

Town of Eden

Town Plan (2013-18)

Adopted by Eden Selectboard: April 10, 2013

Regionally Confirmed: May 28, 2013

Plan Expires: April 10, 2018

Prepared by **Eden Planning Commission**

With technical assistance from the **Lamoille County Planning Commission**

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Pursuant to the *Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act* (24 VSA § 4382), the Town of Eden maintains a municipal plan, hereafter referred to as the Town Plan, consistent with the statewide planning goals established in 24 VSA §4302. Among these goals are the following guiding principles:

- To encourage citizen participation at all levels of the planning process, and to assure that decisions shall be made at the most local level possible commensurate with their impact;
- To plan development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside; and,
- To provide a strong and diverse economy that provides satisfying and rewarding job opportunities and that maintain high environmental standards, and to expand economic opportunities in area with high unemployment and low per capita incomes.

The previous Eden Town Plan was completed in 2007, on the eve of a global economic recession– the effects of which are still being felt in the labor and housing markets at the time of this plan’s adoption. Concurrent with this recession, a wave of social and technological changes has also re-shaped where people live; how they interact; and how commerce is conducted across the world. The accelerated rate of social, economic, and technological innovations underscores the need to develop a Town Plan. Growth and development related issues, from telecommunications to natural resource conservation, are central to the quality of life enjoyed by Eden residents. As the representative legislative and planning bodies for the town, the Eden Selectboard and Planning Commission can assist residents and local businesses in guiding sustainable growth and development within the community.

How is a Town Plan Useful to Eden residents?

Towns are not required to adopt development plans, so the question is sometimes asked– why spend the time and effort to write a Town Plan? There is a range of ways in which a Town Plan can be used, from simply serving as a source of information, to providing the foundation for the adoption of bylaws. Ultimately, the residents of Eden will determine how the Eden Town Plan is applied. However, potential uses of the plan include:

1. *A source of information:* The plan is a valuable source of information for local boards, commissions, residents, and businesses (both current and prospective).
2. *A basis for community programs and policies:* The plan can serve as a guide for capital budgeting and other community initiatives, including farmland protection, recreation planning, and housing policy.
3. *A basis for future planning and development-related studies:* Few plans can address every community issue in sufficient detail. Town Plans not only record and analyze what

is known about community residents and local resources, but also what is not yet known. Therefore, many plans will recommend further studies to develop a course of action for specific needs.

4. *A standard for review at the state and regional levels:* State land use regulations, including Act 250 and Section 248, identify Town Plans as a standard in the review of applications. Town Plans are also important to the development of Regional Plans and inter-municipal programs. Finally, state proposals, including the purchase of state land for parks and recreation, are also required to comply with Town Plans.
5. *To fulfill an eligibility requirement for state and federal grants:* In 2000, the state began requiring towns to adopt plans in order to be eligible for most grants and low interest loan programs. Most statewide planning, infrastructure, community development, and historic preservation grants (as well as several other key sources of funding) require that municipalities adopt and maintain a plan. While other private funding sources do not necessarily require a Town Plan for eligibility, having a plan that documents the need for funding will generally strengthen the competitiveness of an application.
6. *A basis for regulatory implementation:* If desired, the Town Plan can also serve as the foundation for future development bylaws and other local ordinances. For example, Eden has previously considered the adoption of a flood hazard bylaw, to allow the town to enroll in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and enable residents to purchase subsidized flood insurance.

What is required of a Town Plan?

Vermont municipalities are authorized to create development plans under 24 VSA §4381. Statute requires that plans address eleven minimum subject areas, but does not mandate specific goals or policies beyond the previously cited statewide planning goals. The required components of a Town Plan are:

1. A statement of objectives, policies, and programs of the municipality to guide the future growth and development of land, public services and facilities, and to protect the environment;
2. A land use plan and map;
3. A transportation plan and map;
4. A utility and public facility plan and map;
5. A statement of the municipality's policies for the preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas, and scenic and historic resources;
6. An educational facilities plan and map;
7. A recommended program for implementing the plan's objectives;

8. A statement of how the plan relates to adjacent municipalities' plans and the regional plan;
9. An energy plan, including policies and programs to implement those policies;
10. A housing element, including a recommended program for addressing low and moderate income persons' needs as identified in the Regional Plan; and,
11. Effective July 1, 2012, all plans must also contain an economic development element that describes present economic conditions and the location, type, and scale of desired economic development and identified policies, projects, and programs to foster economic growth.

These elements represent the minimum requirements under the *Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act*. Town Plans may look very different from town-to-town, based on the unique value and attributes of communities across the state.

How the Town Plan was developed

The Eden Planning Commission re-convened in 2011, upon appointment from the Selectboard, to review and update the 2007 Town Plan in advance of its expiration and to explore local community development issues.

The 2002 and 2007 Town Plan efforts served as the foundation for this update. Beginning in the summer of 2011, the Eden Planning Commission met regularly with Lamoille County Planning Commission (LCPC) staff to review and update each chapter to reflect changing conditions within the community and throughout the region. All meetings were open to the public, to allow opportunities for residents to participate in the planning process. This update was focused on incorporating new Census and American Community Survey data; revisiting previous growth and housing projections; as well as ensuring continued compliance with Vermont statutes. Finally, with input from community stakeholders and the Eden Selectboard, the Planning Commission drafted goals, policies, and recommendations to reflect the community's position on emergent planning issues.

After completing a preliminary draft, the Eden Planning Commission and Selectboard warned public hearings to receive public comment and formally adopt the plan. The involvement of local residents is an integral part of the town's continuing planning process; while it is the responsibility of the Planning Commission to develop a plan, it is town residents who ultimately invest in the community and implement plan strategies. According to Vermont statute, municipal development plans must be re-adopted at least every five years, providing an opportunity to revisit the challenges and opportunities facing a community. The 2013 Town Plan update is intended to create a five year vision for Eden, with the understanding that changing conditions may require the town to re-asses planning priorities in the interim.

Statement of objectives

Based on a survey of residents in 2012 and additional community input, the Planning Commission identified five guiding principles to be used in the development of the Town Plan. These principles are:

1. All residents must have their property rights both respected and protected;
2. The growth of Eden should occur in such a way as to enable residents to continue to live in town without undue tax burdens;
3. The natural environment should be protected and conserved to ensure that the resources we have today will be available for future generations;
4. A safe and healthy living environment must be maintained; and,
5. Eden's scenic, small-town atmosphere should be preserved.

The first guiding principle of the Eden Town Plan is to respect and protect private property rights. The Eden Town Plan is a visioning document and does not regulate in any way. The only regulatory application of the Eden Town Plan is in Act 250, and Public Service Board proceedings (Section 248 and Section 248a), where the District Commissions and Public Service Board must give substantial deference to local and Regional Plans in their rulings. This provides Eden with a voice in projects of local and regional significance, without infringing on individual property rights.

Eden is fortunate to have a wealth of natural resources, including lakes and ponds, forests, prime agricultural soils, gravel deposits, wildlife and fisheries. These resources provide residents and visitors with a variety of recreational opportunities; supply valuable raw materials for construction; and support local jobs in agriculture, forestry, and tourism. The local natural resource base is a central part of Eden's past and present prosperity, and these resources should be preserved to afford these same opportunities to future generations.

To maintain a safe and healthy environment for town residents, the town must also take measures to ensure that future development does not endanger individual property owners, or the public at-large. For example, development should be accessible to emergency service providers, roads should be safe for both automobiles and pedestrians, and air and water quality should be protected.

Finally, Eden residents also value the small-town atmosphere of the community, including its historical structures, agriculture and forest lands, and compact village centers surrounded by rural countryside. Maintaining this land use pattern is generally accomplished by ensuring the town plans for orderly growth through integrated transportation, natural resource, energy, and economic policies.

The structure of this plan

The Eden Town Plan is divided into thirteen chapters that address both the required elements of the *Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act* (hereafter referred to as the Act) and other areas of local concern. Each of the eleven required elements is discussed, including information on past trends, existing conditions, and future needs. Based on the analysis of that information, one or more goals have been established. *Goals* can be defined as desired future conditions— although some are highly ambitious and may not be attainable for several years. *Policies* describe the conditions or standards by which a development proposal can be evaluated for compliance with a goal.

Finally, each chapter concludes with a discussion of the *recommendations* for the implementation of the goals and/or policies. Some involve continuing current actions, while others suggest new initiatives for the future. A strong implementation plan will describe what is needed, who can take responsibility for the desired response, and when this can be accomplished. By following these guidelines, the course of action associated with implementation items should be clear.

Chapter 2: Community Profile

The Town of Eden lies in northeast Lamoille County and is comprised of 40,690 acres (63.58 square miles), making it the sixth largest town in Vermont by area. Bordering towns include Johnson and Belvidere to the west, Montgomery and Lowell to the North, Albany and Craftsbury to the east, and Hyde Park to the south.

Historical Census Count

Since 1791, the U.S. Census Bureau has conducted a decennial count of persons living in each municipality in the United States. **Figure 1** shows population counts for the Town of Eden for each Census.

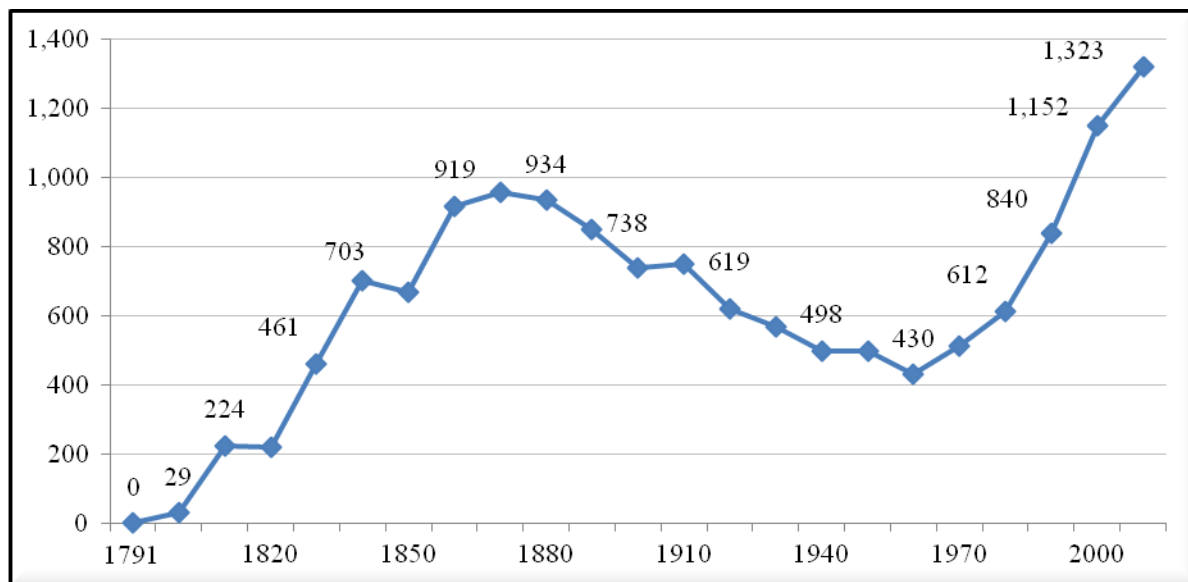


Figure 1: Population estimates from the decennial Census for Eden from 1791 to 2010; **Source:** U.S. Census Bureau

According to the 2010 Census, Eden has a population of 1,323 residents— an increase of nearly 15-percent over the prior Census count. Following nearly a century of gradual population decline (1870-1960), Eden has experienced sharp population growth over the last fifty years, with greater than a 14-percent increase in each subsequent decade. This post-World War II growth trend roughly mirrors the Lamoille County population trajectory, which has outpaced the state of Vermont’s growth during the same period.

Components of Population Change

As cited in the previous section, the Eden population has increased significantly in recent decades. This trend, in both raw population and percentage growth, is shown in **Table 1** (following page). Population change is the result of two primary factors— natural increase and

net migration. Populations increase naturally when more people are born than die over any given period of time.

The Vermont Department of Health has kept birth and death statistics for each town since 1857; **Table 2** (below, right) shows the number of recorded births and deaths in Eden in between 1970 and 2010.

Net migration is the second factor affecting population change. This variable is calculated by subtracting natural increase from the total change in population. During the 1990s, for example, 220 more people moved into town than moved out, accounting for most of the decade's population increase (**Table 3**, below right). This

is indicative of the fact that the bulk of Eden's population growth over the last several decades has been fueled by the construction of new homes. Trends observed both locally and statewide suggest that Eden's continued growth during the last decade was also fueled by net migration. Comparatively, net migration is likely to have a far greater impact on future population trends than natural increase, due to the demographic composition and available build-out capacity of the town.

Age Distribution

Age and demographics are important indicators for projecting public service needs—particularly relating to schools. According to the 2010 Census, the median age of Eden residents was 37.4, 4.1 years younger than the state average (in this respect, Vermont ranks second oldest in the nation, behind only Maine). **Figure 2** illustrates the population distribution of Eden residents by age cohort, according to data from the 2000 and 2010 Censuses:

Table 1: Raw and percentage population change by decade in Eden, 1980-2010

Period	Change in Population	Percent Change
1980-1990	228	37.3% ↑
1990-2000	312	37.1% ↑
2000-2010	171	14.8% ↑

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 2: Number of births, deaths, and net population change by natural increase in Eden, 1970-2000

Period	Births	Deaths	Increase	Percent Change
1970-1980	86	49	37	7.2% ↑
1980-1990	137	53	84	13.7% ↑
2000-2010	156	62	94	11.2% ↑

Source: VT Dept. of Health

Table 3: Number of persons moving to and from Eden (net migration) 1970-2000

Period	Net Migration	Percent Change
1970-1980	62	12.1% ↑
1980-1990	144	23.5% ↑
1990-2000	220	26.2% ↑

Source: VT Dept. of Health

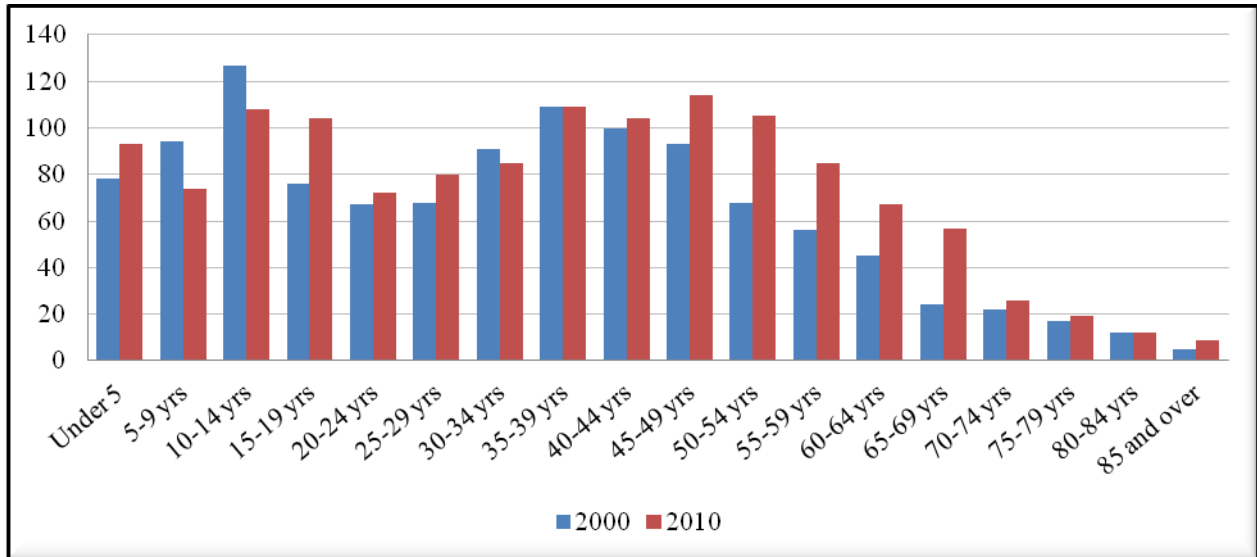


Figure 2: A comparison of Eden’s population sorted by age cohort, between the 2000 and 2010 Censuses; **Source:** U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 2 (above) confirms that Eden’s population is concentrated in the younger and middle age cohorts, reflecting the comparatively high number of families with children that live in town. The only noticeable age cohorts that declined in population between 2000 and 2010 were ages 5-9 and 10-14– although each remains among the largest population groups.

Regional & Neighboring Populations

Eden is surrounded by rural and urban communities, most of which are also growing. Overall, Lamoille and neighboring Franklin and Caledonia counties ranked third, second, and fourth respectively in rate of growth among the state’s fourteen counties between 2000 and 2010. As a basis for comparison, Vermont’s population is estimated to have grown by only 2.8-percent during the decade–down from an 8.2-percent growth rate during the 1990s.

	2000	2010	Percent Change
Eden	1,152	1,323	14.8% ↑
Albany	840	941	12.0% ↑
Craftsbury	1,136	1,206	6.2% ↑
Hyde Park	2,847	2,954	3.8% ↑
Johnson	3,274	3,446	5.3% ↑
Lowell	738	879	19.1% ↑
Montgomery	992	1,201	21.1% ↑
Wolcott	1,456	1,676	15.1% ↑
Lamoille County	23,233	24,475	5.3% ↑
State of Vermont	608,827	625,741	2.8% ↑
Source: U.S. Census Bureau			

Generally, between 2000 and 2010, the state experienced localized pockets of growth, with most regions experiencing only slight gains or losses. **Table 4** (previous page) compares population trends in Eden and surrounding communities.

Future Population Projections

Various agencies in state government periodically supply population predictions, based on models that weigh expected fertility, mortality, and net migration. It should be noted that population projections are only expectations of what might occur. As with any prediction, their accuracy depends on the validity of the underlying assumptions. While imprecise, these models can provide a general forecast of where populations are likely trending. Naturally, mathematical projections cannot anticipate unforeseen events, such as war, recession, or natural disasters, which could drastically alter a community's growth trajectory.

