Fairfax, Vermont Town Plan

Adopted by the Fairfax Selectboard on September 22, 2008

Acknowledgements

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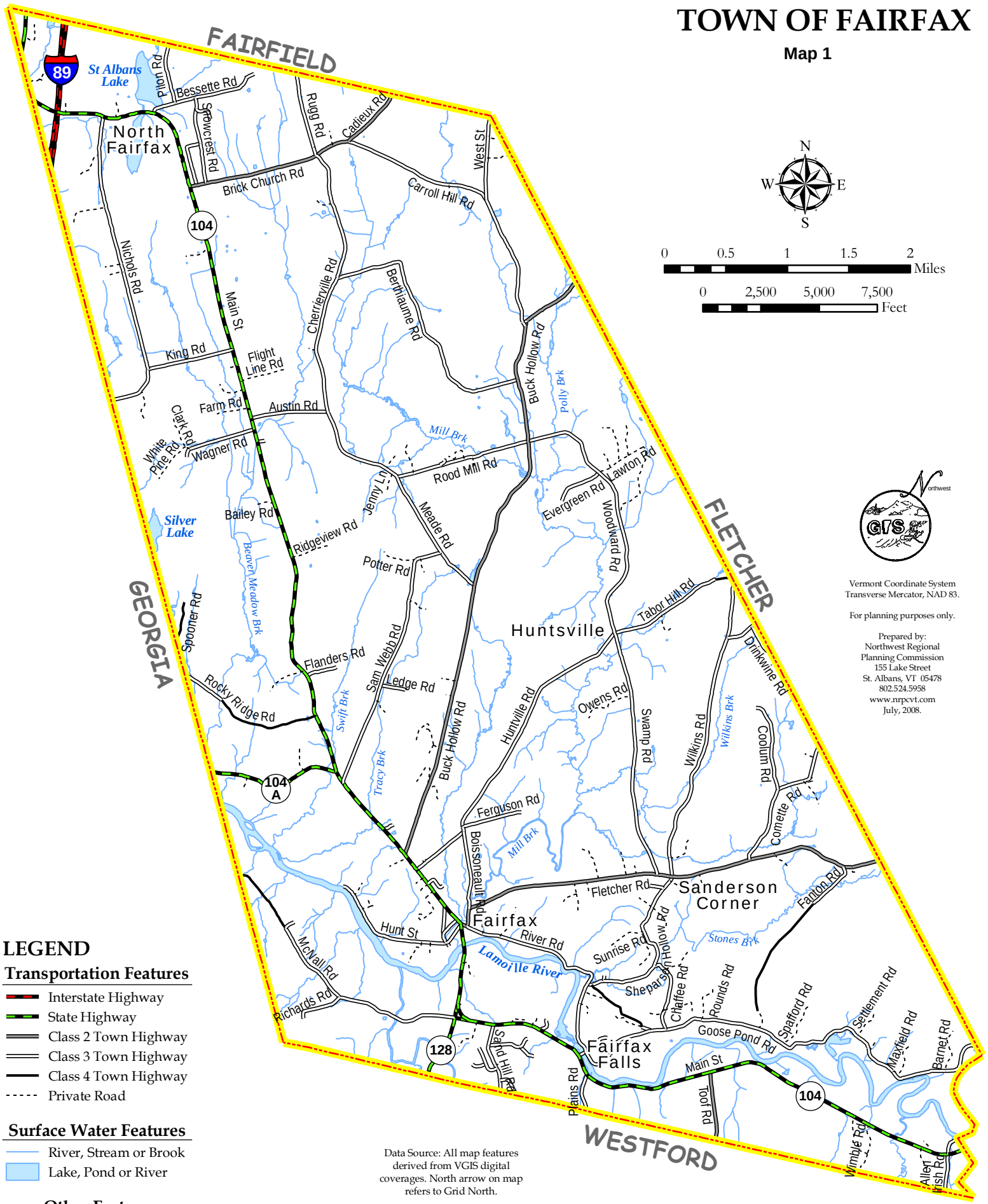

LEGEND

Transportation Features
- Interstate Highway
- State Highway
- Class 2 Town Highway
- Class 3 Town Highway
- Class 4 Town Highway
- Private Road

Surface Water Features
- River, Stream or Brook
- Lake, Pond or River

Other Feature
- Town Boundary

Data Source: All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

Location: z:/gis/projects/county/franklin/fairfax/townplan08/final/basemap

Vermont Coordinate System
Transverse Mercator, NAD 83.

For planning purposes only.

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CHAPTER 1: PURPOSE

THE PLANNING PROCESS

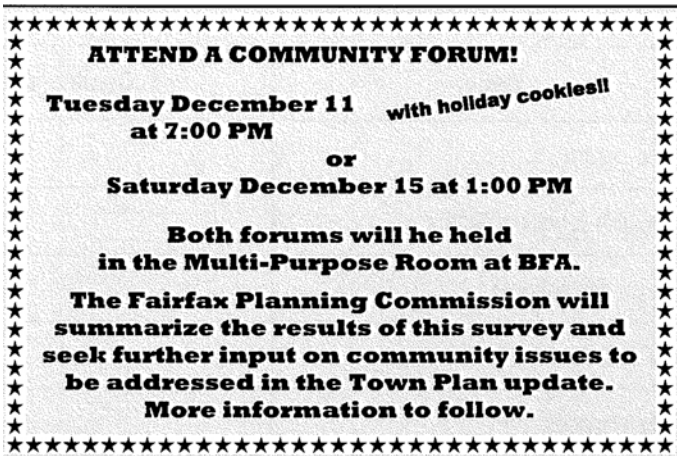
The Town of Fairfax is engaged in a planning process to encourage the appropriate development of land, facilities, and services located within the Town in a manner that will promote the health, safety, and general welfare of its residents. The Fairfax Town Plan provides a framework for the achievement of recognized community goals and policies, while the planning process serves to coordinate public and private actions with these goals and policies. A Town plan can serve as a foundation for implementation devices such as zoning bylaws, subdivision regulations, and capital programming. A plan can also serve as an important function in the evaluation of major development under Vermont's Land Use and Development Law, Act 250.

Planning is a means of preparing for the future in order to overcome problems, meet opportunities, and achieve community goals. In response to changes in the community, problems must be addressed by comprehensive forethought to ensure that future decisions will provide long-term solutions rather than stopgap measures. Since communities exist primarily for the health and enjoyment of those who live in them, it follows that the nature, location, and timing of any future development should be determined by the people of Fairfax rather than left solely to chance. The intent is not to eliminate any existing land uses or stop all future development, but to encourage planned growth in appropriate locations within the Town.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Citizen participation is important in all levels of the planning process. Opportunities for citizen involvement have been assured throughout the Plan update process through several ongoing initiatives (Figure 1.2). These efforts are intended to foster the broadest level of public participation possible, and to utilize the planning process as a vehicle for exercising an inclusive, community-wide vision for the future of Fairfax.

Figure 1.1



Notice for the public forums held for the update of this Town Plan

Figure 1.2

Citizen Participation:
A History of Involvement

The first meeting of the Fairfax Planning Commission was held March 22, 1971. The first Town Plan was adopted in 1984. Since the expiration of that Plan in 1989 and the subsequent revisions, citizen input has been utilized in formulating plan updates, through several unique and ongoing ways:

1990 A community survey was mailed to all postal patrons in the Town of Fairfax. The survey received 395 responses. Questions were focused on identifying community needs and concerns, and on defining areas which are most important to protect from future development.

1991-95 Citizen committees were developed to formulate goals, objectives, and policies regarding the future of the Town. Focus areas included recreation; business and commerce; housing; historical and cultural resources; agriculture and natural resources; and roads. Reports from each group were submitted to the Planning Commission for further action.

1997 A follow-up survey similar to that of 1990 was distributed to Fairfax residents. Results were tabulated and compared to results from 1990 to gauge similarities and changes in citizen ideas and concerns.

Two public forums were held to receive citizen input and comments regarding the draft Town Plan.

2002-03 Citizen focus groups were formed according to geography, to stimulate discussion and receive input. The Planning Commission coordinated ten separate meetings through late 2002 into early 2003.

2007-08 A community survey was mailed to all postal patrons in the Town of Fairfax. The survey received a 19% response rate. The survey asked questions about the rate and pattern of growth in the community, important community issues, and the quality of town services.

Once adopted, the comprehensive plan allows the town to legitimately and reasonably exercise its authority with regard to the course of its future growth and development, and becomes essential to the decision-making process. It forms the basis for policy implementation at the local level and permits greater participation in regional and state planning efforts and project review (e.g. Act 250). Public and private interests are made aware of the desires of the Town through stated goals and policies.

PLANNING COMMISSION ROLES

It is the charge of the Fairfax Planning Commission to prepare and periodically update a comprehensive town plan and bylaws to implement the plan. State law requires that the plan be updated and readopted every five years to remain in effect.

The Fairfax Planning Commission has a responsible role in all phases of the planning process. This role does not end with the adoption of a comprehensive plan, but continues in the following areas:

Plan implementation, which may include the preparation of appropriate bylaws and programs directing the course of future growth and development (e.g., zoning and or subdivision regulations);

- Preparation of further studies to identify and plan for specific problems or situations that may arise; and

- The regular review and revision of the plan, bylaws, and programs to ensure that they reflect changing conditions and requirements.

WHAT'S IN THE PLAN?

The plan for the Town of Fairfax must consider many inter-related factors. It is helpful to understand Fairfax's history and traditions to give a perspective for considering our present and our future. Present trends and their likely future impact must be analyzed. These components plus a knowledge of the natural resource limitations and suitability for various uses provide the basis for determining what is possible and what may be desirable in our Future. To begin, broad public goals should be stated. Consideration of these in light of Fairfax's past and present enables specific policies and land use, transportation, and recreation plans to be developed.

The format for this document is based on Section 4382 of Title 24, Chapter 117, Vermont Statutes Annotated, which outlines required plan components. They are, briefly:

1) a statement of growth related goals, policies, and programs;

2) a land use plan;

3) a transportation plan;

4) a utility and facility plan;

5) a statement of policies on the preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas, scenic, and historic features and resources;

6) an educational facilities plan;

7) a recommended plan implementation program;

8) a statement indicating plan compatibility with plans and trends in adjacent municipalities, the region, and state;

9) an energy plan; and

10) a housing element.

OVERALL COMMUNITY GOALS

Although specific goals, policies, and implementation strategies are included within each appropriate section, several broad statements may be made regarding the future of Fairfax in the focus areas previously described. These are included below as overall community goals.

1) To accomplish the goals, policies, and implementation strategies set forth by the Town of Fairfax Plan to the extent that they comply with all applicable state and federal regulations, rules and standards.

2) To develop, maintain and implement any plans or studies as necessary to achieve the goals and policies set forth by the Town of Fairfax Plan.

3) To preserve the natural, cultural, and historic features and activities which define the rural character and scenic beauty of Fairfax.

4) To promote safe and healthful housing for all segments of the population.

5) To maintain and enhance recreational opportunities for all residents.

6) To insure the provision of efficient, environmentally sound public utilities.

7) To build and maintain a strong and diverse local economy, encourage the efficient use of public funds, and to maintain a sound fiscal balance.

8) To provide broad access to quality educational and vocational services which respond to the needs of a growing community.

9) To promote the efficient use of energy and encourage the development of renewable energy resources.

10) To focus future development toward areas most suitable for that purpose, and to promote planned development, which does not exceed the physical capability of the land to support it.

11) To ensure that future growth, including commercial and industrial development, is in context with the traditional pattern and scale of existing development, and to promote complimentary development patterns of open space and concentrated growth in traditional, mixed use areas.

12) To provide for safe, convenient, economic and energy efficient transportation systems that respect the natural environment and utilize a variety of transit modes, including bicycle and pedestrian travel wherever existing or desired future development densities would support it.

Photo 1 - Aerial Photograph of Fairfax in the 1990's
Courtesy: Ralph Tracy

CHAPTER 2: HISTORY

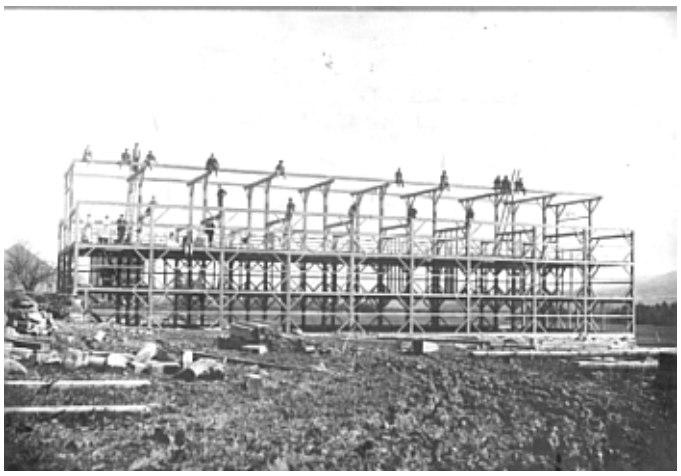


Photo 2 - Bellows Barn Construction 1908

The written historical record of northwestern Vermont begins in 1609 with the exploration of Lake Champlain by Samuel de Champlain. At that time, he took note of the lands intermediate between the lake and the Green Mountains, and named the Lamoille River. In the eighteenth century, these and other lands claimed by Champlain for France were assigned as land grants (seigneuries) to noblemen for the purpose of promoting their settlement. The Fairfax area was included in a tract assigned to the Raimbault Family. It appears, however, that any French settlement in this tract that did occur was restricted to the shores of Lake Champlain and its immediate environs. Actual settlement in Fairfax did not begin until after the establishment of British control of Vermont.

In August of 1763, Governor Wentworth of New Hampshire granted a land parcel of 23,000 acres for the purpose of establishing a new plantation to be named Fairfax. In August of 1786, a town meeting voted to survey out these parcels, most parcels being square lots of 100 acres each, with 64 people drawing for the lots (Figure 2.1). It's doubtful that many of these people ever saw or settled in Fairfax, it being determined that a tax would be imposed to pay surveyors for laying out the highways. Being unable to pay the tax, most of the original landowners lost their parcels to either the tax collector or the surveyor. The first settlers then bought their land from them.

Figure 2.1

"Voted: That the proprietor will lay out as soon as may be, one Hundred acres as each might for the first Division in such a manner that the length of the lots shall not more than twice exceed the Breadth of the same."
- From meeting of the Proprietors of the Town of Fairfax 1786

When the early settlers arrived in Fairfax, Western Abenaki Native American groups inhabited western Vermont. Subsistence strategies for the Abenaki people entailed alternating between living in a village setting where crops were grown and surplus foodstuffs stored, and periodic dispersion into smaller groups that traveled to other locations, primarily for hunting purposes.

The Western Abenaki were organized into several major bands or organizations, each occupying its own village site. No doubt, the first European settlers to the area encountered the Abenaki on their hunting expeditions.

The first settler, Captain Broadstreet Spafford, found the land which today is the Town of Fairfax in virgin forests which were the Abenaki hunting grounds. Captain Spafford, and his two sons Asa and Nathan, arrived in 1783 from Piermont, New Hampshire and built a cabin on the north bank of the river, on what is now called the Goose Pond Road. Gradually, other settlers arrived, coming by way of the lake and the river.

Joseph Beeman and his son were the first to settle in North Fairfax. The first actual settlement in the village area was by Thomas Belcher, a hunter, in 1787. Stephen England, who arrived a year later, purchased the land and later built the first hotel in the village at the corner of Main Street and Hunt Street, where the St. Luke's rectory was formerly located. Hampton Lovegrove purchased the hotel from England and it remained in operation for over 100 years. In 1791, Gould Buck and his wife, Abigail Hawley, from Arlington, settled Buck Hollow. The first Town Meeting was held at Captain Spafford's house on March 22, 1787, and before the century was out, such issues as roads, schools, and the regulation of swine were being addressed.

The initial growth of Fairfax was fueled in part by access to waterpower. Throughout the history of this area, the Lamoille River and several of its tributaries in the immediate vicinity were utilized to drive mills. With its 88 foot descent, Fairfax Falls has been the most heavily utilized hydropower location in the Lamoille drainage. The first mill at Fairfax Falls was constructed in 1791 by Judge Amos Fassett. This was undoubtedly a major economic development, as prior to this time, residents had been forced to rely on facilities in Burlington and Vergennes for milling. Tributaries of the Lamoille in and around the town of Fairfax itself were also quickly utilized for power. In 1792, a fulling mill was constructed on Mill Brook, which flows through Fairfax before emptying in the Lamoille. By 1800, Fairfax had a substantial population of 778.

Fairfax village was actually first settled in the Plains, south of its present location across the Lamoille River. In addition to a tavern, shops, schools and potteries, the Plains had a parade ground where the men bivouacked before leaving to go off to war.

The war of 1812-1814 was in one sense a war of convenience; the men planted their crops, then left for Plattsburgh, leaving their wives and children to tend the farms. They returned in the fall to harvest, wait out the winter, and repeat the cycle the next year. The convenience; however, was far outweighed by the death and disease suffered.

In 1826, a man by the name of Woodward established a saddle and harness business for the Town in return for a free house and the position of toll collector at the Lamoille River bridge. In the spring of 1832, a flood called the Great Freshet carried off the first clothing mill at the Falls, and Fairfax's pride and joy, the Toll Bridge. A ferry boat joined the town of Fairfax until 1833 when citizens voted $1,500 to build a new arched bridge a few rods upstream. As businesses grew in the town center, taverns sprouted to serve the entertainment and resort needs of weary travelers. One of these, the Valley Hotel, still stands at its original location in the center of town after several renovations.

In 1853, the New Hampton Institute moved to Fairfax from New Hampshire. Rev. Eli B. Smith was the first President, and the school enrollment totaled nearly 300 men and women. The Institute provided an excellent education, graduating lawyers, teachers, and ministers for over 50

years before being destroyed by fire. However, the Institute was not the only school in town; Fairfax had grown from having only one school on the Plains to seventeen district schools with 475 students by 1861. In fact, the school enrollment in the 1800's equaled that of the early 1970's.

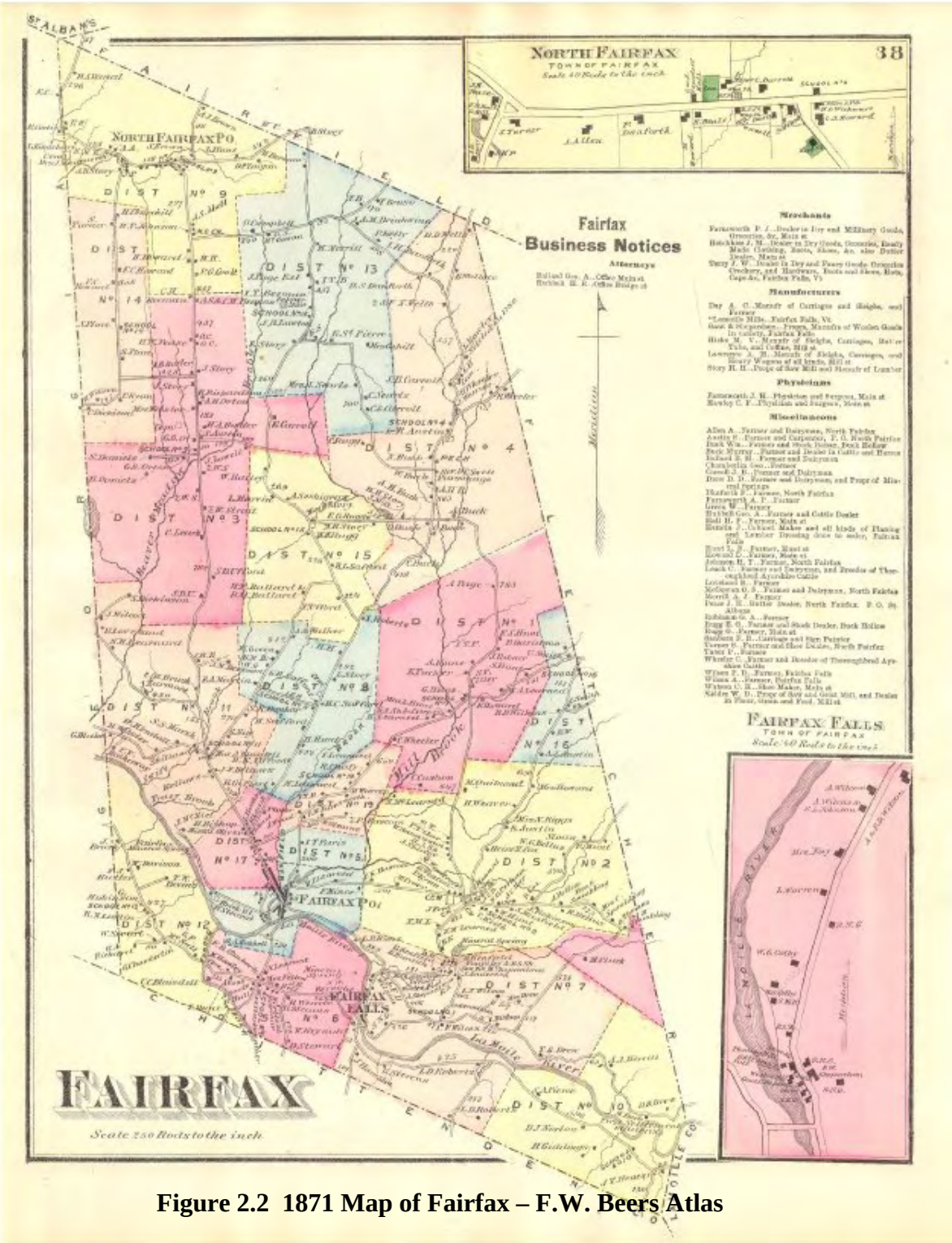


Figure 2.2 1871 Map of Fairfax – F.W. Beers Atlas

The Civil War took a much greater toll than the War of 1812. Five commissioned officers and 139 enlisted men left; 26 native sons were lost in battles such as Bull Run, Brandy Station and at Andersonville. Some who returned again brought disease, and epidemics swept the Town.

The end of the war also brought prosperity. By 1870, there were ten general merchandise stores, a drug store, two hotels, four shoe shops, two butter dealers, a tannery, a harness shop, three wagon and sleigh shops, nine blacksmiths, a wagon, tub and coffin manufacturer, four saw mills, two grist mills, a planing mill, a woolen mill, two carpenters, a brickyard, a saloon and shortly thereafter there were three potteries. In addition, there were two lawyers, three doctors, and several professors. The next 20 years saw tree nurseries, new stage routes, and post offices in the Village, North Fairfax, Beaver Meadow, Buck Hollow, and Huntville, as well as carrier deliveries provided.

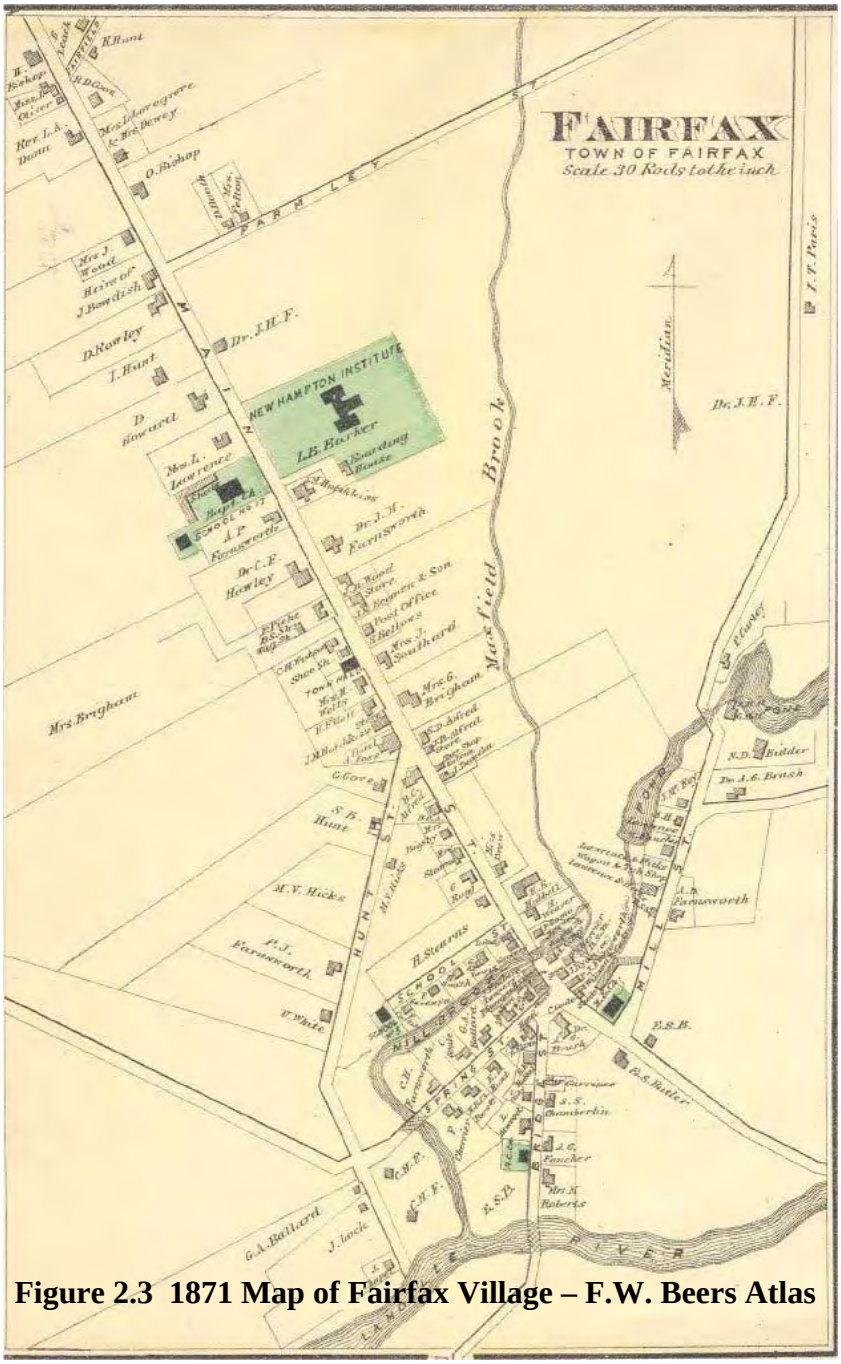


Figure 2.3 1871 Map of Fairfax Village – F.W. Beers Atlas

Fairfax was most prosperous in the early to mid-nineteenth century. Wool, lumber, and cattle were the most important industries at the time. In 1871, the town of Fairfax contained 84 dwellings and 31 commercial establishments. Use of the Lamoille River at Fairfax Falls for a range of hydropower facilities was heavy throughout the nineteenth century. The Beers Atlas of Fairfax Falls (1871) depicts four mills at this location. Three of these, a woolen mill, a planing mill, and a grist mill, were situated along the east bank of the falls. Because of the shallowness of the soil over the steep ledges along the east bank, an excavated headrace to power this last facility would not have been feasible. Instead, this saw mill was

probably powered by an above ground flume or penstock construction drawing water from the Falls above. In addition to the three mills, Beers Atlas (1871) also depicts a store, a blacksmith shop and five residences along the east bank of the Falls at this time.

The reason for such a diversity of enterprises was that the emphasis on lumber and mill manufacturing which had grown enormously was beginning to shift to the dairy industry. By the 1880's, there were four cattle breeders and four cattle dealers listed and many farms. However, the dairy industry at this time was oriented to the production of butter rather than milk, due to the capability of the railroads. Yet the Village continued to thrive, in the next years adding dress shops, millinery shops, and jewelry stores, and around the turn of the century further boasting a skating rink, dance hall, theater, cheese factory, candy factory, and ice cream parlor.

The gold rush and the availability of homesteads attracted many residents westward to California, Oregon, Michigan, Iowa, and Kansas. The population began to decrease and soon after, the area fell into economic decline. During this time, there was a shift from heavy reliance on the wool industry to dairy farming in the area. In large measure this was due to the increasing dependence of economies of the Champlain Valley on manufactured goods, with the larger settlements of Burlington and St. Albans becoming the centers for such production. Although railroad connections in the Lamoille Valley did exist at the time, they extended no further than East Georgia, four miles west of Fairfax, requiring transport along the 104A corridor of any goods produced for export. In 1897 and 1898, major fires accelerated the population decline of Fairfax and destroyed several important buildings in the town.

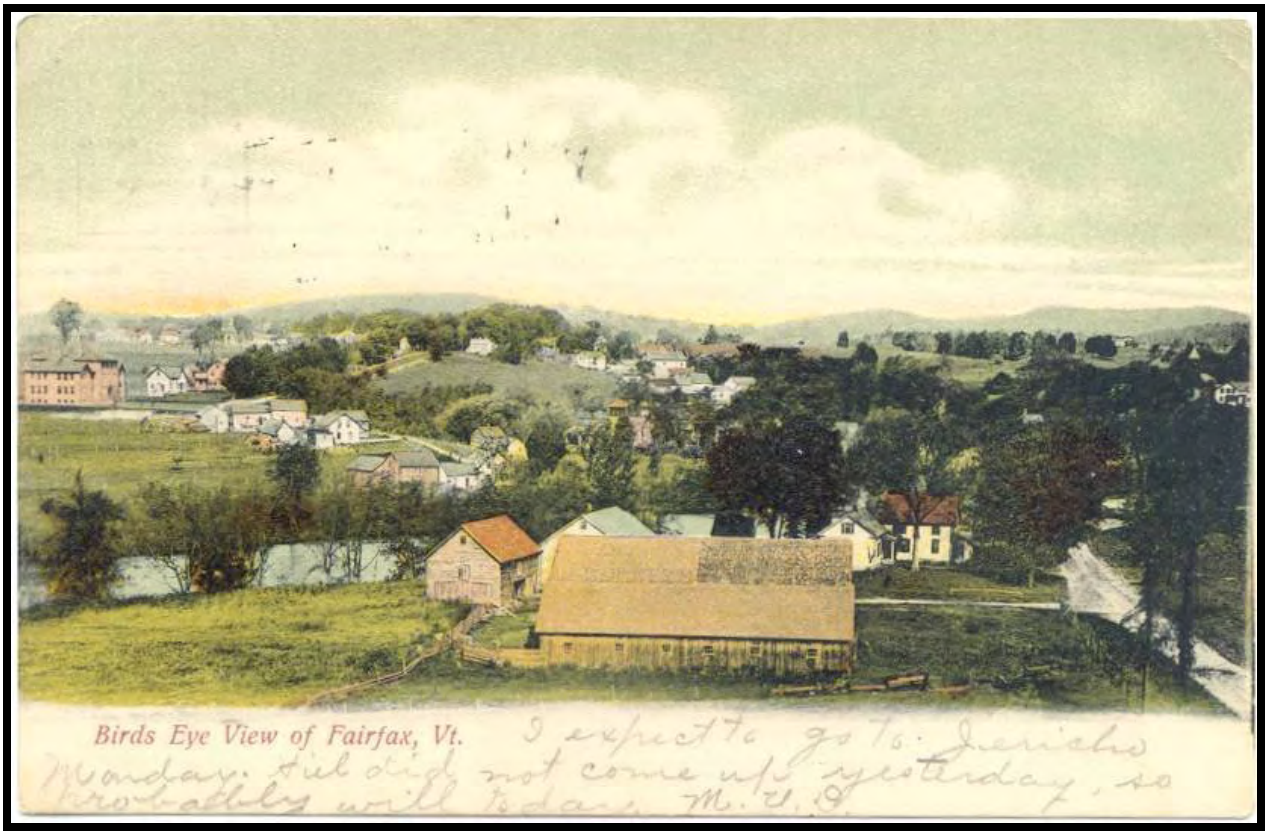


Photo 3 - #59 Birds Eye View of Fairfax Post Card
Courtesy: Mike McNall

In the early twentieth century, electricity came to Fairfax, with the construction of the Lamoille River dam at the Falls. Vermont Power and Manufacturing Company completed construction of the Northside underground hydroelectric plant in 1904. In 1916, VPMC and its Northside Station was purchased by Public Electric Light Company. PELCo subsequently constructed the west bank hydroelectric plant, completing the existing building with one generating unit in 1919. A second unit was added to the works in 1921. A severe flood in the Fall of 1927, precipitated by four days of heavy rain on the frozen ground, heavily damaged the Northside Station facility on the east bank, resulting in its abandonment at that time.

