

WILMINGTON TOWN PLAN

Adopted
September 15, 2010

PLANNING COMMISSION

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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 by Act 250 (10 VSA § 6000, *et seq.*) and § 248 (30 VSA § 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 and Selectboard, with advice from town counsel if deemed appropriate. Except where specifically defined as below or in the Definition Section of 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.

As might be expected, 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.)

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 Hoosic 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



Figure 2: A view of Mountain Mills

railroad provided a ready means to export these logs and timber products to other areas.

Inevitably, the 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: 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 on-site water and sewer arose.

Wilmington History 1955 – Present

Haystack

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. As of this writing of this Town Plan the Haystack Ski Area is not in operation.

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.

Snowmobile Trails

A 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 time.

The Creemee Stand

In 1998 Gene's Creemee Stand – a Wilmington village staple drive-in ice cream shop on Route 9, closed after 50 years in our community. Gene's Creemee Stand was a popular summer destination for decades in the downtown area. One could drive by on any hot summer day and see a long line of kids eagerly waiting for their giant servings of ice cream.

Restaurants

Wilmington is, and for a long time has been, a very attractive destination for good restaurants. Currently there are many fine dining establishments. 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.

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. Having a reliable public transportation system greatly improved local mobility and has been of tremendous benefit to residents throughout the greater Deerfield Valley area.

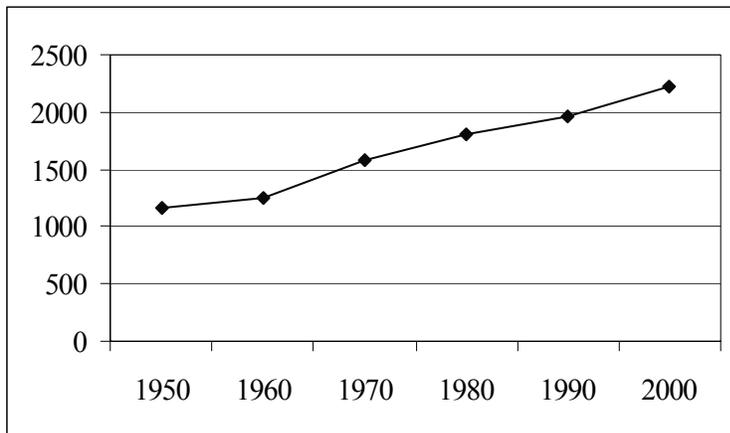
Firetower

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 Firetower 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.

Population Growth and Projections

Overall, Wilmington’s population has steadily increased since 1950, as shown in Figure 1. 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.

Figure 4: Historical Population Data for Wilmington



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

The US Census Bureau estimated Wilmington’s 2007 population as 2,355. This is an increase of 130 since the 2000 Census.

Figure 5 shows Wilmington’s growth as compared with data from its neighboring towns. The Town of Dover was the fastest growing neighboring town. Halifax had the second largest percent change.

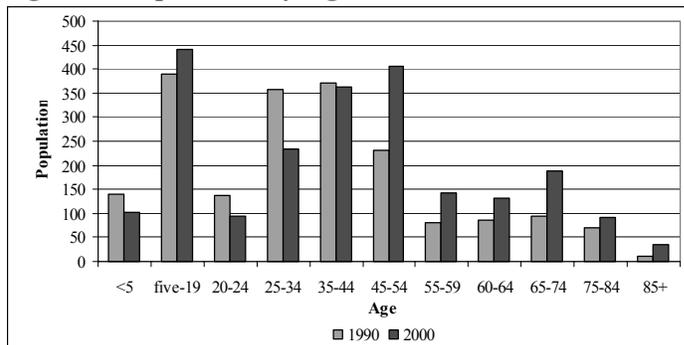
Figure 5: Population Trends in Nearby Towns

<i>Town</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>Percent Change</i>	<i>Actual Change</i>
Wilmington	1,968	2,225	13.1	257
Dover	994	1,410	41.9	416
Halifax	588	782	33.0	194
Marlboro	924	978	5.8	54
Readsboro	762	809	6.2	47
Searsburg	85	96	12.9	11
Whitingham	1,177	1,298	10.3	121

Age Distribution

According to the 2000 US Census, the median age population in Vermont is increasing. This is also true in Wilmington where the median age in 1990 was 34 and 41.9 in 2000. The State’s median age in 2000 was 37.7.

Figure 6: Population by Age Cohort



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

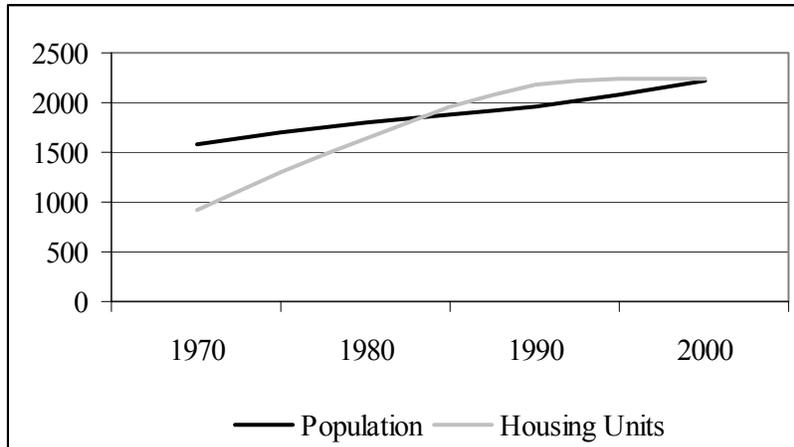
Figure 6 shows the current distribution of Wilmington’s residents by age. The following observations can be made from the data:

- There has been a significant increase in the population of people who will likely enter retirement within the next ten years (those ages 45-59).
- There has been a substantial decrease in the number of young adults (ages 25-34) residing in Wilmington.
- The senior population (those over 65) is growing.

Housing

During the period from 1970 through 2000, 1,315 new housing units were built in Wilmington. Since 1990, housing unit growth has slowed. 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.

Figure 7: Population Growth vs. Housing Growth in Wilmington

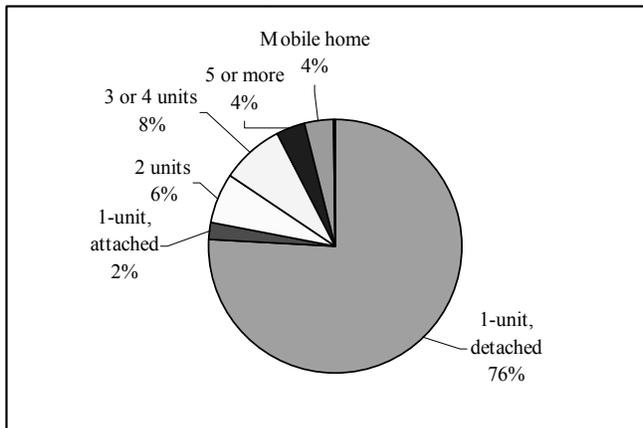


U.S. Census data on local permits estimates that an additional 254 housing units were granted permits between 2000 and 2007. Fifty of the 254 units were reported to be in multi-family buildings. (Vermont Housing Data, www.housingdata.org)

Vacation or seasonal homes account for over half (52.2%) of the total housing stock. Wilmington's vacation/seasonal housing supply decreased from 1990 to 2000 by 102 units. The likely cause of this is the conversion of this type of housing to permanent year-round housing.

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

Figure 8: Housing Types in Wilmington, 2000



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Income and Economy

The median household incomes in Wilmington, as reported in the U.S. Census, rose 38 % from 1990 to 2000 (\$37,396) According to the Vermont Department of taxes the median adjusted gross income for families in Wilmington in 2007 was \$47,571. Figure 9 shows 2007 data in relationship to the surrounding towns, Windham County and the State of Vermont.

