

# NOTICE



Maps to be included in the final Sheffield Town Plan will be available for review at the Public Hearing.

THE SHEFFIELD PLANNING COMMISSION

- *The draft of the Town Plan of Sheffield Vermont has been completed and is ready for the Public Hearing Process.*

*The amended and updated Town Plan generally reflects current data and complies with the Flood Resilience Directive that went into effect on July 1<sup>st</sup> 2014. (See page 17 of draft)*

*We believe this is consistent with the regional goals established by 24 V.S.A. §4302 and will not negatively impact the adjacent towns.*

*Respectfully,*

*The Sheffield Planning Commission*

*For questions contact Keith Ballek at 626-9895*

**TOWN OF SHEFFIELD,  
VERMONT  
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE  
FOR AMENDMENTS TO THE TOWN  
PLAN**

In accordance with State law [24 V.S.A. § 4384(d) and 24 V.S.A. § 4444(a)] the Sheffield Planning Commission hereby gives notice of a public hearing to be held on *[June 21, 2016]* at *[7:00pm]* at the Town of Sheffield Town Office located at 37 Dane Road in Sheffield, VT 05866 to receive public comment regarding the proposed amendments to the Sheffield, Vermont Town Plan.

Pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 4444(b), the following information regarding the proposed amendments to the Sheffield Town Plan is provided:

(1) State law directs that Town Plans expire every five years. 24 V.S.A. § 4387(a). The Town of Sheffield's Town Plan was last approved in March, 2010 and is now expired. The purpose of the amendments to the Town of Sheffield Town Plan is to Update it consistent with the requirements of State law.

(2) The amendments affect the entire geography of the Town of Sheffield.

(3) The table of contents of the Town of Sheffield Town Plan include the following:

- A. Introduction
- B. History
- C. Economic Development
- D. Education Facilities
- E. Energy
- F. Facilities and Utilities
- G. Flood Resilience
- H. Housing
- I. Land Use
- J. Transportation
- K. Development Plan
- L. Municipal Direction For Future Growth
- M. Development Trends And Town Plans For Adjacent Municipalities, Area Towns And The Region
- N. Special Notes and Recognition

(4) The full text of the proposed amendments to the Town of Sheffield Town Plan may be examined at Town of Sheffield Town Office located at 37 Dane Road in Sheffield, VT 05866.

If you have any questions, please contact [ *Rod Dwyer* ] at [ *roddwyer664@yahoo.com* ].

This public hearing notice was approved by the Sheffield Planning Commission on [ *April 20, 2016* ].

## Planning Commission Reporting Form for Municipal Plan Amendments

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

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

*If the proposal would alter the designation of any land area, the report should cover the following points:*

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

The amended and updated town plan generally reflects current data and complies with the Flood Resilience requirements. (see page 17 of draft). That went into effect on July 1st, 2014. Also, an economic development element as added, as this became a requirement since the last town plan was written.

We believe this is consistent with the regional goals established by 24VSA §4302 and will not negatively impact the surrounding towns. The plan should be considered an update and expansion on discussion of how the plan goals relate to statewide planning goals. It does not contain any change in designation of any land area. While the flood resilience element does weigh the issues concerning joining the National Flood Insurance Program, a final decision has not been made by the citizens of Sheffield at this time. Therefore, this plan is intended to guide public discourse regarding potential flood resilience measures.

- 2. The long-term cost or benefit to the municipality, based upon consideration of the probable impact on:*

*(A) the municipal tax base; and*

Not applicable

*(B) the need for public facilities;*

Not applicable.

- 3. The amount of vacant land which is:*

*(A) already subject to the proposed new designation; and*

Not applicable.

*(B) actually available for that purpose, and the need for additional land for that purpose.*

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

**Please Note:**

- ❖ The planning commission must hold at least one public hearing within the municipality after public notice on any proposed plan or amendment.
- ❖ At least 30 days prior to the first hearing, a copy of the proposed plan or amendment and the written report must be delivered with proof of the receipt, or mailed by certified mail, return receipt requested, to each of the following:
  1. the chairperson of the planning commission of each abutting municipality, or in the absence of any planning commission in an abutting municipality, to the clerk of that municipality;
  2. the executive director of the regional planning commission of the area in which the municipality is located;
  3. the Department of Economics, Housing and Community Development within the Agency of Commerce and Community Development; and
  4. business, conservation, low income advocacy and other community or interest groups or organizations that have requested notice in writing prior to the date the hearing is warned.
- ❖ The planning commission may make revisions to the proposed plan or amendment and to any written report, and must thereafter submit the proposed plan or amendment and any written report to the legislative body of the municipality.
- ❖ If the legislative body changes any part of the proposed plan, the planning commission must submit to the legislative body, at or prior to the public hearing, a report that

analyzes the extent to which the changed proposal, when taken together with the rest of the plan, is consistent with the legislative goals established in 24 V.S.A. §4302.

- ❖ Simultaneously with the submission, the planning commission must file with the clerk of the municipality a copy of the proposed plan or amendment, and any written report, for public review.

DRAFT 2

TOWN PLAN  
SHEFFIELD, VERMONT



**The wind farm is built along a Vermont ridgeline.**  
*Photo courtesy of First Wind*

Adopted \_\_\_\_\_



INTRODUCTION .....	4
HISTORY .....	5
Historic Buildings and Sites.....	5
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.....	8
Regional Perspective.....	8
Earth Extraction .....	9
EDUCATION FACILITIES.....	11
ENERGY .....	12
FACILITIES AND UTILITIES.....	14
Facilities .....	14
Services and Utilities .....	14
FLOOD RESILIENCE .....	17
Existing Conditions.....	17
Floodplains.....	18
Flood Hazard Regulations.....	19
River Corridors .....	19
Uplands and Wetlands .....	20
Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund .....	20
Local Emergency Operations Plan.....	21
Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.....	21
HOUSING.....	24
Statistics (as of 2010).....	24
LAND USE.....	26
TRANSPORTATION.....	28
DEVELOPMENT PLAN.....	30
MUNICIPAL DIRECTION FOR FUTURE GROWTH.....	31
DEVELOPMENT TRENDS AND TOWN PLANS FOR ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES, AREA TOWNS AND THE REGION.....	32
Adjacent Towns .....	32
SPECIAL NOTES AND RECOGNITION .....	35
Diligent Dames Homemakers.....	35
Gift of Clair A. and Frances M. Holbrook.....	35
Keniston and Dane Educational Fund.....	35
Jacob McNeal Testamentary Trust .....	36
Pfalzerwald Tree Farm.....	36
Sheffield Cemetery Association .....	37
Sheffield Field Day Committee .....	37
Sheffield Food Pantry .....	37

Sheffield Historical Society .....	38
Sheffield Town Hall Committee.....	38
Vermont Wind, LLC, Its Successors or assigns .....	38
Veterans' Memorial.....	39

## INTRODUCTION

The 2016 Sheffield Town Plan (the Plan) is a general guide for growth. The Plan describes current conditions, identifies needs and goals for the future of Sheffield (sometimes referred to as the "Town") with suggestions and strategies to guide actions. The Plan provides a basis for dialogue and action with adjoining towns, addressing common objectives and goals relating to economic development, education, growth, housing, natural resources and transportation, all critical to the health of our community and region.

The Sheffield Planning Commission has drafted the Plan for approval by residents of the Town. The Commission is made up of nine members elected by voters at Town meetings. The final draft of this Plan was prepared in 2014 and at that time the commissioners were Keith Ballek, Vice-Chair, Garrett Baxter, Chair, Patricia DeGreenia, Linwood Gee, Edward Jewell, Dennis Newland, Wendy Scofield, Sally Wood-Simons, Clerk, and Richard Ziobron.

