

WILMINGTON TOWN PLAN

Re-Adopted August 19, 2015

PLANNING COMMISSION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction ----- 1
Community Profile ----- 5
Natural Resources ----- 22
 Policies and Recommendations ----- 31
Transportation ----- 34
 Policies and Recommendations ----- 42
Community Facilities and Services ----- 44
 Policies and Recommendations ----- 55
Housing ----- 59
 Policies and Recommendations ----- 64
Energy ----- 65
 Policies and Recommendations ----- 70
Economic Development ----- 72
 Policies and Recommendations ----- 80
Flood Resilience ----- 82
 Policies and Recommendations ----- 85
Land Use ----- 87
 Policies and Recommendations ----- 92
Phase II– Strategic Planning ----- 94
Implementing the Town Plan ----- 96
Maps ----- 98

Existing Separate Maps:

- Proposed Land Use (Land Use Plan; Land Use Districts and Special Resource Areas)
- Existing Land Use By Parcel, 2005 (map produced July 2009)
- Community Facilities and Utilities (April 2010)
- Transportation System (February 2010)
- Natural Resources (August 2010)

Additional maps embedded in text:

- Wildlife Habitat Suitability (~ pg. 28)
- Agricultural Soils (~ pg. 29)
- Downtown (~ pg. 79)

INTRODUCTION

Framework for Planning

The Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act (Chapter 117, 24 VSA, as amended by Act 200), enables municipalities to undertake planning for the appropriate development of land in order to "promote the public health and safety against fire, floods, explosions and other dangers; to promote prosperity, comfort, access to adequate light, air, convenience, efficiency, economy, and general welfare; to enable mitigation of the burden of property taxes on agricultural, forest, and other open lands; to encourage appropriate architectural design; to encourage the development of renewable resources; to protect residential, agricultural and other areas from undue concentrations of population and overcrowding of land and buildings, from traffic congestion, from inadequate parking, and the invasion of traffic, and the loss of peace, quiet, and privacy; to facilitate the growth of villages, towns, and cities and of their communities and neighborhoods so as to create an optimum environment, with good civic design; to encourage development of a rich cultural environment and to foster the arts; and to provide means and methods for the municipalities of this state to plan for the prevention, minimization and future elimination of such land use development problems as may presently exist or which may be foreseen and to implement those plans when and where appropriate." In accordance with statutory regulations, a town plan must be reviewed and revised or readopted every five years. The first Town Plan was adopted in February 1974.

Use of the Town Plan

The plan is to be used by town boards, commissions, departments, residents, and businesses in the following ways:

- To provide a framework for planning the future growth of the Town of Wilmington;
- To guide decision making in site development plans and conditional use permits;
- To serve as a guide in responding to Act 250 permit application requests;
- To provide a framework for updating Zoning Bylaws;
- To provide a guide for the preparation of subdivision regulations;
- To recommend future planning studies;
- To assist in the development of a capital budget and program;
- To serve as a source of information and guidance to individuals and businesses making decisions regarding their development plans.
- To determine the use of natural resources.

The clearly stated mandatory provisions of this plan are intended to be legally enforceable standards as provided for in Act 250 (10 V.S.A. § 6000, *et seq.*) and § 248 (30 V.S.A. § 248). The plan identifies some, but not necessarily all, such standards by

labeling them “Legally Enforceable Standards”. Whether or not such standards are identified as such, all clearly written mandatory provisions in this plan are intended to be legally enforceable.

In addition to any other regulatory provisions that may be applicable, such enforceable standards shall be considered as aesthetic standards for and applicable to any construction within the Town of Wilmington. Such enforceable standards are to be interpreted broadly and without exception to protect the mountain and valley vistas, wooded hillsides and undeveloped ridgelines in the Town of Wilmington including, especially, on Haystack Mountain and ridgelines in the west, Medburyville and Mt. Olga. No mitigation measures or interpretations shall be accepted by any regulatory body to overcome prohibitions in such standards.

Interpretation of the Town Plan

Interpretation of this Town Plan shall be the responsibility of the Planning Commission, the Development Review Board, and the Selectboard, with advice from town counsel if deemed appropriate. Except where specifically defined below in this plan, all words used in the Town Plan carry customary meanings. “Should” or “may” means is encouraged but not mandatory. “Shall,” “will,” and “must,” is a mandatory requirement. If any portion of this Town Plan is found to be invalid, any such invalidity shall not affect the remaining portions of this Plan.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

History

The Town's first charter was granted in 1751 by Benning Wentworth, then Governor of New Hampshire (under King George II), and the town was named Wilmington after Spence Compton, the first Earl of Wilmington, a friend of Benning Wentworth. The grant consisted of six (6) square miles and was given to Phineas Lyman and fifty-seven (57) others. In 1763 (under King George III) a second charter was granted for the same six (6) square mile parcel of land. The proprietors were different people, and the town was named Draper.

This double granting created strife among town residents as disputes arose over ownership of land and, of even greater significance, the issue of whether or not the area encompassing the town was a part of the present State of New York or the State of New Hampshire. Issues of ownership between New York and New Hampshire under the original New Hampshire land grants were thought to be resolved in 1777 by Vermont's Declaration of Independence. However, lingering questions over the issues of New York - New Hampshire land claims under the New Hampshire land grants precluded Vermont from entering the Union as the 14th state until 1791. The last remnants of this land conflict were finally resolved by the Supreme Court in 1931.

By 1771 there were fourteen pioneering families living on what is now known as Lisle Hill. This hilltop village settlement contained a store, a meeting house, a tavern, a church, and a number of dwellings, with individual farms scattered about the town. In the early years of the Town, the farmers produced beef, sheep and wool, butter, maple products, eggs, poultry and wood to sell.

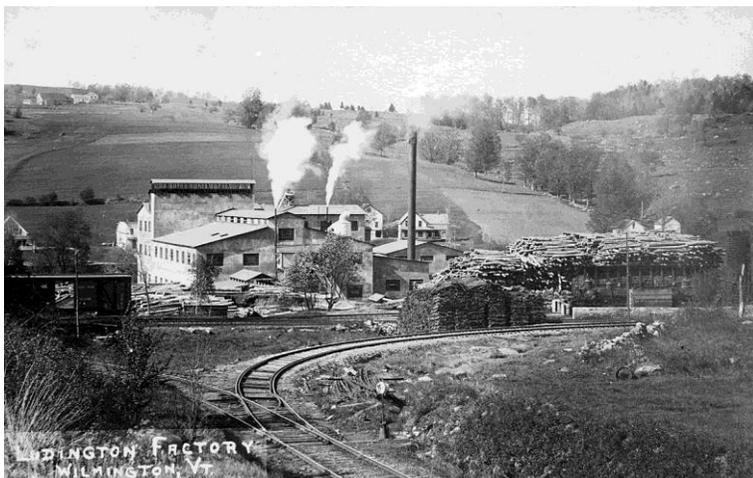


Figure 1: Luddington Factory

poorly managed sheep farming in the 1850's and the abandonment of the farms allowed the regeneration of the forest. (Marsh, G.P. 1864)

During this pioneer period the forest cutting and sheep farming led to soil erosion, and thence to declining agricultural production. George Perkins Marsh, a visionary Vermont farmer and leader, wrote in 1864 about the damage sheep were doing to the soil, and about the problems related to the loss of forest. When the farmers could no longer compete with farms in more fertile regions, the exodus from Vermont began. The end of

The Town center moves

The construction of the Brattleboro-Bennington Turnpike (the current Route 9) in 1828 would signal yet another change in the economic future of the Town. The crossroads created by this private highway and the local town roads near the junction of Beaver Brook and the Deerfield River would establish a commercial center for the town. 1833 was known as “the year the Village moved to Mill Hollow.” All of the Town Hill structures but the meeting house came down to the new town center. By the time of its incorporation in 1855, the Village contained four churches, a school house, 80 dwellings, a town house, a clothing store, a market, a marble works, a carriage shop, a harness shop, two blacksmiths, three lawyers’ offices, a savings bank, and daily mail deliveries. (Deerfield Valley Times Reunion Edition, 1900.)



Published by W. S. Brown Congregational Church, Wilmington, VT
CardCow.com



Congregational Church and Childs Tavern, Wilmington, VT



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Forest and Stream Club House, from Fish Pond

The Forest & Stream Club was a private hunting and fishing club with an exclusive membership of non-residential prominent businessmen and elite sportsmen, opened in 1891. It featured clubhouses and over 700 acres of trout streams, woodlands, and golf links.

Local Produce

After the period of decreasing population, changes began to occur that brought more prosperity to the Town. The number of farms in Wilmington increased and it became known as a cattle center. In 1885 the Deerfield Valley Creamery Association was formed, growing to over 100 farm members, and producing in 1923, its best year, 129,571 pounds of butter. Refrigerated cars brought competition from the West. The building of the Whitingham Dam in 1923 flooded many farms, and the remaining farmers turned to fluid milk production.

Maple produce has always been important to the Wilmington farmers, first for home use, and then as marketable products. Many of the wooden tools needed in the process were manufactured in town by Adams and Haynes, who made patent liquid holders, watering troughs, and gathering tubs.

The river system surrounding Wilmington provided for the establishment of many kinds of mills, helping the town become a manufacturing center. There were mills for the manufacture of padded clothing and reclining chairs, lumber, and flour. Harnesses, wagons, sleighs, carriages, cabinets, and tinware were also produced. Wilmington experienced a resurgence of prosperity that had waned as its residents had moved to the cities, the gold fields, and the more fertile farm land of the Midwest. (Deerfield Valley Times Reunion Edition, 1900)

Railroad

The Hoosac Tunnel and Wilmington Railroad, the more familiar “Hoot, Toot and Whistle,” would also change the direction of Wilmington’s economy. During the spring thaws, from the middle of March to the middle of May, the Deerfield River was jammed with logs from Searsburg, Somerset, Glastenbury, and West Dover heading for Mountain Mills, where about 100 men were kept employed at the saw mills. The railroad provided a ready means to export these logs and timber products to other areas.



Figure 2: A view of Mountain Mills

Inevitably, the seemingly endless supply of timber would run out and the principal function of the railroad would shift to local freight and passenger service, including tourist excursion trains. The New England Power Company foresaw the end of lumber, but did see the potential of the river as a source of electric power, and quietly began to buy up property rights in the valley against the time when a series of water storage dams could be built. The first of these was in 1912, when the Somerset Reservoir was constructed. Then, in 1924, Harriman Dam flooded the valley of Mountain Mills, inundating all the farms and the little village. At the time it was the

world's largest earthen dam and the largest lake wholly within Vermont's borders. Further lumber production was in the form of veneer, furniture, boxes, and wooden wares. While the railroad came primarily for the lumber and paper pulp generated by the mills at the Mountain Mills Development, its arrival in 1891 signaled the emergence of a new industry in town, tourism.

Tourism



Figure 3: The Second Lake Raponda Hotel

Wilmington's location, lakes, and serene beauty were a natural lure for summertime visitors. Easy access via the railroad that was extended to the village in 1891, nurtured this flourishing business. Farms still in operation began to take in summer guests, while vacant farm houses became attractive summer homes for well-to-do families from the cities, many drawn to take "the cure" at the waters of Whitingham. Perhaps

most noticeable of the time was the fifty-room hotel constructed on Lake Raponda in 1889, burned in 1896 and re-built in 1900 which for eight years was a successful destination of considerable elegance.

The tradition of elegance was continued with the construction in the center of town, of the Child's Tavern in 1900, now known as the Crafts Inn, a destination resort for vacationing guests. Summer tourism served to supplement the area's faltering economy and became a vital part of Wilmington's growth.

Wilmington's winter tourism began with the birth of the ski industry in 1953 at Mt. Snow, formerly known as Mt. Pisgah, in Dover. Although Hogback, Dutch Hill, Prospect, and Bromley bounded Wilmington on the east, the southwest, west, and the north respectively, and pre-dated Mt. Snow, they had contributed little to Wilmington's economic base.

There were few inns or lodges in the Valley during the early years. Many people opened their homes to guests, providing seasonal lodges. As the industry grew, more lodges were built and new retail businesses and restaurants appeared. The Village Center was revitalized by this new industry; craft, gift and antique shops were added. The style of guest housing changed, moving from lodges to planned residential developments of single homes to condominiums, and then to the concept of the destination resort with all housing and recreation interrelated. Many problems such as adequacy of on-site water supply and wastewater disposal arose.

The Creation of Harriman Reservoir/Lake Whitingham

Before Harriman Reservoir flooded 2,200 acres of surrounding farms and woodland, the meandering, uninterrupted Deerfield River wound its sinuous way through the river valley. The river's power was harnessed in the late 19th century by the creation of Mountain Mills Pond as a holding area for logs floated down from Somerset Reservoir.



**Logging on Mountain Mills Brook Pond, pre-Harriman Reservoir, c. 1900. And View of Haystack Mountain from the Old Railroad Station 1908
Collection of Wilmington Historical Society**

By 1912, the Mountain Mills settlement included a railroad station with a store, post office, a 6-bed hospital, brick office building, a boarding house, row housing, and a water tower. The rich Deerfield River valley farmland supplied the settlement with food.

A post office designated "Surge Tank, Vermont" was established to serve workers building Harriman Dam, earning it one of the Oddest Place Names in the Postal Service. A site supervisor acted as Postmaster.

In the early 1900s, the New England Power Company began intensive hydroelectric development of the Deerfield River along its entire length in Vermont and Massachusetts. A massive earthen dam was constructed in 1912-13 to create the Somerset Reservoir.

In 1923, Lake Harriman was created by the New England Power Company as part of their hydroelectric system. Fifteen hundred men labored for one year to provide hydroelectric power for the Northeast, including workers from surrounding towns, Nova Scotia, Maine, Prince Edward Island, as well as many Austrian Italians, Canadians, and some Native Americans from Maine.



Flooding of mill housing to create Lake Harriman, 1924. Collection of Wilmington Historical Society.

Three cemeteries were relocated and 14 miles of highways were discontinued. The school house was burned down. Not all residents were ready to give up their homes. When the waters began to fill the lake, some residents of Mountain Mills had to hastily gather their belongings as the waters rose to their doorways to engulf their former homes and village. The submerged foundations of the mill and other buildings can occasionally be seen when boating.



From Route 9 West you may notice a black tube that looks like a giant caterpillar running through the woods along the Deerfield River. This wood-staved penstock (pipeline) conducts water from the Somerset Reservoir to the Searsburg Power Station, a small brick hydroelectric station (built in 1921) on the south bank of the Deerfield River near the Searsburg-Wilmington town line.

Frequent travelers along the Molly Stark Byway will notice the seasonal drawdown of Harriman Reservoir in which the water line drops many feet and much of its shoreline is revealed. This annual drawdown is now regulated to ensure the ecological health of local fisheries. Harriman Reservoir is a special destination for canoeists, kayakers, sailors, sailboarders, paddle-boarders, and fishermen as well as offering powerboat sports such as waterskiing, wake surfing and jet skiing. Somerset Reservoir is limited to a 10 mph speed limit.

The maximum depth of Harriman Reservoir is 185 feet and the lake contains 117,300 acre-feet. The Harriman Dam at the south end of the lake is named for Henry I. Harriman, engineer for the New England Power Company.

Wilmington History 1955 – Present

Climate

Wilmington experiences a humid continental climate (Koppen Dfb) with warm, humid summers and cold (sometimes severely cold) winters. While snowfall can vary greatly from year to year in nearby towns like Bennington and Brattleboro, Wilmington's snowfall is consistently heavy each year because of its elevation in the Green Mountains high country. Wilmington is in the heart of the Southern Vermont snowbelt. This snowbelt lies mainly within the southern Vermont portion of the Green Mountain National Forest and includes the high elevation Southern Vermont towns of Woodford, Searsburg, Wilmington and Marlboro. Between February 24 and February 27, 2010, Wilmington received a record 54 in (1.4 m) of snow. Over 4 ft (1.2 m) of snow fell during this February 2010 blizzard. Snowfall amounts of 54 in (1.4 m) up to 67 in (1.7 m) were reported for Wilmington, West Dover and the surrounding towns. The February 2010 blizzard in Wilmington and West Dover appears to be the single storm snowfall record for anywhere in the state of Vermont in Vermont weather record keeping history. The previous single storm snowfall record was 50 in (1.3 m) between March 2–5, 1947 in Readsboro, Vermont. While global warming is expected to diminish average snowfalls in Wilmington, and recent years have been somewhat erratic in their consistency of snow delivery, Wilmington still receives substantial snowfall of 7 feet of snow on average most winters.

The Flood of August 28, 2011

No conversation about Wilmington's recent history is complete without a discussion of the flooding from Tropical Storm Irene that occurred August 28, 2011. The water in the downtown area exceeded the level of the last great flood in Wilmington of 1938. In a matter of hours the town was changed forever. The downtown area was under 6 feet of rushing water. Two buildings were completely washed away. What remained was badly damaged. Power lines were down and underwater, buildings utility sources were underwater, the septic plant overflowed releasing raw sewage into the river, propane and oil tanks floated freely through the town releasing their contents into the river and Harriman Reservoir. Bridges washed away and roads were gone. The town was essentially shut down and cut off from the rest of the world, a small island of desperation. On day two the National Guard took over management of the downtown to ensure the safety and protection of all. A state of disaster was declared. While serious flooding occurred across the entire state of Vermont, Wilmington was declared to be one of the two towns so badly damaged as to not be expected to recover without substantial assistance in planning and funding. FEMA staff was sent in to assist in engaging community members in recovery planning.

While the first year post-flood was a challenging one for all, driving many of the downtown businesses under, the town has taken dramatic steps toward recovery. Many structures have been recovered, some rebuilt, and some have a rebuild in the planning stages. The town continues to work toward full recovery. The state indicated it would be a good five years before the town was back on its feet. It has been 4 years August 2015 and we are well on our way!

More critical for the view forward is what flooding means for future development in the town. In the past 150 years there have been 5 significant floods leading to widespread disaster and loss of life:

1. October 1869
2. November 1927 (* the largest flood pre-Irene, with 84 fatalities in VT)
3. September 1938
4. June 1973
5. August 2011 (Tropical Storm Irene, with 1 fatality)

Data Source: NOAA

That averages out to a major flood every 30 years. With global warming causing an increase in severe weather patterns, and with the east coast most heavily impacted by the severe weather (with a 76% increase in severe weather compared to much lower rates in the rest of the country) Wilmington is likely to see more floods of this size much sooner than in 100 years.

Wilmington has been engaged and will continue to engage in extensive planning for flood hazard avoidance and mitigation, a process that was started “post-Irene” and will continue under this Town Plan. With the Agency of Natural Resources taking a strong stance against any action to manage the river through damming, redirecting, or temporarily holding back flood waters for a more gradual release, it appears flood avoidance is off of the table. The town will find greatest opportunity in post-flood management planning and fewer options for flood avoidance.

Haystack Mountain

At 3,462 feet, Haystack Mountain is just slightly lower in elevation than Mt Pisgah, known as Mount Snow. Haystack Mountain boasts numerous hiking trails to the summit, capturing a broad vista of the valley below. It is also home to the Hermitage Inn Real Estate Holding Company LLC dba Hermitage Club recreational, commercial, and residential facilities.

Haystack ski area opened in 1964 off Coldbrook Road in Wilmington. This gave the area a tremendous economic boost by attracting more skiers and vacationers to our area, augmenting the already booming Mount Snow populous. The mountain has changed hands multiple times in the 50 years since its first opening. After about 10 years of profitable operation, the area experienced the consequences of economic downturns and deteriorating snowfalls, with many years of financial difficulty and inoperability:

1964 - 1980	Haystack Corporation (1978-1980 operating under bankruptcy protection)
1980 - 1984	Associated Mortgage Investors (AMI) ending in large financial hardship
1987 – 1994	HS Development, Inc. and Stratfield Associates
1994 – 2005	Mt Snow Ltd
2005 – 2011	1 Cornell Inc. dba The Haystack Club (inactive from 2007 – 2011)
2011 – present	Hermitage Inn Real Estate Holding Company LLC dba Hermitage Club

The Hermitage Inn Real Estate Holding Company, LLC (HIREHC), a privately held, single owner corporation, currently operates the Hermitage Club as a member-only organization with an expanding range of recreational facilities and services open year round. Their strategic

approach is to provide exceptional ski conditions through extensive snowmaking, a crowd-free environment through limited access, a full service resort including spa facilities, and a seasonally rounded range of activities including snowmobiling, hiking, ATV trails, and a mountain coaster, available to members only with the exception of the hiking trails.

HIREHC plans a 12 year construction period from 2014 – 2025 where they plan \$285.3 million in development, creating 235 FTE jobs annually on average (56 direct employment, the remainder indirect and induced) during the construction period. In the timeframe of 2011 – 2014 they report having created 447 jobs, of which 261 were direct employment.

Chimney Hill

Shortly after Haystack’s arrival, Chimney Hill opened. Chimney Hill is on the lower southern side of Haystack Mountain in Wilmington and it is a four season resort area with several hundred homes. Chimney Hill opened around 1964 and was one of several developments to spring up around the burgeoning Haystack Ski area. Recognizing the importance of the environmental impact of The Chimney Hill development, the town was pivotal in contributing to the debate at the state level leading to the enactment of Act 250. Chimney Hill and the Haystack Villages have experienced the same economic upturns and downturns as Haystack. During economic good times at Haystack, Chimney Hill and the Haystack Villages experienced growth and positive development. During the economically challenging years, 1978 – 2011, the area stagnated in development. Chimney Hill roads were taken over by the town to ensure road safety. A large number of lots in Chimney Hill and the Haystack Villages remained undeveloped by their owners. Many of these abandoned lots were eventually were taken by the town for tax delinquency and subsequently purchased by HIREHC as a part of their Master Plan for development. While the original lots were as small as ¼ acre, HIREHC will be developing lots at a minimum of an acre by selling multiple lots for a single development, aligning future development of this “ancient” Planned Unit Development with current zoning and PUD regulation.

Snowmobile Trails

In the late 60’s, with the town experiencing significant growth in winter tourism, the logical next step in the growth of Wilmington was the arrival of snowmobiling and numerous snowmobile trails. During the early 1970’s, the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) developed and expanded trails systems in the southern Vermont Green Mountain National Forest. This included Wilmington, Hogback (Mount Olga) and essentially all parts of town. Snowmobiling has proved to be a vital addition to winter recreation in our area. It has stimulated economic growth and facilitated more visitors, as well as people taking up residence, in Wilmington throughout the 1970’s to the present. While the region has seen an overall reduction in snowfall on average, Wilmington has seen recent years of above average snowfall, as well as years of dramatically reduced snowfall. While much of the world has experienced warming trends, Wilmington has had several years of exceptional cold. While global warming is a reality, the change in jet stream weather patterns is delivering more severe weather up the eastern corridor of the United States. The vacillating nature of the weather patterns is compounded by an overall drop in ridership in the snowmobiling industry. The impact of changes in the weather has been exacerbated by an increased number of trail closings by property owners due to abuse of privilege and by ever increasing costs for a permit to ride on trails. Overall ridership is down

45% over what it was at its peak. Membership in VAST, the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers, has tumbled from a high of 42,033 back in 2001 to 23,304 in 2014. Snowmobile registrations in the state have also taken a similar dive in the last decade. While snowmobiling continues to contribute positively to Wilmington’s tourism business, we can forecast a diminishing role for snowmobiling as a source of tourism over time. The timeframe remains a mystery.

Restaurants

Wilmington is, and for a long time has been, a destination for restaurants. There have been many excellent restaurants. Some of the iconic restaurants of the past 40 years include: The Vermont House, the Old Red Mill, the Wilmington White House and, of course, Dots. The complexion of Wilmington’s eateries changed dramatically with the flood of 2011 causing massive economic hardship on the downtown and physical devastation changing the complexion of Wilmington’s downtown forever. The Vermont House is now affiliated with HIREHC offering private inn rooms but serving no food. The Wilmington White House is also affiliated with HIREHC and also has private rooms but no food service. The new Folly Foods was the first eating establishment to open after the flood. The Old Red Mill, rebuilt Dots, The Anchor Seafood, The Maple Leaf, and Jezebels have provided their services to the community both preceding the flood and post-flood. Two new pizza restaurants have opened post-flood, Pizzapalooza and Wilmington Pizza House. 2015 has seen the openings of both the Village Roost and the Cask and Kiln Kitchen, with a new Italian restaurant slated to open later in 2015. Wilmington is experiencing strong growth in restaurant business.

MOOVer

Growing transportation needs and environmental concerns spawned the advent of the MOOVer. The MOOVer is part of the Deerfield Valley transit system and it is a daily operated, Vermont-themed (You can’t miss a giant bus painted like a cow coming down the highway) public bus system. The largest free bus system in Vermont, the MOOVer also produces some of its own fuel - biodiesel. The MOOVer serves numerous residents in Wilmington, Dover, Halifax, Marlboro, Whitingham, Brattleboro and Readsboro. The MOOVer boasts having provided 2,000,000 rides over 3,000,000 miles. In 2015, at the request of VTrans, MOOVer will be taking over Connecticut River Transit dramatically expanding their scope of operation. They are also nearing completion of a new transportation center in the village, a large rustic barn-like structure that is a positive addition to the aesthetics of the downtown area. Having a reliable public transportation system greatly improved local mobility and has been of tremendous benefit to residents throughout the greater Deerfield Valley area.

Fire Tower

The top of Mount Olga (the site of the old Hogback Ski Area, the summit being in Wilmington) was given a fire tower by the Forest Service. The fire tower currently on top of Mount Olga was brought here from Townshend, Vermont in 1955 and the magnificent view from the top is well worth the climb. You can reach the tower via a short trail coming out of Molly Stark State Park in Wilmington. The walk to the fire tower remains a popular day hike for residents, visitors, and Molly Stark State Park campers alike. With an even grander 360 degree vista than the nearby popular traffic stop at the top of Hogback Mountain, Mt Olga will continue to be a valuable scenic resource for the town.

