

2013 Plainfield Town Plan



*The Town Plan was first adopted in 1973
Revised and re-adopted in 1979, 1984, 1994, 2000, and 2007*
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1| Introduction

1.1 The Planning Process

This document sets out the vision Plainfield residents have for the future of the town and provides a framework to achieve the community's goals and objectives over the next ten years. As a small-sized town close to two urban areas, Montpelier and Barre, Plainfield is more likely to be affected by outside development pressure than to generate growth or impacts affecting other towns. A Town Plan is important to protect the community's interests, retain local control, and encourage desired forms of growth and development. The plan itself has no regulatory authority, it merely expresses the town's consensus on the goals and objectives that regulations should strive to obtain.

The Town Plan is updated every five years to reflect new information and changing needs in the community. It can also be amended at any time to deal with unanticipated changes affecting the town. As the principal policy statement for the Town of Plainfield, it is intended as a guide upon which to base decisions about community issues. The Plainfield Town Plan should be used for:

- providing information about the community
- serving as a basis for decisions regarding economic development, recreation, land conservation and development
- providing the framework for the planning the future of the town
- guiding regulatory actions, such as zoning bylaws, flood inundation, fluvial erosion, and subdivision regulations
- establishing a basis for the review of state and regional programs
- evaluating proposals affecting the community
- guiding Plainfield's relations with neighboring towns and the state

While this plan charts a direction for the town, it is up to its citizens to use the plan to shape Plainfield's future.

1.2 The Authority to Adopt the Town Plan

The Plainfield Town Plan was prepared in accordance with Title 24 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated, Chapter 117, The Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning Act.

1.3 Town Participation in writing this Plan

Numerous efforts have been made to encourage participation and formulate the community's goals and objectives. In the summer of 2009, the Select Board received a *Take Charge/Recharge* grant to discuss economic development opportunities for Plainfield. During a similar time period, the Plainfield Planning Commission obtained a planning grant from the Vermont Dept. of Housing and Community Affairs. These grants facilitated a broad discussion of economic development and the long-term health and viability of Plainfield. A steering committee was formed to plan and organize a process for conducting a community-wide conversation. The objectives were to gain input for development of a "vision statement" and to identify potential economic development opportunities.

In March of 2010, over 50 members of the Plainfield community gathered at Twinfield Union School to participate in the process. The input received at these meetings are detailed in the "Plainfield Community Conversation" report published in 2010. The Plainfield Planning Commission followed up on the report with a town survey that was mailed to all residents in the fall of 2010. The reports and surveys are available at the Plainfield municipal building. The Town Plan also reflects input received in writing the 2007 version, which included a town survey and focus group meetings.

1.4 Coordination with Neighboring Towns

Plainfield shares a number of governmental and social interactions with the neighboring towns. The major link between Plainfield and Marshfield is the shared union school Twinfield. This unites the two towns on a social and economic level since the largest share of the local tax revenue goes to the operation of the school. The water and wastewater system that serves the village of Plainfield also serves part of the town of Marshfield. Plainfield is a member of the Regional Planning Commission. The towns' fire and fast squad are part of the mutual aid system in

Washington County.

The Plainfield Planning Commission has worked with the towns along the Route 2 corridor to develop a commuter van service in conjunction with the Wheels Transportation Network.

The Planning Process

Goals:

Widespread involvement of Plainfield citizens and landowners at all levels of the local planning and decision-making process.

Strategies:

Provide opportunities for citizen input during planning and decision-making process in an open, public environment.

Inform the public of governmental activities through public forums, direct mailings, Front Porch Forum, local newspapers and Field Notes.

Continue to actively participate in Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission to coordinate local planning activities with neighboring towns and the region.

2| A Vision Of Plainfield

2.1 Plainfield Today

Plainfield is a small, diverse town with a compact village straddling the Winooski River in its northwest corner. Route 2, a major east-west arterial, cuts through the upper village. In the lower village, gravel roads branch out into the town's hills, offering access to the beauty of Plainfield's open land and long-range views. At 13,500 acres, Plainfield is approximately half the size of neighboring towns.

Plainfield's residents and their town plans have always stressed the importance of maintaining its rural character which they view as being comprised of a landscape of hills, valleys, fields, and forests. Though only a few farms are still in business, agriculture is strongly supported by its citizens. Plainfield's Village Historic District, with its concentration of brick buildings derived from an early local building tradition and its Greek Revival architecture, reflects an intact nineteenth century village-scape.

Over the past decade, the additions of new side walks, a public park, and several businesses have helped the lower village grow into a stable neighborhood, attractive to home owners, renters, and visitors. In 2013, construction will begin on an information kiosk at the Mill Street Park and the Main Street Bridge will be rewired with replicas of the original lamp posts, creating a welcoming 'gateway' into the lower village from US Route 2. A parking lot in the lower village was converted to a community park in 2002 and new trees have been planted along Main Street, Mill Street, and several locations along Rt. 2, including the entrance into town from the west.

Plainfield has several popular community events including, Plainfield Old Home Day parade, the Cold Home Day Bonfire, and the Halloween Parade. Plainfield is home to a restaurant, food coop, auto repair business, bookstore, furniture store, antique business, yoga studio, café, jewelry store, retail professional office space, beer making supply store, clothing design firm, art gallery and summer farmers' market. *See Section 11 | Economic Development.* During the growing

season, a farmer's market is held every weekend at the Mill Street Park. Some of the institutions that enrich the community are Goddard College, The Health Center, and the Community Center, and the Cutler Library.

Speeding and pedestrian safety continue to be a concern in the lower village. The GMTA's US 2 Commuter offers daily public bus service from the Park and Ride at the east end of Main Street. *See Section 8 | Transportation.*

2.2 Plainfield's Past

Plainfield's first visitors were most likely from the Abenaki and Cowasuck native American tribes who traveled along the river. Surveyors employed by the colony of New York were probably among the first white settlers to pass through Plainfield in 1773. In 1788, Plainfield, a land grant left over from neighboring surveyed townships, was called St Andrew's Gore. The first settlement occurred in 1791. In 1797, the legislature granted the petition to incorporate the town as Plainfield, but it wasn't until 1867 that the village became incorporated. By 1812 the village was becoming the commercial center of town with more than a dozen families. The falls of the Winooski River south of the Main Street Bridge provided the principal power source for Plainfield's mills. A saw mill and grist mill on Brook Road gave rise to a secondary commercial center called Perkinsville. By 1860 there were 157 dwellings in Plainfield, 107 in the hills and 50 in the village. The typical farm size was 130 acres and was worked with a pair of horses or oxen and a diversified crop of wheat, rye, Indian corn and oats.

A new era began in 1873 when the Montpelier and Wells River railroad track reached Plainfield. In 1889 the town mill cut between two and three million board feet of lumber a year and ground 600-800 bushels of grain a day with a work force of 30 men. Stores for hardware, dry goods, paints, shoes, groceries, and service of blacksmiths, shoemakers, dressmakers, jewelers, veterinarians, mechanics and physicians were all available. The amount of cleared land reached 70%, the recorded peak. The village hotel served overland east and West travelers and in the summer served as an overnight post for tourists on their way to the

“Spring House” in Perkinsville. Several village homes had been altered to provide housing for the many mill and railroad workers this period of growth brought. Rail cars could now ship cheese, butter potatoes, sheep and cattle to the south. The



Bancroft Inn, now Plainfield Furniture, and Universalist Church, now Town Hall

town had a creamery, two farm machinery dealers, four builders, two livery stables, eleven merchants and fourteen manufacturers, mechanics or artisans. The total town population was about 750 people.

Plainfield Village growth and prosperity continued into the twentieth century. Electricity came to the village in 1906. The first ice merchant appeared in 1915 along with the first dentist. In 1916, F. J. Bancroft erected a sawmill beyond the railroad station to cut ash lumber for tennis stock and dowels. The Plainfield Garage opened in 1923 to service the new automobile in town. The Goddard Seminar completed its move from Barre to Plainfield in 1938. The railroad ceased operation in 1956 as trucks replace the trains in transported milk to the market.

2.3 Recent History

Consolidation is a common theme in Plainfield and throughout Vermont during the second half of

the 20th century. Milk cans were being rapidly replaced by bulk storage tanks, allowing farmers to keep their milk cool on site while waiting for a pickup from a milk tanker truck. This led to the demise of the small dairy farmer, as the industry rushed to consolidate. Larger farms willing to invest in the technology survived, while the smaller farms went out of business.

The Vermont legislature was also going through a process of consolidation as well. Since the state constitution was ratified in 1791, the Vermont House of Representatives had always consisted of one lawmaker from each of the state’s 246 towns. Population was irrelevant since Burlington had the same number of representatives as Plainfield. The system, which clearly favored small towns and rural interests, was changed in 1965 when lawmakers created a new 150-member House with districts based on population.

Plainfield government went through a consolidation as well. Plainfield Village and Plainfield Town had two separate governance structures with too many overlapping interests and conflicts. In 1985 the two merged. Plainfield schools also merged with neighboring Marshfield, as part of a statewide trend to develop more union schools and create operational efficiencies. The Twinfield Union School combines grades K-12 all in one building for all of Marshfield and Plainfield school children. This also served to bring the two towns together for sporting and other community events.

One of the more significant developments over the past fifty years is the growth, decline and re-emergence of Goddard College. *See Chapter 7| Facilities.* The student population at the college peaked in late 1960’s. Single family homes were

Plainfield Vision Goals
 The Town should look for ways to foster appreciation for Plainfield’s cultural and historical background and structures. Encourage economic development that is in keeping with Plainfield tradition of providing local services.

Plainfield Vision Strategies
 The Town will work to inform landowners of resources available (advice and funding) for renovating or repairing historic structures, including barns.

The Town will support Plainfield revitalization groups.

converted to apartments to provide housing for the students. Goddard employed approximately 350 people during this time. When the students were in school the town population doubled. Cultural and political conflicts between the Goddard students and Plainfield residents were common.

The decline in enrollment in the late 1970's had negative economic impact on the town. However, many of the student apartments became part of the town's affordable housing infrastructure. Additionally the school introduced many students from out of state to the area, some who decided to stay and purchase homes and land.

3| Community Profile

Plainfield’s population has generally followed the same growth pattern as that of most Vermont communities. The town’s population peaked in 1840 with 880 residents and gradually declined to 716 in 1900. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the number of Plainfield residents has steadily increased, exceeding its 1840 population peak in 1950, to an historic high in 1970 of 1,399.

The 45% increase in Plainfield’s population between 1960 and 1970 may be related to the expansion of Goddard College. Plainfield’s population today is about 8% less than its historical high, corresponding to Goddard’s decline in enrollment. *See Chart 3.1.*

In 2001, the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission contracted with Economic and Policy Research Inc. (ERPI) of Williston, Vermont to prepare economic and demographic

Chart 3.1

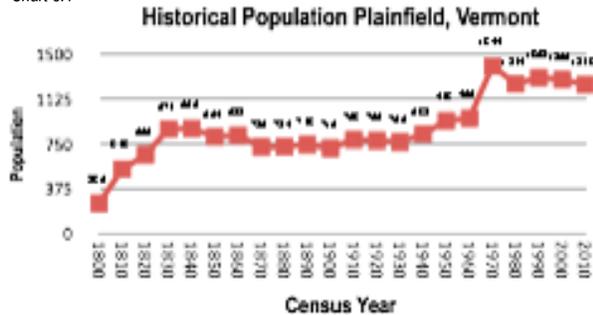
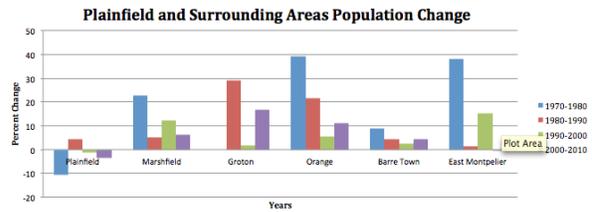


Chart 3.2



forecasts for towns in the region through 2020. According to ERPI’s forecast, Plainfield’s population will increase to 1,306 people (up 20 people) by 2015, an average annual rate of growth of 0.1%.

Most of the neighboring towns have experienced steady population growth in the last decade.

Plainfield is the lone exception with a slight decrease in population since 1990. *See Chart 3.2.*

Chart 3.3

2010 Population Characteristics	
Plainfield's population	1243
Population density	53.5
Absolute Population Change	-43
Percent Population Change	-3.34%
Natural Increase	68
Net Migration	-111
Number of Families	319
Average Family Size	2.91
Median Age	42.2
Non family households	209
Total Children in Single Parent Families	36
Total Households	528

Source: 2010 U.S. Census

The 2010 U.S. Census shows that Plainfield has lost roughly 3% of its population over the past decade. *See Chart 3.3.*

Community Profile Goals

Accommodate a sustainable level of population growth that does not over-burden community facilities, services or the town’s natural and cultural resources.

Community Profile Strategies

Encourage, through land use and housing goals and policies, a socially and economically diverse population that includes families with children, young adults who grew up in the community, senior citizens and those new to town.

The Planning Commission will monitor population and housing estimates, and annual permit data to identify correlation between housing development and population growth on an ongoing basis.

Where appropriate, the appropriate town body will, exercise party status in the Act 250 development review process and other state regulatory proceedings to ensure that the town’s growth needs and limitations are properly addressed relative to this plan.

4| Natural Environment

Residents and visitors alike highly value Vermont’s natural beauty and rich biological diversity. Habitat loss (degradation, fragmentation, etc.) is the single greatest threat to Vermont’s biological diversity. As our land-based culture – farming and forestry, hunting and fishing - declines, the Vermont will depend on a more diverse economy. Resource conservation is vital in order to ensure the natural environment is protected. This will require town planners to promote a viable balance between the sometimes conflicting goals of conservation and development.

4.1 Climate

According to 2012 data collected at the Knapp Airport in Berlin, the total melted annual precipitation is 34 inches of which 96 inches falls as snow. The number of days with any measurable precipitation is 143. On average, there are 160 sunny days per year in Plainfield. The July high is around 78 degrees. The January low is 7. See Chart 4.1.

Chart 4.1

Rainfall (in.)	34.4
Snowfall (in.)	96.4
Precipitation Days	143
Sunny Days	160
Avg. July High	78
Avg. Jan. Low	6.7
UV Index	2.9
Elevation ft.	1,152

Much attention has been given to global climate change in recent years. The effects of climate change are already evident in Vermont, including more intense storms linked to rising average temperatures. Over the next 50 years, climate change models have projected that the average temperatures in the state will increase five to nine degrees Fahrenheit. Such an increase would reduce the number of months with average low temperatures below freezing from the current six to four, and increase the number of months with average highs above 80°F from two to three or four. Climate change is expected to alter the frequency and magnitude of storm events, rain-on-snow events, ice storms, and even the timing and frequency of droughts. Climate change is also expected to alter the town’s natural environment by changing the plant species that can thrive in Plainfield, the migrating patterns of birds, the timing of the budding and flowering of plants, the temperature of rivers and ponds, and countless

other changes throughout the interconnected web of life.

Greenhouse gas emissions associated with human activities are contributing to changes in the climate, both here in Vermont and globally. As a state, Vermont has established aggressive goals of reducing emissions from 1990 baseline levels as follows: 25 percent by 2012; 50 percent by 2028; and, if practicable using reasonable efforts, 75 percent by 2050.

Air pollution emissions in rural areas like Plainfield tend to be dominated by “area sources” (for example: residential heating, road dust, agricultural, consumer solvent use, open burning, etc.), and “mobile sources” (for example: cars, trucks, lawn & garden equipment, etc.) To our knowledge, there are currently no significant “point sources” of air pollution in Plainfield. Point sources include large industrial facilities and electric power plants, but also increasingly include many smaller industrial and commercial facilities, such as dry cleaners and gas stations.

If climate change proceeds as currently anticipated, the climate and natural environment in Vermont will become more like that of the mid- Atlantic region by the end of the 21st century. For many years, Vermont has been a winter tourism and recreation destination, but climate change has the potential to undermine this critical component of our economy.

Plainfield should anticipate that a changing climate will bring dramatic social, economic, and environmental change which indicates a need for diversification of the local economy, action to limit future emission of climate changing air pollutants, and steps to enable our human and natural communities to adapt as effectively as possible to the changes that are likely coming. Maintaining a connected network of forests and natural cover is a critical step in allowing for plant and animal movement in response to this changing climate.

4.2 Surface Water

A number of small (less than ten acre) ponds, both natural and man-made, are scattered throughout the town. The largest in Plainfield is

Bancroft Pond, a 14-acre shallow pond located at the intersection of East Hill Road and Bancroft Pond Road. The shoreline of the pond is undeveloped except for a single camp on the north shore. The wetland areas adjacent to Bancroft Pond provide excellent wildlife habitat. Ducks, geese, otter, beaver, hare, and coyote are among the many species of birds and mammals in the wetlands and on the water of the pond. Uses of the pond include warm-water fishing, canoeing, bird watching, and in the winter, skating. Due to the pond's shallowness, it is not used for swimming. Surface water runoff can cause erosion and damage during heavy rains which are anticipated to occur with increasing frequency. Managing this erosion and subsequent damage outside the larger watersheds will be an important part of the town's future infrastructure needs. Part of this should take place in the village by updating and maintaining the storm water system and part needs to take place along the roads by continually upgrading culverts and drainage management.

