VILLAGE OF JOHNSON MUNICIPAL OFFICES
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Memo to: LCPC, DEHCD and Town of Johnson
From: Johnson Planning Commission
Date: February 14, 2013
Re: Johnson Planning Commission Report

The Johnson Planning Commission has drafted a revised *Village of Johnson Municipal Development Plan 2013-2018* for consideration by the Village Board of Trustees to guide the village for the next five years. The revised Village Plan is consistent with specific goals established in 24 V.S.A. §4302.

If there are any questions or comments with respect to the Village Plan or this report, please contact me.

Lea Kilvadyova
Community & Economic Development Coordinator

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Department of Economic, Housing and Community Development

Village of Johnson
Municipal Development Plan
2008 - 2013

Approved by Johnson Planning Commission on February 12, 2013

This Plan was prepared by:
The Johnson Planning Commission

Maps were created by:
The Lamoille County Planning Commission

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The Village of Johnson Municipal Development Plan is divided into five parts. The plan opens with a description of a vision for village's future. The second part introduces the municipality and reviews the purpose of the plan. The third part introduces general and specific planning goals. The fourth part contains an overview of policies and implementation tasks through which Johnson Village wishes to accomplish its goals. The fifth part contains data that document the present condition of the community and outline projected development trends. The data is presented in the following chapters: Demographics and housing; Economic development; Natural, scenic and historic resources; Recreation; Education; Transportation; Energy; Utilities and facilities; and Land use. Each chapter closes with a summary of policies and implementation tasks applicable to that particular chapter.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE MUNICIPALITY

Johnson is a town of 3,446 people nestled in the heart of Lamoille County. The town is comprised of approximately 29,492 acres or 46 square miles. Mountains and forest dominate Johnson's landscape and the spine of the Green Mountains winds through the town northeast to southwest. Butternut Mountain is the highest peak that falls entirely within the town. The peak of the 3,715-foot Sterling Mountain (also known as White Face Mountain) is located just south of the Johnson town line.

Johnson, granted in 1782 to Samuel Johnson and others, was chartered as a town in January, 1792. In 1856, Johnson annexed part of the town of Sterling, and in 1894 the Village of Johnson was incorporated. Today, the Village is home to about 43% percent of Johnson's population, or 1,443 people. The Town and Village of Johnson remain separate governmental bodies.

Johnson Village represents the community's cultural, commercial and institutional center. The Village is a compact community that is home to a number of unique businesses, heritage buildings and residential neighborhoods. The Village has long been a center for education and today up to *42%* of in-town jobs are in educational services. Johnson State College's roots go back to Johnson Academy School, founded in 1828. Today, Johnson State College has approximately 1,950 students. Founded by artists in 1984, the Vermont Studio Center is the largest international artists and writers' Residency Program in the United States, hosting 50 visual artists and writers each month from across the country and around the world. The Vermont Studio Center, in conjunction with Johnson State College's Fine and Performing Arts Program represent a uniquely gifted and diverse artistic community present in Johnson year round.

The Gihon and Lamoille rivers are a major recreational and scenic resource. In the past, the Gihon provided the foundation for Johnson's water-powered mill economy. The first generating plant in town was located on the falls just north of the Power House Bridge. Johnson Woolen Mills dates back to 1836, when sheep outnumbered cows, and to date remains a core feature of the Johnson Village business district. Around the turn of the century, talc was the prominent industry in Johnson. Today, trees continue to be Johnson's largest crop – for fuel, saw logs, pulp, Christmas trees and maple products. Stowe and Smugglers Notch Ski Resorts located in neighboring communities of Stowe and Cambridge are major contributors to the regional tourism economy.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The principal purpose for a municipal development plan is to be a guide for the achievement of a community vision. The plan is not a regulation, rather, it is a document meant to state a desired direction for growth and development. The framework for planning in Vermont has been established by two major pieces of legislation. The first is 24 V.S.A. chapter 117, the Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act, also known as the Vermont Planning and Development Act or Chapter 117. The second is 10

GENERAL AND SPECIFIC PLANNING GOALS

store service station, the Vermont Electric Coop headquarters and maintenance facility and office space. This area is well served by municipal water, sewer and electric utilities and has good access to Rte 15. It is likely that some existing single family housing will be converted to small business or commercial use, given the access to utilities and transportation, but mixed use should continue to be encouraged in this district. Light industrial/commercial development is also encouraged where there is access to services and transportation and there are not flood zoning issues. This plan amendment recognizes and addresses these changes and modifies the district boundaries. District boundaries attempt to follow property lines so as to eliminate conflicts between districts.

Additionally, the town and village established a Town Sewer Service Area immediately adjacent to this district which allocates 25,000 gpd of sewer capacity for development. Less than half of the capacity has been allocated, so this area should be considered as prime area for future development with commercial/light industrial and mixed use residential development encouraged.

To establish Johnson Village as a preferred location for compatible commercial, light industrial and residential development in the Town. There are various residential neighborhoods in the Village of Johnson. The retention and maintenance of the housing stock is largely the responsibility of the landowner. However, planning efforts can help ensure that the neighborhoods are protected from potentially incompatible land uses. It can also help ensure that the landowners are provided with a degree of assurance that their investment in their housing is securely protected.

To promote the Village of Johnson's diverse cultural, educational and community assets. The Village of Johnson is fortunate to be the home of Johnson State College and the Vermont Studio Center. The College is a major employer and offers various benefits to Johnson's residents and businesses. However, the College is sometimes the source of conflicts between Village residents and college students, particularly in the residential neighborhoods. The Vermont Studio Center (VSC) is an internationally recognized arts facility that has a significant presence in the Village. The VSC has acquired and renovated a number of buildings, some of which are in high-profile locations. It is also a key employer in the Village.

