

# CORNWALL TOWN PLAN

CORNWALL, VERMONT

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Adopted by Planning Commission **November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

Adopted by Selectboard \_\_\_\_\_

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# INTRODUCTION



## General Description

The Town of Cornwall, which celebrated its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2011, is located in west central Vermont about 10 miles east of the southern end of Lake Champlain. Cornwall is located in the southern portion of Champlain Valley and has an area of 18,688 acres or roughly 29.2 square miles. It is bounded on the north by Weybridge, on the west by Bridport and Shoreham, on the south by Whiting, and on the east by Salisbury and Middlebury. Its village center is located southwest of Middlebury at the junction of Vermont Routes 30 and 74.

## Purpose of the Plan

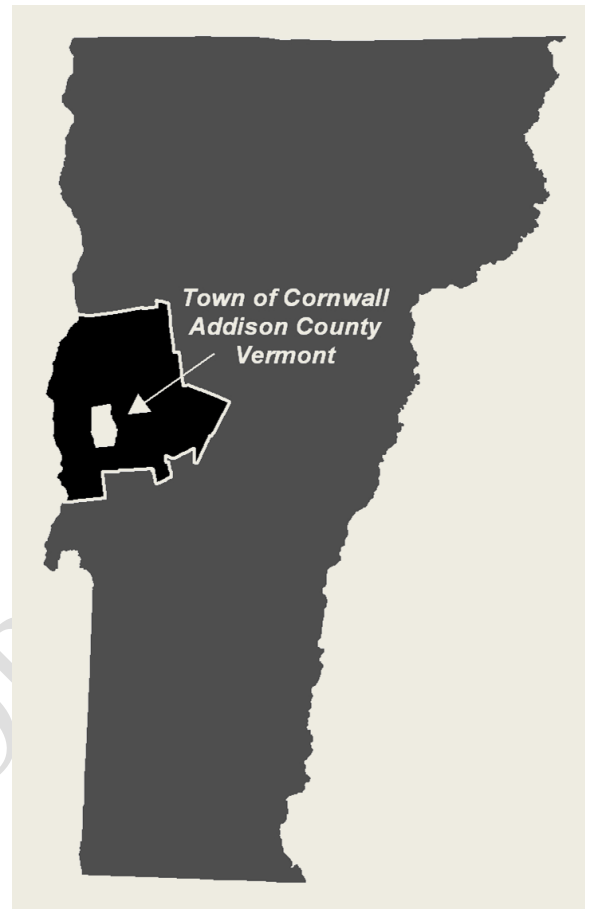
The purpose of the Cornwall Town Plan is to define a long-term vision for the town and a means of achieving that vision. The plan is designed to serve as the primary reference when making community decisions and provide guidance to local officials when setting public policy or, where appropriate, making recommendations in specific regulatory proceedings. It establishes policies that will help safeguard the heritage and shape the future of the town as Cornwall faces potential change and development over the next five years.

The plan discusses those features of Cornwall that combine to make it a special place, such as wildlife habitats, historic structures, scenic vistas, and cultural institutions, the maintenance of which contribute significantly to the quality of life for town residents.

## Organization of the Plan

The plan is divided into three main sections: **Cornwall Yesterday**, **Cornwall Today** and **Cornwall Tomorrow**. Cornwall Yesterday describes the evolution of the town, its people and landscape over the past 250 years. Cornwall Today characterizes the current state of the town across a range of topics including housing, the economy, community facilities and the environment. Within the Cornwall Today section these topics are addressed through an inventory of facts and figures, drawn from the latest U.S. Census, as well as a more qualitative analysis of needs and opportunities. Issues are highlighted and reinforced by the inclusion of residents' own words, as expressed in their responses to the Planning Survey (see Appendix for survey results). Cornwall Tomorrow outlines the vision, goals, objectives and policies that will chart the town's direction.

The plan ends with a conclusion that outlines steps the town should follow to implement the goals and policies of this plan over the next five years, and reviews the plan's compatibility with the plans of its neighboring municipalities and the region. The results of the 2011 Planning Survey are included as well.



## **Acknowledgements**

The Cornwall Planning Commission would like to acknowledge the support and efforts of those people and entities that have made the development of this plan possible. First, work on this plan was supported with a combination of town funding and a 2011-2012 Municipal Planning Grant from the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs. This funding made it possible for the Addison County Regional Planning Commission to provide technical assistance throughout the planning process.

Completing this plan also would not have been possible without the participation of town officials, the members of the many committees and organizations that make Cornwall function so well, and residents who took the time to participate. Special thanks goes to:

Mary Dodge, Kate Gieges, Marc Lapin, Stu Johnson, and Sue Johnson, and Sarah Pelkey

A special thank you goes to Don Shall whose photos once again illustrate the plan. Finally, the Planning Commission wants to recognize the 207 Cornwall households who returned their surveys and put considerable time and thought into their responses.

Thanks to you all from the Cornwall Planning Commission.

Tracy Himmel Isham, Co-Chair

Jim Bolton, Co-Chair

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## CORNWALL YESTERDAY



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## TOWN HISTORY

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*This section is a brief history of the town, which provides context for discussing how and why Cornwall came to be the community it is today. When planning for the future, it is always best to first begin with an understanding of the past.*

### **Pre-colonial history**

There is a long history of human habitation in the Champlain Valley, going back more than 10,000 years to when the glaciers last retreated. The Native Americans who lived here left no written record, but the early colonial settlers of the region were fascinated by the numerous artifacts they found as they cleared and plowed their land. Native American settlements seem to have been concentrated along major waterways, including the Otter Creek, which served as transportation routes. The evidence found of the region's first inhabitants includes tools of all kinds, cooking pots and pottery fragments, projectile points and spears, chips and flints, large stone fire hearths, foundations of longhouses, tilled land along some streams and burial grounds. These archaeological finds point to long-term habitation of the area.

Recent scholarship suggests that the Native Americans living in the Champlain Valley at the time of first contact probably were Abenakis and Mahicans. Foreign diseases carried by Europeans to the Americas and the many years of warfare in the valley left the region largely unpopulated when the first Europeans began settling what was to become the town of Cornwall.

### **Early Settlement**

The first permanent colonial settlement in Cornwall took place in 1774. Fourteen men from Litchfield County, Connecticut made their "pitches" along Otter Creek in an area that was deeded to Middlebury in 1796. At the time of settlement in Cornwall, Vermont was considered part of New Hampshire. People who were granted title to land were from Connecticut, Massachusetts or Rhode Island and lived by the traditions of those places. New York also claimed Vermont and regularly disputed the grants given by New Hampshire. Conflicting land claims and boundary disputes were common. Original deeds were voided by New York, and some settlers had to repurchase their land before legally occupying it.

Settlement was stimulated by Cornwall's attractiveness, natural resources, and relatively low land prices and by the terms of the original grants. The proprietors had to meet certain provisions in order to retain their land. These conditions included a requirement that: settlers cultivate and plant five acres for every 50 owned within five years; all pine trees fit for ship masts be given to the Royal Navy; and a town center had to be laid out prior to any further subdivision of outlying land. Lots were also to be created for the first minister and for the first child born in the town.

Many of the original grant requirements were ignored. Pitches were made without regard to the original surveys. Considerable areas of land were subdivided and sold to pay for services rendered in the construction of the town's first roads.

Life in the early years was difficult, but apparently rewarding. Transportation routes were almost non-existent. People traveling to Cornwall from southern New England had to travel either by foot along a blazed trail from southern Vermont or by raft or sled down Otter Creek. Land could only be cleared of trees and rock at a rate of a few acres per month.

Despite these early difficulties Cornwall's population grew rapidly (see Figure 1). Just after the Revolutionary War, the population was the highest of any town in Addison County. By 1840, Cornwall's population had reached a peak of 1,027 people. Rapid growth seems to have been both encouraged and disliked. Selectmen, fearful that the town might become responsible for large numbers of paupers, regularly sent summonses to new residents advising them to leave the town.

## A Town Develops

The years leading up to the War of 1812 were productive ones for most people of the town. Larger and larger areas were cleared for crops. As long as there were trees to clear, the town had its first major export- potash, which was made from wood ashes. Potash and pearlash were shipped to ports as far away as England. The first farms permitted the establishment and development of other economic activities.

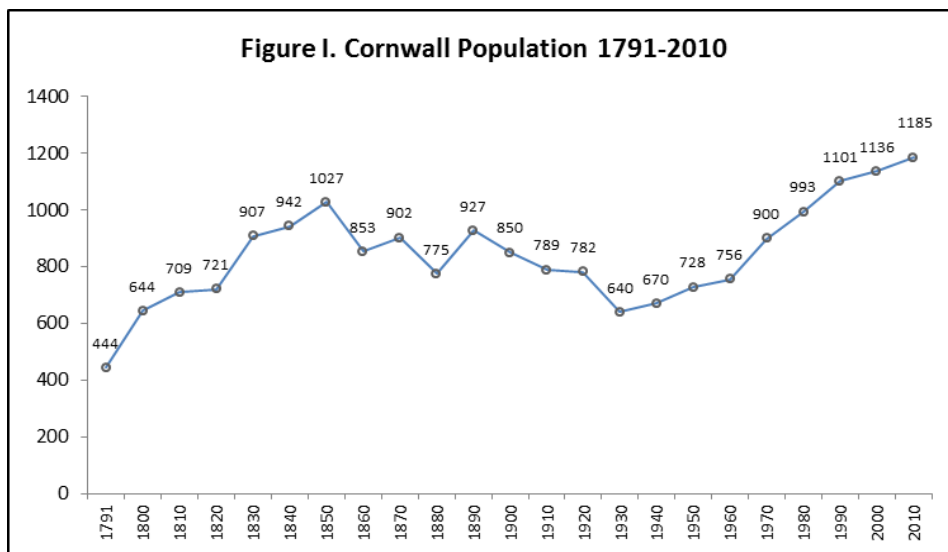


Figure 1: Cornwall Population 1791-2010

Word of the richness of the soil and agreeable climate encouraged more people, many of them Revolutionary War veterans, to come to Cornwall. In a short time the town was able to boast several small hamlets, a church, a store and a "house of amusement," a library, a tavern, tanneries, and asheries, in addition to several successful farms. There also appears to have been considerable land speculation. One farm in the town reportedly changed hands no less than 14 times in 20 years.

The War of 1812 dampened growth in the state. Embargoes prohibited trade with Canada, which was an important market for farmers. Many goods were smuggled there nonetheless. The impact of the war was magnified by disease, crop failure and bad weather. The opening of the Champlain Canal in 1822 and the Erie Canal in 1825 made goods from the Midwest and west less costly.



Soon thereafter, Cornwall's sheep industry began to thrive. Over 5,000 sheep were reported in the town during the 1840s. In the mid-1800s, the success of the sheep industry brought the town national and international recognition. Cornwall and Addison County were recognized as a hub of this important industry with sheep being exported throughout the world. Sheep, oiled and colored to look like top quality Merinos, were said to have a "Cornwall finish." Although sheep dominated the agricultural economy at this time, the townspeople also developed a respect for fine horses and cattle.

During the prosperous years of sheep raising, residents constructed a number of new district schoolhouses to provide for the education of their children. Cornwall and West Cornwall villages remained modest centers throughout the 1800s. The Congregationalists remodeled their 1803 church in 1862. Farmers organized a chapter of the Vermont Grange in 1874 that met in the Cornwall Town Hall, after it was built in 1882. Next door, the Stowell family ran a store and the local post office from their home. In West Cornwall, the "Free Church" remodeled the Baptist meetinghouse and residents reconstructed their District School Number 5.



Figure 2: Facade of the Congregation Church

Around 1850, Cornwall entered a period to which some state historians refer as the Great Migration. Between 1850 and 1870, Cornwall's population fell to 969. The causes of the outward migration were varied. The Civil War took many men off local farms; some who survived sought new lives in the west instead of returning home. Many women went west with their husbands or left to work in the factories of southern New England. The relocation of the sheep industry to the western states and Australia also contributed to the population decline. New farm machinery allowed farms to function with less manpower. Smaller farms were consolidated into larger ones, which led to prolonged periods of limited economic opportunities.

Improvements in transportation during the last half of the 1800s allowed travel and trade to occur over greater distances than previously had been possible. Railroads arrived in Addison County in 1851. The railroads permitted greater agricultural specialization and sparked the development of the dairy industry. Trains made it possible to ship butter, cheese, and eventually milk to the Boston market. Creameries were established to foster a growing dairy industry. Railroads refocused trade at major junctions along transportation routes. Consequently, Middlebury, Vergennes and Bristol developed significant industrial sectors while Cornwall's economy centered on agriculture.

### **During the Last Century**

One notable addition to the town at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the Sampson Memorial Library, built in 1915 by the Mary Baker Allen Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Orchards broadened the agricultural base and grew to considerable importance around the turn of the century. The first commercial Macintosh apples grown in Cornwall were planted in 1908; the first Red Delicious and Northern Spy, in 1910 and 1911, respectively.



Figure 3: D.A.R. Sampson Memorial Library

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, farming allowed most families to provide for their basic needs. Agriculture served as a common focus in people's lives. Agricultural societies, like the Grange (Patrons of Husbandry), helped meet residents' needs for recreation, education and interaction. The first and second World Wars, like the Civil War, encouraged emigration. Many soldiers left the town for the rapidly expanding urban centers of

the east and west coasts for a wider range of available opportunities.

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, Cornwall was still very much a traditional agricultural community. While growing slowly and steadily, the town resisted change. Starting in the 1960s, residential development began to accelerate. This was in response to the national trend of "reverse migration," which is the movement from urban to rural areas. New residents moved to Cornwall seeking a small town atmosphere and a sense of community. In 1965, Standard Register opened in Middlebury, which helped the local economy and brought more people into the area. During this time Middlebury College increased the size of the student population, faculty and staff, and constructed more buildings thereby increasing employment opportunities. Longtime residents feared that, as a result of rapid growth, the town might change.

Growth continued through the 1970s and 1980s, as the town attained population levels not seen since the early nineteenth century. Changes in the number and size of farms accompanied the growth in population. The number of dairy herds fell from 71 in 1953, to 28 in 1977, to 5 in 2004. In 2010, four dairy herds and one commercial orchard remained in production. On a brighter note, much of the cropland is utilized by other farms in Cornwall and neighboring towns. There is also an increase in value-added and specialty agriculture on a commercial scale and Cornwall currently has several examples such as: goat cheese and soap production, apiaries, beef, pork, and chicken growers, and an iced cider producer.

Farms have helped define Cornwall's identity since the time the town was first settled and their loss has been observed with sadness. Almost all new development has occurred in rural and low density areas.

Changes in agriculture and the increase in a more suburban pattern of development are driving forces behind Cornwall's planning efforts. The remaining sections of this plan will clearly detail what type of community Cornwall is today and identify a path that should help ensure that Cornwall remains a healthy and vibrant place in the future.



*Figure 4: Cupola on a 19th Century Barn*

# CORNWALL TODAY



## POPULATION

This section briefly discusses a wide range of information on the population of Cornwall. Information on population helps paint a picture of the community and its people and suggests needs, problems and strengths within the town.

### INVENTORY

#### Current and Historic Population

Cornwall has been experiencing a moderate population growth of 4.3 percent since 2000, with a population of 1,185 people in 2010. The most dramatic increase in Cornwall's population took place in the 1960s, when the Town grew by 19 percent. This growth resulted more from new residents moving in rather than from a natural increase (more births than deaths). Many towns in the county had similar experiences, as large numbers of urban dwellers sought "refuge" in rural areas. Growth in Cornwall slowed and stabilized during the 1970s and 1980s. During the 1990s, very little population growth occurred in Cornwall.

|                   | Population |       |       |       |       |       | Population Change |       |             |       |             |       |             |       |           |       |
|-------------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------------|-------|-------------|-------|-------------|-------|-------------|-------|-----------|-------|
|                   | 1960       | 1970  | 1980  | 1990  | 2000  | 2010  | 1960 - 1970       |       | 1970 - 1980 |       | 1980 - 1990 |       | 1990 - 2000 |       | 2000-2010 |       |
|                   |            |       |       |       |       |       | #                 | %     | #           | %     | #           | %     | #           | %     | #         | %     |
| <b>Cornwall</b>   | 756        | 900   | 993   | 1,101 | 1,136 | 1,185 | 144               | 19.0% | 93          | 10.3% | 108         | 10.9% | 35          | 3.2%  | 49        | 4.3%  |
| <b>Bridport</b>   | 653        | 809   | 997   | 1,137 | 1,235 | 1,218 | 156               | 23.9% | 188         | 23.2% | 140         | 14.0% | 98          | 8.6%  | -17       | -1.3% |
| <b>Middlebury</b> | 5,305      | 6,532 | 7,574 | 8,034 | 8,183 | 8,496 | 1,227             | 23.1% | 1,042       | 16.0% | 460         | 6.1%  | 149         | 1.9%  | 313       | 3.8%  |
| <b>Salisbury</b>  | 575        | 649   | 881   | 1,024 | 1,090 | 1,136 | 74                | 12.9% | 232         | 35.7% | 143         | 16.2% | 66          | 6.4%  | 46        | 4.2%  |
| <b>Shoreham</b>   | 786        | 790   | 972   | 1,115 | 1,222 | 1,265 | 4                 | 0.5%  | 182         | 23.0% | 143         | 14.7% | 107         | 9.6%  | 107       | 8.7%  |
| <b>Weybridge</b>  | 430        | 618   | 667   | 749   | 824   | 833   | 188               | 43.7% | 49          | 7.9%  | 82          | 12.3% | 75          | 10.0% | 9         | 1.0%  |
| <b>Whiting</b>    | 304        | 359   | 379   | 407   | 380   | 419   | 55                | 18.1% | 20          | 5.6%  | 28          | 7.4%  | (27)        | -6.6% | 39        | 1.0%  |

Figure 5: Comparison of Recent Population Trends

As can be seen in the table above, Addison County towns vary in how much they grow by decade. While Cornwall's growth in the past ten years is substantial, Shoreham grew twice as much, with an 8.7 percent growth rate since 2000; while Bridport's population declined, after experiencing a rapid growth ten years ago.

Over the past 40 years, Cornwall has generally grown at a slower rate than most of its neighbors with the exception of Whiting. Salisbury, Weybridge and Bridport have all seen population increases of around 95 percent between 1960 and 2010. Shoreham, Middlebury and Cornwall have grown by 50 to 60 percent over the same period. Whiting has had the least population growth at around 25 percent.

#### General Population Characteristics

Cornwall's current population continues to age. In 2010 the median age of Cornwall's population was 46, up from a median age of 41 in 2000. In 1980 the median age for Cornwall was 28. The increase in median age of approximately 12 years over two decades is one of the sharpest in the region.

*The Cornwall population has changed so that I believe more people have settled here who are not from Vermont than the number of people who have grown up in the area.*

Cornwall Resident  
2004 Planning Survey

Between 1980 and 2010, the number of people beyond the traditional age of retirement (ages 65+) increased by 124 percent, going from 91 to 204 residents – or 17 percent of Cornwall's 2010 population. Between 1990-2010, the number of young people (under 18) has declined from 309 to 279, a 9.8% decrease in 20 years, or by decade: a 3.6% decrease from 1990-2000, and a 6.4% decrease from 2000-2010.

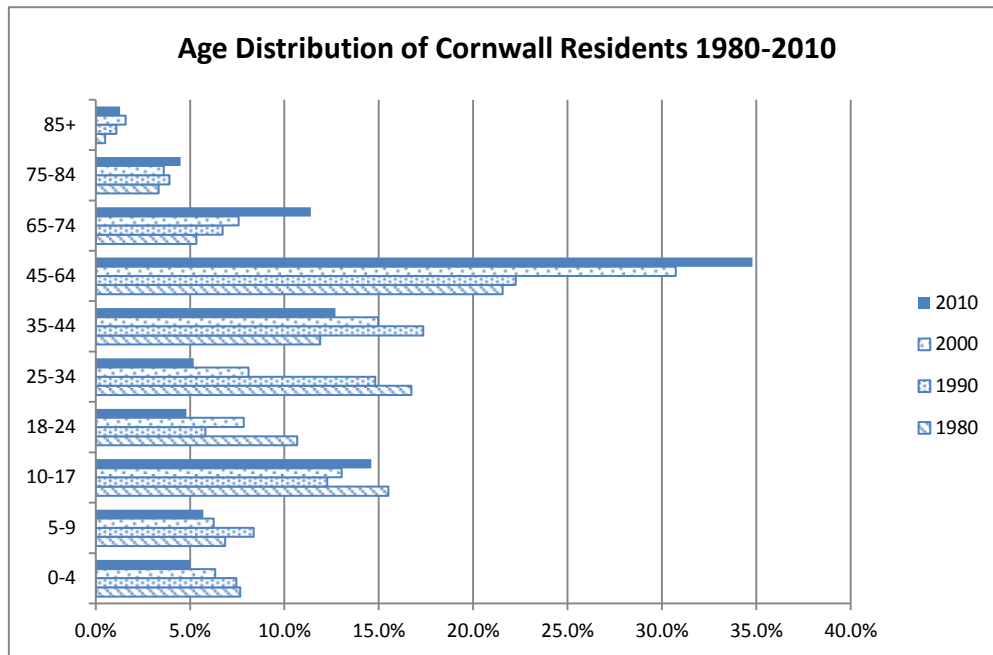


Figure 6: Age Distribution of Cornwall Residents Source: U.S. Census

## ANALYSIS

### Components of Population Change

Accurately projecting population growth over several decades is difficult due to the complex web of factors that affect where and at what rate growth will occur. Barring any significant changes in those factors, Cornwall's population is expected to continue growing steadily in the coming years. The magnitude of this growth will be controlled in large part by the level of in-migration. Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC) has projected a slow, but steady population increase for Cornwall over the next 15 years. ACRPC calculated a low population projection of around 1,200 people in 2025 and a high projection of 1,400 people. That would be an average annual growth rate of 0.3 percent (similar to growth in the 1990s) to 0.8 percent (slower than growth in the 1970s and 1980s).

Availability of employment opportunities is one of the key determinants of population change. Since Cornwall has few employers, the town's recent population growth can be attributed largely to employment opportunities mainly in Middlebury and other surrounding towns. Over the past decade, a trend towards an increasing number of people working from their homes has begun to emerge in Cornwall. Changes in technology and

employment patterns may result in a weakening in the relationship between employment growth and population growth.

Other factors related to quality of life, community character and proximity to cultural or recreation resources also influence people's decision to move to Cornwall. Cornwall and other communities around Middlebury have started to see some population growth from Middlebury College alumni who have retired and are moving to the Middlebury area. College communities are an attractive place for retirees because of the recreational, cultural and educational opportunities available. Over the next several decades, proximity to the college may be one of the most important factors spurring population growth in Cornwall.

Availability of land, and the cost of new construction are also factors that impact a community's rate of growth. There is a significant amount of open farmland in Cornwall that may become available for development if continued agricultural use is no longer viable. However, land prices in Cornwall are currently among the most expensive in the region. The high cost of land, and lack of rental properties are limiting the supply of affordable housing in town and likely contributing to fewer young people moving (or staying) in Cornwall.

The composition of Cornwall's population has shifted noticeably over the past several decades. While some young families are moving to Cornwall, presently, Cornwall has a larger senior population than it does youth population. This fact has implications for the town's future ranging from the viability of its school to the necessity of providing services to elderly residents in ensuing decades. While being a matter of concern on one hand, the increasing percentage of Cornwall's population that is composed of retired or semi-retired people could also provide an opportunity for the town if their time and expertise could be harnessed to support community projects and improvements.

- ❖ *31 % of respondents identified more closely with Cornwall than Middlebury*
- ❖ *17% of respondents identified more closely with Middlebury than with Cornwall*
- ❖ *52.8% identified with both Middlebury and Cornwall equally*

Question 1

2011 Planning Survey



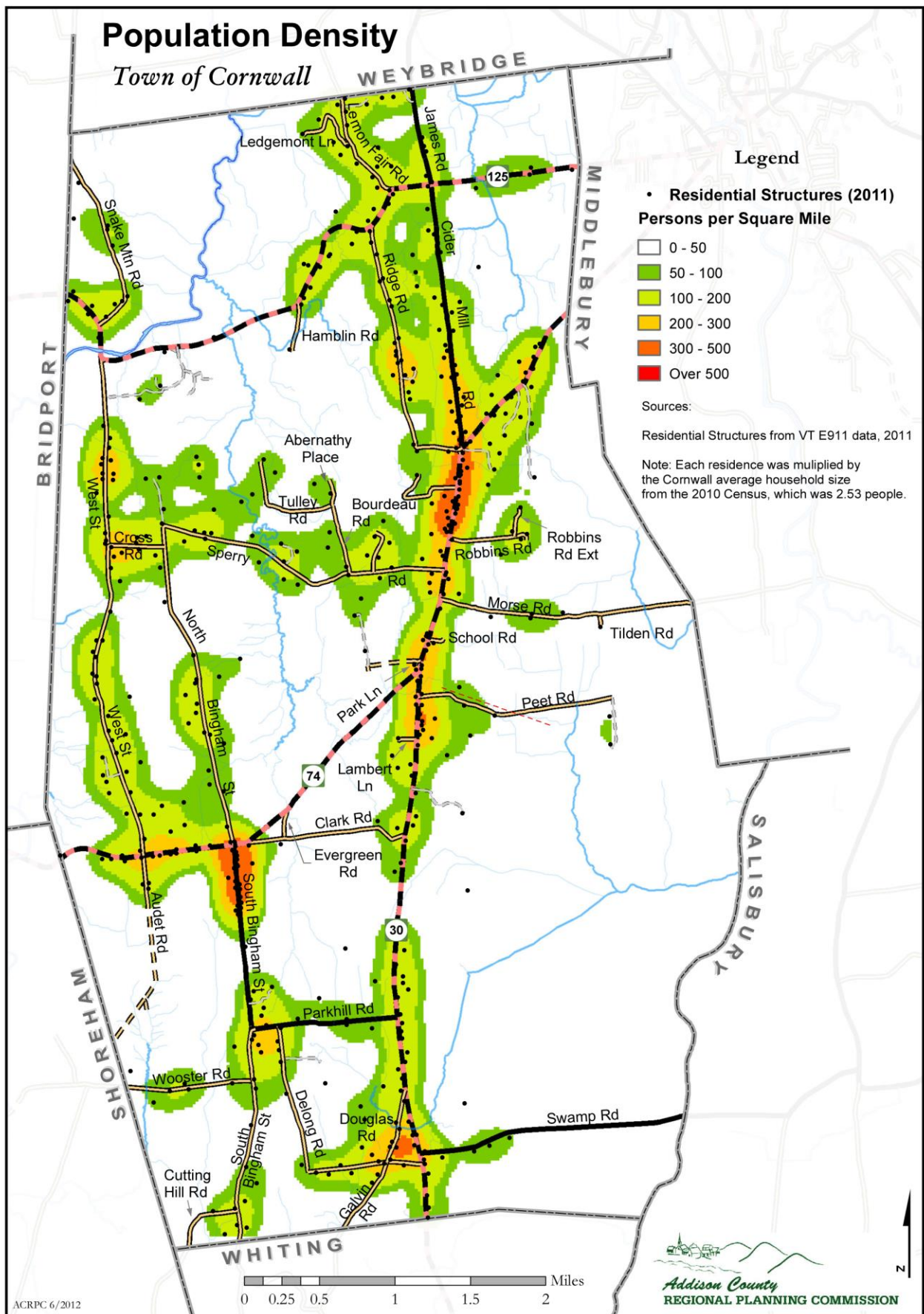


Figure 7: Cornwall Population Density

Source: ACRPC



*This section briefly discusses a wide range of information on Cornwall's housing. Planning for housing is one of the most important aspects of a town plan. The success with which a community plans for its housing needs can have a direct impact on local public services and facilities, economy, transportation, and the conservation of natural resources.*

*A safe, adequate home is a fundamental need of every Vermonter. Housing is basic to survival; it offers shelter from extreme elements and serves as a center for personal and family life. Communities need housing as much as individuals do. In order to thrive and prosper Cornwall residents must have adequate, affordable places in which to live.*

## INVENTORY

### Current and Historic Housing

Cornwall had 517 housing units in 2010, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, an increase of more than 85 percent or 238 units since 1970. A housing unit is a house, apartment, mobile home, or group of rooms occupied as separate residence. Nearly all of the town's housing units consist of year-round dwellings. Twenty eight units were classified as seasonal in 2010, an increase from 16 seasonal units in 2000.

|      | Total Units | Year-round Units |       | Seasonal Units |      | Year-round Units |       |        |      | Year-round Occupied Units |       |        |       |
|------|-------------|------------------|-------|----------------|------|------------------|-------|--------|------|---------------------------|-------|--------|-------|
|      |             |                  |       |                |      | Occupied         |       | Vacant |      | Owner                     |       | Renter |       |
|      |             | #                | %     | #              | %    | #                | %     | #      | %    | #                         | %     | #      | %     |
| 1970 | 279         | 256              | 91.8% | 23             | 8.2% | 248              | 96.9% | 8      | 3.1% | 196                       | 79.0% | 52     | 21.0% |
| 1980 | 341         | 340              | 99.7% | 1              | 0.3% | 324              | 95.3% | 16     | 4.7% | 271                       | 83.6% | 53     | 16.4% |
| 1990 | 416         | 414              | 99.5% | 2              | 0.5% | 387              | 93.5% | 27     | 6.5% | 317                       | 81.9% | 70     | 18.1% |
| 2000 | 464         | 448              | 96.6% | 16             | 3.4% | 427              | 95.3% | 21     | 4.7% | 362                       | 84.8% | 65     | 15.2% |
| 2010 | 517         | 489              | 94.6% | 28             | 5.4% | 468              | 95.7% | 21     | 4.3% | 387                       | 82.7% | 81     | 17.3% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 8: Housing Units in Cornwall 1970-2010

There were 468 households in the town with an average size of 2.53 people in 2010. The number of households has increased substantially in the last four decades from 248 in 1970, while the average household size has declined from 3.63 people in 1970. The decline in the average household size has been a significant factor in the growing number of households because the smaller the average household size, the greater the number of households that will be formed and the greater the number of housing units needed.

