

# MENDON, VERMONT

GATEWAY TO THE HEART OF THE GREEN MOUNTAINS



## 2022 Mendon Town Plan

Prepared by the Mendon Planning Commission  
Addition of the Energy Plan Adopted on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 2022

[www.mendonvt.org](http://www.mendonvt.org)

## **Mendon Town Plan**

Adopted August 8, 2020 and readopted March 28, 2022 with the addition of the Energy Plan

### **Mendon Planning Commission**

Teri Corsones (Chair)

Phil Douglas

Justin Lindholm

Fred Bagley

Gary Sihler

Technical Assistance provided by the Rutland Regional Planning Commission.



**RUTLAND REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

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Cream Hill Road photos on cover and page ii credit: Cort Jones.

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# THE MENDON COMMUNITY

The Town of Mendon is a small, friendly, rural community located in east central Rutland County. The village area is on Route 4 in the northwest section of the Town and contains the Town Office, a church, eateries, gift shops, numerous other commercial enterprises, and several residences. Route 4 is a major east-west traffic corridor through Mendon that connects historic Rutland with the popular Killington-Pico ski areas. It includes pastoral views of mountains, ridges and open spaces that lend a high scenic quality to Mendon as a “Gateway to the Heart of the Green Mountains.”

Schoolchildren in Mendon attend the pre-kindergarten through grade 8 award-winning Frederick Duclos Barstow Memorial School in neighboring Chittenden. Established in 1933 with significant renovations and additions in 1939, 1965, and 2002, Barstow Memorial School is regarded as a top elementary and middle school in Vermont.



Town sign. Credit: Teri Corsones

In response to a survey distributed at the March 2018 Town Meeting and at the Mendon Community Potluck event in June of that year, residents had the opportunity to share their views and hopes for the Town. The overwhelming consensus from those who provided feedback agreed that their love of their town was fed by Mendon’s beautiful scenery and ability to feel connected to the outdoors. Also important to highlight is that many felt a strong sense of community and appreciation for their neighbors. The feedback underscored that the townspeople of Mendon highly value their proximity to natural resources and the people they share them with.

## TOWN GOALS

This Town Plan (the Plan) has been composed to support careful and strategic planning, which will assure that decisions made are consistent with the needs and goals of the Town as listed below:

- *Preserve the present natural environment, character, rural appearance and atmosphere of the Town.*
- *Promote and encourage economic growth in appropriate zoning districts.*
- *Meet the civic, economic, educational, social, recreational, and cultural needs of Mendon residents.*
- *Preserve the rights of Mendon residents to manage their own land, to the fullest extent possible, consistent with Town By-Laws, planning policy and State law.*
- *Preserve the existing high scenic quality of Mendon’s gateway natural, scenic, and historic areas.*
- *Aid the Mendon Historical Society in discovering and preserving the history of the Town of Mendon and its role in the State of Vermont and the United States of America.*

# HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Mendon was chartered in 1781 as Medway and organized in 1806 at its first town meeting. Its name was initially changed to Parkerstown in honor of an early resident and then changed again to Mendon, although the precise origin of the name remains uncertain. The western terminus of both the Rutland-Stockbridge and the Rutland-Woodstock Turnpikes were near the current Town Office, and at one time Mendon's village center had a post office, stagecoach stop, inn and livery stables. Mendon's village center was impacted by the widening of U.S. Route 4 in the 1950s. Construction of the Alpine Pipeline, a private sewer system, in the 1980s led to new commercial development. Many important historic and cultural sites nonetheless remain, reminders of Mendon's past.

## HISTORIC SITES

Several houses from the early 1800s still stand along U.S. Route 4, Meadow Lake Drive, and Cream Hill Road. The Mendon Methodist Church was built in 1876. One of Mendon's original five schoolhouses has been converted to a private residence at 267 Meadow Lake Drive. Mendon District School No. 3, often referred to as Sunny Side School, was located on Townline Road at the upper end near Eastridge Acres. The Sunny Side School Bell, donated by Justin Lindholm, resides at the Mendon Town Office. The Mendon



Sunny Side School Bell at the present-day Mendon Town Office. Source: Sara Tully.

Grange Hall on U.S. Route 4 still stands as a private home. General Edward Ripley played a significant role in the history of the town. He donated the land on which the current town office stands and built the original town hall in 1888. It was used for town meetings until the 1950s, when it was converted to the town garage and later was rented to Adi's Woodworking Shop.

There are two Vermont State Historic markers in Mendon. One honors Captain John Vincent, a Native American who enlisted with the colonial army in the American Revolution and another honoring General Edward Hastings Ripley who led the first Union troops into Richmond at the end of the Civil War. "Old John," the horse that faithfully carried General Ripley throughout the war and returned with him to Vermont, is buried at the base of the large boulder just west of the current Sugar and Spice Restaurant.

The Wheelerville District and Wheelerville Road were named after M.E. Wheeler of Rutland, a landowner who bought over 40 pieces of property in the first decade of the twentieth century. Totaling over 5000 acres, this estate was reputedly the largest farm in the state. The area was a thriving logging and farming community featuring open fields for planting and grazing, many farmhouses and two schools. Mr. Wheeler died in 1927 and his heirs sold the entire property to the City of Rutland, which purchased it for its watershed along Brewer and Mendon Brooks. There are numerous old cellar holes, foundations, silo bases, rock walls and mill sites in the area that remind us it was an active agricultural area up through the 1920s.

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) established a camp in the Aitken State Forest at the end of the Notch Road in the 1930s. The site was converted to Tamarack Notch Girl Scout Camp in the 1950s and the camp was used into the 1980s. Economics caused the camp to be closed and it fell into disrepair; however, the State of Vermont removed all structures in 1992 allowing the site to revert back to its natural state.

## CULTURAL SITES

The Appalachian Trail, running from Georgia to Maine, is managed by the National Park Service. It enters Mendon near Killington Peak, skirts the western flank of Pico Peak and crosses U.S. Route 4 before turning east toward New Hampshire. It is accompanied by Vermont's Long Trail, the United States' first long distance hiking trail.

## CEMETERIES

Mendon has seven cemeteries, with only Tenney Cemetery on Meadow Lake Drive still active. Older and now closed cemeteries are: Mountain Cemetery at the northern end of Wheelerville Road, adjacent to the old Stockbridge Turnpike, with the stone marker honoring Captain John Vincent (see above); Saunders Cemetery on Town Line Road, housing the grave of a veteran of the American Revolution; Wilkins Cemetery on Wheelerville Road; "Lydia's" Cemetery on Wheelerville Road; Eggleston Cemetery at the end of Cream Hill Road; and Orchard Cemetery in the Mendon Orchard.

## GOALS

- *Identify, preserve, and promote Mendon's past.*

## ACTIONS

- *Work with the Mendon Historical Society to identify and preserve significant historic sites.*
- *Develop literature and signage with the Mendon Historical Society to raise awareness of Mendon's history.*
- *Work with the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation to redevelop the old CCC/Tamarack Notch Girl Scout camp.*

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## HISTORIC AND CURRENT ACTIVITIES

The economy of Mendon depends largely on the industries and tourism of the region. The Town offers a variety of services to area residents as well as tourists. The encouragement and stimulation of year-round and seasonal businesses, at-home businesses and industries would serve to strengthen the town's economic base.

Mendon is a rural residential community with a significant number of commercial establishments. Historically, Mendon's rural character and its proximity to major commercial districts resulted in the town's identity as a "bedroom community" with residents commuting to work in adjacent communities. Technological advances and an enhanced appreciation for outdoor recreational activities and associated economic opportunities provide new opportunities for Mendon residents who live and work in Mendon.



Mendon Village Center 1920. Source: [www.mendonvt.org](http://www.mendonvt.org)

A town-wide survey conducted in 2015 found a strong preference for residential development, followed by the development of business activities that would maintain the rural atmosphere. Residents clearly indicated a preference for the development of recreational businesses and activities to attract tourists, and to maintain the rural appearance of the community. A town survey conducted in 2018 also showed support for the development of businesses that would support recreational activities, including restaurants, delis, country stores, and a U.S. Forest

Service information area. Such businesses would both serve the town and also support tourism while maintaining the town's distinctly rural character.



Sugar & Spice Restaurant on Route 4.

Currently, the 2013-2017 American Community Survey estimates the following distribution of employment by nationwide industry:

<b>Industry</b>	<b># of Mendon Residents in Industry</b>
<b>Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining</b>	6
<b>Construction</b>	6
<b>Manufacturing</b>	77
<b>Wholesale trade</b>	9
<b>Retail trade</b>	58
<b>Transportation and warehousing, and utilities</b>	33
<b>Information</b>	5
<b>Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing</b>	30
<b>Professional, scientific, management, and administrative and waste management services</b>	59
<b>Educational services, and health care and social assistance</b>	126
<b>Arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation and food services</b>	94
<b>Other services, except public administration</b>	17
<b>Public administration</b>	19

In 2018, Mendon Town residents voted to implement Tax Stabilization to encourage rehabilitation of underutilized commercial properties and development of new commercial properties. The Mendon Economic Development Committee will promote and the Mendon Select Board will implement the Tax Stabilization program to enhance the town’s economic vitality and its tax base.

The Town applied to the Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) in 2018 for assistance in further evaluating the potential for sustainable economic growth within the constraints of the town’s rural character. There is strong indication that Mendon will be found suitable for VCRD’s assistance, with the hope that this could happen in 2021.

## **BUSINESS NEEDS**

Mendon’s ability to attract and retain small private businesses and professional services is dependent upon its ability to provide state-of-the-art infrastructure, including, but not limited to, digital connectivity (phone and internet), wireless connectivity, sewer and water services. Efforts should be undertaken to improve existing services and introduce new technologies.

Transportation is an important component of community life and Mendon’s economy. Businesses and residences along US Route 4 are served by public transportation, and a park-and-ride facility is available at the Mendon Town Office. Additional information is available in the Transportation section. According to the 2013-2017 American Community Survey (Source: factfinder.census.gov), residents of Mendon commute an average of 22 minutes to work with 532 employed residents (ages 16 years and older) making some level of commute.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

US Route 4 is currently and is likely to remain Mendon's primary commercial zone and, as such, is the public's first impression of the community. Commercial and professional business development along the highway should focus on those activities that enhance Mendon's tax base without adversely affecting the town's rural character, open space, noise, or air and water quality, or that place an undue burden on the town's existing infrastructure. To the extent possible, renovation of existing structures should be encouraged with particular emphasis on the unused hotel and restaurant properties as highlighted during the 2018 Mendon Town Survey. Zoning regulations should be developed that give consideration to the design and appearance of proposed commercial and professional structures, including signage and sign lighting, so as to enhance the rural character of Mendon, while encouraging economic development and vitality. Zoning efforts should be made to eliminate visual clutter and to address derelict structures.

A Village Center Designation should be explored and considered to support Mendon's economic development and preservation of historic and cultural resources. Authorized by 24 V.S.A. §2793a, Village Center Designation recognizes and encourages local efforts to revitalize Vermont's traditional village centers. In accord with the land use goals of the State of Vermont, the designation encourages compact village centers surrounded by working rural lands. The benefits of village center designation include tax-incentives to maintain and enhance buildings as well as priority consideration for various state grants and programs such as Municipal Planning Grants and the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG). The designation must be renewed every eight years

## GOALS

- *Maintain and enhance Mendon's economic vitality, both for the benefit of its residents and the overall good of the region, while preserving the Town's rural and scenic nature.*

## ACTIONS

- *Promote and implement tax stabilization.*
- *Encourage the growth of commercial and professional services and at-home businesses while preserving the rural character of the town.*
- *Pursue development of recreational opportunities such as mountain biking, hiking, snowmobiling, skiing, snowshoeing, etc. (see Recreation section below).*
- *Consider applying for a grant from the Vermont Outdoors Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC), a 2018 legislative initiative to maximize the economic potential of recreational opportunities.*
- *Adopt commercial signage requirements that do not detract from the Town's scenic beauty and that work to bring "grandfathered," non-compliant signage into compliance.*
- *Revisit signage requirements to ensure they assist businesses in marketing their products and services.*
- *Apply for State of Vermont Village Center Designation.*

- *Promote Mendon businesses and recreational opportunities with town-owned signage (i.e. at trail heads).*
- *Participate actively with the Vermont Council on Rural Development upon award of grants.*
- *Support the Mendon Economic Development Committee in its effort to assist property owners in rehabilitation or redevelopment of new and/or underutilized properties.*
- *Evaluate the possibility of installing fiber optic and securing outside funding to support such a project.*

## RECREATION

Mendon’s location in the Green Mountains provides ample opportunities for natural and developed forms of recreation with access to two major ski areas and numerous designated trail systems including snowmobiling, hiking, snowshoeing, mountain biking, and backcountry skiing.

### RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Mendon is blessed with spectacular opportunities for hiking, mountain biking, snowshoeing, backcountry skiing, and snowmobiling.

- *Hiking/Snowshoeing: Trails within the Town of Mendon include the Appalachian Trail/Long Trail, Canty Trail to Blueridge Mountain, the Bucklin Trail to Killington Peak, the Bald Mountain Trails and the trails of Tamarack Notch Girl Scout Camp.*
- *Mountain Biking: Numerous legal trails throughout Mendon are available for backcountry biking.*
- *Backcountry skiing: The Catamount Trail which runs north-south through Vermont has approximately 11 miles of trail in Mendon which can be accessed from numerous locations.*
- *Snowmobiling: the VAST snowmobile trails cover approximately 14 miles within Mendon.*



Snowshoeing with Bald Mountain vistas. Credit: Teri Corsones

Opportunities exist to collaborate with mountain biking enthusiasts and the Green Mountain National Forest to develop additional mountain biking trails in Mendon, potentially connecting to trail systems at Killington Ski area, Pine Hill Park in Rutland City, and the Sherburne Trails.

# RECREATIONAL FACILITIES



Mendon Recreation Area playground and baseball field. Credit: Teri Corsones

Mendon residents currently utilize two recreational facilities. The Mendon Recreation Area located on South Mendon Road consists of a Little League baseball field with two dugouts, a playground, a basketball court, and over two miles of nature trails that are available year round for hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and other passive uses. Motorized vehicles are not allowed beyond the parking lot. The Barstow Memorial School in Chittenden, to which Mendon residents have access, provides



outdoor playgrounds, baseball, soccer, tennis, and other recreational facilities.

# TRAILS

There are various legal town trails available for use in Mendon, the use of which are at the discretion of the Select Board. Mendon contains several maintained hiking trails to destinations with expansive regional vistas.

The Appalachian Trail/Long Trail (AT/LT): The AT which runs from Maine to Georgia and the LT which traverses the Green Mountain spine from Massachusetts to Canada are combined as they enter Mendon from the south at the Shrewsbury line, leave town at the summit of Killington peak, then reenter Mendon on the west flank of Pico Peak and cross US Route 4 where there is a trailhead and parking lot. The trails split north of Deers' Leap where the AT enters Killington to the east and the LT proceeds into Chittenden to the north.



Image: Long Trail trailhead.

The Bucklin Trail: This trail in the Coolidge State Forest is maintained by the Green Mountain Club. It starts at Brewer's Corner, four miles from U.S. Route 4 on the Wheelerville Road, where there is a parking lot and kiosk. After crossing two bridges over Brewer's Brook, it follows old logging roads 3.3 miles to the AT/LT at Cooper Lodge, where there is a spur trail to Killington Peak from which there are expansive views in all directions.

The Cauty Trail to Blue Ridge: This 2.5 mile trail in the Green Mountain National Forest starts 1.3 miles east of U.S. Route 4 off Old Turnpike Road. It traverses several small streams, then follows an old logging road along a series of tumbling cascades before veering west to a lookout over the Otter Creek valley to the west with views of Pico, Killington and Mendon Peaks to the south.

Bald Mountain Trail: This 3.3 mile trail system in Aitken State Forest is accessed from a parking lot and kiosk at the end of the Notch Road. The trail is a figure-of-eight loop over Bald Mountain with multiple vistas over the Otter Creek valley, the Cold River and Mendon, Killington and Pico Mountains.

Tamarack Notch Trail: At the end of the Notch Road is the site of a former CCC camp and Girl Scout Camp with a .75 mile loop trail on flat ground. The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation in the near future plans to improve accessibility of the existing trail with the possibility of expanding the trail system.

Mendon Recreation Area Trails: This easy two-mile loop follows a small stream through pine, fir and hardwood forests. It begins just beyond the ball field at the Mendon Recreation Area off South Mendon Road.

The Catamount Trail: The trail is a back country ski trail that runs from Canada to Massachusetts; it enters Mendon from the north at Old Turnpike Road and crosses U.S. Route 4 at the AT/LT trail head, then proceeds south until it enters Shrewsbury beyond Brewer's Corner.

In addition, there are opportunities to bushwhack to the summit of Mendon Peak, the highest summit in Vermont without designated trails to its summit. There are also four legal town trails that were formerly Mendon Class IV roads, the use of which are at the discretion of the Select Board.

## HUNTING AND FISHING

Hunting and fishing have always been favorite sports for many citizens of Mendon. To be in compliance with the law, permission must be obtained from the property owner before hunting on posted property. Hunters and fishermen from out of state must possess Vermont licenses. Other recreational facilities exist in adjoining towns and are available by fee to Mendon residents. The surrounding rural nature of the Town provides for other activities such as camping, hiking, biking, snowshoeing, picnicking, nature walks, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling.

## GOALS

- *Assure Mendon's wealth of recreational possibilities continue to be available to Town residents and residents of the greater Rutland region.*
- *Utilize all Class IV roads in the Town for recreational trails and promote the development of the Town's designated trails for hiking and mountain biking.*
- *Encourage voluntary development and maintenance of these trails under the direction of and in concert with the Town. Partner with potential partners such as the Vermont Conservation Corp or local trail organizations to develop and maintain these trails.*
- *Encourage the opening of as much undeveloped private land as possible for hunting, fishing, trapping, fishing, hiking, skiing, mountain biking, and other non-invasive or non-destructive outdoor activities.*
- *Encourage the development of suitable parking at designated trail heads*



Green Mountain National Forest Parking Area Rte 4.

## ACTIONS

- *Work with the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation to facilitate and expedite the rehabilitation and development of the lands of the former Tamarack Notch Girl Scout Camp.*
- *Consider requiring that an adequate percentage of the total area of development in new subdivisions be set aside for private and structured recreational facilities. (Zoning has addressed this for PUD's)*
- *Work with regional and state entities to encourage the development of mountain biking and multi-use trails.*
- *Promote Mendon's recreational opportunities to the wider regional and national audience such that these assets continue to make Mendon an attractive place to live and work.*
- *Investigate suitable locations for parking near recreational activities.*
- *Work with landowners to develop suitable parking facilities.*
- *Develop mapping of the numerous hiking trails throughout Mendon.*

## HOUSING

Mendon is a desirable community in which to live, given its proximity to employment in Rutland, its rural and pastoral environment and an excellent education system through the Barstow Memorial School.



Blue Ridge Mountain view from Park Lane showing Mendon Methodist Church.

Mendon has the second highest median home value in Rutland County and the highest median family income. There is a very low vacancy rate in housing, including rental housing.

### HOUSING MARKET

Per the 2010 Census, the total number of housing units in Mendon in 2010 increased 9% to 683 from 616 units in 2000. Because of its rural nature and its proximity to local year round resorts, one third or approximately 230 of the housing units in town are seasonal. Eighty percent of homes are owner-occupied and single-family homes comprise 72% of the total housing. The 2010 census showed approximately 165 multi-family housing units, almost entirely condominiums, and showed approximately forty (40) rental units for year-round families.

# HOUSING GROWTH

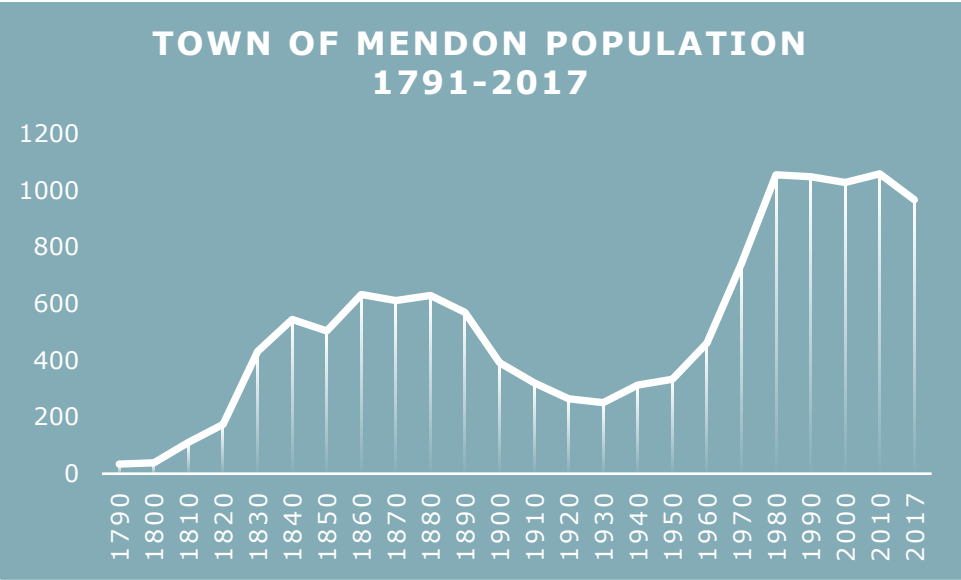
Additional statistics on housing demographics are available from the 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS), a five-year estimate produced by the U.S. Census Bureau. These statistics show growth in total housing units numbering 769, with 387 of these units being owner occupied housing. The median home value in Mendon is estimated by the ACS to be \$254,100 and a median monthly owner costs (of homes with a mortgage) of \$1,568.

