

# DHCD Municipal Plan and Bylaw Intake

Submitted by: Anonymous user

Submitted time: Apr 18, 2025, 6:00:36 PM

Municipality

**Williston**

Regional Planning Commission

**Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission**

Submitter Details

Submitter's Name

**Matt Boulanger**

Submitter's Title

**Planning Director**

Submitter's Email

**mboulanger@willistonvt.org**

Select your Submission

**Municipal Plan**

Type of Municipal Plan Submission

**Proposed**

Date of Public Hearing

**May 20, 2025**

Upload Public Hearing Notice

**PDF** [2025 TOWN PLAN DRAFT PC Public Hearing Notice May 20 2025.pdf](#)  
177KB

Upload Municipal Plan

**PDF** [2025 TOWN PLAN DRAFT - COMPLETE DOCUMENT V.04-18-2025.pdf](#)  
21.5MB

Have you submitted the Municipal Plan to your Regional Planning Commission?

**Yes**



# **Notice of Public Hearing- New Williston Town Plan**

**Tuesday, May 20, 2025 – 7:00 PM**

**Dorothy Alling Memorial Library, 21 Library Lane**

## **Town of Williston, Vermont - Planning Commission New 2025-2033 Williston Comprehensive Plan**

The Planning Commission of the Town of Williston will hold a public hearing to consider the proposed *2025-2033 Williston Comprehensive Plan* (“Town Plan”) in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4384(c). The proposed plan will replace the *2016-2024 Williston Comprehensive Plan* upon final adoption by the Selectboard.

**WHEN:** 7:00 PM on Tuesday, May 20, 2025

**WHERE:** Zoom Webinar (ID 873 0175 0819) and Dorothy Alling Memorial Library, 21 Library Lane, Williston

The New **2025-2033 Williston Comprehensive Plan** includes the following elements for adoption:

- 1) Title, Acknowledgements, Introduction, and “How to Use this Plan”**
- 2) Plan Chapters 1-17**
- 3) Implementation Table Chapter 17**
- 4) Appendices A-D the Taft Corners Vision Plan, May 2021 , Williston Village Master Plan, 2018, Dorothy Alling Memorial Library 2024-2027 Strategic Plan, October 2024 and Energy Plan, August 2025**
- 5) Maps**
- 6) Report on State Law Compliance as required by 24. V.S.A. 4302(c)**

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** Public comment is welcomed and encouraged. Letters or emails received prior to the hearing will be added to the record and presented to the Planning Commission as testimony. Public comment at this hearing is welcomed and encouraged using the following methods:

1. Access Zoom for free on your computer or smartphone:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87301750819>
2. Call-in to the webinar: Dial 1-646-558-8656, enter the webinar ID, and press # when prompted
3. Mail or email public testimony prior to the hearing ([eheymann@willistonvt.org](mailto:eheymann@willistonvt.org); letters to: Town of Williston, c/o Planning Commission, 7900 Williston Road, Williston VT 05495)

The amendments are available for inspection on the Town website and in the Planning & Zoning Office (Monday-Friday, 8:00am – 4:30pm) at 7878 Williston Road. Go to [town.williston.vt.us](http://town.williston.vt.us)

and click on Public Records & Documents > Agendas & Minutes > Planning Commission > May 20, 2025. Questions? Call 802-878-6704 or email Matt Boulanger at [mboulanger@willistonvt.org](mailto:mboulanger@willistonvt.org).



# **WILLISTON, VT**

## **2025-2033 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**LIVABLE  
RESILIENT  
EQUITABLE**



*Adopted by the Williston Selectboard  
August \_\_, 2025*

*Transmitted by the Planning Commission  
May \_\_, 2025*





# Town of Williston, VT

Adopted:  
August \_\_, 2025

Amended:  
*Placeholder space*

Confirmed by  
the Chittenden County Regional  
Planning Commission  
\_\_\_\_\_, 2025



# HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

## HOW TO READ CHAPTERS 1-17

Chapters 1-17 each cover a different subject and are all formatted to allow for quick skimming through the entire Plan with a focus on a particular element or type of information. Here's how:

### ❖ I want facts

Each chapter begins with an introduction, background information, history, and facts. The section called **'three things to know'** highlights the most important facts that inform the goals, objectives and strategies of the chapter.

**Want to know the top three things about each chapter?**  
**READ THE RED BOXES!**

### ❖ I want opinions

Each chapter has a **green box** that contains the top three themes the public engagement process for this plan (further discussed in the [Engagement Insights Report](#)) revealed about the chapter topic.

**Want to know what the public thought about each chapter?**  
**READ THE GREEN BOXES!**

### ❖ I want the vision

Each chapter has a blue box that contains a summary of how Williston can become a more livable, resilient, and equitable place through the successful implementation of the strategies and actions.

**Want to know what the overall goals for each chapter?**  
**READ THE BLUE BOXES!**

### ❖ I want the action

Each chapter has a plain table with gold header that contains the Objectives, Strategies and Actions that will help Williston become a more livable, resilient, and equitable place.

**Want to know the actions and strategies for each chapter?**  
**LOOK FOR GOLD HEADERS!**

## **I want to learn more about *other planning efforts* that inform this Plan**

The following plans and studies are appended to this *Comprehensive Plan*:

- [Williston Housing Needs Assessment, April 2023](#)
- [Williston Village Masterplan, November 2018](#)
- [Taft Corners Vision Plan, May 2021](#)
- [Allen Brook Community Park Master Plan, February 2022](#)
- [Williston Enhanced Energy Plan, September 2020](#)
- [Chittenden County Multi-Jurisdictional All Hazards Mitigation Plan Annex 17 Town of Williston, February 2022](#)
- [Dorothy Alling Memorial Library Strategic Plan, October 2022](#)
- [Community Center and Library Spaces Scoping and Feasibility Study, October 2023](#)
- [Williston Police Department Police Services Analysis Report, November 2023](#)
- Williston Watershed Improvement Plan
- Allen Brook Flow Restoration Plan
- Etc...

## **I want to learn *even more* about everything that informed this Plan**

See the document footnotes with linked references.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). HISPANIC OR LATINO, AND NOT HISPANIC OR LATINO BY RACE. Decennial Census, DEC Demographic and Housing Characteristics, Table P9. Accessed 5/16/2024 at <https://data.census.gov/table/DECENNIALDHC2020.P9?q=Race and Ethnicity&g=060XX00US5000784475>.

# CHAPTER 18: THE "BIG TO-DO LIST"

The final chapter in the Plan assembles all the Objectives, Strategies, and Actions from the other 17 chapters and adds information about its timeframe, priority, potential cost, and how it supports the “required elements” that Vermont law requires as part of a comprehensive plan. Chapter 18 adds estimates of the relative cost, priority and timeframe of each Action. Some Actions are connected to multiple Objectives, sometimes in more than one Plan chapter. This is also noted in the Chapter 18 table.

## GLOSSARY OF SYMBOLS

These symbols will be added to selected Actions in the implementation table for the April 15 Planning Commission meeting on the Plan.



**Required element.** This symbol highlights a strategy or action that fulfills one of the twelve statutorily required elements of a Town Plan.



**High priority.** This symbol highlights a strategy or action that was determined by the Selectboard and Planning Commission, based upon public input, to be a high implementation priority.



**Achieves multiple goals.** This symbol highlights a strategy or action that is grouped within a single chapter, but also achieves livability, resiliency, or equity goals in other chapters.

## ACTION VERBS

**I want to understand what the Town will do when the Plan calls for a strategy or action**

These verbs were carefully chosen to acknowledge that successful implementation of a strategic plan depends on time, money, and people. Decision makers must be informed by well-researched and evaluated policy recommendations when deciding whether or not to take up an action.

### EVALUATE

Evaluate means research past and current performance of an existing regulation, service, program, or piece of infrastructure. Present the evaluation to appointed and elected decision-makers with recommendations or policy alternatives to consider and next steps to take.

The work product of an “Evaluate” action could be a white paper or other research project, followed by a decision on next steps, usually by the Selectboard.

### DEVELOP

“Develop” is typically the next step after “Evaluate.” Where “Evaluate” involves research and a decision on a preferred alternative or next step,” a “Develop” action is only considered complete when a project, program, or policy is put into place, constructed, or adopted.

The work product of a “Develop” Action might be:

1. Develop a project-such as a park – including design, construction, management plan, programming

## IMPLEMENT

2. Develop a program, for example a new Town department or a new function within a Town Department.
3. Develop a policy, like a zoning bylaw amendment or ordinance.

Put an existing approved plan or recommendations from a study that predates this Comprehensive Plan into effect.

The work product for an “Implement” Action:

1. Adjust an existing program or workflow to accommodate the action or strategy in

## MAINTAIN

Continue an existing service or policy, level of service, or provision of a piece of infrastructure. While the Plan does not contain an exhaustive list of efforts the Town will continue to implement, it does identify specific “implement” Actions that are important to achieving the Objectives and Strategies called for in the Plan.

The work product of a “Maintain” Action is to intentionally “keep on keeping on” with an existing effort- in service of a newly adopted Strategy or Objective.

## SUPPORT

Allocate staff or volunteer time, Town money, promotion, or resources for efforts that are not originated by the town.

The work product of a “Support” Action is to put time and effort into a partnership between the Town and an organization that is not the Town whose work helps the Town achieve Objectives or Strategies identified in this Plan.

## FUND

“Fund” is an Action in the Comprehensive Plan, but it cannot by itself commit the Town to allocating funding or making a budget decision- the Elected Officials and Voters have that right and responsibility. In the context of this Plan, “Fund” means that a funding decision (be it “yes” or “no”) was brought before the appropriate body.

The work product of a “Fund” Action is:

1. For large expenses, funding is approved by the voters through bond votes or other ballot measures.
2. For smaller items and operational items, this means the Selectboard decides whether to include funding in the 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan or in the fiscal year Operating Budget.

## PRIORITIZE

Prioritize is an action that usually takes place within an Evaluate, Develop, Implement, or Fund, Action.

The work product of a “Prioritize” Action is the identification and consideration of relevant priorities within the work produced under a Evaluate, Develop, Implement, or Fund Action.

## CONSIDER

This plan does **NOT** use ‘consider’ in lieu of more specific calls to action with a measurable end point. “Consider” is generally replaced with “Evaluate,” which specifies a physical work product and an informed decision by an elected or appointed body.



# ACRONYM GLOSSARY

I want to understand the acronyms used throughout this Town Plan

| Acronym | Zoning Districts as of WDB Version April 1, 2025              |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| ARZD    | State of Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development |
| MRZD    | Midway Residential Zoning District                            |
| MUCZD   | Mixed-Use Commercial Zoning District                          |
| CCRPC   | Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (see also MPO) |
| GZDN    | Gateway Zoning District North                                 |
| GZDS    | Gateway Zoning District South                                 |
| GZDW    | Gateway Zoning District West                                  |
| IZDE    | Industrial Zoning District East                               |
| IZDW    | Industrial Zoning District West                               |
| RZD     | Residential Zoning District                                   |
| TCFBCZD | Taft Corners Form-Based Code Zoning District                  |
| VZD     | Village Zoning District                                       |

| Acronym | Full Term                                                             |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ACCD    | State of Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development         |
| ANR     | State of Vermont Agency of Natural Resources                          |
| AOT     | State of Vermont Agency of Transportation (see also VTrans)           |
| CCRPC   | Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (see also MPO)         |
| CRS     | Community Rating System                                               |
| CVSD    | Champlain Valley School District                                      |
| CUD     | Communications Union District                                         |
| DHCD    | State of Vermont ACCD Department of Housing and Community Development |
| DRB     | Development Review Board                                              |
| DPW     | Williston Department of Public Works                                  |
| EMS     | Emergency Medical Services                                            |
| FEMA    | Federal Emergency Management Agency                                   |
| GMP     | Green Mountain Power                                                  |
| HDA     | Habitat Disturbance Assessment                                        |
| HDAC    | Historic and Design Advisory Committee                                |
| IRP     | Integrated Resource Plan                                              |
| LESA    | Land Evaluation Site Assessment                                       |
| LOEP    | Local Emergency Operations Plan                                       |
| MPO     | Metropolitan Planning Organization (see also CCRPC)                   |
| NFIP    | National Floodplain Insurance Program                                 |



|               |                                                                                 |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>PUC</b>    | Vermont Public Utilities Commission                                             |
| <b>TIF</b>    | Tax Increment Finance District                                                  |
| <b>UPWP</b>   | Unified Planning Work Program                                                   |
| <b>VEC</b>    | Vermont Electric Cooperative                                                    |
| <b>VELCO</b>  | Vermont Electric Power Company                                                  |
| <b>VSA</b>    | Vermont Statutes Annotated                                                      |
| <b>VTRANS</b> | State of Vermont Agency of Transportation (see also AOT)                        |
| <b>VGS</b>    | Vermont Gas Systems                                                             |
| <b>VSPC</b>   | Vermont System Planning Committee                                               |
| <b>WABA</b>   | Williston Arts and Business Association (not in existence, an action item idea) |
| <b>WCJC</b>   | Williston Community Justice Center                                              |
| <b>WDB</b>    | Williston Unified Development Bylaw                                             |
| <b>WENTS</b>  | Williston Essex Network Transportation Study                                    |
| <b>WOTM</b>   | Williston on the Move                                                           |
| <b>WWIP</b>   | Williston Watershed Improvement Plan                                            |

# VISION & VALUES STATEMENT

Williston's Planning Commission began its public engagement for the *2025-2033 Williston Comprehensive Plan* with "Livable, Resilient, Equitable" in mind.

## Livable

Across thousands of years and into the most recent decades, people have made Williston their home. It is a place that supports, sustains, educates, connects, and inspires people. Williston, Vermont is a livable place. The people of Williston have consistently expressed their desire that Williston continue to provide a high quality of life for all within its borders. Keeping Williston livable - even as the environmental, economic, demographic, and cultural conditions around us change - requires constant work on the part of the town and its people.

## Resilient

Since it became a town in 1763, the defining characteristic of Williston has been change. For the life of the 2025-2033 Town Plan and beyond, Williston will continue to be driven by a changing climate, a changing economy, and a changing population. Change brings both challenge and opportunity, but resilience in the face of change usually requires action. Williston will face a changing retail landscape, climate change, technological advances, and other challenges that will be disruptive if they are not planned for and addressed proactively.

## Equitable

In 2022, Williston adopted a [Town Values Policy](#) stating the Town's commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism. Williston's planners are committed to implementing this policy in the 2025 Town Plan. Additionally, Williston's planners used the principles and practices in the American Planning Association [Planning for Equity Policy Guide](#) throughout the engagement process discussed in Engagement Insights Report and in drafting concrete, tangible actions for the implementation of this Town Plan.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## Selectboard

Ellie Beckett  
Greta D'Agostino  
Mike Isham  
Jeanne Jensen  
Ted Kenney, chair  
\*Terry McCaig

## Planning Commission

Meghan Cope  
Hana Kessler, vice chair  
Chapin Kaynor  
Shayla Livingston, chair  
Mickey Myat  
Jill Pardini  
Steve Shepard

## Municipal Staff

Matt Boulanger, Planning Director  
Emily Heymann, Senior Planner  
Melinda Scott, Energy and Community  
Development Planner  
David Moroney, Conservation Planner  
Hanna Hartman Planning Technician  
\*Andrew Plumb, Conservation Planner and  
Planning Technician  
\*Simon Myles, Conservation Planner and Planning  
Technician

Erik Wells, Town Manager  
Erin Dickinson, Assistant Town Manager  
Bruce Hoar, Public Works Director  
Christine Doherty, Assistant Public Works  
Director  
Aaron Collette, Fire Chief  
Tim Gerry, Deputy Fire Chief  
Patrick Foley, Police Chief  
\*Jane Kearns, Library Director

## Other Town Boards & Committees

Conservation Commission: David Westman, Eric Howe, Reed Carr, Kim Coleman, Laura Meyer, Gary Hawley  
Historic and Design Advisory Committee: Emily Morton, John Marcotte, Alex Pintair, \*Karen Fragnoli-Munn,  
\*Brian Forrest, \*Chelsea Levis  
Energy Committee: Reed Parker, Kevin Thorley, Matt Wood, Kevin Batson, Eric Hillmuth, Michael Lazorchak,  
\*Dar Gibson, and \*Maria Gingras  
Housing Committee: Charlie Magill, Debbie Ingram, Lisa Braden Harder, Marla McQuiston, Mikala Kaseweter,  
\*Scott Rogers, and \*Monika Rivera  
Catamount Community Forest Management Committee: Danielle Doucette, Reed Parker, Hans Buehler,  
\*Terry Marron, Jeff Fehrs, Drew Crandall  
*\*Indicates a past appointed or elected official or town employee who contributed to this plan but was not  
present at its adoption.*

## University of Vermont Interns and Leadership Champlain Service Project

*Sustainable Urban Planning Communities of Practice Faculty Mentor, Ravi Venkataraman, Students Abby  
Goldman, Margot Mental, Willem Kahn, and Bayla Steinke. Leadership Champlain 2023 Service Project  
Cohort: Elizabeth Cote, Amelia Cayer, Stacy Brown, Zach Berger, Sara Campbell*

**Thank you** to all town and regional organizations, partnerships, and citizen groups who participated in the drafting process. Thank you to all people who participated in the engagement process. After adoption, please stay involved in the implementation of the Williston 2025-2033 Comprehensive Plan!

**Thank you** to the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission for their review and assistance including: Maya Balassa, Planner; Darren Schibler, Senior Planner & Project Manager; Melanie Needle, GIS & IT Manager; Taylor Newton, Planning Program Director.



# INTRODUCTION

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## The Fabric of Community

See that thread hanging from the cuff of your faded jeans? Of course you do; we all have them. Give it a tug. See how easily it breaks?

Now, grab the cuff and try to tear it. Go on, pull hard. Woven into fabric as it is, that delicate thread takes on remarkable strength. Any individual thread can be easily snapped by a child, yet a strong adult can't tear the fabric.

The power of many.

The same is true in a town. How many times have you heard the phrase, 'a tight-knit community?' What exactly is woven together to create that sense of being tightly knit?

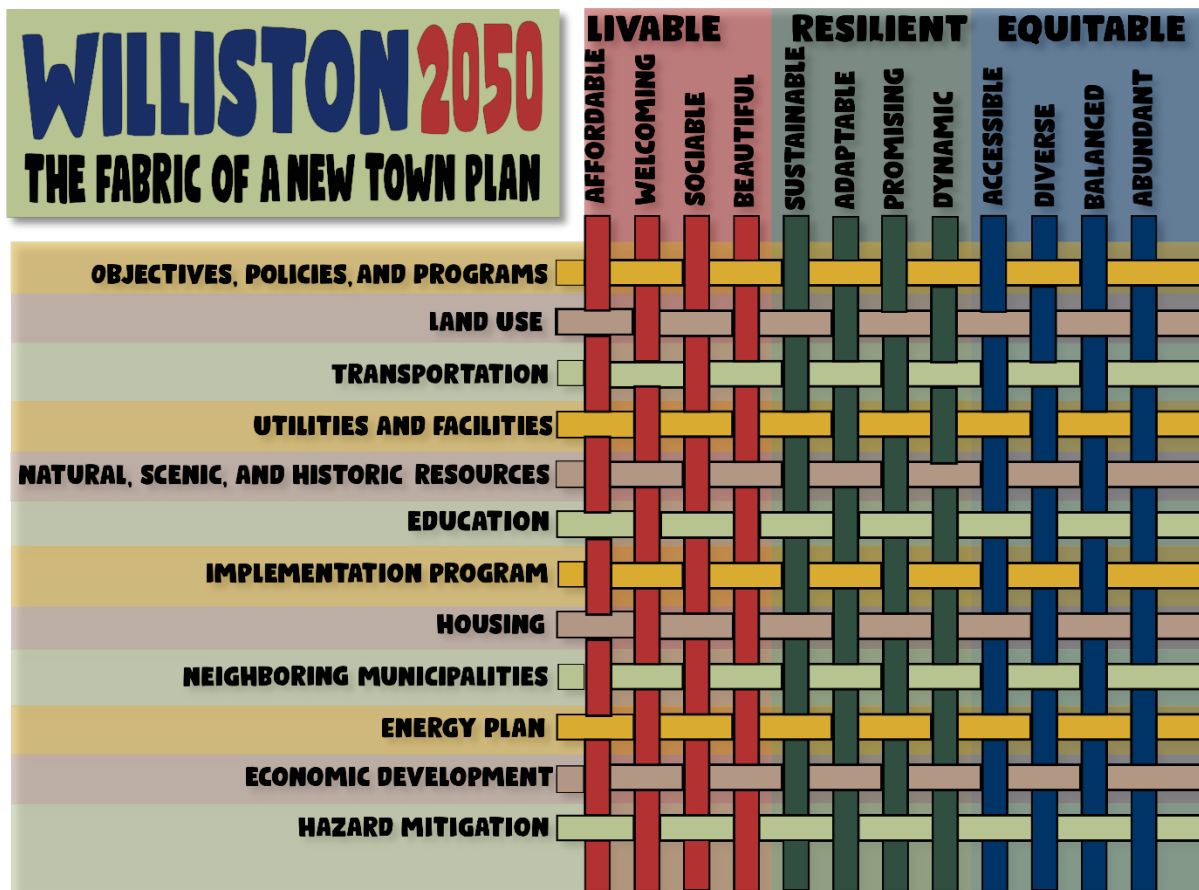
The answer is simple: the fabric is a shared story that defines the fundamental qualities of the community and everyone who lives there.

You hold that story in your hands.

Every eight years, Williston's Staff Planners and Planning Commission, in cooperation with the people who live and work here, write a new town plan that presents our collective vision for the future of Williston and how we will turn that vision into an achievable reality. The plan tells our collective story: who we are, what defines us, how we got here, where we're going, and why we're going there.

## Weaving Required Elements of a Comprehensive Plan (the "What") into Livable/Resilient/Equitable (the "Why" and "How")

Our story, this fabric that defines us, is woven from two opposing but complementary threads. They're shown in the diagram below, created by Williston Town Planner Matt Boulanger. On the left are the "required elements" – the commitments we make in our role as a responsible Vermont community, required by State statute to be integral to a Comprehensive Plan. We agree to put into place and support objectives, policies and programs that are in alignment with state-level planning goals. We engage in responsible and effective land use and transportation practices. We work hard to ensure the availability of town utilities and facilities that support a comfortable standard of living for the people who live and work here. We protect and preserve our considerable natural resources, carefully balanced against the realistic needs for town growth and development. We create strong, future and capability-focused education programs, energy policies, and housing programs designed to meet the current and future residential needs of Williston, taking into account a wide range of factors including changing demographics, economics, and town geography. We work closely with neighboring communities to ensure cooperation, communication, and collaboration on our most important initiatives. We focus strongly on economic development that is in concert with our town growth strategy and develop clear strategies and plans to deal with the inevitable impact of climate change.



Those factors shown along the left side of our Williston community fabric are the ‘what’ factors that we agree to support. They’re tactical outcomes of a well-thought-out strategy, characterized by responses to ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions, which are lined up across the top of our fabric.

The *why* is what drives us. Why do we create this plan every eight years? To ensure that we take into account every possible factor required to have a town where we live and work that is livable, resilient, and equitable. To be a place where people *want* to live rather than *have* to live. To be a community that wants for very little. And to be a place that focuses on a constantly evolving future because that’s how the world works, while never forgetting the depth and richness of our past, the legacy that made us who and what we are.

And how do we do that? By weaving the painstakingly designed pattern of our town fabric. We are a livable place because we create a strong, inalienable sense of belonging for everyone—we welcome all. We are sociable and kind. We work hard to maintain the heterogeneous beauty of Williston, a diverse mix of rural, urban, and suburban environments, woven into a dynamic place that offers a broad range of affordable housing and business options.

We are an equitable community, this Williston of ours. Equitable communities are diverse communities, and diverse communities are strong and resilient and tolerant and balanced. In biology, it’s called hybrid vigor. We grow and expand and become richer as a community because of this approach, offering abundant and diverse services for all.

And we are resilient. Charles Darwin said it well. Contrary to popular myth, he never said anything about ‘survival of the fittest.’ What he *did* say was that those who survive and thrive are not the strongest, or the smartest, but those that are most adaptable to change. Change: the word of the year, the decade, the



century. Climate change. Environmental change. Political change. Economic change. Demographic change. We live with all of those in our midst; they are forces that in many ways define us. And how does Williston respond? By envisioning the possible impacts of these changes and planning for their future impact. By creating firm strategies with flexible execution plans. By relying on sustainable, responsible, energy-efficient practices in transportation, food production, business, education, housing, growth, storm water management, and waste control. By communicating and collaborating across the entirety of the fabric that defines us and our story.

Carved into the lintel above the entrance to the National Archives in Washington, D.C. is this phrase: 'The Past is Prologue.' Williston's past (Old Town Charm) establishes the foundation for our future and what it means (New Town Spirit). This plan tells the story of that future.

This is our plan. This is our community. This is our story.

- Dr. Steven Shepard, Williston Planning Commission



# TIMELINE AND PUBLIC PROCESS



## Public Engagement Timeline

|                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>May 2023</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Website &amp; 'Postcards from the Future' launched at Town Fair on Green Up Day, May 6, 2023</li><li>▪ North Star Planning hired as project consultant (with Municipal Planning Grant funding)</li></ul>    |
| <b>June – September 2023</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Williston Planning staff and North Star staff design the StoryMap, survey, and roundtable Idea Boards</li><li>▪ Pop-up events on July 4, August 8, 15, and September 29</li></ul>                           |
| <b>October – November 2023</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Roundtable events on October 19, 26, 28 and November 4, 9, &amp; 14</li><li>▪ Online survey launched on October 19<sup>th</sup></li><li>▪ Pop-up events on October 10, 17, and 29<sup>th</sup></li></ul>    |
| <b>January 2024</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Final promotion/ads for survey</li><li>▪ Online survey closes on January 29<sup>th</sup></li></ul>                                                                                                          |
| <b>February – March 2024</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Williston Planning and North Star staff analyze results and write Engagement Insights report</li><li>▪ Planning Commission forms four sub-groups in preparation of writing the town plan chapters</li></ul> |
| <b>April 2024</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Engagement Insights Report is published!</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                          |

## Plan Drafting Timeline

The draft plan was written and indexed using Microsoft SharePoint. Throughout the iterative process, view-only links were published to williston2050.com so that anyone from the public could follow the evolution of this document. Anyone could – in real time – watch the staff write the plan! This groundbreaking and unprecedented use of technology provided an enhanced level of transparency and participation to the public process. Planning staff will continue to use williston2050.com following the adoption of this plan to provide updates and progress reports on its implementation.

|                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>May-September 2024</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Planning Commission task forces write Chapters 1-17.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Team Red: Emily Heymann, staff lead; Meghan Cope; Mickey Myat, alternate</li><li>○ Team Yellow: Simony Myles &amp; Andrew Plumb, staff leads; Shayla Livingston, co-chair; Chapin Kaynor</li><li>○ Team Green: Matt Boulanger, staff lead; Hana Kessler; Ellie Beckett, vice chair</li><li>○ Team Blue: Melinda Scott, staff lead; Steve Shepard; Jill Pardini, co-chair</li></ul></li><li>▪ Chapters were published twice a month and reviewed at Planning Commission regular meetings on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays</li></ul> |
| <b>October 2024</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Town Plan Draft Iteration #1 is published to williston2050.com</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>November 2024- January 2025</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Department Head survey</li><li>▪ Continued refinement of goals, objectives, strategies, and actions by Planning staff and Planning Commission</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>February 2025</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Town Plan Draft Iteration #2 published to williston2050.com</li><li>▪ Joint Meeting #1 of Planning Commission and Selectboard to review the initial framework on February 18, 2025</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>March 2025</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Planning Staff and Planning Commission continue to refine Town Plan Draft and merge in introductory text into new framework</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>April 2025</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Town Plan Draft Iteration #3 published to williston2050.com with individual chapters and draft maps</li><li>▪ Joint Meeting #3 of Planning Commission and Selectboard to review the initial framework</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

## **\*TENTATIVE\* Plan Adoption Timeline**

|                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>April 2025</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ April 15, 2025: Joint Meeting #3 of the Planning Commission and Selectboard</li><li>▪ April 18, 2025: Final Draft Warned for public hearing and noticed to neighboring communities and the regional planning commission</li></ul>                                                                        |
| <b>May 2025</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Town Plan “Road show” – Town Fair on Green Up Day, open houses, presentations, and informational sessions</li><li>▪ May 20, 2025 Planning Commission Public Hearing and transmittal to the Selectboard</li></ul>                                                                                         |
| <b>June 2025</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>July 2025</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ TENTATIVE: July 15, 2025: Selectboard Public Hearing #1</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>August 2025</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ TENTATIVE: August 5, 2025: Planning Commission corrects the report based upon any edits made by the Selectboard at the first hearing</li><li>▪ TENTATIVE: August 19, 2025: Selectboard Public Hearing #2 and consideration for adoption</li><li>▪ August 25, 2025: 2016-2024 Town Plan Expires</li></ul> |
| <b>The Future!</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Do the thing! Implement the Town Plan!</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |



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Chapter 3 - Cultural Resources and Archaeology

Chapter 4 - Economic Development

Chapter 5 - Education and Childcare

Chapter 6 - Homes and Smart Growth

Chapter 7 - Facilities and Services

Chapter 8 - Recreation and Parks

Chapter 9 - Utilities

Chapter 10 - Transportation

Chapter 11 - Energy and Climate Resilience

Chapter 12 - Hazard Mitigation

Chapter 13 - Land-Based Conservation Resources

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Chapter 16 - Residential, Mixed-Use and Industrial Land Use

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# MAPS

Map 1 – Current land Cover

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Map 4 – Suitability for On-Site Sewage Disposal

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Map 18 – Protected Open Space

# APPENDICES

*Appendices are adopted with the 2025-2033 Comprehensive Plan and carry the same weight and effect of chapter goals, strategies, objectives, and actions.*

- A. [Taft Corners Vision Plan, May 2021](#)
- B. [Village Master Plan, 2018](#)
- C. [Dorothy Alling Memorial Library 2024-2027 Strategic Plan, October 2024](#)
- D. [Energy Plan, August 2025](#) (adopted in concert with Comprehensive Plan)



*Coming soon: These planning efforts are imminent or in process and will be considered for adoption into the 2025-2033 Comprehensive Plan when they are complete:*

- E. Recreation & Parks Master Plan, (RFQ as of April 2025)
- F. Williston Fire Department Strategic Plan (In process as of April 2025)

## **REPORTS & STUDIES**

*Reports and studies are referenced throughout the Town Plan or may be utilized when implementing an action item, but do not carry the programmatic work plan weight of Chapters and Appendices.*

### **Planning & Zoning**

- A. [Town of Williston Engagement Insights Report, April 2024](#)
- B. [Williston Housing Needs Assessment, April 2023](#)
- C. [Designated Growth Center, 15-Year Review, November 2022](#)

### **Infrastructure and Transportation**

- D. [Transportation Scoping Studies](#)
- E. [Williston Multi-Modal Hub Feasibility Study, June 2023](#)
- F. [Williston Microtransit Feasibility Study, July 2023](#)

### **Parks & Land Management**

- G. [Allen Brook Community Park Master Plan, February 2022](#)
- H. [Country Park and Conservation Area Management Plans](#)

### **Municipal Service Delivery**

- I. [Williston Police Department Police Services Analysis Report, November 2023](#)
- J. [Scoping and Feasibility Study: Community Center and Library Spaces for the Town of Williston, October 2023](#)
- K. [Fire Service Analysis, September 2021](#)

# 1 | WILLISTON'S PEOPLE



## Introduction

Planning, at its core, is about people. The purpose of writing a Town Plan is to help create the conditions that help all of Williston's people reach their full personal and professional potential. Over the course of thousands of years and well into the most recent decades, people have made this place their home because it is a place that supports, sustains, educates, connects, and inspires them.

In 2022, Williston adopted a Town Values Policy<sup>1</sup> which describes the Town's commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Anti-Racism. Williston's planners are fully committed to this policy, a commitment which is expressed comprehensively throughout the 2025 Town Plan.

Williston's planners are also committed to the principles and practices of the American Planning Association Planning for Equity Policy Guide<sup>2</sup>, which staff have utilized throughout the development and implementation of the Williston 2025 Town Plan. The guide provides specific policy guidance from an equity-based perspective, creating a framework for an 'equity in all policies' approach.

The Town Values Policy recognizes that a diverse population contributes to a stronger, healthier, and more vibrant community. The policy embraces diversity in all aspects of community life and civic engagement. It acknowledges that some community members may need more in some ways than others and commits the town to meet each community member on their own terms. It commits the town to identify and eliminate barriers that limit community engagement by creating equal opportunity and access for all, regardless of race, class, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, political views, age, ability, identity or background status.<sup>3</sup>

The objectives and strategies called for in this chapter and throughout this Plan are rooted in a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. To that end, objectives and strategies in this chapter call for taking specific actions to implement the Town Values Policy.

Let's turn our attention now to how we got to this place, and how it will guide our actions going forward.



## Goals: In 2050, Williston is....



### **LIVABLE**

...because we create a strong, inalienable sense of belonging for everyone— we welcome all. We are sociable and kind. We recognize that a diversity of people contributes to a stronger, healthier, and more vibrant community. We create opportunities for all to participate and engage.



### **RESILIENT**

...because different cultures approach problem-solving in diverse ways, and that diversity has an enriching effect on the town's innovation and resilience. We will therefore take steps to not only make our committees and boards more diverse, but we will create protocols that encourage innovative approaches to problem-solving, scenario planning, and conflict resolution.



### **EQUITABLE**

...because we are strong, resilient, diverse, tolerant, and balanced community. We are growing, expanding and becoming richer as a community because of this approach, offering abundant and diverse services for all. This Town Plan calls for implementing strategies and actions that further its commitment to diversity, inclusion, equity and anti-racism. One of the most powerful and impactful ways to do this is by taking steps to achieve a diverse representation among leadership positions including Town Boards, Committees, and staff.



## Three Things to Know

1

### **WILLISTON IS GROWING AND WILL CONTINUE TO GROW**

Williston has grown from the rural community of 1,484 it once was in 1960 to a town of 10,103 and an economic employment hub of greater Chittenden County.

2

### **WILLISTON'S PEOPLE ARE GETTING OLDER AND LIVING IN SMALLER HOUSEHOLDS.**

The demographic makeup of Williston has shifted and people aged 55 and older now make up 40% of the population. This demographic shift is reflected in smaller households.

3

### **WILLISTON IS BECOMING MORE DIVERSE, IN MULTIPLE WAYS**

While still predominantly white, Williston is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. Diversity encompasses other characteristics such as economics and physical/mental/social capacities.



## Three Things Public Engagement Told Us

1

### **WILLISTON'S PEOPLE VALUE ONE ANOTHER AND THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY IN THE TOWN**

When people were asked what they valued most about “Williston’s Homes and People,” the greatest percentage of our survey respondents noted “community,” the sense of community, its close-knit nature, the quality of community engagement in the town, and its friendliness to families and lack of “gated” communities.

2

### **WILLISTON'S PEOPLE VALUE THE UNIQUE QUALITIES OF THE TOWN**

Williston is centrally located, and offers a range of stores and restaurants, with convenient access to Burlington and to a range of retail businesses. They also place a great deal of value on the fact that Williston works hard to balance its rural and natural qualities, against the reality of needed commercial and residential development, with easy access to recreation and open space.

3

### **WILLISTON'S PEOPLE WANT ADDITIONAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR A DIVERSIFYING POPULATION**

To meet the demands of a shifting, diversifying population that includes all people, Williston needs more homes and more types of homes. Over half of the participants in the Town’s 2023 “Williston 2050” public engagement process identified Affordable Housing as their first priority in the “Homes and People” category.



Figure 1: Williston Village Circa (Year?) with Federated Church and Williston Road in foreground. Credit:

## Williston is Growing and will Continue to Grow

Since the 1960s, Williston has experienced prolonged periods of population and employment growth. It is no longer the sleepy rural community depicted at left. The town is now a vibrant and important element of greater Chittenden County. Williston's population more than doubled in the 1960s, grew steadily in the 1970s and 1980's, and grew more rapidly in the 1990's. Since

2000, Williston has resumed a rate of population growth that is significantly slower than any of the four preceding decades.<sup>4</sup> According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Williston's population in 2020 was 10,103.<sup>5</sup> At a growth rate of 16% per decade, Williston's population could approach 15,000 by the year 2050.

| Population and Population Growth of Williston Since 1960 <sup>456</sup> |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
|                                                                         | 1960    | 1970    | 1980    | 1990    | 2000    | 2010    | 2020    |
| Williston                                                               | 1,484   | 3,187   | 3,873   | 4,887   | 7,650   | 8,698   | 10,103  |
| 10-year rate of change                                                  | -       | 115%    | 22%     | 26%     | 57%     | 13.70%  | 16.15%  |
| Chittenden County                                                       | 74,425  | 99,121  | 115,534 | 131,761 | 146,571 | 156,545 | 168,323 |
| 10-year rate of change                                                  | -       | 33%     | 17%     | 14%     | 11%     | 6.80%   | 7.52%   |
| Vermont                                                                 | 389,811 | 444,732 | 511,456 | 562,758 | 608,827 | 625,741 | 643,077 |
| 10-year rate of change                                                  | -       | 14%     | 15%     | 10%     | 8%      | 2.80%   | 2.77%   |

Growth is often seen in a negative light by a town's citizens. But that negative sense often happens because of the very human fear of change, a sentiment that is rooted deep in the brain as a protection mechanism. Growth is a form of change, and as is the case with any force that affects a community, it must be managed. In Williston, management of growth is the job of Williston's Planning Commission, in collaboration with the Development Review Board and Selectboard. Williston has managed growth by developing and implementing zoning that requires it to be "Smart Growth"<sup>6</sup>





Growth is also a powerful indicator of a town's desirability, economic viability, and vibrancy. Growth implies that people want to live in a place, and by doing so, they help to stitch together a fabric of economic resiliency and community diversity that makes the town more vibrant, resilient, and livable. Consider the alternative that so many towns in Vermont and across the country have had to confront -- negative growth and its dire economic and social implications.

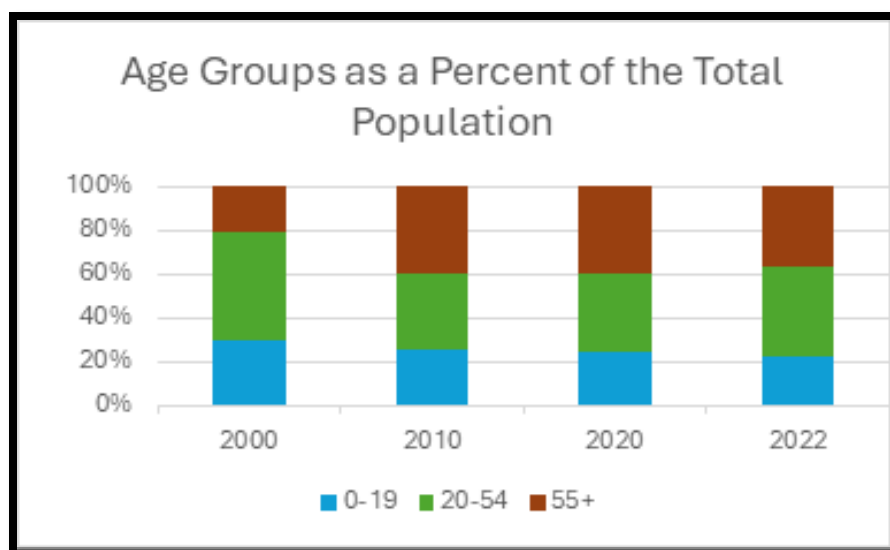
## **Williston's People are Getting Older and Living in Smaller Households**

The proportion of people in Williston over the age of 55 has doubled since 2000, from 20% of Williston's population to over 40% of Williston's population (see figure below). While this demographic trend reflects national and statewide patterns, it also shows Williston's evolution, as the buyers of the wave of single-family homes developed predominantly in the 1980's and 1990's have aged out of their child-rearing years and become empty nesters. The size of the average household in Williston is expected to decrease from 2.36 people per household (2022) to 2.12 by 2050.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> New Homes and People: 5-Year Outlook – Predicted Residential and Commercial Growth FY26-30. Memorandum from Williston Planning Staff to Williston Selectboard. November 19, 2024. Accessed 2/28/2025 at [Agenda Packet - November 19, 2024 - Selectboard Meetings 2024 - Town of Williston, Vermont](#)





The implications of this projected decline are significant for those looking to build in town and those looking to buy. In the 1950s, the American Dream emphasized home ownership. And in keeping with the family culture of the time, that home was typically a single-family dwelling, and it stayed that way through the 1990s and into the Aughts. Hence the presence of developments in Williston like Brennan Woods and South Ridge, which are exclusively single-family home neighborhoods, built during the years when, largely, people were looking to buy a house for their families. Now a days, smaller households are driving a demand for smaller homes, and more homes will be required to house the same amount of people. This exacerbates the housing shortage is one factor that drives up the cost of housing.

Even with the anticipated slowdown of the birth rate, in migration will contribute to population growth. The Williston 2024 Growth Report predicts that the town will have a population about 11,784 by the end of FY2030, which is an annual growth rate of about 1.7%.<sup>7</sup>

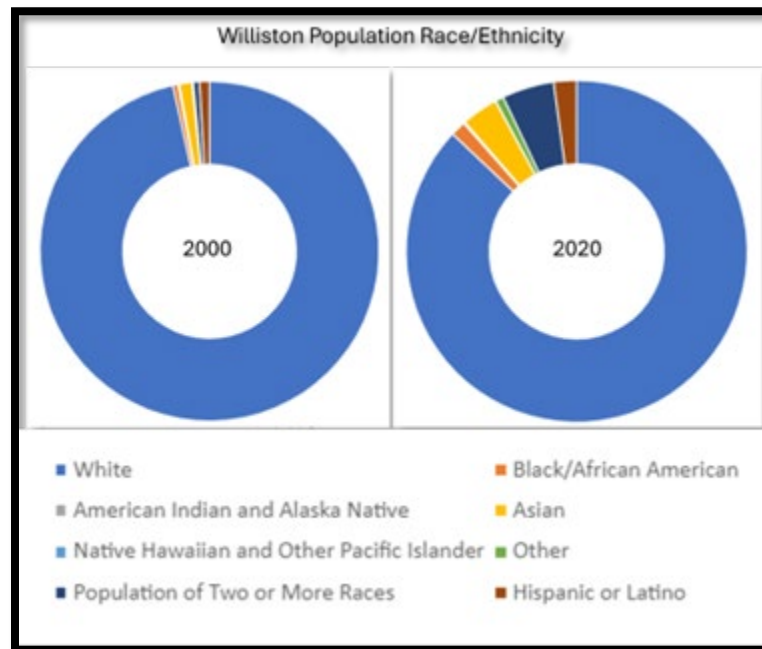
## Williston is Becoming More Diverse, in Multiple Ways

Diversity, a measure of heterogeneity, comes in many forms: economic, professional, political, personal interests, abilities, ethnicity, gender, race, and family history. A diverse town is an interesting town, a town that's filled with the qualities that make it livable, resilient, equitable, and ultimately, not boring! In biology, a genetically diverse species is said to have hybrid vigor: the more genetically diverse an organism is, the more survivable and dynamic it is—and the same can be said for towns.

Historically, Williston's population has been homogeneous with respect to race.

| RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN         | Estimate | MOE              |
|--------------------------------------------|----------|------------------|
| One race                                   | 93.2     | 2.8              |
| White                                      | 88.9     | 4                |
| Black or African American                  | 2.4      | 2.2              |
| American Indian and Alaska Native          | 0.3      | 0.4              |
| Asian                                      | 1        | 0.7              |
| Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander | 0.3      | 0.4              |
| Some other race                            | 0.4      | 0.6              |
| Two or more races                          | 6.8      | 2.8 <sup>1</sup> |

Clearly, the bulk of the town's population is white— 88.9 percent overall. However, as illustrated in the graphic to the right, there is good news on the horizon: racial and ethnic diversity have increased by several percentage points over the last two decades, with people who identify as two or more races at 6.8 percent, and Black or African American at 2.4 percent of the population. In 2000, Caucasians represented 97.45 percent of the population.<sup>8</sup> Williston's racial and ethnic population trends mirror county and statewide trends, with Chittenden County being slightly more racially diverse (85.69% white) and Vermont slightly less racially diverse (89.84% white) than Williston as of 2020.



Diversity, which often means ethnic, racial, or gender-based population statistics, is measured in other ways, as well. For example, economic diversity is an important measure. Williston's median income is \$105,490, whereas Vermont median income is \$81,211.<sup>9</sup> That said, 3.9 percent of Williston's households with children receive some form of Social Security Insurance or other public assistance,<sup>10</sup> and 4.6 percent of the town's population live below the poverty level.<sup>11</sup> In a town of roughly 10,000 people, that's 400 members of the community—a number worth paying attention to.

What about ethnic diversity, or diversity brought about by national origin? Mark Twain is famous for having written, "Travel is fatal to bigotry, prejudice, and narrowmindedness, and most of our people need it sorely on all three points." Well, travel works in two ways, one of which is to embrace and accept members of the community who have arrived from far-flung places for a variety of reasons, many of them beyond our ability to grasp.

In Williston, there are about 4,348 households, 6.4 percent of which speak a language other than English at home: 56 of them speak Spanish, 114 speak Indo-European languages, and 101 speak Asian and Pacific Island languages.<sup>12</sup>

Additionally, diversity is represented by people in the community that are differently abled. Approximately 13.1 percent of Williston's community members have some form of physical or mental disability. 3.2 percent are hearing impaired, 2.6 percent are visually impaired, 3.9 percent have cognitive challenges, 7 percent have ambulatory challenges, 2.3 percent have self-care challenges, and 6.1 percent of Williston's community members are not able to live independently for a variety of reasons.<sup>13</sup> On top of those challenges, many of these are young adults who live with aging parents who are dealing with the challenge of finding permanent, stable accommodations for their adult children.

Diversity has many measures and is a powerful indicator of the degree to which a community is livable, resilient, and equitable. These concepts are measured by the manner in which a community accepts its diversity as a strength rather than a liability, and the manner in which it helps those whose challenges make it more difficult for them to engage in daily life.

## OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

### Objectives

- 1.A** Diversity is reflected in the demographics of the Town boards and staff.
- 1.B** All have equal opportunity and access to engage and participate in community activities, regardless of race, gender, financial circumstances, age, ability or any other identity defining characteristics.
- 1.C** The town integrates equity in all planning and policy implementation.
- 1.D** Williston's people are informed, engaged, and actively participating in building community.

### Strategies

- 1.1** Identify and eliminate barriers to participation on Town Boards and Committees.

| Actions      |                                                                                                                                                                                    | Responsibility                         | Timeframe  | Cost |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------|------|
| <b>1.1.1</b> | Evaluate and identify existing barriers to participation and determine how to best address those barriers in consultation with the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission. | Town Manager<br>Planning<br>Department | Short Term | \$   |
| <b>1.1.2</b> | Maintain accessible meeting spaces and hybrid meeting options.                                  | Selectboard<br>Town Manager            | Short Term | \$   |

|                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                             |                        |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|----|
| <b>1.1.3</b>                                                                                                                                                            | Evaluate the need for and feasibility of providing accessibility to public meetings via provision of translation services, stipends for participants, and transportation.                                                                                       | Selectboard<br>Town Manager | Short Term             | \$ |
| <b>1.1.4</b>                                                                                                                                                            | Maintain standardized practices for all Boards and Committees for electing chairs, rotating responsibilities, and lengths of terms.                                                                                                                             | Selectboard<br>Town Manager | Short Term             | -- |
| <b>1.1.5</b>                                                                                                                                                            | Evaluate the time and location of public meetings annually in consultation with Board and Committee members to confirm that the time and place of meetings continue to be accessible for regular attendance.                                                    | Town Manager                | Short Term/<br>Ongoing | -- |
| <b>1.1.6</b>                                                                                                                                                            | Evaluate strategies to broaden the publicity of community events and volunteer opportunities sponsored by the Town, with a specific emphasis on reaching people who are underrepresented in participation on Town boards and committees and in town activities. | Selectboard<br>Town Manager | Short Term             | \$ |
| <b>1.2 Seek broad representation on Town Boards and Committees by engaging and encouraging participation from individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences.</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                             |                        |    |
| <b>1.2.1</b>                                                                                                                                                            | Develop ways to publicize volunteer Board and Committee positions to networks that are connected to historically marginalized groups.                                                                                                                           | Town Manager                | Short Term             | -- |
| <b>1.2.2</b>                                                                                                                                                            | Prioritize diversity of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives when making appointments to Town Boards and Committees.                                                                                                                                      | Selectboard                 | Short Term             | -- |
| <b>1.2.3</b>                                                                                                                                                            | Develop a robust onboarding and maintenance training program for town staff, volunteer boards and Committees that includes diversity, equity and inclusion.                                                                                                     | Town Manager                | Short Term             | \$ |
| <b>1.3 Ensure inclusive hiring practices that promote broad representation across backgrounds and experiences.</b>                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                             |                        |    |
| <b>1.3.1</b>                                                                                                                                                            | Evaluate ways to publicize staff positions to networks that are connected to historically marginalized groups.                                                                                                                                                  | Town Manager                | Short Term             | -- |
| <b>1.3.2</b>                                                                                                                                                            | Evaluate ways to create and operate regular anti-bias workshops or training for Town staff to help foster a more welcoming and inclusive environment.                                                                                                           | Town Manager                | Short Term             | \$ |
| <b>1.3.3</b>                                                                                                                                                            | Evaluate how to attract a diverse pool of qualified candidates when hiring for Town staff positions.                                                                                                                                                            | Town Manager                | Short Term             | -- |

## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Town of Williston, Vermont. Town Values Policy. Adopted by the Williston Selectboard on November 1, 2022. Accessed 5/16/2024 at [https://willistonvt.gov/office3.com/vertical/Sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/Town\\_Values\\_Policy\\_-\\_Adopted\\_11.01.2022.pdf](https://willistonvt.gov/office3.com/vertical/Sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/Town_Values_Policy_-_Adopted_11.01.2022.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> American Planning Association. Planning for Equity Policy Guide. Ratified by APA Board of Directors, May 14, 2019. Accessed 5/16/24 at [https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/publication/download\\_pdf/Planning-for-Equity-Policy-Guide-rev.pdf](https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/publication/download_pdf/Planning-for-Equity-Policy-Guide-rev.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Town of Williston, Vermont. Town Values Policy. Adopted by the Williston Selectboard on November 1, 2022. Accessed 5/16/2024 at [https://willistonvt.gov/office3.com/vertical/Sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/Town\\_Values\\_Policy\\_-\\_Adopted\\_11.01.2022.pdf](https://willistonvt.gov/office3.com/vertical/Sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/Town_Values_Policy_-_Adopted_11.01.2022.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> United States Census Bureau. Williston town, Chittenden County, Vermont: 2020 Census. Distributed by the United States Census Bureau, 2020. [https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile/Williston\\_town,\\_Chittenden\\_County,\\_Vermont?g=0600000US5000784475](https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile/Williston_town,_Chittenden_County,_Vermont?g=0600000US5000784475)

<sup>5</sup> United States Census Bureau. *Williston town, Chittenden County, Vermont: 2020 Census*, Table P1. [https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile/Williston\\_town,\\_Chittenden\\_County,\\_Vermont?g=0600000US5000784475](https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile/Williston_town,_Chittenden_County,_Vermont?g=0600000US5000784475) Accessed February 27, 2024.

<sup>6</sup> What Is Smart Growth? Smart Growth America, 2025. Washington, D.C. Accessed on 3/25/2025 at <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/what-is-smart-growth/>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). HISPANIC OR LATINO, AND NOT HISPANIC OR LATINO BY RACE. Decennial Census, DEC Demographic and Housing Characteristics, Table P9. Accessed 5/16/2024 at [https://data.census.gov/table/DECENNIALDHC2020.P9?q=Race and Ethnicity&g=060XX00US5000784475](https://data.census.gov/table/DECENNIALDHC2020.P9?q=Race%20and%20Ethnicity&g=060XX00US5000784475).

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). Median Household Income in the Past 12 Months (in 2023 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars). American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B19013. Accessed 3/25/2025 at [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.B19013?q=B19013: Median Household Income in the Past 12 Months \(in 2022 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars\)&g=060XX00US5000784475](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.B19013?q=B19013:Median%20Household%20Income%20in%20the%20Past%2012%20Months%20(in%202022%20Inflation-Adjusted%20Dollars)&g=060XX00US5000784475).

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Census Bureau (2023). B09010 | Receipt of Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Cash Public Assistance Income, or Food Stamps/SNAP in the Past 12 Months by Household Type for Children Under 18 Years in Households. Accessed 3/15/2025 at [https://data.census.gov/table?q=B09010:+Receipt+of+Supplemental+Security+Income+\(SSI\),+Cash+Public+Assistance+Income,+or+Food+Stamps/SNAP+in+the+Past+12+Months+by+Household+Type+for+Children+Under+18+Years+in+Households&g=060XX00US5000784475&y=2023](https://data.census.gov/table?q=B09010:+Receipt+of+Supplemental+Security+Income+(SSI),+Cash+Public+Assistance+Income,+or+Food+Stamps/SNAP+in+the+Past+12+Months+by+Household+Type+for+Children+Under+18+Years+in+Households&g=060XX00US5000784475&y=2023)

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce, "Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months," 2023. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1701*, 2023, accessed on March 25, 2025, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S1701?q=poverty+level&g=060XX00US5000784475&y=2023>.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). Limited English-Speaking Households. American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1602. Retrieved 3/25/2025 from <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2022.S1602?q=S1602>.

<sup>13</sup> Disability Characteristics. Williston, VT. U.S. Census Bureau. 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Accessed 3/25/2025 at <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2020.S1810?q=S1810>.

## 2 | ARTS AND SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE



### Introduction

Defining “social infrastructure” involves intangible elements of vibrancy, a sense of community, connection to place, and mutual support of all members. The Town’s role in facilitating social infrastructure does not come top-down but, rather, from providing the space and materials for activity, exchange, and care. The foundations are laid by good planning and design, as well as substantial public input. In particular, the needs and interests of the community’s most vulnerable members should be prioritized: when we focus on the needs of people on the margins, we create better places for everyone and generate a more inclusive community. For example, having places to sit along a path or trail benefits elders and people with mobility challenges, *and* provides a spontaneous climbing structure for a young child, a seat for a nursing mother, or a spot for conversation between friends.

The moment-by-moment use of community spaces is not scripted or enforced; rather, a diversity of physical elements are incorporated to enhance existing or create new places to gather. Physical elements could range from

providing a water-bottle filling station at a playing field to free Wi-Fi at a meeting space; shade trees and a comfortable bench along a sidewalk to landscaping or pocket park elements separating a busy road from a sidewalk cafe. These elements must adapt seasonally so that indoor community spaces can stretch outward in warm weather (porches, patios, pavilions, rooftops) and outdoor community spaces can support year-round activities (e.g. small shelters/information/first aid kit booths near trailheads; expanded bike and pedestrian infrastructure such as ‘sharrows’ on some Town roads and filling sidewalk gaps).

The best “third spaces” are usually free, anyone can go there and be there. There is no requirement to spend money – no ticket for entry or purchase to be able to be present. There is also a role for the privately-owned, publicly accessible spaces that contribute to social interaction, leisure, recreation, and the arts. These include spaces such as cafes, theaters, galleries, yoga studios, family entertainment, restaurants, and more.





## Goals: In 2050, Williston is....



### **LIVABLE**

...because people do not have to go far to experience the fullness and richness of life. A vibrant arts community is supported by accessible spaces. We are a tightly knit community, more connected to one another, and more stable in the face of a rapidly changing social environment.



### **RESILIENT**

...because of a thriving arts community. These connections and friendships become the critical support networks Vermonters and Willistonians rely on when we are confronted with challenges. Performance spaces become mutual aid hubs, social connections are leveraged during crises to meet individual and community needs, and artistic expression is a powerful tool for coping with change.



### **EQUITABLE**

...because there are indoor and outdoor spaces for people to come together. Where underrepresented populations experience higher levels of social isolation and its impacts, the support of Social Infrastructure and the Arts is even more critical.



## Three Things to Know

1

### **COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND LOCAL BUSINESSES ARE CRITICAL TO OUR INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE HEALTH AND WELLBEING.**

Numerous local non-profits, grassroots organizations, faith-based and religious organizations and other non-municipal groups provide opportunities for community members to create relationships, participate, and give back to the Williston community.

2

### **ARTS AND CULTURE ACTIVITIES HAVE A QUANTIFIABLE ECONOMIC IMPACT IN OUR REGION.**

In the greater Burlington Area, event-related spending by arts and culture audiences total \$31.5 million and total industry expenditures (FY2022) by organizations was nearly \$62 million.

3

### **WILLISTON'S PEOPLE ARE NOT IMMUNE FROM THE NATIONWIDE SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS EPIDEMIC.**

A shrinking household size and aging population means more people are physically and socially isolated. Most households are only accessible by personal vehicle, and some are not able to safely walk or bike to access necessities or parks.



## Three Things Public Engagement Told Us

1

### **WILLISTON'S PEOPLE VALUE LOCAL BUSINESSES, BALANCED BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, AND EQUITY IN THE LOCAL ECONOMY**

When asked about the economy, people would like to see more unique small businesses and shops, public gathering spaces, and restaurants and cafes in both Taft Corners and the Village. These types of businesses often support the arts, or are run by or for the art industry. A challenge is the high rent for commercial space, which can often prevent small organizations and businesses from forming or locating in Williston.

2

### **WILLISTON'S PEOPLE SAY COMMUNITY IS THE SECOND-BEST THING ABOUT WILLISTON AND COMMUNITY AND EVENT SPACE IS THE SECOND BIGGEST NEED.**

People said the first best thing was the Town's convenient location, and the first biggest need is more sidewalks and multiuse paths. There were many positive comments about the Library, its many offerings, and need for more facility space.

3

### **WILLISTON'S PEOPLE SAY THAT IT LACKS PUBLIC ART, PUBLIC EVENT SPACES, AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE BRANDING AND WAYFINDING.**

Taft Corners is an economic driver for the community, and yet to date, it does not have a public park or public art. The Village is the civic center of the community, and yet it lacks the branding and placemaking elements that typically define Vermont village centers (light posts and banners, signage, benches, and public artwork). Indoor and outdoor meeting and event spaces are limited and in high demand.

## How Are Creative Industries Doing Across Vermont?

Certain creative industries represent a bigger share of creative jobs than others, but others are catching up. Here's an in-depth look at segment sizes and growth rates.

| PERCENTAGE OF CREATIVE SECTOR JOBS BY SEGMENT (2018) |                 |                   |      |               |                   |                  |         |     |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------|---------------|-------------------|------------------|---------|-----|
| Creative Segment                                     | Addison/Rutland | Chittenden County | 3CVT | Four Counties | Northeast Kingdom | Southern Vermont | Vermont | US  |
| Culture & Heritage                                   | 4%              | 3%                | 6%   | 3%            | 4%                | 6%               | 4%      | 12% |
| Design                                               | 32%             | 25%               | 26%  | 26%           | 36%               | 22%              | 26%     | 29% |
| Film & Media                                         | 9%              | 19%               | 11%  | 9%            | 8%                | 8%               | 12%     | 20% |
| Literary Arts & Publishing                           | 7%              | 7%                | 10%  | 8%            | 5%                | 11%              | 8%      | 15% |
| Performing Arts                                      | 14%             | 13%               | 15%  | 10%           | 12%               | 14%              | 13%     | 7%  |
| Specialty Foods                                      | 19%             | 15%               | 17%  | 26%           | 19%               | 15%              | 18%     | 4%  |
| Visual Arts & Crafts                                 | 18%             | 17%               | 16%  | 19%           | 14%               | 24%              | 18%     | 13% |
| GROWTH OF CREATIVE SEGMENTS (2010-2018)              |                 |                   |      |               |                   |                  |         |     |
| Creative Segment                                     | Addison/Rutland | Chittenden County | 3CVT | Four Counties | Northeast Kingdom | Southern Vermont | Vermont | US  |
| Culture & Heritage                                   | 22%             | 2%                | 7%   | 1%            | -13%              | 12%              | 5%      | 27% |
| Design                                               | 10%             | -18%              | 9%   | 0%            | -12%              | 2%               | -7%     | 32% |
| Film & Media                                         | -22%            | 32%               | 9%   | -25%          | 3%                | -24%             | 3%      | 15% |
| Literary Arts & Publishing                           | 14%             | -6%               | -2%  | 7%            | -17%              | -16%             | -4%     | 10% |
| Performing Arts                                      | 25%             | 30%               | 26%  | 16%           | 40%               | 7%               | 23%     | -5% |
| Specialty Foods                                      | 47%             | 36%               | 67%  | 47%           | 147%              | 63%              | 53%     | 7%  |
| Visual Arts & Crafts                                 | -2%             | 11%               | -5%  | 4%            | -9%               | -10%             | -7%     | 32% |

Source: Mt. Auburn Associates, 2019

## Public Art is an Economic Driver

The arts are an important dimension of the economic vitality of a place. As of 2019, 32% of Vermont's creative jobs are within Chittenden County (9,793 out of 30,404). *"Creative people, businesses, events and activities thrive when communities offer the infrastructure and resources to support them: work and performance spaces, committees and funds, plans and policies, public spaces and gathering places."* – CreateVT Action Plan<sup>1</sup>

Specialty Foods are Vermont's fastest growing creative industry, with 53% growth between 2010 and 2018 (compared to 7% in the U.S. overall). Williston has a wide range of food and beverage production: From international corporations like Keurig/Dr Pepper and Food Science to regional companies such as Burlington Beer and Goodwater Brewery, down to smaller-scale, home-made products sold at roadside stands and farmer's markets.

Performing Arts is the only other of Vermont's creative segments that beats the national average, with 23% growth compared to 5% for the U.S. overall. Growth rates for Vermont's other segments lag behind the rest of the U.S., and Design is shrinking. Source: Mt. Auburn Associates, 2019.

The "arts" is broadly defined. The creative sector includes the visual artists, theater, and musicians, but also stretches beyond these to include writers, artisan crafters, bakers and brewers, architects, graphic designers, librarians, and media producers. Further, the creative sector is not only the people and businesses, but also the venues and institutions that host them, as well as the funders and champions to support them.

Public art is one component of raising the profile of the creativity of a community. Art can be incorporated into infrastructure and everyday items like painted utility boxes, unique bike racks and bench shapes, light posts, and signs. Similarly, community investment in the arts can be part of a public process of engagement, participation in governance, cultural outreach, and conscious inclusion.

Street murals, planters, and painted utility boxes can blend with traffic-calming features to reduce injuries associated with motor vehicles. It creates highly visible pedestrian and bicycle crossings that slow cars down and improve pedestrian feelings of safety<sup>2</sup>. Art projects foster connection and build community ownership of the project. They can be low-cost, low-risk projects that engage residents, fuel cross-sector collaboration, and contribute to placemaking.

## **Third Spaces are Important Places**

A "third place" or "third space" (as coined by sociologist Ray Oldenburg) is a social space separate from home (first place) and work (second place), serving as a neutral ground for informal, public interaction and community building, fostering connections and a sense of belonging.<sup>3</sup> Third spaces can also be used to facilitate community-based action and improve civic engagement as they serve as gathering places where residents can discuss local issues and participate in community activities.

Reducing barriers to participation and access, like cost for entry, can improve equitable access to engagement. However, the location of these spaces could still be a barrier to entry. If the predominant mode of travel to access a free art event is by car, it limits those who can participate. If a park or community garden is located in an affluent neighborhood, it may unintentionally generate perceived exclusivity among non-residents who feel "out of place"<sup>4</sup>. Local policies that prohibit certain uses of third spaces, reinforced by signage, can also erode feelings of belonging and perceived/actual ability to occupy, socialize, and participate in these spaces. When designing, formalizing, and/or maintaining these spaces, consider how the built environment, community beliefs/norms, and local policies impact participation.

## **Social Health is Public Health**

Beyond increasing the risk of anxiety and depression, social isolation and loneliness can increase the risk of heart disease, stroke, and dementia by 29%, 32%, and 50%, respectively. Poor social connection can increase risk of premature death by more than 60% (See Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation (hhs.gov))<sup>5</sup>. In response, the US Surgeon General's Advisory proposes strengthening social infrastructure by designing environments and programs that promote connection, investing in institutions that bring people together, enacting pro-connection public policies (e.g., accessible public transportation, paid family leave), mobilizing the health sector, reforming digital environments to promote meaningful connection with others, assess the causes and consequences of social disconnection in communities, and cultivate a culture of connection among community members.

A key community health priority identified in the Chittenden County Community Health Needs Assessment<sup>6</sup> was mental health and wellbeing, especially among youth and caregivers. Respondents noted few opportunities to connect to cultural resources, social isolation, and difficulty maintaining and nurturing relationships. They identified the creation of community cultural institutions where folks can interact with shared cultural identity resources and the creation of

common gathering areas where residents can connect over community meals and conversation as potential actions. Creating third spaces that facilitate connection, and conversations can break down social siloes.

The social health and wellbeing of our youth is also at critical levels. 25% of Champlain Valley School District (CVSD) high school students reported feeling sad or hopeless. 35% felt nervous, anxious, or on edge most of the time/always.<sup>7</sup> A greater percentage of female, BIPOC, and LGBTQ students reported feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and anxiety. Similarly, fewer female (61% vs. 69% male), BIPOC (56% vs. 66% WnH), and LGBTQ (50% vs. 72% HetCis) students reported feeling like they matter to people in their community. This indicates a need for improved social infrastructure for youth, especially female, BIPOC, and LGBTQ individuals. Consider how third spaces could be designed/better designed in a way that is inclusive and engage these groups.

## **The COVID-19 Pandemic**

On March 13, 2020, Governor Phil Scott issued an Executive Order declaring a State of Emergency in Vermont in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. What began nationally as a “two weeks to slow the spread” turned into an unprecedented 2+ years of disruption to all facets of daily life. “Stay home, stay safe” with order to recreate within a short radius to your home. For some, a stay-at-home order was a breath of fresh air if you had flexibility to work remotely or your homes location provided quick and convenient access to outdoor space. For others, staying at home was not possible due to working an essential job like public health or retail. For some, staying-at-home mean little to no access to outdoors, recreation, or safe social distancing.

Public spaces and neighborhood layouts that allow for safe social interaction during times of adversity are critical to our collective and individual health and well being. This chapter, as well as many other chapters, address land use and community design to strengthen social interaction.

## **OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS**

### **Objectives**

- 2.A** Williston’s land use regulations and other municipal policies actively support public art, public and private community gathering spaces – known as third places – and inclusive features in community design. Williston has identified, evaluated, and fixed local policies that inhibit the growth of the creative economy.
- 2.B** Williston creates and enhances public indoor and outdoor spaces to provide a greater quantity and diversity of indoor and outdoor public gathering spaces that are available to all people in Williston for active and passive social interaction.
- 2.C** A ‘uniquely Williston’ identity is developed, promulgated, and strengthened because Williston programmatically supports and participates in public-private partnerships that enhance the local and creative industries.

## Strategies

### 2.1

Enhance existing and create new intergenerational, public “third places” such as public facilities, buildings, parks, and multimodal transportation spaces that are functional and interactive for children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. The third place refers to the social surroundings that are separate from the two usual social environments of home and workplace.

| Actions |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Responsibility                                         | Timeframe      | Cost   |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------|
| 2.1.1   | Evaluate the existence of and need for “third places” by conducting periodic assessments to ensure these facilities are adequate in number, diverse in their offerings, equitably distributed throughout town, provide a mix of formal and informal gatherings, and passive and active social interaction.                                                                    | Public Works<br>Recreation and<br>Parks<br>Selectboard | Medium<br>Term | \$\$\$ |
| 2.1.2   | Evaluate standards in alignment with NRPA Park Metrics or other industry-accepted standard, provide amenities like pavilions that provide shade and weather protection, indoor spaces, restrooms, grills, picnic tables, water features, playgrounds, seating, and interactive design elements in existing and new public spaces to provide relaxation and play for all ages. | Recreation and<br>Parks<br>Selectboard                 | Medium<br>Term | \$\$\$ |
| 2.1.3   | Prioritize new and enhanced public “third places” in capital planning for recreation facilities schedule.                                                                                                                                                                                  | Selectboard                                            | Short Term     | \$     |
| 2.1.4   | Develop an operational practice of pursuing grant opportunities and support local fundraising efforts such as a “Friends Group” to add amenities to existing parks and public spaces, aiming to secure \$10,000 annually.                                                                                                                                                     | Recreation and<br>Parks<br>Planning and<br>Zoning      | Short Term     | \$     |
| 2.1.5   | Maintain requirements for sidewalks on both sides of the street in new neighborhoods and on new streets as a community-building as well as a transportation initiative.                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Planning and<br>Zoning                                 | Ongoing        | \$     |

### 2.2

Integrate beauty and character into the design of public spaces and multimodal transportation infrastructure in a manner that facilitates social interaction, especially among the populations most at risk for social isolation.