This Plan is a revision of the Town Plan dated March 2010 and is based on the 2010 Town Plan and contains current information.

The Plan is a foundation upon which residents, landowners and lessees can build and it represents a viewpoint on development for use by the Vermont Environmental Board in Act 250 hearings. Public discussions were held on the Plan and residents, landowners and lessees were encouraged to participate at these hearings.

In accordance with Vermont statutes, Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA) is required to review and confirm the planning efforts of the towns in the Northeast Kingdom. This process is currently conducted at least once a year to ensure that towns are eligible for the State's municipal planning grants. The requirements for confirmation are found in Vermont statutes.

The Plan is not a regulatory document, although it is used to guide decisions made by the Vermont Environmental Board (Act 250) and Vermont Public Service Board (Section 248) processes. The Plan is intended to be a comprehensive long-range guide for growth and development. It is expected that the Plan is compatible with the plans of adjacent communities and those of the regional planning association.

## HISTORY

Sheffield, a hill town located in northern Caledonia County, is one of three counties often referred to as Vermont's "Northeast Kingdom". The Town was chartered in 1793. With the arrival of the first settlers at that time, farming and logging provided the economic basis for the town's population during the first 150 years of its existence.

Jessie Gilbert, Vermont Surveyor, first laid out the town in the 1780s and it contained 24,000 acres, more or less. In 1792, the Vermont legislature altered the boundaries of the Town by transferring 960 acres, more or less, of land to the Town of Wheelock. In 1858, the Town's boundaries were altered again when 3,000 acres, more or less, of land were transferred to Barton. Then, in the 1960s, additional acreage was taken in order to construct a portion of the national interstate highway system, Interstate Highway 91. As a result of these transfers, Sheffield is now smaller in area than originally laid out—approximately 20,900 acres, more or less, of land.

The U.S. Census of 1800 shows a population of 171 people in Sheffield divided among 29 households. Following that modest figure, the population grew throughout most of the nineteenth century. The U.S. Census of 1880 shows a population of 884 people among 205 households—the largest population to date. Thereafter, the population dropped steadily until 1967 when there were only 293 residents. Since that time, there has been a slow but consistent increase in population. The U.S. Census of 2000 shows a population of 726 people. The U.S. Census of 2010 reports a total population of 703 people in 283 households.

The reasons for shifts in population are varied and include changes in household size, employment opportunities and increased mobility due to the automobile. The U.S. Census of 1880 reports 193 males resided in Sheffield whose occupation was operating or working on local farms. In 2010, statistics show 317 persons in the labor force with only 282 people employed—only five of those employed were working in agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and/or mining.

Reference is made to "History of the Town of Sheffield" by Perry Townsend Barber, written in 1936 for more complete information about the history of Sheffield. Sheffield Historical Society presented the reproduction of the history on March 1, 2008. Reference is also made to a publication prepared for Sheffield's bicentennial entitled "Hopes and Dreams and Evergreens". This publication is available at the Town clerk's office.

### Historic Buildings and Sites

The Freewill Baptist Church is located on Berry Hill Road. The church

was built in 1829 by members of the Society and by donation from Sheffield residents. It is still used for church functions including annual Old Home Day held in August. The church is open for tours conducted by members of the Sheffield Historical Society during the summer months.

In December of 1846, Sheffield residents voted to build a Town House for town purposes. Land next to the Freewill Baptist Church was donated. Construction was completed in 1847. Town meetings took place there until 1903 when the Town Hall was built in the village. H. E. Walling's map of 1858 shows the locations of both the church and Town House. A copy of that map is located in the Sheffield town clerk's office. According to Town records, the Town House was used over the years as temporary family housing as well as for meetings of the Grange and the 4-H club. Sheffield Historical Society completed renovation of the building in 2007 and leases the building from the Town for use as a museum—the 1847 Town House Museum—that is open during the summer months.

The original Sheffield Town Hall located in the village, built in 1903 burned down in 1942. It was built on land donated by the Methodist Episcopal Society. It was an impressive building, being three-stories tall with ornate detailing. More than a decade after the fire, architectural plans were drawn up and funds secured for the construction of a new Town Hall that stands on the site today. It was completed in the fall of 1954 and first used for the annual town meeting of 1955.

There are seven cemeteries in Sheffield. Only one, the William Dexter Cemetery is open for burials. The oldest cemetery is Mosher Cemetery. The others are Baptist Hill Cemetery, Heights or Cass Cemetery, Ingalls Cemetery, Union House Cemetery and Wheeler or Berry Cemetery. The Sheffield Cemetery Association maintains the cemeteries. Reference is hereby made to compilations of records pertaining to those buried in Sheffield cemeteries. Such compilations were accomplished by the painstaking and dedicated efforts of a few Sheffield volunteers and are available at the Town clerk's office.

#### Goals:

- Maintain the Town Hall as an attractive, safe gathering place for meetings and social functions.
- To continue to restore and preserve the 1847 Town House Museum.
- Improve and maintain Town cemeteries to keep them neat and attractive.

#### Implementation:

- Support the Town Hall Committee and the Field Day Committee as those committees seek funding and resources for improvements to

and maintenance of the Town Hall, Sheffield-Wheelock Volunteer Fire Department and Town functions.

- Support the Sheffield Historical Society as it continues its work on the 1847 Town House Museum.
- Support the Sheffield Cemetery Association as it continues to improve and maintain Sheffield's cemeteries.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Sheffield is mainly a bedroom community. There are some small businesses and cottage industry scattered about the town. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, using W-2 forms, the majority of primary jobs (234) held by Sheffield residents are in other towns. The top five work destinations are:

St. Johnsbury (52)

Lyndon (25)

Newport City (14)

Barton (11)

Hardwick (9)

There are a few farms as well as some forest-based agriculture.

An industrial wind power project is located in the higher elevations of Sheffield's northeastern section near the boundaries between Sheffield, Sutton and Barton.

Development of light industry similar to our neighboring towns is the desired type of economic development.

### **Regional Perspective**

The region has seen significant growth in agricultural related enterprises in recent years. An NVDA-commission study identified about 750 jobs created in the agriculture and integrated agriculture sector, with average wages of about \$33,000. The Northeast Kingdom also has a Food System Plan, and it is currently being updated. Continued growth in this sector will rely heavily on the continued availability of working lands.

The Working Lands Enterprise Initiative, Act 142 is administered by the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets in partnership with the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation and the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development. The Vermont Working Lands Enterprise Board is an impact investment organization whose mission is to grow the economies, cultures, and communities of Vermont's working landscape by making essential, catalytic investments in critical leverage points of the Vermont farm and forest economy, from individual enterprises to industry sectors. Now in its third year of grant making, the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative has invested over \$3 million into Vermont's working landscape, leveraging close to \$4 million in matching funds. Its funding was in question during last year's legislative session.

An industrial wind power project is located in the higher elevations of Sheffield's northeastern section near the boundaries between Sheffield, Sutton and Barton.