New housing development in Mendon is limited due to steep terrain, sensitive watersheds, some soils that are not suitable for septic systems, limitations on building above an elevation of 2000 feet and zoning districts with minimum lot size (e.g., 2, 3 or 5 acres.) Changing septic technologies are increasing the options for septic construction, though.

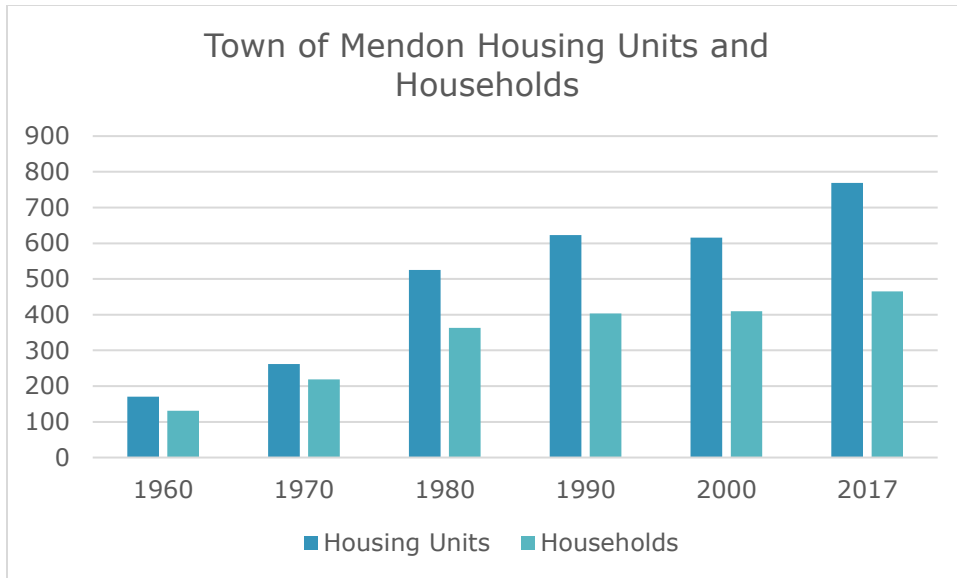
# POPULATION AND GROWTH TRENDS

The Town of Mendon has experienced moderate population growth over the past several decades, as well as a steady increase in the number of households. The population of Mendon in 2017 was 968 with a median age of 52 years as noted in the 2017 America Community Survey by the US Census Bureau (Source: US Census Bureau American FactFinder 2013-2017 Community Survey).

Shown below is Mendon’s current population and population history, as reported by the U.S. Census. These figures represent the year-round population and do not include seasonal residents. Approximately one third of the housing units are for seasonal or occasional use (Source: Vermont Housing Finance Agency housingdata.org).



Source: US Census Bureau, University of Vermont Center for Rural Studies ([crs.uvm.edu/indicators](http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators)), & Vermont Housing Finance Agency ([housingdata.org](http://housingdata.org)).



Source: US Census Bureau, University of Vermont Center for Rural Studies ([crs.uvm.edu/indicators](http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators)), & Vermont Housing Finance Agency ([housingdata.org](http://housingdata.org)).

## GOALS

- *Maintain quality housing in Mendon.*
- *Encourage Planned Residential Development (PRDs) where appropriate.*
- *Assure that future residential housing development conforms to Mendon's rural and pastoral nature.*

## ACTIONS

- *Promote zoning regulations that encourage maintenance of a sound housing stock, including PRDs and PUDs, in compliance with the Town's rural nature.*
- *Evaluate density requirements in zoning districts in light of changing septic technologies.*

# COMMUNITY FACILITIES

## TOWN GOVERNMENT

The Select Board is the official governing body of the Town of Mendon. The Select Board consists of three elected residents who are registered voters, each serving a three-year term. The responsibilities of the Select Board cover the general administration of town affairs, the annual budget, and the appointment of various town officials. A town administrator supports the Select Board and the town providing support in day to day operations, meetings, interfacing with state and federal agencies, and enforcing policies and procedures of the Select Board. Town officials and employee information can be found at [www.mendonvt.org](http://www.mendonvt.org).

### Capital Budget and Program

The Town Plan determines the Capital Budget, which must be approved by the Select Board and the voters. A capital budget lists and describes the capital projects to be undertaken during the coming fiscal year; the Capital Program is a plan of capital projects to be undertaken, their estimated costs, and methods of financing. The Capital Budget and Program are reviewed annually.

## PUBLIC FACILITIES



Mendon Town Office. Source: [www.mendonvt.org](http://www.mendonvt.org)

There are three Mendon town facilities: the Town Office (2282 U.S. Route 4), the Town Garage (157 Park Lane) and the Recreation Area (South Mendon Road). Mendon currently does not have a town hall or community meeting room. These facilities, among others, can be identified on the Education, Transportation, and Community Facilities Map on page 36.

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mendon's goal is to allow for the installation of wireless communication facilities within the town limits that will provide good service for residents and local businesses to enhance the quality of life and property values in town while preserving the aesthetic character of Mendon's neighborhoods, natural areas, ridgelines, and historic districts.

The popularity of cell phones, computers and mobile devices, both at home and in the business community, dictate that Mendon take the necessary steps to allow for state-of-the-art telecommunication facilities. Mendon should always have the mechanisms in place that will clearly describe the guidelines for new telecommunication facilities.

## CHILDCARE

Ensuring accessible, affordable, quality childcare is integral to sound economic development and is important to community well-being. The State of Vermont requires childcare facilities of a certain size to be registered and the Town encourages compliance with that requirement. In 2019 there was one (1) childcare facility in Mendon licensed by the State of Vermont. It is recognized that many children cared for in these facilities are not Mendon residents and likewise many Mendon children receive childcare in neighboring communities. Demographic changes affecting Mendon, the Rutland region and the State of Vermont may dictate a decreasing need for childcare among Mendon residents. Nonetheless, the Town of Mendon should allow for and encourage the availability of quality childcare for its residents.

Mendon Children Ages 0 – 14 Years, 2010 / 2017

AGE	2010	2017	% CHANGE
<b>Infant- Preschool (0-5yrs)</b>	31	43	38%
<b>6-14 years</b>	106	78	-26%
<b>Total</b>	137	121	-11%

(Source: US Census, American FactFinder 2017)

## EDUCATION

The Town of Mendon is a member of the Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union District and operates a cooperative education program with the Town of Chittenden at Barstow Memorial School for pre-school, grades K-8 and after school care. In 2016 the Barstow Unified Union School District (BUUSD) was created; voters of both Mendon and Chittenden are eligible voters in this district. Barstow no longer tracks what percentage of students comes from each town. Senior high school students (grades 9-12) in Mendon can elect to attend public or private, non-sectarian schools with funding provided by the BUUSD.



Barstow Memorial School. Source: <http://barstow.rnesu.org/>.

## **WATER SUPPLY**

Given the rural nature of the town, no municipal water system exists; therefore, the majority of residents depend on individual wells or springs for their water supply. There are also several private water systems that serve multi-unit and commercial properties.

Residents are encouraged to periodically test their water supply to ensure the continued quality of their potable water and take steps to mitigate any sources that do not meet current drinking standards. Protection of the watersheds in the Town should be a priority to ensure the continued potable quality of the water supply to springs and wells.

## **SEWER**

Along the U.S. Route 4 corridor, residents and businesses are able to connect to the Alpine Pipeline, a private sewer system that discharges into the Rutland City treatment plant. Built in 1984, the pipeline runs along U.S. Route 4 from Sherburne Pass through Mendon. Sewer connections to the Alpine Pipeline are encouraged for new construction along U.S. Route 4 due to the fact that challenging soils may limit the suitability of on-site wastewater treatment systems. Mendon's allotment for discharge into the pipeline is sufficient to allow additional development.

## **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

Having emergency services available is among the basic needs of residents in Mendon. The Town strives to be active in all phases of emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

Mitigation means acting before the next disaster to reduce losses of life and property. Mendon's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan is updated every five years and was last updated in 2017. The Plan identifies the highest risk natural hazards facing the community - floods, winter storms, ice storms, high winds - and their corresponding impacts on public safety, property, and the natural environment. Flooding is identified as the Town's highest and most prevalent risk hazard. The Plan includes goals and actions designed to reduce the risks from identified natural hazards.

Preparedness involves activities and measures – such as training, plans, procedures, and equipment – taken in advance of an incident to ensure effective response. Mendon's Director of Public Safety also serves as the local Emergency Management Director. This position is responsible for coordinating the various components of the Town's emergency management program. Mendon has a robust emergency management program with a designated local emergency operations center and sufficient sheltering capacity with both overnight services and warming centers provided at Barstow Memorial School. These and other emergency preparedness and response measures are documented in the Mendon Local Emergency Management Plan. This plan is updated and adopted by the Select Board annually.

Response activities address the short-term, direct effects of an incident and seek to save lives, protect property, and meet basic human needs. The safety of Mendon's residents and visitors is a high priority. In Mendon, response services include fire protection, rescue, and public safety/police. Mendon is served by the Rutland City Fire Department on a contractual basis, since there are no fire protection facilities located in town. At present, contracted fire protection services appear to be the most economical and best

arrangement for the Town. Rescue services are provided by the Regional Ambulance Service, based in Rutland. Mendon relies on the Rutland Barracks of the Vermont State Police, the Rutland County Sheriff's Department, and the Mendon Constable for neighborhood policing and enforcement of traffic laws on streets and highways.

Recovery is the process of rebuilding, restoring, and rehabilitating the community following an emergency. Mendon maintains records of costs incurred in the recovery from disasters, including road and culvert repairs. This information is critical to ensuring the Town receives the fullest amount of government financial assistance legally allowed during a federally declared disaster.

## GOALS

- *Maintain Mendon's quality of life through good governance, citizen participation and timely, appropriate review of the Town's goals and needs.*

## ACTIONS

- *Monitor and encourage state-of-the art telecommunications*
- *Work with local residents and employers to assure available, affordable, quality childcare*
- *Work with Barstow School to continue after-school child care*
- *Develop zoning regulations that allow for childcare facilities that meet Mendon's and regional needs*
- *Update the Town's Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP) annually and the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan every five years.*
- *Implement the actions identified in the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.*
- *Assure that the position of Emergency Management Director is always filled.*
- *Study the possibility of establishing a town hall or a community meeting facility.*

## TRANSPORTATION

An effective transportation network is paramount for the safety and convenience of Mendon residents and is a major component of land use development. As such, effective transportation policies can increase a municipality's capacity to manage growth, foster economic development, improve community health, and assure accessibility, efficiency, and most importantly, safety.

Mendon’s road network is dictated, in large part, by the town’s topography of mountains, steep terrain and narrow river valleys. Because of its terrain, Mendon is home to regionally important forest blocks and wildlife connectors, which to date have largely been protected in spite of the town’s road network.

## HIGHWAYS AND ROADS

Roads constitute the most significant component of Mendon’s current transportation network, which includes one major arterial highway, three collectors and several local roads. Almost six miles of U.S. Route 4, from Town Line Road to the Mendon/Killington line, pass through the heart of Mendon. U.S. Route 4 serves as the main link between Rutland City and Killington and connects New York to New Hampshire, serving as one of the primary east-west corridors across the state. Classified as a U.S. Highway and managed and maintained by VTrans, its potential impact for development is significant. VTrans has the legal authority to define access to Route 4 and is responsible for its maintenance. The town’s Class 2, 3, and 4 highways are managed and maintained by the Mendon Highway Department that includes an appointed Road Commissioner and staff. Road maintenance, including road upgrades and snow removal, is a critical need for residents and visitors and is a significant item in the town’s municipal budget. Mendon has adopted Town Road and Bridge Standards for maintenance as promoted by VTrans. Mendon has a Highway Specifications Ordinance and is compliant with the Municipal Roads General Permit and Complete Streets requirements.

Town of Mendon Highways by Class					
(VTrans Data)	U.S. Highway	Class 2 Town Highway	Class 3 Town Highway	Class 4 Town Highway	Total Highway (Excludes Class 4)
Miles	5.92	4.44	16.82	3.28	27.18
Percent Total	21.8%	16.3%	61.9%	EXCLUDED	100%

## BRIDGES

The ownership of bridges determines the responsibility for their maintenance. Mendon has nine (9) municipal bridges in town over 20 feet in length (making them eligible for federal funding), one (1) bridge less than 20’ and 205 highway culverts on municipal roads. One bridge (over Mendon Brook) and several culverts are owned by the State of Vermont along U.S. Route 4. The condition of local and state bridges is evaluated every two (2) years by VTrans, which annually prioritizes bridge projects with input from the Rutland Regional Transportation Council (RRTC), an adjunct council of the Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC)

## TRAFFIC VOLUME

The most recent VTrans traffic counts in Mendon, taken in 2017, indicate an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) of 13,200 vehicles along Route 4 from Town Line Road east to Park Lane; 11,400 vehicles from Park Lane to Meadow Lake Drive; and 10,700 vehicles from Meadow Lake Drive to Old Coach Road (the first major side road off Route 4 in Killington, directly across from Pico Ski area). The 2017 data also reported an AADT of 1200 vehicles on Park Lane and 1600 vehicles on Town Line Road.

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

Marble Valley Regional Transit District (MVRTD) or “The Bus” provides public transportation, also known as the Rutland Killington Commuter, seven days a week along Route 4. This fixed route service stops in Mendon at Town Line Road, Mendon Mountain Orchards, Sugar & Spice Restaurant, Old Turnpike Road, Pico Mountain Commons, and Mendon Mountainview Lodge. MVRTD will make “Flag Down” stops along Route 4 if the driver determines it is safe to stop. MVRTD also offers complimentary para-transit service, service for Medicare patients and the elderly, and service for persons with disabilities. It can be noted that this service is being increasingly used, especially in the winter, to support the seasonal employees and patrons of the nearby ski slopes.

## **PARK AND RIDE**

Mendon owns and maintains a free public Park and Ride facility that contains 10 parking spaces located on U.S. Route 4 at the Mendon Town Office.

## **BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN**

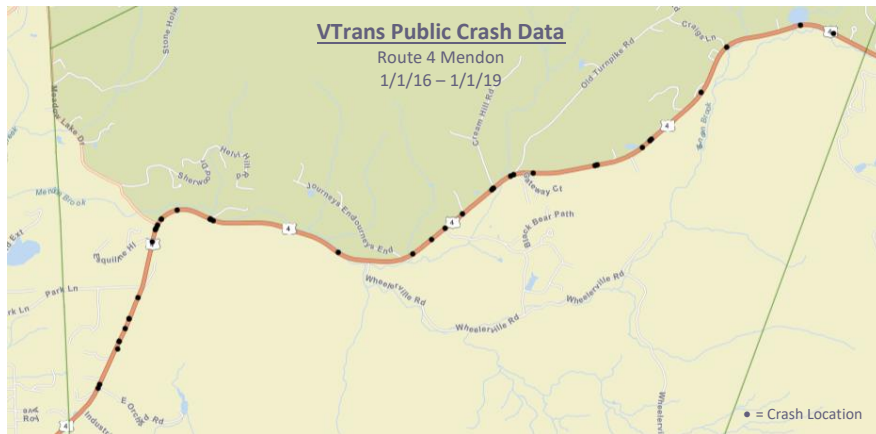
Bicycle and pedestrian travel are critical elements in creating a balanced and resilient transportation network and bicycling and walking are efficient means of transportation with community health and energy conservation benefits. While Mendon does encourage bicycling and walking in road areas that are safe, currently there are no designated bicycle facilities due to historic development patterns, difficult terrain, and roadway design. The Town is endeavoring, however, in concert with local and regional partners, to develop mountain biking and off-road biking elsewhere in town.

## **IMPACT OF REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION**

Mendon participates in regional transportation planning through a member appointment to the Rutland Regional Transportation Council (RRTC), which consists of representatives from all Rutland region towns. The RRTC identifies and develops solutions to regional transportation issues and serves to promote and support an integrated, sustainable, and resilient transportation system. The Town of Mendon opposes the construction of a highway bypass around Rutland City. Mendon's position regarding the construction of a bypass around Rutland may be stated as follows: The construction of a bypass is not necessary given current and future traffic volumes. The Agency of Transportation should pursue a limited upgrade of US 7 and US 4. A bypass in Mendon would have a direct adverse impact on Mendon properties. The Town has voted on two separate occasions to oppose a bypass in Mendon. There are no current plans to construct the bypass.

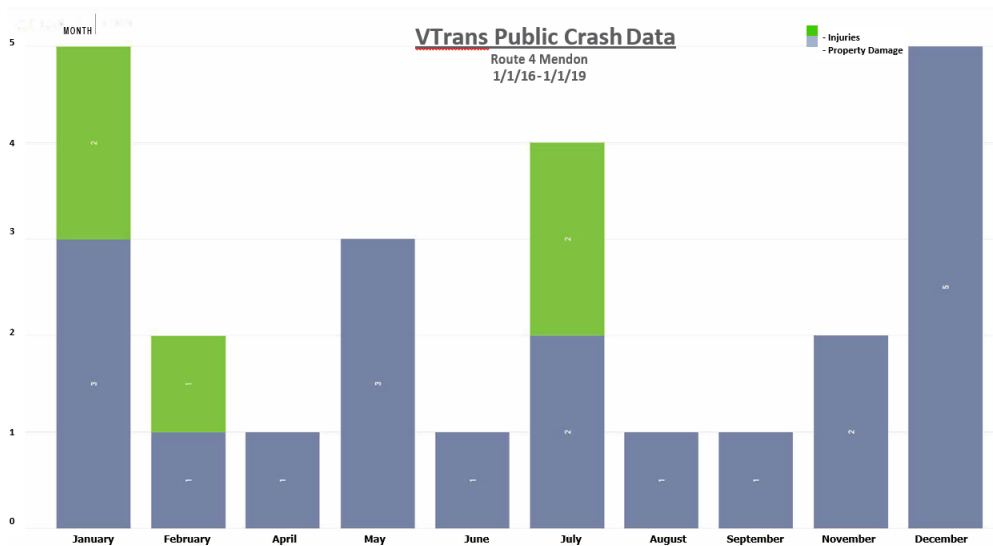
# TRAFFIC SAFETY

According to the VTrans Public Crash Data Report, from 1/1/16 to 1/1/19 Mendon experienced 37 crashes with five injuries on U.S. Route 4. According to data, the highest accident rate on U.S. Route 4 occurs at its intersection with Park Lane, the curve by Meadow Lake Drive, and at its junction with Gateway Court/Old Turnpike Road (see Figure below.) The VTrans Crash Location Report (2012-2016) indicates there were eleven (11) crashes and two (2) injuries in the vicinity of the Gateway Court/Old Turnpike intersections with U.S. Route 4.



Crash location along Route 4 from 1/1/16 to 1/1/19.  
Source: <http://apps.vtrans.vermont.gov/CrashPublicQueryTool/>

Higher crash rates occur during the winter months when seasonally hazardous driving conditions are compounded by high speeds and greater traffic volume. In the warmer months, July experiences a higher rate due to an increase in holiday volume. This issue is compounded by an increase of bicycle traffic along Route 4. (see Figure 2 below.)



Number of crashes per month along Route 4 from 1/1/16 to 1/1/19.

## ACCESS MANAGEMENT

Roads provide mobility for the travelling public and accessibility to adjacent land and property. Therefore, both the efficiency and safety of town roads are directly affected by the frequency and location of points of access (or curb cuts.) Incorporating Vermont Access Management Best Practices can work to optimize safety and efficiency of roadway access by reducing the number of conflict points where accidents typically occur. Consistent and comprehensive access management policies are necessary to balance the needs of roadway users with the needs for land development. Strategies for improving access management include: adequate sight distance at a driveway or intersection, distance between curb cuts and driveways, shared driveways, driveway turnarounds, appropriate on-site and shared parking, landscaping and buffers to define and limit access points.