It was also about this time that Hiram Bellows, a St. Albans businessman, provided the money for schools in Fairfax and St. Albans, both to be named Bellows Free Academy (B.F.A.). Thus, by 1906 (after the fire at New Hampton Institute) Fairfax once again had a beautiful school, but it too was destined to burn 40 years later. A portion of the present B.F.A. was built following that fire, with later additions.

The fact that Fairfax has a water system in the village was also due to the generosity of Mr. Bellows. The system was built in 1911 chiefly to serve the school, with the reservoir (in the woods off the Fletcher Road) replacing the wind-driven pump (which stood behind the school) as the new supply. The annual fee charged the first customers was $2.00.

The 1927 flood miraculously took no lives in Fairfax. It did, however, destroy many roads and buildings. Most of the wooden mill buildings were destroyed, as well as all but one bridge. The covered bridge on Maple Street, built in 1865, was turned end for end in the flood, but was saved. A steel bridge was erected two years later to replace the two lane bridge.

Perhaps more damaging was the stock market Crash of 1929. With the closing of banks, Fairfax returned for a period to a barter economy; many people were forced to exchange work for goods and goods for food. Many also were unable to hold onto their homes and farms, and structures which burned were rarely replaced. Soon afterwards, the Second World War saw an exodus of young people leaving for military service, and for better paying jobs in other states. The population in 1940 was 1,229 residents. At the same time, there were 80 farms with a total of 2,400 milking cows.

It was not until 1947 that town officials embarked on capital improvements for better fire protection. The town received a trailer-mounted pump from civil defense, and voted to purchase a used truck and fire fighting equipment. A new truck was put into service in 1948, and a Volunteer Fire Department was founded.

For several years more, family farms continued to dominate Fairfax's economy and land use. While a few shops remained, most of the others such as the potteries, mills, and the blacksmiths had vanished. The 1950's saw an out-migration of young people in Fairfax due to the lack of employment opportunities. Fairfax's employment base began to diminish and the Fairfax Branch of the Cooperative Creamery shut down.

With the 1970's approaching, roads improved, cars went faster, and the cities of St. Albans and Burlington seemed much closer than they had before. Nearby production facilities such as IBM

attracted a growing workforce to the area, and Fairfax's convenient access contributed to a reverse in previously declining population trends.

Development prompted town officials to study the feasibility of a public sewage treatment system in 1965. A year later, the first zoning bylaws were adopted, after a series of previous defeats at the polls.

The 1970's continued to witness a steady growth rate. Among major projects were new residential developments in North Fairfax, and in Fairfax Plains. A new high school was completed in 1975 while preservation of the old continued with the renovation of the Maple Street covered bridge. In 1977, the passage of a village pollution control bond was finally set in motion.

The 1980's marked a time when the population level of the town rose to that of the late 1800's. The 1990 census showed Fairfax's population to be 2,486, the highest since 1850. More people meant more homes being built, especially on back roads. This led to a need for an increase in services provided by the town, (i.e. road repair, town water system, fire department and rescue squad, and especially BFA Fairfax). Most services are housed in new buildings: (1982) - The new Town Garage was built on the Fletcher Road, (1984) - The Town Clerk's office moved from BFA to the old principal's house, (1987) - The old iron bridge across the Lamoille River on Main Street was replaced by a modern concrete bridge, (1990) - The Fairfax Fire Department and Fairfax Rescue moved to a new, larger building, (1989-90) - BFA Fairfax added its second major addition in 20 years to house grades 5-8, and (1998) the new Elementary Wing was constructed and the old middle school was rehabilitated.
A few more essential services were added in the 1990's, such as a local doctor's office, pharmacy, hardware store, and restaurant along with a small grocery, convenience stores, and auto repair shops. In addition, a community recreation park was completed in 2007 that includes athletic fields and a recreation path.

Well into the Information Age, Fairfax continues to change. The wires that first carried electricity to Fairfax in 1904 now carry high speed internet to the computers of home offices and cable television to home entertainment centers. Although a strong focus on agriculture is still present, the number of small family farms is declining slightly. Industry is expanding in neighboring towns and Chittenden County, further increasing development pressures. Population increase is bound to continue, as a growing number of families discover Fairfax's unique combination of convenient access to major cities and towns, its small town atmosphere, and peaceful environment. Making connections between community members, while maintaining communication as we build a common vision for the town is the challenge ahead.

CHAPTER 3: COMMUNITY PROFILE

DISCLAIMER

The Bureau of the Census, an agency within the Department of Commerce, carries out the Census of Population and Housing every ten years. The first census was taken in 1790 and latest census was taken in 2000. In the year 2010, another census will be conducted; however, because of the amount of time that is needed to compile the data, it will not be available until the year 2012 at the earliest. The Fairfax Town Plan contains the 2000 Census because, in most cases, this is the most current data available. In the course of ten years, many things can change in a town, a county, a state, and so forth. The 2000 Census data that has been used in this Town Plan, was at the time of the count, accurate and did reflect what was happening to the Town at that time.

LOCATION AND BOUNDARIES

The Town of Fairfax is located in the western foothills of the Green Mountains. It is the southernmost town in Franklin County sharing its southern border with the Town of Westford in Chittenden County. On the west, it is bordered by Georgia, on the north by Fairfield, and on the east by Fletcher and Cambridge. It is proximate to the towns of Milton, Underhill, and St. Albans.

Fairfax is served by State Routes 104 and 104A, the major inter-municipal roadways linking Fairfax with St. Albans, Interstate 89 and communities to the east, and State Route 128 connecting to points south in Chittenden County. The Town of Fairfax currently covers a 41.7 square mile area equivalent to 26,688 acres. It is characterized by irregular terrain consisting of open farmland and wooded slopes with panoramic views of Mt. Mansfield and the Lamoille River.

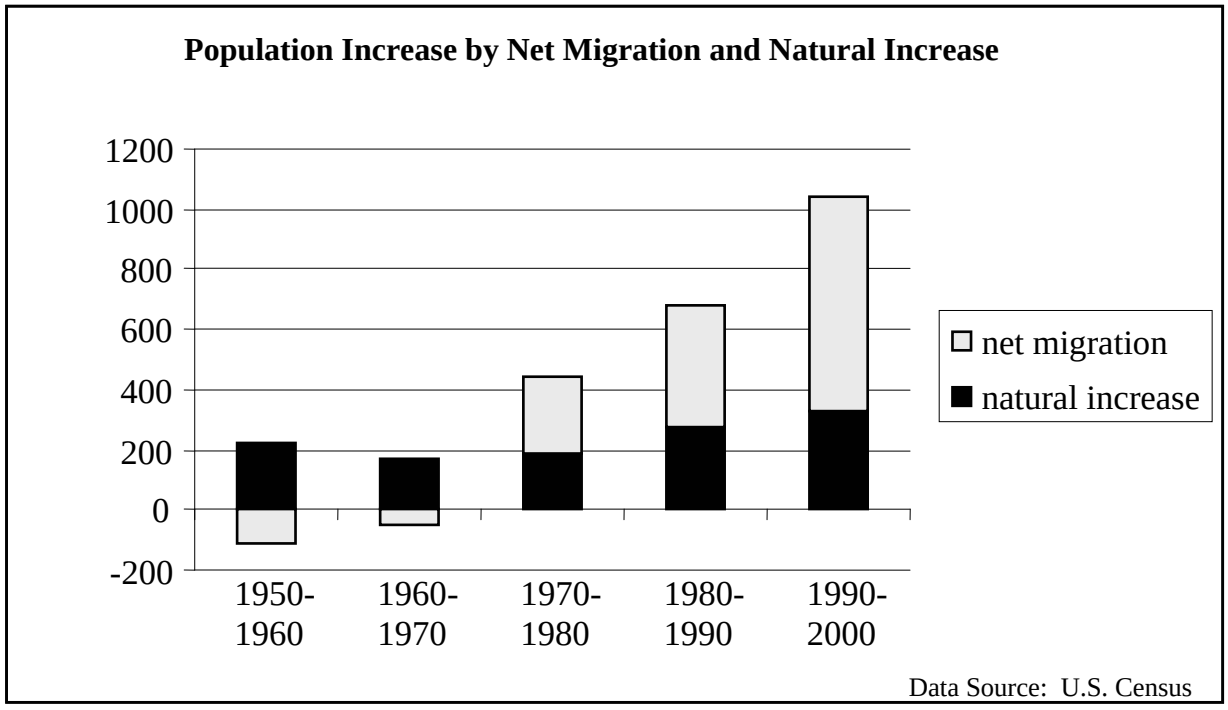
THE PEOPLE

POPULATION TRENDS

Fairfax's population has risen to historically high levels; due in large part to a period of sustained, accelerated growth that began in the 1970's and has continued to the present decade. As shown in Table 3.1, Fairfax has more than tripled its population between 1960 and 2006 and has a significantly higher growth rate than that of the County as a whole. Forecasts for future growth show Fairfax's population continuing to grow at a fast rate. Since the 1970s, increasing numbers of people moving into Fairfax are contributing to population growth, with natural increase (births minus deaths) making up a much smaller percentage of population growth (Figure 3.1).

Table 3.1. Population Trends and Projections, 1950 - 2015								
	Population						***Estimates***	***Projections***
	1950	**1960**	**1970**	**1980**	**1990**	**2000**	**2006**	**2015**
Fairfax	1,129	1,244	1,366	1,805	2,486	3,527	4,101	5,049
% Change	n/a	10.20%	9.80%	32.10%	37.70%	41.90%	16.27%	23.12%
% of County Total	3.80%	4.20%	4.40%	5.20%	6.20%	7.80%	8.51%	9.77%
Franklin County	29,894	29,473	31,281	34,788	39,980	45,417	48,187	51,701
% Change	n/a	-1.40%	6.10%	11.20%	14.90%	13.60%	6.10%	7.29%
Source: U.S. Census Data, 1950-2000, U.S. Census Estimates 2006, MISER Population Projections 2015.								

Figure 3.1



Fairfax was among the fastest growing towns in the State from 2000 to 2006 based on U.S. Census population estimates, with only 34 towns having a greater percent increase in estimated population during that period (five of those towns within Franklin County). The population of Fairfax as a percentage of the County population has continued to increase, from 3.8% in 1950 to 7.8% fifty years later. Without a change in the predominant growth trends of the past, Fairfax will continue to grow at a faster rate than the County. The Town's accessibility to Interstate 89 and to Chittenden County employment centers has significantly contributed to the accelerated growth that Fairfax has experienced. The vast majority of daily commuter trips leave Fairfax for Chittenden County destinations (see also Chapter 10, Transportation). Further, Fairfax offers the rare combination of country charm, accessibility, and quality services such as excellent schools – all of which are powerful attractions for potential homebuyers.

Continued growth at projected rates will likely challenge the ability of the town to provide adequate services needed to accommodate it. Policies and programs are needed which manage growth to rates that can be absorbed by the land, and may be adequately served by municipal facilities.

AGE PROFILE

Figure 3.2 shows the population of Fairfax broken down by age bracket. These figures were derived from the 2000 U.S. Census. They are useful in comparing the general age breakdown of the Town and County for similarities and differences, which may have importance in planning for the future.

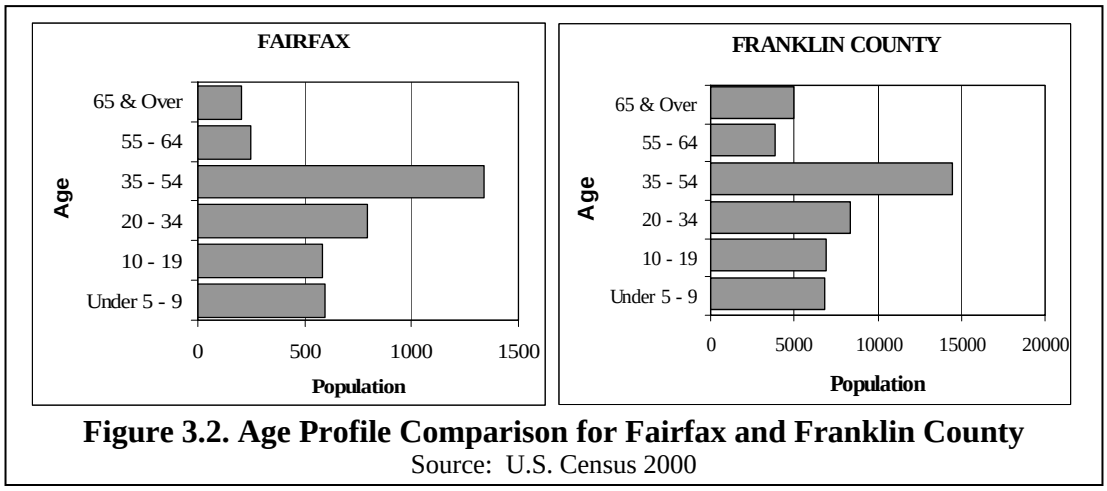


Figure 3.2. Age Profile Comparison for Fairfax and Franklin County
Source: U.S. Census 2000

The graphs in Figure 3.2 indicate a very similar stratification of ages in Fairfax and in Franklin County, although slight differences may be seen upon close examination. The population of Fairfax includes a smaller percentage of seniors (age 65 and over), and a slightly greater percentage of people aged 35 to 54 than Franklin County as a whole. In both instances, the majority of the population resides in the "working age" groups between 22 and 60, with the greatest number of residents in their thirties and forties. The population of Fairfax as a whole is nearly identical with that of Franklin County and markedly younger than that of the State. The median age in 2000 was 31.5 years in Fairfax, compared to 31.7 and 33 for the County and State, respectively.

EDUCATION

The people of Fairfax enjoy the benefits of an excellent school system. This is reflected, unsurprisingly, in the level of educational attainment of Fairfax residents. Table 3.2 illustrates this point by comparing education levels of Fairfax with those of the entire County. Fairfax shows higher attainment levels in nearly all secondary and post-secondary educational categories shown. Most striking is the percentage of residents with Bachelor's and Graduate degrees, which total over 23% of the twenty five years and over population.

Table 3.2: Education Attainment, 25 years and older			
	Fairfax	**Franklin County (Entire)**	**Franklin County (Average/Town)**
Population 25 years and older	2,422 (100%)	32,658	2,512
% of total population	71%	71.9%	71.9%
Less than 9th grade	123 (5.1%)	2,420 (8.2%)	161 (8.4%)
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	217 (9.0%)	2,720 (9.2%)	181 (9.1%)
High School Diploma	811 (33.5%)	12,123 (41.1%)	932 (36.7%)
Some college, no degree	432 (17.8%)	4,929 (16.7%)	328 (16.3%)
Associate Degree	288 (11.9%)	2,404 (8.2%)	184 (5.3%)
Bachelor's Degree	406 (16.8%)	3,392 (11.5%)	261 (7.5%)
Graduate or Professional Degree	145 (6%)	1,497 (5.1%)	115 (3.3%)
Source: U.S. Census Data, 2000.			

INCOME DATA

Education is often the gateway to professional careers and the monetary success they bring. From the assessment of educational attainment presented above, it logically follows that income levels in Fairfax are generally higher than for surrounding areas. Table 3.3 provides evidence to this. Data from the 2000 U.S. Census shows that the 1999 median household income was nearly 24% higher in Fairfax than in Franklin County and 27% higher than in Vermont. Differences between median family incomes were 18% greater than the county and only 13% higher than the state. Consequently; the percentage of Fairfax residents living in poverty is markedly less than County and State wide figures.

Table 3.3. Income and Poverty Profile, 2000				
	Income			**% Pop. Below Poverty Level**
	Per Capita	**Median**		
		Household	**Family**	
Fairfax	$18,632	$51,769	$55,074	4.8%
Franklin County	$17,816	$41,659	$46,733	9%
Vermont	$20,625	$40,856	$48,625	9.4%
Source: U.S. Census Data, 2000.				

GROWTH

Growth in a community is commonly difficult to control, even if residents desire to do so. To better understand growth through Fairfax's history, Table 3.4 outlines building permit trends over the past 10 years. Table 3.5 illustrates land uses as reported in the Fairfax Town Report.

Table 3.4. Zoning and Subdivision Permits, 1997-2007												
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Average
Building Cap in Effect?												
Single Family Homes	28	43	45	18	28	37	23	32	42	42	30	33
Multi-Family/Duplex	1	7	8	8	13	7	10	3	4	65	28	14
Additions	NA	NA	0	12	12	23	12	21	20	4	16	13
Garage/Barns	14	24	17	14	26	20	22	22	12	11	20	18
Other (decks, sheds, pools)	38	19	40	35	44	21	39	44	30	46	43	36
Commercial	4	2	5	1	7	4	0	0	0	1	5	3
Replacement Home	NA	NA	NA	NA	9	6	4	5	6	1	9	6
Changes in Use	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	0	0	16	4	7	0	5
Total Zoning Permits	85	95	115	88	139	118	110	143	118	177	151	122

Table 3.5. Number of Parcels by Land Use, 1997-2007												
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	% Change
Residential 1	618	671	699	712	746	790	778	806	802	856	890	44%
Residential 2	279	295	311	331	343	358	362	373	381	389	391	40%
Mobile Home w/o land	16	32	31	30	30	28	28	28	26	24	19	19%
Mobile Home w/land	61	61	62	60	60	59	57	54	52	48	49	-20%
Vacation	6	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	-33%
Commercial	30	34	38	39	36	39	39	39	36	37	36	20%
Industrial	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	0%
Utilities	7	8	8	6	6	6	6	6	8	8	7	0%
Farm	32	30	29	30	30	29	29	29	44	46	31	-3%
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	71	48	52	108	52%
Woodland	6	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	-67%
Miscellaneous	209	185	186	174	161	150	152	142	136	140	134	-36%
Total Parcels	1,265	1,330	1,376	1,393	1,424	1,468	1,531	1,557	1,541	1607	1,672	32%

LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE: 2007 PLANNING SURVEY RESULTS

In 2007, the people of Fairfax were asked to quantify many of their values, visions, likes, and dislikes about the town in a community planning survey. The results revealed the complexity of growth as an issue for the community, while in many areas a solidarity of thought regarding important community issues. The survey is an invaluable tool for measuring public opinion, and

provides a foundation on which to build policies and programs that exercise such a "community vision".

When survey respondents were asked about residential and commercial growth in town, responses indicated that the community is divided on the issue. About forty percent of survey respondents believed that residential growth inside the Village is too fast, while approximately an equal percentage thought that it is just right. A more conclusive response indicated that close to sixty percent of respondents believed that residential growth outside the Village is too fast; still thirty percent thought that it is just right. When asked where future commercial development should be concentrated, responses were again divided, with answers ranging from the Village, the outskirts of the Village, in shopping centers or malls, along highways, or anywhere. These responses indicate that further discussion on a community wide basis is needed on growth and growth management in the Town.

Survey responses were more conclusive concerning important issues for the town to address in the next five years. The following issues were identified as the most important:

1) Property Taxes (73% very important, 96% very important or important);
2) Fire Department (63% very important, 96% very important or important);
3) Rescue Squad (61% very important, 95% very important or important);
4) High Quality Schools (55% very important, 88% very important or important);
5) Forest Land (54% very important, 91% very important or important); and
6) Agricultural Land (53% very important, 91% very important or important).

Citizen participation provides key directives in formulating a future that retains the rural character and community identity that Fairfax residents currently enjoy. Tabulated results of the 2007 community planning survey are included in the Appendix of the Plan.

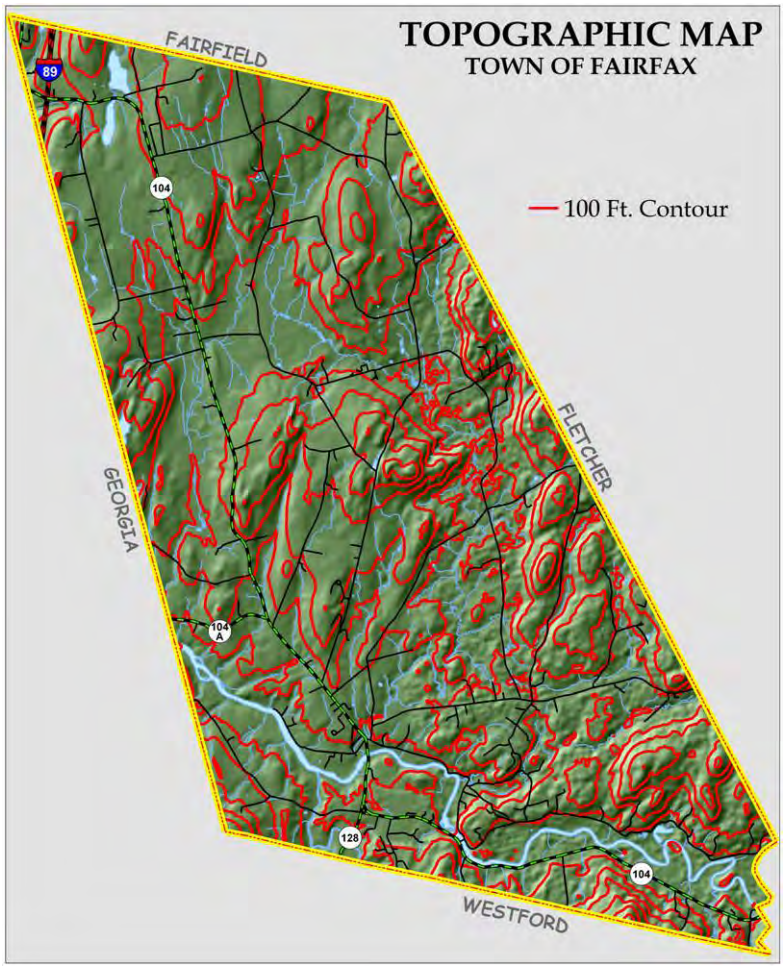
CHAPTER 4: NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

NATURAL RESOURCES

GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Fairfax is located in the rolling hill terrain of the central uplands of Franklin County. A major fault-line runs adjacent to the western edge of the town and separates the more erosion resistant upward-faulted rock under the Town of Fairfax from the much less resistant rocks that generally underlie the Town of Georgia to the West. Glacial erosion and deposition has left many hilltops scoured to bedrock, thin layers of till overlying much of the rest of the landscape, and (glacial) lake-deposited silts and clays filling many of the valleys. Streams from the melting of the glacier deposited thick areas of sand and gravel in various places in the town. Over the next few thousand years, numerous small streams and the Lamoille River further modified the topography, carving valleys and creating perhaps the most dominant geologic feature of the town, Fairfax Falls (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1

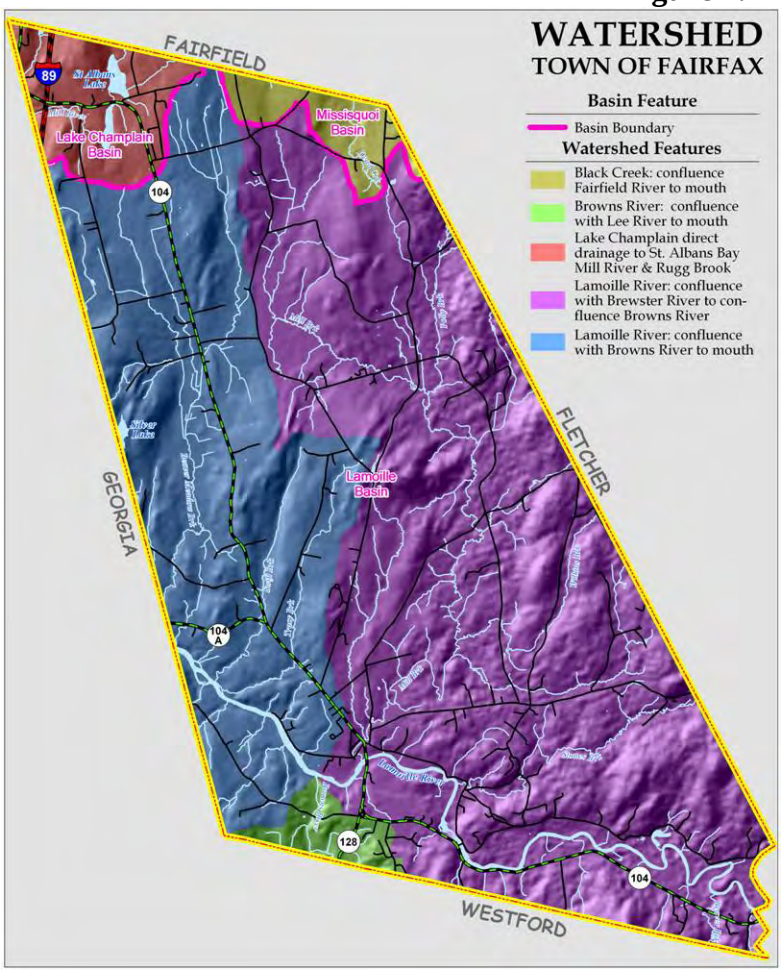


SURFACE WATER

Surface water accounts for 1,824 acres of land in Fairfax, or 7.1% of the overall acreage. The majority of Fairfax is part of the Lamoille River Basin, which covers an area of 706 square miles and flows west to northwest. A small area in northwest Fairfax is part of the Lake Champlain Basin, while a small area in northeast Fairfax is part of the Missisquoi Basin. The main stem of the Lamoille River flows over 84 miles from its headwaters in Glover to the outer Mallets Bay in Lake Champlain. The two major watersheds of the Lamoille River Basin located in Fairfax include the Lamoille River from its confluence with Brewster River to its confluence with

Browns River and the Lamoille River from its confluence with Browns River to its mouth (Figure 4.2). Major tributaries to the Lamoille River include the Wild Branch, North Branch, Brewster River, and Browns River. Extensive brook systems within Fairfax include Beaver Meadow, Mill, Wilkins, Stones, Polly, Swift, Tracy, Olin, and Baker.

Figure 4.2



The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources has completed a watershed plan for the Lamoille River, the Lamoille River Basin Plan (LCBP), for the purpose of improving water quality and aquatic habitat in the watershed. The plan identifies many issues that need to be addressed to improve water quality in the Lamoille River Basin. According to the LRBP, sediment and nutrient pollutants, likely from agricultural activities within the watershed, impair the Mill Brook. The plan notes possible sources of erosion from gravel pit extraction operations as an additional potential source. The LCBP identifies specific actions to improve the water quality in Mill Brook (Figure 4.3).

Portions of the Lamoille are designated as Waste Management Zones (formerly Class C waters) by the Vermont Water Resources Board, including a stretch immediately downstream from Fairfax's Sewage treatment facility. Waste Management Zones (WMZ's) are areas of rivers which are found immediately downstream from Wastewater Treatment outfall points, and extend for one to several miles downstream from these discharge locations. Concerns for water quality within WMZ's result in restrictions on permissible uses of the water in these zones (e.g. drinking water supply restrictions).

Many surface waters in Fairfax exhibit unique wildlife habitat and/or archeological sensitivity. Beaver Meadow Brook is known for wildlife habitat and expected archaeological sensitivity and Wilkins Brook is known as a natural area. In addition, the Lamoille River Corridor running westward from Fairfax Village is designated as having known archaeological sensitivity and the corridor running eastward from Fairfax Village is expected to have moderate to high archaeological sensitivity. Known archaeological sensitivity also involves portions of Olin, Swift, and Tracy Brooks. An area in the far northwest portion of the town west of the I-89 interstate has been noted to contain expected archaeological resources.

There are two significant surface water bodies in Fairfax, Silver Lake and St. Albans Reservoir. St. Albans Reservoir is a public water supply source for St. Albans' drinking water. St. Albans Reservoir is located in North Fairfax. Silver Lake straddles the border between Georgia and Fairfax, in the central-western area of town.

Headwaters

Stream headwaters, located in the upper reaches of a watershed are usually cool, have high oxygen content, and low nutrient content. For this reason, upland streams tend to be highly productive per unit area and are extremely sensitive to sedimentation and pollution discharges.

Figure 4.3

Specific Actions to Improve Water Quality in Mill Brook (Lamoille River Basin Plan):

Action –*Implement agricultural bmps that reduce nutrient and sediment non-point sources in the Mill Brook watershed.* Implement practices such as woody riparian buffers, filter strips, livestock exclusion from waterways, nutrient management, composting, and cover crops with watershed farmers. Reassess the water quality and remove from the List of Impaired Waters when appropriate.
Lead Partner(s): DEC**,** NRCDs, CAV, NRCS, VAAFM, UVM Extension, landowners, and gravel extraction operators.
Potential Funding Sources: EQIP, Partners in Wildlife, and CWA Section 319 grants
Timeline: 2008-2012

Action- ***Evaluate whether gravel pits in the Mill Brook watershed are contributing to the excess sediment discharges and address erosion if necessary.*** Conduct turbidity assessments up and downstream of watershed gravel pits. Implement erosion reduction and sediment control measures as needed.
Lead Partner(s): DEC and landowners
Potential Funding Sources: CWA Section 319 grants and LCBP
Timeline: 2008-2012

Action- ***Develop capital budgets for the Town of Fairfax for stream crossings and road improvement projects.*** Remediation measures may include bridge and culvert upgrades, road crowning, and stone and grass lined road ditches.
Lead Partner(s): DEC, Northern Vermont RC&D, consultants, and watershed towns
Potential Funding Sources: Better Backroads and DEC River Corridor grant
Timeline: 2008-2012

Many streams only flow during periods of high runoff when the water table rises and intersects the stream channel. All of these factors make headwaters and pristine streams extremely sensitive to disturbances resulting from forestry and urbanization.

Streambanks and Shorelines

Vegetation along streambanks not only shades the water, keeping it cooler and thus more tolerable for certain species of fish, but also provides cover for other wildlife, is aesthetically desirable, and prevents streambank erosion.

Photo 4 - Goose Pond, by Skip Taylor

Removal of riparian vegetation for development or conversion to agricultural uses is detrimental to water quality for the Town, and the state as a whole. The Vermont Best Management Practice Rules (1995) outline standards for riparian vegetative buffers. The effects of erosion on downstream environments is often more severe than at the point of erosion itself, resulting in decreased water quality from additional suspended sediments, increased nutrient loading from overland runoff and increased risk of flooding due to losses in flood storage capacity and increased velocity.

Maintenance or construction of vegetative buffers in riparian areas should be adamantly pursued. The short term drawbacks of lost tillable land acreage are more than offset by the bank stabilization power of buffers, which results in long term conservation of important agricultural resources. Road construction projects should avoid riparian areas, and filling, dredging or gravel extraction in or near rivers and streams should be avoided. Further, maintenance of roads should utilize the best mechanisms and standards.

Shorelands contribute to the prevention and control of water pollution, protection of spawning grounds, fish and aquatic life, preservation of shore cover and natural beauty and the multiple use of waters.

Floodplains

Construction within floodplain areas has several negative impacts, including restriction of flood flows, and decreases in flood storage capacity. Construction of impervious surfaces, such as driveways and homes, hamper the ability of floodplains to absorb water, and to assimilate nutrients from residential and agricultural runoff. More suitable uses, such as recreation and agriculture, will ensure a higher level of riverine health, and will prevent property and environmental damages associated with flooding.

Communities are required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to adopt flood hazard regulations under the National Flood Insurance Program, which is structured to minimize risk to life and property. Regulations are required for property owners to become eligible for home mortgage loans and flood insurance. Fairfax adopted a stand-alone Flood Hazard Area Regulation Ordinance in September of 2006, which places an additional set of regulations on

areas of Special Flood Hazard as identified on the Federal Emergency Management Association's (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Maps; flood hazard areas are also subject to the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations for the Town of Fairfax. The areas designated as Zone A in the Special Flood Hazard Areas are those that have a 1 percent chance of flooding in any given year (the 100-year floodplain). The 100 year floodplain, is shown in Figure 4.4.
While the FEMA maps indicate areas that are at risk of inundation by floodwaters, they may not adequately identify areas at risk of erosion. To address this issue, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources is using the results of geomorphic assessment studies to map fluvial erosion hazard (FEH) corridors. Limiting development within these areas will minimize risk and provide streams the opportunity to reestablish a stable, equilibrium condition. Maintaining vegetated buffers around waterways also helps to minimize risk to property and provides water quality benefits. These buffers can be incorporated into the local zoning bylaws to ensure that future development does not further encroach on the Town's waterways. FEH maps and other resources provide a way to identify the appropriate buffer width needed to protect a river corridor.

