

# **BRIGHTON TOWN PLAN**

**April 2013**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Town of Brighton is a vibrant and resilient community with residents and leaders actively working to improve its future. The town has a rich and unique history grounded in the Vermont doctrine of freedom and unity. Our past has been one based in natural resource use that has left a legacy that is visible in our landscape and continues to influence the character of our community. While we are indebted to our past, the Town's recent history has been one of transition. The changes that have affected our town mirror those influencing our region and much of the state.

The local economy is no longer heavily reliant on manufacturing or railroads, yet it remains based on natural resources. Today, outdoor recreation and an enviable quality of life in a forested, mountainous environment are more important. The town has transformed itself from a timber and rail town into a seasonal vacation destination. This transformation has not been without costs to tranquility, to the landscape and to the insular nature of the community. Brighton has managed, however, to retain many of the best elements of its past and merge them with a modern economy driven by tourism, technology, accessibility, and a respect for its natural and social heritage.

The Brighton Town Plan, a living, working document, is intended to function as a reference tool. The plan results from information gathered in the community through discussions, at public meetings, fact-finding sessions, and from the views of residents serving on locally elected bodies. The Planning Commission meets weekly at 4:00, and the Selectboard meets regularly every two weeks. These meetings are open to the public. The boards set their regular meeting schedule for the year right after Town Meeting in March.

The town plan presents existing conditions and lays out goals and objectives for Brighton's future development. These goals and objectives should be used by local leaders, residents, and landowners as a guide for making land use decisions. As circumstances change, so will the needs and opportunities of the community. Therefore, the plan should be reviewed on a regular basis.

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Brighton is a small, picturesque town in rural Essex County, Vermont. Within Brighton, the unincorporated village of Island Pond serves the community and economic center, as it has throughout Brighton's history. Situated halfway between Portland, Maine and Montreal, Quebec, Brighton was once a thriving railroad town. The village of Island Pond is situated along the shores of the similarly named 600-acre lake with a 22-acre island. It is one of the few villages in Vermont with a commercial downtown adjacent to a lakeshore. From the south side of the lake the village and lake are set against Bluff and Dolloff Mountains. From the downtown there is a postcard view across the lake of the Seneca Mountain Range and other mountains. The town lies approximately sixteen miles south of the Canadian border and 23 miles southeast of the City of Newport, Vermont. Surrounding Brighton are towns and unorganized towns of similar shape and size: Morgan, Warren Gore, and Avery's Gore to the north, Lewis and Ferdinand to the east, Newark to the south, and Westmore and Charleston to the west.

## HISTORY

While town plans are focused on the future, a reflection and consideration of the past can be crucial to a town's sense of identity. The history of Brighton is a rich one, and offers the town many opportunities to establish strong and lasting connections between local and outside interests.

Few settlers came to the northern Essex County area until after the Revolutionary War had been fought and won, coming slowly at first. The first settlers arrived from Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, beginning in the 1780s. Colonel Joseph Nightingale and sixty-five others purchased the township formerly named Gilead in 1781. The group chose the unusual name, Random, for the township owing its coinage to the site's original purchase as a random land tract from the state of Vermont. The residents later renamed the largest lake in the area, originally named Knowlton Lake, to Island Pond (from the Abenaki word *Menanbawk* which literally translates to island pond) which also became the name of the village. In 1832, the town residents changed the name Random to its current name of Brighton. In March of the same year, Brighton was formally organized.

The town grew slowly over the first half of the 19th Century, most likely attributable to the relative isolation of the township in a rugged, and often harsh, environment. Travel was difficult, often limited to sleds and snowshoes through the long winter season. Early water supplies flowed from springs atop Bluff Mountain, and were distributed through town by its own pressure. The town's first post office did not appear until 1849, providing further evidence of Brighton's remote character and slow growth. In 1850, the town had 193 residents, but just a few years later Brighton experienced its first large growth period. The Atlantic & St. Lawrence Railroad began traveling through Brighton in 1853, and the town thrived as the midway point between Montreal and Portland, Maine. Portland was attractive to Canadian interests because it was an ice free port which allowed for efficient export of goods and merchandise to Europe. In 1853, a U.S. Customs Office also opened in Island Pond luring new residents to Brighton from the ranks of railroad crews and their families. During this time, the town's population grew ten-fold. The region's timber industry also contributed to the growth of the town as the railroad proved convenient for lumber transport. Many lumber

mills, powered by water, were erected in Brighton. When much of the land was cleared of timber, farms appeared, rounding out Brighton's rural landscape. The railroad station built in 1903 housed the U.S. Customs office and accommodated visiting railroad crews in a bunk area. There was also a lock-up for customs violators. The U.S. Customs office closed its doors in Island Pond in 1973 moving its remaining operations to the town of Norton, sixteen miles to the north.

One cannot overestimate the significance of the railroad to the history, development and character of Brighton. At the peak of operations in World War I, many crucial supplies moved through the town destined for Europe. Many troop trains ran through Island Pond, especially in the final years of the war. These trains transported Canadian wounded soldiers back to their homeland. Later the war shipping gave way to the transport of items such as hay, milk, pulp, coal, wheat, and lumber. In the 1940s, the railroad again played a role in the transport of goods for the next war effort, although on a smaller scale. Today, fewer trains pass through Brighton, but they still carry Canadian wood pulp, supplies for the paper industry, and container cars in transit. The railroad station was renovated in recent years and now houses a bank, office space, and the Island Pond Historical Society and Museum. The station's grandeur has survived, and its existence is a testament to the vitality and uniqueness of Brighton's rail past.

Today, Brighton is a community of over 1,200 residents, with the majority living in the village of Island Pond. Like many Vermont towns, Brighton has experienced its share of setbacks —such as the closure in 2000 of an Ethan Allen manufacturing facility, a major employer in the community. The town also faces the problems of most small towns, such as maintaining and providing expensive municipal infrastructure and services. Brighton has, however, accomplished many important projects in recent years – the renovation of the historic train depot, a library renovation, a new pedestrian bridge and community welcome center, a new park pavilion, as well as several infrastructure projects. The Town Hall “Opera Block” is presently undergoing a \$600,000 restoration project that will restore lost architectural features of the 1889 structure. Other re-vitalization projects, including a lakeshore walking path in the park, are in the planning stages. Brighton residents continue to participate in a community visioning process, with committees working on ways to address problems and explore new opportunities for the community. Identifying and taking advantage of opportunities and meeting important local needs and desires make this town plan an important guide for the future.

## **SECTION I: VISION & PURPOSE**

Brighton is a small rural town blessed with striking natural beauty and an abundance of natural resources that have benefited residents and attracted visitors for many years. The future success of Brighton will depend upon an active citizenry and the wise use and preservation of our clear rivers, lakes, forests, mountains and unspoiled scenic resources.

In accordance with 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117, section 4302, the town of Brighton is charged with engaging in a planning process that furthers the following general goals:

1. To establish a coordinated and comprehensive planning process that will guide Brighton's future decisions
2. To encourage citizen participation in the planning process to ensure that decisions are made at the most local level possible by those affected
3. To encourage Brighton residents to consider the use of resources and the consequences of growth and development in the community and the region.
4. To develop and implement the plan's goals through a creative and cooperative process.

## SECTION II: LAND USE & ZONING DISTRICTS

Brighton and the village of Island Pond enjoy a rich diversity of natural resources. In addition to its well-known lake and island, Brighton is home to McConnell, Spectacle, and Beecher Ponds, and other smaller ponds. The majority of the landscape is covered by boreal forests and wetlands providing an amazing diversity of wildlife and vegetation. Mountain ranges surround Island Pond and the nearby Nulhegan Basin. Besides 600-acre Island Pond Lake, numerous smaller lakes and ponds are scattered around the town. Island Pond is the headwaters for the Clyde River. Brighton State Park and its extensive trail system provide opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy camping, sightseeing, hiking, swimming, boating, cycling, and cross country skiing. Over one hundred miles of snowmobile trails, part of the VAST network, blanket the town and region. There is also a budding ATV trail system in town. The Town borders on the most isolated part of Vermont, and for many, Island Pond is the gateway to the northern forest. Homes and historic buildings set within this wonderful landscape provide Brighton with a beautiful, unique, rural character that must be preserved.

The second largest land use in Brighton is agricultural and open land, comprising approximately 14% of the total (4,900 acres). Open water covers approximately 700 acres, or 2% of the total. Developed land (the built environment) also accounts for 2% of the total acreage in Brighton. The greatest concentration of development is in Island Pond at the northern end of the lake. The remaining land consists of scattered development amidst lakes and ponds, railways, and roads.

Various maps are produced for this plan. One map identifies resources and resource constraints for development; another is a land use cover map that depicts existing land uses in the town. Maps were developed by the Northeastern Vermont Development Association as part of the planning process. NVDA was able to interpret land usage from 1999 orthophotography and 2003 agricultural aerial photography. From the orthophotography, one can clearly see that the majority of land in Brighton is forested. The town of Brighton contains approximately 35,000 acres of land. Approximately 29,000 acres, or 82%, are forested. This predominance of forested land use is similar to other towns in Essex County. Local forests are important for outdoor recreation, commercial timber harvesting, woodlots, hunting, and maple sugaring. Brighton residents place great value in the large amount of open land available to the community as tourism and outdoor recreation are important to the local economy.

### Zoning Districts:

The Town of Brighton Zoning Map shows a division of the town into land use districts. Prospective uses are largely a continuation of present uses with the exception of the industrial district, which may require land acquisition and investment in infrastructure in order to create an industrial park.

The zoning map officially entitled "Brighton Zoning Map" is part of the town's official zoning bylaw.

V – Village	RL — Rural Lands
NR - Neighborhood Residential	CL – Conservation Lands
L – Lake	SO – Shoreland Overlay
RR - Rural Residential	
I – Industrial	

- **Village** is a mixed use district in a traditional downtown environment that is served by municipal water and sewer services. The area is characterized by pedestrian traffic, commercial and civic uses, and apartments. The plan supports the enlargement of the Village zone west on the south side of Railroad Street as far as Meadow Street.
- The **Neighborhood Residential** zone surrounds the Village District and is sewed by municipal water and/or sewer services. Its predominant use is single unit dwellings.
- The **Lake** District is a quiet residential zone that is served by onsite water and/or sewer. The primary objective of this district is to maintain water quality and scenic values.
- **Rural Residential** is a low density residential district within close proximity of public roads and electrical service, which is served by onsite water and sewer. Other typical uses in the area include farming, forestry, and municipal service facilities.
- The **Industrial** district is characterized by manufacturing, warehousing, and freight services. The industrial areas on Meadow and Railroad Streets have a mixture of low-density residential and light industrial uses that have ready access to the state highway system, and are served by town water and sewer system. The Industrial area near the airport off State Route 105 east of town is not served by town water and sewer.
- The **Rural Lands** district is characterized by forestry and agriculture, as well as camps and scattered homes, which rely on onsite water and wastewater disposal. There are limited roads and electrical infrastructure in this district, and the soils tend to have limited capacity to support onsite wastewater systems. Many areas of this district have significant scenic values that would be lost, if the land were overdeveloped. Development that is not in character with the district should be discouraged.
- The **Conservation Lands** district is intended to conserve natural resources. The district, which is to a large extent in its natural state, is comprised of sensitive water recharge areas and other public lands.
- The **Shoreland Overlay** district is designed to protect all surface water quality and applies to all natural lakes and ponds in the Town of Brighton. A 30-foot vegetative buffer, consisting of grass, shrubs and/or trees, shall be maintained adjacent to the shoreline. Limited access to the water is provided through the buffer, but no applications of fertilizer, pesticides, or nutrients in the buffer zone should be permitted.

## Factors Considered In Developing Land Use Objectives

Based on past experience, research, and legislation, it was realized some years ago that Brighton should adhere to state land use and development laws, such as Act 250 and 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117, the state's planning and zoning statute, and rules governing wetlands, logging, mining and agricultural activities if the health and integrity of the town was to continue. This concern remains true today, with new rules addressing onsite septic systems and storm water runoff. These rules should be followed not only because they are the law of the land, but because they make good environmental and economic sense. The town of Brighton will not compromise on the preservation of its natural resources.

The town relies heavily on tourism, and studies have shown that scenic landscapes, unspoiled views and outdoor experiences in natural areas are a prime reason tourists visit Vermont. According to a study for the Vermont Tourism Department, "Respondents were most likely to describe Vermont as 'scenic,' and cited the mountains

(39%) as the most attractive scenery. “(Vermont Visitor Profiling Research, Economic & Policy Resources and VDTM, Portland Research Group.)

The desired overall land use goal within Brighton therefore is to protect and retain the scenic, recreational and environmental qualities of the area while providing for planned and orderly growth that will improve the town's economic condition without sacrificing those qualities. Because of our tourist-based economy that relies heavily on the unspoiled character of the region, and to protect our quality of life, Brighton land use regulations should continue to prohibit development above 40 feet, including on ridgelines.

