
Baltimore Town Plan 2011

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Section I. Introduction

A. Purpose of the Town Plan

It is the intent of this document to plan a course which will benefit the people of the Town of Baltimore and its future generations by encouraging actions that are in the town's best interest. Vermont law 24 VSA Chapter 117 (the Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act) enables any municipality in the state to "prepare, maintain, and implement a plan within its jurisdiction."

The Baltimore Town Plan seeks to:

- Clearly define a vision for future growth and development in Baltimore
- Recommend actions to be taken to secure this vision
- Guide those interested in subdividing and developing land
- Provide a basis for town regulations and standards for Act 250 review
- Provide a source of information about the town
- Provide policies and guidelines for the local, regional, and state decision-makers

B. Town Plan Process

A town plan is developed, and amended as needed, by the Planning Commission, and adopted by the vote of the Selectboard. Town plans expire five years after the date of adoption, at which time they may be re-adopted either with or without changes. Town plans may be amended at any time. The Baltimore Planning Commission believes that public input should guide any town planning process. During the month of April in the year 2000, the Baltimore Planning Commission conducted a scientifically valid survey to gather public opinion on planning related issues. There were 85 surveys mailed to every property owner in Baltimore. There were 47 surveys returned, establishing a 55.3% response rate for this survey. The Baltimore Town Plan states goals which are intended to provide a direction for the future. These goals have come directly from the residents and homeowners of Baltimore through their survey responses.

When people were asked in the Baltimore survey what they liked about the town and what they did not want to change, the most frequent answers were: peace and quiet, rural atmosphere, country setting, friendliness, wildlife, natural environment, and undeveloped land. It is clear from the survey that this small mountain town has plenty to offer its residents.

When people were asked to name the top three things that they did not like about Baltimore and wanted to change, the most frequent responses were: remove the trash and junk, lower the taxes, have better road maintenance, slow down the traffic, have more citizen participation, and more police protection.

The results of the Baltimore Survey of 2000 have been retained in this 2011 update of the Town Plan. The information derived from the survey continues to be highly relevant as a tool to inform and guide the planning and vision for the town.

Section II. Community Profile

A. Background Information and History

The town of Baltimore is surrounded by the towns of Weathersfield, Springfield, Chester, and Cavendish. The town is approximately 3,000 acres of woodland, pasture, residential use, and rural farms. The land that is now the town of Baltimore was once part of the town of Cavendish. Hawks Mountain created a natural division between the two parts of town. Baltimore broke away from Cavendish by act of legislature in 1793. Several times in the history of Baltimore, the residents desired to expand the town's boundaries. In 1797, the town "...voted to receive the northeast corner of Chester to be annexed to the Town of Baltimore with all the privileges equal with the Town of Baltimore." In 1826, Baltimore residents voted to annex parts of Springfield, Weathersfield, and Chester. Baltimore's petitions to annex land were not favorably received by neighboring towns. In 1835, another attempt was made by Baltimore residents to increase the town's size by approximately 6,000 acres. The entire area of North Springfield would have become part of Baltimore, but once again, Springfield refused the petition. Baltimore was destined to remain a small town.

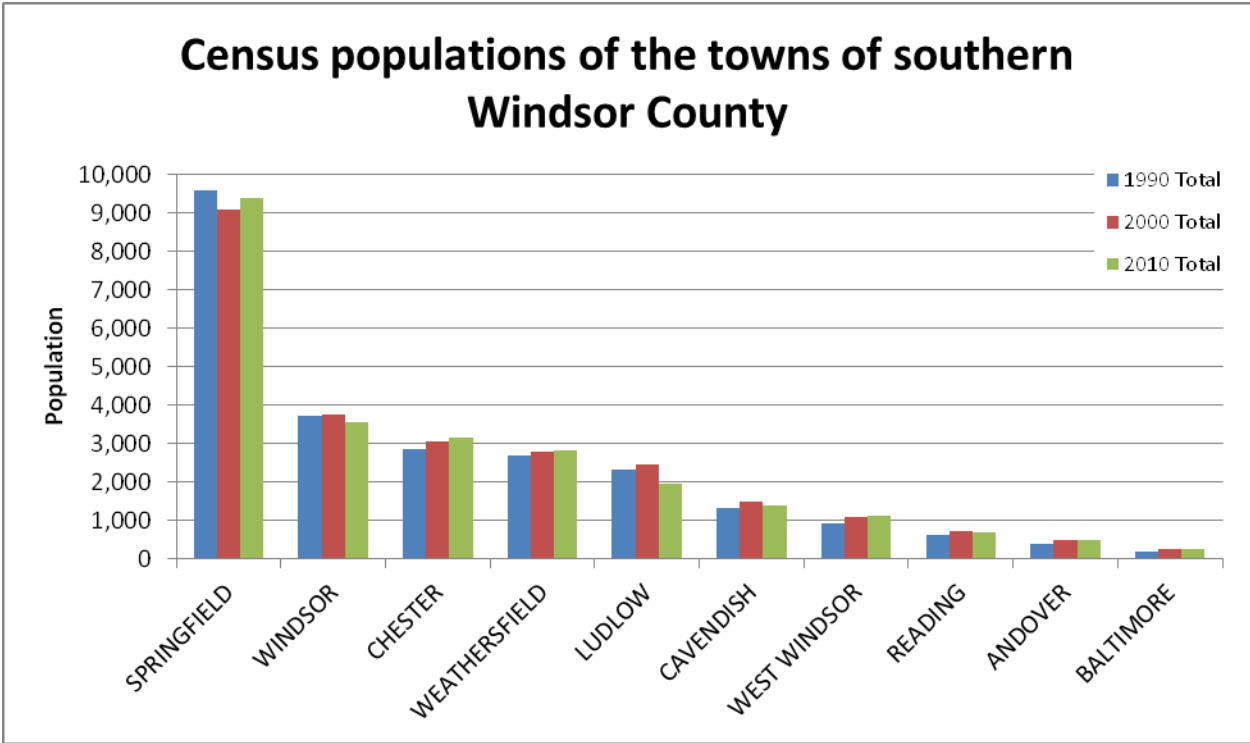
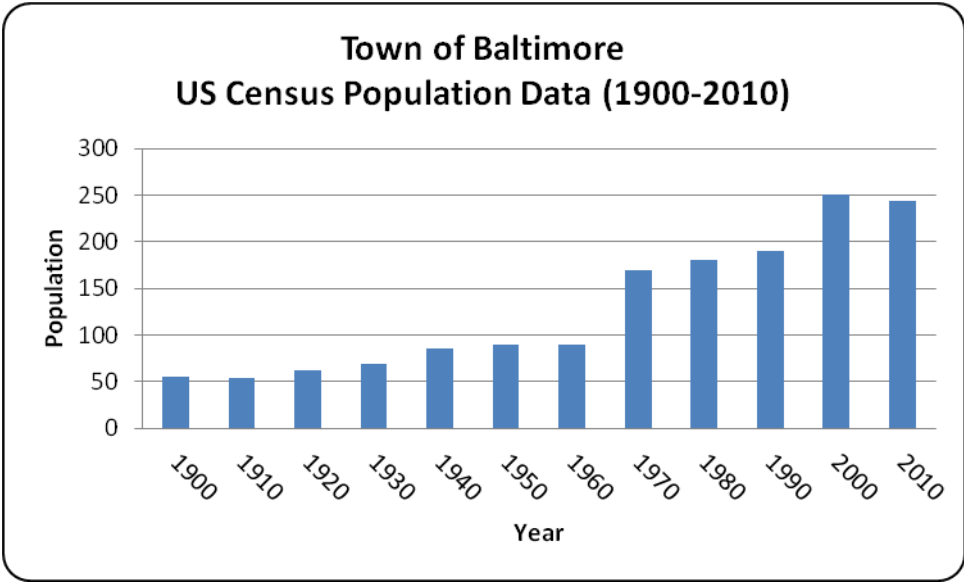
In 1795 there was no road connecting the northern and southern parts of the Town. Baltimore currently has only dirt roads, with one main road called Baltimore Road. The town is nestled in the southeastern face of Hawks Mountain. The land is a mix of open pastures, woodland, and residential development.