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                |               |    |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------|----|
| 2.2.1 | Evaluate existing and proposed public space for the presence of or ability to accommodate street furniture (e.g., movable seating, fountains, sculptures, signage), lighting, accessibility by multiple modes of transportation, prioritizing proximity to essential services and homes. | Recreation and<br>Parks Planning<br>and Zoning | Short<br>Term | \$ |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------|----|



|            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                            |             |      |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------|------|
| 2.2.2      | Support the integration of art and character into infrastructure and everyday life such as painted utility boxes, unique crosswalk designs and colors, light post banners, etc.                                                                                                                                        | Public Works                               | Medium Term | \$\$ |
| 2.2.3      | Evaluate how to choose street furniture and infrastructure elements that have design and character that is ‘uniquely Williston’ can create community identity and avoid the anonymity of the modern-day aesthetic.                                                                                                     | Public Works                               | Medium Term | \$\$ |
| <b>2.3</b> | <b>Ensure that outdoor seating and pocket parks are accessible throughout town.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                            |             |      |
| 2.3.1      | Evaluate existing spaces through observational audits, public surveys or focus groups. Map areas of town where access to pocket parks and outdoor seating is limited or not available in areas of high resident and visitor traffic.  | Planning Recreation and Parks              | Short Term  | \$   |
| 2.3.2      | Evaluate potential new locations through a community-led process and equitably prioritize the highest need areas during implementation.                                                                                                                                                                                | Planning Recreation and Parks CCRPC        | Short Term  | \$   |
| 2.3.3      | Fund integration of outdoor seating and pocket parks in the capital planning program and operating budget for maintenance of these facilities.                                                                                                                                                                         | Planning Recreation and Parks              | Short Term  | \$   |
| 2.3.4      | Evaluate design elements in creation of public space, along multiuse paths and sidewalks that encourage people to slow down and take respite, such as comfortable seating, shade, warmth and shielding from traffic.                                                                                                   | Public Works Recreation and Parks          | Medium Term | \$\$ |
| <b>2.4</b> | <b>Provide indoor and outdoor spaces to foster social engagement during winter months.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                            |             |      |
| 2.4.1      | Evaluate existing public outdoor spaces in Williston to determine opportunities to enhance them for winter use through shelter, lighting, warmth, winter activities, or other improvements.                                                                                                                            | Planning Recreation and Parks              | Short Term  | \$   |
| 2.4.2      | Develop a Winter Engagement Plan using the AARP Winter Placemaking Toolkit, Winter Cities Toolkit, or similar.                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Planning Recreation and Parks              | Short Term  | \$   |
| 2.4.3      | Evaluate how the Town could engage in winter placemaking including opportunities and funding sources.                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Planning Recreation and Parks Town Manager | Short Term  | \$   |
| 2.4.4      | Evaluate bicycle and pedestrian facilities by conducting an AARP Bike Audit, Walk Audit, or other similar multimodal safety audit.                                                                                                                                                                                     | Planning                                   | Short Term  | \$   |
| <b>2.5</b> | <b>Support arts and creative enterprises through library and recreation programming.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                            |             |      |
| 2.5.1      | Promote the offerings in Williston’s “Library of Things.” In FY 2024, the Library of Things represented less than 1% of all library loans.                                                                                                                                                                             | Library                                    | Short Term  | --   |

|                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                              |             |        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|--------|
| 2.5.2                                                                                                           | Develop an expanded Library of Things to include fine arts, creative art supplies, hardware, and other creative resources.                                                                                                                                                | Library                      | Medium Term | \$\$   |
| 2.5.3                                                                                                           | Evaluate community feedback and needs on existing programming and desires for additional programming.                                                                                                                                                                     | Library                      | Short Term  | --     |
| 2.5.4                                                                                                           | Support recreation and library staffing and resource needs to make expanded arts and creative programming enterprise programming available.                                                                                                                               | Library Recreation and Parks | Medium Term | \$\$   |
| <b>2.6 Develop a 'Uniquely Williston' identity and branding package</b> ★                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                              |             |        |
| 2.6.1                                                                                                           | Develop a Williston Branding Package to establish a cohesive design that is utilized by all municipal departments and programming, as well as available for use by non-municipal groups, organizations, and businesses. ★                                                 | Town Manager                 | Short Term  | \$     |
| 2.6.2                                                                                                           | Implement the branding package in all print and online municipal publications, a wayfinding signage package, gateway welcome signs, and street-light banners in the Village and Taft Corners.                                                                             | Town Manager Public Works    | Medium Term | \$\$\$ |
| <b>2.7 Evaluate and explore new land use regulations to support social interaction and the creative sector.</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                              |             |        |
| 2.7.1                                                                                                           | Evaluate Williston's zoning bylaws and other rules that govern new development and use of existing sites and structures to determine if there are any barriers to the arts and creative sector industries that can be reduced or eliminated.                              | Planning                     | Short Term  | --     |
| 2.7.2                                                                                                           | Develop design standards for privately owned public spaces that enhance social interaction. Integrate these standards into revised requirements for "private open areas" in the Taft Corners Form-Based Code and "neighborhood space" in other zoning districts.          | Planning                     | Short Term  | \$     |
| 2.7.3                                                                                                           | Develop design standards for private outdoor spaces that meet the needs of children and the elderly. Integrate these standards into revised requirements for "private open areas" in the Taft Corners Form-Based Code and "neighborhood space" in other zoning districts. | Planning                     | Short Term  | \$     |
| 2.7.4                                                                                                           | Explore development standards to require public art in new developments. Consider metrics such as a percentage of landscaping or construction cost to either fund the design and installation of art in the development or an offsite fund or installation.               | Planning                     | Short Term  | --     |
| 2.7.5                                                                                                           | Evaluate how to require indoor and/or outdoor common spaces in new residential and mixed-use development in a manner that does not hinder affordability and energy goals of this town plan.                                                                               | Planning                     | Short Term  | --     |
| <b>2.8 Support public art.</b>                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                              |             |        |
| 2.8.1                                                                                                           | Develop a town policy and support public art installations through inclusion of art in public sites and buildings, grant                                                                                                                                                  | Selectboard                  | Short Term  | \$     |

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                          |             |    |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|----|
|               | funding, private fundraising, and community-led or public-private partnerships.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                          |             |    |
| <b>2.9</b>    | <b>Evaluate town policies for the use of municipal property and temporary events.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                          |             |    |
| <b>2.9.1</b>  | Evaluate and streamline the Temporary Events ordinance in a manner that is supportive of the creative sector, small organizations, and marginalized groups.                                                                                                                                                  | Selectboard              | Short Term  | -- |
| <b>2.9.2</b>  | Evaluate and improve all town policies for the use of public spaces (buildings, parking lots, parks, right-of-way, or over-the-street banners, etc.) in a manner that encourages use and participation, especially by small organizations and marginalized groups.                                           | Selectboard              | Short Term  | -- |
| <b>2.9.3</b>  | Develop an improved public spaces reservation and/or rental program to increase use and access to public spaces.                                                                                                                                                                                             | Town Manager             | Short Term  | -- |
| <b>2.9.4</b>  | Prioritize the use of public spaces for charitable or publicly accessible events and programs over private or for-profit events.                                                                                                                                                                             | Selectboard              | Ongoing     | -- |
| <b>2.9.5</b>  | Develop partnerships with community organizations to cultivate the regular use of town properties for programs and activities such as farmers and artisan markets, music series, and gallery openings.                      | Town Manager             | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>2.10</b>   | <b>Facilitate the coordination and visibility of Williston's arts and creative economy by developing Public-Private Partnerships.</b>                                                                                                                                                                        |                          |             |    |
| <b>2.10.1</b> | Evaluate local policies that inhibit the growth of the creative economy and evaluate new or revised policies for their impact on the creative economy.                                                                                                                                                       | Planning Selectboard     | Short Term  | -- |
| <b>2.10.2</b> | Develop relationships to coordinate with the VT Arts Council and Vermont Creative Network (VCN) Zone Agent when executing actions within this chapter.                                                                                                                                                       | Planning                 | Short Term  | -- |
| <b>2.10.3</b> | Support the participation of elected officials and community leaders in the Vermont Creative Network.                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Town Manager Selectboard | Ongoing     | -- |
| <b>2.11</b>   | <b>Support the creation of an independent Williston Arts and Business Association (WABA).</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                          |             |    |
| <b>2.11.1</b> | Evaluate the feasibility of creating a local arts and business association by surveying community arts and business stakeholders representing local, regional, and national businesses with a presence in Williston from all sectors including arts, manufacturing, agriculture, forestry, and food service. | Town Manager             | Medium Term | \$ |
| <b>2.11.2</b> | Evaluate how to transition responsibility for WABA to private and nonprofit entities once it is established, with the Town as a member and key stakeholder.                                                                                                                                                  | Town Manager             | Medium Term | -- |

## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Vermont Creative Network (2021). Create VT: Action Plan for Vermont's Creative Sector.

<https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/vermont-creative-network/action-plan/>

<sup>2</sup> Bloomberg Philanthropies (2022). Asphalt Art Safety Study: Historical Crash Analysis and Observational Behavior Assessment at Asphalt Art Sites. Prepared by Sam Schwartz with support by Street Plans.

<https://assets.bbhub.io/dotorg/sites/43/2022/04/Asphalt-Art-Safety-Study.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Roy Oldenburg. The Great Good Place. 1991. <https://www.pps.org/article/roldenburg>

<sup>4</sup> Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2022 Dec 31. Examining Psychosocial and Economic Barriers to Green Space Access for Racialized Individuals and Families: A Narrative Literature Review of the Evidence to Date Tila Robinson, Noelle Robertson, Ffion Curtis, Natalie Darko, Ceri R Jones.

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9819928/>

<sup>5</sup> US Surgeon General (2023). <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> UVM Health (2022). 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment for Chittenden and Grand Isle Counties, Vermont. [https://d2ubrtwy6ww54e.cloudfront.net/www.uvmhealth.org/assets/2022-06/uvmmc-chna-june-2022-report.pdf?VersionId=mwcU0SPdQvf\\_To.6N\\_cEiQ8VYGTDCM1i](https://d2ubrtwy6ww54e.cloudfront.net/www.uvmhealth.org/assets/2022-06/uvmmc-chna-june-2022-report.pdf?VersionId=mwcU0SPdQvf_To.6N_cEiQ8VYGTDCM1i)

<sup>7</sup> Vermont Department of Health (2021). Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey – Champlain Valley School District.

### 3 CULTURAL RESOURCES AND ARCHAEOLOGY



#### Introduction

Vermont is laden with branding of a particular iconic landscape: quaint rural villages with churches and town halls surrounded by rolling landscapes of farms, barns, and mills. This image is rooted in 19<sup>th</sup> century economic practices, a particular agrarian culture and, for the most part, existed prior to the automobile. The image is not that of the 1950s, nor is it the 1790s. It was the tail end of the sheep industry and height of the dairy industry. The imagined landscape is deeply meaningful to what is now named Vermont and part of our shared identity – but it is not the full story.

Indigenous people have been residing here and managing the landscape for about 10,000 years, long before European settlers displaced Native groups and started sheep and cattle farms. Indigenous livelihoods made use of local topography, waterways, wildlife corridors, and plants in ways that are not always apparent on the surface of the land to present-day observers. However, Indigenous material culture is embedded in the landscape, whether as buried artifacts or remnants of settlement patterns and walking

trails. Archeology uncovers the story of Vermont's history before it was "Vermont."

The rural village settlement pattern permeates throughout our culture today: from corporate logos to family stories passed down through generations. It is important to remember our history – all history – but more so it is important to stay cognizant and aware of its context and our biases. For example, the beloved agricultural industry has an impact on the health of the natural environment and waterways. Crop fields and manure waste management flood plains impair vulnerable riverbanks and waterways. Rural lifestyles are ever more exclusive as the costs (financial and resources such as construction, fuel, and transportation) to develop and reside in low-density patterns increase and are increasingly unattainable for the average household.



## Goals: In 2050, Williston is....



### **LIVABLE**

...because its people feel a connection to its past. The presence of archaeological and cultural resources reminds all that we are not the first ones here, nor will we be the last.



### **RESILIENT**

...because its past is visible, protected, and celebrated. Understanding how people lived in the past - socially, culturally, economically and ecologically – informs how we operate and evolve into the future.



### **EQUITABLE**

...because archaeological and cultural resources, when protected and sustained, provide vital connections for those whose roots extend into the deep past of this land.



## Three Things to Know

1

### **WILLISTON'S ZONING DOESN'T PROTECT ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

There are no local protections for archaeological resources. Conducting archaeology review in conjunction with development review is costly and complex. Known archaeology sites in Williston are mostly at sites where studies have been conducted as part of the state or federal permitting processes.

2

### **WILLISTON'S CULTURAL RESOURCES ENCOMPASS MANY PLACES, THINGS, PEOPLE, AND PRACTICES**

The definition<sup>1</sup> of cultural resources is extremely broad: from places and intangible cultural practices to artifacts and objects. All are present in Williston.

3

### **WILLISTON CONTAINS PREHISTORIC SETTLEMENT SITES**

There are areas of Williston are rich in prehistoric settlement sites. Williston contains physical evidence of human habitation of different cultures.

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<sup>1</sup> For a definition of “cultural resources,” see <https://www.nps.gov/dscw/cr-nrhp.htm>





## Three Things Public Engagement Told Us

1

### **WILLISTON'S PEOPLE VALUE THE TOWN'S HISTORY**

Buildings, artifacts, landscapes and institutions are culturally significant to the Town and Willistonians value them. When people said they valued community in Williston, the presence of these resources was included in their statements.

2

### **WILLISTON'S PEOPLE VALUE ITS CULTURAL PRACTICES**

Ensuring Williston is a place that continues to have cultural practices, like farming, gathering berries, maple sugaring, and hunting is important to the people of Williston.

3

### **WILLISTON'S PEOPLE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT ITS HISTORY PREDATES EUROPEAN COLONIZATION**

Williston's people acknowledge that its history began long before European colonization and value the archaeological resources in Town that contain this evidence.

## Williston's Key Archaeological Sites

Exact archaeological site locations are not public records. These irreplaceable cultural resources are protected from public disclosure in order to protect them from in Vermont State statute (1 VSA Chapter 5, Section 317 [20]). While site specifics are intentionally limited, there is an abundance of public information about these resources.

- **Abazimenahanik "Tree Island" (AHH-baah-Zee; Men; ahh; han; eek)**

The knoll along the Allen Brook between Allen Brook School and the Williston Fire Station was inhabited seasonally by Native Americans 10,500 years ago. Thousands of primitive (pre-arrow, pre-pottery) artifacts were found when UVM conducted an archaeological dig in advance of the planned and now defunct Williston portion of the Circumferential Highway.

The area was cleared for agriculture in the 1800's. Aerial photos from 1937 show an orchard on part of it and a few ancient apple and pear trees still inhabit the slope north of Allen Brook. By the 1980's it was abandoned as pasture and is now in the early stages of succession from pasture to forest.

This plan is about returning the area primarily to Northern Hardwood Forest but also including existing passive recreation uses from stump circle classrooms to paths to sliding hills, thus the term "forest park." The plan attached here shows the location of Abazimenahanik.

## Types of Cultural Resources

- **Structures**

Williston was incorporated in 1763. The oldest standing building in Williston, Vermont is the Giles Chittenden Farmstead, also known as the Giles Chittenden House, built around 1796 by Governor Thomas Chittenden for his son Giles. There are many historic buildings dating from the late 1700s and early 1800s in Williston, with a concentration in the village center and North Williston areas. Some structures, like the Stovepipe Corners Schoolhouse on the Village Green, have been moved from their original locations. Other structures have been demolished, particularly those in the industrial and commercial area on west side of town.

- **Archaeological**

Williston has a long and rich history of human settlement far predating the last several centuries of European influence. Though the clues are not so easily found and interpreted as those of European settlement, the Williston landscape abounds with evidence of its prehistoric past. To date, almost 100 archeological sites have been documented in Williston spanning the time period from about 9500BC-1600AD. Books and articles have been written about human history and archaeological resources in this region. Though the summaries contained within this Plan are brief, hinging on reductionist, the objectives, strategies and actions recognize that comprehensive informational resources exist beyond this plan and are constantly evolving as new information and cultural interpretations are brought forth.

- **Museum Objects**

Aside from the Williston Historical Society displays in the Vermont Room of the Dororthy Alling Memorial Library, there is no museum located in Williston. A few historical objects hang in Town Hall and Stovepipe Corners Schoolhouse. In certain zoning districts, Williston's land use regulations are permissive of museums whether owned by a government institution, non-profit, or private entity.

- **Cultural Landscapes**

A geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values. Of the four general kinds, the Historic Vernacular Landscape indicative of the sheep and dairy farming era of Vermont's historic are most prevalent. Williston has many cultural landscapes. For example, deforestation for sheep farming in the 1800s was a cultural landscape that had a physical impact on the environment. While that is not a landscape to replicate in modern society, its impacts are still seen in the health of forests and settlement patterns.

## Certified Local Government

Since 1989, Williston has been a Certified Local Government (CLG) – recognizing the town’s commitment to preservation through public policy. Williston last received a CLG grant in 1990. The CLG grant allowed the town to develop a preliminary overview of archaeological resources in town, consisting of the mapping of known sites and the development of an archaeological sensitivity map based on environmental parameters. Through this grant, 65 Native American, 92 European American and 5 unspecified archaeological sites were documented. Williston is long overdue for an inventory of historic structures and archaeological resources. The strategies and actions of this plan call for a proactive utilization of the CLG benefits, such as apply for grants.

Since 1989, the Town of Williston has maintained a historic preservation ordinance in one form or another. Since 2009, historic regulations have been contained within the Williston Unified Development Bylaw. These regulations were updated in April 2025 in accordance with the goals and actions of 2018 Village Master Plan (an Appendix to the 2016-2024 Town Plan) to support adaptive reuse and clear, consistent administration of historic preservation principles.

Presently, Williston’s land use regulations only protect historic structures in the Village Zoning District, a small land area that represents less than half of all known historic structures. A cluster of historic properties can be found along North Williston Road near the railroad tracks and Winooski River (a former village center during the railroad and mill days). Homesteads with farmhouses and barns throughout rural Williston – and few remain in the industrial and commercial districts having been lost to redevelopment. As recognized in the 2018 Village Master Plan, the best plan for preservation is relevance. Historic structures that can be repurposed and respectfully modified are more likely to be economically viable and maintained. Thus, this plan calls for objectives and actions related to historic preservation town-wide, beyond the boundaries of the Village Zoning District.

## OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

### Objectives

- 3.A** Williston’s local zoning meets or exceeds current Act 250 standards for archeologic resources review in the development review process in ways that balance best practices with other land use goals.
- 3.B** Historic sites of local importance, such as historic Town Buildings and cultural recreation areas are protected and preserved for future generations. The community is knowledgeable about the human history of land today called Williston and Vermont.
- 3.C** Historic practices like farming, recreation, hunting and gathering, religious and civic assembly, and others are maintained and sustained by Williston Town policy, both in terms of Town-controlled regulation and how the Town plans for the use of its buildings and lands.

| Strategies                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                        |                |      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------|------|
| <b>3.1</b> Explore methods beyond development regulations to investigate, document, and/or preserve archaeological resources on private land. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                        |                |      |
| Actions                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Responsibility                         | Timeframe      | Cost |
| <b>3.1.1</b>                                                                                                                                  | Evaluate the best way to document the likely presence of archaeological resources while protecting information about their location from unauthorized exploration and removal.                                                                                                                                                                         | Planning                               | Short Term     | --   |
| <b>3.1.2</b>                                                                                                                                  | Prioritize parcels with likely archaeological resources when considering preservation of land using Environmental Reserve Fund (ERF) monies and the pursuit of grants and other funding sources.                                                                                                                                                       | Planning<br>Conservation<br>Commission | Ongoing        | --   |
| <b>3.2</b> Protect archeology resources when disturbance or development is proposed.                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                        |                |      |
| <b>3.2.1</b>                                                                                                                                  | Evaluate the feasibility of adopting bylaw standards to preserve and protect archeological resources, to avoid or minimize impacts to archaeological sites that may be impacted by development, in balance with other goals.                                                                                                                           | Planning                               | Short Term     | --   |
| <b>3.2.2</b>                                                                                                                                  | Evaluate how to require development to limit soil disturbance to the minimum necessary on sites where testing for potential archaeological sites has not been done.                                                                                                                                                                                    | Planning                               | Short Term     | --   |
| <b>3.2.3</b>                                                                                                                                  | Evaluate the impact of cost and permitting timeframes when considering development standards that protect archaeological resources. Evaluate these impacts before adoption of local regulation.                                                                                                                                                        | Planning                               | Short Term     | --   |
| <b>3.2.4</b>                                                                                                                                  | Evaluate the likelihood of archaeological sites being in any particular location (Similar to Act 250 review) using a predictive model. <a href="https://accd.vermont.gov/historic-preservation/review-compliance/precontact-archaeological-sites">https://accd.vermont.gov/historic-preservation/review-compliance/precontact-archaeological-sites</a> | Planning                               | Ongoing        | --   |
| <b>3.2.5</b>                                                                                                                                  | Evaluate potential impacts to archaeological resources when considering development of trails or other amenities on Town property in partnership with the Vermont Department of Historic Preservation. Recruit an archaeological consultant to conduct research, survey, and excavation if appropriate.                                                | Planning                               | Ongoing        | \$   |
| <b>3.3</b> Improve the visibility and understanding of Indigenous History, Archeological, Cultural Resources in the landscape.                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                        |                |      |
| <b>3.3.1</b>                                                                                                                                  | Prioritize Indigenous language when naming public parks and spaces. For example, consider “Abazimenanahnik” (Tree Island) as a name if a                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Conservation<br>Commission             | Medium<br>Term | \$   |

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                             |                |      |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------|
|              | Country Park is established at Allen Brook School. This park can preserve the archeological resource and enhance public education about this area's early history before European colonization.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                             |                |      |
| <b>3.3.2</b> | Develop a historic resource assessment on municipal structures including Town Hall, Town Hall Annex, and the Old Brick Church to understand their architectural history and modifications over time. Make the findings of this study publicly available through the Town web site and other publications.                                                                                                                                       | Historic & Design<br>Advisory<br>Committee<br>(HDAC)        | Medium<br>Term | \$   |
| <b>3.3.3</b> | Evaluate how to incorporate signage and Indigenous installations on the Town Green and other publicly owned spaces. Develop and execute signage plan to determine the best locations for interpretive signage that promotes knowledge about the presence (past and current) of Indigenous peoples and settlements in Williston. This signage can include landscape and geographical change, early human history to more recent farms and sites. | Conservation<br>Commission<br>HDAC<br>Historical<br>Society | Medium<br>Term | \$\$ |
| <b>3.3.4</b> | Develop ways to leverage external funding sources to conduct archaeological surveys or to protect archaeological resources. Williston is a Certified Local Government (CLG) and as such is eligible for grant funding to conduct historic research and documentation related to buildings and archaeology. Williston should use this funding where appropriate.                                                                                 | Planning                                                    | Ongoing        | \$   |

## 4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



### Introduction

Williston's place in the region as a retail commercial hub, an industrial center, and a host to many service and hospitality establishments shapes not only what it looks like, but also how it functions and funds its services. Williston's economy shapes the development pressures it experiences and provides energy and momentum that can be shaped to meet its goals. Williston's economy also creates evolving challenges and service demands.

Williston has a long history of regulating the "where, what, and how" of economic activity through zoning, and a much shorter history of shaping its public efforts and investments with the same economy in mind. This chapter contains some new goals, objectives, and strategies that will help Williston continue to shape its economy through coordinated investments in infrastructure and programming.



**Goals: In 2050, Williston is....**



### **LIVABLE**

...because the negative impacts of its economy are reduced and its benefits enhanced- and shared more broadly with its people. Economic activity drives increased vehicular traffic and demand for transportation facilities, generates a need for policing and emergency services, and creates a built environment that can enhance or be detrimental to how Williston looks, feels, and functions. Objectives, Strategies and Actions in this chapter, when achieved, will shape Williston's economy in a way that makes it more livable.





## RESILIENT

...because of a thriving and diverse economy. Resilience is often thought of as being able to withstand change- and in Vermont that has often been climate change, flooding, or growth- but what about the loss of dairy industry, end of big-box era, rise of online shopping, or How do we become more economically resilient? The Objectives, Strategies, and Actions for Economic Development are meant to ensure that economic activity and development pressure in Williston is channeled to a direction that makes the town stronger and more adaptable to change.



## EQUITABLE

...because there are indoor and outdoor spaces for people to come together. Where underrepresented populations experience higher levels of social isolation and its impacts, the support of Social Infrastructure and the Arts is even more critical.



## Three Things to Know

1

### **WILLISTON PLAYS A LARGE ROLE IN THE ECONOMY OF CHITTENDEN COUNTY AND THE STATE OF VERMONT**

Williston's location in the state and the region, along with easy access to Interstate 89, Routes 2 and 2A, and Burlington International Airport have led to the development of a diverse and vibrant mix of retail, commercial, and industrial development in the Town over the last 50 years. There are nearly 12,000 jobs in Williston, more than there are citizens of the Town.

2

### **WILLISTON HAS THE HIGHEST VOLUME OF RETAIL SALES OF ANY SINGLE MUNICIPALITY IN VERMONT**

In 2021 there were over 450 million dollars in taxable retail and service sales in Williston, 50 million dollars more than the next town, (Colchester) and more than 100 million dollars more than any other municipality in the state.

3

### **WILLISTON'S ECONOMY IS DEPENDENT ON WORKERS WHO CANNOT AFFORD TO LIVE IN WILLISTON**

Most people who work in Williston cannot afford to live in Williston. This is especially true in the retail and service sectors, which are the prime generators of the local option sales tax revenue that keeps municipal taxes relatively low in Williston.



## Three Things Public Engagement Told Us

1

### **WILLISTON'S PEOPLE VALUE THE VIBRANCY AND CONVENIENCE OF WILLISTON'S ECONOMY**

Throughout the public engagement process for this plan, people noted that Williston was a convenient place to live because of the goods and services made readily available by its economy.

2

### **WILLISTON'S PEOPLE VALUE THE REDUCTION IN PROPERTY TAXES THEY ENJOY DUE TO RETAIL ACTIVITY IN TOWN**

Economic activity in Williston reduces municipal property taxes and makes the Town a more affordable place to own property.

3

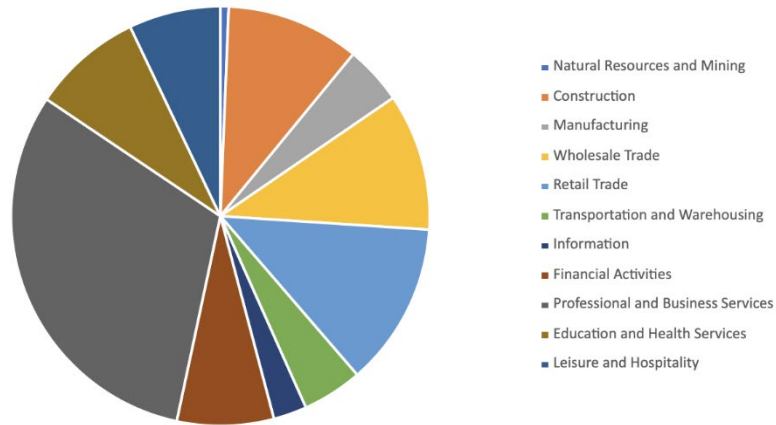
### **WILLISTON'S PEOPLE WANT TO SEE AN EXPANSION OF OPPORTUNITY FOR SMALL BUSINESSES IN TOWN**

When asked about what should change in Williston's economy, people most often said that they wanted to see more opportunities for small, local businesses to play a role.



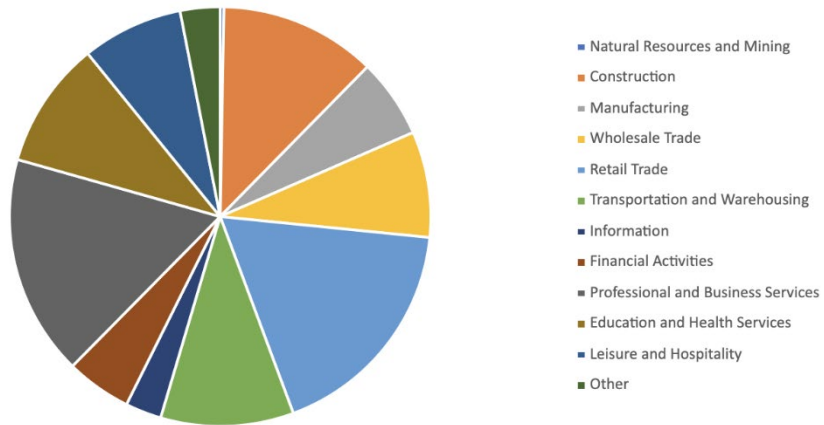
Most Willistonians do not rely on jobs in Williston for employment, but those who own their homes have their property taxes significantly offset by both the presence of a large amount of commercial and industrial property value and a vibrant retail and hospitality economy that generates local sales tax revenue. In FY 2024, 27% of Williston's municipal budget was funded by local option sales tax revenue.

2020 Establishment Distribution



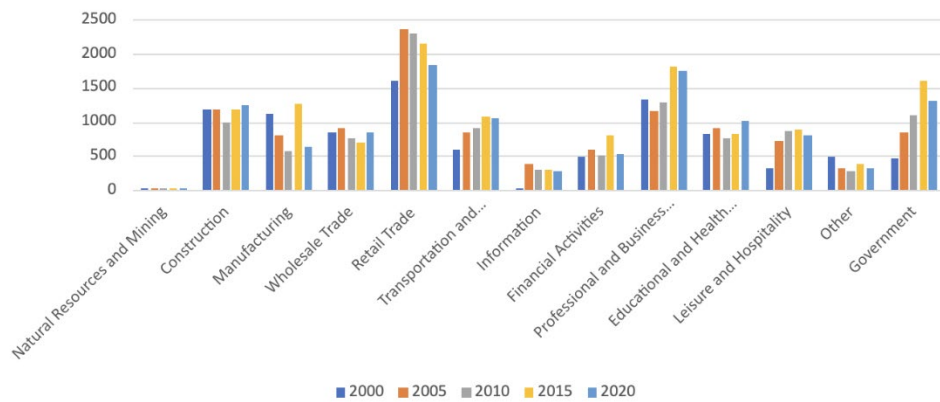
9

2020 Employment Distribution



10

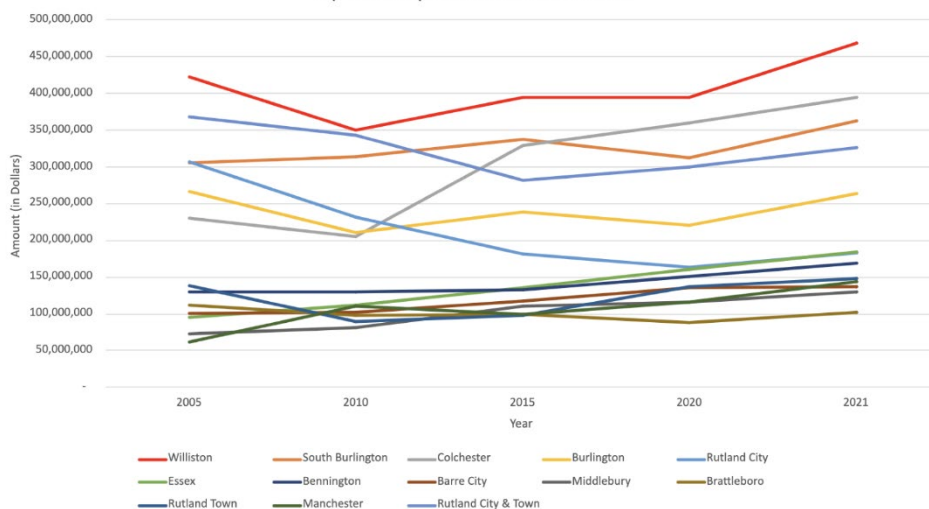
Employment by Sector, 2000 - 2020



11

| Employment by Sector, 2000-2020    |                |            |            |            |               |              |               |               |               |               |
|------------------------------------|----------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Industry                           | Establishments |            |            |            |               | Employment   |               |               |               |               |
|                                    | 2000           | 2010       | 2015       | 2020       | % Change      | 2000         | 2010          | 2015          | 2020          | % Change      |
| Natural Resources and Mining       | 3              | 5          | 4          | 5          | 66.70%        | 17           | 22            | 23            | 30            | 76.50%        |
| Construction                       | 75             | 86         | 88         | 80         | 6.70%         | 1,178        | 984           | 1,182         | 1,242         | 5.40%         |
| Manufacturing                      | 30             | 32         | 31         | 35         | 16.70%        | 1,115        | 576           | 1,273         | 629           | -43.60%       |
| Wholesale Trade                    | 67             | 88         | 82         | 82         | 22.40%        | 852          | 758           | 704           | 842           | -1.20%        |
| Retail Trade                       | 96             | 106        | 102        | 98         | 2.10%         | 1,596        | 2,299         | 2,147         | 1,832         | 14.80%        |
| Transportation and Warehousing     | 25             | 33         | 34         | 36         | 44%           | 594          | 914           | 1,070         | 1,053         | 77.30%        |
| Information                        | 15             | 20         | 22         | 20         | 33.30%        | 479          | 296           | 302           | 286           | -40.30%       |
| Activities                         | 42             | 53         | 55         | 58         | 38.10%        | 488          | 515           | 795           | 519           | 6.40%         |
| Professional and Business Services | 117            | 160        | 206        | 241        | 106.00%       | 1,319        | 1,286         | 1,819         | 1,756         | 33.10%        |
| Education and Health Services      | 53             | 50         | 56         | 66         | 24.50%        | 834          | 756           | 822           | 1,010         | 21.10%        |
| Leisure and Hospitality            | 23             | 40         | 46         | 55         | 139.10%       | 310          | 862           | 886           | 801           | 158.40%       |
| Other                              | 64             | 54         | 54         | 59         | -7.80%        | 479          | 273           | 378           | 315           | -34.20%       |
| Government                         | 20             | 20         | 26         | 25         | 25%           | 463          | 1,098         | 1,604         | 1,315         | 184%          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                       | <b>630</b>     | <b>747</b> | <b>806</b> | <b>860</b> | <b>36.70%</b> | <b>9,724</b> | <b>10,639</b> | <b>13,005</b> | <b>11,629</b> | <b>19.60%</b> |

Top Tax Receipt Towns in VT 2005 - 2021



| Educational Attainment, 2020 |                              |                   |                          |                    |              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------|
|                              | Graduate/Professional Degree | Bachelor's Degree | Associate's/Some College | HS Grad/Equivalent | No HS Degree |
| <b>Williston</b>             | 23.70%                       | 34.30%            | 23.20%                   | 12.70%             | 6.10%        |
| <b>County</b>                | 21.50%                       | 31.10%            | 23.70%                   | 18.50%             | 5.20%        |
| <b>Vermont</b>               | 18.40%                       | 26%               | 24%                      | 26.20%             | 5.50%        |
| <b>US</b>                    | 13.80%                       | 21.20%            | 28.10%                   | 26.30%             | 10.70%       |

- Overall, in Taft Corners and Williston village people want unique businesses and shops and public gathering space. People wanted restaurants and cafes in Williston Village much more than in Taft Corners.
- Housing also affected why people work in Williston but do not live here and was one of the major challenges to owning/running a business in Williston.
- Workers and business owners value the location of Williston.
- 35/214 people left a positive comment saying they were most happy with the business/economic development of Williston.<sup>1</sup>

# OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

## Objectives

- 4.A** The benefits of economic activity in Williston are leveraged by the Town to achieve the goals of this Comprehensive Plan, while the burdens and impacts are managed to ensure that all people in Williston experience it as a livable place. The negative impacts of concentrated economic activity in Taft Corners are mitigated.
- 4.B** Economic development in Williston contributes to its resilience by increasing the diversity of types, scales, and intensities of economic activity in the Town.
- 4.C** Economic activity in Williston is scaled appropriately in concert with Williston's land use goals, while allowing for flexibility for landowners and businesses.
- 4.D** A greater proportion of the workforce in Williston is able to live in Williston and benefit from the Town's status as a hub of economic activity in the region.
- 4.E** The Town's transportation infrastructure supports economic development and resiliency. Specific strategies and actions are in Chapter 10 Transportation.
- 4.F** The Local Option Sales Tax remains a stable component of Williston's municipal revenue stream, allowing the Town to invest in achieving its Comprehensive plan goals.

## Strategies

### **4.1** Refine emergency services to address the impacts of greater economic activity.

| Actions      |                                                                                                                                                                                           | Responsibility         | Timeframe      | Cost |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------|------|
| <b>4.1.1</b> | Evaluate the possibility of creating a Williston Police sub-station in Taft Corners to more efficiently respond to incidents there and serve as a hub for social service agency partners. | Police<br>Town Manager | Medium<br>Term | \$\$ |
| <b>4.1.2</b> | Evaluate establishing a Public Safety Impact Fee so new development can pay its fair share of the needs for public safety capital improvements it creates.                                | Police<br>Town Manager | Short Term     | \$\$ |

### **4.2** Ensure that desired economic activity in Williston is adequately supported by infrastructure, capacity allocation, and services.

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                         |            |    |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|----|
| <b>4.2.1</b> | Evaluate Williston's current growth and sewer allocation policies to support the Vision, Goals, and Objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, amending these as needed.  | Planning<br>Selectboard | Short Term | \$ |
| <b>4.2.2</b> | Maintain the limits on the geographic area where wastewater disposal is provided to the current boundary of the Sewer Service Area.                                                                                                                     | Selectboard             | Ongoing    | -- |
| <b>4.2.3</b> | Maintain, as a statement of policy, that the "area served by water and sewer" in Williston is the mapped Sewer Service Area in this                                                                                                                     | Planning<br>Selectboard | Short Term | -- |

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                          |                |                                                                                     |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|              | Comprehensive Plan and state affirmatively that this boundary is established due to the limitations on wastewater treatment capacity that Williston has pursuant to 24 VSA 4303 42(A).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                          |                |                                                                                     |
| <b>4.3</b>   | <b>Encourage residential development in Taft Corners, which will support small businesses.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                          |                |  |
| <b>4.3.1</b> | Evaluate Williston's Unified Development Bylaw to ensure that it allows a range of housing types from apartment buildings to smaller footprint townhouses, tri-plexes, quad-plexes and other housing types, concentrating the greater density within walking and bicycling distance of retail, restaurants, entertainment and offices.                                                                                                                                                                     | Planning                 | Short Term     | --                                                                                  |
| <b>4.3.2</b> | Maintain allowed density in the form of 4-5 story mixed-use buildings in the Taft Corners Form Based Code District to support mixed-use and mixed-income developments.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Planning<br>Selectboard  | Ongoing        | --                                                                                  |
| <b>4.3.3</b> | Maintain the balance between flexibility in Form-based Code development standards with development requirements like maximum building footprint, limited grading on sloped sites, and maximum building frontage that encourage the creation of smaller-scale commercial spaces.                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Planning<br>Selectboard  | Ongoing        | --                                                                                  |
| <b>4.4</b>   | <b>Ensure that needed infrastructure is not in conflict with land use and economic development goals.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                          |                |                                                                                     |
| <b>4.4.1</b> | Evaluate how to handle stormwater treatment collectively in Taft Corners rather than parcel by parcel. Help landowners plan stormwater comprehensively and collaboratively with one another to ensure lands whose highest and best use is mixed-use, and commercial development can be used that way, while stormwater treatment is addressed on lands less suitable for intense mixed use and commercial development.  | Planning<br>Selectboard  | Medium<br>Term | \$\$\$\$                                                                            |
| <b>4.4.2</b> | Evaluate, in collaboration with utility providers, the potential to add utility services and connections to commercial areas in a way that does not undermine the economic productivity of mixed-use and commercial properties. Communicate Williston's plans for shared access "alleys" in the Taft Corners Form-Based Code street blocks to providers of gas, water, power, and wastewater treatment.                                                                                                    | Planning<br>Public Works | Short Term     | \$                                                                                  |
| <b>4.5</b>   | <b>All existing and future development within the designated Growth Center should be exempted from Act 250 jurisdiction, as per Act 181 (H.687) passed by the Vermont State Legislature in 2024.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                          |                |                                                                                     |
| <b>4.5.1</b> | Develop an application for Act 250 Tier 1A status for the Growth Center.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Planning<br>Selectboard  | Short Term     | --                                                                                  |



|            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                           |             |          |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|----------|
| 4.5.2      | Support the effort for all existing Act 250 permits (and their conditions) within the designed Growth Center to be released.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Planning Selectboard      | Short Term  | --       |
| <b>4.6</b> | <b>Build out Taft Corners in a manner that is consistent with the Taft Corners Vision Plan and encourage phased rather than scatter-shot development.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                           |             |          |
| 4.6.1      | Develop infrastructure (build Trader Lane and/or Wright Avenue, which is also addressed in Chapter 10).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Public Works Town Manager | Medium Term | \$\$\$\$ |
| 4.6.2      | Develop infrastructure in areas where coordinated, focused development is desired (for example on the frontage of Trader Lane and Wright Avenue) in a way that encourages coherent areas of new development rather than scattered development throughout the Growth Center.                                                                                                  | Planning Selectboard      | Medium Term | --       |
| 4.6.3      | Develop focused incentives for new development inside the core of Taft Corners, the “Step One” Area(s) shown in the Taft Corners Vision Plan.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Planning Selectboard      | Medium Term | \$\$     |
| <b>4.7</b> | <b>Play an active role in the physical development of Williston’s most economically productive lands.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                           |             |          |
| 4.7.1      | Evaluate establishing the position of Economic Development Director to recruit businesses, assist businesses with grant funding opportunities, coordinate with GBIC and administer the TIF district.                                                                                                                                                                         | Selectboard               | Medium Term | \$\$     |
| 4.7.2      | Evaluate how to proactively invest in infrastructure, amenities, and redevelopment of distressed and underdeveloped properties in Williston, especially in areas where commercial and residential uses are mixed.                                                                                                                                                            | Selectboard               | Medium Term | \$\$\$   |
| 4.7.3      | Maintain pursuit of mechanisms for public investment in infrastructure and amenities that are affordable for Town residents. If the 2025 study of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) as a funding option shows that this tool is viable for Williston, pursue the approval of an application for a Tax Increment Financing district with the Vermont Economic Progress Council. ★ | Planning Selectboard      | Ongoing     | \$\$     |
| 4.7.4      | Evaluate how to encourage the adaptive reuse of vacant and underused buildings. Evaluate land use regulations to determine if more incentive or regulatory relief is necessary for adaptive reuse to be viable.                                                                                                                                                              | Planning Selectboard      | Ongoing     | \$       |

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<sup>1</sup> Town of Williston, Vermont, 2024. *Town Plan Engagement Insights Report*.  
[https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/Williston\\_2050\\_Engagement\\_Insights\\_Report\\_Final\\_April\\_2024.pdf](https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/Williston_2050_Engagement_Insights_Report_Final_April_2024.pdf). Accessed April 29, 2024.

# 5 | EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE

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## Introduction

In Williston, education has several elements, all of them interrelated. Education is a holistic experience, and as such, many elements are required to create well-rounded kids who are fully functional in society while living their most authentic lives. Williston has two public schools, Allen Brook and Williston Central School, but they do not stand alone. Immediately adjacent to Williston Central School is the Dorothy Alling Memorial Library, a close partner of both schools, and Williston Community Park and playground, with its various ball fields, seasonal ice hockey rink, skate park, primitive trails, basketball and volleyball courts, and other amenities. Running immediately behind Allen Brook and Williston Central is the Williston Bike Path, used by students and teachers alike to travel to and from school and to engage kids in physical activities.

Schools are not managed by town government; they have their own elected officials--school boards-- responsible for operations and curricular programming. Williston schools are part of the Champlain Valley School District, which also includes the towns of Hinesburg, St.

George, Shelburne and Charlotte. The Allen Brook School and Williston Central School provide grades K-8 education for Williston and St. George children. Champlain Valley Union High School in Hinesburg serves children in grades 9-12 from the five district towns.

At full capacity, Allen Brook and Williston Central School meet the needs of 1,350 students. The official (October 1, 2023) enrollment reported to the Vermont Department of Education for the 2023-2024 school year was 979, including grades K-8, pre-kindergarten, and Early Essential Education (EEE). This represents 73% of the schools' capacity. For the past five school years, school enrollment has been flat or declining.<sup>1</sup>

Champlain Valley Union High School has a maximum capacity of about 1,460 students. The SY 2023-2024 enrollment was 1,378 students, or 94% of the high school's capacity.<sup>2</sup> As with most schools, enrollment levels at CVU have fluctuated over time, peaking at 1,418 during the 2009-2010 school year. At this time, no new or expanded facilities are contemplated at CVU.



## Goals: In 2050 Williston is...



### **LIVABLE**

...because people are attracted to Williston because of the reputation of its schools, and that reputation in turn enhances property values. Schools play a crucial role in promoting the health and well-being of students and their families. They provide access to healthcare services, nutritious meals, and physical activities, which are essential for maintaining good health. Williston provides an abundance of affordable housing, making it possible for its schoolteachers and school staff to live in town. This, in turn, attracts highly competent educators and staff to the Williston schools and encourages them to stay in Williston.

Williston has a sufficient number of childcare facilities. Diverse educational opportunities are available both within and outside of the Williston public schools. Students have opportunities to engage in town governance and town projects through volunteer efforts in coordination with town departments. Adult residents have an abundance of continuing education opportunities through the library, the Recreation Department and schools.



### **RESILIENT**

...because having good schools builds the town's resilience. Williston's schools serve as community hubs, reflecting the diversity in the community and bringing people of all backgrounds together. The schools foster social cohesion, trust, and mutual support networks among residents. In times of emergency or crisis, these networks are invaluable for sharing information, resources, and emotional support, strengthening the community's ability to withstand and recover from adversity. Williston schools cultivate an environment of innovation and creativity among students and educators. They encourage experimentation, risk-taking, and learning from failures, essential traits for resilience in the face of uncertainty. The town and schools coordinate to provide opportunities for students to engage in community service projects that practice these qualities and further build resiliency. High quality education builds a responsible, engaged citizenry.



### **EQUITABLE**

...because high-quality childcare and education are available and accessible to all regardless of economic status, physical and/or mental abilities. Educational curricula and after-school enrichment activities are accessible to all and help prepare Williston's youth to engage productively and critically as adults in an increasingly diverse society. Schools provide excellent services to children in need of specialized educational services such as English language learners, children with disabilities; neurodivergent children; and children experiencing housing and food insecurity. The schools take a holistic approach to education with the understanding that every child's situation is unique and meeting each child where they are is essential to their engagement in education.



## Three Things to Know

1

### **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOUSING GROWTH AND SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IS COMPLEX.**

Many factors influence school enrollment, and more homes don't necessarily mean more school kids.

2

### **SCHOOL TAXES ARE INCREASINGLY BURDENSOME**

Act 60 fundamentally changed the relationship between schools and municipalities, and increased Williston's proportional school tax burden.

3

### **WILLISTON'S SCHOOLS ARE DIVERSE**

The student body is diverse and so are the educational offerings.



## Three Things Public Engagement Told Us

1

### **WILLISTON'S SCHOOLS ARE A SOURCE OF PRIDE**

People consider Williston's schools to be one of its greatest assets. When asked "What do you most value about Williston," several respondents mentioned the great schools.

2

### **PEOPLE ARE IMPRESSED BY WILLISTON'S SCHOOLS ENERGY INITIATIVES**

People value the school district's focus on energy efficiency and electrification, specifically mentioning the electric school buses. WCS students in particular appreciate the electric school buses, which were mentioned during school-focused public outreach and listed on Idea Boards as something they value most about Williston's energy efficiency and conservation efforts.

3

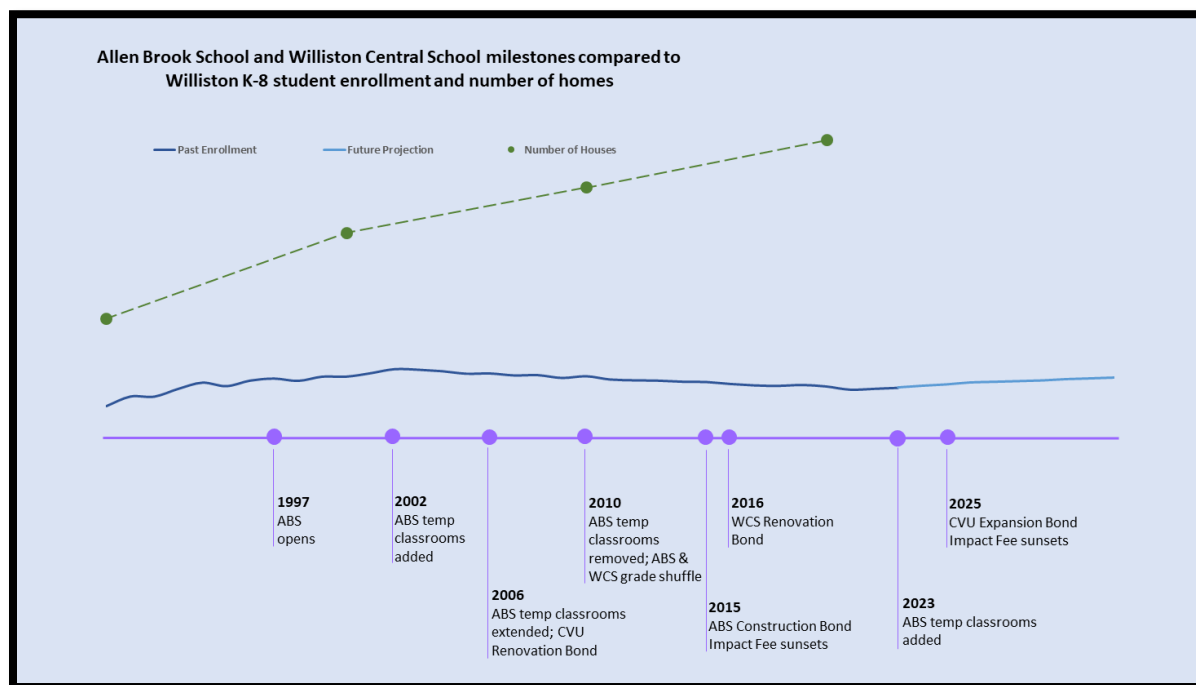
### **SCHOOL DROP OFF IS A CHALLENGE**

School drop-off was noted as one of the biggest transportation challenges in Williston, both for the daily local traffic congestion issues and for the safety concerns. This challenge presents an opportunity to encourage active forms of transportation to and from school. WCS students told us they appreciate the monthly "walk to school days" that were initiated during the 23/24 school year in partnership with Local Motion's Safe Routes to School program.

## Relationship between Housing Growth and School Enrollment

Despite steady population and housing growth, Williston and CVU school enrollment has been flat or declining over the past two decades. In 2022, Statistical Forecasting LLC completed a demographic study for the Champlain Valley School District, projecting grade-by-grade enrollments from 2022-23 through 2031-32, a ten-year period. This study sheds light on the complex and often misunderstood relationship between housing growth and school enrollment. The primary finding is that there are many other factors that influence school enrollment such as population age structure (the relative proportions of the population in each age group), birth rates, in-migration rates, length of home ownership and the type of housing being built – apartments yield an average of .105 of a student per unit as compared to .394 student per single family home.<sup>3</sup>

Mirroring statewide trends, Williston’s population is aging, and more people are choosing not to have children or to have children later in life. The size of the average household in Williston is expected to decrease from 2.36 people per household (2022 numbers) to 2.12 by 2050.<sup>4</sup> Reflecting this demographic shift, there is increasing demand for smaller homes (1 and 2-bedrooms) and a corresponding increase in construction of smaller homes in multi-unit apartments. All these factors play a role in school enrollment trends.



**FIGURE 1: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOUSING GROWTH AND SCHOOL ENROLLMENT<sup>5</sup>**

The bottom line is that factors affecting school enrollment are complex and intertwined, and enrollment trends cannot reliably be predicted by any one factor. Policies in previous Town Plans have emphasized the need for the Town to manage growth “in a way that is consistent with the capacity of the schools.” However, based on these trends and the understanding that school enrollment is influenced by a myriad of factors, not just growth of new homes, the policy of shaping land use decisions to control school enrollment is misinformed and should be revised. Williston can continue to grow its population without



exceeding the capacity of the schools. In fact, the schools are better served when student enrollment is near capacity and not declining.

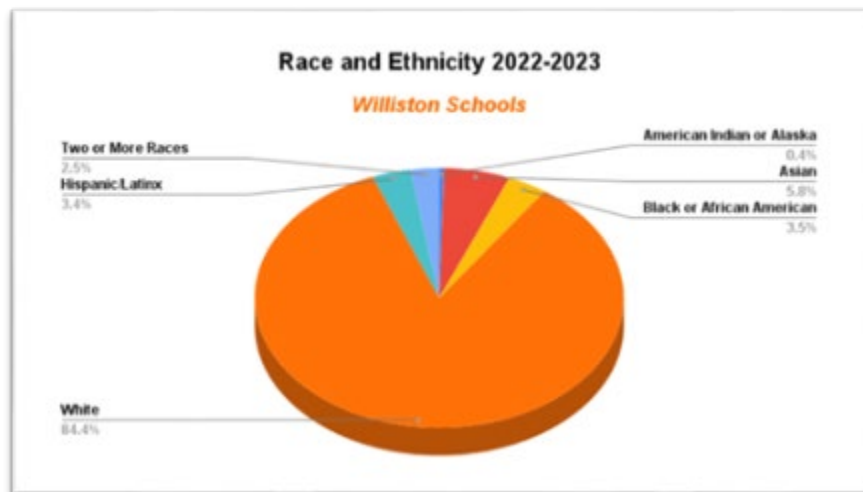
## School Taxes are Increasingly Burdensome

Despite flat enrollment trends, school tax burdens have increased as a proportion of property tax value. Since the 1997 passage of Act 60, Williston has been challenged to maintain high quality education at a reasonable cost to the town. Williston is classified as a “sharing town,” meaning that the amount of school tax revenues generated in Williston exceed the amount of revenues spent on education in Williston. The balance is distributed by the State to towns that have significantly lower tax base resources (the “receiving towns”). This affects affordability for Williston residents, as well as the town government’s budget. If people feel overly burdened by the school property tax, they are less willing and able to bear the burden of increased municipal taxes. Pressure to keep municipal taxes level will strain the municipal budget, making it challenging for the Town to make progress on meeting its long-term goals.

Despite the increasing burden of school taxes-- which the Town cannot control-- the Town should continue to invest in good streets, green space, paths and trails, affordable housing and other amenities that make Williston a great place to live, work and recreate.

## Williston’s Schools are Diverse

Williston’s schools are diverse, a quality that brings depth and richness to the educational experience. more than fifty children are multilingual learners; 15.6 percent are ethnically non-white; and 15 percent are economically disadvantaged.



CVSD is working on developing a better understanding of how to meet the needs of its diverse student body, including providing services to unhoused students and their families and to students with special needs. During the 2023-2024 school year, 24 students within the Champlain Valley School District were unhoused, up from 17 the year before. Five of them were enrolled in Williston schools.<sup>6</sup> The cost of meeting the increasing needs of students today is one factor in the disproportionately increased costs of education.

## Diversity of Educational Institutions and Programs

Of course, education comes in many forms, and Williston offers a broad cross-section of them. ABS and WCS incorporate unique outdoor and life skills education programs such as the Four Winds Program,<sup>7</sup> a parent-led program designed to give students an opportunity to study nature both in and around the

school, the ABS school garden program, the SPARK After School Enrichment Program,<sup>8</sup> and Local Motion's Bike Smart program, which teaches bike safety skills to students five years and up. The Dorothy Alling Memorial Library and Williston Recreation Department offer their own after school and summer programming for school-age children (and adults).

In addition to the public schools (Allen Brook and Williston Central (and by extension, CVU), it is home to a campus of Vermont State University and four private schools serving 200 students including Trinity Baptist School, The Bellwether School, Jean Garvin School and Brownell Mountain School.

## Childcare Needs

For kids younger than five, Williston has thirteen licensed childcare providers and six registered homes serving a total in-care population of 1,078. Does this meet the needs of Williston's population? Current projections show that while the needs for toddler and preschool care appear to be adequately met for the current population, there is a projected need for expanded infant care and school-age childcare, both of which will be addressed in the current town plan.<sup>9</sup>

The Town of Williston recognizes the importance of childcare in community life and will ensure that its planning and development review process do not place unreasonable burdens on childcare facilities. The Town's bylaws currently allow childcare as a primary use in all zoning districts except Industrial Zoning District East and the Agricultural Residential Zoning District, and allow childcare as an accessory use to commercial, industrial, and institutional uses. At-home childcare businesses are allowed in all zoning districts.

The Town should consider providing childcare at town-sponsored events and town meetings. It should also consider providing childcare stipends for town volunteers, which would provide a more equitable opportunity to serve on Town Boards and Committees.

## A Vision of the Future of Education in Williston

*A child without education is like a bird without wings.*

—Tibetan Proverb

Early on a Monday morning, as teachers work bleary-eyed in their classrooms, coffee in hand, preparing for the day ahead, Students converge on their schools. Some are dropped off by parents, and some still arrive aboard the now limited number of electric school buses that serve the more distant parts of Williston. But something is different: the bike path that winds its way throughout the town is buzzing with noisy activity. Large numbers of kids ride their bikes to school, and an equally large number walk in great long trains from neighborhoods in the village, South Ridge and North Ridge, Brennan Woods, the Finney

Crossing area at Taft Corners, and all the other nearby neighborhoods, now seamlessly connected by the town's network of bike paths. Adult volunteers amble along the bike trail at intervals, ever watchful, ready to fix a chain that has jumped its sprocket, apply a band-aid to a scraped knee, adjust a bike helmet, or offer a suggestion about a book to read from one of the many tiny libraries that are installed along the route.



This is as much a part of childhood education in Williston as classroom time. Walking or riding to school provides physical exercise, socialization, unstructured fun, and an opportunity to engage with the natural world along the way, something the Williston Bike Path network offers in bucketloads.

The school day is as dynamic and multifaceted as teachers and administrators can make it. Not only do kids spend time in traditional classroom settings as required to achieve their learning objectives, they also take part in regularly scheduled enrichment programs that are the result of a dedicated coordination effort between schoolteachers and administrators, parents, community volunteers, the town, and of course, the students themselves. Fundamental to this rich educational fabric is well-established, regular communications among the various players to ensure that seamless program integration and enrichment takes place.

Education is not limited to young students: equally involved are parents and other adults in the community who take part in educational programs both as participatory learners and presenters. At any point during the educational day (which for many, may include evenings), children might be in the

classroom with a teacher, learning core subject matter, or on a nature walk with a volunteer, learning about the sights and sounds and smells and textures of the natural world and why they are important; or learning outdoor skills like knot-tying, fire building, trail maintenance, navigating with a compass, safe boating, wildlife identification, photography, or a hundred other skills, all offered by a combination of teachers and skilled, experienced volunteers. They might spend a day with people who teach or work in the skilled trades, learning about a wide variety of job types. Some might engage in ride-along programs with skilled professionals, sit in on college classes for a day at the local college campus at Taft Corners, engage in conversations with local political leaders, or shadow town officials to learn about the interplay among various town officials and functions.

Meanwhile, Williston's adult community attends programs offered at schools, libraries, and other facilities throughout the week, all part of the strategy to keep as many people as possible engaged in town goings-on to drive community involvement, inclusion, understanding, awareness, and lifelong education. Coordinated by town and library staff members, and based on community input and feedback, participants routinely attend programs about healthcare, planning for retirement, town goings-on, first aid training, and presentations about travel, food, the natural world, and other topics as requested.

Town officials take an active role in these activities by providing clear communication within the town to reduce or eliminate the corrosive effects of rumor and innuendo. If, through their extensive, regular communications with local news outlets, schoolteachers and administrators, parents, students, and local businesses, they become aware of the need for outreach to create awareness of something important that is going on or NOT going on in Williston, they take steps to address it. At any given time, there are more than 50 unique programs underway in the town, all designed to support Williston's commitment to being an equitable, affordable, and resilient community, a place that celebrates the remarkable "diversity of the diversity" of the Williston community.

Education in Williston is seen as much more than traditional classroom time, and it transcends age. The community does not see education as a one-and-done process, but rather as a lifelong pursuit that betters individuals and the town itself. Williston is a model for surrounding communities, because of the way it has woven a tight educational fabric from many disparate threads: physical schools, online learning environments, teachers, administrators, town officials, library programs and staff, parents, skilled community members, and of course, our students.

# OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND ACTIONS

## Objectives

- 5.A** The Town and School District have established ongoing coordination and communication channels to facilitate sound decision making and school strategic planning.
- 5.B** The Town and School coordinate to ensure that the schools have adequate funding for capital expansions needed to accommodate a growing school population.
- 5.C** The Town facilitates the permitting process while upholding site design standards for improvements and/or new school facilities.
- 5.D** The Town leverages the school's role as a community hub to foster social cohesion, trust, and mutual support networks among town residents and to share information and resources, on a continuing basis and especially during times of emergency response and recovery.
- 5.E** The Town leverages opportunities to engage the local schools in community planning and improvement initiatives, to enhance learning and foster students' sense of themselves as active, responsible citizens contributing to the benefit of the town.
- 5.F** The Town coordinates with local schools and other partners to provide opportunities for enrichment, hands-on learning and recreation.
- 5.G** Access to childcare is increased.

## Strategies

- 5.1** The Town and School District will communicate regularly to exchange information regarding growth projections, goals and future facilities planning.

| Actions      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Responsibility       | Timeframe  | Cost |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------|------|
| <b>5.1.1</b> | Develop a communication schedule to proactively share data, such as the annual Growth Report [called for in Action 6.6.2] or other reports or studies as applicable, with the CVSD Leadership Team.                                     | Planning             | Short Term | --   |
| <b>5.1.2</b> | Prioritize meeting at least once annually with the CVSD Leadership Team to discuss trends outlined in the Growth Report and the School District's strategic planning in response to those trends, and other areas of concern as needed. | Town Manager<br>CVSD | Ongoing    | --   |

- 5.2** The Town will collaborate with other towns in the CVSD to understand the need for future expansion projects and to determine whether any such project can be funded with impact fees.



|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                |             |    |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------|----|
| <b>5.2.1</b> | Develop new school impact fees if called for in an updated School Impact Fee Assessment. Impact fees to address district-wide needs related to new growth must be charged equally in all district municipalities.                    | Selectboard                                    | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>5.3</b>   | <b>The Town will showcase efforts and initiatives of the school and publicize information about school events and educational resources to the community, and about town events to the schools, to foster community cohesion.</b>    |                                                |             |    |
| <b>5.3.1</b> | Maintain communication between the Town and school administration about Town initiatives, public meetings and events, and request the school administrators to publicize using school media channels and posting physical materials. | Town Manager                                   | Ongoing     | -- |
| <b>5.3.2</b> | Maintain the Town's recognition of worthy school endeavors through Town platforms such as the website, Planners Corner, and the Town Manager's newsletter.                                                                           | Town Manager<br>CVSD<br>Planning               | Ongoing     | -- |
| <b>5.4</b>   | <b>The Town and School will coordinate shared use of their facilities for the community's benefit.</b>                                                                                                                               |                                                |             |    |
| <b>5.4.1</b> | Maintain coordination with the schools to hold Town events such as the annual Energy Fair on WCS or ABS school grounds.                                                                                                              | Energy Committee<br>CVSD                       | Ongoing     | -- |
| <b>5.4.2</b> | Maintain the use of the school auditorium for Town Meeting and film screenings throughout the year.                                                                                                                                  | Town Manager<br>CVSD                           | Ongoing     | -- |
| <b>5.4.3</b> | Maintain the Town's publicization of information about Champlain Valley Union adult education courses.                                                                                                                               | Town Manager                                   | Ongoing     | -- |
| <b>5.4.4</b> | Support the use of Catamount Community Forest and other town-owned natural areas for outdoor education.                                                                                                                              | Town Manager<br>CVSD<br>COFC                   | Ongoing     | -- |
| <b>5.5</b>   | <b>Establish school enrichment programs in coordination with town departments. These can include town planning efforts and community service projects in furtherance of town plan goals.</b>                                         |                                                |             |    |
| <b>5.5.1</b> | Support classroom visits by town staff or field trips to municipal facilities, to enhance the students' understanding of town operations and how those affect the community.                                                         | CVSD<br>Town<br>Departments                    | Ongoing     | -- |
| <b>5.5.2</b> | Develop engagement with school classes in the development of future Comprehensive Plans by soliciting student input through roundtable exercises and surveys.                                                                        | Planning<br>CVSD                               | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>5.5.3</b> | Develop engagement plans for community service projects like trail improvements, tree plantings, or other community improvements by students to enhance educational curricula with                                                   | Planning<br>Conservation<br>Commission<br>CVSD | Ongoing     | -- |

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                   |                |    |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|----|
|              | hands-on experience, foster a strong stewardship ethic and build the town's capacity.                                                                                                                             |                                   |                |    |
| <b>5.6</b>   | <b>Continue to offer and subsidize school and after-school programing.</b>                                                                                                                                        |                                   |                |    |
| <b>5.6.1</b> | Maintain the Recreation and Parks Department's offering of the winter Learn to Ski program at Cochran's Ski Area.                                                                                                 | Recreation                        | Ongoing        | -- |
| <b>5.6.2</b> | Support the Catamount Outdoor Family Center's outdoor educational offerings such as Bike Club and Snow School.                                                                                                    | Recreation<br>COFC                | Ongoing        | -- |
| <b>5.7</b>   | <b>Collaborate with Vermont State College and other institutions of higher learning to offer opportunities for hands-on learning that also contribute to getting work done to further the town's goals.</b>       |                                   |                |    |
| <b>5.7.1</b> | Develop policies to support student Internships with the Town.                                                                                                                                                    | Town Manager                      | Short Term     | -- |
| <b>5.7.2</b> | Maintain the offering of semester-long internships to college students by Town Departments as time and staff resources permit.                                                                                    | Town<br>Departments               | Ongoing        | -- |
| <b>5.7.3</b> | Maintain participation of Town departments as Community Partners in the UVM Rubenstein School's courses, as time and staff resources permit.                                                                      | Town<br>Departments               | Ongoing        | -- |
| <b>5.8</b>   | <b>The Town will participate in school-led initiatives that are consistent with and further the town's goals.</b>                                                                                                 |                                   |                |    |
| <b>5.8.1</b> | Maintain participation in Local Motion's Safe Routes to School initiatives like the monthly walk/ride to school days.                                                                                             | Town<br>Departments               | Ongoing        | -- |
| <b>5.8.2</b> | Maintain participation in other school- or student-led initiatives as time and resources permit.                                                                                                                  | Town<br>Departments               | Ongoing        | -- |
| <b>5.9</b>   | <b>Explore different models of providing childcare beyond the typical 8-5 framework.</b>                                                                                                                          |                                   |                |    |
| <b>5.9.1</b> | Evaluate the feasibility of establishing a 24/7 childcare drop-off service in partnership with State agencies and advocates.                                                                                      | Planning<br>*Outside<br>Partners* | Medium<br>Term | \$ |
| <b>5.9.2</b> | Evaluate on-site childcare or stipend program for Town Board & Committee volunteers to cover childcare during the time when they are volunteering, as well as childcare for attendees of Town events and meetings | Selectboard<br>Town Manager       | Short Term     | \$ |
| <b>5.9.3</b> | Evaluate best practices for achieving the provision of in-house childcare services for large employers.                                                                                                           | Planning<br>Selectboard           | Short Term     | -- |
| <b>5.9.4</b> | Support the development of childcare centers along public transit and active transportation routes.                                                                                                               | Planning<br>Selectboard           | Short Term     | -- |



|              |                                                                                                                                                                         |                         |            |    |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|----|
| <b>5.9.5</b> | Evaluate possible incentives for gyms, yoga studios, recreation centers, indoor courts/pools/fieldhouses, etc. to have a childcare drop off feature in operation daily. | Planning<br>Selectboard | Short Term | -- |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|----|

## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Vermont Education Dashboard: Enrollment. Vermont Agency of Education, Montpelier, Vermont. <https://education.vermont.gov/data-and-reporting/vermont-education-dashboard/vermont-education-dashboard-enrollment>. Accessed May 29, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Vermont Education Dashboard: Enrollment. Vermont Agency of Education, Montpelier, Vermont. <https://education.vermont.gov/data-and-reporting/vermont-education-dashboard/vermont-education-dashboard-enrollment>. Accessed May 29, 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Statistical Forecasting, LLC. Demographic Study for the Champlain Valley School District. March 2022.

<sup>4</sup> New Homes and People: 5-Year Outlook – Predicted Residential and Commercial Growth FY26-30. Memorandum from Williston Planning Staff to Williston Selectboard. November 19, 2024. Accessed 2/28/2025 at [Agenda Packet - November 19, 2024 - Selectboard Meetings 2024 - Town of Williston, Vermont](#)

<sup>5</sup> Need citation. Past school enrollment and future projections derived from ...Number of homes built was derived from Department of Planning and Zoning data (Certificates of Occupancy issued).

<sup>6</sup> Champlain Valley School District. FY24 Annual Report. <https://www.cvsdvt.org/budget-district/fy-25-annual-report> <https://www.cvsdvt.org/site/default.aspx?PageID=763>. Accessed 12/18/2024.

<sup>7</sup> Williston Four Winds. <https://sites.google.com/cvsdvt.org/willistonfourwinds/home> Accessed 5/29/2024.

<sup>8</sup> Williston Schools Points of Pride. Champlain Valley School District 2024-2025 Proposed Budget and Annual Report. Champlain Valley School District. Shelburne, Vermont. Accessed June 7, 2024 at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ms8qVP1n8wcKLLuKfEE9HloOqf20KELbFGJHE9cB924/edit>

<sup>9</sup> Bright Futures Child Care Information System. Vermont Department for Children and Families, Child Development Division. [https://www.brightfutures.dcf.state.vt.us/vtcc/reset.do?0Mmr3gjumkz13-SgYEjWekr3%3dxguw3YEa.aU7zaju.xnn.xGOOF-Oq-Gq%2bSS%256UOq%256UhS.0DGgwEkeUs3peYY.wjRszYgwUVm3kmLmkkUs\\_umUkYAgSUVWjUVm3mWgwkwmpwUVm31mLUjsegkz13SG0DqOqGqS0FO\\_SD](https://www.brightfutures.dcf.state.vt.us/vtcc/reset.do?0Mmr3gjumkz13-SgYEjWekr3%3dxguw3YEa.aU7zaju.xnn.xGOOF-Oq-Gq%2bSS%256UOq%256UhS.0DGgwEkeUs3peYY.wjRszYgwUVm3kmLmkkUs_umUkYAgSUVWjUVm3mWgwkwmpwUVm31mLUjsegkz13SG0DqOqGqS0FO_SD) Accessed 5/29/2024.