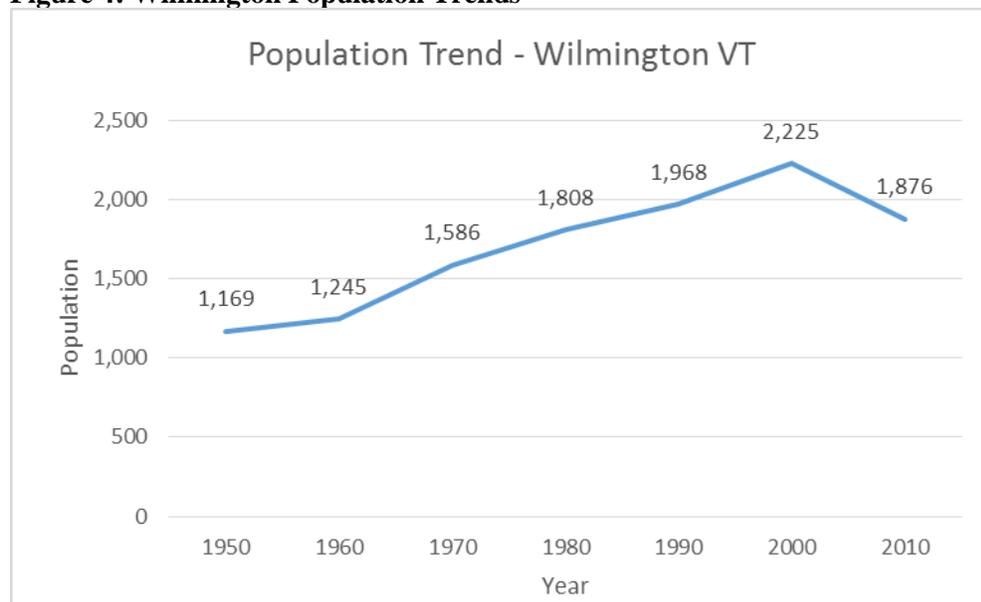
Understanding the Numbers – Census Data and the American Community Survey

There are different sources for data used to inform the Plan. The numbers do not always match precisely, in part because they are generated using differing methodologies and timeframes. The decennial census, conducted once every ten years, collects “point-in-time” data. The American Community Survey is conducted year-round to gather “period” data that are five-year rolling average **estimates** which have a relatively large margin of error; they do not reflect actual counts like population, age, or sex. These estimates can be useful when analyzing trends in small populations, but should be used cautiously when making direct comparisons. While the data informs the discussion of the Town Plan, figures have margins of error and should not be interpreted as literal or precise.

Population Growth and Projections

Overall, Wilmington’s population had steadily increased between 1950 and 2000. The most significant increase in population occurred during the period 1960-1970 (27%). By 2000, the population of Wilmington had grown to 2,225 permanent residents. Between 2000 and 2010, however, the town experienced a decline in population, exacerbated by subsequent loss of tourism and business failures post-Tropical Storm Irene in 2011. Population trends are found in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Wilmington Population Trends



Data Source:

1970 - 2000 Data: Vermont Indicators,
<http://vcgi.org/indicators>

2010 Data: 2010 Census, Demographic Profile

Figure 5 shows Wilmington’s growth as compared with data from its neighboring towns. Both Wilmington and Dover have experienced double digit declines in population, while Halifax and Readsboro have also experienced declines to a lesser degree. Other comparisons towns continue to experience growth trends.

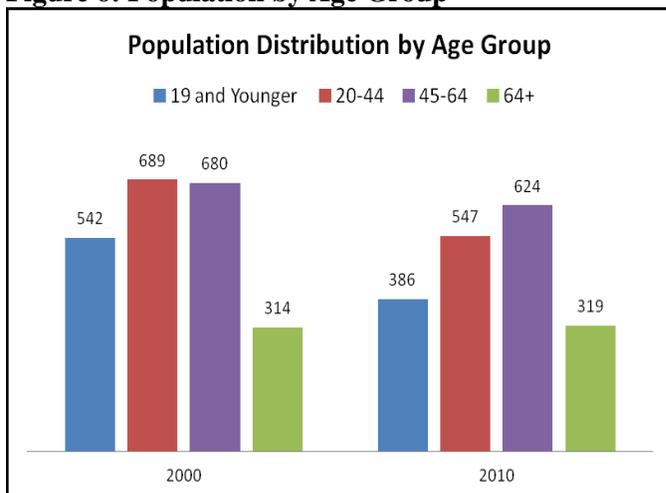
Figure 5: Population Trends in Nearby Towns

<i>Town</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>% Change 1990-2000</i>	<i>% Change 2000-2010</i>
Wilmington	1,968	2,225	1,876	13%	-16%
Dover	994	1,410	1,124	42%	-20%
Halifax	588	782	728	33%	-7%
Marlboro	924	978	1,078	6%	10%
Readsboro	762	809	763	6%	-5%
Searsburg	85	96	109	13%	14%
Whitingham	1,177	1,298	1,357	10%	5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Age Distribution

Figure 6: Population by Age Group



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Figure 6 shows the current distribution of Wilmington’s residents by age. The following observations can be made from the data:

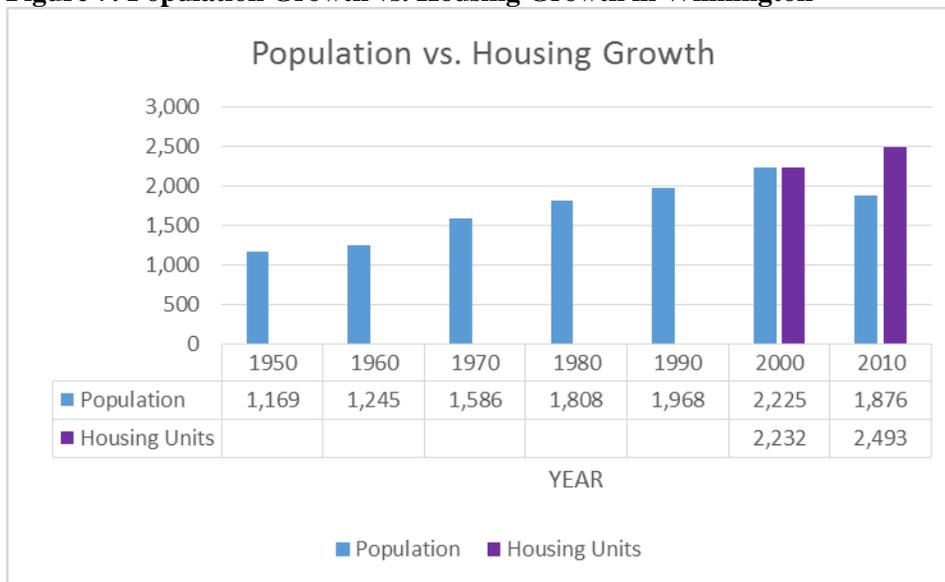
- The largest age banded group is the 45 – 64 year olds, indicating a significant number of people who will likely enter retirement within the next ten to twenty years (those ages 45-59).
- According to the 2010 US Census, there has been a significant reduction in the zero to 45 age group. The age 45 and over remaining moderately stable. It is likely limited job

opportunity and massive business closing after Tropical Storm Irene has resulted in more of the young leaving for greater career opportunity.

Housing

During the period from 1970 through 2000, 1,315 new housing units were built in Wilmington with population growth outpacing housing growth through 1970. Since 1970 population and housing grew at a relatively consistent pace. 2000 – 2010 has seen a dramatic shift in this trend. There has been an increase of 261 housing units while experiencing a reduction in of 349 in population. This is a reflection of the shift toward second-home owners. Figure 7 presents data on housing unit growth as compared to the population growth. The high housing unit growth rates from 1970 to 1990 appear to have leveled off in the 1990’s but has taken a strong upturn in 2010, with housing units far outpacing population.

Figure 7: Population Growth vs. Housing Growth in Wilmington



Population Data Source:

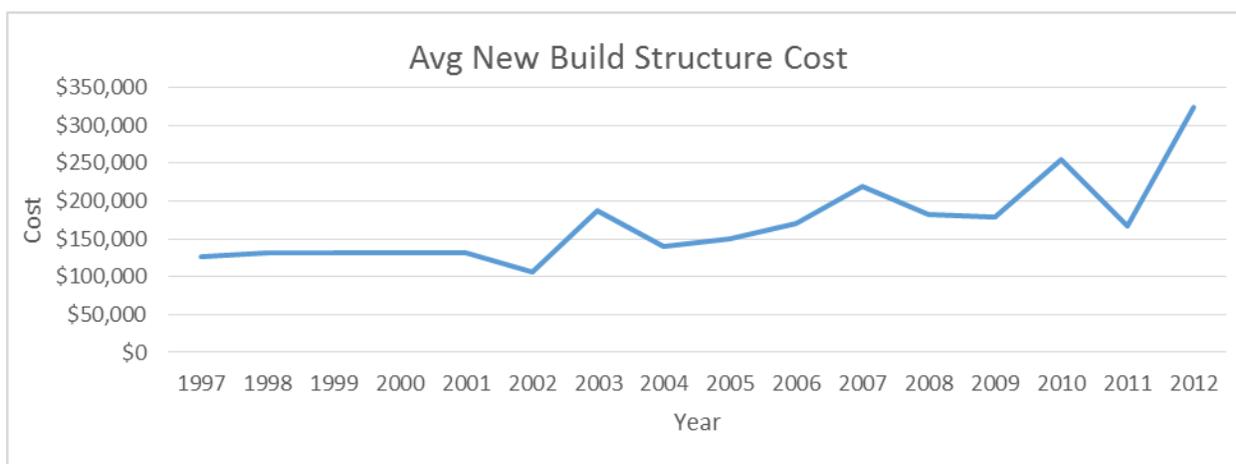
1970 - 2000 Data: Vermont Indicators, <http://vcgi.org/indicators>

2010 Data: 2010 Census, Demographic Profile

Housing Unites Data Source:

Vermont Housing Data, www.housingdata.org

U.S. Census data on local permits estimates that an additional 12 housing units were granted permits between 2010 and 2012, all single family dwellings. (Vermont Housing Data, www.housingdata.org). This is a significant decline over the strong growth years of 2002 – 2006.



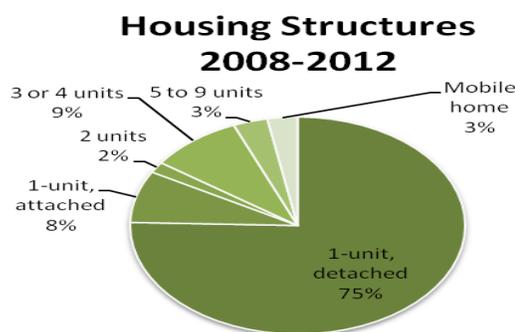
Data Source: www.city-data.com

These charts reflect two notable trends:

1. Strong growth years 2002 – 2006 and
2. A strong upturn in average cost of new builds in 2012. This is likely tied to the growth of Hermitage HIREHC, an upscale private membership club.

Most of Wilmington’s residents live in single family detached dwellings (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Housing Types in Wilmington, 2008-2012: Source: American Community Survey



Income and Economy

The median household incomes in Wilmington decreased 7% from 1999 - 2009. According to the American Community Survey the median adjusted gross income for families in Wilmington in 2009 was \$38,301, down \$2903 from 1999. Figure 9 shows 1979 - 2009 data in relationship to the surrounding towns, Windham County and the State of Vermont, all but one of which experienced an overall reduction in adjusted gross income.

Table 9: Median Family AGI

	1979	1989	1999	2009	10 yr chg	% Change
Brattleboro	\$39,379	\$44,179	\$41,204	\$38,301	-\$2,903	-7%
Whitingham	\$41,507	\$49,447	\$48,205	\$54,766	\$6,561	14%
Readsboro	\$34,169	\$44,833	\$45,071	\$36,023	-\$9,048	-20%
Marlboro	\$37,789	\$51,776	\$53,350	\$38,977	-\$14,373	-27%
Halifax	\$32,647	\$41,091	\$46,948	\$37,102	-\$9,846	-21%
Dover	\$39,929	\$53,575	\$56,434	\$47,500	-\$8,934	-16%
Wilmington	\$38,354	\$47,293	\$48,156	\$45,536	-\$2,620	-5%

Data Sources:

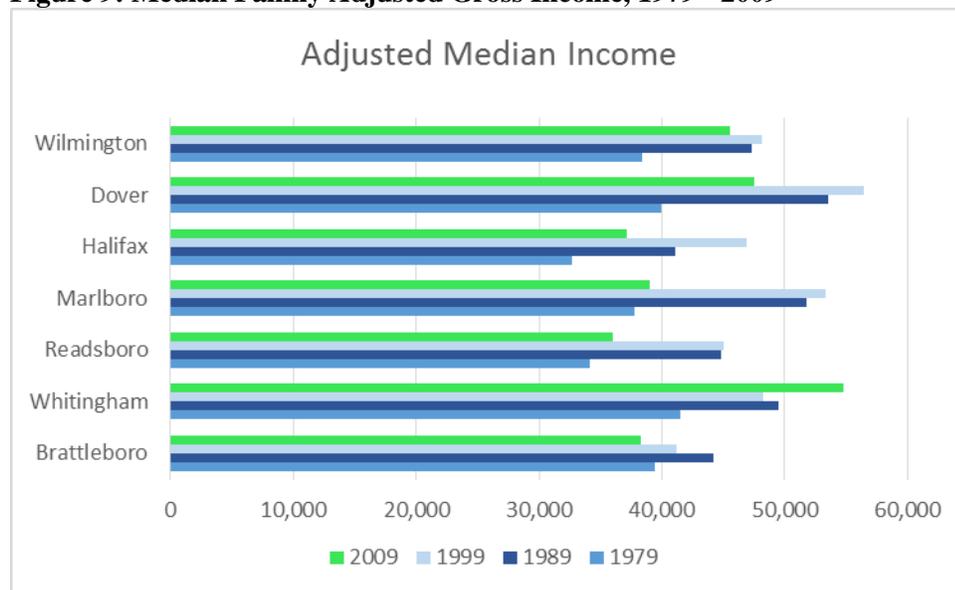
2005 - 2009 <http://factfinder2.census.gov>

1979, 1989, 1999 Vermont Indicators <http://vcgi.org/indicators>

2009 data source 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey 5 year estimates

CPI: Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index History Table

Figure 9: Median Family Adjusted Gross Income, 1979 - 2009



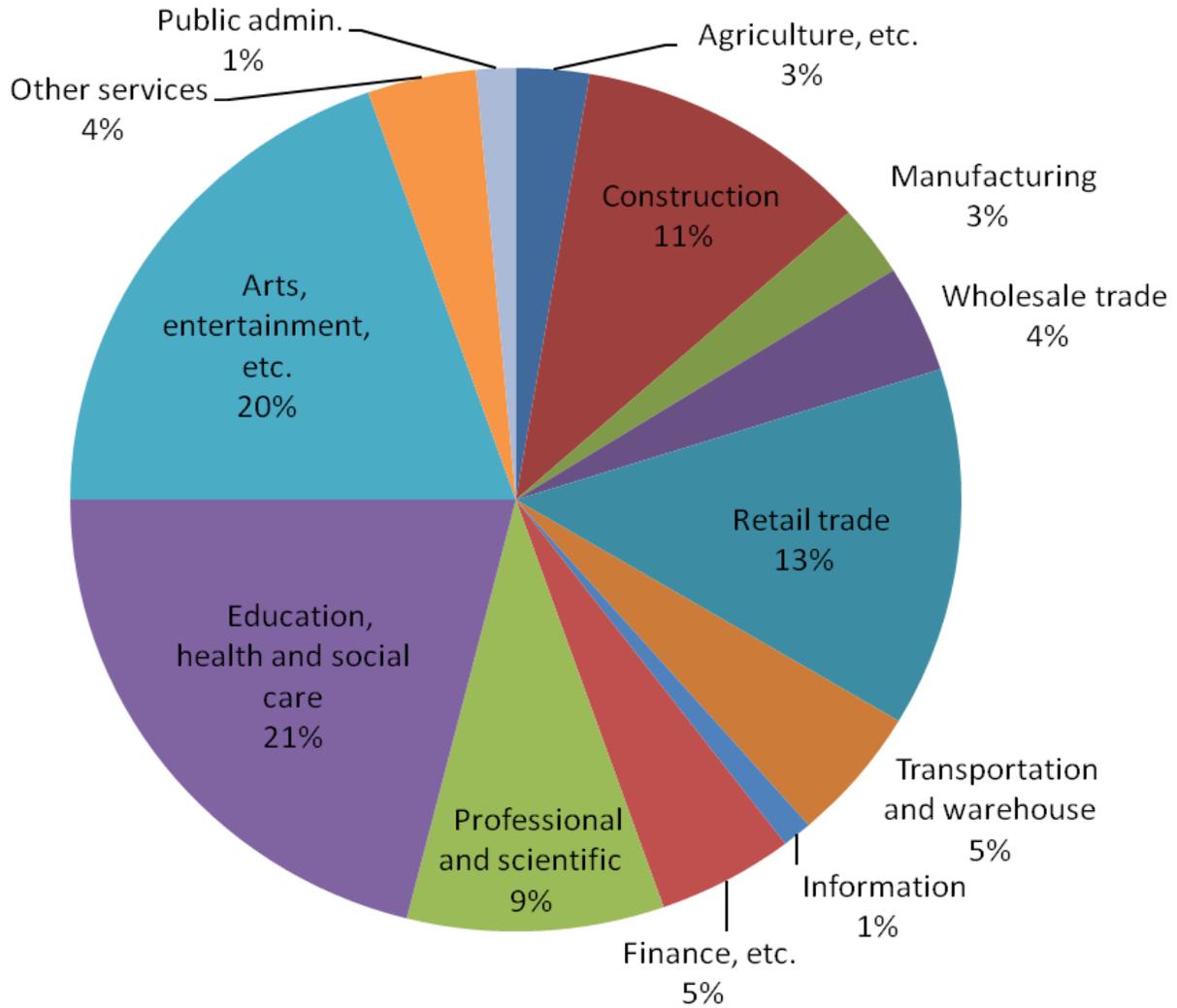
The Vermont Department of Labor “Covered Employment and Wages” for Wilmington 2013 data reports 120 businesses, with 974 positions of employment in those businesses. The average annual wages for those positions was \$29,843 for \$29,074,393 in Total Wages from all positions in those businesses. This compares to 157 businesses in Wilmington in 2008, employing a total of 1036 people, with annual average wages of \$27,630. While annual wages have increased slightly since 2008, the overall number of businesses has dropped 24% in the 5 years and the number of positions has decreased 6%. While Wilmington was experiencing negative growth prior to Tropical Storm Irene, the size of the negative growth is largely attributable to the flooding and devastation that resulted from that storm.

Figure 10 shows the types and diversity of business in Wilmington in 2008-2012. Although these figures provide some insight to the employment picture of Wilmington, this data refers to employees and their wages in firms subject to unemployment laws. Workers not necessarily included are the self-employed, elected officials, employees of certain non-profit organizations, unpaid family members, some agricultural workers and railroad workers. The data also spans pre and post flood employment. While this is informative, it is not necessarily indicative of current conditions. A snapshot taken entirely after 2011 would likely result in a much different picture.

Based on this data source covering 2008 - 2012, Wilmington’s largest sources of employment are Education, Health and Social Care (21%), Arts and Entertainment (20%), Retail (13%) and Construction (11%). This reflects on Wilmington’s shift from a once agriculturally based town (Agriculture currently represents only 3% of the overall employment of the town), to a largely tourism based town providing recreation, retail, and second home ownership and related services.

Figure 10: Wilmington Employment by Industry

Employment by Industry 2008-2012



Source: American Community Survey

NATURAL RESOURCES

Topography and Slope

The physical geography of any region is shaped by the sum of all interacting and man-made processes, selected and driven by climatic forces and governed by the basic geologic structure of the region. The Town of Wilmington is located on the eastern flank of the Green Mountains. The mountain range is bedrock consisting of highly metamorphosed gneisses and schists and a structure of a complex mix of folds and faults with a north-south trend. This basic foundation was established in the early Paleozoic and late pre-Cambrian eras, four hundred million years to one billion years ago. Wilmington's landscape has acquired its present appearance as the result of glacial erosion and deposition, during the recent Ice Age that ended about ten thousand years ago in southern Vermont but whose effects are continuing to this day. However, the physiography continues to change as streams and rivers move materials and carry with them the products of weathering to new locations.

The Town is laced with many streams, each with its own set of lesser tributaries, which divide the Town into a branching group of hills and ridges of considerable relief and separated by narrow, intervening valleys. The Village itself is situated at the confluence of the Beaver Brook valley from the East and the Deerfield River valley from the North. It is the dominance of the Deerfield River, with its adjacent fertile flood plain, that allows the whole region to be known as "The Valley."

The highest and most visible feature of the landscape is the distinctive peak of Haystack Mountain, elevation 3420 feet above sea level. Conversely, the lowest area is the surface of Lake Whitingham whose variable level is at about 1500 feet in elevation. Thus, the local vertical relief is about 1900 feet, much of which is quite steep with slopes greater than 15%. As slopes increase, the suitability of the land for development decreases. While the development constraints of building on steep slopes can be overcome, the environmental risks remain. In areas of steep slopes, the velocity of runoff and, therefore, the erosion potential, increases. The ability of the soil to filter septic system leachate is decreased.¹

Soils

Soils are one of the most important environmental factors that govern the use of land in rural areas. A soil's depth to water table, susceptibility to flooding, depth to bedrock, stone cover, and permeability present potential constraints on the construction of roads, buildings, and septic systems. There are areas in Wilmington which have severe sewage disposal leaching limitations. Careful evaluation of any proposed site is necessary to prevent attempted usage of these soils beyond their capacity.

¹ According to the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, slopes of less than 8 percent are generally the most suitable for building. The erosion potential of such slightly sloping land is low, their ability to absorb runoff is high, and soils are usually of adequate depth and composition for septic systems. Exceptions are extremely flat areas, some of which may be classified as wetlands, where drainage is poor. In addition to the potential for sedimentation and erosion, development on steep slopes is likely to be more visible from a greater number of locations throughout town.

The soils on the mountains and hills of Wilmington are as varied as the landscape. On steep mountain slopes scraped by the glaciers, soils tend to be shallow to bedrock, while on some of the hills, the glaciers have deposited material. Nearly all of the soils in Wilmington have a glacial origin, whether they are the finely ground silts (rock dust) or the less common gravel deposits which resulted from outwash streams.

Water Resources

Water Resources cannot be addressed without first acknowledging that the entire hydrologic cycle is an inseparable whole. "Highest flows occur with snowmelt, and thereafter decline continuously, reaching annual lows in August or September. During the fall and early winter stream flow gradually increases to another peak and remains steady or declines slightly until spring again.² "

Surface Waters: Rivers, Streams, Lakes, and Ponds

Wilmington is blessed with rivers, streams, lakes and ponds that provide recreational opportunities that include fishing, swimming, boating, and various winter sports (see Community Facilities chapter for a further discussion on recreation). Maintaining their high water quality is critical for human use (both recreation and drinking) and for fish and wildlife habitat.

Almost all the streams drain into the North Branch of the Deerfield River, which rises not many miles to the north in the Town of Dover. Except for a few small brooks in the very southeastern corner of the Town, all the drainage converges in Lake Whitingham. Most streams have steep gradients and variable flows and their waters are soft and slightly acidic. The North Branch of the Deerfield River's principal tributaries are Bill Brook from the northeastern portion of the town, Cold Brook from the northwestern part, and Beaver Brook from the eastern part. Rose and Binney Brooks drain the Haystack area, and flow into the upper reaches of Lake Whitingham.

Major surface waters in Wilmington include:

Lake Whitingham

The second largest body of water wholly within the State of Vermont, with roughly half of its 2,185 acres of water surface lying within the Town of Wilmington, is currently owned and operated by a utility company (TransCanada).³ Although the lake serves as an integral component of a utility company's hydroelectric enterprise, it is now a vital part of Wilmington's economy and landscape. The power company has been, and continues to be, attentive to and supportive of collateral use of the lake.

The Vermont Deerfield River Comprehensive Rivers Plan, prepared by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, describes the environmental and ecological issues related to the

2 An Ecological Planning Study for Wilmington and Dover, Vermont, Wallace, McHarg, Roberts and Todd, April 1972.

3 In 1924 a dam was constructed within the narrows of the Deerfield River valley in Whitingham, and the flooding of the lower portion of the valley signaled a change in the physical, social, and economic status of Wilmington

operation of the utility company system in Vermont and Massachusetts. It offers goals and recommendations for the future.

The shores of the lake remain undeveloped and are forested to the water's edge, except when the reservoir has been drawn down in the late fall to prepare to receive the spring's snow melt. Nevertheless, the lake is a scenic gem with wildlife sitings including the American Bald Eagle and Common Loon, while being increasingly impacted as a recreational resource.

Lake Raconda

In the eastern part of the town lies the 116-acre Lake Raconda. It lies at the head of a drainage basin, with a dam at the northern end before leading into Bill Brook. Lake Raconda is regularly monitored for water quality. Parking is limited as is the capacity of the beach area, so use of the beach is limited to use by taxpayers, residents, and their guests.

Haystack Pond

Just below the peak of Haystack Mountain, at an elevation of 2984 feet, lies 36 acre Haystack Pond. Surrounded by wetlands, this pristine pond is accessible only by a hiking trail. Its mountainside location makes it a scenic treasure, whether viewed from the summit or the shore. Nearby is three acre Crystal Pond, now enclosed by woods and also surrounded by wetlands.

Private Lakes

Mirror Lake lies at the base of Haystack Mountain Ski Area and was constructed as a source of water for snowmaking and fire protection. Spruce Lake, a private twenty-acre pond, is the focus of a small development that was created in the 70's by damming a tributary of Beaver Brook.

Impaired Waters

Section 305(b) of the Federal Clean Water Act requires states to monitor the quality of surface waters and to publish the results periodically. Vermont issues a Priority Waters List biannually. Impaired waters in (or partially in) Wilmington listed by the state in 2014 include:

Impaired waters with EPA-approved Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL):

- Harriman Reservoir - elevated level of mercury in all fish except brown bullhead; there is an EPA-approved regional mercury TMDL adopted on December 20, 2007
- Harriman Reservoir - atmospheric deposition: extremely sensitive to acidification; there is an EPA-approved episodic acidification acid TMDL adopted September 20, 2004
- Upper Deerfield River, below Searsburg Dam - elevated levels of mercury in all fish; there is an EPA-approved regional mercury TMDL adopted on December 20, 2007
- Haystack Pond - atmospheric deposition: critically acidified; chronic acidification; there is an EPA-approved acid TMDL adopted September 30, 2003

Waters altered by flow regulation. The state considers these priority waters for management action:

- North Branch Deerfield River (11.5 miles) - artificial and insufficient flow below Mt Snow/Haystack snowmaking water withdrawal; non-support of aquatic life 2.2 mi, partial support of aquatic life 9.3 mi (13.3 mi total length)
- Note: ANR de-listed Cold Brook between 2012 and 2014 publications

Shore Lands

Shore lands are lands adjacent to surface waters which are important for maintaining water quality and providing wildlife habitat; valuable in reducing soil erosion and excessive siltation; and tend to be highly vulnerable to excessive and poorly planned development. The resource value of watercourses and shorelines can be diminished or destroyed by improper development activity. Shown on the Natural Resource Map are areas in town that are found along undeveloped streams.

Maintaining undisturbed naturally vegetated buffer strips along streams provides many functions, including: stabilizing streambanks (by reducing erosion), providing food and shelter for fish and wildlife, filtering and absorbing pollutants (such as silt, fertilizers and livestock wastes) prior to reaching surface waters, maintaining cool water temperatures required to support fisheries, reduce flood and ice damage to streambanks and adjacent structures, as well as preserving the natural character of the water.

Wetlands

Wetlands are seasonally or permanently wet areas which have saturated soils at least part of the year, support wetland plants and contain aquatic life. Marshes, swamps, bogs, and seasonally flooded fields are examples. Wetland values include fish and wildlife habitat, flood and erosion protection, nutrient and pollution filtration, ground water recharge, and sites for educational activities and recreational and scenic enjoyment.