Twenty-one housing units were vacant in 2010, a town-wide vacancy rate of 4.3 percent. A vacancy rate below five percent is considered low, according to the Vermont Department of Conservation and Housing. During the 1990s, there was a shortage of housing in northwestern Vermont. That shortage was sharpest in Chittenden County, but was also noticeable in Addison County. Approximately 83 percent of Cornwall's housing units were

*Cornwall has had a population of about 1,000 people for the past 200 years. The difference today is that there are more homes with fewer people living in each of them.*

Cornwall Resident  
2004 Planning

- ❖ 81 % of respondents felt property taxes were among the greatest financial burdens associated with their housing.
- ❖ 57% of respondents felt that heating costs were among the greatest financial burdens associated with their housing.

Question 21  
2011 Planning Survey

owner-occupied in 2010. This is comparable to rates of homeownership in surrounding rural towns. The vast majority of Cornwall's housing, 87 percent or 450 units is comprised of single-family residences, which is a typical figure for rural communities. The remainder of the housing in town is fairly evenly divided between multi-family structures and mobile homes.

Over 40 percent of Cornwall's housing was built before 1940, and about 15 percent has been built since 1990.

Four new affordable housing units will be built in

Cornwall in 2012, as a Habitat for Humanity project. This is the first project of its kind in the area.

### Housing Costs

The median price of homes sold in Cornwall in 2010 was \$250,000. That is approximately \$45,000 greater than the median price of homes sold throughout Addison County, and \$55,000 greater than the State-wide median.

The State definition of affordable housing is based on what a household earning 80 percent of the county median family income could afford, while spending 30 percent or less of their gross income on housing. The 2010 Addison County median family income (MFI) was \$67,178. A household earning 80 percent of the Addison County MFI would have an annual income of \$53,780 and could afford to spend about \$1,300 a month on housing. Median monthly owner costs in Cornwall were \$1,567 between 2005-2009. Based on median household incomes, 40 percent of Cornwall home owners spent 30 percent or more of their monthly incomes on housing costs, an 11% rise from 2000.

Cornwall's 2011 Grand List included approximately 473 dwellings, most of which were classified as R1 (residence on less than six acres) or R2 (residence on 6 acres or more). The median assessed value of all homes was \$399,944 reflecting an increase in values from the recent town-wide reassessment. A town-wide reappraisal was completed in 2009 and the median assessed value was \$378,207. The discrepancy between *median price* of homes sold and the *median assessed value* of all homes on the grand list may reflect the limited sample of homes sold within the given year, and can also reflect having to lower market prices in the most recent economic recession. These statistics point to the fact the housing values continue to steadily rise in Cornwall even in the face of a severe nation-wide housing bubble. While this is positive, it leads to concerns about the affordability of housing, especially for elderly residents and for younger families in or moving into town. The lack of affordable housing has been identified as a concern in surveys done in the 90's, in 2004 and again in 2011. Almost 10 percent of those surveyed in 2011 indicated that their housing situation was financially stressful.

*It is extremely hard for young working people to find a small lot and put up a home. They need a place to get started and a good home for kids.*

Cornwall Resident  
2004 Planning Survey

The 2011 Cornwall survey identified other contributors to housing costs, such as maintenance, heating costs and property taxes. Eighty one percent of those surveyed agreed that property tax was the greatest financial burden associated with their housing. Fifty seven percent agreed that heating costs were among the greatest financial burdens of housing costs.

Allowing accessory apartments, encouraging adaptive reuse of historical buildings, and requiring affordable housing on all new major subdivision proposals are acceptable methods of creating affordable housing in Cornwall, according to respondents of the 2011 survey.

Question 23  
2011 Planning Survey

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## ANALYSIS

### Future Need for Housing

The future need for housing in Cornwall will be driven by several factors including change in population, change in household size and change in the characteristics of households. Housing construction in Cornwall has also increased because of the second home and retirement market.

As the demographics of the population change, there may also be shifts in the type of housing Cornwall's residents want. Over the past 20 years, many of the homes constructed in Cornwall have been significantly larger and located further out in the rural areas than most of the older homes in town. In time, these houses become difficult for elderly residents to maintain and may be located too far from needed services. Options for single-family homes, including condominiums, town houses, apartments and adaptive re-use should continue to be explored to determine if they could be accommodated in certain areas of Cornwall in a manner that is compatible with the community's character.



Figure 9: Map from a 2004 planning exercise showing new residential housing (with white thumb tacks).

In order to maintain a demographically balanced community, Cornwall needs to attract (and retain) younger residents as well as retirees. Currently, most of the children growing up in Cornwall leave the community after high school. While most parents want their children to continue with their education or start their careers, many hope that they will be able to return to town after a few years to find jobs, own homes and start their own families. This is currently very difficult for most of Cornwall's young people. While there may be job opportunities in the area, finding affordable housing in Cornwall remains a limiting factor.

The latest generation of affordable and mixed income housing is based on good planning, minimal impact and recreating the neighborhood design of New England villages.

Studies have shown that well-designed, properly managed affordable housing does not have a negative effect on neighboring property values. Construction of affordable housing options, including rental housing, should be a priority to make it possible for young people, as well as elderly residents, to move into and stay in all areas of Cornwall. The Habitat for Humanity project, which includes four new housing units on Delong Road, is a good example of diversifying Cornwall's housing stock.

## ECONOMY

*An evaluation of a community's local economy can help to assess its strengths and weaknesses and, if it chooses, to develop strategies to promote desirable types of economic development. Cornwall's local economy is important to the town although relatively limited. It is based primarily on agriculture, home-based businesses and several small shops.*

### INVENTORY

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, approximately 13 percent of Cornwall's employed residents worked in town, approximately 39 percent worked in Middlebury and around 16 percent worked elsewhere in Addison County. Cornwall's labor force is highly skilled and well educated. Cornwall's income levels have been among the highest

in the region for the past 35 years. The Vermont Department of Taxes estimate of family median income in Cornwall has risen from \$30,000 in 1985 to \$57,000 in 2000 and \$81,000 in 2009, compared to a county median of \$67,178. When adjusted for inflation, the net increase is \$10,000 from 2000-2010. According to the U.S. Census, household median income has increased from around \$17,800 in 1980 to \$52,700 in 2000 and \$73,000 in 2010. When adjusted for inflation, the net increase from 2000-2010 is approximately \$8,000.

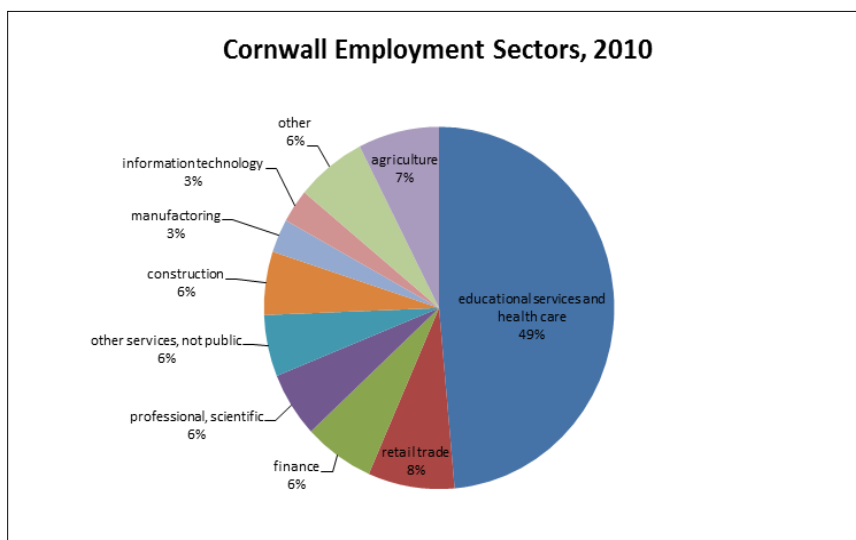


Figure 10: Cornwall Employment Sectors

Source: U.S. Census

### Agricultural Economy

Since the 1940s, the number of dairy farms in Cornwall has dramatically decreased. Consolidation and the depressed state of the farm economy caused the number of farms to plummet from 37 in 1975 to 15 in 1990. In 2011 there were four left. A single commercial orchard remains in production. As dairy farming has declined, the number of small, diversified farms or specialty farms has risen over the last 15 years, as is the trend throughout Addison County and Vermont. According to the U.S. Census, in 2010, 45 people or 7 percent of Cornwall's work force were employed in agriculture. This is an increase from only 19 people in 2000. In 1960, approximately 65 people were employed in agriculture. The following table lists Cornwall's current farming operations and the products they sell.

### **Agricultural Businesses in Cornwall 2011**

**Bread Loaf View Farm** – maple products  
**Hiberna Farm** – organic hay  
**Lemon Fair Honey Works** - honey  
**Lemon Fair West Farm** – natural beef  
**Meeting Place Pastures** – organic beef, pork, ham, bacon and sausage  
**Moonlit Alpacas** – Alpaca breeding stock and fiber  
**Mountain Meadows Farm** –organic beef  
**Orange Cat Soaps** – soaps and lotions  
**Pine Meadows Farm** – raw milk, pork, eggs, maple syrup  
**Roberts Farm** - milk  
**Rowe Crest Farm** – grass fed beef and hay  
**Seiler Farm** - milk  
**Severy Farm** – organic milk and maple syrup  
**Sunset Hill Gardens and Nursery** – garden plants and produce  
**Sunrise Orchards** –apples and cider  
**Twig Farm** – goat cheese  
**Williams Farm** – maple products  
**Windfall Orchards** – apples, cider, cherries, plums, blueberries, ice cider  
**Quesnel Farm** – milk  
**Ed Pete** -hay

### **Non-Agricultural Economy**

In 2010, 49 percent of the Cornwall work force worked in the educational

services and health care professions. The proximity of Cornwall to Middlebury College and Porter Hospital most likely correlates with these findings. According to 2010 U.S. Census, approximately 14 percent of the work force worked from home. In 2004 the planning committee identified more than 60 businesses based in Cornwall of a wide variety of types from automotive, construction, agricultural, accommodations, artisans, nonprofits, retail and others. Due to increased telecommunication technology and the acceptance of ‘work-from-home’ situations, it is most likely the number of home-based businesses have increased since this count.

### **ANALYSIS**

### **Agricultural Economy**



While agriculture is no longer the economic driver of most Cornwall households, agriculturally-related businesses still play a leading role in our local economy. The working landscape is arguably the most essential component of our town's character and must remain an economically viable option for Cornwall residents.

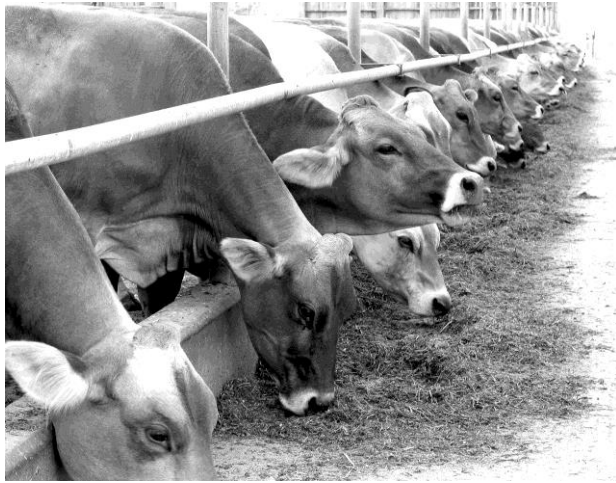


Figure 11: Feeding Time at a Cornwall Farm

Cornwall thrived during the years when sheep farming, which relied on extensive pasturing, was common in Vermont. It quickly adapted to dairy agriculture after the decline of the sheep industry when creameries and refrigeration made it possible to ship dairy products long distances. In the early days of its founding right up to post World War II, the majority of Cornwall's population was engaged in agriculture. By the time of the 2000 census less than three percent of the population was employed in agriculture. As mentioned in the *inventory* section above, this number is now on the rise.

The significant change to the town's identity as an agricultural community and its demographic

composition began in the mid-1900s. During the 1960s and 1970s, new residents flocked to Cornwall, attracted to the pastoral landscape and proximity to Middlebury. New housing resulted from this influx, some of which was built on marginal lands or on farmlands removed from production.

In the past twenty years, conventional dairy farming has declined dramatically as the price of land has increased, farmers have aged, and farming operations have become unsustainable due to inadequate national milk pricing. The few dairy farms which are left are bigger, more capital intensive and more productive in order to battle this challenge. Open agricultural land which is still farmed by large operations, is done so on a rental basis. These large farms often look to immigrant workers to find employees at an affordable cost.

While commercially viable dairy farms and orchards have been on a decline since the 1980's, there has been a shift towards diversification and small-scale farming, which has proven more economically sustainable. Sheep, goats, horses, organic vegetables, maple products and grass-fed beef, pork and poultry are examples of farm diversity in Cornwall today.

The local and sustainable food movement has attracted a younger generation of farmers and entrepreneurs to places such as Cornwall – rural, yet within easy reach of places to market local goods, and alternative employment opportunities for other members of the family. Selling Vermont-made products on-line is also a profitable marketing venue for modern agricultural

- ❖ 71% of food producers/interested food producers in Cornwall said the price of land was the biggest hurdle to successful farming in Cornwall.
- ❖ 70% of survey respondents produce either vegetable, fruit, maple syrup or dairy products for friends and family.
- ❖ 14% of respondents produce such products for local (Addison County) or regional (New England) distribution

Question 36

2011 Planning Survey

businesses in Cornwall, and throughout Addison County. Specialty cheeses, maple syrup, and even Vermont apples are all sold on-line.

These types of agricultural operations, in combination with conservation of farmland through other land-use planning tactics, offer the possibility of continued agricultural use

on some of the town's open farmland. However, due to its proximity to Middlebury College, Porter Hospital, and a relatively short commute to other job centers, Cornwall is attractive to many others besides those who want to farm. Because of this, maintaining a healthy balance between protecting agricultural lands and accommodating non-farming families will be a constant pressure on Cornwall's agricultural lands and resources.

On a more positive note, based on responses to the 2004 and 2011 survey, Cornwall residents respect the essential role the working landscape has in the cultural, environmental, aesthetic and economic make-up of the Town, and this can go far in ensuring the continuation of Cornwall agriculture.

Cornwall should continue to uphold a farmer's right to farm using generally accepted agricultural practices. Farmers, along with the appropriate state and federal agricultural agencies, should also be encouraged to farm in an environmentally responsible way utilizing Accepted Management Practices (AMPs) and Best Management Practices (BMPs). Residents involved in planning and conservation should familiarize themselves with supportive resources for current farmers and those looking to acquire land to farm. Those involved in planning and zoning should look to creative agricultural policies which support on-farm businesses which boost the economic viability of a farm.

### **Home-Based Businesses**

There are a wide variety of non-agricultural home-based businesses in town, including home day cares, excavating, architecture, landscape design, pottery, a woodshop, dog kennels and horse stables. Cornwall residents operate most of these from the property on which they live. Operating a business from residential property is a traditional practice in rural areas where the dominant economic activity, farming, could be described as a home-based business. Additionally, changes in computer and communications technology have allowed even more types of work to be done from home. Availability of high-speed internet access throughout Cornwall has increased the viability of those businesses dependent on technology and communications. Cornwall should support the ability of residents to work from home as those residents may be more likely to be involved in town, are reducing the amount of commuting traffic on local roads, and are generating economic activity within the town.

Some of Cornwall's home-based businesses pre-date the town's zoning regulations and many have been permitted as home occupations. However, some do not meet the strict definition of a home occupation found in the zoning regulations or they have grown beyond it. From time-to-time, conflicts arise between business operators and their neighbors over the impacts of the business on surrounding property owners. Cornwall should reexamine its regulations related to home-based businesses and develop standards that will allow many of the town's existing businesses to meet the legal standards of the regulations and that will protect neighboring property owners from nuisances generated by home-based businesses.

*The internet makes many kinds of work here today that will bring people who could not have thrived here even a decade ago.*

Cornwall Resident  
2004 Planning Survey



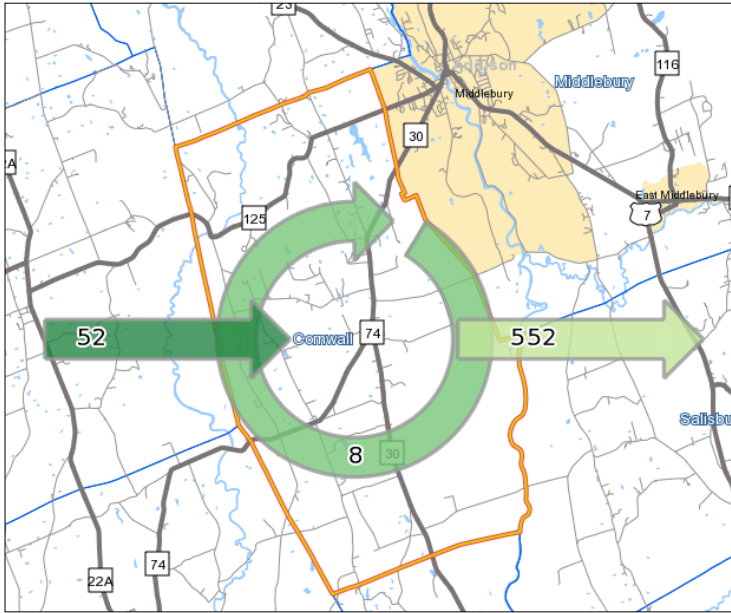


Figure 12: This diagram, which considers the inflow and outflow of workers in and out of Cornwall, and those that live and work in Cornwall, is helpful in thinking about local economics.

This diagram does not include all unreported home-based occupations, and therefore shows that 52 people come into Cornwall to work, 8 both live and work in Cornwall, and 552 leave Cornwall in order to find money.

*Source: U.S.Census 'On the Map' 2010*

### Commercial Development in Cornwall Village

Cornwall Village was once a commercial center that provided a variety of goods and services to local residents. Due to the closing of Longey's Cornwall Country Store in the 1980s, there is nowhere in town where residents can purchase basic groceries or other such goods. Eighty-seven percent of respondents to the 2004 Planning Survey supported development of a general store in Cornwall – the greatest level of agreement of any survey question. In the 2011 survey, 79 percent of respondents agreed that a general store would be beneficial to them. Fifty percent thought a Cornwall farmers market would be a beneficial service, and 45 percent thought a bakery/coffee shop would be beneficial. In a small town like Cornwall a general store or cafe provides more than a convenient place to buy milk, it provides residents with a public space outside of the home in which to meet and engage with neighbors.

- ❖ 79% of survey respondents agreed that a general store would be beneficial to them
- ❖ 50% agreed a village center farmers market would be beneficial
- ❖ 44% agreed a café or coffee shop would be beneficial to them
- ❖ Only 20% responded that a gas station would be most beneficial to them.

Question 10  
2011 Planning Survey

Such commercial development should be of a scale appropriate to a small, Vermont village center and provide goods and services needed by town residents. It is clear that Cornwall residents (54 percent from the survey) do not want large-scale, or strip highway development (including no national chain stores or fast food businesses) in town.

While it is important to have a sense of what kind of amenities and services Cornwall residents would welcome, it is just as important to

have a clear understanding of the limiting factors of implementing such plans. The question of the economic viability of this kind of retail operation in Cornwall has still to be addressed. Lack of available land and lack of water and wastewater infrastructure are other hurdles to discuss. The Town should be prepared to discuss these options for the future – when land becomes available, or a development proposal is presented to the town. Cornwall's zoning regulations should be reviewed to ensure that design standards, such as building size, permitted uses, signage, lighting and parking promote only small-scale commercial activity that would support a stronger local economy and complement the character of the village. Investigation of potential wastewater infrastructure in the village is also recommended. The neighboring Town of Shoreham, which constructed a treatment system in its village, may provide a model that could be used in other similarly situated rural hamlets.

*When we bought our property there was a small general store which we felt provided a small community anchor...we miss that element in Cornwall.*

*I live in the northern part of Cornwall and work in Middlebury. It is more convenient for me to access all of these services in Middlebury.*

Cornwall Residents  
2011 Planning Survey

## EDUCATION

*Education is an important planning topic for a number of reasons. In rural communities like Cornwall, the local school and its related events and organizations are a central component of community life and a mechanism for increasing residents' participation in and identification with their town. The quality of education in a community affects how attractive it is to new residents, especially those with children or about to start families. The education system is also the single largest expense to local taxpayers and has significant financial implications for property owners. For all these reasons, many residents have strong opinions about the quality and cost of education provided by the town's school system, school leadership and costs.*

## INVENTORY

### Facilities

Cornwall has a public elementary school, the Anna Stowell Sunderland Bingham Memorial School, which serves children from kindergarten through sixth grade. The town is a member of the Addison Central Supervisory Union (ACSU) school district. The ACSU maintains a middle school and a high school in Middlebury. Cornwall children attend those schools with students from Bridport, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge. There are also a number of private and parochial schools in the area, although none are located in Cornwall.

Additionally, Cornwall students and residents have access to vocational training at the Hannaford Career Center in Middlebury. The Hannaford facility also has the capability to offer distance learning and interactive educational programs. The Community College of Vermont offers college classes, professional training and continuing education opportunities to adults from a site in Middlebury as well.

### Enrollment

Enrollment at the Bingham Memorial School began in the 1960s at 126 students and declined throughout the decade to a low of 81 students in 1999. In 2011 enrollment had rebounded to 85 and class sizes were averaging around 12 students. The capacity of the Bingham Memorial School is 140 students. Given current population projections, its capacity is not likely to be exceeded in the next ten years.

### Costs

The cost of education continues to increase, even as enrollments decline. In 2001, the total budget for the Bingham Memorial School was more than \$800,000 and in 2011 that figure rose to more than \$1,299,806. The proposed budget for academic year 2012-13 is \$1,337,935.

### FOCS & Educational Enrichment Programs

The Friends of Cornwall School (FOCS) is a parent organization, which is involved in school issues and fundraising. In recent years, FOCS volunteers have raised money and given their time to a number of projects and improvements at the school. With the support of the Gilligan Fund, FOCS continues to offer a variety of after-school programs such as Girl Scouts, yoga, Four Winds Environmental Education, Nordic skiing, VSO performances, instrumental music instruction, and crafts. Other programming includes the Farm to School

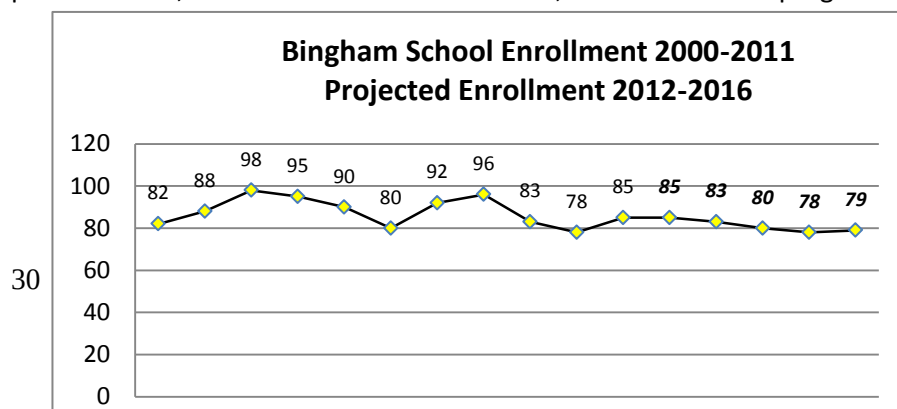


Figure 13: Bingham School Enrollment and Projected Enrollment

program (F2S), which planted a school garden and volunteers built raised beds and other planting areas around the school premises. The Cornwall School F2S Committee also sponsors various events during the course of the year to highlight the F2S initiative including a Harvest Festival, Grand-friends luncheon and the annual Town Meeting dinner. In 2011-12, a Farm-to-School mural was painted for the entry hall of the school by all the children. Improvements to the playground equipment, artists-in-residence, and access to overnight field trips have been other highlights of the program. In addition to the F2S special events, Friends of Cornwall School hold several special events which welcome and include members of the community.

Grants continue to be received for proposals that enrich the outside the classroom experiences of the children. For instance, the first-grade class received an ACEEF grant to purchase bird seed, a bird feeder, and binoculars. These students have a bird-watching station outside their window and they actively record bird data all winter long. Other classes join in on the wildlife exploration as it compliments their learning units.

## ANALYSIS

### Facility Needs

The Bingham Memorial School, constructed in 1959, is a masonry and steel structure with an interesting history. In the 1950s with several outdated, overcrowded “one-room” type schools and even more students on the way, it was clear that Cornwall needed a new, central school. The tax rate at that time was a high \$9.10 and residents were opposed to any increase. A campaign was initiated by townspeople to ask for personal contributions to offset the amount of money to be borrowed for a new school. An initial fund of \$1,500 slowly increased and a five-acre site was donated. After hearing of the high percentage of donors, one man gave stock valued at over \$23,000 and another \$40,000 was donated anonymously. Residents were asked again to increase their pledges and donations. The Town of Cornwall soon had the \$129,000 for a new school without having to raise taxes.

That building has served the town’s students for the past 45 years and school officials note that the structure is beginning to show its age. It is the only local school in the district that has not had a major renovation in the past 20 years. ●

During the 1990s in an effort to keep budget increases at a minimum, only modest repairs were done to the building as absolutely necessary. Since then significant investments in the Cornwall School building have been done - some grant funded, some budget supported. New windows, lights and insulated roof space in 2010 addressed energy efficiency issues on the building. In 2011, a focus on safety and security around the outside of the building and grounds was the focus. Outside lighting was installed on the “porches” so that entry and exit of the building could be done in a safe, well-lighted environment. The east end of the building got a new sidewalk

with a nonslip surface and the entire parking lot is now illuminated as people come and go once the sun goes down. Improvements to the oven exhaust, air handler, and multi-purpose room heat were all addressed in the past year as well. Although the roof is showing signs of its age, this is a cosmetic issue and not a structural one, but one that will require attention in the future.

### **Enrollment Trends**

The recent enrollment numbers at the Cornwall School have been very unusual in terms of the number of students who have moved in and out of the classes according to school officials. The enrollment has fluctuated by more than 20 students over the past several years, a large percent change for a small school. This has made it difficult for the staff to plan from year to year and for students to benefit from a consistent instructional program over time. The school's efforts to help each child succeed academically and personally have been complicated by larger than usual numbers of students moving in and out of the district and more students with serious learning disabilities.

The school continues to have a class for each grade level, as opposed to the two-grade classroom system the school had earlier. Enrollments continue to maintain at a level that supports the school's continuation of single classrooms for each grade level. In the 1990s, the school went through a period of class consolidation and should the enrollments necessitate, there may be a need to address this again in the near future.

Declining enrollment is a shared problem in the district and across the state, but it affects small schools the most dramatically. The number of students, and their related educational needs, can shift significantly as a result of a couple families moving into or out of town. Cornwall's current demographics point to a continued decline in the number of school-age children for the foreseeable future as reflected in the state and national trends. The town's population is growing and there has been a slight increase of young families moving into town with or about to have children.

### **Long and Short-Term Educational Planning**

Because we are witnessing continued decreases in enrollments and education costs per student increase, there is pressure to consider alternatives to Cornwall's local elementary school. As a result of an exploration process at the direction of the Addison Central Supervisory Union board, the schools of the 7 member Elementary School Districts agreed to form a study committee to consider the question "Is it in the best interests of the students and citizens of our community to reorganize our school districts as a Regional Educational District (RED)?" The 7 schools serve the communities of Bridport, Cornwall, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge.

The ACSU Study Committee, whose purpose was to provide leadership as Cornwall explored options and made informed decisions about the future of our school, had four goals in mind to accomplish: 1) ensure that educational quality and access for our communities' children, as well as fiscal responsibility & community values remain central to the discussion; 2) engage members of the public in a way that fosters informed decisions and community ownership of outcomes; 3) develop recommendations based on community input, as well as data and information collected by professional analysts, within the constraints of current law. Data should include, but may not be limited to, educational, fiscal, and demographic analyses; and 4) report to the Commissioner of Education and ensure a community vote, within a reasonable time period.

Following a kick-off meeting on May 6th, 2012, approximately 45 residents participated in a series of small group conversations about the future education of the children of all ages that live in the town. Each group met four times for an in-depth discussion about the role of the school in the community, the quality of education and the ability to fund the school and its operations in light of ever-changing enrollment.

Residents of the town of Cornwall share a deep commitment to the town, our children, and to each other. They appreciated the opportunity to get to know each other better, to hear each other's views, and to brainstorm about the future. At the same time, the complexity of the issue, and the need for more information made it difficult for many to reach solid conclusions about the direction forward. During the final session, they suggested ideas that the Cornwall School Board and administration can consider right away. They also offered suggestions for the ACSU Study Committee to think about as they discuss options for the District.

Upon Cornwall's completion of its public meetings, the Committee provided its input to the ACSU Study Committee for review in a report titled: "Education Our Children in a Changing World: Summary of the Cornwall Community Discussions". The ACSU Study Committee will use what it is learning from our town conversations to inform its recommendations. An overview of the possible recommendations that could result: status quo; form Regional Educational District (RED) with explanation of what this could mean; don't form RED, but consider other changes suggested by towns. Certainly the benefits for Cornwall in participating in this process will be the opportunity for community to talk about its own future; identify core community values; build trust and relationships in each community and across communities in the region; ensure that ACSU Study Committee recommendations are informed and guided by Cornwall's values; and identify local actions Cornwall may want to work on right away.

## HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

*Cultural resources help us understand and celebrate our community heritage. These resources include archaeological sites, historic sites and structures, and community settlement patterns, and the larger cultural landscapes that reflect the character of a time, place or way of life. Cornwall's historic and cultural resources offer a link to the past, help define the town's present character and provide a context and pattern for future growth and development.*

### INVENTORY

As the Cornwall Yesterday section describes, the town has a rich history. That history remains a vital component of the community and is visible in the town's built environment. Historic structures, many of which are located on and visible from municipal and state highways, greatly contribute to the character of and quality of life in Cornwall.

