

# **Town of Vernon Town Plan**

## **2009**

permits; to guide the regional planning commission and state agencies in their planning efforts; to assist the District Environmental Commission in judging applications submitted under act 250 and to guide those interested in subdividing and developing land in the Town of Vernon.

## **STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES**

1. To accommodate the changing needs of the Town through a continuous and comprehensive planning program.
2. To provide for a variety of land uses that will not detract from the rural, residential, scenic and agricultural character of the Town.
3. To manage Vernon's growth to a level that prevents uncontrolled development and that is consistent with Town's ability to provide and pay for satisfactory educational, highway and other services.
4. To prevent uncontrolled growth that places an undue burden upon taxpayers or otherwise leads to an excessive increase in tax rates.
5. To ensure that the basic needs of health, safety, education, welfare, and housing will be met and maintained at satisfactory levels.
6. To discourage incompatible and uncoordinated development activity that will jeopardize public and private investments.
7. To encourage the continued use of lands for agriculture and forestry in order to keep these areas of non renewable resources available and to help meet existing and future needs for food, forage and fiber, to preserve the rural character of the Town, and to provide for diverse economic opportunities in farming and forestry.
8. To protect the rural character of the Town through careful management and guidance of new development.
9. To provide for conservation of the Town's natural resources and the protection of sensitive areas in order to ensure continued availability of a sound resource base for the enjoyment and well being of all Vernon residents and future generations.

10. To protect areas of special educational and scientific value and to conserve sites and structures of historical and architectural significance.
11. To encourage the development of those industrial and commercial activities that are in keeping with the Town's rural character.
12. To require that, where possible, public utilities and transportation facilities integrate the use of corridors in order to minimize the impact on the environment and to assist desired development patterns.
13. To take continuing steps to ensure the safety of Vernon's residents while fostering a climate of orderliness in the Town.
14. To ensure that any project that will increase the capacity of any existing town highway or the development of any new highway will be consistent with the general character of the Town while perpetuating the quiet, picturesque and rural nature of the town of Vernon.

### III. RESOURCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Specific Policies and Recommendations

#### A. Employment and Economic Base

According to the 1980 Census of population, there were an estimated 563 Vernon residents age 16 and above employed in the regional work force. As of 1990, approximately 37% of the community's workers were employed by businesses and industries located within the Town of Vernon, while an estimated 46% commute to Brattleboro, and 11% travel out of state to neighboring communities in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut for employment opportunities. (Table #7)

Vernon functions to a great extent with a large measure of rural independence and self sufficiency, due primarily to the presence of the Entergy NE/Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant which contributes significantly to the community's tax base and provide varied employment opportunities for its residents.

Vernon's economic base is also closely tied to its agricultural and forestry resources with five active commercial farms, several lumber operations and gravel pits; health and elderly care facilities and home based businesses offer stable employment opportunities for town residents.

#### B. Economic Growth

Economic development is a process through which communities, regions and nations seek to improve the well-being of their citizens. Economic development should lead to improvement in the quality of life as well as to an increase in the production and sale of goods and services. Economic development in Vernon, like population growth, must be balanced and consistent with the Town's overall objectives. Examples of the types of resources and economic development desired in Vernon are agriculture; forestry; industrial and commercial service facilities. A study conducted by the Vermont Agency of Development and Community Affairs entitled "Small Business and Employment Growth in Vermont" illustrates the critical importance of micro-businesses (i.e. Firms with fewer than twenty employees) in these types of economic sectors for generating new employment opportunities, particularly in small rural communities. The study also emphasized the relative resiliency of such micro-businesses to declining national and regional business conditions. Such characteristics are important if Vernon is to maintain a strong and stable economic base.

Of significant importance to many of Vernon's residents today is the rather unique situation, which faces the community in the years to come. The Entergy-Vermont Yankee operating license is scheduled to expire in the year 2012. This will have a significant impact on the Town's employment and tax base. The possibility exists that the power plant will be granted a renewal of its operating license for an additional twenty years. We are already facing the

possibility that the community will be challenged with the task of reevaluating its level of municipal spending and with identifying alternative means of generating local tax revenues in order to offset the decrease in Entergy NE/Vermont Yankee's sizeable contribution to the Town's tax base.

