

# TOWNSHEND TOWN PLAN

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE NO.
I. <u>INTRODUCTION</u>	2
II. <u>TOWN PLAN GOALS</u>	3-4
III. <u>COMMUNITY PROFILE</u>	4-5
IV. <u>TOWN PLAN ELEMENTS</u>	6
Land Use	6-11
Transportation	11-16
Community Facilities, Services, & Public Recreation	16-21
Natural Resources, Natural & Fragile Areas, Scenic Resources	21
Forest Lands	21-22
Scenic Landscapes	22-23
Natural & Fragile Areas, Wildlife	23-24
Water Resources	24-28
Air Quality	28
Land Resources -Soils & Topography	29
Mineral Resources	29-30
Historic & Cultural Facilities	30-32
Educational Facilities	32-33
Energy	34-37
Housing	38-41
Economy	42-44
V. <u>PROCESS GOALS</u>	45
VI. <u>PLAN RELATIONSHIP TO DEVELOPMENT TRENDS &amp; TO PLANS FOR ADJACENT TOWNS AND THE REGION</u>	45-47
VII. <u>TOWN RESPONSE TO VERMONT'S PLANNING GOALS</u>	47-48
VIII. <u>IMPLEMENTING THE TOWN PLAN</u>	48-50
IX. <u>MAPS &amp; REFERENCES</u>	51
X. <u>APPENDIX</u>	51

# **TOWNSHEND TOWN PLAN**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Townshend enjoys an attractive natural as well as man-made environment which spells “Vermont” to much of the world. In 2010 a town wide survey indicated that the top five needs of the Town were controlling property taxes, retaining existing businesses, protecting lakes, rivers, and wetlands and preserving open space.

Since the completion of the last Town Plan update there have been several changes in Town to address the needs outlined in the 2003 Town Plan update. The West River Valley Senior Housing Development was completed in October 2007 through Valley Cares and Housing Vermont. The development provides seniors with 24 independent living apartments with supportive services in one building and 28 units of assisted living in a second building. Most of the units are affordable to lower and moderate-income elderly.

The project was selected as the nation's top new senior housing development by a national coalition of affordable housing developers and financiers. The Charles L. Edson Tax Credit Excellence Award was presented to Housing Vermont and Valley Cares by the Affordable Housing Tax Credit Coalition at a ceremony on Capitol Hill, Washington, DC on June 11, 2008. The award includes a \$5,000 grant.

Parking issues within the Townshend Village district were somewhat alleviated when Grace Cottage Hospital added additional parking with a lower lot off of Route 35 in the Village area. The Town also added additional parking spaces on Route 30. The parking issues in Town come about when events take place at the school or other buildings in the village, and the available parking quickly fills up leaving people with only options of parking along a shoulder outside the Village and walking. At the 2009 Annual Town meeting voters approved Article XIII for \$60,000 towards repair and replacement of Town sidewalks.

The Town has formed an ad hoc committee to study issues relating to Town Hall renovations. The Town has funded a study to address issues of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Other funding sources are being explored for this issue. At the Town’s 2009 Town Meeting voters approved the construction of a new Town garage complex at the Route 35 site. The project has been completed.

We intend that foresight and appropriate planning will guard the qualities of Townshend which attract people to settle and live here.

## **PURPOSE OF THE TOWN PLAN**

The Townshend Town Plan identifies the means by which the Town proposes to guide its growth. The official adoption of the Plan represents a community decision towards the Town’s future character, its priorities for land use and conservation of natural resources. The Townshend Town Plan sets forth goals and policies that establish a standard for review in Act 250 proceedings and other state regulatory processes. Its language is intended to be sufficiently clear for any citizen to understand and be guided accordingly. Its provisions shall be “mandatory in nature” as defined by the Vermont Supreme Court

rulings (Nov. 1995). It can be amended at any time during the life of the plan, which is 5 years after adoption.

The Townshend Town Plan will help the community achieve its goals, as well as to increase the amount of local control over the future of Townshend. It directs state agencies to take only those actions in Town which are compatible with the goals and policies of the Town Plan. Therefore, the Plan is an obligation and a commitment by appointed and elected officials at all levels of government to resolve issues according to the direction that has been established in the Town Plan by the people of Townshend.

## **INTERPRETATION OF THE TOWN PLAN**

Interpretation of this Town Plan and a proposed project's conformance or non-conformance to it is to be made by the Town of Townshend through its Planning Commission and Selectboard. Sections of the Town Plan that contain the language "should" are recommendations only. The language "could" or "may" are only suggestions as to the direction a project may or could take. The language "shall, will, or must" is mandatory. Nothing in this Town Plan shall commit the residents to expend funds, and no condition shall be put into a permit under this Town Plan that can cause the taxpayers to expend funds without their approval at a duly warned Town Meeting.

## **II. TOWN PLAN GOALS**

*Statement of objectives, policies, and programs of the town to guide future growth and development of land, public services and facilities, and to protect the environment.*

- 1) To maintain a continuous planning program that will entail active participation among members of town boards, commissions, and residents to update the Town Plan and ensure that land use decisions are based on open, transparent, debate that includes participation of town residents in decisions affecting the future growth of Townshend.
- 2) To encourage policies that provide for a diversity of employment opportunities that provide jobs and wages that support working families
- 3) To maintain a sustainable pattern of settlement typified by villages within a rural setting surrounded by contiguous undeveloped corridors to preserve forests and agricultural soils
- 4) To plan the town's growth in a manner consistent with the town's ability to provide and pay for public services such as education, highway maintenance, fire protection, without placing an undue burden upon taxpayers or otherwise leading to excessive increases in the town tax rate.
- 5) To prohibit incompatible and uncoordinated development that could jeopardize the character of the community and the balance of public and private interests
- 6) To encourage the continued use of lands for prime agriculture and forestry purposes while promoting a long-term sustained yield of crops and timber products which will preserve the rural character of the community.
- 7) To require that, where possible, public utilities and transmission or distribution facilities share the use of corridors in order to minimize the impact on the environment and to assure desired development patterns, minimize their visual impact on ridgelines, slopes, and open areas, and avoid important natural and historic resources.
- 8) To protect significant natural areas and locations of special educational, scientific, historical, scenic, architectural, and archeological significance from adverse development through appropriate conservation measures.

- 9) To assure that any project for increasing the capacity of any existing highway or developing any new highway is consistent with the land use policies of this Plan and that consideration be given to the secondary growth that results from transportation infrastructure improvements.
- 10) To establish a plan that addresses the Act 250 criteria and other state regulatory processes as a standard for review of development applications and other changes in land uses.

### III. COMMUNITY PROFILE

**History -** New Hampshire Governor Benning Wentworth's grant of the town of Townshend is in the form of a charter dated June 20, 1753. The Townshend charter grants to the named subjects of King George II, and to their heirs and assigns, 74 equal shares in a tract of land to be named Townshend. It is to measure six miles square and to enclose 23,040 acres. Each share or allotment of land equals about 313 acres. Charles Townshend, for whom the town is named, is best remembered as the British Chancellor of the Exchequer responsible for the burdensome taxes imposed on the colonists. Known as the Townshend Acts, the levy on imported tea led to the dumping of tea in Boston harbor, the Boston Tea Party.

The Townshend proprietors were men from Sutton, Upton, Uxbridge and Mendon, Massachusetts. Their first meeting took place on July 24, 1753 in Worcester, Massachusetts. At that meeting town officers were elected: a town clerk, five selectmen, two assessors, a treasurer, and a constable-tax collector. The selectmen were to visit the land and have boundaries and parcels surveyed, mapped and marked. Because of the intervention of the French and Indian War, the town was not settled until the charter was renewed in 1762.

Early settlement in Townshend was concentrated near the West River and its tributary brooks. West Townshend was the main settlement, but the center of town gradually shifted to the Townshend East Village, with the Church on the Common (1791), the Baptist Seminary (1835), and the Second Baptist Church (1837). A short distance from the Townshend Common the settlements of Harmonyville and Simpsonville were important business centers. Farming, lumbering, and the production of potash, together with related enterprises – sawmills, lumber yards, grist mills, harness shops, tanneries, tinsmiths and blacksmith shops were the means for making a living.

The first town meeting was held May 30, 1771 and the first census of Townshend was taken the same year. It shows 25 heads of families; males under 16 years of age 33; males above 16 and under 60 years - 40; males over 60 – 1; females under 16 years of age - 35; females above 16 years - 26; and blacks above 16 – 1. Total inhabitants numbered 136.

In 1840, the town of Acton, containing 5046 acres, became part of Townshend. The union, called "The Wedding of the Towns," was celebrated in the Baptist Church in February 1841.

**Topography and Acreage**

The topography of steep hills and narrow valleys limits farming and development, but enhances the town’s natural beauty. The elevation at the Townshend Town Hall is 547’ and the highest peak located on Acton Hill is 2,017’. The town is calculated to contain 27,334 acres. The land, its water and its mountainous beauty are still the town’s principal resource.

**Townshend’s 250th Anniversary Grant Celebration**

For an entire week June 7 through June 14, 2003, Townshend celebrated the anniversary of the town’s charter from King George II. The Townshend Historical Society launched its new history *A Stitch in Time: Townshend, Vermont, 1753-2003* at a party with an exhibit “A Walk through Townshend Village” at the Town Hall. Other highlights were the remarkable photographs of friends and neighbors by Karl Decker; a well-attended ecumenical church service on the Townshend Common followed by pot luck lunch and a superb concert by the 40th Army National Guard Band; cemetery and cellar-hole tours led by Charles Marchant; and, following a day of local exhibits on the Townshend Common, a delicious ham dinner served in the parish house culminating in a fireworks display at the Townshend Dam. It will be some time before so many people work so hard to celebrate such an important anniversary.

**Townshend U.S. Census Year 2000** – The U.S. Census shows the total population as 1,149, a 13% growth between 1990 and 2000. The chart tracks changes from 1970:

POPULATION							
Age	1970	1980	1990	2000	Change 1970-80	Change 1980-90	Change 1990-2000
18 years and younger	220	238	235	295	8%	-1%	26%
19-64 years	327	452	617	665	38%	37%	8%
65 years and older	121	159	167	189	32%	5%	13%
total population	668	849	1019	1149	27%	20%	13%
Median age (years)	32	34	38	42	5%	12%	10%

Breakdown of data for Townshend in Census 2000 shows trends between 1990-2000.

Age	Population	%Change 1990-2000
20-34	145	-34%
35-44	213	11%
35-64	307	51%
65 & over	189	13%

Throughout its history, Townshend has always had considerable economic diversity with workers in many trades and professions. It is often referred to as “the hub” of the West River Valley towns. The presence of Otis Health Care (Grace Cottage Hospital) and Leland and Gray Union High School contribute to the diverse mix.

## **IV TOWN PLAN ELEMENTS**

### **EXISTING LAND USE PLAN**

**Settlement Pattern** – A traditional landscape of small compact communities clearly separated from surrounding rural countryside distinguishes Vermont from many other states. Townshend’s settlement began on the plains of the West River in West Townshend and from there along the brook plateaus. This led to distinct villages with homes separated by natural areas.

**Land Use Plan** – A land use plan should have considerable influence on the future development of the town and its land. It is therefore important through the Town Plan, and any other regulations and ordinances, to seek the best possible solutions to provide for responsible growth while maintaining the rural character of the town. Townshend has no zoning regulations covering various types of land use activities. The Town of Townshend intends to address the character and impacts of various land uses by following the general and specific policies in this Town Plan.

### **GENERAL LAND USE POLICIES:**

1. The location of businesses, such as offices, retail stores, service facilities, etc. shall be governed by the concept that the rural character of the town should be preserved while providing services to an increased population.
2. The traditional attractive Vermont village, of which Townshend, Harmonyville, and West Townshend, are examples, is an important social and economic asset to the town and should be maintained.
3. Encourage the restoration and preservation of buildings that contribute to the architectural and historical character of Townshend. When such buildings become obsolete, new uses should be found for them that will preserve their value.
4. Support a mix of rural land uses, including forests, agriculture, housing, home businesses, small-scale commercial and industrial uses, and outdoor recreation, so long as these uses do not cause excessive noise, pollution, traffic congestion, or additional cost to the town for infrastructure and services.
5. Support cluster development in areas outside village centers in order to prevent fragmentation of land into small parcels and in order to provide efficient use of utilities, roads and town services.
6. Support preservation of open farm land and agricultural activities consistent with environmental concerns.
7. Support long-term management of forest lands for multiple uses and sustained yields of timber products.
8. Mountain ranges and steep valley walls are intolerant of development. Ridge tops and steep slope highlands are designated to accommodate only very low density development. Land development in this kind of location should be limited to the proposed site’s physical limitations.
9. Proposals for land development should include a statement of the immediate and long-term impact on all public facilities and services, and the environment.
10. Lands adjacent to or including areas of historical, cultural, scientific or architectural value should be used in a manner that will not reduce or destroy the value of the site or area.
11. The town should consider purchase or donation of property that has high public value.

## **SPECIFIC LAND USE POLICIES**

There are certain land uses that present distinct potential threats to the resources, including the character and the environment of the town. In order to protect the town, the following policies shall apply to proposed recycling/metal recovery/junkyard facilities and to communications towers and wind energy towers.

### **Recycling, Metal Recovery/Junkyard Facilities Policies:**

1. Require that proposals for these facilities demonstrate that efforts have been made to minimize noise and any adverse effects on aesthetics, surface waters, groundwater, air quality, adjacent properties and the character of the area.
2. Ensure that these facilities have site rehabilitation plans that are reviewed for approval by the Townshend Planning Commission and the Townshend Selectboard, and implemented with bonding assurance.
3. Ensure that site planning for recycling/metal recovery or junkyard facilities include design, management and material disposal, and addresses public health issues, environmental quality, and impacts on adjacent and nearby land uses.
4. Work with the District Environmental Commission in Act 250 land use permit applications to address management of recycling/metal recovery or junkyard facilities.

