



1727 Quaker Village Road
Weybridge, Vermont 05753 • (802) 545-2450

RECEIVED

OCT 21 2016

Department of Housing
and Community Development

MEMORANDUM

TO: - Chairs of Planning Commissions of Towns Abutting Weybridge
(Middlebury, Addison, Bridport, Cornwall, New Haven)

- Adam Lougee, Executive Director, Addison County Regional Planning Commission
- Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs

FROM: Weybridge Planning Commission

Jeff Olson, Chair

DATE: October 15, 2016

SUBJECT: Proposed Weybridge Town Plan and Zoning Regulations

Enclosed per 24 V.S.A. § 4384(e) and 4441(e) are copies of the proposed Weybridge Town Plan and Zoning Regulations slightly revised to reflect anticipated changes to our Town Plan and Chapter 117. We anticipate holding a public hearing on these in late November or early December and our notice of the public hearing will be in the Addison Independent, if you are interested in attending. We would appreciate any comments that you may have with respect to the compatibility of the regulations with local or regional or state agency plans.

For further information or to discuss the proposed changes, please call Jeff Olson of the Planning Commission at (802) 545-2134 or Brenda Jaring, the Town Clerk, at (802) 545-2450.

Draft

Weybridge Town Plan

20174

DEDICATION

The 20174 Weybridge Town Plan is dedicated to Steve Davis~~Rich Wolfson~~ and Bill Roper~~Spence Putnam~~, in appreciation of their work on this document and their over 18many years of dedicated service to the Weybridge Planning Commission.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Note: page numbering and formatting may be off while in draft form

Introduction	1
The Planning Process	1
An Overview of the Plan	2
How to Use this Plan	3
GOALS AND POLICIES	4
1. Roots and Traditions	4
2. Land Resources	5
3. Land Use Planning	7
Land Use Districts	9
Planning Regions	11
4. Jobs	15
5. Housing	16
6. School	18
7. Transportation	20
8. Public Facilities	22
9. Town Government	23
10. Biological Diversity	24
11. Rivers and Streams	25
12. Wetlands	27
13. Groundwater	28
14. Air Quality	29
15. Recreation	30
16. Energy	32
17. Communications	37
18. Regional Relationships	38
19. Implementation Program	40
MAP LIST	42

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Weybridge was chartered in 1761. It is a small, rural town located near the center of Addison County in west-central Vermont. Otter Creek flows along the eastern boundary of the town and along most of the northern border. Snake Mountain lies along the western edge. The southern border is formed by a straight administrative line separating Weybridge from Cornwall. The Lemon Fair River flows through the western section of town. (Map 1 Aerial View of Weybridge)

Weybridge's population, ~~82833~~ as of the 2010~~4~~ census, only grew by ~~4~~nine from the figure of 824 in 2000. The town grew significantly in the 1990s, but the population has since been almost static. The town's population growth is tied directly to job opportunities offered in Middlebury, as well as Chittenden County. Middlebury, the economic and cultural center of Addison County, is less than a 10-minute drive for most residents. Over 60% of the town's workforce is employed there. (Map 2 Population Density)

Although many people commute out of Weybridge to work, agriculture continues to tie the people and the landscape together. Many townspeople consider Weybridge an agricultural community and support the preservation of our valuable farms and open landscapes. Given the development pressures and economic trends of our region, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain the viability of farming. As a community, we are striving to maintain that balance between preserving our heritage and our environment, and changing to meet today's demands and allow new families to settle here.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Town Plan is a statement of how the Town's future development should proceed in order to best promote the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens. The Plan serves as the foundation for zoning and other bylaws that implement the Plan. The Plan by itself may affect development through the Act 250 process. Therefore, it is important that the citizens of the Town consider the Plan so that it reflects the best interests of the community.

Weybridge's Selectboard adopted the most recent Town Plan in 2001~~1~~, under the authority of the Vermont Planning and Development Act, Title 24 VSA, Chapter 117 ("Act 200"). A plan should not be a static document, but should adapt to changing times and conditions, and Section 4387 of the Act mandates that a municipality review, amend, and readopt the existing plan or adopt a new plan at least every 5 years. The 1996 Town Plan was developed by the Planning Commission beginning in 1990 and was the subject of several public hearings held in 1992 and 1993. In response to public comments, the Planning Commission made several revisions in form and content intended to reflect the expressed views of the community. That Plan was adopted by the Weybridge Selectboard in July 1996.

The Plan adopted in 2001 differed from the 1996 Plan ONLY by updating of certain statistics, dates and verb forms; the format and substance of the Plan remained unchanged. The process leading to the proposed 2011 Town Plan has also involved a careful review of dates and statistics. A new section was added on Communications (17), in response both to recent technological advances and to growing awareness of the need to conserve resources. A section on Air Quality (14) was added to be parallel to other Town Plans in adjacent communities. There were also, for similar reasons, significant additions made to the section on Energy (16). Section 5 (Housing) has also seen some modifications to reflect the need for energy conservation and an allowance for greater diversity in housing stock. One highlight of the 2011 Plan is a new set of maps providing a great deal of information about the town. They are referenced in the text and can be found at the end of the Plan

In 2014 the Planning Commission carefully updated the Town's Zoning Regulations to reflect the 2011 Town Plan updates. While revising the Zoning Regulations, the Planning Commission reviewed the 2011 Town Plan and found it consistent with the town's vision for development. Thus, the updates to the Plan in 2017, proposed only 2 years after a thorough review of the Zoning Regulations and the Town Plan they implement include modest changes, except as to the Energy and Rivers and Streams sections. In other respects the 2014~~6~~ version of the Weybridge Town Plan continues to be similar~~ly~~ largely identical in form and substance to previous plans.

~~One highlight of the 2011 Plan is a new set of maps providing a great deal of information about the town. They are referenced in the text and can be found at the end of the Plan~~

AN OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN

This plan contains goals and policies that can help Weybridge guide future growth and development in ways that are compatible with the town's rural character and its agricultural economy. It is based on an extensive body of factual information about Weybridge's history, environment, population and economics gathered by the Planning Commission. The plan itself is a general guide, not a set of regulations, and can serve official town bodies as well as individual citizens in planning for future development.

The broadest goals of this plan – sustaining the town's rural character and agricultural economy -- find expression in suggestions for preserving prime agricultural land, undeveloped land and significant natural areas. Preservation of these resources has the support of the majority of Weybridge citizens who were surveyed during the planning process. And although no town of diverse individuals will be unanimous on all plan details, many Weybridge residents who have attended hearings and information sessions on this plan have expressed their support.

A hallmark of this plan is flexibility. In place of rigid lot sizes, setbacks, and other land-use regulations, this plan suggests that landowners and developers think creatively about designing projects for compatibility with individual sites in ways that enhance the quality of development while helping maintain open space and agricultural potential. The plan emphasizes that there is no one way to achieve these goals, and that different sites, different parts of town, and different scales of development may require different approaches. This plan attempts to enable, even encourage, growth without sacrificing the Town's essentially rural and open landscapes and character.

The plan recognizes that land-use regulations alone cannot achieve the plan goals. Other town policies, especially those relating to sewage disposal and taxation, as well as actions and policies of adjacent towns, have a direct impact on Weybridge's character and development. This plan therefore includes suggestions to help all town officials work in consonance with the plan goals. It also describes ways Weybridge can be involved in regional decisions that impact the town.

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

The essential recommendations of the Plan are presented as a set of broad Goals desirable for Weybridge and Policies, which should assist in reaching these Goals. These are grouped under the following categories:

1. Roots and Traditions
2. Land Resources
3. Land Use Planning
4. Jobs
5. Housing
6. School
7. Transportation
8. Public Facilities
9. Paying for Government
10. Biological Diversity
11. Rivers and Streams
12. Wetlands
13. Groundwater
14. Air Quality
15. Recreation
16. Energy
17. Communications
18. Regional Relationships
19. Implementation Program

1. ROOTS & TRADITIONS

How the people of the past lived and died, and what they lived for, have created the town today. For each of us here today, whether our ancestors were among the first settlers of the town, or we have come here only a season ago, by living in Weybridge we have become part of a chain in time, descendants of the people who lived here one hundred and two hundred years ago, and ancestors of those who will follow us. We live within laws and customs they established as surely as within the land boundaries of our own houses and fields. In turn, future generations will live with our successes and our mistakes, just as we live with those of our forbears.

-- Ida H. Washington, *History of Weybridge, Vermont*

~~The Planning Commission's 2000 survey indicated~~ Over the years, Weybridge residents are committed to preserving have shown their commitment to preserving the town's historic and prehistoric resources. In part, ~~it is our~~ traditions, established over time, that define much of what our community is about today. In our history, we find the roots of the agricultural and home-based businesses that are a part of Weybridge today. It is, therefore, desirable to preserve and ~~commemorate~~ celebrate as many of the historic aspects of our town as we can. (Map 3 Significant Historical Resources).

GOALS

Identify and preserve where possible significant historic structures, sites, or districts; known prehistoric archeological sites; and be aware of areas where prehistoric sites are likely to be found.

Preserve the historic traditions, and values, and landscapes, that give Weybridge its rural character and make it a special place to live.

POLICIES

Regard the town's cultural resources and historic settlement pattern as significant, non-renewable resources that create a special sense of place and community well-being.

Cooperate with historians and archeologists researching Weybridge's past.

~~Allow 10 working days for the State of Vermont Division for Historic Preservation to respond to notification of earth-disturbing activities within areas likely to have prehistoric archeological sites.~~

~~Provide affected landowners with information on known prehistoric archeological sites even though such information is not part of the "public record" and may not be disclosed in public documents. (1 V.S.A. Section 317 (b) (20)). Forward public requests for information to the Division for Historic Preservation.~~

Consider all known archeological sites to be significant until evaluated and proven otherwise.

~~Evaluate~~Consider the significance of all historic districts, structures, and known archeological sites prior to disturbance or alteration.

Apply the current State of Vermont Division for Historic Preservation's "Criteria for Listing in the State Register of Historic Places" when determining the significance of historic districts, structures and sites.

2. LAND RESOURCES

Among material resources, the greatest, unquestionably, is the land. Study how a society uses its land, and you come to pretty reliable conclusions as to what its future will be.