There are more than 60 buildings in Cornwall listed on the Vermont State Register of Historic Places. The town also has two state Historic Districts – West Cornwall and Cornwall Village – which together contain more than 30 additional structures. These buildings range from farmhouses along with their associated barns and outbuildings, to former schoolhouses, small buildings and churches. There are four structures in Cornwall listed on the National Historic Register – the covered bridge on Swamp Road, the Town Hall and the blacksmith's shop along Route 30, and a residential home on Lambert Lane.



Figure 14: Blacksmith's Shop on Route 30, 1791

Other features in the environment also reflect Cornwall's history. Stonewalls, foundations, cellar holes, stumps and trees are indicators of dramatic natural and cultural changes that have shaped the town's landscape. There are also archaeological resources buried beneath the surface in Cornwall, especially along the Lemon Fair River and Otter Creek. Extensive archaeological extractions were done around the area of the bridge over the Lemon Fair River on Route 125 prior to the total rehabilitation of the bridge. The excavation in the area provided evidence of a Native American presence at several locations in the area.

The Lavalley General Store has been the focus of three attempts to find a way to preserve and use the building. To date, despite the significant time and energy that has been put into this project, the Cornwall Historical



Society and those interested in the preservation of the building have been unsuccessful in their attempt to secure the needed funding to "save" the building. At the March 2012 Town meeting, the Selectboard was directed by voters to sell or demolish the building in the most cost-effective manner.

### **Adaptive Reuse**

Adaptive reuse is the term used to describe using old buildings for new purposes. As a rural town in transition from an agricultural community to a largely residential community, Cornwall has a significant number of farm buildings either no longer in use or underutilized. These structures are one of the components of the town's landscape that residents identified as central to Cornwall's rural character. If uses cannot be found for these buildings, owners may no longer maintain them and they could eventually disappear.

Former agricultural buildings can be converted to a variety of uses from residences and apartments to commercial or industrial space. The town does grant waivers for historic residential buildings that do not meet dimensional standards in order to support productive use of these buildings. The regulations should be reviewed to ensure such waivers can also allow businesses to re-use and adapt historic structures in town.



*Figure 15: Vacant Farm Building*



## COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

*A primary function of any municipality is to provide basic facilities and services to the people who live and work within its boundaries. These include law enforcement, fire and emergency medical services, as well as libraries, recreation and town administration.*

### INVENTORY

#### Town Office

The Cornwall Town Hall, which was built in 1882 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, houses the offices of the Town Clerk and Treasurer. It serves as a meeting and working space for the Selectboard, the Listers, the Planning Commission, the historical society, and Zoning Board of Adjustment. Residents cast their town, state and federal election ballots at the hall. The hall also houses the library and has an auditorium meeting space, which is used several dance groups, as a second meeting room and for special town meetings. The town hall has also been designated as the town's Emergency Operations Center and Emergency Shelter. The Emergency Management Team is in the process of supplying the building with the necessary equipment and supplies for that purpose.



Figure 16: View of the Cornwall Town Hall

The building no longer has the capacity for the Annual Town Meeting; consequently, this meeting is conducted at the Bingham Memorial School.

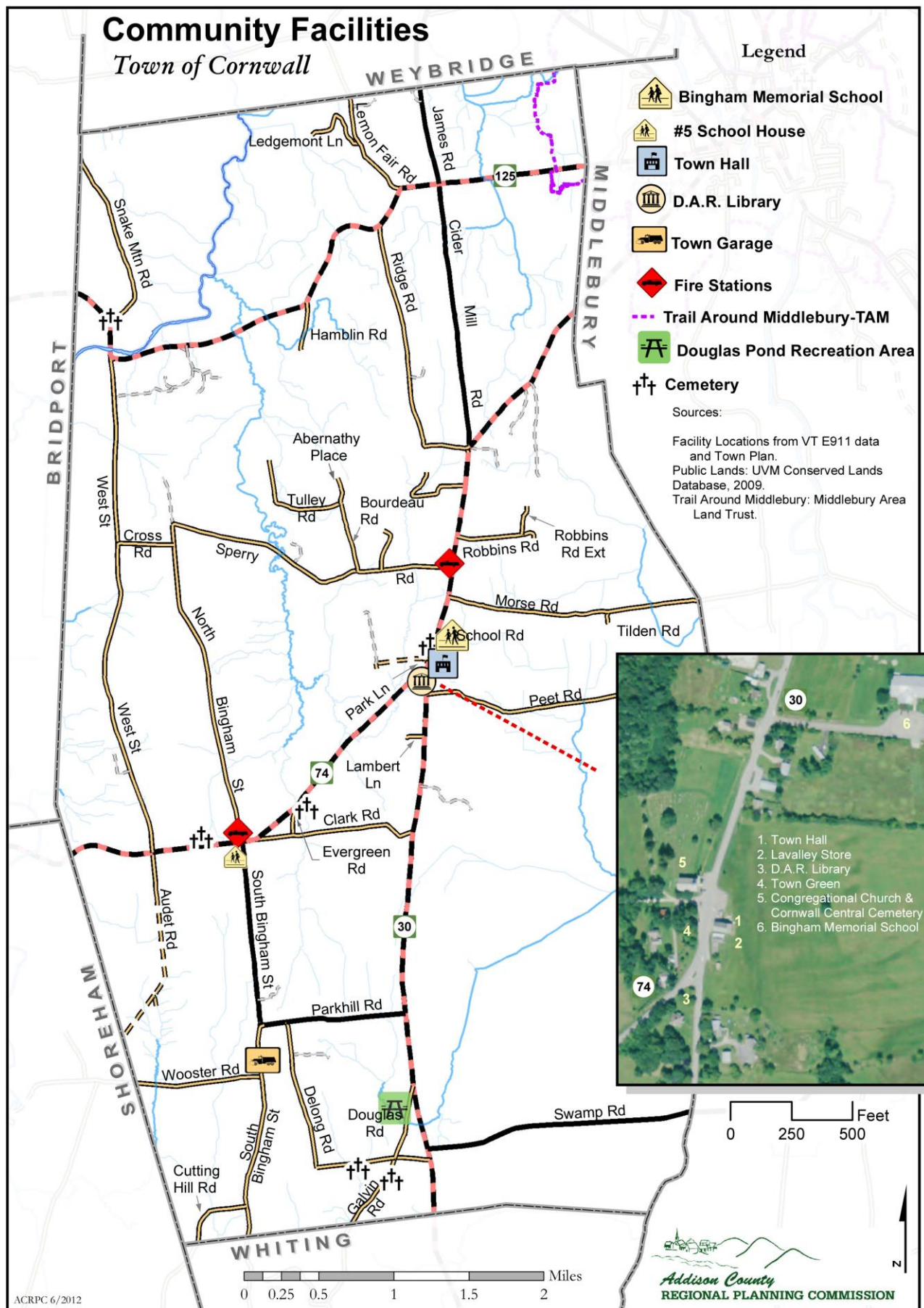
The Town Hall underwent extensive repairs during the 1980s and in 2008 underwent preservation work which included: new windows throughout the building, a new ADA bathroom, new furnace installation and stabilization and roofing of both fire escapes. In 2011, Cornwall received an Emergency Management Planning Grant to assist in the installation of a generator to provide back-up power in case of an emergency.

Three issues that will need addressing in the future include: meeting the accessibility code for accessing the second floor, inadequate lighting in the parking lot, and a moisture problem in the basement. As of March 2012, the Selectboard was looking into solutions to these problems.

### **Town Green**

The Cornwall Town Green, located on Route 30 in Cornwall's historic village, is the site of many of the town's public events. The central location of the green, across from the Town Hall, south of the Cornwall Congregational Church and in close proximity to the Cornwall Elementary School, contributes to importance and accessibility to the community.

The Town Green is currently used for community festivals such as the annual Strawberry Shortcake Festival, and Chicken Barbeque, and as a meeting spot for public events such as Green-Up Day. The green is also informally used a park space by community members, travelers and tourists. There are picnic tables and large shade trees that contribute to its sense of place. There is also ample parking for anyone wishing to use the Town Green at the neighboring Town Office and Library lot.



of 2003 indicated that 37 percent of the 57 respondents favored closing the library, the library has successfully engaged Cornwall residents and is now used and enjoyed by many on a regular basis.

The library now uses Resource Mate software to catalog books and media. All books and media that are part of the library collection have been barcoded. The total library collection numbers nearly 4000 items. This software is also used for electronic software checkout. Through the use of the new barcoded library cards, patrons are also able to download eBooks through the Green Mountain Consortium and Heritage Quest online database. Current information shows that the library is circulating about 700 items per year, with approximately 100 patrons utilizing the library services. The library has one public computer available for use. The library also offers wireless internet access to visitors and patrons. It is open Tuesday-Friday from 9am-5pm.

### **Town Garage**

The Town Garage is located at 1469 South Bingham Street, just north of Wooster Road, in the southwestern corner of Cornwall. The garage was built in the early 70's on land purchased from the Hoops Family.

The garage has had several upgrades including a cold storage lean-to, an office and parts room, and another lean-to that is heated and secure. If the Town chooses to upgrade to bigger trucks in the future, significant structural work would need to be done in order to fit both trucks and other equipment.

Until the early 80's the salt and sand pile were across the street from the garage, on land that belongs to the Gill Family. In the mid 80's it was discovered that salt leaching from the salt pile was entering the water table. At this time a sand and salt shed was built on town land adjacent to the garage, with cement slab floors. In order to flush salt from the water table, a pump and extensive piping system was designed which sends well water from the site of the garage to the Lemon Fair River in Shoreham. This continues today. A standby generator was installed in order to keep pipes from freezing during below-freezing temperatures.

The sand shed had a steel roof installed recently, however there are sections of the building's cement walls that are severely compromised. This will need to be addressed in the near future. Possible upgrades to this building could include additional bearing supports to make it a functional building, moving the salt and sand piles to a new arch and fabric storage structure.

### **Bingham Memorial School**

Cornwall has a public elementary school, the Anna Stowell Sunderland Bingham Memorial School, which serves children from kindergarten through sixth grade. The town is a member of the Addison Central Supervisory Union (ACSU) school district. The ACSU maintains a middle school and a high school in Middlebury. Cornwall children attend those schools with students from Bridport, Middlebury, Ripton, Salisbury, Shoreham and Weybridge. There are also a number of private and parochial schools in the area, although none are located in Cornwall. (See Education section for more information on the Bingham Memorial School).

### **Number 5 School House**

This structure, located on Bingham Street in West Cornwall, was one of the last two schools in use when the current Bingham School opened in 1960. The Number 5 School was rebuilt around 1890 in its present location, prior to that the school was apparently a brick building and was located on North Bingham Street. After it was no longer used as a school building, the fire department used it as a meeting house for about 25 years. This

building is currently vacant and maintenance is needed to adequately protect the structure. There is some interest in trying to preserve it, but no plan in place to do so.

### Douglas Pond

The Town owns Douglas Pond on Douglas Road. This pond was once used for swimming and ice skating but has since grown over. Although the pond could no longer be used for swimming, some residents have shown interest in creating better access to the pond, including the creation of a traffic pull off.

### Undeveloped Land

The town owns two acres near the Bingham school that is currently rented and used for hay. There is currently no discussion as to potential future use of this land. Future uses for this land could include additional village housing or a site for solar energy infrastructure for school and/or municipal use.

### Cornwall Fire Department

|                             | 2005      | 2006      | 2007      | 2008      | 2009      | 2010      |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Medical Assists</b>      | 28        | 24        | 20        | 34        | 23        | 25        |
| <b>Auto Accidents</b>       | 12        | 14        | 4         | 11        | 12        | 10        |
| <b>Structure Fires</b>      | 3         | 6         | 3         | 3         | 3         | 4         |
| <b>Brush or Grass Fires</b> | 6         | 3         | 3         | 2         | 6         | 3         |
| <b>False Alarm</b>          | 3         | 1         | 1         | 1         | 7         | 5         |
| <b>Carbon Dioxide Alarm</b> | 0         | 2         | 1         | 0         | 1         | 0         |
| <b>Mutual Aid</b>           | 2         | 6         | 6         | 9         | 9         | 4         |
| <b>Other</b>                | 1         | 1         |           | 2         | 4         |           |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>54</b> | <b>56</b> | <b>57</b> | <b>60</b> | <b>65</b> | <b>57</b> |

Figure 18: Cornwall Fire Department Calls 2005-2010

The Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department (CVFD) was established in 1950. It has approximately 26 highly trained members, including five first responders. Four more members are slated to gain first responder status in October 2012. The department houses its vehicles and equipment in two fire stations – on Route 30 near the Sperry Road intersection and in West Cornwall

at 63 North Bingham Road. It is imperative that the highway

transportation links and highways to and from these locations be well maintained and free from obstruction or any utility infrastructure development with the potential to cause catastrophic failure due to explosion or otherwise. It is self-evident that these highways will be vital in the event a large or small emergency response is required from these locations or assisting agencies. At the 2012 Town Meeting, residents voted to fund significant improvements to the latter to improve space availability for needed equipment. Voters also agreed to transfer the .5 acre property from the Town to the Cornwall Fire Department.

There is a First Response Group organized under the auspices of the department. Its members respond to medical emergencies and provide care until the Middlebury Ambulance arrives.

The CVFD typically responds to around 30 medical calls per year, 10 auto accidents, and 10 fire calls. The department gives and receives mutual aid with neighboring departments and usually responds to around five mutual aid calls each year.

Construction and retrofitting of older homes with modern materials increasingly adds a toxic mix of chemicals in smoke. This poses an increased risk to firefighters and requires additional training. While Cornwall continues to have a committed group of volunteers, issues such as this pose a threat to volunteer recruitment and retention.

## **Middlebury Volunteer Ambulance Association**

In a medical emergency, Cornwall is served by the Middlebury Volunteer Ambulance Association (MVAA). In 2012, the MVAA had 20 volunteer staff and 23 paid personnel. MVAA serves the towns of Middlebury, East Middlebury, Bridport, Shoreham, Orwell, Ripton, Salisbury, Cornwall, Weybridge, Whiting, and New Haven. They also respond to mutual aid requests from the neighboring towns of Bristol, Brandon, and Vergennes. Cornwall supports MVAA through an annual allocation at town meeting and through an annual drive for operating support.

## **Emergency Management Team**

The Cornwall Emergency Management Team formed in 2007. Emergency management teams work with Addison County Regional Planning to gain expertise and network with other Addison County towns regarding emergency preparedness issues and opportunities. The State, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, has mandated that every town have an Emergency Manager, and develops an "All-Hazard" response plan for its community. Cornwall is in the beginning stages of developing its *Emergency Operations Plan*, which identifies hazards and rates their likelihood, assesses the resources available in and to the Town, and establishes protocols for handling large-scale emergencies and disasters. This document will guide Town officials, emergency responders, and citizens through the process of preparing for and responding to a disaster. Part of the role of Emergency Management is getting preparedness information to citizens, and encouraging people to take these important steps to being prepared for an emergency – whether it be fire, flooding, or another weather related situation. Because the Town Hall is designated as the Town's emergency operations center and Red Cross shelter area in the Town's *Emergency Operations Plan*, it is imperative that no development of utility transmission infrastructure with the potential for catastrophic failure, by explosion or otherwise, be located near or prevent access to that structure.<sup>1</sup>

## **Police Protection**

Police protection, including traffic enforcement, in Cornwall is provided by the State Police, with contract services available from the Addison County Sheriff's Department. The crime rate in Cornwall is significantly below regional and state levels.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the Town would consider a gas transmission pipeline located closer than the potential impact radius (as that term is calculated under the federal regulations governing "high consequence areas" and gas transmission pipelines at 49 CFR Section 192.901 et seq. or any successor regulation), from an emergency structure or space to be unsafe because the failure of a transmission pipeline could have a significant impact on people and/or property. The Town considers its residents and their property to be as important, and as worthy of protection, as those who happen to live in areas with greater population density. For the sake of clarity, the formula for the Potential Impact Radius as used in 49 CFR Section 192.901 is as follows:

$r = 0.69 \times \sqrt{p \cdot d^2}$ , where "d" is the diameter of the transmission pipe and "p" is rated pressure of the pipe. For a 12" transmission line at 1440 PSI, the potential impact radius would be as follows:  $r = 0.69 \times \sqrt{1440 \cdot (12^2)} = 314$  feet. A 10" transmission line at 1440 PSI yields a potential impact radius of 262 feet.



## Healthcare, Social and Human Services

While there are no medical facilities located within Cornwall, residents have convenient access to Porter Medical Center in Middlebury and its associated medical practices. There are also a number of dental and healthcare providers not associated with Porter located in Middlebury.

Some Cornwall residents may also seek medical care in the Burlington or Rutland areas. Fletcher Allen Medical Center in Burlington is the nearest Level I Trauma Center and patients in need of services not available at Porter are typically transported there.

Cornwall residents have access to a variety of social and human service organizations, most of which are nonprofits located in Middlebury. Organizations like the Addison County Community Action Group, Addison County Home Health and Hospice, Addison County Transit Services, Champlain Valley Agency on Aging, the Counseling Service of Addison County, Elderly Services, the Open Door Clinic, Vermont Adult Learning and WomenSafe receive a small amount of funding annually from the town to support their services, which are available to Cornwall residents.

|                          | 2004/2005         | 2005-2006         | 2006-2007         | 2007-2008         | 2009-2010         |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Selectboard Budget       | \$ 109,266        | \$ 144,581        | \$ 162,053        | 192,304           | \$ 194,552        |
| Fire Department          | \$ 41,200         | \$ 51,550         | \$ 53,275         | \$ 56,932         | \$ 57,250         |
| Library                  | \$ 1,500          | \$ 3,000          | \$ 3,000          | 3,000             | \$ 3,000          |
| Outside Agencies         | \$ 16,310         | \$ 16,536         | \$ 17,196         | \$ 19,900         | \$ 19,975         |
| Surplus/Deficit          | \$ (10,164)       | \$ (1,980)        | \$ 9,781          | \$ (59,077)       | \$ (59,142)       |
| Hold Harmless            | \$ (21,917)       | \$ (33,928)       | \$ 38,021         | \$ 43,724         | (\$43,985)        |
| Town Hall                |                   |                   |                   |                   | 60,000            |
| Town Garage              |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Road Equipment           | \$ 120,876        |                   | \$ 60,000         | 137,500           |                   |
| Audit                    |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Reappraisal              |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| <b>Selectboard Total</b> | <b>\$ 257,071</b> | <b>\$ 258,119</b> | <b>\$ 319,384</b> | <b>317,334.82</b> | <b>352,149.40</b> |
| Highway Department       | \$ 218,775        | \$ 261,800        | \$ 286,611        | \$ 313,308        | 304,390           |
| Less State Aid           | \$ (60,000)       | \$ (60,000)       | \$ (60,000)       | \$ (64,000)       | \$ (64,000)       |
| <b>Highway Total</b>     | <b>\$ 158,775</b> | <b>\$ 201,800</b> | <b>\$ 226,611</b> | <b>249,308</b>    | <b>240,390.00</b> |

Figure 19: Comparison of Cornwall's Municipal Budgets 2004-2010

## ANALYSIS

### Cost of Government

Over the past several decades, the cost of government and services in Cornwall has grown. Many of these costs are beyond the control of the Selectboard and voters.

In the past five years, Cornwall has established a capital budget to pay for town vehicle costs. Capital budgets allow scheduling such expenditures and structuring financing to avoid a sudden, unanticipated increase in the tax rate. As shown in Figure 16, the Cornwall budget, in the past, has been highly variable due to such capital expenditures (such as repairs to town buildings or equipment for the fire department).

Creating mutual aid agreements between neighboring towns for all types of resources, including highway related assets, is another way to provide a sense of financial/resource security. An example is the joint purchase of an excavator by Shoreham and Cornwall.



*The availability, location and quality of services provided by utilities within a municipality influence the community's growth pattern. Areas with adequate utility service are often more attractive, less expensive places for new development to occur and growth tends to follow the extension of utilities into a previously unserved area. Similarly, the characteristics and pattern of development can influence the amount of energy consumed by public, residential and commercial energy users. The interrelationships between utilities, energy and land use patterns should be considered when planning for the future of the town and any development, operation or maintenance of utility transmission or distribution infrastructure should take place in a manner that does not adversely affect the safety of the residents or their property or adversely affect the aesthetic or historical nature of the town.*

### INVENTORY

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#### **Utilities**

Typical of rural communities with low-density development, there is limited provision for utilities and infrastructure in Cornwall.

#### **Water and Wastewater**

There is no public water or wastewater treatment system in the town, so all households rely on private water and septic systems. The Town Hall and D.A.R. Library do share a single septic system, with waste being piped from the Town Hall under the road to a system built behind the D.A.R. building. Clay soils in much of the town require expensive raised septic systems which increase the cost of development.

#### **Solid Waste**

Licensed haulers transport Cornwall trash to a transfer station in Middlebury. District waste is disposed of outside the region at a contracted landfill. The district has a mandatory recycling ordinance and waste haulers who operate in the district are required to offer recycling services. Recyclables in Cornwall do not have to be separated out by type, since the district has contracted with a single-stream facility that separates the materials after they are collected. The district also accepts household hazardous waste, white goods and construction debris at its Middlebury transfer station. Garbage and recycling drop-off service is available at the Town Hall parking lot on Saturday afternoons. Residents wishing home pick-up of trash and recycling may subscribe to one of several private services. Cornwall participates in the Addison County Solid Waste Management District (ACSWMD) and residents have access to all of ACSWMD's services including hazardous waste disposal.

#### **Telecommunications**

Shoreham Telephone Company, Cornwall's phone and internet provider, was sold to OTT Communications in 2011. OTT provides residential and business telephone and internet service throughout Cornwall, with various levels of high speed DSL (digital subscriber line) available to the entire town with no distance-to-office limits. Service lines are mostly underground, with some overhead on the company's own poles or shared GMP poles. OTT has a small building near the Town Hall that houses its main service equipment for the town.

There is currently no provision of, or plans for providing, cable television service in Cornwall; therefore, there is also no access to high-speed internet service via cable lines. Satellite television is provided by several companies with high-definition mini-dishes available. These companies offer satellite high-speed internet services to residential customers as well. Local DSL service is fast enough to provide video streaming of media as an alternative to satellite service. Cell phone service is offered by several national companies including, Verizon, Sprint and AT and T Mobile among others, although reception is still poor in many areas. There are no cell phone towers or antennas currently installed in Cornwall. Much of the cellular phone infrastructure installed in the region has been focused on providing service to traffic corridors like Route 7 and more densely populated communities like Middlebury. This plan supports the use of existing structures, such as steeples and farm silos, when installing cell phone infrastructure.

## **Energy**

### **Electricity**

Green Mountain Power (GMP) provides electricity to Cornwall; there are no substations or transmission lines in the town. Service lines are overhead on poles; in recent years, it has become more common for new development to run the service lines underground in buried conduit.

GMP's main sources of electricity include the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant, which provides around 45 percent of their power, and Hydro-Quebec, which provides around 30 percent. Small hydro-projects like those in Middlebury and Salisbury comprise some of the remaining 25 percent of GMP's power portfolio. GMP offers customers the opportunity to sign up for 'Cow Power', a program in which Vermont farms can transform methane gas from cow manure into electricity and connect this energy back to the grid. Three farms in Addison County are involved in this program.

Household energy use represents approximately 30 percent of total statewide energy consumption. Almost 80 percent of domestic demand is for space heating and domestic hot water. The remaining 20 percent runs miscellaneous appliances, lighting, cooking, drying and air conditioning. Space heating and hot water heating are affected by building design and construction. Other energy uses are affected primarily by personal choices and habits. There are no commercial energy generation facilities in Cornwall.

### **Fuel**

According to the 2010 Census, just over 70 percent of Cornwall's homes are heated with fuel oil or kerosene. Less than 20 percent use wood heat, either traditional inside stoves or furnaces, or using outside furnaces.

Companies within Addison County deliver fuel oil, propane and kerosene to Cornwall. Wood pellet delivery is available through the ACORN energy co-op in Middlebury, and firewood is available from individual vendors in Cornwall and other surrounding towns.

## Fuel Assistance

CVOEO provides fuel assistance to income-qualified residents either on a seasonal basis (call CVOEO at 800-479-6151) or on a crisis basis (call CVOEO Addison Community Action at 388-2285 or visit their Middlebury office at Suite 107, 700 Exchange Street, Middlebury to obtain an application). Visit the CVOEO website

[CVOEO.org/htm/community-action/fuel\\_terms.html](http://CVOEO.org/htm/community-action/fuel_terms.html) for a description of additional fuel assistance programs available to Vermont residents.

In 2010 the Vermont government ran a Burn Clean Woodstove Changeout Program. This gave homeowners a \$450 rebate on the replacement of an old woodstove with a new, cleaner burning wood, pellet, or gas stove, or a \$75-\$100 rebate for replacement of an old catalyst in an EPA-certified woodstove.

## Renewable Energy Sources

### ➤ Wood and Biomass

Locally cut timber, much of it from the Cornwall Swamp, was the only source of energy for town residents until the turn of the last century. A significant percentage of Cornwall's homes continue to be fully or partially heated with wood, most of which is still cut locally. Local maple syrup producers depend on wood fuel for boiling sap.

### ➤ Solar and Wind

In the 2011 planning survey, nine percent of respondents indicated they used solar energy to, at least, partially heat their home. This could include solar hot water or simply using passive solar from south facing windows to decrease heating costs, for example. Eight homes in Cornwall have incorporated some type of solar energy system into their home. Several houses have recently installed solar hot water systems as part of a 2011 promotion from VPIRG and Sunward Systems of Vergennes. Currently, three residences use wind power to supply their homes with electricity and one feeds excess power back to GMP.

### ➤ Ground Source Heating

Ground source heat pumps rely on an energy exchange between the air within a building being heated and the ground. Ten feet below the earth's surface, the temperature is typically a constant temperature of 50°F. This provides a year round supply of hotter or cooler air – depending on the season, cutting down on additional heating and cooling services typically needed for a New England home. According to the 2011 survey, at least one home in Cornwall is using this technology.



Figure 20: Wood Pile behind a Sugarhouse in Cornwall

## **Transportation and Energy**

Approximately 40 percent of Vermont's energy use is for transportation, 29 percent is for residential uses, and the remaining 37 percent is for commercial and industrial uses. As there is no regularly scheduled public transportation serving Cornwall, energy consumption per household for transportation purposes is very high. Most residents drive their car every day to get to work, school and for recreational purposes. With the cost of gasoline at historic high levels, commuting can cause significant financial burdens on many households.

Cornwall has no commercial gas station. The nearest gasoline and diesel pumps are four to ten miles from Cornwall village, in East Middlebury, Middlebury, Bridport and Shoreham. Private fuel tanks exist on farm and commercial properties, with deliveries coming from the surrounding towns. In 2010, Cornwall completed an upgrade to Route 30, which included widening the shoulders between Cornwall and Middlebury, for the specific purpose of creating a safer space for cyclists and pedestrians. On the 2011 planning survey, over 70 percent of participants, agreed provisions like these should continue to be made for cyclists and pedestrians on Cornwall roads.

## **Energy Conservation**

In the 2011 Cornwall planning survey, over 60 percent of the participants agreed heating and other utility costs were one of the greatest financial burdens associated with their housing (second after property taxes). Almost half of the 2011 survey respondents have had some type of energy efficiency assessment of their home, and 85 percent said they had taken some measures to increase their home's energy efficiency.

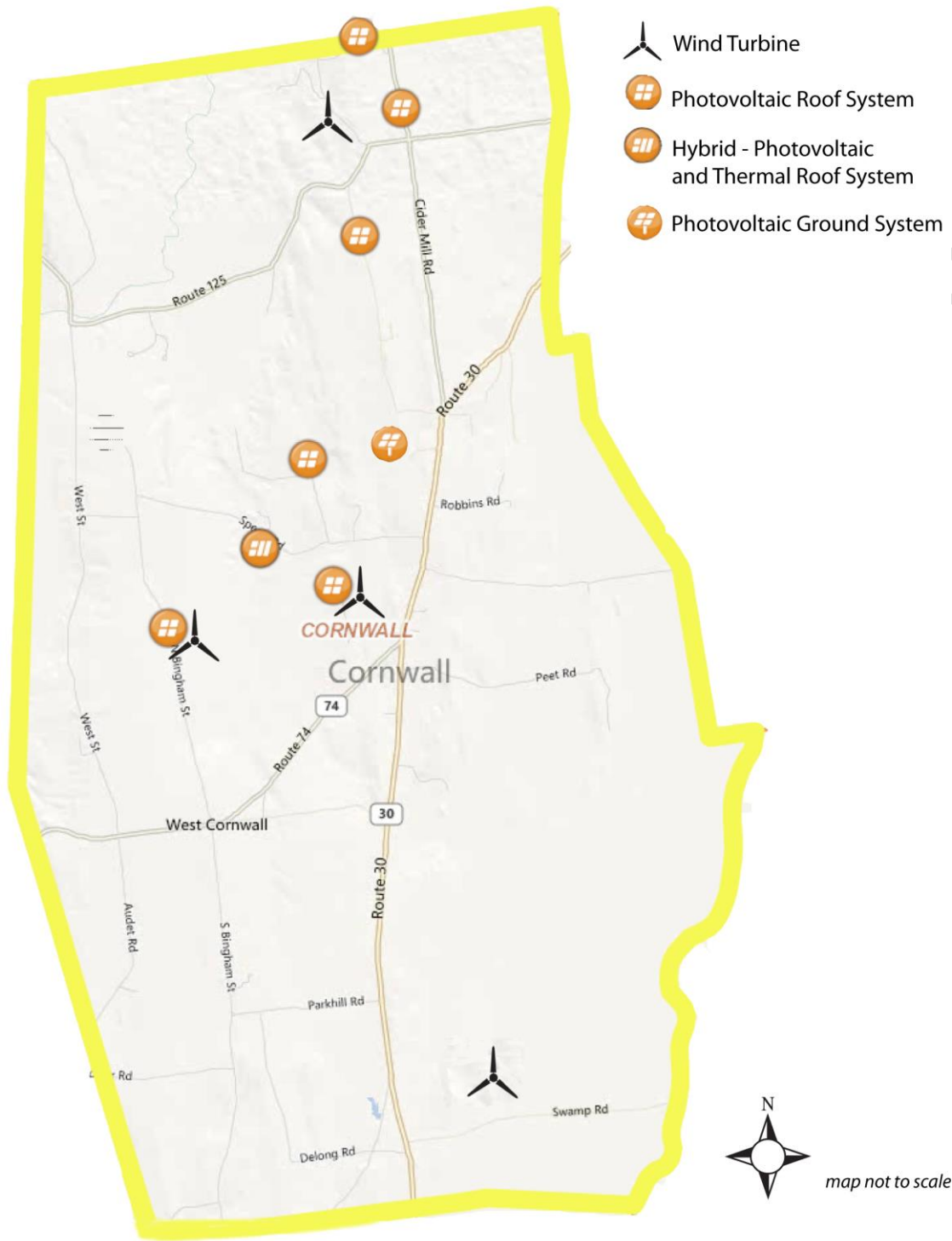
The Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity provides a weatherization service that assists income-qualified households in the region to take steps to increase the efficiency of their homes and reduce their energy bills.

