

TOWN OF SHELDON
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
June 23, 2016
7:00PM
Sheldon Town Clerk's Office

Notice is hereby given to the residents of the Town of Sheldon, Vermont that the Sheldon Planning Commission will hold a hearing on Thursday, June 23, 2016 at 7:00 PM at the Sheldon Town Clerk's Office to consider for adoption the following Sheldon, Vermont Town Plan pursuant to Chapter 117 of Title 24, Section 4387 and 4384, Vermont Statutes Annotated.

By state statute, municipalities must prepare and update their town plan every five years; the current Town of Sheldon, Vermont Town Plan expires on November 8, 2015. The plan update focused on the following: to update data and information in the plan to be as current as possible, to incorporate goals and policies that will make Sheldon a more flood resilient community, and to improve eliminate repetitive language in the plan. The updated plan does not alter the designation of any land area in the Town of Sheldon.

The Sheldon, Vermont Town Plan contains 18 Chapters, which include: 18 Chapters, which include: Introduction; Summary of Goals and Policies; Community Profile; Archaeological, Historic, & Scenic Resources, Community Facilities, Community Services, Community Utilities, Economy, Education, Energy, Housing. Land Use Plan, Natural Features, Transportation, Flood Resiliency, Compatibility, and Implementation. A full text of the plan is on file in the Sheldon Town Clerk's Office. The plan proposes goals and policies that impact the entire Town of Sheldon. This plan is intended to be consistent with the goals established in Title 24, Section 4302.

REPORT ON TOWN OF SHELDON TOWN PLAN REVISION

Over the last year, the Sheldon Planning Commission has been working to complete an update of the “Sheldon, Vermont Town Plan.” This effort is part of a continuing planning process that guides the Town’s decisions for future growth. Their planning process conforms to the State’s four planning goals of Chapter 117, Section 4302, which strive for a comprehensive planning process that includes *citizen participation*, the *consideration for the consequences of growth*, and *compatibility with surrounding municipalities*.

By state statute, municipalities must prepare and update their town plan every eight years; the current Town of Sheldon, Vermont Town Plan expired on November 8, 2015. The plan update focused on the following: to update data and information in the plan to be as current as possible, to incorporate goals and policies that will make Sheldon a more flood resilient community, and to improve eliminate repetitive language in the plan. The updated plan does not alter the designation of any land area in the Town of Sheldon.

The Sheldon Town and Village Municipal Plan contains 18 Chapters, which include: Introduction; Summary of Goals and Policies; Community Profile; Archaeological, Historic, & Scenic Resources, Community Facilities, Community Services, Community Utilities, Economy, Education, Energy, Housing, Land Use Plan, Natural Features, Transportation, Flood Resiliency, Compatibility, and Implementation. These chapters are consistent with the 14 goals established in Chapter 117, Section 4302. These goals aim to: maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village centers separated by rural countryside; provide a strong and diverse economy with rewarding job opportunities; broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities for people of all ages; provide for safe, convenient, economic, and energy efficient transportation systems; to identify, protect, and preserve important natural and historic resources; to maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife, and land resources; to encourage the efficient use of energy and development of renewable energy resources; to maintain and enhance recreational opportunities; to encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest industries; to provide for the wise and efficient use of natural resources; to ensure the availability of safe and affordable housing; to plan for, finance, and provide an efficient system of public facilities and services; and to ensure the availability of safe and affordable childcare. The chapters also contain all 12 required elements for a municipal plan established in Title 24, Chapter 11, Section 4382.

Sheldon’s Development Regulations are based on the information compiled and the goals expressed within the Town Plan. Sheldon Planning Commission members have spent many hours discussing and compiling this document and they would sincerely like to receive your feedback.

Sheldon, Vermont Town Plan



Adopted on XXXXX, 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1	1
VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF SHELDON	1
CHAPTER 3.....	2
INTRODUCTION.....	2
Purpose	2
Authority.....	2
CHAPTER 2.....	4
SUMMARY OF GOALS AND POLICIES	4
ARCHAEOLOGICAL, HISTORIC, AND SCENIC RESOURCES	4
COMMUNITY FACILITIES	4
COMMUNITY SERVICES	4
COMMUNITY UTILITIES	5
ECONOMY	5
EDUCATION	5
ENERGY.....	6
HOUSING	6
LAND USE	6
NATURAL FEATURES	7
TRANSPORTATION	7
CHAPTER 4.....	9
COMMUNITY PROFILE	9
Population.....	9
Projected Populations	10
Age Distribution/Growth by Group.....	11
Special Populations.....	11
Household Size and Type	12
Education Level	13
Income	14
Employment	14
Work Trips.....	15
Commuting Time to Work.....	16
Grand List Trends.....	16
CHAPTER 5.....	18
ARCHAEOLOGICAL, HISTORIC, & SCENIC RESOURCES	18
Historic Resources	19
Scenic Resources	20
CHAPTER 6.....	21
COMMUNITY FACILITIES	21
Public Buildings	21
Public Land.....	22
CHAPTER 7.....	23
COMMUNITY SERVICES	23
Law Enforcement	23
Ambulance.....	23
Fire Department.....	23
Recreation.....	24
Library	24
Cemeteries	24
Solid Waste Disposal.....	25
CHAPTER 8.....	26
COMMUNITY UTILITIES	26
Water Systems	26

Wastewater Treatment	27
Telecommunications	27
CHAPTER 9.....	28
ECONOMY	28
Overview	28
Agriculture.....	28
Food & Lodging	29
Other Commercial Enterprises.....	29
Industry	29
Future Economic Development	30
CHAPTER 10	31
EDUCATION	31
Childcare.....	32
CHAPTER 11.....	33
ENERGY	33
Municipal Energy Use	33
Heating	34
Transportation.....	34
Land Use.....	35
Renewable Energy Sources	35
CHAPTER 12	37
HOUSING	37
Residential Growth	37
Housing Units	38
Affordable Housing Needs	39
Affordable Housing Opportunities	40
CHAPTER 13	41
LAND USE PLAN.....	41
Current Land Use.....	42
Land Cover	43
Limits to Development	43
Current Land Use Districts	45
Proposed Land Use.....	46
CHAPTER 14	47
NATURAL FEATURES	47
Geology	47
Topography.....	48
Soils	48
Earth Resources	49
Surface Waters.....	49
Groundwater	51
Wetlands	51
Flood Hazard Areas	52
Deer Yards.....	52
Natural Areas.....	52
CHAPTER 15	53
TRANSPORTATION	53
Transportation Planning.....	53
Town Road System.....	53
Railroad Beds	54
Public Transportation.....	55
Walking, Biking, and other Forms of Transportation	55
CHAPTER 16	56
FLOOD RESILIENCY	58

CHAPTER 17	<u>60</u>
COMPATIBILITY	58
Compatibility with Enosburgh and Enosburg Falls	58
Compatibility with Franklin	58
Compatibility with Highgate	58
Compatibility with Swanton	59
Compatibility with Fairfield	59
Compatibility with the Regional Plan.....	59
CHAPTER 18	60

CHAPTER 1

VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF SHELDON

The following vision statements shall serve as a guideline for the future of Sheldon:

- ◆ *Preservation of the rural, agricultural character of the town and protection of its natural resources shall remain paramount to the future of Sheldon; this commitment to providing a high-quality of life and to the protection of natural resources will continue to make our town a special and unique place for year-round residents, tourists and visitors.*
- ◆ *Every effort shall be given to the maintain diverse agricultural practices which help preserve the rural landscape of the town and the local economy;*
- ◆ *Growth in Sheldon shall occur at a rate that preserves town's dominant rural character and does not exceed the Town and Region's ability to provide essential services and facilities;*
- ◆ *Maintenance, improvement, and expansion of recreation areas in the Town of Sheldon shall be supported to ensure an assortment of recreational opportunities for current and future generations; this will improve the community's health and quality of life;*
- ◆ *Development of small-scale businesses that provide employment and basic services for the residents of Sheldon shall be supported. The community also supports existing employers, like WestRock and the hydroplant, which currently employ many community residents;*
- ◆ *Sheldon supports the development of environmentally-minded businesses, home-based businesses, and tourism in an effort to create a stable tax base which may reduce dependence on residential property taxes; Sheldon also supports local employment opportunities that offer livable wages which can allow young people to continue to live in Sheldon and can contribute to the strengthening of the family units;*
- ◆ *The Plan, tempered by the economic ability of the Town to provide for its residents and natural resources available, shall be an accurate reflection of the needs and wants of the Town residents. The goals, policies, and actions in the plan shall accurately reflect the vision of Sheldon residents.*

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The municipal plan guides short-term and long-term community goals. In very basic terms, a Town Plan is a community statement describing the evolution of the Town from the past to the present conditions and into the future. The goals of the Town result from identifying community issues and needs, collecting and analyzing background information, and combining them into a vision statement. Goals, policies, and actions are formulated to address specific issues or “elements” such as land use, natural resource protection, economic development, transportation, flood resiliency, housing, education, municipal facilities and services.

The Plan should be an accurate reflection of the needs and wants of Town residents. Tempered by the economic ability of the Town to provide for its residents and the natural resources available, the goals, policies and actions can be determined accordingly.

This Town Plan was developed with the following purpose in mind: to guide Town officials, residents, and persons contemplating actions involving land use, on matters of land development, the economic provision for facilities and services, resource use and conservation, and public health, safety, and welfare. Beyond this purpose, the Sheldon Town Plan serves as the legal basis for land use regulations and capital budget programs which the Town may wish to adopt.

The Plan may also be given effect in State and Federal regulatory proceedings, including Act 250 Hearings. The Selectboard and Planning Commission are statutory parties to Act 250 applications involving Sheldon. Determination of a specific project’s conformance with the Town Plan is one method of participating in the Act 250 process. The Town Plan is also given “due consideration” in the permitting process for energy generation facilities and telecommunications facilities (Section 248 and Section 248a).

The need for involvement of Town residents in the planning process cannot be overstated. While it is the responsibility of the Planning Commission to develop the Plan, citizens and citizen committees can have an active role in gathering information and formulating Plan policies for guiding development. This ensures that the Plan reflects the priorities and desired lifestyle of its residents. A collaborative effort will result in a better plan.

Finally, planning is a continuous process, and plans can be amended to meet new challenges or situations. The Plan must be updated every five years or it expires. This provides opportunities for citizen involvement, and can serve as a review of the effectiveness of the current Plan and its policies.

Authority

The Town of Sheldon is authorized to prepare and adopt a Municipal Plan via Chapter 117, Title 24 of the VSA (Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act). Section 4382 of the Act dictates what needs to be included in a plan. The intent of the law is to encourage a municipality to “engage in a continuing planning

process that will further several stated goals.” The Act further states that municipal plans shall be re-examined, updated, and re-adopted every five years. This process should be ongoing, whereby the Plan is continually reassessed and revised to meet the changing needs of the community. Consequently, there will be future opportunities to review and amend the Plan. Residents, community groups, and anyone with an interest in the Town are encouraged to provide input into this ever-continuing process to the Sheldon Town Planning Commission.

Planning Process

Sheldon first adopted a town plan in November of 1980. The most recent plan was adopted in January of 1994. The Town revised the Plan without substantive alternations in 2000, 2005 and 2010.

Under current law, Title 24, Chapter 117, a municipality must address twelve (12) elements in its plan development, which are the following: a statement of objectives, policies, and programs of the municipality to guide the future growth and development of land, public services and facilities, and to protect the environment; a land use plan; a transportation plan; a utility and facility plan; a statement of policies on the preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas, scenic and historic features and resources; an educational plan; a recommended program for the implementation of the objectives of the development plan; a statement indicating how the plan relates to development trends and plans for adjacent municipalities, areas and the region developed under this title; an energy plan; a housing element that shall include a recommended program for addressing low and moderate income person’s housing needs; an economic development element that describes present economic conditions and the location, type, and scale of desired economic development, and identifies policies, projects, and programs necessary to foster economic growth; and a flood resiliency plan that identifies flood hazard and fluvial erosion hazard areas and recommends policies and strategies to protect the areas identified to mitigate risks to public safety, critical infrastructure, historic structures, and municipal investments. In order to develop regulatory mechanisms (by-laws) appropriate to guide development, a plan must first be adopted by the Town Board of Selectmen. Once adopted, the Plan becomes the basis for development and enactment of zoning and subdivision regulations.

Role of the Sheldon Planning Commission

The Sheldon Planning Commission members are appointed by the Selectboard for three year terms. The Planning Commission is empowered to formulate goals and policies toward the Plan development. The Commission is responsible for the review and revision of the Town Plan and to propose amendments to the zoning bylaws and regulations in an effort to implement the plan.

The role of the Commission is ongoing. Changing community conditions, preferences, and priorities call for consistent monitoring of plan objectives. Amendments to the plan may, from time to time, be necessary and the Commission has responsibility for this task.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY OF GOALS AND POLICIES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL, HISTORIC, AND SCENIC RESOURCES

GOAL: To RECOGNIZE THE ROLE OF SHELDON’S ARCHAEOLOGICAL, HISTORIC, AND SCENIC RESOURCES IN SHAPING THE TOWN’S PRESENT QUALITY OF LIFE AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Policies

- ◆ Protect sites of potential archaeological, historic and scenic significance
- ◆ Promote growth which maintains the historical land use pattern of densely settled village centers separated by open agricultural land
- ◆ Promote the use of historic buildings for public purposes whenever feasible

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

GOAL: To PLAN AHEAD TO MEET FUTURE NEEDS FOR PUBLIC FACILITIES BASED UPON COMMUNITY GROWTH AND CHANGE

Policies

- ◆ Promote efficient and functional use of existing municipal buildings and facilities
- ◆ Provide sufficient space and facilities to carry out essential municipal functions
- ◆ Provide a gathering place for community members to address town business
- ◆ Ensure adequate municipal facilities for all age groups

COMMUNITY SERVICES

GOAL: To PROVIDE MUNICIPAL SERVICES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF LOCAL RESIDENTS OF ALL AGES WITHOUT UNDUE OR SUDDEN IMPACTS UPON LOCAL PROPERTY TAXES

Policies

- ◆ Provide emergency services and law enforcement to protect the health, safety, and property of residents and visitors alike
- ◆ Provide recreational areas and facilities opportunities in convenient and reasonable locations for the use and enjoyment of all residents
- ◆ Conserve Sheldon’s recreational resources, discourage incompatible land uses, and protect the scenic qualities which contribute to recreation
- ◆ Consider land needed for community services within the overall land use plan

COMMUNITY UTILITIES

GOAL: TO PROVIDE PUBLIC UTILITIES TO SUPPORT CONCENTRATED RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL, AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, AND PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH AND WATER SUPPLIES IN AREAS WITHOUT MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Policies

- ◆ Use extensions or improvements or new construction of water and sewer systems to remedy existing problems, promote orderly and timely land development and carry out the purpose of the land use plan
- ◆ All telecommunications facilities shall be located in appropriate areas, respecting the integrity of residential areas, aesthetic concerns, and natural issues

ECONOMY

GOAL: TO PROMOTE A DIVERSE AND STABLE ECONOMY BY HELPING TO ENSURE THE SUCCESSFUL OPERATION OF EXISTING ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW ONES

Policies

- ◆ Protect and encourage the continuation of agriculture by protecting the rights of farmers who responsibly use Required Agricultural Practices
- ◆ Encourage businesses that complement recreation opportunities within the Town.
- ◆ Protect the economic vitality and importance of the villages as a community and regional asset
- ◆ Encourage commercial development that meets local needs for retail, business, and personal services
- ◆ Encourage siting of businesses and industries in Sheldon that will use the skills of the local labor force

EDUCATION

GOAL: TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE, HIGH QUALITY EDUCATIONAL SERVICES RELATIVE TO ANTICIPATED POPULATION GROWTH

Policies

- ◆ Provide for the education of our school population without overcrowding, inefficient division of basic educational facilities, or reduction in the quality of our educational programs
- ◆ Ensure that rapid growth or development will not inflict undue impacts and hardships upon the ability of the town to provide adequate educational services
- ◆ To broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities for all ages, sufficient to ensure the full realization of the abilities of current and future residents
- ◆ Ensure regulation of land development in Sheldon does not negatively impact the availability of safe and affordable childcare

ENERGY

GOAL: INCORPORATE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION AS A PRIORITY IN LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS, TRANSPORTATION PLANNING, AND THE USE OF PUBLIC FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Policies

- ◆ Provide information to residents and businesses about options to become more energy efficient including opportunities to work with other organizations to achieve this
- ◆ Promote car-pooling among area residents; encourage the use of informal park and ride lots where possible
- ◆ Improve town owned buildings to be as energy efficient as possible
- ◆ Encourage energy conservation by promoting patterns of development that utilize clustering and energy efficient site design whenever possible
- ◆ Support the efforts of the State and the Region to achieve the goals of the State Comprehensive Energy Plan
- ◆ Support the development of appropriately site renewable energy generation facilities

HOUSING

GOAL: TO PROVIDE SUITABLE LAND AREAS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT TO SERVE THE NEEDS OF CURRENT AND FUTURE SHELDON RESIDENTS

Policies

- ◆ Ensure adequate housing options for people of all income levels, ages, household types, and preferences
- ◆ Promote low-density residential housing in areas without municipal services and higher densities in parts of town with existing services or close to existing service boundaries
- ◆ Conserve and protect the vitality and quality of existing neighborhoods

LAND USE

GOAL: TO MAINTAIN SHELDON'S RURAL CHARACTER AND SCENIC AND NATURAL RESOURCES WHILE PROVIDING SUFFICIENT SPACE IN APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS FOR ALL LAND USES IN LIGHT OF THEIR RESPECTIVE ENVIRONMENTAL NEEDS AND THEIR MUTUAL INTERRELATIONSHIPS

Policies

- ◆ Maintain the character of existing neighborhoods and avoid potential conflicts between incompatible land uses
- ◆ Limit development on slopes greater than 15% and maintain natural vegetation on slopes

- ◆ Discourage development away from areas where soils will not support it due to shallow depth to bedrock, instability, or high water table
- ◆ Protect public health, welfare, and safety by limiting development in the flood plain
- ◆ Protect water quality by limiting development in Wellhead Source Protection Areas, wetlands, and along streambanks
- ◆ Conserve productive lands by accommodating development in areas away from most farming activity and that do not have prime agricultural soils

NATURAL FEATURES

GOAL: To PROVIDE FOR LOCAL GROWTH THAT IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE TOWN'S NATURAL FEATURES INCLUDING SOILS, LANDSCAPE, WATER RESOURCES, AND WILDLIFE

Policies

- ◆ Recognize the importance of the area's natural features to the overall quality of life enjoyed by Sheldon residents
- ◆ Limit development in areas where soils have limited capacity to support structures or filter wastes and in areas where the slope is greater than 15%
- ◆ Guide development away from productive agricultural or forest soils
- ◆ Protect the water quality of the Missisquoi River and its tributary streams by preventing erosion along their banks
- ◆ Protect ground water quality by regulating uses that could introduce contaminants into the ground
- ◆ Limit the loss of local wildlife habitat
- ◆ Limit infringement upon wetlands
- ◆ Identify and protect areas where rare, threatened or endangered species exist

TRANSPORTATION

GOAL: To ENSURE REASONABLE, FUNCTIONAL, AND EFFICIENT DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

Policies

- ◆ Protect the health, safety, and welfare of the traveling public
- ◆ Promote safe, convenient, economic, and energy efficient transportation systems including public transit options and paths for pedestrians and bicycles
- ◆ Promote transportation activities that respect the natural environment
- ◆ Maintain the scenic character of the Town's rural byways
- ◆ Support public transit efforts of the Northwest Vermont Public Transit Network to increase mobility and access of Town residents
- ◆ Support the efforts of the Northwest Vermont Rail Trail Council to promote, enhance, and increase use of the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail

FLOOD RESILIENCY

GOAL: To ENSURE SHELDON IS A FLOOD RESILIENT COMMUNITY

Policies

- ◆ To discourage development in identified flood hazard areas and river corridor areas. If new development is to be built in such areas, it shall not exacerbate flooding and fluvial erosion.
- ◆ To protect and restore floodplains, river corridors, and upland forest areas that attenuate and moderate inundation flooding and fluvial erosion.
- ◆ To encourage emergency preparedness and response planning.

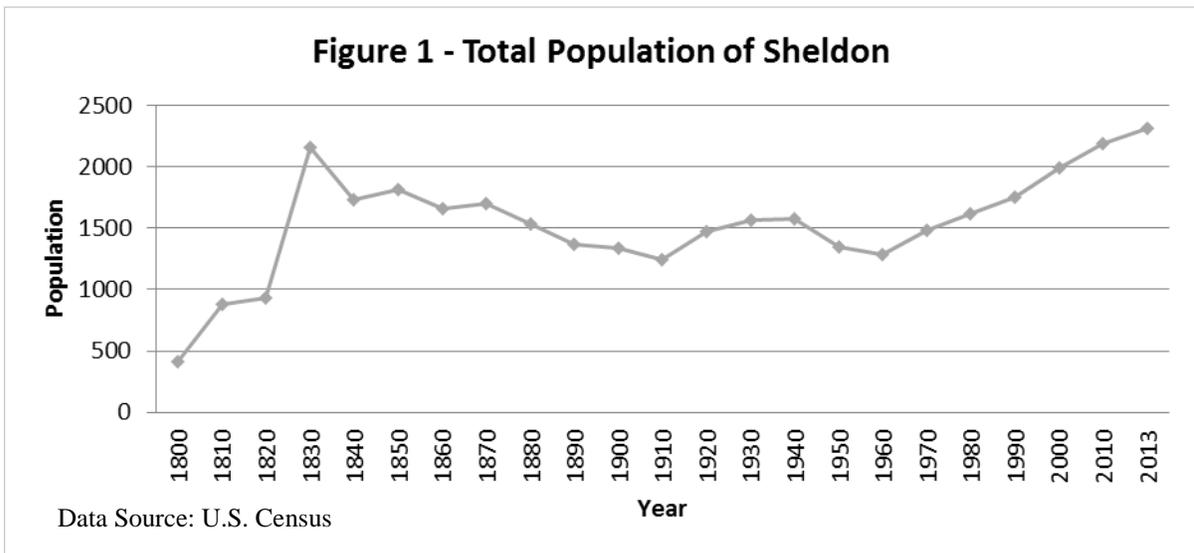
CHAPTER 4

COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Town of Sheldon is located in the northeast of Franklin County which is in the Northwest corner of Vermont. It is bordered on the north by the towns of Franklin and Highgate, on the east by Enosburg, on the southwest by Swanton, and on the south by Fairfield. Sheldon covers 25,177.54 acres or approximately 39.34 square miles. This amounts to 5.68 percent of the total area of Franklin County. The total area in the County is 693 square miles including 56 square miles of surface water.

