

TOWN PLAN for HARTLAND, VERMONT

**Approved January 4, 2017
by the Hartland Planning Commission**

**Adopted May 15, 2017
by the Hartland Selectboard**

**Readopted May 12, 2025
by the Hartland Planning Commission**

Assistance on this Plan was provided by the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission

OVERVIEW AND STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

The Hartland Town Plan provides a statement of objectives and a vision of the manner in which the future of Hartland should unfold. In general, this Plan is guided by six major goals in areas that are of primary concern and that are central to both our present and future well-being.

Major Goals

1. To provide Town services and facilities that meet the education, public safety, and health needs of current residents and the anticipated needs of a growing population in a cost effective manner.
2. To guide industrial and commercial development in a way that will provide for appropriate economic activities on a scale that largely maintains the Town's existing settlement patterns.
3. To preserve open space, the rural character, and present population distribution of the Town.
4. To protect agricultural and forestry land uses by promoting practices that are economically viable and that protect natural resources.
5. To provide orderly development in the village areas by planning for transportation, water, sewage, and public recreation facilities through public funding.
6. To conserve natural areas, unique habitats, and the quality of ground and surface waters.

Explicit goals, policies and recommendations that address particular issues can be found in each of the individual chapters of the Plan.

service stations, gravel pits, industrial land use, multifamily dwellings, and subdivision of land. Most respondents believe that future residential growth should occur either in present villages or along existing roads between these villages, and that future commercial growth should occur at the I-91 interchange going towards Windsor.

Siting Issues

The existing pattern of development indicates that some people have elected to live in villages in relatively close proximity to one another, and others have chosen to live in rural areas where dwellings are farther apart.

With a few serious exceptions, homes have been located in areas suitable both for building and for subsurface disposal of sewage. In recent decades, development of rural areas has not been related to farming, with its relatively large open spaces between dwellings, but rather to single family homes for year-round or vacation use.

In preparing this Town Plan, the Commission has carefully considered natural components of Hartland's landscape that it feels are basic in making recommendations for future land use or development. These critical elements are vital both to the maintenance of public health and the environmental quality of the Town; they are fragile in nature, and they have irreplaceable value. These critical elements include steep slopes, unsuitable soils, and the Town's scenic and agricultural resources

The steepness of the land, called slope, directly affects water runoff and erosion. Generally, as the slope increases, the suitability for development decreases. When vegetation is removed in order to construct roads and buildings on slopes steeper than 25%, severe environmental damage can result. Development becomes abusive when the removal of trees and other vegetation results in increased runoff, increased soil erosion, increased stream sedimentation, reduced groundwater supply, higher flood levels, polluted streams and groundwater, unsafe roads, and unstable construction.

Safe sewage disposal ensures the protection of groundwater sources as well as surface water. New households will continue to be served by individual subsurface disposal systems. Properly designed and installed systems safely treat household wastes so as to render them harmless to the public health and the environment. Because wells will be the source of drinking water for most new homes constructed in rural areas, the natural water purification process must work effectively. The regulations controlling the construction, use, and maintenance of private sewage treatment was entirely taken over by the State of Vermont in July 2007.

Hartland is a rural town with many hills. The tops and sides of those hills are very important to the appearance of the Town. To date, the pattern of settlement has been relatively little construction of structures on the tops of hills, with continuing extensive forestry and agricultural use of the hillsides. The ridgeline may be determined by the contour of the highest elevation, but in most places is actually formed by vegetation, usually trees. Indiscriminate removal of trees breaks the natural ridgeline and detracts from the natural beauty of an area. Structures placed on or near a ridgeline or on a hillside are more visible to others. The views available at a particular

house site must be balanced against the desire of the Town to retain scenic areas and maintain agricultural and forestry resources. Thus, placement of structures, access roads, and utilities needs to be done carefully.

In past years, subdividers often created distorted lot shapes in order to minimize road frontage and still have parcels large enough (the former 10.1 acre “loophole”) to avoid state Act 250 review. “Spaghetti” or “bowling alley” lots were the result. Though the reason for such large lots has gone away, due to revision in State septic permitting, there is still a natural tendency to minimize frontage. Such development has the potential to produce hazardous traffic problems, and resulting lot shapes can make management of forest and agricultural parcels nearly impossible. In addition, it reduces the availability of private land for recreational uses such as hunting, snowmobiling, skiing or walking.

One way to minimize lot sizes while preserving open areas in sizes and shapes useful for conservation, farming, or forestry is through the concepts of clustering development, decreasing setbacks, using density instead of lot size, and even transferring development rights among parcels so that large blocks of farm or forest land are retained and smaller amounts are used for house lots. This can often be done at no loss to the landowner. Density provisions give a town the ability to permit the same number of units in total, but at greater densities in parts of the original parcel while less or none in the remaining areas. The purpose of this kind of development in rural areas, as stated in the Vermont Planning and Development Act, is “to encourage flexibility of design and development of land in such a manner so as to promote the most appropriate use of land, to facilitate the adequate and economical provision of streets and utilities, and to preserve the natural and scenic qualities of the open lands and forests in the town.”

Land Use Goals, and Siting Policies and Recommendations

Land Use Goals:

1. Maintain and improve the accessibility and economic viability of Hartland and its regional growth centers.
2. Encourage growth and development in designated village centers and downtowns.
3. Protect the rural character of Hartland and its natural resources by avoiding sprawling development and incompatible land uses.