A wide variety of state and federal subsidies and rebates are currently available for Vermont residents to conserve energy. Efficiency Vermont offers programs including energy audits, incentives for Home Performance with Energy Star for construction of new homes and renovations, information on appliances and compact fluorescent bulbs, building an Energy Star home, home heating help, rebate information, and Efficiency Vermont's reference library. More information can be found at: [www.Efficiencyvermont.com](http://www.Efficiencyvermont.com)

## **Energy Coordinator**

Cornwall has an Energy Coordinator, appointed annually by the Cornwall Selectboard. The coordinator is part of a county-wide energy committee that meets throughout the year. Energy Coordinators in each Addison County town are responsible for understanding federal, state and local opportunities, such as energy-saving programs and grant opportunities available to their town. They also advise the planning commission and Selectboard on pertinent policies and regulations associated with energy efficiency and conservation.

# Residential Wind and Solar Systems Town of Cornwall 2012



Source: Vermont Energy Atlas <http://www.vtenergyatlas.com/>  
Map: Vermont Energy Atlas and Addison County Regional Planning Commission

Figure 21: Alternative Energy Use in Cornwall 2011

Source: ACRPC and Vermont Energy Atlas

ANALYSIS

## **Utilities**

As Cornwall has grown, GMP and OTT Communication have expanded services to meet the need. OTT Communications may need to increase its cable capacity by burying new cable, running new aerial lines, or adding SLCs to areas with limited capacity.

## **Water and Waste Water Infrastructure**

Cornwall has no public water or waste water infrastructure. Residents rely on wells for drinking and all other household needs. Due to residents' exclusive reliance on wells for drinking and other water use, utilities must assure that any infrastructure be designed, sited, constructed, and maintained to protect existing wells and the groundwater upon which they draw, particularly in the most densely populated areas along Cornwall's major transportation routes (Routes 30, 74 and 125).<sup>2</sup> Single family septic systems are used to handle waste water. The lack of municipal water and wastewater infrastructure and heavy clay soils makes increased density in the historic settlement areas expensive. It would be beneficial for Cornwall to understand the newest technologies available for small scale community water and waste water system and how these might be used in future development decisions.

## **Cellular Telecommunications**

Although service has improved somewhat in the last few years, it is not yet consistently available throughout Cornwall. In communities around Cornwall, cell phone towers have been erected on top of silos to mitigate visual impacts to the landscape. Any company seeking permits for such infrastructure needs to prove that no existing structure in town meets their needs before being allowed to construct a tower. The town should include this in updated zoning regulations.

## **Energy**

The 2011 Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan recommends that Vermont set a goal to obtain 90 percent of our total energy from renewable sources by 2050. It is in Cornwall's best interest to reflect similar ambitions. The conservation of energy can play an important role in the local economy while protecting the environment and saving money for homeowners and businesses. The Cornwall Plan encourages residents to take the necessary steps toward creating more energy- efficient and sustainable homes and lifestyles.

## **Policy**

Updating bylaws to allow for broader home business opportunities and the installation of alternative energy projects is a good first step for incorporating energy efficiency into the daily life of Cornwall residents. This Plan supports the use of alternative technologies such as small-scale wind turbines, geothermal heating, small-scale hydro-electric and solar technologies in order to create clean, affordable, and local sources of energy.

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<sup>2</sup> For example, the Town would consider a gas transmission pipeline located closer than the potential impact radius (as that term is calculated under the federal regulations governing "high consequence areas" and gas transmission pipelines at 49 CFR Section 192.901 et seq. or any successor regulation), from a residential, commercial or municipal well to be unsafe because the failure of a transmission pipeline could have a significant impact on people and/or property. The Town considers its residents and their property to be as important, and as worthy of protection, as those who happen to live in areas with greater population density. Please see footnote 1 for a potential impact radius calculation example.

### **Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE)**

Cornwall took a step towards making energy efficiency improvements more affordable by approving the PACE program at the 2011 Town Meeting. PACE is a financing program designed to help qualifying homeowners invest in specified energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements which will be administered by Vermont Energy Investment Corporation (VEIC).

### **Buildings**

Given that much of the town's existing housing stock was built over one hundred years ago, rehabbing and weatherizing these older homes is critical to reducing energy consumption. Some of these older dwellings still rely on basic winterization methods such as plastic over windows and exterior walls, hay bales around the foundation, and closing off parts of the house to reduce heating demand. Cornwall's homeowners can take steps to weatherize their homes or to replace older, inefficient appliances or mechanical systems that can reduce energy use and expense for heating and cooling by 10 to 50 percent.

Basic, inexpensive measures such as turning off lights in empty rooms or replacing light bulbs with new, more efficient bulbs can substantially reduce energy usage. According to Efficiency Vermont, if every household in the state changed one light bulb, Vermonters would save enough electricity to light 14,500 homes for a year. Using timers to regulate lighting, heating or cooling in a home can also significantly decrease energy consumption.

Newer furnaces that are Energy Star rated or wood stoves containing catalytic converters offer increased efficiency than use of traditional equipment, and some provide for a variety of fuel sources. Pellet stoves allow consumers to heat with wood, while being cleaner and easier to operate.

### **Transportation**

Transportation currently accounts for approximately 40 percent of the total end-use energy demand in Vermont. Nonrenewable petroleum supplies 99.9 percent of the energy used for transportation, all of it supplied from outside our region. Transportation consumes 60 percent of all petroleum used in Vermont. Commuters, shoppers, recreationists and other non-commercial users traveling in private automobiles consume almost half of all the energy used in Vermont for transportation. Therefore, effective transportation policy has great potential to affect Vermont's petroleum usage and overall energy demand, as well as reducing our energy expenses and dependence on foreign oil.

Reducing energy use for transportation is a difficult challenge for a rural town like Cornwall. Residents depend on a car to cater to their individual needs and busy daily schedules. The majority of Cornwall residents commute to Middlebury or further every day, but when surveyed, 50 percent of respondents said that they would not commute by bus even if it was available to them. Only a quarter of the respondents have ever carpooled to or from town. While bus service is available to all students, many parents drive their children to school, and many students drive to MUHS daily as there is no late bus available after sports or other after-school activities.

Continuing to provide additional infrastructure for walking and biking, such as wider shoulders on Route 30 and bike racks, where necessary, is essential to supporting cleaner transportation linkages. Continuing conversation with residents and with ACTR regarding public transportation options for the future would also be beneficial, as would continued discussion on better provisions for cyclist and pedestrians on Route 74 and 125. Encouraging carpooling and the use of the Cornwall *Park and Ride* are also important.



### **Natural Gas Pipeline and Other Transmission and Generation Infrastructure**

With regard to any type of utility scale transmission or generation proposed to impact Cornwall; this plan supports energy infrastructure and services which do not cause undue adverse impact to the health and safety of our residents or on the environmental and scenic qualities of our natural resources, and supports the associated goals within this plan. In order to protect the residents of Cornwall and the aesthetic and historic character of Cornwall, including the Cornwall Village and West Cornwall Areas, Cornwall adopts the following implementation measures for transmission or generation infrastructure that utilities or others propose to construct, operate and maintain within Cornwall, each of which should be considered prior to and during a public service board review process:

- a.** Proposed utility infrastructure shall be designed to provide substantive economic benefits to the town and its residents. Utility infrastructure designs shall provide service in the Cornwall Village and West Cornwall Areas while implementing and reinforcing the Town's planning goals for these areas.
- b.** Proposed utility projects (including energy distribution projects) shall fully use existing infrastructure and utility rights of way to meet the Town's and Region's energy needs before additional infrastructure is built or new rights of ways are required. This shall include co-locating energy distribution lines<sup>3</sup>, telephone, fiber optic, and cable lines (or any future telecommunications technology) in the same corridors. Services using utility poles shall be co-located to reduce the health, safety, environmental, aesthetic and economic impacts of the services they provide. Utilities shall exhaust all feasible areas where landowners will voluntarily negotiate rights of way prior to pursuing eminent domain against any individual landowner. All corridors for transmission lines or pipes, whether for electricity or gas, shall be located outside of populated areas and away from residences, businesses and public buildings and spaces to provide the maximum margin for safety, noise and other impacts.<sup>4</sup>
- c.** Utilities shall conduct thorough and complete siting analyses of alternate routes that demonstrate how sensitive wildlife habitat, soils, along with agricultural, forest and water resources, are protected in accordance with the goals of the associated sections of this plan and shall share the results of these analyses with the Town prior to filing a petition seeking permission to construct utility infrastructure within the Town.
- d.** Utilities shall undertake and present to the town an analysis of viable alternatives to the proposed project which calculates costs whether capital, environmental or health when evaluating both locally generated and imported energy sources.

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<sup>3</sup> The terms "distribution" and "transmission" for the purposes of this plan shall be understood to have the definitions of such terms in use by the Vermont Public Service Board, or any successor regulatory authority.

<sup>4</sup> For example, the Town would consider a gas transmission pipeline located closer than the potential impact radius (as that term is calculated under the federal regulations governing "high consequence areas" and gas transmission pipelines at 49 CFR Section 192.901 et seq. or any successor regulation), from a residence, business or municipal building or space to be unsafe because the failure of a transmission pipeline could have a significant impact on people and/or property. The Town considers its residents and their property to be as important, and as worthy of protection, as those who happen to live in areas with greater population density. Please see footnote 1 for a potential impact radius calculation example.

e. Utilities shall fully explain to Town officials and Town emergency responders, and shall provide the necessary training, support and equipment for our emergency personnel to respond successfully to any emergency situation involving the infrastructure proposed.

f. Utilities shall communicate transparently, honestly, and clearly with affected landowners, Town officials and ACRPC to develop appropriate health, safety and environmental mitigation plans prior to filing their Section 248 applications and continue communicating throughout the permitting and, if applicable, construction process.

g. Utilities shall work toward the phasing out of fossil fuels and encourage development and use of renewable energy resources such as solar, wind and locally generated methane.

h. Utilities shall bury transmission and distribution lines and other service lines in or around the proposed corridor underground and/or site the above-ground lines to reduce aesthetic, historic and natural resource impacts of the lines. New transmission and distribution corridors shall be designed to minimize the aesthetic impact on all properties adjacent to the line and preserve the property values of the citizens of Cornwall.

In addition to these implementation measures, the Town of Cornwall holds entities proposing transmission and/or generation infrastructure responsible for supporting and helping to implement, where applicable, the goals of our natural and scenic resources plan, our land-use plan, and our energy plan.

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## TRANSPORTATION

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*Transportation is one of the most fundamental subjects of planning. The economy could not function without a system for the movement of people, goods and services. Transportation and transportation planning have a direct impact on development patterns and land investment.*

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### INVENTORY

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Cornwall has approximately 34 miles of local roads and 13.5 miles of state highways. Three state highways pass through Cornwall with Cornwall village at the intersection of two of them – Routes 30 and 74.

#### **State Highways**

All three State Class 2 highways (Route 30, 74 and 125) in Cornwall are classified as “major collectors.” Major collectors are designed and maintained to serve traffic traveling within a region as opposed to through it. They gather vehicles from local roads and streets and distribute them into the larger highway network. They also link major communities within a region and serve both as local connectors and as a vital link in the town's

emergency response system and in the delivery of other services. Because of the importance of these roads, the increased population densities along these corridors, and the location on them of both emergency first responders (fire department) and emergency operations center and Red Cross shelter area (town hall), construction of utility transmission lines, whether for electricity or gas, along these routes is not favored by the town.

According to the most recent Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) Sufficiency Ratings report, Route 30 through Cornwall has a classification of “excellent,” VTrans’ highest ranking. Most of Routes 125 and 74 receive a “bad” sufficiency rating, as they pass through Cornwall.

### Route 30

Route 30 runs 6.4 miles through Cornwall from the Whiting to Middlebury town lines. It is one of the three north-south highways (the others being Routes 7 and 22A) in western Vermont. Route 30 was repaved in 2010, with a ‘mill and fill’ down through Whiting and Cornwall, to Route 74, and reclamation of sub-base between 74 and the Middlebury town line. Lane width is now 11 feet with three foot shoulders to better accommodate cyclists and pedestrians using Route 30 between Cornwall and Middlebury.

Traffic on most sections of Route 30 in Cornwall has increased modestly since the mid-1990’s. South of VT Route 74 intersection, the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) increased from 1,700 vehicles per day in 1994 up to 2,100 in 2007. North of VT 74 near the Middlebury town line, the AADT increased from 3,800 up to 4,700 vehicles per day during the same period. However, the most recent AADT captured at this location was 4,000 vehicles per day during 2011.

### Route 30 and Cornwall Village Center

Just north of the village center (about 600’ north of Fisher Rd.), the 85th Percentile Speed was found to range between 44 to 45 mph. Within the village center (just south of VT Route 74 at the library), the 85th Percentile Speed was found to range from 47 to 48 mph. The posted speed limit for the village is 40 mph. Although special consideration should be given to any State Highway passing through a small village center, the speed and volume of traffic on this section of Route 30 continues to be of concern to the Town of Cornwall and some of its residents, particularly to those who frequently use the Town Hall and Congregational Church, and to those driving in and out of the Bingham School road entrance. The scale of the village and the speed of the road does not match up and make it nearly impossible for the village center to be pedestrian-friendly. These issues are compounded when surrounding roads are closed and regional traffic is re-routed onto Route 30 through the village.

| Average Daily Traffic upon VT Route 30 in the Town of Cornwall |           |           |           |              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| Road Segment                                                   | AADT 2007 | AADT 2010 | AADT 2011 | 85th % Speed |
| Whiting Town Line to Swamp Rd.                                 | -         | *1800     | 1800      | -            |
| Swamp Rd. to VT 74                                             | 2100      | 2100      | -         | 47-48 mph    |
| VT 74 to Cider Mill Rd.                                        | -         | 3700      | -         | 44-45 mph    |
| Cider Mill Rd. to Middlebury T/L                               | 4700      | *4500     | 4000      | -            |

Figure 22: Average Daily Traffic Counts Route 30 Source: ACRPC and VTRANS

In light of this, conversations are in process with a Cornwall Traffic Committee and the Vermont Agency of transportation (responsible for all State roads) as to what can be done.

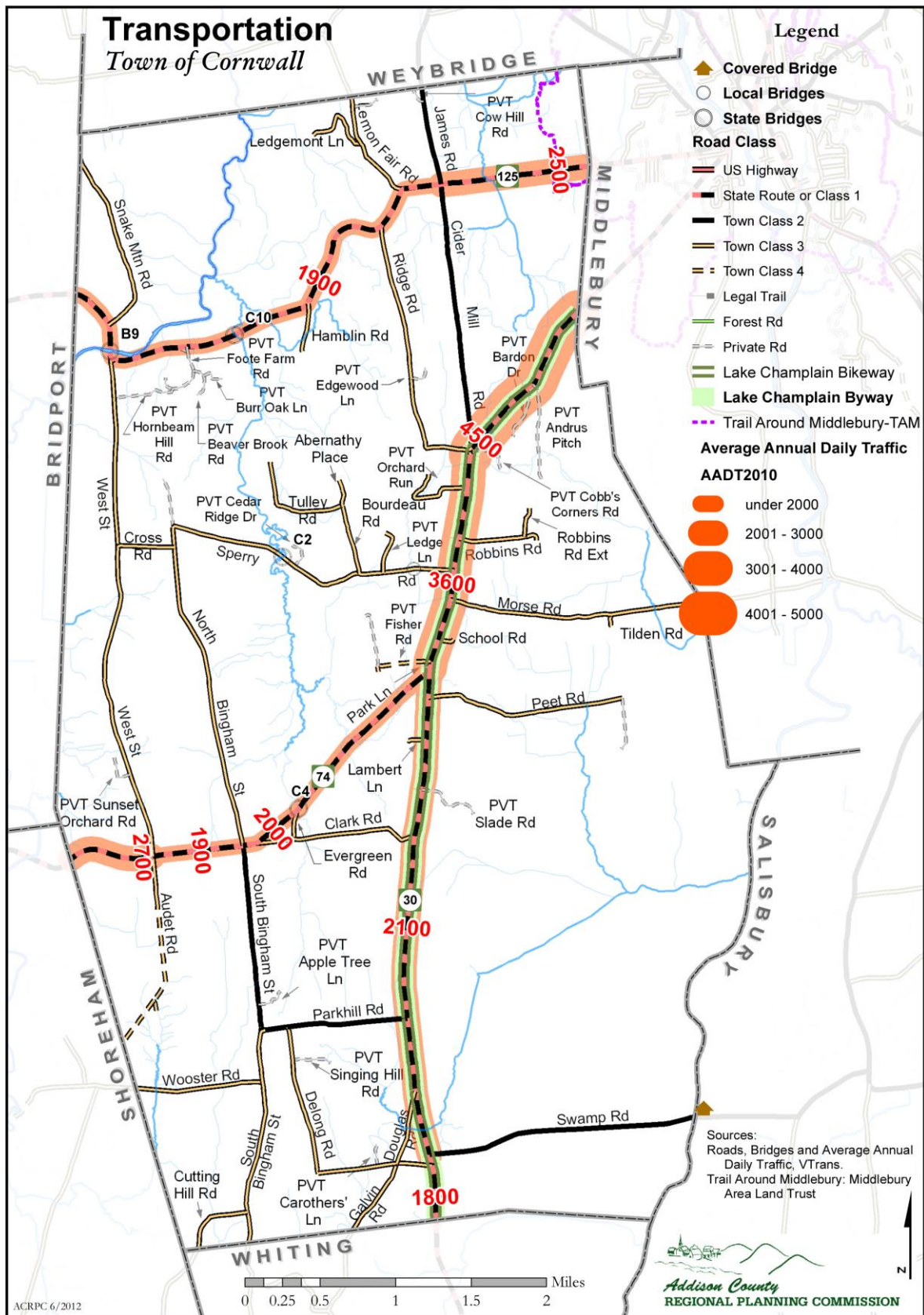
While the above discussions are focused on reducing speed limits, other potential solutions to this problem include: police enforcement, using a temporary speed monitor, creating crosswalks, highlighting the school entrance with distinguished street design and signage, creating places for pedestrians and cyclists, and creating a more identifiable gateway into Cornwall's village center in general - using road stenciling, signage, lighting, different street design or landscaping.

### **Route 74**

Route 74 runs 2.9 miles into Cornwall from west of the Shoreham town line, providing an east-west connection between Routes 30 and 22a. In Shoreham, it also connects to New York State via the Fort Ticonderoga Ferry, which operates on a seasonal basis. This connection to Lake Champlain is the historic function of the road and the reason that Cornwall village developed at the intersection of Routes 74 and 30.

The segment of Route 74, between West Street and Bingham Road is the most heavily travelled, with 2,790 vehicles a day.

In 2011, a new bridge deck was replaced to a small bridge just east of the Shoreham town line. Also the entrance to Route 74 from Route 30 was realigned and narrowed in order to slow turning traffic at this dangerous intersection. The rest of Route 74 in Cornwall is in need of being repaved.



| Average Daily Traffic upon VT Route 74 in the Town of Cornwall |           |           |           |              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| Road Segment                                                   | AADT 2007 | AADT 2010 | AADT 2011 | 85th % Speed |
| Shoreham Town Line to West St.                                 | -         | -         | *2700     | -            |
| West St. to Bingham St.                                        | -         | *1900     | -         | -            |
| Bingham St. to VT 30                                           | 2000      | 1600      | -         | 50-53 mph    |

Figure 24: Average Daily Traffic Counts Route 74 Source: ACRPC and VTRANS

## Route 125

Route 125, one of a few east-west highways in Vermont, runs 4.2 miles through Cornwall from the Bridport to Middlebury town lines. It connects to New York State via the Crown Point Bridge, intersects with Route 22a in Bridport. From Cornwall it runs through Middlebury and into the Green Mountains before ending at Route 100 in Hancock.

Until 2005, traffic volume on this highway had been increasing annually, but this growth trend seems to have slowed. The demolition of the Champlain Bridge in 2010 probably had an impact on vehicle numbers, lessening daily traffic counts by at least 100 vehicles, if not more, from prior years. As can be seen on the table below, more people drive on the section of Route 125 between Cider Mill Road and Middlebury, than do from Bridport to Cider Mill Road.

| Average Daily Traffic upon VT Route 125 in the Town of Cornwall |           |           |           |              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| Road Segment                                                    | AADT 2007 | AADT 2010 | AADT 2011 | 85th % Speed |
| Bridport Town Line to Cider Mill Rd.                            | 2600      | *1900     | -         | -            |
| Cider Mill Rd. to Middlebury T/L                                | 2000      | 1600      | -         | -            |

Figure 25: Average Daily Traffic Counts Route 125 Source: ACRPC and VTRANS

## The Lake Champlain Byway

The Town of Cornwall is home to portions of the Lake Champlain Byway, a program whose purpose is to “identify, designate and promote scenic byways and to protect and enhance the recreational, scenic, historic and cultural qualities of the areas through which these byways pass” ([http://www.vermont-byways.us/about\\_us](http://www.vermont-byways.us/about_us)). The Lake Champlain Byway runs along portions of Route 74 and Route 30 in Cornwall and identifies the following locations as points of interest to travelers:

- Cornwall-Salisbury Covered Bridge
- Old Stone Blacksmith Shop
- Cornwall Public Library
- Lemon Fair Wildlife Management Area



## **Town Roads**

Nearly 26 miles or 76 percent of the town's local roads are Class 3 highways. There are around 6.5 miles (19 percent) of Class 2 and 1.5 miles (5 percent) of Class 4 roads in town.

Class 2 highways, formerly known as State Aid highways, secure truck links between towns. They are designated by the Selectboard and are approved by the State Transportation Board. Cornwall's Class 2 roads include: Cider Mill Road, James Road, South Bingham Street (from Route 74 to Parkhill Road), Parkhill Road, and Swamp Road. All these roads are paved. Paving width of Class 2 roads is at least 21 feet. Swamp road is subject to closure due to seasonal flooding.

Class 3 highways are negotiable under normal conditions all seasons of the year by a "standard pleasure car" and have sufficient surface and base, adequate drainage, and width to permit winter maintenance. The Selectboard designates them after consultation with a representative of the State Transportation Board. Cornwall's Class 3 roads currently include: Snake Mountain Road, Ridge Road, West Street, Sperry Road, Morse Road, Clark Road, Wooster Road, Delong Road, South Bingham Road (south of Parkhill Road), Douglas Road, as well as several shorter access roads.

Class 4 highways are defined by the state as all other town highways including impassible and untraveled roadways. These roads, as public rights-of-way, must remain open and accessible. A locked gate or other type of obstruction is prohibited, but landowners and the town may agree upon and formalize the enclosing of the road, creating a pent road. Cornwall's Class 4 roads total 1.46 miles, including some sections that are untraveled and impassable.

| <b>Average Daily Traffic upon Class 2 Local Roads in the Town of Cornwall</b> |                  |                  |                  |                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Road Segment</b>                                                           | <b>AADT 2005</b> | <b>AADT 2007</b> | <b>AADT 2011</b> | <b>85th % Speed</b> |
| Cider Mill Rd. 0.6 Mile North of VT 30                                        | -                | -                | 250              | -                   |
| S. Bingham St. 0.4 Mile South of VT 74                                        | -                | 410              | -                | -                   |
| Swamp Rd. just East of VT 30                                                  | 390              | -                | -                | 45-48 mph           |

Figure 26: Average Daily Traffic Counts Class 2 Roads Source: ACRPC and VTRANS

| Average Daily Traffic upon Class 3 Local Roads in the Town of Cornwall |           |           |           |              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| Road Segment                                                           | AADT 2005 | AADT 2008 | AADT 2011 | 85th % Speed |
| West St. 0.6 Mile South of VT 125                                      | -         | -         | 380       | -            |
| Sperry Rd. just West of VT 30                                          | 320       | -         | -         | 45-47 mph    |
| Lemon Fair Rd. just North of VT 125                                    | -         | 290       | -         | 44 mph       |

Figure 27: Average Daily Traffic Counts Class 3 Roads Source: ACRPC and VTRANS

## Private Roads and Drives

There are also some private roads in Cornwall and further construction of such roads to serve new development is likely in the future. While the construction and maintenance of these roads is not the responsibility of the town, it is important that private roads and drives be constructed to minimum standards that provide safe use of the road by both vehicular and non-vehicular traffic, access by emergency and delivery vehicles, and prevent erosion and water pollution.

Private road and drives need to accommodate access from the main road to homes for at least one fire truck and one ambulance. Emergency vehicles should be able to

Figure 28: View down a Tree-Lined Road in Cornwall

Figure 29: Swamp Road Covered Bridge

turn around at a house, thus eliminating the need to back down the road or drive. Fire departments in rural areas use a method called the “rural hitch,” which involves stationing one truck adjacent to the house and supplementing the water supply through use of trucks and hose from a more distant location. This is possible when the trucks can be located roughly within 1,000 feet of each other. Longer private roads or drives should be required to provide pull-off areas wide enough to park a fire truck and let another pass.



Gravel roads and driveways are a potential source of sediment to the town’s surface waters. Every road or driveway can become a conduit for rainwater or snowmelt, eroding the road material and dumping it into nearby streams. Run-off and erosion from poorly constructed or maintained private roads often results in damage to the town roads they intersect with. Private roads and drives need to be constructed and maintained to prevent run-off and erosion from damaging town roads and reducing water quality in the town’s water bodies. Currently, the Cornwall Road Commissioner must assess

any new road cut for conformity with state regulations, Vermont Standard B-71 for drainage and curb cuts.



## **Highway Structures**

The Vermont Agency of Transportation categorizes bridges and culverts according to their clear span as follows: small bridge or culvert (less than six feet), bridge or large culvert (6 to 20 feet), bridge greater than 20 feet, and covered bridges.

### **Bridges**

#### **Lemon Fair Bridge**

The Lemon Fair Bridge is a two-lane structure carrying Route 125 over the Lemon Fair River. It has two 62-foot spans, consisting of a concrete deck on steel stringers. Originally built in 1936 with a roadway width of 20 feet, the bridge had a low state sufficiency rating and was replaced in 2010. Issues still exist due to the sharp turn at the south end of the bridge and an awkward intersection where West Street intersects with Route 125.



#### **Swamp Road Bridge**

Swamp Road Bridge is a covered bridge built in 1865 over the Otter Creek, the responsibility for which is shared by Cornwall and Salisbury. It is on the National Historic Register. The bridge consists of two lattice truss spans, each 71 feet long, supported on abutments and a center pier that are now of concrete. The 13-foot wide deck consists of two layers of timber laid diagonally and two sets of longitudinal planks that provide a wearing surface. The bridge was reconstructed in 1966 and, more recently, a coated steel roof was installed. Recent structural work has been done on this bridge with Federal Grant funds. The town of Cornwall owns one half of this bridge and Salisbury owns the other.

#### **Three Mile Bridge**

The town should formulate a position relating to the desire to rebuild this Otter Creek crossing.

#### **Small Bridges and Culverts**

The town maintains four bridges or culverts with six to 20-foot spans, all on Class 3 roads. The Town of Cornwall is also responsible for the maintenance of close to 200 crossroad culverts, not including culverts for driveways. These vary from 12 to 72 inches in diameter and 30 to 50 feet in length.



Figure 30: The Former Three Mile Bridge

## Road Equipment

Cornwall's inventory of road equipment as of March 2012 consists of the following:

- 1988 344E John Deere loader
- 2001 Komatsu 130 excavator jointly owned with Shoreham
- 1996 Landpride roadside mower
- 2000 International 4900 dump truck
- 2004 Volvo 710B grader
- 2005 International 7500 dump truck
- 2006 Easylawn L65-7RTR hydroseeder jointly owned with 11 other towns
- 2007 Camline equipment trailer
- 2007 caravan trailer
- 2008 Salsco 627XT chipper
- 2009 International 7400 dump truck

## Public Transportation

None of the fixed routes of the Addison County Transit Resources (ACTR) serve Cornwall, mainly because of the low density of settlement or commercial activity along the state highways in town. 2011 Survey responses indicated half of the residents

were interested in such services. Of the respondents, 49 percent said they would take the bus if the route and times worked for their schedule, and 51 percent said they would not take the bus, even if the times and routes worked for them. As gas prices rise further and an energy crisis is perceived by a larger percentage of the population, the interest in accessing public transportation may increase. The town has been in communications with ACTR about providing commuter bus service into Middlebury from the park-and-ride, and possible bus routes along Route 125 as well, but nothing to date has been pursued. In order to implement ACTR routes, Cornwall would need to provide a 20 percent local match to ACTR. While no regular service is currently provided in Cornwall, ACTR does provide "demand response" service throughout the county – "Dial-a-Ride" or DAR. Volunteer drivers transport elderly or disabled residents to healthcare or social service appointments provide this service. These rides are for critical medical care, medical appointments, grocery shopping or other essential services depending on the program the individual qualifies for and their individual needs. In 2003, Cornwall

- ❖ 60% of survey respondents said someone in their household travels to Middlebury during peak morning or evening hours.
- ❖ Of these, 51% said they would not commute by bus, even if the schedule worked for them.