### **Priorities for action:**

1. Support a local ordinance to regulate commercially operated recycling/metal recovery or junkyard facilities.

### **Communications Towers Policies**

1. The development of new sites, towers, and structures for transmission and receiving equipment for broadcasts, satellite transmission, and other wireless telecommunications shall be in compliance with the Townshend Telecommunications Ordinance (2001).
2. Encourage siting, design and access of towers and structures, in all cases, to minimize negative impacts on natural and scenic resources.
3. Ensure that provisions are made for removal of towers or structures as set forth in Townshend Telecommunications Ordinance (2001)
4. Ensure that new and existing telecommunication facilities comply with FCC emission standards in order to protect public health.

### **Wind Energy Towers Policies:**

1. Wind energy turbine towers, both commercial or individual, should be sited to minimize negative impacts on natural and scenic resources.

## **PROPOSED LAND USE DISTRICTS**

In order to continue the historic settlement pattern and to protect the various resources of Townshend, this Town Plan classifies five categories of land use areas in the town. The districts are: Villages, Health Care Services, Rural Residential, Productive Rural Lands, and Resource Lands.

## **VILLAGE DISTRICTS**

Townshend village, which includes Harmonyville, and West Townshend village constitute the Village Districts. These areas are comprised of moderately dense residential, civic, and commercial uses. To promote the vitality and protect the character of these areas, the town adopts the following policies for the Village Districts. The boundaries of these districts are shown on the Proposed Land Use map.

In 2002, a “Village Center Designation” was created at the state level that would recognize and encourage local efforts to revitalize Vermont’s traditional village centers. Benefits would include a town having preferential status in community grant proposals, as well as tax credits for private business owners who improve village properties, and/or municipal or private historic building preservation. In addition to tax credits for rehabilitative work, designated village centers are given priority consideration for all grants administered through the State’s Municipal Planning Grant Program and the Consolidated Plan for HUD funding, including the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG).

On May, 17<sup>th</sup> 2004 the Townshend Selectboard passed a motion authorizing the Townshend Planning Commission to submit the town’s application for Village Center Designation. In June, 2004 Townshend received Village Center Designation from the State. The designation was renewed in 2007. The Vermont legislature recently revised the duration of the designation from three years to five years, so the Town will not need to renew until June 2012.

### **Village District Policies:**

1. Promote the economic and community vitality of the central business districts in Townshend, Harmonyville, and West Townshend.
2. Promote the attractiveness of village centers through quality building, landscaping, and by maintaining public open spaces for scenic and recreational pleasure.
3. Concentrate growth in village centers to minimize sprawl. Use and maintain existing historic structures whenever possible.
4. Encourage the appropriate and compatible rehabilitation and use of under-utilized land and buildings in village centers.
5. Maintain the character of Townshend's villages by ensuring that any additional commercial and residential development within the Village is compatible with existing types of uses and architectural styles
6. Target federal, state or private funding to support infrastructure improvements, bridge and highway repairs, installation of sidewalks and lighting, housing, recreation, or any other identified village need.
7. Establish and maintain village boundaries in order to prevent rural sprawl and strip development along highways and to preserve historic settlement patterns.

### **Priorities for action:**

1. Work with Selectboard on application for Vermont grants and give tax relief to business owners through the Village Center District for Townshend Village.
2. Support the development of utilities, such as municipal water or wastewater treatment facilities, when needed to protect health and ground water resources and to allow full use of lands within villages.

## **HEALTH CARE SERVICES DISTRICT**

There is a significant cluster of health care services in Townshend village. We recognize its importance to the town and want to support the vitality of health care services in Townshend, and also protect the character of the village. The Town Plan defines a Health Care Services District. Expansion of Otis Health Care Services and related facilities or structures should be located in the Health Care Services District. This area consists of certain lands to the north of the Common along Route 35 and is shown on the Existing Land Use map.

### **Health Care Services District Policies:**

1. Direct new health care services growth in the form of jobs, housing, commerce, facilities and utilities, to the Health Care Services District.
2. Encourage cooperation between the institutional health care services providers, neighbors and the town on issues related to health care services development, related impacts, and financial issues.

### **Priorities for action:**

1. The Town's officials should be active participants in Grace Cottage's long term plans which may call for any capital improvements to occur within the health care services district
2. The Town's officials should encourage compatibility with goals and policies in the Town Plan and goals and policies that would occur in any long range Master Plans for Grace Cottage Hospital.

## **RURAL RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS**

There is demand for rural housing outside the defined Village Districts. The Rural Residential District is intended to accommodate this demand in the most appropriate areas, minimizing costs to the town and maximizing protection of resources. These areas are shown on the Existing Land Use map.

### **Rural Residential District Policies:**

1. Encourage a mix of rural land uses including: housing; home businesses; small-scale agricultural or commercial uses; and outdoor recreation, so long as these uses are compatible with one another and do not cause excessive noise, disturbance, pollution, traffic congestion or safety.
2. Ensure that any development of rural residential lands will be at densities that will serve to contain rural sprawl and that are compatible with existing land uses and sensitive to the limitations of the land
3. Ensure that new development avoids important natural resource areas located within the rural residential lands
4. Direct new rural residential development away from areas that provide critical access to wildlife habitat and ensure, through planning, that wildlife habitat does not become fragmented by the elimination of connecting parcels between wildlife areas.

### **Priorities for action:**

1. The Planning Commission should consider the creation of an Open Space Plan and support and encourage conservation organizations that work with the Town to identify and preserve lands that are being considered as conservation priorities

## **PRODUCTIVE RURAL LANDS**

There are significant areas in Townshend where the greatest use of the land is for agricultural and forestry production. Low density, low impact rural residential use is also accommodated. These areas are shown on the Existing Land Use map.

### **Productive Rural Lands Policies:**

1. Support a mix of rural land uses including agriculture, housing, home businesses, small-scale commercial and industrial uses, commercial forestry and outdoor recreation, so long as these uses are compatible with one another and do not cause excessive noise, pollution, traffic congestion, or disturbance.
2. Ensure that new development reflects existing settlement patterns, is low in intensity, and does not conflict with the use and management of forest, agricultural and mineral resource lands, but rather sustains these natural resource commodities.
3. Support long-term management of agricultural and forest lands for uses that promote a sustained yield of crops and timber products.
4. Encourage the use of innovative land-saving techniques such as cluster development and fixed area density allocation to protect agriculture, forest, and mineral resource lands from development and fragmentation.
5. Encourage protective buffers along streams and rivers, and protection of other important lands that are valued for trails, open space, wildlife habitat and scenic enjoyment.

### **Priorities for action:**

1. For all large residential developments that meet Act 250 review criteria, the Planning Commission should advocate, where feasible, that dwelling units are clustered to avoid fragmentation of forested lands and wildlife corridors.
2. The Planning Commission shall encourage the use of innovative land saving techniques to protect agriculture, forest, and mineral resources lands from development.

## **RESOURCE LANDS**

These lands in Townshend have resource values of critical importance that must be protected. These lands include productive agricultural and forest lands, mineral, stone and sand deposits, streams, high elevations and steep slopes, nature and wildlife habitats and other areas of significant ecological value. See Existing Land Use map.

### **Resource Lands Policies:**

1. Ensure that new development is low impact and low density, and does not conflict with the resources, but rather sustains these natural resources.
2. Protect fish and wildlife habitats; federally identified endangered and threatened species; unique and fragile natural areas; wetlands; shore lands; floodplains; aquifer recharge areas; steep slopes and high elevations; ridgelines; and essentially undeveloped forest lands that have limited access to an improved public road from development that would negatively impact the resource.
3. Encourage protection of green space, particularly along streams and rivers, and other important lands that are valued for trails, open space, wildlife habitat and scenic enjoyment.
4. Avoid extension of roads, energy transmission facilities, and other services into and through Resource Lands.

5. Construct corridors for new energy transmission facilities only when needed, and then adjacent to and parallel to existing operational energy transmission facility corridors. Minimize their visual impact on ridge lines, slopes and open areas, and avoid important natural resources.
6. Avoid the fragmentation of wildlife habitat by protecting wildlife corridors that join large tracts of resource land.

**Priorities for action:**

1. The Townshend Planning Commission and Selectboard should improve resource mapping and identification to raise awareness among residents and town officials of key resources in Town.
2. The Town should consider conducting a natural resources inventory, to identify natural areas that should be preserved and protected.
3. The Planning Commission should encourage landowners to manage their lands in ways that protect valuable resources.
4. The Town shall work with the Vermont Land Trust, or other appropriate non-profit organizations to encourage the voluntary protection of productive agricultural and forest lands. Techniques such as conservation easements or donation of land should be explored.
5. The Town should consider forming a Conservation Commission for the purposes of implementing the above recommendations for protecting the natural resources of the Town for the benefit of all.

**TRANSPORTATION**

***Existing Transportation System***

Roads

The majority of Townshend’s transportation infrastructure includes Town roads and State highways. The closest federal highway is Interstate 91, which passes through Brattleboro about 15 miles east of Townshend. Regional access to Townshend from State maintained roads is provided by Vermont route 30 with 7.35 miles of State Highway running through Town. A major travel corridor for Windham County, VT 30 runs in a northwest-southeast direction through the region connecting the Towns of Winhall, Jamaica, Townshend, Newfane, Dummerston, and Brattleboro.

**Table 1: Town and State Road Mileage in Townshend**

Town				State
Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	State Highway
0	10.62	45.03	6.31	7.35

*(Vermont Agency of Transportation, 2007)*

No state appropriation is made for maintaining Class 4 roads. These roads are seasonally functional for normal vehicular traffic and have a dirt surface. Like many Vermont communities, Townshend may have Class 4 roads and legal trails that are not mapped on the VTrans Highway Maps. So while the current maps show 6.31 miles of Class 4 roadway, it is possible that more miles of Class 4 roadway exist in Townshend. Recent statutory changes require the accounting of mileage and mapping of Class 4 roads

and legal town trails. Many class 4 highways are old, unmapped, and often observable. These particular roads are called “ancient roads”. Act 178 requires municipalities to identify these “ancient roads” and formally declare their existence to the State of Vermont by February 10, 2009, by adding them to the official Town Highway Map. Those ancient roads that are not added to the official map by that date will become “unidentified corridors” on July 1, 2010. Townshend has formed a Town Committee to explore if there are any ancient roads that need to be declared on the official Town Highway map.

Unpaved roads tend to limit the amount of traffic and discourage speeding, thereby promoting vehicle safety. However, while the traffic calming effect of dirt roads is beneficial, unpaved surfaces are less ideal for commuter bicyclists.

In 2007, the Vermont Agency of Transportation conducted traffic counts along route 35, Grafton Rd. and Athens Rd, to the town line with Athens. The data revealed the average annual daily traffic (AADT) along the route. The average daily traffic was 1,600 vehicles along the Grafton rd. portion of Route 35 in Townshend. The Athens rd. section had less traffic with an AADT of 510. This shows that less traffic moves north along 35 into Athens and some is diverted along Grafton Rd. towards Grafton. It is possible that much of the traffic counted was generated by activity at Grace Cottage Hospital and consisted of vehicles traveling from route 30 to the hospital and not further north along 35 to Athens. However, this is still a significant amount of traffic being generated around a small compact village area that has noticeable pedestrian foot traffic as well.

#### **Traffic and Safety Factors – Route 30 and Route 35**

Route 30 is classified a rural minor arterial which links the West River Valley towns and major resorts west of Townshend. Route 35 links the valley towns with Grafton and Rockingham.

While local traffic along Grafton Rd has seen a slight increase in recent years, average daily traffic counts along Route 30 have shown a decrease in volume from 2004 to 2008. For example, the average annual daily traffic (AADT) count at the Route 30, Newfane/Townshend town line for the year 2004 was 5,200 vehicles. In 2008 the traffic count showed 3, 800 vehicles, this was a decrease in volume of 1,400 vehicles. While volume has been decreasing, safety concerns are still a top priority for town officials who want to assure the safety of pedestrians and school populations in the village area. On the Route 30 hill to Harmonyville, speed and road conditions contribute to safety concerns. With constant building at Stratton Mountain Resort and points west, traffic continues to be a perennial concern. It is also unclear how much impact higher gas prices and economic recession have impacted the noticeable decrease in AADT. It is assumed that with economic recovery and a recovery in residential and business development, there will be a corollary increase in daily traffic. All options for increasing safety at the Townshend Common intersections should be explored, including the long-range possibility of rerouting through traffic around the center of Townshend. This option would be many years away and would be subject to the approval of Townshend voters.

## **Harmonyville Path Sidewalk Study**

In 2000, the Town of Townshend and the Windham Regional Commission selected Summit Engineering LLC to conduct a feasibility study for pedestrian facilities connecting the village of Harmonyville with Townshend Village at Leland and Gray High School. The planning study involved soliciting adjacent property owners for feedback on pedestrian needs, as well as identifying any opportunities or constraints to development. The recommendations of the study concluded that a sidewalk alignment was feasible along the east side of Rt. 30 that would entail constructing four separate retaining walls for a total of approximately 1,788 ft, two eleven foot travel lanes with two foot shoulders on both sides as well as a five foot sidewalk on the east side. The total costs of these improvements were estimated at \$904,054.

The Town formed a Harmonyville Path Study Committee to study this recommended option as well as other alternatives. The Study Committee recommended the Selectboard accept the findings of the Sidewalk Study and continue on to surveying and design studies. However, there were several landowners who voiced concerns about any construction affecting their properties. The Town was also concerned with the costs associated with constructing retaining walls along the corridor. Due to the expected costs and concerns voiced by landowners, the Town has not proceeded any further on this issue to date.

## **Alternative Transportation**

Currently, there are no fixed service commuter bus routes that run along Route 30 through town. The Connecticut River Transit (CRT) provides fixed route service along Route 5, which services the towns of Rockingham, Westminster, Putney, Dummerston, and Brattleboro. While fixed route service is unavailable to Townshend residents, the CRT does provide a service known as “Dial a Ride”. This service is available for medical appointments for residents with Medicaid, or who are over 60 years old, or who have an ADA defined disability. The Dial a Ride service is also available for residents in town who are looking for a general bus ride for commuting or shopping purposes. For this service, there is a general recommended donation of four dollars and a need to request this service two days in advance.