Because of the potential future need to stabilize the local tax base and to continue to provide employment opportunities to Vernon's residents, the Town anticipates the potential need for additional industrial and commercial activities in the future. Of great concern, however, is that new industrial and commercial growth relates satisfactorily to the rural-residential character of the community. A 1990 survey of local residents clearly indicated that the protection of Vernon's rural character and agricultural resources should be an important consideration in planning for the future of Vernon. The Farmland Protection Advisory Committee routinely receives funding and support at the Annual Town Meetings.

While new industry and commerce should provide tax benefits to the local community, necessary road improvements, traffic problems, and expansion of residential development to accommodate new employees, the resulting burdens of the Town's educational system, can readily reduce such benefits. For this reason, and in order to protect the rural character of Vernon, the expansion of the commercial and industrial base should be controlled to ensure that only quality development takes place within the community.

Policies:

1. A balanced economic development will be pursued, that provides long-range economic benefits including stable employment opportunities for town residents and an adequate local tax base.
2. All agricultural, industrial, commercial and institutional entities must adequately control their wastes, relate satisfactorily to existing land uses, minimize increases in traffic congestion, avoid contributing to sprawl or strip development or detracting from the rural character of the Town, and account to the Town for both direct and indirect municipal costs.
3. Agricultural, commercial and industrial development should be well designed and attractive with ample buffer zones to protect adjacent land.
4. The production and processing of native agricultural and forest products is encouraged.
5. "Home Industries" or those activities and occupations, which can be carried on within a rural or village residence without creating undue traffic, noise, or other disturbances of the quiet residential nature of the immediate area, are encouraged.

Recommendations:

1. The Town should consider the formulation of an industrial development plan which:

(a) Evaluates the potential social, physical, and economic impacts of an industrial park on the community in terms of effects on the natural environment, and on residential development, on public facilities and services, and on the local tax base;

(b) Identifies potential sites that are conducive to industrial development in terms of topography, soils, power availability, access availability to existing transportation systems, and would not, if developed, conflict with the objectives and policies established through this Town Plan.

2. The Town should control the location and aesthetic quality of future agricultural, commercial and industrial development in order to minimize conflicts with surrounding uses; performance standards should be established to address the problem of adverse environmental impacts including, but not limited to, excessive noise, odor, dust, smoke, vibration, glare, water pollution and other nuisances; design standards should be implemented regarding access and parking, landscaping, screening setbacks, height limitations, signage and lighting.

3. The Town should pursue discussions with appropriate representatives of Entergy-Vermont Yankee regarding the possible re-use of the power plant site for commercial and industrial development following decommissioning.

IV. NATURAL RESOURCES USE AND CONSERVATION:

Specific Policies and Recommendations

A. Agricultural Resources

Vernon owes much of its present character to the continued use of large land areas for agricultural production. Besides forestland, the major land use in the town of Vernon is agriculture.

In order to establish sound policy about the use and preservation of Vernon's agricultural lands, there must be a common understanding of the agricultural resource base. This section deals with agricultural soils and agricultural land, two distinct, yet often overlapping agricultural resources.

Agricultural soils: The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soil Conservation Service (SCS) has worked with State officials to categorize soils found in Vermont according to their potential for agricultural use. This land use capability system is based upon the physical and chemical characteristics of soils as well as climatic conditions. All soils have

been labeled as having high, good, low or limited potential for agriculture. For state land use planning purposes, specifically for the Act 250-review process, high and good potential soils are considered "primary agricultural soils".

At the local level, the Vernon Farmland Protection Advisory Committee undertook an extensive soils mapping project in 1982; with assistance from the Soil Conservation Service; for the purpose of developing and implementing the Vernon Land Evaluation Site Assessment Program (LESA), a system designed specifically to help the Town identify farmland in need of protection under the community's Farmland Protection Program.

Soils were evaluated based upon their relative productivity in Vernon and were subsequently classified into seven different Agricultural Value Groups\*. Groups 1 through 3 represent the three best soils groups in the Town of Vernon. Together with three additional soil types, which were placed in Agricultural, Value Group 4, these soils represent the "primary agricultural soils" as defined by the State soils classification system.

Agricultural Land: Agricultural land used for farming purposes in Vernon includes both lands whose soils are considered primary agricultural soils as well as those whose soils have been identified as non-primary. This suggests that any future efforts to identify and protect locally important farmland in Vernon need to consider more than just the soil characteristics of land.