Population

Planning relates to people, therefore an understanding of the population and its geographical distribution as it changes over time is essential. Population growth is the result of two factors: natural increase (where the number of births exceeds the number of deaths) and/or net in - migration (where the number of people moving into a community exceeds the number of people moving out). The Town of Sheldon has seen a steady growth in its population since 1960. Figure 1 shows how the population of Sheldon has fluctuated over time.



As illustrated above, the Town population reached a peak in the mid-1800's and has only recently rebounded to that level. As of the 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate, 2,317 persons reside within Sheldon's borders. This amounts to 4.83 percent of the countywide population. Table 1 shows the population for Sheldon and its bordering communities. Table 2 shows the percent change for Sheldon, Franklin County, and the State of Vermont.

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2013
Franklin County	34,788	39,980	45,417	47,746	48,019
Franklin Town	1,006	1,068	1,268	1,405	1,190
Highgate	2,493	3,020	3,397	3,535	3,547
Enosburg	2,070	2,535	2,788	2,781	2,759
Swanton	5,141	5,636	6,203	6,427	6,423
Fairfield	1,493	1,680	1,800	2,891	2,029
Sheldon	1,618	1,748	1,990	2,190	2,317

Source: US Census of Population 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010; American Community Survey 2009-2013 5-Year Estimate

	1980-1990		1990-2000		2000-2010		2010-2013	
	% Change	Annual %						
Franklin County	14.92	1.49	13.60	1.36	5.13	0.51	0.57	0.19
Sheldon	8.03	0.80	13.84	1.38	10.05	1.00	1.06	0.11

Source: US Census of Population 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010; American Community Survey 2009-2013 5-Year Estimate

Projected Populations

The small size of the population makes long-term forecasting difficult, especially at the local level. Most models assume that in-migration, driven in part by continued economic growth and development, will continue well into the years to come, but natural increases will level off somewhat, given the overall aging of the population. According to the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development population projections release in 2013, the projected population of Sheldon is expected to increase steadily through the year 2030 in both scenario “A” (higher economic growth) and scenario “B” (lower economic growth). Table 3 shows the projected populations for Sheldon and for Franklin County through the year 2030. Table 4 shows the percent changes in projected population for both Sheldon and Franklin County. The percent increases for the Town are expected to be slightly higher than those of the County.

	Scenario A				Scenario B			
	2000	2010	2020	2030	2000	2010	2020	2030
Franklin Co.	45,417	47,746	51,810	55,647	45,417	47,746	49,253	50,739
Sheldon	1,990	2,190	2,398	2,581	1,990	2,190	2,280	2,354

Source: VT Agency of Commerce and Community Development

Table 4: Percent Growth in Projected Population						
	Scenario A			Scenario B		
	2000-2010	2010-2020	2020-2030	2000-2010	2010-2020	2020-2030
Franklin Co.	5.13%	8.51%	7.41%	5.13%	3.16%	3.02%
Sheldon	10.05%	9.50%	7.63%	10.05%	4.11%	3.25%

Source: VT Agency of Commerce and Community Development

Age Distribution/Growth by Group

The median age in 2013 for the residents of Sheldon was 38.8 years. This figure is lower than both Franklin County and the State of Vermont. Sheldon, Franklin County, and the State of Vermont have all seen an increase in their median ages since 1980. Like many towns in the State, the population of Sheldon is aging.

According to the 2013 US Census, Sheldon has a smaller percentage of its population in the sixty-five and up age group than the County and the State. The Town has seen a decrease in the percent of the population that is under-eighteen since 2000, while its elderly population has increased. Like the County and the State, the percentage of persons in the eighteen to sixty-four age group has increased over the years. Table 5 show the percentages of population for the different age groups as well as the median ages for Sheldon, Franklin County, and Vermont.

Special Populations

The US Census provides information about the number of people with various levels and types of disabilities. Sheldon had a higher percentage of persons between the ages of eighteen and sixty-four with a sensory, cognitive, ambulatory or self-care difficulty than Franklin County or the State of Vermont. Table 6 lists the percentage of persons with some type of disability.

Table 5: Age Groups in Sheldon 2000-2013			
	18 and less	19 to 64	65 and over
Sheldon			
2000	33.3%	59.1%	7.6%
2010	27.7%	61.4%	10.7%
2013	25.1%	63.5%	11.4%
Franklin Co			
2000	30.4%	58.6%	11.0%
2010	27.0%	61.0%	12.2%
2013	26.5%	61.0%	12.7%
Vermont			
2000	27.4%	59.9%	12.7%
2010	24.0%	61.5%	14.5%
2013	25.7%	61.2%	15.2%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000, 2010; American Community Survey 2009-2013 5-Year Estimate

Table 6: Percent of People With a Work Disability, Mobility, or Self-Care Limitation										
	Percent of Civilian Non-institutionalized Persons 18-64 Years with Disability or Limitations					Percent of Civilian Non-institutionalized Persons 65 Years and Over with Disability or Limitations				
	Sensory	Cognitive	Ambulatory	Self-Care	Independent Living	Sensory	Cognitive	Ambulatory	Self-Care	Independent Living
Sheldon	5.0%	5.9%	6.7%	3.7%	3.9%	21.6%	7.6%	14.8%	8.7%	16.3%
Franklin County	4.6%	5.1%	6.0%	1.7%	3.8%	24.9%	8.1%	21.1%	9.3%	13.4%
Vermont	4.1%	5.3%	4.7%	1.7%	3.6%	22.1%	8.4%	19.6%	7.4%	13.4%

Source: American Community Survey 2009-2013 5-Year Estimate

Household Size and Type

The way the population groups itself into households affects the demand for housing, community services, and employment. Nationwide and within Vermont, household size declined dramatically during the 1970's, and has continued to decline more slowly since. This trend is partly due to families having fewer children. However, the decrease in the number of individuals living together is also due to the breakup of extended family households, an increasing number of single-parent households, and the larger number of elderly who are choosing to remain in their own homes.

The percentage of family households has decreased by more than 7.0 percent between 2000 and 2010. Married couple families have also seen a decrease. However, the number of single-parent households has increased slightly for both male and female householders. Non-family Households increased by 7.0 percent. Non-family household is defined as either a householder living alone or with another non-related person. This category went from 19.0 percent of total households to 26.7 percent of total households. Table 7 shows the percentages of households in Sheldon in 1990 and 2000.

Table 7: Household Types and Percentages for Sheldon 2000 and 2010		
	2000	2010
	%	%
Family Households	81.0%	73.3%
Married Couple Families	65.9%	56.7%
Male Householder-No Wife	5.1%	6.5%
Female Householder-No Husband	10.0%	10.1%
Non-family Households	19.0%	26.7%
One-person (householder living alone)	12.9%	18.4%
Householder not living alone	6.1%	8.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%
Source: U.S. Census, 2000, 2010		

Sheldon’s average household size decreased from 2.94 persons per household in 2000 to 2.86 persons in 2013. The 2013 average is higher than that for Franklin County as a whole at 2.58 persons per household. A decrease in average household size corresponds to an increase in the number of households. The number of households in Franklin County and in Sheldon is increasing much more rapidly than the population is, and this generates a demand for more housing units.

Table 8: Percent Growth in Population, Number of Households, and Housing Units 2000-2010			
	Population	Households	Housing Units
Sheldon	10.05%	21.28%	23.88%
Franklin County	5.13%	10.43%	12.49%
Vermont	2.78%	6.57%	9.56%
Source: U.S. Census, 2000-2010			

Education Level

In the Town of Sheldon, 88.59 percent of its residents were high school graduates in 2013, which increased from 81.3 in 2000. This figure is almost exactly the same as the percentage of people in Franklin County who also hold a high school degree. The percentage of college graduates in Sheldon was 13.3 percent in 2013, which increased by 0.6 percent since 2000. In Franklin County, the 2013 figure was 22.3 percent. The State of Vermont, as a whole, had 91.2 percent of its residents holding high school diplomas while 31.6 percent held bachelor degrees. Table 9 shows the percentage of persons with a high school diploma and the percentage of persons with a bachelor’s degree or higher.

Table 9: Educational Attainment of Population 18 and Over , 2013		
	% With a High School Diploma or Higher	% With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Sheldon	88.59%	13.25%
Franklin County	88.46%	22.34%
Vermont	91.24%	31.59%
Source: American Community Survey 2009-2013 5-Year Estimate		

Income

Median household income for the Town of Sheldon was slightly lower than Franklin County and for the State of Vermont in 2009. This changed in 2013, when Sheldon's median household income raised above the County and the State. It is the middle figure of all incomes reported to the US Census for each area. It includes wages earned, along with other types of income such as social security income, public assistance income, and retirement income. Between 2009 and 2013, Sheldon's median household incomes grew by significantly more than the County and the State's median household incomes. In addition, Sheldon had a lower percentage of families below the poverty level in 2013 as compared to Franklin County and the State of Vermont. It should be noted that these figures are from the 2005-2009 and 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates and it is possible for these to have positively changed during the past two years. Table 10 shows the median household incomes for Sheldon, Franklin County, and for Vermont.

	Median Household Income 2005-2009	Median Household Income 2009-2013	Percent Change	Percent of Families Below Poverty Level 2013
Sheldon	\$49,904	\$62,153	24.5%	4.2%
Franklin County	\$52,279	\$56,240	7.6%	7.8%
Vermont	\$51,284	\$54,267	5.8%	6.9%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2005-2009, 2009-2013

Employment

According to the Vermont Department of Employment and Training, the 404 workers who held a job in Sheldon in 2014 enjoyed an average annual wage of \$46,266. This wage compares favorably with the County's (\$42,366) and State's (\$43,017) average annual wage. It is important to note that average annual wage is for jobs that are actually located in the Town itself, rather than the average incomes of Sheldon residents.

As of the 2009-2013 American Community Survey, a relatively high percentage of Sheldon residents over the age of sixteen were in the labor force – 71.8 percent as compared to 71.2 percent countywide. The highest amount of workers in Sheldon were employed in Educational services, health care, and social assistance occupations (15.09 percent) followed by manufacturing at 14.29 percent and retail trade at 11.46 percent. Table 11 shows the employment breakdown by occupation for Sheldon, Franklin County, and the State of Vermont.

	Vermont		Franklin County		Sheldon	
	Count	% of Total	Count	% of Total	Count	% of Total
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	8,543	2.63%	929	3.71%	129	10.41%

Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	30,060	9.27%	1,448	5.78%	122	9.85%
Construction	23,940	7.38%	2,027	8.09%	99	7.99%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	90,880	28.02%	6,264	25.01%	187	15.09%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	15,576	4.80%	837	3.34%	28	2.26%
Information	6,839	2.11%	400	1.60%	5	0.40%
Manufacturing	34,391	10.60%	3,661	14.62%	177	14.29%
Other services, except public administration	15,008	4.63%	943	3.77%	48	3.87%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative waste management services	28,375	8.75%	2,026	8.09%	103	8.31%
Public administration	15,414	4.75%	2,010	8.03%	112	9.04%
Retail trade	37,300	11.50%	2,826	11.29%	142	11.46%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	10,665	3.29%	1,054	4.21%	42	3.39%
Wholesale trade	7,359	2.27%	616	2.46%	45	3.63%
	324,350	100.00%	25,041	100.00%	1,239	100.00%
Source: American Community Survey 2009-2013 5-Year Estimate						

Work Trips

According to the 2013 US Census On The Map tool, 5.2 percent of work trips were made within the borders of Sheldon. The biggest percentage of work trips from Sheldon were made to St. Albans Town. Table 12 lists the journey to work destinations from Sheldon, Vermont.

	# of Trips	% of Total
Franklin County	525	47.0%
St. Albans Town	123	11.0%
St. Albans City	103	9.2%
Swanton	77	6.9%
Highgate	61	5.5%
Sheldon	58	5.2%
Georgia	33	3.0%
Enosburg Town	26	2.3%
Franklin	16	1.4%
Fairfax	9	0.8%

Richford	5	0.4%
Montgomery	3	0.3%
Fairfield	1	0.1%
Sheldon County	4	0.4%
Chittenden County	311	27.8%
Rest of VT	239	21.4%
Other	39	3.5%
Total	1,118	100.0%
Source: US Census On The Map, 2013		

Commuting Time to Work

The mode of commuting times for Sheldon, VT in 2013 was 20-24 minutes. In Franklin County, the most prominent data point is less than 10 minutes, although a large number of residents also travel half an hour or longer. The mean travel time to work for Sheldon residents is 27.2 minutes while Franklin County, as a whole, averaged very closely at 27.1 minutes for travel time to work.

Minutes to Work	Sheldon		Franklin County		Vermont	
	Count	% of Commuters	Count	% of Commuters	Count	% of Commuters
Less than 10	149	12.7%	3,887	16.7%	63,542	20.1%
10 to 14	105	9.0%	2,840	12.2%	49,948	15.8%
15 to 19	170	14.5%	2,723	11.7%	49,000	15.5%
20 to 24	201	17.2%	2,025	8.7%	42,361	13.4%
25 to 29	102	8.7%	1,187	5.1%	19,284	6.1%
30 to 34	147	12.6%	3,142	13.5%	35,406	11.2%
35 to 44	30	2.6%	2,817	12.1%	19,284	6.1%
45 to 59	150	12.8%	2,723	11.7%	20,548	6.5%
60 or more	113	9.7%	1,909	8.2%	16,755	5.3%
Mean Travel Time (Minutes)	27.2		27.1		22.2	
Source: American Community Survey 2009-2013 5-Year Estimate						

Grand List Trends

It is possible to get an idea of how the amount and type of housing and other land uses in the community are changing over time by using information from the Sheldon Grand List. The Town of Sheldon has seen an increase in the number of parcels from 812 to 891 from 1999-2013 which is an overall 9.73% increase. Table 14 shows the number of parcels categorized by their land use in Sheldon in 1999, 2005, 2010 and 2013 along with percent changes.

Table 14: Sheldon Grand List Trends							
					% Change		
	1999	2005	2010	2013	1999-2005	2005-2010	2010-2013
Residential <6 acres	349	379	395	410	8.60%	4.22%	3.80%
Residential >6 acres	159	156	169	180	-1.89%	8.33%	6.51%
Mobile Home w/o Land	37	33	26	27	-10.83%	-21.12%	3.85%
Mobile Home w/ Land	58	76	92	90	31.03%	21.05%	-2.17%
Seasonal	25	24	23	14	-4.00%	-4.17%	-39.13%
Commercial	25	29	32	28	16.00%	10.34%	-12.50%
Industrial	1	1	2	2	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Utilities	6	6	9	7	0.00%	50.00%	-22.22%
Farm	59	58	57	46	-1.69%	-1.72%	-19.30%
Woods	1	3	2	4	200.00%	-33.33%	100.00%
Miscellaneous	92	81	77	83	-11.96%	-4.93%	7.79%
Total	812	846	885	891	4.19%	4.60%	0.68%

Source: Vermont Department of Taxes, Division of Property Valuation and Review, 2013

CHAPTER 5

ARCHAEOLOGICAL, HISTORIC, & SCENIC RESOURCES

GOAL: TO RECOGNIZE THE ROLE OF SHELDON'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL, HISTORIC, AND SCENIC RESOURCES IN SHAPING THE TOWN'S PRESENT QUALITY OF LIFE AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Policies

- ◆ Protect sites of potential archaeological, historic and scenic significance
- ◆ Promote growth which maintains the historical land use pattern of densely settled village centers separated by open agricultural land
- ◆ Promote the use of historic buildings for public purposes whenever feasible

According to recent archaeological investigations, the northwest corner of Vermont has been home to humans for at least 12,000 years. The first people, called Paleo-Indians, lived and camped around the Champlain Sea and major river valleys, including the Missisquoi. This culture evolved over eight to nine thousand years to become what we know as the Algonquins. The tribes of St. Francis and Abenaki are of this Native American culture, and most certainly inhabited the land near Lake Champlain along the Missisquoi River and Black Creek. These two water bodies flow through Sheldon and early history records indicate a Native American presence here.

Archaeological investigations have uncovered thirty-six prehistoric sites in Sheldon. Many of these were found during digs conducted in connection with the installation of the hydro project during the 1980's. Because of the wealth of sites along the Missisquoi River, archaeologists assume that all of the river's tributary streams and brooks are likely to contain sites of prehistoric activity. These sites could be protected by using measures, which would limit the potential for stream bank erosion.

In more recent times, the colonial governor of New Hampshire, Benning Wentworth, granted 23,040 acres to Samuel Hungerford and sixty-four associates. In the spring of 1790, the first settlers, George Sheldon and a family named McNamary along with their house servants, came by means of oxen and sled from Connecticut. They settled on the north bank of the Missisquoi, opposite the mouth of Tyler's Branch. In 1791 the settlers petitioned to change the name of the town from Hungerford to Sheldon.

The Town's population peaked in the 1830's at 2,158 persons. During this time Sheldon Village alone contained three churches, a post office, three stores, two hotels, two grocery stores, a grist mill, a sawmill, a carriage shop, a cabinet maker's shop, harness shop, two blacksmith's shops, and the Missisquoi Bank. The Town was comprised of eleven school districts. Apparently, the population boom had its effect upon the environment as one historian reports, "The Missisquoi River and Black Creek had become severely polluted. One observer described them as being 'scarcely translucent'."

By this time agriculture's emphasis had shifted from sheep to dairy. Although Fairfield produced more butter, Sheldon led the State of Vermont in the production of cheese during the late 1860's.

On October 19, 1864, during the Civil War, a score of "Rebel Raiders" led by Captain Young entered St. Albans, robbed the banks, and killed several inhabitants. Young's men then made for Canada, going by way of Fairfield Pond towards Sheldon. The Raiders set fire to the Black Creek Bridge in order to halt Captain Conger's party, which was in close pursuit. Fortunately, the Methodist minister squelched the blaze before any damage was done. The Raiders attempted to rob Missisquoi Bank, but it was closed. They stole horses and food and hurried on their way to Enosburg. The Vermont Historical Society placed a marker commemorating this event at the east end of the Black Creek Bridge in 1964. There is also a marker from the Historical Society at the site of the Fenian Raids.

Sheldon became a mill town in 1894 when Joseph Shipley began producing ground wood pulp at the Missisquoi Mill. The ownership of the mill has changed several times throughout the years. The current operator, WestRock, employs approximately 150 people and produces 91,000 tons of recycled paperboard annually.

Sheldon suffered many thousands of dollars in property damage during the flood of 1927. The beautiful suspension bridge at Sheldon Springs and the North Sheldon Bridge were among the major losses.

Historic Resources

At the 1995 Town Meeting citizens expressed interest in holding another parade and celebration in 1996. In addition, it was felt that something should be done to recognize the oldest home in the village, which was built for Col. Elisha Sheldon.

As a result, the Sheldon Historical Society was founded in January of 1996. The society consists of twenty to thirty members who meet four to five times a year. The Society's objective is the preservation of historical artifacts, records, and stories in town. The current yearly dues are three dollars. Anyone interested in joining or if they would like to be placed on the mailing list can contact the Historical Society or the Town Clerk for information.

Several meetings were held in conjunction with the founding of the society and planning future activities. Members of the society decided to plan a celebration recognizing Col. Sheldon's former home on July 6. The celebration was named Old Home Day.

A historical marker honoring Col. Sheldon was purchased and erected in his memory. Accordingly, a group of modern day re-enactors of Col. Sheldon's famous Revolutionary War Calvary Unit came from Connecticut to participate along with two of their well-trained horses.

Following the parade, the marker was dedicated by the commander of the unit. The unit then marched to the Colonel's grave in the old part of the cemetery with flowers in his honor. A tactical demonstration of Revolutionary era charges was enjoyed by all.

Following the display, participants and spectators enjoyed drinks, a chicken barbeque, and ice cream (homemade and Ben and Jerry's). Children were entertained by various games and contests. Various ongoing exhibits and a concert by Vermont's own 40th Army National Guard Band contributed to the success of the event.

The Historical Society has continued to hold several meetings each year. Interesting programs have been presented, including Sheldon's Post Office, the Poor Farm, Sheldon Fair, and the Mineral Springs.

A number of local structures are listed in the State Historic Register. The State also recognizes the Sheldon Creek Historic District, and the Sheldon Springs Main Street Historic District. Many of the Town's historic structures have been razed or rehabilitated to the point where they have lost the details which tie them to the past. These losses may be attributed to a lack of awareness, interest, and/or motivation among property owners. In addition, economics places the need for basic shelter over the importance of historically appropriate restoration.

