

# Williamstown Town Plan

*NOTE: Once the information from the 2010 Census is released, the town plan population data can be updated.*

# Table of Contents

## Purpose

- A. Why Plan?
- B. Required Goals and Elements
- C. Implementation
- D. Planning Process
- E. Vision Statement

## Community Profile

- A. Overview
- B. Demographics
  - Population Trends*
  - Density*
  - Age Distribution*
  - Regional Comparisons*
  - Special Needs Population*
- C. Community Identity
- D. Goals, Policies, & Tasks

## Natural and Cultural Resources & Features

- A. Overview
- B. History of the Landscape
- C. Productive Resources
  - Forest Lands*
  - Agricultural Lands*
  - Earth Resources*
- D. Protective Resources
  - Surface Water*
  - Wetlands*
  - Natural Heritage Sites*
  - Wildlife Habitat*
  - Scenic Areas*
- E. Environmental Hazards in Williamstown
  - Overview*
  - Soil/Water/Air Pollution*
  - Noise Pollution*
  - Flooding and Fluvial Erosion*
- F. Goals, Policies & Tasks

## Education & Learning

- A. Overview
- B. Education Levels
- X. Schools
  - History*
  - Enrollment Trends*

*Funding Challenges*  
*Physical Condition/Location*  
*Community Mapping Program*  
*High School Survey*  
*Home Schooling*

- Δ. Adult Education
- E. Goals, Policies & Tasks

## **Housing**

- A. Overview
- B. General Trends & Conditions
- X. Affordability
- Δ. Special Needs Housing
- E. Fair Housing Laws
- Φ. Federal Response
- Γ. On-line Resources
  - I. Goals, Policies & Tasks

## **Community, Utilities, Facilities, Services, and Organizations**

- A. Overview
- B. Utilities
  - Water Supply*
  - Wastewater*
  - Telecommunications*
- X. Facilities
  - Municipal Buildings and Land*
  - Post Office*
  - Library*
  - Cemeteries*
  - Recreational Resources*
- D. Services
  - Municipal Government*
  - Emergency Services*
  - Post Office*
  - Animal Control Officer*
  - Health and Wellness*
  - Childcare*
  - Solid Waste*
- E. Organizations.
  - Churches*
  - Other*
- D. Goals, Policies & Tasks

## **Energy**

- A. Overview
- B. Sources
- C. Conservation

- D. Energy Programs and Resources
- E. Goals, Policies & Tasks

### **Economic Development**

- A. Overview
- B. History
- C. Current Conditions
- D. Trends
- E. Economic Development Committee Survey
- F. Economic Development Issues
- G. Goals, Policies & Tasks

### **Transportation**

- A. Overview
- B. History
- C. Current Conditions
- D. Maintenance Issues
- E. Safety Issues
- F. Traffic Solutions/ Alternatives
- G. Goals, Policies & Tasks

### **Land Use Patterns**

- A. Overview
- B. History
- C. Evolving Land Use Patterns
- D. Desired Future Land Use
- E. Future Land Use Plan
- F. Goals, Policies & Tasks

### **Adjacent Municipalities & Regional Coordination**

- A. Overview
- B. Summary of Contiguous Towns
- C. Goals, Policies & Tasks

### **Implementation Priorities**

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## **CHAPTER I**

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## PURPOSE

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### A. Why Plan?

Town planning is required by law. The town plan is a major component of the information used by Act 250 commissioners in making decisions. A town plan is NOT zoning and zoning is NOT required by law.

Planning is the act of designing a strategy, in advance, to avoid errors and seize opportunities. Land use decisions made without a clear direction can result in haphazard, inefficient development. Unplanned growth can cause conflicts between neighbors, engender unnecessary public expenditures, cause environmental damage, erode the character of a community and generally reduce quality of life for residents. This document makes recommendations about how Williamstown residents and town officials can support the overall health of our town. Williamstown can achieve great things by planning, learning, growing, and prospering together.

### B. Required goals and elements

Two major pieces of legislation and amendments have determined the structure for planning in Vermont. Act 250, Vermont's development review law regulates new development projects over a certain threshold size, The Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning Act (aka 24 VSA, Chapter 117) enables municipalities to adopt local plans and land use regulation and provide guidelines for the development, adoption and enforcement of the same. Amendments to the Act in 1988, known as Act 200, included provisions designed to help agriculture and forestry remain viable by encouraging new growth to be developed in conformance with the historic settlement pattern of compact villages and towns surrounded by countryside. Act 200 also offered incentives to towns for drafting comprehensive plans that are consistent with the state's recommendations.

### C. Implementation

A municipal plan is a guidance document. It is generally not legally binding. However, the Town Plan can provide a town with a legal framework for any municipal ordinance. In addition it has legal standing in the Act 250 process. Williamstown intends to use this Plan for the following purposes over its five year statutory life:

- Informing residents and others about Williamstown
- Guiding the community towards its short (5 year) and long-range goals by assisting town officials in making smart and responsible decisions for community development
- Providing the town with a unified voice in the Act 250 and Act 248 proceedings and a framework for evaluating development projects
- Ensure the continuing viability of the community's cultural, historical, and rural character
- Helping the Town qualify for, and prepare, state and federal planning grants
- Prioritizing and planning for public expenditures
- Providing strategies for the revitalization of Williamstown Village
- Balancing competing interests and demands in a fair and equitable manner that recognizes the rights of individual and protects the welfare of the general public

## **D. The Planning Process**

The Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning Act (24 VSA, Chapter 117) states that municipal plans must be re-examined, updated, and readopted every 5 years. This document replaces Williamstown's previous plan, adopted on June 11, 2005. During the development and preparation of that plan, members of the Williamstown Planning Commission met with the community to gather information through focus groups, individual interviews, and surveys. They also held a public map display and a workshop on land use. Answers to open-ended questions reflected a wide range of views and provided valuable insights. During this same time-period, the newly developed Economic Development Committee also distributed a survey. The information gathered identified a community vision and the results were incorporated in the plan.

Among the common values and themes expressed in the surveys were:

- Protecting the lifestyle and traditions of the community
- Promoting good citizenship
- Revitalizing the villages
- Preserving the Town's rural character
- Improving the business climate
- Providing citizens with a good education
- Protecting the public health, safety and welfare

Furthermore, residents wanted all of these goals accomplished in a cost effective manner and with minimal infringement on individual land rights. The current planning commission believes these ideals still reflect the opinions and desires of the community. As such, they will be guiding principles for this, the 2010 Plan, as well.

## **E. Vision Statement**

*Williamstown is changing whether we like it or not. Some of the changes we deem to be good, others not so good. You can't see into the future and how the town looks now is nothing that residents could have foreseen 50, 25 or even ten years ago.*

*A town plan is a way for us all to visualize what we want Williamstown to be in 5, 10, 25 or perhaps 50 years from now. It's where we want to be living in that short-term and where our children will be living. Will the town simply be a bedroom community to Barre and Montpelier with mostly homes and little in the way of business? Will it have a vibrant village center with an outlying landscape of open farm lands and forests?*

*No one knows for sure but your planning commission feels that the road toward that future landscape starts now, with this plan. We hope you will join us in envisioning the town's future.*

## CHAPTER II

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### COMMUNITY PROFILE

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#### A. Overview

Williamstown was established on November 6, 1780 (by Elijah Paine who later became Justice of the State Supreme Court and a United States Senator) and was chartered on August 9, 1781 by the Republic of Vermont. The first settlements took place in 1784 on the West Hill, along the present day Stone Road.

The town is located in the northwest portion of Orange County, abutting Washington County on its northeastern and western borders. Covering an area of around 28,180 acres (40 square miles), it has a quiet beauty conjuring images of buckets hanging from sugar maple trees and stonewalls following pasture lines; with its patchwork field patterns so very common in New England. It is surrounded by the towns of Berlin and Barre town (on the north), by Northfield (on the west), by Washington (on the east) and the towns of Brookfield and Chelsea (on the south). The Green Mountains shape much of the town's land into hills and valleys. Near the middle of the southern boundary is a deep gorge known as Williamstown Gulf that has cut its way through two steep mountains.

Williamstown is fortunate to have both rural qualities and a convenient centralized location with a good balance of residential, small businesses, agricultural, recreational, forested, and open spaces. It is only a short drive to cultural facilities (Barre Opera House and others), Berlin Mall, Central Vermont Hospital, outdoor activities, small specialty shops located in surrounding towns, and nearby New Hampshire and Canada.

The town is anchored by two villages, Foxville and Williamstown. *Foxville Village*, locally known as Graniteville, is located about 4 miles from Williamstown and borders the town of Barre. The village has no structural hub, post office, stores, municipal offices, or common areas. However, a dense cluster of residential uses define the hamlet. Forests in this area are shaped by discarded granite deposits from neighboring quarries. In the past, residents have reported wanting access to more amenities.

*Williamstown Village* is situated 6 miles south of Barre City and 13 southeast of Montpelier. The village sits along a valley floor at the base of a long, winding hill and is accessed from interstate 89 via Route 64 or by Route 14. Chartered in 1781, the village has managed to retain some of its historical features. The following old Main Street homes and buildings remain: the churches, Beckett Block, the town hall, Historical Society, and feed store building. Williamstown village offers a mix of stores, library, homes, businesses, churches, and town offices, but has no traffic signals and people can still park along the main street.

Despite its appealing aspects, some residents feel that the village is lacking in character and functional order, with clashing architectural styles and a less than ideal mix of uses. Furthermore it has no public focal point (such as a village green) and is lacking in sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities (see Chapter IX).

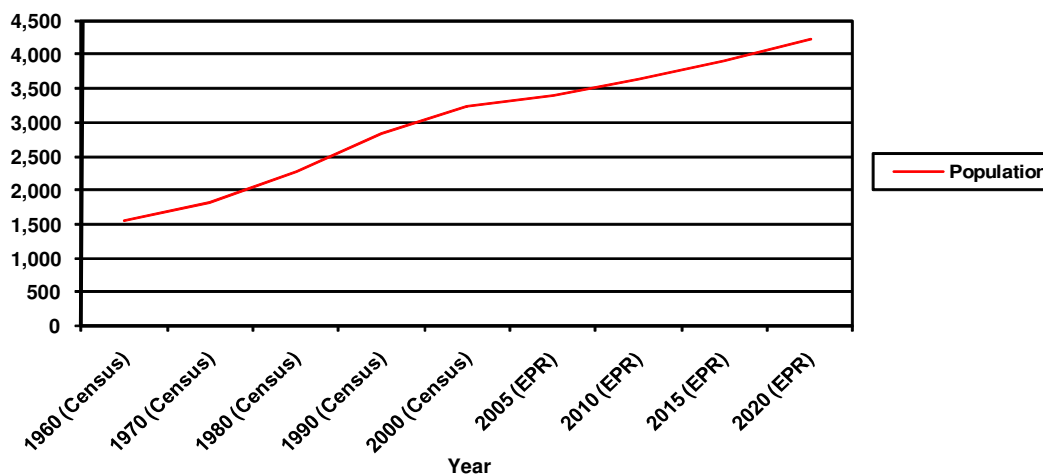
## B. Demographics

### Population Trends

Williamstown's population has grown steadily since the first settlers arrived around 1780, changing it from a wilderness to a modern community. According to the U.S. Census, Williamstown's population grew by 386 between 1990 to 2000, or a little over 13.6%. This is significantly higher than the statewide average of a little over 8.2% within the same time- period. In fact, Williamstown was the 2<sup>nd</sup> fastest growing town in Central Vermont. (**Figure 1** shows the Williamstown population almost tripled from 1,038 in 1980 to 3,225 in 2000) However, Vermont department of Health estimate suggest that population growth in Williamstown has stalled in the current decade. In fact the 2007 estimate of 3,227 represents a gain of only two people since the census. In spite of this lull, CVRPC projections (made by the consulting firm EPR) forecast that Williamstown's population will be around 4,224 in 2020. If Department of Health estimates are accurate, this projection appears highly unlikely.

Williamstown had a "rural" status until our population grew in excess of 2,500 residents in 1990, which resulted in changing our town's legal status into an urban municipality. However, residents still identified with their rural roots and were uncomfortable with the status change. Accordingly, the town voted on the question at town meeting by Australian ballot {24 V.S.A § 4303 (10)} re-converting itself back into a rural town. According to the state, "A rural town is described as a municipality with a population of less than 2,500 persons, *or* one that has voted, by Australian Ballot to be considered a rural town."

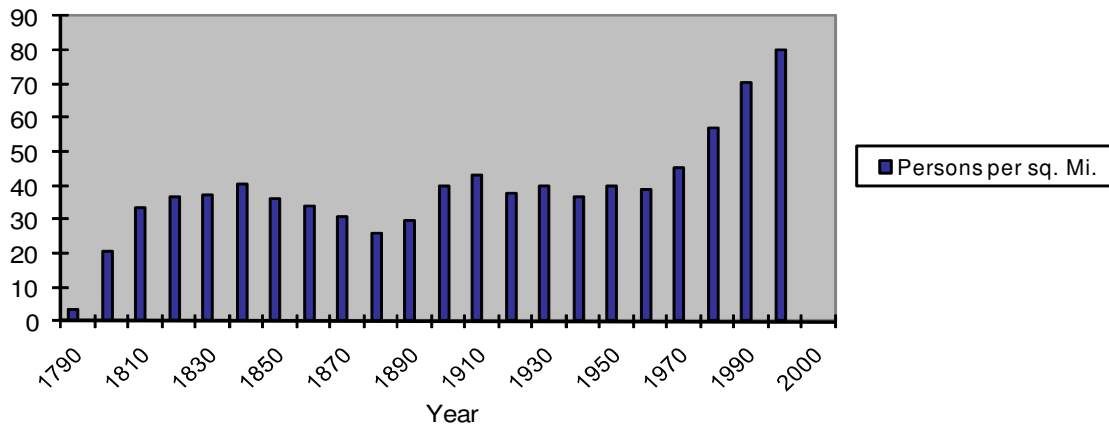
Figure A  
Williamstown Population & Forecast (1960-2020)



## Density

Because our land area has not changed, with increasing population comes an increasing population density. The chart below shows the average number of inhabitants per square mile for Williamstown. These figures were derived by dividing the total number of residents by the number of square miles of land area in the specified geographic area. The Census Bureau data shows that from 1810 to 1950 the population density was stable. Population density has been dramatically increasing since the 1970s, and currently stands at just over 80 person/square mile (2004).

**Figure B**  
**Williamstown - Population Density (Persons Per Square Mile),**  
**1790-2000**



*Figure B - shows the average number of inhabitants per square mile of area land (Derived from U.S. Census 2000 and the UVM Center for Rural Studies)*

## Age Distribution

In Williamstown, according to the 2000 Census:

- children 17 years of age or less made up twenty-six (26%), or 764 people
- adults between 18 and 61 years old made-up sixty-two (62%), or 1,990 people
- adults age 62 and older made up twelve (12%), or 465 people

Statistics indicate that Americans are living longer. According to Vermont Department of Health projections, by the year 2030, there will likely be twice as many elders as there were in 1996. According to this projection, people age 65 and older will make up 20% of the population.

## Regional Comparisons

According to the 2008 Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce Profile, Williamstown ranks as follows out of 23 Towns and Cities in the Central Vermont Region:

- 6<sup>th</sup> in land area (40 square miles, steady)
- 6<sup>th</sup> in population (3,227, steady)
- 6<sup>th</sup> in number of students ( 552, slight increase)
- 6<sup>th</sup> in housing units (1,318, increasing)
- 6<sup>th</sup> in labor force (1,920, increasing)
- 10<sup>th</sup> in number of employers (61, slight increase)
- 11<sup>th</sup> in employment (516, increasing)
- 11<sup>th</sup> in average annual wage (\$31,574, increasing)

Williamstown has an unusually high percentage of residents who are native born Vermonters (77% vs. 41% for Orange County and 52% for the State).

## **Community Identity**

Williamstown is starting to feel the impacts of growth and associated development. Unplanned development can cause stress on our community by limiting jobs and housing, placing more demands on the town's infrastructure, increasing the demand for our schools, increasing conflict regarding privacy and space issues, and by threatening those scenic areas we enjoy so much. In recent years, citizens have had some conflicting ideas about their town.

The term "community identity" means different things to different people. Community identity can be defined as a common interest, an emotional attachment, or sense of belonging to a town. In the past, citizen's concerns with community encompassed such issues as how they feel the town officials represent them, access to town officials, or feelings that they have lost an influence in community decision making.

Williamstown residents still have a strong sense of tradition and pride. They highly value seeing their neighbors pass by to get updates about their family members, and storekeepers still know all about what is going on in town. Many of our residents offer community dinners and annual events that bring people together. These rural values make Williamstown a great place to grow-up and to remain.

A goal of this plan is to get more people actively involved in their town by organizing citizen groups to educate themselves on complex issues and work together to solve them. Such citizen groups may be an untapped resource and can become a potent force for dealing with these and other local problems. Williamstown citizens will make, or break, our future.

Town officials cannot force community identity upon Williamstown residents. Feelings of community identity take time to evolve. Our municipal government can, however, provide opportunities to enhance community identity, through the establishment of various committees, organizing community gatherings, and developing community common areas.

# COMMUNITY

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<b><i>GOALS</i></b>	<b><i>POLICIES &amp; TASKS</i></b>
<b>1. To seek ways to enhance and maintain a strong sense of community in Williamstown</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organize an annual celebration of Williamstown</li><li>• Maintain a farmer’s market in the village</li><li>• Seek opportunities and funds to encourage Williamstown businesses and community members to undertake landscaping and other aesthetic improvements. To this end, the planning commission and select board should pursue “Downtown Designation” for Williamstown village through the Department of Housing in order to qualify for grants</li><li>• Enlist the help of media to help the town promote a more pleasant image of Williamstown</li><li>• Pursue the development of a common space or spaces within the village area.</li></ul>
<b>2. To create an environment where people deal with conflict productively and respectfully</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain a high level of professionalism in town government and strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect between citizens and all town officials.</li></ul>

## CHAPTER III

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### NATURAL RESOURCES, FEATURES AND HAZARDS

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#### A. Overview

Natural resources (plants, animals, soils, minerals, air, and water) provide us with the foundation of our basic life supports: the air we breathe, the water we drink, the land we live on, and the food we eat. They also play an important role in dictating where we build our houses and develop our streets. Our quality of life, including our health, depends upon the quality and quantity of these natural resources and their role in the larger ecosystem. We expect that these natural resources will be available when needed, sometimes without a great understanding or appreciation of how fragile they are. Unfortunately, natural resources *are* limited and our everyday activities can impact them profoundly. The consequences of our actions are not always apparent until resources are gone, diminished, or unusable. Natural areas have intangible benefits, as well, as sources of inspiration, learning, and beauty. It is in the town's best interest to use its critical resources wisely and protect those that are most vulnerable, fragile and irreplaceable.

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#### B. History of the Landscape

In the late 1700's, when settlers first came to Vermont, they saw thick forests of both hardwood and softwood, filled with wildlife. The topsoil was organic and soft. However, settlers soon began clearing the forests to make pastures for sheep to graze in and so their crops could grow. After cultivation of the land, the topsoil was stony and thin (frost heaving caused bedrock to lift to the surface). By the early 1800's, residents deforested 75% percent of the land and exterminated much of the wildlife. Clearing the trees caused a variety of problems. Topsoil eroded into the streams polluting them and killing many fish as a result. Wetlands and ponds dried. Food became scarce and crops refused to grow. Families were unable to heat their homes. Unable to survive in this harsh environment, many people left Vermont for the west with the promise of a new life. Only the hearty stayed behind.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries turkey, deer, beaver, moose, fish, and other extirpated wildlife species were reintroduced to Vermont. The deer population quickly multiplied; and by 1896 the state was able to establish a hunting season. White pine trees began to grow back in the open land and by the late 1900's the trees had grown large enough to harvest. Eventually the logging industry recovered. Today, 78% of Vermont, (and a similar percentage of Williamstown), is forested, providing habitat for wildlife and other benefits for the community. Although we have no old growth forests left, our forested landscape affords us an abundance of outdoor activities, beautiful landscapes, and a great quality of life.

## C. Productive Resources

### Forest Lands

In Williamstown, citizens are never out of sight of the forests. Forests shelter us against wind, rain, sun, and heat, provide us with food sources, protect our watershed, produce oxygen, and are important for timber and heating our homes. Hunters, maple syrup sugar makers, outdoor enthusiasts, and leaf peepers enjoy our forests. At the heart our forests, are the complex relationships between plants, animals and microbes that enable the ecosystem to function almost like a living organism.

Williamstown's forests are a mix of hardwoods and softwoods. Tree species include maple, beech, birch, cherry, basswood, aspen, spruce, balsam fir, hemlock, ash, elm, and many others. This mix of tree species is valuable for wildlife and helps to reduce the impact of species-specific diseases or insects. Currently, Williamstown's forests are healthy and sustainable, but there are concerns for the future, including forest fragmentation and conversion to other uses. Williamstown currently has about 20,000 acres of forested land, nearly a thousand acres of which is protected within the boundaries of Ainsworth State Park. Another 9,355 acres receive some protection from development and enforced management through Vermont's Use Value appraisal Program.

Well-managed multiple use lands can play a major role in conserving and enhancing biological diversity to maintain options for future generations. Please refer to **Map 2 Wetlands, Wildlife Habitat and Natural resources**.

### Agricultural Lands

As small in numbers as our hardworking farmers are, Williamstown residents still care deeply about them. Without them, we realize that much of our rural character would be lost. Our farms are also very important for other more practical reasons – they are an important part of our economy and they provide food and sustenance.

There are 1,840 acres of important farmland soils in Williamstown - 27 acres categorized as “prime” and 1,647 considered to be of “Statewide significance” (see **Map 4 Earth and Mineral Resources**). Ironically, the best agricultural soils are often the easiest to develop as they are generally flat, well drained and stable. However, it is important to understand that local sources of food could become critical given the uncertainties of our nation's energy/transportation future and the town agricultural potential could be significantly diminished if farmlands are excessively build upon, paved, or divided into small, unworkable parcels.

For the moment, however, Williamstown's agricultural base is relatively healthy, stable and diverse. There are a handful of full time farms, approximately 20 “working” farms, and a number of “hobby” or part time farms. However, the increasing tax burden on large landowners is often cited as a reason for the sale of farmland and its subsequent conversion to other uses. Landowners can reduce their tax burden by applying for the Vermont Current Use Value Appraisal Program. The program helps owners of productive forest or agricultural land by lowering their taxes to reflect their actual, use opposed to most profitable, use. Current Williamstown landowners have approximately 9,355 acres of land enrolled in this program.

Land trusts can also help landowners who wish to continue to work their land to remain solvent. These organizations will work with willing landowners to purchase the development rights to important parcels. The owner will usually retain title and will often use the sale price as reinvestment capital to keep operations modern and productive. In 1997, Williamstown had 255 acres protected by the Vermont Housing and

Conservation Board. In 2003, the Agency negotiated a farm conservation project with another Williamstown family and now holds the easement on another 343 acres of land.