Recent studies of farmland in Vernon indicate that approximately 1581 acres are associated with farms in Vernon; representing both pastures and land under cultivation. This land is either owned by local farmers or is leased or rented by them from non-farmer landowners; and is identified on the Town Farmlands Map.

All of the farmland leased by Vernon's farmers is actively being farmed for crop production or pasture purposes, while a sizeable portion of the land owned by farmers is in forest use. For the most part, this forest land is unsuitable for direct crop production or pasture land. These forest lands may contribute to the general economic viability of local farms by providing opportunities for maple sugaring, firewood and lumber harvesting and Christmas Tree production.

Vernon farmers clearly rely heavily on the availability of leased land to support their farm operations. Studies show that farmers leased approximately 547 acres of land in 1992. This represents approximately 35% of the total number of acres used by farms in operation at this time. This suggests that Vernon farmers, like their counterparts in neighboring communities, are vulnerable to sudden changes in the availability of a sizeable portion of the land, which they depend upon to keep their agricultural enterprise economically viable since they do not own, and therefore, do not control the lands they lease. It is nonetheless recognized that the economics of farming are changing and will continue to change in the future. In light of this reality and in fairness to the landowners, reasonable multiple use and alternative use of the important agricultural lands must be provided for. Preservation of farmlands, which cannot yield a reasonable, competitive living

\*A copy of the full soil potential study is on file in the Vernon Town Offices

to a working farmer, has to be regarded as a public expense, not a private owner's burden.

Policies:

The Town of Vernon recognizes the considerable importance of farming to the Town's social, economic and natural environment, as well as the importance of protecting existing farms and agricultural land for expanded or new agricultural uses. For these reasons, when agricultural land is proposed for change of use, the Town adopts the following policies to guide future public and private development activity:

1. The Town will encourage the use of primary agricultural soils for farming and related pursuits that will maintain the potential of such soils for productive agriculture.
2. Agricultural land that is important to the Town is identified on the Town Farmlands Map. Important agricultural land includes, but is not restricted to primary agricultural soils as defined by the USDA Soil Conservation Service.
3. Any zoning or subdivision by-laws considered by the Town should provide for reasonable multiple use and alternative use of important agricultural lands at an intensity equivalent to that allowed on other similarly located properties. The use of cluster planning or similar concepts is encouraged in all areas.
- 3a. It should be noted that in July 2000 the Vernon Selectboard was authorized to sell a portion (25.7 acres) of the (approximately 29 acre) of land formerly known as The Streeter Property to Vernon Senior Housing, Inc. for \$1.00, for the purpose of building affordable senior housing according to Senior Housing Authority, rules and regulation.
4. The Town will strive to help maintain the farms, agricultural land and related agricultural services required to ensure a viable agricultural community.
5. Construction or extension of public services and utilities by the Town (i.e. Roads, sewer, recreational areas), State (highways), private companies (energy generation or transmission facilities), should not change the Grand List Category of any abutting farm land.. However, if these improvements will change the Grand List Category, then the Town shall encourage the utilization of the authority granted its Selectboard and Town School District Directors by vote at the 1974 Annual Town Meeting to contract with farmers for Tax Stabilization purposes as provided for under Vermont Statutes Annotated, Title #24, 2741. Or, in the alternative, the farmer could consider the sale of development rights. The landowner (farmer) may also consider the sale of development rights under the Town Farmland Protection Program and/or the Vermont Land Trust.
6. The Town will inventory its forest soils and secondary agricultural soils for such lands. It is the policy of Vernon to plan where possible for development that will not materially reduce the productivity of these soils.

Recommendations:

1. The Town Farmland Protection Advisory Committee should continue to advise the Vernon Selectboard, School Board, Planning Commission and other public and private bodies and individuals in the implementation of the above policies. The committee should employ land evaluation and site assessment (LESA) guidelines to determine which agricultural and forestry land is in the Town's interest to protect. Appropriate land protection measures and techniques should be employed.
2. The Town should continue the Farmland Protection Fund which was established on March 2, 1982. This fund is to be used to acquire interests in threatened agricultural land, acquire development rights, and recommend as supplemental state and local tax assistance, subject to approval by vote at a Special Town Meeting or a Regular Town Meeting.
3. The Town should continue to encourage the efforts of non-profit land trusts within the Town.

B. Forest Land

The majority of Vernon's land base is forested. Much of the forestland is impractical for development due to limited accessibility, steepness and poor soils. This is particularly true in the western portions of town. Several large forested areas are owned by the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department and are also unavailable for development.

