

Shaftsbury, Vermont Town Plan

Adoption Date: 4th of May 2009
Reenactment Date: 4th of May 2014



SELECTBOARD

Lon McClintock, Chair
Bill Pennebaker, Vice-chair
Wynn Metcalfe
Karen Mellinger
Cinda Morse

PLANNING COMMISSION

Craig Bruder, Chair
Chris Williams, Vice-chair
Bill Pennebaker
Bob Carter
Norm St.Onge

This Town Plan was prepared by the Shaftsbury Planning Commission, with assistance provided by the Bennington County Regional Commission, Town employees, volunteers, and interested citizens.

ATTESTED: _____
Town Clerk

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>CHAPTER</u>		<u>PAGE</u>
<u>I. INTRODUCTION</u>		5
<u>II. GOALS</u>		6
2.1	Maintain an Effective Planning Process	6
2.2	Effectively Manage Future Growth	6
2.3	Maintain the Rural Character of the Town	7
2.4	Protect Important Resources	7
2.5	Maintain and Enhance Recreational Opportunities	8
2.6	Promote Opportunities for Affordable Housing	8
2.7	Support Desirable Economic Growth	8
2.8	Provide Outstanding Educational and Childcare Service	8
2.9	Develop Effective Plans for Roads and Other Capital Investments	9
2.10	Promote Safe and Efficient Use of Energy and Utilization of Renewable Energy Resources	9
2.11	Ensure a High Quality of Life	9
<u>III. POPULATION, HOUSING, AND THE ECONOMY</u>		10
3.1	Population	10
	1. Trends and Projections	10
	2. Density	10
	3. Age Distribution	10
3.2	Housing Characteristics	11
3.3	Economy	11
	1. Employment	11
	2. Income	11
<u>IV. HISTORY</u>		12
<u>V. PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND NATURAL RESOURCES</u>		14
5.1	Physical Characteristics	14
	1. Soils	14
	2. Topography	14
5.2	Natural Resources	15
	1. Streams	17
	2. Lakes	18
	3. Wetlands and Floodplains	19
	4. Groundwater	20
	5. Air Quality	23
	6. Forests	23
	7. Agricultural Lands	23
	8. Unique Natural Features and Areas	27
	9. Wildlife Habitat	27
	10. Hillsides, Ridgelines, and Mountains	29
	11. Sand and Gravel Resources	29
	12. Scenic Roads	29

5.3	Policies	30
5.4	Recommendations	32
<u>VI. LAND USE</u>		34
6.1	Residential Districts	35
	1. Village Residential (VR) District	35
	2. Rural Residential (RR) Districts	37
6.2	Commercial (VC and RC) Districts	39
6.3	Industrial (I) Districts	40
6.4	Forest and Recreation (FR) Districts	41
6.5	Land Use and Development Policies	42
	1. Residential Development	42
	2. Commercial Development	43
	3. Industrial Development	43
<u>VII. HISTORIC PRESERVATION</u>		44
7.1	Introduction	44
7.2	Districts and Landmarks	45
7.3	Policies	48
7.4	Recommendations	49
<u>VIII. TRANSPORTATION</u>		50
8.1	Issues and Recommendations	50
8.2	Policies	53
<u>IX. PUBLIC UTILITIES, FACILITIES, AND SERVICES</u>		54
9.1	Water Supply and Wastewater Disposal	54
9.2	Solid Waste	57
9.3	Public Buildings and Land	58
9.4	Fire, Emergency, and Public Safety	60
9.5	Other Facilities	60
9.6	Policies	61
9.7	Recommendations	61
<u>X. EDUCATION</u>		62
10.1	Educational Facilities and Issues	62
10.2	Recommendations	64
<u>XI. RECREATION</u>		
11.1	Howard Park	65
11.2	Lake Shaftsbury and Lake Paran	65
11.3	Neighborhood Parks	67
11.4	Natural Resources	67
11.5	Policies	67
11.6	Recommendations	68

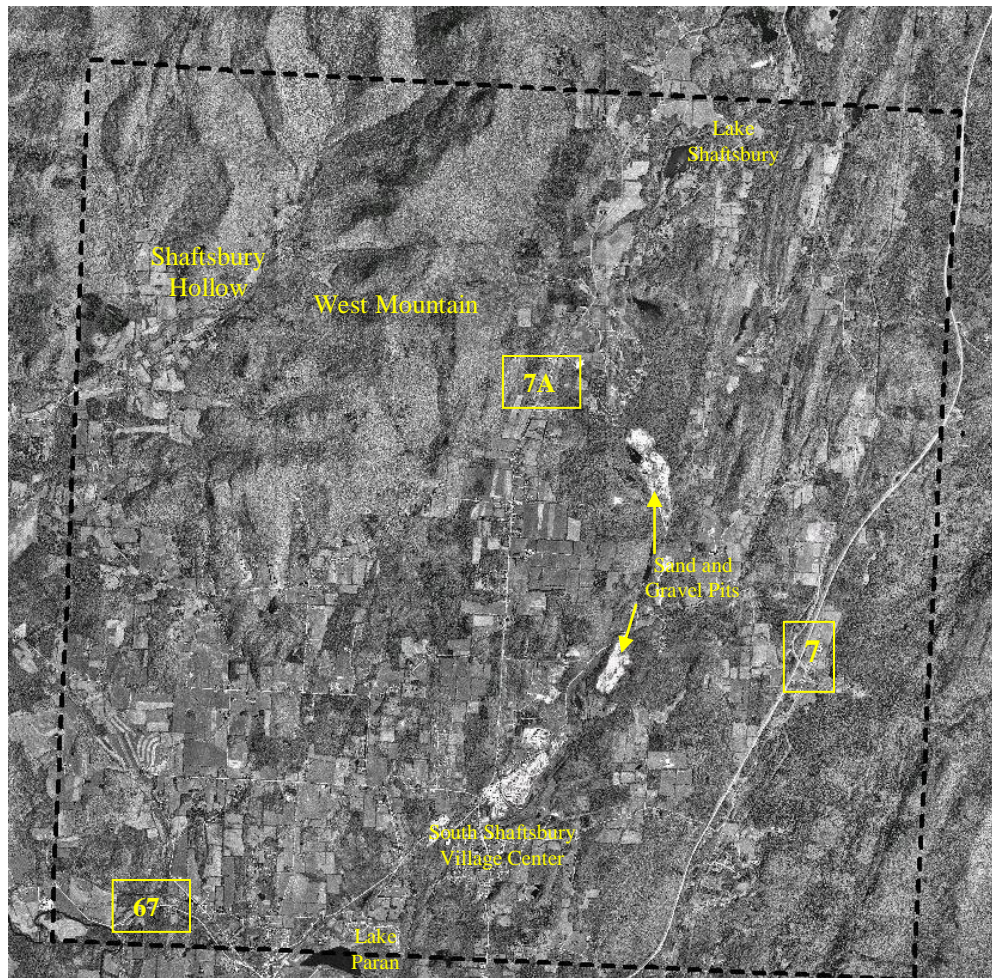
<u>XII. HOUSING</u>	69
12.1 Recommendations	70
<u>XIII. ENERGY</u>	70
13.1 Recommendations	71
<u>XIV. MUNICIPAL FINANCE</u>	72
14.1 Fiscal Description and History	72
14.2 Capital Programming	73
<u>XV. IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM - SUMMARY</u>	74
<u>XVI. RELATIONSHIP TO NEIGHBORING TOWNS AND THE REGION</u>	75

I. INTRODUCTION

Shaftsbury's last comprehensive Town Plan was adopted in 2004 and subsequently amended in 2005. According to the Vermont Planning and Development Act, municipal plans must be updated at least every five years to reflect current conditions and address current demands and pressures. This new Plan will, therefore;

- Assess current conditions
- Identify goals
- Offer a variety of policies and recommendations to implement those goals.

The Town Plan is intended to help Shaftsbury to deal with future growth and development and must therefore provide mechanisms to respond to changing growth pressures. It is intended to serve as a tool to help local residents have a say in the development of their town and to ensure that Shaftsbury will continue to be an outstanding community in which to live. The Plan should be consulted when making public policy decisions, evaluating public investments, reviewing development proposals, and when considering new or amended bylaws and ordinances. The Plan, along with the municipal zoning by-laws, sub-division regulations, and state land use law (i.e., Act 250) should provide clear guidelines to private individuals who propose new developments in Shaftsbury.



Aerial view of Shaftsbury.

II. GOALS

The Town Plan serves as the vision statement for Shaftsbury's future and the municipal Zoning Bylaws and subdivision regulations are the regulations intended to implement the Town Plan. These documents must, therefore, be thoroughly aligned. In certain cases the Zoning Bylaws may need to be adjusted to be consistent with the Town Plan.

The following goals have been identified as fundamentally important in setting a direction for Shaftsbury's future. Some of the goals may be realized by continuing with current policies and directions; others may only be attained with new policies, regulations, investments, or other strategies. Each goal, however, will remain important and relevant for the Town over the next five years. Subsequent chapters will detail specific policies and actions that will facilitate attainment of the goals.

2.1 Maintain an Effective Planning Process

Shaftsbury is a unique community because it is small, yet diverse in character. Shaftsbury contains a village center, large and small businesses, working farms, rural neighborhoods, forests and open lands. Shaftsbury's diversity gives the community its unique character and provides a high quality of life for its residents. While each of Shaftsbury component parts is important, retaining the balance among these parts is critical for Shaftsbury to retain its unique character and quality of life. Having an effective planning process, with citizen participation, is the best method for the Town to achieve this goal.

The planning process should be premised on the notion that residents of Shaftsbury should have the primary responsibility for shaping the Town's future direction. Citizen participation should, therefore, be encouraged during the development of the policy framework and throughout the planning process. Effective and responsible decision-making should be promoted through reliance on a coordinated, comprehensive planning process and policy framework.

Recognition must be given to the fact that the impacts of growth and development within Shaftsbury do not stop at the town line. Cooperation and consultation with neighboring towns and the Bennington County Regional Commission will ensure that the inter-municipal and regional effects of growth and development can be properly evaluated.

Citizens are encouraged to join or otherwise involve themselves with local boards, commissions, and organizations, such as the Planning Commission, Economic Development Committee, Recreation Committee, Development Review Board, Solid Waste Committee, School Board, and Select Board, as well as regional organizations like the Bennington County Regional Commission, Bennington County Industrial Corporation, and Regional Affordable Housing Corporation.

2.2 Effectively Manage Future Growth

Shaftsbury experienced considerable growth during the past two decades, primarily in the form of new single-family homes. The large amount of developable land in the Town points to a potential for additional growth in the future which may be limited by the capacity of the soils for septic systems. The type, location, intensity, and rate of new growth are all important issues that should be controlled so that such development results in a net benefit for the Town. The diversity of landscapes in the town should be protected.

Because local businesses are critical to the Town's economic future it is critical that their needs and challenges be understood and to consider public policies and investments that will support them. We should encourage our existing businesses and strive to create an atmosphere for bringing new businesses to Town.

New residential development should provide a range of housing opportunities and be planned to preserve important natural resources and minimize the need for expenditure of public funds. Commercial uses should provide goods and services for local residents and accommodations and attractions for the traveling and vacationing public in appropriate locations.

Future growth and development should be planned to reinforce historic development patterns, preserve important natural areas and resources, prime agricultural and forest land, and maintain and enhance recreational opportunities. Regulations and public investments should recognize these concerns and direct development to appropriate areas.

Residential and commercial developments should be compatible with the historic small-scale and rural character of the Town.

Resources should be allocated to encourage a rate of growth that does not exceed the long-term historical rate for the Town. Under no conditions should the rate of growth outstrip the ability of the Town to pay for the added services made necessary by that growth. Future development should bear its fair share of municipal capital and maintenance costs.

Growth that will impart an economic benefit to the community while being consistent with the goals of maintaining historical development patterns and preserving natural resources should be encouraged.

2.3 Maintain the Rural and Historical Character of the Town

Shaftsbury's extensive agricultural and forest lands are important components of the Town's rural heritage. Preservation of the rural landscape, with its attendant cultural, recreational, and aesthetic benefits, is a priority for the Town.

Similarly, the village centers of South Shaftsbury, Center Shaftsbury, and (North) Shaftsbury represent unique historical assets, which should be preserved. Special emphasis should be placed on the preservation of historical structures. Develop and promote programs designed to educate the public regarding Shaftsbury's history and heritage.

Land use and infrastructure planning should consider the objective of maintaining a distinct edge between historical village centers and rural open spaces.

2.4 Protect Important Resources

Significant natural and fragile ecological areas, important features of the landscape, scenic roads, waterways, views, and sites of historical, archeological, educational, cultural and scientific significance should be identified and measures taken to preserve them for the enjoyment of current and future residents of the Town.

Streams, wetlands, lakes, ponds, and important wildlife habitat areas provide valuable recreational opportunities and environmental protection benefits. The adequacy of existing protection measures should be evaluated and new means of protecting these areas investigated. Shaftsbury relies on safe and clean groundwater for domestic and commercial water

supplies. Groundwater recharge areas must, therefore, be protected from incompatible development and contamination.

Agricultural lands are an important aspect of the town and special attention should be paid to protect these important resources. While large farms are no longer the mainstay, there has been a steady conversion to smaller, more diverse farming operations.

Mineral and forest resources should be protected for their economic value. Shaftsbury has abundant sand and gravel resources that have been the basis for an active extraction industry and precast concrete manufacturing. Earth and forest resource extraction operations should not significantly degrade environmental quality. At sites where these resources have been exhausted, an effort should be made to economically reclaim the land to make it suitable for other uses. New projects should include provisions for reclaiming areas upon completion of the project. Policies should be considered, developed and implemented for future reclamation of gravel pits in collaboration with landowners and extraction companies.

New wastewater disposal systems must conform to applicable state and municipal health regulations. Appropriate remedial measures should be implemented in areas where existing systems have failed or are inadequate.

The Town should plan ahead to ensure that disposal of solid waste is accomplished in a reliable and safe manner. Recycling to reduce the volume of solid waste should remain a priority. The Town operates a transfer station for the use of town residents. A privately owned transfer station accepts waste from the region.

Air quality is a natural asset of great value to Shaftsbury and should be protected through the enforcement of local and state laws. A Town ordinance; The Burning And Disposal Of Solid Wastes, prohibits the burning of solid waste.

2.5 Maintain and Enhance Recreational Opportunities

A variety of quality recreational opportunities should be available to residents of Shaftsbury. Emphasis should be placed on maintaining and enhancing existing recreational facilities. Methods should be found to maintain or provide public access to recreational resources such as streams, trails, and forests. The Town needs to develop and implement a long range plan to enhance the viability of Howard Park as a recreational resource. The Recreational Overlay zone allows increased recreational opportunities while helping to maintain open space.

2.6 Promote Opportunities for Affordable Housing

Increasing real estate and building costs have made it difficult for some people to locate suitable housing in Shaftsbury. The Town should seek innovative ways to facilitate the development of housing for low and moderate-income people.

2.7 Support Desirable Economic Growth

Economic development should provide maximum economic benefit to the community with minimal environmental costs. Non-polluting, low environmental impact commercial and industrial development that will provide quality employment opportunities and help diversify the Town's property tax base should be encouraged in areas planned for those uses.

2.8 Provide Outstanding Educational and Child Care Service to the Community

Shaftsbury should allocate resources and energies to ensure adequate educational opportunities for all. Child care services should be available to provide a safe nurturing environment for children and to support economic development.

2.9 Develop Effective Plans for Roads and Other Public Investments

Public investments should be planned to meet significant existing and future needs. Roads should be maintained and improved to provide a safe and convenient transportation system. Consideration should be given to evaluate high maintenance roads for reconstruction.

Transportation planning should include the objective of providing safe facilities for walking and bicycling between neighborhoods, village centers, schools, parks, and other destinations.

Efforts to provide public transportation services to residents should be supported.

Improvements to the rail line that runs through Shaftsbury should be supported with the objective of encouraging more passenger and freight service, as long as necessary safety improvements are made at all road crossings.

2.10 Promote the Safe and Efficient Use of Energy and Utilization of Renewable Energy Resources

The issue of energy affects every facet of the community life and municipal operations. Through the planning process, policies should be adopted to encourage both conservation and the implementation and use of alternative energy technologies, both for residential and commercial purposes.

2.11 Ensure a High Quality of Life

The underlying goal of Shaftsbury's planning effort is to ensure a high quality of life for all residents through economic, environmental and community planning. Shaftsbury currently enjoys a high quality of life because of the diversity of its landscape, which includes: both a densely populated village and rural residential homes; small and medium size professional, commercial, agricultural and industrial businesses; forest, farm and open lands; recreational lakes and parks; historic sites; and a history of strong citizen participation. Shaftsbury will continue to enjoy a high quality of life if it can continue to maintain a balance of village and rural lands, business activity and forest, farm and open lands, and continued citizen participation. Special attention should be given to providing facilities and services to achieve this goal for children, seniors, handicapped and people with special needs.

III. POPULATION, HOUSING, AND THE ECONOMY

3.1 Population

1. Trends and Projections

The population of the Town of Shaftsbury in 2007 was 3,693 (Vermont Department of Health). The relatively rapid rate of population growth that began in the 1960s has leveled off (Figure 3-1), as the Town's population actually has declined since 2000. Shaftsbury's population is expected to begin increasing again, reaching approximately 3,989 by the year 2020 (Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research projection).



Figure 3-1. Shaftsbury's population from 1790 to 2000.

2. Density

Much of the land within the Bennington Region is rugged and remote mountain land not suitable for development. Calculating population densities in persons per square mile, excluding high elevation and undevelopable mountain lands, allows for a reasonable comparison of the current intensity of residential development. Of those Bennington Region towns having at least ten square miles of such "developable land," being Arlington, Bennington, Dorset, Manchester, Pownal and Shaftsbury, only Pownal has a lower population density than Shaftsbury. Moreover, of all the towns in the region, only Bennington and Pownal have more valley/developable land than Shaftsbury. This information indicates that a significant amount of new residential development in Shaftsbury is possible.

3. Age Distribution

According to the 2000 Census, the median age of the Shaftsbury population was 40.4 years, slightly above the county median age and nearly three years older than the statewide median. The percentage of Shaftsbury's population under 18 years of age (25.8%) is slightly higher than both the statewide (24.2%) and countywide (23.7%) proportions in this age group. The percentage of Shaftsbury's population in the 65 years and older category is 13.1%, comparable to the statewide figure (12.7%), but significantly less than the

percentage in this age group countywide (16.7%).

3.2 Housing Characteristics

As of 2000 (the most recent year for which data is available), there were 1,450 housing units in Shaftsbury, 84 percent of which were owner-occupied. The great majority of the units were single-family detached houses, with 106 units in multi-family (two or more unit) buildings and 66 mobile homes.

Based on the 2020 population projection (3,989 residents) and the current average household size of 2.6 persons, 114 new housing units will be needed over the next 12 years (assuming a constant number of vacant housing units). Shaftsbury does have a sufficient supply of developable land to accommodate this projected demand, but limited infrastructure capacity in Village areas suggests that much of the new growth will be in outlying rural areas.

3.3 Economy

1. Employment

While Shaftsbury contains over ten percent of the county's population, it has only 2.8% of its jobs, indicating that many of the Town's residents commute to work elsewhere. According to the 2000 Census, the mean travel time to work for Shaftsbury residents is 21.4 minutes. Not including the 62 residents that work at home, 35.9% of the Shaftsbury resident workforce spends less than 15 minutes commuting to work, 41.7% of the workforce spends between 15 and 29 minutes commuting to work, and 22.4% of the workforce spends between 30 and 90 or more minutes commuting to work.

Shaftsbury's resident workforce numbers 2200 (2120 employed and 80 unemployed as of the first quarter of 2008 – Vermont Department of Employment and Training). Most of those workers are employed in jobs outside of Shaftsbury, the majority in Bennington. Just over 500 jobs are located within Shaftsbury; of those 202 are classified as some form of retail or professional service position and 182 as manufacturing jobs. Other significant areas of employment within the Town include education and construction.

2. Income

The average annual wage earned by a Shaftsbury resident in 2007 was \$34,570, slightly higher than the county and state averages. The 2005 median family income was \$55,299, approximately 15 percent above the county and 5 percent above the state medians. The number of families below the poverty level in Shaftsbury in 2000 (U.S. Census), was 43, or 4.0%, below the county average of 7.0 percent, and below the state average of 6.3 percent.

IV. HISTORY

The Town of Shaftsbury was established by Benning Wentworth, governor of the province of New Hampshire, in 1761 when he granted 66 shares comprising some 23,040 acres of land. The Town was named after the third Earl of Shaftesbury, England. Eighteen settlers had taken up residence in Shaftsbury by 1765, and the first recorded birth in Town occurred in 1766. The population of the Town grew rapidly until, by the end of the 18th century, close to 2,000 people resided in Shaftsbury.