This poem composed by Annie M. Pollard, a resident of Baltimore, captures the feelings residents have for Baltimore:

*"Close to the side of Hawks Mountain
Where the sun's rays brightly fall,
Nestles a town
of some renown
Because of its areas small.
A three-cornered clipping from Eden,
A haunt for the birds and flowers,
No place is more blest
In all east and west
Than this land that we love and call ours."*

B. Population

The population chart below shows that Baltimore's population has steadily increased since 1900. After a high population of 207 in 1810, farmers moving to the Midwest caused the population to drop dramatically to a low of 54 in 1910. U.S. Census figures indicate that population growth between 1990 and 2000 was 31.6% while that figure decreased from 2000-2010 to -2.4%. As of the 2010 U.S Census, Baltimore ranked 234th in population size among all towns within Vermont.



C. Economy

Over the years, farming and forestry have played an important role in Baltimore’s land use and local economy. Many farms have ceased to operate and today Baltimore serves as a residential community relying on the commerce and industry of surrounding towns such as Springfield,

Cavendish, Chester, and Ludlow. There isn't much hope of attracting new business to Baltimore (other than home-based businesses) due to the lack infrastructure (such as water and sewer lines). Therefore the tax base is limited to the residential properties. According to the 2009 Annual Town Report, residential tax rate distribution allocates 70% for education, 16% for highway maintenance and costs and the remaining 14% for town operating costs.

Farming, logging, mining and home-based businesses are the types of income generation most likely to take place in Baltimore. According to the Baltimore Survey, 72% of respondents did not want to encourage mining or mineral extraction and 51% did not want to encourage commercial logging or wood processing.

The 2000 U.S. Census reported that of the 161 Baltimore residents age 16 and over that were employed, only 12 worked in the town itself. This is an indication of Baltimore residents' dependence on outside towns for employment. The chart below outlines the towns to which Baltimore residents commute.

Where Baltimore Residents Work (top six towns)	Number of workers
Springfield	88
Ludlow	15
Baltimore	12
Chester	11
Claremont, NH	10
Weathersfield	5

Source: U.S. Census 2000

The U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics has released current employment figures through 2010. The table below indicates number of residents in the labor force along with unemployment information.

2010 Labor Force		Unemployment Rate	
January	184	January	2.7
February	180	February	2.2
March	181	March	3.3
April	174	April	4.6
May	166	May	3.6
June	172	June	4.1
July	173	July	5.2
August	170	August	3.5
September	167	September	4.2
October	165	October	3
November	163	November	2.5
December	176	December	2.3

North Springfield has an industrial area about a 15 minute drive from Baltimore. An increase in jobs in the North Springfield area might increase the demand for housing in the area. Springfield has a long history of precision tool manufacturing. While most Baltimore residents are employed in Springfield, other surrounding towns offer a number of jobs to Baltimore residents. The Mack Molding plant in Cavendish offers manufacturing jobs and the region's

top employer, Okemo Mountain Resort, is located in Ludlow. Since most residents work outside of town, regional economic prosperity is important to Baltimore.

Industry for the Employed Civilian Population (16 years and over)		
Industry	Baltimore	SWCRPC Region
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	2	319
Construction	18	904
Manufacturing	48	2,273
Wholesale trade	7	341
Retail trade	20	1,368
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	3	414
Information	7	346
Finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing	12	501
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste mgt.	12	769
Educational, health and social services	21	2,879
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accomodation and food services	6	1,354
Other services (except public administration)	6	629
Public administration	2	384
Totals	164	12,481

Source: U.S. Census 2000

In 2000, the Vermont, non-metro median family income (MFI) of \$52,800 was established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. This was higher than the MFI for all towns in southern Windsor County with the exception of West Windsor. 2008 Median Family Income, according to the Vermont Department Taxes for Baltimore was \$52,748.

Median Family Income 1990-2000						
Location	Actual Dollar Values			Adjusted Dollar Values*		
	1990	2000	% Change	1990	2000*	% Change
Andover	\$40,754	\$52,488	28.8%	\$40,754	\$39,891	-2.1%
Baltimore	\$41,163	\$48,692	18.3%	\$41,163	\$37,006	-10.1%
Cavendish	\$37,183	\$43,122	16.0%	\$37,183	\$32,773	-11.9%
Chester	\$43,508	\$48,815	12.2%	\$43,508	\$37,100	-14.7%
Ludlow	\$41,641	\$46,008	10.5%	\$41,641	\$34,966	-16.0%
Reading	\$44,015	\$50,426	14.6%	\$44,015	\$38,323	-12.9%
Springfield	\$39,553	\$44,188	11.7%	\$39,553	\$33,583	-15.1%
Weathersfield	\$37,844	\$47,985	26.8%	\$37,844	\$36,468	-3.6%
West Windsor	\$53,671	\$65,791	22.6%	\$53,671	\$50,001	-6.8%
Windsor	\$47,625	\$45,153	-5.2%	\$47,625	\$34,316	-27.9%
REGION	\$42,696	\$49,267	15.4%	\$42,696	\$37,443	-12.3%

*Dollar Values adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index 1990 \$ constant value
 Note: \$1 in 2000 is worth \$0.76 in 1990
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census 1990-2000; SWCRPC.