## MUNICIPAL ROADS GENERAL PERMIT

The Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) is intended to achieve significant reductions in stormwater-related erosion from municipal roads, both paved and unpaved. In order to comply with the MRGP, towns implement a customized, multi-year plan to stabilize their road drainage system. Mendon, with the assistance of the RRPC, has conducted both a culvert inventory and a road erosion inventory to identify and track areas for improvement and develop implementation strategies. Wheelerville Road and Orchard Road are two roadways of very high priority due to their gravel surface, adjacent steep slopes, and hydrological connectivity.

## GOALS

- *Improve traffic safety and traffic patterns.*
- *Promote a multi-modal transportation system by supporting infrastructure improvements.*
- *Manage growth and development through a safe, resilient and sustainable transportation network.*
- *Develop a transportation network that respects the integrity of historical, natural, and residential environments.*
- *Encourage and maintain highway law enforcement patrols to control speeding.*
- *Preserve the scenic quality of Mendon's "back roads".*
- *Avoid or minimize fragmentation of identified forest blocks and wildlife connectors.*

## ACTIONS

- *Implement strategies to improve traffic safety:*
  - *Encourage the State to reduce speed limits on U.S. Route 4 in the Commercial and Village Districts.*
  - *Expand traffic law enforcement throughout the Town.*

- *Improve signage of road hazards in compliance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.*
- *Conduct safety studies of high crash locations with the assistance of VTrans and RRPC and procure such improvements as may reduce crash potential.*
- *Implement Vermont Access Management Best Practices and develop an Access Master Plan for U.S. Route 4.*
- *Work with private landowners, both commercial and residential, to minimize “curb cuts” on U.S. Route 4 and other major town roads.*
- *Work with local partners to improve the overall status of the U.S. Route 4 corridor, such as improved parking at public trail heads and public transportation crossing points.*
- *Adopt “Codes and Standards” for road maintenance as promoted by VTrans and assure such “Codes and Standards” are updated as new recommendations are published.*
- *Include “Complete Streets” principles as part of town transportation projects to accommodate all modes of transportation.*
- *Develop a transportation capital improvement program that refines and advances the goals and actions of this Plan.*
- *Encourage efficient and sustainable modes of transportation by promoting and expanding public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and other transportation alternatives.*
- *Pursue alternative funding sources for improvements to alternative transportation.*
- *Continue to comply with the MRGP.*
  - *Develop an MRGP implementation plan.*
  - *Maintain culvert and road erosion inventories.*
  - *Pursue grant funding for road improvements through state programs such as the State Structures Program, the Class 2 Roadways Program, Grants in Aid and the Better Roads Program.*
- *Design roads, driveways, and utilities so as to avoid or minimize impacts on forests and wildlife.*
- *Continue participation in regional transportation planning through the Rutland Regional Transportation Council.*
- *Oppose the construction of any major highway or bypass in the Town of Mendon.*

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

Mendon is unique in Rutland County in that a major portion of its approximately 22,000 acres is devoted to the public welfare, with managed and/or conserved forest lands owned by the United States Forest

Service, the State of Vermont Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation, and the City of Rutland. In addition, large portions of privately-owned forestland in Mendon are open to the public. As a result, Mendon is a critical resource for Rutland County as residents of many nearby towns hike, bike, ski, and snowmobile within Mendon's boundaries.

The Rutland City Watershed lies within the town boundaries and provides a major portion of the water supply for the City of Rutland. The land has moderate to severe limitations for development because of either steep slopes, shallow depth to bedrock, very rocky soil, or extreme wetness. It is therefore essential that proper planning is undertaken prior to any proposed development. One example of potential development for the Rutland City Watershed is the identification of portions of the area as a "preferred site" in Mendon's Enhanced Energy Plan. Identification of the site as a preferred site would comport with the long-standing critical goal of protecting viewsheds and the renewable energy goals set forth in the Enhanced Energy Plan but would be contingent upon negotiations with and approval by the City of Rutland.

## **GEOLOGY**

Mendon is a rural mountain community with large portions of the town comprised of steep and high terrain, such as East Mountain, Mendon Peak, Killington Peak and Blue Ridge. These high elevations and steep slopes have thin soil over Cambrian and pre-Cambrian gneiss and schist. The portion of Mendon along Town Line Road as far east as the Village District sits upon the Mendon Moraine left over from the last glacial epoch. The portion of town served by Wheelerville Road consists of glacial eskers and outwash till which allowed some agriculture in the 19th century and currently supports a timber industry. In many areas of town, shallow soils and little depth to bedrock will limit excavation and sewage disposal.

## **TERRAIN AND SLOPE**

The mountains and forests in Mendon serve as an important regional resource for watersheds, wildlife habitat, climactic barrier and recreation. Since many land uses, such as residential development, are dependent on slope and terrain, such uses should only be allowed with attention to environmental concerns. Natural habitat and compatibility with the landscape should be of primary concern to development in the town.

The steep slopes of East Mountain, Mendon Peak, Killington Peak and Blue Ridge define much of Mendon and as a result soils in town are generally thin. Elevations in the town range from 805 feet above sea level on Town Line Road to 4235 on the summit of Killington Peak.

## **SOILS**

Mendon has scattered areas of prime agricultural, secondary and tertiary soils. These areas are considered by the Town to be irreplaceable resources. It is the intention of the Town to protect these lands and preserve the long-term viability of farmland and forestland. To the extent zoning permits, the Town will encourage cluster development Planned Unit Development (P.U.D) and Planned Residential Development

(P.R.D) in order to preserve as much greenspace as possible. Other uses of forest and agricultural land that are compatible with this goal may also be allowed.

## **AGRICULTURE, FORESTS AND WILDLIFE**

Vermont's Act 171 requires that municipalities and regions that are updating their town and regional plans to identify areas that are important as "forest blocks" and "habitat connectors" and plan for development in those areas to minimize forest fragmentation and promote the health, viability, and ecological function of forests. This is particularly relevant and important to Mendon.

Forest lands in Mendon support a timber industry, offer multiple forms of recreation, sustain a diverse wildlife population, provide drinking water for thousands and account for approximately 94% of Mendon's total land mass, with northern hardwoods predominating. Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF) currently occupies 3,030 acres, with that number potentially increasing (by 420 acres) once the Rolston Rest Project is transferred to GMNF care (Forest Service (FS) Acres on <https://www.nbc.gov/pilt/counties.cfm>). The State of Vermont has three state forests within Mendon town limits: Aitken State Forest (907 acres), Coolidge State Forest (3216 acres) and Jeffords State Forest (1349 acres) acres. Additionally, the City of Rutland owns 3736 acres of forest in Mendon that support Rutland City's principal watershed via Mendon Brook.

Considering the complexity of land ownership within Mendon's borders, a significant initial effort will be to identify forest conservation and habitat connectivity partners at the national and state levels as well as with the City of Rutland. Efforts to minimize fragmentation of forest blocks and habitat connectors will be evaluated and assessed for feasibility in coordination with the above-mentioned partners. Potential policies to be discussed can include that roads, driveways, and utilities be designed to avoid (or minimize) the fragmentation of identified forest blocks and wildlife connectors.

Mendon has an abundance of diverse wildlife. Deer, bear, moose, marten, porcupines and numerous other mammals as well as countless varieties of year-round and seasonal birds call Mendon home, including a robust wild turkey population. High elevations and relative isolation from human activity provide necessary critical habitat for this diverse range of wildlife. In addition, rare and endangered species of plants exist in Mendon in sites identified by the Vermont Non-Game and Natural Heritage Program.

The Mendon Forest and Wildlife Resources Map as well as the Mendon Habitat Blocks Map highlight where Mendon's rare natural communities occur. These maps can be found on pages 40 and 41. The Town encourages protection of all publicly owned lands to continue protection of our many animal and plant species.

Agriculture in Mendon includes an apple orchard, sheep farming, commercial maple sugaring and small-scale farming. In addition, many residents pursue home vegetable gardening.

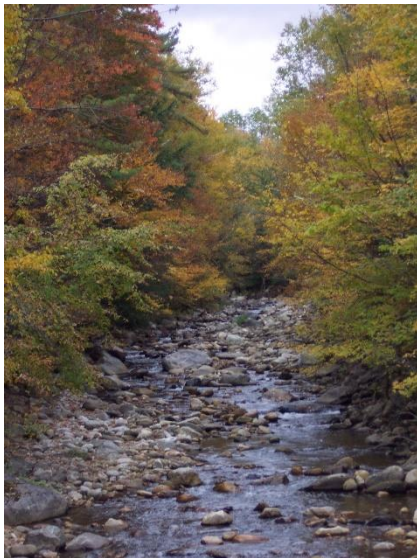
## **SEPTIC DISPOSAL**

On-site sewage disposal is usually a soil absorption system consisting of a tank for holding, settling and microbial breakdown, and a distribution system (i.e. leach field) for the resulting effluent. Under ideal conditions the soil acts as a natural filter by absorbing and allowing further bacteriologic processing of

that effluent. The characteristics of the soil (permeability, percolation rate, hydraulic conductivity, depth to season high water tables, flooding, slope and depth to bedrock or hardpan) are of major importance to the function of these absorption systems.

Much of the land in Mendon has severe limitations for on-site sewage disposal and these limitations must be addressed by proper engineering and construction. However, newer technology can facilitate development where traditional septic designs could not. Septic design and siting in Mendon are overseen by the State of Vermont.

## **WATER RESOURCES**



Mendon Brook

The Town of Mendon lies principally within the Otter Creek watershed, with a small amount of its water going to the Ottauquechee River in Parker's Gore and a trivial amount of water to the White River. A significant portion of Mendon has seasonal high water tables of 0-4 feet and is therefore easily polluted. Ground water supplies throughout the Town vary but are considered moderate to substantial overall. Public water sources within Mendon Town borders include Mendon Brook which is a water source for the City of Rutland. These resources are identified on page 39 in the Mendon Water Resources Map.

## **STEEP SLOPES AND RIDGELINES**

The suitability of land for development decreases on steep slopes where soils could be shallower and surface water runoff increases. When vegetation is removed for the construction of roads and buildings, the area for absorption of precipitation is reduced. In turn, the susceptibility to increased rates of runoff may result in excessive erosion. Slopes greater than 20% in steepness may present problems in complying with the Vermont Wastewater Regulations governing subdivisions. Serious limitations to steep slope development also include depth of soil and access for emergency and delivery vehicles. In addition, areas with high elevation and ridgelines present striking visual features and are a significant feature of what Mendon residents consider to be the town's unique landscape. Settlement in these areas may be extremely visible from other areas within Mendon and adjacent towns. The Town of Mendon considers it critically important to protect its viewsheds within the town.

Ridgelines also present significant land use development problems. At high elevations, ridgeline precipitation is greater, air and soil temperatures are lower, soils are shallower and lower in nutrients, slopes are steeper, wind speeds are higher and re-establishing vegetative cover is difficult and slow to replenish. In an effort to preserve and protect the ridgelines and steep slopes in the town, a Ridgeline Overlay District has been approved by town voters as part of the overall zoning amendments. To see the areas within the town that have been selected as significant ridgeline and steep slope areas, please refer to the Ridgeline District Overlay Map, referenced in the Mendon Zoning Regulations document.

## GOALS

- Maintain Mendon’s rural character, respect its wildlife, forests and public lands, and preserve its role in the greater Rutland community.
- Protect the high scenic quality of Mendon’s viewsheds.
- Protect Mendon’s rare, fragile and irreplaceable natural resources.

## ACTIONS

- *Educate residents about the unique nature of Mendon’s role in the larger Rutland community (forest lands, watersheds, etc.).*
- *Develop zoning regulations that recognize Mendon’s mountains, ridgelines, steep slopes, shallow soils and unique viewsheds.*
- *Encourage private forest owners to allow public access for non-destructive activities.*
- *Evaluate methods that protect and/or enhance the quality of Mendon’s water resources.*
- *Identify forest conservation and habitat connectivity partners.*
- *Discuss feasibility of maintaining or enhancing connectivity.*
- *Protect habitat blocks that contain important species, habitats, or natural communities.*
- *Evaluate how to design roads, driveways, and utilities to avoid (or minimize) the fragmentation of identified forest blocks and wildlife connectors.*

## ENERGY

The Town of Mendon is committed to doing its part to meet the State of Vermont’s goals of reducing energy consumption through means that comply with the Town’s desire to maintain its rural and visually aesthetic scenic character.

To obtain a determination of energy compliance, 24 V.S.A. §4352 requires municipalities to include an “energy element” that contains the components described in 24 V.S.A. § 4348a(a)(3) and which explicitly address energy across all sectors and to identify potential and unsuitable areas for siting renewable energy resources: An energy element, which may include an analysis of resources, needs, scarcities, costs, and problems within the region across all energy sectors, including electric, thermal, and transportation; a statement of policy on the conservation and efficient use of energy and the development and siting of renewable energy resources; a statement of policy on patterns and densities of land use likely to result in conservation of energy; and an identification of potential areas for the development and siting of

renewable energy resources and areas that are unsuitable for siting those resources or particular categories or sizes of those resources.

The energy element must:

- Be adopted.
- Be confirmed under 24 V.S.A. § 4350.
- Include the same components as described in 24 V.S.A. § 4348a(a)(3).
- Be consistent with state energy policy, in the manner described in 24 V.S.A. § 4302(f)(1).
- Meet all standards for issuing a determination of energy compliance.

For the full version of the town’s energy element, refer to the stand-alone *2021 Mendon Enhanced Energy Plan*, adopted March 28, 2022 by the Mendon Select Board.

## FLOOD RESILIENCY

### REGULATIONS

Flooding is the highest risk and most prevalent natural hazard identified in the Mendon Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. In recognition of this hazard, Mendon adopted a Flood Hazard Overlay District policy by town vote on March 2, 2010. This policy was codified in subsequent language inserted in Section 316 of the Town Zoning Regulations. The regulations were intended to ensure the design and construction of development in flood prone areas are accomplished in such a manner that minimizes or eliminates the potential for flood related damage to property or loss of life. Because of its topography, Mendon has no land areas that are prone to inundation but has large areas that are exposed to fluvial (stream or river) erosion with the potential for severe damage from flash flooding.



### HISTORY OF FLOODING

Over the last twenty years, Mendon has experienced flooding in three federally declared disasters. Hurricane Floyd in 1999 caused significant damage to the Notch Road. A rain event in July 2013 washed out Wheelerville Road near bridge 15. However, nothing in Mendon’s history compared to Tropical Storm Irene showering Mendon Peak with over 10 inches of rain.

On August 28, 2011, just eighteen months after the town adopted a Flood Hazard Overlay District policy, Tropical Storm Irene ravaged Mendon. Town residents and public officials were severely tested and highways, town roads and bridges were severely damaged. Mendon Brook, which runs alongside U. S. Route 4 and which collects water runoff through its tributaries on the flanks of Pico, Killington and Mendon peaks and East Mountain and Blue Ridge, jumped its banks in several locations. The raging water eroded and scoured hillsides and sent an uncountable number of trees and amount of debris downstream. Fortunately, no houses were damaged but sadly, two lives were lost at the Rutland City Water Intake on Meadowlake Drive.

There was extensive damage to U.S. Route 4 from Medway Road to Wheelerville Road. Municipal highways also experienced severe damage which included the Notch Road, Meadowlake Drive, Medway Road, Journeys End, Woodward Road, Cream Hill Road, Old Turnpike Road, and Wheelerville Road. Damage to municipal infrastructure exceeded \$2 million dollars. Significant risk mitigation to Wheelerville Road bridges had been accomplished prior to Irene. It is notable that while Wheelerville Road itself sustained extensive damage to its roadbed, structures that were modernly engineered remained in place. Because U.S. Route 4 was also heavily damaged in nearby Killington and Vermont State Highway 100 was severely damaged in Pittsfield to the north and Plymouth to the south, much of Mendon was cut off from the outside world. The area was commonly referred to as “The Island”. Electricity and telecommunications were unavailable on the “Island,” but were restored quickly after the storm by Central Vermont Public Service (now Green Mountain Power). The Woodward Road area experienced the greatest power outage lasting five days. The Alpine Pipeline that serves all of Route 4 in Mendon was destroyed in multiple locations and was also restored relatively quickly.

The Town rallied during this crisis, using the Town Office as the Incident Command Center overseeing the recovery effort. Relying on the expertise and commitment of Casella Construction Inc., The Belden Company, and Markowski Excavating, the State of Vermont oversaw reconstruction of U.S. Route 4 and the Mendon Town Highway Department oversaw reconstruction of Wheelerville and Woodward Roads. Shortly after the storm a half mile footpath between Journeys End and Helvi Hill Road was discovered as a way around the unpassable damage to US Route 4. The Mendon emergency management team stepped in to manage the safe transportation of people and supplies along the path. Loads of mulch were spread to create a surface to travel on. Donated

Route 4 damage after Tropical Storm Irene.



Casella Construction rebuilding Wheelerville Road after Tropical Storm Irene.

ATV’s from Hendees and local residents and golf carts from the Green Mountain Golf Course were brought in to help transport people and supplies. Portable toilets and information tables were placed at either side of the path. Over 250 volunteers consisting of residents and neighbors managed this alternative access to the “Island.” Over the course of the disruption, an estimated 15,000 people, including a regular contingent of Barstow School students, used this “Woodchip Parkway.” Incredibly, just eighteen days after the storm struck, U.S. Route 4 was reopened and the long-term recovery process began.

The hard work of Mendon Town Office staff, the Select Board, the Town Highway Department and public safety officials, as well as uncountable numbers of local residents allowed Mendon to regain a sense of normalcy in a remarkably short period of time. Ultimately the Federal Emergency Management

Agency (FEMA) reimbursed the Town for a large portion of the reconstruction costs from 28 construction projects.

## RESPONSE

While Mendon has endured flooding in the past, no living resident had experienced anything like Tropical Storm Irene. As there is broad consensus among climate scientists that storms such as Irene may become more common, less predictable and more severe, it behooves the Town to continue to plan for and anticipate flooding in the future.

The State has established an incentive program to encourage community flood resiliency – the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF). Communities that take specific steps to reduce flood damage will benefit financially during recovery from a federally declared disaster. The steps include:

1. *Adoption of the most recent VTrans Town Road and Bridge Standards;*
2. *Participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP);*
3. *Annual adoption of a Local Emergency Management Plan;*
4. *Adoption of a FEMA-approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plan; and*
5. *Adopt River Corridor Bylaws OR Participate in FEMA’s Community Rating System.*

Mendon has completed steps 1 through 4 and as a result is eligible to receive 12.5% of project costs from the State in addition to the 75% of project costs from FEMA’s Public Assistance Program. If the Town were to successfully adopt River Corridor Bylaws, they would become eligible to receive 17.5% ERAF funding.

The Mendon Select Board adopts Town Road and Bridge Standards annually.

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) within FEMA was created to address losses from flooding. Flood insurance rates are based on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) or Digital Flood Insurance Maps (DFIRMs), which delineate areas prone to flooding. These areas are identified as having a 1% chance of flooding (or a one hundred-year flood). Mendon enrolled in the NFIP in 1985.

Since flood damage can occur outside of these federally mapped flood areas, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) has developed a River Corridor and Floodplain Management Program for those areas subject to fluvial erosion. Mapping of Mendon done by the ANR demonstrates the flood potential of Brewer Brook, Mendon Brook, Eddy Brook, and the North Branch of the Cold River (see the Water Resources Map found on page 39).

As described previously, in the Emergency Management section of this Plan, Mendon annually adopts a Local Emergency Management Plan and has a FEMA-approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, dated 2017. For more information about Mendon’s flood resiliency measures, refer to the town’s Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

## GOALS

- *Protect Mendon citizens and their property, the town’s infrastructure (i.e. roads, bridges, etc.), important regional resources (i.e. the Alpine Pipeline, telecommunications, watersheds, etc.), and the town’s natural resources from significant flooding.*

- *Ensure Mendon is able to recover quickly from flooding events.*
- *Explore ways to improve Mendon’s resilience to flooding.*

## **ACTIONS**

- *Work with regional (e.g. RRPC) and state entities (e.g. ANR, VTrans) to help ground-truth the river corridor mapping and locate areas most prone to fluvial erosion, specifically U.S Route 4 and Wheelerville Road.*
- *Restrict development in mapped areas subject to fluvial erosion by adopting River Corridor Bylaws.*
- *Develop zoning regulations that maintain wetland areas in the Wheelerville District.*
- *Minimize the amount of impervious surfaces in town by utilizing Low Impact Development principles (LID) to increase storm water retention and infiltration.*
- *Maintain the integrity of Mendon roadways in flood prone areas by complying with the town’s adopted Road and Bridge Standards.*
- *Develop and implement a communication system to keep Mendon residents informed and up to date about flood related issues.*

## **FUTURE LAND USE**

### **RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS**

Preservation of open space and maintaining the rural character of these areas is strongly desired. Development should take place in such a manner that natural areas and resources including viewsheds from public highways and private residences shall be protected.