Figure 9: Median Family Adjusted Gross Income, 2007¹

Town/Area	2007
Marlboro	\$63,066
Whitingham	\$51,834
Dover	\$51,818
Wilmington	\$47,571
Readsboro	\$42,584
Searsburg	\$27,054
Windham County	\$50,903
State of Vermont	\$57,433

Source: Vermont Department of Taxes

The Vermont Department of Employment and Training publishes a study called “Covered Employment and Wages”. According to that study, in 2008 there were a reported 157 businesses in Wilmington, employing a total of 1036 people, with annual average wages² of \$27,630. Figure 10 shows the types and diversity of business in Wilmington in 2008. 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.

¹ The median measure of adjusted gross incomes from the Vermont State tax forms of families, including those filing as Married filing jointly, Civil union filing jointly, Head of household, and Widow(er) with dependent children.

² Annual Average Wage is a figure computed from total wages and average employment (total annual wages/annual average employment). It is an average of aggregate data.

Figure 10: Wilmington Covered Employment (Source: VT Department of Labor, Economic and Labor Market Information, 2008)

Industry	Establishments
Retail Trade	32
Construction	26
Accommodation and Food Services	21
Professional and business services	17
Other services, except public administration	10
Education and Health Services	8
Real Estate Rental and Leasing	7
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	5
Local Government	6
Manufacturing	5
Wholesale Trade	4
Transportation	5
Finance and Insurance	4
Publishing and Telecommunications	4
Agricultural and Forestry	1
Utilities	1
Federal Government	1

Wilmington’s economic base strongly relies on the recreation industry with the majority of employers associated with hospitality and tourism. Mount Snow is the largest employer in the Deerfield Valley. They currently employ over 505 full-time staff during the winter season and over 200 full-time, year round workers.

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.³

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.

³ 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 decline slightly until spring again.⁴"

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.

Other 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).⁵ 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 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

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

5 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 sightings 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 and 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.

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 One⁶ and Class Two⁷ wetlands are considered significant by the State of Vermont and are shown on the Vermont Significant Wetland Inventory Map.⁸ Currently, there are no Class One wetlands and 533 acres of Class Two wetlands in the Town of Wilmington. Class Three⁹ 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

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 needs.

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 silvacultural¹⁰ management do not require state or federal

⁶ **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.

⁷ **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

⁸ http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec//waterq/wetlands/htm/wl_vermontsigwetinvmaps.htm

⁹ **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.

¹⁰ Silviculture is the growing and tending of trees and forests.

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 areas¹¹, 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 Well Head Protection Areas. Within the Town of Wilmington 17 springs, 7 bedrock wells and 2 gravel wells which supply water for the 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

¹¹ <http://www.fema.gov/hazard/flood/info.shtm>

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 trout and warm water species.

The black bear is native to Vermont and primarily found in remote, forested habitat. In

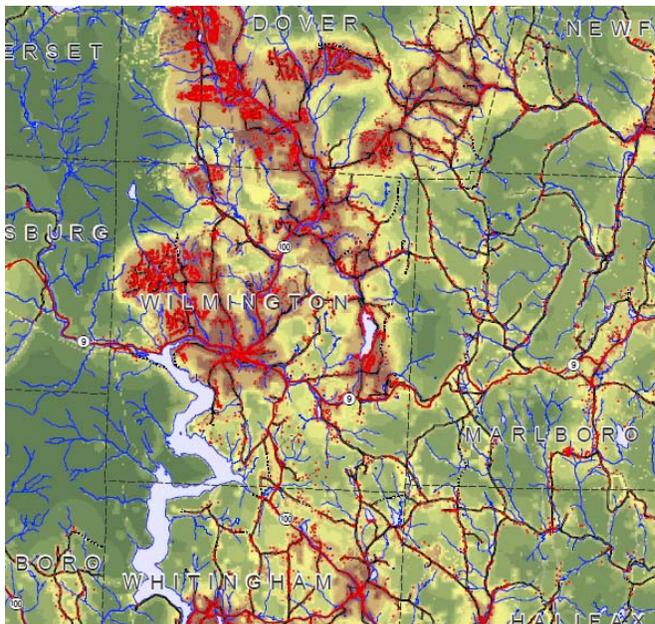


Figure 11: Wildlife Habitat Suitability

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 rare¹² plant species and one occurrence of a threatened¹³ 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.

Agricultural Resources

The US Department of Agriculture Soil 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.

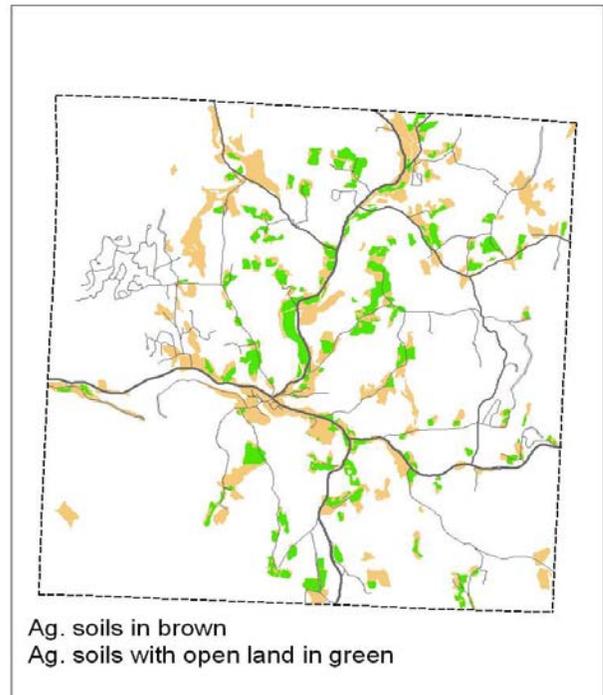


Figure 12: Agricultural Soils

Wilmington has scattered pockets of agricultural soils that could be classified as either prime (390 acres or 1.5 % of town) or statewide (3185 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

¹² A rare species is one that has only a few populations in the state and that faces threats to its continued existence in Vermont

¹³ 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,

materials; serving as an educational resource; and contributing to the rural character of the Town. According to the Town of Wilmington records, in 2009 Wilmington had a total of 365.5 acres classified as Agricultural land enrolled in the Use Value Appraisal Program. For Agricultural land to be eligible, participating owners must have a minimum of 25 contiguous (not counting the 2 acres surrounding any dwelling) acres to enroll in the program or 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 sugarbushes, 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.

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, also serve as an important visual resource for the Town. Likewise, the spruce-fir forest west of Lake Raponda is a special natural area.

According to the Town of Wilmington's records, in 2009 Wilmington had a total of 2,462 acres classified as forest land enrolled in the Use Value Appraisal Program (also known as Current Use). 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.

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 2500 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.
- Well-head protection areas: These areas are mapped by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources¹⁴ 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.
- 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.

¹⁴ <http://www.anr.state.vt.us/DEC/watersup/swapp.htm>

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, 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. (Planning Commission)

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

Recommendation 1.3: Encourage burial of utility lines whenever feasible. (Planning Commission, Selectboard)

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 impact 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. (Planning Commission)

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. (Planning Commission)

Recommendation 3.2: Strictly regulate development in aquifer recharge and significant groundwater areas and protect these areas from development that will contaminate these resources. (Planning Commission, DRB)

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

Recommendation 3.4: All development in floodways or flood hazard zones areas is subject to Wilmington Flood Hazard Regulations. (DRB)

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. (Planning Commission)

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. (Planning Commission, DRB)

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 (Planning Commission)

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. (Selectboard)

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. (Planning Commission, Conservation Commission once established)

Recommendation 7.3: Consider creating buffer strips around natural areas to preserve their value for education, science, research, aesthetics and recreation. (Planning Commission, Conservation Commission once established)

Recommendation 7.4: Identify and protect deeryards, wildlife corridors, waterfowl habitat, rare and endangered plants and animals. (Planning Commission, Conservation Commission once established)

Recommendation 7.5: Develop criteria to evaluate natural areas of the town for protection through regulations, purchase or other non-regulatory means. (Planning Commission, Conservation Commission once established)