Economic Goal:

1. Encourage farming, forestry, home-based business and other types of economic development in Baltimore that maintains Baltimore’s rural character and lessens the need for commuting and dependence on jobs sources from surrounding towns.

Economic Policies:

1. Encourage home occupations, as defined by the Unified Bylaw,
2. Support home-based businesses through zoning, subdivision regulations, and incentive programs.
3. Support farming and forestry activities that meet Vermont Accepted Agricultural Practices.

Economic Recommendations:

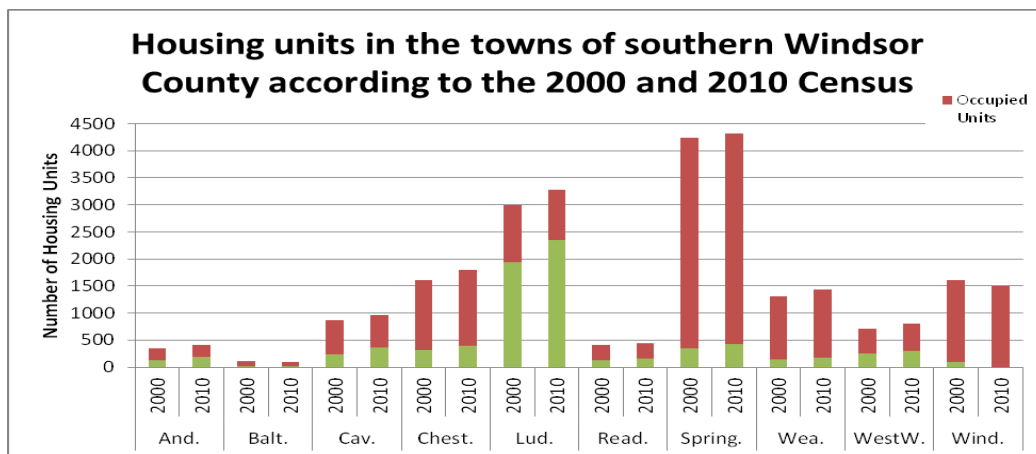
1. Review surrounding towns' economic status and job availability to ensure there is an adequate local job market.
2. Encourage people to ride-share when commuting to work; create a ride-share sign up.

Section III. Housing

According to the Baltimore Survey in 2000, 79% of respondents didn't want to encourage apartments, and 64% of respondents didn't want to encourage multiple family housing. The majority of respondents (96%) to the survey felt that single family homes should be encouraged.

However, Vermont statutes identify a significant planning goal for housing: "to insure the availability of safe and affordable housing for all Vermonters." The recent changes (2004) to the statutes as part of the revisions to Chapter 117 strengthen this goal by providing for housing accessory dwelling units and requiring towns to include zoning that allows for multi-family housing units and mobile home parks in their plans.

The 2010 U.S. Census shows there were total of 100 housing units in Baltimore with 90 occupied and 10 vacant. Single family units in 2000 were 91 (80.5%) compared to 57 units in 1990 (64.8%). There were 12 mobile homes in Baltimore, accounting for 10.6% of the total housing units, compared to 25% in 1990. Mobile homes help to address affordable housing by providing lower cost alternatives to traditional single-family residential housing.



The U.S. and Vermont State Housing goals for affordable housing include the achievement of housing costs at or below 30% of household income for households at or below the county

median income level. For rental housing this includes rent and utilities (fuel for heat, hot water, and cooking; electricity for lights; water and sewer charges; and trash removal). For home ownership housing, this includes mortgage (principal and interest), taxes, and property insurance. Thus, in Baltimore at the 2007 median family income of \$52,748, no more than \$1,319 per month would go toward mortgage payments or rent, heat, electricity, water, housing related taxes or fees, and other similar housing expenses.

2001 Counts and Average Fair Market Values (FMV)

TOWN	R1* count	R1 avg. FMV	R2* count	R2 avg. FMV	MHU* count	MHU avg. FMV	MHL* count	MHL avg. FMV	Com. Apt.*	Com. Apt.* avg. FMV
Andover	74	118,966	93	184,490	2	29,309	13	50,524	0	0
Baltimore	36	90,249	34	128,310	1	22,776	11	42,308	0	0
Cavendish	289	86,228	126	153,239	97	8,667	52	46,298	5	117,621
Chester	684	107,276	282	157,797	40	9,454	110	53,462	9	363,482
Ludlow	579	141,134	125	223,838	90	20,107	58	66,052	0	0
Reading	122	109,455	120	202,836	0	0	19	48,934	0	0
Springfield	2,551	79,081	327	141,895	117	17,455	82	51,337	34	234,697
Weathersfield	538	98,482	327	149,544	176	23,427	138	60,745	1	97,466
West Windsor	197	138,561	190	228,110	0	0	13	76,337	1	173,048
Windsor	911	76,325	85	129,347	40	13,130	29	49,685	19	280,143
REGION	5,981	93,123	1,709	168,100	563	17,408	525	55,613	69	252,643

Source: Figures based on Form 411 data submittal to the Division of Property Valuation and Review

***Property definitions are as follows:**

R1 - Residential on less than 6 acres

R2 - Residential on greater than 6 acres, not including working farms

MHU - Mobile home - unlanded (set up on land not owned by the owner of the mobile home, as in mobile home parks)

MHL - Mobile home - landed (set up on land owned by the owner of the mobile home)

Com. Apt. - Commercial apartments with five (5) or more units.

In 2001, there were 36 residential homes on less than six acres in Baltimore that averaged \$90,249 in Fair Market Value, according to the Division of Property Valuation and Review. There were 11 landed mobile homes (located on land owned by the owner of the mobile home) that averaged \$42,308 in Fair Market Value. There was one mobile home located on land not owned by the owner of the mobile home valued at \$22,776. Based on the FMV figures above, Baltimore's moderately priced mobile homes and residential homes on less than six acres offer housing that is affordable to low and moderate income residents.

Housing Goal:

1. To guide housing development in Baltimore to meet the needs of residents of all income levels and meets State and Federal standards of quality and livability.