Development of light industry similar to our neighboring towns is the desired type of economic development. Life in the Northeast Kingdom has long been marked by chronic underemployment and lagging personal incomes. In the fall of 2012, an infusion of funds from the federal EB-5 Visa program proposed to bring a reversal of fortune to the Kingdom. Planned EB-5-funded projects include:

- AnC BIO Vermont: A 40 acre research campus in Newport City that has now received Act 250 approval.
- Expansion to the Newport State Airport in Coventry. Associated with the airport expansion are plans to construct warehousing facilities, as well as a 50,000 square-foot airplane assembly plant at the airport, which is expected to bring a number of skilled jobs to the region.
- Resort development in Jay and in Burke. A 116-unit hotel and conference center is planned for Burke Mountain, which will draw increased numbers of tourists. Similarly in Jay, new ski amenities, as well as a 100 new housing units and an 84-unit hotel, will draw more visitors to the region.
- Other developments in the Kingdom include the designation of Foreign Trade Zone #286, which allows US- based companies to defer, reduce or eliminate customs duties on products admitted to the zone.

These developments will invariably bring more people to the region. AnC BIO alone is expected to hire about 500 people, of which 150 will earn salaries of \$75,000 and up. A workforce development study released in July 2013 attributed about 1,100 new hospitality and tourism jobs related to the resort development. Many of the jobs would require minimal post-secondary education. Early estimates for total direct, indirect, and induced job creation indicated about 2,000 direct jobs, 3,000 total jobs (which includes indirect and induced jobs), and a net migration to the region as high as 4,500. Where newcomers might choose to live remains unclear, but the region will see an increased demand for housing at all income levels, more visitors, and increased spending power.

### **Earth Extraction**

Earth resources such as sand and gravel are commonly utilized by local and state road departments, railroads, and commercial paving operations and constitute some of the most intensive commercial uses with potential impacts to neighboring properties. Other mineral resources like granite, talc, and soapstone have been important for communities in the past, and along with other mineral resources may become useful again. From

a regional perspective, it is good to have mineral resources available locally as transportation costs are reduced and the extraction process may create local employment. For local planning efforts, NVDA encourages towns to identify important mineral resource deposits and develop policies that would minimize potential conflicts between land uses, should the extraction of sand, gravel, or other mineral resources become feasible. A site reclamation or rehabilitation plan shall be developed for any earth extraction activity that requires an Act 250 permit or meets the definition of “substantial regional impact” as defined in the Northeast Kingdom’s regional plan.

As mineral resource extractions and their transport have the potential to be damaging to the environment and public infrastructure if carried out improperly, NVDA recommends that mitigation policies consider negative impacts such as:

- Excessive dust and noise which may result in unreasonable nuisance to neighboring properties and create air quality issues,
- Improper site management which may lead to excessive soil erosion, soil compaction, water quality impacts, or inadequate site restoration,
- Site degradation which may result in aesthetically displeasing conditions in the immediate vicinity of the project and/or the community, and
- Deterioration of town and state highways or other public infrastructure due to frequent truck traffic.

## Goals

- Encourage businesses that protect the working landscape.
- Assist start-up businesses.

## Implementation

- Obtain information about working-lands legislation that provides assistance in promoting businesses that protect the working landscape.
- Explore other programs and organizations that encourage local businesses and assist financial start-ups.

## EDUCATION FACILITIES

The towns of Sheffield and Wheelock established Unified School District No. 37 in 1971 to educate students and this relationship continues. Each town has three members on the school board that meets monthly. Under Vermont law, multiple town school districts are entities unto themselves and their place in a town plan is somewhat ambiguous. The school budget is presented to voters from Sheffield and Wheelock at the annual school meeting.

Miller's Run School, educating pre-kindergarten through grade eight students, is located in Sheffield. The building was initially built in 1975; however, an increase in population required a major renovation that was completed in 2000. The new gymnasium/auditorium has been designated a community center to be used for various kinds of community events and activities such as basketball, scouting activities, homework hall, concerts and school and town meetings.

The instructional environment is set up in a typical pre-kindergarten through eighth grade configuration. The number of students in each grade for the school year 2013- 2014 ranged from seven students to 17. Enrollment numbers for Miller's Run School have dropped. The average enrollment for years 2004 to 2008 was 158 students/year and for years 2009 through 2013, the average number was 138 students/year.

Lyndon Institute, located in Lyndon, Vermont, has long been the Town's designated high school. For the years 2010 through 2013, the average number of students from Sheffield in high school programs was 50 students/year. The school budget for fiscal year ending 2015 was approved at \$3,734,561. The school budget and tax rate continue to increase despite a decreasing number of students attending schools.

### Goals:

- Encourage the school board to concentrate on financial prudence.
- Encourage the school board to work with the State of Vermont to fund its mandates through broad-based tax structures, not predominantly on property taxes.

### Implementation:

- Encourage more local participation at school board meetings and school-sponsored events.
- Encourage the school board to explore energy conservation strategies.
- Encourage the school board to open a dialogue with State representatives to express concerns over the property-tax burden.

## ENERGY

The energy needs of the Town of Sheffield are currently being met by a variety of providers. The primary electric suppliers are Vermont Electric Cooperative and Village of Lyndonville Electric Department. Providers from Lyndonville, St. Johnsbury and other local areas supply fuel oil and propane for heating.

Some residents supplement their energy needs with alternative energy, such as solar collectors, wood burning stoves or furnaces and individual generators. Gasoline and kerosene are available in the towns of Glover, Lyndonville, St. Johnsbury, West Burke and Wheelock. Energy conservation is essential to ensure a reasonable standard of living as the cost of petroleum-based fuels and energy products are seemingly ever rising.

At a special Town Meeting in December 2005, Sheffield voters supported an agreement between the Town of Sheffield and Vermont Wind, LLC. In 2006, the select board signed a contract with Vermont Wind, LLC for the construction of 16 420-foot wind turbines near existing transmission lines close to the borders between Sheffield, Barton and Sutton. The Vermont Public Service Board issued a Certificate of Public Good in 2007. The industrial wind-turbine blades became active on October 20, 2011.

A 20-year contract providing a benefit of \$520,000 per year for all Sheffield taxpayers became reality in 2011. The wind turbines are currently in service.

Energy audits have been conducted at the municipal building and Town Hall. The municipal building was found to be in adequate condition. The Town Hall needed energy improvements, some of which have now been made.

### Goals:

- Monitor energy usage for public buildings on a regular basis for the purpose of improving energy efficiency.
- Set thermostats in public buildings within the range recommended by the appropriate authorities.
- Complete the remaining energy improvements needed for the Town Hall.

### Implementation:

- Recommend to the select board that periodic audits for energy efficiency be conducted.
- Inform citizens about energy issues and make information about Federal and State conservation and efficiency programs available at the Town clerk's office.

- Encourage homeowners and landowners to explore alternative energy sources, such as biomass, small-scale hydro, solar and wind.
- Continue to promote energy conservation.

## **FACILITIES AND UTILITIES**

### **Facilities**

Maps are available at the Town clerk's office and show the location of town facilities, historic buildings and sites. These locations are further described in other sections of this Plan.

Town facilities include: 1) the municipal building, which houses the Town offices, Town highway equipment and a portion of equipment belonging to the Sheffield-Wheelock Volunteer Fire Department; 2) the Town House; 3) the Town Hall; and 4) Wheelock-Sheffield Transfer Station, a jointly owned facility that provides a centralized location for residents of Sheffield and Wheelock to dispose of compost, construction/demolition materials, metals, recyclables and trash.

Other facilities located in Sheffield include: 1) Miller's Run School, which is owned jointly by the towns of Sheffield and Wheelock and is the designated emergency relocation site; 2) The United States Post Office, which serves residents of Sheffield and area towns; 3) Vermont Wind, LLC, an electrical wind-power generating facility, which feeds the grid that supplies electricity for Vermont and other New England states.