### Land Use Objectives:

1. Maintain Island Pond village as the focal point within the town and local region for the provision of services and economic development thus maintaining the town's primarily rural character.
2. Support the development of an Industrial Park or area for manufacturing in the Industrial zone, and the land acquisition and infrastructure necessary.
3. Promote and utilize existing public lands and facilities in a manner that benefits the community, and without jeopardizing the rural, unspoiled character and traditional historic viewshed.
4. Permit development that maintains Brighton's historic settlement pattern of a compact village and urban center surrounded by rural countryside.
5. Make public investments in infrastructure and services that reinforce the general character and growth patterns of the town.
6. Identify, protect and preserve important natural and historic features in Brighton's landscape including significant natural areas, fragile areas, water resources, scenic roads and views, and important historic structures or sites.
7. Promote the wise, sustainable, and efficient use of Brighton's natural resources — forest, agricultural, and earth resources.
8. Prohibit development above 40 feet.
9. Acquire land and/or development rights to further the above objectives.

## SECTION III: HOUSING & DEMOGRAPHICS

The housing data used for this section is based on U.S. Census data for the year 2010, and was obtained from multiple sources. Table H-1 below, indicates that there were 947 total housing units in Brighton in 2010, with most of these located in the village of Island Pond. Of the 947 units 384 (40%) were owner occupied and 170 (18%) were renter occupied. The remaining 393 units were vacant, but 326 of these were seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Nearly 74% of the housing units in Brighton are single-unit dwellings. Seven (7%) percent of the housing units are two unit dwellings and 14% are units with three or more dwellings. Five (5%) of the units are mobile homes.

Table H-1 Brighton Housing Data

		Island Pond	Brighton	Essex County
Total Population	2010	821	1222	6306
Total Households	2010	377	554	2818
Avg Household Size	2010	2.18	2.21	2.23
Total Families	2010	221	343	1814
Avg Family Size	2010	2.73	2.70	2.70
Total Housing Units	2010	539	947	5019
...Owner Occupied		223	384	2260
...Renter Occupied		154	170	558
...Vacant		162	393	2201
.....Season, recreation		111	326	1928
.....for rent		12	16	64
.....for sale only		15	17	53
<u>Housing by units in structure</u>				
..all housing units		541	873	4906
...in buildings with 1 unit		357	645	4062
...with 2 units		58	61	186
...with 3 or more units		120	120	182
...mobile homes		6	47	466
...boats, RV's, vans and other		0	0	10

Sources: [www.housing\\_data.org](http://www.housing_data.org)

### **PUBLIC HOUSING**

Brighton has a small number of private and non-profit providers of low-income housing primarily in the village of Island Pond.

Hillside Acres contains 12 deep-subsidy housing units. Sunrise Manor has 22 deep subsidy units designated for the elderly and disabled, along with RM properties which has 6 units and The Village House has 4 units. Gilman Housing Trust operates five sites in Island Pond with a total of 14 units, of which three meet ADA accessibility standards.

## Affordability

The definition of affordable housing as stated by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) states: “Housing is affordable when households with incomes below an area’s median income pay no more than 30% of their income on housing. Housing costs for renters are rent and utilities. Housing costs for homeowners are principal on mortgage payments, interest, property taxes, and insurance.” Table H-2 below presents data on housing affordability for Brighton and Island Pond and offers comparisons with Essex County and Vermont.

**Table H-2: Housing Affordability**

	Brighton	Island Pond	Essex	Vermont
Median Household Income,	27,321	19,063	37,679	53,422
Median Family Income	49,688	60,714	45,500	66,340
Median Adj Gross income per family	28,856	n/a	36,282	57,665
Avg adj. Gross Income per person	23,864	n/a	30,887	39,430
Median Housing Unit Value	126,800	103,000	124,300	208,400
Median Monthly Ownership Costs	664	622	679	1,131
with mortgage	1016	986	978	1467
without mortgage	452	419	403	580
as percent of household income	19.3%	19.2%	20.6%	22.9%
Median Gross Rent	425	405	629	843
as percent of household income	35.5%	36.2	37 %	30.9%
Owner-occupied housing units	380	231	2385	183,162
at or above 30% of household income	23.0%	17.6%	27.6%	32.4%
at or above 50% of household income	9.9%	7.7%	10.5%	11.6%

Sources: U.S Census Bureau-Housing data

Based on the data presented in Table H-2, incomes in Brighton are lower than the average for Essex County and significantly less than the average for Vermont. Similarly, average housing values, ownership costs, and rents are lower in Brighton than averages for the county and state. Home ownership costs and rents as a percentage of household income have risen since 1999. In a survey, a majority of respondents believe that the town needs more affordable housing and more elderly housing. The town should support the creation of more affordable and elderly housing in the community. Encouraging developers to build a certain percentage of affordable housing units is one way to do this. Allowing greater densities in some zoning districts is another opportunity, as is permitting accessory dwelling units, as defined in subdivision 4412(1)(E) of this title, which provide affordable housing.

## Projected Housing Needs & Demographics

To determine Brighton's future housing needs, it is necessary to examine population trends in the town. Table H-3 below shows basic population information for Brighton, Island Pond and Essex County. More detailed information can be obtained at Vermont Indicators Online (source listed below).

Table H-3 Brighton Population

	Island Pond	Brighton	Essex
Est. 5yr Population 2006-2010	647	1034	6359
Total Population, 2010	821	1222	6306
...under 18 yrs.of age	161	252	1197
...age 65 and over	191	275	1220
...female	410	610	3118
...male	411	612	3188
Population Change, 2010	-28	-38	-153
% Population Change	-3.29%	-3.02%	-2.36%
Median Age, 2010	50.6	49.3	45.8

Source: Censtats.census.gov

Based on Table H-3, the most notable fact is that Brighton's population dropped over the past decade while other towns in the county experienced slight population gains, or remained relatively constant. Other factors that may have contributed are the closing of the Ethan Allen facility (a major employer) in 2001 and possibly a shift in the buyers of housing units (more seasonal purchases vs. year-round residents)

In 2010, the baby boom population was aged 50 to 65 years. The median age of Brighton at 49.3 years, is higher than the average for Essex County perhaps because Brighton has more senior housing facilities than other towns in the county. Again, the town survey conducted for this plan indicated that a majority of respondents believe that more elderly housing is needed in Brighton.

## Housing Supply

Brighton has a large percentage of older structures in its housing stock. This situation is similar to many towns in the region and Vermont. At the time of the 2010 census, 373 of 686 home (54%) were built in 1939 or earlier. Older homes tend to be less efficient from an energy usage standpoint and are more susceptible to fire. Fifty five homes (.08%) were built in Brighton during the decade 2000-2010. It is likely all of these were single family dwellings.

## Housing Objectives:

1. Support state and local efforts to improve and/or provide safe and affordable housing for Brighton residents.
2. Encourage developers to provide housing in a range of options for all Brighton residents, particularly for residents of low and moderate income.
3. Provide that multi-unit and multi-family housing units are constructed in or near the existing village center where municipal services are currently available.
4. Encourage and support energy-efficiency programs.

## SECTION IV: SERVICES, UTILITIES & FACILITIES

Goals for the Town of Brighton include planning for, financing, and providing an efficient system of public facilities and services to meet current and future needs. The rate of growth in the town should not exceed the ability of Brighton officials and residents to provide services. Future construction or expansion of infrastructure and services will reinforce the general character and planned growth pattern of the area.

### Water Supply

The Brighton Water Department was chartered in 1904, and the 1987 state legislature reviewed and approved the charter that set up the town's water service. Monthly public meetings are presided over by the elected Water Commissioners, who are responsible to the voters (ratepayers). Equipment available to both the Water and Sewer departments includes:

1999 12ft. Flatbed trailer  
1999 Synergy International Generator 60JDA  
1997 Ford F250 Pickup  
2011 Chevrolet Pickup

As surrounding towns sometimes struggle with access to high quality water, adequate service, and affordable rates, Brighton enjoys an ample supply of fresh water at reasonable rates. For this to continue, Brighton officials should work to ensure that water supplies are protected, infrastructure is maintained and upgraded, all with an eye on maintaining affordability. Brighton's water quality sample results meet state standards. The town also receives free technical assistance from the Vermont Rural Water Association.

Brighton's municipal water system relies on two surface water supplies to meet domestic and fire protection needs. According to a 2005 water system study, there are 650 water system connections (pipes serving buildings) supplying businesses and residences. The system is operated by the Brighton Water Commission. There are two reservoirs in town located in the northern and southern ends of town. The North reservoir holds 250,000 gallons of water, whereas the South one holds 333,000 gallons. These reservoirs serve most of the village of Island Pond and the houses around the lake. Each reservoir has a state approved Wellhead Protection Plan. The cost of water service in 2012 per individual unit is \$364 per year. Residents beyond the service area of the municipal water system rely on individual on-site wells for water supplies. All water systems (as of July 1, 2007) are regulated by the State of Vermont under the *Wastewater System and Potable Supply Rule*.

Notable recent and ongoing water projects include:

- Water & Sewer System Study – Forcier Aldrich & Associates, Inc. in March 2005
- One mile water line replacement for the North reservoir
- Replacement of inadequate water lines on Ripple Cove, Lakeshore Drive, Lake Street, East Brighton Road, Island View, and the Spectacle Pond area

- Water lines around the lake were looped to aid in fire protection. This included Lake and Back Streets.
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## Water Supply Objectives:

1. Monitor, maintain, and upgrade when necessary the town's existing community water supply system infrastructure.
2. Consider purchasing land or expanding existing sites to create additional reservoir capacity.
3. Support state and local water protection and conservation efforts to ensure clean and adequate water supplies.
4. Expansions of the municipal water system infrastructure should prioritize service to the Village, Neighborhood Residential, and Lake Districts.
5. Extend the water system to the area near the former Ethan Allen facility if that site is re-developed (a connection is available to do this).
6. Discourage development in areas that threaten surface water supplies, groundwater recharge areas, or other areas where water supplies are likely to be adversely impacted.
7. Install dry hydrants in remote rural areas to sufficiently meet local fire protection needs, and replace or remove inadequate hydrants.
8. Develop and adopt a capital program to address municipal water supply and system needs.
9. Continue to review the 2005 Sewer & Water System Study for future infrastructure planning (Forcier Alrich & Associates, Inc.).
10. Update Brighton's municipal water ordinance.

## Wastewater / Sewer

The State of Vermont's Department of Environmental Conservation regulates all public sewer systems, as well as all public and private on-site septic systems.

In Brighton, municipal wastewater is treated by an aerated lagoon system installed circa 1976. The #1 Lagoon was last pumped in 1992. There has been some discussion about installing small transfer pumps that would reduce the sludge volume in smaller amounts on a more regular basis. The municipal sewer system utilizes conventional gravity sewers, pump stations, and force mains to convey sewage to the wastewater treatment facility located on Meadow Street. The sewer system does not extend completely around Island Pond, with properties not connected utilizing septic tanks and soil disposal systems. The municipal system is currently operated through a contract with Piscataqua Environmental Services. The maximum treatment capacity of the Brighton wastewater treatment system is 150,000 gallons daily. The average annual flow is 77,500 gallons per day. The system currently operates at approximately 52% of capacity, leaving 48% capacity available for new customers. The municipal sewer system collects sewage from 415 customers in the village. The 2012 per annum cost for sewer service was \$312 per individual unit.

Future wastewater needs include a new grinder pump at the wastewater treatment plant, to make the process more efficient and less hazardous. Because of the low dwelling density around the lake, extending the municipal sewer system entirely around the lake was found to be extremely costly and not feasible. A recommendation from the 2005 Sewer & Water System Study was to develop clusters

of small decentralized wastewater management systems. This is important for protecting the water quality of the lake. All road and street improvements should be coordinated with sewer and water improvements as much as possible.

The majority of Brighton residents rely on on-site systems for the disposal of wastewater. As of July 1, 2007, all municipal and on-site systems are regulated by the State of Vermont's Wastewater System and Potable Supply Rule.

### Wastewater / Sewer Objectives:

1. Monitor, maintain, and upgrade Brighton's existing municipal wastewater system to meet current and anticipated future development needs. Priority items include:
  - a. Replace the manhole for Hillside Acres.
  - b. Upgrade the aeration system at the wastewater treatment plant.
  - c. Implement the recommended sewer system improvements for Area #6 (Cottage Rd. & Blueberry Lane) from the 2005 Sewer Study.
2. Pursue in future years, the development of off-site community subsurface disposal systems for Areas #2 through #5 in accordance with the recommendations of the 2005 Sewer Study.
3. Consider acquiring land for on-site septic systems in the area of Spectacle Pond.
4. Extension of the municipal wastewater system should prioritize the Village, Neighborhood Residential, and Lake Districts.
5. Review local wastewater system operation procedures and contracting policies to maintain affordability for wastewater users.
6. Update the town's wastewater ordinance.
7. Develop and adopt a capital program to address wastewater system needs.