The latest set of state predictions released in 2003 forecasted Eden's population through 2020, projecting growth rates of nearly 20-percent per decade, with anticipated populations of 1,389 in 2010 and 1,666 in 2020. To date, this projection has proved relatively accurate. With the release of the 2010 Census, the Lamoille County Planning Commission can adapt this projection through 2030, using a regression-based extrapolation (parabolic model). Although mathematical extrapolations are a commonly used community planning tool, they are best consulted for advisory purposes only and should not replace more state-specific projections, such as the one cited above. The results of this population projection are show in **Figure 3** (below):

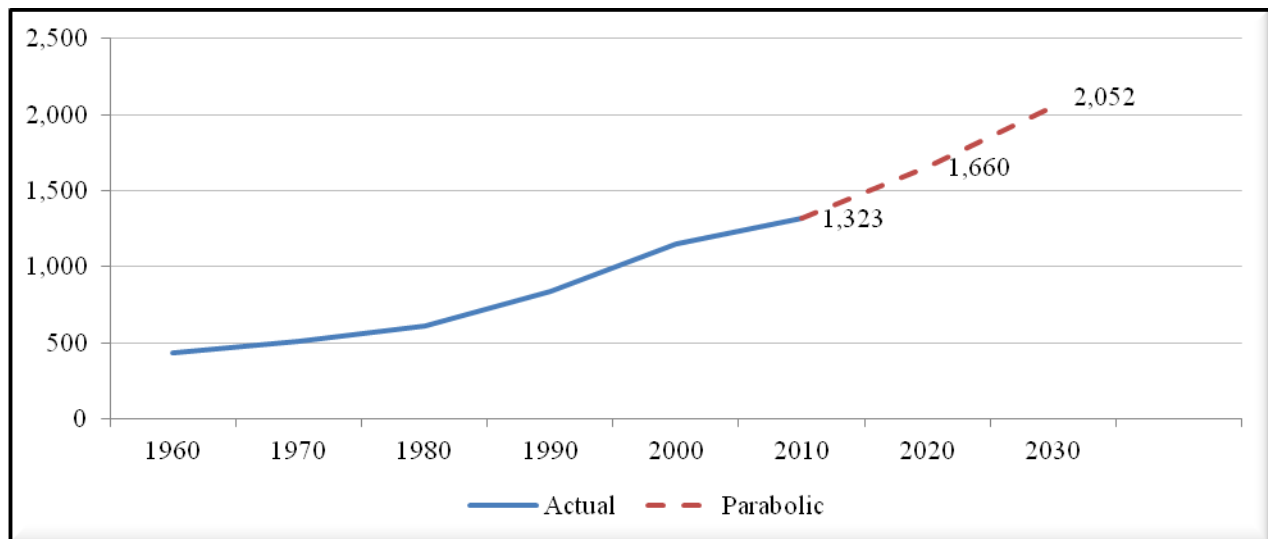


Figure 3: Eden's population growth trajectory between 1960 and 2000, extended by a projection using a mathematical regression model; **Source:** Lamoille County Planning Commission

While all predictions are inherently flawed, the fact that Eden and Lamoille County have grown at a rate faster than the state for four decades is reasonable evidence to suggest the town will continue to grow into the future. Within roughly an hour drive of Burlington, Eden's proximity

to Chittenden County – the state’s fastest growing county and largest metropolitan and economic center– is at least partially responsible for past and projected growth trends. Recent development in the Jay Peak area may also contribute to population growth in Eden. Over the next five years, as updated Census estimates are released and more information regarding the health of the economy becomes available, the town should have a clearer idea of where development trends are pointing. In the meantime, monitoring new construction will be the most accurate predictor of population growth.

Results of 2012 Eden Community Survey

The 2012 Eden Community Survey asked residents to share their perspective on development and growth within town. Overall, respondents were supportive of single-family housing development in Eden, but were concerned about spaghetti lot subdivision and multifamily housing developments. Ultimately, as Eden continues to grow, an emerging challenge will be to balance private property rights, with a desire to maintain controlled, orderly development.

Goals, policies, & recommendations

Goal #1: For Eden to experience slow to moderate population growth, without placing a burden on existing community facilities and public services. Growth should ultimately not exceed the town’s ability to provide services to support the population.

Policies:

- Due to the fact that Eden has no local Zoning or Subdivision Regulations, the primary review of residential development is conducted by the Act250 District Commission. Subdivisions creating six or more lots for sale or development should be phased over multiple years to avoid overburdening the town’s services and facilities.

Recommendations:

- The Planning Commission should review and amend the “Future Population Predictions” contained in this Plan when figures are released by the State of Vermont or other reliable source. This should be conducted, at minimum, every five years in association with the update of the municipal plan.
- The Planning Commission should review all “Act 250” applications for its impact on the town. Where the application is determined to not conform to this Plan or any goal or policy, the Planning Commission or Selectboard should participate in the Act 250 process in order to ensure the concerns of the town are addressed.

Chapter 3: Historic, Scenic, & Archeological Resources

Historic resources

Chartered in 1781, Eden has a long and varied history, which is the basis for many of the values and traditions held by residents today. Perhaps the best account of Eden's history is captured in *A Walk through the Garden of Eden*, published by the Eden Historical Society in 1996. The Eden Historical Society has been recognized by the community for their efforts in recording the town's history, and in the preservation of local historic resources. The historic old Town Clerk's office building was donated to the Eden Historical Society by Fred and Patricia Lentz and re-located to a one acre plot of land, leased from the town, next to Eden Central School. This building is under restoration to be used as an educational center to showcase artifacts and information on the history of Eden.

Although Eden does not have any structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the town does have a considerable number of buildings of local and statewide historic significance. Many of these historic structures have been identified in the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation *Historic Sites and Structures Survey* completed in 1983. This survey identified 48 historic structures in Eden, which are highlighted in the Historic, Scenic, & Archeological Resources Map (See **Appendix**). According to the Division for Historic Preservation, there are two historic districts within Eden: the Eden Mills Historic District and Eden Camp Historic District. These districts are also shown in the Historic, Scenic, & Archeological Resources Map, with each containing multiple historic buildings and structures.

In addition to the inventory of historic structures and districts, there are numerous other historical resources within town, including former mill and schoolhouse sites, cellar holes, cemeteries, and historic roads. While many of these sites are not formally recognized as historic, they contribute to the community's historical fabric and connection to its past. For instance, many residents enjoy the fact that their properties were once owned by the Green Mountain Boys of the Revolutionary War.

Scenic resources

The Town of Eden has an abundance of scenic resources for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike. A drive on almost any road, a walk on the Long Trail, or an afternoon canoeing on any of the town's lakes and ponds provides a multitude of scenic vistas. While the town could conceivably identify every meadow and forested ridgeline as scenic resources worthy for consideration or protection, the Planning Commission has identified priorities for special consideration. The highest priority scenic resources (also identified on the Historic, Scenic, & Archeological Resources map) include:

- Vermont Routes 100 and 118: Vermont Route 100 serves as the region's primary north-south arterial and is the most heavily traveled highway through Eden. Vermont Route 118— which originates in Eden and runs north through Montgomery and Berkshire to the

Canadian border– is also a very important travel corridor. Consequently, these highways provide travelers with a window into the town. Working to maintain an attractive highway landscape will promote Eden as an attractive place to live, work, and play. The Historic, Scenic, & Archeological Resources Map show some stretches of highway that are of particular scenic value.

- Lake Eden, Belvidere Pond, and South Pond: Eden’s three major lakes and ponds provide immeasurable scenic and recreational value. From the wild undeveloped shores of Belvidere Pond to the rustic camps lining Lake Eden, the town’s lakes and ponds offer picturesque views, both from the shoreline or a boat.
- The Green River Reservoir: Located in Eden and Hyde Park, the Green River Reservoir is the largest non-motorized lake in Vermont. Its wilderness-like character is considered a local treasure, to the extent that Hyde Park has adopted a viewshed overlay district covering private lands within view of the water. The project won state recognition for its creativity and the public involvement in its development. This viewshed extends to Eden’s southern border; however, Eden has elected not to adopt similar bylaws, partially due to the fact that these properties are owned by the State.

While Eden’s scenic resources remain largely preserved within the rural, small-town character of the town, numerous potential threats exist. Telecommunications towers, salvage yards, and disproportionately scaled development could all negatively impact Eden’s scenic landscape. In recent years, the propagation of “wind farm” proposals has presented significant challenges to small, rural communities across the state– including the neighboring Town of Lowell. In response, several municipalities have adopted ridgeline development bylaws, to protect local scenic values. Respondents to the 2012 Eden Community Survey were split on the issue of commercial wind development on Eden’s ridgelines; 40-percent were opposed, 37-percent were supportive, and 22-percent were undecided.

Ultimately, despite their inherent value to the community, Eden’s scenic resources are difficult to regulate. Although the community values the town’s beautiful vistas, forested hills, and open fields, it would be unfair to deny the right to develop based on the visual appearance of private property from a public highway. The Selectboard, Planning Commission, and town residents may establish policies that strike an appropriate balance between the private property rights and the economic, environmental, and aesthetic value of Eden’s scenic resources. At a local scale, blighted properties can be regulated through tools, such as salvage yard ordinances. However, larger development impacts associated with wind and telecommunications towers require an ongoing public dialogue on whether or not (and how) the town should regulate development on the basis of scenic values.

Archeological resources

Archeological sites contain a fragile, complex, and irreplaceable record of past human activities. Such sites differ from historic resources in that the information that exists is buried. For 10,000 years, Native Americans focused their activities within river valleys and lake basins. Evidence of prehistoric activities and occupations may be contained within soil deposits of a cornfield or woodlot, or could be buried in a floodplain. Any prehistoric archeological sites constitute an essential link to our past. These sites are often the only source of information for the longest part of human history in Eden.

A National Park Service study of archaeologically significant riparian areas was done as part of the Vermont Rivers Study in 1986. The Park Service findings concluded that the entire length of Gihon River, from Lake Eden and points south, has an expected moderate-to-high archeological sensitivity (see Historic, Scenic, & Archeological Resources Map). This rating does not necessarily indicate that any archaeologically significant resources have been located in the area; it only denotes that the topography, sun exposure, availability of food and other important natural resources exist in the right combination along this stream to expect that the area could be archaeologically significant. Unlike the large sites found in Highgate and Swanton, any sites, if they exist, will likely be small.

Results of 2012 Eden Community survey

The 2012 Eden Community Survey only asked one question relating to the protection of historic buildings. A strong majority (97-percent) responded that the protection of historic buildings was either “very important” or “somewhat important.” Feedback relating to scenic resources suggested that Eden should consider addressing the stockpiling of trash and junk cars and roadside litter, and that planning should aim to make Eden more visually attractive.

Goals, policies, & recommendations

Goal #1: To preserve Eden’s heritage for future generations.

The overarching goal of preserving Eden’s heritage can be achieved by accomplishing four related goals: the recording of the local history; the preservation of historic structures; the conservation of scenic resources; and the preservation of the Eden’s archeological record. By achieving these four goals, the town’s heritage will be recorded, protected, and available for residents and visitors to learn what events made Eden the place it is today.

Historic Resources

Policies:

- Applications for grants to compile a history of Eden, including oral histories, are supported.
- Efforts to protect and preserve items and artifacts of historic significance to Eden are supported.

- Development within any designated historic districts should be in character with the surrounding architecture.
- Eden encourages the restoration and reuse of historic buildings.

Recommendations:

- Support the Eden Historical Society whose mission will include the implementation of the goals and policies of this chapter.
- The Historical Society is encouraged to continue efforts to rehabilitate the old clerk's office as an education center and museum.
- The Historical Society may pursue grant funding to collect oral histories of our residents.
- The Historical Society may research avenues for historic preservation projects in the Town and assist residents interested in preservation of historic structures.
- The Selectboard may consider applying for village center designation for Eden Mills and/or the Lake Eden Camp district.

Scenic Resources

Policies:

- Telecommunications towers, wind towers and turbines, and other large obvious structures should be carefully sited to minimize impacts on scenic resources.
- Development around the natural scenic resources identified should be sited and constructed in such a manner as to retain the natural scenic beauty of the areas. Removal of the natural vegetation on the site should be minimized and structures should be screened or hidden from view as best as possible.
- Development should avoid ridgelines, especially those visible from roadways. Any ridgeline development should be set back from the edge of the hill and have a forested buffer to protect view from the valley.
- Storage of abandoned vehicles and junk must comply with local and state limitations on such materials.

Recommendations:

- The Planning Commission may consider tower regulations to establish minimum standards for the construction of telecommunications towers.
- The Selectboard may follow up with violations of the state abandoned vehicles and junk regulations.
- The Planning Commission may pursue funding to conduct a survey of local opinions on protection of scenic resources including such topics as telecommunications and wind towers.

Archeological Resources

Policies:

- Projects occurring in archeologically sensitive areas should consider the potential impact of the project on these sites during the early stages of development. This will offer the best opportunity to mitigate potential impacts.
- If at any point in the development of a parcel an archeological site is discovered, the state archeologist should be given a reasonable opportunity to investigate and suggest a means to mitigate the impact.

Recommendations:

- Where an archeological site is discovered on undeveloped property or part of a property, the town may support the purchase of development rights on the effected portion as a means of compensating landowners for the loss of development rights. Purchase of development rights are always on a willing seller basis.

Chapter 4: Housing

Eden is predominantly a residential community, without a traditional village center or commercial core. As such, the majority of development throughout the town continues to be low-density, single-family residential. The one notable exception is the land surrounding Lake Eden, where both seasonal and year-round homes are clustered along the shoreline. Because there are no public water or sewer systems within the town, there exist limited opportunities for higher density residential and commercial development in Eden.

Residential growth

According to the 2010 Census, there were 712 housing units in Eden, an increase of 22.3-percent over the previous Census estimate. In Eden and in several other towns within Lamoille County, the rate of growth in housing units during the 1990s and 2000s was actually greater than the rate of population growth. This trend is attributable to several factors, including a decrease in average household size throughout the United States, increase in seasonal home construction within the region, and generally strong housing market through much of the 1990s and early-2000s. A snapshot of housing indicators in Eden, Lamoille County, and the State of Vermont between 1990 and 2010 are shown in **Table 5** (below):

Table 5: A comparison of the growth in number of housing units across the Town of Eden, Lamoille County, and the State of Vermont, 1990-2010.				
	# of Units 1990	# of Units 2000	# of Units 2010	% Change (1990-2010)
Town of Eden	466	582	712	52.8% ↑
Lamoille County	9,872	11,009	12,969	31.4% ↑
State of Vermont	271,214	294,382	322,539	18.9% ↑
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990-2010				

As demonstrated in **Table 5** (above), the growth in housing units in Eden has exceeded the rest of the county and far exceeded the state as a whole over the last two decades. During this period, the character of residential development in Eden and throughout Lamoille County has largely been rural and large-lot single family construction. Due to the fact that the town has vast amounts of undeveloped land and no zoning or subdivision regulations, Eden has expansive “build-out” potential. In other words, if left unregulated and under favorable market conditions, the town could conceivably support hundreds, or even thousands more housing units built on two to five acre lots. While there are strategic advantages to subdividing land into large lots—including the preservation of open space—it is very expensive to extend and maintain services for development of this scale. Ultimately, the Eden Planning Commission and Selectboard should closely monitor development trends, to ensure that growth does not place an undue burden on the existing tax base, or jeopardize Eden’s scenic and natural resources.

Household characteristics

While new development in town has been largely concentrated in detached single-family dwellings, the 2010 Census estimated approximately 15-percent of Eden’s housing units are rentals, with 26-percent serving as seasonal or recreational properties. The local housing stock also includes 105 mobile homes, according to the 2011 Eden Grant List.

The composition of Eden’s housing stock has been largely shaped by net-migration, with younger and middle-age residents fueling new single-family housing starts. However, a variety of social and demographic trends indicate that communities across the country will experience demand for more diverse housing options in the coming decades. These trends include: families having fewer children; the break-up of the extended family households; an increase in the number of single parent households; a larger number of elderly residents who are choosing to remain in their own homes; and growing popularity of more compact site designs. By nature of Eden’s open rural landscape, the town supports a variety of housing options for residents within a wide range of income levels. This fact is reflected in the diversity of single-family, mobile home, and seasonal housing units that are located throughout town.

A comparison of basic household characteristics within Eden and Lamoille County is contained in **Table 6** (below):

Table 6: A comparison of basic household characteristics in the Town of Eden and Lamoille County		
	Town of Eden	Lamoille County
% Owner occupied housing units	84.6%	71.2%
% Renter occupied housing units	15.4%	28.8%
Average household size, all units	2.64 people	2.37 people
Avg. household size, owner occupied	2.69 people	2.49 people
Avg. household size, renter occupied	2.35 people	2.08 people
Vacancy rate	29.6%	22.8%
Median household income (2005-09)	\$44,329	\$51,037
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010) and American Community Survey (2005-09)		

As indicated in the data above, the share of owner-occupied housing units in town is higher than the county average, and average household sizes are uniformly higher in Eden as well. These figures are consistent with Eden’s image as a rural, family-oriented community. In addition, the reported vacancy rates for both Eden and Lamoille County should be viewed in light of the fact that the region supports a large number of seasonal homes, which may be vacant several months during the year. Finally, Eden’s median household income (15-percent lower than the county average) has numerous implications for local housing, most notably the need for affordable housing units in town (as discussed in the next section).

Affordable housing

The Vermont Department of Economic, Housing, and Community Development (DEHCD) housing policy states that housing is “affordable” when the costs (such as rent and utilities, or mortgage payments and taxes) are no more than 30-percent of income for a household earning 80-percent of the county median. The data shown in **Table 6** (previous page) estimate the median household income in Lamoille County to be \$51,037. 80-percent of county median income is. At eighty percent of this median income (\$40,830), an affordable monthly housing payment for Lamoille County households is approximately \$1,000 per month, including taxes and utilities. Assuming a traditional mortgage, a household with this income could afford a home valued at ~\$136,000 or less. By comparison, **Table 7** (right) contains data on the average listed values of residential properties in Eden.

Table 7: Average municipal listed value of residential properties in Eden, 2011	
	Average Municipal Listed Value
Residential <6 acres	\$164,588
Residential >6 acres	\$217,942
Mobile homes w/o land	\$29,947
Mobile homes w/ land	\$89,295
Vacation homes	\$171,778
Source: Eden Grand List 411 Form	

Although the exact number varies by interest rate and down payment amount, the average listed value of a residential property on fewer than six acres (\$164,588) is greater than the county affordability threshold. While mobile homes and rental units are more affordable locally, there are significantly fewer units available for prospective residents. Additional information on local housing affordability is reflected in **Table 8** (below), based on the transfer of properties within town over the last four years:

Table 8: Total number and average value of housing sales in the Town of Eden, 2007-2010								
	2007	#	2008	#	2009	#	2010	#
Residential <6 acres	\$160,687	8	\$135,200	5	\$ 87,700	7	\$ 113,000	12
Residential >6 acres	\$145,000	2	\$203,000	2	\$ 191,251	5	\$ 311,633	3
Mobile homes w/o land	\$79,000	1	\$6,500	1	\$ 76,000	1	\$ 57,000	1
Mobile homes w/ land	\$39,125	1	\$43,500	2	\$ 8,000	1	\$ 74,500	1
Source: Vermont Dept. of Taxes								

The data in **Table 8** (above) does not provide an accurate reflection of property values in Eden, but rather a snapshot of the quantity and price of those units bought and sold in a given year. While the sampling is too small from which to draw any conclusions regarding trends in local property values, there appears to be an increase in activity from the start of the recession in December 2007, through the end of 2010.

Possible avenues to expand affordable housing

Municipalities have limited opportunities to impact affordable housing. Communities with zoning and subdivision regulations must be careful not to inflate housing costs by requiring large lots or mandating other requirements that add cost to the final unit. By state law, municipalities must treat mobile homes the same as other types of housing and must allow mobile home parks, multi-family housing, and accessory apartments in their communities. The latter is of particular interest in rural Vermont, as additional affordable housing can be added to the local housing stock, without the development impacts associated with new construction.

One avenue to help provide affordable housing is for the town to support projects that create new affordable units. Lamoille Housing Partnership (LHP) in Morrisville is a regional, non-profit organization serving residents of Lamoille County in funding, managing, and developing attractive and affordable housing opportunities. LHP develops projects in Lamoille County that are financially feasible, meet real or perceived social needs, and serve community interests. LHP is available to work with municipal governments, businesses, and individuals to discuss developing other affordable housing opportunities.