The Vermont Rideshare Program is another option for commuters in Townshend to reduce transportation costs. This program provides a database of other commuters in nearby areas who are looking to combine trips. The Rideshare program has an easy online form that residents can fill out which will enter them in a statewide database to help match the resident with carpool partners in the area. The cost savings of carpooling to work, especially for residents in a largely rural area where commutes can be lengthy, are potentially quite large. The Vermont Rideshare website can be accessed here, <http://www.vermontrideshare.org> and provides a cost savings calculator for residents looking to find out how much money they will save by carpooling to work.

In Townshend, there are currently pedestrian sidewalks only in the village areas of town and none along Route 30 or Route 35 outside of the village areas. With the exception of approximately 460 feet of existing sidewalk in the village area, there are no pedestrian facilities on or adjacent to Route 30 and pedestrians currently are forced to walk in the roadway or along the shoulders where available. Generally, the road right-of-way is narrow, affording pedestrians little shoulder width. This, combined with topographical difficulties along areas of Route 30, make sidewalk creation difficult. The existing road network is used for recreational bicycle riding however; weather conditions, automobile-oriented development patterns, and the difficult terrain combine to keep it from serving as a significant mode of transportation in Townshend. On roads with no shoulders, cyclists share the road with vehicular traffic. Generally, biking to work is more common for bicycle commuters that live closer to Brattleboro, which is the regional center of population and jobs.

Townshend Commuting to Work Data, 2000 Census (Workers 16 years and over)		
Means Of Commuting	Number of People	Percentage of Commuters
Car, truck, or van – drove alone	394	70%
Car, truck, or van - carpooled	69	12.3%
Public Transportation	0	0%
Walked	44	7.8%
Other Means	7	1.2%
Worked at Home	49	8.7%
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	23.7	

Census data indicates that the great majority of residents commute to work alone via car, truck, or van. Seventy percent working age residents commuted by this method. Roughly twelve percent of residents carpooled to work. The number of residents not relying on automobiles for commuting was seventeen percent. Of those residents, nearly nine percent worked at home, while nearly eight percent walked to work. The average travel time to work was twenty three minutes.

#### **American Recovery and Re-Investment Act (ARRA) Stimulus Funding**

The ARRA provided Vermont with \$125 million to reinvest in its' transportation infrastructure. The ARRA, under transportation, has been divided into Phase 1 and Phase 2; with at least 3% of the total going to Transportation Enhancement projects (e.g. sidewalk improvements). Phase 1 called for each state to allocate \$44 million of the total amount within 120 days, from the March 2<sup>nd</sup> ARRA signing date.

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) moved quickly and allocated \$44.8 million in paving and bridge improvements under Phase 1 funding. The majority of projects under Phase 1 were either Interstate and National Highway Systems or urban and rural principal arterial routes which are, generally, numbered State and U.S. highways. Projects associated with Phase 1 funding are going to be completed during the Federal Fiscal Year 2009.

Phase 2 dedicated stimulus money for Vermont must be obligated within one year of apportionment. The eligible roads for this funding are Class 1 roads as well as some Class 2 roadways that meet the definition of a town highway “major collector”. The phase 2 funding will include money for the resurfacing of VT30 in Townshend and in the neighboring community of Newfane.

**Specific Concerns List:**

1. The Townshend Common intersections, Route 30 by Leland and Gray and Route 30 by Common Road (near the elementary school).
2. The intersection in West Townshend where Windham Hill Road enters Route 30.
3. Inadequate parking space in the village of Townshend.
4. Lack of a sidewalk from Townshend to Harmonyville.
5. The intersection of Route 30 at Depot Road and the Harmonyville Bridge.
6. Speeding through the village of West Townshend on Route 30.

**Transportation Policies:**

1. Pursue options that would enhance safety at the Townshend Common intersections of Route 30 and Route 35.
2. Look at long-term possibilities for relocation of Route 30 as a solution to greatly increasing traffic volume in the years ahead.
3. Pursue options that would enhance safety at the intersection of Route 30 and Windham Hill Road. Continue with dynamic striping where appropriate.
4. Control the impact of site development on Routes 30 and 35 by careful review of traffic growth in development or expansion proposals, and by use of techniques such as shared highway access point, landscaping, and signage.
5. Integrate the use of energy efficient and alternative modes of transportation such as public transit, ride-sharing, van pools, bicycling, and walking into community plans and private development, whenever possible.
6. Maintain the rural, historic, and scenic character of Townshend by retaining the current system of paved/unpaved roads with no increase in paving activity unless public safety or the State of Vermont requires it.
7. Support the design of transportation improvements that provide for access, mobility, and safety of users; compatibility with environmental contexts; and avoidance of “over-designing” in terms of scale and capacity. Add sidewalks and bike paths to existing infrastructure whenever possible.
8. Post and enforce speed limits.
9. Retain all present public rights-of-way whether or not they are presently being maintained by the town. No tract of land shall be allowed to become “land-locked” by the relinquishment of a public right-of-way.
10. Discourage development in remote areas of town in order to minimize the need for more road construction, maintenance, and consequent increased cost to the town.
11. Work with the VTrans, the Windham Regional Commission, as well as other state or regional agencies, to solve traffic safety problems.

**Priorities for Action:**

1. Support the Townshend Parking Ordinance (2003) and consider options for additional off-street parking spaces in Townshend village.

2. Cooperate with other towns, especially towns along the Route 30 corridor, the Windham Regional Commission and VTrans in developing solutions to the traffic problems along Route 30. A Planning Commission Member and Selectboard Member should attend monthly Road Foreman meetings to keep up to date on transportation and infrastructure issues in the region.
3. Enforce overweight permits on local roads and bridges in coordination with appropriate officials, local and state.
4. Pursue funding options such as Transportation Enhancement Grants to help design and implement a plan for pedestrian and traffic safety at the Townshend Common intersection of Route 30 and Route 35.
5. Adopt a Class 4 Road and Trail Policy to assure clarity when maintenance or improvements are proposed along a legal Town trail.

## **COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES, AND PUBLIC RECREATION**

The community facilities and utilities are the infrastructure provided by the Town of Townshend, or provided in cooperation with the town, for the health, safety, benefit and enjoyment of the general public. These include municipal government, emergency services, schools, solid waste disposal, and recreational facilities.

### **Municipal Government**

Town officers include a Board of Selectmen, a Planning Commission, Town Clerk, Town Treasurer, Listers, and Auditors, all elected positions. Townshend School Board members, Leland and Gray School Board members from Townshend, Cemetery Commissioners and Library Trustees are elected, among others, at Town Meeting.

### **Health and Emergency Services**

Townshend currently depends on organizations located inside and outside of the community to provide necessary health care and emergency services. There are medical professionals located throughout the West River Valley. Hospitals both in Town and outside the community serving residents are Grace Cottage Hospital in Townshend, Brattleboro Memorial Hospital in Brattleboro, and Southwestern Vermont Medical Center in Bennington. While the regional centers provide options outside of Townshend, most residents rely on Grace Cottage as an immediate asset for providing medical services for residents' healthcare and well being.

The Carlos G. Otis Health Care Center, Inc. consists of Grace Cottage Hospital, supporting 19 patient bed and also an outpatient lab and an X-ray department; the Wolff Outpatient Clinic with numerous outpatient services, among them physical, occupational and speech therapy; the Messenger Pharmacy serving the public; and the Bock EMS Training Center providing emergency and first aid training. There is also Valley Cares development which provides seniors with 24 independent living apartments with supportive services in one building and 28 units of assisted living in a second building.

## **Fire Departments**

The Town is served by the Townshend Volunteer Fire Department. The Townshend Volunteer Fire Department is located at 208 Grafton Rd and currently consists of 18 active members. In many cases where large or multiple incidents occur in Town, the Volunteer Fire Department response is supplemented by assets provided by Newbrook Fire Station in Newfane, as well as fire departments and EMS from the neighboring communities of Grafton, Windham, Wardsboro, and Jamaica.

Townshend participates in a mutual aid program, making personnel and equipment available to neighboring towns in the event of a shortage. The Townshend Volunteer Fire Department is a member of the Southwestern New Hampshire District Fire Mutual Aid system. This system is sometimes referred to as “Keene Mutual Aid” for short (since the central dispatch is located in Keene), and encompasses one hundred and twenty six fire departments across three counties; Bennington and Windham Counties in Vermont, and Cheshire County in New Hampshire. Townshend Fire Department responded to 14 mutual aid calls in 2008. The website for Keene Mutual Aid is <http://firemutualaid.com/> and their business phone number is 603-352-1291.

## **Police Services**

Police protection is contracted with the Windham County Sheriff’s Department and the Vermont State Police. The Town is part of the Enhanced 911 state service.

## **Health Care Services**

Nine medical doctors on the hospital staff include five family-practice physicians, a pediatrician, two podiatrists and a psychiatrist. One physician and one dentist who are not staff members of the Otis Health Care Center maintain private practices in Townshend. Rescue Inc. provides ambulance service to the community, assisted by the Newbrook Fire & Rescue Department in Newfane, Vermont. The Hospital Auxiliary’s annual Fair Day, held on the first Saturday in August, helps to provide financial support. A grateful community supplies dozens of volunteers who labor diligently for the Fair’s success.

## **Town Hall**

Built in 1921, the Townshend Town Hall is a state-listed historic building. It is the site of many town functions, including Town Meetings, elections, banquets, wedding receptions and cultural events. It houses the town offices which may need additional space and in particular a larger or additional vault. Townshend has formed a Town Hall Renovation Committee which obtained a grant design to update the facilities including handicap bathrooms and access to upstairs via a lift. The design also includes provisions for fire-prevention and other safety issues.

## **Townshend Public Library**

Located in a building next to the Townshend Post Office, the Library provides a meeting place for community groups. With over 10,000 volumes of books and tapes, and interlibrary loan service, the collection serves many adults and children. Support for the Library comes from taxes, gifts, grants, and fundraising efforts. It is accredited by the Vermont Department of Libraries.

At the 2007 Town Meeting, an article was passed allowing for a new roof to the library. Other recent additions to the building have included updating lighting fixtures and installing energy efficient light bulbs. The Library's circulation numbers for 2007-2008 totaled 9,094 items including books, books on audio tape or cd, magazines, and DVD and VHS movies. There are public internet access stations available, but library staff has not conducted any counts of how many users take advantage of this system to access the internet. The library offers extensive public programs including knitting, scrabble, growing giant pumpkins, crafts, and summer reading.

### **Town Garage**

Located on Route 35, the Town Garage also serves as the site of the solid waste compactor and recycling center. At the Town's 2009 Annual Town Meeting voters approved the construction of a new Town garage at the Route 35 site. Funding for the project has been attained and construction began in the summer of 2009. The new Town Garage is now complete.

### **Municipal and Privately-Owned Waste Water Disposal Systems**

State regulations now require property owners to acquire a permit from the State for any new wastewater systems. There have been two studies that have described the issues involved in dealing with the topography of the village area and the constraints related to allowing municipal or privately owned waste water disposal systems. A 1992 Sewage Disposal Capacity Study for Townshend village conducted by the Windham Regional Commission and a study conducted by Dufresne and Henry, dated, 1971 both address waste disposal in Townshend village and both are on file in the Town Hall.

On July 14, 1970 the Town of Townshend leased a parcel of land to Leland and Gray Union High School for a period of 99 years, with what buildings were there. It is now used for playing fields. The terms of the lease have the following constraint:

“The Lessor reserves the right if it should be necessary during the term of this lease to construct and maintain a municipal sewage disposal system, sewage treatment system, and/or municipal sewage line for the Town of Townshend on the leased premises, provided:

- A. That such system, plant or line does not in any way interfere with the operation of the school facilities; and
- B. That such arrangement meets approval of the State Board of Education, at such time as a proposal for the above system is submitted to Lessee by Lessor.”

Leland and Gray Union High School maintains its own waste disposal system.

Privately-owned large capacity waste disposal systems are vitally important to the economy and public health of Townshend village.

Currently, there are two such systems:

One serves buildings on the south side of the Common from Oakwood Cemetery Road to the house just south of Townshend Pizza. This system has a leach field on town-owned property on the south side of Route 30. At one time, the Townshend Elementary School tied into this system. (See Existing Conditions map)

The second serves the Otis Health Care complex and the Townshend Elementary School, and the Townshend Church parsonage. The leach field is located on town-owned land next to Oakwood Cemetery, where the ball field is located.

(See Existing Conditions map).

### **Schools**

The Townshend Elementary School serves children in grades Kindergarten through 6, and Leland and Gray Union High School serves students in grades 7 through 12.

(See Education section for detailed descriptions)

### **Childcare**

Childcare is a concern for many working parents and employers. The accessibility, affordability, and quality of child care effects parents' ability to enter the workforce, be productive while at work, and remain employed. According to the Bright Futures Information System, a service of the Vermont Department for Children and Families, the private sector provides child care services in Townshend. As of August 2009, there was one registered childcare home and one licensed childcare facility in Townshend. The Vermont Agency of Human Services, Department for Children and Families requires any person who provides child care for children from more than two families, other than their own, to be registered or licensed. Family childcare home registration is for a caregiver seeking to operate out of his or her home. A registered caregiver may provide care for up to six children, including up to two children under the age of two, at any one time. In addition, he or she may care for up to four school-age children for not more than four hours daily per child. A caregiver wishing to care for children in a building other than his or her home requires a state license. Registered childcare homes and licensed providers can also be found in the surrounding towns of Athens and Jamaica

Child care programs hours of operation often do not meet the needs of parents working non-traditional or mixed shifts. Only 17% of licensed child care centers in the State are open before 7am and only 3% after 6pm. Overnight and weekend care is offered by only 10% statewide.<sup>1</sup> According to the Windham County, Vermont Child Care Needs Assessment (2002), most child care centers in Windham County follow an 8 am to 5pm schedule.

### **Community Facilities and Utilities Policies:**

1. The rate of town growth should not exceed the town's ability to provide community facilities and services required to service new development.