-- E. F. Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful*

Weybridge's land – mountains and valleys, cliffs and waterfalls, rocks and soils – was shaped by geologic processes beginning hundreds of millions of years ago. The resulting characteristics of the land and their pattern on the landscape both enable and constrain human activities and biological systems. For example, deep, well-drained soils enable us to grow crops or build effective septic systems; ledges and clay soils prevent us from doing so; wetlands and larger tracks of undeveloped lands provide important wildlife habitat and corridors. Recognizing and understanding the land's opportunities and limitations are the underpinnings of sound development, efficient conservation and utilization of natural resources and retention of habitat. (Map 4 General Land Cover, Map 5 Landscape Slope and Map 6 Earth Resources).

Weybridge's rural character is determined largely by the patterns of development that have evolved. Most of Weybridge's land area is in farms or forest; there are a few small areas of relatively concentrated housing in the eastern half of the town, with other dwellings widely dispersed through the rest of the town. In an effort to maintain the rural character and healthy wildlife habitat so attractive to us, this plan seeks to balance the opportunities and limitations of Weybridge's land with the historic patterns of land use. A significant amount of land in the town is in public hands or has been. (Map 7 Public, Conserved and Institutional Lands).

GOALS

Promote and protect the long-term productivity and viability of agricultural soils.

Protect and encourage the maintenance of agricultural lands for the production of food and other agricultural products.

Maintain the scenic, aesthetic, wildlife and economic value of Weybridge's landscape of hills and forests, farms, open lands, large undeveloped tracts, and long views.

POLICIES

Conserve the town's primary agricultural soils for agricultural uses. Steer development away from primary agricultural soils. Primary agricultural soils are Class 1, Class 2, and Class 3 soils as determined by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Guard against waste of valuable earth resources such as topsoil, building stone, sand and gravel.

Work actively with landowners and developers to achieve the goals, policies and objectives of this plan. Provide information, assistance and advice as needed.

Uphold farmers' right to produce food and other agricultural products encouraging best practices that protect water quality, minimize pesticide and artificial hormone use without unnecessary interference from local regulation and private litigation.

Carefully review and condition the approval of any proposals for resource extraction in order to balance potentially competing interests such as economic benefits, rights of property owners, and environmental and community impacts. Special attention should be given to safety concerns when extraction occurs in residential areas, and where extraction-related traffic competes with bicycles, pedestrians, children at play, and commuter, residential, and tourist traffic. Audio, visual, and atmospheric pollution must be considered with respect to the quality of life in surrounding areas.

Consider impact on wildlife habitat and corridors when new development is proposed near or in areas identified as important to wildlife habitat and travel corridor, and how to mitigate the impact.

Balance the need for siting renewable energy facilities serving Weybridge and/or beyond with Weybridge's productive agricultural lands, wildlife corridors, and its defining rural aesthetics and landscapes.

3. LAND USE PLANNING

Our town's rural character and welfare are determined largely by the mixture of farm, forest, and villages; by the patterns of buildings on the landscape; and by the sense of community that comes from people of mixed incomes and lifestyles living and working together. Experience has shown, neither working landscapes nor economic integration, are ensured by imposing large lot requirements and large setbacks. In some instances they create sprawling development that uses land inefficiently, inhibits diversity of incomes within neighborhoods and gradually undermines the welfare of the community.

Weybridge's landscape is a rich mosaic of farms, forests, villages, neighborhoods, and isolated houses. The pattern they create varies substantially from one part of town to another. These differences -- and the reasons for them -- must be taken into account when setting land use goals

GOALS

Maintain the historic settlement pattern of villages and neighborhoods surrounded by working farm and forestland, while allowing for growth to support the tax base and the local school.

Provide residents with a variety of living opportunities in different settings, including villages, rural neighborhoods, and farms.

Assure that type, location and intensity of land use is compatible with the environmental and economic capability of the community to sustain it over the long term.

POLICIES

Recognize the opportunities and limitations presented by geology and soils when planning and regulating land use.

Adopt maximum average housing density¹, rather than minimum lot size, as the basis of zoning district definition, and encourage the use of Planned Unit Developments in order to achieve flexibility in development planning, allow most favorable placement of homes relative to terrain, and preserve desirable open areas.

Base development densities for different areas of town on existing and desired settlement patterns and physical suitability of the land for development, with a willingness to grow along the edges.

¹ Maximum average housing density (MAHD) may be illustrated by the following example: A 20 acre development in a Planned Agricultural Residential District (PAR), with MAHD = one dwelling per five acres, could contain four dwellings, although each individual lot need not be five acres in size; the four lots could even all be smaller than five acres if the remainder of the 20 acres were set aside by covenant as common land restricted from further development.

Conserve the town's primary agricultural soils for agricultural use by steering development away from primary agricultural soils.

Distribute growth over space and time so that the town's facilities, services and natural resources are not overburdened by development while recognizing the relationship between housing and school enrollment.

Prohibit big box or large-scale commercial development throughout the Town of Weybridge, thereby preserving the rural character of the town.

Promote the efficiency of providing public facilities and services by concentrating growth in designated areas while simultaneously conserving open space in the surrounding countryside. Plan public investments to minimize development pressure on agricultural and forestland and natural areas and reduce visual impacts on the rural aesthetics of our town.

- Recognize that a major factor limiting development is the unsuitability of soils in most areas of town for conventional on-site sewage disposal systems, while keeping informed of innovative systems that may allow development in some previously unsuitable areas.
-
- Plan public investments to minimize development pressure on agricultural and forestland and natural areas.
- Specify the appropriate land uses in the various areas of Weybridge in terms of **land use districts** allocated to particular **planning regions** as described below:

LAND USE DISTRICTS

The recommended use of land in certain areas is described in terms of districts similar to those used in Weybridge zoning for over ten years, are meant to tie the vision of this Plan to the town's zoning regulations, and constitute a description of types of sub-districts that may be or are incorporated in each planning area. They reflect historical patterns, as well as water resources and sewage disposal capacity. In the past, districts have been characterized by the minimum lot size permitted. In this plan, to reflect new trends in residential and commercial growth and to allow flexibility in land-use planning, maximum average densities are specified, rather than minimum lot sizes.

The six types of land use districts are:

Neighborhood Commercial

(NC) District

High Density Residential	(HDR) District
Medium Density Residential	(MDR) District
Planned Agricultural Residential	(PAR) District
Flood Hazard Area	(FHA) District
Conservation	(CON) District

This Plan specifies which of these land use districts are to be located in particular regions of Weybridge. (Map 8 Weybridge Planning Regions with Land Use Districts). for these particular designations). Precise locations and boundaries, and permitted and conditional uses, of the districts will be defined in Zoning Regulations which should be rewritten as necessary to be consistent with this Plan. Introduction of new methods of sewage disposal could significantly affect the assignment of land use districts. Furthermore, a look at how to promote affordable housing and a greater diversity of housing and ownership types to provide diversity in our residents and a more reliable flow of students to our school may require amendments to both this plan and the implementing zoning regulations.

Neighborhood Commercial District (NC)

This district should only be located in one planning region adjoining a High Density Residential District. To protect environmental quality, yet avoid the necessity for instituting costly public sewage disposal facilities, the intensity of uses in this district should be limited to their on-site sewage disposal capacity and water supply. Residential use should be limited to a maximum average density of one dwelling per acre. For non-residential uses, special regulations may be imposed to limit the type and scale of development and to ensure adequate site servicing, screening, and district residential and/or rural character.

High Density Residential District (HDR)

This type of district should be located in three of the planning regions in areas where soils have suitability for more intensive development, where there is minimum of agricultural tillage, and the road network provides reasonably good access. Much of the population is already centered in these areas. Residential use should be limited to a maximum average density of one dwelling per acre, subject to the site sewage disposal capacity limits.

Medium Density Residential District (MDR)

This type of district should be located in four of the planning regions, where there are compatible existing settlement patterns and/or the soil is reasonably suitable for development. Maximum average density should be one dwelling per two acres, to allow space for a mound septic system, if necessary, as well as a replacement septic drainage field. Non-residential conditional uses may have additional requirements to preserve scenic quality and residential character.

Planned Agricultural Residential District (PAR)

This type of district should cover the majority of Weybridge's land in areas typically devoted to agricultural and forest use. Lands in this district are vital to Weybridge's agricultural economy and provide the open space that gives Weybridge its rural character and scenic beauty. Maximum average density is one dwelling per five acres.

Use of the Planned Unit Development (PUD) provisions of 24 V.S.A. Sections 4417 and 4303 is strongly encouraged for all developments in the PAR district. For developments involving three or more lots, whether proposed at one time or over a period of up to five years, the owner shall propose a PUD that incorporates significant open-space preservation features. An owner preferring to propose a conventional plan shall also submit a PUD plan, with the final plan to be determined in consultation with the Planning Commission.

In evaluating applications for subdivision and development in PAR districts, the Planning Commission should be guided by the goal of assuring orderly growth while preserving as much as possible Weybridge's open space, rural character, and agricultural potential. When necessary, the Commission will work with applicants to modify or formulate PUD plans that meet these goals. When a PUD calls for retention of open space apart from individual lots, that space should be guaranteed by means that provide legal guarantees against future development. Plans shall also provide for adequate maintenance of open space. Planned Residential Developments should also conform to standards set forth in the State of Vermont Environmental Protection Rules, and should also meet special use and site plan review provisions if required by the Weybridge Zoning Ordinance.

Conservation District (CON)

The primary purpose of this area is open space conservation. This includes agriculture and forest use, public outdoor recreation, wildlife refuges, and reservoirs. This district consists of land on which development is currently restricted. Any development in this district is to be a conditional use and must be reviewed by the Zoning Board. All approved residential development must have a maximum average density of one dwelling per 25 acres

Flood Hazard Area (FHA)

This district will be located throughout Weybridge in areas designated by the Federal Flood Insurance Administration as indicated on a Flood Hazard Boundary, most recently amended, which, although a separate document, will be considered an integral part of the Land Use Plan Map. Agricultural and recreational use is permitted, but any development in this district should be a conditional use and

should be reviewed by the Zoning Board. (The flood plan is shown on Map 14 Significant Natural Resources and Wildlife Habitat)

PLANNING REGIONS

This part of the plan describes the patterns of Weybridge's current land uses and our vision of how the land should be used in the future to protect and promote the town's rural character and other goals. The planning regions are shown in Map 8 Weybridge Planning Regions with Land Use Districts. More detailed descriptions of each region's features and present uses are given in Weybridge Facts and Figures. Differences in land characteristics and current uses between the regions are used as the basis of guidelines for appropriate future land use.