Question 15

2011 Planning Survey

residents used this service for nearly 1,000 trips. In 2008 Cornwall residents used this service for 450 trips. In 2011 Cornwall residents used this service for only 183 trips. In comparison, the neighboring town of Salisbury used this service for nearly 3,000 trips in 2011. The significant decrease in service use in Cornwall can be attributed to previous riders moving into elder homes or passing away, or that the population most served by DAR is not living in Cornwall to begin with. Numbers also fluctuate based on a sudden, critical need for help by any family using the service on a daily or weekly basis.

## **Commuting**

Thirty-nine percent of working residents commute to jobs in Middlebury, while another 20 percent work in town. Over 75% of commuters drive alone to work. The average commute time for Cornwall residents has increased over the past 20 years by about four minutes to 17.4 minutes. Much of that increase is likely due to greater levels of traffic congestion in downtown Middlebury, as opposed to residents driving further distances. According to the 2011 survey, 60 percent of respondents travelled to Middlebury during peak hours. Only 6 people out of 140 indicated that they carpool more than once a week. Sixteen people carpooled more than once a month and 99 people said they never carpool.

In recent years, the parking lot at the Town Hall has undergone recent upgrades to include a designated Park-and-Ride area.

## **Air Transportation**

One private airstrip is in operation in Cornwall and is used primarily for recreation.

## **Cycling and Pedestrian Traffic**

Cornwall is home to some of the most popular bicycle routes in the county. Many bicycle-touring companies regularly utilize Routes 74, 125, and 30 as well as West Street and Cider Mill Road. These routes are especially popular with Middlebury College runners and cyclists. Recreational walking or running is also done on smaller, back roads. In the 2011 survey, 72 percent of those participating thought provisions should continue to be made for bicyclists and pedestrians in Cornwall.

Discussion as to the safety of pedestrians using Cornwall's village center has been raised at planning commission meetings. In the 2011 survey, 61 percent of respondents thought traffic calming, sidewalks and/or a crosswalk from the church to the Town Hall would be a good idea. Twenty-six percent thought only slower speeds should be enforced.

❖ 72% of survey respondents agreed that provisions should continue to be made for cyclists and pedestrians

Question 17 2011 Planning

In 2010, working with ACRPC and VTRANS, Cornwall received an enhancement grant and successfully added three foot shoulders to Route 30 between Middlebury and Cornwall Village. There has been varied response by residents as to whether or not the shoulders provide adequate room and safety for cyclists. However, there was strong support from Cornwall residents to implement this project, and for implementing similar measures along VT Route 125 and 74 in the future. Funding, negotiations at the State level (on State highways), and lack of available adjacent property are hurdles to implementing off-road walking and cycling routes.

## Safety Concerns

There are a range of safety concerns related to Cornwall's transportation system including those related to traffic speed, limited sight distances, poor layout of intersections, and bicycle and pedestrian use of the roads. While a number of recent update projects have improved conditions, such as shoulders on Route 30, bridge improvements and the 74/30 intersection improvement, there are safety concerns which must be considered regularly. There are two locations along Route 30 that have been identified by the State's 2006-2010 High Crash Location (HCL) Report;

1. Between Cider Mill Rd. and Robbins Road, listing 9 crashes with 8 injuries. This location had also been identified as within the State's 2003-2007 HCL Report, listing 11 crashes with 15 injuries. Neither report lists any fatalities at this location.
2. Between Park Hill Road and Douglas Road, listing 5 crashes with 2 injuries between 2006 and 2010.

Due to the fact that Route 30 is relatively straight, in good condition, and is a major north-south transportation corridor, speed and volume of traffic are continual battles for the village center area of town and those using the shoulders for cycling or running. Along Route 74, there are significant dips and curves that should not be travelled at the speeds currently seen. Manure on the roads from farming equipment is also a significant danger, especially in conjunction with wet roads.

While the Lemon Fair bridge has been reconstructed and realigned, a number of cars have driven off the road at the intersection of West Street and Route 125. Perhaps the most dangerous intersection in Cornwall is the

*Create separate bike and walking paths.*

*I love the improvements on Route 30; wish the same could be done of Route 125.*

*The 'bike path' is narrow, but an important start both philosophically and practically.*

*I believe that for the health benefits of our community combines with the savings on fossil fuels, we should make the creation of bike paths a top priority of our community.*

*(provisions should continue to be made for bicyclists and pedestrians) only if bicyclists are licensed and taxed for the privilege of using roads funded by automobile taxes.*

*Sadly, the improvements to Route 30 have only mitigated the danger of being a cyclist or runner by a small amount. Speeds on Route 30 are higher than when the road was in worse condition.*

Cornwall Residents  
2011 Planning Survey

crossing of Route 125 at Cider Mill Road, where, in spite of some improvement by the state in recent years (following a fatal accident at the intersection), the sight distances on both roads are still limited. The presence of ledge rock and historically significant buildings near the intersection makes further improvements both difficult and costly. From this intersection to the Snake Mountain Rd. intersection about 1,000 feet to the north

have also been listed in the 2006-2010 and 2003-2007 HCL Reports, listing 7 crashes with 3 injuries, and 5 crashes with 5 injuries, respectively.

## **Road Policy**

Cornwall's Road Policy governs the use and maintenance of the town's highways. It states that the town will not be responsible for maintenance of Class 4 roads, and that the users of the road will pay for the entire cost of upgrading a Class 4 road to Class 3 unless otherwise agreed. The town may at its discretion maintain Class 4 roads that have been improved to meet Class 3 standards, but it is not obligated to do so. Roads entering developments are also covered by the policy. A private road may be taken over by the town if the town chooses, if it meets applicable state standards, and if a right-of-way is deeded to Cornwall. Weight, size and speed restrictions are also covered by the policy as are driveway culverts.

There are two programs in Vermont that provide recommendations for construction and maintenance of private roads and drives. The Vermont Local Roads Program's *Developing a Highway Access Policy: Guidelines and a Model Ordinance* contains minimum standards for the design, construction and maintenance of residential driveways and private roads. The *Vermont Better Backroads Manual* from the Better Backroads Program recommends techniques and actions that can be used to improve the maintenance of graveled roads and drives. Cornwall's private roads and drives should be constructed and maintained to the standards described in these publications.

With ever greater amounts of faster moving traffic – as well as more driveway and road intersections – on state and some local roads in Cornwall, the potential for dangerous intersections, difficulty making left turns and exiting driveways, congestion and driver confusion increases. Access management is a group of strategies, tools and techniques that work to optimize the safety and efficiency of roads. One of the most basic access management strategies is to limit the addition of new access points being added along roads and encourage use of shared drives. Other simple access management techniques include:

- Designing driveways/road connections to B-71 VT standards;
- Limit private property drainage into road ditch system;
- Driveways constructed so as to provide adequate access to private structures by emergency vehicles;
- Locating driveways on side roads, where appropriate;
- Establishing a minimum spacing distance between driveways;
- Consolidating driveways and connecting parking lots, where applicable; and
- Increasing the minimum lot frontage.

Access management strategies should also be incorporated into Cornwall's road policy and land use regulations.

## **Capital Budget and Program**

Cornwall now has a capital budget in place. In light of recent State-wide flooding from Tropical Storm Irene (August 2011), having a capital budget in place can serve a town well, mitigating unexpected and sudden costs to a community. Being able to shoulder costs of replacing/upgrading town roads, culverts and bridges to Q50 standards can be part of flood mitigation. Mitigation opportunities should be recognized whenever replacing bridges or culverts.

## Rural Character

From previous planning survey results, it is clear that Cornwall's roads are intrinsically linked to the rural character valued by residents. Many residents feel strongly that the town's gravel roads should not be paved or widened.

It should, however, be noted that future traffic volumes on some town roads may reach levels at which paving could minimize total costs to drivers and the town. Cornwall's Selectboard has a policy to guide the decision-making process related to paving of the town's gravel roads based on criteria from the Vermont Local Roads programs and other similar guidelines.

Many of Cornwall's roads exemplify scenic qualities that are pleasing to residents and add significantly to the rural character of the town. Stone wall or wooden fences, mature trees and hedgerows that line the road, views of the Adirondacks and Green Mountains over open fields, neatly planted apple orchards, streams and other natural landforms are all features that define the scenic quality of Cornwall's roads. The road itself, whether paved or gravel, can also be scenic. Narrow country lanes and windings roads that curve around hills opening onto scenic vistas can delight the traveler or life-long resident.

The town's land use regulations are intended to preserve the scenic character of Cornwall's roads through measures such as protecting existing features like tree canopies, stonewalls, hedgerows and significant old trees. The view from the road could be considered when developing regulations related to signage and requirements for planting of street trees along some roads. Cornwall could also consider the capacity of its existing system of town roads and establish development densities that would not exceed that capacity thereby preventing the need for excessive road widening or straightening. New roads should also be designed to enhance the town's rural character. Construction elements associated with suburban subdivisions, such as wide asphalt roads and concrete curbing, should be avoided.



*Figure 31: View from the Roadside in Cornwall*

## RECREATION

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*Planning for the recreation needs of town residents and visitors can enhance the character of a community, attract tourists and be beneficial to the quality of life within the community. Small, rural towns like Cornwall often have an abundance of outdoor recreation resources. These resources, however, are usually on private land and continued public access to them is based upon the generosity of the landowner.*

### INVENTORY

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Cornwall has limited public recreational facilities and areas, which include: fields and a playground at the Bingham School; a softball field owned by the Synotts; and the recreation area at Douglas Pond. The silt and weeds have become an issue at Douglas Pond and limits pond use, but ice skating has not been affected by this. The Town Hall has dancing available to residents. Notifications of these events are posted in front of the Town Hall, on the town website and in the Addison Independent. Town roads are used for bicycling, hiking, dog walking, walking/running and rollerblading. The Trail Around Middlebury (TAM) crosses briefly into Cornwall's northeast corner along Route 125.

*All new subdivisions should require walking trails open to the public, not just to subdivision residents.*

Cornwell Resident  
2011 planning survey

Private land in town is available to the public, by request/permission for hiking, hunting and viewing wildlife. Cross country skiing and horse-back riding are done on private lands or done on land owned by the Nature Conservancy. Some private lands have hills for sledding. All-terrain vehicles and snowmobiles are ridden on private property. A

snowmobile trail – part of the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers' (VAST) trail system – runs through Cornwall on private land. VAST maps are available at Champlain Valley Motorsports.

The State Fish and Wildlife Department has a boat launch at the Swamp Road bridge. At various times of the year, Lemon Fair is accessible for small boat crafts and fishing. Boating is available in nearby lakes such as Lake Champlain, Lake Dunmore, Hortonia, Bomoseen, Burr Pond, and Lakes Sunrise and Sunset.

### ANALYSIS

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In response to the 2011 Planning Survey, 51.4 percent of the residents do most of their outdoor recreation on private property in Cornwall, while 34.8 percent go outside of Cornwall for recreational pursuits. 40.1 percent of the residents would like more places for picnicking and outdoor gatherings/team sports, yet 40.9 percent had no opinion on this particular topic. 61.7 percent would like to see an off-road connection to the Trail Around Middlebury (TAM). 55.6 percent of the residents would like to see public access to local streams and rivers for small craft boating/fishing.

As noted on a 2004 survey, most activities that residents participate in are things they can do on their own, rather than a group sport. In addition to outdoor recreation, it is likely that many residents engage in a variety of indoor recreation activities at facilities out of town. In the absence of



public facilities, people build their own rinks, pools and courts and stay in their own yards.

Extensive indoor and outdoor recreation facilities and programs are available in Middlebury, and many Cornwall residents take advantage of them. In the absence of public transportation, those who are too young or too old to drive to Middlebury may be excluded from these resources. Additionally, some of the recreation opportunities in Middlebury require an association with the college, membership in a club, or are pay-for-service. The Middlebury Recreation Department does extend its offerings to “out of town” residents which does include the Town of Cornwall. Also available are many pick-up sports which are played on the many fields available in Middlebury, which fortunately are only minutes away from Cornwall and very accessible.

A large amount of open space still exists around the town hall and the school, but is privately owned. Some of this privately owned land is already used for recreational purposes, such as the firemen’s ball field which was constructed in the 1980’s. If the town could eventually purchase the land, it could extend the existing recreational facilities at the school, creating additional playing fields and trails for walking, biking and cross-country skiing. The 2004 planning survey showed strong support for recreational trails, sports fields, and public green space in the village center.

Cornwall residents looking for recreational opportunities can do so by checking the board at the Town Hall. Inquiries and postings can be made here. The newsletter is also available to people who want to inquire or post happenings on a quarterly basis.

## NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

*This section of the town plan describes the natural features and resources that help shape Cornwall's rural character. It also recognizes and discusses threats to those resources and identifies appropriate strategies for their use and protection. The integration of the natural environment with the town's built environment and cultural heritage has created the distinct sense of place that is easily recognized and valued by residents.*

### INVENTORY

#### Natural Communities

Cornwall's natural communities include upland and wetland forest types, streams and ponds, non-forested wetlands and open uplands such as cliffs and bedrock outcrops. Part of maintaining a quality environment in our town includes wise stewardship, protection and sustainable management of Cornwall's natural communities.

#### Topography

Cornwall's topography is for the most part gently rolling, with some flat terraces and a few steep pitches. Elevation varies from 180 feet above sea level along the Lemon Fair to 550 feet at "550 Hill" near South Bingham Street and DeLong Road.

Several ridges run north to south through the town. The eastern third of the town is dominated by a large, flat expanse created by Cornwall Swamp. The western third of the town consists of a large terrace separated from the central hills by the valleys created by Beaver Brook and the Lemon Fair.

The hills on one ridge line become particularly noticeable in an area known as The Ledges near the boundary with Weybridge. The Ledges is a 50- to 60-foot cliff with a vertical face of limestone, dolomite and marble that runs for approximately 1,000 feet. The cliff is highly visible from Route 125 and is a striking feature rising up from flat agricultural fields. The Ledges are part of a four-mile calcareous, ledgy woodland that extends through the northern part of town into Weybridge, ending slightly north of Bittersweet Falls on Beaver Brook.



Figure 32: View of the Ledges

## Soils

Soils in Cornwall range from heavy clays to light loams to bedrock. Most of them are classified as Vergennes Clay, a soil that is inherently fertile yet very heavy. Vergennes soils are not easily developed because of their wetness and slow permeability. However, these soils have high potential for agricultural production and moderate potential for forestry production. They are considered soils of statewide importance by the USDA

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Vergennes soils were also considered suitable for the manufacturing of bricks at one time.

Areas of lighter, loamy Nellis soils occupy parts of the upland terrace in the center of Cornwall. These soils have high agricultural potential. Because of their scattered distribution and irregular shape, they are difficult to farm effectively. Certain Nellis soils have been classified by the NRCS as being of national importance (prime) for agriculture, and others have been classified as being of statewide importance. Nellis is extremely productive for forest growth and orchards and has few limitations for development.

Farmington silt loams, found along many ridgelines in the town, have low productivity ratings for agriculture and forestry. They also have low potential for development due to their shallow depth to bedrock.

Creation of the town's current soils began over 10,000 years ago when a large sheet of glacial ice covered Cornwall.

When the ice began to melt and receded, the soil, dirt and rocks that the ice had scraped off the mountains were deposited throughout Vermont. The retreat of the glacier also led to Cornwall being submerged underwater. Glacial meltwater filled much of the Champlain Valley, creating

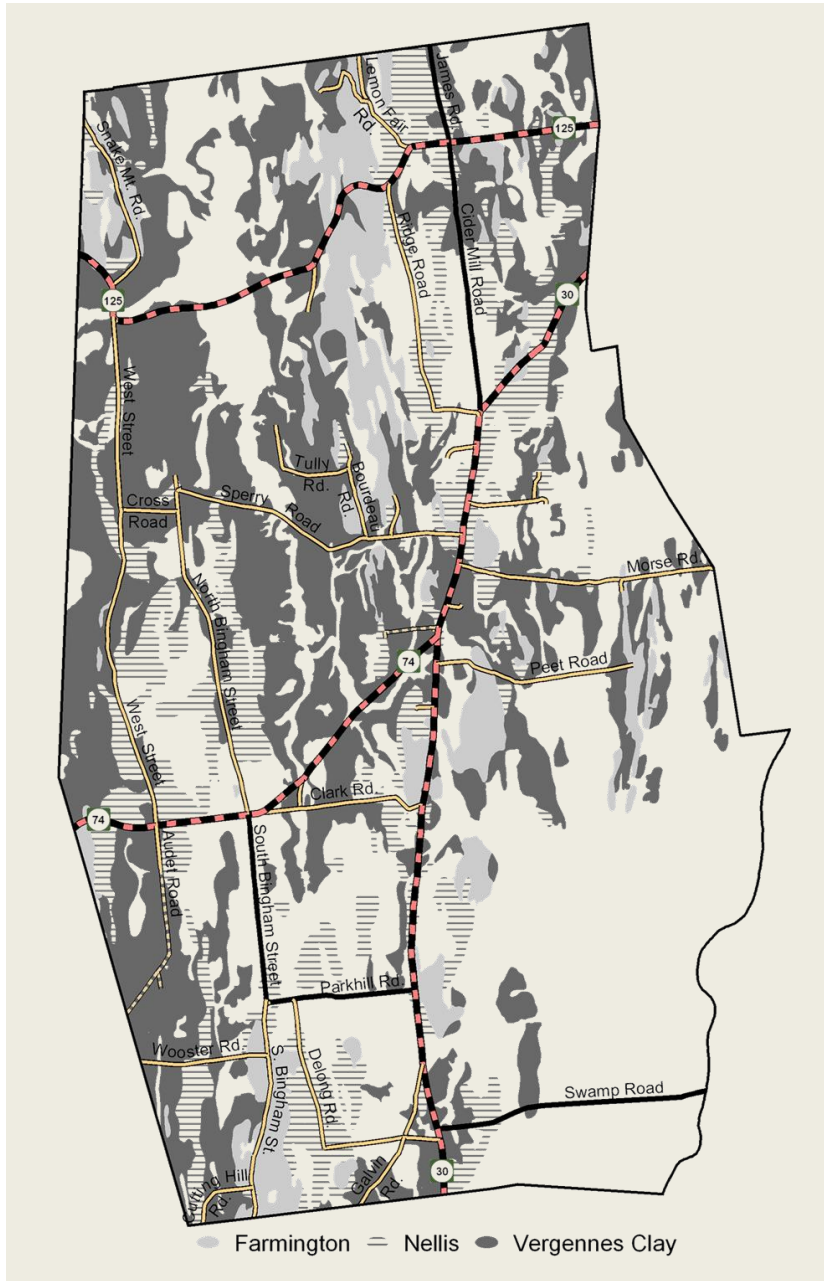


Figure 31: Major Soil Types

Lake Vermont, the predecessor to Lake Champlain. These episodes together explain much about Cornwall's soil and landforms. The town's clay deposits were formed from many centuries' accumulation of lake sediments, while rocky and gravelly areas resulted from the "bulldozer" action of the glaciers

## Mineral Resources

Cornwall has a limited number of deposits of high quality mineral resources. These resources include sand, clay and gravel, as well as slate and limestone. Probably the most significant by current economic standards are sand and gravel. There is a significant deposit of sand and gravel in the south end of Cornwall, west of Route 30.

Starting near the geographic center of Cornwall and running north into Weybridge, are “The Ledges,” which play an important role as habitat for deer, fox, bobcat and coyote. The limestone, which was used to construct Mead Chapel at Middlebury College, came from a quarry in southwest Cornwall known as “Peck’s Ledge” near Wooster Road. Deposits of white marble, flagstone and slate can also be found but are no longer quarried, however, because they can no longer be economically extracted.

## Surface Waters

Surface waters in Cornwall include Otter Creek, Lemon Fair River, Beaver Brook, Douglas Pond, Davydov Pond, numerous small streams and a variety of beaver ponds. Many constructed ponds also dot the town’s landscape.



*Figure 33: Beaver Brook*

Otter Creek runs along the southeast corner of Cornwall and supplies water to the Cornwall Swamp. The creek continues to flow north and empties into Lake Champlain. The Lemon Fair begins in Orwell south of Richville Pond. It flows north, through the western side of Cornwall, and then flows into the Otter Creek. The Beaver Branch originates in Cornwall and flows north to the Lemon Fair. The Beaver Branch and



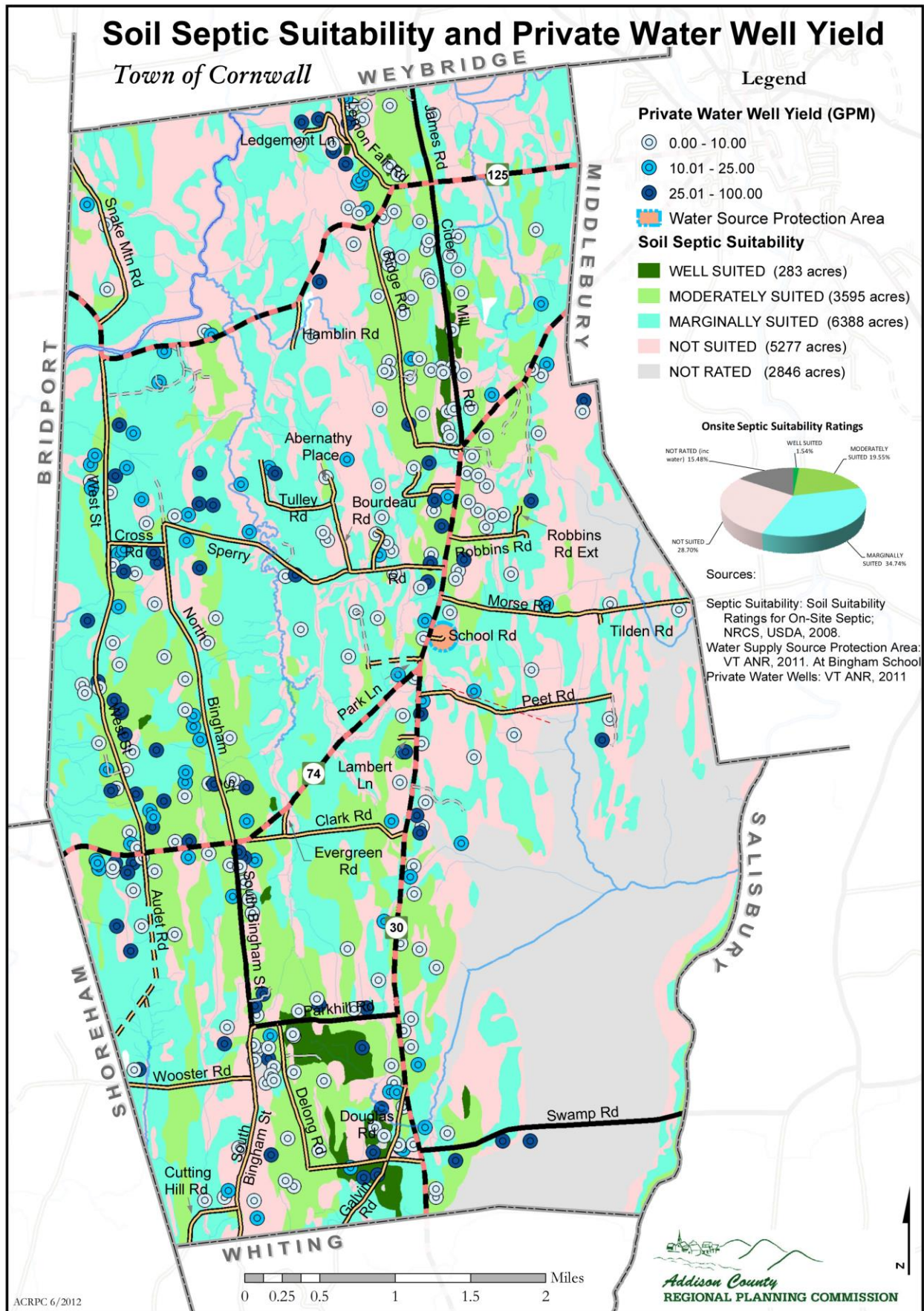


Figure 34: Septic Suitability and Private Well Yields

Source: ACRPC and Vermont ANR

the Lemon Fair meet on the north side of Route 125.

The State of Vermont Water Quality Division considers all of these surface waters Class B waters. Class B waters are managed to be safe for swimming, fishing and boating. They must be treated, filtered or boiled before drinking, however. Many areas in town, particularly along the Lemon Fair and Otter Creek, are prone to springtime flooding.

Cornwall residents can stay informed on the quality of the Lemon Fair River by keeping up on results obtained by the Addison County River Watch Collaborative. There are currently two monitoring stations in the Lemon Fair River in which this volunteer group checks ecoli, phosphorus and nitrate levels as well as turbidity levels. In the summers of 2011 and 2012, ecoli levels exceeded that of the State's standards. More information can be found at <http://www.lewiscreek.org/addison-county-riverwatch-collaborative/>

There are several ponds in Cornwall, ranging in size from less than one acre to over 20 acres. These ponds provide drinking water for livestock and wildlife, as well as recreation opportunities for residents. Davydov Pond and Douglas Pond are two of the better-known natural ponds in Cornwall. Davydov Pond is a small, shallow pond located adjacent to Cider Mill Road and is primarily used for recreation purposes. Douglas Pond, located off of Route 30 on Douglas Road, was deeded to the town after several local residents opposed the sale of the pond to a developer.

There are several man-made ponds in Cornwall. The largest of these is Jackson Pond, a private pond that covers approximately 25 acres and is located off of Route 125. Tall Pond, located off of Clark Road, is considerably smaller and is used by local trout fisherman.

## Wetlands

Cornwall Swamp, a *National Natural Landmark*, is located almost entirely in Cornwall. Cornwall Swamp is part of



Figure 35: Cornwall Swamp

a larger system of wetlands along the Otter Creek basin in Addison and Rutland counties. In spring, all the swamps are connected by floodwaters forming a landscape of water from Brandon north to Middlebury. This system – Long Swamp, Brandon Swamp, Salisbury Swamp, Whiting Swamp and Cornwall Swamp – form the largest interior wetland complex in Vermont. Cornwall Swamp is an approximately 3,200-acre, Class II wetland that is largely forested with virtually no development and a limited amount of land in agricultural use. The swamp features an array of natural community types and supports a number of rare and uncommon plant species. The

swamp contains very good examples of red maple-back ash swamp and floodplain forest. Within the swamp, 1,200 acres are part of a state-owned wildlife management area. The Nature Conservancy owns around 300 additional acres in the swamp.

Another large wetland area in the Lemon Fair River valley includes portions in Cornwall. Additionally there are many smaller Class II and Class III wetlands located within the town.

### Groundwater

Cornwall has sparse groundwater potential and every effort needs to be made to maintain its quality and quantity and protect recharge areas and aquifers. Most of the areas with good groundwater potential are near the Cornwall Swamp and the Lemon Fair. The quality of groundwater varies with some areas of town reporting varying concentrations of sodium and sulfur in the groundwater, while others report good quality. There are no Source Protection Areas in Cornwall, since there are no public water supplies. All residents in Cornwall rely on private wells for all water needs. Due to this reliance, underground utility transmission lines should not be constructed near these water sources.

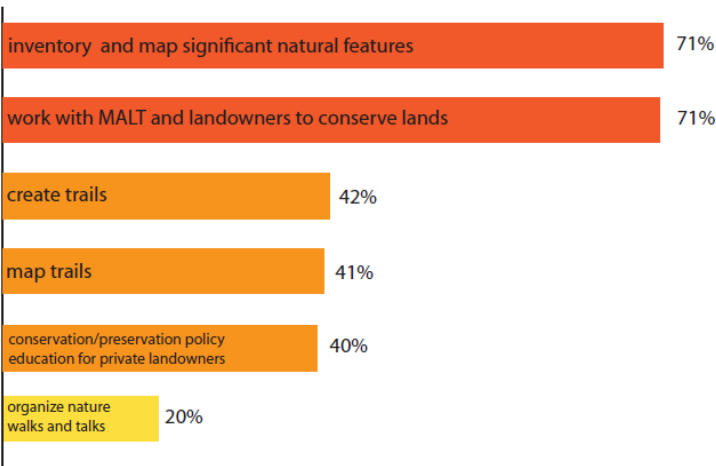
### ANALYSIS

### Stewardship and Conservation

To plan for maintaining and protecting the town’s significant natural communities, it is necessary to identify and describe those areas through a thorough inventory that utilizes both existing information and acquires new information through interviews with knowledgeable locals as well as ground truthing sites. Although the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department has identified some of Cornwall’s significant natural areas, a systematic inventory has not been done. Lack of funding is the main reason this has not been accomplished to date.

Discussion on how best to do this has been a topic of conversation between the Cornwall Planning Commission and the Cornwall Conservation Commission for quite some time. In the 2011 survey, 72 percent of respondents

What is the job of the Cornwall Conservation Commission?



2011 Cornwall Planning Survey Question 40

agreed that inventorying and mapping Cornwall’s significant natural features is a priority task for the Conservation Commission. Members of the Conservation Commission are currently seeking funds to begin these tasks. As can be seen in the above illustration, 71 percent of survey respondents agreed that working with Cornwall land owners and the Middlebury Area Land Trust (MALT) to conserve the natural landscape was just as important as mapping and inventory work. The Cornwall Planning Commission and Conservation Commission are also in the process of formalizing the role of the Conservation



Commission in the subdivision application process, in order to ensure minimal impact to Cornwall's natural systems during any new development plans.

### **Beaver Brook Watershed Conservation Plan**

The Beaver Brook watershed covers 7.5 square miles of land in the center of Cornwall, or 4,822 acres. There are 151 residents living in this watershed. In July 2010, at the request of a resident living in this area, the *Beaver Brook Watershed Plan* was completed by a private consulting firm. This conservation plan highlights land uses, soils types, pre-settlement and existing natural communities, wildlife habitats and corridors, conservation priorities and management recommendations. The Beaver Brook Conservation Plan is an example of the kind of inventory and mapping that could be done throughout Cornwall in order to adequately protect ecological and scenic resources in the future.