## Town Garage

The Town's road equipment is housed in the town garage on Railroad Street. Major highway equipment includes:

1993 John Deere Grader  
2006 International 7500 dump truck  
2007 Chevy Silverado 4WD P/U  
2007 Quality Model B trailer  
2008 Kubota Tractor  
2008 John Deere Backhoe  
2011 John Deere Bucket loader

The town garage was constructed near the state highway garage where supplies such as sand, gravel, etc., can more easily serve town and state needs. The town garage is also the location of the recycling center. The old town garage on Dale Avenue is used for storage of town property. A new storage building was constructed at the Dale Avenue site as well.

## Solid Waste Disposal & Recycling

Brighton is a member of the Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District (NEKWMD). The NEKWMD Solid Waste Management Plan covers Brighton and meets the state requirement for managing solid waste disposal. Curbside trash pickup for household wastes is available to Brighton residents. This service is currently available from two private haulers - Myers Container and Austin's Rubbish Service. Solid wastes are disposed at the Coventry landfill. Brighton provides five (5) bulky waste days each summer for large disposable and selected items. The Brighton recycling facility located at the town garage is open two days per week. These activities greatly reduce dumping fees for citizens and aid in lengthening the life of the landfill.

The state in 2012 passed a new law phasing in mandatory recycling and restrictions on organics going into the landfill over the coming years. There may be a need to stagger the facility's hours of operation to allow more residents to participate in recycling.

Re-use and recycling are important methods of waste reduction and conservation. Re-use consists of the development of second, third, or more uses of a primary (first time) product. Recycling requires the collection and reproduction of products from the initial resources. These methods save on energy consumption, and reduce the flow of solid waste. Brighton officials will continue to offer and promote recycling services within the community.

## Fire Department

The Brighton Volunteer Fire Department is run by a very dedicated group of volunteers numbering approximately 17. In recent years, however, the fire department has been asked to provide service to many adjoining towns, and so a need for a greater number of volunteers exists, especially during daytime working hours. Because many small towns in the area are suffering from a lack of volunteers and high costs, a regional fire and rescue service could be considered in the future. Potential benefits may include cost sharing equity, and a larger pool of volunteers or an opportunity to hire fulltime emergency personnel.

In November 2008 the voters approved a 15-year bond to add a 4,000 square foot addition to the existing fire station on Railroad Street. Through its general fund, Brighton budgets money to maintain the fire station building and the department's six vehicles:

1989 E-One 1210 foot ladder truck  
1990 Grumman Ford Pumper  
1972 Ford Pumper  
1996 Freightliner 1800 tanker/pumper  
1992 E-One Rescue/pumper  
1985 Chevrolet 3/4T Pickup carrying a Hale Pump  
Arctic Cat Snowmobile  
Polaris All-Terrain Vehicle  
Orion Rescue Sled

A cooperative agreement between the Fire and Water Departments exists for the care of the 95 hydrants located within the town.

Brighton is a member of Local Emergency Planning Commission District 10 ([www.lepc10.org](http://www.lepc10.org)). Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPC's) were established by the Federal Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act. Rapid Response Plans for each LEPC member can be found on the LEPC website. The LEPC planning efforts have been refocused in recent years to include planning for a variety of disasters that may affect the community. Floods, hazardous material spills, wildfires, natural disasters, and even terrorism all constitute real challenges facing community leaders today.

## Rescue Department

Brighton contracts with Lyndon Rescue, Inc., from Lyndonville for emergency ambulance service. The contract provides for round-the-clock service, and costs the taxpayers \$65,000 a year. The service is particularly important given the relatively large population size and the high number of elderly residents in the area.

## Fire & Rescue Objectives:

1. Continue to provide for the operation and maintenance of a fire department in the town
2. Continue to provide for the operation and maintenance of a rescue department in Brighton.
3. Consider investigating the formation of a regional fire and/or rescue service.
4. Promote local participation in LEPC 10 initiatives.

## Police Protection

Police services are provided by a hired Police Chief, who appoints deputies as needed. All police officers are part-time. A vote passed in the March 2008 election made the position of Constable an appointed one effective March 2009. Brighton also receives limited coverage from the Essex County Sheriff's Department through annual county tax payments. The Vermont State Police, dispatched from Derby, also provide limited coverage to the town.

## Municipal Land & Buildings

The town of Brighton owns two municipal forests totaling approximately 200 acres. Main goals of the management plans for these lots are recreational use and sustainable production. Hiking trails and picnic areas have been considered to make these lands more usable to the townspeople and their guests. The Bluff Mountain Trail is located in the Mountain Street Town Forest and offers excellent recreational opportunities a short distance from downtown, including the Bluff Mountain Lookout which offers broad views of the surrounding mountains, the pond, and the village below. There are also many publicly owned recreation facilities scattered throughout the town, including the town lakeshore park facilities such as tennis courts, beach and playground areas, volley ball court, basketball court, winter skating rink, and ball fields. A public baseball field on Derby Street has potential to be used in a variety of ways, and has seen significant improvements in recent years, including a new grandstand.

The municipal building houses the Essex County Probate Court, the Brighton Public Library (renovated in 2004), a branch bank, the offices of the Town Clerk, Administrative Assistant, and Listers. The municipal building has an elevator making it accessible for those in need. The building also has a gymnasium that is used for sports, town meetings, talent shows, and other community functions. The building is undergoing an historic renovation project to restore historic architectural features, and insulate it more effectively in the process.

The Town of Brighton also owns the Historic Grand Trunk Railroad Station, a key downtown building that was restored in the early 1990s. The first floor houses a local bank branch, and the offices of the Brighton Police Department. The second floor is used mostly by the Island Pond Historic Society and by a venture capital firm. Other offices are available for rent on the second floor.

The town maintains four small cemeteries located along Pleasant Street.

## **Commercial Utilities**

Fairpoint, Inc. provides landline telephone and internet services to the Brighton area, and they now are offering to provide internet service to anywhere there is a phone line. The Vermont Electric Cooperative supplies electric power and several dealers from other towns provide propane fuel. Comcast provides cable television and internet service to the townspeople, and there are also satellite television customers within Brighton. Great Auk Wireless (GAW) also provides internet services to residents, and is often available in the more remote areas of town.

### **Commercial Utility Objectives:**

1. Help to keep local communications utility rates competitive by attracting multiple providers to the area whenever possible.

## **Telecommunication Facilities**

Cellular telephone service is available most places in town, depending somewhat on what carrier is used. There is currently a privately owned telecommunications tower in Brighton, located on Paradise Mountain Rd. There are also a number of smaller antennae in the town, providing wireless internet service.

Under the Brighton Zoning Bylaw, communications facilities are permitted uses in the Industrial Districts. Communication facilities are subject to conditional use review in the Village, Neighborhood Residential, Rural Residential and Rural Lands Districts. However, this ordinance is superseded at least until 2014 by a provision of state law that gives the Public Service Board jurisdiction over telecommunications facilities.

Because of their visibility, telecommunication towers and related infrastructure require careful consideration. Telecommunication facilities of a certain size are subject to the Act 250 review process; however, it is still possible for towns to regulate the development of projects of a certain size. Brighton residents realize that the need for telecommunication facilities has increased significantly in recent years and expect this need to continue. They also realize that telecommunications technologies are continually evolving and that these facilities are important for communication, economic development, and emergency services.

Should Brighton decide to adopt or revise regulatory instruments to control the development of telecommunication facilities, factors to consider are whether or not public benefit is maximized, aesthetics are negatively impacted, and a decommissioning plan exists.

### **Telecommunications Objectives:**

1. Adopt a local telecommunication ordinance in order to guide the development of telecommunication facilities within the town.

2. Amend zoning bylaws to better address telecommunication facilities (if an ordinance is not acceptable).
3. Ensure that affordable wireless and cellular communications are available to all residents in all areas of the town.

### **Medical Facilities**

The Island Pond Health Center, part of the Northern Counties Health Care system, is located on Maple Street in Island Pond. The Island Pond Health Center is a family practice designed to make health care and health education more readily available to area residents. The center offers complete, coordinated, and individualized health care to people of all ages and provides a one-stop location for many family health care needs, including primary medical care, laboratory tests, and a variety of programs geared toward health maintenance.

The facility was established in 1977. Prior to that, Island Pond was the site of one of the first National Health Service Corps doctors in the country. The health center is unique in the fact that it consists of 3 different sources of healthcare under one roof - a medical office with 2 physicians and a physician assistant, a dental office with 1 dentist and 2 hygienists and a dispensary for medicines for patients.

There have been local efforts to attract a pharmacy business to the community, but these efforts have thus far been unsuccessful. Having a pharmacy in town would greatly benefit the community and the future growth and development of the community.

#### **Medical Facility Objectives:**

1. Ensure that medical and dental services are available for community residents.
2. Assist efforts to attract a pharmacy to the community.

## SECTION V. EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Brighton's elementary and junior high school-age children (grades K-8) receive public education at the Brighton Elementary School located at the lower end of Railroad Street. Brighton Elementary is a member of the Orleans Essex North Supervisory Union. Students in grades 9-12 attend North Country Union High School in Newport. General school information for Brighton Elementary is summarized in the table below.

<b>GENERAL</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>
Total school enrollment	132	108	107	100
Attendance rate	95.15%	95.51%	95.2%	95.5%
Retention rate	0%	0%	0%	1%
Student/teacher ratio	7.82	7.0	6.79	6.15
Eligible Special Education	22%	25%	27%	27%
Home study (# of students)				
Classroom teachers	8.9	8.9	8.5	7.5
Other teachers	10.1	10.1	9.1	7.7
Licensed administrator	1	1	1	1
Administrative support	1	1	1	1
Other staff	8.27	10.27	10.27	10.7
Average teacher salary	\$41,697	\$42,489	\$40,2011	\$40,360

The school enrollment for the 2011-2012 school year was 100 students in grad Pre-K through grade 8. The enrollment has consistently declined over the last five years. The enrollment over the next five years will remain relatively consistent. There will be some fluctuation in the kindergarten numbers during the next two years. There has been discussion at the supervisory union level regarding the decline in student population and the best ways of serving the students in Brighton but no decisions have been made.

Brighton Elementary provides high quality instruction at all grade levels by highly qualified teachers. This includes physical education, music, art, technology, and guidance. Students in grades 4 through 8 have individual computers to use a school and home. Students in the grades K through 3 have access to computers at school. An after school program provides a variety of activities for all ages.

Brighton Elementary provides transportation for all students. Breakfast and lunch are provided. The fourteen acre campus includes an updated playground and baseball field for use by students and the community. The land adjacent to the school is used for ecological studies and would provide room for future expansion.

The **Island Pond Public Library**, located in the Town Hall, partners with the Brighton Elementary School Library and provides services to the residents of and visitors to Island Pond and the neighboring communities including the Unified Towns & Gores, Newark, Charleston, Morgan and Norton.

In 2011 library usage continued to top 12,000 visits and 5,000 computer uses. The library now has 5 computers for public use (3 desktops and 2 laptops) and continues its WiFi (wireless Internet access) service on a 24/7 basis. They subscribe to Vermont On-Line Library (including Heritage Quest), World Book On-Line encyclopedia and Universal Class. These can be accessed on our newly created Web Page, <http://islandpondpubliclibrary.wordpress.com> .

They are having successful Summer Reading Programs every year (this year a record 102 students participated) and continue to provide programming for the young and old. Special services and programs are provided to Early Headstart, Headstart, Homeschooling families, Day Care providers and the handicapped.

The support of Brighton residents, volunteers and donators has helped make the library a successful community facility.

### **Other Education**

Northeast Kingdom Learning Services (NEKLS, [www.neklsvt.org](http://www.neklsvt.org)) provides comprehensive educational programs and services to community members who would like to advance their education or workplace skills. In addition, they serve children and families through an array of support programs. The NEKLS Community Education Center in Island Pond serves both adults and out-of-school youth with Adult Basic Education, GED preparation and testing, and two high school credentialing programs. Basic computer skills training is provided on an on-going basis, and CDL training is offered through periodic classes. Other job-skills training and certification are available as well.

The NEKLS office is in the basement of the Town Hall. Current hours are Monday and Tuesday from 9-5. They are exploring evening hours. They do outreach computer classes, and work with the Area Agency on Aging, Brighton elementary school, as well as running CDL classes and other tutorials.

Northeast Kingdom Community Action (NEKCA, [www.nekca.org](http://www.nekca.org) ), coordinates efforts with NEKLS, and rents adjacent office space in the town hall.