Historic buildings, which were once in public ownership, such as schoolhouses, have been sold off in the hope that they would add more benefit to the grand list than they will absorb in town services. A number of these buildings are sitting idle and in disrepair. Sheldon's historic buildings, its rural land use pattern, and its typical Vermont scenery contribute to a quality of life that many residents take for granted. These features are a direct link to local history; a link that provides not only interesting and pleasing sights, but also valuable insights into the Town's present and future. Once gone, they cannot be replaced or returned.

Not included in the Register is the Region's historic settlement pattern of small villages and hamlets, located along well-traveled routes, surrounded by an open, working landscape. This pattern strongly evokes the Region's 19th century agrarian heritage, and contributes much to its particular sense of place and community.

Smaller landscape features such as stone walls, old barns, outbuildings, corner stones, markers, trees, and old apple orchards and lilac bushes planted around former homesteads, all have historic value and importance; however these unfortunately often go unnoticed. Despite the fact that these features say as much about the Region's rural and agricultural heritage as many of its more readily recognized historic landmarks, they are often disturbed, removed, or demolished without any thought. Recognizing the need for more public education, the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation published in 1994 *Stonewalls and Cellarholes: a Guide for Landowners on Historic Features and Landscapes in Vermont's Forests*.

Cultural and historic resources are also at risk of degradation through improper earth resource extraction. This includes the accidental destruction of buried archaeological sites and diminished scenic qualities that may limit the future use of disturbed sites. Noise, dust, and increased traffic on roads near extraction sites all compromise the rural character and sense of place the Town enjoys

Scenic Resources

The Northwest Region of Vermont is an extremely rich visual assortment of diverse landscapes, to the heavily wooded Western slopes of the Green Mountains. Visual language of an area plays an important role in how a community is perceived.

Scenic highways and corridors link natural, cultural, and scenic resources to the historic landscape of the area. The visual character of Sheldon makes it an excellent place to live. Sheldon, like all other towns, should preserve its scenic vistas. The Town should also encourage innovation in design and layout of development so that the visual impact can be minimized. The use of vegetative buffers and other screening methods should be encouraged to help reduce the visual impact of development in the Town.

CHAPTER 6

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

GOAL: TO PLAN AHEAD TO MEET FUTURE NEEDS FOR PUBLIC FACILITIES BASED UPON COMMUNITY GROWTH AND CHANGE

Policies

- ◆ Promote efficient and functional use of existing municipal buildings and facilities
- ◆ Provide sufficient space and facilities to carry out essential municipal functions
- ◆ Provide a gathering place for community members to address town business
- ◆ Ensure adequate municipal facilities for all age groups

Public Buildings

The Town of Sheldon owns several buildings as shown in Table 15. All of these buildings are in need of some, if minor, repair.

Table 15 –Public Buildings – Town of Sheldon, 2016					
Building	Location	Land Area	Owner	Use	Condition/ Comments
Elementary School	TH 29	7.4 acres	School District	K-8 Education Rec. Field	Built in 1973 - at capacity
Town Garage	TH 2	1 acre	Town	Storage/Maintenance of Equipment	Built in 1973 - needs new roof
Town Clerks Office	TH 4	0.4 acre	Town	Town Office Library	Built in 2012
Fire House	TH 2	0.125 acre	Town	Garage Meetings Training	Built in 2009
Salt Building	TH 2	1 acre	Town	Storage	1981
Sewerhouse	TH 43	2.5 acres	Town	Sewer Plant	1976
Sheldon Water House	TH 4	6.5 acres	Town	Pumphouse	Agricultural easements

The Town Clerks office, which also serves as the library and public meeting room, was recently moved to a new building in 2012. The library has a collection of almost 5,000 books, and serves several hundred patrons a year.

In 2005, the town voted to allocate funding toward the construction of a new Fire Station. This project was completed in 2009 and the Fire Station in Sheldon Springs now has adequate space and up-to-date facilities.

Public Land

The Town owns a number of small parcels of land which it has picked up over the years through tax default. All of these are too small for development according to the Town zoning bylaw.

A parcel of 96 acres was acquired by the Town at tax sale in the 1950s. Some residential lots have been sold from the original parcel. The remaining 86 acres have never been surveyed, and are not actively managed for wood production, recreation, or wildlife habitat. A Selectboard-appointed committee is currently studying the future use of this property and will provide a report to the Selectboard before Town Meeting in 2017. A list of town owned lands are shown in Table 16.

Name	Location	Size	Use
Cardosi Lot	Sheldon Springs	.25 acre	Vacant
Dump Land	Bridge Street	.25 acre	Vacant
Fay Parent Lot	TH 4	1 acre	Well
Grist Mill Lot and Waite Lot	TH 2	.18 acre	Grist Mill Park
Lawson Clapper Lot	TH 2	.66 acre	Vacant
Municipal Property	RTE 105	86 acres	Vacant
Pump House	School Street		Pump House
Rec. Field	Sheldon Springs	4 acres	Recreation field at school
Rooney Lot	TH 2	.25 acre	Vacant
Sewer Plant	Mill Street	.25 acre	Sewer Plant
Sheldon Water House Lot	Main Street	5 acres	Water House
Town Garage	Bridge Street	.75 acre	Town Garage
Town Hall Lot	TH 4	.75 acre	Vacant
Town Office Lot	Main Street	.38 acre	Town Office
Water House	Boarding House St.	.25 acre	Water House

CHAPTER 7

COMMUNITY SERVICES

GOAL: To Provide Municipal Services to Meet the Needs of Local Residents without Undue or Sudden Impacts on Local Property Taxes

Policies

- ◆ Provide emergency services and law enforcement to protect the health, safety, and property of residents and visitors alike
- ◆ Provide recreational opportunities in convenient and reasonable locations for the use and enjoyment of all residents
- ◆ Conserve Sheldon's recreational resources, discourage incompatible land uses, and protect the scenic qualities which contribute to recreation
- ◆ Consider land needed for community services within the overall land use plan

Law Enforcement

The Vermont State Police and Franklin County Sheriff provides police services for Sheldon. The State Police are based out of the St. Albans Barracks and have several troopers working in outpost in eastern Franklin County. Dispatching is based out of the Williston Barracks. The Franklin County Sheriff's Department covers Franklin County and contracts with individual towns who request additional police services. Crime statistics for the region can be obtained from the Department of Public Safety – Criminal Justice Services.

Most of the complaints received locally are motor vehicle-related and involve noise and nuisances. A more recent and escalating problem are complaints about off-road vehicles, including snowmobiles.

Ambulance

AmCare provides ambulance care to Sheldon. AmCare currently uses space in the Sheldon Fire Department, but is planning a permanent facility in Sheldon that will be completed in 2016. Currently, 2 crew members are on each shift and the company employs 24 total employees, including paramedics. AmCare reports that they respond to approximately 150 calls a year on average.

Fire Department

The Sheldon Volunteer Fire Department is currently composed of twenty-two members and one station. The department currently has 3 pumper and tanker trucks and 1 heavy rescue unit.

The Town of Sheldon is now dispatched through the 911 system. The fire department responds to over 135-200 calls a year. Approximately one quarter of these calls is fires and about three-quarters are car accidents.

The fire department is funded through donations, fund-raisers, and an annual appropriation from town property taxes.

Water from the Missisquoi is piped to fourteen hydrants in Sheldon Springs, but nine of these hydrants are currently inactive. There are currently four dry hydrants in

the Town. Housing developments in the outlying areas must provide their own water for use in case of fire. Access to water, adequate roadways and turn-arounds for fire-fighting vehicles should be reviewed during the permit process for all new development.

Recreation

Ball fields, tennis courts and a playground are available at the elementary school. The gym is also available for local use. The Little League ball field for local youths is owned by Rami Bourdeau. The fields are in high demand and are used frequently by the community.

The Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail traverses through many towns in Franklin County, including the Town of Sheldon. The 26.4-mile trail, located on the former Central Vermont Railroad bed, links the communities of St. Albans City, St. Albans Town, Swanton, Fairfield, Sheldon, Enosburgh, Enosburg Falls, Berkshire, and Richford. The year-round trail accommodates snowmobiles, bicycles, horses, joggers, hikers, walkers, and cross-country skiers. Parking and primary access to the trail for Sheldon residents is between Route 105 and Old Sheldon Road, and at the trails end in Richford. A representative of the Town serves on a regional committee organized to develop the management plan for the trail.

Library

Sheldon has had a local public library since 1869 when the Sheldon Agricultural Library Association was founded. By 1895, the library was located in the home of Miss Trudeau.

Today, the Sheldon Public Library is housed at the Town Office building. It is open fourteen hours a week with evening hours available. There are approximately 5,100 volumes, with approximately one hundred new titles added each year. There are also twenty-four periodical subscriptions and twelve children's programs. Additionally, audiotapes are available for patrons to check out. There is also a computer with internet access.

The library sponsors special events including a summer story hour, Christmas coloring contest, a Christmas bazaar, Town Meeting luncheon, and a bake sale at the annual school meeting. Net proceeds from the holiday craft fair benefit the library's building fund.

Library trustees are currently undergoing reorganization, and will soon begin work on a five-year plan for their facilities and program. A building advisory committee has been formed to deal with the lack of space issue. The committee includes select board members, library trustees, townspeople, and a construction consultant.

The library currently meets the State standards for library facilities and services. Libraries that meet the State standards are eligible for grants and free cataloging services from the Department of Libraries. This allows the library to greatly improve its service to its patrons.

Cemeteries

The Town of Sheldon has several cemeteries which are now closed, and three which remain open. Their status is shown in table 17. It is important to plan ahead in order to reserve space adjacent to the existing cemeteries for future expansion. It is also

important to ensure that adequate funding arrangements are made for the long-term maintenance of cemeteries, especially once they are filled.

Table 17: Cemeteries in Sheldon, VT			
	Who maintains the cemetery?	Size in Acres	Remaining Capacity
Rice Hill Cemetery	Church	1.7	Open
Sheldon Village Cemetery	Association	10.2	1/3
Missisquoi Cemetery	Association	0.6	Open
Grace Episcopal Cemetery	Town	1	Closed
North Sheldon	Town	0.2	Closed
West End Cemetery	Town	0.5	Closed
East Sheldon Cemetery	Town	1.5	Closed
Poor Farm Cemetery	No one	0.75	Closed
St. Anthony's	Church	6.8	Open

Solid Waste Disposal

Sheldon is a member of the Northwest Vermont Solid Waste Management District. The district includes twelve Franklin and Grand Isle County towns. The District has a contract for disposal at the Highgate Transfer Station for all member municipalities. In February of 2000, the District purchased four recycling trailers and a truck. Long range plans include a three-cell lined landfill with associated transfer stations and a district-wide recycling program. Meanwhile, Sheldon has a contract with Waste U.S.A. in Coventry to take their trash until a local facility is completed. There is currently no local drop-off site for recyclables.

CHAPTER 8

COMMUNITY UTILITIES

GOAL: To Provide Public Utilities to Support Concentrated Residential, Commercial, and Industrial Development, and Protect Public Health and Water Supplies in Areas without Municipal Services

Policies

- ◆ Use extensions or improvements of water and sewer systems to remedy existing problems, promote orderly and timely land development.
- ◆ All telecommunications facilities shall be located in appropriate areas, respecting the integrity of residential areas, aesthetic concerns, and natural issues

Water Systems

Sheldon has one public water systems that serves both villages in the Town. In 2010, bids for major improvements to the water system in Town, specifically for storage and distribution, were being received. Construction began in 2011 and was completed in 2013. The system is financed by hook-up fees and quarterly user fees

Currently, the part of the water system that serves the village draws from a shallow, gravel well just outside the Village. This well, developed in 1975, has a capacity of seventy gallons per minute. Its maximum daily demand is 44,000 gallons. Its source protection area is subject to an agricultural easement which allows the owner use of the land excluding activities which might contaminate the ground water.

A cement reservoir on lower Main Street holds 20,000 gallons of water, only about half a day's reserve supply for the system. Water is distributed through 4" PVC pipes and 2" galvanized lines pressurized by a pump. There are no fire hydrants on the system. Pressure is adequate except for two connections which were added at the top of Crow Hill. The water is chlorinated. This system is adequate to service development at the current level, but would require an upgrade to serve a large development.

. The Sheldon Springs part of the water system operates from a 180 foot drilled well located off School Street. The well, drilled in 1979, has a forty gallons-per-minute capacity and a maximum daily demand of 35,000 gallons. Its source protection area is not protected from uses which might cause contamination. According to a study conducted in 1990, potential sources of contamination include an industrial dump site and a gas station. The well has been tested for low levels of phenols and high levels of sodium. Engineering tests for a new well site off Poor Farm Road have been completed, but access to the site remains unresolved. The water is currently treated with chlorine in the distribution lines.

A reservoir with 40,000 gallon capacity is located upgrade from the well. Consequently, water does not always travel into the reservoir before distribution through the system. Distribution lines are 8" cast iron and 2-4" PVC.

On-site wells and springs serve the remainder of homes in town. At least some of the local groundwater has shown signs of nitrate contamination. Water sources near Sheldon Springs have high sulfur content.

Wastewater Treatment

The Village of Sheldon Springs has a municipal sewage treatment plant with an extended air system constructed in 1976. In 2003, the Town upgraded the system with a new digester and sludge pump and refurbished the aviation tank. All homes and businesses in the village are connected to the system. The system is designed to handle 54,000 gallons of effluent per day, and is currently receiving approximately 30,000 gallons per day. There is no written policy governing extensions to the system. Hook-up and user fees are charged. There is no long-term plan or budget for system upgrades or maintenance. Storm water infiltrates the system at times of high rainfall. However, the current operator does not consider this a significant problem.

A 13,000 gallon drying bed located next to the wastewater treatment plant is used by the Town as well. This bed is adequate to treat the volume of wastewater generated by the Town in the near future.

WestRock also operates a wastewater facility in Sheldon that services their facility. Changes to the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) that governs phosphorus limits discharged to Lake Champlain may mean that upgrades to the WestRock and Sheldon Springs facilities are needed. The Town should monitor this issue and begin planning accordingly.

The remainder of the Town is served by on-site septic systems. As of 2007 new construction, updating or repairing a wastewater system must be approved and permitted by the state.

Telecommunications

Telecommunications have become increasingly important to the security and economic success of residents and businesses in the northwest region of Vermont, as well as in all other sections of the State. Telecommunication towers and related infrastructure require careful consideration. These structures tend to be located in highly visible locations such as on mountaintops and ridgelines. The need for additional facilities is projected to increase dramatically in the coming years. The Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 placed certain limitations over municipal control of these structures; however within those confines, Sheldon must act to protect the Town's historic character, rural nature, and aesthetic beauty.

CHAPTER 9

ECONOMY

GOAL: To PROMOTE A DIVERSE AND STABLE ECONOMY BY HELPING TO ENSURE THE SUCCESSFUL OPERATION OF EXISTING ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW ONES

Policies

- ◆ Protect and encourage the continuation of agriculture by protecting the rights of farmers who responsibly use Required Agricultural Practices
- ◆ Encourage businesses that complement recreation opportunities within the Town.
- ◆ Protect the economic vitality and importance of the villages as a community and regional asset
- ◆ Encourage commercial development that meets local needs for retail, business, and personal services
- ◆ Encourage siting of businesses and industries in Sheldon that will use the skills of the local labor force

Overview

Sheldon has been primarily an agricultural community since first settled in the late 1700's, The rural character contributes to the high quality of life in Sheldon, however economic development opportunities exist that will maintain or enhance the character of the Town. As agriculture remains prominent in the local economy, opportunities for farmers to sell their products locally should be explored. There is a strong market for many value-added products in the state and the region. The Town can encourage residents to consider these opportunities to supplement their current farming activities or to generate greater income in their household. Economic development may provide more local jobs. If commercial and industrial opportunities are explored and carefully planned in accordance with current land use and economic activities, the overall quality of life can be improved in Sheldon.

According to the Vermont Department of Labor, there were 31 employers in Sheldon in 2014. These employers retained 404 employees with an average wage of \$46,266.

Agriculture

According to historical records, Sheldon led the State in cheese production during the 1860's. Today, the dairy industry continues to play a major role in the local economy. There are approximately 22 operating dairy farms in Sheldon.

Forty-seven farmers were surveyed by planning commission members in the early 1990s. The average age of this sample was just under fifty-two. They reported owning an average of 150 acres each. There are several hundred acres of land owned by non-farmers in town, which is leased for pasture or crops. Only eight of the forty-seven farmers surveyed felt that they had no family member to take over the farm when they retired. Eleven farmers reported that they have had some difficulty with conflicting land uses in their neighborhoods, including increasing traffic or complaints of noise and/or

farm odors. These problems are occurring mostly in more populated areas along the Enosburgh border, in Sheldon Village, and along Route 105.

The majority of farmers interviewed felt it is important to conserve agricultural land and many have considered selling the development rights to their property. During a public survey conducted by the planning commission, sixty-nine percent of respondents said that agricultural land should be protected. The Vermont Land Trust has stepped forward as a leader in the purchase of development rights to protect farmland from development. Other opportunities exist however, to guard productive farmland from development such as incentives to cluster housing.

Farm diversification is important in Sheldon. Maple sugaring was noted as the most common farm diversification activity in 1990 with nine reporting commercial maple operations. The maple industry has continued to become more important to local farmers in the past 10 years and has allowed some farms to continue to be viable. Other farm diversification practices include forestry, beef cattle and bee keeping.

In the next several years, Sheldon should update the farmer survey from the early 1990s to better understand the challenges facing agriculture in Sheldon.

Food & Lodging

The latter part of the 1860's marked a lucrative local business era. Four principal enterprises bottled the waters of local mineral springs. These waters were claimed to be a "remedy for cancer, scrofula, and other diseases of the blood. During 1868 alone, 14,792 boxes of 24 one-quart bottles were dispatched to all parts of the country.

As a result of the successful promotion of mineral spring's water, Sheldon acquired considerable importance as a summer resort. Stages departed from St. Albans every morning at 8:00 a.m. and returned in time to connect with the afternoon trains. Approximately eleven hotels were in operation in town during this period. Portland House, now the Napoli Home for the Aged, is the only one still in existence.

Although there are only one restaurants and one catering business, this sector of the economy still contributes substantially to the local economy, providing jobs, tax revenues, and dining services for Sheldon residents.

Other Commercial Enterprises

Sheldon has many different types of businesses and services for its residents and visitors. These include tourist orientated services, outdoor recreational services, retail stores, lodges, construction services, automotive services, financial advising services, and restaurants. These businesses all contribute to the local economy by providing jobs, tax revenues, lodging, dining, and other services for Sheldon's residents.

The top employers in the Town of Sheldon include WestRock, Bourdeau Brothers Inc., Abbey Restaurant and the Sheldon Public School system. Sheldon Elementary School employees about 64 people according to the Vermont Department of Labor.

Industry

Joseph Shipley came to Sheldon in 1894 and began the Missisquoi Mill which produced ground wood pulp. The mill flourished and expanded into a pulp and paper mill in the early twentieth century, and Sheldon became a mill town. The ownership of the mill has changed several times throughout the years. The current operator, WestRock, employs approximately 175 people and produces 110,000 tons of recycled

paperboard annually or approximately 301 tons a day at its mill location in Sheldon Springs.

During the ownership of Boise Cascade in the early 1980's, the water power rights were separated from the mill and Missisquoi Associates, a private company, constructed a hydroelectric plant with a much greater capacity for producing electric power. The power generated here is sold to VELCO.

Future Economic Development

Future economic development in Sheldon should continue to center on the existing industries in the town: agriculture and manufacturing. Agriculture and agriculture-related businesses should be encouraged and supported. Future small scale commercial-type development shall be located in the village districts as identified in the Land Use chapter. Any future industrial development shall be located within the industrial districts, as identified in the Land Use chapter, where there is sufficient public infrastructure.

CHAPTER 10

EDUCATION

GOAL: TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE, HIGH QUALITY EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AND PLAN FOR ANTICIPATED POPULATION GROWTH

Policies

- ◆ Provide for the education of our school population without overcrowding, inefficient division of basic educational facilities, or reduction in the quality of our educational programs
- ◆ Ensure that rapid growth or development will not inflict undue impacts on the ability of the town to provide adequate educational services
- ◆ To broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities for all ages, sufficient to ensure the full realization of the abilities of current and future residents
- ◆ Ensure that is adequate, safe and affordable child care

Samuel Sheldon built the first school house on the west side of Black Creek in Sheldon Village in the early 1800's. At its population peak in 1880, the Town had thirteen schools. These facilities employed twenty-one teachers and educated 385 pupils at a cost of \$2,512.86 in 1880 dollars.

Today, Sheldon has one school located in Sheldon Springs which serves students from pre-school through eighth grade. The Sheldon School, built in 1975, has a design capacity of 350 students. The FY 2016 budget was \$5,770,000. Currently, there are no plans to expand the elementary school. The total enrollment in December 2015 was 262 students, not including the pre-school with the breakdown by grade as follows:

Grade	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Enrollment	27	34	29	33	28	29	33	21	28	262

The Town does not have its own high school and therefore, they have a choice of attending options for their high school aged students. They can either attend Bellows Free Academy (BFA) in St. Albans or Fairfax, Enosburg High School in Enosburg, or Missisquoi Valley Union (MVU) High School in Swanton. As of 2016, there are a total of 94 high school students from Sheldon that attend area high schools. BFA in St. Albans enrolled 34 students, Enosburg Falls High School enrolled 50 students and MVU High School enrolled 10 students from Sheldon for the 2015-2016 school year. Vocational education is supplied at all three of these sites. The tuition rates for the high school students for the 2016 fiscal year were the following: MVU High School - \$16,000 per student, Enosburg Falls High School - \$14,250 per student, and BFA – St. Albans - \$15,600 per student.