Snake Mountain

The Snake Mountain region is located west of Snake Mountain Road and covers 14% of town. Most of the land is steep, rocky and forested; topography and cracks in exposed bedrock indicate it may be a groundwater recharge area (Section 13). It contains the town's largest woodland, deer wintering area, and block of public land, and is very important to wildlife and recreationists (Sections 10 and 14). Almost half the area is owned by the state The Nature Conservancy.

Future development should not impair the significant wildlife, water quality, recreational and aesthetic benefits of this area. Overall housing density should remain low to moderate, with new buildings close to the road, near the edge of the forest, away from the deer wintering area and wildlife corridors. Additional public ownership of land or rights to land -- particularly in-holdings, sensitive areas and access points -- is desired. Commercial timber cutting should follow accepted sustainable forestry management practices.

Zoning districts in the Snake Mountain region of town are Conservation and Planned Agricultural/Residential.

Lemon Fair Valley

The Lemon Fair Valley region is located east of Snake Mountain Road, south of Otter Creek and west of Bittersweet Falls Road and Route 23. It covers 41% of town and includes most of the town's farmland. Almost all land is flat, fertile and well-suited for agriculture. This region also contains important wetlands, a major waterfowl staging area, and sizable woodlands (Sections 10 and 12).

Agriculture should remain the dominant land use in this region. The right to farm -- despite the presence of nearby residential development -- should be protected. Construction of non-farm dwellings should be limited. New dwellings should be located to leave the largest possible portion of land and the most productive soils in agriculture. New development should be compatible with waterfowl staging

areas, wetlands, major woodlands, wildlife corridors and other biologically significant areas. (Sections 10-12).

Zoning districts in the Lemon Fair Valley are Flood Hazard Area, Planned Agricultural/Residential, and Conservation.

Goose Neck Bend

The Goose Neck Bend region lies north of Otter Creek and covers 7% of town. Its characteristics and distribution of land uses are very similar to the Lemon Fair Valley -- a high proportion of prime farmland, with significant areas of forest, floodplain and waterfowl staging lands (Sections 10-12).

Land use in this region should follow the same guidelines as in the Lemon Fair Valley, with agriculture remaining the dominant land use. Likewise, the same zoning districts should be assigned: Flood Hazard Area, Planned Agricultural/Residential, and Conservation.

Sheep Farm Region

The Sheep Farm region lies south of Hamilton Road, west of Morgan Horse Farm Road and east of Bittersweet Falls Road, covering 17% of the town area. It is the town's third major agricultural area, although soil productivity is not as uniformly high as in the Lemon Fair Valley and Goose Neck Bend regions. Substantially more residential development occurs here than in these other two regions, putting pressure on the continued viability of farming. It also contains a major woodland, a deeryard, and the scenic Bittersweet Falls/Beaver Brook Gorge. (Sections 10-12).

Agriculture should remain a viable land use in this region; the overall proportion of functional farmland to buildings should be kept as high as possible. New dwellings should be located away from farmland, near the edge of large woodlands, and located to leave the largest possible portion of land and most productive soils in agriculture and forest. New development should be compatible with biologically significant areas and increased development or density should have a discernable relationship with existing development.

Zoning districts in the Sheep Farm region are High Density Residential, Medium Density Residential and Planned Agricultural / Residential.

Cave Hill

The Cave Hill region covers 12% of town north of Hamilton Road, east of Quaker Village Road and west of Morgan Horse Farm Road. Present land uses are principally forest and residential, with a smaller area of farmland in the southeast corner. Exposed bedrock and thin soils are common. Housing -- much of it

clustered on small lots -- is concentrated along Cave Hill Road. The region also includes major woodlands, Weybridge Cave, and state lands suitable for recreation presently lacking public access points. (Sections 10 & 14).

This may be an appropriate area for additional residential development. Any new development should be located near the existing settlements, and efforts should be made to conserve existing farmlands, woodlands, wildlife corridors and potential groundwater recharge areas.

Zoning districts in the Cave Hill region are Conservation, Planned Agricultural/Residential, and Medium Density Residential. This is a good area for implementation of Planned Residential Development regulations.

Otter Creek Gorge Region

The Otter Creek Gorge region covers 6% of town and is located east of the Morgan Horse Farm Road. It is largely forest, non-agricultural open land and pasture; there is a limited amount of productive agricultural soil in this region. A high proportion of the land is unlikely to be available for development, as it is owned by Middlebury College, University of Vermont and Otter Creek Land Trust. Large parcels predominate.

Conservation of the river corridor, undeveloped woodland and pasture should be the primary objective in this section. Residential development should preferably be directed to other areas of town. Any residential development should be compatible with the outstanding natural resources in this section -- Otter Creek Gorge, large undeveloped woodlands, and deer wintering area. New buildings should be located near existing development and away from the shoreline of Otter Creek. Planned Residential Developments (PUDs) might be employed to assure a maximum ratio of open land to buildings.

Zoning districts in the Otter Creek Gorge region are Conservation, Planned Agricultural/Residential, and Flood Hazard.

Residential Villages and Neighborhoods -- Pulp Mill Bridge, Weybridge Hill, and Quaker Village, Terrace Heights, Pleasant View Terrace and Meadow Lane

This "planning region" comprises the ~~six~~three separate relatively concentrated residential areas of Weybridge. Together they cover 3% of the town's area and contain approximately 39% of the town's housing. Lot sizes are generally very small (0.5 to 2.0 acres). There is an opportunity for "in-filling" since some houses are located on relatively large lots (5 or more acres) and several undeveloped lots exist. Present average housing density is one house per 3.2 acres.

Future growth -- residential and commercial -- should be oriented to these settlements. Housing for a mixture of incomes should be available along with opportunities -- such as general stores -- for residents to find basic goods and services. Working farm and forestlands surrounding these settlements should be maintained to keep them separate and distinct. New development should efficiently utilize available space, be environmentally sound, and be consistent with the existing character of these areas. The historic character of portions of these areas should be retained. Setbacks may be less than other sections of town. Maximum average housing density should not exceed one dwelling per acre, although some lots may be smaller than one acre. Water supply and sewage disposal capacity may necessitate lower density in some locations. Public greens or recreation parks (open common lands) of adequate size and location, and public trails and greenways connecting these areas and other parts of town are desirable.

Zoning districts in these areas are as follows:

Pulp Mill Bridge: High Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, Planned Agricultural/Residential,

Weybridge Hill: Neighborhood Commercial, High Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, and Planned Agricultural/Residential;

Quaker Village: Neighborhood Commercial and High Density Residential.

Terrace Heights: High Density Residential

Pleasant View Terrace: High Density Residential

Meadow Lane: High Density Residential

4. JOBS

There is universal agreement that a fundamental source of wealth is human labor.

-- E. F. Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful*

Increasingly, Weybridge has become a bedroom community for employment centers within and without Addison County. Because of its proximity to Middlebury, as well as Vergennes and even Burlington, and because of its physical beauty, Weybridge is a desirable place to live. Technological advances have made working from home feasible for more residents. Weybridge has a direct stake in the types of jobs created in the region, since those jobs will have an impact on the town's population, as well as provide employment for present and future residents. (See Map 9 Labor Shed, showing where people who work in Weybridge live and Map 10 Commute Shed, showing where people who live in Weybridge work.)

GOALS

Nurture a strong and diverse economy in Weybridge and the Addison County region that provides job opportunities for residents and maintains high environmental and social standards.

Encourage regional commercial development that meets the goals and policies of this plan.

Encourage home-based businesses as a way to provide local employment opportunities and curtail the need for commuting.

Strengthen and protect the town's agricultural economy, including farming, forestry, and related activities.

Foster development of housing options that permit jobholders at all economic levels to maintain residences in Weybridge.

POLICIES

Support local and regional efforts that encourage economic development and meet the goals and policies of this plan

Cooperate with other towns to maintain a balance between type and number of jobs created and natural growth in the region's workforce.

Participate in Act 250 reviews of major business proposals that could accelerate development pressures in Weybridge.

Support development of local and regional businesses that create markets for locally produced goods and services or which themselves create value-added products from locally produced goods.

Encourage manufacturing and marketing of value-added agricultural and forest products.

Encourage use of locally grown agricultural and forest products.

| ~~Actively seek local or~~ Encourage regional clean, low-environmental-impact commercial or light industrial development consistent with the goals and policies of this plan.

Support the construction/development of dwellings and apartments that serve the needs of lower-income jobholders and families with children.

5. HOUSING

We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us.

— Winston Churchill

One of ~~Weybridge's~~ the most outstanding and attractive features of Weybridge is the diversity of its population. Our town is home to farmers, workers, business and professional people, and retirees, and there is a corresponding wide range in the size, type, and price range of local housing. Recent trends have been toward higher-end housing construction in Weybridge. The dense clay soil of Weybridge limits septic capacity in much of the town, making house construction more expensive in those areas. (Map 11 Soil Septic Suitability) -This has made it increasingly difficult for the children of long-time residents to raise their own families in town. Our housing policy is designed to help maintain diversity in the town's housing stock, so that Weybridge can be home to individuals and families at a broad range of income levels. (Map 2 Population Density provides an overview of where housing is concentrated).

~~The dense clay soil of Weybridge limits septic capacity in much of the town, making house construction more expensive in those areas. (Map 11 Soil Septic Suitability)~~

GOALS

Ensure that the rate of housing growth does not exceed the community's ability to provide adequate public facilities and services. Currently, in 2016, this does not seem to be an issue thanks to the cost of wastewater systems and the lack of strong demand for housing in the town.

Provide housing that meets the needs of a diversity of age, social, and income groups.

Promote energy efficiency in new construction and renovations, including the use of the Vermont Energy Star Program.

Support the provision of affordable housing that will allow young people to buy homes and raise their families in the community.

Support the provision of housing that will allow elderly residents to live in the community.

Encourage the creation of a greater range of rental options in town for related adults and families.