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. (Planning Commission, Conservation Commission once established)

Recommendation 8.2: Develop guidelines or regulations to discourage fragmentation of large tracts of forest, agricultural and resource lands. (Planning Commission, Conservation Commission once established)

Recommendation 8.3: Support efforts to protect agricultural and forest resources through purchase or other non-regulatory means. (Planning Commission, Conservation Commission once established, Selectboard)

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. (Conservation Commission once established)

Recommendation 9.2: Develop a method to evaluate environmental and economic impacts and benefits from gravel extraction operations. (Planning Commission, Conservation Commission once established)

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 site rehabilitation that emphasizes health and safety concerns, environmental conditions, and scenic qualities. (Planning Commission)

TRANSPORTATION

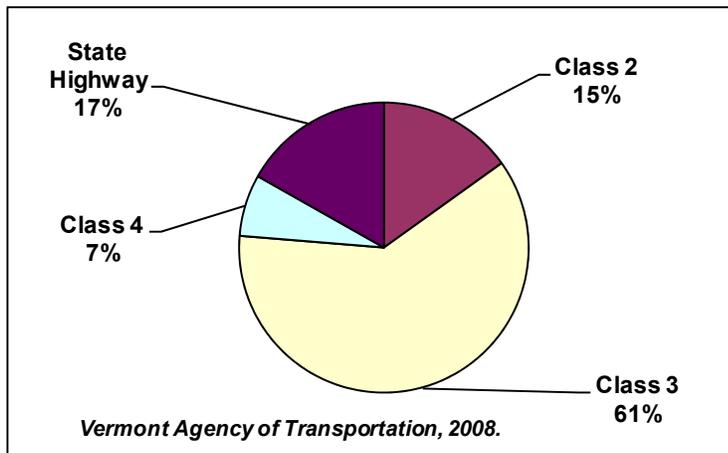
Existing Transportation System

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 are not mapped on the VTrans Highway Maps.

In response to Act 178 which requires municipalities to identify "ancient roads"¹⁵ 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.

¹⁵ An ancient road is a right-of-way not otherwise clearly observable by physical evidence of their use as a highway or trail.

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.

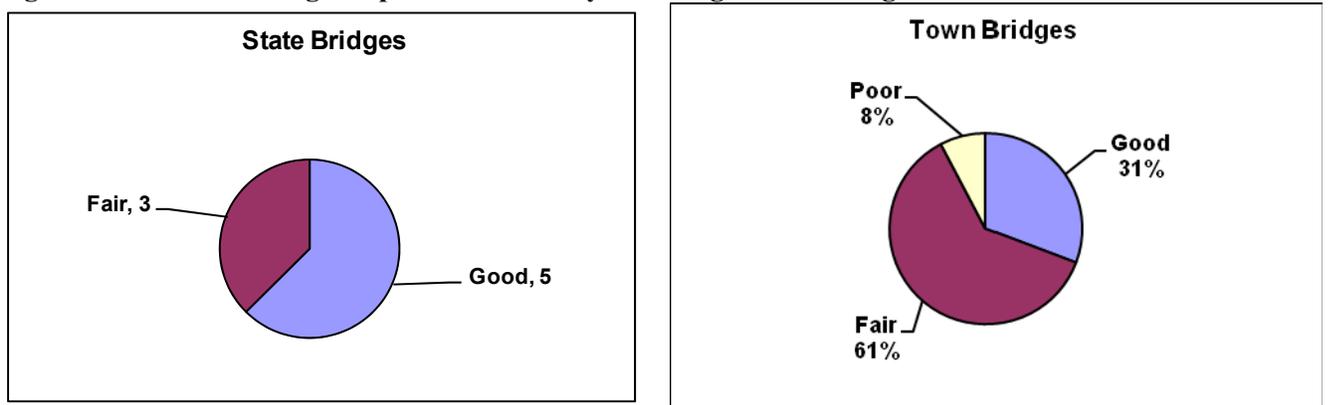
Much interest in the scenic value of Town roads has been expressed by residents. Concerns over Town road standards in relation to scenic quality have also arisen. There is a general recognition that safe, well-maintained roads with scenic attractive road sides represent a valuable economic asset. The 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 Transportation 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.

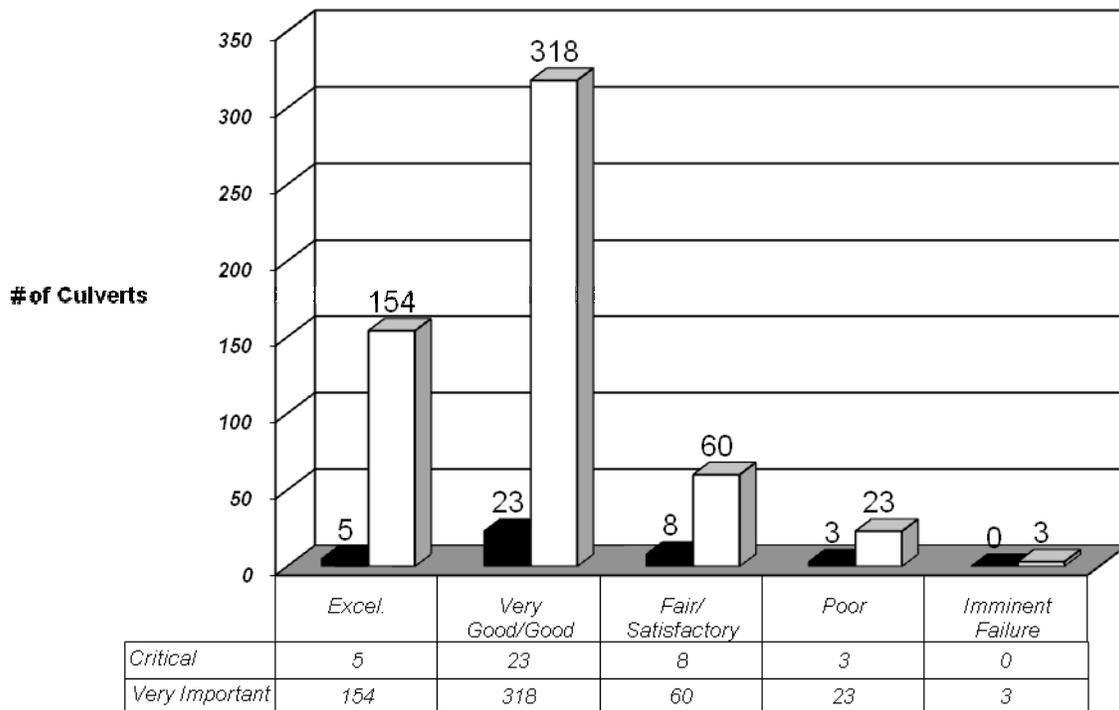
The following table is on the condition of the 8 state and 13 town bridges in Wilmington. The rating system is based on the National Bridge Inspection/Inventory scale, which was last carried out by the Vermont Agency of Transportation in 2007.

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



In 2005, though a project funded by the Windham Regional Commission, culvert data was collected for sites throughout the Town of Wilmington and were rated by condition and importance to road function. The results are summarized in the following chart.