The Village will promote itself as the educational and cultural 'heart' of Lamoille County. It will develop a strong connection to the Studio Center and the College and will seek to develop a higher profile of both institutions in the Village.

To conserve and protect the natural and heritage features which contribute to Johnson's unique and attractive character. The Village of Johnson; the Lamoille and Gihon Rivers; the lands adjacent to the rivers; historic buildings; the orientation of buildings to one another that contributes to the pleasant character and atmosphere of the community; the Lamoille Valley Railroad corridor; surrounding rural lands and hillsides.

To promote the community's tourism and recreation opportunities. The location of the Village along Route 15; a number of unique businesses that attract visitors to the Village; the attractive qualities of the Village itself (compact, heritage buildings); location between Stowe and Smuggler's Notch ski areas; proximity to the Long Trail hiking trail; fall foliage.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND HOUSING

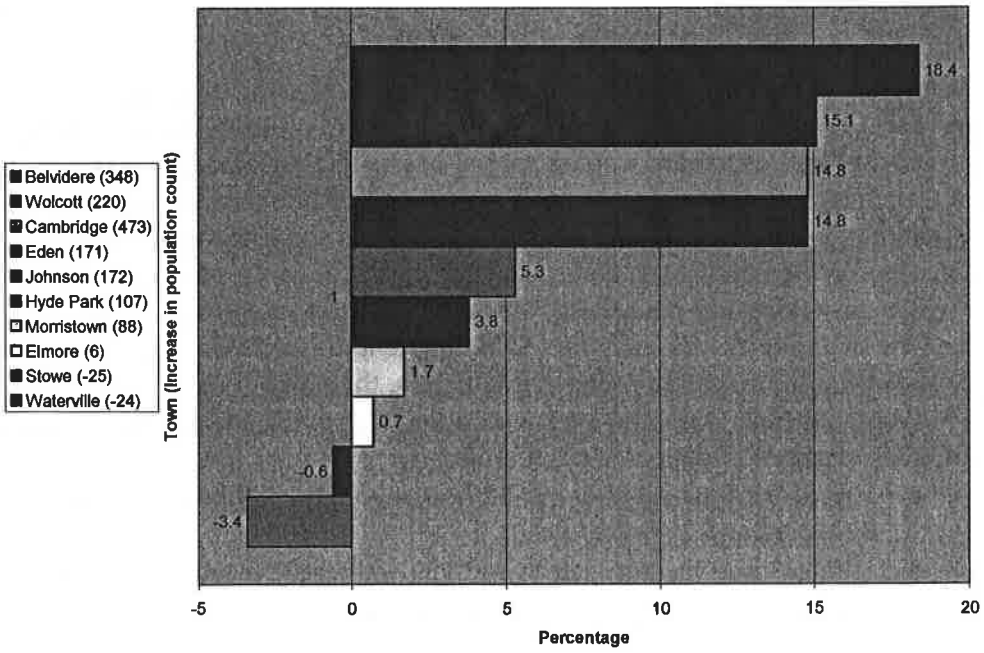
A. DEMOGRAPHICS

Population growth

Johnson is the fourth most populated municipality in Lamoille County. The US Census Bureau counted 3,446 people living in Johnson in 2012. This includes the population of Johnson Village which was 1,443 people at the same time. Since the last population count in 2000, the number of people living in the Village decreased by 24 people. Overall, the Town of Johnson's population grew by 5.3%, or by 172 people.

The overall Lamoille County growth rate was also 5.3%. The fastest growing towns were Belvidere (18.4%), Wolcott (15.3%), and Cambridge and Eden (both at 14.8%). Because of its growth rate, Cambridge surpassed Johnson in its total population number and changed the ranking of Johnson from 3rd to 4th largest Lamoille County municipality. Complete population growth statistics for all towns in Lamoille County are shown in Figure 1 below. The numbers in brackets show increases in total population numbers in different towns.

Figure 1.
Population Growth Rate 2000-2010
(2000-2010 Census)



Between 2000 and 2010 Lamoille County's growth slowed down considerably. While between 1990 and 2000, the County's population grew by 17.7%, between 2000 and 2010, the growth was 5.3%. This trend mirrors the rate of the State' overall

62% of renters in Johnson spent 30 percent or more of household income on housing.

Subsidized Rental Housing

The Affordable Housing Database, supported by the Vermont Housing Finance Agency, includes three projects in Johnson Village. The first one is St. John's Knoll and is comprised of 20 units dedicated to seniors. The second is Johnson Group home, seven units reserved for the disabled. The third is 5 units (4 2-bedrooms and 1 1-bedroom) on Main Street owned by the Lamoille Housing Partnership. Johnson Community Housing, a new housing development consisting of 24 affordable housing units for families and seniors on School Street, became available for renting in March 2011.

Real Estate Values

The Vermont Department of Taxes provides data on all property transactions in the state. The current median sales price of a single family home with less than 6 acres in Johnson is $103,250. Table 2 also shows the amount of property transfer taxes raised between 2005 and 2011. Median sales prices in other real estate categories are shown in Table 3.