Siting Policies:

1. *Slopes steeper than 25% shall be permanently protected by forest, erosion-resistant cover, or a natural wilderness state. Development on these areas shall be permitted only if it can be certain that such development will not be harmful to the environment. Moderate slopes of 15-25% require special consideration to ensure development is planned in a manner which will not result in erosion or sedimentation.*
2. *In all areas where soils have severe limitations, development shall be permitted only where it can be adequately proven that such development will not be harmful to the environment or to the health and wellbeing of the community.*

3. *While land use may change and become more intense, and while technology may make land alterations easier, the continued use of productive soils for agricultural and forestry purposes shall be one of the primary considerations in lot layout and building siting plans.*
4. *The preservation of open space in the community and along corridors between settlement centers shall be encouraged to preserve the attractiveness of the landscape, and to preserve agricultural, forestry, and recreational uses.*
5. *Structures, roads, and utilities on hillsides shall be placed downgrade of the ridgeline, placed to preserve agricultural and forestry land uses, and constructed in a manner so as not to exceed (be taller than) the nearby natural or vegetative ridgeline as viewed from public vantage points.*
6. *If and when different land use is considered for open spaces, especially for fields, planners shall consider ways of preserving or maximizing agricultural, forestry and scenic potential. For example, dwellings, access roads, and utilities should be placed on the perimeter of the open space.*
7. *Clustering of buildings and multiple-use support facilities for preservation of acreage for agricultural, forestry or other open space purposes is highly encouraged. Encouragement may include appropriate incentives such as increased overall density when indicated. The protection of open space by outright purchase or gift and by obtaining easements, especially in scenic areas and along natural waterways, is also encouraged.*
8. *As development occurs in the rural areas, it must not only respect the physical limitations imposed by topography and soil characteristics, but shall also be in harmony with the existing landscape and adjoining land uses. Future development shall be guided by and related to the existing pattern of settlement.*
9. *Major considerations in determining lot sizes and density shall include:*
 - *the existing pattern of development,*
 - *the provision and maintenance of roads, and*
 - *the proper installation and operation of sewage treatment systems.*
10. *The Town encourages use of density limits, versus minimum lot sizes, for dwelling units on large parcels particularly as a means to preserve agricultural land and other important resources.*
11. *Generally, one acre, except in the village, is to be considered the minimum lot size throughout the Town, with smaller lots of half acre if public sewer or water is available and one-quarter acre if both were available).*

This area is appropriate for the continued and expansion of its current industrial activity. Completed construction of the bridge in Hartford facilitates truck access in this largely industrial area.

Industrial Area Policies:

- 1. Industrial development must be carefully reviewed to ensure that the activity will not be conducted in a manner which would be likely to result in undue or unreasonable adverse impacts on nearby residences or on town services and facilities.*
- 2. New industries shall be located within or adjacent to existing commercial and industrial areas, before additional land is developed for this purpose.*

Rural Residential Area

In areas especially surrounding the villages but also throughout the Town, a density of development has occurred that is somewhat higher than typically found in the more rural areas, but lower than that found in the village itself. These areas have a greater distance between homes than in the villages, but more of a “neighborhood feel” than is typically found in the rural areas. Rural residential development typically occurs in five acre parcels.

Rural Residential Area Policies:

- 1. An overall density of one residential structure unit, with no more than two dwelling units, per five acres is in general considered appropriate in these areas although soil, slope conditions and other resource protection considerations may not permit this density at some locations.*
- 2. A minimum lot size of one acre per residential structure, with no more than two dwelling units, is appropriate to ensure proper water supply and wastewater treatment.*
- 3. To ensure more appropriate lot configurations, a lot created in the Rural Residential District should have a minimum public highway frontage of 200 feet. Lots without frontage may be created and accessed by a 50-foot right-of-way so long as there is only a single access to such lots.*
- 4. Reduced dimensional requirements may be appropriate in the case of clustered development.*

Rural Area

Maintaining the Town’s natural resource base, agricultural economy, and forest industry are primary objectives of the Town Plan to be implemented through the Rural Area. In these areas, only low density residential development with home occupations will meet these objectives.

Rural Area Policies:

- 1. Typically no greater than one dwelling unit per ten acres is an appropriate density in this District. However for preexisting lots greater than 10 acres and less than 20 acres with adequate soils, one subdivision should be allowed,*

2. *A lot created in the Rural District should have minimum public highway frontage of 400 feet. Lots without frontage may be created and accessed by a 50-foot right-of-way so long as there is only a single access to such lots.*
3. *Forestry, agriculture and related activities are encouraged.*
4. *Larger projects within the Rural District, including subdivisions of more than 5 lots, shall be configured such that at least 80% of land is left in contiguous undeveloped acreage. Locally enforceable permit conditions, conservation easements, or similar mechanisms on the undeveloped portion of the lot shall be required sufficient to maintain this land as open space.*
5. *Any development in the District on previously undeveloped hilltops or extending more than 800 feet into previously undeveloped lots, merits additional review and greater restrictions. Mandatory provisions shall include that no structures may break the natural tree canopy or disturb the silhouette of high points of land (as seen from public highways), and buildings not screened by vegetation will reduce their visibility through muted colors and less reflective materials.*
6. *Subdivisions that keep more than 90% of the land undeveloped may have a density of one dwelling unit per 7.5 acres.*

Rural Area Recommendation:

1. *Any new private road constructed off VT Route 12 or the Hartland-Quechee Road should be of limited length and not connect to other town highways so as to limit through traffic, and to avoid fragmentation of forest blocks, agricultural lands, or critical wildlife habitat.*

River Area

The River District is a small strip of land along the downstream portion of the Ottauquechee River (as shown on the map) and Connecticut River that is meant to limit development that would either be in danger of being undermined by changes in the river, or would itself contribute to destabilizing the rivers' banks.

River Area Policy:

1. *In this district, non-agricultural development activities shall not occur within 200 feet of the top of the bank. To the fullest extent practicable, natural vegetation shall be maintained within this buffer area to protect water quality, important habitat areas (wildlife, plants, aquatic habitat, and corridors), and the scenic value of the River. Other siting considerations related to the protection of ground and surface water resources are discussed in the Water Resources Chapter.*

Excavation and Mining

The western bank of the Connecticut River in Hartland is the site and source of an extensive and extraordinarily valuable amount of gravel. This is a finite resource currently being extensively exploited by commercial extraction companies. It is also used by the Town of Hartland for the

Agriculture and Forestry Resources

Forestry and agriculture have played a major part in the history of Hartland and continue to do so today. Since Oliver and Aaron Willard built the Town's first sawmill along McArthur Brook in 1767, Hartland has seen a pattern of land clearing for crops or pasture (mainly for sheep) and timber harvesting for building materials, wood products, and fuel. As was the general trend in New England during the latter half of the Eighteenth Century and first half of the Nineteenth Century, much of Hartland was converted to farmland or pasture. After farming became less profitable toward the latter half of the Nineteenth Century and many farmers moved west, many of these fields and pastures returned to forest land.