The demands of the Town's forestland are likely to increase. Where conditions are favorable, future residential development will be encouraged on wooded land, as opposed to highly visible open areas.

Policy:

1. The value of forestland for lumber, recreation, wildlife habitat, scenic resources and as a vital component in the hydrologic cycle should be recognized and protected to the fullest extent possible; and proper management of forest resources should be encouraged to increase the quality of existing forest resources.

Recommendations:

1. The Town should inventory its productive forest soils and where possible plan for the development that will not materially reduce the productivity of these soils.
2. The Town should actively engage in the management of its own forestland.

### C. Water Resources

Groundwater and Aquifer Recharge Areas: The residents of Vernon rely entirely on groundwater for their drinking water supplies since no municipal water supply system exists within the community to date. Much of the future development in Vernon will continue to depend on groundwater resources. Thus, protecting this resource is of paramount importance.

Wells and springs receive their water from precipitation and surface waters, which infiltrate through overlying and up gradient geologic materials. This groundwater recharge then moves through zones below the surface of the earth into underground zones or formations called aquifers. Aquifers are defined as subsurface formations, which can yield significant amounts of water to wells and springs. One way to protect this water is to identify the land surface areas which supply the recharge to the aquifers and then control polluting activities within these areas. The map entitled *Surface Water and Flood Plain Overlay Map of Vernon (Map #4)* identifies potential aquifer recharge areas in Vernon according to underlying geologic conditions. The Vermont Department of Water Resources has also identified two Aquifer systems. These well water systems have been classified based upon their service to a cluster population and include wells serving Vernon Advent Christian Home. As additional aquifer recharge areas or aquifer protection areas are identified through further state or local studies, these should also be afforded appropriate protection as indicated below.

The *Surface Water and Flood Plain Overlay Map of Vernon (Map #4)* also indicates those general areas of Vernon in which the Vermont Department of Water and Resources can anticipate varying yields of groundwater based upon geologic analysis. Understanding potential water supply sources is an important aspect of planning for growth and conservation in Vernon.

Areas that have underlying thick deposits of coarse-grained stratified glacial drift generally have excellent groundwater potential, which may be suitable for municipal or industrial requirements. Areas underlain by fine-grained stratified glacial drift and swamp deposits have low groundwater potential and generally will yield sufficient water for domestic wells only. Hardpan and ledge, however, underlie most of Vernon, which have low groundwater potential. In general, wells in these materials will yield only enough water for domestic or light commercial use.

#### Policies:

1. To insure maximum water yield and quality for the health and welfare of the public, areas which have been identified or will be identified as having high groundwater potential or which permit the collection or recharge of groundwater supplies should be protected from any potential adverse impacts of the land use activities and development.
2. It is a policy of the Town to protect its water resources by restricting development to areas other than headwaters of watersheds characterized by steep

slopes and shallow soils or watersheds of public water supplies when and if developed.

3. The Town will discourage development in areas where the topography and soil conditions will cause contamination of surface or subsurface waters or the failure of waste disposal systems. Vernon Town Plan maps and detailed soil survey information from the USDA Soil Conservation Service should be applied in determining where appropriate development can satisfactorily be located.

Water Courses and Shorelines: The most prominent body of water situated partially in Vernon is the Connecticut River. Approximately ten miles of its western shoreline abut the township. Broad Brook is located in the northern part of the Town and the extent of its drainage within the community is limited to the lower one-mile reach before discharging into the Connecticut River.

With the exception of the Connecticut River and lower most section of Broad Brook, the Town of Vernon has few streams draining off its twenty square mile land area. These waters are typically small flowage and either drains to the east into the Connecticut River or to the west into the Falls River. Foremost of these waters are Town Brook, Newton Brook, Cold Brook, and Roaring Brook.

Two ponds are situated in Vernon: Lily Pond (42 acres) and Vernon Hatchery Pond (5 acres). Lily Pond supports warm water fish populations. Vernon Hatchery is an artificial impoundment owned and managed by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife for public fishing. It is stocked annually with brook trout.

Watercourses and shorelines are valuable scenic, recreational and ecological resources widely used and limited in amount. The resource value of these areas can be diminished or destroyed by development activity.