### **Services and Utilities**

The Town provides services for environmental emergencies, fires, medical emergencies, trash disposal and village streetlights. Other providers supply to the citizens of Sheffield electric power, public transportation, water supply for a portion of the village, telephone and television. The citizens of Sheffield also benefit from services provided by area and State agencies.

The Emergency Management Coordinator (E-911) directs management of environmental emergencies. The manual for such management is located in the Town clerk's office.

Sheffield-Wheelock Volunteer Fire Department, organized in 1950, responds to fires and medical emergencies within the town. The Department has a certified technical rescue team for water, ice, low and high angle. The team is the primary rescue team for Vermont Wind, LLC. A junior firefighter program includes outreach to Lyndon Institute. The Department adopted the National Incident Command System and has updated all radios and equipment to the Federal Communication Commission's narrow-band requirements. The Department participates in mutual aid with area fire departments at no charge.

Lyndon Rescue, Inc. provides primary ambulance and medical services for medical emergencies. Lyndon Rescue is supported financially by the Town as well as by the citizens it serves. Barton Ambulance Service,

Calex ambulance service (from St. Johnsbury) or Glover Ambulance Service provide mutual aid services.

Residents of Sheffield and Wheelock take trash, including compost materials, construction/demolition materials, metals and recyclables, to the Wheelock-Sheffield Transfer Station for disposal. The transfer station is located at Vermont Route 122 in Wheelock. Any material not accepted by the transfer station is taken to the Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District. All trash is disposed of under the authority of the District. The town is a charter member of the District and is represented by one supervisor.

The Town provides streetlights for the village of Sheffield.

Other entities that provide services to the town include the following utilities:

Electricity: Vermont Electric Cooperative and Village of Lyndonville Electric Department.

Internet and television: Charter Communications provides cable television service to a portion of the town. Several satellite communication companies provide private Internet and television services.

Public transportation: Rural Community Transportation, Inc. provides bus/van service. Several privately owned taxi services located in area towns are available for ground transportation. There is a county airport located in Lyndon if air transportation is needed. Railroad service is not provided in this region at the present time.

Telephone: FairPoint Communications and Verizon.

Water and sewer: There are no municipal water or sewage facilities in town. However, Sheffield Fire District #1 serves a portion of Sheffield village with water. The water is tested periodically and currently meets State requirements for safe drinking water.

Goals:

- Continue to improve the Wheelock-Sheffield Transfer Station facility.
- Continue to improve and maintain the municipal building as a multi-use facility.
- Reduce trash going to the landfill and communicate to residents ways to recycle, reduce or reuse disposed of materials.
- In conjunction with the Town of Wheelock, obtain and install, a suitable generator for emergency management at Miller's Run School.
- Encourage members of the community to join the Sheffield-

Wheelock Volunteer Fire Department.

Implementation:

- Provide information to all residents concerning reduction of the materials going to the landfill.
- Improve and maintain designated emergency management facilities, including Miller's Run School, in conjunction with the Town of Wheelock.

## **FLOOD RESILIENCE**

As of July 1, 2014, all duly adopted municipal plans must contain a flood resilience plan that identifies flood and fluvial erosion hazard areas and designates those areas to be protected, including floodplains, river corridors, land adjacent to streams, wetlands, and upland forests to reduce the risk of flood damage to infrastructure and property; and recommends policies and strategies to protect the areas.

### **Existing Conditions**

Sheffield has a history of flooding and has received public assistance from FEMA from eight federal FEMA declarations between 1989 through the present. The flooding that affected much of northern Vermont in 2002 created significant road damage in Sheffield. The flood maps show areas that are prone to overrun the river banks. Sheffield has diligently replaced undersized culverts with larger culverts in the past several years and has recently adopted the Highway Codes and Standards that require upgrades for culverts and bridges when performing regular highway maintenance. Sheffield has taken advantage of the available bridge and culvert initiatives through the Vermont Local Roads Program.

### **Past FEMA Declarations and Federal Funding Received**

<b><u>Declaration</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Incident</u></b>	<b><u>FEMA Funds Received</u></b>
<u>875</u>	<u>June 1990</u>	<u>Flooding</u>	<u>\$23,201</u>
<u>1184</u>	<u>July 1997</u>	<u>Flooding</u>	<u>\$53,919</u>
<u>1428</u>	<u>July 2002</u>	<u>Severe storms (4 projects for repair)</u>	<u>\$27,132</u>
<u>1715</u>	<u>August 2007</u>	<u>Severe Storms (1 project)</u>	<u>\$24,109</u>
<u>1790</u>	<u>September 2008</u>	<u>Severe Storms (1 project)</u>	<u>\$13,921</u>
<u>4022</u>	<u>September 2011</u>	<u>T.S. Irene (19 projects)</u>	<u>\$184,761</u>
<u>4120</u>	<u>August 2013</u>	<u>Flood (1 project)</u>	<u>\$5,048</u>
<u>4163</u>	<u>January, 2014</u>	<u>Severe Ice (1 project)</u>	<u>\$18,378</u>

Total			\$350,469.00
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Flooding does pose a threat to some buildings and roads. Because of some low areas, when heavy rains and thaws raise concern, the flood prone areas are monitored and the Emergency Management Coordinator will contact the Selectboard and Road Foreman if needed. A few rivers have been banked with large rocks to reduce the chance of erosion. Rivers and streams are watched for ice jams and, if needed, a contractor will be brought in to break the ice. These operations will continue along with new strategies as needed.

Dirt road washouts are common in the entire area. Culvert washouts are much less since some new culverts have been installed. The road crew will continue to keep the culverts cleaned. Because of the many remote areas, road washouts have caused citizens to become stranded. Deeper ditching and better gravel has helped but because of the steep roads and many streams, it continues to be a problem. Erosion with flash flooding is common.

Road access permits will continue to be reviewed to assure proper size culverts are being installed.

### **Floodplains**

Floodplains are low-lying areas adjacent to a river channel that become inundated as floodwaters rise up and spill out over a river bank. They provide an important ecological function by storing and conveying floodwaters, reducing downstream flood velocities, and mitigating riverbank erosion. Floodplains also help to protect water quality by filtering nutrients and impurities from runoff, processing organic wastes, and moderating temperature fluctuations.<sup>1</sup>

Sheffield's floodplains are depicted on a FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) with an effective date of 1985. This map depicts the Special Flood Hazard areas along the Miller's Run, which are floodplains that would likely become inundated during a significant flood known as a "base flood." The base flood is often referred to as the "100-year flood." Sheffield's FIRM is not accompanied by any insurance studies or base flood elevations, which would indicate how high the water would rise in a 100-year flood event.

It is difficult to estimate the total number of structures in the 100-year limit of the FIRM identified floodplain as those maps do not accurately match up to the E911 maps that are based on the structures' geographical location (latitude and longitude). However about 10 structures may be in or near the flood areas depicted on the FEMA FIRM.

## **Flood Hazard Regulations**

The FEMA FIRM is used to administer flood hazard regulations, which are required in order for the town to join the National Flood Insurance Program. The primary benefit of joining the National Flood Insurance Program would be to enable Sheffield property owners to obtain flood insurance at more affordable rates. Federally-backed lending institutions require flood insurance on any mortgage in the Special Flood Hazard Area, regardless of whether the Town participates in the National Flood Insurance Program. This could therefore be very helpful to property owners who are attempting to refinance or sell properties in the flood hazard area. If the town does not join the National Flood Insurance Program, property owners in the areas depicted on the FEMA FIRM will have to either purchase more expensive flood insurance on the private market (like through Lloyd's) or effectively demonstrate that their property is not in the 100-year floodplain by obtaining a Letter of Map Amendment. If the town does join the National Flood Insurance Program, property owners outside of the Special Flood Hazard Area also would be able to purchase flood insurance, and at preferred risk rates.