Table 2. Median Price of Single Family home on less than 6 acres in Johnson 2005-2011

Year	Median Price	Property Transfer Tax
2005	$137,000	$87,166
2006	$138,000	$89,224
2007	$150,281	$102,920
2008	$149,000	$68,656
2009	$147,500	$33,539
2010	$137,500	$25,781
2011	$103,250	$45,815

Source: VT Department of Taxes

Table 3. 2011 Median Selling Price

Category	**Median/Average Price**	**Number of Valid Sales**
Residential <6 acres	$103,250	20
Residential >6 acres	$185,000	5
Mobile Home no Land	$14,800	6
Mobile Home w/Land	$82,000	2
Commercial	0	0
Commercial Apt	0	0
Open Land	$114,000	4
Woodland	$145,000	1
Seasonal <6 acres	0	0
Seasonal >6 acres	$92,000	1

Source: VT Department of Taxes

C. JOHNSON STATE COLLEGE

Population

As of fall 2012, Johnson State College had a student population of approximately 1,800 students. Of this number, roughly 1,250 students attended on-campus undergraduate classes and 575 students were enrolled in external, off campus undergraduate programs.

Housing

The total on-campus housing capacity is about 550 beds in residence halls. Additionally, there are 50 on-campus apartments, providing housing for roughly 100 students, including students with families. The College does not track the distribution of off-campus housing but the majority of them live within Johnson and other nearby communities.

POLICIES

- The Village of Johnson understands that the ability of Johnson residents to affordably rent or purchase a home is directly linked to their income levels. In that regard, the Village will support and implement initiatives that will improve overall economic conditions, increase local employment opportunities and provide workforce investment training opportunities for Johnson residents.

- The Village of Johnson understands that people's desire to locate their home in Johnson is connected to their perceptions of the quality of life in Johnson. The quality of life factors include stable neighborhoods, quality public education, higher education and childcare programs, recreational and cultural opportunities, and services available to Johnson residents (such as town-wide access to broadband), etc. To that end, the Village is committed to supporting initiatives that make Johnson an attractive place to live, work and recreate.

- The Village of Johnson supports businesses and organizations interested in developing safe and sanitary single family homes as well as perpetually affordable owner occupied multi-family housing structures. The efforts to develop multi-family housing that focus on the rehabilitation of the existing housing stock should take priority over the construction of new multi-unit buildings, in an effort to preserve the village of Johnson's historical and architectural character. Housing projects located in proximity to employment and commercial centers are encouraged and so is the coordination with the provision of necessary public facilities and utilities.

- Accessory apartments within or attached to single family homes are deemed an affordable way of providing housing in close proximity to cost-effective care and supervision for relatives, disabled or elderly persons.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Johnson's local economy cannot be separated from the larger regional economy within which it is part. Reinforcing this notion is Johnson's geographic location at the near center of the region and one of only two municipalities that does not border a neighboring county. Even though a significant portion of Johnson residents work in Johnson, the majority of workers leave town to go to work.

According to the Vermont Department of Labor data, a significant source of jobs in Lamoille County is the Accommodations and Food Services sector. This sector provides 30% of all private jobs in the county. This is nearly three times greater than the State average of jobs in this sector. In only one other sector, Construction, does the county beat the state average, and in this case by only 4%. In all other sectors, the County underperforms compared to the state average. The manufacturing sector in Lamoille County is below the state average by over 300%.

Johnson Village Workforce

According to 2006-2010 American Community Survey estimates, 852 Village residents were employed. Out of the employed residents, 75% commuted to work by car; 20% percent walked to work and 5% worked at home. Approximately 13% percent were unemployed. About 21% of village families lived in poverty.

Village Employers

Among the largest employers located in Johnson Village are Johnson State College (339 employees), Johnson Elementary School (47) and the Vermont Studio Center (26). Private businesses with most employees include Johnson Woolen Mills, Parker & Stearns and Manchester Lumber.

National and state-wide statistics do not provide the overall number of jobs available within the limits of Johnson Village. For the entire Town of Johnson, the number of jobs available within the community in 2010 was 977. According to the Vermont Department of Labor, jobs available in the Town of Johnson pay among the highest average annual wages in Lamoille County. In 2010, the average annual wage was $35,393.

Income of Johnson residents

While in-town jobs pay among the highest wages in Lamoille County, median income of Johnson families (regardless of whether income earners work in Johnson or elsewhere) are among the lowest in the County. The income gap between Johnson and the rest of the County has been growing for the past 30 years. In 1980, the median income of Johnson families was almost at par with the median income of Lamoille County families. Thirty years later, the income gap is approximately $22,000.

- In 2011 and 2012, Main Street Johnson underwent a major overhaul of its streetscape features and travel infrastructure. The implemented improvements include the extension of the sidewalk network, installation of brick crosswalks, new parking layout, new streetlights, bike racks, park benches, sculpture pedestals, trees and public gathering spaces.
- Recognizing the importance of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail and its economic potential, the Village and the Town began looking into improving pathway connections between the LVRT and the downtown. A feasibility study for a path connecting the downtown and the LVRT was completed in 2012. A new trailhead facility for LVRT users has been designed.
- In 2012, village voters granted to Village Trustees an authority to enter into tax stabilization agreements with business and commercial property owners. (Note: The Selectboard was granted the same authority by Town voters).
- Both the Village and Town have also voted to eliminate the Business and Personal Property Tax as a further incentive to attracting new business and retaining existing one.
- Efforts to identify and develop a parcel suitable for business, commercial or light industrial development have been ongoing. After a suitable parcel has been identified adjacent to Route 15, a conceptual design for the park as well as a market study to determined business demand have been completed. The market study recommended two business clusters with growth potential in Johnson: Agribusiness, Food Processing and Technology; and Energy and Environmental Services.
- Throughout the past five years several Main Street businesses closed and new businesses moved in. Among the closed businesses have been Roo's Natural Foods, The Quilted Lily, Plum & Main Restaurant, Beard's Hardware, Ryan Books and Sweet Hollow Herbs. The new businesses on Main Street include Ebenezer Books, The Hub Pizzeria and Pub, Wicked Wings Restaurant and The Studio Store.
- In May 2011, Johnson Village was affected by flood waters of the Gihon and Lamoille rivers. Among the properties affected by the flood was the Grand Union supermarket housed in the downtown shopping plaza. Following the flood, Grand Union closed. To date, the former grocery store space remains unoccupied.
- The village business district continues to maintain its Village Center Designation status. Johnson businesses and other buildings not used solely as single-family residences that are located within the designated Village Center District are eligible to apply for tax credits. The tax credits have been created by the Vermont Legislature to support redevelopment of older and historic properties within designated districts. The tax credits are targeted at general rehabilitation work, code compliance work and exterior improvements to the façade of buildings.

