

Planning Commission Reporting Form for Municipal Plan Amendments

This report is in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4384(c) which states:

*“When considering an amendment to a plan, the planning commission shall prepare a written report on the proposal. **The report shall address the extent to which the plan, as amended, is consistent with the goals established in §4302 of this title.**”*

The proposed plan is consistent with the goals of 24 VSA §4302. An analysis of the plan in relation to the statewide planning goals appears on page 51 of the proposed plan.

If the proposal would alter the designation of any land area, the report should cover the following points:

- 1. The probable impact on the surrounding area, including the effect of any resulting increase in traffic, and the probable impact on the overall pattern of land use.*

The plan does not propose any designation in land area other than re-designation of the Brownington Village Center, which was de-designated when the plan expired. Brownington does have some scattered development and the plan notes this. However, this development does not appear to be significant. The planning commission will continue to monitor development trends and will reassess the need for zoning and subdivisions regulations.

- 2. The long-term cost or benefit to the municipality, based upon consideration of the probable impact on:*

(A) the municipal tax base; and

Current development patterns do not have a significant effect on the municipal tax base or on the need for public facilities. The town just committed to build a town garage and acquired town road equipment. This is the extent of public facilities right now, and there are no plans to build additional facilities.

(B) the need for public facilities;

- 3. The amount of vacant land which is:*

(A) already subject to the proposed new designation; and

This is not applicable.

(B) actually available for that purpose, and the need for additional land for that purpose.

- 4. The suitability of the area in question for the proposed purpose, after consideration of:*

(A) appropriate alternative locations;

(B) alternative uses for the area under consideration; and

(C) the probable impact of the proposed change on other areas similarly designated

This is not applicable.

5. *The appropriateness of the size and boundaries of the area proposed for change, with respect to the area required for the proposed use, land capability and existing development in the area.”*

The proposed village center designation is based on what was previously approved by the Downtown Board. The relocation of the Orleans County Grammar School (Grange Hall) to its original site will enhance the cultural and civic uses of the village center.

Please Note:

- ❖ The planning commission must hold at least one public hearing within the municipality after public notice on any proposed plan or amendment.
- ❖ At least **30** days prior to the first hearing, a copy of the proposed plan or amendment and the written report must be delivered with proof of the receipt, or mailed by certified mail, return receipt requested, to each of the following:
 1. the chairperson of the planning commission of each abutting municipality, or in the absence of any planning commission in an abutting municipality, to the clerk of that municipality;
 2. the executive director of the regional planning commission of the area in which the municipality is located;
 3. the Department of Economics, Housing and Community Development within the Agency of Commerce and Community Development; and
 4. business, conservation, low income advocacy and other community or interest groups or organizations that have requested notice in writing prior to the date the hearing is warned.
- ❖ The planning commission may make revisions to the proposed plan or amendment and to any written report, and must thereafter submit the proposed plan or amendment and any written report to the legislative body of the municipality.
- ❖ If the legislative body changes any part of the proposed plan, the planning commission must submit to the legislative body, at or prior to the public hearing, a report that analyzes the extent to which the changed proposal, when taken together with the rest of the plan, is consistent with the legislative goals established in 24 V.S.A. §4302.
- ❖ Simultaneously with the submission, the planning commission must file with the clerk of the municipality a copy of the proposed plan or amendment, and any written report, for public review.

1 **Brownington Town Plan**
2 **Proposed Town Plan**
3
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7 **Planning Commission Hearing Date:**
8 **Wednesday, July 8, 2015**
9 **5:00 p.m.**
10 **Brownington School**

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15
16 *This plan was developed with assistance from a Municipal Planning*
17 *Grant from the Vermont Department of Housing and Community*
18 *Development.*
19

1 **1: General Goals and Objectives of the Plan..... 6**

2 **2: Community Profile 8**

3 Population 8

4 Figure 2.1: Brownington Population 1920-2010 8

5 Table 2.1: Population of Brownington and Surrounding Communities 8

6 Housing Stock and Households 8

7 Income & Employment..... 9

8 History..... 9

9 Town of Brownington Historical Perspectives 10

10 Population Projections 11

11 Figure 2.2 Brownington Population 2020 and 2030 Projections 12

12 Figure 2.3 Orleans County-wide Population Projections by Age..... 12

13 Table 2.2: Brownington Population by Gender and Age, 2000 to 2010..... 13

14 **3. General Land Use 14**

15 Table 3.1: Brownington Acreage..... 14

16 Existing Land Use..... 14

17 Forestry and Agriculture 14

18 Village Centers..... 14

19 Proposed Land Use 15

20 Land Use Goals..... 15

21 Land Use Strategies 16

22 **4. Transportation 17**

23 Roads and Highways..... 17

24 Figure 4.1: Of the following descriptions, which one do you think BEST describes the

25 condition of Brownington roads?..... 17

26 Parking and Bus Service 18

27 Airports 18

28 Railroads 18

29 Functional Classification 18

30 Figure 4.2: Which of the following goals do you think are most relevant to Brownington's

31 transportation infrastructure ? 19

32 Figure 4.3: Please rate the importance of each as it relates to Brownington's transportation

33 infrastructure:..... 20

34 Maintenance of Transportation Infrastructure 20

35 Table 4.1: Brownington Bridges..... 21

1	Regional and Statewide Resources	21
2	Capital Budget and Planning	21
3	Transportation Goals.....	22
4	Transportation Strategies	22
5	5. Utilities and Facilities	23
6	Existing Utilities and Facilities.....	23
7	Educational Facilities -- Elementary and Middle school.....	23
8	Secondary Schools	23
9	Cultural and Additional Educational Resources	23
10	Recreational Facilities.....	23
11	Water Supply and Sewage Disposal	24
12	Solid Waste Disposal	24
13	EMS-Fire protection	24
14	Town Garage.....	24
15	Communications	25
16	Facilities and Utilities Goals.....	25
17	Facilities and Utilities Strategies	25
18	6. Housing	26
19	Existing Housing Conditions	26
20	Affordability	26
21	Table 6.1: Population Paying 30% of Household Income or More on Housing	26
22	Residential Development Patterns	27
23	Figure 6.1: Acreage of New Home Development in Brownington over the past decade.....	27
24	Figure 6.2: Location of New Residential Development in Brownington 2004-2014.....	28
25	Housing Goals and Objectives.....	28
26	7. Energy	29
27	Conservation of Energy	29
28	Renewable Energy	29
29	Figure 7.1: Should the Town Encourage the Following Forms of Renewable Energy?	30
30	Figure 7.2: Should the Town Development Specific Standards for Siting the Following	
31	Forms of Renewable Energy?.....	30
32	Energy Goals.....	30
33	Energy Strategies	31
34	8. Economic Development	32
35	Present conditions	32

1 Table 8.1: Work Destination Report: Where People Who Live in Brownington are
2 Employed (all jobs)..... 32
3 Table 8.2: Industry and Occupation of Worker, Brownington Workforce..... 33
4 Figure 8.1: Household Incomes, Brownington and Orleans County 33
5 Employment Opportunities in Brownington..... 34
6 Regional economic development implications 34
7 Figure 8.1: Proposed EB-5 Developments – Likelihood of Impacts 35
8 Figure 8.2: Proposed EB-5 Developments – Desirability of Impacts..... 35
9 Brownington’s Vision for Economic Development 36
10 Figure 8.3: Type of Economic Development in Brownington that are “Village Scale”..... 36
11 Economic Development Goal 36
12 Economic Development Strategies 36
13 **9: Preservation of Rare and Irreplaceable Areas, Scenic and Historic Features 37**
14 Rare and Irreplaceable Areas 37
15 Figure 9.1: How Important is it to Protect the Following?..... 37
16 Rare and Irreplaceable Areas - Preservation Goals 37
17 Rare and Irreplaceable Areas - Preservation Strategies 37
18 Historic and Scenic Resources..... 38
19 Historic Preservation Resources 39
20 Scenic and Historic Preservation Goal 40
21 Scenic and Historic Preservation Objectives 40
22 **10: Flood Resilience 42**
23 Existing Conditions..... 42
24 Flood Risks in Brownington 42
25 Table 10.1: FEMA Flood-Related Declarations and FEMA Public Assistance, 1996 –
26 Present..... 42
27 Floodplains..... 43
28 River Corridors 44
29 Uplands and Wetlands 44
30 Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund 44
31 Table 10.2: Brownington Public Assistance Received in FEMA-DR-1995..... 45
32 Transportation Infrastructure 45
33 Flood Hazard Regulations..... 46
34 Local Emergency Operations Plan..... 46
35 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan..... 47

1 Flood Resilience Goals: 47
2 Flood Resilience Strategies:..... 47
3 **12. Development Trends and Plans for Adjacent Towns and Region..... 48**
4 Westmore 48
5 Derby..... 49
6 Coventry..... 49
7 Charleston 50
8 Barton..... 50
9 Irasburg 50
10 Regional Planning..... 50

1 **1: General Goals and Objectives of the Plan**

2 Our goals are the statements defining where we as a Town and what we wish to accomplish over the
3 next five years. Our objectives are the measurable milestones that point us in the direction of our
4 goals and measure our progress.

5 Brownington is one of the few remaining natural gems protected from the development of the 21st
6 century by our remote location in Vermont’s Northeast Kingdom. This unique character has been
7 recognized—the NEK was named in the top ten places to visit in the world by National
8 Geographic’s geo-tourism initiative—but sustaining it will require an ongoing commitment to
9 mindful planning and measured development. This precious natural, rural quality—along with the
10 strong character of our people—is among the Town’s chief economic and cultural assets.

11 Brownington can benefit greatly from new business that brings jobs and economic opportunity to
12 our Town. New businesses in areas such as farming, agriculture, forestry, logging, manufacturing,
13 technology, health care, tourism, and services are welcome in Brownington, and will find broad
14 support across the community both for the jobs they bring and their vital contribution to our
15 Town’s tax base. Any new business must be well integrated with our Town’s rural setting, protect
16 our natural resource areas, and preserve our scenic beauty.

17 When Brownington’s previous town plan expired in 2012, the Town applied for a Municipal
18 Planning Grant to solicit input and develop a new plan that best reflected the goals and objectives of
19 its citizenry. In addition to regularly scheduled public meetings with the planning commission, local
20 officials met publicly with state and regional officials to review flood resilience information and
21 strategies. Additionally, the planning commission developed a community wide survey in the winter
22 of 2014. Postcards were sent to every household with the survey’s URL, and paper copies were
23 made available. Where relevant, survey findings are published in this plan.

24 We intend for this Town Plan to promote the economic well-being of our residents and provide for
25 the orderly development of our Town and region by encouraging smaller scale new business and
26 development that is compatible with the rural character of our Town and protects the scenic beauty
27 of our natural landscape. We also intend for this Town Plan to preserve and protect the natural
28 condition of our mountain ridgelines and high elevation habitats, headwater areas, rivers, streams
29 and surface waters, wetlands and vernal pools, wildlife habitats, groundwater recharge areas, forestry
30 resources, agricultural resources, and our aesthetics and natural scenic beauty.

31 Brownington is a community of moderate means, but we are rich in our people and our natural
32 assets. By attracting new business and economic opportunity to our Town on an appropriate scale,
33 we can protect our land, rivers, ponds, hills and mountain ridgelines. The residents view our Town
34 as an example of natural beauty that will continue to attract visitors, new economic opportunities,
35 and new residents from across the state and the nation for decades to come. These core objectives
36 are the touchstones for our economic growth and quality of life.

37 **Our general goals and objectives are detailed below:**

38 **A. To broaden Brownington’s economic base by encouraging small, non-polluting**
39 **businesses and industries to locate in Brownington.**

- 40 1) Develop mutually supportive preservation and economic development policies integrating
41 both regional and municipal plans.
42 2) Promote tourism by developing existing recreational and historical assets and identifying
43 other recreational opportunities.

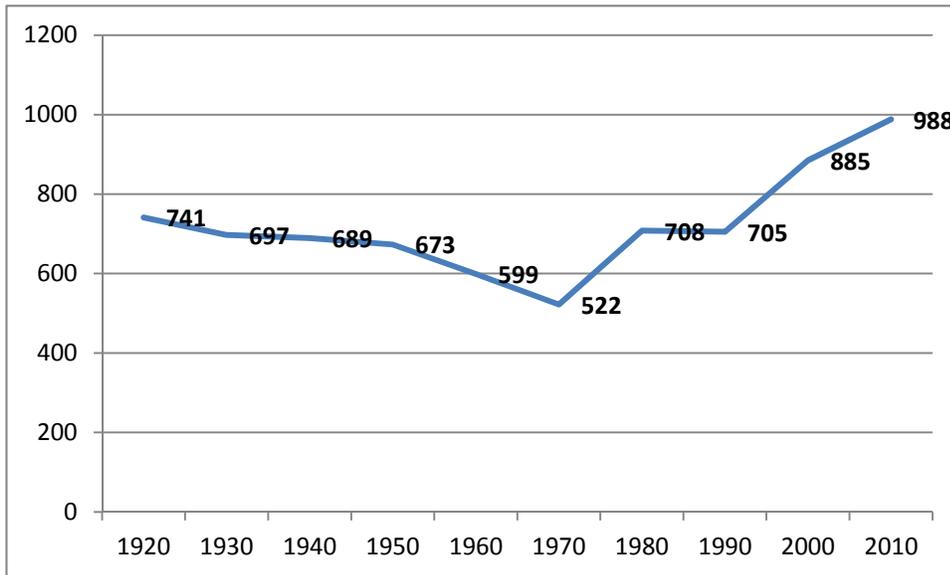
- 1 3) Adopt policies friendly to the establishment of village scale commercial uses.
- 2 **B. To keep the tax rate within the limits of its residents ability to pay.**
- 3 1) Educate the taxpayer about state abatement and relief policies and programs, i.e. homestead,
- 4 current use.
- 5 2) Seek alternate funding for specific Town projects and improvements.
- 6 **C. To retain the town’s rural character and its economic base of working farms and**
- 7 **productive forests without hampering the landowner’s ability to profit from either the**
- 8 **use or sale of his or her assets.**
- 9 1) Encourage stewardship of the town’s natural resources through information and education.
- 10 2) Investigate the use of subdivision regulations to preserve parcel sizes that are economically
- 11 viable for farm and forest uses.
- 12 3) Promote viability of resources through promotion of Current Use, Vermont Land Trust and
- 13 local Vermont products.
- 14 **D. To provide safe reliable year-round access on roads presently maintained by the town of**
- 15 **Brownington.**
- 16 1) Identify and remediate dangerous intersections, access points and road sections.
- 17 2) Continue to pursue grant funding for paving projects when appropriate.
- 18 **E. To continue to enhance the quality of education offered to all ages in Brownington.**
- 19 1) Encourage the use of educational buildings to establish a functional meeting place for town
- 20 and community organizations.
- 21 **F. Preserve Brownington’s historical assets.**
- 22 1) Investigate the establishment of a design control district in Brownington Village.
- 23 2) Inventory other historic assets in the Town of Brownington.
- 24 3) Take advantage of Federal, State and local programs available for development or
- 25 preservation of local cultural and historic assets.
- 26 **G. Ensure the public health, safety and welfare.**
- 27 1) Examination of the adequacy of emergency services by the Planning Commission
- 28 2) Develop the school as an emergency shelter. Purchase and install a generator to support the
- 29 Brownington Central School as well as the Town Clerks Office.
- 30

1 **2: Community Profile**

2 ***Population***

3 The Town of Brownington covers 18,232 contiguous acres. The 2010 U.S. Census reports a total
 4 population of 988 residents, 51% female and 49% male, indicating a population density of about 1
 5 person per 26 acres. Population figures indicate that the number of people residing in Brownington
 6 in the 1920's was 741. Between 1920 and 1970 the population declined to a low of 522 persons. A
 7 dramatic increase of 35.6% in the 1970's made up for much of the loss. The 1980's saw little change.
 8 The latest figures through 2010 show a continued steady increase in population since the 1990s.

9 **Figure 2.1: Brownington Population 1920-2010**



Source: US Census Bureau, 1920-2010

21

22

23 **Table 2.1: Population of Brownington and Surrounding Communities**

	1990	2000	Rate of Change	2010	Rate of Change
Brownington	705	885	25.5%	988	11.6%
Charleston	844	895	6.0%	1,023	14.3%
Derby	4,479	4,604	2.8%	4,621	0.4%
Coventry	806	1,014	25.8%	1,086	7.1%
Irasburg	907	1,077	18.7%	1,163	8.0%
Barton	2,967	2,780	-6.3%	2,810	1.1%
Westmore	305	306	0.3%	350	14.4%
Orleans County	24,053	26,277	9.2%	27,231	3.6%

24 Source: US Census Bureau, 1990-2010

25 ***Housing Stock and Households***

26 According to the 2010 Census, there are 509 housing units in Brownington, with 110 vacant. Of the
 27 vacant housing stock, 85 are for seasonal, recreational and occasional use. Brownington has 399

1 households, of which 274 are family households. The average household size is 2.48, and the average
2 family size is 2.86. Of the 399 occupied housing units, 357 -- the vast majority -- are owner-occupied.
3 The remaining 42 housing units were renter occupied. At the time of the 2010 Census 880
4 individuals were living in owner-occupied dwellings, and 108 in renter-occupied dwellings.

5 ***Income & Employment***

6 Brownington is considered a bedroom community, indicating that the majority of the town's
7 population in the work force is employed outside of the community. According to most current
8 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year averages (2009-2013), about 37% of Brownington
9 residents travel at least 30 minutes to work, which is higher than Orleans County or the state (27%
10 and 29% respectively). About 10% of the population works outside of Orleans County, and 1.9%
11 work outside of the state. Compared to the rest of the Northeast Kingdom, Orleans County has a
12 higher percentage of jobs in services and retail trade, which tend to have lower average wages.

13 According to the ACS 5-year averages, 511 of the Town's residents are in the civilian labor force
14 with 475 employed (63.6%) and 36 unemployed (4.8%). The median household income is \$41,250,
15 which is a little lower than the county median (\$41,953), and considerably lower than the statewide
16 median (\$54,267). About 11.6% of Brownington families had incomes that fell below the poverty
17 line within the past 12 months.