POLICIES

Encourage housing that would be appropriate for a range of household incomes.

Support the provision of housing for special needs populations such as the physically or mentally handicapped, single parent households, and elderly.

Allow creative development for a diverse community through the use of:

- * accessory apartments;
- * developments served by common facilities;
- * innovations in design;
- * energy efficient construction;
- * flexibility in local regulations;
- * land trusts and other vehicles assuring perpetual affordability;
- * other reasonable provisions.

Promote the creation of smaller infill lots or developments in parts of Weybridge where village patterns of development already prevail, allowing for more reasonably priced new construction.

Recognize the limitations on development imposed by the poor sewage disposal capacity of soils in most of Weybridge.

Ask that a portion of all developments of four or more housing units in one subdivision be affordable¹ and encourage this provision by granting a density bonus where appropriate.

Encourage owners of housing developments to use construction methods that result in savings in utility and maintenance costs.

Work with other towns and the Regional Planning Commission, and possibly through the Act 250 process, to ensure that housing demand resulting from significant job expansion is equitably shared throughout the region.

¹ This plan defines "affordable housing" as those households in which those earning the county's median income could afford to have no more than 30% of their incomes spent on housing costs. For homeowners, housing costs include payments for mortgage principal and interest, property taxes and property insurance. For renters, housing costs include rent and utilities.

6. SCHOOL

School is not a place, but a set of relationships among individuals, some are teaching and some are learning... School is a community institution... Parents are partners... The business community works closely with schools, providing support and opportunities for work-study, employment and training... Every child experiences school as a place of challenge, hard work and engagement in things that matter.

-- Vermont Department of Education, 1990, Vermont's Education Goals: A Vision of What Could Be

Education has always been a priority of Weybridge residents. A substantial addition and improvement to the Weybridge School was completed in 1996. Today the school serves as the town's primary community center by offering educational opportunities to each child as well as by offering a gathering place for non-school functions. A strong school plays an important role in attracting families with young children to Weybridge. Current trends show declining enrollment (~~2010-2015-2011-2016 enrollment in mid to high 40's of 43~~ of 43 ~~is well below historic highs, which reached a peak of 106 in 2005-2006~~), with projections for enrollment to precipitously drop by 2012-2013. The school's reputation remains strong as of this writing and attracts families—just not enough of them. The influx of families with elementary school-aged children should be encouraged through other sections in this plan. Discussions at both state and regional levels ~~have begun~~ are ongoing with regard to property tax burdens, school and school board consolidations, and resource sharing at the time of this plan update. The plan addresses issues related to maintaining the school in a way that continues to meet the town's needs.

Early childhood and adult learning opportunities are not available in Weybridge. The town should encourage ~~funding of VAL and the~~ childcare centers that serve the towns in ~~with~~ close proximity. With shrinking enrollment, programs such as these could be offered in Weybridge to diversify the resources offered and maximize functions of the school facility.

At this time there ~~is only one~~ are very few after-school care private home providers in Weybridge. They are ~~it is not~~ affiliated with the school.

Community access to the school library is limited and only available to the students enrolled in the school. The town library is not an active lending library and the town does not currently support adult access to the Ilsley Library in Middlebury (only school-aged children are eligible for free Ilsley library cards). ~~To support adult education, the town should opt in to the Ilsley program for adults to provide free library and internet access for all Weybridge residents.~~ (Map 12 Utilities, Facilities and Education)

GOALS

Provide educational programs and facilities that encourage every child to become a competent, caring, productive, responsible individual and citizen who is committed to continued learning throughout life.

Maintain a safe, secure learning environment where quality educational opportunities are provided to all students.

Maintain a vibrant, active and appropriate center for educating children and supporting community activities.

Support broader early childhood and adult learning programs in Weybridge and the adjoining communities.

~~Characterize~~ Recognize that the low enrollment issue goes beyond housing affordability barriers.

Improve access to county library resources for adult residents of Weybridge to encourage learning and provide access to the internet.

POLICIES

Provide sufficient and appropriate physical space to meet current and projected educational needs. Right now, in 2016, our school space remains underutilized.

Design and operate the school and grounds as models for responsible citizenship and environmental stewardship.

Encourage the use of the school as an educational facility and a community resource.

Monitor the rates of growth of housing and population so that they do not exceed the school's ability to keep pace. Again, as things stand, pressures remain slight and do not threaten the town's ability to provide enough space for all students.

Explore coordination with adjoining communities to meet educational needs of Weybridge. Respond to state and regional discussions with regard to school district consolidation and sharing resources.

Use the school to foster early childhood education, including but not limited to pre-school story hours, after school and summer programs.

Encourage town-wide subscription to the Ilsley Library Lending system for all Weybridge residents, not just school-aged children.

7. TRANSPORTATION

ACTR's mission is to enhance the economic, social and environmental health of the region (county) by providing public transportation services that are safe, reliable, accessible and affordable for everyone.

--Addison County Transit Resources' Mission Statement

As a result of living in a rural community, Weybridge residents are almost exclusively dependent on private means of transportation, principally the car. While the Planning Commission cannot eliminate reliance on automobiles, in reviewing development proposals we will seek to minimize impact on our current network of roads and consider development proposals that acknowledge and plan for public transportation infrastructure access. Weybridge residents should be encouraged to consider and support options that seek to reverse greenhouse gas emissions. In Vermont the transportation sector is responsible for 46% of greenhouse gas emissions that cause global climate change. (Map 13 Transportation and Road Names; see also Maps 9 and 10, showing commuting into and out of Weybridge).

GOALS

Provide and maintain a road infrastructure system that is safe, efficient, and environmentally sound.

Support regional efforts to provide public transportation systems that meet the needs of all segments of our population – including the elderly and disabled as well as those who can afford to own and operate automobiles.

Coordinate with regional transportation goals that support alternative clean energy technologies and behaviors including: commuting and school-drop off single car reductions such as rideshare and bike/pedestrian options (i.e. Safe Routes to School and Way to Go! Commuter Challenge behavior change programs); ~~and supporting access for the local Ag businesses to clean diesel or bio-diesel farming equipment.~~

POLICIES

The Town's position and policy is that construction of new through roads is neither necessary nor desirable for the planning period. Specifically, the Town is opposed to the location of any new traffic arteries or bypasses within its boundaries. Construction of access roads for new developments should ~~be kept to a minimum~~ have as few curb cuts as possible.

Maintain or improve the current conditions on all roads in town to meet community demand. Pave existing gravel roads when justified by traffic load and by comparative costs of paving and maintenance, using the Vermont Local Roads Program for

guidance. Consult the residents along any road being considered for paving before proceeding.

~~Measure transportation system efficiency in terms of energy use, social and environmental cost, as well as public economic cost.~~

~~Preserve Pulp Mill Bridge~~ the town's historic bridges as an integral part of the automotive and pedestrian infrastructure.

Promote energy conservation, public transportation, and ride sharing programs.

Investigate Scenic Road designation (see Designating Scenic Roads: A Vermont Fieldguide) to promote the esthetic values of Weybridge's rural character.

Support the development of bike and pedestrian paths on some of the Town's highways, such as ~~especially like~~ Pulp Mill Bridge Road and Morgan Horse Farm Road, to provide increased recreational opportunity and safety and energy-conserving alternatives to the automobile for personal transportation.

Continue to limit the use of an existing aircraft landing strip and oppose its extension or the establishment of further airport facilities.

8. PUBLIC FACILITIES

Public facilities -- such as schools, parks, the town forest, the town hall, the town garage and fire station, the library, the recycling center, and town offices are provided to meet the needs of present and future residents. The town provides some of these facilities, while others are provided in a joint effort with regional and state government. A significant growth in population in Weybridge may require an increase in services and, consequently, in the facilities that support these services. (Map 12 Utilities, Facilities and Education)

GOALS

Provide an environmentally sound and energy- and cost-efficient system of public facilities and services to meet present and future demands for education, government, transportation, fire protection, public safety, emergency medical services, and other essential needs.

Reduce environmental degradation and ~~extend the life of a regional landfill~~ by encouraging waste reduction, recycling, composting of food, and other proper waste disposal.

POLICIES

Ensure that the construction, expansion or provision of public facilities and services are consistent with the goals and policies of this plan.

Ensure that the design, construction and maintenance of private facilities and services used by the general public are consistent with the goals of the plan.

Locate, to the greatest extent practicable, new or expanded public utilities within existing highway or utility rights-of-way. For solar or wind installations, the Energy Section in this Town Plan should also be referenced.

Encourage maximum waste reduction, composting of food, conservation and recycling to reduce need for new solid waste management facilities.

Encourage the development and use of a ten-year capital budget for the acquisition and replacement of town facilities and equipment.

Support the maintenance and use in Weybridge of the statewide E-911 emergency response system.

Assure effective fire protection and emergency services for Weybridge, either through continued service of the Weybridge Volunteer Fire Department, Middlebury Regional EMT or through contractual arrangements with neighboring towns.

9. TOWN GOVERNMENT

Residents enjoy the quality of life in Weybridge. That is due in part to the services the Town is able to provide and in part to the active involvement of the citizenry. As Weybridge grows and services become more expensive, the Town, in an effort to maintain economic diversity, must strive to balance need for those services with their cost and the residents' ability to pay.

GOALS

Carefully balance the cost of Weybridge's governmental and school services with the taxpayers' ability to pay.

Encourage efforts to develop a tax structure and assessment policy that complement rather than contradict the other goals and policies of the plan. In particular, ensure that tax policies are consistent with the preservation of open space and supportive of Weybridge's agricultural economy.

Encourage commercial activity appropriate to Weybridge's scale and consistent with the preservation of open space, agriculture and a rural landscape.

Encourage participation in town government, especially through Town Meeting, hearings, board meetings, ~~and other government functions,~~ and participation on elected and volunteer boards, town commissions and other positions.

POLICIES

Work to minimize adverse fiscal impact of proposed projects both in Weybridge and in the region.

Investigate and support alternative tax structures that would more equitably distribute the tax burden, while providing an adequate level of services.

Manage growth so there are no sudden significant tax increases and phase major capital expenditures to protect taxpayers from sudden increases in tax bills.

Seek a balance of residential, commercial, and agricultural development, and avoid burdening town services with an excess of residential growth.