Policies:

1. It is a policy of the Town that watercourses and shorelines be retained and maintained in a natural state.
2. Shorelines and stream banks shall be protected from uses and settlement, which may reasonably be expected to cause erosion or reduce scenic qualities of surface waters or cause pollution from sewage disposal systems.
3. Development is discouraged in drainage areas of pristine or upland streams as classified by the Department of Water Resources. Within such areas special attention shall be given to prevent, siltation of streams, soil erosion and pollution of ground and surface waters.

Wetlands: Wetlands include swamps and marshes with open water or with a vegetative mat over a high water table. In addition to their value as wildlife habitat, wetlands may contribute recharge waters to aquifers and serve as regulators of surface water flow. They hold great amounts of water during times of flood, and often provide a much more efficient and less expensive control measure than man-made dams and levees.

Policy:

1. The limited number of wetlands in Vernon should be protected from development and should not be drained for development purposes unless the long-term public benefit of so doing heavily outweighs the loss of resource value.

D. Wildlife Habitat

Deeryards: White tailed deer are a valuable resource to the Town of Vernon, providing opportunities for hunting and recreational viewing and filling an essential ecological niche in the community's natural environment. The heavily wooded, rugged and low population characteristics of the western portion of Vernon provide ideal habitat for wintering deer populations. These critical deer wintering areas comprise approximately 672 acres or approximately five percent (5%) of the Town's total land area.

Deer wintering areas can be completely destroyed or their carrying capacities greatly reduced by some of the activities of man. Activities of primary concern are housing, recreational and industrial development, highway development and unscrupulous logging operations.

Wetland Areas: Wetlands throughout Vernon provide ideal habitat for a variety of plant and animal species. Many avian inhabitants such as ducks, geese, rails, and herons, as well as numerous songbirds and birds of prey rely on wetlands for nesting, brood rearing and migration rest areas. Wetlands are also essential habitat for muskrat, beaver, otter, mink, raccoon, a number of fish species, and a variety of reptiles and amphibians.

Rivers and Streams: Town Brook, Newton Brook, Cold Brook, and Roaring Brook are located in Vernon and support small, self-sustaining populations of brook trout.

Broad Brook is located in the northern part of the town and the extent of its drainage in the town is limited to the lower one-mile reach before discharging into the Connecticut River. Three species of trout, i.e. Brown, rainbow and brook trout, inhabit this section and receive reasonably high angling pressure.

The Connecticut River is the focal point for restoration of two anadromous fish species: Atlantic salmon and American Shad, to central New England. In order to provide the salmon and shad access to their historic spawning and nursery waters in the upper mainstream as well as several critical tributaries, a fish ladder was constructed at the Vernon Hydroelectric

Station. Since going into operation during the spring of 1981, both salmon and shad have been observed passing upstream through this facility. Shad have responded quickly to the opening of new habitat in the river adjacent to Vernon with young shad being produced during each year since the fish ladder went into operation. Presently, sufficient numbers of adult shad ascend the Connecticut River to the Vernon area to provide sport fishing particularly in the vicinity of the dam and Stebbins Island.

Aside from anadromous species, the Connecticut River supports a diversity of resident fish species including small mouth bass, largemouth bass and walleye. Although less abundant in the river than the three preceding species, brown and rainbow trout frequent the Vernon area particularly at the mouths of the smaller tributaries to the river. Pan fish common to the area include yellow perch, white perch, rock bass, brown bullhead, common carp, and several sunfish species. The Connecticut River is also a valuable habitat for waterfowl and wading birds.

Whether it is the Connecticut River or any of the small streams located in Vernon, the continued ability of these waters to support wildlife resources is reliant upon the quality and quantity of their habitat. Stream relocation and channelization as well as pollution result in the long-term destruction of essential habitat.

Policies:

1. Critical wildlife habitats (including but not just limited to wetlands, deeryards, surface waters, etc.) shall be protected from uses and settlement, which reduce their vital biological function.
2. Sites or areas of endangered or rare species of wildlife shall not be used or developed in a manner that will destroy, diminish or imperil those species.

E. Fragile Areas

Fragile areas are irreplaceable components of Vernon's natural heritage. They are valuable for maintaining a diversity of natural communities, providing refuges for rare and endangered plants and animals, and for providing standards by which to judge the health of the environment. They have great biological, educational and social value.