Most all wetlands are under the jurisdiction of the US Army Corps of Engineers, and are regulated under Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act. The Vermont Wetland Rules regulate development within and adjacent to wetlands areas. Under the rules, three classes of wetlands were established to determine the level of protection. Class One⁴ and Class Two⁵ wetlands are considered significant by the State of Vermont and are shown on the Vermont Significant Wetland Inventory Map.⁶ Currently, there are no Class One wetlands and 533 acres of Class Two wetlands in the Town of Wilmington. Class Three⁷ wetlands are not regulated under State wetland rules, but in most cases are under the jurisdiction of the US Army Corps of Engineers, and may be protected by other State or Federal regulations.

http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec//waterq/wetlands/htm/wl_vermontsigwetinvmaps.htm

⁴ ***Class One:*** These wetlands are considered to be exceptional or irreplaceable in their contribution to Vermont's natural heritage and merit the greatest amount of protection. The Wetland Rules establish a 100-foot buffer around all Class One Wetlands and also establish conditional uses allowed within the wetlands and buffer areas.

⁵ ***Class Two:*** These wetlands are protected under the Wetland Rules due to their significance alone or in conjunction with other wetlands. The Wetland Rules establish a 50-foot buffer around all Class Two Wetlands and also establish conditional uses allowed within the wetlands and buffer areas

⁶ http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec//waterq/wetlands/htm/wl_vermontsigwetinvmaps.htm

⁷ ***Class Three:*** These wetlands have not been determined to be significant enough to merit protection either because they have not yet been evaluated or because they were determined not to be so.

A significant wetland in the Town is the Lake Raponda balsam swamp, some twenty acres located to the south of the lake. It consists of plants of unusual diversity and productivity. This area is a dense spruce-balsam swamp with boreal plant species and a luxuriant ground cover of mosses and lichens. A wetland of less than ten acres on Meadow Brook provides excellent food and cover, and nesting potential, for waterfowl. Aside from the aforementioned sub-alpine wetlands on Haystack, there are several beaver pond areas of five acres or less scattered about the Town. The shorelines of Lake Whitingham are atypical, and consequently, the plant communities there are now characterized by a reduced habitat as a result of seasonal fluctuations in the water level due to power company operations.

The Town does not regulate wetlands. Nonetheless, the Vermont Wetlands Office is required to review projects for work that is proposed to be done in a wetland or buffer area. Many activities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, boating, bird watching, scientific and education research or activities, and wildlife, fisheries, or silvicultural⁸ management do not require state or federal review provided that they do not influence the water levels in a wetland and do not involve draining, filling, or grading.

Floodplains

Floodplains are relatively flat areas adjacent to a stream or river that experience occasional periodic flooding. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has mapped flood hazard areas⁹, areas with a one percent chance of flooding in any given year Official Flood Hazard Maps are available at the Town Office.

The Town participates in the National Flood Insurance Program and has adopted and enforces a Flood Hazard Area Regulation as part of the zoning. By doing so, property owners in Wilmington are able to obtain federal insured flood insurance at affordable rates and flood disaster assistance. The Flood Hazard Area Regulation imposes design standards on development within the FEMA-defined flood hazard areas that are intended to minimize property damage during flood events.

Groundwater

Groundwater occurs in rock openings. In Wilmington, with its high percentage of metamorphic rock, most of these gaps were derived from secondary joints and fractures created after the rock was formed. Wilmington gneiss, the most weathered metamorphic rock, has the greatest number of fractures. Deep sands and gravel found near recharge sources such as streams, ponds, and bogs are sources of groundwater as well.

Well Head Protection Areas

Public water supplies derived from a groundwater source should be secure. The State of Vermont Agency of Natural Resources has established and mapped Source Protection Areas. Within the Town of Wilmington 17 springs, 7 bedrock wells and 2 gravel wells which supply water for the

⁸ Silviculture is the growing and tending of trees and forests.

⁹ <http://www.fema.gov/hazard/flood/info.shtm>

Wilmington Water District, Chimney Hill Owners Association and Coldbrook Fire District have been identified.

The springs that supply the Wilmington Water District are located higher upon the slopes of Haystack Mountain. The Coldbrook Fire District wells are all located within the District boundaries, mostly throughout the Haystack Development in the Golf Course Tract, Ski Area Tract and East Tract. Some other wells are located on private property not part of the Haystack Development, but still within the District boundaries. Any developments near these wells must consider the potential effect they could have upon these sources (within the Well Head Production Areas) and account for it in the permitting process. In 1991 the Wilmington Water District constructed a new covered reservoir as well as upgraded the distribution system. The system meets the Federal Clean Water Act.

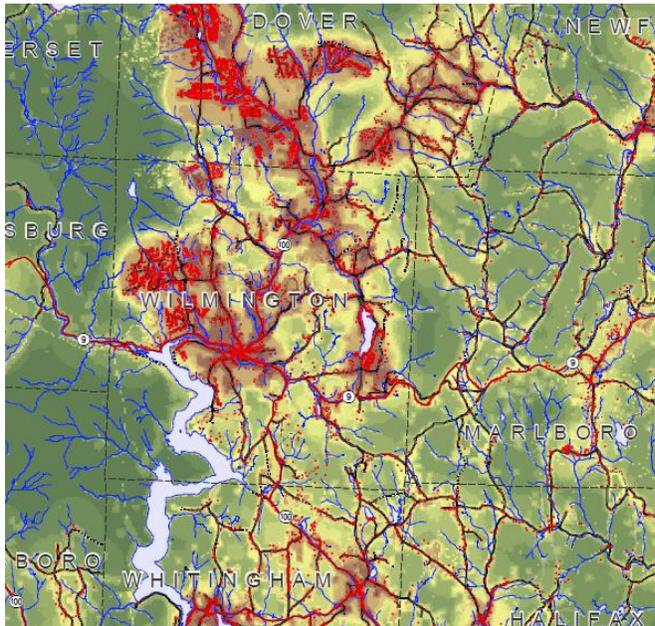
Minerals

Commercially useful sands and gravels, suitable for road maintenance and construction, have been extracted in years past and are now nearly depleted from any sizeable deposits except stream beds and the Lake Whitingham flood area. The Town must rely on outside sources for a supply to handle municipal needs.

Wildlife Habitat and Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species

In addition to habitats mentioned under water resources, large forested tracts have significant habitat potential for large mammals (bear, moose, deer, bobcat, fisher, and coyote) and many valued songbirds. The forests, open fields, and wetlands provide the needed habitat. Mammals that inhabit the Town include - white tailed deer, moose, bear, coyotes, bobcats, red fox, skunks, chipmunks, red and gray squirrels, rabbits, hare, porcupines, beaver, raccoons, opossum, fisher, otter, mink, weasels, and muskrats. Game birds, such as turkey, ducks, and grouse are abundant. Non-game species of mammals and birds find the mix of forest, open fields, backyards, wetlands, lakes, ponds, and streams attractive.

Most of the town's streams are good trout waters, even though there are seasonal low flows. Streams with a steep gradient, a mix of pools and riffles, and intact forested riparian zones are particularly good fisheries. Salmon have been unsuccessfully introduced into some of the upland streams and into Lake Whitingham. Fish habitat exists for both cold (trout) and warm water (bass) species.

Figure 11: Wildlife Habitat Suitability

The black bear is native to Vermont and primarily found in remote, forested habitat. In Wilmington bear are found most commonly on the forested mountains on the west side of the Town. During late spring and summer, bear are known to feed on lower elevation vegetation and in wetlands. During this time period there is an active bear crossing on Cold Brook Road where they come down off Haystack to wetlands along Cold Brook. Bear also feed on Jack-in-the-pulpit and skunk cabbage, both of which have been found in Wilmington.

The appearance of black bear in the more thickly settled parts of town has been increasing over the past few years. Along the border with the Town of Dover there has been an increase in human-bear

conflicts. To decrease these encounters, Vermont Fish and Wildlife Biologists recommend that bird feeders only be placed outdoors from December 1 to April 1.

Moose and bald eagle sightings have increased and great blue herons and many species of hawks are common. The many overgrown fields, hedgerows, open woodlands, thickets, and backyard feeders invite song birds to come and stay in the town

In Wilmington there are four occurrences of rare¹⁰ plant species and one occurrence of a threatened¹¹ plant species. All of these occurrences are in the general area of surface water (see Wildlife Habitat Suitability map).

The Wildlife Habitat Suitability analysis conducted by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Vermont Agency of Transportation, used a statewide, landscape scale model which considered housing density, land use/land cover, and core habitat information. The resulting data show the probability of finding suitable contiguous and linkage wildlife habitat in an area, but it does not describe the quality of habitat.

The wildlife habitat suitability rating, shown on this accompanying map, goes from high (green) to low (brown) with red showing the built environment. The areas of Wilmington with the highest wildlife habitat suitability are located along the town's western and the southeastern corners. These areas also provide the best opportunity of connecting with neighboring towns existing wildlife corridors.

¹⁰ A rare species is one that has only a few populations in the state and that faces threats to its continued existence in Vermont

¹¹ A threatened species is a species whose numbers are significantly declining because of loss of habitat or human disturbance and unless protected will become an endangered species,

Agricultural Resources

The US Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service has identified soil types that are best suited for crop production based on soil quality, growing season and moisture supply. Important Farmland inventories identify soil map units that are Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Additional Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Additional Farmland of Local Importance. The prime agricultural soils are likely to produce the highest crop yields using the least amount of economic resources and causing the least environmental impact. Soils with an Important Farmland rating of 'prime' or 'statewide' have the potential to be Primary Agricultural Soils under Act 250.

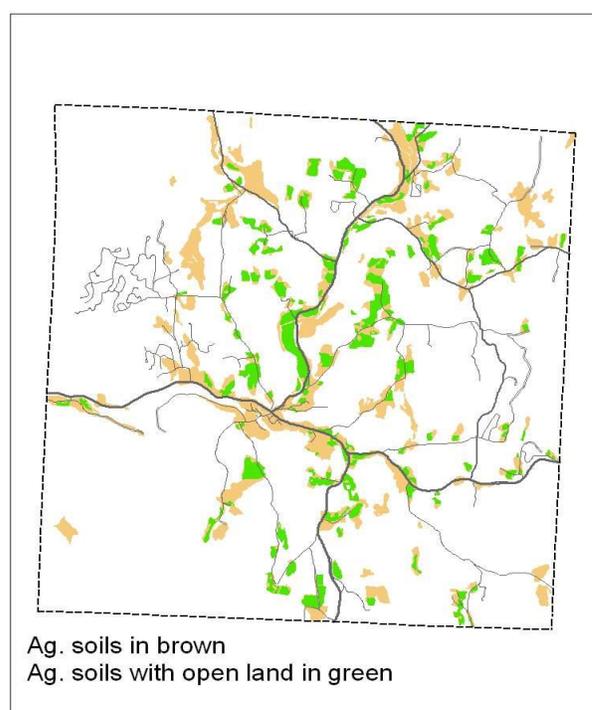
Wilmington has scattered pockets of agricultural soils that could be classified as either prime (390 acres or 1.5 % of town) or statewide (3,185 acres or 12.6 % of town). The majority of the prime agricultural soils are found along the

Deerfield River or Beaver Brook. Currently, the Primary Agricultural (prime and statewide) found in Wilmington consists of 31% open land (not forested or residential).

Although agriculture is not extensive in Wilmington, the agricultural lands are an important resource that serves many functions including: providing local seasonal produce and planting materials; serving as an educational resource; and contributing to the rural character of the Town. According to the Town of Wilmington records, in 2015 Wilmington had a total of 475.3 acres classified as Agricultural land enrolled in the Use Value Appraisal Program (also known as Current Use). For Agricultural land to be eligible, participating owners must have a minimum of 25 contiguous acres (not counting the 2 acres surrounding any dwelling) to enroll in the program; the land must be land actively used for farming.

Agricultural land or farmland can be defined as presently or potentially productive crop, pasture, or range lands. Agricultural enterprise is defined as business activity directly related to agriculture. Usually farmland is cleared, although some forestry practices, such as tree farming or the cultivation of maple sugar bushes, may be considered agricultural. Natural and human influence factors determine viability of farmland, both economically and in their ability to produce crops. Some examples of natural factors are soils, slope, and climatic conditions; some factors influenced by humans are accessibility, distance to services, development, and markets, and proximity to other agricultural land.

Figure 12: Agricultural Soils



Forestry Resources

The total acreage of forestland in Wilmington is estimated at 21,200 acres (nearly 78% of the town). This includes woodland associated with existing residential uses. The forestland of Wilmington serves many functions including timber production, wildlife habitat, and recreation.

Woodlands of the town are comprised of both the northern hardwood and boreal forests. The hardwood forest is comprised of American beech, yellow birch, and sugar maple, in association with eastern hemlock, white birch, red maple, and white ash. Pioneer species after cutting or fire include aspen, birch, spruce, white pine or fir, depending upon site conditions. The spruce-fir forest is comprised of red, white, and black spruces, and balsam fir. Pioneer associations after fire or cutting may include those same species or hardwoods, depending upon site conditions.

The climate and soils have supported forests that have played such a major role in our economy that our woodlands are now third and fourth growth forests. The timber industry plays a lesser but still important part of our economy. The trees and wooded hills, which dominate the landscape and provide contrast with open fields and pasture land, serve as an important visual resource for the Town. The spruce-fir forest west of Lake Raponda is a special natural area.

According to the Town of Wilmington's records, in 2015 Wilmington had a total of 3,655 acres classified as productive forest land enrolled in the Use Value Appraisal Program. For forest land to be eligible, participating owners must have a minimum of 25 contiguous acres to enroll in the program (not counting the 2 acres surrounding any dwelling) and must manage the forest land according to the provisions of a 10-year forest management plan approved by the County Forester.

Planning Considerations for Natural Resources

Special planning and design standards should be considered and reflected in zoning and subdivision regulations and considered by landowners in their own land planning. The following areas have been mapped on the natural resources map:

- Areas above 2,500 feet: As part of the Green Mountain range, higher elevations are vulnerable to serious problems caused by increased rainfall on steep slopes, shallow soils and disturbed ground cover. It is recommended that these areas be protected by careful review of any development proposals.
- Surface waters (rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, wetlands): These resources have natural, scenic, and recreational value. Their value can be easily diminished or destroyed by unwise development. In so far as practical, surface waters and shorelines should be retained and maintained in their natural state.
- Source Protection Areas (for water supplies): These areas are mapped by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources¹² in order to delineate the minimum area needed to protect a public water supply. Land uses should be limited to those which pose no threat to the quality of the water supply.
- Flood hazard areas: These areas are identified so that development in flood hazard areas does not impede the flow of flood waters or endanger the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

¹² <http://www.anr.state.vt.us/DEC/watersup/swapp.htm>

- Deer wintering areas: Low-lying softwood stands with southern exposures provide critical shelter from deep snow and cold temperatures. Road and housing construction and other forms of similar development reduce both the quantity and quality of deer wintering areas. http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/cwp_elem_spec_dwa.cfm
- Rare and threatened plant and animal locations: Sites have been designated and mapped by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources and require protection from the impacts of development.
- Scenic areas - Haystack Mountain and the ridgeline which forms the spine of the Green Mountain National Forest are prominent landforms. They provide a dramatic scenic impact from many viewpoints in Wilmington.
- Scenic roads - These roads were identified by the Wilmington Planning Commission as having the most scenic value to residents and visitors. Consideration should be given to these scenic values.

POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

GOAL: To Identify, Protect and Preserve Important Natural Features of the Wilmington Landscape.

Policy 1: Protect valuable natural areas from uses that would significantly alter their scenic, ecological, educational or scientific values.

Recommendation 1.1: Identify and inventory sites of geological significance, waterways and valuable habitat, areas with premium stands of trees, unusual plant communities or significant wild life habitat, and scenic views and features that may require special policies for protection.

Recommendation 1.2: Develop guidelines or regulations for siting of buildings so that views will not be obstructed.

Recommendation 1.3: Encourage burial of utility lines whenever feasible.

Recommendation 1.4: Develop guidelines for the protection of ridgelines and conservation of fragile areas.

GOAL: To Protect, Maintain and Improve the Quality of Wilmington’s Natural Resources: its Air, Water, Wildlife, Plant Life and Soils.

Policy 2: Reduce negative impacts on air quality.

Recommendation 2.1: Develop guidelines or regulations to screen proposed activities for their air polluting potential and limit or prohibit those air-polluting activities.

Policy 3: Protect aquifer recharge areas, significant groundwater sources and surface waters.

Recommendation 3.1: Identify and inventory aquifer recharge areas, significant groundwater sources and surface waters.

Recommendation 3.2: Strictly regulate development in aquifer recharge and significant groundwater areas and protect these areas from development that will contaminate these resources.

Recommendation 3.3: Regulate land alteration that interferes with the natural flow of water to surface waters and assure maintenance of water quality and minimize the potential for erosion.

Recommendation 3.4: Ensure that development in floodways or flood hazard zones areas is subject to Wilmington Flood Hazard Regulations.

Policy 4: Riparian buffers along the shorelines of watercourses, streams, rivers, ponds and lakes shall be maintained as a means to protect surface and ground water quality, reduce pollution and erosion, and provide wildlife habitat.

Recommendation 4.1: Consider developing guidelines or regulations for development within shoreline areas of streams lakes or ponds to be compatible with the natural beauty of the area and protect existing vegetation.

Policy 5: Protect and retain in their natural state wetland areas, swamps, bogs, fens, marshes with open water or with a vegetative mat over a high water table.

Recommendation 5.1: Protect wetlands from development by require the maintenance of an undisturbed buffer strip of naturally vegetated upland around the wetland edge.

Policy 6: Discourage development along steep slopes, unstable soils and in areas with unsuitable topography.

Recommendation 6.1: Develop strict guidelines or regulations for development or land use in these areas to minimize the potential impacts of erosion, slides, and earthquakes

Policy 7: Identify and protect unique natural areas and their significant plant and animal communities, wildlife habitats, and rare and endangered plants and animals and their habitats.

Recommendation 7.1: Consider the formation of a Conservation Commission to identify and inventory those lands that should be listed as Conservation and Natural Resource Lands.

Recommendation 7.2: Establish criteria to evaluate potential uses of these lands that will minimize any adverse impact and be compatible with their long-term protection.

Recommendation 7.3: Consider creating buffer strips around natural areas to preserve their value for education, science, research, aesthetics and recreation.

Recommendation 7.4: Identify and protect deer wintering areas, wildlife corridors, waterfowl habitat, rare and endangered plants and animals.

Recommendation 7.5: Develop criteria to evaluate natural areas of the town for protection through regulations, purchase or other non-regulatory means.

Policy 8: Protect the long-term viability of Wilmington’s agricultural and forest lands for future generations.

Recommendation 8.1: Create a plan to protect existing tree species and conserve productive forest and agricultural soils.

Recommendation 8.2: Develop guidelines or regulations to discourage fragmentation of large tracts of forest, agricultural and resource lands.

Recommendation 8.3: Support efforts to protect agricultural and forest resources through purchase or other non-regulatory means.

Recommendation 8.4: Pursue access to and develop Shafter Park to further its use by the public.

<p>GOAL: To Provide for the Wise and Efficient Use of Wilmington’s Earth and Mineral Resources.</p>
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Policy 9: Conserve Wilmington’s earth and mineral resources and the subsequent natural resources impacted by them.

Recommendation 9.1: Identify and inventory significant sand, gravel, and mineral deposits, noting environmentally sensitive areas.

Recommendation 9.2: Develop a method to evaluate environmental and economic impacts and benefits from gravel extraction operations.

Recommendation 9.3: Develop guidelines or regulations for extraction or processing of earth resources to have minimal adverse impact on the environment; to allow for future earth and mineral extraction; and to provide for site rehabilitation that emphasizes health and safety concerns, environmental conditions, and scenic qualities.

TRANSPORTATION

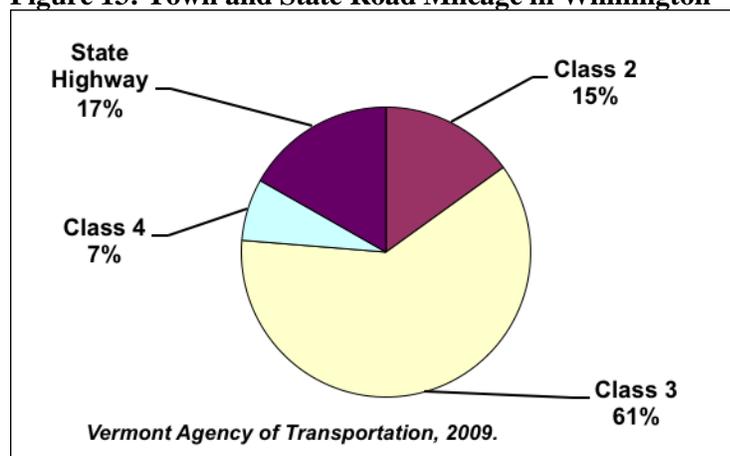
Existing Transportation System

Early settlers in Wilmington traveled by foot, horse, and ox cart and for many years animals were used to draw wagons, stage coaches, and buggies. Most homes had a barn that accommodated horses and horse drawn vehicles. Averill Stand (1787) was one of the major Inns on the Windham County Turnpike. There was a livery stable in the Village (located at the present True Value on Rte. 9) for boarding horses and housing vehicles. However, since the arrival of the automobile, people have depended upon it for transportation, hauling, and delivery. Recently the MOOver has been added to our transportation network and is very successful.

Roads

Wilmington’s network of roads includes town roads and state highways. Wilmington is a crossroads town with Vermont Routes 9, east-west, and Route 100 (formerly 8), north - south, meeting at the traffic lights in the Village. The closest federal highway is Interstate 91, which passes through Brattleboro approximately 20 miles to the east. Vermont Route 9, a national highway system road, runs west from Brattleboro to Bennington. VT 100, Vermont’s interior recreational corridor, heads south into Whitingham and Readsboro and goes north almost to the Canadian Border.

Figure 13: Town and State Road Mileage in Wilmington



In Wilmington VT 9 and 100 are 14.8 miles of state maintained roads that provide regional access to the town’s network of 67.3 miles of Class 2 and 3 Town-maintained roads (see Transportation map in the map section).

Approximately 6.1 miles of non-contiguous roads in the Town are classified as Class 4. No state appropriation is made for maintaining Class 4 roads. These roads are seasonally functional for normal vehicular traffic and have a dirt surface. Like many Vermont communities, Wilmington has many Class 4 roads and legal trails that were not mapped on the VTrans Highway Maps.

In response to Act 178 which requires municipalities to identify “ancient roads”¹³ and formally map them if the town wishes to retain them, the Wilmington Selectboard appointed the Ancient Roads Committee. The Ancient Roads Committee worked on an inventory of all existing Class 4 roads, town trails, and historic roads. The inventory lists the current classification status of all roads. The Selectboard decides which roads serve the public need.

Of the town maintained roads, 23.2 miles are paved. The surface of the remaining 44.1 miles is a mix of gravel and dirt. Unpaved roads tend to limit the amount of traffic and discourage speeding, thereby promoting vehicle and pedestrian safety and, at the same time, helping to preserve the rural character of the town.

Much interest in the scenic value of Town roads has been expressed by residents. Concerns over Town road standards in relation to scenic quality have also arisen. There is a general recognition that safe, well-maintained roads with scenic attractive road sides represent a valuable economic asset. The Town recognizes the need for an open space plan and opportunities available to fund the preservation of open spaces. A scenic road inventory of all town roads was conducted by members of the Planning Commission and other interested people in 1992 and updated by the Planning Commission in 2010. The inventory was based on “Designating Scenic Roads - A Vermont Field Guide” developed by the Vermont Scenery Preservation Council and the Vermont Transportation Board (June, 1979). Scenic values such as vegetative patterns, vistas, water, rock walls, type of road, and historic sites were balanced with negative values, such as utility lines, landscape scars, and structures out of context, to come up with an overall rating for each road. These ratings and inventories are on file at the Town Office to help guide road reconstruction activities, and are shown on the Natural Resources Map in the map section.

Bridges

Bridges in Vermont are classified according to length and by whether the ownership and maintenance responsibility lies with the town or the state. “Long structures” are those over 20 feet in length, and “short structures” are 6 to 20 feet in length. Structures shorter than six feet are classified as culverts, regardless of design.

The following table is on the condition of the 8 state and 13 town bridges in Wilmington. The rating system is based on the National Bridge Inspection/Inventory scale, which was last carried out by the Vermont Agency of Transportation in 2007.

¹³ An ancient road is a right-of-way not otherwise clearly observable by physical evidence of its use as a highway or trail.

Figure 14: National Bridge Inspection/Inventory for Bridges in Wilmington

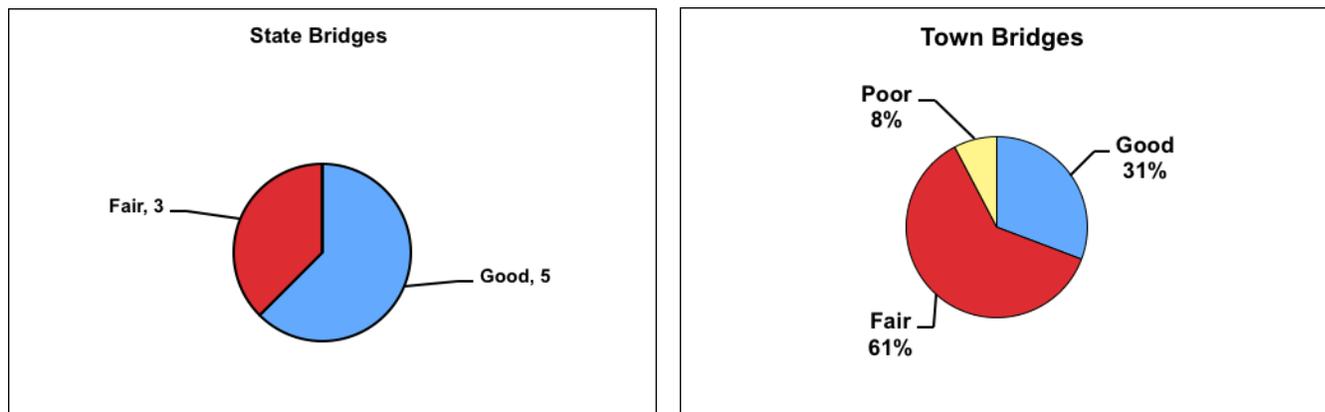


Figure 15: Bridge Statistics

National Bridge Inventory (NBI) Statistics

Number of bridges: 22 *

Total length: 39 meters (128ft)

Total costs: \$3,882,000

Total average daily traffic: 49,608

Total average daily truck traffic: 4,152

Total future (year 2015) average daily traffic: 70,161

*This is one more bridge than noted in the 2007 data above, accounted for by 1 bridge built between 2010 – 2012 (see below)

Ages of Bridges: New bridges - Historical

- 1930-1939: 14
- 1940-1949: 0
- 1950-1959: 2
- 1960-1969: 1
- 1970-1979: 1
- 1980-1989: 1
- 1990-1999: 2
- 2000-2009: 0
- 2010-2012: 1

Data Source

<http://www.citydata.com/city/Wilmington-Vermont>.