The Town of Sheffield has been weighing the merits of joining the National Flood Insurance Program for some time now. In order to participate in the program, the Town would have to adopt regulations that meet FEMA's minimum standards (found in CFR44), and the development standards would have to be enforced in the Special Flood Hazard Areas shown on the FEMA FIRM. The minimally compliant regulations would not prohibit development in Special Flood Hazard Area, but new development would have to meet certain standards, such as elevation and flood proofing. If an existing residential structure currently in the Special Flood Hazard Area were more than 50% damaged from any cause, the structure would have to be brought into compliance by elevating it to the base flood elevation, prohibiting an enclosed below-grade basement, and allowing for flood waters to flow through basement openings to reduce hydrostatic pressure. Existing non-residential structures more than 50% damaged would need to be flood-proofed to at least the base flood elevation.

## **River Corridors**

About two-thirds of Vermont's flood-related losses occur outside of mapped floodplains, and this reveals the fundamental limitations of the FEMA FIRMs: A mapped floodplain makes the dangerous assumption that the river channel is static, that the river bends will never shift up or down valley, that the river channel will never move laterally, or that river beds will never scour down or build up.

In reality, river channels are constantly undergoing some physical

adjustment process. This might be gradual, resulting in gradual stream bank erosion or sediment deposit – or it might be sudden and dramatic, resulting a stream bank collapse.

Land near stream banks are particularly vulnerable to erosion damage by flash flooding, bank collapse, and stream channel dynamics. The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, Agency of Natural Resources, has identified river corridors, which consist of the minimum area adjacent to a river that is required to accommodate the dimensions, slope, planform, and buffer of the naturally stable channel and that is necessary for the natural maintenance or natural restoration of a dynamic equilibrium condition. In other words, the river corridor provides “wobble room” for a stream as its channel changes over time. Keeping development out of the river corridors therefore reduces vulnerability to erosion. The statewide river corridors maps were released in late 2014. They delineate river corridors for streams with a drainage area of two square miles or greater. In Sheffield these areas would consist mainly of Miller’s Run, the Passumpsic, and Square Brook. Streams with a smaller drainage area are depicted with a 50 buffer.

### **Uplands and Wetlands**

Proper management of upland areas also plays an important role in flood hazard management. Limiting clearing of upland slopes will help to attenuate flood flows and reduce storm water runoff. Forest cover, particularly in areas with steep slopes and high elevations (where headwaters are located) should be protected. Conservation easements and enrollment in the Current Use Program may be an effective way to protect existing forested cover.

Wetlands also have the capacity to retain significant amounts of water. The State of Vermont regulates activities in and adjacent to wetlands. These rules apply to the wetlands and associated buffer zones within 100 feet of Class I wetlands, and 50 feet of Class II wetlands. Any activity in a Class I or II wetland requires a state permit.

### **Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund**

When a community requires public assistance, FEMA funds generally cover 75% of the loss. To date, the State’s Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF) has provided half of the matching funds (about 12.5%), and the town has assumed the remainder of the cost. In October 2014, however, new legislation tied the level of ERAF funding to specific local initiatives to reduce flood-related risks and prepare for emergencies.

For federally declared disasters ERAF will contribute half of the required match only if the town has taken all the following steps to reduce flood damage. Otherwise, the level of State funding will be reduced to 30% of

the remaining match, which will usually be about 7.5% of the total cost:

1. Adopt the most current Town Road and Bridge Standards (which can be found in the *VTrans Orange Book: Handbook for Local Officials*).
2. Adopt flood regulations that meet the minimum standards for enrollment in the National Flood Insurance Program
3. Maintain a Local Emergency Operations Plan (adopt annually after town meeting and submit before May 1)
4. Adopt a FEMA-approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Considering that Sheffield has received more than \$350,000 from FEMA through its public assistance program, the cost implications for the next federally declared disaster could be significant.

Under ERAF, the Town may receive an increased state match for federally declared losses, if the town adopts flood regulations that are more aggressive than the minimum standards of the National Flood Insurance Program. These above-and-beyond standards include prohibiting most forms of new development in the river corridor, prohibiting most forms of new development in the Special Flood Hazard Area, and requiring structures that are more than 50% damaged to be elevated to at least one foot above the base flood elevation.

### **Local Emergency Operations Plan**

The Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP) establishes lines of responsibilities in the critical hours immediately following a disaster. This information is particularly important in coordinating responses through mutual aid towns, and regional and state entities. The LEOP is updated and adopted annually after Town Meeting Day.

### **Local Hazard Mitigation Plan**

A local hazard mitigation plan prioritizes hazard issues and details next steps for addressing them. It is required by FEMA in order to receive grant funding to reduce or eliminate hazards such as moving or elevating structures or acquiring repetitive loss structures. A local hazard mitigation plan was developed for Sheffield as an annex to the regional plan for the Northeast Kingdom, but it was never adopted. Since that time, the FEMA approval process has become more rigorous. The town will now need to develop a single-jurisdiction plan. NVDA has received funds from FEMA that will provide the Town with the assistance it needs to develop a plan.

Identify flood hazard and fluvial erosion hazard areas based on river corridor maps provided by Vermont Department of Natural Resources

~~when they are available. In addition, designate those areas to be protected, including floodplains, river corridors and land adjacent to streams, wetlands and upland forests, to reduce the risk of flood damage to infrastructure and improved property.~~

~~Recommend policies and strategies to protect flood hazard and fluvial erosion hazard areas and mitigate risks to public safety, critical infrastructure, historic structures and municipal investments.~~

Goals:

- Resolve flood plain issues within the Town.
- Ensure the Town and its facilities are prepared to meet the demands of the next flood.
- Explore ways to maximize outside assistance in the event of the next federally declared disaster.

Implementation:

- Continue to explore the National Flood Insurance Program.
- Refer to corridor maps of Miller's Run, which outline past and potential future meandering-flow patterns.
- Review the State's river-corridor and consider the implications of protecting these areas mapped in order to mitigate risks to public safety, critical infrastructure, historic structures and municipal investments.
- Adopt Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) to identify important local hazard areas, long-term policies and actions to reduce disaster risks and future losses provide access to funding from the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance Program and the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF).
- Maintain and regularly update the Local Emergency Operations Plan.

Goals:

~~Review the State's river corridor mapping when it becomes available and adopt freestanding flood hazard area regulations that meet or exceed National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) standards to protect the areas mapped in order to mitigate risks to public safety, critical infrastructure, historic structures and municipal investments.~~

~~Adopt Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) to identify important local hazard areas, long-term policies and actions to reduce disaster risks and future losses provide access to funding from the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance Program and the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund~~

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Implementation:

~~Implement regulations to limit further development within floodplains and river corridors. New development should retain naturally vegetated riparian buffers along streams and rivers. Property owners should be encouraged to re-establish naturally vegetated buffers where they have been removed.~~

## HOUSING

What is affordable housing? According to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, "Affordable housing is appropriate housing that can be purchased by people for a reasonable percentage of their income." Generally, housing is considered affordable when monthly shelter costs do not exceed approximately one-third of a person's monthly income. In this section of the Sheffield Town Plan, information will be shared for the purpose of analyzing trends related to housing and identifying current or potential needs.