There are currently discussion between the Sheldon School Board and school boards in surrounding communities regarding consolidation of school districts under

Act 46. Decisions regarding district consolidation are sure to have an impact on Sheldon's future.

There are several opportunities for higher education, continuing education and adult learners in the region. While there are no adult education opportunities offered in Sheldon, adult basic education courses are offered in Enosburg Falls and St. Albans. Community College of Vermont offers college-level courses in St. Albans. The University of Vermont, St. Michael's College, and Champlain College are all located in the Burlington area as well.

The cost of maintaining a school is shared between the Town, the State, and the Federal Government. The local share of school cost is currently raised through property taxes and comprises the largest fraction of municipal tax bills.

Childcare

Childcare can be a growing concern for existing and prospective families, whether it means finding quality services or securing the costs of services. High quality, available childcare is a critical component supporting a stable workforce.

According to state data, Sheldon currently has 10 registered childcare homes and one licensed childcare centers. The 2009-2013 American Community Survey indicates that there are approximately 417 children from birth to age 14 living in Sheldon, this is significantly more than the total capacity of available childcare in town. Some families may seek childcare in other towns near their place of employment or with family members. Data on other options, such as siblings, stay at home parents, family care providers, un-registered childcare homes or other opportunities are not available. Therefore it is unknown how the needs of the other children are being met.

CHAPTER 11

ENERGY

GOAL: INCORPORATE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION AS A PRIORITY IN LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS AS WELL AS IN PUBLIC FACILITIES, SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Policies

- ◆ Provide information to residents and businesses about options to become more energy efficient including opportunities to work with other organizations to achieve this
- ◆ Promote car-pooling among area residents; encourage the use of informal park and ride lots where possible
- ◆ Improve town owned buildings to be as energy efficient as possible
- ◆ Encourage energy conservation by promoting patterns of development that utilize clustering and energy efficient site design whenever possible
- ◆ Support the efforts of the State and the Region to achieve the goals of the State Comprehensive Energy Plan
- ◆ Support the development of appropriately site renewable energy generation facilities

Energy production is essential to human society and, at the same time, threatens the environment that sustains us. Most current energy sources have negative environmental impacts, namely fossil fuels. The challenge for the future will be to reduce energy consumption in general, and to shift demand from the more harmful energy sources toward those that are renewable and have an overall low environmental impact. Energy conservation is an important step in reducing reliance on fossil fuels and meeting state energy goals.

Land use and energy are closely related. Land resources are used in the production, transport, and disposal of energy products. Land use patterns exert a strong influence on major end uses of energy, including transportation, heating and cooling of buildings, and the energy used in developing infrastructure. Furthermore, land is used for the disposal of waste products resulting from our energy consumption.

The State of Vermont has set ambitious goals for energy conservation and energy generation in state statute and in the State Comprehensive Energy Plan. The most prominent of these goals, and perhaps the most controversial, is to have renewable energy resources provide 90% of the state's total energy needs by 2050. This accounts for all energy use: transportation, heating, and electricity. Northwest Regional Planning Commission is currently developing a Regional Energy Plan that will implement regional policies and strategies that will help achieve the state's energy goals. Sheldon supports the efforts of both the State and the Northwest Regional Planning Commission in their efforts to improve energy conservation, reduce reliance on foreign energy sources, and to develop additional, appropriately sited, renewable energy facilities.

Municipal Energy Use

Energy expenditures comprise a part of the Town's budget. The expenditures inventoried below on Table 18. Total energy costs by the Town of Sheldon increased by

43% between 2009 and 2014. This was mostly due to increased gasoline and diesel prices. Electricity and heating oil costs at the Town Office also increased substantially. However, these costs may have risen due to the Town Office moving to a different, larger building. Electricity costs for the Sewer and Water Departments both decreased. The Town may want to investigate ways that it can decrease its energy costs through working with organizations like Efficiency Vermont. The Town is hoping to install LED streetlights in the near future to save on energy costs.

TABLE 18: MUNICIPAL ENERGY EXPENDITURES TOWN OF SHELDON				
	2004	2009	2014	% change 2009-2014
ROAD DEPT.				
Fuel & Oil	\$16,000	\$16,960.94	\$41,114.23	142%
TOWN OFFICE				
Electricity	\$963	\$1,079.53	\$2,596.95	141%
Heating Oil	\$1,114	\$1,078.06	\$2,493.76	131%
STREET LIGHTS	\$7,500	\$8,941.50	\$9,695.09	8%
SEWER DEPT. - Electricity	\$6,467	\$10,553.19	\$9,966.95	-6%
WATER DEPT. - Electricity	\$11,256	\$12,947.71	\$8,889.12	-31%
TOTAL	\$43,300	\$51,560.93	\$74,756.10	45%
Source: Sheldon Town Reports				

Heating

According to the 2009-2013 American Community Survey, fuel oil and kerosene are the most popular home heating fuels in Sheldon (348 occupied housing units out of 810, or 42.69 percent). Wood is the second most popular home heating fuel with 271 units (33.45 percent). The third most popular home heating fuel is bottled, tank, or LP gas with 125 units (15.43 percent). Utility gas follows in use with 32 units or 3.95 percent, while electricity makes up the remaining percentage.

Transportation

Transportation in the State of Vermont represents approximately 37 percent of total energy consumption for the state (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2015). Road maintenance accounts for a large share of the Town's energy costs, and personal transportation requirements typically constitute the largest share of a family's energy costs. Energy demand for transportation can be influenced by the location and type of roads provided, convenience of services and facilities, structuring of routes for school buses, and the siting of new residential development.

Approximately 73.9 percent of commuters in Sheldon drive to work alone and 14.3 percent of workers carpooled according to the 2009-2013 American Community Survey. The survey also notes that 4.9 percent of workers work from home and the 6.9

percent of workers walk to their place of employment. The number of walking commuters seems relatively high given the lack of pedestrian network in Sheldon, but may account for the relatively large amount of farmers in the community.

Commuter parking is available in Sheldon Springs. Some of the Region's large employers, such as Global Foundries, run commuter vans which stop in Sheldon. Pedestrian and bicycle travel has been greatly enhanced by the conversion of the Missisquoi Railroad bed to the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail. The commuter lot also provides parking for the rail trail.

The Town has a road policy, which requires private or Class 4 roads to be brought up to specifications before take-over.

Land Use

From a land use planning perspective, the development of village centers, clustered housing, energy efficiency in design, location and construction of buildings, and the development of more efficient transportation networks are practices that shall be encouraged needed to provide access and concentrated development within a village is meant to optimize traffic patterns and the efficient delivery of services.

The Development Review Board (DRB) has opportunities to encourage energy efficient siting and design during their review processes. The DRB should review adopt standards which require that a minimal amount of roadway be developed to access lots in rural areas. The number of curb cuts allowed per property should be limited to encourage land owners to plan their developments and consolidate the number of road access points. The DRB shall also encourage new homes in a development to be clustered close together by requiring that subdivision of three or more lots apply for a permit as a Planned Unit Development and by allowing for a density bonus for clustering homes.

Promoting home occupancy businesses is yet another way that Sheldon can contribute to energy conservation through land use regulation. Home occupancies cut down on commuting distance, and provide nearby employment for residents.

Renewable Energy Resources and Siting

The use of renewable energy resources from local sources can provide cost-savings and reduce environmental impacts in Sheldon, the Region, and the State. Local, renewable energy sources include wind, solar, biomass and hydroelectric. Energy can be generated from these sources at different scales.

Sheldon is home to a hydroelectric dam that produces approximately 26.38 MW of electricity. It is one of the largest dams in the State. Sheldon is also home to a 2.2 MW solar facility located near the dam on the north side of the Missisquoi River. Ranger Solar, a Maine Company, has proposed a 20 MW solar facility to the west of Sheldon Springs. The proposed facility will incorporate approximately 120 acres.

Sheldon should expect to see additional proposals for solar generation facilities in the future due to its comparatively high solar potential and the Town's location along a transmission line corridor. In addition, the retail price of solar panels has dropped considerably in recent years and Federal incentives can also make renewable energy a more cost-effective option.

It is important for the Town Plan to provide strong guidance regarding the placement of future renewable energy facilities in Sheldon. Most renewable energy

generation facilities receive a Certificate of Public Good from the Vermont Public Service Board and are therefore exempt from municipal zoning regulation (30 V.S.A. 248 and 24 V.S.A. 4413). However, the Public Service Board shall provide “due consideration” to the recommendations of the Selectboard, Planning Commission and the “land conservation measures” in the Town Plan when making a determination about whether or not a proposed project unduly interferes “with the orderly development of the region.” Currently, the legislature is considering several changes to the criteria and the process by which energy generation facilities are reviewed. Sheldon shall continue to monitor the legislature and make amendments to this plan to ensure that the community has a strong voice in the Certificate of Public Good process. Sheldon shall also continue to monitor the development of the Regional Energy Plan by Northwest Regional Planning Commission. Municipalities have recently been enabled by the legislature to adopt a municipal ordinance or bylaw regarding the screening of solar generation facilities. Sheldon should consider developing and adopting a solar siting ordinance or bylaw to guide future development of solar generation facilities in town.

CHAPTER 12

HOUSING

GOAL: TO PROVIDE SUITABLE LAND AREAS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT TO SERVE THE NEEDS OF CURRENT AND FUTURE SHELDON RESIDENTS

Policies

- ◆ Ensure adequate housing options for people of all income levels, ages, household types, and preferences
- ◆ Promote low-density residential housing in areas without municipal services and higher densities in parts of town with existing services or close to existing service boundaries
- ◆ Conserve and protect the vitality and quality of existing neighborhoods

Adequate and affordable housing is an important concern to residents in every town. There is a high demand for affordable housing in Franklin County but a limited supply in many areas of the County.. Towns that are located in the southern tier of the County have a relatively small percentage of families below the County median income. Therefore, there is little housing that would be affordable to households earning the County median income. Towns that are more rural in nature often provide a large percentage of the Regions' affordable housing.

Residential Growth

According to the U.S. Census large proportion of Sheldon's population (34.7 percent) is in the childbearing and home-buying age group between eighteen and forty-four. Much of the Town's population up to present has come from natural increase. This indicates that natives who wish to stay here and raise a family can generally find suitable housing at a price they can afford. However, net migration was positive for the first time in three decades from 1990 to 2000 and increased in the following decade as the housing market in Franklin County expanded.

Continued population growth in Franklin County could affect Sheldon, causing population growth to reach levels not seen here since the 1960's. If this happens, new residents combined with the large number of young families already here could put considerable pressure on the market for housing and residential land.

Vacancy rates are a good indicator of whether a community has an adequate supply of housing. The vacancy rate (not including seasonal housing units) in Sheldon increased from 1.9 percent in 2000 to 8.6 percent in 2013. This indicates that there is adequate housing in Sheldon at present. Vacancy rates below 3 three percent are considered to be "absolute zero" due to circumstances such as substandard housing conditions.

The median sale price for primary residences increased from \$147,330 in 2004 to \$157,907 in 2014, an increase of 6.6 percent over ten years according to the Vermont Department of Taxes.

Changes in the way people live and work will affect the Town's population and housing demands over the next five to ten years. As it becomes possible for more

professionals to work at home using advanced computer and telecommunication equipment, agricultural communities like Sheldon may be viewed as even more attractive places to live and raise a family. Also, workers are increasingly willing to commute to work while enjoying a rural lifestyle in a small community. According to the Census, the percent of workers commuting at least fifteen minutes from Sheldon to their jobs increased from 32.0 percent in 2000 to 78.1 percent in 2013.

Of recent concern is the Chittenden County housing market's effect on Sheldon. Chittenden County contains the State's largest city, Burlington, which has the greatest population density. Because the City and County have seen so much growth over recent years, people are being forced to seek housing outside of Chittenden County and into more rural areas like the Town of Sheldon. This will make it harder for towns in Franklin County, including Sheldon, to maintain their rural character. Another factor in the housing market is that Chittenden County has some of the highest property values in Vermont (majority range from \$200,000 to 750,000) and the tax rates are slightly higher than the State average tax rate. On the other hand, property values in Franklin County are generally between \$125,000 and \$300,000 and also the tax rates in the County are generally below the statewide average.

In light of all these complicated market interactions, the safest course is to plan for some limited new residential growth and also for a diversity of housing options to accommodate changes in household size and composition.

The Town has few rental units. If additional population growth causes the price of residential land or homes to rise out of the reach of single people or older folks on fixed incomes, there may be a need for more alternatives to home ownership. These alternatives could take the form of accessory apartments or other types of multi-family dwellings.

Traditionally, Sheldon has not attracted much vacation or seasonal home development. While this may help to keep the price of homes and land down, it also means that the majority of the homes in town place year-round demands upon the town for services. The availability of municipal services and the quality of road access should be considered in order to determine the best areas in town for new residential growth.

The large amount of agricultural land and the Town's commitment to agriculture further requires local leaders to carefully consider the amount, density, and location of new residential growth.

Housing Units

The average number of persons per household in Franklin County has seen a decline since 1970 while the total number of households has increased during this same time period. The average number of persons per household has gone from 2.94 in 2000 to 2.86 in 2013. This amounts to a 2.7 percent decrease. At the same time, the population is increasing. Previously, when the number of persons residing in the same household was larger, there was less of a demand for housing and as long as the population continues to increase, there is going to be a greater demand for housing units.

According to the U.S Census, there were 856 year-round housing units and only seventeen vacation or seasonal housing units in Sheldon in 2010. Table 19 shows the number of housing units and the percent changes for year-round housing units in Sheldon and Franklin County.

	Count				% Change		
	1980	1990	2000	2010	1980-1990	1990-2000	2000-2010
	Sheldon	488	627	691	856	28.48%	10.21%
Franklin County	14,460	17,250	19,191	21,588	19.29%	11.25%	12.49%

Source: U.S. Census, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010

Affordable Housing Needs

The demand for affordable housing is something that needs to be addressed in all communities. According to State Statute, housing is considered affordable when a household earning 80 percent of the County median income pays no more than thirty percent of their income on housing. Lower income households have to get by on tighter budgets and because housing is a basic need that people cannot do without, high housing costs place a greater strain on lower income households than on households that are economically better off. Therefore, affordable housing initiatives emphasize the importance of providing affordable housing to households that are at or below the median income of the area. It is also important to understand that transportation costs are not factored into the state definition of affordability, yet these costs can be significant for Sheldon residents that work outside the community.

Table 20 shows a homeownership affordability analysis for households earning the median county income and below. The analysis displays an “affordability gap” that is computed by subtracting the median sale price from the maximum affordable mortgage (not more than 30 percent of the median county income). Median county income is used instead of Sheldon’s median income because housing is a regional issue. Using the median county income is a better representation of household within the geographic area that may be living in Sheldon or may consider moving to Sheldon.

A house at the median sale price is currently affordable for households that have an income equal to the county median income. Households making 80%, 50% and 30% of county median income cannot afford a home in Sheldon that sells for the median sale price due to an affordability gap.

Percent of HH Median Income	County Median HH Income	30% of Income		Taxes & Insurance	Income Available for Housing/ Month	5% Down Payment	Maximum Affordable Mortgage	Median Sale Price for Primary Residences	Affordability Gap
		Yearly	Monthly						
100%	\$56,240	\$16,872	\$1,406	\$427	\$979	\$9,330	\$197,407	\$157,907	\$39,500
80%	\$44,992	\$13,498	\$1,125	\$427	\$698	\$9,330	\$138,025	\$157,907	-\$19,882
50%	\$28,120	\$8,436	\$703	\$427	\$276	\$9,330	\$48,953	\$157,907	-\$108,954
30%	\$16,872	\$5,062	\$422	\$427	-\$5	\$9,330	-\$10,428	\$157,907	-\$168,335

Data Sources: Median Income from U.S. Census ACS 2009-2013 estimates; Median Sale Price from Vermont Housing Data, 2014; Taxes and Insurance are an estimate; All other figures computed by the NRPC. Maximum affordable mortgage rates include a 4% mortgage rate.

Table 21 displays a renter affordability analysis based on county median household income and the median gross rent in Sheldon. Renting is affordable for those making 100% and 80% of median household income. However, households making 50% and 30% of median household income cannot afford the median rent in Sheldon due to an affordability gap.

The Homeowner and Renter Affordability analyses show that there may be a significant segment of the population in Sheldon that is living in housing that may be unaffordable. High housing costs may be compounded by high transportation costs for some households. This indicates that there may be some need for perpetually affordable housing in Sheldon.

Table 21: Renter Affordability						
Percent of HH Median Income	County HH Median Income	30 % of Income		Income Available for Housing/Month	Median Gross Rent/Month	Affordability Gap
		Year	Monthly			
100%	\$56,240	\$16,872	\$1,406	\$1,406	\$967	\$439
80%	\$44,992	\$13,498	\$1,125	\$1,125	\$967	\$158
50%	\$28,120	\$8,436	\$703	\$703	\$967	-\$264
30%	\$16,872	\$5,062	\$422	\$422	\$967	-\$545

Data Sources: Median Income and Median Gross Rent (monthly amount of rent plus the estimated average monthly cost of utilities) from U.S. Census ACS 2009-2013 estimates; All other figures computed by the NRPC

Affordable Housing Opportunities

Mobile homes are an important source of affordable housing. Vermont land use law does not allow municipalities to discriminate against or segregate mobile homes. Mobile homes in a town can provide an opportunity for those who cannot afford conventional housing.

Public infrastructure contributes to the availability of low cost housing. In particular, sewer and water connections allow for higher densities and lower land costs by minimizing the amount of land that is necessary to accommodate new development. Affordable housing developers often depend on these public facilities to reduce building costs. Sheldon currently does not have any perpetually affordable rental or homeownership housing. There may be opportunities for the development of perpetually affordable housing in Sheldon in areas with existing infrastructure.

CHAPTER 13

LAND USE PLAN

GOAL: To MAINTAIN SHELDON’S RURAL CHARACTER AND SCENIC AND NATURAL RESOURCES WHILE PROVIDING SUFFICIENT SPACE IN APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS FOR ALL LAND USES IN LIGHT OF THEIR RESPECTIVE ENVIRONMENTAL NEEDS AND MUTUAL INTERRELATIONSHIPS

Policies

- ◆ Maintain the character of existing neighborhoods and avoid potential conflicts between incompatible land uses
- ◆ Limit development on slopes greater than 15% and maintain natural vegetation on slopes
- ◆ Discourage development where soils will not support it due to shallow depth to bedrock, instability, or high water table

Land is one of the basic components of the environment that affect life. It is also one of the three traditional “factors of production”, with the other two being labor and capital. In more recent years, a portion of Vermont’s economy has shifted from the natural resource industry to technology based businesses. As the types of businesses change, the value of land also changes. Previously, the productivity of a piece of land for farming or timber largely determined its economic value. Today, features such as access to major transportation networks; infrastructure such as water and sewage systems; and proximity to qualified labor markets all help in determining the value of land for economic development.

Much of Franklin County’s eastern section, including Sheldon, is wooded, hilly, and well suited for forestry. Forested areas are beneficial for many reasons. Included are the economic livelihood of the rural communities, aesthetic and scenic value, carbon sequestration and natural habitat they provide. “Non-productive” uses of land, such as protection of wildlife, provide substantial benefits to society, ranging from the economic returns arising from tourism to the benefits of flood control to recreational opportunities. In addition, open land requires little in terms of municipal services.

Technological change also has an impact on land use. Current technology allows projects to be completed much more rapidly today than in the past. The construction of roads and the use of transportation technology allow people and materials to move rapidly and reliably over the landscape. Telecommunication and computer knowledge further erases geographical limitations. Changes in State sewage regulations and the design of innovative sewage management systems also help in reducing the number of constraints on land development. Previously, land that was thought to have too many constraints can now be developed without much exertion.

Land use planning involves the consideration of the many possible types of land uses and the goals of the land users. The impacts of growth, development, and environmental change on the land should be taken into consideration before any changes are made to the land. These changes will have a lasting effect on the community for years to come.

Current Land Use

The current arrangement of residential, commercial, agricultural, and industrial development within the town is a clear reflection of Sheldon's historic heritage. Sheldon Village, or Sheldon Creek, the site of the Town's first settlements, remains the municipal center of the Town. The Town offices, library, post office, and two churches form the core of the area. The streets are lined with large old historic homes. There is limited commercial development - a quickmart and a harness shop. The only remaining hotel building from the mineral springs era is now the Napoli Home for the Aged.

Sheldon Springs became a central focus for development at the turn of the century due to the water power offered by the falls. The mill and hydro facility form the nucleus of the area surrounded by a community of historic mill homes on small lots. The Springs now has its own post office, and the elementary school was established here in 1975. The Catholic Church, a number of small businesses, and the Town's major industry are also located here.

Another focus of commercial development is Sheldon Junction, located at the intersection of Vermont Routes 78 and 105. This area provides goods and services to regional residents and tourists. There is little residential development, and few farms. Businesses include agricultural implements and supplies and a motel.

The remaining areas of town can best be described as neighborhoods of varying and distinctive character. Moving from west to east across town, the west end is low, flat land off Route 105. The soils are sandy. The area is characterized by a mixture of older farmsteads on very large acreage new development on lots of ten acres and under.

Bedardville is a newly developing neighborhood devoted to residences on larger lots. The area is located southwest of Sheldon Springs off Route 105. North Sheldon is an area of large farms and little new development. There are some home occupations in this part of town as well. The Abbey Restaurant, located on Route 105, serves as local and regional center for dining and meetings.