Investigate alternative sources of funding (e.g., Federal, State, or foundation grants) for facilities and programs of benefit to the Community.

Help landowners to take advantage of State programs for abatement of tax on open land; develop a Town program to complement the State's land use plan; ensure that land for which development rights have been sold to land trusts or other conservation groups be taxed at rates more appropriate to its limited use potential.

10. BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

The first rule of intelligent tinkering is to save all the pieces.

-- Aldo Leopold

In 1990, the Town of Weybridge hired biologist Jim Andrews to locate, map, and describe areas of biological significance. His report (available at the Town Clerk's office) describes 18 different areas in town, each with its own individual characteristics. He identified what many of us already know -- that Weybridge is rich with biological diversity in both the plant and animal kingdoms, as well as rich in natural beauty. This plan states goals and policies to serve as the framework within which development can occur in harmony with our natural resources. (Map 14 Significant Natural Resources and Wildlife Habitat)

GOALS

Maintain and improve native biological diversity in the town and region to the fullest extent possible.

Provide suitable conditions for plant and animal communities in areas that are densely developed as well as those areas that are relatively undisturbed.

POLICIES

Identify, protect and preserve important natural features of the Weybridge environment, including rare, endangered, and threatened species and habitats, paying particular attention to the "Blue Spotted Valley," "Blue Spotted Swamp," "Lemon Fair Valley," "LaFountains' Upland Sandpipers," "Otter Creek George," "Otter Creek Waterfowl Staging Areas and Wildlife Corridor," "Weybridge Bat Caves," and the "Wonnacott Floodplain" areas as more particularly described in said "Jim Andrews' Report".

Consider Weybridge's major habitats to be areas of regional significance because of their relative scarcity, their important roles within Addison County, and their interconnectedness with other habitats in the region. Work within the town and with neighboring communities to protect this functional, interconnected system of habitats.

Minimize impacts of development on and support the system of interconnected habitats and the functional qualities of individual areas of biological significance.

Help landowners design development proposals that would fully comply with the goals and policies for biological diversity.

Design development to minimize disruption to waterfowl staging in major lowlands.

Minimize fragmentation of large woodlands (~~160 or more acres of contiguous forest land~~).

Work with landowners to identify significant deer wintering areas and guide development to minimize adverse effects on the ability of this habitat to support deer.

Ensure that operation of hydropower facilities, large wind turbines and large solar installations ~~are~~ is compatible with the long-term conservation of outstanding natural areas and uncommon plant and animal species in and along Otter Creek, a regionally significant resource and habitat.

11. RIVERS AND STREAMS—PRESERVATION OF WATERWAYS & MANAGEMENT OF FLOOD AND EROSION HAZARDS

Weybridge's rivers and streams are held in trust by the state for the common and public use of all citizens. The state's policy is to protect and manage public waters to provide the greatest net benefits to present and future citizens of the state. While only the state can set standards by which public waters are managed and used, Weybridge can help influence the creation of those standards. To do so, we must understand the functions of our waterways. While rivers and streams are a water source and provide important recreation opportunities and wildlife habitats, they also can be the source of destructive flooding and erosion.

~~In the 2000 Planning Commission survey, Weybridge residents placed high value on public access to public waters. Individual landowners and environmental organizations also place a high value on private waters. These goals and policies reflect our reliance on and value of those resources while acknowledging that in times of heavy rainfalls and tropical storms, for example, those same rivers and streams can pose a threat to residents, to their property, homes and business, and to town roads and bridges. Reference is also made to the 1990 Jim Andrews report on file at the Town Offices.~~

GOALS

Protect public waters for public purposes and uses that promote the greatest benefits to present and future citizens.

Maintain a high level of water quality.

Protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitats, feeding areas, travel corridors and the ecology of rivers and streams.

Make present and future citizens aware of which areas of Weybridge are prone to flooding and/or erosion and discourage building or development in areas that are prone to flooding and/or erosion.

POLICIES

Present the town's views on the highest and best uses of public waters to the state through its regulatory processes.

Site new development to minimize disruptions of ecological functions of the river and stream corridor and strongly discourage new development in erosion and flood-prone areas. Pay particular attention to the River Corridors and Floodplain and other related maps and information on file at the Town offices.

Monitor actions of towns and state and federal agencies that directly affect Weybridge's surface water quality and intervene as appropriate.

Protect surface water quality from new development by using natural buffer strips along river and stream banks and banks of ponds of more than 5 acres shorelines.

Ensure that adequate flooding and erosion control measures are taken in the rare event that if-development activities are allowed within the buffer strip.

Encourage use of ~~accepted management~~best management practices for timber harvesting, and ~~accepted agricultural practices and best management practices~~ for farming.

Limit development in areas of high erosion potential (e.g., steep slopes, ~~and thin soils and areas which have been subject to erosion in the past~~) and high susceptibility to surface water pollution (e.g., along wetlands, rivers, streams and ponds), and in areas with a high potential for surface flooding.

Use the "Vermont Backroad Erosion Control Handbook" and "Vermont Road and Bridge Standards" to guide construction and major alteration of backroads. Use "Maintaining the Vermont Backroad" as a guide for road maintenance.

Prohibit or control the removal of gravel from rivers and streambeds and banks.

Require~~Ask~~ developers requesting planning approval or zoning permits for projects within a designated floodplain or area of high erosion potential or surface flooding potential to ~~prepare reports for submission~~submit by the town to the Agency of Natural Resources. The reports will contain the information required in 24 V.S.A. Section 4409 (c). Allow 30 days for comments from a fisheries biologist from Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department prior to permitting construction of any pond on any stream, or the use of stream water as a source for a pond.

Support policies and regulations to minimize storm water runoff and to protect water recharge areas.

Cooperate with Addison County the Otter-Creek River-Watch Collaborative in monitoring ~~the river's~~ water quality and support the extension of this program to the Weybridge portions of Otter Creek and Lemon Fair.

Maintain at the Town Offices maps and information concerning Weybridge's small streams, rivers and river corridors, flood hazard areas and known sites of roadway flooding, plus known addresses of homes and house sites where surface flooding and/or erosion are distinct possibilities.

12. WETLANDS

Weybridge has 614 acres of wetlands made up of swampy and marshy lands. These wetlands contribute to the ecological balance of our community. These wetlands, along with the adjoining woods and fields, provide a variety of habitats for plants and animals, as well as a system of water purification, storage, and groundwater recharge for human consumption. Protection of these wetlands does not preclude their use for agricultural and recreational purposes. Our increased understanding of their value will enhance our enjoyment of them.

GOALS

Retain the present amount (no net loss) of significant (Class One and Class Two) wetlands and the values and functions that they serve. These values and functions include, but are not limited to, those listed in Vermont Wetlands Rules.

POLICIES

Protect wetlands of importance to the town, including:

- * Non-designated wetlands, serving a significant function, recommended by the Selectboard to the Water Resources Board for reclassification;
- * Wetlands contiguous to all National Wetlands Inventory wetlands, including those near or on a river or lake;
- * All significant wetlands designated by the Water Resources Board at the time this plan is adopted;
- * Wetlands above one acre in size;
- * Wetlands that possess uncommon or outstanding values and functions to the town or region based on an evaluation of the criteria and review standards in Vermont Wetland Rules, Section Five.
- * Ledge side Woods, Cedar Swamp and Red Maple Swamp, Wyman's Hackberry Floodplain, as labeled in said Jim Andrews report.

Recognize and protect property owners' rights to agricultural and recreational use of wetlands within the Vermont Wetland Rules.

Ensure that new development is located and designed so that it will not impair the values and functions of important wetlands.

Require developers requesting zoning permits for projects within the buffer zone of important wetlands to prepare reports for submittal by the town to the Agency of Natural Resources. The reports will contain the information required in 24 V.S.A. Section 4409 (c). Local approval should not be granted prior to the expiration of a period of thirty days following the submission of the report to the Agency of Natural Resources.

Use the Federal Manual for Identifying and Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands, 1989, when delineating the boundaries of important wetlands unless the planning commission recommends the use of other recognized federal or state guidelines.

13. GROUNDWATER

When the well is dry, we know the worth of water.

-- Benjamin Franklin, Poor Richard's Almanac, 1746

In response to a 1990 survey, Weybridge residents identified groundwater as the town's most important natural resource. Since most Weybridge residents rely on wells and springs for their domestic water needs, proper siting of new growth is critical. While the state through the Agency of Natural Resources has jurisdiction over all wastewater systems and impacts to wells associated with those systems, ensuring adequate quality and amount of water over the long term may require Weybridge and neighboring towns to limit the type, density, and amount of activities around surface waters, aquifers and recharge areas, to the extent, if any, allowed under state law.

GOALS

Maintain high quality groundwater and sufficient yields to adequately serve current and future residents of Weybridge.

Protect the quality of surface water, wetlands and groundwater recharge areas.

POLICIES (to the extent allowed under state law)

Guide new development and land use activities to minimize impact on groundwater quality and supply.

Encourage consideration of off-site locations for community water and septic systems, while avoiding adverse impact on neighboring landowners, to enable additional development in villages and other areas where high-density growth is desired.

~~Require adequate isolation distances between septic systems and wells or aquifer recharge areas.~~

~~Require proper design, installation and maintenance of on-site sewage systems.~~

Plan Weybridge's land uses so that the groundwater supplies of neighboring towns are not likely to be impaired. Ask neighboring towns to do the same.

Participate in Act 250 hearings on projects in neighboring towns that are likely to impair Weybridge's or the region's groundwater supplies.

Ensure renewable energy systems utilizing native groundwater are designed to have a neutral impact on groundwater quality and supply.

Regularly maintain, update and evaluate information on the yield and quality of wells.

14. AIR QUALITY

While the State of Vermont is ~~complying in attainment~~ with the standards as set by the Clean Air Act, tougher health-based standards are being established that will make it harder for the State to maintain attainment on some criteria pollutants including fine particulate matter and ozone.- This will make it especially important for local practices to support the voluntary and mandatory rules and regulations as established by the State of Vermont Air Pollution Control Division.

Due to the topography, working landscapes and rural nature of the town of Weybridge, ~~the town is vulnerable to localized compromised air quality. Such practices as including the spreading of manure spreading practice on local farmlands, and the use of wood for home heating, as well as the dependence on the automobile due to lack of other alternatives, the town is vulnerable to localized compromised air quality, which can have negative health impacts~~ for vulnerable populations including the elderly and the very young.