### Statistics (as of 2010)

<b>Population</b> of Sheffield:	703 persons
Population change since 2000:	-3.3%
Median Sheffield household income:	\$38,175
Median Vermont household income:	\$53,422
Median income of Sheffield homeowner:	\$44,875
Median income of Vermont homeowner:	\$64,771
Median income of Sheffield renter:	\$24,479
Median income of Vermont renter:	\$30,943
Median value of house in Sheffield:	\$135,900
Median value of house in Vermont:	\$213,000
Occupied housing units in Sheffield:	220 units
Vacant housing units:	157 units
Total housing units:	377 units
Types of housing (377 units)	
Single unit, detached	282 units
Single unit, attached	3 units
Duplex units	10 units
Three- and four-units:	9 units
Mobile homes:	73 units

Federal and State housing authorities state that housing is deemed affordable when the total cost of housing accounts for no more than 30% of household income. The housing expenses of 34.4% of Sheffield homeowners with a mortgage are in excess of that 30% affordability limit while Vermont is 33.1%. 16.9% of Sheffield homeowners with a mortgage are paying in excess of 50% of their income for housing expenses while Vermont is 12.1%.

References: Vermont Housing Data, maintained by Vermont Housing

Finance Authority and Vermont Center for Rural Studies; and Consensus Bureau, Census 2010

Sheffield is a community in which most of the dwellings are single-family units. Home ownership costs are a concern. According to Vermont Housing Data, approximately 65.6% of housing is considered affordable, given monthly costs to income. Traditional forms of affordable housing in Sheffield are likely to be mobile homes, followed by multi-unit dwellings, and accessory dwelling units (formerly known as “mother-in-law suites.”

There is no industry as a source of employment in Sheffield that drives the need for housing. The issue for Sheffield will be the cost of providing services for any additional growth in population or change in service needs.

Goals:

- Continue to support Sheffield as a peaceful town for those coming to Vermont to earn a living, raise a family, vacation or settle for retirement years.
- Support any future development that will not negatively affect the municipal tax rate nor result in a major increase in the need for services.
- Maintain the rural character of Sheffield.
- Emphasize, when possible, the rehabilitation of existing structures.

Implementation:

- Monitor the need for housing for low-income and elderly residents.
- Preserve designated historic buildings as an important part of Sheffield's heritage.
- Encourage housing that conserves energy, provides for efficient delivery of public services and minimizes negative impacts for agriculture, forestry, wildlife and the rural character of the land.

## LAND USE

Detailed maps indicating the Town's current land use are available in the Town clerk's office. The maps indicate areas of residential, agricultural, public use, wildlife, wetlands, byways and floodplains.

Of the 20,900 acres of land comprising Sheffield, 96 acres are bodies of water; namely, Duck Pond, Long Pond, Round Pond, Mud Pond, Blake Pond and Bruce Pond. Brooks include Trout Brook, Oregon Brook, Rapid Brook, Nation Brook, Square Brook, Piperville Brook Chamberlain Brook and Mosher Brook. These brooks are all tributaries of Miller's Run, which flows through Sheffield, Wheelock and Lyndon into the Passumpsic River in Lyndon.

Conserved lands, being State, public or private, total 538.22 acres, more or less, of land and include the Mathewson State Forest, Holbrook State Park, Pfälzerwald Tree Farm, Willard forest, a mill site at Miller's Run in the village of Sheffield and 2,700 acres, more or less, of land mitigated on the Meadowsend property for the life of the wind project, as per agreement with the Agency of Natural Resources for wildlife habitat and recreation.

Some small-scale commercial development is preferred along the larger roads in town. Class II and Vermont Route 122 are suitable for varied commercial development so long as adequate parking and road access are provided. The smaller Class III and Class IV roads are not as suitable for commercial development. These roads are best suited for residential or very small-scale enterprises that would generate only limited vehicular traffic.

Present land use categories echo trends that began after the Civil War. At that time, Vermont lost a significant population as the country expanded west. The losses were primarily agricultural families and manifested itself in the loss of hill farms where the soils are very thin and marginal. Sheffield is one such town with the only tillable soils fit for crops lie in the lower river plains, and upper elevations being fit mainly for pasture land and forests.

### Goals:

- Continue to encourage responsible stewardship of lands to maintain the quality of Miller's Run and its tributaries for the benefit of our citizens and communities downstream.
- Continue to advance protection of wildlife habitat as identified by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife and continue to work under State guidelines to preserve these natural areas.
- Continue to inform and educate residents, landowners and visitors about the importance of protecting and preserving our natural

beauty and resources by promoting recycling, roadside and stream-bank cleanup and taking protective measures to minimize stream-bank erosion.

#### Implementation:

- Support local agricultural and silvicultural endeavors.
- Encourage responsible recreational activities such as cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, snowmobiling, hiking, biking, horseback riding and all-terrain vehicle usage. Such activities are done with the cooperation of landowners, Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) and Vermont All Terrain Sports Association (VASA).
- Encourage landowners with tillable soil to explore the possibility of diversification by producing products for Vermont's growing specialty food and ecological-friendly fuels businesses, such as producing switch grass, Soya and organic foods and feeds.
- Encourage landowners at the higher elevations to practice sustainable forestry management and involve the use of foresters, like the county forester, in making decisions concerning stand development and rotations, invasive species control, cutting practices and species selection.

## TRANSPORTATION

Interstate Highway 91 connects Massachusetts and Canada along the eastern corridor of Vermont. The Interstate runs through Sheffield and provides access to Vermont Route 122 at Exit 24. Sheffield is approximately six miles northerly of Exit 24 on Vermont Route 122. This is the only State road through Sheffield. It connects Lyndon to Glover. Route 122 has 7.727 miles of paved road in Sheffield and is the only paved road in Town.

Sheffield maintains 28.43 miles of Class 11 (8.15 miles) and Class III (20.28 miles) roads. There are 14.00 miles of Class IV roads in Sheffield. The Town is under no obligation to maintain Class IV roads. Maps indicating all classes of roads in Town are located in the Town clerk's office.

The Sheffield select board has identified all rights-of-way, Class II, Class III and Class IV town highways (maintained or not) so that the State may include same in the 2015 edition of Vermont highway maps. Any town road not so identified by the Town will be automatically discontinued.

Bridges and culverts are currently inspected every two years with improvements and maintenance done accordingly. VTrans offers funding for these projects in the form of the "State Bridge and Culvert Program." Sheffield presently meets the criteria to receive the maximum funding amount of 90% of an approved project.

NVDA provides bridge and culvert inventory data to all towns on an approximately three-year schedule. This information may be used for upgrades and replacements and for budgeting. This inventory can also be used to plan for the future.

Improvements to and maintenance of Class III roads, with the exception of bridges and culverts is paid for with a combination of tax payer dollars and State Aid to Highways. All towns receive state aid based on an amount per mile set each year by VTrans.

Berry Hill Road and Sheffield Square Road are Class II town highways. The town receives state aid for class II highways at an increased amount per mile. There are other funding sources through the state to help offset cost to our local tax payers. Sources include the state's class II highway funding program and VT Better Roads grant program. These funds can be applied for on an annual basis.

Town ordinances are in effect for winter-parking bans and for all-terrain vehicles traveling on Town highways. The ordinances are available for review in Sheffield town offices.

RCT provides ground transportation (vans or busses) for the elderly, disabled and Medicaid patients free of charge and the general public for a

fee. RCT has been providing service to Sheffield for over 20 years. In fiscal 2013, RCT provided 16 Sheffield residents with 499 trips, traveling 16,355 miles.