The rivers, streams and brooks of Plainfield are important features in town. The Winooski River is one of Vermont's largest. The Winooski flows east to west through Plainfield, shaping the landscape and influencing land use in the village.

Plainfield residents and others use the Winooski River for canoeing and kayaking from the dam upstream. There is a newly designated boat portage site located behind the Plainfield Coop,



maintained by The Friends of the Winooski. The river is used for swimming above the sewage treatment plant. Along the river are several high,

unstable riverbanks that provide unique habitat for kingfishers and cliff and bank swallows.

Plainfield (like many other towns) discharges its treated wastewater into the Winooski River. *See Section 7 | Facilities, Utilities & Services.* The State of Vermont classifies the Winooski in between the Plainfield sewage treatment plant and four miles down river as a "Class B water." This means that the section of river is considered unsuitable for swimming, fishing, or drinking—although it is suitable for limited agricultural or industrial water supply, and habitat for aquatic biota, fish and wildlife.

Great Brook, a tributary of the Winooski River, bisects the town from south to north. The Great Brook and all of the brooks and streams in Plainfield (except for the Winooski River) are designated by the State of Vermont as "Class B" waters. Class B waters are managed by the State of Vermont to maintain a high-quality habitat for fish, wildlife, and other aquatic species, as well as a variety of important human uses.

Damaging floods are known to have occurred in the Great Brook watershed in July 1857, April and October of 1869, November 1927, September 1938, June 1973, June 1989, August 1990, September 1999, and, most recently, in May and August of 2011.

During the evening of May 26, 2011 a series of intense thunderstorms swept across central Vermont, resulting in a period of intense rainfall. The National Weather Service cooperative weather station at Plainfield had a storm total of 5.22 inches, the highest of all reported totals for this event. The rain began after 7 p.m. and most of the total had fallen by midnight. As the snowpack had been heavy in the late winter and April and May had been very rainy, the ground was already saturated. Great Brook responded rapidly to the downpour, cresting in the village sometime around 2 a.m. The Winooski River took longer to respond, reaching its crest at Plainfield sometime between 6 and 7 a.m. Heavy erosion occurred on the banks of the streams in town, destabilizing the slopes in many locations. Erosion was especially severe along Great Brook from the village up to about Maxfield Road. This led to landslides, which in turn resulted in many trees falling into

the brook. Damage in Plainfield and surrounding towns was extensive, with all of Plainfield's roads sustaining moderate to severe damage. The first bridge on the Brook Road (Town Highway Bridge 21) clogged with debris and washed out the Brook Road on the east side. A long stretch of Brook Road just downstream from the intersection with Fowler Road was washed out and took several weeks to repair.

The second flooding in 2011 was the result of Tropical Storm Irene. The rain began in Plainfield late on the evening of August 27 and ended around midnight on the 28th. Although damage in Plainfield was quite limited in comparison to many towns in Vermont, 5.12 inches fell within 24 hours at Plainfield and the streams rose to dangerously high levels. The flow on Great Brook peaked in the late afternoon of the 28th. A debris jam had begun to accumulate upstream of Town Highway Bridge 21 on the Brook Road, but it broke up and there was no repeat of the May washout. A small bridge higher up on the Brook Road (Bridge 13, the first one upstream of the Lee Road intersection) clogged with debris and sent water across the road. There were numerous washouts along the roads and several important culverts were washed out, but no major bridges went out. The banks of Great Brook were again eroded and slopes were further destabilized.

Costs to the Town for road repairs from these two storms totaled \$504,021. The costs from the May storm along Brook Road alone exceeded \$184,652 (the cost of the major washout near the bottom of Fowler Road).

After the May flood, the Selectboard appointed a Flood Committee to make recommendations regarding management of hazards associated with Great Brook. The committee met several times between August of 2011 and June of 2012 and is tasked with developing a list of recommendations.

Checkerberry Brook originates at Bancroft Pond and flows west for several miles to Great Brook. In May 2007 the beaver dam at the mouth of the pond broke open, draining the pond to several feet below its usual level and causing considerable damage to Fowler and Brook roads.

Potter Brook originates in the southeastern portion of L.R. Jones State Forest and flows in a northerly direction, eventually entering Nasmith Brook which flows into the Winooski River in Marshfield.

In addition to these named watercourses, six unnamed tributaries to Great Brook and two unnamed tributaries to the Winooski River are shown on the USGS topographic maps for Plainfield.

4.3 Wetlands

Wetlands are those areas of town inundated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands contain types of soils and plants that act as natural filters, removing many potential pollutants from runoff as it flows into streams, rivers, and ponds. The removal of nutrients, especially phosphorus, from water flowing into rivers and ponds, is one of the most beneficial water quality functions of wetlands in rural and agricultural areas. Wetlands are among the most productive natural systems in Vermont and provide critically important habitat, food, and protection to numerous species of birds, mammals, amphibians, and fish. Common in the wetlands and adjacent waters of Plainfield are spring peepers, red-winged blackbirds, snipe, warblers, beavers, snowshoe hares, and many other species. Forty-six of Plainfield's wetlands are included on the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) maps, which were prepared by interpreting 1977 aerial photographs. These wetlands identified on the NWI maps are considered "significant" by the State of Vermont for the functions and values they provide and are protected under the Vermont Wetland Rules as "Class Two" wetlands. Wetlands are especially important in watersheds that are subject to flooding during storms. During storms, wetlands store water and slow down its rate of flow; they release that water slowly, thus lowering the flood peak and the volume of water flowing in the streams and rivers. By reducing the streams' volume and velocity, wetlands reduce stream bank erosion and thus help reduce the destruction of land and property.

In fall and winter or with the meltwater and runoff of winter and spring snow and rain, vernal pools fill with water. By late summer, vernal pools are generally dry. Their periodic drying keeps them free from populations of predatory fish. This reduced-predator environment supports local and regional biodiversity by serving as essential breeding, nursery, and feeding grounds for several species, such as spotted salamanders and wood frogs, and unique invertebrates, such as fairy shrimp, organisms which have evolved to use a temporary wetland where they are not eaten by fish. These organisms are the "obligate" vernal pool species, so called because they **must** use a vernal pool for various parts of their life cycle.

4.4 Ground Water

Homes in the Village that are served by the Plainfield Water Department and those that are served by dug or drilled wells are dependent on ground water sources. The importance of ground water to residents of Plainfield cannot be overstated. So dependent is the community on ground water sources for water supplies, that protection from depletion or pollution of the ground water should be a priority. Failed septic systems, road salt, and illegal disposal of waste such as used oil, antifreeze, household chemicals, pesticides or household trash can pose risks to existing or future ground water supplies. The amount of water supplied by a well can vary, depending on a variety of factors. Data from well reports filed with the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources for 180 wells drilled in Plainfield between 1967 and 1997 indicate that most of the high yield wells (≥ 20 gallons per minute) are less than 300 feet in depth. At greater depths, the cracks in the type of bedrock found in Plainfield tends to be under such great pressure that they are very closed down and little ground water flow can occur. A plot of yield versus depth to bedrock shows that the wells with depths to bedrock greater than 100 feet rarely have very high yields. This may be due to the dense till or silty clay present above bedrock, both of which are quite impermeable and may reduce ground water recharge in the bedrock.

4.5 Physical Landscape

Several times over the last 1.8 million years our region was covered by large continental ice

sheets, which scraped away much of the loose soil and sediment as they advanced, and left behind a variety of sedimentary deposits which have served as the raw materials for the soils of the present day. The most common material is glacial till, which is a mix of grain sizes, from boulders down to silt and clay. Much of the glacial till in the Plainfield area is rich in silt and a little clay and is quite hard when freshly exposed (a common name for this is "hardpan"). This sort of till is fairly resistant to erosion. Till which has less silt and more sand is very susceptible to erosion. The type of soil in any given area is dependent on the underlying bedrock or glacial deposits, vegetation, topography, climate and time.

The Plainfield landscape can be divided into three regions: The eastern hills, the western hills, and the Winooski River Valley. The eastern hills have rather conical shapes and are underlain by granite bedrock. Spruce Mountain, Colby Hill, and the unnamed hill southwest of Spruce Mountain are the major peaks. The western hills are irregular in shape and are underlain by metamorphic bedrock such as phyllite, schist, and metamorphosed limestone. They extend from the vicinity of Bancroft Pond westward to the Winooski River Valley.

Another important factor affecting the suitability of land for development is elevation; at higher elevations soils tend to be thinner, erosion more extensive and vegetative cover more sparse. Steep slopes and high elevations are generally unsuitable for many types of development, posing serious imitations to sewage disposal and increasing the potential for soil erosion as well as increasing construction costs for a project.

4.6 Natural Communities

Plainfield has dozens of distinctive natural communities, occurring in early successional fields (with shrubs and/or sapling growth), coniferous and deciduous forests, streams, ponds, and wetlands. They can be found throughout the town. Some—like early successional fields—are very common; others, such as grasslands and wetlands, are scarcer as more homes are built and lawns expand in size. One type of community, Rich Northern Hardwood Forests, can host not only scarlet tanager and wild turkey, but also white-tailed deer and red-backed salamander,

maidenhair fern and ginseng—a full range of living things. They convene in the landscape under the right environmental conditions, such as soil, climate, and water. A mix of open and wooded land creates excellent habitat for many mammals such as deer, fox, coyote, woodchuck, chipmunk, skunk, shrews, and mice. Birds such as red-tailed hawks, kestrels, turkeys, flickers, flycatchers and bluebirds, among others, also prefer the habitat created by the boundary between the mix of forested and open land.

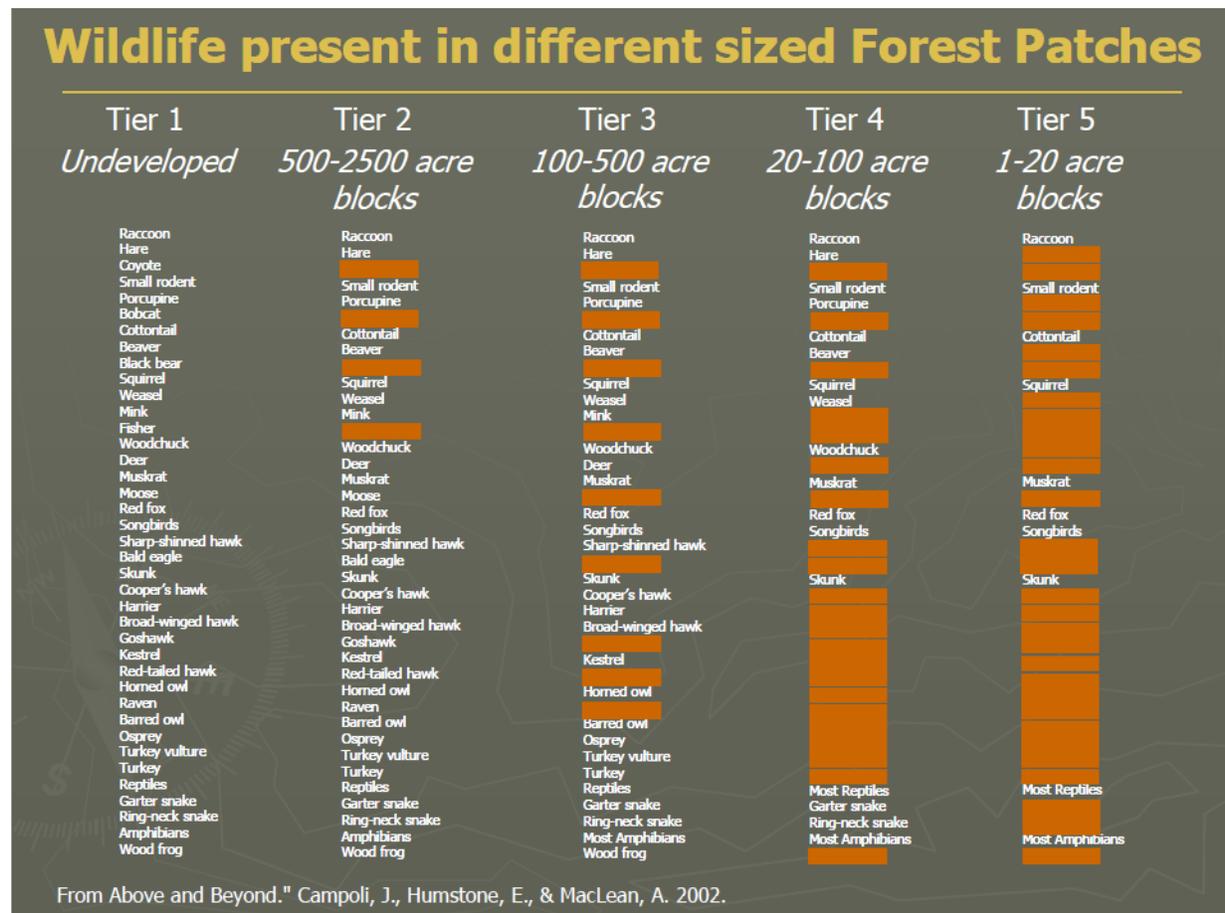
Plainfield also includes a variety of uncommon significant natural communities, such as Montane Spruce Fir and Northern White Cedar Swamps. These add to the overall biological diversity of species and communities present in Plainfield.

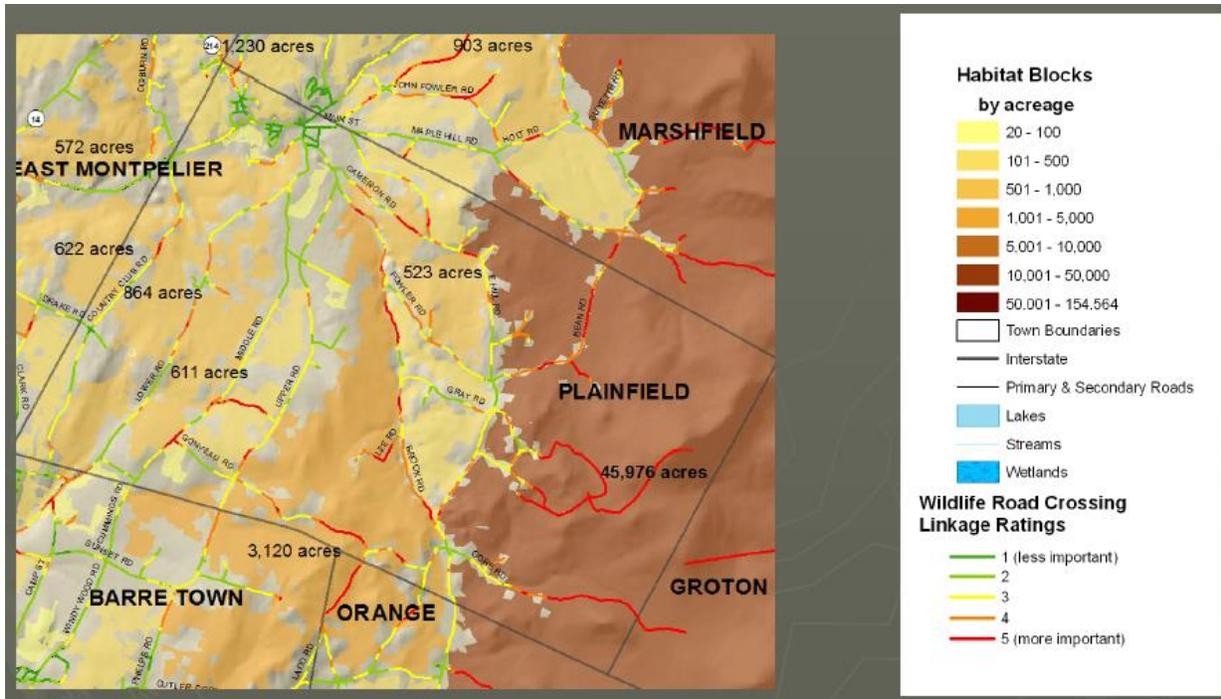
4.7 Contiguous Forest

Contiguous forest habitat supports native plants and animals, including those species like bobcats and black bears that require large areas to survive. Such habitat, together with other important habitats such as wetlands, also supports natural

ecological processes such as predator/prey interactions and natural disturbance. It also serves to buffer species against the negative consequences of fragmentation. These areas are likely to include considerable biological diversity given their size. These areas are used by mammals with large home ranges such as black bear and fisher, as well as as forest “interior” species like great horned owls, warblers, and scarlet tanagers that require large areas of unbroken forest for survival.

