

Sheldon, Vermont

Town Plan



Adopted on September 30, 2024 by Town of Sheldon Selectboard

Chapter 8: Community Utilities

GOAL: To Provide Public Utilities to Support Concentrated Residential, Commercial, and Industrial Development, and Protect Public Health and Water Supplies in Areas without Municipal Services.

Policies

- Coordinate the extension and upgrade of water, sewer, and power lines with planned growth of the community.
- Support state permitting and enforcement to ensure that individual on-site septic systems and water supplies are sited and installed in a manner that protects public health and the quantity and quality of ground water.
- All telecommunications facilities shall respect the integrity of residential neighborhoods, aesthetic impacts, and have no undue adverse impact on natural resources.
- Telecommunications facilities shall be co-located with other towers or structures when feasible.

Water Systems

Sheldon has one public water system that serves both Sheldon Creek village and Sheldon Springs village in the Town. The system is financed by hook-up fees and quarterly user fees.

Prior to 2013, the Sheldon Springs and Sheldon Creek Village systems operated independently and were fed by two separate wells. In 2013 the two systems were connected via a new pipe along Route 105, and the Sheldon Springs well was closed due to high sulfur content and contamination in its source protection area.

The water system's single current source is a shallow, gravel well just outside the Village. This well, developed in 1975, has a potential capacity of 250 gallons per minute, but is currently limited to 70 gallons per minute due to constraints in the system's pumping capacity. Its maximum daily demand is 55,000 gallons. Its source protection area is subject to an agricultural easement which allows the owner use of the land excluding activities which might contaminate the ground water.

The system is served by two reservoirs along Main Street, with a total reserve capacity of 95,000 gallons. The second reservoir was added in 2013. There is also a disused 40,000 gallon reservoir in Sheldon Springs that is not currently connected to the system. Water is distributed through 4" PVC pipes and 2" galvanized lines pressurized by a pump. There are three fire hydrants on the system. Pressure is adequate except for two connections at the top of Crow Hill. The water is chlorinated. This system is adequate for service development at the current level, but would require an upgrade to serve a large development.

On-site wells and springs serve the remainder of homes in town. At least some of the local groundwater has shown signs of nitrate contamination. Water sources near Sheldon Springs have high sulfur content.

Wastewater Treatment

The Village of Sheldon Springs has a municipal sewage treatment plant with an extended air system constructed in 1976. In 2003, the Town upgraded the system with a new digester and sludge pump and refurbished the aviation tank. All homes and businesses in the village are connected to the system. The system is designed to handle 54,000 gallons of effluent per day and is currently receiving approximately 20,000 gallons per day. There is no written policy governing extensions to the system. Hook-up and user fees are charged. There is no long-term plan or budget for system upgrades or maintenance. Storm water infiltrates the system at times of high rainfall. However, the current operator does not consider this a significant problem.

A 13,000-gallon drying bed located next to the wastewater treatment plants is used by the Town as well. This bed is adequate to treat the volume of wastewater generated by the Town in the near future.

WestRock also operates a wastewater facility in Sheldon that services their facility. Changes to the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) that governs phosphorus limits discharged to Lake Champlain may mean that upgrades to the WestRock and Sheldon Springs facilities are needed. The Town should monitor this issue and begin planning accordingly.

The remainder of the Town is served by on-site septic systems. New construction, updating or repairing of a wastewater system must be approved and permitted by the state.

Telecommunications

Telecommunications have become increasingly important to the security and economic success of residents and businesses in the northwest region of Vermont, as well as in all other sections of the State. Telecommunication towers and related infrastructure require careful consideration. Proper siting is necessary to protect the Town's historic character, rural nature, and aesthetic beauty. Much of Sheldon now has service from at least one of the major cellphone companies. However, there remain significant areas that lack coverage, including directly adjacent to the elementary school, which presents a safety concern.

There are various types of internet service providers that serve customers in Sheldon with fiber optic cable available along and near Route 105. The Town is a member of Northwest Fiberworx, a regional municipal entity working on expanding fiber access across Northwest Vermont.