18 People employed in Brownington tend to make their living close to the land, with small businesses
19 connected to farming and agriculture, forestry and logging, agri-tourism, retail of farm and maple
20 sugar products, auto repair, and real estate. The Stonehouse Museum and Orleans County Historical
21 Society offer educational programs and tours. All enterprises, commercial or non-profit, are on a
22 smaller scale appropriate to our Town. We encourage business appropriate to the culture of farming
23 and agriculture to ensure the rural quality of our community.

24 ***History***

25 The first modern inhabitants of the region of what is now the Northeast Kingdom were the Abenaki
26 -- Native American groups who frequented the areas between Lake Champlain and the Connecticut
27 River. Much of the Abenaki culture was centered near area rivers and lakes. Primarily, the region was
28 used for hunting and fishing, with seasonal agriculture bordering the region's many lakes and rivers.
29 At the time of European contact, Abenaki groups inhabited much of the upper Connecticut River
30 Valley. Native American settlements at the time of these early contacts included: South Bay and
31 Indian Point near Newport, Derby, East Charleston on the Clyde River, Barton on Crystal Lake, and
32 Magog. The fur trade in the 17th and 18th centuries increasingly brought these indigenous groups
33 into contact with Dutch, English and French entrepreneurs. The English eventually dominated
34 much of the fur trade in the Connecticut River Valley, while the French controlled the St. Lawrence
35 and Champlain Valleys. While the French came to the new lands as explorers, traders, and
36 missionaries, the English arrived primarily as farmers and colonists. Yet, the Northeast Kingdom
37 remained a relatively unsettled region throughout the French and Indian wars and the American
38 Revolutionary period.

39 Orleans County is the largest county (715 sq. miles) in the region; the larger population centers in
40 the county are Newport and Derby. For most of the 20th century, the Northeast Kingdom existed
41 in relative isolation up until the 1970's, when Interstate 91 sliced its way northward. This essentially
42 created two "gateway towns" to the area; improved access brings new residents and visitors to the
43 area. The largest urban center is St. Johnsbury, where Interstate 91 enters the region from the south.

1 Route 2 heads east to Maine, and Interstate 93 leaves for the White Mountains of New Hampshire.
2 Newport, only six miles from the Canadian border, is the northern gateway community off I-91.

3 ***Town of Brownington Historical Perspectives***

4 The Town of Brownington was granted in 1782, and chartered in 1790. It does not appear to have
5 been settled until 1796, when Peter Clark, a potter from Lyndeboro, New Hampshire, made his
6 home near the present-day Samuel Read Hall House in Brownington Village. By 1799, the year the
7 town was organized, further settlement occurred in or near the Village, as well as in the east end of
8 town near the Westmore line. Although the town was named for two original grantees, Timothy and
9 Daniel Brown, the land, including a “gore” that later became the eastern tip of the Town of Morgan,
10 passed through the hands of speculators before the various lots were sold to individual settlers. Most
11 of these early settlers were of British descent, and came from southern New Hampshire and
12 southern New England.

13 The “Timothy Hinman Road” was laid out in the early 1790’s to connect Derby with the towns of
14 southern Orleans County. This road followed the present-day course of the Churchill Road,
15 connecting Derby to Brownington Village. In those days, travel and settlement tended to follow the
16 ridges. From the start there was always some sort of non-agricultural economic activity, even in a hill
17 town such as Brownington and the town supported both lumber and grist mills from the early
18 1800’s. The arrival of the railroad in the 1850’s followed a valley route, causing valley settlements,
19 such as Barton and Orleans, to flourish at the expense of the ridges and hills. The transportation
20 revolution was accompanied by an industrial revolution that called for larger amounts of waterpower
21 than were available in most of the town, with the exception along portions of the Willoughby River,
22 including “Skunk Hollow,” later known as Evansville.

23 Until 1816, Brownington was designated as a “half-shire town,” and functioned, along with
24 Craftsbury, as a county seat. The cellar of the present-day home of Claire Lyon was used as a jail,
25 while court was held in a building nearby. A more permanent County Seat was established as
26 Irasburg in 1816, and later moved to Newport. In the early days, (1800 – 1820), many settlers came
27 from the Newport area to Brownington to receive their mail. During the 1800’s, there were post
28 offices in the Village, the Center, and in Evansville. Today most mail comes through the Orleans
29 Post Office.

30 In 1823, Brownington was chosen as the site for the Orleans County Grammar School, a secondary
31 school designed to serve all Orleans County. The present-day Grange Hall, originally located north
32 of the Congregational Church, served as the classroom building. The Rev. Alexander Twilight was
33 hired in 1829 to be the school’s Principal and served in that capacity for most of the time until his
34 death in 1857. The school closed permanently in 1859. Twilight is known for his heroic role in the
35 construction of a huge four-story granite block dormitory for the school completed in 1836. It is
36 now known as the “Old Stone House” and is used as a County Historical Museum. Twilight is
37 known nationally among black history scholars as the first African-American to graduate from a U.S.
38 college, Middlebury 1823 and the first to serve in a state legislature when he represented
39 Brownington in the Vermont House in 1836-37. Other notable people associated with Twilight’s
40 school were: Samuel Read Hall (1795-1877), a pioneer in the field of teacher training, who taught at
41 the school during the 1850’s and served as minister of the Congregational Church; and William
42 Barstow Strong (1837-1914), who attended as a student and later became the President of the
43 Atchison, Topeka, Santa Fe Railroad. His brother James Woodward Strong was the first president of
44 Carlton College in Northfield Minnesota. It was Strong who erected the original observatory on
45 Prospect Hill during the 1890’s. The fact that Brownington never developed into a major center for

1 the region, coupled with the proliferation of competing high schools elsewhere in the County, made
2 it impossible for the County Grammar School to survive. For the last 133 years, Brownington
3 residents have had to attend high school outside of town. Until 1967, most were sent to Orleans;
4 since that time, the town has belonged to the Lake Region Union high school district, busing its
5 students to a facility in Barton Town. The 1878 Beer's Atlas shows that there were six elementary
6 school districts, each with its own small school. In 1966, the remains of that system were
7 consolidated into a Central School for grades 1-8. Since that time, a Kindergarten has been added.

8 In the mid-1800's, Brownington began to lose many of its people to the economic lure of the cities
9 and of the American west. This out-migration was somewhat offset by new, often French-speaking,
10 and settlers from Quebec. As Quebec prospered, this source of settlement was largely dried up.
11 During the past forty years, a new wave of settlers has emerged from urban areas of the northeast,
12 particularly from the southern New England and New York City regions.

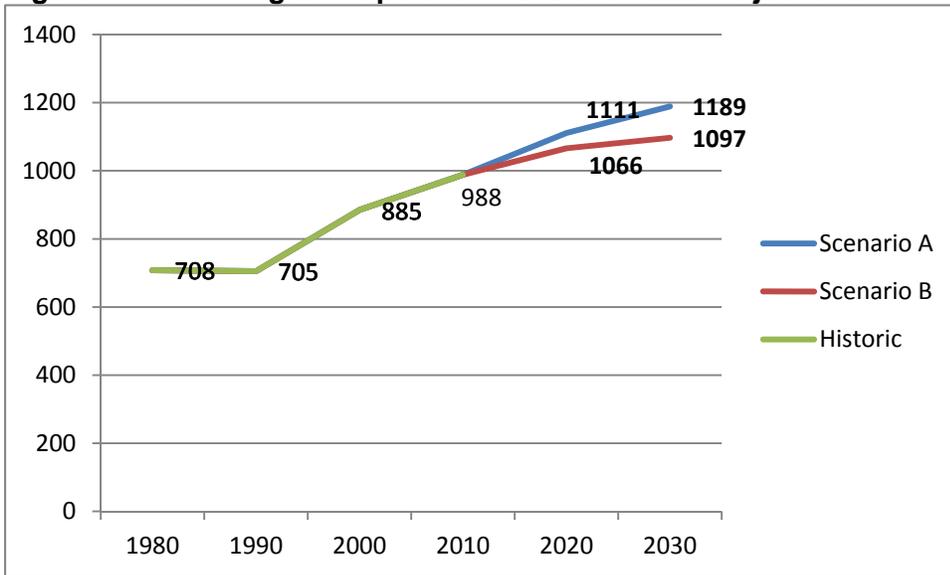
13 In spite of the fact that Brownington's growth did not keep pace with that of valley towns such as
14 Barton, Orleans, Newport and North Troy, there was a general increase in population until about
15 1870 (901), followed by one hundred years of slow decline. During the past four decades, population
16 has again increased gradually, while the number of housing units in Town has increased dramatically.
17 Although Brownington Village and the nearby "north ridge" area were the first to be populated, by
18 the 1850's there was a substantial settlement at Brownington Center. A substantial Methodist-Baptist
19 Union Church was built there in 1854 (now Brownington Center Church). Evansville was named in
20 1871 for Joseph Evans. The extent to which the "frontier spirit" still prevailed at the time is revealed
21 by the fact that the village was named for the winner of a tree-chopping contest. It was the
22 availability of waterpower along the Willoughby River and the presence of a whetstone-
23 manufacturing firm that included a now-abandoned quarry in the southeast corner of the Town,
24 lumber mill and creamery that caused this village to flourish between the time of the Civil War and
25 the Great Depression. In 1891 A Methodist Church was built; long-abandoned as a place of
26 worship, it now serves as the gift shop portion of the Evansville Trading Post. Although
27 manufacturing and retailing have played and continue to play a role in Brownington's economy,
28 most Brownington residents now employed in these areas work outside of town. During 1802, the
29 majority of Brownington residents were employed in agriculture within the town. Now, the majority
30 of employment is elsewhere. During this century, the trend has been toward fewer and larger farms.

31 ***Population Projections***

32 Making accurate long-term projections is difficult, especially in a town as small as Brownington. In
33 August 2013, the State of Vermont released a new set of population projections to 2030. Unlike
34 earlier projections, these projections use TWO scenarios. "Scenario A" assumes an in-migration rate
35 similar to what occurred from 1990 to 2000, when the economy was more robust. "Scenario B"
36 assumes an in-migration rate in line with what occurred from 2000 to 2010, a decade plagued by
37 lingering recession and economic turmoil. In either scenario -- assuming that current conditions and
38 trends continue -- Brownington can expect to see modest-to-robust population growth over the next
39 two decades. But there is a major caveat: Projections are NOT predictions of what's to come. Rather
40 projections assume that trends that have occurred in the past will continue. This projection does not
41 take into account any significant economic changes to the region, such as the impacts of the EB-5
42 developments that are planned for the Northeast Kingdom. The Planning Commission will seek
43 updated data whenever significant changes occur or additional information is available.

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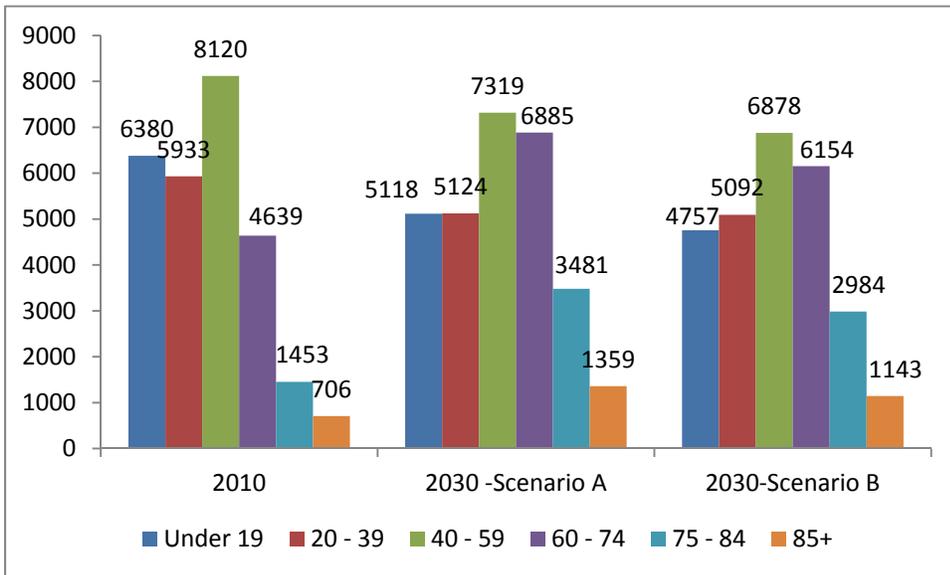
1 **Figure 2.2 Brownington Population 2020 and 2030 Projections**



2 Source: Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, 2013

3 Vermont’s population projections have been based on an age cohort model (defined age groupings
 4 such as: 35-39 year-olds) using US Census data as the basis for calculations. Mortality, birth rate and
 5 migration rate data from 1990-2010 are factors used to develop the projections. County-wide
 6 projections indicate an aging demographic, with decreases in each age category under 60 and
 7 increases for every age group over 60. This projection aligns with trends seen throughout the state
 8 and the northeastern U.S.

9 **Figure 2.3 Orleans County-wide Population Projections by Age**



10 Source: Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, 2013

11 This trend is also reflected in most recent Census. Brownington’s population has aged, with an
 12 increase of residents ranging from the ages of 35 to 69+ years. The figures also show an increase in
 13 the general population and a decrease in the number of children residing in the town from 2000 to

1 2010. These figures are illustrated in Table 2.2. An aging demographic has significant long-range
2 implications for demand for services and housing, and the regional and local economy.

3 **Table 2.2: Brownington Population by Gender and Age, 2000 to 2010**

	2000	2010	Rate of change
Male	450	490	8.9%
Female	435	498	14.5%
Under the age of 18	241	225	-6.6%
20 to 24	41	42	2.4%
25 to 34	100	108	8.0%
35 to 44	155	132	-14.8%
45 to 54	126	174	38.1%
55 to 59	72	85	18.1%
60 to 64	36	55	52.8%
65+	89	140	57.3%

4 Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 – 2010

5

3. General Land Use

The Town of Brownington is comprised of 18,148 acres, more than three-quarters of which is forested. Some pastureland in Brownington may be open land but most is currently not active farm land and is being reclaimed by woods, making the majority of Brownington’s land cover forested.

Table 3.1: Brownington Acreage

Total Acreage*	18,148 acres
Developed	1,148 (6.3%)
Open/Agricultural	3,798 (20.9%)
Forested	12,994 (71.6%)
Open/water	208 (1.1%)
Total Enrolled in Current Use Appraisal**	3,254 (17.9%)
Total enrolled parcels	36
Parcels enrolled in forestland	25
Total acreage enrolled in forestland category	1,996.42
Parcel enrolled in agriculture	11

Sources: *Land Use/Land Cover data developed from digitized 2008 orthophotos; ** Vermont Department of Taxes, FY2014 Annual Report

The general character of the town is rural, working landscape. Residents value this rural character highly. Brownington is a blend of working landscape, forestland interspersed by active farms. The majority of existing residential development has occurred along the major travel ways in town (Frog Pond Hill, Hinman-Settler Road, and Routes 58 and 5A), and around the three villages (Brownington Village, Brownington Center, and Evansville.) More recent resident development may be occurring away from major travel corridors. One very special quality of Brownington is that many points in town afford spectacular views in all directions.

Existing Land Use

Forestry and Agriculture

The working landscape makes up the vast bulk of the land area of the Town of Brownington and gives the countryside its rural character. It is a goal of this plan to preserve the working landscape and maintain forestry, agriculture and outdoor recreation as predominant land uses. A recent study published by the Northern Communities Investment Corporation (NCIC) found that Brownington had the second largest amount of prime agricultural soils in all Orleans communities – more than 2,378 acres. When removing buildings and infrastructure (such as roads and paved areas) from the spatial analysis, Brownington still had 2,282 acres of prime agricultural soils. This total does not include soils of statewide importance, which may also present opportunities for agricultural activity.¹

Village Centers

The Town of Brownington has three identifiable village centers, Evansville, Brownington Center and Brownington Village which contains the Brownington Historic District.

Brownington Village had been a Designated Village Center under the State of Vermont’s Downtown and Village Center Designation program. This designation provides a number of incentives to preserve traditional development patterns. Unfortunately, the designation expired after

¹ Northern Communities Investment Corporation: Jobs Accelerator Plan for Agriculture and Food System Development, June 2014.

1 five years while the Town did not have a current Town Plan and was therefore ineligible to apply for
2 renewal. Two primary goals of this Town Plan are to preserve historic assets and concentrate village-
3 scale commercial and residential uses in these centers at such densities as on-site wastewater disposal
4 can support.

5 The Village Center designation can help Brownington achieve these goals by:

- 6 • **Making the Town more competitive for certain state grant programs.** The Department
7 of Historic Preservation Grant program, for example, assigns an extra point to applications
8 that are located in designated village centers. Since a goal of this plan is to preserve the
9 Town’s historic assets, Brownington could benefit from historic preservation grants that
10 help to stabilize or rehabilitate important assets in the Village, such as the Grange Hall,
11 which is currently uninsured due to code compliance issues. Other state programs, such as
12 Municipal Planning Grants (which funded the development of this plan) might be available
13 to help the Town carry out village-specific initiatives that explore ways to identify build-out
14 capacity and promote density in Brownington Village.
- 15 • **Tax credits.** The primary benefits of this program are state tax credits for fit-up and
16 rehabilitation of certain income producing properties built before 1983. If these tax credits
17 are in addition to Federal tax credits for rehabilitation of historic properties, these tax credits
18 can be substantial – and could help a project “cash flow” that otherwise might have not been
19 financially feasible. Credits are awarded on a competitive basis. These credits are not
20 available to churches or government buildings, but non-profits can obtain the tax credits and
21 sell the credits to a bank or insurance company, apply the proceeds to reduce debt load, or
22 parlay the proceeds back to the project as collateral. The Stone House Museum did apply for
23 tax credits when the Village Center designation was still active. Unfortunately, those credits
24 were not awarded. That does not mean, however, that a future rehabilitation or fit-up project
25 in Brownington Village could not receive tax credits, if Village Center designation were to be
26 re-established.

27 Designation is not a regulatory program. Once conferred, it is good for five years. It is in the town’s
28 best interest to pursue the designation to assure all benefits of this designation are recognized and
29 implemented.

30 ***Proposed Land Use***

31 It is the purpose of this Plan to maintain current land use patterns and to encourage the location of
32 residential and village scale commercial uses and increases in residential densities in our village
33 districts.