Shawville is the area north of Sheldon Junction off Route 78. The neighborhood consists of mostly older homes on smaller lots along the road. Crowe Hill is the eastern approach to Sheldon Creek. Just outside the extended village area, there is new residential growth on lots of about an acre. Further out, farms prevail, and there are a number of maple operations.

South Franklin consists of land along the route to Lake Carmi. While this is a major tourist route, the area is sparsely populated, and there is not much sign of new development. The area has shallow soils with ledge outcroppings. There is some commercial development along Route 105 including a machinery dealer.

Rice Hill, on the north side of Route 105, is also in the process of very gradual transformation. The soils here are shallow and stony, and consequently there are a number of old abandoned farms. The area also has some new homes on various-sized lots.

Duffy Hill is an area of town in transition. Along the western border with Enosburgh, the land is high offering scenic views off dirt roads. Development is proceeding, but sparsely on lots of ten acres and greater. At one time, East Sheldon had its own school and post office. Today, this part of town is limited to agricultural operations and large land holdings. There has been some new development in this part of the Town during recent years.

Land Cover

Sheldon covers a total of 25,167.17 acres or approximately 40 square miles. The majority of land cover in town is comprised of agricultural and forested land. Deciduous, coniferous, and mixed forested land accounts for 34.42 percent of the total area in Sheldon. While row crops and pasture comprise 48.92 percent. Table 21 is a list of how the land is divided up in the Town of Sheldon.

	Acres	Percent
Residential	635.432	2.52%
Commercial	3.840	0.02%
Industrial	0.222	0.00%
Other Urban	1.110	0.00%
Transportation/Utilities	555.868	2.21%
Deciduous Forest	2,775.090	11.03%
Coniferous Forest	2,410.864	9.58%
Mixed Forest	3,474.390	13.81%
Forested Wetland	887.444	3.53%
Non-Forested Wetland	289.169	1.15%
Row Crop	6,736.496	26.77%
Hay/Pasture	5,574.293	22.15%
Other Agricultural	28.333	0.11%
Water	1,794.623	7.13%
Total	25,167.174	100.00%
Source: Vermont Center of Geographic Information		

Limits to Development

Some areas of the Town are poorly suited for development due to physical characteristics or lack of adequate infrastructure. If developed, these areas may pose a hazard to the public health and welfare, affect property values of adjoining landowners, or place demands upon the Town for municipal services. The following are some of the limits that must be taken into account before development can occur:

Steep Slopes

- Slopes greater than 20% present considerable constraints to development. They are often covered by only shallow soils with relatively dense and brittle layer of silt and fine sands beneath. The

necessary cuts and stabilization which is necessary to accommodate building foundations, parking areas, road access, and utilities are expensive and, unless very well designed, unattractive.

- Development on steep slopes can entail additional costs for the developer, the Town, and even adjoining property owners. Road maintenance, management of runoff, and erosion control may be problems on the site itself, and on adjoining properties both during and after construction. Slopes also pose obstacles to public services such as fire, ambulance, and school buses, as well as providing extra challenges for road maintenance.

Shallow Soils

- Shallow soils pose limits to development in the form of increased site development costs, inability to filter wastewater, and difficulty in burying utilities below the frost line.

Unstable Soils

- Soils with high shrink/swell potential are considered of poor suitability for

development because of their inability to provide a supportive surface for structures, roads, or paving.

High Water Table (Flood Prone Soils)

- Many areas in town have groundwater at or near the surface for part of the year. The ground water in these areas is more susceptible to contamination by the application of pesticides or fertilizers and leach fields from onsite septic systems. Once contaminated, these waters may present health hazards through public or private water supplies. They also may interact with surface waters in areas where they interact with streams and wetlands.

Flood Plains

- Development in the flood plain presents hazards to human life, health, and property. The flood plain also contains some of the Town's most fertile soils.

Agricultural Soils

- Large areas of prime and good agricultural soils that are present in Sheldon are a unique and irreplaceable resource. These soils support the lifestyle and economy of the Town. Development should be encouraged in areas other than those which are currently devoted to agriculture in order to conserve productive soils and limit land use conflicts.

Source Protection Areas (SPAs)

- Wellhead protection areas include the public water supply and the area, which contributes water to the well. Land uses which could introduce contaminants directly into the ground should be prohibited within these areas.

Shoreland

- The only shoreland in Sheldon is along the Missisquoi. This land is important in giving the Town its scenic beauty. The natural vegetation growing along the shoreline protects water quality by filtering silt and other potential contaminants. The trees and bushes on the banks of the river play an important role in keeping the water cool for fish. For both scenic and environmental reasons, a naturally vegetated buffer zone along the banks of the river should be maintained.

Wetlands

- Wetlands need to be protected from development because they are of crucial importance to the water system, both surface and underground. These areas regulate surface water flow by storing water during periods of high precipitation, and releasing it gradually over periods of low moisture. They help to prevent both flooding and drought. Wetlands also assist in maintaining water quality by filtering and purifying water before it enters either streams or the ground. In addition, the saturated soils of a wetland limit the ability of these areas to support development.

Remote Areas

- Areas that have little potential for the extension of public services and utilities and/or limited road access should be reserved for future use. Land use in these areas should be limited to agriculture, forestry, outdoor recreation, and residences on large lots. This will limit costs to the town of providing services such as road maintenance and emergency services, and allow Sheldon residents to plan ahead for future expansion.

Current Land Use Districts

The Town of Sheldon currently divides its land use into the following land use districts (which are also zoning districts): Village District, Industrial District, Rural Lands I District, Rural Lands II District, Flood Hazard Overlay District, and the Source Protection Overlay District.

Village Districts

- The purpose of this district shall be to maintain the Villages of Sheldon Creek and Sheldon Springs as residential and commercial centers. Municipal water and sewage disposal is available. Land development on small lots will be encouraged to take advantage of municipal services and maintain the traditional pattern of development.

Industrial Districts

- The purpose of this district shall be for future industrial and commercial development. The district has good highway access and potential for municipal water and sewage disposal. Land development in this district shall be planned to take the greatest advantage of the land within the district while limiting conflicts with surrounding land uses. Access points to the district from Route 105 shall be limited and shared accesses shall be encouraged.

Rural Lands I

- The purpose of this district shall be to provide opportunities for low-density rural land development. These areas, in combination with the village districts, shall meet local needs for residential and commercial growth over the next five years. Land included in the district have good highway access, are adjacent to existing villages, or are lands currently committed to extensive rural residential settlement or commercial use. Some parcels or portions of parcels which fall within the district may, upon closer inspection, be limited in their suitability for development.
- Land development within the district shall be planned to minimize the number of access points onto town and state highways in order to maintain smooth traffic flow. Agriculture shall be a predominant land use in much of the district and new development shall be required to minimize potential conflicts with existing agricultural operations.

Rural Lands II

- The Rural Lands II District contains those areas within Sheldon that are most remote and are not needed to meet housing or other development needs over

- the planning period (5 years). These lands have especially high resource values easily jeopardized by land development.
- Included in this district are Sheldon's most extensive wetlands, the Town's less accessible forested hills, and certain extensively managed agricultural lands located furthest from the villages or from public highways. Land within the district has no access by improved public highways and extension of utilities and emergency services to these areas would be costly. Generally, land within the district has one or more of the following characteristics: soils are either shallow to bedrock or are saturated with water for most of the year; soils which are especially well-suited to agriculture; soil conditions (high permeability or shallow depth) which suggest high potential for ground water recharge; land within the probable zone of groundwater recharge.

Flood Hazard Overlay District

- The purpose of this district is to prevent development which might increase flooding and to reduce losses as a result of damage from flooding in areas of special flood hazard in and on the most current flood insurance studies and maps published by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), as provided by the Secretary of the Agency of Natural Resources pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 753. Designation of this district is required for the town to be eligible for the National Flood Insurance Program. This district is an overlay zone and shall be superimposed on the other districts established by this plan. Where the provisions of the underlying district differ from those of the Flood Hazard Area Overlay District, the more restrictive shall govern.

Source Protection Overlay District

- In order to protect the Town's public water supplies, this district will be superimposed over those described above. The overlay district will restrict land uses which might impact surface or ground water quality. The district is delineated on maps supplied by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Water Quality Division. Where the provisions of the underlying district differ from those of the Source Protection Overlay District, the more restrictive shall govern

Proposed Land Use

The Sheldon Planning Commission proposes no changes to the current land use districts at this time. The Planning Commission will review the land use districts again as part of the next plan. A proposed land use map is included in this plan.

CHAPTER 14

NATURAL FEATURES

GOAL: To Provide for Local Growth that is Compatible with the Town's Natural Features Including Soils, Landscape, Water Resources, and Wildlife

Policies

- ◆ Recognize the importance of the area's natural features to the overall quality of life enjoyed by Sheldon residents
- ◆ Limit development in areas where soils have limited capacity to support structures or filter wastes and in areas where the slope is greater than 15%
- ◆ Guide development away from productive agricultural or forest soils
- ◆ Protect the water quality of the Missisquoi River and its tributary streams by preventing erosion along their banks
- ◆ Protect ground water quality by regulating uses that could introduce contaminants into the ground
- ◆ Limit the loss of local wildlife habitat
- ◆ Limit infringement upon wetlands
- ◆ Identify and protect areas where rare, threatened or endangered species exist

The natural areas of Sheldon are important for ecological, scenic, economic, educational, and recreational uses. The critical or important natural areas include wetlands, flood hazard areas, important wildlife and/or endangered species habitats, and other biological, hydrological, or geological areas.

The Town of Sheldon is located within the Vermont Lowlands, a physiographic region that extends from the Canadian border in the north to the Poultney River in the south. The Adirondack Mountains to the west and the Green Mountains to the east protect the area from severe storms. The mountains, along with the low average elevation of the valley area and the proximity to Lake Champlain keep the climate mild. This region contains the largest amount of flat and gently rolling land in the state, mostly lying below 1,500 feet in elevation. Growing seasons are longer than other regions, and the soils are fertile.

Geology

Most of the rocks in the area are sedimentary or metamorphic. A fault line runs northeasterly along Town Road #28 and the railroad tracks through Sheldon Springs to the Rice Hill area and into Highgate. The metamorphic rocks that were thrust upward by the fault are harder and more erosion resistant than the sedimentary rocks found in the western part of town.

During glacial times, until about 12,000 years ago, the land which is now Sheldon was at least partially covered by Lake Vermont. Glacial activity is responsible for both the topography and soils which characterize the area today.

Topography

Sheldon's elevation ranges from around 85 meters (280 feet) in the western part of town to a height of 345 meters (1132 feet) at the top of Duffy Hill on its eastern border with Enosburgh. The overall topography of the area is gently rolling hills. The center of town is dominated by low lands associated with the Missisquoi and its tributaries. Steeper slopes are concentrated in the southern and eastern parts of town. Sheldon Hill is a prominent landmark at 287 meters (941 feet). The banks of the Missisquoi are steep in places, and along the Enosburgh border slopes range between fifteen and twenty-five percent.

Slope conditions, the steepness of the land measured in number of feet of vertical rise over 100 feet of horizontal distance, are a major factor in determining the land's capacity of use and development. The Soil Conservation Service provides general guidelines for assessing slope limitations as shown in Table 22.

Table 22: Slope Classifications		
Classes Simple Slopes	Slope Gradient Limits	Comments
Nearly level	0 to 3	Generally suitable for most types of development but may require drainage
Gently Sloping-Undulating	1 to 8	Most desirable for development because these areas generally have the least restrictions
Strong Sloping-Rolling	4 to 16	Suitable for low-density development with particular attention given to erosion control, runoff, and septic design
Moderately Steep-Hilly	10 to 30	Unsuitable for most types of development and septic systems; construction is costly; erosion and runoff problems are likely
Steep	20 to 60	All types of construction should be avoided, careful land management for other uses needed
Very Steep	>45	Not suitable for construction
Source: Natural Resources Conservation Service		

However, the capacity of any particular site must be evaluated considering the interaction of slope with other features such as soils, vegetation, and existing and proposed land uses.

Soils

The soil groups which are present today in Sheldon owe their quality and distribution to the area's glacial history. Along the flood plain are soils that formed as the waters dammed by the glaciers receded. These soils are deep, level, moderately well-drained to poorly drained, and loamy. They are subject to flooding anywhere from once every five years to twice a year, and have a seasonal high water table. Most of these areas have been cleared and are farmed intensively.

Soils which were deposited by water on terraces and old lake plains are also found along the Missisquoi and its major branch streams. In the larger valleys above the flood plains on old freshwater lake beds are areas of deep, gently-sloping to steep soils composed of silt and clay. Development potential on these soils is limited by their poor drainage and instability. However, with some artificial drainage, they are suitable for cultivation and pasture.

The eastern part of town is dominated by soils which are deep, excessively drained, and sandy. These soils formed on beaches, deltas, and terraces. The level areas are good for cultivation, although somewhat dry with low nutrient content. Development potential on these soils is considered good with the exception of some areas where the water table is high.

Along McGowan and Goodsell Brooks are soils which formed in organic material and glacial till on hills and in depressions. They are deep, poorly drained, loamy soils with a hard, brittle layer underneath and stones at the top. The use of these areas for either development or agriculture is limited.

Large areas of Sheldon have soils which are deep, moderately-drained to well-drained, and loamy. These are upland soils which are suitable for agriculture with some artificial drainage. Their use for development is limited due to slope and the presence of a hard, brittle layer below the surface.

Adjacent to the areas described above are areas of shallow soils on bedrock ridges. Most of these sites are forested. Their development is limited by slope and rock outcroppings.

The discussion above is based upon the General Soil Map for Franklin County compiled by the Soil Conservation Service. This map is used because it provides a broad perspective of the soils and landscapes in the area and their suitability for general kinds of land use. The maps which accompany this plan are based upon detailed soils mapping, and can be used to more accurately determine the limitations and potential for different land uses on particular sites in the Town.

Earth Resources

Sand and gravel deposits are a valuable resource which will be of increasing importance. As the area develops, more of these materials will be necessary to expand infrastructure. At the same time, increased residential development in rural areas often conflicts with extraction activities. There is also pressure upon the Franklin County gravel market from Canadian purchasers. The Town's earth resources should be identified, and access protected so that they can be extracted if and when the need arises. The Town does not have its own source of gravel, and will be at the mercy of commercial sources as demand increases and prices rise.

According to mapping done by the Vermont Geological Survey, Sheldon has sand deposits of medium to good quality in the western part of town off Route 105 extending north into Highgate. There is a gravel deposit of medium to good quality containing less than twenty-five percent sand lying at about the center of the Town's eastern border.

Surface Waters

The Northwest Region of Vermont is home to many types of surface waters. They offer sustenance, scenic beauty, recreational opportunities, and livelihood to the residents and visitors of Franklin County and Sheldon County. Water is one of the basic

necessities of life; and because of that, it must be appropriately respected, managed, enhanced, and preserved to ensure the future vitality of the Region and its inhabitants.

Since Sheldon has no major lakes or ponds, the Missisquoi River is the Town's principal surface water feature. The Missisquoi and its associated streams and brooks provide recreation, scenic views, wildlife habitat, and drainage for the surrounding lands. All of these functions can be impacted by land uses in the river corridor or along shorelines. Maintaining the quality of the river is of extreme importance. Not only does it affect the Town, but also it has the potential to directly affect the Missisquoi River Delta and consequently, Lake Champlain.

The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources categorizes Vermont's waters into three quality classifications:

Class A

- These waters have uniformly excellent quality
- They support contact recreation (i.e. swimming)
- They are suitable for use as public drinking water supplies
- They have high ecological value
- All water above 2500 feet in elevation are included here

Class B

- These waters exhibit good aesthetic value
- They support swimming and other forms of recreation
- They may be used as public drinking water supplies if filtered
- They are appropriate for irrigation and other agricultural uses

Waste Management Zones or WMZ (formerly Class C)

- These areas are protected
- They are used for the assimilation of treated wastes where water contact uses are not encouraged
- WMZ's extend for a minimum of one mile downstream of all wastewater treatment outfall areas

All waters not classified as Class A or as WMZ's are automatically Class B waters. Class A waters make up about three- percent of the State total. Vermont's waters are classified according to this system which establishes goals to be attained or minimum standards to be maintained, depending upon the present quality of a particular section of water. The majority of Sheldon's surface waters are Class B - suitable for drinking as long as filtration and disinfection measures are taken. Class B waters are also suitable for irrigation, swimming, and recreation. The Missisquoi River, as it passes through Sheldon Springs, and from the Tyler Branch to the Enosburgh border, is designated as a Waste Management Zone. The waters in these stretches provide mixing zones for treated waste water and are not suitable for water contact recreation.

The Department of Environmental Conservation, Water Quality Division has identified local sources of water quality problems which could threaten the use of the Missisquoi and its tributaries. The hydroelectric facility produces alterations in flow which can impact recreational activities and fisheries. Between Sheldon Springs Dam

and Tyler Branch, agricultural runoff, streambank erosion, and hydropower flow alterations were identified.

Black Creek has been identified as a tributary which cannot support the uses associated with its Class B status due to agricultural runoff, nutrients and organic enrichment, pathogens, sedimentation and turbidity, temperature, aquatic weeds and algae, loss of streambank vegetation, animal grazing, and allegedly failed septic systems. Tyler Branch exhibits many of the same problems.

Groundwater

Water that is contained within the soil and rocks below the ground surface is considered ground water. Ground water storage and travel is determined by topography and by the composition of the soils and rocks in which it is confined. Ground water is the source of over ninety- percent of the drinking water for rural areas in Vermont. It is replenished through rain and surface water which percolates down through the soil.

The Vermont Geological Survey indicates that the area along Black Creek from Fairfield to the Missisquoi and west along RTE 105 to Sheldon Springs has excellent ground-water potential. However, some of the surface water quality problems present in this corridor may also affect ground water quality. Any activities which introduce contaminants directly into the ground - underground storage tanks, leach fields, agricultural activities - can affect ground water quality. Since surface waters may also travel underground, ground water can be contaminated by sources which introduce contaminants at the surface.

Wellhead Protection Areas (WPA's) are surface and subsurface areas that serve as natural recharge, collection, transmission, and storage zones for public water supply systems. The WPA's include a buffer, which incorporates the area through which contaminants are likely to move toward and reach the wells.

Sheldon has three WPA's, two in Sheldon Springs and one along Town Highway 4. Both of the Sheldon Springs areas are located along Route 105 in Sheldon Springs. Sheldon Water System is located along Town Highway 4 north of Town Highway 31. Both the Sheldon Springs water systems have potential sources of contamination including a sewage lagoon, an industrial dump, and a gas station. Potential sources of contamination for the Sheldon Water System include leach fields, the cemetery, and agricultural activities. The WPA's for local public water supplies are shown on the maps accompanying this plan. Uses that could impact ground water should be restricted within the WPA's.

Wetlands

Wetlands are areas of land where soils are saturated with surface or ground water frequently enough to support vegetation which requires these saturated conditions for growth and reproduction. Such areas include marshes, swamps, sloughs, potholes, fens, river and lake overflows, mud flats, bogs, and ponds. Wetlands are identified according to vegetation, soils, and hydrology.

Wetlands perform many functions which contribute to the quality of both surface and ground water. They store flood water and storm runoff and often are the place where surface water enters the ground to renew ground water supply. Wetlands act as a filter to remove contaminants as waters pass through on their way to streams or underground. They are also important to wildlife, fish, and plants, including a high

number of threatened or endangered species. Wetlands are also utilized by humans for their recreational, scenic, historic, educational, and cultural values.

Vermont's wetland regulations are based upon the National Wetlands Inventory. They designate most of the wetlands identified by the inventory as Class 2, and require a fifty foot vegetated buffer between the wetland and any adjacent land development. The maps accompanying this plan show some of Sheldon's wetlands. However, if there is a chance that a site may be a wetland, the area should be surveyed by a soil scientist. The Agency of Natural Resources Wetlands Division staff is available to help landowners make wetlands determinations free of charge.

Flood Hazard Areas

Flooding is a natural occurrence and Sheldon's floodplains are important natural features that are worthy of protection due to their ability to absorb the effects of flooding on the community and their positive impacts on water quality. Flood Hazard Areas are discussed in more depth in Chapter 16 – Flood Resiliency

Deer Yards

Vermont's deer live near the northern limit of White Tail Deer range. They require specific winter habitat to survive severe weather and heavy snow. Deer wintering areas, or yards, have two features important for deer survival: shelter and food. The core area is usually made up of softwoods with southerly or westerly exposure, moderate elevation, and minimal human disturbance. Here, snow depth is limited, winds are buffered, and air temperature is higher. This shelter must be near to an area of mixed forest to provide browse. In addition, the deer must have corridors which link the yards together and allow them to move between summer and winter habitat.

Sheldon has just one area identified as winter deer range on a side hill extending down to McGowan Brook north of Sheldon Junction. However, other areas fitting the description above may also be providing valuable winter habitat, and sites should be checked on a case-by-case basis. Usually when development is proposed for a site which adjoins a deer yard, measures can be developed to limit impacts.

Natural Areas

According to an inventory conducted in 1992, Sheldon has two biological areas of statewide significance. Even though Sheldon Falls, originally one of the largest falls on the Missisquoi, has been destroyed by the dam, several rare and threatened plant species can be found on the bare rocks of the gorge. The islands and ledges in the Missisquoi River between Sheldon Junction and Highgate Falls, which are in private ownership, are also considered of biological significance.