A 45,000 acre block of forested habitat covers the eastern side of Plainfield and neighboring towns, providing core habitat for a variety of species. To the east, the pattern includes more fragmentation with forest blocks of only a few hundred acres. At least half of Plainfield is considered to be potential black bear habitat by the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department. The heavily forested and relatively undeveloped eastern portion of town is considered to be “bear production habitat”—a region supporting relatively high densities of cub producing female bears. Adjacent to the bear production area is an





area of seasonal bear habitat. This area includes critical feeding areas such as beech stands and wetlands. Contiguous forest habitat is important to Plainfield because it supports the biological requirements of many plants and animals; supports viable populations of wide-ranging animals by allowing access to important feeding habitat, reproduction, and genetic exchange; serves as habitat for source populations of dispersing animals for recolonization of nearby habitats that may have lost their original populations of those species; supports public access to and appreciation of Vermont’s forested landscape; provides forest management opportunities for sustainable extraction of forest products; provides forest management opportunities to yield a mixture of young, intermediate, and older forest habitat; helps maintain air and water quality; and provides important opportunities for education and research of forest ecosystems.

4.8 Habitat Connectivity

While eastern Plainfield is part of a huge forest block of more than 45,000 acres, even this alone is not sufficient for species with large home ranges. For example, black bear in Vermont require between 10,000 and 20,000 acres EACH, and male bobcat have a home range of 27 square miles each. Using a multitude of forest blocks is required for

these and other species to meet their basic needs. Vermont still enjoys a relatively connected network of lands and waters, where wildlife still have locations where forest blocks are close to one another, allowing for easy movement between them, even with rural roads in between. This network is critically important in order for plants and animals to adjust their home ranges, moving around in the face of climate change. Furthermore, riparian habitats play a key role in this overall network, allowing for multiple benefits associated with their protection, including improving water quality, flood resiliency and movement areas for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife species.

Species Habitats

According to the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, there are five major deer winter areas in Plainfield. Given that the White-tailed deer is at the northern edge of its range, these areas of softwood cover provide protection from deep snow, cold temperatures, and wind, allowing animals to exert less energy at a stressful time of year... They provide a dense canopy of softwood trees, a favorable slope and aspect (mentioned above), generally moderate elevation, and low levels of human disturbance in winter.

Plainfield is home to at least four rare and uncommon plant populations in two locations. Rare native species in Vermont are an important

part of Vermont’s natural heritage. these species most at risk of extinction, serve as barometers of the state of the environment

4.9 Other Biologically Significant Areas

Bald Hill as seen from East Hill Road is one of the town’s most striking views, and its summit is a popular place for walkers, skiers, kite fliers, and others. The area’s current owner generously allows this non-destructive recreation.

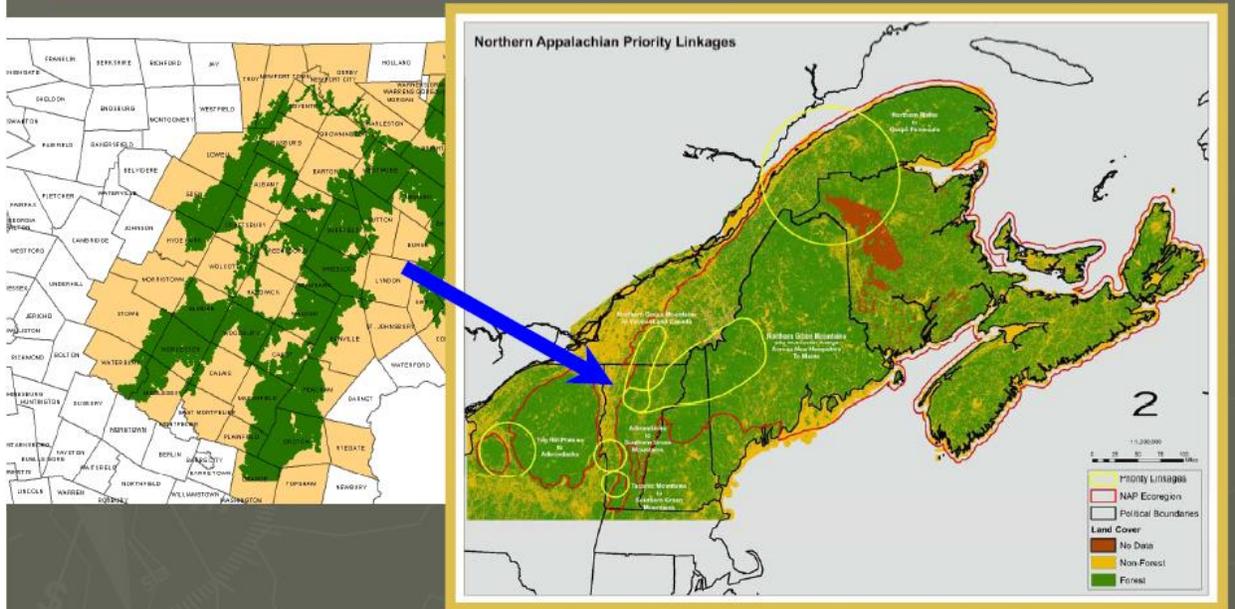
Spruce Mountain, with its remarkably conical slopes and high summit at 3,037 feet, is Plainfield’s most dramatic natural feature, and one of its best-loved. Spruce Mountain gets its name from its dominant vegetation community: a spruce-fir forest. Most of the mountain and the land surrounding it are part of the Seyon Block of Groton State Forest, the largest state forest in Vermont; 633 acres of Groton State Forest are in Plainfield. The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation maintains a management plan for the Seyon Block that designates the “classification emphasis” for Spruce Mountain as “protection” (as opposed to timber management, recreation, wildlife, or special use). A hike to the

summit reveals a breathtaking view of the town’s rural landscape, a panorama of forested hills and open fields. The State left the abandoned fire tower at the summit of Spruce Mountain to provide hikers with access to the stunning views of Vermont and New Hampshire. However, due to the fragility of approach to this site, it’s not recommended for this use.

The L.R. Jones State Forest covers 642 acres in the eastern portion of town. The initial acquisition consisted of 450 acres purchased from three owners by the State of Vermont Board of Agriculture and Forestry in 1909. The State bought the rest of the parcel in the following three years. The forest ranges in elevation from 1,700 feet where Potter Brook leaves the parcel to over 2,700 feet on the southwest slope of Spruce Mountain. Much of the popular hiking trail to the summit of Spruce Mountain is located in the L.R. Jones forest.

The Triple Point Natural Area is primarily wetland and is a good example of a cedar swamp with some hardwoods and softwoods. Plant surveys have been done which demonstrate a diversity of native plant

Regional connectivity



Worcesters to Kingdom Linkage (& on to Northern NH)

species, including leatherwood, and very few non-native invasive species.

Soils in the state forest range from somewhat poorly drained in the lower areas to well drained at higher elevations. The area includes a variety of forest cover types and age classes which can be divided into two groups by their origins: natural stands and softwood plantations. The softwood plantations include stands of white pine, Norway spruce, red pine and Scotch pine. The natural forest communities include four typical mixes of trees: sugar maple, beech, and yellow birch; sugar maple; red spruce and yellow birch; and spruce and fir. The state's management plan for the forest specifies three goals: protection and enhancement of the Spruce Mountain Trail; maintenance and improvement of wildlife habitat; and demonstration of "best management" forestry practices.

Resource Extraction

The Plainfield zoning ordinance allows for the removal for sale of soil, loam, sand gravel or quarried stone with a conditional use permit if after public hearing if it will not cause physical damage to neighboring properties, will not cause erosion, sedimentation or water pollution and will not create an undue burden on town roads

Goal: Maintain and protect Plainfield's natural resources of rivers, streams, open spaces, and forest for the benefit of current and future generations.

Natural Environment Strategies

Promote the sustainable use of Plainfield's natural resources.

Adopt and implement fluvial erosion and mitigation plan.

Develop a long term management plan for minimizing infrastructure damage due to flooding.

The Planning and Conservation Commissions will work to identify and protect important natural resources, including prime agricultural soils, forest resources (soils, products, and habitat), significant wildlife habitat, floodplains, river corridors, water resources and other features described in this plan.

The Planning Commission will work to see that zoning regulations reviewed to ensure that riparian buffer strips alongside all streams are maintained and that structures and roads are not built in areas subject to flooding.

Maintain habitat connected networks by managing development where habitat block are close to one another and connected to other large areas not only within the state but throughout the entire region.

Goal: Maintain and protect Plainfield's natural resources of rivers, streams, open spaces, and forest for the benefit of current and future generations.

Strategies:

The Planning Commission, with the support of the Conservation Commission, will work to obtain an inventory and map of Plainfield's significant natural communities, prime agricultural soils, forest resources (soils, products, habitat), significant wildlife habitat, habitat connectivity, floodplains, river corridors, water resources and other features described in this plan and develop appropriate measures for their protection.

The Planning Commission, with the support of the Conservation Commission, will identify possible wildlife corridors, and protect specific road crossings. The Planning Commission will use this information to determine how best to protect these areas.

Encourage the permanent protection of farmland and important natural resource areas through conservation easements or comparable deed restrictions, and by facilitating communication between interested landowners and conservation organizations (e.g. Vermont Land Trust or Vermont Housing and Conservation Board) that work to preserve Vermont's working landscape.

The town will manage town properties for biodiversity by controlling populations of exotic invasive species.

Promote the sustainable use of Plainfield's natural resources. Continue to manage the extraction of sand, bedrock, gravel, and soil in ways that will not cause physical damage to neighboring properties, will not cause destabilization of slopes, erosion, sedimentation or water, air or noise pollution, will not create an undue burden on town roads, and includes effective plans for the rehabilitation of the site at the conclusion of the operation. Maintain zoning ordinances that review how and where sand, bedrock, gravel, and soil are extracted.

Goal: Safeguard Plainfield's air quality by reducing current sources and preventing future sources of greenhouse gases and air pollution.

Strategies:

At all levels, the town will assist and support, wherever possible, use of public transportation and carpooling

Encourage residents through education and other incentives, to use clean, efficient, renewable sources of energy for home use and heating, and help them access programs that offer financial assistance for conservation and efficiency measures, such as weatherization.

Provide financial assistance through the town's revolving loan fund to help people buy more efficient, cleaner-burning wood stoves for home heating.

Encourage alternatives to burning brush piles, such as composting or using them to provide wildlife habitat.

Through planning process, develop guidelines and zoning regulations that require review and mitigation of potential air soil in ways that will not cause physical damage to neighboring properties, will not cause destabilization of slopes, erosion, sedimentation or water, air or noise pollution, will not create an undue burden on town roads, and includes effective plans for the rehabilitation of the site at the conclusion of the operation.

Goal: Maintain and preserve Plainfield's scenic and historic resources

Strategies:

a) Through the subdivision and conditional use review process the town will ensure that new development maintains and enhances the town's rural character,

b) Permits for telecommunication facilities will be contingent upon their being sited, designed, maintained and operated so as to minimize negative impacts on natural, cultural and scenic resources. Additional facilities should use existing towers and communication facilities rather than developing new towers.

c) Where safety is not an issue, maintaining the rural character of the roads will take precedence over improving road surfaces or motorists' sight lines. They should not be widened, straightened unless such changes can maintain existing rural character or are absolutely necessary for safety reasons. Road maintenance techniques should include protection of stonewalls and mature trees in the road right of way.

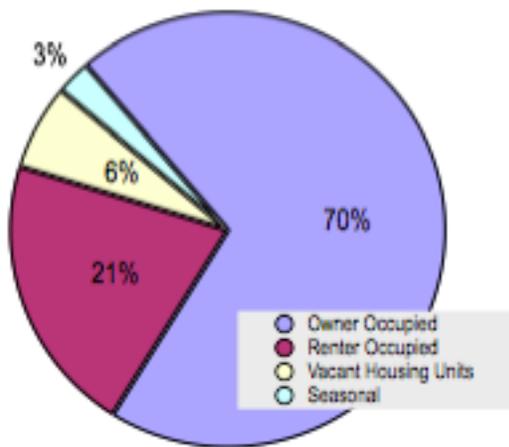
d) Maintain visual quality of night sky; use the Outdoor Lighting Manual for Vermont Municipalities developed by the Chittenden County Planning Commission and the standards developed by the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) and the Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) to guide zoning and subdivision regulations and to clarify construction requirements so that cost-effective, environmentally friendly outdoor lighting and minimal light pollution can be assured.

5| Housing

Plainfield is a rural community with a traditional Vermont village surrounded by open countryside. Housing is concentrated in the upper and lower villages as well as old farm fields and hillsides. Since 1970, Plainfield’s housing stock has increased substantially, even though the population has declined by nearly 10%. The majority of recent housing development has involved the construction of single family homes on parcels greater than 5 acres. The Land Use map in the Appendix shows the distribution of residential development throughout the town.

Chart 5.1

Plainfield Housing Units by Type, 2010



Plainfield ensures that the housing is appropriately located through the permitting process. All applicable state permitting requirements are incorporated into Plainfield’s zoning permits for health and safety reasons. The town has the highest allowable densities for housing in and near the village which encourages growth to occur closest to the municipal services and commercial opportunities. Plainfield’s zoning allows two family dwellings in all zones, as well as accessory apartments, and does not restrict manufactured housing. Affordable housing in Plainfield can be found in the former high school on School Street (Rt. 2), which is now converted to apartments. There are also several multi-unit buildings in the village. Plainfield’s housing

values are generally higher than neighboring towns.

In 2007 the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission conducted what is known as a build-out analysis of the housing in Plainfield. It took the existing number and location of housing and projected out the growth using the current zoning in place at the time. This projection shows that much of the growth will take place along the secondary roads in the town because the Village has limited capacity under current zoning and the 5 acre minimum in the largest zoning district (Forest and Agriculture) only permits houses to be located on or near existing roads at a low density. “This type of sprawl growth would have permanent negative impacts on prime agricultural soils, forest resources (soils, products, and habitat), significant wildlife habitat and habitat connectivity, road crossings important to wildlife corridors, floodplains, river corridors, and water resources. Significant natural communities in Plainfield need to be surveyed and mapped to provide guidance for planning future housing.”The study suggests various alternative methods of density flexibility that would promote concentrated growth in and near the village. This flexibility also permits different lot and density configurations in the rest of the town that would help achieve some of the goals in the Land Use of the town.

Chart 5.2

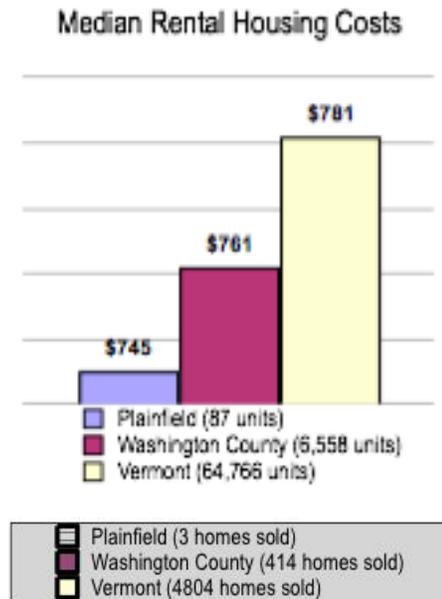
Primary Residences Sold, 2011



The Central Vermont Regional Housing Distribution Plan estimates that municipalities should anticipate planning for a share of the number of net year round housing in the Central Vermont area. For Plainfield that number is 42 new housing units between 2015 and 2020.

Creating modifications to the existing zoning regulations can help make these new units potentially more affordable and with lower overall impact on the town. the town of Plainfield would like to see a majority of predicted new housing developments (as modeled by the CVRPC Regional Housing Distribution Plan projections) in and around the areas of Plainfield Village. The remaining housing units would be developed in the areas in the rest of the town best suited for housing. Using the area in and around the village will reduce new infrastructure costs, enhance economic development in villages, and reduce expenses related to service expansion.

Chart 5.3



Housing Goals

Ensure the availability of safe and affordable housing for all Plainfield residents.
 The Town will promote a growth goal in keeping with the projections of the Regional Housing Distribution Plan.
 Increase the availability of handicap accessible housing in all residential districts

ii

Housing Strategies

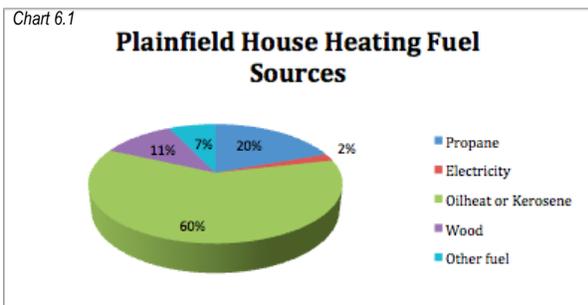
Encourage a variety of housing types to meet the needs of a diversity of social and income groups.
 The Planning Commission and Development Review Board will review and update current zoning and subdivision regulations as needed.
 The town will obtain a survey and map of significant natural communities to help guide future planning and zoning.
 The Development Review Board should consider handicap accessibility in site plan reviews of housing developments. Investigate sources of funding for village revitalization efforts.
 The Planning commission should consider permitting higher density zones in and around of the village to allow for clustered developments and possible growth centers when revising the current zoning regulations.
 Promote the use of revolving loan fund and other funding sources for the preservation of historic buildings. Use

6| Energy

In order to plan for the long-term energy security of our Town, we must first understand that it is not energy itself that we want or need, but the services that energy provides: we need heat for our homes; we want cheap transportation; we need light for our work place. The energy security of Plainfield depends on being able to provide these energy services consistently, sustainably and affordably to the townspeople.