An important aspect of the Town's early history was the bitter land dispute waged between Vermont settlers and New York officials. The Vermonters had established themselves on land granted by the governor of New Hampshire, while New York felt that it had sole authority to make land grants in Vermont. It took many years of angry debate and confrontations before the "Green Mountain Boys" secured their homes and land.

When not fighting the New Yorkers or the British during the Revolutionary War, Shaftsbury's residents were hard at work making a living and carving a community out of the wilderness. The first church in Shaftsbury (and the second in Vermont) was the First Baptist Church, established in West Shaftsbury in 1768. Town meetings were held from at least 1779, where decisions were made that ranged from establishing school districts to raising tax revenues to laying out new roads. It was decided in 1784, for example, to lay out a new road from Center Shaftsbury to Arlington.

There was, of course, considerable agricultural development in the early years of the community. Grains, vegetables, beef, pork, and dairy products were all produced in abundance. Early manufacturing focused on small home-based enterprises that produced potash (from burning hardwood trees), flax, maple sugar, and similar products. Shaftsbury's first factory was a small tannery. In the early 1800s the Town became well known for its wool that was derived from Merino sheep. Large areas of forest were cleared for pasturing these animals (by 1840 there were nearly 25,000 sheep kept in Shaftsbury).

Forests were cleared not only for cropland and pasture, but also to feed logs to the Town's saw mills (there were 12 in Shaftsbury in 1840) and paper mills (2 in 1840), and eventually to produce charcoal for the Burden Iron Works iron smelter which operated from 1850 to the 1870's. Consequently, in Shaftsbury, as in most of the rest of the State, a majority of the land had been cleared of trees by the late 1800s.

Agriculture continued to be of great importance to the Town throughout the 19th century, although many young Shaftsbury farmers migrated westward, especially to Michigan, during those years. After the sheep boom ended in the mid-1800's many farmers turned to dairy farming. The number of farms and farm acreages declined, but only slightly, through the first part of the 20th century. A radical change occurred



The Center Shaftsbury Historic District is the site of an early concentration of development in the town and contains this church building that houses the local historical society.

between 1936 and 1940, however, when 46 Shaftsbury farms went out of business.

Nonetheless, a number of farmers continue to work some of the most productive agricultural soils in Shaftsbury.

As the number of farms declined, the population became less dispersed and the village areas began to grow. Together with improved roads and the advent of the automobile, the result was a town that became functionally much smaller than it had originally been. This trend was clearly illustrated by the opening of a single elementary school to serve all of Shaftsbury's students in the late 1950's, when there had at one time been 17 separate schools to serve the various parts of the Town.

A number of small industries have contributed to Shaftsbury's economy over the years. In addition to the tannery, iron works, and saw and paper mills noted above, grist mills, a woolen factory, cider and flax mills, carriage and wagon makers, a gunsmith, a boot and shoe manufacturer, a cheese factory and creamery, and ochre, marble, iron and stone mining have operated in Shaftsbury. David Millington, inventor of grafting wax, spawned a prosperous business in Shaftsbury that kept many townspeople busy each spring in the mid-1800s as they traveled throughout the northeastern United States grafting apple trees. Unfortunately for the Town, the best-known and largest industry, Stanley Tools Eagle Square Plant closed its doors in April 2002. The Eagle Square Company was originally established in the 1820's when it pioneered the manufacture of metal carpenter's squares. This action displaced 160 skilled employees. The former Eagle Square Plant is now occupied by Bernstein Displays, a manufacturer of mannequins and retail display fixtures and systems.



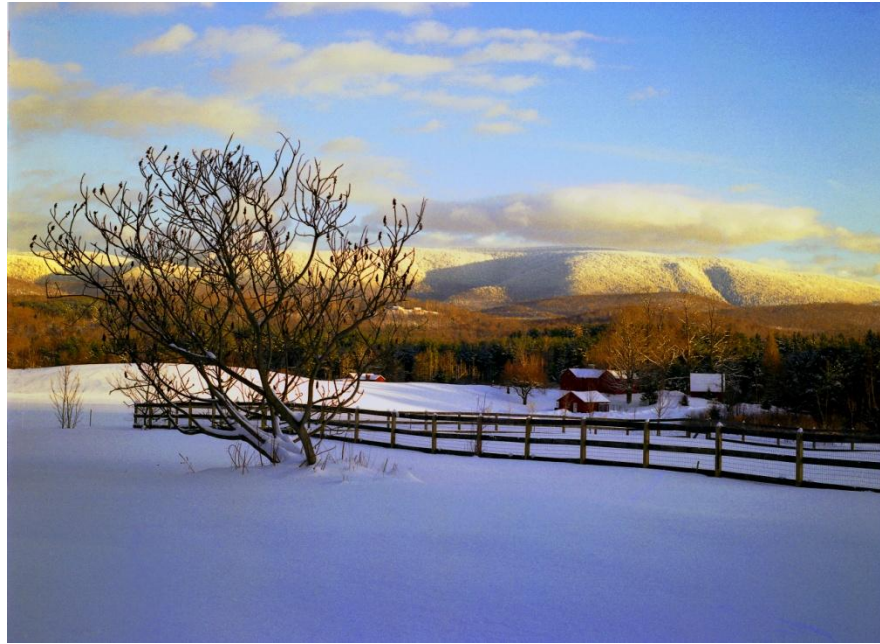
The former Eagle Square tool plant is now occupied by Bernstein Displays.

Another major employer in Shaftsbury today is the former Wm. E. Dailey Company Inc., now, Peckham Industries, a firm that has utilized the abundant sand and gravel resources in the area that are so vital to the construction industry. The precast plant has recently undergone a major expansion of operations.

Transportation improvements have played a significant role in shaping the Town. The first roads connected the scattered farmhouses with one another, but it was time-consuming and difficult to travel or to transport materials any great distance. The railroad, which first came to Shaftsbury in 1852, aided the Town's industries, allowed residents to travel out of Town with greater ease, improved mail delivery, and even brought the first tourists to the area. At the same

time, however, railways were improving transportation to and from the rich agricultural lands of the Midwest, thereby damaging the profitability of Eastern agriculture. Use of the railroad declined with the coming of the automobile, truck, and improved roadways. Today, a limited access highway traverses Shaftsbury and a network of paved and gravel roads tie the Town together.

Shaftsbury has certainly seen remarkable changes in its two and one-half century history, but it is clear that the past has helped shape the present and that the Town will continue to benefit from its rich history. Additional information on the Town's history can be found in the book "Ordinary Heroes: The Story of Shaftsbury" by Ruth Levin and Tyler Resch, the source of the information presented in this chapter.



Evening sunlight on the Green Mountains – North Shaftsbury.

V. PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND NATURAL RESOURCES

5.1 Physical Characteristics

1. Soils

Soil conditions are a primary determinant of the suitability of an area for particular resource opportunities and types and intensities of development. Certain soils provide outstanding opportunities for agricultural or forestry use, other soils support vegetation which provides important wildlife habitat, and some soils represent economically significant earth resources. Soils directly affect land development potential since poor qualities of texture, wetness, permeability, stability, or depth to bedrock/hardpan cause limitations for septic systems, roads, and building foundations. Soil conditions should be identified and land uses planned in accordance with soil capability.

Maps of soil types and suitability for various land uses are available through the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Bennington County Regional Commission. A recent soil studies has confirmed that some areas of Shaftsbury contain prime agricultural land.

2. Topography

A community's historic development pattern is often related to topographic conditions. Such is the

case in Shaftsbury where the most concentrated developments have occurred on the relatively gentle slopes in the center of town, between Lake Shaftsbury in the north and Lake Paran in the south. The steep slopes and high elevations on West Mountain in the Town's northwest corner, and the slopes of the Green Mountains to the east have, since the late 1800's, remained largely devoid of permanent development. Substantial acreage is devoted to agricultural and rural residential uses south and west of Center Shaftsbury, where moderate slopes are prevalent and roadways tend to follow stream valleys or parallel the contour lines around the southern and western faces of West Mountain. Scattered low-density residential development occurs among the irregular hills and valleys east of Route 7A.



Lake Shaftsbury is located along Warm Brook in the valley at the northern end of Town; West Mountain forms a long ridge between this valley and Shaftsbury Hollow.

Distinctive topographic features of the Shaftsbury landscape include: West Mountain, an elongated ridge in the Taconic Range rising to 2,401 feet; the low central Valley of Vermont containing south-flowing Paran Creek, north-flowing Warm Brook, Lake Paran and Lake Shaftsbury, and a number of wetlands, particularly in the "Tunic" area east of Center Shaftsbury; a number of small peaks and "cobbles" (Hale Mountain, Bucks Cobble, Harrington Cobble, Trumbull Mountain, Maple Hill) east of the valley; Shaftsbury Hollow; and the very level "Flats" and wetlands along Route 67.

Steeply sloping lands present significant obstacles to development because of limitations due to high erosion potential, wastewater disposal system limitations, roadway grade, stability, and safety, and other factors. At higher elevations precipitation amounts are greater, air and soil temperatures lower, soils more shallow and poorly drained, and plant species fewer; also, ecological communities at these elevations tend to be more fragile and susceptible to damage.

5.2 Natural Resources

The many natural resources found within the Bennington region represent some of the area's greatest assets. Most of these resources are evident throughout the region: valleys with their low rolling hills and agricultural fields against the forested backdrop of the Green and Taconic Mountains; the region's four main rivers and their pristine tributaries; abundant fish and wildlife; various earth and mineral resources; and clear air and clean water.

Water Resources

The quality of surface and ground water is essential to the well being of the area's residents and visitors as well as the region's economy. The region's high quality surface and ground water is a valuable resource providing water for drinking and irrigation, recreational opportunities, scenic enjoyment, and habitat for many wildlife species. While costly remedial solutions may be utilized to improve water quality, contamination prevention will always need attention since today's good quality may be subject to future degradation.

Shaftsbury contains a network of smaller streams called headwater streams. The many smaller streams within the region are very important, both because they directly affect water quality in the larger rivers and because they provide many of the same recreational and environmental protection benefits. Efforts should therefore be made to protect these streams from the negative affects of point and nonpoint source pollution. Some streams and watersheds, such as Basin Brook, need to be carefully managed as a primary water supply source.

Water Quality Degradation:

Non-point pollution sources are the greatest cause of surface water quality degradation. Common non-point sources of water quality impairment are siltation, thermal modifications, organic enrichment or low dissolved oxygen, and "acid rain" (coming primarily from outside the region). Other common causes are pathogens such as E. coli bacteria, flow alterations, and other habitat alterations. The principal sources of these impairments are agricultural runoff, stream bank destabilization and erosion, removal of stream bank vegetation, in-stream water impoundments, land development, and highway and parking lot maintenance/runoff.

Nonpoint Source Pollution vs. Point Sources, Nonpoint source pollution: Nonpoint source (NPS) pollution comes from many diffuse sources. NPS pollution is caused by rainfall or snowmelt moving over and through the ground. As the runoff moves, it picks up and carries away natural and human-made pollutants, finally depositing them into lakes, rivers, wetlands, coastal waters, and underground sources of drinking water. These pollutants include: excess fertilizers, herbicides, and insecticides from agricultural lands and residential areas; oil, grease, and toxic chemicals from urban runoff and energy production; sediment from improperly managed construction sites, crop and forest lands, and eroding streambanks; salt from irrigation practices and acid drainage from abandoned mines; and bacteria and nutrients from livestock, pet wastes, and faulty septic systems.

Nutrients such as phosphorus, nitrogen, and potassium in the form of fertilizers, manure, sludge, irrigation water, legumes, and crop residues are applied to enhance production. When they are applied in excess of plant needs, nutrients can wash into aquatic ecosystems where they can cause excessive plant growth, which reduces swimming and boating opportunities, creates a foul taste and odor in drinking water, and kills fish. Farmers can implement nutrient management plans which help maintain high yields and save money on the use of fertilizers while reducing NPS pollution.

Point Source Pollution: In contrast, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines point source pollution as "any single identifiable source of pollution from which pollutants are discharged, such as a pipe, ditch, ship or factory smokestack" (Hill, 1997). Management of Point Source Pollution is directed through a National Pollution Discharge Permit System administrated by the Agency of Natural Resources.

Managing Stormwater through Low Impact Development (LID) Techniques: Low impact development (LID) stormwater management includes a set of practices and design approaches that maintain natural drainage patterns and retain more stormwater where it falls. LID practices help cleanse stormwater by filtering and releasing it slowly into receiving water bodies, thereby improving water quality and reducing the risk of flash flooding. Shaftsbury can encourage LID to

reduce the impacts of development on lakes, rivers and streams. For new development, LID stormwater management methods mimic drainage and flow patterns that existed prior to development.

The LID approach aims to retain the natural ability of the pre-development site to absorb water by capturing, detaining and infiltrating precipitation. These processes clean the water and promote groundwater recharge. LID as a stormwater strategy often uses a series of small-scale non-structural and structural practices linked together on the development site. For example, in lieu of a treatment pond or municipal storm sewer serving a new subdivision's runoff needs, the development site can integrate lot-level practices throughout, such as maintaining native vegetation, incorporating rain gardens, diverting water from downspouts into planting beds (and away from driveway surfaces) and eliminating curbs. This type of integrated approach costs less than conventional methods because the total volume of runoff to be managed is significantly minimized or even eliminated when stormwater is absorbed into the soil, and evaporated and transpired from plant surfaces. Less runoff volume equals fewer infrastructures and its related maintenance.

Shoreline Buffer Strips:

The maintenance and enhancement of shoreline vegetation is perhaps the easiest and most effective means of protecting the many benefits and values associated with surface waters. Setting aside strips of naturally growing vegetation is essential to the health of all streams, lakes and ponds. Vegetated shorelines contribute to water quality and shoreline protection in the following ways:

- Provide bank support,
- Provide food and shelter for fish and wildlife,
- Intercept and filter out pollutants,
- Keep water temperatures cool during the summer months when fish are susceptible to heat stress,
- Reduce surface runoff,
- Increase wildlife diversity,
- Reduce the impacts of flood and ice damage to stream channels, adjacent lands, and structures, and
- Preserve the natural characteristics of water.

Where onsite evaluations have not been conducted by the Department of Fish and Wildlife staff, the agency recommends riparian buffer zones not less than 50 feet and up to 100 feet for the protection of water quality, fish habitat, and wildlife habitat for regulated projects on streams. A greater or lesser setback may be recommended when an onsite investigation has been conducted.

A buffer zone of 100 feet is recommended for regulated projects on lakes. A greater or lesser value may be recommended if onsite investigations have been conducted. Wider buffer zones are recommended for sites having the following characteristics: steeper slopes, specific natural resource values of concern (e.g. threatened or endangered species), and projects or activities posing great risks to the environment.

1. Streams

Shaftsbury has the distinction of being in the headwaters of two of the main rivers in Bennington County; these free-flowing streams contribute a great deal to the Town's natural resource base. The headwaters of Warm Brook and the Fayville Branch flow to the Batten Kill. White Creek, Little White Creek, Cold Spring, Paran Creek, Furnace and Basin Brook all provide a substantial amount

of water to the Walloomsac River. Both the Batten Kill and Walloomsac River are a part of the large Hudson River Basin.

All of these resources contribute to the quality of life that is enjoyed in the region. Protection of these streams will assure that opportunities for fishing, hiking, aesthetic appreciation and other water-based recreational pursuits remain available to the community. Stream protection will also serve to preserve historical and archeological sites, protect water quality and public health, and important wildlife habitat. Wise resource management and planning is necessary to ensure that maximum benefits are realized both now and into the future.

2. Lakes

Two small lakes, Lake Shaftsbury and Lake Paran, are important recreational assets for the community. Lake Shaftsbury and Lake Paran are both heavily used and offer two of the most heavily used swimming areas in Bennington County. The health of these waterways is directly related to land use management throughout the local watershed. Each is a natural water body, expanded to its present size by man-made dams. The shorelines of both lakes contain little development beyond recreational facilities. To protect and preserve these lakes the streams that feed the lakes need to be protected from nonpoint source pollution. The recreation section of this plan offers further details regarding these resources.



Lake Paran is located at the town's border with Bennington and North Bennington; cooperation between the municipalities, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, and Paran Recreations will help protect water quality and recreational uses.

Natural lakeshore vegetation is critical to the long-term health of a lake environment. A "buffer" of native vegetation along the water's edge separates the uphill land uses from the lake thus providing numerous water quality, scenic, privacy and habitat benefits. Not only are the buffers crucial around the lake but along the streams that feed into the lake.

The region's water bodies also provide important habitat for waterfowl and many other wildlife species. Moreover, the natural beauty of glistening ponds nestled among the hills contributes to the area's aesthetic values. For all of these reasons, it is important to protect the quality of our lakes and ponds, and to ensure that reasonable public access to them is maintained.

Comprehensive planning for the protection of lakes and ponds can be achieved through local and regional action. For such planning to be effective, three specific areas must be addressed: watershed management, shore land management, and lake management.

The area lying landward 500 to 1,000 feet from the water's edge is referred to as a lake's shore land. Activities occurring in shore land areas can have direct impacts on lake water quality. Improperly designed or sited septic systems, inadequate erosion control during construction, the spreading of manure, fertilizers and pesticides, and excessive removal of vegetation can all lead to increased sediment and nutrient loading in a lake.

Towns can influence such activities through shore land regulations (as per 24 VSA Section 4411) and educational programs. Requiring that construction activities and other disturbances are set back a sufficient distance from the shoreline, and that undisturbed vegetated "buffer strips" are maintained along shorelines, are commonly used and effective methods of limiting pollution from shore land areas. Such techniques also help to preserve the natural beauty of shorelines and facilitate public access where such access is deemed appropriate.

Of course, activities that occur in or on a lake or pond can have immediate water quality impacts. One major concern is the spread of nuisance aquatic weeds, Eurasian water milfoil and water chestnut. These plants adversely affect fish and wildlife habitat and can render areas unsuitable for recreational use. These weeds can easily be spread when pieces of a plant become attached to boats and are subsequently released in another part of the lake or in a different lake. One lake in the region, Lake Paran, is currently suffering from a severe infestation of Eurasian water milfoil. Towns, lake associations, and other lake users should support and cooperate with the Agency of Natural Resources' programs that are designed to prevent the spread of these weeds.

3. Wetlands, Vernal Pools and Floodplains

Wetlands: Wetlands are lands transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems, where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water. A wetland has one or more of the following three attributes: (1) at least periodically, the land supports predominantly hydrophytic vegetation; (2) the substrate is predominantly undrained hydric soil; and (3) the substrate is nonsoil and is saturated with water or covered by shallow water at some time during the growing season of each year. Benefits provided by wetlands include: flood and storm water control, maintenance of surface and groundwater quality, open space and aesthetic appreciation, educational and scientific research areas, wildlife habitat, and sources of nutrients for freshwater food chains. Concentrations of significant wetlands in Shaftsbury are found along stream floodplains and in areas in the southwestern and northeastern portions of the Town.



Wetlands, like this one along Cider Mill Road are important ecological and aesthetic components of the landscape.

Wetlands function as natural sponges that trap and slowly release surface water, rain, snowmelt, groundwater and flood waters. Trees, root mats, and other wetland vegetation also slow the speed of flood waters and distributes them more slowly over the floodplain. This combined water storage and braking action lowers flood heights and reduces erosion. Wetlands within and downstream of urban areas are particularly valuable, counteracting the greatly increased rate and volume of surface- water runoff from pavement and buildings.

The Legislature adopted an act in 1986 (10 V.S.A., Chapter 37, Section (a)(7-9)) mandating that the Water Resources Board (the Board) adopt rules to identify and protect Vermont's "significant wetlands". These rules, known as the Vermont Wetland Rules, became effective on February 23, 1990. Amendments to the rules were adopted in December 2001 and became effective on January 1, 2002.

The rules contain a list of activities that are allowed within significant wetlands and their adjacent buffer

zones without review under the rules, provided there is no draining, dredging, filling, grading or alteration of the water flow, with some noted exceptions. Examples of allowed uses include: routine repair and maintenance of existing structures, recreational activities, and fish and wildlife management activities.

Section 6.3 of the rules states that all uses which are not allowed uses are conditional uses. Conditional uses are only allowed in significant wetlands or in their adjacent buffer zones upon receiving a Conditional Use Determination (CUD).

Vernal Pools: Vernal pools are temporary bodies of water that usually occur in woodland depressions. Most vernal pools are filled by spring rains and snowmelt and are typically dry during the summer months. Typically vernal pools are less than 3 feet deep and vary in size from just

a few feet across to over 100 feet in width. Vernal pools provide important breeding habitat for many amphibians including the tree frog and salamanders as well as many species of insects. These habitats are safe breeding grounds because they do not support fish populations. Since many amphibians return to the same vernal pool each year to breed, destruction or alteration of vernal pools may result in the loss of local populations of some species. However, because of their small size and temporary nature, vernal pools are not protected under the Vermont Wetland Rules. They are a unique and very vulnerable habitat area that should be identified and protected under municipal regulations.