Presently a small percentage of the Town is in agricultural use, while most of the remaining area is forested. Both agriculture and forestry continue to contribute to the Town's economic well-being. Dairy products, beef and veal, sheep, and hay are produced by Hartland farms. Equine pursuits are another common farming activity within the Town. Aside from the lumber and wood products industries, the Hartland-Woodstock area is home to a large concentration of maple syrup producers. Forested lands also support important wildlife habitat in the region. Both agricultural and forested land provides the residents of Hartland with exceptional scenic and recreational opportunities.

Undeveloped land, such as forest and farmland, is one component of open space. Besides playing a key role in the visual character of the Town, open space land provides wildlife habitat and migratory corridors for animals. Further, it is well-established that in the long run, open space can save the town money, since the tax revenues from developed property often do not cover the costs of providing services to it.

To maintain open space and preserve their land for future generations, landowners who own undeveloped parcels larger than 25 acres can choose to put their land in "current use." Vermont's Use Value Appraisal Program offers tax break incentives to landowners who enroll their property in current use land protection. The landowner can continue to use the property for agriculture or forestry, but agrees not to develop it. People that do develop land enrolled in the program pay a hefty penalty. The taxes paid to the Town do not change as the state makes up the difference between the current use value and what would be paid if the parcel was not in the program. While every new business or resident pays taxes to the Town, providing services to those people generally costs more than the revenues they generate. The costs of police and fire protection, utilities, and public education, as well as those associated with increased traffic and road maintenance (a substantial part of the Town budget), are among the problems facing growing towns. Thus, by limiting growth and preserving open space, especially in the harder to reach areas, a town can keep its expenses down, while retaining its rural character. Recognizing the benefits of open space, Hartland residents had 13,743 acres of land listed under the current use program as of 2013.

Vermont's Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act states that "preservation of the agricultural and forest productivity of the land, and the economic viability of agricultural units, conservation of the recreational opportunity afforded by the state's forests, streams, and lakes, wise use of the state's nonrenewable earth and mineral reserves, and protection of the

4. *The Conservation Commission should educate landowners, foresters, and developers about the importance of using buffer zones for wildlife habitat protection.*
5. *The Town should consider redirecting the proceeds from the State's Land Use Change Tax into the Town's Conservation Fund instead of the Town's General Fund.*
6. *The applicant for subdivisions subject to Act 250 shall evaluate the impacts of their development on any identified core habitat areas.*
7. *The Conservation Commission, in cooperation with other organizations, should identify existing core habitat areas and travel corridors within the Town, identify desired wildlife protection areas, and sponsor efforts to educate the public about the importance of protecting wildlife habitats and the importance of interconnecting these habitats.*

Scenic and Aesthetic Resources

The rolling hills of Vermont, dotted with picturesque pastures and forests of evergreens and hardwoods, have long captured the hearts of many. Nestled within the Connecticut River Valley, in view of Mount Ascutney, the Town of Hartland exemplifies characteristic beauty and New England charm. From both Interstate 91 and Route 5, travelers are treated to spectacular views of the valley and portions of the River, as it courses past Hartland.

Hartland offers a warm and inviting sense of community. Like most Vermont towns, it is composed of several villages, including North Hartland, Hartland Three Corners, and Hartland Four Corners, each displaying a variety of architectural designs and scenic landscape features. These scenic characteristics are both part of the Town's history and a major reason why most have chosen to live here. Scenic vistas are very sensitive to activities such as intensive development and road construction. Therefore, to preserve the character of the Town, it is essential to ensure the future of these scenic resources.

Hartland has a number of natural and recreational areas. The North Hartland Flood Control Dam and Recreational Area, Lull's Brook Fish and Game Area, Sumner's Falls, the Hartland Town Forest, Class 4 roads and trails, Eshqua Bog, Densmore Hill Wildlife Management Area, and the Connecticut River are all available to Hartland residents. Swimming, boating, hiking, fishing, and nature observation are among the recreational opportunities these areas provide. Protection of these resources is very desirable.

Maintaining the scenic and recreational features of Hartland and preserving the character of the Town continues to be a challenge. Development at the intersections of major roadways or along their length may lead to sprawl if not monitored closely. Unprotected open space can be quickly sold off and subdivided, changing both the scenic nature of the Town and eliminating important natural resources. Activities along highly visible portions of rivers or hillsides, such as clear cutting of forests or development, can severely alter the beauty of Hartland. Further, poorly sited development atop hills, including houses, transmission towers, and power lines, can all make the town less attractive for residents and tourists. Buildings, signs, and lighting which do not fit the traditional character of the Town can be eyesores. Loud noises that aren't typically associated with regular activities in the Town can also be aversive, such as the sounds of increased traffic, heavy construction, or shooting ranges.

Balancing the need for growth and prosperity in Hartland with that of sustaining the scenic character of the Town is an important task shared by the Selectboard, Planning Commission, and Conservation Commission, as well as the residents they represent.

Scenic and Aesthetic Resources Goals, Policies, and Recommendations

Scenic Goals:

1. *To preserve Hartland's scenic and aesthetic resources, including recreational and natural areas, views and vistas, traditional land use patterns, and overall character.*
2. *To foster a sense of pride in the scenic nature and rural lifestyle that Hartland offers.*

Scenic Policies:

1. *Open space and natural resources which relate to the historical, cultural, and scenic character of the Town should be preserved.*
2. *Growth or activities that would contribute to sprawling development along major roads and highways is discouraged.*
3. *The scenic value of ridgelines, hilltops, and hillsides should be maintained.*

Scenic Recommendations:

1. *The Town should coordinate land use and conservation efforts with adjacent towns and cities.*
2. *The Town should consider a noise ordinance to ensure the Town's aesthetic environment, including quiet, is preserved. Land uses should not be so noisy as to interfere with neighbors' lives.*
3. *The Town should work cooperatively with landowners, local land trusts, and conservation groups to acquire high-quality scenic resources.*

roadside trees and stone walls and can still be used to keep scenic attributes. This policy should be reviewed to identify opportunities to strengthen the role of public input in the planning process and to evaluate the need for a scenic road ordinance addressing specific roads. The first step in this process would be to inventory the significant features along potential scenic roads which contribute to their scenic nature. These include forest and agricultural patterns, significant viewsheds, terrain, and special natural and man-made features including stone walls. Examples of roads which should be considered include Clay Hill Road, Jenneville Road, Advent Hill Road, Town Farm Road, Weed Road, Garvin Hill Road, and sections of US Route 5 southeast, southwest and northwest of the I-91 interchange. A scenic road ordinance does not regulate adjacent land use. Scenic easements are one possible method to explore for ensuring the future enjoyment of these important viewsheds by the public.