### **Education Goals:**

The goals identified for the Brighton public school system include the following:

1. To enhance parental and community support
2. To create a school climate that embraces positive communication, respect, and discipline
3. To promote a culture of school values and old-fashioned manners
4. To improve test scores while striving to have students exceed grade level expectations

### Education Objectives:

1. Provide for the operation and maintenance of a local elementary school.
2. Work to retain all K-8 students at the Brighton elementary school and transport local children to schools beyond 8<sup>th</sup> grade only as necessary.
3. Consolidation, to promote efficiencies, should only be considered with schools in neighboring communities. The travel distance should not exceed a reasonable distance.
4. Continue to support NEKLS and Department of Labor services in town by providing the space for such programs.
5. Continue to support the Island Pond Public Library, its staff and facility.

## SECTION VI: TRANSPORTATION

Transportation planning is a vital component for planning a community. It has a fundamental impact on land use development, provide for the movement of people and goods within the community, and provide connections between homes, businesses, community facilities, and destinations beyond the municipality. A map describing the existing and planned transportation facilities is available for review as part of this plan in the town clerk's office. As such, the regional focus on the transportation system provides the appropriate vantage point for assessing and directing planning efforts. The Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA) has forwarded a general set of transportation goals and objectives for Northern Vermont municipalities. Town representatives participate in the setting of these goals through the Transportation Advisory Committee.

### Roads and Sidewalks

There are fifteen miles of state highways in Brighton including route 105 (7.9 mi.) crosses the town in an east-west direction, route 114 (6.9 mi.) runs in a north-south direction, and route 111 (0.1 mi.) begins near the Brighton — Morgan town line. Town roads include two Class 1 highways totaling 1.7 miles, three Class 2 highways totaling 6.1 miles, and 19.2 miles of Class 3 highways. Brighton has many scenic areas, and areas and features of interest, and so recently opted to enroll in the Vermont Scenic Byways Program, which promotes travel along historic and cultural routes. Because much of the area is prime moose habitat, drivers should be wary as there are collisions occurring each year.

Brighton taxpayers may face significant expenses related to road rebuilding and resurfacing in the near future. The state has been falling behind on regular maintenance of its existing roads and bridges and faces regular shortfalls in infrastructure funding. This means that it will take longer for projects to receive funding while repair costs continue to rise. At this time, it has been identified that Derby Street is in need of rebuilding and Pleasant and Middle Streets need resurfacing. Railroad Street near the downtown area should be re-built due because of drainage issues during rainstorms that affect nearby homes.

Maintaining unpaved roads takes up approximately fifty percent of road maintenance time for culvert repair, grading, etc. Acceptable minimum construction standards for dirt roads are adhered to. In the case of a proposed subdivision in which roads will be constructed, said roads must meet minimum Class 3 road standards and acceptance to the town road system will be determined in accordance with Vermont Statute. The ability of the town to supply services to residents of improved roads should be taken into consideration when making the choice to accept a road into the town road system. This is because maintaining roads is expensive, and the taxes gained by accepting the road should cover maintenance. Consideration will only be given to the paving of gravel roads once a sufficient density of residences is reached to justify the costs.

There is currently an ample amount of public parking in the village area, although much of the parking in Island Pond village is on-street. There is a parking lot between Sunrise Manor and the

town hall and there is a public parking lot on the other side of Sunrise Manor. A better pedestrian route between these lots and the downtown would help alleviate any parking issues.

The town is responsible for some sidewalk construction and maintenance within the village area. The town has sidewalks on Derby Street, Railroad Street, Main Street, South Street, Mountain Street and Cross Street. An older sidewalk on South Street west of the footbridge is slated for improvements in 2013. However, the sidewalks on upper Mountain Street and on parts of South Street need extensive repair.

Guertin Elkerton & Associates, Inc. (GE&A) conducted a road widening and sidewalk study for Brighton in November 2003. The GE&A study considered shoulder widening along Pleasant St. and Lakeshore Dr., and constructing a sidewalk along Railroad St. to the elementary school. They also looked at the replacement of existing sidewalks on Mountain St. and Cross St. DuBois & King, Inc. (D&K) also conducted a sidewalk study for Brighton in October 2005. The D&K study examined the construction of and/or replacement of sidewalks on Cross and Railroad Streets. Although this project was eventually abandoned, the plans for this sidewalk and for a sidewalk system on Cross Street still exist, and may be useful in the future. A path along the shore of part of the lake was reviewed as a possibility in the study, but local officials now feel that a defined route using primarily existing roads around the lake would be a better option.

At a minimum, existing sidewalks in the town should be maintained and/or improved to accommodate existing pedestrian traffic. By agreement with the state, the town must maintain the Route 105 overpass sidewalk and the adjacent South Street sidewalk to the northern terminus of the pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks. The construction of the pedestrian bridge over the rail lines in 2004 replaced a former historic structure that linked together areas of the village. Winter maintenance of sidewalks, including the bridge ramp, is done with the town's tractor. The town does not plow private roads or sidewalks not owned by the town. In areas where sidewalks are not feasible, road shoulders should be maintained at a width that would accommodate pedestrian traffic.

## **Airport**

The John H. Boylan State Airport lies just over three miles east of town and serves small commercial and private aircraft. This 188-acre site has one grass runway 2,650 feet long and 120 feet wide. Through the Agency of Transportation's Capital Facilities Plan, minor improvements were made involving obstruction removal, runway turf improvements and runway safety area improvements. The airport is listed by the state as a "Specialty" airport, providing services for smaller single engine aircraft, ultralights and gliders. The airport is good for summer and daylight use considering it is not plowed in the winter and has no lights for directing night traffic. It is possible for ski planes to land in winter. The community should investigate the possibility of making greater use of this facility.

**Table E-13  
John H. Boylan State Airport  
Airport System Plan Capital Plan**

<b>John H. Boylan State</b>							
Associated City: Island Pond							
Ownership: VTrans							
Functional Role: Specialty Service							
<b>Project</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>FAA 0%</b>	<b>State 100%</b>	<b>Local 0%</b>	<b>System Plan</b>	<b>Master Plan</b>	<b>Facility/Service Objectives</b>
Install PWBS	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	X		WEA
Install Public Phone	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000	\$0	X		G-C
AvGas Tanks and Pumps	\$60,000	\$0	\$60,000	\$0	X		FUEL
Fencing Around Operations Area	\$37,500	\$0	\$37,500	\$0	X		FEN
Airport Layout Plan Update (2013 & 2023)	\$75,000	\$0	\$75,000	\$0	X		PLN
Runway Safety Area Improvements	\$400,000	\$0	\$50,000	\$0		X	SAF
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$578,500</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$228,500</b>	<b>\$0</b>			
Total System Plan Costs (minus any CIP)	\$178,500	\$0	\$178,500	\$0			
Total CIP Costs	\$400,000	\$0	\$50,000	\$0			

Source: VTrans, Airport personnel, Wilbur Smith Associates

## Railroad

The St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railway (SLR), one of the Northeast Kingdom's busiest lines, operates in Brighton with a terminal in Island Pond Village. The rail line extends from Portland, Maine to St. Rosalie, Quebec where it connects with Canadian National Railway, and then into Montreal for access to the entire Canadian Rail network. In St. Rosalie it also connects with the Canadian American Railroad Company. Approximately four trains per day run between Island Pond and Canada and six per day between Island Pond and Maine. Lumber is the principal freight

## Public And Alternative Transportation

Rural Community Transit (RCT) is a non-profit transportation group that serves a wide range of passengers through a variety of programs, including Brighton residents. As the Medicaid/Reachup broker for Essex and other counties, RCT coordinates medical trips for Medicaid eligible persons. RCT also provides transportation services for area social service agencies. RCT is also a coordinator for the statewide Rideshare and Van Pool programs. RCT relies heavily on a volunteer driver network. A growing demand continues to increase the volunteer driver network, and allows people from outlying areas to access the more heavily populated service centers. Brighton residents support RCT through their tax dollars.

Island Pond Community Services is a non-profit organization that has teamed up with RCT to provide free transportation with its 12 passenger bus to residents of Brighton and local communities. Currently there is weekly transportation from Island Pond to Newport. The trip is open to anyone that needs a ride, the bus will pick people up along the route and bring passengers anywhere they need to go in the Derby/Newport area, picking them up and dropping them off as requested. There are also two monthly trips to Littleton that are currently being run. Passengers meet at Sunrise Manor for departure and the bus will pick passengers up along the route if needed. This transportation gives local residents without transportation or limited transportation the opportunity for them to run errands, get to doctors appointments, pick up prescriptions and any other shopping needs they may

have. Provided there is an increase in demand there is possibility of providing more days of transportation.

### Ancient Roads

In 2007, Brighton received a state grant to conduct research on Ancient Roads within the town. These are primarily roads that would have been laid out by town officials at some point in the past, but were never constructed or became unused over time. Much historical information about the town's development, as seen through the road system development, was obtained. More information might be obtained by more research, but there are no pressing issues directing more resources to this effort at this time.

### Snowmobiles & All-Terrain Vehicles

To many, Island Pond is the snowmobiling capitol of the nation, primarily because of its extensive and well-maintained trail system. The winter economy is largely dependent on snowmobiling, even though at times there is some disruption at the gas pumps. The town allows snowmobiles to come into the village on specific routes and allows on certain roads to be open to snowmobile traveling, per state statute. The town has a Snowmobile Ordinance, as well as an All Terrain Vehicle ordinance. At present the town restricts ATV travel to very limited sections of certain town highways.

### **Transportation Objectives:**

1. Maintain existing town roads and bridges including the rebuilding of Derby Street, the resurfacing of Pleasant and Middle Streets, and the repair and paving of Lakeshore Drive.
2. Establish connections to communities outside of the town via public transportation through agencies such as RCT.
3. Provide Local Roads Training for town road employees.
4. Send a Brighton representative to actively participate in the regional Transportation Advisory Committee meetings, a group which prioritizes local transportation projects for the region which are then forwarded to VTrans for state prioritization and approval.
5. Explore event opportunities for the John H. Boylan State Airport which could enhance economic opportunities in warmer months.
6. Complete the identification and research process of the Ancient Roads as time and funding allows.

## SECTION VII: ENERGY

Brighton lies within the service territory of the Vermont Electric Cooperative (VEC) and is therefore a member of VEC. The electric utility serves over 15,000 customers in northern Vermont. VEC provides electricity to residents and businesses at market rates. As of June 2012, VEC metered electric rates for residential (R-1) service were \$8.48 cents for the first hundred KWH, and 17.118 cents for anything more. Washington Electric Cooperative, by way of comparison had rates of \$.09433 for 0-200kwh, and \$.21063 for over 200 kwh of usage.

In Brighton and the region, existing energy supplies more than meet local demand. However, high energy costs — electric service and fuel oil - create affordability issues for many in the community. This is likely to continue over the short-term and possibly worsen over the foreseeable future. The State of Vermont encourages eligible individuals to sign up for fuel assistance, and it is presumed that many people in the community currently do so.

### Local Renewable Energy Sources

The Planning Commission recognizes the importance of developing locally renewable energy resources and recommends their appropriate development and use within the town. These would include the use of wood heat, solar, biomass (woodchips), small hydro, and small scale wind technologies. The efficient use and conservation of energy is also strongly encouraged.

Clean energy and energy independence are important goals, and the state of Vermont has put forth an aggressive attempt to promote and construct renewable electrical energy sources, in accordance with the state energy plan.

One of the goals of the state plan is to have a certain amount of energy produced by wind, solar, and other renewables. There are incentives provided for developing these resources. The previous version of our town plan, written in 2008, supported renewables generally, including wind, solar, etc. in Brighton. Since that time the 16 Sheffield wind turbines have been erected, and the 25-turbine Lowell Mountain wind project is under construction and expected to be operational by the end of the year. A third large project in the NEK has recently been proposed for the Seneca Mountain range in Brighton, Ferdinand and Newark, overlooking the Nulhegan Basin. The project is in the early stages, with an application for measuring towers to evaluate the wind resource now before the Public Service Board. Such a project would have high visibility from downtown Island Pond, which now looks across the lake right at the Senecas.

Although the previous 2008 town Plan supported various renewables, including wind energy, the construction of wind facilities such as these on the ridgelines of Vermont has turned out to be increasingly controversial for a number of reasons, but mostly due to their immense size, and placement on sensitive ridgelines. At nearly 500 feet, they dwarf even the tallest trees, and dominate the ridgelines, which are for many people a defining characteristic of Vermont. The towers are so tall that the FAA

requires them to be lit at night with blinking red lights. Much of the village, lakeshore homeowners, and properties throughout the region could have their view changed from scenic vista to 500-foot tall towers lit up at night by red blinking lights. The near-150' blades, spinning at 140 mph, kill a certain amount of birds and bats. Turbine construction involves a good deal of environmental destruction in the building of heavy duty roads up high mountains to handle the heavy equipment needed to get the components to the top, construct huge cement foundations and erect the turbines. There are claims, and denials, about health effects, impact on property values, tourism, the environment, and electric rates. After all that, they operate but one-third of the time.