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<sup>1</sup> Vermont Child Care: A Study of Wages, Credentials, Benefits and Market Rates, 2001. Vermont Child Care Services Division

2. If the capacity of community facilities or services (e.g. sewer, water, fire, police protection, schools, etc.) cannot be expanded without incurring significant capital expenditure for the town, then a fair share of the burden for required services or facilities shall be borne by the beneficiary of such services.
3. Maintain a certified solid waste transfer and recycling facility for Townshend residents and businesses. Encourage residents to recycle waste materials and to take advantage of hazardous waste disposal days.
4. Privately-owned utilities, facilities, or services should not be accepted by the town unless the cost of owning, operating and maintaining such utilities, facilities and services are provided for in the town's budget program, and the town's annual operating budget would not significantly increase the financial burden to the town.
5. Support the town's contracting for police services.
6. Encourage the provision of safe and affordable childcare in Townshend.
7. Ensure that the emergency service personnel, facilities, and equipment needed to effectively service new development are available to avoid placing undue demands on existing personnel, equipment, and facilities.

**Priorities for action:**

1. Support a committee to make recommendations on the use of the town-owned property on Route 30, Taft Meadow.
2. Assess the need for replacing the present fire department station which lacks enough space for equipment and lacks sufficient parking space.
3. Maintain an inventory of all childcare programs in Townshend and their capacity.
4. Provide links on the town website to information about starting a day care as well as information about available child care subsidies.
5. Support improvements to the Town Hall.

**RECREATION**

Many opportunities for recreation are available in Townshend. There are ample opportunities for hunting, hiking, biking, fishing, and swimming. Tennis courts at Leland and Gray and an elementary school playground for younger children are open to the public. In addition to the above, there are two government-managed recreational areas, occupying about 2,000 acres. They are:

**Townshend Flood Control Dam**

The Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) manages a flood control dam built in the West River in 1961 at a cost of 7.5 million. It is part of a network of 32 flood control projects in the Connecticut River Basin. Townshend Lake reservoir can store up to 11 billion gallons of flood water. The lake provides a safe swimming area, with a long sandy beach, changing facilities and rest rooms.

The Vermont Dept. of Fish & Wildlife stock the West River and its tributaries. A project to bring back Atlantic salmon to the West River is operated jointly by several agencies and the public is asked to know the difference between a brown trout and a young salmon, since salmon must be returned to the water if caught. The fine for not releasing young salmon is \$500.00.

Located in an area overlooking the lake is a wooded picnic area that provides 120 tables, 50 fireplaces and several covered shelters. Reservations for shelter use may be made with the Corps of Engineers. In the summer, Corps Rangers offer nature walks and also a Junior Ranger program. Hiking trails are marked and maintained in the approximately 1000 acre area. (See map Townshend Lake Recreation Area in Appendix)

### **Vermont State Forest Park**

This Vermont State Park provides shelter facilities and tent areas for camping, but no RV spaces. A registered forester and summer interns supervise the park. The stone building that houses the park headquarters was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the 1930s and is now on the National Register of Historic Places.

### **Recreation Policies:**

1. Support the “West River Trail” project for hikers and bicyclists, which presently starts on Old Route 30 in the Townshend Lake area. Access is provided from the parking lot next to the Townshend Dam spillway. It is hoped to construct a path from Brattleboro to South Londonderry. Segments of the path now run through Jamaica State Park and the upper section by the Winhall campground is to provide access for wheelchairs.
2. Work with neighboring communities, the Windham Regional Commission, and state and federal agencies to stop the degradation of the West River, and the damage to fish population that results from release of silt from both Ball Mountain Reservoir and Townshend Dam.
3. Support a “catch and release” program for the West River.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES, NATURAL AREAS and FRAGILE AREAS, and SCENIC RESOURCES**

Townshend prides itself on the quality of its natural environment. The purity of air and water, the abundance of wildlife, and the integrity of land resources are critical contributors to Townshend’s strength and character, as well as to the health and welfare of all Townshend citizens. Unless the location, type and quality of development receive careful attention, these resources will quickly degrade.

The wise use of Townshend’s hills, forests, streams, rivers, lakes and roadways and the protection of the landscape's beauty are matters of public good. Special areas are lands and resources with unique, irreplaceable qualities which are so valuable that their protection and preservation is a high priority in all land use planning efforts.

### **Forest Lands**

The Town of Townshend consists of approximately 27,300 acres. Of this total, the Town estimates 86 percent is forested. The State Forest covers 1,334 acres. In 2008, landowners enrolled in the Use Value Appraisal Program accounted for about 10,600 acres. Numerous small landowners hold forested parcels that make up the remaining acreage.

Forests are valuable as a timber resource, as wildlife habitat, for recreation and hunting, as a retreat, and as a scenic resource. Vermont's Use Value Appraisal Program, frequently referred to as the "Current Use Program," enables landowners who choose agriculture or forestry as long-term uses of their property to have that land taxed accordingly. The law's intent is to encourage continued and productive use of Vermont's agricultural and forest lands. This is Vermont's best tool for assuring that land is continually used and preserved for forestry and agriculture.

### **Forest Land Policies:**

1. Support the development of local industries which produce "value added" agricultural and forest products.
2. Timber harvesting should follow a professionally prepared management plan. Timber harvesting practices must protect surface waters, shorelines and stream banks, and should minimize all adverse short-term and long-term environmental impacts, including those on neighboring properties.
3. Encourage the use of cluster development as a measure to prevent the fragmentation of large tracts of forest land, and to protect locally significant forest land within those tracts.

### **Scenic Resources**

Townshend's scenic landscape, including the back roads and trails, the open lands, water bodies and wetlands, is widely appreciated by residents and visitors alike. The landscape itself is a valuable economic resource.

Maintaining the overall scenic quality of our town is one aim of this plan. Special attention should be given to particular components of Townshend's scenery. Conservation of scenic resources need not preclude development nor cause economic hardship; rather it should be an important consideration in the planning and design of development to ensure enjoyment of living in our town.

### **Scenic Landscapes and Views**

The rocky cliff face of Peaked Mountain, at 1,280 feet above sea level, 750 feet above the Townshend Common, is a striking view when traveling north on Route 30. Its profile resembles a sheep's back. From the top there is a panoramic view of the valley, as well as of Stratton Mountain in the distance. Peaked Mountain is mentioned in the 1889 Beers Atlas of Windham County along with Bald Mountain, also part of the vista seen from Route 30.

Ridge lines and hilltops and their upper slopes are visible for great distances and give the landscape form and coherence. Development may have a great visual impact and should be sited and landscaped to minimize incompatibility with the natural landscape.

Open meadowlands provide contrast with the predominant forests, reminding one of the agricultural activities of the past. The impact of development can be minimized on meadowlands by careful grouping of structures and sensitive alignment of access roads.

The list below incorporates a number of the special scenic values in Townshend.

1. Route 30 - the entire length within the Townshend boundaries.
2. Townshend Common and views surrounding the common.

3. Route 35 - village and outlying districts.
4. Mountain vistas as seen from Routes 30 and 35, Townshend Acres and East Hill in Townshend, and Windham Hill Road in West Townshend.
5. Townshend's system of back roads such as Deer Valley, Simpson Brook, West Hill, State Forest Rd, and Back Windham Rd.
6. Scott Covered Bridge
7. Vermont's largest sycamore tree - located in Harmonyville next to the bridge.
8. Follett stone arch bridges (See Existing Conditions Map)

### **Scenic Resource Policies:**

1. Give special care and attention in reviewing development proposals that involve high quality scenic landscapes and scenic corridors.
2. Foster greater appreciation of scenic resources as a significant environmental and economic resource.
3. Improve public sites that have diminished a scenic view, particularly along state and local highways and within scenic corridors.
4. Encourage the scale, siting, and design of new development to be in keeping with the landscape and to enhance it.
5. Encourage incentives for preserving scenic lands that may otherwise be suitable for development.
6. Preserve special views and protect mountain vistas against towers or commercialization. When deemed absolutely essential, minimize visual impacts of communication towers, wind generators, and other high-elevation or ridgeline structures through co-location, design, siting, and color choice.
7. Design and site communication and other high elevation towers so that they do not require night-time illumination.
8. Provide for removal of towers, at owner's expense, when no longer in use.
9. Illuminate structures and exterior areas only at levels necessary to ensure safety and security of persons and property. Illumination of prominent physical features, landscapes, buildings and towers should be designed so as to not unduly distract from the night-time horizon or night sky.
10. Encourage careful planning of new or improved roads to maintain or enhance scenic resources.

### **Natural Areas, Fragile Areas, and Wildlife**

Fragile Areas are designated and managed by the Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, while Natural Areas are designated and managed by the Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation. Both resource areas should be recognized and protected. (See Natural Resources Map)

A function of Natural Areas and Fragile Areas is to protect plant and animal species and their ecosystems. In 1991, a wildlife habitat survey was completed on a 4,600 acre tract of land owned by about 40 contiguous landowners in Newfane, Townshend and Wardsboro. Also included in the survey were 1,100 acres of the Townshend State Forest bringing the total acreage to 5,700 acres. The Town could consider continuing surveying of landowners after this new Town Plan is completed. Such a survey of landowners could be accomplished by a Conservation Commission if the Town pursues such an option.

Planning so that large portions of a town (and adjoining communities) are left forested minimizes many of the detrimental effects on wildlife, ecosystems, and the environment of fragmenting land by dividing it into too many smaller parcels. Forests do not have to be untouched wilderness and are often better if they are not. Low density development, clustering of land uses which leave large expansions of connected wooded habitat, and buffer strips along waterways, help to protect important wildlife habitat and corridors.

#### **Natural Area, Fragile Area and Wildlife Resource Policies:**

1. Protect Natural Areas, Fragile Areas, and critical plant and animal habitats, especially those of state and regional significance.
2. Protect habitats of threatened, endangered, and economically significant species and important ecosystems. Maintain or enhance the habitat needs and travel corridors required by our region's larger mammals. If necessary, protect these areas from indiscriminate publicity by mapping them in very general terms.
3. Support state, federal, and conservation group acquisition of land and/or conservation easements to protect critical wildlife habitats. Encourage designation of State Natural and Fragile Areas for significant features and resources.
4. Encourage private and public landowners to recognize the importance of protecting, maintaining and enhancing fish and wildlife habitats and ecosystems by supporting a variety of community, regional and state programs and incentives.

#### **Water Resources**

Much of the West River's watercourse and shorelines in Townshend are controlled and managed by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineer's (ACOE) Townshend Dam and Lake and the flowage easements above the dam. The federal lands, consisting of 949 acres, managed by ACOE, cannot be developed without approval by the Army Corps.

#### **Surface Waters**

The quality of surface waters in Vermont is highly dependent upon the content and amount of surface runoff from the surrounding land. The Upper West River Basin Water Quality Management Plan, and the Basin 11 Management Plan, cover the area above the Townshend Dam and also includes the West River below the Dam which can be affected by upstream water uses. The Basin 11 Management Plan also includes the Williams and Saxtons River watersheds. Townshend Lake acts as a sedimentation basin during large flood control operations, allowing some silt and soil particles to settle out before reaching the dam outlet. Sediments are transported out of the impoundment with water drawn from the bottom of the lake. Operation of the project probably produces other important changes in water quality, in particular an increase in temperature and a decrease in dissolved oxygen content.

The Southeastern Vermont Watershed Association is a recently established nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection of and education about the resources of the West River watershed. It works in cooperation with the Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District and the Windham Regional Commission to protect and enhance existing natural and cultural resources and to plan for the future of the basin.

Pursuant to VSA Title 10, Chapter 47, Section 1252, as amended, Vermont has adopted the following classes and definitions to classify its surface waters:

- TYPE A:
1. Waters to be managed to maintain ecological integrity
  2. Waters to be managed for public water supply purposes.

TYPE B: All waters other than Type A are currently Type B. This classification is to be broken out into three categories. Type B1, B2, and B3, through the state mandated Basin Planning process. Type B1-B3 are to be managed for impacts ranging from minimal through moderate deviation in aquatic biota and habitat from the reference (pristine) condition.

The West River is classified as Type B Waters. There are threats to its quality from the impacts of the Townshend Dam, as mentioned above, and from public and private septic, agricultural runoff and other wastewater discharges. Tributaries to the West River include Mill, Negro, Fair, Tannery, Joy, and Ranney brooks among others, which provide fishing and recreational opportunities.

The greatest concerns in Basin 11, as identified in the Basin 11 Management Plan are as follows; 1) thermal modification or a change in temperature from the natural condition of the stream; 2) sedimentation; 3) habitat alteration; 4) flow alterations; and 5) pathogens. These top five concerns along with nutrient loading, atmospheric deposition of pollutants and invasive species are addressed in the Management Plan.

### **Surface Water Policies:**

1. Maintain undisturbed buffers of vegetation along watercourses, lakes, ponds and wetlands in order to protect shorelines, minimize effects of erosion, sedimentation and other sources of pollution, and maintain scenic, recreational, and habitat values.
2. Maintain or enhance existing chemical, physical, and biological quality of the town's and the region's surface waters.
3. Support surface water classification and management strategies which are, insofar as possible, consistent with the municipal and regional land use planning objectives for the affected watershed, and which will also effectively maintain existing water quality.
4. Maintain water flows in streams at levels which will support a full range of in-stream uses and values.
5. Ensure that the location and design of development in flood hazard areas does not impede the flow of flood waters or endanger the health, safety and welfare of the public.
6. Identify and address any adverse environmental impacts of development proposals which could alter the stream channel or its floodplain.

7. Advocate that agriculture, forestry, recreation and development activities be conducted in accordance with generally accepted best management practices in order to reduce sedimentation, chemical pollution, and disturbance to surface waters.
8. Ponds which do not divert water from a stream or infringe on the property of a neighbor are encouraged for both fire protection and as a wildlife enhancement.
9. Protect and enhance water quality in the West River and its tributaries, especially in regard to sediment impact from operations of flood control dams in Townshend and Jamaica and effluent from sewage disposal facilities (latrines as well as septic systems).
10. Support the work of The Southeastern Vermont Watershed Association in its dedication to the protection of and education about the resources of the West River watershed.