Housing Policies:

1. Allow for mobile home parks, multi-family housing and higher density development of single family housing, such as accessory apartments, to provide for the housing needs of low and moderate income residents.
2. Continue to monitor and review the housing needs of Baltimore.

Housing Recommendations:

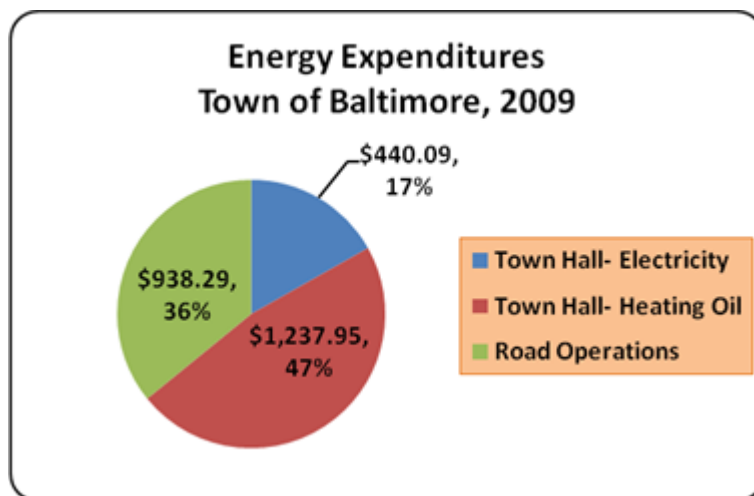
1. Continue to review surrounding towns' job market and economy.
2. Support housing that is consistent with the goals of 24 V.S.A., Chapter 117.

Section IV. Energy

There are a variety of home heating fuels utilized by residents of Baltimore. Many residents use wood stoves as their primary or secondary source of heat. Heating oil and propane are readily available from dealers in Springfield; however, high costs for fuel oil, propane, and electricity make it increasingly difficult for many families to afford to heat their homes in the winter. Home heating costs can be reduced utilizing modern construction and insulation techniques, and through careful siting of buildings.

During calendar year 2009, the Town of Baltimore spent \$2,616.33 on energy and emitted 17,066 lbs. of CO₂. \$1,237.95 (47%) was for the 354 gallons of heating oil, \$440 (17%) was spent on 1,562 KWH of electricity, and \$938 (36%) was spent on fuel for road operations.

Please see Figure 4 below.



Baltimore Energy Expenditure:

▪ Buildings and Facilities	\$1,678 (64%)
▪ Vehicle Fuel	\$938 (36%)
▪ Streetlights	0 (0%)
Total	\$2,616 (100%)

CO₂ Emissions (lbs.):

▪ Buildings and Facilities	9,332 (53%)
▪ Vehicle Fuel	8,334 (47%)
Total	17,666 (100%)

Energy Consumption (MMBtu):

▪ Buildings and Facilities	54 (51%)
▪ Vehicle Fuel	52 (49%)
▪ Streetlights	0 (0%)
Total	106 (100%)

Most Baltimore residents travel to surrounding towns for employment. High fuel costs have increased the cost of transportation for commuters. Residents may wish to investigate carpooling as an option for reducing the cost of transportation.

Energy Goal:

1. To reduce local demand for non-renewable energy resources.
2. Encourage the use of renewable energy resources such as wood, solar, and wind for both new homes and homes being renovated or enlarged.

Energy Policy:

1. Encourage new home construction and additional construction to use modern building materials and techniques in order to conserve energy and lower home heating costs.
2. Builders of new homes shall complete a Vermont Residential Building Energy Standards Certificate. Standards for new construction should specify insulation, lighting, heating, and appliance performance levels.

Energy Recommendations:

1. Amend subdivision regulations and/or adopt site plan review procedures for review of the building and insulation materials, and the siting of new homes (for passive solar).
2. Increase awareness among residents about incentives for energy conservation through programs such as Efficiency Vermont, which promote energy audits, weatherization, and upgrades to energy efficient appliances to reduce consumption.
3. Consider density bonuses for energy efficient building construction (LEED, Energy Star).

Section V. Utilities and Facilities

The siting of electrical facilities and transmissions lines, telecommunication and broadcasting towers involves health, safety and aesthetic issues. These structures can alter mountaintops and ridge lines in ways that negatively affect scenic resources vital to Baltimore's economic and cultural future. In addition, there are unanswered questions about health effects from the electromagnetic fields generated by these facilities on the people and animals living near them. Any proposed wireless communications facilities must utilize existing facilities before new sites are considered. New sites should blend into the surrounding landscape in both size and appearance. As less intrusive designs evolve through technological advances, those designs should be utilized.

Electric service is available to Baltimore residents through Central Vermont Public Service (CVPS). Local telephone service is available through TDS Telecom .

Baltimore conducts its business from its Town Office, formerly the old Baltimore School. The Town Office is the only town-owned facility. There is one cemetery and no recreational fields or town-maintained walking trails. All residents rely on private wells for drinking water and private septic systems.

Baltimore is one of thirteen member towns in the Southern Windsor/Windham Counties Solid Waste Management District (SW/WCSWMD). SW/WCSWMD is a union municipal district

dedicated to providing solid waste management authority, services, and planning to its member towns. The District was chartered in 1982 and serves: Andover, Baltimore, Cavendish, Chester, Grafton, Ludlow, Plymouth, Reading, Rockingham, Springfield, Weathersfield, West Windsor, and Windsor.

For twenty years, until 2007, the District was part of the bi-state agreement under the NH/VT Solid Waste Project. Twenty-nine member towns were contractually obligated to tip all municipal waste at the Wheelabrator incinerator in Claremont, New Hampshire. When the Project's contract with Wheelabrator expired, the Project disbanded. Thirteen of the fourteen Vermont towns which had previously comprised the SW/WCSWMD decided to stay together. In July 2007, the District entered into a one-year contract with the Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) to provide administrative and management services; the District renewed the contract in July 2008. In addition to a part-time manager, the District employs a recycling coordinator.

Most Baltimore residents use the Springfield Transfer Station for disposing of their recyclables. They may also pay to dispose of their trash at the Transfer Station using a ticket system. Household hazardous waste collections are held in on the second Saturdays in May and September at the Transfer Station for District residents. For more information, visit www.vtsolidwastedistrict.org.

There are no registered childcare facilities in Baltimore. Residents rely on informal childcare arrangements in town or in surrounding towns or on regional resources that are either licensed or registered. The childcare resource and referral agency for Baltimore is the Springfield Area Parent Child Center, which is located in North Springfield.