The purpose of Residential Districts is to designate housing areas and promote various types of housing that will not exceed the physical capabilities of the land or the availability of community facilities and services. In order to enhance and maintain the rural nature of Mendon, Planned Residential Developments (PRD’s) are encouraged. Density incentives for PRD’s with multi-family dwellings will promote the preservation of woodlands and incorporation of recreational activities within the project area. The same type of development is also encouraged in other districts where commercial and industrial activity is permitted.

Residential building lots will be compatible with the developmental capability of the land. The property owner will have the responsibility for demonstrating the required capability prior to subdivision or development.

## **COMMERCIAL AND VILLAGE DISTRICTS**

The purpose of the Commercial District is to designate areas for commercial uses to serve the needs of both residents and visitors and to enhance opportunities for economic development. Shopping, service, and lodging facilities are an asset to the town. The rural character of the town should be preserved. Planned Unit Developments (PUD's) and Planned Residential Developments (PRD's) are encouraged in the Commercial and Village Districts.

A Village Center Designation is a tool used to protect and enhance the characteristics of the areas that are valued by the community. The designation can improve Mendon's vitality and livability by supporting the goals of this plan, including those regarding land use. The designation can be achieved by applying through the State Department of Housing and Community Development. The potential Village Center Designation area is depicted on the Future Land Use Map found on page 43.

## **FLOOD HAZARD OVERLAY DISTRICT**

The purpose of this district is to raise awareness of properties that may lie within a floodplain and minimize future losses of life or property due to flooding. Flood mapping is available on the State of Vermont's website at [anrmaps.vermont.gov](http://anrmaps.vermont.gov) or FEMA's website at [msc.fema.gov/portal/home](http://msc.fema.gov/portal/home). Currently, the town's flood hazard overlay district language does not include language related to river corridor or floodplain protection bylaws that meet or exceed the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Fluvial Erosion Hazard (FEH) model regulations.

## **CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

The purpose of these districts is to protect those lands which have steep slopes, shallow soils and fragile or limited vegetation and which provide significant recharge of the ground and surface water supplies of the town and region. They will also protect, as a natural resource, those lands which are essentially unsuitable for development and which are important for wildlife habitat or have high potential for commercial forestry use. There are two conservation districts.

The Conservation I District includes Coolidge State Forest, Aitken State Forest, Jeffords State Forest, private lands in Parkers Gore, any other state-owned or federally-owned lands (such as Green Mountain National Forest) in Mendon, and lands north of U.S. Route 4 which are above the elevation of 2,500 feet.

The Conservation II District is an area along U.S. Route 4 which is generally unsuitable for development due to steep slopes, unstable soils, flood plains, and traffic problems.

These two districts encourage wildlife habitat, forestry, agriculture, limited commercial recreation, noncommercial recreation, and limited single family residential in order not to increase the town's need to provide facilities and services.

Highland conservation areas include those lands of 2500 feet or above. Upland conservation areas include lands from 2000 feet to 2499 feet. Forest reserves include lands that belong to the City of Rutland, State of Vermont, or the federal government, and those lands which are unsuitable for development. In the

city forest area snowmaking ponds should be allowed, as well as solar energy generation sites so long as they do not negatively impact viewsheds or water quality.

## **SKI DISTRICT**

The Ski District is remote mountainous land in the eastern part of Parkers' Gore. The purpose of this district is to allow commercial ski area development in portions of the town that are adjacent to those areas already developed for skiing in the Town of Killington. These areas are particularly well suited for skiing due to high elevation and their proximity to existing ski development.

Carefully planned commercial ski development should be allowed in this district provided there is ample opportunity for public feedback, and the services that the town provides should be limited because of the remoteness of the area in relation to the other developed portions of Mendon.

## **GOALS**

- *Make available all public forest lands within the town for recreational use.*
- *Preserve and protect the town's steep slopes and ridgelines and the high scenic quality of its viewsheds.*
- *Enhance and maintain the town's distinctly rural nature – while protecting existing cultural, historic, and natural resources – of Mendon and simultaneously encourage strategic development needs.*
- *Strictly limit development that has an undue adverse impact on view-shed scenic resources.*

## **ACTIONS**

- *In the elevation range from 2,000 feet to 2499 feet, only allow land uses which do not require additional town facilities.*
- *No development should be permitted for elevations above 2500 feet other than limited single family residences or seasonal camps on large lots where the topography and soils will allow.*
- *Allow carefully planned ski area development in the Ski District at any elevation.*
- *Allow single family residences and seasonal camps on large lots where the topography and soils permit.*
- *Research and apply for a Village Center Designation.*
- *Continue working with the City of Rutland regarding identifying portions of the Rutland City Forest as a renewable energy generating preferred site in the Mendon Enhanced Energy Plan.*

# STATUTORY BACKGROUND

The Mendon Town Plan is the official policy of the community. It is designed to provide a clear, written standard for orderly development, such that development will not have an undue adverse effect on aesthetics, and such that the town's distinctly rural character and its scenic viewsheds are protected and preserved. Adoption of the Plan provides the legal foundation for the town to establish growth and development regulations. It is intended that the Plan be used in a positive manner as a tool in guiding the direction of growth and development in a way which is both economically feasible and environmentally acceptable.

The Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act (the Act) guides the preparation of town plans and includes required and suggested elements and adoption procedures. The Act, 24 VSA §4382(a), requires that all plans contain twelve elements: a statement of objectives, policies, and programs; a land use plan; a transportation plan; a utility and facilities plan; a statement of policies on the preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas; an educational facilities plan; an implementation program; a statement indicating how the plan relates to development trends in adjacent communities; an energy plan; a housing element; an economic development element; and a flood resilience element. In addition to containing all the required elements, plans must also be consistent with a series of statutory goals listed in 24 VSA §4302. Consistency with the goals means that the goals have been considered and addressed in the process used to prepare the plan, not that the plan include all the goals.

## IMPLEMENTATION

As a policy document, the plan provides the legal as well as the conceptual basis for all land use control. There are many ways to implement the goals and action items of this town plan. These fall into two general categories: regulatory and non-regulatory options. Regulatory options include: zoning and subdivision bylaws, flood hazard area regulations, and official maps. Nonregulatory implementation options include but are not limited to a local hazard mitigation plan, a capital budget program, and advisory commissions. Since the bylaws are intended to implement the plan, their content should reflect the findings, recommendations, and policy statements embodied in the plan.

The first step towards implementation of a town plan is its adoption as public policy. As required by the Vermont Planning and Development Act, the Planning Commission shall hold at least one public hearing on the proposed plan. The Planning Commission must then make any necessary revisions and submit the proposed plan to the Select Board. Under the Act the Select Board shall hold one or more public hearings (towns with populations over 2,500 require two public hearings) on the proposed plan. After the final public hearing the plan may be adopted by the Select Board, or if substantial changes are made, may be sent back to the Planning Commission. The plan should then obtain Town Plan Approval and Confirmation of Town Planning Process by the Regional Planning Commission in accordance with §4350 of the Act. Town plans expire eight years from the date of adoption. Because town planning is a flexible, continuing and long-range process, the plan should be reviewed from time to time and be amended in light of changes affecting the municipality.

Public participation at the June 2018 Mendon  
Town Potluck.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Throughout the review and writing of this town plan, there was coordination and interaction between the Mendon Planning Commission, the public, the Select Board, and the Rutland Regional Planning Commission. Participation occurred at the regularly held Planning Commission meetings as well as at designated Select Board meetings, both of which welcomed public involvement. Public involvement was most directly received through a survey given at the 2018 March Town Meeting and at the Town Potluck on June 9, 2018, hosted by the Mendon Planning Commission, the Mendon Select Board, the Mendon Historical Society, and the Mendon Economic Development Committee. The survey solicited feedback on items such as preferred types of new businesses, what it is that the townspeople love about Mendon, and what about the town they feel could be improved. Popular responses for new businesses included repurposing of the unused hotels along Route 4, new restaurants, businesses geared toward recreational activities, and country store-type businesses. The aspects of what people love about Mendon varied but commonly answered were the natural environment of the town, proximity to nature, and appreciation for the townspeople they share it with. Again when it came to what people would like to see improved, there were multiple comments regarding the unused hotels along Route 4 as well as opportunities to connect with their community- either through community events, better distribution of information so people are informed on what opportunities to connect exist, or businesses that facilitate social interaction (example being a café).



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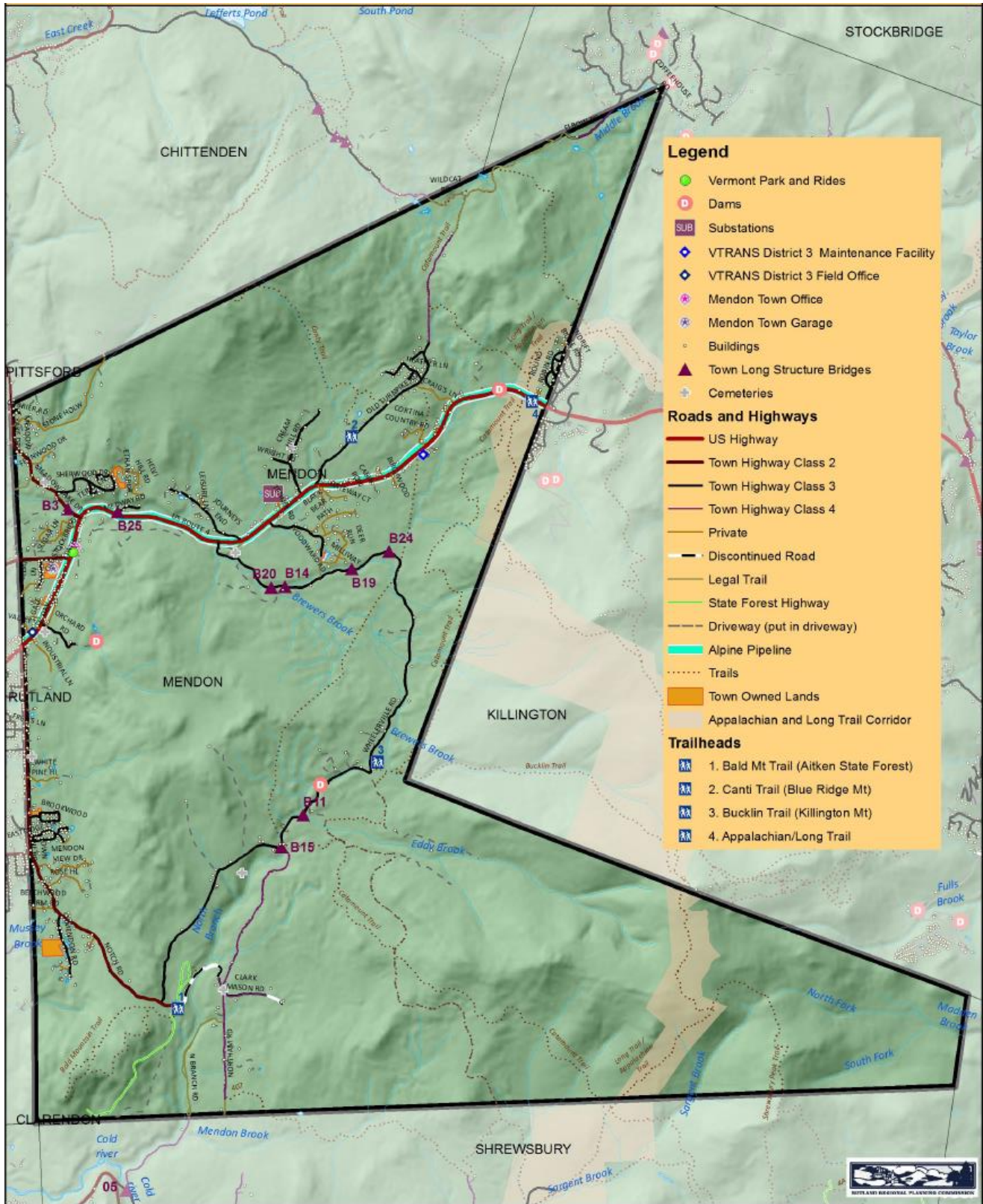
## REGIONAL COORDINATION

Mendon is part of Rutland County and the relationship between this Plan and the development trends in the area and plans for the surrounding communities have been considered during the planning process. Towns adjacent to Mendon include: Killington, Shrewsbury, Rutland Town, and Chittenden. Review of the Rutland Regional Plan also indicates that the Mendon Town Plan is consistent with the Regional Plan, adopted in 2018, which supports an overall vision of a region that supports a strong sense of community, responsible management and stewardship of natural resources, and economic development which reflects the town's character. Mendon continues to have community representatives serve on regional committees such as the Regional Planning Commission and the Rutland Region Transportation Council.

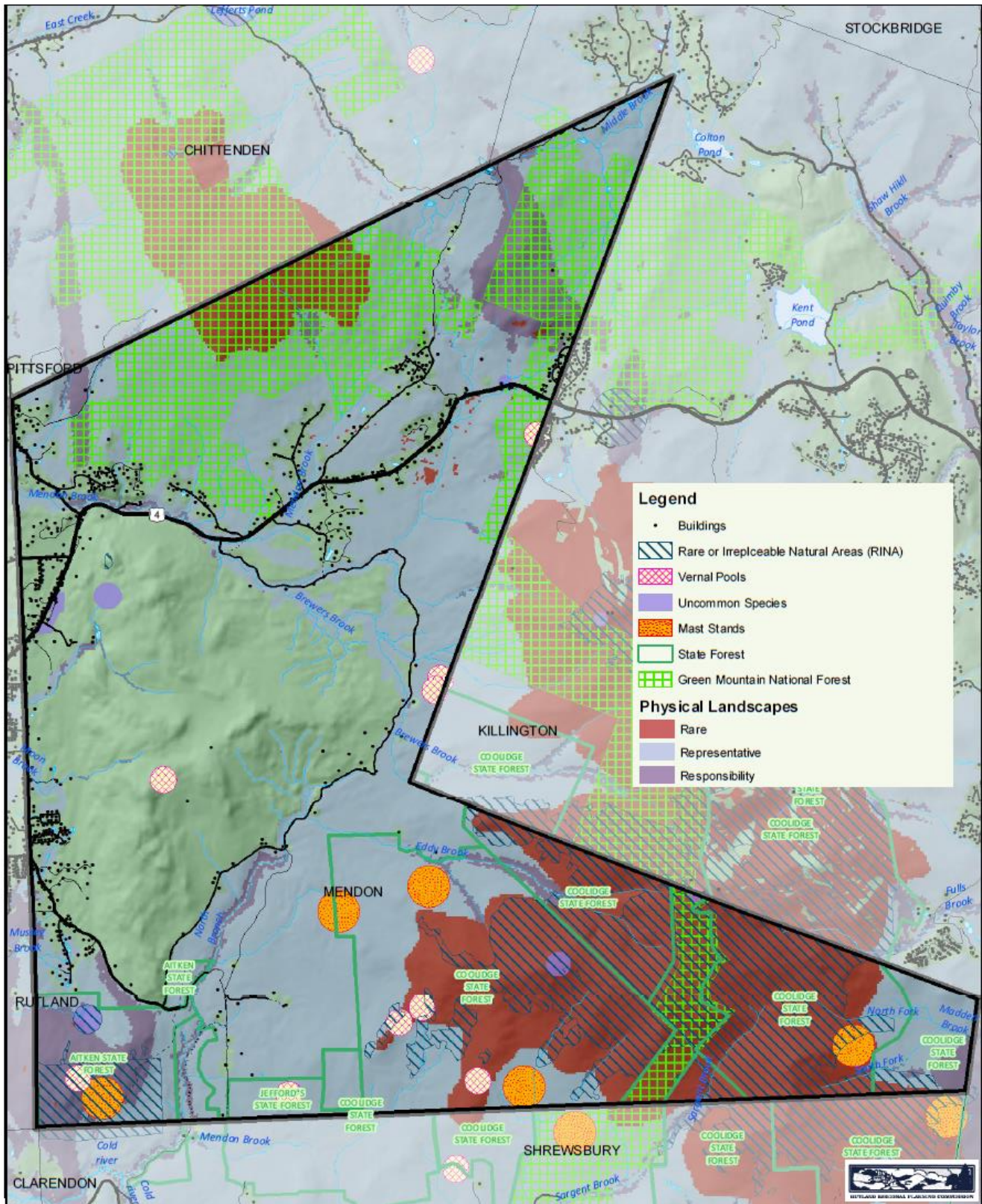
## MAPS

- *Education, Transportation, and Community Facilities*
- *Forest and Wildlife Resources*
- *Habitat Blocks*
- *Water Resources*
- *Future Land Use*

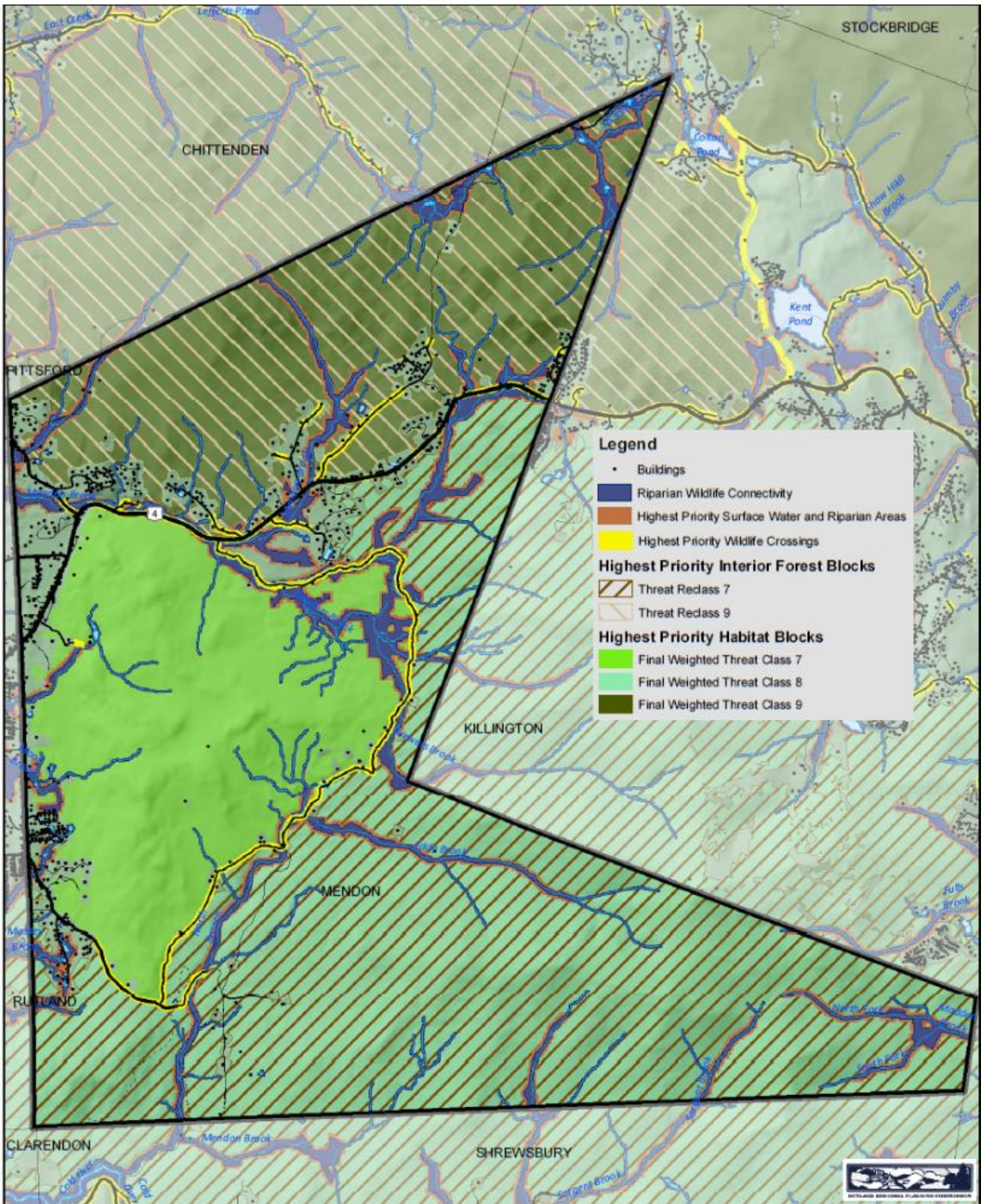
# EDUCATION, TRANSPORTATION, AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES



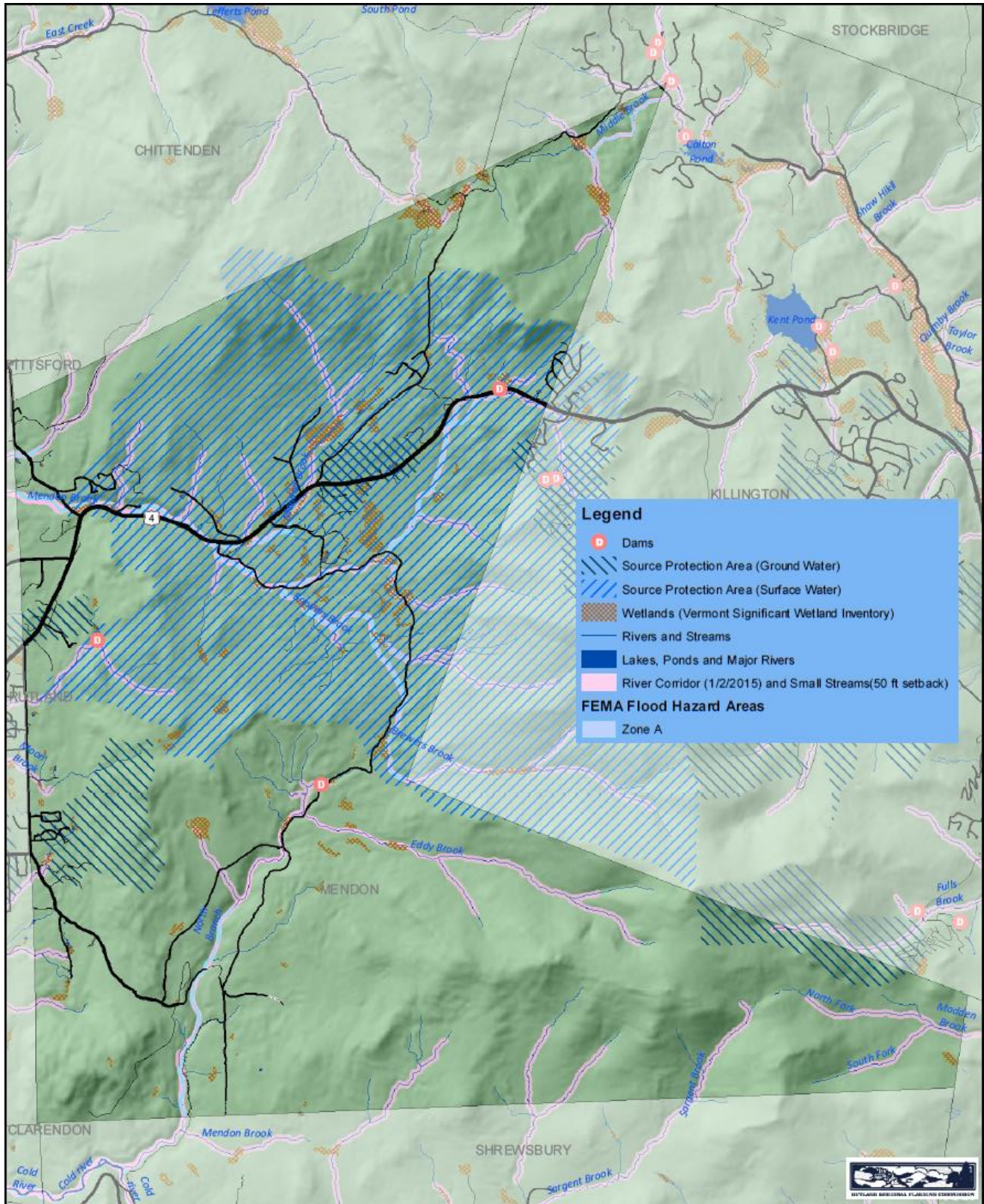
# FOREST AND WILDLIFE RESOURCES



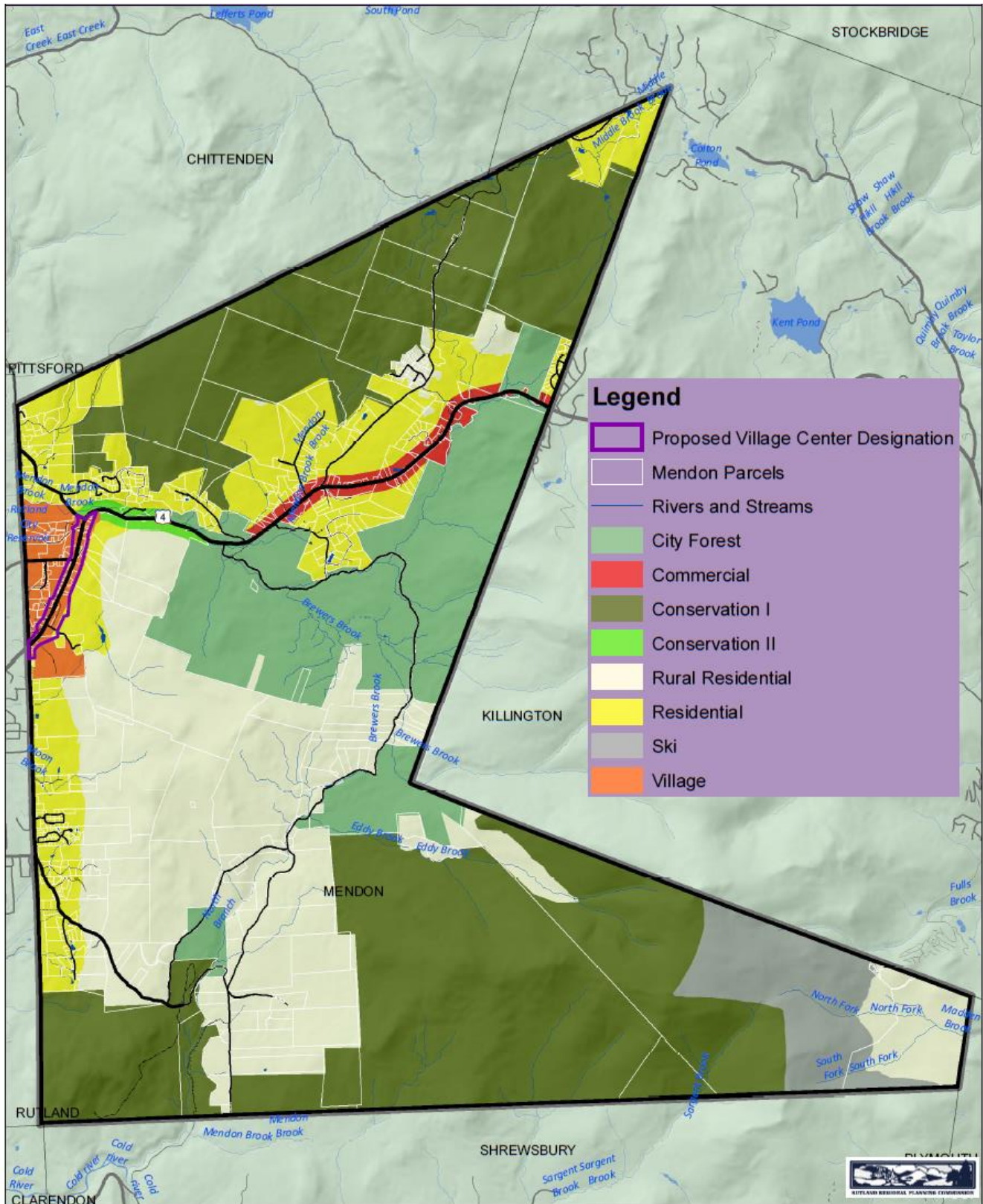
# HABITAT BLOCKS



# WATER RESOURCES



# FUTURE LAND USE



# MENDON, VERMONT

GATEWAY TO THE HEART OF THE GREEN MOUNTAINS



## 2021 Mendon Enhanced Energy Plan

Prepared by the Mendon Planning Commission  
Adopted March 28, 2022 by the Mendon Select Board

## Mendon Enhanced Energy Plan

The purpose of the Mendon Enhanced Energy Plan is to conduct comprehensive energy planning at the local level while also achieving state energy goals – most importantly, the goal to have renewable energy sources meet 90% of the Town’s energy needs by 2050. This in-depth energy planning is essential for addressing three crucial issues for the people of Mendon: economic needs and opportunities, energy security, and environmental protection . Mendon recognizes that as conventional fuel resources dwindle, future resilience relies on lowering dependence on imported, non-renewable fuels, tapping local energy sources for enhanced self-reliance, and improving efficiency.

### Mendon Energy Goals and Policies

- Decrease overall energy consumption through conservation and efficiency;
- Reduce reliance on fossil fuels and imported energy sources;
- Develop renewable energy resources locally.

### VT Energy Goals and Policies (CEP 2016)

- Obtain 90% of energy for all uses from renewable sources by 2050;
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 50% below 1990 levels by 2028 and 75% by 2050;
- Rely on in-state renewable energy sources to supply 35% of energy use by 2025;
- Improve energy efficiency of 25% of homes by 2025;
- Meet the Vermont Renewable Energy Standard through renewable generation and energy transformation.

The State of Vermont has adopted a set of ambitious energy goals through its Comprehensive Energy Plan (CEP) which was updated in 2016. To help communities reach the sustainable energy future envisioned by the CEP, a central goal is to attain **90% renewable energy by 2050**.

However, development of new renewable energy sources will not be enough to achieve the state’s goals. Since renewable sources yield less energy per unit than fossil fuel-based counterparts, a reduction in overall energy consumption also is critical to meeting this target.

It is important to note that these state policies and goals did not originate with the Mendon Planning Commission, and are based on projections that the state has provided. Likewise, the locations for siting potential new renewable energy in Mendon come from state-developed data and mapping.

This plan has been written to conform with the Energy Planning Standards for Municipal Plans determined by the Department of Public Service. Once it is given an affirmative “determination of energy compliance” by the Rutland Regional Planning Commission, the Mendon Town Plan, of which the enhanced energy plan is a part, will be given substantial deference in the Public Utility Commission’s review of whether an energy project meets the specific policies in this plan. Only energy compliant plans are afforded this type of review before the Public Utility Commission.

## Mendon Enhanced Energy Plan

A critical facet of improved efficiency will be a greater reliance on electricity to power everyday needs. Since electricity can be generated from renewable resources and electric-powered technologies such as heat pumps and electric vehicles are highly efficient, switching to electricity will ideally help lower overall energy consumption while at the same time maintaining current lifestyles in Mendon. According to the 2016 Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan, **significant growth in electricity consumption is expected and a total of 60% of all energy will be supplied through electricity by 2050.**

Though this major shift in energy use is formidable, there are opportunities to lower costs and bolster the local economy through a transformation of the energy sector, which costs Mendon more than **\$4.4 million a year or \$4,145 per person each year** (U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) estimates). Since nearly all this money flows out of the Town and the state, redirecting expenditures for electricity, space and water heating and transportation to local energy businesses and employers will keep more wealth in the community.



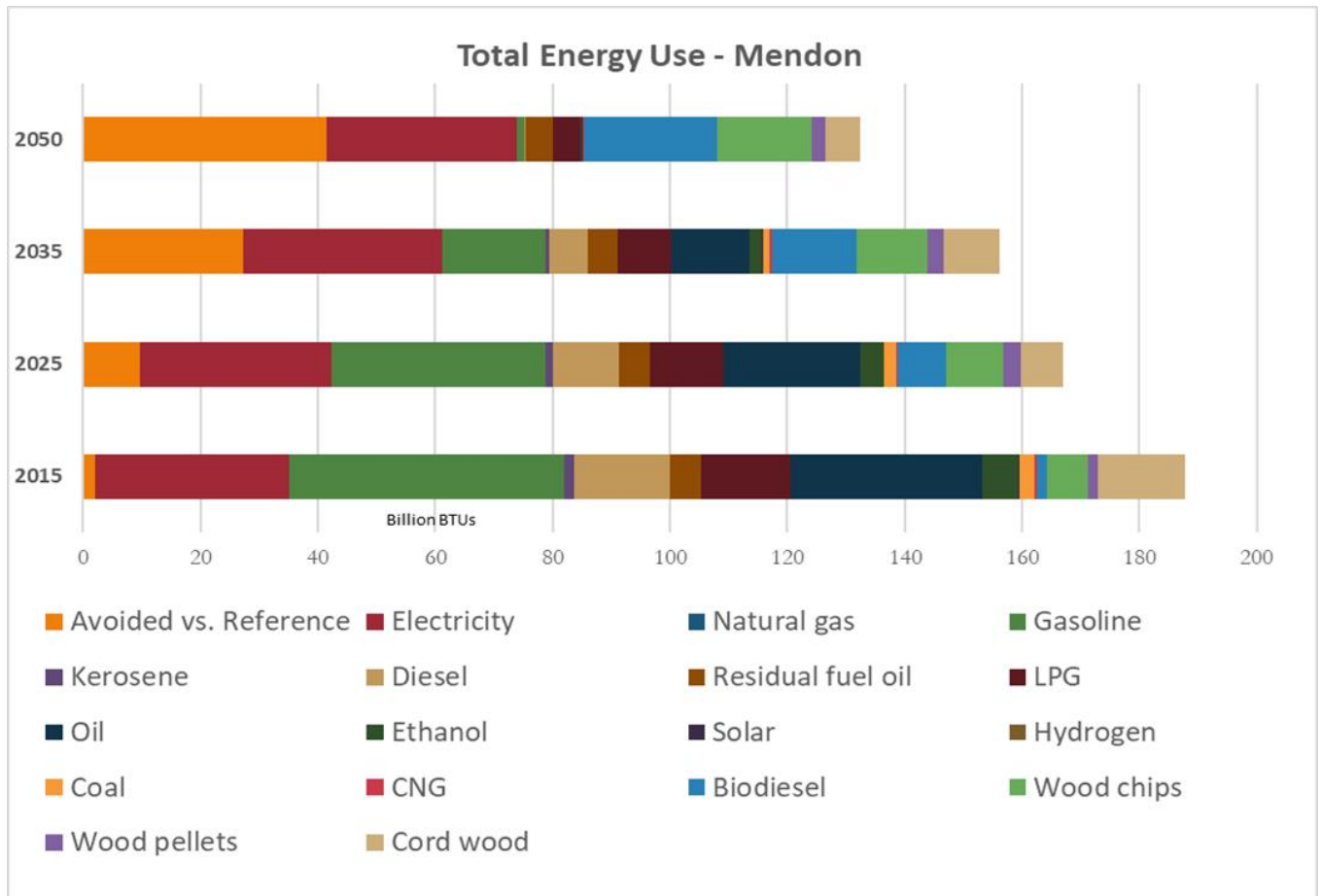
Courtesy: Rob Stubbins Solar Energy

This energy plan is intended to provide the residents and local leadership of Mendon with the information and strategies needed to maintain a vibrant community in coming decades while the energy sector is transformed to better preserve the environment, lower energy costs, promote local renewable energy development, and enhance the Town's self-reliance.

### Current and Future Energy Use

The Rutland Regional Energy Plan (2018) estimates current and future regional energy consumption using a computer modeling program known as LEAP (Long Range Energy Alternatives Planning System) that was developed by the Vermont Energy Investment Corporation. Mendon's estimates are based on these projections. The Town uses nearly **186 billion BTUs** (British Thermal Units) per year and should aim to reduce consumption to about half that or **91 billion BTUs by 2050.**

## Mendon Enhanced Energy Plan



↓	
Gasoline	- 98%
Oil & Fuel Oil	- 87%
Electricity	0%

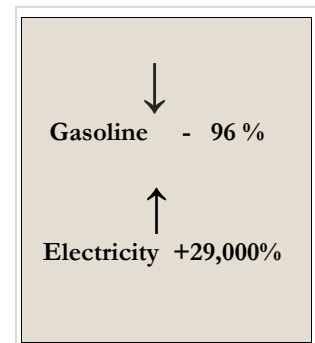
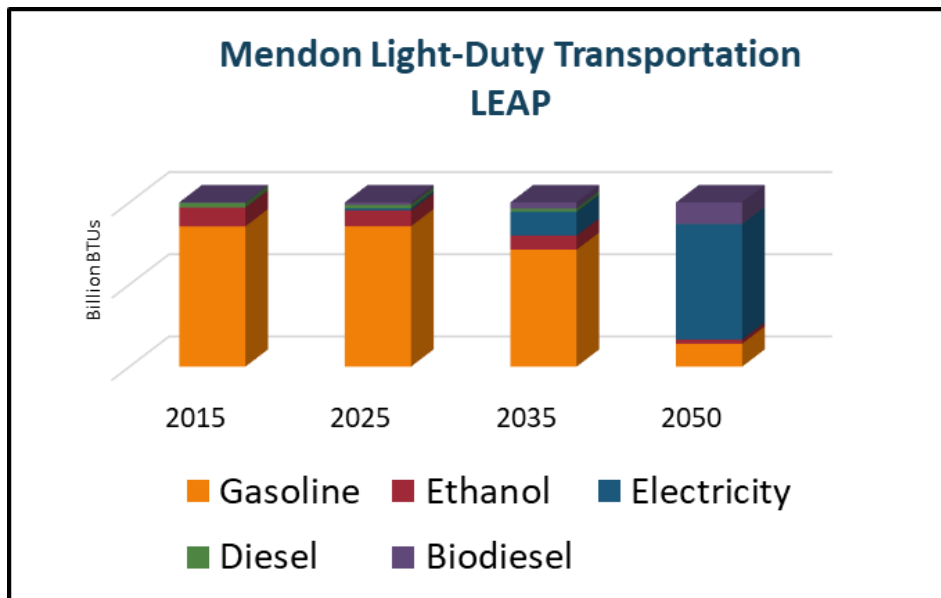
Energy use can be grouped into three major sectors: transportation, thermal (heating and cooling) and electricity. Mendon’s 454 households and 35 commercial entities consume significant amounts of energy for transportation and to power equipment, to heat space and water, and to power lights and appliances with electricity. Mendon could see significant savings in energy consumption and costs by adopting conservation strategies, replacing outdated appliances and switching to more efficient technologies, and participating in weatherization programs. By looking at consumption in three categories within these sectors – light-duty transportation, residential and commercial heating, and electricity use – a clearer picture emerges about what impact the Town can have on overall energy use and in meeting the state’s energy goals.

## Mendon Enhanced Energy Plan

### Transportation Energy Use

In Mendon, as in other municipalities in Vermont, **transportation consumes the most energy of any sector**. In 2018 there were an estimated 823 light-duty vehicles in the Town traveling nearly 10 million miles a year - at a cost of more than \$1.2 million a year and a consumption of 64 billion BTUs. Of the 555 residents in the labor force, 449 (or 84%) drive to work alone. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, commuter travel declined significantly because of remote work and this trend is expected to continue post-pandemic. This will decrease transportation energy use in the future.

In the next few decades, it's anticipated that total energy for transportation will fall gradually to about 35% of current levels for light-duty vehicles. The efficiencies of electrification, a switch to biodiesel as well as increased remote working trends will account for much of this reduction. **By 2050, electric and biodiesel vehicles are estimated to comprise about 83%** of the light-duty fleet in Mendon. It is expected that by 2050, there will be 1,190 electric and 48 biodiesel-powered light-duty vehicles in the Town. By targeted year, this represents 3% of the fleet of light-duty vehicles in 2025; 18% in 2035; and 83% in 2050.



Requiring more compact land use patterns is an excellent means for towns to reduce vehicle mileage and consumption of fuel. Mendon is committed to promoting multi-use land use (housing mixed with commercial) in future development. The Town also is committed to reducing energy use in transportation and will lead by example by purchasing electric or biodiesel vehicles (when feasible), encouraging the use of public transit, offering more park-and-ride opportunities, and installing EV charging stations.