34 ***Land Use Goals***

- 35 • Maintain current land use patterns of residential and village-scale commercial development
36 in and around Brownington’s villages.
- 37 • To retain the town’s rural character and its economic base of working farms and productive
38 forests without hampering the landowner’s ability to profit from either the use or sale of his
39 or her assets.

1 ***Land Use Strategies***

- 2 • Encourage stewardship of the town’s natural resources through information and education.
- 3 • Promote viability of resources through promotion of Current Use, Vermont Land Trust and
- 4 local Vermont products.
- 5 • Educate the public on the benefits of Village Center designation.
- 6 • Pursue Village Center re-designation for Brownington Village.
- 7 • Monitor rural residential development trends in Brownington in order to identify potential
- 8 conflicts with long-range land use goals.
- 9 • The Brownington Planning Commission shall investigate the feasibility of implementing
- 10 subdivision regulations to preserve open space, and discourage loss of farmland and, if
- 11 found appropriate, shall draft such regulations for submission to the Select Board.

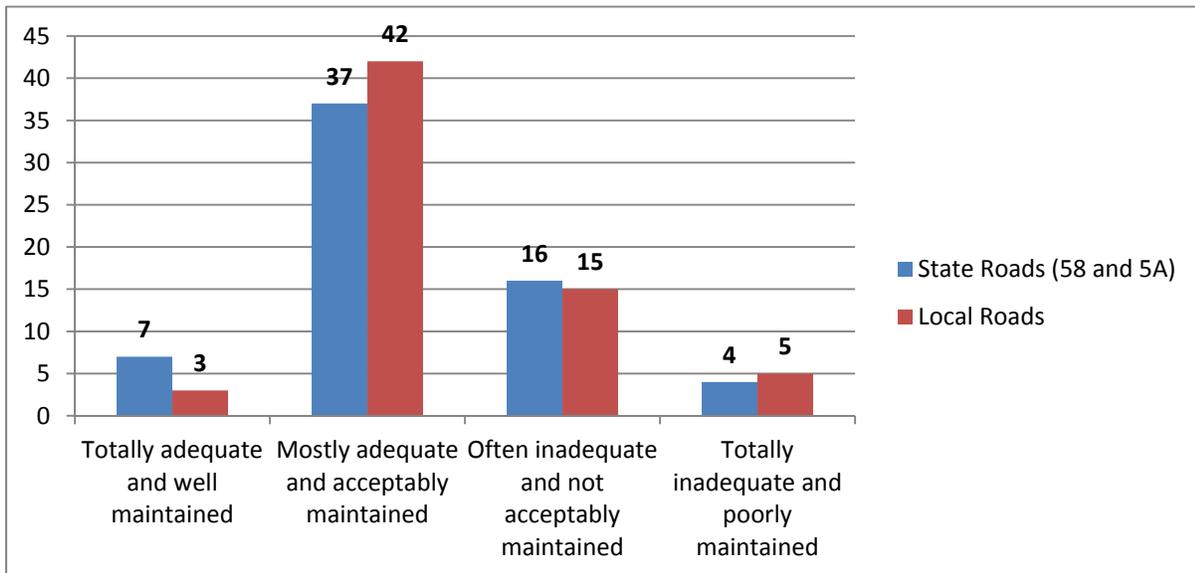
1 4. Transportation

2 *Roads and Highways*

3 The Town's Road Commissioner is an elected official and takes an active role in road maintenance.
4 Until recently, the Town rented a garage from the Road Commissioner. In October 2014, voters
5 approved a \$500,000 bond to build a new 5,000 sq. ft. facility at 614 Schoolhouse Road. There are
6 also plans to extend the hard surface paved portion of the School House Road to the Town Clerk's
7 Office. Town owned road maintenance equipment consists of one grader, one loader. The Town
8 also requires two trucks in working order to be efficient. Until recently, these trucks were rented
9 from the Road Commissioner. Two new trucks, along with plows and sanders, were recently
10 acquired. One was purchased by the Town outright for \$170,888, and the Town paid for a second
11 truck with a loan for \$169,000.

12 The Town adheres to State of Vermont Town Road and Bridge Standards required for the Town to
13 receive state aid for highways, which is necessary to meet the annual costs of maintaining our roads.
14 The Town Road and Bridge Standards is also one of the requirements to receive a certain level of
15 public assistance from the State following a presidentially declared disaster. (See the Flood Resilience
16 chapter.) At this time, our road crew of three is able to perform basic maintenance of roads and
17 equipment, plow and sand winter roads and undertake some smaller projects and road resurfacing.

18 **Figure 4.1: Of the following descriptions, which one do you think BEST describes the**
19 **condition of Brownington roads?**



20 Source: Brownington Community Survey

21 The road system in Brownington consists of a total of approximately 50 miles; the majority of these
22 roadways are class 3 roads (58.6%) which consist of roads of sufficient surface, base, drainage and
23 width to permit winter maintenance and use. The class 2 roads (22%) link to Orleans and carry a
24 majority of the traffic east and west across Brownington and Route 5A which runs north and south
25 and provides a link between Westmore and Charleston. There are several class 4 roads (3%)
26 remaining in Brownington, these roads play an important role as recreational resources.

1 ***Parking and Bus Service***

2 Greyhound bus service is available at White River Junction. Rural Community Transportation (RCT)
3 in Newport operates local bus service Monday through Saturday within Newport, Derby, and Derby
4 Line, on the first, third, and fifth Thursday of each month.

5 There is a parking lot in Orleans Village, just past the bridge at Routes 5 and 58. This lot is regularly
6 used by Brownington residents.

7 ***Airports***

8 The Newport State Airport in Coventry has two 4,000 foot paved runways designed for aircraft
9 weighing less than 12,500 pounds and with wingspans of less than 79 feet. Visual and navigational
10 aids are available to allow for non-precision approaches for aircraft equipped with electronic
11 navigational instruments. Following a business expansion of the nearby Jay Peak ski area and
12 downtown Newport, plans are in the works for a nine-year project to upgrade the Newport State
13 Airport, potentially adding 1,000 feet to the runway, improving water and sewer services and adding
14 services from Customs and Border Protection and the Transportation Security Agency. The John H.
15 Boylan State Airport in Island Pond is a public, state-owned facility that maintains two turf surface
16 runways. A private airport with a small, privately owned airstrip is in Norton, and a seaplane base is
17 located on Lake Memphremagog. Commercial air service is available in Burlington, VT; Manchester,
18 NH; Boston, MA; Portland ME; and Montreal, Quebec.

19 ***Railroads***

20 Freight points for rail service are in Newport and Island Pond. Passenger train access points are in
21 White River Junction and Montpelier.

22 ***Functional Classification***

23 ARTERIALS

- 24 • Interstate I-91: Brownington currently has no direct interstate access and will not seek such
25 access for the foreseeable future.
- 26 • Route 58: Evansville Road-road link to Orleans for the Town of Brownington and Route
27 5A.
- 28 • Route 5A: Willoughby Lake Road-road link to Charleston to the north and Westmore to the
29 south.

30 MAJOR COLLECTORS

- 31 • Hinman Settler Road: Major north/south collector that funnels traffic into Barton and
32 Derby, much of its length is gravel paved.

33 MINOR COLLECTORS

- 34 • Old Stone House/School House Roads: East/west collector that funnels traffic to Route 5A
35 and Hinman Settler Road, much of its length is gravel paved.

36 CONNECTORS

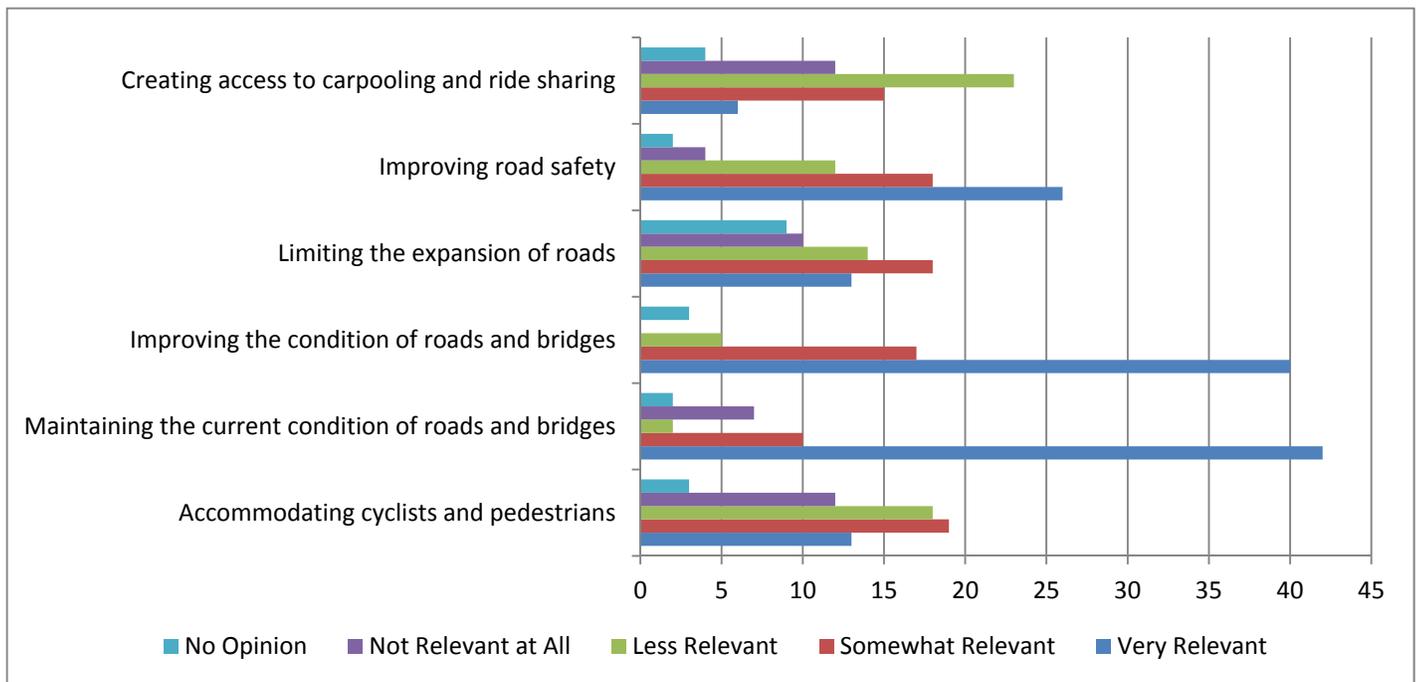
- 37 • Parker Road-serves as a connector to Coventry, its entire length is gravel paved.

- 1 • Frog Pond Road: connector running from the Hinman Settler Road to the Village of Orleans and hard surface paved for its entire length.
- 2
- 3 • Center Road: Connector running from Brownington Center to the Village of Orleans and hard surface paved for its entire length.
- 4
- 5 • Hunt Hill Road: Connector between School House Road and Evansville and Route 58.

6 TOWN ROADS (all class three roads)

7 North to south, east to west-Moulton Rd., Old Cemetery Ln., Cleveland Rd., TH 17, West Rd.,
 8 Baxter Ln., Birch Ln., Postman Ln., TH 9, Chapdelaine Rd., Glodgett Ln., Lafoe Ln., Dutton Brook
 9 LN., Wildwood Ln., Ticehurst Rd., Gaye Hill Rd., Chilafoux Rd., Pepin Rd., Candle Ln., Pond Ln.,
 10 TH 32, Old Nadeau Ln., Davignon Ln., TH 35, Stevens Rd., Chase Rd., Ryan Rd., Kittredge Rd.,
 11 Sawmill Ln., Poirier Ln., Whitting Ln., Whetstone Ln.

12 **Figure 4.2: Which of the following goals do you think are most relevant to Brownington's**
 13 **transportation infrastructure ?**

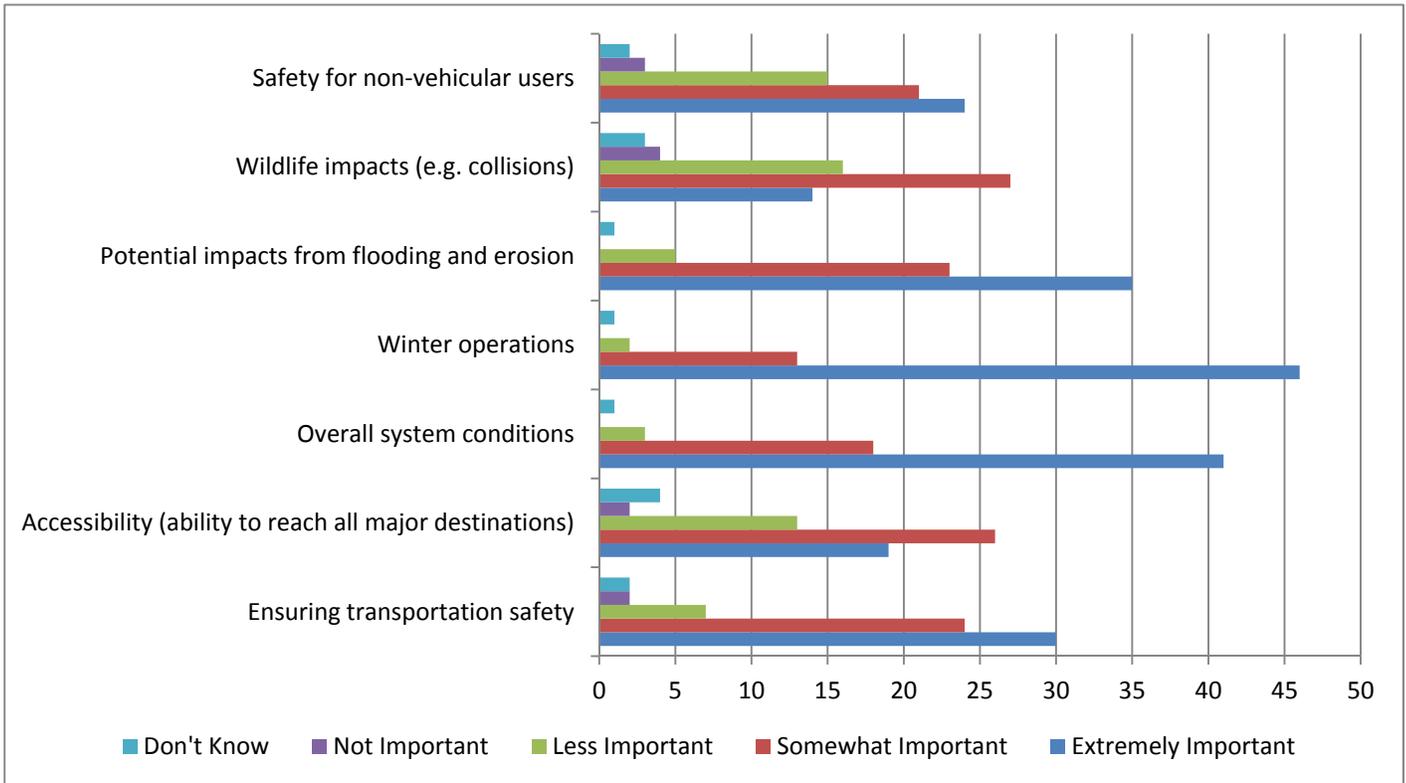


14 Other responses: Speed limits (2), Dust control (1), Upgrading class of roads (1), Mud season
 15 problems (1)

16 Source: Brownington Community Survey

17

1 **Figure 4.3: Please rate the importance of each as it relates to Brownington's**
 2 **transportation infrastructure:**



3 Other responses: Reducing 4-wheeler and snowbile traffic on roads (1); Speed limit (1)

4 Source: Brownington Community Survey

5 ***Maintenance of Transportation Infrastructure***

6 Like all municipalities, Brownington receives an appropriation from the state to pay for the
 7 maintenance of town highways. This appropriation does not require a match, as long as at least the
 8 municipality spends at least \$300 per mile of local tax revenues on its highways. The appropriation is
 9 based on the mileage and classification of roads (44% for Class 2 and 50% for Class 3).

10 State funds are available for repairs and replacement of bridges and culverts on town highways,
 11 Classes 1 through 3. The state share is limited to \$175,000 per project. The local share is 20% of the
 12 project cost, unless the municipality has done the following

- 13 • Adopted the current VTrans Road and Bridge Standards
- 14 • Conducted a highway infrastructure study (not less than three years old) which identifies all
 15 town culverts, bridges, and identified road problems. The inventory would include location,
 16 size, deficiency/condition, and estimated cost of repair –where the condition is less than
 17 acceptable.

18 If both requirements are met, the local share of the project cost drops to 10%. The Town should
 19 consider these cost implications for future and potential projects involving Brownington's road
 20 infrastructure.

1 VTrans is required to inspect all bridges with a span of 20 feet or longer, whether they are located
 2 on a federal-aid system or a town highway. These inspections occur once every two years, and
 3 reports of the inspections are sent to the Town.

4 Bridges with a span of less than 20 feet but equal to or greater than 6 feet are considered “short
 5 structures.” They are neither inspected nor prioritized by the state, and no formal system for
 6 identifying or assessing them currently exists. In fact, short structures have not been even depicted
 7 on the Town Highways Maps since 2003. Towns are responsible for the inspection of their own
 8 short structures. In 2015, the regional planning commission will organize condition assessments on
 9 town short structures, classifying them as “Good,” “Fair,” or “Poor.” The conditions assessment
 10 will be an important tool for identifying medium- to long-range costs for maintaining, upgrading,
 11 and repairing short structures.