Floodplains: The Town has adopted a flood hazard bylaw to regulate development in floodplain areas. These regulations are designed to protect property and the health and safety of the population against the hazards of floodwater inundation, and to protect the community against the costs which may be incurred when unsuitable development occurs in areas prone to flooding.

The National Flood Insurance Program is a voluntary program administered at the community level. Shaftsbury is currently a participating community. Participating communities agree to manage floodplain development using building and land-use regulations. In return, residents have the ability to purchase flood insurance, apply for federally insured loans (such as mortgages), and receive flood disaster assistance. By managing flood hazards so as to meet or exceed the requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program the Town can enable all residents to secure flood insurance, enable the Town to receive disaster relief for damaged infrastructure, and be eligible for grant programs to prepare for the next flood event.

4. Groundwater

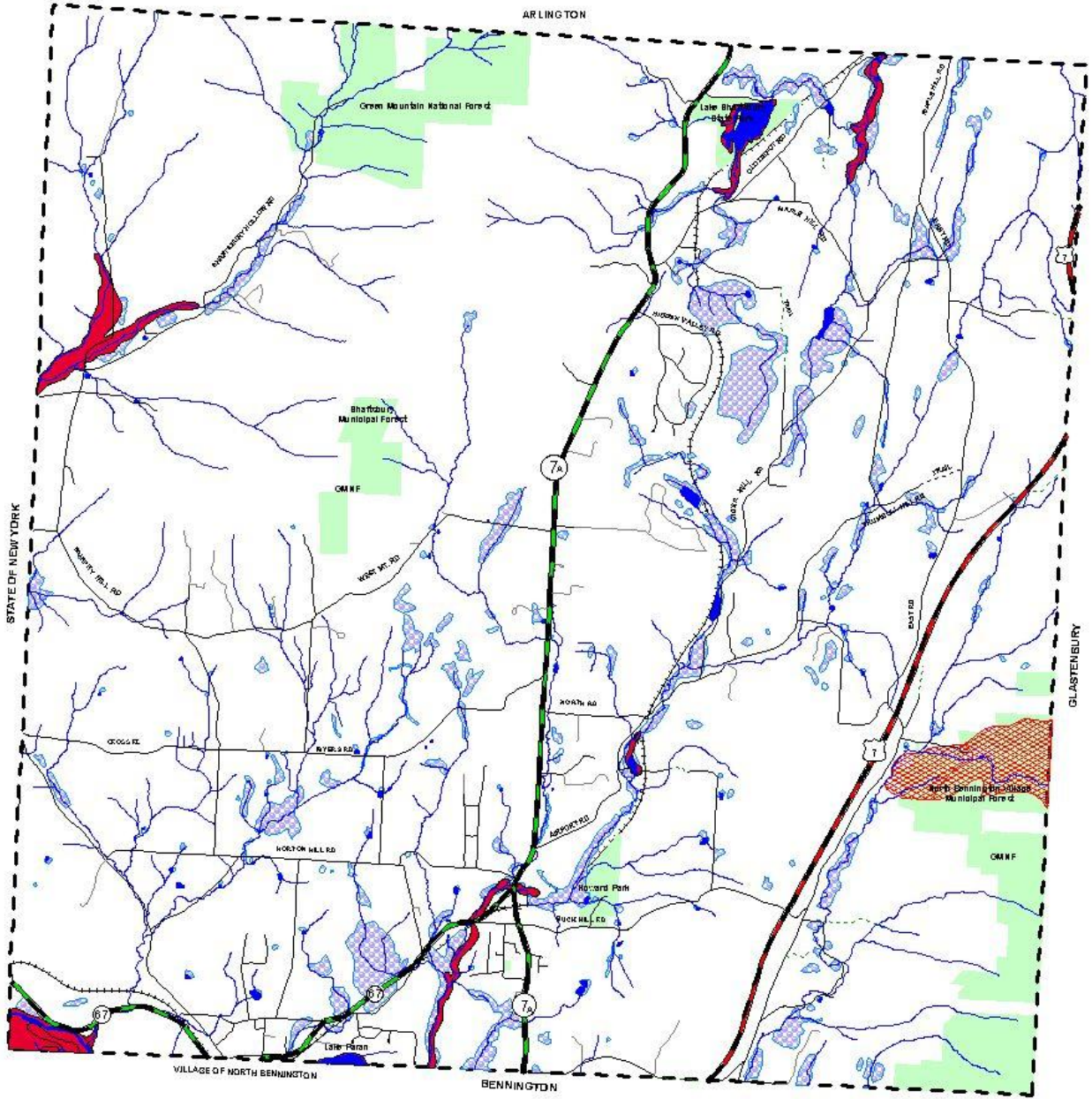
Existing residential and commercial/industrial uses, as well as future development, depend on the availability of adequate and clean groundwater supplies. Many homes and businesses in South Shaftsbury obtain their water from the North Bennington Water Department system, the source of which is in the Basin Brook watershed in Shaftsbury and Glastenbury and wells along Furnace Brook. Other than one small private system, the remainder of the Town obtains water from private on-site wells.

The North Bennington water system, with its relatively new filtration plant, has the capacity to accommodate modest growth for the next decade. If future development is to be concentrated primarily near existing village centers, it is likely that additional service from a public water system will be necessary. Questions of capacity, environmental regulations, and cost may limit substantial expanded use of the North Bennington system.

Outside the water district, development in areas having soils which are marginally acceptable for on-site wastewater disposal and in areas of low groundwater availability may require additional multi-user water supply systems.

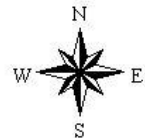
Protection of existing and potential groundwater supplies, including important aquifers and aquifer recharge areas, is therefore of great importance to the Town. The largest areas having potential as important groundwater sources lie in the valley between the Taconic and Green Mountain Ranges, and south of West Mountain. Not surprisingly, geologic studies have identified West Mountain as providing an important recharge area for those aquifers.

The State of Vermont has mandated the installation of larger pipes and the elimination of most dead-ends in the North Bennington water system distribution network in South Shaftsbury Village. These improvements are necessary to insure adequate water pressure at the fire hydrants connected to the system. The state is concerned that when a fire truck pumps water from a hydrant attached to the mains, the water pressure may drop sufficiently to allow ground water to siphon into the main and possibly contaminate the water. The Town secured voter approval for a bond to pay for these improvements during the November 4, 2008 election.



Map 5-1 Shaftsbury, Vermont Water Resources

-  Streams
-  Lakes and Ponds
-  100 Year Floodplain
-  Source Protection Area
-  Wetlands



Map produced November 6, 2008 by
Bennington County Regional Commission
111 South Street, Suite 203
Bennington, VT 05201

5. Air Quality

The quality of the air in Shaftsbury is generally excellent. The Town must be careful to limit activities that would threaten this resource. The Town, in adopting an ordinance (The Burning and Disposal of Solid Wastes), has taken a positive step toward curtailing localized and potentially town-wide air quality problems. Non-residential development should not emit pollution that would unduly affect air quality.

6. Forests

Extensive forests cover much of Shaftsbury, particularly on West Mountain and the ridges and hills in the eastern part of the town. Numerous small woodlots dot the landscape in and around village and agricultural areas. All of these woodlands help prevent soil erosion and flooding, and provide valuable timber, wildlife, recreational, and aesthetic resources. Consequently, municipal planning and private developments should include the objective of maintaining natural vegetative cover to the greatest extent possible. With the expansion of the Green Mountain National Forest proclamation boundary to include the Taconic Range, some forest land in the northwest part of Town has become federally owned and managed. Public access to this land should be maintained and a solution to the degradation of trails by motorized vehicles and poor logging practices should be found. Motorized vehicle overuse represents a serious threat to road stability in all forests.

7. Agricultural Land

Agriculture is a vital part of Shaftsbury's rural heritage. While the number of farms and total acreage devoted to agriculture has declined in Shaftsbury, as in much of New England over the past several decades, the Town has retained its agricultural character to a greater extent than most other communities in the area. An agricultural landscape helps to maintain the Town's rural character while providing aesthetic value to both residents and visitors. The mix of fields and woodlands characteristic of the area also provides the habitat diversity necessary to sustain a large and diverse wildlife community. Not to be overlooked is the fact that agriculture comprises an important element of the local economy. Agricultural values should be preserved through a thoughtful and effective planning process.

A necessary first step in this planning process is the identification of important agricultural lands. This effort has been initiated through creation of a map depicting primary agricultural soils in Shaftsbury, and an inventory of large parcels of open space and farmland. The Town has developed a Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) program. A LESA program is a means of assessing the relative significance of parcels of agricultural land. The "land evaluation" is a measure of the productive capability of a parcel of land based on its constituent soil types; the "site assessment" measures other characteristics of the parcel: location, size, quality of structures and equipment, aesthetic appeal, and so on. By ranking agricultural parcels in this way, it is possible for the Town to focus its efforts on preserving its most valuable farmland. The Development Review Board should utilize the LESA in ranking properties at the preliminary stage of any land use application, and should work with the owner of any parcel ranking 200 or higher to minimize the adverse impact of any proposed land use changes.

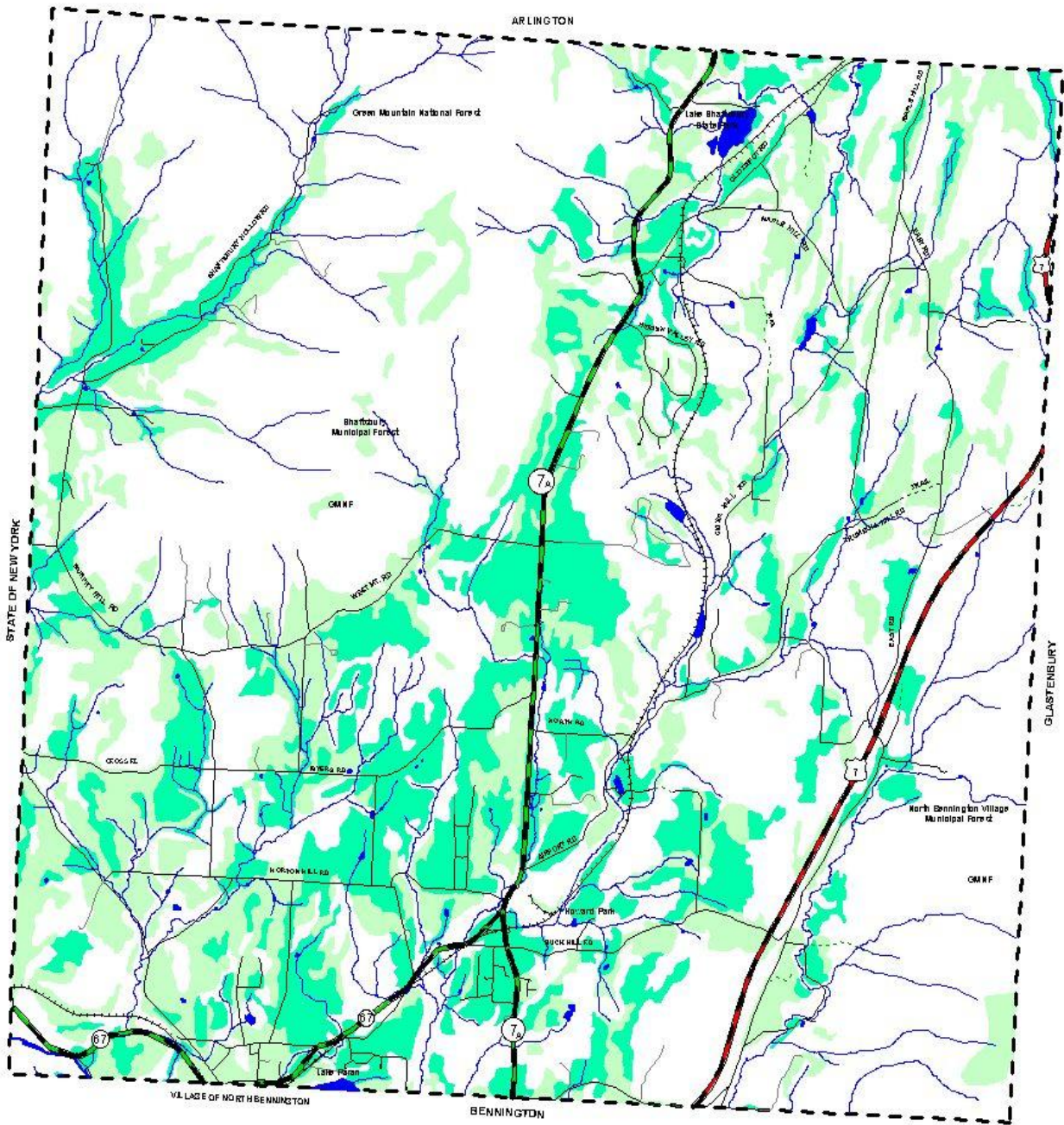
A fundamental mechanism for preserving outlying agricultural areas is to encourage development in and around Shaftsbury's existing village centers, thus relieving the pressure to develop elsewhere. Public investments and zoning incentives should encourage growth in these areas. Conversely, zoning in important agricultural areas should permit only those uses (and density levels) that will not detract from the rural character of these areas. Unfortunately, this vision is not consistent with current zoning bylaws which permit scattered, small lot development in all rural districts.



Rural Shaftsbury contains a mix of productive agricultural land, woodlots, and forested mountainsides.

A number of specific preservation strategies may be quite effective in Shaftsbury. The Town should evaluate minimum lot size requirements and determine whether density should be reduced in agricultural areas and/or increased in designated growth centers. A related zoning technique is the concept of transferable development rights, whereby the right to develop land in an important agricultural area may be transferred to a designated growth center where a greater density of building may be appropriate. Subdivision regulations can promote open space development by requiring that housing be “clustered” in one area while open lands are preserved on the remainder of the site. Such a development pattern should be utilized when it would preserve agricultural land more effectively than a conventional subdivision of the land. Soil survey information can be used to identify areas having particularly productive agricultural soils that should be preserved (Map 5-2).

Non-regulatory strategies also can advance the goal of maintaining the Town's rural agricultural heritage. Participation in the Vermont Use Value program should be encouraged so that owners of farm and forest land are taxed based on the property's use for agricultural, rather than development, purposes. Finally, acquisition of development rights to important agricultural lands, through gift or purchase, by a land trust or other conservation organization should be supported. The Vermont Land Trust has recently concluded purchase of development rights from the W. and P. Ludwig and Lawrence/Polymeadow Farms.



Map 5-2 Shaftsbury, Vermont Agricultural Soils

- Prime Agricultural Soils
- Statewide Significant Agricultural Soils



Map produced November 6, 2008 by
Bennington County Regional Commission
111 South Street, Suite 203
Bennington, VT 05201

8. Unique Natural Features and Areas

Shaftsbury contains a number of interesting and unique natural areas that warrant special protection (Map 5-3). Following is a brief description of several such areas:

(1) Bucks and Harrington Cobbles: Two sharp knobs along a limestone ridge, both affording excellent views of the valley. Bucks Cobble has several small colonies of rare ferns and other plant species that grow in limestone.

(2) Trumbull Hill: A fine example of mature hardwoods on limestone soil covers much of the hill. A fairly steep and rocky west slope supports various interesting species of plants adapted to ledges.

(3) The "Flats": Large area of very level terrain along Route 67 containing significant wetlands.

(4) "Tunic" Area: Valley at low point between West Mountain and Trumbull Hill containing abundant groundwater and earth resources.

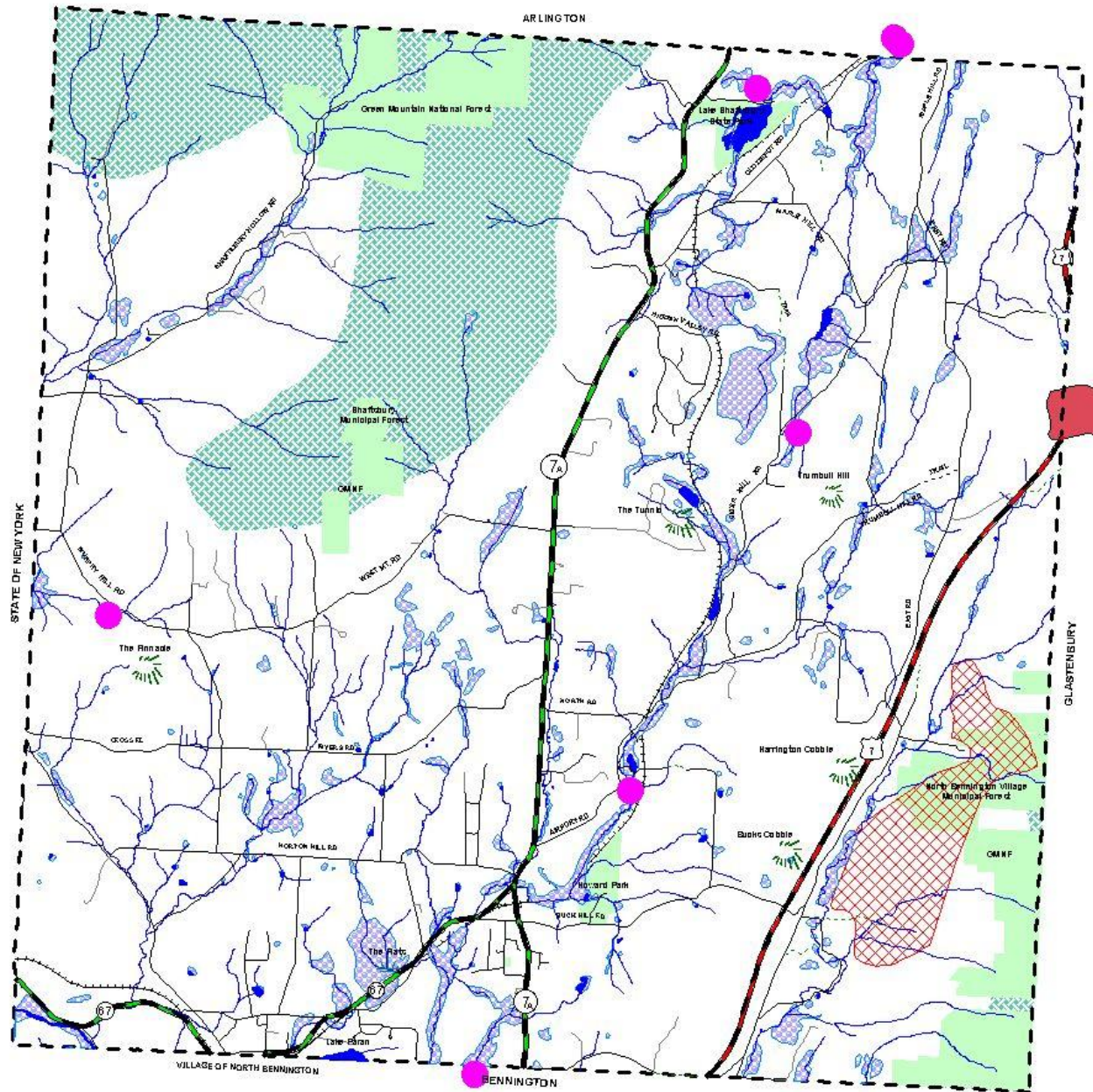
(5) The Pinnacle: The Cross-Collins Marble Quarry north of Cross Hill Road.

(6a) and (6b): The two rare plant habitats identified by the Vermont Natural Heritage Program.

* The above list represents a sample inventory of unique natural areas in Shaftsbury, but is not necessarily inclusive of all such areas.

9. Wildlife Habitat

The diverse natural environments in Shaftsbury provide habitat for a wide range of wildlife species (Map 5-3). Mature softwood and hardwood forests, young second growth woods, open farmland, rocky ledges, lakes, streams, and wetlands all combine to support populations of large and small mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, and amphibians. The most important factor in maintaining viable populations of these animals is protection of their habitats and travel corridors. For example, the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife has identified important winter deer ranges in the Town; these areas are crucial to the survival of deer herds in the region as they provide shelter and browse for deer during the winter months. Other key habitat areas should be mapped to help protect such areas from incompatible development.