GROUNDWATER

Ground water is defined as all water that exists beneath the surface of the earth. The geology of the region is the most important factor in determining the flow of subsurface water. Wells and springs generally receive groundwater from precipitation on up-slope areas, through saturated gravel deposits or water filled bedrock fractures (Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, Water Supply Division). The availability of ground water suitable for drinking water supply varies considerably throughout the town. According to the Groundwater Favorability Map of the Lamoille River Basin (Vermont Department of Water Resources, 1967), the town has low-groundwater potential likely suitable for domestic purposes only, while the Lamoille River Floodplains may have potential for higher yields.

All Fairfax residents rely on groundwater as their source of drinking water through individual or community wells or springs, or by the Fairfax municipal water system, which is supplied by a well. An investigation of a well or spring, including an analysis of available flow, water quality data, and surrounding geology can determine the land surface area where the drinking water is drawn, which is called the recharge area or source protection areas (SPA), (Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, Water Supply Division). Recharge areas should be protected from unrestricted dumping and other practices that might harm the potability of water supplies. Potential sources of groundwater contamination include stormwater runoff, underground storage tanks, aboveground storage tanks, gas stations, septic systems/leach fields, auto body and repair facilities, businesses, such as dry cleaning, photo finishers, printers, furniture strippers, health clinics, beauty solons, and dental offices, agricultural activities includes areas of pesticide and fertilizer application and storage, road salt storage and use, industrial facilities, waste disposal sites, salvage yards, hazardous storage or disposal sites, private wells, high traffic areas, forestry operations, mining operations or drainage, and radioactive waste storage facilities or disposal sites.

Public water supplies should be carefully guarded from contamination and are required to have source protection plans (SPP's) approved by the state. Public water supplies include community water systems (municipal water systems or development water systems that serve at least 25

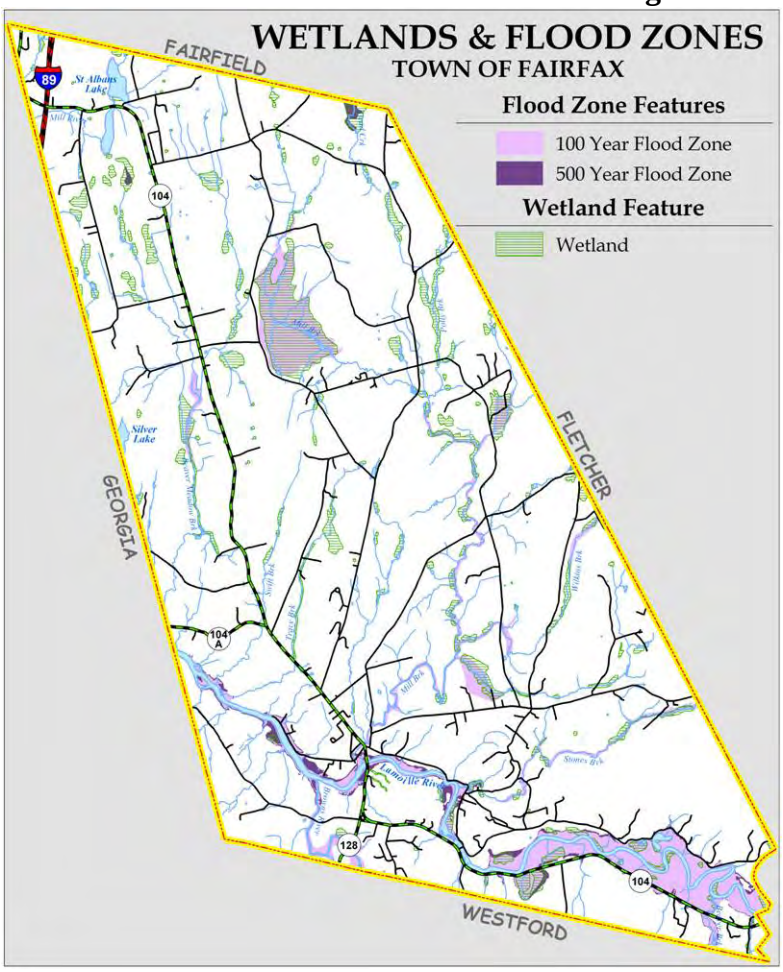
residents or 15 service connections), non-transient, non-community water systems (i.e. a school, daycare, or business), and transient, non-community water systems (i.e. motels, gas stations, and restaurants with their own source of water). SPP's are required to include delineation of a source water assessment or protection area; inventory of the potential contaminants of concern to that area; assessment of the susceptibility of the drinking water source to contamination; a management plan for the potential risks; and a contingency plan in case of an emergency.

There are six SPA's within Fairfax, including around the St. Albans Reservoir, around the water supply well for the Fairfax Municipal Water System, and around four community water supply wells for residential developments. The Development Review Board should carefully review development located in Source Protection Areas to assure that public and private drinking water remains available and clean. See also Chapter 7, Public Utilities, Fairfax Water Department for a discussion on Source Protection Areas.

Seasonal High Water Table

Low elevation areas of high water table contribute to ground water recharge; these are often broken out as significant wetlands or bogs near which urban development should be buffered. These areas have unconfined groundwater at or near the ground surface for part of the year and may be polluted easily by application of nutrients from septic tanks or other sources. Once contaminated, these waters may present health hazards locally and pollution of surface waters should the groundwater contribute to stream flow or wetlands.

Figure 4.4



WETLANDS

Wetlands provide critical habitat and are of crucial importance to the surface water regime. They store large quantities of water during periods of high runoff and gradually release water during low flow periods. Therefore, wetlands regulate stream discharge both during low flow and peak flow. Loss of this storage capacity would not only adversely affect stream behavior but would also increase floods and reduce stream flow during crucial low flow periods.

Wetlands are also important for

the maintenance of water quality. The biological activity of a wetland area enables the absorption and assimilation of nutrients and thus purifies to some extent the water that is discharged.

Numerous wetlands complexes have been identified within Fairfax. Wetlands in the Town range from less than 1 acre to over 350 acres (on Mill Brook between TH 13 and TH 16). In all, over 1,300 acres of wetlands in the Town have been identified by the National Wetlands Inventory.

The Vermont Wetlands Rules, revised and adopted in 2001, protect areas identified by the Vermont Water Resources Board as significant. A number of activities are allowed inside significant wetlands, including silvicultural and agricultural activities, providing no dredging, filling, or alterations to water flow occur. Significant wetlands fall under three separate classifications:

- ⇨ Class I wetlands are those which are considered exceptional or irreplaceable, and merit a high degree of protection under the Vermont Wetlands Rules. Class I wetlands must be specifically designated by the Water Resources Board. They are protected by a 100 foot minimum buffer zone in which only certain activities are conditionally allowed. There are no class 1 wetlands in the Town of Fairfax.
- ⇨ Class II wetlands are those that appear on NWI maps and any contiguous unmapped wetlands, and are protected by a minimum 50 foot buffer. There are 1,326 acres of class II wetlands in the Town of Fairfax (5.2% of total land area) (Figure 4.4). The largest wetland in town is Fairfax Swamp at approximately 357 acres.
- ⇨ Class III wetlands are those that do not appear on National Wetlands Inventory maps, and are not considered significant by the Water Resources Board. Total acreage and their locations are therefore not known. As a result, Class III wetlands are not protected under the Wetlands Rules.

SOILS

Immense geological forces -- the scouring and depositional action of glaciers during the last ice age (approximately 11,000 years ago) -- have created the special landscape of Fairfax. The current patterns of development and land use are directly related to the underlying geology. Listed in Table 4.1 are the major soil types in Fairfax.

Table 4.1 Major Soils Types in Fairfax

The Lyman-Peru-Marlow

Occupies the largest proportion of Fairfax's acreage. These soils were formed in glacial tills on uplands and are characteristically loamy, low in lime, and have hardpan layer or bedrock near the surface. The deeper and better-drained soils of this group have good agricultural potential. Due to steep slopes, and shallow depth to bedrock, construction restrictions are severe.

Munson-Buxton-Belgrade-Scantic

Formed in water-deposited material on old lake plains. These are generally deep, moderately well-drained to poorly-drained silty and clay soils which are medium in lime. Where slope and drainage are also favorable, these are classified as prime agricultural soils, but restrictions for construction are severe.

Limerick-Hadley-Winooski

Deep, silty floodplain soils medium in lime. Assuming adequate drainage, these have prime

agricultural standing.

Windsor-Eldridge (Missisquoi)

Covers a substantial portion of the town. Deep, sandy, and sandy-over-silty soils on terraces and old lake plains. The low lime and excessive leaching characteristics, however, limit their agricultural capability, but present only moderate restrictions for construction.

The Carlisle-Terric Medisaprists

Very poorly drained black decomposed material with slopes of less than 1% characterized by bog. The depth to bedrock is more than five feet in places placing severe restrictions on construction.

Woodstock-Tunbridge-Rock outcrop

Shallow to moderately deep soils and is excessively drained. It is shallow to bedrock with slopes of 25 - 60%. It is severe for construction due to slope and depth to bedrock.

Cabot-Westbury

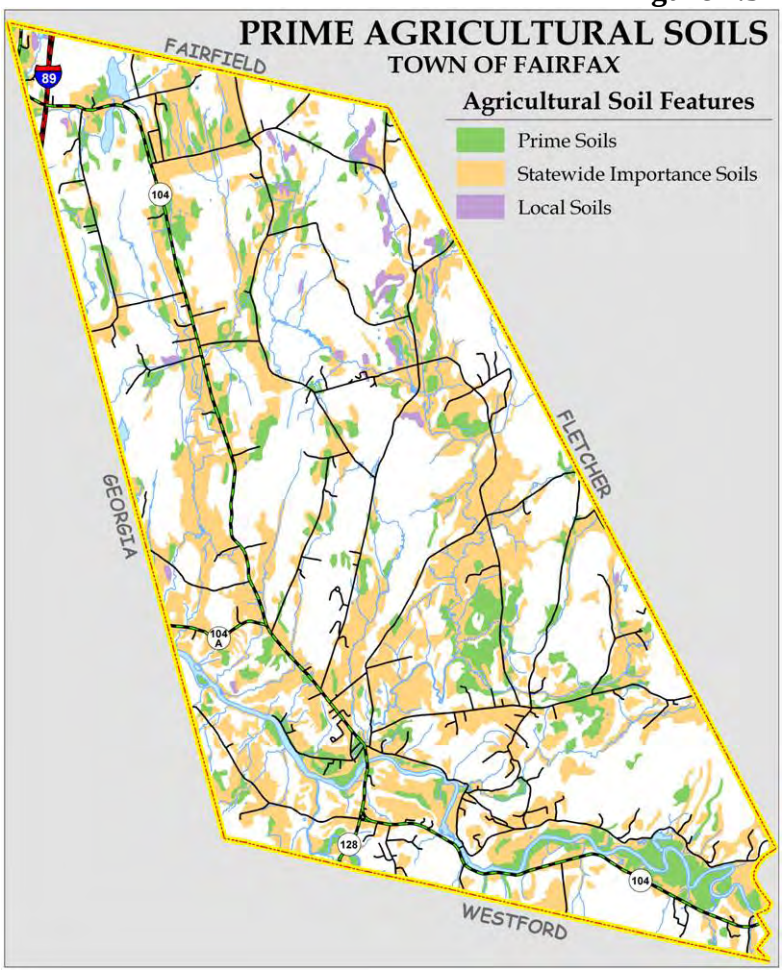
Deep and nearly level to sloping. It is somewhat poorly drained loamy soils, and stony to extremely stony. It presents severe constraints for construction due to large stones and wetness.

Conversion of traditional paper soil surveys to digital formats included in the Vermont Geographic Information System (VGIS) have provided manifold increases in the ability to view and analyze soil suitability for a host of uses, with relative ease. Using GIS, spatial attributes of each soil type (e.g. extent, location) are directly linked to information regarding an extensive number of soil attributes. A small few of these include:

- *suitability for on-site septic disposal*
- *prime agricultural attributes*
- *frequency of flooding*
- *depth to bedrock*
- *slope classifications*
- *drainage information*
- *potential for woodland productivity*

Use of these digital data layers can be an invaluable resource for land use planning, since numerous factors can be considered simultaneously, and with immeasurable time savings.

Figure 4.5



Contact the Vermont Center for Geographic Information (VCGI), or the Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) for additional resources and information.

Prime Agricultural Soils

Prime agricultural soils represent truly unique, irreplaceable resources due to their unique physical qualities, the importance of fertile soils to a stable economy, and the need for increased food production.

Prime agricultural soils have natural fertility retention qualities, high organic matter content, favorable drainage, level to gently rolling slopes, sufficient depth and textural qualities as well as a high available moisture content. These factors in combination make such soils intrinsically suitable for crop production.

Areas of primary agricultural production potential are particularly vulnerable to loss or alteration. Prime agricultural areas have few local regulatory protections, and from a purely physical perspective, are often extremely suitable for residential, commercial, and industrial development. Preservation of primary agricultural soils should be considered when reviewing development proposals.

A significant portion of Fairfax contains areas recognized by the United States Department of Agriculture, or by the State of Vermont, as having primary agricultural potential (Figure 4.5). These areas of high productivity potential coincide well with areas which are currently in agricultural production. This fact is certainly not by chance alone. Over time, farmers have found and maintained the most productive land available for their farm operations. As a result, effective conservation of prime agricultural resources may be practically achieved by concentrating conservation efforts on existing productive farmland.

Conserving agricultural resources is important to preserving rural character, and sustaining the traditional and economic resources which agriculture provides to Vermont's working landscape. Finding innovative ways to balance future growth with maintaining critical resources is central to the planning process for Fairfax. To ensure that these important resources will be available for agricultural use in the future, mechanisms to enhance agricultural opportunities and the industry should generally be encouraged and supported. This interactive process between landowners and the Development Review Board will not completely prohibit growth in these areas, but will ensure site planning that is sensitive to these irreplaceable resources, while enabling landowners to realize a fair economic return. To best implement conservation practices, soil resources should be measured against the economic viability and practicality of its use and the Fairfax Town Plan as a whole.

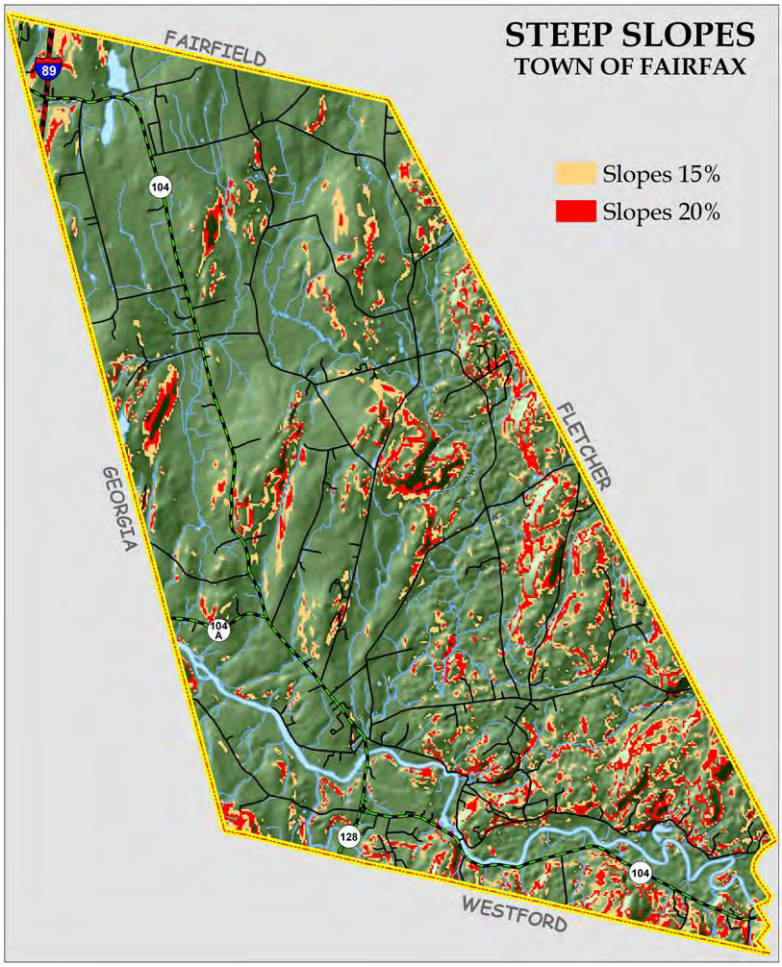
Table 4.2 Soil Slope Classifications

0-3%	generally suitable for most types of development but may require drainage
3-8%	most desirable for development because these areas generally have the least restrictions
8-15%	suitable for low-density development with particular attention given to erosion control, runoff, and septic design
15-25%	unsuitable for most types of development and septic systems, construction costly, erosion and runoff problems likely
>25%	all types of construction should be avoided, careful land management for other uses is needed

STEEP SLOPES

Steep slopes present considerable constraints to many types of development. They are characteristically covered by shallow soils often having fragipans, which makes development more difficult. The necessary cuts and slope stabilization for foundations, parking areas, road access and utilities are expensive and often, unless well designed, unattractive. Considerable environmental problems may arise from development on steep slopes presenting hazards to those residing within the areas as well as those outside. Development on steep slopes may upset the natural slope repose angle and by removal of vegetation and the injection of effluent by onsite sewage disposal will increase runoff, erosion, and the possibility of mass movement or slumping. Slippage of foundations is not uncommon in steep sloping areas.

Figure 4.6

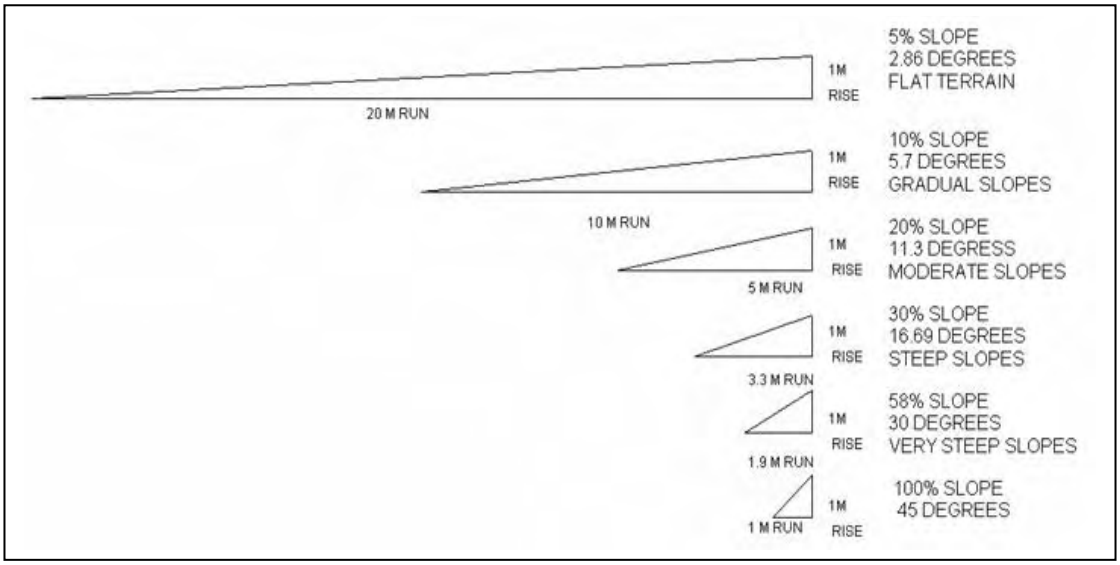


In addition, areas characterized by a slope of greater than 20% are usually not suitable for on-site septic systems due to risk of septic seepage. Septic tank disposal fields located on slopes greater than 20% may result in partially treated effluent surfacing and seeping onto the downslope surface causing health hazards and possible nutrient enrichment of surface water not to mention aesthetic problems. Of the effluent that does remain under the shallow soil characteristics of steep slopes, much of it may flow laterally and result in groundwater contamination or the surfacing of effluent at outcrop or fragipan areas.

Development on steep slopes may also increase the costs of road maintenance; runoff maintenance and sedimentation problems are much higher on steep slope areas. School bus and fire service may also be difficult, expensive or even impossible depending on weather conditions.

The Soil Conservation Service provides general guidelines for development limitations on steep slopes, listed in Table 4.2. Figure 4.6 provides a visual of the relative steepness of different slopes in percentages and degrees.

Figure 4.7 Visual Depiction of Slope in Percentage and Degree



FOREST RESOURCES

Wood and wood products are becoming increasingly valuable commodities, yet future forest productivity is often neglected in harvest practices. Productive local woodlands can provide a source for raw materials and value added products for various forest products industries, such as woodlots for home heating fuel, value added products such as those produced by the Morse Lumber and Furniture Company.

Much of Fairfax's landscape is heavily wooded with a mixture of hardwood and softwood types. According to Landsat Thematic Mapper Imagery, 11,088 acres or 42.9% of the land in Fairfax consists of either coniferous, deciduous or mixed forests. See Map 4 for a depiction of forestland in town. Careful management of these resources in the future could reap benefits in recreational, scenic, habitat and economic realms.

WILDLIFE HABITAT

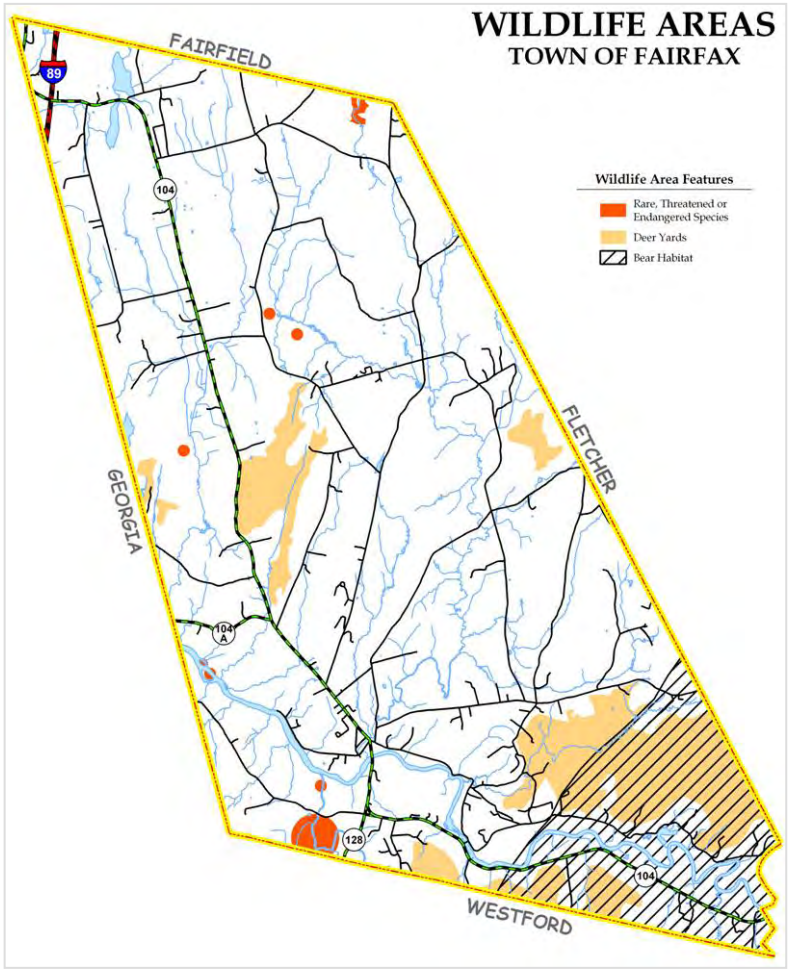
Vermont has identified several unique natural habitats in Fairfax, including wetlands, deer habitat, bear habitat, and locations of rare, threatened, and endangered species (Figure 4.8).

Wetlands

Wetlands provide habitat for a wide floral and faunal diversity, including habitat for threatened and endangered species in numbers which are disproportionately higher than are found in other habitat types. Many species are completely dependent on wetlands for their habitat requirements. Wetlands provide food and shelter for many species of fish, small mammals such as muskrat, beaver, and raccoon, large mammals such as deer, bear, and moose, and many species of waterfowl and migratory birds.

Deer Wintering Areas

Figure 4.8



Winter deer ranges have been mapped in portions of the town. The largest area borders the Town of Fletcher along and south of Stones Brook. Smaller areas in central Fairfax and along the southern border with Chittenden County are also noted. Deer wintering areas provide critical habitat for white tail deer and other species of vertebrates. These areas of hemlock, spruce, fir, cedar, and pine species provide shelter from deep snows, and permit easier winter travel for deer, compared to deciduous forests where the leafless tree branches do not prevent snow from reaching the ground. Occasionally, deer wintering areas will be found where softwood species are not dominant. These areas are usually found where south-facing slopes provide adequate solar radiation to limit snow depth.

These micro-climatic conditions - combinations of elevation, vegetation, and solar aspect - significantly increase the winter survival rates of deer populations, and so critically impact Vermont's landscape ecology and recreation. These areas have been targeted for protection by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and are a consideration in development review under Criterion 8A of Act 250.

Black Bear Habitat

The forested areas in the far southeastern part of Town are considered important seasonal bear habitat, which include feeding areas and travel corridors. The black bear is a sensitive indicator of the health of Vermont's forest. These areas are considered critical to the black bear's long-term survival in Vermont.

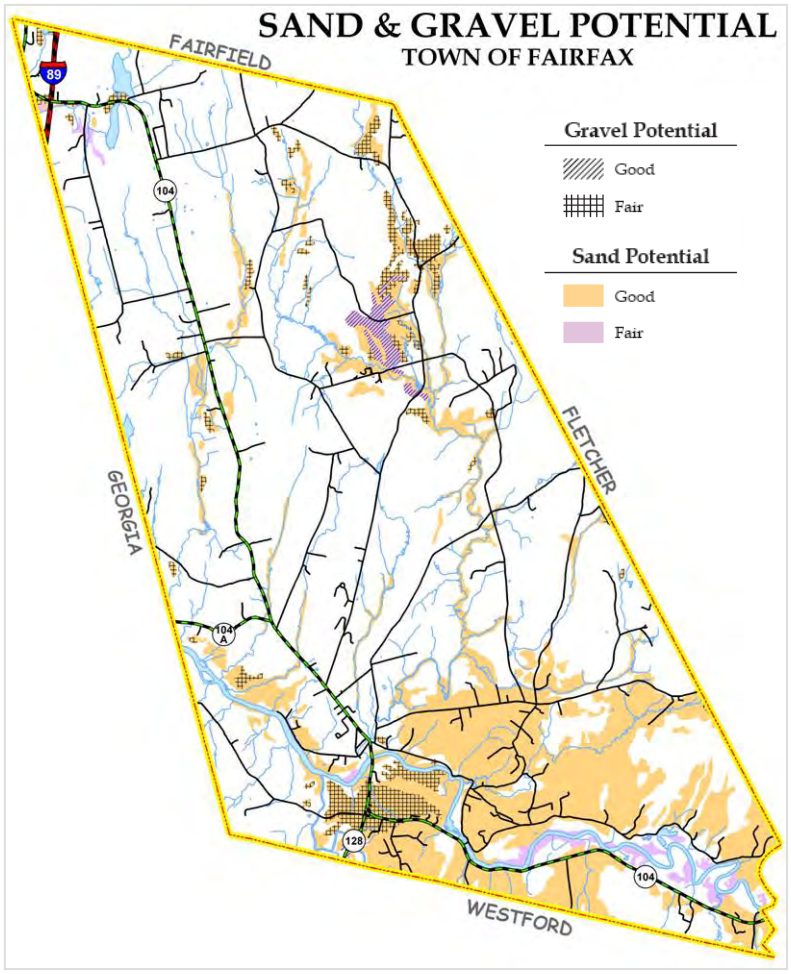
Threatened and Endangered Species Habitat

Numerous locations within the Town have been identified which support populations of designated rare, threatened, or endangered plants and animals. Locational data and descriptions for these areas have been entered into the Vermont Nongame and Natural Heritage Program database. The species identified have very particular habitat requirements, or have been

identified because they are at the edge of their natural range, are vulnerable to collection or disturbance, or have difficulty reproducing.

EARTH RESOURCES

Figure 4.9



There is potential for sand and gravel extraction in Fairfax (Figure 4.9). Soil erosion and the laying to waste of land by stripping, quarrying, or drilling operations deplete the natural wealth of the Town, resulting in environmental and municipal costs. Any extraction or processing proposal must include a plan, acceptable by the Development Review Board, for the rehabilitation of the site at the conclusion of extraction or processing activities. Appropriate guarantees may be required to ensure the rehabilitation at the operator's expense.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

HISTORIC STRUCTURES

Fairfax has many older homes and historical buildings indicating a rich past. The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation has placed many homes, farms, and buildings, as well as the Fairfax Falls, Fairfax Village, and Brown's River bridges, in the Vermont State Register of Historic Places. Although the covered bridge located on Maple Street is not listed in the register, it is an important part of the village landscape. The Vermont State Register is available for review at the Town Clerk's office. It contains the location of all the historic sites within the Town. Unfortunately, several have been lost, including; Rood House, McClure House, and the Howell House. The Fairfax Bridge and the Browns River Bridge were replaced for safety reasons.

Photo 5 - Maple Street Covered Bridge, by Skip Taylor

In addition to individual properties listed in the register, the Fairfax Village Historic District is

defined as having approximately the same boundary as the Village of Fairfax when it was first laid out in 1820. Today, the district encompasses all of Maple, School, and Hunt Streets, as well as a portion of Fletcher Road, and all of Main Street from near the Lamoille River to just north of Buck Hollow Road. Historic sites in the Town, their location, and site number are shown in Table 4.3.

Note: Table 4.3 is not an official list of all Historic Properties, and some omissions may occur. An official list, which is updated as new properties are added, is available for review from the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation.

Table 4.3. Registered Historic Properties in the Town of Fairfax

Site Name	Location	Site #
Drinkwine-Roig House	Carroll Hill	1
Gillan-Kuhn House		2
Hawley-Bailey Barn		3
Webb Farm-Maplewood Dairy	Buck Hollow	4
Rugg-Austin-Webb House		5
Coddings House		6
Parsonage-Collins House		7
Ovitt House		8
Rugg-Gaudette House		9
Rugg-Meigs House		10
Buck-Ovitt Place		11
Hunt-Dufford-Meade House	Mead Road	12
Bludgeon Farm		13
Wycoff-Irwin House	Huntville	14
Wheeler-Heyer Farm		15
Learnerd-Martin-Wold House		16
McClure House		17
Woodward Farm-Echo Valley		18
Howard-Blum House		19
Tabor House	Tabor Hill	20
Wilkins Farm	Wilkins Road	21
Megars-Tanner House	Fletcher Road	22
Clokey Farm		23
Wilson-Tracey Farm		24
Maxfield-Faymond House		25
Old Minor House		26
Chaffee House	River Road	27
Lovegrove-Zeno House		28
Cameron House		29
Howell House		30
Howell Place		31
Fairfax Falls Bridge	Fairfax Falls	32
Bernard Bessette House	Goose Pond	33
Bishop-Goldsmith House		34
Maxfield House		35
Prindle-Maxfield House		36
Giddings-Wimble Farm		37
Dezotelle House-Old Stone		38
Gerald Minor House		39

Table 4.3. Registered Historic Properties in the Town of Fairfax		
Site Name	**Location**	**Site #**
Foss-McNall House	McNall Road	40
Billado Farm	Richards Road	41
Fairfax Bridge		42
Methodist Parsonage		43
Fairfax Historic District		44
Parsonage-Ballard-Langelier House	Rte 104	45
James Bellows Farm		46
Blenerhaset Farm – Holmes House		48
Napoli House		49
Bouthilette Farm		50
Bailey House		51
Bessette House		52
Orton-McNall House		53
Parah House		54
Ayers-Bessette House		55
Boucher House		56
Duval House		57
Magnan House		58
Pease-Ladoux House	Nichols Road	59
Nichols House		60
Hilbard House		61
Brown's River Bridge		62
Brown's Creek Warren Pony Truss Bridge		63
Source: Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, 2008.		