# 6 | HOMES AND SMART GROWTH

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## Introduction

Across multiple iterations of its Comprehensive Plan, in other documents and as a part of several planning efforts, the Town of Williston has recognized the need for housing. Previous Comprehensive Plans include objectives aimed at encouraging a wider range of housing types in Williston as well as policies for increasing the number of units considered affordable by households with incomes at or below the regional median income.

The need for new development in Williston to further its housing goals was reiterated as part of the 2020-2022 Taft Corners Form-Based Code project. In its work on the project, the Planning Commission recognized that additional tools and policies should be explored to ensure housing goals are met.

In 2023 Williston completed a Housing Needs Assessment to better understand and quantify the trends of increasing housing scarcity and unaffordability. This assessment identified key findings about housing in Williston and policy

and programmatic responses the town may choose to take.

Since the assessment was done, the Town has adopted several bylaw amendments that support the creation of more homes, and particularly affordable homes. Notable among these is the adoption in 2023 of Inclusionary Zoning as an alternate path to the Town's growth management system. Inclusionary Zoning requires a proposed development of five or more homes to include a minimum percentage of affordable homes, or else go through growth management and pay in lieu.

This chapter discusses recent trends and the current state of housing in Williston, actions the town is taking now in the context of regional and statewide housing shortage and unaffordability crisis, and proposed policies and programs for the Town to implement to address housing needs during the life of this Plan and beyond.



## Goals: In 2050 Williston is....



### **LIVABLE**

...because the town supports the growth of housing stock with clear regulations and high standards for subdivision and site design. Most new residential development is situated in the Taft Corners Form Based Code District, which is a thriving center of commerce including markets, restaurants, and local businesses, and has beautiful green spaces/parks for people to relax and recreate.

Abundant and diverse housing opportunities make Williston more livable, affordable and welcoming to people who wish to live here, including some of Williston's workforce. As a result, those workers who live in Williston have substantially reduced their commuting distance, which allows time for other activities. Some workers commute to their jobs by walking or biking, which improves their health, as well as reducing traffic impacts and carbon emissions. The benefits of more housing opportunities make it easier for local employers to hire and retain workers.



### **RESILIENT**

...because a greater diversity of homes makes the town more resilient and adaptable to future changes. When we have a diverse housing stock, it makes it possible for people to stay in Williston if their life circumstances change. Establishing a dedicated funding source for the Housing Trust Fund will make the fund more sustainable and more usable in furthering a variety of housing goals.



### **EQUITABLE**

...because a diversity of people, including people of different races, genders, sexual orientations, gender identities, ages, marital statuses, family sizes, religious creeds, colors, national origins, economic statuses and physical/mental abilities, can find homes in Williston that are affordable, safe, healthy and energy efficient. All new residential developments integrate at least 10-15% of affordable homes, with some developments integrating many more affordable homes.



## Three Things to Know

1

### **WILLISTON HAS A HOUSING SHORTAGE, ESPECIALLY OF AFFORDABLE HOMES.**

Demand exceeds the supply of new homes, driving prices upward. Home sale prices and rents are increasing at a faster pace than incomes, resulting in decreased affordability.

2

### **THE SHORTAGE OF AFFORDABLE HOMES HAS MULTIPLE SOCIETAL IMPACTS.**

Many jobs in Williston rely on low wage workers, and many people who work in Williston struggle to find affordable housing and are forced to commute long distances. This makes it difficult for employers to hire and retain workers.

3

### **THE STATEWIDE HOUSING CRISIS REQUIRES A COORDINATED RESPONSE**

Recently adopted Vermont statutes (Act 47 and Act 181) overhaul Vermont's planning framework for coordinating state, regional, and municipal land use, and establish housing targets that all towns must strive to achieve.



## Three Things Public Engagement Told Us

1

### **WILLISTON IS A DESIRABLE PLACE TO LIVE**

When asked what they value most about Williston's homes and people, respondents said they most appreciate the small-town identity and rural nature of Williston while still being close to shopping centers, restaurants and places like Burlington. People view Williston as a safe and beautiful place to live. Williston is centrally located, with convenient access to Burlington and proximity to "everything you need," while also close to lots of recreation options, conserved land and open space.

2

### **THE LACK OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS THE GREATEST CHALLENGE FACING WILLISTON**

Over 50% of responses to queries about the town's challenges agreed that affordable housing is the number one priority for Williston. There are not enough housing options for workers and for those earning less than the median income. Additionally, respondents expressed concern about the lack of housing diversity and the mismatch between size of housing and household size.

Participants voiced that the town has an obligation to address these challenges by increasing the supply of affordable homes, increasing density through infill and smaller lot sizes, supporting a better mix of housing for older and younger people, and by

providing a diversity of housing options, including smaller individual homes. People want new housing in Taft Corners.

Despite this, support was mixed for funding the Affordable Housing Trust Fund through property taxes, indicating that changes will need to come through policies that spur creation of desired housing types and desired development patterns. When asked if Williston should fund the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, even if it results in an increase in taxes, 41% disagreed, and 31% agreed, while 28% were neutral.

### 3

#### **WILLISTON'S PEOPLE WANT ADDITIONAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR A DIVERSIFYING POPULATION**

The biggest challenge facing Williston's economy is the limited housing options that inhibit people from living and working in town. Local businesses, schools and the town administration face challenges in finding and retaining workers. The town should encourage mixed use development where housing and businesses are built in the same vicinity. There is a need for more affordable housing and a transit-oriented development pattern.

## Housing Tenure

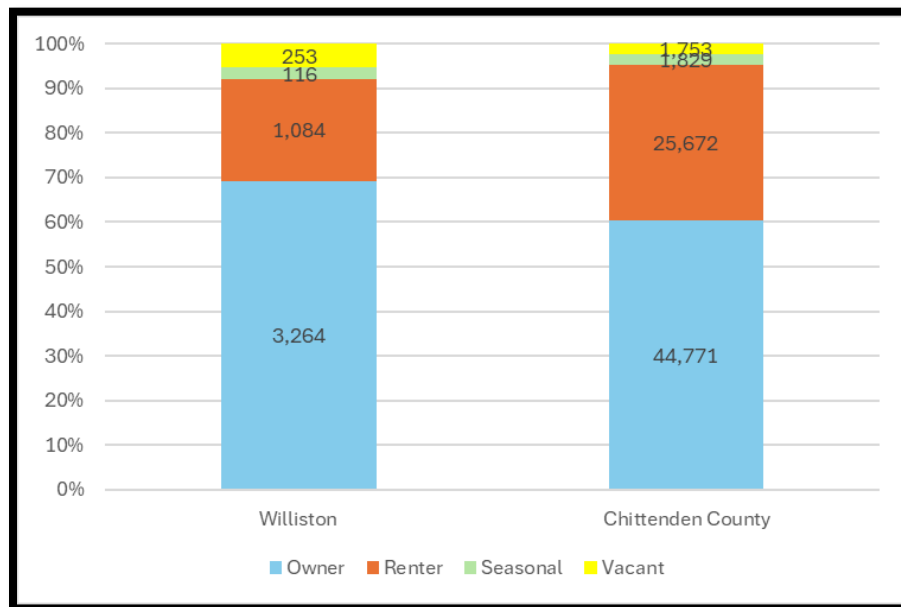


Figure 1: Housing stock by tenure, Williston and Chittenden County, 2023.

As of 2023, Williston has 4,725 dwellings.<sup>1</sup> Figure 1 shows how Williston's homes are classified by tenure, as compared to Chittenden County overall. Vacant homes include vacant units for sale or rent and units that have been sold or rented but are not yet occupied. Seasonal homes are homes used or intended for use only in certain seasons or for occasional use throughout

the year. 69% of homes in Williston are owner-occupied, as compared to 60% in Chittenden County.<sup>2</sup>

## Housing Is Becoming Less Affordable

Beginning in the 1960s, the number of new dwellings in Williston grew steadily each decade, increasing from 400 in 1960 to over 4,400 in 2020. Table 1 below shows that the annual rate of housing growth was highest during the 1960's at 12.7%, dropped during the 1970's, 80's and 90's, and declined even further, to roughly 2%, during the 2000's and 2010's.



| Table 1: Housing Units in Williston, Chittenden County and Vermont <sup>3</sup> |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
|                                                                                 | 1960    | 1970    | 1980    | 1990    | 2000    | 2010    | 2020    |
| Williston                                                                       | 400     | 908     | 1,284   | 1,874   | 3,036   | 3,652   | 4,484   |
| annual change                                                                   | -       | 12.70%  | 4.10%   | 4.60%   | 6.20%   | 2%      | 2.28%   |
| share of county housing                                                         | 1.80%   | 3%      | 3.10%   | 3.60%   | 5.20%   | 5.50%   | 6.14%   |
| share of county growth                                                          | -       | 6.20%   | 3.50%   | 5.50%   | 17.20%  | 9%      | 11%     |
| Chittenden County                                                               | 22,467  | 30,668  | 41,339  | 52,095  | 58,864  | 65,722  | 73,085  |
| annual change                                                                   | -       | 3.70%   | 3.50%   | 2.60%   | 1.30%   | 1.20%   | 11.20%  |
| Vermont                                                                         | 136,307 | 165,068 | 223,199 | 271,214 | 294,382 | 322,539 | 334,318 |
| annual change                                                                   | -       | 2.10%   | 3.50%   | 2.20%   | 0.90%   | 1%      | 3.65%   |

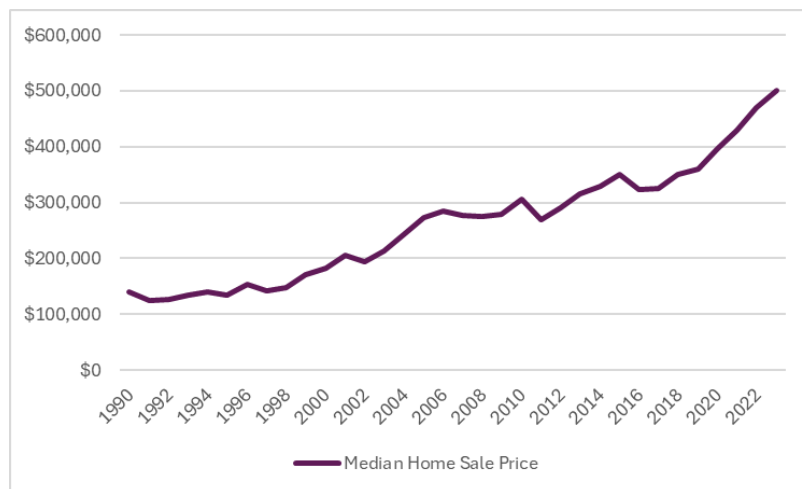


Figure 2: Median Williston Home Sale Price: 1990-2024

Housing affordability is based on the relationship between someone's income and their housing costs. Over the last 10 years, Williston home sale prices and rents have grown at a faster rate than the incomes of both residents and workers in Williston.<sup>5</sup>

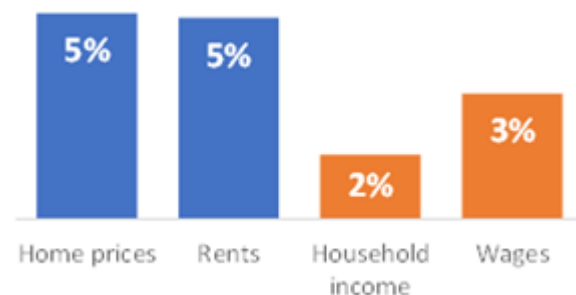


Figure 3: Average Annual Rate of Increase in Housing Costs and Income

## **The Shortage of Affordable Homes Has Multiple Societal Impacts**

*For the family living paycheck-to-paycheck, or those at risk in their current living situation, access to affordable housing is pivotal to their safety and long-term stability.*

Sen. Alex Padilla

Vermont Statute defines “affordable” housing is either 1) owner-occupied housing that costs 30 percent or less of the annual income of a household earning 120% of the County median income, or 2) rental housing that costs 30 percent or less of annual household income at 80% of the County median income.<sup>6</sup> Households spending more than that are considered to be “cost burdened.”

Housing cost burdens are borne disproportionately by renters. Because of rising housing costs and stagnant wages, two-thirds of all renting families in Williston spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs, and at least one in three spends more than 50 percent.<sup>7</sup> In fact, according to Melissa Needham, Healthy Communities Specialist at the Vermont Department of Health, ‘A lack of affordable housing can place undue financial strain on cost-burdened families. Low-income families struggling to afford housing costs must make difficult trade-offs, often forced to choose between paying rent, mortgage, and utility bills or prescription medications, food, transportation, heating, and other basic needs. Less disposable income also restricts the amount of money available to save for retirement or higher education expenses, further limiting wealth generation and social capital among vulnerable populations. Low-income individuals are more likely to postpone medical treatment, instead incurring excessive medical bills through emergency room treatment. Children and adolescents are especially vulnerable to the effects of unaffordable housing and residential instability. Namely, children experiencing housing insecurity are at increased risk of poorer overall health, more behavioral problems, and lower academic performance than their peers who do not experience housing insecurity.’<sup>8</sup>

Williston’s economy is generally reliant on middle- and low-income workers who typically cannot afford to live in town, thus making it difficult to find and retain workers. Workers who live outside Williston and in many cases, outside of Chittenden County, are forced to commute long distances to work. As of 2022 10,758 people<sup>9</sup> commute to Williston from other towns for work every day! That increases traffic congestion in Taft Corners and also results in significant carbon emissions.

Creating more homes in Williston, especially in Taft Corners, can reduce these emissions significantly and advance the Town’s energy goals. It would bring health benefits by enabling some to walk or bike to work. It would benefit Williston’s economy: being able to house more workers near their jobs would make it easier for local businesses, schools and the town to hire and retain workers.

## **The Mismatch Between the Abundance of Larger Homes and Demand for Smaller Homes**

Williston has an abundance of three-to-four-bedroom homes in its various neighborhoods, built at a time when there was demand for that style of dwelling. But today, the greatest need is for smaller dwellings, based on average household size. Average household size is expected to decrease from 2.45 in 2020 to 2.12 in 2050. Nearly 61% of Williston households have only one or two people. 66% of Williston homes

have three or more bedrooms, while 34% of Williston's homes have one or two bedrooms. This combination of a surplus of larger houses and an abundance of smaller households represents a mismatch between supply and demand that exacerbates housing unaffordability.<sup>10</sup>

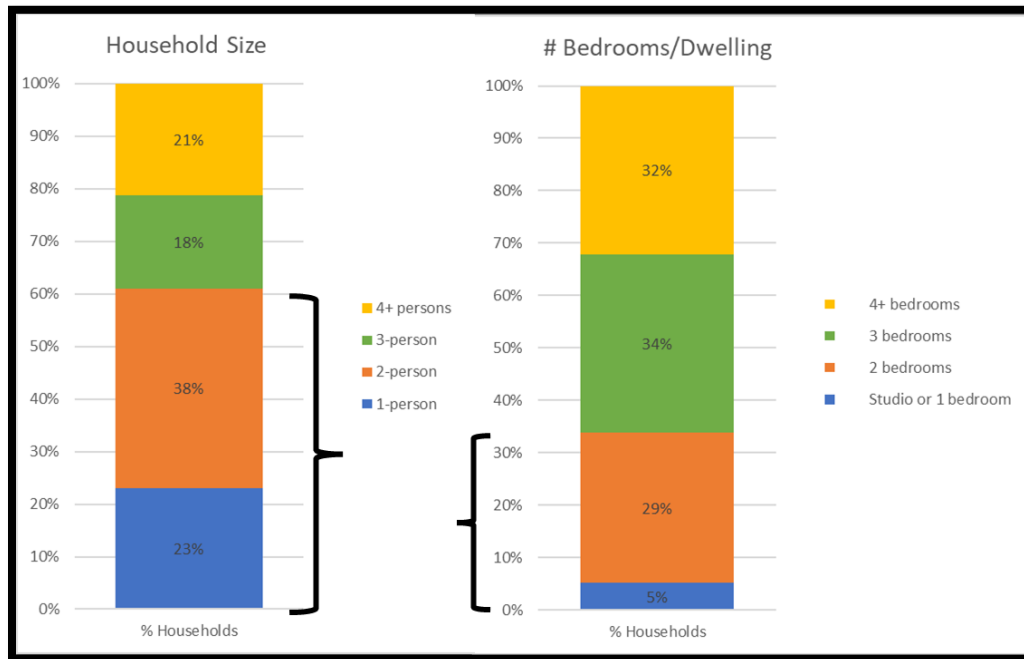


Figure 4: Percentage of Households by Size Compared to Percentage of Dwellings by Bedroom Count

Furthermore, because of the current realities of price and availability, people who live in the larger homes that are now too big for their needs--older couples, for example, whose kids have now grown up and left--can't afford to sell and buy a smaller home, because they would have to take on a mortgage to do so, in spite of the equity they have accumulated in the dwelling they currently occupy. This 'paralysis' has long-term impact.

But there is hope. The town has been making efforts to meet the demand for smaller, more affordable homes, largely through the construction of multi-unit dwellings in Taft Corners. As shown in the figures below, since 2010, the majority of new homes in Williston have been multiunit structures and the vast majority of those are located in Taft Corners.

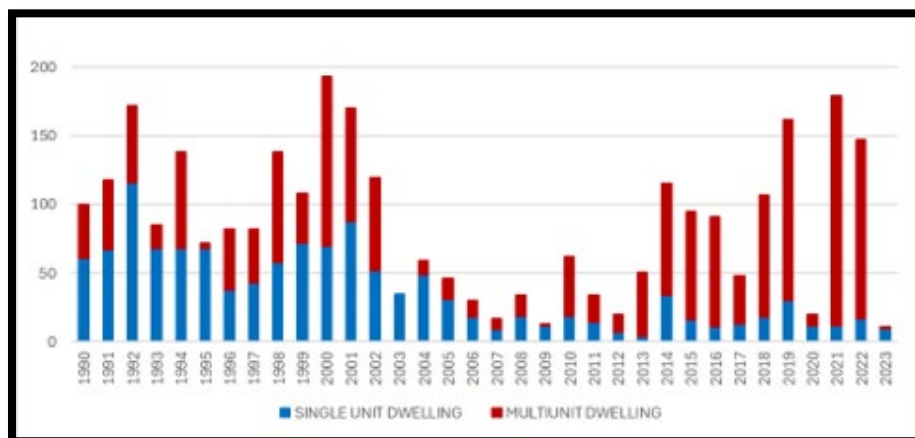


Figure 5: New Housing Construction 1990-2023.

## Coordinated Response to the Statewide Housing Crisis

In 2016, Champlain Housing Trust, Evernorth and the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission launched the Building Homes Together campaign to address the region’s severe housing shortage by committing to the goal of creating 3,500 new dwelling units within the county, 700 of which would be affordable to lower-income households. In the first five years, 3,600 homes were successfully built. A second five-year campaign — Building Homes Together 2.0 — was launched in 2021 and set a goal of 5,000 homes by 2025 for people of all incomes, including at least 1,250 affordable homes.<sup>11</sup>

Statewide progress has been made on housing policy recently. The Vermont Housing Opportunities Made for Everyone (HOME) Act, Act 47, enacted on June 5, 2023, amended the Planning & Development statute, Act 250 and other laws to enable new opportunities for housing development within state, regional and local planning and development regulations. One of the primary ways the law creates new opportunities is by requiring municipalities to allow higher density development in areas served by water and sewer.<sup>12</sup> In 2024, Williston amended its bylaw to comply with Act 47.

Additional legislation, Act 181 (BEHOME Act) was passed in June 2024 making further changes to the Planning and Development Statute, Act 250, regional planning processes, and the state planning designation program to further support creation of housing and affordable housing.

Act 47 requires the state to set regional housing targets, which are then disaggregated by the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission into municipal housing targets, which must be included in municipal plans along with policies that support meeting those targets. As of March 31, 2025, the draft municipal housing targets have been released. The targets represent the number of dwellings that a municipality must try to get built by 2050. For Williston, the targets are:

| 2050 Housing Target Ranges <sup>13</sup> |       |        | 2025- 2050 Annual #s |     |      |
|------------------------------------------|-------|--------|----------------------|-----|------|
| Low #                                    | Mid # | High # | Low                  | Mid | High |
| 1,402                                    | 2,807 | 4,212  | 58                   | 112 | 168  |

If housing construction trends of the past decade continued (2020 notwithstanding), Williston could easily meet or exceed the low target; however, the mid and high targets are more challenging to achieve. While Williston’s zoning regulations have made great strides in supporting home construction and affordable housing, the provision of infrastructure (namely streets) continues to be a challenge for developers and wastewater treatment capacity will eventually limit what can be built if the town does not plan and prioritize carefully.

## Smart Growth

The Objectives, Strategies and Actions are aimed at boosting Williston’s creation of new homes to meet these targets, implementing measures to increase home affordability, and supporting the buildout of new homes in Taft Corners. Chittenden County has a regional goal to ensure 80% of new development occurs in planned growth areas. In Williston, this includes the Taft Corners Growth Center and Designated Village Center. This is what “Smart Growth” means, and the benefits are:

- Preserving rural and natural landscapes by focusing development in urban and village areas.
- Reducing commute times by locating work, school, and amenities near where people live.
- Reducing individual transportation costs and the costs of water, sewer, and other public services when shared among more customers.
- Reducing carbon emissions (48% of emissions in Chittenden County come from transportation).

Since the establishment of the Town’s Growth Center in 2006, a steadily increasing number of dwellings have been built there. From 2017-2022, 76% of all dwelling units were built in the Growth Center. From 2026-2030, 607 (77%) out of 783 total dwelling units are projected to be built in the Growth Center.<sup>14</sup> The adoption of the Taft Corners Form Based Code (TCFBC) District in 2023 allows for building forms that require a more efficient use of land and will provide more opportunities for the creation of affordable housing in Williston’s Growth Center.

Most if not all the need for additional housing can be met within the Growth Center, through new development on vacant or underutilized lots, or through redevelopment of existing commercial sites. The current bylaws and Form Based Code can be enhanced by additional work: on the programmatic side by investing in housing supportive infrastructure (streets, stormwater, public parks and green spaces, bicycle and pedestrian facilities), building better partnerships and developing the town’s Affordable Housing Trust Fund and policies, and by maintaining Inclusionary Zoning and other housing supportive policies.

## OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

### Objectives

- 6.A** The Town provides ample public facilities and services to meet the demands of projected commercial and residential growth.
- 6.B** New residential development is largely focused in the Growth Center and patterned in a compact and efficient manner rather than sprawl, so that it can be served in the most efficient manner that doesn’t strain the town’s resources.
- 6.C** Williston has expansive housing opportunities. There is a diversity of housing types, including dwellings that are affordable for a wide range of Williston residents and its workforce. Affordable rental housing is abundant and opportunities for home ownership have broadened.
- 6.D** Housing opportunities in Williston are equitable – everyone lives in a home that is affordable, safe, healthy and energy efficient, and opportunities to purchase a home are expansive.
- 6.E** Existing naturally affordable housing is preserved. People are enabled to age in place if they wish to, by adding an accessory dwelling unit, converting their large home into a duplex, or sharing their home in exchange for assistance with daily living. Homeowners who wish to can use a portion of their home as a rental or home business that does not unduly impact the surrounding neighborhood.
- 6.F** Williston provides its fair share of housing in the Chittenden County region, and strives to meet or exceed the state-mandated housing targets.

## 6.G

Municipal property taxes do not exceed the average municipal property taxes of Chittenden County towns.

### Strategies

## 6.1

Encourage adaptive reuse of industrial and commercial buildings for affordable housing use.

| Actions |                                                                                                                                           | Responsibility                  | Timeframe   | Cost   |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|--------|
| 6.1.1   | Maintain an exemption to Growth Management for adaptive reuse projects.                                                                   | Planning Commission Selectboard | Ongoing     | --     |
| 6.1.2   | Evaluate other possible ways to incentivize adaptive reuse.                                                                               | Planning Commission Selectboard | Short Term  | --     |
| 6.1.3   | Evaluate properties for their adaptive reuse potential and leverage funding and partnerships to advance suitable adaptive reuse projects. | Housing Committee Selectboard   | Medium Term | \$\$\$ |

## 6.2

Implement the Housing Trust Fund Ordinance.

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                            |                    |      |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|------|
| 6.2.1 | Develop clear guiding policies for eligible use of funds, eligibility criteria, priorities and process for allocating funds. Focus on filling gaps that other funding sources cannot.                                                                                                                                                    | Selectboard                | Short Term         | --   |
| 6.2.2 | Maintain the program and create annual work plans and reports. Work plans and funding policies should use existing resources as models.                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Planning Housing Committee | Short Term Ongoing | --   |
| 6.2.3 | Evaluate possibilities for a dedicated funding source for the Housing Trust Fund not subject to annual budget adjustments so that it can grow steadily over time. This may include a voter-approved tax rate, payment in lieu for market rate projects, a dedicated portion of local options sales taxes, or other sources of funding. ★ | Selectboard                | Short Term         | \$\$ |

## 6.3

Explore additional affordable housing programs and implement programs that are feasible and align with the town's goals.

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                            |         |    |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------|----|
| 6.3.1 | Support non-profits like Champlain Housing Trust, Evernorth, and Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity, who are best positioned to provide “deep affordability” units (serving households with less than 80% of median income). ★ | Housing Committee Planning | Ongoing | -- |
| 6.3.2 | Develop plans to complete specific housing projects by identifying parcels for development, fostering partnerships with for-profit developers, and supporting their grant                                                       | Housing Committee Planning | Ongoing | -- |

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                       |             |          |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|----------|
|              | applications through direct letters and language in planning documents.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                       |             |          |
| <b>6.3.3</b> | Support the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission's Housing Navigator work to evaluate land in Williston for potential to support affordable housing.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Housing Committee Planning            | Short Term  | --       |
| <b>6.3.4</b> | Evaluate options to acquire / develop municipal land for housing.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Selectboard                           | Long Term   | \$\$\$\$ |
| <b>6.3.5</b> | Prioritize the Homes for All Toolkit by using ACCD training and outreach resources to host a symposium to introduce and orient builders/developers to the toolkit.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Housing Committee Planning            | Short Term  | \$       |
| <b>6.4</b>   | <b>Leveraging outside funding sources, the town should invest in infrastructure such as building public streets (Trader Lane) and collective stormwater systems to kickstart development in Taft Corners Form Based Code district.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                       |             |          |
| <b>6.4.1</b> | Develop an analysis of the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District to fund the construction of streets and other needed infrastructure that will support housing goals.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Planning Town Manger                  | Short Term  | \$       |
| <b>6.4.2</b> | Develop the recommendations of the TIF study (see 6.4.1).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Selectboard                           | Medium Term | \$\$     |
| <b>6.4.3</b> | Develop plan to leverage federal and state funding, local funding through transportation impact fees, to build streets and other needed infrastructure that will support housing goals.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Selectboard                           | Medium Term | \$\$\$\$ |
| <b>6.5</b>   | <b>Ensure that zoning outside the growth center area allows for maximum flexibility in housing types and options to support unsubsidized affordable housing (rentable accessory dwellings, farm worker housing, adaptive reuse, service- supported and home-sharing adaptations).</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                       |             |          |
| <b>6.5.1</b> | Evaluate ways to reduce barriers to building an accessory dwelling unit (ADU), such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relax permitting requirements</li> <li>• Connect homeowners who wish to build an ADU to sources of funding and technical assistance</li> <li>• Publish an ADU toolkit with resources to assist homeowners through the planning and permitting process of developing an ADU</li> <li>• Hold periodic ADU workshops in collaboration with neighboring housing committees</li> <li>• Post information and resources on the town website</li> </ul> | Housing Committee Planning Commission | Ongoing     | \$       |
| <b>6.5.2</b> | Evaluate whether changes should be made to zoning regulations in the Agricultural Rural Residential Zoning District to allow greater flexibility for farmworker housing.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Planning Commission Selectboard       | Short Term  | --       |



## 6.6

**Continually monitor and evaluate Williston's production of housing and its land-use regulations to ensure they support the town's required housing targets. Pay particular attention to the system of growth management (with inclusionary zoning) to allocate dwelling units for exclusively market rate developments, to determine its continued relevance and effectiveness.**

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                            |             |    |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|----|
| 6.6.1 | Maintain annual audit of the amount of affordable and market rate housing being permitted and built in Williston.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Housing Committee Planning | Ongoing     | -- |
| 6.6.2 | Evaluate an annual growth prediction report based on staff knowledge about permitted projects, typical permitting and buildout timelines, trends in household size, and constraints on development created by Williston's permitting timeframes, Growth Management rules, and Sewer Allocation system.                                                                                                                                                            | Planning                   | Ongoing     | -- |
| 6.6.3 | Evaluate housing production from 2023-2028 (5 years after adoption of Inclusionary Zoning) to analyze the degree to which the town's goals with respect to housing are being met with current regulations, looking at the number of homes being built, the diversity of housing types and sizes, and housing affordability. Use the results of this analysis to determine whether the current regulations need to be modified to better achieve intended results. | Housing Committee Planning | Medium Term | -- |

## 6.7

**Address equity in rental housing.**

|       |                                                                                                                 |                                |             |    |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|----|
| 6.7.1 | Evaluate the need for "just cause" evictions protections to prevent renters from unfairly losing their housing. | Housing Committee Planning     | Medium Term | -- |
| 6.7.2 | Evaluate the need to establish rent control provisions.                                                         | Housing Committee Planning     | Medium Term | -- |
| 6.7.3 | Evaluate the need to establish a rental inspection program.                                                     | Housing Committee Town Manager | Medium Term | -- |

## 6.8

**Address equity in owner-occupied housing.**

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                            |                    |    |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|----|
| 6.8.1 | Prioritize engagement with populations historically excluded from homeownership and support them in obtaining down payment assistance, either with direct funding through the town's Housing Trust Fund or by connecting them with VHFA's ASSIST Program or CHT's Shared Equity Homeownership Program. | Housing Committee Planning | Short Term Ongoing | -- |
| 6.8.2 | Evaluate ways such as CHT's Shared Equity Program to integrate mixed income housing                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Housing Committee          | Short Term         | -- |

|                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                    |                       |        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------|
|                                                                                                                                         | into established high-opportunity neighborhoods.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Planning                           |                       |        |
| <b>6.8.3</b>                                                                                                                            | Evaluate homeownership purchasing trends through an annual audit. Respond as needed to minimize negative impacts of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short Term Rentals</li> <li>• Investors buying up properties and pushing up rental prices</li> <li>• Anything that decreases affordability</li> </ul> | Housing Committee<br>Planning      | Short Term<br>Ongoing | --     |
| <b>6.9 Invest in keeping people in their homes.</b>                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                    |                       |        |
| <b>5.9.1</b>                                                                                                                            | Develop outreach plan about the HomeShare Vermont Program, which matches people needing regular assistance to stay in their homes with people willing to provide assistance in exchange for low or no cost housing.                                                                                                 | Housing Committee/<br>Planning     | Short Term            | --     |
| <b>5.9.2</b>                                                                                                                            | Fund assistance in housing retention efforts using the Housing Trust Fund.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Housing Committee/<br>Planning     | Short Term<br>Ongoing | \$     |
| <b>5.9.3</b>                                                                                                                            | Maintain referral of service organizations to people experiencing financial hardships.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Housing Committee/<br>Selectboard  | Ongoing               | --     |
| <b>6.10 Provide robust services for unhoused people in Williston.</b>                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                    |                       |        |
| <b>6.10.1</b>                                                                                                                           | Evaluate the feasibility of establishing services in Taft Corners – such as a day station and/or overnight shelter—in partnership with Chittenden County Homeless Alliance, the Howard Center and other service organizations                                                                                       | Town Manager/<br>Selectboard       | Medium Term           | \$\$\$ |
| <b>6.10.2</b>                                                                                                                           | Support partner service organizations in their efforts in meeting the needs of the unhoused.                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Town Staff/<br>Police              | Ongoing               | --     |
| <b>6.11 Invest in preserving the “natural affordability” of older existing homes to ensure preservation of affordability over time.</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                    |                       |        |
| <b>6.11.1</b>                                                                                                                           | Fund rehabilitation or accessibility improvements to existing homes with the Housing Trust Fund, in combination with other funding sources as needed. Offer grants rather than loans in exchange for making those homes perpetually affordable.                                                                     | Housing Committee/<br>Town Manager | Short Term<br>Ongoing | \$\$   |
| <b>6.11.2</b>                                                                                                                           | Support Champlain Housing Trust in incentivizing property owners to contribute their existing homes to CHT’s shared equity portfolio.                                                                                                                                                                               | Housing Committee                  | Short Term<br>Ongoing | --     |
| <b>6.12 Mitigate the impacts of increasing property taxes to reduce burdens on property owners.</b>                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                    |                       |        |
| <b>6.11.1</b>                                                                                                                           | Develop outreach materials and distribute to property owners to make sure they are aware                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Assessors                          | Short Term<br>Ongoing | \$     |

|               |                                                                                                                                   |                             |                |    |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|----|
|               | of existing taxation relief programs such as the Vermont Property Tax Credit and Use Value Appraisal (Current Use) Program.       |                             |                |    |
| <b>6.11.2</b> | Evaluate a property tax abatement program for affordable rental housing managed and operated by a housing nonprofit organization. | Town Manager<br>Selectboard | Medium<br>Term | \$ |

## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Existing housing units. Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission. Chittenden County Housing Dashboard. Accessed 4/2/2025 at <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/1b980d3a955a49c09a62c08f7404eb0a>.

<sup>2</sup> Housing stock by tenure, Williston and Chittenden County, 2023. U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Table B25003, B25004). Accessed 4/2/2025 from [Housing stock | HousingData.org - Directory of affordable rental housing](https://www.housingdata.org/HousingData.org-Directory-of-affordable-rental-housing).

<sup>3</sup> Housing Units in Williston, Chittenden County and Vermont. United States Census Bureau. Williston town, Chittenden County, Vermont: Decennial Census (H1 Occupancy Status). Distributed by the United States Census Bureau, 2020. Accessed 4/2/2025 at <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=Housing%20and%20Vacancy%20Rates%20Williston,%20Chittenden%20County,%20Vermont&tid=DECENNIALPL2020.H1>

<sup>4</sup> Median home sale price, Williston, Vermont: 1990 – 2024. Vermont Department of Taxes, Property Transfer Tax (PTT) records, 1990-2024. Accessed 4/2/2025 at <https://www.housingdata.org/profile/homeownership-costs/primary-home-sales>.

<sup>5</sup> Town of Williston Planning Department, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC), and Vermont Housing Finance Agency, 2023. *Housing Needs in Williston, Vermont*. P 12 [https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/Williston\\_Housing\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_Final\\_Report\\_4-18-2023.pdf](https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/Williston_Housing_Needs_Assessment_Final_Report_4-18-2023.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Vermont Planning and Development Statutes Online. Title 24: Municipal and County Government, Chapter 117: Municipal and Regional Planning and Development. Subchapter 001: General Provisions; Definitions. (24 V.S.A. § 4303). Accessed 7/9/2024 at [https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/24/117/04303#:~:text=context%20otherwise%20requires%3A-\(1\)%20E2%80%9CAffordable%20housing%20E2%80%9D%20means%20either%20of%20the%20following%3A,defined%20by%20the%20U.S.%20Department%20of%20Housing%20and%2](https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/24/117/04303#:~:text=context%20otherwise%20requires%3A-(1)%20E2%80%9CAffordable%20housing%20E2%80%9D%20means%20either%20of%20the%20following%3A,defined%20by%20the%20U.S.%20Department%20of%20Housing%20and%2)

<sup>7</sup> Housing Needs in Williston, Vermont. Town of Williston Planning Department, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC), and Vermont Housing Finance Agency. April 18, 2023. Accessed 6/11/2024 at [https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/Williston\\_Housing\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_Final\\_Report\\_4-18-2023.pdf](https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/Williston_Housing_Needs_Assessment_Final_Report_4-18-2023.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Housing and Health. Exploring the Social Determinants of Health: Issue Brief #7. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2011. Accessed 4/2/2025 at [https://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue\\_briefs/2011/rwjf70451](https://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2011/rwjf70451)

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Census on the Map. Accessed 4/2/2025 at <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>.

<sup>10</sup> Town of Williston Planning Department, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC), and Vermont Housing Finance Agency, 2023. *Housing Needs in Williston, Vermont*. [https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/Williston\\_Housing\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_Final\\_Report\\_4-18-2023.pdf](https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/Williston_Housing_Needs_Assessment_Final_Report_4-18-2023.pdf) Accessed February 27, 2024.

<sup>11</sup> Building Homes Together Campaign. Accessed 6/11/2024 at <https://www.ecosproject.com/building-homes-together>.

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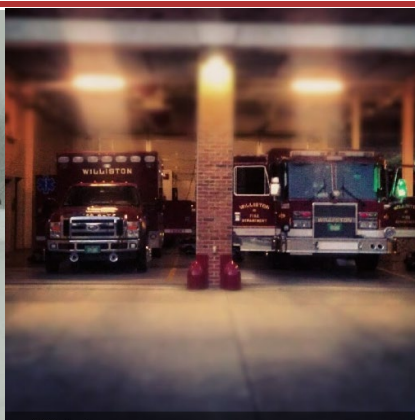
<sup>12</sup> Vermont HOME Act of 2023, Act 47 (S 100). Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development. Accessed 6/11/2024 at <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/resources-rules/planning/HOME>

<sup>13</sup> Chittenden County Draft Housing Targets. Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, 2025. Accessed 4/2/2025 at [https://www.canva.com/design/DAGivCqnmRY/-3yDww3GyCK66wynLMSajQ/view?utm\\_content=DAGivCqnmRY&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link2&utm\\_source=uniqueLinks&utm\\_id=h8b94ac1708](https://www.canva.com/design/DAGivCqnmRY/-3yDww3GyCK66wynLMSajQ/view?utm_content=DAGivCqnmRY&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=uniqueLinks&utm_id=h8b94ac1708).

<sup>14</sup> New Homes and People: 5-Year Outlook – Predicted Residential and Commercial Growth FY26-30. Memorandum from Williston Planning Staff to Williston Selectboard. November 19, 2024. Accessed 2/28/2025 at [Agenda Packet - November 19, 2024 - Selectboard Meetings 2024 - Town of Williston, Vermont](#)

# 7

# TOWN DEPARTMENTS AND CORE SERVICES



## Introduction

As Williston has grown, so has the scope, magnitude, and cost of its departments and services. The majority of Williston's budget and personnel are involved in Emergency Services (Police and Fire and Rescue), and after that nearly another third of the Town's resources are dedicated to Public Works. Other Town departments include its Manager and administrative team, Assessor, Clerk, Treasurer, Recreation and Parks, Library, Community Justice Center, and Planning and Zoning department.

Developing facilities to accommodate a growing Town staff is an ongoing challenge. In the 2016 Town Plan, the Fire Station was identified as being an asset to the community and able to meet the needs of the community for years to come, however increased staffing needs and demand for services have accelerated the need for expanded facilities.

Williston's police increasingly engage with people who are unhoused, people who have

health challenges and/or substance addiction challenges. This highlights the need for a social work function in the department. In 2025, the town will add a social work position to the Police Department.

Williston's Fire and Rescue operations serve a critical function both in Williston and by responding to calls for mutual aid in surrounding Towns. A visit to the Fire station will often reveal a nearly empty building, with virtually all staff out on calls.

This chapter is mostly focused on the "core" services provided by the Town. Programmatic elements such as those provided by Recreation and Parks or the Library are discussed in Chapter 8.



## Goals: In 2050, Williston is....

### **LIVABLE**



...because Williston provides emergency services with a response time as good or better than it has in the 2016-2024 period. Williston's emergency services continue to grow as the town and demand for those services grow. Similarly, Williston expands its capacity to maintain public infrastructure as that infrastructure and the maintenance it demands expands.

### **RESILIENT**



... because Williston's municipal departments and services have systems in place to maintain critical functions during crises, plan ahead for long-term sustainability, and ensure that all residents are supported, especially in times of need. These departments work together to create a community that can weather challenges and emerge stronger.

### **EQUITABLE**



... because the town invests in spaces that facilitate community member needs across generations and income levels. Community Center is located in the Growth Center, which is where the population is concentrated, and is accessible to most of the senior living complexes and affordable housing. Diverse community voices are included in decision-making processes. Regular consultations, town halls, and surveys help identify the needs of marginalized or underserved groups.





## Three Things to Know

1

### **WILLISTON'S EMERGENCY SERVICES ARE GROWING AND CURRENTLY UNDERSTAFFED. FACILITY EXPANSIONS AND ADDITIONAL STAFF ARE NEEDED TO MEET THE TOWN'S NEEDS**

The primary challenge of the Fire and Police Departments will be to provide the necessary number of trained personnel to respond to incidents and provide police and fire protection. Also, because most service needs are in the Taft Corners Growth Center area, the Police Department would benefit from a satellite station located there

2

### **EMERGENCY SERVICES IN WILLISTON (POLICE, FIRE, AND RESCUE) ACCOUNT FOR OVER HALF OF THE TOWN'S BUDGET**

For fiscal year 2026, voters in Williston approved a budget of nearly 16 million dollars, with Police and Fire/EMS each roughly receiving nearly 4 million dollars each.

3

### **PUBLIC WORKS ACCOUNTS FOR OVER 15% OF WILLISTON'S BUDGET.**

Of the over 2.5 million dollars approved for Public Works in fiscal year 26, almost 75% goes to the maintenance (plowing and paving) of the Town's roads and sidewalks.



## Three Things Public Engagement Told Us

1

### **PEOPLE IN WILLISTON SEE EMERGENCY SERVICES AND PUBLIC WORKS AS THE "FOUR CORE" SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE TOWN .**

During the public engagement process for the Plan, people often debated just exactly which services the Town should provide, but there was broad agreement that the "four core" services (Police, Fire, Rescue, and Public Works) should be provided and are critical to the Town.

2

### **PEOPLE IN WILLISTON DON'T OFTEN EXPRESS A LOT OF CONCERN ABOUT TOWN SERVICES**

The *Engagement Insights Report* rarely mentions emergency services as a primary concern of its residents. People generally are comfortable with the level of maintenance of Town roads and infrastructure, and no complaints were raised about other Town operations like elections and permitting.

## **PEOPLE IN WILLISTON UNDERSTAND THAT ITS ECONOMY AND LIVABILITY DEPEND ON THE PROVISION OF TOWN SERVICES.**

Throughout discussions during the engagement process for the Town Plan, when people talked about the desire to encourage small business, diversify housing, increase job opportunities, and keep the Town an attractive place to live, participants did acknowledge the important role town services play in achieving those other goals.

### **Fire and Rescue**

Today, the fire department operates from a modern facility opened in 2007 at 645 Talcott Road and provides a range of essential services, including fire suppression and prevention, as well as ambulance transport. Staffing comprises both full-time and call members, operating a fleet of apparatus that includes multiple engines, a 105' aerial ladder truck, and several ambulances to ensure comprehensive coverage. Beyond emergency response, the Williston Fire Department is actively involved in community safety through initiatives like burn permits, emergency preparedness programs, and the provision of reflective 911 address signs and medication disposal options, demonstrating their ongoing commitment to the well-being of Williston residents.

### **Police**

The Williston Police Department is dedicated to the safety and well-being of the community, striving to collaborate with residents, businesses, and visitors to proactively solve problems and enhance public safety through fair, impartial, transparent, and consistent actions. Their services encompass patrol operations, investigations conducted by certified officers, community policing initiatives, the assignment of School Resource Officers, and active traffic enforcement. Emphasizing professionalism and community engagement, the department aims to make Williston a secure and desirable place for everyone, actively participating in collaborative efforts with other agencies and organizations to address regional safety and justice matters.

### **Public Works**

The Public Works Department plays a vital role in maintaining and improving the town's infrastructure and ensuring the smooth operation of essential services. Public Works is responsible for plowing and paving Williston's public roads, maintaining its sewer, water, and stormwater infrastructure, and reviewing new development that will connect to town utilities for compliance with its standards and specifications.

### **Town Clerk**

The Town Clerk's office serves as a crucial link between the local government and town residents. The Town Clerk's office is responsible for maintaining official town records and ensuring their accuracy and accessibility to the public. This includes vital records such as birth certificates, marriage licenses, and death certificates. The Clerk also manages land records, which are essential for property ownership and transfers within the town. The Clerk also oversees the administration of local elections, including voter registration and the management of polling places. Following a pause during the COVID 19 Pandemic, the Clerk continues to offer passport services as well.

## Planning and Zoning

The Williston Planning and Zoning Department helps to guide the town's physical development and land use through the implementation and enforcement of the Unified Development Bylaw, which encompasses zoning regulations and subdivision rules. Planning and Zoning staff review development proposals, administer zoning regulations and ensure compliance with land use rules. Serving as a resource for residents, developers, and businesses, the Planning and Zoning provides assistance to citizen boards and applicants regarding the development review process. Planning and Zoning staff also provide the primary staff support to the Planning Commission in the development of comprehensive plans like this one!

## Administration

Williston has a Town Manager, Assistant to the Manager, Treasurer, Finance Director, and Finance Human Resources staff. As the Town has grown, so too has its number of employees and the complexity of managing its operations and funds. The administrative team in Williston will need to continue to grow as the town does. The most recent example of this is the addition of a Human Resources Director position for 2025.



## OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

### Objectives

- 7.A** The Town of Williston will manage the provision of public facilities and services to meet the demands of projected commercial and residential growth.
- 7.B** The Town of Williston will develop adequate space and modern facilities for the administration of municipal services.
- 7.C** The Town of Williston will continue to provide a high-quality level of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) services that meets the community's expectations for coverage and response time.

**7.D**

The Town of Williston will continue to provide law enforcement protection and services at a level that keeps pace with the town's growth and demand for services.

**7.E**

The Town of Williston will continue to use its capital budgeting process to help staff and decision-makers understand the need for and costs of additional or improved facilities. Future Capital Improvement Plans will incorporate the general priorities and proposed improvements established by this plan.

**7.F**

Continue to oversee the care and management of the town's cemeteries.

## Strategies

**7.2**

### Establish a Community Center in Taft Corners

|       |                                                                                                            |              |             |          |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| 7.2.1 | Evaluate opportunities to acquire a building/property that could be rehabilitated into a community center. | Town Manager | Medium Term | \$       |
| 7.2.2 | Develop architectural plans with community input.                                                          | Recreation   | Medium Term | \$\$     |
| 7.2.3 | Evaluate potential funding sources including grants, bond, and town funds.                                 | Selectboard  | Long Term   | \$       |
| 7.2.4 | Implement construction of the Community Center.                                                            | Selectboard  | Long Term   | \$\$\$\$ |

**7.3**

### Establish a satellite emergency services facility in Taft Corners.

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                          |             |             |        |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------|
| 7.3.1 | Develop plans for a satellite emergency services station in Taft Corners. Explore opportunities to lease or acquire a building/property that could be repurposed for emergency services. | Selectboard | Medium Term | \$\$\$ |
| 7.3.2 | Evaluate staffing capacity for the added location.                                                                                                                                       | Selectboard | Medium Term | \$\$   |

**7.4**

### Expand the physical infrastructure of town buildings to accommodate a growing staff.

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |              |             |      |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|------|
| 7.4.1 | Develop a Strategic Plan for each municipal building and town department to determine the space needed for future growth, alternatives to consider, and actions needed to expand the existing space. | Town Manager | Medium Term | \$\$ |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|------|

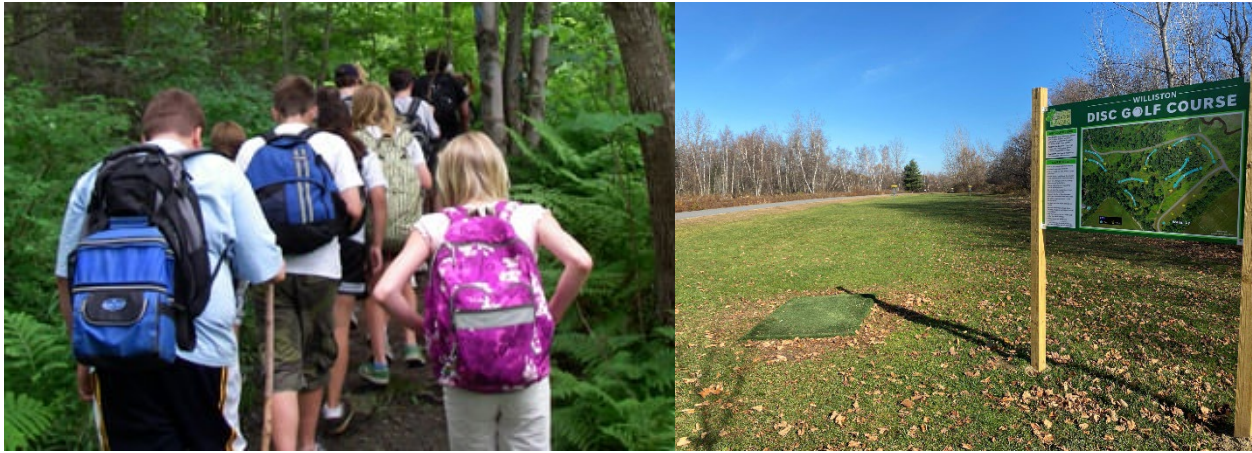
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |              |             |      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|------|
| <b>7.4.2</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Develop a plan to modernize the town's systems. Invest in smart technology to help the town run more efficiently and sustainably.                                                                                                                          | Town Manager | Medium Term | \$\$ |
| <b>7.4.3</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Use the capital budgeting process to help decision makers and the public understand the need for and costs of additional or improved facilities.                                                                                                           | Town Manager | Medium Term | --   |
| <b>7.5 Maintain strong relationships with related entities and organizations.</b>                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |              |             |      |
| <b>7.5.1</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Maintain the cultivation of a strong relationship between CVSD, WCS staff, the town, and community organizations. The Town relies on the school auditorium for Town Meeting. The Annual Craft Fair held in the fall is a popular event with regional draw. | Town Manager | Ongoing     | --   |
| <b>7.5.2</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Maintain a strong relationship with the Vermont National Guard and pursue the acquisition of this property for expanded municipal civic or community space if the opportunity emerges.                                                                     | Town Manager | Ongoing     | --   |
| <b>7.6 Support the Civic Role of Historic and Village Municipal Buildings</b>                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |              |             |      |
| <b>7.6.1</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Develop a master plan for the use, maintenance, and continued preservation of Town Hall, Town Hall Annex, Old Brick Church, the Stovepipe Corners Schoolhouse, and the Brennan Barn.                                                                       | Town Manager | Short Term  | \$   |
| <b>7.6.2</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Develop celebration schedule for the 200th Anniversary of the Old Brick Church. The Old Brick Church, constructed c. 1832, will celebrate its 200th anniversary in 2032.                                                                                   | Town Manager | Medium Term | \$   |
| <b>7.7 Expand and modernize the Town's information technology and data management capabilities with digital and software-based solutions to better support internal department workflows and more effectively deliver services to the public.</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |              |             |      |
| <b>7.7.1</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Maintain the Town's use of best practices to modernize systems across departments to streamline workflows and improve data management efficiency and integrity.                                                                                            | Town Manager | Ongoing     | \$\$ |
| <b>7.7.2</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Develop an enhanced website and digital presence to broadcast information about activities; holidays; reminders; town meeting minutes; farmers markets; surveys; traffic patterns; town Podcast; emergency broadcasts; etc.                                | Town Manager | Medium Term | \$\$ |
| <b>7.8 Maintain the care and management of the Town's Cemeteries and evaluate burial policies.</b>                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |              |             |      |

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                      |             |    |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----|
| <b>7.8.1</b> | Evaluate a Home Burial Ordinance to protect public health and safety within the Growth Center and Sewer Service Area.                                                                                                  | Cemetery Commission                                                  | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>7.8.2</b> | Evaluate a natural burial policy for burial for Town Cemeteries.                                                                                                                                                       | Cemetery Commission                                                  | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>7.8.3</b> | Evaluate the feasibility of a natural burial forest cemetery, whether owned and/or operated as a municipal cemetery, or ensure town land use regulations and policies are supportive of non-municipal forest cemetery. | Cemetery Commission/<br>Conservation Commission/<br>Catamount Forest | Medium Term | -- |



# 8

## RECREATION, PROGRAMMING, PARKS & LIBRARY



### Introduction

The Recreation & Parks Department stewards public spaces and provides programming to create a dynamic and inclusive environment that inspires lifelong wellness. This work fosters community engagement and enhances the quality of life for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities by promoting physical activity and social interaction.

Over the life of the last Town Plan, Recreation & Parks has grown by expanding their program offerings, adding a Recreation Program Coordinator position, opening the R.E.C. Zone facility, conducting a Recreation Needs Assessment, and adding several facilities at existing parks such as pickleball courts, a basketball court, and a climbing structure.

Recreation & Parks currently faces challenges of limited recreation space and equitable access. Field, court, and indoor space for programming is a major constraint. Additionally, the

department also strives to provide a higher level of accessibility to all members of the town. By increasing the number of parks and public spaces in Town, increasing multimodal transportation connections to recreation spaces, and developing a year-round Recreation Center, the Town can increase the accessibility of the programming it provides.

At the time of adoption for this Town Plan, Recreation & Parks is working on a Master Plan that will guide the department over the next 15 years. Concurrently, the Town continues to work on the Community Center Scoping Study<sup>1</sup> to address the challenges Williston is facing in providing indoor recreation programs.

The Recreation and Parks department's efforts are guided by the Recreation and Parks Committee.





## Goals: In 2050, Williston is....



### **LIVABLE**

... because all people -- residents, workers, and visitors – have access to a variety of active and passive recreation facilities. Access to nature and green spaces reduces stress, improve mood, and increase overall happiness. Williston’s parks give kids safe places to play, learn, and grow, while giving parents opportunities to connect with other families. Williston’s Rec programs offer after-school activities, mentorship, and skill-building that keep kids engaged and safe. Williston’s parks are well-connected to neighborhoods by a network of paths and sidewalks, which promotes walking, biking, and outdoor recreation. Williston’s strong park system fosters a high quality of life that attracts residents and businesses alike.



### **RESILIENT**

...because developed parks and country parks provide opportunities for stormwater management and habitat restoration. Green spaces help with climate adaptation by reducing urban heat islands and improving air quality. Williston’s parks promote physical activity, stress relief, and mental well-being, helping people stay healthier, as well as strengthening social connections that are critical during times of need. During emergencies (like heatwaves or pandemics), parks can serve as safer outdoor spaces for socializing, aid distribution, or even medical response setups. Parks – for example, the Catamount Community Forest and Outdoor Center - attract tourism, increase nearby property values, and create jobs through maintenance, programming, and events.



### **EQUITABLE**

...because the Recreation & Parks Department continues and expands offerings that serve people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. All people are welcome and included. Urban, suburban, and country parks are equally important and managed equitably. Community parks and indoor facilities are close to dense populations and accessible without a car. Natural areas and trails are equitably distributed throughout the Town.



## Three Things to Know

1

**THERE IS A NEED FOR ADDITIONAL DEVELOPED PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES, BUT SPACE IS LIMITED BY WETLANDS**

The Allen Brook Park Master Plan was completed in 2022, but plans cannot be fully realized due to wetland constraints. The Town has begun to take steps to pivot to a different site or sites for these needed facilities.

2

## **THE TOWN IS MOVING FORWARD WITH A LIBRARY EXPANSION**

The Williston Library and Community Center Scoping Study was completed in 2023 and set the direction for library expansion and siting search for a community center location of approximately 7-10 acres. In the spring of 2025, the Library Trustees endorsed concepts presented by Black River Design and the Town hired CPG Enterprises to study private fundraising options for the expansion.

3

## **THROUGH ITS RECREATION AND PARKS DEPARTMENT AND LIBRARY COMBINED, WILLISTON PROVIDES A WIDE VARIETY OF PROGRAMMING THAT ENGAGES MANY OF ITS CITIZENS.**

In fiscal year 2024, the Dorothy Alling Memorial Library conducted over 750 program sessions, with a collective attendance count of over 11,000 attendees. Williston Recreation and Parks offered more than 250 activities and had over 2,500 registrations for those activities<sup>2</sup>.



## **Three Things Public Engagement Told Us**

1

### **THE #1 PRIORITY FOR THE TOWN'S FACILITIES IS A NEW COMMUNITY CENTER AND EXPANDED LIBRARY**

29% of respondents thought that the biggest challenge facing Williston's public parks and recreation programs was a lack of community amenities. Requests included a dog park, pool, and more playgrounds.

2

### **THE TOWN WILL NEED TO PLAN FOR SENIOR-SPECIFIC PROGRAMMING AND SPACES.**

Survey responses highlighted the lack of ADA accessibility and the need for a senior center. Williston's median age (43.6 in 2024) is higher than the Chittenden County median of 36.7, and Vermont is an aging state.

3

### **PEOPLE VALUE THE OUTDOOR SPACES MAINTAINED BY THE RECREATION & PARKS DEPARTMENT.**

72% of respondents said that there was a park or open space within a 10-minute walk of where they live. However, community engagement found a need for more connectivity and maintenance of existing trails.

## Dorothy Alling Memorial Library

Dorothy Alling Memorial Library (“DAML” or the “Library”) serves the Williston and St. George communities with exemplary library service, circulating books and audiobooks in all formats alongside non-traditional materials. As part of the library’s mission to provide a safe and welcoming environment for our dynamic community to connect with each other and explore the world, we also provide cultural and educational programs for adults and youth. The outreach program serves homebound patrons and a growing senior community with year-round visits and programs. The bookmobile operates year-round, visiting childcare centers, special community events and neighborhoods in the summer.

During fiscal year 2024, there were over 60,470 patron visits to the Library and over 134,000 items circulated. Program attendance was 11,470.

The Scoping and Feasibility Study for a Community Center and Library Spaces (Scoping Study), as facilitated by Black River Design, Architects, laid important groundwork for DAML space planning as well as overall library strategic planning. A clear message was expressed during the community engagement phases of the Study in which respondents expressed a desire for an expanded library space. The Scoping Study process concluded in October 2023 with the Williston Selectboard endorsement of the Report’s recommendation to undertake schematic design of a renovated and expanded Library on the current site. Planning started in June with the formation of the Schematic Design Advisory Committee, comprised of community members and trustees, which will advise the Architect’s design team during the schematic design and budget development process.

The Library also began working on the next iteration of its strategic plan. DAML used the opportunity to link the design and strategic planning processes explicitly to create a blueprint for Williston’s future library.

## Existing Recreation Programming

Recreation programming is fundamental to the quality of life for the community. The mission statement of the Recreation and Parks Department reflects this: “To enhance the lives of our citizens and visitors, by providing a variety of leisure opportunities that are safe and enjoyable, and in maintaining the parks so they are safe and physically attractive, while preserving and enhancing the natural resources”.

The current offering of recreation programs range in age from pre-school to seniors. Currently over 150 programs are offered annually, in the areas of preschool, youth and teen programs, family programs, adult programs, senior programs, camps and special events. In fiscal year 2024, Williston Recreation and Parks offered more than 250 activities and had over 2,500 registrations for those activities<sup>3</sup>.

In addition, the Town works with area community groups, nonprofits, businesses, and the school district to enhance the program offerings.

## Existing Recreation Facilities

The Town of Williston provides a variety of active and passive recreational facilities. Williston’s recreational facilities include **Community Parks** such as Brennan Park, Rossignol Park, Williston Community Park and Allen Brook Park; **Country Parks** like Five Tree Hill, Mud Pond Sucker Brook Hollow, and Catamount Community Forest; and Williston’s **primitive trail network** that includes Allen Brook Nature Trail and Oak View Hill Trail. The **Lake Iroquois Recreation District**, managed collectively by the

Towns of Williston, Richmond, Hinesburg and St. George, also provides an important recreational opportunity for residents.

**Community Parks** are public open spaces. They are developed for intensive recreational uses that serve the entire town. They include playgrounds, tennis and basketball courts, soccer/multi-use fields, baseball/softball diamonds, sand volleyball courts, pickleball courts and skating rink/skate park. Support facilities may include benches, picnic tables, water fountains, emergency phones, outdoor lighting, equipment storage, picnic shelters, public restrooms, and parking lots.

Williston's existing community parks are described in Table 9.A and shown on Map 15. The parks are managed and maintained by the Recreation & Parks Department with the exception of the Lake Iroquois Recreation District.

| Park Name                           | Location                                                        | Acres | Recreational Uses/Facilities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Rossignol Park                      | Industrial Ave and North Brownell Rd                            | 9     | 2 tennis courts, 1 little league baseball field, basketball court, playground                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Brennan Park                        | Brennan Woods Dr. off Mt. View Rd                               | 5     | 3 little league baseball/softball fields, toddler playground, community gardens                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Williston Community Park            | Williston Road, in the Village, behind Williston Central School | 21    | 2 full-size multi-use fields, 3 small soccer fields, 1 full-size baseball field, 1 little league baseball field, 1 softball field, basketball court, 2 tennis courts, 4 volleyball courts, a multi-use skating rink/skate park, 12-hole disc golf course, multi-age and toddler playground, public bathrooms w/concession area and warming hut. Allen Brook Nature Trail (0.5 mi), Village Bike Path (1.3 mi) |
| Allen Brook Park                    | Talcott Drive off Rte. 2                                        | 2     | 2 full size irrigated multi-use fields                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Lake Iroquois Recreational District | Beebe Lane off Oak Hill Rd                                      | 1     | playground, beach, swimming, snack bar and changing building, primitive hiking loop (1.5 mi)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

**Conservation Areas**, such as Brownell Mountain and the Mud Pond Conservation Area, are publicly owned open space landscapes that are used recreationally but are primarily managed to conserve the natural ecosystem. Information about Williston's Conservation Areas is found in Chapter 13 – Land Based Conservation Resources.

**Country Parks** are publicly owned open space landscapes that are primarily used for passive recreation but can have more intensive uses like mountain biking. Williston's Country Parks include Sucker Brook Hollow, Five Tree Hill and Mud Pond Country Park. In 2017 the Town acquired by donation a 29-acre parcel of land adjacent to the Winooski River in the northwest part of town. The Town is working with Winooski Valley Park District to develop this parcel as a new Country Park.

**Catamount Community Forest**<sup>4</sup> is a permanently conserved 393-acre parcel acquired by the Town in 2019. The Town has an agreement with the non-profit Catamount Outdoor Family Center to manage the trail system, camps and programming they have developed over the years. The property is open for pedestrian access (walking, running, snowshoeing) at no charge. Cross-country skiing and mountain biking require a purchased trail pass.

**Neighborhood and Urban Parks** are privately-owned parks. Urban Parks include plazas, greens, and other spaces that provide shoppers and workers an opportunity to enjoy the outdoors in commercial areas. Neighborhood Parks are privately-owned parks that provide outdoor recreation in residential neighborhoods. The Town encourages and, in some cases, requires the provision of urban parks and neighborhood parks in new residential, commercial, and mixed-use developments.

**Sidewalks and Paths** are used recreationally and for active transportation purposes. Sidewalks are typically constructed as part of neighborhoods and are designed for pedestrian uses such as walking and jogging. Paths link neighborhoods and are designed to accommodate a broad range of non-motorized uses such as walking, jogging and biking. Information about Williston's sidewalks and paths is found in Chapter 10 – Transportation.

## **Future Recreation Needs**

### **Community Parks**

While the Town now has a variety of outdoor recreational facilities like ball fields and sports courts, there remains a need for additional playing fields. The increase of youth and adult leagues has placed a huge demand on field spaces. In addition, many are used for multi-sports events, not allowing for proper maintenance and rehabilitation time.

The Allen Brook Park Master Plan was completed in 2022, but plans cannot be fully realized due to wetland constraints. The Town has begun to take steps to pivot to a different site or sites for these needed facilities.

This chapter calls for the Town to develop a Recreation Masterplan (currently in progress) to identify additional parks needed to achieve the goal of having a park within walking distance of anywhere in the Sewer Service Area. This chapter calls for the Town to evaluate the need for additional amenities for existing parks such as pavilions, benches, water fountains, etc. The Town should prioritize park scoping and development in the capital planning process.

### **Community Gardens**

The Town has one community garden area off of Mountain View Rd. The Town should evaluate other potential locations and prioritize the expansion of community gardens. Community gardens should be established near densely developed residential areas for ease of access.

### **Indoor Recreation**

The Town currently does not own any indoor recreation facilities, although in 2023 it established a leased indoor space in Taft Corners called the **REC Zone**, which accommodates a variety of programming such as Senior Meals, yoga, exercise classes and educational offerings.

A taskforce was appointed by the Select Board in 2007 to study the need for a community center. That taskforce reported in October of 2007 that there would definitely be a need for an indoor recreation facility within 5-10 years. Beyond accommodating recreation activities for senior citizens, teens, and preschoolers, the taskforce found that a facility was needed for other indoor structured recreation programs and cultural events.

The Town hired Black River Design Architects in December of 2022 to study community, recreation and library programming space needs and to evaluate the feasibility of new building(s) and/or expansion of the existing library to meet those needs. The Williston Library and Community Center Scoping Study was completed in 2023 and set the direction for library expansion and search for a community center location of approximately 7-10 acres. In the spring of 2025, the Library Trustees endorsed concepts presented by Black River Design and the Town hired CPG Enterprises to study private fundraising options for the expansion.

This chapter calls for the Town to continue to evaluate potential sites for a Community Center and study the cost and feasibility of establishing one.

### **Country Parks and Conservation Areas**

Williston's Country Parks and Conservation Areas are shown on Map 15. Included is the **Catamount Community Forest**, which is unique for its variety of landscapes and uses of the property, including cross-country skiing, mountain biking, snowshoeing, walking/running, birding, forest management, as well as extensive organized recreational and educational programming offered by the Catamount Outdoor Family Center. The Conservation Commission has developed management plans that establish the levels of recreational use and development appropriate for these areas. The Conservation Commission will continue to develop and update management plans. The goal of these plans will be to strike a balance between recreational use and conservation values.

This chapter calls for the Town to develop a more robust system to maintain existing Country Parks and Conservation Areas, and to develop new country parks and trails, prioritizing connections to underserved and under connected residential neighborhoods and employment nodes.

### **Primitive Trails**

The Town currently maintains over twelve miles of unpaved primitive trails. These trails are used primarily for recreational activities such as hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and in some cases, mountain biking or horseback riding. Over sixteen additional primitive trail easements exist through private properties in Williston but have yet to be built.

The Town should prioritize new trails that link discontinuous segments and provide access to underserved areas.

# OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

## Objectives

- 8.A** The Town proactively manages the provision of public facilities and services to meet the demands of projected residential, commercial, and economic growth.
- 8.B** Within the Growth Center, no household is more than a 10-minute walk to a park. Within the Sewer Service Area, no household is more than a 20-minute walk to a park. Multiuse paths provide safe access from residential developments to parks.
- 8.C** The town continues to offer and expand accessible, diverse, and equitable recreation programs.
- 8.D** This town plan is a complement to the Recreation and Parks Master Plan's 15-year outlook and the Library and Community Center Scoping Study.