Culverts

In 2015, though a project funded by the Better Backroads program, the Windham Regional Commission, is collecting culvert data for a number of sites throughout the Town of Wilmington. There are two studies underway.

Two culvert studies are currently underway, one assessing all mid-sized culverts and another on the most critical secondary road culverts. The two studies are:

- A Better Backroads project conducting a town-wide inventory of all culverts 36” diameter and greater (63 of them) to provide observations regarding road and stream interaction (e.g., erosion, scour, deposition). The project will produce a report containing detailed observations and location maps for each culvert.
- A Better Backroads project evaluating structural integrity and other road-related concerns regarding selected culverts. The Road Foreman identified eight sites that the town considers to be the highest priorities. The project will produce a report with photos, maps, detailed observations, and cost estimates to help the town prioritize repair/replacement expenditures.

Information from the reports will be incorporated in the coming full update of the Town Plan.

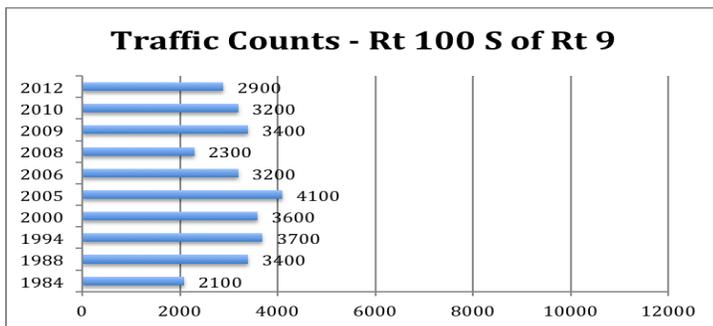
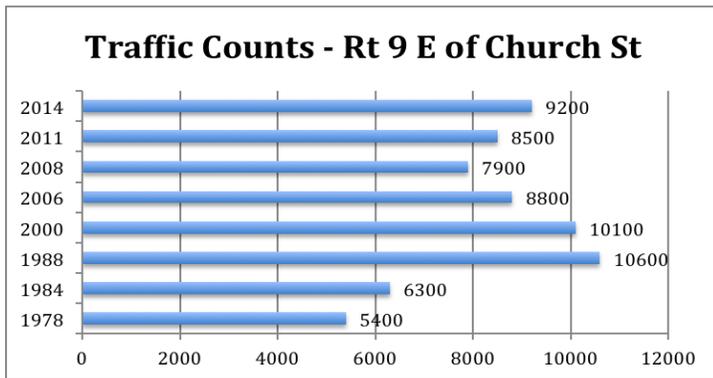
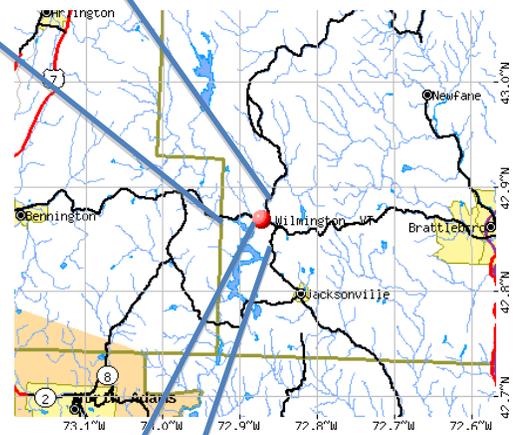
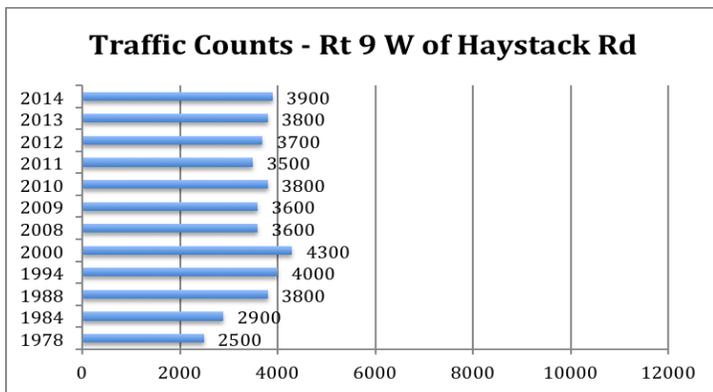
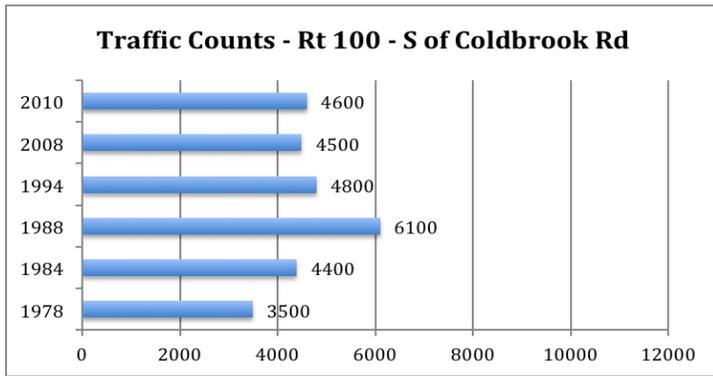
VT 9/100 Intersection

There has been a long-standing concern over the traffic at the junction of Routes 9 and 100 North, as well as concern over the heavy through traffic in the commercial center. The following charts¹⁴ show the best available traffic count data for VT 9 and 100. From these data it appears that there was generally growth in traffic volumes in the 80s and 1990s. By the 2000’s traffic volumes decreased a little and remained rather constant.

Annual average daily traffic, abbreviated **AADT**, is a measure used primarily in transportation planning and transportation engineering. It is the total volume of vehicle traffic of a highway or road for a year divided by 365 days. AADT is a useful and simple measurement of how busy the road is. It is also sometimes reported as "average annual daily traffic."

14 Vermont Agency of Transportation, Automatic Traffic Recorder Station History 1978 – 2014.

Figure 16 Traffic Counts in Wilmington (Note: Route should be abbreviated Rt throughout.)



- Traffic Count Location Detail**
1. Rte. 100 - 0.4 miles S of Coldbrook
 2. Rte. 9 - 0.7 miles W of Haystack Rd
 3. Rte. 9 - 0.0 miles E of Church St
 4. Rte. 100 - 0.1 miles S of Rt 9

Several ad hoc committees have been established by the Town to work on transportation problems. As early as 1972, the Planning Commission studied and reported on ways in which to correct this situation. To date the problem has not been solved.

In 1986 Wilmington and neighboring towns, in cooperation with the Windham Regional Commission, formed the Deerfield Valley Transportation Committee of 6 people, 2 each from Wilmington, Dover and Marlboro to both define the traffic problem and suggest possible solutions. A consultant was hired and the so called “Bruno Study,” completed in 1988, documented that there was a traffic problem at times (summer, fall and winter) well beyond the traditional design hour (usually the 30th highest hourly volume on an annual basis). The focal point of the problem was the intersection of VT Routes 9 and 100 North, and the increased truck traffic that compromised the quality of life in the village. The Committee continued its work by conducting another study to evaluate possible bypass corridors around the village.

In December 1992, the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) replaced the traffic light with a more sophisticated model and installed another traffic light on VT 9 and its junction with Ray Hill Road to help alleviate congestion. Around this time VTrans hired a consultant, VHB, to begin evaluating bypass alternatives for a Federal Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The consultant looked at alternatives developed by the Deerfield Valley Transportation Committee as well as additional possibilities. In June 2005, based on the results of much community involvement and a Special Town Meeting, the citizens of Wilmington voted to oppose the Wilmington Bypass.

VT Route 100 Corridor Study

Wilmington participated in the *VT Route 100 Corridor Study* (Windham Regional Commission, January 2002) which documented lack of access controls, speed, and volume of traffic and safety issues along the corridor. Of particular concern to the Town, in the report, were the following issues. Noted in parentheses is work that has been completed since the original report.

Wilmington Town

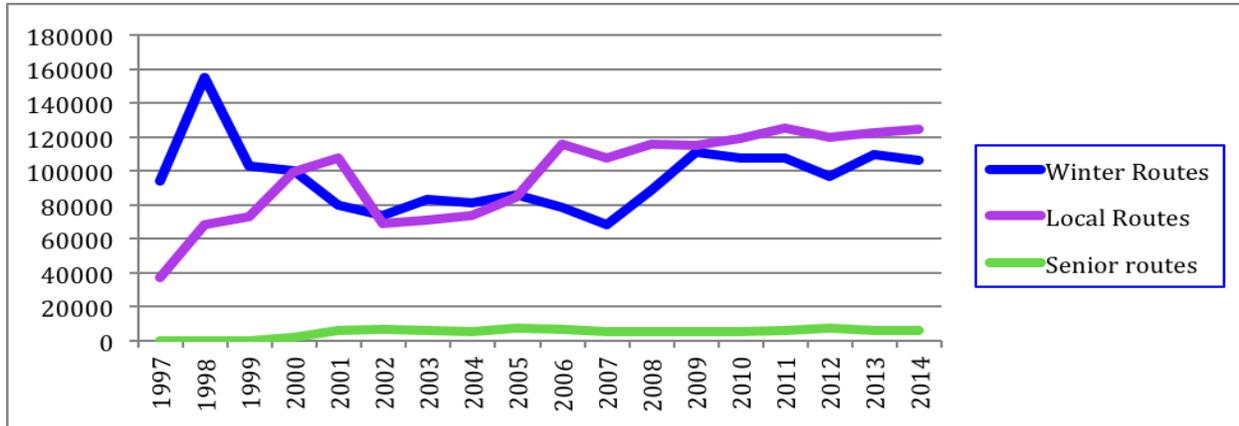
- Shoulder width and pavement condition is poor in most areas (some of which have been paved recently).
- The poorly configured VT 9/100 south triangle intersection was reconstructed in 2008 to correct for a variety of vehicle movements and lessen speeding.
- Several commercial and residential driveways connections north of the Village are located along sharp curves with higher speeds and poor sight distances
- Signs on Rte 100 (have been installed to prohibit parking on shoulder) during ball games at the Deerfield Valley Elementary School.
- Poor sight distance for drivers exiting Higley Hill Rd.

Wilmington Village

- Uncontrolled access to a number of businesses creates unsafe situations for pedestrians and motorists.
- Village pedestrian facilities are satisfactory for the most part, but lacking continuity and adequate width in several places.
- There is no apparent gateway to the Village on Rt 9 at either end.
- The Village is plagued by traffic congestion, noise and air pollution caused by large truck through traffic and weekend winter ski traffic.

Alternative Transportation

Figure 17 DVTA Ridership (Source: DVTA, 2014) excludes parking lot and charter volumes



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Winter Routes	107,817	107,951	96,961	110,249	106,583
Local Routes	119,399	125,259	119,925	122,643	124,467
Senior routes	5,001	5,795	7,305	6,281	5,763

Public Transportation

A public bus service, known as the MOOver, is operated by Deerfield Valley Transit Association (DVTA) and serves riders free of charge along the VT 100 corridor from West Dover to Readsboro, with regular scheduled stops in Wilmington and other stops on demand. From Wilmington, riders can catch a bus that travels along the VT 9 corridor to Brattleboro. For elderly or disabled riders, DVTA provides both an on demand van service and volunteer drivers for medical appointments.

To house their growing operations, DVTA is nearing completion of a maintenance and operations facility at the former Barnboard Factory site adjacent to the Village. DVTA is also working to establish a new route along the VT 9 corridor from Wilmington to Bennington.

Air Transportation

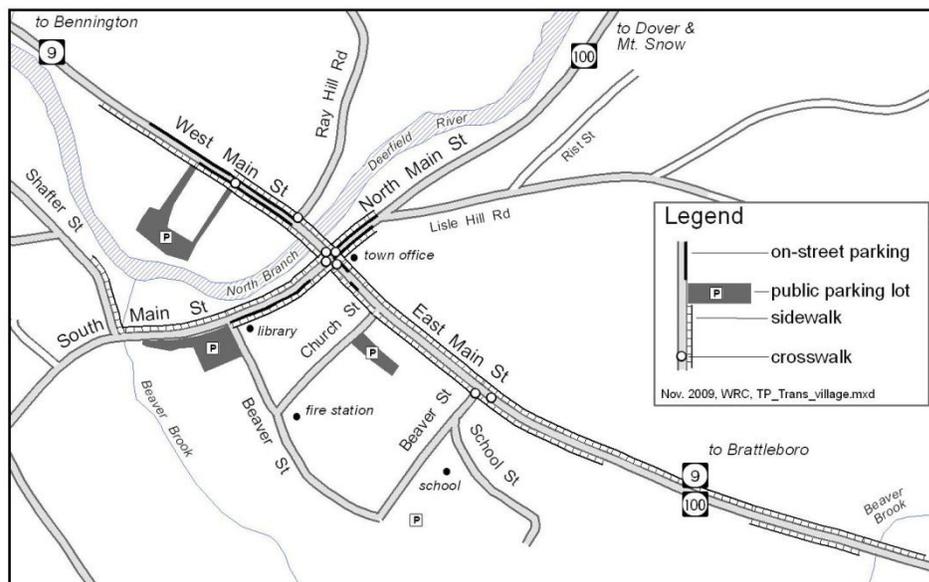
Limited air transportation for private planes is available at the small airstrip in the adjoining town of Dover. In recent years HIREHC has acquired the airport, repaved the runway, upgraded the services, and plans a runway extension and expansion of the obstruction-free zone to accommodate receiving small jets.

Bicycle and Pedestrian

At present, there are limited sidewalks and crosswalks in Wilmington Village and no bike paths in the Town. There is a great need for additional sidewalks, crosswalks and other improvements to make the Village more pedestrian and cyclist friendly. Sidewalks should be extended to the east on the north side of Rte. 9 to White’s Road and west to the last storefront on the south side

of Route 9, as well as north of Lisle Hill on Rte 100, with particular focus on the curve by Fat City which lacks sidewalk or curb through a very narrow blind turn. West Main Street past Reardon’s bridge lacks sidewalks as well. With several business on that end of town there are frequent tourist walkers, as well as a town hiking trail. The absence of a sidewalk or other safe walking area forces hikers and tourists alike to skirt the side of this major thoroughfare.

Figure 18 Sidewalks



The Town of Wilmington and Wilmington Works are committed to making streetscape, lighting and sidewalk improvements in the downtown area and beyond. A comprehensive scoping study, completed by Dubois and King in 2105, will guide this work: to begin with the construction of a new sidewalk, railing and lighting on West Main Street, slated for completion in 2016. Concerns about pedestrian safety as well as walk and bike-ability in the village will continue to be addressed as funding is secured to complete this multi-phase project.

Parking

The need for additional parking in the Village continues to be a concern for the Town. Several efforts have been made since the devastation of Tropical Storm Irene in 2011.

- The former South Main Street lot was improved and established as a Park & Ride lot in Town.
- The Church Street lot originally used for parking for town officials has been opened up as a public parking lot
- The town leased the area behind several West Main Street merchants and created a public parking lot with 40 spaces and a walkway out to West Main Street.

A Wilmington Works survey of parking spaces in the Village taken in the spring of 2015 revealed 156 public, 196 private, and 5 handicapped parking spaces. Although a large improvement from before, parking will still be insufficient when the currently planned restaurants and hotel rooms are completed. Additional efforts will be required. Among them

enforcement of 2 hour parking should be considered which would inhibit business owners and employees from parking on the streets, and additional public parking options should be explored.

Access Management and Traffic Calming

Truck traffic, speeding vehicles, truck noise and lack of pedestrian safety are all concerns that have a negative impact on the quality of life in Wilmington. The Town realizes that a number of businesses are dependent on traffic along VT 9 and 100 and as the number of curb cuts or driveways increases, so does the rate of accidents.

Access management is a process for controlling access to roadways such that the function and safety of the transportation system is preserved while reasonable access is provided for the development of land. Developing access management guidelines, such as limiting number and width of curb cuts, could improve safety conditions along VT 9 and 100. Guidelines of this nature would promote desirable land use patterns, reduce traffic congestion and improve pedestrian safety.

Future Transportation System

Wilmington as a rural town will continue to rely on motor vehicles as the predominant form of transportation. Existing roads in the town will continue to be maintained as they are currently and no new town roads are planned.

Bicycling and walking as forms of transportation must be enhanced in Wilmington where feasible, along VT 9 and 100; and the road shoulders should be expanded to accommodate bicycling. In Wilmington, where appropriate and feasible, sidewalks, crosswalks, parking and traffic calming treatments should be added. The Village's contribution to the local economy can be enhanced if people are encouraged to stop and visit. This could be accomplished by increasing parking availability and signage as well as concentrating on the aesthetic quality of being “in the Village.”

Public transportation will continue to be provided to and from Wilmington along VT 100. Transportation for the elderly and disabled will continue to be enhanced. Carpooling as a possible alternative to driving alone should be promoted.

POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

<p>GOAL: To Provide for Safe, Convenient, Economical and Energy Efficient Transportation Systems.</p>
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Policy 1: Maintain roads in good and safe conditions and with due regard for their scenic qualities.

Recommendation 1.1: Maintain the improvement and maintenance policy that is used to develop multiyear improvement plan. The scenic qualities of roads should be protected and enhanced so long as safety is not compromised. The policy should also provide for public notice of major changes to a roadway, such as widening and paving.

Recommendation 1.2: Avoid unnecessary new road intersections or curb cuts by encouraging shared driveway accesses and through zoning.

Recommendation 1.3: Research and consider developing access management guidelines.

Recommendation 1.4: Encourage developers to anticipate road connections to coordinate with future development.

Policy 2: Alleviate traffic congestion in the Village.

Recommendation 2.1: Develop parking areas, park and ride lots, ride share services and continue to maintain and support bus services.

Recommendation 2.2: Encourage the State to continue monitoring the traffic patterns in the Village.

Recommendation 2.3: Encourage ridesharing by working with the DVTA to develop a Town on-line bulletin board.

Policy 3: Develop an attractive village that is bicycle and pedestrian friendly.

Recommendation 3.1: Encourage walking and cycling by construction of safe trails and paths that connect centers of population with educational facilities, sports facilities, recreation areas, the village, and other points of interest.

Recommendation 3.2: Plan and develop additional off-street parking.

Policy 4: Coordinate transportation goals within the Deerfield Valley.

Recommendation 4.1: Continue and expand services that provide transportation for residents and visitors, especially the elderly and handicapped.

Recommendation 4.2: Encourage the development of transportation systems with neighboring communities.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Town Facilities

The Town buildings are a major asset of the Town. They provide space for the majority of Town services. In addition, they provide space for groups that provide a variety of services to the public. Some of the Town buildings are in need of improvements, particularly with regard to accessibility, code conformance and energy efficiency.

The Wilmington Town hall, located at 2 East Main Street in downtown Wilmington, currently houses the Town Clerk's office and the Administrative offices. The Town Manager, Listers, Zoning Administrator, Selectboard, Finance, and several other town committees use the Town Meeting Room to hold their meetings or conduct business as well. The Town Garage is now located at 23 Haystack Road and the Fire Station is located on Beaver Street.

Recreational facilities owned and maintained by the Town include the Town Common on Lisle Hill Road, which is the original site of the town, Buzzy Towne Park located on South Main Street, Bank Lot Park on Main Street and Green Mountain Beach on Lake Raponda. Wilmington also has extensive hiking and biking trails which are being constructed and maintained with help from the Trails Committee.

Wilmington has four town-owned cemeteries; Riverview on Stowe Hill Road, Intervale, also known as Cuttings, located on the corner of Smith and Davis Road, Averill on Route 9, and Restland, which is located in the center of town behind St Mary's In-the-Mountains Episcopal church. There are several small cemeteries throughout the valley which are within private property.

The Town-owned Memorial Hall, c.1902, is available for public and private events. The Memorial Hall Board is in the process of rehabilitating the hall and planning for its future use.

Waste Water Disposal

Connections to the system have increased. Wilmington operates 7 pumping stations and one waste water treatment plant that averages a daily treatment and discharge of 87,800 gallons per day over the past 5 years. The Wilmington Waste Water System was upgraded in 1987 to a secondary system and storm water was excluded from the system in 1989. Wilmington has approximately 250 connections to the collection system to be treated at the plant. Waste water is treated and discharged into the Deerfield River. The sludge is used to produce a Class A compost for use as a soil conditioner and fertilizer for flower gardens; the sludge is mixed with woodchips, then treated and tested before being delivered to Wilmington residents free of charge. The treatment plant and pumping stations have equipment that is close to 22 years old, so it is beginning to replace major pieces of equipment to ensure proper and efficient operation.

The Cold Brook Fire District serves the north-west corner of the Town including the Haystack development. Areas not served by the treatment facilities utilize individual, on-site septic systems as the principal means of waste water disposal. The State of Vermont requires permits for on-site septic systems as well as potable water supplies. These permits are issued by Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation.

In addition, the North Branch Fire District (which does not serve Wilmington) owns two spray fields in town.

Water Districts

The Wilmington Water District is a municipal system independent of the town. The water for the system comes from springs on Haystack Mountain and other wells in the northeast section of Town, some of them on private property. A new covered storage system was built in 1992 and the distribution system has been upgraded. Water flow to each building in the system is now metered. The commissioners of the water district have allowed for additional users within the district but have not planned for any expansion of the district.

Chimney Hill water system is a privately owned water system providing water for the Chimney Hill Development. The Cold Brook Fire District water main extension policy was designed to meet the future expansion plans of the Haystack Development.

Electric Distribution

Wilmington is served by Green Mountain Power.

Solid Waste Disposal

Wilmington is a member of the Windham Solid Waste Management District. Wilmington's landfill was closed in the 1990s and the site was converted to a transfer station. The Town operates the transfer station on Miller Road for all Wilmington residents and landowners. The transfer station also has a recycling center and information on what can be recycled is found on the Wilmington website. Recycling bins for paper, plastic, glass and cardboard are located on Beaver Street in the village center.

Public Safety Services

The Town of Wilmington has one fire station, staffed by a full time Fire Chief and approximately 35 volunteer members. The firehouse is located on Beaver Street in Wilmington, close to the High School. It is a member of the Keene Mutual Aid System and approved by the Vermont Fire Underwriters. It houses three fire pumpers, a heavy duty rescue truck, boat, snowmobile, and ATV with recovery sled. The fire department handles fire and emergency medical rescue support for Wilmington, Somerset, and Searsburg.

Police protection is provided by the Wilmington Police Department. Additional police protection is provided by Vermont State Police.

Health and Emergency Services

Most of the health and medical needs of the Town are met through the Southwestern Vermont Medical Center, Deerfield Valley Campus (formerly known as Deerfield Valley Health Center) which is located in Wilmington and serves towns in western Windham County. More extensive medical services are provided by facilities in Brattleboro, Bennington, Greenfield and North Adams. The town employs a town nurse for nursing assessment and in home care for all residents with a nominal fee per visit. There are a number of other health services, including

dentistry and psychiatric and physical therapy services, available in Wilmington to valley residents and visitors.

Deerfield Valley Rescue, a volunteer non-profit organization, provides 24 hour pre-hospital emergency medical care and transport for Wilmington residents and visitors. New volunteer members are frequently needed.

Communications

Telephone Service

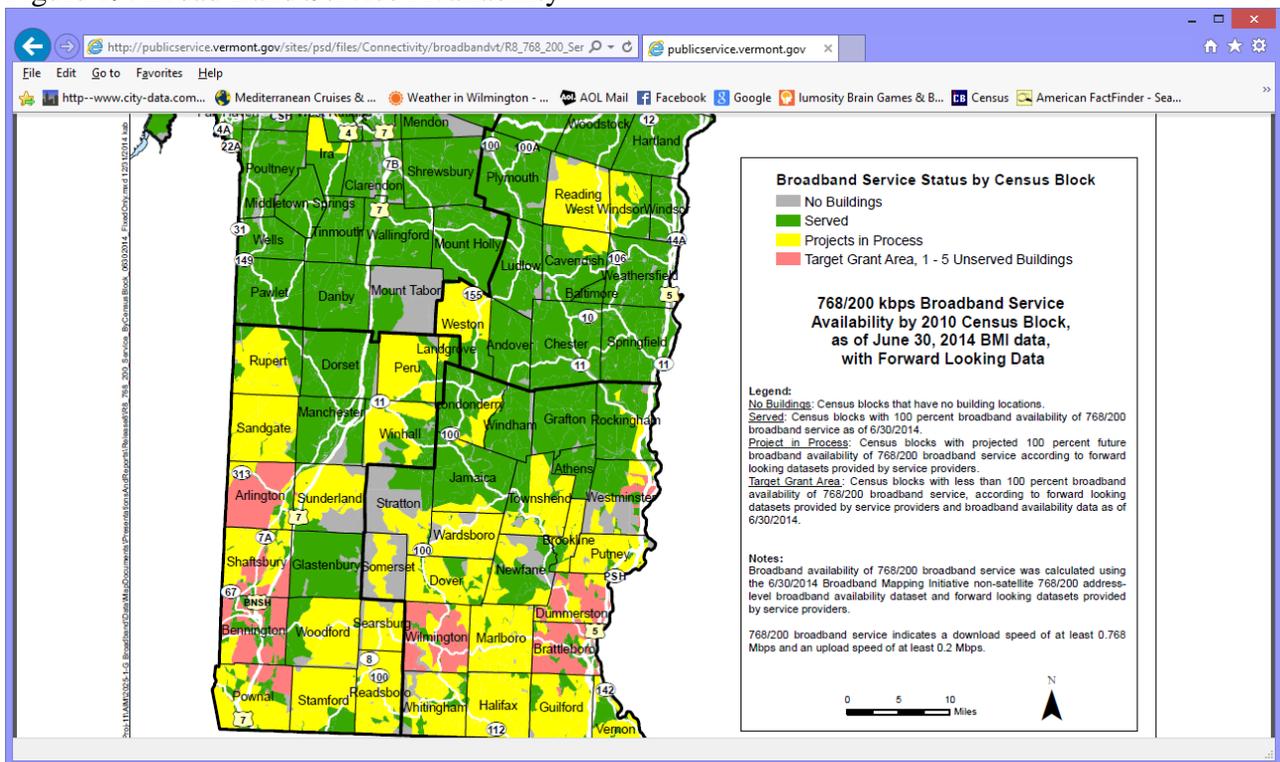
Wilmington’s local telephone service is currently provided by FairPoint Communications. A variety of providers are available for long distance service.

Internet Access and Broadband

As of 2015, the data indicate that all but 2 of the 2,263 locations in Wilmington are purportedly served at the minimum speed of 768/200mbs, including fixed and mobile wireless providers. If you exclude mobile wireless, 149 locations are not served, and all but one of these are projected to be served by a project in progress. Wilmington has an ordinance regulating the construction of telecommunications facilities.