Figure 15: 2005 Culvert Infrastructure for the Town of Wilmington



Importance of Culvert to Road Function

Windham Regional Commission and Town of Wilmington 2005

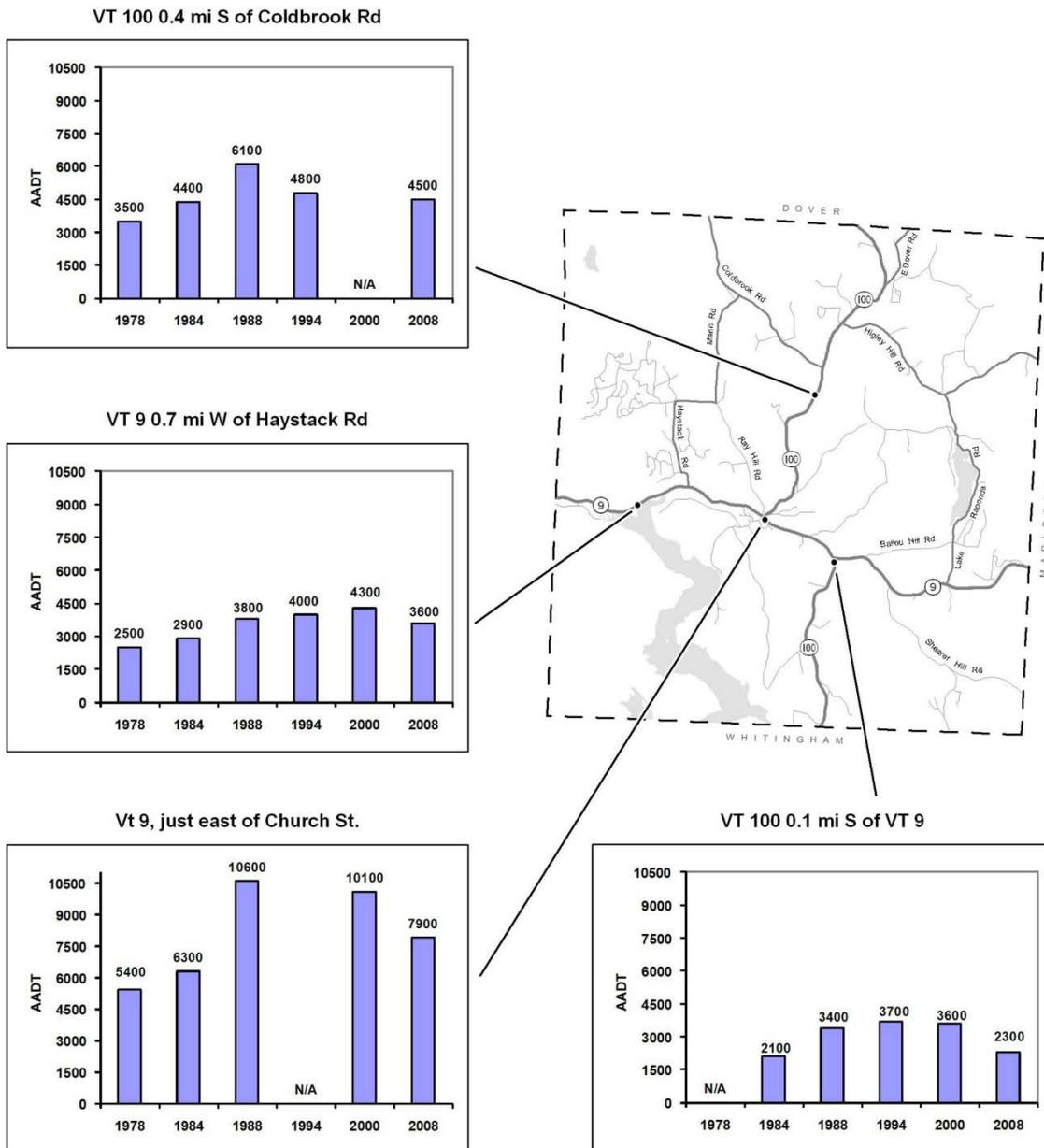
This chart indicates the impact that the condition of poor and failing culverts have upon the roadways and hydrology of the town of Wilmington. Of the culverts that were critical to road function, 3 were identified as poor and 0 were identified as either critical or imminent failure. This means that about 7.5 % of culverts that are critical to road function were in poor or impaired condition in 2005. Of those culverts that are very important to road function 26 were identified as in poor condition or critical/imminent failure. On an ongoing basis the town addresses these culvert problems including those identified in 2005.

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 charts¹⁶ 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.

¹⁶ Vermont Agency of Transportation, Automatic Traffic Recorder Station History 1975 – 2008.

Figure 16 Traffic Counts in Wilmington



Feb. 2010: Windham Regional Commission
 c:\Towns\Wilmington\Maps\TP_Trans_traffic.mxd

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".

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.

Currently proposed by VTrans for the VT 9/100 intersection is a left hand turn lane from VT 9 east to 100 North and the movement of the sidewalk to the outside of the bridge. The project, as planned, will improve the level of service at this intersection, which is currently considered a failed intersection.

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 parenthesis 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. Mirrors should be installed to facilitate sight lines.

Wilmington Village

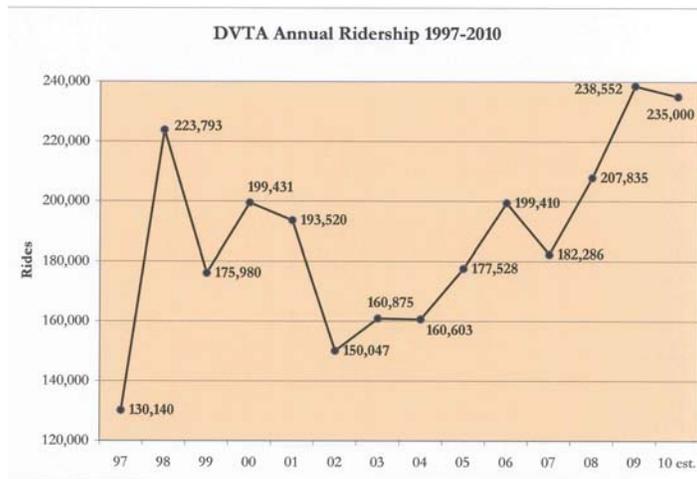
- Uncontrolled access to a number of businesses creates unsafe situations for pedestrians and motorists.
- Village pedestrian facilities are satisfactory for the most part, but lacking continuity and adequate width in several places.
- There is no apparent gateway to the Village at either end.
- The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

Alternative Transportation

Public Transportation

A public bus service, known as the MOOver, is operated by Deerfield Valley Transit Association

Figure 17 DVTA Ridership (Source: DVTA, 2010)



(DVTA) and serves riders free of charge along the VT 100 corridor from 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 in the process of developing 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.

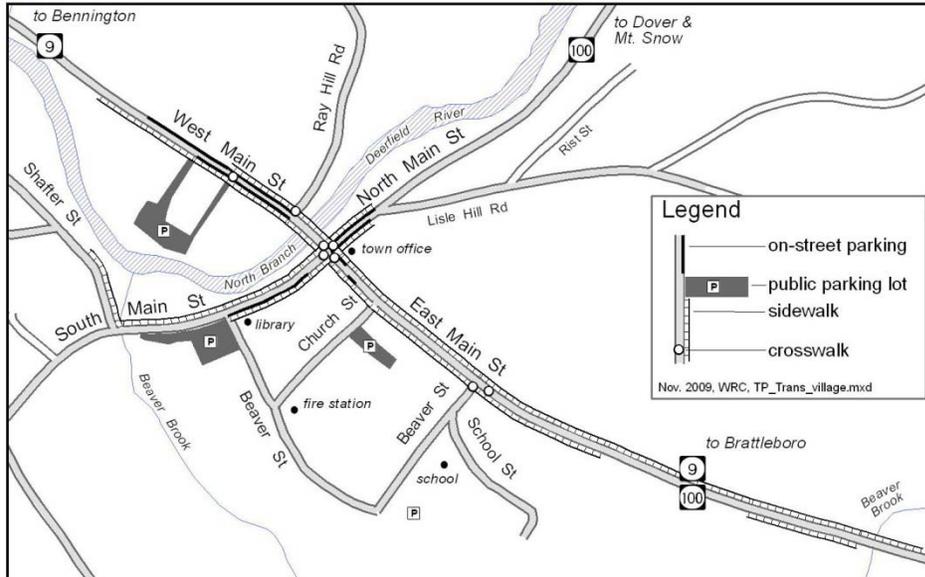
Air Transportation

Limited air transportation for private planes is available at the small airstrip in the adjoining town of Dover.

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 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.