There are no public railroads or airports in Sheffield. The Town does not have bicycle or pedestrian trails or bridle paths. There are no park-and-ride sites in Town. However, there is a small parking area adjoining Vermont Route 122 that serves the village of Sheffield.

Goals:

- Provide certain transportation services that are efficient, safe and adequate for the needs of townspeople.
- Improve and maintain Town highways for the convenience and safety of all.

Implementation:

- Enforce Town ordinances regarding use of motorized vehicles, snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles and other four-wheeled machines.
- Continue periodic inspections of bridges and culverts especially in the spring when thaw may cause unsafe and hazardous conditions to the roads.
- Continue to use Federal and State funding for highway improvements and maintenance and for new projects as they become necessary.

## **DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The program for implementation of the objectives of the development plan will continue.

### **Goals**

~~Resolve flood plain issues within the Town.~~

### **Implementation**

~~Continue to explore the National Flood Insurance Program.~~

~~Refer to corridor maps of Miller's Run, which outline past and potential future meandering flow patterns.~~

Use updated Bio maps and written information supplied to the Town by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife for reference concerning future development.

## **MUNICIPAL DIRECTION FOR FUTURE GROWTH**

The residents of Sheffield will continue to determine the objectives, policies and programs of Sheffield in guiding future growth relating to the use of public lands and services in Sheffield and protection of the environment within the confines of current and future State laws and regulations.

### Goals:

- Encourage growth of infrastructure to minimize burden on municipal services.
- Encourage limiting impacts on environmentally sensitive areas, such as wetlands and drinking water protection areas.

### Implementation:

- Continue to maintain and improve current infrastructure and future needs thereof.
- Continue to follow recommended guidelines set by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife concerning wetlands, high-elevation areas, bodies of water and wildlife habitat and corridors.
- Continue to assist residents in the village area in developing a plan concerning floods.

## **DEVELOPMENT TRENDS AND TOWN PLANS FOR ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES, AREA TOWNS AND THE REGION**

Sheffield, with a population of 703 people (2010 Census), abuts four towns—Barton, Glover, Sutton and Wheelock. Of the abutting towns, Barton is the largest. Other towns in the region include Burke, Lyndon, Newport and St. Johnsbury. The towns of St. Johnsbury and Lyndon, with their villages are the largest towns in the area.

The Town of Sheffield has reciprocal relationships with adjacent towns. Sheffield provides an elementary education facility, employment opportunities, housing and recreational opportunities. Adjacent towns provide education facilities, employment opportunities, housing medical services, professional services, recreational opportunities, shopping and solid-waste transfer facilities. Sheffield does not have police or ambulance services; however, towns in the area and region do provide these services for Sheffield. Adjacent, area and towns in the region provide mutual aid in cases of fire and emergency.

The issues of economic development, affordable education, employment opportunities and housing costs extend beyond Sheffield's borders as they are of concern to all towns in the region.

### **Adjacent Towns**

The Town of Barton abuts Sheffield in the higher, remote elevation areas to the northeast and along Interstate Highway 91. The Barton Town Plan indicates the section of Barton that abuts Sheffield is remote land. Barton, including the village of Orleans, has shops and professional services. People from Sheffield receive health care and other professional services, shop and recreate in Barton.

The Town of Glover abuts Sheffield to the northeast along Vermont Highway 122 and near Quarry Road in Sheffield near Vermont Route 16. People from Sheffield shop and recreate in Glover.

The Town of Sutton abuts Sheffield in the mountainous region to the east. Three gravel roads transect this area. Sutton, like Sheffield, is a bedroom town and has experienced limited development. Sutton provides mutual aid services with Sheffield.

The Town of Wheelock abuts Sheffield to the south. Vermont Route 122 as well as gravel roads connect the two towns. Low-density housing and Mathewson State Forest dominate the boundary between Sheffield and Wheelock. Development pressures on both towns in these areas are limited due to the remoteness of the area and lack of roads. People from Sheffield shop and recreate in the Town of Wheelock.

Sheffield and Wheelock share many municipal functions. Maintaining

open communications promotes awareness of any issues that may affect the people of both towns.

Sheffield shares elementary educational responsibilities with Wheelock through the Unified District #37 school board, which oversees Miller's Run School. Three school directors from each town make up the school board. Miller's Run School is located in Sheffield. The designated high school for Sheffield is located in Lyndon.

Sheffield and Wheelock share a volunteer fire department, the Sheffield-Wheelock Volunteer Fire Department. Each town provides equipment and a building. The Department is made up of volunteers from both towns who meet and train regularly.

The residents of Sheffield and Wheelock work together to provide for the disposal of solid waste. The Wheelock-Sheffield transfer station is located in Wheelock and serves both towns. The select boards at joint meetings manage operations at the transfer station. The Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District manages on a regional level the disposal of all waste, including recycling.

The select boards from both towns are Trustees of the Keniston and Dane Educational Fund. The Fund provides monetary distributions to eligible, resident students pursuing post-secondary education. The Fund also contributes to special projects at Miller's Run School.

Road maintenance in a few instances is traded between the two towns. For example, Sheffield maintains the Miller's Run School driveway and Wheelock maintains the driveway at the transfer station. This is a good example of mutual cooperation.

Sheffield is made up almost entirely of single-family dwellings and seasonal homes and hunting camps in the more remote areas. There are mobile homes in a variety of conditions scattered throughout the Town. The population has remained around 700 people for the past 15 years. It can be expected that this trend will continue for the next ten years if the current economic growth remains constant.

#### Goals:

- Maintain open communications with other towns in the area.
- Be aware of economic and other developments throughout the region so that Sheffield is ready to participate in regional growth.

#### Implementation:

- Provide assistance to those in Town as requested to improve energy conservation and maintain natural resources.
- Maintain the Town's beneficial attributes as Sheffield grows.

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- Continue to form agreements with adjacent and area towns to benefit the people of Sheffield.

## **SPECIAL NOTES AND RECOGNITION**

Certain individuals and programs in Sheffield are dedicated to improving the lives and/or livelihoods of Sheffield residents and their families.

### **Diligent Dames Homemakers**

The Diligent Dames Extension Homemakers was started in the 1920s to promote various home extension service activities, including cooking, sewing, gardening and crafts. When the University of Vermont Extension Service no longer included homemakers, the name of the organization was changed to Diligent Dames Homemakers.

The group meets in the afternoon once a month from September to June. The goals are to provide the school with several magazine subscriptions, provide Christmas "Thinking of You" boxes (which include a craft), help with food if a family needs it, provide Welcome baskets for new people in town, help with dinners in the Town Hall, donate to David's House near Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in Hanover, New Hampshire, donate towards a dishwasher for the Town Hall and fellowship for all the ladies at meetings, sometimes at a pot-luck lunch. The group is not exclusive, all ladies, young and old, are welcome.

### **Gift of Clair A. and Frances M. Holbrook**

Clair and Frances Holbrook conveyed land to the State of Vermont in 1991. The parcel is located north of Vermont Route 122 near the border between Sheffield and Glover. The property consists of 240 acres, more or less, of land and includes three ponds and a right-of-way into the property from Vermont Route 122. The deed provides that the public may enjoy the property for recreational purposes.