The Vernon Black Gum Swamp: Three distinct black gum swamps and several groups of individual black gum swamps are located in the J. Maynard Miller Town Forest. The largest of these swamps straddles the boundary between the Vernon land and the Roaring Brook Wildlife Management Area, which is controlled by Vermont's Fish and Wildlife Department. This five-acre swamp is listed as one of the 64 best natural areas in the State. Several plants, which are rare in Vermont, are found here. The black gums are the most conspicuous.

Although black gum is a common tree south of Vermont, it is found this far north in only a few isolated pockets called disjunctive communities. Our climate has been cooling over the last thousand years. In warmer times, black gums were more common to Vermont but the cold has forced them south. For some reason few gums are left in these swamps. They are remnants of the "climatic optimum".

The black gum swamps are worth preserving. They are important sources of scientific information and a valuable educational tool. Isolated pockets of a species may be genetically unique. Because they were never logged some trees are very old (some individuals perhaps as much as 400 years old). These swamps give us an idea of what a virgin forest was like. The wide diversity of plants in these small areas makes these swamps a valuable educational resource for schools and nature groups. The impressive sight alone of these thirty-inch diameter trees with their deeply fissured bark and broken tops is enough to justify their protection.

The community of plants in the Vernon Black Gum Swamps is fragile. Although the old gums still appear to be healthy and younger gums are growing nearby, many factors could destroy the swamps as we know them. Black gums prefer warmer climates; several bad winters could kill them. A bad windstorm could uproot their shallow root system. Careless logging, off-road vehicles or heavy hiker visitation could cause soil and organic matter to wash down into the swamp basins and suffocate the roots. Well meaning visitors could kill the trees and other rare plants simply by trampling and compacting the soil.

#### Policies:

1. The Town will protect and maintain Vernon's black gum swamps by preventing sudden environmental changes around the swamps and by limiting vehicle access to these natural areas.
2. The Town will encourage sound forest management practices on the J. Maynard Miller Town forestland which surrounds the Black Gum Swamp and shall discourage any tree cutting within a 300-foot radius of the swamp.

#### Recommendations:

1. The Vernon Municipal Forest Committee should coordinate with the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation to develop a master plan for the protection of the Black Gum Swamp in conjunction with the forestry and recreational use of the J. Maynard Miller Town Forest.
2. Roads usable by four wheel drive vehicles or dirt bikes should be closed at all forest entrances during both wet and dry seasons to help prevent soil erosion and possible fires.

## F. Flood Hazard Areas

Within the flood hazard areas as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Rate Map and the Town's Flood Hazard Area Bylaw adopted in October of 2007, or as may be amended, and such other flood hazard areas as may be defined by the Town, the following policies are recommended.

### Policies:

1. Flood hazard areas should be reserved for agriculture, open recreation or other low impact purposes, which do not significantly impair the lands natural ability to handle floodwaters.
2. All construction within flood hazard areas as defined by the Town and Federal Maps shall be carried out in a manner, which is consistent with prevailing local, state and federal regulations and shall adequately ensure the health, safety and welfare of the public during flooding.
3. Any construction within flood hazard areas should minimize disturbances of the soil, including earth removal, soil compaction or paving.

### Recommendations:

1. The Town shall strictly apply and enforce the Vernon Flood Hazard Area Bylaw and should periodically review and update those Bylaws in full compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program.

## G. Soils

Soils are an important consideration in site development, since their characteristics can affect the feasibility of on-site waste disposal, as well as the stability of structures built upon them.

### Policy:

1. It is the policy of the Town of Vernon to prohibit development in areas where the topography and soil conditions will cause contamination of surface or sub-surface waters or failure of the waste disposal system. In determining where a development can satisfactorily be located, the Vernon Town Plan maps will be considered along with detailed soils survey information from the United States Soil Conservation Service.

## H. Earth Resources

Policies:

1. Lands with high potential for the extraction of mineral and earth resources should not be developed so as to interfere with the subsequent extraction or processing of the resource.
2. The extraction or processing of minerals or earth resources should not have an adverse environmental impact, result in inconvenience or unreasonable burden on neighboring property owners, nor represent an unreasonable burden on municipal facilities.
3. The extraction of earth resources must ensure site rehabilitation suitable for alternative uses.