Private Roads

The safety of occupants and emergency personnel depends on proper road design and maintenance. The Town currently enforces standards for new public roads, but there is no legal mechanism in place to apply the standards to privately-owned and maintained roads which may be dedicated to the Town in the future. Subdivision regulations can be used to apply town road standards to all new private roads and rights-of-way. Furthermore, the current road standards should be reviewed for adequacy based on recent application.

Driveways and Curb Cuts

Proper siting and design of the access points of driveways is required to ensure the safety of users, drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Adequate sight distances are essential. Drainage from a driveway is also an important issue as undersized and improperly maintained driveway culverts can damage adjacent roadways and contribute to pollution and sedimentation of nearby streams and rivers.

Access to private property from highways and local roads is an important issue to consider when assessing the potential impacts of future development. Access impedes mobility and can decrease safety. Single access driveways to multiple lots should be encouraged on new development. This highway management principle often conflicts with prevailing market forces which encourages intensive commercial development along major thoroughfares. Communities can help minimize the impacts of strip development and sprawl on highways by concentrating future development activity in existing village centers and/or specific "nodes" along local roads, where adequate infrastructure exists or can be provided to support intensive development and natural constraints to future development are minimal. Communities also can apply specific access management techniques designed to reduce the number of curb cuts or driveways needed to serve roadside development. These techniques include:

1. Requiring driveways to serve adjoining lots;
2. Prohibiting curb cut access from the main thoroughfare for corner lot properties;
3. Requiring off-street access and traffic circulation to adjoining parking lots in commercial areas;
4. Imposing restrictions on the width and placement of curb cuts on major highways;

Section 248

Distributed power generation facilities, such as hydropower dams, fossil fuel plants as well as wind power or solar systems owned by utilities, are subject to review and approval by the Vermont Public Service Board (30 VSA §248). Under this law, prior to the construction of a generation facility, the Board must issue a Certificate of Public Good. A Section 248 review, similar to Act 250, addresses environmental, economic, and social impacts associated with a particular project. In making its determination, the Board must give due consideration to the recommendations of municipal and regional planning commissions and their respective plans. Accordingly, it is appropriate that this Plan address these land uses and provides guidance to town officials, regulators, and utilities.

For all commercial energy generation facilities, the following policies shall be considered:

1. Preferred Locations:

- New generation and transmission facilities shall be sited in locations that reinforce Hartland's traditional patterns of growth, of compact village centers surrounded by a rural countryside, including farm and forest land;
- New or existing structures, including a commercial or residential building or a parking lot, whose primary purpose is not the generation of electricity;
- A tract that has previously been developed;
- Brownfield sites;
- Disturbed portions of a gravel pit or quarry; and
- The three industrial areas in Hartland:
 - i. The undeveloped permitted landfill, owned by GUVSWD, near the Hartland-Hartford border,
 - ii. The industrial area in the village of North Hartland, and
 - iii. The industrial area along Depot Road.

2. Prohibited Locations: Because of their distinctive natural, historic or scenic value, energy facility development shall be excluded from the following areas:

- Floodways shown on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (except as required for hydro facilities)
- River Corridor Areas as mapped by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (except as required for hydro facilities)
- Wetlands as indicated on Vermont State Wetlands Inventory maps or identified through site analysis.
- Rare, threatened or endangered species habitat or communities.
- Conserved Areas

3. Significant Areas: All new generation, transmission, and distribution facilities shall be sited and designed to avoid or, if no other reasonable alternative exists, to otherwise

minimize and mitigate adverse impacts to the following:

- Historic districts, landmarks, sites and structures listed, or eligible for listing, on state or national registers.
 - Public parks and recreation areas, including state and municipal parks, forests and trail networks.
 - Municipally designated scenic roads and viewsheds.
 - Special flood hazard areas identified by National Flood Insurance Program maps (except as required for hydro facilities)
 - Public and private drinking water supplies, including mapped source protection areas.
 - Primary agricultural soils mapped by the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service.
 - Necessary wildlife habitat identified by the state or through analysis, including core habitat areas, migration and travel corridors.
4. **Natural Resource Protection:** New generation and transmission facilities must be sited to avoid the fragmentation of, and undue adverse impacts to the town's working landscape, including large tracts of undeveloped forestland and core forest habitat areas, open farm land, and primary agricultural soils mapped by the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service.
5. **Protection of Wildlife:** Designers must gather information about natural and wildlife habitats that exist in the project area and take measures to avoid any undue adverse impact on the resource. Consideration shall be given to the effects of the project on: natural communities, wildlife residing in the area and their migratory routes; the impacts of human activities at or near habitat areas; and any loss of vegetative cover or food sources for critical habitats.
6. **Site Selection:** Site selection should not be limited to generation facilities alone; other elements of the facility need to be considered as well. These include access roads, site clearing, onsite power lines, substations, lighting, and off-site power lines. Development of these elements shall be done in such a way as to minimize any negative impacts. Unnecessary site clearing and highly visible roadways can have greater visual impacts than the energy generation facility itself. In planning for facilities, designers should take steps to mitigate their impact on natural, scenic and historic resources and improve the harmony with their surroundings.