## **Earth Resources**

### **1. Topography/Slope:**

Geological upheavals and glacial weathering, which took place millions of years ago, sculptured the land of Williamstown into mountains, hills, wetlands, rivers, and lakes. Currently, elevations in Williamstown range from under 800 feet along Steven's Branch to the highest at 2,060 feet at Mount Pleasant in the northeast corner of town. Elevations of land in combination with soil factors can be important factors in land use planning. Improper development in areas with excessive erosion and instability can cause nutrient loading, stream siltation and groundwater contamination. Development in areas with excessively steep slopes may also have hidden financial burdens for the town. New roads on unsuitable slopes may be costly to construct and maintain. In addition, access by fire, emergency medical, and law enforcement and service vehicles is more difficult in these areas. Slopes over 25% are considered unsuitable for most development and septic systems.

### **2. Geology:**

Most of the rock deposits in the Williamstown area are a mixture of limestone, schist, and granite. Williamstown residents once quarried granite on a grand scale. In 2004, Pike Industries established a 30-acre quarry operation (on a 90-acre farm) in Williamstown. This operation removed approximately 100,000 tons of material last year.

Rock of Ages owns about 170 acres used as a granite quarry near Foxville and a large quarry is located near the border of Williamstown and Berlin on Route 63. The town also has a few sandpits and gravel deposits that supply commercial extraction operations, including:

- Two large sand pits located in Williamstown on Jay Lane off Route 14.
- A gravel and sand pit owned by the town located on a 23-acre site located at the Barre town line on Vermont Route 14 north of the village.
- A 23-acre gravel pit in Williamstown owned by the town of Barre. (This pit has been in operation for nearly 30 years. Gravel reserves above the groundwater table in the original 10-acre section of the gravel pit are nearly exhausted. Barre plans to close down this gravel pit in the near future, thus it should be closely monitored. In 1990, Barre purchased a little over 13 acres nearby).
- Several borrow pits and small private gravel/sand pits.

Operation of the town gravel pit has saved the town a great deal of money. This site provides winter sand and is a source of crushed gravel for the town and its 69 miles of gravel roads. Approximately 8,500 cubic yards of winter sand is stored annually.

Sand, gravel, and quarry operations supply much needed materials for road maintenance and construction; but if not properly developed and managed, they can result in unstable slopes and slides. Furthermore, they have the potential to adversely affect surface and groundwater quality and quantity, increase noise, dust, traffic levels and accidents on local roads, and affect the lives of people and animals that live nearby. It is vital that town officials pay close attention to the potential location and operation of future mining and extraction operations to avoid land use conflicts, environmental damage and habitat destruction. Additionally, the town should avoid areas that will cause unreasonable congestion or unsafe conditions with

respect to the use of the highways and intersections, and access roads. Refer to **Map 4 Earth and Mineral Resources** for more detailed information.

### **3. Soils:**

Soil provides fertility, stores water, holds rain and runoff for later release, cleans and filters pathogens and toxins, buffers acidity, and decomposes waste and some litter. Soils are the most important environmental factor that governs the use of land in rural areas. Soil scientists classify soils based on structure, form, composition, and suitability for various types of development. Four characteristics are of primary concern for planning: the bearing capacity, erodability, drainage, and resource value. Some soils are suitable for structures and highways, while other soils are well suited for growing plants and vegetables. Other soil conditions constrain development and/or the placement of on-site septic systems. Most of Williamstown is comprised of a layer of glacial till over bedrock. This till is usually thin (less than 20 feet), particularly in the higher elevations, and is composed of materials from clay to boulders.

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service has completed a soil survey of Orange County, Vermont. The survey contains useful information in managing farms, woodlands, site locations for roads, ponds, recreation, and buildings. This survey describes Williamstown's soil primarily having a higher percentage of poorly drained soils than other associations of soils.

## **D. Protective Resources**

### **Surface Water**

Surface waters are abundant in Williamstown. The town is dotted with many ponds, interconnected systems of streams and rivers, and many acres of wetlands. These surface waters offer scenic beauty and recreational opportunities. They draw fishermen, canoeists and boaters to our town, and provide a livelihood to the residents of our town. Furthermore, these bodies of water are literally wellsprings and reservoirs of life for the insects, fish, microorganisms, birds, and wildlife that share our town.

Staples, Cutter, and Rood ponds are located along the Steven's Branch and the Second Branch of the White River in the Southern part of Williamstown. Limehurst Pond, a 500-yard long, narrow shaped body of water is rimmed on the west by gentle hillsides. Other ponds include Rouleau, Whitcomb, and Lotus Lake. Ainsworth State Park has a small one-acre shallow pond. There are also a number of smaller private ponds and brooks scattered throughout the town (Martin Brook, Cold Spring Brook, among several others).

Since rivers and streams are interconnected systems, at a broad, watershed scale the Stevens Branch of the Winooski River flows northward to the Winooski River and ends up in Lake Champlain. Meanwhile, the Second Branch flows southward to the White River system.

### **Wetlands**

Wetlands are numerous in Williamstown (see **Map 2**). They include areas commonly known as marshes, swamps, bogs, fens, shrub swamps and wooded swamps, or wet meadows. The water may be visible standing water or unseen ground water. Many of our wetland areas tend to be small because of the hilly topography and are located at the margins of larger upland water systems like lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams. Wetland areas are important because they store floodwater, reduce the impact of downstream flooding and

erosion, provide habitat for wildlife, support erosion control, and improve water quality by filtering out impurities.

Currently, 90% of Williamstown's wetland areas are on private land. In the Northwestern corner section of Williamstown (at the corners of Bador and Hebert Road) is a very private, secluded swamp, located deep in a forest that has over 20-acres of surface water. Known locally as Beaver Meadow Swamp, this area is rich in wildlife and, not surprisingly, has an especially large habitat of beavers.

Vermont Wetland Rules classify all wetlands into one of three classes:

- Class One wetland areas are those that are exceptional or irreplaceable in contribution so they merit the highest level of protection,
- Class Two wetland areas are those wetlands which are found to be significant enough so they merit some protection (50-foot buffer zones), and
- Class Three wetland areas are those wetlands that have not been determined to be sufficiently significant enough to merit any protection. However, these wetlands may be protected by other federal, state, or local regulations. For example, they may be mapped as a significant habitat area.

Wetland protection programs and regulating laws exist at the federal, state, and local levels of Vermont. Community members must contact officials for any work activity that influences water levels in the wetland area that involves draining, dredging, filling, or grading.

Upon request, the Department of Environmental Conservation may determine wetland boundaries through field investigation. Citizens may contact the Wetlands Office at (802) 241-3770 for more information on state wetland rules and Conditional Use Determinations (CUD).

### **Natural Heritage Sites**

Throughout Williamstown, there are many peat lands (areas with partially decayed, moisture-absorbing plant matter), including bogs and fens. In those peat lands there are a number of sites of ecological importance because they host protected communities of rare and uncommon native plants, rare mosses, shrubs, and grasses. These plants are rare because they have very particular habitat requirements. Others are at the edges of their ranges, are vulnerable to disturbance or collection, or have difficulty reproducing for unknown reasons. The state protects these rare plants with a status of "threatened" or "endangered" under the Vermont Endangered Species Law. The Federal Endangered Species Act also protects these sites of ecological importance.

In 1995, a study was done by the United States Environmental Protection Agency to explore fen (wetland, deep peat sites) and riverside seep (groundwater seepage) communities in Williamstown that host protected communities. This study concluded that there are two sites that met criteria for "threatened" status, including a fen area on Birch Lane and another marshy area located on Pleasant Street. These wetland areas have rare plants and the area has rare qualities that are threatened, or endangered and are protected by the Federal Government. Several other sites were explored by researchers and identified as "highly ranked as fen and seep sites", including locations on South Stone Road, Birch Lane Road, Middle Stone Road, and North Stone Road. Other significant areas with rare communities are located on Berlin Pond Road, and Mill Hill Road. The state listed a marsh on Pleasant Street as having a rare plant that is "threatened." These significant habitats are depicted on **Map 2**.

## **Wildlife Habitat**

In Williamstown, wildlife is always close by and residents have learned to respect them. Many residents look forward to leaving a hard day of work and going home to see deer grazing in their backfield or a red fox crossing the street. Luckily, moose, white-tailed deer, bobcat, and beaver populations continue to expand in the Williamstown area. This increase has resulted in increased viewing and hunting opportunities. See **Map 2** for locations of deer wintering areas.

Many birds have adapted quite well to our village habitat. They eat at our bird feeders, nest in our barns, hop around on our lawns, and eat berries off our ornamental trees. The wild turkey, ruffed grouse, and woodcock continue to expand. Many people report seeing large flocks of up to fifty wild turkeys in their backyards. Other birds prefer areas not to go anywhere near humans like the Blue Heron who frequent our wetland areas and Canada Geese who enjoy the cornfields.

Other creatures of the forest and wetlands are plentiful and equally important contributing to our web of life in their own special way. Significant among these are reptiles, amphibians, and fish and insects many of which pollinate our fruit trees and crops.

## **Scenic Areas**

Williamstown's scenic beauty is defined by a landscape of soft hills and valleys, wetlands, open pastures, stone-walls, thick forestland, and dirt roads lined with maple trees. Many of our back roads still offer beautiful open pastures filled with horses, sheep, and cows. As the town moves forward with its planning activities it should consider conducting a landscape assessment to determine what areas are most critical to community's visual character.

## **E. Environmental Hazards in Williamstown**

### **Overview**

Natural and manmade disasters can strike a community with little or no warning. Communities across the country are struggling to prepare for these possible events. The Williamstown select board adopted a customized Hazard Inventory/Vulnerability Assessment in June 2004, and as a result, a Pre Disaster Mitigation Plan was developed. A Hazard/Crisis team will need to be organized. Training and practice are also essential for the successful implementation of the Hazard/Crisis Plan. Community leaders and teachers will need ready access to the plan so they can understand its components and act on them to be prepared for a potential crisis. The Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan will need to be reviewed and revised at least every 3 years.

### **Soil/Water/Air Pollution**

Contaminants in our soil, water and air can find their way into our bodies by contact, ingestion or respiration, causing both long term and short term health impacts. Williamstown has witnessed the dangers of pollution firsthand. State officials have found contamination within the proximity of the school. From 1973 through 1983, the (Interstate Industrial Uniform Laundry aka –UniFirst) UniFirst facility operated a laundry and dry cleaning business located on Hebert Road. The facility borders a residential neighborhood to the east,

public schools to the north and south, and residences and agricultural land to the west. In 1983, the State discovered soil and water contamination coming from the uniform-cleaning facility just above the elementary school. Soil contamination flows downward along the slope and seeps deep into cracks in the bedrock. Thus in 1984, to avoid protect public health the town hooked-up the nearby homes to the town's water supply. The state installed a network of collection drains and expanded them in 1985 and 1990. Monitoring is ongoing.

The old town landfill site on VT Route 14 closed down as a Williamstown landfill as ordered in a consent decree (official legal agreement) from the State of Vermont during the UniFirst contamination problems. The old landfill section has been covered and sealed, but one portion of the site is still contaminated and is restricted. Additional site monitoring and investigation will continue by the Department of Environmental Conservation (VDEC). Removal and transport of gravel contaminated by hazardous waste is in violation of federal RCRA regulations as well as a violation of the Williamstown Consent Decree. Another adjacent section of the town landfill is also contaminated. The solid waste rule on landfills enacted by the Vermont Department of Natural Resources requires that landfills closed after 1989 must sample their monitoring wells. The Williamstown Landfill closed around 1992. Another 2-acre wetland section of the town landfill was used as a CVSWD trash depository transfer station until 2003 and was closed because of potential water contamination.

All restrictions on this land have been removed as of 2009. This land can potentially be used for recreational use.

There are many private junkyards (any property with 3 or more unregistered vehicles) and dumpsites in Williamstown. Samples at some of these sites found concentrations of methyl tertiary butyl ether, trimethylbenzene, benzene, toluene, and other gasoline range organics.

The town tests water samples for contaminants on an annual basis by Williamstown Water Department. Fortunately, Williamstown's Water Quality Report, states that our current municipal water supply is currently of high quality and potable. However, Williamstown does have some potential water quality problems. The contaminated UniFirst facility site is located on the Rouleau Brook Watershed. Rouleau Brook is a tributary to the Stevens Branch, which flows into the Winooski River. To protect the future public health, on March 8, 2004, the Agency of Natural Resources' proposed reclassifying the site groundwater (about 85 acres) from a Class III (drinkable water) to Class IV (not suitable for potable water).

After numerous meetings, between ANR (Agency of Natural Resources) and a small group of concerned (and some effected) town citizens, ANR agreed to consider withdrawal of the reclassification order if the town would expand the water service area to include all the effected properties and adopt an ordinance which prohibited well drilling in the area. The citizens brought this option to the Select Board. The board then moved forward and negotiated with the ANR. The ordnance became effective January 3, 2009 and ANR withdrew its position to reclassify April 17, 2009.

Other potential sources of water quality problems originate from developed land, agricultural, atmospheric deposition, lawn/dump run-off, parking lots, construction sites, disturbed areas, road salt, and failed septic systems. Based on the Environmental Protection Agency's current data, 14% of surface waters in Orange County are impaired or threatened. Some are impaired by pathogens (bacteria and viruses), metals (mercury, copper, and lead), and by sediments. Others are impaired by high acidity levels.

According to Environmental Protection Agency sources, Williamstown's general air quality meets national standards. However, air quality is not monitored in Williamstown.

In the future we must continue to strive to protect our citizens from both the incidence of, and exposure to, environmental toxins. In recent years the federal government has been investing in the analysis and remediation of so called “brownfield” sites. Brownfields are defined by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) as “real property, the expansion, redevelopment or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant or contaminant.” Typical prior uses that may fall into this category in Central Vermont include old town dumps, photo developing sites, mill complexes, factories, dry cleaners, auto repair shops, gas stations and even some agricultural sites. Sites in Williamstown include, but are not restricted to, our two old town dumps and the UniFirst property. There is concern that there may be other properties in Williamstown that have not been designated as brownfield sites.

Brownfield sites often remain vacant and underutilized due to concerns over liability and unknown environmental assessment and clean-up costs; yet many sites can be rehabilitated. Redevelopment or re-use of potentially contaminated sites has many benefits, including:

- Elimination of eyesore properties
- Promotes/supports historic use patterns
- Protects human and environmental health
- Strengthens the local economy

Since brownfield sites are often in already developed areas, their reuse can help to promote compact land use and in-fill development. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s web site “for every acre of brown fields redeveloped, it is estimated that an average of 4.5 acres of green fields are saved.”

The CVRPC has been very active in the area of brownfield rehabilitation, having received over a half million dollars in EPA grants since 2004 to assist towns in assessing and reclaiming important properties. Williamstown should consider taking advantage of the Commission’s expertise to identify and evaluates sites within the community for inclusion in the program.

### **Noise Pollution**

Any undesired loud and/or continuous sound can be considered “noise.” Noise pollution is defined as “continuous and unrelenting sounds at all levels or episodic and excessively loud sounds.” Higher noise levels may be appropriate and unavoidable within designated industrial, commercial, and mixed use areas. While it must be recognized that noise necessarily accompanies certain business and transportation operations, new development should make all reasonable efforts to minimize noise impacts and shall not exceed acceptable standards in residential areas. Among the strategies for the town to consider are: restricting hours of operation or construction, using vegetated buffer zones to filter sound, taking advantage of topography in designing projects to provide sound barriers, the use of structural barriers (i.e. earth berms and sound walls), and architectural design and materials.

### **Flooding and Fluvial Erosion**

Floodplains are low lying areas of land adjacent to a streams and rivers that are frequently inundated by water. While these places serve important ecological functions, including floodwater storage, sediment

trapping, nutrient filtering and aquifer recharge, they can be hazardous locations for people and property. Flooding (and flood related events), arising from a variety of causes, including heavy rain, melting snow, ice jams, poor drainage and dam breaks, is the most frequent, damaging and costly type of natural disaster experienced in the state and region. In fact, over the last 50 years flood recovery costs have averaged \$14 million per year (not adjusted for inflation) statewide. Unfortunately, it appears that Vermont can anticipate more frequent flooding occurrences in the years ahead as climate change models predict wetter summers with more intense rainfall events.

High water causes damage in two distinct, but related, ways. *Inundation* can fill structures with water and cause property damage and drowning. It is a great concern for those living in or near Flood Hazard Zones (the area inundated by water during a flood with a statistical probability of occurring once every 100 years – i.e., the “One Hundred Year Flood”). *Fluvial erosion* i.e. flash flooding actually causes greater damage. Within the area of a stream or river’s active channel movement, known as the Fluvial Erosion Hazard Zone (or FEH), bank failures and changes in river channel courses during floods can undermine buildings, roads, farm fields, and utility infrastructure.

Williamstown is not immune to either of these hazards. Over the years the town has experienced several damaging floods and high water events. The most recent events were July 2007 and July 2008.

Perhaps the best known mitigation program is the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). This program, administered through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), identifies areas within the Flood Hazard Zone and prescribes development review standards and procedures for lands within regulated areas. Municipalities that comply with Federal standards can qualify their residents for flood insurance through the program at rates far below what would be available on the private market. It is essential, therefore, that Williamstown maintain its eligibility for this program. It is important to note that under this program, reduced insurance rates are available town-wide – not just to those located within the Flood Hazard Zones.

In the near future, Orange County will be undergoing a FEMA directed “map modernization process” which will provide the town with updated digital maps of Williamstown’s Flood Hazard Zones. Because the new maps will use ortho-photographs as a base, they may be more accurate and easier to interpret. When the updates are completed, Williamstown will have six months to review them and request any modifications. At the end of this period the maps will become official and the town’s Flood Hazard Regulations will have to comply with revised federal standards if Williamstown is to remain in the NFIP program. It is anticipated that Williamstown will face a deadline for program compliance in 2010 or 2011. The “current” FEMA maps, provided to the town some 30 years ago, depict 100 year flood levels, primarily identifying areas subject to the threat of inundation along the valley that parallels Route 14 and the Steven’s Branch and a few other areas scattered within the town. Development in these areas is restricted in order to prevent water pollution and damage to life and property in accordance with Williamstown’s Flood Hazard ordinance. Agriculture, recreation, forestry, and other similar low intensity uses are permitted

While the FEMA Flood Hazard Zones are important maps are for town planning and for mortgage lenders in deciding which properties need flood insurance protection, they do not address fluvial erosion hazards. Accordingly, the Department of Environmental Conservation, and many Regional Planning Commissions, has been busy conducting fluvial erosion hazard assessments for many river and stream segments statewide. Town’s can use erosion hazard mapping information to help avoid future life and property damage by allowing rivers and streams the area they need to maintain or re-establish their natural “equilibrium” (or stability) thereby avoiding the need for costly, and potentially environmentally damaging stream channelization and bank stabilization measures. While Flood Hazard and Fluvial Erosion Hazard Zones typically have large areas of coincidence, they are seldom, if ever, identical.

Even if Williamstown were to restrict new development from flood hazard and FEH zones, it would not solve every problem. Historically, the town has also witnessed damage from upland streams that have not been mapped by either of the above programs. Mountainous or hilly areas tend to have narrow, confined channels through which flood water move rapidly and travel downstream more quickly than in flat areas. Even though a building is not located in a valley where a rising river could overflow its banks and inundate the structure, it is not necessarily safe from flood damage. By establishing development setbacks, communities can prevent people from building structures too close to rivers, such that the structures could be flooded or swept away by strong currents in a storm.

Finally, it is important to consider how land use within a watershed impacts flooding. Impervious surfaces, such as roads, driveways, parking areas and buildings prevent water from soaking into the ground, increasing runoff and erosion potential. Any disturbance of the soil or any change in topography may increase erosion potential. Building development and soil tillage are two primary causes of soil disturbance in Williamstown. Logging is another. Excessive logging can leave hillsides open to erosion, removing the forest canopy that would have absorbed and retained much of the water. Improperly constructed logging roads may lead to increased erosion, particularly on poorly drained soils. Private driveway culverts are often undersized, causing washouts and road damage during intense storms.

Driveways which are improperly graded and ditched can direct water onto the main road, increasing highway maintenance costs. Improper maintenance of town roads and roadway culverts can lead to washouts. Soil and vegetation allowed to build up on the edges of roads prevent water from running into ditches. Clogged culverts restrict water flow. Inadequate investments in municipal infrastructure result in problems such as undersized (or too few) culverts, inadequate ditches, or the lack of headwalls on culverts.



## NATURAL RESOURCES & FEATURES

Goals	Policies
<p><b>1. To promote sound management, conservation and use of Williamstown’s natural resources by educating the community and establishing mechanisms to inform and assist town officials.</b></p>	<p>Establish a <i>Conservation Commission</i> to assist the town in identifying, studying, maintaining, and protecting important natural resources including ecologically sensitive areas. Responsibilities could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting public awareness about our natural resources and environmental threats;</li> <li>Enlisting public participation in identification, protection, preservation, mapping and enhancement of ecologically sensitive resources. Work with the high school students to use their GIS system to identify and map Williamstown’s natural resources.</li> <li>Seeking grants from the state and private foundations to educate the community</li> <li>Educate landowners about fish and wildlife habitat management practices</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. To protect environmental quality by avoiding undue impact from human activity and maintaining natural areas that contribute to the quality of life in Williamstown.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class 1 and 2 wetlands are considered significant and shall not be drained, filled, or altered to accommodate subdivision.</li> <li>• Class 3 wetlands are also considered very important and shall not be drained, filled, or altered to accommodate subdivision unless without review by the state and the issuance of a CUD.</li> <li>• Proposals for subdivision of a lot involving or adjacent to an identified wetland shall provide a minimum 50 foot setback for roads, buildings, structures and sewage systems from the wetlands.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undisturbed areas of vegetation should be retained and encouraged along the banks of surface waters.</li> <li>• Any activity that would degrade important groundwater supplies is discouraged. Specifically, development activities in designated WHPA’s shall be carefully reviewed for groundwater impacts.</li> <li>• WHPA signs should be located bordering areas considered protected so residents can avoid contaminating important groundwater.</li> <li>• New development should be designed so as to minimize impacts on deer yards and critical wildlife habitat.</li> <li>• Work with the Department of Forest, Parks, and Recreation to assist with the State Management Plan for Ainsworth State Park.</li> <li>• Hazardous wastes shall be disposed of properly to prevent any degradation of groundwater</li> <li>• Construction on steep or unstable slopes and in high elevations (slopes in excess of 25% and elevations above 2,000 feet) is prohibited</li> <li>• Town should seek funding to administer a survey and study areas of possible contamination through participation in the Central Vermont Brownfields Inventory and Assessment Initiative</li> <li>• Storage and utilization of fertilizers, pesticides, petro-chemicals, herbicides, sludge, or other potentially harmful industrial, agricultural, commercial or residential materials, must be accomplished in a manner compatible with existing regulations</li> <li>• Seek funds to purchase and install monitoring wells at the Williamstown Landfill.</li> <li>• Encourage businesses and practices to not pollute or reduce existing pollution.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>3. To balance the benefits and uses of sand, gravel and other mineral and earth resources against the impacts associated with their extraction, processing and transportation.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discourage the extraction of sand and gravel in locations that would be unduly detrimental to surrounding land uses or the environmental quality of the area.</li> <li>• All areas used to extract mineral and earth resources (sand, gravel, topsoil, and granite) will be stabilized during and after the extraction process (including saving topsoil and seeding and planting new trees).</li> </ul>

**4. To preserve the aesthetic quality and working landscape of the Town.**

- Support the Vermont Land Trust and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board in their efforts to protect working lands.
- Seek grants for the enhancement of access to scenic areas. For example, create car turn-offs for viewing vistas, add benches for viewing waterfalls.
- Discourage ridgeline development or conspicuous development on locally prominent landscape/scenic features unless effectively screened, or clearly in the best interest of the general public.
- Encourage “clustered” or “open space” subdivision to promote the preservation of resources by allowing flexibility in the design and siting of buildings.