The town could encourage and adopt practices for clean wood-burning for home heating as well as establish idle-free zones (Weybridge Elementary School has been an "idle-free" zone ~~since as of~~ January 2005) to reduce both criteria air pollutants as defined by the EPA both criteria and hazardous air pollutants as defined by the State of Vermont.- Other sources of greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to Climate Change should also be minimized.

GOALS

Maintain high standards for air quality based on state standards to protect the health of ~~the~~ Weybridge residents and minimize reduce the town's overall contribution to greenhouse gas emissions that cause Climate Change.

POLICIES

Guide new development and land use activities to minimize impact on air quality.

Encourage participation in programs such as Idle-Free Vermont, Way to Go! Commuter Challenge, ~~and~~ Safe Routes to school, and as well as educational programs on proper wood combustion for home heating.

Plan Weybridge's land uses so that the air quality of neighboring towns are qualities of neighboring towns are not likely to be impaired. Ask neighboring towns to do the same.

Participate in Act 250 hearings on projects in neighboring towns that are likely to impair Weybridge's air quality.

Regularly evaluate information on the state data for air quality monitoring including criteria pollutants and hazardous air pollutants.

15. RECREATION

What are the natural features that make a township handsome? A river, with its waterfalls and meadows, a lake, a hill, a cliff or individual rocks, a forest, and ancient trees standing singly. Such things are beautiful; they have a high use which dollars and cents never represent. If the inhabitants of a town were wise, they would seek to preserve these things...for such things educate more than any hired teachers or preachers....

It would be worthwhile if in each town there were a committee appointed to see that the beauty of the town received no detriment. If we have the largest boulder in the country, then it should not belong to an individual, nor be made into doorsteps. As in many countries precious metals belong to the crown, so here more precious natural objects of rare beauty should belong to the public.

-- Henry David Thoreau 1861

Weybridge citizens have identified their preference for enjoying recreation in open, natural areas. There are several areas that provide opportunities such as hiking, boating, fishing, hunting, and cross-country skiing. In addition, the school grounds provide access to baseball, basketball, and soccer. Public access to these recreational areas will improve town residents' appreciation for and enjoyment of Weybridge.

GOALS

Protect and enhance the natural beauty and scenic characteristics of significance to local landscapes, including focal points and characteristics such as:

- * landscape diversity,
- * order and harmony of landscape elements,
- * unique combinations of natural and cultural features,
- * distinctive distant views
- * foregrounds in harmony with distinctive distant views
- * skylines,
- * shorelines,
- * steep slopes,
- * agricultural and forest land,
- * traditional villages and streetscapes,
- * historic buildings and cultural features,
- * significant scenic roads and pathways,
- * bird watching.

POLICIES

Ensure that new development is located and designed to minimize adverse impacts on recreation resources and important scenic views.

Ask proponents of major subdivisions to set aside land or facilities for parks, public access, or trails if the need for those lands or facilities have been identified by the community and would benefit Weybridge residents.

Investigate the feasibility of a community trail and bicycle path system, coordinated, as appropriate, with Continue to support the Middlebury Area Land Trust's work with the "Trail Around Middlebury," and the "Bob Collins Conservation Farm and Preserve," and the North Country National Scenic Trail system, and other future land acquisition or conservation effort opportunities in order to preserve recreation access by Weybridge residents and the greater community.

Support the state and The Nature Conservancy's acquisition of land or rights to land in and around the Snake Mountain Wildlife Management Area and the Town Forest.

Encourage the creation of designated rights of way for bicycles and pedestrians on all roads in conjunction with the reconstruction of those roads.

Continue efforts by the town (through the Conservation Commission or other appropriate means) to gain access to the town forest for educational and recreational opportunities.

16. ENERGY

This plan is based on the assumptions that:

- * energy may not be abundant or cheap in the future;
- * the full social, environmental, and economic costs of energy are not reflected in present market prices;
- * the public interest is served by conserving energy, reducing consumption of nonrenewable energy and shifting reliance to renewable energy; and,
- * each town must play a role in shaping and implementing policies and actions that promote wise energy use.

Some 87 percent of the United States' energy comes from the fossil fuels: coal, oil, and natural gas. Nationally, 29 percent of the United States' energy supply is used for transportation, 21 percent in industry, and 11 percent in residential and commercial applications. Another 40 percent is used to generate electricity, used almost exclusively in the industrial and residential/commercial sectors.

Background

Energy Consumption in Vermont

Vermont's energy picture is different, and because there is no specific energy data for Weybridge, we assume that Weybridge's energy patterns are comparable to the state as a whole. Vermont's total energy consumption is by far the lowest of any state. In per-capita energy consumption for 2013, Vermont ranks 44thnd at about 8.9 kW.ⁿⁱ

More significant is the difference in Vermont's energy mix; our state is far less reliant on fossil fuels, thanks to our electrical energy supply being largely non-fossil hydro. Still, the majority of our energy—some 60 percent—is fossil based. We use a greater fraction of our energy for transportation—32 percent versus 29 percent nationally. And Vermont gets a larger portion, larger than the national average, of its energy from renewable sources, including 5 percent from biomass, nearly all of which is comprised of wood and wood waste. A very small fraction of Vermont's energy comes from wind, solar, and geothermal sources.

Our lower dependence on fossil fuels means that Vermonters are responsible for lower carbon-dioxide emissions: about 11 tons per person annually in Vermont, versus some 20 tons nationally.

Multiplying Vermont's per-capita energy consumption rate (8.9 kW) by Weybridge's population (8284) gives an estimate of our town's total energy consumption rate: 7300 kW or 7.3 megawatts (MW) per year. As with the figures given earlier, that includes not only the energy we use in our homes and cars, but our share of the energy used in industry, in transportation of goods, and so on.

Weybridge's Energy Resources

Considerations ranging from economics to environmental protection to security of our energy supply suggest that it would be preferable to rely as much as possible on local energy sources. Of these, Weybridge has several.

Solar Energy

Globally, the Sun supplies energy to Earth at some 10,000 times the rate at which humankind uses energy. However, this energy is not distributed equally, and Weybridge's location and climate mean our share of solar energy is less than average. Nevertheless, the rate of solar energy input to Weybridge ranges from about 500 kilowatts per acre in January to 900 kilowatts per acre in June; these are for solar collectors tilted at an angle equal to our latitude, 44°.ii For comparison, our January figure is just over half that of Albuquerque, New Mexico—an excellent place for solar energy—and our June figure is more than three-quarters that of Albuquerque. Given our total energy consumption rate of 7300 kW, this means that even in January Weybridge could, in principle, meet our average energy demand with solar energy, using just 15 of our town's 11,243 acres. Inefficiencies would raise this figure many times over, as would our increased energy consumption in January. Nevertheless, it's clear that the solar resource at Weybridge is theoretically more than adequate for our energy needs.

Although technology exists to convert solar energy into heat and electricity, at this point it would be impractical to supply all of Weybridge's energy with in-town solar installations. However, use of solar energy for electricity and/or heat in individual homes and for charging electric vehicles is technologically feasible and ranges from solidly economical to marginally so. Solar energy facilities ranging from 150 kW to 2.2 MkW are starting to be constructed in neighboring Addison County towns with varying visual and other impacts The section 'Alternative Energy in Weybridge' describes some of our town's current solar installations.~~Although technology exists to convert solar energy into heat and electricity, at this point it would be economically prohibitive to supply all of Weybridge's energy with in-town solar installations. And using solar energy to provide the 32 percent of our energy used for transportation requires technologies like electric cars or fuel-cell vehicles that are neither economical nor widely available at present.~~

~~However, use of solar energy for electricity and/or heat on individual homes is technologically feasible and ranges from solidly economical to marginally so. The section "Alternative Energy in Weybridge" describes some of our town's current solar energy installations.~~

Biomass

Trees' leaves act as solar collectors, storing solar energy through the process of photosynthesis. Although the efficiency is low, Vermont's large areas of forest make for a substantial rate of solar energy storage in the form of tree biomass, biomass that can be burned for heat or to generate electricity. Indeed, Vermont hosts the world's largest municipally owned wood-fired electric power plant, Burlington Electric Company's 54-megawatt McNeil Station. Closer to home, Middlebury College has recently displaced one million gallons of oil per year—half the oil consumption of its heating plant—with local biomass in the form of wood chips.

Many homes in Weybridge use wood either as the primary heating fuel or to supplement another heat source, usually oil but sometimes solar or geothermal. Although accurate figures are not available, burning wood for heat in Weybridge almost certainly makes a significant dent in our town's oil consumption.

Weybridge owns a 38-acre town forest, although it is landlocked and its boundary markings are at best inadequate or nonexistent. Addison County and Middlebury College foresters agree that each acre of Addison County forest might sustainably yield about one-third of a cord of firewood each year. That means our town forest could supply some 12 cords annually—about enough to heat 2-3 homes.

However, our town overall is 34 percent forested, and that figure, combined with Weybridge's overall land area of 11243 acres, suggests that Weybridge forest land might supply some 1200 cords per year—probably somewhat below what would be needed to heat all of Weybridge's 340 households. In any case, widespread use of wood and other biomass materials as a heat-producing or energy producing fuel might result in unacceptable levels of air-borne particulates and other forms of air pollution. Biomass should be considered in the context of public health impacts in addition to whether supplies are sustainable and effective to meet short and long term demands for renewable heat source energy ~~Additional studies with regard to biomass as a true "carbon-neutral" energy source question that use of wood as a biomass source.~~

Wind

Mapping of New England wind resources by the National Renewable Energy Laboratoryⁱⁱⁱ shows that most of Weybridge has average winds in the Class 1 category (speeds below 12 miles per hour). This is the lowest class, and is unsuitable for commercial-scale wind power. A small portion of Weybridge—probably the Snake Mountain ridge—appears to have class 3 winds (around 12 miles/hour at 100 meters above the ground), considered marginally suitable for large-scale wind installations. However, all of Weybridge is likely capable of producing significant wind energy at the smaller scales of individual- or multiple-home wind turbines. Experience with wind installations in Weybridge and surrounding communities confirms this; see the section "Alternative Energy in Weybridge," below.