Proponents of large-scale wind feel that the societal need to address the problem of climate change justifies the construction of turbines on ridgelines. Also, they provide local tax dollars, some temporary construction jobs, and some permanent jobs, and they generate clean energy.

The Planning Commission is not equipped with the resources to determine all the facts that are at dispute in the debate over large scale industrial wind development.

Members of the Planning Commission and the Selectboard have spoken with many members of the public, and the Selectboard conducted a thorough survey of voters and taxpayers. The survey showed that a majority of those voting were opposed to industrial wind turbines on the ridgelines of Brighton, by a vote of 544-320. The planning commission is in agreement with this vote.

Brighton's economy is basically a tourism-based economy that is dependent on its reputation as unspoiled mountainous and forested landscape, and we can say without ambiguity that large-scale development that is not in harmony and in character with the scenic and environmental quality of the area is a serious risk to that economy.

We therefore support the resolution of the Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA) and the NEK Regional Planning Commission, to call for a three-year suspension on further development or construction of industrial wind projects, while objective studies are carried out to determine their impacts and real value. The NVDA's Energy Committee, appointed to update the NVDA Regional Plan, has determined that there is more than enough power already being produced in the region, and more electricity would not reduce fossil fuel use for heating our homes and fueling our cars.

The permitting of grid-connected electrical generating facilities is ultimately in the hands of the Public Service Board, using the criteria found in 30 VSA Section 248. The PSB takes into consideration Town Plans such as this, but makes its final decision on its interpretation of the "public good". The Town of Brighton should always seek Intervenor status for Energy projects requiring Vermont Public Service Board review, as these projects may be contentious in nature.

Meanwhile, we can all do our part to avoid wasting the energy that we strive so hard, and at such cost, to produce. Weatherization Programs are available for Brighton residents. These programs can help families reduce energy costs by improving the energy efficiency and comfort of their homes while ensuring their health and safety. For weatherization assistance from the Department for Children and Families Office of Economic Opportunity, call (802) 2412452 or via the web at:

[www.dcf.state.vt.us/OEO/weather.htm](http://www.dcf.state.vt.us/OEO/weather.htm) .

The Northeast Employment and Training Organization, or NETO, ([www.vtneto.org](http://www.vtneto.org)) provides weatherization assistance, residential electric audits, and home energy assistance to qualified applicants. Most people heat their homes with fossil fuels, so energy audits are excellent sources of information on how better control the use of fossil fuel.

Efficiency Vermont ([www.vtenergystarhomes.com](http://www.vtenergystarhomes.com)) provides technical assistance and financial incentives to Vermont households and businesses, to help them reduce their energy costs with energy-efficient equipment and lighting and with energy-efficient approaches to construction and renovation. Efficiency Vermont is funded by an energy efficiency charge on the local electric bill.

This plan recommends that Brighton residents consider personally adopting energy saving practices. These will almost certainly become more important as energy prices rise. Weatherizing homes, purchasing more energy efficient appliances, and making conscious efforts to use less energy will all reduce household energy costs. In addition, energy efficient behaviors (shutting off lights when leaving the room, lowering thermostats at night, etc.) should be taught and used at school, home and in the workplace. In 2004-5, town officials worked with Efficiency Vermont in conducting energy audits for all town buildings. More in-depth audits have since been conducted, especially in the town hall and the train depot. The recommendations from these energy audits have been largely implemented, but there remain some tasks to be completed. The measures taken include adding one foot of insulation in the town hall attic, replacing 25 windows in the third floor of the town hall, insulating around the basement foundation walls, tightening many air leaks. Foundation insulation and tightening of air leaks also done in the Railroad depot.

For informational purposes, site design and building construction also play a large role in increasing efficiency and reducing future energy costs. A southern orientation can provide direct solar energy contributions. Designing buildings with large insulated window areas on the southern side allows passive solar heating in the winter months. These windows will capture sunlight and in turn pay for themselves in energy savings. Similarly, constructing dwellings to allow large roof areas with southern exposure allows the homeowner to retain the opportunity of future solar development. Consideration of the natural surroundings is also important in site design. The location of trees can further reduce energy costs. Trees planted in the proper location can act as buffers to the cold winter winds and provide cooling shade in the summer.

Laying out the land use districts as described in this plan will promote the conservation of energy, by continuing the traditional pattern of concentrating development in the village core and adjacent areas.

#### Energy Objectives:

1. Continue to implement energy audit recommendations for all public buildings.
2. Acquire and make information available to Brighton residents for energy efficiency and conservation measures and opportunities.
3. Investigate the potential for developing small-scale renewable energy resources to meet municipal needs.

## SECTION VIII: NATURAL, SCENIC, AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Brighton is near the geographic center of the three-county Northeast Kingdom region. Geologically, granite and glacial formations have created a stunning and rugged topography, and are also important in shaping the patterns of vegetation. Elevations in Essex County are higher than average for Vermont and the lowlands contain some of the most notable geological features, including the expansive Nulhegan Basin. The area's forests and wetlands support a diverse array of plant and animal species. Brighton and Essex County are considered part of the Great North Woods of Maine, and northern New Hampshire.

### Water Resources

The protection and conservation of local water resources should be a major priority for the Town of Brighton. Protection efforts to maintain quality should include municipal surface water supplies, Island Pond Lake and other area ponds, the Clyde River, and all wellhead areas. Activities such as logging on steep slopes or near the waters' edge, building construction, road and storm water runoff, and excessive vegetation removal have the potential to negatively impact water quality. There must be a basic respect for the integrity of the surface and ground waters within the town. Conservation efforts should be focused on maintaining the long-term availability and wise use of existing water resources.

### Wetlands

Wetlands are important for many reasons. They provide habitat for fish and wildlife, storage for flood and storm waters, erosion control, and have recreational, aesthetic and economic value. There are 27 wetlands areas listed on the National Wetlands Inventory for Brighton which are very apparent on the land use map associated with this plan. Of significant interest are the wetlands along the west inlet stream of Nulhegan Pond - a diverse complex of bogs, soft wood swamps, alder swamps and beaver meadows; the Clyde River wetlands consisting of shrub, black ash and northern white cedar swamps; and the Meehan Hill Swamp and other wetlands surrounding Beecher, Spectacle, and Island Ponds. Most wetlands are on private lands, but the State of Vermont regulates the development around all wetlands.

### Water Resource & Wetland Objectives:

1. Provide for the protection of well-head areas according to the zoning Bylaw.
2. Enforce the Zoning Bylaw for Brighton which designates a Shore Land Overlay District, a 30 ft. vegetated buffer strip with no pesticides, fertilizers, or nutrients applied. *This may need to be amended to 50 ft. with new state legislation pending.*
3. Enforce the limitation of development on steep slopes within the town.

## **Flood Plains**

The town adopted flood plain zoning in 1986. The National Flood Insurance Program makes flood insurance available to those who live in the FEMA-designated flood hazard zones only if the town adopts flood plain zoning. In most cases the enforcement has meant requiring any structure in the flood hazard area to be raised enough to avoid damage by flooding. However, enforcement is expected to get more aggressive due to increasing insurance claims. Also, assistance to towns from this program is now based on how restrictive their regulations are. This may be a good reason to consider adopting regulations that provide the town and property owners with the maximum benefits possible.

## **Earth Resources**

The commercial extraction or removal of topsoil, sand, gravel, rock minerals or other similar earth resources should be regulated by the town zoning bylaw.

## **Forest Resources**

Forest lands are the most prominent and visible feature within Brighton. The forests add greatly to the area's scenic beauty and recreational and economic opportunities. Northern Vermont's forests are typically considered a "transitional" forest type, as the hardwood and conifer stands of the Northeast Kingdom lie between the mixed hardwoods of the south and the true conifer forests of the north. Brighton's forests have played a vital part in the local and regional economy, including timber production, recreation, and hunting. Because timber is a renewable resource, there will likely be growth and development within the timber industry. Therefore, Brighton supports sustainable forestry practices that will protect and sustain its quality of life. Also, the public forests owned by Brighton town should be managed according to a sustainable forestry plan. Island Pond is a gateway community to the Great Northern Forest.

## **Wildlife**

Brighton's sometimes extreme climate requires plants and animals in the area to have special adaptations enabling them to survive long and cold winters. The primarily evergreen landscape provides deep shade and acidic soil for other plants and animals to call home. A relatively small human population and low intensity development have created excellent habitats for a variety of animals and plants, both large and small. As the town strives for economic prosperity and stability, care should be taken to preserve the extensive fish and wildlife resources.

Common wildlife in the area includes moose, black bear, deer, bobcat, and small game species. With state and federal wildlife refuges nearby, Brighton is becoming popular for bird watchers. Loons, spruce grouse, black-backed woodpecker, herons, and other bird species are common in the area. Many plant species (sedges, grasses, shrubs, and wildflowers) located in local swamps, bogs, marshes, ponds, lakes, rivers, streams, or mountains provide habitat for wildlife and add to natural beauty of the area.

## **Scenic Resources**

Brighton stands apart from many other rural towns in New England because of its rugged, natural beauty. Island Pond, a small Vermont village, sits on the shore of a 600-acre lake with a 20-acre

island in the center, all against a backdrop of forested mountains. Bluff Mountain, Dolloff Mountain, the Seneca Mountain range and many other beautiful sites all add to the town's character. These scenic resources provide economic, recreational, and aesthetic benefits for residents and visitors alike.

The Island Pond Plan, October 1989, G.H. Trebor, Black River Design, and Germain Page, a study prepared for the town made the following points:

“Of the 17 largest lakes in Vermont only three have the distinction of having a downtown adjacent to them. The communities are Burlington, Newport, and Island Pond. Island Pond is a member of the small group of communities in Vermont that is blessed with the opportunities and amenities that a “downtown lake” brings. As a result of this unique position in the region and the State, Island Pond is a valued resource well beyond the political boundaries of the Town of Brighton.” (p. CD 12)

Also,

“Scenic Enhancement – During the course of all planning and development activity in Island Pond, the community must be constantly mindful of the scenic quality of the Lake and the hills that surround it. Improvements in the village and development along the shoreline must not adversely impact the visual experience of Island Pond. Scenic protection should be a strong element of any local land use controls.”

The town has a lot invested in taking advantage of the scenic qualities of the area to enhance tourism and provide quality of life for residents. The Town has supported and encouraged the development of the Bluff Mountain Trail, in cooperation with the Northwoods Stewardship Center in neighboring Charleston. The trail has spectacular views of the village, lake, forest and distant mountain ranges. Recently a landowner whose land the trail passes through gave an easement to the town for the trail. Northwoods has a plan to extend the trail north to Middle Mountain and Gore Mountains, which would make Island Pond an important trailhead community. The town has been working with Northwoods on developing a trail up the Senecas on the town-owned 100-acre Mose Wood Lot off of Pleasant Street. Further, the town has a \$78,000 grant to construct a walking path along the lake, with park benches for pedestrians to sit and enjoy the view.

The following list identifies places that community members and guests have identified as their favorite scenic areas. Proposed developments in these areas deserve special attention in the review process. The list includes: Island Pond Lake, the 20-acre island in Island Pond Lake, Back Pond, McConnell Pond, Nulhegan Pond and Spectacle Pond. In addition, the mountains that are visible from Island Pond--Bluff Mountain, Dolloff Mountain, Haystack and Meehan Hills, Paradis Mountain, the Seneca Mountain range—all are lands that the town places special value on for scenic, wildlife and recreational importance. Any development on those mountains should not extend above the tree line.

Other attractions are the Historic Grand Trunk Railroad Station, the Bluff Mountain Trail, village churches, the Clyde River, which is part of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail system. There are also the State Beach on Island Pond, and Brighton State Park. Island Pond's Historic District encompasses a

core downtown area and much of the upper village, and the town should consider taking steps to preserve the character of the area through the zoning bylaw.

#### Objectives For Natural & Scenic Areas:

1. Base land use decisions on preserving Brighton's forest, water, and scenic resources for future generations.
2. Decide land use decisions to potential impacts on ecologically sensitive areas which are land or water resources with unusual or significant flora, fauna, geological, or similar features, and are especially susceptible to human disturbance.
3. The planning commission should maintain a natural and scenic resource survey to identify specific areas in which development should be limited or prohibited.
4. Continue to prohibit development over 40 feet in height, particularly on ridgelines.

#### Island Pond Historic District

In 1979, the Island Pond Historic District was recognized by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. Encompassing thirty historic buildings and sites located along Depot, Main, Railroad (Pherrin), Maple, South, Walnut, Cross, Elm, Middle, North, and Mountain Streets, the district is essentially perched on the hill overlooking the village, but it also includes a number of buildings fronting on Main Street. There are other buildings located within the town that are eligible for inclusion on the register. The buildings within the historic district are currently used by a variety of entities: commercial, government, residential, and religious. A reproduced version of the state historic district map produced in 1977 is attached to this document. The official designation may offer grant assistance for renovations and historical projects and programs. It should be noted that the Island Pond Historic District has a great deal of overlap with the Designated Village Center, a designation that also provides tax credits and other benefits.