12 **Table 4.1: Brownington Bridges**

Bridge #	Highway & Locations	Status
B3	Center Road, Brownington Center, crossing Dutton Brook	Short structure
B6	Town Highway 6 (Pepin Road), crossing Brownington Branch	Short structure
B7	Town Highway 30 (Schoolhouse Road), crossing Brownington Branch	Short structure
B8	Hunt Hill, approaching Route 58	Short structure
B9	Center Road, (damaged in Tropical Storm Irene)	Long structure
B11	Town Highway 48 (Parker Road), crossing Day Brook	Short structure
B13	Town Highway 16 (Cleveland Road), crossing Trout Brook	Short structure
B18	Poirier Lane (temporary structure)	Short structure

13 Source: VTrans Town Highway Maps 2003 and 2014, VOBCIT

14 ***Regional and Statewide Resources***

15 Brownington enjoys a strong relationship with the Northeastern Vermont Development
 16 Association, which provides ongoing regional transportation planning assistance. NVDA hosts the
 17 Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings on the second Tuesday of each month.
 18 Community officials, public transportation providers, interested groups, and individual citizens are
 19 encouraged to attend. Each year a list of suggested projects is compiled from the TAC meetings and
 20 is sent to the Secretary of Transportation for approval and possible inclusion in the State
 21 Transportation Improvement Plan. NVDA also hosts a series of Road Foreman trainings around
 22 the region. These trainings help towns meet the training requirement of VTrans Road and Bridge
 23 Standards. The Vermont Local Roads program may also be a technical resource for transportation
 24 planning. The federally-funded local technical assistance program offers a number of workshops on
 25 a variety of topics, such as winter maintenance, roads in relation to rivers, and construction safety
 26 awareness.

27 ***Capital Budget and Planning***

28 The new garage construction and truck purchases represent a major investment for Brownington.
 29 The Town should consider developing a capital budget and plan that, at a minimum, takes into
 30 account depreciation of the new town garage and equipment, and anticipated infrastructure repair

1 needs. The latter could be greatly informed by the planned conditions assessment of Brownington's
2 short structures. A capital budget and program usually consists of the budget for the current fiscal
3 year, as well as a multi-year plan for expenditure. The multiyear plan can be an effective fiscal
4 management tool, because it allows the town to anticipate mid- to long-range expenditures without
5 creating fluctuations in annual budgets and taxes. Although the budget is formally adopted (in
6 accordance with Vermont Statute), it's a flexible and nonbinding planning tool. The multiyear plan
7 provides a baseline figure for budgeting, but it doesn't set the actual budget. Public opinion can
8 convince the Town to deviate from the plan, and voters must still approve each annual budget at
9 Town Meeting. Both NVDA and Vermont Local Roads will be likely technical resources for
10 developing a capital budget and plan for Brownington.

11 ***Transportation Goals***

- 12 • Ensure the public health, safety and welfare.
- 13 • To keep the tax rate within the limits of its residents ability to pay.
- 14 • To provide safe reliable year-round access on roads presently maintained by the town of
15 Brownington.

16 ***Transportation Strategies***

- 17 • Identify and remediate dangerous intersections, access points and road sections. Review and
18 update conditions assessments for Town short structures, when this information becomes
19 available.
- 20 • Update and maintain bridge and culvert information in the Vermont Online Bridge and
21 Culvert Inventory Online Database (VOBCIT).
- 22 • Continue to pursue grant funding for paving projects when appropriate.
- 23 • Investigate and pursue state and federal aid opportunities to cover town garage construction
24 costs, equipment costs, and cost of paving portion of Schoolhouse Road.
- 25 • Maintain Codes and Standards as per state regulations.
- 26 • Investigate the creation of a Capital Budget and Plan that includes, at a minimum, the
27 depreciation of the Town Garage and equipment, and anticipated repairs and improvements
28 to Brownington's transportation infrastructure.

1 **5. Utilities and Facilities**

2 ***Existing Utilities and Facilities***

3 Due to Brownington’s relatively small population and resource-driven economy, existing utilities and
4 facilities are basic with many amenities provided by far more populous surrounding towns. An
5 accounting of our public facilities and utilities is listed below.

6 **Educational Facilities -- Elementary and Middle school**

7 The Brownington Central School, located on Road, serves Kindergarten students through 8th grade.
8 With a staff of 18 professionals and 9 support staff, the school serves 102 students in nine regular
9 classrooms. The Town provides two buses to transport students to and from the elementary school
10 and on field trips. The school building is used extensively beyond the regular school day. The
11 cafeteria/gymnasium and classrooms are used for after-school programs, and the gym is used
12 steadily for numerous basketball teams. Annual school concerts are held in the cafeteria/gymnasium,
13 which is also the site of the annual Town Meeting. Other organizations use the school as a meeting
14 place. The school population fluctuates from year to year but is currently increasing. A Town School
15 Board, a three-member governing body elected by Town residents oversees budgets and
16 construction.

17 **Secondary Schools**

18 Brownington students are served by North Country Union High School (grades 9 through 12) in
19 Newport; Lake Region Union High School (grades 9 through 12) in Barton; United Christian
20 Academy, a private school in Newport that serves grades K through 12; and Turning Points, also in
21 Newport. Some parents home-school their children, both part-time and full-time.

22 **Cultural and Additional Educational Resources**

23 The Brownington Elementary School houses a school library. The Town is also served by the
24 Orleans Public Library in Orleans, the Dailey Memorial Library in Derby, the Island Pond Public
25 Library in Brighton, and the Haskell Library in Derby Line, which provide access to the Vermont
26 and the Quebec library systems. The Big Read Book Wagon based in Derby brings books to a
27 variety of locations throughout the area.

28 Brownington is also home to the Old Stonehouse Museum and the Orleans County Historical
29 Society. Open to the public during the summer, May through October, the Museum offers a variety
30 of educational opportunities for children, adults, and college students seeking internships. “Time
31 Travelers Day Camp” allows children aged 8-13 to participate in one week of building hand skills
32 (such as blacksmithing, basketry, and digging for artifacts) while experiencing New England’s
33 history. The NorthWoods Stewardship Center in Charleston maintains a natural history library that
34 is available for reference to the public.

35 The North Country Career Center in Newport offers a variety of adult education programs for
36 career advancement or personal enrichment. Online courses are also available.

37 **Recreational Facilities**

38 Recreation opportunities include state fishing access on Brownington Pond and Willoughby River,
39 the Willoughby falls Wildlife Management area, the Brownington Historic District, the sports field at

1 the Brownington Central School and the class 4 roads utilized for hiking, snowmobiling and cross
2 country skiing. Much of the land suitable for outdoor recreation is in private ownership.

3 **Water Supply and Sewage Disposal**

4 Water supply and sewage disposal in the Town of Brownington is the responsibility of the property
5 owner and all homes are served by private potable water and waste water systems. The State of
6 Vermont Agency of Natural Resources has primary responsibility in the regulation and approval of
7 these private systems.

8 **Solid Waste Disposal**

9 Solid waste is transported by residents or by private hauler to the landfill currently operated by
10 Waste USA Inc. in neighboring Coventry. We now use the Brownington/Evansville Recycling
11 Center which is located at the Trading Post. The facility also accepts scrap metal and electronics.

12 Act 148, Vermont’s Universal Recycling Law, was passed in 2012. The purpose of this law was to
13 increase recycling, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, decrease the dependence on landfilling, and
14 reduce municipal expense by diverting recyclables and compostable materials from the waste stream.
15 This law enforces the practice of unit-based pricing for trash disposal (sometimes called “Pay As
16 You Throw”) by July 2015. It will also ban the disposal of recyclable materials (glass, metal, plastics
17 #1 and #2, cardboard and paper) by July 2015. The law will ban the disposal of leaves, yard debris
18 and clean wood in July 2016 and food scraps by July 2020. All solid waste facilities (transfer stations,
19 drop-offs, and landfills) that collect trash were required to offer collection of baseline recyclables by
20 July 2014. (Commercial haulers were exempted from this requirement.) Solid waste facilities --
21 including commercial haulers – must offer collection of leaf and yard debris by July 2015 and food
22 scraps by July 2017. Facilities cannot charge an additional fee for the collection of recyclables, but
23 they can charge for the collection of yard debris and food scraps.

24 Brownington already has institutions and businesses that divert food scraps from the waste stream.
25 Additionally, residential food scraps may be collected at the Brownington/Evansville Recycling
26 Center. In 2013, Brownington diverted 4.5 tons of food waste from the waste stream.

27 Brownington belongs to the Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District and is represented on
28 its board of directors.

29 **EMS-Fire protection**

30 EMS and fire protection for the town of Brownington is provided by Orleans Village FD, a dry
31 hydrant is maintained in Brownington Village, Brownington Center, on Ticehurst Road, on Rt. 58
32 and on Brownington Pond. Rescue services are provided by Orleans Ambulance Service and are
33 satisfactory as of this time. Police protection is provided by the State Police and under contract with
34 the Orleans County Sheriff’s Department with Town meeting approval. Effective 911 addresses
35 have been established.

36 **Town Garage**

37 Until now, the Town of Brownington has operated a Road Department housed in a rented garage
38 facility. Brownington has secured land for a new town garage located on land currently owned by the
39 town located behind the school grounds and south of the Town clerk’s office. (See base map)

1 **Communications**

2 Brownington is well served by conventional telephone landlines, coaxial cable television and digital
3 satellite. Telecommunications is currently inadequate for modern home business and telecommuting
4 applications, however a cell tower (140 ft) has been approved and will be built on privately owned
5 property which will have the capacity to house up to 6 transformers serving up to three
6 telecommunications companies. (See base map.)

7 ***Facilities and Utilities Goals***

- 8 • Improve the utility of the Central School as an institution of public education, public
9 meetings and emergency shelter.
- 10 • Expand and integrate recreational resources and facilities.
- 11 • Insure the adequacy of water supply for firefighting.
- 12 • Provide adequate facilities for the Road Department and animal control.
- 13 • Provide for modern T-1, cellular and broadband data and voice transmission.

14 ***Facilities and Utilities Strategies***

- 15 • The Select Board and Planning Commission shall pursue grant funding for shelter
16 emergency generators.
- 17 • Provide information to landowners regarding the Vermont Landowner Liability Law to
18 encourage continued public access to private lands.
- 19 • Select Board and Planning Commission shall continue to study the availability of firefighting
20 water supplies, recommend locations and install dry hydrants where needed.
- 21 • Select Board shall investigate options for the construction of public building or buildings to
22 house Road Department equipment and operations and possibly an animal holding facility
23 for dogs impounded by the Town and propose such facility to the voters.
- 24 • The Select Board and Planning Commission shall pursue grants and program participation
25 for the provision of wireless and broadband communications.

26

1 **6. Housing**

2 ***Existing Housing Conditions***

3 The entire population of Brownington is housed, with 880 living in owner occupied dwellings and
4 108 in renter occupied dwellings. The average family size is 2.8 and the average household size is 2.4.
5 There are a total of 509 households in Brownington with 110 vacant units for seasonal or rental use.
6 According to 2010 Census figures there are 399 occupied housing units in the Town of
7 Brownington of which 357 (89.4%) are owner occupied and 42 (10.5%) are renter occupied. The
8 dwelling units in Brownington were exclusively single family dwellings either stick built or mobile
9 units.

10 ***Affordability***

11 According to Vermont Statute, housing is considered “affordable” if it is:

- 12 A) Housing that is owned by its inhabitants whose gross annual household income does not
- 13 exceed 80 percent of the county median income, or 80 percent of the standard metropolitan
- 14 statistical area income if the municipality is located in such an area, as defined by the U.S.
- 15 Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the total annual cost of the housing,
- 16 including principal, interest, taxes, insurance, and condominium association fees is not more
- 17 than 30 percent of the household's gross annual income.
- 18 B) Housing that is rented by its inhabitants whose gross annual household income does not
- 19 exceed 80 percent of the county median income, or 80 percent of the standard metropolitan
- 20 statistical area income if the municipality is located in such an area, as defined by the U.S.
- 21 Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the total annual cost of the housing,
- 22 including rent, utilities, and condominium association fees, is not more than 30 percent of
- 23 the household's gross annual income.

24 According to most current American Community Survey 5-Year averages, the median value of an
25 owner occupied housing unit in Brownington is \$143,300, compared to the county-wide median of
26 \$156,300. Median Selected Monthly Owner Costs (SMOC) for Brownington housing units with a
27 mortgage is \$1,134 and \$487 for housing units without a mortgage. Median gross rent is \$711.

28 Traditionally, the opportunities for affordable housing in Brownington consist of mobile homes and
29 rental units. However, owner-occupied units in Brownington are more likely to be considered
30 “affordable” than rental units -- even when there is a mortgage on the property.

31 **Table 6.1: Population Paying 30% of Household Income or More on Housing**

Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income*	Brownington	Orleans County
...with a mortgage	40.4%	40.4%
...without a mortgage	17.5%	27.6%
Gross Rent as Percentage of Household Income*	72.7%	54.9%

32 Source: American Community Survey Selected Household Characteristics, 2009-2013
33 *Figure excludes units where cost as a percentage of household income cannot be calculated.

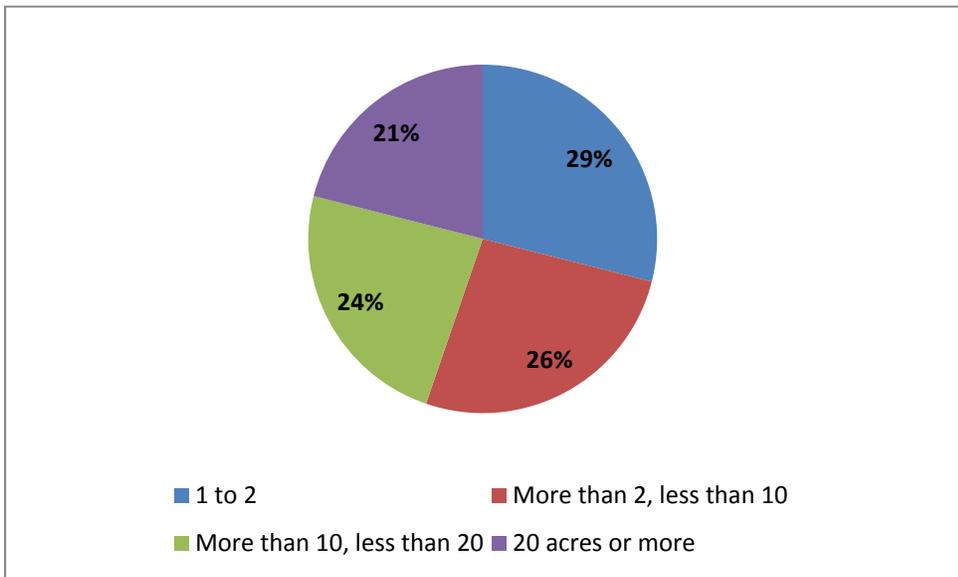
34 According to ACS estimates (which will differ from the Census), only about 11% of Brownington’s
35 housing units are currently renter-occupied, when compared to county-wide (22%), so the relative

1 lack of local rental opportunities is likely a cost driver. By contrast, mobile home properties
2 (unlanded and landed) account for about 15% of Brownington’s grand list. Not all of these
3 properties are necessarily primary residences, but it does appear that mobile home properties are the
4 most prevalent and likely form of affordable housing stock in Brownington.

5 ***Residential Development Patterns***

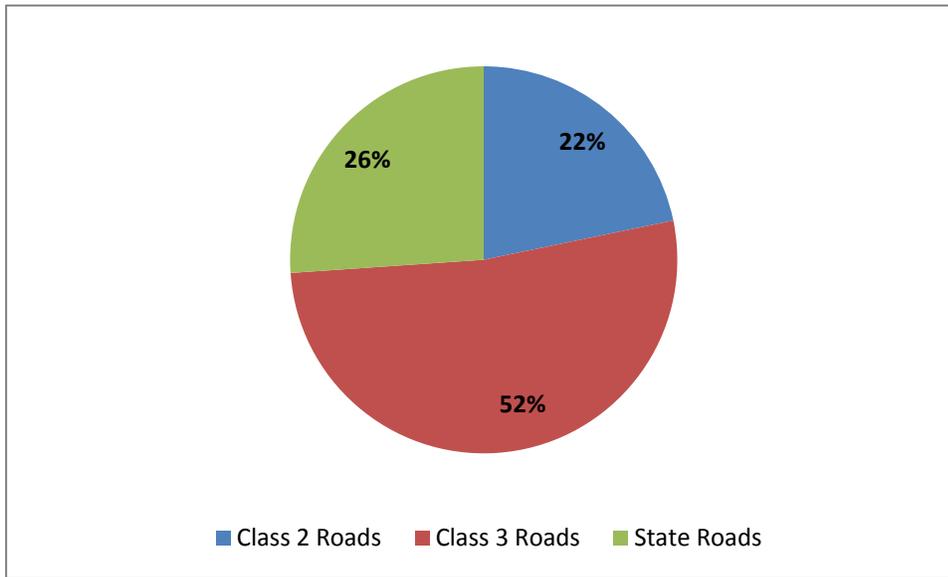
6 Brownington has no zoning, but a review of about a decade’s worth of Wastewater System and
7 Potable Water Supply Permits helps to shed some light on the nature of rural residential
8 development in Brownington. Since late 2004, there were about 38 permits issued for single-family
9 homes, and one for a duplex. (Lots created with a notice of permit requirement, which means that
10 the lots may be developed or even resubdivided later, were not counted for acreages.) Nearly half of
11 these residential developments occurred on lots greater than 10 acres.

12 **Figure 6.1: Acreage of New Home Development in Brownington over the past decade**



13
14 Source: Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Environment Conservation, 2004- 2014 Potable
15 Water/Wastewater Permits Issued for Development (excludes lots created with notice of permit requirement)
16 Where is development taking place? Wastewater permit data is not geo-referenced, but approximate
17 street (or highway) addresses are given on each permit. The majority of all permits issued on the
18 most recent 10-year period (including lots created with a “notice of permit” requirement), show that
19 more than half of residential development is taking place on Class 3 roads.
20

1 **Figure 6.2: Location of New Residential Development in Brownington 2004-2014**



2

3 Source: Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Environment Conservation, 2004- 2014 Potable
4 Water/Wastewater Permits Issued for Development (includes lots created with notice of permit requirement)

5 ***Housing Goals and Objectives***

- 6 • Brownington is dominated by owner occupied dwellings and will continue to be so for the
7 foreseeable future. The Planning Commission shall investigate and draft a recommendation
8 of a subdivision bylaw that would insure village densities would increase to the carrying
9 capacity of the land and thereby lower land costs associated with housing.
- 10 • The Town should encourage retirees to build in Brownington and investigate a possible
11 reduction in property taxes for the elderly.

12

1 **7. Energy**

2 Energy resources are available to Brownington in sufficient supply. Vermont Electric Cooperative,
3 Barton Electric, and Citizens Energy supply electricity. Wood, heating oil, and propane gas are all
4 available through local distribution. Gasoline and diesel fuel are available in adjacent towns and
5 through local fuel suppliers.