## Mendon Enhanced Energy Plan

### Residential and Commercial Energy Use

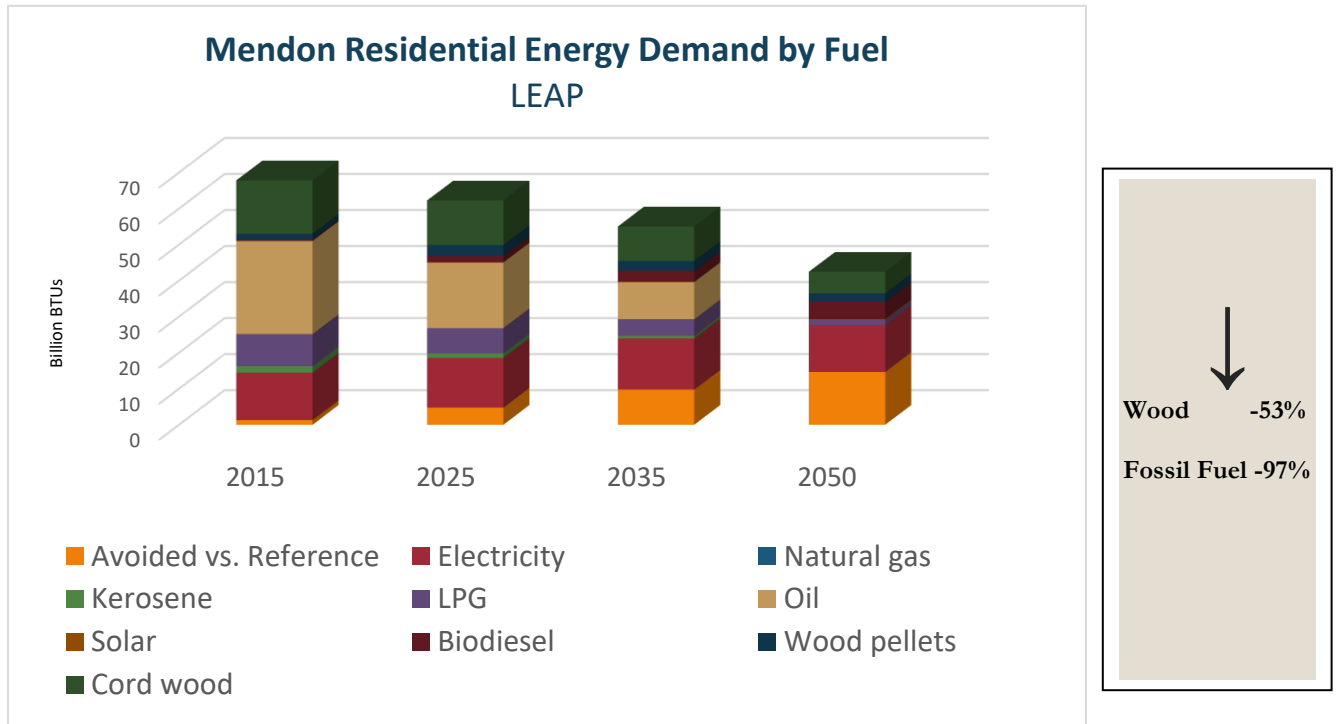
About 80% of Mendon homes are heated with oil and other fossil fuels for the seven-month heating season. With the projected future shortage of fossil fuels, it would be in the Town's best interest to become less reliant on these sources of heating fuel and switch to efficient heating systems powered by local resources.

### Current Mendon Residential Heating Energy Use (American Community Survey, US Census, 2011-2015)

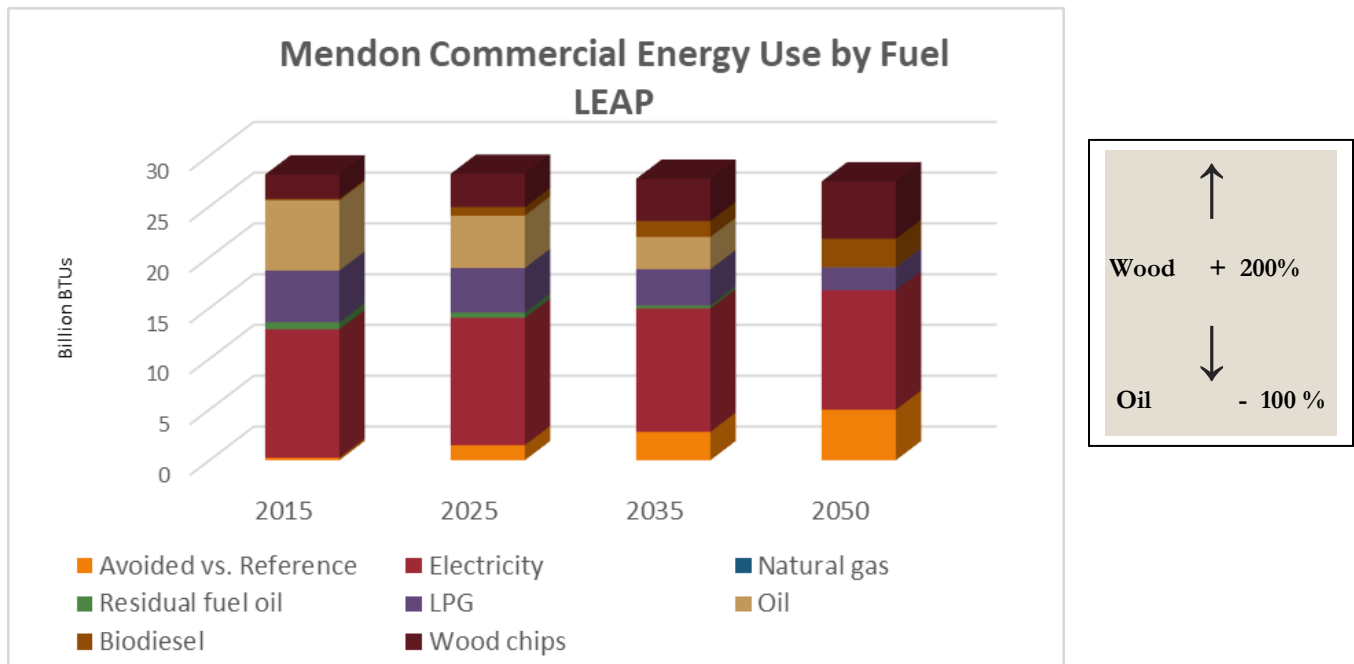
Fuel	# of Households	% of Households	BTUs (in billions)
Natural Gas	0	0.0%	0
Propane	75	16.5%	7
Electricity	4	0.9%	0
Fuel Oil	287	63.2%	25
Coal	0	0.0%	0
Wood	83	18.3%	8
Solar	0	0.0%	0
Other	5	1.1%	1
No Fuel	0	0.0%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>42</b>

LEAP modeling shows how the Town can make the transition to renewable energy sources for both residential and commercial structures through the increased use of bio-distillates and electricity. The use of fuel oil for heating drops precipitously in this modeling.

# Mendon Enhanced Energy Plan



Currently there are an estimated 35 commercial establishments using 0.725 Billion BTUs of thermal energy use per establishment for a total of 25 Billion BTUs a year in Mendon. Energy use is projected to decrease due to less use of fossil fuels and a heavier reliance on more efficient renewable sources such as biodiesel and wood. Due to efficiencies, overall energy use declines when additional conservation (avoided vs. reference) is factored in.



By switching fuels and relying on efficient heat pumps systems for both residential and commercial, the Town’s target is 46 units by 2025; 121 by 2035; and 236 by 2050. Conversions to new efficient wood heat systems are projected to increase from 4 units in 2025; then decrease by -4 in 2035; and by -8 in 2050 for both residential and commercial uses.

The projected growth in the percentage of heating energy use coming from renewable sources is sharp: rising from 48.7% in 2025 to 92.4% in 2050.

Also, Mendon is committed to meeting its residential and commercial thermal targets through increased efficiency and conservation. The percentage of Mendon households that will need to be weatherized between now and 2050 to meet the state’s goals is: 14% by 2025; 39% by 2035; and 85% by 2050. For commercial structures, weatherization targets are 29% by 2025; 47% by 2035; and 84% by 2050.

### Electricity

Electricity, produced mostly by more expensive fossil fuel, is the third major sector of energy use so reducing usage and converting to renewable sources is critical to meeting the state’s energy goals. Although electricity use will increase dramatically in the future since it is a conduit for making local renewable energy sources available for use, widespread adoption of efficient appliances, vehicles and thermal technologies powered by electricity is critical to achieving the state’s energy goals for efficiency.

## Mendon Enhanced Energy Plan

### Mendon KWh Usage by Year (Efficiency Vermont)

Sector	2016	2017	2018
Commercial & Industrial	1,985,369	2,214,982	1,973,365
Residential	4,837,840	4,795,450	5,065,655
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,823,209</b>	<b>7,010,432</b>	<b>7,039,020</b>
Average Residential Usage	7,297	7,211	7,641

Data show that overall electrical use in the Town is affected by electric efficiencies. Further electricity efficiency savings are included in the LEAP modeling. The Town's targets are 12.1% by 2025; 39% by 2035; and 69.8% by 2050. The MWh targets for the use of renewable sources for this electricity are 1,585 in 2025; 4,742 in 2035; and 14,369 in 2050.

Mendon is committed to energy conservation and will take advantage of Efficiency Vermont initiatives to upgrade the insulation of home and buildings to reduce heating and cooling energy consumption. The Town also will lead by example by ensuring all municipal buildings, including the Town Office and Town Garage, are audited for energy use and upgraded when feasible.

### Development and Siting of Renewable Energy Sources

As of November 2019, Mendon has **0.18 MW of total renewable energy generation**. The data in this table are based on information available from the Vermont Department of Public Service and the Vermont Community Energy Dashboard. The Town has 17 solar sites.

Renewable Type	MW	MWh
Solar	0.18	234
Wind	0	0
Hydro	0	0
Biomass	0	0
Other	0	0
<b>Total Existing Generation</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>234</b>

This is the estimated renewable energy generation potential for the Town. These data were based on mapping completed by the Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC) that are based on the Municipal Determination Standards and associated guidance documents developed by the Vermont Department of Public Service.

Renewable Type	MW	MWh
Rooftop Solar *	1	1,432
Ground-Mounted Solar *	479	586,832
Wind (small scale)	268	536,000
Hydro	0	0
Biomass & Methane	0	0

## Mendon Enhanced Energy Plan

Other	0	0
<b>Total Renewable Generation Potential</b>	<b>748</b>	<b>1,124,264</b>

\*As technology advances, Mendon plans to promote the switch from primarily ground-mounted solar to primarily impervious and rooftop locations.

RRPC has suggested the following targets (in MWh) for Mendon for total renewable energy generation to meet the state’s 90x50 renewables goal. **The target of 14,369 MWh by 2050 is a fraction of the Town’s generation potential of 1,124,264 MWh.**

2025	2035	2050
1,585	4,742	14,369

There are 98,000 MWh available in solar prime areas that are on impervious surfaces. That’s more than six times what is needed to meet the Town’s renewable target. However, the mapping data are composed of many small polygons which makes the acreage data misleading. For instance, there are very few impervious/prime or secondary solar sites that are greater than one acre in size. This means the Town will need to rely on numerous commercial and residential rooftop, small ground-mounted, and parking lot canopy solar installations to meet its target.

The approach proposed by this plan would not have the effect of prohibiting any type of renewable generation technology in all locations. The Mendon Enhanced Energy Plan allows for the siting of all types of small-scale renewable generation technologies, wind, solar, hydro and biomass energy generation, but not necessarily all scales of a given technology. The Town is certain that, if applied regionally, this is a fair and equitable approach that follows Town and state priorities and still allows for sufficient land area to meet the Town’s and Vermont’s energy targets and goals. If the approach taken by Mendon was adopted by all towns in the region, all four types of renewable energy generation could be sited in every town. **Mendon also notes the potential for nuclear energy to be considered as a renewable as new technology is created and advanced.**

### Data Sources

Efficiency Vermont, 2016  
 LEAP (Long-range Energy Alternatives Planning), 2017  
 U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2011-2015  
 U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2017  
 Vermont Department of Labor, 2016  
 Vermont Department of Public Service, 2017  
 VTrans (Vermont Department of Transportation), 2016  
 Vermont Community Energy Dashboard, Energy Action Network, 2017

## Mendon Enhanced Energy Plan

### Maps

#### Known Constraints

-High priority constraints that limit where energy can be generated.

Energy generation facilities are not very likely to be developed in Known Constraints areas due to the presence of natural resources that are regulated at the federal, state or local level. Accordingly, these constraints have been removed from the raw resource potential mapping layers. Site-specific study is required to ascertain whether one of the mapped constraints truly exists on the site and some sites not captured by the Known Constraints mapping may have such high-priority constraints, depending on the results of site-specific study. The maps are good indicators, but not definitive siting tools.

Included:

- Vernal Pools
- DEC River Corridors
- FEMA Floodways
- State-significant Natural Communities and Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species
- National Wilderness Areas
- Class 1 and Class 2 Wetlands

#### Possible Constraints

-Lower priority constraints that may limit where energy can be generated.

Possible constraints can impact the siting process for generation facilities, and should always be considered in planning for these facilities, but do not necessarily preclude placement in corresponding areas. Site-specific solutions are often possible when one of these conditions exists. Site-specific study is required to ascertain whether one of the mapped constraints truly exists on the site and some sites not captured by the Possible Constraints mapping may have such lower priority constraints, depending on the results of site-specific study. The maps are good indicators, but not definitive siting tools.

Included but not limited to:

- Agricultural soils (prime farmland, additional farmland of statewide importance, and additional farmland of local importance)
- FEMA Special Flood Hazard Areas
- Protected Lands (State fee lands and private conservation lands)
- Act 250 Agricultural Soil Mitigation Areas
- Deer Wintering Areas
- ANR's Vermont Conservation Design Highest Priority Forest Blocks (Habitat Blocks 9 & 10)
- Hydric Soils

## Mendon Enhanced Energy Plan

### Prime Resource Areas

-Areas with high resource potential and no identified constraints (Known or Possible).

### Secondary Resource Areas

-Areas with high resource potential and no Known Constraints, but where at least one Possible Constraint exists.

### Wind Resource Area (map on page 19)

-Areas where there is likely to be sufficient wind at a specified height for industrial scale wind energy development.

The analysis used digital wind speed at various heights (30, 50, and 70 meters) and identified areas with the highest wind speeds at each of those heights. The mapping also considers various other conditions, such as ecological zones that may impact the feasibility of renewable energy development. These conditions are known as constraints. The strongest wind resources are generally located at higher elevations and that is where the state's utility-scale installations are located. But Vermont does have nearly 200 small-scale wind projects ranging from 0.95 kW to 100 kW of generating capacity.



Courtesy: Blue Spruce Farm, Bridport, VT

Mendon has decided not to include industrial and most commercial scale wind (greater than 25 kW) in its renewable energy generation targets. Instead of looking at the areas identified on the wind resource map, the Town envisions residential scale and limited commercial scale turbines or windmills in areas throughout Mendon.

“Mendon would seem like an ideal location for wind generation due to its exposure to prevailing westerly winds, but its geography with extremely steep slopes, high ridgelines and mountain peaks largely precludes the opportunity for commercial or industrial wind generation. In addition, given the fact that over two-thirds of Mendon is in conserved forest lands held by the United States, the State of Vermont and the City of Rutland, there is little private land on which wind generation projects could be sited.” Mendon Town Plan, adopted August 8, 2020, p. 26.

## Mendon Enhanced Energy Plan

This scale of wind generation is referred to as **Distributed Wind**. Small Distributed Wind turbines can range from 1kW to 100kW (located at homes and farms). Medium turbines range from 101kW to 1MW (at manufacturing plants, schools or other institutions).

Due to anticipated technological advances, small scale wind generation is projected to be feasible throughout most of the Town at lower elevations in coming decades. It is Town policy that the areas identified on the Wind resource map and identified as resource areas for primarily industrial scale wind be designated as unsuitable given their valuable natural resource values and scenic resources values that limit other development.

Mendon is not saying “no” to wind generation. Instead, following Town land use policy, it would be most appropriate if small scale systems were encouraged at low elevations and on towers preferably not to exceed 100 feet in height, and not visible from public roadways.

### Solar Resource Area (map on page 20)

-Areas where there is likely to be sufficient solar radiation for solar energy development (solar photovoltaic or PV).

The GIS-based analysis factored in direction, slope and location of land to maps areas with high solar radiation potential. Certain areas where development was not possible – such as rivers and roads – were removed. The mapping also considers various other conditions, such as ecological zones that may impact the feasibility of renewable energy development. These conditions are known as constraints.

Community solar is a solar PV generation system that provides electricity, net metering, and return on investment to multiple participants. A community solar project—referred to as a solar farm, garden or shared renewable energy plant—is a solar power plant whose electricity is shared by more than one household.

Instead of installing panels on rooftops, these are ground-mounted solar projects. Participants subscribe to a portion of the energy produced in the community solar project, along with other residents (or investors). It could be a viable option for some of Mendon’s neighborhoods, so long as screening and maintenance of screening is required.



Courtesy: EnergySage

Screening can be natural vegetation. To keep wildlife corridors open, fencing is not always required. There is precedent in Vermont for non-fenced solar arrays; the posts supporting solar panels are specially protected so that they’re not safety hazards.

## Mendon Enhanced Energy Plan

Mendon endorses the minimum setbacks required for ground-mounted solar generation facilities as enumerated in 30 VSA §248(s). See below:

Minimum Setbacks for Solar	
From a state or municipal highway	100 feet for capacity exceeding 150 kW; 40 feet for capacity between 15 and 150 kW
From each property boundary that is not a state or municipal highway	50 feet for capacity exceeding 150 kW; 25 feet for capacity between 15 and 150 kW

Mendon is projecting to help meet its renewable energy generation target with mostly non-utility and non-Standard Offer Program scale solar ( $\leq 500$  kW). Because of the rapid pace of technological advances in the field of PV solar, it is expected that residential, commercial and industrial scale projects will dominate the region's solar generation by 2050. Solar generation facilities of a capacity less than 150 kW are highly encouraged throughout the Town, especially on residential and commercial rooftops.

The Local Constraints and Preferred Locations map shows that there are 343 acres of impervious surfaces in the Town not including residential rooftops. This should be more than enough area to accommodate small scale solar and meet the Town's renewable energy generation target.

### Hydro Resource Area (map on page 21)

-Areas where there is likely to be capacity to accommodate hydroelectric energy development.

The mapping shows areas of potential electricity generation from hydro; locations where renewable energy generation would likely be most feasible according to the natural conditions of an area. Existing, powered and existing non-powered dam sites where a generator could be installed or existing hydropower sites where equipment could be upgraded or expanded to provide additional generation (with potential production) were mapped.

The mapping also considers various other conditions, such as ecological zones that may impact the feasibility of renewable energy development. These conditions are known as constraints.

It is important to note that there is considerable time and expense involved with permitting hydropower projects, which are reviewed at the federal level.

### Biomass Resource Area (map on page 22)

-Areas where there is likely to be sufficient biomass resources for biomass energy development.

The mapping shows areas of potential electricity generation from biomass totaling 15,172 acres of prime and secondary biomass resource - locations with high woody biomass potential and where renewable energy generation would likely be most feasible according to the natural conditions of an area.

## Mendon Enhanced Energy Plan

The mapping also considers various other conditions, such as ecological zones that may impact the feasibility of renewable energy development. These conditions are identified as Known and Possible Constraints in the maps' legends.

### Local Constraints (map on page 23)

-Areas where Mendon prohibits most renewable energy generation: All state and Town conserved lands.  
-Areas where Mendon discourages renewable energy generation.

- Scenic Vistas
- Route 4 Viewshed Corridor
- Ridgeline District and other Prominent Ridgelines such as the East Mountain Corridor
- Conservation Districts 1 & 2
- Use Value (Current Use) parcels
- Designated Mendon Historic Sites

### Scenic Vistas

These vistas are important to the Town as detailed in a number of sections of the Mendon Town Plan adopted August 8, 2020:

*“Route 4 is a major east-west traffic corridor through Mendon that connects historic Rutland with the popular Killington-Pico ski areas. It includes pastoral views of mountains, ridges and open spaces that lend a high scenic quality to Mendon as a “Gateway to the Heart of the Green Mountains.” (p. 1)*

*“Preserve the existing high scenic quality of Mendon’s gateway natural, scenic, and historic areas.” (p. 1)*

*“Protect the high scenic quality of Mendon’s viewsheds.” (p. 25)*

*“Preserve and protect the Town’s steep slopes and ridgelines and the high scenic quality of its viewsheds.” (p. 32)*

*“Strictly limit development that has an undue adverse impact on view-shed scenic resources.” (p. 33)*

*“The Mendon Town Plan is the official policy of the community. It is designed to provide a clear, written standard for orderly development, such that development will not have an undue adverse effect on aesthetics, and such that the Town’s distinctly rural character and its scenic viewsheds are protected and preserved.” (p. 33)*

### Route 4 Viewshed Corridor

Officially the Crossroad of Vermont Byway, this 50-mile east-west route across central Vermont and along Route 4 in Mendon includes the many scenic features and viewsheds of the Town and is a popular route for tourists visiting Vermont.

## Mendon Enhanced Energy Plan

### Ridgeline District and Other Prominent Ridgelines such as East Mountain Corridor

As outlined in the Town Plan adopted August 8, 2020, “In an effort to preserve and protect the ridgelines and steep slopes in the Town, a Ridgeline Overlay District has been approved by Town voters as part of the overall zoning amendments.” (p. 24)

### Conservation Districts 1 & 2

As outlined in the Town Plan adopted August 8, 2020, “The purpose of these districts is to protect those lands which have steep slopes, shallow soils and fragile or limited vegetation and which provide significant recharge of the ground and surface water supplies of the Town and region. They will also protect, as a natural resource, those lands which are essentially unsuitable for development and which are important for wildlife habitat or have high potential for commercial forestry use.” (p. 32).