CEMETERIES

In addition to Fairfax's historic structures, numerous cemeteries are located around the town. A complete listing of all stones, the information on them and a map of each cemetery is in the town office. Since a lot of the writing on the stones was becoming unreadable, and many of the stones had fallen or were damaged, volunteers went to each cemetery in Fairfax during the summer of 1996. They tried to record all legible information before it was lost forever.

Listed in Table 4.4 below, are all the cemeteries in town of Fairfax with their location and party responsible for maintenance.

Table 4.4 Fairfax Cemeteries		
Name and # of Stones	**Location**	**Maintained By**
Kingsbury-Hibbard 62 Stones	Off Route 104 and Oakland Station Road leading to Georgia in North Fairfax.	Town of Fairfax and Town of Georgia
North Fairfax or Beeman Cemetery 235 Stones	On Route 104 near St. Albans reservoir.	Town of Fairfax
Central or Beaver Cemetery	Off Route 104 in North Fairfax just north of the McNall farm.	Members of Harold Craft's family

Table 4.4 Fairfax Cemeteries		
Name and # of Stones	**Location**	**Maintained By**
132 Stones		
Carroll Hill Cemetery 257 Stones	On Carroll Hill Road north of the Webb farm.	Town of Fairfax
Safford Cemetery 142 Stones	On Buck Hollow Road north of the Albert Ledoux residence.	Town of Fairfax
St. Luke's Cemetery 301 Stones	Off 104 across from the Fairfax Commons.	St. Luke's Catholic Church
Fairfax Plains Cemetery 588 Stones	Off the McNall Road across from the Raymond McNall residence.	Fairfax Plains Association with annual $250 appropriation from the Town
Sanderson Cemetery 1667 Stones	On Fletcher Road near the town highway garage.	Fairfax Cemetery Association with annual appropriation from the Town
Mudgett Cemetery 50 Stones	Off Fletcher and Wilkins Road.	Not maintained
Spafford Cemetery 19 Stones	Off Goose Pond and Spafford Road near the McGough residence.	Not maintained
Bowditch Cemetery	Behind the former Tellstone residence in Fairfax Village, but no evidence of the cemetery remains.	Not maintained
Kezer Cemetery 4 Stones	Off the Spooner Road on Gilles Rainville farm.	Not maintained
Learned Cemetery 10 Stones	Off the Huntville Road on the Heyer farm	Not maintained

It is known that there are a number of people buried in the Town's cemeteries with no markers and a number of people have been buried in private grave sites outside of the known cemeteries. Preserving the history of the town and its residents is very important and well worth the time. To the Town's knowledge, no other town has accomplished the task of a complete inventory of cemeteries and the Town has received many compliments on the work. There is extensive work that needs to be done in the Town's cemeteries, but funding is a problem. Taking the time to visit Fairfax's cemeteries is a favorite past time of many residents as well as visitors to the town and care should be taken to preserve them.

ARCHAEOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

Archaeological resources provide evidence of human habitation dating from prehistoric times. This includes evidence of prehistoric habitation and use, including villages, trails, and trade networks, and burial grounds, as well as remnants of historic settlement and use, including old foundations and cellar holes, quarry, mill, kiln and foundry sites, and unmarked cemeteries and roads.

When found intact, archaeological sites can provide a wealth of information about past ways of life, but because they are hidden, they may be easily disturbed or destroyed. It is often not the artifacts themselves that are important, but rather the context in which they are found.

The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation maintains listings of known sites, made available on a "need to know" basis in order to protect their integrity. For planning purposes, the Division has identified more broadly defined "sensitive areas," using modeling based on known site conditions in which archaeological sites are known or expected to occur. These include a 200 foot buffer along all major rivers and tributaries in the region, particularly in the vicinity of major confluences, and the Lake Champlain shoreland, which is considered highly sensitive. Historic sites may be identified and located from historic records, including historic atlases and gazetteers and local records.

Development in known or anticipated sensitive areas should be reviewed with particular attention given to the possibility of buried sites. Assistance with the identification, protection and/or excavation of sites is available from the Division for Historic Preservation.

The Lamoille River running westward from Fairfax Village is designated as being an archaeologically sensitive area. Portions of the Olin, Swift, Tracy and Beaver Meadow Brooks may also contain archaeologically sensitive sites.

SCENIC RESOURCES

Scenic resources should be considerations in planning and development, including ridgelines, foregrounds of distant views, open land, vistas, and historic villages and settlements. These scenic features contribute to the local quality of life and a sense of place, and are instrumental in defining the rural character of the Town, so prized by its inhabitants.

The scenic views in Fairfax extend from the winding curves of the Lamoille River to the peak of Mt. Mansfield, with a varied pattern of wooded hills and open farm fields in between. Views of the river can be enjoyed from points along both Routes 104 and 104A, Goose Pond Road, Hunt Street, and River Road. Mt Mansfield can be seen from several roads throughout the town. Many roads in Fairfax allow for the enjoyment of a drive through countryside with tree covered roads, wide open farm land, and views of the neighboring hillsides and mountains.

Promontories are of relative significance geologically and aesthetically since they are visible and often protected from most types of building development. Special consideration for the protection of ridgelines is encouraged when establishing telecommunications (or cellular phone) towers, which often favor ridgeline siting for their obvious benefits to signal range. I

Future development should be sensitive to these often unprotected elements of the landscape. Proper siting for development, avoidance of steep slopes and hilltops for construction, and development which fits the existing historic settlement pattern of the town should be encouraged at every level of Town planning. Many of these factors can be addressed through the subdivision review process. Implementation of flexible, creative zoning which pays more attention to the character of the landscape than to strict dimensional requirements may enable the Town to preserve its rural character and scenic resources, while not imposing overly restrictive conditions on potential future growth.

Photo 6 - Goose Pond with Mount Mansfield in the Background, by Skip Taylor

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal

1) Protect and preserve natural, cultural, and scenic resources, which help define the Town's rural character, natural environment, and traditional working landscape.

Policies

1) To conserve viable agricultural and forest land resources.
2) To enhance and protect the surface and ground water resources in the Town. ,
3) To protect fragile and sensitive resources, including but not limited to critical habitat, wetlands, steep slopes, prime agricultural soils, and floodplains.

and

4) To discourage development that compromises the archaeological or visual integrity of significant scenic views or cultural features, such as the Fairfax Historic District and cemeteries.
5) To maintain the historic, cultural, and scenic sense of place in the Village.

CHAPTER 5: ENERGY

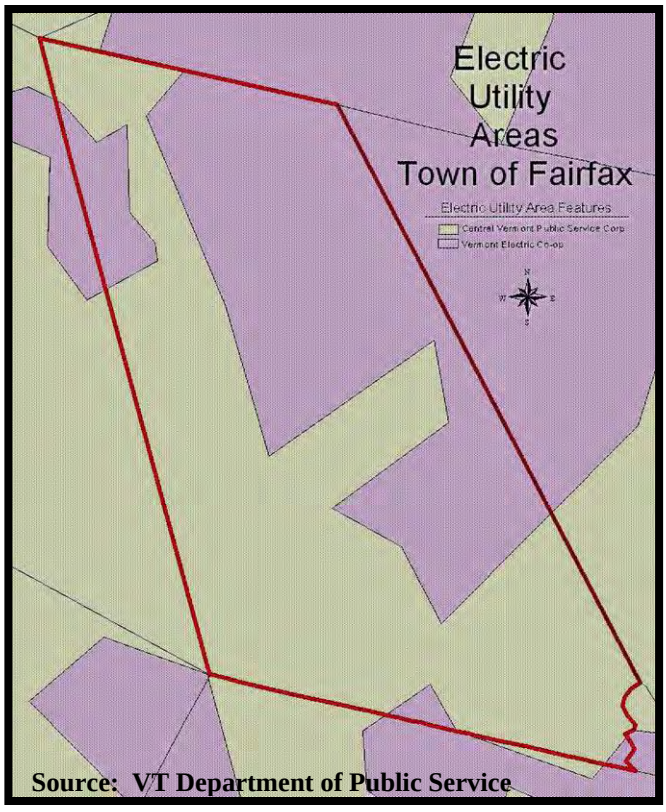
Vermont planning law requires that municipal plans include an energy element, which is intended to plan for and promote the efficient and economic utilization of energy in the community. While it is recognized that energy supply and demand are directed largely by economic forces at the state, federal, and international levels, there is a lot that can be done on a household and community level to promote the use of renewable resources, to promote energy efficiency, and to conserve energy.

ELECTRICITY

There are twenty-one electric utilities serving Vermont. Central Vermont Public Service (CVPS), and Vermont Electric Co-op (VEC) serve Fairfax (Figure 5.1). CVPS is one of four investor owned utilities and VEC is one of two coop utilities. The remaining utilities are municipally owned. CVPS is the largest electric utility in the state both in terms of customers and service area, with a total of 129,424 customers in 2006. VEC, Green Mountain Power, and Burlington Electric are the only other utilities with over 10,000 customers.

According to the Vermont Department of Public Service (2006), CVPS purchases just over half of its electricity from the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant, almost thirty percent of its electricity from Hydro Quebec, about eighteen percent of its electricity from small hydro and other renewable sources, with the remainder generated from oil and purchased from the New England Power Pool (NEPOOL). The Vermont Electric Cooperative purchases forty-four percent of its electricity from Hydro Quebec, thirty-two percent from the NEPOOL, fifteen percent from the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant, and nine percent from small hydro and other renewable sources (2006). Statewide, two thirds of electricity is generated through the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant and from Hydro Quebec. The remaining sources of electricity consist of purchases from the NEPOOL, small hydroelectric and other renewable operations within the state, and a small percentage of gas and oil.

Figure 5.1 Electric Utility Areas



Source: VT Department of Public Service

High-voltage electricity produced by generation facilities and purchased by CVPS and VEC is moved long-distances through transmission lines across the state. There are two transformers at substations located in Fairfax, one at Fairfax Falls and

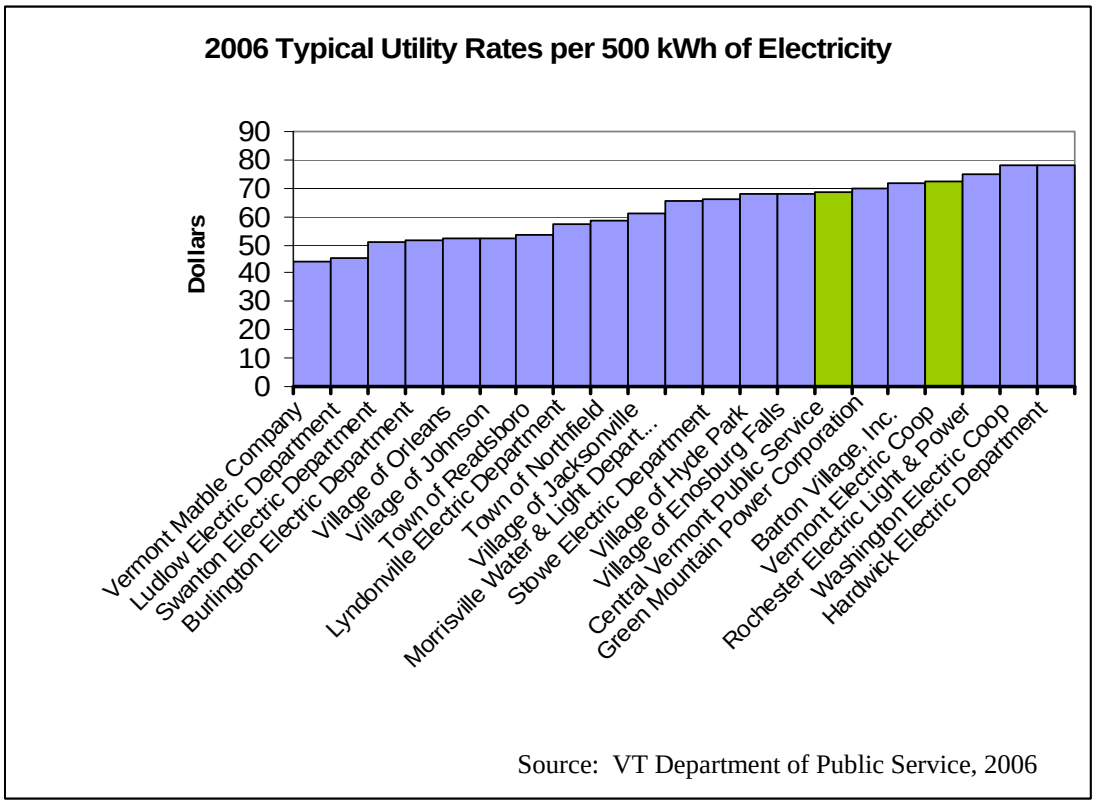
one in East Fairfax that reduce, or step down, the high-voltage electricity so it can be moved along the distribution system. The distribution lines are the smaller poles and wires on streets that connect to individual homes or businesses. According to the Vermont Department of Public Service, these wires deliver electricity to the customers, either in the form of a three-phase (or three-wire) line or a single-phase (or one-wire) line. Three-phase lines are typically used by large commercial customers who run heavy machinery, while single-phase power serves the needs of smaller residential customers. There is currently limited three phase service in Fairfax, but upon request and payment of a fee, it can be extended. Three phase power currently serves Morse Hardwoods and Millwork Co. on Fletcher Road.

Photo 7 - Fairfax Falls Substation, by Skip Taylor

CVPS and VEC rates are above average, charging a typical bill of $68.38 and $72.11, respectively, for 500 kWh of electricity (Figure 5.2).

Vermont's electrical rates have generally stayed stable over time and have not experienced the same sharp increases seen elsewhere in New England. The price stability in Vermont is largely due to the fact that the two largest sources of power, Hydro Quebec and Vermont Yankee have been under long-term contract. However, Vermont Yankee's license will expire in 2012 and the contract with Hydro-Quebec will expire in 2012 and 2015. Thus, in the next 5 years Vermonters, including the residents of Fairfax, will likely be facing important decisions regarding the sources and costs of electricity.

Figure 5.2



RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY SOURCES

Locally generated power from renewable sources, such as solar, wind, biomass, and methane, can provide cost saving and environmental benefits for Vermont municipalities. The more power produced locally (on a household or community basis), the less dependent communities, and the state as a whole, are on purchasing non-renewable and/or non-locally produced power. This in turn reduces the impact of volatile electric and heating fuel costs on the community and the state as a whole.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 8% of all occupied housing units in Fairfax use wood as a primary source of heating fuel, down from 18% in 1990. With an abundance of woodlands in Fairfax and the surrounding region, use of wood as a primary home heating fuel has the potential to increase in the future. With careful management, local forests could provide a sustainable, local fuel source that promotes economic vigor at an affordable cost per BTU.

In addition to using wood as a heating source on an individual household basis, the clean combustion of wood chips for heat and electricity production is another method of producing electricity from wood. This method of electricity generation has been promoted by the Vermont Department of Public Service, including a program directed at heating schools. Virtually all of Vermont's wood chip usage comes from mill wastes or sustainably harvested chips from low quality trees.

Potential for other forms of renewable energy generation, such as solar, wind, and methane power, exist in Fairfax, and may provide affordable, local, non-polluting heat and power if utilized to their full potential. Also in use in Fairfax are geothermal heating systems. Heat pumps use the natural thermal stability of the earth to partially heat a system of underground water pipes, which in turn heat the home through a forced hot water system.

Photo 8 - Alburgh Welcome Center Wind Tower, Courtesy VT Department of Public Service

Despite the initial insurgence of solar power in the 1970's, solar technologies are still not widely utilized, and federal funding for research into solar and other alternative energy resources has been less than generous in recent administrations. This is beginning to change as the consequences of climate change are more widely known and accepted, and as crude oil prices rise and sources for purchasing it become less secure. These factors are leading to the creation of new programs and incentives for developing renewable and clean sources of power and fuel. Solar power, though proven successful even in Vermont's northern climate, was not used as a heat source in any homes in Fairfax or Franklin County at the time of the 2000 U.S. Census. Small-scale wind power was not even tracked. Since the Census, solar and wind power have gained popularity on a household and neighborhood basis.

There is great potential in Vermont for anaerobic digestion and methane recovery as an energy source from a variety of sources including manure, industrial waste, and solid waste. Specifically, the number of methane digesters on farms is growing in Franklin County as dairy farmers are recognizing not only the energy potential, but environmental and economic benefits as well. Currently, methane digesters are profitable for large farms with more than 500 cows, but there is research being conducted on making digesters work for smaller farms in the future.

Net-metering power back into the grid provides an opportunity to offset some costs and potentially generate revenue from investing in local, renewable energy generation on a household or farm basis. Power produced from any renewable source, whether it be solar, wind, small-hydro, or methane can qualify for net-metering. A Certificate of Public Good under Act 248 is required and it is exempt from local zoning, though the Public Service Board usually considers local town plans and regulations in the review.

HEAT

As shown in Table 5.1, fossil fuels are the primary source of home heating fuel in Fairfax by a wide margin. Fuel oil and kerosene heat nearly 70% of all occupied housing units in the Town, compared to 53% in Franklin County. This difference may be explained by the lack of utility gas available in Fairfax, which is used in 20.9% of all homes in the county. Despite the lack of

available utility gas in town, the use of bottled or liquid propane gas accounts for 0.9% of all home heating in Fairfax.

Table 5.1. Home Heating Fuel Type		
	Fairfax	Franklin County
Utility Gas	0.9%	20.9%
Bottled,Tank or LP	21.4%	14.0%
Electricity	2.2%	2.6%
Fuel Oil/Kerosene	66.8%	52.9%
Coal/Coke	0.0%	0.1%
Wood	8.1%	9.2%
Solar	0.0%	0.0%
Other Fuel	0.7%	0.3%
No Fuel Used	0.0%	0.1%
Source: U. S. Census, 2000		

This reliance on non-local, unsustainable energy sources for heat could have negative implications for future energy affordability and reliability. Alternatives to current heating sources should be investigated which provide greater public benefit at lower economic, social, and environmental costs.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION

At the local level, concerns related to energy efficiency, conservation, and the use of renewable energy resources generally fall into four categories: town-owned or town-maintained buildings, utilities, and vehicles; private energy use in residences and businesses; development patterns and the construction and siting of buildings; and energy used for transportation.

MUNICIPAL ENERGY

The Town has taken several steps to ensure that efficient use of energy and the development and implementation of renewable energy resources are supported.

- ⇨ The older public buildings such as Bellows Free Academy, and the Town Clerk's office receive energy audits periodically. Past audits have resulted in improvements to the windows, lighting, and heating systems in both facilities.

- ⇨ The town garage and Fire Department buildings are heated to minimum levels when not in use. The recent purchase of a waste oil heating unit will both save on energy costs and recycle oil. The Town currently accepts waste oil from residents for use in the new unit.

- ⇨ The Town's truck fleet is completely diesel at this time. The school maintained bus fleet is also diesel. The quality of this maintenance program is evidenced by a 14 year life span for a bus owned by the school district.

According to Annual Reports, total municipal energy expenditures, for heating fuel, electricity, street lights, and vehicle fuels (excluding school) was $22,053 in 2006, down from $22,919 in 2002, and $23,990 in 1996; 1.2%, 3.2%, and 2.3% of total disbursements in 2006, 2002, and 1996 respectively. The efficient uses of energy in the operation of Town facilities and services promote savings in municipal energy costs, and place less demand on available energy resources.

The Selectboard is authorized by Vermont Statute to appoint an energy coordinator and/or an energy committee as an official resource to town planners. Since local information on the use of energy is limited, an energy coordinator or committee may be able to collect valuable data to further energy planning in town. According to statute, an energy coordinator and/or committee would take on a view toward the more efficient and economical utilization of existing and potential energy resources and with that in mind, could coordinate energy resources within the town, cooperate with the Planning Commission and with those federal, state, and regional agencies of government responsible for energy matters, and study and evaluate alternative sources of energy. The Planning Commission supports the creation of an energy coordinator and committee in Fairfax.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION IN HOMES AND BUSINESSES

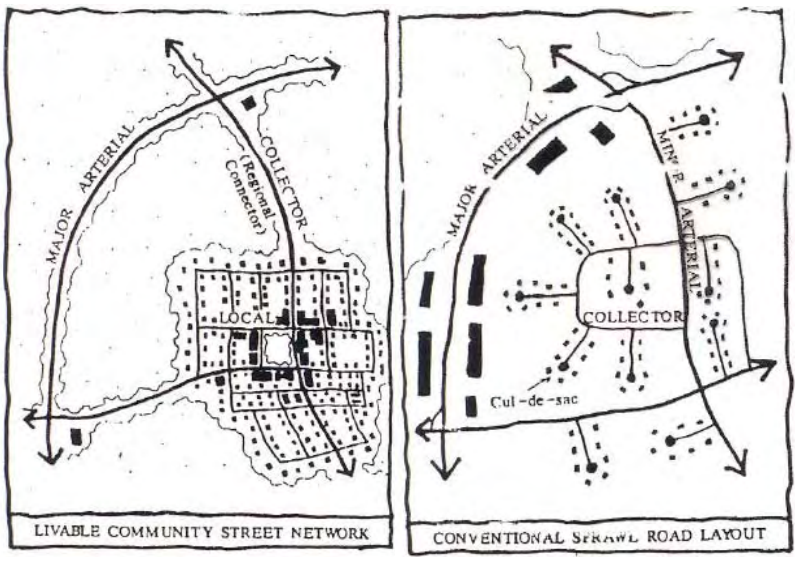
While the Town has less direct control over private energy use, it is possible to encourage weatherization, the use of improved windows, the installation of insulation, and the use of renewable energy resources. Efficiency Vermont is the nation's first statewide provider of energy efficiency services and is available to provide technical assistance and financial incentives to Vermont households and businesses to help them reduce their energy costs with energy-efficient equipment and lighting and with energy-efficient approaches to construction and renovation.

The farming community has been specifically targeted by utilities for assistance in increasing efficiencies and reducing electrical costs. Both CVPS and VEC offer these programs to help reduce energy demand through conservation. Statewide efforts aimed at agriculture include proposals to improve energy efficiencies in farm buildings and machinery. Alternative technologies which produce new sources of renewable energy are increasing in popularity, including digesters which capture methane for use as an energy source.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

The significance of land use related impacts on energy consumption and conservation are often underestimated, though critical considerations in formulating sound energy policy. Dispersed settlement patterns put a greater strain on energy supplies by increasing transportation related consumption, and by reducing space efficiencies in the delivery of essential services (Figure 5.3). Reliance on automotive travel for work, school, shopping, and recreation also results in greater energy

Figure 5.3



The community on the right puts a greater strain on energy supplies.

expenditures for both individuals and municipalities.

By encouraging future development in a concentrated, mixed-use center, such as the current village area, the town will achieve better efficiency in the delivery of existing essential services, such as fire and rescue services, solid waste pick-up, and mail delivery. The Village's street network should limit dead ends and improve interconnectivity to reduce transportation related energy consumption by improving circulation and efficiency. The street network should also provide opportunities for pedestrian and other non-vehicular traffic to enable and encourage walking and biking instead of driving.

The Town's current zoning bylaws encourage planned unit developments (PUDs), which require that buildings be clustered for more efficient uses of land and energy resources. PUDs "facilitate the adequate and economic provision of streets and utilities and preserve the agricultural, forested, natural and scenic qualities of the Town". PUD's are widely used tools in land use planning because they promote energy efficient siting and design. PUD's and other innovative techniques should be investigated further and utilized wherever possible and appropriate.

BUILDING SITING AND DESIGN

The way that buildings are sited and constructed can affect the amount of energy needed to access and use them. Development regulations can include incentives to site buildings with south facing orientation for maximum solar gain, use trees for wind breaks and shade, use appropriate glazing (windows) on the south wall, install "thermal mass" (such as concrete, brick, quarry tile, or water) to store the sun's energy, employ high levels of insulation, and use solar water heating,

By nature of their design, single family structures are generally less energy efficient in northern climates such as Vermont, due to the number of outside walls per dwelling unit. Multi-family structures, with more common interior walls, provide greater thermal integrity against the elements. A greater mix of single and multiple unit structures would improve energy efficiency on the municipal level, resulting in reductions in per capita energy consumption.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation accounts for a significant amount of energy demand, which can be reduced through conservation efforts. Ridesharing and encouraging local and home businesses help reduce transportation related energy consumption, and promote economic vitality in accordance with state energy goals.

Photo 9 - Park and Ride Lot at Exit 18, Courtesy VT Agency of Transportation

According to the latest U.S. Census (2000), over 77.9% of all Fairfax commuters drive alone to

work, while 14.5% carpool. Given that most work trips are to destinations outside Franklin County, commuter use results in significant energy consumption by the Town. Alternatives to consumptive, long distance, single occupancy work trips would greatly decrease energy demand and pollution resulting from the combustion of fossil fuels. Some alternatives include constructing park and ride lots to encourage carpooling, and seeking ways to develop the local economy to decrease the necessity for long distance commuter trips.

Transportation energy demand is also affected by the orientation of facilities and services relative to the population. Compact, mixed-use centers of activity reduce fuel consumption by enabling accessibility to bicycle and pedestrian traffic.

ENERGY GOALS AND POLICIES

Goals

1) To conserve energy and encourage the use of renewable energy resources.
2) Promote land settlement and economic development patterns that minimize energy demand.

Policies

1) To encourage future development at greater densities in the growth center so that residents have access to a variety of public and private services with a minimum of travel.
2) To encourage and enable public and private installation and application of appropriately sited, small scale renewable energy production systems, such as wind energy conversion and photo voltaic systems.
3) To encourage energy efficiency in the provision of municipal services and programs.

CHAPTER 6: EDUCATION

EXISTING FACILITIES

Photo 10 - Bellows Free Academy Fairfax – Middle School, by Skip Taylor

Bellows Free Academy Fairfax (BFA-Fairfax) is an excellent K-12 educational facility serving Fairfax residents in grades K-12, tuition students from Fletcher in grades 7-12, and tuition students from Westford, Georgia, and the surrounding communities in grades 9-12. BFA Fairfax provides a high quality educational program with access to vocational training at both the Essex Technical Center and the Burlington Technical Center for a wide variety of programs, six Advanced Placement (AP) classes for juniors and seniors, and access to courses through the Community College of Vermont. The facility includes two gymnasiums, one combination gym and cafeteria, one combination cafeteria and multi-purpose room, eighty classrooms as well as multiple fields to accommodate a rapidly growing co-curricular program. BFA employs eighty eight full time equivalent teachers, three full time administrators, and approximately fifty-five support staff, including office staff, paraprofessionals and bus drivers.

Because Fairfax has a small town office with limited meeting space, the school is an important resource for the community. The Fairfax Community Library is located within the school and is the center for a myriad of community activities, including church dinners, meetings of local community groups, and athletic activities. The comprehensive use of the school generates a high level of pride and commitment to the school by the community.

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

Population growth used to overtax the original 800 student design capacity of Bellows Free Academy. This problem was rectified in 1996 when voters approved a bond issue to finance the construction of an elementary wing. The addition was constructed in 1998 and increased the capacity of Bellows Free Academy to 1,200 students. The addition provided more classroom space, improved the existing kitchen facilities, added parking, provided greater separation of elementary and high school facilities, and installed fiber optic technology. It also added spaces

for additional programs necessary to extend the high quality educational experience currently offered into the future.

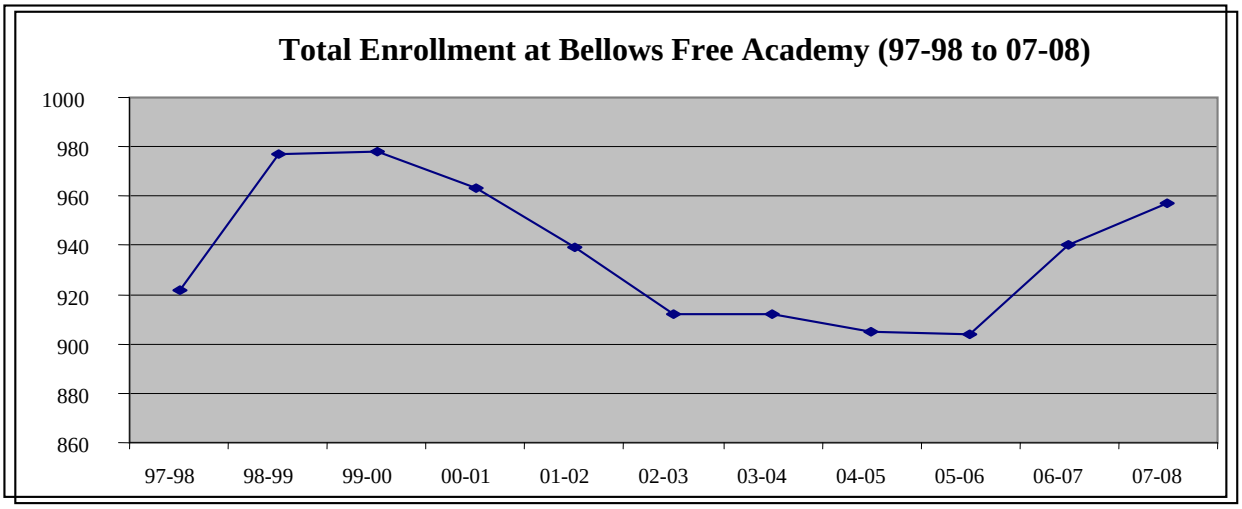
Table 6.1 and Figure 6.1 show enrollment history for the past ten years at Bellows Free Academy. Total enrollment has increased by 3.8% from the 1997/1998 school year to the 2007/2008 school year. During this 10 year period, there was a significant increase in school population from the 1997/1998 school year to the 1998/1999 school year, which is a reflection of increased capacity from the addition. Enrollment then steadied for a year before beginning a decline from the 1999/2000 school year to the 2005/2006 school year. Enrollment has now been increasing from the 2005/2006 school year to the present. While enrollment in kindergarten through grade 8 tends to fluctuate by small increments, enrollment in grades 9 through 12 fluctuates by much larger increments. This is a reflection that tuition students from Westford, Georgia, and Fletcher have a choice of attending any high school, which causes larger changes in enrollment based on choice rather than population of high school age students in the district.

Table 6.1. Bellows Free Academy: Enrollment Trends

Grade	97-98	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	% Change
K to 3	237	262	237	237	199	196	197	199	214	224	237	0.0%
4 to 6	170	177	186	198	216	196	196	178	170	173	177	4.1%
7 to 8	159	162	166	159	148	179	181	172	176	159	157	-1.3%
9 to 12	356	376	357	334	346	341	338	356	344	384	386	8.4%
Total	922	977	946	928	909	912	912	905	904	940	957	3.8%

Source: Town School District Annual Reports / Bellows Free Academy

Figure 6.1



If enrollment continues to increase at the same rate as the last 10 years, the school could be at capacity by the late 2060s. To provide some perspective based on national trends, school enrollment has seen a decrease during the current decade as a result of the aging of the baby boomers (generally born between the years of 1946 and 1964); however, small to moderate increases in enrollment are expected from the children of the baby boom echo population

(generally born between the years of 1976 to 2001) beyond 2010. Given these trends, BFA Fairfax has sufficient capacity for the near future, but should continue planning for how to accommodate increases in school age population in the future due the high capital costs of additions. At Town Meeting Day 2003, voters passed a motion to purchase 3 lots adjacent to the school campus. These lots will provide additional area for school facilities in the future, though specific plans do not currently exist.

Continued public use of the facility has mandated an effective maintenance program and has increased the demands for custodial supervision and cleaning. Additional help may be warranted as community use and evening school activities have an impact on the custodial staff's cleaning and maintenance schedule. Community use of the building typically includes meeting spaces used by local government, service organizations, adult recreation, self-help groups, youth activity groups, and cultural groups. Even though the school board has encouraged community use of the facility, an increase in school programs may restrict community use of the building in the future due to increases in curricular and co-curricular opportunities for a growing student population as the high school attracts more and more tuition students from area schools without high schools. Gym space in particular is in high demand between November and March.