Map 5-3
Shaftsbury, Vermont
Important Natural Areas and Habitats

- Rare or Endangered Species
- Wetlands
- Deer Wintering Areas
- Bear Travel Corridors
- Important Bear Habitat



Map produced November 6, 2008 by
 Bennington County Regional Commission
 111 South Street, Suite 203
 Bennington, VT 05251

10. Hillsides, Ridgelines, and Mountains

The natural appearance of Shaftsbury's numerous hillsides, ridgelines, and mountains are fundamental to the Town's rural character and appeal. A single development sprawling across or along a prominent hillside or ridgeline would seriously degrade these aesthetic values. These uplands also tend to be environmentally fragile due to prevalent steep slopes, poor soils, and inadequate infrastructure. Such lands should be regulated to minimize the potential for substantial changes in topographic features, destruction of vegetation, or other visual/aesthetic degradation, and to minimize erosion, pollution of ground or surface waters, and flooding in lowland areas. However, special consideration should be given to wind energy projects.

Wind energy is a renewable resource that can be effectively utilized only by erecting turbines on ridgelines that are exposed to reliable winds. The town recognizes the value of wind energy and supports development of carefully sited and designed wind energy systems.

11. Sand and Gravel Resources



A Shaftsbury Sand and Gravel Pit.

Shaftsbury contains some of the most abundant sand and gravel deposits in the region, serving a region-wide market to meet the demands of new development. Existing extraction operations and identified potential sand and gravel deposits are distributed in a north-south band running the length of the Town. The Zoning Bylaws contain provisions for the extraction of earth resources and the rehabilitation of sites. Several large gravel pits pre-date the local and state regulations requiring rehabilitation. Policies should be considered, developed and implemented for future reclamation of gravel pits in collaboration with landowners and extraction companies. Concepts for redevelopment are discussed in the housing chapter of this Plan.

12. Scenic Roads

The scenic roadways that wind through Shaftsbury are an important element of the Town's valued rural character. The State of Vermont enacted a "Scenic Highway Law" (10 V.S.A. Sec.425) to "preserve through planning the scenic quality of [Vermont's] rural landscape, and enable municipalities to designate town scenic highways which may be improved in accordance with standards combining aesthetic and functional criteria." That law contains guidelines for designating scenic roads and standards for managing those roads to preserve their scenic qualities. Designation of a highway as a Vermont Byway under The National Scenic Byway Program is another way to recognize roadways with important scenic, historic, recreational, or cultural attributes. Following is a list of roads in Shaftsbury that should be considered for official "scenic" designation by the Town (or the State, for State highways):

- * Historic Route 7A: from Myers Road north to Arlington Town Line
- * West Mountain Road - Le Clair Road - Murphy Hill Road
- * Coulter Road - Tinkham Road
- * Myers Road
- * Cold Spring Road

- * Maple Hill Road - Harrison Road: from Jack Cross Road to East Road
- * East Road: from Route 7 overpass to Arlington Town Line
- * Trumbull Hill Road: from Holy Smoke Road to end
- * Potter-Montgomery Road
- * Buck Hill Road



View north from Maple Hill Road.

The Planning Commission should evaluate the scenic qualities of the roads noted above and recommend, if appropriate, designation under the scenic highway or Vermont Byway law. A manual, "Designating Scenic Roads -- A Vermont Field Guide," prepared by the Vermont Scenery Preservation Council, will be helpful in this effort.

5.3 Policies

1. The type and intensity of development on a given site should be compatible with soil conditions.
2. Development planning should recognize the use potential of soils. Where possible, the development or subdivision of lands with high potential for agriculture, forestry, public water supply, wildlife habitat, or mineral and earth resource extraction should provide for the continued or potential use of the land for these non-residential land uses.
3. Future growth should occur on land with relatively few topographic limitations to development, thus reflecting historic development patterns. Permanent development should not be permitted in the high elevation and rugged backcountry areas identified as "Forest and Recreation" on the Town Plan and Zoning maps.
4. Development should be carefully planned in areas where natural slopes exceed 15%: natural vegetation should be retained to the greatest extent possible, the siting of buildings and wastewater disposal systems carefully planned, and appropriate erosion control measures implemented.
5. Streams should be preserved in a natural free-flowing state. An undisturbed buffer of at least 50

feet, or greater if appropriate because of environmental conditions, should be maintained between the stream bank and any development to ensure that both water quality and the riparian ecosystem are protected. Compatible recreational uses (e.g., fishing, hiking, picnicking) should be encouraged in a natural setting along streams. Development planning should include provisions for public access to these resources. The intensity of use and access points should be limited in particularly fragile ecological areas along streams.

6. Lake Shaftsbury and Lake Paran are extremely valuable resources. Continued use of these lakes for the recreational activities that they currently support is of great importance to the community. Actions which support such uses should be encouraged, while factors that would diminish the recreational value of the lakes should be identified and actively discouraged.
7. Important wetlands must be preserved in their natural state. Development should be designed to minimize negative impacts to wetland values.
8. Development in floodplain areas should be carefully controlled in accordance with the Town's flood hazard regulations.
9. Aquifers and aquifer recharge areas, including the important recharge area on West Mountain, should be protected to maintain the quantity or quality of available groundwater.
10. The municipal subdivision and health regulations should be strictly enforced to protect individual water supplies.
11. Developments or activities that would significantly degrade the Town's air quality should not be permitted.
12. Developments should be planned so as not to significantly diminish the values afforded by woodlands on or near the site.
13. Silvicultural practices which minimize erosion and impacts on roads, streams, wildlife habitat, and natural areas, should be employed.
14. Large blocks of productive forestland should be identified and fragmentation of parcels within these blocks discouraged.
15. Public sector planning and investments should promote growth in centers near existing villages, and discourage excessive scattered development in outlying areas that would result in the loss or fragmentation of important agricultural lands.
16. Developments on agricultural lands should be planned so as to preserve the viability, or potential viability, of the site for agricultural use.
17. Any development that encroaches upon or may adversely impact any unique natural feature should not be permitted.
18. Development planning should identify important wildlife habitat and should incorporate appropriate protection measures. Examples of such measures are: the maintenance or provision of natural buffers between developed areas and wildlife habitat, the maintenance of vegetated corridors along streams, shorelines, and between otherwise separate habitat areas, and utilization of construction practices that minimize environmental disturbances.

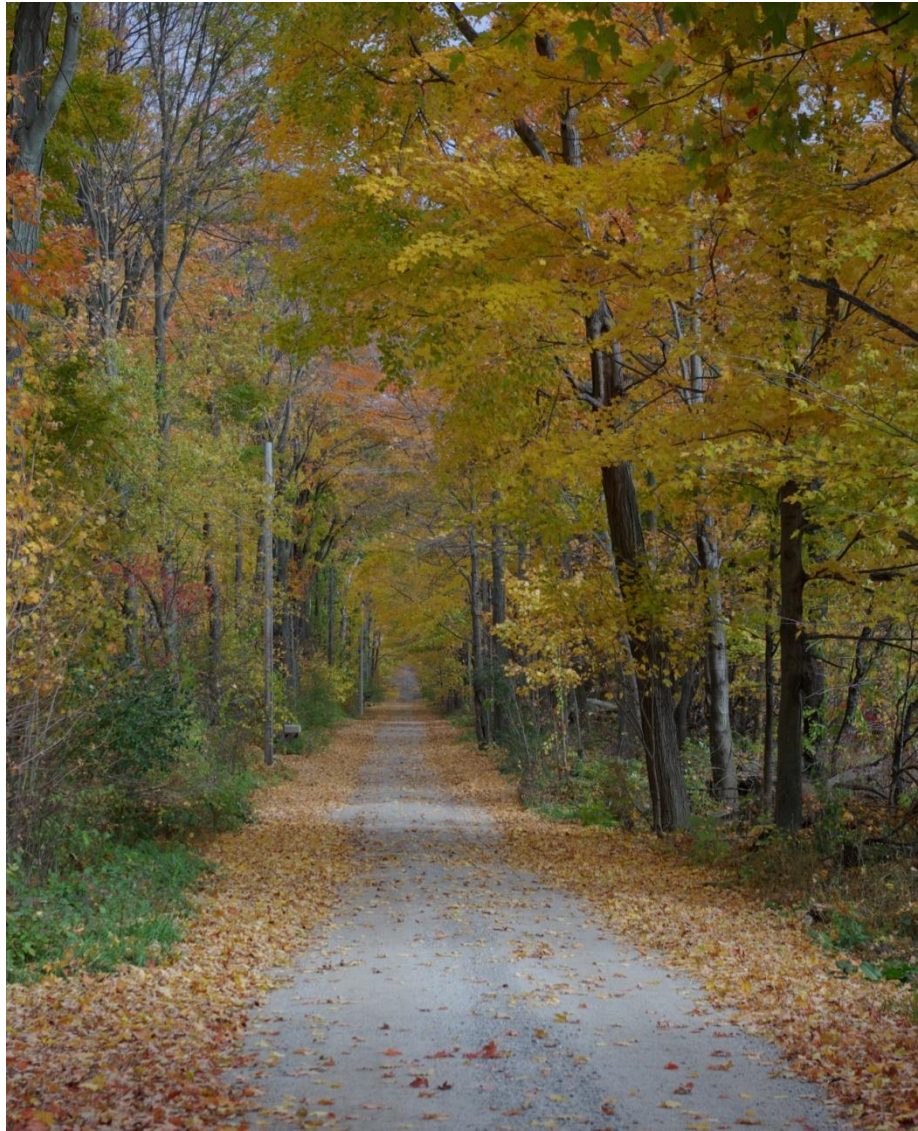
19. New development on hillsides, mountains, or ridgelines - with the possible exception of wind energy generation projects - should be situated or screened by vegetation, so as not to be prominently visible from off-site locations.
20. Development on hillsides, mountains, or ridgelines should be carefully planned to protect the environment.
21. Emphasis should be placed on the protection and use of existing aggregate resources for present and future generations. The rate of extraction should be consistent with demand, and extraction methods should consider environmental concerns and the proposed final use of the site.
22. The extraction or processing of earth resources and the disposal of spoil should not have an unduly harmful impact upon the environment or surrounding land uses.
23. Upon completion of the extracting or processing operation, the site should be reclaimed and left in a condition suited for an approved alternative use.
24. Maintenance and reconstruction of scenic roads should be carried out in a manner that will ensure that such roads retain their characteristic features.
25. Development along scenic roads should be planned so as to minimize impact on the historic character of the roads and the views from those roads.
26. Installation of cell towers should be regulated to minimize adverse affect on the Town.

5.4 Recommendations:

1. Existing zoning regulations should be evaluated in light of prevailing soil conditions, topography, and historic development patterns to ensure that development is being directed to appropriate areas and that important resource areas are protected.
2. Existing land use districts should be reviewed to determine whether permitted densities are appropriate given topographic constraints, historic development patterns and the goal of preserving agricultural lands.
3. Identify situations that could result in diminished resource values or access to streams. Target threatened segments and identify appropriate protection measures: regulatory action (mandated setbacks and buffers), acquisition of land or easements to or along the stream, pollution abatement, or other appropriate measures. .
4. Using the National Wetlands Inventory, field inspections, and public process, develop an inventory of particularly important wetlands in the Town of Shaftsbury.
5. Prepare a zoning regulation that will prevent the destruction or substantial alteration of important wetlands and which will protect the natural vegetation within at least 50 feet (or a greater distance in environmentally sensitive areas) from the perimeter of wetlands.
6. Obtain funding to carry out a technical analysis of available groundwater resources and future water supply needs, and develop a program for satisfying those needs.
7. A zoning regulation that establishes a 300-foot protective buffer around the North Bennington water

system reservoirs in South Shaftsbury should be enacted. The aquifer recharge area for the North Bennington Water Department system should be mapped and protected from incompatible development by provisions in the Shaftsbury Zoning Bylaw. The system's reservoirs, located in South Shaftsbury, should also be protected from contamination.

8. The Select Board and Planning Commission should actively participate in environmental reviews, such as Act 250, to ensure that new developments will not adversely impact air quality.
9. The Burning and Disposal of Solid Wastes ordinance should be strictly enforced to protect air quality.
10. Utilize the Forest Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (FLESA) program to identify important major wooded parcels in Shaftsbury.
11. Authorize acquisition of valuable forestlands by the United States Forest Service, when the acquisition is in the Town's best interest.
12. Qualified landowners should be informed of the Vermont Current Use program and encouraged to participate in that program.
13. Review existing zoning regulations to determine whether minimum lot sizes should be adjusted in agricultural areas and in growth centers. Study the feasibility of implementing a Transferable Development Rights zoning provision.
14. Amend the municipal subdivision regulations to require open space subdivision design if it is deemed appropriate for a given site.
15. The Town should expand upon the natural areas inventory and pursue appropriate preservation strategies.
16. Identify specific important wildlife habitats in Shaftsbury and develop a list of environmental features (e.g., vegetation composition, proximity to surface waters, etc.) that are key habitat determinants.
17. Sites proposed for development should be carefully examined to determine the location of any important habitat areas prior to approval of the development.
18. All known sand and gravel resources should be evaluated. New land uses that would conflict with extraction of these resources should be limited until the extraction is completed and the site is determined to be suitable for the proposed type of development.
19. Policies should be considered, developed and implemented for future reclamation of gravel pits in collaboration with landowners and extraction companies.
20. The Town should pursue the creation of a "Right to Farm" ordinance, to allow agricultural practices inherent to and necessary for the business of farming to proceed and be undertaken free of unreasonable and unwarranted interference or restriction.



Fall foliage along Tunic Road.

VI. LAND USE

The land use policies of the Town Plan are implemented through enforcement of the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations, which identify planning districts and guide the type, location and density of land use for future growth. The land use plan (Map 6-1) should be periodically reviewed to assess whether or not full implementation of the plan is an accurate representation of the community's vision for its future.

In this chapter, each of the Town's currently designated land use districts will be evaluated to determine how effectively the land use and development goals (Chapter II) are implemented by the regulations for those districts. Policies and recommendations will be enumerated that will result in future development that is both economically efficient and environmentally sound.

6.1 Residential Districts

1. Village Residential (VR) District

The purpose of the Village Residential District is to provide for compact residential development, in one and two-family dwellings in suitable areas and at densities not currently requiring public sewer systems, but appropriate for public water supplies.

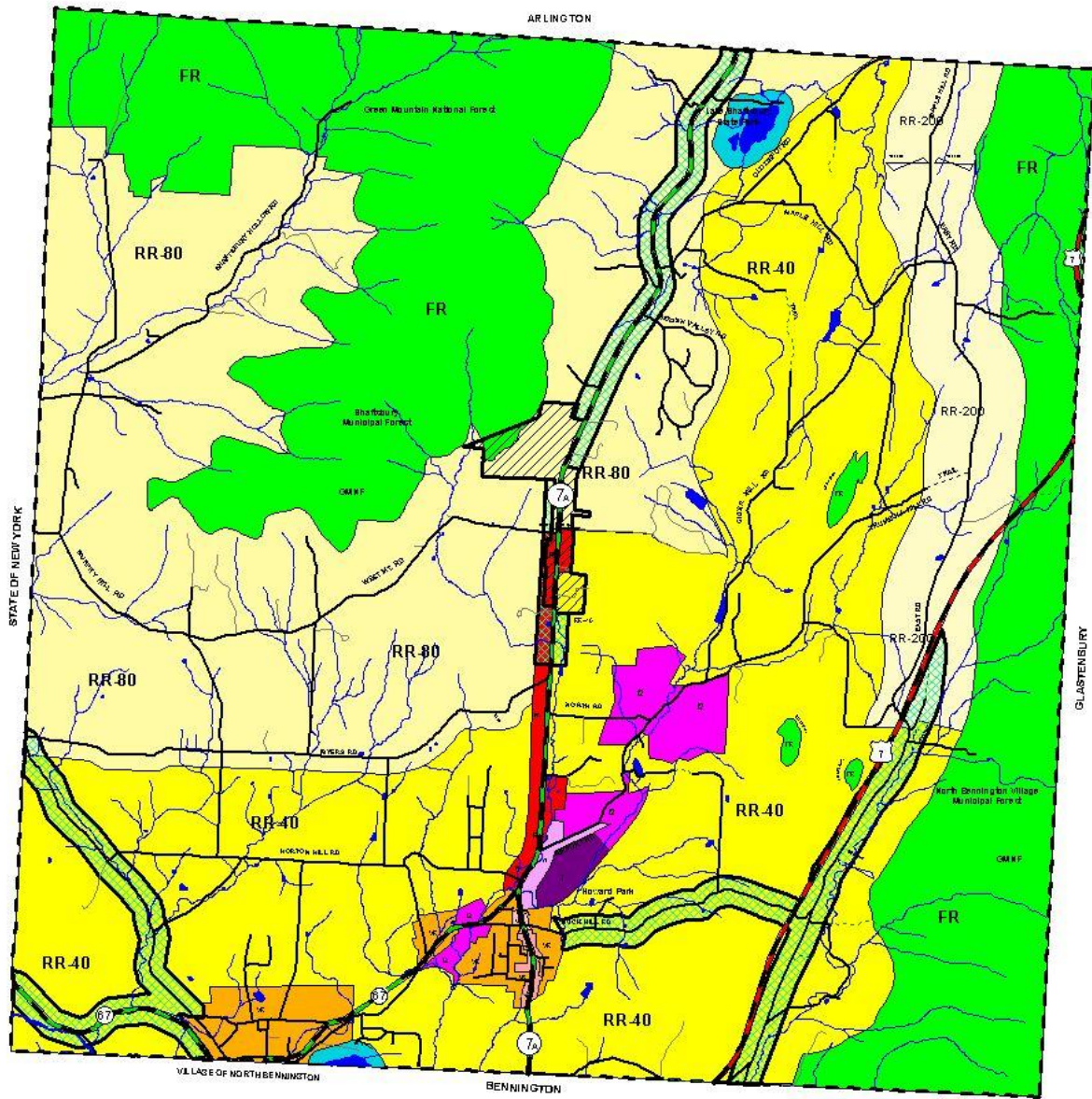
Controlled development should be encouraged in this area, relieving pressure to develop rural areas of the Town, promoting efficiency of infrastructure and delivery of municipal services, and reinforcing historic development trends. These objectives are furthered by the recent designation of South Shaftsbury as a Village Center through the Vermont Downtown Program. Such a designation provides financial benefits including tax credits for commercial building improvements and receiving priority consideration for various community development grant programs.

There are two VR districts in Shaftsbury, one in South Shaftsbury Village, and another abutting North Bennington near Lake Paran. Permitted uses include single and multi-family dwellings, and certain religious, educational, medical, and community facilities. Minimum lot size is 10,000 square feet per dwelling unit if connected to the public water system, and 20,000 square feet per dwelling unit if not connected to the system. The "group service" uses permitted in the district require a lot of at least 80,000 square feet.

These districts are serviced by the North Bennington municipal water system. Very little land in the VR districts remains to accommodate new growth at the densities permitted, and lack of a municipal sewer system renders increased densities a non-viable option. The expected continuing demand for new residential development in Shaftsbury, therefore, suggests that, to avoid scattered development, it may be appropriate to encourage additional village-type development by expanding a VR district or establishing a new VR district where access to the public water system is possible.

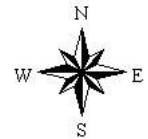
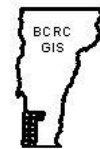
In the South Shaftsbury area, village development is circumscribed by three factors: 1) Availability of buildable lots. A recent survey by the Planning Commission revealed 14 open lots of which only eight appeared to be suitable for development. 2) The North Bennington Water System has sufficient capacity to support only a modest expansion of the VR district. 3) Lack of a municipal sewer system.

The zoning regulations for the VR districts should include provisions to ensure that new developments in these areas are compatible with the existing street systems and neighborhood character.



- Historic District
- Recreation Overlay Zone
- Shoreline Zone
- Land Use Districts**
- Rural Residential 40 (1 Acre)
- Rural Residential 80 (2 Acres)
- Rural Residential 200 (5 acres)
- Village Residential
- Roadside Commercial
- Village Commercial 1
- Village Commercial 2
- Industrial
- Industrial 2
- Commercial Industrial
- Forest and Recreational

Map 6-1 Shaftsbury, Vermont Land Use Plan



Map produced November 6, 2008 by
Bennington County Regional Commission
111 South Street, Suite 203
Bennington, VT 05201

2. Rural Residential (RR) Districts

The purpose of the Rural Residential Districts is to ensure the preservation of natural resources, scenic qualities and agricultural land while accommodating relatively low-density residential development. These districts are planned to be predominantly residential in character, while permitting appropriate compact development but in all cases at densities to avoid the need for municipal water supplies or sewer systems.

The Rural Residential districts include those areas that have recently experienced the most development pressure and which also contain many areas deserving of special protection for resource conservation.

Scattered development in these districts should be avoided due to the potential economic and environmental costs associated with such development patterns. Site planning should provide for preservation of open space and conservation of natural resources, while minimizing municipal costs.



Low density residential development is appropriate in the Rural Residential District, such as this home in the RR-80 District on West Mountain Road.

Single and multi-family dwellings, agricultural and forestry uses, and certain religious, educational, medical, and community facilities are permitted in the RR districts, while customary home occupations, community care homes, veterinary hospitals, and wholesale establishments are conditionally permitted.