**5. To manage the quality and quantity of storm-water runoff in order to avoid property damage and negative impacts on surface and groundwater.**

- Structural Best Management Practices (BMP’s) should be used to control storm water on new development sites before and after construction (including plans for long-term maintenance and operations Methods may include diversions, seeding, mulching, check dams, construction schedules, basins, trenches, dry well, leaching catch basins, hay bales, inlet protections, sand and compost filters and others.).
- Acceptable Management Practices (AMP’S) should be employed on all agricultural, silvacultural and earth extraction operations.
- Contractors and landowners are encouraged to consult the “Erosion Control Prevention Manual” published by the Vermont Geological Survey prior to undertaking activities which will disturb the soil.

**6. To avoid, where possible, the conflicts, nuisances and hazards associated with land uses that produce dangerous, excessive or otherwise bothersome impacts.**

- Adopt a Noise Control Ordinance that establishes a maximum DBA allowable at property line boundaries.
- Advocate for noise reduction measures in the development review process. Techniques considered could include: restricting hours of operation or construction, using vegetated buffer zones to filter sound, taking advantage of topography in designing projects to provide sound barriers, the use of structural barriers (i.e. earth berms and sound walls), and architectural design and materials.

Adopt a Firing Range Ordinance

- Advocate for Firing ranges or similar uses to be prohibited inside, or within ¼ mile of village areas. In addition, they will not be permitted within ¼ mile of an existing residence unless all reasonable measures to prevent danger from stray bullets and damage to hearing are taken. Among the techniques available are: sound barriers, sound walls, and time restrictions.

**7. To reduce damage from future flooding events and to prevent changes to the landscape this could increase hazardous flooding conditions.**

- Initiate mapping of Williamstown’s FEH risk areas. Areas subject to fluvial erosion hazards, from gradual stream bank erosion to catastrophic channel enlargement, bank failure, and change in course, due to naturally occurring stream channel adjustments, should be identified and mapped in accordance with accepted state fluvial geomorphic assessment and mapping protocols.
- Review final revised FEMA flood hazard maps when they become available.
- Review and update Williamstown’s Flood Hazard Ordinance to comply with updated NFIP maps and standards and possibly to address fluvial erosion hazards. This should be accomplished through the adoption of a unified overlay district based on the above maps.

- Maintain development setback distances from smaller streams (those for which an FEH zone has not been mapped) to minimize the potential for flash flood damage. A 50 foot minimum buffer is recommended by VT ANR.
- Undersized or blocked bridges and culverts are a main culprit in exacerbating flooding and erosion hazards. Accordingly, Williamstown should continue to participate in CVRPC's Bridge and Culvert Program in order to develop a detailed GIS based inventory, with exact locations and specifications for these structures.



# CHAPTER IV

## EDUCATION & LEARNING

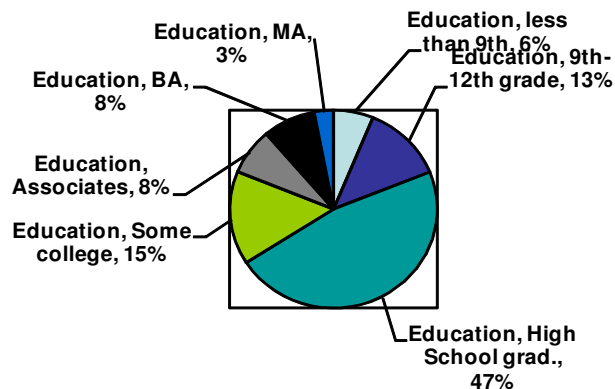
### A. Overview

Education is the process by which people pass knowledge and values to each other. Education gives people new ways of looking at the world and prepares young people for adult roles. Education also prepares adults for new roles. A lack of education opportunities limits an individual's job opportunities and reduces their ability to provide for basic needs like health-care, housing, and transportation. This is especially true in today's society with its increasing dependency on technology. Quality education is vital to our town's quality of life, now and in the future. Every one of our residents has something to teach and something to learn. This plan seeks to find creative ways to increase opportunities to help residents share their knowledge with their neighbors.

### B. Education Levels

The town education levels are an excellent indicator of our economy and quality of life. While high school graduates are the majority of our town's population, Williamstown's overall education levels lag behind the Region and the State, especially with respect to higher learning.

**Figure C**  
**Williamstown Education Levels**



**Figure D**  
**Educational Attainment Levels**  
**(2000 Census)**

	<b>Williamstown</b>	<b>Orange Co.</b>	<b>Vermont</b>
<b>Less than 9<sup>th</sup> grade</b>	6%	5%	5%
<b>9-12 grade, no diploma</b>	13%	11%	9%
<b>High school or equiv.</b>	47%	38%	32%
<b>Some college, no degree</b>	16%	16%	20%
<b>Associate's degree</b>	7%	8%	7%
<b>Bachelor's degree</b>	8%	14%	17%
<b>Grad. Or Prof. degree</b>	3%	9%	10%

### C. Schools

#### History

The *History of Williamstown, Vermont, 1781-1991* (Williamstown Historical Society) reports, “Williamstown has, over the years, had 17 school districts.” A list of those school districts is as follows: Clogston District School (Stone Road), Martin School (originally Graniteville Road moved to McGlynn Hill Road), South Hill School (Graham Road), Lynde School (sharp corner of Hebert Road), Baptist Street School (Baptist Street), Cram School (corner of Northfield Road and Clark Road), Woolcut School (Boyce Street), Quarry School (corner of Tower and McCarty Road), Adams School (Flint Road), Toad Hollow or Gale School (Williamstown-Barre Road) Briggs School (off Chelsea Road), Hatch School (South Hill Road), Alfred Smith School (Weir Road), and the Village School (Construction Hill, Town Hall).

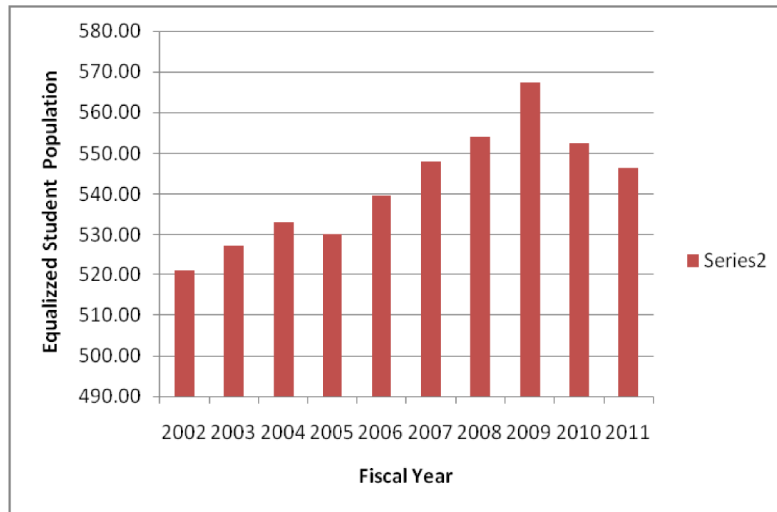
Town officials designed the current schools to be located in the Village. The Williamstown Elementary School was built in 1962 on Brush Hill Road, just down the street from the High School. The school has the capacity to serve between 300-350 students in grades K-5. The Williamstown Middle/High School, built in 1973 on Hebert Road, educates students from grades 6 through 12 and has a capacity of 400-450 students. See **Map 3** for the school locations.

In 2004, the School Board adopted the following mission statement: “*to provide an education that fosters the development of responsible and successful individuals who will practice good citizenship in their local and extended communities*”. In order to meet this challenge, school officials agreed to; build and sustain a safe school system that cultivates academic excellence and life-long learning, recognize the role of parents in the education of their children, and value a working relationship with the community at large. The schools plan to foster positive connections between adults and the schools by offering public educational opportunities. In addition, they plan to remain accountable to families and the community for both educational results and fiscal responsibility.

## Enrollment Trends

Student enrollments in both the elementary and middle/high schools have varied since 1995. Orange North Supervisory Union enrollment figures show that Williamstown's student population reflects the overall state trend of a steady decline in its school-age population. According to the School Construction Report, the equalized pupils sorted by growth rates shows that Williamstown's average annual change from fiscal year 2000 to 2002 decreased by -3.4%.

Enrollment projections for the State suggest the numbers will fall for the rest of the decade and possibly longer.



**Figure E** *Equalized Pupils: This figure is not an actual count, but is a weighted number. It is close to the actual students enrolled. The weighing is based on kids in preschool, grades 1-6, and grades 7-12. Younger kids count less and older kids count more.*

## Funding Challenges

Today, our school officials are grappling with a number of funding challenges including:

- The number of full-time public classroom teachers, instructional aides, and other teachers has increased while the enrollment has been declining. Despite the drop in enrollments, the federal *No Child Left Behind Law* makes it difficult to reduce staffing, because the schools are expected to meet annual progress goals or be penalized
- Teacher's salaries are increasing somewhat and rising health care cost pose significant challenges to the school system
- Residents are finding it difficult paying the increasing taxes

In 1999, for the purposes of providing a financing system that provided equal opportunity in public education, State officials enacted *Act 60*. Under this program towns received an equalized amount of money from the state for every student they enrolled. State officials based the state block grant formula on two variables: equalized pupils (not an actual headcount) and compared it to the statewide average.

In 2003 a new state education funding law, Act 68, amended Act 60. This law changed the way towns compiled their grand list for the statewide property tax. The Act took effect in 2005 and the new changes will eliminate the property sharing pool where per pupil spending links to the town's tax rates. Towns will split the grand list between residential properties (houses, mobile homes, or farms) and non-residential property, such as commercial, industrial, camps, vacation homes, open land (not used as a primary residence for more than six months of each year). Under the new law, non-residential property is subject to a higher statewide education property tax rate than residential property. Under the changes in the education financing formula, Williamstown school taxes have decreased.

The following is a history of the Williamstown Schools tax rate history:

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
School	1.69	1.79	1.51	1.30	1.17	1.19	1.19	1.18	1.25	1.35	1.40

**Physical Condition/Location**

The middle and high school both recently underwent significant renovations. 8.9 million dollars was spend to updating and modernizing the building to include an energy efficient wood chipped fired boiler housed in a separate building.

**Community Mapping Program**

In 2004, the High School, in partnership with the Planning Commission, applied for a mini grant through the Community Mapping Program, (Orton Foundation, Vermont Institute of Natural Sciences) to explore how maps can help Williamstown examine local issues and plan for their future. The High School's long-term vision is to sustain the work they have they begun with their community.

However, the 2003, Economic Development Committee Survey reported that residents felt it was important to have a school system within their community. In fact some reported that having a school in the Village was the primary reason they moved to Williamstown and if the schools were located outside of the Williamstown village it would divert community activities away from its town center. School consolidation increases travel times and transportation costs. Having the school located in the village reinforces that location as the core for community life. When our children walk to schools it saves transportation costs.

**D. Adult Education**

Research in adult education increasingly shows that adults are more likely to learn in an informal way, as they do not always have the time to leave work and take formal courses. Adults in Williamstown who want help with learning basic reading, writing, math, and English (as a second language) can receive help through a free program of instruction provided by the Central Vermont Basic Education Program located in Barre. They also have the opportunity to study for their high school equivalency exam or the adult diploma program. Students and teachers meet in on-to-one and small group sessions and design an individual learning program to suit the requirements of each adult student. Volunteers from the community help make this service accessible to Williamstown residents.

**EDUCATION AND LEARNING**

<b>GOALS</b>	<b>POLICIES &amp; TASKS</b>
<p><b>To strive for schools that foster community-learning opportunities where students and adults learn together.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and encourage community-school partnerships.</li> <li>• Continue the Williamstown High School GIS mapping program</li> </ul>
<p><b>To create a learning community.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the mission of the Williamstown School District</li> <li>• Support efforts to broaden access to adult and senior educational opportunities.</li> <li>• Support vocational education opportunities.</li> <li>• Secure funds for space that could be used for public education opportunities on issues of concern to the community.</li> <li>• Support home schooling, GED, and other non-traditional learning options.</li> </ul>
<p><b>To remain accountable, both educationally and fiscally, to school families and community at large.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The School Board should work with the community to review funding and standards data to improve the quality of the schools and student performance.</li> <li>• Encourage schools to employ capital budgeting and programming as a means to anticipate and plan for the payment of capital improvements.</li> <li>• Ensure that Williamstown’s schools remain in the Village as they are vital to the community’s vitality and identity.</li> <li>• Support incremental investment in the school’s short-term renovation needs to support the long term needs of our neighborhoods and children.</li> </ul>

## CHAPTER V

### HOUSING

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#### A. Overview

Housing is critical to our existence. The size location and cost of housing shapes the communities in which we live, impacting local economic development, school enrollment, as well as land use and transportation patterns – indeed housing is part of the very fabric of our lives. Providing for a range of housing options for a variety of incomes levels and lifestyles and locations that make sense contributes to the vitality and diversity of our community.

This Chapter discusses existing conditions with respect to housing in Williamstown, examines trends, including development patterns and affordability issues, considers Williamstown’s expected housing growth and outlines strategies to accommodate future housing demand. Finally, it concludes with a list of resources that can be used by town officials and residents who are interested in this important issue.

#### B. General Trends and Conditions:

##### Unit Growth/Household size

According to the State of Vermont, the definition of a housing unit is, “a house, an apartment, a mobile home or trailer, a group of rooms or a single room occupied as separate living quarters, or if vacant, intended for occupancy as separate living quarters.”

As Williamstown’s population has grown, so has the number of housing units in the community (**See Table 1**).

**Table 1.**  
**Housing Units vs. population in Williamstown 1940 – 2009**  
**(US Census)**

	<b>1940</b>	<b>1950</b>	<b>1960</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>Population</b>	1477	1600	1553	1822	2284	2839	3225	3209
<b>Housing Units</b>	408	421	439	555	861	1133	1318	1427

In fact, as the Table suggests, housing unit growth has greatly outpaced population growth in Williamstown (as in the rest of the Country), owing largely to steadily decreasing household sizes. This

phenomenon can be attributed to smaller families, an aging population, higher divorce rates and changing cultural mores. The average household size in Williamstown has decreased from 3.65 persons per household (pph) in 1970 to 2.58 pph in 2000, according to U.S. Census data. However, it remains slightly above State and Regional averages (2.44 and 2.46 respectively). Economic and demographic forecast projections prepared by CVRPC predict that the figure for Williamstown will continue to decrease to about 2.36 pph in 2020.

The divergence between housing unit growth and population is especially evident over recent years (see **Table 2**). This suggests that the Town must continue to plan for growth and development despite an apparently stable population.

**Table 2.**  
**Change in housing units and population in Williamstown 2001- 2008**  
**(VT. Department of Health estimates, Williamstown Planning Commission data)**

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>Population</b>	+ 37	-6	+6	-5	-16	0	-18		
<b>Housing units</b>	14	16	18	25	11	20	15	10	12

In 2008 the Central Vermont Regional Plan adopted a Housing Distribution Plan as part of its Regional Plan. This document asks municipalities to plan for future estimated housing need through the year 2020. The numbers for Williamstown appear in **Table 3**, below.

*Table 2 chart shows Williamstown housing units. Projections predict that the Town will need to plan for --- new housing units by 2020 (derived by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission).*

**Table 3.**  
**2008 CVRPC Housing Distribution Plan**  
**Williamstown**

	2000-2004	2005-2009	2010-2014	2015-2020	Total
<b>New Units</b>	84	131	140	184	539
<b>Actual Units</b>	73	67			

### Unit Type/Condition

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, The vast majority of housing units in Williamstown (78%) are single family, owner occupied homes. Less than one fifth (17%) of units are renter occupied. Five percent of units are vacant and 2% are considered seasonal or recreational. Both owners and renters are relatively stable, averaging 19 and 11 years at their current addresses, respectively.

Out of the total 1,318 housing units, the following is a breakdown of substandard housing in Williamstown, according to the 2000 US Census Data:

- 33 housing units lacked complete plumbing facilities, 12 of which were owner occupied
- 13 owner occupied housing units lacked complete kitchen facilities
- 15 occupied housing units had no telephone service available

### **Density, Location and Distribution**

In the early twentieth century towns and villages were characterized by compact neighborhoods surrounded by rural countryside. In recent decades, however, much of the housing growth in Vermont (and Williamstown) is happening outside of village centers (**See Map 1**). As we perpetuate this pattern we are in danger of losing not only our unique character, but a variety of other attributes as well. It has been demonstrated that the benefits of developing denser, compact housing within or close to village and town centers at historic settlement densities are numerous and include:

- decreased land costs due to smaller lot sizes
- decreased development costs due to proximity to existing infrastructure
- increased opportunities to develop a variety of housing options for different lifestyles
- decreased automobile dependency due to proximity to amenities such as
  - schools, shops, services and jobs
- increased vitality and economic activity in village centers
- increased viability of mass transportation
- preservation of natural resources such as agricultural land and water resources

While it is widely believed that this shift to homes on large lots in rural locations is driven by market forces/consumer preference, that perception may not be the entire story. In fact, a 2005 survey by the Vermont Forum on Sprawl concluded that 80% of Vermont residents believe that “action should be taken to prevent sprawl,” and, more surprisingly, that 33% of Vermonters would choose to live in an urban/village setting over a rural one if such a choice was available. This latter figure represents a 65% increase over the number making this choice in a 1998 poll.

Rural communities can promote compact housing by providing density bonuses and other incentives for “clustered” development, or by finding suitable locations for village expansion. Williamstown, with public water and wastewater infrastructure and capacity, is in a better position than most small Vermont towns to realize these “smart growth” principles. However, without land use regulations it is difficult to influence developers, and potential developers, to conform to this vision.

The aforementioned CVRPC Housing Distribution Plan asks towns to provide in their municipal plans, a map showing preferred locations for accommodating anticipated future units, as well as a map displaying the locations of new units during the preceding five year period. Both of these maps may be found in the Appendices to this Plan.

### **Proposed Housing Distribution Plan**

Map 5 depicts the new village area of the town as defined by settlement patterns and extension of the water and sewer lines. The planning commission would like to encourage development of housing units within

that current village area and adjacent locale. If future homes are built in this area they will have greater accessibility to water and sewer lines, cable and other utilities, and close proximity to amenities offered with the local village businesses.

### **C. Affordability**

It is undeniable that the availability of affordable homes is crucial to our quality of life. Affordable housing is also vital to the local economy because employers cannot attract or keep good employees if housing is not available. However, thousands of Vermonters and their families have been having an increasingly difficult time finding housing they can afford over recent decades. According to the Vermont Housing Council/Vermont Housing Awareness Campaign document “Between a Rock and a Hard Place (2009 Update)”:

*“This situation is the product of many factors, but it essentially boils down to the fact that Vermont is a state with relatively high housing costs and, for a large portion of the workforce, relatively low wages. The slow pace of housing development, especially development of moderately-priced housing, has left Vermont with very tight rental and home purchase markets, whose low vacancy rates help keep prices up.”*

The Vermont State standard for housing affordability defines housing as “affordable” if the household is paying no more than 30 percent of its income for rent and utilities or for mortgage, taxes and insurance. This standard may be too high when considering the rising costs of other necessities, such as health care, fuel, and child care, but it remains the basis for defining affordable housing.” So, affordability is determined by two factors: the cost of housing and the ability of people to pay that cost.

Williamstown, like much of the rest of Vermont, has witnessed a dramatic increase in home/rent costs. And, while wages have increased as well, they have done so at a considerably slower pace. This discrepancy has resulted in an increasing “affordability gap”. Consider the following statistics:

In 2000 the median household income in Williamstown was \$45,859. In 2006 median family income was \$50,648. Although these are slightly different measurements, they suggest that no dramatic increase in wages has taken place. When we look at housing costs over a similar period, the story is very different. According to the US Census the median value of housing units in Williamstown was \$88,200. By 2008 however, the average cost of units sold (22 in total) was \$180,322, and even mobile homes averaged \$118,000.

Despite this dramatic increase, home costs and rents in Williamstown remain slightly below county averages, and well below state averages. This is probably of little comfort to the average resident however. The average family in Williamstown could afford to pay approximately \$160,000 (with \$11,000 down) for a home. So, it appears that, for the first time, the average Williamstown family could not afford the average Williamstown home.

This situation is not much better in the rental market. In 2000, the median gross rent in Williamstown was \$450/month. The average rent for a two bedroom apartment is \$852/month (2009). While this remains below the statewide average (\$914), it would still require an income of \$15.29 per hour, or \$31,800 per year, to afford to pay rent. In other words, an individual would have to make 190% of minimum wage to live in such a place.

There is some evidence that recent economic conditions are stemming the rising tide of housing costs. Again, according to the Vermont Housing Council/Vermont Housing Awareness Campaign document “Between a Rock and a Hard Place” (2009 Update):

*“Home purchase prices have stabilized, but it should be noted that recently, the market has seen a decline in the prices at the upper end of the market while prices at the lower end — \$200,000 and below — have tended to hold firm. That means that people who can afford a more expensive home can find bargains, but people who’re looking for something the median household income can afford are probably still looking at the same prices.*

*“Although interest rates are down, the turmoil in the financial markets has caused credit requirements to tighten, which has had wide ranging ripple effects that include job losses at a pace not seen in many years. The financial markets’ situation has also made it more expensive for many people to obtain a mortgage, as minimum credit scores, mortgage insurance requirements, and fees have all increased in recent months.”*

Estimated median household income in 2008: \$49,730 (it was \$38,929 in 2000)

Williamstown:  \$49,730

Vermont:  \$52,104

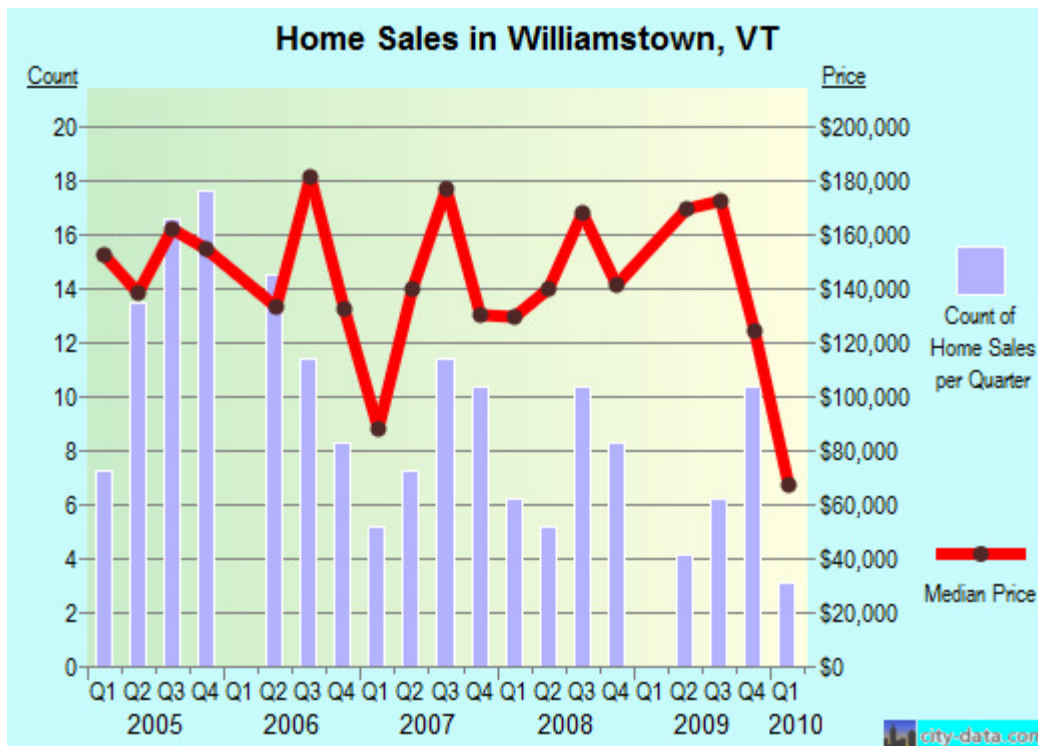
Estimated per capita income in 2008: \$23,969

Estimated median house or condo value in 2008: \$169,749 (it was \$88,200 in 2000)

Williamstown:  \$169,749

Vermont:  \$214,700

Mean prices in 2008: All housing units: \$188,244; Detached houses: \$198,044; Townhouses or other attached units: \$77,589; In 2-unit structures: \$186,838; Mobile homes: \$86,381



Read more: <http://www.city-data.com/city/Williamstown-Vermont.html#ixzz0nO1Op4jS>

## D. Special Needs Housing

### Elderly/Low Income

Central Vermont will experience substantial changes in the growth and decline of certain age groups between 2000-2010. Most notably, householders between the ages of 25-44 are expected to decline while most of the growth will occur in householders between ages 45-69. There will also be a fairly significant increase in the number of householders over 80 years old.