BFA administrators continue efforts to improve the programs and facilities offered at the school. Currently, they are working with the Center for Technology in Essex to establish a satellite technical program on campus at BFA. Under discussion are a Pre Tech class for students in grade ten and a new Certificate Program in Equine studies. In addition, the school's accrediting agency recommended in their decennial evaluation report of 2005 that the school is in need of an auditorium for music and drama performances, however no plans have been developed at this point to build a performing arts space.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Continuing education is located either in or around Burlington, in St. Albans, and in Johnson. The Community College of Vermont (CCV) offers courses and degree programs in both Burlington and St. Albans. The CCV is part of the Vermont State College System and has links to other higher education facilities around the State. The University of Vermont, St. Michael's College, Burlington College, and Champlain College are all located in the Burlington area while Johnson State College is located in Johnson.

EDUCATION GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal

1) Provide a quality comprehensive educational experience for all residents of Fairfax, regardless of age.

Policies

1) Maintain the school as an educational, cultural and social center of the community.
2) To support programs that provide access to educational and vocational/technical training for traditional and non-traditional students.

CHAPTER 7: FACILITIES, UTILITIES, AND SERVICES

OVERVIEW: GROWTH AND FUNDING

In the past few decades, Fairfax's population has continued to grow to historically high levels. Population trends and forecasts indicate that this trend is not likely to abate in the near future. Fairfax's population as a percentage of the County total continues to rise, asserting the Town's position as a major area of potential growth in the region.

The potential for significant future growth is evidenced by the variety and quality of services and facilities available to residents, while still providing the charm of small town life in an enriching social and natural environment. By and large, Fairfax offers a greater level of services than do surrounding communities, including excellent schools (with school recreational facilities), municipal water distribution and wastewater treatment systems, an extensive community library, curbside trash, recycling, and household hazardous waste collection.

As the Town continues to experience growth pressures, especially in light of continued expansion of the Chittenden County commutershed, and major industrial job creation to the South, a need for additional or improved services and facilities will likely occur. Clear forethought and aggressive planning within limited monetary resources will be necessary to ensure that the rate of future growth in Fairfax does not exceed the ability of the community and the area to provide necessary facilities and services to maintain public safety, environmental integrity, and a high quality of life.

Photo 11 - Recent Housing Development in Fairfax, by Skip Taylor

Currently, the majority of services and facilities are funded through local property taxes, with additional revenue coming from water and sewer user fees and impact fees. The policy of depending solely upon property tax assessments to fund municipal services should be carefully examined, in light of the need for additional or improved services, including additional water supply and expansion to the wastewater treatment facility. In a community survey distributed to residents in 2007, the majority of respondents indicated that property taxes are the most important issue for the community to address in the next five years.

Fairfax is poised at a difficult crossroads. Successfully managing growth while adequately funding municipal services in need of improvement will require careful fiscal planning. Maintaining the town's capital budget and program will allow the Town to plan for municipal

improvements, leading to the most efficient use of tax revenues. It will be important to maintain the impact fee ordinance to assure the additional revenue may continue to be levied. Additionally, non-repayable funding sources (such as grant programs for facility and service improvements) should be aggressively sought to minimize the need to raise taxes in the future.

TOWN GOVERNMENT

PERSONNEL

Selectboard

The Town of Fairfax is managed by a five member Selectboard elected during the March Town meeting and serving for three-year or two-year staggered terms. The primary responsibilities of the Selectboard are to provide for the general health and welfare of the community, to see to the maintenance of the roads, to draft the town budget, and to set a tax rate. The budget is presented at Town Meeting for approval by the voters. The Selectboard also appoints the members of town commissions.

Photo 12 - Town Offices, by Skip Taylor

Town Clerk

The Town Clerk is elected for a three year term at the March Town Meeting. Duties of the office include maintenance of town land records, overseeing elections, maintaining the voter check list and issuing licenses for which the town has authority.

Treasurer

The Treasurer is elected for a three year term at March Town Meeting. In Fairfax, the Treasurer handles the collection of taxes banking, and accounting for both the town and the School District. The town runs on a calendar year while the school runs on a fiscal year starting in July. Taxes are due on November 15th.

Listers

Listers are elected at March Town Meeting for three-year staggered terms. The Listers assess property and maintain the Grand List. The most recent assessment was completed in 2005. Property evaluations are at 94% (2008) of fair market value.

Board of Civil Authority

The sixteen members of the Board of Civil Authority validate the voter checklist before each election and assist in counting votes. In addition, the board hears appeals of property appraisals and must view each property in question. All five Selectboard members serve on the board. The remaining members are Justices of the Peace, whom automatically serve as members of the Board of Civil Authority. The five members nominated by each political party are elected by the people, traditionally unopposed. The Town Clerk serves as clerk of the board; in addition, the Town Clerk has the power to cast a vote in the event of a tied vote on the board.

Town Constable
The constable is elected annually at March Town Meeting. At this time the Town Constable is primarily responsible for enforcing the town dog ordinance.

Public Works Department
The Fairfax Public Works Department includes the Fairfax Road Crew, the Fairfax Water Department, and the Fairfax Sewer Department.

The full time road crew employed by the Town of Fairfax is made up of one foreman, and two crew members. The full-time crew is responsible for winter and summer maintenance of all town roads. They also make any necessary repairs to the town water distribution lines. The Select Board assumes the duties of road commissioner, instituting a regular maintenance program and continually evaluating pending projects. Part-time help is hired by the town as needed.

The Fairfax Sewer Department has employed a full time supervisor since August 1996. Several improvements to existing systems have been made since that time.

Health Officer
The Vermont Commissioner of Health appoints the Health Officer on the recommendation of the Selectboard. The Health Officer is responsible for protecting the town against the cause, spread and development of disease.

Planning and Zoning Department
The Planning and Zoning Department consists of the Zoning Administrator and the Planning and Zoning Assistant. The Zoning Administrator is the enforcement officer for the town's ordinances and bylaws and administers the development review process on behalf of the town. Specifically, the zoning administrator issues zoning permits in accordance with the town's zoning and subdivision regulations. The Planning and Zoning Assistant assists the Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission, and the Development Review Board with meeting notices, meeting minutes, and issuing decisions in accordance with the town's zoning and subdivision regulations.

Recreation Department
The Recreation Department consists of two part-time employees: a recreation director, who coordinates the activities and projects of the recreation committee, and a grounds keeper.

Cemetery Commission
The Cemetery Commission is in charge of maintaining several cemeteries in the town and is elected at March Town meeting each year.

Legislative Representation
Fairfax and Georgia share Vermont Legislative District Franklin-1. Two state representative is elected to the Vermont House of Representatives to serve that constituency. As a municipality of Franklin County, Fairfax participates in electing two representatives to the Vermont State Senate.

TOWN COMMISSIONS

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission consists of five members appointed by the Selectboard for four year staggered terms. Primarily, the commission is responsible for preparing the five year Town Plan and the zoning and subdivision regulations. A full description of the planning commission's responsibilities is located in Chapter 1 of this Plan.

Development Review Board

The Development Review Board meets on a regular basis to decide on requests for development proposals, including conditional uses, subdivisions, right of ways, and site plans. In addition, the DRB hears requests for any variance from the zoning bylaws and appeals of the decisions of the Zoning Administrator. It suggests changes to zoning regulations where advisable. The board has five full time members and three alternates appointed by the Selectboard, for staggered four-year terms of service.

Northwest Regional Planning Commission

The Northwest Regional Planning Commission is an organization formed by and serving the municipalities of Franklin and Grand Isle Counties. The Commission has been providing planning and development assistance to communities for over 25 years. All communities, including Fairfax, are entitled to equal voting representation by two locally appointed members of the governing Board of Commissioners. As a member of the Commission, the Town typically receives assistance with planning and zoning issues including mapping, plan and bylaw revisions, and grant applications, with special projects such as the Safe Routes to School program, and with emergency and transportation planning. In addition, the Town is able to participate in regional planning programs, such as hazard mitigation planning and emergency planning/exercises, the development of a regional plan, Act 250 project review for conformance with the regional plan, and other issues of a regional scale.

TOWN ORDINANCES AND BYLAWS

Zoning Bylaws

Fairfax first adopted a zoning bylaw in the late 1960's. After a state planning law amendment, the bylaw was rewritten in 1980 and revised in 1982, 1985, and 1988. In 1998, further amendments were adopted to the zoning bylaw and subdivision regulations were adopted. The 1998 zoning bylaws and subdivision regulations were rewritten in 2000 and since revised in 2002, 2005, and 2007. Copies of the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations are available in the Town Office.

Pursuant to 24 V.S.A. 4411 a municipality may regulate land development in conformance with its adopted municipal plan and for the purposes set forth in Section 4302 of the same title to govern the use of land and the placement, spacing, and size of structures and other factors specified in the bylaws related to public health, safety, or welfare. Zoning bylaws may permit, prohibit, restrict, regulate and determine land development including the following:

1. *specific uses of land and shoreland facilities;*
2. *dimensions, location, erection, construction, repair, maintenance, alteration, razing, removal, and use of structures;*

3. *areas and dimensions of land to be occupied by uses and structures, as well as areas, courts, yards, and other open spaces and distances to be left unoccupied by uses and structures;*
4. *timing and sequence of growth, density of population, and intensity of use.*

Sewage Ordinance

A village sewer use ordinance is in effect, which provides rules for the control and regulation of the use of the public sewer system. Copies of the ordinance are available for review at the town office.

Dog Ordinance

An ordinance addressing the rights and responsibilities of dog owners is available in the town office for review.

Solid Waste Management

A Solid Waste Implementation Plan (SWIP) has been approved by the state and adopted by the Town in 2007. Fairfax's Solid Waste Implementation Plan prescribes a program of education, collection, recycling, processing and disposal for wastes generated in the Town. Goals of the Plan include 100% participation in municipal recycling, and in-state disposal of Fairfax's solid waste. Complete copies of these regulations are available for review in the town office.

Highway Ordinance

Fairfax first adopted a highway ordinance in 1972. It has been amended many times, most recently in 2004 to better address and regulate the construction of new roads throughout the town. Copies of the Highway Ordinance are available for review in the Town Office.

Emergency Management Plan

The Fairfax Emergency Management Plan was last adopted in September 1997 and is currently being updated. It identifies the emergency responsibilities of all appropriate municipal officials and officers; identifies local shelters and emergency operation centers; and outlines necessary communication and command protocols. Copies of the emergency management plan are available for review at the town office. Rapid Response Plans are a short form of the Emergency Management Plan. The most current Rapid Response Plan for the Town of Fairfax was last adopted in June of 2007.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND MUNICIPAL PROPERTIES

TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

The Town Clerk's Office is located on the first floor of the former principal's house owned by the Fairfax School District. The office houses working space for the Town Clerk, Town Treasurer, the Listers, the Zoning Administrator, and the water and sewer departments. It also serves as a meeting place for the Selectboard, Planning Commission and Development Review Board, and is handicapped accessible.

Future growth in the Town will necessitate additional vault space, which is sufficient until 2010. Aside from vault space, the current building will adequately serve the needs of the Town, although exploring the availability of alternate meeting space for large groups may be necessary

if the there is a need for additional office workspace in the future. There are currently no plans for expansion of the existing facility; however, the Town will be planning for an expansion to the vault. The Town Office is open five days a week from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, and Monday evenings from 6:00 pm until 8:00 pm.

TOWN PROPERTY

The Town is currently listed as the owner or part-owner of several pieces of property in town. These are listed in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2. Town of Fairfax: Municipal Properties

Location	Type	Acres
Wheezy Way	Land & well	4.00
Rte 104	Land - Historic	0.2
Maple Street	Land, Recreation	23.5
Fletcher Rd	Land & water system	55.5
Rte 104	Land	7.2
Rte 104	Land	98.0
Hunt St	Pollution control plant	7.1
Hunt St	Pollution control	6.7
Goodall St	Fire Station	1.6
Beeman Rd	Road	0.9
Broadstreet Rd	First settlers cellar	0.1
Anderson Rd	Old Rte 104	7.1
Total Acres		**211.8**

FEDERAL POST OFFICE

The post office is located in the Fairfax Commons. There are approximately 378 lock boxes that can be rented at the post office building. Rural route carriers serve approximately 150 miles of postal routes for Fairfax residents. These routes also serve parts of East Georgia, Westford, Fletcher and Fairfield. The post offices in Cambridge and Fairfield also service small parts of Fairfax.

LIBRARY

The Fairfax Community Library is located in the school, and is one of a small number of Vermont libraries that combine both the school and public libraries in the same facility. It is, however, the only such library in a K-12 facility. The school and town libraries work together to coordinate programs that serve both the school and the community. These programs include: children's programs, summer programs, reading discussion groups, and inter-library loans. The library is open each day during the school year, two evenings a week, and Saturday mornings. The use of shared staff with the school allows the library to be open more hours than would be possible otherwise.

The combination of Community Library and School Library is a unique community resource that provides a variety of valuable services in a single location. Books on tape, large print books, and inter-library loan materials are readily available. The Library is fully automated and is networked directly with the State Library system. In addition, computers allow access to a world of information, including the Vermont Online Library, a database of magazine and reference materials. Fairfax Community Library was recognized as one of the top libraries in the nation according to population in 2000 and 2002.

RECREATION FACILITIES

As a rural community, the outdoors provides an abundance of recreation opportunities for Fairfax residents. The Lamoille River, which flows through the southern portion of town, is used

for fishing and canoeing and the wooded areas and fields found throughout the Town are used for hunting, walking, snowmobiling, and cross country skiing. In addition to passive recreation opportunities, Fairfax is taking steps to meet the increasing recreational needs of the community.

Bellows Free Academy has traditionally served as the social, recreational, and educational center of the community. The single complex houses grades K-12 as well as the Community Library. The School Board has made classrooms, meeting rooms, gyms, and kitchens available to the general public when they are not being used for programs for students. The School Board and the Recreation Committee have worked together to continue to provide public access to the building, this access is generally available each evening when school is in session. Its central location in the Village keeps traffic isolated in a single multi-use area within walking distance of Village residents, and has available parking for vehicles. Athletic fields and tennis courts are in continual use by school sponsored teams, as well as adult and youth groups. Available space at the school is so completely utilized that there is not available time for intramural programs for the middle or high school and no programs for elementary students. This continual use of the school building and athletic fields demonstrates the value of the school to the entire community but at an increase in maintenance costs beyond those of a normal educational facility. In addition, population growth within the school may mean that additional classroom construction may encroach on existing recreational space. Members of the community have begun to investigate and discuss the need for a community center to address the Recreation Departments needs as well as the needs of other community organizations (theatre, seniors etc.)

A Community Park Committee was formed in 1994, which examined a variety of projects, including purchasing and developing a community park. In 2002, the Committee received a land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) grant to construct a Community Park and Recreation Path on 20.5 acres owned by the Town along the Lamoille River. The Community Park Committee led to creation of the Fairfax Parks and Recreation Department in 2004. The Community Park and Recreation Path was completed in 2006 with improved community ball fields and a paved 1/2 mile long recreational path that connects the natural surroundings with key community features, including stores, ball fields, and schools. Plans are in the works with a land transfer to expand the size of the park to accommodate a restroom facility/storage area.

Photo 13 - Fairfax Community Park and Bike Path Sign, by Skip Taylor

The Department is seeking to expand recreation opportunities to meet the needs of all of the residents of the town. The Parks and Recreation Department offers recreation and fitness programs for the community, including fusion (yoga/pilates), yoga for parents and kids, boot camp, wellness classes, and stroller strolling. The Department also sponsors the annual Ducky Race and Egg Run and Walk which are fundraising events. The Town owns nearly 100 acres

near the St. Albans reservoir that is potentially available for resident use for low impact recreational activities such as hiking and skiing. The Town is currently pursuing plans to implement the use of this area.

Photo 14 - Fairfax Community Recreation Path Ribbon Cutting and Bike Fair, September 30, 2006, by Henry Raymond

SOLID WASTE

The Town currently has a contract with Casella Waste Management, which collects household solid waste through curbside pickup weekly. The solid waste is then trucked to the Coventry, Vermont landfill. Recyclable items are picked up once a week. There are two hazardous waste collection days a year at the town garage.

The Town left the Northwest Solid Waste District in 1993 in an effort to provide more local flexibility regarding solid waste management strategies. Since that time, the Town has operated under their own Solid Waste Plan. The Towns current Solid Waste Implementation Plan was approved by the Agency of Natural Resources in 2007 and adopted by the Town later that year. The Plan places an emphasis on cost-effective waste reduction and re-use through a program of public education, and through the provision of accessible recycling opportunities to the community.

PUBLIC FACILITIES & UTILITIES

TOWN OF FAIRFAX

Map 2

LEGEND

Facility Features

- Church
- Fire Station
- Town Garage
- Historical Society
- Community Library
- Town Office
- School
- Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Town Well
- Water System Building

Transportation Features

- Interstate Highway
- State Highway
- Class 2 Town Highway
- Class 3 Town Highway
- Class 4 Town Highway
- Private Road

Surface Water Features

- River, Stream or Brook
- Lake, Pond or River

Other Feature

- Town Boundary

Vermont Coordinate System
Transverse Mercator, NAD 83.

For planning purposes only.

Prepared by:
Northwest Regional
Planning Commission
155 Lake Street
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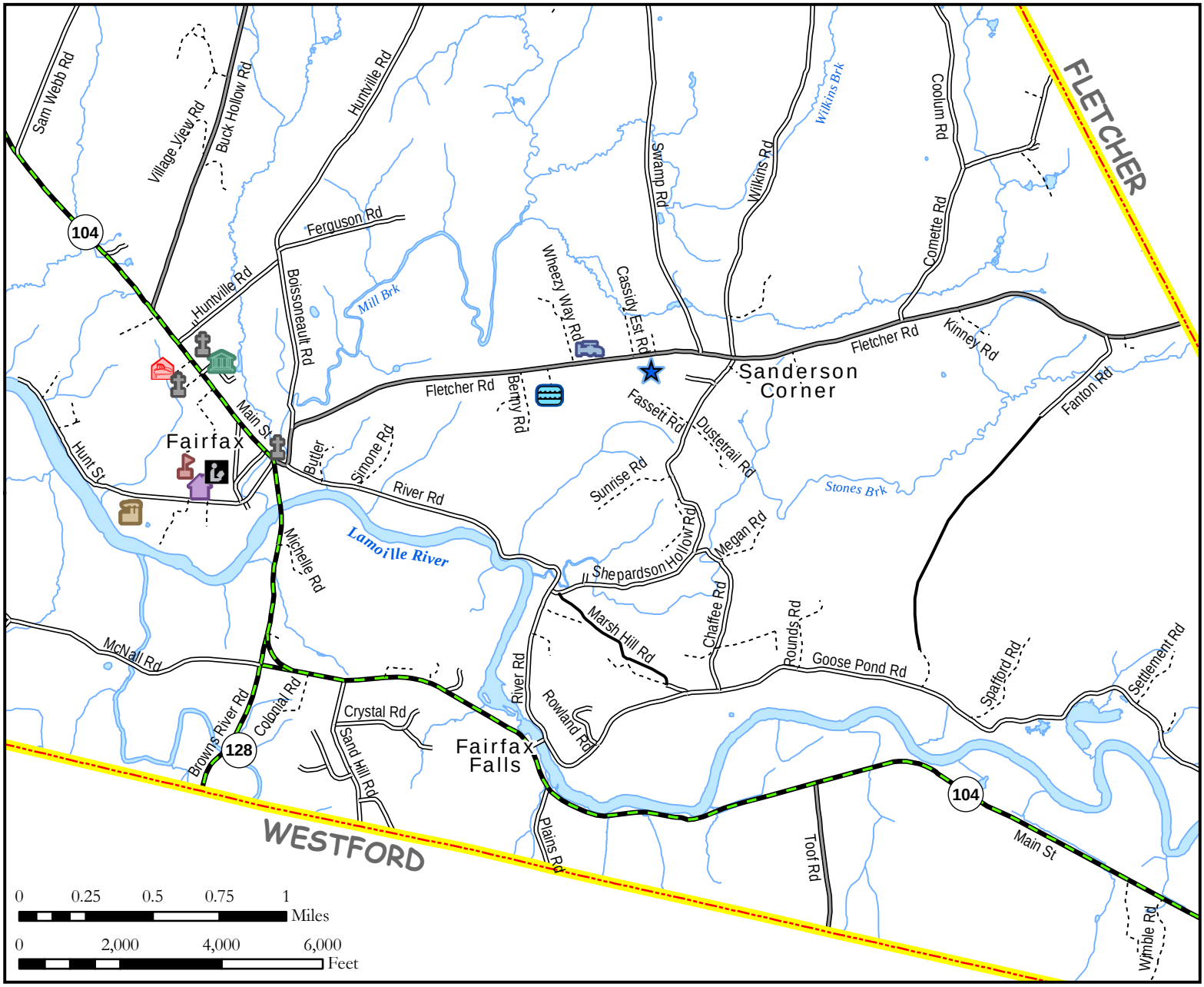
July, 2008.

Data Source: All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

Location: z:/gis/projects/county/franklin/fairfax/townplan08/final/facilites&utilities



PUBLIC UTILITIES

FAIRFAX WATER DEPARTMENT

The Fairfax Water Department distributes water to the village population through a system which was updated in 1999. The system was originally intended to serve only the school, but as time went on the system was expanded to include houses in the village. The system currently serves approximately 260 connections, including the school. The total possible yield of the well is 60,000 gallons per day. In 2008, the estimated demand for water was 37,000 gallons per day, with another 23,000 gallons per day allocated to future development, which places the water system at capacity. The well has been at capacity since 2001. The well does not meet the water supply needs for the Town of Fairfax. An additional water source is needed to expand capacity and as a backup source of water in the case of contamination or other emergency.

The water source is a well located on the Wheezy Way Road, which produces 75 gallons per minute. Water is pumped from the source on demand to two 176,000 gallon storage reservoirs, which are controlled by a computer and radio frequency communications, and then distributed to the village by gravity flow. Two pump stations, located within the system, provide water to above gravity fed elevations. The system is chlorinated and controls levels of manganese in the water.

In 2002, the Town hired Green Mountain Engineering to explore locations for additional water supply wells. Green Mountain Engineering completed a hydrology study that located four potential sites, none of which were located on the preferred location – a 56 acre parcel by the water control building owned by the town. Before looking into Green Mountain Engineering's recommended sites, the Selectboard pursued other options for determining water source potential on the town owned 56 acres, which were unsuccessful. The Selectboard also pursued one of Green Mountain Engineering's recommended sites, which abuts the town's existing supply well and is in the same aquifer. However, securing this well site has stalled due to its proximity to the existing well. It is in the same aquifer and therefore would not serve well as a backup in the case of contamination. It is possible that the well could serve as additional capacity, but the well needs to be drilled and a pump test completed to determine if it would affect the current well's existing capacity. No steps have been taken to complete such tests and no other sites have been investigated to date.

Current user fees are sufficient to maintain the existing water system; however, they are not adequate to fund an increase in capacity of the water system, which would require drilling and constructing infrastructure for an additional supply well.

The State of Vermont has delineated a Source Protection Area (SPA) around the Village's drinking water supply well of just under 120 acres. SPA's are defined by the Department of Environmental Conservation as "surface or subsurface areas from or through which contaminants are reasonably likely to reach a public water system source". Fairfax is required to have a Source Protection Area Plan that delineates the boundaries of the protection area, inventories the potential contaminants of concern to the area, assesses the susceptibility of the drinking water source to contamination, a management plan for potential risks, and a contingency plan in case of an emergency. The plan was first adopted in November of 2001 and last updated in March of

2006. There were ten residences and one industry located within the Source Protection Area in 2008.

There are 33 fire hydrants in Fairfax, which are for immediate response to fires and not for extended use due to capacity limitations. The Fire Department has a map of other water sources available in the case of a fire, including two fire ponds.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL

A village sewer system and treatment plant were installed in Fairfax in 1982. The present system is capable of discharging 78,000 gallons of treated waste per day. The system continues to discharge an average of 41,000 gallons of treated waste a day or 53% of capacity. The Town reserves ten percent of capacity for municipal use and an additional 29,200 gallons per day have been allocated to planned or recently approved development. This places the system at capacity (as of early 2008) and unable to serve future wastewater management needs within the Growth Center District.

Significant improvements have been made to the system since August 1996. A new system was installed to deliver oxygen to the three sewage treatment lagoons. Previously, bacteria in the treatment lagoon were dying as a result of a lack of oxygen. This resulted in decreased efficiency in waste treatment, as well as an increase in odors from the plant. The new oxygen delivery system has improved the treatment efficiency (and therefore capacity) of the facility, and has alleviated the previous problem of excessive odor. In addition, two main pumps have been replaced since the system was built. The system is entirely paid for and the fees being charged are currently covering the yearly maintenance costs and are not sufficient to cover the needed expansion in treatment capacity. .

The system is monitored by the State when monthly samples and reports are submitted. Sludge is cleared from the facility and spread every five to seven years according to sludge accumulation. The available spreading area is sufficient for the capacity of the plant for the next 75 years; however, if the system is expanded, sludge would need to be spread every two to three years and the area would only serve for the next 35 years. The Fairfax Wastewater Department is currently investigating innovations which would eliminate the need for the cleaning and subsequent spreading of sludge; however, it is the cheapest method. Sludge-eating bacteria are currently being used in other localities that eliminate the need for frequent cleaning of treatment lagoons. Alternative approaches such as this could significantly improve the efficiency of the current treatment system.

As noted above, the current system is not adequate to meet the needs of the future population of the village area and has been near capacity since 1999. Without improvements to the current system, the town will not achieve the desired density or see new economic development and services in the Village. The Selectboard recently commissioned a Wastewater Feasibility Study to look at doubling the discharge capacity and completing required upgrades to the existing Wastewater Treatment Plant. The final results of the Feasibility Study were presented in June of 2007, which reported a total estimated cost of 2.5 million. The Selectboard held a public meeting in December of 2007 to present the results of the Feasibility Study and to discuss potential financing and action plans for securing additional sewer treatment capacity and

additional drinking water supply; however, no decisions have been made as a result of the meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

Local telephone service for residents of Fairfax is provided by FairPoint. Several long-distance service providers are available. Cell phone service is spotty throughout town.

Internet service is available in town through a variety of means. Dial-up internet service is available throughout the town by several service providers, while DSL high-speed service is available within a 2½-mile radius around the Village. Satellite high-speed internet service is available throughout town, but requires good exposure for the satellite. Wireless broadband internet will soon be available in the Village. The Town supports additional reliable broadband internet options in Town, such as fiber optic cable.

Cable television lines were installed in 2006, prior to which satellite was the only option for picking up more than basic local television channels. Television service (more than basic local channels) is provided through Comcast, Dish Network, and DirecTV.
Local newspaper media coverage is supplied through *The Buyer's Digest* and the local monthly *Fairfax News*. Local news and information is also available at www.franklinone.com, www.vtgrandpa.com, and www.fairfaxvt.com. Regional newspaper coverage, including Fairfax, is provided in the *St. Albans Messenger,* which is published daily.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

Fairfax has a volunteer fire department (staffed by residents of Fletcher and Fairfax) and rescue squad. Calls made to these services are routed through a 911 telephone system. Road identification numbers have been assigned to each property so that when a call is received the site of the emergency can be quickly located. Both services are housed in a facility built in 1990 on the western side of Route 104 on land donated by Robert Young. The building has two offices, a meeting room, a kitchen, and sleeping facilities. All of the bays are currently full. If at some later time additional vehicles were required, an addition to the building would be needed.

The Volunteer Fire Department provides valuable and adequate services to Fairfax and neighboring towns. Approximately 35 members from Fairfax and Fletcher train and serve as firefighters, approximately 18 of which are from Fairfax. The number of calls that the department responds to on a yearly basis has been increasing. In the nineties, the department was responding to an average of about 60 calls per year. In 2006, the department responded to approximately 97 calls, in 2007 approximately 130 calls, and in 2008 an estimate of 150 calls. Despite the annual increase in calls, the department expects to maintain quality fire protection service.

The department has an ISO rating of 6, within 1,000 feet of a hydrant and a rating of 9, for 5 miles beyond the 1,000 feet; and is currently capable of handling any fires in this area. If Fairfax should develop any large industrial sites, an upgrading of equipment and training would be

required. Fairfax has a mutual-aid agreement with 27 other communities, but serves only 4 or 5 of those communities on a regular basis, including Milton, Westford, Essex, Cambridge and Johnson.

The current equipment inventory includes two pumpers (1996 – 1,250 gpm and 2003 – 1,250 gmp), three tankers (1995 – 1,700, 1983 - 3,000 gal, 1985 2,000 gal), and a variety of specialty equipment and accessories. Improvements and replacements to fire equipment are funded through the Town's Budget as a line item at town meeting. Currently, all tankers need replacing. Within the next three years, the department will specifically be looking to replace the 1983 and the 1985 tankers.

Water supply for fire protection is provided by 33 hydrants within the village, and a combination of dry hydrants, brooks, ponds, and rivers throughout the rest of town. The fire department keeps an updated map of these water supplies at the station. Currently, there are 4 dry hydrants within the coverage area. The Fire Department recommends installing dry hydrants when suitable conditions exist for all new developments in town.

For many years, ambulance services for Fairfax were provided by the local funeral home directors. Later, the ambulance transport service was taken over by the Heald Ambulance Service in St. Albans. In the fall of 1975, a "jump squad" (now known as a First Responder Service) was formed. The squad purchased its first ambulance in 1984 to replace a station wagon that carried equipment to the scene of an emergency.

The rescue services in town are now provided by the Fairfax Rescue Squad, Inc., which is licensed by the State of Vermont to give emergency care to Fairfax and neighboring towns. The squad serves primarily the towns of Fairfax, Fletcher, and northern Westford. The group also serves as backup service to southern Westford, Milton, Georgia, Fairfield, and Cambridge. The department is staffed by approximately 28 volunteers from Fairfax and surrounding areas.

The squad owns one 1999 ambulance, which is expected to be replaced in 2009. It is expected that the squad will purchase a second truck within approximately five years, depending on the call load. The squad is funded by a variety of sources including, the voters of Fairfax, Fletcher, and Westford, revenues from billing for service, contributions, and fundraisers. Requests for ambulance services have shown an eighteen to twenty percent increase in the last five years.

The squad sponsors public classes each year in specific areas of first aid. Once a month the entire squad holds training sessions, and the crews train once a week. The group now has members that are certified ECA's (Emergency Care Attendants), EMT's (Emergency Medical Attendants), EMT-I's (I.V. Technicians). All EMT's are certified to perform defibrillation, and a defibrillator is carried on the ambulance.

The Fire Department and the Rescue Squad have provided quality services to all sections of the town. Their response time to all parts of the town is good (approximately 7 minutes on average). However, Fairfax Rescue is finding it more and more difficult to find enough volunteers to staff the ambulance around the clock, seven days a week. As a remedy, the squad has resorted to paying some positions per diem.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law enforcement is primarily provided by the Franklin County Sheriff's Office through a contract with a deputy sheriff for 40 hours a week. Coverage was increased to 40 hours per week from 20 hours and shared coverage with Georgia in 2006 in response to increased need. During 2006 in Fairfax alone, the Sheriff's Office responded to 215 complaints, made 22 arrests, and issued 219 traffic tickets.

In addition to coverage provided by the Sheriff's Office, the Vermont State Police provide law enforcement to Fairfax, although their presence has decreased in recent years due to budget cuts. The Town Constable is primarily responsible for enforcing the Town Dog Ordinance.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

High quality medical services are within easy travel distances of Fairfax. The Northwest Medical Center, Medical Center Hospital of Vermont, and the Cambridge Medical Center are all located within 25 miles of Fairfax. A variety of medical and dental offices are located in neighboring towns. Nursing homes are available in St. Albans, Swanton, Richford, and Burlington. Family support services are available from Franklin-Grand Isle Mental Health and Social and Rehabilitative Services based in St. Albans. Two physicians, a pharmacy, and Huber House, a residential care home, are based in Fairfax. The school has a referral agreement and provides some preventative and rehabilitative counseling through Champlain Valley Drug and Alcohol. The Town supports additional services by contributing to the following: Franklin County Home Health Agency, Franklin-Grand Isle Mental Health Services, Inc., Franklin County Citizen Advocacy and Champlain Valley Agency on Aging. Meals on Wheels for Fairfax senior citizens is an all volunteer service.