The RR districts are divided into three sub districts based on permitted residential densities: RR-40 (minimum of 40,000 square feet per dwelling unit) covering much of the southern and northeastern portions of the Town; RR-80 (minimum of 80,000 square feet per dwelling unit)

covering those lands below 1,600 feet elevation or less than 3,000 feet distant from Historic Route 7A in the northwestern portion of the Town; and RR-200 (200,000 square feet per dwelling unit) covering lands 1,500 feet deep on either side of East Road north of the Route 7 overpass. Group service uses in any RR district require a minimum lot size of 130,000 square feet.

The Town should plan carefully to ensure that the future development of these rural areas provides for a reasonable level of housing development while protecting important natural resources, recreational opportunities, and agricultural and forest lands. Several sections of the municipal land use ordinances may need to be adjusted in the future to encourage a more appropriate development pattern. Conventional zoning alone will not achieve the goals of open land preservation and resource protection.

Reducing allowable development densities may not achieve the land use goals either, unless the reduction is substantial, which, of course, adds to the cost of individual housing units. An alternative or complementary approach to rezoning is special recognition that not all lands are equally able to support a given level of density. It may be preferable to consider land suitability and the presence or absence of special resource lands (soil limitations for development or value for

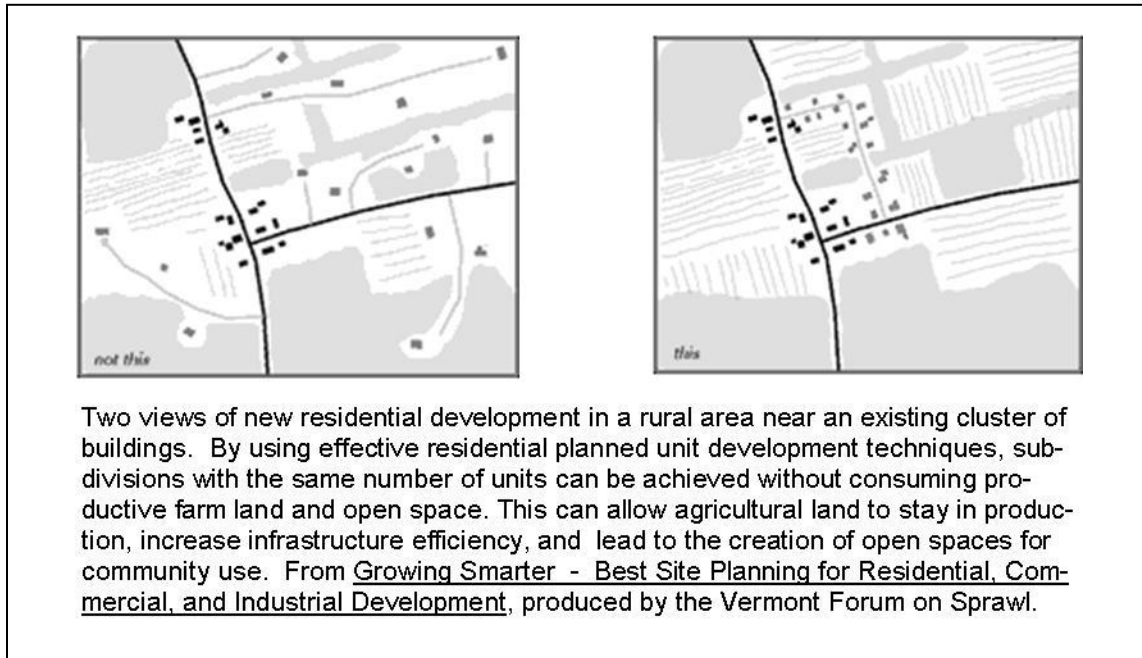
agriculture or forestry, scenic areas, shore lands, flood hazard areas, steep slopes, remote areas with minimal infrastructure, and well head protection areas) when determining appropriate density for future residential subdivisions. Development in the RR Districts should avoid conventional cookie-cutter type development. The application of creative techniques such as clustering and planned residential designs should be applied to maintain the integrity and character of a site and surrounding area.

Although use of such planning techniques in Rural Residential Districts may theoretically reduce the overall acreage available for development in rural areas, the town-wide development potential can be greatly increased by expanding the Village Residential areas, providing density bonuses for open space development in all districts, and by implementing a transferable development rights program. To accommodate these goals, the Select Board, at some point in the future, may need to facilitate the implementation of a public sewer system for South Shaftsbury's Village Center and surrounding higher-density residential areas.

Open space design - which enables and encourages flexibility in the development of tracts of land, promotes appropriate use of land, facilitates the economical provision of streets and utilities, and enhances the environmental quality of an area through maximum preservation of open land – is provided for in the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations.

The Zoning Bylaws permit open space development in VR and RR Districts. As of yet, developers have made no use of open space planning. However, density bonuses, which tend to make open space design more appealing, are a recent addition to the Bylaws. If open space development opportunities are not realized in the future, the Town may choose to make this design more attractive to developers while ensuring that community objectives are met by:

1. Allowing open space development on any size parcel as long as zoning density requirements are met and all necessary permits for water supply and wastewater disposal systems are obtained;
2. Increasing the number of units allowable (density bonuses);
3. Allowing greater flexibility in lot dimensional requirements by using language such as: "Individual lots in an open space subdivision may be reduced in required area, width, and yard dimensions in conformance with local and state regulations and subject to approval of the Development Review Board," rather than by citing specific numerical standards;
4. Adjusting the required minimum open space of the gross area of the subdivision (currently 20%) to a figure more attractive to developers.



Open space designs are particularly important when certain conditions are present. The Development Review Board must be aware of the conditions and should require developers to implement an open space design when failure to do so would result in one or more of the following:

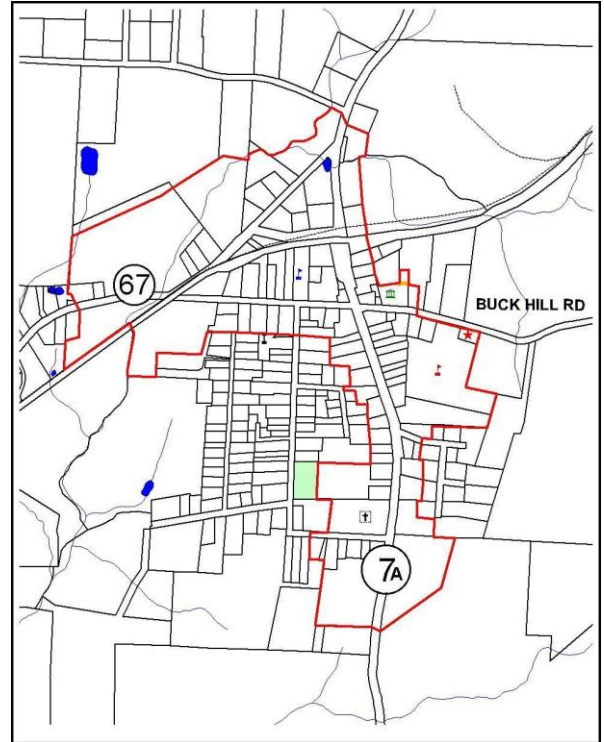
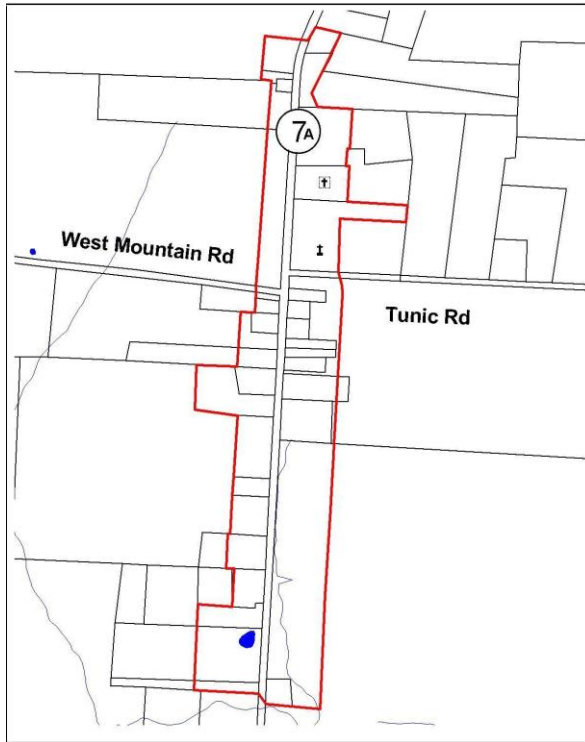
1. A significant reduction in the agricultural use potential of the land (as indicated by potential impact on a parcel achieving a high LESA score);
2. Degradation of the natural visual appeal of a hillside, ridgeline, or open field;
3. Encroachment upon an important natural or historic area, wildlife habitat, or a stream, wetland, vernal pool, or other water body;
4. Elimination of access to an important recreational resource;
5. Allowing excessive erosion, ground or surface water contamination, or otherwise endangering environmental quality.

6.2 Commercial (VC & RC) Districts

The purpose of the VC District is to promote the sound economic development of the Town by encouraging commercial, business, and service uses at a scale and intensity that reinforces the historic development pattern of the Town. The VC-1 and VC-2 Districts, located in South Shaftsbury, are relatively small and compact, running for about one-half mile along Route 7A, but are sufficient to accommodate uses that can provide goods and services for townspeople. The area for retail uses has been concentrated nearer the four corners of historic Rt. 7A, Church Street, and Buck Hill Road.

The Roadside Commercial (RC) zone recognizes the potential for commercial opportunities along Route 7A. As can be seen in Map 6.1, Shaftsbury, Vermont Land Use Plan, The RC zone extends along Route 7A from the junction of Route 67A to West Mountain Road.

The Economic Development Committee has spear-headed and received approval by the state for Village Center Designations in South Shaftsbury and Center Shaftsbury. It is important to note the Village Center Designation only addresses commercial properties within the VC and RC district.



The designated village centers in South Shaftsbury and Center Shaftsbury are outlined in red.

Since uses in the VR District are also permitted in the VC District, the Development Review Board should ensure that commercial uses should minimize impacts to surrounding residential areas.

Shaftsbury should avoid commercial strip development, particularly along historic Route 7A. Such development would be drastically out of context with the Town's rural character, and could result in serious traffic safety problems. The potential exists, under the Town's current Roadside Commercial zoning, for such an undesirable development pattern along historic Route 7A. The Planning Commission should consider the existing conditions in this area and determine whether any amendments to the zoning regulations may be in order. Among the changes that might be considered are:



The Shaftsbury Country Store is located in the VC District along Route 7A.

1. Utilize commercial clustering to preserve farmlands and open space, reduce construction costs for roads, land preparation, and public utilities;
2. Consider density bonuses for commercial clustering in order to preserve open space;
3. Modify the minimum lot size requirement for certain commercial uses;
4. Establish standards for landscaping and screening, and for the location of buildings, parking lots, and drives.
5. Encourage commercial enterprises to share common ingress/egress in order to limit the number of accesses onto historic Route 7A.

6.3 Industrial (I) Districts

The purpose of the Industrial Districts is to permit industrial growth to support local economic development while ensuring the preservation of the historic village, rural, and scenic qualities of the Town. The Zoning Bylaws identify a number of specific industrial uses as conditionally permitted in the Industrial Districts, with a minimum lot size of 80,000 square feet.

The location and extent of these districts should accommodate industrial growth while minimizing conflicts with residential uses. The industrial districts are located in South Shaftsbury along the railroad and major roadways. Specific performance standards should be included in the Zoning Bylaws to ensure that residential areas are not disturbed and that the potential for environmental degradation is minimized. These standards should address air, noise, water, and soil pollution as well as solid waste, energy resources, neighborhood character, landscape, and transportation safety.



The Peckham (formerly Dailey) concrete industry occupies a considerable amount of industrially zoned land near South Shaftsbury.

The Town is interested in attracting new, clean industrial development, but opportunities are somewhat limited by the lack of a municipal sewer system and limited availability of a public water system. The Planning Commission should be open to the possibilities of expanding the current Industrial Districts provided maximum protection to residential areas, existing or planned, is a primary consideration.

6.4 Forest and Recreation (FR) Districts

Shaftsbury's Forest and Recreation (FR) Districts are designed to provide opportunities for forestry and recreational uses and to protect timber, wildlife, and watershed resources in the Town's major forested areas, and to protect our watersheds from contamination.

The upland and mountainous areas in the districts are irreplaceable natural assets that deserve special protection. These areas are characterized by environmental limitations associated with steep slopes, shallow soils, drainage, and other conditions that constrain sound development. Furthermore, scattered development and any significant level of development would severely impact the cost of providing community facilities and services. The importance of these areas is recognized in the zoning bylaw regulating elevation and district lines of Forest and Recreation. Limiting development in these areas will assure:

1. Protection of important groundwater recharge and watershed areas which provide a safe, healthful, and reliable water supply for present and future needs;
2. Protection against soil erosion and down slope flooding of valley areas;
3. Preservation of the Town's natural beauty and rural character;
4. Maintenance of forest resources for timber production, recreation, and wildlife habitat;
6. Prevention of costly and poorly planned scattered development.

6.5 Land Use and Development Policies and Recommendations

1. Residential Development

- 1a1. Recognizing that very little developable land is available in the South Shaftsbury VR district, there are two possibilities to address this situation:
 1. Rezoning to VR district a portion of the land to the east and south of the current district.
 2. Adjustment of road frontage requirements to allow interior lots. This would increase the amount of developable land within the existing VRD.
- 1a2. Water supply in the VR district is a limiting factor and must be addressed for the VR district to achieve its development potential.
- 1a3. Implement a municipal Sewer District for the 'downtown' area to facilitate multi-family dwellings and encourage business growth.
- b. Residential densities should be relatively low in rural areas outside village centers. Where appropriate, rural residential development should occur as clusters of one or two-family dwellings surrounded by reserved open space.
- c. Emphasis should be placed on the protection and use of agricultural resources for present and future generations. Residential development in important resource areas, particularly in agricultural areas, should be clustered as provided for in the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations.

- d. Adjacent open space developments should be planned, to the greatest extent possible, so that reserved open spaces are contiguous.
- e. Residential development should not be permitted in fragile and remote upland areas (designated "Forest and Recreation" on the Land Use map).
- f. In addition to requiring open space development in areas where it is deemed appropriate, Transferable Development Rights and non-regulatory tools such as the acquisition of development rights by the Vermont Land Trust, should be utilized to the greatest extent possible.
- g. Residential use should maintain a level of density compatible with land capability. Although zoning prescribes an overall density scheme, not all land has the same development potential. All development should carefully assess land suitability.
- h. Residential development should be planned so as not to diminish the value of important natural resources or scenic and historic sites. Such protection may be attained through proper siting of buildings and roads and by maintaining substantial undisturbed buffer zones between the resource and any development activity. Natural features should be carefully considered throughout the site planning process.
- i. In all site development, natural topography and vegetation should be preserved to the greatest extent possible.
- j. To prevent erosion and other environmental hazards, only limited and carefully planned residential development should occur in areas where predominant natural slopes exceed 15%. Where natural slopes exceed 20%, no residential development should occur. Rugged backcountry areas with poor access should remain free from permanent development and should be reserved for forestry and recreational uses.
- k. All new residential development must obtain required state permits for wastewater disposal prior to the construction of any new dwelling unit.
- l. During construction builders should follow accepted conservation practices for erosion control.
- m. Pursuant to the Subdivision Regulations, before any new residential development occurs a road system capable of handling the resulting vehicular traffic in a safe and efficient manner should either exist or be planned for immediate construction. Where new development is proposed on existing substandard private roads, the roads should be upgraded to meet town roadway standards to the extent possible. Access roads remaining private should have recorded maintenance agreements as part of the permitting process.
- n. Residential subdivisions should be designed to avoid direct access to major roads from individual lots.

2. Commercial Development

- a. Commercial businesses that serve to meet the needs of Shaftsbury residents and provide services for the traveling and vacationing public in appropriate areas should be encouraged.
- b. New commercial development should be relatively small in scale and consistent with the Town's

rural character.

- c. Historic buildings of local, state, or national significance should be preserved.
- d. Adequate open space and landscaping should be incorporated in any development and every effort should be made to integrate the development with adjacent properties.
- e. New commercial development should include: adequate parking, storage and loading areas, appropriate landscaping, and screening of parking, loading, and storage areas from surrounding properties.
- f. Where possible, adjacent commercial uses should share access drives to encourage safe and efficient movement of automobiles.
- g. New commercial development in the Roadside Commercial District should be planned so as to avoid a scattered or strip development along Route 7A, particularly in the designated historic district.

3. Industrial Development

- a. Industries should not produce excessive amounts of noise, vibration, dust, odor, heat, light, or glare, nor should they adversely impact air or water quality.
- b. When two or more industrial uses are located on adjacent properties, they should be designed as an integrated unit.
- c. Industries and related activities should be planned so as to afford maximum protection to any nearby residential areas (existing or planned).
- d. Any industrial process involving the use or production of a hazardous waste (as classified by the State of Vermont or the United States Environmental Protection Agency) should be disclosed at the time of application, and such application should include detailed plans which provide for the safe storage, usage, and removal of any hazardous waste.
- e. Utilities, roads, and other essential services should be available and adequate to serve a new industrial project at the time of completion of such project.
- f. Traffic routes and access points to industrial sites should be compatible with nearby residential areas.
- g. The Planning Commission should investigate and attempt to implement a Light Industrial District to encourage economic development. Targeted businesses should possess high standards of performance and low environmental impact and could border residential areas with no adverse impact. The Planning Commission should assess land in close proximity to the current Industrial and Village Commercial Districts for possible rezoning to a Light Industrial District.

VII. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

7.1 Introduction

Historic preservation is a vital interest to the residents of Shaftsbury. The Town, with its distinctive village centers, contains sites and buildings that vividly reflect the community's rich history, archeology, and architectural heritage. These resources provide residents of Shaftsbury with an important sense of heritage and a tangible link to the past, thus promoting a sense of identity and cohesiveness within the community.

The Shaftsbury Historical Society is active in historic preservation in the community, and has restored the Baptist Church in Center Shaftsbury. The Town should continue to support the efforts of this worthy organization and collaborate with them to identify additional historic districts, landmarks and individual properties. In addition, the Town should adopt regulations that are specifically designed to protect historic resources.

The area in Center Shaftsbury, primarily occupying the more built-up areas around the intersection of West Mountain and Tunic Roads at Route 7A is an officially designated historic district. It lies partly within the Roadside Commercial and partly within the Recreational Overlay zoning districts. New buildings within the district should be a product of their own time but should reflect contextual elements of setbacks, scale, materials, and other key architectural features.



The Shaftsbury Historical Society occupies this historic church structure in the Center Shaftsbury Historic District.

Vermont's "Townscape Preservation Act" enables towns to protect their historic resources by designating historic districts and landmarks under their municipal zoning regulations. Under an historic district and landmark regulation, Development Review Board approval is required prior to the erection of a new structure within a designated historic district and before any modifications are made to the exterior appearance of a structure. The Development Review Board must review and approve plans involving the demolition or movement of an individual historic structure before any action can be taken. Given the considerable value of Shaftsbury's historic sites, it is essential for the Town to increase the level of protection given to these resources by enacting an historic district and landmark zoning regulation. Such a regulation should be drafted in accordance with State

enabling legislation, and should at a minimum, cover historic Old Center Shaftsbury and all other historically significant properties listed in the Town Plan.

7.2 Districts and Landmarks

Center Shaftsbury lies along Historic Route 7A near its intersections with West Mountain Road and Tunic Road. It is an area of particular historical and archeological importance, containing a number of historic buildings such as the Old Center Shaftsbury meeting house, the Hickory Stick Center Shaftsbury School, and the Old Baptist Church and Cemetery, all of which are surrounded by open fields and orchards. The view of the valley to the south is particularly scenic from the height of land occupied by Center Shaftsbury.

A listing of historic sites in Shaftsbury follows. The Planning Commission should refine this list during the preparation of the historic district/landmark regulations. While preparing such documentation, the Planning Commission should refer to the historic sites inventory prepared by the Shaftsbury Historical Society in conjunction with the Bennington County Regional Commission and the Vermont Division of Historic Sites. Many of the listed homes are on the State Historic List. Additions to this list of historic sites are welcomed.

*Robert Frost Stone House and Museum (Peleg Cole c. 1769): Historic stone house and museum; Historic Route 7A, South Shaftsbury.

*Howard Stone House (c. 1770): Historic fortress-farmhouse; Buck Hill Road, South Shaftsbury.

*Parker Cole House (c. 1783): Classic Vermont farmhouse; Buck Hill Road, South Shaftsbury.

*Cole Hall (c. 1830): Originally a stone church, now serves as a Town Hall; South Shaftsbury.