### **Water Resources**

#### **Flood Mitigation**

Cornwall's wetlands, ranging from the large, nationally significant Cornwall Swamp to the smallest Class III wetland, are recognized as performing numerous ecological functions of importance to the broader ecosystem of the town and the entire Champlain Valley. Some, if not all, of these functions are very important to human communities and human welfare. As such, wetlands are protected by both federal and state regulations, and Cornwall must do its part to ensure that wetland degradation does not occur in our town. 2011 Tropical Storm Irene, which destroyed many areas of Vermont due to excessive flooding, did little damage in Cornwall. The scale of Cornwall's swampy areas no doubt attributed to this outcome. Wetlands cannot be underrated for their ability to absorb and filter massive amounts of stormwater, offering essential flood mitigation properties.

#### **Sediment and Nutrient Loading**

The Lake Champlain Basin Program has identified nutrient loading as one of the lake's major environmental problems; one of the goals of this federal-state-provincial collaboration is to clean the lake of point and non-point source nutrient and other chemical pollution. As all of Cornwall's surface waters are within the Lake Champlain watershed, it is the town's responsibility to participate in water quality enhancement efforts in the basin.

Because groundwater supplies almost all of the drinking water for residents of Cornwall, potential threats by contaminants to surface water, wetlands, and groundwater recharge areas need to be identified and the highest protection measures need to be taken.

Mandating vegetated buffers along all Cornwall water tributaries would minimize toxic sediment and nutrient run-off from roads, residential properties, and agricultural properties. Encouraging the use of Agricultural Best Management Practices would also be advantageous to this goal, as would the incorporation of vegetated swales along roadways. Design guidelines for the latter can be found in Vermont's *Better Back Roads Manual*.

As most of Cornwall's land is privately owned, home owners should be encouraged to take steps toward minimizing their impacts on our shared water resources. As all Cornwall residents rely on their own well water and septic systems, taking care of the land surrounding these systems is essential. Phosphorus and nitrogen loading into fresh water sources can be minimized by alternative lawn care treatment (no-phosphorus fertilizers)

and incorporating woody vegetation and meadowlands on private property. Incorporating Low-Impact-Design (LID)/green infrastructure techniques, such as vegetated swales, narrower/shorter driveways, gravel filter strips, rain-gardens and detention ponds, are other ways to minimize private property impacts on water quality.

Goals and actions within Cornwall's plan need to outline best practices for water resource protection. Once this has been done, zoning and subdivision regulations should reflect policies laid out in the plan, so that they can be enforced during any development process.

### **Resource Extraction**

Although sand and gravel have been excavated over the years, no commercial resource extraction is currently happening in Cornwall. Because of the importance of sand and gravel for road maintenance and construction, there may be requests for extraction operation in Cornwall at some future time. Extraction poses the risk of adverse social and environmental impacts on the community such as reduction in groundwater recharge, possible contamination resulting from on-site storage and disposal of materials; alteration of surface drainage patterns; noise, dust and increased truck traffic; limitations on the future use of the site; and, reduction in neighboring property values.

Many of these impacts can be avoided or mitigated through careful site planning, operation and reclamation. Demonstrating that adverse impacts on neighbors and the town will be minimized and that adequate provisions for site reclamation have been made during the permitting process would avoid problems. Cornwall's regulations should be reviewed and amended to ensure policies are in place to avoid problematic extraction operations.

### **Land Suitability**

New development is restricted and limited by specific physical elements. These limitations include steep slopes, wet and impermeable soils, high water tables, shallow depth to bedrock and flood hazard. Such constraints are found throughout the town. For example, shallow soils are most common along the central ridge, and steep slopes can be found in the north-central and northwestern ridges. High water tables and mucky soils dominate the eastern third of town and appear in numerous low or wetland areas.

These physical limitations have a significant impact on growth and development. Many restrict, if not rule out, the placement of safe and effective on-site septic systems, and consequently, are a major impediment to residential development. They also increase costs dramatically by requiring extensive drainage, filling, stabilization and construction reinforcement.

Flood hazards usually are limited to areas along Otter Creek and the Lemon Fair. The floodplain along Otter Creek is very large, encompassing most of Cornwall Swamp. Wet and impermeable soils, such as Vergennes and Covington, blanket many areas in Cornwall. Flood hazard areas are often associated with peat and muck soils and limit development because of the threat posed to structures by floodwater.

It is prudent for Cornwall's land use policies, in both the plan and in the zoning and subdivision bylaws, to consider the unique characteristics of the Cornwall landscape and whether or not any proposed development is

suitable to any given site. No development is appropriate in the flood hazard area. Preservation and protection of the working landscape are of the highest priority.

### **Scenic Resources**

As expressed in the comments from the 2004 and 2011 planning surveys, many Cornwall residents highly value the town's scenic resources and want to protect them. For some that might be the view they see each day of the Adirondacks over the Champlain Valley, while for others it may be the view from their kitchen window of orchards on a neighboring property. Needless to say, Cornwall's natural and agricultural landscape is the reason many residents have chosen to live here.

Reflecting this sentiment, 77 percent of 2011 survey participants thought Cornwall zoning regulations should make specific efforts to protect scenic views.

- ❖ 77 % agreed zoning regulations should make specific efforts to protect scenic views
- ❖ 80% agreed zoning regulations should make specific efforts to protect agricultural soils
- ❖ 81% agreed zoning regulations should make specific efforts to protect wildlife habitat and movement corridors
- ❖ 85% agreed zoning regulations should make specific efforts to streams, rivers, ponds and wetlands
- ❖ 86% agreed zoning regulations should make specific efforts to protect ground water resources

Questions 31-35  
2011 Planning Survey

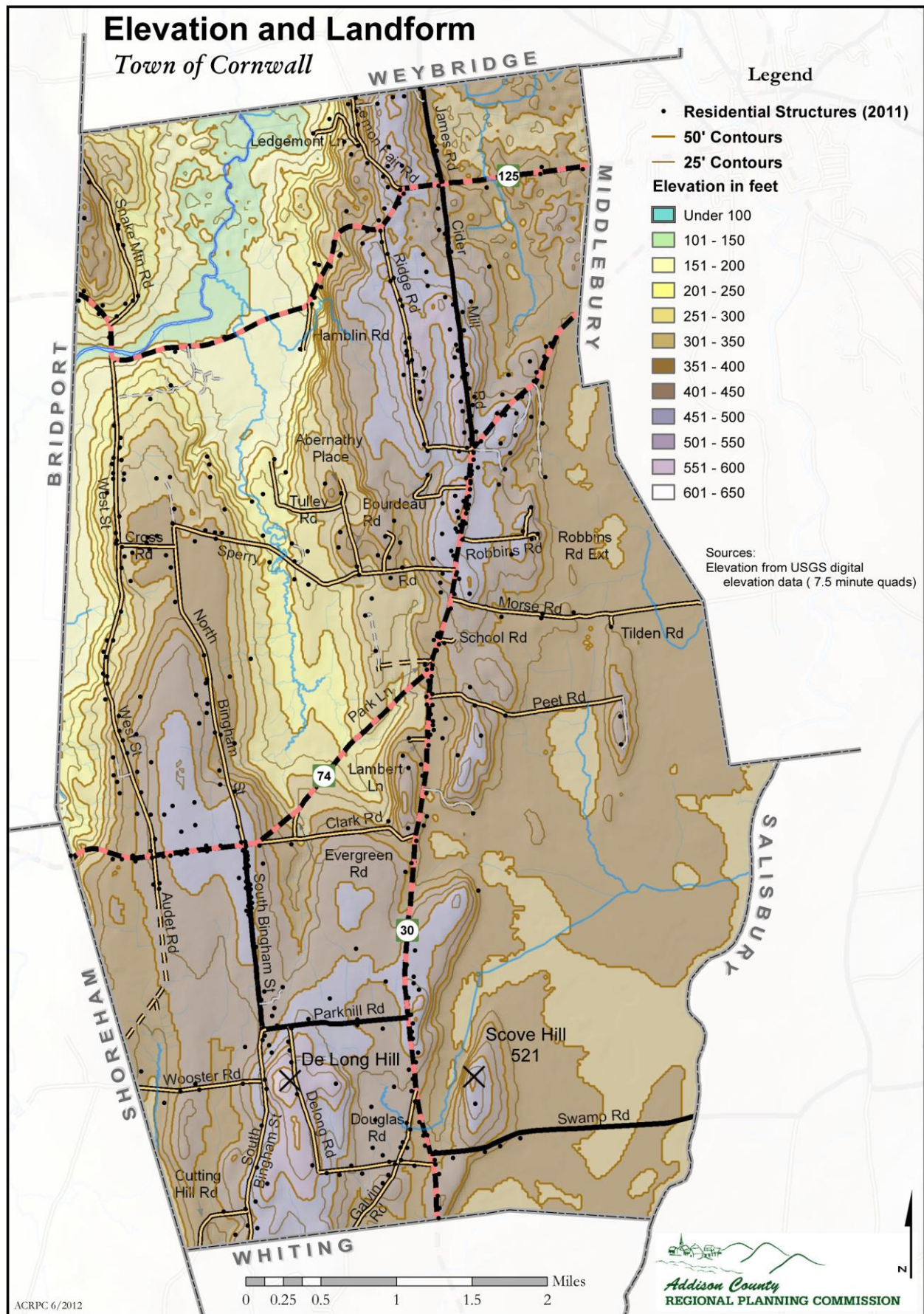


Figure 37: Cornwall Elevation and Landform

Source: ACRPC



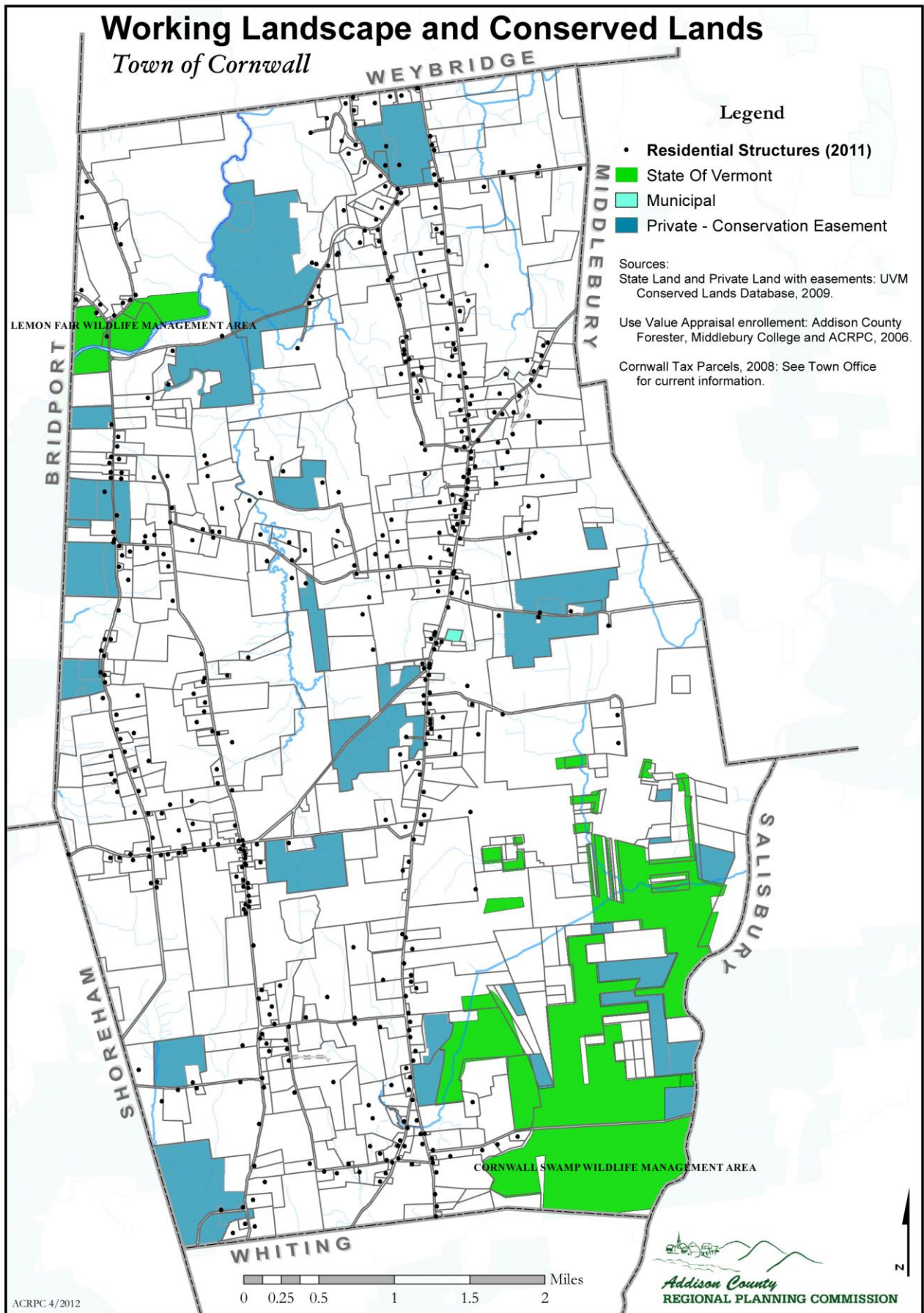


Figure 38: Conserved Land and Land in Current Use Program Source: ACRPC, UVM Conserved Lands Database



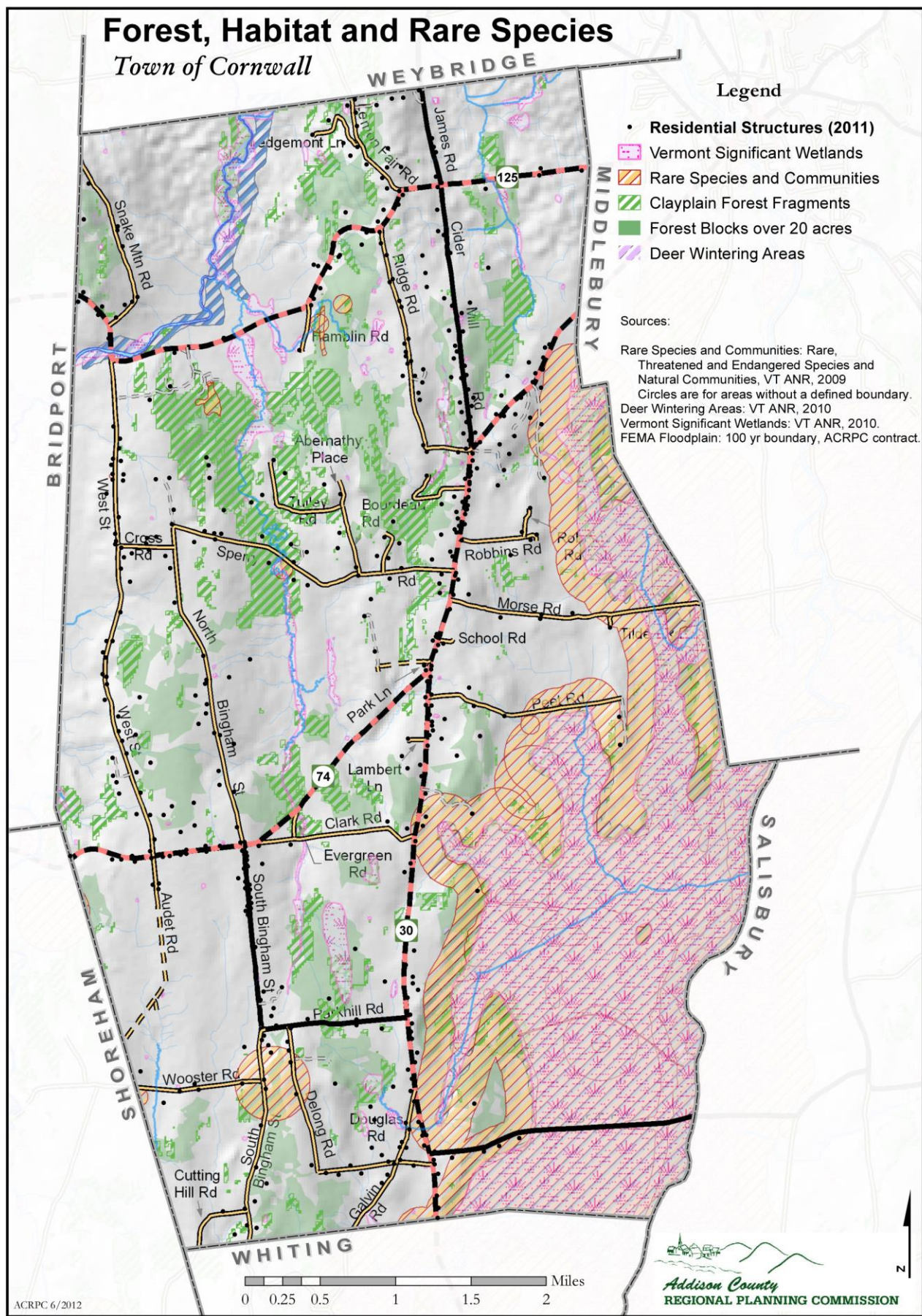


Figure 39: Forest Habitat and Rare Species

Source: ACRPC and VT ANR



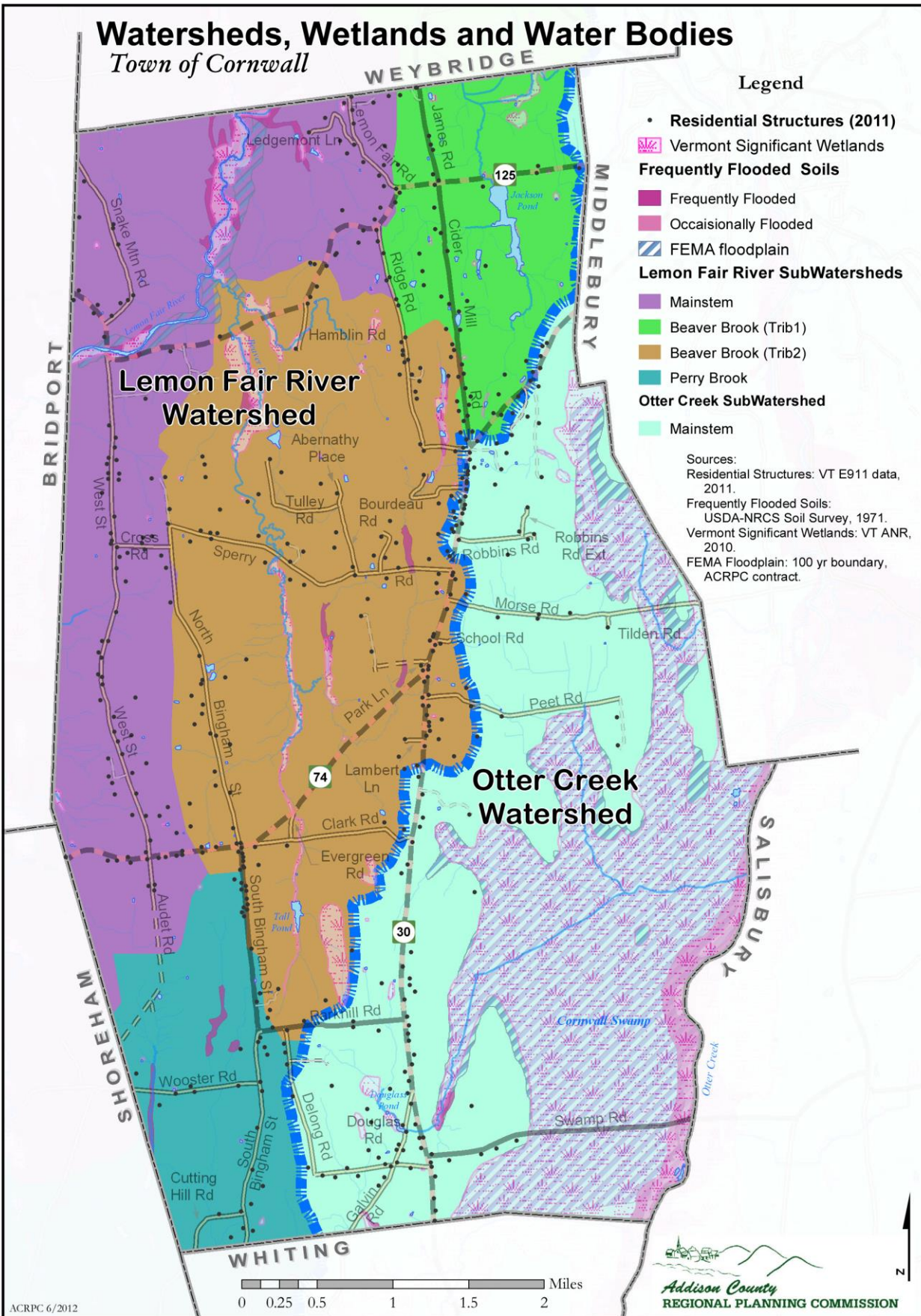


Figure 40: Lemon Fair and Otter Creek Watersheds and Sub-Watershed

Source: ACRPC and NRCS and VT ANR



*This section of the plan describes the current character and use of land within the town's land use areas. It also discusses the threats to the town's rural character and strategies for guiding new development to be in-keeping with the existing character of the community.*

### INVENTORY

#### Cornwall Village

Cornwall village developed at the intersection of what are now Routes 30 and 74 in the 1790's. At that time Route 30 was a stage road between Castleton and Middlebury and Route 74 provided a connection west to Lake Champlain. These roads were important trade routes. Early homes were built in a linear fashion along the main roads as well. While it was always a small center, it provided a vibrant mix of public, business and residential use throughout the 1800s and into the early 20th century.

From the earliest colonial settlement, this area of Cornwall functioned as a town center; a role that continues to the present. Within Cornwall village are important community institutions including the Town Hall, Cornwall Elementary School, the D.A.R. building, the Cornwall Congregational Church and cemetery, and a town green.

Currently, there are two businesses operating within the village, and a vacant country store. The businesses include: a daycare and a motorsports store. There has been little new residential development in the village since the late-1800s.

Within Cornwall village, approximately 12 acres are currently in public use and unlikely to be further developed in the future. Two acres adjacent to the elementary school parking lot are owned by the town and have not been developed. Around ten homes sit on an area of 20 acres. Champlain Valley Motorsports and the former Cornwall General Store properties comprise another five acres. The remaining land, most of which is currently owned by the Peet and Synnott families, is in agricultural use.



Figure 41: View of the Town Hall and Lavalley Store

## West Cornwall Area

West Cornwall developed at the intersection of what are now Route 74 and Bingham Streets around 1810. At that time Route 74 provided a connection west to Lake Champlain. West Cornwall developed mainly along South

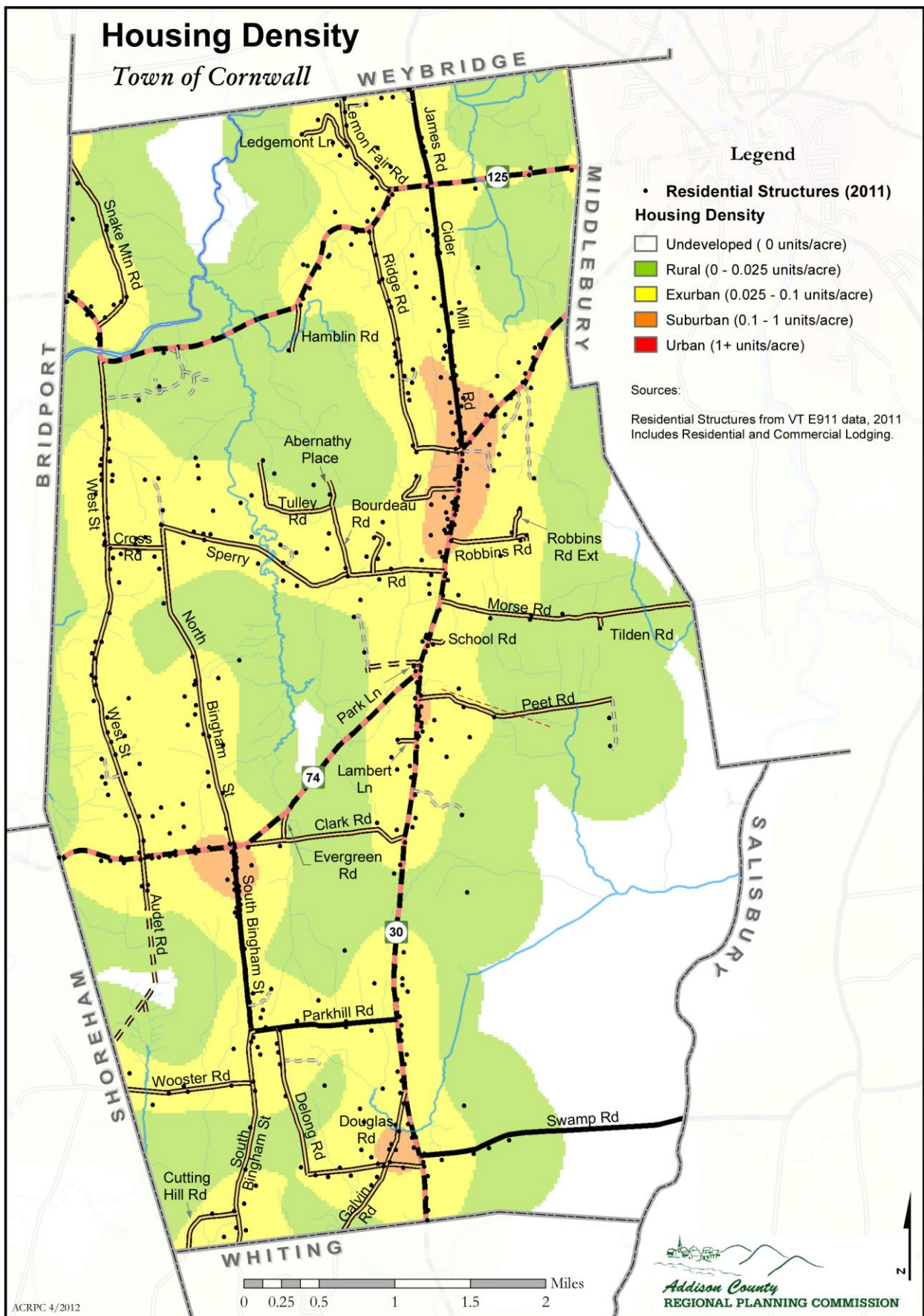
Bingham Street near the four-corners as a small social center within a prosperous agricultural area.

Historically, this settlement was primarily residential with public buildings, including a church, post office and school, and limited commercial activity. This remains the pattern today with around 10 residences with lots varying in size from  $\frac{1}{2}$  to five acre. Most of these homes were built between 1810 and 1880. In addition to the pattern and style of the historic homes, the mature street trees that provide canopy over South Bingham Street are a distinguishing feature of West



*Figure 42: Former Baptist Church in West Cornwall*

Cornwall. The only active public use remaining in West Cornwall is a fire station and the only commercial activity currently remaining within the core settlement area is the Belanus Garage; there are three additional businesses on the fringe of this area: Sunrise Nursery, Dewitt Insurance Company and a dog training facility. In more recent years, residential development has continued down South Bingham Street. These newer homes are located on lots ranging between 2 and 3 acres in size and are set back a bit further from the road.



### **Route 30 North Area (Zoning District *Medium Density Residential MDR*)**

Route 30 south of Cider Mill Road has historically been a residential corridor with homes on lots typically ranging from 1½ to 3 acres built close to the road. Many of these homes were constructed in the 1800s, although there has been some additional infill since the mid-1900s. There are approximately 20 homes along this section of the highway and a handful of undeveloped parcels. This area is closer to commute to Middlebury's services and amenities than most areas in Cornwall. Current zoning allows little room for additional development in this historically dense, residential area. Most of the existing homes are set back from the center of the road 50 to 60 feet with lot frontages of 100 to 300 feet. There are several home-based businesses in this area, including Cornwall Orchards Bed and Breakfast, Windfall Orchards, Crystal Pottery, and a home-based architectural office.

North of the Cider Mill Road intersection, development along Route 30 is less dense. There are around five homes on lots ranging from one to five acres in size and there are a number of parcels with significant undeveloped road frontage. Over the past 20 years, development has been occurring further back from Route 30 on large lots 10 acres or more in size that are accessed from long drives off the highway.

The amount and speed of traffic on Route 30 is a concern of residents. Currently the speed limit is 50 mph even though this is one of the densest residential areas in Cornwall.

In 2010, three-foot shoulders were added to this section of Route 30, and travel lanes were narrowed to eleven feet. The impetus for this project was to provide safer cycling and pedestrian opportunities from Cornwall to Middlebury. More information on this project can be found in the transportation section of this plan.

A large area of agricultural and forest land within this planning area was gifted to Middlebury College.

### **Route 30 South Area (Zoning District *Low Density Residential LDR*)**

This area is another traditional settlement area within the town, and a southern gateway, located in the triangular area formed by Route 30, Delong Road and Douglas Road. There are approximately 20 homes in this area on lots averaging between one and five acres in size. There are two commercial businesses in this area – Williams Sugar House and a car-repair shop. The town owns about seven acres around Douglas Pond. The remainder of the land is largely open agricultural fields. In 2011, a four lot, Habitat for Humanity project was proposed for an area of land off of Delong Road, close to Route 30. This proposal was accepted and construction began in the spring of 2012.

### **Cider Mill – Ridge Road Area (Zoning districts *MDR and LDR*)**

This planning area is north of the village center and includes Sperry Road to the south and James Road to the north. Both Cider Mill Road and Ridge Road run north to south. This planning area is the most recently developed residential area, and is distinguished by the surrounding open space, natural habitat, and views to both the Adirondacks and the Green Mountains. There are approximately 70 homes in this area.

Cider Mill Road is significantly developed with homes built on five to ten-plus acre lots that have been constructed largely over the last 40 years on once active farmland. On the southern end of the road near the intersection with Route 30, homes are located on smaller lots generally one to three acres in size. There are a few large agricultural parcels left with developable frontage mainly near the north end of Cider Mill Road.