The quality of health and human services available now will continue to meet the needs of the town well into the foreseeable future. The Fletcher-Allen Hospital is a teaching hospital and the largest hospital in the northern part of Vermont and New York. The standard of medical care available for Fairfax residents is thus the highest provided anywhere in the state. Mental health services are similarly situated.

CHILDCARE SERVICES

Childcare is a strong concern for existing and prospective families with young children, whether it means finding quality services or securing the costs of services. A 2005 Legislative Report from the Vermont Child Care Advisory Board reports that the average cost for center-based care in Vermont is $140.92 for infants and $125.71 for preschoolers per week. Statewide, more than 27 percent of low-earning families spend more than one fifth of their income on childcare. High quality, affordable childcare is a critical component to supporting a stable workforce.

Many child development experts believe that children often do not have the maturity and self-care skills to be left unsupervised until the age of 12. The 2000 U.S. Census indicates that there are 724 children under the age of 12 currently living in Fairfax. According to the Vermont Bright Future Childcare Information System, Fairfax currently has sixteen (16) registered

childcare homes and five (5) licensed centers, with approximately 29 vacancies as of mid 2008. The total capacity of these facilities is not currently known; however, infant capacity is limited.

Table 7.3: Number of Children in Fairfax under the age of 12

	1990	2000	% change
Under 1 year	49	58	18.4
1 and 2 years	85	111	30.6
3 and 4 years	84	97	15.5
5 years	48	64	33.3
6 years	35	59	68.6
7 to 9 years	132	203	53.8
10 and 11 years	99	142	43.4
Total	532	734	38.0

Source: US Census

The population of children under the age of 12 in Fairfax has slightly increased by approximately three percent from 1990 to 2000 (Table 7.3). However, of the 21 childcare options in Fairfax, spots are filled with children from adjacent municipalities as well as children from Fairfax. In addition, Fairfax children fill spots in adjacent communities, St. Albans, and Chittenden County locations. Further, data on other childcare options, such as grandparents, siblings, stay at home parents, un-registered childcare homes or other opportunities, and the quality and affordability of existing services is not available. Given these data limitations, it is difficult to assess the availability and quality of childcare in the community.

It is also important to note that the childcare industry can contribute to the local economy by creating jobs and supporting a stable workforce. The accessibility, affordability, and quality of childcare may affect a parent's ability to enter and remain in the workforce and to be a productive employee.

FACILITIES, UTILITIES, AND SERVICES GOALS AND POLICIES

Goals

1) To provide and plan for efficient and adequate municipal facilities and services, including a community library, recreation opportunities, sewer and water infrastructure, solid waste management, and public safety and emergency response.
2) To support access to a variety of community services, including communications, health, and human services.

Policies

1) To balance growth with the Town's ability to provide expanded services and facilities.
2) To provide a broad range of quality community programs and services through the combined school/community library.
3) To maintain and enhance recreational and scenic resources for the enjoyment of all residents in Fairfax.
4) To provide a variety of efficient, environmentally sound, and cost effective long term solid waste options.
5) To provide an efficient human waste treatment system within the growth center.
6) To provide a safe, reliable source of municipal drinking water.

7) Provide for the efficient and reliable delivery of sufficient water supplies for fire protection in Fairfax Village.
8) To assess when improvements or expansions to the municipal water supply and wastewater treatment plant will be needed and how to finance them.
9) To assess fair user fees to fund the municipal water supply and wastewater treatment plant.
10) To provide for the physical safety of Fairfax residents through quality fire, emergency response, and law enforcement services.
11) To encourage opportunities to provide convenient access to health and human services for Fairfax residents.
12) To promote opportunities for increased communications infrastructure, such as broad band internet access, cell phone service, DSL, etc.

CHAPTER 8: THE LOCAL ECONOMY

THE ECONOMY

The economy in Fairfax is supported by the businesses and services in the historic village area and mixed use district south of the Lamoille River and the rural economy in the remainder of the Town. The rural economy largely consists of agricultural operations, agricultural related businesses, and home based businesses. It is important to plan for and enable business and industry that will contribute to and maintain both the traditional village character and rural, agricultural setting.

Photo 15 - Foothills Bakery in Fairfax Village, by Henry Raymond

The Village has a number of retail businesses serving the basic needs of villagers and the surrounding countryside. Future commercial development will likely be in the service sector and in retail businesses, and should continue to be located in the growth center and mixed use district as identified in the Fairfax Zoning and Subdivision Regulations.

Photo 16 - Marvin's Garden's Farm Stand, by Henry Raymond

Although employment in agriculture is slowly declining with mechanization and the consolidation of small family farms into larger units, strength and stability of the agricultural economic base should be promoted. Agribusiness and other support and co-operative services should be encouraged to locate in Town. Home occupations and other small industries and businesses should also be

encouraged as part of the rural economy to encourage local employment opportunities and a diverse economic base.

EMPLOYMENT

Due to the Town's close proximity to the employment centers in Chittenden County and St. Albans, Fairfax is primarily a bedroom community. Few employment opportunities exist within the Town. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, over half (55.6%) of employed persons living in Fairfax commuted to work in Chittenden County, while 17% worked in Fairfax. The remaining 26% commuted to work in other towns in Franklin County or Lamoille County. The proportion of employed persons that work in Fairfax has likely stayed the same or decreased since 2000, as no new industries have located in Fairfax. Turnkey commercial sites are available in three neighboring towns, therefore the likelihood of a major employer locating in Fairfax is limited. Fairfax has been and is likely to continue to experience residential and perhaps small-scale commercial growth (without a significant increase in the property tax base) in response to a major employer locating or expanding in an adjacent community.

BUSINESSES IN FAIRFAX

According to the Vermont Department of Labor, there were 77 commercial establishments in Fairfax in 2006, increasing by 38% since 1996. The largest industry in Fairfax is construction, with retail trade, manufacturing, and other services also having higher percentages (Table 8.1).

Table 8.1 Industries by Type in Fairfax (1996 and 2006)

	Number of Establishments		Percent of Total		Absolute Change
	1996	2006	1996	2006	1996-2006
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	1	3	2%	4%	2
Construction	16	20	29%	26%	4
Manufacturing	4	8	7%	10%	4
Wholesale Trade	3	4	5%	5%	1
Retail Trade	8	9	14%	12%	1
Transportation and Warehousing	1	5	2%	6%	4
Financial Activities	1	3	2%	4%	2
Professional and Business Services	3	3	5%	4%	0
Educational and Health Services	3	5	5%	6%	2
Leisure and Hospitality	3	4	5%	5%	1
Other Services (maintenance, housekeeping, etc.)	7	8	13%	10%	1
Government	6	5	11%	6%	-1
Total	56	77	100%	100%	21

Vermont Department of Labor, 2008

The Fairfax Community Guide put together by the Fairfax Business Professional Association includes a directory of all businesses in Fairfax, which provides more detailed information than

the U.S. Census. The guide lists over 100 diverse, mostly small businesses, ranging from professional services such as lawyers and doctors to contractors, builders, and construction businesses, auto repair shops, bed and breakfasts, and travel agencies. There are four convenience/country stores, including Steeple Market, Minor's, Nan's, and Adam's Quick Stop. The Town also hosts a video store, pharmacy, a hardware store, and several hair salons. There are two restaurants in Town, the Country Pantry and the Foothills Bakery.

Photo 17 - Steeple Market, by Henry Raymond

CHALLENGES RELATED TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Town is faced with many challenges to local economic development. By working on these challenges, including adequate sewer and water infrastructure, ensuring adequate parking, pedestrian accessibility, and calming traffic, the Town will encourage the continued development of a healthy economy in the Village area. These challenges are discussed in other areas of the plan, but are briefly introduced here as they relate to economic development.

Sewer and Water Infrastructure. Additional sewer and water capacity is needed in the Village for any new businesses to locate in the growth center and to realize the goal of a compact village center surrounded by rural countryside. Until the Village addresses this ongoing problem, the Village will not realize further economic development there. In the Mixed Use District, wastewater treatment should be dealt with on a community basis to accommodate a compact density.

Parking. Adequate parking is important to attract people to stop in Fairfax and patronize businesses. Supplying enough parking spaces is a common problem in village centers and downtown areas because the compact settlement pattern does not provide enough space for off-street parking. In such compact commercial areas, it makes sense to encourage common parking lots and on-street parking. Currently, no research exists on whether parking is adequate in the Village and Mixed Use District. In the future, it may be necessary to conduct a study on parking opportunities.

Sidewalks. A safe pedestrian environment in the Village will contribute to its economic vitality. Continued effort to maintain and improve sidewalks in the village area and along Route 104 in the mixed use district will encourage people to walk the village streets and patron local businesses. Specific attention should be paid to providing safe pedestrian links from the Mixed Use District to the Growth Center. Further discussion on sidewalks is located in Chapter 10 under Pedestrian and Bicycle Travel.

Traffic. Heavy traffic is an issue along Route 104 through the Growth Center and the Mixed Use District. To improve access and circulation to local businesses, the Town should implement the recommendations of the Route 104/104A Corridor Study (2005) and the Route 104/128 Intersection Study (2007). These studies are discussed in Chapter 10 under Route 104.

LOCAL ECONOMY GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal

1) Promote a balanced, diverse economic base, with a focus on locally owned enterprises.

Policies

1) To support agriculture and forestry related businesses, and protect productive agricultural and forestry lands from conversion to incompatible land uses.
2) To encourage a mixture of commercial uses including retail, personal and professional services, and restaurants in the growth center and mixed use districts.
3) Support the maintenance of and/or upgrade to reliable services that attract commercial development, such as broadband internet, cell phone service, and municipal water supply and wastewater treatment.
4) Promote opportunities to produce, process and distribute locally grown food products and forest resources.

CHAPTER 9: HOUSING

EXISTING CONDITIONS

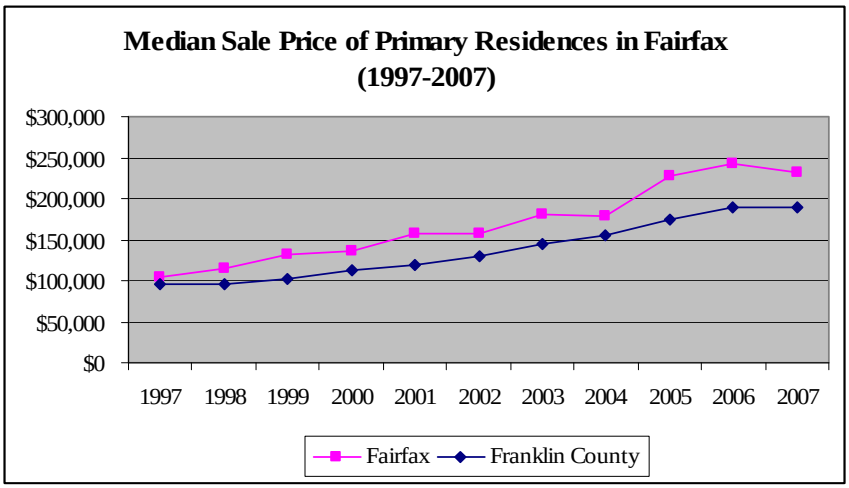
Fairfax is primarily a bedroom community for residents who work in the Burlington and St. Albans areas. This is due to its accessibility from Routes 104 and I-89, as well as the shortage and cost of housing closer to these employment centers. Undoubtedly, the aesthetic attractiveness of the town also contributes to this trend.

The 2007 Grand List reflects 1,353 parcels in residential use, up from the 1997 Grand List which showed 980 residential parcels in Fairfax. The majority (66%) are single family homes on less than 6 acres of land. These "R-1" properties represent just over half of the total municipal listed value on the 2007 Grand List. Residential properties account for the overwhelming majority of the Town's tax base at 83%, up slightly from 81% in 1997. R-2, or multi-family residential properties, have also increased as a percentage of the total listed value. Commercial rental properties comprise less than 1% of the total Grand List. Similarly, vacation and seasonal housing also contributes less than 1% of the total Grand List. (A summary of this data can be viewed in Table 3.5 in Chapter 3)).

Overall, housing in Fairfax is in sound condition. There are some very beautiful old homes in Fairfax, which the town historical society has recognized as having significance, and are listed in the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, Historic Sites and Structures Survey. Nearly 24% of all housing units in Fairfax were built before 1939. An additional 39.5% were constructed during the Town's biggest growth period, between 1970 and 1989.

According to 2000 Census figures, there are 1,222 housing units in Fairfax that are occupied throughout the year, up from 849 in 1990. This averages to 2.9 persons per dwelling, compared to 2.7 for Franklin County. On average, 33 new single family houses were built per year from 1997 to 2007 and 14 multi-family homes during the same period (see Table 3.4 in Chapter 3).

Figure 9.1



According to Vermont Housing Data, which is based on property transfer taxes, the median sale price for primary single family dwellings in 2007 was the second highest in the County at $232,500. Georgia was the only town in the County with a higher median sale price at $233,500 during the same period (Table 9.1). The median sale price in Fairfax during 2007 was 22% higher than the median sale price for Franklin County as a whole. Over the last ten years, the median sale price has increased significantly (124%) (Figure 9.1). While significantly higher than the County median, the Town has followed the same trend over the last ten years, with a steady increase through 2004, a jump in sale prices through 2006, and then a leveling off of sale prices during 2007, which reflects the downturn of the housing market nationally.

Table 9.1
Median Price of Primary Residences Sold

Bakersfield	$161,500
Berkshire	$140,000
Enosburgh	$129,000
Fairfax	**$232,500**
Fairfield	$215,000
Fletcher	$200,250
Franklin	$144,750
Georgia	233,500
Highgate	$166,500
Montgomery	$139,500
Richford	$68,250
St. Albans City	$176,950
St. Albans Town	$205,250
Sheldon	$176,000
Swanton	$184,900

Source: VT Housing Data, 2007

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Safe, adequate housing is inarguably one of our most basic needs. It is an important planning consideration to ensure that being able to afford adequate housing is not the luxury of a select few. Instead, a variety of housing types (in equally various price ranges) needs to be aggressively promoted to foster a diverse community, which is not economically exclusive. Housing which is affordable for first-time buyers, senior citizens (often on fixed incomes), and for lower income residents is especially important in this regard.

To define affordable housing, the state has determined that 80% of the median household income (or median metropolitan statistical area (MSA) income, if it applies) can afford to pay no more than 30% of their income on housing. This definition is used as an indicator for the availability of affordable housing in a community. Homeownership housing costs include not only the mortgage, but taxes and insurance, as well. In the case of rental units, the cost is defined as rent plus utilities. All of Franklin and Grand Isle County have recently been added to the Burlington-South Burlington MSA. In 2000, the U.S. census determined the 1999 median family income in the town of Fairfax to be $51,769 vs. $46,732 in the Burlington-South Burlington MSA as a whole. Low income households are those in which income is less than 80% of the median. Approximately 320 households are considered "low-income" in Fairfax (Table 9.2).

Table 9.2. Household Income Distribution (1999)

Income	# Households
Less than $35,000	318
35,000 to $99,999	826
$100,00+	79

Source: US Census, 2000

Using the state definition of affordable housing outlined above, Tables 9.3 and 9.4 illustrate the income available for homeownership and for rent each month for the median income and 80% of the median income, median sale price for year-round primary dwellings or median gross rent, and the difference between the two, known as the affordability gap. The maximum affordable mortgage for the median income is over $70,000 less than the median price of homes sold in Fairfax during 2007, while for lower incomes the gap gets even larger. The maximum affordable mortgage for the median adjusted family income is still over $50,000 less than the median price of homes sold in Fairfax during 2007, again with a larger gap for lower incomes. Rental housing in Fairfax appears to be more affordable for median and low incomes.

Table 9.3 Affordability Gap for Homeownership Costs in Fairfax

Income		30% of Income/ Per Month	Taxes & Insurance	Income Available for Housing per Month	5% Down Payment	Maximum Affordable Mortgage	Median Sale Price Primary Residences (2007)	Owner Affordability Gap
Median MSA HH Income (1999)	$46,732	$1,168	$240	$928	$6,717	$162,324	$232,500	-$70,176
Low HH (80%)	$37,386	$935	$240	$695	$4,972	$121,413	$232,500	-$111,087

Data Source: Median Household Income (2000 U.S. Census); 2005 median family adjusted gross income (VT Department of Taxes); 2007 median home sale price (Vermont Housing Data); taxes and insurance (NRPC estimate); all other figures computed by NRPC.

Table 9.4 Affordability Gap for Rental Costs in Fairfax

	Income Available for Housing per Month	Median Gross Rent (2000)	Rental Affordability Gap
Median MSA HH Income (1999)	$928	$655	$273
Low HH (80%)	$695	655	$40

Data Source: U.S. Census, NRPC calculations

Rental housing in Fairfax is at a premium. Of the 27 vacant housing units identified by the 2000 Census, only 6 were available for rent; less than half the vacancies in 1990 (57). This very low vacancy rate for rental properties has a tendency to drive up rental costs, making housing less affordable. Median gross rent in 2000 was $655 per month in Fairfax, considerably higher than the $539 figure for Franklin County; up from $473 and $412 in 1990 respectively.

There is currently one development of subsidized low income housing in Fairfax for families, the Lost Tree Condominium Development on Route 104 across from Minor's Store, which includes 44 2-bedroom condominium units. The units are managed by Champlain Housing and are available to "very-low" income families making less than 60% of the median income. There are

two senior housing complexes, the first with 20 housing units and the second with 47 units. . These units are also available to any applicant whose income meets the "very low" status needed to qualify (less than 60% of the median household income). The 47 units of senior housing were recently developed in 2006 and are not at capacity.

The Town recognizes that there is a need for senior housing for the growing senior population and affordable housing for low and moderate income households. When possible to develop senior and affordable housing, it should be located conveniently near community services and the village area to make it easier for residents to access needed services without a vehicle. Construction of new housing in existing centers is inherently more affordable; most particularly, where municipal services, such as municipal water and sewer, are provided. Proximity to services, smaller lot sizes, and less costly road construction help keep construction and maintenance costs at a minimum. These savings can then be passed on to the buyer or renter. Utilizing small, in-town lots for infill development, and rehabilitating existing structures can also help create housing which is "naturally" more affordable. Currently, municipal sewer and water infrastructure in the village area of Fairfax is at capacity. The potential for future growth in this area - at higher densities than in other parts of town – will be dependent on the availability of infrastructure. Integrated planning for both public service improvements and affordable housing is of paramount importance for Fairfax's immediate future.

Photo 18 - Workman Senior Housing Project, by Henry Raymond

HOUSING GOALS AND POLICIES

Goals

1) To guide the Town in achieving well managed residential growth that includes a diversity of housing opportunities.

Policies

1) To encourage the development of a variety of safe, affordable housing options that range in cost, size, and type.
2) To encourage the preservation and rehabilitation of Fairfax's existing affordable housing.
3) To encourage infill development of small, existing lots.
4) To encourage future residential development within the growth center.
5) To encourage the development of housing that is energy efficient to reduce heating and electricity costs.

CHAPTER 10: TRANSPORTATION

EXISTING ROAD NETWORK

Fairfax has a total of 84 miles of paved, gravel, and dirt roads and highways (excluding Class 4 and private roads). All roads having more than one dwelling have been measured, renamed, and marked in conjunction with the state-wide E911 emergency system, and 24 VSA, Chapter 61.

Map 3, the Transportation Map, shows the roads in Fairfax and their classification. Streams are also mapped, which are important for locating culverts.

The town currently participates in the Road Surface Management System (RSMS); a program to inventory, evaluate and monitor road surfaces and road infrastructure such as culverts and signs.

Roads are classified according to their use and ability to carry traffic. The State has identified several roadways in Fairfax which are regionally important for their role as principal corridors for the flow of traffic around Franklin and Grand Isle Counties. These functional classifications are shown in Figure 10.2.

Figure 10.1
Fairfax Road Inventory by Class

TOWN HIGHWAYS

Class 1 - 0.00 miles
Class 2 - 11.32 miles
Class 3 - 50.12 miles
Class 4 - 5.10 miles

Total Town Highways – 66.54 miles

FEDERAL AND STATE HIGHWAYS

I-89 - 1.24 miles
VT 104 - 14.19 miles
VT 104A - 1.67 miles
VT 128 - 0.79 miles

Total State Highways – 17.4 miles

Figure 10.2. VAOT Functional Classifications for Significant Travel Corridors

Road	Regional Management Objective
Highbridge Rd (VT 104A)/VT 104 (From VT104A to Cambridge townline)	Minor arterial for general east-west traffic
VT 104 (From VT104A to St. Albans townline)	Major collector for general north-south traffic
Fletcher Rd	Major collector
Brown's River Rd (VT 128)	Major collector
Buck Hollow Rd	Minor collector
Toof Rd	…Minor collector

In addition to the functional classifications listed in Figure 10.2, the State's classification system separates Town Highways into four categories:

- **Class 1:** Form extensions of State Highways and are numbered as such.

- **Class 2:** Form connections from town to town, and/or carry a more significant volume of traffic than other roads in town.
- **Class 3:** All other traveled roads receiving State Aid funds.
- **Class 4:** All other Town roads.

Note: Class 4 roads do not receive any state aid, and do not have to be maintained by the town except for culverts and bridges.

Many of the local roads provide scenic views, but there are no locally or state designated scenic roads in the town.

The Fairfax Selectboard has established the Town of Fairfax Highway Ordinance, dated May 2004 and the Town of Fairfax Road and Bridge Standards, dated June 2, 2003. The purpose of these documents is to protect the Town from undue financial burdens associated with maintaining existing roads and new construction of development roads. These documents provide several additional benefits:

- Standardized road evaluation in regards to widths, surface type, safety and use;
- Ensure that any private roads are constructed reasonably to provide for adequate emergency responder access, and future pedestrian amenities; and
- Avoid future issues currently identified on existing streets ('dead end' street issue for example)

It is recommended that the town keep its road ordinance and policies in effect as a means of dealing with these issues.

ROAD AND BRIDGE MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

The transportation network serving local traffic is adequate. The winter "clear road" policy followed by the Selectboard has continually provided the safest roads possible. Constant communication between the road commissioner and the school transportation director has assured the safest possible transportation of students to and from school.

Local roads, bridges, and culverts are maintained on an as needed basis by the public works department. The state provides aid for the maintenance of class 1, class 2, and class 3 highways from a general sum appropriated each year by the general assembly, which is disbursed quarterly. Six percent of the amount appropriated goes to the Class 1 highways and is distributed based upon mileage, except that an extra amount is provided for multi-lane highways, forty-four percent goes to Class 2 highways, fifty percent goes

Photo 19 - Fairfax Road Crew at Work, by Henry Raymond

to Class 3 highways, and no funds are available for Class 4 highway mileage. Use of grant funds are solely for town highway construction, improvement, and maintenance purposes; or as the non-federal share of public transit assistance. Costs directly related to highways and bridges, such as maintenance employee fringe benefits, interest costs on loans or bonds, street lighting, etc. are considered to be eligible uses. Bicycle routes are another eligible use. Tax dollars and impact fees heavily supplement these funds to cover the full cost of road maintenance.

Photo 20 - Newly Improved River Road Bridge, by Henry Raymond

The Town will continue to benefit from an improved system for identifying, prioritizing, and estimating the cost of needed repairs and improvements. Funding has been available within the past few years through the Northwest Regional Planning Commission for towns to implement a Road Surface Management System (RSMS). Using RSMS helps efficiently accomplish the tasks identified above with minimal cost to the Town. Implementing such a system is helping greatly in capital budgeting for future road improvements. Funding should continue to be sought through the Regional Planning Commission for this important tool.

No State roads in Fairfax have been identified for improvement by the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTRANS) as 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Priorities (TIP). However, there are two projects on the Northwest Regional Planning Commission's FY2010 Project Prioritization list, which is used to create the TIP. The resurfacing of a portion of Route 104 beginning approximately 0.02 miles south of the VT104A junction and extending northerly 11.653 miles to the VT 105 intersection in St. Albans is on the list and is ranked as the number one paving project for the region, but is a candidate project ranked 11 out of 46 by VTRANS. The widening of bridge 10 on VT104 over Mill Brook is also on the list and ranked the number one priority for state highway bridges by the region, but is in the development and engineering stage ranked 6 out of 54 by VTRANS.

ROUTE 104

Heavy traffic, access management, and dangerous intersections have been issues along Route 104 for many years. The intersections with Route 104A, Fletcher Road, River Road, and Route 128 have been particularly problematic. The Northwest Regional Planning Commission hired Wilbur Smith Associates to complete a study on the Route 104 Corridor that would guide future transportation improvements for Route 104 and 104A. The plan was intended as a blueprint for a long-term sustainable transportation system to address the multi-modal needs of the

community. Figure 10.3 lists the key issues affecting the corridor within Fairfax. Excessive speeds, congestion, access, and sight distances at intersections are major issues. The Study includes recommendations for how to address the issues identified. In Fairfax Village, the study recommended posting speed limits clearly and frequently, increasing enforcement of speed, and installing street trees to address excessive speed. To address congestion, it recommended improving traffic flow through access management for new development, expanding the internal road network, and installing a traffic light or roundabout at the Fletcher Road/River Road/Route 104 intersection; and increasing non-motorized mobility by expanding the sidewalk network and widening the roadway to include bike lanes. The study prioritizes each of these solutions and notes responsibilities and funding sources. The Study provides valuable information that the Town should use in future planning and project development in the Village and along the entire corridor.

Figure 10.3

Key Issues Along Route 104
(According to the Route 104 Corridor Study)

From St. Albans to Fairfax Village:

- Poor pavement conditions,
- Sight distance at intersections,
- Unsafe conditions on the "curves",
- Excess speeds,
- Shoulder widths/multi-modal potential, and
- Increasing congestion.

Within Fairfax Village:

- Access management,
- Signage,
- Unsafe intersections,
- Sight distance at intersections,
- Excessive speeds,
- Multi-modal potential (pedestrian environment, bike lanes & amenities), and
- Congestion and peak period traffic (increasing development and growth).

Between Fairfax Village and Route 15:

- Poor pavement conditions,
- Sight distance at intersections,
- Shoulder widths/multi-modal potential,
- Excessive speeds,
- Truck stacking, and
- Recreation /pull-outs.

A further study includes valuable information on planning improvements to the Route 104/128 intersection. A study on the specific intersection was completed in July of 2007. According to the study, the Northwest Regional Planning Commission hired Wilbur Smith Associates at the request of the Town "due to growing development pressures around the intersection and the current geometry of the dual intersections, which creates confusing traffic movements for motorists on both Route 104 and Route 128". The study prepared an analysis of six alternatives to improve the intersection, three of which were determined by the Town to be most appropriate. The first preferred alternative is a no-build situation, where there would be no improvement to traffic or safety, but also no

Figure 10.4
Route 104/128 Intersection

impacts to the right of way or land use. The second preferred alternative is to eliminate the northern intersection and re-align the easterly intersection in front of the Country Pantry. This would require minimal acreage of new right-of-way, with the potential for needing even more if the location of the intersection if moved even further to the north. The third preferred alternative would re-align McNall Road/Route 128 and Route 128/Route 104 intersections, which would require slightly more acreage of new right-of-way, taken primarily from the bank property with a minimal amount needed from the auto repair parcel. The Consultant (Wilber Smith Associates) recommended the second preferred alternative. This valuable study should implemented in conjunction with the Route 104/104A Corridor Study.

MAJOR COMMUTER FLOW

The majority of commuter trips originating in Fairfax are to employment destinations outside of Town, particularly to Chittenden County's major employment centers. Of the 1,873 daily work trips from Fairfax, 1,042 (57%) ended in Chittenden County. Only 64 daily trips originated in Chittenden County and ended in Fairfax. For those commuter trips that remained in Franklin County, 320 of 739 stayed within Fairfax. Commuter flow from Fairfax to St. Albans City was also significant, with 225 daily trips (U.S. Census, 2000).

In addition to commuter traffic, some roads in Town, particularly VT104, carry a significant volume of north/south/east-west truck traffic. While this trend is in keeping with the Vermont Agency of Transportation's management goals, it has been expressed as a disturbance to many Fairfax residents.

Encouraging a pattern of high density, mixed use development within the Town Center could help create more local job opportunities, lessening the demand on the existing road network to carry commuter traffic to destinations outside of Town. Promoting home occupations and local agriculture-related businesses would further assist in reversing current trends.

High density development of this kind would best be performed in conjunction with improvements to municipal infrastructure in the area of the existing village. These infrastructure improvements include water and sewer system improvements; continuing the extension of sidewalks within the village for safe, easy pedestrian travel; and the possible addition of new roads within the village which extend the current pattern of interconnected streets in a "neighborhood" street layout.

Dead end streets should be discouraged whenever possible, especially in the Growth Center District. Dead end streets are detrimental to the efficient flow of automobile travel by creating heavy traffic loading at relatively few connecting points along the street network. Interconnected "neighborhood" streets spread out traffic flow more evenly along the network, keeping traffic flow more diffuse and orderly.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

There are no regional public transportation services in Fairfax, nor does the town provide any public transportation for its residents. Limited transportation services are provided to the elderly

through various service providers. The closest transit stop is located at the Georgia Industrial Park. It is a stop for the St. Albans Link Express, which provides service to Chittenden County. Commuter parking would greatly benefit the community and the transportation infrastructure. Currently, one informal commuter parking lot is used in the Village, but a formal lot is needed. The closest official commuter parking lot is located at Exit 18 in Georgia. The Northwest Regional Planning Commission and VTrans are both available to assist the town in any future considerations.

Amtrak is continuing passenger rail service out of the St. Albans depot. The Franklin Country Regional Airport in Swanton, the Burlington International Airport in Burlington, and the Trudeau and Mirabel Airports in Montreal provide air service to the region.

In the past, it has been impractical to offer public transportation services in this rural community due to relatively low ridership potential and a diffuse pattern of land use. Due to the steadily increasing population and the fact that more residents are commuting out of town for employment, the potential for some level of public transportation services may too be increasing. The Northwest Vermont Public Transit Network ('the NETWORK') and the Chittenden County Transportation Authority (CCTA) are available to examine any possibilities for expansion of existing services; the community may be well served to consider communicating with the Network and/or CCTA.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRAVEL

The Village has just under 5,000 linear feet of sidewalk on the northwest side of Hunt Street and southeast side of School Street, both sides of VT104 between Hunt and School Street, on the west side of Route 104 north of Hunt Street to Tuttle Street, and on the west side of VT104 to just before the Lamoille River Bridge.

Efforts to maintain and improve the sidewalk network have been underway for many years. In 2006, the Selectboard completed an investigation of the feasibility of constructing additional sidewalks along VT 104 in the village area. The purpose of the project was to increase safety for pedestrians, encourage walking to school and the community library, and provide accessibility to other town amenities. The investigation determined that the west side of VT 104 continuing north from where the existing sidewalk ends was the most appropriate location for a sidewalk. The Town applied for construction funding through the Vermont Agency of Transportation Enhancement Program in 2006 and 2007. Both applications were not successful, and the Town plans to resubmit in 2008.

One result of the sidewalk study was the town's enrollment in the Safe Routes to School Program. As part of the program, Fairfax will evaluate existing conditions and attitudes, actively encourage walking and bicycling by students, and identify infrastructure projects to make walking and bicycling safer. The State of Vermont provides support to the Safe Routes program in the form of funding and services to participating schools. The School has completed a School Travel Plan that documents the community's problems related to the journey to school and describes the strategies that the community chose to address these problems. The Travel Plan includes a detailed inventory of sidewalk and road conditions as they relate to pedestrian safety

and identifies barriers to safe school travel, including locations where there is no or an inadequate crosswalk, areas that lack sidewalks or a direct sidewalk connection, dangerous intersections, and a lack of support infrastructure such as signs and bike racks. This study is a valuable collection of data and strategies and should be central in any planning for new and improved sidewalks in Fairfax.

Bicycle travel in the Village can be accommodated on the roads in town; however, this can be hazardous as there are no dedicated lanes or wide shoulders. Route 104 and other roads in town would benefit from a dedicated bicycle lane to provide a safe route, especially busy, high-speed Route 104. Bicycle and pedestrian travel for recreation is accommodated by the Fairfax Recreation Path and Class 4 roads.