6.1 Thermal Energy

Plainfield, like most of Vermont, relies on mostly on fossil fuels such as oil, kerosene and propane for heat and hot water. *See Chart 6.1.* There are more than a dozen companies that compete to provide this service in Plainfield. Alternative thermal energy such as solar and geothermal is not widespread. More than 10% of Plainfield residents identify wood (either chunk or pellet) as their primary source of heat; however wood also serves a significant source of thermal energy as a supplemental heat source. In 2012, Goddard College applied for permits to build a wood chip heat plant to provide thermal energy to many of its buildings on campus.



6.2 Transportation

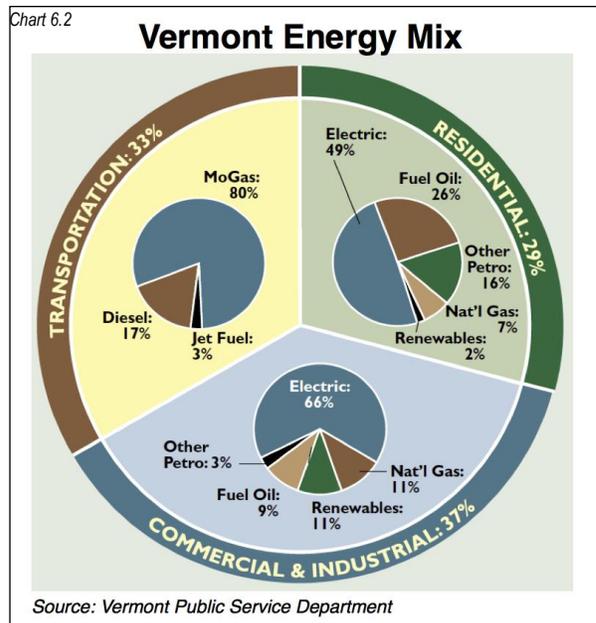
As documented in Section 7, Plainfield residents have a public transportation option. In 2010, a commuter bus service was established, providing five trips weekdays between St Johnsbury and Montpelier. The Route 2 commuter bus stops at the Plainfield Park and Ride and in front of Goddard College. This service was initially funded by a Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) grant, which provided federal funding to cover 80% of the net cost of the service. The remaining service costs are covered by passenger fares and the 20% net local match from the towns

served by the route, including Plainfield. The CMAQ grant ends in 2013. In 2013 the route will transition to another source of 80% net funding. However, as in previous years, GMTA will continue to request the remaining 20% match from the towns served by the commuter route. In 2012, the US 2 Commuter saw a 30% ridership increase from 2011— equaling 19,056 riders.

When the Red Store on Route 2 closed in 2012, Plainfield lost its only gasoline station. A gas station in nearby Marshfield provides gasoline, diesel, kerosene, and 20 pound propane cylinders.

6.3 Electricity

In Vermont, electricity accounts for approximately 40% of energy consumption. Most of Plainfield’s electricity is supplied by Green Mountain Power (GMP) which is owned by Gaz Métro, a Quebec company. In other areas of town, power is supplied by the Washington Electric Cop (WEC), which owns and operates the Wrightsville hydroelectric generating station, on the North Branch of the Winooski River. A methane generation facility in Coventry provides about two-thirds of the electricity needs for WEC customers. In 2008, GMP and the town of Plainfield explored the possibility of joint ownership of a small hydro power facility at Batchelder Mills, however that project never



materialized. Wind power has never been utilized on any large scale in Plainfield, however according to the Vermont Wind Energy Atlas (see appendix), there is potential for wind energy near Spruce Mountain. There are also no large scale solar farms in Plainfield, however, there are several homeowner installations.

Energy generation and transmission systems that are linked to the electrical grid are preempted from local land use regulation. They are instead regulated by the Public Service Board (PSB) under 30 V.S.A. Section 248 (Section 248 review). These include net metered distributed energy installations, as well more commercial, utility-scale generation, transmission and distribution facilities. The Public Service Board (PSB) must consider project conformance with municipal and regional plans prior to issuing a Certificate of Public Good. The town does not have statutory party status in PSB (Section 248) proceedings, but does receive notice of most applications (petitions) before the board. The town may participate informally by providing comments on a proposed project, or request more

formal status as an intervener with rights to participate and appeal. Town participation in the state’s review process, based on adopted community standards under this plan, is the best way to ensure that local conservation and development objectives are considered and weighed by the Public Service Board

6.4 Energy Efficiency

In 2012, Plainfield voters approved the creation of Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) district. PACE could potentially allow homeowners to obtain financing to complete energy-related projects (weatherization, more efficient oil heat equipment, solar hot water, etc.) with the funds paid back through an assessment on the homeowner’s property tax bill. The assessment stays with the property if it is sold, and the financing can be extended for a longer period than typical loans. More than 30 Vermont towns have passed similar measures however funding for the PACE has not been identified and the program has not been implemented in the state at the time.

In 2011, the Plainfield Energy Team received

<p>Energy Goals Create a sustainable energy future: one that minimizes environmental impact, supports our local economy, and emphasizes energy conservation, efficiency and the increased use of local and regional clean, renewable, environmentally sound energy sources.</p> <p>Energy Strategies Energy efficiency and conservation should be a primary consideration in new municipal construction projects, equipment purchases and operations. Use the survey and map of Plainfield's significant communities, when completed, to help guide energy planning decisions. Encourage the increased use of local and regional clean, renewable, environmentally sound energy sources and technologies as they become available. Energy facilities, including solar arrays and other generation facilities, transmission and distribution lines, accessory structures, and access roads should be located as to minimize and mitigate adverse impacts to agricultural land, waterways, and significant natural communities as well as property in the village designated for housing. Minimize the adverse impacts of energy production on public health, safety and welfare, the town’s historic and planned pattern of development, environmentally sensitive areas, and Plainfield’s natural and cultural resources, consistent with adopted plan policies and community standards for energy development, resource protection and land conservation. Promote sustainable development, energy conservation through weatherization of existing structures, encourage appropriate development and use of renewable energy, and support transportation alternatives to the single-occupant vehicle. Promote community energy literacy, and provide information about available energy assistance and incentive programs, state energy codes and energy system permitting, and voluntary, cooperative purchasing agreements to reduce the costs of acquiring and installing small-scale renewable energy systems for individual homes Provide financial assistance through the town’s revolving loan fund to help people buy more efficient, cleaner-burning wood stoves for home heating.</p>

a\$3,000 grant from the Vermont Energy & Climate Action Network (VECAN) to weatherize the Town Hall. The VECAN grant program was funded from a Federal Earmark obtained by Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT). The Plainfield Energy Team has also highlighted ways homeowners can become more energy efficient. In 2009, volunteers conducted nearly three dozen home energy visits. These visits helped educate Plainfield residents about energy usage. The team helped install low-flow shower heads and aerators to reduce water consumption, as well as compact fluorescent light bulbs, pipe insulation, water heater jackets, and thermostats.

7| Facilities, Utilities & Services

The Plainfield water and sewer districts were created in 1968 to serve what was then the Village of Plainfield, located in the towns of Plainfield and Marshfield. The original water and sewer lines continue to serve some Marshfield customers, even though the Village formally merged with the Town of Plainfield in 1984. The water and wastewater systems have been maintained and upgraded with user fees. The Plainfield Water and Wastewater Commission has adopted regulations that allow for steady new growth and expansion in the village district by allocating a certain percentage of unreserved wastewater plant capacity for new growth each year for the next twenty years.

There are approximately 383 water connections, including Goddard College and the Northwood development off of Rt. 214. The water main running along Route 214 was replaced with a larger, four-inch diameter pipe in 2001. Households purchase 60,000 gallons of water per year at a flat rate. An additional fee is charged for every thousand gallons a household uses above 30,000 gallons in 6 months. The Water Department chlorinates the water to kill bacteria. Fluoride supplements were removed from the water supply in March 2009. As required by state law, the Department monitors water quality daily.

The water for the Plainfield system comes from two sources. There is a Source Protection Plan for these water sources that the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation approved in 1995. The Plan designates Aquifer Protection areas for each water source in order to prevent the sources from becoming contaminated. Those landowners living within the Aquifer Protection Areas for each of the two water supplies are urged to dispose of household's wastes and chemicals with care. For example, used motor oil or leftover paints should never be dumped out on the ground but taken to appropriate trash facilities. Very small quantities of such chemicals can contaminate thousands of gallons of water in an underground aquifer. Underground fuel storage tanks should be carefully monitored and leaks prevented.

The main source consists of six springs on Maple Hill in Marshfield. The Aquifer Protection Area for the spring system covers 47 acres. This is an area designated by the State of Vermont to protect public water supplies from potential contamination. In 1994, the Town of Plainfield purchased 14 acres immediately surrounding the springs in order to protect them from contamination. The remaining 33 acres in the Wellhead Protection Area are privately owned. The Marshfield Town Land Use and Zoning Map have designated most of this area as the Plainfield Village Watershed Area.

The second source, used for back-up purposes, is the Hood well, located at the base of Maple Hill, adjacent to and below the cemetery. A 14-acre Aquifer Protection Area surrounds the site in order to protect the well from potential contamination. This Aquifer Protection Area is partly in Marshfield, partly in Plainfield. The portion in Marshfield is zoned for High Density Housing (land served by public water and sewerage system) and Agricultural and Rural Residential. The portion in Plainfield is designated Rural Residential with two-acre minimum lots. Plainfield has no obligation to provide additional hookups to Marshfield residents living near Plainfield's village area, although the Select Board voted in 2006 to adopt an amended wastewater ordinance that extends the district to areas within 500 feet of existing water and sewer lines, which allowed a couple sites in Marshfield to obtain sewer hookups.

The Plainfield Wastewater Department operates a wastewater treatment plant located between the



Photo: Bram Towbin

recreation field and the Winooski River in Plainfield Village. The original plant was built in 1968 with a combination of state and federal funds. Goddard College helped finance the plant in exchange for rights to 22 percent of the plant's capacity. The original plant was designed to last 20 years, and it was replaced in 1999 after being in service for 29 years. There are currently 353.5 sewer connections, including the Goddard College campus and the Northwood development off Route 214. In 1999, the Town built a new wastewater treatment plant. Aided by a 50% federal grant, the Town bonded for the cost, but only the ratepayers of the sewer system pay back the bond. The new plant increased the capacity of the plant from 100,000 gallons a day to 125,000 gallons a day. The new plant uses an ultraviolet light system to disinfect the treated discharge to the Winooski River.

The Plainfield Water and Wastewater Commission voted to phase in new hookups to the wastewater plant as allowed in the Wastewater Allocation Ordinance. The Commission designated a certain amount of reserve plant capacity to be available for new connections or expansions each year for the next twenty years with an extra amount designated for the first year of the new plant's operation. Any allocation that remains unused at the end of each year is added to the total available for subsequent years.

The town no longer applies sludge to agricultural fields. Now all sludge is hauled away, usually to the Barre City municipal wastewater plant where it is combined with the much larger volume of sludge from that plant. In 2002 Barre City had a contract with a Canadian firm to haul away the de-watered sludge and compost it in Canada. The costs for sludge hauling and disposal have been increasing rapidly, adding significantly to the operating cost of Plainfield's wastewater disposal. The State of Vermont Solid Waste Program estimates, using data for the year 2000, that Vermonters generate 5.19lbs/person/day of municipal solid waste of which 1.70 pounds per person per day (32.8%) is reused, recycled or composted and 3.49 pounds per person per day (67.2%) is disposed. With a population of 1286 (2000 US Census) Plainfield generates an estimated 1218 tons of municipal solid waste per

year of which 399 tons is diverted and 819 tons is disposed per year.

The Town of Plainfield is a member of the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District and is included in the District's Solid Waste Implementation Plan. The District has adopted a Zero Waste approach to managing discarded and unwanted resources that are typically referred to as waste materials. They are embarked upon a ten-year effort of restructuring their programs and practices to offer communities opportunities to move closer to and finally achieve a no-waste region. The District is devotes significant resources to developing organics diversion programs for residents, businesses, schools and other institutions. Organic material represents between 20 and 40% of the waste stream, depending upon the generator. In a landfill, organic material contributes significantly to Green House Gas emissions, even when recaptured for energy during post-closure. By diverting the material, the embodied energy of this resource is captured and turned into a viable product used by farmers, gardeners, nurseries and landscapers. As of the October of 2011 all of the public schools in the CVSWMD are diverting food waste to composting facilities. Business and residential organic collection expansion efforts will take place through 2012 and 2013. The organics programming being developed by the CVSWMD will allow all District residents and businesses to save on the cost of disposal, diminish regional contributions to global warming, divert material to local composters thereby strengthening local economic development and creating sustainable, environmentally friendly waste-based programming. This is the goal for all Zero Waste endeavors.

During the 2012 legislative session Act 148, An Act Relating to Universal Recycling of Solid Waste was ratified by the Vermont legislature. This legislation contains phased bans of recyclables and organic materials from the landfill using a phased in approach that concludes in 2020. Other similar endeavors may be pursued including: seeking extended producer responsibility on specific products, and

establishing advance disposal fees on other items that are typically dumped in roadside rural areas. Plainfield will continue to actively participate in these efforts, carefully considering which may be appropriate for implementation on a local level.

While developing new programming, the District continues to provide recycling and household hazardous waste collection services to Plainfield residents and small business owners, collecting hazardous items including mercury thermometers, fluorescent light bulbs, heavy metal batteries, pesticides and herbicides. The District also provides additional recycling and reuse initiatives including the Lawrence Walbridge Reuse program, School, Municipal and Disaster Relief Grants, computer collections and more. As a member, Plainfield benefits include the development of a Solid Waste Implementation Plan, which is critical for the Town of Plainfield in order to fulfill State solid waste planning requirements. The State requires that the plan be based upon the following priorities, in descending order: a) the greatest feasible reduction in the amount of waste generated; b) reuse and recycling of waste to reduce to the greatest extent feasible the volume remaining for processing and disposal; c) waste processing to reduce the volume necessary for disposal; d) land disposal of residuals.

Many residents contract with private haulers to dispose of their waste and to pick up materials for recycling. Others haul their waste and materials for recycling to transfer stations in nearby towns or use Saturday “fast trash” services in Plainfield village or elsewhere. Waste is transported and disposed at the WSI landfill in Moretown, Vermont and the Waste USA landfill in Coventry, Vermont. Haulers may choose to dispose the waste in landfills or incinerators in other states if cost-competitive to Vermont landfills or if the Vermont landfills have reached their tonnage limits for the year. Many residents’ compost food and yard waste on site. Some residents’ burn waste on-site in “burn barrels” and some waste is dumped, though both are illegal.

As a member of the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District, Plainfield plays an active role in addressing the region's solid waste management responsibilities and problems. Plainfield expects to continue to participate in the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District to achieve solid waste management goals and does not anticipate a crisis in the management of its solid waste. The Town does not anticipate that a regional landfill will be sited in Plainfield due to traffic issues related to increasing truck traffic from either Route 2 through the lower village or over the rural dirt roads from the Barre side of Plainfield.

Town Hall

The town hall was built in 1841 as the Universalist Church. It was remodeled in 1911, removing massive stone steps to the second story and installing a ground-floor entrance, and a stage and balcony to the large room on the second floor. These changes turned the building into the “Plainfield Opera House.” Town and Village meetings were held upstairs through the 1980s. In 1950, the Town Clerk, Treasurer, and Board of Selectmen moved their offices here. The ground floor was remodeled in 1988 to accommodate the expanding needs of the town offices. The need to meet safety codes, as well as new accessibility requirements resulted in the forced closing of the second floor and balcony in 1988. In addition to Town Meeting, it has been used for voting and public hearings of municipal boards and commissions, as well as private parties, classes and community events.



Photo: Bram Towbin

The Town Hall was closed in the fall of 2011, due to structural problems. A Town Hall Advisory Committee was appointed by the Select Board to gather information to assist the Town in deliberating the issue of what to do with the building. At the 2012 annual Town Meeting, after a review of the Town Hall Advisory Committee Report, voters approved expenditure of \$40,000 for structural repairs and energy saving improvements, \$15,000 from town funds and the remainder provided by State of VT Division for Historic Preservation, US Dept of Energy, and VT Energy and Climate Action Network. Since then the Select Board has pursued more funding through various grants.

Municipal Building

The Town Clerk's Office moved into the Municipal Building at 149 Main Street in the village in August 2005. The Town purchased and renovated the building, which had previously been a Methodist meeting house, store, and residential housing. Originally built in 1819, it is one of the oldest buildings on Main Street. The town offices are located on the first floor, as well as a larger room where the Select Board and other groups meet, including the Conservation Commission, Planning Commission, Board of Listers, Development Review Board, Recreation Committee, Sewer & Water Commission, Plainfield Area Community Association, Revolving Loan Committee, Fuel Assistance Committee, and Social Concerns Committee. The second floor is provides rental income as office space.