Both the Town and the Pettee Memorial Library have high speed free WiFi available in the downtown area, and many of the local businesses are offering free wireless access to their customers.

Figure 19: Broad Band Service Availability



Cable Television

As of 2010, Duncan Cable is the current provider of cable television service for those serviced with cable access in the Town of Wilmington. Many town roads do not have cable offerings.

Library

The Pettee Memorial Library is in an historic building located on South Main Street in the Village district of Wilmington. The library continues to experience growth, with a 2014 attendance of 15,912 and book circulation of 17,383. Attendees of the library come not only from Wilmington. Dover, Marlboro and Whitingham residents use Pettee Memorial Library resources. The librarians help educate and create a healthier lifestyle for our community. Librarian positions add to the employment opportunities in the town.

The 24 hour accessible WiFi is available to the community with five computers in the library for public use during library hours. During 2014, 2,092 people logged on to the public computers. In the 6 months from December 2014 and May 2015, 7,105 people used the WiFi connection. The librarians will help patrons access the Internet, hook up to the WiFi, or assist with portable devices. E-books are free and downloadable through the library website. During 2014, Pettee experienced 122,330 website visits.

The library is cramped for many of its activities. Many of the children's activities take place outside of the library for lack of space for the large number of participants. During 2015 the library is undertaking a comprehensive strategic planning effort to better define the library's role in the future and decide how to proceed regarding space and functions.

The library is currently open seven days a week, with varying hours each day. More library information can be found on the website: petteelibrary.org.

Education

Elementary Education

Elementary education in Wilmington (pre-K through grade 5) is provided at the Twin Valley Elementary School. This school was formed for the school year 2013-2014 with the merging of Whitingham and Wilmington elementary students in a renovated former Deerfield Valley Elementary School. The Twin Valley Elementary School also hosts the Center Base Program, an initiative to service students with multiple disabilities residing in any of the six towns surrounding Wilmington. The Windham Southwest Supervisory Union provides administrative, curriculum, and personnel support for a number of school districts, including Wilmington. Comparisons of student numbers are difficult with the combination of schools and increase in functionality, but the former elementary school enrollment had experienced a steady decline since the peak of 173 students in the 2004-2005 school year. In the 2012-2013 school year, there was an enrollment of 139 students, only 80% of the peak year. For the year 2013-2014, there were 234 students enrolled in the new Twin Valley Elementary school, 129 of whom were Wilmington residents.

The Deerfield Valley Elementary School enrollment K – 5 for the past four years is as follows:

Figure 20: Total Elementary School Enrollment

	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2014-2015
Total School Enrollment	173	164	169	155	164	189 *

(Source: Vermont Department of Education School Report)

* 2014-2015 reflects combined Twin Valley Enrollment. Wilmington school board reports 2013-2014 enrollment of 129.

Middle and High School Education

In the spring of 2004, the towns of Wilmington and Whitingham made an agreement to merge their middle and high school. The Twin Valley Middle School, serving students in grades 6 – 8 was located in the same building as the Whitingham Elementary School. The Twin Valley High School, serving students in grades 9 – 12, was located in Wilmington. The education of both was overseen by the Twin Valley School Board, consisting of five school directors, three of which are representatives from Wilmington. Because of declining enrollment since the merger in 2004 (nearly 25% from 2004 to 2009) and because of the numerous structural limitations of the Wilmington high school building, the school district actively studied multiple options. They recommended further consolidation of the schools which was approved by both towns and resulted in the closure of the Wilmington high school facility.

School year 2014-2015, the first year of school consolidation, has been a trying year of construction and change, but is deemed a success by students and teachers alike. The new Twin Valley Middle/High School is located in the newly renovated former Whitingham Elementary Middle School facility.

Figure 21: Middle (6 – 8) and High School (9 – 12) Enrollment

Enrollment	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2013-2014
Middle School	132	138	106	102	122	109
High School	274	265	238	208	188	153

(Source: Vermont Department of Education School Report)

Years of Education Completed: those 25 years and over in Wilmington

- High school or higher: 90.7%
- Bachelor's degree or higher: 31.1%
- Graduate or professional degree: 11.4%

Data Source: www.city-data.com

Career Education and Lifelong Learning

Career education opportunities are available to Wilmington’s high school students and adults at the Windham Regional Career Center in Brattleboro, attached to the Brattleboro Union High School. The Community College of Vermont, at its learning centers in Brattleboro and Bennington, also offer associate degrees, career-related certificates, and credit and non-credit

training programs. Another opportunity is the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute in Brattleboro. This is a community-driven membership organization, dedicated to providing learning opportunities for people 50 and older who are interested in engaging in learning experiences without tests, papers, or grades. The Institute is affiliated with the University of Vermont, with leadership coming from local community members. A series of lectures are held each semester at the Southeast Vermont Learning Collaborative in Dummerston.

Figure 22a: Age Distribution of Population

Population Distribution	Population Under Age 19	Percentage of Population	Actual #
	Under 5 years only	4.7%	88
	5 to 19 years old only	15.9%	298
	20 – 64 years old	62.4%	1171
Total Population 1876	65 and older	17.0%	319

Figure 22b: Families with Children Under 18

Households with Children	Households with Children	Percentage of Total Households	Actual #
	Total With Children Under 19	58.0%	502
	Female head of house/no male w/ children under 19 Total Female (no Male) Home 71	5.9% of Total 71.8% of Female Head House	51
	Male head of house/no female w/ children under 19 Total Male (no Female) Home 36	2.7% of Total 63.9 of Male Head House	23
Total Households 866 Family Households 502 (58% of all Households)	Male/Female house w/ children under 18 Total Husband/Wife Home 395	13.7% of Total 30.1 % of Male/Female Homes	119

Figure 22c: Living alone Population

Living Single and Living Single over age 65	Living Alone	Percentage of Live Alone Population	Actual #
	Male	52.5%	149
	Male age 65 and older	10.9%	31
	Female	47.5%	135
Total Living Alone 284 (33% of Total Households) (Total Non-Family Homes 364)	Female age 65 and older	19.0%	54

(Source: 2010 US Census)

Of the 502 families with children under 18:

- 71 or 8.1% of Total Households were female headed (Windham Region is 6.19%)
- 36 or 4% were male headed households with no female (Windham Region is 2.78%)
- 395 or 46% were male and female households (Windham Region is 45.14%)

The percentage of single parent head of house in Wilmington is slightly higher than the Windham Region overall.

Child Care

Child care and early childhood education are important components of the Wilmington community and its future. Ensuring accessible, affordable, quality child care is vital. Availability of child care services can have a direct effect on the vitality of the Town by encouraging young families to locate and remain in Wilmington. With the number of families in which both adults work outside the home increasing, the demand for child care services has also increased.

As of June 2014 the Vermont Department for Children and Families Bright Futures Child Care Information System reported that there were two licensed child care providers (Twin Valley Elementary School and Hermitage Club LLC) and four registered child care homes in Wilmington. There are also licensed providers and registered child care homes in neighboring towns.

The local demand for child care services is difficult to measure, but the following statistics might shed light on possible need for child care. In 2010 20.6% (386) of the population was under the age of 19, whereas in 2000, 22.2% (480) of the population is under the age of 18. While older data cut-off was at 18, one year less than the 2010 data, the volume was still reflected a higher percentage of the population than those under 19 in 2010. This reflects a very significant drop in the youth population. In 2010 4.7% (88) were under the age of 5. This is similar to the under 5 population of 2000 with 4.5% (101) under the age of five. This would imply that the decline in 0 – 19 is primarily in the 5-19 population. In 1990, 7.1% (140) of the population was under age five. This reflects a sizable drop in the 0-5 population in the 10 years from 1990 -2000.

In 2010 there were 502 family households (58% of 866 households) in Wilmington having children under the age of 19.

Youth Programs

The Deerfield Valley Community Partnership (DVCP) is in its 20th year working to address alcohol, tobacco, and drug abuse.

DVCP provides:

- Programming and activities for parents and middle/high school students
- Drug and alcohol awareness education and activities in the community

Monthly meetings are held with community participation of adults and young adults encouraged. Environmental initiatives are funded through state grants. Town funds assist in costs for youth and parent programming.

Elder Care

With 284 single – living alone households (33% of all households) and 85 of those over the age of 65 (31 male, 54 female), elder care considerations are vital to the community.

The Disabled

Reported number of non-institutionalized disabled in Wilmington over the age of 5 2009-2013:

Age 5-17	11	Age 18 – 64	10	Age 65 and over	24
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Data Source: Vermont Housing Data, www.housingdata.org

Poverty

Wilmington has 139 residents reported to be below the federal poverty level, an estimated 5% of a population of 2,554 as reported 2009 – 2013. Data Source: Vermont Housing Data,

www.housingdata.org

Residents with income below the poverty level in 2009: as reported by www.City-Data.com:

Wilmington:9.3%

Whole state:9.4%

Residents with income below 50% of the poverty level in 2009: www.City-Data.com:

Wilmington:3.6%

Whole state:3.6%

The Food Pantry: serves an estimated 100 families for 200+ people, servicing the greater Wilmington area including surrounding towns.

Deerfield Valley Community Cares (DVCC): helps citizens of the Deerfield Valley region with payment of home fuel bills. In the 2013-2014 heating season they provided \$88,875 in assistance to 98 families, of which \$33,000 went to residents of Wilmington. In the 2014-2015 heating season they provided \$87,585 in assistance to 112 families. 34 of these families were from Wilmington.

Southern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA), an anti-poverty, community-based, non-profit organization serving Windham and Windsor counties since 1965, strives to:

- Enable people to cope with and reduce the hardship of poverty
- Create sustainable self-sufficiency
- Reduce the causes of poverty
- Move toward elimination of poverty

They support Head Start, weatherization programs, emergency home repair, fuel/utility/housing/ food assistance, micro-business management support, individual development accounts, tax preparation, work resource coordination, VT Health Connect navigation, disaster recovery, and running a thrift store. Housing assistance includes referrals to area shelters, landlord lists, and assistance in completing applications .

Windham and Windsor Housing Trust: subsidy towards the purchase of a qualifying home with below market rate mortgages and financial assistance with closing costs.

West River Habitat For Humanity (WRHFH): sells homes to low-income individuals and families at no profit and much below market cost. They do this through volunteer labor, donations of money and materials, help of the homeowner (partner) families, and affordable

financing of loans. Three (3) units have been built in Wilmington housing one (1) single parent household and two (2) couples with 2-4 children.

Historic Resources

Wilmington has a unique heritage and a number of sites which are important to its history. There are many historic buildings and sites in Wilmington, many of which have been identified by the State's Division of Historic Preservation. The Wilmington Village Historic District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This listing recognizes the historic importance of the district and assures protective review of federally funded projects that might adversely affect its character.

Because the Village itself was not established at its present site until 1840, much of the architecture is nineteenth century with most buildings clapboarded. There are some buildings that are especially significant such as the several Greek revival structures and the Crafts Inn, in the shingle style. Among the historic sites is the Old Town Common off Lisle Hill Road. There are several small cemeteries and other markers throughout the Town.

In October 2009 the Selectboard repealed the previously adopted Design Control District Ordinance and adopted an Historic Review District Ordinance for the Village of Wilmington. The Zoning Amendment states the following purpose of the district:

The natural beauty and the visual and historic character of the Village of Wilmington represent an important asset to the community by providing a source of pleasure for both residents and visitors, and also by contributing substantially to the economic base of the community and to its tax base. In order to protect these characteristics, it is necessary to ensure that buildings are properly related to their surroundings, that proper attention is given to the exterior appearances of buildings so as to provide a means by which property values can be stabilized or improved, and to protect and foster the economic well-being of the community.

Public Recreation

Wilmington prides itself on the numerous opportunities that the community has to offer locals and tourists in the way of public recreation. There are recreational opportunities to:

- | | | |
|---------------------|------------------|---------------|
| * bike | * golf | * play tennis |
| * boat | * hike | * sail |
| * bowl | * ice skate | * snow mobile |
| * canoe | * kayak | * snow shoe |
| * cross country ski | * miniature golf | * walk |
| * fish | * picnic | |

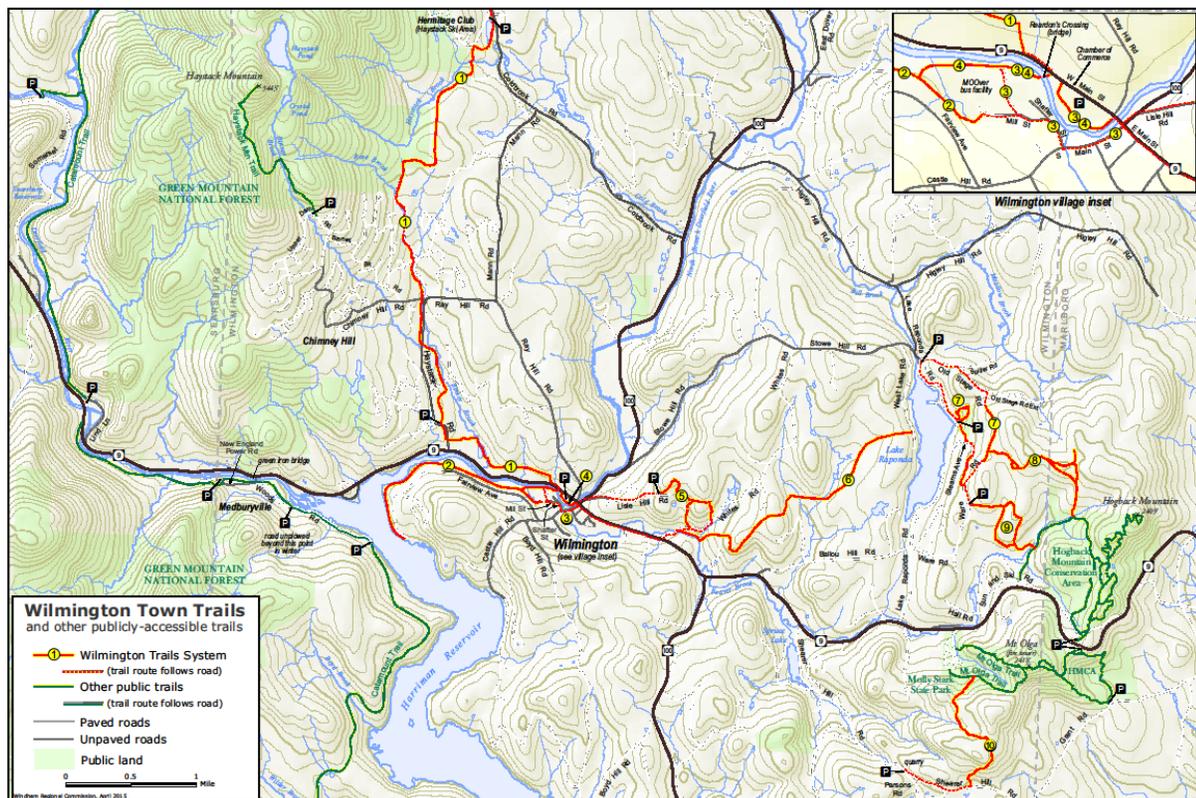
The Town of Wilmington is also well noted for its abundant shopping and dining possibilities. Many of these are within walking distance of each other in the historic Wilmington downtown.

Wilmington has a wealth and variety of private and public recreation trail networks. There are also hiking trails in the Green Mountain National Forest (to Haystack Peak) and in the Molly Stark State Forest (to Mount Olga) and snowmobile trails which exist on mostly private land. Popular seasonal destinations include:

- Buzzy Towne Park
- Green Mountain Beach at Lake Raponda and boat launch
- Lake Whitingham (Harriman Reservoir) which has several access points
 - Wards Cove has swimming and a picnic area
 - Oxbow has a boat launch and picnic area
 - Maynard’s Cove has swimming and canoe/kayak access
 - Mountain Mills boat launch
 - Fairview Avenue has swimming, a picnic area and boat launch
 - Medburyville picnic area

The Wilmington Trails committee works on building, maintaining, and adding signage to many hiking and biking trails throughout Wilmington. The committee and dedicate volunteers gained permits, repaired, improved surfaces and built bridges to complete a number of trails and loops.

Trail Map



Trails to date include:

1. The Valley Trail: from Reardon’s Crossing in downtown Wilmington, along Rte. 9 to the Crosstown trail in Dover – 9.0 miles one way
2. Hoot, Toot and Whistle Trail: a multi-use trail from Reardon’s Crossing in the Village to the Mountain Mills boat launch on the east side of Lake Whitingham – a 4 mile round trip
3. Downtown Loop: starting at Reardon’s Crossing and bearing left behind the West Main businesses along the river, behind the Crafts Inn.
4. Riverwalk: From Dot’s restaurant, behind the Crafts Inn, along the river, across Reardon’s Crossing, turning right by the river behind the Moover building, turning left up the hill to connect with the Hoot, Toot, and Whistle trail.
5. Lisle Hill to Whites Road: Starting 0.5 miles up Lisle Hill Rd (near the old town common) following up and over Lisle Hill to Whites Rd. Returning by Lisle Hill is a 1.1 mile loop. Returning by Rte. 9 is a 2.4 mile loop. At Whites Road the trail intersects with the Primitive Trail.
6. Primitive Trail: Starts at the Bottom of White’s Road and ends on the west shore of Lake Raponda - 2.75 miles one-way
7. Lake Raponda Trails: Trails are on the eastern side of Lake Raponda, accessed from parking by Green Mountain Beach or Lake Raponda Road. The shorter of the two loops through the Wilmington Town Forest is 0.3 miles.
8. Raponda Ridge Trails: From the Raponda Ridge gate and trail head, looping 1.3 miles back to the trailhead. The trail connects to the Hogback Mountain Conservation Area Trails.
9. Ware-Homestead & Hogback Connector: Accessed from the Lake Raponda Trail parking areas, looping 1.1, this trail connects to Hogback Mountain Conservation Center, from which one can access Molly Stark State Park to the south and the Shearer Hill Trail.
10. Shearer Hill Trail: Starting at the intersection of Shearer Hill and Parsons Road just past the quarry, the trail runs along Shearer Hill Road for 1.2 mile, turns left and follows a 1.5 mile loop. This trail connects to the Molly Stark trail running to Mount Olga. You can descend down to Hogback to connect with trails across Route 9. It is a 6 mile hike back to Lake Raponda.

Scenic Resources

The outstanding scenic quality of the Wilmington area is one of its greatest assets. The work of the Scenic Road Committee, the planning survey, and the ad hoc planning committees show that the protection of the scenic qualities of the Town is an aesthetic concern, as well as an economic one.

These scenic qualities separate Wilmington from other towns that are less pleasing visually, and provide an advantage for the Town as it competes with other New England towns in attracting visitors and customers to shops and restaurants. There are four major types of scenic resources in the Town. They are:

- Views from Primary Roads: What is seen on the roadsides as well as views of distant landforms influences the visual quality of the Town.
- Intermediate View Sheds: These are visually significant areas adjacent to primary roads, serving as foreground for views of ridges, hills, and valleys.

- **Back Roads:** The back roads of Wilmington are the connecting links to all parts of Town. These roads provide such important visual features as leaf tunnel effects, hedgerows, stonewalls, fences, orchards, cemeteries, wetlands, ponds, brooks, and lakes.
- **Major Land Forms:** Haystack Mountain is the major landform in Wilmington. It can be viewed from all the major highways leading into the Town and is a significant scenic resource. Lake Whitingham is also a significant scenic resource.

Many of these resources are highly sensitive and because they may be adversely affected by careless development, must be carefully managed.

POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

GOAL: To Provide a Town Government Organized to Serve the Residents of the Town in a Beneficial Way.

Policy 1: Ensure that the Town Government provides ready accountability, well managed finances, amicable working conditions and excellent communication among town boards, employees and residents.

Recommendation 1.1: Inform residents and visitors about town policies and its permitting process by directing them to the pamphlet guide to the town by-laws and regulations as well as maintaining the Town website.

Recommendation 1.2: Work to refer people to the Town website (www.wilmingtonvermont.us) with its wealth of information and the Town Newsletter. The guide put out by the Chamber of Commerce is also an important information resource.

GOAL: To Plan for and Provide an Efficient System of Public Facilities and Services.

Policy 2: Continue supporting handicapped accessibility, energy efficiency, and code conformance of all town and public buildings.

Policy 3: The construction or expansion of community facilities and services should take place with minimum negative impact to the community and natural resources.

Recommendation 3.1: Continue to request that all appropriate town departments review any proposed development plans and then provide evaluation(s)/input to the Selectboard and to the Development Review Board concerning the impact said development will have on the public facilities and services of the Town.

Recommendation 3.2: Continue development and presentation of capital improvement plans and budgets for consideration by the voters.

Recommendation 3.3: Encourage town officials with the help of appropriate local and state agencies to continue to pursue and develop methods to improve:

- solid waste management

- the conservation of water
- handling of hazardous materials

Recommendation 3.4: Pursue as many options as possible for grant funding to accomplish goals.

Policy 4: Maintain effective safety and health services.

Recommendation 4.1: Expand and strengthen the pro-active community based law enforcement strategies, including programs for public education in safety issues surrounding use of technology, domestic violence, safe dating, bullying, underage drinking and substance abuse.

Recommendation 4.2: Continue self-evaluations of the fire, police and emergency services needs on an annual basis.

Recommendation 4.3: Continue the ongoing examination of the health service needs of the Deerfield Valley and encourage the establishment and growth of services to meet those needs.

Recommendation 4.4: Support local efforts to prevent substance abuse and encourage recovery efforts.

Policy 5: Facilitate the provision of telecommunications services to the Town while minimizing the adverse visual effects of towers and other facilities.

Policy 6: Provide for education facilities that ensure a healthy and enriching educational experience.

Recommendation 6.1: Implement various funding methods for supporting facility upgrades and/or construction and renovation projects.

Recommendation 6.2: Work towards outstanding education programs for K-12 and seek to reduce education cost through greater efficiency.

Recommendation 6.3: Increase adult education programs by exploring the use of existing school facilities for adult education programs and other community social and cultural activities.

Recommendation 6.4: Work to improve communication with residents about the link between economic development and education.

Recommendation 6.5: Support the provision of healthy food service initiatives in all school food programs.

Recommendation 6.6: Encourage school programs that promote healthy physical activities for all students.

Policy 7: Support the provision of local library services and programs.

Recommendation 7.1: Continue support for increasing library hours of operation, the library collection, the educational use of the internet, the offering of special programs and preservation of the Library building.

GOAL: To ensure the availability of safe and affordable child care and to integrate child care issues into the planning process, including child care financing, infrastructure, business assistance for child care providers, and child care work force

Policy 8: Encourage the provision of quality child care services and facilities to meet the needs of the area residents, workforce, and employers.

Recommendation 8.1: Pursue child care needs assessment to determine the supply of and demand for child care in Wilmington.

Recommendation 8.2: Encourage schools to stimulate interest in early education careers through community service and apprenticeship programs.

GOAL: To identify, protect and preserve important historic features in the Town of Wilmington.

Policy 9: Protect historic sites and structures of significance. Lands adjacent to or including areas or sites of historic, educational and/or archaeological value should be used only in a manner that will not reduce or destroy the value of the site or area.

Recommendation 9.1: Identify sites of historic, educational and/or archeological value and guidelines for preservation.

Recommendation 9.2: Continue to maintain and improve the site of the Town Common on Lisle Hill protecting and preserving its historic significance.

Policy 10: Reuse or rehabilitate historic buildings in the community as a method of preservation.

GOAL: To maintain, identify, and enhance the recreational opportunities of Wilmington’s residents and visitors.

Policy 11: Continue to preserve and improve Town-owned lands with recreational value.

Recommendation 11.1: Publicize existing and potential recreational areas.

Recommendation 11.2: Improve these sites to enhance their natural, aesthetic, and historical value; determine safety improvements needed.

Policy 12: Work with other entities and agencies, such as the Power Company and National Forest Service, to foster and promote the use of their land for non-commercial recreational activities.

Recommendation 12.1: Work with existing organizations to explore the use of existing recreational trails and sites for year-round use.

Recommendation 12.2: Pursue signs for Lake Whitingham marking points of public access.

Policy 13: Continue to enhance recreation programs and information about recreational activities located in our Town.

Recommendation 13.1 Expand the dissemination of descriptive literature of town activities and events.

Recommendation 13.2: Explore ways to develop additional recreational facilities in the town.

Policy 14: Support commercial recreational development that compliments the natural terrain and aesthetic beauty within our town.

Policy 15: Encourage the preservation of significant scenic resources.

Recommendation 15.1: Work to refine previously completed scenic inventories and develop strategies to preserve significant scenic resources.

HOUSING

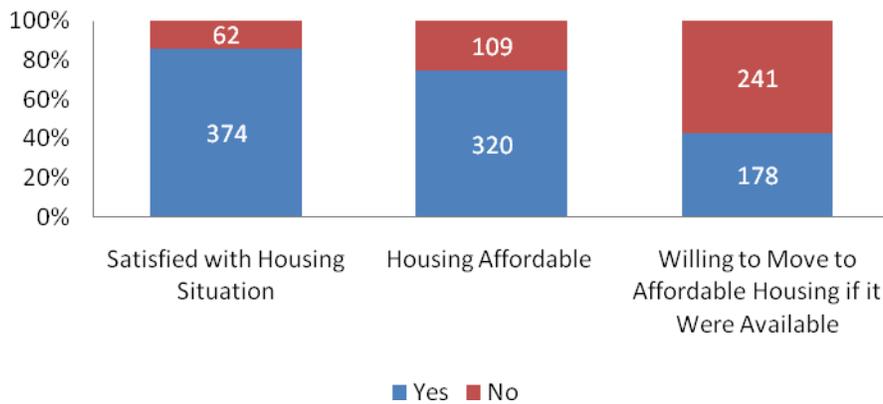
Existing Conditions

The Wilmington Housing Advisory Committee conducted a survey at the November 2008 elections as voters exited the polls. It also sent the survey to registered voters who did not take the survey at the poll. Four hundred and forty one (441) surveys were returned, which represents approximately 18% of Wilmington’s residents. No more recent surveys have been conducted, so the 2008 data will serve as the most recent study on housing affordability.

This study of housing does not speak to Affordable Housing as defined by the U.S. Government Department of Health and Human Services. Rather, this study speaks to the perceived affordability of housing by residents of the town.

From the surveys collected the data shows that respondents are generally satisfied with the housing that they are currently in and for the most part they consider it affordable. A larger majority of respondents said that if affordable housing were available closer to town they would consider moving. Lastly, 85% of the respondents were interested in more affordable ownership opportunities, as opposed to rental opportunities.