### **Keniston and Dane Educational Fund**

Harry A. Keniston and Marion K. Dane, brother and sister and educators, first established an educational trust fund on August 31, 1964. The purpose of the fund is (1) "to assist in the post-secondary education of [eligible] Wheelock and Sheffield..." students, and (2) to provide certain funds "to the graded school... of the Towns of Sheffield and Wheelock to be used for , special out-of-the-ordinary projects... connected with..." such school.

The select boards from Sheffield and Wheelock were appointed trustees and the town clerks from the two towns were appointed administrators of the Trust in 1991.

Each year eligible post-secondary students and students attending Miller's Run School receive monies from the Fund. In the fall of 1994, thirty post-secondary students benefited from the Fund. In the spring of

2014, 24 post-secondary students so benefited.

### **Jacob McNeal Testamentary Trust**

Jacob McNeal, a farmer from Burke, Vermont, made provision in his Last Will and Testament dated September 15, 1885 for the care of the burial lots of his parents and sister, who resided in Sheffield. In connection with that provision, any funds remaining from the bequest were to be used "in assisting to make more comfortable such persons residing in the said Town of Sheffield who are most needy & deserving of such assistance, who do not receive aid from the said Town of Sheffield.

On August 6, 1999, the Sheffield select board was appointed Trustee of the "Trust for Burial Lot and Poor Fund", so-called, by the Probate Court, District of Caledonia County.

In recent years, the Trust has assisted charities that provide eligible families from Sheffield with clothing and holiday food baskets.

### **Pfälzerwald Tree Farm**

The Roberta and James Robertson Memorial Forest, also known as the Pfälzerwald Tree Farm, is located at Berry Hill Road and is a gift from Alan Robertson to the residents of Sheffield and the general public. The land is held in trust, and eventually will be managed by a three member Board of Trustees including chair of the Sheffield Selectboard, and the Executive Directors of the Vermont Woodlands Association and NorthWoods Stewardship Center.

Pfälzerwald Tree Farm is the result of Alan's experiences while stationed in Germany in the 1970s. While in Germany, Alan had an "awakening" as to the importance of forests for the world and how important management can be to the health and vigor of a forest. Pfälzerwald is Alan's way of bringing his experiences and education to Sheffield.

A "Walk in the Woods" is an annual event that started in 2010 and is held during the summer. The Walk is an effort to familiarize residents with the 60-acre woodland that will become a Sheffield town forest. It is also an opportunity to educate the public on the benefits of sustainable woodland management. Each year, certain aspects of forest management are highlighted during the Walk. For example, the effects of windstorms could be discussed along with ways to clean up and replant the forest. The Vermont Woodlands Association and the State Tree Farm Committee sponsor the Walk. There is no charge for the event although donations given to the sponsors are gratefully accepted so that educational and outreach efforts may continue.

## **Sheffield Cemetery Association**

Sheffield Cemetery Association maintains the Town's seven cemeteries and the veterans' memorial. Each year, the Association provides an American flag for the gravesite of each veteran buried in Sheffield. The Association is comprised of anyone from Sheffield wishing to volunteer. The association meets annually in April or more often if necessary to conduct its business for the ensuing season.

## **Sheffield Field Day Committee**

Field day, as it is known, is much different than when first started more than 67 years ago. It was a harvest celebration with sports contests, food and garden displays. Then parents wanted a way to keep their children off the roads, so parades, music and games were added. Now, we have a parade, pony pulling, a midway with games, bingo, music, a floral hall full of displays and events to be involved with such as a dessert and silent auction and a raffle. A fiddlers' contest was added a few years ago that is highly attended. There is a chicken barbeque and two food booths with added French fries and fried dough. Corn on the cob is a delightful treat as well as candied apples and cotton candy. This is a wonderful day for coming back to renew friendships. Usually over one thousand people attend. Field Day revenues help the Sheffield-Wheelock Volunteer Fire Department, camp scholarships, children's Christmas goodies, needed repairs to the Town Hall and items such as a donation towards a new dishwasher.

A Harvest Dinner in October is another way for people to come together.

All residents are welcome to help by offering ideas and assisting with the Field Day. Committee meetings are held the second Wednesday of the month March through September at the Town Hall.

## **Sheffield Food Pantry**

The Sheffield Food Pantry provides food to income qualified seniors and families in the towns of Sheffield, Wheelock and Sutton. The Pantry is open on the first Wednesday of each month at the Sheffield Town Hall. This eight-year old organization was incorporated on September 26, 2011 as a 501[c][3] not-for-profit corporation with a five-member board of directors. The annual meeting is held in May. Funding comes from individuals, local businesses and anonymous donations through the Vermont Community Foundation. Sheffield Food Pantry is a partner of the Vermont Foodbank where most of the food is purchased at minimal cost. Other food comes from local farms and businesses.

## **Sheffield Historical Society**

The Sheffield Historical Society is a 501[c][3] not-for-profit corporation established on December 8, 1992 with a nine-member board of directors. The annual meeting is held on the second Saturday in June.

In 2009, the Society completed a restoration of the 1847 Town House and leases the building from the Town. The curator is appointed by the board each year and maintains the historical collection, including museum displays. In 1993, the Society published "Hopes and Dreams and Evergreens—The Two Hundred Year History of Sheffield". Since then, the curator has published several family genealogy projects.

## **Sheffield Town Hall Committee**

The Town Hall Committee, a volunteer group, was started several years ago after discussion under "To transact any other business", a warned article at Town meeting. The discussion concerned the deterioration of the facility and grounds. The Committee was formed for the purpose of renovating and maintaining the building.

The first committee took on the responsibility of upgrading the building to make it accessible for everyone. A ramp was added to the exterior and an elevator was installed inside the building--necessities if the building was to be used as a public facility. Energy-efficient windows and curtains were also installed.

The second phase was a committee with an elected chair, Pat O'Hagan, whose goal was to upgrade and maintain decor of the interior. This resulted in sanding and refinishing the upstairs floor, tiling the downstairs floor and painting the walls. Soffits were also repaired.

The Town Hall became a more valuable and usable facility for the Town and is presently used each month by the Sheffield Food Pantry. The Town Hall has a reading room, continues to be a meeting place, headquarters for the Sheffield Field Day Committee, chicken pie supper, once a month dinners and is a contracted rental facility.

The Town Hall Committee continues and recently installed a commercial dishwasher in the kitchen and took care of other kitchen needs such as the sinks, faucets and cutting block.

## **Vermont Wind, LLC, Its Successors or assigns**

Vermont Wind, LLC, a/k/a First Wind, is a subsidiary of SunEdison. Vermont Wind began operating on October 19, 2011. Power has been generated to date by the sixteen turbines.

Sheffield received the first payment from Vermont Wind in 2011 and will continue to receive annual payments for the contracted 20-year period.

Articles are warned each year and voted on at annual Town meetings regarding how the monies received by the Town from Vermont Wind are to be appropriated.

The SunEdison Scholars Program is offered to high-school seniors who live near the Sheffield wind farm and plan to enroll in full-time undergraduate study at an accredited two or four-year college or university to study environmental sciences, general sciences or engineering. Students who attend Concord Graded high School, Craftsbury Academy Hazen Union High School, Lake Region Union School, Lyndon Institute, North Country Union High School and Applied Tech Center at St. Johnsbury Academy are eligible for participation in the scholarship program. The site opens for applicants in fall/winter and winners are announced the following spring.

### **Veterans' Memorial**

A memorial for all veterans of our armed forces was created through the efforts of Sheffield resident and veteran Vernon Whitcomb in the 1980s. The nationally recognized memorial is located near the entrance to the Dexter Cemetery. The Sheffield Cemetery Association and volunteers maintain the memorial.

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