Utilities and Facilities Goal:

1. Accommodate the necessity of utilities and telecommunication towers while minimizing the economic, aesthetic and environmental impact upon the town.

Utilities and Facilities Policies:

1. Allow new facilities only as necessary to meet the changing needs of residents and businesses.
2. New utility lines shall be planned along existing roads whenever possible and should not detract from the important scenic resources.
3. Telecommunication towers and antennas should be placed on existing structures whenever possible. No tower should be placed on Hawks Mountain.
4. Continue routine maintenance on town hall.

Utilities and Facilities Recommendation:

1. Consult the Baltimore Zoning Regulations and Future Land Use Map for the specific conditions of siting and construction of any electrical, telecommunication or broadcasting tower or facility (commercial or private).
2. The town should plan for the future demand for childcare services that are safe and

affordable and integrate child care issues into the planning process as appropriate.

3. The town should work to achieve the goals and action steps outlined in the District's Solid Waste Implementation Plan.

Section VI. Transportation

There are no state routes in Baltimore, the closest state routes are VT Route 131 to the north, VT Route 106 to the east, VT Route 10 to the south, and VT Route 103 to the west of Town. 2011 Vermont Agency of Transportation highway mileage reports for Baltimore include:

- 4.36 miles of Class 2 Town Highways;
- 2.81 miles of Class 3 Town Highways;
- 0.15 miles of Class 4 Town Highways;

The Baltimore Selectboard established standards for roads, bridges and culverts, adopted as the Road Ordinance in August 2004. An inventory of Town culverts was conducted in 2002 and updated in 2004. Currently the road network in Baltimore is sufficient with no additional roads needed. The Road Commissioner is authorized by the Selectboard to approve driveways and other access along town highways pursuant to Section 4.15 of the Road Ordinance.

The Baltimore Survey results indicated that most people would like to keep the roads unpaved and many improvements to road condition and drainage have been made in the last few years. No additional roads are needed at this time in Baltimore. Class 4 Town Highways and trails are not maintained by the Town. They are valued for hiking, bicycling, snowmobiling, and other recreational uses.

There are no airports in Baltimore, however, the Hartness State Airport is located in North Springfield and provides access for corporate jets, flight instruction and gliding opportunities.

Connecticut River Transit offers on-demand public transportation services in Baltimore with at least 48 hours' notice. According to the 2009 Baltimore town report, Connecticut River Transit offered 100 Dial a Ride services to residents within the town.

Transportation Goal:

1. Provide safe and adequate town roads.

Transportation Policies:

1. Keep the roads in Baltimore unpaved.
2. Preserve public rights-of-way on Class 4 Town Highways and trails for recreational uses.
3. Do not accept new roads under Town ownership unless they clearly meet the public interest.

Transportation Recommendations:

1. Seek funding sources for a new grader (possibly grants).
2. Seek funding sources to improve the emergency preparedness conditions of the roads.

Section VII. Education

In 1838 the Baltimore School House was built. Not much money was spent on education back then. The teachers were boarded out into houses of families that bid for them. In the earlier days, school only met for two months in the winter and two months in the summer. Grades 1-8 were offered in the Baltimore School until the late 1960's. Grades 7-8 were sent to Springfield Junior High School and Green Mountain High School. The Baltimore School closed in June of 1988, and in March of 1989 the Town of Baltimore was granted possession of the school house from the Baltimore School Board. Most of the students in Baltimore make use of the Springfield school systems; as an alternative some have chosen the Chester/Andover school systems. The school systems receive a tuition reimbursement from the Town of Baltimore. The tuition dues are generated from the Town tax revenues. A large percentage (70%) of respondents to the Baltimore Year 2000 Survey have indicated there are adequate educational resources in the area.

A number of schools in the area offer a wide range of educational services. The River Valley Technical Center in Springfield offers high school students from the region the chance to learn a technical trade. Vermont Community College in Springfield and New Hampshire Technical College in Claremont, NH offer college level courses, associates degrees and adult continuing education.

Education Goal:

1. To provide and maintain adequate educational services and, when possible, provide more educational opportunities for the residents of Baltimore.

Education Policies:

1. Ensure all residents have access to traditional and non-traditional educational resources.
2. Continue ongoing dialogue with the Springfield schools to negotiate for the lowest possible tuition rates.

Education Recommendation:

1. Seek legislative support for review of the state-mandated educational funding Act 68.
2. Inform residents about educational opportunities in the area.

Section VIII. Emergency Preparedness

Vermont Emergency Management has requested that all towns fill out a Basic Emergency Operations Plan in order to provide a more informed state response to local disasters. The Basic Emergency Operations Plan provides contact information for those involved in local emergency response. Also included are shelter locations, critical and vulnerable facilities and populations and Incident Command System flow charts. The Basic EOP is located in the Appendix of this document. The plan is updated yearly and submitted to Vermont Emergency Management.

In 2006, the Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission received FEMA approval of its Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. This plan makes Baltimore eligible to join the National Flood Insurance Program and are eligible to apply for mitigation project grants. Baltimore does not participate in the NFIP but has no Special Flood Hazard Areas identified. FEMA has suggested that Baltimore reconsider the advantages of joining the NFIP in order to derive the full benefits of completing a mitigation plan.

Baltimore relies heavily on the surrounding towns for medical and fire assistance. The closest hospital is Springfield Hospital (about 20 minutes away). The closest full time fire station is the Springfield Fire Department (also about 20 minutes away). The closest volunteer fire station is West Weathersfield Volunteer Fire Station, located at Downers Corners in Weathersfield (15 minutes north on Route 106). For Baltimore residents, Riverside Middle School in Springfield serves as the local shelter and the Baltimore Town Hall is equipped with a back-up generator to continue service during a power outage and serve as the local Emergency Operations Center. There is no town water source and if the town lost power, most residents would have to rely on privately owned generators to power their water pumps.

Emergency Preparedness Goal:

1. To ensure that the community can respond to a local emergency.

Emergency Preparedness Policy:

1. Review and correct the Basic Emergency Operations Plan on an annual basis.
2. Work with surrounding towns to complete mutual aid agreements.

Emergency Preparedness Recommendations:

1. Have the road commissioner identify road sections, bridges, and culverts that need maintenance or replacement.
2. Work with the Regional Planning Commission to seek funding for emergency preparedness in Baltimore.
3. Reconsider joining the National Flood Insurance Program.