Figure 18 Sidewalks



The Wilmington Trails Committee has been working on various new trails; among them are trails near Lake Raponda, up Lisle Hill and a new trail from Shearer Hill to the Mt. Olga firetower. In the future the Trails Committee would also like to work on establishing the HTW and the Valley Trail. The proposed HTW hardpack gravel trail will run from the Barnboard Factory to the boat ramp along Fairview Avenue.

Wilmington has a wealth and variety of private and public recreation trail networks. There are also hiking trails on Green Mountain National Forest (to Haystack Peak) and Molly Stark State Forest (to Mount Olga) and snowmobile trails, many maintained by the Vermont Assn. of Snow Travelers, which exist on mostly private land. Other public trails, particularly for transportation purposes, are limited to about six miles of Class IV Town road and two miles of town trail. Sometimes people perceive that a Class IV road or Town Trail is not important by virtue of its classification. However, increasing utilization of these town resources make it apparent that these resources must be retained, especially for future generations.

Parking

The need for additional parking in the Village continues to be a concern for the Town. Town officials have been working to solve this issue and have also begun working with the Windham Regional Commission to establish a Park & Ride lot in the Town. The economic health of the Town can be greatly enhanced by addressing additional parking in the village.

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 curbcuts, 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 a form 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

GOAL: To Provide for Safe, Convenient, Economical and Energy Efficient Transportation Systems.

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. (Selectboard and Road Commissioner)

Recommendation 1.2: Avoid unnecessary new road intersections or curb cuts by encouraging shared driveway accesses and zoning. (Selectboard, Planning Commission)

Recommendation 1.3: Research and consider developing access management guidelines. (Town Manager, Road Commissioner and Planning Commission)

Recommendation 1.4: Encourage developers to anticipate road connections to coordinate with future development. (Planning Commission)

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. (Selectboard and Planning Commission)

Recommendation 2.2: Encourage the State to continue monitoring the traffic patterns in the Village. (Selectboard, Road Commissioner and Town Manager)

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. (Wilmington Trail Committee, Selectboard and Planning Commission)

Recommendation 3.2: Plan and develop additional off-street parking, with appropriate signage along the riverside off West Main Street. (Selectboard and Planning Commission)

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. (Selectboard)

Recommendation 4.2: Encourage the development of transportation systems with neighboring communities (Planning Commission and Selectboard)

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 and the Fire Station are 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 Raconda. 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 the Congregational 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

Most of Wilmington is served by Green Mountain Power. The southeastern part of Town is serviced by Central Vermont Public Service (CVPS).

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

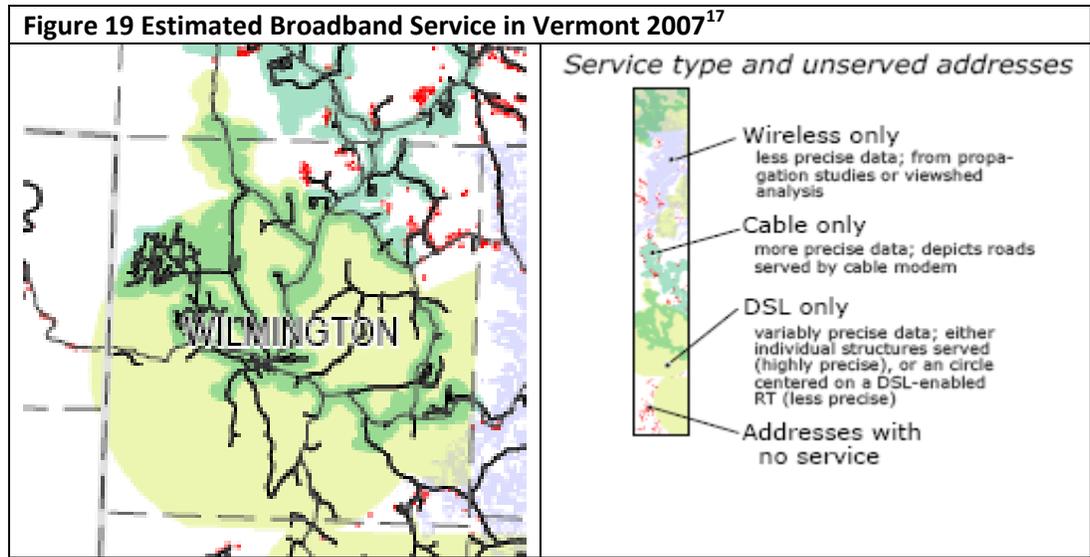
Telephone Service

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

As of 2010, wireless service is available in many parts of Wilmington and signal quality is unreliable in others. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 preserved state and local regulatory authority for the placement, construction or modification of wireless facilities. Wilmington has enacted an ordinance regulating the construction of telecommunication facilities.

Internet Access and Broadband

Dial-up Internet services are available through a variety of local and national providers. Broadband technologies such as DSL, cable modem, or wireless access are shown in Figure 19. As presented to the Vermont Public Service Board, FairPoint Communications was expected to extend broadband availability to over 80 percent of current customers by 2010 as well as ensuring that half of its local exchanges will have 100 percent coverage; however, financial difficulties have interfered. Businesses are starting to offer free wireless access for their customers.



Cable Television

As of 2010, Duncan Cable is the current provider of cable television service for the Town of Wilmington.

Library

The Pettee Memorial Library is in an historic building located on South Main Street in Wilmington Village. Currently, the library has an approximate annual circulation of 15,000 items borrowed and a total of 2300 members. The Library is open Monday thru Saturday, during selected hours and offers a large book collection as well as a wide variety of additional resources including internet access heavily used by the public.

Education

Elementary Education

Elementary education in Wilmington (pre-K through grade 5) is provided at the Deerfield Valley Elementary School. The Windham Southwest Supervisory Union provides administrative, curriculum, and personnel support for a number of school districts, including Wilmington.

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

Figure 20: Total School Enrollment

	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Total School Enrollment	173	164	169	155	164

(Source: Vermont Department of Education School Report)

¹⁷ Data on broadband service areas is from the Vermont Department of Public Service’s GIS files. Current to December 2007. These data provide estimates of areas with broadband service. Some data are quite precise (such as individual addresses) while others are less precise (such as viewshed analysis from an antenna to simulate wireless service).

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 schools. Twin Valley Middle School, which serves students in grades 6-8 from Whitingham and Wilmington, is located in the same building as Whitingham Elementary School. Twin Valley High School, where students in grades 9-12 attend, is located in Wilmington. Middle and high school education is overseen by the Twin Valley School Board, consisting of 5 school directors, 3 of which are representatives from Wilmington.

Figure 21: Middle and High School Enrollment

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

(Source: Vermont Department of Education School Report)

The Twin Valley High School building faces numerous structural limitations which affect, not only the health and well being of the students and staff who occupy the building on a daily basis, but also the quality of the education program. The Twin Valley High School District has been actively studying various options to address the aging facility.

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.

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.

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 2000, 22.2% (480) of the population is under the age of 18 with 4.5% (101) under the age of five. In 1990, 7.1% (140) of the population was under age five. In 2000, 597 families resided in Wilmington with 43.2 % (258) of these families having children under the age of 18. The following chart summarizes some of the statistics in relation to the 258 families that have children under the age of 18:

Figure22: Families with Children under the age of 18 in Wilmington

	Family Units with Children	Percentage of Families	Actual # of families
	Under 6 years only	18.2%	47
	6 to 17 years old only	67.8%	175
	In both categories (under 6 and 6 to 17 years)	14.0%	36
Total of families with children under the age of 18		100%	258

(Source: 2000 US Census)

Of the families with children under 18, 20.5% were female headed households. The percentage in Wilmington is larger than the Vermont (19%) and smaller than the Windham County (22%) average. Although there has been a decrease in the number of children under the age of 5 there has been an increase in the number of residents since 1990. In addition, compared to the national average, Vermont has a larger percentage of women in the work force.¹⁸ If these trends continue it is likely there will be more working parents moving to Wilmington and a possible increase in the number of families needing child care.