The majority of Ridge Road is less densely developed compared to Cider Mill Road. While there is a cluster of smaller, 1 acre lots toward the middle section of this road, there are more large parcels with undeveloped frontage remaining on Ridge Road than Cider Mill.

In recent years, development has been occurring further back from the main roads on long private drives. There are still a few historic farmsteads along these roads, but agricultural use in this area is declining in quantity of productive acres and intensity of use. There are two Christmas tree farms in this area.

The amount of forested area has been increasing as once cultivated fields have begun transitioning back to their natural forested state. To the west of Ridge Road much of the land is forested, a significant percentage of which was part of the former Foote farm. One of the forks of Beaver Brook originates between Cider Mill and Ridge Roads and flows south.

### **Rural Area (Zoning District *LDR*)**

The rural planning area is sparsely populated and holds the majority of Cornwall's farmland. Ironically, there has been more development in this area than any other planning area in Town. This is likely due to large land parcels that can be subdivided easily. There are 140 homes in this planning area. For the most part, development in this area has been occurring along the roads, leaving larger, interior acreage intact.

In 2008, the Foote Farm obtained permits to create a Planned-Unit-Development (PUD) on land off of Route 125. Twenty two, one-three acre lots were sited with the intent of conserving as much natural area/open space as possible, including the conservation of 100 acres of land adjacent to the project, on the north side of Route 125. A community septic system was incorporated into the site. See the analysis section below for more information on this project. In the northeastern corner of town, the rural area forms a boundary between Cornwall and the neighboring towns of Middlebury and Weybridge. Currently, this area remains largely open land, although there has been recent residential development on lots generally over 10 acres in size along James Road, the Lemon Fair Road, and to the east of Route 30. Middlebury College has significant landholdings in the northeastern corner of town. At this time the land remains in agricultural use as hayfields. The agricultural land associated with the Border Acres Farm located on Route 30 on the Cornwall-Middlebury line creates a demarcation between Middlebury College and Cornwall.

This area in the southwest corner of town remains largely agricultural with several significant areas of conserved land. The amount of residential development in this part of Cornwall over the past 20 years has been significantly less than areas of town closer to Middlebury.



### **The Ledges Area (Zoning District *LDR*)**

The Ledges are a unique geologic formation and natural community. The rocky, steep terrain has never been conducive to development or agricultural use, so the land remains largely undisturbed in a natural forested state. Early in the town's history, there were some attempts at quarrying rock from this area, but such operations were not viable in comparison to those in Middlebury and other communities in the region. In recent years, there have been some homes built within this area, but the amount of developed land remains very low. There are approximately 25 homes in this area.

### **Lemon Fair-Beaver Brook Area (Zoning Districts *Conservation (CON)* and *LDR*)**

This area is comprised of the floodplain for the Lemon Fair River, wetlands south of Route 125 along the Beaver Brook, and the land west of West Street that slopes down into the Lemon Fair floodplain. Beaver Brook is a tributary of the Lemon Fair River and has a significantly large watershed, encompassing 7.5 square miles of land in Cornwall. Beaver Brook passes through open agricultural fields and wooded land, forming an important wildlife corridor through the center of Cornwall. It connects several natural areas along its route including the forested areas on Delong Hill and the Ledges.

Due to regular flooding and generally wet conditions of much of this area, the intensity of development is very low within the area. The soils are generally poorly suited for on-site septic systems. There are approximately 10 homes within this area. The area is predominately in agricultural or open space use and there is significant acreage along West Street that has been conserved.



*Figure 44: Former Schoolhouse near the Lemon Fair*

Fifty three acres of land have recently been conserved in this planning area – a forested area between Sperry Road and Route 125, recognized for its wildlife habitat quality within the Beaver Brook watershed.

### **Cornwall Swamp Area (Zoning District *CON*)**

This area is an approximately 3,400-acre area in the southeastern corner of town. Most of the area is comprised of Cornwall Swamp, a Class II wetland that is largely forested. A more thorough description of the swamp can be found in the Natural Resource section of

the plan. There is no development within the Cornwall Swamp Area. Most of the land is forested with a small amount of open agricultural land along Otter Creek.

Looking at the town's parcel maps, the swamp is divided into many small wood lots, most ranging between 5 and 20 acres in size. Most of the swamp was logged at least once, and some areas have been cleared several times. Limited timber harvesting continues on some of the privately owned parcels, mainly to provide firewood for personal use. Within the swamp, 1,200 acres are part of a state-owned wildlife management area. The Nature Conservancy owns around 300 additional acres in the swamp.

There are two town roads that cross the swamp, Morse Road and Swamp Road. Swamp Road crosses the Otter Creek into Salisbury over the Cedar Swamp Covered Bridge. In 2010 this bridge was reconstructed to replicate its



historic construction. Unlike many Vermont covered bridges, in 2011, it survived Tropical Storm Irene. The bridge is listed on the Vermont State and the National Registers of Historic Places and is co-owned by Salisbury and Cornwall.

Morse Road at one time also crossed the Otter Creek in Middlebury over Three Mile Bridge, which burned in the 1950s and was not rebuilt. Morse Road now connects to South Street Extension, which provides an alternative route into downtown Middlebury.

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## ANALYSIS

Residents of Cornwall have strongly voiced their desire for the town to remain primarily a rural residential and agricultural community. Maintenance of the town's rural character can only be achieved by supporting creative agricultural enterprises, using a variety of innovative planning techniques for development in all parts of town, and encouraging growth in existing areas of higher density development..

Each land use planning area, defined by a common set of characteristics, needs its own set of planning goals in order to maintain and/or cultivate it into the unique part of town that it is. When planning decisions, including zoning regulations, are guided by these goals, agricultural land, open space, and the scenic and cultural resources that define Cornwall's rural character can continue to enhance the quality of life.

### **Preserving Community Character**

Conventional zoning determines the number of residential units allowed on a parcel largely by setting minimum lot sizes. While most of Cornwall has been zoned for four or two acre lots for the past two decades, until recently, state septic regulations had promoted development on lots larger than ten acres. The results of these regulations can be seen in Cornwall's landscape, as a large-lot suburban pattern of development has overspread the historic settlement pattern of small centers surrounded by agricultural land. Even though this regulation is no longer a development restriction, the current two to four acre minimum lot size across an entire rural town, does little to distinguish one area from another, and provides just as much risk of rural sprawl as ten acre lot development. In order to move toward preserving rural character, Cornwall's 2008 zoning update, guided by the 2004 public survey and plan update, decreased the minimum lot size for village areas from one acre to ½ acre lots to encourage increased development in areas already designated as dense-residential. Cornwall's subdivision regulations were also updated in 2008 and set specific criteria and design standards for major and minor subdivisions that encourage the protection of natural landscape features such as tree canopy.

*What is the ultimate goal? Should all land in Cornwall be subdivided? Then what?*

*[new lots] have tended toward oversized, upscale housing units which drive up assessments.*

Cornwall Residents  
2011 Planning Survey

A two acre lot minimum was kept for the medium density residential. The four acre minimum lot size was maintained

for the low density residential areas. The argument from residents for keeping this relatively small (for the most rural areas of town) lot size, was that property owners have a right to maximize the value of their land by selling off as many lots as possible. As most development in Cornwall has occurred within this low-density planning area, there is an obvious conflict between desiring property rights and maintaining the integrity of the rural landscape.

### **Encourage Conservation Subdivisions**

Conservation subdivision is a method that includes a range of strategies that use land development regulations to direct growth away from landscape assets such as: prime agricultural soils, surface waters, wetlands, steep slopes, wildlife habitat, scenic views and other sensitive resources. The terms 'clustering' of homes and 'density averaging' are associated with conservation subdivisions and are explained throughout this section. Conservation subdivisions separate density from lot size, permitting property owners to develop at the allowable density on small lots in exchange for permanently protecting the remainder of the parcel as open space. A number of studies have shown that compact development with proximity to permanently protected open space enhances property values because homeowners are willing to pay a premium for the assurance that adjacent open land will never be developed. Clustered homes can be more cost effective – sharing utilities, services and access.

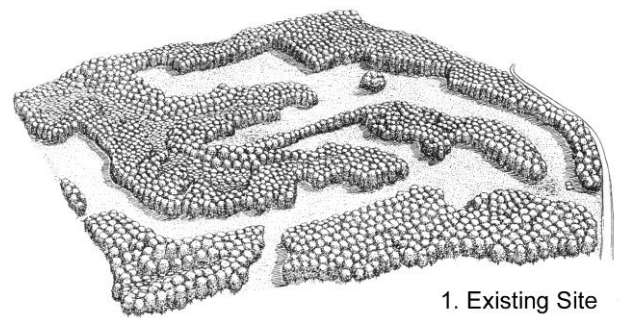
The first step in conservation subdivision design is to identify the resources that are to be preserved (see '*Understanding our Natural Resources*', below). Portions of the site that are not constrained by these features become the potential development areas. Calculations are then made to determine the number of dwellings the zoning allows on the parcel, this is sometimes referred to as *density averaging*, and used instead of a minimum lot size regulation. For example, under conventional RA-10 zoning, a 50-acre parcel could be subdivided into a maximum of five 10-acre lots. Using density averaging, the parcel remains limited to 5 total homes/lots, but the landowner can subdivide into lots of various sizes, and clustered placements. These conservation subdivision concepts can be applied to both minor and major subdivisions.

Currently, Cornwall's zoning regulations can apply conservation subdivision concepts through the Planned Unit Development (PUD) provisions. Cornwall's current regulations provide density bonuses as an incentive for developers to use the PUD provisions. Density bonuses allow developers to build more units than would be allowed under the zoning regulations in exchange for developing the land in a manner that meets the town's goals. In Vermont, density bonuses have typically been linked to the provision of affordable, elderly housing or public trails and open space, but are also used to promote design and development practices desired by town residents.

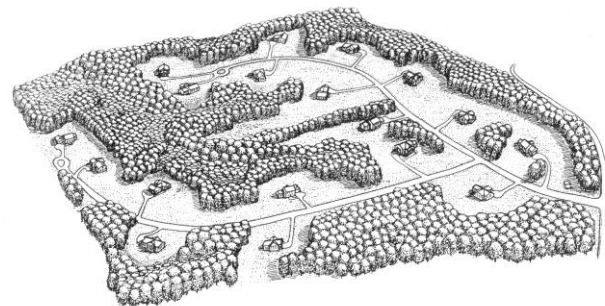
PUD's are typically associated with larger subdivisions, and Cornwall's minor subdivision applications typically do not go through this process. In order for Cornwall to promote conservation subdivision concepts on *minor* subdivisions, a *conservation subdivision overlay* could be placed over Cornwall's entire low-density residential area, creating a non-mandatory option for property owners seeking to protect the natural features of their land.

Since 2008 Cornwall has approved three major subdivisions applications, one of which was the 22 lot Foote Farm subdivision. This is considered a conservation subdivision, setting aside 100 acres of open space and Clay Plain forest for common access by property owners. In lieu of dedicating land for affordable lots/housing, the Foote Farm project gave the town \$75,000 to be used toward a separate affordable housing project. These funds were used in Cornwall's most recent PUD: a four unit Habitat for Humanity project. This project seeks to provide affordable units, fitting with the cultural and historic character of Cornwall, while setting aside common open space for the residents. This kind of project aids Cornwall in diversifying its housing stock and demographics – both of which provide a town with resilience to economic fluctuation. The planning commission could consider imposing a conservation fee for all subdivisions.

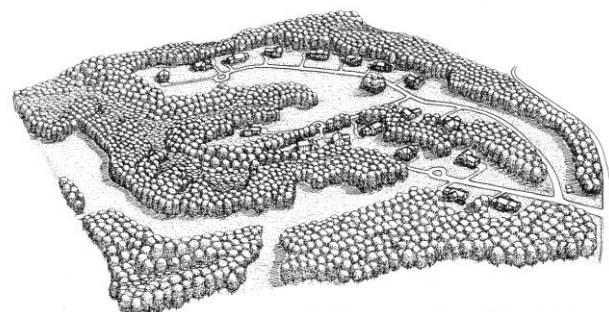
While conservation subdivision and the planning strategies it houses do work to protect the rural landscape it is



1. Existing Site



2. Conventional Subdivision



3. Conservation Subdivision

Figure 45: Comparison of Alternative Development Patterns  
Illustration from *Growing Greener: Putting Conservation into Local Plans and Ordinances* (Arendt, 1999)

*All new major subdivisions should require walking trails that are open to the public, not just subdivision residents.*

Cornwall Residents  
2011 Planning Survey

advantageous to promote growth in existing residential areas before developing more rural areas of a town. Homes built closer to services and amenities can more easily provide alternatives to daily car commuting, such as walking, biking and public transit.

### **Follow Historic Settlement Patterns**

As previously mentioned, development of homes, businesses and services within historic settlement areas, encourages a landscape of villages and hamlets surrounded by expanses of agricultural and natural areas. This also provides opportunities in the future for more residents to access services and amenities by bicycle or foot. Route 30 North, Cornwall Village, and West Cornwall are the historically more settled areas of Cornwall and are still the most densely populated today. Allowing pan-handle lot development –where homes could be built behind those existing, would allow for the continuation of higher density in this residential area, instead of seeing all new development in historically agricultural/open space areas. Adequate space for septic and well requirements is a limiting factor to the lot size within this scenario.

#### **Cornwall's Village Center**

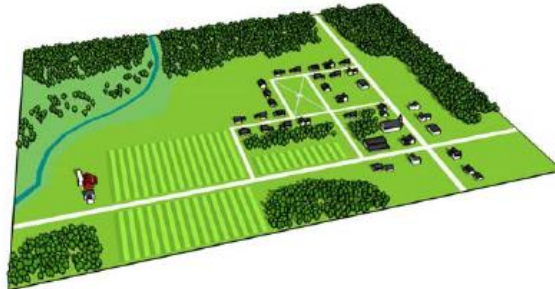
There has been much discussion on the opportunity and challenges of additional housing and amenities in Cornwall's Village Center. In the 2011 planning survey, almost 80% of respondents would like to see a general store here. In the 2004 survey, many wanted to see additional open space and a safer pedestrian environment connecting existing civic buildings. While this area does house the majority of Cornwall's public facilities and buildings, and a more dense residential settlement pattern is appropriate, there is currently little available land for growth or public outdoor space.

At the present time, lack of available land and lack of water and wastewater infrastructure are hurdles to developing Cornwall's village center. However, when land becomes available, or a development proposal is presented to the town, Cornwall needs to be prepared with a vision for its future.

**THIS:**

*The Village of Tomorrow: Planned Development (Village)*

Updated Village zoning will enable additional housing in and around the village, at traditional densities, scale and settlement patterns.



*The Village of Tomorrow: Planned Developments (Rural)*

**NOT THIS:**

*The Village of Tomorrow: Under Previous Zoning*

While few houses have been added in this visual, the large lots, each with their own driveway, gradually erode the character of the village, depend entirely on the automobile and decrease traffic safety.

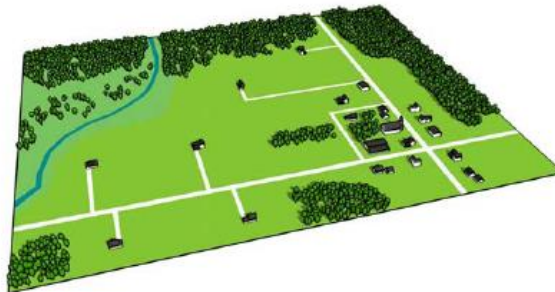


Fig 46: Above, Illustrations from the 2008 Smart Growth Vermont report: Cornwall Village Center Zoning: A Visual Overview, showing how smaller lot sizes and frontage requirements can help maintain a clustered village center, surrounded by a productive working landscape.

Zoning was reviewed and updated in 2008 which created smaller minimum lot lines and frontage dimensions. In the future, Cornwall's zoning regulations should be reviewed to ensure that design standards, such as building size, permitted uses, signage, lighting and parking promote only small-scale commercial activity that would support a stronger local economy and complement the character of the village. Investigation of potential wastewater infrastructure in the village is also recommended.

## **Understand Our Natural Resources**

A critical piece in cultivating better development patterns lies in understanding what the resources are that you wish to protect. As mentioned in the Natural Resource section of this plan, the Cornwall Planning Commission and Conservation Commission would like to inventory significant ecological features of Cornwall's landscape. Databases such as these provide critical planning tools when subdivision proposals are submitted. In the 2011 survey, respondents agreed this was a critical role of the Cornwall Conservation Commission. The Cornwall Planning Commission is currently seeking funds to be able to do this.

As mentioned in the Natural Resource section of the plan, the Cornwall Conservation Commission does play a role in any subdivision proposal process. Being experts in the natural systems of Cornwall and Addison County, members of the conservation commission identify potential conflicts between the proposed development and impacts to the land. The Conservation Commission and the Planning Commission are in the process of making this a more formalized role within the permitting process.

Creating a master open space plan with potential trail connections on both public and private land would be another way to understand future opportunities for maximizing the natural resources available to Cornwall residents, and alternative ways to connect residential areas to more rural areas, other than by car.



# CORNWALL TOMORROW



## VISION STATEMENT

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When updating a town plan and establishing a current vision statement, it is important to acknowledge *where we are coming from, where we are now, and where we want to be in the future*. This plan outlines challenges and opportunities for Cornwall, some of which have been consistent for the past ten years or more, and others have emerged in light of current state of affairs such as a significant economic recession, peak oil and the price of commuting, and also demographic and lifestyle trends.

The following is taken from the vision statement from 2004:

*"The Planning Commission sees Cornwall on the brink of significant changes in land ownership within the next decade when much of the remaining non-conserved farmland may be purchased by people who will hold the land as an investment to be developed in the future or who will build on large tracts of land. This type of large-lot development could fragment the land and may be worse for the environment than well-planned clusters of housing that have been sensitively located. Much of the land purchased by investors will not be developed immediately, but will slowly be built upon as the market demands. It is likely that, over time, developments that offer "country club" living for an active, retired population could be built in town. Land will continue to be expensive and affordable housing opportunities extremely limited. Most young families will find it difficult to live here and the school population will continue to decline, perhaps reaching a point that would force the elementary school to close".*

The trends identified in 2004 have largely continued. Cornwall still inspires great loyalty from its residents but there is an acute acknowledgement that there are weaknesses that must be addressed. Among the weaknesses identified are affordability, the growing potential for loss of rural character, and lack of a focal point for community activities that would be afforded by a more robust village center. The ideas and recommendations in this plan reflect feedback provided to us from the 2011 planning survey. The vision statements below are based on this feedback and supported by the policy within this plan.

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### *Creating a strong sense of community*

This plan supports Cornwall in maintaining its own unique, rural identity, where neighbors know each other and help each other; and which offers a high quality of life for a diversity of residents young and old alike – to live, work and access safe recreational opportunities. This plan encourages local agricultural businesses and other local businesses that are in keeping with the goals of this plan.

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### *Preserving rural character*

To maintain its unique, rural character, Cornwall must protect its working, agricultural landscape, its natural systems, and its historic and scenic resources – holding them in highest regard during any development decision. This plan suggests that the town once again, refine its current zoning and permitting practices and determine whether the existing regulatory structure is working satisfactorily to protect these

assets. If it is not, the plan suggests how the town might amend its regulations and permitting procedures to attain the goals of this plan.

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### *Supporting a more robust center*

While this plan recognizes the current restraints on creating a more robust village center, it seeks to maintain this vision for the future. Many residents support a village center that would provide Cornwall with a better sense of identity, opportunities for neighbors to see each other outside of their homes, and one day, house a general store/café and a farmers market. Improved pedestrian crossings, traffic calming, and pedestrian access on the associated road networks and between community buildings and the Town Green would also be welcome.

In order to achieve this vision, the following goals and future land use plan have been set forth for the Town of Cornwall.

## FUTURE LAND USE

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*The town has been divided into land use planning areas as shown on the Land Use Map. The boundaries are not legally binding, and should not be interpreted as zoning districts but are generalized areas of town with common features, characteristics and development goals. This Land Use Plan and map should be used to guide future growth and development, and form a strong foundation for Cornwall's zoning regulations.*

### CORNWALL VILLAGE AREA

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*Cornwall Village will be a vital civic center with a mix of residential, business and public uses.*

- a. **Agricultural:** Agricultural use will continue to be low intensity with open lands in production for hay, corn and similar crops. Small scale, innovative agricultural enterprises are encouraged, providing operations do not negatively impact the health, welfare or safety of nearby residents. Intensive agricultural activities – such as storage of waste materials or chemicals, or housing of large numbers of animals – that have the potential to conflict with residential, business or public uses should be discouraged.
- b. **Residential:** Existing residential uses will be supported and future residential development will be encouraged to match traditional New England village settlement patterns. The possibility of developing lot sizes, setbacks and frontages should be based on traditional village patterns rather than suburban subdivision standards. Homes within the village center should be encouraged to be of a style and scale similar to existing historic homes. While promoting compatible building types, a range of housing options such as multi-family housing and accessory apartments should be allowed. Adaptive reuse of historic buildings should be supported over new construction or demolition of significant buildings. PUD's should be encouraged in the village center that are guided by standards set forth in the 2008 *Smart Growth Vermont: Cornwall Village Center Zoning: A Visual Overview*. This document can be found in the appendix of this plan.
- c. **Commercial:** Business activities, appropriate in scale and character to a traditional New England village center, and fitting with the unique Character of Cornwall, will be encouraged in this area. Large, big box, and/or franchise operations or strip development along state highways should not be allowed. Development in this area should support and encourage pedestrian and cycling activity. Priority should be given to re-establishing businesses in the village like a general store, café, or pub that provide gathering places for Cornwall residents, promote community interaction and strengthen the resident's sense of community.

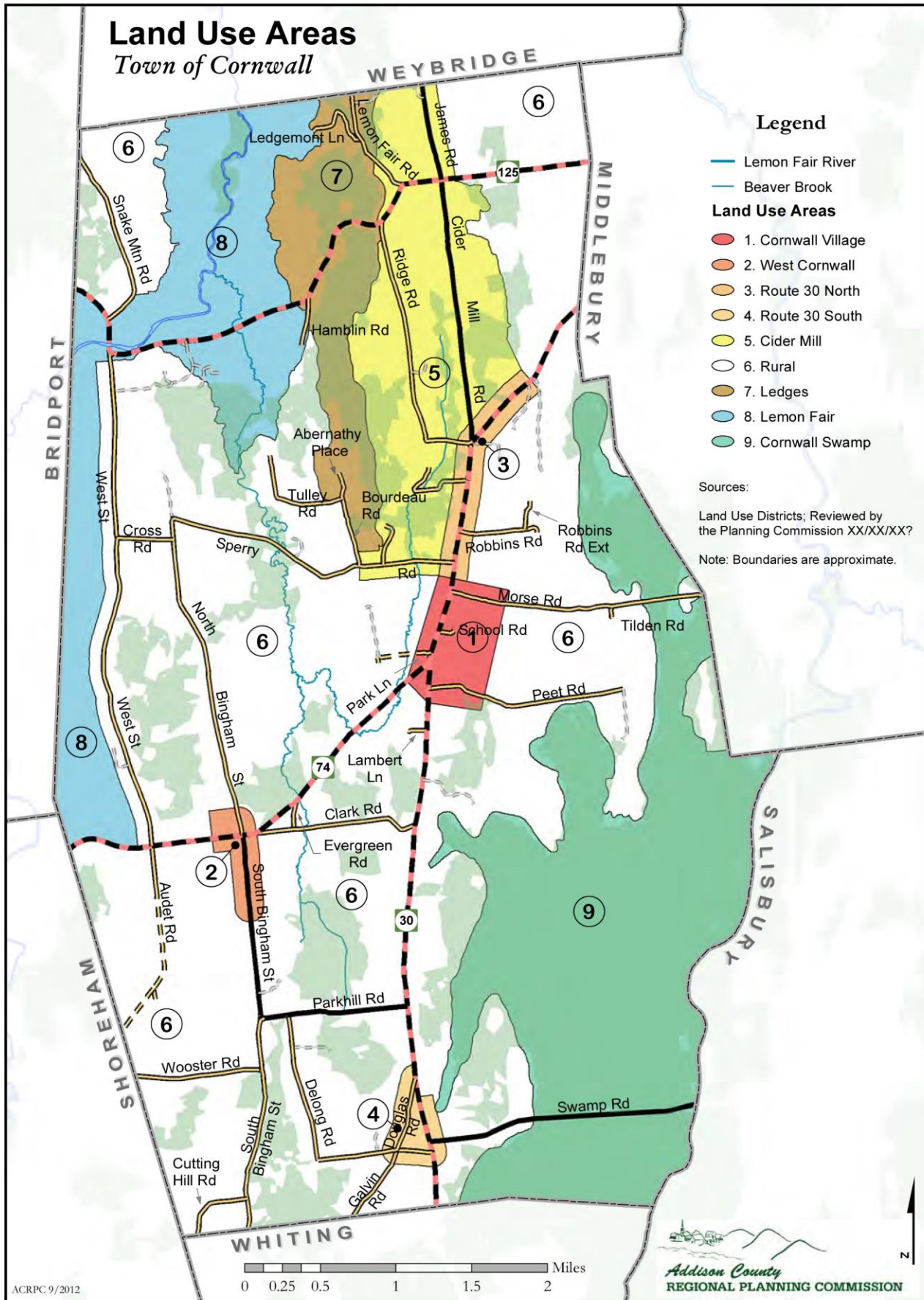


Figure 47 Cornwall Land Use Areas Source: ACRPC



Other businesses, such as professional offices, small retail shops, restaurants, inns or bed-and-breakfasts, should be accommodated within this area with adequate regulation to ensure their compatibility with neighboring uses. Restrictions should be given to hours of operation, noise, lighting, traffic, outdoor storage, parking, signage and other impacts that could affect the quality of life for neighboring property owners. Home occupations and home-based business that will not negatively affect the quality of life for neighboring property owners should also be encouraged.

- d. **Public:** The majority of the town's public buildings and services will continue to be based within the village area. These places, along with the Cornwall Congregational Church and Town Green, provide a civic hub for Cornwall residents. The Town intends to preserve the Town Green for its current function as a cultural and recreational resource and will maintain the green as a public investment. The Town will seek opportunities to enhance or promote the function of the Town Green as an open space intended for community members and travelers' use. Plans that create a stronger sense of place in the Cornwall village and that provide safe links (such as crosswalks, signage or other appropriate traffic calming measures) to the community resources located there will be encouraged. Many of the existing public structures are historic and maintaining their character is key to maintaining the character of the village as a whole. Additional buildings in the village center should complement this character. Adaptive reuse of historic buildings for public use should be supported over new construction or demolition of significant buildings. Provisions for pedestrians and cyclists should continue to be pursued, including efforts to slow thru-traffic and provide safe opportunities to walk or bike from, to and within this area of town.

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#### WEST CORNWALL AREA

*The West Cornwall Area will continue to be a primarily residential neighborhood.*

- a. **Agricultural:** Agricultural use will continue to be low intensity with open lands in production for hay, corn and similar crops. Small scale, innovative agricultural enterprises are encouraged, providing operations do not negatively impact the health, welfare or safety of nearby residents.
- b. **Residential:** Existing residential uses will be supported and future residential development will be encouraged to extend the existing settlement pattern and architectural character of West Cornwall. While promoting compatible building types, a range of housing options such as multi-family housing and accessory apartments should be allowed. Development should be allowed on small lots and provision of the infrastructure needed to facilitate higher density use should be encouraged. Panhandle lots behind existing homes should be explored to provide infill opportunities.
- c. **Commercial:** This area is currently and should remain primarily residential. Home occupations and home-based business that will not negatively affect the quality of life for



neighboring property owners should be encouraged. Restrictions should be given to hours of operation, noise, lighting, traffic, outdoor storage, parking, signage and other impacts that could affect the quality of life for neighboring property owners. Appropriate business uses would include home-based businesses, small shops, restaurants or inns that do not require increases in traffic – including trucks – beyond what is customary in residential areas, or outdoor storage of materials, equipment or goods. Small scale, innovative agricultural enterprises are encouraged, providing operations do not negatively impact the health, welfare or safety of nearby residents.

- d. **Public:** Public uses that duplicate or cannot be accommodated in Cornwall Village may be appropriate in this area. The scale and character of public buildings needs to be carefully considered. Adaptive reuse of historic buildings for public use should be supported over new construction or demolition of significant buildings.

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#### ROUTE 30 NORTH AREA

*The Route 30 North Area will continue to be a densely built settlement characterized by historic homes lining the highway, and acting as a visual gateway into Cornwall Village*

- a. **Agricultural:** Agricultural use will continue to be low intensity with land in production for hay, corn and similar crops. Small scale, innovative agricultural enterprises are encouraged, providing operations do not negatively impact the health, welfare or safety of nearby residents.
- b. **Residential:** Existing residential uses will be supported and future residential development will be encouraged to extend the existing settlement pattern, lot configuration and architectural character of existing historic homes. Development should be allowed on lots similar in size to existing parcels. The possibility of developing panhandle lots behind existing homes should be explored to provide infill opportunities. Provisions should continue to be made to create safe access for residents to walk or bike along Route 30 by maintaining the up keep of three-foot shoulders on Route 30, reducing and enforcing the speed limit, and improving signage, creating a visual 'gateway' into Cornwall village. A range of housing options such as multi-family housing and accessory apartments should be encouraged.
- c. **Commercial:** This area is currently and should remain primarily residential. Home occupations and home-based businesses that will not negatively affect the quality of life for neighboring property owners should be encouraged. Restrictions should be given to hours of operation, noise, lighting, traffic, outdoor storage, parking, signage and other impacts that could affect the quality of life for neighboring property owners. Conversion of residential structures into office space or similar low-intensity commercial uses may be appropriate under similar constraints.

- d. Public:** Development of public uses should be discouraged, in order to guide future public use structures into Cornwall Village. Provisions for pedestrians and cyclists should continue to be pursued, including efforts to slow thru-traffic and provide safe opportunities to walk or bike.