## Strategies

- 8.1** Provide community park facilities for recreational programming and other gatherings, with the goal of equitable distribution of parks throughout the Town. Within the Growth Center, no household is more than a 10-minute walk to a park and within the Sewer Service Area, no household is more than a 20-minute walk to a park.

| Actions      |                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Responsibility         | Timeframe   | Cost     |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|----------|
| <b>8.1.1</b> | Develop new Master Plan for Parks (Community) and Recreation, and identify additional park needs to meet walking distance goals specified in Objective 8.B.                                               | Recreation             | Short Term  | \$       |
| <b>8.1.2</b> | Evaluate grant and funding alternatives and prioritize park scoping and development in the capital planning programs.  | Recreation Selectboard | Short Term  | \$\$     |
| <b>8.1.3</b> | Evaluate potential connections from all existing and future parks to the multi-use path network. Identify gaps and create an action plan to bridge the gaps.                                              | Recreation Selectboard | Long Term   | \$\$\$\$ |
| <b>8.1.4</b> | Maintain Recreation Program Scholarship Fund. Report on scholarship fund donations, utilization, and adapt utilization of the fund to meet community needs.                                               | Recreation Selectboard | Medium Term | --       |
| <b>8.1.5</b> | Evaluate and fund additions to existing outdoor facilities that foster activity and exercise such as outdoor workout stations,                                                                            | Recreation Selectboard | Medium Term | \$\$     |



|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                     |                    |        |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--------|
|              | shade structures, and seating along the recreation paths.                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                     |                    |        |
| <b>8.2</b>   | <b>Expand indoor recreation and program capacity, in alignment with national standards for adequate facility space.</b>                                                                                                                         |                                     |                    |        |
| <b>8.2.1</b> | Develop the site and design work for a community center, pool, and outdoor recreation spaces as called for in the Library and Community Center Scoping Study.  | Recreation Selectboard              | Medium Term        | \$     |
| <b>8.2.2</b> | Support private landowners and businesses in repurposing or rehabilitating existing space for public or quasi-public use. See also 2.11 and 2.12.              | Recreation Selectboard              | Medium Term        | \$\$\$ |
| <b>8.3</b>   | <b>Publicize and maintain the Official Map.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                     |                    |        |
| <b>8.3.1</b> | Maintain regular updates of the Official Map with new information about desired facilities, newly constructed facilities, and known constraints.                                                                                                | Planning Commission Selectboard     | Short Term Ongoing | --     |
| <b>8.3.2</b> | Develop outreach plan regarding the Official Map and inform officials and landowners on its purpose and use.                                                                                                                                    | Planning                            | Short Term Ongoing | --     |
| <b>8.3.3</b> | Maintain discussion with the Library Board of Trustees, Recreation and Parks Committee and staff in amendments of the Official Map.                                                                                                             | Planning Recreation Library         | Ongoing            | --     |
| <b>8.4</b>   | <b>Maintain and improve the Country Parks and Conservation Areas</b>                                                                                                                                                                            |                                     |                    |        |
| <b>8.4.1</b> | Develop more robust organizational and fiscal systems for the maintenance of Country Parks.                                                                                                                                                     | Selectboard Town Manager            | Short Term         | \$     |
| <b>8.4.2</b> | Evaluate an inventory of Country Parks and develop a framework for prioritizing repairs and expansion factoring costs, equitable usage, and fiscal sustainability.                                                                              | Planning & Conservation Commissions | Short Term         | \$     |
| <b>8.4.3</b> | Develop new country parks and trails, prioritizing connections to underserved and under connected residential neighborhoods and employment nodes.            | Conservation Commission Selectboard | Medium Term        | \$\$   |
| <b>8.4.4</b> | Evaluate improvements to the volunteer programs and adopt-a-trail style programs to supplement paid town and contracted labor.                                                                                                                  | Planning Recreation                 | Medium Term        | \$     |
| <b>8.5</b>   | <b>Enhance and expand community gardens; evaluate the feasibility of establishing a tree nursery.</b>                                                                                                                                           |                                     |                    |        |
| <b>8.5.1</b> | Evaluate feasibility of a town tree nursery to provide ecosystem appropriate and cost-effective plantings for street trees and private development.                                                                                             | Selectboard                         | Long Term          | \$\$\$ |
| <b>8.5.2</b> | Prioritize expansion of community gardens. Establish community gardens in close proximity to homes for ease of access.                                                                                                                          | Recreation Selectboard              | Medium Term        | \$\$   |

|                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                    |                    |          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|----------|
| <b>8.6 Establish a linear park in the former Circumferential Highway right-of-way that runs south to north from 1-89 to Williston's northern boundary.</b>                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                    |                    |          |
| <b>8.6.1</b>                                                                                                                                                                  | Evaluate process to acquire the necessary rights from the state of Vermont to develop a linear park in the CIRC right-of-way.                                                                                                                | Selectboard                        | Medium Term        | \$       |
| <b>8.6.2</b>                                                                                                                                                                  | Evaluate options for a linear park including connections to trail and easements in surrounding neighborhoods, which could include a scoping study and construction plan.                                                                     | Planning Public Works              | Medium Term        | \$\$     |
| <b>8.6.3</b>                                                                                                                                                                  | Fund linear park construction with Circumferential Highway alternative project funding and supplement with the capital improvement program.                                                                                                  | Selectboard                        | Long Term          | \$\$\$\$ |
| <b>8.7 Continue improvement of the primitive trail program. Retain trail access and easements consistent with the Official Map as part of the development review process.</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                    |                    |          |
| <b>8.7.1</b>                                                                                                                                                                  | Maintain an inventory of publicly accessible trails and trail easements.                                                                                                                                                                     | Planning Conservation Commission   | Ongoing            | --       |
| <b>8.7.2</b>                                                                                                                                                                  | Evaluate desired future trails and the cost and feasibility of construction based on known constraints by creating an inventory.                                                                                                             | Planning Conservation Commission   | Short Term         | \$       |
| <b>8.7.3</b>                                                                                                                                                                  | Prioritize new trails that link discontinuous segments and provide access to underserved areas.                                                                                                                                              | Planning Conservation Commission   | Short Term         | --       |
| <b>8.8 Manage parkland in a sustainable and wildlife-friendly manner.</b>                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                    |                    |          |
| <b>8.8.1</b>                                                                                                                                                                  | Develop a management plan that limits mowing and lawn chemicals to the minimum area necessary for sports fields, enhances gathering spaces with wildlife- friendly plantings, edible plants, stormwater gardens, and shade.                  | Recreation Conservation Commission | Short Term         | \$       |
| <b>8.8.2</b>                                                                                                                                                                  | Support the conversion of mowed lawns to wildlife, pollinators, and edible ecosystems especially in places that reconnect fragmented habitat.                                                                                                | Conservation Commission            | Short Term         | \$       |
| <b>8.9 Maintain productive relationships with partner organizations.</b>                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                    |                    |          |
| <b>8.9.1</b>                                                                                                                                                                  | Support Vermont Mountain Bike Association (VMBA) and Fellowship of the Wheel (FOTW) on the maintenance of existing and development of future mountain biking trails. Where reasonably feasible, design trails to accommodate adaptive bikes. | Conservation Commission            | Short Term Ongoing | \$\$     |
| <b>8.9.2</b>                                                                                                                                                                  | Maintain collaboration with the Winooski Valley Park District to complete projects in Williston.                                                                                                                                             | Conservation Commission            | Ongoing            | \$       |

|               |                                                                                                                                |                                            |             |                                                                                     |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>8.9.3</b>  | Evaluate the value of returns on the investment of annual dues the town pays to the WVPD.                                      | Selectboard                                | Short Term  | --                                                                                  |
| <b>8.10</b>   | <b>Monitor, evaluate, and adjust policies and programming at Catamount Community Forest.</b>                                   |                                            |             |                                                                                     |
| <b>8.10.1</b> | Maintain a land management plan and ensure alignment with the Conservation Easement and other funding requirements.            | Catamount Forest Committee<br>Selectboard  | Medium Term | --                                                                                  |
| <b>8.10.2</b> | Evaluate the long-term function of the Catamount Community Forest Management Committee now that the land is owned by the Town. | Selectboard                                | Short Term  | --                                                                                  |
| <b>8.10.3</b> | Maintain collaboration with the Catamount Outdoor Family Center on facilities and programming.                                 | Catamount Forest Committee<br>Town Manager | Ongoing     | --                                                                                  |
| <b>8.10.4</b> | Evaluate improvements to multi-modal access to Catamount Community Forest.                                                     | Selectboard                                | Medium Term | \$\$\$                                                                              |
| <b>8.11</b>   | <b>Expand the library in the Village to meet the needs of the town, using the recommendations of the 2023 scoping study.</b>   |                                            |             |  |
| <b>8.11.1</b> | Evaluate the options presented in the scoping study. Get community input on the options proposed.                              | Library Trustees                           | Short Term  | --                                                                                  |
| <b>8.11.2</b> | Develop architectural plans for expansion using a public process.                                                              | Library Trustee                            | Short Term  | \$\$                                                                                |
| <b>8.11.3</b> | Develop a funding mechanism – mixture of grants, private donations and bond. Put a bond to vote.                               | Selectboard                                | Short Term  | --                                                                                  |
| <b>8.11.4</b> | Implement construction of the expansion.                                                                                       | Selectboard                                | Short Term  | \$\$\$\$                                                                            |

## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Report of Scoping and Feasibility Study Community Center and Library Spaces for the Town of Williston October 26, 2023. Accessed at: [https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/WLCC\\_Feasibility\\_Report\\_2023.10.26\\_-\\_compressed.pdf](https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/WLCC_Feasibility_Report_2023.10.26_-_compressed.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Williston , Vermont, 2024 Annual Report July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024, accessed at [https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/2024\\_Annual\\_Town\\_Report.pdf](https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/2024_Annual_Town_Report.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Williston , Vermont, 2024 Annual Report July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024, accessed at [https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/2024\\_Annual\\_Town\\_Report.pdf](https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/2024_Annual_Town_Report.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Town of Williston. Catamount Community Forest. Accessed 4/15/2025 at <https://www.town.williston.vt.us/index.asp?SEC=B641ADD2-B781-484C-8D1F-320550C9B5B7&DE=EF3C40B2-04CA-40F8-A4EA-7FC338D2F978>.

# 9 | UTILITIES

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## Introduction

The utilities sector is a foundational element of Williston’s infrastructure, providing essential services that support daily life, enhance public health, and drive economic growth. These services, which include the provision of water, wastewater disposal, solid waste disposal and diversion, electricity, broadband, and others, are not only necessary for the functioning of households and businesses but also for fostering sustainability, resilience, and a high quality of life. As the town continues to grow and evolve, it becomes increasingly important to ensure that utility systems are not only reliable but also efficient, affordable, and environmentally responsible.

This chapter will delve into the various utility systems that serve the town, examining their current conditions, existing challenges, and forecasting future needs. It will also discuss these utilities’ role in supporting the town's goals for livability, resilience and equity. The strategies outlined here will offer a roadmap for addressing future challenges, adopting innovative solutions, and building a resilient utility network capable of supporting the town for years to come.



## Goals: In 2050 Williston is...



### **LIVABLE**

...because Williston continues to provide sewer service and high-quality, safe potable water to households, businesses and institutions within the Sewer Service Area, at an affordable cost. The town is well served by fixed and mobile broadband, and all households and businesses are able to access and afford this service.



### **RESILIENT**

...because the town's water, sewer, stormwater and electrical infrastructure is well-maintained and has redundancies to cover outages. The Sewer Service Area remains constant and does not expand, so as not to encourage sprawl. Utilities are largely run underground to avoid outages from windstorms. Electricity is powered by renewable, local sources (solar, wind). Stormwater infrastructure is robust and adequately sized to be resilient to withstand the predicted increased frequency and intensity of storms.



### **EQUITABLE**

...because high-speed fixed broadband is available throughout town at an affordable cost. Mobile broadband (cell service) is available throughout town with no "dead zones." The town recognizes that not everyone can be served by municipal water and sewer, and lack of suitable septic capacity and/or potable water may prevent development in much of rural Williston. That inequity results from intentional town policies and goals to conserve open space in rural Williston.



## Three Things to Know

1

### **SEWER CAPACITY IS LIMITED BUT CAN SUPPORT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF MANY LONG-RANGE GOALS.**

Sewer capacity is the most limited utility needed to support new development in Williston. The remaining capacity can support the achievement of many long-range goals, but the town will have to carefully prioritize the allocation of remaining capacity in a way that maximizes public benefits.

2

### **UNIVERSAL BROADBAND COVERAGE IS FUNDAMENTAL TO ENSURING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO OTHER CRITICAL SERVICES**

Broadband is essential for supporting economic and educational opportunities, strengthening health and public safety networks, and reinforcing freedom of expression and democratic, social, and civic engagement.

3

### **UTILITIES SUCH AS WATER, GAS AND ELECTRICITY ARE LARGELY CONTROLLED BY OTHER ENTITIES**

Water is provided regionally by the Champlain Water District, but the town is responsible for its distribution. Electric transmission and distribution is handled by regional utility companies VELCO, Green Mountain Power and Vermont Electric Cooperative. These entities, along with Vermont Gas (VGS), are overseen by the Vermont Public Utilities Commission.



## Three Things Public Engagement Told Us

1

### **SOME AREAS OF WILLISTON EXPERIENCE POOR CELLULAR COVERAGE AND SOME ARE UNDERSERVED BY BROADBAND COVERAGE.**

We received many comments from residents and local business owners about poor cell coverage and internet service in various parts of town.

2

### **SOME WOULD LIKE MUNICIPAL SEWER AND WATER SERVICE TO BE EXTENDED TO AREAS OUTSIDE THE SEWER SERVICE AREA.**

Some people commented they would like to see municipal water and sewer service expanded, to allow more homes to connect.

3

### **AS WILLISTON CONTINUES TO GROW, INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS (NEW AND MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING) WILL INCREASE.**

The Williston Department of Public Works noted that as the infrastructure gets older and as more is added the demands will increase exponentially from both a cost and crew size perspective.



## Sewer Capacity is Limited but Can Support the Achievement of Many Long-Range Goals

Williston provides sewerage in the service area shown on Map 5. The town's sewer service area is an expression of the town's land use plan to minimize sprawl and concentrate growth within its designated growth center. There are some additional areas currently served by municipal sewer service and these are also identified on Map 8. Properties in these locations were allowed to connect to the town's system either under the Pollution Abatement Provision of the town's Sewer Service Ordinance, or they pre-date the town's current policy.

Sewer capacity is the most limited utility needed to support new development in Williston. The remaining capacity can support the achievement of many long-range goals, but the town will have to carefully prioritize the allocation of remaining capacity in a way that maximizes public benefits.

The sewer collection system was initially constructed in the early 1980's and has expanded within the sewer service area as new development has occurred. The Town owns and operates ten (10) wastewater pump stations, and there are several smaller pump stations that are privately owned and operated. Some of these private pump stations are operated and maintained through the Cooperative Maintenance Agreement administered by the Town.

All of the wastewater collected in the sewer service area is transported north to the River Cove pump station and is pumped in a 10" force main under the Winooski River to the Essex Jct. wastewater treatment facility. Sewage treatment is provided through a Tri-Town agreement with the Essex Treatment Plant. The treatment facility has a capacity of 3,300,000 gpd of which the Town of Williston currently owns a total of 1,040,000 gpd (31.52%). The remaining capacity is owned by the Village of Essex Junction (35.15%) and the Town of Essex (33.33%).<sup>1</sup>

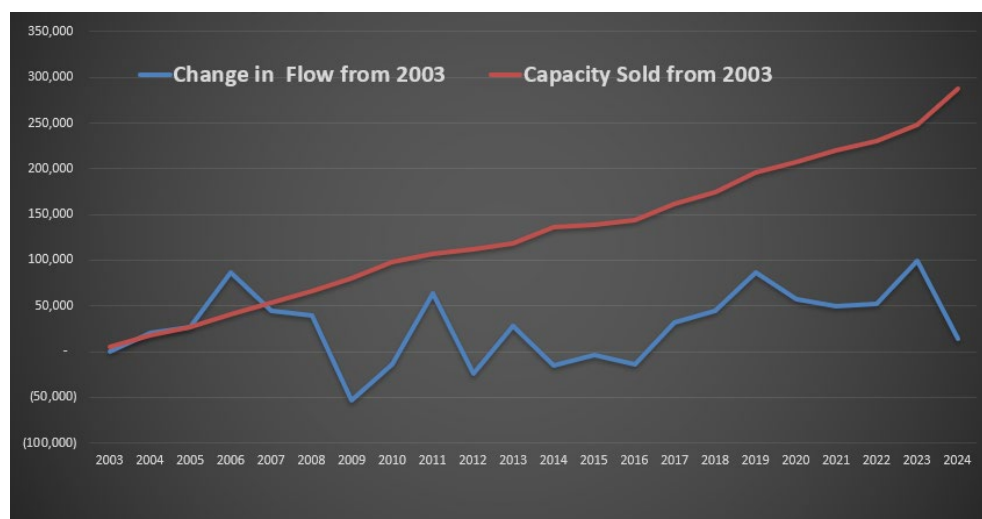


Figure 1: Sewer capacity sales and actual sewer flows, 2003-2024.

Factors affecting capacity include:

- The town can and should purchase additional capacity. Williston has made several purchases of capacity from the Tri-Town over the last 30 years. Williston is currently partway through a 5-year plan to purchase an additional 50,000 GPD capacity. By 2027, the town will have a total sewerage capacity of 1,130,000 gpd.
- The Selectboard typically makes more capacity available than is sold.

- Developers have historically held capacity indefinitely for future use, however, that is no longer allowed beyond a four-year limit.
- Capacity actually used is significantly less than capacity sold. In the last 20 years, only 40% of the gpd sold have shown up as increased flows into the treatment plant from Williston.
- Sewer flows are affected by rainfall, suggesting there may be inefficiencies to address, such as system leaks or unauthorized discharge of stormwater into the system.<sup>2</sup>

**The amount of unused sewer capacity held by the Town today is enough to support the buildout of Taft Corners, if the town allocates it wisely and addresses the inefficiencies in the system.** As the amount of available capacity becomes more limited the Town may wish to consider several strategies to increase available capacity and to maximize its use of what it has. These strategies are included in the Objectives/Strategies/Actions table below.

## **Universal Broadband Infrastructure is Fundamental to Ensuring Equitable Access to Other Critical Services**

Broadband is essential for supporting economic and educational opportunities, strengthening health and public safety networks, and reinforcing freedom of expression and democratic, social, and civic engagement. Vermonters who cannot access broadband face challenges with respect to distance learning; remote working; accessing telehealth services; and accessing government programs and services. Robust and resilient broadband networks are critical to our economic future as a whole and provide a foundation for our educational, health care, public health and safety, and democratic institutions.

Existing providers are not providing adequate service to many rural areas, including some locations in Williston, where fewer potential customers reduce the profitability necessary to justify network expansion. Accordingly, reaching the last mile will require a grassroots approach founded on input and support from local communities.

Act 71 established the Vermont Community Broadband Fund to support policies and programs designed to accelerate community efforts that advance the State's goal of achieving universal access to reliable, high-quality, affordable, fixed broadband, and established the Vermont Community Broadband Board to coordinate, support, and accelerate the development and implementation of universal community broadband solutions. Act 71 enabled the formation of Vermont Communications Union Districts (CUDs), to further coordinate and facilitate these efforts.<sup>3</sup>

In 2022, Williston along with four other Chittenden County municipalities (Essex, Essex Junction, Shelburne, and South Burlington) formed a Chittenden County Communications Union District (CUD). Subsequently, three more municipalities joined (Westford, Underhill, and Jericho). A Communications Union District (CUD) is a municipal organization made of two or more towns for the purpose of building, or causing to be built, communication infrastructure together. CUDs may plan, contract, build, and manage the infrastructure that will provide high speed internet. The main function of the CUD is to deliver public funds to the providers to build the network and to provide public oversight to ensure broadband service is provided to unserved and underserved locations at speeds of at least 100/100 Mbps in accordance with Act 71.<sup>4</sup>

There are roughly 500+ addresses that are considered under or unserved in the CCCUD.<sup>5</sup>

Since its inception, the CCCUD developed a strategic plan to accomplish universal coverage in the 8-municipality district. In 2023 the CCCUD was awarded a \$300,000 Pre-construction grant for planning work and in 2024 the CCCUD was granted a \$2.1M Vermont Community Broadband Board Construction

Grant to partner with Consolidated Communications (CCI) to accomplish phase 1 of reaching all the unserved and underserved locations in the 8-municipality district.<sup>67</sup> It is anticipated that service will be available for all phase 1 customers (~100 households) by the end of 2025. Phase 2 is funding dependent, so it has no definite timeline yet, but is anticipated to be completed by end of 2026.<sup>8</sup>

Mobile broadband (cellular service) is notably poor in some areas of town, including in the Village. The Old Brick Church was proposed as a site to house Verizon communications infrastructure, which would have provided the Village and school area with much improved cellular service. However, in June 2024 the Old Brick Church Trustees voted against the proposal and subsequently passed on this recommendation to the Williston Selectboard, which has yet to make a decision on the matter.<sup>9</sup> The town should seek future opportunities to collaborate with private cellular service providers to lease municipal buildings or properties for cellular signal transmission.

## **Other Utilities (water, Solid Waste, gas, electricity) are Largely Controlled by Other Entities**

Water is provided regionally through the Champlain Water District and distributed by the Williston Public Works Department. CWD is a nationally award-winning provider of water, sourced from the deep underwater canyon of Shelburne Bay in Lake Champlain, at 75 feet of depth and a half mile from shore.<sup>10</sup> This water supply is an abundant resource and will serve Williston adequately for years to come. While the town purchases water from the CWD, Williston is responsible for maintaining the infrastructure that is needed to distribute the potable water in town and planning for additional capacity. The water infrastructure includes valves and over 71 miles of pipe and 1 pump station. Objectives and strategies focus on Williston's role in maintaining its water infrastructure.

Solid waste collection, disposal, diversion and recycling services are provided by private haulers and Chittenden Solid Waste District (CSWD). Williston is, however, the host community for CSWD facilities located on Redmond Rd. The site, shown on Map 11 – Public Facilities, includes a former town landfill that is now monitored by CSWD, CSWD's headquarters, a solid waste and recycling drop-off center, and a regional composting facility. Construction of a potential future regional landfill has transportation and land use implications that must be addressed during the regulatory process.

CSWD is authorized to operate its solid waste facilities under the provisions of 10 V.S.A § 6604, also known as Act 78. Solid waste facilities operators are considered to be quasi-independent local government entities regulated by the State of Vermont. CSWD has operated its facilities under a Host Town Agreement that defines the nature and extent of CSWD operations and provides a mechanism for CSWD to make appropriate payments in lieu of taxes to pay its fair share of the costs of using town services and infrastructure. The town will continue to require CSWD or any other solid waste facilities operator to enter into a Host Town Agreement prior to locating or operating any new or expanded solid waste facilities in Williston and ensure that that agreement is included as a condition of any solid waste certification.

Electric transmission and distribution is handled by regional utility companies VELCO, Green Mountain Power and Vermont Electric Cooperative. All lands north of I-89 are served by GMP. The majority of the land south of I-89 is served by VEC, though some lands near Meadowridge and Exit 12 are served by GMP.

VELCO transmission lines traverse Williston and have an impact on the built environment. Most notable, the transmission lines bisect the Taft Corners Growth Center including Blair Park, Finney Crossing, and Maple Tree Place. No development, aside from parking lots and low-growing trees and shrubbery, are permitted by VELCO under the transmission lines and within the VELCO-easement. Other transmission

lines bisect low density rural areas and forest blocks, where vegetation is kept from growing into a forest. The VELCO Easement Corridor, among other constraints, was incorporated into the Form-Based Code Regulating Plan Map. The VELCO transmission lines and surrounding easement are in tension with Williston's land use goals for a compact, pedestrian-friendly town center at Taft Corners.

These entities, along with Vermont Gas (VGS), are overseen by the Vermont Public Utilities Commission and the town has no regulatory authority over electrical distribution and transmission. The objectives and strategies outlined below underscore this relationship and are focused on ways in which the town can exert influence through the PUC process.

## OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

### Objectives

- 9.A** The Town is served by private utilities that are robust, resilient and adequate to meet the demands of projected commercial and residential growth.
- 9.B** The town and utility companies coordinate to ensure the best outcomes for Williston. The town shares data on growth trends to inform long- range planning and decision-making processes. The town monitors and comments on utility companies' long-range plans for their compatibility with the town's goals.
- 9.C** The town maintains its water and sewer infrastructure so that it is resilient and sustainable.
- 9.D** The town has wastewater capacity that is adequate to support the estimated "build out" of commercial and residential structures and support Williston's fair share of housing in the region.
- 9.E** The town achieves universal coverage of fixed and mobile broadband service, that is accessible and affordable to all.

### Strategies

- 9.1** Reevaluate the town's Sewer Allocation Ordinance to make sure that it supports the town's development priorities within the current capacity constraints.

| Actions      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Responsibility                     | Timeframe  | Cost |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------|------|
| <b>9.1.1</b> | Evaluate whether the town's current allocated capacity will support the estimated "build out" of commercial and residential structures and support Williston's fair share of housing in the region. Decide what percentage of "buildout" is desired in different geographic areas and prioritize allocation of capacity based on those decisions. | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Short Term | \$   |

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                     |                    |          |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------|
| <b>9.1.2</b> | Evaluate revisions to the Sewer Allocation Ordinance so the methodology accurately reflects the existing capacity and the town's priorities for development. The current Sewer Allocation Ordinance divides up available capacity based on type of use.  Whereas adding spatial prioritization (Growth Center vs. Residential zones Vs. Industrial Zones) may be more directly in line with Town Plan goals. | Planning Commission Selectboard                     | Short Term         | \$       |
| <b>9.1.3</b> | Fund the purchase of additional capacity if available.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Selectboard                                         | Medium Term        | \$\$\$   |
| <b>9.2</b>   | <b>Pursue avenues to increase sewer capacity at the Essex Sewer Plant, through changes in permitting or physical changes to the plant, or by other means such as distributed wastewater solutions.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                     |                    |          |
| <b>9.2.1</b> | Evaluate with the Tri-Town (Essex, Essex Junction, and Williston) and the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources how to increase the permitted capacity of the Sewer Plant.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | *Tri-Town*<br>*Vermont Agency of Natural Resources* | Medium Term        | \$\$\$   |
| <b>9.2.2</b> | Evaluate funding sources including state grants, zero interest loans or other funding sources for upgrades to the physical plant as needed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | *Tri-Town*<br>*Vermont Agency of Natural Resources* | Long Term          | \$\$\$\$ |
| <b>9.2.3</b> | Evaluate the feasibility of distributed wastewater solutions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Selectboard                                         | Long Term          | \$\$\$\$ |
| <b>9.3</b>   | <b>Monitor usage and plan for sewer, water, and stormwater system maintenance and upgrades in alignment with Town Plan land use goals and growth trends.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                     |                    |          |
| <b>9.3.1</b> | Evaluate uses of GIS software to track the condition of infrastructure assets.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Public Works                                        | Short Term         | \$       |
| <b>9.3.2</b> | Develop training schedule for staff on the use of mobile software to collect data on infrastructure.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Public Works                                        | Short Term         | \$       |
| <b>9.3.3</b> | Maintain an up-to-date geodatabase of infrastructure assets.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Public Works                                        | Short Term Ongoing | \$       |
| <b>9.3.4</b> | Develop a projection of needs for future upgrades by incorporating information from asset inventories and include these estimated upgrades into the capital improvement plan and annual operating budget.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Public Works                                        | Short Term Ongoing | \$       |
| <b>9.4</b>   | <b>Pursue ways to implement universal fixed and mobile broadband service throughout town, with the goal of no "dead zones."</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                     |                    |          |
| <b>9.4.1</b> | Maintain participation in the Chittenden County Communications Union District (CUD) to provide universal fixed broadband coverage.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Town Manager                                        | Ongoing            | --       |
| <b>9.4.2</b> | Evaluate how to leverage existing CUDs and electric utilities to expand and reduce the costs of broadband.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Town Manager                                        | Short Term         | \$       |
| <b>9.4.3</b> | Evaluate properties and structures that could house cellular communications infrastructure,                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Town Manager                                        | Short Term         | \$       |

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                      |                    |    |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|----|
|              | and partner with service provider(s) to expand service.                                                                                                                                                                        |                                      |                    |    |
| <b>9.5</b>   | <b>Mitigate the impact of VELCO transmission line and the easement corridor on Williston's land use goals in Taft Corners.</b>                                                                                                 |                                      |                    |    |
| <b>9.5.1</b> | Evaluate creative ways to activate the otherwise undevelopable places within the VELCO transmission easement in Taft Corners (pollinator gardens, pocket parks, etc.).                                                         | Planning                             | Medium Term        | \$ |
| <b>9.5.2</b> | Support the public process for the Vermont Long-Range Transmission Plan as it pertains to infrastructure maintenance, improvements, or expansion of the transmission system within Williston and especially the Growth Center. | Town Manager                         | Short Term Ongoing | -- |
| <b>9.5.3</b> | Develop an advocacy plan for the undergrounding of the VELCO transmission line in Taft Corners Form Based Code district.                                                                                                       | Town Manager                         | Medium Term        | -- |
| <b>9.6</b>   | <b>Monitor utility companies' long-range planning and participate in the public process.</b>                                                                                                                                   |                                      |                    |    |
| <b>9.6.1</b> | Maintain monitoring of the work of the VELCO Vermont System Planning Committee (VSPC) and Technical Working Group.                                                                                                             | Town Manager                         | Short Term Ongoing | -- |
| <b>9.6.2</b> | Maintain review of GMP and VEC's Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), which are filed every three years with the Public Utilities Commission, for consistency with Williston's land use and energy equity goals.                    | Town Manager                         | Short Term Ongoing | -- |
| <b>9.6.3</b> | Support the PUC as it pertains to the goals of the Williston Energy Plan.                                                                                                                                                      | Energy Committee Planning Commission | Ongoing            | -- |

## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Aldrich & Elliot, Water Resource Engineers. Town of Williston, Vermont Sewer Capacity Analysis. October 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Matt Boulanger, Town of Williston Planning and Zoning. Memorandum Re: Wastewater Allocation Ordinance Attachment A Amendment. March 19, 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Act 71 as Enacted. Accessed 12/27/24 at <https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/Docs/ACTS/ACT071/ACT071%20As%20Enacted.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> What Is a Communications Union District (CUD)? Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission. Accessed on 4/3/2025 at <https://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/broadband/>.

<sup>5</sup> Email communication with Michael Vance, Chair, Chittenden County Communications Union District. December 30, 2024.

<sup>6</sup> Email communication with Ann Janda, Energy Project Manager, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission. December 30, 2024.

<sup>7</sup> CUD Agendas and Minutes. Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission. Accessed on 4/3/2025 at <https://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/broadband/>.

<sup>8</sup> Email communication with Michael Vance, Chair, Chittenden County Communications Union District. December 30, 2024.

<sup>9</sup> Town of Williston Selectboard July 2, 2024 Meeting Minutes. Accessed on 4/3/2025 at [https://www.town.williston.vt.us/index.asp?Type=B\\_BASIC&SEC={BF873E20-7A5D-432F-9028-9939B81C0A9B}&DE={0BB0EFBD-8B91-43F1-813E-2C4EEBF98010}](https://www.town.williston.vt.us/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={BF873E20-7A5D-432F-9028-9939B81C0A9B}&DE={0BB0EFBD-8B91-43F1-813E-2C4EEBF98010}).

<sup>10</sup> Champlain Water District, 1973-2013. Accessed on 4/3/2025 at <https://www.champlainwater.org/DocumentCenter/View/73/Champlain-Water-District-40th-Anniversary-Brochure-PDF>.



# 10 | TRANSPORTATION

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## Introduction

Mobility in Williston and to points beyond is critical to all who live, work, shop, and recreate here. Public and private infrastructure that supports the mobility of people and goods has significant and wide-ranging impacts on the Town and its people. Transportation infrastructure is probably the most costly and complicated type of asset for the town to construct, upgrade, and connect. At the same time, the way roads, bike paths, sidewalks, and transit systems are placed in our Town shapes our land use planning and the development pressures it attempts to address. Conversely, how we develop our land influences the opportunity to provide multi-modal choices to residents and visitors.

Given the great expense, complexity, and time related to making changes to our transportation infrastructure, and the near-permanence of those decisions once they have been implemented, we must make careful decisions about how to proceed. In response to extensive feedback from the public, this chapter proposes a significant focus on expanding and enhancing mobility in Williston for modes of transportation that

do not require the use of an individually owned vehicle. Think walking, bicycling, taking the bus, and using ride-share or taxi services. While this chapter acknowledges that individuals choosing to drive alone will likely continue to make up most of the transportation in Town, it also recognizes that the choice to do so has been heavily shaped by a lack of other transportation options.

Safe space to walk and bike does not exist along many of Williston's roads. Bike paths and sidewalks sometimes end abruptly, do not connect to one another, or are interrupted by unsignalized crossings of busy roads. Bus service is limited and infrequent and only covers a small geographic area in Town. A complete and well-rounded transportation strategy will enable the town to facilitate the movement of people and goods, protect public safety, promote healthy lifestyles, and foster community building through the town.

This chapter lays out a set of goals, strategies, and actions intended to expand transportation options to all in Williston.



## Goals: In 2050 Williston is....



### **LIVABLE**

...because its transportation infrastructure is aesthetically pleasing and safe to use (street trees, adequate space for all users). Williston's transportation system provides opportunities to combine exercise and social interaction with going places. Williston implements land use policies that support connectivity, active transportation, and high-density mixed-use development. This promotes safe and convenient physical activity opportunities, reduces injuries associated with motor vehicle crashes, and minimizes human exposure to air and noise pollution and the associated adverse health impacts. These policies also enhance access to medical care, essential health and human services, nutritious foods, employment, and social connection.<sup>1</sup>



### **RESILIENT**

...because Williston's transportation system is able to withstand disruptions from weather events, maintenance activities, power outages, or crashes by providing more than one mode of transportation and more than one route for people to get where they are going. Williston proactively maintains its transportation system (roads, bridges, culverts, paths and sidewalks) in a manner that promotes sustainability and useability. This includes both roads and active transportation routes (paths and sidewalks), long term and day-to-day maintenance such as plowing.



### **EQUITABLE**

...because Williston has transportation infrastructure and systems that allow all people to get where they need and want to go safely and efficiently. The transportation needs of those who do not have access to a private car are met with adequate alternatives including walking, biking, public transportation, rideshare, and special needs transportation. A robust, multifaceted transportation system helps reduce transportation costs, allowing households to allocate more funds to essential needs like food, medical care, childcare, and utility bills, while also enabling them to save and build wealth. A broader variety of transportation modes support mobility independence, particularly among non-drivers, older adults, and individuals with disabilities, and empowers all community members to meet their needs.



## Three Things to Know

1

### **WILLISTON'S PEOPLE MOSTLY GET AROUND BY DRIVING ALONE.**

Almost 90% of respondents to the Williston 2050 survey said that they typically get around Town by driving alone.

2

### **WILLISTON'S PEOPLE VALUE THE ALTERNATIVES TO DRIVING ALONE THAT ARE AVAILABLE.**

People in Williston value the multi-use path system in Town and see access to it and the town's sidewalks as one of the major positives of living here.

3

### **WILLISTON'S TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE, PARTICULARLY INTERSTATE 89 AND EXIT 12, HAVE SHAPED PAST DEVELOPMENT AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PRESSURE IN TOWN.**

Taft Corners Largely developed because of the accessibility to the region created by interstate 89. Transportation Infrastructure that makes Williston easy to get to from nearby population centers will continue to shape desired development in Town into the future.



## Three Things Public Engagement Told Us

1

### **WILLISTON'S PEOPLE WANT EXPANDED BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE IN TOWN.**

While Williston has some bike paths and sidewalks, residents have identified gaps in connectivity and safety concerns. They want safer routes for cycling, including more bike lanes on main roads and measures to reduce traffic speeds. Improved pedestrian infrastructure, such as wider sidewalks, better lighting, and more crosswalks, are also desired. 40% of respondents in the Williston 2050 survey said that Williston's bike and pedestrian facilities are a strength of the town. However, 27% of people said that insufficient bike and pedestrian facilities were the biggest transportation challenge. 66% of people think that Williston should fund and support the building of new paths and sidewalks, even if it increases taxes and people think that bike lanes and paths are the best way to encourage forms of transportation besides single occupancy vehicles.

2

### **WILLISTON'S PEOPLE WANT BETTER AND MORE FREQUENT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

Williston's people expressed that the current public transportation system is lacking, with limited routes, infrequent service, and slow speeds. This makes it difficult for people who rely on public transit for work, errands, and other activities. There is a strong desire for improved bus service with expanded routes and increased frequency.

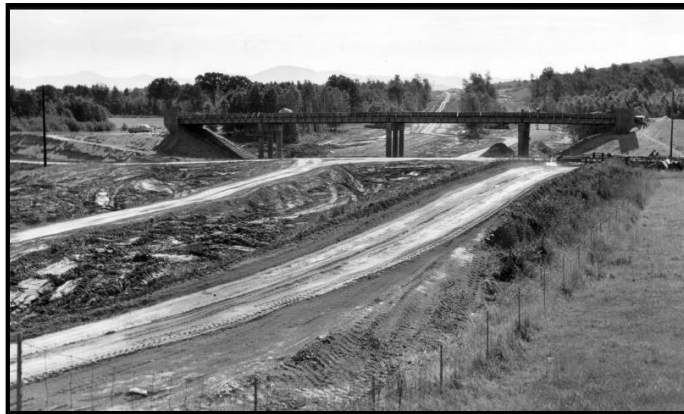
## 3

**WILLISTON'S PEOPLE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT TRAFFIC CONGESTION.**

Traffic congestion, particularly during peak hours, is a significant concern. Key areas like Route 2A, Williston Road, and Taft Corners experience heavy traffic at times, leading to delays and frustration for commuters and those who live in neighborhoods accessed by these roads.

## Recent Transportation History in Williston

While some of the roads in Williston do follow ancient pathways that date before the use of the passenger car, much of Williston's landscape has been shaped by a single major event- the construction of Interstate 89 and Exit 12, which made it convenient for shoppers from around the county and the state to come to Williston, and for Willistonians to live in the Town while commuting to work elsewhere. The development of Taft Corners as a suburban shopping center followed, with the first proposals for malls and shopping centers in the area arriving within a decade of the completion of the highway.



*Figure 1: The construction of Interstate 89 and Exit 12 in 1962 fundamentally changed land use and transportation patterns in Williston. Source: University of Vermont Landscape Change Project accessed at <https://www.uvm.edu/landscape>*

Almost as soon as Exit 12 was open to travel, Williston began to prepare for another major highway in Town, the Circumferential Highway, or “Circ,” which would have connected Interstate 89 to Route 2 between Taft Corners and the Village, Mountain View Road, and Route 289 in Essex- and eventually all the way to Burlington via a “ring road.” The 2011 Williston Comprehensive Plan had been almost entirely drafted and approved when then-governor Peter Shumlin held a press conference alongside Interstate 89 to announce that, after 40 years, tens of millions of dollars in planning, and several expensive lawsuits, the Circumferential Highway would not be built. Williston pivoted over the next few years, participating in a “Circ Alternatives” process that identified projects that could relieve congestion in Town in other ways, by making improvements to existing roads and intersections and by providing infrastructure for walkers and cyclists so alternatives to driving would be more available.

Circumferential Highway Alternatives projects for Williston include:

- I-89 Exit 12 Interchange Stage I-IV Improvements
  - Stage 1: New Shared Use Path under Interstate<sup>2</sup> & New VT2A Lane from Marshall Ave to I-89 NB Ramp
  - Stage 2: New Grid Streets and At Grade Intersection on VT2A between I-89 & Marshall Ave
  - Stage 3: Diverging Diamond Interchange Improvements
  - Stage 4: VT 2A Boulevard Upgrade from Grid St Intersection to Taft Corners
- Industrial Ave/Mountain View Rd/VT 2A - Intersection Improvements; New VT 2A Lane to James Brown Dr<sup>3</sup>

- New US 2 Taft Corners to Williston Village Shared Use Pathway and Village Sidewalk<sup>4</sup>
- New Mountain View Road and Redmond Rd Ext to IBM Access Rd Shared Shoulder
- New Harvest Lane Taft Corners Sidewalk, VT2A Taft Corners Area Sidewalks/Shared Use Path, VT2A North Gap Path, VT2A South Gap Sidewalk/Path<sup>5</sup>

The Williston-Essex Network Transportation Study (WENTS) built upon the CIRC Alternatives process to develop a set of multimodal strategies, policies, and land use strategies that enhance corridor mobility, improve access to major employment and retail centers, minimize congestion, improve safety, support economic development, and enhance environmental quality within the WENTS area. The study resulted in a set of short- and longer-term multimodal strategies (Implementation Plan) that will help achieve the area's Goals and Objectives.

A Network Implementation Plan was developed that identified specific transportation improvements, by mode, time frame, estimated cost, and lead agency for pursuing those improvements. For more details on this study, read the [WENTS Final Report](#).<sup>6</sup>

To date, one of these alternative projects has been completed, one is in progress, and many of the promised projects are listed further out in the state's Transportation Implementation Plan (TIP), unfunded and with an uncertain completion date.

Since the adoption of the 2016 Williston Comprehensive Plan, the Town has made progress and improvements to its transportation system including:

- Completion of the Exit 12 Park and Ride (by Vermont AOT)
- 4-way stop at intersections of Rte. 2/North Williston Rd and North Williston Rd/Mountain View Rd
- Traffic signal and reconfiguration of James Brown Drive/Rte. 2A intersection
- Elimination of the passing lane along Rte. 2 entering the Village
- Painted bicycle lanes along both sides of Rte. 2 from the Village to S. Brownell Rd
- Infill paths/sidewalks
  - Route 2A (section in front of Bank North Property) 2018
  - Blair Park (in fill around loop to connect to Route 2) 2021
  - Williston Road (S. Burlington Town Line/Muddy Brook to Industrial Ave) 2023
  - Along Rte. 2A under Interstate (part of a CIRC alternative project)
  - Throughout Finney Crossing
  - Along Rte. 2 fronting Cottonwood Crossing
  - Along Rte. 2 fronting former Robear property to Industrial Ave.
- Adoption of Official Map
- Microtransit Feasibility Study
- Scoping study and conceptual design for Taft Corners Multimodal Hub
- Scoping study and implementation of traffic calming measures on North Williston Rd.
- Road safety audit of Oak Hill Rd.
- Update 2014 Williston Road Multimodal Scoping Study
- Class I Town Highway Study
- Adoption of Taft Corners Form Based Code and Street Specifications.



## Action Areas

### Taft Corners Grid Streets and Class I Town Highway Reclassification

In 2022, Williston adopted the Taft Corners Form Based Code, which envisions and codifies a vibrant mixed-use, urban village in the area surrounding intersection of 2 and 2A. This future for Taft Corners relies on the construction of grid streets to achieve a safe, walkable, livable, area that supports a mix of small businesses, housing, and green space as well as alleviating congestion and collision concerns on the main arteries.

The town is committed to building “Complete Streets” whenever possible. Complete Streets are those that include design features for addressing the needs of all modes of transportation not just vehicles. New transportation facilities should incorporate complete street design principles to the maximum extent possible, and improvements to existing roadways should incorporate facilities for non-motorized transportation users whenever feasible. To that end, the Taft Corners Form Based Code district incorporates street specifications that align with Complete Streets principles.



Figure 2: Vision for future Trader Lane grid street. Source: Taft Corners Vision Plan.<sup>7</sup>

However, the goals of the town in building these grid streets including the incorporation of Complete Streets design principles, are not compatible with the two highways bisecting it. As early as 1991, Vermont AOT warned that they would not maintain ownership of a road with the number of intersections planned along Route 2A.

Williston is not unique in this respect. The state recognizes that conventional highways running through downtowns can be at odds with the needs of the individual towns that they run through and offers the

Class 1 Town Highway reclassification process, wherein the town takes ownership for a segment of road, as a solution.

“Reclassification can have benefits for both the municipality and VTrans. It provides more flexibility to the municipality for streetscape design, traffic calming measures, placement of crosswalks, on-street parking, coordination of maintenance activities and the municipality receives annual compensation via Town Highway Aid. While at the same time the municipality retains eligibility for most state and federal grant programs. VTrans is relieved of maintaining a section of road that may require customized equipment or practices that are beyond the resources of VTrans maintenance staff.”<sup>8</sup>

To make these corridors more pleasant, walkable, and safe as well as support the window-shopping environment of local businesses and gathering places, Williston will need to take these roads over as Class 1 Town Highway or advocate Vermont AOT’s policy to be more flexible to support the Town’s needs.

### **Town Path and Sidewalk Network**



*Figure 3: Williston Safe Routes to School leads monthly walks to Williston Central and Allen Brook Schools.*

A majority of the responses to Williston’s public engagement process in Fall 2023 were about bike lanes, sidewalks, and bus routes. Some participants noted that a car is essentially required, and some of those said that Williston should not invest in this area to attempt to change that. A few participants commented about micro-transit.

- 40% of respondents stated that they think Williston's bike and pedestrian facilities are a strength of the town. Visiting the walking path behind Allen Brook School on any given day, you will see numerous users out for a walk, jog, or rollerblade.



- 89% of people typically drive alone when getting around Williston. While vehicle transportation has taken and will continue to take the largest share of our infrastructure budget, there is steady and vocal support for other options.
- Nearly 50% of respondents noted that improving bike and pedestrian facilities is a top town priority to addressing transportation challenges. Not only do people feel that the town needs more connected bike lanes and walking paths, but the town also needs to address bike and pedestrian safety through slower traffic speeds, better marked crosswalks, and street lighting.
- 55% of 254 respondents think that bike lanes and paths are the best way to encourage forms of transportation besides single occupancy vehicles.
- 66% of people think that Williston should fund and support the building of new paths and sidewalks, even if it increases taxes.
- Most of the areas that people feel unsafe walking and biking are along major roads<sup>9</sup>

A town-wide network of paths reduces congestion on our roads for local trips and provides opportunities for recreation and connection. When combined with bicycle infrastructure, public transportation, and first/last mile connection, expanded pedestrian pathways improve job and housing options without the need to own a car. This has significant social benefits for low-income households, single-parent and younger homes, individuals with disabilities, and non-white individuals, who are less likely to own cars.<sup>10</sup>

The [Official Map](#) shows existing trails and paths and those proposed. The Official Map was developed through a public process and adopted in 2022. Per 24 V.S.A. § 4421, the intent of an Official Map is to *identify the location of future municipal utility and facility improvements, such as road or recreational path rights-of-way, parkland, utility rights-of-way, and other public improvements, in order to provide the opportunity for the community to acquire land identified for public improvements prior to development for other use.*<sup>11</sup>

Williston last took out a bond for sidewalks in 2004, and alongside that has relied on developers to build sidewalks and paths as part of their projects. This has resulted in gaps – sidewalks that go to nowhere with no plans to be connected, primarily due to lack of funding.

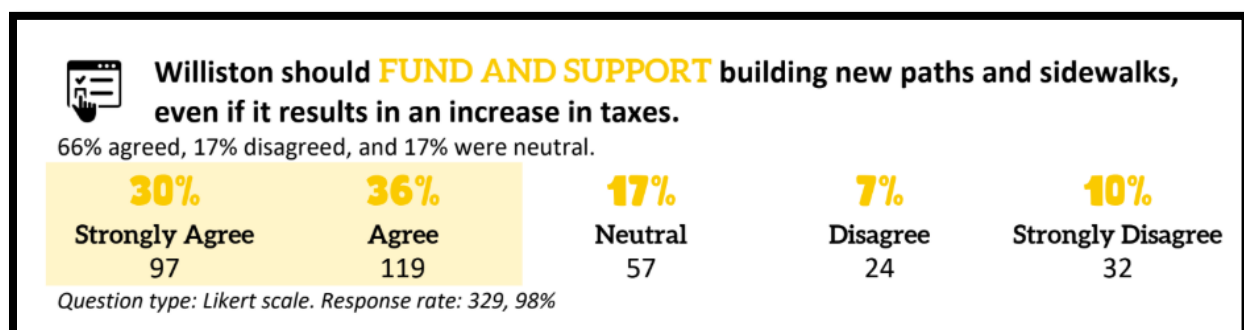


Figure 4: Summary of responses to online survey question about funding new paths and sidewalks.

Surrounding communities such as South Burlington have utilized a Penny for Paths program to ensure that these projects get consistent funding, both to increase pedestrian safety and close gaps in existing networks. A typical mechanism may be a dedicated 1 cent on the tax rate, such that a \$300,000 property would pay \$30 into this fund.

## **Public Transit**

Williston currently has limited, fixed-route bus service provided by the Green Mountain Transit (GMT) and on-demand special transportation services provided by the Special Services Transportation Agency (SSTA). Map 8 – Existing Transportation Network shows the present bus routes. The #1 Williston/Burlington route runs every 20 minutes from 6:00 am to 11:10 pm Monday-Friday and on Saturday every 30 minutes from 7:40 am to 7:40 pm with less frequent service in the early morning and late evening hours. Sunday service runs about every 45 minutes from 8:40 am to 7:10 pm. The #10 Williston/Essex route runs Monday-Friday, 7:00 am to 6:15 pm with trips spaced 75 minutes apart.<sup>12</sup>

Route #1 (Williston/Burlington) is one of GMT's most successful routes and serves over 55,000 trips per month. Route 1 ridership had returned to pre-COVID levels by January of 2023. Currently, Route #10 (Williston/Essex) delivers around 1,800 trips per month.<sup>13</sup>

Some service reductions have been implemented since the last Town Plan was written. The Williston Village route was discontinued in 2019 due to low ridership (about 1,000 trips/month). In GMT's efforts to manage a near-term financial cliff due to the conclusion of covid-relief funds, several route adjustments are being made. This includes the elimination of the Saturday run of the #10 Williston/Essex route and less frequent service for the #1 Williston/Burlington route.<sup>14</sup>

GMT also provides on demand service for people eligible for special transportation services. In FY 2024 1,795 trips were provided for the Older & Disabled Transportation program in Williston.

Recently Williston has begun to explore microtransit as an option to supplement fixed route bus service and provide a locally focused public transportation option. Microtransit, also known as "on-demand transit," is a form of public transit that features flexible routing and flexible scheduling of vehicles. Passengers must request a trip, and this is most commonly done using a smartphone application. On-demand microtransit services match passenger demand (trips) with supply (vehicles) to improve service quality and extend the reach of the transit system. Passengers who live or work beyond walking distance from fixed-route bus stops can use on-demand microtransit to bridge the "first-and-last-mile" gap to reach the longer-distance service. In lower density areas on-demand microtransit's primary application is to improve mobility by offering high-quality service where fixed-route buses cannot operate efficiently.<sup>15</sup>

In 2023, Williston engaged the services of Via Mobility to complete a Microtransit Feasibility Study. The Study found that Williston is suitable for a microtransit service, and that the community would benefit from additional transportation options. While the Town is served by fixed routes, most residents live beyond walking distance of stops, and there are no locally focused options open to the general public. Residents would likely use microtransit for errand-running trips, and for connection to fixed routes, allowing community members to meet their daily needs without a personal vehicle. This will benefit those without access to personal cars, and those who would prefer to travel via transit and on foot, making for a more livable community where everyone has access to transit service. The Town should continue to pursue avenues for microtransit service.

# OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND ACTIONS

## Objectives

- 10.A** Williston evaluates its current bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and has a plan, including adequate funding to upgrade the system over time.
- 10.B** Gaps in the existing multi-use path and sidewalk system are connected with new sidewalks and paths rapidly to create a more interconnected network.
- 10.C** Existing sidewalks and paths are maintained and enhanced where needed.
- 10.D** Bike lanes and space for walking are added to roads where cyclists and walkers feel unsafe.
- 10.E** Transit that is frequent, affordable, and fast enough to compete with driving alone, is available to most people in Williston.
- 10.F** Vehicle congestion on Williston's roads is monitored and intersection and street improvements are made when congestion is predicted to create a safety or accessibility issue. Congestion mitigation is focused on vehicle throughput as opposed to vehicle speed.

## Strategies

### **10.1** Create a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan as an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan.

| Actions       |                                                                                                                                                                          | Responsibility                                     | Timeframe  | Cost |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------|------|
| <b>10.1.1</b> | Evaluate the current Bicycle and Pedestrian network in Williston and identify gaps and places in town where bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure is desired.            | Planning Commission<br>Public Works                | Short Term | \$   |
| <b>10.1.2</b> | Prioritize “gap closing” bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects based on Williston’s “Livable, Resilient, Equitable” vision as stated in the Comprehensive Plan. | Planning Commission<br>Public Works<br>Selectboard | Short Term | \$   |
| <b>10.1.3</b> | Evaluate and rank projects called for by the Plan in terms of cost, effectiveness, relative difficulty to implement, and population served.                              | Planning Commission<br>Public Works<br>Selectboard | Short Term | \$   |
| <b>10.1.4</b> | Review the Plan on an annual basis to assess progress towards goals. Consider adopting a few key performance indicators to facilitate this periodic assessment.          | Planning Commission<br>Public Works<br>Selectboard | Short Term | \$   |

## **10.2 Use the Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to pursue scoping, design, and construction of the projects it calls for.**

|               |                                                                                                                                                       |                                 |             |      |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|------|
| <b>10.2.1</b> | Develop bicycle and pedestrian projects using the Chittenden County Unified Work Program (CCRPC UPWP) annual process to request technical assistance. | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | \$   |
| <b>10.2.2</b> | Partner with Local Motion to seek out Federal and State grant opportunities to fund bike and pedestrian paths.                                        | Planning Staff/ WOTM            | Short Term  | \$   |
| <b>10.2.3</b> | Fund the appropriate local match for these scoping and design efforts in the Planning Department Operating budget.                                    | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | \$\$ |

## **10.3 Advance the Williston Road Multimodal Path from feasibility scoping through design to construction. This project has much community support and should be advanced.**

|               |                                                                                                                                                                              |                                              |            |      |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------|------|
| <b>10.3.1</b> | Develop further scoping to identify constraints such as wetlands and archaeological resources. Utilize the Chittenden County Unified Work Program (CCRPC UPWP) to fund this. | Planning Commission Public Works Selectboard | Short Term | \$\$ |
| <b>10.3.2</b> | Fund the complete design and construction of the path. Procure local match through a combination of bond and impact fees.                                                    | Planning Commission Selectboard              | Short Term | \$\$ |

## **10.4 Evaluate ways to adequately fund the more rapid buildout of needed bicycle and pedestrian facilities.**

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                         |                       |            |    |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|----|
| <b>10.4.1</b> | Prioritize the development of a “penny on the rate” style ballot question on a Town Meeting Ballot to request Williston voters dedicate funds to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. | Selectboard           | Short Term | -- |
| <b>10.4.2</b> | Evaluate projects that can be funded using the Tax Increment Financing tool available to Vermont municipalities.                                                                        | Planning              | Short Term | \$ |
| <b>10.4.3</b> | Evaluate the feasibility of a new bond for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.                                                                                                           | Planning Public Works | Short Term | \$ |

## **10.5 Enhance in the viability of transit in Williston. Improve public transit so it better meets the needs of people who work and shop in Taft Corners. Collaborate with Green Mountain Transit to ensure that transit is an attractive option for all people travelling to and from Williston: workers, shoppers, and residents alike.**

|               |                                                                                                                                               |             |             |          |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| <b>10.5.1</b> | Fund Green Mountain Transit so it can provide transit that is frequent and rapid enough to provide a viable alternative to driving.           | Selectboard | Medium Term | \$\$\$   |
| <b>10.5.2</b> | Evaluate possibilities for transit facilities that improve the transit rider experience and allow transit users to switch modes (biking to or | Selectboard | Long Term   | \$\$\$\$ |

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                     |             |          |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|----------|
|               | driving and parking at a transit center, for example).                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                     |             |          |
| <b>10.5.3</b> | Continue to evaluate options for microtransit or “on-demand” service in Williston.                                                                                                                                                                        | Selectboard                         | Medium Term | \$\$     |
| <b>10.5.4</b> | Develop advocacy plan for direct transit routes in Williston that support frequency of service.                                                                                                                                                           | Planning Commission                 | Short Term  | --       |
| <b>10.6</b>   | <b>Build the “grid streets” in Taft Corners to distribute vehicle traffic and enhance connectivity.</b>                                                                                                                                                   |                                     |             |          |
| <b>10.6.1</b> | Maintain the provision of impact fee offsets for the private funding and construction of grid streets.                                                                                                                                                    | Selectboard                         | Ongoing     | \$       |
| <b>10.6.2</b> | Implement tax increment financing, special assessment districts, bonding, or other mechanisms to fund grid street construction.                                                                                                                           | Selectboard                         | Short Term  | \$\$\$\$ |
| <b>10.6.3</b> | Evaluate the possibility of taking portions of Route 2 and/or Route 2A as Class I Town Highways so they can be reconfigured to be more bicycle and pedestrian friendly and be configured to a design that better serves their function as “Main Streets.” | Planning Public Works               | Medium Term | \$\$     |
| <b>10.7</b>   | <b>Re-evaluate the Transportation Impact Fee and Impact Fee Project List.</b>                                                                                                                                                                             |                                     |             |          |
| <b>10.7.1</b> | Evaluate the transportation Impact Fee in light of rising construction costs and predicted development to ensure new development pays its “fair share” to mitigate the new traffic it creates.                                                            | Planning Commission<br>Public Works | Short Term  | \$\$     |
| <b>10.7.2</b> | Evaluate the impact of the transportation impact fee on infill, redevelopment and the creation of new housing to ensure desirable new development is not impeded by the fee.                                                                              | Planning Commission                 | Short Term  | \$\$     |
| <b>10.8</b>   | <b>Strengthen standards for access, connectivity, sidewalks, multi-use path, and trail connections in all zoning districts.</b>                                                                                                                           |                                     |             |          |
| <b>10.8.1</b> | Develop a consistent, quantitative standard for when sidewalk or path construction is required and when an easement alone is sufficient.                                                                                                                  | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard  | Medium Term | --       |
| <b>10.8.2</b> | Evaluate ways of incentivizing and requiring path and trail connections without the Growth Management scoring system.                                                                                                                                     | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard  | Medium Term | --       |
| <b>10.8.3</b> | Maintain requirements for safe and convenient short- and long-term bicycle storage and end-of-trip facilities for new development and for amendments to existing development when appropriate.                                                            | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard  | Ongoing     | --       |
| <b>10.8.4</b> | Maintain policy for consolidated driveway access on arterials and collector roads and the build out of a grid-street network.                                                                                                                             | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard  | Medium Term | --       |

|                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                    |             |          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------|----------|
| <b>10.8.5</b>                                                                                                                        | Evaluate and modify the number of units and intensity of development served by a single point of access, driveway, and loop road.                                                                                                                             | Planning Commission Selectboard    | Medium Time | --       |
| <b>10.8.6</b>                                                                                                                        | Evaluate the Public Works Specifications to provide for street and right-of-way design that prioritizes pedestrians and cyclists and slower vehicle speeds for roads serving residential and mixed-use areas.                                                 | Public Works Selectboard           | Medium Term | --       |
| <b>10.9 Create a “park-once” environment in Taft Corners to reduce vehicular traffic and more effectively utilize the land area.</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                    |             |          |
| <b>10.9.1</b>                                                                                                                        | Develop bylaw amendments to reduce or eliminate parking minimums and require shared parking instead.                                                                                                                                                          | Planning Commission                | Short Term  | --       |
| <b>10.9.2</b>                                                                                                                        | Evaluate pedestrian connections between parking locations and destinations. Update Williston’s Official Map to identify and prioritize the construction of “missing link” pedestrian connections.                                                             | Planning Commission Public Works   | Medium Term | \$\$\$\$ |
| <b>10.9.3</b>                                                                                                                        | Develop public facilities that enhance transit, bicycling, and walking in Taft Corners and beyond; such as public benches, a multimodal hub at Maple tree Place, and public bicycle racks where none are currently available.                                 | Planning Public Works Town Manager | Long Term   | \$\$\$\$ |
| <b>10.10 Design and build new Taft Corners streets for slow-moving traffic and to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.</b>        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                    |             |          |
| <b>10.10.1</b>                                                                                                                       | Evaluate the feasibility of allowing or requiring 10-foot-wide travel lanes in some or all of the new Street Specifications that were adopted in 2022 as part of the Taft Corners Form-Based Code, many of which allow for 11- or 10-foot-wide travel lanes.  | Planning Public Works              | Short Term  | --       |
| <b>10.10.2</b>                                                                                                                       | Evaluate the Form-based Code Street Specifications Map to ensure a complete bicycle network will be created as these streets are built over time. Ensure where possible that all streets that provide an off-street cycle track are connected to one another. | Planning Public Works              | Short Term  | --       |

## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Heaps, Wendy et al, 2021. *Public Transportation In The US: A Driver of Health and Equity*. Health Affairs Health Policy Brief, July 29, 2021. DOI: 10.1377/ hpb20210630.810356. Accessed 4/8/2025 at <https://www.healthaffairs.org/content/briefs/public-transportation-us-driver-health-and-equity>.

<sup>2</sup> Completed in 2023.

<sup>3</sup> In progress as of the drafting of this Plan (2025).

<sup>4</sup> Scoping study was completed in 2014 and was updated in 2025.

<sup>5</sup> Short/Mid/Long Term Implementation Package of Phase III CIRC Alternative Projects. Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission. Accessed 4/7/2025 at [https://www.ccrpcvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/20131121\\_PhaseIII\\_Project\\_List\\_Final.pdf](https://www.ccrpcvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/20131121_PhaseIII_Project_List_Final.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> R.S.G. Transportation, Inc. prepared for Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission. 2014. *Williston Essex Network Transportation Study (WENTS) – Final Report*. Accessed 4/8/2025 at <https://www.ccrpcvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/WENTS-Final-Report-March2014.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Town of Williston, Vermont, 2023. *Taft Corners Vision Plan*. Accessed 4/7/2025 at [https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/Taft\\_Corners\\_Vision\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/Taft_Corners_Vision_Plan.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Dubois and King, Inc., 2016. *Class I Town Highways: Costs and Issues for Vermont Communities Considering Reclassification of State Highways*. White Paper prepared for Vermont Agency of Transportation Policy, Planning and Research Bureau. Accessed 4/8/2025 at <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/sites/aot/files/planning/documents/planning/Class%20I%20Town%20Highways%20White%20Paper.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Town of Williston, Vermont, 2024. *Town Plan Engagement Insights Report*. [https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/Williston\\_2050\\_Engagement\\_Insights\\_Report\\_Final\\_April\\_2024.pdf](https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/Williston_2050_Engagement_Insights_Report_Final_April_2024.pdf). Accessed April 29, 2024.

<sup>10</sup> Volker, J. M. B., & Handy, S. (2021). Economic impacts on local businesses of investments in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure: a review of the evidence. *Transport Reviews*, 41(4), 401–431. Accessed 4/8/2025 at <https://doi.org/10.1080/01441647.2021.1912849>.

<sup>11</sup> Vermont Statutes. 24 V.S.A. § 4421. Official map. Accessed 4/8/2025 at <https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/24/117/04421>.

<sup>12</sup> Green Mountain Transit schedules, accessed 4/8/2025 at <https://ridegmt.com/gmt-schedules/>.

<sup>13</sup> Green Mountain Transit Performance Dashboard. Accessed 4/8/2025 at <https://ridegmt.com/performance-dashboard/>.

<sup>14</sup> Green Mountain Transit. Town of Williston 2024 Annual Report. Accessed 4/8/2025 at [https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/2024\\_Annual\\_Town\\_Report.pdf](https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/2024_Annual_Town_Report.pdf).



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<sup>15</sup> Via Mobility, LLC., 2023. *Williston Microtransit Study Final Report*. Accessed 4/8/2025 at [https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/Williston\\_Microtransit\\_Study\\_Final\\_Report\\_-\\_v2.pdf](https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/Williston_Microtransit_Study_Final_Report_-_v2.pdf).

# 11 ENERGY AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE



## Introduction

The planet is facing a climate crisis, and the impacts of climate change will increasingly become a matter of public safety and economic prosperity as extreme weather events occur with greater frequency and intensity. Looking towards the future, action must take place at all levels to cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that result from the use of fossil fuels and to mitigate its impacts. To meet these challenges, towns need to design and implement plans that ensure safe, sustainable, and thriving communities in the context of a changing climate and energy landscape.

The 2025 Williston Energy Plan is a standalone document that is incorporated by reference into this Town Plan and summarized in this chapter. The Energy Plan was developed in accordance with the Vermont Department of Public Service's energy planning standards and in alignment with the goals outlined by the 2022 Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan (CEP). The Energy Committee developed the energy plan with input from Sustainable Williston, guidance from town staff and Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) staff, and oversight from the Planning Commission. The Plan provides direction for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by focusing attention

on five key areas: 1) transportation and land use, 2) building energy usage, 3) recycling and consumption, 4) renewable energy generation, and 5) agriculture.

Within each major focus area, the plan articulates measurable goals the town aims to achieve, outlines objectives to achieve said goals, identifies pathways that list the responsible entities, and suggests a timeline for task completion.

The energy profile for Williston (pages 7-13 of the Energy Plan) provides an estimate of current energy consumption in the heating, electricity, and transportation sectors. These estimates are provided to better understand where the town is currently with respect to Vermont's energy goals.

The Energy Plan (pages 13-20) also provides a picture of estimated future energy targets that need to be met for Williston to achieve the goal of 90% renewable energy by 2050. To achieve these targets, multiple strategies and actions are proposed.



## Goals: In 2050 Williston is....



### **LIVABLE**

...because Williston is a community powered by renewable, locally produced and owned energy, fed by local farms, housed in energy efficient homes heated without fossil fuels, transported by biking and walking, electric cars and buses, all sustained by a vibrant, local economy and social network. Everyone in Williston lives in a healthy, safe and comfortable home, and no one spends more than 6% (threshold above which is considered “energy burdened”) of their income on energy bills.



### **RESILIENT**

Williston is primarily powered by renewable, locally produced and owned energy, it is resilient to fluctuations in global energy supply and prices. Because local farms supply a substantial part of the local food supply, the town is resilient to fluctuations in global food supply and prices. Because the town’s robust public transit system and expansive, well-connected network of paths and trails provides viable alternatives to driving a car, the roads are less congested and carbon emissions and other pollutants are greatly reduced and the community is active and healthy.



### **EQUITABLE**

...because the Town of Williston centers equity in the implementation of all pathways towards achieving the town’s energy and climate resiliency goals. A key guiding principle of the Vermont Climate Action Plan is to prioritize the most impacted first. Those most impacted by rising energy costs and climate change are households with high energy to income ratios, referred to as “energy burdens.” Most often this includes lower-income households, many renters and people who work in Williston at lower wage occupations but cannot afford to live in town thus relying more on car transportation. All implementation pathways prioritize those with high energy burdens, incorporate consideration of possible unintended negative impacts on this population and mitigate those impacts. Those who are most impacted by energy burden and climate change have a voice in decision making while the town plans the transition to a clean energy future and receive a share of benefits.



## Three Things to Know

1

### **BOLD ACTION IS REQUIRED TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS**

Including moving the town away from use of fossil fuels toward renewable energy, reducing consumption of energy and materials, and increasing conservation measures.

2

### **WILLISTON'S 2020 ENERGY PLAN WAS AN IMPORTANT FIRST STEP TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE**

The development of 2020 Williston Energy Plan was the first time the town attempted to develop a comprehensive document putting forth goals, strategies and actions to reduce carbon emissions in alignment with those outlined by the 2016 State of Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan (CEP).

3

### **WILLISTON NEEDS TO DO MORE AT A FASTER PACE TO ACHIEVE ITS STATED ENERGY AND CLIMATE GOALS.**

Williston needs to begin making progress to electrify its fleet and needs to implement measures to decarbonize and increase the energy efficiency of town buildings.



## Three Things Public Engagement Told Us

1

### **PEOPLE VALUE WILLISTON'S INVESTMENT IN RENEWABLE ENERGY.**

The town owns two solar arrays that produce a combined total of 314 megawatts annually, enough energy to offset 74% of electricity used in town buildings.

2

### **THE TOWN SHOULD BE DOING MORE.**

When asked what the town's priorities should be to address energy and climate challenges, 44% of respondents stated that the greatest town priority for Williston's energy and environment is in addressing renewable energy and energy efficiency. This includes encouraging more solar and clean energy, more available electric vehicle charging stations, and shifting away from fossil fuels.

3

### **THERE IS SOME SUPPORT FOR FUNDING ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY THROUGH PROPERTY TAXES.**

When asked whether they would support the town's investments in energy efficiency and solar generation, even if it results in an increase in taxes, 44% agreed, 31% disagreed, and 25% were neutral.

## **Bold Action is Required to Address Climate Change Impacts**

While the State has set goals for 2050 through the 2022 Comprehensive Energy Plan (CEP), the August 2018 report of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states that, **“we must switch from fossil fuels to renewable, non-carbon-based energy sources by 2030 to avoid a 1.5 degree increase in global temperature; a change which is projected to cause catastrophic risks to human systems.”** Bold action at the local level is required to address these challenges, including moving the town away from use of fossil fuels toward renewable energy, reducing consumption of energy and materials, and increasing conservation measures to minimize Williston's impact on climate change. In addition to environmental concerns caused by severe weather events (floods, heatwaves, storms), climate change has significant negative impacts on public health and safety, food security, transportation and mobility, and political and economic stability. Therefore, addressing climate change requires our collective attention and resources on a similar scale, at the very least, to other Town public safety priorities.

## **Williston's 2020 Energy Plan was an important first step to address climate change**

The 2020 Williston Energy Plan was developed in accordance with the Vermont Department of Public Service's energy planning standards and was the first time the town attempted to develop a comprehensive document putting forth goals, strategies and actions to reduce carbon emissions in alignment with those outlined by the 2016 State of Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan (CEP). The Energy Plan's purpose is to provide a direction and framework for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by focusing on five key areas: 1) transportation and land Use 2) building energy usage 3) recycling and consumption 4) renewable energy generation and 5) agriculture.

This plan has several functions: • It is a stand-alone document and a supplement to the Williston Comprehensive Plan • It is a plan to help Williston achieve the goals of the state Comprehensive Energy Plan (CEP) at the local level • It is a plan to obtain a “determination of energy compliance” from the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) that will assure the plan will receive “substantial deference” when siting renewable energy projects within the town.

## **Williston has begun implementing actions in the Energy Plan but needs to do more at a faster pace to achieve its stated energy and climate goals.**

Since the adoption of the Energy Plan, the town has taken these steps:

- The Selectboard established an Energy Committee in January 2022.
- The town added the position of Energy and Community Development Planner to the Planning Department in May 2022. Energy Planning represents 50% of the position.
- The town has secured over \$100,000 in grants for energy projects, not including invaluable technical assistance
- As of 2024, 368 EVs/PHEVs have been registered in Williston
- As of 2024, 545 (12%) of Williston homes have been weatherized, 1,300 heat pumps have been installed (28% of homes), and 114 heat pump water heaters have been installed (2.6% of homes).
- Since the 2010 Energy Audits were done, the town has weatherized the Town Hall, Town Hall Annex, Library and Old Brick Church, and has done a comprehensive lighting retrofit of the Town Hall.

- The town owns two solar arrays that together produce > 300 MW of electricity annually, enough to supply 75% of the electricity used in municipal buildings.
- The Energy Committee coordinates an annual Energy Fair, which features an electric vehicle display along with vendors in the energy conservation, solar installation, and home weatherization sectors.
- The Energy Committee engages in energy education activities including:
  - Writing articles for the monthly Williston Observer Living Green series.
  - Publishing information about energy usage in town buildings as part of the Town's Annual Report and on the Energy Committee website.
  - Conducting outreach at farmers markets and town events with information on EVs, weatherization, energy efficiency and solar generation.
- Energy Committee identified high-priority locations for EV chargers in Williston and the town installed a pilot EV charging station at the Village Park in 2024.
- Using a Department of Energy grant and town funding, the town purchased two new electric riding mowers for the Department of Public Works and the Recreation Department.

Conversely, the town has not purchased any electric vehicles to date, and in that area is falling way behind the progress of neighboring municipalities. For example, Burlington has over 80 electric vehicles in its fleet, including several police cruisers, fire, public works, and recreation department vehicles. South Burlington has a few hybrid police cruisers and several EVs used by other town departments. Richmond purchased an electric police cruiser, and the Town of Shelburne is partnering with Car Share Vermont to pilot an EV for town and public use. **Williston needs to begin making progress in electrifying its fleet.**

Similarly, the town has yet to transition any of its buildings' HVAC systems from fossil fuel (gas) to electric heat pumps. Nor has the town taken steps to replace outdated fluorescent lighting in the Police Station, Fire Station, Town Hall Annex and Library with LED lighting, which would greatly reduce electricity usage, reduce peak loads and save the town money over the long term. **The town needs to take the lead in decarbonization and energy efficiency efforts.**

**If the town intends to achieve the goals as stated in its adopted Energy Plan, it needs to take bold action starting now.** The following Objectives, Strategies and Actions provide a roadmap for the Town to achieve the energy targets as described in the Energy Plan.

# OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

## Objectives

- 11.A** Williston enjoys a low overall energy burden rating, but we're committed to prioritizing those who are most energy burdened and are well-informed about ways to decarbonize and make their homes more energy efficient and how to fund those measures.
- 11.B** The town administration and staff are well-informed about funding opportunities and changes to state and federal policies as they relate to energy plan goals and objectives.
- 11.C** The town's land-use policies embrace smart and sustainable growth.
- 11.D** By 2050, Williston has made substantial progress on its energy and climate goals:
- Per-capita energy consumption has been reduced by more than a third.
  - Greenhouse gas emissions have been reduced by 80% below 1990 levels.
  - The amount of renewable energy generation has doubled from 2015 levels.
  - 90% of homes and 50% of commercial buildings have been weatherized.
  - 98% of light-duty vehicles in Williston are electric.
  - 100% of the light-duty vehicles in the municipal fleet are electric.
  - 96% of heavy-duty municipal vehicles are fueled with renewable resources.
  - 95% of homes are equipped with cold climate heat pumps.
- 11.E** Public transit is frequent and reliable enough to be a viable alternative to driving a car.
- 11.F** The town's multimodal network is fully connected, making it safe to walk and bike as a regular means of transportation.

## Strategies

- 11.1** Partner with others such as Drive Electric Vermont to conduct outreach related to electric vehicles, with the goal to increase the rate of EV adoption.

| Actions       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Responsibility   | Timeframe | Cost |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------|------|
| <b>11.1.1</b> | Develop plans for high-visibility events where people can see Electric Vehicles (EVs), such as energy fairs and other community events.                                                                                             | Energy Committee | Ongoing   | \$   |
| <b>11.1.2</b> | Develop outreach campaign to promote resources such as Drive Electric Vermont, Green Mountain Power and Vermont Electric Cooperative websites, which connect users to financial incentives, dealers, and charging stations for EVs. | Energy Committee | Ongoing   | --   |
| <b>11.1.3</b> | Maintain facilitation and promotion of the EV Ambassador program by regularly posting on Front Porch Forum and other media to solicit                                                                                               | Energy Committee | Ongoing   | --   |



|                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                    |             |      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------|------|
|                                                                                                                                               | new Ambassadors and to publicize the program to potential electric vehicle purchasers.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                    |             |      |
| <b>11.2 Work to expand the number of publicly available EV chargers in Williston.</b>                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                    |             |      |
| <b>11.2.1</b>                                                                                                                                 | Support the installation of additional EV chargers where they are needed, partnering with developers and leveraging all available local, state, federal and private funding sources.                                                                                                                                                                                  | Selectboard                        | Short Term  | \$\$ |
| <b>11.2.2</b>                                                                                                                                 | Support local utilities, Drive Electric Vermont, Vermont Clean Communities Coalition, and other organizations to promote the expansion of workplace charging, which would provide a convenient and consistently available charging location for people who are not able to charge at home.                                                                            | Energy Committee                   | Short Term  | --   |
| <b>11.2.3</b>                                                                                                                                 | Maintain support for and incentivize the installation of EV chargers in development standards.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Short Term  | --   |
| <b>11.2.4</b>                                                                                                                                 | Develop standards for EV charging in new developments.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Short Term  | --   |
| <b>11.3 Electrify the town light-duty vehicle fleet.</b>  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                    |             |      |
| <b>11.3.1</b>                                                                                                                                 | Implement the recommended steps in the (pending) VEIC Fleet Electrification Plan, which will establish a schedule to replace current town vehicles with EVs.                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Town Manager<br>Selectboard        | Medium Term | \$\$ |
| <b>11.3.2</b>                                                                                                                                 | Support Car Share Vermont to pilot an electric vehicle for use by town staff and the public, as a way to test EVs out and become comfortable with them.                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Town Manager<br>Selectboard        | Short Term  | \$   |
| <b>11.3.3</b>                                                                                                                                 | Implement installation of the recommended number of Level 2 EV chargers to support town fleet electrification.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Town Manager<br>Selectboard        | Medium Term | \$\$ |
| <b>11.3.4</b>                                                                                                                                 | Develop a plan to leverage all available local, state, federal and private funding sources to replace town vehicles at the end of their useful life with electric vehicles.                                                                                                                                                                                           | Town Manager<br>Selectboard        | Medium Term | \$\$ |
| <b>11.3.5</b>                                                                                                                                 | Evaluate adopting a policy requiring an alternatives analysis for the purchase of new light-duty vehicles, to be prepared by department heads in conjunction with the Capital Budget. This analysis should include a comparison of the upfront and lifecycle costs of conventional and electric vehicles and should explore available leasing and purchasing options. | Town Manager<br>Selectboard        | Short Term  | --   |

## 11.4

**Support further expansion and improvement of public transit and provide greater connectivity between public transit, park-and-ride locations and places of work.**

|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |             |            |          |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------|----------|
| 11.4.1 | Develop local park and ride spaces in the Village (Town Hall) and in the town-owned parcel in Maple Tree Place (MTP).                                                                                                                        | Selectboard | Short Term | \$       |
| 11.4.2 | Support Green Mountain Transit (GMT), Chittenden County municipalities and other entities in creating a diverse mobility solution, such as micro transit, to connect the residential areas of Williston to the Taft Corners commercial area. | Selectboard | Long Term  | \$\$\$   |
| 11.4.3 | Develop a mobility hub on the MTP town-owned parcel.                                                                                                                                                                                         | Selectboard | Long Term  | \$\$\$\$ |

## 11.5

**Encourage transit use, telecommuting, carpooling, vanpooling, walking, and biking for town employees' commute trips.**

|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |             |            |    |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------|----|
| 11.5.1 | Evaluate becoming a member of Chittenden Area Transportation Management Association (CATMA). Partner with CATMA to conduct outreach to local businesses on the adoption of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) policies. | Selectboard | Short Term | \$ |
| 11.5.2 | Develop policies to encourage bike commuting, carpooling, etc. for Town Staff.                                                                                                                                              | Selectboard | Short Term | \$ |

## 11.6

**Support and encourage walking and biking to school. Work to close the gaps in the multimodal network, starting with areas walkable to the schools.**

|        |                                                                                                             |                  |         |    |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------|----|
| 11.6.1 | Support Local Motion's Safe Routes to School. Town staff should participate in the monthly walks to school. | Town Departments | Ongoing | -- |
| 11.6.2 | Support Williston on the Move to improve bike and pedestrian infrastructure.                                | Planning         | Ongoing | -- |

## 11.7

**The Town should take steps to decarbonize and improve the energy efficiency of municipal buildings.**

|        |                                                                                                                                                                                       |                          |            |    |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------|----|
| 11.7.1 | Maintain annual monitoring of energy used in town buildings and publish a summary in the Capital Improvement Program report.                                                          | Planning                 | Ongoing    | -- |
| 11.7.2 | Implement the recommended measures in the Fire Station and Police Station building assessments.                                                                                       | Town Manager Selectboard | Short Term | -- |
| 11.7.3 | Evaluate feasibility of capturing wastewater heat recovery, adding turbines for net-metering, and working with EVT on flexible load management to reduce electricity demand and cost. | Town Manager Selectboard | Short Term | \$ |
| 11.7.4 | Develop a plan for other town buildings and budget for implementation measures to be                                                                                                  | Town Manager Selectboard | Short Term | -- |

|                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                     |             |      |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|------|
|                | included in the town's capital improvement program.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                     |             |      |
| <b>11.7.5</b>  | Develop plan to phase out the use of fossil fuel powered equipment by replacing it with electric powered equipment at the end of existing equipment's lifecycle.                                                                                                                                                                              | Town Manager        | Medium Term | \$\$ |
| <b>11.8</b>    | <b>The town should develop sustainable means of funding renewable energy, electrification and energy conservation projects.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                     |             |      |
| <b>11.8.1</b>  | Develop an internal (municipal) revolving loan program to fund renewable energy, electrification and energy conservation projects. Return a portion of energy.                                                                                                                                                                                | Selectboard         | Short Term  | \$\$ |
| <b>11.8.2</b>  | Develop plan to leverage town funds with all other available sources of funding including grants, rebates and tax credits.                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Town Manager        | Ongoing     | --   |
| <b>11.9</b>    | <b>Support and encourage residents and business owners to weatherize and decarbonize their homes/businesses. Prioritize those who are most energy burdened.</b>                                                                                                                                                                               |                     |             |      |
| <b>11.9.1</b>  | Support partners such as Efficiency Vermont to conduct outreach and offer educational resources about ways to fund energy efficiency and electrification measures.                                                                                                                                                                            | Energy Committee    | Ongoing     | --   |
| <b>11.9.2</b>  | Maintain hosting an annual Energy Fair that brings together vendors, partners, and EV Ambassadors to showcase EVs, electric lawn equipment, the latest heat pump technologies and other resources related to weatherization and electrification measures.                                                                                     | Energy Committee    | Ongoing     | \$   |
| <b>11.9.3</b>  | Develop schedule for pop-up events periodically in conjunction with town events and farmers markets to share information about energy conservation and electrification strategies.                                                                                                                                                            | Energy Committee    | Ongoing     | \$   |
| <b>11.9.4</b>  | Develop and distribute free Energy Saving Kits and materials to those who need them and leverage these opportunities to build trust in the community, to encourage community members to seek information and assistance from the Committee and Energy Planner on how to reduce energy burdens. Where practicable, meet people where they are. | Energy Committee    | Ongoing     | \$   |
| <b>11.9.5</b>  | Maintain organization of workshops and/or building walk-throughs highlighting demonstration projects completed by residents, businesses, the Town or the State.                                                                                                                                                                               | Energy Committee    | Ongoing     | \$   |
| <b>11.10</b>   | <b>Continue to implement land-use policies that embrace smart and sustainable growth.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                     |             |      |
| <b>11.10.1</b> | Maintain policy to pursue a land use and transportation strategy centered on mixed-use,                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Planning Commission | Ongoing     | --   |

|                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                    |             |        |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------|--------|
|                | compact development in the town's Growth Center.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Selectboard                        |             |        |
| <b>11.10.2</b> | Maintain policy to support the development of high- intensity land uses within the town's designated Growth Center to result in a compact development pattern that supports and encourages driving fewer miles, the use of transit, ride-sharing, and active forms of transportation like bicycling and walking. | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Ongoing     | --     |
| <b>11.10.3</b> | Maintain promotion of green infrastructure practices in development standards to reduce local temperatures and shade sidewalks and building surfaces.                                                                                                                                                            | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Ongoing     | --     |
| <b>11.11</b>   | <b>The town should increase its renewable energy production, and pair with battery storage.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                    |             |        |
| <b>11.10.1</b> | Evaluate opportunities to install new solar arrays on preferred sites – meaning rooftops and parking lot solar canopies.                                                                                                                                                                                         | Energy Committee<br>Selectboard    | Medium Term | \$\$\$ |
| <b>11.10.2</b> | Evaluate opportunities to pair renewable energy generation with electrical energy storage to ensure energy is utilized to the fullest potential, to increase resilience/reliability of electrical system during outages and decrease fossil fuel usage during peak periods.                                      | Energy Committee<br>Selectboard    | Short Term  | \$     |
| <b>11.10.3</b> | Develop a site feasibility analysis for installing a rooftop solar array and storage at the Fire Station.                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Planning Staff                     | Short Term  | \$     |
| <b>11.10.4</b> | Evaluate feasibility for rooftop solar arrays at school buildings in collaboration with CVSD.                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Energy Committee                   | Short Term  | \$     |
| <b>11.10.5</b> | Fund grants, local funds and tax credits to construct new solar arrays where it is feasible.                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Energy Committee<br>Selectboard    | Medium Term | \$\$\$ |
| <b>11.10.6</b> | Evaluate the feasibility and cost of establishing microgrids for the Town's critical infrastructure (such as emergency shelters) so as to allow continued operations during outages and storms while reducing carbon emissions.                                                                                  | Energy Committee<br>Selectboard    | Medium Term | \$\$\$ |
| <b>11.12</b>   | <b>Encourage and support new solar arrays and community solar in Williston.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                    |             |        |
| <b>11.12.1</b> | Develop outreach plan for available funding resources and/or programs for private solar installations.                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Energy Committee                   | Short Term  | --     |
| <b>11.12.2</b> | Develop outreach plan regarding community solar programs for properties at which the installation of a solar array is not feasible due to site or other constraints.                                                                                                                                             | Energy Committee                   | Short Term  | --     |
| <b>11.13</b>   | <b>Design and build new Taft Corners streets for slow-moving traffic and to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                    |             |        |

|                |                                                                                                                                |                  |             |    |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------|----|
| <b>11.13.1</b> | Evaluate the feasibility of incorporating geothermal network into new development in partnership with VGS and property owners. | Energy Committee | Short Term  | -- |
| <b>11.13.2</b> | Evaluate avenues of funding a geothermal network if determined feasible.                                                       | Energy Committee | Medium Term | -- |

# 12 HAZARD MITIGATION



## Introduction

Hazards are all around us. While we don't have control over their frequency and intensity, there are actions we can take to lessen their impacts. Hazard mitigation is the practice of planning actions and strategies with the intended effect of reducing risks to people and property from known hazards.

The town developed a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, adopted by the Selectboard on October 4, 2022. The Plan is an Annex to the Chittenden County Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazards Mitigation Plan (HMP), approved by Vermont Emergency Management on September 13, 2022 and by FEMA in November 2023. The Plan recommends several actions (projects) that will provide mitigation for specific natural hazards - including fire, flood, severe snowstorms, drought, extreme temperatures, extreme wind events including tornadoes, and others - that impact the town, with the intended effect of protecting people and property from loss associated with those hazards and of significantly improving community resilience and sustainability.<sup>1</sup>

Adopting both the regional and the local HMP is required for the town to be eligible for federal hazard mitigation grant funds and for receiving a

favorable amount of State matching funds under its Emergency Recovery Assistance Funding (ERAF) program in the event of a Federal Disaster Declaration.

This chapter summarizes and highlights the information in the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan that is most relevant to comprehensive planning. Particularly important is how hazard mitigation planning can help the Town to prepare for and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The Objectives, Strategies and Actions pay careful attention to the impacts of hazards on our most vulnerable, and how the Town can prioritize vulnerable populations and include them in hazard mitigation planning.

For a deeper dive into the town's and region's Hazard Mitigation Planning, read the [2022 Chittenden County Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazards Mitigation Plan](#) and [Williston Annex](#).



## Goals: In 2050 Williston is....



### **LIVABLE**

...because, as the climate changes and weather events become increasingly unpredictable and violent, Williston communicates clearly and often about the state of the town's preparedness and the steps being taken to protect against such events. To ensure that the town meets the defined qualities of livability, it carefully plans its development model to balance growth and population against the town's ability to deliver the services necessary to ensure that the four tenets of the livable commitment—affordable, welcoming, sociable, and beautiful—are met.



### **RESILIENT**

...because Town planning, in conjunction with other town and state agencies, will monitor and develop actions required to improve and maintain Williston's ability to respond to threats when they occur. This process of "reverse-engineering the future" includes assessing the vulnerability of critical road infrastructure; taking steps to "harden" power and telecommunications infrastructure, including the possibility of burying aerial utilities that are vulnerable to wind and ice load; creating a plan to deal with a possible disruption of the power grid; moving or hardening critical infrastructure, plant and buildings that are vulnerable to extreme flooding events; and other eventualities that come up in the town's ongoing what-if scenario planning exercises.

Through careful and deliberate planning, Williston has a process in place to continually monitor and assess the town's threat horizon. Through regularly conducted what-if scenario exercises, the town's various agencies and town residents engage jointly to assess the potential impact of a wide range of potential threat scenarios.



### **EQUITABLE**

...because Williston's plan for dealing with natural disasters will be a town plan, meant to serve the entire community with special attention paid to the most vulnerable members of the community. These include elderly people, people with disabilities, people with medical needs, people with limited mobility who may rely on social services. Vulnerable populations are more susceptible to the impacts of disasters and may experience more long-term effects with a loss of their social support networks, in addition to the disruption brought about by the natural disaster itself. Other residents may be considered vulnerable due to their everyday living conditions or based on their proximity to hazard-prone areas. Vulnerable populations are invited to participate in planning and they are prioritized in emergency preparedness and response.





## Three Things to Know

1

### **HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING HELPS THE TOWN ADAPT TO A CHANGING CLIMATE**

The Hazard Mitigation Plan considers the potential impact of climate change on the hazards the Plan addresses.

2

### **EPIDEMICS AND INFECTIOUS DISEASE ARE INCREASINGLY PROMINENT HAZARDS**

The COVID 19 pandemic raised awareness of infectious disease hazards. Williston's people and the town administration learned much from its recent lived experience with COVID 19. Having a comprehensive and robust response strategy will make the town better prepared to face future pandemics.

3

### **WILLISTON HAS DONE COMMENDABLE WORK IN ITS PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF HAZARD MITIGATION**

The Town has built flood resilience through its land use regulations, conservation and stormwater programs; adopted and is implementing an Emerald Ash Borer Preparedness Plan; maintains a Hazard Mitigation Plan and a Local Emergency Operations Plan.



## Three Things Public Engagement Told Us

1

### **PEOPLE VALUE WILLISTON'S PUBLIC WORKS AND PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES.**

People expressed appreciation for the Williston's Fire and Police Departments, and Department of Public Works' winter road maintenance and efficient plowing after snowstorms.

2

### **STORMWATER RUNOFF IS A CHALLENGE TO THE TOWN'S FLOOD RESILIENCY.**

Related to energy and climate, impervious surfaces and stormwater runoff was noted as a contributing factor to flooding, and flood resiliency in general was noted as a challenge for the town.

3

### **ENERGY AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE SHOULD BE THE TOWN'S #1 PRIORITY.**

People voiced that the town should prioritize building infrastructure resilient to severe weather and the town should improve its "temperature resilience." In the Roundtable activities, 41% of participants noted that energy and climate resilience should be the town's #1 priority.

## **Hazard Mitigation Planning Helps the Town Adapt to a Changing Climate**

The Hazard Mitigation Plan considers the potential impact of climate change on the hazards the Plan addresses, using information from the 2021 *Vermont Climate Change Study*, a report developed by the University of Vermont (UVM) Gund Institute for the Environment in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, the Vermont Natural Resources Council, and the Norman Foundation.<sup>2</sup>

Among other findings, the study reports that the state's average annual temperature has warmed by nearly 2 degrees Fahrenheit, and precipitation has increased by 21 percent, since 1900. Vermont now experiences 2.4 more days per year of heavy precipitation than in the 1960s, mostly in the summer. With flooding events expected to increase because of increased rain and higher water tables, improved stormwater infrastructure and planning is required to reduce damage to homes, businesses, roads, bridges, and farm fields.

It isn't just the level of water that is an issue: temperature also plays a critical role in ecosystem health. Warming waters will have adverse effects on lakes and rivers, including reduced biodiversity and increased risk of harmful algal blooms which will impact beaches, swimming, and other lake activities.

Climate-related health impacts include greater risk of heat exposure, diseases from ticks and mosquitoes, water-borne bacterial or algal infections, inhalation of wildfire smoke, and other consequences of natural disasters. These threaten some populations more than others, highlighting the unequal burden of climate impacts of people who are over 65, from marginalized communities, or who have underlying medical conditions.

Despite these negative impacts, Vermont's warming climate will remain attractive compared to many regions. We can expect an increase in "climate refugees" as rising temperatures nationwide draw people to Vermont looking to escape extreme heat. There is already anecdotal evidence of this in Williston.

The objectives and strategies listed at the end of this chapter are written with climate change impacts at the forefront. For example, stormwater management is an important focus of the HMP, to reduce the risks of flooding.

## **Epidemics and Infectious Disease are Increasingly Prominent Hazards**

The COVID 19 pandemic, which began in early 2020 and lasted through 2022, was a wake-up call. We were unprepared for a disaster of this magnitude, with catastrophic and devastating public health consequences. By June 2022, the U.S. had recorded over 84 million COVID-19 infections and more than one million deaths from COVID-19.<sup>3</sup>

COVID revealed the inequities in our society. The pandemic had a disparate effect on populations, depending on your profession, age, race, living situation, and the state and local policies where you live. "Front line" workers providing essential services like grocery stores, farms, health care, etc. and who largely kept working through the pandemic, were at high risk of exposure; while people working in other professions had the option to work at home and were therefore at much lower risk. The very old, many of whom have compromised immune systems and underlying medical conditions and live in congregate settings, were at very high risk from the disease. African American/Black, Native American and Hispanic people were more at risk of dying from COVID than were Caucasian people.

Because of strong leadership, rapid response and smart policies at all levels (state, municipal, and local volunteers), Vermont did not fare nearly as badly as other states. In the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, mortality disproportionately impacted older people and people with underlying medical conditions. Therefore, measures were put in place to protect these more vulnerable populations, including masking, non-essential business closures and stay-at-home orders. These measures likely limited disease transmission. Cumulative COVID-19 deaths in Vermont as of January 2025 were reported as 1,255 or 143.3 per 100,000 people, the second lowest death rate in the country.<sup>4</sup>

However, this tells only part of the impact. The impact on Williston and the surrounding area was essentially a microcosm of what happened at the state and national levels. The necessary isolation brought about by the disease resulted in widespread negative impacts to local businesses that depend on in-person engagement (retailers, restaurants, hotels, etc.), which in turn had a negative impact on employment. The trickle-down effect was economically devastating for many. Further, essential services were disrupted to various degrees, as enforced isolation, social distancing, and the inability to work because of enforced (and necessary) isolation made it difficult if not impossible to provide these services. Equally impactful, but less quantifiable, was the social damage done to kids who were unable to attend school, instead depending on home-schooling and remote teleconferencing, and to people who were isolated to begin with because of illness, disease or infirmity.

COVID 19 raised awareness of the significant risks and vulnerabilities posed by epidemic and infectious disease outbreaks. Of course, the spread of infectious diseases that affects large populations is not limited to COVID-19. Others include zoonotic diseases (spread from animals to humans) such as salmonella or rabies; vector-borne diseases such as West Nile Virus, Eastern Equine Encephalitis, and Lyme Disease; and viral diseases such as Influenza, Coronavirus, Ebola, Measles, Mumps and Smallpox.<sup>5</sup> The Hazard Mitigation Plan now elevates this category of hazard. Williston's people and the town administration learned much from its recent lived experience with COVID 19. Having a comprehensive and robust response strategy will make the town better prepared to face future pandemics.

## **Extreme Heat**

Extreme heat conditions are becoming more common as the planet warms. In Vermont, normally cooler than most of the United States during the hot summer months, the climate has changed – it is now noticeably hotter. This has serious health ramifications as most older homes were not built with air conditioners, and people living in those homes often have difficulties staying cool during times of warmer weather. According to the Vermont Department of Health, older adults living alone, those with less education, and those with fewer economic resources are often less able to find relief during summer heat events.<sup>6</sup>

Extreme heat disproportionately impacts unhoused people and people living in substandard housing, as well as landscapers, construction workers, farmworkers and others whose occupations require them to be outdoors or in unconditioned spaces. According to the National Weather Service, heat now kills more people in the U.S. each year than hurricanes, floods and tornadoes combined.<sup>7</sup>

Extreme heat can also affect crops or livestock in the region by evaporating the water source used to hydrate them and causing body temperatures to rise higher than safe levels. These high heat conditions can also affect water supplies for crops by removing moisture from the soil and causing drought or drought-like conditions that, if prolonged, can cause long term damage to the economy through crop reduction or outright loss.

Thirty environmental, healthcare and labor groups recently filed a petition urging federal government to include heat (and wildfire smoke) in its definition of “major disaster.”<sup>8</sup> While the frequency and intensity of these phenomena has risen sharply in recent years, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) refuses to acknowledge that they are qualifying major disasters under the Stafford Act (the enabling statute for FEMA). Recognizing heat and wildfire smoke as disasters would open funding opportunities for critically needed services to mitigate these hazards.

## **Invasive Species**

An invasive species is any living organism such as a bacterium, protist, fungus, plant, or animal, that has been introduced to an environment where it is not native, and that has since become an environmental or economic nuisance through rapid spread and increase in numbers, often to the detriment of native species.<sup>9</sup>

While the regional Hazard Mitigation Plan goes into much detail about many invasive species on land and in water, we will focus on one species – the Emerald Ash Borer – that has already caused the town to expend many resources to mitigate this hazard.

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) probably arrived in the United States on solid wood packing material carried in cargo ships or airplanes originating in its native Asia. The Emerald Ash Borer feeds and lives in all species of ash. The EAB is a significant threat to Vermont’s ash trees as five percent of the state’s trees are ash. Most ash trees infested with EAB will die, which poses a threat to Vermont’s economy and ecology. It spreads very quickly, is difficult to detect, and eradication is not expected.

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) was first discovered in Orange County, Vermont in February 2018. As of March 2022, EAB was detected in Chittenden County, in the Town of Richmond in October 2020, followed by a detection in Colchester in May 2021.<sup>10</sup>

In anticipation of the arrival of EAB, the Town of Williston developed and adopted an Emerald Ash Borer Preparedness Plan in 2015. The Plan was developed with assistance from the Williston Conservation Commission, Town of Williston Public Works, Chittenden County Forester, and the Vermont Departments of Forests, Parks, and Recreation. The purpose of the EAB preparedness plan is to mitigate the effects of the pest when it arrives in Williston. This involves addressing public safety concerns and minimizing the impact on the towns’ budget and public works manpower. The town Department of Public Works has implemented the mitigation actions in the Plan with grant funding from the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. These actions include removal and replacement of ash street trees, prioritizing the areas where they are most heavily concentrated, and preserving culturally important ash trees such as those located in public parks and greens, by injecting the trees with insecticide.<sup>11</sup>

## **Town Mitigation Actions**

Critical assets that help the town to withstand impacts from the hazards listed above but also vulnerable to those hazards include its people – Town officials, staff, volunteers, Road Crew, Fire and Police Departments and the general public; roads and bridges that ensure safe travel; and municipal buildings including Town offices, Town garage, Fire Station, Police Station, Town Hall and Library.

Fortunately, due to good planning, none of the town’s critical facilities and very few other structures (15 in total) are located within Special Flood Hazard Areas or River Corridors. The town should continue to support efforts to safeguard these structures, relocate them out of the floodplain, or “buy them out” using FEMA hazard mitigation funds.

Some hazard mitigation actions the town has taken include:

- **Building flood resilience through provisions in the town's Land Use regulations:**
  - Watershed protection buffers for all streams, ponds, Class 2 wetlands and Lake Iroquois. Development is prohibited in watershed protection buffers and land in those buffers is required to remain undisturbed and in its natural state.
  - Williston Development Bylaws Chapter 28 regulates development in Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA). All new development, with minor exceptions, is prohibited in the SFHA.
  - Under the standards of Williston Development Bylaws Chapter 28, any permitted development including nonconforming uses and structures currently located in the SFHA must be reasonably safe from flooding and designed to prevent floatation, collapse or lateral movement during the occurrence of the base flood. This includes using materials resistant to flood damage and using construction practices that minimize flood damage; protecting utilities from flood damage, flood proofing basements, and protecting water supply and wastewater systems.
  - The town undertook a process in the late 1990s to identify key conservation areas that should not be developed, and subsequently incorporated those identified areas into the town's Unified Development Bylaw's regulatory framework.
  - Subdivisions in the Agricultural Residential Zoning District that involve a parcel of land greater than 10.5 acres are required to set aside 75% of the parent parcel as protected open space. This protected land provides valuable flood attenuation.
- **Protection and restoration of floodplains and upland forested areas that attenuate and moderate flooding and fluvial erosion.**
  - Using its Environmental Reserve Fund and leveraging other funding, the town has conserved over 2,000 acres, including many forested upland areas.
  - Williston has completed several major restoration projects on the Sucker Brook and the Allen Brook, and to a lesser degree, the Muddy Brook. The town will continue to monitor these projects.
- **Williston has an aggressive and detailed stormwater management program,** outlined in the Watershed Health chapter of this Plan. It should be noted that stormwater treatment standards required under Vermont law are designed to capture 90% of the annual storm events and to safely "pass" a 100-year storm event, meaning that even well-designed stormwater infrastructure won't prevent flooding in an extreme event.
- **Williston completed a Phosphorus Control Plan,** which will help to reduce stormwater runoff, erosion, sedimentation, and phosphorus loading.
- **CCRPC conducted a Road Erosion Inventory** of hydrologically connected road segments in Williston.
- **Williston participates in the regional Rethink Runoff program** ([www.rethinkrunoff.org](http://www.rethinkrunoff.org)) to educate and provide opportunities for residents to learn about stormwater impacts and potential Green Stormwater Infrastructure solutions such as rain barrels and rain gardens.
- **Emerald Ash Borer Mitigation Actions.** The town adopted an Emerald Ash Borer Preparedness Plan in 2015. The EAB preparedness plan was developed with assistance from the Williston Conservation Commission, Town of Williston Public Works, Chittenden County Forester, and the Vermont Departments of Forests, Parks, and Recreation. The purpose of the EAB preparedness plan is to mitigate the effects of the pest when it arrives in Williston. This involves addressing public safety concerns and minimizing the impact on the towns' budget and public works manpower. The town Department of Public Works has implemented the mitigation actions in the Plan with grant funding from the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. These

actions include removal and replacement of ash street trees, prioritizing the areas where they are most heavily concentrated, and preservation of culturally important ash trees such as those located in public parks and greens.<sup>12</sup>

- **Williston has adopted and regularly updates a Local Emergency Response Plan** to support emergency operations during disasters. To further prepare for emergencies, Williston works with the Local Emergency Planning Committee to conduct and participate in trainings and exercises.

The town has done commendable work in its planning and implementation of hazard mitigation. Is there room for improvement? Absolutely. The following Objectives, Strategies and Actions outline some steps the Town can take to achieve its goals for hazard mitigation.

## OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

### Objectives

- 12.A** Williston is well prepared for emergencies and maintains a Resiliency Hub, which is a community-serving facility augmented to support residents, coordinate communication, and distribute resources during an emergency or other critical event.
- 12.B** Williston plans appropriately for growth with a focus on climate change resilience.
- 12.C** Williston's existing and planned municipal infrastructure is well-protected from hazards.
- 12.D** Williston power systems and grid are resilient and can withstand severe weather events with minimal disruptions to service.
- 12.E** Stormwater management systems and infrastructure are resilient.
- 12.F** Flooding and fluvial erosion results in minimal damage to structures and infrastructure.
- 12.G** The town facilitates strong and caring community relationships and neighbors help each other out.
- 12.H** The town maintains effective communication channels.
- 12.I** Town 'knowledge infrastructure' is in place that helps guide people, raises awareness of issues and what to do.
- 12.J** The town has communication networks with vulnerable populations and prioritizes them during emergencies.

## Strategies

### 12.1

**Ensure that local plans are regularly updated and well-coordinated with Regional, State, and Federal Plans.**

| Actions |                                                                                                                                                                           | Responsibility | Timeframe | Cost |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|------|
| 12.1.1  | Support CCRPC and State Agencies on updates to State and Regional Plans.                                                                                                  | Town Manager   | Ongoing   | --   |
| 12.1.2  | Implement the Annex 17 Williston Chittenden County Multi-Jurisdictional All Hazards Mitigation Plan.                                                                      | Town Manager   | Ongoing   | \$\$ |
| 12.1.3  | Maintain annual updates to the Williston Local Emergency Operations Plan (LOEP).                                                                                          | Town Manager   | Ongoing   | --   |
| 12.1.4  | Develop a Local Resiliency Hub Plan for Extreme Temperature Preparedness (cooling/heating shelters), power banks, and radio communication.                                | Town Manager   | Ongoing   | --   |
| 12.1.5  | Develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan for Williston, support the Town Fire Warden Program, and coordinate with the ANR Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation. | Town Manager   | Ongoing   | \$   |

### 12.2

**Maintain and develop effective, resilient communication strategies.**

|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                           |                       |    |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----|
| 12.2.1 | Evaluate ways to expand functional broadband coverage in areas not currently well served.                                                                                                                                                        | Town Manager                              | Short Term<br>Ongoing | -- |
| 12.2.2 | Develop plan to coordinate with mobile carriers to ensure that infrastructure not only provides town-wide coverage but is also equipped with an emergency generator in the MTSO to ensure uninterrupted service in the event of a power failure. | Town Manager                              | Short Term            | -- |
| 12.2.3 | Implement improvements to Local Emergency Services Radio Communication.                                                                                                                                                                          | Town Manager                              | Short Term            | -- |
| 12.2.4 | Develop a promotion campaign to encourage Williston residents to participate in OnCall Vermont or other state volunteer programs for emergency services and preparedness.                                                                        | Town Manager                              | Short Term<br>Ongoing | -- |
| 12.2.5 | Develop capacity to engage local and state volunteers in hazard mitigation education, planning, and emergency response.                                                                                                                          | Emergency Management Director             | Short Term            | \$ |
| 12.2.6 | Evaluate and engage vulnerable populations in hazard mitigation planning opportunities.                                                                                                                                                          | Emergency Management Director<br>Planning | Short Term            | \$ |
| 12.2.7 | Maintain plan to mitigate threats to data security by implementing cybersecurity best practices for town technology and asset management.                                                                                                        | Town Manager                              | Ongoing               | \$ |



|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                 |                    |                                                                                     |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>12.2.8</b> | Develop outreach to citizens regarding cybersecurity threats and connect seniors to the Vermont Consumer Assistance Program.                                                                                                                   | Town Manager                    | Short Term         | \$                                                                                  |
| <b>12.2.9</b> | Develop digital services for all town public services and inter-department communications to ensure all town services and procedures can be conducted in-person and online/remotely.                                                           | Town Manager                    | Short Term         | \$\$                                                                                |
| <b>12.3</b>   | <b>Maintain and strengthen regulatory requirements of the National Floodplain Insurance Program (NFIP).</b>                                                                                                                                    |                                 |                    |  |
| <b>12.3.1</b> | Implement the designation of a floodplain manager and follow the best practices of Flood Ready Vermont and as appropriate for Williston.                                                                                                       | Town Manager                    | Ongoing            | \$                                                                                  |
| <b>12.3.2</b> | Maintain existing flood hazard regulations in the WDB and update when needed to respond to evolving best practices.                                                                                                                            | Planning Commission Selectboard | Ongoing            | --                                                                                  |
| <b>12.3.3</b> | Develop application to the FEMA Community Rating System (CRS) and become a CRS Community.                                                                                                                                                      | Selectboard                     | Medium Term        | \$                                                                                  |
| <b>12.4</b>   | <b>The Town will maintain accurate and updated inventories of all its assets, and proactively plan to fund asset repairs and replacements, with the goal to maintain infrastructure that is resilient to natural and human-caused hazards.</b> |                                 |                    |                                                                                     |
| <b>12.4.1</b> | Develop design specifications and require future streets, paths, water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure to be resilient to a changing climate and potential hazards.                                                                      | Public Works Selectboard        | Medium Term        | \$\$\$                                                                              |
| <b>12.4.2</b> | Develop new and retrofit existing critical facilities to withstand the impacts of identified hazards.                                                                                                                                          | Selectboard                     | Medium Term        | \$\$\$                                                                              |
| <b>12.4.3</b> | Develop schedule of regular updates of stormwater plans and procedures for consistency with mitigation goals.                                                                                                                                  | Public Works                    | Short Term         | --                                                                                  |
| <b>12.4.4</b> | Evaluate funding and capacity to maintain public infrastructure and support upgrades as needed.                                                                                                                                                | Public Works                    | Ongoing            | \$\$\$                                                                              |
| <b>12.4.5</b> | Develop and maintain accurate inventories of town-owned stormwater infrastructure.                                                                                                                                                             | Public Works                    | Short Term Ongoing | \$                                                                                  |
| <b>12.4.6</b> | Evaluate potential for micro-grids on town property, powered by onsite renewable energy to help mitigate the effects of a commercial power interruption.                                                                                       | Selectboard                     | Medium Term        | \$\$\$                                                                              |
| <b>12.4.7</b> | Develop plans for maintenance and updates to ditching, culverts, and closed stormwater systems that are based on road and pipe inventories to prioritize the most urgent locations and mitigate damage from stormwater and flooding.           | Public Works                    | Medium Term        | \$\$\$                                                                              |

## 12.5 Ensure the Town's Land Use Regulations support climate change resilience goals.

|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                           |             |    |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----|
| 12.5.1 | Maintain regular review and updates to land development regulations for consistency with climate change mitigation and resilience goals.                                                                                                                                  | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard                        | Short Term  | -- |
| 12.5.2 | Support private utilities in developing a plan to bury existing utilities underground to be resilient to extreme weather events. Ensure there are redundancies in systems. Partner with GMP to underground utilities and/or provide battery backup to outage prone areas. | Green Mountain Power<br>Vermont Electric Co-op<br>+others | Medium Term | \$ |
| 12.5.3 | Maintain requirements that all utilities in new developments are buried underground.                                                                                                                                                                                      | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard                        | Ongoing     | -- |

## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup> 2022 Chittenden County Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazards Mitigation Plan. 2022. Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, Winooski, Vermont. Accessed June 18 at [https://www.ccrpcvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/ChittendenCountyAHMPFinal\\_Oct2022.pdf](https://www.ccrpcvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/ChittendenCountyAHMPFinal_Oct2022.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Basil Waugh, University of Vermont Gund Institute for the Environment, Vermont Climate Assessment: Climate Change is here. Accessed June 16, 2024 at: <https://www.uvm.edu/news/gund/Vermont-getting-warmerandwetter-climate-change-study>.

<sup>3</sup> CDC Museum COVID-19 Timeline. David J. Sencer CDC Museum: In Association with the Smithsonian Institution. Accessed On June 19, 2024 at <https://www.cdc.gov/museum/timeline/covid19.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Vermont Department of Health. Weekly COVID-19 Surveillance Report – June 19, 2024. Accessed on June 19, 2024 at <https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/document/COVID-19-Surveillance-report-20240619.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> 2022 Chittenden County Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazards Mitigation Plan. 2022. Annex 17: Town of Williston. Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, Winooski, Vermont. Accessed June 18 at [https://www.ccrpcvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Annex-17-Town-of-Williston\\_Adopted.pdf](https://www.ccrpcvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Annex-17-Town-of-Williston_Adopted.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Vermont Department of Health. *Heat Vulnerability in Vermont: Local Indicators of Heat Illness Risk*. May 2016. Accessed on June 19, 2024 at [https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2016/12/ENV\\_EPHT\\_heat\\_vulnerability\\_in\\_VT\\_0.pdf](https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2016/12/ENV_EPHT_heat_vulnerability_in_VT_0.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Megan Lim, Katia Riddle, Sacha Pfeiffer. *Petition pushes FEMA to classify extreme heat and wildfire smoke as 'major disasters'*. National Public Radio, All Things Considered. June 18, 2024. Accessed June 19, 2024 at <https://www.npr.org/2024/06/18/nx-s1-5010416/petition-pushes-fema-to-classify-extreme-heat-and-wildfire-smoke-as-major-disasters>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> United States Department of Agriculture, National Invasive Species Information Center. Accessed June 20, 2024 at <https://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/what-are-invasive-species>.

<sup>10</sup> 2022 Chittenden County Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazards Mitigation Plan. 2022. Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, Winooski, Vermont. Accessed June 18 at [https://www.ccrpcvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/ChittendenCountyAHMPFinal\\_Oct2022.pdf](https://www.ccrpcvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/ChittendenCountyAHMPFinal_Oct2022.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Williston Emerald Ash Borer Preparedness Plan. 2015. Williston, Vermont. Accessed on June 20, 2024 at [https://www.town.williston.vt.us/index.asp?Type=B\\_BASIC&SEC={9AC5DE33-0817-4533-A2A4-AA8301D75C81}&DE={29FACCA4-2A96-4E31-B397-55B1E6302FBA}](https://www.town.williston.vt.us/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={9AC5DE33-0817-4533-A2A4-AA8301D75C81}&DE={29FACCA4-2A96-4E31-B397-55B1E6302FBA}).

<sup>12</sup> Williston Emerald Ash Borer Preparedness Plan. 2015. Williston, Vermont. Accessed on June 20, 2024 at [https://www.town.williston.vt.us/index.asp?Type=B\\_BASIC&SEC={9AC5DE33-0817-4533-A2A4-AA8301D75C81}&DE={29FACCA4-2A96-4E31-B397-55B1E6302FBA}](https://www.town.williston.vt.us/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={9AC5DE33-0817-4533-A2A4-AA8301D75C81}&DE={29FACCA4-2A96-4E31-B397-55B1E6302FBA}).

# LAND-BASED CONSERVATION RESOURCES



## Introduction

Positioned between the lowlands of the Champlain Valley and the foothills of the Green Mountains, the town of Williston has a unique physical setting whose roots trace back over millennia to ancient river deltas in Glacial Lake Vermont and to the great tectonic forces of geology that uplifted the Green Mountains and shaped the very bedrock the town stands on. Those same geological forces create the patterns we see on the landscape today. From moist floodplain forests and wetlands to dry craggy ridgelines, Williston hosts diverse plant communities and is home to abundant wildlife including bobcats, fishers, black bears and moose as well as a rich springtime chorus of amphibians and birds.

In recent times, Williston's landscape has experienced rapid, dramatic change. Residential, commercial and industrial development has not only resulted in forest fragmentation and loss of forest cover; Williston has also lost a sizeable area of productive farmland to development.

Fortunately, as it has grown from a small rural town to Vermont's 11<sup>th</sup> largest town by population<sup>1</sup>, Williston has proactively taken steps to protect its rural landscape.

Although the center of Williston is planned as dense and mixed-use, most of the town remains rural with working landscapes, vibrant forests, and unique natural communities. While Williston is a commercial center for the region, much of its natural lands remain due to a long history of land conservation and protective land use policy.

As community values and identity have shifted over time, Williston's conservation goals have evolved. Today, Williston aims to conserve land for climate resilience, ecological value, agricultural and silvicultural working lands, scenic aesthetics, and recreation. Often, conserving a single parcel of land can result in multiple co-benefits. For example, Mud Pond Conservation Area is valued for its wetlands and unique ecosystems which support a diversity of plant and wildlife species. It is also home to approximately 1.4 miles of walking trails and a section of the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) snowmobile trail system.

This chapter outlines long-range strategies for preserving and protecting Williston's forests, scenic viewsheds, working landscapes, and recreational/cultural/natural resources.



## Goals: In 2050, Williston is....



### **LIVABLE**

... because over 30% of the land area is protected as open space and the public has equitably distributed access to open space for non-motorized recreation such as walking, biking, skiing and snowshoeing. Local farms have diversified their operations in a sustainable way and some include managed public access. Protecting natural features like wetlands, stream buffers, forest blocks, and habitat connectors provides habitat for wildlife, improves water quality, filters stormwater runoff and reduces downstream flooding. Natural areas are deeply important to people who live in and visit Williston and contribute to their mental and physical well-being. Supporting accessible public conservation resources for recreation, outdoor education, and scientific research makes Williston livable.



### **RESILIENT**

...because forests and wetlands sequester carbon and help mitigate climate change. Additionally, green spaces and vegetation within urban areas provide cooling effects, reducing the urban heat island effect and making the town more comfortable during extreme weather events. A diverse range of plants and animals is essential for ecosystem health and resilience. Preserving biodiversity ensures that ecosystems can adapt to changes and continue to provide vital services. Supporting local farms and community-based agriculture ensures a stable local food supply and can insulate the town from supply chain disruptions.



### **EQUITABLE**

...because the town's trails and parks are free to use and accessible to all. Ample recreation path connections to trails and parks ensure equitable access for all members of Williston's community. The town has preserved scenic views and established natural areas close to Taft Corners, where most of the town's population lives. The green spaces within the growth center provide opportunities for quiet respite or recreation for people who live and work there.



## Three Things to Know

1

### **WILLISTON HAS CONSERVED 16% OF ITS LAND AREA**

As of 2024, Williston has permanently conserved 3,049 acres of land through easements and Town ownership – that's 16 percent of the town's land area! Positioned between the lowlands around Lake Champlain and the foothills of the Green Mountains, Williston is

home to 10,103 people making it the 11th largest town by population in the state<sup>2</sup>, yet most of the town remains rural with working landscapes, vibrant forests, and unique natural communities. While Williston is also a commercial center for the region, much of its natural lands remain due to a long history of land conservation and protective land use policy.

2

## **WILLISTON CONSERVES LAND TO ACHIEVE MULTIPLE GOALS**

The Town prioritizes watersheds, natural communities, wildlife habitat & corridors, farmland & working landscapes, scenic viewsheds, trails, and other recreational resources.

3

## **WILLISTON CAN AND SHOULD CONSERVE MORE LAND**

A 2020 geospatial analysis revealed 55 unprotected high-priority parcels in Williston totaling 4,883 acres. If the top 20 parcels were conserved (totaling 2,560 acres), it would increase the percentage of conserved land in Williston to 30% of the town's land area, which represents the town's goal for conservation by 2050. Over a 25-year horizon and assuming a 50% match from outside partners such as Vermont Land Trust, conserving the top 20 parcels through fee acquisition would require the ERF to be funded at a minimum of \$200,000/year.<sup>3</sup>



## **Three Things Public Engagement Told Us**

1

### **PEOPLE DEEPLY VALUE WILLISTON'S RURAL LANDS AND WANT TO ENSURE THEY ARE PROTECTED**

The protection of natural areas for their ecological value and natural beauty were common themes in both the engagement events and in survey responses. During the engagement events, land conservation was listed as the first item that respondents most valued about Williston's energy efficiency and environmental conservation work. In the survey, more than 75% of respondents selected "preservation of forests/meadows" and "protection of wildlife habitat" when asked that they value about Williston's open spaces and undeveloped areas.<sup>4</sup>

2

### **WILLISTON'S PEOPLE VALUE CONSERVING LAND FOR MULTIPLE FUNCTIONS INCLUDING:**

agriculture, scenic viewsheds, and public access to parks and trails. Residents of Williston have expressed a strong desire to have the natural world and working landscapes close by so that even if they live in a subdivision or dense development, they can walk, bike, hike, or drive close by to enjoy them. Being able to walk in nature or enjoy a scenic view is part of Williston's success in being an enjoyable place to live.

*"As the town's population grows, so will the need for people to recreate. The town needs to support the conservation of land and open space for its residents and wildlife."*

## PEOPLE WANT THE TOWN TO INVEST IN LAND CONSERVATION

Sixty percent of survey respondents agreed that Williston should fund and support the conservation of undeveloped land, even if it results in an increase in taxes.

*"I want to see a strong commitment to preserving our working farms, local agriculture, and open fields. Williston will benefit from a local land trust and conservation fund to preserve open space and our viewsheds."*

## History of Conservation in Williston

Williston has protected conservation areas through a mix of regulatory and nonregulatory strategies including land acquisition and purchase of development rights (PDR). This chapter focuses on nonregulatory strategies. Chapter 17 focuses on regulatory strategies.

### Environmental Reserve Fund

In 1990 the Town established its Environmental Reserve Fund (ERF), a dedicated fund used for permanent protection of land with high natural resource value, through land acquisition and/or the purchase of development rights. Since 1990, roughly 75% (2,252 acres) of the ~3,000 acres of conserved land in Williston were protected by leveraging funding from the ERF. Typically, the ERF is used as a tool to match grant funds and motivate partners to donate contributing funds. Since it was established, \$2.4 million from the ERF has been used to conserve \$5.2 million in land value; \$2 in conserved land for every \$1 spent.

In 2020 the Town used Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology and scoring criteria to develop a prioritization matrix to identify and prioritize key areas for long-term protection through the use of the town's Environmental Reserve Fund. Parcels were classified as high, medium or low priority.<sup>5</sup> This prioritization matrix serves as an important tool to guide decisions about funding future conservation easements or land acquisitions and should be updated periodically. The town will continue to fund acquisitions and purchase of development rights, and to work with other organizations including the Vermont Land Trust and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to leverage funds.

As acquiring land for conservation is becoming increasingly expensive and funding increasingly scarce, organizations such as Vermont Land Trust are directing their priorities to larger parcels in more ecologically intact landscapes. As a result, high priority parcels identified by the Williston Conservation Commission often don't meet the Vermont Land Trust's criteria for conservation, making it difficult to obtain funding and the commitment of VLT or a similar third-party easement holder. For that reason, the Conservation Commission is beginning to explore alternatives such as a Town or multi-town land trust (Action 13.1.5).

### Town Owned Open Space

Map 18 shows the location of the existing protected open space. Town-owned protected open space includes:

- **Catamount Community Forest** – 393 acres of largely forested land formerly owned and operated by Jim and Lucy McCullough as an outdoor recreational hub known as the Catamount Outdoor Family Center, donated to the Town and permanently conserved in 2019 (more information in Chapter 8 – Recreation and Parks).



- Former **Jacob-Krantz** property – 29 forested acres along the Winooski River in northwest Williston donated by Peter Jacob and Lloyd Krantz in 2017.
- **Mud Pond Conservation Area and Mud Pond Country Park** - Mud Pond and the surrounding bog and wetlands within the upper reach of Allen Brook (264 acres).
- **Five Tree Hill County Park** – 53 forested acres accessed via trails from Sunset Hill Rd.
- Approximately half of the forested slopes of **Brownell Mountain** (107 acres).
- **Sucker Brook Hollow County Park** - former Hill property, located along the Sucker Brook off Route 2A (20 acres).
- 14-acre red maple/**blueberry swamp** on Marshall Avenue that the town acquired when it extended Marshall Avenue.
- Forested slopes of the former **Burnett property** south of I-89 (91 acres).
- **Mahan Farm Conservation Area** – 25 acres of farmland south of Route 2 across from the Fire Station.
- **Town Hall Meadow** – 24 acres of open meadow used for the generation of solar power and non-motorized recreation.
- **Allen Brook Natural Area** - former Senecal property located between the Chatham Woods and Old Stage Estates developments (14 acres).
- **Lake Iroquois Natural Area** and beach - headwater wetlands north of Lake Iroquois, about 53 acres (owned by the Lake Iroquois Recreation District, of which Williston is a member).

The areas listed above are protected for different reasons. Some areas have multiple co-benefits – such as biodiversity, water quality, agricultural or silvicultural value, and recreation – that may conflict with each other if uses are not managed appropriately. For that reason, the Town should continue to develop and update management plans for all town-owned open space lands. Besides maintaining these existing properties, the Town should develop and implement strategic plans for Town lands that are fallow or underutilized. Such plans should evaluate proposed uses in balance with their ecological, agricultural, recreational and other attributes. In evaluating locations for new Country Parks with public access, the Town should prioritize the Growth Center and other areas without existing parks (Strategy 13.3).

Chapter 8 – Recreation and Parks contains more detailed information about the recreational use of the Town’s open space lands and trails.

Other parcels are privately owned but have been permanently protected through the purchase of development rights. Many of these are actively farmed today, including Isham Farm, Boomhower, Siple Farm, Bruce Farm, Johnson Farm and Conant Farm. Some of these privately owned parcels have public access through trail easements while others do not permit public access.

### **Working Lands and Private Stewardship**

Working landscapes are lands actively used for the production of food, fiber, earth products, sustainable forest products and outdoor recreation. They include cropland, dairies, woodlots, orchards, sugarbushes, pastures, plant nurseries, gravel mines, and fee-based recreation areas. Working landscapes are what many residents and visitors see as the classic image of Vermont. The persistence of these traditional land uses in rapidly changing Williston is a credit to the perseverance and hard work of dedicated private landowners. The policies adopted here seek to support their continued stewardship.

Williston has lost a sizeable area of productive farmland to development, but agriculture is still an important part of the local landscape and the town will continue to work with landowners to sustain it. The town developed the LESA (Land Evaluation, Site Assessment) system on which Map 14 is based to help identify important farms in the late 1980s. The Town uses this map to assess impacts to locally important farmland in development review; however, the map is outdated and is difficult to interpret. The Town should re-evaluate the use of the LESA map as a tool to assess impacts to farmland in development review, especially since the Williston Unified Development Bylaw Chapters 27 and 31 generally require clustered development to minimize impacts to other natural resources.

Working farms the town has helped conserve through the purchase of development rights include the Lacasse Farm on South Brownell Rd, the Johnson Farm and Woodlot at the east edge of the Village, the Siple Farm on South Rd, the Isham Farm and Bruce Farm on Oak Hill Rd, the Conant Farm on North Williston Road and the Burnett Farm on Route 2 west of the Village. With the local food movement, there are many small farm operations cropping up in Williston. The town should consider supporting these small farms where possible, for example, by allowing a diverse range of land uses that support working landscapes (Action 13.4.1).

Rapidly increasing property taxes are one of the factors contributing to the loss of working landscapes and other open spaces. Vermont's Use Value Appraisal Program (a.k.a. Current Use) helps farm and forest landowners keep their land productive by assessing it for property tax purposes based on its use value, not its development value. This lowers the owners' property tax burden. In exchange for the use value assessment, owners keep their land in productive management and pledge not to develop it while they are enrolled in the program.<sup>6</sup> While the state's Current Use Program has been effective at protecting large parcels of working lands, the minimum size requirement and the program's complexity has been an obstacle for many landowners who wish to keep active farms or woodlots. Williston should participate in discussions of Current Use and how to improve it and should periodically sponsor outreach efforts to encourage eligible landowners to participate in the program (Action 13.5.5).

### **Scenic Viewsheds**

When driving, bicycling, or hiking through Williston one can enjoy views of rolling fields framed by a background of wooded slopes, nearby ridgelines, and distant mountains. From some points in town, you can see both the Adirondacks to the west and the Green Mountains to the east at the same time. These views are central to the sense of place the residents of Williston treasure. To help maintain that sense of place, the town undertook an evaluation of the visual character and quality of the local landscape in 1989. The results of that analysis are provided on Map 17. The accompanying report is available from the own planning office.

The Town still relies on the 1989 Visual Resource Assessment map to guide development review. This map is outdated and has been difficult to interpret. The Town should explore new visual assessment methods and technologies that developers can use to better illustrate how the proposed development will impact the landscape.

Williston's landscape has changed since the visual resource assessment was done in 1989. Development has filled some views, formerly open fields are no longer mowed, and the number of public viewpoints has grown as roads and trails are extended. A new visual resources analysis should be conducted using a

combination of public participation and geographic information systems technology. Important viewsheds should be noted on the Official Map (Action 13.4.2).

## OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

### Objectives

- 13.A** By 2050, Williston has permanently protected 30% of its land area through conservation easements and acquisitions.
- 13.B** Conservation resources throughout Williston are protected for the significant benefits they provide for soil health, water quality, groundwater recharge, biological diversity, climate change resilience, and outdoor recreational opportunities.
- 13.C** There is abundant opportunity and accessibility for public use of rural lands including trails, parks and community gathering spaces in rural Williston.
- 13.D** Local food producers are well-supported, diverse, and sustainable; the local food system makes the town more resilient by using practices that steward healthy soils and clean water.
- 13.E** Wildlife populations are abundant and thriving because large habitat blocks and their linkages have been protected, and wildlife has space to move from one habitat block to another.
- 13.F** Public open spaces are welcoming and accessible to all.
- 13.G** Town-owned forests and agricultural lands are managed in a manner to strengthen local food systems, minimize harmful agricultural practices, use nature-based solutions, enhance resource and habitat conservation.

### Strategies

- 13.1** Invest and utilize the Environmental Reserve Fund to ensure the town can achieve its land conservation goal of conserving 30% of Williston's land by 2050.

| Actions       |                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Responsibility                                       | Timeframe  | Cost |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------|------|
| <b>13.1.1</b> | Fund the ERF annually—such as by maintaining the half-penny on the tax rate—at a contribution level that is proportional to reaching the 30x50 goal based upon market conditions.                            | Selectboard<br>Voters                                | Ongoing    | \$\$ |
| <b>13.1.2</b> | Develop policy to manage and ethically invest the ERF funds in a manner that both grows the fund balance while ensuring liquidity to be available when a conservation opportunity arises (e.g., annual CDs). | Selectboard<br>Town Manager<br>Finance               | Short Term | --   |
| <b>13.1.3</b> | Implement updates to the methodology for ERF Prioritization List and map to ensure that the map reflects the goals of this plan, equity and inclusion, equitable distribution of public open                 | Conservation<br>Commission<br>Planning<br>Commission | Ongoing    | \$   |

|                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                    |                |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----|
|                                                                                                                                 | space throughout town, the current demands of land conservation in the region, and considers potential impacts from climate change.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                    |                |    |
| <b>13.1.4</b>                                                                                                                   | Maintain policy to act efficiently to acquire land or easements when the opportunity arises.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Selectboard<br>Town Manager<br>Finance                                             | Ongoing        | -- |
| <b>13.2 Public &amp; Private Land Management.</b>                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                    |                |    |
| <b>13.2.1</b>                                                                                                                   | Evaluate the feasibility and benefit of a Williston or multi-town Land Trust to conserve parcels or manage conservation easements for parcels that are not prioritized by larger or regional Land Trusts.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Conservation<br>Commission<br>Selectboard                                          | Medium<br>Term | \$ |
| <b>13.2.2</b>                                                                                                                   | Develop a land management policy for town-owned land to support pollinators, wildlife habitat, and regenerative agricultural practices for agricultural land leases. Evaluate and adjust land management practices on parcels such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town-owned water tower parcel north of Mountain View Road (ID 09-012-081-001)</li> <li>Lambert Lane Meadow (ID 15-104-160-000)</li> <li>Mehan Farm Conservation Area south of Williston Road (ID 08-104-050-000)</li> </ul> | Conservation<br>Commission<br>Public Works<br>Selectboard                          | Ongoing        | \$ |
| <b>13.2.3</b>                                                                                                                   | Maintain and improve existing and new community gardens on Town property and collaborate with the schools on school district property.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Conservation<br>Commission<br>Public Works<br>Recreation &<br>Parks<br>Selectboard | Short Term     | \$ |
| <b>13.2.4</b>                                                                                                                   | Evaluate and develop an invasive species management plan that does not villainize a species based on temporal and boundary divisions and instead address the ecosystem imbalances that the species is responding to or filling the niche of.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Conservation<br>Commission<br>Public Works<br>Recreation &<br>Parks<br>Selectboard | Medium<br>Term | \$ |
| <b>13.3 Maintain and establish Country Parks with a prioritization of the Growth Center which currently lacks public parks.</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                    |                |    |
| <b>13.3.1</b>                                                                                                                   | Evaluate, revise, and/or develop new management plans – as applicable for each area – for the existing and proposed country parks and conservations areas, as applicable for each area in a manner that balances recreational use, conservation values, forestry and agricultural economy, invasive species management.                                                                                                                                                                                   | Conservation<br>Commission<br>Selectboard                                          | Short Term     | -- |
| <b>13.3.2</b>                                                                                                                   | Develop a prioritization strategy and evaluate establishing new country parks and conservation areas at the following , in no particular order: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abazimenahanik (Tree Island), south of Allen Brook School</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Conservation<br>Commission<br>Selectboard                                          | Medium<br>Term | \$ |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                               |             |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town-owned land between Finney Crossing, Katie Lane, and Brennan Wood north of the Allen Brook</li> <li>• The Burr Oak Knoll south of Cottonwood Crossing and east of Maple Tree Place</li> <li>• Town-owned Brownell Mountain</li> <li>• The Jacob-Krantz parcel in collaboration with the Winooski Valley Park District (WVPD)</li> </ul> |                                                               |             |    |
| <b>13.4 Evaluate and amend land use regulations and other town policies to protect natural resources, support working landscapes, and respond to changing economic and environmental climates.</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                               |             |    |
| 13.4.1                                                                                                                                                                                             | Evaluate and revise land use regulations to allow a diverse range of uses to support working landscapes such as agriculture and on-farm businesses, fee-based recreation, hospitality, and educational activities.                                                                                                                                                                   | Conservation Commission<br>Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| 13.4.2                                                                                                                                                                                             | Evaluate and revise the visual resource protection standards of the WDB Chapter 27, including an update to the 1980 Visual Resource Assessment Map. Prioritize important views through Official Map.                                                                                                                                                                                 | Conservation Commission<br>Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Medium Term | \$ |
| 13.4.3                                                                                                                                                                                             | Evaluate and revise the important farmland protection standards of the WDB Chapter 27, particularly the use of the LESA map.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Conservation Commission<br>Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| 13.4.4                                                                                                                                                                                             | Implement revisions to the zoning district specific standards – particularly Chapters 31 Agricultural Rural Residential Zoning District (ARZD) and 39 Residential Zoning District (RZD)—based on the conservation area and water health standards of Chapter 27 and 29.                                                                                                              | Conservation Commission<br>Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Medium Term | \$ |
| 13.4.5                                                                                                                                                                                             | Evaluate and amend land use regulations to strengthen habitat protections, Habitat Disturbance Assessments, mitigation measures, and right-size protections for small- and infill-projects. Include past land disturbance and land use history in the habitat or watershed health protection value.                                                                                  | Conservation Commission<br>Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Medium Term | \$ |
| <b>13.5 Work with partners, neighboring communities and private landowners to implement programs that furthers climate change resilience and other town goals.</b>                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                               |             |    |
| 13.5.1                                                                                                                                                                                             | Maintain regular updates of data regarding natural resources, endangered, rare, and/or unique species, trail and park usage to support the evaluation strategies of this and other town plan chapters.                                                                                                                                                                               | Conservation Commission<br>Planning Commission                | Medium Term | \$ |
| 13.5.2                                                                                                                                                                                             | Develop partnerships with neighboring communities in regard to natural resources, habitat blocks, water source and watersheds that span town boundaries.                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Conservation Commission<br>Selectboard                        | Medium Term | \$ |

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                     |             |    |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|----|
| <b>13.5.3</b> | Develop partnership with neighboring communities in regard to country parks, trails, and recreational resources that span town boundaries or could connect communities.                                                                                                  | Conservation Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | \$ |
| <b>13.5.4</b> | Develop an outreach and resolution strategy to mitigate and reduce human-wildlife conflicts and the denigration of plant and animal ecosystems, including plants considered invasive due to temporal and spatial divides that differentiate native vs. invasive species. | Conservation Commission             | Medium Term | \$ |
| <b>13.5.5</b> | Develop an outreach program for Current Use to support agricultural and forestry businesses, monitor the success of this program and advocate to the legislature for improvements that can benefit working lands in Williston.                                           | Conservation Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | \$ |
| <b>13.5.6</b> | Evaluate methods and policies through which the Town can support and encourage private landowners to manage their resources for the production of food, forest, and earth products; wildlife, scenic views; and outdoor recreation.                                      | Conservation Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | \$ |
| <b>13.5.7</b> | Develop partnerships with organizations such as Winooski Valley Park District, Fellowship of the Wheel, and Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports to maintain and develop new parks and trails, including developing new or existing trails for ADA accessibility.             | Conservation Commission Selectboard | Short Term  | \$ |
| <b>13.5.8</b> | Develop an outreach program between the town, private landowners, other municipalities, land trusts, and land-based organizations such as trail clubs to assist with land management and conservation in support of good stewardship.                                    | Conservation Commission Planning    | Short Term  | \$ |
| <b>13.5.9</b> | Evaluate and assess the value of return on the investment of annual dues and benefits received from the Winooski Valley Parks District (WVPD). Evaluate if funds can be better utilized by the town to develop new parks in Williston.                                   | Selectboard                         | Short Term  | -  |

## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup> United States Census Bureau, *City and Town Population Totals 2020 to 2023*. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2020s-total-cities-and-towns.html>. Accessed October 9, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> United States Census Bureau, *City and Town Population Totals 2020 to 2023*. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2020s-total-cities-and-towns.html>. Accessed October 9, 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Town of Williston, Vermont. Conservation Prioritization. Accessed on 4/15/2025 at [https://www.town.williston.vt.us/index.asp?Type=B\\_BASIC&SEC={B641ADD2-B781-484C-8D1F-320550C9B5B7}&DE={D29F7355-0DB5-4674-8622-A34CBE52C755}](https://www.town.williston.vt.us/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={B641ADD2-B781-484C-8D1F-320550C9B5B7}&DE={D29F7355-0DB5-4674-8622-A34CBE52C755}).

<sup>4</sup> Town of Williston Engagement Insights Report.

<sup>5</sup> Town of Williston, Vermont. Conservation Prioritization. Accessed on 4/15/2025 at [https://www.town.williston.vt.us/index.asp?Type=B\\_BASIC&SEC={B641ADD2-B781-484C-8D1F-320550C9B5B7}&DE={D29F7355-0DB5-4674-8622-A34CBE52C755}](https://www.town.williston.vt.us/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={B641ADD2-B781-484C-8D1F-320550C9B5B7}&DE={D29F7355-0DB5-4674-8622-A34CBE52C755}).

<sup>6</sup> Vermont Department of Taxes. Current Use. Accessed 4/14/2025 at <https://tax.vermont.gov/property/current-use>.



# 14 | WATERSHED RESOURCES

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## Introduction

Williston lies within the 8,249 square mile Lake Champlain watershed. This watershed includes portions of Vermont, Quebec, and New York. Precipitation that falls in town eventually finds its way into Lake Champlain by one of several paths, which are shown on Map 12 – Watershed and Source Protection.

Land development has well-documented impacts on the volume, velocity, and quality of surface runoff. Changes in these parameters have a direct impact on the stability of a stream's channel, as well as the health of the aquatic, wetland, and riparian communities associated with the stream. These impacts have propelled Williston into a major role in watershed management.

The Town of Williston protects watershed health by:

- Managing stormwater in compliance with State permits.
- Evaluating and strengthening land use regulations to limit the impact of land development on water quality.
- Working with landowners to support good stewardship of water resources
- through programs like No Mow May, Raise the Blade, and the BLUE Program.
- Setting a good example by practicing low-impact management of the Town's own lands.
- Developing a plan to manage stormwater in Taft Corners more efficiently so that individual lots have more space for the highest and best uses of the land.
- Engaging neighboring towns, partner organizations and volunteers in stream restoration efforts.
- Protecting floodplains and river corridors by avoiding development within them and acquiring conservation easements.
- Enhancing public access to water resources for recreation and education, to encourage a sense of connection and investment in those resources.
- Supporting the efforts of Lake Iroquois Association and other watershed groups.
- Working with the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation and water suppliers to protect water quality.



## Goals: In 2050, Williston is....



### **LIVABLE**

... because protecting Williston's surface waters and riparian zones safeguards wildlife corridors and habitats. Protecting good access to the Town's water resources enhance their recreational value by offering spaces for people to unwind and connect with nature, thus enhancing their quality of life. Williston's water quality protection efforts maintain clean water in all town lakes and ponds, and contribute to clean water downstream and in nearby Lake Champlain.



### **RESILIENT**

...because by protecting its water resources, Williston is resilient to climate-related challenges like droughts or floods. By maintaining healthy ecosystems including wetlands and upland forests and by ensuring sustainable water management, Williston reduces the risks of water scarcity or flood damage during extreme weather events. Undisturbed wetlands and floodplains attenuate flooding, protecting downstream homes and infrastructure.



### **EQUITABLE**

...because when water resources are protected and managed responsibly, it ensures that everyone in the town, regardless of income or background, has access to the same quality of water. By focusing on the protection of water resources, Williston fosters a healthier, more equitable environment, where all residents thrive, and where the community can better withstand environmental challenges.



## Three Things to Know

1

### **WILLISTON HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO MANAGE WATER RESOURCES AS PART OF THE LAKE CHAMPLAIN WATERSHED**

The majority of Williston's land area is part of the Winooski Sub-basin, which is the largest of 11 major sub-basins in the Lake Champlain watershed. The Lake is a crucial component of Vermont's ecology, culture, and economy, and must be responsibly stewarded for future generations.

2

### **WILLISTON MANAGES WATERSHED HEALTH PRIMARILY THROUGH ITS STORMWATER PROGRAM**

In 2015, the Town's Department of Public Works formally established a Stormwater Program to meet state and federal regulatory requirements, manage drainage upkeep, and support local initiatives.

3

### **WILLISTON MANAGES STORMWATER TO COMPLY WITH STATE PERMITS**

Major changes in the stormwater program are often driven by decisions made on a state-wide level. The town currently has limited resources to support activities outside of permit compliance.



## **Three Things Public Engagement Told Us**

1

### **WATERSHED AND SOURCE PROTECTION IS DESIRABLE AS PART OF THE TOWN'S RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE**

20% of people thought that stormwater, green space, and climate resilience were the biggest energy and climate challenges facing Williston.

2

### **THE PEOPLE OF WILLISTON VALUE ACCESS TO THE TOWN'S WATER RESOURCES**

Community engagement efforts found that the vast majority of participants value access to protected open space and undeveloped areas, including wetlands, waterways, and wildlife habitat.

3

### **RESIDENTS REQUEST EXPANDED INFRASTRUCTURE TO MANAGE STORMWATER**

When asked, "What changes or improvements are overdue for Williston?" multiple respondents suggested larger culverts to mitigate the effects of stronger storms and an expansion of wastewater infrastructure to allow for housing growth.

## **Williston's Watersheds**

Williston lies within the 8,249 square mile Lake Champlain watershed. This watershed includes portions of Vermont, Quebec, and New York. Runoff from the town eventually finds its way into Lake Champlain by one of several paths, which are shown on Map 12 – Watershed and Source Protection. Williston's watersheds are summarized below:

- The Muddy Brook runs along Williston's western border forming the boundary to South Burlington. It's 20.8 square mile watershed includes the Sucker Brook tributary and occupies approximately 9.8 square miles in Williston. The Muddy Brook watershed includes the retail centers in Taft Corners and Maple Tree Place and a portion of the industrial and commercial facilities in the north-west corner of the town. The Muddy Brook fails State water quality standards for toxins, nutrients, and temperature for the last seven miles of the tributary due to urbanization of this watershed.<sup>1</sup>

- The Allen Brook originates above Mud Pond and flows northwest to join the Muddy Brook just before the confluence with the Winooski River. The Allen Brook watershed falls entirely within the town and is Williston's largest watershed, encompassing roughly 10.8 square miles. The Allen Brook watershed includes agricultural and forested lands, residential development, and a portion of the industrial and commercial facilities near the confluence with Muddy Brook. This tributary currently fails State water quality standards for stormwater and *E. coli* from the headwaters down to Industrial Avenue.
- Several small tributaries flow directly into the Winooski River, draining approximately 8.4 square miles in total.
- Lake Iroquois and the surrounding lands are part of the LaPlatte River watershed, ultimately draining into Shelburne Bay. Lake Iroquois drains into Patrick Brook, which joins the LaPlatte River in Hinesburg. This watershed includes about 1.7 square miles in Williston.
- Finally, less than one hundred acres each of the Johnnie Brook and Shelburne Pond watersheds are within the town.