As of February 2010 the Vermont Department for Children and Families Bright Futures Child Care Information System reported that there were three registered child care homes in Wilmington. In addition, there is one licensed program at the Deerfield Valley Elementary School and Wings program provides academic services after the school day. There are also licensed providers and registered child care homes in neighboring towns.

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

¹⁸ Windham County, Vermont Child Care Needs Assessment, June 2002, pg 9.

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
- boat
- bowl
- cross country ski
- fish
- golf
- hike
- ice skate
- picnic
- play tennis
- snow mobile
- snow shoe
- swim
- walk

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 Village.

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

- The Town Common
- Buzzy Towne Park
- Green Mountain Beach at Lake Raponda and boat launch
- Lake Whitingham which has several access points:
- Wards Cove
- Oxbow
- Maynard's Access
- Mountain Mills
- Boat launch
- Medburyville picnic area

The Wilmington Trails committee also works on building, maintaining, and adding signage to many hiking and biking trails throughout Wilmington. The Wilmington Trails committee has created and maintained trail loops at Lake Raponda, near the Town Common and is in the process of building two new trail systems. Currently, they are also actively working on obtaining landowner permissions to complete the Wilmington portion of the Valley Trail which would connect from Mount Snow in West Dover to Route 9 in Wilmington.

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. (Town Manager, Administrative Assistant and Zoning Administrator)

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. (Administrative Assistant)

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.

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. (School Boards)

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

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 development.

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. (Planning Commission)

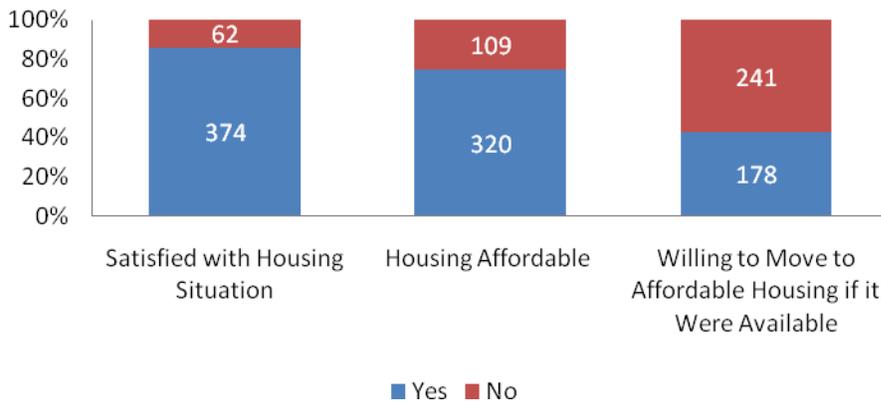
HOUSING

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.

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: Affordable Housing

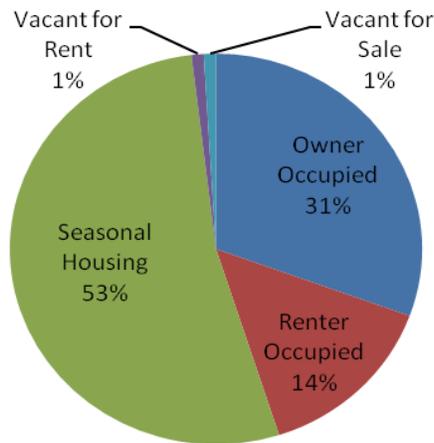


In 2000, the U.S. Census documented that 2,225 people lived in Wilmington and in 2007 the population was estimated to be 2,355. Between 1990 and 2000, the Town’s population increased by 257 people, a 13% increase. For additional information and statistics about housing in Wilmington, see the Community 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 24: Housing Occupancy Levels



Source: 2000 US Census

Housing Affordability

The generally accepted standard for housing affordability defines housing as "affordable" if the household is paying no more than 30% of its income for rent and utilities or for mortgage, taxes and insurance. This standard may be too high when considering the rising costs of other necessities, such as health care, fuel and child care, but it remains the basis for defining "affordable housing."

There are several factors that have contributed to these increased housing costs, including higher costs of labor and building supplies, costs related to building permits, and costs related to providing waste and water systems and utilities that meet applicable standards. An additional factor which made a significant contribution toward high housing costs in the late 1980's and that is still felt today¹⁹ is the inflationary effect caused by the demand for second homes in Vermont by non-residents.

The hourly wage a household must earn in order to afford a rental unit at Fair Market Rent²⁰ and only pay 30% of its income towards housing costs varies depending on the number of bedrooms in a unit. Proposed Fair Market Rent in 2010, for a two bedroom unit in Windham County,²¹ is

19 However, at the writing of this plan (in 2010) there is uncertainty of the effect of the economic down turn on Vermont housing prices. Footnote source: Vermont Housing Council. "Between a Rock and a Hard Place" 2009 edition.

20 Fair Market Rent is the 40th percentile and what is commonly used by US Housing and Urban Development's (HUD). Median rent would be the 50th percentile.

21 HUD calculates county values only.

\$930²². This monthly cost requires a renter to earn an hourly wage of \$17.89²³ (assuming a 40 hour work week) to afford. This would equal an annual income of \$37,211. Figure 25 helps put the affordability gap for rental units in perspective.

Figure 25: Occupational Wage Estimates for the Southern part of Vermont, 2008

Occupation	Mean Hourly Wage	Mean Annual Wage
Recreational Workers	\$14.59	\$30,350
Cooks, Restaurant	\$12.84	\$26,710
Maids and Housekeeping Workers	\$10.79	\$22,450
Child Care Workers	\$10.23	\$21,280
Police and Sheriff Patrols	\$17.27	\$35,920
Carpenters	\$17.67	\$36,760
Elementary School Teachers	N/A	\$48,370
Healthcare Practitioners and technical occupations	\$30.22	\$62,850

Source: Vermont Department of Labor (<http://www.vtmi.info/occupation.cfm>)

According to the Vermont Department of Taxes, the median purchase price for a primary residence in Wilmington in 2008 (based on 14 homes sold) was \$155,950, and the average price was \$181,439²⁴. To purchase a primary residence at the median price, an annual household income of \$48,482 would be needed.²⁵ The median household income for a family of four in Wilmington for 2009 is \$61,800 a year according to the 2009 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development database; however, in 2006 the median family adjusted gross income was \$44,568²⁶.

Wilmington continues to have a high number of vacation homes, usually with the cost much higher than a home bought for a primary residence. The median purchase price for a vacation home was \$245,000, and the average price was \$291,046 (based on 51 vacation homes sold).

22 HUD estimates the Fair Market Rent (FMR) by bedroom size annually for metropolitan areas and no metropolitan counties. FMRs are gross rent estimates. They include the shelter rent plus the cost of all utilities, except telephones.

23 The housing wage is calculated by National Low Income Housing Coalition in their annual report entitled Out Of Reach. The housing wage is the hourly wage a household must earn while working 40 hours a week to afford a rental housing unit at HUD's Fair Market Rent (FMR) and only pay 30% of its income towards housing costs. 30% of income is the federal standard of affordability.

<http://www.housingdata.org/profile/meta.php?profile=main&item=hwa2&town=025105>

24 The median price of primary residences sold is the middle of selling price of all primary residences sold in ascending order for the given year.

25 This has been calculated using the Vermont Housing Data online Home Mortgage Calculator (www.housingdata.org). It assumes a 5% down payment, average interest rates, average property taxes, average property and private mortgage insurance premiums, average closing costs, and that a homebuyer can afford to spend 30% of their income for housing expenses.

26 The median measure of adjusted gross incomes from the Vermont State tax forms of families, including those filing as Married filing jointly, Civil union filing jointly, Head of household, and Widow(er) with dependent children.

In addition to home prices rising, homeownership costs are also increasing. According to Vermont Department of Public Service's Fuel Price Report in August 2009, No. 2 Fuel Oil (commonly used for home heating) was on average \$2.38 per gallon. This is about \$2.00 less expensive than it was in August 2008. Although this year has seen a decrease in price, No 2 Fuel Oil has seen an overall upward climb over the years, never being under \$2.00 per gallon since 2004.