Island Pond's historic legacy needs to be carefully considered in future municipal initiatives. Planning for the protection and enjoyment of historical resources can provide the town with another feature to attract outside interest through its preservation and promotion. The town may wish to consider developing a separate historic preservation "mini-plan" or a design control district to be incorporated into the larger municipal plan. Because Brighton has an active and sizable historical society that demonstrates the strong interest in the town's history and traditions, this society is in a good position to lead efforts for future registration/recognition at the state and national level, and in the general creation of the mini-plan itself.

#### Historic Resource Objectives:

1. Explore the development of a historic preservation "mini-plan" to identify, protect, and better capitalize on Brighton's historic resources.
2. Enlist the Island Pond Historical Society to lead historic preservation efforts.
3. Enlist the Chamber of Commerce or the Brighton Community Forum to promote historic preservation in Island Pond.
4. Invite Vermont Historic Preservation staff to educate residents and businesses on how to capitalize on the town's official historic district designation (i.e. through tax credits or otherwise).

## SECTION IX: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Tourism** is Vermont's second largest industry and is certainly an essential part of the Island Pond economy today. Brighton leaders are aware that tourism is an important part of any economic development strategy. Local leaders and business owners would like to see tourism become more of a year round and sustainable industry. The community realizes that there are impacts and limitations to tourism as an economic driver (i.e. seasonality, weather dependence, typically low-wage jobs), but they also realize there are also benefits — primarily, increased dollars flowing into the community, jobs, and little demand on municipal services. Meals receipts generated in Brighton totaled over \$1.04 million for the last 12-month period available. Gross figures from Sales and Use receipts show that in FY2011 just over \$9.3 million was generated in Brighton. This is an increase from the \$8.6 million reported in FY2007. With proper planning, Brighton leaders can make the community even more attractive and hopefully increase tourism business in the community.

From hiking, to boating, to snowmobiling, many visitors are drawn to Brighton each year for the diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities. Brighton has many areas where one can enjoy the outdoors, but the most popular area is beautiful Island Pond, the headwaters of the Clyde River. There is also Brighton State Park, the Bluff Mountain Trail, Lakeside Camping, and a portion of the former Champion Lands, now owned by Plum Creek. The Nulhegan and Clyde Rivers are part of the 740-mile Northern Forest Canoe Trail, a multi-state/nation attraction. For the last several years, the Chamber of Commerce has been putting on the very successful Friday Night Live events in the town park. Together, all of the above resources serve to attract visitors who support the commercial enterprises in Island Pond village.

An earlier survey of local restaurants, lodging establishments and retailers revealed that tourism is already a major contributing factor to the town's economy and character. While part-time employees were a substantial base, full time employment constituted the majority. Seasonal employee fluctuations were minimal. Two-thirds of those surveyed attributed more than fifty percent of their total income to tourism. Results showed that the strongest tourist populations in order are campers, snowmobilers, and hunters. Those surveyed felt that summer, winter and fall were adequately busy while mud season is traditionally slow. Town events such as the Winter Carnival, Fourth of July Parade and Fall Festival were major assets to local businesses. In addition, the high school reunion and the historical convention also contribute annually. Local businesses promote tourism through advertising. Such efforts have ranged from the local newspapers to publications reaching a broader scope such as Vermont Life magazine, VAST, Business for Trails Program, and the Boston Globe.

The area's tourism resources are bountiful. A group of graduate and undergraduate students from the University of Vermont put together an Interpretive Master Plan for Island Pond that suggested the development of "nature-based tourism" to stimulate the town's economy. The report states that "The area's beautiful and undeveloped natural resources are a large attraction to visitors of the Island Pond area." This group study strongly suggested that the Town needs a Welcome Center and laid out a plan for its operation. Their report further points out that:

The Town is located within the southernmost reaches of the boreal forest in an area considered an extension of New Hampshire's White

Mountains. This gives Island Pond a natural environment unique to the rest of Vermont.”

A Johnson State College conference in 2000 on Ecotourism and Regional Sustainability, asserted that:

“The far northern forest area of Vermont is highly regarded as pristine wilderness by numerous stakeholder groups including hikers, birdwatchers and canoers, as well as snowmobilers and hunters.”

Further evidence of the region’s tourist potential is that the National Geographic Society selected the Northeast Kingdom as the location for a pilot geotourism program in 2009. This program was designed to “enhance the NEK as a sustainable tourism destination and act as a tool for education and community development.”

Island Pond and Brighton recreational resources are a great tourist attraction, along with the lake, the state park, the island and our history. It is also the region’s isolated, rugged, unspoiled and undeveloped landscape that provide the “sense of place” for Brighton, the Nulhegan Basin and the towns of the Upper Kingdom. That landscape is our “brand”. The potential for developing economies based on concepts such as “eco-tourism”, “geo-tourism” and “watchable wildlife” is great, but must be promoted.

It is commonly accepted wisdom that a scenic community that protects its environment will attract more visitors, thus bringing in more tourism revenue. Local community visioning sessions have noted the economic importance of recreation and tourism for Brighton. Many people choose to hunt, fish, camp, and snowmobile in Brighton because of the area's natural beauty. By protecting Island Pond's natural and scenic resources today from development out of character with those resources, the town can ensure a sustainable tourist economy in the future.

### **Manufacturing & Industry:**

Although the town’s most available economic resource is tourism, it is very important to develop a diversified economy, rather than relying on one type of economic engine.

For several decades, until 2000, the manufacturing industry that provided jobs for the town and region was Ethan Allen furniture. The plant was sited in Island Pond because Ethan Allen has larger plants in Orleans and in Beecher Falls, and the wood pieces leftover from those operations were made into smaller articles of furniture such as end tables, coat rack, etc at the Island Pond plant. The plant employed 120 people, and when it left town, the impact was very severe economically. One of the fallouts from that was that many of the volunteer ambulance squad members were also employees at the plant, and the company was generous in allowing them to leave work in case of an emergency. When the company left town, many of the squad members had to find work elsewhere, and that work took them too far away to respond.

The former plant sits vacant on the shores of Spectacle Pond. It is currently under private ownership, and had been slated to become a wood pellet manufacturing plant, until plans fell through.

The town has acquired by donation the manufacturing plant on Meadow Street that had been the home of the Island Pond Woodworkers, an employee-owned business that was started up by former employees of the Ethan Allen plant.

The Meadow Street facility is 15,000 square feet and is only about ten years old. It is one of the nicest facilities of its kind in the NEK. The Selectboard has hired a realtor and has the facility on the market.

Like many towns in the NEK, Brighton is at a disadvantage for attracting industry, largely due to the distance to an interstate highway. There are many small towns looking to attract industry in Vermont, but only a few industries starting up. The reality is that a decision to locate an industry in Brighton is mostly beyond our control.

However, the town can do a lot to promote itself by making sure that all town infrastructure is in good condition and that the town is an attractive place to live and work. If the town can attract tourists due to its beauty, character and sense of place, some of those tourists might be people who are in a position to start a business.

The town could also consider an active recruitment effort to attract appropriate industry, but spending scarce funds on such a project, given the chances of success in this very competitive climate, should be carefully considered.

## **Recreation Resources**

A major recreation resource in Brighton includes Brighton State Park, located on Spectacle Pond, which has 5 cabins, 61 tent/trailer sites, 23 lean-tos, and restroom/shower facilities. Facilities include hiking trails, a beach, a nature museum, bath house, playground and concession stand. A larger beach and bath house are located on Island Pond. The beach has a great view of Island Pond village against Dolloff and Bluff Mountains.

Lakeside Camping is a privately owned operation situated on Island Pond. The campground features majestic pines, over 1,500 feet of sandy beach, lake views, trout fishing, and nesting loons. There are 200 campsites with full hookups, playgrounds, a game room, convenience store, boat rentals and boat cruises available.

The former Champion Lands cover a vast area extending well beyond Brighton's borders. The state-owned West Mountain Wildlife Management Area, the federal Silvio O. Conte National Wildlife Refuge – Nulhegan Basin Division, and the public access easements on Plum Creek land provide thousands of acres of protected area for recreation. These lands are prime wildlife habitat and contain some of Vermont's largest deer wintering areas and offer excellent opportunities for outdoor exploration.

The Northern Forest Canoe Trail, a relatively new multi-state water trail is a scenic recreation resource that passes through Brighton. There may be future opportunities for the community to capitalize on this resource.

Brighton, the unofficial snowmobile capital of Vermont has over one hundred miles of trails and are part of the VAST network of trails throughout Vermont. It is no surprise that snowmobiles are permitted on designated roads within the town, and it is not uncommon to see snow machines traveling into Island Pond to take advantage of the goods, services, and travel amenities provided there. To a much lesser degree, ATV travel is permitted on some Brighton roads as well. All-terrain vehicle travelers have expressed a desire for a better trail network in the town, but unlike snowmobiles, ATV's are considered environmentally destructive by many.

On any warm day beyond snow season, one will likely see bicyclists passing through Brighton. Island Pond is in fact, a hub for multiple cycling routes in the region identified on Cycling in the Kingdom, a map developed in part by NVDA, the regional planning commission. These maps can be found at [www.nvda.net](http://www.nvda.net) in the transportation section. There has also been some interest in the community to explore the development of an off road trail network similar to the Kingdom Trails network in Burke. Such a network could potentially help to increase local tourism in the warmer months.

Bicycle touring, fishing and foliage viewing are three activities that could be further promoted and developed with relative ease.

Lakeside Park is a five-acre public park on the lakeshore in Island Pond village. The park contains a basketball court, tennis courts, skating rink, public beach area, pavilion, playground, and soon a walking path. The Town contracted a park study in 2010, the aim of which was to develop ideas to better use the park to integrate the lake with the downtown. Since then a largely volunteer effort constructed the beautiful pavilion in the Cross Street section of the park.

## Village Center Designation

Within Brighton, the Island Pond Village Center has received an official Village Center Designation from the State of Vermont. This designation, as provided for in 24 V.S.A. Ch.76A, was created by the legislature to recognize and encourage local efforts to revitalize Vermont's traditional village centers. Revitalization is an ongoing process to improve a community's vitality and livability, but it is only one tool with a focus is on supporting commercial activity in the center of Vermont's villages. Current benefits include:

- ✓ 10% Tax Credit for the Substantial Rehabilitation of Certified Historic Buildings
- ✓ 25% Tax Credit for making Facade Improvements
- ✓ 50% Tax Credit for making Code Improvements
- ✓ Designated village centers will be given priority consideration for all grants administered through the State's Municipal Planning Grant Program and for HUD funding, including the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG).
- ✓ Designated village centers will be given consideration and priority by the State Building Department when leasing or constructing buildings, in consultation with the community.

- ✓ A special assessment district in a designated village may use funds for operating costs in addition to capital expenses.

## Business Patterns

According to recent Essex County business data, there were 33 businesses in Brighton. The majority of businesses were small. Most employed nine people or fewer. There were no businesses employing more than 49 people in Brighton. Tables E-1 and E-2 on the following pages provides basic business and economic information:

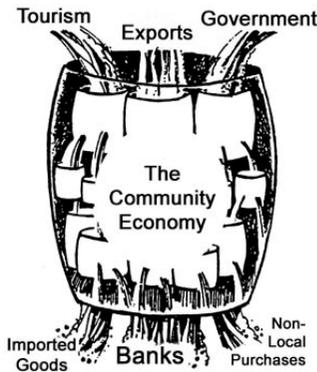
**Table E-1: Brighton Business Patterns**

<b>INDUSTRY</b>	<b>#Employees by size</b>				
	<b>Total Establishments</b>	<b>1-4</b>	<b>5-9</b>	<b>10-19</b>	<b>20-49</b>
<b><i>Forestry, Fishing, Hunting and Agriculture</i></b>	1	0	1	0	0
<b><i>Mining, quarrying, oil and gas extraction</i></b>	1	1	0	0	0
<b><i>Construction</i></b>	4	4	0	0	0
<b><i>Wholesale Trade</i></b>	1	0	1	0	0
<b><i>Transportation and Warehousing</i></b>	3	3	0	0	0
<b><i>Finance and Insurance</i></b>	3	3	0	0	0
<b><i>Real Estate and Rental and Leasing</i></b>	1	1	0	0	0
<b><i>Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services</i></b>	2	1	1	0	0
<b><i>Health Care and Social Assistance</i></b>	4	2	1	0	1
<b><i>Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation</i></b>	3	2	0	1	0
<b><i>Accommodation and Food Services</i></b>	5	3	1	1	0
<b><i>Other Services (Except Public Administrations)</i></b>	5	3	1	1	0

<b>Table E-2: Brighton Economic Data</b>			
	<b>Island Pond</b>	<b>Brighton</b>	<b>Essex</b>
			<b>County</b>
Median Household Income 2010	22,375	31,000	37,734
Median Family Income 2010	58,750	52,222	46,263
Per Capita Income 2010	20,698	21,480	20,040
Median Earnings for workers 2010	19,479	29,235	30,121
Total Retail Receipts (taxable) FY2008		2,397,370	
Civilian Labor Force 2010	312	510	3,246
...employed	302	487	2,977
...unemployed	10	23	269
...unemployment rate	3	5	8
Persons for whom poverty			
considered 2010	647	1,034	6,346
...in Poverty 2010	178	200	1,071
...0-17 yrs old	36	36	330
...18-64 yr old	117	134	620
...65 yrs. And older	25	30	121
Families for whome poverty status			
considered 2010	155	270	1,820
...in Poverty 2010	24	26	236
...w/related children under 18	16	16	173

## The Local Economy Simplified

When attempting to analyze Brighton's or any local economy, it is useful to imagine the community economy as a barrel with money and goods flowing in, as well as leaking out.