6 ***Conservation of Energy***

7 The Town of Brownington promotes energy conservation and acknowledges individual
8 responsibility for conservation of energy and protection of our natural resources. Brownington
9 believes that the most effective conservation efforts begin with the individual to incorporate lifestyle
10 behaviors which reduce our demand for energy.

11 Vermont's energy conservation efforts in recent years have focused on demand side management
12 (DSM) to increase energy efficiency, reduce energy demand and increase available energy supplies.
13 Several energy conservation programs exist in the State such as Efficiency Vermont, which can help
14 the Town as well as private homeowners identify and put into use energy conservation practices for
15 their homes. The Vermont Residential Energy Code—Residential Building Energy Standards
16 (RBES)—was passed by the Vermont State Legislature in May 1997 to establish standards to
17 promote energy conservation in all new residential construction.

18 In 2010 Northeastern Vermont Development Association performed a number of energy audits for
19 public buildings throughout the region. Energy audits for the Brownington Grange Hall and the
20 Town Clerk's office were completed. The audit report for the Grange Hall found a significant level
21 of air leakage and recommended insulation to the crawl space foundation, attic ceiling, and exterior
22 walls. Energy upgrades were estimated to be \$9,453 with a heating load decrease of 50% to 60%.
23 Payback in energy savings would be about three years. At the annual Town Meeting in 2015,
24 Brownington residents approved the transfer of the Grange Hall to the Orleans County Historical
25 society. Energy improvement recommendations should be kept in mind as improvements and
26 renovations are made to the building. The energy audit of the Town Clerk's office recommended
27 insulation improvements to the attic ceiling with a total cost of \$3,584. Since the heating load
28 decrease would be 10% to 15%, this is not economical work to carry out unless funds happen to be
29 available or there is an opportunity to coordinate the insulation improvement with other work.
30 Nevertheless, the energy audits recommendations should be kept in mind should the opportunity
31 arise.

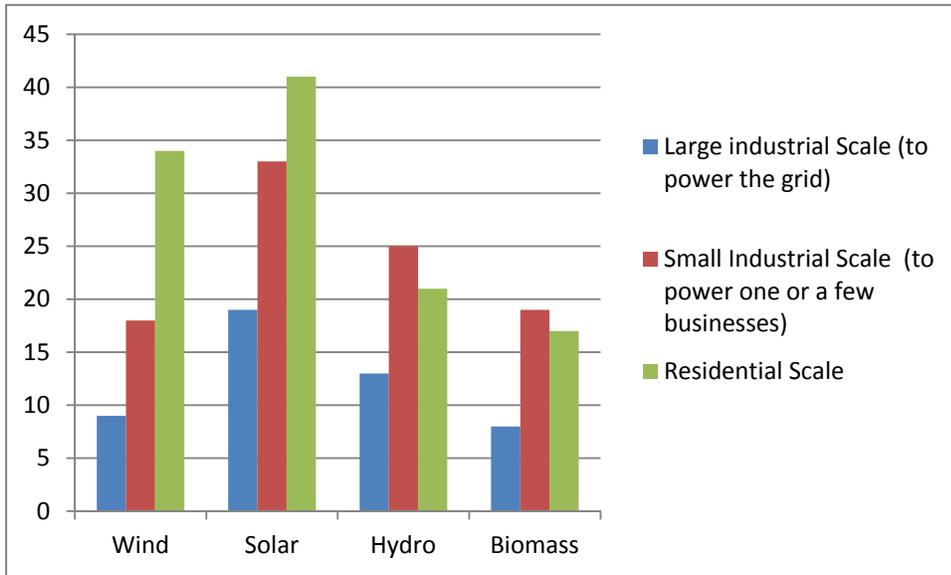
32 ***Renewable Energy***

33 Brownington is a net energy importer in an era of increasing energy costs. An adequate supply of
34 energy at an affordable cost is critical to the maintenance of existing enterprises and the attraction of
35 new ones. Brownington supports alternative energy sources such as solar, geothermal and small
36 scale wind.

37 Siting renewal energy facilities requires careful balance with other important natural and scenic
38 resources. The Town of Brownington, for example, considers its viewsheds to constitute a major
39 economic and social resource. In 2006, the Northeast Kingdom was one of only a handful of
40 destinations selected by National Geographic to participate in its Geotourism program. This concept
41 embraces "sustainable tourism" – enhancing the local economy while minimizing the negative

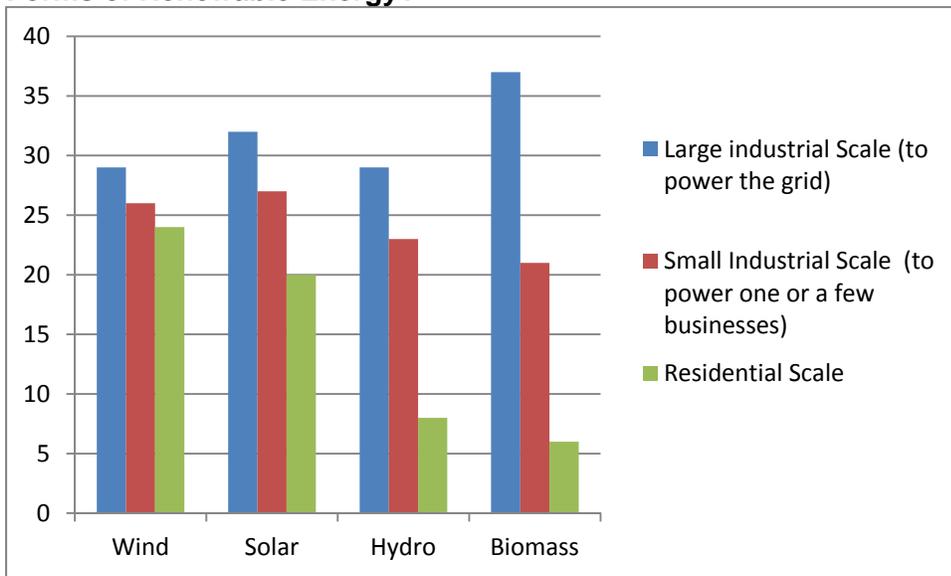
1 impacts on the environment and the local culture. While the Town wishes to maintain the integrity
 2 of our viewsheds, there is room for small wind generation on towers less than 140 feet tall.

3 **Figure 7.1: Should the Town Encourage the Following Forms of Renewable Energy?**



4
 5 Source: Brownington Community Survey

6 **Figure 7.2: Should the Town Development Specific Standards for Siting the Following**
 7 **Forms of Renewable Energy?**



8
 9 Source: Brownington Community Survey

10 ***Energy Goals***

- 11 • The Town of Brownington shall encourage local small scale development of wind, solar and
- 12 geothermal resources.
- 13 • The Planning Commission strongly advocates the conservation of energy.

1 ***Energy Strategies***

- 2 • The Planning Commission shall obtain the wind resources mapping for Orleans County and
3 make it available in the Town Clerks Office
- 4 • The Select Board shall support residential scaled wind power applications before Act 250
5 and PSB proceedings.
- 6 • The Town of Brownington shall encourage the establishment of village scale commercial
7 and service enterprises that will reduce vehicle use.
- 8 • This plan recommends the use of energy audits (NVDA) as well as energy saving products
9 such as insulation, efficient appliances, and when necessary the use of winter weatherization
10 products such as weather stripping, window plastic, and water heater wraps. New
11 construction and the replacement of old appliances, doors, and/or windows should always
12 be done with energy efficient products. In addition, energy efficient behavior (shutting lights
13 off when leaving the room, turning the thermostat down at night, etc.) should be taught and
14 used, at school, home and in the workplace.

15

1 **8. Economic Development**

2 ***Present conditions***

3 As is typical of a rural bedroom community, Brownington residents have traditionally travelled far
4 and wide to their sources of employment. More than 60% of the Brownington Community Survey
5 respondents indicated that they regularly commuted to work to the Newport/Derby area. Another
6 30% commuted to Barton/Orleans. The most recent data from the US Census Bureau largely
7 confirms this pattern of commuting.

8 **Table 8.1: Work Destination Report: Where People Who Live in Brownington are**
9 **Employed (all jobs)**

	Job count	Share
Total All Jobs	445	100%
Job Counts by Cities, Places, CDPs, where workers are employed		
Newport City	83	18.7%
Orleans Village	17	3.8%
St. Johnsbury (CDP)	15	3.4%
Burlington city	9	2.0%
Waterbury village	9	2.0%
South Burlington city	8	1.8%
Barre City	7	1.6%
Barton Village	7	1.6%
Derby Line	7	1.6%
Lyndonville	7	1.6%
Derby Center	6	1.3%
Rutland city	6	1.3%
Montpelier	5	1.1%
All other	259	58.2%

10 The US Census Bureau: On the Map Application and LEHD Origin 2011

11 According to latest American Community Survey 5 Year Averages (2009-2013), 71.8% of
12 Brownington’s civilian employed population are private wage and salary workers, 15.8% are
13 government workers, and 12.4% are self-employed in their own (non-incorporated) businesses.

14

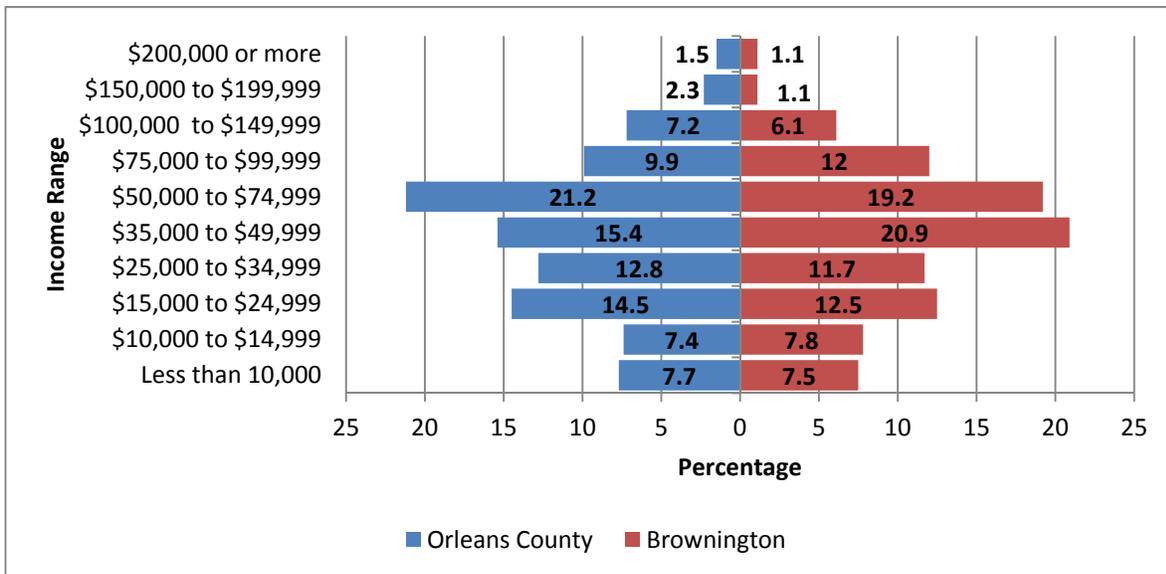
1 **Table 8.2: Industry and Occupation of Worker, Brownington Workforce**

Industry	%	Occupation	%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	25.3%	Sales and office occupations	27.3%
Construction	12.4%	Service occupations	21.4%
Manufacturing	12.3%	Management, business, science, and arts occupations	19.6%
Retail trade	11.7%	Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	16.5%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	8.8%	Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	15.2%
Public administration	7.7%		
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	6.4%		
Other services, except public administration	4.6%		
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	4.2%		
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	3.5%		
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	1.8%		
Wholesale trade	1.5%		

2 Source: American Community Survey, Selected Economic Characteristics 2009-2013

3 Brownington’s median household income is \$41,250, which is just slightly lower than the county
 4 median (\$41,953). Average household income in Brownington is \$50,648, which is even lower than
 5 the county average of \$52,730. In general, household incomes in Brownington are more weighted
 6 toward the middle (between \$35,000 and \$50,000).

7 **Figure 8.1: Household Incomes, Brownington and Orleans County**



8 Source: American Community Survey, Selected Economic Characteristics 2009-2013

1 ***Employment Opportunities in Brownington***

2 There are limited employment opportunities in Brownington. The most recent statistics from the
3 Vermont Department of Labor (2013) reports only 11 private ownership establishments employing
4 32 people, with an average wage of \$16,423. These figures only represent *covered* employment, so
5 self-employment opportunities are not included. Most employment activity in Brownington occurs
6 close to the land, either in agricultural or forestry, and it is fairly difficult to quantify the scale of
7 activity in terms of direct sales. There are about a dozen working farms in Brownington, and
8 Orleans County is the most agriculturally active county in the Northeast Kingdom. In forestry, there
9 are 25 parcels currently enrolled in the Vermont Use Value Appraisal Program. These parcels
10 account for 1996.42 acres.

11 ***Regional economic development implications***

12 Life in the Northeast Kingdom has long been marked by chronic underemployment and lagging
13 personal incomes. Orleans County has traditionally had one of the highest unemployment rates in
14 the state. (November 2014 non-seasonally adjusted figures puts the county unemployment rate at
15 about 5.0%, compared to 4.0% statewide.)

16 In the fall of 2012, an infusion of funds from the federal EB-5 Visa program proposed to bring a
17 reversal of fortune to the Kingdom. Planned EB-5-funded projects include:

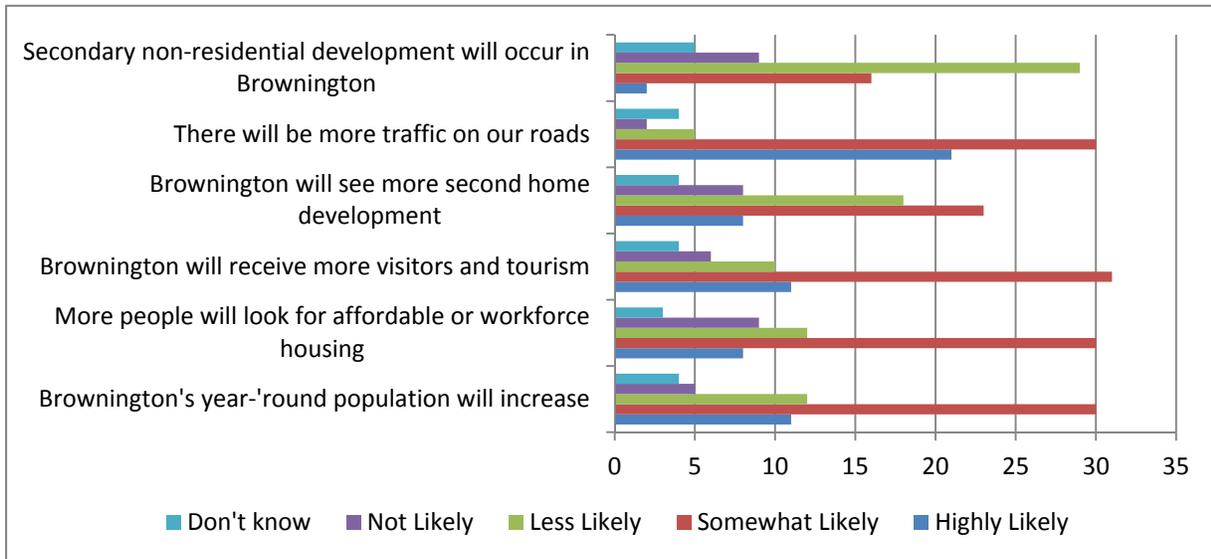
- 18 • AnC BIO Vermont: A 40 acre research campus in Newport City that has now received Act
19 250 approval.
- 20 • Expansion to the Newport State Airport in Coventry. Associated with the airport expansion
21 are plans to construct warehousing facilities, as well as a 50,000 square-foot airplane
22 assembly plant at the airport, which is expected to bring a number of skilled jobs to the
23 region.
- 24 • Resort development in Jay and in Burke. A 116-unit hotel and conference center is planned
25 for Burke Mountain, which will draw increased numbers of tourists. Similarly in Jay, new ski
26 amenities, as well as a 100 new housing units and an 84-unit hotel, will draw more visitors to
27 the region.
- 28 • Renaissance Block: An entire city block in Newport City is slated for demolition. In its place
29 will be a four-story mixed-use development with anchor businesses on the first two floors
30 and short- and long-term residential suites on the upper two.

31 Other developments in the Kingdom include the designation of Foreign Trade Zone #286, which
32 allows US- based companies to defer, reduce or eliminate customs duties on products admitted to
33 the zone.

34 These developments will invariably bring more people to the region. AnC BIO alone is expected to
35 hire about 500 people, of which 150 will earn salaries of \$75,000 and up. A workforce development
36 study released in July 2013 attributed about 1,100 new hospitality and tourism jobs related to the
37 resort development and the Renaissance block. Many of the jobs would require minimal post-
38 secondary education. Early estimates for total direct, indirect, and induced job creation indicated
39 about 2,000 direct jobs, 3,000 total jobs (which includes indirect and induced jobs), and a net
40 migration to the region as high as 4,500. Where newcomers might choose to live remains unclear,
41 but the region will see an increased demand for housing at all income levels, more visitors, and
42 increased spending power.