Long-term planning considerations

The Eden Planning Commission has identified the conversion of deer camps and seasonal homes into year-round residences as an area for future inquiry. Many such properties are accessed by private roads, which are not typically maintained during winter and often subject to washouts during spring and summer floods. Although the Town of Eden is not obligated to maintain private roadways, the Highway Department has in the past assisted in emergency situations to ensure the safety and well-being of town residents. As more seasonal homes are converted to year-round occupancy, the town and other local service providers will incur additional costs to ensure such roads are safely navigable for residents and emergency service vehicles. Maintaining safe accessibility is critical not only for emergency response, but also for the daily needs of the town's mature resident, who may rely on door-to-door transportation services.

In addition to the increased costs associated with maintaining private roadways, there are also environmental considerations related to the conversion of seasonal homes to year-round residences, especially surrounding Lake Eden and South Pond. When converted to year-round occupancy, structures are often renovated, creating larger areas of impervious surface and thereby increasing stormwater runoff. This runoff may carry pollutants into local water sources, while increasing the potential for flooding and downstream erosion. Year-round occupancy also increases the amount of sewage processed by on-site septic systems, which can potentially leach into surrounding bodies of water if they are not properly maintained. Ultimately, these considerations represent an area of interest for future planning and housing studies in Eden.

Goals, policies, & recommendations

Goal #1: Provide options for residential development to accommodate a diversity of ages, income levels, and housing preferences, without sacrificing water quality, land conservation, or creating strip development.

Goal #2: To maintain the character of existing neighborhoods and provide for orderly growth compatible with the physical capabilities of the land, and existing facilities and services.

Policies:

- Efforts of regional and non-profit organizations to provide increased opportunities for affordable housing ownership should be supported, provided they are consistent with other elements of this plan.
- Sites for manufactured and mobile homes are allowed in locations similar to those generally used for traditional single family housing.
- Eden encourages land use patterns that are inherently more affordable by nature of the cost efficiencies associated with construction, including shorter access roads, clustered units, and proximity to utilities and public services.
- Accessory apartments are permitted per state statute.

Recommendations

- The Planning Commission encourages a variety of housing types and densities in Eden. If a project is subject to Act 250 Review, the District Commission should not find a development out of conformance with the Town Plan simply because it contains housing types or densities that differ from surrounding neighborhoods. The District Commission should not impose conditions to meet other Act 250 review criteria that result in increased housing costs.
- Private Roads and driveways should be designed to ensure suitable access for emergency service vehicles.
- The Planning Commission may work with local agencies to find ways to ensure working residents have housing they can afford.
- The town may work with the Lamoille Housing Partnership and others to investigate the development of senior housing in Eden.

Chapter 5: Energy & Utilities

As a rural community situated several miles from the nearest service centers, Eden residents understand the close relationship between energy, land development patterns, transportation decisions, and quality of life. This chapter is intended to assess the town's current energy profile and establish strategies to promote efficiency, conservation, and development of renewable energy in a manner consistent with scenic and environmental values of the community.

Current energy consumption

In Vermont, energy consumption is split among three primary sectors: electricity, transportation, and heating. Each sector has unique economic and environmental consequences associated with anticipated increases in demand across the state, as explained in the paragraphs below:

Electricity

According to the *Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan*, electricity accounts for approximately 40-percent of energy consumption within the state. Currently, Vermont is divided among twenty electric utilities, each with exclusive franchise territories. While Lamoille County is fragmented among ten different utility providers, virtually the entire Town of Eden is serviced by Vermont Electric Co-Operative (VEC), headquartered in the neighboring Town of Johnson. VEC is a member-owned cooperative, serving approximately 34,000 customers in 74 towns across rural northern Vermont.

VEC was the first electric utility in the state to utilize Advance Meter Infrastructure (AMI) technology, otherwise referred to as a "smart grid." AMI technology allows VEC to monitor outages, track wholesale electric prices, and read meters in real-time, thereby increasing system efficiency and reliability. VEC also allows customers to monitor their hourly electric usage on the internet, providing consumers with better information to manage in-home energy consumption.

According to data published by the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund (VSJF), Eden household consumed an average of 6,163 kWh of electricity in 2010 (3rd lowest of the county's ten towns). Of this demand, only a fraction is generated locally, with the remainder bought on the wholesale power market, known as the grid. In Vermont, primary sources for power bought from the electric grid include the Seabrook Station Nuclear Plant in New Hampshire, statewide contract with Hydro Quebec and the McNeil wood-burning generator in Burlington. The Vernon, Vermont based Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant's operating license was originally scheduled to expire in March 2012, but is pending litigation and still supplying electricity at the time of this plan's update.

Transportation

Accounting for approximately one-third of energy consumption across the state, transportation-related energy costs have increased substantially since the previous Town Plan was adopted in

2007. Over a twelve month period between September 2011 and August 2012, the statewide average price was \$3.64 for a gallon of gasoline and \$4.05 for a gallon of diesel. For comparison purposes between September 2006 and August 2007, the average price was \$2.62 per gallon of gasoline and \$2.79 per gallon of diesel. With the majority of Eden residents commuting out of town daily for work, rising gasoline prices are a significant local concern. Retirees and those employed locally must also leave town regularly for essentially goods and services not available within Eden's borders. As there is very limited public transit service within the region, residents are highly dependent on the automobile for transportation. While this has long been a reality for rural Vermont, rising energy and gasoline prices may compel some residents to revisit their normal commuting patterns in the years to come. A comparison of select local, regional and state commuting statistics is contained in **Table 9** (below):

Table 9: Comparison of select commuting statistics in the Town of Eden, Lamoille County, and State of Vermont (Five year estimates, 2006-10)			
	Town of Eden	Lamoille County	State of Vermont
Average daily commute	28.1 min	24.4 min	21.5 min
% of workers commuting alone by automobile	80.4%	75.4%	74.1%
% utilizing commuting via alternative transit	2.6%	7.3%	7.2%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey			

Ultimately, nearly all of the automobile fuel consumed in Vermont is derived from imported petroleum and residents have limited opportunities to impact the supply of energy supporting their transportation needs. However, from a demand perspective, the Town of Eden can advocate for a more efficient energy profile through several related initiatives, including:

- Promoting the expansion of broadband internet coverage, to allow opportunities for telecommuting and home-based businesses within town;
- Attracting economic opportunities to Eden, to allow residents to work within the community; and
- Encouraging the preservation of open space and continuing to enforce Town Highway Standards, to limit the expansion of the local highway network and associated maintenance costs.

Heating

Thermal is the third major energy sector in Vermont, accounting for approximately 27-percent of demand statewide. The vast majority of homes in the region are heated by fuel oil, otherwise

known as “#2 home heating oil.” As shown in **Figure 4**, nearly 80% of Eden’s residential heat is generated from fuel oil and propane, both of which are petroleum-based.

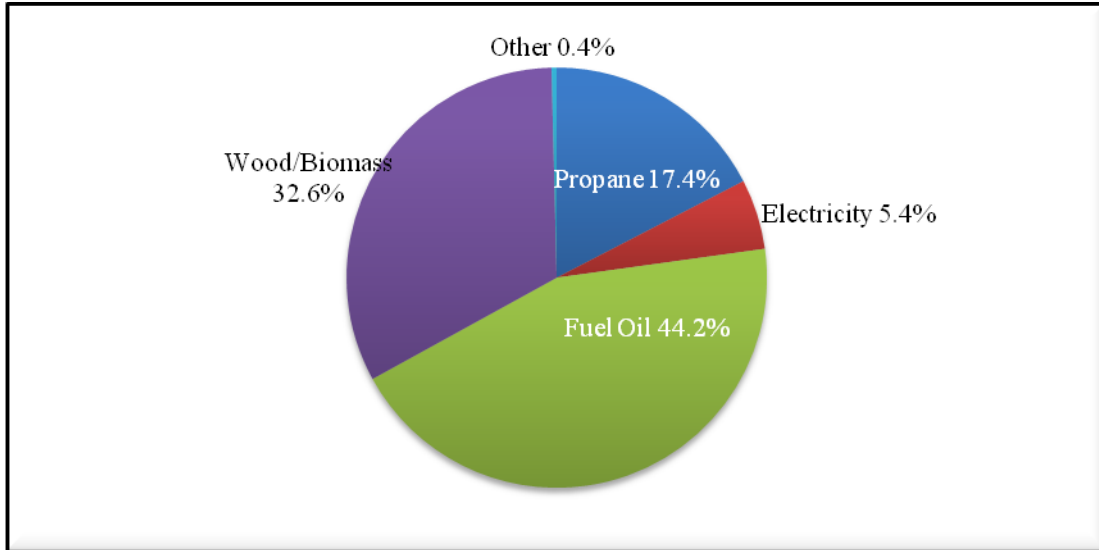


Figure 4: A pie chart displaying the primary home heating fuel used by households in the Town of Eden (2006-10); **Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Despite its prevalence throughout the region, on a dollar per MMBtu basis, fuel oil is among the least efficient heating sources available (**Figure 5**, below). However, unlike the transportation sector, which almost exclusively relies on gasoline and diesel, there are alternatives for residents and businesses to transition away from petroleum heating. These alternatives include wood biomass, biofuel-heating oil blends, natural gas, solar, and geothermal systems.

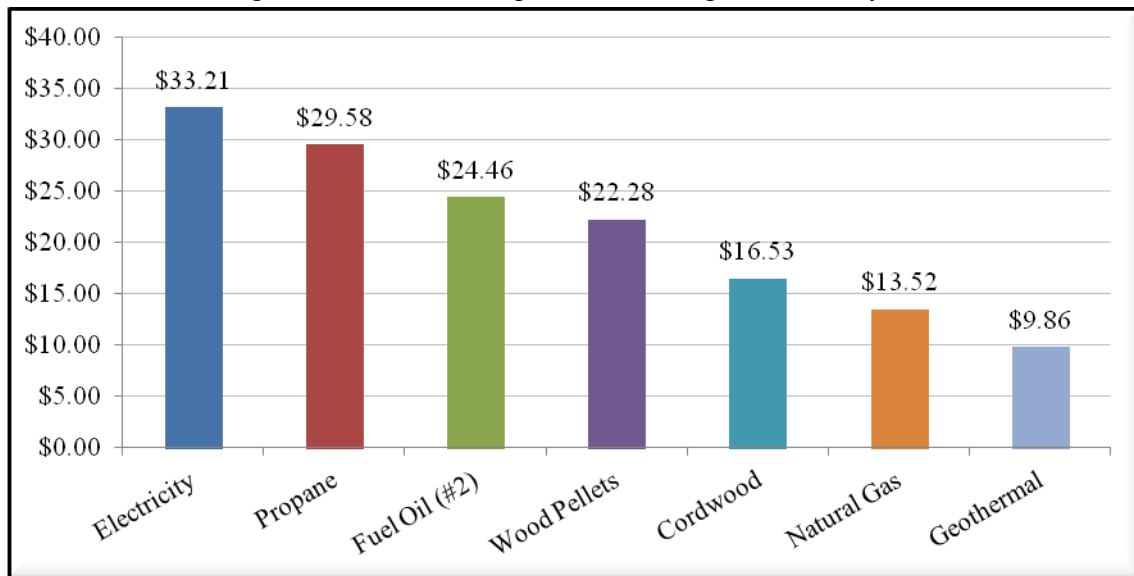


Figure 5: A comparison of prevalent home heating fuels, based on their dollar per MMBTU costs; **Source:** U.S. Energy Information Administration

While the long-term operating costs of propane and fuel oil systems may be higher than many alternatives, the initial investment required to install a geothermal or wood boiler system is cost-prohibitive for most residents. Outside of Chittenden and Franklin Counties, Vermont also lacks the infrastructure to supply homes with natural gas. Ultimately, residents of Eden primarily heat their homes and businesses with petroleum, and to a lesser extent wood, because those are the heating sources that are affordable and readily available in town.

Local & renewable energy sources

Local energy production accounts for only a tiny share of energy demand in Eden. By encouraging more local energy generation and use, the town can reduce its dependence on non-renewable energy sources. In the process, town residents would benefit from lower energy costs and a healthier environment.

Wood Products

The burning of wood possesses tremendous energy-generating potential, especially in regions with high heating demand and an abundance of low-grade hard and softwood forests. According to recent Census estimates (2006-10) 18.6-percent of Eden households utilized wood as a primary source of heat, compared with the county average of 17-percent. This figure is indicative of Eden and Lamoille County's rural, forested landscape, which allows residents to cut and burn wood on their properties. Given the extensive forest resources that exist across Lamoille County, there is clearly potential to increase the burning of wood and biomass as a thermal energy source. Provided sustainable forest management practices are in place, the consumption of wood biomass can help support local industries, reduce fossil fuel dependence, and lower consumer energy costs.

A second high-capacity option for the burning of wood products is a combined heat and power (CHP) biomass facility. Biomass CHP facilities burn wood to generate electricity— a process which in and of itself is highly inefficient. However, when coupled with a mechanism to capture the excess heat associated with producing electricity, such facilities represent a local, renewable source of heat and power. In addition to biomass, CHP systems can also be equipped to operate using natural gas. Presently, Eden does not appear to have a local manufacturer or cluster of development large enough for a CHP facility to be financially viable. However, with the growth of industrial parks in neighboring Hyde Park and Wolcott— along with general population growth throughout the region— there may be potential for a CHP system in Lamoille County in the near future. Such a facility could stimulate the regional economy and the local wood-products industry.

Solar

The generation of heat or electricity from solar panels is another potential renewable energy source for Eden. Because solar panels harness the unlimited energy of the sun, solar is considered among the cleanest renewable energy sources in existence. However, due to high

start-up costs and relatively low per-unit efficiencies, solar is not a viable primary fuel source for much of Vermont. Still, when coupled with tax credits or other incentives, solar can be utilized as a non-polluting supplemental energy source. Legislation passed under the Vermont Energy Act of 2011 created an expedited permitting process for small solar arrays under 5kW, which was later expanded to 10kW during the 2012 legislative session. This law is expected to significantly increase the number of permitted solar projects. A study to determine the feasibility of generating solar electricity at the former VAG mine is currently underway.

Wind

The use of wind turbines for commercial energy production continues to be a topic of much discussion in Eden and the surrounding communities. The development of wind energy has been controversial in other areas of Vermont. This is due to the fact that ridgelines that are most suitable for wind energy also contain important wildlife habitat, and some residents perceive wind energy as having a negative impact on aesthetic values. According to the results, of the 2012 Eden Community Survey, Eden residents are fairly evenly split on the issue of commercial wind energy development. 40-percent are opposed, 37-percent are in favor, and 22-percent are undecided. However, 75-percent of respondents were in favor of residential scale wind energy development. If such development occurs, service and access roads should utilize existing woods roads and trails in order to limit the amount of forest fragmentation, and clearing around turbines should be limited to what is necessary to provide for safe operation of the facility.

Efficiency & conservation

Due to the array of economic and environmental considerations associated with renewable energy generation in the region, perhaps the greatest opportunity for Eden to economize its long-term energy profile is through the implementation of efficiency and conservation strategies. Efficiency Vermont, the nation's first ratepayer-funded energy efficiency utility, is a public resource that provides valuable information on efficiency, conservation, rebates, and incentives. Various other public and non-profit organizations are also available to assist residents and businesses in conducting energy audits, implementing home weatherization techniques, and purchasing energy efficiency equipment.

In October 2011, the state updated Vermont's Residential Building Energy Standards, more commonly referred to as the "energy code." The energy code applies to virtually all new residential structures with fewer than three stories, as well as additions and renovations. Building contractors are required to complete a certificate of compliance with all new construction, confirming the building meets the state's minimum standards for ventilation and insulation. These efficiency standards are flexible and can be met through a variety of different approaches and construction techniques. More information on the state energy code can be found on the website of the Department of Public Service (publicservice.vermont.gov).

For its part, the Town of Eden should also act as a model for the economical use of energy, by considering the long-term costs associated with municipal purchases and, when financially

feasible, investing in energy efficient equipment. Improving energy efficiency and conservation is critical to the continued prosperity of the local economy and environment. The Town of Eden encourages efficient use of energy by businesses and households, and for transportation purposes.

Goals, policies, & recommendations

Goal #1: To provide energy, whether for heating, electricity, or transportation, in a safe, reliable, and efficient manner, and to generate energy from local, renewable sources, provided these sources are economically viable and environmentally sound.

Policies:

- Eden supports the use of residential installations of wind and solar to generate electricity, provided scenic and aesthetic concerns are met. The Eden Community Survey showed that 75-percent of residents were supportive of such projects.
- Until such time as a comprehensive determination is made regarding support or opposition to commercial wind development in town, each application should be considered on a case by case basis.
- Within subdivisions, planning for transmission lines should be strongly weighted in favor of underground placement to achieve the scenic objectives of this plan.

Goal #2: To promote energy efficiency and conservation in the design, construction, and maintenance of all municipal, residential, commercial, and industrial buildings.

Policies:

- Energy efficiency will be included as a factor in municipal construction, purchases, and use.
- Outdoor lighting, especially parking areas, should use cutoff fixtures to reduce the amount of light pollution and to allow lower wattage bulbs.

Recommendations:

- The Planning Commission and Selectboard may coordinate a public outreach project to help develop clear policies with respect to commercial wind farms in Eden.
- The Planning Commission encourages the Selectboard and School Board to conduct energy audits of all municipal buildings to identify opportunities for savings.
- Builders and homeowners should check with Efficiency Vermont for energy standards and conservation opportunities for new construction.
- The Selectboard should participate in all Section 248 hearings to ensure local concerns are met.

Chapter 6: Economic Development

Local employment characteristics

Historically, the foundation of Eden’s economy has been its natural resource base, which supported various scales of farming, timbering, and milling through much of the 19th and early-20th centuries. By the early-1900s, the town also experienced an influx of economic activity associated with the establishment of a 2,900 acre asbestos mine along the town’s northeast boundary with Lowell. The asbestos mine was a staple industry of the regional economy for many decades to follow and employed as many as 175 workers by 1981. However, mining operations gradually disbanded during the 1980s amid health and environmental concerns, until the mine closed in 1994. At various points in the town’s history, Eden was also home to multiple factories, hotels and restaurants, as well as a casino.

Today, the most recent data from the Vermont Department of Labor indicates the total number of workers employed in Eden is approximately 87. The largest employer is currently the Eden Central School, with the remainder of the local workforce spread among a small number of retail, agricultural, and construction businesses. A comparison of employment characteristics in Eden over the previous five years is contained in **Table 10** (below, right):

It should be noted that the average wage reported in **Table 10** incorporates both full and part-time workers. To protect the confidentiality of individual businesses, more detailed wage data for a population as small as Eden’s is not available. However, the data does suggest a decrease in private sector economic activity between 2005 and 2010. This period spans an economic recession, which resulted in a similar decrease in the number of establishments and employees across the state over the same period.