### Use Value (Current Use) Parcels

Mendon recommends that the list of Town agricultural and forest lands that are part of the state’s Possible Constraints list include Use Value parcels. This would ensure that all parcels now in agricultural or silvicultural production and used for long-term food or wood production are included as part of the state’s Possible Constraints. A working landscape is a high priority for land use and development in Vermont and meets several of the goals of 24 V.S.A. § 4302.

### Designated Mendon Historic Sites

The Mendon Historic District and historical properties around the Town are of high importance for preservation. There are 20 historic structures listed on the Vermont Historic Places Register in Mendon. Two other locations in Town are being studied for inclusion as historic places: the North Tower Castle (also known as the Mead Castle) and the Tamarack Notch Camp.

To that end, development of renewable energy resources and facilities shall not cause an undue adverse impact on these Town historic resources:

- The installation of renewable energy generation facilities on historic buildings or on buildings within the Mendon Historic District shall be done in accordance with current Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.
- The historic character of listed properties and structures shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
- Ground installations, to the extent functionally feasible, shall be installed in locations that minimize their visibility and shall be screened from view of adjoining properties.

## Mendon Enhanced Energy Plan

In short, the local constraints mapped for the Town are supported through data or studies; are consistent with the remainder of the plan; and do not include an arbitrary prohibition or interference with the intended function of any particular renewable resource size or type.

### Preferred Areas (map on p. 23)

Areas where Mendon encourages solar energy generation ( $\geq 500$  kw)

#### Town Plan

“There is open area in Mendon where commercial solar projects could be sited, but such projects should be placed only where they do not interfere with Mendon’s long stated goal of maintaining and enhancing its rural aesthetics, and any such proposed projects should not interfere in any way with view sheds from public roadways or private residences.” Mendon Town Plan as adopted August 8, 2020, p. 26.

### Department of Public Service Preferred Areas

Where applicable, parcels containing any of these state-preferred areas for renewable energy generation: roof-mounted systems; former brownfield sites; disturbed areas such as gravel or sand pits; sealed and sanitary landfills and former quarries and mineral extraction sites; junkyards; parking lots; parking lot canopies over paved parking lots; previously developed sites; brownfields and Superfund sites; areas adjacent to large-scale commercial or industrial buildings; and areas where topographical features or vegetation naturally screen a site from common view.

Although some of these areas are designated in the Local Constraints/Preferred Areas map as Impervious Areas, the data used for the map is not complete enough to show all preferred area criteria. Therefore, the list of state preferred sites above is more comprehensive and should better guide renewable energy development. There are an estimated 343 acres of state-defined impervious surfaces in Mendon which is 43 MW/55,900 MWh of potential energy generation that would be added using a solar conversion.

### Existing Renewable Energy Generation (map on page 24)

-Sites where there is renewable energy generation in the Town.

This map is based on data in the Vermont Energy Action Network (VEAN) Community Energy Dashboard which reflects all renewable projects that have received Certificates of Public Good. As mentioned on page 9, as of March 2017, Mendon has 0.18 MW of existing renewable energy generation.

### Grid Infrastructure (Included in existing Energy map on page 24)

-Current Green Mountain Power grid infrastructure.

Another key element of the Resource Maps is the location of electric grid infrastructure, including three-phase and other high-capacity distribution lines. The location of transmission and distribution infrastructure was not specifically factored into the mapping analysis or the development of energy

## Mendon Enhanced Energy Plan

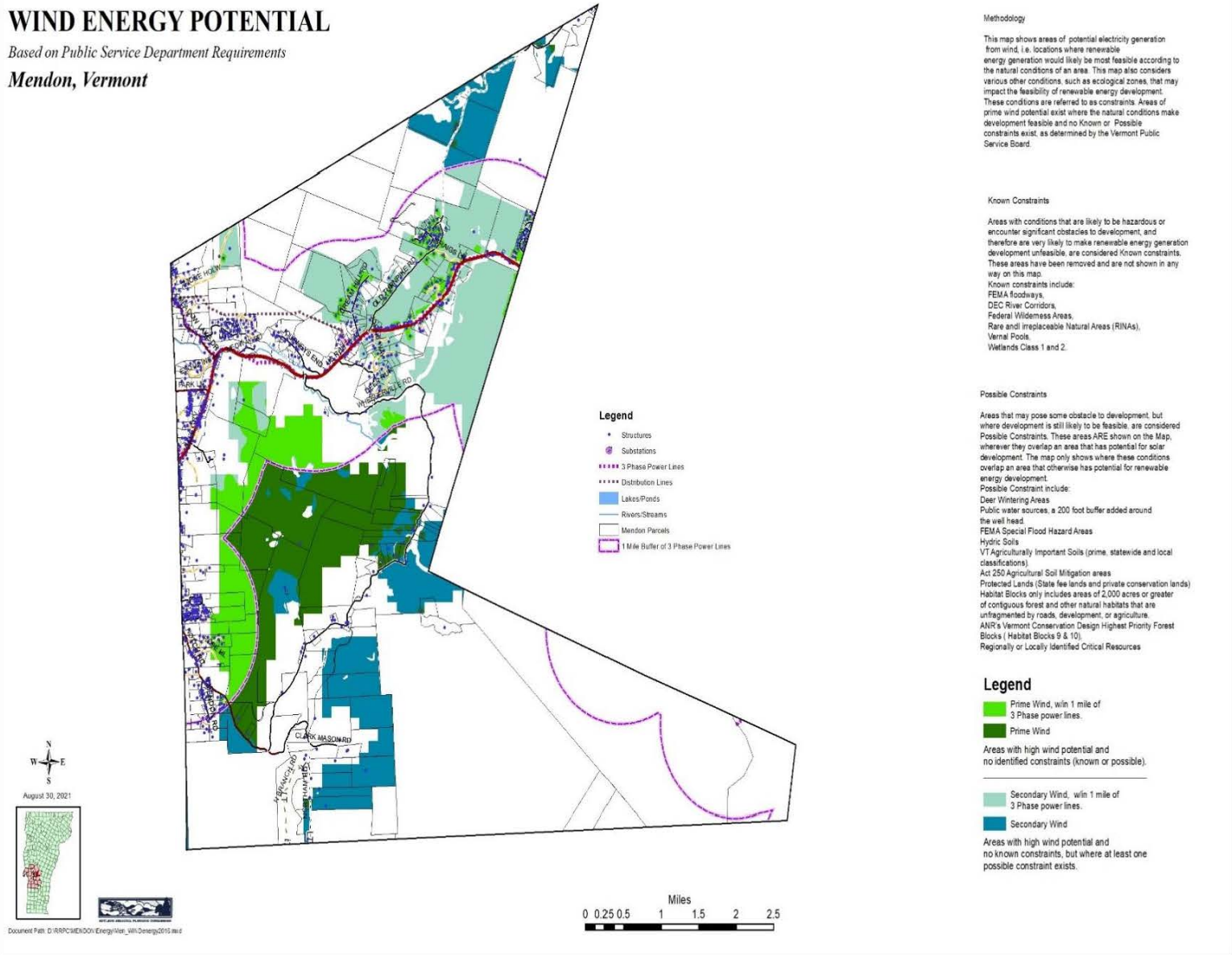
generation goals at the regional scale. However, grid infrastructure location and capacity will play a vital role in determining the economic feasibility and timetable for development of a certain site for a renewable energy generation facility. The Town of Mendon requests that the corridor along the Route 4 Scenic Byway be protected with the use of setbacks.

For more detailed information on grid infrastructure and capacity, Green Mountain Power's "Solar Map" shows the specific capacity of each section of the utility's grid. Red distribution lines indicate there is less than 10% capacity remaining; yellow lines show 10-20% capacity remaining; and green lines indicate more than 20% capacity remaining.

# WIND ENERGY POTENTIAL

Based on Public Service Department Requirements

Mendon, Vermont



- Legend**
- Structures
  - Substations
  - 3 Phase Power Lines
  - Distribution Lines
  - Lakes/Ponds
  - Rivers/Streams
  - Mendon Parcels
  - 1 Mile Buffer of 3 Phase Power Lines

**Methodology**

This map shows areas of potential electricity generation from wind, i.e. locations where renewable energy generation would likely be most feasible according to the natural conditions of an area. This map also considers various other conditions, such as ecological zones, that may impact the feasibility of renewable energy development. These conditions are referred to as constraints. Areas of prime wind potential exist where the natural conditions make development feasible and no Known or Possible constraints exist, as determined by the Vermont Public Service Board.

**Known Constraints**

Areas with conditions that are likely to be hazardous or encounter significant obstacles to development, and therefore are very likely to make renewable energy generation development unfeasible, are considered Known constraints. These areas have been removed and are not shown in any way on this map.

Known constraints include:  
 FEMA floodways,  
 DEC River Corridors,  
 Federal Wilderness Areas,  
 Rare and Irreplaceable Natural Areas (RINAs),  
 Vernal Pools,  
 Wetlands Class 1 and 2.

**Possible Constraints**

Areas that may pose some obstacle to development, but where development is still likely to be feasible, are considered Possible Constraints. These areas ARE shown on the Map, wherever they overlap an area that has potential for solar development. The map only shows where these conditions overlap an area that otherwise has potential for renewable energy development.

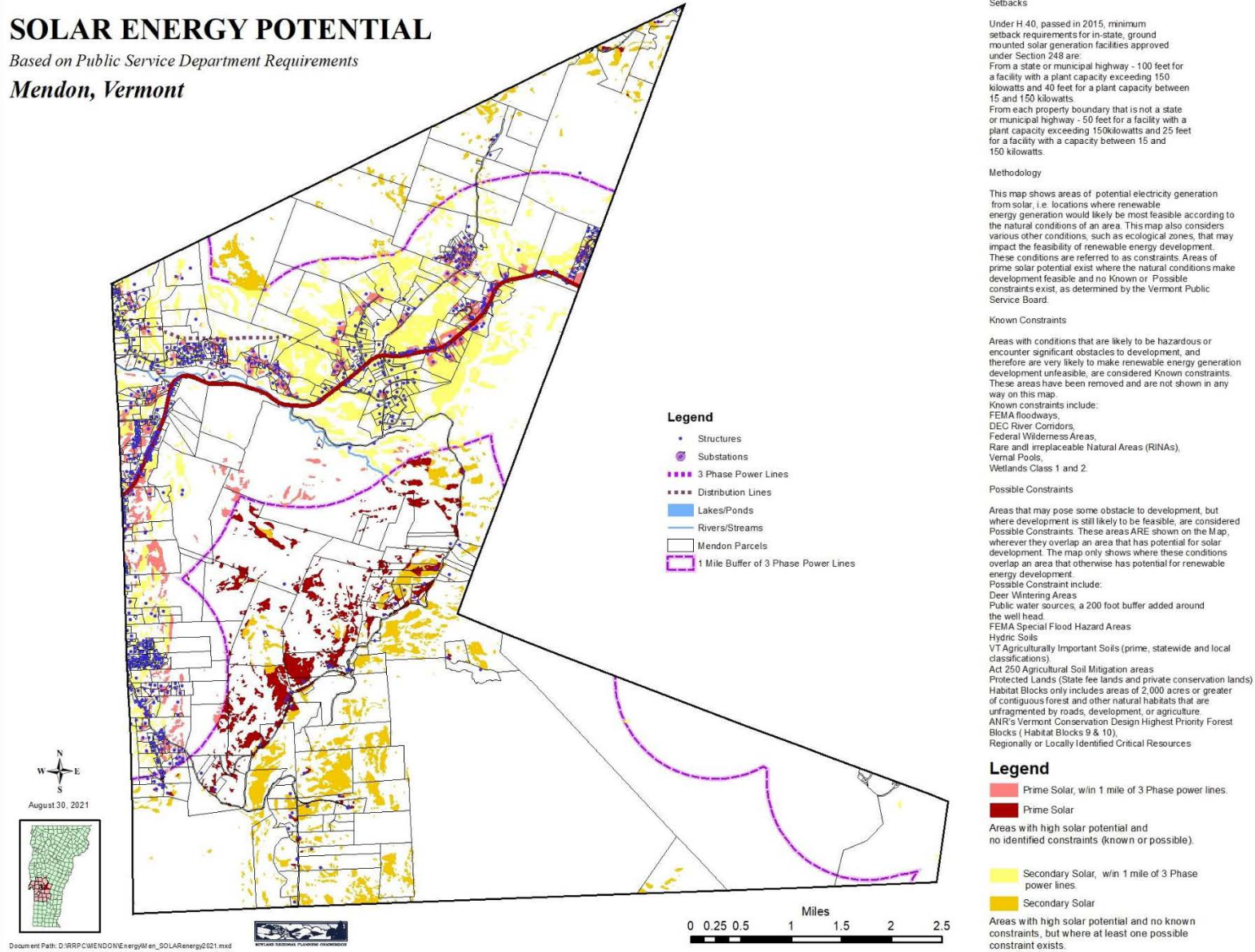
Possible Constraint include:  
 Deer Wintering Areas  
 Public water sources, a 200 foot buffer added around the well head.  
 FEMA Special Flood Hazard Areas  
 Hydric Soils  
 VT Agriculturally Important Soils (prime, statewide and local classifications)  
 Act 250 Agricultural Soil Mitigation areas  
 Protected Lands (State fee lands and private conservation lands)  
 Habitat Blocks only includes areas of 2,000 acres or greater of contiguous forest and other natural habitats that are unfragmented by roads, development, or agriculture.  
 ANR's Vermont Conservation Design Highest Priority Forest Blocks (Habitat Blocks 9 & 10).  
 Regionally or Locally Identified Critical Resources

- Legend**
- Prime Wind, win 1 mile of 3 Phase power Lines.
  - Prime Wind
- Areas with high wind potential and no identified constraints (known or possible).
- 
- Secondary Wind, win 1 mile of 3 Phase power Lines.
  - Secondary Wind
- Areas with high wind potential and no known constraints, but where at least one possible constraint exists.

# SOLAR ENERGY POTENTIAL

Based on Public Service Department Requirements

Mendon, Vermont



**Setbacks**

Under H 40, passed in 2015, minimum setback requirements for in-state, ground mounted solar generation facilities approved under Section 248 are:

- From a state or municipal highway - 100 feet for a facility with a plant capacity exceeding 150 kilowatts and 40 feet for a plant capacity between 15 and 150 kilowatts.
- From each property boundary that is not a state or municipal highway - 50 feet for a facility with a plant capacity exceeding 150 kilowatts and 25 feet for a facility with a capacity between 15 and 150 kilowatts.

**Methodology**

This map shows areas of potential electricity generation from solar, i.e. locations where renewable energy generation would likely be most feasible according to the natural conditions of an area. This map also considers various other conditions, such as ecological zones, that may impact the feasibility of renewable energy development. These conditions are referred to as constraints. Areas of prime solar potential exist where the natural conditions make development feasible and no Known or Possible constraints exist, as determined by the Vermont Public Service Board.

**Known Constraints**

Areas with conditions that are likely to be hazardous or encounter significant obstacles to development, and therefore are very likely to make renewable energy generation development unfeasible, are considered Known constraints. These areas have been removed and are not shown in any way on this map.

Known constraints include:

- FEMA floodways,
- DEC River Corridors,
- Federal Wilderness Areas,
- Rare and irreplaceable Natural Areas (RINAs),
- Vernal Pools,
- Wetlands Class 1 and 2.

**Possible Constraints**

Areas that may pose some obstacle to development, but where development is still likely to be feasible, are considered Possible Constraints. These areas ARE shown on the Map, wherever they overlap an area that has potential for solar development. The map only shows where these conditions overlap an area that otherwise has potential for renewable energy development.

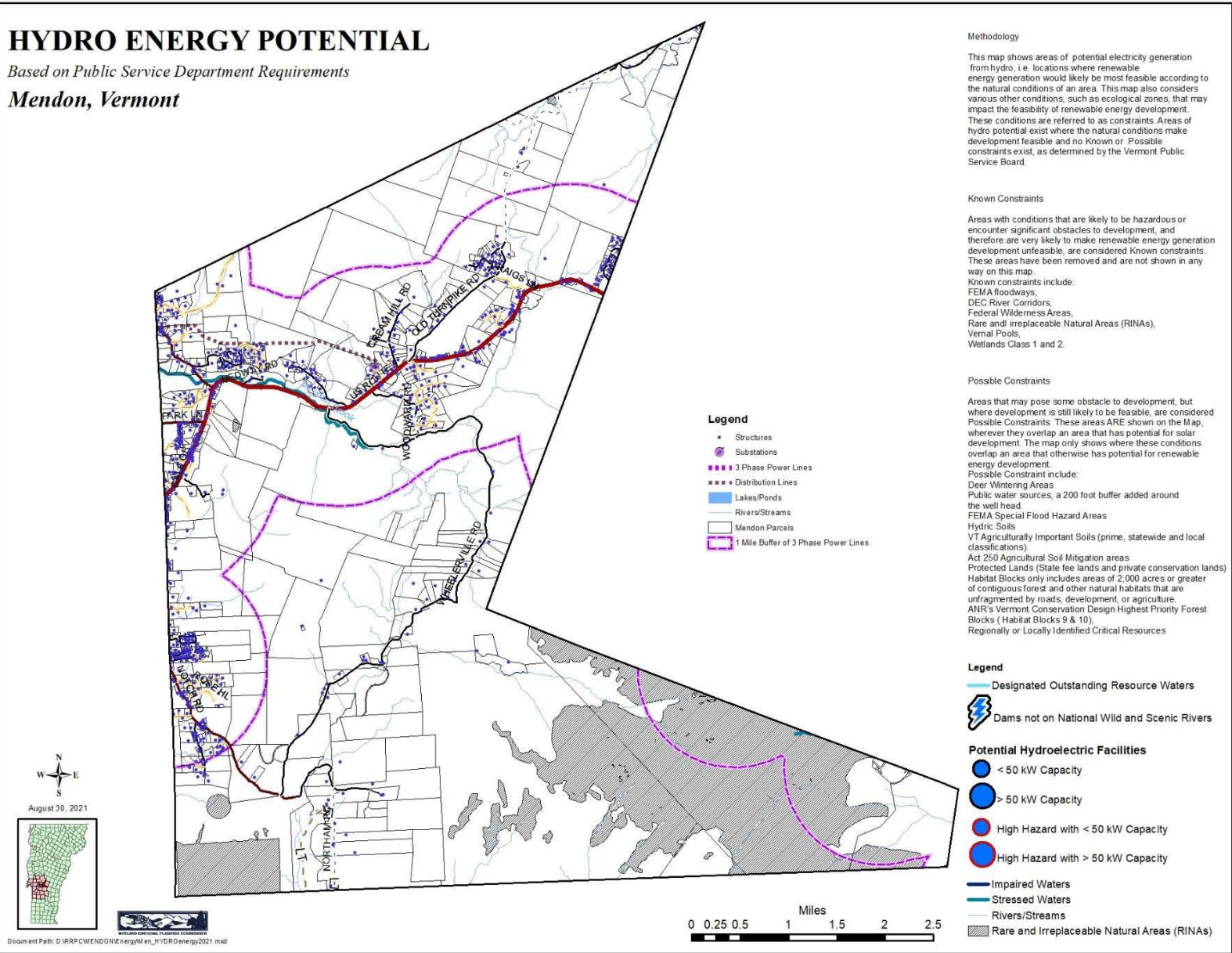
Possible Constraint include:

- Deer Wintering Areas
- Public water sources, a 200 foot buffer added around the well head
- FEMA Special Flood Hazard Areas
- Hydric Soils
- VT Agriculturally Important Soils (prime, statewide and local classifications)
- Act 250 Agricultural Soil Mitigation areas
- Protected Lands (State fee lands and private conservation lands)
- Habitat Blocks only includes areas of 2,000 acres or greater of contiguous forest and other natural habitats that are unfragmented by roads, development, or agriculture.
- ANR's Vermont Conservation Design Highest Priority Forest Blocks (Habitat Blocks 9 & 10)
- Regionally or Locally Identified Critical Resources