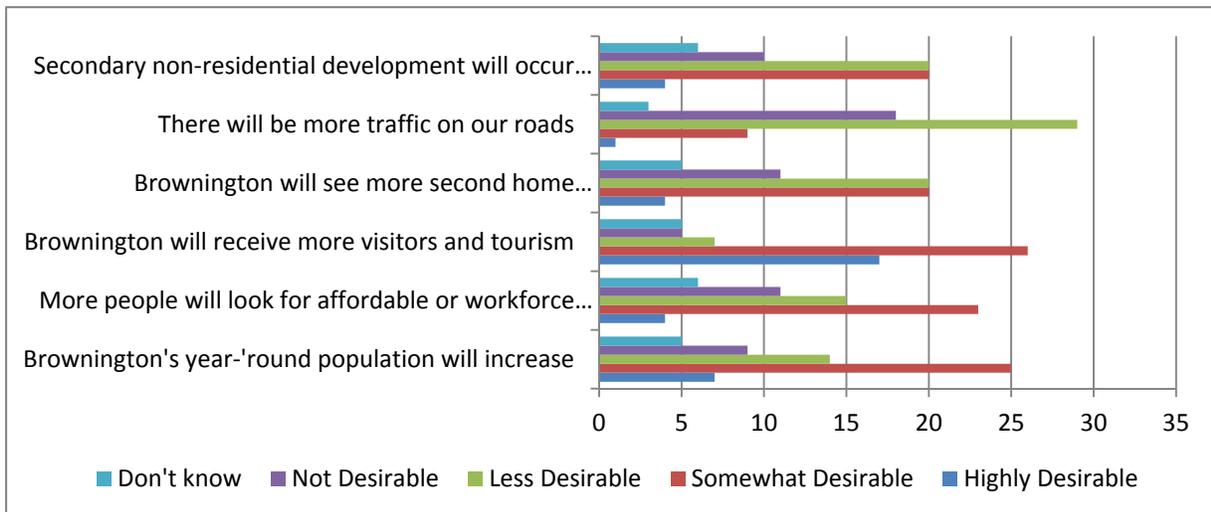
1 According to an economic analysis of job creation by counties, Orleans County showed the greatest
 2 percentage increase in job growth -- the first time ever that Orleans had led the state in that arena.
 3 The analysis showed that non-farm jobs grew by 8.4% in the county between December 2009 and
 4 June 2014. According to the review, the EB-5 foreign investments fueling Jay Peak and other parts
 5 of the NEK had driven that growth.² Research also seems to suggest that traditional commuting
 6 patterns are shrinking. Traditionally, many Orleans County residents have travelled outside the
 7 county to find work. Economic research also indicates a modest increase in adjusted gross income,
 8 with more wages coming from within the county in recent years.³

9 **Figure 8.1: Proposed EB-5 Developments – Likelihood of Impacts**



10
 11 Source: Brownington Community Survey

12 **Figure 8.2: Proposed EB-5 Developments – Desirability of Impacts**



13
 14 Source: Brownington Community Survey

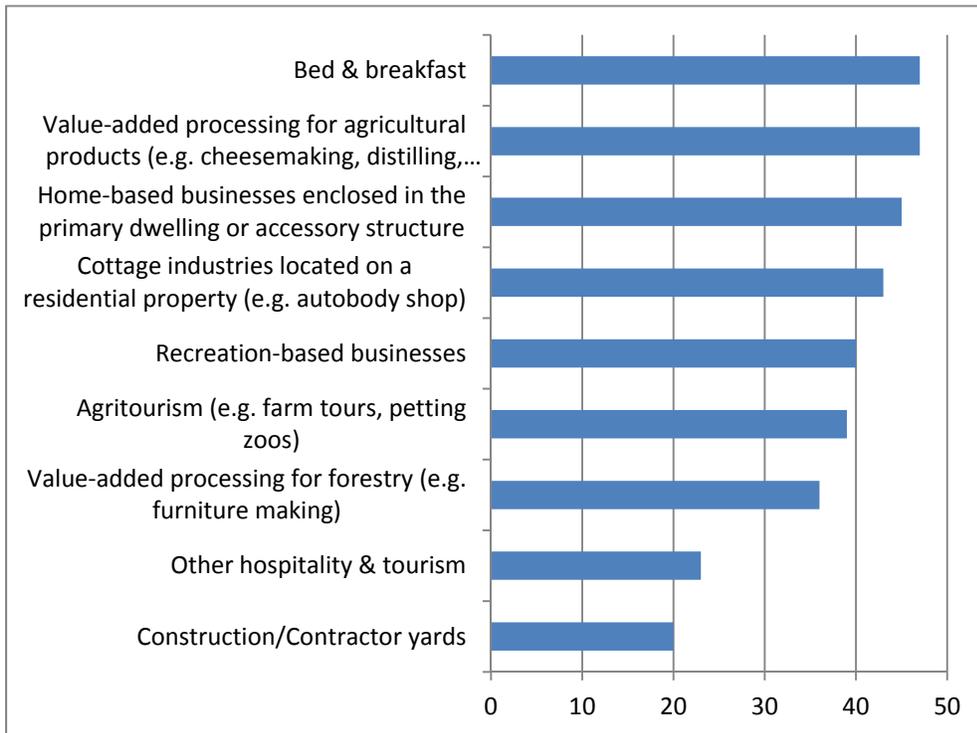
² Kavett, Rockler & Associates LLC: July 2014 Economic Review and Revenue Forecast Update

³ Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development: Impacts of Growth on the Northeast Kingdom, October 2014

1 ***Brownington’s Vision for Economic Development***

2 Economic development in Brownington is an issue of scale. Brownington’s previous plan called for
3 “village scale” economic development that complemented the community’s rural character.
4 Respondent to the community-wide survey that accompanied this plan update attempted to quantify
5 “village scale” economic development.

6 **Figure 8.3: Type of Economic Development in Brownington that are “Village Scale”**



7
8 Source: Brownington Community Survey

9 ***Economic Development Goal***

- 10 • To broaden Brownington’s economic base by encouraging small, non-polluting businesses
11 and industries to locate in Brownington.

12 ***Economic Development Strategies***

- 13 • Develop mutually supportive preservation and economic development policies that integrate
14 with and complement regional and supporting plans.
- 15 • Promote tourism by developing existing recreational and historical assets and identifying
16 other recreational opportunities.
- 17 • Encourage the establishment of village scale commercial uses.
- 18 • Obtain and maintain Village Center designation in Brownington Village so that owners of
19 income-producing properties can apply for tax credit for fit-up and rehabilitation of historic
20 properties.
- 21 • Support and promote the sale of local agricultural and forestry products.

1 **9: Preservation of Rare and Irreplaceable Areas, Scenic and**
2 **Historic Features**

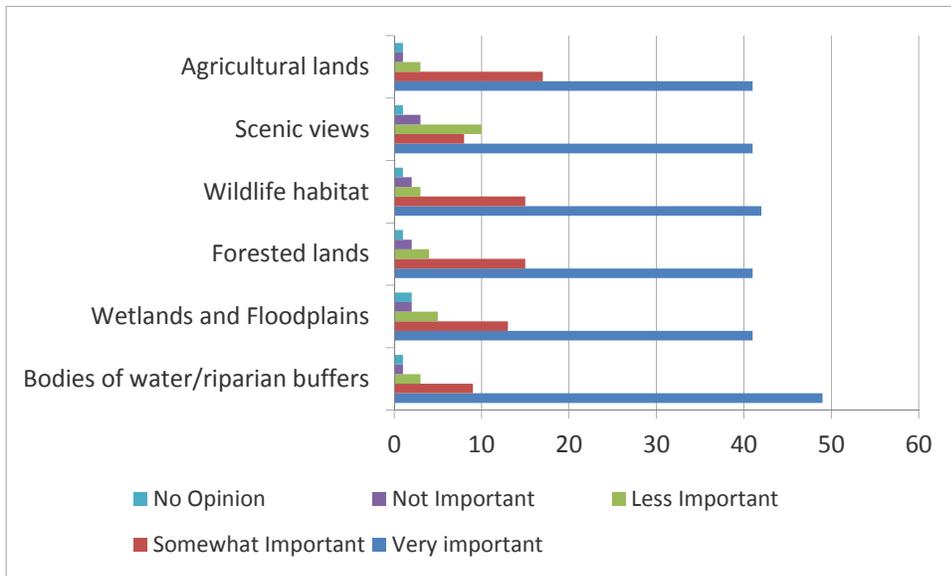
3 ***Rare and Irreplaceable Areas***

4 Brownington shares Brownington Pond with the Town of Derby to the north, the Brownington
5 shore of the pond is largely underdeveloped. As of July 1, 2014, the State of Vermont does require a
6 permit for virtually all development or clearing within 250 feet of the mean water level of
7 Brownington Pond.

8 Brownington also contains a stretch of the Willoughby River which once powered industries in the
9 Evansville area. Wetlands are a common feature and provide moose and beaver habitat. Some of
10 the largest concentration of wetlands can be found in southeastern border of the town, south of
11 Evansville Road, and on the northern border of the town, west of Willoughby Lake Road. Both
12 areas also contain Northern White Cedar swamps, and are identified as “significant natural
13 communities,” because high quality examples are considered to be fairly uncommon in Vermont.

14 Most of Brownington’s land area is farm and forest land which is a rapidly disappearing resource in
15 much of the state.

16 **Figure 9.1: How Important is it to Protect the Following?**



17
18 Source: Brownington Community Survey

19 ***Rare and Irreplaceable Areas - Preservation Goals***

- 20 • Retain the town’s rural character and its economic base of working farms and productive
21 forest without hampering the landowner’s ability to profit from either the use or sale of his
22 or her assets.

23 ***Rare and Irreplaceable Areas - Preservation Strategies***

- 24 • Encourage stewardship of the town’s natural resources through information and education.

- 1 • Investigate the use of subdivision regulations to preserve parcel sizes that are viable
2 economically for farm and forest uses.
- 3 • Inventory rare and irreplaceable areas, wetlands, pond shore lands and riparian buffers; The
4 Planning Commission shall undertake such an inventory utilizing state and local resources.
- 5 • Promote viability of resources through promotion of Current Use, Vermont Land Trust and
6 the sale of local Vermont products.

7 ***Historic and Scenic Resources***

8 The first road in Orleans County was the Hinman Settler Road, which connected Brownington to
9 Greensboro and Derby. Before the arrival of rail travel, Brownington Village was once a stage coach
10 stop for travelers between Canada and Boston. The village was a bustling center of commerce and
11 cultural activity and was home to the county’s first grammar school.

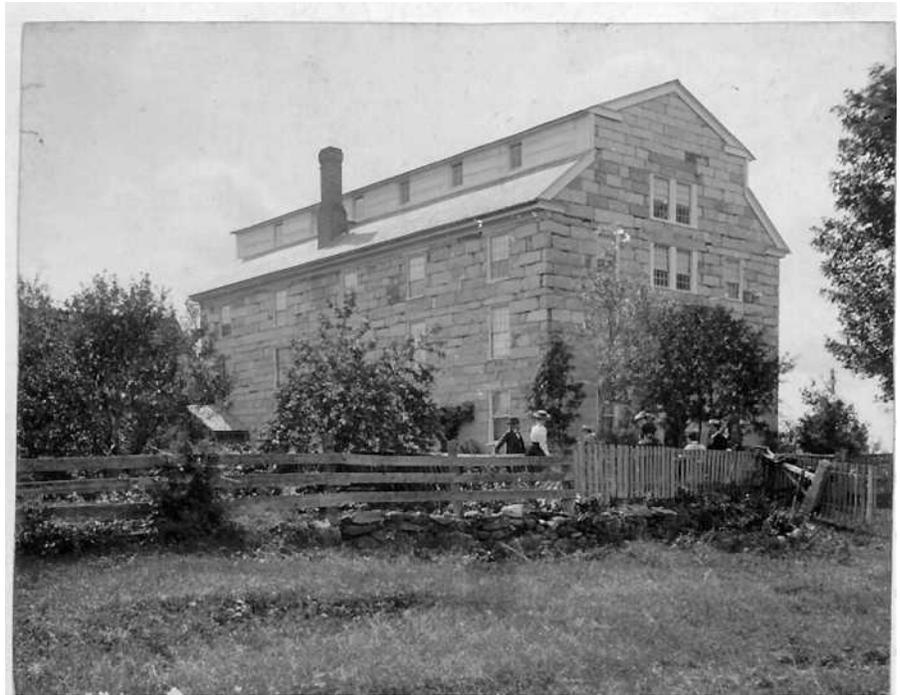
12 Brownington Historic District consists of the northern portion of the Brownington Village. Listed
13 on the National Historic Register of Historic Places since 1973, the district contains an impressive
14 assemblage of historic buildings and sites that speak to Town’s rich and unique history. They are
15 valuable resources to be managed and protected. The Orleans County Historical Society owns seven
16 buildings and 55 acres of land in or near the district: the Samuel Read Hall House, the Cyrus Eaton
17 House, the Twilight Homestead, the Twilight Farmhouse, the Old Stone House and the Lawrence
18 barn. The latter is not original to the site as it was donated by the Ruth and Roland Lawrence family
19 of Albany in 1997. The barn is currently being used to house an exhibit of farming and farm
20 equipment in Orleans County. The Orleans County Grammar School building (now known as the
21 Grange Hall), opened in 1823, and was deeded over to the Orleans County Historical Society in
22 early 2015. Buildings in the district not owned by the Orleans County Historical Society are the
23 former Rice and Going Hotel, and the Brownington Congregational Church.

24 Also located in the district is the Observatory which offers sweeping views from the top of Prospect
25 Hill. Originally built by in 1898 by William Barstow Strong, an alumnus of the school, the
26 Observatory has since been rebuilt twice. The Observatory and the land on which it is located are
27 owned by the Orleans County Historical Society, which is committed to protecting this scenic asset.

28 Brownington Village’s rich history is inextricably linked to the legacy of Alexander Twilight. Born in
29 Corinth, Vermont, and educated at Middlebury College, he is the first African-American known to
30 have earned a bachelor’s degree from an American College or University and the first to serve as a
31 state legislator. He arrived in Brownington in 1829 and became the principal of the Orleans County
32 Grammar School. He also did double duty as the minister of the Congregational Church. At that
33 time, students came to the school from all over Orleans County (and some from even further away)
34 and boarded at residences in the village. When an academy in Craftsbury was chartered by the
35 legislature in 1829, Alexander Twilight looked for a way to keep the school sustainable and
36 competitive in the face of emerging competition. His vision for a central boarding facility, the four-
37 story stone “Athenian Hall,” was not shared by the trustees of the school. Construction commenced
38 in 1834 and continued over the course of the next two years, largely due to the sheer will and
39 determination of Mr. Twilight, who endeavored at great personal expense.

1 Alexander Twilight left the
2 school in 1847, and the Stone
3 House closed in 1859 due to
4 diminishing enrollment. For a
5 while, Alexander Twilight's
6 widow remained in the Stone
7 House. By 1918, the long-
8 vacant structure was acquired
9 by the Orleans County
10 Historical Society.

11 The Orleans County Grammar
12 School was moved to its
13 present location in 1869, was
14 acquired by the town and
15 became the Grange Hall. In
16 2014, the building was
17 essentially "condemned"
18 because it was no longer
19 deemed insurable, due to the
20 lack of running water and
21 bathrooms, as well as some
22 structural issues. In 2015, the Orleans County Historical Society acquired the property from the
23 Town with the intention of restoring its functionality in a way that will respect the historic integrity
24 of the building. The Orleans County Historical Society intends to move the structure back to its



The Old Stone House in the late 1800s. (Photo courtesy of the Orleans County Historical Society)

25



Orleans County Grammar School (The Grange Hall) in its present location. (Photo courtesy of the Orleans County Historical Society)

41 for their historic, architectural, and/or engineering merit includes about 50 Brownington structures
42 and one district. Properties listed on the HSSS are evaluated by the Advisory Council for Historic
43 Preservation for inclusion on the State Historic Register.

original location (which has been identified through some preliminary archeological investigation). The structure, once restored, will be available for community functions as well. The transfer of the Grange Hall to the Orleans County Historical Society was approved by the voters at annual meeting.

Historic Preservation Resources

Listing or participation in these programs is voluntary. They do not, in themselves, place a restriction on the property owner to use or dispose of the property.

The Historic Sites and Structures Survey (HSSS): This statewide inventory of historic buildings and structures that are significant

1 **State Register of Historic Places:** Properties listed in the State register or deemed eligible for the
2 State register are subject to special consideration in Act 250 reviews in order to determine if a
3 proposed development will have an undue adverse effect on the historic resource. Other projects
4 that use state or federal funds will be subject to review.

5 **National Register of Historic Places:** Properties listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National
6 Register may be eligible for grant funds for rehabilitation or restoration (such as grants from
7 Department of Historic Preservation or Preservation Trust of Vermont). Properties may also be
8 eligible for substantial federal tax credits for rehabilitation projects. In 1973, the Brownington
9 Village Historic District was added to the National Register. Its listing describes the significance of
10 the district:

11 *“[The district] represents the survival in an exceptionally pure form, of the hill village typical of the*
12 *first settlements in northern Vermont. The village has retained the integrity and architectural*
13 *character of an agricultural community of the early 19th century in a setting of exceptional natural*
14 *beauty. The combination of farms and residences within the village and the placement of*
15 *institutional buildings on a common illustrates both the agricultural nature of the region and a*
16 *planning concept characteristic of New England.”*

17 **Village Center Designation:** This program offers tax credits to fit-up or rehabilitation to income-
18 producing properties. The property does not have to be “historic” to be eligible for tax credit – just
19 built before 1983 and located within the Village Center designation area. However, if a property *is*
20 listed in the National Register and eligible to receive federal tax credits, it can be eligible for
21 substantial state tax credits on top of the Federal credit – about 10% of rehabilitation costs up to
22 \$500,000. Entities without an income tax liability, such as a nonprofit, can sell the tax credit to a
23 bank or insurer for as much as .90 on the dollar. This program can significantly boost the cash flow
24 for a potential rehabilitation project. Brownington’s Village Center designation, which expired in
25 2012, allowed the Stone House Museum to apply for tax credits. Although no tax credits were
26 awarded while the designation was active, redesignation would be a positive step toward retaining
27 the aesthetic and architectural integrity of the Village.

28 ***Scenic and Historic Preservation Goal***

- 29 • The Brownington Select Board and Planning Commission shall seek to protect the integrity
30 of the Town’s historical district and assets and establish more direct local control over those
31 assets.
- 32 • Preserve Brownington’s historic assets.

33 ***Scenic and Historic Preservation Objectives***

- 34 • The Brownington Planning Commission should identify viewshed resources which would
35 then be protected by intervention by the Select Board in Act 250 and PSB proceedings.
- 36 • Obtain and maintain Village Center Designation for Brownington Village.
- 37 • Investigate the establishment of a design control district in Brownington Village.
- 38 • Support the stabilization and adaptive reuse of the Grange Hall.
- 39 • Inventory other historic assets in the Town of Brownington.