POLICIES

In the area of Economic Development the Village of Johnson will:

- Support the expansion and diversification of the town's economic base in a way that respects the scale and character of the community and protects against sprawl.

NATURAL, SCENIC AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

A. LAND RESOURCES

Soils, Forest and Agricultural resources

The dominant land use in both Johnson and Lamoille County today is forest, although limited in the Village of Johnson. Agricultural land is also very limited within the Village limits.

B. WATER RESOURCES

Water resources take on a variety of forms and functions. They provide rivers and lakes upon which to boat, fish and swim, groundwater to drink, and wetlands to store floodwaters and filter natural and manmade contaminants. Water resources provide numerous habitats for a variety of aquatic and riparian plant and animal communities, and support numerous economic activities such as fishing and boating.

Water resources also serve as repositories for runoff and seepage including pesticides, herbicides, sediments, and leaching landfills, septic systems and underground storage tanks. These contaminants kill fish and plants, destroy existing and potential drinking water supplies and preclude recreational activities.

Rivers and streams

The Lamoille River flows westerly through the Johnson landscape for about 7.9 miles. The Lamoille originates at Horse Pond in Greensboro and flows into Lake Champlain at Milton. From its headwaters to the mouth, the river descents approximately 1,200 feet and drains a 706 square mile watershed.

The biggest tributary to the Lamoille in Johnson Village is the Gihon River. The Gihon River played an important role in the history of Johnson. The first generating plant in town was located on the falls just north of the Power House Bridge. Johnson's historic mill economy was literally powered by the Gihon in Johnson Village.

Significant natural features

The Gihon and Lamoille Rivers help create the essential character of Johnson Village. The picturesque rivers can be admired from many scenic locations. The 1992 Vermont Swimming Hole study includes the Power House Covered Bridge Falls on the Gihon River. A popular swimming hole is located behind the United Church on the Gihon.

Other significant natural features are located just outside of the Village boundaries. Dog's Head Falls is located about 1 mile southeast of Johnson Village and consist of six-foot high twin falls, two large pools for swimming, rocks and outcrops for jumping, picnicking, and sunbathing. Sloping Falls just downstream is another well-used

Wetlands

The term wetland is used to refer to areas that are commonly referred to as swamps, marshes, bogs, fens or other such names. Wetlands serve a number of important functions, including storm water retention, erosion control, ground water recharge, and wildlife habitat. Wetlands share three basic characteristics:

1. The presence of water at or near the ground surfaces;
2. The presence of water dependant plants occurring on site; and
3. Common types of soil that have formed as a result of the presence of water.

The U.S. Department of the Interior has mapped wetlands, and each town has a set of National Wetlands Inventory Maps. These maps were made using aerial photos. They are useful for assessing the general character of a particular area, but are not accurate enough to determine the nature of a particular property without a site visit.

Vermont's wetland regulations are based upon the National Wetlands Inventory. They designate all of the wetlands identified by the inventory in Johnson as Class II, meaning the functions they serve – either alone or in conjunction with other wetlands in Vermont are protected by a 50 foot vegetated buffer between the wetland and any adjacent land development. Class I wetlands are those of such high quality and important function that they are considered of statewide significance. In 1992, there were no wetlands in Johnson classified as Class I.

Groundwater resources

Groundwater is the source for over 90% of the drinking water for rural communities in Vermont. It is replenished through rain and surface waters which percolate through the soil. Any activity that introduces contaminants directly into the ground (such as underground storage tanks, septic disposal fields, abandoned wells, junk cars and agricultural activities) can affect groundwater quality. Since surface waters may also travel underground, surface water quality may affect groundwater quality as well.

Groundwater is an important source of drinking water for Johnson residents. For homes outside of the Village Water Company service area, groundwater is the primary source of drinking water. The Village Water Company uses groundwater and surface water but will be abandoning their surface water source in late 2006.

Public groundwater sources in Vermont are assigned a Source Protection Area (SPA). SPAs are defined as the surface and subsurface areas from or through which contaminants are reasonably likely to reach a public water system source. The state Agency for Natural Resources (ANR) Water Supply Division is responsible for the Vermont Source Protection Program. A public water supply is defined as one serving fifteen or more connections or 25 or more people.