Vermont’s rental housing environment is a difficult challenge for the 13,881 Vermonters who live on Supplemental Security Income, or SSI.<sup>44</sup> Monthly SSI checks were \$726 in 2009. SSI<sup>45</sup> or \$188 less than the 2-bedroom FMR (Fair Market Rent) Fifty-six percent of SSI recipients have no other source of income SSI.<sup>46</sup> The average FMR for a one-bedroom apartment in Vermont, \$746, would consume an entire SSI check. A Vermonter living on SSI can afford about \$220 per month for housing. Williamstown needs to provide a range of affordable middle and high end housing to accommodate all income levels.

Williamstown has served its elderly and low income populations well over the years with the development of the following projects:

- Williamstown Square. (22 one-bedroom units).
- Meadowbrook Place (15 units)
- Limehurst Mobile Home Park
  - The Gardens, a retirement community, offering rental apartments according to income. In 2004, the Gardens added an additional 21 new apartments.
- Northwind Trailer park

The town of Williamstown is proud of the years of support for the elderly and low income housing. The town feels that we have done our share to support this population. We would encourage future development of housing that will help balance the taxable property.

### **Disabled Population**

Williamstown offers specialized housing opportunities for its non-elderly, disabled residents at Second Spring Residential Community, located on Rte 64. The 2002 Vermont Housing Data, a collaborative project of Vermont's housing community, reported that Williamstown has a large number of individuals diagnosed with a disability. There were approximately 35 individuals between the ages of 16 and 20, 365 between the ages of 21 and 64, and 157 individuals age of 65 or over meeting the definition at that time.

### **Homeless**

Homelessness in Central Vermont is growing, yet it is a problem which is not easily tracked. Homeless persons are not counted in the Census and many times they do not seek assistance or shelter at local facilities. Some 'couch surf' at homes of friends and family, some seek shelter in tents or in their cars. Others may find shelter in abandoned lots or buildings. Currently there is one overnight shelter in Central Vermont, the Good Samaritan Haven in Barre. It operates on a first-come-first-serve basis and is open from 6 p.m. to 7 a.m. in the winter and from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. in the summer. In addition to the overnight shelter there is one transitional housing site. Transitional housing provides the bridge between homelessness and permanent housing. Good Neighbors offer both short term housing and case management to assist families transitioning from homelessness into permanent housing.

According to the Washington County Needs Assessment average stays at the Good Samaritan Shelter have dramatically increased in the last 10 years. In 1998 the average stay was between eight days to two weeks, in 2004 the average stay was two months. More people who are seeking shelter are not transient but are local Vermonters who are working multiple jobs and cannot afford rent.

## **E. Fair Housing Laws & Municipal Responsibility**

State and Federal housing laws help protect against housing discrimination. Under the Federal Fair Housing Act and its 1988 amendments, individuals may file complaints alleging housing discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, handicap, or familial status. Individuals may also allege related acts of discrimination that are governed by other federal laws such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Vermont law (9 VCS 4503) prohibits any person from engaging in unfair housing practices such as the refusal to sell or rent, as well as many other actions involved in the advertisement, financing, and brokering of a dwelling.

A municipality has fair housing responsibilities regardless of whether or not the Federal Government has funded the activity that is the basis for the complaint. A fair housing violation does not require a discriminatory intent; a violation can be found simply because municipal officials carried out regular activities in a routine way and failed to recognize their special fair housing responsibilities. In addition Chapter 117 section 4412 outlines required provisions and prohibited effects by which municipalities must abide.

Municipalities carry out four broad categories of activities that affect housing. Each can trigger municipal fair housing responsibilities:

- **Regulatory activities** – When a municipality enacts and administers regulations (e.g. zoning or building codes) that affect existing or potential residential properties;
- **Provision of services** – When a municipality provides routine services in residential areas or to residents;
- **Provision of subsidies** – When a municipality offers financial incentives (e.g. grants, loans, or loan guarantees) or special services (e.g. infrastructure projects or housing rehabilitation services) to residential property owners or to residents; and
- **Proprietary activities** – When a municipality buys or sells real property, particularly if the property was used or will be used as a residence.

Under the Fair Housing Act, a person who believes that he or she is a victim of housing discrimination may file either a complaint with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or a lawsuit in federal or state court. If a municipality must defend itself against a complaint based on the Fair Housing Act, or if it is found to have violated the Act, the costs can be considerable. For more information on Fair Housing laws, visit the HUD website at <http://hud.gov>.

## F. Federal Response

Some new initiatives and programs affecting housing have emerged in the wake of the mortgage crises and subsequent economic downturn, including:

**The Housing and Economic Recovery Act (HERA 2008).** A comprehensive effort to address the foreclosure crisis- HERA created an Affordable Housing Trust Fund, the first new federal housing production program since the early 1990's. HERA also created the Neighborhood Stabilization Program, bringing \$19.6 million to Vermont to address foreclosed, abandoned and blighted properties. Though narrow federal guidelines present challenges to spending this money in Vermont, it will certainly help the state's affordable housing efforts. Among myriad other provisions, the act also boosts the state's allocation of federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits for two years, which affects important Tax Credit Program reforms, and creates a first-time homebuyer tax credit.

**The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA 2009).** The Act will bring \$17.8 million in direct new housing dollars to Vermont over the next two years. HUD funds will go towards public housing capital improvements, Community Development Block Grants, a Homelessness Prevention Fund, a Tax Credit Assistance Program, and Project Based Rental Assistance. Additional USDA Rural Development dollars will provide funding for first time homebuyers, water and waste disposal systems, and community facilities. Though not housing funds per se, tens of millions in additional recovery funds for weatherization, energy efficiency, infrastructure improvements, New Market Tax Credits, brownfields, Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF), Food Stamps, and Community Services Block Grants will have a major impact on affordable housing and homelessness in Vermont.

**A new HUD budget-** Includes \$1 billion in first-time funding for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund was almost \$1 billion extra for Community Development Block Grants. In addition to the new federal spending, passage of major housing legislation is expected in 2009, including comprehensive Section 8 reform and bills

to boost efforts to preserve the nation’s existing affordable housing stock, help troubled borrowers and bring stability to the nation’s mortgage markets.

(Source: “Between a Rock and a Hard Place (2009 Update)”)

**G. On-line Housing Resources** A few of the Vermont housing websites include:

Vermont Housing Awareness Campaign

([www.housingawareness.org](http://www.housingawareness.org))

Vermont Housing & Conservation Board

([www.vhcb.org](http://www.vhcb.org))

Vermont Housing Data, comprehensive statistical information regarding housing costs, housing supply, and ability to afford housing

([www.housingdata.org](http://www.housingdata.org))

Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs, which includes the Vermont housing needs assessment

([www.dhca.state.vt.us](http://www.dhca.state.vt.us))

Vermont Housing Finance Agency

([www.vhfa.org](http://www.vhfa.org))

Vermont State Housing Authority

([www.vsha.org](http://www.vsha.org))

Housing Vermont ([www.hvt.org](http://www.hvt.org))

Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies ([www.vapda.org](http://www.vapda.org))

Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness ([www.helpingtohouse.org](http://www.helpingtohouse.org))

Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition ([www.vtaffordablehousing.org](http://www.vtaffordablehousing.org))



## HOUSING

<b>GOALS</b>	<b>POLICIES &amp; TASKS</b>
<p><b>1. Encourage the development of housing opportunities to meet the current and future needs of diverse social and economic groups.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigating the current supply of housing needed for our future growth and determine options for developing more housing to fill the need</li> <li>• Educating the community about the Community Land Trust, Rural Housing Development Loans, and other opportunities that help low income people purchase houses</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. To offer a range of rental and ownership opportunities for all income groups in order to meet the Town’s projected housing units needed by 2020.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage a balance between affordable, middle and high-end housing opportunities.</li> <li>• Encourage mixed use development in the villages</li> <li>• Promote the conservation and preservation of existing housing by seeking state funds to inventory and preserve historical houses.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Consider the relationship between land use patterns, land use policy and housing development</b></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Maintain traditional compact settlement patterns to efficiently use land resources, and infrastructure investments by encouraging high density in village areas and “cluster housing developments in all districts to promote the preservation of resources and flexibility in design in keeping with the rural character</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Strive to direct anticipated new development through the year 2020 to the area(s) depicted on <b>Map 3</b>, and in accordance with CVRPC’s Housing Distribution Plan.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Support the development of multi-family and accessory dwelling units, particularly in village areas.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Continue to track and map the location of new residential units as they are constructed to identify market trends and compare actual development to desired patterns of growth.</p>	
<p><b>4. Adopt an ordinance that requires residences to dispose of and/or recycle abandoned or unoccupied mobile home, non-functioning cars, and/or large equipment</b></p>	
<p><b>5. Adopt a construction registry as a reporting tool for the Lister’s Office.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior to construction, residents would inform the town clerk of any construction that would have an impact on the tax rate (the town clerk would be recording this information for the lister’s office)</li> <li>• to assist the town in providing information that would impact any services</li> <li>• to assure that the grand list is current and up to date</li> <li>• thus providing greater tax equity</li> </ul>	

## CHAPTER VI

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### COMMUNITY UTILITIES, FACILITIES, ORGANIZATION, & SERVICE

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#### A. Overview

Public and private utilities, facilities, and services play a critical role in providing for the health, safety, and welfare of Williamstown's citizens. All of us depend, in one way or another, upon water distribution systems, solid waste and sewage disposal, electric power, police and fire protection, health and social services, parks, local government and more.

The location, condition and availability of services and facilities can have a profound influence on growth and development. Homes, businesses, and industry tend to concentrate where utilities and facilities are readily available, while areas remote from infrastructure and services are more costly and difficult to develop (and often contain important natural resources as well). Hence, communities, through the thoughtful placement of infrastructure, may direct growth to the most suitable location, or away from areas where change may have undesirable impacts.

The condition and scale of utilities, facilities and services also needs to be considered. Where facilities are over-sized and under-utilized they may encourage unplanned growth, or operate inefficiently and at unnecessary financial expense to residents. For systems that are at capacity and/or outdated, further development may cause environmental damage. Failure to upgrade urban systems may stall new growth or push it away from growth-designated areas. Williamstown can avoid the above scenarios through the appropriate timing and sizing of infrastructure improvements.

#### B. Utilities

##### 1. Water supply

Much of the drinking water outside of the village comes from private wells. The amount and quality of ground water is of great importance to the town because it is the sole source for drinking and fire protection. Under much of Williamstown, groundwater is available in both quantity and quality. The town's municipal water system and private wells generally yield reliable and good quality drinkable water.

Williamstown's water system has changed dramatically over the years. See **Map 3** to see the location of our town water system. The construction of our municipal water system was completed in 1971-1972 and serves most of the dwelling units in the main part of the Williamstown Village, as well as the schools. In 2005-6 the town installed a new concrete 675,000-gallon reservoir on Rood Pond Road adjacent to the town well. Transmission mains connect the village areas to the water supply. During the 1970's and 1980's the town completed several projects to upgrade and extend the water distribution system. In the mid-1980's, the water source for the town became impacted by dry cleaning solvents and the town completed the siting of a new water source.

In 1991 and 1992, a new town well was drilled, replacing one that had become impacted by dry cleaning solvents. The new well is located at an upland well site just south of Mountain View Development off the Rood Pond Road. Residents in the Consent Decree Zone were required to stop using their own wells and attach their drinking water pipes to the town water system. The Mountain View Development was also hooked-up to the new

town water system when it was constructed. In 1992, the Insurance Services Office (ISO) conducted hydrant testing of the Williamstown water system and identified significant deficiencies in supply pressure and flow at the high school. Moderate deficiencies were found on Route 14 near the industrial center. The new reservoir and pump system addressed these problems.

The new reservoir and pump are capable of producing 400 gpm (gallons per minute). The town built a pre-stressed concrete water storage tank that has a 675,000 gallon capacity. The resulting water pressures have cured the deficiencies in the system.

The system has been producing on average 27 to 28 million gallons per year. This averages 80,000 gallons per day but would not be accurate due to the increased demand during certain times of the year, Fire Department usage, or substantial leaks. The storage capacity offers quite a buffer for peak demands. With a possible maximum production of 576,000 gallons per day the system could easily meet double the current demand.

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has identified several Well-Head Protection Areas (WHPA) within Williamstown. (see **Map: 3**) These areas are defined as "the surface and sub-surface area surrounding a spring of well water supplying a public water system through which contaminants are likely to move toward and reach such water supplies." A WHPA may also be referred to as a "recharge area", or in Vermont law as a "public water source protection area." The WHPA is divided into 3 zones that require increasing levels of source protection closest to the well. The DEC requires that municipalities develop a "source protection plan" designed to minimize contamination risks within these areas. The town has a Well Head protection policy that can be reviewed at the Williamstown town hall. However, without zoning bylaws Williamstown has limited mechanisms to use for monitoring and restricting development, land uses, and activities from these sensitive zones. Preventative measures can save people's health, the town's money, and avoid water supply disruptions.

## **2. Wastewater**

### **A. Public**

Williamstown village and some outlying areas are served by municipal sewer systems. Williamstown's own plant, constructed in 1970, currently serves about 360 customers. About 26 residences in Graniteville are served by the Barre Town system. Residents in both service districts are charged user fees for system maintenance and hook-up fees are required for new development. **Map 3** depicts the location of the town's sewer lines.

The Williamstown sewer collection system has three pump stations located at Industrial Road, Business Park and Mountain View. The sewer system is a gravity collection system.

Treatment of the waste is by an aerated dual lagoon system located at the end of Vesper Street. The system has a design capacity (MGD) of .150 million gallons per day (MGD), an average daily flow of .089 MGD, and a committed reserve of 6,948 MGD and an uncommitted reserve of 59,469. Its uncommitted reserve capacity could accommodate a little over 100 additional average single-family residences.

In the past 10 years, the sewer plant has had several improvements, including removing sludge from one lagoon, installing new aeration equipment, and replacing 240 feet of deteriorated sewer main. The collection system is in good shape. In the future, the treated sewerage discharge point for the system may have to be

extended to the new bridge on Brockway Hill road to improve the discharge into a waterway with a higher flow rate. There are no known needs to replace sewer mains. Extension of the collection mains beyond the present service area would be the financial responsibility of a developer if capacity is not an issue. However, the service area will be limited to the village area and have a clear boundary between the rural areas.

The Graniteville area of Cogswell is served by a municipal sewer from Barre Town through an inter-municipal agreement.

## **B. On-site**

The majority of homes and buildings in Williamstown have on-site, underground seepage disposal, as about three quarters of the Williamstown population lives in rural areas outside of the service territories of Williamstown Wastewater Treatment Facility. The proper treatment of septic waste is essential to a clean and healthy environment. As our population grows, sanitary disposal will become more important. Effective June 14, 2002, all new subdivision of property must obtain a permit from the state certifying the adequacy of septic design.

Most on-site septic systems require specific soils and site characteristics to enable the effective treatment of wastes. Where soils are impermeable, too permeable, shallow, or wet, or where slopes are steep, conventional septic systems are problematic and potentially hazardous. Accordingly, non-sewered areas displaying site limitations are not recommended for conventional on-site systems. Restricting such areas, however, intensifies development pressure on those soils, which can accommodate septic systems. Unfortunately, prime agricultural land often contains such soils. Clustered subdivisions with community septic systems may help overcome site limitations and simultaneously protect resource lands."

It is also important to note that as 2002, applications for "performance based" systems (as opposed to conventional, leach area systems) may be used where ground slopes exceed 20%. Please refer to the Department of Environmental Conservation's *Environmental Protection for Wastewater System and Potable Water Supply Rule* for more information on "performance based" systems.

## **3. Electricity**

Williamstown and its residents receive electricity services from Green Mountain Power Company as well as Washington Electric Cooperative, Inc. There are currently numerous residents that are using alternative sources of power and are considered "off the grid".

*See Chapter 7 for further information regarding alternative energy opportunities and resources*

## **4. Telecommunications**

A modern telecommunications system with high-speed connections is essential if Williamstown wants to enhance its business climate and meet the needs of its residents the existing businesses and create new ones. Due to the low density of population and Williamstown's rugged landscape, we will need a combination of cable and wireless service to ensure universal Internet access. These new technologies will help revitalize the town by enabling people to live in rural areas and still access their workplaces from their homes and do business around the world.

Currently, the town has a number of telecommunication facilities and towers located on Tower Road to accommodate the communication needs of residents and businesses. In 2002, Independent Wireless One Leased Reality Corp., NEXTEL constructed a cell phone tower off Stone Road in Williamstown.

The Federal Telecommunications Act (FTC) of 1996 does not allow local governments to prohibit the construction of wireless facilities, or to make regulatory barriers so difficult as to effectively block service. However, according to law any installation, construction or modification of telecommunication facilities must go through the Act 250 process. Issues such as the aesthetic impact of the installation, fall zones, and the possibility for the creation of "attractive nuisances" should be addressed in this process.

## **C. Facilities**

### ***1. Municipal Buildings and Land***

#### ***A. Town Hall***

Williamstown town hall and offices are located in a municipally owned building on Route 14 in the center of the Williamstown village. The building was constructed in 1853 and was originally 1 1/2 floors. It was raised another floor in the late 1800s. The Williamstown town hall is a fine example of the New England town halls built during the middle 1800s. In the 1980's it was lowered back to 1 1/2 floor and renovated to its current condition.

The town hall currently houses the Town Clerk, Town Manager, Town Treasurer and Lister's offices. There is also a larger conference room used for a variety of public meetings, including those of the Select Board (Executive Sessions), Planning Commission, Cemetery Commission, Economic Development Committee, Transportation Committee, and Energy Committee. (The Select Board currently meets in the High School Library on the first and third Mondays of the month)

The meeting room has a small kitchen space, a long table, chairs for visitors, and about 8 filing cabinets. This space is currently used for files, land record research, project workspace, or any small meetings. Unfortunately, the parcel where the town hall is located does not allow for any expansion of the building. The parking lot is located on an adjacent lot owned by the Williamstown Historical Society and is inadequate during larger public meetings.

In the short term, the planning commission recommends that the town clean-up the second story of the town hall and remove unneeded items, then have a *neutral* structural engineer examine the building and assess for structural problems. If possible, town officials should fix structural problems so that the space can be better utilized and possibly house a vault that could be used for historical records. Any changes to the existing building should not significantly alter its historical appearance.

### ***B. Town Garage***

The town garage is located on 77 Brockway Hill Road adjacent to Meadow Street. The building is occupied by a 5 person highway department. The building has a 16 x 22 foot office, a restroom, and a break room was added in 2002. Fuel is stored on site in underground gas and diesel tanks.

### ***C. Historical Society Building***

Staffed by volunteers, the Historical Society Building, located on Route 14 in the center of the village, opens primarily by appointment. The historical museum has a large collection of artifacts, pictures, and documents on display. It also offers monthly meetings May through October that inform the public on subjects from local folklore, to early photography, to old time fiddling. In 2002, the town voted to replace the roof with a new standing seam metal roof.

### ***D. Old Town Landfill***

A 93-acre site is located on the south end of the village with access to Vermont Route 14, the Stevens Branch flows along the easterly side of the property. The town closed a section of the site due to contamination problems. Currently, the property is not being used, but could be considered space for future outdoor opportunities..

### ***E. Library***

Mrs. Laura Ainsworth donated the property and building for the Ainsworth Public Library in 1911. Once established, the town named the library after her. Throughout the years, the library has had many benefactors and volunteers, and many people have donated books and money to sustain its operation.

Today, the Ainsworth Public Library offers a variety of services including reference, special reading programs, Story Hour, Adopt-a-Book program, Inter-library Loan program, Internet access, Children's Room, special services to seniors (home delivery, computer tutorials, large print books and books on tape), and an extensive book collection of over eleven thousand volumes. Community members can find general information about the Town at the library.

The library is open partial days Monday through Saturday.

### ***F. Cemeteries***

Williamstown has several cemeteries. Williamstown is responsible for three: West Hill, East Hill, and the Village Cemetery. Adams and Flint cemeteries are privately owned and maintained by their owners. The Adams Cemetery is located on the Robert Boyce farm and consists of one gravestone. Flint Cemetery has 12 gravestones and is located off the Chelsea Road.

### ***G. Recreational Resources***

Williamstown's still very rural nature provides its residents with a wide variety of opportunities for outdoor recreation. Snow shoe and cross-country skiing across local fields, snowmobiling on local trails

maintained by the Billtown Moonshiners Snowmobile Club, horseback riding on back roads, sightseeing, and 4 wheeling on special trails are activities available in Williamstown. Sports are also important. Teams and clubs for basketball, baseball, and soccer are opportunities in town.

Facilities include Seaver Recreational Field (the Williamstown baseball/softball field), the Williamstown High School and Elementary School facilities and Saldi Field. Saldi Field space offers a basketball court, 3 soccer fields, playground, and restrooms. Events sponsored by the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (V.A.S.T) and horse clubs bring many visitors to our Town.

The following is a list of all the other outdoor activities residents participate:

- nature walks, hiking, biking, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, horseback riding, snowmobiling
- Limehurst Pond (swimming, boating, camping, hiking)
- Camp at Lotus Lake Day Camp, (educational program to tourists and local children)
- Hunt and fish

Williamstown's best-kept secret is Ainsworth State Park, which is located at the south end of Town. This facility encompasses approximately 885 acres of land; 584 acres of which is in Williamstown. Its steep, densely wooded slopes rise from Williamstown Gulf on the east side of Route 14. Activities compatible with the parks primary goal of protecting bio-diversity are encouraged and allowed (i.e., hunting, hiking, and fishing are allowed). Vermont Route 14 constitutes most of the western boundary of the park but offers little access. Additional access is available to hikers from the east via the South Hill Road and Winchester Hill Road.