Geothermal Energy

Energy trickles from Earth's interior to the surface at a modest average rate of about 350 watts per acre, far less than the solar input. For Weybridge, far from major geological activity, that number is almost certainly significantly lower. In addition, solar energy warms the Earth, especially in the summer, and some of that energy is stored as heat in the upper layers of soil and rock. The result of these geothermal and solar effects is that soil temperatures just a few yards deep under Vermont average around 45°F to 50°F year-round. This temperature is too low for direct heating, although it can help with summer cooling. Nevertheless, the constant ground temperature represents a significant energy resource, and with appropriate technology it can be used as a heat source.

Several geothermal systems relying on heat pump technology now operate in Weybridge, and are described in the section "Alternative Energy in Weybridge."

Hydropower

Weybridge is endowed with substantial hydro resources, as Otter Creek drops some 200 feet as it flows north through our town. There are four separate power stations on the Weybridge portion of Otter Creek, three of them shared with another town and one wholly in Weybridge. Counting half the capacity of the shared stations, Weybridge's hydroelectric capacity comes to an impressive 9.9 megawatts, nearly half of Addison County's total. When all those stations' generators are operating, that makes Weybridge a net exporter of energy—a situation few Vermont towns ~~outside of Vernon (home to Vermont Yankee)~~ can boast. However, medium-scale hydro installations like those in ~~Weybridge, Weybridge~~ are generally used to provide peak power because they can be started and stopped quickly, so they usually do not operate all the time.

Weybridge's hydroelectric installations are also unique in the amount of ~~that the majority of the generating capacity was installed quite recently, in 1988.~~ Of ~~the~~ four stations, ~~two~~ are operated by Central Vermont Public Service and ~~two~~ by Green Mountain Power ~~Vermont Marble~~. Weybridge's share of the energy generated in our town is minimal. However, we benefit economically by having these generating facilities on our tax rolls. In particular, Weybridge brought the first in a series of lawsuits in the early 1980s that changed the basis of hydro plants' valuation from a depreciated fixed asset value to the present value of the plants' future income. That raised the plants' valuation on our tax rolls from tens of thousands to millions of dollars.

Alternative Energy in Weybridge

Although Weybridge's energy supply is largely consistent with statewide patterns, our town does have a number of alternative energy installations that tap local energy resources. A growing number of ~~at least three~~ homes have photovoltaic systems that supply a portion of their electrical energy. Thanks to Vermont's net-metering law, owners of these systems can sell excess power back to the grid during periods of high solar production, and purchase grid power when needed. Thus the grid serves as a kind of storage system for solar-produced electrical energy. Several other homes have

solar domestic hot water systems, including one that has operated continuously for a quarter-century, supplying its owners with 95 percent of their hot water from May to October. A wind turbine operated at one Weybridge home in the late 1970s and early 1980s ~~had~~. With a peak power output of 1.5 kW, ~~it produced and produced~~ typically 2100 kWh of electrical energy per year. The owner of that long-gone machine ~~has is~~ ~~planning to replaced~~ it with a more modern device. Finally, several Weybridge homes have groundwater-based geothermal heating ~~systems, systems;~~ one of them ~~is powered in part by photovoltaically generated electricity. The owner of one grid-based geothermal system reports that electrical energy costs jumped a mere \$400 during the first winter after the system was installed—a time when heating oil approached \$4 per gallon, giving fuel costs of perhaps \$3000 to \$5000 in a typical oil-heated home.~~

Weybridge Energy Committee

Established in 2011, the Weybridge Energy Committee is actively addressing energy conservation and alternative energy practices in Weybridge and was awarded funding to weatherize the Town Office and lead the community in weatherizing residential and municipal buildings. The Weybridge Energy Committee is also addressing transportation alternatives through education and advocacy.

Conclusion of background information and statements

Weybridge recognizes its residents' and other Vermont residents' consumption of energy and our individual and collective responsibility to help reduce and otherwise mitigate this energy usage, especially fossil fuel-based usage. Weybridge therefore supports responsibly sited and developed renewable energy projects within its boundaries. It recognizes that financial considerations require large solar and wind projects be located in close proximity to electric power lines capable of transmitting the load proposed to be generated and with easy access to major transportation networks for construction. However, Weybridge also desires to maintain the working and open landscapes, adopted conservation and habitat protection measures, scenic rural views important to its economy- and to the rural cultural aesthetic and quality of life. Not all commercial or community scale solar projects that may be proposed can meet these standards.

In 2016 the Vermont legislature adopted new legislation related to the siting of renewable energy projects; however, the implementation of that new legislation will take longer than Weybridge has to renew its Town Plan. Therefore, until the 2016 new legislation is implemented by the Addison County Regional Planning Commission and the VT Public Service Board thereby enabling Weybridge to adopt new town plan language, Weybridge is proceeding to adopt the following goals, policies and community standards. Renewable energy projects proposed in Weybridge should satisfy these goals, policies and community standards to be considered "orderly development" as articulated by this town plan and in order to not unduly, negatively impact the aesthetics of the rural countryside this plan intends to protect. In light of these renewable energy success stories, the use of alternative means for energy supplies in Weybridge should be encouraged. There are successful models of towns around the State and in Addison County with active Energy Committees that are

addressing alternative energy practices and identifying opportunities for collaboration, funding and micro-power generation. An Energy Committee in Weybridge should be established.

~~⁴ U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration, State Energy Data 2005: Consumption~~

~~⁴ National Renewable Energy Laboratory, *Solar Radiation Data Manual for Flat-Plate and Concentrating Collectors*~~

~~⁴ TrueWind Solutions, "Wind Energy Resource Map of New England," available through Massachusetts Technology Collaborative at http://www.mtpc.org/rebates/green_power/NE_spd100m.pdf
Map used here is for 100 m above the surface; lower maps available at the same site.~~

GOALS

Conserve renewable and nonrenewable energy resources.

Reduce reliance on nonrenewable energy sources such as oil and gas, and shift reliance to renewable energy sources. Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and substances that cause acid rain.

Support responsibly sited and responsibly developed renewable energy projects.

POLICIES

Settlement patterns. Encourage settlement patterns that reduce travel requirements for work, services, shopping and recreation. For example:

- Encourage development of compact neighborhoods.
- Allow general stores and other businesses in village areas.
- Allow infilling of existing large-lot development if higher density development is desirable and appropriate.
- Provide opportunities for appropriate home occupations.
- Provide walking and biking paths in large developments.
- Establish a strong and visible commitment to energy efficiency in buildings.
- Promote energy efficiency and increased use of renewable fuels in all buildings, especially new ones.

Transportation. Support state and regional public transportation programs serving Weybridge and ask major employers wishing to construct or expand businesses in the region to promote energy efficient commuting. Support

locating a Park and Ride in Weybridge and encourage Weybridge residents to consider using ride-sharing programs in order to reduce use of fossil fuels.

Methane. Support production of energy from methane ~~ast~~ be a desirable agricultural practice.

Wind. Encourage the use of wind energy with due regard to aesthetic and environmental considerations, especially in high and medium density residential areas.

Town buildings. Encourage the use of ~~other~~ alternative means for energy production in town buildings, the school and residences such as geothermal and solar.

Biomass. Conserve forest land as a renewable energy resource.

Lighting. Discourage the use of “always-on” street lamps and other outdoor lighting.

Financial support. Explore the funding opportunities and implementation possibilities to upgrade the efficiencies in all town buildings including the school, town hall, library, town garage, volunteer fire department building, and town offices.

Community Standards

A. Siting. Where a project is placed on the landscape constitutes the most critical element in the aesthetic siting of a project. Poor siting cannot be adequately mitigated. Accordingly, all renewable energy projects must evaluate and address the proposed site’s aesthetic impact on the surrounding landscape and significant viewsheds.

Good sites have one or more of the following characteristics:

- Roof-mounted systems;
- Systems located in close proximity to existing larger scale, commercial, industrial or agricultural buildings;
- Proximity to existing hedgerows or other topographical features that naturally screen the proposed array from view from at least two sides;
- Systems fit the scale and context of their location.
- Reuse of former brownfields or otherwise impacted property.
- Glare and noise are minimized to the extent possible.

Poor Sites have one or more of the following characteristics:

- No natural screening;
- Topography that causes the arrays to dominate the skyline from common vantage points like roads or neighborhoods (recognizing that this is more difficult for wind towers);
- Locations in floodways or mapped river corridors;
- A location in proximity to and interfering with a significant viewshed.

Significant viewsheds within the municipality of Weybridge include: open farm

fields with unobstructed views from roads or other points in Weybridge (particularly the long views across extensive fields), the views down into the Lemon Fair valley, the higher elevations of Snake Mountain and Weybridge Hill, views to the east along the south of James Road, and views to the east along Sheep Farm Road;

- The removal of productive agricultural land from agriculture use; and
- Sites that require public investment in transmission and distribution infrastructure in order to function properly.

B. Mass and Scale. The historical working landscape and other open lands, rural residential development, rolling hills, sweeping Lemon Fair Valley and the backdrop of Snake Mountain define Weybridge and Weybridge desires to preserve these types of viewsheds. Rural structures like barns fit into the landscape because their scale and mass generally do not impact large tracts of otherwise open land. When houses are added to Weybridge's landscape, sensitive siting and appropriate screening are required whenever possible. Renewable energy systems should also be limited in mass and scale, or have their mass and scale broken by screening, to fit in with the landscape. Systems of 150 kW and less (which comprise 1.5 acres or less) should fairly easily conform to these standards given the smaller size. All commercial scale solar arrays (i.e. above 150kW) shall also be limited in mass and scale, and/or have their mass and scale broken by screening to fit in with the landscape. Commercial solar projects larger than 500 kW, which are typically in excess of four acres are larger than any other structure within the municipality of Weybridge, are difficult to screen or otherwise mitigate from a visual perspective and in the event such is the case, are therefore strongly discouraged.

Projects which on the balance are found to have poor siting characteristics pursuant to the community standards contained above or in other parts of Weybridge's Town Plan violate Weybridge's Plan regarding orderly development.

Average Person

For the purposes of this plan, either the municipal legislative body or the planning commission (whichever body is selected by the legislative body to represent Weybridge before the Public Service Board in any Section 248 hearing), shall be deemed to represent the voice of the "average person" with respect to the "Quechee Test" when evaluating the aesthetics of a proposed solar or wind array.