There are five Source Protection Areas in Johnson. The first is an area defined by a 3,000-foot radius around the Wescom Trailer Park wells. The second is a hydrogeologically delineated area around the Nadeau Well, which is supposed to be a

POLICIES

In the area of Natural, Scenic and Historic Resources the Village of Johnson will:

- Provide for the wise and efficient use of Vermont's natural resources and facilitate the appropriate extraction of earth resources and the proper restoration and preservation of the aesthetic qualities of the area.
- Support efforts that protect long-term viability of agricultural and forest lands; implement sound forest and agricultural management practices; and the use of locally grown food products.
- Protect the quality of public drinking water supplies and restrict development in Source Protection Areas.
- Support efforts that monitor the water quality of Johnson's rivers and streams; maintain or improve the quality of water resources; and take actions to ensure that our rivers and streams are classified and developed in accordance with the Select Board's resolution from August 16, 2004.
- Support private and public activities and uses that are oriented to the Lamoille and Gihon riverfronts. This Plan recognizes the importance of the rivers in the Village's history and their continued contribution to the scenic, economic and recreational opportunities in the community. The Village supports development along the riverfronts carried out in a manner that is sensitive to the natural features of the watercourses.
- Encourage a range of land use measures that will ensure long-term access to public waters, preserve undeveloped spaces for recreation, support the viability of agricultural and timber landscapes and protect wilderness areas.
- Protect rare, threatened and endangered species and preserve their habitats through appropriate conservation techniques. Where appropriate a buffer strip will be designed and maintained to ensure protection.
- Protect resources by restricting commercial and residential development in fragile areas, i.e. areas with topography limitations, soil limitations, areas prone to flooding and wetlands.
- Encourage initiatives that restore, preserve and continuously use historic structures in Johnson Village.

The Town of Johnson purchased this land, previously occupied by the Cubb mobile home park, in 2001. Because the land was subject to frequent floods, an agreement was made with the mobile home park owner to remove the trailers from the flood-prone area and develop new trailer sites on higher ground, in the upper part of the park. The Town purchased the land through a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant. Because of the floods, the grant agreement with FEMA designated the use of the land as solely recreational, thus excluding residential and commercial uses of the property.

Legion Field

The Legion Field is a 1.6-acre parcel owned by the Town of Johnson. It is located on School Street in proximity to Johnson Elementary School. The *Johnson Pathways Plan* acknowledges the Legion Field as an "extremely important town facility often serving as a town common for special events." Parking is available along School Street and on a nearby College Hill parking lot.

The central location of the Legion Field in the heart of the Village lends itself to the field's frequent use. The field is rich in community events and celebrations. In recent years, the field hosted annual events such as the Winter Carnival; the Halloween parade and bonfire; the Tuesday Night Live summer concert series, the Powerhouse Bridge reopening, and the Johnson Millennium Celebration.

The field also serves as a sports and outdoor education facility. Minor League Baseball players (9-11 year olds) and the women's softball league use the field for their team practices and games. Johnson Elementary and Laraway Schools conduct their physical education classes here. Church Football Days are held here as well. In the winter, the Johnson Fire Department floods the field and converts it into an ice rink. The hillside of the field above the Art House functions as a sledding slope.

When not otherwise in use, the field serves as a general park space for local residents. A member of the Recreation Facilities Plan Steering Committee observed that the Legion Field "is the only field in town where you can see people gather for pick-up games."

Village Green

In 2010, the Village, through grant funds raised to implement the Main Street Project, purchased an open parcel in downtown Johnson and redeveloped the parcel into a community green space. The space is home to Johnson Farmers Market, and community events and celebrations.

Elementary School Facilities - Gymnasium and Playground

The gymnasium and playground are owned by the School District and are integrated into a greater Johnson Elementary School campus located on School Street. The gymnasium was built in 1998 as a part of a larger building addition project. The playground features diverse equipment, a basketball court and a grass-covered play area.

Rivers and Trails

The Gihon and Lamoille Rivers help create the essential character of Johnson. The picturesque rivers can be admired from many scenic locations including the Power House Bridge and an area located near the United Church. Fishermen and swimmers are among the most frequent river users. Kayakers flock to Johnson in the spring. Johnson has an ongoing interest in improving access to its rivers to increase the appreciation and use of these unique natural resources.

Two major state trail systems pass through Johnson. The Long Trail passes within two miles of the village center and a future relocation will bring the trail closer. When completed, The Lamoille Valley Rail Trail will intersect the Old Mill Park and pass through the former Talc Mill Property. This 98-mile trail system will wind throughout the Lamoille Valley bringing a variety of users in different seasons. The Rail Trail will have the added benefit of creating a direct connection between the Long Trail and the village, bypassing VT 15.

Johnson State College recreation resources available to the community

Johnson State College (JSC) has a broad range of recreation facilities that are available to the community. These include the JSC SHAPE Center, which has a state-of-the art fitness center, weight room, indoor swimming pool, exercise rooms, racketball courts and an indoor climbing wall. There are also four outdoor tennis courts; a network of hiking, biking and running trails; and disc golf course. The Lower Pond is a favorite walking destination. Free campus maps can be picked up at the Admissions Office or may be downloaded from the JSC website.

Throughout the year, the College hosts performances, guest speakers and countless other events at Dibden Center for the Arts and other campus venues. Virtually all of these events are open to the public – many of them free; others for a nominal fee (typically $5). A list of upcoming events is available online at www.jsc.edu/events. In addition, all home varsity games are open to the public and free of charge. JSC competes in NAC Division III and fields 12 athletics teams, including soccer, basketball, volleyball and lacrosse. Area residents also enjoy free access to the Willey Library & Learning Center. The College welcomes and encourages community members to take advantage of the many programs and resources on campus. For more information, visit www.jsc.edu or call 635-2356.

POLICIES

In the area of Recreation the Village of Johnson will:

- Encourage efforts of Johnson Recreation Committee to revisit and/or implement recommendations of the 2005 Recreation Facilities Plan.
- Encourage the expansion of trail-based infrastructure to improve connectivity and pathway networks expansion.

EDUCATION

A. JOHNSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Students in the Town of Johnson attend schools in two locations. Pre-kindergarden through sixth grade attend classes in Johnson, at the Elementary School, while students in seventh through twelfth grades and Johnson's vocational students attend classes at Lamoille Union High School, and the contiguous Green Mountain Technology and Career Center, all located in Hyde Park.