### **Priorities for Action:**

1. Encourage agricultural practices such as nutrient management planning, conservation tillage, riparian area protection, fencing, incorporating manure after spreading and the development of alternative livestock watering facilities
2. Working with the Natural Resources Conservation District, The Southeastern Vermont Watershed Alliance, and the Windham Regional Commission, Conduct a series of best management practice workshops for municipal officials and landowners in the basin.
3. Work with organizations such as the Vermont Farm Bureau, Rural Vermont, and others, on providing technical assistance to farmers on crop diversification to avoid soil runoff into adjacent streams.

### **Groundwater**

An adequate supply of high quality groundwater is essential to the health, safety and welfare of Townshend residents. The sources of our water supply are natural springs, dug and drilled wells, or artesian wells. These resources should be protected.

The majority of town residents are served by individual private on-site water supplies, usually drilled or dug wells. Dug wells are susceptible to contamination from leachates that have reached the water table through soils. Private drilled wells are susceptible to the same groundwater contaminants as those of public water supply wells. Unlike source protection for public water supplies, private wells are not afforded specific levels of protection.

Individual on-site wells can be affected by factors other than contamination. A new well drawing a high volume can deplete the groundwater supply in an area creating supply problems for existing wells.

### **Groundwater Policy:**

1. Avoid contamination of groundwater through the use of proper well-drilling technology and appropriate well placement that protects wellhead areas.

## **Water Quality**

Major potential sources of groundwater contamination include landfills, abandoned dumps, and leaking underground petroleum storage tanks which can contaminate large areas of groundwater supply. Other potential sources of groundwater contamination include: salt storage piles and treated sand storage piles, manure storage areas, onsite sewage disposal systems, fertilizer and pesticide applications, and uncontrolled dumping of waste, homeowner products and petroleum. Federal and state regulations exist to help protect groundwater quality. However, research, planning and regulation measures, and sound land use practices carried out at the local level are also needed to protect Townshend's groundwater supplies.

### **Water Quality Policies:**

1. Where there are known potential pollution sources of water resources, either underground or above ground, periodic monitoring should be ongoing.
2. Maintain or enhance existing chemical, physical and biological quality of the town's groundwater and, since water doesn't abide by political boundaries, the region's ground waters.
3. Design and construct sewage disposal systems in consultation with a qualified professional in accordance with applicable state and local regulations.
4. Support Townshend's Health Ordinance for the design of on-site sewage disposal systems to protect ground and surface waters.
5. Require small quantity generators of hazardous waste, as defined by the current Vermont Hazardous Waste Management Regulations, to have storage and disposal plans which demonstrate that water contamination risks have been minimized.
6. Support Windham Solid Waste Management District, Townshend is currently a member, in its efforts to provide safe disposal for household and agricultural hazardous waste products. Work to increase public awareness of these products and reduce reliance on them.
7. In order to conserve the town's water resources and minimize the cost of waste disposal systems, development shall be planned, designed and operated to minimize the consumption of water.
8. Unless otherwise approved, subdivisions shall provide a water supply large enough to serve all the units within the subdivision, as well as to provide fire protection as needed. Where appropriate, dry hydrants or fire ponds will be constructed to assure adequate supply during fire response.
9. Any new water supply systems or waste disposal systems should not deplete or contaminate any existing water supply system, and shall comply with the Town of Townshend Health Ordinance.
10. Proper maintenance of septic systems should be an on-going educational effort, supported by the town.
11. Drainage areas of upland streams which are characterized by steep slopes or marginal soils need special attention to prevent siltation of streams, soil erosion and pollution to ground and surface waters from septic systems.

## **Wetlands**

Wetlands are defined as those areas that are inundated by surface or ground water sufficient to support vegetation and/or aquatic life that depend on saturated or seasonally saturated areas for growth and reproduction. Such areas include marshes, swamps, potholes, sloughs, river and lake overflows, mud flats, bogs and ponds. Wetland benefits include fish and wildlife habitat, flood and erosion protection, pollution filtration, ground water re-charge, and sites for education, recreation and scenic enjoyment. Wetlands are shown on state resource maps, but accuracy for local conditions should be reviewed on an individual case basis.

Several state and federal laws provide protection for wetlands, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permits, Act 250, the Vermont Wetlands Rules, and the Townshend Health Ordinance.

### **Wetlands Policies:**

1. Protect important wetlands, including the area surrounding them, from land uses that would result in runoff or direct discharge or otherwise diminish the benefits and functions that wetlands provide.
2. Significant Wetlands should be protected from development by maintaining an undisturbed, naturally vegetated buffer strip around the wetland edge sufficient to ensure the integrity of the wetland.

### **Priorities for Action:**

1. Conduct an inventory of wetlands in town to verify National Wetland Inventory (NWI) wetlands and document other wetlands not on the NWI maps.
2. Adopt Town road management standards designed to protect wetlands. Roads should be managed to maintain natural vegetated buffers around wetlands and to limit road runoff from directly entering wetlands. Existing roads that cross wetlands should be retrofitted with culverts and/or bridges to restore wetland hydrology and minimize impacts to wildlife and their habitat.

## **Air Quality**

Generally, the widespread use of wood burning stoves can be a potential threat to air quality, unless catalytic converters are installed. A significant contributor to air quality degradation is the emissions from internal combustion and diesel engines, particularly those powering transportation.

### **Air Quality Policies:**

1. Discourage any development or activity which significantly degrades air quality.
2. Support efforts to reduce locally generated air pollutants from residential, industrial and transportation uses, in particular, emissions from vehicles and wood and coal burning stoves. Encourage pollution controls on any present or future operations that emit contaminants into the atmosphere.
3. Target clean industry for economic development.

## **Land Resources**

**Floodplains** - As to the use of flood hazard areas for development, the town encourages agricultural and open space uses whenever feasible. Whenever such uses are not feasible, the town shall allow only development which will not restrict or divert the flow of flood waters and endanger the health, safety, and welfare of the public during flooding. Community Flood Insurance number is 500136C (for building construction). (See Flood Plain Regulations in Town Clerk's Office).

### **Floodplain Policy:**

1. The Town shall continue to enforce its Flood Hazard Regulations to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of Town residents and assure continued participation in the National Flood Insurance Program.

### **Agricultural and Forest Soils**

Land used for farming purposes in Townshend includes land whose soils are considered primary agricultural soils as well as those considered non-primary. In order to identify and protect local farmland, we need to consider more than just the soil's characteristics. Farmers may also rely on forest soils that permit marketing of maple products, firewood, timber, fruit and Christmas trees.

### **Soils and Topography Policies:**

1. Take special precautions on slopes to avoid environmental damage, including negative consequences associated with erosion. Minimize areas of earth disturbance, grading and vegetation clearing on slopes over 15%; avoid intensive development in areas predominated by slopes exceeding 25%
2. Use detailed site studies to determine suitability for development where steep slopes occur with shallow soils. Ensure that construction and/or logging activities on such soils provide and conform to an erosion control plan for the construction phases of the operation as well as a site drainage plan.
3. Design developments on slopes over 15% so as to minimize the potential impacts of slides and earthquakes.
4. Conduct extensive site investigation to determine suitability for any development on unstable soils.
6. Any non-agricultural or non-forestry related development shall be designed to minimize adverse impacts on existing or potential agricultural or forest uses.

### **Mineral Resources**

Earth resources include deposits of sand and gravel, and deposits of other minerals including granite, slate, limestone, sulfide, uranium, iron ores, talc, soapstone and serpentine. Natural resources do not recognize political boundaries and the management of some resources may take the efforts of several towns or the region as a whole.

The Town of Townshend owns a gravel pit in Harmonyville. There are also two operational private pits in West Townshend. There is an abandoned soapstone pit located in the northeast part of Townshend.

### **Mineral Resource Policies:**

1. Land with high potential for the extraction of mineral and earth resources shall be developed so as to not interfere with the subsequent extraction or processing of the resource. The extraction of such resources must assure site rehabilitation suitable for alternative uses. Any extraction of minerals or earth resources must comply with the Townshend Fissionable Source Materials Ordinance and Flood Hazard Bylaws as recorded in the Town Office.
2. In connection with conformance to Act 250 criteria regarding proposed mineral extraction operations, the town shall require such operations to meet strict health, safety and environmental performance standards. For approval, the operator will submit an excavation plan, a site restoration plan, and be subject to a bond.
3. Overweight permits on local roads and bridges for trucks and heavy equipment will be required.
4. Extraction of mineral resources should not interfere with or have negative impacts on groundwater, surface waters, wetlands, air quality (dust and noise), and special community resources (historic sites, recreation areas, or scenic areas). Extraction sites must handle truck traffic without creating unsafe conditions for adjoining landowners.

## **HISTORIC AND CULTURAL FEATURES AND RESOURCES**

Over two centuries of history has left a rich heritage in Townshend. Although few structures remain from the past, the following are significant historic areas and structures.

1. **Townshend Common and Fountain** - land area of 2 3/4 acres leased to the inhabitants of Townshend from Ephraim Wheelock in 1803. In 1893, the fountain was erected at a cost of \$526. The gazebo is left over from the movie, "Funny Farm," filmed in 1987.
2. **Bridges** - Scattered throughout the town are six small stone arch bridges, fine examples of handcrafted stone masonry. These bridges were built between 1894 and 1910 by James Otis Follett, a local farmer turned stonemason, using the "keystone" rock at the top of two arches. Follett reportedly built as many as forty stone bridges throughout the region of southern Vermont and New Hampshire, of which only eleven are known to remain. These bridges should be preserved through grants. (See locations on Existing Conditions Map)

Townshend used to have four covered bridges, but now Scott Bridge on Route 30 is the only one still standing. Scott Bridge remained in service for over 80 years, until it was seriously weakened by two heavily loaded trucks crossing together. In 1955, the bridge was closed to vehicular traffic. It was donated to the Vermont Historical Site Commission, responsible for its maintenance, and is listed as a State Historic Marker site.

3. **Woods-Wheelock House**, south on Route 30 in Harmonyville, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

4. **West Townshend Village** is in the National Register of Historic Places. It consists of the aggregation of historic buildings in West Townshend Village plus adjoining farmsteads. (See map of West Townshend historic district in Appendix)
5. **Fletcher Grave Site** is situated in the back yard of a private residence in West Townshend. *Townshend and the Founding of Vermont*, a town history published by the West Townshend Historical Society (1991) sets forth General Fletcher's efforts in the campaign for Vermont becoming an independent state, sympathetic to the American Congress in its war with England, but sovereign in itself. General Fletcher's career and accomplishments are fully described in the Townshend Historical Society's book *A Stitch in Time: Townshend, Vermont, 1753-2003*.
6. **Aaron Taft Homestead** - Aaron Taft and family came to West Townshend in 1799 and established a farm on 100 acres. Aaron's grandson, Alphonso, born in Townshend in 1810, later moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, where his son William Howard Taft was born in 1857. William Howard became President of the United States and Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. A Vermont historic plaque honoring the Taft family is located in West Townshend on Route 30 at the site of the now closed general store.
7. **Cemeteries** - There are seventeen known cemeteries maintained by both private and public funds. Wiswell Cemetery is the location of the earliest carved stone, dated 1786. The oldest stone at Oakwood Cemetery is dated 1792. A cemeteries brochure with map is available free from the Town Clerk.

### **Leland and Gray Seminary**

The "Leland Classical and English School of Townshend" was incorporated by the State Legislature under the auspices of the Baptist Association in 1835, with the Hon. Peter Taft as President of the Board of Trustees. To honor Deacon Samuel Gray, who made an endowment of \$500, the name was changed in 1860 to "Leland and Gray Seminary." In 1970, the old Seminary building was torn down along with the general store and Baptist Church to make room for Leland and Gray Union High School.

### **Cultural Activities**

The community enjoys a rich heritage of art, music, drama and dance. Beginning in the 1950s, the Leland and Gray Seminary held an annual festival of the arts with elaborate original productions involving students, and many community members. Posters announcing these events are saved by former headmaster Arlo Monroe in his Jamaica studio. Participation in the arts continues to be a focus of the Leland and Gray Union High School curriculum. The Dutton Gym has been remodeled and used for plays and other artistic events for the community.

Annual events with large community participation are the Grace Cottage Fair Day, the 1st Saturday in August, and in October, the Pumpkin Festival, sponsored by the Townshend Business Association. In June 2003, Townshend celebrated for a full week the 250th anniversary of its charter as a town.

The Townshend Historical Society, a 503(c) non-profit organization incorporated in 1999, is dedicated to the preservation of documents, artifacts and places of historic interest in Townshend. Its mission is to communicate the historic and cultural story to the community through the schools; a website [www.townshendvt.org](http://www.townshendvt.org); and special programs. A major project, supported by donations, grants, and volunteers, resulted in the publication of an updated history book *A Stitch in Time: Townshend, Vermont, 1753-2003*. Membership in the Townshend Historical Society is open to everyone with an interest in Vermont history.

**Historic and Cultural Resource Policies:**

1. Encourage community-based organizations that support art, theatre, music and other cultural programs.
2. Support preservation and restoration of historic buildings and sites, under the guidance of the local community.
3. Protect places of outstanding archeological or historical value from development that unreasonably impairs their character and quality.
4. In Act 250 proceedings involving projects utilizing or nearby to historic structures, their architectural and historic value should be taken into consideration.
5. Support the Townshend Historical Society, and its educational and communication programs.
6. Support the Townshend Public Library, and its variety of cultural programs.

**Priorities for Action:**

- 1, Identify and inventory architecturally significant buildings and streetscapes - (defined as a group of buildings where individual buildings in the group may be undistinguished but together they make an important historic architectural environment.)

**EDUCATION**

**Public School Facilities**

Children in Kindergarten through Grade 6 attend the Townshend Elementary School, overlooking the Townshend Common, which also serves as a place to play at recess. There is a small playground for younger children on the grounds in back of the school building.

In 1990 the building was renovated with additional space added. The capacity of the building is 120 students. Enrollment in the 2007-08 year was 95 students.