Energy Policies

1. *Hartland municipal officials should participate in the Public Service Board's review of new and expanded generation and transmission facilities in Hartland to ensure that local energy, resource conservation, and development objectives are identified and considered in future utility development.*
2. *Any commercial energy generation facility proposed in Hartland must be developed so as to avoid undue adverse effects on the rural character of the surrounding area.*
3. *Developers should make all possible efforts to minimize damage to important natural areas as identified in the Natural, Historical, and Scenic Resource chapter of this Town Plan.*
4. *New facilities should be located as close to existing roads as possible to avoid any increase in the services provided by the town.*
5. *Hartland supports the development and use of renewable energy resources – including but not limited to wind, solar, biomass, micro-hydro and cogeneration – at a scale that is sustainable, that enhances energy system capacity and security, that promotes cleaner, more affordable energy technologies, that increases the energy options available locally, and that avoids undue adverse impacts of energy development on the local community and environment.*
6. *The rehabilitation or the development of new buildings and equipment should use proven design principles and practices with the lowest lifecycle costs (cost of owning, operating, maintaining, and disposing of a building or a building system over a period of time). Design plans shall reflect sound energy conservation principles, such as solar and slope orientation, the maximization of passive solar heating when possible, the use of protective wind barriers, and cluster development (citing buildings close to each other to maintain open space on the remaining parcel).*
7. *Power generation, transmission, and distribution facilities or service areas should be encouraged only when they complement the recommended land use patterns set forth in this plan.*
8. *New significant public investments (including schools, public recreational areas, municipal facilities, and major commercial or residential developments) must be located within or in close proximity to the village and shall utilize existing roads whenever possible.*
9. *Promote energy-efficient travel by residents by encouraging carpooling, increased use of public transportation, telecommuting, home businesses, and safe bike routes.*
10. *Discourage the construction of visually intrusive transmission towers, antennas, and other structures, including personal wireless service facilities. Alternative sites in the region that already have towers shall be utilized if at all possible. If alternative sites are*

Current Land Use
Town Plan
Hartland, Vermont
Map 1 of 5



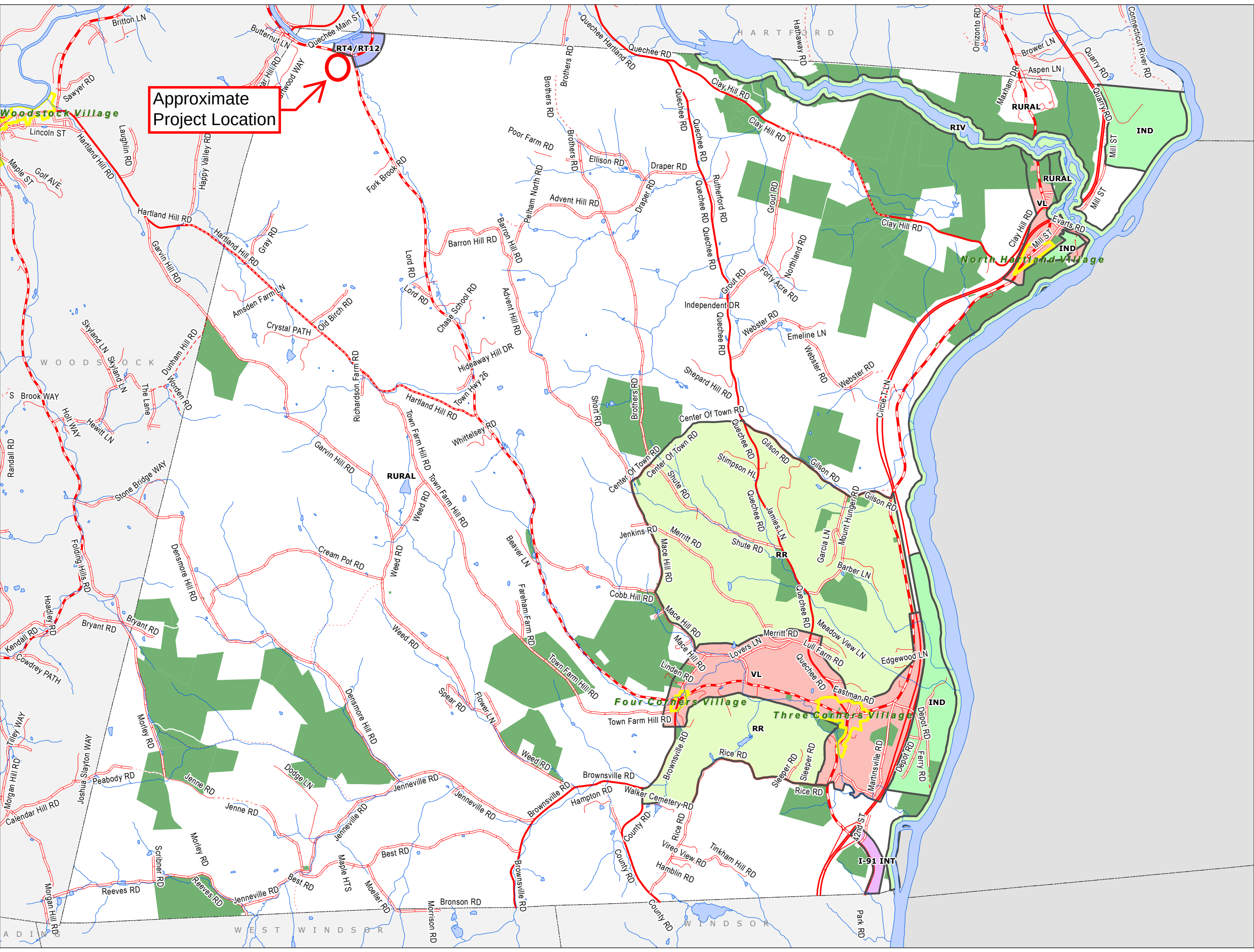
- VT route/TH cls 1
- TH cls 2
- TH cls 2 gravel
- TH cls 3
- TH cls 3 gravel
- TH cls 4
- trail
- private
- US route
- US interstate
- VT forest hwy

1:45,000
1 inch = 3,750 feet
0 0.5 1
Miles

- designations
- TYPE
- DOWNTOWN
 - GROWTH CENTER
 - TIF DISTRICT
 - VILLAGE
 - con/pub lands

Adopted 2017

Future Land Use
Town Plan
Hartland, Vermont
Map 2 of 5



- VT route/TH cls 1
- TH cls 2
- TH cls 2 gravel
- TH cls 3
- TH cls 3 gravel
- TH cls 4
- trail
- private
- US route
- US interstate
- VT forest hwy

1:45,000
1 inch = 3,750 feet
0 0.5 1
Miles

LAND USE
AREAS

- I-91 INT
- IND
- RIV
- RR
- RT4/RT12
- RURAL
- VL
- Conserved Lands as of 2016
(for reference)

Adopted 2017

Preferred and
Prohibited Energy
Generation Locations
Town Plan
Hartland, Vermont
Map 5 of 5