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 2000 Census indicated that of the 322 householders living alone, 79 of them (25%), were over the age of 65. There were 53 single female heads of household (5 % of households) in Wilmington in 2000, who had children living with them under 18 years of age.²⁷

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.

Affordable Housing Programs

Currently, housing affordability in Wilmington is addressed through regional programs. The Windham Housing Trust has created and manages affordable housing through a variety of programs that serve low and moderate income residents. They have 7 units of affordable housing at the Laterre House in downtown Wilmington as well as the Roundhouse on Shafter Street and 33 units in nearby Dover, with 4 affordable condos.

Windham Housing Trust can also provide income-eligible homebuyers with a subsidy towards the purchase of a qualifying home. In addition, 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) builds simple, affordable, houses together in partnership with families in need, one (1) has been built in Wilmington and one (1) more is planned to be built in 2010.

Housing Needs

It is important to assure that existing and future town residents and the workforce are served by a range of housing opportunities.

²⁷ The US Census does not report information on single male head of household with children under 18.

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 (*Housing Advisory Committee*)

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

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. (*Housing Advisory Commission*)

Recommendation 4.2: Evaluate and inventory possible locations for development of community and senior housing close to community and commercial services. (*Housing Advisory Commission*)

Recommendation 4.3: Support efforts to provide affordable housing for low and moderate income and senior residents. (*Selectboard, Planning Commission*)

Recommendation 4.4: Encourage private developers to participate in building community housing. (*Selectboard, Planning Commission*).

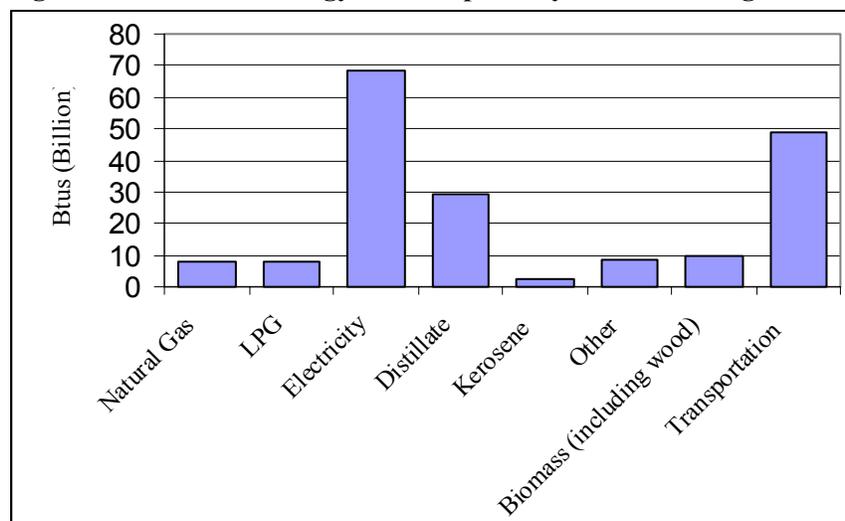
ENERGY

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, 2006



(Source: Energy Information Administration)

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 2000 Census, 55% of homes in Wilmington were primarily heated with fuel oil or kerosene. Other home heating sources include LP Gas (23%), wood (15%), electricity (6%), 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.

In 2000 the average energy cost per home in Vermont was \$861. Since that time, fuel prices have shown a steady increase giving way to record growth in prices beginning in late 2007 continuing into 2008 where gasoline reached its highest national average retail price.²⁸

As a rural state, Vermont continues to show a reliance on petroleum based fuels with a high number of vehicle miles traveled. The U.S. Department of Transportation estimated the per capita vehicle miles traveled in Vermont was 12,379 in 2005. A majority of all workers who live in the Town commute to work with an average commute time of 19 minutes. The U.S. Bureau of the Census (2000) reports that 915 people commute to work alone and 116 carpool, for a total of 1,031 commuting vehicles.

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
Elec – Municipal Bldg.	\$7,000	\$10,402	\$6,378
Oil – Town Garage	\$4,000	\$4,835	\$12,172
Elec – Town Garage	\$2,700	\$2,817	\$2,659
Equipment – gasoline & diesel fuel	\$16,000	\$25,679	\$90,842
Subtotal	\$29,700	\$43,733	\$112,051
Wilmington Schools			
Utilities	\$104,796	\$125,500	No breakdown
Subtotal²⁹	\$134,496	\$169,233	\$112,051
TOTAL	\$134,496	\$169,412	\$112,051 (partial)

Source: Wilmington Town Reports

Energy Sources

The majority of the Town of Wilmington is serviced by Green Mountain Power. The southeastern portion of the Town is serviced by Central Vermont Public Service (CVPS). 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

²⁸ *Utility Facts 2008*, Vermont Department of Public Service

²⁹ This subtotal does not account for school transportation costs as it is contracted out and fuel costs are a part of the overall fee

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.³⁰ 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

While Wilmington does have elevations greater than 2000; ridgelines above 2500 feet have State restrictions that would add to the difficulty in developing these wind resources. Currently, there is a wind generating facility in Searsburg with ten functioning windmills. As of the writing of this plan another larger commercial wind facility in Searsburg and Readsboro is planned. The project has received the necessary State permits, but has not yet received the Federal permits required to build on National Forest Service land.

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

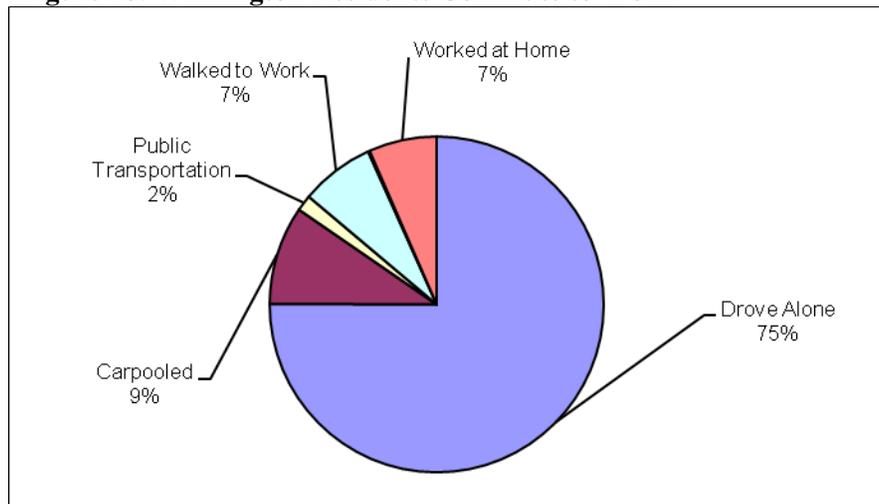
30 Vermont Residential Fuel Wood Assessment 1997-1998, Vermont Department of Public Service, December 2000.

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.³¹

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, Wardsboro, Readsboro, and Whitingham.

Figure 28: Wilmington Residents Commute to Work



(Source: 2000 U.S. Census)

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:

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

- 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.encyvermont.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://encyvermont.com/pages/Residential/SavingEnergy/HomePerformanceWithENERGYST/HomePerformanceFinancing/>
- Vermont Housing Finance Authority's Energy Saver Loan Program -Administered by Windham 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, which they 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. (Planning Commission).

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. (Town Energy Coordinator)

Recommendation 2.2: Evaluate 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. (Planning Commission)

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 and water power. (Town Energy Coordinator)

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

Recommendation 3.3: Continue to carry out energy audits of all municipal buildings on an appropriate time scale. (Town Energy Coordinator, Town Manager and Selectboard)

Recommendation 3.4: Support car-pooling, public transportation (Moover), and van-pooling initiatives and programs. (Town Energy Coordinator)

Recommendation 3.5: Promote and encourage pedestrian and bicycle use as alternative modes of travel. (Town Energy Coordinator)

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 their job base, it is essential, over the long term, that they begin to expand their base in new directions.³²

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., 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.³³

Wilmington Village is the major 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 major tourist draw and also 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 Labor³⁴ reported in their 2009 annual report that 1480 residents of Wilmington were in the labor force (individuals 16 years and older) with an unemployment rate of 7.9 %. In 2008, the U. S. Census data³⁵ indicated that about 35% of the people lived and worked in Wilmington. Approximately, 23% commute out to Dover and 13% to Brattleboro. The remaining 29% work outside these three towns.