Williston's rivers, brooks, streams, wetlands, and ponds provide habitat for aquatic species that live in town. Their vegetated margins, or 'riparian zones,' extend this habitat and act as travel corridors and migration pathways for animals and plants between disconnected forest blocks. By protecting Williston's surface waters, we are protecting wildlife, their habitat, and the areas they use to move through town.<sup>2</sup>

## Stormwater Management

The Town of Williston discharges stormwater under the authority of a Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) General Permit issued by the State of Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. As a condition of the permit, the Town is required to develop a [Stormwater Management Plan](#)<sup>3</sup>, last updated in 2024, which addresses how the Town will prevent stormwater runoff from carrying potential pollutants to receiving surface waters. Potential pollution sources may include runoff from agricultural fields, residential areas where excessive lawn treatment chemicals or fertilizers are applied, parking lots where vehicles may have leaked fluids and where salts are often applied during winter months, or construction sites where large areas of disturbances are common. Each of these potential pollutant sources needs to be identified and mitigated to minimize their potential for commingling with stormwater runoff and eventually entering our waterways.

When receiving waters do not meet their intended use due to a specific pollutant(s), additional standards for the Stormwater Discharges to that water body become required. In the Town of Williston, our stormwater is received by seven surface water bodies which include the Allen Brook, Johnnie Brook, Lake Iroquois, Muddy Brook, Shelburne Pond, Sucker Brook, and the Winooski River. Of these seven waterbodies Allen Brook, Muddy Brook, and Lake Iroquois are listed as impaired by the State of Vermont, but only the Allen Brook has discharge restrictions at this time. Muddy Brook and Lake Iroquois are being monitored as local cleanup efforts continue. Under the MS4 permit the Town of Williston is required to implement a Stormwater [Flow Restoration Plan](#)<sup>4</sup> to address the impacts stormwater discharges are having on the Allen Brook. The required plan was developed and approved by the State in 2016. The ultimate goal of an FRP is to identify stormwater treatment practices (including retrofits to existing systems) which when implemented will work towards removing an impaired waterbody from the States List of Impaired Waters.

Williston launched a Stormwater Program operating in the Department of Public Works with a Stormwater Coordinator in 2015. The fee-based Program was formed to facilitate the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the town-wide stormwater drainage network, address increasingly stringent state and federal permitting requirements and support local water quality initiatives. Prior to the establishment of that program, the Williston Conservation Commission and Conservation Planner were charged with monitoring water quality and improving watershed health through such actions as stream cleanups, riparian plantings, stormwater management and public engagement and education.

The Williston stormwater program and services are designed to comply with the State's "MS4" permit. Therefore, major changes in the stormwater program are based on State regulatory requirements, especially as the Town currently has limited resources to expand the program beyond permit compliance. While the Town cannot predict how the MS4 permit or state regulations will change over the next eight years, we do know that maintenance costs will increase for the Stormwater Program and for private landowners as our newer facilities will need to be cleaned. Frequent, severe storms due to climate change will put greater pressure on our older infrastructure, and the Town should make efforts to repair and protect riparian zones, upgrade infrastructure, and control the increase of impermeable surfaces.

The Town should evaluate its land use regulations, specifically Chapter 29 – Watershed Health, to make sure that they effectively minimize the impact of land development on water quality, and amend the regulations as needed.

### **Stormwater Management in Taft Corners**

The Taft Corners Vision Plan noted stormwater management as an overarching issue that will affect how the area is developed. The Vision Plan stated, "The current practice of pushing storm-water management entirely onto individual lot owners is a guarantee of a smaller tax base and a bigger environmental footprint. It ultimately forces an auto-dependent environment." Rather, stormwater management should be handled collectively like water or sewer, either as a Town utility or via a shared responsibility among landowners.<sup>5</sup>

Approaching stormwater management in this way will be more efficient and effective and will help ensure that the available land is used for its best and highest use.

## **Stewardship**

While State and Federal government entities are ultimately responsible for protecting our local waterways, the Town of Williston will strive to keep those waterways free and clear of contamination. Quality of life is linked to a healthy environment. In recognizing this mainstay, the town will strive to become a sustainable community of citizens and businesses motivated to conserve and enhance natural resources through policies, programs, and outreach activities.

The Town can support stewardship of our waterways by taking the lead and practicing good stewardship of its own lands. Such practices include minimizing mowing where feasible and, where mowing must occur, raising the level of the mower blades to 3 inches; restoring wetlands where feasible, and replacing mowed grass with native vegetation that slows runoff and promotes infiltration.

The Town can also encourage good stewardship through promotion of programs like No Mow May<sup>6</sup>, Raise the Blade<sup>7</sup> and the BLUE Program to address stormwater issues in residential areas. BLUE evaluators

educate and collaborate with residents to identify opportunities for stormwater mitigation such as rain gardens, rain barrels, permeable driveways, infiltration trenches, gutter re-directs, dry wells, etc. to reduce pollutants and phosphorus overload to Williston's waterways.<sup>8</sup>

## **Stream Restoration**

Efforts to restore Williston's named streams began in 2001 with the Sucker Brook stream stabilization project. In the mid-1980s, a high flow event re-routed Sucker Brook out of its channel, away from a 25-ft waterfall, through an abandoned sand and gravel pit traversing exposed sand, silts, and clays. Over the next twenty years, the channel steadily eroded. Approximately 72,000 cubic yards of material were transported downstream, leaving a steep, unstable channel at the bottom of a 40-ft gully.<sup>9</sup> From 2001 – 2008 the Town worked with VT DEC and other partners to successfully stabilize the Sucker Brook. Monitoring of the restoration site is ongoing.

From 2004 - 2012 a substantial restoration project was completed on the Allen Brook. A comprehensive decision matrix was developed to assess 158 parcels along the Allen Brook and its tributaries to identify properties where restoration efforts were expected to have the greatest impact. Acquisitions or conservation easements on high priority parcels permanently protected 37 acres of land along the Allen Brook and its tributaries, and 18 acres within stream buffers were planted with native trees and shrubs. Steep and highly erodible stream banks were strategically cut back and gradually sloped in many locations, resulting in the removal of 228 cubic yards of sediment.<sup>10</sup>

The Actions and Strategies in this chapter call for evaluating the effectiveness of the Allen Brook restoration project, coordinating with the city of South Burlington on planning restoration projects along the Muddy River, and evaluating other riparian corridors in Williston for restoration potential.

## **Flood Resilience**

The Town of Williston has developed strategies to build flood resilience. This includes identifying areas vulnerable to flooding or fluvial erosion; designating those areas to be protected to mitigate risks to public safety, critical infrastructure, historic structures, and municipal investments; locating new development in safer areas; using sound stormwater management techniques to reduce flooding; conserving floodplains and upland forested areas that attenuate flooding; and encouraging flood emergency preparedness and response planning (see Chapter 12 – Hazard Mitigation). The town will continue to implement these strategies.

Williston's regulations include "watershed protection buffers" for all streams, ponds, lakes and for certain wetlands. These include:

- A shoreline buffer of at least 150 feet for all ponds and lakes exceeding an area of a half-acre;
- A shoreline buffer of 250 feet for Lake Iroquois;
- A buffer of at least 150 feet for the Allen Brook, Muddy Brook, Sucker Brook and Winooski River;
- A 50-foot buffer for all unnamed streams;
- A 50-foot buffer around all Class 2 Wetlands and certain Class 3 Wetlands, and
- Special Flood Hazard Areas

The town's regulations stipulate that land within these buffers shall remain undeveloped and in native vegetation. In total, the watershed protection areas generally provide greater protection than the

statewide River Corridors under the jurisdiction of Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, and very little land area is within the River Corridors that are not already under the town's watershed protection buffers (see Map 12 – Watershed and Source Protection). Nonetheless, to assure consistency with State statute and with surrounding towns, the town should consider incorporating the ANR River Corridors into the flood hazard protection standards in the Bylaw. Similar to the Special Flood Hazard Areas, the River Corridors should become part of the watershed protection buffers listed above.

Stormwater management techniques can also help to slow the spread of floodwater. It should be noted that stormwater treatment standards required under Vermont law are designed to capture 90% of the annual storm events and to safely “pass” a 100-year storm event, meaning that even well-designed stormwater infrastructure won't prevent flooding in an extreme event.

## **Lake Iroquois**

Lake Iroquois is a 229-acre kettle pond that lies in the Lake Champlain watershed and is bounded by the towns of Williston, Richmond, St. George and Hinesburg. The lake was formed after the last ice coverage in Vermont receded about 15,000 years ago. Over the years, the lake has naturally become more eutrophic, and it has been the site of significant human development and use in the last 150 years. By 1900, settlers had cleared most of the Lake's watershed for farming and began to build seasonal camps on its shores. A hundred years later, much of the watershed is reforested but most of the shoreline has been developed with over 90 summer camps and year-round homes.

A dam built on the lake's outlet in the mid-1800s was used to control the water supply to mills downstream in Hinesburg. Milling declined in the 20th century and in the 1960s the dam was intentionally cemented in its top position, keeping the pond at its current level throughout the year. Approximately 32 streams flow into the lake on the north, east and west sides, the largest flowing in from the northwest (crossing Beebe Lane). There are also several streams that bubble up from the lake bottom.

The lake is used extensively throughout the year by residents and by visitors. The Lake Iroquois Recreation District (LIRD) maintains the public beach at the north end of the lake. The LIRD also maintains a trail network on the land around the lake. The trails are accessible from the beach parking lot. The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department maintains the fishing access and boat ramp, also at the north end of the lake, which provides public access to the lake for boating and fishing.<sup>11</sup>

The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources has classified Lake Iroquois as eutrophic, meaning that the Lake's waters are rich in nutrients (i.e. phosphorous, nitrogen) that promote the proliferation of plant life, especially algae, which in turn reduces the dissolved oxygen content that fish and other aquatic species rely on for survival. The elevated nutrient levels in the Lake have also contributed to the spread of the invasive aquatic plant, Eurasian Watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*). Since 1979, studies have indicated that Lake Iroquois has one of the highest average levels of phosphorus of all lakes in the State.<sup>12</sup>

The Lake Iroquois Association (LIA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation whose sole purpose is to maintain and enhance the Lake Iroquois ecosystem. The LIA aims to encourage and guide appropriate public uses of the lake and its watershed for the purpose of protecting and preserving the lake's overall well-being. These goals are achieved through monitoring, preventive and management initiatives, research, education, advocacy and other actions, involving the cooperative efforts of property owners, Town, State and Federal officials, and other interested parties.<sup>13</sup>



The LIA's efforts are paying off. In 2022 the Vermont DEC granted the Lake Iroquois Association the "Gold Lake Wise Award"<sup>14</sup> to recognize that 15% of the properties surrounding the lake follow shoreland best management practices and have received an individual Lake Wise Award<sup>15</sup> for their efforts. The town should support the efforts of the LIA through direct funding and in-kind contributions, to help them achieve their mission to restore the lake.

## **Source Water Protection**

Williston residents and businesses receive their drinking water from one of three sources: a private well, which is managed by the landowner; the Lake Iroquois Source Protection Area, which is supplied by the Champlain Water District (CWD); or the Porterwood Source Protection Area, which is supplied by the Williston Fire District #1 (FD1). Williston's two Source Protection Areas (SPAs) are shown on Map 12. Water suppliers who manage SPAs are responsible for developing and updating Source Protection Plans (SPPs), which are designed to maintain the integrity of the SPA. These Plans must comply with State and Federal Rules governing water supply protection. This chapter calls for Williston to ensure that all development activities within the designated SPAs are consistent with the SPPs; therefore, development proposals within SPAs will be referred to their water suppliers for comment prior to the issuance of a permit.

## **Groundwater Protection**

Groundwater in Williston is protected under the jurisdiction of the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection Division. The Regional Office Program issues water/wastewater permits (WW Permits) for soil-based wastewater systems with flows of less than 6500 gallons per day, for potable water supplies (water supplies that are not public water supplies), and for municipal water and sewer connections. The Vermont Wastewater System and Potable Water Supply Rules (adopted June 30, 2007) supersede existing municipal ordinances and zoning bylaws that regulate potable water supplies and wastewater systems. Municipalities may continue to have ordinances and/or bylaws that: (1) only regulate the use and/or operation of municipally owned water and/or sewage treatment plants; (2) require submission of copies of plans and documents used to obtain a state permit under these Rules to the municipality; (3) require a certificate of occupancy that is based on full compliance with a state permit issued under these Rules; (4) require notice of, and have the option to observe, any soil testing such as the digging of test pits; and (5) require time of sale inspections. In light of its limited authority to regulate water supplies and wastewater systems, Williston will work with the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation to further the goals of protecting groundwater quality and quantity.

# OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

## Objectives

- 14.A** Manage stormwater in compliance with State permits.
- 14.B** Improve Williston's watershed health by investing in the stormwater program, working with landowners, protecting and enhancing ecological resources that benefit water quality, and coordinating with other organizations, neighboring towns, and the state.
- 14.C** Improve Williston's flood resilience by directing development away from vulnerable areas and by permanently protecting high priority areas within riparian corridors.
- 14.D** Manage stormwater in Taft Corners communally rather than on a parcel-by-parcel basis, to reduce the environmental footprint of those systems and allow more land to be used for its highest and best use optimal value.
- 14.E** Improve and enhance public access to water resources in town, providing opportunities for recreation and education, which demonstrates the value of water resources and helps connect people with the process to protect those resources.
- 14.F** The town will participate in partnerships to improve the Lake Iroquois ecosystem.
- 14.G** The Town of Williston will work with the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection Division to help protect both groundwater quality and quantity.

## Strategies

- 14.1** The Town of Williston will continue to operate as a Municipal Small Separate Stormwater System (MS4) within the framework established by the Clean Water Act, under the General Permit for MS4s issued by the State of Vermont and the State's stormwater legislation.

| Actions       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Responsibility           | Timeframe  | Cost |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------|------|
| <b>14.1.1</b> | Maintain implementation of the Stormwater Management Plan and update as needed.                                                                                                                                                                                          | Public Works             | Ongoing    | \$\$ |
| <b>14.1.2</b> | Support regional efforts to implement required public education, outreach and participation.                                                                                                                                                                             | Public Works             | Ongoing    | \$   |
| <b>14.1.3</b> | Develop strengthened regulations that limit the impact of land development on water quality. Continue to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these standards and consider referencing new technologies and stormwater management strategies as they are developed. | Planning<br>Public Works | Ongoing    | --   |
| <b>14.1.4</b> | Evaluate, in partnership with The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Watershed Management Division staff, the standards of WDB 29 Watershed Health, to ensure that the regulations reflect current best practices and technologies.                  | Planning<br>Public Works | Short Term | --   |

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |              |                       |        |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------|
| <b>14.1.5</b> | Implement the Allen Brook Flow Restoration Plan, with the ultimate goal to utilize stormwater treatment practices (including retrofits to existing systems) that will help improve the water quality of Allen Brook to the point where it is no longer listed as impaired.                                                                                                                   | Public Works | Short Term<br>Ongoing | \$\$\$ |
| <b>14.1.6</b> | Develop and implement stormwater improvements using Stormwater Program funding. Continue to charge fees based on the amount of a property's impervious surfaces.                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Public Works | Ongoing               | \$\$   |
| <b>14.1.7</b> | Evaluate stormwater issues in older developments. Continue to monitor and maintain Town-owned and Town-managed stormwater treatment practices.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Public Works | Ongoing               | \$\$   |
| <b>14.1.8</b> | Implement the Stormwater Program utilizing the DEC Clean Water Program and Funding.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Public Works | Ongoing               | \$     |
| <b>14.2</b>   | <b>The Town should strive to practice low-impact management on its properties by reducing the use of pesticides and fertilizers, by reducing the extent of mowed, heavily managed landscapes, and by reducing the frequency and impact of mowing on those landscapes.</b>                                 |              |                       |        |
| <b>14.2.1</b> | Develop an operations policy to minimize mowing of wetlands, buffers, and meadows to prioritize habitat and ecosystem function on town land such as the Town Hall meadow, Allen Brook Field along the recreation path, between the recreation path and Lambert Lane, and the disc golf course. Delineate wetlands to inform decision making, and plan to restore wetlands where practicable. | Public Works | Short Term            | --     |
| <b>14.2.2</b> | Develop a plan to reduce the amount of mowed grass on town land and replace it with native and edible plantings to slow runoff, promote infiltration, provide habitat, and edible foods.                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Public Works | Short Term            | \$     |
| <b>14.3</b>   | <b>Encourage and support low-impact development.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |              |                       |        |
| <b>14.3.1</b> | Support No Mow May, Raise the Blade and other piloting programs that incentivize landowners to "re- wild" their lawns.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Selectboard  | Medium Term           | \$\$   |
| <b>14.3.2</b> | Support and encourage landowners to plant landscaping that is appropriate for their specific microclimate, for example drought-resistant plants for dry, sandy soils or specific plants for wet clay soils.                                                                                                                                                                                  | Selectboard  | Short Term            | \$     |
| <b>14.3.3</b> | Support volunteer programs such as the BLUE Program to address stormwater in residential areas. BLUE evaluators educate and collaborate with residents to identify opportunities for stormwater mitigation, such as rain gardens, rain barrels, permeable driveways, infiltration trenches, gutter re-directs, dry wells, etc. to reduce pollutants                                          | Public Works | Ongoing               | \$     |

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                 |                    |          |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|----------|
|               | and phosphorus overload into Williston's waterways <sup>1</sup> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                 |                    |          |
| <b>14.4</b>   | <b>Reevaluate the manner in which stormwater is managed in the Taft Corners Form Based Code district. The current practice of lot-by-lot stormwater management increases the environmental footprint and forces auto-dependency. Stormwater needs to be handled communally (like water or sewer), whether as a Town utility, or via shared responsibility among owners.</b>                                               |                                 |                    |          |
| <b>14.4.1</b> | Evaluate, via a scoping study, to determine the best location for collective stormwater treatment and any potential barriers.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Public Works Selectboard        | Medium Term        | \$\$     |
| <b>14.4.2</b> | Evaluate available funding sources to design and implement a collective stormwater system.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Public Works Selectboard        | Long Term          | \$\$\$\$ |
| <b>14.5</b>   | <b>The Town will support water quality and stream restoration efforts through the engagement of volunteers led by outside partners like the Winooski NRC and Friends of Winooski River.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                 |                    |          |
| <b>14.5.1</b> | Support and coordinate with the City of South Burlington on the planning and funding of targeted restoration projects along the Muddy Brook.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Conservation Commission         | Short Term         | --       |
| <b>14.5.2</b> | Evaluate the effectiveness of the previous 2008- 2011 Allen Brook Restoration project on stabilizing stream banks and improving water quality.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Conservation Commission         | Medium Term        | \$\$     |
| <b>14.5.3</b> | Evaluate other riparian corridors in Williston and then develop a plan to reforest areas with the help of partner organizations and volunteers.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Conservation Commission         | Medium Term        | \$\$     |
| <b>14.6</b>   | <b>Avoid development and protect land in particularly vulnerable areas such as floodplains and river corridors.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                 |                    |          |
|               | <b>Permanently protect land within river corridors and floodplains to enhance flood storage capacity and allow streams room to move, so that over time streams will become more stable.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                 |                    |          |
| <b>14.6.1</b> | Evaluate the incorporation of river corridors into WDB Chapter 28, in order to assure consistency with State statute and with surrounding towns, and to ensure that the town retains the maximum level of Emergency Relief Assistance Funding. Williston Development Bylaws Chapter 28 regulates development in Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA). All new development, with minor exceptions, is prohibited in the SFHA. | Planning Commission Selectboard | Short Term Ongoing | --       |

<sup>1</sup> BLUE Williston. Sea Grant Lake Champlain. Accessed on 3/24/2025 at <https://www.uvm.edu/seagrant/blue/blue-williston>

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                     |             |        |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|--------|
| <b>14.6.2</b> | Prioritize parcels to target for acquiring river corridor easements and restoring floodplain.                                                                                                                                                                                      | Conservation Commission             | Short Term  | --     |
| <b>14.6.3</b> | Evaluate how to conduct outreach to landowners to discuss opportunities for conservation and/or flood zone protection projects.                                                                                                                                                    | Conservation Commission             | Short Term  | \$     |
| <b>14.6.4</b> | Fund acquisitions with Environmental Reserve Fund and grant funding.                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Conservation Commission Selectboard | Long Term   | \$\$\$ |
| <b>14.7</b>   | <b>Maintain, protect, and where possible, enhance access to water resources for recreation and educational opportunities. Some access to water resources is, appropriately, informal; however, the town should evaluate locations where access can be improved and formalized.</b> |                                     |             |        |
| <b>14.7.1</b> | Evaluate and identify locations for improved public access to water resources in collaboration with partners such as Northern Forest Canoe Trail and Vermont River Conservancy.                                                                                                    | Conservation Commission             | Short Term  | --     |
| <b>14.7.2</b> | Evaluate the cost and feasibility of improving access at select locations.                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Conservation Commission             | Medium Term | \$     |
| <b>14.7.3</b> | Implement public access improvement projects with a mixture of grants and town funding.                                                                                                                                                                                            | Conservation Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | \$\$   |
| <b>14.8</b>   | <b>Support the efforts of the Lake Iroquois Association and other organizations to improve the water quality of Lake Iroquois.</b>                                                                                                                                                 |                                     |             |        |
| <b>16.8.1</b> | Maintain support of the LIA, through direct funding and in-kind contributions, to help them achieve their mission to restore the lake.                                                                                                                                             | Conservation Commission Selectboard | Ongoing     | \$     |
| <b>14.9</b>   | <b>In light of the town's limited authority to regulate water supplies and wastewater systems, Williston will work with the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation to further the goals of protecting groundwater quality and quantity.</b>                              |                                     |             |        |
| <b>14.9.1</b> | Maintain compliance with State Wastewater System and Potable Water Supply Rules. Continue to require development applications to include Water and Wastewater system designs and State Water and Wastewater Permit.                                                                | Planning                            | Ongoing     | --     |
| <b>14.9.2</b> | Support ending the duplicative permitting for development served by municipal water and sewer. To ensure that a wastewater system has been installed as designed, as-built plans must be filed with the Zoning Administrator prior to issuance of a certificate of compliance.     | Planning Commission Selectboard     | Short Term  | --     |
| <b>14.9.3</b> | Evaluate the need to require hydrogeologic studies or whether the town should defer that responsibility to the State since the State is responsible for issuing Water and Wastewater Permits.                                                                                      | Planning Commission Selectboard     | Short Term  | --     |

**14.10**

The Town of Williston will help protect both water quality and quantity in drinking water Source Protection Areas by notifying development proposals to any applicable water suppliers.

|                |                                                                                                                                           |          |         |    |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------|----|
| <b>14.10.1</b> | Maintain the practice of notifying the Champlain Water District of development proposals within the Lake Iroquois Source Protection Area. | Planning | Ongoing | -- |
| <b>14.10.2</b> | Maintain support of the LIA, through direct funding and in-kind contributions, to help them achieve their mission to restore the lake.    | Planning | Ongoing | -- |

## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Evan P. Fitzgerald, Samuel P. Parker, 2009. *Muddy Brook Phase 1 and 2 Stream Geomorphic Assessment Summary*. <http://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/%7B922450B7-536D-4114-A65A-AE44AF7AE55D%7D.PDF>. Accessed December 5, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Dylan O’Leary, 2022. *Williston Wildlife Corridors*. <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/e373041378f849a496042ba134426a14>. Accessed December 4, 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Town of Williston Stormwater Management Program. Accessed 4/15/2025 at [https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/Sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/FOR\\_SUBMITTAL\\_Williston\\_SWMP\\_Update\\_2024\\_V2.pdf](https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/Sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/FOR_SUBMITTAL_Williston_SWMP_Update_2024_V2.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Dubois & King, Inc. *Town of Williston Allen Brook Flow Restoration Plan*. Accessed 4/15/2025 at [https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/Sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/Allen\\_Brook\\_Flow\\_Restoration\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/Sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/Allen_Brook_Flow_Restoration_Plan.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Town of Williston, 2021. *Taft Corners, Williston, Vermont: Vision Plan Created by the Residents of Williston*. Accessed on 4/15/2025 at [https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/Taft\\_Corners\\_Vision\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/Taft_Corners_Vision_Plan.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Plantlife. No Mow May. Accessed 4/15/2025 at <https://www.plantlife.org.uk/campaigns/nomowmay/>.

<sup>7</sup> Lawn to Lake. Raise the Blade program. Accessed 4/15/2025 at [https://lawntolake.wpengine.com/?page\\_id=13](https://lawntolake.wpengine.com/?page_id=13).

<sup>8</sup> BLUE Williston. Sea Grant Lake Champlain. Accessed on 3/24/2025 at <https://www.uvm.edu/seagrant/blue/blue-williston>.

<sup>9</sup> Dubois & King, Inc. website. *Sucker Brook Channel Stabilization and Natural Channel Design*. Williston, Vermont. Accessed 4/15/2025 at <https://www.dubois-king.com/projects/sucker-brook-channel-stabilization-and-natural-channel-design/>.

<sup>10</sup> Stream Buffer Restoration. Town of Williston website. Accessed 4/15/2025 at [https://www.town.williston.vt.us/index.asp?Type=B\\_BASIC&SEC={5E27EA55-FB4C-4420-9162-64DC7BF93780}](https://www.town.williston.vt.us/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={5E27EA55-FB4C-4420-9162-64DC7BF93780}).

<sup>11</sup> Lake Iroquois Association. *History of Lake Iroquois*. Accessed 4/15/2025 at <https://www.lakeiroquois.org/about/history-of-the-lake>.

<sup>12</sup> Citation

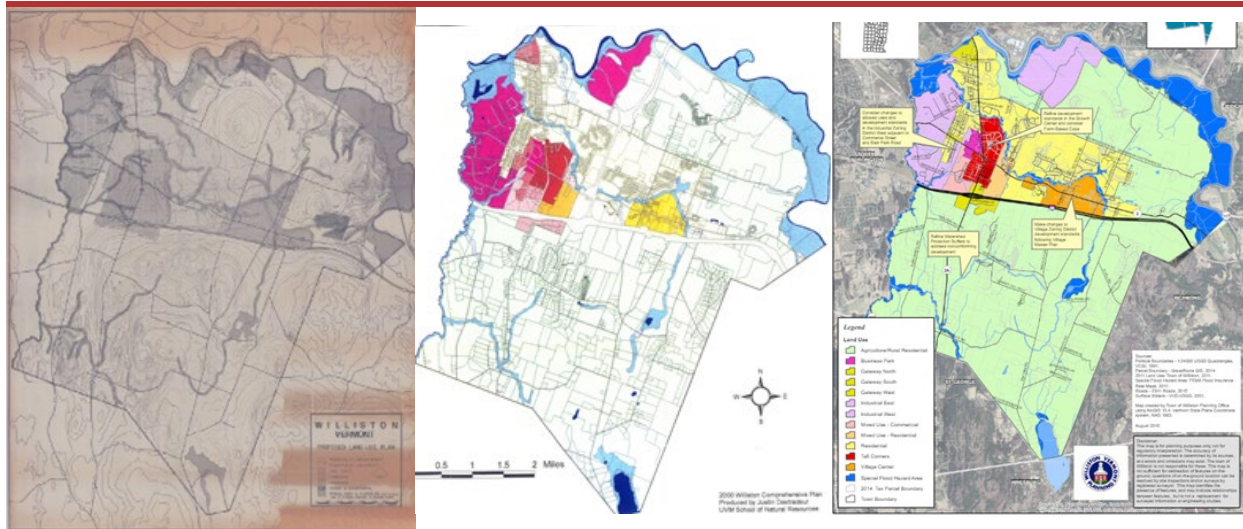
<sup>13</sup> Lake Iroquois Association. Accessed 4/15/2025 at <https://www.lakeiroquois.org/>.

<sup>14</sup> Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Environmental Conservation. *Lake Iroquois Achieves Gold Lake Wise Award Status*. Accessed 4/15/2025 at <https://anr.vermont.gov/dec/content/lake-iroquois-achieves-gold-lake-wise-award-status>.

<sup>15</sup> Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Environmental Conservation. *What is Lake Wise?* Accessed 4/15/2025 at <https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/lakes-ponds/lakeshores-lake-wise/what-lake-wise>.



# 15 | FUTURE LAND USE BOUNDARIES



*The 1978, 2001, and 2016 Comprehensive Plans' Future Land Use Maps of Williston*

## Introduction

Designating different places where a variety of types and intensities of use are envisioned is often the foundation of a Comprehensive Plan. Land uses that are incompatible with one another are separated, more intense uses are planned where infrastructure can support them, and together these designated places are meant to comprise a cohesive “whole.” Districts with development and use rules that align with the Future Land Use designations are the building blocks of the regulatory implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, the Town’s zoning. The zoning of the Town is regulated by the Williston Unified Development Bylaw.

This chapter is about how the Town is divided into the land use designations that inform the boundaries of its zoning districts. It identifies areas where changes should be made, either to the borders of the zones themselves or the development standards within them.

Williston’s land use designations and zoning boundaries have been quite stable over the last 40 years, considering the amount of change the Town has seen in that time. The concept of a commercial and mixed-use core at Taft Corners with an industrial area to the west and a suburban area to the north and east, all surrounded by a large low-density agricultural area south of Interstate 89 and north of Mountain View Road harks back to early planning efforts. This overall pattern is proposed by this plan to be maintained, with only minor shifts in zoning boundaries to achieve specific goals.

Particularly, this plan maintains the boundaries of rural Williston and does not propose adding development density or intensity to the parts of the town that have been designated for agriculture and low-density rural residential development throughout Williston’s history.



## Goals: In 2050, Williston is....



### **LIVABLE**

...because where Williston faces significant “friction” between more and less intense uses on either side of a zoning or Future Land Use map boundary, the Town will take great care to ensure negative impacts on existing residents will be mitigated when those properties are developed or when boundaries are proposed to be shifted.



### **RESILIENT**

...because the Town will plan proactively to assess and respond to requests to shift the boundaries of the Future Land Use map and zoning districts based on the realities of its geography and current buildout. Particular areas of Town where the Planning Commission expects to review and potentially revise Future Land Use and zoning boundaries are identified in the maps that are adopted along with this Comprehensive Plan.



### **EQUITABLE**

... because when considering both the allowed land uses within zoning districts and the boundaries between them, the Town will strive to ensure that any changes to allowed uses or boundaries do not result in a negative impact to people who are least equipped to endure those impacts. Often residential areas that are closer to commercial or industrial areas are some of the most affordable parts of Town. Similarly, small businesses and agricultural enterprises may be located in areas where zoning has traditionally been used to “squeeze them out” of expensive residential areas. This plan recognizes that responsiveness to the needs of some property owners (relating to changing zoning standards or boundaries) must be balanced with mitigating impacts to vulnerable populations.



## Three Things to Know

1

### **WILLISTON'S LAND USE BOUNDARIES HAVE BEEN REMARKABLY STABLE OVER THE LAST 60 YEARS**

... considering the amount of change the town has seen in that time. The concept of a commercial and mixed-use core at Taft Corners with an industrial area to the west and a suburban residential area to the north and east, all surrounded by a large low-density agricultural area south of I-89 and north of Mountain View Road harks back to early planning efforts.

2

## **HOWEVER, ARCHITECTURAL, DENSITY, AND SITE DESIGN STANDARDS HAVE CHANGED WITHIN THOSE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS**

Williston's zoning is constantly evolving, both in response to changes in state law (for example, requirements in 2023 that the Town allow greater residential densities in areas served by water and sewer) and as the Town fine-tunes its development standards to achieve the vision of the Comprehensive Plan (as evidenced by recent work on the Form-Based Code in Taft Corners and bylaw amendment for Williston Village).

3

## **CHANGING DESIGNATION BOUNDARIES HAS BEEN A CHALLENGE IN SOME PARTS OF TOWN**

In parts of Williston where heavy commercial or industrial zoning districts are next to rural and residential areas, there is more friction when a landowner wishes to expand a more intense land use into an area that was formerly rural or residential. While generally Williston's zoning and land use maps have designated land uses in a way that does not put the most intense land uses in direct contact with the least intense ones, there are places where the Town's geography makes that unavoidable. Residential areas abutting Commerce Street, Route 2A, Industrial Avenue, Hurricane Lane, and Brownell Road are all examples of this.



## **Three Things Public Engagement Told Us**

1

### **WILLISTON'S PEOPLE VALUE THE BALANCE OF RURAL AND SUBURBAN LAND USES**

Throughout the Williston 2050 engagement process, people said that they valued the balance Williston has found in maintaining rural land uses in a rural state, while growing and adding density in its commercial and mixed-use areas.

2

### **WILLISTON'S PEOPLE GENERALLY AGREE WITH THE CURRENT LOCATIONS OF LAND USE BOUNDARIES**

While some participants in Williston 2050 acknowledged that keeping rural lands zoned for very few uses and low densities may exclude some housing and economic development, there was little public call to change boundaries in Williston to "open up" more land for denser residential or more intense commercial, industrial, or mixed-use development.

3

### **WILLISTON'S PEOPLE ARE GENERALLY ACCEPTING OF EXISTING NON-CONFORMING USES WITHIN ITS ZONING DISTRICTS**

Throughout the Town, there are commercial uses in the residential areas, industrial uses in mixed-use commercial areas, and even residential uses in industrial areas that have been there since before the zoning prohibited them (legal nonconforming uses, in zoning parlance). There was no significant public desire expressed to make these existing uses "conforming" (that is, relocate them to a different zoning district) during Williston 2050 and some acknowledge that this existing diversity of uses, even where no longer legal under zoning, is an asset to the Town.

## **Balance of Rural and Suburban Land Uses**

Throughout the public engagement process for this Comprehensive Plan, people had very little to say about the boundaries between land use designations in Williston. As these boundaries are more or less invisible, this isn't a surprise. However, people had a lot to say about what they like and didn't like about Williston and what they hoped for in Williston's future that is grounded in the critical planning tool of zoning districts. Citizens value the balance of land uses in Williston, the quiet of its rural and suburban residential places, the community focus of its historic village, and the convenience of having places to work and shop in town. People value keeping property taxes low, which is largely a function of the sales tax revenue Williston collects in its industrial and retail areas. Willistonians don't want to see sprawl. They want to see the more intense development at Taft Corners contained within the boundaries of the Form-Based Code District, and they emphatically want to "keep the rural, rural" due to concern that the town will lose its rural character. These values are reflected in this chapter.

## **Vision: Land use in Williston is all about BALANCE and CONSISTENCY**

Land in Williston is used in a broad diversity of ways, from farming and forestry, to industry, hospitality, and retail, from multi-story apartments to rural homes and large acreages. All these things can coexist in this small Vermont town because they have been arranged spatially with great care using sound planning principles. The Vision for Land Use Boundaries in Williston discussed in this Plan and fulfilled in part by the Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Actions below is that this great level of care will continue to be employed by the municipality. Minor adjustments will be made to the land use boundaries and the standards within those boundaries to further this vision. By and large, however, no major changes will be made to the boundaries between rural areas and growth areas, recognizing that some of Williston's greatest successes in planning have come from its stalwart consistency. Visions take a long time to become reality, and the consistency of Williston's land use vision over the last half century can be seen and felt around the town. Rural feels like rural, there are no strip malls in Williston Village, and the "grid streets" imagined in Taft Corners in the 1990 Town Plan are beginning to be built. Williston will consistently maintain the geographic balance of its land uses while remaining just flexible enough to adapt to changing conditions.

## **Coordination with other Designated Areas**

Williston's Land Use designations also align and are coordinated with State Designations. The Taft Corners Area is encompassed by a state-designated Growth Center and the historic village contains a Designated Village Center and a National Register Historic District. Under Vermont law, these designated areas come with requirements and offer benefits for the town, non-profits, and businesses. Those areas, as well as other suburban residential areas, are also contained within Williston's Sewer Service Area, which rarely extends into the more rural fringes of town where lower residential densities and few commercial uses are allowed. Williston's coordination of services, infrastructure, open space priorities and development incentives have long been a hallmark of the Town's plans. This plan proposes continuing that pattern.

# OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

## Objectives

### 15.A

The location of Williston's Future Land Use and Zoning boundaries are fully in support of the Vision and Goals of the 2025 Williston Comprehensive Plan.

### 15.B

When boundaries or zoning standards are considered for change, the Town places the utmost importance on doing so via an open, participatory process that allows participation by all stakeholders.

## Strategies

### 15.1

Maintain the balance between rural and suburban, industrial and urban parts of Williston.

| Actions |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Responsibility                  | Timeframe | Cost |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|------|
| 15.1.1  | Maintain the boundary of the Agricultural/Rural Residential Zoning District (ARZD) and future Land Use designation for the duration of this Comprehensive Plan. "Keep the rural, rural" in Williston. The Town acknowledges that there will be development pressure to expand denser residential zoning into the ARZD and that there are locations (such as along Mountain View Road or Oak Hill Road just south of Interstate 89) where there are "pipes in the ground" and existing infrastructure that could eventually serve greater densities and intensities of development than are planned for or allowed in these areas.                                                                                                                                                                                        | Planning Commission Selectboard | Ongoing   | --   |
| 15.1.2  | Maintain the boundaries of Williston's Sewer Service Area where they do not extend further into the ARZD. Williston's Sewer Service Area (SSA) as identified in the maps that accompany this Plan, generally does not extend the opportunity to connect to sewer in the ARZD, even when the physical infrastructure is adjacent to its boundary. This Plan states unambiguously that this arrangement is intentional due to the Town's Land Use goals, its longstanding desire to create a walkable, dense Town Center at Taft Corners, and its limited access to the wastewater treatment capacity necessary to achieve those goals. Pursuant to 24. VSA 4303 (42), the Town hereby defines its "area served by water and sewer as ONLY the area within the SSA boundary as shown on the maps that accompany this Plan. | Planning Commission Selectboard | Ongoing   | --   |

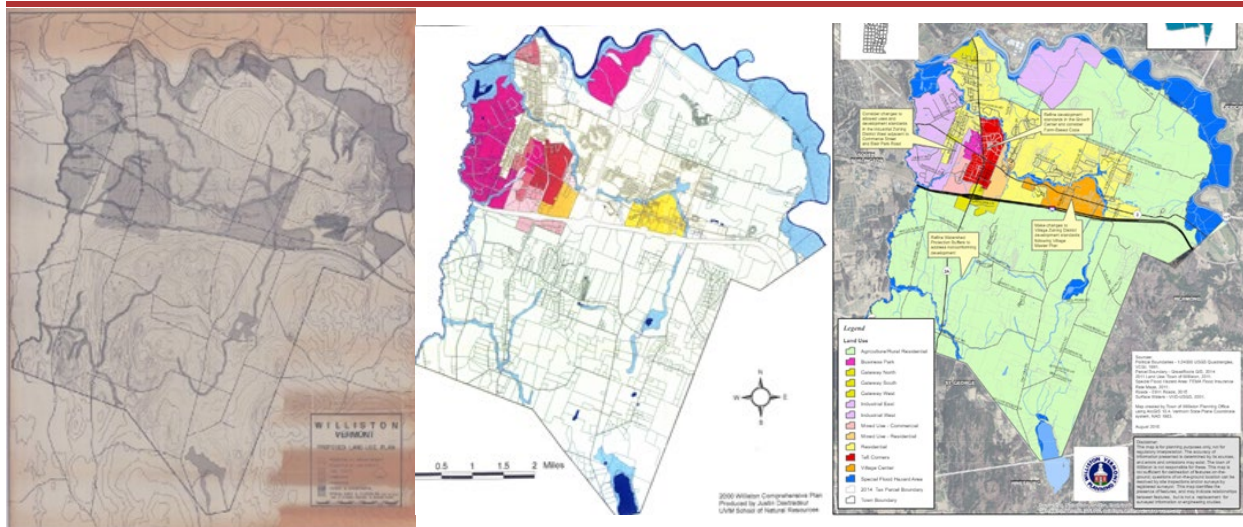
### 15.2

Carefully evaluate boundary changes where geography and existing uses do not align with land use designations.

|                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                 |             |    |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|----|
| <b>15.2.1</b>  | Evaluate the possibility of changing zoning boundaries where they do not align with existing land uses or trends or desired redevelopment in some limited areas of Town. Areas not identified in this Plan may also be considered for boundary changes, but only under the Specific Plan option offered in Williston's bylaws. In either case, the Town will do so while maintaining the goals of Livability, Resilience, and Equity as stated in this Chapter and the overall Plan. | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>15.2.2</b>  | Evaluate changes at the outer edges of the Taft Corners Form-Based Code (TCFBC) District, particularly where it abuts the Gateway South and Mixed-Use Commercial Districts in Williston's Growth Center.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>15.2.3</b>  | Evaluate changes where River Cove Road intersects Route 2A.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>15.2.4</b>  | Evaluate changes where industrial uses on Commerce Street abut residential uses on Kirby Lane.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>15.2.5</b>  | Evaluate changes where commercial and industrial uses abut residential uses on North and South Brownell Road.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>15.2.6</b>  | Evaluate changes where Industrial uses abut mixed-use "Gateway West" uses at Route 2 and North/South Brownell Road.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>15.2.7</b>  | Evaluate reverting changes made by the 2007 Specific Plan (approved, never developed) that expanded the Gateway South District into the ARZD on Hurricane Lane.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>15.2.8</b>  | Evaluate changes to the zoning district boundaries between the RZD, ARZD, and VZD in the area along Williston Road east of the Allen Brook and west of French Hill.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Planning Commission Planning    | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>15.2.9</b>  | Evaluate changes where the Industrial Zoning District West extends into the Special Flood Hazard Area.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>15.2.10</b> | Evaluate changes where the Industrial Zoning District East boundaries align with the surrounding Agricultural/Rural Residential Zoning District to reflect constraints and areas that are not suitable for industrial development.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |



# RESIDENTIAL, MIXED USE AND INDUSTRIAL LAND USES



## Introduction

This chapter is about land use in the denser residential, commercial, and industrial zoning districts of Williston. All of the areas addressed in this chapter are either north of interstate 89 or adjacent to Exit 12, and most are south of Mountain View Road as well. Williston's residential, mixed use, and industrial areas include a Village Center, a Growth Center, a suburban residential area, multiple small commercial "gateway" areas, and two industrial areas. Most of the new residential subdivisions and commercial development in Williston happen here.

Williston will be its most resilient when its various parts are in harmony, complementing but not clashing with one another. The development standards contained within Williston's land use regulations will acknowledge inevitable change and ensure that industrial areas built 50 years ago can remain relevant 50

years from now, that open spaces thousands of years old will be open for thousands more, that businesses small and large can adapt to shifting market realities, and that everybody who needs a home can find one in Williston.

Where things are denser, Williston has more development standards and restrictions on land use that are specific to each zoning district, reflecting the reality of more diverse land use in the densely developed parts of town. This chapter calls for Actions that will help its zoning to continue working well where it works well today while resolving conflicts between it and the overall Vision of the Town Plan.

Most of the Actions called for at the end of this chapter concern resolving zoning issues while determining if there are opportunities to add flexibility or challenges that can be fixed by improving development standards contained within Williston's existing zoning.





## Goals: In 2050, Williston is....



### **LIVABLE**

...because there are many types of residential areas and housing developments to meet various incomes, housing lifestyle needs, and stages of the life cycle. People have access to shops, businesses, and employment opportunities with short drives or the option to walk or bike.



### **RESILIENT**

...because Williston's land use standards for commercial and industrial development allow the economy to shift with market trends, but without compromising on the goal for compact, walkable Smart Growth patterns. The zoning district design standards prioritize architectural quality and pedestrian-oriented scale and discourage sprawl and auto-oriented developments.



### **EQUITABLE**

... because all zoning districts are held to high standards but within reason and context for their intended uses and geographic context for architectural design, natural conservation, landscaping, and pedestrian-design.



## Three Things to Know

1

### **RESIDENTIAL AREAS AND NEIGHBORHOODS ARE, FOR THE MOST PART, BUFFERED FROM INCOMPATIBLE INDUSTRIAL AND HEAVY COMMERCIAL AREAS**

The Interstate highway, other major roads, and waterways primarily separate and buffer residential neighborhoods from incompatible, higher intensity uses. There are still a few places in town where heavy commercial and industrial uses abut residential neighborhoods.

2

### **THE GROWTH CENTER IS PLANNED FOR, AND WILL EXPERIENCE, THE MOST DEVELOPMENT**

In 2022, Williston adopted a Form-Based Code that covers most of the Taft Corners Growth Center (Southwest Quadrant near Home Depot and Gardener's Supply is excluded). These forward-thinking standards set Williston up for a design-conscious, pedestrian-focused Town Center that is also a fiscally resilient land use pattern. Prior to the adoption of Form Based Code, more than 70% of new dwellings in Williston have been built within the

Growth Center. Under Form Based Code, the Growth Center is expected to receive a greater percentage of new dwellings.

3

**WILLISTON HAS DESIGN STANDARD FOR ITS VILLAGE AND TAFT CORNERS CENTERS AS WELL AS INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL AREAS, BUT HAS LIMITED DESIGN STANDARDS FOR RESIDENTIAL AREAS BEYOND OPEN SPACE DESIGN**

Industrial and mixed-use design standards have demanded pedestrian-oriented designs, a variety of colors and materials, and more architectural detailing and windows especially amongst the newer 'big box' stores and commercial development. On the other hand, design standards for the residential zoning districts are limited to the provision of open space, sidewalks and paths, a variety of housing types, clustered homes, and good neighborhood design and neighborhood space – all criteria under the Town's growth management system.



**Three Things Public Engagement Told Us**

1

**WILLISTON'S PEOPLE VALUE THE LOCAL BUSINESSES AND CONVENIENCE OFFERED BY WILLISTON'S TAFT CORNERS AND COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS**

Residents, business owners, and workers all value the convenient location.

2

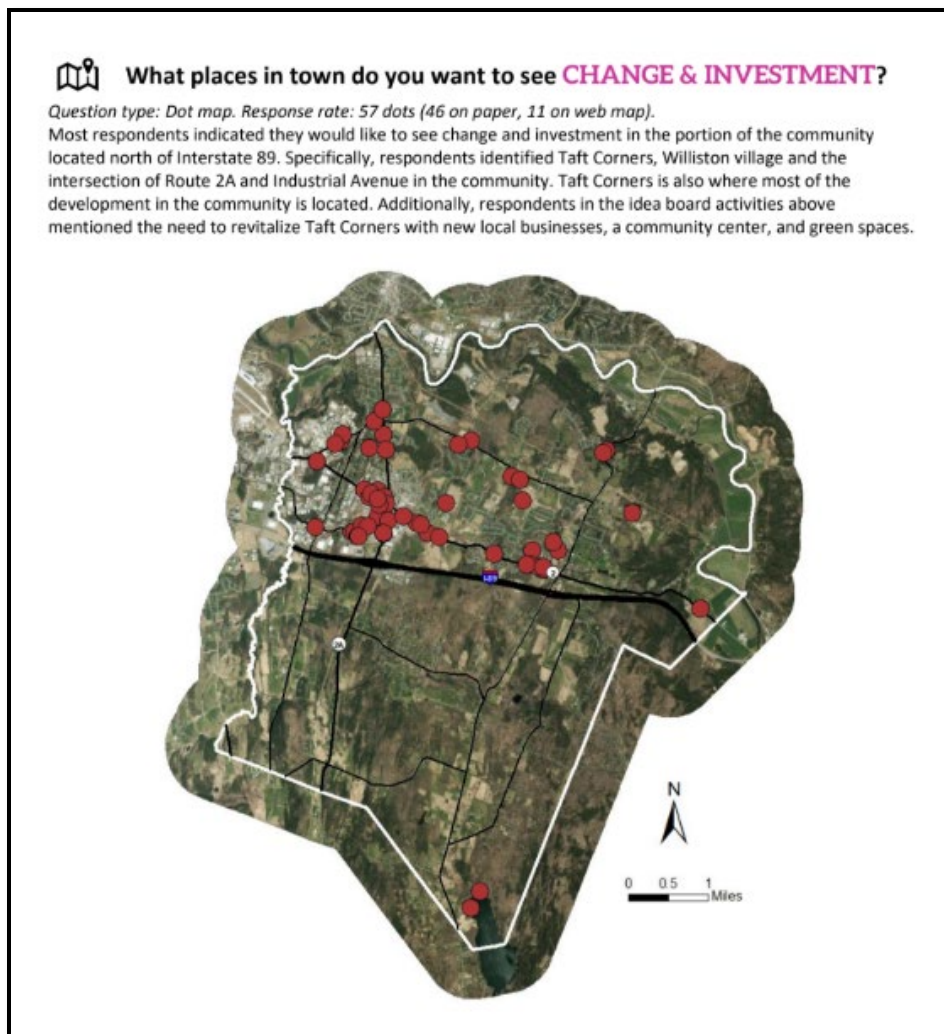
**WILLISTON'S PEOPLE WANT THE RURAL PART OF WILLISTON TO STAY RURAL**

One of the dot maps during public engagement asked the question, "What places in town do you want to see change and investment?" Very few thought that rural parts of town should change (only 1 dot was placed south of I-89), while the vast majority expressed a desire for change and investment within the Sewer Service Area, especially in the Village and Growth Center (see Figure 1 below).

3

**WILLISTON'S PEOPLE WANT MORE RESTAURANTS AND CAFES, PUBLIC GATHERING SPACES AND UNIQUE SMALL BUSINESSES IN WILLISTON VILLAGE**

A majority of respondents to the online survey stated they would like to see more of these types of uses in Williston Village.



*Figure 1: Public engagement dot map results. Results combine both the printed maps from the Roundtable events and the online interactive survey maps.*

## Recent Changes in Land Use Regulation in Williston

Williston’s land use rules have been “conventional” until recently, dividing land areas by allowed and prohibited uses, then later adding design standards and site development standards to zones in Taft Corners and the “Gateway” districts along Routes 2 & 2A and Exit 12 of I-89. In 2022, the adoption of the Taft Corners Form-Based Code represented a shift in focus to what buildings look like and how they are arranged on their sites, emphasizing form over use and intensity of use. These changes removed “units/acre” residential density caps and allowed a much broader set of uses of land in the district, focusing instead on form.

A similar strategy was implemented in the Village Zoning District. In April 2025, new design and development standards for Williston Village were adopted. These standards relaxed residential density caps but put much more emphasis on (and regulation of) how buildings are located on their sites and building design. Design standards stress compatibility with the Williston Village National Register Historic District.

Since 2016, Williston has also changed its zoning to encourage the provision of more affordable homes in new residential projects by requiring the inclusion of some perpetually affordable homes in most new residential developments. This is discussed in greater depth in Chapter 6: Homes and Smart Growth.

## **External Factors Affecting Williston's Land Use Planning since 2016**

Changes in state law limiting the authority of municipalities have also occurred since the adoption of the last Town Plan, altering the “tools in the toolbox” available to Williston when it regulates land use.<sup>1</sup> Generally, the ability for Vermont municipalities to require low residential densities and restrict multifamily dwellings has been curtailed by a series of amendments to State statutes that allow them to implement zoning. As of the drafting of this plan, municipalities must allow duplex homes everywhere that single-unit dwellings are allowed, must allow four-plex homes everywhere single-unit dwellings are allowed and water and sewer service is available, and must allow a residential density of at least five dwellings per acre wherever residential uses are allowed and water and sewer service is available. For the purposes of density, a multiunit building up to 4 dwelling units is treated the same as a single unit dwelling. In several cases, these statewide preemptions have had the effect of increasing allowed residential densities and permitted development types beyond the limits Williston had previously established in its zoning.

## **Land Use Trends in Williston**

Since the adoption of the 2016 Town Plan, the Planning Commission has interacted with landowners and neighbors in various land use areas as they encountered challenges posed by the existing zoning. In some parts of town, legacy land use patterns mean that sometimes industrial and residential properties are next to each other or even mixed in together. Longstanding businesses on busy corners are sometimes located in zoning districts that only allow residential uses, imposing nonconforming status on them and severely limiting their ability to evolve over time. The nature of some businesses has changed with the advent of online shopping or direct-to consumer service delivery, meaning that some uses that would have been thought of as "downtown" uses 30 years ago now make more sense in an industrial park. The need for outpatient medical services has expanded beyond the typical doctor's office or hospital to a more "office park" configuration.

Other recent trends include:

- Continued residential focus on the Growth Center, with more than 70% of new dwellings in Williston built within its boundaries. The majority of units have been developed in multifamily configurations<sup>2</sup>. This trend is expected to continue with permitted projects under construction (such as Cottonwood Crossing and the Annex) as well as new buildings designed and permitted under Form-Based Code.
- The Park and Ride and new State Police Barracks in Gateway Zoning District South are the first new developments in that district since a major zoning overhaul in 2009. These two projects, while state projects and partially exempt from Williston's bylaws, mostly comply with the development standards of the Williston bylaw such as lighting, landscaping, access and parking, but also reflect impractical and weak standards for hillside development.<sup>3</sup>
- The Gateway West area (centered on Williston Road and North/South Brownell Road intersection) was established in 2015. Although this zoning district was created from what was previously zoned Residential, only one parcel has significantly redeveloped since the zoning was changed. Conflicts with air traffic noise at the nearby airport, as well as industrial uses along

Commerce Street and farther west on Williston Road, are reasons to reconsider the density, design, and use of this highly trafficked area near some of Williston's more affordable and older neighborhoods.

- Continued diversification of uses and adaptive reuse of sites and buildings in industrial parts of Williston. There is very little undeveloped land remaining in the Industrial West area at this point, but ample opportunities for infill, adaptive reuse, and redevelopment.
- A change in ownership from International Business Machines (IBM) to Global Foundries on parcels in the Industrial East Zoning District, with Chittenden Solid Waste District (CSWD) building or expanding several new waste management facilities in their portion of the area (Materials Recovery Facility, Transfer Station, Metals recycling, Compost Facility).
- With the approval of the Summer Field subdivision on a 30-acre parcel and the Glaser Specific Plan Subdivision on a 96-acre parcel, very few parcels of significant size or development capability remain in Williston's suburban residential area between I-89 and Mountain View Road.
- A very slow rate of growth and change in Williston's rural areas. Very few new houses, no large new subdivisions. Since October 2005, Williston has required subdivisions in the Agricultural/Rural Residential Zoning District to set aside 75% land area as open space. By land area, there is more acreage of protected open space than total land area within the Growth Center.

These trends will help shape the work of the Planning Commission to address bylaw changes and evaluations called for in the Objectives, Strategies and Actions that follow.

## OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

### Objectives

- 16.A** The Town will monitor and evaluate the performance of its land use regulations in commercial, industrial, and mixed-use Zoning Districts.
- 16.B** Maintain the viability of industrial and heavy commercial areas in Williston as markets and demands change and buildings and sites age.
- 16.C** Evaluate the future of the Residential Zoning District for enhanced design review and existing or corner commercial uses.
- 16.D** The Town will conduct a consistent, transparent, publicly accessible and efficient permit review and approval process.

### Strategies

- 16.1** In addition to land use boundaries as discussed in Chapter 15, evaluate other regulatory solutions for areas where incompatible uses are near residential neighborhoods, such as:

| Actions | Responsibility | Timeframe | Cost |
|---------|----------------|-----------|------|
|         |                |           |      |

|                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                 |             |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|----|
| <b>16.1.1</b>                                                                                                | Evaluate land use regulations at the Residential Zoning District and Industrial Zoning District near Commerce Street, Kirby Lane, and South Brownell Road.                                                                 | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.1.2</b>                                                                                                | Evaluate land use regulations at the Residential Zoning District and Industrial Zoning District near Industrial Ave and North Brownell Road intersection.                                                                  | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.1.3</b>                                                                                                | Evaluate land use regulations at the Gateway Zoning District North and Residential Zoning District near James Brown Drive and Shirley Circle.                                                                              | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.1.4</b>                                                                                                | Evaluate land use regulations in other locations mentioned in Chapter 15.                                                                                                                                                  | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.2 Evaluate performance and examine the design review standards in the Industrial Zoning Districts.</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                 |             |    |
| <b>16.2.1</b>                                                                                                | Evaluate higher design and performance standards for properties with frontage on Williston Road, Industrial Ave, and other arterial and collector roads.                                                                   | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.2.2</b>                                                                                                | Evaluate a different methodology for allowed and prohibited uses besides NAICS Code.                                                                                                                                       | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.3 Examine performance and reevaluate the landscaping standards.</b>                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                 |             |    |
| <b>16.3.1</b>                                                                                                | Evaluate landscaping standards for outdoor storage and loading areas, in addition to parking lots to provide shade, stormwater and green strips along buildings and parking lots in industrial and heavy commercial areas. | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.3.2</b>                                                                                                | Evaluate the allowed and prohibited species and explore landscaping standards that enhance wildlife travel corridors, pollinators, native and edible species in all contexts.                                              | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.3.3</b>                                                                                                | Develop Landscape Buffer standards to allow for taller berms, front yard planting minimum densities, and better buffering to provide habitat and pollinator connectivity.                                                  | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.3.4</b>                                                                                                | Develop a landscape standard that works in concert with the Conservation Areas and habitat, especially in residential open space subdivisions to reduce lawns and enhance biophilic design principles.                     | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.4 Support a broader diversity of uses and intensities in the Industrial Zoning Districts.</b>          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                 |             |    |
| <b>17.4.1</b>                                                                                                | Develop amendments to Williston's zoning bylaws to allow more diverse uses in the Industrial Zoning District West, such as space-intensive indoor recreation and greater flexibility for on-site retail sale of            | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                 |             |    |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|----|
|               | manufactured goods, medical services, and others.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                 |             |    |
| <b>16.5</b>   | <b>Evaluate revised design and development standards in the Residential Zoning District.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                 |             |    |
| <b>16.5.1</b> | Evaluate “corner commercial” standards to allow existing commercial uses to remain and allow new uses that support a walkable neighborhood pattern.                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.5.2</b> | Evaluate whether to add design standards and requirements for new development in the Residential Zoning District. Standards to consider would be those regulating garage placement and orientation, front doors facing the street, trash and utility consolidation and management in multifamily structures, shared driveway requirements, and others. | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.5.3</b> | Evaluate how to differentiate design and development standards for small infill developments from medium- and large- scale developments.                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.5.4</b> | Evaluate the home business thresholds and limitations in all zoning districts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.6</b>   | <b>Unify the signage regulations for all zoning districts.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                 |             |    |
| <b>16.6.1</b> | Maintain Williston’s prohibition of internal and upward illumination everywhere and its prohibition of freestanding signs in the Taft Corners FBC District.                                                                                                                                                                                            | Planning Commission Selectboard | Ongoing     | -- |
| <b>16.6.2</b> | Develop improved signage regulations for buildings and developments in TCFBC that existed prior to the FBC and/or have Master Sign Plans.                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.7</b>   | <b>Explore revised design and development standards in the Gateway Zoning Districts North, South, and West as well as Mixed- Use Commercial.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                 |             |    |
| <b>16.7.1</b> | Evaluate the performance of existing standards.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.7.2</b> | Evaluate ways to encourage adaptive reuse and infill development through revised development standards.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.7.3</b> | Evaluate how to change allowed and prohibited uses and residential density standards to support economically and socially resilient economies and compatible mixed- use areas.                                                                                                                                                                         | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.8</b>   | <b>Evaluate and modify the provisions for non-conformity thresholds.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                 |             |    |



|                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                              |             |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------|----|
| <b>16.8.1</b>                                                                              | Evaluate better integrated standards for existing buildings and developments in the TCFBC Zoning District.                                                                                                                                                                     | Planning Commission Selectboard              | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.8.1</b>                                                                              | Evaluate standards for when the nature and extent of a non-conforming use can change, particularly in the Residential Zoning District and Agricultural Rural Zoning District.                                                                                                  | Planning Commission Selectboard              | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.9 Evaluate the permit review process and improve its functionality.</b>              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                              |             |    |
| <b>16.9.1</b>                                                                              | Evaluate the performance of the procedural elements of Williston's Unified development Bylaw (WDB) and revise the thresholds for pre-application, discretionary permit and administrative permit to balance efficiency and public input.                                       | Planning Commission Selectboard              | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.9.2</b>                                                                              | Support ending the duplicative permitting for development served by municipal water and sewer. To ensure that a wastewater system has been installed as designed, as-built plans must be filed with the Zoning Administrator prior to issuance of a certificate of compliance. | Planning Commission Selectboard              | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.9.3</b>                                                                              | Evaluate how to more fully align the Public Works Specifications and Zoning Bylaw.                                                                                                                                                                                             | Planning Commission Public Works Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.9.4</b>                                                                              | Evaluate delegating all historic and design review responsibilities to the Development Review Board and/or Zoning Administrator, eliminating the advisory role of the Historic and Design Advisory Committee (HDAC).                                                           | Planning Commission Selectboard              | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.9.5</b>                                                                              | Develop a policy proposal to designate the Development Review Board (DRB) as the historic preservation review commission pursuant to the Vermont Historic preservation (VHP) Rule 3.                                                                                           | Planning Commission Selectboard              | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.9.6</b>                                                                              | Evaluate restructuring the Historic and Design Advisory Committee (HDAC) into an Economic and Cultural Development Committee in alignment with Chapter 2 Objectives.                                                                                                           | Planning Commission Selectboard              | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.10 Monitor the performance of the 2025 Village Zoning District Bylaw Amendments.</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                              |             |    |
| <b>16.10.1</b>                                                                             | Evaluate the performance of the updated development standards in the Village Zoning District (VZD). Within 2 years of adoption, identify areas for improvement and revision to better support the goals of this town plan and the 2018 Master Plan.                            | Planning Commission HDAC Selectboard         | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.10.2</b>                                                                             | Evaluate expanding Village-specific standards into other districts or town-wide.                                                                                                                                                                                               | Planning Commission Selectboard              | Medium Term | -- |

## **16.11** Expand and support historic preservation in and beyond the Village Zoning District.

|                |                                                                                                        |                                                    |             |    |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------|----|
| <b>16.11.1</b> | Maintain Certified Local Government (CLG) Status and apply for CLG Funding with local grant match.     | Planning Commission<br>Town Manager<br>Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.11.2</b> | Develop an updated town-wide Historic Sites and Structures Inventory.                                  | Planning Commission<br>HDAC<br>Selectboard         | Medium Term | \$ |
| <b>16.11.3</b> | Evaluate the establishment of a Municipal Historic Preservation Grant or Low/No-Interest Loan Program. | Planning Commission<br>Town Manager<br>Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.11.4</b> | Develop a Historic Preservation Outreach Program led by the CLG Coordinator and HDAC.                  | Planning Commission<br>HDAC<br>Selectboard         | Medium Term | \$ |

## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup> 24 V.S.A §4410-§4427 contain the provisions that identify permissible and prohibited restrictions on the use of land that may be adopted by Vermont municipalities in their zoning. These were changed by Act 47 (The HOME Act) in 2023, and Act 181 (The BE HOME Act) in 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Town of Williston (2022). Growth Center Designation 15-year Report. Accessed 4/17/2025 at [https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/Williston\\_Growth\\_Center\\_15-Year\\_Review\\_Report\\_October\\_28\\_2022\(2\).pdf](https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/Williston_Growth_Center_15-Year_Review_Report_October_28_2022(2).pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Town of Williston Unified Development Bylaw, Chapter 34 Gateway Zoning District South, 34.8 Hillside Development. Accessed 4/17/2025 at [https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/WDB\\_Jun\\_04\\_2024\\_Chapter\\_34\\_Gateway\\_Zoning\\_District\\_South.pdf](https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/WDB_Jun_04_2024_Chapter_34_Gateway_Zoning_District_South.pdf).

# 17 **RURAL LAND USE & SUBDIVISION DESIGN**

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## **Introduction**

Williston's rural lands are a core element of the town's history and continue to be a deeply valued resource that contributes to the town's sense of place. Williston has a long history of protecting rural lands for ecological conservation, agriculture, forestry, scenic views and recreation that continues today. As Williston continues to grow, balancing development with support for working landscapes, land conservation, and recreation will become increasingly important because these open space attributes have tremendous value in creating a more livable, equitable, and resilient Williston.

Williston's current land use regulations for residential subdivisions in the Agricultural/Rural Residential Zoning District (ARZD) require low densities and the protection of open space when lots larger than 10.5-acres are subdivided. The intent of these regulations is to balance the landowner's development rights with other stated objectives for Williston's rural areas. In practice, this results in predominantly single-family homes, duplexes, and accessory dwelling units on lots designed to minimize impact to the

natural resources within them. Additionally, the regulations also promote the adaptive reuse of historic barns as 'wedding barns' or other event venues.

Williston's land use regulations for the Agricultural/Rural Residential Zoning District (ARZD) have remained remarkably consistent since the Town adopted zoning and have contributed to the preservation of the predominantly rural nature of the town that the people of Williston value. Still, there are measures that could be implemented to enhance flexibility for rural landowners, support housing, while strengthening and clarifying natural resource protections.

This chapter discusses existing land use regulations and subdivision design for residential development in rural Williston and how the regulations could be modified to better support the Town's goals. These topics overlap with many related topics such as conservation, working landscapes, and recreation and parks, which are discussed in Chapters 8 and 13.



## Goals: In 2050, Williston is....



### **LIVABLE**

Rural Williston is livable for wildlife as well as humans because clustered subdivision design standards with protected open space ensure wildlife travel corridors and the preservation of valuable natural resources.



### **RESILIENT**

...because a substantial portion of rural land is protected, allowing wildlife and native plants to flourish. Williston maintains stringent subdivision and development standards, which limits sprawl and protects habitat integrity and contiguity.



### **EQUITABLE**

...because even though residential development in rural Williston is expensive due to market conditions and stringent regulations, all Willistonians and visitors to the town have access to rural trails and open spaces that are connected by bicycle and pedestrian path networks. Farm businesses and landowners have created additional gathering places and shared open spaces available to all.



## Three Things to Know

1

### **WILLISTON'S RURAL LANDS ARE CENTRAL TO ITS HISTORY AND CONTINUE TO BE A DEEPLY VALUED RESOURCE THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE TOWN'S SENSE OF PLACE**

Williston has a long history of protecting rural lands for ecological conservation, agriculture, forestry, and recreation that continues today.

2

### **CURRENT LAND USE REGULATIONS BALANCE PROTECTION OF OPEN SPACE WITH PROPERTY RIGHTS**

Williston's current land use regulations for residential development in the Agricultural/Rural Residential Zoning District (ARZD) require low densities and the protection of open space when lots larger than 10.5-acres are subdivided. The intent of these regulations is to balance landowner development rights with the protection of Williston's natural resources and rural character.

3

### **CONCENTRATING GROWTH IN THE GROWTH CENTER ALIGNS WITH PRESERVING THE RURAL CHARACTER OF WILLISTON OUTSIDE THE SEWER SERVICE AREA**

The Town is best positioned to meet its goal of preserving its rural character if it concentrates new development in Taft Corners and continues to limit development in the ARZD. The town can do this by maintaining the current Sewer Service Area, not expanding it or allowing connections outside the boundary; maintaining the current boundary of the ARZD, not shrinking it; maintaining stringent open space development standards in the ARZD, and encouraging adaptive reuse of historic barns.



### Three Things Public Engagement Told Us

1

#### **WILLISTON'S PEOPLE VALUE THE BALANCE OF THE DENSE CENTER AND THE RURAL FEEL OF MOST OF THE TOWN**

At roundtables and in the survey, there was very strong support for land conservation, trails, country parks, and general support for rural Williston to 'stay the way it is.' Many people appreciate living in a rural town while also enjoying the convenience of living close to cultural amenities, shopping, and restaurants.

2

#### **PROTECTED OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS IN RURAL WILLISTON SHOULD BE MAINTAINED**

79% of respondents value the preservation of forests and meadows in Williston's open spaces and undeveloped areas.

3

#### **CYCLING AND WALKING ON RURAL ROADS SHOULD BE SAFER**

The people of Williston requested bike lanes on major roads and pedestrian connectivity between Town-owned parcels. 27% of survey respondents named insufficient bicycle and pedestrian facilities as the Town's top challenge in transportation.

## Protecting Natural Resources through Land Use Regulations

Despite past development patterns that have fragmented wildlife habitats in Williston and surrounding communities, significant areas of habitat remain that are essential for a variety of plant and animal species, that contribute to local biological diversity and ecological integrity, and that support traditional activities such as hunting and fishing. Maintaining connectivity through the protection of wildlife habitat and travel corridors is critical to the long-term survival of several wildlife species. Public engagement told us that Williston's people appreciate the presence of wildlife in their town, as well as the many other benefits of ecologically intact landscapes.

One way the Town protects lands with high natural resource value is through its land use regulations, in balance with property rights. Depending on their location and scale, proposed developments located within conservation areas may be asked to set at least some portion of those areas aside as open space. This is required for subdivisions in the ARZD on parcels with an area of 10.5 acres or greater and encouraged in the RZD.

Approximately 1,484 acres of open space have been protected through Williston's development review requirements. 933 acres of open space has been protected by Williston's 75% open space requirement in the Agriculture/Rural Zoning District (ARZD) and an additional 551 acres of open space has been protected in all other zoning districts.

A suite of regulations in Williston Development Bylaw (WDB) Chapter 27 ensures strong protection of wetland and riparian conservation areas as well as forested upland areas. Wetlands and riparian corridors are protected from incompatible development by the town's stormwater management and watershed health regulations, and other state and federal regulations. Forested uplands are partially protected from incompatible development by the town's WDB Chapter 27 and Chapter 31 regulations.