Johnson Elementary School

The Johnson Elementary School (JES) is owned by the Johnson School District. The Johnson Elementary School Board governs the School District. There are five directors, elected to two and three year terms, at the Annual School District/Town meeting.

Enrollment

JES underwent a major renovation in 1997 and was expanded by the addition of a gymnasium, 11 classrooms, a library, and kitchen. The school was built for growth, however, following state trends, Johnson's school age population has been slowly dropping over the past decade. As a result of the expansion, the school now has a capacity for approximately 350-360 students. In 2012-2013, there were 259 students enrolled in JES.

Lamoille Union High School

The Lamoille Union High School is owned by a cooperative agreement among six member towns called the Lamoille Union High School District. These towns are: Belvidere, Cambridge, Eden, Hyde Park, Johnson and Waterville. The Lamoille Union High School Board of School Directors governs the District. There are 12 members on the Board. At present three of the Directors are from Johnson.

When the school was built, it was designed to serve about 800 students, based on the educational standards of the time. Current standards, which came into effect in 2000, reduced the facility capacity to 640 students. The change of standards necessitated the expansion of the facility and in 2002 a new Middle School building, along with expansion and renovation of the High School, was completed.

Green Mountain Technology and Career Center

The Green Mountain Technology and Career Center (GMTCC) is one of 16 regional technical centers in the state of Vermont that provides career, technical, and vocational programs for high school and adult students in the greater Lamoille Valley. It serves students from Hazen Union High School District, Lamoille Union High School District, Craftsbury Academy, Peoples Academy, and Stowe High School.

C. PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Laraway Youth and Family Services

Johnson is home to Laraway Youth and Family Services (LYFS), a private non-profit organization employing 112 people. LYFS' two main programmatic components include the Laraway School and Substitute Care program.

The Laraway School is licensed in Vermont as an independent school, approved for special education. The School serves 4th to 12th grade-students who have special emotional and behavioral circumstances that keep them from being successful in their own schools and who want to return to their own schools once they get their behavior under control.

Laraway Substitute Care is a behavioral treatment program that serves youth who experience problems that make it difficult for them to live in their own communities. Laraway provides services designed to support children, adolescents and their families as they identify effective ways to address those problems.

LYFS is also a Licensed Child Placing Agency administering a statewide Foster Care program that provides daily care, intensive care management, treatment and crisis intervention services.

In 2010, LYFS moved from their location nearby Johnson Elementary School to a new state of the art facility located in the Town of Johnson.

Child care

The Village of Johnson recognizes the importance of high quality childcare and early childhood education with the community and supports the expansion of these services. According to the Lamoille Family Center, in 2013 there were 5 registered in-home child care operations and 1 licenced child care center in Johnson. The Turtles and Tots child care center is the largest child care facility in Johnson licenced for 54 children. The opening of this facility has helped to bridge the gap in child care services after the Child Development Center operated by Johnson State College closed several years ago.

D. OTHER EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Vermont Studio Center

The Vermont Studio Center (VSC) is a nonprofit, year-round, international creative community serving artists and writers from across the country and around the world. Each month, 50 artists and writers participate in 4-12 week independent studio residencies. Throughout the year, VSC also offers exhibitions, public lectures and readings to the community.

Since it was founded in 1984, VSC has offered a free summer art program for children, and since 1998, a community arts program for teenagers and adults. In addition, VSC's Community Arts Director teaches art classes at the local Johnson Elementary

TRANSPORTATION

Sidewalks
Johnson Village maintains the network of local sidewalks. The maintenance includes winter plowing, spring sweeping and a general upkeep of the sidewalks. The Village continuously improves the sidewalk network. In 2011 and 2012, sidewalks were improved and extended as part of the Main Street redevelopment Project. In 2013, sidewalk extension and improvement is slated for School Street and College Hill Road. The implementation of sidewalk improvements is governed by pedestrian improvement plans. The most recent pedestrian improvement plan was completed in 2008 and included pedestrian infrastructure along School St, College Hill Road, Clay Hill Road, Pearl Street and Route 100 C.

State and local roads
Local roads in Johnson are maintained by the Town of Johnson Highway Department. Numbered state roads are maintained by the Vermont Department of Transportation.

Bridges and culverts
The Town owns and maintains 8 bridges within its boundaries, not including the numerous culverts serving both intermittent streams and larger waterways. Within the past ten years, three major bridges in Johnson Village were reconstructed or rehabilitated: State-owned Route 15/Gihon River Bridge; Town-owned Railroad Street Bridge and Pearl Street Bridge.

Rail
The nearest passenger service available is AMTRAK with a station in Waterbury.

Airports
Johnson residents are provided air transportation service through the Morrisville-Stowe state Airport on Route 100 in Morristown, and through the Burlington International Airport in South Burlington. Long-term expansion plans for the Morrisville-Stowe State airport have been considered although none of those plans are expected to be implemented over the next 20 years.

Regional trails and paths
Long Trail
Johnson's stretch of the 270-mile Long Trail consists of fifteen miles of main trail and 1.5 miles of side trails. The trail descends the north side of Whiteface Mountain, through Bear Hollow, along Smith Brook Basin, crosses Rte 15 and the Lamoille River, ascends to Prospect Rock, up and over Roundtop Mountain, crosses the Plot Rd, wends into Codding Hollow, then continues its way north to Laraway, Butternut and Bowen Mountains. The trail includes three overnight shelters: Bear Hollow, Roundtop and Corliss Camp.