Other Property

The Town owns 2 acres behind the old high school building on Rt 2, which was converted into low income apartments administered by the State Housing Department. The deed stipulates that the land could be used for municipal offices.

A 4.75 acre piece of land with frontage on Country Club Road was donated to the town in 2005 by the Cross Vermont Trail Association for use as a recreation and alternative transportation trail. It is a segment of the Cross Vermont Trail and is open to the public from Country Club Road to Route 14, following the old railbed.

In 2006 the town swapped 22 acres of land in Calais (donated to the Town in 1950 by Arthur Cutler and designated as our town forest) for 28 acres of land on Maxfield Road in Plainfield. Subsequently, the Conservation Commission developed a town forest management plan, adopted by the Selectboard in September, 2011, which promotes passive, low-impact summer and winter recreation and a long-term demonstration forestry project as the primary purposes for use of this land. In addition, it provides education and research opportunities, as well as wildlife habitat and wetland protection.

The Triple Point Natural Area, a 4.9 acre parcel tucked between Route 14, the Marshfield town line and Taylor Farm Road, consists primarily of a cedar swamp with the wet soil precluding most forms of development. Ownership of this parcel was transferred to the town by the Vermont Land Trust in April, 2006 with the understanding that it would be maintained in its current state. The management plan was approved in 2007. The primary goals for conservation of this land are education, research, wildlife habitat, passive recreation, as a demonstration conservation project and protection of a wetland.

Town Parks

The Russell Memorial field on Recreation Field Rd., the village park at the old Mill Privilege next to the waterfall, Washburn Park on Mill Street next to the Great Brook, and the Park and Ride at the east end of Main Street are public green spaces in the village. The Historic Society has begun to place granite markers at historic sites in the village. Currently, there are two in place- one

at the Washburn Park and one at the abandoned Montpelier-Wells River Railroad bed at the Park and Ride, both commemorating buildings that formerly stood there.

Town Shed

The town shed is located off Cameron Road on 2 acres of land purchased from the Bartlett family. The prefabricated steel building was erected to replace the old wooden town shed located nearby on Brook Road. A new salt shed was built at the same site as the current town shed in 2001 to avoid storing salt near the Great Brook.

Village Trustee Building

The Village Trustee Building is a small riverside structure that was originally Plainfield's first firehouse in the late 19th century. Later it became the offices of the village government until the merger in 1982. It is now the home to the Plainfield Historical Society.

Parking Lots

The Town owns and maintains several parking lots: one across Route 2 from the Town Hall; another at the Mill Street Park in the center of the lower village and a Park & Ride lot on Main Street at the former depot site. There is also public parking at the Russell Memorial Field and at the Washburn Park.

Emergency Services

The Plainfield Fire Station, at one time the Congregational Church and, at a later time, the High School gym, has been the home of the Plainfield Volunteer Fire Department since 1972. The two open garage bays have been used for Town Meeting on at least two occasions – most recently in March 2012, after the Town Hall was closed for repairs. However, since the Fire Station does not meet ADA or fire safety standards for public assemblies, it can only be used for Town Meetings in an emergency situation. When used as a meeting space, the garage has a capacity for 240 people.

According to Fire Chief Pat Martin, within 15-20 years, the Fire Station will be too small for the needs of the community. Plainfield Fast Squad responded to 212 rescue calls last year. (Eight percent of Vermont's total fatal accidents occur

on Route 2 between Plainfield and Marshfield!) He is also concerned about inadequate parking for emergency responders at the present site.

The Fire Chief has had very preliminary conversations with his counterpart on the Marshfield Fire Department about the possibility of a shared space for both departments at a new location on Route 2 in the long term. In the event the Fire and Rescue Department moves to a new site, here are some possible public uses for the current building: Town Recreation Center; Town Meeting Hall; Senior Center.

Town Government and Administration

Plainfield has always encouraged its citizens to participate in town government. Boards and commissions often have vacancies as most people's daily schedules leave little time for meetings. However, the community has several ways of keeping citizens aware of government functions: Select Board meetings are televised on the public access channel; Select Board minutes, articles about planning conservation and energy commission meetings and/or projects appear regularly in the monthly Twinfield Field Notes and in the Times Argus newspaper; the Town maintains a website (<http://www.plainfieldvt.us>); the Town posts notices of public forums and special hearings at the clerk's office, the post office, and the Plainfield Co-Op.

Cemeteries

Plainfield has five cemeteries, four of which are within the town's boundaries. The fifth cemetery, Plain-Mont Cemetery, is on Route 2 in East Montpelier just at the East Montpelier and Plainfield town line. The Center Cemetery is located in the Bartlett Hill area of town on Bartlett Road (town highway #22). The Village Cemetery is located off Main Street behind the Fire Station. The Bisson Cemetery is located on Lower Road (town highway #41), about a mile from the Barre line. The Kinney Cemetery is on East Hill Road, about half a mile beyond the former junction with Cameron Road. Only the Plain-Mont and Center Cemeteries have plots for sale at this time; the Plain-Mont has expansion capacity across Route 2 that has yet to be developed. At the current rate of usage, that capacity is sufficient for 100 years.

Recreation

The Russell Memorial Field in the lower village has a ball field, basketball court, a volley ball court, tennis court, a skateboard park, a children's playground, a seasonal ice rink, and a picnic shed.

The field is used during Plainfield's Old Home Day in September and Cold Home Day in January. The row of Red Oak trees planted along the edge of the parking lot will provide shade for spectators in years to come. The site also contains a skateboard park and a children's playground.

Other recreation areas in Plainfield are less well defined. Spruce Mountain and the L.R. Jones State Forest provide excellent hiking trails. Numerous trails for snowmobiling, walking, horseback riding, and mountain biking, including some Class 4 roads, crisscross Plainfield's woods and fields. Hunters have access to most parts of town. The Winooski River offers unique recreational opportunities to boaters and fishers. There is a new public park at the Martin Bridge upstream of the village and a newly designated boat portage site located behind the Plainfield Coop, maintained by The Friends of the Winooski. There is a steep trail off the Mill Street Park leading down to the river's edge. There are many recreation resources in Plainfield that are located on private property. There are property owners who have kept their lands open to others for recreation which has allowed Plainfield residents to hunt, hike, ski and snowmobile close to their homes.

The old Montpelier-Wells River Railroad bed is a significant recreation resource. The railroad ended operation in 1956 after 83 years of hauling granite from the Barre quarries, farm products, other goods and passengers between Montpelier and the Connecticut River. The former railroad bed has reverted to private property in Plainfield, but some property owners have allowed sections of it to be used for walking, snowmobiling, bicycling, skiing and horseback riding. In other towns much of the old railroad bed is still in public ownership. The trail is unusual because, unlike Vermont's many trails that ascend mountains, it follows the valley. This makes the trail more accessible to the old, the young, and the physically challenged. The trail provides an off-road connection to Groton State Park and could be used by off-road travelers

to Montpelier if it were contiguous. Local snowmobile clubs negotiate with land owners to define trails throughout the town that connect with other regional trails.

Emergency Shelter

There are two large-scale emergency threats to the Town of Plainfield that currently merit strategic planning. The first is a massive flood from either the Great Brook or the Winooski. The second is a chemical or other hazardous spill on US Route 2. Both disasters would require a triage area and an emergency shelter with off grid power capability. Presently the Town lacks a formal emergency shelter - although we are in discussions with both Goddard and the Medical Center. The Town Hall, currently under repair, has generator capacity and might provide a location in the future. The geographical challenge of having the river bisect the Town means that, ideally, we would have shelters on both sides of the divide to avoid traffic at choke points during an event. Presently the only available area on the east side of the highway is the Fire House. Although it has been used as a temporary shelter in the past, the logistical challenges of manning displaced people as well as supervising emergency equipment proves challenging. Ideally, there would be two separate locations.

The locating of staging areas and shelters also brings up issues of communication and warning systems. Presently, Chief Martin manually directs the warning process. This has proved successful in the past and successfully avoided loss of life in the May 2011 storm event. This system will probably take on a more formal regimented approach as the population of the Town grows and weather events become more routine. The Town has formally adopted the Federal guidelines for managing these situations and has an Emergency Management Coordinator who is actively pursuing emergency shelter options and is updating the Town's emergency response system.

Senior Citizens

The Twin Valley Senior Center (TVSC) provides meals and educational, exercise and/or health-related programs for seniors from Plainfield, Marshfield, Cabot, East Montpelier, Calais and

Woodbury. It currently serves approximately 33 Plainfield residents, operating out of its rental space in the Schoolhouse Common in Marshfield. In the 1990s, the Senior Center was located in the meeting/dining area at the Plainfield Fire Station. From there, it moved to the Goddard College cafeteria. It left Goddard when the college's residency program ended and the cafeteria was no longer open to meals on a regular basis.

According to Executive Director Rita Copeland, the TVSC has never had a permanent, appropriate home for its growing numbers. In 2011, the TVSC prepared over 11,000 meals for delivery to homebound or disabled seniors, compared to 5,400 meals in 2008 (more than doubling in three years). Roughly thirty-five sit-down meals are prepared three days a week at the Center. With a larger, permanent facility, Rita believes the center could be open five days a week. Because the Schoolhouse Common space does not have enough storage, TVSC has to store its food supplies at an off-site location.

To accommodate growing demand, Ms. Copeland's vision for the future is for TVSC to own a 3,000 – 4,000 square foot facility at a location with ample on-site parking. With such a facility, the Senior Center would have space for a gym, community dinners, weekly Bingo games, and a thrift shop – as well as storage and food preparation space.

The Study Committee strongly suggests that the Town work with the TVSC to try to identify a suitable location for a permanent home for the Senior Center in Plainfield and to partner with TVSC on grants to assist in this process. The possibility of combining TVSC with a senior housing development ought to be explored.

Plainfield Historical Society

The Plainfield Historical Society is a private, non-profit association whose mission is to “collect, preserve, share and create materials that establish or illustrate the history of Plainfield, Vermont”. In carrying out this mission, the Society helps to enrich and build community and is an important contributor to the cultural and social life of Plainfield.

In 1993, PHS published The Town of Plainfield, Vermont: A Pictorial History, 1870 – 1940 (a second printing in 2008). It has also published a booklet containing a self-guided walking tour of Plainfield village (available at the Town Clerk's Office) and an annual wall calendar featuring a different historic photo for each month. PHS organizes exhibits and presentations on local history at various locations in the village.

Unlike other local historical societies, the Plainfield Historical Society does not receive funding assistance from the Town. However, it has been allowed exclusive use of a small, one-room building owned by the Town (the village's first fire station) on US Route 2/School Street. This space is used to store artifacts and printed materials that have been donated to the Historical Society over the years. The building is not equipped to display historic artifacts and serves as a repository for the Society's assortment of miscellanea and printed material which, although of local significance, are generally of limited quality and value.

The Society meets monthly in the Cutler Library and stores some of its files there. However, since the library is small and crowded with materials, there is not adequate wall space to effectively display materials and information reflecting Plainfield's history.

The building on Route 2/School Street needs a new roof and other structural repairs. The outward thrust of the gambrel roof on the Winooski River side has pushed the knee wall out of alignment. This wall needs to be pulled in and adequately braced (which should be done at the same time as the new roof is installed). In keeping with our designated historic district, the replacement roof should be made of new cedar shingles. A rough estimate of the cost of this work is \$11,500.

The Facilities Committee has no recommendation for repairs to this building until there is a full assessment. PHS is interested in locating a place where a permanent display of Plainfield's history could be housed and where people interested in finding local genealogical records and other historical data, as well as the public, could visit.

Village Parking

There are 53 designated on-street parking spaces in the lower village, Plainfield's primary retail and residential area. Of these, 26 are on Main Street between Mill and Creamery, and 27 on Mill Street between Main and the Great Brook. Two of the spaces on Main Street are in front of the Municipal Building and are designated for Municipal Building parking.

There are 18 off-street parking spaces in the town-owned lot between the Municipal Building, the Fire Station and the village cemetery. Of those, six are designated for the Food Co-op, while the remainder is reserved for the visitors or staff in the Municipal Building. While this is a heavily-trafficked lot, there is generally enough parking available to meet the needs of the Municipal Building and the Co-op.

There is a widespread perception that the number of parking spaces available along Mill Street and lower Main is inadequate for current use by tenants and by patrons of local stores and restaurants. The absence of downtown parking makes it difficult for people to attend regularly scheduled activities at the Grace Methodist Church at the corner of Main and Mill. The town Park and Ride, while offering ample parking opportunities, is not used for overflow parking because it is on the outskirts of the village, some 1/5th mile (more than 1,000 feet) from the corner of Mill and Main.

The Community Facilities Study Committee views public parking in the lower village as a priority facilities issue. On-street public parking does not meet current needs, Parking is already allowed on both sides of village thoroughfares, so additional public parking space near the village center can only be provided at off-street locations.

A survey of lots in the lower village suggests that portions of several privately-owned properties near the village center may be suitable sites for off-street parking. Since the process of acquiring and developing land for public purposes is a complicated matter that will require professional planning and extensive public conversation and deliberation, the Facilities Committee recommends that the Town seek grant funding in

FY13/14 for a consultant to assist with a study of village parking.

The significant parking need in the upper village is for more parking in the vicinity of the Town Hall. More parking spaces in this area will improve access to the small businesses clustered around the intersection of Main Street and US Route 2.

The Town parking lot opposite Town Hall (.21-acres) can currently hold 10 - 12 vehicles. According to a local excavation contractor, there is enough land to extend this parking area to create enough parking for another 8 - 10 vehicles.

To the west of this lot is private property: a two-story home with a sizeable back yard... A rough calculation suggests that up to 15 parking spaces could be located behind the house. If the building were to be purchased by the Town and removed, the Town could gain another 10 to 15 parking spaces. The Facilities Committee suggests that the Town pursue this property for more public parking.

Pedestrian Facilities Between the Lower and Upper Village

For years, safety hasn't been a sure thing for foot traffic between the lower and upper village. Given the fact that there are many amenities in both parts of the village, it makes sense to continue to work on improving this deficiency. The Select Board has been in discussions with VTrans and Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission to develop solutions. Recently, the Town was awarded a \$25,000 grant (10% Town match) to study the possibility of a sidewalk on the south side of US 2, continuing to the lower village via a pedestrian walkway on the south side of the Main Street Bridge. If constructed, this would allow for a marked crosswalk near the blinking light intersection and would provide a safe connecting link between the parking lot opposite Town Hall and the public parking in the village. The study is to extend from the Mill Street Park to the Post Office.

US Route 2/Main Street Intersection

The Select Board is in discussion with CVRPC and VTrans to figure out both a temporary and a

permanent solution to the unsightly and dangerous intersection at the blinking light. The Town already has an engineered design for improvements to the intersection and the process to implement it is scheduled to begin within the next several years.

Village Traffic Calming-Brook Road/Creamery Street Intersection

Speeding in the lower village has a drastic effect on the neighborhood, particularly during commuting hours. Cars descend from the hills surrounding the village at speeds that endanger foot traffic and children at play, and disturb residents' sleep. Families have come to several Select Board meetings to express their concern. With the help of CVRPC, the Board has decided to focus the intersections of Brook and Creamery and to explore the option of speed humps at the entry points to the village. Crosswalks lanes will get a new coat of paint. One unresolved issue is the village's sensitivity to traffic signs. This winter, a representative from VTrans drove around the village with the Board and made suggestions to bring the signs up to recommended safety standards. The idea of extending the sidewalks to Creamery and Brook has been discussed.

Cutler Memorial Library

The Cutler Library, a not-for-profit corporation, is engaged in its own strategic planning process. It has held a well-attended public input meeting and is preparing a plan laying out its options for the future. The Select Board looks forward to reviewing this plan and to providing assistance wherever possible.

Flood Mitigation

Among the recommendations of the town's Flood Advisory Committee was for the town to study ways of preventing flood hazards that result from debris jamming at narrow downstream overpasses of the Great Brook. The last bridge on the Brook Road (bridge # 2) and the bridge at Main Street – the last one before the Great Brook reaches the Winooski (bridge # 1) are the two major choke-points. The Select Board met with FEMA representatives and indicated its intent to apply for federal funding to widen the bridges, but was unable to qualify as an applicant due to the lack of

financial records documenting the cost of three previous flood events at each bridge.

The town is taking steps to track and digitalize past flood damage costs to the extent possible so that they may be available in the future. The Select Board is also seeking funding to conduct an engineering study of the feasibility of widening bridges # 1 and # 2, which it sees as a priority community safety issue.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear that Plainfield has several community facility issues to address in order to promote the safety, the welfare, and the quality of life for its citizens and visitors. The Select Board proposes that a Community Facilities Section be included in the new Town Plan. This section would identify and prioritize improvements needed to Plainfield's infrastructure and community facilities. This Community Facilities Study Report and the conversations it generates would be used as the starting point for developing a Community Facilities Plan.