- 1
 - 2
 - 3
- Take advantage of Federal, State and local programs available for development or preservation of local cultural and historic assets.

1 **10: Flood Resilience**

2 As of July 1, 2014, all duly adopted municipal plans must contain a flood resilience plan that
3 identifies flood and fluvial erosion hazard areas and designates those areas to be protected, including
4 floodplains, river corridors, land adjacent to streams, wetlands, and upland forests to reduce the risk
5 of flood damage to infrastructure and property; and recommends policies and strategies to protect
6 the areas.

7 ***Existing Conditions***

8 All of Brownington is located in the Barton River watershed, a drainage area of approximately 164
9 square miles. The mainstem of the Barton originates from Tildy’s Pond in Glover, then travels
10 through Barton and the Village of Orleans, on to Lake Memphremagog’s South Bay in Coventry,
11 just bypassing Brownington at its southwest boundary. The Barton River watershed contains one
12 large tributary watershed, the Willoughby River (62 square miles), which drains from Lake Willoughby
13 in Westmore, runs through Evansville and enters the Barton River just north of Orleans Village.⁴
14 The Brownington Branch flows from northeast in Brownington, crossing Chilafoux, Pepin, and
15 Schoolhouse Roads, before joining the Willoughby near Center Road. A River Corridor Plan
16 released in 2008 notes mass failures of riverbanks along reaches of the Willoughby River from
17 Churchill Road to Center Road, where deposition of sediment have created steep riffles and flood
18 chutes. The study noted that one riffle upstream of the Center Bridge Road had directed the
19 majority of flow against a bridge abutment.

20 ***Flood Risks in Brownington***

21 While the Town of Brownington has had a history of flooding, losses to public infrastructure have
22 intensified in recent years. The summers of 1996, 1998 and 2002 saw moderate road damage
23 throughout the town and in the village areas. Damage was largely contained to local back roads due
24 to washouts. During Tropical Storm Irene, the Center Road Bridge, which connects Brownington to
25 Barton on Route 58, was destroyed. The bridge did not reopen until more than a year later in
26 November of 2012. The total cost to replace the bridge was \$986,219.35. FEMA provided
27 \$106,508.86. The Town received \$44,806.06 from the state, with additional funding from three
28 points on the grand list (\$44,359.81) and a state structures grant (\$78,435). The Town of
29 Brownington shared remaining expenses with neighboring Barton.

30
31 **Table 10.1: FEMA Flood-Related Declarations and FEMA Public Assistance, 1996 –**
32 **Present**

FEMA Declaration #	Declaration Date	Description	Total FEMA Public Assistance Received (Rounded to nearest \$)
FEMA-DR-1101	January 1996	Ice jams and flooding	\$4,233
FEMA-DR-1228	August 1998	Severe storms and flooding	\$5,701
FEMA-DR-	July 2002	Severe storms and flooding	\$15,779

⁴ Restoring Water Quality in the Lake Memphremagog Basin: River Corridor Plan for the Barton and Johns Rivers, Northwoods Stewardship Center, December 2008

1428		– road and culvert repair. (Two public assistance projects.)	
FEMA-DR-1995	June 2011	Severe storms and flooding – road and culvert repair to Dutton, Whiting, Chalifoux, Pepin, Ticehurst, and Hinman Roads. (Six public assistance projects)	\$117,241
FEMA-DR-4022	September 2011	Severe storms and flooding – road, bridge and culvert repair to Pepin Road Bridge, and replacement of Center Road Bridge on the Willoughby River. (Eight public assistance projects)	\$860,043

1 Source: Retrieved from FEMA.gov August 4, 2014. FEMA and the Federal Government cannot vouch for the data
2 or analyses derived from these data after the data have been retrieved from the Agency's website(s) and/or Data.gov.
3 Roads, bridges, and culverts can and should be reinforced and sited to minimize future damage.
4 Nevertheless, directing development away from the Town's natural flood protection assets will be
5 the least costly and most effective mitigation strategy in the long run. A comprehensive mitigation
6 strategy must take inventory of the natural means of flood hazard protection – floodplains, river
7 corridors, wetlands, and upland forested cover.

8 **Floodplains**

9 Floodplains are low-lying areas adjacent to a river channel that become inundated as floodwaters rise
10 up and spill out over a river bank. They provide an important ecological function by storing and
11 conveying floodwaters, reducing downstream flood velocities, and mitigating riverbank erosion.
12 Floodplains also help to protect water quality by filtering nutrients and impurities from runoff,
13 processing organic wastes, and moderating temperature fluctuations.⁵
14 Brownington's floodplains are depicted on a FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) that was
15 created in 1974 and somewhat revised in 1976. This map depicts the Special Flood Hazard areas,
16 which are floodplains that would likely become inundated during a significant flood known as a
17 "base flood." The base flood is often referred to as the "100-year flood." Brownington's FIRM is
18 not accompanied by any insurance studies or base flood elevations, which would indicate how high
19 the water would rise in a 100-year flood event.
20 Unfortunately, the term "100-year flood" is misleading, because it creates the false impression that a
21 flood of that magnitude will only occur once a century. What the term really means is that the base
22 flood has a 1% chance of flooding in ANY given year. With a one percent annual chance, a structure
23 in the Special Flood Hazard Area has more than a one-in-four chance of being affected by a flood
24 during a thirty year mortgage. By comparison the same structure has less than a one-in-ten chance of
25 being affected by fire over the same mortgage.⁶

⁵ Floodplain Management Requirements A Study Guide and Desk Reference for Local Officials, FEMA 2005

⁶ www.floodready.Vermont.gov

1 Brownington’s FIRM is a paper map. Its age and lack of detail make interpretation difficult. The
2 Special Flood Hazard Areas are found mostly along the Brownington Branch and along the
3 Willoughby River. The highest concentration of development in a flood hazard area appears to be
4 near Route 58, in Evansville, along the Willoughby River. There are other hazard areas along Day
5 Brook to Brownington Pond, where some development may be affected. Remaining hazard areas
6 have no development and appear to be in state conserved lands.

7 ***River Corridors***

8 About two-thirds of Vermont’s flood-related losses occur outside of mapped floodplains, and this
9 reveals the fundamental limitations of the FEMA FIRMs: A mapped floodplain makes the
10 dangerous assumption that the river channel is static, that the river bends will never shift up or
11 down valley, that the river channel will never move laterally, or that river beds will never scour down
12 or build up.

13 In reality, river channels are constantly undergoing some physical adjustment process. This might be
14 gradual, resulting in gradual stream bank erosion or sediment deposit – or it might be sudden and
15 dramatic, resulting a stream bank collapse. The losses experienced during the May 2011 storms and
16 Tropical Storm Irene were most often related to the latter. In fact, this type of flood-related damage
17 occurs frequently in Vermont, due in part to the state’s mountainous terrain.

18 Land near stream banks are particularly vulnerable to erosion damage by flash flooding, bank
19 collapse, and stream channel dynamics. The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation,
20 Agency of Natural Resources, has identified river corridors, which consist of the minimum area
21 adjacent to a river that is required to accommodate the dimensions, slope, planform, and buffer of
22 the naturally stable channel and that is necessary for the natural maintenance or natural restoration
23 of a dynamic equilibrium condition. In other words, the river corridor provides “wobble room” for a
24 stream as its channel changes over time. Keeping development out of the river corridors therefore
25 reduces vulnerability to erosion. The statewide river corridors maps will be released very soon, and
26 these maps will show any streams with a drainage area of two square miles or greater.

27 ***Uplands and Wetlands***

28 Proper management of upland areas also plays an important role in flood hazard management.
29 Limiting clearing of upland slopes will help to attenuate flood flows and reduce stormwater runoff.
30 Brownington’s forest cover, particularly in areas with steep slopes and high elevations (where
31 headwaters are located) should be protected. Conservation easements and enrollment in the Current
32 Use Program may be an effective way to protect existing forested cover.

33 Wetlands also have the capacity to retain significant amounts of water. The State of Vermont
34 regulates activities in and adjacent to wetlands. These rules apply to the wetlands and associated
35 buffer zones within 100 feet of Class 1 wetlands, and 50 feet of Class II wetlands. Any activity in a
36 Class I or II wetland requires a state permit. Brownington’s highest concentration of wetlands can
37 be found on the town’s northern border with Charleston, near Route 5A, and the southeastern
38 corner of the town, near Evansville Road (Route 58). Both areas are Class 2 wetlands and are hosts
39 to significant natural communities.

40 ***Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund***

41 The Town has received public assistance for six federally-declared disasters since 1999. (One is not
42 listed in Table 10.1 because it was an unusually heavy winter storm that required assistance with

1 snow removal.) When a community requires public assistance, FEMA funds generally cover 75% of
 2 the loss. To date, the State’s Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF) has provided half of
 3 the matching funds (about 12.5%), and the town has assumed the remainder of the cost. In October
 4 2014, however, new legislation will tie the level of ERAF funding to specific local initiatives to
 5 reduce flood-related risks and prepare for emergencies.

6 For federally declared disasters that occur after October 23, 2014, ERAF will contribute half of the
 7 required match only if the town has taken all the following steps to reduce flood damage. Otherwise,
 8 the level of State funding will be reduced to 30% of the remaining match, which will usually be
 9 about 7.5% of the total cost:

- | | |
|----|---|
| 10 | 1. Adopt the most current Town Road and Bridge Standards (which can be found in the |
| 11 | <i>VTrans Orange Book: Handbook for Local Officials</i>). |
| 12 | 2. Adopt flood regulations that meet the minimum standards for enrollment in the National |
| 13 | Flood Insurance Program |
| 14 | 3. Maintain a Local Emergency Operations Plan (adopt annually after town meeting and |
| 15 | submit before May 1) |
| 16 | 4. Adopt a FEMA-approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. |

17
 18 Currently, the town meets requirements #1 and #3. Loss data from the May 2011 storm helps
 19 illustrate the potential financial impact to the community if the Town does not meet all the ERAF
 20 requirements in another declared disaster.

21 **Table 10.2: Brownington Public Assistance Received in FEMA-DR-1995**

Actual Funding from May Storm					What funding scenario would have been AFTER 10/23/14	
Damage	Project Total	Federal Share	State Share	Town Share	State Share	Town Share
Dutton	\$24,567.12	\$18,425.34	\$3,070.89	\$3,070.89	\$1,842.53	\$4,299.25
Whiting	\$4,785.91	\$3,589.43	\$598.24	\$598.24	\$358.94	\$837.54
Chalifoux	\$22,235.72	\$16,676.79	\$2,779.47	\$2,779.47	\$1,667.68	\$3,891.25
Pepin	\$55,291.48	\$41,468.61	\$6,911.44	\$6,911.44	\$4,146.86	\$9,676.01
Ticehurst	\$25,759.08	\$19,319.31	\$3,219.89	\$3,219.89	\$1,931.93	\$4,507.84
Hinman	\$23,681.81	\$17,761.36	\$2,960.23	\$2,960.23	\$1,776.14	\$4,144.32
TOTAL			\$19,540.14	\$19,540.14	\$11,724.08	\$27,356.20

22 ***Transportation Infrastructure***

23 Brownington’s culvert and bridge inventory noting the location, size and condition of all culverts
 24 and bridges in Town can be found in the Vermont Online Bridge and Culvert Inventory Tool
 25 (VOBCIT). At present there are 364 culverts that are classified in the system, the majority of which
 26 are at least in GOOD condition (73% GOOD, 3% EXCELLENT). The remainder are FAIR (15%)
 27 or POOR (6%) or URGENT, CRITICAL, or UNKNOWN (3%). This inventory is being updated
 28 by the Town. Those that are considered URGENT (meaning that they are failing or likely to fail in
 29 the future) can be found on Pepin Road, Lafoe Lane, Gaye Hill, and Ticehurst.

1 **Flood Hazard Regulations**

2 The primary benefit of joining the National Flood Insurance Program (other than meeting the
3 ERAF requirements) is enabling Brownington residents to obtain flood insurance at more affordable
4 rates. Federally-backed lending institutions require flood insurance on any mortgage in the Special
5 Flood Hazard Area, regardless of whether the Town participates in the National Flood Insurance
6 Program. This could therefore be very helpful to property owners who are attempting to refinance
7 or sell properties in the flood hazard area. Property owners outside of the Special Flood Hazard
8 Area also would be able to purchase flood insurance, and at preferred risk rates.

9 The Town of Brownington does not participate in the National Flood Insurance Program because it
10 does not administer and enforce flood hazard regulations. In order to participate, the Town would
11 have to adopt regulations that meet FEMA’s minimum standards (found in CFR44), and the
12 development standards would have to be enforced in the Special Flood Hazard Areas shown on the
13 FEMA FIRM. The minimally compliant regulations would not prohibit development in Special
14 Flood Hazard Area, but new development would have to meet certain standards, such as elevation
15 and floodproofing. If an existing residential structure currently in the Special Flood Hazard Area
16 were more than 50% damaged from any cause, the structure would have to be brought into
17 compliance by elevating it to the base flood elevation, prohibiting an enclosed below-grade
18 basement, and allowing for flood waters to flow through through basement openings to reduce
19 hydrostatic pressure. Existing non-residential structures more than 50% damaged would need to be
20 flood-proofed to at least the base flood elevation.

21 Because the data on Brownington’s FEMA FIRM is dated and possibly incorrect, it is possible that
22 many of the approximately 25 structures shown on the FIRM are not actually located in the Special
23 Flood Hazard Area. If this can be demonstrated with appropriate survey data, those property
24 owners can seek a Letter of Map Amendment in order to remove the structure from the regulatory
25 flood hazard area.

26 While minimally compliant flood hazard regulations will allow property owners to purchase flood
27 insurance at more affordable rates, the regulations should not be seen as an effective way to
28 minimize flood risks. The minimally compliant standards still allow development in the Special
29 Flood Hazard Area, so it is possible to cut off access to critical floodplain storage, resulting in
30 increases to the base flood elevations and flood velocities to other properties.

31 The legislative changes to ERAF funding propose to address the limitations of the National Flood
32 Insurance Program by providing an incentive: Under ERAF, the Town may receive an increased
33 state match for federally declared losses, if the town adopts flood regulations that are more
34 aggressive than the minimum standards of the National Flood Insurance Program. These above-
35 and-beyond standards include prohibiting most forms of new development in the river corridor,
36 prohibiting most forms of new development in the Special Flood Hazard Area, and requiring
37 structures that are more than 50% damaged to be elevated to at least one foot above the base flood
38 elevation. Under this scenario, the Town’s out-of-pocket expenses from the Table 10.2 would have
39 been \$11,724.08, which would be 40% less than the actual expense to the town. All of these
40 measures should be explored as way to minimize taxpayer expense in the event of future flood-
41 related losses.

42 **Local Emergency Operations Plan**

43 The Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP) establishes lines of responsibilities in the critical
44 hours immediately following a disaster. This information is particularly important in coordinating

1 responses through mutual aid towns, and regional and state entities. The LEOP is updated and
2 adopted annually after Town Meeting Day.

3 ***Local Hazard Mitigation Plan***

4 A local hazard mitigation plan prioritizes hazard issues and details next steps for addressing them. It
5 is required by FEMA in order to receive grant funding to reduce or eliminate hazards such as
6 moving or elevating structures or acquiring repetitive loss structures. A local hazard mitigation plan
7 was developed for Brownington as an annex to regional plan for the Northeast Kingdom. It was
8 adopted and approved by FEMA in 2005 and expired in 2010. Since that time, the FEMA approval
9 process has become more rigorous. The town will now need to develop a single-jurisdiction plan.
10 The Town has requested funds from FEMA to cover the cost of putting the plan together. The
11 Town has also requested hazard mitigation funds from FEMA to acquire a generator for the
12 school's emergency shelter. If awarded, the generator funds will not be committed until the Town
13 develops a FEMA-approved local hazard mitigation plan.

14 ***Flood Resilience Goals:***

- 15 • Mitigate Brownington's flood hazards in the most cost-effective manner possible.
- 16 • Minimize the risk exposure and associated expense to Brownington tax payers.
- 17 • Ensure the Town and its facilities are prepared to meet the demands of the next flood.
- 18 • Ensure the Town can receive the maximum outside assistance in the event of the next
19 federally declared disaster.

20 ***Flood Resilience Strategies:***

- 21 • Identify and protect Brownington's natural flood protection assets, including floodplains,
22 river corridors, other lands adjacent to streams, wetlands, and upland forested cover.
- 23 • Adopt flood hazard regulations that at a minimum, ensure eligibility for flood insurance
24 through the National Flood Insurance Program.
- 25 • Review and evaluate statewide river corridor information, when it becomes available.
26 Consider adopting regulations that will protect erosion prone areas for additional
27 development and encroachment.
- 28 • Maintain and regularly update the Local Emergency Operations Plan.
- 29 • Continue to meet the VTrans Road and Bridge standards. Participate in regional road
30 foreman trainings and Transportation Advisory Committee meetings to stay abreast of flood
31 resilience measures for the Town's roads and bridges.
- 32 • Continue to update the Town's transportation infrastructure information in the Vermont
33 Online Bridge and Culvert Inventory Tool.
- 34 • Replace undersized and failing culverts.
- 35 • Develop a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- 36 • Equip the town's emergency shelter (the school) with a generator.

12. Development Trends and Plans for Adjacent Towns and Region

Brownington is adjacent to six municipalities: Westmore, Derby, Coventry, Charleston, Barton and Irasburg. All of these towns have some impact on Brownington which is in fact a bedroom community of the larger towns of Derby, Barton and the City of Newport. Interestingly, the smallest and most rural communities – Brownington, Charleston, and Westmore – have all experienced double-digit rates of growth over the past decade. Both Barton and Derby, which are considered service centers to Brownington’s population, experienced extremely modest growth rates over the past decade which were well below the county’s overall growth rate. (Table 2.1: Population of Brownington and Surrounding Communities.) Of the adjacent towns, only Westmore, Derby, and Barton have zoning. Irasburg has no zoning and has never adopted a plan.

Westmore

Due to the rural nature of land use along the boundary between Brownington and Westmore the Planning commission does not anticipate any major impact as a result of development on either side of the town line. Route 5A, a minor arterial north-south road may be a possible area of cooperation for future transportation needs. Westmore has adopted a town plan and has zoning.