TRANSPORTATION GOALS AND POLICIES

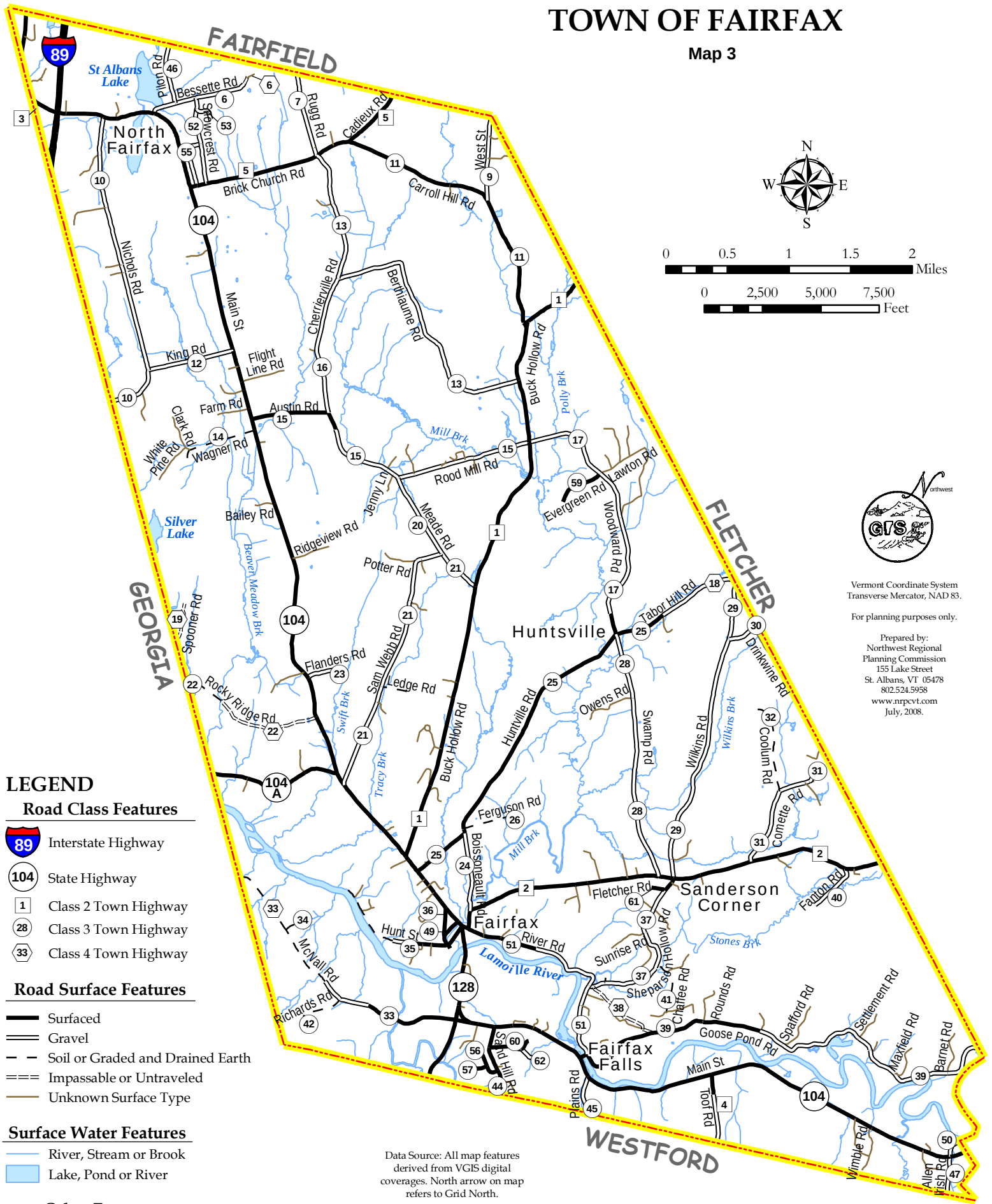
Goal

1) Provide for safe, convenient, economic, and energy efficient transportation systems that respect the natural environment and utilize a variety of transit modes.

Policies

1) To maintain roads at a level consistent with their use.
2) To provide for pedestrian safety and access to important community places or events, such as the school, Town government, recreation areas, and river access.
3) To adopt new roads within the growth center that extend the interconnected Village street network, and that include provisions for safe and efficient vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian travel.
4) To encourage appropriate provisions for bicycle and pedestrian use on designated routes, including proper signage and pavement improvements.
5) To manage traffic flow and access points throughout the VT 104 corridor.

TRANSPORTATION MAP
TOWN OF FAIRFAX
Map 3



LEGEND

Road Class Features
- Interstate Highway
- State Highway
- Class 2 Town Highway
- Class 3 Town Highway
- Class 4 Town Highway

Road Surface Features
- Surfaced
- Gravel
- Soil or Graded and Drained Earth
- Impassable or Untraveled
- Unknown Surface Type

Surface Water Features
- River, Stream or Brook
- Lake, Pond or River

Other Feature
- Town Boundary

Data Source: All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

Location: z:/gis/projects/county/franklin/fairfax/townplan08/final/transportation

Vermont Coordinate System
Transverse Mercator, NAD 83.

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CHAPTER 11: LAND USE

The Town of Fairfax, though still an agrarian community grown from the roots of its early-American past, is in the midst of changes of considerable importance. High rates of residential development are causing changes to the demographic makeup, visual changes to the landscape, and higher demand for services from the Town. Faced with these changing forces, planners are challenged with maintaining the rural agricultural character and small village setting, while accepting and accommodating a fair share of residential development for the greater region.

Encouraging a diverse, small-scale local economy (including agriculture and forestry enterprises), maintaining and enhancing a mixed use, high density town center, minimizing strip development, and preserving natural and cultural features that help define the rural character of Fairfax, have all been stated as future goals by the people of the Town. Through proactive planning, this community vision can be translated into actions that best serve the people, the culture, and the land itself.

Photo 21 - Flyover of Fairfax – June, 1994 Courtesy: Ed Nuttall

EXISTING LAND USE

As can be seen in Figure 11.2, the Current Land Cover Map, the dominant land cover in the Town of Fairfax continues to be agricultural and forest lands (82%). Dispersed within

agricultural and forest lands are pockets of residential development, with the existing village as the most significant concentration of residential and commercial uses in the town.

AGRICULTURE

Culturally, agriculture has defined the historic rural character of Fairfax. The continuation of this trend to the present day is evidenced by the amount of total land area still in agricultural production. Farming has long contributed to the local and regional economy, and has created the "scenic infrastructure" which is attractive to visitors and residents alike.

According to 2002 LANDSAT satellite imagery, agricultural lands total 39% of the total land area of Fairfax, compared to 32% in the Franklin & Grand Isle region as a whole. County-wide statistics from the U.S. Census of Agriculture note a trend toward decreased farm size (an 8% decrease from 1992 to 1997 and another 4% decrease from 1997 to 2002), though increased numbers of farms (2% increase from 1992 to 1997 and another 4% increase from 1997 to 2002) since the early 1990's. This is a shift from the same regional information between 1982 and 1992, which showed a 0.4% decrease in farm size and an 8% decrease in the number of farms. Land use trends in Fairfax follow a similar pattern. The majority of agricultural acreage in Fairfax (and the region) remains in dairy production, with hay, pasture, and corn being by far the dominant agricultural land use types.

Other forms of agriculture, including "niche farming", vegetable growing, and landscape nurseries are also present in Fairfax. While these agricultural land uses do not represent a significant acreage in comparison to hay, corn, and dairy farming, they still contribute to the local economy and culture of the area.

FORESTS

Approximately 43% of Fairfax is covered by forest. About 37% of all forest lands are in mixed broadleaf and conifer forests. Another 34% are coniferous, with the balance consisting of scattered stands of broadleaf forests. Diversity in land ownership patterns moderates the current potential for large scale forest products industry. Fairfax's forests may be well-suited for use as small woodlots, low impact recreation, as well as some limited opportunities for larger scale forest industries.

CURRENT USE PROGRAM

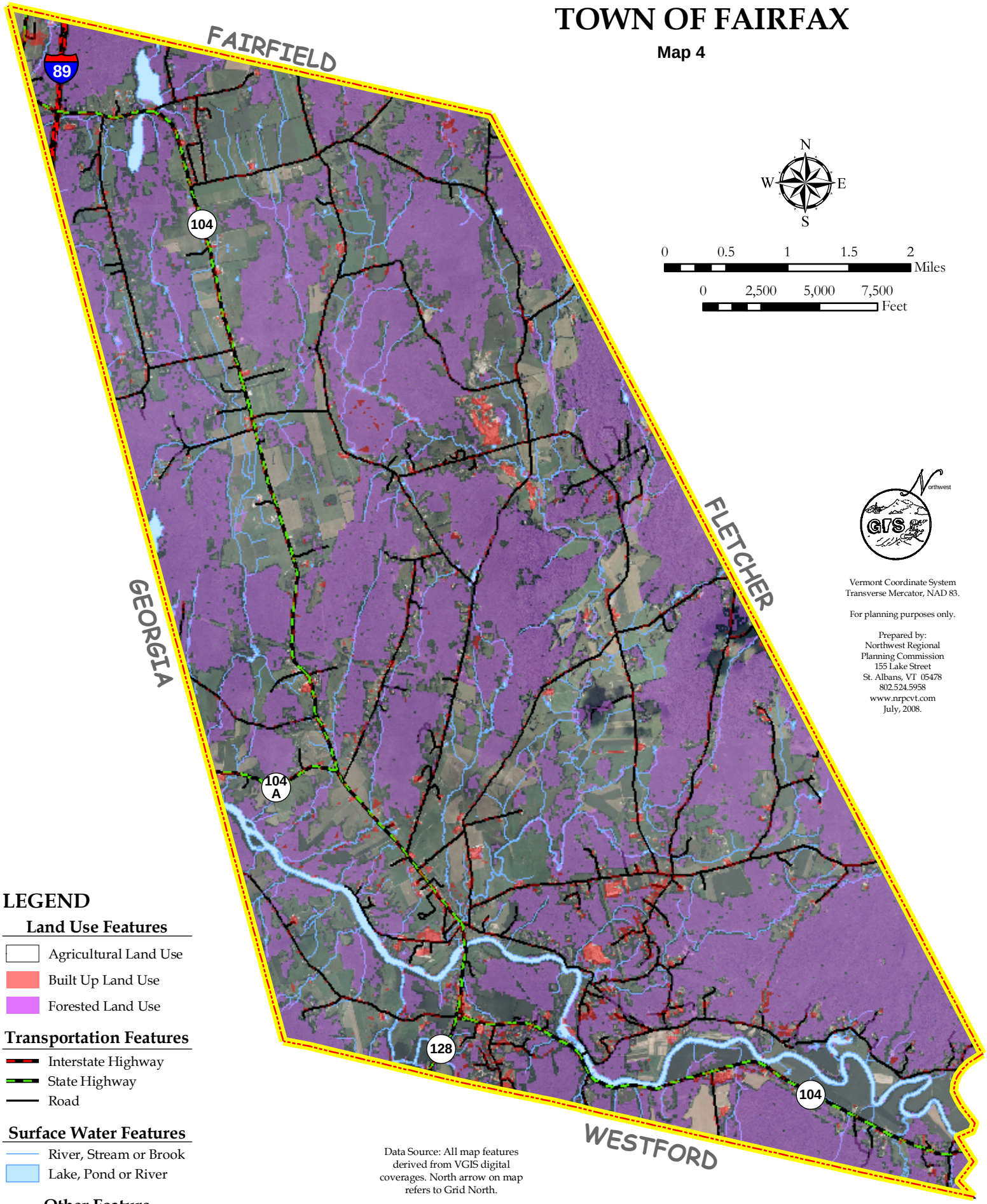
In an effort to encourage conservation and sound management of farm and forestlands, the State instituted the current use program where enrolled parcels are taxed according to the use rather than fair market value. Through this program, the state reimburses municipalities for the balance in tax revenue, negating any fiscal municipal impacts for conserving the town's undeveloped natural resource lands.

In 2007, 92 parcels covering 11,976 acres were enrolled in the program; approximately 46% of the total land acreage in Fairfax. As a whole, enrolled property owners currently experience an $6,867,568 reduction in the listed value of their property.

CURRENT LAND COVER

TOWN OF FAIRFAX

Map 4



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S

0 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

0 2,500 5,000 7,500 Feet

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LEGEND

Land Use Features

- Agricultural Land Use
- Built Up Land Use
- Forested Land Use

Transportation Features

- Interstate Highway
- State Highway
- Road

Surface Water Features

- River, Stream or Brook
- Lake, Pond or River

Other Feature

- Town Boundary

Data Source: All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

Location: z:/gis/projects/county/franklin/fairfax/townplan08/final/currentlandcover

RESIDENTIAL USES

Residential land use is concentrated within the existing village area in a network of streets, where water and sewer infrastructure exists. However, recent trends (within the past few decades) have shown an increase in scattered residential development outside the village area. Given Fairfax's high residential growth rate, in part due to affordable housing shortages in Chittenden County and volatile market pressures that make it difficult for farmers to stay in business, continuation of scattered residential development will impose changes in the rural, agricultural landscape of Fairfax. Encouraging the majority of development in the Village area and balancing the rights of individual landowners with aesthetic and cultural considerations in the rural areas are important challenges for town planners. Creative approaches in subdivision and site design, including encouraging the clustering of residences to prevent strip development and the parcelization of agricultural, forestry, and meadow lands, and flexible zoning that allows for the most sensitive development of building sites with respect to natural resources and aesthetic qualities of the land should be incorporated into development review and approval processes.

COMMERCIAL USES

The majority of commercial uses in the Town are concentrated within the existing village, and across the Lamoille River near the intersection of Rte 104 and Rte 128. Most commercial development in Fairfax is service-oriented, including restaurants, shops, gas stations and convenience stores. Centrally located, small-scale service-oriented commercial development will likely be the trend in the future. It is important to note that until there is additional capacity for municipal sewer and water service or other alternatives for neighborhood/community scale wastewater treatment, little to no additional commercial development will have the opportunity of locating in the Village area.

CURRENT LAND USE REGULATIONS: ZONING DISTRICTS

Fairfax's current zoning bylaw (most recently amended on August 6, 2007) divides the Town into seven land use districts (Figure 11.2):

- **Agricultural/Forest Resources**
- **Conservation**
- **Growth Center**
- **Recreation**
- **Shoreland**
- **Low Density Residential**
- **Mixed Use**

A comprehensive rewrite of the Fairfax zoning bylaws was completed in 2000 to implement the 1998 municipal plan. The goal of this rewrite was to encourage Fairfax to grow and develop in a manner and intensity that reflects its traditional land use patterns. Growth Center and Mixed Use Districts were added to encourage a mix of uses in the growth areas, especially where infrastructure exists. Regulations were modified in the rural and agricultural districts to encourage clustering and to conserve resources. Another goal of the rewrite was to modernize the bylaws to reflect current state law, and current planning practices. After an interim trial

period, permanent subdivision regulations were also adopted to enable the town to adequately manage future growth. These regulations were again amended in 2002, 2005, and 2007. Following adoption of this Town Plan, the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations should be reviewed and amended again to conform with the goals, policies, recommendations in the Plan.

LAND USE LIMITATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Wise land use planning should entail an assessment of the physical factors of a given piece of land and its resultant capability to support various land uses. Toward that end, the Town participated in the Northwest Vermont Project with the Northwest Regional Planning Commission, which studied future growth projections and assessed the Town's ability today to manage growth now and in the future. As part of this project, the Town completed an analysis of land suitability and a buildout analysis using GIS. The land suitability or development constraints analysis utilized an "overlay" technique, in which several "layers" of information were combined and subsequently aggregated into a single composite data layer. Each data layer (e.g. wetlands or steep slopes) was assigned a value corresponding to its severity as a development constraint relative to the other layers. These values were summed in the resulting composite layer, providing an "index of development constraint" by which a piece of land's capabilities can be evaluated. The buildout analysis considered the towns zoning regulations and the development constraints analysis to project the total potential number of residential units that could be developed, if each parcel were subdivided and developed to its full potential. Overlay techniques such as the one described above are important planning tools, allowing for the evaluation of areas based on physical characteristics rather than arbitrary or subjective means.

The results of the analyses are not directly incorporated into this plan, but were used as a general guideline for developing proposed land use designations, in concert with an assessment of existing land use patterns, current zoning designations, and evaluation of citizen input from the community survey and public hearings. The results of the Northwest Vermont Project are compiled in a project report available in the Town Office or from the Northwest Regional Planning Commission.

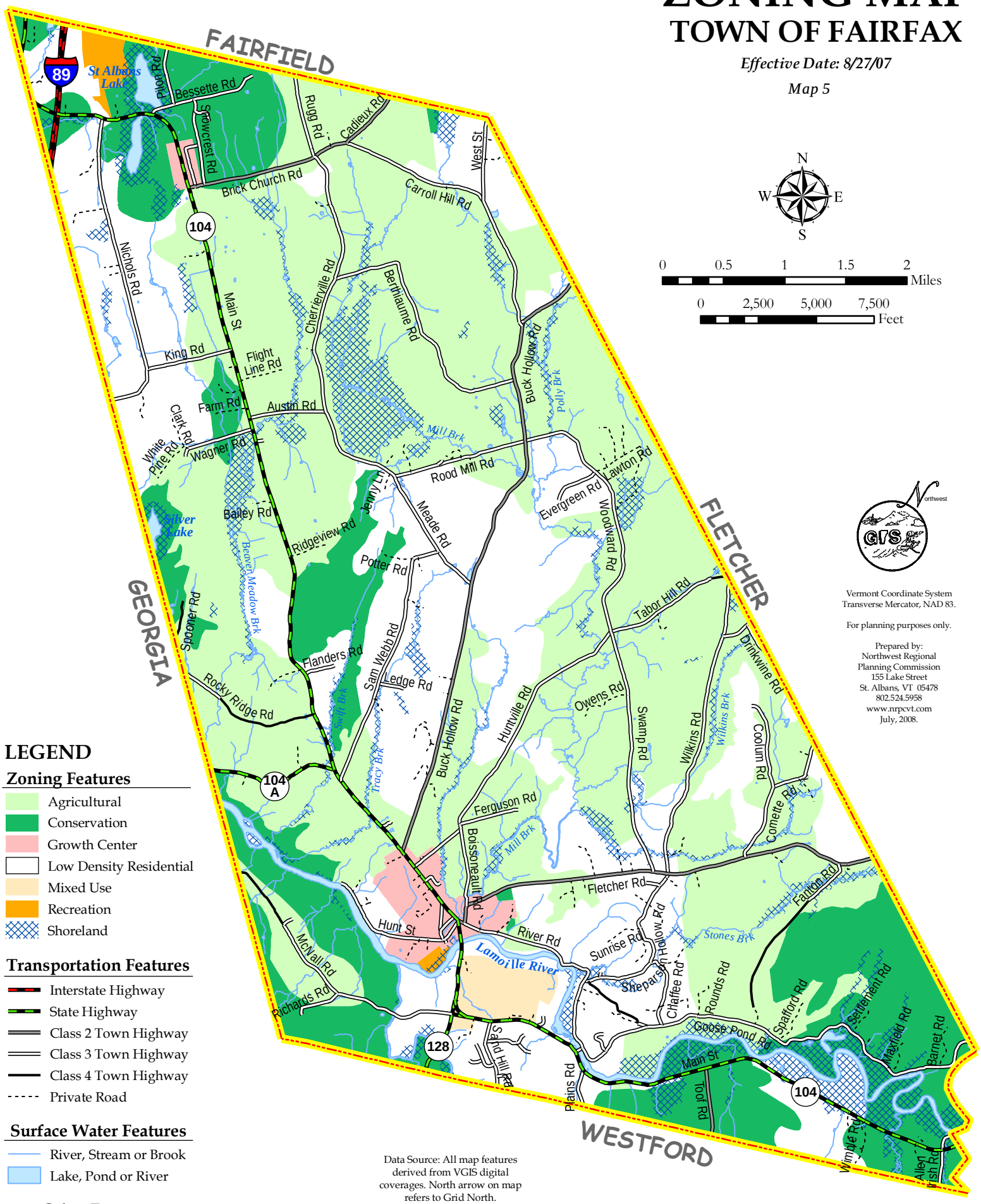
PROPOSED LAND USE

During the planning process, the planning commission considered current land use, land use limitations and opportunities, public input, and the goals and policies of this plan to define proposed land use for Fairfax's future. The results of this process are intended to respect the traditional land use patterns and activities that have defined the Town, while being attentive to the physical capabilities of the landscape, the desires of the citizenry, and the need for proactive management of the scale and pattern of future growth. Proposed land use designations have been divided into eight land use districts listed and described below, and as shown in Figure 11.3 the Proposed Land Use Map. It is the intent that the Planning Commission use the Proposed Land Use Map, the district purposes outlined below, and the goals, policies, and objectives in this Chapter when preparing updates to the zoning districts in the Fairfax Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations. Any future zoning map is not required to match the proposed land use map exactly, but it should be used as a guide when delineating zoning district boundaries.

ZONING MAP
TOWN OF FAIRFAX

Effective Date: 8/27/07

Map 5



LEGEND

Zoning Features
- Agricultural
- Conservation
- Growth Center
- Low Density Residential
- Mixed Use
- Recreation
- Shoreland

Transportation Features
- Interstate Highway
- State Highway
- Class 2 Town Highway
- Class 3 Town Highway
- Class 4 Town Highway
- Private Road

Surface Water Features
- River, Stream or Brook
- Lake, Pond or River

Other Features
- Town Boundary

Data Source: All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

Location: z:/gis/projects/county/franklin/fairfax/townplan08/final/zoningmap.mxd

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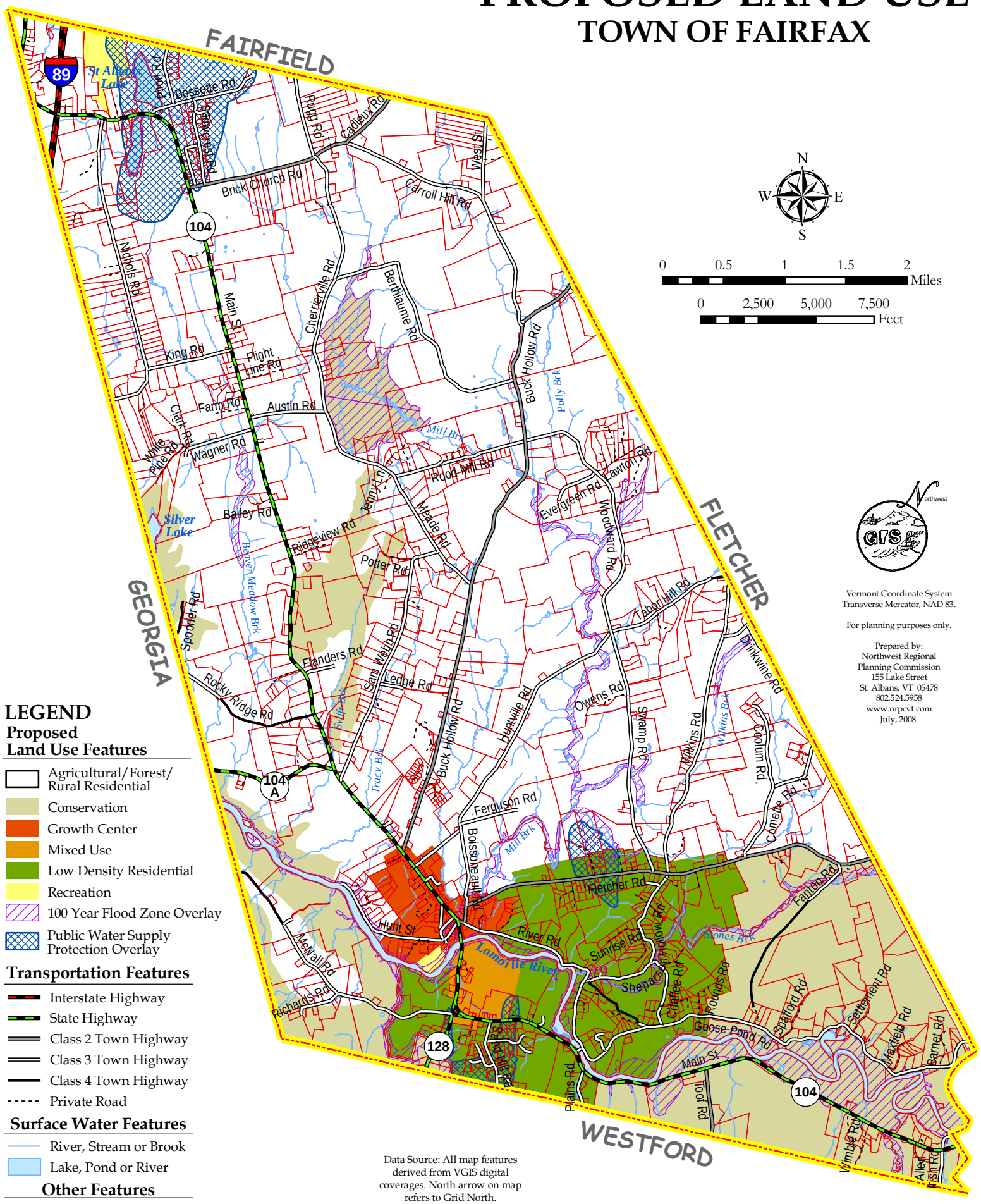
PROPOSED LAND USE
TOWN OF FAIRFAX



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LEGEND

Proposed Land Use Features

- Agricultural/Forest/ Rural Residential
- Conservation
- Growth Center
- Mixed Use
- Low Density Residential
- Recreation
- 100 Year Flood Zone Overlay
- Public Water Supply Protection Overlay

Transportation Features

- Interstate Highway
- State Highway
- Class 2 Town Highway
- Class 3 Town Highway
- Class 4 Town Highway
- Private Road

Surface Water Features

- River, Stream or Brook
- Lake, Pond or River

Other Features

- Parcel Line
- Town Boundary

Data Source: All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

Location: z:/gis/projects/county/franklin/fairfax/townplan08/final/proposedlanduse.mxd

Proposed Land Use

- Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential Lands
- Recreation Lands
- Conservation Lands
- Growth Center
- Mixed Use
- Low Density Residential Development Lands
- Flood Hazard Areas
- Public Drinking Water Protection Areas

Proposed Land Use District Purposes

GROWTH CENTER

In keeping with Vermont tradition, the people of Fairfax have expressed a strong desire for the higher densities of future growth to occur in designated growth areas, with the remaining land being kept in uses such as agriculture, open space, forestry, and some low density rural residential development. In pursuit of this desire, a high density, mixed use growth center has been defined in the environs of the existing village (See Proposed Land Use Map.). This growth area is intended to accept the majority of future growth in the Town, and will include a mixture of residential, multi-family and commercial land uses on smaller building areas than are allowed in other parts of town. In short, the growth center represents "Downtown Fairfax", with the typical amenities which downtowns have traditionally offered: pedestrian friendly streets, "neighborhood" living, an integrated street network, shops, government services, schools, parks and playgrounds.

Figure 11.1

CHARACTERISTICS OF GROWTH CENTERS

- incorporates a mix of uses
- provides public spaces organized around a focal point
- promotes development that is more dense than that outside a growth center supported by existing or planned infrastructure
- results in concentrated development surrounded by rural countryside
- planned in accordance with chapter 117 planning goals and with smart growth principles
- supports the purposes of Act 250

~ ~ ~

(As enacted into Law under Title 24 § 2791)

In July of 2001, the Town of Fairfax commissioned a Growth Center Master Plan. According to the Master Plan, "it's primary purpose is to show appropriate land uses and pedestrian, roadway, and green space connections between parcels". The Master Plan calls for a new green to be developed in what was identified as the core of the growth center – the parcels where the Workman Project has been developed. The Plan also identifies transportation improvements to provide additional connections between places within the growth center and alternate routes of travel. The Plan includes valuable information for implementing these goals through zoning and subdivision regulations and should used in future growth center planning. It

may be appropriate to update and revise the Plan to reflect how the growth center has changed and redefine where the town would like it to go in the future.

The growth center concept is the engine by which the remainder of Fairfax's future land use policy is driven. The designation (and enabling) of high density growth in certain areas promotes a contrast in land use outside its borders. This symbiotic relationship between high and low density growth, helps channel growth into areas best suited to absorb it, while better serving the capabilities of surrounding land through decreased human impact. In addition, the contrast between low and high density land uses helps create an "edge" or visual gateway to the core of the community, a welcome alternative to the strip development and automobile-oriented entry corridors which have stifled the underlying character of so many communities.

If the growth center is the engine that drives land use policy, then the availability and quality of municipal services and infrastructure is the fuel. The provision of efficient municipal water distribution and wastewater treatment systems is of paramount importance for higher density development to be adequately absorbed by the land. In this regard, Town policies for expansion and improvement of these systems is the keystone of a successful future. Planning for improvements and acquiring the necessary funding for improvements must be tenaciously pursued.

The Growth Center is also recognized as the 'Village'. The State of Vermont offers a voluntary "Village Center Designation" program to municipalities. The benefits to Village Center Designation include eligibility for tax credits and priority consideration from other state programs. Village Designation should be pursued to further the Town's planning efforts.

The boundaries of Fairfax's growth center have been recognized by the Northwest Regional Planning Commission, and have been incorporated into the Regional Plan as a Sub-regional Growth Center.

Photo 22 - Fairfax Village Growth Center, by Henry Raymond

MIXED USE

An area intended for mixed use development has also been proposed near the junction of VT Rte 128 and VT Rte 104. This area will be limited in scope and due to its lack of municipal water and sewer infrastructure, is not intended for an intensity of uses comparable to the Growth Center. The Mixed District is intended to maintain the small-scale commercial, residential, and recreational uses currently in existence, while complementing and providing connection to the Village. Pedestrian accessibility should be considered in future development applications to promote walkable, village scale development. Community wastewater treatment should be required for any new development to encourage density and clustering of uses. Options for extending municipal wastewater treatment to the area should also be pursued. Safe pedestrian connection to the Village should be provided through sidewalks or other pedestrian paths.

Photo 23 - Eastfield Condo Development, Mixed Use District, by Skip Taylor

LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT LANDS

The area east and south of the Village has been designated for future low density residential development beyond what is accommodated by the Growth Center. Agriculture and significant forestland does not dominate in this district and soils are generally suitable for on-site septic systems. Clustering of building lots and planned unit developments are recommended in these areas in order to preserve tracts of open land, tracts of forestland, and rural character. Zoning amendments should reflect the discouragement of linear strip residential development.

CONSERVATION LANDS

The Conservation District includes areas generally not physically suited for development, or which should be protected for their inherent value as significant wildlife habitat and forestland. These areas include deer wintering areas; bear habitat; locations of rare, threatened, or endangered species or significant natural communities; or the existence of development constraints such as steep slopes and poor development soils. Development and subdivision should be limited in conservation areas. Future zoning amendments should reflect this intent through appropriate land use restrictions, dimensional standards, and development review standards, including the use of planned unit developments.

AGRICULTURAL/FOREST/RURAL RESIDENTIAL LANDS

The Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential lands consist of areas with significant prime agricultural soils, areas in current agricultural use, significant forestland not included in the Conservation Lands, and the remaining areas of Town not otherwise identified as the Growth Center, Low Density Residential Lands, or Conservation Lands. Agriculture and forestry should remain a dominant land use and the landscape of rural open countryside and forestland should be maintained. The importance of Agriculture to the local culture and economy has been stated previously. Consequently, provisions should be made to encourage the long term viability of

agricultural uses into the future by providing restrictions on the potential encroachment of non-agricultural forms of development. In addition, the intention of this designation is to encourage viable forest practices within the Town, and to protect these areas from incompatible forms of development.

Photo 24 - The Heyer Farm,
By Skip Taylor

This district can accommodate a small portion of future residential development at low densities. The planning commission should study options for planned unit developments in future zoning amendments, which would have the effect of appropriately siting residential development around significant agricultural lands, forest lands, and meadows, preserving them from fragmentation and conversion. Opportunities for intact preservation of forest and agricultural resources through single or common ownership (i.e. cluster development around the forest perimeter with common or single ownership of the forest interior) should be encouraged.