	2005	2010
Private Sector		
Establishments	15	13
Employees	44	27
Average Wage	\$13,533	\$17,645
Public Sector		
Establishments	3	3
Employees	51	60
Average Wage	\$24,117	\$27,205
Source: VT Dept. of Labor		

Due to its relatively small employment base, the wages reported in **Table 10** (above) do not accurately characterize incomes within the town. As noted in the Housing Chapter, the median household income in Eden (2005-09) is \$44,329, which is approximately 15-percent lower than the state average. One pressing concern of Lamoille County residents and workers throughout the country has been persistently high unemployment, which have suppressed income levels since the last Town Plan update. A comparison of unemployment trends in Eden, Lamoille County, and Vermont as a whole are outlined in **Table 11** (following page):

Table 11: A comparison of unemployment rates in the Town of Eden, Lamoille County, and State of Vermont between 2005 and 2011						
	May-07	May-08	May-09	May-10	May-11	May-12
Town of Eden	5.6%	8.3%	14.5%	10.1%	10.2%	8.2%
Lamoille County	4.7%	5.0%	8.6%	7.5%	7.3%	5.5%
State of Vermont	3.5%	4.1%	6.1%	6.1%	5.4%	4.4%
Source: VT Dept. of Labor						

As noted in **Table 11** (above), the economic recession— which officially began in December 2007 and ended in June 2009— had a pronounced and long-lasting impact in local, regional, and statewide unemployment rates. While there has been some improvement in the labor market since the lowest point of the recession, both wages and employment have yet to return to pre-recession norms.

Despite long-term instability in labor markets, Eden residents remain employed in a diversity of occupations and professions. The American Community Survey (2005-09) reported the following industries as the largest employers of the town’s workforce, estimated at 651:

- Educational services, and healthcare and social assistance (29.6-percent)
- Construction (16.4-percent)
- Retail trade (13.7-percent)

In the coming years, as the reach of mobile broadband penetrates further into rural Vermont, there will be a corresponding increase in opportunities for telecommuters and home-based businesses to operate from outlying areas of the state. This will contribute to a more diverse local employment base and likewise increase the potential for entrepreneurship and small business start-ups.

Journey to work

Local commuting data are often analyzed to classify towns as job centers, average communities, or bedroom communities. Job centers are those towns with more jobs than members of the resident workforce; bedroom communities are defined as having more than two-thirds of the resident workforce leaving the community for employment. Clearly, Eden can be defined by conventional measures as a bedroom community, with the vast majority of residents commuting to other job centers within the region for work.

In past decades, the decennial Census collected detailed journey to work information; however, these data were not collected in 2010. This information can be supplemented using estimates from the American Community Survey and its *OnTheMap* interactive commuting analysis tool. According to estimates from 2009, Eden’s workforce commutes to a wide range of employers,

scattered across the state. The most common workplace destinations are depicted in **Figure 6** (below):

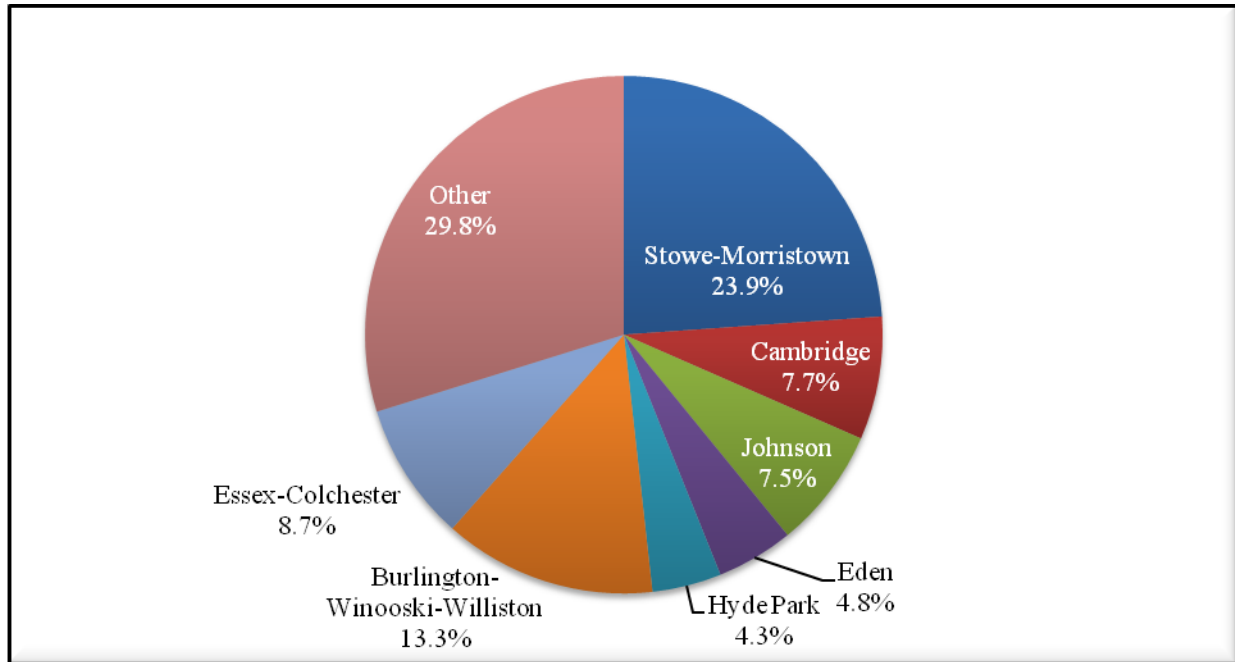


Figure 6: A pie chart representing the breakdown of commuting destinations for Eden's resident workforce (2009); **Source:** The American Community Survey

As represented in **Figure 6** (above) Eden's proximity to Vermont Routes 100 and 15 (via 118 and 109) allows workers to find employment in communities throughout northern Vermont. Roughly speaking, about one-quarter of the workforce is employed in Stowe and Morristown; another quarter is employed in other areas of Lamoille County, including Eden; a third quarter is employed in Chittenden County; and the remaining quarter is spread across the state, including places as far away as Rutland and Bennington. These data underscore the economic importance of the state highway network in safely and efficiently circulating commuters throughout the region.

Poverty

The U.S. Census Bureau defines annual poverty thresholds for households across the country, based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Established by the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, the CPI is defined as the average price paid for an assortment of commonly consumed goods at a given time. It therefore fluctuates with changes in the price of gasoline, groceries, and other essentials, and is often used as a rough cost of living indicator. While imprecise, the CPI and associated poverty rates provide a useful basis for comparing trends in income and poverty across regions. According to 2009 Census Bureau estimates, the percentage of residents living below the poverty threshold was 11.5 for the State of Vermont and 12.5 for Lamoille County. Estimates from the American Community Survey (2005-09) indicate the poverty rate in Eden at

14.4-percent, although such estimates have a wide margin of error in such small population samples. Overall, these state, county, and local figures represent slight increases over the poverty rates reported by the 2000 Census.

Long-term economic development variables

Ultimately, economic development does not occur within the boundaries of a single municipality, but rather in a broader regional context. Eden residents purchase goods and services in town and from neighboring communities, which in turn create new economic opportunities for other residents of Lamoille County and beyond. To the same extent, the hundreds of visitors who come to Eden to enjoy the serenity of the area also support local businesses during their stay. Planned expansions at Jay Peak and proposed development in the Newport area may create new opportunities for Eden based businesses and residents. Thus while all communities strive for a vibrant local economy, different scales of development are appropriate for different types of communities.

Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor Recreation is an important economic driver within the State of Vermont. The ski industry is a major economic force in nearby communities, notably Jeffersonville, Stowe, and Jay. In particular, planned expansions at the Jay Peak Ski Resort may serve as a center for development of related businesses in the region, providing opportunities for economic development in businesses directly related to recreation, as well as for other businesses that might sell products or provide services to visitors. Smaller scale outdoor recreation based opportunities, such as the Eden Dogsledding Center, VAST trail system, Catamount Trail and Long Trail, are already located within Eden. Lake Eden, the Green River Reservoir, and other lakes and ponds are also attractive areas for visitors interested in bird watching, swimming, boating, fishing, and other recreational activities.

Road bicycle touring is increasingly popular during the summer months. Formal and informal bicycle tours along Route 118 and Route 100 have the potential to connect Eden with Jay Peak to the north and Smugglers Notch Resort and Stowe Mountain Resort to the south. Cyclists would be inclined to stop at businesses along the route for food, provisions, and lodging. Development of such tours could be hampered by the narrow shoulders on some areas of Route 118 and Route 100; expansion of these shoulders should be considered an important economic development strategy.

Wildlife-based activities including hunting, fishing, viewing, and photography are estimated to have brought more than \$383 million dollars to the state's economy (Vermont Forest Resources Plan, 2010). Hunters alone spend more than \$189 million in Vermont annually, according to a new survey conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Census Bureau. Wildlife-based recreation represents a potential economic driver for the Eden. However, given that a growing percentage of Eden's forestland is in public ownership, Eden will only benefit if traditional activities such as hunting are allowed to continue on these "conserved" properties.

Agriculture and Forestry

Along with the few dairy farms left in Eden, the emergence of new agricultural products has led some to say that Northeastern Vermont is experiencing an “Agricultural Renaissance.” Some new agricultural products include grass-fed beef, direct-to-consumer vegetable farming, seed and nursery production, and specialty products such as cheese and bread. The growth and popularity of “micro-breweries” in the region may create opportunities for producing hops. Both traditional and emerging agricultural products represent opportunities for Eden landowners. A weekly farmers market is currently held at the Eden Historical Society. Eden farmers can also utilize new, digital tools such as yourfarmstand.com, an online farmers’ market that connects consumers with local agricultural producers.

Eden has a large forested land base. Over the last several decades, many of the large sawmills in Lamoille County have closed, partially due to increased international competition and drop off of the housing market. Currently, while some timber is milled locally, the remainder of the raw timber produced in Lamoille County is exported for milling. Increasing the amount and types of forest products processed in Eden could provide local employment as well as an incentive for landowners to maintain active forestland. While it is unlikely that a large, traditional sawmill would be located in Eden, expansion of small “backyard” mills, portable mills, fire wood suppliers, cottage furniture makers and wood turners all represent opportunities to process timber products. Some Eden based businesses have also begun to market “non-timber” forest products, such as leeks and fiddleheads.

Construction Industry

As noted earlier in this chapter, many Eden residents are employed in the construction industry. Construction at Jay Peak and other resorts, renovation and expansion of camps and second homes, and new housing development all represent opportunities for Eden residents employed in the construction industry. This industry was particularly hard hit by the decline of the housing market at the onset of the “Great Recession,” the height of which Eden’s unemployment rate exceeded 14 percent. Identifying new opportunities that utilize the skills of residents in the construction industry should be a priority for regional and state workforce development organizations.

Home-Based Businesses

The recent initiative to bring hi-speed broadband Internet access to Eden could represent an economic boon to the town. Hi-speed internet access is increasingly essential not only for high tech industries, but for all businesses operating in the 21st century. Hi-speed Internet is a vital tool for growing the local economic base and will make Eden more attractive to home-based businesses, telecommuters, the cottage software and web development industry, the creative economy, and even manufactures who increasingly rely on broadband for product specifications and advertising.

Regulatory Environment

Ultimately, the local and state regulatory environment is a determining factor in where businesses chose to locate. To this point, Eden has not elected to adopt any land use regulations. However, development proposals that exceed specified thresholds are subject to state review under Vermont's land use law, Act 250. Proposals for the installation of various forms of infrastructure, energy generating systems, and telecommunications facilities are also subject to review by the Vermont Public Service Board (PSB), under the Section 248 statute. The Town of Eden has the opportunity to participate in both Act 250 and Section 248 hearings to advocate for the interests of the town and its residents. The goals and policies set forth in this plan are considerations in both the Act 250 and Section 248 processes. Therefore, it is important for the town to maintain a plan that incorporates specific language, expressing the community's position on how Eden can grow and develop. As the economy continues to evolve, periodically public input should be collected and reviewed these positions, so that Eden is prepared to accommodate the character and scale of development desired by its residents.

Goals, policies, & recommendations

Goal #1: To encourage a diverse and sustainable economy, through the provision of essential public infrastructure and participation in state regulatory proceedings.

Goal #2: For Eden to have a balanced and diverse local economy that provides rewarding job opportunities.

Policies:

- The town supports initiatives that will make farming and forestry more economically viable into the future.
- State owned properties and land “conserved” using public funds should be actively managed and remain open to public use. Active management includes, but is not limited to, forest management (including timber, maple, and other forest products), agricultural production, and recreational uses.
- The Town supports industries that utilize local resources to produce value added products.
- The development of appropriate industries and businesses, that utilize the skills of the local labor force, are encouraged.
- The Town supports proposals that will provide workforce training to improve opportunities for residents in new and existing businesses.
- The Town supports existing and proposed businesses that provide jobs.
- Economic development at the expense of the environment is not encouraged. Businesses and industries shall not degrade or endanger air and water resources.

- The Town supports recreational use of Eden's land base and lakes and ponds, including, but not limited to, swimming, boating, fishing, snowmobiling, mountain biking and hiking, and snow-shoeing/cross country-skiing.

Recommendations:

- Eden should lobby the Vermont Agency of Transportation to ensure appropriate maintenance of Routes 118 and 100 commensurate with increased traffic volumes.
- In order to support recreational tourism, the Town should advocate for expanded, paved shoulders for cyclists along Route 100 and Route 118. Shoulders should be included in plans for repaving of both routes.

Chapter 7: Transportation

State & local highways

In Vermont, state highways bear a route number and are maintained by the VT Agency of Transportation (AOT). Examples in Eden include Routes 100 and 118. All other local roads are classified according to their importance and general use (Class 1-4). This system is used to determine the amount of state highway assistance provided to each community. *Class 1* roads are those highways that, while remaining the responsibility of the town to maintain, are extensions of the state highway system and carry a state route number. Eden does not currently have any Class 1 roads within its boundaries. *Class 2* roads include major transportation corridors between towns, which consequently carry a large volume of local and regional traffic. Examples include North Road and East Hill Road. *Class 3* roads— such as Knowles Flat— are classified as secondary town highways that primarily carry only local traffic. Finally, *Class 4* roads are private and often unpaved roads that may be impassable in snowy or muddy conditions. The town does not maintain Class 4 roads, except for existing culverts, and in emergency situations, where residents with pressing needs are isolated by weather or other obstructions.

The following chart (**Table 12**) provides a comparison of state and town highway mileages in Eden and surrounding communities.

Table 12: A comparison of state and local highway mileage in Eden and neighboring Lamoille County towns.					
Town	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	<i>Class 4</i>	State Hwy
Eden	0.0	8.4	21.57	<i>12.0</i>	13.8
Belvidere	0.0	0.0	11.8	<i>2.8</i>	9.7
Johnson	0.0	10.0	39.2	<i>13.3</i>	11.4
Hyde Park	0.0	13.7	49.3	<i>8.6</i>	9.5
Source: VT Agency of Transportation					

In addition to the road categories described above, the Town of Eden also owns a 0.19 mile segment of right-of-way, officially classified as a “Legal Trail.” This trail, which connects Cemetery and Blakeville Road, is not publically maintained and is accessible only by foot or other non-motorized transit.

Traffic

As the region’s population and tourism sector have grown over the last two decades, automobile traffic in Lamoille County has also generally increased. The two areas that have experienced the greatest increase in traffic are Route 100, south of Morrisville, and Route 15, west of Hyde Park. As shown in **Table 13** (following page), traffic on the two major state highways that cross Eden

(Routes 100 and 118) has remained relatively stable, with only minor increases or decreases at various observation points. Decreases in traffic can at least partially be attributed to the downturn in the national economy and concurrent rise in gasoline and diesel fuel prices, which have increased the cost of commercial and recreational travel.

Table 13: A comparison of observed Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) counts on major highways in Eden (2006-10)			
Observation Point	2006	2010	% Change
Rt. 100, Hyde Park townline	4,500	4,500	0.0%
Rt. 100, intersection with Rt. 118	3,600	3,200	-11.1% ↓
Rt. 100, intersection with Eden Mills Rd.	3,100	3,300	6.5% ↑
Rt. 100, intersection with Camp Rd.	2,200	2,000	-9.1% ↓
Rt. 100, Lowell townline	2,200	2,600	18.2% ↑
Rt. 118, west of Rt. 100	990	940	-5.1% ↓
Rt. 118, intersection with Knowles Flat Rd.	690	610	-11.6% ↓
Rt. 118, Belvidere townline	690	650	-5.8% ↓
Source: VT Agency of Transportation			

While the data shown above suggest that overall traffic volume has remained largely flat since the previous Town Plan update, anecdotally, Eden residents have observed a marked increase in heavy truck traffic, especially along Route 100. This uptick is attributable to several factors, including greater activity at the Casella landfill (located approximately 22 miles north in Coventry) and the development of the Kingdom Community Wind project in neighboring Lowell. Relative to an average automobile, heavy trucks have a greater impact on the community in terms of noise, emissions and road surface deterioration. Thus, while the number of cars traversing Eden's highway may be relatively stable, traffic impacts— from a financial, safety and quality of life standpoint— are more pronounced than ever before.

Ultimately, there do not appear to be any highways or intersections in town that fail to provide an adequate level of service from the perspective of circulation and congestion. Rather, traffic concerns in Eden are primarily associated with the gradual wear-and-tear on roads that serve as local and regional collectors (especially those that are unpaved). While Eden's major businesses and public services are located along Routes 100 and 118, they are generally setback from the highways, so as to eliminate any chance for a traffic back-up. All facilities have adequate off-street parking; scarcity of parking is not considered a concern at this time.

Maintenance of the local transportation network

In addition to approximately 30 miles of town highways, Eden is responsible for maintaining a network of bridges and culverts that assist in the conveyance of stormwater runoff and ensure the

safe passage of motorists, pedestrians and other travelers. General maintenance of the local transportation network is the responsibility of the Eden Highway Department, staffed by 2 full-time and 5 on-call employees. The Eden Highway Garage is located off Route 100. Additionally, an AOT District 8 garage– housing equipment for state highway maintenance– is located on Route 118.

Regular maintenance activities in Eden include the grading and ditching of roads, replacement of culverts, and winter snow removal. Due to the high cost of bridge and large culvert repairs, the town relies heavily on state aid and grants for such work. Potential funding sources include the state Better Backroads, Class 2 Highways, and AOT Structures grant programs. Highway construction and maintenance are governed by the AOT recommended “Codes and Standards,” adopted by the Eden Selectboard in February 2011. These standards have provisions to ensure investments in town highways are protected with proper drainage, ditching and construction techniques. Environmentally-sound highway construction and maintenance practices are of particular importance, in light of the unprecedented flooding that impacted Vermont in 2011. Heavy rain and flooding prompted two federal disaster declarations in Lamoille County: one covering the period of April 23- May 9 (FEMA DR-1995) and a second associated with Tropical Storm Irene in August (DR-4022). While Eden was fortunately spared any significant damage from Irene, the spring floods caused widespread damage to roads and culverts across town. To mitigate damages from future storm events, the town should work with LCPC to maintain an accurate bridge and culvert inventory, which will help prioritize investments in new structures in the coming years. Additional mitigation priorities are identified in the Eden Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), adopted by the Eden Selectboard in October 2011.