Westmore’s current town plan (adopted 2013) addresses strong concerns about any development that has the potential to have an impact on its iconic viewshed of Lake Willoughby, which is surrounded on all sides by ridgelines. The Lake Willoughby area was designated as a National Natural Landmark in 1967. The designation is permanent and is currently conferred on only 600 sites nationwide. The plan attributes economic and cultural importance to this designation and requests that any development of 100 feet or higher that can be viewed from any point in the NNL designation be considered a development of substantial regional impact. Here is how the plan justifies this position:

“While scenic natural beauty is a hallmark of life in the Northeast Kingdom, Westmore’s iconic viewshed of Willoughby defines the community both culturally and economically. Westmore’s identity is tied to a landscape that has served as inspiration for artists and writers and has made the community a destination for more than a century. The lake area draws visitors worldwide, who spend on recreation, dining, and entertainment establishments all over the Northeast Kingdom. While the NNL designation can and should be taken into account for all federal permitting process, it should be a critical factor in local land use decisions as well, including Act 250 and Section 248.”

The current regional plan (NVDA 2013) defines Substantial Regional Impact as projects that would have substantial and ongoing impact on two or more municipalities, including the host municipality:

1. Projects that would likely have substantial impact on a resource within the region that is widely used by people outside of the municipality in which it is located.
2. Projects that may affect development patterns to the extent that the character or identity of neighboring municipalities is significantly affected.

Without a specific development in mind, it is unclear that such a development that could be viewed from the NNL area in Brownington would be deemed to have substantial regional impact, but it is highly likely that Westmore would seek to participate in any Act 250 or Section 248 review process.

1 **Derby**

2 Derby’s economic growth is expected to have the greatest impact on Brownington. The Derby
3 Town Plan states “The Derby Planning Commission should meet periodically with their
4 counterparts in adjoining communities to discuss their mutual interests and concerns.” Only 8% of
5 Derby is developed, but there is a high concentration of commercial development along Route 5.
6 Plans for future development on Route 5 and adjoining Quarry Road involves about 340,000
7 cumulative square feet in retail (including a 150,000 Wal-Mart Super Center) and 55,000 square feet
8 in light industrial. In 2013-14, NVDA commissioned a traffic study, which projected a 52% increase
9 in peak traffic at Route 5/Shattuck Hill by 2024, and a 70% increase in peak traffic at Route
10 5/Quarry Road. Growth in Derby will likely create increasing traffic burdens on the Hinman Settler
11 Road, which also serves as a popular bypass to traffic and congestion on Route 5. Growth in the
12 Derby are may possibly increase housing demand in Brownington as well.

13 Brownington shares Brownington Pond with Derby and in contrast to the large parcel orientation of
14 Brownington in this area, Derby’s zoning bylaw facilitates shoreline development with high densities
15 and small lakeside lot sizes. In 2014, the State Shoreland Act took effect. This legislation does not
16 override the minimum lot sizes or uses allowed on Brownington Pond, but it does require a state
17 permit for virtually all development, redevelopment, or clearing of any shorelands within 250 feet of
18 the mean water level of any lake or pond greater than 10 acres. Towns do have option of taking local
19 delegation (enforcement) of these regulations, but Derby has no plans to do so.

20 **Coventry**

21 Due to the rural nature of land use along the boundary and the I-91 right of way, the Planning
22 Commission anticipates some impact as a result of development of the Newport Airport in both
23 traffic and increase in tourism and possibly population. The Newport Airport also is of interest to
24 the town as proposals are being sought to increase the size of the airport over the next 5 years. Plans
25 for expansion include a 5,000 square foot passenger terminal, a bonded warehouse and Free Trade
26 Zone facility, a light aircraft and repair facility, and a flight training facility. The regional landfill also
27 provides an area of mutual interest to the town. Coventry has adopted a town plan (2013).

28 Coventry’s current town plan characterizes its pattern of development as “rural residential.” Its
29 immediate future appears to be tied to the “stability of its farming community and natural resource
30 based industries, as well as the growth of the commercial and industrial bases of its surrounding
31 communities. As long as the town continues to offer comparatively low property taxes; a well-
32 balanced educational program with school choice; limited development regulations; and a beautiful
33 rural setting, it will likely continue attracting new residential growth.” In fact, the town has seen
34 significant residential growth over the past four decades – a 237% increase in population since 1960.

35 Interstate 91 never varies from than 0.8 of a mile from the Brownington/Coventry border. While
36 the Coventry plan deems I-91 to act as a barrier to development that may have an impact on the
37 neighboring community, the Interstate does limit travel from Brownington to Coventry to one road.
38 The plan states that potential development could be focused on this road. The plan also cites
39 concerns regarding a “sudden influx of development in any part of Brownington could also impact
40 water quality in Coventry as all of the surface water in Brownington drains into the Barton River. It
41 has already been pointed out that the pollution of this river could be very detrimental to the quality
42 of the Barton River Marsh as well as the residents and wildlife of the eastern portion of Coventry.”
43 The plan does note that Brownington’s plan (expired at the time of the Coventry plan adoption),
44 should serve to protect Coventry from adverse impacts because the Brownington plan “encourages

1 the development of small, non-polluting businesses as well as the protection of Brownington's rural
2 character, natural resources, and agricultural and forest lands.”

3 ***Charleston***

4 Due to the rural nature of land use along the boundary between Brownington and Charleston the
5 Planning Commission does not anticipate any major impact as a result of development on either side
6 of the town line. This sentiment is echoed in Charleston’s town plan, which was adopted in 2013.
7 Route 5A may be a possible area of cooperation for future transportation needs.

8 Like Westmore, however, the Charleston plan cites concern about the impact of high
9 elevation/ridgeline development. The plan specifically refers to “an out-of-state commercial
10 enterprise called Three Town Farms that is buying up large parcels of adjacent farm acreage in
11 Brownington, Westmore, and Charleston. The purpose of this large scale land acquisition has not
12 been disclosed. The construction of any commercial industrial scale facility for the generation,
13 transmission or distribution of wind energy upon Brownington’s mountain ridgelines and high
14 elevation habitats would significantly interfere with the orderly development of Charleston and the
15 local region and would directly conflict with the objectives and land conservation measures set forth
16 in the Charleston Town Plan.” Like Brownington, Charleston ties its economic development to “its
17 “ability to preserve our natural environment.” The plans goes on to state that “[i]ndustrial scale
18 facilities for the generation, transmission or distribution of energy located on Charleston’s ridgelines
19 or mountain areas would unduly interfere with the orderly development of Charleston and the
20 surrounding region.”

21 ***Barton***

22 The Village of Orleans within the Town of Barton provides the closest concentration of
23 employment and shopping opportunities to the Town of Brownington. Road connections with
24 Barton are the most highly developed for Brownington, and the towns are linked by education
25 facilities and emergency management services. High level contact between the towns should be
26 maintained. Barton’s town plan has expired, but a new plan is in development. The town of Barton
27 is also planning to revise its zoning regulations. The new proposed regulations would direct more
28 dense and mixed use development to the Orleans Village and Barton Village area. The “Town”
29 district would extend for one mile from the approximate core of each village center. If adopted, this
30 zoning bylaw revision would likely discourage future commercial development along shared
31 roadways in outlying “Rural” districts, such as Willoughby Lake Road, and Kittredge Road and
32 redirect it to Barton Village and Orleans Village.

33 ***Irasburg***

34 Irasburg is only mentioned here because of its short boundary with Brownington. The two towns
35 share no direct road connection, land uses are rural on both sides of the town line and Irasburg is
36 completely isolated from Brownington by the I-91 right of way.

37 ***Regional Planning***

38 Brownington is within District 7 of the Department of Environmental Conservation. Act 250
39 constitutes the major form of regulation over development in the Town of Brownington. The
40 regional Planning Commission for the district is the Northeastern Vermont Development
41 Association (NVDA). NVDA provides technical assistance to the member municipalities and has

1 developed a regional plan. The regional plan states that rural development should take place in ways
 2 that: minimize impacts on the rural character, do not strain municipal services, built along existing
 3 roads that can handle the traffic burden generated and discourages strip development.
 4 Brownington’s Town Plan is in conformance with these regional plan elements and while a thin
 5 document it is well suited to our citizens and needs.

6 Brownington intends to seek regional approval from the regional planning commission (NVDA) in
 7 accordance with statute. This affords the town a number of advantages, including the ability to
 8 reapply for Village Center Designation for Brownington Village. If approved by the regional
 9 planning commission, the plan must be deemed consistent with statewide planning goals, or
 10 establish why the goals are not relevant to the Town of Brownington.

Statewide Planning Goals	How this relates to Brownington
<p>(1) To plan development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside.</p> <p>(A) Intensive residential development should be encouraged primarily in areas related to community centers, and strip development along highways should be discouraged.</p> <p>(B) Economic growth should be encouraged in locally designated growth areas, employed to revitalize existing village and urban centers, or both, and should be encouraged in growth centers designated under chapter 76A of this title.</p> <p>(C) Public investments, including the construction or expansion of infrastructure, should reinforce the general character and planned growth patterns of the area.</p> <p>(D) Development should be undertaken in accordance with smart growth principles as defined in subdivision 2791(13) of this title.</p>	<p>Brownington has limited commercial development. Public investment is largely limited to the municipal building, the town garage, and the network of town highways. There is no off-site water and sewer service to support intensive residential development, and there is no strip development along roadways.</p> <p>Nevertheless, one of Brownington’s land use goals is to “maintain current land use patterns of residential and village-scale commercial development in and around Brownington’s villages.” The town does not have zoning regulations and does not intend to implement them in the immediate future. There is some scattered rural residential development occurring through Brownington. The most appropriate strategy for Brownington at this time is to monitor development trends and reassess the need for new policies if scattered development poses a financial burden on the town.</p>
<p>(2) To provide a strong and diverse economy that provides satisfying and rewarding job opportunities and that maintains high environmental standards, and to expand economic opportunities in areas with high unemployment or low per capita incomes.</p>	<p>Brownington’s key economic goal is to “broaden the economic base by encouraging small, non-polluting businesses and industries to locate in Brownington.” Orleans county is the second poorest county in Vermont, largely due to persistently high unemployment rates. The Town supports regional endeavors to create new opportunities in Orleans county, and it supports the establishment of businesses in Brownington that complement and enhance the Town’s rural assets – agriculture, forestry, passive recreation, and tourism.</p>
<p>(3) To broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities sufficient to ensure the full realization of the abilities of all Vermonters.</p>	<p>A goal of Brownington’s plan is to “improve the utility of the Central School as an institution of public education, public meetings and emergency shelter.” The Town also supports the additional educational cultural opportunities that exist for Brownington residents through the Stone House Museum, the Northwoods Stewardship Center, and the North Country Career Center.</p>

<p>(4) To provide for safe, convenient, economic and energy efficient transportation systems that respect the integrity of the natural environment, including public transit options and paths for pedestrians and bicyclers.</p> <p>(A) Highways, air, rail, and other means of transportation should be mutually supportive, balanced, and integrated.</p>	<p>A key goal of Brownington’s transportation plan is to “ensure the public health, safety and welfare” and “to keep the tax rate within the limits of its residents ability to pay.” The Town intends to monitor the safety of its transportation system (which includes the safety of cyclists and pedestrians), and to monitor the functionality of its roads, bridges, and culverts in order to keep its transportation network safe, convenient, economic and efficient.</p>
<p>(5) To identify, protect, and preserve important natural and historic features of the Vermont landscape, including:</p> <p>(A) significant natural and fragile areas;</p> <p>(B) outstanding water resources, including lakes, rivers, aquifers, shorelands and wetlands;</p> <p>(C) significant scenic roads, waterways, and views;</p> <p>(D) important historic structures, sites, or districts, archaeological sites, and archaeologically sensitive areas.</p>	<p>Brownington has numerous historic assets, and the town plan identifies several non-regulatory strategies for protecting them, including village center designation and national and state historic registers.</p>
<p>(6) To maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife, and land resources.</p> <p>(A) Vermont's air, water, wildlife, mineral and land resources should be planned for use and development according to the principles set forth in 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a).</p>	<p>Wetlands are wildlife habitat are identified, and the plan recommends conducting a natural resource inventory that will provide better information on local conservation strategies.</p> <p>Farmland is identified as an important land resource. Brownington does not have zoning, but the plan encourages good stewardship of the land, as well as enrollment in Current Use and land trust conservation easements.</p>
<p>(7) To encourage the efficient use of energy and the development of renewable energy resources.</p>	<p>The town believes that most energy conservation efforts begin with the individual. The plan supports energy conservation and audits. The town is not likely to pursue the energy audit recommendations for the town clerk’s office unless the recommendations are incorporated into some other necessary repair or construction work. The future of the Grange Hall is uncertain, but energy conservation measured should be incorporated into rehabilitation and restoration efforts. The town supports the use of renewal energy, provided that installations are of an appropriate scale.</p>
<p>(8) To maintain and enhance recreational opportunities for Vermont residents and visitors.</p> <p>(A) Growth should not significantly diminish the value and availability of outdoor recreational activities.</p> <p>(B) Public access to noncommercial outdoor recreational opportunities, such as lakes and hiking trails, should be identified, provided, and protected wherever appropriate.</p>	<p>Growth in Brownington in limited and has not interfered with access to recreational development. Nevertheless, most opportunities for recreation are located on private property. Incremental rural residential development and changes in land ownership could restrict access in the future. The Town believes the best way to address secure access to recreation is through outreach and education to property owners on landowner liability laws. If property owners understand the limitations to their liability exposure, they may be less likely to post their lands.</p>
<p>(9) To encourage and strengthen agricultural and</p>	<p>Brownington’s vast working landscape is a critical asset to</p>

<p>forest industries.</p> <p>(A) Strategies to protect long-term viability of agricultural and forest lands should be encouraged and should include maintaining low overall density.</p> <p>(B) The manufacture and marketing of value-added agricultural and forest products should be encouraged.</p> <p>(C) The use of locally-grown food products should be encouraged.</p> <p>(D) Sound forest and agricultural management practices should be encouraged.</p> <p>(E) Public investment should be planned so as to minimize development pressure on agricultural and forest land.</p>	<p>the community. The Town's existing policy regarding protection of working lands consists on reliance on best practices (e.g. AAPs, AMPs) and through current use enrollment. The Town does not have local land use regulations but will explore the feasibility of implementing subdivision regulations.</p> <p>The Town encourages economic development in Brownington that is of an appropriate scale. Businesses that support the sale of local food and forest products are encouraged, as are businesses that promote agritourism.</p> <p>The Town has limited public investment and has not created development pressures on Brownington's working lands.</p>
<p>(10) To provide for the wise and efficient use of Vermont's natural resources and to facilitate the appropriate extraction of earth resources and the proper restoration and preservation of the aesthetic qualities of the area.</p>	<p>Brownington has no zoning and therefore does not enforce any standards for earth extraction or the restoration and reclamation of a site. The Town relies on Act 250 review of such activities and directs the Natural Resources board to consider such development in a way that minimizes adverse impacts to adjoining residential uses. Gravel should be stored and sited in a manner that does impair wetlands and water resources. Truck traffic should not degrade our roads and daily truck traffic should not exceed the town's ability to service such roads. Transport of earth materials should be done in a manner that minimizes dust.</p>
<p>(11) To ensure the availability of safe and affordable housing for all Vermonters.</p> <p>(A) Housing should be encouraged to meet the needs of a diversity of social and income groups in each Vermont community, particularly for those citizens of low and moderate income.</p> <p>(B) New and rehabilitated housing should be safe, sanitary, located conveniently to employment and commercial centers, and coordinated with the provision of necessary public facilities and utilities.</p> <p>(C) Sites for multi-family and manufactured housing should be readily available in locations similar to those generally used for single-family conventional dwellings.</p> <p>(D) Accessory apartments within or attached to single-family residences which provide affordable housing in close proximity to cost-effective care and supervision for relatives, elders, or persons who have a disability should be allowed.</p>	<p>Brownington's villages are very small and cannot be considered centers of employment or extensive commercial activity. Nevertheless the Town does have land use regulations that would prohibit the development of affordable housing or accessory dwelling units anywhere in town. That lack of off-site water and sewer is likely to restrict the development of multi-family housing.</p>
<p>(12) To plan for, finance and provide an efficient system of public facilities and services to meet future needs.</p> <p>(A) Public facilities and services should include fire and police protection, emergency medical services, schools, water supply, and sewage and solid waste disposal.</p> <p>(B) The rate of growth should not exceed the ability of the</p>	<p>Brownington's public facilities are adequate for the foreseeable future. The most significant public investment is in the town's roads and supporting infrastructure. The plan strongly encourages assessment and planning activities that will enable the Town to anticipate future costs of maintenance and repairs (such as the short structures assessment planned for 2015) as well as the</p>

community and the area to provide facilities and services.	development of a capital budget and plan. Brownington has limited growth and existing development patterns are within the town's service capacity. The Town will continue to monitor rural residential development on class 3 roads and determine the need for future policy changes.
(13) To ensure the availability of safe and affordable child care and to integrate child care issues into the planning process, including child care financing, infrastructure, business assistance for child care providers, and child care work force development.	Brownington currently has one registered home daycare provider, and there are at least 16 providers (licensed daycares or registered homes) in neighboring Barton and Charleston. Derby has some providers as well. Since many Brownington residents work outside of the town, availability of affordable daycare in neighboring towns is equally important. The Town encourages expanding the availability of daycare for its workforce.
<p>(14) To encourage flood resilient communities.</p> <p>(A) New development in identified flood hazard, fluvial erosion, and river corridor protection areas should be avoided. If new development is to be built in such areas, it should not exacerbate flooding and fluvial erosion.</p> <p>(B) The protection and restoration of floodplains and upland forested areas that attenuate and moderate flooding and fluvial erosion should be encouraged.</p> <p>(C) Flood emergency preparedness and response planning should be encouraged.</p>	The Town currently has no flood hazard regulations but is exploring the possibility of joining the National Flood Insurance Program as well as the Statewide River Corridor layer recently released by the Agency of Natural Resources. The Town will assess the various regulatory models in order to determine an appropriate strategy that minimizes future risks. Additionally, the town has recently received a Hazard Mitigation Grant from FEMA to develop a FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plan. Development of the plan will certainly advance Brownington's flood preparedness.

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