CHAPTER 15

TRANSPORTATION

GOAL: TO ENSURE REASONABLE, FUNCTIONAL, AND EFFICIENT DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

Policies

- ◆ Protect the health, safety, and welfare of the traveling public
- ◆ Promote safe, convenient, economic, and energy efficient transportation systems including public transit options and paths for pedestrians and bicycles
- ◆ Promote transportation activities that respect the natural environment
- ◆ Maintain the scenic character of the Town's rural byways
- ◆ Support public transit efforts of the Northwest Vermont Public Transit Network to increase mobility and access of Town residents
- ◆ Support the efforts of the Northwest Vermont Rail Trail Council to promote, enhance, and increase use of the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail

Transportation Planning

Transportation planning at the State, Regional, and local level should have two primary functions. The first purpose is to ensure that people and goods are able to move, safely, and efficiently using various modes of transportation. This includes, where applicable, highways, local roads, railroads, airports, bicycle paths, pedestrian routes, ferry systems, and public transit. Transportation efficiency includes consideration of energy use, economic and social costs, and time. People and goods move with the assistance of more than one mode, therefore transportation planning should consider how the different modes of transportation could complement each other.

The second purpose of transportation planning is to help guide growth in appropriate locations identified through land-use planning. Growth management can be assisted by directing construction or transportation improvements in coordination with local and regional plans into areas favorable for growth and away from environmentally sensitive areas.

In 1991, the Vermont Agency of Transportation decentralized its planning process in order to provide for more local and regional participation. The Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) was then formed to help in the planning process. It serves in an advisory role to the Region's Board of Commissioners. Each of the Region's municipalities has the option to have a representative on the committee; Sheldon has chosen to participate and has a member on the TAC.

Town Road System

The Sheldon transportation map shows the Town roads and State highways located within the Town. Sheldon may require improvements in the form of paving and widening in years to come. The decisions to perform this work should be made by the voters after local officials make recommendations and suggestions.

The Town of Sheldon currently maintains a total of 44.59 miles of roads – 15.99 miles of Class 2 highways and 28.67 miles of Class 3 highways. . The budget for the highway department in 2005 was \$264,000 or \$5,967 per mile. In 2015, the road budget was \$732,106.73 or \$8,202 per mile.

A staff of three full-time employees performs local road maintenance. Equipment currently in use for road maintenance in Sheldon includes:

- ◆ Road grader - Caterpillar
- ◆ 2009 John Deere Tractor Loader backhoe
- ◆ 2006 International Tandem dump Truck with plow equipment
- ◆ 2015 utility truck with plow GMC
- ◆ 2015 International tandem with plow
- ◆ 2016 Western Star single axle with plow equipment

Road equipment was previously replaced according to a five-year capital budget and program. However, the plan has lapsed. Due to the present age of the existing road equipment a new five-year capital budget plan should be considered.

The Town buys its sand and gravel from two private sources with the largest amount coming from Enosburg Falls. There are no long-term agreements which govern Sheldon's access to gravel and sand, or their cost. The current sources should be adequate for the next five years, but as existing sources are depleted, new sources become more difficult to access, and the number and quality of roads increases, prices will rise.

The Town is responsible for the maintenance of four bridges within its borders. Bridge #9 on Town Highway 1, was replaced in 1996. The State of Vermont paid 90% of the cost of the new structure, and the Town picked up the remaining ten percent. The Vermont Agency of Transportation closed the truss bridge on Bouchard Road TH 22, in 1998. The town roadmen using town equipment repaired the bridge in 1999. The bridge was upgraded from a three-ton capacity to an eight-ton capacity.

The Selectboard grants permission for access onto town highways. These decisions are made based on the Town Road Ordinance.

In order for the Town to take over private roads they must be brought up to town standards and the owner must deed the road right of way to the Town. In recent years, an increasing number of homes are being built off Class 4 roads. New home owners then desire town maintenance of the trail to their home. Town policy is that homeowners or developers are responsible for upgrading these trails back to Class 3 standards before the Town will maintain them.

There are 15.811 miles of state highway in Sheldon including Routes 78, 120, 105, and the Vermont State Park Road.

Railroad Beds

Rail service came to Sheldon in 1867 when the St. Johnsbury and Lake Champlain Railroads were chartered. This line became the Vermont Northern, and then the Lamoille Valley Railroad before discontinuing its service to Sheldon in 1989.

The Missisquoi Railroad also served the Town beginning in 1869. Eventually the Missisquoi became part of the Central Vermont Railway System. Railroad activity in Sheldon came to an abrupt end in June 1984 when the bridge crossing the Missisquoi

River was severely damaged by a Boston and Maine train which had been routed through St. Albans. The abandoned railroad bed is now a 26.4-mile year-round recreation path known as the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail. The trail runs from Richford to St. Albans.

Public Transportation

The Green Mountain Transit Authority (GMTA) operates a shuttle that runs from Richford to St. Albans, Monday through Friday. It makes several scheduled stops but can also deviate from the route up to ¼ of mile to accommodate specific needs by calling in advance. The scheduled Sheldon stop is at Pauline's Mobile in the morning and the evening. Riders can transfer to the Chittenden County Transportation Authority (CCTA) LINK at the last stop in St. Albans. The LINK connects to Burlington in the morning and evening on weekdays only.

Walking, Biking, and other Forms of Transportation

Bicycle traffic in and around the Town has increased in recent years. It has become a popular seasonal activity locally and in the surrounding areas. Sheldon has become a favorite destination for both bicycle tours and road riders from Quebec, Canada and other parts of Vermont. On many of the Town's roads, the mixing of bicycles and auto traffic is potentially very hazardous due to narrow roads, limited shoulders, sharp curves, and a variety of bicycle-unfriendly obstacles, such as guardrails and steep slopes.

Local efforts to develop bicycle and pedestrian paths have been unsuccessful. However, there remains a need to upgrade and maintain existing sidewalk infrastructure. In Sheldon Village, the existing 100-year old concrete walks are discontinuous, overgrown with vegetation, and have been heavily damaged by tree roots. New sidewalks on both sides of Bridge Street down to the bridge and on both sides of Main Street would be ideal improvements.

Other local forms of transportation include motorcycles, snowmobiles, and All Terrain Vehicles (4-wheelers). The Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail, with a trail bridge and public transit connections, offers the opportunity to increase the number of people who walk, bicycle, snowmobile, or take public transit to work (ATV's are not permitted on the Rail Trail due to safety and maintenance issues). Sheldon residents can use the trail to reach public transit stops. In 1999, the Northwest Vermont Rail Trail Council received assistance from the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps and District 8 of the Vermont Agency of Transportation to construct two parking areas along the Trail in Sheldon Junction and North Sheldon. The Sheldon Junction parking area accommodates eight cars. Local residents use it as an informal park-and-ride lot.

CHAPTER 16

FLOOD RESILIENCY

GOAL: To ENSURE SHELDON IS A FLOOD RESILIENT COMMUNITY

Policies

- ◆ To discourage development in identified flood hazard areas and river corridor areas. If new development is to be built in such areas, it shall not exacerbate flooding and fluvial erosion.
- ◆ To protect and restore floodplains, river corridors, and upland forest areas that attenuate and moderate inundation flooding and fluvial erosion.
- ◆ To encourage emergency preparedness and response planning.

Flooding is a common hazard in the Sheldon. The Town lies within the Missisquoi River watershed. The Missisquoi River and many of its tributaries flood in the spring of each year when snow melt and spring rains cause them to overflow their banks. Ice jams also cause flooding on the Missisquoi which contribute to field and bank erosion.

Flooding generally occurs in two ways: inundation and fluvial erosion. Inundation flooding is when water rises and inundates the adjacent low-lying land. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) defines a floodplain as an area of land adjacent to lakes and streams that is subject to recurring inundation or high water (See Water Resources Map I). There are several areas of floodplain in Sheldon, including along the Missisquoi River, Tyler Branch and the Black Creek.

The Town of Sheldon has adopted land use regulations for special flood hazard areas, as defined by FEMA on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), in order to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its residents and to allow the community to participate in the National Flood Hazard Insurance Program (NFIP). It is important to note that the existing FIRMs are dated April 1, 1981 and the Flood Insurance Study was published on October 1, 1980. While this information is the best available, the hydrology that these maps are based on has not been updated since the study in 1980 and therefore does not account for shifts in rivers or effects of development. The FIRMs were digitized by the Northwest Regional Planning Commission in 1999 to assist in planning efforts and are used to determine approximate locations. The digital version is not used for regulatory rulings.

Development within floodplains can have many potentially damaging consequences as development may obstruct the natural flow of water or displace soil and raise base flood elevations. Development within floodplains should generally be avoided. One strategy to mitigate potential encroachment and flood loss is to prohibit development below base flood elevation or set an elevation from which development is prohibited. Examples of uses that are appropriate to floodplains include agriculture, open space, and recreation.

Flooding can also occur through fluvial erosion, a condition that occurs when fast moving flood waters, typically in steep mountain valleys, cause erosion of areas surrounding streams and rivers. To identify areas prone to fluvial erosion hazards, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resource has identified River Corridors in all Vermont municipalities (see Water Resources Map II). River Corridors are based on the individual conditions of streams and rivers including topography and the existence of existing public infrastructure. River Corridors have been mapped for the Missisquoi River, Black Creek, Tyler Branch, Goodsell Brook, McGowan Brook, and Hungerford Brook (and branches). River Corridors are not mapped for streams that have a watershed area of less than 2 square miles. Instead, the Agency advises using a 50 foot buffer on each side of those streams with the intention of protecting stream stability and natural flow. The intent of the regulation is to limit bank erosion, to protect habitat, and to improve water quality.

River Corridor regulations currently apply only to Act 250-related land development and land development not regulated by municipalities (ex. agriculture). Municipalities may adopt River Corridor maps and regulation as a part of their local development regulations. Adoption may result in financial benefits for the Town in the event of federally declared natural disaster due to changes in how the State Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF) is administered.

Planning for future flooding events is important to ensure that a community is flood resilient. Development and adoption of a local hazard mitigation plan can help a community identify potential risks to the community. Local hazard mitigation plans can also identify projects in the community that can decrease the effects of potential hazards, such as the replacement of culverts or buyouts of properties with repetitive flood risk. Approval of local hazard mitigation plans by FEMA may also lead to increased grant opportunities for communities to implement identified projects. Sheldon should adopt a local hazard mitigation plan to plan for future hazards, including flooding, and to gain access to additional funding sources that will decrease risks to the community.

CHAPTER 17

Compatibility with Neighboring Towns

The Town of Sheldon is located in the northwestern part of the State in Franklin County. Five different municipalities, all of which are in Franklin County, border it. The Town of Enosburgh borders it to the east; Franklin borders it to the north, Highgate to the northwest, Swanton to west, and Fairfield to the south.

Land use patterns in all of these municipalities can affect one another in many different ways. It is important that all of their development patterns are compatible with each other. It is also important that each town's future development plans do not adversely affect their bordering neighbor's plans. The Sheldon Town Plan does not propose any major changes to its land use districts, and because of this, no substantial conflicts with adjoining Town Plans should arise.

A complete description of each town's land use districts can be found in each municipality's town plan and zoning bylaws.

Compatibility with Enosburgh and Enosburg Falls

The Town of Enosburgh and the Village of Enosburg Falls border Sheldon to the east. Enosburgh and Enosburgh Falls completed their latest joint municipal plan in 2015. The town has divided its land into the following districts: Village of Enosburg Falls District, Small Village District, Agricultural District, Rural District, Conservation District, Well Protection Overlay, Wetland Overlay, and Flood Hazard Overlay. The Rural Residential District and the Conservation District in the Town make up the majority of the border with Sheldon.

The Village has divided its land into the following districts: Central Business District, Recreation District, High Density Residential District, Commercial District, Industrial District, Low Density Residential District, Agricultural/Rural Residential District, Conservation District, and Flood Hazard Overlay District. The Commercial District in the Village borders Sheldon's Rural Lands I District. This potential conflict should continue to be monitored to ensure there aren't future conflicts in planned land uses.

Compatibility with Franklin

The Town of Franklin borders Sheldon to the north. Franklin completed its latest town plan in 2012. The Town has divided its land into the following districts: Village District, Rural Residential/Agricultural District, Conservation District, Shoreline/Recreation District, and the Flood Hazard Overlay. The Rural/Agricultural District borders Sheldon's Rural Land 1 and Rural Lands 2 District's.

Compatibility with Highgate

The Town of Highgate borders Sheldon to the northwest. Highgate completed its latest town plan in 2015. The Town has divided its land into the following districts: Agricultural District, Medium Density Residential District, High Density Residential District, Industrial/Commercial District, Shoreline District, Protected District, and the Forest Reserve District, Protected Areas District, Airport Overlay and Flood Plain

Overlay. The Medium Density Residential District, the Forest Reserve District, and the Protected Area District make up the border between Sheldon and Highgate. While there could potentially be residential development in the Medium Residential District of Highgate, it should not be dense and therefore still be compatible with Sheldon's Rural Lands I and II districts.

Compatibility with Swanton

The Town of Swanton borders Sheldon to the west. Swanton completed its latest town plan in 2015. The Town proposed the following land use districts: Shoreland Recreation Area, Recreation/Conservation District, Shoreland/River District, Agricultural Residential District (R1), Moderate Density Residential District (R3), Residential District (high density, R5), Central Business District, Neighborhood Commercial District, Neighborhood Commercial Light District, Commercial/Light Industrial District, Industrial District and Southern Growth District. The Agricultural/Residential District of Swanton makes up the border between Sheldon and Swanton and is generally compatible with the Sheldon Rural Lands I and II districts.

Compatibility with Fairfield

The Town of Fairfield borders Sheldon to the south. Their latest town plan was adopted in 2015. The Town has divided its land into the following districts: Village Residential District, Conservation and Recreation District, Chester A. Arthur Historical District and Scenic Road, Flood Hazard District, Fairfield Waterfowl Refuge District (Fairfield Swamp), Lake District, Uplands District, Wellhead Protection Overlay District, and the Agricultural District. The Conservation and Recreation District along with the Agricultural District make up the majority of the border between Sheldon and Fairfield.

Compatibility with the Regional Plan

Sheldon recognizes that it is part of a larger region and has considered the compatibility of its planning goals with that of the region. The Regional Plan was recently adopted in 2015. Many of the Regional Plan's goals and policies were based on ideas expressed in local plans. The Regional Plan identifies land areas that are similar to those identified in the Sheldon Town Plan. The Regional Plan also notes the importance of agricultural lands in Sheldon and the significance of having these land remain a part of the working landscape.

CHAPTER 18

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

One of the most important steps in developing a Town Plan is how the goals and policies in the plan are to be implemented. Goals and policies were established for the following chapters of this plan:

- Chapter 5: Archaeological, Historic, and Scenic Resources
- Chapter 6: Community Facilities
- Chapter 7: Community Services
- Chapter 8: Community Utilities
- Chapter 9: Economy
- Chapter 10: Education
- Chapter 11: Energy
- Chapter 12: Housing
- Chapter 13: Land Use Plan
- Chapter 14: Natural Features
- Chapter 15: Transportation
- Chapter 16: Flood Resiliency

When combined together, the goals and policies support the “Visions for the Future of Sheldon” set forth by the plan and are compatible with the plans of surrounding communities. It should be noted that some of the goals set forth by the plan may take a substantial amount of time to accomplish. Below are specific implementation steps that Sheldon should complete to accomplish the goals and policies in the Town Plan:

Table 23 – Implementation Table	
<u>Task</u>	<u>Responsible Party</u>
Archeological, Historic and Scenic Resources	
Consider the historic settlement pattern of the community and when amending the development regulations.	Planning Commission and Selectboard
Amend development regulations to include standards that encourage clustered development in order to reduce impact on open agricultural fields and forested areas.	Planning Commission and Development Review Board
Community Facilities	
Have municipal forest surveyed, and request assistance of county forester to evaluate the property and suggest a management plan to provide for better use of the land for timber production, wildlife habitat, recreation.	Selectboard
Adopt a Capital Budget and Program.	Planning Commission and Selectboard

Community Services	
Amend development regulations to include standards that require access to water for fire fighting, sufficient roadway access, and turnaround ability for emergency vehicles.	Development Review Board
Continue financial support for local AmCare Squad.	Selectboard
Investigate options for recreational use of municipal forest.	Planning Commission
Community Utilities	
Develop and use a written policy regarding extensions to water and sewer systems.	Selectboard
Work with the Agency of Natural Resources and Northwest Regional Planning Commission to monitor and install upgrades to wastewater facilities in Sheldon to ensure compliance with TMDL standards.	Selectboard
Economy	
Amend development regulations to require that developers that are subdividing land place language in covenants which acknowledges agricultural practices as an established land use in rural residential areas.	Planning Commission and Development Review Board
Upgrade and maintain village utilities and services to allow for economic development.	Selectboard
Education	
Maintain capital budget and program and reevaluate yearly to provide long-term planning for school facilities and equipment.	School District
Consider improvements to school parking and road alignment to ensure the safety of students and drivers.	School District and Selectboard
Energy	
Check weatherization status of all municipal buildings and work with Efficiency Vermont to make necessary weatherization improvements.	Selectboard
Work with Northwest Regional Planning Commission to amend the energy section of the Municipal Plan to ensure that the plan can be regionally certified per 24 V.S.A. 4352.	Planning Commission and Selectboard
Develop and adopt a solar facility screening ordinance enabled by 24 V.S.A. 4414.	Selectboard
Adopt subdivision standards to encourage better planning and more efficient layout of new development to reduce potential energy costs.	Planning Commission and Development Review Board
Housing	
Ensure development regulations allow for higher density development in areas of town served by municipal water and sewer.	Planning Commission and Selectboard

Identify areas which can withstand higher density development and encourage new residences to be clustered by offering a density bonus for designs which conserve land and/or create efficient, economical housing.	Planning Commission and Selectboard
Land Use	
Review zoning districts and ensure that existing and desired land uses correspond to land use plan.	Planning Commission
Consider applying for a state village center designation for Sheldon's villages.	Planning Commission and Selectboard
Natural Features	
Consider slope and soils characteristics when considering areas for new development, and when reviewing individual development proposals.	Development Review Board
Transportation	
Administer the written access policy regulating curb cuts and provide for consistent decisions regarding town road access.	Selectboard
Discuss, plan, and seek grant funding for construction of pedestrian improvements, such as sidewalks, in Sheldon's villages.	Selectboard and Planning Commission
Consider how road access and quality influences development when amending the development regulations	Planning Commission
Plan for long-term sources of sand and gravel and for potentially developing a local source.	Selectboard
Continue to participate in regional transportation planning efforts (Regional Transportation Advisory Committee)	Selectboard
Flood Resiliency	
Review River Corridor Maps created by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR). Work with ANR to amend maps based on local knowledge. Consider incorporating river corridor maps and regulations into the Sheldon Development Regulations.	Planning Commission and Selectboard
Review current Flood Hazard Zone District standards in the Sheldon Development Regulations for compliance with National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) minimum standards. Consider adopting standards higher standards for this district.	Planning Commission and Selectboard
Adopt a Local Emergency Operations Plan for each community each year.	Selectboard
Adopt a Sheldon Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP).	Planning Commission and Selectboard
Adopt Vermont Road and Bridge Standards each year.	Selectboard
Support streambank stabilization efforts that reduce the risk of erosion.	Planning Commission and Development Review Board

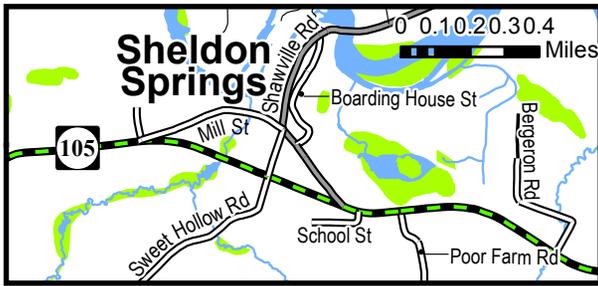
Other Implementation Measures	
Continue the existing coordinated, comprehensive planning process and policy framework to guide decisions by the Sheldon Planning Commission and continue to encourage citizen participation at all levels of the planning process.	Planning Commission
Hold semi-annual meetings with the Planning Commission, Development Review Board, and Selectboard to coordinate the implementation of the goals, policies and implementation actions in this Plan.	Planning Commission, Development Review Board, and Selectboard

The Town of Sheldon can work with other agencies and organizations to implement the plan such as: Northwest Regional Planning Commission, the Vermont Agency of Transportation, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, the Vermont Agency of Housing and Community Affairs, and the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation (to name a few).