Alternative and multi-modal transportation

According to estimates from the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (2005-09), more than 93-percent of residents commute to work by personal automobile– 80-percent of which drive alone. As a bedroom community, Eden residents have limited opportunities to utilize non-motorized transit. However, to the greatest extent practical, the town encourages residents to utilize alternative modes of transportation, such as walking, bicycling, snowmobiling, and riding the limited public transit routes offered in the county. In 2011, Vermont enacted “Complete Streets” legislation, mandating that new and renovated paved roads be designed to accommodate safely motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians of all ages and abilities. Examples of design elements encouraged through the Complete Streets program include:

- Adding and maintaining sidewalks that are connected to public services;
- Improving lighting, signage and pavement markings; and,
- Installing curb ramps and sidewalk seating.

Like much of the county’s highway infrastructure, Eden’s roads were primarily designed during the 1950s and 60s with only the automobile in mind. As a result, the town does not currently

have any sidewalks or dedicated bicycle lanes, which is not uncommon for a rural community of its size. In the future, the town may be required to consider roadway improvements under the new Complete Streets law.

Generally, Eden is supportive of the concept behind Complete Streets; many pedestrians walk along Routes 100 and 118 between Lake Eden, Eden Central School and the Post Office. Presently, these state highways provide only very narrow right-of-ways for walking or bicycling, and pedestrian connectivity in these areas is a major safety concern. To this end, the town strongly encourages the AOT to consider installing dedicated bicycle lanes along Routes 100 and 118 as part of any future road surface upgrades. In addition to improving pedestrian safety, bicycle lanes would serve as a tourism amenity, especially to the increasingly popular “bicycle tours,” which bring visitors to Lamoille County throughout the spring, summer and fall months.

Air & rail travel

The nearest passenger rail service for residents of Eden is provided through AMTRAK, with a station in Waterbury (32 miles from the town center). This station is linked to a daily route, “The Vermonter,” which runs from St. Albans to Washington, D.C. with stops in New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore.

Eden residents also have access to private and charter aviation services through the Morrisville-Stowe State Airport on Route 100 in Morristown. Long-term expansion plans have been considered, although none of these plans are expected to be implemented within the next several years. Commercial airline service is available through Burlington International Airport (BTV) in South Burlington (45 miles from the town center), offering direct flights to destinations across the eastern United States.

Public transportation

Eden is not directly served by any regular public transit routes. The nearest available service is provided by Green Mountain Transit Authority (GMTA), through its Stowe/Lamoille Valley Area routes. Currently, these routes include a circulator between major destinations in Morrisville and Stowe, as well as the Route 100 Commuter bus, connecting Morrisville to Waterbury. Utilizing the Route 100 Commuter bus, it is possible (though largely impractical) to ride public transportation from Morrisville to Burlington, via connection to the Chittenden County Transportation Authority’s (CCTA) Montpelier LINK.

On an as-needed basis, numerous human-service organizations in Lamoille County also provide transportation services to assist Eden residents, including:

- The Central Vermont Council on Aging (CVCOA) provides transportation to health services, shopping and other community programs across central Vermont. They also transport meals to residents who are confined to their homes. CVCOA operates the local

Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), which provides transportation to its volunteers, in addition to reimbursing volunteers for mileage.

- Central Vermont Community Action Council (CVCAC) has contracted with Rural Community Transport (RCT) to administer a ride referral/ride match program in Lamoille County. RCT also focuses on developing and coordinating transit services and cultivating awareness of, and support for, public transportation in the region.
- Lamoille Community Connections (LCC) provides rides for developmentally-disabled clients between their homes and the region's treatment and activity centers.
- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) provides services to clients with disabilities that create barriers to employment. The VR program works to relocate individuals and provide transportation so clients can work in the community. VR also serves as an advocate of local and regional transportation planning.
- Out and About is an adult day care program that provides transportation to clients through RCT to gain access to-and-from their homes to the day care.

Rideshare & carpooling

According to estimates from the American Community Survey (2005-09), approximately 13-percent of Eden residents utilize a carpool as a primary means of transportation to work. As previously noted, the commuting destinations of Eden residents are generally clustered along major transportation corridors, such as Route 100 south (Stowe/Morristown) and Route 15 west (Cambridge and Chittenden County). Accordingly, there would appear to be additional carpooling opportunities for Eden residents, enabling commuters to save money, conserve energy and reduce demands on the local transportation infrastructure. To facilitate more ride-sharing, several neighboring municipalities have worked with AOT to construct designated "park-and-ride" facilities. If resident interest exists, LCPC is available to work with the Town of Eden to designate one or more such carpool lots.

Recreation and non-motorized travel

Both the Catamount Trail and Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) trails pass through Eden. The Catamount Trail, a cross-country skiing path that spans the entire length of the State, crosses town north of Green River Reservoir State Park and runs east along the hills of Eden, before entering Lowell. VAST trails also pass through various parts of town. Both systems provide winter recreational opportunities to residents, but do not serve a role in year-round transportation.

In 2011, following several years of planning, VAST submitted a proposal to convert the state-owned right-of-way of the former St. Johnsbury and Lamoille County Railroad into a multi-modal recreation path, known as Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT). When complete, the LVRT

will become the longest rail-trail in New England, spanning 93 miles from St. Johnsbury to Swanton. The proposed LVRT passes through the neighboring towns of Johnson and Hyde Park and is expected to attract new tourists and provide an unparalleled recreational opportunity to residents and visitors alike. At the time of this plan's adoption, construction is pending VAST's receipt of an Act 250¹ permit.

In addition to designated recreation paths, scenic highways also represent a tourism and leisure amenity in Eden and elsewhere throughout the region. Vermont Route 100 is a renowned fall foliage drive, while Route 118 offers stunning views of Belvidere Pond and Belvidere Mountain. These highways provide visitors with a window into Eden and preserve the scenic, rural image of the town.

Regional transportation planning

In July 1992, the Lamoille County Transportation Advisory Committee (LCTAC) was formed. The LCTAC is comprised of appointed representatives from each town in the County and a member of the LCPC Board of Directors. The purpose of the LCTAC is to provide recommendations regarding regional transportation needs and concerns to the LCPC Board and Vermont AOT. The LCTAC serves as the eyes, ears and voice of communities in the regional transportation planning effort. A Regional Transportation Plan for Lamoille County was last adopted in 2006; an update of the Regional Transportation Plan and Transportation chapter of the Lamoille County Regional Plan are slated for 2013.

The benefits to Eden of participating in regional transportation planning efforts, such as the LCTAC include:

1. More local control of regional transportation planning and funding;
2. Greater eligibility for Federal funds;
3. Eligibility to attach additional local elements in the region's annual work plan; and
4. Local technical assistance on transportation issues.

Goals, policies & recommendations

Goal #1: To provide a safe, efficient and diverse transportation network for the benefit of all residents and visitors.

Goal #2: To expand opportunities for residents to access alternative modes of transportation, whether by carpool, public transit, walking or bicycling.

Goal #3: To preserve Eden's scenic highways and transportation corridors, to promote Eden as an attractive place to live, work and play.

¹ Act 250 is a statewide permitting process, governed by nine District Environmental Commissions. More details on Act 250 will be explained in the Land Use chapter.

Goal #4: To ensure adequate maintenance of important public corridors, especially Route 100 and Route 118.

Highways

Policies:

- New road and driveway accesses should have a suitable site distance so as not to create blind or hidden driveways.
- All new or upgraded roads must be constructed to town road standards.
- Land use and development must not adversely impact traffic safety and the condition of town roads and rights of way.

Recommendations:

- The Town should assess road and culvert conditions on a regular basis to establish maintenance and repair priorities and to comply with state standards for funding assistance.
- The Selectboard should update road and bridge standards as necessary to comply with state standards. The Selectboard may periodically review policies to regulate the acceptance of private roads.
- Eden should lobby the Vermont Agency of Transportation to ensure adequate maintenance of Routes 118 and 100. These roads should receive higher priority in the State repaving schedule due to the impacts of heavy trucks involved in construction of the Lowell wind development and transporting waste to the Coventry Landfill.
- In order to provide safe access for various transportation modes, the Town advocate for expanded, paved shoulders for cyclists along Route 100 and Route 118. Shoulders should include in plans for repaving of both routes.

Transportation Services

Policies:

- Eden supports efforts to provide transportation services to assist elderly and disabled residents who wish to remain in their homes.
- Carpooling and vanpooling by local commuters to reduce transportation costs and impacts is encouraged.

Recommendations:

- Eden should continue to support the non-profit services that provide public transit and other transportation services at the regional level.
- The Selectboard should continue to appoint a municipal representative to the Lamoille County Transportation Advisory Committee (LCTAC) to coordinate transportation planning, road maintenance and improvements with adjoining towns, and to ensure that the interests of the town are adequately addressed by the region and the state.

Chapter 8: Education

Lamoille North Supervisory Union

The Town of Eden belongs to the Lamoille North Supervisory Union (LNSU), a regional cooperative serving the towns of Belvidere, Cambridge, Eden, Hyde Park, Johnson and Waterville. Students within each town attend one of five local elementary schools, before advancing to Lamoille Union Middle and High School, which are co-located along with the LNSU district offices on Route 15 in Hyde Park (10 miles south of the Eden town center).

Early Childhood Education & Child Care

According to the Lamoille Family Center, in 2012 there were four registered in-home child care operations and two licensed child care centers in town: the Eden Central School Pre-school and Eden After-School program. Ultimately, early childhood education and childcare represents a major service void across the state. According to a 2002 report, *The Economic Impact of Vermont's Child Care Industry*, the existing regulated child care system meets only 65-percent of estimated need.

Vermont statute mandates that a family child care operation serving six or fewer children is to be treated as a permitted single-family residential use within local development bylaws. While Eden has not elected to adopt zoning or subdivision regulations, the town does support early childhood education and child care services in all residential districts, as described in the Land Use chapter of this plan. When developing site plans for new facilities, the town encourages property owners to address any potential traffic and pedestrian safety concerns within the neighborhood.

Elementary Education

Children of Eden residents, from pre-kindergarten to 6th grade, may attend the Eden Central School, located on an 18 acre parcel off Knowles Flat Road, adjacent to Route 100. The school is operated by a three-member School Board, elected to staggered three year terms at the annual Town Meeting. During the 2011-12 school year, Eden Central School had an enrollment of 135 students. Since the previous Town Plan update, student enrollment figures have fluctuated (**Figure 7**, next page), despite the town's consistent rise in population.

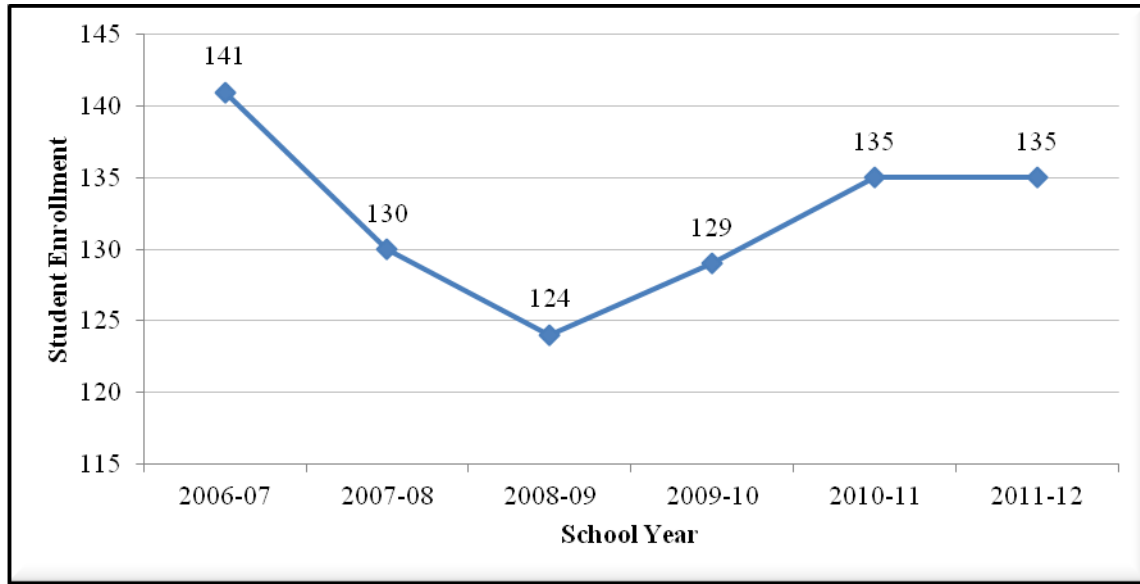


Figure 1: Student enrollment at Eden Central School between the 2006-07 and 2011-12 school years; **Source:** Eden Central School

The Eden Central School building was constructed in 1990 and has adequate capacity for current and projected near-term enrollments. In addition to classroom space, facilities include a library, kitchen, recreation fields and large multi-purpose room utilized for lunches, meetings, physical education and other activities. In 2010, Eden Central School became an American Red Cross certified shelter. During an emergency situation, the Selectboard can call upon the Red Cross to open the shelter to provide food, bedding and limited medical attention for temporarily displaced residents.

Middle & Secondary Education

As noted above, students living within the LNSU district may attend Lamoille Union Middle (grades 7-8) and High School (grades 9-12). As of 2011-12 school year, the combined district-wide enrollment of grades 7 through 12 was 869 students. Since opening a new wing of the building in 2002, the facilities are considered to have sufficient capacity to accommodate reasonable growth projections across the district. Current amenities at Lamoille Union Middle and High School include an auditorium, library, gymnasium, outdoor athletic fields and the Cricket Hill Trails system— a network of all-season recreation trails adjoining the campus. Over the last five school years, the number of middle and high school students from Eden has remained relatively stable, as shown in **Figure 8** (next page).

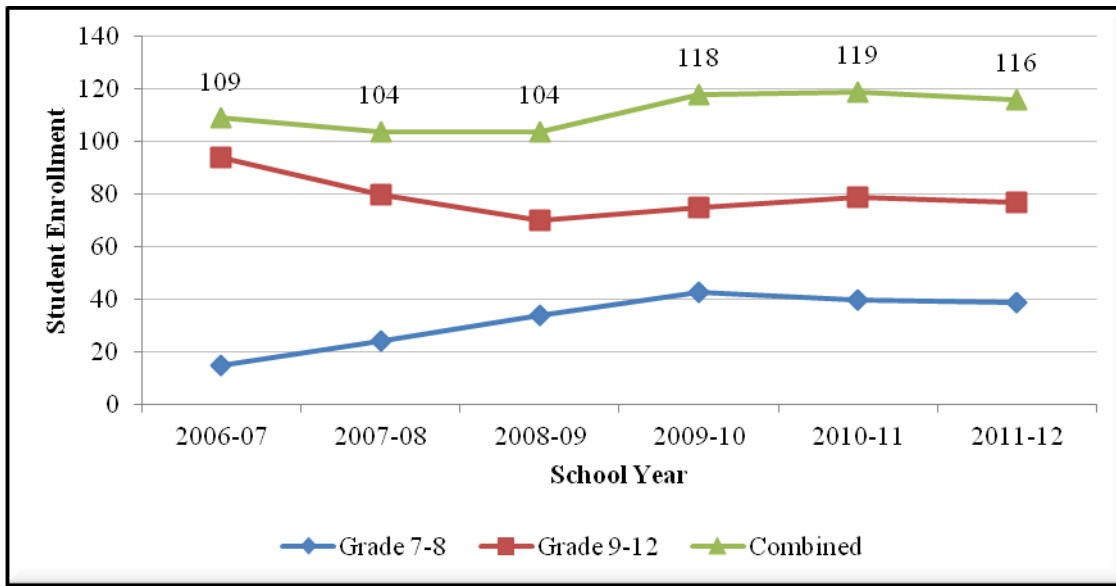


Figure 8: A parallel comparison of the enrollment of students from Eden at LUMS, LUHS and combined middle and high school enrollment between the 2006-07 and 2011-12 school years; **Source:** LUHS & LUMS

High school juniors and seniors, as well as a limited number of adult learners also have access to career training and educational opportunities at Green Mountain Technology and Career Center (GMTCC), located on the same campus as Lamoille Union Middle and High School in Hyde Park. GMTCC offers technical programs in thirteen areas of study and is accredited through the Association of New England Schools and Colleges. Noteworthy programs include forestry and land management, automotive technology, culinary arts and HVAC.

Post-Secondary & Adult Education

In addition to GMTCC, which offers multiple courses eligible for college credit, there are two other local institutions offering college-level instruction in Lamoille County. Johnson State College in neighboring Johnson offers a variety of graduate and undergraduate degree programs, along with other continuing education services. The Community College of Vermont (CCV) also operates a campus in Morrisville, offering Associate Degrees, certificate programs and online instruction in various pre-professional concentrations. Finally, additional adult educational opportunities are available through Central Vermont Adult Basic Education (CVBAE) in Morrisville, which offer instruction for students that are not enrolled in public schools.

Future Concerns

The quality of instruction and educational facilities offered at local public schools are in many ways a reflection of a community's vibrancy. Eden seeks to balance the need to maintain high-quality educational services, within a tax structure that is not burdensome to current and prospective residents. Therefore, the town must carefully monitor demographic trends, to ensure that future residential growth does not overwhelm the capacity of the local school system. 63-percent of respondents to the Eden Community Survey indicated that school facilities are

adequate. A group of residents is currently working to upgrade the playground located on the school property.

School Budget Trends

Overall, the cost of providing education has continued to increase throughout Vermont since the last plan update. Due to a multitude of changes to state funding formulas, it is difficult to make accurate comparisons of local tax assessments and per-pupil costs across school budget years. However, as a point of reference, in terms of Gross Act 68 Budget², the Eden School District experienced an increase of five-percent (about one-percent per year) between FY2008 (\$2,382,793) to FY2013 (\$2,506,590).

Goals, policies & recommendations

Goal #1: To plan for growth in a way that allows Eden to provide quality educational services and adequate facilities, without placing an undue tax burden on residents.

Policies:

- Future development in Eden should not exceed the capacity of the town to provide educational services.
- Eden supports efforts to broaden educational and vocational opportunities
- Eden recognizes the importance to our community of high quality early education and daycare. Eden supports organizations that provide these services.
- Eden supports the GMTCC and their efforts to broaden access to education for adult learners and to provide vocational opportunities for students.

Recommendations:

- Through its representative Eden should continue to have an active role on the Board of Directors of LUSD and Lamoille North Supervisory Union.
- If school populations begin to rise again, the Planning Commission should investigate options to moderate growth.

² According to the Vermont Dept. of Education, this includes local budget, special programs, full technical center expenditures, and any Act 144 expenditures.

Chapter 9: Community Services & Facilities

As a small, rural community the Town of Eden's primary public service obligations are maintaining the local transportation infrastructure and operating Eden Central School. Residents nonetheless have access to a multitude of public, private and municipally-supported service providers to contribute to the health, safety and quality of life enjoyed by town residents.