Private Facilities

Goddard College

The Goddard campus, located on 117 acres at the western edge of Plainfield's village, includes two clusters of buildings with a community radio station (WGDR 90.1 FM). Initially chartered as a Universalist seminary in 1863, Green Mountain Central Institute, later renamed Goddard Seminary, moved to Plainfield from Barre in 1938. While the on-campus program ended in 2002, Goddard now offers adult learning, a low-residency model for higher education, and residential programs for single parents receiving public assistance. Goddard is the nation's leading low-residency college, with 10 low-residency programs in which nearly 800



students are enrolled at three sites: Plainfield, Seattle, WA and Port Townsend, WA. Goddard employs approximately 230 people.

Health Center

The Plainfield Health Center is one of eight community health facilities in Vermont. Open to everyone, the centers provide high-quality, cost-effective care to patients regardless of their ability to pay. Payments for eligible patients are on a sliding scale. In 2012 the Health Center underwent a significant expansion. The 5,000-square-foot building was paid for by \$988,000 in federal grant funding and about \$200,000 raised locally.



Photo: Bram Towbin

The Health Center injected \$2.4 million of operating expenditures into the local economy in 2004. That number has grown, doubling between fiscal years 2004 and 2009, and increasing to over \$6.3 million for the current fiscal year, including the budget for the accessory building and staff. In addition, The Health Center’s impact results in many added jobs, both directly and indirectly. The Health Center serves an estimated 10,500 patients annually.

This growth directly affects the local economy, as well as producing additional indirect and induced economic activity, for an overall economic impact of \$9.6 million. This amount includes about \$7.2 million in value-added spending, including personal income. The Health Center directly generates employment of approximately 75 full time positions and indirectly creates an estimated 25 full time jobs as a result of its total operating expenditures.

Twin Valley Senior Center

The Twin Valley Senior Center is a non-profit organization providing meals and educational, exercise and/or health-related programs 3 days a

week for seniors from Plainfield, Marshfield, Cabot, East Montpelier, Calais and Woodbury. The Senior Center is located at Schoolhouse Common in Marshfield. Each town is asked to contribute to the yearly operational expenses of the center. It serves approx. 33 Plainfield residents; at town meeting this year we approved their request for \$1000. Transportation is provided from home to the center by Green Mt. Transit, who also brings the meals to those who get home delivery. Meal delivery is coordinated through the center. (6000 on-site meals last year/5500 home delivered meals)

Child Care

Plainfield has approximately a half dozen private child care providers through out the town. Children aged kindergarten and older also have access to Twinfield Learning Center (TLC) at Twinfield School which provides educational opportunities for children after school.

Plainfield Childcare Providers		
Provider Name	Contact Information	Program Type
Twinfield Union Preschool	106 Nasmith Brook Road	Licensed Provider
Washington Northeast District ASP at Twinfield	106 Nasmith Brook Road	Licensed Provider
Center School Learning Community	786 Upper Road	Licensed Provider
MacLaren, Dawna	785 Upper Road	Registered Home
Brickey, Sally	231 Bunker Hill Circle	Registered Home
Roberts, Brandi	1267 Hollister Hill Rd.	Registered Home
Welti-Darling, Amy	806 Maple Hill	Registered Home
Anderson, Chelsie	2930 VT Rte 14N	Registered Home
Source: The Bright Futures Child Care Information System		

Regional Services

The agencies listed below expand the services available to residents of Plainfield:

- The Twin Valley Senior Center
- Central Vermont Community Action Council
- Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice
- Central Vermont Council on Aging
- Retired Senior Volunteer Program, People’s Health and Wellness Clinic
- Washington County Youth Services Bureau
- Battered Woman Services
- Onion River Food Shelf
- Green Mountain Transit Agency

Facilities, Utilities & Services Goals

Ensure that Plainfield Ensure the water and wastewater system in a way that protects the public’s health and allows for gradual continued growth in the Village.

Continue to enable adequate Child Care as the demand changes.

Ensure Plainfield has a place in town near village for voting and public meetings.

Maintain and upgrade storm water management town wide

Facilities, Utilities & Services Strategies

Support efforts to increase reusing, recycling or composting.

Promote community based and well as private child care facilities.

Support efforts to reduce illegal burning and dumping.

Develop capital budget in order plan for long term infrastructure needs in the town.

Continue to maintain and upgrade the village storm water system and town road culverts and road drainages

8| Transportation

The village of Plainfield is bisected by U.S. Route 2, one of Vermont's primary east-west highways. U.S. Route 2 connects towns between St. Johnsbury and Montpelier and is a northern connecting route between I-89 and I-91/I-93. It is an important corridor for Plainfield commuters as well as for commercial trucks and tourist travel. As a result there is an increasingly large number of vehicles traveling through the village center. The Brook Road often serves as the most direct route from Cabot, Marshfield and Danville to the Orange/East Barre area and the valley towns of Chelsea, Tunbridge, and Sharon. The Middle and Lower Roads serve the same purpose between Plainfield and Barre. Heavier use of these roads, along with increased instances of speeding vehicles, creates both unsafe conditions and nuisance from excessive dust. In 2000, the Select Board established and posted a 35 mph speed limit on all town roads outside the village. The speed limit in the lower village is 25 mph; on US 2 the limit is 30 mph. Town roads have been renamed and signposted in compliance with the statewide E-911 emergency system, which has also made it easier for both delivery people and visitors to find rural destinations.

US Route 2 is maintained by the State. The paved roads in and leading out of the village are Class 2 roads. There are no plans at the present to extend the amount of paved road surface in town. In the mid 1990s, the town removed the paved surface on much of the Brook Road because it was too difficult and expensive to maintain. The remaining secondary roads are Class 3 gravel roads. There is no long-range road repair/rebuild schedule and repairs are made as needed. This existing method of maintaining Class 3 roads is adequate, and all secondary roads are in good condition. Their culverts and drainage ditches are on a maintenance schedule that ensures that they are kept in good condition. Class 4 Roads receive no regular summer maintenance and are not plowed in the winter.

According to VTrans traffic studies, between 1986 and 1998 traffic volumes have increased more than 50% on Routes 2 and 214. In 1994, a proposal to build a bypass routing commercial

and through traffic around the village center had polarized opinions in town. When presented to voters in both Plainfield and Marshfield, it was approved in Plainfield and rejected by Marshfield and consequently tabled at the Agency of Transportation (now known as VTrans).

In 1997–1998, VTrans adopted new Vermont Design Standards that allow the roadway to be tailored to village settings, with reduced speeds and narrower lane widths. These standards would accommodate a variety of traffic calming solutions to let Rt. 2 function more as a village main street than a highway where it passes through built-up areas. In 2012, the Town received a grant award from VTrans to study the feasibility of sidewalk construction on the south side of US 2 from the Mill Street parking lot to the Post Office. Having sidewalks on both sides of US 2 would allow for construction of a safe pedestrian crosswalk and facility public parking capacity in the village.

In 2004, Central Vermont Regional Planning commissioned DuBois & King to prepare a study of the Rt. 2/Main St. intersection and presented options for reconfiguring the intersection at a public meeting. That study, which was completed in June, 2005, observed that, as Plainfield residents are well aware, "high traffic volumes, plus the geometry of the intersection, cause this intersection to be dangerous." The study concluded that the creation of a "T" intersection with a traffic signal and pedestrian crosswalks, along with a new sidewalk on the south side of Main Street/Route 2, was the preferred solution to the problem. In May, 2012, at the town's request, the Transportation Advisory Committee of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission voted to rate this as a priority safety and traffic operations project, which means that it is now in line to be accepted as an AOT project.

Ensuring that this key intersection is safe for pedestrians as well as highway traffic is of importance to the people of Plainfield in order to avoid accidents and injuries. This improvement will overcome the lack of sight distance from the northeast and permit safe pedestrian crossing of Route 2, re-opening easy access to the town's historic town hall/opera house from the lower

village as well as from the town's parking lot on the opposite side of the street that existed in earlier, low-traffic times. Overcoming the highway crossing barrier that has grown up over the years is critical to the future of this landmark public building as the venue for the town's annual meeting and as well as a popular dance and performance space.

The 2005 intersection study also proposed that a sidewalk be constructed on the south side of Route 2 from the westerly termination of Main Street in front of the present Blinking Light Gallery west along Route 2 past the town's parking lot opposite the Town Hall. If such a sidewalk were built, a crosswalk to the north side of Route 2 in the vicinity of the Town Hall would be permitted by Vermont Agency of Transportation. In order to advance this project, in 2012, the town of Plainfield applied for and received funds from the Vermont Agency of Transportation and the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission for planning services to study how this improvement could best be accomplished, including a pedestrian bridge added to the existing bridge over the Winooski River to the east, as well as extending it west along Route 2 to the Post Office. The current Select Board is investigating funding sources for this intersection.



While recognizing that the automobile will remain the primary mode of transportation for most people for the foreseeable future, the town supports alternative transportation. Plainfield residents have a public transportation option. "In April of 2010, a commuter bus service was established by Green Mountain Transit Authority (GMTA) and Rural

Community Transportation (RCT), providing five trips during peak commuting hours along Route 2 between St. Johnsbury and Montpelier. The service stops at the Plainfield Park and Ride, near the Post Office, and in front of Goddard College. In addition to Plainfield, the route includes intermediate stops in East Montpelier, Marshfield, West Danville and Danville.

Commuting to Work		
Mode	Estimate	Percentage
Car, truck, or van-drove alone	140	73.30%
Car, truck, or van-carpoled	22	11.50%
Public transportation	0	
Walked	15	7.90%
Other means	0	
Worked at home	14	7.30%
Mean travel to work time (minutes)	24.9	n/a
Source: American Community Survey 2006-2010, 5-Year Estimates		

The US2 Commuter provides accessible and affordable transportation for those traveling long distance for employment and education, as well as basic mobility for those who are transit dependent. Additionally, the service removes vehicles from the corridor, thereby reducing air-pollution and wear and tear on Route 2 and feeder roads. The route not only serves the single corridor, but enables transfers to/from the Waterbury Commuter, Burlington Link Express, Montpelier Hospital Hill, City Commuter, Montpelier Circulator routes and Jay-Lyn Shuttle. In October, 2012, approximately 280 Plainfield riders used GMTA and RCT commuter transport. Currently, the towns of Plainfield, Marshfield, and East Montpelier each contribute \$8,333 per year for this service.

GMTA also provides ongoing individual medical and daily needs transportation service to those who qualify for Medicaid, Elderly and Disabled funds or both. Qualifying individuals include Medicaid clients, those 60 years of age or older and people with disabilities. GMTA offers individuals the scheduling and payment of rides which are provided through GMTA volunteer drivers or bus service. Trips include coordinated service to local and long distance medical care facilities, dialysis and radiation treatments, meal site programs, senior centers, adult day care, pharmacy and shopping locations. In 2012, 38

Plainfield residents were provided a total of 2,774 trips and 20,475 miles driven.

The Select Board adopted a Road Policy in 2003 that discourages the upgrading of Class 4 Roads and Trails. This was done in order to reduce higher road maintenance costs for the town resulting from extension of the road network into previously undeveloped areas.

Over the past twenty years, multiple projects have been completed to improve pedestrian traffic through the village. In the mid-1990s, sidewalks were constructed along the northern side of Rt. 2 from the Town Hall to the Post Office. The granite curb gives pedestrians an extra margin of safety, and the Town contracts with a private operator to keep village sidewalks plowed in the winter. In conjunction with the Rt. 2 sidewalk construction, a gravel path was laid down from the Post Office to the Rt. 214 intersection. This unpaved portion of the sidewalk has become overgrown in recent years, but continues to be used by pedestrians walking between the village and Goddard College.

In 2001, the construction of the park on Mill Street included a brick patterned circle at the intersection with Main Street that had the intended effect of slowing traffic by narrowing the over-wide intersection and making the pedestrian crossing shorter and safer. The old, uneven sidewalks in the lower village were rebuilt in 2007- 2008 adding granite curbing, “bump outs”, and pedestrian cross on both Main and Mill Street. Green Mountain Transit Agency, a nonprofit public transportation company, offers door-to-door service for seniors and persons with disabilities.

The former rail bed through the village has reverted to private ownership; however, the Cross Vt. Trail Association is working with landowners to extend the trail through Plainfield. This could eventually provide a trail for Plainfield residents to commute to Montpelier by bicycle.

VTrans is planning to finalize plans for improvements to the section of Route 2 from Cabot to Main Street in Plainfield in 2013. Construction can include sidewalk improvements and extensions. The sidewalk from Main Street north to the Marshfield town line on the east side

of Route 2, which is not properly curbed or paved, should be included in this project. The town should participate in scoping sessions to advocate for this improvement.



The nearest rail is Amtrak passenger service is in Montpelier. The nearest commercial airport is the Burlington International Airport which is 50 miles away. There is a limited commercial airport at the Knapp airport in Berlin

Transportation Goals

Maintain safe and efficient road system that provides adequate access to rural locations in town. Promote public and alternative modes of transportation in order to minimize fuel consumption, transportation costs, and pollution and to strengthen local economic systems. Protect the scenic and rural character of the town's roads.

Transportation Strategies

Develop a policy for traffic management on Rt. 2 and village roads that supports the economic health of village businesses, as well as the safety and well-being of village residents. Create safer pedestrian access from Route 2 through the village.

Roadside trees should be removed only when they present a serious danger to the public; the tree warden must be consulted before any roadside tree removal. Historic stone walls should be left in place.

Construct and maintain roads so that the impacts of storm water runoff on nearby streams are minimized. Continue to investigate ways to minimize the impacts of traffic on Route 2. Maintain a village feel to slow traffic. Support and encourage alternative transportation modes: bus, bicycles, walking, etc.

Support Cross Vermont Trail efforts to extend the trail beyond the section from Route 14 to Country Club through Plainfield. If this becomes a reality, people would eventually be able to commute to Montpelier by bicycle.

The town should implement sidewalk sections over time when the funding becomes available.

Emphasize the use of Class 4 roads as recreational trails, valuable for hiking, horseback riding, bicycling, VAST trails and cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Consider downgrading appropriate Class 4 roads to Town Trail status for low-impact recreational use only (no motorized vehicles except for snowmobiles on approved VAST trails).

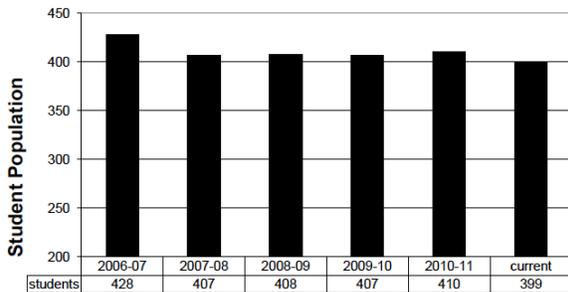
9| Education

Plainfield has offered public education to its children since the early 1800s. In the late 1960s, Plainfield, Marshfield and Cabot consolidated to become the Washington Northeast Supervisory Union. As part of the Washington Northeast Supervisory Union, Twinfield shares administrative personnel (superintendent and full-time secretary, special education administrator and half-time secretary, 1.5 staff members for fiscal services) with Cabot School as well. Twinfield Union School is housed in one building in between Marshfield and Plainfield on an 88-acre campus.



Though enrollment at Twinfield increased through the 1990s, student numbers have been steadily decreasing since then. *See Chart 9.1*

Chart 9.1



The state currently provides vocational education opportunities through a system of sixteen vocational centers serving local high schools around the state. The nearest vocational center to Twinfield is the Barre Vocational Center housed at Spaulding High School. Presently, transportation opportunities are available for Twinfield students to attend vocational programs at that facility. Goddard College provides access to a wide variety of adult education locally.

Education Goals

Promote creative use of school facilities and conservative use of funds.

Education Strategies

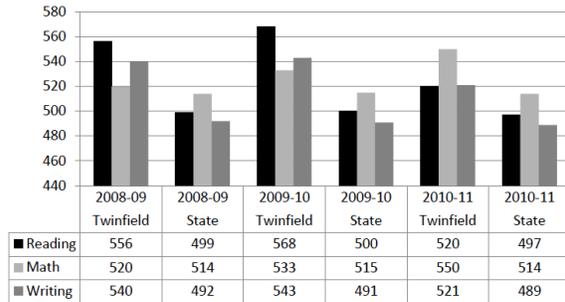
Continue to monitor population and school enrollment trends to address future needs in an efficient manner.

Maintain good communication between the towns of Plainfield and Marshfield.

Vermont College of the Fine Arts as well as Community College are located nearby in Montpelier which also serve as locations for adult education.

Chart 9.2

SAT Average Scores Twinfield and Vermont



Students from Twinfield score higher on the SAT's than the statewide average and have a greater graduation rate. *See Chart 9.2 and 9.3.*

Per pupil spending is one of the primary factors that determine the tax rate. In FY 2013, Twinfield spent \$12,382 per pupil, a 5% increase over the

Chart 9.3

Year	Twinfield Graduation Rate	Statewide Graduation Rate
2010-11	94%	87%
2009-10	88%	87%
2008-09	82%	85%
2007-08	75%	85%

prior year. This increase is also reflected in the drop in student population, which has decreased by nearly 7% between 2006 and 2012.