Beginning in 2005, the Town has taken steps to identify and protect significant wildlife habitat, comprised of core habitat and wildlife corridors:

- 2005 - Several areas characterized as significant habitat were identified in *An Assessment of Wildlife Habitat in Williston, VT*<sup>1</sup>
- 2011 - A follow-up study was completed, *An Assessment of Wildlife Habitat in Williston: Expanded Land Cover Mapping and Corridor Modeling*<sup>2</sup>
- 2014 - The definition of significant wildlife habitat area (SWHA) and associated map was incorporated in the town's Unified Development Bylaw together with appropriate habitat protection standards as an overlay district. Proposed developments that are within the mapped SWHA are required to document no undue adverse impact to the SWHA through the completion of a Habitat Disturbance Assessment.<sup>3</sup>
- 2018 - The Town updated language regarding forest fragmentation and worked with the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife, Community Conservation Planning staff to refine the Town's Significant Wildlife Habitat Area map, dividing the mapped areas into Tier I (highest priority), Tier II (medium priority) and Tier III (lowest priority). This was done to recognize the importance of forests, in compliance with Act 171<sup>4</sup>, which encourages and allows municipalities to address protection of forest blocks and habitat connectors. The revised map has not yet been integrated into the Town's regulations.
- 2023 - The Town adopted a bylaw amendment that requires Habitat Disturbance Assessments to be funded by the applicant but completed by a qualified consultant hired by the Town, whereas previously, applicants hired their own consultant to conduct the HDA.

The Strategies and Actions called for in this chapter emphasize continued protection of natural resources, continued updating of maps and data used to inform those protections, evaluating the effectiveness of current regulations and adapting as needed, and coordination with neighboring communities on the protection of natural resources.

## **Recent Development Trends in the Agricultural-Rural Residential Zoning District (ARZD)**

Recent trends related to development in the ARZD are noted as follows:

- It is becoming very challenging and costly to construct homes in the ARZD, primarily due to the expense of providing onsite wastewater treatment systems and potable water supply systems, as



well as a lack of suitable soils for onsite wastewater treatment and a lack of adequate groundwater for potable water systems. Other factors that add to the cost of building a home in the ARZD include needing to construct a longer driveway (for the owner's preference and to avoid neighbor appeals), and compliance with town and state regulations in an area of town where there are more natural resource constraints than in other areas and more stringent natural resource protections. The demand for growth management allocation<sup>5</sup> has been very low in the ARZD for several years. There have been only a few projects competing for allocation each year where the annual growth target is 10 homes.<sup>6</sup>

- Prior to the “small projects exemption” adopted in 2023, all proposed residential subdivisions regardless of size were required to obtain growth management allocation. This had the effect of slowing down development and discouraging small projects, effectively shuttering development in the ARZD. The current regulations exempt from growth management projects with 4 or less dwelling units. This may encourage more proposals for small subdivisions, which could boost housing construction but might increase sprawl.
- Some legacy parcels of large acreage and with dwellings that predate Williston's zoning regulations are initiating “clean up” projects to clarify boundaries and ownership. Often this involves farm properties that are passing to the next generation or otherwise transitioning. This could be a precursor to future development of these working lands.
- Some recent subdivisions involving parcels just over 10.5 acres have used a Boundary Line Adjustment to avoid triggering the 10.5-acre threshold for the 75% open space requirement. That may be due to the fact that Williston's open space requirements have become more stringent – open space must be platted as a separate parcel (an amendment adopted in 2018).

## **Recent Changes in State Law**

Act 250 is undergoing a transition period. Act 181 affected a major overhaul of the Act 250 regulatory framework, where jurisdiction will no longer be determined by the project size, rather by location. Projects within areas planned for growth in the Regional Future Land Use map will benefit from Act 250 exemptions if Williston obtains Tier 1A and 1B status for areas within it that are planned growth areas.<sup>7</sup> However, status in the ARZD (a Tier 2 area) will be unchanged from what exists today.

Given recent trends, we can expect to perhaps see more small subdivisions in the ARZD and very few large subdivisions. To help protect the rural landscape of Williston and support working land uses, the Strategies and Actions call for the Town to consider allowing more flexible uses in the ARZD to support working farms as they diversify their operations, and to evaluate allowing more allowed uses for historic barns, including farmworker housing.

# OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

## Objectives

- 17.A** Rural Williston in 2050 looks largely the way it does in 2025, with sparse carefully planned development that clusters homes near roads and preserves open space.
- 17.B** Rural Williston has large swaths of protected open space with invaluable attributes like wetlands, upland forests, farmland, and scenic vistas.
- 17.C** Rural Williston has thriving local farms that support the local food system and make it more resilient. Williston's land-use regulations support the continued operation of local farms.

## Strategies

- 17.1** Focus development within the growth center and limit development in the Agricultural Rural Residential Zoning district (ARZD).

| Actions       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Responsibility                     | Timeframe  | Cost |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------|------|
| <b>17.1.1</b> | Maintain the boundaries of the ARZD for the duration of this plan, except where explicitly called for evaluation in other chapters.                                                                                                         | Selectboard                        | Ongoing    | --   |
| <b>17.1.2</b> | Maintain the boundaries of the sewer service area and do not extend sewer lines outside of the area, except in response to public health emergencies.                                                                                       | Selectboard                        | Ongoing    | --   |
| <b>17.1.3</b> | Evaluate the removal of or revision to the Transfer of Development Rights provisions in the Williston Development Bylaw as it is largely no longer applicable given unlimited allowed density in the Taft Corners Form Based Code District. | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Short Term | --   |

- 17.2** Continue to require low residential density and open space protection in the ARZD.

|               |                                                                                                                                  |                                    |             |    |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------|----|
| <b>17.2.1</b> | Maintain the required protection of 75% open space for parcels larger than 10.5 acres in the ARZD.                               | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Ongoing     | -- |
| <b>17.2.2</b> | Evaluate the 10.5-acre threshold for open space and the 75% open space requirement to see if these thresholds should be changed. | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>17.2.3</b> | Evaluate requiring development to be clustered closer to existing roads to further reduce habitat fragmentation.                 | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Short Term  | -- |

- 17.3** Continue to protect Significant Wildlife Habitat Areas, areas containing uncommon, rare, threatened, or endangered species, unique natural communities, farmlands of local importance, scenic viewsheds, special flood hazard areas, and streams, wetlands, lakes, and ponds during the development review process.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                         |             |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----|
| <b>17.3.1</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      | Maintain the requirement for Habitat Disturbance Assessments as a component of development review to ensure the protection of the above stated resources during the development review process.                                                                                                     | Planning Commission Selectboard                         | Ongoing     | -- |
| <b>17.3.2</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      | Evaluate the HDA process to determine if it is adequately protecting the natural resources it seeks to protect.                                                                                                                                                                                     | Planning Commission Conservation Commission             | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>17.3.3</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      | Maintain the data and maps used to make decisions about the protection of natural resources.                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Conservation Commission                                 | Ongoing     | -- |
| <b>17.3.4</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      | Develop coordination with neighboring communities on the preservation of natural resources in the development review process.                                                                                                                                                                       | Conservation Commission                                 | Ongoing     | -- |
| <b>17.4 Evaluate and amend land use regulations and other town policies to protect natural resources, support working landscapes, and respond to changing economic and environmental climates.</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                         |             |    |
| <b>17.4.1</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      | Evaluate and revise land use regulations to allow a diverse range of uses to support working landscapes such as agriculture and on-farm businesses, fee-based recreation, hospitality, and educational activities.                                                                                  | Conservation Commission Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>17.4.2</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      | Evaluate and revise the visual resource protection standards of the WDB Chapter 27, including an update to the 1980 Visual Resource Assessment Map. Prioritize important views through Official Map.                                                                                                | Conservation Commission Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | \$ |
| <b>17.4.3</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      | Evaluate and revise the important farmland protection standards of the WDB Chapter 27, particularly the use of the LESA map.                                                                                                                                                                        | Conservation Commission Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>17.4.4</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      | Implement revisions to the zoning district specific standards – particularly Chapters 31 Agricultural Rural Residential Zoning District (ARZD) and 39 Residential Zoning District (RZD)—based on the conservation area and water health standards of Chapter 27 and 29.                             | Conservation Commission Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | \$ |
| <b>17.4.5</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      | Evaluate and amend land use regulations to strengthen habitat protections, Habitat Disturbance Assessments, mitigation measures, and right-size protections for small- and infill-projects. Include past land disturbance and land use history in the habitat or watershed health protection value. | Conservation Commission Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | \$ |
| <b>17.5 Support the adaptive reuse of historic barns because they contribute to Williston's rural character.</b>                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                         |             |    |
| <b>17.5.1</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      | Evaluate broadening the list of allowed uses for historic barns to promote their conservation and adaptive reuse and to support Williston's working landscapes                                                                                                                                      | Planning Commission Selectboard                         | Medium Term | -- |

|               |                                                                                                                                                  |                                    |             |    |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------|----|
| <b>17.5.2</b> | Develop relaxed density provisions to allow historic barns to be used for farmworker housing.                                                    | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Short Term  | -- |
| <b>17.6</b>   | <b>Explore new land use regulations that support diversifying farms and small businesses.</b>                                                    |                                    |             |    |
| <b>17.6.1</b> | Develop land use regulations that allow more public events in rural Williston.                                                                   | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>17.6.2</b> | Develop land use regulations that support and promote safe housing for farm workers.                                                             | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Short Term  | -- |
| <b>17.6.3</b> | Evaluate amending land use regulations to allow camping and other necessary ordinances or town policies to support camping and reduce nuisances. | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |

## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Capen, David et al. University of Vermont, Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources, Spatial Analysis Laboratory. 2005. *An Assessment of Wildlife Habitat in Williston, Vermont*. Accessed 4/15/2025 at <https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/Sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/%7B4C496729-348F-4E34-8728-C01CBB5419CC%7D.PDF>.

<sup>2</sup> MacFaden, Sean et al. University of Vermont, Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources, Spatial Analysis Laboratory. 2011. *An Assessment of Wildlife Habitat in Williston, Vermont: Expanded Land Cover Modeling and Corridor Modeling*. Accessed 4/15/2025 at [https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/Sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/WillistonWildlifeHabitatAnalysis2011\\_FinalReport.pdf](https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/Sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/WillistonWildlifeHabitatAnalysis2011_FinalReport.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Town of Williston Unified Development Bylaw. Chapter 27 – Conservation Areas. Accessed 4/15/2025 at [https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/WDB\\_Jun\\_04\\_2024\\_Chapter\\_27\\_Conservation\\_Areas.pdf](https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/WDB_Jun_04_2024_Chapter_27_Conservation_Areas.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. Act 171 and Planning for Forest Blocks and Habitat Connectors. Accessed 4/15/2025 at [https://anr.vermont.gov/act171\\_forestplanning](https://anr.vermont.gov/act171_forestplanning).

<sup>5</sup> Town of Williston Unified Development Bylaw. Chapter 11 – Including Affordable Homes and Residential Growth Management. Accessed 4/15/2025 at [https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/WDB\\_Jun\\_04\\_2024\\_Chapter\\_11\\_Including\\_Affordable\\_Homes\\_and\\_Residential\\_Growth\\_Management.pdf](https://www.town.williston.vt.us/vertical/sites/%7BF506B13C-605B-4878-8062-87E5927E49F0%7D/uploads/WDB_Jun_04_2024_Chapter_11_Including_Affordable_Homes_and_Residential_Growth_Management.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> New Homes and People: 5-Year Outlook – Predicted Residential and Commercial Growth FY26-30. Memorandum from Williston Planning Staff to Williston Selectboard. November 19, 2024. Accessed 2/28/2025 at [Agenda Packet - November 19, 2024 - Selectboard Meetings 2024 - Town of Williston, Vermont](#)

<sup>7</sup> State of Vermont Act 250. A New Land Use Review Framework (Act 181). Accessed 4/15/2025 at <https://act250.vermont.gov/new-land-use-review-framework-act-181>.

# 18 IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

## CHAPTER 1 - WILLISTON'S PEOPLE

### Objectives

- 1.A** Diversity is reflected in the demographics of the Town boards and staff.
- 1.B** All have equal opportunity and access to engage and participate in community activities, regardless of race, gender, financial circumstances, age, ability or any other identity defining characteristics.
- 1.C** The town integrates equity in all planning and policy implementation.
- 1.D** Williston's people are informed, engaged, and actively participating in building community.

### Strategies

#### 1.1 Identify and eliminate barriers to participation on Town Boards and Committees.

| Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Responsibility                      | Timeframe              | Cost |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|------|
| <b>1.1.1</b> Evaluate and identify existing barriers to participation and determine how to best address those barriers in consultation with the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission.                           | Town Manager<br>Planning Department | Short Term             | \$   |
| <b>1.1.2</b> Maintain accessible meeting spaces and hybrid meeting options.                                                                                                                                               | Selectboard<br>Town Manager         | Short Term             | \$   |
| <b>1.1.3</b> Evaluate the need for and feasibility of providing accessibility to public meetings via provision of translation services, stipends for participants, and transportation.                                    | Selectboard<br>Town Manager         | Short Term             | \$   |
| <b>1.1.4</b> Maintain standardized practices for all Boards and Committees for electing chairs, rotating responsibilities, and lengths of terms.                                                                          | Selectboard<br>Town Manager         | Short Term             | --   |
| <b>1.1.5</b> Evaluate the time and location of public meetings annually in consultation with Board and Committee members to confirm that the time and place of meetings continue to be accessible for regular attendance. | Town Manager                        | Short Term/<br>Ongoing | --   |
| <b>1.1.6</b> Evaluate strategies to broaden the publicity of community events and volunteer opportunities sponsored by the Town, with a specific emphasis on reaching people who                                          | Selectboard<br>Town Manager         | Short Term             | \$   |

|              |                                                                                                                                                                     |              |            |    |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|------------|----|
|              | are underrepresented in participation on Town boards and committees and in town activities.                                                                         |              |            |    |
| <b>1.2</b>   | <b>Seek broad representation on Town Boards and Committees by engaging and encouraging participation from individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences.</b> |              |            |    |
| <b>1.2.1</b> | Develop ways to publicize volunteer Board and Committee positions to networks that are connected to historically marginalized groups.                               | Town Manager | Short Term | -- |
| <b>1.2.2</b> | Prioritize diversity of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives when making appointments to Town Boards and Committees.                                          | Selectboard  | Short Term | -- |
| <b>1.2.3</b> | Develop a robust onboarding and maintenance training program for town staff, volunteer boards and Committees that includes diversity, equity and inclusion.         | Town Manager | Short Term | \$ |
| <b>1.3</b>   | <b>Ensure inclusive hiring practices that promote broad representation across backgrounds and experiences.</b>                                                      |              |            |    |
| <b>1.3.1</b> | Evaluate ways to publicize staff positions to networks that are connected to historically marginalized groups.                                                      | Town Manager | Short Term | -- |
| <b>1.3.2</b> | Evaluate ways to create and operate regular anti-bias workshops or training for Town staff to help foster a more welcoming and inclusive environment.               | Town Manager | Short Term | \$ |
| <b>1.3.3</b> | Evaluate how to attract a diverse pool of qualified candidates when hiring for Town staff positions.                                                                | Town Manager | Short Term | -- |



# CHAPTER 2 - SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE ARTS

## Objectives

**2.A**

Williston's land use regulations and other municipal policies actively support public art, public and private community gathering spaces – known as third places – and inclusive features in community design. Williston has identified, evaluated, and fixed local policies that inhibit the growth of the creative economy.

**2.B**

Williston creates and enhances public indoor and outdoor spaces to provide a greater quantity and diversity of indoor and outdoor public gathering spaces that are available to all people in Williston for active and passive social interaction.

**2.C**

A 'uniquely Williston' identity is developed, promulgated, and strengthened because Williston programmatically supports and participates in public-private partnerships that enhance the local and creative industries.

## Strategies

**2.1**

Enhance existing and create new intergenerational, public “third places” such as public facilities, buildings, parks, and multimodal transportation spaces that are functional and interactive for children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. The third place refers to the social surroundings that are separate from the two usual social environments of home and workplace.

| Actions      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Responsibility                                      | Timeframe      | Cost   |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------|
| <b>2.1.1</b> | Evaluate the existence of and need for “third places” by conducting periodic assessments to ensure these facilities are adequate in number, diverse in their offerings, equitably distributed throughout town, provide a mix of formal and informal gatherings, and passive and active social interaction.                                                                    | Public Works<br>Recreation and Parks<br>Selectboard | Medium<br>Term | \$\$\$ |
| <b>2.1.2</b> | Evaluate standards in alignment with NRPA Park Metrics or other industry-accepted standard, provide amenities like pavilions that provide shade and weather protection, indoor spaces, restrooms, grills, picnic tables, water features, playgrounds, seating, and interactive design elements in existing and new public spaces to provide relaxation and play for all ages. | Recreation and Parks<br>Selectboard                 | Medium<br>Term | \$\$\$ |
| <b>2.1.3</b> | Prioritize new and enhanced public “third places” in capital planning for recreation facilities schedule.                                                                                                                                                                                | Selectboard                                         | Short Term     | \$     |
| <b>2.1.4</b> | Develop an operational practice of pursuing grant opportunities and support local fundraising efforts such as a “Friends Group” to add amenities to existing parks and public spaces, aiming to secure \$10,000 annually.                                                                                                                                                     | Recreation and Parks<br>Planning and Zoning         | Short Term     | \$     |
| <b>2.1.5</b> | Maintain requirements for sidewalks on both sides of the street in new neighborhoods and on new streets as a community-building as well as a transportation initiative.                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Planning and Zoning                                 | Ongoing        | \$     |

## 2.2 Integrate beauty and character into the design of public spaces and multimodal transportation infrastructure in a manner that facilitates social interaction, especially among the populations most at risk for social isolation.

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                             |             |      |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------|------|
| 2.2.1 | Evaluate existing and proposed public space for the presence of or ability to accommodate street furniture (e.g., movable seating, fountains, sculptures, signage), lighting, accessibility by multiple modes of transportation, prioritizing proximity to essential services and homes. | Recreation and Parks<br>Planning and Zoning | Short Term  | \$   |
| 2.2.2 | Support the integration of art and character into infrastructure and everyday life such as painted utility boxes, unique crosswalk designs and colors, light post banners, etc.                                                                                                          | Public Works                                | Medium Term | \$\$ |
| 2.2.3 | Evaluate how to choose street furniture and infrastructure elements that have design and character that is 'uniquely Williston' can create community identity and avoid the anonymity of the modern-day aesthetic.                                                                       | Public Works                                | Medium Term | \$\$ |

## 2.3 Ensure that outdoor seating and pocket parks are accessible throughout town.

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                           |             |      |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------|------|
| 2.3.1 | Evaluate existing spaces through observational audits, public surveys or focus groups. Map areas of town where access to pocket parks and outdoor seating is limited or not available in areas of high resident and visitor traffic.  | Planning<br>Recreation and Parks          | Short Term  | \$   |
| 2.3.2 | Evaluate potential new locations through a community-led process and equitably prioritize the highest need areas during implementation.                                                                                                                                                                                  | Planning<br>Recreation and Parks<br>CCRPC | Short Term  | \$   |
| 2.3.3 | Fund integration of outdoor seating and pocket parks in the capital planning program and operating budget for maintenance of these facilities.                                                                                                                                                                           | Planning<br>Recreation and Parks          | Short Term  | \$   |
| 2.3.4 | Evaluate design elements in creation of public space, along multiuse paths and sidewalks that encourage people to slow down and take respite, such as comfortable seating, shade, warmth and shielding from traffic.                                                                                                     | Public Works<br>Recreation and Parks      | Medium Term | \$\$ |

## 2.4 Provide indoor and outdoor spaces to foster social engagement during winter months.

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                  |            |    |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------|----|
| 2.4.1 | Evaluate existing public outdoor spaces in Williston to determine opportunities to enhance them for winter use through shelter, lighting, warmth, winter activities, or other improvements. | Planning<br>Recreation and Parks                 | Short Term | \$ |
| 2.4.2 | Develop a Winter Engagement Plan using the AARP Winter Placemaking Toolkit, Winter Cities Toolkit, or similar.                                                                              | Planning<br>Recreation and Parks                 | Short Term | \$ |
| 2.4.3 | Evaluate how the Town could engage in winter placemaking including opportunities and funding sources.                                                                                       | Planning<br>Recreation and Parks<br>Town Manager | Short Term | \$ |
| 2.4.4 | Evaluate bicycle and pedestrian facilities by conducting an AARP Bike Audit, Walk Audit, or other similar multimodal safety audit.                                                          | Planning                                         | Short Term | \$ |

## 2.5 Support arts and creative enterprises through library and recreation programming.

|       |                                                                                                                                             |                                 |             |      |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|------|
| 2.5.1 | Promote the offerings in Williston's "Library of Things." In FY 2024, the Library of Things represented less than 1% of all library loans.  | Library                         | Short Term  | --   |
| 2.5.2 | Develop an expanded Library of Things to include fine arts, creative art supplies, hardware, and other creative resources.                  | Library                         | Medium Term | \$\$ |
| 2.5.3 | Evaluate community feedback and needs on existing programming and desires for additional programming.                                       | Library                         | Short Term  | --   |
| 2.5.4 | Support recreation and library staffing and resource needs to make expanded arts and creative programming enterprise programming available. | Library<br>Recreation and Parks | Medium Term | \$\$ |

## 2.6 Develop a 'Uniquely Williston' identity and branding package

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                              |             |        |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|--------|
| 2.6.1 | Develop a Williston Branding Package to establish a cohesive design that is utilized by all municipal departments and programming, as well as available for use by non-municipal groups, organizations, and businesses.  | Town Manager                 | Short Term  | \$     |
| 2.6.2 | Implement the branding package in all print and online municipal publications, a wayfinding signage package, gateway welcome signs, and street-light banners in the Village and Taft Corners.                                                                                                               | Town Manager<br>Public Works | Medium Term | \$\$\$ |

## 2.7 Evaluate and explore new land use regulations to support social interaction and the creative sector.

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |          |            |    |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------------|----|
| 2.7.1 | Evaluate Williston's zoning bylaws and other rules that govern new development and use of existing sites and structures to determine if there are any barriers to the arts and creative sector industries that can be reduced or eliminated.                              | Planning | Short Term | -- |
| 2.7.2 | Develop design standards for privately owned public spaces that enhance social interaction. Integrate these standards into revised requirements for "private open areas" in the Taft Corners Form-Based Code and "neighborhood space" in other zoning districts.          | Planning | Short Term | \$ |
| 2.7.3 | Develop design standards for private outdoor spaces that meet the needs of children and the elderly. Integrate these standards into revised requirements for "private open areas" in the Taft Corners Form-Based Code and "neighborhood space" in other zoning districts. | Planning | Short Term | \$ |
| 2.7.4 | Explore development standards to require public art in new developments. Consider metrics such as a percentage of landscaping or construction cost to either fund the design and installation of art in the development or an offsite fund or installation.               | Planning | Short Term | -- |
| 2.7.5 | Evaluate how to require indoor and/or outdoor common spaces in new residential and mixed-use development in a manner that does not hinder affordability and energy goals of this town plan.                                                                               | Planning | Short Term | -- |

## 2.8 Support public art.

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                          |             |            |    |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------|----|
| 2.8.1 | Develop a town policy and support public art installations through inclusion of art in public sites and buildings, grant funding, private fundraising, and community-led or public-private partnerships. | Selectboard | Short Term | \$ |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------|----|

## 2.9 Evaluate town policies for the use of municipal property and temporary events.

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |              |             |    |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|----|
| 2.9.1 | Evaluate and streamline the Temporary Events ordinance in a manner that is supportive of the creative sector, small organizations, and marginalized groups.                                                                                                        | Selectboard  | Short Term  | -- |
| 2.9.2 | Evaluate and improve all town policies for the use of public spaces (buildings, parking lots, parks, right-of-way, or over-the-street banners, etc.) in a manner that encourages use and participation, especially by small organizations and marginalized groups. | Selectboard  | Short Term  | -- |
| 2.9.3 | Develop an improved public spaces reservation and/or rental program to increase use and access to public spaces.                                                                                                                                                   | Town Manager | Short Term  | -- |
| 2.9.4 | Prioritize the use of public spaces for charitable or publicly accessible events and programs over private or for-profit events.                                                                                                                                   | Selectboard  | Ongoing     | -- |
| 2.9.5 | Develop partnerships with community organizations to cultivate the regular use of town properties for programs and activities such as farmers and artisan markets, music series, and gallery openings. 🌟                                                           | Town Manager | Medium Term | -- |

## 2.10 Facilitate the coordination and visibility of Williston's arts and creative economy by developing Public-Private Partnerships.

|        |                                                                                                                                                        |                          |            |    |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------|----|
| 2.10.1 | Evaluate local policies that inhibit the growth of the creative economy and evaluate new or revised policies for their impact on the creative economy. | Planning Selectboard     | Short Term | -- |
| 2.10.2 | Develop relationships to coordinate with the VT Arts Council and Vermont Creative Network (VCN) Zone Agent when executing actions within this chapter. | Planning                 | Short Term | -- |
| 2.10.3 | Support the participation of elected officials and community leaders in the Vermont Creative Network.                                                  | Town Manager Selectboard | Ongoing    | -- |

## 2.11 Support the creation of an independent Williston Arts and Business Association (WABA).

|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |              |             |    |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|----|
| 2.11.1 | Evaluate the feasibility of creating a local arts and business association by surveying community arts and business stakeholders representing local, regional, and national businesses with a presence in Williston from all sectors including arts, manufacturing, agriculture, forestry, and food service. | Town Manager | Medium Term | \$ |
| 2.11.2 | Evaluate how to transition responsibility for WABA to private and nonprofit entities once it is established, with the Town as a member and key stakeholder.                                                                                                                                                  | Town Manager | Medium Term | -- |

# CHAPTER 3 - CULTURAL RESOURCES AND ARCHAEOLOGY

## Objectives

- 3.A** Williston's local zoning meets or exceeds current Act 250 standards for archeologic resources review in the development review process in ways that balance best practices with other land use goals.
- 3.B** Historic sites of local importance, such as historic Town Buildings and cultural recreation areas are protected and preserved for future generations. The community is knowledgeable about the human history of land today called Williston and Vermont.
- 3.C** Historic practices like farming, recreation, hunting and gathering, religious and civic assembly, and others are maintained and sustained by Williston Town policy, both in terms of Town-controlled regulation and how the Town plans for the use of its buildings and lands.

## Strategies

- 3.1** Explore methods beyond development regulations to investigate, document, and/or preserve archaeological resources on private land.

| Actions      |                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Responsibility                         | Timeframe  | Cost |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------|------|
| <b>3.1.1</b> | Evaluate the best way to document the likely presence of archaeological resources while protecting information about their location from unauthorized exploration and removal.                   | Planning                               | Short Term | --   |
| <b>3.1.2</b> | Prioritize parcels with likely archaeological resources when considering preservation of land using Environmental Reserve Fund (ERF) monies and the pursuit of grants and other funding sources. | Planning<br>Conservation<br>Commission | Ongoing    | --   |

- 3.2** Protect archeology resources when disturbance or development is proposed.



|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |          |            |    |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------------|----|
| <b>3.2.1</b> | Evaluate the feasibility of adopting bylaw standards to preserve and protect archeological resources, to avoid or minimize impacts to archaeological sites that may be impacted by development, in balance with other goals.                                                                                                                           | Planning | Short Term | -- |
| <b>3.2.2</b> | Evaluate how to require development to limit soil disturbance to the minimum necessary on sites where testing for potential archaeological sites has not been done.                                                                                                                                                                                    | Planning | Short Term | -- |
| <b>3.2.3</b> | Evaluate the impact of cost and permitting timeframes when considering development standards that protect archaeological resources. Evaluate these impacts before adoption of local regulation.                                                                                                                                                        | Planning | Short Term | -- |
| <b>3.2.4</b> | Evaluate the likelihood of archaeological sites being in any particular location (Similar to Act 250 review) using a predictive model. <a href="https://accd.vermont.gov/historic-preservation/review-compliance/precontact-archaeological-sites">https://accd.vermont.gov/historic-preservation/review-compliance/precontact-archaeological-sites</a> | Planning | Ongoing    | -- |
| <b>3.2.5</b> | Evaluate potential impacts to archaeological resources when considering development of trails or other amenities on Town property in partnership with the Vermont                                                                                                                                                                                      | Planning | Ongoing    | \$ |

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                       |             |      |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------|
|              | Department of Historic Preservation. Recruit an archaeological consultant to conduct research, survey, and excavation if appropriate.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                       |             |      |
| <b>3.3</b>   | <b>Improve the visibility and understanding of Indigenous History, Archeological, Cultural Resources in the landscape.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                       |             |      |
| <b>3.3.1</b> | Prioritize Indigenous language when naming public parks and spaces. For example, consider “Abazimenahanik” (Tree Island) as a name if a Country Park is established at Allen Brook School. This park can preserve the archeological resource and enhance public education about this area’s early history before European colonization.                                                                                                         | Conservation Commission                               | Medium Term | \$   |
| <b>3.3.2</b> | Develop a historic resource assessment on municipal structures including Town Hall, Town Hall Annex, and the Old Brick Church to understand their architectural history and modifications over time. Make the findings of this study publicly available through the Town web site and other publications.                                                                                                                                       | Historic & Design Advisory Committee (HDAC)           | Medium Term | \$   |
| <b>3.3.3</b> | Evaluate how to incorporate signage and Indigenous installations on the Town Green and other publicly owned spaces. Develop and execute signage plan to determine the best locations for interpretive signage that promotes knowledge about the presence (past and current) of Indigenous peoples and settlements in Williston. This signage can include landscape and geographical change, early human history to more recent farms and sites. | Conservation Commission<br>HDAC<br>Historical Society | Medium Term | \$\$ |
| <b>3.3.4</b> | Develop ways to leverage external funding sources to conduct archaeological surveys or to protect archaeological resources. Williston is a Certified Local Government (CLG) and as such is eligible for grant funding to conduct historic research and documentation related to buildings and archaeology. Williston should use this funding where appropriate.                                                                                 | Planning                                              | Ongoing     | \$   |



# CHAPTER 4 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Objectives

**4.A**

The benefits of economic activity in Williston are leveraged by the Town to achieve the goals of this Comprehensive Plan, while the burdens and impacts are managed to ensure that all people in Williston experience it as a livable place. The negative impacts of concentrated economic activity in Taft Corners are mitigated.

**4.B**

Economic development in Williston contributes to its resilience by increasing the diversity of types, scales, and intensities of economic activity in the Town.

**4.C**

Economic activity in Williston is scaled appropriately in concert with Williston's land use goals, while allowing for flexibility for landowners and businesses.

**4.D**

A greater proportion of the workforce in Williston is able to live in Williston and benefit from the Town's status as a hub of economic activity in the region.

**4.E**

The Town's transportation infrastructure supports economic development and resiliency. Specific strategies and actions are in Chapter 10 Transportation.

**4.F**

The Local Option Sales Tax remains a stable component of Williston's municipal revenue stream, allowing the Town to invest in achieving its Comprehensive plan goals.

## Strategies

**4.1**

**Refine emergency services to address the impacts of greater economic activity.**

| Actions |                                                                                                                                                                                           | Responsibility         | Timeframe      | Cost |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------|------|
| 4.1.1   | Evaluate the possibility of creating a Williston Police sub-station in Taft Corners to more efficiently respond to incidents there and serve as a hub for social service agency partners. | Police<br>Town Manager | Medium<br>Term | \$\$ |
| 4.1.2   | Evaluate establishing a Public Safety Impact Fee so new development can pay its fair share of the needs for public safety capital improvements it creates.                                | Police<br>Town Manager | Short Term     | \$\$ |

**4.2**

**Ensure that desired economic activity in Williston is adequately supported by infrastructure, capacity allocation, and services.**

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                         |            |    |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|----|
| 4.2.1 | Evaluate Williston's current growth and sewer allocation policies to support the Vision, Goals, and Objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, amending these as needed.  | Planning<br>Selectboard | Short Term | \$ |
| 4.2.2 | Maintain the limits on the geographic area where wastewater disposal is provided to the current boundary of the Sewer Service Area.                                                                                                                       | Selectboard             | Ongoing    | -- |
| 4.2.3 | Maintain, as a statement of policy, that the "area served by water and sewer" in Williston is the mapped Sewer Service Area in this Comprehensive Plan and state                                                                                          | Planning<br>Selectboard | Short Term | -- |



|            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                          |                |                                                                                     |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|            | affirmatively that this boundary is established due to the limitations on wastewater treatment capacity that Williston has pursuant to 24 VSA 4303 42(A).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                          |                |                                                                                     |
| <b>4.3</b> | <b>Encourage residential development in Taft Corners, which will support small businesses.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                          |                |  |
| 4.3.1      | Evaluate Williston's Unified Development Bylaw to ensure that it allows a range of housing types from apartment buildings to smaller footprint townhouses, tri-plexes, quad-plexes and other housing types, concentrating the greater density within walking and bicycling distance of retail, restaurants, entertainment and offices.                                                                                                                                                                     | Planning                 | Short Term     | --                                                                                  |
| 4.3.2      | Maintain allowed density in the form of 4-5 story mixed-use buildings in the Taft Corners Form Based Code District to support mixed-use and mixed-income developments.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Planning<br>Selectboard  | Ongoing        | --                                                                                  |
| 4.3.3      | Maintain the balance between flexibility in Form-based Code development standards with development requirements like maximum building footprint, limited grading on sloped sites, and maximum building frontage that encourage the creation of smaller-scale commercial spaces.                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Planning<br>Selectboard  | Ongoing        | --                                                                                  |
| <b>4.4</b> | <b>Ensure that needed infrastructure is not in conflict with land use and economic development goals.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                          |                |                                                                                     |
| 4.4.1      | Evaluate how to handle stormwater treatment collectively in Taft Corners rather than parcel by parcel. Help landowners plan stormwater comprehensively and collaboratively with one another to ensure lands whose highest and best use is mixed-use, and commercial development can be used that way, while stormwater treatment is addressed on lands less suitable for intense mixed use and commercial development.  | Planning<br>Selectboard  | Medium<br>Term | \$\$\$\$                                                                            |
| 4.4.2      | Evaluate, in collaboration with utility providers, the potential to add utility services and connections to commercial areas in a way that does not undermine the economic productivity of mixed-use and commercial properties. Communicate Williston's plans for shared access "alleys" in the Taft Corners Form-Based Code street blocks to providers of gas, water, power, and wastewater treatment.                                                                                                    | Planning<br>Public Works | Short Term     | \$                                                                                  |
| <b>4.5</b> | <b>All existing and future development within the designated Growth Center should be exempted from Act 250 jurisdiction, as per Act 181 (H.687) passed by the Vermont State Legislature in 2024.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                          |                |                                                                                     |
| 4.5.1      | Develop an application for Act 250 Tier 1A status for the Growth Center.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Planning<br>Selectboard  | Short Term     | --                                                                                  |
| 4.5.2      | Support the effort for all existing Act 250 permits (and their conditions) within the designed Growth Center to be released.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Planning<br>Selectboard  | Short Term     | --                                                                                  |
| <b>4.6</b> | <b>Build out Taft Corners in a manner that is consistent with the Taft Corners Vision Plan and encourage phased rather than scatter-shot development.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                          |                |                                                                                     |

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                              |                |          |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|----------|
| <b>4.6.1</b> | Develop infrastructure (build Trader Lane and/or Wright Avenue, which is also addressed in Chapter 10).                                                                                                                                                                     | Public Works<br>Town Manager | Medium<br>Term | \$\$\$\$ |
| <b>4.6.2</b> | Develop infrastructure in areas where coordinated, focused development is desired (for example on the frontage of Trader Lane and Wright Avenue) in a way that encourages coherent areas of new development rather than scattered development throughout the Growth Center. | Planning<br>Selectboard      | Medium<br>Term | --       |
| <b>4.6.3</b> | Develop focused incentives for new development inside the core of Taft Corners, the “Step One” Area(s) shown in the Taft Corners Vision Plan.                                                                                                                               | Planning<br>Selectboard      | Medium<br>Term | \$\$     |

## **4.7 Play an active role in the physical development of Williston’s most economically productive lands.**

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                         |                |        |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|--------|
| <b>4.7.1</b> | Evaluate establishing the position of Economic Development Director to recruit businesses, assist businesses with grant funding opportunities, coordinate with GBIC and administer the TIF district.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Selectboard             | Medium<br>Term | \$\$   |
| <b>4.7.2</b> | Evaluate how to proactively invest in infrastructure, amenities, and redevelopment of distressed and underdeveloped properties in Williston, especially in areas where commercial and residential uses are mixed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Selectboard             | Medium<br>Term | \$\$\$ |
| <b>4.7.3</b> | Maintain pursuit of mechanisms for public investment in infrastructure and amenities that are affordable for Town residents. If the 2025 study of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) as a funding option shows that this tool is viable for Williston, pursue the approval of an application for a Tax Increment Financing district with the Vermont Economic Progress Council.  | Planning<br>Selectboard | Ongoing        | \$\$   |
| <b>4.7.4</b> | Evaluate how to encourage the adaptive reuse of vacant and underused buildings. Evaluate land use regulations to determine if more incentive or regulatory relief is necessary for adaptive reuse to be viable.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Planning<br>Selectboard | Ongoing        | \$     |

# CHAPTER 5 - EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE

## Objectives

- 5.A** The Town and School District have established ongoing coordination and communication channels to facilitate sound decision making and school strategic planning.
- 5.B** The Town and School coordinate to ensure that the schools have adequate funding for capital expansions needed to accommodate a growing school population.
- 5.C** The Town facilitates the permitting process while upholding site design standards for improvements and/or new school facilities.
- 5.D** The Town leverages the school's role as a community hub to foster social cohesion, trust, and mutual support networks among town residents and to share information and resources, on a continuing basis and especially during times of emergency response and recovery.
- 5.E** The Town leverages opportunities to engage the local schools in community planning and improvement initiatives, to enhance learning and foster students' sense of themselves as active, responsible citizens contributing to the benefit of the town.
- 5.F** The Town coordinates with local schools and other partners to provide opportunities for enrichment, hands-on learning and recreation.
- 5.G** Access to childcare is increased.

## Strategies

- 5.1** The Town and School District will communicate regularly to exchange information regarding growth projections, goals and future facilities planning.

| Actions      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Responsibility       | Timeframe   | Cost |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|------|
| <b>5.1.1</b> | Develop a communication schedule to proactively share data, such as the annual Growth Report [called for in Action 6.6.2] or other reports or studies as applicable, with the CVSD Leadership Team.                                     | Planning             | Short Term  | --   |
| <b>5.1.2</b> | Prioritize meeting at least once annually with the CVSD Leadership Team to discuss trends outlined in the Growth Report and the School District's strategic planning in response to those trends, and other areas of concern as needed. | Town Manager<br>CVSD | Ongoing     | --   |
| <b>5.2</b>   | The Town will collaborate with other towns in the CVSD to understand the need for future expansion projects and to determine whether any such project can be funded with impact fees.                                                   |                      |             |      |
| <b>5.2.1</b> | Develop new school impact fees if called for in an updated School Impact Fee Assessment. Impact fees to address district-wide needs related to new growth must be charged equally in all district municipalities.                       | Selectboard          | Medium Term | --   |

### 5.3

**The Town will showcase efforts and initiatives of the school and publicize information about school events and educational resources to the community, and about town events to the schools, to foster community cohesion.**

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                  |         |    |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------|----|
| 5.3.1 | Maintain communication between the Town and school administration about Town initiatives, public meetings and events, and request the school administrators to publicize using school media channels and posting physical materials. | Town Manager                     | Ongoing | -- |
| 5.3.2 | Maintain the Town's recognition of worthy school endeavors through Town platforms such as the website, Planners Corner, and the Town Manager's newsletter.                                                                           | Town Manager<br>CVSD<br>Planning | Ongoing | -- |

### 5.4

**The Town and School will coordinate shared use of their facilities for the community's benefit.**

|       |                                                                                                                         |                              |         |    |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------|----|
| 5.4.1 | Maintain coordination with the schools to hold Town events such as the annual Energy Fair on WCS or ABS school grounds. | Energy Committee<br>CVSD     | Ongoing | -- |
| 5.4.2 | Maintain the use of the school auditorium for Town Meeting and film screenings throughout the year.                     | Town Manager<br>CVSD         | Ongoing | -- |
| 5.4.3 | Maintain the Town's publicization of information about Champlain Valley Union adult education courses.                  | Town Manager                 | Ongoing | -- |
| 5.4.4 | Support the use of Catamount Community Forest and other town-owned natural areas for outdoor education.                 | Town Manager<br>CVSD<br>COFC | Ongoing | -- |

### 5.5

**Establish school enrichment programs in coordination with town departments. These can include town planning efforts and community service projects in furtherance of town plan goals.**

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                |                |    |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------|----|
| 5.5.1 | Support classroom visits by town staff or field trips to municipal facilities, to enhance the students' understanding of town operations and how those affect the community.                                                                                             | CVSD<br>Town Departments                       | Ongoing        | -- |
| 5.5.2 | Develop engagement with school classes in the development of future Comprehensive Plans by soliciting student input through roundtable exercises and surveys.                                                                                                            | Planning<br>CVSD                               | Medium<br>Term | -- |
| 5.5.3 | Develop engagement plans for community service projects like trail improvements, tree plantings, or other community improvements by students to enhance educational curricula with hands-on experience, foster a strong stewardship ethic and build the town's capacity. | Planning<br>Conservation<br>Commission<br>CVSD | Ongoing        | -- |

### 5.6

**Continue to offer and subsidize school and after-school programing.**

|       |                                                                                                                   |                    |         |    |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|----|
| 5.6.1 | Maintain the Recreation and Parks Department's offering of the winter Learn to Ski program at Cochran's Ski Area. | Recreation         | Ongoing | -- |
| 5.6.2 | Support the Catamount Outdoor Family Center's outdoor educational offerings such as Bike Club and Snow School.    | Recreation<br>COFC | Ongoing | -- |

## **5.7 Collaborate with Vermont State College and other institutions of higher learning to offer opportunities for hands-on learning that also contribute to getting work done to further the town's goals.**

|              |                                                                                                                                              |                  |            |    |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------|----|
| <b>5.7.1</b> | Develop policies to support student Internships with the Town.                                                                               | Town Manager     | Short Term | -- |
| <b>5.7.2</b> | Maintain the offering of semester-long internships to college students by Town Departments as time and staff resources permit.               | Town Departments | Ongoing    | -- |
| <b>5.7.3</b> | Maintain participation of Town departments as Community Partners in the UVM Rubenstein School's courses, as time and staff resources permit. | Town Departments | Ongoing    | -- |

## **5.8 The Town will participate in school-led initiatives that are consistent with and further the town's goals.**

|              |                                                                                                                       |                  |         |    |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------|----|
| <b>5.8.1</b> | Maintain participation in Local Motion's Safe Routes to School initiatives like the monthly walk/ride to school days. | Town Departments | Ongoing | -- |
| <b>5.8.2</b> | Maintain participation in other school- or student-led initiatives as time and resources permit.                      | Town Departments | Ongoing | -- |

## **5.9 Explore different models of providing childcare beyond the typical 8-5 framework.**

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                |             |    |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|----|
| <b>5.9.1</b> | Evaluate the feasibility of establishing a 24/7 childcare drop-off service in partnership with State agencies and advocates.                                                                                      | Planning<br>*Outside Partners* | Medium Term | \$ |
| <b>5.9.2</b> | Evaluate on-site childcare or stipend program for Town Board & Committee volunteers to cover childcare during the time when they are volunteering, as well as childcare for attendees of Town events and meetings | Selectboard<br>Town Manager    | Short Term  | \$ |
| <b>5.9.3</b> | Evaluate best practices for achieving the provision of in-house childcare services for large employers.                                                                                                           | Planning<br>Selectboard        | Short Term  | -- |
| <b>5.9.4</b> | Support the development of childcare centers along public transit and active transportation routes.                                                                                                               | Planning<br>Selectboard        | Short Term  | -- |
| <b>5.9.5</b> | Evaluate possible incentives for gyms, yoga studios, recreation centers, indoor courts/pools/fieldhouses, etc. to have a childcare drop off feature in operation daily.                                           | Planning<br>Selectboard        | Short Term  | -- |

# CHAPTER 6 - HOMES AND SMART GROWTH

## Objectives

- 6.A** The Town provides ample public facilities and services to meet the demands of projected commercial and residential growth.
- 6.B** New residential development is largely focused in the Growth Center and patterned in a compact and efficient manner rather than sprawl, so that it can be served in the most efficient manner that doesn't strain the town's resources.
- 6.C** Williston has expansive housing opportunities. There is a diversity of housing types, including dwellings that are affordable for a wide range of Williston residents and its workforce. Affordable rental housing is abundant and opportunities for home ownership have broadened.
- 6.D** Housing opportunities in Williston are equitable - everyone lives in a home that is affordable, safe, healthy and energy efficient, and opportunities to purchase a home are expansive.
- 6.E** Existing naturally affordable housing is preserved. People are enabled to age in place if they wish to, by adding an accessory dwelling unit, converting their large home into a duplex, or sharing their home in exchange for assistance with daily living. Homeowners who wish to can use a portion of their home as a rental or home business that does not unduly impact the surrounding neighborhood.
- 6.F** Williston provides its fair share of housing in the Chittenden County region, and strives to meet or exceed the state-mandated housing targets.
- 6.G** Municipal property taxes do not exceed the average municipal property taxes of Chittenden County towns.

## Strategies

- 6.1** Encourage adaptive reuse of industrial and commercial buildings for affordable housing use.

| Actions      |                                                                                                                                           | Responsibility                     | Timeframe      | Cost   |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|--------|
| <b>6.1.1</b> | Maintain an exemption to Growth Management for adaptive reuse projects.                                                                   | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Ongoing        | --     |
| <b>6.1.2</b> | Evaluate other possible ways to incentivize adaptive reuse.                                                                               | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Short Term     | --     |
| <b>6.1.3</b> | Evaluate properties for their adaptive reuse potential and leverage funding and partnerships to advance suitable adaptive reuse projects. | Housing Committee<br>Selectboard   | Medium<br>Term | \$\$\$ |

- 6.2** Implement the Housing Trust Fund Ordinance.

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                       |             |            |    |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------|----|
| <b>6.2.1</b> | Develop clear guiding policies for eligible use of funds, eligibility criteria, priorities and process for allocating funds. Focus on filling gaps that other funding sources cannot. | Selectboard | Short Term | -- |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------|----|

|            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                       |                    |          |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|----------|
| 6.2.2      | Maintain the program and create annual work plans and reports. Work plans and funding policies should use existing resources as models.                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Planning Housing Committee            | Short Term Ongoing | --       |
| 6.2.3      | Evaluate possibilities for a dedicated funding source for the Housing Trust Fund not subject to annual budget adjustments so that it can grow steadily over time. This may include a voter-approved tax rate, payment in lieu for market rate projects, a dedicated portion of local options sales taxes, or other sources of funding. ★ | Selectboard                           | Short Term         | \$\$     |
| <b>6.3</b> | <b>Explore additional affordable housing programs and implement programs that are feasible and align with the town's goals.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                       |                    |          |
| 6.3.1      | Support non-profits like Champlain Housing Trust, Evernorth, and Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity, who are best positioned to provide "deep affordability" units (serving households with less than 80% of median income). ★                                                                                                          | Housing Committee Planning            | Ongoing            | --       |
| 6.3.2      | Develop plans to complete specific housing projects by identifying parcels for development, fostering partnerships with for-profit developers, and supporting their grant applications through direct letters and language in planning documents.                                                                                        | Housing Committee Planning            | Ongoing            | --       |
| 6.3.3      | Support the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission's Housing Navigator work to evaluate land in Williston for potential to support affordable housing.                                                                                                                                                                           | Housing Committee Planning            | Short Term         | --       |
| 6.3.4      | Evaluate options to acquire / develop municipal land for housing.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Selectboard                           | Long Term          | \$\$\$\$ |
| 6.3.5      | Prioritize the Homes for All Toolkit by using ACCD training and outreach resources to host a symposium to introduce and orient builders/developers to the toolkit.                                                                                                                                                                       | Housing Committee Planning            | Short Term         | \$       |
| <b>6.4</b> | <b>Leveraging outside funding sources, the town should invest in infrastructure such as building public streets (Trader Lane) and collective stormwater systems to kickstart development in Taft Corners Form Based Code district.</b>                                                                                                   |                                       |                    |          |
| 6.4.1      | Develop an analysis of the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District to fund the construction of streets and other needed infrastructure that will support housing goals. ★                                                                                                                                                          | Planning Town Manger                  | Short Term         | \$       |
| 6.4.2      | Develop the recommendations of the TIF study (see 6.4.1).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Selectboard                           | Medium Term        | \$\$     |
| 6.4.3      | Develop plan to leverage federal and state funding, local funding through transportation impact fees, to build streets and other needed infrastructure that will support housing goals.                                                                                                                                                  | Selectboard                           | Medium Term        | \$\$\$\$ |
| <b>6.5</b> | <b>Ensure that zoning outside the growth center area allows for maximum flexibility in housing types and options to support unsubsidized affordable housing (rentable accessory dwellings, farm worker housing, adaptive reuse, service-supported and home-sharing adaptations).</b>                                                     |                                       |                    |          |
| 6.5.1      | Evaluate ways to reduce barriers to building an accessory dwelling unit (ADU), such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relax permitting requirements</li> <li>Connect homeowners who wish to build an ADU to sources of funding and technical assistance</li> </ul>                                                              | Housing Committee Planning Commission | Ongoing            | \$       |



|            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                 |                    |    |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|----|
|            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish an ADU toolkit with resources to assist homeowners through the planning and permitting process of developing an ADU</li> <li>• Hold periodic ADU workshops in collaboration with neighboring housing committees</li> <li>• Post information and resources on the town website</li> </ul>                                                                                                                         |                                 |                    |    |
| 6.5.2      | Evaluate whether changes should be made to zoning regulations in the Agricultural Rural Residential Zoning District to allow greater flexibility for farmworker housing.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Planning Commission Selectboard | Short Term         | -- |
| <b>6.6</b> | <b>Continually monitor and evaluate Williston's production of housing and its land-use regulations to ensure they support the town's required housing targets. Pay particular attention to the system of growth management (with inclusionary zoning) to allocate dwelling units for exclusively market rate developments, to determine its continued relevance and effectiveness.</b>                                                                            |                                 |                    |    |
| 6.6.1      | Maintain annual audit of the amount of affordable and market rate housing being permitted and built in Williston.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Housing Committee Planning      | Ongoing            | -- |
| 6.6.2      | Evaluate an annual growth prediction report based on staff knowledge about permitted projects, typical permitting and buildout timelines, trends in household size, and constraints on development created by Williston's permitting timeframes, Growth Management rules, and Sewer Allocation system.                                                                                                                                                            | Planning                        | Ongoing            | -- |
| 6.6.3      | Evaluate housing production from 2023-2028 (5 years after adoption of Inclusionary Zoning) to analyze the degree to which the town's goals with respect to housing are being met with current regulations, looking at the number of homes being built, the diversity of housing types and sizes, and housing affordability. Use the results of this analysis to determine whether the current regulations need to be modified to better achieve intended results. | Housing Committee Planning      | Medium Term        | -- |
| <b>6.7</b> | <b>Address equity in rental housing.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                 |                    |    |
| 6.7.1      | Evaluate the need for "just cause" evictions protections to prevent renters from unfairly losing their housing.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Housing Committee Planning      | Medium Term        | -- |
| 6.7.2      | Evaluate the need to establish rent control provisions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Housing Committee Planning      | Medium Term        | -- |
| 6.7.3      | Evaluate the need to establish a rental inspection program.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Housing Committee Town Manager  | Medium Term        | -- |
| <b>6.8</b> | <b>Address equity in owner-occupied housing.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                 |                    |    |
| 6.8.1      | Prioritize engagement with populations historically excluded from homeownership and support them in obtaining down payment assistance, either with direct funding                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Housing Committee Planning      | Short Term Ongoing | -- |

|                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                 |                    |        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------|
|                                                                                                                                         | through the town's Housing Trust Fund or by connecting them with VHFA's ASSIST Program or CHT's Shared Equity Homeownership Program.                                                                                                                                                                                |                                 |                    |        |
| <b>6.8.2</b>                                                                                                                            | Evaluate ways such as CHT's Shared Equity Program to integrate mixed income housing into established high-opportunity neighborhoods.                                                                                                                                                                                | Housing Committee Planning      | Short Term         | --     |
| <b>6.8.3</b>                                                                                                                            | Evaluate homeownership purchasing trends through an annual audit. Respond as needed to minimize negative impacts of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short Term Rentals</li> <li>• Investors buying up properties and pushing up rental prices</li> <li>• Anything that decreases affordability</li> </ul> | Housing Committee Planning      | Short Term Ongoing | --     |
| <b>6.9 Invest in keeping people in their homes.</b>                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                 |                    |        |
| <b>5.9.6</b>                                                                                                                            | Develop outreach plan about the HomeShare Vermont Program, which matches people needing regular assistance to stay in their homes with people willing to provide assistance in exchange for low or no cost housing.                                                                                                 | Housing Committee/ Planning     | Short Term         | --     |
| <b>5.9.7</b>                                                                                                                            | Fund assistance in housing retention efforts using the Housing Trust Fund.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Housing Committee/ Planning     | Short Term Ongoing | \$     |
| <b>5.9.8</b>                                                                                                                            | Maintain referral of service organizations to people experiencing financial hardships.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Housing Committee/ Selectboard  | Ongoing            | --     |
| <b>6.10 Provide robust services for unhoused people in Williston.</b>                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                 |                    |        |
| <b>6.10.1</b>                                                                                                                           | Evaluate the feasibility of establishing services in Taft Corners – such as a day station and/or overnight shelter—in partnership with Chittenden County Homeless Alliance, the Howard Center and other service organizations                                                                                       | Town Manager/ Selectboard       | Medium Term        | \$\$\$ |
| <b>6.10.2</b>                                                                                                                           | Support partner service organizations in their efforts in meeting the needs of the unhoused.                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Town Staff/ Police              | Ongoing            | --     |
| <b>6.11 Invest in preserving the “natural affordability” of older existing homes to ensure preservation of affordability over time.</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                 |                    |        |
| <b>6.11.1</b>                                                                                                                           | Fund rehabilitation or accessibility improvements to existing homes with the Housing Trust Fund, in combination with other funding sources as needed. Offer grants rather than loans in exchange for making those homes perpetually affordable.                                                                     | Housing Committee/ Town Manager | Short Term Ongoing | \$\$   |
| <b>6.11.2</b>                                                                                                                           | Support Champlain Housing Trust in incentivizing property owners to contribute their existing homes to CHT's shared equity portfolio.                                                                                                                                                                               | Housing Committee               | Short Term Ongoing | --     |
| <b>6.12 Mitigate the impacts of increasing property taxes to reduce burdens on property owners.</b>                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                 |                    |        |
| <b>6.11.1</b>                                                                                                                           | Develop outreach materials and distribute to property owners to make sure they are aware of existing taxation relief programs such as the Vermont Property Tax Credit and Use Value Appraisal (Current Use) Program.                                                                                                | Assessors                       | Short Term Ongoing | \$     |

|        |                                                                                                                                   |                             |                |    |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|----|
| 6.11.2 | Evaluate a property tax abatement program for affordable rental housing managed and operated by a housing nonprofit organization. | Town Manager<br>Selectboard | Medium<br>Term | \$ |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|----|

# CHAPTER 7 - FACILITIES AND SERVICES

## Objectives

- 7.A** The Town of Williston will manage the provision of public facilities and services to meet the demands of projected commercial and residential growth.
- 7.B** The Town of Williston will develop adequate space and modern facilities for the administration of municipal services.
- 7.C** The Town of Williston will continue to provide a high-quality level of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) services that meets the community's expectations for coverage and response time.
- 7.D** The Town of Williston will continue to provide law enforcement protection and services at a level that keeps pace with the town's growth and demand for services.
- 7.E** The Town of Williston will continue to use its capital budgeting process to help staff and decision-makers understand the need for and costs of additional or improved facilities. Future Capital Improvement Plans will incorporate the general priorities and proposed improvements established by this plan.
- 7.F** Continue to oversee the care and management of the town's cemeteries.

## Strategies

- 7.1** Expand the library in the Village to meet the needs of the town, using the recommendations of the 2023 scoping study. 

| Actions                                                 |                                                                                                            | Responsibility   | Timeframe   | Cost     |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------|----------|
| <b>7.1.1</b>                                            | Evaluate the options presented in the scoping study. Get community input on the options proposed.          | Library Trustees | Short Term  | --       |
| <b>7.1.2</b>                                            | Develop architectural plans for expansion using a public process.                                          | Library Trustee  | Short Term  | \$\$     |
| <b>7.1.3</b>                                            | Develop a funding mechanism – mixture of grants, private donations and bond. Put a bond to vote.           | Selectboard      | Short Term  | --       |
| <b>7.1.4</b>                                            | Implement construction of the expansion.                                                                   | Selectboard      | Short Term  | \$\$\$\$ |
| <b>7.2 Establish a Community Center in Taft Corners</b> |                                                                                                            |                  |             |          |
| <b>7.2.1</b>                                            | Evaluate opportunities to acquire a building/property that could be rehabilitated into a community center. | Town Manager     | Medium Term | \$       |

|                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |              |             |          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| <b>7.2.2</b>                                                                                    | Develop architectural plans with community input.                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Recreation   | Medium Term | \$\$     |
| <b>7.2.3</b>                                                                                    | Evaluate potential funding sources including grants, bond, and town funds.                                                                                                                                                                                 | Selectboard  | Long Term   | \$       |
| <b>7.2.4</b>                                                                                    | Implement construction of the Community Center.                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Selectboard  | Long Term   | \$\$\$\$ |
| <b>7.3 Establish a satellite emergency services facility in Taft Corners.</b>                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |              |             |          |
| <b>7.3.1</b>                                                                                    | Develop plans for a satellite emergency services station in Taft Corners. Explore opportunities to lease or acquire a building/property that could be repurposed for emergency services.                                                                   | Selectboard  | Medium Term | \$\$\$   |
| <b>7.3.2</b>                                                                                    | Evaluate staffing capacity for the added location.                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Selectboard  | Medium Term | \$\$     |
| <b>7.4 Expand the physical infrastructure of town buildings to accommodate a growing staff.</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |              |             |          |
| <b>7.4.1</b>                                                                                    | Develop a Strategic Plan for each municipal building and town department to determine the space needed for future growth, alternatives to consider, and actions needed to expand the existing space.                                                       | Town Manager | Medium Term | \$\$     |
| <b>7.4.2</b>                                                                                    | Develop a plan to modernize the town's systems. Invest in smart technology to help the town run more efficiently and sustainably.                                                                                                                          | Town Manager | Medium Term | \$\$     |
| <b>7.4.3</b>                                                                                    | Use the capital budgeting process to help decision makers and the public understand the need for and costs of additional or improved facilities.                                                                                                           | Town Manager | Medium Term | --       |
| <b>7.5 Maintain strong relationships with related entities and organizations.</b>               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |              |             |          |
| <b>7.5.1</b>                                                                                    | Maintain the cultivation of a strong relationship between CVSD, WCS staff, the town, and community organizations. The Town relies on the school auditorium for Town Meeting. The Annual Craft Fair held in the fall is a popular event with regional draw. | Town Manager | Ongoing     | --       |
| <b>7.5.2</b>                                                                                    | Maintain a strong relationship with the Vermont National Guard and pursue the acquisition of this property for expanded municipal civic or community space if the opportunity emerges.                                                                     | Town Manager | Ongoing     | --       |
| <b>7.6 Support the Civic Role of Historic and Village Municipal Buildings</b>                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |              |             |          |
| <b>7.6.1</b>                                                                                    | Develop a master plan for the use, maintenance, and continued preservation of Town Hall, Town Hall Annex, Old Brick Church, the Stovepipe Corners Schoolhouse, and the Brennan Barn.                                                                       | Town Manager | Short Term  | \$       |
| <b>7.6.2</b>                                                                                    | Develop celebration schedule for the 200th Anniversary of the Old Brick Church. The Old Brick Church, constructed c. 1832, will celebrate its 200th anniversary in 2032.                                                                                   | Town Manager | Medium Term | \$       |

## 7.7

**Expand and modernize the Town's information technology and data management capabilities with digital and software-based solutions to better support internal department workflows and more effectively deliver services to the public.**

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |              |             |      |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|------|
| 7.7.1 | Maintain the Town's use of best practices to modernize systems across departments to streamline workflows and improve data management efficiency and integrity.                                                             | Town Manager | Ongoing     | \$\$ |
| 7.7.2 | Develop an enhanced website and digital presence to broadcast information about activities; holidays; reminders; town meeting minutes; farmers markets; surveys; traffic patterns; town Podcast; emergency broadcasts; etc. | Town Manager | Medium Term | \$\$ |

## 7.8

**Maintain the care and management of the Town's Cemeteries and evaluate burial policies.**

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                      |             |    |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----|
| 7.8.1 | Evaluate a Home Burial Ordinance to protect public health and safety within the Growth Center and Sewer Service Area.                                                                                                  | Cemetery Commission                                                  | Medium Term | -- |
| 7.8.2 | Evaluate a natural burial policy for burial for Town Cemeteries.                                                                                                                                                       | Cemetery Commission                                                  | Medium Term | -- |
| 7.8.3 | Evaluate the feasibility of a natural burial forest cemetery, whether owned and/or operated as a municipal cemetery, or ensure town land use regulations and policies are supportive of non-municipal forest cemetery. | Cemetery Commission/<br>Conservation Commission/<br>Catamount Forest | Medium Term | -- |

# CHAPTER 8 - RECREATION AND PARKS

## Objectives

### 8.A

The Town proactively manages the provision of public facilities and services to meet the demands of projected residential, commercial, and economic growth.

### 8.B

Within the Growth Center, no household is more than a 10-minute walk to a park. Within the Sewer Service Area, no household is more than a 20-minute walk to a park. Multiuse paths provide safe access from residential developments to parks.

### 8.C

The town continues to offer and expand accessible, diverse, and equitable recreation programs.

### 8.D

This town plan is a complement to the Recreation and Parks Master Plan's 15-year outlook and the Library and Community Center Scoping Study.

## Strategies

### 8.1

Provide community park facilities for recreational programming and other gatherings, with the goal of equitable distribution of parks throughout the Town. Within the Growth Center, no household is more than a 10-minute walk to a park and within the Sewer Service Area, no household is more than a 20-minute walk to a park.

| Actions |                                                                                                                                                                                          | Responsibility         | Timeframe   | Cost     |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|----------|
| 8.1.1   | Develop new Master Plan for Parks (Community) and Recreation, and identify additional park needs to meet walking distance goals specified in Objective 8.B.                              | Recreation             | Short Term  | \$       |
| 8.1.2   | Evaluate grant and funding alternatives and prioritize park scoping and development in the capital planning programs.                                                                    | Recreation Selectboard | Short Term  | \$\$     |
| 8.1.3   | Evaluate potential connections from all existing and future parks to the multi-use path network. Identify gaps and create an action plan to bridge the gaps.                             | Recreation Selectboard | Long Term   | \$\$\$\$ |
| 8.1.4   | Maintain Recreation Program Scholarship Fund. Report on scholarship fund donations, utilization, and adapt utilization of the fund to meet community needs.                              | Recreation Selectboard | Medium Term | --       |
| 8.1.5   | Evaluate and fund additions to existing outdoor facilities that foster activity and exercise such as outdoor workout stations, shade structures, and seating along the recreation paths. | Recreation Selectboard | Medium Term | \$\$     |

### 8.2

Expand indoor recreation and program capacity, in alignment with national standards for adequate facility space.

|       |                                                                                                                                                               |                        |             |        |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|--------|
| 8.2.1 | Develop the site and design work for a community center, pool, and outdoor recreation spaces as called for in the Library and Community Center Scoping Study. | Recreation Selectboard | Medium Term | \$\$   |
| 8.2.2 | Support private landowners and businesses in repurposing or rehabilitating existing space for public or quasi-public use. See also 2.11 and 2.12.             | Recreation Selectboard | Medium Term | \$\$\$ |



### 8.3 Publicize and maintain the Official Map.

|       |                                                                                                                                                  |                                    |                       |    |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|----|
| 8.3.1 | Maintain regular updates of the Official Map with new information about desired facilities, newly constructed facilities, and known constraints. | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Short Term<br>Ongoing | -- |
| 8.3.2 | Develop outreach plan regarding the Official Map and inform officials and landowners on its purpose and use.                                     | Planning                           | Short Term<br>Ongoing | -- |
| 8.3.3 | Maintain discussion with the Library Board of Trustees, Recreation and Parks Committee and staff in amendments of the Official Map.              | Planning<br>Recreation<br>Library  | Ongoing               | -- |

### 8.4 Maintain and improve the Country Parks and Conservation Areas

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                           |                |      |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------|------|
| 8.4.1 | Develop more robust organizational and fiscal systems for the maintenance of Country Parks.                                                                                                                                           | Selectboard<br>Town Manager               | Short Term     | \$   |
| 8.4.2 | Evaluate an inventory of Country Parks and develop a framework for prioritizing repairs and expansion factoring costs, equitable usage, and fiscal sustainability.                                                                    | Planning &<br>Conservation<br>Commissions | Short Term     | \$   |
| 8.4.3 | Develop new country parks and trails, prioritizing connections to underserved and under connected residential neighborhoods and employment nodes.  | Conservation<br>Commission<br>Selectboard | Medium<br>Term | \$\$ |
| 8.4.4 | Evaluate improvements to the volunteer programs and adopt-a-trail style programs to supplement paid town and contracted labor.                                                                                                        | Planning<br>Recreation                    | Medium<br>Term | \$   |

### 8.5 Enhance and expand community gardens; evaluate the feasibility of establishing a tree nursery.

|       |                                                                                                                                                     |                           |                |        |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|--------|
| 8.5.1 | Evaluate feasibility of a town tree nursery to provide ecosystem appropriate and cost-effective plantings for street trees and private development. | Selectboard               | Long Term      | \$\$\$ |
| 8.5.2 | Prioritize expansion of community gardens. Establish community gardens in close proximity to homes for ease of access.                              | Recreation<br>Selectboard | Medium<br>Term | \$\$   |

### 8.6 Establish a linear park in the former Circumferential Highway right-of-way that runs south to north from 1-89 to Williston's northern boundary.

|       |                                                                                                                                                                          |                          |                |          |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|----------|
| 8.6.1 | Evaluate process to acquire the necessary rights from the state of Vermont to develop a linear park in the CIRC right-of-way.                                            | Selectboard              | Medium<br>Term | \$       |
| 8.6.2 | Evaluate options for a linear park including connections to trail and easements in surrounding neighborhoods, which could include a scoping study and construction plan. | Planning<br>Public Works | Medium<br>Term | \$\$     |
| 8.6.3 | Fund linear park construction with Circumferential Highway alternative project funding and supplement with the capital improvement program.                              | Selectboard              | Long Term      | \$\$\$\$ |

## **8.7 Continue improvement of the primitive trail program. Retain trail access and easements consistent with the Official Map as part of the development review process.**

|              |                                                                                                                                  |                                  |            |    |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|----|
| <b>8.7.1</b> | Maintain an inventory of publicly accessible trails and trail easements.                                                         | Planning Conservation Commission | Ongoing    | -- |
| <b>8.7.2</b> | Evaluate desired future trails and the cost and feasibility of construction based on known constraints by creating an inventory. | Planning Conservation Commission | Short Term | \$ |
| <b>8.7.3</b> | Prioritize new trails that link discontinuous segments and provide access to underserved areas.                                  | Planning Conservation Commission | Short Term | -- |

## **8.8 Manage parkland in a sustainable and wildlife-friendly manner.**

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                    |            |    |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------|----|
| <b>8.8.1</b> | Develop a management plan that limits mowing and lawn chemicals to the minimum area necessary for sports fields, enhances gathering spaces with wildlife- friendly plantings, edible plants, stormwater gardens, and shade. | Recreation Conservation Commission | Short Term | \$ |
| <b>8.8.2</b> | Support the conversion of mowed lawns to wildlife, pollinators, and edible ecosystems especially in places that reconnect fragmented habitat.                                                                               | Conservation Commission            | Short Term | \$ |

## **8.9 Maintain productive relationships with partner organizations.**

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                         |                       |      |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|------|
| <b>8.9.1</b> | Support Vermont Mountain Bike Association (VMBA) and Fellowship of the Wheel (FOTW) on the maintenance of existing and development of future mountain biking trails. Where reasonably feasible, design trails to accommodate adaptive bikes. | Conservation Commission | Short Term<br>Ongoing | \$\$ |
| <b>8.9.2</b> | Maintain collaboration with the Winooski Valley Park District to complete projects in Williston.                                                                                                                                             | Conservation Commission | Ongoing               | \$   |
| <b>8.9.3</b> | Evaluate the value of returns on the investment of annual dues the town pays to the WVPD.                                                                                                                                                    | Selectboard             | Short Term            | --   |

## **8.10 Monitor, evaluate, and adjust policies and programming at Catamount Community Forest.**

|               |                                                                                                                                |                                            |             |    |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------|----|
| <b>8.10.1</b> | Maintain a land management plan and ensure alignment with the Conservation Easement and other funding requirements.            | Catamount Forest Committee<br>Selectboard  | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>8.10.2</b> | Evaluate the long-term function of the Catamount Community Forest Management Committee now that the land is owned by the Town. | Selectboard                                | Short Term  | -- |
| <b>8.10.3</b> | Maintain collaboration with the Catamount Outdoor Family Center on facilities and programming.                                 | Catamount Forest Committee<br>Town Manager | Ongoing     | -- |

|        |                                                                            |             |                |        |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------|--------|
| 8.10.4 | Evaluate improvements to multi-modal access to Catamount Community Forest. | Selectboard | Medium<br>Term | \$\$\$ |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------|--------|

# CHAPTER 9 - UTILITIES

## Objectives

- 9.A** The Town is served by private utilities that are robust, resilient and adequate to meet the demands of projected commercial and residential growth.
- 9.B** The town and utility companies coordinate to ensure the best outcomes for Williston. The town shares data on growth trends to inform long- range planning and decision-making processes. The town monitors and comments on utility companies' long-range plans for their compatibility with the town's goals.
- 9.C** The town maintains its water and sewer infrastructure so that it is resilient and sustainable.
- 9.D** The town has wastewater capacity that is adequate to support the estimated "build out" of commercial and residential structures and support Williston's fair share of housing in the region.
- 9.E** The town achieves universal coverage of fixed and mobile broadband service, that is accessible and affordable to all.