Public safety

Law Enforcement

The Vermont State Police (VSP) is the sole source of law enforcement coverage in Eden, providing a limited number of patrol hours, responding directly to emergency calls and offering the services of criminal and investigative specialists, upon request. At this time, the town has elected not to contract with the VSP or Lamoille County Sheriff's Department (stationed in Hyde Park) for additional patrol coverage. LCSD serves as the emergency dispatch center for police, fire and rescue services across Lamoille County and a select number of neighboring communities. Eden residents also elect two constables, who have no direct law enforcement authority, but generally respond to domestic issues, such as animal control.

Fire Safety

Fire protection is provided by the North Hyde Park/Eden Fire Department (NHPE), a 25-member volunteer unit serving all of Eden and northern Hyde Park. The NHPE fire station is located on Route 100 in the village of North Hyde Park, approximately four miles from Eden's town center. The department participates in the Lamoille Mutual Aid Association (LMAA), an organization of all eight county fire departments, designed to coordinate shared emergency response resources. Administratively and financially, NHPE is responsible to the Prudential Committee of Hyde Park Fire District #1. However, the department receives the majority of its funding from the Towns of Eden and Hyde Park. In FY13, Eden voters appropriated \$26,000 for local fire protection. Operationally, NHPE is managed by an elected Fire Chief. The Town of Eden is also authorized to appoint a separate Fire Warden, responsible for issuing burning permits and monitoring forest and wildland fire vulnerability.

In addition to oversight of NHPE, Hyde Park Fire District #1 operates a public water system within the village of North Hyde Park, which serves 48 customers (including the North Hyde Park Industrial Park) and five pressurized hydrants. A small portion of the fire district's wellhead protection area (WHPA) is located in Eden, along Route 100 and the Hyde Park town line. There are no pressurized hydrants in Eden; firefighters rely on tanker engines or one of eight "dry hydrants" located throughout town for water. A dry hydrant is essentially a 4.5 to 6 inch diameter threaded pipe capable of drawing water from a nearby pond or stream. The installation of these hydrants improves overall fire safety and also provides an added benefit to property owners, in the form of lower insurance premiums.

Rescue/Ambulance Service

Emergency rescue services in Eden are provided by the Northern Emergency Medical Services (NEMS) squad – a division of Newport Ambulance Services – stationed in Johnson. Previously, the town was also served by the Eden Fast Squad, a local non-profit volunteer rescue service. The Eden Fast Squad is no longer active, but does still retain a bank account through the town, in the event volunteers would like to re-start the organization.

Emergency Coordination

The 1986 Federal Emergency Preparedness & Community Right to Know Act (EPCRA) established Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs), for the purposes of coordinating hazardous materials and emergency planning and preparedness activities throughout the country. Eden is a member of Vermont’s LEPC 11 (serving all of Lamoille County) and is entitled to and has appointed a voting member to the committee. Under Vermont statute, the town must also appoint an Emergency Management Director (EMD) charged with establishing a local organization for emergency management in accordance with the state emergency management plan. Resources for local emergency planning and coordination are available through LEPCs, Vermont Emergency Management and the Vermont Homeland Security Unit.

Health Care

The primary healthcare providers serving Lamoille County and the surrounding region are Copley Hospital and Community Health Services of Lamoille County (CHSLV), both headquartered approximately 14 miles from Eden in Morrisville. Copley Hospital is a 25 bed critical access facility that serves as an emergency care center, along with providing in-patient and out-patient services, a family-oriented birthing center, physical therapy, and rehabilitation programs. CHSLV is a federally-qualified health center, committed to providing quality medical, dental and behavioral health services to residents of Lamoille County, including the uninsured and under-insured.

Additionally, Eden residents may seek health services from among the many private practices and specialists within the region, or from other regional health centers, including North Country Hospital in Newport (30 miles), Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital in St. Johnsbury (52 miles) and Fletcher Allen Hospital in Burlington (56 miles). A range of additional health and wellness services—including family medicine, chiropractic and counseling—are also available through the Cambridge Regional Health Center (20 miles).

Recreation

There are a multitude of recreational opportunities available in Eden, regardless of the season. During the spring, summer and fall months, residents and visitors enjoy activities such as hiking, bicycling and swimming. Lake Eden, in particular, is a major seasonal attraction, surrounded by lake homes, camping sites, the Lake Eden Recreation Area (offering a public beach, picnic area and new bathhouse), and the Mt. Norris Boy Scout Reservation. Other public recreational

facilities in town include the baseball and soccer fields at Eden Central School. Both the Long Trail and Catamount Cross Country Ski Trail pass through Eden.

During winter months, the aforementioned VAST snowmobile network connects Eden to virtually anywhere else in the state. Downhill skiers will also find several resorts only a short drive from town, including Jay Peak (23 miles), Smugglers' Notch Resort (25 miles), Stowe Mountain Resort (30 miles) and Owl's Head Mountain in Masonville, Quebec (36 miles). In addition, Eden is home to the Eden Mountain Dog Sledding Club, which offers tours, lessons and lodging.

Libraries

There is no municipal library in Eden. Eden residents have access to all public libraries in Lamoille County. The general public also has access to the Johnson State College Library and Learning Center, located on the school's campus in Johnson. The Library and Learning Center allows the general public access to circulation and reference services. Additional features include a 24-hour study room; three media booths for use of videocassettes, vinyl recordings and compact disks; a two-story reading room; six study offices; a children's room; and two seminar rooms. Students at Eden Central School may also borrow books and media from the school library. Eden residents can use libraries located in surrounding communities for free or for a nominal fee.

Solid Waste Facilities

Eden is a member of the Lamoille Regional Solid Waste Management District (LRSWMD), a municipal district formed to serve Lamoille County and the neighboring Towns of Craftsbury and Worcester. Funding for LRSWMD operations is covered entirely by user and service fees and local appropriations. As required by state law, the LRSWMD has devised a 20-year plan for the management and disposal of all types of solid waste generated by its member communities. The Eden Town Garage serves as a drop-off location for recycling and bagged trash every Sunday, between the hours of 10am and 2pm. From there, waste is trucked to a landfill in Coventry. The life of this landfill depends greatly on the amount of waste sent to the facility. Through education, recycling, composting and other initiatives, the district strives to reduce the overall volume of trash generated within the district.

Water & sewer treatment

There are no central water or sewer systems available to Eden residents. Homeowners and businesses must obtain potable water through a private well and all sewage treatment must be handled by an on-site system. Under regulations that came into effect in 2007, all permitting for septic systems, leach fields and wells is now delegated to the state. To comply, individuals must apply for a Wastewater and Potable Water Supply Permit from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Municipalities retain the right to adopt and enforce a local ordinance, provided it meets or exceeds state standards and can be administered by a licensed engineer. Any complaint or discovery of a failing septic system should be referred to DEC by

the local Health Officer. Owners of failed systems will be instructed by DEC on how to bring their systems back to operating condition.

Stormwater

The term “stormwater” applies to rain and snowmelt that runs off impervious surfaces, including roofs, driveways and paved streets, rather than infiltrating into the ground and natural water cycle. As it flows into streams and lakes, stormwater runoff often picks-up pollutants, such as oils, fertilizers and sediment. Excess stormwater also contributes to erosion and increases stream volumes during peak storm events. Larger municipalities may attempt to mitigate the negative impact of excess stormwater runoff through the creation of storm sewers, and even storm water treatment plants. Beyond the network of culverts and ditches that serve the local transportation network, Eden does not maintain any stormwater infrastructure. However, developers and property owners may implement any number of affordable stormwater management strategies, often referred to as “low impact development” (LID). For a community of Eden’s size, the most appropriate residential-scale stormwater management techniques include the installation of rain gardens and other plantings, particularly on steep slopes and other areas prone to erosion.

Municipal Properties

According to the Grand List, the Town of Eden owns sixteen properties totaling 90.82 acres. These include 2.7 acres for the Town Clerk’s Office, 10.4 acres for the Town Garage, 18 acres for Eden Central School, 8 acres for the Eden Recreation Area, 11.5 acres for the Town Field and 17 acres for the former town dump property.

Other Public Lands

Table 14 (below) contains a listing of prominent state-owned lands within the town. While state parks and conservation areas serve as an amenity to both residents and visitors, the transfer of land from private to state ownership significantly reduces local tax revenue, which is necessary to support essential services. Comparatively, Eden already has a large percentage of lands in state ownership; therefore, as a general policy, the town does not support state ownership of additional land in Eden, unless the impact on the local tax base is mitigated.

Agency or Department	Description	Acreage	Use
Dept. of Forest, Parks & Recreation	Long Trail State Forest	~2,525	Recreation (hiking)
Dept. of Forest, Parks & Recreation	Green River Reservoir	~2,226	Electrical generation, recreation
Dept. of Forest, Parks & Recreation	Whitney Lane	~1.0	Former “Roller Shed”
Dept. of Fish & Wildlife	Wild Branch Management Area	~410	Recreation (hunting & fishing)
Dept. of Fish & Wildlife	Lake Eden Dam	~0.25	Dam facility
Dept. of Fish & Wildlife	Eden Access Area	~0.74	Public access to Lake Eden
VT State Colleges	Babcock Nature Preserve	~1,089	Research, natural preserve

Agency of Transportation	District 8 Garage	~2.9	Maintenance, operations
Agency of Transportation	Natural Spring	~0.2	Conservation
Total		6,269.09	
Source: Eden Grant List			

In addition to state-owned lands, other prominent parcels in public ownership include the 953 acre Mt. Norris Boy Scout Reservation (owned by the Boy Scouts of America), the Eden Corner and Dodge cemeteries (combined 13.15 acres), and the Eden Historical Society Property (1 acre).

Power generation & transmission

At this time, there are no active power-generating facilities in Eden. Specific policies pertaining to the siting of energy facilities areas are outlined within the Energy chapter. High-capacity electric transmission lines (33-35 kilovolts) do cross the town along Routes 100 and 118. The Vermont Electric Power Company's (VELCO) 2009 long-range transmission plan does not identify any reliability concerns within Lamoille County. Due to the minimal amount of commercial and industrial activity in Eden, there are no anticipated transmission capacity concerns at this time.

Financing & future needs

The breadth of community facilities and services is naturally greater in urban settings than in rural areas. Still, Eden residents are fortunate to have a range of local and regional providers to support health, safety and recreational needs. For its part, town government must balance an appropriate level of public services within a property tax structure that is not burdensome to residents – both present and prospective.

Perhaps the two highest priorities of rural municipalities are the maintenance of town highways and management of the local school district. General concerns associated with transportation and school budgeting include unfunded mandates, declining tax revenues and the increasing cost of infrastructure maintenance, associated with materials inflation and greater use. From a long-term perspective, continued residential growth in Eden could feed demand for additional public facilities such as a community center, school expansion or centralized water system. Ultimately, such decisions are several years out on the horizon and the town is currently focused on maintaining current service levels, to ensure Eden remains an affordable place to live and work.

Goals, policies & recommendations

Facilities and services have benefits and costs which are debated every year in Town Meetings and in Montpelier. For every service that is provided, there must be taxes, fees, or volunteers to support it. Some services are expected of any community – police, fire, and rescue service—while others are not – plowed sidewalks. Each town decides what services it is willing to pay for in order to receive the benefit of those services.

Goal #1: To ensure adequate facilities and services are available to protect and enhance the lives of the residents and visitors of Eden.

- **Sewage and septic:** All wastewater in Eden is appropriately treated so as to protect public health, in compliance with State Standards.
- **Water:** All household water supplies should be clean and be of an adequate supply.
- **Public safety:** To provide a safe environment in which to work, live, and play.
- **Health facilities:** For Eden to have a variety of quality local health care options.
- **Child care:** To have quality affordable local child care opportunities in Eden.
- **Community wellness:** To have adequate services available to protect and enhance the lives of residents and visitors.
- **Library facilities:** To maintain and enhance library facilities and opportunities.
- **Cemeteries:** For Eden's cemeteries to be maintained with respect and dignity and have sufficient capacity to support future need.
- **Recreation facilities:** To maintain and enhance recreational facilities and opportunities.
- **Solid waste facilities:** Eden's residents and businesses will responsibly dispose of solid waste including efforts to reduce the amount of waste generated and increase recycling.
- **Storm drainage:** To provide storm drainage facilities as needed for the proper treatment of storm runoff.

Policies:

- **Septic and sewage:** All wastewater treatment systems must meet State standards and receive a state wastewater permit before construction begins.
- **Water:** All wells must meet State established isolation distances.
- **Public safety:** All residential development shall be accessible to emergency vehicles.
- **Health facilities:** Eden supports any reasonable proposal to locate a community health or dental facility.
- **Child care:** The development of day care facilities and other related services will be supported.
- **Community wellness:** Human services should be delivered locally to the extent feasible.
- **Library facilities:** Eden will continue to work with neighboring communities to ensure Eden residents have access to libraries.
- **Cemeteries:** For Eden's cemeteries to be maintained with respect and dignity and have sufficient capacity to support future need.
- **Recreation facilities:** Eden supports efforts to improve public and private recreational facilities.
- **Solid waste:** All projects must provide for adequate removal of solid waste.
- **Storm drainage:** All projects should maintain water quality in Eden's lakes and streams through proper treatment of storm water runoff.

- **Public lands:** Before any purchase of land to be held by the public, the entity must report the anticipated loss of value from the Grand List to the Selectboard.

Recommendations:

- **Sewage and septic:** The Health Officer and Selectboard should report any failed wastewater systems to the state for compliance with state wastewater regulations.
- **Public safety:** The Selectboard should review police contracts annually to determine the best coverage for Eden.
- **Child care:** Child care facilities should comply with State regulations.
- **Community wellness:** The town may support, through annual appropriations, the efforts of regional human service providers.
- **Solid waste:** The Selectboard should review local solid waste, junk and health ordinances to ensure the proper regulations are in place to protect the public health, safety and welfare.
- **Storm drainage:** Developers are required to demonstrate compliance with state stormwater rules as well as general storm drainage standards.

Chapter 10: Natural & Productive Resources

Eden residents derive a vast amount of economic, recreational and scenic value from the town's natural resource base. The mountainous, heavily wooded landscape supports an abundance of rare and irreplaceable forests, wildlife and natural areas. These resources are integral parts of Eden's cultural history and identity, and will be critical to the town's future prosperity. This chapter provides an inventory of Eden's natural and productive resources, alongside goals and policies to support sustainable conservation practices.

Identified fragile and natural areas

In 1976, the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) created an inventory of significant natural areas throughout the state. While a natural area designation does not necessarily preserve a site from development, it does act as a tool for increasing local knowledge of Vermont's important natural heritage. Today, many sites nominated to this list are also included in the state's Fragile Area Registry. The following sites within town have been noted for their local and regional significance:

Belvidere Pond: A 97-acre body of water (otherwise known as Long Pond) located on Eden's western boundary at the foot of Belvidere Mountain. The area contains features characteristic of a Pleistocene mountain glacier and the pond's undeveloped shoreline and deep marshes also provide food and cover for waterfowl.

Babcock Nature Preserve: A 1,000-acre tract of forestland in north-central Eden, owned and maintained by Johnson State College. The preserve is open to the general public and also serves as an outdoor laboratory for environmental sciences. Both Big Muddy, Little Muddy Pond and Ritterbush Pond are located within the tract.

Big Muddy Pond: A 17-acre natural glacial tarn, located in a mountainous and heavily wooded undisturbed setting. The surrounding area includes prominent glacial features including kames, eskers and drumlins.

Little Muddy Pond: A small pond within the Babcock Nature Preserve, which includes a number of beaver ponds layered upon a mountain slope.

Ritterbush Pond: Downstream from Belvidere and Big Muddy, Ritterbush Pond has a surface area of 14 acres and contains similar glacial features. It is also a valued scenic area, with the Long Trail passing along its western shores.

White Branch Swamp: This shrub swamp and bog is located along the White Branch of the Gihon River, east of Crooks Road. The area provides food and excellent cover for waterfowl, which utilize it for nesting and during migration periods.

Beaver Meadow: This 6-acre deep marsh and shrub swamp is located along upper stretches of the Green River. The area also provides food and cover for waterfowl; as implied by the name, beavers are quite active in the meadow.

Devils Gulch: A narrow ravine north of Bowen Mountain, the floor of Devils Gulch includes massive boulders and thick fern stands, while also serving as a passage for the Long Trail.

Eden Notch: A relatively undeveloped mountain notch at an elevation of approximately 2,000 feet on the Lowell town line.

Green River Reservoir State Park: A 5,110-acre state park surrounding the Green River Reservoir—a 653-acre body of water, with a 19-mile undeveloped shoreline. The park and reservoir span the Eden/Hyde Park town boundary; the area is renowned for its remote and wilderness-like setting. While the majority of the reservoir shoreline is located in Hyde Park, 2,226 acres of the park are located in Eden, including the Upper Diggings—a 1,700-acre mapped deer habitat. The official website of the park is: <http://www.vtstateparks.com/html/grriver.htm>.

Mount Norris Scout Reservation: A 953 acre camp owned by the Boy Scouts of America, located south of Mount Norris on the northeast shore of Lake Eden. The reservation hosts scouts for week-long stays throughout the summer and has dedicated areas for swimming, fishing, hiking and archery, among other activities.

Visit www.scoutingvermont.org/Camping/MountNorris for more information.

Critical wildlife habitats

Deer wintering areas

Vermont's deer herd requires a protected habitat to endure severe winter weather and heavy snowfall. Winter deer yards provide two features important to whitetail deer survival: shelter and food. Statewide, under average winter conditions, between 6 and 8-percent of Vermont's forestland is suitable for winter deer range. Wintering areas do not change substantially between years and can be used by generations of deer over several decades, if appropriate habitat conditions are maintained. Eden's mapped deer wintering areas include the lowlands west of Route 100, the northern and southern shores of South Pond, and a corridor between Green River Reservoir State Park and East Hill.

Bear habitat

Bears also require large areas of uninterrupted forestland for breeding and travel between seasonal habitats. The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department prepared a map in 1989 to indicate general areas of black bear habitat throughout the state. According to this map, potential bear habitat exists throughout the town, outside Eden’s more developed corridors along Routes 100 and 118, and Lake Eden.

Other critical habitat areas

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department maintain an ongoing effort to identify and map special natural features in towns throughout the state. These maps demonstrate the locations of rare plant and animal species, significant wildlife communities, and other natural or fragile ecological areas. According to these maps, Belvidere and Big Muddy Pond have populations of rare flora, as shown in the attached Critical Habitat map. One noteworthy species, the Green Mountain Maidenhair Fern (*adiantum viridimontanum*), is found in Vermont only within the Towns of Eden, Lowell and Westfield, most frequently at the tailing piles of the VAG mine. Additionally, the area surrounding the asbestos mine contains serpentine soils, which support a wide variety of rare and endangered plants.

In August 2009, the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, in partnership with other federal, state and local organizations, published a report titled *Critical Paths: Enhancing Road Permeability for Wildlife in Vermont*. In essence, the study reviewed major wildlife crossings along the span of the Green Mountains, provided policy recommendations to improve habitat connectivity, and reduce points of conflict with humans and vehicles. Route 118 between the Towns of Eden and Belvidere was identified as one of the study’s priority crossings. The report noted this stretch of highway is commonly referred to as “Moose Alley.” Other wildlife observed in and around this crossing includes deer, fisher, bobcats, coyotes, beavers, minks, skunks and raccoons.