Leland and Gray Union High School was formed in 1968 replacing the Leland and Gray Seminary, a private school established in 1835. Leland and Gray serves students from the towns of Brookline, Jamaica, Windham, Newfane and Townshend, and is part of the Windham Central Supervisory District. Enrollment of students for the year 2007-08 was 397 students Enrollment peaked at 440 students in the year 2003-2004 and has been declining since. It should be noted that forces that affect immigration of families to Southern Vermont do not permit accurate predictions. For instance, earlier predictions suggested a peak at 460 students in the fall of 2003, but the number was slightly less. Some students in grades 11 and 12 take advantage of comprehensive career training at the Southern Vermont Career Education Center in Brattleboro. Thanks to the support of voters in June, 2007, construction began at Leland and Gray Union High School to renovate or add spaces that will benefit students, staff, and the community. Renovations were completed in October of 2009. The renovations to Leland and Gray included one new art room, new room for experiential learning, and relocation of the woodworking room.

### **Private School Facilities**

Little Valley Nursery School, established in 1983, operates in the downstairs of Our Lady of the Valley Church. It provides a full-day and a half-day program for children of pre-school age.

Kindle Farm School, located on Route 30 at the Newfane/Townshend border, is a day school currently enrolling 65 students ages 7-20. The Townshend site is for the school's organic farming program. Other sites in Vermont are used for academic work.

In 1999, for the purposes of providing an equalized financing system of education, the legislature enacted ACT 60. This law established a statewide property tax that was equal among all towns. The Town received an equalized amount of money from the State for every student they enrolled. State officials based the state block grant formula on two variables: equalized pupils (not an actual headcount) and compared it to the statewide average.

In 2003, the Vermont legislature passed ACT 68, which contained substantial changes to ACT 60, ACT 68 repealed the property sharing pool where per pupil spending links to the town's tax rates. Towns split the grand list between residential properties (houses, mobile homes, or farms) and non-residential property, such as commercial, industrial, camps, vacation homes, open land ( not used as a primary residence for more than six months of each year). Under ACT 68, non-residential property is subject to a higher statewide education property tax rate than residential properties. These changes to the financing system began to take effect with the 2004-2005 school year.

### **Educational System Policies:**

1. Support public and private cooperation in offering vocational and basic skills training to employees of area businesses and industry.
2. Promote lifetime learning as a goal, supporting, whenever possible, educational programs for all ages.
3. Support the activities of the Townshend Public Library in programs for pre-school and elementary age children, and programs for adult book discussions and parenting skills,
4. Involve the Townshend business community in assisting with career fairs, special courses, and hands-on job experiences.

# ENERGY

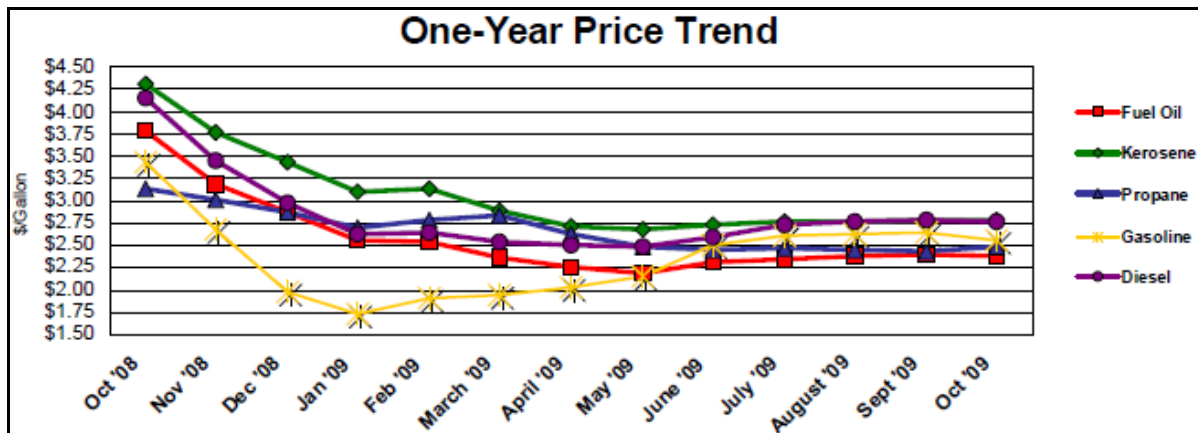
The Town of Townshend is dedicated to supporting the use of renewal energy resources whenever economically feasible and appropriate. “Renewable energy resources” is defined as energy available for collection from direct sunlight, wind, hydro, organically derived fuels, including wood, agricultural sources, waste materials, waste heat and geothermal sources.

This section is being expanded because of the reality of how critical energy is to society and our current standard of living. The debate about energy policy in recent years has focused on promotion of renewable energy sources and energy conservation to mitigate the impacts of uncertainty in global oil production. While efforts to predict the price or supply of available global petroleum is at best, an educated guessing game, the relationship between cheap abundant energy sources and economic growth cannot be ignored.

On July 11, 2008, the price of a barrel of oil hit a record \$147.27 in daily trading. That same month, world crude oil production achieved a record 74.8 million barrels per day. Since that time the American economy and the world economy have entered a severe recession. While there are many theories on how to weight the various triggers of what has led to the greatest recession since the Great Depression, peaking global oil production and high energy prices have certainly played a significant role. High energy prices have negative impacts on the airline and automobile industries. Consumer tastes have shifted to support more fuel efficient vehicles, many produced by foreign companies.

The current recession has brought down energy prices considerably, however, when economic recovery begins, it is expected that energy prices will again rise, which could lead to yet more contraction. The reality of limited available global oil supply and increasing demand for oil consumption from emerging economies, will continue to drive up prices for American consumers. Much of the increase in global oil consumption can be attributed to a growth in automobile ownership and usage in countries such as India and China. Transportation energy consumption which accounts for about a third of energy use both in the State of Vermont, and in the Nation as a whole will continue to be affected by this increased demand abroad and the increasing scarcity of cheap, abundant, and easily recoverable oil supplies.

## Vermont Fuel Retail Price Report, October 2009



## ***Energy Uses***

According to the Vermont Department of Public Services 2009 report *Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan 2009: An update to the 2005 Twenty Year Electric Plan*, the majority of energy consumption in Vermont is used for transportation and space heating. About half of Vermont's energy demand is met by the direct consumption of petroleum-based fuels. Of this, 33% is transportation fuels (predominantly gasoline and diesel) and 27% is heating and business processes (including distillate, natural gas, residual, propane and kerosene).

Demand for total energy in Vermont continues to grow, driven largely by the pressures of population growth, economic development, and increases in vehicular travel and commuting distances. Overall energy demand grew by 25% between 1990 and 2005. More than a third of the state's energy is consumed in the form of electricity, which predominantly comes from resources that are low-emitting or non-emitting sources of greenhouse gases (such as carbon dioxide).<sup>2</sup>

## ***Energy Sources***

The residents of Townshend use a variety of energy sources for home heating fuel. According to the 2000 Census, 48.2% of homes in Townshend were primarily heated with fuel oil or kerosene. Other home heating sources include wood (26.7%) and bottled tank gas or LP (23.5%). The 2000 census indicated that no homes were using other sources such as solar, utility gas, or other fuels for home heating. However, the coming 2010 decennial census may show an increase in usage of sources such as solar.

Renewable energy sources are available for use as a means of electrical generation and space heating. Solar, wood, hydro, and wind are all forms of renewable energy that can be more effectively utilized in the years ahead.

Passive solar designs and siting can increase the efficiency of solar energy and the conservation of other heating fuels in homes and businesses. No mechanical means are employed in passive solar heating. Instead, siting and design measures, such as south facing windows, open floor plans, and ventilation are used. Photovoltaic systems, another option, can be used to convert sunlight to electricity.

## ***Energy Conservation***

Federal and State governments have more control over energy supplies, sources, distribution, and pricing, than regions or Towns. However, regional and local efforts can play an important role in energy conservation. Effective land use planning can promote energy conservation. Concentrated development and land use patterns can reduce reliance on the automobile, vehicle miles traveled, and inherent system energy costs. Cluster development, where buildings and infrastructure (such as roads, power) are concentrated in specific areas rather than spread out, generally disturbs less land, and requires less fuel, material, and energy to both build and maintain. It also encourages people to walk, rather than drive, to nearby destinations.

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<sup>2</sup> Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan 2009, Pg xii

Under Title 21 § 266 of the Vermont State Statutes all new detached one-and two-family dwellings, multifamily and all other residential dwellings three stories or less in height, additions of 500 square feet or more, and factory built modular homes not on a permanent chassis constructed after July 1, 1997 must comply with the Vermont Residential Building Energy Standards (RBES) and generally referred to as simply the Energy Code. This Energy Code is a minimum standard of energy efficiency relating to things like ventilation, appliances, insulation, and percentage of window space on the building envelope, known as the “glazing percentage. These minimum standards are supposed to be certified by the developer and the Town of Townshend should make sure these standards are known by developers and should encourage adherence to the Energy Code for all new dwelling units.

Building energy codes in Vermont are supplemented by “Act 250,” Vermont’s Land Use and Development statute that requires review of proposed major development and subdivisions prior to construction. Before a project that falls under Act 250 is permitted, it must satisfy a number of environmental, social, and fiscal impact criteria, including criterion 9F, which applies to energy conservation.<sup>3</sup> The statute states that a permit will be granted only if:

“The planning and design of the subdivision or development reflect the principles of energy conservation and incorporate the best available technology for efficient use or recovery of energy.”

As it relates to criterion 9F, the term “best available technology” has been interpreted to mean the best of proven design techniques and of normally accessible equipment and materials. For residential buildings, meeting the Residential Building Energy Standard is considered compliance with Act 250 criterion 9F. This compliance was legislated when RBES was enacted. Whether the state will move beyond this presumption in the future is unclear.<sup>4</sup>

Energy savings can be realized by retrofitting existing buildings with insulation, more efficient doors and windows, weather-stripping, compact fluorescent lights, and energy efficient appliances. The following programs are available to residents of Townshend:

- Efficiency Vermont. Efficiency Vermont is the State’s provider of energy efficiency services. They provide technical and financial assistance to electrical consumers for the purpose of improving the efficiency of new and existing facilities. Additional programs that support low income housing and households are also available through efficiency Vermont
- Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA). SEVCA provides a wide array of programs and initiatives addressing a wide range of poverty related programs in areas of affordable housing, homelessness prevention, energy costs, energy and skills training, affordable clothing, seasonal fuel assistance, and emergency fuel assistance. In addition, SEVCA also works with electric companies in order to prevent disconnection and help negotiate payment plans.

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<sup>3</sup> Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan 2009, Pg V124-V125

<sup>4</sup> Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan 2009. Pg V124-V125

## ***Electrical Infrastructure***

Central Vermont Public Service company provides electric power to Townshend. The CVPS Southern Loop subtransmission system consists of the 46 Kv transmission line extending from the 115 Kv substation in Bennington, Vermont to the 155 Kv substation in Brattleboro. This line runs through the southwest corner of Townshend. The VELCO 345 Kv transmission line which extends from Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant to Coolidge substation in Cavendish runs north – south through Townshend.

Presently, the CVPS Southern Loop subtransmission system has only limited ability to support increased electrical demand and is unable to withstand failures of, or to have preventive maintenance conducted on, key components at present demand levels. As the electric demand in southern Vermont has grown, the ability of the Southern Loop to deliver power to all customers in all hours of the year has increasingly become compromised.

### **Energy Policies:**

1. Ensure that utilities have demonstrated, using all reasonable measures, that they are maximizing efficiencies and assisting customers in energy conservation before constructing additional generation and transmission facilities.
2. Encourage all new development to follow the energy conservation guidelines developed by the Department of Public Service for Act 250 permits.
3. Ensure that the State monitors the effects of restructuring electric utilities and protects the interest of small rural communities and their residents.
4. Encourage the use of propane and other clean fuels, so long as such proposals are economically feasible and environmentally appropriate.
5. Target clean industry for economic development.
6. Support the use of energy efficient applications, equipment, vehicles and weatherization.
7. Promote the reduction of vehicular miles traveled in Vermont. (See policies in Transportation section)
8. Support reuse and recycling of goods and materials, currently under contract to Windham Solid Waste Management District.
9. Encourage lending institutions to fund low-interest loans for energy conservation improvements and for the development of renewable energy resources.
10. Encourage new proposals for gas, electric and telecommunication transmission systems to use existing transportation and/or transmission rights-of-way and corridors, where feasible and appropriate.
11. Wind energy turbine towers shall be sited with respect for natural resources and scenic views.

### **Priorities for Action:**

1. Encourage and support residential energy programs that conduct energy audits and provide weatherization services for existing homes, especially for low income homes.
2. The town should complete energy audits of all town buildings to identify potential areas for modifications that would improve energy efficiency and save money.

## HOUSING

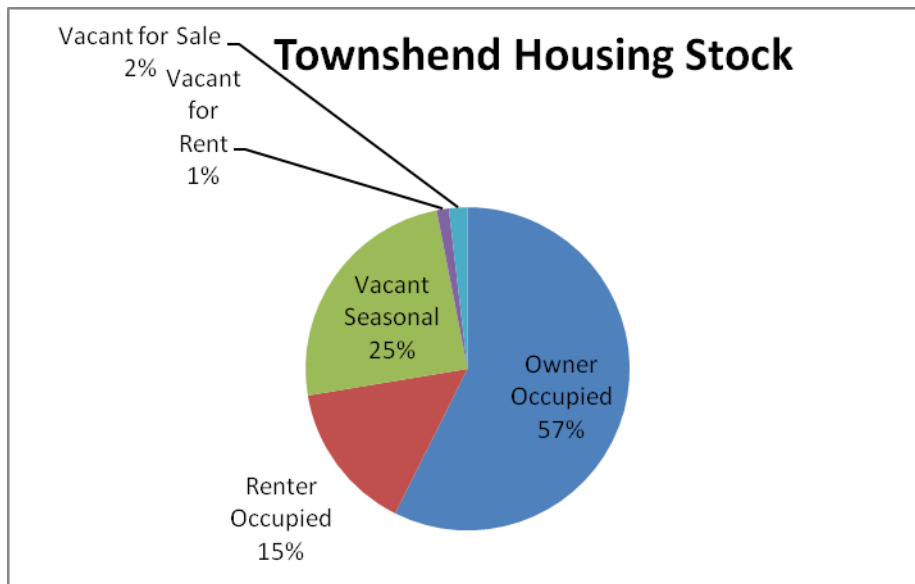
### *Existing Conditions*

In 2000, the U.S. Census documents that 1,149 people lived in Townshend and in 2008 the population was estimated to be 1,085. Between 1990 and 2000, the Town's population increased by 130 people, a 12% increase. Between 2000 and 2008, Townshend's population shrank by 64 individuals. This was a population decline of about 5.5%. For additional information and statistics about housing in Townshend see the Community Profile section.