Ainsworth State Park's location and accessibility make it ideal for use as an outdoor educational classroom for resource managers, landowners, and for our children and adult learners to learn about our natural resources. The park is an extremely sensitive site with a rich diversity of plants.

## **H. Services**

### **Municipal Government**

A five member Select Board has general supervision and control over town functions, including but not limited to: enacting ordinances and regulations; overseeing town property and personnel; preparing, presenting, and managing the budget; overseeing road maintenance; and maintenance of the property records. The town also operates the water and sewer facilities. The "*green books*" located in the town office are helpful regarding the laws relating to the Select Board authority.

The Select Board hires a town manager to assist in managing the business of the town. The town manager is responsible for the daily operations of the town including developing and managing the town budget, grants writing, supervision of employees, community relations, care and maintenance of town roads and facilities, and intergovernmental relations. In 2004, and again in 2009, residents affirmed their desire to keep the town manager form of government in Williamstown.

The town moderator, town clerk, town treasurer, cemetery commissioners, tax collectors, health officer, listers, library trustees, school directors, justices of the peace, planning commissioners, and a wealth of community volunteers also devote many hours serving our town. These community members act as advisors, helpers, and educators to their local governing body.

Unlike some states and larger cities, Williamstown's local government is still accessible to those who wish to participate. Traditional Town Meeting Day, the first Tuesday in March, is very important to Williamstown residents because it allows them to determine local issues and set local laws for themselves. Williamstown has no meetinghouse, so our town meetings are held in the Williamstown High School to discuss and vote on issues.

The local property tax burden continues to be one of the most serious issues currently facing Williamstown. The ability to pay for municipal government services affects how well Williamstown will be able to accomplish the *Town Plan* goals and grow in the manner envisioned. The following is a summary of the history of Williamstown's tax rate:

Municipal

<i>1999</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>
0.62	0.72	0.63	0.62	0.61	0.70	0.55	0.61	0.67	0.66	0.54

**Post Office**

The post office is located in the south end of Williamstown village and is set back from the road. Given the population increases in Williamstown, the needs of the post office will most likely outgrow its space within the next 10 years. Williamstown should explore alternative locations within the downtown area of the village.

**Animal Control Officer**

Williamstown currently has an animal control officer. He is on-call and can be contacted through the town office or by calling the Barre Police Department 802-479-0509.

**2. Emergency Services**

**A. Police/Crime**

The Orange County Sheriff's Department provides police protection through an annual contract. In 2009, the Department recorded a total of 424 incidents or calls for service in Williamstown. The Vermont State Police also provides law enforcement within Williamstown through their normal delivery of service.

As of May 2010, the Vermont Department of Corrections most recent "town by status" count for Williamstown revealed:

- 32 citizens on probation
- 5 citizens on parole
- 7 citizens on conditional re-entry
- 1 citizen in jail

## 2009 Crime Statistics for Williamstown

- Number of Rape/Sexual Assaults/Sexual Offenses 12
- Number of domestic violence/Family Fight 32
- Number of breaking and entering 24
- Number of Assaults 12
- Number of Citizen disputes 59
- Number of Juvenile problem 22
- Number of Motor vehicle complaints 71
- Number of Noise disturbance 22
- Number of Phone problem. Harassment 27
- Number of Suspicious Person/ Circumstances 101
- Number of Threatening 29
- Number of Unlawful Mischief 27
- Number of thefts 43
- Number of robberies 1
- Number of speeding tickets 42
- Number of Alcohol offenses 28
- Number of arrests 72

### ***B. Fire***

The Williamstown Fire Department was formally organized in February of 1911. The Williamstown Volunteer Fire Department operates a station on Depot Street in Williamstown Village. Currently there are 24 volunteers. The District receives assistance and back-up when needed from members of the regional Mutual Aid System.

In 2009, the Williamstown Fire Department responded to mainly vehicle accidents and structural fires in addition to a wide variety of other service calls.

If you have questions on safe burning of debris and permits you must contact the Forest Fire Warden, Bryan Palmer at (802) 433-1019.

### ***C. Enhanced 911***

The Enhanced 9-1-1 Board supervises the operation of Vermont's Enhanced 9-1-1 system. The Board trains and certifies the 9-1-1 call-takers, maintains a statewide Global Information System (GIS) database and disseminates information about 9-1-1. The board depends on regular information updates from municipalities to ensure complete coverage.

### ***D. Ambulance***

Volunteers and full time personal support the Williamstown Ambulance service, spending many hours serving the community. These members sponsor emergency medical courses, community awareness programs, and respond to emergency calls. The ambulance service recorded 384 services in fiscal year 2009. The following is a summary of those services: 232 patients were transported to hospital by the ambulance services, and there were 72 calls for no transport or transport by another agency responding in a mutual-aid capacity, 18 for stand-by fire services, and 47 for vehicle related services.

### ***3 Health and Wellness***

Private and public health care providers, located throughout the Washington and Orange County areas, serves Williamstown. Service providers include the Clara Martin Center for mental health needs, Washington County Youth Services Bureau/Boys and Girls Club, Central Vermont Adult Basic Education, Central Vermont Council on Aging, Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice, and the People's Health and Wellness Clinic. All healthcare services are located outside of Williamstown except for a chiropractor's office and an ambulance service.

The Williamstown Health Officer's Report indicated approximately 40 health related complaints and investigations were reported between June 2008 and June 2009. Residents complaints consisted of such issues as, dog bites, garbage and refuse disposal, environmental sampling for testing, septic sewage disposal and pesticide use.

### ***4 Childcare***

The shortage of reliable and affordable childcare has become a barrier for many Williamstown residents trying to enter the workplace. The cost of childcare has increased due to the increased cost of living, liability insurance, and supplies. Childcare is difficult to find, especially for infant and school-aged care. Williamstown has numerous amounts of registered and non-registered child care providers. Child Care resource and referral agency that can help citizens with their search for childcare is located at the Family Center of Washington County at (802) 828-8771. Additionally, the Williamstown Elementary Preschool Program provides limited childcare services between 7:15 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

### ***5 Solid Waste***

Vermont's waste management law, Act 78, requires municipalities to plan for the management and disposal of solid waste, and provides for region-wide coordination. The town is a member of the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District (C VSWMD). The District reports that Williamstown residents generate many tons of solid waste each year. CVSWMD is responsible for planning solid waste disposal and ensuring that residents and businesses recycle selected waste materials. They provide leadership, education, and services for residents and businesses in reducing and managing their solid waste in order to protect public health and the environment to the greatest extent feasible. CVSWMD has programs and services related to solid waste including Illegal Dumping and Prevention, Illegal Burning Preventions, Green-up Day Grants, Hazardous Waste, and many others. They can be contacted at (802) 229-9383 for information about specific programs. The town augments the CVSWMD by having Donald Giroux Trucking established a trash drop-off and recycling site that is located in the town garage parking lot on Meadow Street.

Williamstown participates in Vermont Green Up day. Call the town clerk's office for further information.

## 6 Organizations

### A. Churches

Williamstown's faith-based communities are housed in most charming buildings in Williamstown. These include the Williamstown United Federated Church, Congregational/Methodist, Main Street; Saint Edwards Catholic Church on Beckett Street; and Williamstown Lutheran Church on Graniteville road. The interdenominational Grace Christian Church meets at the Williamstown Methodist Church. All of these churches retain their architectural character and appear untouched by time. The town's tower clock is located on the top of the Congregational Church. In 1921, Mr. Bert C Hoyt, a local sawmill owner, donated the E. Howard tower clock to the town of Williamstown. In 1998, the town had the clock's mechanisms and dials restored.

Good citizenship is one of Williamstown's greatest strengths and there are numerous examples, including, church members helping neighbors who need a helping hand, dinners for the elderly, Christmas Tea for the Adopt-a-Family program, Billtown Moonshiners Snowmobile Club have donated many hours and equipment to the community, and The Garden's Art Exhibition/Holiday Party.

The town also contains a number of membership organizations, including : Brownies, 4H Club, Garden Club, Girl Scouts, Happy Moments Club, Historical Society, Masons, Boonie Club, Moon-Shiners Club, SADD Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star, Dog River Horse Club, and Rebekahs.

**COMMUNITY UTILITIES, FACILITIES, SERVICES AND ORGANIZATIONS**

<b>GOAL</b>	<b>POLICIES &amp; TASKS</b>
<p><b>Guide the physical development of Williamstown in a manner conducive to community pride, social interaction, and identity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop a capitol budget 5 to 15 Capitol Investment Plan (CIP) as a means to plan for expenses and/or anticipated requirements</li> <li>▪ Survey municipally owned buildings to get a better understanding of future demand, identify funds required, and to prioritize future funding.</li> <li>▪ Survey Foxville residents to determine interest and future need for village development</li> </ul> <p>Digitize town records</p>
<p><b>To protect the quality and quantity of water in public systems</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate residents about where the village drinking water comes from and how to protect the aquifer recharge area</li> <li>• Collect, update and disseminate information on Williamstown's current and future groundwater supplies for drinking water and fire safety on a regular and needed basis</li> <li>• Ensure that new development and land use activities do not create undue adverse impacts on groundwater quality, or exceed the capacity to supply adequate groundwater yields to existing and future residences and businesses</li> <li>• Encourage water projects in the village areas or areas to maximize efficiency and effectiveness Request on-site municipal assistance from the Environmental Compliance Assistance Program , as needed, to identify and recommend corrective action regarding compliance with environmental regulations</li> </ul>
<p><b>To ensure Williamstown's wastewater system has the capacity to serve its residents and protect the safety of its residents and environment.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robar Road and part of Graniteville Road should be studied because of failed, on-site, septic systems; poor soils and high water tables, and for extensions to the service area</li> <li>• Ensure that infrastructure sewer projects comply with ANR's sewer funding rule and all projects should obtain Act 250 permits where applicable Ensure that public funds are used for sewer expansion in the village area</li> </ul>
<p><b>To maximize efficiency and minimize environmental damage through sound solid waste management</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote waste reduction, re-use, recycling, proper management and disposal of town solid waste programs and opportunities</li> <li>• Consider offering disposal services for other types of items/materials as needed</li> <li>• Encourage volunteers to participate in Vermont Green-up Day to keep roadsides clean and the Adopt-a-Site program to clean up illegal dumpsites</li> <li>• Develop a local ordinance on illegal dumping Offer learning opportunities on composting and recycling</li> </ul>
<p><b>Preserve the character, appearance, and natural resources of the town while allowing adequate</b></p>	

**telecommunication services to be developed**

- Discourage ridgeline development or conspicuous development on locally prominent landscape/scenic features unless maximally screened, or clearly in the best interest of the general public
  - Encourage adequate setback and health effects by locating telecommunication services away from sensitive areas such as schools, hospitals, teen centers, and childcare facilities
- Work with the community to draft a Model Wireless Telecommunications Facilities ordinance to protect our scenic, historic, environmental, natural resources, and other sensitive areas like the schools and childcare facilities for adoption by the town

**Revitalize the sense of community by recognizing the role played by the historic sites, landmarks, and symbols**

- Encourage the preservation, restoration, and use of historic sites and community landmarks to foster community identity
  - Place outstanding historic buildings on the National Register of Historic buildings
  - Strive to keep all town owned historical buildings preserved to keep their historical significance and beauty
  - Ensure adequate funding arrangements for long-term maintenance of all historical buildings owned by the Town by putting funds into a capital reserve fund
  - Seek public and private funds to study and preserve historic buildings
- Ensure adequate funding arrangements for long-term care of Town Maintained cemeteries.

**To promote and enhance quality childcare opportunities to families with young children**

- Support the expansion/enhancement of the preschool program, at the elementary school, to include a 3year old program
  - Support expansion/enhancement of childcare facilities
  - Encourage businesses to offer assisted childcare centers
  - Encourage childcare centers to seek national childcare credentialing by completing the Certified Childcare Professional certification and other educational opportunities
  - Encourage illegal childcare operations to become registered or licensed facilities
  - Conduct a community survey of local businesses, childcare providers and young families to ascertain childcare needs and deficiencies
- Support after school childcare programs

**To protect and preserve our historical buildings, barns, and cultural resources**

- Seek historic preservation grants for educational , preservation and rehabilitative purposes
- Encourage understanding of our historical and cultural resources

# CHAPTER VII

## ENERGY

### A. Overview

During the past decade, the cost, reliability and access to traditional energy sources had been challenging. It is imperative that Williamstown develop economical and environmentally conscious alternatives to produce energy. Early 2010, plans and talks for a 250 mega-watt Solar Panel farm is being considered. This and other forms of alternative energy resources need to be developed.

### B. Energy Sources

In Williamstown, the primary sources of energy are fossil fuels (oil, gas, coal and liquid petroleum gas), nuclear generated electricity, local and imported hydro-electricity, and biomass (fuel wood). Renewable energy sources such as solar and wind currently account for only a negligible proportion of total energy use. Fossil fuels are used primarily for transportation and heating, while nuclear power (supplied from the Vermont Yankee Facility in Vernon, Vermont) and out of state hydro-power (supplied by facilities in New York state and Quebec) provide for the lion's share of our electricity demand.

Although analyses of energy demand by fuel and by sector are not available for Williamstown, data generated for the State as a whole can be interpolated for planning at the local level.

#### Statewide Energy Demand- All Sectors, by Fuel (KW/year)'

	Fossil Fuels	Electric	Biomass	Solar
<b>1980</b>	2112 73.2%	427 14.8%	344 12.0%	.3 0.0%
<b>1990</b>	2406 74.3%	567 17.5%	263 8.1%	.2 0.1%
<b>2010</b> (estimated)	3623 76.5%	817 17.3%	292 6.1%	.7 0.1

**Statewide Energy Demand- All Fuels, by Sector**  
(KW/year)

	Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Transportation
<b>1980</b>	1000 35%	364 13%	387 13%	1134 39%
<b>1990</b>	962 29.7%	393 12.1%	440 14%	1444 44.6%
<b>2010</b> (estimated)	1339 28.3%	568 12.0%	601 12.7%	2229 47.0%

Transportation stands as the sector where energy use has grown substantially during the past 30 years. During that time energy consumption in the transportation sector will have grown 97% primarily due to increased commercial and industrial uses. The transportation sector now accounts for 45% of all energy, and approximately 60% of all fossil fuels, consumed in Vermont.

**Fossil Fuels**

As shown in the above tables, fossil fuels account for over 3/4's of all energy consumed in Vermont. In Williamstown fossil fuels are used primarily to power vehicles and heat homes and businesses. Approximately 65% of the oil consumed in the U.S. is imported, up from only 10% in 1960. In fact, oil imports account for approximately 50% of the total U.S. trade deficit and the cost of U.S oil imports has increased over 300% in this decade to a level of about \$340 billion in 2007. Our economic system is so tied to the availability of fossil fuels that even modest increases in price can lead to high inflation, lagging economic growth and monetary instability.

The economic and social consequences of intensive fossil fuel use are only part of the story. The combustion of fossil fuels is by far the largest contributor of atmospheric "greenhouse gases" (primarily carbon dioxide). There is strong consensus in the scientific community that continued accumulation of "greenhouse gases" within the earth's atmosphere is creating a warming of the atmosphere, or "greenhouse effect." Such warming could cause severe coastal flooding and unpredictable climate shifts, threatening the viability of the earth's most significant urban and agricultural centers. In Vermont, significant warming could cause irreparable harm to the State's largest industry, tourism. Reduced snowfall and a die-off of sugar maples could spell disaster for ski areas, syrup producers, and our fall foliage season. Further, fossil fuel combustion is directly linked to the acidification of rivers, lakes and soil, and human health hazards resulting from declining air quality.

For reasons highlighted above, and because fossil fuels are an exhaustible natural resource, Williamstown should strive to reduce fossil fuel consumption.

**Nuclear**

The Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant in Vernon provides about one third of current electric power in Vermont. However it is only licensed to operate until 2012 and its future beyond that is uncertain.

## **Hydro-power**

Currently, Williamstown gets about half of its energy from hydro-power, primarily from HydroQuebec and New York Power Authority. The Hydro Quebec contract is scheduled to expire in 2015.

It is estimated that Vermont has at least 174,000 KW of undeveloped hydroelectric potential. This represents about 22% of current use. Most of the sites constituting this additional capacity are classified a "mini-hydro" (under 1000KW) developable at existing, but unused, dam sites.

Any hydroelectric development in Williamstown will require a balancing of priorities. While the benefits of generating electricity from local, renewable resources are evident, they are not without associate costs. The power output captured from a given stream must be moderated by environmental considerations. A minimum stream flow, adequate to support aquatic life forms, must be maintained and impoundments must be designed with water quality and land use/recreation considerations in mind

Hydropower potential lies not only within naturally flowing streams and rivers, but to some extent in potable water systems as well.

## **Biomass**

Forest land covers approximately three-quarters of Williamstown's total land area. The generation of heat (and even electricity) from biomass is a strategy that may hold the potential to benefit the town. Under proper management and replacing fossil fuel combustion, the use biomass could reduce greenhouse emissions. Importantly, this could also stimulate the local economy, as estimates show that approximately 80% of each dollar spent on wood remains in the state while only 20% of each dollar spent on nonrenewable energy sources remains in the state.

Currently, about 15 % of Williamstown residents use wood as a heat source. Increased use of wood for heating would stimulate local economies and, if harvest and burning is executed in an environmentally sound manner, would decrease the environmental impacts of existing patterns of energy consumption. New technology is expanding the potential for implementing high-efficiency wood burning in buildings as a primary heat source. While wood burning does contribute a large proportion of atmospheric particulate pollution - pollution directly associated with respiratory damage - new wood burning technology and stricter EPA emissions standards are resulting in increased efficiency and reduced particulate emissions.

In Vermont, schools have taken the lead in the use of biomass fuels. Approximately 20% of Vermont's students attend buildings heated by wood chips. The Williamstown Middle/High School was retrofitted with a biomass heating system in 2007.

## **Vegetable Biofuels**

Biofuels are renewable, agriculturally derived liquid fuels that can be used to run vehicles and heat buildings. They include biodiesel, ethanol, and even straight vegetable oils. A variety of plants with high oil or cellulose content can be employed to produce these products. Some, including corn, sunflower, canola, soy and hemp, could be grown and processed in Vermont. Doing so could help keep money circulating in the community, creating jobs and sustaining local agriculture, while helping to avoid the external costs associated with fossil fuels. However, it may also take farmland out of food production and some question the energy *inputs* processing requires.

Biodiesel, in particular, appears to be catching on in Vermont (and elsewhere), as it can be used in many existing vehicles and furnaces with minimal equipment modification. Furthermore, it is often blended with petroleum fuels. As of January 2007, biodiesel fuel was available at about two dozen location throughout Vermont.

### **Wind-power**

Essentially a form of solar power, created by pressure and temperature differences across our planet, wind-power is one of the oldest and most environmentally benign sources of energy. In recent years it has experienced resurgence in its application which is certain to continue. In fact, it is the fastest growing energy source in the world. Wind turbines are among the most economical of contemporary renewable energy technologies, and have become cost competitive with most conventional electricity sources (especially when indirect, avoided costs are factored in).

Although Vermont has potential for wind power, it is estimated that only 10 to 15% of Vermont's electrical power could be generated by wind because of its intermittent nature. Furthermore, Williamstown probably does not have viable sites for industrial scale wind generation (generally at elevations between 2,500 and 3,500 feet). However, it should be noted that advances in small scale wind turbine technology figure to make them an increasingly viable option for private individuals or groups of individuals. State law restricts the regulation through zoning of turbines with blades less than 20 feet in diameter. Furthermore, any small scale turbine that returns energy to the power grid is exempt from local bylaws and is instead reviewed by the Public Service Board under Act 248.

### **Solar-power**

Solar energy has tremendous potential for providing clean, reliable and safe energy, even in Williamstown's climate. The application of both active (systems which collect, store and distribute solar energy within a building) and passive (systems which utilize a building's structure to trap sunlight and store it as heat) solar technologies have demonstrated their cost effectiveness in Vermont.

Solar-tempered buildings are buildings that have their long axis oriented within 30 degrees of true south and have an unobstructed net south facing window area equal to at least 7% of the total floor area. Solar-tempering coupled with proper insulating can offset heat costs in a building by 40%. Although solar-tempering at initial construction generally requires no additional investment, experts suggest that a majority of new buildings in Vermont do not incorporate such design principles.

Contemporary solar technologies have proven their value in Vermont, particularly in rural areas. As the technologies improve and costs decrease, solar thermal collectors and photovoltaic (technologies which can convert sunlight to electricity) will become more competitive in the marketplace even in less remote areas. As the power source of solar technologies is inexhaustible, and solar energy neither contributes pollutants to the atmosphere nor to our reliance on foreign energy suppliers, strategies should be developed to encourage its use in Williamstown.

## **C. Conservation**

### **Demand Side Management**

In 1990 the Public Service Board required the state's regulated utilities to carry out Least Cost Integrated Planning and implement Demand Side Management programs. In Central Vermont those utilities are investor owned municipal and cooperative electric utilities. Least Cost Integrated Planning requires that each utility "...meet the needs of its customers at the lowest total long term cost and do so by giving equal consideration to all generation, transmission and energy efficiency options..." Demand Side Management programs promote the conservation of energy as an energy source available for future demand. Through their Demand Side Management programs, the region's utilities will likely provide various incentives including financing and partial payment of certain efficiency improvements, energy audits and design services.

As the creation of excess generating capacity can be used to meet future electrical needs for Vermont, conservation must continue to be viewed as a source of electricity. Conservation is our least expensive and most environmentally benign source of electricity.

## **Transportation**

According to the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan, the transportation sector accounts for over 45% of total energy demand and approximately two-thirds of all fossil fuels used in Vermont. As discussed in previous pages, this situation imposes a tremendous economic and ecological detriment. Environmental degradation resulting from heavy petroleum use is well documented, as is the fact that the lion's share of money spent on fuel and automobiles leaves the state, thus undermining the local economy.

The rural character and decentralized settlement patterns of Central Vermont, the very qualities which render our area an extraordinary living environment, create difficult circumstances in which to minimize the consumption of traditional fuels in the transportation sector. Nevertheless, there are strategies which can be employed at the local, regional and state levels which will bear influence within this context.

Improved access to, and increased use of, alternative and public transportation options such as rail, bus, vanpooling, ride-sharing and bicycling, will not only decrease energy consumption, but will also reduce the infrastructure expenditures that are associated with the "car culture."

Another strategy by which the demand for transportation can be reduced is through encouraging settlement patterns which require less physical travel. The concentration of employment opportunities, housing and social services, the expansion of telecommunications potential, and the increased use of local resources may help achieve this objective.

## **Buildings and Structures**

According to the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan, approximately 30% of the total amount of energy consumed in Vermont is used for residential purposes. The Plan shows that growth in energy demand in the residential sector will be driven by increases in population and housing, and a corresponding increase in demand for space and water heating. This demand, when considered with the energy demand associated with the space and water heating requirements of commercial and industrial buildings, represents tremendous potential energy savings.