*Local resources include: land, water, air, and minerals, labor, management, technology, and capital.*

*A loss of resources comes from unemployed workers and spoilage of local resources.*

*Non-local purchases of goods and services drain money from the economy.*

*Non-local sales of goods and services bring money into the economy.*

The barrel analogy represents some key concepts:

- Brighton is intimately linked with the rest of the world through the inflow and outflow of income and goods.
- Brighton uses resources to produce the output it sells. Resources may be available locally or purchased elsewhere.
- The size of the barrel is determined by the inflow of outside income, the lack of the leakage of income, and the volume of resources used to produce the community's output.

A community economic analysis is an examination of the components of this barrel that is concerned with the forces of demand and supply. Some basic questions that Brighton leaders should ask when they are working to improve the local economy include:

- What are the linkages with the rest of the world?
- What are some ways to increase the potential flow of income?
- How can the community better use its existing resources and businesses to produce more output and associated jobs and income?
- How can the community reduce its loss of resources to improve its local income situation?

## Economic Development Resources

There are many opportunities for technical and financial assistance in the region. Several organizations provide a variety of services to help expand businesses and employment within the Brighton. These organizations include:

- *University of Vermont Extension*, through its Take Charge program, conducted visioning and strategic planning exercises in Brighton. Take Charge brings local residents and business people together in the interests of their community's future. The sustainable development program consists of a series of weekly meetings asking the community to focus on: Where are we now?, Where do we want to be?, and How do we get there? At the end of this series of

meetings the participants elect projects to pursue. They divide into committees that tackle these various projects and continue by organizing plans of action.

- *USDA Rural Development* primarily funds local community facility and infrastructure projects. Brighton lies within part of a federally designated Rural Enterprise Area Partnership (REAP) zone. The zone status is currently expired, but efforts are underway to re-establish the designation. The REAP Initiative was established to address critical issues related to constraints in economic activity and growth, low density settlement patterns, stagnant or declining employment, and isolation that has led to disconnection from markets, suppliers, and centers of information and finance. The Northeast Kingdom Collaborative, the body associated with the REAP, is comprised of economic development agencies, businesses, educational institutions, social service agencies, non profit organizations, health care and other organizations working to better the three county region.
- *Northern Community Investment Corporation (NCIC)* offers Small Business Administration (SBA) loans, lines of credit, direct loans up to \$100,000; loan guarantees; an equipment-leasing program; equity investments; arranges bank loans, and SBA 504 Fixed Asset Financing.
- *Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA)*, the regional planning and development authority, is a primary contact for Northeast Kingdom businesses. NVDA provides technical assistance for business planning, and connects businesses with the appropriate state agencies for marketing and financial assistance. NVDA assists towns with community and economic development projects to a number of funding agencies. NVDA also has a Rural Development Intermediary Re-lending Program, which provides loans ranging from \$20,000 to \$50,000.
- *Small Business Development Center (SBDC)*, under the U.S. Small Business Administration, provides assistance to for-profit businesses to develop business plans for internal use or for loan proposals. The SBDC also offers management, marketing, financial, and production support to fledgling businesses.
- Northeast Kingdom Community Action (NEKCA) Micro-Business Development Program provides information on how to start a business, creating marketing and financial plans, as well as general trouble shooting for micro-businesses.
- Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA) serves the entire state and offers a variety of business incentive programs.
- Northeast Kingdom Learning Services offers educational programs to promote workforce training

### **Economic Strategies:**

There are five economic strategies that Brighton officials should consider when addressing the local economy. These basic strategies are successfully used throughout the country in areas large and small, and Brighton officials have been working on some of these:

1. Attract new basic or export employers. Brighton leaders should continue revitalization efforts to make the town attractive to employers.
2. Capture existing markets. Residents and visitors should be encouraged to Buy Local.

3. Encourage the start-up of new firms. Brighton officials should update the marketing study conducted by UVM for Brighton and/or implement recommendations from that earlier study.
4. Help existing businesses to grow or become more efficient. The town can apply for technical assistance funds, workforce development funds, or conduct commercial energy audits.
5. Take advantage of aids and programs from regional, state, and federal governments such as tax-increment financing, tax credit programs, revolving loans, etc.
6. Continue upgrading municipal infrastructure and improving municipal services to make the community a more attractive place.
7. Make officials and the community aware of new economic opportunities that have the potential to aid the local economy (i.e. the National Geographic Geo-tourism Destination, of which Brighton is a part).
8. The town should promote and protect its scenic and natural resources, as these are the basis for our tourist economy.

## **SECTION X: ADJACENT TOWNS & THE REGION**

The Town of Brighton is bordered by eight towns. These include the towns of: Westmore, Morgan, Charleston, Newark, Warren Gore, Avery's Gore, Lewis, and Ferdinand. With the exception of Charleston, each of these towns has a town plan and local land use regulations in effect. Newark has a town plan, but no zoning regulations.

### **WESTMORE**

The town of Westmore adopted a plan in 2008 and zoning regulations in 2008. They also have a telecommunications ordinance (2004). The development along the town boundary between Brighton and Westmore is very minimal and is not expected to change much. This is a very rural section of Westmore, with only one secondary road providing access. The Planning Commission does not anticipate any major impact as a result of development along this boundary.

### **MORGAN**

The town of Morgan abuts Brighton to the northwest. Morgan has a Town Plan and zoning regulations (both adopted in 2004). The plan indicates that the more concentrated development should occur in the two villages of Morgan and Morgan Center. The language in their plan places emphasis on the importance of open space, and forestry and farming uses and allowing residential use to be dependent upon soil and water quality. However, the two state routes, 111 and 114, connect at the border of Morgan and Brighton. There could be some future development in this area.

### **CHARLESTON**

Charleston, bordering Brighton to the west, has neither a town plan or land use regulations. A natural boundary, the Clyde River, inhibits some development but there is much land that is available for constructing homes and businesses. Much of this would be considered prime agricultural land, but the Route 105 corridor is still an area to watch for future development.

### **NEWARK**

Newark borders Brighton to the south. Newark's town plan, adopted in 2011, and amended in 2012, states its compatibility with Brighton based upon the rural nature of both towns. Newark is presently considering the adoption of land use controls, but at this time there is little residential or developed land areas on the border of Brighton. However, Route 114, Newark Pond Road and Center Pond Road hold potential for more development, which the Planning Commission will watch carefully. More recently, Newark amended its plan to clearly state its position against large-scale wind turbines, in the face of a proposal by an industrial wind developer to erect 195' measuring towers now, and a number of 450' turbines at a later date.

### **UNIFIED TOWNS & GORES**

The neighboring unincorporated towns of Warren Gore, Avery's Gore, Lewis and Ferdinand (also Averill and Warner's Grant) are collectively referred to the Unified Towns & Gores, or the UTG.

These towns extend from Brighton's northern border easterly to its southeast border. The UTG has a town plan and updated zoning regulations — both adopted in 2011.

The previous version of the Brighton plan, adopted in 2008, stated :

“There are no development pressures from any of these towns. The former Champion Lands with its land easements (Avery's Gore, Lewis and Ferdinand) the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Nulhegan Refuge (Lewis and Ferdinand), the West Mountain Wildlife Management Area (Ferdinand), and Wenlock Wildlife Management Area (Ferdinand) would prohibit development from occurring in these towns and hence along the border of Brighton.”

While that may have been true in 2008, there is now proposed a development in the region that far exceeds the scale of any development foreseen in the 2008 plan.

## REGIONAL CONTEXT

A wind developer has proposed to Brighton, Newark and the UTG towns the possibility of erecting as many as 35 nearly 500' tall wind turbines on mountain ridgelines in the three towns. Given the probable location of the towers on the region's mountainous terrain, a decision by SMW and any town to erect the turbines would mean that all three towns see and feel the impact. SMW has also said that fairly large sums of money would come the way of the towns hosting such turbines. These conditions are problematical for good regional planning, they pit town against town, and permit effective local control only if all three towns agree to host the turbines or all disagree. This plan recommends that the Brighton Planning Commission work with and keep in good communication with the UTG and Newark Planning Commissions.

Brighton is considered by the state to be a service center, meaning it is important to its local area for commerce, services, employment and community life. Service centers are also defined by having at least one state highway. Brighton has Vermont Routes 114, 105 and 111. Much of the village of Island Pond is served by municipal water and wastewater systems. In addition to Brighton's local government, the Essex County probate court is located in the town hall. Brighton certainly differs in size from the larger growth centers like Newport/Derby and St. Johnsbury/Lyndon, but it is a hub in its own right. Brighton's importance to the area is due to its separation by some distance from the larger regional growth centers and, therefore, has not become a satellite of either. Brighton welcomes working with all neighboring towns in all aspects of implementation of this plan.

## **SECTION XI: STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES, POLICIES, & PROGRAMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

The Brighton Planning Commission considers the following issues important to the future of the town. These projects are not prioritized here.

### **\*Affordable housing:**

In order to meet the needs of all Brighton residents, there should be an adequate supply of quality affordable housing. There are low and moderate income individuals, who provide labor for local businesses, yet cannot afford to buy a home. There are also those who own property but face escalating property values and the resultant increase in taxes. Lastly, there are those who reside in sub-standard housing. Ideally, there should be a mix of quality single and multi-unit dwellings available to Brighton residents. Brighton officials will support efforts to address affordable housing.

### **\*Community:**

1. The slopes around the pedestrian footbridge should be landscaped, possibly with the addition of an "Island Pond" emblem.
2. Efforts should continue to attract a pharmacy to the town.
3. The Town should consider sidewalk construction and maintenance in its yearly budget.
4. Veteran's organizations such as the VFW and American Legion have been involved in many community efforts in past years. These organizations should be enlisted for support and supported in the future.
5. Work to strengthen the local Chamber of Commerce, the Brighton Community Forum and the Island Pond Historical Society.
6. Continue efforts to improve Lakeside Park and the waterfront.

### **\*Economic Growth:**

1. In the next five years or more the town needs to pursue more economic growth in the tourism sector and small business development which will hopefully increase employment opportunities benefiting everyone. The basic economic strategies presented in this plan should be considered.
2. At the eastern end of town, where the former Ethan Allen factory stands empty, new enterprises or uses should continue being explored.
3. The railroad station second floor should be improved to generate additional revenues.
4. The town has put the Miller/Woodworkers' building on Meadow Street on the market, and efforts should continue to take most advantage from the town's ownership of the building.
5. Continue efforts at downtown revitalization.

### **\* Education:**

Brighton officials shall work to meet state requirements for the provision of Life Sciences education to Brighton school students.

The town should continue to support NEKLS efforts in the town, and to make sure they have appropriate quarters in the town hall.

**\*Historic Preservation:**

Historic renovation work on the Town Hall “Opera House” should continue. The third floor of the municipal building should be improved and made usable.

The town should take full advantage of the Island Pond Historic District designation, and develop more information about the homes in the district.

**\*Infrastructure:**

It is necessary to support municipal efforts to upgrade and improve all existing infrastructure—water and wastewater systems, buildings and lands, and sidewalks and roads. This commission suggests that recommendations from existing technical studies be used as a guide when upgrades are planned.

**\*Land Use:**

If an opportunity arises, Brighton should consider purchasing or acquiring the development rights to the island in the lake. This is an attractive feature in the town.

**\*Parks planning:**

The town park on Island Pond, the town ball field, and the town forests are underutilized community assets. A Parks visioning committee will work to develop a parks master plan that would yield specific strategies on how to improve each park and the town forest for Brighton residents.

**\*Recreation:**

1. The town's tennis court should be resurfaced
2. The public baseball field on Derby Street needs a facelift for public recreation.
3. Local bicycle and pedestrian trails should be improved or developed within the community.