*Shaftsbury Country Store: Traditional country store located at main intersection in South Shaftsbury.

*Eagle Square Manufacturing Company (c. 1820): Formerly one of the oldest continuing enterprises in Vermont, original building constructed of stone; Route 67, South Shaftsbury.

*Grist Mill - Gerlach House (c. 1823): Historic grist mill, now a residence; Routes 7A/67, South Shaftsbury.

*Site of Burden Iron Works and Mines: Iron works operated during the mid-1800s; near Paran Creek, South Shaftsbury.

*Site of Cross-Collins Marble Quarry: Historically significant quarry from late 1700's located north of Cross Hill Road.

*Monroe-Hawkins House (c. 1807): One of the finest Georgian residences in Vermont; Historic Route 7A, north of South Shaftsbury.

*Polymeadows Farm (c. 1807): Historic farm located off Historic Route 7A in Center Shaftsbury.

- *Huntington-Dufresne (White Pillar) House (c. 1858): Historical brick Georgian house with unique single pillar; an historical barn is also on the property; Historic Route 7A, Center Shaftsbury.
- *David Galusha Inn - Weeks House (c. 1787): Colonial inn, now a residence; Historic Route 7A, Center Shaftsbury.
- *Brick School House (c. 1841): Historical brick school house with bell tower, now a gift shop; Historic Route 7A, Center Shaftsbury.
- *Center Shaftsbury Baptist Church (c. 1846): Restored church building, now a museum, and adjacent cemetery; Historic Route 7A, Center Shaftsbury.
- *Governor Galusha House (c. 1783): Another outstanding historic Georgian house; Historic Route 7A, Center Shaftsbury.
- *Matteson (Topping) Tavern (c. 1777): Originally a stagecoach tavern, formerly a museum; East Road.
- *Jacob Merritt Howard House: Historical brick house; Trumbull Hill; Once residence of the author of the 13th Amendment (outlawing slavery) and the founder of the Republican Party.
- *Amos Huntington House (c. 1782): Restored colonial house; Peters Four Corners.
- *State Line House (c. 1800): Unique brick building, originally a tavern, with an intriguing history; Route 67 on the NY/VT state line.
- *Colonel Baum Marker: Marker indicating the site of the house where the commander of the enemy (German mercenary) forces died following injuries received at the Battle of Bennington; Route 67, Sodom.
- *Simon Bottum House (c. 1795): Historical house probably used as part of the "underground railway;" Historic Route 7A, North Shaftsbury.
- *Nathan Bottum House (c. 1858): Historical house; Historic Route 7A, North Shaftsbury.
- *Carpenter House (c. 1765): Possibly the oldest homestead in Shaftsbury; West Mountain Road.
- *Isaiah Mattison House (c. 1810): Home of an early Baptist minister in the area; near Route 67.
- *Brick Row/Shoe Lane (c. 1860): Excellent example of industrial row housing, built by the North Bennington Boot and Shoe Company for its workers; Route 67.
- *Amos Huntington, Jr. House (c. 1788): Historical farmhouse; Cold Spring Road.
- *Rev. Caleb Blood House (c. 1768): Owned by one of Shaftsbury's most prominent early citizens who was Pastor of the Baptist Church in Center Shaftsbury; Historic Route 7A.
- *Abiathar and Rachel Waldo House (c. 1764-65): Rivals the Carpenter House as the "oldest homestead in Shaftsbury"; Meat stored for the participants in the Battle of Bennington - meat hooks still in cellar; Historic Route 7A.

*Huntington - Spencer House (c. 1835): Historical house with Greek revival exterior ornament; Historic Route 7A.

*Harrington House (c. 1805): Historic house which has undergone several renovations; Original barn is of a plan and form typical of the earliest in Vermont; Historic Route 7A.

*Cole-Stone House (c. 1825): Though renovated, the original Cape Cod section of this historical house was the first schoolhouse in this district; Historic Route 7A.

*Walter Russell House (c. 1820): Second floor served as a ballroom and courtroom in the 19th century; Historic Route 7A.

*Galusha House (c. 1810): Not to be confused with the Governor Galusha House or David Galusha Inn, this early Cape Cod with a Queen Anne style porch has undergone alterations; Historic Route 7A.

*Baptist Parsonage (c. 1849): Historical Greek Revival once used as a Parsonage for the Center Shaftsbury Baptist Church; Historic Route 7A.

*O'Dell House (c. 1785): Little is known about the house except that it was used as a post office and associated with other nearby commercial enterprises; Historic Route 7A.

*Town House (c. 1847): Vernacular Greek Revival style, was constructed to avoid using the Baptist Church for civic functions; Historic Route 7A.

*Norman and Amelia Douglass House (c. 1850): Greek revival owned and probably built by one of the principals in the Eagle Square Manufacturing Company; Historic Route 7A and Tunic Road.

*Myers House (c. 1855): Though may have been built much earlier, and radically altered in the mid-nineteenth century; Historic Route 7A.

7.3 Policies

1. Buildings and sites of historical, archeological or architectural merit should be preserved whenever possible.
2. The renovation and adaptive re-use of historical structures which might otherwise be lost to deterioration is encouraged.
3. Developers should incorporate historic sites near proposed developments into their plans and provide compatible architectural designs and/or screening and buffers in accordance with The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation as outlined below:

The Standards (Department of Interior regulations, 36 CFR 67) pertain to historic buildings of all materials, construction types, sizes, and occupancy and encompass the exterior and the interior, related landscape features and the building's site and environment as well as attached, adjacent, or related new construction. The Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

1. *A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.*
2. *The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.*
3. *Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.*
4. *Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.*
5. *Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.*
6. *Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.*
7. *Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.*
8. *Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.*
9. *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
10. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

7.4 Recommendations

1. Center Shaftsbury has attained Historic District designation, but has no protection under current zoning Bylaws; it is not recognized in any legal sense. The Planning Commission should investigate adopting historic district/landmark zoning regulations as provided for in 24 V.S.A. Section 4414(1)F. The goals of these historic district regulations should be:
 - *To maintain the special historical, archeological and cultural heritage of these unique sites and preserve a "sense of place" and pride for the Town's residents.
 - *To assure that the renovation and alteration of existing structures and the construction of new buildings in an historic district is done in a manner consistent with the historic character of the area.

*To achieve visual compatibility within historic districts through careful attention to architectural, landscape, and site structure details.

*To maintain historic and aesthetic qualities that bring value to the community.

2. The Town should continue to support the efforts of the Shaftsbury Historical Society and collaborate with them to identify additional historic districts, landmarks and individual properties.

VIII. TRANSPORTATION

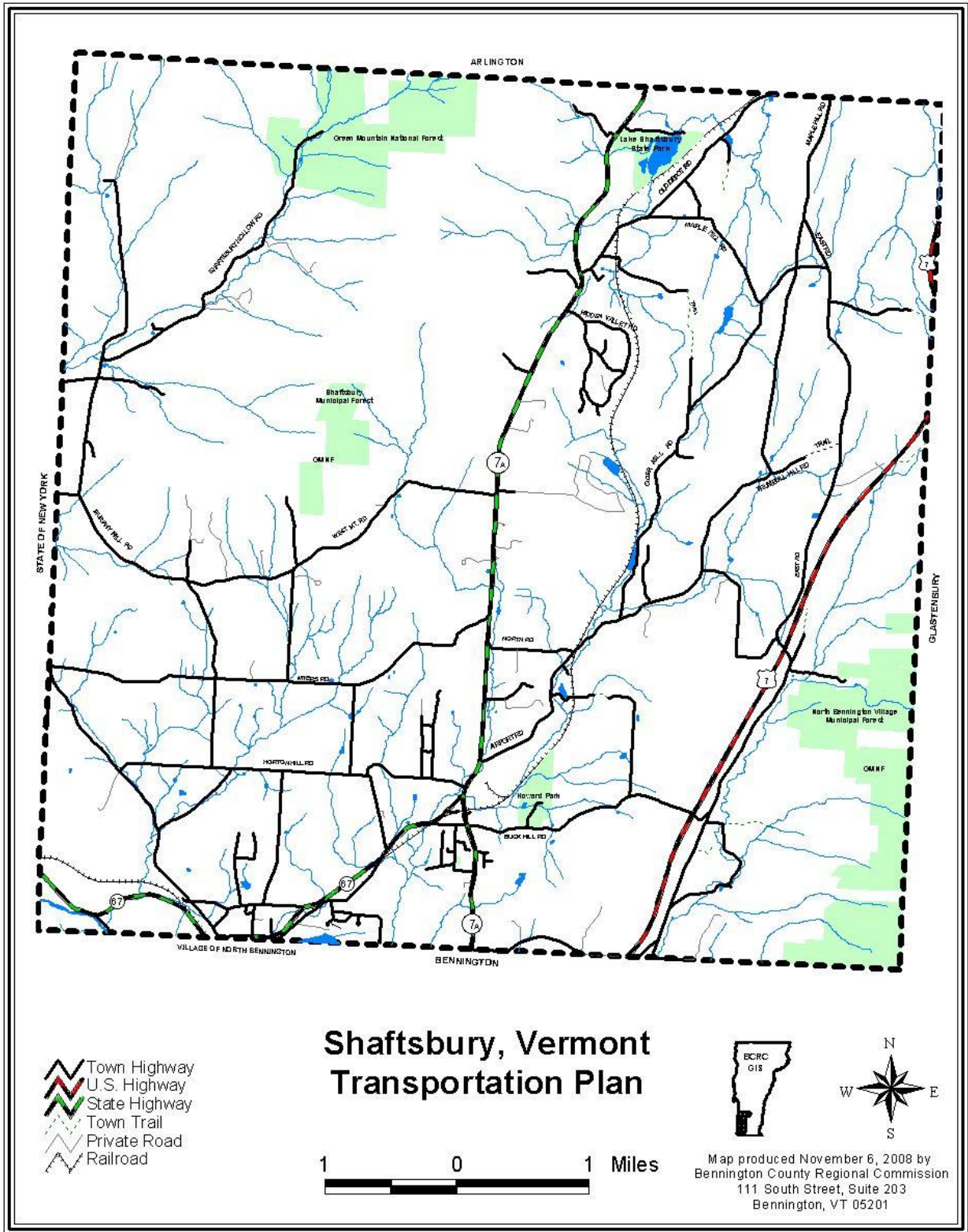
Safe, convenient, and economical transportation is essential to the people and economy of Shaftsbury. While numerous transportation modes are important to the Town, most of the use (and public expense) is concentrated on the Town's local road network (Map 8-1). The development of an effective and efficient plan for maintaining the roads should therefore be a priority for the Town.

The Road Foreman and Select Board have developed a plan to prioritize maintenance and repair of Shaftsbury's roads. The survey has inventoried all town road and highway infrastructure including drainage ditches, culverts and bridges. With this information, the most pressing needs for each road segment can be determined and a schedule of improvements created.

8.1 Issues and Recommendations

The Highway Department and Select board have identified the following concerns relating to the Town's road system:

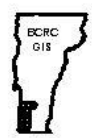
1. Proper drainage is the key to maintaining the integrity of roads. Poor drainage results in rapid road deterioration, winter ice, spring mud, washouts, and flooding. The location and design of roads, driveways, building sites, ditches, and especially culverts can profoundly affect the adequacy of drainage. To avoid potential problems, the Town's road foreman is required to be consulted prior to the construction of any new road or driveway or the development of any new building site.
2. Shaftsbury contains approximately 60 miles of gravel roads and 12 miles of paved roads (excluding State Highways). Consequently, the question of paving the gravel roads is often raised. The initial cost of paving has been determined by the Select board to be prohibitive. Moreover, there is a concern that paved roads would encourage excessive vehicle speeds. The Select Board has therefore decided that new paving of roads will not be considered, with the exception of small road segments where extreme circumstances make paving more cost effective.
3. Application of salt to paved roads and calcium chloride to unpaved roads is necessary to minimize ice hazards in winter and/or to control dust in the summer and minimize maintenance. Unfortunately, these chemicals may injure roadside vegetation, promote auto body rust, and contaminate groundwater. The use of these chemicals should therefore be limited to the amount necessary to ensure safe travel.



Shaftsbury, Vermont Transportation Plan

- Town Highway
- U.S. Highway
- State Highway
- Town Trail
- Private Road
- Railroad

1 0 1 Miles



Map produced November 6, 2008 by
Bennington County Regional Commission
111 South Street, Suite 203
Bennington, VT 05201

Map 8-1

4. The cost of purchasing and maintaining heavy equipment constitutes a significant share of the Town's annual budget. The Town's current policy is to replace major equipment (trucks, grader, etc.) after ten years of use to avoid high maintenance expenses and to ensure that the equipment retains some resale value. Based on this schedule, one large piece of equipment should be replaced every thirty months either by lease/purchase or outright via a capital replacement fund set up expressly for this purpose. Smaller road equipment (e.g., a chipper) may be purchased from this account if necessary.
5. Space is very limited at the Town garage. Expansion of the garage at its current site is difficult and relocation to a town-owned site on Airport Road should be considered. The garage is currently located next to the Town offices and both facilities use the same parking area; understandably, ease of maneuvering is compromised.
6. The Highway Department currently employs six full-time employees. Additional personnel may be needed if the Town acquires significantly higher road mileage.



Maintenance of the local road network is critical for both the convenience of the public and to minimize the need for costly repairs.

Fundamental to this Town Plan are the related goals of concentrating development in designated growth centers and preserving important agricultural and natural areas. Future highway projects should discourage development of areas that should remain open. The Town should ensure that plans for State-owned roads are not contrary to these objectives and plans of adjacent municipalities should be consistent with Shaftsbury's objectives. Efforts should be made to coordinate, and communicate with adjacent municipalities, the BCRC, and the Agency of Transportation regarding project priorities, design, timing, and sources of funding.

Although there are some small localized parking problems in Shaftsbury, the lack of intense commercial development has prevented any serious parking problems or dangerous, congested intersections. There is currently no requirement to develop a centrally-located parking lot, so the Development Review Board should require adequate and safe on-site parking for any new development.

Sidewalks along Route 7A enhance pedestrian safety and the appearance of South Shaftsbury. Recently constructed sidewalks running from the Elementary School to Howard Park and along Route 7A from the four corners to Ledgely Drive have provided safe pedestrian connections to important destinations. New sidewalks are planned along Route 7A to Cleveland Ave, and along Cleveland Ave to connect with the existing sidewalk. In general, sidewalks or paths should be considered in locations that would connect residential areas with nearby commercial or recreational areas.

Railroads are not presently used as a major means of transport in the region, but the potential exists for expanded use of this mode of transportation. A rail line runs through Shaftsbury in close proximity to a number of industrial areas. Current and future manufacturers should be encouraged to utilize rail service when feasible. The Town should cooperate in any efforts to maintain and improve rail service in the region. The State of Vermont has purchased the B & M rail line between North Bennington and Hoosick Falls and this will, over time, provide the Town with more direct access to the northeast rail corridor. Rail crossings at town highways should be improved to maximize safety.



This sidewalk provides a critical connection between South Shaftsbury, the elementary school, and Howard Park.

8.2 **Policies**

1. New roads, driveways, and drainage systems should be designed, constructed, and maintained in accordance with the municipal subdivision regulations, road specifications, and any recommendations of the Town's Road Foreman.
2. Additions and improvements to the transportation system should be designed to minimize impacts on residential areas and avoid the loss of parks and recreation areas, agricultural land, natural resources, unique sites, and wildlife habitat.
3. Major transportation improvements and investments should be encouraged to benefit villages and designated rural growth areas, with minimal or no investment for roads serving remote and mountainous areas.
4. Proposed transportation facilities should, to the degree possible, utilize existing highway and railway alignments.
5. All new road construction should be consistent with limitations imposed by topographical conditions, natural areas, and areas having special resource value.
6. Residential subdivisions should be designed to avoid direct access to major roads from individual lots.
7. Commercial and industrial developments should provide adequate on-site parking and include provisions for safe and efficient vehicular ingress and egress. To the extent possible, adjacent commercial or industrial uses should make use of common parking and access drives.
8. Scenic roads should be maintained for their scenic value while providing safe access for residents. Road construction and maintenance should be consistent with scenic values (width, alignment, roadside vegetation, etc.).

- Public safety should be the main determining factor in setting priorities for roadway and railway maintenance and improvement projects. Upgrading safety at railroad grade crossings in light of possible increase in rail traffic is essential.



View south from West Mountain Road.

IX. PUBLIC UTILITIES, FACILITIES, AND SERVICES

Shaftsbury residents rely on a number of public or quasi-public facilities and services. These community assets should be properly managed and supported so that they will continue to contribute favorably to the quality of life in Shaftsbury.

9.1 Water Supply and Wastewater Disposal

Shaftsbury's network of water mains, serving the South Shaftsbury area, receives water from a supply source near Basin Brook that is owned by the Village of North Bennington (Map 9-1). The source is an open water reservoir, and is susceptible to bacterial contamination. A filtration plant was built at a cost of approximately \$2.5 million in 1991.

Issues of capacity and cost highlighted the need for installation of water meters. Voters approved a ballot question at the 1990 Town Meeting that required installation of meters for all users of the

public water system. There are 301 meters servicing our community. These meters have the following beneficial effects:

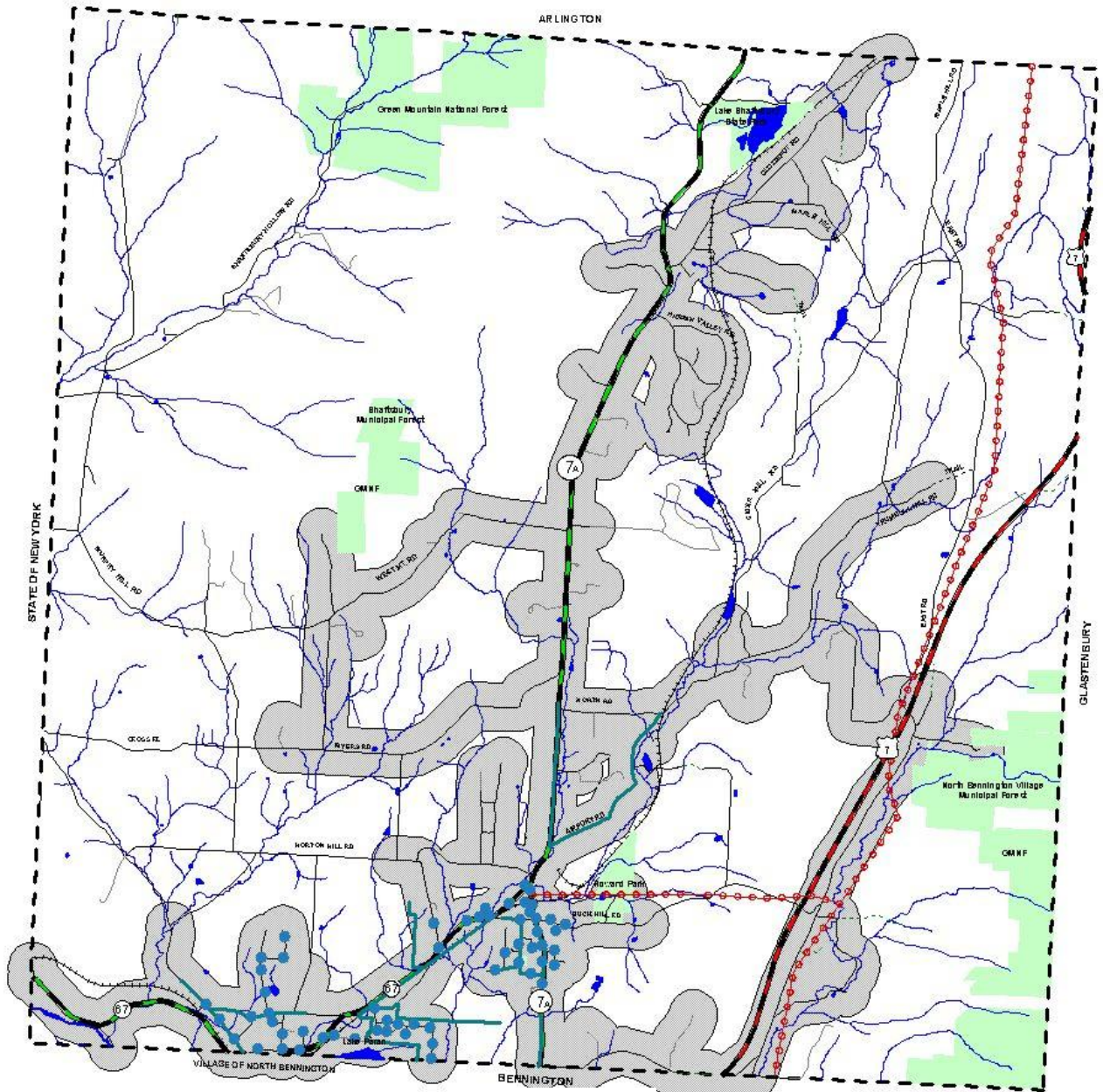
1. Billing for water use is more equitable, as charges are based on actual water consumption (with a specified minimum charge).
2. Water conservation is promoted.
3. Improved monitoring, planning, and leak detection is possible.