³² 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.

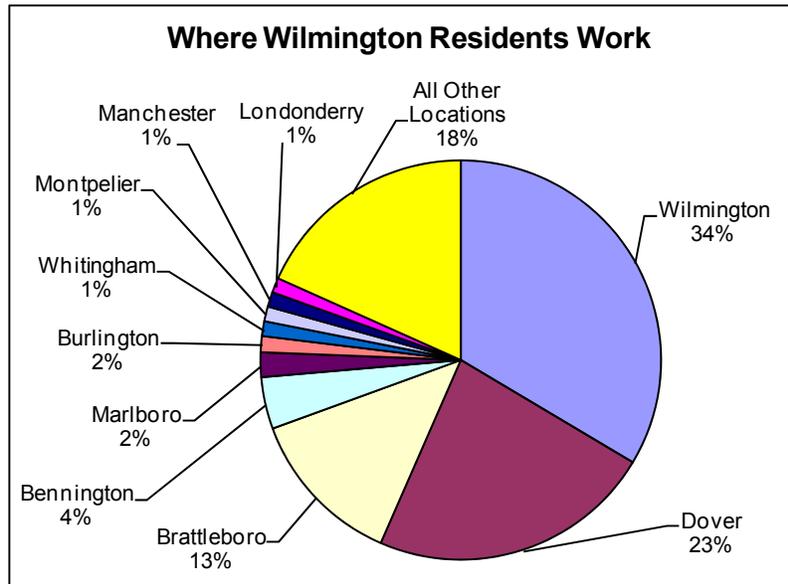
³³ These three paragraphs are from the Mullin Report.

³⁴ <http://www.vtlmi.info/Labforce.cfm?qperiodyear=2009&qareatype=12&qadjusted=Y>

³⁵ U.S. Census - Local Employment Dynamics (LED) On the Map, 2008.

Wilmington residents are employed in a variety of industries. The 2000 Census indicated that the largest percentage (26%) of Wilmington residents are employed in art, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services; 17% education, health and social services fields; 12% in retail trade; and 10% in construction. The remaining percentage of Wilmington residents are employed in a variety of other “industries”.

Figure 29: Where Wilmington Residents Work

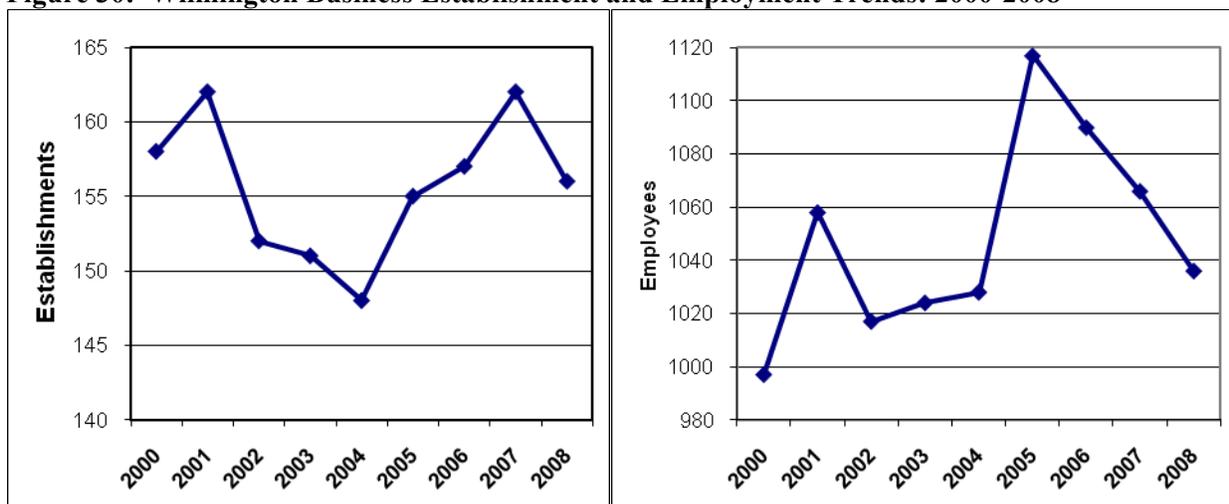


U.S. Census - Local Employment Dynamics (LED) on the Map, 2008

Existing Business

In 2008, there were approximately 156 establishments in the community employing 1,036 workers in a variety of industries and jobs. In 2007, the largest percentage of the businesses in Wilmington were part of the retail, construction and accommodation/food sectors (Figure 30).

Figure 30: Wilmington Business Establishment and Employment Trends: 2000-2008



(Source: Vermont Department of Labor)

Figure 31: Wilmington Business Establishments by Sector 2008

Industry	Establishments
Retail Trade	32
Construction	26
Accommodation and Food Services	21
Professional and business services	17
Other services, except public administration	10
Education and Health Services	8
Real Estate Rental and Leasing	7
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	5
Local Government	6
Manufacturing	5
Wholesale Trade	4
Transportation	5
Finance and Insurance	4
Publishing and Telecommunications	4
Agricultural and Forestry	1
Utilities	1

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.³⁶ Recently a parcel of land in Wilmington was purchased for growing grapes for winemaking. Other local food producers are exploring new crops and markets indicating a renewed interest in local farming.

Figure 32: Wilmington Farms by size -1997 to 2007

	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)

According to the Town of Wilmington’s records in 2009 Wilmington had a total of 2,462 acres classified as forest land enrolled in the Use Value Appraisal Program (also known as Current Use). Forestry activity in Wilmington is generally in relation to owners of current use property managing their forest land as part of their forest management plan.

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

³⁶ University of Vermont Extension, 2006

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.

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, collaborate with vocation schools, 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.

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 can occur.

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. 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 Ski Area site. 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 Deerfield Valley Elementary School. Scattered commercial development is also found along Coldbrook Road on the way to Haystack Resort area. Institutional land uses outside of the Village are the health center on Route 100 South, Deerfield 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. Last updated in 2009, the Wilmington Zoning Regulations updated the Historic Review District guidelines.

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 well head 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:

- Conservation
- Residential
- Village
- Commercial

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 2,185 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.

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 and developed at the existing village scale

Commercial 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 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 development in nodes throughout the Commercial 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 Development areas.

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 habitat³⁷. 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 decline in agriculture, prime agricultural soils are nevertheless valuable and the better areas 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.

³⁷ 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: (Planning Commission)

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 Historic Review District to other Village District lands. (Planning Commission)

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

Recommendation 2.3: Place attractive directional signage throughout the Village identifying the Village surroundings for visitors. (Selectboard, Wilmington Beautification Committee)

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 (Planning Commission)

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. (Planning Commission)

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. (Planning Commission)

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 (Planning Commission)

Recommendation 6.2: Research and map important wildlife crossing areas. (Planning Commission, Conservation Commission once 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 most recent revisions have been to the Sections on Flood Hazard (2007), Telecommunications (2008) and the Historic Review District (2009, formerly titled the Design Control District). The Bylaw still needs significant revision to the other portions, especially in regard to the establishment of additional districts. The subdivision of land is enforced through zoning.
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. In the proposed rewrite of the Zoning Bylaw, some additional provisions should be included, especially for boundary adjustments.
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 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.

Census Figures:

All population and related figures are from the 2000 Census.

Adopted this fifteenth day of September 2010

WILMINGTON SELECTBOARD


Thomas P. Consolino, Chair


Bruce P. Mullen, Vice Chair


Margaret L. Streeter, Clerk


Susan Joy Haughwout


James R. Burke