0 0.5 1
Miles
1:45,000 1 inch = 3,750 feet

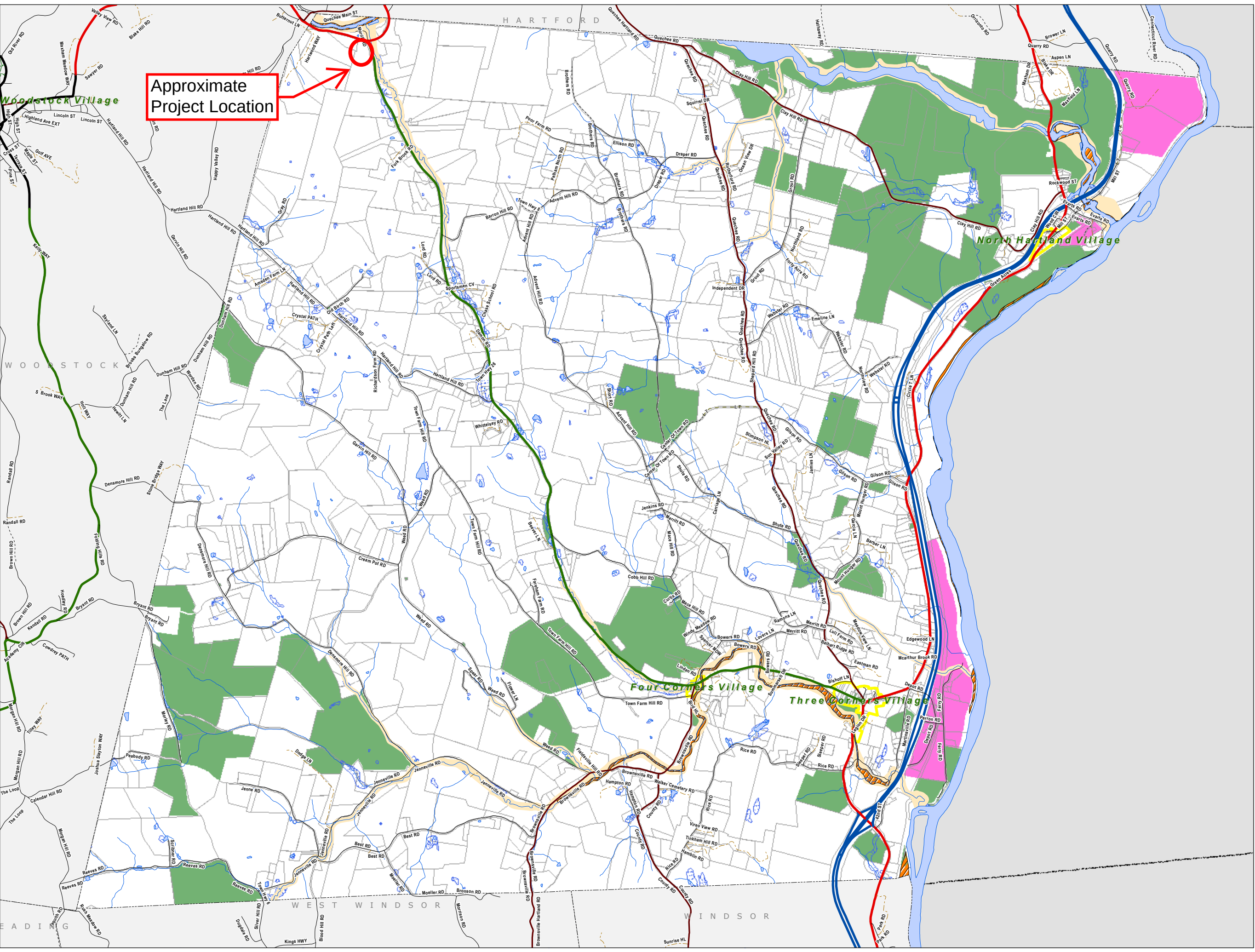
Preferred Locations

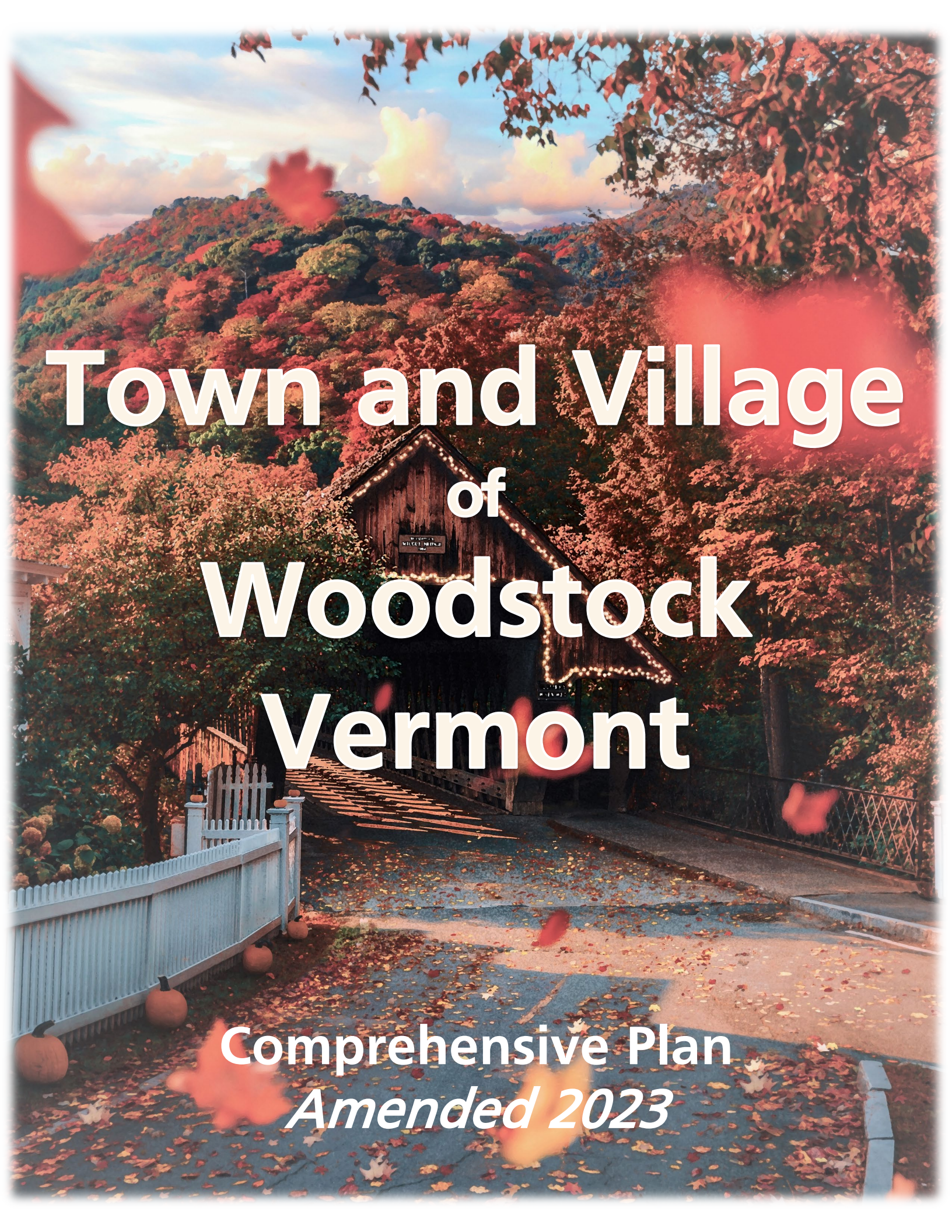
- Designated Villages
- Industrial Areas