Regulatory considerations

On a regulatory basis, Act 250 criteria 8(A) mandates that development activity must not “imperil necessary wildlife habitat or endangered species in the immediate area.” According to the Vermont Natural Resource Board (NRB), the habitat must be critical to a life stage of a species and be clearly identifiable—as in the case of the mapped deer wintering and bear habitat.

Water Resources

Water resources serve a variety of forms and functions. Lakes and rivers support numerous recreational and economic activities, such as swimming, fishing and boating; groundwater and reservoirs supply homes and businesses with potable water; and wetlands store flood waters, while filtering natural and man-made contaminants. Bodies of water also provide irreplaceable habitats for a variety of aquatic and riparian plant and animal communities. Water systems also serve as repositories for runoff and seepage, including (potentially) leaching septic systems and

underground storage tanks. Pollutants can also be introduced to the water through the illegal dumping of chemicals. Ultimately, these contaminants may kill fish and plants, destroy existing and potential drinking water supplies, and preclude recreational activities.

Rivers and streams

Eden is fortunate to have abundant riparian resources. The town's numerous brooks, streams and rivers helped shape the local landscape. Most of the rivers and streams in Eden contribute to the Lamoille River watershed. The majority of Eden's lands drain into the Gihon River, which flows south to join the Lamoille River in Johnson. Other areas of town may drain into the Green River Reservoir, Wild Branch or North Branch—each of which also eventually assimilates with the Lamoille. Eden also has smaller portions of town that drain into other watersheds. Along the northern border with Lowell, streams drain north into the Missisquoi River watershed. Additionally, the northeast corner of Eden provides headwaters for Seaver Brook, which is part of the Black River watershed. Ultimately, both the Lamoille and Missisquoi watersheds are part of the Lake Champlain drainage basin, while the Black River is part of the Lake Memphremagog drainage basin.

Lakes and ponds

Eden is also fortunate to have numerous lakes and ponds throughout town that support both public and private recreational opportunities, as well as important plant and animal habitats. Eden has three lakes/ponds greater than 20 acres, as identified by the Vermont Lakes and Ponds Inventory (1981) and six smaller ponds of at least ten acres.

Eden's most prominent aquatic feature is Lake Eden, located adjacent to Route 100 at an elevation of 1,239 feet. Lake Eden has a fully developed shoreline of both permanent residences and seasonal homes and campsites. The lake's surface area measures 194 acres, with a drainage basin of approximately 2,347 acres; its maximum depth reaches 40 feet. Present uses of the lake include fishing, swimming and boating. The Lake Eden Association, a non-profit volunteer organization dedicated to the preservation of Lake Eden, operates a seasonal "greeter program" to welcome visitors and educate them about preventing the spread of Eurasian Milfoil.

South Pond is Eden's second largest water body, with a surface area of 103 acres. It is notable as the second deepest body of water in Lamoille County (estimated at 66 feet), behind only the Green River Reservoir (estimated at 93 feet deep). The northern and eastern shores of South Pond are also lined with camps and residences (albeit at a lower density than Lake Eden), supporting fishing, swimming and other forms of recreation. Unlike Lake Eden, there is no public access to South Pond. The southern shore is largely undeveloped and abuts Green River Reservoir State Park.

The aforementioned Belvidere Pond, located adjacent to Route 118, has a surface area of 93 acres and drainage basin of approximately 723 acres, with an average depth of only 6-feet. The

pond is also a popular fishing spot. Nearly all of the shoreline is under conservation through the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. Eurasian Milfoil, an invasive plant that threatens native vegetation, was recently discovered in Belvidere Pond. This plant can be fought with herbicides and by introducing weevils (a species of beetle).

Other smaller ponds found in Eden (identified in the Water Resources map in this plan's appendix) include Corey Pond, Gut Pond, Round Pond and Rush Pond. With the exception of Gut Pond (contiguous to South Pond), these smaller water bodies are generally undeveloped, or have limited development along the shoreline.

Wetlands

The term “wetland” is used to identify areas otherwise referred to as swamps, marshes, bogs or fens. Generally, wetlands share three basic characteristics:

- 1) The presence of water at or near the ground surface;
- 2) The presence of water-dependent plants occurring on site; and
- 3) Common types of soil.

Wetlands serve many important ecological functions including stormwater retention, erosion control, ground water recharge and wildlife habitat. Wetlands throughout the country have been inventoried by the U.S. Department of the Interior, producing a set of National Wetland Inventory maps for each municipality. These maps were created using aerial photographs and are useful in determining the general character of a broader area. However, in cases where detailed wetland characteristics for individual parcels are desired, a site visit and survey are usually necessary.

Wetland regulations were first adopted in Vermont in 1990, later consolidated into legislation under Act 115 in 2004 and last amended effective August 1, 2010. The current system establishes a three-tier wetland classification system. Designated Class I wetlands are considered the most environmentally significant and therefore receive the highest level of protection under state law, requiring a 100-foot vegetated buffer between any adjacent land development. There are currently no Class I wetlands located in Eden. Rather, most local wetlands are designated as Class II—protected from development by a 50-foot buffer. Lastly, Class III wetlands are those wetlands with no delineated buffer.

Riparian habitat and buffers

Vegetation—in the form of trees, shrubs, grasses and herbs situated along stream banks and river corridors—provides food and shelter for many wildlife species. The Gihon River corridor, for example, supports essential deer habitat. These and other riparian corridors should be preserved both as a matter of wildlife protection, as well as for the purposes of preventing sedimentation and maintaining stream bank stability.

Floodplain and fluvial erosion corridors

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) defines a floodplain as an area of land adjacent to rivers and streams that is subject to recurring inundation. Development within floodplains can have many potentially damaging consequences, as construction may obstruct the natural flow of water or displace soil and raise base flood elevations. Eden is among a minority of communities in Vermont that has yet to have had an official FEMA flood insurance study published and, therefore, does not have Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for the town. Rather, Eden's maps are approximate Flood Hazard Boundary Maps (FHBMs), which do not differentiate between tiers of floodplain (floodway, floodway fringe, etc.) This is likely due to the limited extent of floodplain that exists in Eden, consisting only of a small area surrounding Belvidere Pond, as well as a corridor along the Gihon River and Route 100. In 2011, the Eden Planning Commission began exploring the possibility of adopting a flood hazard bylaw to allow the town to join the National Flood Insurance program and enable residents to purchase federally-subsidized flood insurance.

The damage inflicted on Vermont by Tropical Storm Irene demonstrates that flooding and erosion threatens buildings and infrastructure far beyond the limits of mapped floodplains. In the coming years, Eden may have access mapped fluvial erosion corridors produced by ANR, demonstrating potential stream movement and areas vulnerable to erosion. Whether or not Eden elects to adopt flood hazard regulations, such maps could prove as valuable resources to current and prospective property owners as they make long-term investment decisions.

Water quality

As a byproduct of Eden's vast and well-preserved landscape of mountains, fields and forests, the town enjoys excellent water quality. All residents and businesses derive potable water from groundwater wells and springs. Accordingly, it is critical for the town to monitor those activities that introduce contaminants into the ground, such as underground storage tanks, septic fields and agricultural activities (in the form of fertilizers and animal waste). Ultimately, substantial impacts to rivers, streams, wetlands and public water systems are subject to a range of state and federal regulations, as described within this plan. While Eden does not enforce local development bylaws, the town does retain the right to participate in Act 250 proceedings and comment on development proposals—such as those impacting local water quality—based on the policies established throughout this plan.

Working landscape

The Town of Eden recognizes that farm and forest-based activities are essential to the community's economy and rural character. These prominent natural resource-based industries, including farming, logging, sugaring, silviculture and outdoor recreation, are often associated with the term "working landscape." Maintaining Eden's working landscape is critical to the community's long-term prosperity.

One mechanism helping property owners maintain working lands is the state's Use Value Appraisal (UVA) program. UVA was established by the Vermont Legislature in 1977, in recognition of the fact that tax pressures placed on farm and forestlands were contributing to their development and fragmentation throughout the state. The program allows farm and forestland to be taxed on resource production value, rather than the value of the parcel's development potential. Despite the fact that it was a popular program statewide, the growth of UVA enrollment was curtailed by a decrease in funding in 1991 and 1992, and an enrollment moratorium in tax years 1992 and 1993. During the moratorium, property owners enrolled in UVA program were allowed to withdraw from the program without penalty. Since that period, local enrollment has steadily increased. As of 2010, there were fifty parcels in Eden enrolled in UVA, totaling more than 20,099 acres, or 49.4-percent of the town's land area.

Goals, policies & recommendations

Goal #1: To maintain healthy conditions in natural areas, fragile areas, and areas with significant ecological value including wetlands, uplands, and critical plant and animal habitats; to ensure fragile and natural areas are protected and preserved; and to maintain the natural diversity of wildlife.

Goal #2: For Eden's water resources, including its lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, wetlands, groundwater, and associated habitats, to be preserved, and, where degraded, improved in order to ensure water quality for drinking, recreation, and the environment. Specific goals related to various water resources are outlined below:

- **Rivers and Streams:** To ensure Eden's rivers and streams contain clean water, a healthy riparian habitat and stable stream banks.
- **Lakes and Ponds:** To encourage maintenance of the overall health of our lakes and ponds for recreation and environmental purposes.
- **Wetlands:** To preserve and protect wetlands from pollution, filling, and any other uses or activities that will result in their degradation or a reduction in its capacity to provide wildlife habitat, flood control and water storage.
- **Flood Hazard Areas:** To protect the health, safety and welfare of the residents of Eden by discouraging development in flood hazard areas.
- **Groundwater:** To encourage maintenance of the quality and quantity of local groundwater supplies, per state regulations.
- **Water Quality:** To maintain and, where degraded, improve the water quality within the town.

Fragile/Natural Areas and Wildlife Resources

Policies:

- Eden supports voluntary efforts by private landowners to maintain and enhance wildlife habitat.

- Eden supports maintaining land for agriculture and forestry.
- Eden supports efforts to promote active land management through use and growth of e-commerce and telecommunications tools such as the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Landowner/Hunter Access Registry) http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/wildlife_hunteraccess.cfm) and www.Yourfarmstand.com

Recommendations:

- As a result of living in Eden, many landowners have an ethic to be good stewards of the Land. The Planning Commission recognizes that more can be accomplished by education, advising, and assisting landowners with their natural and wildlife resource concerns than could be accomplished through regulations.
- Given the large amount of State-owned land within Eden, public use of this land for recreation, wildlife management (including hunting), and timber management should be allowed and encouraged.

Water Resources

Policies:

- Development within or proximate to designated rivers and streams should follow Vt. Fish and Wildlife Guidelines for Stream Crossings and should protect and maintain a natural vegetative buffer.
- All bridges and culverts should be built to town and State standards.
- Educate lakeshore property owners about the importance of maintaining lakeshore vegetation.
- The Town of Eden encourages support for lake and pond association grant applications to monitor milfoil and other lake issues.
- Any development related to wetlands shall adhere to state regulations.
- Development should be discouraged in flood hazard areas. Agriculture, recreation fields, parks, and open space are all appropriate uses of flood hazard areas.
- Per State regulations, withdrawal of groundwater should not exceed the recharge rate over a reasonable period of time. No form of waste disposal or storage of possible contaminants should be permitted in high-water table and groundwater recharge areas.
- All construction should provide adequate erosion control per state guidelines and regulations.
- Agriculture and forestry must abide by State Guidelines (Accepted Agricultural Practices and Accepted Management Practices.)

Recommendations:

- Eden supports local and county conservation agencies whose goal is the protection of the rivers and streams in the area.

- Eden may work with regional organizations such as the Lamoille County Planning Commission and Lamoille County Conservation District to educate shoreline property owners about the benefits of shoreline vegetation and best practices for maintaining it.
- Eden encourages cooperation between these regional organizations and the Lake Eden Association.
- Public education and signage should be placed at all boat accesses and public shoreland to notify the public of Eurasian Milfoil and how to protect the lake.
- An updated National Wetlands Inventory Map should be posted in the Town Office for reference.
- The Planning Commission should continue to consider strategies to protect flood hazard areas.
- The Planning Commission should review annual State reports related to individual groundwater protection areas.
- The Town should encourage all residents to dispose of household hazardous waste in a proper manner. The pickup of such materials should be inexpensive and easy to encourage compliance.

Chapter 11: Information Technology & Telecommunications

The availability of high-speed internet and mobile phone service is not only a quality of life amenity, but an essential public safety and economic development tool in the 21st century. Due to a variety of factors—including Vermont’s rural character, low population density and mountainous terrain—the state has yet to achieve full wireless telecommunications coverage. Although cell phone service is relatively strong in town, Eden remains among those communities with limited broadband service penetration. This chapter is intended to express Eden’s support for broader telecommunications access, while acknowledging the land use and aesthetic impacts associated with extending internet and mobile phone services.

Vermont Telecommunications Plan (2011)

In May 2011, the Vermont Department of Public Service released a new telecommunications plan, which sets forth an aggressive agenda of outcomes to be achieved by the end of 2013. These include:

- Universal availability of mass-market broadband;
- Fiber broadband connectivity to all anchor institutions and large businesses; and,
- Universal availability of mobile service along roadways and near universal availability statewide.

The implementation of these goals will be aided by a combination of state and local investments, as well as federal funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) granted to the Vermont Telecommunications Authority (VTA), the Vermont Telephone Company (VTel) and other service providers. In 2012, the Lamoille County Planning Commission published a Regional Broadband Plan to encourage broader technology utilization among residents, businesses and non-profits in advance of the arrival of statewide wireless coverage.

Point telecommunications service

Point telecommunication facilities (or point-to-point networks) are those designed to provide services to a fixed-point, such as a home or businesses. Residents commonly have up to three point facilities in their home: cable or satellite television, home telephone, and internet service. However, such point systems are swiftly consolidating, so that it is now possible to have a single-point telecommunication facility serving multiple functions: a cable line used for television, internet and voice simultaneously.

Telephone

In many areas of the country, the hard-wired home telephone (otherwise known as a landline) is being replaced by mobile devices and web-based services, such as Skype. However, given the vast areas of the region without mobile phone coverage, most families still retain a landline.

Fairpoint Communications is the current home telephone service provider in town; Eden is part of the “635” service exchange, which also includes the Town of Johnson.

Television

At the time of this plan’s publication, cable television service is not available in Eden. According to the 2011 *Vermont – Telecommunications Market Analysis Report* published by the Department of Public Service, less than 50-percent of Lamoille County households have access to cable television. Residents across Eden and rural Vermont do, however, have access to a range of competitively-priced television options via satellite providers such as Dish Network and DirecTV.

Internet

High-speed internet service can be delivered by one of several mediums—DSL, cable, fiber optic satellite, or fixed wireless (WISP). At the time of this plan’s adoption, WISP, cable and fiber optic coverage is largely unavailable in Eden. However, high-speed DSL service is accessible to most residences. Other alternatives are generally considered less-than-ideal, either on the basis of cost (satellite) or performance (dial-up). In the end, comprehensive statewide broadband coverage is likely to be achieved initially through a wireless network. The Town of Eden recognizes that access to high-speed internet is a primary consideration for home-based businesses, telecommuters and vacationers who may consider Eden as a destination.

Mobile telecommunications service

At the time of this plan’s adoption, the fastest growing market of internet devices is among “smartphones,” which include operating platforms such as the iPhone, Android and Blackberry. Generally, smartphones combine the voice capabilities of a mobile phone, with an internet browser and other data applications, known as “apps.” Increasingly, residents and visitors expect both voice and data coverage wherever they travel, to support their leisure and business-related internet usage.

Additionally, there are a growing number of Wireless Fidelity (or WiFi) hotspots throughout the state that allow for mobile telecommunications access. A WiFi network is essentially a point telecommunications facility that broadcasts a wireless signal through a router and/or series of signal repeaters. A range of devices, including personal computers, notebooks, tablets and smartphones can receive a WiFi signal for data or voice. WiFi is currently available at Eden Central School, Lanpher Memorial Library in Hyde Park, and freely throughout downtown Morrisville.

Telecommunications facilities

As a byproduct of the growing demand for telecommunications coverage, the state will need to construct an infrastructure of fiber optic lines and wireless towers to extend service to Vermont’s dispersed population of residents and businesses. Although the Town of Eden acknowledges that

its residents demand world-class telecommunications, they accept the fact that infrastructure will need to be built in adherence to the policies listed below:

- In order to minimize tower proliferation, developers should co-locate antenna on existing towers, whenever possible.
- To minimize conflicts with scenic values, facility design and construction shall employ the following principles:
 - A) Where feasible, be sited in areas not highly visible to the traveling public, or from residential areas, historic districts and public lands and outdoor recreation areas, including hiking trails and beaches;
 - B) Be located in forested areas, or be sufficiently landscaped to screen the lower sections of towers and related ground fixtures from public vantage points, such as trails, roads or water bodies;
 - C) Utilize materials, architectural styles, color schemes, lighting fixtures and other design elements to promote aesthetic compatibility with surrounding uses and to avoid adverse visual impacts;
 - D) Where prominent views of a site exist, be located downgrade of the ridge so as not to exceed the elevation of the immediate ridge;
 - E) Where construction of access roads is involved, to minimize visibility, be situated to follow the contour of the land and to avoid open fields or meadows;
 - F) To avoid peaks and ridges identified in the Historic, Scenic & Archaeological Resources chapter of this plan; and
 - G) No external lights.
- In planning for telecommunication facilities, consideration shall be given to the environmental limitations of any given site. Impacts of the use on wildlife habitat, soil erosion, forestry and agricultural lands, and similar resources should be carefully addressed. Projects that materially impact these resources shall be discouraged.

Goals, policies & recommendations

Goal #1: To efficiently maintain high-quality, environmentally sound and affordable public services and facilities.

Goal #2: To support investments in infrastructure that benefits the local economy, while avoiding negative environmental and social impacts.

Goal #3: For Eden to have access to high-speed internet and telecommunications services meeting a wide variety of information and communication needs.

Policies:

- Eden supports investment in telecommunications infrastructure in town, provided aesthetic concerns are addressed in accordance with the recommendations above.

Recommendations:

- Eden should participate in decisions related to development of telecommunications infrastructure at the State and Local level.
- Encourage growth of E-ventures as they develop, including those that support agriculture, forestry, and hunting.

Chapter 12: Topography & Land Use

As alluded to in the preceding chapters, Eden’s landscape is dominated by rolling hills and flowing streams. Elevations range from over 3,100 feet above sea level on the slopes of Belvidere Mountain, to a low of approximately 860 feet along the Gihon River, near the Hyde Park town line. The highest summit is Eden Mountain (within the Lowell Range) with a peak elevation of 2,640 feet (see the Contour Map in the Appendix).

Topography

The hills and mountains of Eden provide a beautiful scenic character to the town. However, the factors that contribute to this effect also provide limitations to development. For decades, Vermont has established an upper limit for development at 2,500 feet. Areas above this elevation are typically slower to recover from disturbance and are at greater risk to erosion. All development activities, including forestry operations, require an Act 250 permit above 2,500 feet. The aforementioned Belvidere and Eden mountains are the only such locations in town. Future land uses over 2,500 feet should be limited to hiking trails and wildlife habitat. Logging should be permitted, only with an approved forest management plan that will protect water quality and prevent soil erosion.