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#### ROUTE 30 SOUTH AREA

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*This part of town, formed by the triangular area formed by Route 30, Delong Road and Douglas Road, has a home density similar to the West Cornwall village area and will also continue to be primarily a residential area. Existing commercial activity, which is home-based and agricultural, is in keeping with this traditional settlement pattern.*

- a. Agricultural:** Agricultural activities are encouraged to continue in this area, including small scale and hobby-type farms.
- b. Residential:** Existing residential uses will be supported and future development will be encouraged in keeping with a rural pattern with clusters of buildings separated by open land. A range of housing options, such as multi-family housing and accessory apartments, should be allowed. Exterior lighting should be kept to a minimum. Private roads and drives built to access new development should be constructed to standards that allow efficient, adequate access and at the same time are compatible with the character of the area and conform to established safety and construction standards.
- c. Commercial:** Commercial uses within this area will continue to be primarily home-based businesses. Town regulations should be reviewed and amended as appropriate to insure that the definitions of home-based business and business based out of buildings other than residences are clear and generally support current commercial uses. Consideration should be given to hours of operation, noise, lighting, traffic, outdoor storage, parking, signage and other impacts that could affect the quality of life for neighboring property owners. Agricultural-related businesses and adaptive reuse of agricultural buildings should be encouraged.
- d. Public:** Survey results indicate that there is still interest in public use of the town-owned Douglas Pond, which is on the NW edge of this area. A town recreation committee can be tasked to investigate the options and costs associated with access and maintenance of this potential recreation site. Negative impact on the residential and agricultural character of the area should continue to be a concern.

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#### CIDER MILL – RIDGE ROAD AREA

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*The Cider Mill – Ridge Road Area has significant open space and scenic views to both the Adirondack and Green Mountains. It is primarily a residential area.*

- a. **Agricultural and Open Space:** Agricultural activities are encouraged to continue in this area. Small scale, innovative agricultural enterprises, including small-scale or hobby-type farms are encouraged providing operations do not negatively impact the health, welfare or safety of nearby residents. The conservation of agricultural land and maintaining open space for its ecological, scenic and recreational value is highly encouraged and supported.
- b. **Residential:** Existing residential uses will be supported and future residential development will be encouraged. New residential development should be encouraged to site buildings to minimize impacts on ecological, historical and scenic features of the landscape. Use of conservation subdivision principles should be encouraged and rural amenities, such as public recreation trails, should be incorporated into any major subdivisions. A range of housing options such as multi-family housing and accessory apartments should be encouraged. Exterior lighting should be kept to a minimum. Private roads and drives built to access new development should be constructed to standards that allow efficient, adequate access and at the same time are compatible with the character of the area.
- c. **Commercial:** Low-intensity home occupations and home-based businesses that will not negatively affect the quality of life for neighboring property owners should be encouraged. Restrictions should be given to hours of operation, noise, lighting, traffic, outdoor storage, parking, signage and other impacts that could affect the quality of life for neighboring property owners.
- d. **Public:** Public uses, with the exception of recreation, should not be encouraged in this district, in order to guide such uses into Cornwall Village.

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#### **RURAL AREA**

*The Rural Area includes Cornwall's most productive agricultural lands and significant ecological, historic and scenic assets of the landscape. It is a low-density settlement area where future homes should be built on the margins of agricultural land in order to maximize these assets.*

- a. **Agricultural and Open Space:** Agricultural activities of a range of scales and types are encouraged in this area. The conservation of agricultural land and maintaining open space for its ecological, scenic and recreational value is highly encouraged and supported. Additional on-farm agricultural enterprises and value-added initiatives should be supported by updated zoning regulations. Landowners wishing to sell the development rights on their property should be supported to do so.
- b. **Residential:** Existing residential uses will be supported and future residential development will be encouraged to locate away from agriculturally viable land and environmentally sensitive areas. New residential development should be encouraged to site buildings to minimize impacts on ecological, historical and scenic features of the landscape. All subdivisions should be encouraged to follow conservation subdivision guidelines found in

this plan, and major subdivisions should incorporate affordable housing options and access to public recreational trails. A range of housing options such as multi-family housing and accessory apartments should be encouraged. Exterior lighting should be kept to a minimum. Private roads and drives built to access new development should be constructed to standards that allow efficient, adequate access and at the same time are compatible with the character of the area.

- c. **Commercial:** Commercial uses, other than agriculture related businesses, will continue to be primarily home occupations or home-based businesses. The town's regulations should be amended to support a variety of home-based businesses, including those that are based out of buildings on the property other than the residence. Consideration should be given to hours of operation, noise, lighting, traffic, outdoor storage, parking, signage and other impacts that could affect the quality of life for neighboring property owners. Agricultural-related businesses or adaptive reuse of agricultural buildings should be encouraged
- d. **Public:** Public uses, with the exception of recreation, should not be encouraged in this district, in order to guide such uses into Cornwall Village.

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#### LEDGES AREA

*The Ledges Area is characterized by a significant amount of forested, steep slopes and other unique natural features. It has a very low level of development.*

- a. **Agriculture and Open Space:** This area is recognized for its contiguous forest cover, connecting approximately seven miles from Sperry Road north to Weybridge Cave Natural State Park. Some timber harvesting continues in this area. Care should be taken to retain this natural area, and minimize impacts from development. The Planning Commission may look into including this area in a 'special features overlay district', to guide development in this unique natural area.
- b. **Residential:** Existing residential uses will be supported and future residential development will be permitted only at a very low density. Consideration should be given to maintaining forest cover in this area and residential development should be encouraged to locate on existing non-wooded land if possible. Development should also be prohibited on lands with extreme slopes in order to prevent erosion and reduction in water quality in nearby streams, as well as ensure adequate access to residences.
- c. **Commercial:** Commercial uses within this area will continue to be low-intensity, home occupations. Restrictions should be given to hours of operation, noise, lighting, traffic, outdoor storage, parking, signage and other impacts that could affect the quality of life for neighboring property owners.
- d. **Public:** Public uses, with the exception of recreation, should not be encouraged in this district, in order to guide such uses into Cornwall Village.

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#### LEMON FAIR - BEAVER BROOK AREA

*The Lemon Fair-Beaver Brook area is characterized by its inclusion of the Lemon Fair River flood plain, parts of the Beaver Brook riparian corridor, and adjacent agricultural fields. It will continue to be largely undeveloped.*

- a. **Agricultural and Open Space:** Much of the land is undeveloped in this area, and should continue to remain primarily undeveloped. Agricultural landowners are encouraged to leave a riparian buffer of uncultivated land around streams and prevent farm animals from entering the streams. Landowners are encouraged to participate in federal programs for such projects. The town should also continue to encourage landowners who wish to sell the development rights on their property in this area in order to minimize development in this ecologically important area. Development should be prohibited within the floodplain to prevent future property loss or damage. This land use area emphasizes the importance of Beaver Brook and the Lemon Fair River in the town's natural systems and encourages property owners to keep development set back from the stream for water quality and wildlife habitat protection. Zoning regulations should be updated to reflect this, including specific setback requirements from riparian corridors. The Planning Commission may look into including this area in a 'special features overlay district', to guide development in this unique natural area.
- b. **Residential:** Existing residential uses will be supported and the location of future residential development should be carefully reviewed to ensure that it is not being located within floodplains, wetlands, riparian zones or other similar sensitive areas. No additional development should be allowed within the floodplain. Along the Beaver Brook, future residential development should be required to be set back a reasonable distance from the stream. Consideration should be given to maintaining riparian vegetation along the stream banks.
- c. **Commercial:** Commercial uses within this area will continue to be low-intensity, home-based businesses and home occupations. Restrictions should be given to hours of operation, noise, lighting, traffic, outdoor storage, parking, signage and other impacts that could affect the quality of life for neighboring property owners.
- d. **Public:** Public uses, with the exception of recreation, should not be encouraged in this district, in order to guide such uses into Cornwall Village.

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#### **CORNWALL SWAMP**

*Cornwall Swamp will continue to be a largely undeveloped, forested swamp with limited land in low-intensity agricultural use.*

- a. **Agricultural and Open Space:** Open space and limited forestry, will continue to be the primary land uses within this area. The town should also continue to support landowners who wish to sell the development rights on their property or sell the property to a conservation organization or the state.
- b. **Residential:** Existing residential uses will be supported, but additional residential development should be prevented on environmentally sensitive land.

- c. **Commercial:** Commercial uses should not be allowed within this area.
- d. **Public:** Public uses, with the exception of recreation, should not be encouraged in this district, in order to guide such uses into Cornwall Village.



## PLAN GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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*The following goals are written in association with the sections of this plan. Together with the Future Land Use Plan, these goals direct planning and land use decisions and guide Cornwall toward our future vision.*

### POPULATION GOAL 1

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*Promote community activities and interaction among town residents.*

- a. Create and Maintain public facilities and spaces that encourage social interaction among town residents.
- b. Strengthen residents' sense of community by promoting opportunities for residents to gather for recreation, education and other activities.
- c. Support small-scale commercial activities in Cornwall's village center that would create places for residents to gather and interact, while providing basic daily supplies. (i.e. general store and farmers market)

### GOAL 2

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*Strengthen citizen participation in local government and build a stronger sense of community.*

- a. Develop a stronger sense of civic responsibility and duty in residents.
- b. Increase residents' understanding of how the town government works.
- c. Continue to publicize town news and information to residents through the newsletter and website.

### GOAL 3

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*Maintain the diversity and intergenerational nature of the community.*

- a. Support elderly residents and their assisting organizations in efforts to maintain independence.
- b. Support the provision of housing that will allow elderly residents to continue to live in the community.
- c. Support the provision of housing that will allow young people to buy homes and raise their families in the community.
- d. Work to ensure that Cornwall is an attractive and affordable community.

### HOUSING GOAL 1

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*Promote a pattern of development to accommodate residential growth that will preserve the town's rural character, protect prime agricultural land, conserve natural resources and revitalize Cornwall's village center.*

- a. Adopt regulations to preserve prime agricultural and important habitat from the pressures of residential development and maintain the rural atmosphere of the town.
- b. Create an overlay district to preserve prime agricultural land, important wildlife habitat or other environmentally sensitive areas for future generations.
- c. Allow incentives for developments that use the town's PUD provisions or that cluster homes while preserving open space or agricultural land.
- d. Investigate the following land code options to determine which may further support this goal:
  - Allowing lot standards to match historic settlement patterns
  - Adopting form-based zoning code
  - Allowing panhandle lots in historic settlement areas

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## GOAL 2

*Provide a range of housing opportunities that will meet the needs of Cornwall's current and future residents.*

- a. Work with land trusts and developers to encourage development of small-scale affordable housing PUDs with access to services, particularly for younger town residents and the elderly.
- b. Allow for "density bonuses" for the creation of affordable housing development in PUDs over the permitted zoning in such developments, provided sufficient water and septic capability exists.
- c. Promote affordable housing and increase the availability of rental housing by allowing for apartments associated with existing homes or the conversion of large single-family homes into multi-family homes.
- d. Investigate using town land to create affordable housing.
- e. Maintain a mix of housing types and values by discouraging "cookie-cutter" housing developments that contain homes of a single style, size or sale price.
- f. Encourage any new residential development to be energy-efficient and promote use of PACE and the Vermont Energy Star Program to help meet the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan goals.

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## ECONOMY

## GOAL 1

*Promote and protect the long-term viability of agriculture and agricultural land.*

- a. Minimize development in prime agricultural land.
- b. Uphold a farmer's right to farm using generally accepted agricultural practices.
- c. Encourage landowners to protect agricultural land through conservation easements or current use program.
- d. Update zoning regulations to emphasize investment in ventures that support a sustainable local economy with particular consideration given to local food production and innovative on-farm businesses.

## GOAL 2

*Support the maintenance of existing and development of new home-based businesses in Cornwall that would fit into the rural character of the town*

- a. Encourage the creation and viability of home-based businesses and home occupations that meet the standards of the town's regulations and preserve neighbors' quality of life.
- b. Prohibit large-scale, big box, and/or strip commercial development throughout Cornwall, including along Routes 125, 30 and 74.

## EDUCATION

### GOAL 1

*Ensure that quality educational opportunities are provided for all residents.*

- a. Offer educational programs for all ages and levels that provide challenging, effective and affordable opportunities for creative learning, and personal and professional growth.
- b. Encourage and support efforts by parents to be involved in their children's education.
- c. Support the development of programs in Cornwall's students to promote increased understanding of natural systems and to use the town's natural areas as a resource for engaging children in their local environment.
- d. Support the provision of early education programs and after-school programs.

- e. Encourage the provision of high-quality childcare services that meet the needs of the town's working parents.
- f. Ensure excellent and diverse educational opportunities in order to facilitate a tradition of lifelong learning by town residents and work to engage residents of all ages in the town's education system.

## GOAL 2

*Support the recommendations of the ACSU study committee in regards to elementary school solutions for declining enrollment.*

- a. Encourage citizen participation in the school policy-setting process.

## HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

### GOAL 1

*Maintain and protect Cornwall's historic and cultural resources as vital, actively used components of the community, which help define the town's unique character and are a source of pride for residents.*

- a. Identify and protect significant historic structures, sites or districts.
- b. Foster a respect for known and potential archaeological sites.
- c. Encourage efforts to preserve historic sites and buildings, and enhance the appearance of historic districts.
- d. Support adaptive reuse of historic structures, including former agricultural buildings.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

### GOAL 1

*Work to ensure that Cornwall's public buildings can continue to accommodate the services needed by residents and will actively plan to meet future demand for community facilities.*

- a. Maintain Cornwall village as a community center that provides administrative and public facilities including town offices, library, school and Town Green.
- b. Support future projects to construct, rehabilitate and maintain Cornwall's public buildings and facilities that are cost-effective to taxpayers, preserve their historic character, promote the viability of the village center and conform to the goals of this plan.
- c. Consider the long-term costs and benefits associated with community projects to the town's residents and taxpayers when determining how to spend public funds.

- d. Achieve a rate and pattern of development that is consistent with the town's ability to assimilate new residents without overburdening community facilities and services and negatively impacting the town's fiscal condition.
- e. Encourage development of a 5- to 10-year capital budget and program that would allow the town to require phasing of developments and the assessment of impact fees on large developments needing expansions of local services or facilities.
- f. Promote and recognize the value of volunteerism in the provision of community services and the longstanding tradition of Cornwall residents working together to meet community needs.
- g. Continue to explore opportunities for coordinating services with neighboring towns and sharing resources such as equipment and personnel in a manner similar to the fire department's mutual aid system.
- h. Continue to actively plan for the town's solid waste disposal needs by participating in the Addison County Solid Waste Management District.
- i. Continue to support high quality fire and rescue services in town and ensure that there is adequate access to all development for emergency vehicles.
- j. Continue to support the organizational and planning efforts of the Emergency Management Committee to insure adequate preparation for potential large scale weather-related events.

## GOAL 2

*Work to ensure that current and future development has adequate, functioning wastewater disposal systems.*

- a. Issue town permits for development contingent upon applicants receiving all required state and federal permits, including a state water and wastewater permit.
- b. Support efforts to ensure that new, cost-effective wastewater disposal technologies are approved for use in Vermont that will allow for reasonable development throughout the Town of Cornwall.

## UTILITIES AND ENERGY

### GOAL 1

*Provide access to state-of-the-art communication technology to Cornwall residents and businesses, the infrastructure of which does not compromise Cornwall's scenic landscape.*

- a. Support provision of DSL or other high-speed internet access throughout Cornwall.
- b. Support provision of cellular phone service throughout Cornwall

- c. Ensure that new infrastructure blends into its surroundings by developing regulations that encourage utilization of existing structures before the construction of new towers.

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## GOAL 2

*Foster resource conservation by promoting energy efficiency, small-scale generation and local distribution of energy.*

- a. Support the implementation of the newly adopted PACE program by forming a Cornwall Energy Committee to support the work of Cornwall's Energy Coordinator.
- b. Work with Cornwall's Energy Coordinator to provide up-to-date energy efficiency programs and resource information at the Town Hall, on the Town Website and in the Cornwall Newsletter.
- c. Encourage use of energy-efficient building practices for new construction and renovation projects based on the Vermont Residential Energy Code.
- d. Encourage dispersed, small-scale development of renewable energy generators, including solar panels and wind turbines, and net-metering as a way to make these systems more affordable.

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## GOAL 3

*That energy infrastructure and services do not cause undue adverse impact to the health and safety of our residents or on the environmental quality of our town.*

**SEE UTILITIES AND ENERGY SECTION FOR GOALS SPECIFIC TO TRANSMISSION AND GENERATION PROPOSALS.**

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## GOAL 4

*Continue to maintain the common rural practice of utilizing local resources, such as wood, in a sustainable manner for energy sources.*

- a. Consider access to land-locked woodlots when reviewing development proposals.
- b. Promote sustainable land management of woodlots and other resource areas and encourage landowners to develop management plans for such lands.



*Reduce safety hazards throughout Cornwall's transportation system.*

- a. Complete the reconstruction (or relocation) of Route 125 at its intersection with Cider Mill Road in a manner that avoids any damage to adjacent historic structures and that provides adequate sight distance consistent with prevailing speeds on these roads.
- b. Again, revise the current intersection of Route 30 and Route 74 to provide a straightforward "T" intersection.
- c. Enter into substantive talks with VTrans when the next round of repaving approaches for Route 125 and 74 for the purpose of establishing paved shoulders, wide enough to accommodate bicycles, joggers and pedestrians.
- d. Support implementation and enforcement of slower speed limits and increased signage in the Historic Route 30 North, Cornwall Village and West Cornwall areas to reflect the population densities in these areas, and allow safer access by cyclists and pedestrians, and explore the feasibility of village crosswalks.
- e. Support the creation of an open space master plan, to identify existing and potential bike and pedestrian networks throughout Cornwall.

## GOAL 2

*Maintain Cornwall's transportation system in a manner that enhances the town's rural character and protects the environment.*

- a. Conduct a review of the town's policies and guidelines related to whether it is appropriate and necessary for the town to pave an existing gravel road.
- b. Gain the concurrence of the majority of residents along any gravel road, which is being considered for paving.
- c. The Town of Cornwall will continue to participate as a member community in the Lake Champlain Byway and will encourage efforts to promote its use as a tool to attract visitors to the community.
- d. Promote awareness of key animal crossing locations on town roads.
- e. The Town of Cornwall will continue to participate as a member community in the Lake Champlain Byway and will encourage efforts to promote its use as a tool to attract visitors to the community.

*Ensure that private roads and drives are constructed and maintained to minimum standards.*

- a. Maintain the town's current standards for private roads to ensure they are in-keeping with state standards for safe access by emergency vehicles.

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**RECREATION**  
**GOAL 1**

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*Promote provision of public recreation facilities, preservation of public access and responsible use of the town's resources.*

- a. Continue to create rights-of-way for bicycles, joggers and pedestrians on all state highways in conjunction with the reconstruction of those roads, so people can walk and bicycle safely.
- b. Support the creation of a recreation committee to improve and promote public access to public and private lands, and to connect Cornwall teachers with private landowners wishing to provide outdoor education opportunities.
- c. Support the creation of an open space master plan, to identify existing and potential bike and pedestrian networks and recreation opportunities throughout Cornwall.

Continue to maintain and encourage public access to traditional recreation areas by encouraging private landowners to continue the common rural practice of allowing use for hunting, fishing and other recreational activities.

- d. Encourage developers of major subdivisions to earmark or donate land or facilities for parks, public access, or trails if the need for such facilities has been identified and would benefit residents of the subdivision and the town.
  - e. Permit development that is designed and situated in such a way as to minimize any adverse effects on recreation resources.
  - f. Encourage the use of Cornwall's public buildings for recreational opportunities such as yoga and dance.
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**NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT**  
**GOAL 1**

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*Conserve and ensure the continued viability of the town's native plants, animals and natural communities.*

- a. Formalize the role of the Cornwall Conservation Commission in in the town's review of PUDs, subdivisions, commercial development and other significant projects.
- b. Undertake an inventory of the town's important natural communities, wildlife habitat and corridors.
- c. Create 'Special Features Overlay Map' to guide development decisions on projects that could otherwise fragment contiguous forest blocks and other significant wildlife corridors.
- d. Support efforts by landowners, land trusts, state and federal agencies, and other organizations to conserve corridors, important habitats and the locations of rare and uncommon species.
- e. Encourage landowner participation in state and federal conservation programs.

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**GOAL 2**

*Maintain and, where necessary, improve the quality of Cornwall's groundwater, surface waters and wetlands.*

- a. Cooperate with agencies or organizations in monitoring the river's water quality and support the extension of this program to all of Cornwall's rivers and streams.
- b. Require adequate management of storm-water runoff from developed lands, parking areas, roads and driveways so that surface waters are not negatively impacted by storm-water discharge.
- c. Review and update zoning regulations to include specific setback requirements from riparian corridors.
- d. Limit development in the floodplain to protect the ecological services that this area provides of mitigating flood hazards.
- e. Limit development in areas with steep slopes and other areas with high erosion potential.
- f. Discourage negative impacts to wetlands, such as disruption of natural hydrology and soils, alteration of natural nutrient, chemical and sediment regimes, and degradation of natural community quality.

- g.** Work with landowners, land trusts, state and federal agencies, and other organizations to protect water quality, conserve groundwater resources and preserve functioning wetland systems.
- h.** Encourage the gathering and analysis of information on the yield and quality of wells in Cornwall to help determine the adequacy of the town's groundwater supplies, and support testing of water sources for pollutants. The town does not favor the construction of underground utility transmission infrastructure near wells and groundwater supplies.

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**GOAL 3**

*Protect and enhance the rural, scenic character of Cornwall's landscape.*

- a.** Require management plans for any lands to be held in common as a condition of approval for future PUDs.
- b.** Review and amend zoning regulations to ensure policies are in place relating to commercial extraction operations.

## C O N C L U S I O N



## PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

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*This section of the Cornwall Plan lists specific actions that the town should take over the course of the next five years to implement the priority goals and objectives of this plan, and to move towards the creation of the community described in the vision statement above. They are as follows:*

### **1. Strengthen our conservation efforts**

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**Action 1:** Formalize the Conservation Commission's role in reviewing all subdivision applications.

**Action 2:** Create a conservation fund to support the Conservation Commission's continuing efforts related to education and preservation of areas deemed important.

**Action 3:** Develop public and private funding sources to complete an inventory of Cornwall's important natural features and areas.

**Completion Date:** on-going

**Who:** Planning Commission, Conservation Commission, and Selectboard

**How:** The CPC and Conservation Commissions will work together to develop concepts for the review of subdivision applications and the mission of and funding sources for a conservation fund. These concepts will be presented to the Selectboard for discussion and approval.

The Conservation Commission will identify grant monies available for natural resource inventories and submit a grant request.

**Why:** The Conservation Commission has unique capabilities in regards to the assessment of subdivision requests and has demonstrated its value in several public hearings. The 2011 survey's strong desire for the preservation of Cornwall's natural features and rural character require the CPC to institute a better and more thorough review of subdivision applications to insure minimal impact on natural features. This desire for preservation could also be enhanced by a fund that allows the purchase of certain properties that are deemed critical to Cornwall's character.

### **2. Further support home- based businesses**

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**Action:** Review zoning regulations to ensure that clear and practical definitions of "home-based business" and "home occupation" are included.

**Completion Date:** end of 2013

**Who:** Planning Commission

**How:** Use existing regulations from other towns, if appropriate. If none are appropriate, craft language that is clear and definitive. Encourage all of those in Town who currently have home-based businesses or home occupations to participate in development of workable definitions.

**Why:** It has become apparent that the existing definitions are too vague to insure consistent interpretation and application by the CPC and Zoning Administrator.



### *3. Reinforce our historic settlement land-use pattern*

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**Action 1:** Review Zoning Bylaws and assess opportunities to increase housing densities in village and medium density residential areas consistent with historical settlement patterns.

**Action 2:** Work with Selectboard and state agencies to encourage further traffic calming measures in village areas.

**Action 3:** Investigate Village Center Designation application.

**Completion Date:** summer of 2014

**Who:** Planning Commission and Selectboard

**How:** Review case studies from other towns with similar development patterns to evaluate alternatives available. Assess the current town road signage and consider additional signage. Discuss the possibilities of posting Town roads with lower speed limits.

Define traffic calming needs and locations and present case to Selectboard.

### *4. Better understand affordability challenges and opportunities*

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**Action 1:** Create an Energy Committee

**Action 2:** Promote affordable housing

**Completion Date:** mid-2014

**Who:** Planning Committee and Selectboard

**How:** Leverage the Energy Coordinator position to form an Energy Committee, whose mission is to provide assistance and guidance related to energy conservation and savings through education and outreach utilizing state and regional resources.

Assess the possibilities of requiring an “affordable housing” fee from all major subdivision applications and other options designed to make housing in Cornwall more affordable.

**Why:** The 2011 survey indicated that high home and energy prices and a high tax rate were viewed as obstacles for young families and older residents on fixed incomes. The elementary school enrollment needs to have a student population that affords financial sustainability.

### *5. Increase local recreation opportunities*

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**Action:** Form a Recreation Committee comprised of residents dedicated to identifying existing and potential local recreational opportunities.

**Completion Date:** spring of 2015

**Who:** Planning Commission and Selectboard

**How:** Seek interested persons through the use of the Town Newsletter and Town website to mutually develop a work plan and goals and to work with landowners, when appropriate, to achieve goals.

**Why:** The 2011 survey indicated that residents seek increased opportunities to recreate in Cornwall but are challenged by not knowing what is available and what lands are accessible. Of particular interest were: bike shoulders on Routes 74 and 125, possible use of the VAST trail network for summer hiking and horseback riding, trail connectivity into Middlebury, and an inventory of property allowing unhindered access for hunting and fishing. The Recreation Committee can also assess the practicality for recreational use of Douglas Pond and the re-establishment of town youth sports teams.

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## *6. Preserve the working landscape*

**Action 1:** Promote related town-wide events and education which foster the support networks and foundations needed to generate agriculturally focused social and economic capital.

**Action 2:** Review and amend Cornwall's Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations to better ensure the preservation of working landscape and encourage a healthy, local agricultural economy.

**Completion Date:** summer of 2015

**Who:** Planning Commission and Selectboard

**How:** The CPC will facilitate opportunities that support awareness of and provide a forum for highlighting the benefits of a working landscape. For example, the CPC could sponsor meetings where representatives of conservation groups, such as the Vermont Land Trust or the Middlebury Area Land Trust, or an expert in current use to lead to discussion in the various methods available for preservation of working landscape.

The CPC will review the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations and amend, as needed, to ensure the preservation of the working landscape and present any amendments to the Selectboard for approval

**Why:** The 2011 survey indicated that residents feel strongly about the need to maintain the rural character of Cornwall and to support local agricultural enterprises.

**Why:** There is a continuing need to protect agricultural land.

## COMPATIBILITY

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*Cornwall's plan is of course primarily focused on guiding future development within its own borders. However, the effects of development do not necessarily respect municipal boundaries. Development and land use policies in neighboring communities and the region as a whole will impact the town. Conversely, trends and policies in Cornwall may affect its neighbors or potentially the region.*

### WITH THE REGION

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The Town of Cornwall is located in the Addison Region. By state statute, town plans must be compatible with the Regional Plan. The Cornwall Town Plan contains goals and objectives similar to the Addison County Regional Plan. The Regional Plan adopts the land use plans of its member municipalities as its own, so there can be no conflict between local and regional land use plans.

### WITH SURROUNDING TOWNS

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This section briefly examines the land use plans for towns surrounding Cornwall. No conflict was found to exist between Cornwall and its neighbors. Each of the towns is listed below with a summary of the land use along that town's boundaries.

#### **Bridport**

The Town of Bridport forms the northwest boundary of Cornwall. Much of the border between the towns is part of the Lemon Fair floodplain and wetland area. Indeed most of the farm parcels with frontage along West Street cross the town line into Bridport. Both towns recognize this area as environmentally sensitive and ill-suited for development. West of Snake Mountain Road, Cornwall's land use plan classifies the area as suited for rural agricultural and residential uses. As the road continues into Bridport, the terrain becomes more steep and wooded. Bridport classifies this area as part of its Upland Region, suited for low-intensity residential use.

#### **Middlebury**

The Town of Middlebury borders Cornwall to the northeast. Cornwall's development pattern over the past several decades has been significantly linked to economic development and job growth in Middlebury and expansion of Middlebury College. As a regional center, Middlebury provides many of the services and facilities used by Cornwall residents.

The land use plans for the two communities along their shared border is generally compatible. Both recognize the area around Otter Creek and Cornwall Swamp as wet, flood-prone and ill-suited for development. Both envision a continuation of agricultural and rural residential uses elsewhere along their border. The area Middlebury has designated for institutional use does not extend to the town line, although the college has been acquiring land in the northeastern corner of Cornwall.

#### **Salisbury**

The Town of Salisbury borders Cornwall on the east and the two towns are linked by the historic covered bridge over the Otter Creek. On both sides of the creek, the land is swampy and not well suited to development. In Cornwall, the land is largely forested, with small areas of open agricultural land. In Salisbury, most of the border is in agricultural use as open fields. Both towns are planning low-intensity or no development in this sensitive, wet area.

### **Shoreham**

The Town of Shoreham also borders Cornwall to the west. Both towns recognize the agricultural character and use of the land along the town line. Some of the land on the border is conserved as part of a farm with land in the towns of Cornwall, Shoreham and Whiting.

### **Weybridge**

The Town of Weybridge borders Cornwall to the north of Cornwall. Along the town line, Weybridge has two planning regions – Lemon Fair Valley and Sheep Farm. The Lemon Fair region recognizes the flood-prone character of the land around the creek and the fertility of the farmland that surrounds it. The Sheep Farm region east of James Road recognizes a higher level of residential development. This is very similar to the planning areas described in this plan along the Cornwall side of the border.

### **Whiting**

The Town of Whiting borders Cornwall to the south. The land in Whiting along the town line is largely classified for conservation and agricultural uses. Both towns recognize the limitations and sensitivity of the land around Otter Creek and Cornwall Swamp. The remaining land is classified for agricultural and rural residential uses in both towns.