Prohibited Locations

- Flood Hazard Areas
- Flood Hazard Areas, BFE
- Floodway
- River Corridor Areas
- Wetlands
- Conserved Areas

Approximate
Project Location





Town and Village of Woodstock Vermont

Comprehensive Plan
Amended 2023

PREFACE

The Vermont Planning and Development Act (24.V.S.A. Chapter 17) enables municipalities to guide their future development through implementation of a municipal plan. The Town and Village of Woodstock first took advantage of this enabling legislation 40 years ago. The following is the latest revision of the Plan.

The Planning Commission held hearings starting in the fall of 2011 and directly petitioned input from key civic groups or individuals in the months that followed before finishing their draft for presentation to the citizens, Selectboard and Trustees. The Selectboard and Trustees in turn held hearings on the draft in the winter of 2013-2014. The public has had the opportunity to influence the Plan at each stage.

The purpose of this process and of the Plan has been to determine and encourage the appropriate use of all lands in the Town and Village of Woodstock, and to allow development in a manner which promotes and safeguards the health, safety, and general welfare of citizens.

Several specific goals and objectives surface repeatedly throughout the Plan, all designed to lead the community to a sustainable future. These are:

1. To encourage a rational pattern of development which underscores the importance of forests, agriculture, and the historical uniqueness of Woodstock, while balancing the needs and demands of residential, recreational, commercial, and light industrial uses;
2. To provide opportunities for residents to have good jobs, affordable housing;
3. To protect soils, water, air, and other natural resources;
4. To protect the public against fires, floods and other natural or man-made dangers, in as efficient a manner as possible;
5. To protect the historic settlement pattern of one main village center and smaller hamlets, surrounded by rural areas, and;
6. To reinforce and strengthen a longstanding tradition of stewardship of the land, care for neighbors and involvement in affairs of the Village and the Town for the benefit of all.

SCENIC STATEMENT

Few Villages in New England can match the combination of scenic setting, watercourses, and gracious architecture which characterize the Village and Town of Woodstock. The community provides evidence that a caring population can hold in check the influences which so easily erode the good works of man and nature.

The values we seek to protect are largely aesthetic, and yet, they are vitally important to both the pleasure of living here and to the economic health of the community. Visitors come because they

like what they see. What visitors see are the same things which condition our daily lives and characterize the best of village life in New England. The two prime focal points of the Village are the Green surrounded by private homes and public buildings, and the Village central commercial business district coexisting pleasantly with contiguous residential neighborhoods. Our Village streets and bridges present attractive views while our floodplains and meadows leave open views to the hillsides beyond.

The scenic rural character, so vital to our lifestyles, consists of a great variety of features. Densely settled areas provide focal points of human activity, clearly defined within the space beyond. This space provides fields, mixed forests and wetlands which are linked together by brooks, rivers, and both paved and unpaved roads. Distant views of Ascutney, Killington, and the Green Mountains contrast with a foreground of open and wooded ridgelines and valley floors. The scenic corridor of the Ottauquechee River provides a second visual focal point. Scattered cemeteries, historic bridges, farmscapes, and stone walls give us a perspective on our rich heritage and may provide us with a third. For residents of the small farms and private homes, the beauty and function of this landscape is an integral part of their lives

This landscape is changing through both natural and cultural processes. Reforestation and vegetation growing along country roads limit both the diversity of this landscape and the views to it. Poorly sited or unsightly development will taint or obstruct key views. Strip development and sprawl break down the clear-cut edges between countryside and our village and hamlets.

Wherever development occurs, Town and Village officials, citizens and landowners should work together to blend what is to be built with the natural scenic environment and, where appropriate, build in conformance with existing architectural traditions. Such are the scenic values of the community of Woodstock. Our commitment to them contributes importantly to the way we define ourselves.

for expansion of the River Street Cemetery.

Cemetery commissioners are encouraged to maintain municipally owned cemeteries to propagate grounds which are neat and orderly.

UTILITIES

ELECTRICAL POWER

Overhead wiring work in 2005 near the Woodstock substation improved the service capability to its present level. GMP currently has no plans for additional upgrades.

The Town should develop a clear understanding of the degree of dependence of the Town upon the transmission line from Taftsville to the Village and alternatively what fraction of normal and peak loads can be supplied by alternate routes.

GMP is in the process of installing “smart meters” throughout the town to its customers. The Town looks forward to energy conservation benefits this technology can provide.

COMMUNICATIONS

POTS (plain old telephone service) is, for all practical purposes, universal within the Town.

Fairpoint has increased coverage of its DSL service, but it is not available everywhere in the Town. Comcast cable service is widespread but also not universal. Vtel which provides service (POTS) in the western corner of the Town is upgrading service to some areas that may include fiber to the home.

Cable TV, cell phone and broadband internet services are widely available from one or more providers, but no current provider offers universal coverage. Vtel has Federal funding to provide universal WIFI Broadband service within Vermont. This coverage will emanate (mostly) from existing cell towers. The tower on Mt Peg will be such a site.