Figure 23: Perceived Affordability of Housing



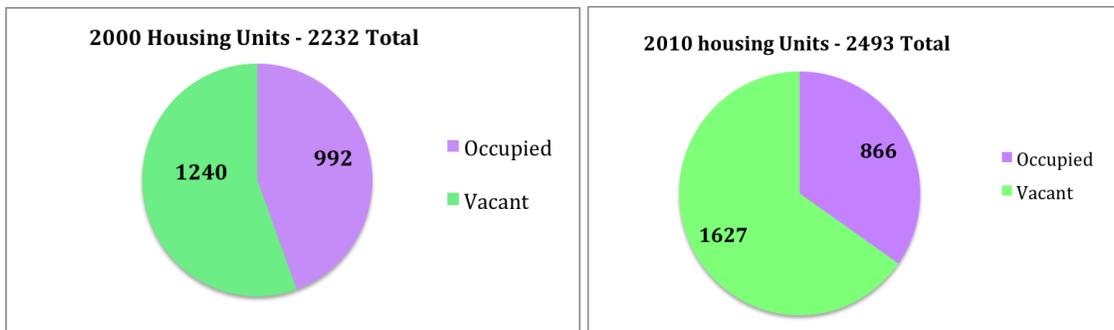
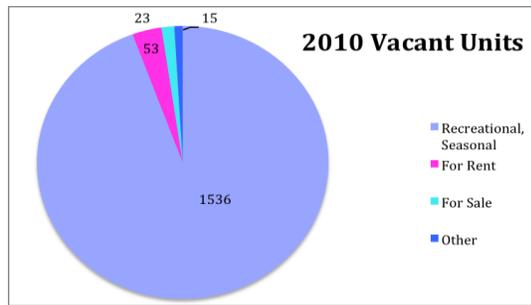
Wilmington’s population steadily increased between 1950 and 2009. The most significant increase in population occurred during the period 1960-1970 (27%). Between 1990 and 2000, the Town’s population increased by 257 people, a 13% increase. In 2000, the U.S. Census documented that 2,225 people lived in Wilmington and in 2007 the population was estimated to be 2,355. Between 2009 and 2010, however, the town experienced a decline in population, exacerbated by subsequent loss of tourism and business failures post-Tropical Storm Irene in 2011.

For additional information and statistics about housing in Wilmington, see the Community Profile section.

Some key housing figures from the 2000 US Census include:

- Housing growth has leveled out, while population continues in an upward trend.
- Fifty-three percent (53%) of the housing units are for seasonal, recreation or occasional use.
- Of the 992 year round occupied housing units, about one-third (319) of them are renter occupied.

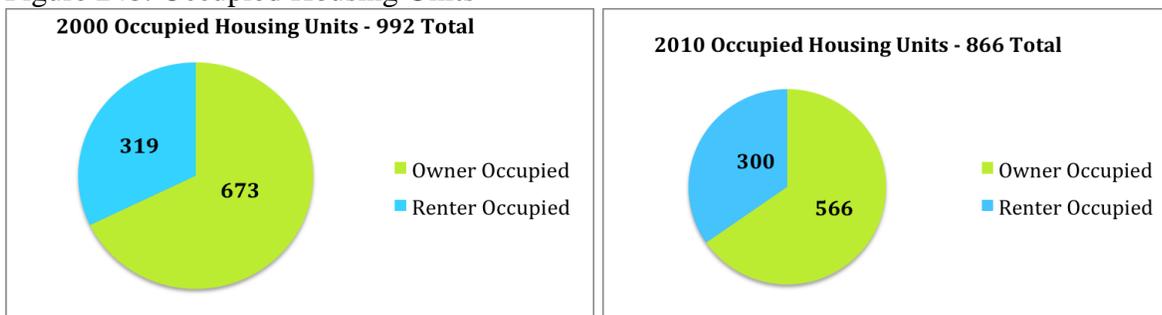
Figure 24a: Housing Occupancy Levels



Data Source: Vermont Housing Data, www.housingdata.org

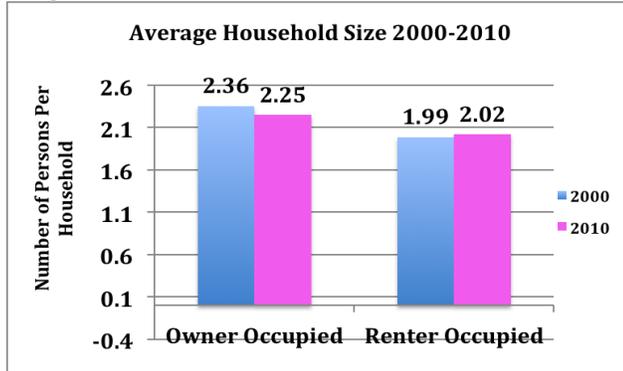
Of the 1627 vacant home, 1536 or 94% are seasonal, recreational, or occasional use homes. This represents 62% of the 2493 total housing units. That is up 10% from the 2010 Town Plan where it was reported to be 52.2% of the total housing stock. While the 2010 Town Plan observed a decrease in the vacation/seasonal housing supply from 1990 to 2000 by 102 units, 2000 to 2010 has seen an increase of 368 units, reflecting the shift toward second-home owners.

Figure 24b: Occupied Housing Units



Data Source: Vermont Housing Data, www.housingdata.org

Figure 24c: Average Household Size



Data Source:: 2000 and 2010 SF1 Profile of General Demographic Characteristics, <http://factfinder2.census.gov>

Housing Affordability

Estimated median household income in 2012

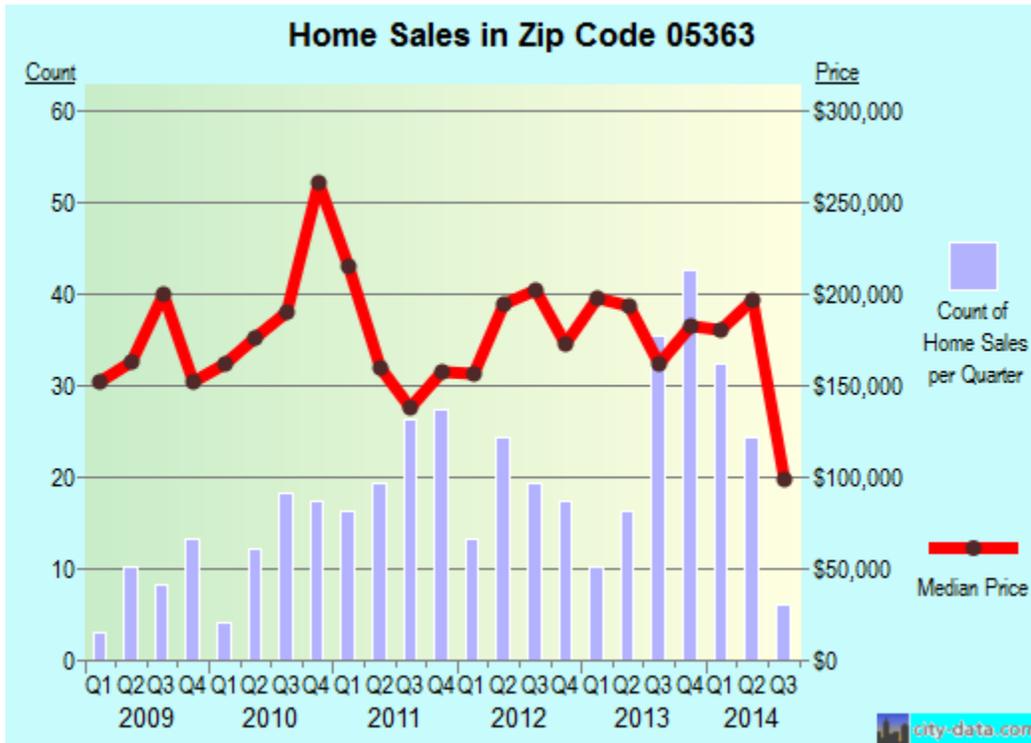
(Median = 50% of the population fall below this number):

2012	Wilmington	\$48,932	(Vermont \$52,977)
2000	Wilmington	\$37,396	



Data Source: www.city-data.com

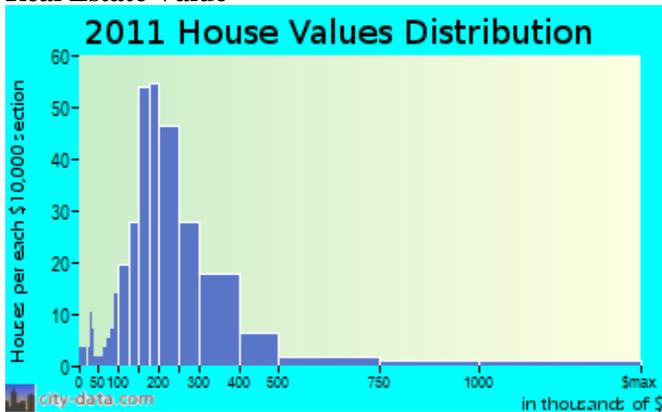
Figure 25: Home Sales



The above data is reflective of a sharp dip in the real estate market in Wilmington in the 3rd quarter of 2014. While the real estate market is starting to rise again, the current state of the market remains down.

While home prices have fallen significantly, it is important to note that homeownership costs are increasing. Raw materials and labor costs for construction and maintenance have increased, telephone and other communication services costs have increased, and heating costs have increased substantially.

Real Estate Value



Data Source: www.City-Data.com

Estimated median house or condo value:

2012: Wilmington \$224,993 (Vermont \$216,900) **2000:** \$120,100

Mean prices in 2009:

\$296,993: All housing units
 \$304,435: Detached houses
 \$196,729: Townhouses or other attached units
 \$288,202: In 2-unit structures
 \$214,585: 3-to-4-unit structures
 \$540,848: 5-or-more-unit structures
 \$112,347: Mobile homes

Wilmington continues to have a high number of vacation homes, usually with the cost much higher than a home bought for a primary residence.

Two subsets of the Wilmington population that may be struggling to afford housing in the community are elderly on a fixed income and single parent families. The 2010 Census indicated that of the 284 householders living alone, 85 of them (30%), were over the age of 65. There were 135 single female heads of household (16 % of all households) in Wilmington in 2010. 51 of these or 38% had children living with them under 19 years of age. (Refer to page 48 for more details on the 2010 census results.)

Special Needs Population

The special needs population for the purposes of a housing analysis includes physically and mentally impaired persons and the homeless. In addition to requiring certain services that differ from the typical households (i.e., physical accessibility, assisted living), these groups also tend to have limited potential for income. Butterfield Common in nearby Dover offers these services.

Affordable and Community Housing Programs

Currently, Affordable Housing in Wilmington, as defined by the Department of Health and Human Services, is addressed through regional programs. The Windham and Windsor Housing Trust has created and manages affordable housing through a variety of programs that serve low and moderate income residents. They have seven (7) units of affordable housing at the Laterre House in downtown Wilmington as well as four (4) units of shared equity home ownership in the Roundhouse on Shafter Street and 33 units in nearby Dover, with 4 affordable condos.

Resources available to support housing for low-income families includes:

- **Windham and Windsor Housing Trust:** provides income-eligible homebuyers with a subsidy towards the purchase of a qualifying home. Homebuyers under this program have access to below market rate mortgages as well as financial assistance with closing costs.
- **Southeastern Vermont Community Action Agency (SEVCA):** provides referrals to area shelters, landlord lists, and assists in completing applications for affordable housing possibilities. SEVCA also operates weatherization and fuel assistance programs for income-eligible **homeowners and renters.**
- **West River Habitat for Humanity (WRHFH):** sells homes to low-income individuals and families at no profit and much below market cost. They do this through volunteer labor, donations of money and materials, help of the homeowner (partner) families, and affordable financing of loans. Three (3) units have been built in Wilmington housing one (1) single parent household and two (2) couples with 2-4 children.

Housing Needs

It is important to assure that existing and future town residents and the workforce are served by a range of housing opportunities. With a trend over the past few years toward more costly homes and an influx of second homeowners, the town will have to play a very active role in ensuring that Wilmington maintains a diversity of housing options and social support services for its moderate and lower income residents. Maintaining diversity of residents and income levels will ensure an interesting and welcoming community for all.

POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

GOAL: To Ensure the Availability of Housing for all Residents of Wilmington.

Policy 1: Maintain a stable and demographically diverse community base by encouraging housing availability at varied prices, sizes and locations to meet the needs of all residents. This is known as Community Housing

Recommendation 1.1: Develop an inventory and evaluation of existing housing to determine what type of housing is needed in Wilmington.

Recommendation 1.2: Develop a comprehensive land-use policy, the implementation of which will encourage and promote the development of primary residential housing.

Recommendation 1.3: Encourage energy efficient housing that is practical, cost-effective, and healthy.

Policy 2: Preserve and maintain the mixed use and historic character of the village and town.

Policy 3: Design new housing in and adjacent to the village to be compatible with the village's existing historic and residential character.

Policy 4: Promote the creation and preservation of housing that is and will continue to be affordable.

Recommendation 4.1: Encourage the development of a program for addressing the Housing needs of those with low and moderate income.

Recommendation 4.2: Evaluate and inventory possible locations for development of community and senior housing close to community and commercial services.

Recommendation 4.3: Support efforts to provide affordable housing for low and moderate income and senior residents.

Recommendation 4.4: Encourage private developers to participate in building community housing.

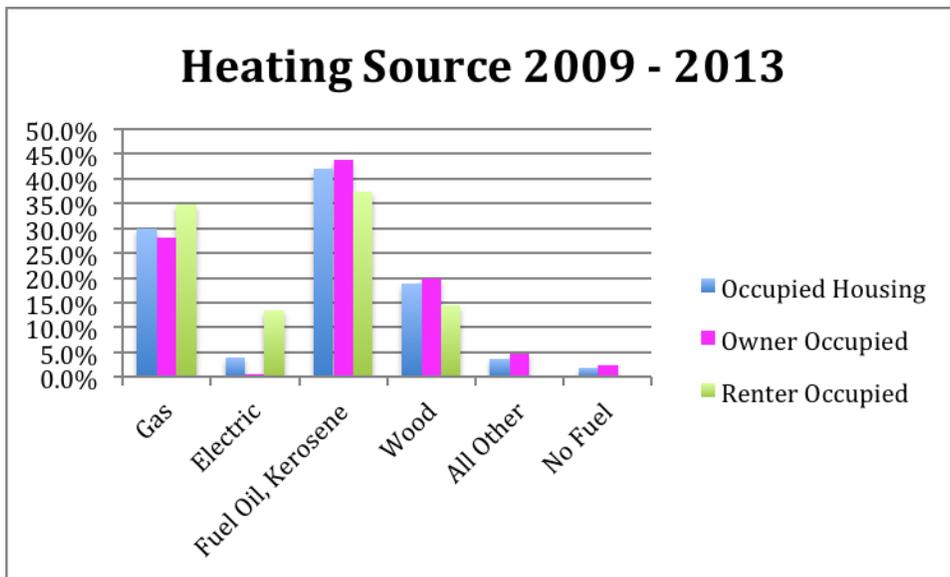
ENERGY

State and Federal government have far more control over energy supplies, sources, and pricing than regions or towns. However, regional and local efforts can play an important role in energy conservation and use of energy in residential and commercial development. Demand for energy in Vermont continues to grow, according to the Draft 2008 Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan, and is driven largely by population growth, economic development and increase in vehicular miles traveled. This section will focus on energy uses and sources and those local initiatives which Wilmington can undertake to have the greatest impact.

Energy Uses

Wilmington’s energy use patterns closely match those of Vermont, which are shown in the following figure. In Wilmington, natural gas is not available, so the proportion of oil, propane, and electricity might be slightly higher than that shown for the entire state. According to the Vermont Draft Energy Plan (2008) the per capita demand for energy in Vermont has shown steady growth. Between 1990 and 2004, per capita energy demand rose roughly 30%.

Figure 26: Vermont Energy Consumption by Selected Categories, 2009-2013



(Source: Vermont Housing Data: www.housingdata.org)

Heating Source	Occupied Housing	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied
Gas	29.8%	28.0%	34.9%
Electric	3.8%	0.6%	13.4%
Fuel Oil, Kerosene	42.1%	43.7%	37.3%
Wood	18.9%	20.0%	14.4%
All Other	3.6%	4.8%	0.0%
No Fuel	1.8%	2.4%	0.0%

Home heating and automobiles account for the greatest energy use. The residents of Wilmington use a variety of sources for home heating. According to the 2010 Census, 42% of homes in Wilmington were primarily heated with fuel oil or kerosene. Other home heating sources include LP Gas (30%), wood (19%), electricity (4%), and the remaining from other sources such as coal/coke, geothermal or other fuels. Only two homes were reported as being heated by solar energy, and at least one by geothermal. These figures only represent the primary heating sources and do not indicate whether or not there are multiple fuel sources being used.

As a rural town lacking public rail and with a rugged terrain precluding broad bicycle transportation viability, Wilmington continues to show a reliance on petroleum based fuels with a high number of vehicle miles traveled.

Energy use for the Town government is much easier to quantify, since the Town budget includes energy line items. Energy line items for selected recent years are shown in Figure 27. Increases in the price of heating and transportation fuels have accounted for close to a doubling of energy costs in five years.

Figure 27: Annual Energy Costs for Town Facilities and Services

Energy Line Item	FY99	FY04	FY09	FY14
Elec – Municipal Bldg.	\$7,000	\$10,402	\$6,378	\$8,276
Oil – Town Garage	\$4,000	\$4,835	\$12,172	\$5,593
Elec – Town Garage	\$2,700	\$2,817	\$2,659	\$6,276
Equipment – gasoline & diesel fuel	\$16,000	\$25,679	\$90,842	\$68,906
Subtotal	\$29,700	\$43,733	\$112,051	\$89,051
Schools Utilities	\$104,796	\$125,500	No breakdown	No breakdown
Total	\$134,496	\$169,233	\$112,051	\$89,051

Source: Wilmington Town Reports

Energy Sources

The Town of Wilmington is serviced by Green Mountain Power. The community has been receptive to alternative energy sources. Renewable energy sources that are also available for use include solar, wood, geothermal and wind. Proper siting of buildings can increase the use of solar energy and the conservation of other heating fuels in homes and businesses.

Wood is a relatively low cost source of renewable energy. The Vermont Department of Public Service reported in 2000, the last time the state reported the data, that approximately 50% of the households in

the region contained at least one wood-burning appliance.¹⁵ Continued rising oil and electric costs will likely spur new growth in the use of wood as a home heating fuel, both in the form of cordwood and wood pellets. Wilmington has a large amount of woodland that, if effectively managed, could supply a reliable, local source of wood.

Wind is another source of renewable energy that is being developed in Vermont on both large and individual scales. There are several factors that contribute to the siting of large scale wind-generating facilities:

- elevations greater than 2,000 feet
- proximity to electric transmission lines
- reasonable road access
- ridgeline locations
- wind speed

Currently, there is a wind generating facility in Searsburg with eleven functioning windmills. As of the writing of this plan another larger commercial wind facility in Searsburg and Readsboro is planned.

Small, home-based wind energy systems are being used in the region but high costs have restricted their growth. Towns may only regulate wind facilities that do not connect in any way to the public power supply. The height of wind turbines with blades less than 20 feet in diameter cannot be regulated unless a town specifically addresses them in their bylaws.

Net metering is one way in which homeowners can realize savings from operating a residential wind or solar system. Under net metering, a homeowner is permitted to connect suitable generating equipment to the public power grid. During periods when more energy is generated than the property is using, the metered amount of electrical energy provided to the grid reduces residential electric bills. In order to net meter, the homeowner must receive a Certificate of Public Good from the Vermont Public Service Board under Section 248.

Conservation, our most readily accessible “source” of additional energy, is further discussed below. Avoiding increases in energy demand through effective conservation measures is equivalent to developing new sources. Estimates vary as to how much energy can be conserved without significantly affecting lifestyles or convenience. Some estimates say that 20% is attainable by 2020, 10% of that in annual electricity and natural gas use alone.¹⁶

Energy Conservation

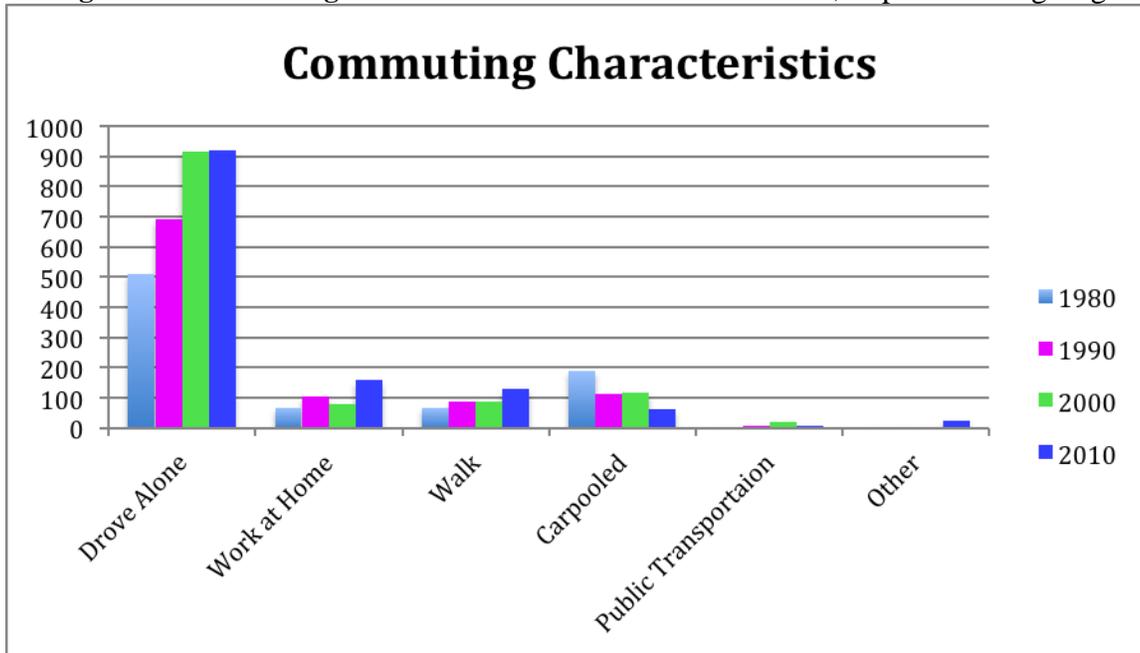
Regional and local efforts can play an important role in energy conservation. Reducing automobile dependency will go a long way towards reducing transportation energy consumption. In 2000, 75% of Wilmington residents commuting to work drove alone. As discussed in the transportation chapter, the Deerfield Valley Transit Authority (DVTA) operates a free public transit system (MOOVER) within the towns of Dover, Wilmington, Marlboro, Readsboro, and Whitingham.

15 Vermont Residential Fuel Wood Assessment 1997-1998, Vermont Department of Public Service, December 2000.

16 Energy Efficiency Resource Standards: Experience and Recommendations; American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy; March, 2006.

According to www.city-data.com, Mean travel time to work (commute) is 19.3 minutes.

Figure 28: Commuting Characteristics Source: VT Indicators, <http://www.vcgi.org>



Commuting	1980	1990	2000	2010
Drove Alone	511	690	915	918
Work at Home	65	105	80	157
Walk	66	87	87	130
Carpooled	189	113	116	61
Public Transportation	3	9	19	8
Other	0	4	2	23

Effective land use planning can promote energy conservation. Concentrated development in the villages could reduce reliance on the automobile and encourage people to walk and exercise, rather than drive, to nearby destinations.

The siting, design and construction of buildings strongly influences the amount of energy needed for heating as well as the amount of electricity needed for lighting. Separate subdivision regulations, which could include such siting standards, have not been adopted in Wilmington.

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

- Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) - SEVCA offers a variety of programs that are designed to assist low-income residents with their energy costs. These programs include seasonal fuel assistance, emergency fuel assistance, and free weatherization services to reduce heating costs. In addition, SEVCA also works with electric companies in order to prevent disconnection and help negotiate payment plans. <http://www.sevca.org/weatherization/>
- Efficiency Vermont - Efficiency Vermont is the State's provider of energy efficiency services. They provide technical and financial assistance to electrical consumers for the purpose of improving the efficiency of existing and new facilities. Additional programs that support low-income housing and households are available through Efficiency Vermont. <http://www.efficiencyvermont.com/pages/>
- ENERGY STAR Home Rebates - Energy Star Homes meet strict energy efficiency guidelines set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Energy. Efficiency Vermont provides free financial, design, and technical assistance to help build an ENERGY STAR qualified home. Benefits of being an ENERGY STAR home include financial incentives such as product rebates; utility savings; higher resale value; increased comfort and air quality; and other environmental benefits. <http://efficiencyvermont.com/pages/Residential/SavingEnergy/HomePerformanceWithENERGYST/HomePerformanceFinancing/>
- Vermont Housing Finance Authority's Energy Saver Loan Program -Administered by Windham and Windsor Housing Trust, this program offers low interest loan funding for homeowners for an energy audit and improvements specified in the audit. <http://www.helpforvt.org/loans>

Energy Vision

The community needs to focus on local initiatives it can take to lower Wilmington's future demand for energy. Information on all potential alternative energy sources and conservation will be made available to the community. The Town will continue to lead by example and continue to carry out energy audits and energy conservation in all municipal buildings. The Town, through education and bylaw updates, will promote energy efficient siting, design, and construction of buildings.

POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

GOAL: To Encourage the Efficient Use of Energy and the Development of Renewable Energy Resources.

Policy 1: Maintain land use patterns that will conserve energy.

Recommendation 1.1: Review existing regulations and make changes as necessary to ensure techniques are in place to enhance energy conservation.

Policy 2: Promote the use of alternative forms of energy that respect the environment.

Recommendation 2.1: Promote the use of wood as a space heating fuel source and a small scale industrial fuel.

Recommendation 2.2: Evaluate and propose amendments to the zoning bylaws to address the siting of systems that make use of renewable energy, such as solar panels and wind energy systems.

Policy 3: Reduce energy consumption and increase energy efficiency.

Recommendation 3.1: Provide residents with energy information at central locations in Town regarding:

- conservation of water and other resources
- areas in the home which lose heat
- weatherization methods, appropriate materials, and installation techniques
- siting and design of new homes to maximize natural heating
- utilization of solar, wind, and water power

Recommendation 3.2: Encourage funding for energy programs to enable existing homes and community buildings to receive energy audit and weatherization services.

Recommendation 3.3: Continue to carry out energy audits of all municipal buildings on an appropriate time scale.

Recommendation 3.4: Support car-pooling, public transportation (MOOVer), and van-pooling initiatives and programs.

Recommendation 3.5: Promote and encourage pedestrian and bicycle use as alternative modes of travel.

Policy 4: Construct new energy transmission corridors within or adjacent to existing utility and public rights-of-way.

Policy 5: Relocate existing distribution lines, whenever they are updated or replaced, within road corridor rights of way.

Recommendation 5.1 Work to get underground energy distribution lines in Wilmington Village.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Town of Wilmington is facing a period of economic transformation. Its topography and clean streams are marked by great beauty and have been attracting visitors for more than a century. Long dependent on a steady tourist activity for its job base, it is essential, over the long term, that the town begin to expand its base in new directions.¹⁷

The citizens, while well educated, are not keeping pace with the educational attainment of other parts of Vermont and New England. In fact, its most highly educated workers, including most of its latest graduates, are seeking employment opportunities outside of the two-town region (Dover/Wilmington). This exodus, coupled with a falling birthrate and an influx of retirees, is contributing to a community of increasingly older citizens.