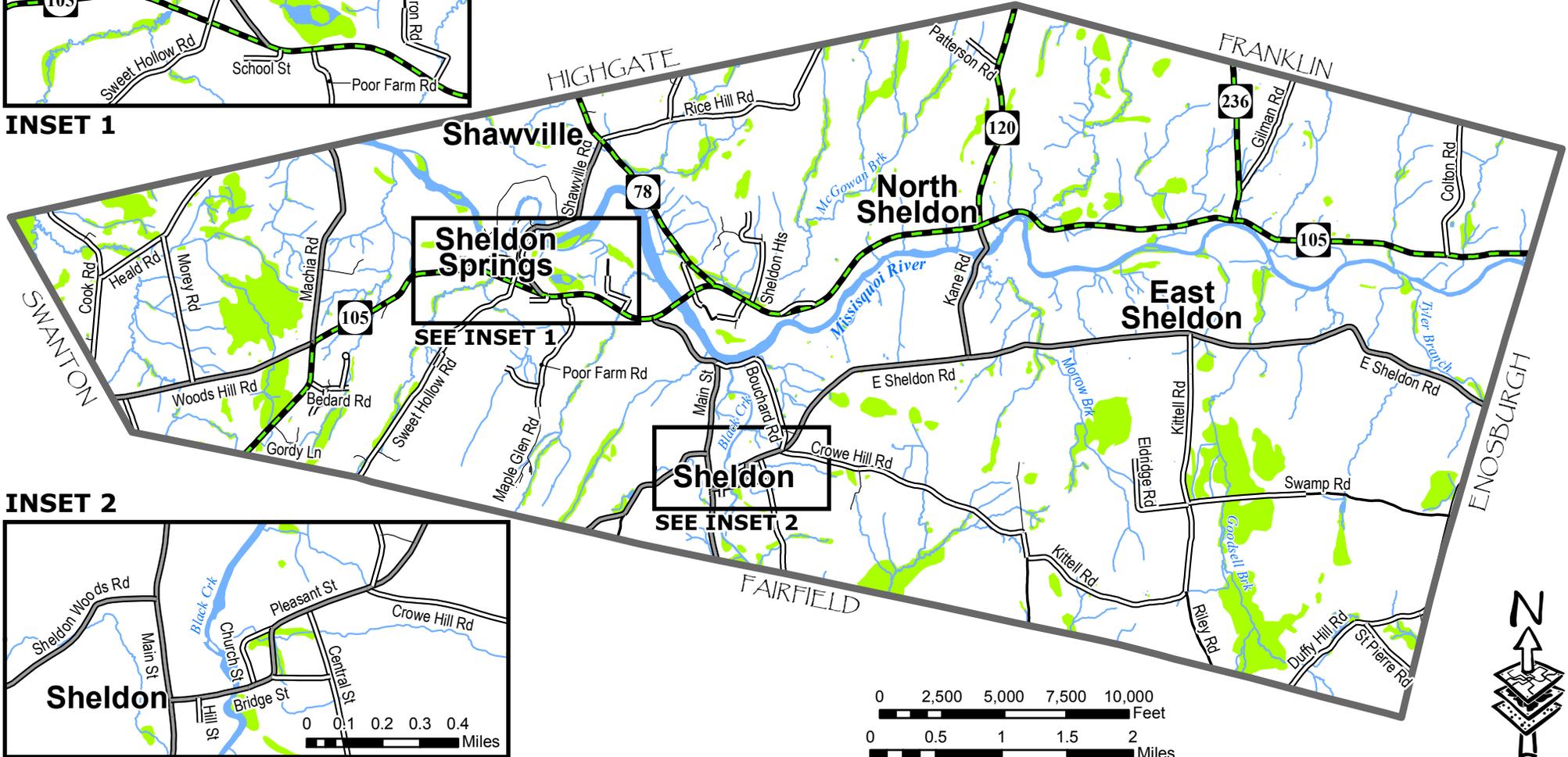
Citizen involvement is also a tool that should be used and encouraged. Citizens should be involved in local planning issues that may arise for they will be the ones most affected by any changes that occur in the Town. Their input, ideas, opinions, and concerns should be taken into account when dealing with planning issues since they are the ones who have the most to gain from the Plan.

Planning is an ongoing process that will require the efforts of many different people. The Plan will continue to change over time to meet the evolving needs to the people of Sheldon.

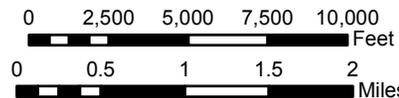
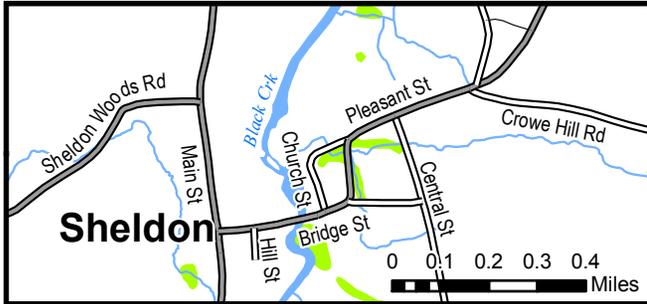
TOWN OF SHELDON Base Map



INSET 1



INSET 2



LEGEND

Transportation Features	Surface Water Features
State Highway	River, Stream or Brook
Class 2 Town Highway	Pond or River
Class 3 Town Highway	Wetland
Class 4 Town Highway	Other Feature
Private Road	Town Boundary

For planning purposes only.

Data Sources:
All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. Vermont Coordinate System Transverse Mercator, NAD 83. North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

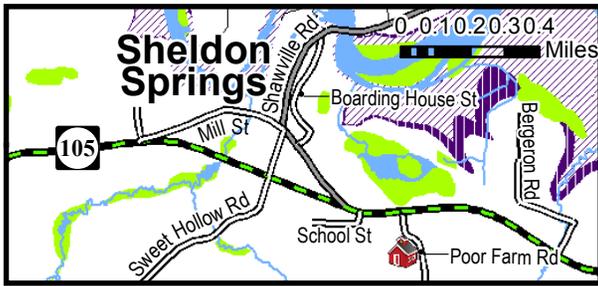
Located:
z:gis/projects/county/franklin/sheldon/
townplan2016/basemap.mxd

Created:
January, 2016.

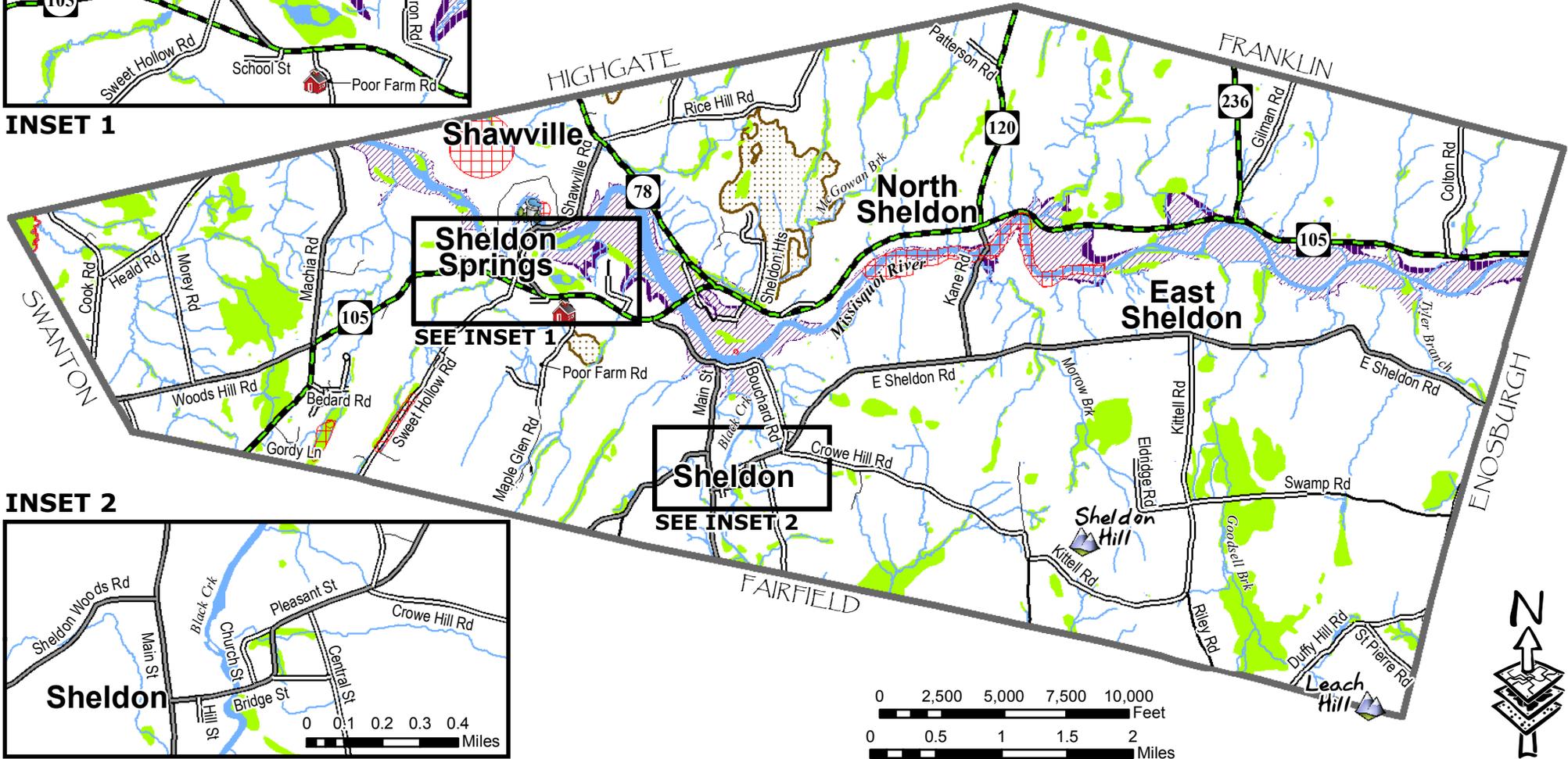


Prepared by:
Northwest Regional
Planning Commission
75 Fairfield Street
St. Albans, VT 05478
(802) 524-5958
www.nrpcvt.com

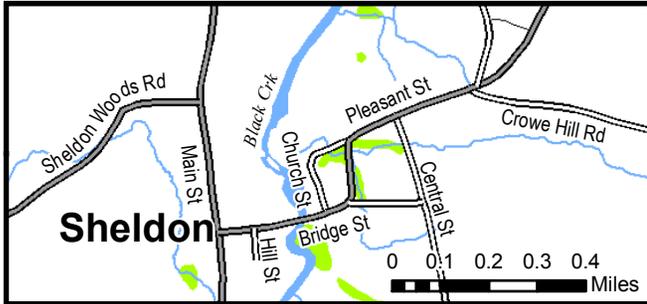
TOWN OF SHELDON Critical Areas



INSET 1



INSET 2



LEGEND

Critical Features

- Dam
- School
- Summit
- Threatened or Endangered Species
- Deer Yards

Transportation Features

- State Highway
- Class 2 Town Highway
- Class 3 Town Highway
- Class 4 Town Highway
- Private Road

Surface Water Features

- River, Stream or Brook
- Pond or River
- Wetland
- 100 Year Flood Zone
- 500 Year Flood Zone

For planning purposes only.

Data Sources:
All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. Vermont Coordinate System Transverse Mercator, NAD 83. North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

Located:
z:gis/projects/county/franklin/sheldon/
townplan2016/criticalareas.mxd

Created:
January, 2016.

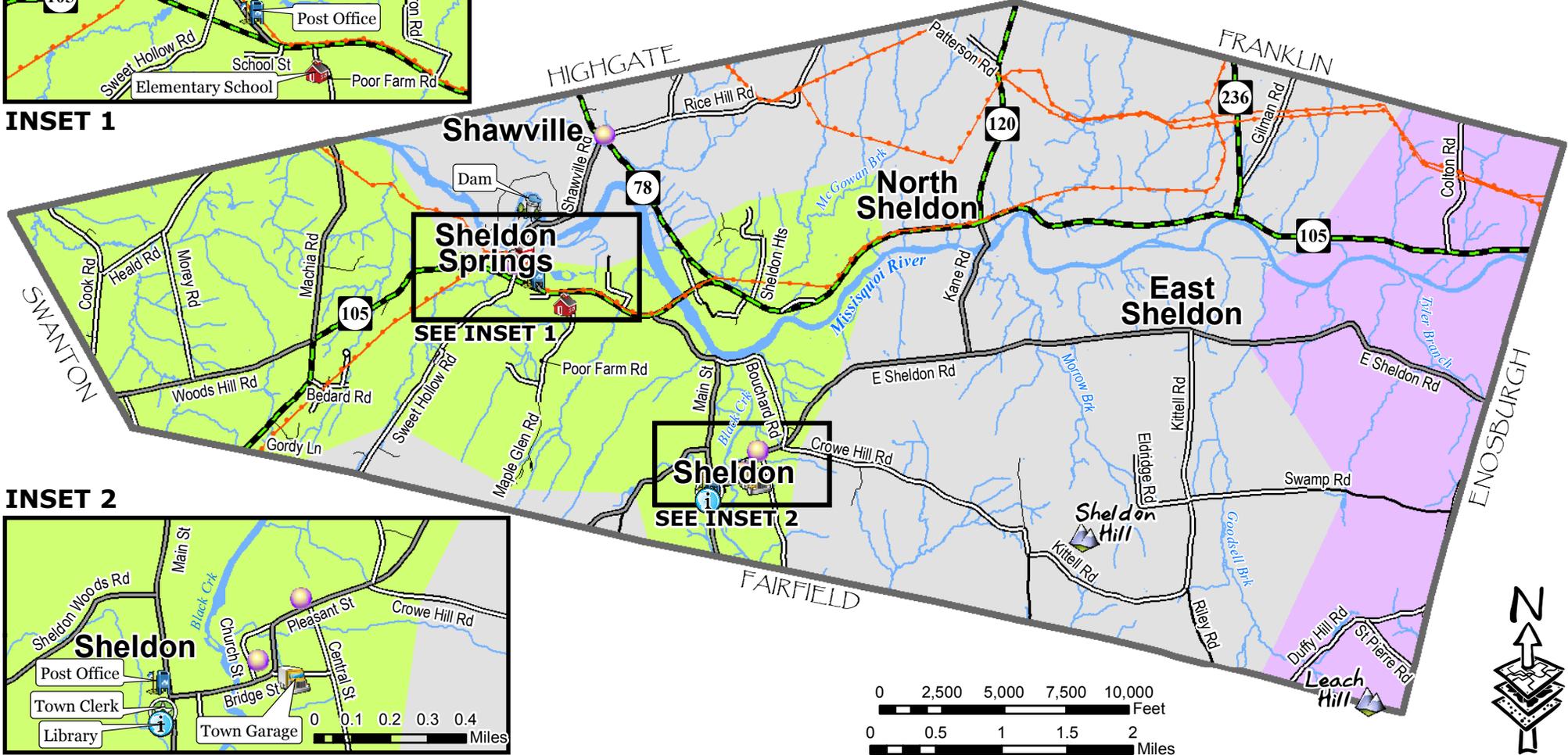


Prepared by:
Northwest Regional
Planning Commission
75 Fairfield Street
St. Albans, VT 05478
(802) 524-5958
www.nrpcvt.com

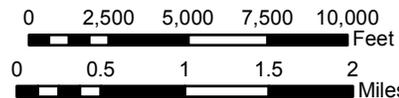
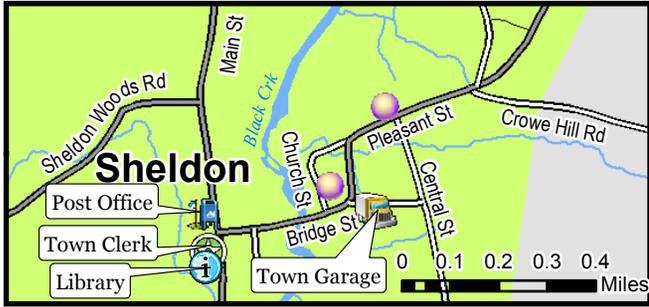
TOWN OF SHELDON Facilities & Services



INSET 1



INSET 2



LEGEND

Facilities & Services Features

- Town Clerk
- Post Office
- Town Garage
- Library
- Dam
- School
- Church
- Fire Dept.
- Summit

Electric Power Features

- Electric Transmission Line
- Green Mountain Power
- VT Electric Co-op
- Village of Enosburg Falls

Surface Water Features

- River, Stream or Brook
- Pond or River

Transportation Features

- State Highway
- Class 2 Town Highway
- Class 3 Town Highway
- Class 4 Town Highway
- Private Road

Other Feature

- Town Boundary

For planning purposes only.

Data Sources:
All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. Vermont Coordinate System Transverse Mercator, NAD 83. North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

Located:
z:gis/projects/county/franklin/sheldon/
townplan2016/facilitieservices.mxd

Created:
January, 2016.

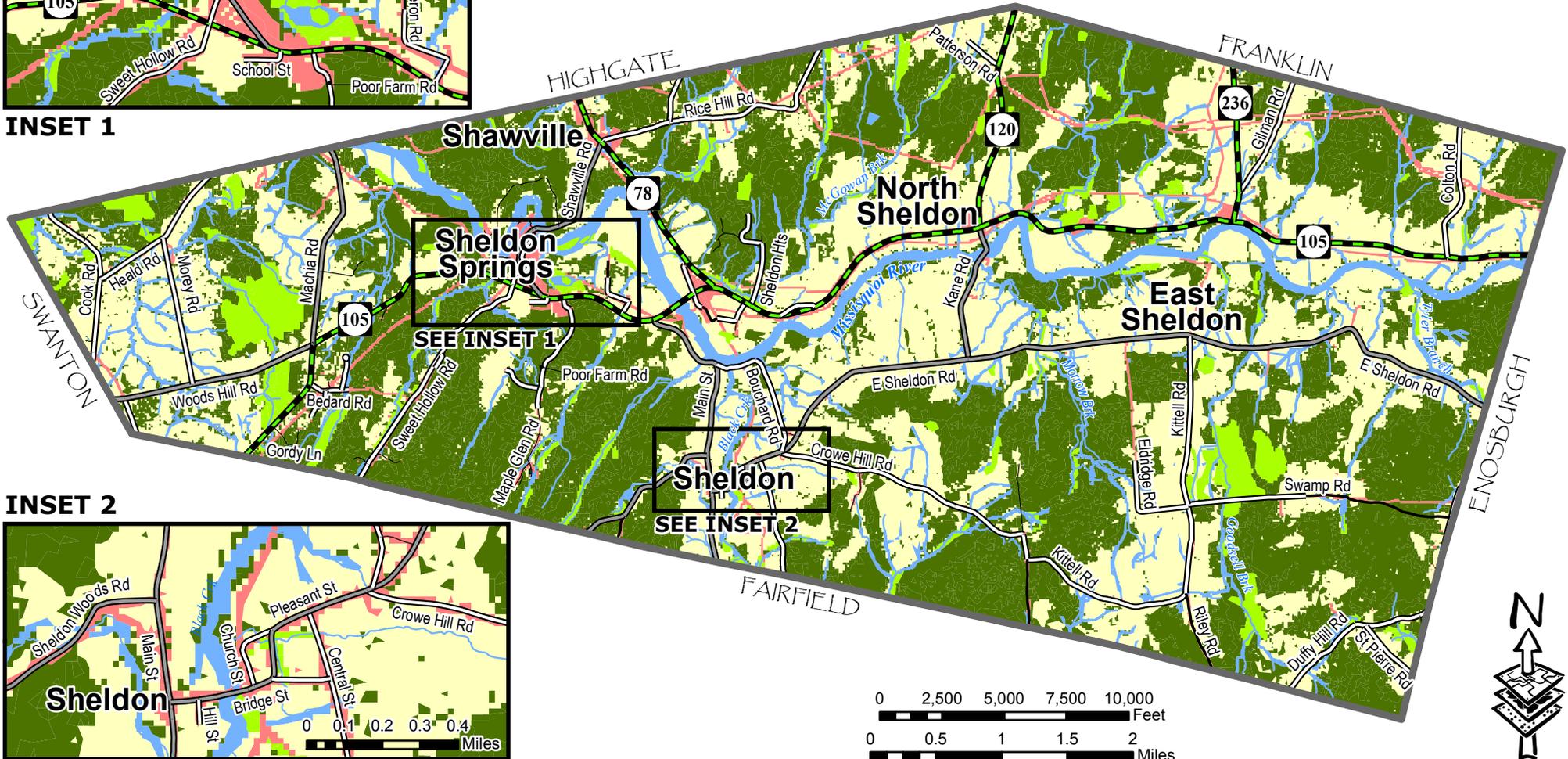


Prepared by:
Northwest Regional Planning Commission
75 Fairfield Street
St. Albans, VT 05478
(802) 524-5958
www.nrpcvt.com

TOWN OF SHELDON Land Use/Land Cover



INSET 1



INSET 2



LEGEND

Land Use/ Land Cover Features

- Built Up(residential, commercial, industrial or other urban)
- Agricultural(row crop, hay/pasture or other agricultural practice)
- Forested(deciduous, coniferous or mixed forest)
- Wetland(forested and non-forested wetlands)

Transportation Features

- State Highway
- Class 2 Town Highway
- Class 3 Town Highway
- Class 4 Town Highway
- Private Road

Surface Water Features

- River, Stream or Brook
- Pond or River

Other Feature

- Town Boundary

For planning purposes only.

Data Sources:
All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. Vermont Coordinate System Transverse Mercator, NAD 83. North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

Located:
z:gis/projects/county/franklin/sheldon/
townplan2016/landuselandscover.mxd

Created:
January, 2016.