The State of Vermont has mandated the installation of larger pipes and the elimination of most dead-ends in the North Bennington water system distribution network in South Shaftsbury Village. These improvements are necessary to insure adequate water pressure at the fire hydrants connected to the system.

The North Bennington/Shaftsbury water system presently has one million gallons of surplus capacity that is allocated for use by Shaftsbury. Special emphasis should be placed on protecting aquifers that may serve as a source for future water supply systems.

There is one small private water system in Shaftsbury with its source near the junction of Coulter and Cold Spring Roads. This system serves four residences, but has an undetermined capacity.

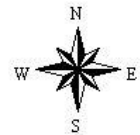
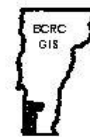
A municipal sewage treatment facility would effectively address potential groundwater contamination and growth problems. A town-wide survey which addressed alternative sewage systems as well as the possibility of connecting to the Bennington sewage plant was completed in 2007. These alternatives were rejected by the vast majority of the survey respondents and further investigation is currently on hold. The lack of a municipal sewer system will impact growth in the Village Center area, thus reinforcing the importance of the public water system. It also highlights the fact that it is critical that in-ground disposal systems are properly designed, permitted, constructed, and maintained.



Map 9-1
Shaftsbury, Vermont
Public Utilities

-  Fire Hydrants
-  Water Mains
-  Electric Transmission Lines

 Cable Service Area



Map produced November 6, 2008 by
 Bennington County Regional Commission
 111 South Street, Suite 203
 Bennington, VT 05201

9.2 Solid Waste

For many years Shaftsbury operated a landfill on North Road (Map 9-2). This operation was discontinued in 2004 and Shaftsbury's solid waste disposal needs are now being met by a certified transfer station operated on the landfill property under contract with TAM. The contract runs through 2009. Since more than 80% of the waste stream in Shaftsbury is handled by private haulers, the Shaftsbury Transfer Station is sufficient to serve the Town's needs for the foreseeable future.

The closed landfill continues to require ongoing monitoring of groundwater in the vicinity of the capped landfill. In addition, a remediation system has been installed to prevent excessive buildup of methane in the monitoring wells along the western boundary of the property.

In order to meet the stringent State groundwater standards, annexation of down gradient parcels adjacent to the landfill has been necessary. In 1992 the Town purchased a four acre parcel between the landfill and Airport Road to serve as a buffer. Extending the boundary of the landfill has allowed the Town to meet the State ground water standards. In July of 1996 the Town voters approved the purchase of an additional 0.75 acre parcel, due to the discovery of benzene and related materials in excess of acceptable standards in groundwater flowing beneath a small portion of this property.

The State solid waste planning law, Act 78, requires that Regional Planning Commissions develop comprehensive solid waste management plans for their regions. At the 1995 Town Meeting, voters rejected funding or participating in the Bennington County Regional Commission's Integrated Solid Waste Applications Program (ISWAP). The prevailing sentiment among residents appears to be in support of maintaining local self-sufficiency with regard to solid waste management. The Select Board maintains local control over the Town's solid waste and recycling management. In 2008 the Select Board adopted a revised zoning bylaw which incorporates many goals of the solid waste management plan.

Shaftsbury has been a recycling leader in Vermont for many years as measured by the percentage of waste that is diverted from landfills and incinerators. In 2007 Shaftsbury implemented a pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) program in which a fee is charged that is sufficient to pay for the disposal of the waste. Because recycling is free, PAYT provides a significant incentive to recycle.

Shaftsbury has implemented a Swap Shed at the transfer station as a further means of diverting materials from the waste stream. Shaftsbury's current diversion rate is approximately 35% whereas the region covered by the BCRC Solid Waste Implementation Plan (of which Shaftsbury is a member) has a diversion rate of about 10%. The long-term goal of the State is a diversion rate of 50%. The Town, therefore, has more work to do on this important issue.

The Town also continues to provide funding for a Solid Waste Implementation Plan under the BCRC, and the Town's Environmental Issues Committee (formerly the Solid Waste Committee) continues to monitor the Transfer Station and closed landfill operations and make suggestions for improvements.

Recommendations:

1. Monitor and update the existing solid waste management plan on an ongoing basis so that the town, in effect, has a rolling 5 year plan in place.

2. Investigate recycling technologies and practices that further encourage recycling by Town residents.
3. Keep the cost of waste disposal for Town residents as low as is possible without compromising good waste disposal practices.

9.3 **Public Buildings and Land**

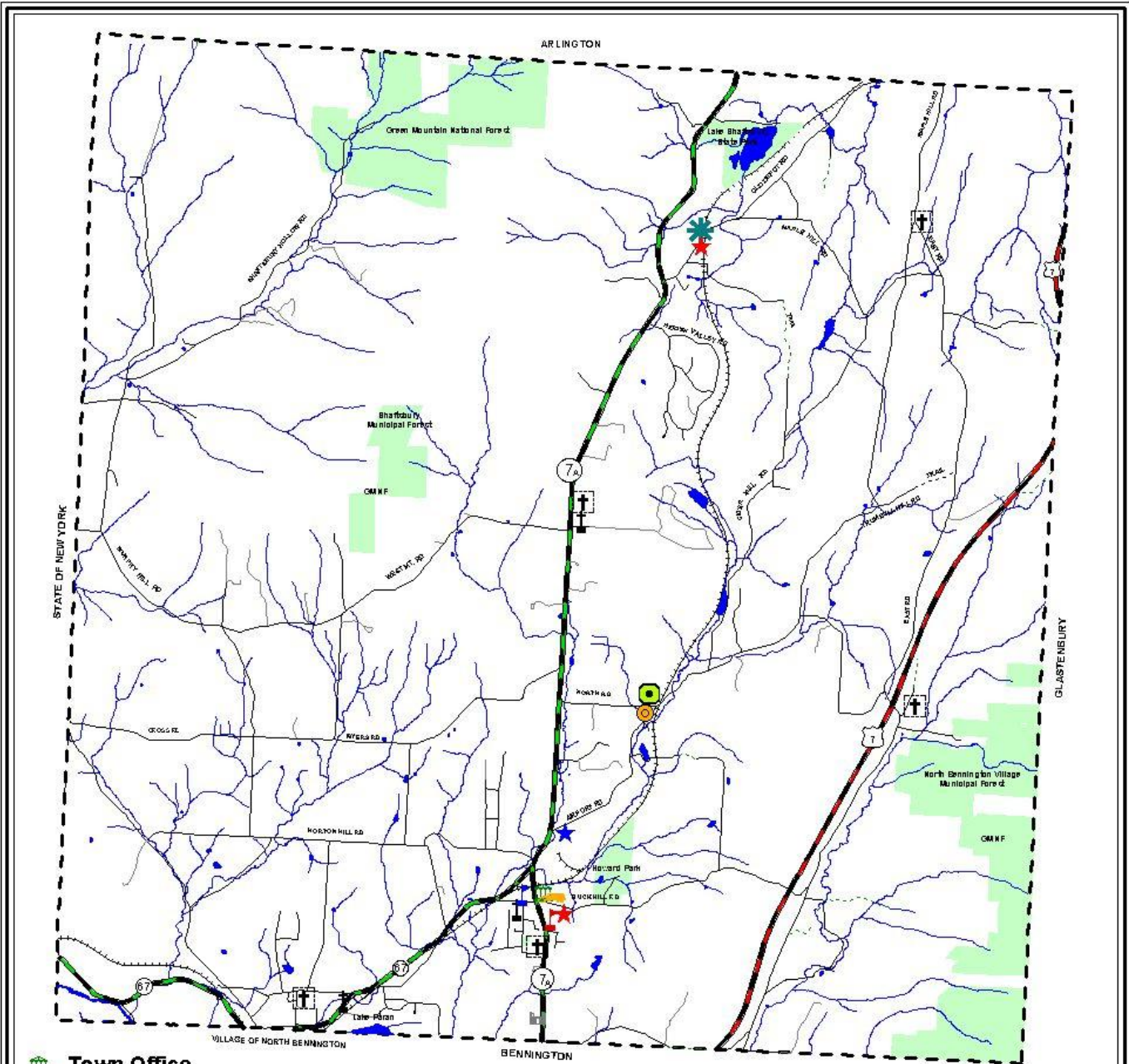
There are a number of publicly owned properties in Shaftsbury (map 9-2); following is a brief inventory and discussion of each:

1. Cole Hall serves as the municipal office building. Cole Hall is an historic building suffering from deferred maintenance.
2. The Town Garage is located next to Cole Hall and is in poor condition. For the reasons outlined in the Transportation chapter of this Plan, relocation of this facility is a desirable option.



Cole Hall is an important historical structure and the center of town government; the structure is in need of renovation for structural and functional reasons.

3. Howard Park, located off Buck Hill Road near South Shaftsbury, is the Town's focal point for many organized recreational activities. Water-based recreational activities occur at Lake Shaftsbury State Park and at Lake Paran. A small recreation area is located on Cleveland Avenue. A detailed discussion of Shaftsbury's recreation facilities is contained in Chapter XI.
4. The Shaftsbury Municipal Forest, in Shaftsbury Hollow on West Mountain, is managed to support timber harvesting, wildlife management, and recreation. A detailed management plan is on file at the Town Clerk's office. The Town should continue to maintain this land and assure that it remains available for public use.



-  **Town Office**
-  **School**
-  **Town Garage**
-  **Fire Station**
-  **Police Station**
-  **Post Office**
-  **Recycling Center**
-  **Transfer Station**
-  **Church**
-  **Museum**
-  **Public Gathering Place**
-  **Cemetery**

Shaftsbury, Vermont Public Facilities



Map produced November 10, 2008 by
Bennington County Regional Commission
111 South Street, Suite 203
Bennington, VT 05251

5. The Municipal Landfill, located off Airport Road, has already been discussed in this chapter.
6. Several Cemeteries are located around the Town:

South Shaftsbury,
Center Shaftsbury,
Maple Hill,
Grandview (maintained by North
Bennington),
Little Rhode Island,
Waite

It is important that each of these cemeteries be properly maintained. Recent surveys were performed to assess capacity and to determine whether plans should be made to acquire additional land for enlargement of any of the cemeteries.



Shaftsbury's cemeteries are important to the community and should be properly maintained.

9.4 Fire, Emergency, and Public Safety

Shaftsbury is fortunate to be served by an outstanding volunteer fire department. State training and equipment requirements have made recruiting and outfitting volunteers more difficult and costly.

A mutual aid agreement is in place with Washington County, New York, to better provide services to Shaftsbury residents.

One new fire truck is purchased every eight years; these purchases are currently financed partly through a sinking fund and partly by a lease-purchase arrangement. This capital equipment replacement schedule has been formalized through development of a capital budget and program.

Shaftsbury has no emergency rescue service of its own, but rather relies on the Bennington and Arlington Volunteer Rescue Squads. The Town does not maintain a police force; the Bennington County Sheriff Department and the Vermont State Police provide law enforcement coverage for the Town.

9.5 Other Facilities and Services

Shaftsbury's proximity to Bennington enables residents to take advantage of many of the facilities located in that larger municipality. Shaftsbury residents make use of both the Bennington Free Library and the John G. McCullough Free Library in North Bennington. The Bennington Museum is enjoyed by Shaftsbury residents, as is the Robert Frost Home and Museum. The Shaftsbury Historical Society Museum, located in Center Shaftsbury, contains a wealth of valuable information on the history of the Town and its residents. The Bennington Recreation Center also is used by many Shaftsbury residents.

Many residents receive basic medical services at Shaftsbury Medical Associates in South Shaftsbury and at other medical offices in the area. Full medical services are available in

Bennington at the Southwest Vermont Medical Center.

Shaftsbury is fortunate to have an active and highly-regarded emergency management organization that provides needed management training and manpower in times of emergency. The Town should continue to support these efforts.

The WBTN radio tower located on Buck Hill provides a platform for wireless communications.

9.6 Policies

1. Recycling, reuse, and composting should play a major role in solid waste management for the Town of Shaftsbury. Any future landfills, transfer stations, composting facilities and related uses should not be located on important agricultural land and should be low in impact and volume in order to preserve the small town character of Shaftsbury and its natural environment, and to limit heavy truck traffic, prevent air, surface water, groundwater and noise pollution, and promote the public safety. The recently enacted solid waste section of the Zoning Bylaw should support these efforts.
2. Communication companies should be encouraged to co-locate using existing structures, where available, for siting communication facilities.

9.7 Recommendations

1. Existing and potential public water supplies are critically important to the Town of Shaftsbury and should be protected from any type of contamination. Additional protection should be provided by prohibiting development, or any use that risks contamination, within 300 feet of the North Bennington water system reservoirs. Such public water supplies should be used to promote concentrated "village" development rather than dispersed development.
2. Future development in Shaftsbury is contingent on a waste water system and adequate water supply. The town should continue the planning process for developing the expansion of the water system and a municipal waste water disposal system for South Shaftsbury.
3. Broadband internet and cell phone service is essential to most commercial, industrial, healthcare, and educational operations and is essential to attracting younger residents and workers. The Town should be a part of the state initiative to have complete coverage by broadband and cell phone service by December, 2010.
4. The Town Garage sits on a crowded site and is nearing the end of its useful life. Now that the former town landfill property has been re-zoned to industrial use, the town should pursue the construction of a new garage facility at that location.
5. Cole Hall is the public face of the town and houses all of the town offices and vital records. Its current condition is a poor reflection of the town. Revitalizing this important, historic public facility should be addressed in the near future.



The Shaftsbury Volunteer Fire Department provides a vital service to the community.

X. EDUCATION

10.1 Educational Facilities And Childcare Facilities

Shaftsbury residents are fortunate to have access to excellent educational opportunities. The Town is a part of the Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union (SVSU), the largest school district in the State of Vermont. Elementary education (grades pre-Kindergarten through six) is provided at the Shaftsbury Elementary School (present enrollment approximately 204) and the North Bennington Elementary School (of the 147 students enrolled, 68 are from Shaftsbury). Junior high and high school students attend Mount Anthony Union Middle School and Mount Anthony Union High School respectively. MAUHS includes a comprehensive and up-to-date regional career development (vocational) center. A new MAU Middle School facility is now complete. Several post secondary schools are located in the Bennington area: Bennington College, Southern Vermont College, and branches of the Community College of Vermont, Renselaer Polytechnic Institute among others.

A unique feature in the local educational picture is the relationship between Shaftsbury and North Bennington and the schools in those municipalities. For instance, a family in Shaftsbury's "District 1" sends its children to school and votes on school issues in North

Bennington, pays school taxes to North Bennington and Mount Anthony Union Middle and High Schools, but votes on town issues and pays town taxes to Shaftsbury.

Shaftsbury Elementary School		
year	number of students	budget
2004-2005	221	\$2,457,524
2005-2006	204	\$2,571,464
2006-2007	181	\$2,439,095
2007-2008	209	\$2,566,264
2008-2009	204	\$2,714,936



Demographic predictions suggest that enrollment will continue to decrease. Therefore, the physical structure, including a new Music Room built in 1996 should be adequate provided maintenance remains an important priority

The Shaftsbury and North Bennington school boards have managed to maintain strong educational programs, even with very conservative budget increases.

Childcare

Childcare centers and family childcare homes are a service which contributes to the town and region's economy. It enables working parents (especially two working parents) to participate in the workforce not only for meeting personal financial needs, but filling the needs of the workforce as well. Childcare centers vary in size and function and range from small home-based facilities to larger state registered and licensed facilities.

In the school year '08-'09 the Shaftsbury Elementary School in collaboration with the Bennington College Early Childhood Center began a pre-K pilot program involving 16 Shaftsbury children. This is not meant to serve as daycare but rather early childhood education involving qualified teachers It is too early to foresee the impact of this change on

private childcare facilities. The town should monitor this development to assure an effective level of childcare services is delivered.

10.2 Recommendations

1. The Vermont Legislature should be encouraged to intensify their efforts to develop a more equitable means of supplying State aid to local school districts.
2. Together with North Bennington, the town should continue to monitor population and demographic trends, student enrollment and other variables as required to assess the viability and possible economic necessity of consolidating the Shaftsbury and North Bennington elementary school systems.
3. North Bennington & Shaftsbury schools should encourage students from surrounding communities that may suffer from overcrowding to transition to our underutilized facilities.
4. Encourage more collaboration between town and school governing bodies (recognizing that they are legally separate entities).



Students from Shaftsbury's District 1 attend the North Bennington Graded School.

XI. RECREATION

Residents of Shaftsbury are fortunate to have ready access to a wealth of recreational opportunities. A municipal recreation park, a state park (which contains one of the two small lakes in Town), streams, forests, hiking trails, and scenic back roads serve the Town's recreational needs. Maintenance of the quality of these amenities is an important goal of this Town Plan. The addition of the Recreational Overlay District to the Shaftsbury Zoning Bylaw in 2002 will further enhance recreational opportunities in Town by encouraging development of certain private and public recreational facilities appropriate to the area.

11.1 Municipal Parks and Recreation

The Town maintains two municipal recreation parks 1) Howard Park, on Buck Hill Road and 2) Village Park, on Cleveland Avenue. A recreation committee is responsible for overseeing the operation and maintenance of both municipal recreation parks. Both parks should be financially self-sufficient, but are not.

Howard Park is situated just east of South Shaftsbury Village on 65 acres of land. The park contains facilities for a wide variety of sports and activities, including: softball, baseball, soccer and multi-purpose fields, tennis courts, a basketball court, playground equipment, picnic facilities, and a small pond. Other structures at the park include bathroom facilities and equipment storage buildings and a concession stand. The number of people using the park's facilities increases every year.

Interest from an endowment fund is no longer sufficient for proper care and maintenance. At this time the Town is subsidizing the general operation and maintenance of the two municipal recreation parks through an endowment fund and the town's general fund "operating budget." Currently, no fees are charged to people who use the park.

Village Park is a small (\pm 1 acre) neighborhood park located on Cleveland Avenue in South Shaftsbury Village. This park contains playground equipment and a backstop for a small ball field. The park receives a great deal of use by children who live in the neighborhood.

In order to meet the evolving and growing recreational demands of the population, further improvements and additional facilities may be needed at both municipal recreation parks. The Recreation Committee has generated a list of capital improvements at Howard Park from a survey mailed to all taxpayers in the town. The Recreation Committee is attempting to evaluate which capital improvements, new programs and services are necessary to meet the Town's needs. At this time, the Recreation Committee has identified the following:

- 1) Make more opportunities available for adults and families at both facilities such as Bocce, Horseshoes and Shuffle board.
- 2) Improve and expand existing trail infrastructure at Howard Park to include both nature and fitness programs;
- 3) Move the location of and replace playground equipment at both parks;
- 4) Develop and maintain a community garden at Howard Park
- 5) Increase amenities such as seating, lighting, bike racks, parking, trash disposal, and water fountains.
- 6) Allow for more seasonal opportunities to occur at Howard Park such sledding, ice skating, snowshoeing and cross country skiing.

Private gifts, donations, fund raising by citizen groups, and corporate support should be encouraged and user fees should be collected in order to fund such improvements and ongoing maintenance.

11.2 Lake Shaftsbury and Lake Paran

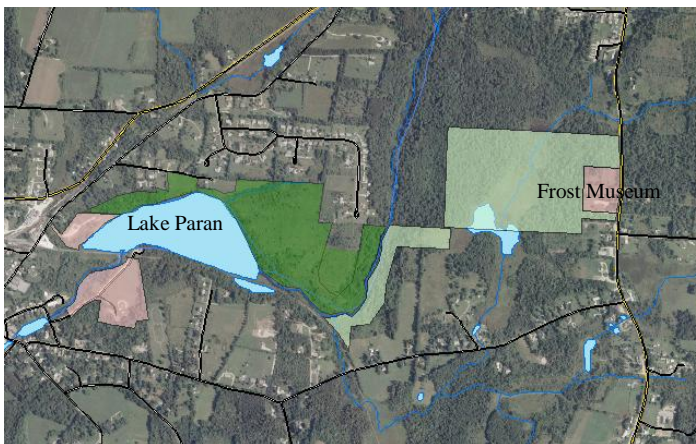
Two small lakes provide outstanding recreational opportunities for residents of Shaftsbury and other towns in the area. Lake Shaftsbury is a 26 acre lake located within a 101 acre state park off Historic Route 7A just south of the Arlington town Line. Popular activities at the lake include swimming, picnicking, fishing, boating, hiking, and group camping. Continued wise management of this state park will assure that these recreational facilities are properly maintained for the public's benefit. The Town should continue to work with the State of Vermont and BCRC to ensure cooperation in any new developments at Lake Shaftsbury.