**\*Tourism:**

The Island Pond Welcome Center was completed in 2007. The facility is an excellent place for the Brighton Community Forum or the Chamber of Commerce to promote events, local attractions, and businesses. If the opportunity to purchase an adjacent property in the future comes about, this commission should work toward that end allowing the Welcome Center to be further developed to improve the local economy.

## REFERENCES

Island Pond Plan, G.H. Trebor, Black River Design, Germain Page, October 1989

UVM Environmental Program Interpretive Master Plan for Island Pond, Vermont. Tom Hudspeth and students, 2000.

Exceptional Natural Habitats and Rare Plant and Animal Species of Essex County, VT, Non-Game and Natural Heritage Program, Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department March 1990

Island Pond Lakeside Park Improvement Study, Stantec Planning & Landscape Architecture, P.C., 2011

Brighton Town Plan, 2008

Attachment 2: Minimum Town Road and Bridge Standards that include Water Quality Best Management Practices

January 4, 2011

TOWN ROAD AND BRIDGE STANDARDS  
TOWN OF BRIGHTON, VERMONT

The Town of BRIGHTON hereby adopts the following Town Road and Bridge Standards which shall apply to the construction, maintenance and repair of all town roads and bridges.

The standards listed here are considered minimum and are presented for purposes of guiding construction and maintenance personnel. The standards listed here include three types of management practices and are designed to: ensure the safety of the traveling public, minimize damage to road infrastructure during flood events, and enhance water quality protections by minimizing sediment delivery to surface waters and/or wetlands. The select board reserves the right to modify the standards for a particular project, where, because of unique physical circumstances or conditions, there is no possibility that the project can be completed in strict conformance with these provisions. Any modifications to the standards must be done in a manner that protects the underlying intent of the management practice, be it public safety, flood hazard avoidance, or water quality protection. Fiscal reasons are not a basis for modification of the standards. Questions about modifications to the standards should be directed to the VTrans District Office.

Any new road, whether or not that road is proposed to be conveyed to the town, shall be constructed according to the minimums of these standards. If any federal and/or state funding is involved in a project, the VTrans district office will be notified prior to any field changes taking place that would alter the original scope of work.

**Roadways**

- All new or substantially reconstructed roads will have at least a 15-inch thick processed gravel subbase, with gravel roads having the top 3 inches (minimum) as crushed gravel.
- All roadways will be graded so water does not remain on the road surface. For roadways that are not superelevated, this generally means a 2-4% ( $1/4'' - 1/2''$  per ft) crown for gravel roads and a 1-2% ( $1/8'' - 1/4''$  per ft) crown for paved roads to promote sheeting of water.
- Proper grading techniques for gravel roadways will be used to avoid creating a ridge or berm between the crown and the ditch.
- Any berm along the roadway shoulder that prevents the proper sheeting of water will be removed.

**Ditches and Slopes**

Soil exposed during ditch and slope construction or maintenance will be treated immediately following the operation. Priority should be given to areas vulnerable to erosion immediately adjacent to or discharging to surface waters and/or roadway drainage facilities. The following are minimum erosion control measures:

- Seed and mulch ditches with grades less than 2%. Use biodegradable, non-welded matting and seed on ditches with grades between 2% and 5%. Stone line all ditches with grades greater than 5%; alternatively, install stone check dams. Dams should be comprised of a well graded stone matrix 2 to 9 inches in size. Dams should not exceed 2 feet in height and check dam crest should be at least 6" below the top of the ditch.

- Create parabolic (wide "U" shaped) ditches when constructing new or substantially reconstructing ditches, rather than narrow "V" shaped ditches. Ditches with gradual side slopes (maximum 2H: 1V ratio) and a wide bottom (at least 2 feet) are preferred.
- Use biodegradable, non-welded matting to stabilize side-slopes where slopes are greater than 1:1; apply seed and mulch to any raw or exposed side-slope if slopes are less than or equal to 1:1.
- Ditches should be turned out to avoid direct outlet into surface waters. There must be adequate outlet protection at the end of the turnout, either a structural (rock) or vegetative filtering area.

#### **Culverts and Bridges**

- All new driveway culverts will have a minimum diameter of 15 inches.
- All new roadway culverts will have a minimum diameter of 18 inches.
- Any culvert with a drainage area greater than 0.25 sq mi will require a hydraulic engineering study. Culverts will be designed to convey the Q25 design storm with minimal surcharge.
- All bridges (structures with spans greater than 6 feet) and open bottom structures will require a hydraulic engineering study. Structures will be designed to convey the Q25 design storm and allow for passage of ice and debris.
- When installing or replacing culverts, use appropriate techniques such as headwalls and wingwalls, where there is erosion or undermining or where it may occur.
- Install a splash pad or plunge pool at the outlet of drainage culverts where there is erosion or where erosion may occur. Splash pads and plunge pools are not appropriate for use in streams supporting aquatic life.

#### **Guardrail**

When roadway, culvert, bridge, or retaining wall construction or reconstruction projects result in hazards such as foreslopes, drop offs, or fixed obstacles within the designated clear-zone, a roadside barrier such as guardrail shall be installed. The most current version of the AASHTO Roadside Design Guide will govern the analysis of the hazard and the subsequent treatment of that hazard.

#### **Access Management**

The town will have a process in place, formal or informal, to review all new drive accesses and development roads where they intersect Town roads, as authorized under 19 V.S.A. Section 1111. Towns may reference VTrans A-76 Standards for Town & Development Roads and B-71 Standards for Residential and Commercial Drives.

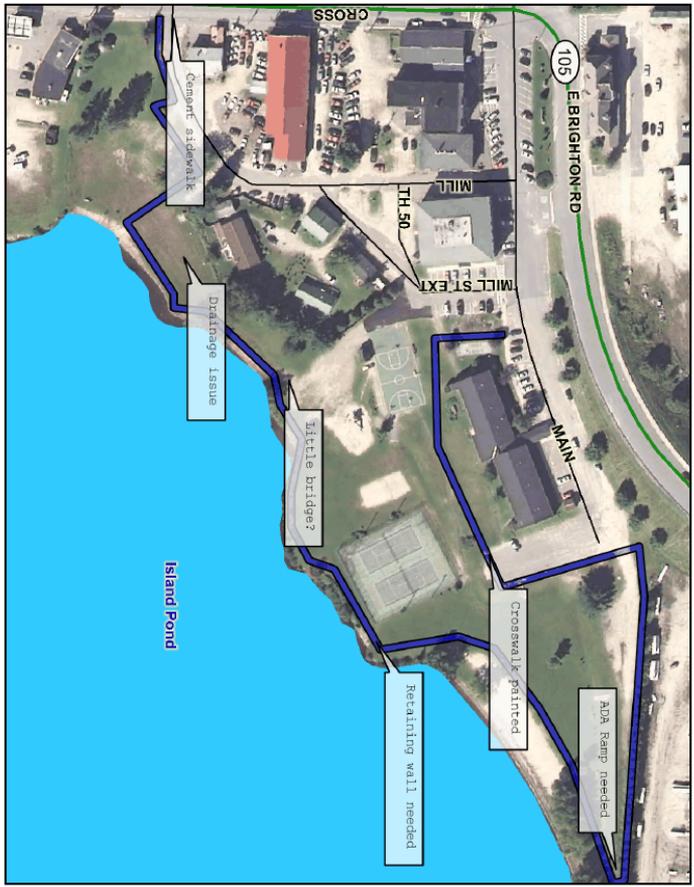
#### **Training**

Town highway maintenance crews will collectively attend a minimum total of 6 hours of training per year on best road management practices. The town will keep documentation of their attendance.

Passed and adopted by the Selectboard of the Town of BRIGHTON, State of Vermont on APRIL 5, 2011.

Select Board

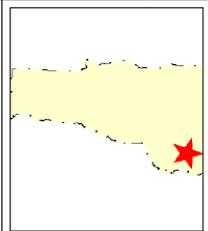
Neil D. Brown      James E. Webb  
Paul P. Long



Map center: 549130, 257338

DISCLAIMER: This map is for general reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate or current, or otherwise not reliable. The State of Vermont does not warrant the accuracy, completeness, or fitness for a particular use, nor does it warrant respect to the data on this map.

Notes: Length: 2,800 feet  
Width: 6 feet  
URL: [http://maps.vermont.gov/insight/CSG\\_LakesideMap/launch.jsp](http://maps.vermont.gov/insight/CSG_LakesideMap/launch.jsp)



Legend

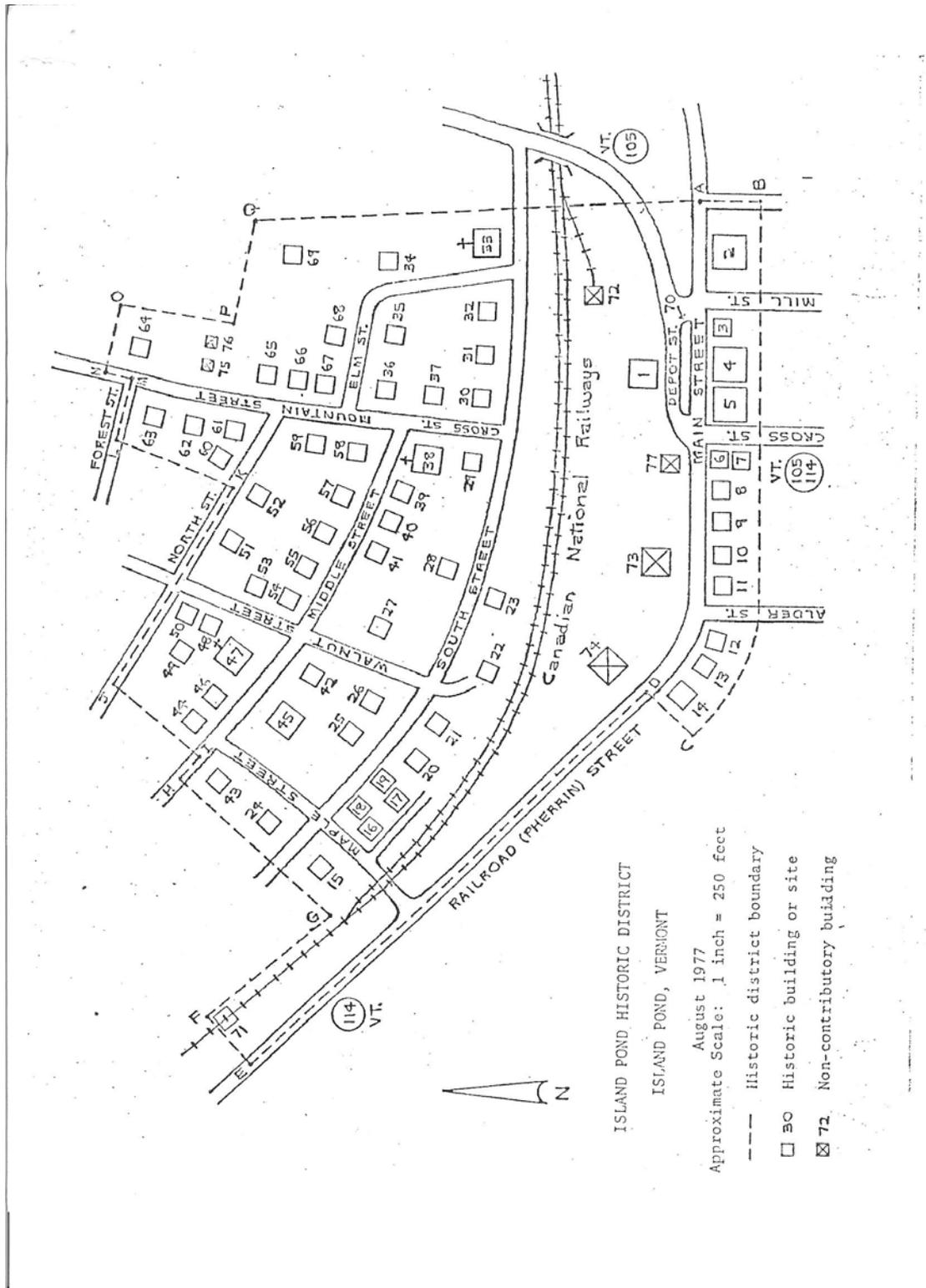
- Airports
- Mountains and hills
- Interstates
- US Highways
- VT State Highways
- Rail Lines
- Town Boundaries
- Roads
- Class 1,3
- Class 4
- Driveways
- Rivers and Lakes
- Streams
- Intermittent
- Perennial
- Unassigned
- Cities
- VT State Boundary

VT State Plane Meters (NAD83)  
Scale: 1:1,900



8/6/12





ISLAND POND HISTORIC DISTRICT

ISLAND POND, VERMONT

August 1977  
 Approximate Scale: 1 inch = 250 feet

- Historic district boundary
- Historic building or site
- ⊗ Non-contributory building