Section IX. Natural and Cultural Resources

A. Water Resources

The largest bodies of surface water in Baltimore are brooks, including Beaver Meadow Brook and Chandler Meadow Brook. Baltimore residents are aware of the importance of their water resources. In the Baltimore Year 2000 Survey, 96% of the respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement, “protection of our water resources is important” and 79% of the respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement, “protection of our wetlands is important.”

Wetlands are defined in VSA 24, Section 4303 as, “...those areas that are inundated by surface or groundwater with a frequency sufficient to support vegetation or aquatic life that depend on saturated or seasonally saturated soils for growth and reproduction.” Wetland benefits include fish and wildlife habitat, flood and erosion protection, nutrient and pollution filtration, groundwater recharge, and sites for educational activities, recreation and scenic enjoyment. Wetlands over three acres in size are identified by the National Wetland Inventory.

B. Forest and Wildlife Habitat

The majority of land in Baltimore is woodland or forest. Vermont and the rest of the New England states have been deforested three times since the settlement of America by early colonialists. The predominant canopy species has changed since pre-settlement. The forest and woodlands of Baltimore are currently a mix of broadleaves and conifers. The age of the

trees are typically 50 years old or younger, with some older trees mixed in (usually left because of the poor lumber quality or remote location). Sugar Maple, Red Maple, Red Oak, White Oak, Black Oak, Eastern Red Cedar, Eastern Hemlock, Ash, Willow, Cottonwood, Beech, White Birch, Yellow Birch, Cherry, Buckthorn, White Pine, Red Spruce, and Black Spruce can be found throughout the Town. Red and Black Oak are generally the most valuable timber in the region but other species such as White Pine and Yellow Birch can be valuable if they are large and straight enough.

The sap from the Sugar Maples is boiled down to make maple syrup which is an important source of food, income, and identity to the residents of Baltimore. Sugar Maples have been reported to be declining in the United States due to warming annual temperatures.

According to the Baltimore Survey, 87% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that protection of our forests is important. A number of animal species depend on the forest and woodland for their habitat requirements. Forests provide shelter and food for a variety of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and birds. Whitetail deer, fisher cats, porcupines, black bear, rabbits, skunks, and wild turkey are a few of the animals that can be found in Baltimore.

C. Agriculture

The days of when Vermont had many working farms are over. There are only a few small farms currently operating in Baltimore. Farms provide open space and the rural atmosphere that people enjoy about Baltimore. The only working farm left in Baltimore belongs to John Thomas. There are a number of people with rural properties that resemble farms but they are not “working farms.” Open fields and agricultural lands are important scenic resources in Baltimore. Haying of open fields continues to leave these lands open.

D. Earth and Mineral Resources

The bedrock of the area is identified as pegmatite, granite, and granite gneiss and represents some of the oldest rock in the Northeast. Overlying the bedrock is a dense basal till of low permeability, with particle sizes ranging from the fine silts and clays to boulders. The depth of the till varies from zero to possibly ten feet. There are a few exceptions to this, as isolated deposits of sands and gravels with a higher permeability than the tills exist. These are probably of glacial-fluvial origin.

Mining impacts the environment, peace and quiet, and aesthetics of a community. Most of the respondents to the survey felt that mining or mineral extraction should not be encouraged (72% of respondents).

E. Outdoor Recreation

Town owned recreational facilities are limited to the area around the Town Hall, which includes a few swings. There is ample opportunity to enjoy the outdoors in Baltimore. A number of residents enjoy hunting and take part in whitetail deer and turkey hunting seasons (wild turkey have been successfully reintroduced to New England). Hiking, biking and walking can be done on dirt roads or trails located throughout the town. Snowmobiles are popular during the winter.

New England has historically supported the English Common Law concept of allowing hunting

and recreational use on private property unless posted as “no trespassing”.

F. Historic Resources

The Town Hall was formerly the old school built in 1838. There are a number of homes in Baltimore that were built in the 1800s. Currently, the Loomis House is the only structure in Baltimore listed on the State Register of Historic Places. This building is built with the Sneeked Ashlar construction technique, a form of stone masonry thought to have been brought to the area by masons from Scotland in the 1800s.

The preservation of historic resources was identified in the survey as being a positive and worthwhile Town effort. Two questions were asked in the survey about historic resources. Both questions received favorable responses, indicating that there is local support for identifying and preserving historic buildings.

G. Scenic Resources

Baltimore possesses landscape features which are extremely important to the rural character which the residents have defined as one of the top ten things that “should not change.” The maintenance of these scenic resources is important to the people of Baltimore. A wide range of questions were asked in the survey to gather public opinion about the importance of the natural aesthetics in Baltimore.

Open fields and working farms help to define the rural landscape of Baltimore. The protection of farming and open agricultural land will help preserve the scenic and cultural resources of Baltimore.

Open space, natural areas, and wildlife habitat are other rural characteristics that residents of Baltimore would like to protect. Baltimore is located on the side of Hawks Mountain, giving residents beautiful views of the Connecticut River Valley. Hawks Mountain itself is also valued as a scenic resource to Baltimore residents. A majority of survey respondents said there should be no development and no telecommunication towers on Hawks Mountain.

Natural and Cultural Resources Goals:

1. To protect the land uses and natural features which define Baltimore’s rural character by preserving agricultural land, forest and woodland, wildlife habitat, wetlands, water resources, steep slopes, good air quality, natural and scenic areas.
2. To encourage and promote the preservation of agricultural land for open space and scenic views.
3. To foster an environment and habitat where wildlife can thrive.
4. To encourage the continued use of agricultural lands for farming.
5. To protect and preserve historic and cultural resources for future generations to enjoy.
6. To protect against loss of peace and privacy in the community.
7. To maintain access to important recreational resources.

Natural and Cultural Resources Policies:

1. Protect existing water resources and wetlands from contamination or disruption from development.
2. Ensure that the use, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials (junk cars, batteries, trash, used oil, etc.) is done in such a manner that it does not have an adverse effect on the water resources in the Town.
3. Ensure that streams, brooks, and water courses are maintained in a natural state.
4. Ensure that any new water supply system or waste water system does not deplete or contaminate the existing water supply.
5. Deter development from identifiable wetlands.
6. Natural and manmade features which contribute to the scenic beauty of Baltimore should be protected.
7. Scenic views should be considered when planning location of development.
8. Telecommunication towers should not be constructed on Hawks Mountain.
9. Residential development on or near Hawks Mountain should not be clearly visible.
10. There should not be any development on the ridge line of Hawks Mountain.
11. Plan development to minimize the impact on fish and wildlife habitat.
12. New or existing developments are encouraged to avoid clear-cutting large acreage (large acreage defined for the purposes of this Town Plan as over ten acres).
13. Maple sugaring should be encouraged as a long standing Vermont and Baltimore tradition.
14. Encourage working farms to keep in operation.
15. Discourage the conversion of quality farmland and agricultural soil to other uses through zoning and subdivision regulations.
16. Discourage the development of mining operations that would negatively impact the environment, peace and quiet, or aesthetics of the community.
17. The recreational use of the land should be encouraged, providing that private property and natural resources are not negatively impacted, and permission for use is granted where required.
18. Residents and non-residents should ask the owners first before hunting or using motorized vehicles on private property.