Investments in energy efficiency improvements in new and existing buildings and appropriate site design in new development will result in the realization of this savings, and will demonstrate a significant impact on total energy demand. Ultimately, such investments will reduce the percent of income residents spend on energy, per capita energy consumption and environmental degradation.

## **D. Energy Programs and Resources:**

A variety of organizations and programs exist to provide assistance to citizens and local governments in the realm of energy conservation and development. A partially list of Vermont based resources follows:

**The Alliance for Climate Action/14% Challenge** - Community energy organizing and programs.

[www.10percentchallenge.org](http://www.10percentchallenge.org)

**Apollo Alliance Vermont** - Coalition of labor, business and community groups dedication to energy independence.

[www.apolloalliance.org/state](http://www.apolloalliance.org/state)

**Biomass Energy Resource Center** - Consults on biomass and cogeneration projects. 802-2237779

**Efficiency Vermont** - Financial and technical assistance for energy savings. EnergySmart home energy analysis.

[www.encyvermont.org](http://www.encyvermont.org)

**Renewable Energy Vermont** - Trade association for renewable energy dealers.

[www.REVermont.org](http://www.REVermont.org)

**School Energy Management Program** - Provides free energy assessments for schools. [www.vtvs.org](http://www.vtvs.org)

**Sustainable Energy Resource Group** - Consults with communities on energy planning/programs.

[www.SERG-info.org](http://www.SERG-info.org)

**Vermont Biodeisel Project** - Collaboration designed to help accelerate emergence of industry in Vermont,

[www.vtbiodeiselproject.org](http://www.vtbiodeiselproject.org)

**Vermont Green Building Network** - Promotes green building in Vermont. [www.vgbn.org](http://www.vgbn.org) **Vermont Energy Education Program.** - Provides in school energy curriculum. [www.veep.org](http://www.veep.org) **Vermont Energy Investment Corp** - Promotes energy efficiency and renewable technologies. [www.veic.org](http://www.veic.org)  
**Vermont Energy Star Homes** - Technical assistance to build energy efficient homes. [www.Vtenergystarhomes.com](http://www.Vtenergystarhomes.com)  
**Vermont Peak Oil Network** - Network of groups and individuals working on energy sustainability. [www.vtpeakoil.net](http://www.vtpeakoil.net)  
**Vermont Rideshare**- Promotes commuter carpooling. [www.VermontRideShare.org](http://www.VermontRideShare.org) **Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network**- Collaborative of organizations involved in energy and climate issues.  
**Vermont Fuel Dealers Association** - Trade association of fuel marketers. [www.vermontfuel.com](http://www.vermontfuel.com);  
**Vermont Biofuel Partnership** - Resource for producers, wholesalers, retailers and users of bioheat and biodiesel fuel, [www.vtbio.org](http://www.vtbio.org)

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## ENERGY

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GOAL	POLICIES AND TASKS
<p><b>To encourage energy conservation and the development of renewable energy resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Williamstown should consider forming a Town Energy Committee and/or appointing a Town Energy Coordinator. The Committee/Coordinator should review the <i>Town Energy and Climate Guide (Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network, 2006)</i> for ideas on energy conservation and development.</li> <li>• Support demand side management conservation programs which are designed to reduce demand for electricity through enhanced energy efficiency and conservation.</li> <li>• Conduct energy audits of Town buildings</li> <li>• Reduce Town expenditures by considering the cost of energy over the life of equipment to be purchased by the Town.</li> <li>• Support home weatherization programs</li> <li>• Support efforts to create a fund to provide low interest capital to home owners, landlords, institutions, and businesses to assist in making cost effective investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy</li> <li>• Consider the establishment of local, publicly owned and operated bulk storage fuel facilities, as authorized under 24 VSA, Chapter 107, Section 3701, as a means of containing fuel costs for Williamstown residents.</li> <li>• Support the use of biofuels and/or electric power in government and public transit vehicles.</li> <li>• Promote the design and construction of buildings which are energy efficient.</li> <li>• Encourage the development of small scale wind, solar, or hydro power by individuals, or groups of individuals, to offset fossil fuel consumption and promote self-sufficiency</li> <li>• Encourage land use planning that: encourages the concentration of social and civic services, employment and housing opportunities within or adjacent to Williamstown's villages; supports the expansion of telecommuting, teleconferencing and public transit; provides for pedestrian transportation options; and promotes the development of commuter parking lots.</li> </ul>

## CHAPTER VIII

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### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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#### A. Overview

A healthy economy is essential to maintaining Williamstown's quality of life. A diversified and dynamic economy provides employment, stimulates social and cultural interaction, and generates income to provide for a wide variety of community services, including education, health care and physical infrastructure. On the individual level, a diversified economy offers greater opportunities for people to engage in satisfying and meaningful occupations and pursuits.

The purpose of this element is to guide and plan for economic development that will create employment in Williamstown which keeps pace with the region's labor force, provides an adequate flow of taxable economic activity to fund state programs, and increases the wealth and economic well being of residents.

#### B. History

According to the Williamstown Historical Society, prior to 1840, most early residents of Williamstown worked on family farms.

In 1888, the first train arrived in the Williamstown Village. An economic “boom”, lasting for nearly 4 decades, followed. Quarries and farmers could finally ship their products to other parts of the country, and more and more goods and services streamed into Williamstown. During this time-period the following quarries were established: 1) Pirie Quarry (1882), 2) Jones Brothers Quarry, and 3) Dr. Bailey Quarry. (All currently owned and operated by Rock of Ages (1882). Other businesses included: Burrell Roofing and Lacillade Lumber were established in the 1940's. Other businesses included: Bruce's Garage (1892), Watson Hotel, Williamstown Inn, Hibbard House, Lotus Lake Camp (1952), Lynde Store (1952), and Smallwood Nurseries (1932). The late 1960's were a major period of road building in Vermont, making travel even easier. After that time, the entrepreneurial spirit came alive. The number of family farms began to decrease and tourism started to increase. In Williamstown, the following business were established after the 1960's: UniFirst (1972), Randolph National Bank (1979), VEPCO (Vermont Electric Power Company – formerly VELCO) (1980), Pump N' Pantry, A&S Collections, Depot & Main convenience store, Farm & Country Hardware, Behind the Scenes restaurant, (1980's) and most recently Dollar General and Poulin Lumber 2010,

## C. Current Conditions

A diverse economy is a strong economy. Luckily, diversity is the backbone of employment in Williamstown, which is the home of many well-established businesses. According to a 2008 Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce Report, Williamstown has 61 employers, providing work for around 516 people. Major employers include (A&S Collection, Burrell Roofing, Progressive Plastics, Pike Industries, and the Williamstown Public School System and other municipal positions). However there are also many smaller businesses, often small and run out of people's homes. In fact, almost 10% of the labor force works at home – up almost 20% from 1990. In addition, Williamstown is fortunate to still have working farms, including dairy operations, Christmas tree farms, a potato farm, and many sugarhouses. We also have a variety of wholesale and retail merchants, manufacturers, and general service businesses.

In spite of all this business activity, Williamstown is still considered a “bedroom community” as approximately 80% of its workforce works outside of town, primarily in the Regional jobs centers of Barre, Montpelier and Waterbury. Table – below, displays a breakdown of employment data for Williamstown from the 2000 Census. It shows the vast majority of Williamstown's workers were employed in the Manufacturing, Education, Health and Social Services, Retail Trade, Construction and Public Administration Sectors. The average annual wage for Williamstown workers in 2006 was \$31,574. This compares favorably to the rest of Orange County (\$29,781), but below the State average (\$35,535). Obviously, Individual wages vary widely in Williamstown due to different types of occupations.

**Table: General Employment Data for Williamstown  
2000 Census**

<b>Census Category</b>		<b>Change from 1990</b>
Population 16 Years and Over	2,464	+ 16.4 %
In Labor Force	1,841	+ 16.7 %
In Armed Forces	0	
Civilian	1,841	
Employed	1,737	+ 17.5 %
Unemployed	104	+ 16.9 %
Not In Labor Force	623	
Employed Population 16 Years and Over	1,737	
Male Employed Population 16 Years and Over	904	
Female Employed Population 16 Years and Over	833	
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining Industry	55	
Construction Industry	142	
Manufacturing Industry	312	
Wholesale Trade Industry	82	
Retail Trade Industry	225	
Trans., Warehousing, and Utilities Industry	65	
Information Industry	44	
Finance, Ins., Real Estate, Rental, and Leasing Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management Services Industry	111	
Education, Health, and Social Services Industry	310	
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food Services Industry	83	
Public Administration Industry	121	
Other Service Industries	88	

While Williamstown has displayed fairly strong economic/job growth over the past several decades, there are some indications of economic hardship beginning to emerge. According to the Vermont DET, the April 2009 unemployment figure for Williamstown was 10.2% (State average 8 %). This represents a dramatic increase from just a few years ago when it stood at a relatively healthy 4%. According to the 2000 Census, Vermont Housing Data Williamstown had an average poverty rate of 8% (representing 257 individuals in 54 families) in comparison to the statewide rate of 10%.

## **D. Trends**

Projections developed by the Office of Policy and Information of the Vermont Department of Employment and Training help to identify the shifts that are occurring in the state and regional economies. National and international forces have a tendency to have greater influence on manufacturing, while state and

regional market forces combine to influence the non-manufacturing side.

According to these projections, future job growth will be concentrated in the service-provider sector of the economy, with education, health services, professional and business services growing the fastest. Healthcare practitioners are at the top of the list (i.e., registered nurses, medical assistant, and physical therapists). Construction will also continue to grow. Other projected increases are in the areas of professional and related occupations, which include architecture and engineering occupations, education, training and library services. Computer or information technology occupations should also see gains. Finally, tourism, particularly recreation based tourism, is projected to be a growth industry well into the 2040s.

Manufacturing will continue to decline due to technological changes resulting in the need for fewer and fewer people to get the same output and outsourcing. Industries with the largest decline in employment will be apparel manufacturing, textile mills, and computer and electronic manufacturing. These types of jobs have been decreasing for decades and there is no reason to believe the trend will change.

The agricultural sector also is expected to continue its historical trend of decreasing employment, in part because the average wage earned by farmers remains lower than that of other sectors and because of fluctuating incomes. However, Williamstown still has about 10 working dairy farms, one potato farm, a tree farmer, and various other agricultural farms/businesses. These agricultural jobs are a very important part of our economy in their own right, as well for the intangible aesthetic benefits they provide. Furthermore, agriculture also contributes to tourism. Putting out the welcome mat for visitors and residents by encouraging farmers markets, visits to the farm, cut-your-own Christmas tree, and fruit orchards in those out-of-the-way places can contribute immensely to the sustainability of our agricultural industry and our local economy. People like Vermont food products because they feel they are safe and fresh. Buying locally grown and manufactured products adds to the local economy. Hope lies with small farmers currently capitalizing on their natural advantages by diversifying and rotating crops, integrating livestock, and residents buying locally.

Another important trend to note is aging of our labor force. The number of older workers is projected to grow by almost 50%, or 4 times the growth projected for the overall labor force. About 1/5th of the labor force will be 55, or older, by 2012.

## **E. Williamstown Economic Survey**

In the fall of 2003, the Select Board formed an Economic Development Committee to assist the municipality in finding creative ways to bring more businesses into the town and enhance the existing businesses.

The Economic Development Committee surveyed the community to gather ideas on how to proceed with economic development. Residents reported that their family members were leaving Williamstown in search of work elsewhere. Some residents reported that if they could have found decent jobs at good wages locally, they would have remained in Williamstown. Most recognized attracting good jobs to Williamstown was not going happen overnight. People agreed that attracting “just any” new business into town was not the answer for our long-term future. Residents reported that they did not want to exploit the environment in order to support economic sustainability saying, “Ruining the environment just makes for bad economics and bad ethics.” Protecting our natural resources is critical for the economic well-being of our future. The town can have clean, safe, and sustainable jobs if we all work together to shape the future of our town.

The survey revealed the following ideas and desires of town residents for improving Williamstown's economic attraction, particularly in the village downtown area:

- A farmer's market
- A grocery and /or variety store
- A laundry mat
- A family restaurant
- Health care practitioners
- A town common & other common areas (i.e., a senior center building, hiking paths)
- Jobs that are clean and sustainable
- Community activities & spirit
- A Vietnam war memorial
- Sidewalks & cross walks in both the villages
- Clean-up activities/pride
- Trees and landscaping
- Fun activities for teenagers

## **F. Economic Development Issues**

### ***Diversity and Self Sufficiency***

Research has shown that community and economic development are best supported when local solutions and resources are brought to bear on local problems. Small, new businesses are the backbone of economic development and job creation. In Central Vermont, enterprises with less than 20 employees comprise 90% of total private businesses while providing for 38% of total private employment. (National figures are 87% and 26%, respectively.) Even though initial employment gains may be small, start-up businesses have immediate impacts on the local economy. Small companies tend to hire locally, buy locally and put more money into the local economy than they take out.

Over the past decade, Central Vermont has become a leader in small business formation, with Williamstown adding its share of new, small, innovative businesses to the list. In Williamstown, the vast majority of the more than 60 employers fit the definition of small business.

### ***Education/Workforce Demographics***

The quality of the work force and quality of life are directly related to community emphasis on education. Elementary and high school education are the basis of the human infrastructure. They provide the skills necessary for individuals to interact with one another in civil and meaningful ways. They are also the source of basic vocational skills in communications, mathematics, and problem solving.

As our society becomes more technologically advanced, these elementary skills take on even greater importance. Complex manufacturing techniques require workers who can process information and manipulate advanced machinery. Information management requires the ability to identify, isolate and utilize a wide variety of data.

Institutions of higher education play an important role both as major employers and as support institutions for technology based industry. The Central Vermont region hosts six colleges and post-secondary schools. Spin off institutes and for-profit ventures undertaken by the higher education community have added substantially to the economic and cultural wellbeing of the region. Advanced educational institutions also play a major role through the provision of programs that advance technical and problem solving skills.

While an elementary and high school education can provide the building blocks for an educated work force, individual advancement and technological improvement will depend on the development of life-long learning habits and opportunities for all workers. The public education system must expand to meet the vocational needs of adults. Public and private institutions and employers must take a proactive role in identifying the skills necessary for economic vitality in the future, and take the steps necessary to prepare and retain the work force.

Finally, continued economic vitality depends on the existence of a skilled, knowledgeable and innovative “next generation” workforce. With an older than average and rapidly aging population, along with the lowest percentage of people in the 25 to 29 age group in the nation, Vermont faces some serious challenges in this regard. Chief among them is the disincentives our relatively low wages and high cost of living provide to young people to stay in the State. Williamstown must recognize these trends and strive to support and cultivate opportunities for young people to stay in, return to, or discover our town as an exciting and affordable place to work and live.

According to the 2000 census approximately 81% of the work force has a high school diploma or better. In fact, 34% of those 25 and over have either an associate’s degree, bachelor's degree or graduate-professional degrees. While these percentages have increased significantly since the 1990 census, they still lag behind state and regional averages.

### **Access: Transportation and Communications**

The ability to transport goods and information, and be accessible to clients and customers is essential to business. With its own interstate exit and a major state highway, Williamstown is well situated to take advantage of its physical accessibility. It is also within 20 minutes of a state airport with business/cargo capabilities.

Of course physical access is not enough for businesses to prosper in this day and age. They need a network of telecommunications infrastructure that enables information-based industries to link into a worldwide telecommunications network. There remain challenges to both take advantage of this advanced technology, and to keep pace with the developments of this quickly changing industry. The town -wide availability of the state-of-the-art telecommunications/information technology infrastructure (including high speed internet access and wireless communications) would increase work options for residents and could potentially reduce commuting and its impacts on the transportation infrastructure and the environment.

### **Quality of Life/Village Vitality**

The Vermont Business Roundtable surveyed the state's businesses in 2003 and discovered that the top 2 reasons businesses located to Vermont were because of: 1) a high quality of life and, 2) the owners had ties to the state. Quality of life could be described as having a safe environment (clean air, water and land, transportation, and access to health care and emergency services), job opportunities, natural beauty, educational quality, and low crime rate.

Also essential to a high quality of life is a dynamic and varied social/cultural experience. The village as the center of social activity provides the critical mass necessary for a flourishing interchange of ideas, art and culture. The traditional New England village is a virtual textbook of human history - the variety of architectural styles reveal the economic and social fortunes of its inhabitants, past and present. It is considered by many to be the pinnacle in land use design. In scale and function, it satisfies our needs for privacy, community and livelihood. Maintaining historic development patterns of village centers surrounded by resource based agricultural, mineral, forest and recreational activities balances economic and environmental interests. Concentrating growth and development within the confines of a village allows the community to implement infrastructure improvements in an efficient and effective manner that will improve the quality of life while limiting the degradation of the environment.

Williamstown is fortunate to have a village with the infrastructural capacity for further growth and development (or re-development). We have already seen that many Williamstown residents have lofty goals for the village and would like to see it revitalized and improved. Towards this end, the town should consider applying to the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs for "Village Center Designation". This relatively easy process could help residents qualify for various tax incentives and loans and make Williamstown more competitive in a variety of grant programs.

### **Industrial and Commercial Development**

Industrial and commercial development is important because it provides jobs to nearby residents. Williamstown does not have many choices for locating industrial and commercial development due to its rolling hills and valleys. In 2004, promotion of environmentally clean, diverse, and sustainable small industrial commercial developments are in the best interest of the residents. Commercial and industrial development that is auto-dependent, separated from other uses, and scattered in rural areas is not "smart growth". It is essential that the industrial park area be available for those industries that cannot be located elsewhere in Williamstown, or in the surrounding communities. There are problems with our current industrial park site that need to be corrected: the site is too small, not only for current businesses that are located there, but for future development this may cause industrial businesses to locate in residential areas. The industrial park also has problems with parking demand, high land cost, and environmental issues (developed in a flood zone area).

In keeping with the rural characteristics of this community, future development of commercial properties and structures should consider exterior architecture to include natural materials. (i.e. stone, brick, lumber) In comparison, commercial development and architecture should exclude metal/vinyl/concrete and glass facing.

Exterior planning of new and repurposing of existing buildings should include landscaping techniques such as visual barriers, shrubs, trees, seating areas offset with gardens and flower beds to create an atmosphere of tranquility and beautification.

The town recognized that exit 5 of the interstate is a possible asset for future business. This interchange area would be highly appropriate for light commercial and/or light/clean industrial development. The town officials will work closely with the Regional Development Commission and Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce to attract these types of firms.

## **G. SUMMARY**

Despite the current economic downturn, Williamstown has the underpinnings of a strong economy. The diversity of its larger employers, the number of small employers, the variety and level of skills found in its labor force, and its quality of life are its prime assets. In conjunction with, businesses and other regional development groups, Williamstown will participate in economic development efforts so as to capitalize on these assets and overcome economic obstacles. Some of those aspects are improving community pride and spirit, education levels, visual appeal of both Villages, housing, and our infrastructure in order to attract good paying jobs. Attracting the right businesses will allow us to keep our community alive, healthy, and not lose the aspects of our rural culture that we cherish.



## ECONOMIC GOALS AND POLICIES

<b>GOALS</b>	<b>POLICIES &amp; TASKS</b>
<p>1. To nurture our existing businesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooperate with the Department of Tourism and Marketing and Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce to help market our existing businesses</li> <li>• Press for affordable fiber optic service and other improvements in communication infrastructure throughout the community</li> <li>• Seek assistance from the Central Vermont Planning Commission to study and clean-up abandoned, idled and underused industrial and commercial contaminated sites (aka “Brownfields”)</li> <li>• Recognize business owners in public forums (e.g., newspapers, annual festivals).</li> <li>• Pursue “Downtown Designation” for the village and the Nation Register designation for certain village properties in order to qualify for grants, low interest loans and other incentives.</li> </ul>
<p>2. To recruit new business and services to town to increase the tax base while keeping the rural culture of the community alive and authentic</p> <p>Encourage the <i>Economic Development Committee</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to increase our economic competitiveness. The team could take responsibility for the following:</li> <li>• working with the Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce to increase marketing and promotional efforts</li> <li>• finding a location and seek funds to build a small information booth</li> <li>• encouraging local businesses to list local events on the Vermont Travel Plan Website</li> <li>• recruiting new healthcare services to town</li> <li>• seeking creative ways to get and keep the town clean and improve its aesthetics (including enlisting volunteers for plantings)</li> <li>• exploring opportunities for hosting and maintaining a farmers market in the Williamstown Village area</li> <li>• seeking media opportunities to attract attention to our town</li> <li>• Exploring ways to recruit new, clean businesses to town (especially restaurants, small niche manufacturing &amp; health-oriented businesses),</li> <li>• Exploring the development of a professional center for Williamstown village. The center could have space for a dentist, doctor, lawyer, variety store, and pharmacy</li> <li>• Encouraging wireless broadband telecommunication services</li> </ul>
<p>3. To develop broad based support for agriculture as an economic activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage locally grown food, encourage a farmer’s market, gardening operations, and roadside farm stands/markets/garden centers</li> <li>• Consider a “right to farm” ordinance</li> <li>• Encourage participation in use value and land trust programs to alleviate tax burdens and acquire operations capital</li> <li>• Work with Vermont Technical College’s Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program to provide farmers with consultation in business planning</li> </ul>

4. To promote life-long learning opportunities.

\* Encourage businesses to upgrade and improve the skills and knowledge of their employees by working with the local Workforce Investment Boards

5. The town officials will work closely with the Regional Development Commission and Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce to attract light commercial and/or light/clean industrial development at the exit 5 interchange

## CHAPTER IX

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### TRANSPORTATION

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#### A. Overview

Public roads and private automobiles are the predominant means of transportation in Williamstown. The condition and performance of the town and state's transportation system affects our quality of life, the natural environment, and our economic well-being.

One of the primary issues facing Williamstown's future is whether residential development will continue to require virtually complete dependence on the automobile or whether it will include some mixed-use aspects that encourage alternate modes of transport. Another issue the town is faced with is development in rural areas where roads are steep, twisty, and narrow and staff has difficulties providing services to these areas.

This chapter provides an overview of how the existing transportation network functions and how it might be improved.

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#### B. History

Local residents built and maintained early roads. The first crude roads in Williamstown were most likely dusty in the summer and muddy in the spring. Residents used stocky horses, or oxen, to pull heavy sleds and wheeled carts for transport of goods and people. According to the *Book of Opinions*, published by the State of Vermont, Secretary of State's Office, when Legislature passed the 1781 Highway Act it gave power to the Select Board to set a road tax on each male between 16 and 60 years old. The road tax was payable in labor unless people refused to work, in which case they had to pay their taxes by selling their land to their local town collector. Because of the poor conditions of the early roads, there were often harsh words between the Select Board and community members.

In 1889, Williamstown got its first railroad connecting Williamstown to Barre and Montpelier Junction and the main line north and south. The old depot and grain building are still located on Depot Street in the Williamstown Village, though the railroad has since been abandoned.

In the early 1900's, the first self-propelled electro-gasoline combination car was introduced. When automobile production and ownership soared, major road building started with a new concrete highway constructed through the village in 1931 and continued with the surfacing of the road to Northfield (VT 64) in the early 1950's. Road building went on throughout the 1960's and 1970's with the completion of the Interstate which linked our community to most of the major cities of the Northeast.