Many residents are eligible to calculate some or all of their school taxes as a percentage of their income rather than on the value of their property. The "income sensitivity" rate also is derived from the amount of per pupil spending. Under Act 68, there are two gross numbers: one is the grand total and the other is an amount used to calculate per pupil spending. Certain grants and money generated through local fundraising are not counted when the state calculates each district's education spending.

10| Land Use

Land use is one of the most critical and controversial issues confronting local communities. While decisions regarding land use are generally made by the landowner, it becomes a public concern to the extent that land use could affect adjoining properties, demand for municipal services, public safety, the local environment, the use of finite resources, the character of the community, or the quality of life of its residents. Plainfield's land area, at 13,501 acres, is roughly one half the area of traditional land grant towns. This reduced land base presents the town with particular challenges in protecting its rural character.



Plainfield developed in two distinct areas: the village and the outlying rural hills. Through most of Plainfield's history, growth has occurred in the village, which occupies 128 acres in the northwest corner of town. Over the past twenty-five years, however, virtually all new houses in Plainfield have been built outside the village, particularly along Lower Road and Country Club Road. Additional homes built on Maple Hill Road in Marshfield in recent years have contributed to the increase in car traffic through the lower village.

The village and some areas at its edges are served by the town's water and sewer lines, shown on the Utilities and Facilities map in the appendix. In 2004, the zoning was revised to allow development on lots of .25 acre in the village (previously the minimum lot size had been .5 acre). This, together with the current sewer and water hookup capacity, would allow greater density in the village district, enabling a more

people to build homes close to existing public services and transportation corridors.

The historic district, containing the village's core, has always served as the social, cultural, educational, governmental, commercial and manufacturing heart of the town. Visible clues to the source of its early prosperity, the water-powered mills and manufactories, can be found in the area around the old Mill Privilege where the dam and the ruins of some penstocks remain.

Plainfield's village, practically speaking, extends into the town of Marshfield, serving the residents in the western part of that town. This area of Marshfield was part of the legal Village of Plainfield until this was dissolved in 1985. As a consequence, some residences and businesses on the Marshfield side of the line continue to be served by the Plainfield water and wastewater system. However, Marshfield declined to share in the cost of constructing the new wastewater plant, stating that they needed no further capacity. Therefore, Plainfield has no obligation to provide additional hookups to Marshfield residents living near Plainfield's village area, although the Select Board voted in 2006 to adopt an amended wastewater ordinance that extends the district to areas within 500 feet of existing water and sewer lines, which allowed a couple sites in Marshfield to obtain sewer hookups. Since Marshfield businesses on the edge of Plainfield village are perceived by most people to be a part of our village, the Plainfield Planning Commission has requested the Marshfield Planning Commission and Development Review Board notify the Town of development proposals and planning policy changes for this area of Marshfield.

In 2012, Plainfield's sole remaining dairy farm ceased operations. While there are still non-dairy farms in Plainfield, most of the town has heavy upland soils of medium fertility. Although the land is capable of supporting various agricultural enterprises, it has generally been used for raising hay, sheep, cows, and horses. The decline of farming provides fewer economic reasons for landowners to keep large tracts of open land, and the town may continue to become less agricultural and more residential. Among the most desirable locations for housing are those fields with

dramatic views of the countryside. Plainfield has a few areas of well-drained river bottomland along the Winooski that are potentially excellent for vegetable and small-fruit production.

Two-thirds of Plainfield's land is forested. The trees not only define the appearance of the town and provide important habitat for wildlife, but also represent a valuable renewable economic asset for landowners and the town as a whole. Maps derived from aerial photographs taken in 1979 show that 8,830 acres of land in Plainfield are forested. Roughly 30 percent of this land is actively managed for timber production, either by professional foresters or by loggers cutting under open contract with landowners.

A map of Plainfield's forests, roads, and parcel lines would show that there are many places in town where a single type of forest spans several parcels. The owners of these parcels might find it advantageous to manage the forests cooperatively, thereby saving costs and maximizing the potential return from a resource that, if managed separately, might produce no return from logging at all. Additionally, there are more opportunities to improve wildlife habitat through forest management when contiguous parcels are managed cooperatively: wildlife doesn't recognize parcel boundaries, and wildlife corridors between feeding and shelter areas usually extend over property lines. A survey and map of significant natural communities would help determine appropriate land use decisions.

The Vermont's Current Use (or Use Value Appraisal) program sets a standard level at which land used for forestry or agriculture will be appraised for property taxes and reimburses towns for the difference between the amount a landowner enrolled in this program pays and what he/she would have normally paid the town in property taxes. In 2007, 53 parcels comprising approximately 5,540 acres, or 41% of the land in town, were enrolled in the Use Value Appraisal program. This program has allowed large land owners to reduce their burden in exchange for maintaining natural resources.

The land use policies of the town plan are implemented primarily through the zoning regulations. In November 2000, voters approved a revision of the zoning regulations that combined the former Village Zoning Regulations with the Town Zoning Regulations. In addition to meshing the two sets of regulations into a cohesive bylaw and combining superfluous zoning districts, the planning commission also made minor updates to the definitions and uses, and created a new use, extended home occupations, that allows for the creation of small cottage industries throughout the town. A telecommunications bylaw was added to give the town a way to deal with anticipated requests for towers. An interim zoning amendment adopted by the Select Board in 2001 added temporary structures as a new use in all zoning districts in response to community needs.

In March 2004, the town adopted subdivision regulations that incorporated several of the goals and strategies from the 2002 Town Plan. In November 2004, a zoning revision that combined the Village Residential, Commercial and Public Lands districts into one Village zoning district was adopted.

Currently, Plainfield's zoning bylaw divides the town into the following land use districts:

- **RESERVE LANDS DISTRICT:** An area with steep slopes, scenic ridge lines and high elevations, lacking good road access, suitable mainly for forestry, low-impact recreation and wildlife habitat. This district is currently limited to lands with an elevation above 2200 ft.
- **FLOODPLAIN:** Certain areas, mainly along the Great Brook and the Winooski River, designated flood hazard areas and mapped by the National Flood Insurance Program.
- **VILLAGE DISTRICT:** A mixed-use area consisting of the town's businesses, civic and religious buildings and many residences, served by town water and sewer facilities.
- **RURAL RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT:** Three areas adjacent to the Village which are served by town water and sewer but not contiguous to each other. Most of this district is in residential use, although a number of other uses are permitted, due to its proximity to the village. This area had been in separate

districts under the older town/village regulations, and a more thorough review of the current land uses and physical characteristics of the parcels affected will need to be done to be sure that the district boundaries, densities and uses are appropriate.

- **FOREST AND AGRICULTURAL LANDS DISTRICT:** An area containing all the land not included in other districts. This district encompasses 85% of the land area in Plainfield. Currently this district is zoned for five-acre-minimum lot sizes. While the original intent may have been to allow smaller lots as a way of allowing the landowner to retain a large parcel still viable for agriculture or forestry the result has been a number of single homes strung along the road that in some areas is beginning to resemble a suburban neighborhood. Some towns have adopted density-based zoning, as opposed to minimum lot size requirements, to address this issue. Under such a method, a lot would be allowed to develop a certain number of dwellings or parcels, based on its original acreage, without restrictions on individual parcel size.
- An analysis known as a build out study was done by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission for Plainfield. A map was created showing where the potential housing units would be located if all the potential housing development took place under the existing zoning regulations. This is Map 1 in the appendix. One alternative showing how an alternative measure of density, proximity to the village and services plus limitations such as slope and poor soils could impact the distribution of future housing. This alternative build out is Map 2.

Note to only use two maps currently map 3 and map 4 or better to label them Existing Potential Build Out and Alternative Build Out

Land Use Strategies

Promote a vibrant village center with a mix of businesses and homes while preserving the rural working landscape of farms and forestry uses.

Develop standards for site plan reviews and conditional use reviews to guide boards in land use decisions.

Encourage people to open up land for recreational use, with respect for private property rights.

Concentrate future growth in densities and locations that respect both the natural capacity of the land and the historic patterns of development, and make use of the existing infrastructure, including roads. .

Consider modifying zoning through creative methods, such as density-based zoning, to promote growth in appropriate areas without sacrificing the potential of lands with good agricultural soils or valuable wildlife habitat.

Goal: Promote the regulation of land development that protects vital natural and community resources while allowing a range of land uses in appropriate locations.

Strategies:

Obtain a town level significant natural communities survey and map.

Establish and maintain conservation, recreation, and agricultural areas in the zoning ordinance. Parcels within these special overlay areas would be of particular importance to the town and would be managed in a way that would protect their special values by creating siting standards for development and limiting uses as appropriate. By designing protection for specific natural features, the districts regulations might actually permit greater flexibility in lot sizes, density, or other requirements, than would otherwise be available.

Strive to maintain a balance between community land use regulations and the rights of individual landowners.

Educate residents about the very real hazards associated with living near the Great Brook.

Goal: Concentrate future growth in densities and locations that respect both the natural capacity of the land and the historic patterns of development.

Strategies:

Encourage the owners of land of particular importance to the town to trade some proportionate tax burden in return for maintaining undeveloped land.

Encourage the protection of natural resources including important agricultural soils, wetlands, fluvial erosion hazard areas, riparian buffers, headwater streams, steep slopes and wildlife habitat by using educational and regulatory methods.

Create a forum that will encourage open discussion between affected neighbors and developers. Make it possible for the resolution of conflicts to take place in atmosphere of creative solutions rather than strict regulations.

Encourage cluster development that will protect rural and scenic character and maintain contiguous tracts of forest or open land. Such cluster development may be required in conjunction with overlay districts, as appropriate.

11| Economic Development

Plainfield’s economic well being is a critical function of the planning process in order to foster an environment in which residents have access to meaningful employment within the community. Economic vitality also supports many of the recreational, cultural and commercial amenities that have attracted permanent residents to Plainfield.

In the summer of 2009 the Plainfield Select Board received a Take Charge/Recharge grant to discuss economic development opportunities for Plainfield. In their grant application, the Plainfield Select Board discussed the current tension between environmental and economic concerns as they relate to land use. It was determined that a broad discussion of economic development is critical for the Town’s long-term health and viability. Also in 2009, the Plainfield Planning Commission obtained a Planning Grant from the Department of Housing and Community Affairs. This grant helped facilitate a community meeting to discuss Plainfield’s economic opportunities.

Chart 11.1

Change in the number of establishments, employees, and average wage among the Plainfield employment base, by NAICS classification, 2005 and 2010						
NAICS Industry Type	Establishments		Employment		Average Wage	
	2005	2010	2005	2010	2005	2010
Construction	9	9	18	25	\$26,095	\$35,603
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	9	5	46	33	\$15,490	\$13,476
Professional and Business Services	8	8	16	14	\$34,139	\$31,006
Education and Health Services	8	7	260	245	\$26,907	\$39,616
Leisure and Hospitality	3	2	70	(c)	\$12,536	(c)
Government	5	4	58	76	\$31,351	\$28,486
Total	42	35	468	393	\$24,419.67	\$29,637.40
(c)Data is confidential.	Source: Vermont Dept. of Labor					

Employment Opportunities

Plainfield’s employment opportunities are primarily offered by small businesses,

self- employment, and commuting to work in other communities. The largest employer in Plainfield, Goddard College, would be considered a small business on the national scale. All others jobs are provided by very small employers. According to the Vermont Dept. of Labor the average wage in Plainfield in 2010 was nearly \$30,000— up more than \$5000 from 2005.

According to the data collected by the Vermont Department of Employment and Training, unemployment increased in Plainfield at a similar rate as neighboring communities.

Chart 11.2

Unemployment trends between July 2005 and July 2011				
Comparison Region	July '05	July '07	July '09	July '11
Plainfield	2.90%	4%	8.80%	5.80%
Barre-Montpelier LMA	3.50%	3.80%	6.70%	5.60%
Burlington-S.Burlington LMA	3.00%	3.30%	6.10%	5.00%
Washington County	3.30%	3.60%	6.50%	5.20%
Vermont	3.20%	3.70%	6.80%	5.70%
United States	5.20%	4.70%	9.70%	9.30%

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Vermont Dept. of Labor

Unemployment figures are based on the percentage of the estimated potential working residents in a given town or region. Chart 11.1. shows the percentage of unemployed Plainfield residents versus the state of Vermont. Since 2005 the unemployment percentage has risen slightly for both Plainfield and the state.

While some diversification has taken place, the trends are generally stable in each employment sector. Employment in the real estate industry appears to have decreased; however, there could be other explanations, such as a shift to self- employment. Professional and Business services, Educational and Health Services (not including public education), and services such as property maintenance are all growing sectors and do indicate a healthy diversification of employment opportunities.

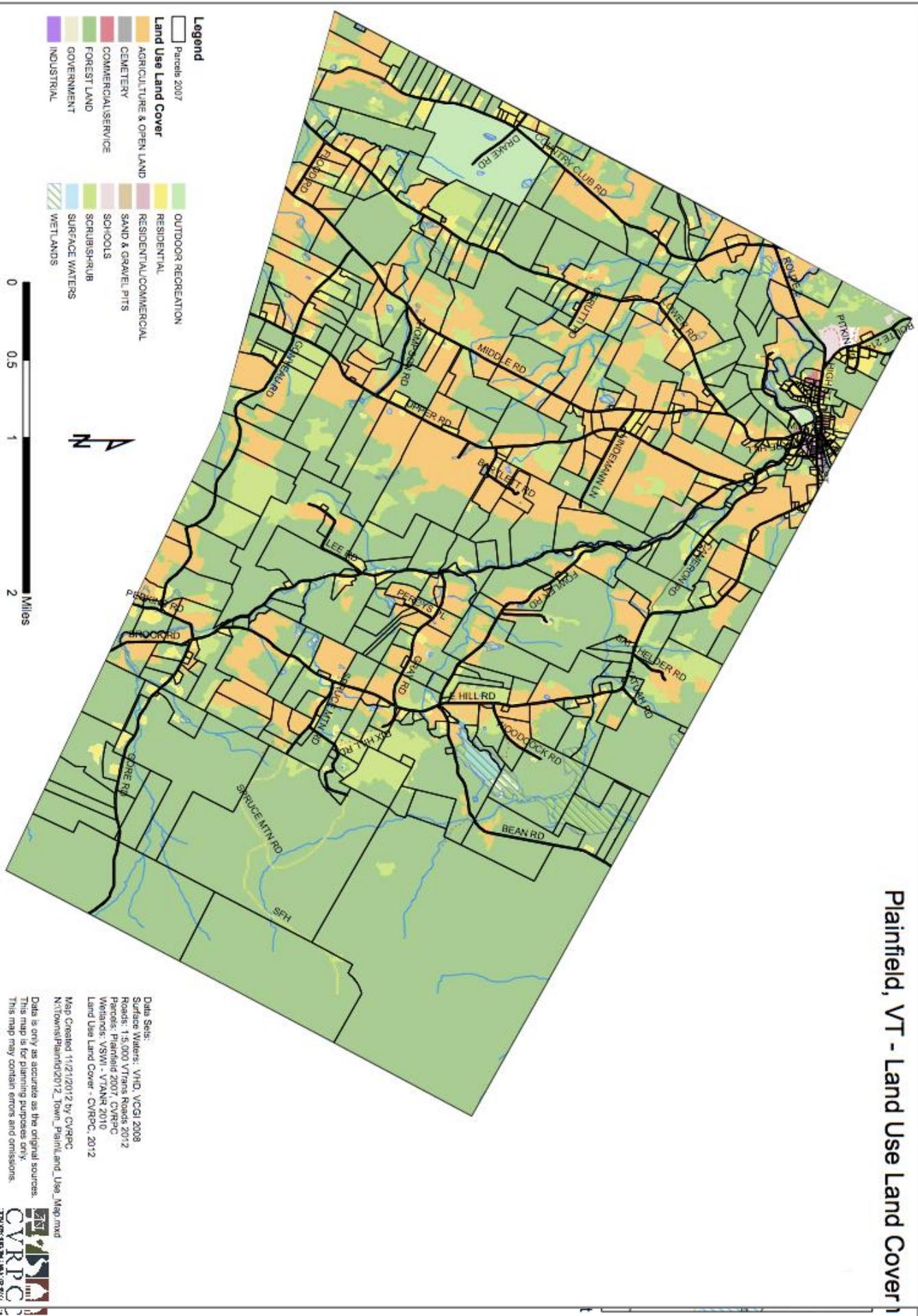
Economic Goals

Create and promote economic opportunities for businesses and other organizations to succeed.
Encourage economic development that is in keeping with Plainfield tradition of providing local services