## Strategies

- 9.1** Reevaluate the town's Sewer Allocation Ordinance to make sure that it supports the town's development priorities within the current capacity constraints.

| Actions      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Responsibility                     | Timeframe      | Cost   |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|--------|
| <b>9.1.1</b> | Evaluate whether the town's current allocated capacity will support the estimated "build out" of commercial and residential structures and support Williston's fair share of housing in the region. Decide what percentage of "buildout" is desired in different geographic areas and prioritize allocation of capacity based on those decisions.                                                                                                                                                 | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Short Term     | \$     |
| <b>9.1.2</b> | Evaluate revisions to the Sewer Allocation Ordinance so the methodology accurately reflects the existing capacity and the town's priorities for development. The current Sewer Allocation Ordinance divides up available capacity based on type of use. Whereas adding spatial prioritization (Growth Center vs. Residential zones Vs. Industrial Zones) may be more directly in line with Town Plan goals.  | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Short Term     | \$     |
| <b>9.1.3</b> | Fund the purchase of additional capacity if available.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Selectboard                        | Medium<br>Term | \$\$\$ |

- 9.2** Pursue avenues to increase sewer capacity at the Essex Sewer Plant, through changes in permitting or physical changes to the plant, or by other means such as distributed wastewater solutions.

|              |                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                        |                |        |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------|
| <b>9.2.1</b> | Evaluate with the Tri-Town (Essex, Essex Junction, and Williston) and the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources how to increase the permitted capacity of the Sewer Plant. | *Tri-Town*<br>*Vermont Agency of<br>Natural Resources* | Medium<br>Term | \$\$\$ |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------|

|            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                     |                       |          |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| 9.2.2      | Evaluate funding sources including state grants, zero interest loans or other funding sources for upgrades to the physical plant as needed.                                                                                    | *Tri-Town*<br>*Vermont Agency of Natural Resources* | Long Term             | \$\$\$\$ |
| 9.2.3      | Evaluate the feasibility of distributed wastewater solutions.                                                                                                                                                                  | Selectboard                                         | Long Term             | \$\$\$\$ |
| <b>9.3</b> | <b>Monitor usage and plan for sewer, water, and stormwater system maintenance and upgrades in alignment with Town Plan land use goals and growth trends.</b>                                                                   |                                                     |                       |          |
| 9.3.1      | Evaluate uses of GIS software to track the condition of infrastructure assets.                                                                                                                                                 | Public Works                                        | Short Term            | \$       |
| 9.3.2      | Develop training schedule for staff on the use of mobile software to collect data on infrastructure.                                                                                                                           | Public Works                                        | Short Term            | \$       |
| 9.3.3      | Maintain an up-to-date geodatabase of infrastructure assets.                                                                                                                                                                   | Public Works                                        | Short Term<br>Ongoing | \$       |
| 9.3.4      | Develop a projection of needs for future upgrades by incorporating information from asset inventories and include these estimated upgrades into the capital improvement plan and annual operating budget.                      | Public Works                                        | Short Term<br>Ongoing | \$       |
| <b>9.4</b> | <b>Pursue ways to implement universal fixed and mobile broadband service throughout town, with the goal of no “dead zones.”</b>                                                                                                |                                                     |                       |          |
| 9.4.1      | Maintain participation in the Chittenden County Communications Union District (CUD) to provide universal fixed broadband coverage.                                                                                             | Town Manager                                        | Ongoing               | --       |
| 9.4.2      | Evaluate how to leverage existing CUDs and electric utilities to expand and reduce the costs of broadband.                                                                                                                     | Town Manager                                        | Short Term            | \$       |
| 9.4.3      | Evaluate properties and structures that could house cellular communications infrastructure, and partner with service provider(s) to expand service.                                                                            | Town Manager                                        | Short Term            | \$       |
| <b>9.5</b> | <b>Mitigate the impact of VELCO transmission line and the easement corridor on Williston’s land use goals in Taft Corners.</b>                                                                                                 |                                                     |                       |          |
| 9.5.1      | Evaluate creative ways to activate the otherwise undevelopable places within the VELCO transmission easement in Taft Corners (pollinator gardens, pocket parks, etc.).                                                         | Planning                                            | Medium<br>Term        | \$       |
| 9.5.2      | Support the public process for the Vermont Long-Range Transmission Plan as it pertains to infrastructure maintenance, improvements, or expansion of the transmission system within Williston and especially the Growth Center. | Town Manager                                        | Short Term<br>Ongoing | --       |
| 9.5.3      | Develop an advocacy plan for the undergrounding of the VELCO transmission line in Taft Corners Form Based Code district.                                                                                                       | Town Manager                                        | Medium<br>Term        | --       |
| <b>9.6</b> | <b>Monitor utility companies’ long-range planning and participate in the public process.</b>                                                                                                                                   |                                                     |                       |          |
| 9.6.1      | Maintain monitoring of the work of the VELCO Vermont System Planning Committee (VSPC) and Technical Working Group.                                                                                                             | Town Manager                                        | Short Term<br>Ongoing | --       |

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                         |                       |    |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------|----|
| <b>9.6.2</b> | Maintain review of GMP and VEC's Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), which are filed every three years with the Public Utilities Commission, for consistency with Williston's land use and energy equity goals. | Town Manager                            | Short Term<br>Ongoing | -- |
| <b>9.6.3</b> | Support the PUC as it pertains to the goals of the Williston Energy Plan.                                                                                                                                   | Energy Committee<br>Planning Commission | Ongoing               | -- |

# CHAPTER 10 - TRANSPORTATION

## Objectives

- 10.A** Williston evaluates its current bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and has a plan, including adequate funding to upgrade the system over time.
- 10.B** Gaps in the existing multi-use path and sidewalk system are connected with new sidewalks and paths rapidly to create a more interconnected network.
- 10.C** Existing sidewalks and paths are maintained and enhanced where needed.
- 10.D** Bike lanes and space for walking are added to roads where cyclists and walkers feel unsafe.
- 10.E** Transit that is frequent, affordable, and fast enough to compete with driving alone, is available to most people in Williston.
- 10.F** Vehicle congestion on Williston's roads is monitored and intersection and street improvements are made when congestion is predicted to create a safety or accessibility issue. Congestion mitigation is focused on vehicle throughput as opposed to vehicle speed.

## Strategies

- 10.1** Create a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan as an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan. 

| Actions |                                                                                                                                                                          | Responsibility                                     | Timeframe  | Cost |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------|------|
| 10.1.1  | Evaluate the current Bicycle and Pedestrian network in Williston and identify gaps and places in town where bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure is desired.            | Planning Commission<br>Public Works                | Short Term | \$   |
| 10.1.2  | Prioritize “gap closing” bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects based on Williston’s “Livable, Resilient, Equitable” vision as stated in the Comprehensive Plan. | Planning Commission<br>Public Works<br>Selectboard | Short Term | \$   |
| 10.1.3  | Evaluate and rank projects called for by the Plan in terms of cost, effectiveness, relative difficulty to implement, and population served.                              | Planning Commission<br>Public Works<br>Selectboard | Short Term | \$   |
| 10.1.4  | Review the Plan on an annual basis to assess progress towards goals. Consider adopting a few key performance indicators to facilitate this periodic assessment.          | Planning Commission<br>Public Works<br>Selectboard | Short Term | \$   |

- 10.2** Use the Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to pursue scoping, design, and construction of the projects it calls for.



|             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                              |             |                                                                                     |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10.2.1      | Develop bicycle and pedestrian projects using the Chittenden County Unified Work Program (CCRPC UPWP) annual process to request technical assistance.                                                                                                                                                                                     | Planning Commission Selectboard              | Medium Term | \$                                                                                  |
| 10.2.2      | Partner with Local Motion to seek out Federal and State grant opportunities to fund bike and pedestrian paths.                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Planning Staff/ WOTM                         | Short Term  | \$                                                                                  |
| 10.2.3      | Fund the appropriate local match for these scoping and design efforts in the Planning Department Operating budget.                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Planning Commission Selectboard              | Medium Term | \$\$                                                                                |
| <b>10.3</b> | <b>Advance the Williston Road Multimodal Path from feasibility scoping through design to construction. This project has much community support and should be advanced.</b>                                                                                                                                                                |                                              |             |                                                                                     |
| 10.3.1      | Develop further scoping to identify constraints such as wetlands and archaeological resources. Utilize the Chittenden County Unified Work Program (CCRPC UPWP) to fund this.                                                                                                                                                              | Planning Commission Public Works Selectboard | Short Term  | \$\$                                                                                |
| 10.3.2      | Fund the complete design and construction of the path. Procure local match through a combination of bond and impact fees.                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Planning Commission Selectboard              | Short Term  | \$\$                                                                                |
| <b>10.4</b> | <b>Evaluate ways to adequately fund the more rapid buildout of needed bicycle and pedestrian facilities.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                              |             |  |
| 10.4.1      | Prioritize the development of a “penny on the rate” style ballot question on a Town Meeting Ballot to request Williston voters dedicate funds to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.                                                                                                                                                   | Selectboard                                  | Short Term  | --                                                                                  |
| 10.4.2      | Evaluate projects that can be funded using the Tax Increment Financing tool available to Vermont municipalities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Planning                                     | Short Term  | \$                                                                                  |
| 10.4.3      | Evaluate the feasibility of a new bond for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Planning Public Works                        | Short Term  | \$                                                                                  |
| <b>10.5</b> | <b>Enhance in the viability of transit in Williston. Improve public transit so it better meets the needs of people who work and shop in Taft Corners. Collaborate with Green Mountain Transit to ensure that transit is an attractive option for all people travelling to and from Williston: workers, shoppers, and residents alike.</b> |                                              |             |                                                                                     |
| 10.5.1      | Fund Green Mountain Transit so it can provide transit that is frequent and rapid enough to provide a viable alternative to driving.                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Selectboard                                  | Medium Term | \$\$\$                                                                              |
| 10.5.2      | Evaluate possibilities for transit facilities that improve the transit rider experience and allow transit users to switch modes (biking to or driving and parking at a transit center, for example).                                                                                                                                      | Selectboard                                  | Long Term   | \$\$\$\$                                                                            |
| 10.5.3      | Continue to evaluate options for microtransit or “on-demand” service in Williston.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Selectboard                                  | Medium Term | \$\$                                                                                |
| 10.5.4      | Develop advocacy plan for direct transit routes in Williston that support frequency of service.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Planning Commission                          | Short Term  | --                                                                                  |

## **10.6 Build the “grid streets” in Taft Corners to distribute vehicle traffic and enhance connectivity.**

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                          |                |          |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|----------|
| <b>10.6.1</b> | Maintain the provision of impact fee offsets for the private funding and construction of grid streets.                                                                                                                                                    | Selectboard              | Ongoing        | \$       |
| <b>10.6.2</b> | Implement tax increment financing, special assessment districts, bonding, or other mechanisms to fund grid street construction.                                                                                                                           | Selectboard              | Short Term     | \$\$\$\$ |
| <b>10.6.3</b> | Evaluate the possibility of taking portions of Route 2 and/or Route 2A as Class I Town Highways so they can be reconfigured to be more bicycle and pedestrian friendly and be configured to a design that better serves their function as “Main Streets.” | Planning<br>Public Works | Medium<br>Term | \$\$     |

## **10.7 Re-evaluate the Transportation Impact Fee and Impact Fee Project List.**

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                        |            |      |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------|------|
| <b>10.7.1</b> | Evaluate the transportation Impact Fee in light of rising construction costs and predicted development to ensure new development pays its “fair share” to mitigate the new traffic it creates. | Planning<br>Commission<br>Public Works | Short Term | \$\$ |
| <b>10.7.2</b> | Evaluate the impact of the transportation impact fee on infill, redevelopment and the creation of new housing to ensure desirable new development is not impeded by the fee.                   | Planning<br>Commission                 | Short Term | \$\$ |

## **10.8 Strengthen standards for access, connectivity, sidewalks, multi-use path, and trail connections in all zoning districts.**

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                    |                |    |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|----|
| <b>10.8.1</b> | Develop a consistent, quantitative standard for when sidewalk or path construction is required and when an easement alone is sufficient.                                                                      | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Medium<br>Term | -- |
| <b>10.8.2</b> | Evaluate ways of incentivizing and requiring path and trail connections without the Growth Management scoring system.                                                                                         | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Medium<br>Term | -- |
| <b>10.8.3</b> | Maintain requirements for safe and convenient short- and long-term bicycle storage and end-of-trip facilities for new development and for amendments to existing development when appropriate.                | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Ongoing        | -- |
| <b>10.8.4</b> | Maintain policy for consolidated driveway access on arterials and collector roads and the build out of a grid-street network.                                                                                 | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Medium<br>Term | -- |
| <b>10.8.5</b> | Evaluate and modify the number of units and intensity of development served by a single point of access, driveway, and loop road.                                                                             | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Medium<br>Time | -- |
| <b>10.8.6</b> | Evaluate the Public Works Specifications to provide for street and right-of-way design that prioritizes pedestrians and cyclists and slower vehicle speeds for roads serving residential and mixed-use areas. | Public Works<br>Selectboard        | Medium<br>Term | -- |

## **10.9 Create a “park-once” environment in Taft Corners to reduce vehicular traffic and more effectively utilize the land area.**

|               |                                                                                                      |                     |            |    |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------|----|
| <b>10.9.1</b> | Develop bylaw amendments to reduce or eliminate parking minimums and require shared parking instead. | Planning Commission | Short Term | -- |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------|----|

|                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                          |                |          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------|----------|
| <b>10.9.2</b>                                                                                                                 | Evaluate pedestrian connections between parking locations and destinations. Update Williston's Official Map to identify and prioritize the construction of "missing link" pedestrian connections.                                                             | Planning Commission<br>Public Works      | Medium<br>Term | \$\$\$\$ |
| <b>10.9.3</b>                                                                                                                 | Develop public facilities that enhance transit, bicycling, and walking in Taft Corners and beyond; such as public benches, a multimodal hub at Maple tree Place, and public bicycle racks where none are currently available.                                 | Planning<br>Public Works<br>Town Manager | Long Term      | \$\$\$\$ |
| <b>10.10 Design and build new Taft Corners streets for slow-moving traffic and to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                          |                |          |
| <b>10.10.1</b>                                                                                                                | Evaluate the feasibility of allowing or requiring 10-foot-wide travel lanes in some or all of the new Street Specifications that were adopted in 2022 as part of the Taft Corners Form-Based Code, many of which allow for 11- or 10-foot-wide travel lanes.  | Planning<br>Public Works                 | Short Term     | --       |
| <b>10.10.2</b>                                                                                                                | Evaluate the Form-based Code Street Specifications Map to ensure a complete bicycle network will be created as these streets are built over time. Ensure where possible that all streets that provide an off-street cycle track are connected to one another. | Planning<br>Public Works                 | Short Term     | --       |

# CHAPTER 11 - ENERGY AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE

## Objectives

- 11.A** Williston enjoys a low overall energy burden rating, but we're committed to prioritizing those who are most energy burdened and are well-informed about ways to decarbonize and make their homes more energy efficient and how to fund those measures.
- 11.B** The town administration and staff are well-informed about funding opportunities and changes to state and federal policies as they relate to energy plan goals and objectives.
- 11.C** The town's land-use policies embrace smart and sustainable growth.
- 11.D** By 2050, Williston has made substantial progress on its energy and climate goals:
- Per-capita energy consumption has been reduced by more than a third.
  - Greenhouse gas emissions have been reduced by 80% below 1990 levels.
  - The amount of renewable energy generation has doubled from 2015 levels.
  - 90% of homes and 50% of commercial buildings have been weatherized.
  - 98% of light-duty vehicles in Williston are electric.
  - 100% of the light-duty vehicles in the municipal fleet are electric.
  - 96% of heavy-duty municipal vehicles are fueled with renewable resources.
  - 95% of homes are equipped with cold climate heat pumps.
- 11.E** Public transit is frequent and reliable enough to be a viable alternative to driving a car.
- 11.F** The town's multimodal network is fully connected, making it safe to walk and bike as a regular means of transportation.

## Strategies

- 11.1** Partner with others such as Drive Electric Vermont to conduct outreach related to electric vehicles, with the goal to increase the rate of EV adoption.

| Actions |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Responsibility   | Timeframe | Cost |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------|------|
| 11.1.1  | Develop plans for high-visibility events where people can see Electric Vehicles (EVs), such as energy fairs and other community events.                                                                                             | Energy Committee | Ongoing   | \$   |
| 11.1.2  | Develop outreach campaign to promote resources such as Drive Electric Vermont, Green Mountain Power and Vermont Electric Cooperative websites, which connect users to financial incentives, dealers, and charging stations for EVs. | Energy Committee | Ongoing   | --   |
| 11.1.3  | Maintain facilitation and promotion of the EV Ambassador program by regularly posting on Front Porch Forum and other media to solicit new Ambassadors and to publicize the program to potential electric vehicle purchasers.        | Energy Committee | Ongoing   | --   |

## 11.2 Work to expand the number of publicly available EV chargers in Williston.

|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                    |            |      |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------|------|
| 11.2.1 | Support the installation of additional EV chargers where they are needed, partnering with developers and leveraging all available local, state, federal and private funding sources.                                                                                                       | Selectboard                        | Short Term | \$\$ |
| 11.2.2 | Support local utilities, Drive Electric Vermont, Vermont Clean Communities Coalition, and other organizations to promote the expansion of workplace charging, which would provide a convenient and consistently available charging location for people who are not able to charge at home. | Energy Committee                   | Short Term | --   |
| 11.2.3 | Maintain support for and incentivize the installation of EV chargers in development standards.                                                                                                                                                                                             | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Short Term | --   |
| 11.2.4 | Develop standards for EV charging in new developments.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Short Term | --   |

## 11.3 Electrify the town light-duty vehicle fleet.

|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                             |                |      |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|------|
| 11.3.1 | Implement the recommended steps in the (pending) VEIC Fleet Electrification Plan, which will establish a schedule to replace current town vehicles with EVs.                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Town Manager<br>Selectboard | Medium<br>Term | \$\$ |
| 11.3.2 | Support Car Share Vermont to pilot an electric vehicle for use by town staff and the public, as a way to test EVs out and become comfortable with them.                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Town Manager<br>Selectboard | Short Term     | \$   |
| 11.3.3 | Implement installation of the recommended number of Level 2 EV chargers to support town fleet electrification.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Town Manager<br>Selectboard | Medium<br>Term | \$\$ |
| 11.3.4 | Develop a plan to leverage all available local, state, federal and private funding sources to replace town vehicles at the end of their useful life with electric vehicles.                                                                                                                                                                                           | Town Manager<br>Selectboard | Medium<br>Term | \$\$ |
| 11.3.5 | Evaluate adopting a policy requiring an alternatives analysis for the purchase of new light-duty vehicles, to be prepared by department heads in conjunction with the Capital Budget. This analysis should include a comparison of the upfront and lifecycle costs of conventional and electric vehicles and should explore available leasing and purchasing options. | Town Manager<br>Selectboard | Short Term     | --   |

## 11.4 Support further expansion and improvement of public transit and provide greater connectivity between public transit, park-and-ride locations and places of work.

|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |             |            |        |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------|--------|
| 11.4.1 | Develop local park and ride spaces in the Village (Town Hall) and in the town-owned parcel in Maple Tree Place (MTP).                                                                                                                        | Selectboard | Short Term | \$     |
| 11.4.2 | Support Green Mountain Transit (GMT), Chittenden County municipalities and other entities in creating a diverse mobility solution, such as micro transit, to connect the residential areas of Williston to the Taft Corners commercial area. | Selectboard | Long Term  | \$\$\$ |

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                             |             |          |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|----------|
| <b>11.4.3</b> | Develop a mobility hub on the MTP town-owned parcel.                                                                                                                                                                        | Selectboard                 | Long Term   | \$\$\$\$ |
| <b>11.5</b>   | <b>Encourage transit use, telecommuting, carpooling, vanpooling, walking, and biking for town employees' commute trips.</b>                                                                                                 |                             |             |          |
| <b>11.5.1</b> | Evaluate becoming a member of Chittenden Area Transportation Management Association (CATMA). Partner with CATMA to conduct outreach to local businesses on the adoption of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) policies. | Selectboard                 | Short Term  | \$       |
| <b>11.5.2</b> | Develop policies to encourage bike commuting, carpooling, etc. for Town Staff.                                                                                                                                              | Selectboard                 | Short Term  | \$       |
| <b>11.6</b>   | <b>Support and encourage walking and biking to school. Work to close the gaps in the multimodal network, starting with areas walkable to the schools.</b>                                                                   |                             |             |          |
| <b>11.6.1</b> | Support Local Motion's Safe Routes to School. Town staff should participate in the monthly walks to school.                                                                                                                 | Town Departments            | Ongoing     | --       |
| <b>11.6.2</b> | Support Williston on the Move to improve bike and pedestrian infrastructure.                                                                                                                                                | Planning                    | Ongoing     | --       |
| <b>11.7</b>   | <b>The Town should take steps to decarbonize and improve the energy efficiency of municipal buildings.</b>                                                                                                                  |                             |             |          |
| <b>11.7.1</b> | Maintain annual monitoring of energy used in town buildings and publish a summary in the Capital Improvement Program report.                                                                                                | Planning                    | Ongoing     | --       |
| <b>11.7.2</b> | Implement the recommended measures in the Fire Station and Police Station building assessments.                                                                                                                             | Town Manager<br>Selectboard | Short Term  | --       |
| <b>11.7.3</b> | Evaluate feasibility of capturing wastewater heat recovery, adding turbines for net-metering, and working with EVT on flexible load management to reduce electricity demand and cost.                                       | Town Manager<br>Selectboard | Short Term  | \$       |
| <b>11.7.4</b> | Develop a plan for other town buildings and budget for implementation measures to be included in the town's capital improvement program.                                                                                    | Town Manager<br>Selectboard | Short Term  | --       |
| <b>11.7.5</b> | Develop plan to phase out the use of fossil fuel powered equipment by replacing it with electric powered equipment at the end of existing equipment's lifecycle.                                                            | Town Manager                | Medium Term | \$\$     |
| <b>11.8</b>   | <b>The town should develop sustainable means of funding renewable energy, electrification and energy conservation projects.</b>                                                                                             |                             |             |          |
| <b>11.8.1</b> | Develop an internal (municipal) revolving loan program to fund renewable energy, electrification and energy conservation projects. Return a portion of energy.                                                              | Selectboard                 | Short Term  | \$\$     |
| <b>11.8.2</b> | Develop plan to leverage town funds with all other available sources of funding including grants, rebates and tax credits.                                                                                                  | Town Manager                | Ongoing     | --       |
| <b>11.9</b>   | <b>Support and encourage residents and business owners to weatherize and decarbonize their homes/businesses. Prioritize those who are most energy burdened.</b>                                                             |                             |             |          |
| <b>11.9.1</b> | Support partners such as Efficiency Vermont to conduct outreach and offer educational resources about ways to fund energy efficiency and electrification measures.                                                          | Energy Committee            | Ongoing     | --       |

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                  |         |    |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------|----|
| <b>11.9.2</b> | Maintain hosting an annual Energy Fair that brings together vendors, partners, and EV Ambassadors to showcase EVs, electric lawn equipment, the latest heat pump technologies and other resources related to weatherization and electrification measures.                                                                                     | Energy Committee | Ongoing | \$ |
| <b>11.9.3</b> | Develop schedule for pop-up events periodically in conjunction with town events and farmers markets to share information about energy conservation and electrification strategies.                                                                                                                                                            | Energy Committee | Ongoing | \$ |
| <b>11.9.4</b> | Develop and distribute free Energy Saving Kits and materials to those who need them and leverage these opportunities to build trust in the community, to encourage community members to seek information and assistance from the Committee and Energy Planner on how to reduce energy burdens. Where practicable, meet people where they are. | Energy Committee | Ongoing | \$ |
| <b>11.9.5</b> | Maintain organization of workshops and/or building walk-throughs highlighting demonstration projects completed by residents, businesses, the Town or the State.                                                                                                                                                                               | Energy Committee | Ongoing | \$ |

## **11.10 Continue to implement land-use policies that embrace smart and sustainable growth.**

|                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                 |         |    |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------|----|
| <b>11.10.1</b> | Maintain policy to pursue a land use and transportation strategy centered on mixed-use, compact development in the town's Growth Center.                                                                                                                                                                         | Planning Commission Selectboard | Ongoing | -- |
| <b>11.10.2</b> | Maintain policy to support the development of high- intensity land uses within the town's designated Growth Center to result in a compact development pattern that supports and encourages driving fewer miles, the use of transit, ride-sharing, and active forms of transportation like bicycling and walking. | Planning Commission Selectboard | Ongoing | -- |
| <b>11.10.3</b> | Maintain promotion of green infrastructure practices in development standards to reduce local temperatures and shade sidewalks and building surfaces.                                                                                                                                                            | Planning Commission Selectboard | Ongoing | -- |

## **11.11 The town should increase its renewable energy production, and pair with battery storage.**

|                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                              |             |        |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|--------|
| <b>11.10.1</b> | Evaluate opportunities to install new solar arrays on preferred sites – meaning rooftops and parking lot solar canopies.                                                                                                                                                    | Energy Committee Selectboard | Medium Term | \$\$\$ |
| <b>11.10.2</b> | Evaluate opportunities to pair renewable energy generation with electrical energy storage to ensure energy is utilized to the fullest potential, to increase resilience/reliability of electrical system during outages and decrease fossil fuel usage during peak periods. | Energy Committee Selectboard | Short Term  | \$     |
| <b>11.10.3</b> | Develop a site feasibility analysis for installing a rooftop solar array and storage at the Fire Station.                                                                                                                                                                   | Planning Staff               | Short Term  | \$     |
| <b>11.10.4</b> | Evaluate feasibility for rooftop solar arrays at school buildings in collaboration with CVSD.                                                                                                                                                                               | Energy Committee             | Short Term  | \$     |
| <b>11.10.5</b> | Fund grants, local funds and tax credits to construct new solar arrays where it is feasible.                                                                                                                                                                                | Energy Committee Selectboard | Medium Term | \$\$\$ |



|                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                 |                |        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|--------|
| <b>11.10.6</b>                                                                                                              | Evaluate the feasibility and cost of establishing microgrids for the Town's critical infrastructure (such as emergency shelters) so as to allow continued operations during outages and storms while reducing carbon emissions. | Energy Committee<br>Selectboard | Medium<br>Term | \$\$\$ |
| <b>11.12 Encourage and support new solar arrays and community solar in Williston.</b>                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                 |                |        |
| <b>11.12.1</b>                                                                                                              | Develop outreach plan for available funding resources and/or programs for private solar installations.                                                                                                                          | Energy Committee                | Short Term     | --     |
| <b>11.12.2</b>                                                                                                              | Develop outreach plan regarding community solar programs for properties at which the installation of a solar array is not feasible due to site or other constraints.                                                            | Energy Committee                | Short Term     | --     |
| <b>11.13 Design and build new Taft Corners streets for slow-moving traffic and to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians.</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                 |                |        |
| <b>11.13.1</b>                                                                                                              | Evaluate the feasibility of incorporating geothermal network into new development in partnership with VGS and property owners.                                                                                                  | Energy Committee                | Short Term     | --     |
| <b>11.13.2</b>                                                                                                              | Evaluate avenues of funding a geothermal network if determined feasible.                                                                                                                                                        | Energy Committee                | Medium<br>Term | --     |

# CHAPTER 12 - HAZARD MITIGATION

## Objectives

- 12.A** Williston is well prepared for emergencies and maintains a Resiliency Hub, which is a community-serving facility augmented to support residents, coordinate communication, and distribute resources during an emergency or other critical event.
- 12.B** Williston plans appropriately for growth with a focus on climate change resilience.
- 12.C** Williston's existing and planned municipal infrastructure is well-protected from hazards.
- 12.D** Williston power systems and grid are resilient and can withstand severe weather events with minimal disruptions to service.
- 12.E** Stormwater management systems and infrastructure are resilient.
- 12.F** Flooding and fluvial erosion results in minimal damage to structures and infrastructure.
- 12.G** The town facilitates strong and caring community relationships and neighbors help each other out.
- 12.H** The town maintains effective communication channels.
- 12.I** Town 'knowledge infrastructure' is in place that helps guide people, raises awareness of issues and what to do.
- 12.J** The town has communication networks with vulnerable populations and prioritizes them during emergencies.

## Strategies

- 12.1** Ensure that local plans are regularly updated and well-coordinated with Regional, State, and Federal Plans.

| Actions       |                                                                                                                                            | Responsibility | Timeframe | Cost |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|------|
| <b>12.1.1</b> | Support CCRPC and State Agencies on updates to State and Regional Plans.                                                                   | Town Manager   | Ongoing   | --   |
| <b>12.1.2</b> | Implement the Annex 17 Williston Chittenden County Multi-Jurisdictional All Hazards Mitigation Plan.                                       | Town Manager   | Ongoing   | \$\$ |
| <b>12.1.3</b> | Maintain annual updates to the Williston Local Emergency Operations Plan (LOEP).                                                           | Town Manager   | Ongoing   | --   |
| <b>12.1.4</b> | Develop a Local Resiliency Hub Plan for Extreme Temperature Preparedness (cooling/heating shelters), power banks, and radio communication. | Town Manager   | Ongoing   | --   |

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                              |                       |                                                                                       |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 12.1.5      | Develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan for Williston, support the Town Fire Warden Program, and coordinate with the ANR Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation.                                                                        | Town Manager                                 | Ongoing               | \$                                                                                    |
| <b>12.2</b> | <b>Maintain and develop effective, resilient communication strategies.</b>                                                                                                                                                                       |                                              |                       |                                                                                       |
| 12.2.1      | Evaluate ways to expand functional broadband coverage in areas not currently well served.                                                                                                                                                        | Town Manager                                 | Short Term<br>Ongoing | --                                                                                    |
| 12.2.2      | Develop plan to coordinate with mobile carriers to ensure that infrastructure not only provides town-wide coverage but is also equipped with an emergency generator in the MTSO to ensure uninterrupted service in the event of a power failure. | Town Manager                                 | Short Term            | --                                                                                    |
| 12.2.3      | Implement improvements to Local Emergency Services Radio Communication.                                                                                                                                                                          | Town Manager                                 | Short Term            | --                                                                                    |
| 12.2.4      | Develop a promotion campaign to encourage Williston residents to participate in OnCall Vermont or other state volunteer programs for emergency services and preparedness.                                                                        | Town Manager                                 | Short Term<br>Ongoing | --                                                                                    |
| 12.2.5      | Develop capacity to engage local and state volunteers in hazard mitigation education, planning, and emergency response.                                                                                                                          | Emergency<br>Management Director             | Short Term            | \$                                                                                    |
| 12.2.6      | Evaluate and engage vulnerable populations in hazard mitigation planning opportunities.                                                                                                                                                          | Emergency<br>Management Director<br>Planning | Short Term            | \$                                                                                    |
| 12.2.7      | Maintain plan to mitigate threats to data security by implementing cybersecurity best practices for town technology and asset management.                                                                                                        | Town Manager                                 | Ongoing               | \$                                                                                    |
| 12.2.8      | Develop outreach to citizens regarding cybersecurity threats and connect seniors to the Vermont Consumer Assistance Program.                                                                                                                     | Town Manager                                 | Short Term            | \$                                                                                    |
| 12.2.9      | Develop digital services for all town public services and inter-department communications to ensure all town services and procedures can be conducted in-person and online/remotely.                                                             | Town Manager                                 | Short Term            | \$\$                                                                                  |
| <b>12.3</b> | <b>Maintain and strengthen regulatory requirements of the National Floodplain Insurance Program (NFIP).</b>                                                                                                                                      |                                              |                       |  |
| 12.3.1      | Implement the designation of a floodplain manager and follow the best practices of Flood Ready Vermont and as appropriate for Williston.                                                                                                         | Town Manager                                 | Ongoing               | \$                                                                                    |
| 12.3.2      | Maintain existing flood hazard regulations in the WDB and update when needed to respond to evolving best practices.                                                                                                                              | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard           | Ongoing               | --                                                                                    |

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                     |                    |        |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------|
| 12.3.3      | Develop application to the FEMA Community Rating System (CRS) and become a CRS Community.                                                                                                                                                                                 | Selectboard                                         | Medium Term        | \$     |
| <b>12.4</b> | <b>The Town will maintain accurate and updated inventories of all its assets, and proactively plan to fund asset repairs and replacements, with the goal to maintain infrastructure that is resilient to natural and human-caused hazards.</b>                            |                                                     |                    |        |
| 12.4.1      | Develop design specifications and require future streets, paths, water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure to be resilient to a changing climate and potential hazards.                                                                                                 | Public Works Selectboard                            | Medium Term        | \$\$\$ |
| 12.4.2      | Develop new and retrofit existing critical facilities to withstand the impacts of identified hazards.                                                                                                                                                                     | Selectboard                                         | Medium Term        | \$\$\$ |
| 12.4.3      | Develop schedule of regular updates of stormwater plans and procedures for consistency with mitigation goals.                                                                                                                                                             | Public Works                                        | Short Term         | --     |
| 12.4.4      | Evaluate funding and capacity to maintain public infrastructure and support upgrades as needed.                                                                                                                                                                           | Public Works                                        | Ongoing            | \$\$\$ |
| 12.4.5      | Develop and maintain accurate inventories of town-owned stormwater infrastructure.                                                                                                                                                                                        | Public Works                                        | Short Term Ongoing | \$     |
| 12.4.6      | Evaluate potential for micro-grids on town property, powered by onsite renewable energy to help mitigate the effects of a commercial power interruption.                                                                                                                  | Selectboard                                         | Medium Term        | \$\$\$ |
| 12.4.7      | Develop plans for maintenance and updates to ditching, culverts, and closed stormwater systems that are based on road and pipe inventories to prioritize the most urgent locations and mitigate damage from stormwater and flooding.                                      | Public Works                                        | Medium Term        | \$\$\$ |
| <b>12.5</b> | <b>Ensure the Town's Land Use Regulations support climate change resilience goals.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                     |                    |        |
| 12.5.1      | Maintain regular review and updates to land development regulations for consistency with climate change mitigation and resilience goals.                                                                                                                                  | Planning Commission Selectboard                     | Short Term         | --     |
| 12.5.2      | Support private utilities in developing a plan to bury existing utilities underground to be resilient to extreme weather events. Ensure there are redundancies in systems. Partner with GMP to underground utilities and/or provide battery backup to outage prone areas. | Green Mountain Power Vermont Electric Co-op +others | Medium Term        | \$     |
| 12.5.3      | Maintain requirements that all utilities in new developments are buried underground.                                                                                                                                                                                      | Planning Commission Selectboard                     | Ongoing            | --     |

# CHAPTER 13 - LAND-BASED CONSERVATION RESOURCES

## Objectives

- 13.A** By 2050, Williston has permanently protected 30% of its land area through conservation easements and acquisitions.
- 13.B** Conservation resources throughout Williston are protected for the significant benefits they provide for soil health, water quality, groundwater recharge, biological diversity, climate change resilience, and outdoor recreational opportunities.
- 13.C** There is abundant opportunity and accessibility for public use of rural lands including trails, parks and community gathering spaces in rural Williston.
- 13.D** Local food producers are well-supported, diverse, and sustainable; the local food system makes the town more resilient by using practices that steward healthy soils and clean water.
- 13.E** Wildlife populations are abundant and thriving because large habitat blocks and their linkages have been protected, and wildlife has space to move from one habitat block to another.
- 13.F** Public open spaces are welcoming and accessible to all.
- 13.G** Town-owned forests and agricultural lands are managed in a manner to strengthen local food systems, minimize harmful agricultural practices, use nature-based solutions, enhance resource and habitat conservation.

## Strategies

- 13.1** Invest and utilize the Environmental Reserve Fund to ensure the town can achieve its land conservation goal of conserving 30% of Williston's land by 2050.

| Actions |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Responsibility                                    | Timeframe  | Cost |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|------------|------|
| 13.1.1  | Fund the ERF annually—such as by maintaining the half-penny on the tax rate—at a contribution level that is proportional to reaching the 30x50 goal based upon market conditions.                                                                                                                                                | Selectboard<br>Voters                             | Ongoing    | \$\$ |
| 13.1.2  | Develop policy to manage and ethically invest the ERF funds in a manner that both grows the fund balance while ensuring liquidity to be available when a conservation opportunity arises (e.g., annual CDs).                                                                                                                     | Selectboard<br>Town Manager<br>Finance            | Short Term | --   |
| 13.1.3  | Implement updates to the methodology for ERF Prioritization List and map to ensure that the map reflects the goals of this plan, equity and inclusion, equitable distribution of public open space throughout town, the current demands of land conservation in the region, and considers potential impacts from climate change. | Conservation<br>Commission<br>Planning Commission | Ongoing    | \$   |
| 13.1.4  | Maintain policy to act efficiently to acquire land or easements when the opportunity arises.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Selectboard<br>Town Manager<br>Finance            | Ongoing    | --   |

## 13.2 Public & Private Land Management.

|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                     |             |    |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----|
| 13.2.1 | Evaluate the feasibility and benefit of a Williston or multi-town Land Trust to conserve parcels or manage conservation easements for parcels that are not prioritized by larger or regional Land Trusts.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Conservation Commission Selectboard                                 | Medium Term | \$ |
| 13.2.2 | Develop a land management policy for town-owned land to support pollinators, wildlife habitat, and regenerative agricultural practices for agricultural land leases. Evaluate and adjust land management practices on parcels such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town-owned water tower parcel north of Mountain View Road (ID 09-012-081-001)</li> <li>Lambert Lane Meadow (ID 15-104-160-000)</li> <li>Mahan Farm Conservation Area south of Williston Road (ID 08-104-050-000)</li> </ul> | Conservation Commission Public Works Selectboard                    | Ongoing     | \$ |
| 13.2.3 | Maintain and improve existing and new community gardens on Town property and collaborate with the schools on school district property.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Conservation Commission Public Works Recreation & Parks Selectboard | Short Term  | \$ |
| 13.2.4 | Evaluate and develop an invasive species management plan that does not villainize a species based on temporal and boundary divisions and instead address the ecosystem imbalances that the species is responding to or filling the niche of.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Conservation Commission Public Works Recreation & Parks Selectboard | Medium Term | \$ |

## 13.3 Maintain and establish Country Parks with a prioritization of the Growth Center which currently lacks public parks.

|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                     |             |    |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|----|
| 13.3.1 | Evaluate, revise, and/or develop new management plans – as applicable for each area – for the existing and proposed country parks and conservations areas, as applicable for each area in a manner that balances recreational use, conservation values, forestry and agricultural economy, invasive species management.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Conservation Commission Selectboard | Short Term  | -- |
| 13.3.2 | Develop a prioritization strategy and evaluate establishing new country parks and conservation areas at the following , in no particular order: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abazimenahanik (Tree Island), south of Allen Brook School</li> <li>Town-owned land between Finney Crossing, Katie Lane, and Brennan Wood north of the Allen Brook</li> <li>The Burr Oak Knoll south of Cottonwood Crossing and east of Maple Tree Place</li> <li>Town-owned Brownell Mountain</li> <li>The Jacob-Krantz parcel in collaboration with the Winooski Valley Park District (WVPD)</li> </ul> | Conservation Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | \$ |

## 13.4

### Evaluate and amend land use regulations and other town policies to protect natural resources, support working landscapes, and respond to changing economic and environmental climates.

|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                               |             |    |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----|
| 13.4.1 | Evaluate and revise land use regulations to allow a diverse range of uses to support working landscapes such as agriculture and on-farm businesses, fee-based recreation, hospitality, and educational activities.                                                                                  | Conservation Commission<br>Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| 13.4.2 | Evaluate and revise the visual resource protection standards of the WDB, including an update to the 1980 Visual Resource Assessment Map. Prioritize important views through Official Map.                                                                                                           | Planning Commission<br>Conservation Commission                | Medium Term | \$ |
| 13.4.3 | Implement revisions to the zoning district specific standards – particularly Chapters 31 Agricultural Rural Residential Zoning District (ARZD) and 39 Residential Zoning District (RZD)—based on the conservation area and water health standards of Chapter 27 and 29.                             | Conservation Commission<br>Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Medium Term | \$ |
| 13.4.4 | Evaluate and amend land use regulations to strengthen habitat protections, Habitat Disturbance Assessments, mitigation measures, and right-size protections for small- and infill-projects. Include past land disturbance and land use history in the habitat or watershed health protection value. | Conservation Commission<br>Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Medium Term | \$ |

## 13.5

### Work with partners, neighboring communities and private landowners to implement programs that furthers climate change resilience and other town goals.

|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                |             |    |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------|----|
| 13.5.1 | Maintain regular updates of data regarding natural resources, endangered, rare, and/or unique species, trail and park usage to support the evaluation strategies of this and other town plan chapters.                                                                   | Conservation Commission<br>Planning Commission | Medium Term | \$ |
| 13.5.2 | Develop partnerships with neighboring communities in regard to natural resources, habitat blocks, water source and watersheds that span town boundaries.                                                                                                                 | Conservation Commission<br>Selectboard         | Medium Term | \$ |
| 13.5.3 | Develop partnership with neighboring communities in regard to country parks, trails, and recreational resources that span town boundaries or could connect communities.                                                                                                  | Conservation Commission<br>Selectboard         | Medium Term | \$ |
| 13.5.4 | Develop an outreach and resolution strategy to mitigate and reduce human-wildlife conflicts and the denigration of plant and animal ecosystems, including plants considered invasive due to temporal and spatial divides that differentiate native vs. invasive species. | Conservation Commission                        | Medium Term | \$ |
| 13.5.5 | Develop an outreach program for Current Use to support agricultural and forestry businesses, monitor the success of this program and advocate to the legislature for improvements that can benefit working lands in Williston.                                           | Conservation Commission<br>Selectboard         | Medium Term | \$ |
| 13.5.6 | Evaluate methods and policies through which the Town can support and encourage private landowners to manage their resources for the production of food, forest, and earth products; wildlife, scenic views; and outdoor recreation.                                      | Conservation Commission<br>Selectboard         | Medium Term | \$ |



|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                     |            |    |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------|----|
| <b>13.5.7</b> | Develop partnerships with organizations such as Winooski Valley Park District, Fellowship of the Wheel, and Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports to maintain and develop new parks and trails, including developing new or existing trails for ADA accessibility. | Conservation Commission Selectboard | Short Term | \$ |
| <b>13.5.8</b> | Develop an outreach program between the town, private landowners, other municipalities, land trusts, and land-based organizations such as trail clubs to assist with land management and conservation in support of good stewardship.                        | Conservation Commission Planning    | Short Term | \$ |
| <b>13.5.9</b> | Evaluate and assess the value of return on the investment of annual dues and benefits received from the Winooski Valley Parks District (WVPD). Evaluate if funds can be better utilized by the town to develop new parks in Williston.                       | Selectboard                         | Short Term | -  |

# CHAPTER 14 - WATERSHED RESOURCES

## Objectives

- 14.A** Manage stormwater in compliance with State permits.
- 14.B** Improve Williston's watershed health by investing in the stormwater program, working with landowners, protecting and enhancing ecological resources that benefit water quality, and coordinating with other organizations, neighboring towns, and the state.
- 14.C** Improve Williston's flood resilience by directing development away from vulnerable areas and by permanently protecting high priority areas within riparian corridors.
- 14.D** Manage stormwater in Taft Corners communally rather than on a parcel-by-parcel basis, to reduce the environmental footprint of those systems and allow more land to be used for its highest and best use optimal value.
- 14.E** Improve and enhance public access to water resources in town, providing opportunities for recreation and education, which demonstrates the value of water resources and helps connect people with the process to protect those resources.
- 14.F** The town will participate in partnerships to improve the Lake Iroquois ecosystem.
- 14.G** The Town of Williston will work with the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection Division to help protect both groundwater quality and quantity.

## Strategies

- 14.1** The Town of Williston will continue to operate as a Municipal Small Separate Stormwater System (MS4) within the framework established by the Clean Water Act, under the General Permit for MS4s issued by the State of Vermont and the State's stormwater legislation.

| Actions |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Responsibility           | Timeframe  | Cost |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------|------|
| 14.1.1  | Maintain implementation of the Stormwater Management Plan and update as needed.                                                                                                                                                                                          | Public Works             | Ongoing    | \$\$ |
| 14.1.2  | Support regional efforts to implement required public education, outreach and participation.                                                                                                                                                                             | Public Works             | Ongoing    | \$   |
| 14.1.3  | Develop strengthened regulations that limit the impact of land development on water quality. Continue to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these standards and consider referencing new technologies and stormwater management strategies as they are developed. | Planning<br>Public Works | Ongoing    | --   |
| 14.1.4  | Evaluate, in partnership with The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Watershed Management Division staff, the standards of WDB 29 Watershed Health, to ensure that the regulations reflect current best practices and technologies.                  | Planning<br>Public Works | Short Term | --   |

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |              |                       |        |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------|
| <b>14.1.5</b> | Implement the Allen Brook Flow Restoration Plan, with the ultimate goal to utilize stormwater treatment practices (including retrofits to existing systems) that will help improve the water quality of Allen Brook to the point where it is no longer listed as impaired.                                                                                                                                            | Public Works | Short Term<br>Ongoing | \$\$\$ |
| <b>14.1.6</b> | Develop and implement stormwater improvements using Stormwater Program funding. Continue to charge fees based on the amount of a property's impervious surfaces.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Public Works | Ongoing               | \$\$   |
| <b>14.1.7</b> | Evaluate stormwater issues in older developments. Continue to monitor and maintain Town-owned and Town-managed stormwater treatment practices.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Public Works | Ongoing               | \$\$   |
| <b>14.1.8</b> | Implement the Stormwater Program utilizing the DEC Clean Water Program and Funding.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Public Works | Ongoing               | \$     |
| <b>14.2</b>   | <b>The Town should strive to practice low-impact management on its properties by reducing the use of pesticides and fertilizers, by reducing the extent of mowed, heavily managed landscapes, and by reducing the frequency and impact of mowing on those landscapes.</b> ★                                                                                                                                           |              |                       |        |
| <b>14.2.1</b> | Develop an operations policy to minimize mowing of wetlands, buffers, and meadows to prioritize habitat and ecosystem function on town land such as the Town Hall meadow, Allen Brook Field along the recreation path, between the recreation path and Lambert Lane, and the disc golf course. Delineate wetlands to inform decision making, and plan to restore wetlands where practicable.                          | Public Works | Short Term            | --     |
| <b>14.2.2</b> | Develop a plan to reduce the amount of mowed grass on town land and replace it with native and edible plantings to slow runoff, promote infiltration, provide habitat, and edible foods.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Public Works | Short Term            | \$     |
| <b>14.3</b>   | <b>Encourage and support low-impact development.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |              |                       |        |
| <b>14.3.1</b> | Support No Mow May, Raise the Blade and other piloting programs that incentivize landowners to "re- wild" their lawns.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Selectboard  | Medium<br>Term        | \$\$   |
| <b>14.3.2</b> | Support and encourage landowners to plant landscaping that is appropriate for their specific microclimate, for example drought-resistant plants for dry, sandy soils or specific plants for wet clay soils.                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Selectboard  | Short Term            | \$     |
| <b>14.3.3</b> | Support volunteer programs such as the BLUE Program to address stormwater in residential areas. BLUE evaluators educate and collaborate with residents to identify opportunities for stormwater mitigation, such as rain gardens, rain barrels, permeable driveways, infiltration trenches, gutter re-directs, dry wells, etc. to reduce pollutants and phosphorus overload into Williston's waterways <sup>1</sup> . | Public Works | Ongoing               | \$     |

<sup>1</sup> BLUE Williston. Sea Grant Lake Champlain. Accessed on 3/24/2025 at <https://www.uvm.edu/seagrant/blue/blue-williston>

## 14.4

Reevaluate the manner in which stormwater is managed in the Taft Corners Form Based Code district. The current practice of lot-by-lot stormwater management increases the environmental footprint and forces auto-dependency. Stormwater needs to be handled communally (like water or sewer), whether as a Town utility, or via shared responsibility among owners.

|        |                                                                                                                               |                          |             |    |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|----|
| 14.4.1 | Evaluate, via a scoping study, to determine the best location for collective stormwater treatment and any potential barriers. | Public Works Selectboard | Medium Term | \$ |
| 14.4.2 | Evaluate available funding sources to design and implement a collective stormwater system.                                    | Public Works Selectboard | Long Term   | \$ |

## 14.5

The Town will support water quality and stream restoration efforts through the engagement of volunteers led by outside partners like the Winooski NRCD and Friends of Winooski River.

|        |                                                                                                                                                 |                         |             |    |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|----|
| 14.5.1 | Support and coordinate with the City of South Burlington on the planning and funding of targeted restoration projects along the Muddy Brook.    | Conservation Commission | Short Term  | -- |
| 14.5.2 | Evaluate the effectiveness of the previous 2008- 2011 Allen Brook Restoration project on stabilizing stream banks and improving water quality.  | Conservation Commission | Medium Term | \$ |
| 14.5.3 | Evaluate other riparian corridors in Williston and then develop a plan to reforest areas with the help of partner organizations and volunteers. | Conservation Commission | Medium Term | \$ |

## 14.6

Avoid development and protect land in particularly vulnerable areas such as floodplains and river corridors. Permanently protect land within river corridors and floodplains to enhance flood storage capacity and allow streams room to move, so that over time streams will become more stable.



|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                     |                    |    |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|----|
| 14.6.1 | Evaluate the incorporation of river corridors into WDB Chapter 28, in order to assure consistency with State statute and with surrounding towns, and to ensure that the town retains the maximum level of Emergency Relief Assistance Funding. Williston Development Bylaws Chapter 28 regulates development in Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA). All new development, with minor exceptions, is prohibited in the SFHA. | Planning Commission Selectboard     | Short Term Ongoing | -- |
| 14.6.2 | Prioritize parcels to target for acquiring river corridor easements and restoring floodplain.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Conservation Commission             | Short Term         | -- |
| 14.6.3 | Evaluate how to conduct outreach to landowners to discuss opportunities for conservation and/or flood zone protection projects.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Conservation Commission             | Short Term         | \$ |
| 14.6.4 | Fund acquisitions with Environmental Reserve Fund and grant funding.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Conservation Commission Selectboard | Long Term          | \$ |

## 14.7

Maintain, protect, and where possible, enhance access to water resources for recreation and educational opportunities. Some access to water resources is, appropriately, informal; however, the town should evaluate locations where access can be improved and formalized.

|                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                     |             |      |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|------|
| <b>14.7.1</b>  | Evaluate and identify locations for improved public access to water resources in collaboration with partners such as Northern Forest Canoe Trail and Vermont River Conservancy.                                                                                                | Conservation Commission             | Short Term  | --   |
| <b>14.7.2</b>  | Evaluate the cost and feasibility of improving access at select locations.                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Conservation Commission             | Medium Term | \$   |
| <b>14.7.3</b>  | Implement public access improvement projects with a mixture of grants and town funding.                                                                                                                                                                                        | Conservation Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | \$\$ |
| <b>14.8</b>    | <b>Support the efforts of the Lake Iroquois Association and other organizations to improve the water quality of Lake Iroquois.</b>                                                                                                                                             |                                     |             |      |
| <b>16.8.1</b>  | Maintain support of the LIA, through direct funding and in-kind contributions, to help them achieve their mission to restore the lake.                                                                                                                                         | Conservation Commission Selectboard | Ongoing     | \$   |
| <b>14.9</b>    | <b>In light of the town's limited authority to regulate water supplies and wastewater systems, Williston will work with the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation to further the goals of protecting groundwater quality and quantity.</b>                          |                                     |             |      |
| <b>14.9.1</b>  | Maintain compliance with State Wastewater System and Potable Water Supply Rules. Continue to require development applications to include Water and Wastewater system designs and State Water and Wastewater Permit.                                                            | Planning                            | Ongoing     | --   |
| <b>14.9.2</b>  | Support ending the duplicative permitting for development served by municipal water and sewer. To ensure that a wastewater system has been installed as designed, as-built plans must be filed with the Zoning Administrator prior to issuance of a certificate of compliance. | Planning Commission Selectboard     | Short Term  | --   |
| <b>14.9.3</b>  | Evaluate the need to require hydrogeologic studies or whether the town should defer that responsibility to the State since the State is responsible for issuing Water and Wastewater Permits.                                                                                  | Planning Commission Selectboard     | Short Term  | --   |
| <b>14.10</b>   | <b>The Town of Williston will help protect both water quality and quantity in drinking water Source Protection Areas by notifying development proposals to any applicable water suppliers.</b>                                                                                 |                                     |             |      |
| <b>14.10.1</b> | Maintain the practice of notifying the Champlain Water District of development proposals within the Lake Iroquois Source Protection Area.                                                                                                                                      | Planning                            | Ongoing     | --   |
| <b>14.10.2</b> | Maintain support of the LIA, through direct funding and in-kind contributions, to help them achieve their mission to restore the lake.                                                                                                                                         | Planning                            | Ongoing     | --   |

# CHAPTER 15 - FUTURE LAND USE BOUNDARIES

## Objectives

**15.A**

The location of Williston's Future Land Use and Zoning boundaries are fully in support of the Vision and Goals of the 2025 Williston Comprehensive Plan.

**15.B**

When boundaries or zoning standards are considered or change, the Town places the utmost importance on doing so via an open, participatory process that allows participation by all stakeholders.

## Strategies

**15.1**

Maintain the balance between rural and suburban, industrial and urban parts of Williston.

| Actions       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Responsibility                     | Timeframe | Cost |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|------|
| <b>15.1.1</b> | Maintain the boundary of the Agricultural/Rural Residential Zoning District (ARZD) and future Land Use designation for the duration of this Comprehensive Plan. "Keep the rural, rural" in Williston. The Town acknowledges that there will be development pressure to expand denser residential zoning into the ARZD and that there are locations (such as along Mountain View Road or Oak Hill Road just south of Interstate 89) where there are "pipes in the ground" and existing infrastructure that could eventually serve greater densities and intensities of development than are planned for or allowed in these areas.                                                                                                                                                                                        | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Ongoing   | --   |
| <b>15.1.2</b> | Maintain the boundaries of Williston's Sewer Service Area where they do not extend further into the ARZD. Williston's Sewer Service Area (SSA) as identified in the maps that accompany this Plan, generally does not extend the opportunity to connect to sewer in the ARZD, even when the physical infrastructure is adjacent to its boundary. This Plan states unambiguously that this arrangement is intentional due to the Town's Land Use goals, its longstanding desire to create a walkable, dense Town Center at Taft Corners, and its limited access to the wastewater treatment capacity necessary to achieve those goals. Pursuant to 24. VSA 4303 (42), the Town hereby defines its "area served by water and sewer as ONLY the area within the SSA boundary as shown on the maps that accompany this Plan. | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Ongoing   | --   |

**15.2**

Carefully evaluate boundary changes where geography and existing uses do not align with land use designations.

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                    |                |    |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|----|
| <b>15.2.1</b> | Evaluate the possibility of changing zoning boundaries where they do not align with existing land uses or trends or desired redevelopment in some limited areas of Town. Areas not identified in this Plan may also be considered for boundary changes, but only under the Specific Plan option offered in Williston's bylaws. In either case, the Town will do so while maintaining the goals of Livability, Resilience, and Equity as stated in this Chapter and the overall Plan. | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Medium<br>Term | -- |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|----|

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                 |             |    |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|----|
| <b>15.2.2</b> | Evaluate changes at the outer edges of the Taft Corners Form-Based Code (TCFBC) District, particularly where it abuts the Gateway South and Mixed-Use Commercial Districts in Williston's Growth Center. | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>15.2.3</b> | Evaluate changes where River Cove Road intersects Route 2A.                                                                                                                                              | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>15.2.4</b> | Evaluate changes where industrial uses on Commerce Street abut residential uses on Kirby Lane.                                                                                                           | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>15.2.5</b> | Evaluate changes where commercial and industrial uses abut residential uses on North and South Brownell Road.                                                                                            | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>15.2.6</b> | Evaluate changes where Industrial uses abut mixed-use "Gateway West" uses at Route 2 and North/South Brownell Road.                                                                                      | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>15.2.7</b> | Evaluate reverting changes made by the 2007 Specific Plan (approved, never developed) that expanded the Gateway South District into the ARZD on Hurricane Lane.                                          | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>15.2.8</b> | Evaluate changes to the zoning district boundaries between the RZD, ARZD, and VZD in the area along Williston Road east of the Allen Brook and west of French Hill.                                      | Planning Commission Planning    | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>15.2.9</b> | Evaluate changes where the Industrial Zoning District West extends into the Special Flood Hazard Area.                                                                                                   | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |



# CHAPTER 16 - NON-RURAL LAND USE

## Objectives

- 16.A** The Town will monitor and evaluate the performance of its land use regulations in commercial, industrial, and mixed-use Zoning Districts.
- 16.B** Maintain the viability of industrial and heavy commercial areas in Williston as markets and demands change and buildings and sites age.
- 16.C** Evaluate the future of the Residential Zoning District for enhanced design review and existing or corner commercial uses.
- 16.D** The Town will conduct a consistent, transparent, publicly accessible and efficient permit review and approval process.

## Strategies

- 16.1** In addition to land use boundaries as discussed in Chapter 15, evaluate other regulatory solutions for areas where incompatible uses are near residential neighborhoods, such as:

| Actions       |                                                                                                                                                            | Responsibility                  | Timeframe   | Cost |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|------|
| <b>16.1.1</b> | Evaluate land use regulations at the Residential Zoning District and Industrial Zoning District near Commerce Street, Kirby Lane, and South Brownell Road. | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | --   |
| <b>16.1.2</b> | Evaluate land use regulations at the Residential Zoning District and Industrial Zoning District near Industrial Ave and North Brownell Road intersection.  | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | --   |
| <b>16.1.3</b> | Evaluate land use regulations at the Gateway Zoning District North and Residential Zoning District near James Brown Drive and Shirley Circle.              | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | --   |
| <b>16.1.4</b> | Evaluate land use regulations in other locations mentioned in Chapter 15.                                                                                  | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | --   |

- 16.2** Evaluate performance and examine the design review standards in the Industrial Zoning Districts.

|               |                                                                                                                                                          |                                 |             |    |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|----|
| <b>16.2.1</b> | Evaluate higher design and performance standards for properties with frontage on Williston Road, Industrial Ave, and other arterial and collector roads. | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.2.2</b> | Evaluate a different methodology for allowed and prohibited uses besides NAICS Code.                                                                     | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |

- 16.3** Examine performance and reevaluate the landscaping standards.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                 |             |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|----|
| <b>16.3.1</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Evaluate landscaping standards for outdoor storage and loading areas, in addition to parking lots to provide shade, stormwater and green strips along buildings and parking lots in industrial and heavy commercial areas.                                                                                                                             | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.3.2</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Evaluate the allowed and prohibited species and explore landscaping standards that enhance wildlife travel corridors, pollinators, native and edible species in all contexts.                                                                                                                                                                          | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.3.3</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Develop Landscape Buffer standards to allow for taller berms, front yard planting minimum densities, and better buffering to provide habitat and pollinator connectivity.                                                                                                                                                                              | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.3.4</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Develop a landscape standard that works in concert with the Conservation Areas and habitat, especially in residential open space subdivisions to reduce lawns and enhance biophilic design principles.                                                                                                                                                 | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.4 Support a broader diversity of uses and intensities in the Industrial Zoning Districts.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                 |             |    |
| <b>17.4.1</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Develop amendments to Williston's zoning bylaws to allow more diverse uses in the Industrial Zoning District West, such as space-intensive indoor recreation and greater flexibility for on-site retail sale of manufactured goods, medical services, and others.                                                                                      | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.5 Evaluate revised design and development standards in the Residential Zoning District.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                 |             |    |
| <b>16.5.1</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Evaluate "corner commercial" standards to allow existing commercial uses to remain and allow new uses that support a walkable neighborhood pattern.                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.5.2</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Evaluate whether to add design standards and requirements for new development in the Residential Zoning District. Standards to consider would be those regulating garage placement and orientation, front doors facing the street, trash and utility consolidation and management in multifamily structures, shared driveway requirements, and others. | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.5.3</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Evaluate how to differentiate design and development standards for small infill developments from medium- and large- scale developments.                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.5.4</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Evaluate the home business thresholds and limitations in all zoning districts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.6 Avoid development and protect land in particularly vulnerable areas such as floodplains and river corridors. Permanently protect land within river corridors and floodplains to enhance flood storage capacity and allow streams room to move, so that over time streams will become more stable.</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                 |             |    |
| <b>16.6.1</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Maintain Williston's prohibition of internal and upward illumination everywhere and its prohibition of freestanding signs in the Taft Corners FBC District.                                                                                                                                                                                            | Planning Commission Selectboard | Ongoing     | -- |
| <b>16.6.2</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Develop improved signage regulations for buildings and developments in TCFBC that existed prior to the FBC and/or have Master Sign Plans.                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |

## **16.7 Explore revised design and development standards in the Gateway Zoning Districts North, South, and West as well as Mixed- Use Commercial.**

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                |                                 |             |    |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|----|
| <b>16.7.1</b> | Evaluate the performance of existing standards.                                                                                                                                | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.7.2</b> | Evaluate ways to encourage adaptive reuse and infill development through revised development standards.                                                                        | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.7.3</b> | Evaluate how to change allowed and prohibited uses and residential density standards to support economically and socially resilient economies and compatible mixed- use areas. | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |

## **16.8 Evaluate and modify the provisions for non-conformity thresholds.**

|               |                                                                                                                                                                               |                                 |             |    |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|----|
| <b>16.8.1</b> | Evaluate better integrated standards for existing buildings and developments in the TCFBC Zoning District.                                                                    | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.8.2</b> | Evaluate standards for when the nature and extent of a non-conforming use can change, particularly in the Residential Zoning District and Agricultural Rural Zoning District. | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |

## **16.9 Evaluate the permit review process and improve its functionality.**

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                              |             |    |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------|----|
| <b>16.9.1</b> | Evaluate the performance of the procedural elements of Williston's Unified development Bylaw (WDB) and revise the thresholds for pre-application, discretionary permit and administrative permit to balance efficiency and public input.                                       | Planning Commission Selectboard              | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.9.2</b> | Support ending the duplicative permitting for development served by municipal water and sewer. To ensure that a wastewater system has been installed as designed, as-built plans must be filed with the Zoning Administrator prior to issuance of a certificate of compliance. | Planning Commission Selectboard              | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.9.3</b> | Evaluate how to more fully align the Public Works Specifications and Zoning Bylaw.                                                                                                                                                                                             | Planning Commission Public Works Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.9.4</b> | Evaluate delegating all historic and design review responsibilities to the Development Review Board and/or Zoning Administrator, eliminating the advisory role of the Historic and Design Advisory Committee (HDAC).                                                           | Planning Commission Selectboard              | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.9.5</b> | Develop a policy proposal to designate the Development Review Board (DRB) as the historic preservation review commission pursuant to the Vermont Historic preservation (VHP) Rule 3.                                                                                           | Planning Commission Selectboard              | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>16.9.6</b> | Evaluate restructuring the Historic and Design Advisory Committee (HDAC) into an Economic and Cultural Development Committee in alignment with Chapter 2 Objectives.                                                                                                           | Planning Commission Selectboard              | Medium Term | -- |

## **16.10** Monitor the performance of the 2025 Village Zoning District Bylaw Amendments.

|                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                            |                |    |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------|----|
| <b>16.10.1</b> | Evaluate the performance of the updated development standards in the Village Zoning District (VZD). Within 2 years of adoption, identify areas for improvement and revision to better support the goals of this town plan and the 2018 Master Plan. | Planning Commission<br>HDAC<br>Selectboard | Medium<br>Term | -- |
| <b>16.10.2</b> | Evaluate expanding Village-specific standards into other districts or town-wide.                                                                                                                                                                    | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard         | Medium<br>Term | -- |

## **16.11** Expand and support historic preservation in and beyond the Village Zoning District.

|                |                                                                                                        |                                                    |                |    |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------|----|
| <b>16.11.1</b> | Maintain Certified Local Government (CLG) Status and apply for CLG Funding with local grant match.     | Planning Commission<br>Town Manager<br>Selectboard | Medium<br>Term | -- |
| <b>16.11.2</b> | Develop an updated town-wide Historic Sites and Structures Inventory.                                  | Planning Commission<br>HDAC<br>Selectboard         | Medium<br>Term | \$ |
| <b>16.11.3</b> | Evaluate the establishment of a Municipal Historic Preservation Grant or Low/No-Interest Loan Program. | Planning Commission<br>Town Manager<br>Selectboard | Medium<br>Term | -- |
| <b>16.11.4</b> | Develop a Historic Preservation Outreach Program led by the CLG Coordinator and HDAC.                  | Planning Commission<br>HDAC<br>Selectboard         | Medium<br>Term | \$ |

# CHAPTER 17 - RURAL LAND USE AND SUBDIVISION DESIGN

## Objectives

- 17.A** Rural Williston in 2050 looks largely the way it does in 2025, with sparse carefully planned development that clusters homes near roads and preserves open space.
- 17.B** Rural Williston has large swaths of protected open space with invaluable attributes like wetlands, upland forests, farmland, and scenic vistas.
- 17.C** Rural Williston has thriving local farms that support the local food system and make it more resilient. Williston's land-use regulations support the continued operation of local farms.

## Strategies

- 17.1** Focus development within the growth center and limit development in the Agricultural Rural Residential Zoning district (ARZD).

| Actions |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Responsibility                     | Timeframe  | Cost |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------|------|
| 17.1.1  | Maintain the boundaries of the ARZD for the duration of this plan, except where explicitly called for evaluation in other chapters.                                                                                                         | Selectboard                        | Ongoing    | --   |
| 17.1.2  | Maintain the boundaries of the sewer service area and do not extend sewer lines outside of the area, except in response to public health emergencies.                                                                                       | Selectboard                        | Ongoing    | --   |
| 17.1.3  | Evaluate the removal of or revision to the Transfer of Development Rights provisions in the Williston Development Bylaw as it is largely no longer applicable given unlimited allowed density in the Taft Corners Form Based Code District. | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Short Term | --   |

- 17.2** Continue to require low residential density and open space protection in the ARZD.

|        |                                                                                                                                  |                                    |             |    |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------|----|
| 17.2.1 | Maintain the required protection of 75% open space for parcels larger than 10.5 acres in the ARZD.                               | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Ongoing     | -- |
| 17.2.2 | Evaluate the 10.5-acre threshold for open space and the 75% open space requirement to see if these thresholds should be changed. | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| 17.2.3 | Evaluate requiring development to be clustered closer to existing roads to further reduce habitat fragmentation.                 | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Short Term  | -- |

- 17.3** Continue to protect Significant Wildlife Habitat Areas, areas containing uncommon, rare, threatened, or endangered species, unique natural communities, farmlands of local importance, scenic viewsheds, special flood hazard areas, and streams, wetlands, lakes, and ponds during the development review process.

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                             |             |    |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------|----|
| <b>17.3.1</b> | Maintain the requirement for Habitat Disturbance Assessments as a component of development review to ensure the protection of the above stated resources during the development review process. | Planning Commission Selectboard             | Ongoing     | -- |
| <b>17.3.2</b> | Evaluate the HDA process to determine if it is adequately protecting the natural resources it seeks to protect.                                                                                 | Planning Commission Conservation Commission | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>17.3.3</b> | Maintain the data and maps used to make decisions about the protection of natural resources.                                                                                                    | Conservation Commission                     | Ongoing     | -- |
| <b>17.3.4</b> | Develop coordination with neighboring communities on the preservation of natural resources in the development review process.                                                                   | Conservation Commission                     | Ongoing     | -- |

## **17.4 Evaluate and amend land use regulations and other town policies to protect natural resources, support working landscapes, and respond to changing economic and environmental climates.**

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                            |             |    |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----|
| <b>17.4.1</b> | Evaluate and revise land use regulations to allow a diverse range of uses to support working landscapes such as agriculture and on-farm businesses, fee-based recreation, hospitality, and educational activities.                                                                                  | Conservation Commission<br>Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>17.4.2</b> | Evaluate and revise the visual resource protection standards of the WDB Chapter 27, including an update to the 1980 Visual Resource Assessment Map. Prioritize important views through Official Map.                                                                                                | Conservation Commission<br>Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | \$ |
| <b>17.4.3</b> | Evaluate and revise the important farmland protection standards of the WDB Chapter 27, particularly the use of the LESA map.                                                                                                                                                                        | Conservation Commission<br>Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>17.4.4</b> | Implement revisions to the zoning district specific standards – particularly Chapters 31 Agricultural Rural Residential Zoning District (ARZD) and 39 Residential Zoning District (RZD)—based on the conservation area and water health standards of Chapter 27 and 29.                             | Conservation Commission<br>Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | \$ |
| <b>17.4.5</b> | Evaluate and amend land use regulations to strengthen habitat protections, Habitat Disturbance Assessments, mitigation measures, and right-size protections for small- and infill-projects. Include past land disturbance and land use history in the habitat or watershed health protection value. | Conservation Commission<br>Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | \$ |

## **17.5 Support the adaptive reuse of historic barns because they contribute to Williston's rural character.**

|               |                                                                                                                                                                |                                 |             |    |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|----|
| <b>17.5.1</b> | Evaluate broadening the list of allowed uses for historic barns to promote their conservation and adaptive reuse and to support Williston's working landscapes | Planning Commission Selectboard | Medium Term | -- |
| <b>17.5.2</b> | Develop relaxed density provisions to allow historic barns to be used for farmworker housing.                                                                  | Planning Commission Selectboard | Short Term  | -- |

## 17.6

### Explore new land use regulations that support diversifying farms and small businesses.

|        |                                                                                                                                                  |                                    |                |    |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|----|
| 17.6.1 | Develop land use regulations that allow more public events in rural Williston.                                                                   | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Medium<br>Term | -- |
| 17.6.2 | Develop land use regulations that support and promote safe housing for farm workers.                                                             | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Short Term     | -- |
| 17.6.3 | Evaluate amending land use regulations to allow camping and other necessary ordinances or town policies to support camping and reduce nuisances. | Planning Commission<br>Selectboard | Medium<br>Term | -- |