#### C. Current Conditions

### **Interstate System**

The State, under Federal control, maintains the Vermont's interstate system. Interstate 89 provides Williamstown residents with fast access to their jobs and tourists an easy access to our Village area for goods and beautiful mountain views. Marring of natural and scenic features along the 89 State Highway has been discouraged. The State has also protected the Highway from strip development. There are two access roads (Route 63 and 64) off Interstate 89 both provide easy access into Williamstown.

### **State Highways/Interstate Access Roads**

Vermont Routes 14 and 64 are classified as state highways. Williamstown's access road, *Route 64*, takes travelers down a steep (11% grade), winding hill into the Williamstown village. The views along Route 64 are picturesque and the people who travel them appreciate their aesthetic contribution. New houses spaced along the road are beginning to place pressures on those working farms and spacious fields that attracted people to the area in the first place. Traffic congestion along Route 64 is minimal. During the 2003-2004 Community Focus Groups, the residents unanimously agreed that having a second way into town via South Barre access road, Route 63, which stretches from Route 64 along Hebert Road to Route 63, was beneficial to the community.

State Highway, Route 14 serves as a gateway into Williamstown village and guides the traveler from Brookfield through Williamstown Gulf and north into Barre City. While Route 14 brings economic vitality to our town by providing access to Williamstown Village, traffic is increasing rapidly, especially during those times when people travel to and from work. At those times, the traffic can be somewhat heavy, less pedestrian-friendly and occasionally unsafe.

### **Town Highways**

In the Highway Act, Vermont first recognized classes of highways for the purpose of granting state aid. The Select board has the responsibility for general supervision and control of town highways. The following are the four basic highway groups in the town of Williamstown based on the Agency of Transportation, 2004 Town Highway Mileage:

- Class 1 town highways are those town highways that form the extensions of a state highway route and carry a state route number. There are no class 1 town highways in Williamstown
- Class 2 town highways are the most important town roads and connect from town to town and have high traffic volumes. Williamstown has 18.24 miles of class 2 town highways. Falls Bridge Road was recently upgraded to a class 2 road, making it eligible for state matching funds and 90% funding for the replacement of the bridge
- Class 3 town highways are all traveled town highways other than class 1 and 2 that receive state funding. The minimum standard for class 3 town highways is that it be negotiable under normal conditions all seasons of the year by a standard manufactured pleasure car. Williamstown has 50.9 miles of class 3 town highways
- Class 4 highways only need to be maintained "to the extent required by the necessity of the town, the public good and the convenience of the inhabitants." There are no standards for maintenance of class 4 town highways in the state. Williamstown has 11.45 miles of class four town highways

As we grow, the town may want to study the upgrading of a few of class 4 roads to class 3 to help with traffic circulation. For example, in 2010 Cold Spring Road was connected to Ferno Road to provide additional access to the interstate. To avoid conflicts between the use of highways and future development, the town has established a Motor Vehicle Ordinance that was adopted On May 2, 1994, by the Select Board. It is available for inspection in the Town Manager's office. On October 21, 1995, amendments to the ordinance were adopted.

The ordinance addresses parking, speed limits, driveways, discontinued roads, stop and yield signs, 1-way traffic only, enforcement and other areas.

### **Commuting Patterns**

As we have already seen, Williamstown is a job exporter, with about 80% of our labor force leaving town to work. Commuting and commuting patterns can have a major impact of traffic issues in a community. Relevant commuting data from the 2000 Census is as follows:

#### **Travel Time**

- 49.6% take under 20 minutes to get to work
- 29.4% take 20-29 minutes to get to work
- 14% take 30-40 minutes to get to work
- 11.6% take 45 minutes or more time to get to work

#### **Commuting Method**

- 79% of Williamstown residents drive alone to get to work, and
- 10% carpool
- 8.7 % work at home
- 1.6% walk or bike to work

#### **Travel Patterns**

- 40.8 % leave at 5:00 a.m. to 6:59 am
- 37% leave at 7:00 a.m. to 7:59 am
- 8.2% leave at various times in the am
- 8% leave at 12:00 a.m. to 11:59 pm
- 6% leave at 8:00 a.m. to 8:59 am

## **D. Maintenance Issues**

### **Road Maintenance**

Maintaining and enhancing the local road network in a safe and effective manner is an important community responsibility. The town highway department is responsible for maintaining both town and village roads. In an attempt to balance the needs of the town road improvements and limited financial resources, the road department budget represents a big challenge. Much pays for necessary sand, salt, roadside drainage/ditch maintenance, new equipment, and manpower. As we move forward, attention needs to be paid to upgrading roads and bridges. Currently, the roadside drainage/ditch maintenance remains a top priority in conjunction with the 3-phase road grading program begun in 2003.

Paving and maintaining of existing paved roads is an ongoing fact of life and will take continued funding in the town highway budget each year.

### **Ancient Roads**

As of spring of 2010, there were 2 roads identified by the Ancient Roads Committee to be considered to be reconstituted by the town.

## E. Safety Issues

### Speed/Volume

Speed limits are useful in providing safety to the motorist driving along and entering the roads and to pedestrians and animals along the roadside. Speed limits also provide safety and guidance to visitors unfamiliar with our roads. A very small percentage of drivers tend to cause most of the problems.

High traffic volumes have a negative impact on the perceived quality of life. Speeding vehicles put pedestrians and horseback riders at risk. Traffic delays cause motorists to seek routes on back roads, and traffic congestion has negative effects on the local economy.

On August 8, 2002, a survey of roads for traffic count and speed were conducted on five major roads as part of a speed limit study (Hebert, Baptist, Falls Bridge, South Hill and Stone Roads). Findings indicated increasing commuter traffic from adjacent towns, speeds limited by road conditions, traffic compressed at peak times of the workday, and that vehicle trips in Williamstown are increasing. Title 23 section 1007 states that a town may set speed limits of 35 miles per hour on unpaved town highways, if it places signs.

According to the speed limit study, the miles per hour surveyed on roads were as follows:

	<u>average speed</u> per hour	<u>Posted</u> <u>Speed</u>	<u>Average Daily totals</u> (cars a day)
• Stone Road:	39	35	580
• Hebert Road:	42	35	480
• Baptist Street:	38	35	148
• Falls Bridge:	32	35	750
• South Hill Road:	28	35	450

### Accident Locations

The State of Vermont Orange County Sheriff's Department prepared the following accident report for all the years since computerized statewide data began in 1994 to 2002: 8 on Baptist Road, 15 on Hebert Road, 13 on Stone Road, 8 on Tower Road, 9 on McCarthy Road, 13 on Falls Bridge Road, and 78 on Route 14. Unreported accidents are much higher according to local inhabitants who live on these roads.

A second source of accident data is the Vermont Agency of Transportation, Traffic Research Unit. According to the 2002 accident report, I-89 had 11 accidents, and VT-64 had 5. Other areas that were included in the report included: a few incidents on McGlynn Road, Stone Road, McCarthy Road, Sugar House Road, Hebert Road, Route 14, and Chelsea Road. According to the November 26, 2002 Traffic Impact Report, the Route 14 corridor that accesses to the intersection of Vermont's Routes 14 and 63 has an actual accident rate close to the "critical accident rate" based upon existing traffic volumes and movements showing 20 accidents at the intersection during the period 1997-2002. There have been 9 accidents on Williamstown's stretch of Route 14 between 1997-2001. Traffic and related accidents on Route 14 are expected to grow.

Road surfaces have improved over the past five years. However, the town continues to have road surfaces in poor repair. Residents have reported gravel spilling into their driveways. Pavement dropping off a

few inches at the roads edge can deliver tragic consequences. Unforgiving hazards include sharp curves, insufficient shoulders, and poor surfaces.

Special attention is required to some roads for safety concerns. In particular, sharp corner of Hebert Road (across from the past Lynde School) and the sharp corner of Cogswell Street.

The town has done some work over the past 5 years to improve road signs; however, many signs are still poor. Improvements should continue on an ongoing basis. Signage should be inventoried and new ones placed according to the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

### **Town Bridges and Culverts**

Bridges and culverts on class 4 roads cannot be ignored. If the town puts a culvert in, then the town is liable to keep them in repair. If the town issues a permit to a resident that allows him/her to put a culvert in for their own use then the resident is liable for maintenance and repairs. The town culvert program replaces or upgrades 8-10 culverts per year.

The long awaited Williamstown VT 64 State Highway Bridge over brook number 2, bridge 10, is on the high priority list of projects and scheduled for construction in 2006. It was completed in 2009.

## **F. Traffic Solutions/Alternatives**

### **Traffic Calming/Access Management**

The town must manage a safe and efficient flow of traffic along our roads. Access management is a set of techniques that the town officials can use to control access to highways, major arterials, and other roadways. (See **MAP 1** for more information). The following are examples of access management techniques that the town can use, especially in the village access areas:

- some calming devices such as “green” strips, curbs, on street parking, raised sidewalks, speed humps, rumble strips, street-tree plantings, street furniture, landscaping, signage, and textured or colored pavement can be more effective than traditional speed reduction measures such as police enforcement because they are based on self-enforcement
- alternate routes and grid networks reduce traffic when incorporated into village areas and highly used roads
- space and location of driveway location For example, driveways should be located away from intersections and provide adequate sight distance to see oncoming traffic and curb cuts should be limited and consolidated
- limits to right-of-way access onto highways For example, connect parking lots and consolidate driveways so vehicles can circulate between businesses without having to re-enter the major roadway

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Access**

Among the recommendations of the 2003-2004 Community Survey and Focus Groups was the need to develop more walking trails and improve the safety of walkers, bikers, and horseback riders from people driving cars. These are still important activities in town and are becoming more frequent on our back roads.

Bicycles provide a clean, economical and energy efficient mode of transportation. They are a primary means of transportation for young people and more recently have become an increasingly popular form of recreation and transportation for adults. There is currently no bicycle route within the Town. Traffic, speeding and irresponsible driving are becoming more frequent creating dangerous situations for cyclists. Most of the highways used by bicyclists do not have sufficient shoulder width to accommodate them safely.

Pedestrian byways are an important and integral part of the transportation system. Residents have reported they want a safe and walkable village. Residents walk across the main road of busy Williamstown Village every day, all day long. Especially during certain times of the day, motorists lack respect for people trying to cross the street in the village areas.

Sidewalks provide safe routes for pedestrians in neighborhoods, commercial and industrial areas, areas frequented by children, and community centers. In areas of moderate to higher density development, having sidewalks is a necessity. Sidewalks have been a debated issue in town. After much debate, fund raising, and receipt of grants, Williamstown will begin construction of sidewalks along Route 14 and adjacent streets during the summer of 2010.

Footpaths are informal pedestrian byways utilized to move traffic between points or as nature trails and other recreational purposes. The Planning Commission suggests that footpaths should also be developed on land owned by the town.

**Public Transportation**

Many people, including the elderly, disabled and poor, cannot live in a community setting without access to public transportation. Public transportation is a vital service that helps people live in less restrictive settings. Public transit serves the general public, elderly persons, disabled persons, and low-income persons. Williamstown is served by the Green Mountain Transit Agency, a non-profit organization that provides a mixture of fixed and non-fixed route services to benefit the Williamstown citizens. A shuttle picks people up at Williamstown Square and each Tuesday at the Garden Apartments to transport individuals to Hannaford’s (Shopping Special).

The Williamstown’s Park and Ride is located off exit 5, I-89 on Route 64. The paved, lighted, parking area has 23 parking spaces, and 1 disabled space. The parking area facilitates carpooling and ridesharing and is well used.

**TRANSPORTATION**

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Policies and Tasks</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>To maintain and preserve our transportation system.</b></li> <li>1a</li> </ol>	Establishing a <i>Transportation Advisory Committee</i> to work with the Transportation crew, property owners, merchants, residents, and police to identify transportation problems and help to solve them. The Transportation Advisory Committee could take responsibility for the following:

- Developing an asset management plan (inventory the condition of roads, come-up with agreed upon standards, solutions, costs, priorities, and how to implement the vision over time)
  - Developing and adopting a five-year capital program, updated annually and divided into annual capital budgets, to provide for maintaining current and acquiring future capital improvements. The capital budget and program will prioritize and project where the transportation money will be spent and include additional funding for unexpected issues and beautification efforts.
  - Organizing beautification projects that encourages tourism, protects and allows enjoyment of roadside scenic features. For example, the Vermont Agency of Transportation's Byway Program.
  - Studying possible traffic calming devices, pullouts for vistas, and walking paths
  - Organizing groups to do some maintenance work on trails the town still owns right of way
  - Looking at a 5 to 10 year highway and bridge reconstruction and rehabilitation program
- 1b. Surveying the residents who live on major roads for expanding the paving program to determine their desires, before plans are considered.
  - 1c. Reviewing the Town Highway classifications periodically by taking into consideration increasing highway needs, changing traffic patterns and growing population.
  - 1d. Considering applications for acceptance of public highways and roadways and to adopt and adhere to an orderly procedure for taking action on such applications. The decision on an application for acceptance of a highway is reserved to the sole and absolute discretion of the Select Board, who will consider the granting or denial of an application on the basis of what is in the best interest of Williamstown residents.
  - 1e. Designing roads that comply with A-76 State of Vermont Design Standards.
  - 1f. Investigating Access Management techniques from VT Trans.
  - 1g. Continuing to use pavement, gravel, and maintenance management systems to maintain all roads.
    - Developing a program that over time upgrades those roads that are currently below desired serviceability criteria
    - Improve driveways with excessive spillage (The grade in front of a dwelling or other building adjacent to the road cannot be changed by more than 3 feet without following quasi-judicial procedures)
  - 1h. Continuing to address the project backlog and implement shelf projects.
  - 1i. Limiting the construction of new roads in open fields and design them so that they do not significantly increase forest fragmentation.
  - 1j. Developing roads that are logically related to the topography to produce reasonable road grades.
  - 1k. Encouraging subdivisions adjacent to roads designated as scenic to be appropriately designed with respect to the sighting of any structure and site alteration, including grading filling, removal of trees, stonewalls, or other existing landscape features that are consistent with the scenic quality of the road.
  - 1l. Encouraging landowners understanding that all newly planned roads and driveways meet environmental laws (i.e., approval for paving/disrupting flow near wetland areas, and others).
    - Designing, if possible, a access/curb cut permit application (Select Board coordinating with the State Department of Transportation/ Natural Resources).
  - 1m. Studying and taking appropriate steps to correct unsafe roads and improve safety on bends on Hebert Road and Cogswell Street.
  - 1n. Continue to inventory, inspect and repair the Town's culverts
  - 1o. Using established sign-off inspection report form for all new roads (adequate drainage, how steep, how wide for essential services).
  - 1p. Designing standards and declare all substandard roads as a public nuisance (Too narrow, twisty, poor drainage).

**2. To increase the safety and perception of safety and choices in transportation including non-motorized users, walkers, horses, that share the use our streets.**

<p>2a. Investigating roads frequently used by walkers, joggers, bikers, and horseback riders, and provide appropriate and safe walkways to the greatest extent possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using The Bike Sufficiency Ratings to further investigate pedestrian/bicycle path opportunities</li> </ul> <p>Placing bike racks and benches along roads and paths in the village areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning for both the villages of Williamstown and Foxville, and outlying neighborhoods of new growth areas, for integrating non-motorized transportation via bike paths, walking paths, and recreational trails. Where traffic is less than 1500, Annual Average Daily Traffic sharing of the road should be looked at.</li> <li>• Considering Williamstown CL 4 Town Highways for hiking and horseback riding trails.</li> </ul> <p>2b. Considering sidewalks and pedestrian walkways for the safety and convenience of pedestrian and vehicular traffic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future planning should include: adding new sidewalks to connect Construction Hill Road to South Main Street at the Post Office conforming curbs with existing sidewalks in the Village areas.</li> <li>• Repaving and upgrading of existing sidewalks in the village.</li> <li>• Working with the State to develop two pedestrian crosswalks along Route 14 of the Williamstown village for the safety of our residents: from the Gardens to the Pump and Pantry and from the Bank to Behind the Scenes Café.</li> </ul> <p>2c. Encouraging new projects to afford enough parking space so that cars are not forced to park in the road.</p> <p>2d. Encouraging road and driveway projects that provide enough room for emergency vehicles to enter and turn-around.</p> <p>2e. Placing warning signs, as necessary, near places that have horses and near farms that regularly drive tractors and pull farm equipment on roads. In areas considered unsafe, town officials should place luminous signs so visitors and residents can avoid these problem areas at night, if they meet warrants.</p>
<p><b>3. To enhance the street environment</b></p> <p>3a. Seeking funds to plant at least five trees/bushes per year on Town property in the downtown area and for other beautification areas along the rural roads in Town and entryways into the villages.</p> <p>3b. Requiring attractive transportation system elements and surroundings to reinforce community identity Preserve tree-lined areas of roadways. Property owners should be encouraged to plant new trees where older trees have been removed.</p> <p>3c. Studying the re-establishment of a few roads, which will help with traffic circulation including Henry Road which does not currently connect to Flint Road as shown on the highway Map, Erskin road from Graniteville to Gilbert Road, Cold Springs to Ferno and Grand View to reconnect with Chelsea road. Also study the potential for adding a connecting road from the Pump and Pantry to the former Lacillade Lumber.</p> <p>3d. Encouraging developments to keep large parking lots in the back of their buildings.</p> <p>3e. Update and adopt a long-plan scenic road plan based on Scenic Roadway standards promulgated by the Agency of Transportation. Williamstown has many rural, primarily gravel, roads that should be preserved for their scenic, cultural (stonewalls), and rural qualities.</p> <p>3f. Improving entry-ways into the villages to set image and bring speed down in the villages by using suggestions by the Better Back Roads Manual.</p>
<p><b>4. To promote reduction of transportation energy costs</b></p> <p>4a. Developing an integrated plan for non-motorized transportation in the Williamstown village.</p> <p>4b. Encouraging Green Mountain Transit Agency to expand the shuttle to the Foxville village area.</p> <p>4c. Seeking transportation enhancement grants for infrastructure/community attributes projects that are small in scope to reinvigorate the Town like enhancing pedestrian/bicycle, and enhancing scenic and historical assets.</p> <p>4d. Preserving Class 4 roads for recreational use, or downgrade their status to a legal trail thus retaining the public's interest in them.</p>

- 4e. Studying and coordinate planning efforts for extending plans for the Bike Path from connecting towns along the old train tracks.
- 4f. Promoting car pool programs and public transit.
- 4g. Encouraging non-motorized travel through accommodating walking, bicycling, and the use of transit in addition to a safe and coordinated street system.
- 4h. Encouraging concentrated settlement patterns, which minimizes transportation related energy costs.

**5. To be accountable to and educate the community about the roads.**

- 5a. Maintaining a long-term schedule for major and minor road improvements.
- 5b. Seeking technical assistance from the State Vermont Department of Transportation and Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission and Vermont Local Roads Program (St. Michael's College) to help our community learn about local road building and maintenance strategies.
- 5c. Updating to be more accurate the official Town Highway Map with the State

**6. To Manage Roadway Access**

- 6a. Promoting driveway interconnection of adjacent developments along major highways.
- 6b. Limiting one driveway per parcel, with special conditions for additional driveways. For example, lots with larger frontages, or those with needs for separate right and left-turn entrances.
- 6c. Encouraging shared driveways.
- 6d. Encouraging subdivision design where lots fronting on major roads have internal access from a residential street (sometimes known as, "reverse frontage").
- 6e. Providing adequate distance between the interstate and nearby curb cuts according to the following standards:

<u>Design Speed of Roadway Section (MPH)</u>	<u>Curb Cut Spacing (Feet)</u>
• 30	200
• 35	225
• 40	275

- 6f. Coordinating land use, subdivision, and site design decisions that affect access management needs along state highways with the Department of Transportation (Select Board).
- 6g. Limiting curb cuts by developing a curb cut permit application process.
- 6h. Promoting provisions for all parcels having road frontage on town and state highways, for access to be located at least 150 feet from the intersection of public road rights of way, for all uses except for single and two family dwellings, which shall be located at least 50 feet from such intersections. Distance should be measured from the radius of the driveway.
- 6i. Discouraging roadway connection roads that have cul-de-sac (dead-end) designs to enhance the safety and efficiency of our highways.
- 6j. Complying with the Williamstown Highway policy.
  - Ensuring that all newly developed private roads are brought-up to class 3 standards.
  - Ensuring maintenance of all roads not designated as Class 3 Town Highways or higher shall be the responsibility of the subdivider. The subdivider shall supply evidence and assurance that said roads will be adequately maintained either by himself/herself or by an owner's association.
  - Managing access to public roads, defining design standards for new roads, protecting scenic features along existing roads, and the upgrades or protection of un-maintained public (class 4) roads.
- 6k. Continuing to participate in Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission's Transportation Advisory Committee.

## Chapter X

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### LAND USE

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#### A. Overview

This chapter is intended to describe past and current land use patterns in Williamstown and to articulate expectations and desires regarding the town's future growth and development. The Planning Commission believes that the values expressed here are in concert with the beliefs and ideals of the residents of Williamstown.

- Protect Williamstown's rural character
- Grow at a measured and careful pace
- Avoid poor development & poorly designed projects that can be bad for business and quality of life
- Enhance and invigorate Williamstown Village
- Develop new common spaces to help bring the community together while fostering aesthetic enhancement and recreational opportunity
- Respect individual rights while recognizing that private actions must be balanced against community welfare
- Have clear, fair rules and policy in place to guide growth

There are different ways to approach land use planning and different balances that can be achieved between competing uses. While there is no correct answer, we can make choices. As the community moves forward, residents must work together to plan the way they want to use the land in Williamstown. Ideally, we will do so in a way that will benefit the common interests of our residents *and* our natural environment.

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#### B. History

Early on, most of Williamstown's land was used for farming. Farm families grew, or manufactured, almost everything they needed to live. Self-sufficiency on the family farm was a product of necessity because of isolation. Our villages started to develop in the middle 1800's due to the railroad and improved transportation that connected Williamstown to other communities. In time, they became symbolic of culture, close friendships, and places to work and residents developed beautiful public spaces that conveyed civic pride.

Originally, in the 1700's, all the land in Williamstown, and all other Vermont towns, was plotted-out on 100-acre lot grids. The State regulated the land use on a *Lot and Range* numbering system. Many of the town roads, tree lines, stonewalls, fence lines, property boundaries tend to follow these so-called straight lot lines. For example, Williamstown's Lot 2, Range 15 was originally designated as "School Lease Land." Long abandoned, this old grid system no longer applies to land ownership or taxing structure.

#### C. Evolving Land Use Patterns

Historically in Williamstown, as in many Vermont communities, most new growth occurred in a compact form within or adjacent to established centers. This pattern allowed businesses and residents to take advantage of existing services and facilities and helped to reinforce the economic and social importance of our cities and villages. It also allowed resource based industries (farming, forestry and mining) to operate with minimal interference from residential uses and access to prime land resources.

Over the past several decades, however, this pattern has changed. Much of the residential construction over the past thirty years has taken place on large lots located on back roads in more rural parts of town. With the number of new housing units outpacing population growth the impacts of this phenomenon on land use in Williamstown are significant. In some adjacent municipalities, new businesses have located along the state highways, interstate exits, and collector roads which bring commuters back and forth to work and tourists to and from their destinations, or in areas where other infrastructural improvements have been provided. While only a few locations have experienced full blown "strip development," or suburban sprawl, most of the region's communities, including Williamstown, are witnessing the emergence of these patterns to some degree. (Footnote: The Vermont Forum on Sprawl ([www.vt.sprawl.org](http://www.vt.sprawl.org)), a project of the Orton Family Foundation, defines sprawl as "low-density development that spreads from compact village centers along highways and into the countryside. Sprawl separates the places that people live from the places where they work, shop, learn, worship, and play").