The citizens are committed to their communities and have, over time, developed means and methods to invest and make a living in an economy that is quite cyclical. Many gain their income by cobbling together seasonal jobs, others commute to nearby centers of employment and still others, through their artisanal and professional skills, are able to successfully operate full time local businesses. With the exception of the Mount Snow Ltd. and HIREHC, there are no large businesses in the area. In fact, more than 90% of the companies in the two-town region employ less than five full time workers.¹⁸

Wilmington Village is a commercial and residential center for the Town of Wilmington. The Village functions as the civic and retail hub of the Deerfield Valley. Wilmington Village is a tourist draw and contributes to the unique cultural, historic, and recreational characteristics that make Vermont such a special place.

The two towns (Dover/Wilmington) are not in a crisis at the moment. However, they are in an economic climate of gradual decline that will only continue if they do nothing. They are able to survive recessions and times of severe distress but are unable to regain that which they have lost and are not growing in new areas. The decline is slow and subtle, but constant. They have no choice but to change if they wish to remain vibrant and maintain their quality of life.

Employment

The Vermont Department of Labor¹⁹ 2010 annual report indicates there are 1,290 Wilmington residents in the labor force (individuals 16 years and older) with an unemployment rate of 7.9 %. www.city-data.com indicates a June 2014 unemployment rate of 4.8% in Wilmington, 3.7% statewide, suggesting a 3.1% reduction in unemployment. The differing sources of data should be considered when assessing the comparability of these data.

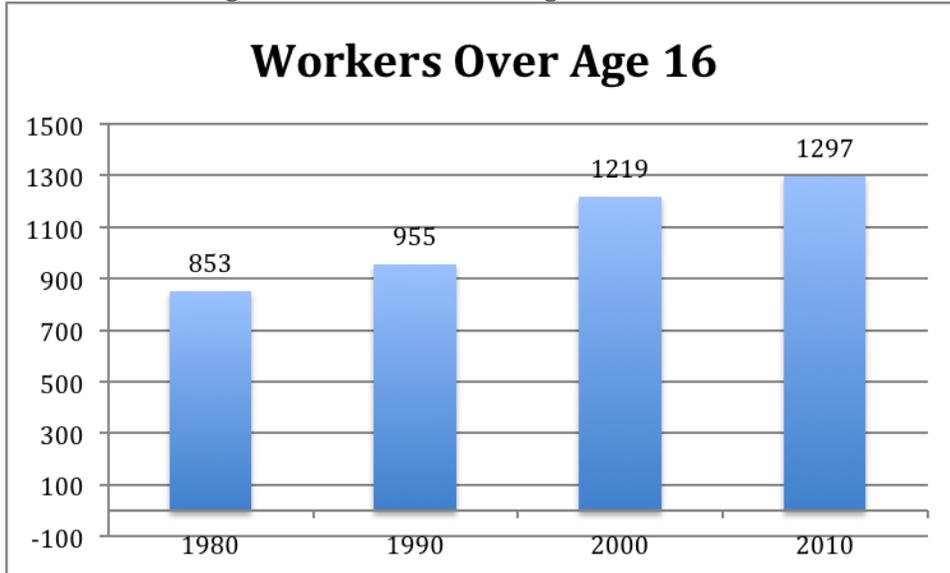
¹⁷ This chapter includes segments of the *Strategic Economic Development Plan for Dover and Wilmington*, December 2009. http://www.wilmingtonvermont.us/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={44015C01-2A41-41C9-93DE-12D68D8B53CF} Where appropriate the report will be quoted directly and noted in italics.

¹⁸ These three paragraphs are from the Mullin Bi-Town Strategic Economic Development Plan for Dover and Wilmington VT December 2009

¹⁹ <http://www.vtlni.info/Labforce.cfm?qperiodyear=2009&qareatype=12&qadjusted=Y>

Workforce

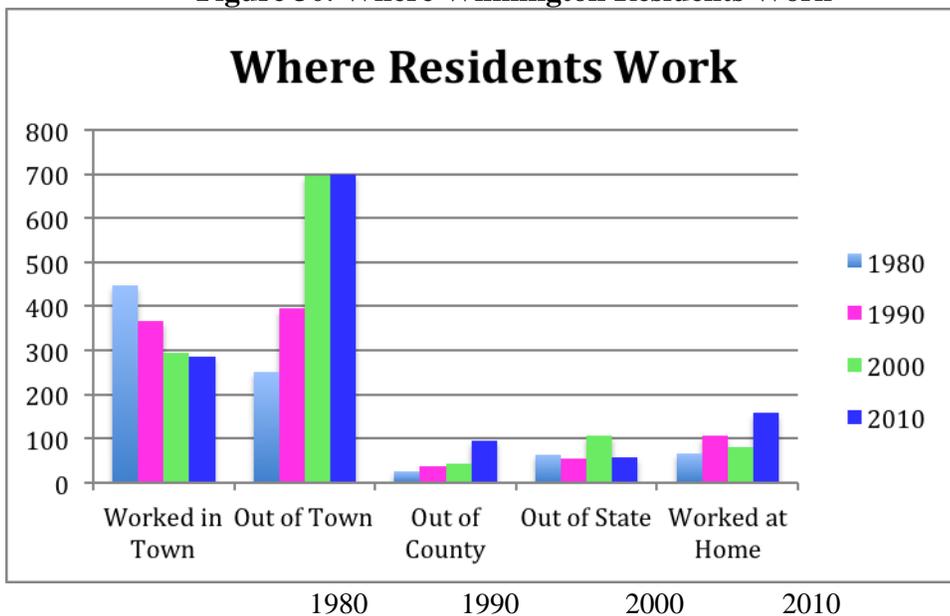
Figure 29: Size of Wilmington Workforce



	1980	1990	2000	2010
Commuting				
Drove Alone	511	690	915	918
Work at Home	65	105	80	157
Walk	66	87	87	130
Carpooled	189	113	116	61
Public Transportaion	3	9	19	8
Other	0	4	2	23

Data Source: Vermont Indicators Website, <http://www.vcgi.org>

Figure 30: Where Wilmington Residents Work



Worked in Town	447	366	294	287
Out of Town	252	395	696	700
Out of County	25	36	43	95
Out of State	64	53	106	58
Worked at Home	65	105	80	157
Total	853	955	1219	1297

Data Source: Vermont Indicators Website, <http://www.vcgi.org>

The 2010 data suggests that 444 of 1297 or 34% of all workers work either in the home or in the town. 853 or 66% work out of town.

Existing Business

In 2004, there were approximately 156 establishments in the community employing 1,297 workers in a variety of industries and jobs. The largest percentage of the businesses in Wilmington were in the accommodation/food and retail sectors.

Data Source: Fact Finder
 2004 Business Patterns
www.factfinder.com

Figure 31: Wilmington Business Establishment and Employment Trends 2004 vs. 2013

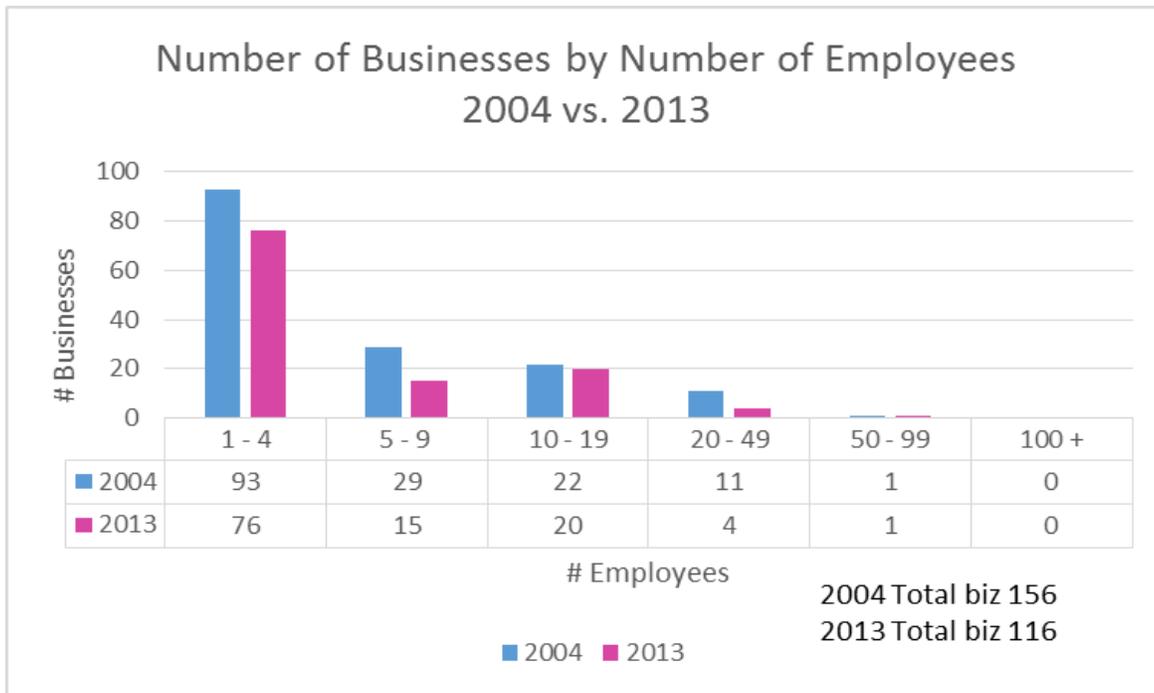
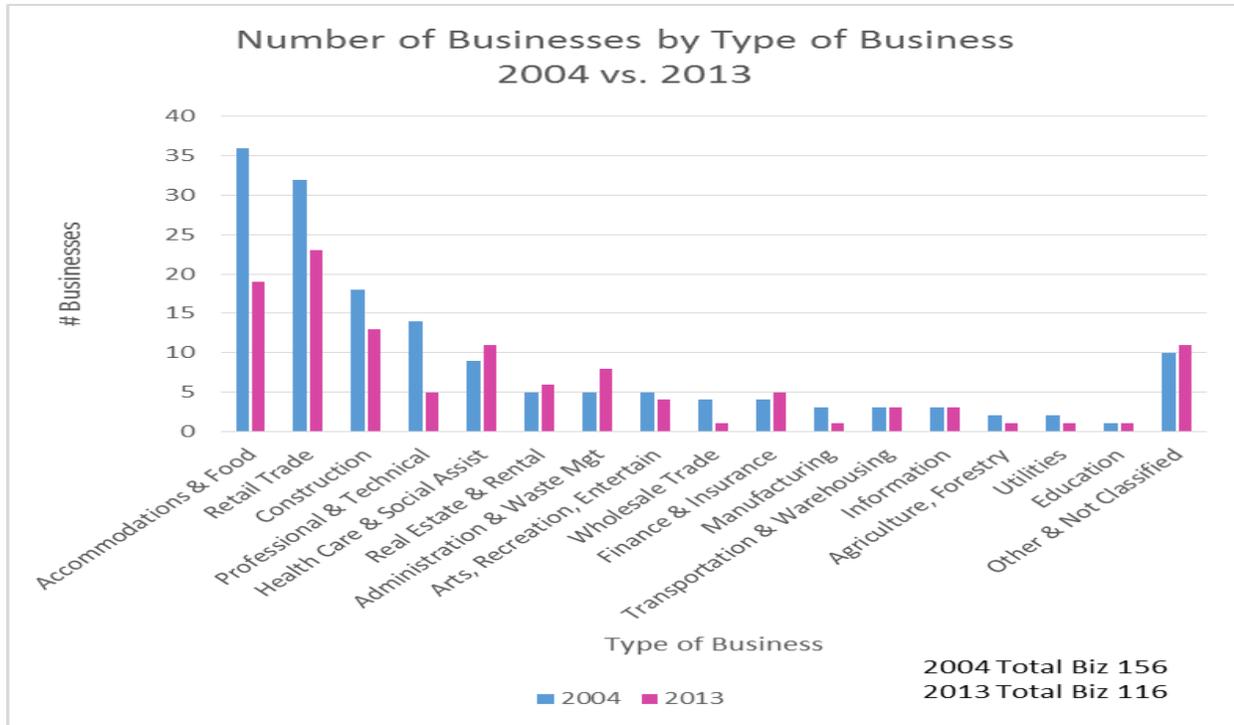


Figure 32: Wilmington Business Establishments by Type 2004 vs. 2013



Data Source: Fact Finder: 2004 & 2013 Business Patterns www.factfinder.com

	2004	2013
Accommodations & Food	36	19
Retail Trade	32	23
Construction	18	13
Professional & Technical	14	5
Health Care & Social Assist	9	11
Real Estate & Rental	5	6
Administration & Waste Mgt	5	8
Arts, Recreation, Entertain	5	4
Wholesale Trade	4	1
Finance & Insurance	4	5
Manufacturing	3	1
Transportation & Warehousing	3	3
Information	3	3
Agriculture, Forestry	2	1
Utilities	2	1
Education	1	1
Other & Not Classified	10	11

Figures 31 and 32 largely tell the story of the impact of Tropical Storm Irene on the economy of the town. Total Businesses dropped 26 % or 40 businesses between 2004 and 2013 from a total of 156 to 116. While the town has experienced a 15% reduction in population, businesses shrank by 26%. Business came to a halt after Irene and after 4 years is only now starting to regain momentum. Small businesses, especially tourism related businesses, could not endure the down years of none or few tourists.

Businesses were quick to learn that FEMA disaster recovery grants are not available for commercial purpose. Small Business Association loans and Vermont Economic Development loans were unaffordable to many. Few business owners had flood insurance, due largely to the high price tag. Those with flood insurance experienced lengthy benefit recovery processes. Affordable funding and flood insurance benefit recovery time were contributing factors in the speed with which businesses were able to rebuild and the number of business to endure the disaster.

The recovery process was complicated by the initial shock and chaos, followed by the arrival of and subsequent taking over of the town by the National Guard. As the reality of the situation settled and residents and town officials tried to figure out “what next”. The recovery was complicated by the absence of transportation routes in and out of town as all major roads and all but a couple of secondary roads were rendered unusable, taking months or in some case years, to repair. Immediate priority shifted to addressing the most basic life needs of those impacted most deeply. Town and social services had to be relocated and reestablished. Building recovery processes had to be defined and communicated to business owners, a process that was initially plagued with miscommunications and misinformation. A temporary ordinance had to be put in place allowing for short term, immediate shoring up of businesses, homes, and environs.

Once money was lined up and building requirements for each situation determined, contractors had to be lined up, materials obtained, and the long rebuilding process started. The town continues with this process to this day.

This life lesson for the town has resulted in a many improved processes and plans, many of which are still in process:

- A more robust emergency management plan
- Relocation of municipal and emergency services such as police and fire is planned
- Many of the most vulnerable buildings downtown have improved flood resiliency features
- Residents and business owners have gained much knowledge of what occurs after a flood and how to navigate these “waters”.

Agriculture and Forestry

One dairy farm and some small agricultural businesses continue to operate. Much of the land used to support the dairy farms of the past has still managed to support the small farms of today. The trend in agriculture throughout the State has been for farmers to seek small-scale, diversified and direct-market

opportunities.²⁰ Some parcels of land are used for growing grapes for winemaking. Other local food producers are exploring new crops and markets indicating a renewed interest in local farming.

u

Figure 33: Wilmington Farms by size -1997 to 2007 (updated data not available as of 7/15)

	1997			2007		
	All farms	1 to 49 acres	50 to 999 acres	All farms	1 to 49 acres	50 to 999 acres
Wilmington	15	5	10	15	4	11

(Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture)

Agricultural, forestry and pastoral qualities remain important to the Town. Wilmington’s working lands will continue to provide varied opportunities for farm and forestry-related employment. Not only do these land-based industries provide employment opportunities, but they also contribute to a quality of life and scenic backdrop to the Town of Wilmington.

Tri-Town Economic Development Group

In the spring of 2007, the Dover, Whitingham and Wilmington Selectboards voted to approve the creation of a committee to address economic development in the Dover/Whitingham/Wilmington area. In December 2009 a Strategic Economic Development Plan for Dover and Wilmington was completed. In 2010 Dover and Wilmington agreed to each contribute funds to hire an economic development planner to implement the Strategic Plan.

Strategic Economic Development Plan

Due to the importance of the Plan in providing a strategy to improve the economy of Dover and Wilmington the plan’s vision statement is included in this Town Plan.

Tri-Town Economic Development - A Sense of Vision

Given the importance of protecting the environment and the uncommon beauty that marks our communities, it is essential that all long-term economic activity reflect our special character. We are two small communities that endeavor to develop such that our water, air, fields, farms, villages and roadways are of the highest possible quality. We embrace the concept of a balanced local economy where there is the opportunity for all citizens, ranging from our latest high school graduates to our newest senior citizens, to find satisfying employment at wages that enable them to comfortably reside in our communities. We will endeavor to stimulate a balanced portfolio of jobs ranging from those of the tourist industry, to professional services, light manufacturing and agriculture to the latest in high technology. We are connected to Vermont, New England, the nation and the world. We will make every effort to have an infrastructural system that enables us to communicate with distant points. We will strive to unleash the entrepreneurial spirit for our citizens and work to find places and spaces to help them to meet their economic interests.

Given the presence of Mount Snow, its beauty and powerful economic influence on our prosperity, we will endeavor to partner with the owners in such ways that will enable the proprietors and the communities [to] mutually benefit. We recognize that if our children are to find meaningful employment in our communities, then a solid educational framework is a necessity. To this end, we believe that the creation of a top level educational system from kindergarten through high school, and collaboration with

²⁰ University of Vermont Extension, 2006

vocation schools and the community college are critical to our long term future: Economic development and education are inextricably linked.

Finally, we recognize that we have a special responsibility to respect our legacy, history, culture and Vermont values. Our efforts will ensure that our special characteristics, uniqueness and values are maintained and enhanced.

The Resurrection of Mt Haystack

Like a Phoenix rising from the ashes yet again, the private acquisition of Haystack Mountain and the related tracts has shifted the complexion of the economic profile from what was then envisioned by Tri-Town Economic Development Group when they wrote this vision statement. No longer is Mt Snow of Dover the sole large employer or economic life-line of Wilmington. Rapid growth and development by The Hermitage Inn Real Estate Holding Company, LLC (HIREHC) has brought Wilmington-based development to the forefront of the economic development plan for the town. With that development comes the unique challenge of maintaining economic diversity in the town.

Diversity in Wilmington

The growth and development of this private upper-income club has already had dramatic impact on the town as is evidenced by the numbers:

- more costly homes
- fewer primary homes, more second homes

It is likely the arrival of a more wealthy population will change the retail profile of the town toward more upscale stores. The town is already seeing this through more up-scale dining opportunities. The town will have to play a very active role in ensuring that Wilmington maintains a diversity of options and social support services for its moderate and lower income residents. Maintaining diversity of residents and income levels will ensure an interesting and welcoming community for all.

Wilmington Works

Downtown remains the heart of the community. It has a lively and eclectic mix of uses, including residential, retail, office, governmental, and municipal parking. It is fully serviced by public water and sewer and is a hub for public transportation.

The broad land use pattern in Downtown is fairly well established, but there are opportunities for redevelopment. To support Downtown's viability and livability, the Town participates in Vermont's Downtown Program. This enables the Town to receive grants for improvements within the designated area, gives priority consideration for some state-funded grants, and allows owners of income-producing buildings to be eligible to receive tax credits for building improvements (historic, façade, code, and technology). Downtown Designation was first received in 2012 as an extension of the post-tropical storm Irene recovery planning process.

The boundaries of the designated downtown are shown on the map that follows.



Wilmington, VT Downtown

To build, improve and support a vital downtown that benefits the entire Wilmington community.

Downtown designation achieves the following goals:

- Furthering the intent of the Land Use Chapter – Downtown is an important mixed-use district. The Town Plan identifies the need to make public and private physical improvements in this area. Continued designation will focus additional resources to help this area thrive, including priority consideration for several grant programs.
- Preserving significant historic, architectural, and cultural heritage – The access to historic tax credits and code improvement tax credits will support redevelopment of older and historic properties, preserving the historic character of the Designated Downtown district.
- Create safer streets and more inviting environments for all users - The Town has benefited from improvements in the Downtown and will continue to seek improvements as necessary.

Wilmington Works is the official designated downtown organization for the Town of Wilmington, Vermont. The mission is:

As one of twenty-four designated downtowns in Vermont, Wilmington Works is able to provide access to tax credits, grant opportunities, and technical assistance to help preserve and revitalize downtown Wilmington. Wilmington Works utilizes the National Main Street Program Four Point Approach of downtown revitalization. These four points mirror our standing committees that accomplish much of our work in our downtown: Design, Promotions, Organization and Economic Development. The locus of our work is at the intersections of Routes 9 and 100, using the footprint of the Historic District to describe the downtown district boundary.

Wilmington Works has approximately thirty volunteers that serve on the Board, as part of four major committees, or work on specific projects and events. The organization receives operational and program funds from The Town of Wilmington, The Wilmington Fund, and numerous individual donors and partners with various public and private organizations to raise funds for community and economic development. In 2013 the VT Downtown Program chose Wilmington as one of eight communities to receive a grant through the Economic Development Administration to assist towns affected by Tropical Storm Irene.

In the two years since inception, Wilmington Works has focused on establishing the organization and its governance structure (including partnering with the Wilmington Fund as a local fiscal conduit, forming a Board of Directors and applying for state and national 501(c)3 status and hiring an Executive Director/consultant); developing a marketing and branding strategy (including work with Arnett Muldrow & Associates, logo design and development, social media and website management, communications strategy and database development), event planning and execution (including block parties, village strolls, and historic village walking tours); and capital improvements to the downtown center (including trash cans, banners, sidewalk and streetscape enhancements, crosswalks, façade improvement projects and signage); as well as economic development projects (such as historic tax credit applications, shop local campaigns, organizational fundraising and surveys).

Future projects spanning the timeframe of the current town plan include, but are not limited to: establishment of an independent 501(c)3 organization, further clarification of the role that Wilmington Works plays in collaboration with the Southern Vermont Deerfield Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Town of Wilmington, coordination of several major streetscape and sidewalk improvements on South, East and West Main Streets, expansion of promotional events and marketing, the launch of an ambassador program to greet tourists, parking and snow-removal studies, re-assessment of the downtown boundary, vacant building development, and expansion of retail and lodging operations to match the current food-industry expansion.

www.wilmingtonworksvt.com

www.wilmingtoninthemountains.com

wilmingtonworks@gmail.com

POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The *Strategic Economic Development Plan* goals, where appropriate, have become this section's town plan policies to ensure that the plan's implementation occurs. The Strategic Economic Development Plan's objectives and actions are incorporated by reference as recommendations for the Town Plan.

Policy 1: Develop and install state-of-the-art broadband internet and cellular telephone systems throughout the Deerfield Valley, with special attention to the Towns of Dover and Wilmington that will enable businesses to have efficient, sustained connectivity across the globe over the next 20 years.

Policy 2: Provide support services such that businesses in the two towns have the ability to maximize their potential and provide a living wage.

Policy 3: Encourage development of industry that utilizes renewable natural resources and agricultural products from within Dover, Wilmington, the Windham Region and Vermont.

Policy 4: Work to attract and retain younger population.

Policy 5: Work to reduce the costs of doing business in the Town of Wilmington.

Policy 6: Work to enhance the job base and tax base of the community over the long term while respecting the qualities that makes Wilmington special.

Policy 7: Continue to create a platform and environment such that steady implementation of Strategic Economic Development Plan for Dover and Wilmington and economic diversity can occur, while maintaining the character and small-town nature of the community.

FLOOD RESILIENCE

Wilmington has land, homes and businesses that are susceptible to the two types of flooding impacts: flooding or water inundation occurs during high water on extensive acreage along the Deerfield River. Both river erosion (when river or stream jumps its bank and rips through an area) and flooding are potential along both the upper Deerfield River and the North Branch of the Deerfield River, and Beaver Brook, as well as along the streams that drain watersheds extending to our borders, particularly those with Dover and Marlboro.

In 2013 Vermont enacted Act 16, An act relating to municipal and regional planning and flood resilience, which requires that all municipal and regional plans effective after July 1, 2014 include a “flood resilience element” pursuant to the purpose and goals of 24 V.S.A. §4302 - Purpose; Goals - subsection (c)(14):

(14) To encourage flood resilient communities.

(A) New development in identified flood hazard, fluvial erosion, and river corridor protection areas should be avoided. If new development is to be built in such areas, it should not exacerbate flooding and fluvial erosion.

(B) The protection and restoration of floodplains and upland forested areas that attenuate and moderate flooding and fluvial erosion should be encouraged.

(C) Flood emergency preparedness and response planning should be encouraged.

Act 16 also amended 24 V.S.A. § 4382 - The plan for a municipality - adding a twelfth element to the requirements for a municipal plan, specifically to include a flood resilience plan.

(a) A plan for a municipality . . . shall include the following . . .:

(12) (A) A flood resilience plan that:

(i) identifies flood hazard and fluvial erosion hazard areas, based on river corridor maps provided by the Secretary of Natural Resources pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 1428(a) or maps recommended by the Secretary, and designates those areas to be protected, including floodplains, river corridors, land adjacent to streams, wetlands, and upland forests, to reduce the risk of flood damage to infrastructure and improved property; and

(ii) recommends policies and strategies to protect the areas identified and designated under subdivision (12)(A)(i) of this subsection and to mitigate risks to public safety, critical infrastructure, historic structures, and municipal investments.

(12) (B) A flood resilience plan may reference an existing local hazard mitigation plan approved under 44 C.F.R. § 201.6.

Fluvial Erosion

By statutory definition, “fluvial erosion” means the erosion or scouring of riverbeds and banks during high flow conditions of a river. Most of the flooding damage experienced in Vermont is from the power of moving water and the sudden destruction of under-sized culverts and erosion of stream banks

supporting roads and buildings. Providing a river the room it needs to slow the flow, over time can allow it to function as a responsive system and avoid repeated losses to public infrastructure and investments.

Erosion (and deposition) along a stream or river is natural. Sometimes, efforts to stop this process in one place can make it worse in others. Rivers, streams, and their channels are changing constantly in response to the inputs of water, energy, sediment and debris that pass along them. Every few years a stream fills to bankfull and the shape of the channel responds to this force by cutting deeper into some streambanks and also by depositing sediments in the quiet inside bends. This process is visible as an “S” shaped form that slowly changes position.

If the stream cannot spill out of its banks, the power of the trapped water increases and the channel either digs down or cuts out further to the sides. Where the roads and buildings are nearby these adjustments to the channel’s shape can become dramatic and costly.

A river is in geomorphic equilibrium when it is in balance with its water, energy, sediment, and debris. In this condition a river is neither building up sediment in the channel nor losing sediment from its bed. Importantly, a river in equilibrium has not become overly deep and can continue to overflow onto its floodplains. The water that spills onto the floodplain slows down, and the velocity of the water still in the channel does not become excessively powerful.