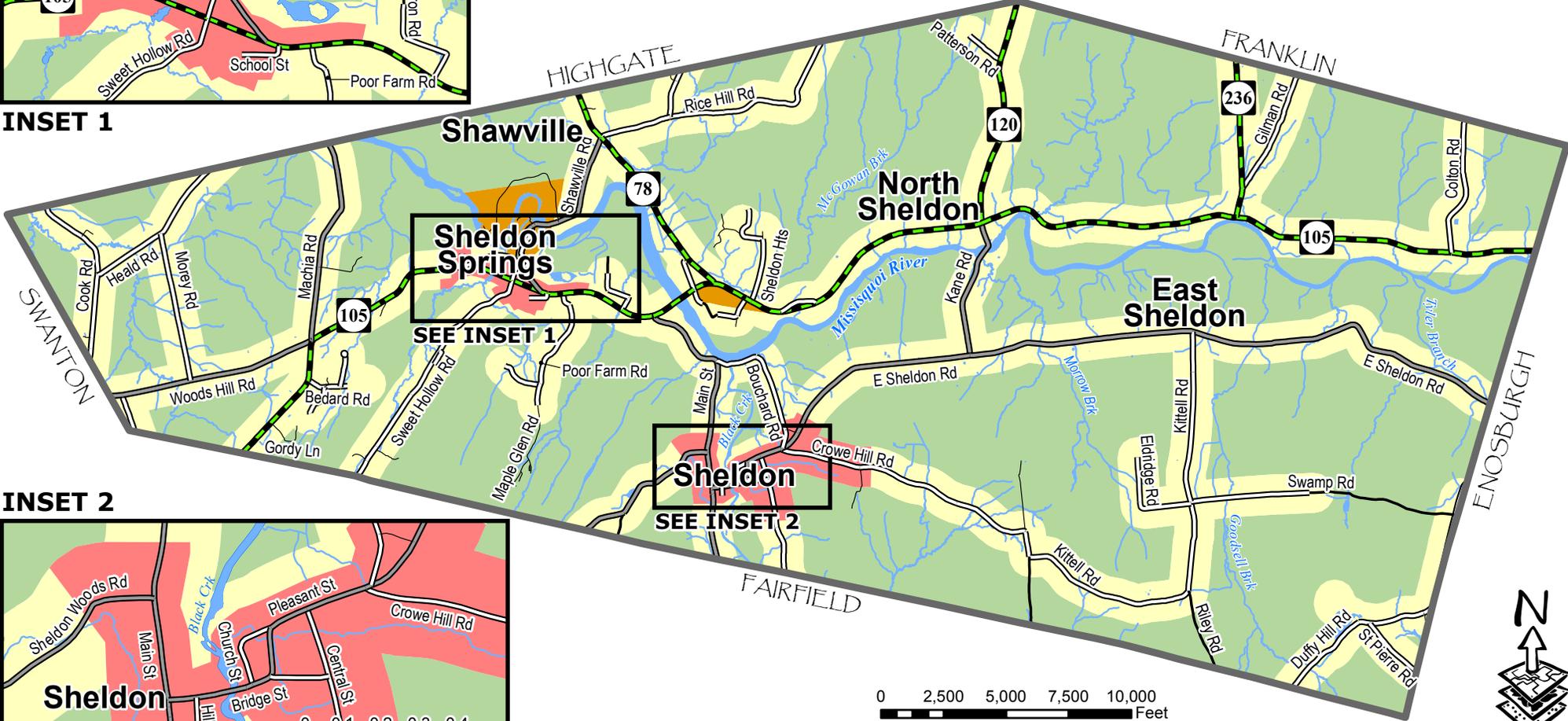


Prepared by:
Northwest Regional
Planning Commission
75 Fairfield Street
St. Albans, VT 05478
(802) 524-5958
www.nrpcvt.com

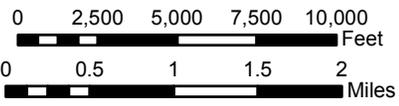
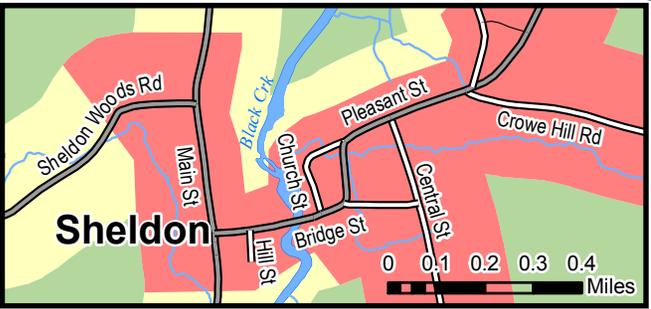
TOWN OF SHELDON Proposed Land Use



INSET 1



INSET 2



LEGEND

Proposed Land Use Features

- Village District
- Commercial/Industrial District
- Rural Lands 1
- Rural Lands 2

Transportation Features

- State Highway
- Class 2 Town Highway
- Class 3 Town Highway
- Class 4 Town Highway
- Private Road

Surface Water Features

- River, Stream or Brook
- Pond or River

Other Feature

- Town Boundary

For planning purposes only.

Data Sources:
All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. Vermont Coordinate System Transverse Mercator, NAD 83. North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

Located:
z:gis/projects/county/franklin/sheldon/townplan2016/proposedlanduse.mxd

Created:
January, 2016.

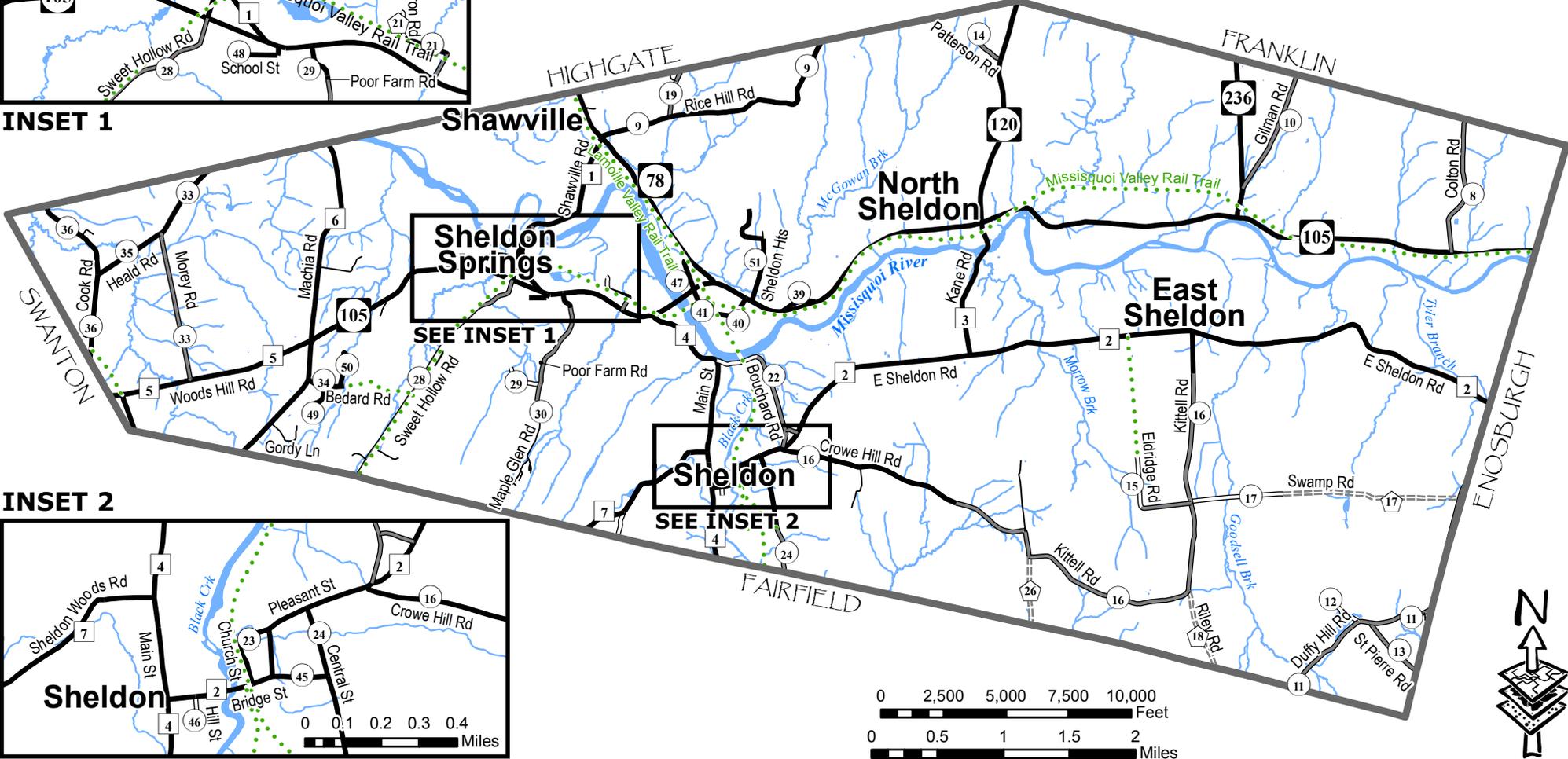


Prepared by:
Northwest Regional Planning Commission
75 Fairfield Street
St. Albans, VT 05478
(802) 524-5958
www.nrpcvt.com

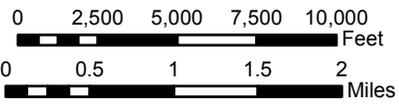
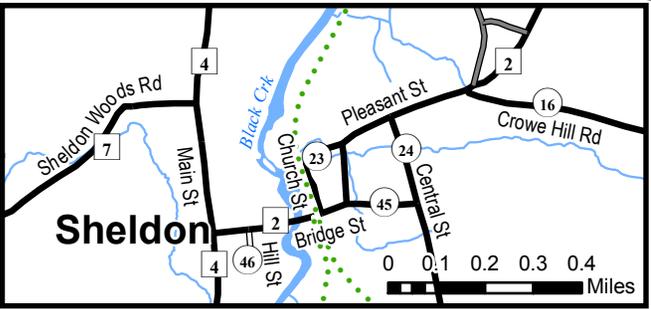
TOWN OF SHELDON Transportation System



INSET 1



INSET 2



LEGEND		
Road Surface Features	Road Class Features	Surface Water Features
Surfaced	State Route	River, Stream or Brook
Gravel	Class 2 Town Highway	Pond or River
Soil or Graded & Drained Earth	Class 3 Town Highway	
Impassable or Untraveled	Class 4 Town Highway	Other Feature
Unknown Surface Type	Legal Trail	Town Boundary

For planning purposes only.

Data Sources:
All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. Vermont Coordinate System Transverse Mercator, NAD 83. North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

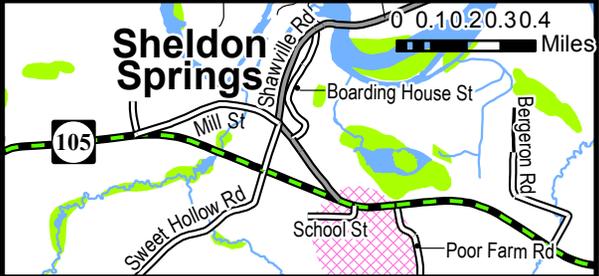
Located:
z:gis/projects/county/franklin/sheldon/townplan2016/transportation.mxd

Created:
January, 2016.

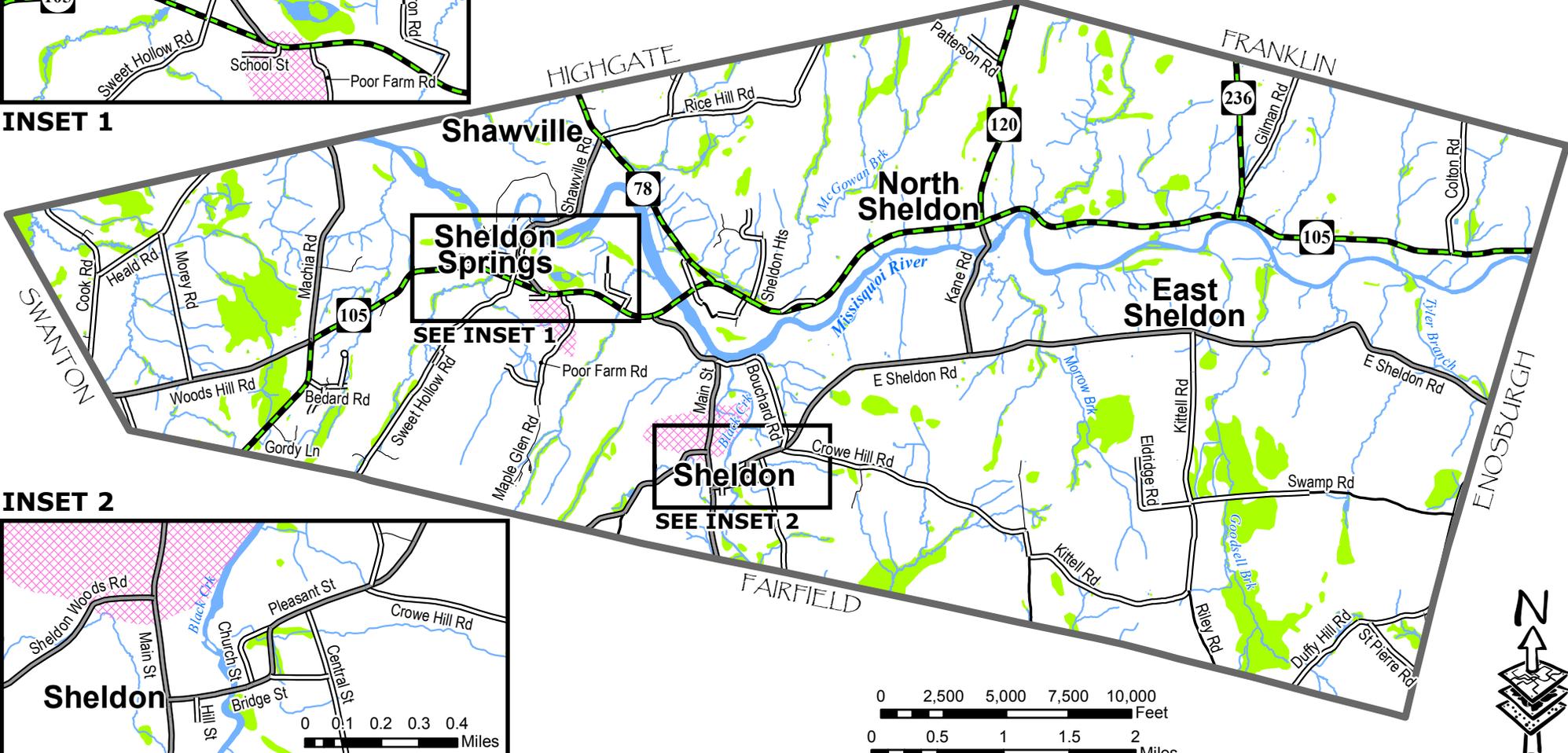


Prepared by:
Northwest Regional Planning Commission
75 Fairfield Street
St. Albans, VT 05478
(802) 524-5958
www.nrpcvt.com

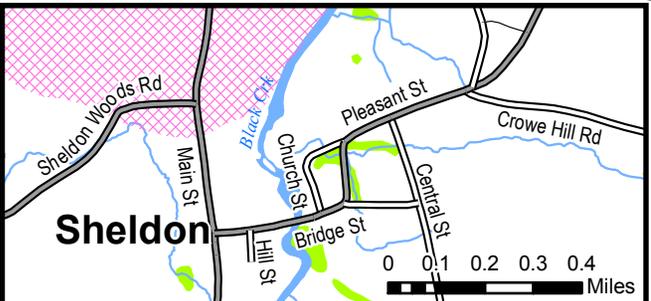
TOWN OF SHELDON Water Resources 1



INSET 1



INSET 2



LEGEND

Surface Water Features

- River, Stream or Brook
- Pond or River
- Wetland
- Ground Water - Surface Protection Area

Other Feature

- Town Boundary

Transportation Features

- State Highway
- Class 2 Town Highway
- Class 3 Town Highway
- Class 4 Town Highway
- Private Road

For planning purposes only.

Data Sources:

All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. Vermont Coordinate System Transverse Mercator, NAD 83. North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

Located:

z:gis/projects/county/franklin/sheldon/townplan2016/waterresources1.mxd

Created:

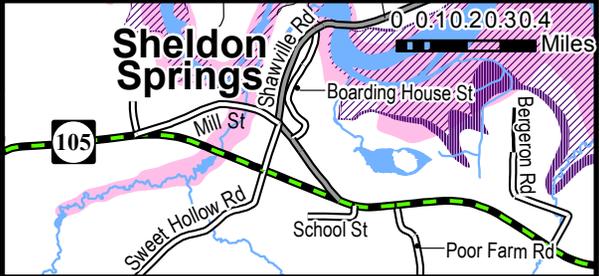
January, 2016.



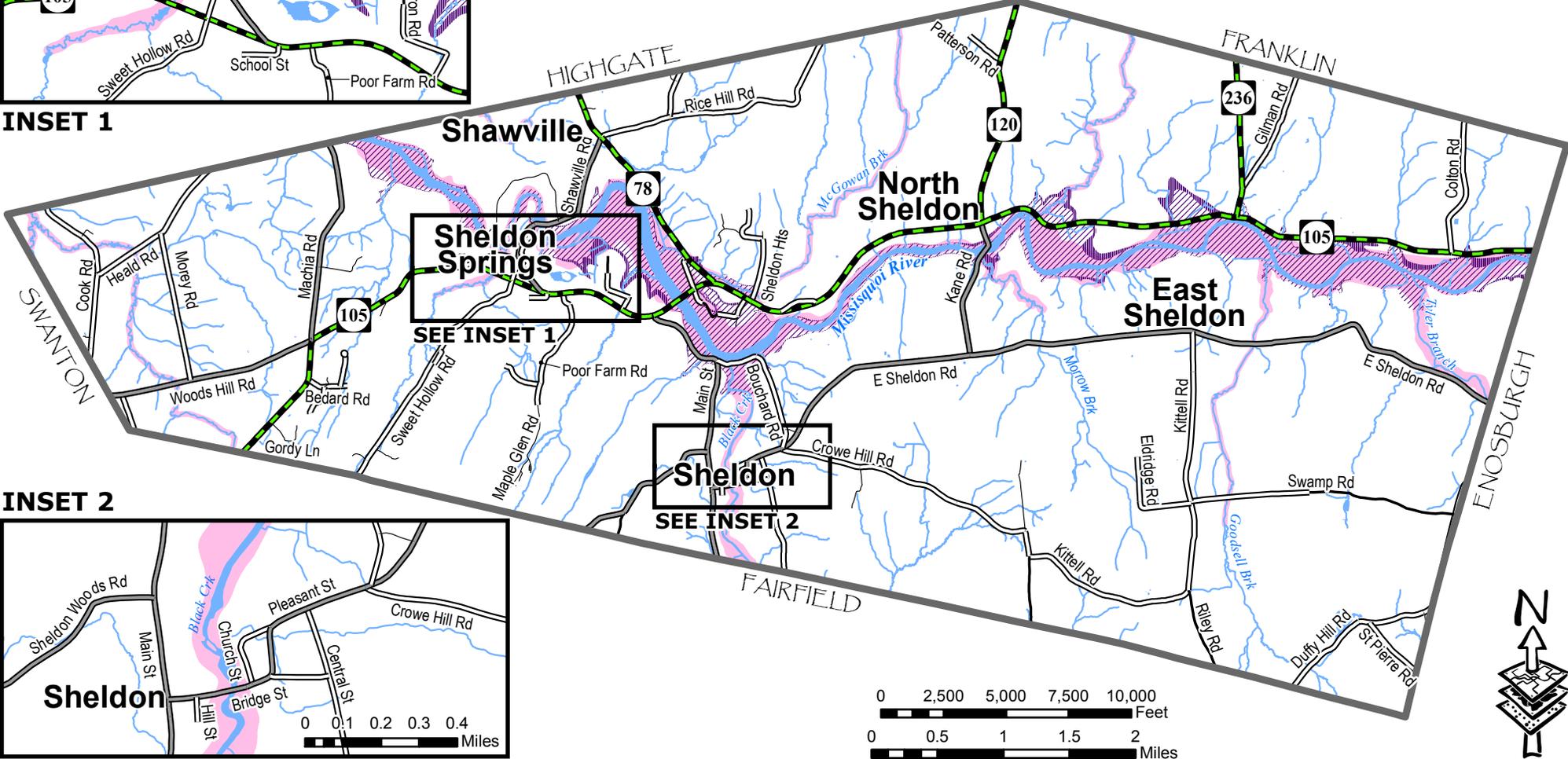
Prepared by:
Northwest Regional Planning Commission
75 Fairfield Street
St. Albans, VT 05478
(802) 524-5958
www.nrpcvt.com



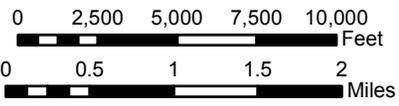
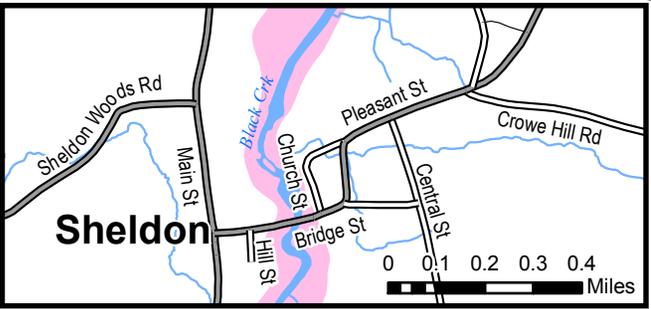
TOWN OF SHELDON Water Resources 2



INSET 1



INSET 2



LEGEND

Surface Water Features

- River, Stream or Brook
- Pond or River
- River Corridor
- 100 Year Flood Zone
- 500 Year Flood Zone

Other Feature

- Town Boundary

Transportation Features

- State Highway
- Class 2 Town Highway
- Class 3 Town Highway
- Class 4 Town Highway
- Private Road

For planning purposes only.

Data Sources:

All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. Vermont Coordinate System Transverse Mercator, NAD 83. North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

Located:

z:gis/projects/county/franklin/sheldon/townplan2016/waterresources2.mxd

Created:

January, 2016.



Prepared by:
Northwest Regional
Planning Commission
75 Fairfield Street
St. Albans, VT 05478
(802) 524-5958
www.nrpcvt.com