Natural and Cultural Resources Recommendations:

1. Support the local Health Officer's enforcement of State and Federal regulations for the protection of surface and ground waters.
2. Develop local regulations for on-site septic systems not covered by State regulation.
3. Commercial wood harvesters are encouraged to leave buffer strips of trees and vegetation near the borders of roads, wetlands, and streams to deter negative impacts to aesthetics

and water quality.

4. Encourage conservation of forest and woodlands for recreation, wildlife habitat, wood products, maple sugaring, scenery, and important recreation areas.
5. Encourage roadside farm stands in order to provide a local means of food distribution.
6. Utilize the Regional Planning Commission to record and apply to the National and State Registers of Historic Places.
7. Seek grant funding sources (such as Municipal Planning Grants made available by the State of Vermont to Towns with approved Town Plans) to help in the identification and recognition of historic buildings and structures.
8. Work with proposed mining operations to minimize impacts to residential property and the environment.
9. Encourage residents and visitors to ask for permission to hunt or used motorized vehicles on private property.
10. People who hunt, trap, and fish are advised to read and understand all of the State of Vermont's Laws pertaining to hunting and fishing.

Section X. Land Use Planning

A. Existing Land Use

Baltimore is a rural town with much of the land in forest or brush (approximately 2,606 acres). Forests provide wildlife habitat and variety of scenic, recreational, and economic resources (such as timber and maple sugaring). The next largest land use is agriculture, covering approximately 303 acres of land (pastures and hayfields are included in this estimate). The third largest use of land in Baltimore is residential, covering approximately 75 acres. Baltimore does not fit into the typical historic settlement pattern of Vermont. There are no villages or hamlets (a small area of concentrated development with one or more commercial establishments) in Baltimore.

B. Future Land Use

The village of North Springfield and the areas surrounding the North Springfield Industrial Park and Hartness State Airport are anticipated to grow over the next several years. Easy access to Routes 106 and 10, the proximity of a major employment center and the availability of municipal services are variables which could stimulate growth in Baltimore. There currently are no growth centers in Baltimore and the existing homes are fairly spread apart.

According to the Baltimore planning survey, the qualities of Baltimore that residents would like to maintain are peace and quiet, the rural atmosphere and country setting, wildlife habitat and open space. The greatest threats to these qualities are rapid and widespread residential development that could fragment large areas of undeveloped forest land and open fields, and detract from the scenic views that help to define Baltimore's rural character. In light of Baltimore residents' desire to maintain the rural, scenic nature of their town, a future land use map was developed.

The definitions of land use categories that follow are descriptions of areas shown on the Future Land Use Map. They are meant to serve as a guide to the types and intensities of uses appropriate to each area by describing the values that each category provides for the Town. The definitions do not prescribe or prohibit a specific use or set of uses for any category; the actual uses of the land will have some overlap between categories. For example, forest/wildlife or agricultural land can continue to support rural residential development, as long as that development does not negatively impact the primary values or functions attributed to the forest/wildlife or agricultural land uses. Development is inappropriate in any one category if, whether alone or combined with other uses in the area, it threatens the values described below.

The Future Land Use Map is general in nature, and the boundaries of different categories were drawn with this in mind. They are not meant to be detailed representations of present conditions, nor are they intended to be precisely bounded areas of completely segregated land uses in the future.

Forest/Wildlife

The majority of undeveloped land in Baltimore is forested. The contiguity of large areas of forest land is important for many types of wildlife, especially for large mammals such as deer, bear, and moose. The State Agency of Natural Resources has identified several large areas within the town as deer wintering areas and bear habitat. Any development which occurs in forest areas should be designed so that these important habitat areas and their functions are maintained wherever possible. Forest areas are also important for their recreational, aesthetic, and economic resource values. The ability of Forest areas to provide these benefits should not be significantly impaired. Development in these areas should be undertaken in ways that protect their value and ensure the continued presence of healthy forest ecosystems in the Town. Small cluster developments could be considered in these areas for the maximization of forest preservation.

Agriculture

Agricultural land has historically been important to the Town's economy, food supply, and cultural heritage. It contributes to the land use patterns and aesthetic qualities that make the Town a desirable place to live. Land in agricultural use, and idle open land with agricultural potential both possess these values. The potential for agricultural use and production should not be impaired in designated agricultural areas. Residential development may be considered in these areas as long as the scenic qualities of the open fields and farmland are not impaired, and the overall density remains low.

Rural Residential

Rural Residential areas can support a number of different uses, including low density residential, forest, agricultural (including tree farms and other horticultural uses), open, and transitional (scrub/shrub). They have been designated based on their current uses and accessibility from existing roads. The primary concern in rural areas shall be to discourage sprawl and strip development, and to maintain existing settlement patterns. Cluster development is encouraged wherever possible, as long as the overall density remains low.

Access to open space and recreational resources should be preserved wherever possible. New residential development may occur in Rural Residential areas only where accessible by existing town roads.

Residential

Residential areas can support a higher density of residential development than areas designated “Rural Residential.” These areas have been designated based on their current development pattern and accessibility from existing roads. The primary concern in Residential areas shall be to discourage sprawl and strip development, and to maintain existing settlement patterns. Cluster development is encouraged, in order to maintain the rural character of the Town. Access to open space and recreational resources should be preserved wherever possible. New residential development may occur in Residential areas only where accessible by existing town roads.

Conservation

Conservation areas are lands that possess outstanding value or potential as wildlife habitat, recreation areas, educational resources, fragile natural areas, or aesthetic resources. Conservation lands represent relatively pristine areas of the Town that residents wish to preserve in their natural state for future generations, and should receive the highest level of protection from development. Special care should be taken in any resource management or extraction plans to maintain the character and value of these areas. Conservation areas are especially beneficial when surrounded by compatible uses such as forest and agriculture.