- The Central Vermont Council on Aging (CVCOA) provides transportation to health care, shopping and community programs. They also transport meals to residents that are confined to their homes. In addition, CVCOA operates the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) in central Vermont. RSVP provides transportation to its volunteers in addition to reimbursing self-drive volunteers for mileage.
- Central Vermont Community Action Council (CVCAC) has contracted with Rural Community Transport (RCT) to administer a ride referral/ride match program in Lamoille County. RCT also focuses on developing and coordinating transit services and cultivating awareness of and support for public transportation in the region.
- Lamoille County mental Health (LCMH) provides rides for developmentally disabled clients between their homes and the region's treatment and activity centers.
- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) provides services to clients with disabilities that create barriers to employment. The VR program works to relocate individuals and provide transportation so they can work in the community. VR also serves as an advocate of local and regional transportation planning.
- Out and About is an adult day care program at Copley Hospital which provides transportation to clients through RCT to gain access to and from their home to the day care.
- The VT Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired offers reimbursement to volunteer drivers and also purchases transportation for clients. There are a couple of private taxis in Johnson available to call, some drive long distances.

POLICIES

In the area of Transportation the Village of Johnson will:

- Support initiatives to improve traffic safety, public parking and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.
- Encourage opportunities to create a system of pathways providing for better connections between Johnson State College and the rest of the Village; as well as interconnections between residential areas and recreation facilities. The development of pathways will be guided by recommendations generated by the 2003 Pathways Plan and 2008 Pedestrian Improvements Feasibility Study.
- Maintain and improve the existing infrastructure of Village streets and bridges while conserving their aesthetic and recreational qualities.
- Encourage and promote public transportation and ridesharing.

IMPLEMENTATION TASKS

- Complete design and construct pedestrian improvements along School Street and College Hill Road.
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle connection between the Rail Trail and the downtown.

in Vermont. VPPSA aggregates the Power Supply needs of the members and secures the power from the market on behalf of the members, at a cost savings. With changes in the power supply market, membership in VPPSA has become essential to the continued operation of municipal electric departments all over the state. The increasing costs of purchasing power are of great concern.

Heat

Across Vermont, a vast majority of homes are heated with petroleum based products. Johnson Village follows this pattern as 52% of occupied housing units are heated by fuel oil and 13% of housing units are heated by propane gas. The rest of residential homes are heated with electricity (23%) and wood or utility gas heat (12%). Recent volatility of petroleum prices and the adverse environmental impacts associated with burning fossil fuels, pose serious challenges to the sustainability of this heating profile.

Transportation

Other than walking or biking, all energy for transportation comes from non-renewable fossil fuels. According to 2006-2010 American Community Survey Estimates, 75% of the employed workforce in Johnson Village commuted to work by car. That said, Johnson Village has a relatively sizeable proportion of workers that walk to work (20%) or work at home (5%). In addition, many Johnson State College students, Vermont Studio Center residents and senior residents do not own a car and frequently walk or bike to many village destinations. Johnson Village recognizes the needs of pedestrians and bicycles and to that end has continuously been upgrading the network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

B. LOCAL AND RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES

Wood products, solar and wind

One locally renewable source for heat in Lamoille County is wood. According to American Community Survey data, 12% of village residencies use wood as a primary source of heat. On a larger scale, Johnson Elementary School has a wood-fired system fueled by wood-chips. Given the forested nature of Lamoille County, real potential exists for taking a greater advantage of this local resource for residential and commercial heating.

Other sources of renewable energy that village residents and businesses can consider include solar and wind power. Before implementation, the feasibility of these approaches should be assessed both for cost-effectiveness and site potential. If feasible, this investment is often paid off in several years by cost savings as well as revenue created by selling net energy to a utility for distribution on the Vermont power grid. Recent legislation (H.446, Act 45) has improved the profitability of smaller net systems from the old net metering to what is called "standard offer". This creates a greater incentive to invest locally, in small scale renewable energy generation.

UTILITIES AND FACILITIES

Sewage and septic system

Johnson Village owns and operates a municipal wastewater sewage treatment plant built in 1995. The plant was built on the site of the original 1968 plant and has approximately 30% more capacity than its predecessor. It has a design capacity of 270,000 gallons per day and should provide Johnson with the ability to accommodate its needs for the foreseeable future.

The Village has been able to replace some old and dilapidated sewer mains as part of other projects at relatively low cost by combining the projects. Examples include RR St and several sections on Main St. The Village sewer currently encompasses the entire Village (including Johnson State College) plus 13 houses in East Johnson. The Town and Village entered into an inter-municipal agreement to extend sewer service onto specific mapped areas of the Town.

Development in the Village is required to connect to the system, if the development is within 100 feet of a sewer line. Outside of the Village and Town sewer service area, individual on-site sewage disposal permits are required and are regulated by the State of Vermont.

Water supply

Residents within the Village are serviced by a municipal water system, which is managed and maintained by the Village Water Department. Connection to the system is regulated by the Water System Rules and Regulations by the Village Trustees. The Johnson State College campus is also connected to the Village system. Residents outside the Village supply their own water through on-site, private systems (e.g. springs or wells).

There are two sources of public drinking water: The Nadeau Well (backup supply) located southeast of the Village and drilled in 1974, and the new Osgood well just west of Johnson Village off Route 15 drilled in 2004.