Some key housing figures from the 2000 US Census include:

- Both Housing and Population are beginning to see declines.
- Twenty-five percent (25%) of the housing units are for seasonal, recreation or occasional use.
- Of the 668 year round occupied housing units, less than one quarter are renter occupied units

### Figure:



Source: 2000 Census

For some years, single family units have accounted for the majority of all new housing in Townshend. Information on housing units in Townshend is shown herewith:

## *Housing Affordability*

A special challenge to all communities throughout Vermont, particularly for smaller, rural communities like Townshend, is the task of adequately meeting the housing needs of low and moderate income citizens. At the present time there are no known subsidized housing units in town.

Vermont's Planning and Development Act requires that town plans must have a housing element that includes a program for addressing low and moderate income persons' housing needs, as identified by the regional planning commission. Affordable housing is a term applied to housing that a family of four, with an income at or below the median income level for the county, can afford without spending more than 30% of its income on monthly housing costs. Housing costs for renters include rent and utilities, while housing costs for homeowners include mortgage payments, insurance and property taxes.

Townshend is fortunate in having The West River Valley Senior Housing Development, which was completed in October 2007 through Valley Cares and Housing Vermont. The development provides seniors with 24 independent living apartments with supportive services in one building and 28 units of assisted living in a second building. Most of the units are affordable to lower and moderate-income elderly. Otis Health Care also provides Meals on Wheels and additional services through the Valley Health Council for elderly and handicapped persons remaining in their homes.

Townshend Town Plan policies encourage accessory apartments within or attached to single family residences. These provide affordable housing in close proximity to cost-effective care and supervision for relatives, handicapped, or elderly persons.

The Town recognizes that high real estate costs make housing unaffordable for many of our residents, especially young people. Some possible solutions to be looked at are community land trusts and state programs that help with home ownership. With no municipal sewage or water facilities in Townshend, there are distinct limits on multi-family dwellings and larger housing complexes.

The hourly wage a household must earn in order to afford a rental unit at Fair Market Rent<sup>5</sup> and only pay 30% of its income towards housing costs varies depending on the number of bedrooms in a unit. Proposed Fair Market Rent in 2010, for a two bedroom unit in Windham County,<sup>6</sup> is \$930. This monthly cost requires a renter to earn an hourly wage of \$17.89 (assuming a 40 hour work week) to afford. This would equal an annual income of \$37,211. The table below helps put the affordability gap for rental units in perspective.

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<sup>5</sup> Fair Market Rent is the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile and what is commonly used by US Housing and Urban Development's (HUD). Median rent would be the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile.

<sup>6</sup> HUD calculates county values only.

**Table : Occupational Wage Estimates for the Southern Balance of Vermont, 2008**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Median Hourly Wage</b>	<b>Median Annual Wage</b>
Recreational Workers	\$14.59	\$30,350
Medical and Health Service Managers	\$38.38	\$79,830
Secondary School Teachers	\$26.50	\$47,710
Child Care Workers	\$10.23	\$21,280
Police and Sheriff Patrols	\$17.27	\$35,920
Carpenters	\$17.67	\$36,760
Elementary School Teachers	N/A	\$47,300
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	\$30.22	\$62,850

Source: Vermont Department of Labor (<http://www.vtmi.info/occupation.cfm>)

According to the Vermont Department of Taxes, the median purchase price for a primary residence in Townshend in 2008 (based on 8 homes sold) was \$211,250, and the average price was \$219,063<sup>7</sup>. To purchase a primary residence at the median price, an annual household income of \$65,379 would be needed.<sup>8</sup> The median household income for a family of four in Townshend for 2009 is \$61,800 a year according to the 2009 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development database; however, in 2006 the median family adjusted gross income was \$50,088<sup>9</sup>. It should be noted that housing prices have dropped substantially in the last year due to the recession, and that if more up to date data was available, it would probably reflect a price decline.

One subset of Townshend population that may be struggling to afford housing in the community is elderly on a fixed income and single parent families. The 2000 Census indicated that Townshend had 118 householders living alone, 25.2% (46) of whom were over the age of 65. There were 22 single female heads of household (4.7 % of households) in Townshend in 2000, which had children living with them under 18 years of age.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The median price of primary residences sold is the middle of selling price of all primary residences sold in ascending order for the given year.

<sup>8</sup> This has been calculated using the Vermont Housing Data online Home Mortgage Calculator ([www.housingdata.org](http://www.housingdata.org)). It assumes a 5% down payment, average interest rates, average property taxes, average property and private mortgage insurance premiums, average closing costs, and that a homebuyer can afford to spend 30% of their income for housing expenses.

<sup>9</sup> The median measure of adjusted gross incomes from the Vermont State tax forms of families, including those filing as Married filing jointly, Civil union filing jointly, Head of household, and Widow(er) with dependent children.

<sup>10</sup> The U.S Census does not report information on single male head of household with children under 18.

## ***Affordable Housing Programs***

Currently, housing affordability in Townshend is addressed through regional programs. The Windham Housing Trust (formerly Brattleboro Area Community Land Trust) has created and manages affordable housing through a variety of programs that serve low and moderate income residents. The Windham Housing Trust can also provide income-eligible homebuyers with a subsidy towards the purchase of a qualifying home. In addition, homebuyers under this program have access to below market rate mortgages as well as financial assistance with closing costs. Southeastern Vermont Community Action Agency (SEVCA) provides referrals to area shelters, landlord lists, and assists in completing applications for affordable housing possibilities. SEVCA also operates weatherization and fuel assistance programs for income-eligible homeowners and renters. The Southeast Vermont Housing Rehabilitation Loan Fund provides loan funding for low and moderate income homeowners to maintain safe and affordable housing.

## ***Housing Needs***

It is important to assure that existing and future town residents and the workforce are served by a range of housing opportunities. The Planning Commission has identified that there is a noticeable lack of affordable rental units in Town and that there is a lack of willing investors who would want to build affordable housing units. Providing for affordable housing in Town will continue to be a difficult process going forward, but the Planning Commission will continue to study the issue and make recommendations to developers and non-profits that can assist in achieve these goals to provide for a diversity of housing options in Town.

### **Housing Policies:**

1. Future development should occur on sites capable of maintaining permanently functioning on-site sewage and water facilities.
2. Support a healthy diversity of housing to meet the needs of low and moderate income households.
3. Encourage accessory apartments within or attached to single family residences that provide affordable housing in close proximity to cost-effective care and supervision for relatives, handicapped, or elderly persons.
4. Encourage new residential development in the villages that is compatible with existing architecture and community character. Outside the villages, development should have minimal impact on natural resources, open space, and important agricultural and forest lands.

### **Priorities for Action:**

1. Support and collaborate with Otis Health Care in efforts to provide housing for elderly throughout the five year cycle of this Town Plan.
2. Support a housing assessment that would project needs for elderly, lower income and physically disabled residents.
3. The town shall study the need for municipal water supply and/or sewage treatment facilities for village districts in order to maintain property values and assure public health.
4. Create a program for addressing low and moderate income persons' housing needs, based on inventories and analyses of current trends.

## ECONOMY

For a small rural town of 1,085 people, Townshend has a diverse economy. It has become a regional center for healthcare and supports a union high school serving grades 7-12. A diversity of industries are represented in Town with the highest concentration of jobs in healthcare and education. Major employers are Otis Health Care Inc, Mary Meyer Corporation, River Bend Farm Market, the Townshend Elementary School and Leland and Gray Union High School.

Products from our forest and fields, while less than in the past, are very important to our economy. The list includes logs for lumber, firewood, maple sugar products, Christmas trees, fruit and organic produce, cheese and other dairy products, also bison, horses, sheep and llamas. Some of these are part-time activities, but they all add up to the Vermont working lifestyle that so intrigues visitors.

Route 30 provides a steady stream of visitors who add to our economy and support businesses and services. The natural scenic beauty of the mountains, villages, and river valleys invites visitors to stop and shop, eat and sleep, hike, bike and ski. Major ski resorts nearby offer all-season activities and provide year-round employment opportunities. There is steady demand for Vermont-made food and crafts as well as for sports equipment and related services. Owners of second homes employ the building trades and property management service.

### ECONOMIC COMPARISON OF WINDHAM COUNTY TOWNS

TOWN	Population	Employment	Average Annual Wage	Effective Tax Rate	Average Residential Value of Homes Sold	Median Adjusted Income
				2009		
Athens	323	NA*	NA*	3.25	\$ NA	\$ 26,708
Brattleboro	11,491	11,332	\$ 35,313	3.71	\$ 190,345	\$ 26,904
Brookline	442	65	\$ 18,170	2.70	\$ 191,938	\$ 32,913
Grafton	612	165	\$ 31,759	3.23	\$ 294,000	\$ 34,253
Jamaica	897	181	\$ 29,288	2.73	\$ 145,653	\$ 29,217
Newfane	1,702	334	\$ 27,942	2.96	\$ 190,488	\$ 32,250
<b>Townshend</b>	<b>1,085</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>\$ 35,636</b>	<b>3.21</b>	<b>\$ 248,656</b>	<b>\$ 29,607</b>
Wardsboro	906	95	\$ 35,760	3.01	\$ 179,614	\$ 29,177
Windham	344	30	\$ 27,993	3.12	\$ 229,000	\$ 29,903
*Not Available						
Sources:	U.S. Census 2008	VT Dept. of Labor 2007 data	VT Dept. of Labor 2007 data	VT Dept of Taxes	www.housingdata.org 2009	VT Dept. of Labor. 2007 data

Townshend's wage and income data are comparable to other towns in Windham County. The median adjusted income for Townshend in 2007 was \$29,607, Grafton, Brookline, and Newfane had slightly higher median incomes while Athens and Brattleboro were noticeably lower. The latest data available for this Town Plan update was from 2007, had more updated data been available it is likely that these figures would show a decline due to the economic recession that began in late 2007. What this data reveals is an especially difficult environment for working families in southern Vermont in light of the fact that median income growth has remained essentially flat in terms of purchasing power per household for the entire decade since 2000.

#### TOWNSHEND BUSINESSES BY INDUSTRY CATEGORY

	Number of Employees by Industry	Percent
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Mining	19	3.3%
Construction	73	12.8%
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	31	5.4%
Manufacturing	73	12.8%
Public Administration	14	2.4%
Retail Trade	53	9.3%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	47	8.2%
Information	9	1.6%
Educational, health, and social services	127	22.2%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services	48	8.4%
Transportation and Public Utilities	28	4.9%
Other services (except public administration)	20	3.5%
Wholesale Trade	30	5.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: U.S. Census 2000

The Townshend school system and Grace Cottage Hospital remain the largest employers in Townshend. The last decennial census confirms this fact stating that just under a quarter of employment in Town falls under the education, health, and social services industries. Other large employment sectors in Town were construction and manufacturing, accounting for just over 25 percent of employment. The manufacturing sector has been declining for several years in the region. In 2008 the manufacturing sector in Windham County accounted for only 9.6% of employment, where in 2004 it accounted for 11% of employment, and this sector had accounted for 15% of employment as recently as 1998. The loss of work in this sector means the loss of relatively high paying jobs for the region.

## **Property Taxes**

Within the town, 11,862 acres (2009) are in the Use Value Appraisal Program, known as "Current Use", and another 150 acres are tax exempt or town owned. In addition, the Townshend State Forest occupies 856 acres for which the Town receives \$2,300 annually about \$2.69 per acre. The federally owned Townshend Dam facility occupies 948 acres of what used to be very productive bottom land, for which the Town is paid \$5,656.00 annually, or \$5.96 per acre. Both of these properties yield the town revenues in lieu of taxes that are far below comparable acreage of privately owned land.

### **Economic Development Policies:**

1. The town favors economic development that provides diversified and stable local employment opportunities with competitive wages that enhance Townshend's small town rural character, and protect the community's natural resources.
2. Development should not overburden existing town services and facilities nor require expansion of such facilities at public expense. Townshend desires to balance growth and additions to the tax base.
3. All agricultural, commercial and industrial operations must adequately control wastes, be environmentally responsible, relate satisfactorily to existing land uses, and minimize traffic congestion. Activities that cause repetitive excessive noise, noxious or hazardous wastes, soil and groundwater pollution, or traffic congestion are undesirable. Architecture and signage that is tastelessly showy and not in keeping with the character of the town should be discouraged.
4. Townshend encourages cottage industries, home-based work and entrepreneurial ventures that preserve and revitalize the town's character and add to the diversity of cultural and other activities available to residents and visitors.
5. Encourage production and marketing of land-based industries such as agriculture and forest products, and development of recreation and sporting facilities.
6. Support protection of farm and forest lands by encouraging donation of development rights to local government or qualified nonprofit land trusts.
7. Encourage businesses that support tourism, providing lodging, dining, and recreational activities for visitors.
8. Support agricultural demonstration, test projects, and other programs, including agri-tourism, community supported agriculture, consumer or producer cooperatives, and farmers' markets. The Town should also encourage restaurants and markets to obtain and supply agricultural products from within the region and Vermont
9. Encourage civic organizations: among them the Townshend Business Association that assists businesses and promotes tourism; the Leland and Gray Education Foundation that promotes education, occupational training and scholarships; the Townshend Historical Society that supports historical preservation, education, and communication projects.

### **Priorities for Action:**

1. Support provisions for additional parking areas in the Townshend village.
2. The town shall formally petition the proper authorities to obtain a substantial increase in payments to Townshend in lieu of taxes for the state and federally owned property

**V. PROCESS GOALS**

1. To establish a coordinated and comprehensive policy framework, including a capital expenditure or 5 year plan, to help guide local decisions.
2. To encourage citizen participation at all levels of the planning process.
3. To consider the use of resources and the consequences of growth and development in Townshend.
4. To coordinate with neighboring communities to develop and implement compatible municipal plans.