In spite of these recent trends, Williamstown's historic landscape remains largely intact. There are still distinct village areas separated and surrounded by a rural countryside - characterized by farm and forest lands interspersed with residential uses.

## **D. Desired Future Land Use**

### **Introduction**

It is in Williamstown's best interests to preserve its traditional land use pattern – not just for its intrinsic values, but also because we recognize the pitfall of "sprawl." The argument is often made that sprawling patterns of growth are unnecessarily consumptive of land and energy, taxing on public services, destructive of downtowns, inflationary for land and housing costs, and in conflict with the aesthetic character of Vermont. As such, the notion that our interests could be best served by concentrating new development in or near existing settlements and/or mixed use areas is gaining traction. Williamstown, too, supports this so called "smart growth" concept with the expectation that a future influenced by this model could deliver economic, social, and environmental benefits to its residents, specifically:-

- maximizing the utility and efficiency of public service, energy and infrastructure expenditures;
- reinforcing and revitalizing the role of Williamstown village as the center of commerce, industry and community life;
- reducing development pressures on important natural resource lands;
- preserving the character and aesthetic integrity of the town and thereby, the tourism economy

Williamstown recognizes that not all new growth will or should occur within growth centers. In fact, some industrial or warehousing operations may be incompatible with the mix of uses found in residential, and

hence better suited to single use industrial parks. Furthermore, residential uses in the rural parts of town can be designed to be more sensitive to aesthetic and environmental concerns.

The following sections set forth the town's land use vision for four distinct areas of our community.

### **Village/Mixed Use Areas**

Williamstown village is the hub of our town. The village is laid-out in a linear configuration, with one square pattern in the center of the village. It contains a mix of development types and people who live in its residential areas have access to the downtown. The downtown provides the variety of employment, shopping, services, and social and municipal activities typical of a traditional village center. Another advantage for people living in the village area is that their homes are served by the public sewer and water system.

This infrastructure should also allow for expansion of this relatively dense mixed-use development pattern into the future. Williamstown therefore encourages concentrated growth in and in close proximity to the existing village and encourages a mixed-use concept within these areas. Shops and services within the village, and the school, should all be within walking distance of homes, thereby reducing reliance on cars.

There is a growing awareness that the village has lost some of its historic appeal and beauty due to unplanned growth. Furthermore, the square has been developed without setting aside a common/green space. As the Williamstown grows, it will be important to ensure that the village center is a visually interesting and an aesthetically pleasing place to live and visit.

Foxville Village (also known as Graniteville) may also provide room for guided expansion. The area of Cogswell is served by a municipal sewer from Barre Town through an inter-municipal agreement. Mixed use growth is envisioned for this area in the long-term future. Williamstown should consider any additional infrastructure improvements needed to implement this vision.

Williamstown Industrial Park is located south of the Williamstown village. Currently, the industrial park is fully developed.

Other areas that exhibit some characteristics of more traditional neighborhoods include Chelsea, Stone, Felicity, McGlynn, Graniteville, Mountain View, and Crabapple Ridge Roads. In the long-term future, these areas could be studied and considered for light mixed-uses including country stores, small shops, office space, common spaces, roadside vegetable/flower stands, and the like.

Densities for new development in Williamstown Village should reflect the traditional pattern. Lot sizes for residential uses should be relatively small (~1/4 acre or less) as should setbacks and street frontages. Commercial uses should be relatively close to the street, forego front yard parking, and be architecturally compatible with a Vermont village setting.

### **Residential/Agricultural Areas**

The purpose of the Residential and Agricultural District is to balance residential development with agricultural needs, open space, and natural resource protection by supporting low-density or "clustered" development that is appropriate with the physical capabilities of the land. Residential and agricultural land uses

include, but are not limited to houses, farms, flower and vegetable stands. Other appropriate use may include small businesses, low-impact outdoor recreation, forestry and mining, and educational uses.

Open land continues to contribute to the rural character and scenic beauty shared by all our residents. Fragmentation of open areas by non-agriculture uses should be carefully evaluated. Development should occur away from the prime agricultural soils, whenever possible. To minimize the loss of existing or potential agricultural land within these areas, “cluster” housing, (i.e., “open space subdivision”, or Planned Unit Development).

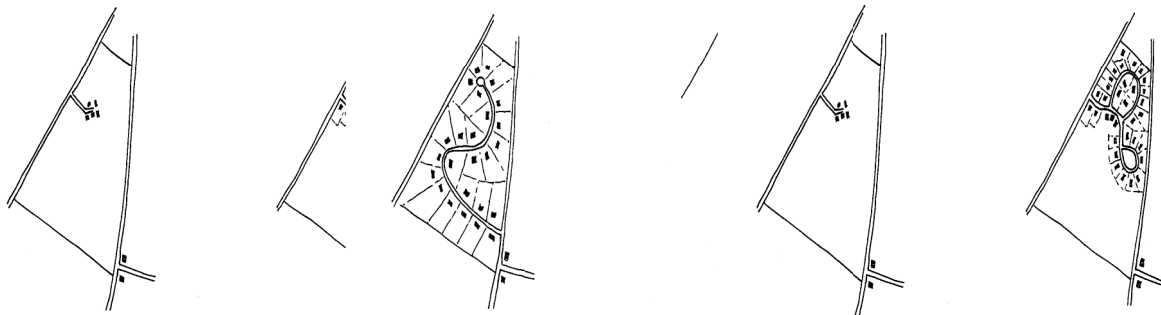
Open space subdivisions provide for increased density on a portion of a subdivided parcel in return for a commitment to keep some portion of the tract undeveloped. This can help a community meet its open space and natural resource protection goals, and concentrate its service areas, while allowing the landowner to realize his or her property equity. In addition, this form of development may reduce the cost of housing while providing home buyers with reasonably sized lots and access to protected open spaces. Research has shown that homes in "clustered" subdivisions generally appreciate faster than those in conventional subdivisions, may reduce the developer's infrastructure investment by 30 to 50 percent, and can reduce municipal service costs significantly.

### Open Space Subdivision

Existing Farm  
■ 75 acres

Conventional Subdivision  
■ 25 three acre lots

Open Space Subdivision  
■ 30 one acre lots  
■ Preserves farm & open/ag land



Overall densities in the Residential/Agricultural areas should be lower than in those areas with sewer and water infrastructure. Lot sizes under an 1 acre are discouraged except as part of a PRD/PUD subdivision.

### Interstate Interchange Areas

Interstate interchange areas tend to receive high pressure for the development of commercial and industrial uses. A study conducted by VAOT concluded that “Once development starts in these areas, sprawl begins by filling in the vacant lands between the commercial use areas. Commercial development also tends to increase. Soon people find it difficult to enter or leave businesses or homes along the road. Serious accidents increase, resulting in a higher public cost of lessening these impacts. In response, Towns tend to widen the roads in order to handle more cars and install traffic signals. The overall town population increases at a rapid pace.”

Large-scale commercial/industrial development close to the Interstate Interchange areas could lead to a decline in economic development for Williamstown village, an overtaking of town roads, increased congestion and accidents, and increased local taxes. Such development can also place undue impacts on our natural resources, wildlife, and scenic areas. However, thoughtful development of interchange areas could provide needed services, jobs, and reinforce existing development patterns. It should be recognized that not all interchange zones are appropriate for the same kind or degree of new growth.

The State of Vermont, by Executive Order and under the auspices of the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, has recognized the importance of interstate interchange areas through the production of a manual titled “*Vermont Interstate Interchange Planning and Development Guidelines*.” This document explores policy issues, characterizes interchange areas by type and offers text and pictorial guidelines to illustrate both the consequences of poor design/policy and the advantages of alternative design options.

### **Conservation and Forestry Areas**

The purpose of the Conservation and Forestry Area is to protect high elevation lands that have shallow soils and steep slopes, and the fragile resources that occur there. These areas also provide significant recharge to the ground and surface water supplies of the municipality and the region. This district encompasses the least accessible and more sparsely developed area of town where limited developmental potential exists.

Compatible uses in this district include agriculture and forestry, game preserves, environmental education, recreation, and very low-density residential development. Lot sizes under – acres are discouraged. Use of open space design principles is encouraged, where feasible. Town officials shall not provide community facilities and services to these areas.

## **E. Growth Management Tools**

### **Act 250**

Act 250 is the law governing Vermont’s unique development review process. Under this Act, larger development proposals come before a citizen panel known as a “District Commission”. This panel uses a quasi-judicial process to review proposals under its jurisdiction for compliance with ten environmental criteria. These criteria address issues ranging from traffic to water quality, wildlife and aesthetics. In order for a project to receive an Act 250 Land Use Permit, the District Commission must make “positive findings” under each criterion – that is to say it must find that the project will either have no significant undue adverse impacts, or militate against the same where they do occur.

Because Williamstown is without local land use regulations, the town’s knowledge of, and participation in, Act 250 is particularly important. Criterion 10 of the Act states that all projects must be shown to be in conformance with the municipal plan before being permitted. Generally speaking, plan language must be explicit and its directives clear to be enforceable. While the District Commission welcomes municipal participation (in fact, the host town is a “statutory party” to the proceedings), it, rather than the town makes the final judgment and ruling on this “conformance” issue.

A study of the Vermont Natural Resources Council discovered, “Act 250 is one of the reasons that Vermont has one of the strongest banks in New England: it discourages undercapitalized development that can lead to bad loans, and bad development is bad business.” However, while Act 250 can help to realize better

designed and more environmentally sensitive development, most new construction in Williamstown is not large enough to trigger jurisdiction.

District 5 of the Environmental Commission covers Williamstown. Anyone with questions about Act 250, or needing assistance in preparing an application for a project can contact the office on 324 North Main Street, Barre, Vermont 05641 at (802) 476-0185.

### **Local Land Use Regulations (Zoning & Subdivision)**

Williamstown voters have, in the past, rejected the idea of using locally developed standards to regulate and track new development. However, the planning commission and residents should strive to understand the pros and cons of local regulation in case future circumstances should call for more direct action on land use patterns.

The vast majority of municipalities in Vermont employ local land use regulations to help enforce community goals as expressed in the town plan. Originally, the primary intent of land use regulation was to separate incompatible land uses. However, it has evolved into a more sophisticated science designed to reinforce land use goals, protect important resources, promote economic development and safeguard the public health, safety and welfare. Generally speaking, zoning bylaws prescribe allowable densities and land uses for various districts within a community, while subdivision regulations control the design and layout of projects. These mechanisms are authorized by the Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act (commonly known as Chapter 117).

### **Non-Regulatory/ Incentive Based Programs:**

While land use regulations provide the most direct avenue for impacting and implementing land use pattern goals, there are some non-regulatory strategies Williamstown could consider:

- **Land Trusts/Use Value Appraisal**

As previously discussed, land trusts can enable open land to remain productive by infusing capital into agricultural or forestry operations, through the purchase of easements and/or development rights. Vermont's Use Value Appraisal program allows productive land to be taxed on the basis of current uses rather than development value.

- **Village Center Designation**

The Vermont Downtown Program, established under the Department of Housing and Community Affairs, recently released its application guidelines for the village center designation process. This village center designation, as provided for in 24 V.S.A chapter 76A, was created by the Legislature to recognize and encourage local efforts to revitalize Vermont's traditional village centers. The definition of a village center, according to the statute, is: "Village center means a traditional center of the community, typically composed of a cohesive core of residential, civic, religious, and commercial buildings arranged along a main street and intersecting streets. Industrial uses may be found within or immediately adjacent to these centers." According to the Downtown Program, village centers are to be designated to support the revitalization of what exists, not as a growth center. New growth should be expected in these village centers; however, they should not be used as a target for all new growth in a municipality.

Applications for designation must be made by the select board. Decisions regarding designation will be made by the Vermont Downtown Development Board. A municipality may seek designation for more than one village center, but each must meet the specific application requirements. Also, village centers will be designated on a three-year basis, so renewal requests will be due every three years. These renewals must demonstrate that the village center continues to meet all requirements for designation.

If a Village Center is designated under this program it will be eligible for the following benefits:

- \* 5% Vermont Income Tax Credit for Substantial Rehabilitation of Certified Historic Buildings. This credit is available for income producing buildings that apply for and qualify for the 20% Federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit. Therefore, qualifying projects receive a total tax credit of 25%.
- \* 50% Vermont Income Tax Credit for Code Improvements to Commercial Buildings. This credit is available for capital improvements to commercial buildings in order to comply with: fire, life safety, and accessibility codes; Health Department rules for food establishments; Agriculture Department rules for the sale of dairy and meats; and Agriculture Department rules on weights and measures. Only one award, up to \$5,000, can be awarded to any one building.
- \* Designated village centers will be given priority consideration for all grants administered through the State's Municipal Planning Grant Program and the Consolidated Plan for HUD funding, including the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG).
- \* Designated village centers will be given consideration and priority by the State Building Department when leasing or constructing buildings, in consultation with the community.
- \* A special assessment district in a designated village may use funds for operating costs in addition to capital expenses

- **Landowner/Developer Education**

Even in the absence of land use regulations, the Planning Commission may wish to consult with landowners and prospective developers, on a voluntary basis, to identify and mitigate potential development impacts and discuss design alternatives.

## LAND USE

Goals	Policies & Tasks
<p><b>1. To maintain vitality of Williamstown and Foxville Village areas by encouraging high-density growth.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deny infrastructure extensions for any large development outside Village/mixed Use areas.</li> <li>• Establish design guidelines in mixed-use areas, such as: lighting requirements, landscaping, pedestrian amenities, community gathering places, walking paths, recreational opportunities, services, and signage.</li> <li>• Study expanding the Williamstown Industrial Park</li> <li>• Study undeveloped land in the Williamstown village to determine if the Town sewer system has the physical capacity to accommodate average single-family residences.</li> <li>• Consider seeking Village Center designation for Williamstown Village</li> <li>• Conduct GIS “sampling” of village areas to determine prevailing densities, setbacks and frontages.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. To preserve working landscape by sustaining farm and forest land and other rural resource lands to maintain contiguous tracts of open land and minimize land use conflicts.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Encourage future development to occur in the following locations or areas:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- on the edges of fields where scenic and agricultural resource values are low</li> <li>- in forested areas that are not critical to wildlife habitats/water supply/public recreation wetlands</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Work with developers to create innovatively designed cluster developments, and conservation subdivisions</li> <li>* Conform to recommended slope development suitability as follows:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 0-3% is suitable for development</li> <li>- 3-8% is most desirable for development</li> <li>- 8-15% is suitable for low density development</li> <li>- 15-25% is unsuitable for most development and septic systems</li> <li>- 25% is not acceptable and should be avoided</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Strive to have new development be consistent with the form and function of existing uses in each of the proposed land use districts</li> <li>• Strive to update the next Town Plan to include an Official Map that includes all public improvements planned for the community that includes sidewalks, paths, village common areas, and others.</li> <li>• Consider the principles highlighted in the Interstate Interchange Design Guidelines Manual</li> <li>• Encourage repurposing and reusing of existing commercial structures</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Adopt an ordinance that regulates designs of all new commercial structures</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage exterior designs in keeping with the rural landscape already established</li> <li>• Subject to review of the Planning Commission</li> </ul>

## CHAPTER XI

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### ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES AND REGIONAL COORDINATION

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#### **A. Overview**

Williamstown does not live in its own world isolated from our neighboring towns. Our local land use decisions can have impacts outside our jurisdictional boundaries. Consideration of bordering communities' plans can help assure that the Williamstown Town Plan is consistent with the efforts our neighbors, and vice versa.

#### **B. Summary of Contiguous Towns**

Williamstown shares boundaries with 6 other municipalities: Barre Town, and the Towns of Brookfield, Berlin, Northfield, Chelsea, and Washington. A summary of the existing and planned land uses follows:

##### **Barre Town**

Williamstown shares its northern boundary with Barre Town (except for a minor section of land near the Interstate at the northwest corner). Recommended uses for areas adjoining the Barre Town border land include residential, agricultural, and recreational. It should be noted that there are many wetland areas mapped in this area. Williamstown coordinates sewer disposal with Barre Town. Barre Town serves Foxville Village. Mutual agreements are in place. Effort needs to be invested to avoid sprawl that is continuing to spread along Route 14 into Williamstown.

##### **Brookfield**

Brookfield shares one of our most important natural resource areas, Ainsworth State Park, as well as a moderate span of land at the southwestern section of our Town's border. This land area is very rural, mostly forested, hilly, and has a number of wetland areas and areas of significant habitat. The areas along Route 14 and Stone Road have scattered residential, and flood hazard areas. Land uses in both communities are agricultural, low-density residential, and recreational. Brookfield's zoning ordinance restricts most developments to 5-acre lots along the road corridors on the Williamstown border. Williamstown Gulf is protected within Ainsworth State Park.

##### **Berlin**

The town of Williamstown shares a small boundary with neighboring Berlin along our northwestern corner. This part of Williamstown is mostly forested, hilly, and contains some wetlands. Berlin considers this area as "Highland Conservation". Williamstown is linked to Berlin via Hebert Road, South Miller Road and Route 63. The town should work with Berlin to solve potential traffic/safety concerns and land use issues on the access road especially near the interstate interchange area.

##### **Northfield**

The Town of Northfield occupies Williamstown's western boundary along Interstate 89. Williamstown links roads with Northfield via interchange 5. Northfield considers this interstate exchange area as rural. If Williamstown decides to develop this area, town officials should work with Northfield town officials to solve potential traffic/safety concerns, impacts on natural heritage areas, and land use issues.

**Chelsea**

Williamstown borders Chelsea at its southeast corner. The area is characterized by low-density residential uses. Our land use areas and planning goals are largely compatible with Chelsea except that however, Chelsea has expressed concerns about Williamstown’s lack of zoning and increasing population growth. Williamstown should support efforts that balance the concerns of both towns.

**Washington**

At our eastern border is the town of Washington. Our land uses here are mostly low density and are compatible with Washington’s town plan and zoning regulations.

**Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission**

The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) was created in 1967 to provide planning assistance to municipalities within the region and create a forum for addressing those issues which transcend municipal boundaries. Williamstown is a member of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC). The Williamstown Planning Commission worked with the CVRPC in preparing this town plan to ensure it was consistent with statewide goals and compatible with the plans of adjoining towns. The Williamstown town plan is also in compliance with the Central Vermont Regional Plan.

**ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES & REGIONAL COORDINATION**

<b><i>C. Goals</i></b>	<b><i>Policies and Tasks</i></b>
<p>1. <b>To cooperate and communicate with surrounding communities.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage information sharing and working with other local, regional, and state agencies to ensure that good planning practice are followed.</li> <li>• Continue support for, and participation in, CVRPC.</li> </ul>	

## CHAPTER XII

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### IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

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The Williamstown Planning Commission hopes that this plan will alter the course of action in Williamstown's future. Most of the goals described in the town plan cannot be realized overnight and town officials cannot accomplish the vision alone. Residents have an important part to play, as well.

While the planning commission believes all of the recommendations contained in this document are important, we also recognize that some are more critical and achievable than others. We also believe that success builds on success. Accordingly, it is recommended that the town focus its energies on the following objectives over the five year lifespan of this plan as they are achievable and likely to produce "on the ground" results:

- Installing sidewalks and pedestrian walkways in Williamstown village
- Seeking space and funding for a common area in Williamstown village
- Organizing citizen advisory groups including a Conservation Commission, Transportation Committee, Facilities Improvement Committee, Housing Committee, and Williamstown Village Revitalization Committee, as described in previous chapters
- Keeping residents well informed and engaged regarding planning through the town's website, local media, public meeting, and town forums
- Seeking funds for monitoring wells in the town landfill, properly controlling site access, and coordinating protection efforts with the State Department of Natural Resources and Federal Environmental Protection Agency
- Investigating opportunities to enhance our scenic areas, including; creating car turn-offs for viewing vistas, adding benches for viewing areas, and creating trails, bike paths, and footpaths for cyclists and pedestrians
- Continuing support for our farmers market in Williamstown village
- Organizing a celebration of Williamstown (municipality open house day and events)



## APPENDIX 1: Town Officials

### Town Manager -

Garrett Earls

(802) 433-6671 (802) 433-6671

PO Box 646

Williamstown, VT 05679

E-mail-[twmgr@williamstownvt.org](mailto:twmgr@williamstownvt.org)

### Select board:

Larry Hebert - Chair

Rodney Graham - Vice Chair

Arthur Stone

Bill Ashe

Francis Covey

The Williamstown Select board meets on the first and third Mondays of each month at the Williamstown High School Library unless otherwise posted.

### Town Clerk:

Deborah Palmer [clerk@williamstownvt.org](mailto:clerk@williamstownvt.org)

### Assistant Town Clerk:

Barbara Graham

[asstclerk@williamstownvt.org](mailto:asstclerk@williamstownvt.org)

Mailing address: PO Box 646, Williamstown, VT 05679

Physical address: 2470 VT RT 14, Williamstown, VT 05679

Phone 433-5455 433-2168 | FAX: 433-2160

Hours: Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

### Williamstown Town Treasurer:

Robert Cleaves

PO Box 646

Williamstown, VT 05679

(802) 433-5455 (802) 433-5455

(802) 433-2160 Fax

e-mail: [treasurer@williamstownvt.org](mailto:treasurer@williamstownvt.org)

### Tax Collector

Please click on Tax Collector to find information on the new tax bills.

The Treasurer's office is by appointment only.

### Listers:

Willit Knight, Sr. 433-5568

Julie Ann Thayer 433-9893

Kathy Cormier, 433-1638

### Planning Commission:

The Williamstown Planning Commission meets on the second Wednesday of each month at Town Hall, unless otherwise posted. The commission is currently working on the newest version of the Town Plan.

Paige Emory, Chair 802-522-2743

Alvin Day

Horace Duke

Matt Rouleau

John Taylor

Paul Zeller

### Economic Development Committee Announcement

Residents and others interested in participating in a market this summer should call Terry Knight at 433-5568.

Members of the Committee are:

Terry Knight

Walter Brink

Rama Schneider

Wally Roberts

Frank Anello

**Board of Cemetery Commissioners**

Town of Williamstown  
PO Box 646  
Williamstown, VT 05679

Milo Winters

Debbie Palmer                    433-5455  
Julie Ann Thayer  
R. Joe Lanctot  
Paul Zeller

Kevin Henessey, Grounds Keeper

The Board of Cemetery Commissioners meets on the last Thursday of the month from April through October and on special occasions as warranted in order to conduct cemetery business. Visitors are always welcome as the Board values input and suggestions. The cemeteries are being meticulously maintained and mowed by our groundskeeper, Kevin, and are looking wonderful.

**Highway Crew**

Town Garage - 433-5571

Ed Farnham, Road Foreman

Tim Emmons  
Joe Perusse  
Bryan Palmer  
Don Smedy

**Appendix 2: Maps**

- Map 1:            Roads and Building Locations
- Map 2:            Wetlands, Wildlife Habitat and Natural Resources
- Map 3:            Land Use Plan
- Map 4:            Earth and Mineral Resources
- Map 5:            Village Redefined
- Map 6:            New Homes Built Between 2000-2009