Since the last Plan update the Village has completed a major water supply improvement project that implemented the following improvements to the public water system:

- Acquisition of a property where a new water supply well was located, drilled and tested in 2003-2004. Final development of water source, and construction of filtration plant for manganese removal.
- Replacement and construction of water mains and hydrants and new 350,000-gallon storage reservoir for improved domestic water and fire service in the Village.
- Improvements to the existing Nadeau well to serve as a back-up supply.
- Replacement of the two existing water booster pump stations
- Replacement of all customer water meters

Fire

The Johnson Fire Department is a volunteer fire department providing twenty-four hour fire, rescue protection and HAZMAT (Hazardous Materials) response to a Community Service Area defined by the Village of Johnson and the towns of Johnson, Waterville and Belvidere. The Johnson Fire Department (JFD) is administratively responsible to the Village Trustees and receives part of its funding from the Village. Service to the towns of Johnson, Belvidere and Waterville is by annual contract for fire protection coverage. Johnson State College typically pays a contribution for services as well.

JFD is dispatched through the County Sheriff's 911 emergency call service. Over the past ten years, the volume of calls has been on a steady increase. While in 2003, the department responded to 91 alarms, in 2011, they had 120 alarms and predicted that 2012 was going to be another record year.

In February 2004, JFD fire station was destroyed by a structural fire. This tragedy resulted in the loss of the fire station, gear and most of the equipment, personal gear and memorabilia, awards and trophies of the firefighters. The construction of the new Fire Station was completed in December 2005.

Johnson Fire department also operates a water rescue team that is on a rapid response team with Vermont Emergency Management.

Cemeteries

There are six cemeteries in the Town and Village of Johnson. Three Cemetery Associations, a Cemetery Commissioner and the Johnson Selectboard oversee the care of these cemeteries.

Table 7. Johnson Cemeteries

Cemetery	Size	Capacity Status
Evergreen Ledge	+/- 1.1 acres	+/- 30% of land available
French Hill or Grow Cemetery	+/- .45 acres	Uncertain, but likely at or near capacity
Lamoille View	5-6 acres	At 60% capacity; should not reach full capacity for 10-20 years
Plot Cemetery	1 acre	Uncertain, considered full
Whiting Hill	Unknown	Considered full
Old Catholic Cemetery	Unknown	Considered full

Source: Johnson Utilities and Facilities Report 2000.

Health facilities & services

The primary health care facility serving Johnson and the whole Lamoille County is Copley Hospital in Morristown. Copley Hospital is a 53-bed acute care hospital that serves as an emergency care center for local emergency services and provides in patient and out-patient service, long-term care, and family oriented birthing center. Copley's major tertiary referral hospital is Fletcher Allen Hospital in Burlington.

LAND USE

In an effort to implement goals and policies contained in this plan, this plan establishes six land use districts. These districts, identified on the Village Plan Land Use map, include:

1) Main Street District
2) Main Street West Mixed Use District
3) Lower Village District
4) College District
5) Upper Village District
6) Industrial District

In addition, this plan establishes an overlay district to protect the Village's flood hazard areas. The overlay district will impose an additional layer of regulations upon the affected lands.

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE LAND USE DISTRICTS

Main Street District

The purpose of this proposed district is to maintain the historic main street area of the village as a mixed-use residential, commercial, business, and service center. Municipal water and sewage disposal is available, and development on small lots should be encouraged to take advantage of these services, as well as to maintain the traditional pattern of development. Multi-use buildings, such as apartments over retail stores, and multi-use properties, such as a repair shop behind a residential property, should also be encouraged. As a result of the historic significance of the area, preserving and enhancing the aesthetics of Main Street should be a priority.

In determining the appropriateness of new development, its scale and design should be evaluated in relation to the scale and design of existing uses and structures, and the effect of the proposed development on the continued enjoyment of existing and approved uses in the district. For new structures, building location within the lot could be required to be compatible with the location of existing and approved uses in the district. The buildings within this district tend to be primarily historic structures. Any construction or reconstruction should be consistent with the styles and designs of the neighborhood.

Main Street West Mixed Use District

This district recognizes the existing mixed residential commercial land use patterns and the potential for future light industrial/commercial development and or re-development of existing residential development. The district has good access to transportation, water, sewer and electric services.

Additionally, the district is adjacent to a Town Sewer Service Area (TSSA) established by the town and the village for the purposes of extending sewer service to that

Industrial District

The purpose of this proposed district is to permit land on and around the current industrial operations south of the Railroad Street bridge. The area has municipal services and 3-phase power so future development within this district should take advantage of available resources. While the current level and scale of operations should be supported, heavier industrial development should not be permitted due to the proximity to the village, flood hazard areas, and the Lamoille River.

This area has historically been the industrial district for the village with the talc and lumber mills and rail yard. With a closing of the talc mill, the end of rail use, and increased residential development in the area, future land uses should be evaluated in light of this shifting trend. Truck traffic is of primary concern as the only access to the area is via Railroad Street. Conditions should be attached to approvals, which will protect the village as a whole as well as the neighboring properties within the district.

Flood Hazard Overlay District

The purpose of this proposed district is to prevent development that might increase flooding and to reduce losses as a result of damage from flooding. Designation of this district is also required for the Village to be eligible for the National Flood Insurance Program. This district should encompass all areas in the Village of Johnson identified as areas of special flood hazard on the National Flood Insurance Program maps. This district will be an overlay zone and will be superimposed on the other districts proposed in this plan.

POLICIES

In the area of Land Use the Village of Johnson will:

- Manage growth and development in a manner that is respectful of the Village's character, natural resources and their environmental, recreational and economic functions, and its infrastructural capacity.
- Support efforts that encourage and expand the diversity and vitality of the Village as the cultural, single family residential, commercial-service and economic hub of the Town.

IMPLEMENTATION TASKS

- Utilize existing development controls and state regulatory proceedings in an effort to implement the vision, and address the policies of this plan *(Trustees and Johnson Planning Commission)*.