Many communities in Lamoille County have also established a policy to limit or restrict growth above 1,500 feet. An examination of the Eden Contour Map shows little development above this elevation, with one significant exception. A majority of East Hill Road—a Class 2 town highway, which runs southeast from Eden Mills into Craftsbury—is above 1,500 feet and multiple residences have been built on adjacent properties. Additional areas above 1,500 that have experienced some level of development include a portion of North Road, a few structures east of Route 100 near the Lowell town line, and a small number of camps on the Class 4 portion of Cooper Hill Road, near border with Hyde Park.

Undeveloped lands over 1,500 feet should continue to be used as they have for the past two centuries—for recreation and forestry. With the exception of lands along North Road and East Hill Road, development should be limited to seasonal camps. Preserving these lands will serve to protect wildlife habitat and large tracts of forestland for future generations.

Slopes

A second factor presenting potential limitations to development is slope. Steep slopes introduce complications when they are cleared for development and timber extraction, as downhill erosion increases as vegetation is removed. Slopes of greater than 30-percent over distances of more than 50 feet are generally considered unsuitable for development. Some soils (particularly clay) may be unstable even at slopes as shallow as 5 to 8-percent. Overall, Eden’s soil characteristics are generally stable to at least 30-percent, provided they have some degree of vegetation cover (such as grass or trees). The Topographic Limitations Map (Appendix) identifies those parts of town with slopes greater than 20-percent. These areas impose limitations on residential

development, due to conventional septic rules established by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

Unlike lands above 2,500 feet, there is no state regulation of steep slopes, other than DEC septic and wastewater system permitting rules. Like other development-related issues, municipalities have the option to establish policies on slope within the Town Plan and other development bylaws, where applicable.

Vermont Asbestos Group Mine

The deposits of ultramafic rock on Belvidere Mountain were discovered to contain chrysotile asbestos in the late 1800's. A commercial mine was established in 1900 and ran, with some interruptions in production until 1994. In 1975, the employees purchased the mine from the parent company, G-1 Holdings. At the time, it was the largest employee owned company in the United States.

Increased environmental and health regulations and decreased demand for the asbestos product finally closed the mine permanently. The site is a desired destination for geologists, mineralogists and rock hounds as garnets, Vermont jade and additional unique minerals are found there. It is also the home of the Green Mountain Maiden Hair Fern (*Adiantum Viridimontanum*), a rare and endangered plant that thrives at the base of the tailings piles, remnants of the mining process.

The community has considered the possibility of designating the Vermont Asbestos Group (VAG) site as an EPA Superfund site on the National Priorities list. The vote at Town Meeting in March 2012 in both Eden and Lowell was conclusive. Both towns voted against a Superfund site by substantial majority. With the mine now closed, any significant exposure to asbestos fibers is now well in the past. The VT Department of Health concluded that there are no increased incidences of disease related to asbestos exposure in Eden or any surrounding towns.

A feasibility study conducted by the National Resources Energy Laboratory in conjunction with EPA is currently assessing the potential for a solar installation to generate electricity at the mine site.

Assessment of Existing Land Uses

Eden's topographic and geographic characteristics have allowed for a rural, residential development pattern that has left preserved scenic ridgelines, riparian corridors and vast tracts of forestland and open space. These natural resources are defining characteristics of the town and contribute to the community's vibrancy, economy and overall quality of life.

As noted in the Economic Development chapter, Eden does not have a dense commercial or industrial base. Rather, the town functions largely as a bedroom community for neighboring job centers, with residents attracted to Eden's quiet rural character and convenient location along

Routes 100 and 118. These assets have attracted an ever-growing number of residents to town, as illustrated in **Figure 14**.

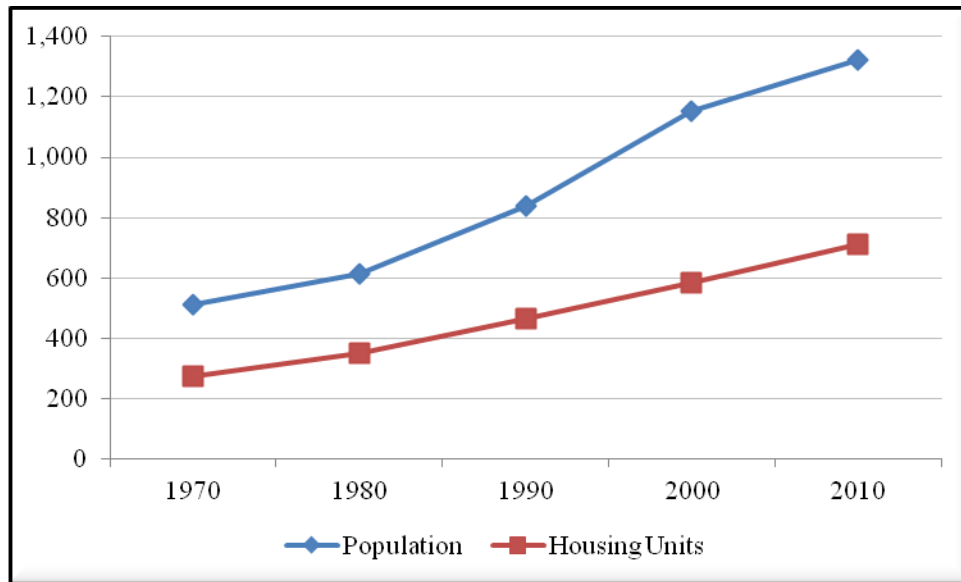


Figure 14: A comparison in the growth of the local population and rise in number of housing units in Eden between 1970 and 2010; Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

As shown above, Eden’s population (and accordingly the number of housing units in town) has grown at a steady rate since 1970. In fact, between 2000 and 2010, when the state’s population grew by less than 3-percent, Eden’s population increased nearly 15-percent—tied for 12th highest among Vermont towns with more than 1,000 residents. For the most part, this growth has can be characterized as large lot, single-family residences and seasonal homes.

Regional trends within the last two decades demonstrate a declining population throughout southern parts of the state, with concentrated growth in north-central Vermont including Chittenden, Franklin, Caledonia and Lamoille County. A strong and resilient labor market in greater-Burlington—particularly through the recent recession—foreshadows sustained growth within this region for years to come. As much of Eden is within an hour commute of Chittenden County and less than 40-miles from Jay Peak Resort (which is in the process of a substantial, long-term expansion), Eden can reasonably anticipate continued residential growth in the near-term.

Future Land Use

The Town of Eden has not elected to enact regulatory measures, such as zoning or subdivision bylaws, to direct future land uses. However, in accordance with statute (24 V.S.A. § 4382), this chapter of the plan is intended to establish a vision for “prospective land uses, indicating those areas proposed for forests, recreation, agriculture, residence, commerce, industry, public and semi-public uses and open spaces reserved for flood plain, wetland protection, or other

conservation purposes.” This guide for future land uses in Eden is not regulatory in nature, insofar as it does not prescribe development standards for properties located in town. However, Act 250 criterion 10 establishes that development proposals triggering Act 250 jurisdiction must be in compliance with all duly adopted local and regional plans. Accordingly, this chapter does provide an opportunity to broadly characterize the types and scales of development appropriate in different areas of town.

The 2007 Eden Town Plan established six land use districts: Rural Residential, Eden Mills, East Hill, Shorelines, Forest, Natural Areas, as well as two Overlay Districts. Please refer to the Land Use map (Appendix) for specific district boundaries. Additional information on these non-regulatory designations is described in the following paragraphs:

Rural Residential

- *Description:* The Rural Residential district includes all lands not otherwise classified; generally those below 1,500 feet in elevation between the Green Mountains and the Lowell Range.
- *Purpose:* This district is expected to accommodate the vast majority of future growth in town.
- *Present Land Uses:* Due to the large area of this district, it accommodates a diversity of land uses. It currently includes residential, agricultural, forest and other natural resource-based activities, as well as a limited number of commercial uses. Most developed lands are within a few hundred feet of the existing road network.
- *Future Land Uses:* The district should continue to be used as described above. Additionally, future development must respect on-site environmental constraints, including slope, soil capacity and wildlife habitat. Preservation of open space for continued use in forestry and agriculture is also desirable.

Eden Mills

- *Description:* The Eden Mills boundary is established in accordance with the Eden Mills Historic District, designated by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation.
- *Purpose:* This area represents the historic village center of Eden. Due to its proximity to Lake Eden, this area is expected to continue to be used for commercial and residential purposes.
- *Present Land Uses:* Eden Mills is currently characterized by residential, commercial and public land uses. Many structures within the district have historic value.
- *Future Land Uses:* The district should continue to be used as described above. Mixed-uses and commercial development providing services to Eden residents are encouraged in this district. Any development or redevelopment in this area should respect the historic character of the district. Improvements in pedestrian infrastructure would help connect properties to the recreational areas surrounding Lake Eden.

East Hill

- *Description:* East Hill Road is one of the few developed areas in town above 1,500 feet in elevation. The district includes all lands within 500 feet of the road, from the point at which it rises above 1,500 feet until reaching the Craftsbury town line.
- *Purpose:* East Hill Road is a Class 2 town highway. However, the provision of services to this area can be expensive, given the high elevation and remoteness of the landscape. Therefore, larger-scale development in the East Hill District is discouraged.
- *Present Land Uses:* This area is currently used for residential purposes, but also includes agriculture and forestry.
- *Future Land Uses:* East Hill should continue to be used as described above. Development should be limited to low density and seasonal dwellings, where possible, to avoid winter emergency services. Forestry and agriculture, including value-added operations, may also occur in this district.

Shorelines

- *Descriptions:* The shoreline districts include all lands within 500 feet of the three major water bodies in town: Lake Eden, South Pond and Belvidere Pond.
- *Purpose:* Each of the three bodies of water is unique, but the overall goals of the district are the same—to protect water quality and the scenic character of the surrounding areas.
- *Present Land Uses:* Lake Eden has a developed shoreline, with public access. Much of the residential development consists of seasonal camps, but year-round dwellings are becoming more common. The shores of South Pond are privately owned and developed at a far lower density. Lastly, Belvidere Pond has an undeveloped shoreline and should be protected as a natural area.
- *Future Land Uses:* The goal for the Shoreline district is to allow the types of land uses found along each of the respective bodies of water to continue. As specific issues arise, they should be addressed, especially to the extent that they impact the water quality or scenic values of these areas.

Forest

- *Descriptions:* The Forest districts (east and west) are generally lands over 1,500 feet in elevation, excluding North Road and East Hill Road, as well as areas on the “back sides” of these hills out to the Belvidere and Craftsbury town lines.
- *Purpose:* These areas have been chosen to conserve forest and wildlife resources. They are considered difficult to develop, due to the presence of wetlands, steep slopes and shallow soils, or based on their distance from maintained town highways. In the Forest west area, there is also greater concern for the protection of scenic values, based on the nearby presence of the Long Trail.

- *Present Land Uses:* The Forest district is currently used for forestry and wildlife habitat. A limited amount of agriculture and residential development also exists, primarily in the Forest east area.
- *Future Land Uses:* The district should continue to be used for forestry and wildlife habitat. Forestry uses may include value-added operations such as onsite processing. Recreational uses with limited structures may also occur in this area. (*For example, the Eden Dog Sledding center*)

Natural Areas

- *Descriptions:* The Natural Areas districts include separately designated Long Trail and Mountain areas. The Long Trail area includes the Babcock Nature Preserve and all the land within 500 feet of the delineated watershed line and Long Trail. The Mountain area includes all lands over 2,500 feet in elevation, which are regulated by Act 250.
- *Purposes:* These areas are chosen for protection from development; no residential or commercial uses should be allowed.
- *Present Land Uses:* The Natural Areas district is generally reserved for wildlife and recreation. There is limited existing development associated with the Babcock Nature Preserve, but it is intended for ecological research and protection.
- *Future Land Uses:* The district should continue to be used as described above. No development should occur in these areas.

Overlay Districts

Overlay districts are generally created to provide additional protections on the lands to which they apply, without changing the underlying land use designation. There are two identified overlays within Eden:

- *Flood Hazard Overlay:* This area consists of the FEMA delineated Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), it is identified to protect the safety and welfare of residents and to prevent economic losses from flooding.
- *Wellhead Protection Overlay:* As noted in the Natural & Productive Resources chapter, a small portion of the well shield for the North Hyde Park public water system falls within Eden. This area is protected by public water supply regulations established by the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

Timing and intensity of growth

Future development in Eden should be timed so as not to exceed the town's ability to extend and maintain public services, including but not limited to, local highways and educational facilities. The Town of Eden has a responsibility to its taxpayers to continue to provide the highest level of service, within a tax structure that is not burdensome to current or prospective residents. Future development—both residential and non-residential—should be encouraged in a manner that is sensitive to this responsibility.

Goals, policies & recommendations

Goal #1: For development and growth in Eden to occur in a reasonable and sustainable manner so as to protect the natural resource base, use services efficiently and preserve Eden's rural character and historic settlement patterns.

Goal #2: To encourage development that provides economic opportunities and employment for Eden residents.

Policies:

- The clustering and/or siting of development is encouraged in order to replicate traditional patterns of development, to protect rural and scenic character, and to maintain contiguous tracts of resources and open land.
- All development within the town must be pursued with strict regard to the capability of the soils to support it, per state wastewater regulations.
- Further fragmentation of productive agricultural and forestland should be avoided. Continued access to productive forest and farmland will be encouraged.
- Earth resource operations (sand and gravel pits and stone/mineral quarries) shall comply with Act 250 regulations.
- Development in the floodplain is discouraged.

Recommendations:

- Encourage forest landowners to continue to work with the County Forester.
- Encourage participation in Agricultural Extension Service programs.
- Eden should work with LCPC and other organizations to educate landowners about ways to minimize risks for development in Flood Hazard Areas.

Chapter 13: Implementation

Each of the chapters in this town plan established a set of recommendations to accomplish the goals and objectives. With more than 50 recommendations throughout this plan, there is no way each and every task can be completed. Over any time period, money or resources may become available to tackle an issue and the policies and recommendations will be in place to take advantage of them.

Implementation can take place in big and small steps. Some chapter recommendations can be undertaken over the course of a few years. With that in mind, the Planning Commission would like to recommend a few projects for the Selectboard and Planning Commission to accomplish in the next five years. In this way this plan will hopefully lead to some direct actions and take the town a step closer to their goals for the future.

Recommended Actions for Implementation of the Town Plan

Over the next five years the town, Planning Commission, and Selectboard should take action to implement parts of this plan.

Selectboard

One of the Selectboard's primary responsibilities is the road system and municipal infrastructure. Roads are an important factor in municipal taxes and help determine where future development is possible. Having clear highway policies helps the Selectboard decide on reclassification of roads, to what standards roads need to be built, and how much say the town has in the construction and location of driveways. Therefore, it is recommended that within the next five years:

- The Selectboard should develop a basic road surface management schedule for budgeting needed road repairs and major improvements.
- The town should review State assessments of bridge conditions and develop a long term budget for road/bridge repairs. The Planning Commission encourages the Selectboard to develop a "rainy day fund" that addresses emergency repairs to roads, bridges and culverts.
- The Selectboard should continue to update road and bridge standards as needed.
- The town may consider purchasing the rights to a gravel pit or to purchase a property with sufficient gravel to provide for the town's needs in the future.
- The Selectboard should encourage the Vermont Agency of Transportation to make needed repairs and upgrades to Route 100 and 118.
- The Selectboard should encourage the State to provide funding for enforcement of violations of state regulations related to abandoned vehicles and junkyards.

Planning Commission

In addition to working with other groups and boards in town, the Planning Commission should undertake the following priorities:

- The Planning Commission should pursue funding, perhaps through a municipal planning grant program, to develop a strategy for moving forward with the goals of this Plan.
- If the number of persons moving into Eden becomes a major issue, the Planning Commission may consider growth management tools.

Other groups or individuals

Other groups were mentioned throughout this plan. The Planning Commission encourages groups to participate in the overall Goals of this Plan. These groups include:

- Eden Historical Society
- Eden Cemetery Association
- Local Officials
- Lamoille Housing Partnership
- School Boards
- Lake Eden Association
- Eden EPIC (Eden People Inspiring Community)

How the Plan Relates to the Regional Plan and Adjacent Municipalities

The Eden Planning Commission and Selectboard look forward to cooperating with our neighboring towns to improve services and planning for all residents and visitors. This town plan is one step towards achieving this goal. The Planning Commission and Selectboard believe this Town Plan complements and enhances the efforts of our surrounding communities.

Hyde Park: Hyde Park is Eden’s neighbor to the south. Eden and North Hyde Park share a volunteer fire department. Except along Route 100, the border between the two towns is sparsely populated. The two towns share portions of the Green River Reservoir State Park as well. North Hyde Park is the closest “village center” to Eden and is the site of a proposed Vermont National Guard Armory. Growth in North Hyde Park Village and the North Hyde Park Industrial Park may create future opportunities and impacts for Eden residents. This town plan supports the Hyde Park Town Plan.

Johnson: Eden connects to Johnson along the southwest edge. Ober Hill Road and Tree Farm Road are roads connecting the two towns. One of Johnson and Eden’s connections is the Gihon River, whose headwaters lie in Eden and whose confluence is in the village of Johnson. Johnson’s Plan designates a forest conservation district above 1,500 feet elevation, primarily in the area around Laraway Mountain. This town plan supports the Johnson Town Plan.

Belvidere: Belvidere and Eden are connected via Route 118. The western border of town falls within the North Branch Lamoille watershed. Activities in these areas, especially around Belvidere Pond, may impact water quality downstream; therefore, it is important to residents in Belvidere. Belvidere’s forest conservation district includes a large contiguous land area around Laraway Mountain for future forestry, wildlife and recreational opportunities. This town plan supports the Belvidere Town Plan.

Lowell: Historically Eden and Lowell shared a strong connection. The VAG Asbestos mine straddles the town line between the two towns. The question of designating the site as a “Superfund” was voted down by both towns at the 2012 Town Meeting. Route 100 and North Road connect Lowell and Eden. Eden and Lowell should cooperate to encourage the Vermont Agency of Transportation to make needed repairs and upgrades to Route 100.

Montgomery & Albany: While technically adjoining communities, Montgomery and Albany share only a very small border with Eden, but no roads connect the towns. Albany Road connects to the Town of Albany after crossing through the southeastern corner of Lowell.

Craftsbury: Craftsbury and Eden are connected via East Hill Road and the Square Road. Recent development in Eden and Craftsbury has increased traffic volumes on East Hill Road. Both communities are rural and conflicts in land use are not expected.

Regional Plan: The Lamoille County Regional Plan is guided by three overall objectives: (1) to guide growth into compact settlements; (2) to encourage compact development and protect the working landscapes; and (3) to protect the region’s natural systems and valuable agricultural and silvicultural resources. Eden strongly prefers that implementation of these Regional Goals occur through non-regulatory and non-compulsory means. These regional objectives are compatible with the Land Use Section of this Plan. Eden notes that the Town does not contain an existing compact settlement, and that Eden residents will continue to utilize regional development centers in other communities.

Appendix: Maps

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