V. RECREATIONAL, CULTURAL AND SCENIC RESOURCES:  
Specific Policies and Recommendations

A. Public Recreational Resources

Vernon has a well-planned recreation park, which opened in 1971 with a fine swimming pool and facilities. Since that time two lighted tennis courts, a basketball court, two shuffleboard courts, a group picnic shelter and picnic sites with tables and grills in the wooded area, and children's playground have been added. The Town installed equipment in the pool in 1985, providing access for the physically-challenged. Other facilities available at the park include horseshoe pits, an arts and crafts program that has been developed, along with an extensive summer program that includes, but not limited to, swimming lessons, tennis lessons, special events, baseball, softball, outdoor educational programs, field trips, and an arts-in-the-park program.

Trails are available for walking, biking, as well as cross-country skiing. A multipurpose sports field on other town property close to the park is also available for public use. A year-round activities program is conducted at the elementary school that consists of youth and adult sports.

A volunteer Recreation Board appointed by the Vernon Selectboard conducts the operation of the total recreation program. The Recreation Board employs a fulltime Director and support staff to supervise the leisure activities of all age groups. More than fifty volunteers also support the programs throughout the year.

The Town has acquired a tract of land called the J. Maynard Miller Town Forest, which has on it, Black Gum Swamp and many beautiful and interesting natural areas. The Recreation Department has been involved in cutting and making trails, drawing a map and worked with the Miller family who installed a permanent station at the entrance. Trails are used for hiking,

biking, cross-country skiing and horseback riding. The Town has also, purchased a fifty-foot wide access road and approximately one-acre of land bordering the Lily Pond.

One developer has deeded land to the Town, in close proximity to the park, for passive recreation. Such dedication of lands for public use should be encouraged.

The Town also owns a small roadside area, Indian Point Picnic Area, which was developed in memory of Mrs. Clara Lou Cooper. It is hoped this can be further developed and maintained for public picnicking.

There is a large amount of Vermont Fish and Wildlife land within the Town and these lands should be utilized to the fullest extent for the enjoyment of Vernon's residents. Some of these lands are not accessible except through private property.

#### Policies:

1. The use and development of land and waters should occur in such a way as not to significantly diminish the value and availability of outdoor recreational activities.
2. Existing access to land and water areas of high outdoor recreational potential shall be protected and desirable rights of way to these areas should be sought.
3. All town parks will be well maintained and be accessible to the physically-challenged.

#### Recommendations:

1. The Vernon Recreation Board should continue to identify future recreational needs based upon changing recreational trends as well as projected changes in the composition of the local population.
2. State laws concerning snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles should be enforced and local ordinances for their control should be promulgated.

### B. Historic and Architectural Resources

By virtue of its geographical location, Vernon has a unique heritage and a number of sites which are important to its history.

The 1974 Historic Sites and Structures Survey conducted by the Vermont Division of Historic Sites of the Agency of Environmental Conservation identified the structures listed below as having significant local historical value and as deserving protection, maintenance

or renovation. These structures are noteworthy because of architectural style or contribution to the character of the Town. Most are privately owned.

### HISTORIC STRUCTURES

Structure	Location
Brick School House	Junction Route #142 and Pond Road
Lorenzo Brown House (Brick House With Pilasters)	West side of Route #142/Fort Bridgman Road
Pond Road Chapel.	Pond Road
½ Greek Revival House	Pond Road near Chapel
Vernon Grange Hall	Route #142/Fort Bridgman Road
Jonathan Hunt Mansion	Governor Hunt Road

In addition, the Vernon Historians have identified a number of noteworthy structures including the Bushnell Mill pond and dam along Route #142, the Miller's residence on Route #142, the Brown's residence on West Road and the Emery-Moseley residence on Huckle Hill Road.

#### Policies:

1. Lands adjacent to or including areas of historical, cultural or architectural value should be used in a manner that will not reduce or destroy the value of the site or area.
2. All significant historic sites and structures in the Town should be identified and marked.
3. Wherever architecturally and historically significant structures have become obsolete for their original use, new and compatible uses should be found which would allow them to continue as a visual, social and cultural asset to the community.

#### C. Scenic Resources

Vernon enjoys a wide variety of scenic resources. Many of which are typical of Vermont settlements. These resources are a significant factor in the quality of life experienced in Vernon. Many of these resources are highly sensitive and may be adversely impacted through careless development.

#### Policy:

1. Recognizing the value of scenic resources, it is the policy of the Town of Vernon to encourage land uses that will help to protect river corridors, scenic highways and roads, scenic views and other scenic resources.