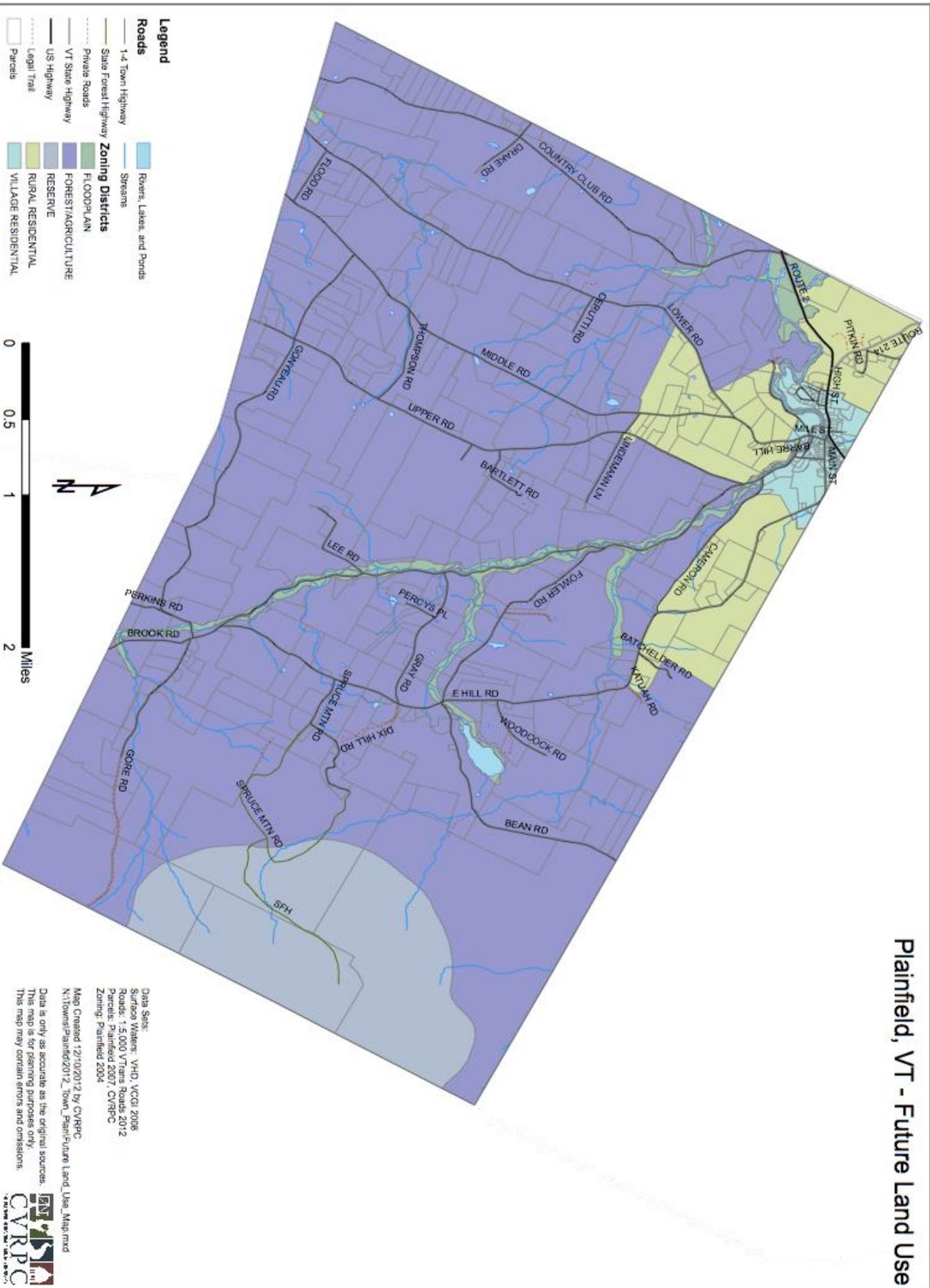
Economic Strategies

Allow the utilization of agricultural buildings for economic uses to preserve the structure and contribute to the local economy.
Support and promote compatible economic activity in forest, rural residential and agricultural districts.

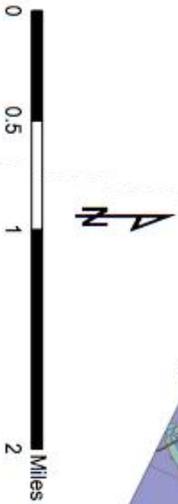
Plainfield, VT - Land Use Land Cover



Plainfield, VT - Future Land Use



- Legend**
- Roads**
- 1-4 Town Highway
 - State Forest Highway
 - Private Roads
 - VT State Highway
 - US Highway
 - Legal Trail
 - Parcels
- Zoning Districts**
- Rivers, Lakes, and Ponds
 - Streams
 - Floodplain
 - Forest/Agriculture
 - Reserve
 - Rural Residential
 - Village Residential



Data Srs:
 Surface Waters: VHD, VCGI 2006
 Roads: 1:5,000 VTtrans Roads 2012
 Parcels: Plainfield 2007 CV/RPC
 Zoning: Plainfield 2004

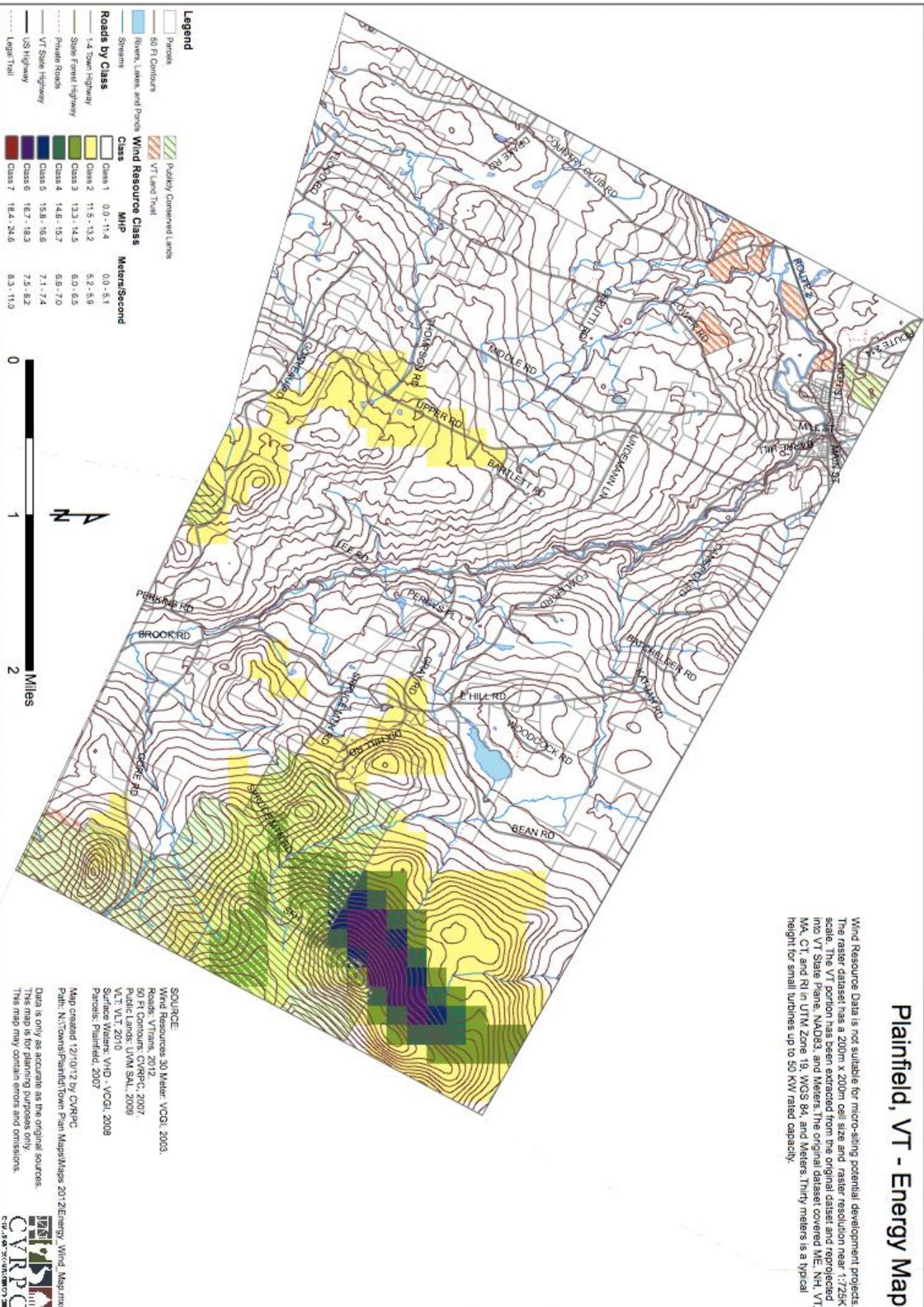
Map Created 12/10/2012 by CVRPC
 N:\Townes\Plainfield2012_Town_Plan\Future Land Use_Map.mxd

Data is only as accurate as the original sources.
 This map is for planning purposes only.
 This map may contain errors and omissions.

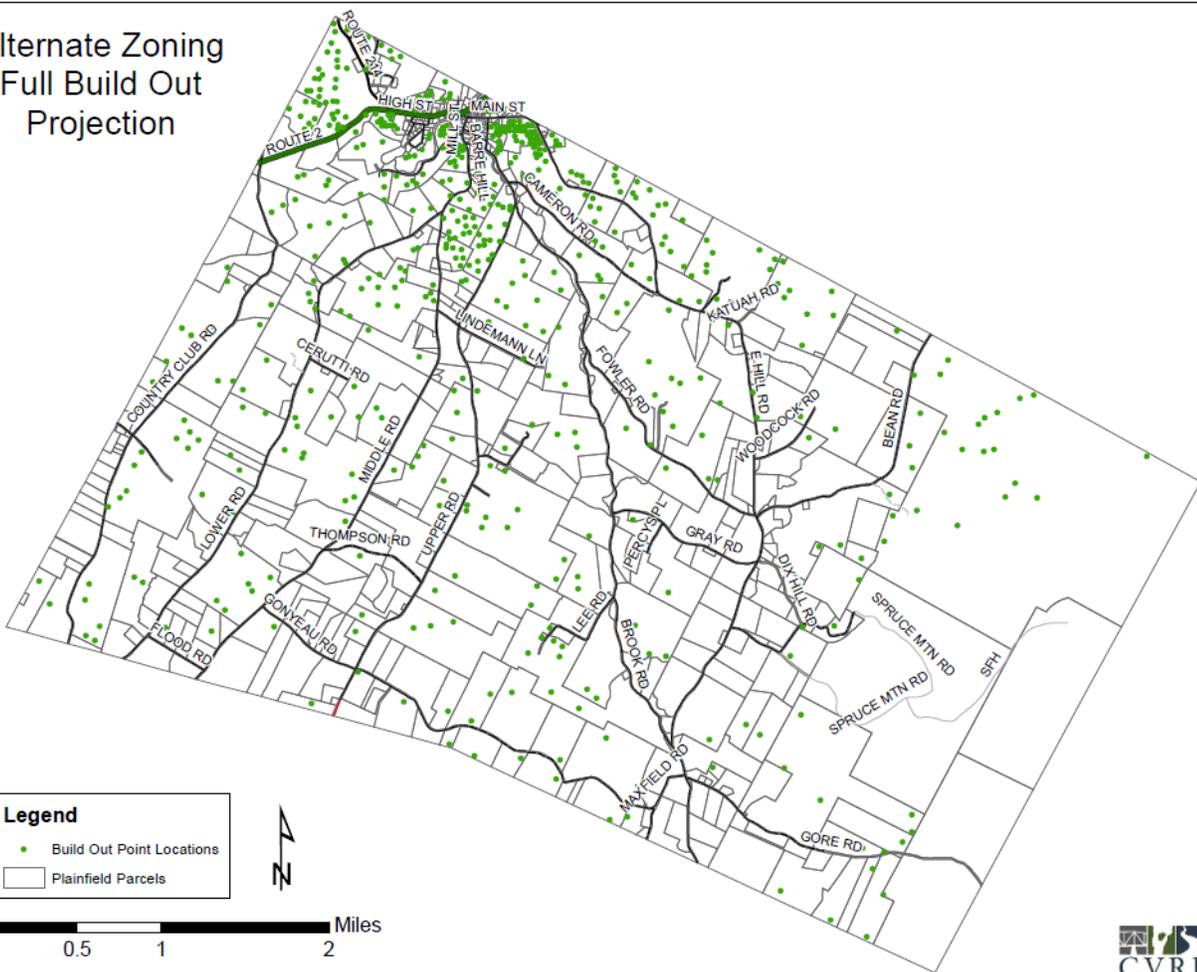


Plainfield, VT - Energy Map

Wind Resource Data is not suitable for micro-siting potential development projects. The raster dataset has a 200m x 200m cell size and raster resolution near 1:725K scale. The VT portion has been extracted from the original dataset and reprojected into VT State Plane, NAD83, and Meters. The original dataset covered ME, NH, VT, MA, CT, and RI in UTM Zone 19, WGS 84, and Meters. Thirty meters is a typical height for small turbines up to 50 kW rated capacity.

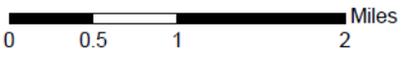


Alternate Zoning Full Build Out Projection

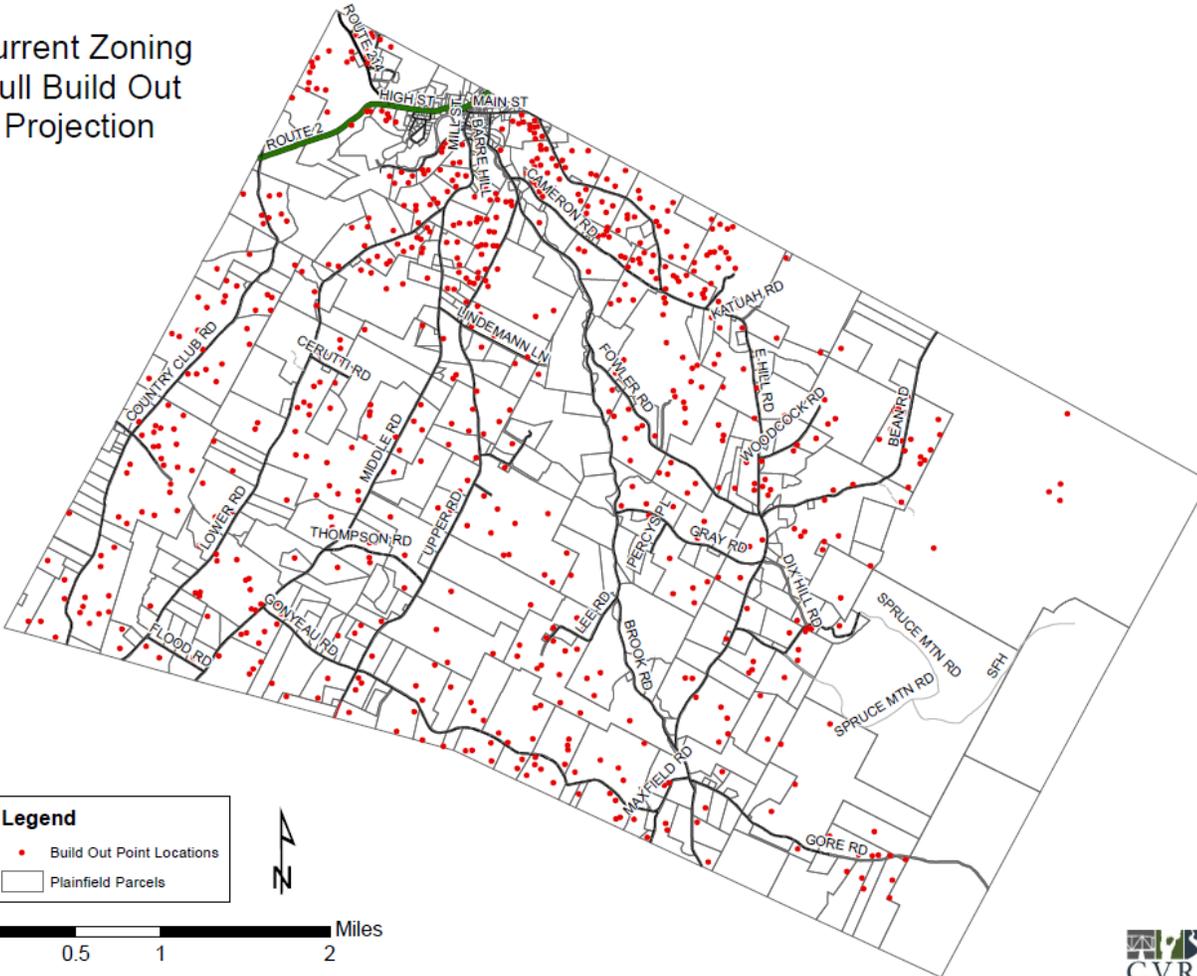


Legend

- Build Out Point Locations
- Plainfield Parcels



Current Zoning Full Build Out Projection



Legend

- Build Out Point Locations
- Plainfield Parcels