RECREATION LANDS

Recreation lands are those areas (owned by the Town) which have been set aside for future development as sites for public recreation. Potential construction in these areas will be limited to necessary public facilities associated with these recreation areas. With this exception, Recreational Lands will essentially remain in their present condition as forested areas and open land for public recreation.

FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

The purpose of this overlay is to prevent increases in flooding caused by development in flood hazard areas, to minimize future public and private losses due to flood, and to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare. Designation of this area is also required for continued participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and is regulated under the Town's Flood Hazard Ordinance. Included are all areas in Fairfax identified as areas of special flood hazard on the National Flood Insurance maps.

PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY PROTECTION AREAS

Public water supply protection areas consist of the six source protection areas for the public drinking water sources located in Fairfax. Source protection areas consist of the recharge area, which is the land surface area where the drinking water is drawn. Recharge areas should be protected from unrestricted dumping and other practices that might harm the potability of water supplies. Future zoning amendments should prevent contamination of groundwater supplies. Zoning amendments could require a hydrology study for all development applications to prove that there will be no impact to the water supply.

LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES

Goals

1) To maintain the traditional village center surrounded by a landscape of farms, forestry, and rural countryside.
2) To protect the historic integrity and character of the existing village area.

Policies

1) To provide future services and public facilities within a growth center that is conducive to pedestrian and other non-vehicular travel, has a distinct organization around a central focal area, and that includes public spaces that promote social interaction.
2) To encourage the economic viability of local agriculture, forestry, and related industries.
3) To discourage sprawling development patterns/strip development.
4) To encourage an interactive permitting process between landowners and local planning officials to facilitate site sensitive planning and best use of available land.
5) To limit development on lands unsuited for that purpose, including fragile and sensitive resources, such as critical habitat, wetlands, steep slopes, prime agricultural soils, and floodplains.
6) To encourage infill development and the rehabilitation of historic structures and features that are a part of Fairfax's character.
7) To consider long term plans for the entire parcel and adjacent lands during development review and address their potential cumulative impact.
8) Future infrastructure expenditures should be concentrated in the growth center.
9) To encourage the clustering of development in the rural areas of town to preserve the open rural landscape that defines Fairfax for the future.
10) To coordinate the preservation of forestland, agricultural land, and open space throughout the town to create connected corridors of undeveloped land.

CHAPTER 12: COMPATIBILITY WITH THE REGION AND ADJACENT COMMUNITIES

It is important to recognize that municipalities do not exist apart from one another and that land use planning in one community can affect land use in neighboring communities. This Chapter considers the compatibility of proposed land use in this Town Plan with land use in adjacent communities.

Fairfax is located in southern Franklin County, bordering the Chittenden County towns of Milton and Westford and the Lamoille County Town of Cambridge. The towns of Georgia, St. Albans Town, Fairfield, and Fletcher border Fairfax in Franklin County. Fairfax is well connected to adjacent communities via several state and local highways.

CONSIDERATION OF LAND USE PLANNING IN ADJACENT COMMUNITIES

Town of Georgia

The Town of Georgia adopted its most recent municipal plan in September of 2006. The Plan identifies eleven proposed land use districts, which have been adopted as zoning districts in their land use regulations. The Recreational, Natural, and Agricultural/Rural Residential Districts border Fairfax. The Recreational and Natural Districts are not intended for future development and border Fairfax's Conservation and Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential Lands. Fairfax's Conservation Lands are generally not suited for development and are compatible with Georgia's Recreational and Natural Area Districts. Fairfax's Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential Lands may allow more residential development than in Georgia's Recreational and Natural District, but the scale of development is unlikely to present compatibility issues. Georgia's Agricultural/Rural Residential District is intended for agricultural and forestry uses and low density residential development, which largely borders the similar Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential Lands in Fairfax and is compatible.

The Route 104A corridor connects Georgia to Fairfax. In addition, the following town roads connect Fairfax and Georgia: the Georgia Mountain/McNall Road, the Blake/Rocky Ridge Road, the Goodrich Hill/Nichols Road, and the Oakland Station Road. Currently, there are no issues with proposed land use compatibility or other multi-town issues that should be addressed jointly concerning these shared road corridors.

Sliver Lake is located both in the Town of Georgia and the Town of Fairfax. Silver Lake is protected in both towns, in the Natural District in Georgia and the Conservation Lands in Fairfax. The Lamoille River crosses the Fairfax/Georgia border. The floodplain along the Lamoille River in protected in both towns, in the Natural District in Georgia and the Conservation Lands in Fairfax.

Town of St. Albans

The Town of St. Albans adopted its most recent municipal plan in September of 2005. St. Albans Town identifies eleven proposed land use districts, which have been adopted as zoning districts in their land use regulations. A corner of the Rural District borders the Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential Lands in Fairfax. The Rural District in St. Albans Town is intended for agricultural and forestry uses in addition to scattered residences and a few businesses. These land uses are compatible with land use planning in this area of Fairfax.

Route 104 is the only transportation route that connects St. Albans Town with Fairfax. Route 104 has experienced high levels of traffic and increasing congestion, as identified in the Route 104/104A Corridor Study. Fairfax and St. Albans should work together in implementing the recommendations of this study, especially in the north of Town.

The St. Albans Town Reservoir is located in the Town of Fairfax. The water supply recharge area is protected under current zoning regulations. This Town Plan proposes a source protection overlay zone, which would add an additional set of regulations specific to protecting the recharge area.

Town of Fairfield

The Town of Fairfield's municipal plan is currently expired; it expired in January of 2007. The Fairfield Zoning Regulations include seven zoning districts. The Agricultural/Rural Residential and the Fairfield Swamp Districts border the Town of Fairfax. The Agricultural/Rural Residential District borders Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential Lands and the Public Water Supply Protection Area in Fairfax and the Swamp District borders just Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential Lands. Fairfield's Agricultural/Rural Residential District is intended for agricultural and forestry uses and rural residential development, which is compatible with Fairfax's Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential District. It is not clear whether Fairfield is considering potential impacts to the St. Albans reservoir when reviewing land use applications. The Swamp District provides for the protection of the areas surrounding the Fairfield Waterfowl Refuge. The State owned Fairfield Swamp Management District is located in Fairfield and crosses the border into Fairfax between Cadieux Road and West Street. While Fairfax's Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential Lands would allow some residential development, the areas around the Wildlife Management Area are protected by Land Trust, thus the land uses are compatible.

Several town roads connect Fairfield with Fairfax including the Pilon/Gillin Road, the Rugg Road, the Cadieux/Swamp Road, and West Street. Currently, there are no issues with proposed land use compatibility or other multi-town issues that should be addressed jointly concerning these shared road corridors.

Town of Fletcher

The Town of Fletcher adopted its most recent municipal plan in September of 2005. Fletcher identifies six proposed land use districts, which have been adopted as zoning districts in their land use regulations. The Village, Conservation, and Rural Residential/Agricultural Districts border the Town of Fairfax. The Village District borders Conservation Lands and Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential Lands and is intended to provide for residential, commercial, and other compatible development that serves the needs of the Town. While

Fairfax's Conservation Lands are not generally suitable for future development, the scale of development in the Fletcher Village District will likely not create compatibility issues. There are also no compatibility issues with the Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential Lands. Fletcher's Conservation District largely consists of uplands and is not intended for future development. It borders Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential Lands and Conservation Lands in Fairfax. While the Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential District will allow for some residential development, the scale should not affect compatibility with the Conservation District; this plan recommends appropriate site planning to cluster development and maintain the quality of forestlands. The Conservation District in Fletcher is compatible with the Conservation Lands in Fairfax. The Rural Residential/Agricultural District in Fletcher borders Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential Lands in Fairfax, where there are no compatibility issues, and Conservation Lands. It is likely that the scale of development in Fletcher's Rural Residential/Agricultural District will not create any compatibility issues with Fairfax's Conservation Lands.

Several town roads connect Fletcher to Fairfax including the Buck Hollow Road, Ellsworth Road (connecting to Tabor Hill an Wilkins Road), the Slattery Road, the Comette/Rugg Road, the Cambridge/Fairfax Road, and Goose Pond/River Road. Currently, there are no issues with proposed land use compatibility or other multi-town issues that should be addressed jointly concerning these shared road corridors.

Town of Cambridge

The Town of Cambridge adopted its most recent municipal plan in September of 2003. The Plan identifies eleven proposed land use districts, but the Town has not adopted zoning regulations to implement the proposed land use map. Cambridge does have subdivision regulations with a one acre minimum lot size throughout town. The Agricultural and the Rural Residential/Agricultural proposed land use districts border Fairfax's Conservation Lands. There is unlikely to be any land use incompatibilities between these two town borders.

The Lamoille River crosses the Fairfax/Cambridge border. Both towns are members of the National Flood Insurance Program and regulate development in accordance with flood hazard bylaws in accordance with the program.

Route 104 connects Cambridge to Fairfax. Route 104 has experienced high levels of traffic and increasing congestion, as identified in the Route 104/104A Corridor Study. Fairfax and Cambridge should work together in implementing the recommendations of this study, especially in the east of Town.

Town of Westford

The Town of Westford adopted its most recent municipal plan in 2004. Westford identifies six proposed land use districts, which have been adopted as zoning districts in their land use regulations. The Agriculture, Forestry, and Residential I; Agriculture, Forestry, and Residential II; and Rural Residential Districts border the Town of Fairfax. The Agriculture, Forestry, and Residential I District is intended to enable low density residential development that is compatible with the District's primary uses of agriculture and forestry and it borders Fairfax's Low Density Residential and Conservation Lands. There is unlikely to be any land use incompatibilities with these proposed land uses. The Agriculture, Forestry, and Residential II District is intended to

enable where appropriate certain commercial and industrial uses on good roads while conserving the rural environment of the District and it borders Fairfax's Conservation Lands on either side of Route 128. While commercial development is allowed adjacent to Conservation Lands, if Westford determines it to be appropriate and it conserves the rural environment, these proposed land uses can remain compatible. The Rural Residential District is intended to provide an option for residential development at a higher density than surrounding rural areas and it borders Conservation Lands and Low Density Residential Lands between Plains Road and just east of Toof Road. The District is compatible with the Low Density Residential Lands. If residential development is clustered and appropriately sited it mitigate impact to wildlife habitat and forest land, there are no incompatibilities with Conservation Lands.

Route 128 connects Westford to Fairfax. In addition, the following town roads connect Westford to Fairfax: Sand Hill Road, Plains Road, Toof Road, and Allen Irish Road. Currently, there are no issues with proposed land use compatibility or other multi-town issues that should be addressed jointly concerning these shared road corridors.

Town of Milton

The Town of Milton adopted its most recent municipal plan in 2003. Milton identifies nineteen proposed land use districts, which have been adopted as zoning districts in their land use regulations. The corner of the Agricultural/Rural Residential District borders Conservation Lands in Fairfax and there are no roads connecting the two towns. The Agricultural/Rural Residential District is intended to provide for continued agriculture, forestry, and open space uses together with compatible low density residential development. These land uses are compatible with proposed land use planning in this area of Fairfax.

CONSIDERATION OF LAND USE PLANNING IN THE REGION

Fairfax is a member municipality of the Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NRPC). All communities, including Fairfax, are entitled to equal voting representation by two locally appointed members of the governing Board of Commissioners. The NRPC is legally mandated to prepare a regional plan pursuant to Title 24, Chapter 117, of the Vermont Statues Annotated. It is intended for use as a legal document, as a guide for decision makers, and as a five year action plan to address issues of regional importance. In addition, to receive an Act 250 permit, a project must conform to the regional plan. The Northwest Regional Plan, most recently adopted in 2007, proposes land use planning areas to encourage the conservation of valued resources and a development pattern that will maintain the character and quality of life important to this region. The planning areas include agricultural resource lands, conservation and forest resource lands, low-density development areas, growth centers, and sub-regional growth centers. Fairfax contains agricultural resource lands, conservation and forest resource lands, and low-density development areas throughout the town. In addition, the Fairfax growth center zoning district has been designated a sub-regional growth center. Sub-regional growth centers are expected to serve as economic and cultural hubs for surrounding towns. One factor in designating Fairfax Village as a sub-regional growth center was its desire for managed high density and mixed-use development with the center's boundaries.

CHAPTER 13: IMPLEMENTATION

"Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there."
-- Will Rogers

INTRODUCTION TO IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

There are many ways to implement the goals and policies of this Town Plan, which fall into two general categories – regulatory and non-regulatory options. Regulatory options consist of zoning and subdivision regulations and other town ordinances, which can include numerous specific regulations that further goals and policies in the plan. Non-regulatory implementation options include, but are not limited to capital planning, special studies, advisory commissions. Listed below are strategies that the Fairfax Planning Commission recommends to implement the goals and policies of this Town Plan.

REGULATORY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations

The majority of policies outlined in the Fairfax Town Plan will be implemented through the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations. The purpose of the Fairfax Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations is to implement the Fairfax Town Plan and to further the purposes of the Act [Title 24, Chapter 117, Section 4302 of V.S.A]; specifically, to promote the public health, safety, comfort, convenience, economy and general welfare of the community. The Zoning and Subdivision Regulations require that all land development, including the subdivision of land, obtain all permits and approvals as required in the regulations before it is commenced. The Fairfax Zoning and Subdivision Regulations incorporate many tools enabled in the Act, including zoning districts, site plan review, conditional use review, off-street parking and loading space requirements, performance standards, overlay districting, planned unit developments, and setback requirements. The Zoning and Subdivision Regulations should be reviewed on an ongoing basis to implement the goals, policies, and implementation strategies of this plan.

<u>Fairfax Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations: Specific Implementation Strategies</u>

- Natural and Cultural Resources
  - o Consider strengthening siteplan and/or subdivision review standards for preserving natural, scenic, and cultural resources.
  - o Consider strengthening subdivision review standards that minimize impact to prime agricultural soils and existing farmland.
  - o Consider strengthening review standards that limit development on the shorelines of streams.

- The Local Economy
  - o Consider adopting incentives for the adaptive re-use of historic buildings within the Fairfax growth center to encourage economic development.

- Housing
  - Review the Zoning Regulations and look for areas where affordable housing could be further encouraged (for example review standards that would require shorter access roads, common walls, proximity to public utilities, smaller lot sizes).
  - Investigate the implementation of creative zoning techniques such as density bonuses to encourage affordable housing.

- Transportation
  - Review the effectiveness of the access management regulations and propose amendments if necessary to reduce the potential for curb cuts and strip development along existing roads.
  - Incorporate standards that require new sidewalks to connect to the existing or planned sidewalk network in all developments within the growth center where possible.
  - Consider requiring that all new development roads in the growth center district connect to the existing road network (i.e. not a dead end road) or if this is not possible, dedicate a right of way for potential future connection.

- Land Use
  - Consider ways to enhance planned unit development review standards and procedures in the Residential and Agricultural/Rural Residential Districts to encourage the clustering of development; to preserve agricultural, forest, and open lands; and to discourage strip development along existing roads.
  - Consider reducing the minimum lot size in the growth center in accordance with existing historic lot sizes in the area.
  - Consider strategies to discourage residential development from encroaching on large tracts of forest land.
  - Consider strengthening standards that restrict clearing of trees other than what is absolutely necessary for a home site.
  - Consider implementing regulatory changes that would enable and encourage community services and businesses to locate in the growth center and mixed use district.
  - Consider expansion of the land use mapping capabilities of the Town to assist in development review.

Town Ordinances

The town has adopted many regulatory ordinances that implement the goals and policies of the town plan.

Town Ordinances: Specific Implementation Strategies

- Reevaluate and revise as appropriate all town ordinances to assure conformance with the town plan.

NON-REGULATORY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Capital Planning

An important tool for Plan implementation in Fairfax is the use of capital budgeting to plan ahead for future municipal expenditures. The capital budget provides several benefits, including enabling the Town to raise revenue for anticipated needs before they become urgent, providing flexibility in moving priorities around in an emergency, and improving the ability of the school and Town to plan capital projects in accordance with one another. It also makes the town's financial management and decision-making process more visible to the voters.

Capital budgeting in Fairfax is essential in planning needed improvements and expansions to Town water and sewer systems. Ideally, the existing capital budgeting process would have anticipated and planned for financing the needed improvements and expansions to the existing systems before they reached capacity. Given that they are currently at capacity, continued effort should be made to secure funding for municipal water and sewer system improvements and a capital budget and program should be appropriately used, managed, and maintained and used in the future.

Additionally, road maintenance and improvements could be better planned for utilizing capital budgeting. Continued improvement of the road management system to identify and fund needed improvements and the costs associated with different treatment options would greatly benefit the Town. A Road Surface Management System assessment of present road conditions should be continued and the Town should seek funding through and assistance from the Northwest Regional Planning Commission for this purpose.

Fairfax has been levying an impact fee, which implements the Capital Budget and Program, since 2003. An impact fee is levied on new development to help mitigate its fiscal impacts on the community. Under state law (24 V.S.A. §5200), the purpose of authorizing impact fees is "to enable municipalities to require the beneficiaries of new development to pay their proportionate share of the cost of municipal and school capital projects which benefit them and to require them to pay for or mitigate the negative effects of construction." Fairfax's impact fee is important because it defers the burden of additional services incurred by new development from the existing taxpayers. The Town should prepare an updated capital budget and program that carefully outlines an appropriate impact fee formula.

<u>Capital Planning: Specific Implementation Strategies</u>

- Revise the 2003 Capital Budget and Program, and associated impact fee ordinance.
- Maintain the Capital Budget and Program on an annual basis by revising the first year in the five year program as the current budget and adding another year at the end of the program.
- The Fairfax Capital Budget and Program should include a plan to finance improvements for the municipal wastewater treatment system; the municipal water supply system; municipal roads and associated vehicles and equipment, municipal sidewalks, municipal buildings, municipal parks and associated infrastructure, and the municipal fire department.

Special Studies and Projects

Zoning and subdivision regulations and capital planning work best at implementing the goals and policies of municipal plans when they are coupled with studies and projects initiated or recommended by the Planning Commission.

Special Studies and Projects: Specific Implementation Strategies

- General
  - Hold semi-annual meetings with the Planning Commission, Development Review Board, and Selectboard to coordinate the implementation of the goals, policies, and recommendations in this Plan.

- Energy
  - Investigate alternatives that decrease the number of single occupancy commuter vehicles, including, but not limited to, the construction of a park and ride lot.
  - Conduct periodic energy audits of Town buildings and vehicles.
  - Encourage the establishment of a municipal energy committee and or town energy coordinator.

- Public Facilities, Utilities, and Services
  - Pursue State and Federal Grant programs to secure funding for recreational projects that that are consistent with the recreational goals of the town.
  - Increase the availability of fitness programs to the residences of Fairfax.
  - Investigate and expand use of the Town Forest.
  - Investigate the need and explore options for a community center in Fairfax that would serve as a venue for services, activities, and events that support community residents of all ages.
  - Develop a program to improve or expand Town water and sewer systems, including providing a back-up water source, to enable centralization of public services and commercial amenities at higher densities of development in the Village.
  - Work on increasing town-wide support for funding community infrastructure in the growth center, with specific attention to wastewater treatment and water supply.
  - Annually review town financial support for public health and human service agencies.
  - Investigate the need for an expansion to the Town Office Building.
  - Investigate viable options for broadband internet access in Fairfax.

- Transportation
  - Work with the Vermont Agency of Transportation on alternative management strategies for the Route 104 corridor, which would decrease the volume of traffic through the Town.
  - Develop a sidewalk construction and maintenance master plan and implementation strategies for the growth center.
  - Implement the recommendation of the Route 104/104A Corridor Study and the Route 104/128 Intersection Study, as appropriate.

- Local Economy
  - Develop strategies to encourage centralization of public services and commercial amenities in the growth center and mixed use district to promote a healthy localized economy.
  - Develop strategies to encourage businesses to locate or expand in Fairfax.

Respondent Information

What part of Fairfax do you reside?			How long have you lived in Fairfax?			How old are you?			Where are you employed?		
North	58	20%	< 5 Yrs	64	22%	18-34	30	11%	Fairfax	27	9%
Central	105	37%	5-9 yrs	55	19%	35-64	206	72%	Franklin Co	36	13%
Village	41	14%	10-19 yrs	67	24%	65+	44	15%	Chittenden Co	101	35%
South	77	27%	20+ yrs	91	32%	No Resp	5	2%	Other Co	12	4%
No Resp	4	1%	No Resp	8	3%	Total	285	100%	Fairfax & Frank Co	11	4%
Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%				Fairfax & Chitt Co	19	7%
									Fairfax & Other	1	0%
									Franklin & Chitt Co	21	7%
									Franklin & Other Co	1	0%
									Chitt & Other Co	10	4%
									Other combo	4	1%
									No Resp	42	15%
									Total	285	100%

1,500 surveys sent to households in Fairfax

285 responses

19% response rate

Question 2. Rate of Residential Development

Residential Development Rate in Village Ctr.			Residential Development Rate Outside Village Ctr.		
Too Rapid	121	42%	Too Rapid	166	58%
Just Right	115	40%	Just Right	85	30%
Too Slow	21	7%	Too Slow	10	4%
No Opin/Resp	28	10%	No Opin/Resp	24	8%
Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%

Question 3. Rate of Commercial Development

Commercial Development Rate in Village Ctr.			Commercial Development Rate Outside Village Ctr.		
Too Rapid	11	4%	Too Rapid	23	8%
Just Right	106	37%	Just Right	115	40%
Too Slow	144	51%	Too Slow	100	35%
No Opin/Resp	24	8%	No Opin/Resp	47	16%
Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%

Question 4. Where to Concentrate Commercial Development

Concentrate/Encourage Small Businesses & Prof Services			Concentrate/Encourage Larger Businesses		
Village Ctr	101	35%	Village Ctr	26	9%
Outskirts of Village	69	24%	Outskirts of Village	95	33%
Shopping Ctrs & Malls	27	9%	Shopping Ctrs & Malls	44	15%
Along Highways	25	9%	Along Highways	64	22%
Anywhere	57	20%	Anywhere	37	13%
No Resp	6	2%	No Resp	19	7%
Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%

Question 5. Rate of Industrial Development

Industrial Development Rate in Fairfax		
Too Rapid	10	4%
Just Right	93	33%
Too Slow	114	40%
No Opin/Resp	68	24%
Total	285	100%

Question 6. Level of Importance of Town Issues															
Traffic Control			Sidewalks & Walking Paths			High Quality Schools			Growth & Development			Police Services			
Very Important	96	34%	Very Important	89	31%	Very Important	156	55%	Very Important	90	32%	Very Important	99	35%	
Important	123	43%	Important	101	35%	Important	95	33%	Important	126	44%	Important	136	48%	
Not Important	52	18%	Not Important	69	24%	Not Important	14	5%	Not Important	54	19%	Not Important	42	15%	
No Opinion	14	5%	No Opinion	26	9%	No Opinion	20	7%	No Opinion	15	5%	No Opinion	8	3%	
Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	
Very Impt & Impt	219	77%	Very Impt & Impt	190	67%	Very Impt & Impt	251	88%	Very Impt & Impt	216	76%	Very Impt & Impt	235	82%	

Question 6. Level of Importance of Town Issues															
Rescue Squad			Fire Department Services			Community Activities (clubs, classes, sports events, theatre, etc.)			Community Activities Center (for meetings, performances, etc.)			Affordable Housing			
Very Important	174	61%	Very Important	180	63%	Very Important	46	16%	Very Important	44	15%	Very Important	72	25%	
Important	98	34%	Important	95	33%	Important	140	49%	Important	105	37%	Important	123	43%	
Not Important	9	3%	Not Important	7	2%	Not Important	76	27%	Not Important	118	41%	Not Important	71	25%	
No Opinion	4	1%	No Opinion	3	1%	No Opinion	23	8%	No Opinion	18	6%	No Opinion	19	7%	
Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	
Very Impt & Impt	272	95%	Very Impt & Impt	275	96%	Very Impt & Impt	186	65%	Very Impt & Impt	149	52%	Very Impt & Impt	195	68%	

Question 6. Level of Importance of Town Issues															
Economic Growth & Quality Employment			High-Speed Internet Access			Property Taxes			Natural Resources			Energy Use			
Very Important	93	33%	Very Important	115	40%	Very Important	208	73%	Very Important	121	42%	Very Important	120	42%	
Important	135	47%	Important	93	33%	Important	65	23%	Important	117	41%	Important	127	45%	
Not Important	47	16%	Not Important	60	21%	Not Important	9	3%	Not Important	22	8%	Not Important	17	6%	
No Opinion	10	4%	No Opinion	17	6%	No Opinion	3	1%	No Opinion	25	9%	No Opinion	21	7%	
Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	
Very Impt & Impt	228	80%	Very Impt & Impt	208	73%	Very Impt & Impt	273	96%	Very Impt & Impt	238	84%	Very Impt & Impt	247	87%	

Question 6. Level of Importance of Town Issues																	
Agricultural Land			Forest Land			Open Land (not actively farmed)			Areas with Scenic Views			Accessible Areas for Recreational Use			Other Issues (Specify)		
Very Import	151	53%	Very Import	154	54%	Very Import	114	40%	Very Import	117	41%	Very Import	91	32%	Very Import	30	11%
Import	107	38%	Import	106	37%	Import	114	40%	Import	100	35%	Import	134	47%	Import	2	1%
Not Import	16	6%	Not Import	11	4%	Not Import	39	14%	Not Import	46	16%	Not Import	48	17%	Not Import	0	0%
No Opin	11	4%	No Opin	14	5%	No Opin	18	6%	No Opin	22	8%	No Opin	12	4%	No Opin	253	89%
Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%
Very Impt & Impt	258	91%	Very Impt & Impt	260	91%	Very Impt & Impt	228	80%	Very Impt & Impt	217	76%	Very Impt & Impt	225	79%	Very Impt & Impt	32	11%

Question 7. Quality of Town Services

Quality of Fire Department Services			Quality of Rescue Squad Services			Quality of Police Services			Quality of Trash & Recycling Services			Quality of Public Town Roads		
Excellent	147	52%	Excellent	150	53%	Excellent	15	5%	Excellent	124	44%	Excellent	78	27%
Adequate	90	32%	Adequate	90	32%	Adequate	125	44%	Adequate	145	51%	Adequate	160	56%
Poor	1	0%	Poor	3	1%	Poor	104	36%	Poor	12	4%	Poor	39	14%
No Opin/Resp	47	16%	No Opin/Resp	42	15%	No Opin/Resp	41	14%	No Opin/Resp	4	1%	No Opin/Resp	8	3%
Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%

Question 7. Quality of Town Services

Quality of Schools			Quality of Library			Quality of Recreation Facilities & Programs			Quality of Town Clerk Services			Quality of Zoning Office Services		
Excellent	106	37%	Excellent	111	39%	Excellent	30	11%	Excellent	81	28%	Excellent	40	14%
Adequate	120	42%	Adequate	114	40%	Adequate	154	54%	Adequate	155	54%	Adequate	137	48%
Poor	10	4%	Poor	10	4%	Poor	48	17%	Poor	19	7%	Poor	32	11%
No Opin/Resp	49	17%	No Opin/Resp	50	18%	No Opin/Resp	53	19%	No Opin/Resp	30	11%	No Opin/Resp	76	27%
Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%

Question 7. Quality of Town Services

Quality of Listers' Services			Quality of Planning Commission Services			Quality of Selectboard Services			Quality of Development Review Board Services			Quality of Sewer & Water Services		
Excellent	33	12%	Excellent	21	7%	Excellent	18	6%	Excellent	16	6%	Excellent	24	8%
Adequate	136	48%	Adequate	113	40%	Adequate	119	42%	Adequate	98	34%	Adequate	100	35%
Poor	18	6%	Poor	55	19%	Poor	66	23%	Poor	69	24%	Poor	35	12%
No Opin/Resp	98	34%	No Opin/Resp	96	34%	No Opin/Resp	82	29%	No Opin/Resp	102	36%	No Opin/Resp	126	44%
Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%

Question 8. Importance of Transportation Related Issues

Maintaining Town Roads			Improving Town Roads			Constructing Sidewalks or Other Pedestrian/Bicycle Paths			Constructing Park-&-Ride Facilities			Establishing Public Transportation		
Very Important	127	45%	Very Important	108	38%	Very Important	95	33%	Very Important	31	11%	Very Important	34	12%
Important	123	43%	Important	103	36%	Important	78	27%	Important	69	24%	Important	59	21%
Not Important	5	2%	Not Important	46	16%	Not Important	83	29%	Not Important	140	49%	Not Important	143	50%
No Opin/Resp	30	11%	No Opin/Resp	28	10%	No Opin/Resp	29	10%	No Opin/Resp	45	16%	No Opin/Resp	49	17%
Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%
Very Impt & Impt	250	88%	Very Impt & Impt	211	74%	Very Impt & Impt	173	61%	Very Impt & Impt	100	35%	Very Impt & Impt	93	33%

Question 9. Types of Economic Development to Encourage

Encourage Resource-Based Economic Development			Encourage Home-Based or Cottage-Business Economic Development			Encourage Light Industry Economic Development			Encourage Retail Economic Development		
Encourage	227	80%	Encourage	217	76%	Encourage	190	67%	Encourage	172	60%
Discourage	7	2%	Discourage	8	3%	Discourage	45	16%	Discourage	58	20%
Neither/No Resp	51	18%	Neither/No Resp	60	21%	Neither/No Resp	50	18%	Neither/No Resp	55	19%
Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%

Question 9. Types of Economic Development to Encourage

Encourage Professional Services Economic Development			Encourage Hospitality Services Economic Development			Encourage Other Services Economic Development			Encourage Other Economic Development		
Encourage	218	76%	Encourage	224	79%	Encourage	146	51%	Encourage	31	11%
Discourage	11	4%	Discourage	11	4%	Discourage	53	19%	Discourage	4	1%
Neither/No Resp	56	20%	Neither/No Resp	50	18%	Neither/No Resp	86	30%	Neither/No Resp	250	88%
Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%

Question 10. Importance of Different Recreations Facilities/Lands

Playing Fields			Walking/Hiking/Biking/X-Country Trails			Ice Rink			Hunting Areas/Access			Fishing Areas/Access		
Very Important	85	30%	Very Important	100	35%	Very Important	24	8%	Very Important	52	18%	Very Important	63	22%
Important	104	36%	Important	118	41%	Important	59	21%	Important	68	24%	Important	99	35%
Not Important	66	23%	Not Important	47	16%	Not Important	150	53%	Not Important	130	46%	Not Important	88	31%
No Opin/Resp	30	11%	No Opin/Resp	20	7%	No Opin/Resp	52	18%	No Opin/Resp	35	12%	No Opin/Resp	35	12%
Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%
Very Impt & Impt	189	66%	Very Impt & Impt	218	76%	Very Impt & Impt	83	29%	Very Impt & Impt	120	42%	Very Impt & Impt	162	57%

Question 10. Importance of Different Recreations Facilities/Lands

Boat Access			Swimming Access			Community Center			Swimming Pool			Nature Areas		
Very Important	54	19%	Very Important	50	18%	Very Important	78	27%	Very Important	32	11%	Very Important	102	36%
Important	90	32%	Important	79	28%	Important	109	38%	Important	40	14%	Important	116	41%
Not Important	96	34%	Not Important	104	36%	Not Important	71	25%	Not Important	181	64%	Not Important	43	15%
No Opin/Resp	45	16%	No Opin/Resp	52	18%	No Opin/Resp	27	9%	No Opin/Resp	32	11%	No Opin/Resp	24	8%
Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%
Very Impt & Impt	144	51%	Very Impt & Impt	129	45%	Very Impt & Impt	187	66%	Very Impt & Impt	72	25%	Very Impt & Impt	218	76%

Question 10. Importance of Different Recreations Facilities/Lands

Snowmobile Trails			ATV Trails			Other Recreational Land/Facilities (Specify)		
Very Important	33	12%	Very Important	23	8%	Very Important	15	5%
Important	78	27%	Important	54	19%	Important	4	1%
Not Important	138	48%	Not Important	168	59%	Not Important	7	2%
No Opin/Resp	36	13%	No Opin/Resp	40	14%	No Opin/Resp	259	91%
Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%	Total	285	100%
Very Impt & Impt	111	39%	Very Impt & Impt	77	27%	Very Impt & Impt	19	7%