The Conservation area on the Baltimore Future Land Use Map covers the ridge line and steep slopes of Hawk’s Mountain. These areas are important because of their scenic qualities and fragile soils, and because they are difficult to access without destroying some of the qualities that make them valuable to the town. This area also abuts State Forest land that makes up the northwest slope of Hawk’s mountain in the town of Cavendish. Much of this State land is harvested, however the land is managed for wildlife and the area provides trails for recreational use.

Special Considerations

There are several important resources that may occur within any of the land use categories above, and which merit special attention and protection. They include: vegetated areas next to surface waters; wetlands; Natural Heritage Inventory sites; critical deer wintering habitat and bear habitat as defined by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources; significant historic sites; and other locally defined sensitive natural areas and scenic resources. Development should avoid and minimize negative impacts to these resources. In addition, special considerations should be observed in the following areas:

High elevations and steep slopes — At high elevations (greater than 1,500 feet) the soil tends to be thinner and cooler and less able to support a wide range of plant life. If areas are disturbed the potential for severe erosion is great. Land at 1,500 feet and above as well as lands with steep slopes (greater than 25%) should be protected from any development which could reasonably be expected to cause soil erosion.

Ridgelines — Any development which is proposed at higher elevations should demonstrate that every measure has been taken so as the development is not visually obtrusive to surrounding neighbors or from public roadways.

While residential development may be expected in almost all land use categories, higher densities should be concentrated in existing residential areas. Residential development should be compatible with the land use and housing goals of this plan, and should not conflict with the values defined in the land use categories of this plan.

Timing of Development

Baltimore is a rural community which has historically seen family-by-family growth. Baltimore residents wish to continue this steady and well-paced pattern of growth, and to the extent possible, prevent sudden large increases in population which would place undue stress on Town services and rural character.

Land Use Goal:

1. To encourage development that is compatible with the existing rural character of Baltimore.

Land Use Policies:

1. Protect the residential areas from incompatible industrial activity.
2. Subdivisions and new development shall not detract from the scenic views, disrupt wetlands, or negatively impact surface water.
3. Special consideration should be given to any development or subdivision on Hawks Mountain for its impacts on the scenic views, wildlife habitat, and water resources.
4. Encourage agricultural and forest land use through zoning, subdivision bylaws, and tax incentives.
5. Discourage the conversion of agricultural and forest land to other uses.
6. Protect against loss of peace and privacy in the community.
7. Development above 1,500 feet or on a slope greater than 25% shall be prohibited.
8. Commercial development along major transportation routes (i.e., strip development) is discouraged. Innovative commercial development that maintains the rural nature of the town may be considered.
9. Home occupations are encouraged as long as they are appropriate to adjoining land uses, and do not adversely affect air, water, or scenic resources or cause noise, dust or traffic that is offensive to surrounding neighbors.
10. Development adjacent to significant natural resources (waterways, large forested areas, wildlife habitat, etc) should be compatible with the value of those resources and should be mitigated with buffer strips or visual screening if necessary.
11. Programs that help owners of farm and forestland bear the financial responsibility of resource protection should be supported.

Future Land Use Recommendations:

1. Encourage citizen participation in local decisions, making local government accessible through a continuous planning program.
2. Review the subdivision and zoning regulations for their ability to implement the goals of the Town Plan.
3. Initiate the development of a Conservation Commission in order to protect significant cultural resources, farmland, forestland, and significant plant and animal species and their habitat.

Section XI Plan Implementation and Relationship to Other Plans

A. Plan Implementation

Implementation of the goals, policies and recommendations outlined in this Plan depends on the combined efforts of Town residents and local officials, as well as the resources of the Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission, and other regional, state, federal and private entities involved in land use planning activities.

At the state and federal levels, the Plan can be used to justify and prioritize the use of federal funds for community development, transportation improvements, natural resource protection and management, and other investments. In addition, Act 250 requires that developers show that projects conform to local and regional plans.

At the regional level, the Regional Planning Commission can review the Town Plan for compliance with the requirements of Act 200. Act 200 approval makes the Town eligible to apply for implementation funding from the State in the form of Municipal Planning Grants.

At the local level, the Town may take some of the following actions to implement the goals of this Plan:

1. Update zoning bylaws and subdivision regulations so that they are based on the goals, policies and recommendations outlined in the Town Plan.
2. Refer to the Town Plan when planning additions and improvements to local infrastructure such as local roads and public utilities. Such additions or improvements should be used to plan for appropriate growth and development.
3. Work with public and private entities to help them design development or resource management plans in ways that will further the goals of this Plan.
4. Work with area land trusts to develop a plan for conservation of important resource lands.

B. Relationship to Local and Regional Plans

In order for the Town of Baltimore to carry out its land use planning goals, the Town must evaluate the Town Plan in relation to plans of neighboring towns and the region. Baltimore is bordered by the towns of Cavendish, Weathersfield, and Chester, and meets at the southeast corner with northwest corner of the town of Springfield. Baltimore is located in the center of

the Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission's 10-town region, is served by the District 2 Environmental Commission, and is located in Vermont Agency of Transportation District 2.

Neighboring Towns

Baltimore is surrounded by towns which are faced with varying degrees of development pressure. All of the towns surrounding Baltimore have town plans, and all have zoning bylaws and subdivision regulations with the exception of the town of Cavendish. None of the town plans of these surrounding towns is in conflict with the Baltimore Town Plan.

Southern Windsor County Region

The Southern Windsor County Regional Plan provides broad guidelines for planning, coordination and review of the natural, cultural, social and economic features of the Southern Windsor County region. The 2009 Southern Windsor County Regional Plan which also includes the Regional Transportation Plan are companion documents to the Baltimore Town Plan, providing a broader framework and context for local planning efforts. The Town Plan should support and complement the land use and development goals of these regional planning documents.

The Future Land Use map of the 2009 Regional Plan shows much of land with access to the main roads in the town as being "Rural." Rural areas, in the Regional Plan, are defined as follows:

"These areas are rural in character and are generally valued for environmental and recreational uses as well as for the primary purpose as a working landscape, which includes agricultural, forestry and earth extraction uses. These working landscape activities contribute to the economy by providing jobs in the natural resource sector as well as attracting tourists who want to take advantage of the recreational opportunities."

The ridge line of Hawk's Mountain is designated as conservation land, and the land between Hawk's and the Rural area is identified as "Forest." These land use designations are all compatible with those in Baltimore's Future Land Use map.

The Baltimore Planning Commission would like to thank the participants in the survey of 2000 for their input, time, and devotion to the community.