The Planning Commission believes that the planning process is continuous and this plan builds on plans made as early as the 1970s. A survey asking for responses to several important planning issues was distributed to residents who participated at the 2010 Town Meeting day. Two public hearings are scheduled before adoption of this plan.

**VI. PLAN RELATIONSHIP TO DEVELOPMENT TRENDS AND TO PLANS FOR ADJACENT TOWNS AND THE REGION**

Townshend is a focal point for towns in the West River Valley because of the union high school and the large complex of health care services. We have a cooperative relationship with our neighboring towns and look forward to continued collaboration in the planning efforts with our bordering communities.

**With Other Towns:**

When Vermont's Growth Management Law, Act 200, was passed in 1988, Vermont set up a system for communities to work in concert with their neighbors, and with agencies of state government, to shape the future. As envisioned, decisions on local growth issues are to be made by the local communities; decisions of regional significance are to be made by the region's communities acting in consort. Town Plans are to be compatible with the regional plan and compatible with approved plans of other municipalities in the region.

**Athens:** Athens does not have a Town Plan

**Brookline:** (Town Plan Adopted August 2005) Brookline is located east of Townshend and can be accessed via Ellen Ware rd. Brookline has four land use districts which abut Townshend; they are the Town Center District, Rural Residential Lands District, Resource Lands District, and Conservation Lands. Brookline's Conservation lands are meant to encourage the retention and acquisition of public or private conservation lands to promote recreation, reforestation, water conservation and suitable forest practices. This is compatible with Townshend's abutting land use Resource Lands district which encourages protection of green space, particularly along streams and rivers, and other important lands that are valued for trails, open space, wildlife habitat and scenic enjoyment.

**Grafton:** (Town Plan Adopted May 2008) Grafton is located north of Townshend and can be accessed via Townshend Rd. The land uses in the southern portion of Grafton which directly abut Townshend are Rural Residential and Conservation. The Conservation Land Use district is composed of areas that are best used for agriculture, forestry, low-intensity recreation, and open space. The Rural Residential Land Use district is where primary growth of permanent and vacation homes would occur. These districts are compatible with Townshend's Resource District and Productive Rural Lands, under the assumption that

commercial and residential densities remain low in the Productive Rural Lands district and Rural Residential District in Townshend and Grafton which outly the Route 35 / Townshend Rd. Corridor. Townshend and Grafton should work together in the next five year cycle of this Plan to assure that any development of rural residential lands will be at densities that contain rural sprawl and are sensitive to the limitations of the land.

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**Jamaica:** (Town Plan Draft Adopted in June 2006) Jamaica lies to the west of Townshend and can be accessed via VT Route 30. The Route 30 corridor and border between Jamaica is Conservation and Rural Resource Area Land Use Districts, allowing for low density development at one unit per 12.5 acres for the Conservation District and one unit per four acres for the Rural Resource Areas District. Townshend's bordering Land Use District is primarily the Resource Lands District which discourages residential or commercial development, the extension of roads, energy transmission facilities, and other services. These land use districts are largely compatible. Growth is clustered along West Townshend Village which runs along Route 30 into Jamaica.

**Newfane:** ( Town Plan adopted in September 2006) Newfane lies to the south of Townshend and can be accessed via Route 30. The Land Use Districts which border Townshend are the Resource District and the Rural District. The Resource District is where Newfane identifies its areas where development should be discouraged and the land should be used for low intensity recreation, open space, or forestry. These areas would be considered a high priority for long term conservation efforts. The Rural District comprises areas that are already committed to development and primarily benefits from road access along Route 30. The district policies encourage development at densities that will contain rural sprawl. These Districts abut Townshend's Resource Lands District and State Forest District. These Districts encourage preservation of open spaces, wildlife habitat, wetlands, floodplains, and steep slopes. These uses are largely compatible.

**Wardsboro:** (Town Plan adopted in February, 2009) Wardsboro lies to the west of Townshend and is south of Jamaica, which also borders Townshend to the west. Townshend can be accessed via East Hill rd. through Wardsboro. The Land Use District in Wardsboro which borders Townshend is the Rural Residential District. The Rural Residential District is used to accommodate a major portion of the growth of year-round residences and vacation homes. This abuts the Resource Lands District in Townshend which covers lands that are primarily meant for uses that prevent development to preserve wildlife corridors, open space, wetlands, and fragile natural areas. This has potential to create incompatible uses due to the targeting of residential growth along East Hill Rd. The towns of Townshend and Wardsboro should further discuss the future planning and development of this section of the border.

**Windham:** (Town Plan adopted in September 2008)The town of Windham lies northwest of Townshend and is accessed only through Chase rd. The Land Use District which borders Townshend is the Rural Residential District, however, Windham has decided to add a Resource Protection Area Overlay which covers most of the border region with Townshend. Townshend's border area is designated as a Resource Land. There should be no conflict with the designated land uses in both towns.

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### **Compatibility with The Windham Regional Plan:**

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The Windham Regional Plan is intended to provide guidelines for the planning and coordination of development which will allow for a shared vision of the region's future that provides for a high quality of life, defined as a composite of our economic, social, cultural, and ecological well being. For the most part The Townshend Town Plan is compatible with the land use and development goals of the Regional Plan.

There is one exception between the proposed land use and the Windham Regional Plan. The Rural Residential District land in the northwest portion of Townshend along Windham Hill Rd. encourages a mix of rural land uses including: housing; home businesses; small-scale agriculture; or commercial uses. This could contrast with the Regional Plan which identifies the land use a *Productive Rural*. Productive Rural lands are “low density and very low density residential areas containing land-based resources that, when in productive use, contribute to the working landscape and have significant economic value”. Townshend Town officials should work actively with neighbors and with the Windham Regional Commission to assure that future development is in line with regional goals and policies.

## **VII. TOWN RESPONSE TO VERMONT’S PLANNING GOALS**

***Goal 1.*** *To plan development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside, and avoid sprawl.*

The Town Plan acknowledges that Townshend’s future development should occur primarily in presently developed areas. Every effort should be made to avoid sprawl and maintain a rural countryside.

***Goal 2.*** *To provide a strong and diverse economy that provides satisfying and rewarding job opportunities and that maintains high environmental standards.*

The Town Plan’s policies in the Economy section as well as Natural Resources address these issues.

***Goal 3.*** *To broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities sufficient to ensure the full realization of the abilities of all Vermonters.*

Leland and Gray Union High School sends students to the Southeastern Vermont Career Center in Brattleboro, and also cooperates with businesses for career days and training programs. The Townshend Business Association participates in “career days,”

***Goal 4.*** *To provide for safe, convenient, economic and energy efficient transportation systems that respect the integrity of the natural environment, including public transit options and paths for pedestrians and bicyclers.*

The Town Plan policies and priorities for action in the Transportation section support paths for pedestrians and bicyclists, and advocate for measures to increase safety for pedestrians and motorists, including a long-range study of relocating heavily traveled Route 30, as well as other safety measures at dangerous intersections. Policies also support traffic-calming methods on Vermont Route 30 as well as reducing the speed limit along RT 35 to Grace Cottage Hospital .

***Goal 5.*** *To identify, protect and preserve important natural and historic features of the Vermont landscape, including: significant natural and fragile areas, outstanding water resources and wetlands; significant scenic landscape and views, important historic structures, sties, or districts, and archaeological sites.*

Policies that clearly address these issues are found in the Natural Resources, Natural Areas and Fragile Areas, and Scenic Resources sections.

***Goal 6.*** *To maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife and land resources.*

Policies address these issues in the Natural Resources, Natural Areas and Fragile Areas, and Scenic Resources sections.

**Goal 7.** *To encourage the efficient use of energy and the development of renewable energy sources.*  
Policies in the Energy section support conservation, energy audits, and renewable energy sources.

**Goal 8.** *To maintain and enhance recreational opportunities for Townshend residents and visitors.*  
The Town Plan addresses this in the Public Recreation section of Community Facilities and Services.

**Goal 9.** *To encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest industries.*  
Policies in the Natural Resources and the Economy sections encourage strategies to protect agricultural and forest industries, and include maintaining low over-all density.

**Goal 10.** *To provide for the wise and efficient use of Vermont’s natural resources and to facilitate the appropriate extraction of earth resources and the proper restoration and preservation of the aesthetic qualities of the area.*  
Policies in Natural Resources and Mineral Resources sections clearly address protection and restoration of such areas.

**Goal 11.** *To ensure the availability of safe and affordable housing for all Vermonters.*  
In the Housing section, the Town Plan recognizes the need for safe and affordable housing and seeks ways to provide it, with particular emphasis on elder and handicapped housing needs.

**Goal 12.** *To plan for, finance and provide an efficient system of public facilities and services to meet future needs.*  
Policies in the Community Facilities, Services and Public Recreation section support long-range planning and a capital budget plan.

**IMPLEMENTING THE TOWN PLAN**

The Townshend Town Plan is a statement of vision: it is a dynamic document which provides a new starting point in the ongoing process of planning for the future of Townshend. Used properly, the Town Plan can provide guidance to elected officials and the people for present and future decisions facing the town. The Town of Townshend supports decision-making at the most local level possible, whenever appropriate and legal. This section summarizes the “Priorities for Action” elements of the Town Plan and suggests who has responsibility for implementation.

**PRIORITIES FOR ACTION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

<b><u>ACTION</u></b>	<b><u>RESPONSIBILITY</u></b>	<b><u>PAGE #</u></b>
<b>Land Use -</b>		
1. Support a local ordinance to regulate commercially operated recycling/metal recovery/junkyard facilities.	<u>Selectboard</u>	<u>7</u>
<b>Village Districts –</b>		
1. Support the development of utilities, such as municipal water or wastewater treatment facilities, when needed to protect health and ground water resources and to allow full use of lands within villages.	<u>Selectboard &amp; Consultants</u>	<u>8</u>

**Rural Residential District –**

1. The Planning Commission should consider the creation of an Open Space Plan and support and encourage conservation organizations that work with the Town to identify and preserve lands that are being considered as conservation priorities. [Assigned to...] 9

**Resource Lands –**

1. The Town should consider forming a Conservation Commission for the purposes of implementing the above recommendations for protecting the natural resources of the Town for the benefit of all. [Assigned to...] 11

**Transportation -**

1. Support the Townshend Parking Ordinance (2003) and consider options for additional off-street parking spaces in Townshend village. Selectboard 15

2. Cooperate with other towns, especially towns on Route 30, the WRC and VTrans in developing solutions to the traffic problems on Route 30. Plan.Comm. & Selectboard  
WRC & VTrans 16

3. Enforce overweight permits on local roads and bridges in coordination with appropriate officials, local and state. Selectboard 16

4. Pursue funding options such as Transportation Enhancement Grants to help design and implement a plan for pedestrian and traffic safety at the Townshend Common intersection of Routes 30 and Route 35. Plan.Comm. & Selectboard  
VTrans 16

**Community Facilities -**

1. Support a committee to make recommendations on the use of the town property on Rte 30, Taft meadow. Plan.Comm. & Selectboard 20

2. Assess future needs of the Fire Department Plan. Comm., Selectboard, and Fire Dept. 20

**Natural Resources, Natural Areas, and Fragile Areas, and Scenic Resources -**

1. Encourage the use of cluster development as

a measure to prevent the fragmentation of large tracts of forest land, and to protect locally significant forest land within those tracts. Plan Comm. & Selectboard 22

2. Work with organizations such as the Vermont Farm Bureau, Rural Vermont, and others, on providing technical assistance to farmers on crop diversification to avoid soil runoff into adjacent streams Plan Comm. & Selectboard 26

3. Conduct an inventory of wetlands in town to verify National Wetland Inventory (NWI) wetlands and document other wetlands not on the NWI maps Plan Comm. & Selectboard 28

### **Historic & Cultural Resources -**

1. Identify and inventory architecturally significant buildings and streetscapes – (defined as a group of buildings where individual buildings in the group may be undistinguished but together they make an important historic architectural environment.) Plan.Comm.& Consultants 33

### **Energy -**

1. Encourage and support residential energy programs that conduct energy audits and provide weatherization services for existing homes, especially for low income homes. Plan.Comm.& Selectboard 37

2. The town should complete energy audits of all town-owned buildings to identify potential areas for modifications that would improve energy efficiency and save money. Selectboard, Plan. Comm 37

### **Housing**

1. Support and collaborate with Valley Cares in efforts to provide housing for the elderly. Plan.Comm.&Selectboard 41

2. Support a housing assessment that would project needs for elderly, lower income and physically disabled residents. Plan.Comm.& Selectboard 41

3. The town shall study the need for municipal water supply and/or sewage treatment facilities for village districts in order to maintain property Plan.Comm.& Selectboard&

values and assure public health. *Consultants* 41

4. Create a program for addressing low and moderate income persons' housing needs, based on inventories and analyses of current trends. *Plan.Comm.& WRC&Consultants* 41

**Economy-**

1. Support provisions for additional parking areas in Townshend village. *Plan.Comm.& Selectboard* 44

2. The town shall formally petition the proper authorities to obtain a substantial increase in payments to Townshend in lieu of taxes for the state and federally owned property. *Selectboard* 44

**IX. MAPS & REFERENCES**

**Existing Land Use, and Insets** – includes roads, community facilities and utilities

**Proposed Land Use, and Insets** – shows 5 districts: Villages, Health Care Services, Rural Residential, Productive Rural Lands and Resource Lands

**Natural Resources** – shows topography, rivers and streams, wetlands, natural & fragile areas and wildlife resources

**West Townshend Historic District**

**Townshend Dam Recreation Area Trail Map**

Note: Town maps may be seen in large-size format at the Town Hall offices. The maps of this plan are key to understanding the vision of the plan in the same manner as the plan's policies; the maps and policies should be used in concert with each other.

**REFERENCES:**

Sewage Disposal Capability Study and Route 30 Relocation Feasibility Study – Final report May 6, 1992 by Windham Regional Commission for Town of Townshend. On file in Town Offices.

Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan, 2009

**X. APPENDIX**

Townshend Housing Characteristics, U.S. Census 2000