# HYDRO ENERGY POTENTIAL

Based on Public Service Department Requirements

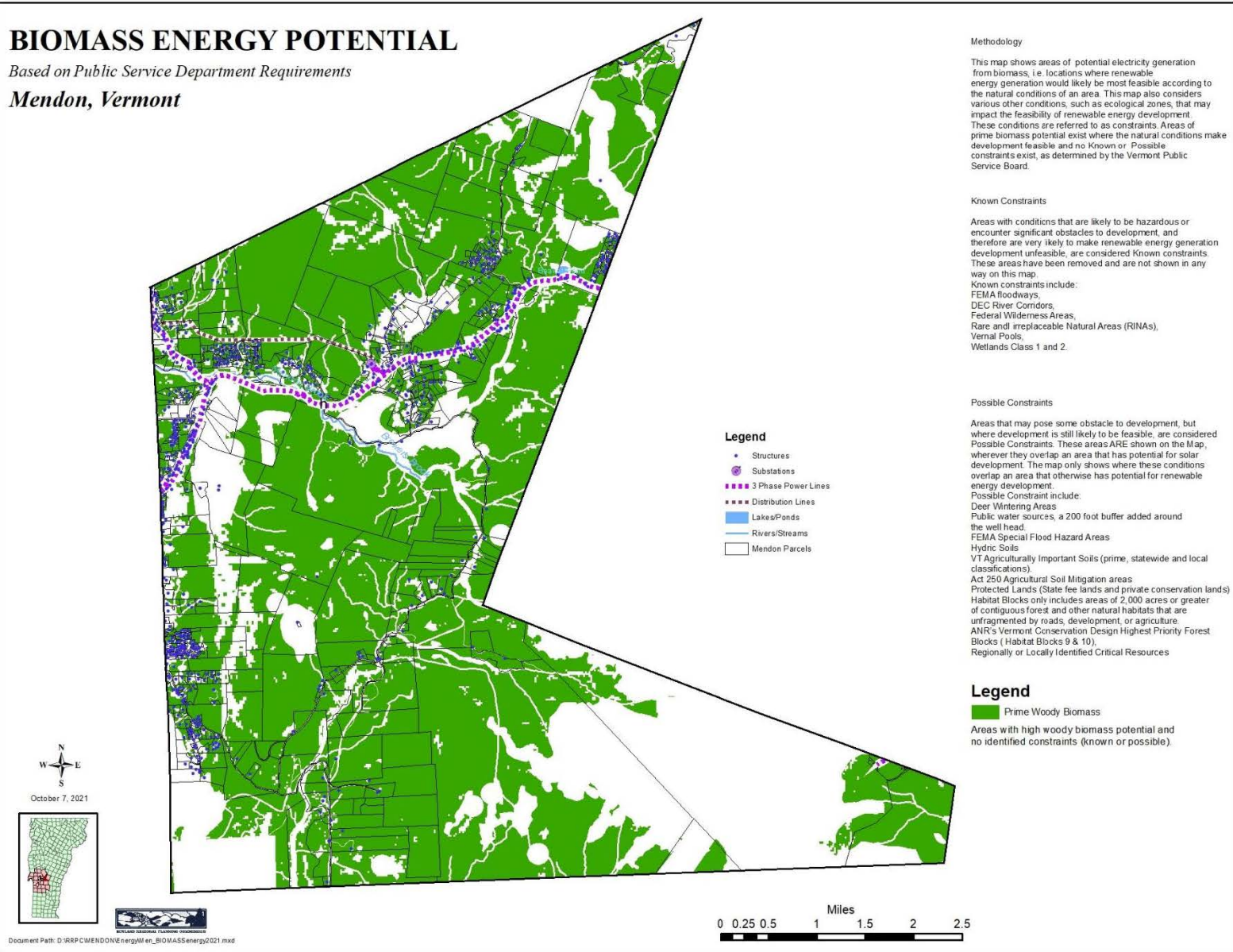
**Mendon, Vermont**



# BIOMASS ENERGY POTENTIAL

Based on Public Service Department Requirements

## Mendon, Vermont



**Methodology**

This map shows areas of potential electricity generation from biomass, i.e. locations where renewable energy generation would likely be most feasible according to the natural conditions of an area. This map also considers various other conditions, such as ecological zones, that may impact the feasibility of renewable energy development. These conditions are referred to as constraints. Areas of prime biomass potential exist where the natural conditions make development feasible and no Known or Possible constraints exist, as determined by the Vermont Public Service Board.

**Known Constraints**

Areas with conditions that are likely to be hazardous or encounter significant obstacles to development, and therefore are very likely to make renewable energy generation development unfeasible, are considered Known constraints. These areas have been removed and are not shown in any way on this map.  
 Known constraints include:  
 FEMA floodways,  
 DEC River Corridors,  
 Federal Wilderness Areas,  
 Rare and irreplaceable Natural Areas (RINAs),  
 Vernal Pools,  
 Wetlands Class 1 and 2.

**Possible Constraints**

Areas that may pose some obstacle to development, but where development is still likely to be feasible, are considered Possible Constraints. These areas ARE shown on the Map, wherever they overlap an area that has potential for solar development. The map only shows where these conditions overlap an area that otherwise has potential for renewable energy development.  
 Possible Constraint include:  
 Deer Wintering Areas  
 Public water sources, a 200 foot buffer added around the well head.  
 FEMA Special Flood Hazard Areas  
 Hydric Soils  
 VT Agriculturally Important Soils (prime, statewide and local classifications).  
 Act 250 Agricultural Soil Mitigation areas  
 Protected Lands (State fee lands and private conservation lands)  
 Habitat Blocks only includes areas of 2,000 acres or greater of contiguous forest and other natural habitats that are unfragmented by roads, development, or agriculture.  
 ANR's Vermont Conservation Design Highest Priority Forest Blocks (Habitat Blocks 9 & 10),  
 Regionally or Locally Identified Critical Resources

**Legend**

- Structures
- Substations
- 3 Phase Power Lines
- Distribution Lines
- Lakes/Ponds
- Rivers/Streams
- Mendon Parcels

**Legend**

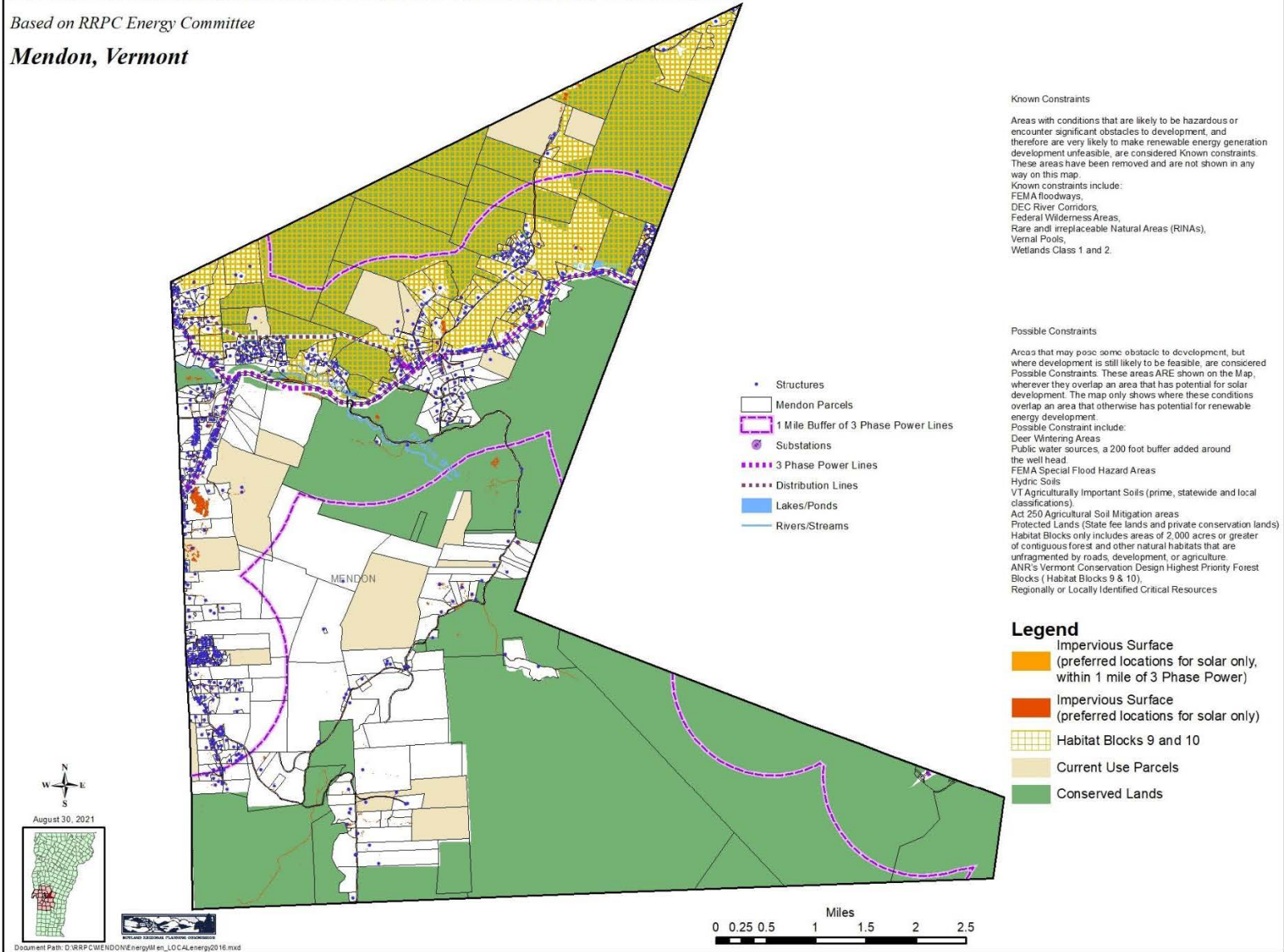
- Prime Woody Biomass
- Areas with high woody biomass potential and no identified constraints (known or possible).

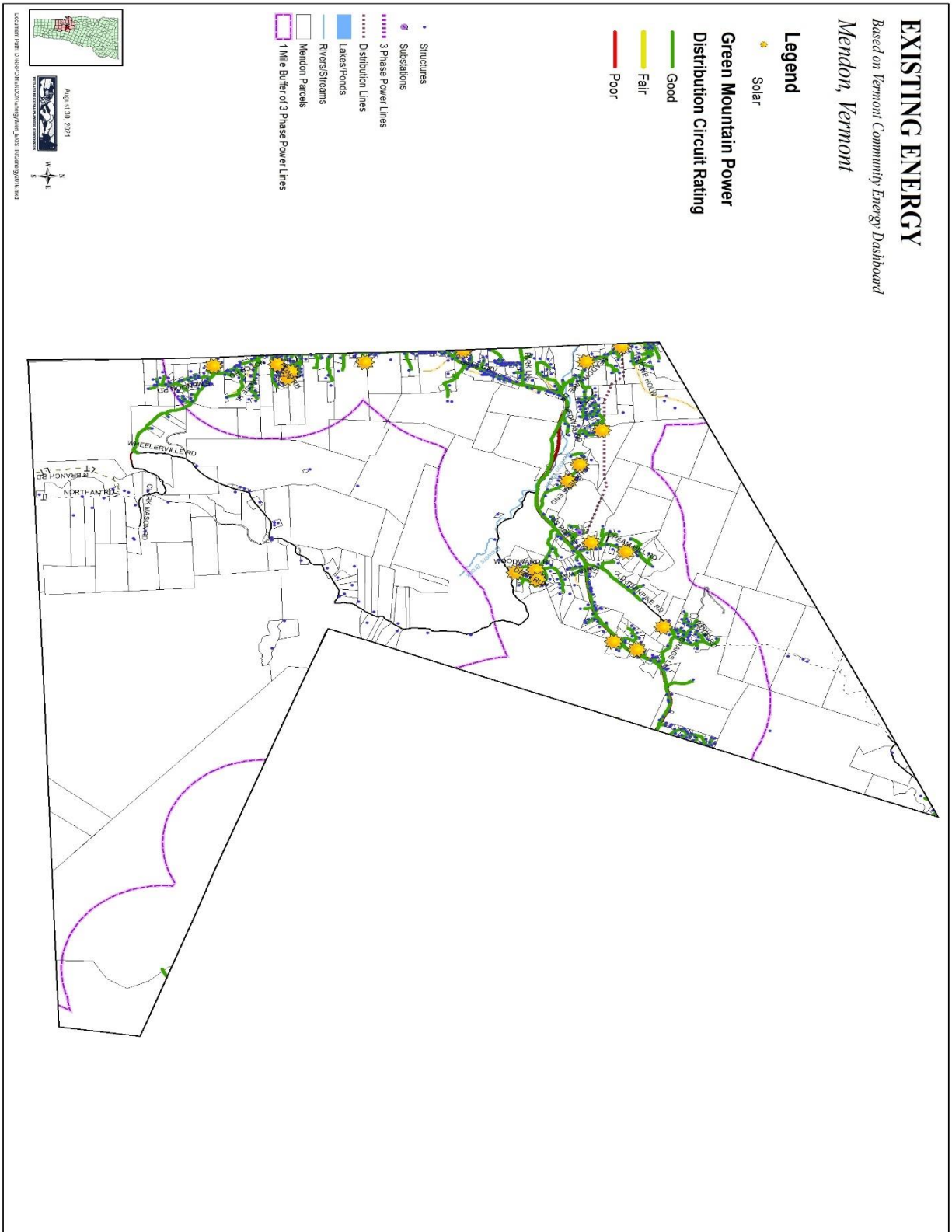
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# LOCAL CONSTRAINTS AND LOCALLY PREFERRED LOCATIONS

Based on RRPC Energy Committee

## Mendon, Vermont





## Energy Strategies to Achieve Town Targets

The purpose of this section is to identify specific actions that have the greatest potential for Mendon to greatly reduce fossil fuel use in a sustainable manner. Specifically, the following are strategies and policies to advance conservation and efficiency in space and water heating (thermal), and transportation and related land use changes.

The Mendon Selectboard shall form an Energy Committee as established by 24 V.S.A. § 4433. The Energy Committee shall be responsible for the assigned tasks below:

Conservation and efficient use of energy

### **To encourage energy conservation, efficient buildings, and the efficient use of energy by individuals and the municipality, the Energy Committee shall:**

- Implement this plan and track progress on the policies and actions in this plan. This Committee's task shall be to promote local residential and commercial efficiency and conservation improvements through coordination of information and technical assistance. This Committee shall advocate for appropriate renewable energy generation throughout the Town. This Committee shall report regularly to the Town Selectboard. Committee tasks include:
  - Co-sponsor and organize weatherization workshops for homes and businesses for new construction, retrofits, and existing structures.
  - Coordinate with the following programs:
    - "Energy Star" building performance rating system
    - Education programming and appliance upgrade rebates through Efficiency Vermont
    - Weatherization assistance provided by BROCC Community Action in Southwestern Vermont and NeighborWorks of Western Vermont.
    - Provide information/resources to promote strategic tree planting to maximize energy benefits.
    - Promote the use of landscaping for energy efficiency.
    - Promote the use of cold climate heat pumps with education/presentations in coordination with Efficiency Vermont and electric utilities.
    - Support the use of ground-source heat pump heating and cooling systems for new construction.
    - Promote municipal solar, if feasible, or other renewable energy projects on Town land and take steps to help viable projects move forward.
  - Promote the use of the residential and commercial building energy standards by distributing code information.
  - Encourage new municipal and existing Town buildings to meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards and encourage current structures to become more energy efficient.
  - All other alternative sources of energy would reduce fossil fuel consumption beyond the 90/50 target. Other renewable sources of energy may include small wind.

## Mendon Enhanced Energy Plan

- Distribute (in person and via the Town's website) utility energy transformation (reduction) information to promote greater energy efficiency as well as information regarding residential and group/community solar generation.

## Transportation

**To promote reduced transportation energy demand and single-occupancy vehicle use, use of renewable or lower-emission energy sources for transportation, and the increased use of public transit Mendon shall:**

- Promote the expansion of service of the Marble Valley Regional Transit District in the Town.
- Continue close collaboration and promotion with the MVRTD to encourage greater ridership by Town residents.
- Make public transportation information/resources available at Town buildings and facilities.
- Promote the Go Vermont webpage, which provides ride share, vanpool, public transit, and park-and-ride options.
- Encourage municipal employers to have the necessary equipment and training to facilitate conference calls, webinars, and other virtual meetings and information sharing.
- Promote the Drive Electric Vermont webpage which connects users to financial incentives, dealers, and recharging stations for EVs.
- Use Town-wide events to promote different kinds of EVs and provide people interested in purchasing them an opportunity to talk with fellow community members who own them.
- Partner with Drive Electric Vermont, the Vermont Clean Cities Coalition, and other organizations to promote the expansion of workplace charging.
- Promote the installation of DC fast-charging infrastructure at strategic locations throughout Town.
- Promote the installation of EV charging infrastructure as part of new or redevelopment, especially for developments subject to Act 250.
- Encourage the installation of EV charging infrastructure that is accessible to school buses, municipal vehicles, snow plows, fire and other emergency vehicles, and farm vehicles.
- Encourage local planners, public works department, and others to implement complete streets concepts and provide sample language to include in municipal ordinances, regulations, and bylaws to ensure that site plan reviews include pedestrian and bicycle access as well as safety and traffic-calming measures.
- Assess existing roads for their ability to accommodate safe and convenient walking and biking. Areas for improvement shall be prioritized and funding sought to align these areas with Complete Streets guidelines.
- Extend bicycle and pedestrian facilities to high use areas and areas of new development.
- Ensure that local site plans include adequate bike and pedestrian infrastructure and safety measures.
- Purchase energy efficient municipal vehicles when practical.

## Mendon Enhanced Energy Plan

- Encourage the installation of EV charging stations at the Town Office and other Town buildings and facilities.

## Land Use

**Mendon is committed to land use policies that result in the conservation of energy, demonstrate a commitment to reducing strip development, minimizing low-density development and making compact development more feasible. The Energy Committee shall:**

- Promote low-impact development and green infrastructure practices for new development.
- In collaboration with Rutland City, provide sewer services to areas that would allow fill-in development in existing developed residential, commercial and industrial areas, in addition to what the Alpine Pipeline already services.
- Prepare a plan for improving pedestrian and bike connections and for the consideration of funding through a capital budget and program.
- Promote future development along Business Rt. 4 (an under-developed commercial area in the Town) so that it is a walkable, multi-use hub.
- Consider a designated Village Center for the Town.
- Work with the Selectboard to develop a long-term master plan to address the infrastructure necessary for compact development, e.g., sewer and water, pedestrian and biking facilities and parking.
- Work with regional planning groups such as CEDRR and RRPC to promote Mendon as a site for energy efficient business development and green transportation.
- Accommodate the safe and effective use of renewable energy systems and consider Town policies that address design, height, safety, siting, sound, and decommissioning.

Mendon Planning Commission

Mendon Town Plan Update: Written Report November 4, 2021

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

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

The Mendon Town Plan has been updated in accordance with the goals set forth in 24 V.S.A. §4302. The changes made to the Mendon Town Plan include the adoption of a stand-alone Mendon Enhanced Energy Plan (EEP) and a related updated energy section referencing the EEP in the Mendon Town Plan, in compliance with the enhanced energy planning requirements set by the Department of Public Service and Act 174, to comply with state planning goals, and to be consistent with the Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC) *Regional Plan*.

24 V.S.A. §4384(c) requires that when the designation of any land area is altered, that the report covers the following points:

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

The probable impact on the surrounding area of the updated energy section would be minimal since the land use references in the EEP reflect current use. Increase in traffic is not anticipated.

*(2) The long-term cost or benefit to the municipality, based upon consideration of the probable impact on: (A) the municipal tax base; and (B) the need for public facilities.*

Long-term costs are not anticipated. Long-term benefits are anticipated by virtue of the “substantial deference” standard that is to be afforded the Mendon Town Plan in the Public Utility Commission’s review of whether an energy project meets the specific policies in the EEP, once the EEP is adopted. The need for additional public facilities is not anticipated.

*(3) The amount of vacant land which is: (A) already subject to the proposed new designation; and (B) actually available for that purpose, and the need for additional land for that purpose.*

Vacant land that is conducive to renewable energy development was looked at in drafting the energy section. Scenic resource concerns were paramount in determining where energy generation is not encouraged.

*(4) The suitability of the area in question for the proposed purpose, after consideration of: (A) appropriate alternative locations; (B) alternative uses for the area under consideration; and (C) the probable impact of the proposed change on other areas similarly designated.*

The suitability of the energy section's preferred or non-preferred areas was carefully considered by the Mendon Planning Commission. The group spent considerable time considering these areas' renewable energy resource potential and comparing that to alternative locations and uses as well as to the probable impact on other areas similarly designated.

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

The size and boundaries of the preferred renewable energy generation sites are appropriate and minimal with respect to the area required and land capability. The impact on existing development would be minimal in these areas although the Mendon Planning Commission is and will continue to be sensitive to abutting landowners' aesthetic concerns. As outlined in the energy section, abutting landowners will be an integral part of the planning process if energy projects are proposed in Mendon.