Lake Shaftsbury State Park is a popular recreation area in North Shaftsbury.

Lake Paran, located between the Villages of South Shaftsbury and North Bennington, receives substantial use by residents of those communities. Its proximity to these population centers makes Lake Paran a uniquely valuable center for water-based recreational activities. Paran Recreations, Inc., a non-profit organization, manages the operation of the recreational facilities at Lake Paran. Annual operating expenses are generally covered from membership fees, usage fees and contributions.

A boat launching ramp and recently constructed handicap accessible fishing pier, both on state-owned land, are open for public use. They were constructed by and are operated by the State. Eurasian milfoil is an invasive aquatic plant that has adversely affect the lake's ecology and recreational potential. Periodic weed harvesting is necessary, but expensive. The Town should support harvesting operations and research into mechanisms for controlling weed infestation.



The Fund for North Bennington has recently completed the preliminary clearing of a nature/hiking trail from the Robert Frost Museum on Route 7A to the Lake Paran Recreation Area in North Bennington. Much of this trail is located in Shaftsbury. The Town should work with the Fund for North Bennington and other interested parties to enhance and expand this natural scenic area.

11.3 Neighborhood Parks

As the Town grows and new neighborhoods develop, it would be desirable to have neighborhood parks convenient to these areas. The Town should require the dedication of land for a neighborhood parks and provide for the ongoing maintenance of the parks as a condition of approval of large new subdivisions. Parks and Recreation Areas should, as well, be encouraged in all (3) Town compact areas where it is feasible and financially viable, and is in compliance with current zoning bylaws.

11.4 Natural Resources

Shaftsbury's location among the mountains, forests, and streams of southwestern Vermont provides a variety of easily accessible outdoor recreational opportunities. Hunters are aware that the combination of forested uplands, open fields, and wetlands in Shaftsbury represents excellent habitat for a variety of wildlife species. Hiking, cross-country skiing, and mountain biking are also popular activities in Shaftsbury's backcountry. Numerous streams flowing from the Taconic and Green Mountains support fishing and other recreational pursuits. Although little used, the Shaftsbury Municipal Forest also has potential for recreational use.

Snowmobiling is a major winter recreational activity for Town residents and tourists. Parking areas for snowmobile trailers and access to feeder trails to the VAST statewide trail network should be identified and protected.

Physical conditions and regulatory restrictions are likely to prevent the fragmentation and loss of the remote forested upland areas in Town. Careful and creative land use planning (see discussion in Chapter VI) will be necessary to protect recreational open spaces in other parts of Town. Public access to important recreational areas is also a serious concern. Various options to maintain access to streams, trails, natural areas, and other recreational sites are available (e.g., acquisition of easements, land acquisition by the National Forest Service or some other conservation organization), and should be pursued in those situations where loss of access is threatened. Shaftsbury, along with seven other towns in the Region, voted to support extension of the National Forest proclamation boundary to include the Taconic Range, thus enabling acquisition of land for public use (with the consent of the Town and land owner). Extension of the boundary has been approved by the Vermont Legislature and the U.S. Congress, and was signed into law by the President. Approval of the Glastenbury Wilderness Area by the U.S. Congress provides for additional recreational opportunities by Shaftsbury residents.

Bicycle touring (both road and off-road) is popular among both vacationers and residents of the area. Planning should include consideration of this activity whenever appropriate (e.g., road construction and improvements, trail use designations) to ensure the safety of bicyclists and the environment.

11.5 Policies

1. Developments which include, or potentially affect access to, an important recreational resource should include provisions to ensure preservation of that resource and continued public access.
2. While public access to streams and other water bodies is encouraged, recognition should be given to the need to protect fragile environmental areas; intensive recreational uses in such areas should be restricted accordingly.

3. Capital investments that would adversely affect an important recreational resource, or public access to that resource should not be pursued.
4. Permanent development is severely limited in the forested mountain areas of Shaftsbury as these areas are classified as Forest and Recreation Zones in the bylaws.
5. Stream channels, and lands adjacent to them, should be preserved in their natural state; in areas of existing or planned development, improvements near such waterways should be limited to those that will support recreational access without damaging the natural environment.
6. Highway improvements or new construction should provide adequate space for the construction of bicycling paths, or include shoulders of sufficient width to safely accommodate bicycle use.

11.6 **Recommendations**

1. The town should inventory all recreational lands and natural resources and determine the most appropriate way to secure public access and awareness of such areas including parking, signage and trail maps. This study should include an inventory of important recreational forest areas, trails, access to and along streams and to less obvious resources such as the Shaftsbury Municipal Forest, The Long Trail/Appalachian Trail, and Fund for North Bennington properties.
2. The Town should consider requiring developers of large residential subdivisions to establish and maintain neighborhood parks.
3. The Town should encourage the creation of a bike/hiking path between the Lake Paran area of North Bennington and South Shaftsbury, thus providing access via the sidewalk to Howard Park. This would provide a needed addition to the recreational facilities of the Town and would have the benefit of connecting two important existing recreational areas.
4. Evaluate the results of the Ancient Roads Study and develop these Town-owned rights-of-way to create an interconnecting, town-wide multi-use trail system for recreational use.



Spruce Peak from Old Depot Road.

XII. HOUSING

Ensuring an adequate supply of affordable housing to meet the needs of current and future residents is an important goal of this Plan. Although housing is quite expensive in Shaftsbury, the median sale price of a single-family house in 2007, \$185,500, was less than the median for the County (\$195,000) or State (\$210,000). The median sale price of a mobile home in Shaftsbury, \$89,500, was higher than the County (\$77,750) or State (\$80,000). Approximately one in six households in Shaftsbury occupy a rental unit; median rental costs are not available at the town level, but the County median ranges from \$691 for a one bedroom unit to \$1,049 for a three bedroom unit.

Housing is considered affordable when no more than 30 percent of total household income is spent on housing costs (rent or mortgage, property taxes, and property insurance). The cost of heating a household, providing necessary services such as electricity and water, and of maintaining the physical structure must also be considered. Although the median family income in Shaftsbury provides sufficient funds to support median rental and home ownership costs, over 60 households in Town pay rental costs in excess of 30 percent of total income, indicating a need for additional affordable housing within the community. Moreover, rising energy costs point to the need for weatherization of many homes to ensure that they remain affordable. In the future, it will be critical to consider energy and long-term maintenance when developing new "affordable" housing in the community; low cost construction does not necessarily translate to housing that is affordable when all operating and maintenance costs are considered.

Because Shaftsbury is a rural town, with a relatively small population and limited infrastructure available, large affordable housing projects will probably not be developed in the Town. Instead, a number of smaller projects -- conversions of large, older houses to apartments; the addition of accessory apartments; inclusion of affordable units in new residential developments through incentives (such as density bonuses) or mandates ("inclusionary zoning"), individual mortgage assistance (through organizations such as VHFA); working with the Regional Affordable Housing Corporation (RAHC) to develop new housing -- and similar techniques will be emphasized. These approaches, combined with the land-use strategy of promoting growth in village centers and residential clusters support housing affordability.

It may be possible to redevelop underutilized residential or commercial sites in or near South Shaftsbury, creating two or multi-family housing on those sites, provided that local and state regulations are satisfied. The potential for developing housing on reclaimed gravel pit sites should be considered. Development of these sites would provide needed housing and avoid impacts on important natural resources and agricultural areas. Because they are relatively remote from the village center, however, water and sewer infrastructure will not be available; it may be necessary to develop small multi-user water supply systems and/or community or package wastewater disposal systems to provide adequate residential densities. In any such development outside designated village areas, careful planning will be necessary to ensure limited impact on roads and other public investments and to maintain the rural character of the surrounding area.

It will be less expensive to develop new housing in the higher density village areas of Shaftsbury, but as noted, limited open land is available in that area. The need for additional affordable housing provides another reason for the Town to consider expanding the area and/or finding a way to provide water and wastewater infrastructure that can safely accommodate higher density housing in new or existing structures. Locating affordable housing near South Shaftsbury has the added advantage of being closer to services for elderly residents, being within walking distance of Shaftsbury Elementary School, and being in close proximity to jobs and services in Bennington.

12.1 Recommendations:

1. Review zoning regulations to ensure that adequate provision is made for development of multi-family and manufactured housing.
2. Conduct a detailed housing needs analysis to determine the amount and type of affordable housing needed for Shaftsbury.
3. Collaborate with RAHC or other not-for-profit organizations, private lenders, and developers to create additional units of affordable housing.
4. Support infrastructure improvements and extensions that would support higher density housing within or adjacent to existing village areas.
5. As required by Chapter 117, zoning Bylaws should be adjusted to allow the creation of a mobile home park zone to be established in South Shaftsbury where mobile home parks currently exist.

XIII. ENERGY

Recent rapid escalation in fuel prices served to remind us that energy is an expensive resource with unpredictable pricing fluctuations. Homes and businesses in Shaftsbury utilize a variety of energy sources for heating: wood, fuel oil, gas, electricity, and coal. With a heating season that generally lasts for at least seven months, home and business energy consumption is a significant issue for everyone in this area. These concerns, combined with the local, regional, and global environmental problems caused by fuel extraction, processing, and combustion, mean that energy conservation measures should be emphasized now more than ever. Subdivisions and buildings should be designed with energy conservation in mind (orientation for solar access, locating buildings in protected rather than exposed locations, etc.), and thermal integrity standards for buildings, such as those specified in the Bennington Regional Energy Plan, should be adhered to. Owners of existing buildings should be urged to retrofit to meet those standards. Financial assistance may be available to some home owners through State programs and organizations such as the Bennington Rutland Opportunity Council (BROC).

The Efficiency Vermont program has been developed to help fund energy efficiency changes and is funded through an assessment of electric bills. Efficiency Vermont reduces energy costs by offering no-cost technical assistance and financial incentives to help residents and businesses identify and pay for cost-effective approaches to energy-efficient building design, construction, renovation, equipment, lighting, and appliances. Residents and business owners should be encouraged to take advantage of these programs.

Support should be given to efforts to utilize local renewable resources. Wood is very abundant in the region and can provide for a significant share of heating needs. Other renewable energy sources such as wind power (small turbines for residential use or larger commercial wind generating facilities) and micro-hydroelectric facilities offer ways for the Town to reduce reliance on petroleum products. Utilization of local renewable energy resources also supports local economic development and keeps dollars spent on energy within the local and regional economy. As alternative heating sources are implemented, particularly wood burning units, an increased focus on proper installation and maintenance should be encouraged.

Effective land use planning can promote energy conservation by concentrating development in growth centers, with new residential development convenient to commercial service and employment centers. The land use element of this Plan and as implemented through the Zoning Bylaws prohibits permanent development in Shaftsbury's remote forest areas, discourages scattered development in rural areas, and provides for more intensive residential and commercial growth in designated village areas. The Plan also discourages capital expenditures on roads or other infrastructure that would tend to lead to scattered development. Compact development patterns will encourage non-motorized modes of transportation, while reducing the number and length of automobile trips, truck deliveries, and the like.

13.1 Recommendations:

1. Future public and private investments should be mindful of energy conservation. Facilities that encourage pedestrian and bicycle transportation (e.g., centrally located parking facilities and sidewalks in village areas, and bicycle paths and lanes) should be pursued and continuing research into the feasibility of passenger rail service or other means of mass transit in our area should be encouraged.. Efforts to develop alternative/renewable energy sources, such as wind, hydroelectric, and solar power should be supported.
2. The benefits of a tax abatement plan or other local, state, and/or federal incentives should be explored in order to encourage the construction of or to retrofit structures to include high performance and low fossil fuel usage energy systems. The town should 'lead by example' in all future municipal building and renovation projects; striving for cost-effective energy efficient systems as a primary goal. Care should be taken when crafting and enabling legislation and/or incentives not to hinder homeowners or businesses from the implementation of alternative energy systems.
3. Encouraging the development of town-wide broadband internet connection may help provide an alternative to energy-consumptive physical travel.



Vermont's abundant wind energy resources can provide a significant amount of electrical power.

XIV. MUNICIPAL FINANCE

14.1 Fiscal Description and History

The cost trend of municipal government operations has varied in Shaftsbury over the past several years, as displayed below.

Total municipal expenditures, 2000 to Present

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>
2000-01	\$1,161,270
2001-02	1,110,371
2002-03	1,111,041
2003-04	1,173,775
2004-05	1,152,786
2005-06	1,226,276
2006-07	1,345,153
2007-08	1,422,757
2008-09	1,497,721

Predictably, the taxes paid by individuals owning property in Shaftsbury have varied accordingly over this same time period. Increases in property taxes have not been uncommon in Vermont communities in recent years and have led to a number of proposals for tax reform.

**Tax Rate (Per \$100 Assessed Value)
(Town and School Combined) (need updated numbers)**

<u>Year</u>	<u>District 1</u> <u>(N. Bennington)</u>	<u>District 2</u> <u>(Shaftsbury)</u>
2000-01		2.444
2001-02		2.553
2002-03		1.8902
2003-04		2.12
	<u>Resident/Non-Resident</u>	<u>Resident/Non-Resident</u>
2004-05	2.0379/2.021	1.7640/2.0109
2005-06	2.2099/2.1613	1.9802/2.1499
2006-07	2.2373/2.2247	2.0824/2.2300
2007-08	2.2036/2.3439	2.2036/2.3439
2008-09	2.5302/2.5829	2.4679/2.5877

Of course, school taxes comprise the largest share of the local tax burden. Recent discussions between the North Bennington and Shaftsbury School Boards have focused on possible areas of cooperation to ensure continuation of quality educational services while exploring possible areas where costs can be shared. Shaftsbury residents who live in “District 1” pay school taxes to support the North Bennington Elementary School as well as to the Mount Anthony Union Middle and High

Schools, while residents in “District 2” pay taxes to the South Shaftsbury Elementary School and to the MAU secondary schools. The tax rates paid by residents of each district have been fairly even in the past two years, although the District 1 tax rate has been up to ten percent higher than the District 2 rate at times in the past decade. The Town Select Board should work closely with the School Board to find ways to control costs and to balance expenditures so that the tax burden from year-to-year is evened out to the extent possible. In addition, legislative efforts to control our growing reliance on property taxes through fair and equitable reform programs should be supported.

The Town's expenditures for municipal services can be broken down into several categories: General Government (Selectors, Board of Civil Authority, Treasurer, Listers, Town Clerk, Planning and Zoning, building maintenance, clerical, etc.), Public Safety (Emergency Management, Constables, Animal Warden, Fire Warden, Fire Department - but not including expenditures on capital equipment), Public Works (utilities, landfill, and all aspects of the Town Highway Department except for certain capital equipment), Appropriations (voted as separate articles at Town Meeting and including requests from human service agencies, libraries, and recreation committees, and certain capital equipment funds - e.g., fire truck and highway equipment replacement), and Employee Benefits and Miscellaneous Expenses.

Further details on town financial matters can be found in the Annual Town Report, published and furnished to all taxpayers of Shaftsbury prior to Town Meeting.

14.2 Capital Programming

Capital programming provides a method for selecting, scheduling, and financing capital projects. The Town should engage in long-term planning, identifying capital improvements and projects that need to be made, identify when these projects should be implemented and plan for these costs to control the Town's debt level and tax burden on property owners. The Select Board should develop and update its Capital Budget plan on an annual basis, in consultation with various Town departments, including its Facilities Committee, Road Foreman, Fire Department, and in consultation with the Shaftsbury School Board and the North Bennington Prudential Committee.



Purchases of heavy equipment must be carefully planned to avoid adverse impacts on the municipal budget and taxes.

XV. IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM - SUMMARY

Each chapter of this Town Plan contains specific policies and recommended actions designed to implement the goals which were presented in Chapter II. A brief synopsis of principal implementing measures is presented here. Refer to the text of the Plan for a thorough discussion of these items.

1. The approved Town Plan is the vision statement for the town and should serve as a guide to local officials. Boards and commissions should refer to the Plan as a regular part of their decision-making process. Zoning Bylaws, Subdivision Regulations, and a Capital Budget and Program are intended to implement major aspects of the Plan. Therefore, these documents must be thoroughly aligned. In certain cases they may need to be adjusted to be consistent with the Town Plan.
2. The Planning Commission and Select board should appear at Act 250 hearings and offer testimony on a proposed development's conformance with the Plan. The Plan should also be consulted as the Town reviews and comments on the plans of state agencies, the regional planning commission, and neighboring towns.
3. A number of possible regulatory changes are discussed in the Plan. These regulations can be grouped into four general categories: (1) modification of zoning district boundaries, densities, and permitted uses; (2) promotion of creative development techniques; (3) protection of important natural resources; and (4) Promotion of energy efficiency and conservation. Consideration of such amendments should be a priority of the Planning Commission. The Commission should hold working sessions and public hearings on each idea as it is developed, and make every effort to involve potentially interested parties.
4. Develop and implement a strategic plan for town facilities. Improved planning for the Town's capital needs is a recurring theme of this Town Plan. The work of the Facilities Committee should be developed into a long range strategic plan.
5. The Town should undertake cooperative studies with the Village of North Bennington, and the Town of Bennington, to ascertain future inter-community needs and to develop plans for meeting those needs.

XVI. RELATIONSHIP TO NEIGHBORING TOWNS AND THE REGION

The Shaftsbury Town Plan has been developed giving due consideration to the plans and development patterns of adjacent towns and the Bennington Region as a whole. Shaftsbury is situated immediately north of Bennington, the most populous town in the Region, northeast of North Bennington, and immediately west of the unorganized town of Glastenbury, the Region's least populous town. Several small agricultural towns, including White Creek (immediately west of Shaftsbury), are found just across the border in New York State, and Arlington, with its distinctive villages, mountains, and river valley, lies to the north. Woodford (southeast of Shaftsbury) and Sunderland (northeast) are very small towns with large percentages of their land lying within the Green Mountain National Forest.

Shaftsbury is a diverse town that reflects both the rural and village/urban land use patterns of its neighbors. As a residential community, Shaftsbury provides housing for many people who work in Bennington and other employment centers. Shaftsbury has also retained the character of a small New England community, and still has a number of active and viable farms. Equally abundant are the Town's forested upland and mountain areas, providing outstanding habitat for both wildlife and human recreation. Small village centers, with their concentrations of homes and nearby commercial and industrial areas, provide jobs, services, and a sense of focus to the community.

The land use/zoning map for Shaftsbury generally conforms with the prevailing land use and land use regulations of adjacent towns. The residential and forest and recreation uses planned for areas adjacent to White Creek, Arlington, and Glastenbury reflect conditions in those areas of Shaftsbury as well as conditions in these neighboring rural towns. More intensive residential development is planned for the southern part of Shaftsbury near existing villages, infrastructure, and employment centers. Shaftsbury has the capacity to provide housing to support new commercial and industrial development within the Town, and to help support other employment centers in the Region. The Town would like to attract some new commercial and industrial development to provide employment opportunities, needed services, and to support the property tax base. As befits the Town's rural character, the location and modest size of such development should not result in any significant impact on other towns in the area.

The road system is adequate to accommodate inter-town travel between homes and job and shopping sites. Tourist through-traffic is not problematic but increasing truck traffic is a concern.

Intermunicipal cooperation is clearly called for in issues regarding the local school situation (relationship between Shaftsbury, North Bennington, and the SVSU) and South Shaftsbury's public water supply (system owned by the Village of North Bennington, source protection area partially in Glastenbury). These issues have been identified in the text of this plan, and appropriate courses of action suggested.

Cooperation with the neighboring village of North Bennington is, in fact, important in many areas (schools, water system, connecting roads, shared recreational facilities, etc.); consequently local officials -- including school boards, Selectors/Trustees, recreation groups, planning commissions, and others -- should make intermunicipal discussions regular events.

Glastenbury is of particular interest to Shaftsbury, as any new growth in Glastenbury will inevitably lead to demands for costly services from Shaftsbury (e.g., education at Shaftsbury schools, road maintenance, provision of emergency services, etc.). Such impacts would fall on Shaftsbury because there is no municipal government in the unorganized Town of Glastenbury and because the only feasible access to private lands in the town is from Shaftsbury. Shaftsbury should be involved in the planning process for Glastenbury, through the BCRC, to ensure that new growth in Glastenbury is limited, and that the costs associated with any such growth will not impact the Town of Shaftsbury.

The Shaftsbury Town Plan reflects the basic development concept put forward in the Bennington Regional Plan. Ideally, New development should be concentrated in village centers and designated growth areas; low density residential and agricultural uses should be promoted outside such growth areas, and remote upland areas should be designated for conservation, forestry, and recreation. Through implementation of this plan, Shaftsbury intends to retain its unique rural character and preserve the lifestyle that we all enjoy.