In trying to protect roads and buildings we need to be sure that the river is able to function as well as possible upstream and downstream. We need functional streams and rivers with room to adjust (River Corridors) and intact floodplains to moderate the impact of high water events.

River Corridors and floodplains

River Corridors and floodplains are different but frequently closely related. The River Corridor is the area that provides the physical space that the river needs to express its energy and meander without causing it to dig down. In statute it is defined as: *"River corridor" means the land area adjacent to a river that is required to accommodate the dimensions, slope, planform, and buffer of the naturally stable channel and that is necessary for the natural maintenance or natural restoration of a dynamic equilibrium condition and for minimization of fluvial erosion hazards, as delineated by the Agency of Natural Resources in accordance with river corridor protection procedures.*

A floodplain is the area where water flowing out over a river bank can spread out and slow down.

River Corridors and floodplains overlap a great deal. One on top of the other there might be 60 – 90% overlap. However, there are areas in the River Corridor that will be eventually shaped by the channel - although they may be currently high and dry - and other areas in the floodplain that will be under water during a large flood, but which the river channel may not need to access to maintain its geomorphic equilibrium.

The extent of a River Corridor is based on calculations including such things as the meander belt of the stream, soils, watershed size and gradient, and channel width. The extent of floodplains is based on calculations including such things as stream peak flow history and frequency.

Regulatory Flood Hazard Areas

There are two types of regulatory flood hazard areas and two sets of official maps that identify and designate those flood hazard areas in Vermont: inundation hazard areas are designated by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) and fluvial erosion hazard areas are designated on the VT Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) River Corridor maps.

Inundation Hazard

Towns participating in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) must regulate development in areas designated on the FIRMs that show the floodplain that FEMA has calculated would be covered by water in a 1% chance annual inundation event, also referred to as the “100 year flood” or base flood. This area of inundation is called the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). FIRMs may also show expected base flood elevations (BFEs) and floodways (smaller areas that carry more current). FIRMS are only prepared for larger streams and rivers. The Town of Wilmington has areas of flood risk mapped by FEMA.

Fluvial Erosion Hazard

A significant portion of flood damage in Vermont occurs outside of the FEMA mapped areas along rivers and smaller upland streams, as well as along road drainage systems that fail to convey the amount of water they are receiving. Since FEMA maps are only concerned with inundation, and these other areas are at risk from flash flooding and fluvial erosion, these areas are often not recognized as being flood-prone. Property owners in such areas outside of SFHAs are not required to have flood insurance. Flash flooding in these reaches can be extremely erosive, causing damage to road infrastructure and to topographic features including stream beds and the sides of hills and mountains, and also creating landslide risk.

Vermont ANR’s river corridor maps show the area needed to address the fluvial erosion hazards, which may be inside of FEMA-mapped areas, but often extend outside of those areas. River Corridor maps delineate areas where the lateral movement of the river and the associated erosion may be more of the threat than inundation by floodwaters. Elevation or floodproofing alone may not be protective of structures in these areas, as erosion can undermine structures. ANR released statewide river corridor maps in the latter part of 2014. The Town of Wilmington has areas of River Corridor mapped by ANR.

Flood Hazard Area Regulation

Inundation

In order to enable property owners to be eligible for federal flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), a municipality must adopt and administer flood hazard area regulations. These can be within local zoning regulations or adopted as a free-standing bylaw. A community’s flood hazard regulations must apply to at least the Special Flood Hazard Areas identified by FEMA. They regulate new structures and place restrictions on other types of activities, such as fill within the floodplain. They specify land, area, and structural requirements to be adhered to within the SFHA. Paradoxically, using the minimum required regulations can *increase* flood risk, as they allow filling in flood zones which can increase flooding downstream.

Erosion

To satisfy the intent of Act 16, to protect citizens, infrastructure, and the environment, as well as to qualify for maximum Emergency Relief Assistance Fund match from the state in the event of a disaster, a town must adopt and administer protection of River Corridors in its flood hazard area regulations. These can be within local zoning regulations or adopted as a free-standing bylaw.

Addressing flood resilience

This plan identifies as flood hazard areas the Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs) shown on the FIRMs and identifies fluvial erosion hazard areas as those shown on the Agency of Natural Resources River Corridor maps. Further, this Plan designates both those identified areas as areas to be protected, including floodplains, river corridors, and land adjacent to streams, wetlands, and upland forests, to reduce the risk of flood damage to infrastructure and improved property. In addition, this plan incorporates by reference the town’s Local Hazard Mitigation Plan approved under 44 C.F.R. § 201.6. Finally, this plan recommends the following policies and strategies to protect the designated areas to mitigate risks to public safety, critical infrastructure, historic structures, and municipal investments.

Maps referenced in this section will be posted as available. Some named maps have not yet been provided to the town by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources.

Additional information is available at <http://floodready.vermont.gov/>.

POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Goal: Encourage Wilmington to become a more flood resilient community
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Policy 1: It is the policy of the Town to foster the protection and restoration of river corridors, floodplains, wetlands, and upland forested areas that attenuate and moderate flooding and fluvial erosion.

Recommendation 1.1: The Town will become familiar with up-to-date ANR River Corridor maps (when they become available) delineating the land area adjacent to streams and rivers that are required to accommodate a stable channel.

Policy 2: It is the policy of the Town to protect floodplains, river corridors, land adjacent to streams, wetlands, and upland forests through adoption and administration of flood hazard area regulations governing development in designated Special Flood Hazard Areas and River Corridors, in order to reduce the risk of flood damage to infrastructure, improved property, people, and the environment.

Recommendation 2.1: The Town will be familiar with Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) that delineate areas that could be covered or inundated by water during flooding.

Policy 3: New development in identified flood hazard, fluvial erosion, and river corridor protection areas should be avoided. If new development is to be built in such areas, it should not exacerbate flooding and fluvial erosion.

Recommendation 3.1: The Town will regulate any new development in identified flood hazard areas, fluvial erosion hazard areas, and/or River Corridors to not exacerbate flooding and fluvial erosion.

Policy 4: The protection and restoration of floodplains and upland forested areas that attenuate and moderate flooding and fluvial erosion should be encouraged.

Recommendation 4.1: The Town will update the Flood Hazard Area Regulations addressing regulation of River Corridors, flood hazard areas, fluvial erosion areas, and/or upland forested areas based on regulatory templates developed by the ANR Department of Environmental Conservation Rivers Program.

Policy 5: Flood emergency preparedness and response planning are encouraged.

Recommendation 5.1: The Town will pursue a flood resilience management approach whose essential components are to identify and map flood hazard areas, fluvial erosion hazard areas, and river corridor protection areas based on stream geomorphic assessment studies and maps provided by the Vermont ANR Rivers Program, and designate those areas for protection to reduce the risk of flood damage to infrastructure and private property.

LAND USE

Existing Land Use

The Town of Wilmington is 25,241.60 acres and its existing land use/land cover was mapped using aerial photographs, Orthophotos and GIS data. The Village sits at the crossroad of Routes 9 and 100.

Built Environment

Wilmington Village functions as the center for Town government, public services, and community affairs. The Village is an area of clustered mixed land use containing residential, commercial, professional, institutional, municipal, recreational and cultural uses. A greater density of dwellings (including multifamily dwellings) is found in Wilmington Village than in outlying lands.

The area around Haystack Mountain is an area of outdoor recreational activity including a ski area, golf course, and tennis courts, a new base lodge, numerous condominiums, and a plan for a 5-story, 184,190 square foot, 93-unit hotel and 7 villas. Associated secondary development includes dwellings, lodging, restaurants and resort related commercial enterprises. A concentration of condominium dwellings is also located somewhat near the mountain.

Residential land use occupies the outlying areas of the Town, is random in its settlement pattern, and consists of predominantly single-family dwellings. Many home occupations and cottage industries are associated with permanent residences. Vacation homes and camps account for over half of the total housing stock, and although many are concentrated at or near the ski area, others are located along the shores of Lake Raponda, near Lake Whitingham, at Chimney Hill vacation community or dispersed throughout the Town.

Commercial and industrial land use is located in the Village and along Routes 9 and Route 100 approaching the Village as well as the Haystack/HIREHC area. A large concentration of commercial development is located along both sides of Route 100 from the intersection of Higley Hill Road north to the intersection of East Dover Road. A smaller concentration is located along Route 100 near the Twin Valley Elementary School. Scattered commercial development is also found along Coldbrook Road on the way to Haystack, many of which are now owned by HIREHC. Institutional land uses outside of the Village are the health center on Route 100 South, Twin Valley Elementary School on Route 100 North and the medical facility on Coldbrook Road.

Open Lands

Active agricultural land use comprises a small acreage of Wilmington lands. Open meadows are maintained by mowing and are rather extensive throughout the Town. Forest-related land use is significant and includes private, non-industrial lands which provide for wildlife, recreation, and forest products. Private utility lands are extensive and comprise approximately 3836 acres that includes Lake Whitingham.

Conservation

Lands in public ownership consist of the Green Mountain National Forest, Molly Stark State Park, Wilmington School Forest and Glebe land as well as privately-owned power company land around Lake Whitingham. Much of the remaining land provides important recreational and scenic resource in the

Town, as it is commonly used for hunting and fishing, cross country skiing, snowmobiling, hiking, snow shoeing and other outdoor activities.

Zoning

In 1968 Wilmington adopted its first zoning regulations. The Wilmington Zoning Regulations have undergone significant revision in the past few years, with a complete reorganization of the zoning bylaws and readoption planned for later in 2015.

Land Use Plan

The land use plan's purpose is to guide growth and development that conforms to the goals and policies outlined in this Town Plan. Among the factors considered in preparing the land use plan were the following: existing sewer and water service, existing publicly owned lands, existing rural settlement, current commercial and industrial land use, agricultural, forestry, and wildlife resource values, proximity to public highways, and the need for economic vitality. Of particular note:

- It is important to assure that existing and future town residents and the workforce are served by a broad range of housing opportunities.
- Wilmington Village functions as the center of Town government, public services, community affairs and many small businesses. The Village is important to the local economy and needs to be enhanced and revitalized.
- The areas of Wilmington with the highest wildlife habitat suitability are located along the town's western and the southeastern corners. These areas also provide the best opportunity of connecting with neighboring towns existing wildlife corridors. (see the Natural Resources map at the end of the document)
- Although agriculture has become less extensive, the agricultural lands are an important resource that serves many functions including: providing local seasonal produce and planting materials; serving as an educational resource; and contributing to the rural character of the Town.
- The trees and wooded hills, which dominate the landscape and provide contrast with open fields and pasture land, also serve as an important visual resource for the Town.
- Surface waters have natural, scenic, and recreational value. Their value can be easily diminished or destroyed by unwise development. In so far as practical, surface waters and shorelines should be retained and maintained in their natural state. (see the Natural Resources map at the end of the document)
- In the Source Protection Areas land uses should be limited to those which pose no threat to the quality of the water supply.
- Haystack Mountain and the ridgeline provide a dramatic scenic impact from many locations in Wilmington and the views should be protected.
- Consideration should be given to the values of the Scenic Roads that were identified as having the most scenic value to residents and visitors.
- Preservation and enhancement of existing community facilities and services. (see the Community Facilities map at the end of the document)
- Consideration should be given to the importance of public recreation for the community and as an economic development tool.
- Encourage land use patterns that will enhance energy conservation
- Encourage economic vitality

Based on those considerations the following land use classification was developed and shown on the enclosed land use plan map: (Note: the Resort - Residential and Resort - Commercial/Residential classifications are new designations that will be shown on an updated Proposed Land Use map, but are not on the current 2010 map. They are applied to areas that are designated Residential or Commercial on the current map. Note, also, that the Commercial/Residential classification is a new name; it applies to the areas shown as Commercial on the current (2010) map.)

- Conservation
- Residential
- Resort - Residential
- Village
- Commercial/Residential
- Resort – Commercial/Residential

A brief explanation of purposes, description, and suggested land use guidelines for each land use district follows.

Conservation District

Purpose: To protect the undeveloped nature of those forest lands that provide scenic and recreational opportunities, public water supply, watershed protection, flood storage, fish and wildlife habitat, and timber production.

Description: Lands in this district are publicly-owned lands including Green Mountain National Forest, Town of Wilmington land, Molly Stark State Park and private utility lands. Lands are characterized by extensive forests with few roads and dwellings.

These lands are important as upland watershed and aquifer recharge areas, as essential habitat for fish and wildlife, and as an outdoor recreational resource. Lake Whitingham is a 2,000+ acre reservoir created for hydroelectric power generation, with other valuable assets including recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and flood storage. Ultimate land use management of the lands in this district is under the auspices of these public and private entities.

Conservation areas should be used for outdoor recreation, education, commercial forestry, and public water supply. Any structures built should be limited to those in direct support of these activities.

Legally Enforceable Standards

Development should not diminish the scenic and ecological values associated with these areas. To this end, new commercial land uses and large scale and/or moderate to high-density development, including energy generation facilities of any size, should be prohibited in the Conservation district and on other land characterized by one or more fragile natural features (e.g., critical wildlife habitat, wetlands, riparian buffers, steep slopes and ridgelines). Commercial wind energy generation facilities of any size are prohibited in the Conservation district and on other land characterized by one or more fragile natural features (e.g., critical wildlife habitat, wetlands, riparian buffers, steep slopes and ridgelines).

Residential District

Purpose: To provide areas for dwellings and other small-scale rural uses including home occupations with consideration being given to historic settlement patterns, aesthetics, natural resource production, and economic vitality.

Description: Lands in this district are already committed to residential development or appear to be capable of accommodating a significant proportion of the expected growth of the Town. Residential areas should be used to accommodate a major proportion of the growth of year-round residences and vacation homes and associated uses. Commercial forestry, agriculture, earth and mineral extraction and recreational uses that utilize appropriate management practices as established by the Town are also typical for this District.

Resort Residential District

Purpose: Similar to the Residential District, but for that area designated for resort and recreational development.

Description: Lands in this district are committed to residential development as defined above, but are specifically focused on areas designated for resort or recreational development.

Village District

Purpose: To maintain Wilmington Village as an area of clustered mixed land use that is in scale with the historic, existing, and desired character of the Village, and which serves residents and visitors to Wilmington.

Description: Lands in this district include lands that are suited for village development and the Wilmington Village Historic District (a National Register designation) for which design control regulations were adopted in 1984. In October 2009 the Selectboard repealed the previous adopted Design Control District and adopted an Historic Review District for the Village of Wilmington. Appropriate village uses include residential and commercial uses, public buildings and public facilities, and associated services. Small, light industrial uses may be accommodated as well; but they should be carefully planned to minimize undesirable impact on village character. The goal is to encourage a compact pattern of development in the Village to be developed at the existing village scale

Commercial/Residential District

Purpose: The purpose of this district is to limit sprawl and roadside strip development while promoting open space preservation and historic village settlement patterns by designating areas within the Town for certain kinds of commercial and residential mixed-use growth. These types of developments are encouraged to meet Planned Unit Development requirements, as well as consider physical and environmental limitations, such as flood hazard areas, wildlife habitat, steep slopes and traffic volume and flow.

Description: Allow for commercial and residential mixed-use development in nodes throughout the Commercial/Residential Development areas. Where possible these areas should correspond to parcel boundaries and other physical criteria. Zoning standards for lot size, parking, access and circulation, open space protection and design of structures will need to be developed that are specific to the particular situations in each of the Commercial/Residential Development areas.

Resort – Commercial/Residential

Purpose: Similar to the Commercial/Residential District, but for that area designated for resort and recreational development.

Description: Lands in this district are committed to Commercial and Residential mixed use development as defined above, but are specifically focused on areas designated for resort or recreational development.

Special Resource Areas

The following areas, which are highlighted on the Land Use Plan map, have been identified as Special Resource Areas to be overlaid on the land use districts. These areas should be considered by landowners in their own planning as well as further studied by the Planning Commission to determine if regulatory or non-regulatory approaches are warranted.

High Natural Resource Value: The High Natural Resource Value Areas are comprised of land that links larger patches of habitat within a landscape, allowing the movement migration and dispersal of animals and plants in a larger region. Critical corridor areas highlight those locations along roads or between large blocks of probable contiguous habitat that have been identified by the Vermont Wildlife Habitat Suitability analysis or as probable linkage habitat²¹. Regardless of the land use district, new uses that are proposed must respect the sensitive nature of the system and must be designed to enhance the values of the area.

Productive Rural Lands: Productive Rural Lands are comprised of Wilmington’s working lands and consists of farm, field and forest lands that are being used in a manner that provides an economic benefit. Many of these working lands also provide a scenic backdrop for the community and also serve to maintain contiguous tracts of open space.

Rural Lands should continue to be used for agriculture, forestry, low-intensity recreation and open space. Despite a drop from 2 primary agriculture use of a farms to just 1 (U.S. Census) there has been an some secondary use growth for vineyards and other small agricultural uses. The prime agricultural soils of Wilmington are valuable assets and need protection. Development should be carefully planned to ensure that it does not prevent or infringe upon existing or potentially productive working lands.

Important Wildlife Crossing: In Wilmington bear are found most commonly on the forested mountains on the west side of the Town. During late spring and summer, bear are known to feed on lower elevation vegetation and in wetlands. During this time period, according to the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, there is an active bear crossing on Cold Brook Road where they come down off Haystack to wetlands along Cold Brook. Any uses proposed in this area must respect the sensitive nature of this crossing and be designed to enhance the natural resource value.

²¹ This includes areas in Wilmington and adjacent towns that had medium to high probability of wildlife habitat.

POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

GOAL: To plan development so as to maintain the Town’s characteristic settlement pattern of compact village and rural countryside.

Policy 1: Provide for effective land development opportunities while allowing for innovative land solutions in the Zoning Bylaw

Recommendation 1.1: Review the existing Wilmington zoning and subdivision regulations and propose amendments.

Policy 2: Encourage the Village to continue its role as a viable, friendly, attractive, commercial center with a mix of residential and commercial uses.

Recommendation 2.1: Consider expansion of the Design Review District(s).

Recommendation 2.2: Work on streetscape improvements (street furniture, plantings, sidewalks, lighting, underground utilities, walking paths, and public restrooms) for the Village.

Recommendation 2.3: Place attractive directional signage throughout the Village identifying the Village surroundings for visitors.

Recommendation 2.4: Consider applying for Certified Local Government designation for the Village. (Planning Commission, Selectboard). The CLG program enhances the local government role in preservation by strengthening a community's preservation program and its link with the state historic preservation office (the Vermont Division Historic Preservation)

Policy 3: Encourage higher density commercial growth in the Commercial District.

Recommendation 3.1: Encourage the use of the Town’s Planned Unit Development and cluster development designs for commercial and industrial development in the Commercial District.

Policy 4: Maintain the rural character of the Town outside the Village by encouraging the continued existence of cropland, meadows, pasturelands and forested hillsides and mountains.

Recommendation 4.1: Promote the continued operation of agricultural and forestry enterprises.

Recommendation 4.2: Investigate uses of regulatory and non-regulatory tools, such as conservation easements and purchasing of land, to protect working lands.

Recommendation 4.3: Encourage citizen actions to protect and conserve rural areas. These actions might include: privately-agreed restrictive covenants, formation of or involvement in non-profit conservation or community land trusts, participation in organizations concerned with the future of Wilmington.

Recommendation 4.4: Explore using clustering of buildings and structures as a design tool to provide an appropriate means for conserving open space and natural resources.

Policy 5: Strongly discourage intensive development along highways to minimize “strip development”.

Policy 6: Explore innovative regulatory and non-regulatory efforts for the Special Resource Areas.

Recommendation 6.1: Investigate appropriate performance standards for Special Resource Areas.

Recommendation 6.2: Research and map important wildlife crossing areas.

PHASE II – STRATEGIC PLANNING

Phase II of this Town Plan update, after the immediate re-adoption, will engage community members and town officials in a planning process to assess current town needs and future direction. Plans, goals, and recommendations will be updated and appropriate follow-through and community member engagement for assignments and follow-up made.

The Phase II Strategic Planning process will engage the resources and initiatives that have developed post-Irene. Many of the community action groups started under FEMA planning facilitators continue to this day. Leveraging all of the past initiatives and resources brought into the planning process four years ago will be a foundation on which to build a new and updated Plan.

In addition to leveraging past and current initiatives, the town will draw on a variety of studies completed both in the public and private sector to support a strong and resilient community. Some of those resources identifying scenic resources, natural features, economic opportunities, and flood resiliency recommendations for the town include:

1. Conway School of Landscape Design, Village Master Plan for Wilmington, VT, prepared by Renee LaGue and Kimberly Smith, Spring 2013.
2. A Townscape Analysis, Wilmington, VT, prepared under the direction of John Martin, professor of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning, University of Massachusetts, September 1976. Known as the Amherst Study.
3. V-DAT (Vermont Downtown Action Team) Concept Presentation, Wilmington, VT Sept 2013
4. The Mullin Bi-Town Strategic Economic Development Plan for Dover and Wilmington VT December 2009
5. An Ecological Planning Study for Wilmington and Dover, VT, prepared by Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd, Architects. Landscape Architects, Urban Ecological Planners, Philadelphia, PA, 1972.
6. Wilmington Design District Report, prepared by the Town of Wilmington and the Windham Regional Commission, 1982, revised 1983.
7. Downtown Wilmington Streetscape Scoping Report, DuBois & King, May 21, 2015
8. National Register of Historic Places, Inventory/Nomination Plan, prepared by the Town of Wilmington, 1978-89.

The town will plan for continued development applying the Guiding Principles for Community Revitalization:

Incremental Change - Providing simple, easy approval processes for small, revitalization focused projects

Partnership - Encouraging collaboration between public and private sectors

Leveraging Existing Assets – Building on the wealth of historic and natural qualities of the town
Quality – Highly values solutions such as pedestrian friendly, historically interesting, aesthetically appealing, yet economically viable solutions.

Change – While seeking to preserve the historical value of the towns’ structures, vistas, and natural assets of the community, accommodate the many changes of an evolving community

This phase will require a strong facilitated process, guiding community members and public officials to establish achievable goals and provide a guided follow-up process to ensure goals are completed. With the completion of that process a comprehensive planning and process tracking tool will be developed covering action plans and assigned parties to ensure a complete and comprehensive follow-up on the plans, goals, and recommendations established.

IMPLEMENTING THE TOWN PLAN

Effective implementation of the Plan requires careful consideration and action by the townspeople, the Selectboard, Planning Commission, and other organizations. Managing growth is a conscious process of directing development to appropriate locations and in appropriate ways. The process requires a commitment on the part of a community to set a course for its future and to employ all the tools available to stay on that course. This Town Plan shall provide the framework for managing Wilmington's future growth. Tools and techniques for implementing the Town Plan follow.

1. **Recommendations:** In each of the Elements of the Town Plan a set of steps and responsible parties is included to give various town officials direction in implementing immediate needs in the Town. Setting a schedule for those items in the next five years will guarantee implementation of the Town Plan.
2. **Land Use Regulation:** Land use regulation at the local level is most effective when it is specifically directed to public health and safety, the prohibition of unsuitable uses, the protection of water quality and highly valuable natural resources, and the provision of land use incentives for affordable housing. Wilmington has had zoning since 1968. The Bylaw's recent revisions have been comprehensive with broad updates to the entire Zoning Ordinance, bringing zoning documents up-to-date with current zoning trends and needs.
Subdivision regulations were prepared by the Planning Commission and public hearings held by the Planning Commission and Selectboard in 1990. Because of the negative response from property owners and potentially costly processing expenses for the town and applicants, the proposed regulations were not taken to the voters. Recent requests to look again at subdivision regulations with a goal of increasing the area threshold that triggers Act 250 jurisdiction from 1 acre to 10 acres for Act 250 review (Act 250 currently applies to any development of over 1 acre in Wilmington) will be reviewed. The exemption of additional properties from Act 250 review will ease review burdens on some property owners, but will substantially increase the burden on the town to review and assess impacts upon sensitive natural resources and transportation management currently provided by state resources. Act 250 addresses issues requiring extensive expertise and caution.
3. **Capital Budgeting:** Budgeting provides for control of development pressure by providing public services and facilities according to projected need and the Town's ability to fund improvements. Capital budgeting also increases the efficiency and economy of town government by foreseeing and planning needed capital expenditures well in advance.
4. **Land Acquisition:** The most certain methods for protecting and assuring controlled public use of valuable recreational and scenic lands are by gift, purchase in fee simple, lease, or by acquisition of easements or development rights.
5. **Taxation:** Vermont's Use Value Appraisal Program enables landowners who choose agriculture or forestry as long term uses of their property to have that land taxed accordingly. The Program encourages the maintenance of undeveloped lands for farming, forestry, and/or public recreation. Towns may also provide property tax relief for qualifying farm, forest, and open space landowners by adopting tax stabilization programs to reduce local property tax burden.
6. **Voluntary Action:** The following methods would ensure Plan implementation: (1) privately-agreed restrictive covenants binding on purchasers of land; (2) special attention and consideration given by private landowners to the objectives of the Plan and its policies when they decide to build or subdivide; (3) participation in the Act 250 review process by abutting landowners; (4) participation in the town planning process by individuals and organizations

concerned with the future of Wilmington; and (5) setting aside a percentage of new development for affordable housing.

7. **Coordination with neighboring towns:** Wilmington must continue to take the initiative to work with its neighbors on issues that cross town borders. This is particularly important in dealing with such issues as economic development, transportation, housing, education, and land use.

8. **Conservation Commission**

The Planning Commission should investigate the benefits of establishing Conservation Commission as outlined in Chapter 118, 24 VSA, and prepare a report of its findings for the Selectboard and residents.

TOWN PLAN MAPS AND EXPLANATIONS

A portfolio of maps is available for examination at the Wilmington Town Offices. These maps were prepared by the staff of Windham Regional Commission under direction of the Wilmington Planning Commission. Smaller scale maps are attached as part of this Plan.

The maps were prepared to show where and how Town Plan policies should influence future land use and development in Wilmington. Together with Town Plan policies, these maps will be used by the Planning Commission as a guide for appropriate bylaws and other measures necessary to implement this Plan.

The Planning Commission recognizes that these maps may be subject to inaccuracy and misleading interpretations when applied to small parcels of land. If this is kept in mind by landowners, these maps will be useful when making preliminary decisions about the use of land, and its potential for development. These maps, however, should not be depended upon as the only basis for investment and development decisions. Specific situations may call for a more detailed site survey and/or studies. The Planning Commission and the Windham Regional Commission disclaim any liability for losses incurred through inappropriate or improper use of these maps.

Note: the following maps are from the 2010 Town Plan. They have not been updated for the re-adoption, but will be addressed in the continuing process of conducting a full update of the Plan.

- Proposed Land Use (Land Use Plan; Land Use Districts and Special Resource Areas)
- Existing Land Use By Parcel, 2005 (map produced July 2009)
- Community Facilities and Utilities (April 2010)
- Transportation System (February 2010)
- Natural Resources (August 2010)