Mitigation methods.

A. Solar Installations: In addition to properly siting a project according to the criteria set forth above, solar developers must take the following action to mitigate all project sites:

- Locate the structures on the site to keep them from dominating the skyline above the horizon from public vantage points;
- Shorter panels may be more appropriate in certain spaces than taller panels to keep the project lower on the landscape.

- At a minimum, all solar arrays must observe the setback restrictions contained in Act 56 governing solar installations. However, developers are encouraged to increase setbacks to at least those listed in Weybridge's Zoning Regulations within the Zoning District in Municipality in which the array lays.
- Use the existing topography, development or vegetation on the site to screen and/or break the mass of the array;
- In the absence of existing natural vegetation, the commercial development must be screened by native plantings beneficial to wildlife and pollinators that will grow to a sufficient height and depth to provide effective screening within a period of 5 years. Partial screening to break the mass of the site and to protect public and private views may be appropriate.
- Practice a "good neighbor policy". The siting of the array should be done in such a manner that the array creates no greater burden on neighboring property owners or public infrastructure than it does on the property on which it is sited. As an example, a landowner may not site an array on his or her property in a location calculated to diminish the visual impact of the array from his or her residence, but places the array immediately within their neighbor's or the public's viewshed.
- Use black or earth tone materials (panels, supports, fences) that blend into the landscape instead of metallic or other brighter colors).

B. *Wind*: The actual footprint of a wind turbine tends to be small but its resource impact is more substantial within the footprint area, and wind turbines (particularly wind farms) are likely to have scenic or esthetic impacts, sometimes quite dramatic. Scale and landscape context are important considerations in siting wind installations. Besides applying any relevant goals, policies and standards set forth above, the following additional criteria will be used to evaluate whether on the balance potential wind installations meet or violate Weybridge's Town Plan:

- Glare and noise will be considered in locations that are adjacent to residential or recreational properties. Lower gloss paint or darker color blades may be required where reflective characteristics could present an annoyance.
- Wind turbines are likely to be most appropriate within agricultural, commercial or industrial contexts and should be sited, where practical, near other structures.
- In landscapes valued for natural or scenic features, siting will be evaluated for potential visual impacts on scenic views and the experience of a natural landscape.
- Impact on the flight and migration patterns of birds.

Decommissioning and Restoration. All projects shall be decommissioned at the end of their useful life. This means equipment shall be removed, landscaping kept and disturbed areas restored. Developers of all projects 100 kW and greater shall provide the municipality with appropriate assurances to guarantee funding exists to decommission the project. In keeping with Weybridge's desire to retain its agricultural land base, a solar array's useful life shall be deemed to be at the end of its useful life when the array(s) are taken off line.

ⁱ U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration, State Energy Data 201305: Consumption
(http://www.eia.gov/state/seds/data.cfm?incfile=/state/seds/sep_sum/html/rank_use_capita.html&sid=VT)

ⁱⁱⁱ National Renewable Energy Laboratory, *Solar Radiation Data Manual for Flat-Plate and Concentrating Collectors*

ⁱⁱⁱⁱ TrueWind Solutions, "Wind Energy Resource Map of New England," available through Massachusetts Technology Collaborative at http://www.mtpc.org/rebates/green_power/NE_spd100m.pdf
Map used here is for 100 m above the surface; lower maps available at the same site.

17. COMMUNICATIONS

The Planning Commission recognizes the importance of access to modern communications for the town's residents. The public is increasingly dependent upon cell phones, high speed Internet, wifi, and other developing technologies for business and personal use.

GOALS

Promote the availability of state of the art high-speed Internet service throughout the town of Weybridge.

Make reliable cell phone coverage universal throughout the town in a manner that preserves the aesthetic quality of our landscape.

Support emerging communications technologies that do not compromise human health and environmental quality.

POLICIES

Strongly encourage the extension of wireless telephone service through the siting of antennas out of view within existing structures.

Keep communication antennas as a conditional use, with approval contingent upon a site plan review to assess their aesthetic and other impacts.

Discourage siting of cell phone and other communications antennas where construction of new roads would be required.

Give preference to antenna placements in structures meeting the criteria below, in the order listed. This recognizes that the placement of communication antennas can be a source of income, and preference should be given to public buildings.

- Within town-owned structures, with profits being channeled to uses that would benefit everyone in town. (For example, siting a tower in the steeple of the town hall might be used for the renovation of that historic building).
- Within structures that provide broad community benefits (e.g. church steeples).
- Within structures owned by private individuals (barns, silos, other appropriate sites).

Discourage the building of freestanding cell phone towers on Snake Mountain and other ridgelines.

However, the plan recognizes that there are circumstances in which a cell phone tower may be the only option for supplying service to certain parts of the town.

| The plan requires that any entity/person/company wishing to build a freestanding tower in Weybridge must provide a study demonstrating that they cannot satisfy demand by using existing structures. This study would take the form of a conditional use review, | with costs of the Town consultant to be paid by the entity/person/company seeking the tower.

18. REGIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Weybridge is not an isolated community, but an integral part of Addison County and the Champlain Valley region of Vermont. Development including solar and wind energy installations in the surrounding towns inevitably has an impact on Weybridge and the residential, scenic, agricultural and recreational resources of Weybridge are valuable assets for the region. The Weybridge Planning Commission has examined the Addison Regional Plan and the land use planning regions along our borders with neighboring towns. The results are summarized below.

The Region

The Town of Weybridge is located in the Addison Region, which is administered by the Addison County Regional Planning Commission. By Vermont statute, town plans must be compatible with the Regional Plan. The goals and objectives of the Weybridge Town Plan are similar to those found in the Addison Regional Plan. The Regional Plan follows the land use plan of its member towns, so there can be no land use conflict between the local and regional plans.

Surrounding Towns

The Town of Weybridge abuts five towns: Cornwall, Bridport, Addison, New Haven and Middlebury. An examination of land use plans along the Weybridge border found no significant incompatibilities with its neighbors, as shown below.

Addison

The Town of Addison borders Weybridge on the west, with most of the town line running through the forest on the east side of Snake Mountain. Both towns have designated this a Conservation (CON) area, so they are compatible.

Bridport

The southwest corner of Weybridge borders Bridport. In Weybridge, this represents the Lemon Fair Valley and Snake Mountain planning regions, primarily suitable for conservation and agricultural uses. Bridport designates this as part of its Upland region.

Cornwall

The Town of Cornwall borders Weybridge on the south. Weybridge has two planning regions along this border: Lemon Fair Valley and Sheep Farm. The descriptions of these two areas are very similar to the adjacent Cornwall planning regions, Lemon Fair, Ledges and Cider Mill. Both plans recognize the flood-prone nature of the Lemon Fair Valley and the rich agricultural land in the valley. ~~Similar language is found along the Sheep Farm region starting with Hamilton Road, where Cornwall also anticipates a higher rate of residential development.~~

New Haven

The northeast corner of Weybridge abuts New Haven. In New Haven most of this region is zoned as an RA-10 district with 10-acre zoning, and most of the border area is designated as agricultural. This is largely compatible with the Weybridge designation of the Otter Creek Gorge and Quaker Village planning areas.

Middlebury

Weybridge borders the Town of Middlebury's Village area in the Pulp Mill Bridge region. On both sides of this border, development is encouraged to remain high and medium density residential, with some planned agricultural/residential sections. Otter Creek Gorge area.

GOALS

Encourage and participate in a regional approach to development planning and environmental protection in Addison County.

~~Assure that~~ Seek to ensure developments in Weybridge and surrounding towns are compatible, especially avoiding conflicting land use districts at town boundaries.

POLICIES

Cooperate with adjoining towns in the protection and appropriate use of shared natural, scenic and recreational assets, such as Snake Mountain and Otter Creek.

Work with the Middlebury Area Land Trust to support the Trail Around Middlebury and with MALT and Monument Farms Dairy to support the Bob Collins Conservation Farm.~~[need name].~~

Participate with adjoining towns in planning for improvements of roads and bridges, and sidewalks and bike paths, connecting Weybridge with its neighbors.

Seek the advice and support of the Addison County Regional Planning Commission in developing local plans, bylaws and regulations.

Cooperate with fire departments of adjoining towns to provide adequate fire protection for the area.

Keep informed of the municipal plans, bylaws and property developments in adjoining towns and take these into consideration in implementing the Weybridge Town Plan.

19. IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

A town plan is essentially a statement of the ways in which a town would like to see itself develop and grow, and is intended to guide the local government and civic agencies in actions affecting the health, safety, comfort, and well-being of the general public. The plan itself, however, does not carry out or mandate these actions -- implementation requires the adoption and execution of by-laws, regulations, and other commitments to perform the appropriate actions. ~~During the preparation of this plan, some concrete steps consistent with the plan goals have already been taken, notably, the design and approval of a substantial addition and improvement to the Weybridge Elementary School, and the adoption of a new sewage disposal ordinance.~~

~~Since the adoption of the 1996 Town Plan, some concrete steps consistent with the plan goals have already been take, notably:~~

~~The completion of a substantial addition and improvement to the Weybridge Elementary School.~~

~~The complete revision and adoption of Weybridge Zoning and Subdivision Regulations.~~

~~The installation in Weybridge of the statewide E-911 emergency response system.~~

~~The design, execution, and tabulation of a town survey of opinion and information.~~

~~The preparation and publication of "Weybridge Facts & Figures 2000", including an extensive set of GIS (Geographic Information System) maps.~~

GOAL

Implement the goals and policies of this Town Plan in a timely and systematic manner.

POLICIES

Periodically review the town zoning and subdivision regulations to keep pace with growth and development in Weybridge and surrounding towns.

Prepare periodic addenda to "Consider updating "Weybridge Facts & Figures 2000" to include new US Census figures and other data as they become available. (This would be a substantial undertaking that might require grant money and committed leadership.)

~~Ask the Weybridge Selectboard, and offer assistance, to develop a ten-year capital budget for acquisition and replacement of town facilities and equipment.~~

Throughout the lifetime of this Plan, look for and record goals and policies that could beneficially be revised or added, in order to facilitate renewal of the Plan within five years.