In recent years, cellular telephone towers have become more prolific as cell phone use becomes more commonplace. The providers have located towers to aim their coverage at the Route US 4 corridor. Directional antennae on these towers often provide coverage along the corridor but not for the space facing away from the corridor. The Town and Village should seek better coverage from the providers holding tower permits. The current zoning requirements for both the Town and Village have sections that govern the permitting of these towers.

The Town, along with twenty-two other towns, formed ECFibernet in 2008. Their goal is universal FTTH (fiber to the home) broadband internet and phone service. Tight capital markets delayed their initial startup, but they have established service in three towns and will spread to six more in 2013. The Town should continue to support this effort as it will provide the technology with the best current performance and the service most likely to meet future needs.

UTILITY LINES

Woodstock has identified the unsightliness of utility lines as undesirable and proposes that Woodstock encourage Green Mountain Power, Fairpoint, ECFiber and Comcast to run transmission lines along one side of a Town Highway and encourages that all development and subdivisions install underground utilities. Those utility companies responsible for placement of lines are encouraged to involve individual landowners in discussions with municipal officials as early as possible in the planning process to avoid delays and adversarial interactions for the parties concerned.

WINDSOR COUNTY BUILDING

The former correctional facility property is owned by Windsor County and is currently being used by the Windsor County Sheriff and Windsor County Courts. Woodstock should keep abreast of developments affecting this property.

WINDSOR COUNTY COURT HOUSE

There are buildings in Woodstock which are uniquely valuable for their historic usage as well as their architecture. When necessary to preserve historic usage, compromises should be reached between renovation and architectural integrity. Methods of reaching such compromises can include zoning variances and special exceptions

At the present, the Windsor County Administration is in the process of upgrading the building to make it ADA compliant and increasing the number of court rooms. Woodstock is opposed to moving the courthouse to another location.

WOODSTOCK AQUEDUCT

Representatives of the Woodstock Aqueduct Company report that facilities are continually being upgraded and expanded to meet increasing demand. A deep well on Route 12 provides water for domestic use, with a one million-gallon well water storage tank as the primary supply located near the Cox Reservoir. Both Cox and Vondell reservoirs are maintained for fire protection and emergency domestic backup but are not part of the daily supply stream.

Fire protection is adequate where hydrants are located along large distribution mains, but is limited by capacity in outlying areas due to smaller pipe sizes. An ongoing effort is underway to transform spurs into loops to help minimize this limitation.

High river currents resulting from Tropical Storm Irene caused damage to the distribution piping. It appears essential that Woodstock should work closely with the Woodstock Aqueduct Company and initiate an analysis of this vital resource and to assure an adequate water supply and modernization of the system, and if water for fire protection cannot be provided by the Woodstock Aqueduct Company, then alternative water supplies should be provided by developers to take care of fire protection needs.

Objection 10.1. Develop high building densities in areas served by public sewage facilities.

Action 10.1.1. Zone high density uses for areas accessible to sewer lines.

Action 10.1.2. Restrict sewer lines from areas where low densities are to be maintained.

Goal 11: Minimize unsightly overhead utility lines.

Objective 11.1. Bury and hide utility lines.

Action 11.1.1. Encourage subdivision and development applicants to bury utility lines.

Action 11.1.2. Encourage utilities to lay out rural lines so they are hidden from view.

Goal 12: Address cellular telephone service coverage

Objective 12.1. Identify and correct current service dead zones.

****Action 12.1.1.*** Encourage cell phone operators to maximize antenna coverage from existing towers.

Goal 13: Improve access to broadband internet service.

Objective 13.1. Define, then correct access to broadband internet service in town.

****Action 13.1.1.*** Identify underserved areas and encourage communication companies to enhance service to these areas.

Goal 14: Maintain and improve U.S. Postal Service for Woodstock.

Objective 14.1. Improve parking and loading areas.

Action 14.1.1. Work closely with U.S. Postal Service and Town/Village officials to ease congestion in and around the Post Office.

Objective 14.2. Support the continuation of Postal Service at hamlet Post Offices.

****Action 14.2.1.*** Work with community groups to identify unique needs of hamlet residents.

Goal 15: Alleviate parking congestion in the Central Business District

Objective 15.1. Expand the available of day-long off-street parking in or near the Central Business District for primary use by business owners and employees.

Action 15.1.1. Identify land for potential expansion of parking and then

TAFTSVILLE

In 1997, a Residential/Office District was established to allow office use for property located along the south side of Route 4. The residents have expressed a desire to maintain the character of Taftsville.

As with South Woodstock, the importance of the country store as a community center must be recognized and every effort made to continue its existence. Continued support of the Post Office is also critical to the economic health and civic vitality of the hamlet. In the aftermath of Tropical Storm Irene, the Taftsville Covered Bridge has been fully restored and once again serves as a vital transportation link and tourist draw. The next chapter in Taftsville's storied history should involve the Town applying to have Taftsville recognized as a Village Center through the Village Center Designation process.

SPECIAL BUSINESS CLASSIFICATIONS

HOME ENTERPRISE

Woodstock encourages entrepreneurial activity in rural areas. The Home Enterprise designation in the Zoning Regulations provides an opportunity for such activity. To preserve open space while allowing for economic development in the rural district, this designation can protect residential land, provide property owners with reasonable use of their properties for commerce, and offer employment opportunities. The EDC is encouraged to reach out and bring more of these types of businesses to Woodstock

HOME OCCUPATION

Woodstock does not encourage businesses of size in residential areas. However, the operation of a home occupation in owner-occupied residences is allowable in many zones. This designation will continue to be available in the future. And, providing that improvements to communications technologies and other business-to-business services can continue, there is no reason that home occupations cannot play an increasingly important role in the economic diversity and sustainability efforts being made throughout Woodstock.

BED & BREAKFAST

Woodstock has long recognized that Bed and Breakfast establishments are an integral part of our community. Over twenty years ago, the proliferation of bed and breakfasts/tourist homes was seen as a problem requiring limitations to help maintain the character of residential neighborhoods. Woodstock should review the regulations in the current competitive climate, and in consideration of new opportunities for homeowners to connect with visitors via internet connections and services, to assure that the balance between the rights of residences and those of fully permitted bed and breakfast operations are maintained.

The quality of the visual environment is central to Woodstock's identity and is a fundamental asset of the Town and Village. The built environment, both historical and contemporary, the landscape and immediate settings of structures and surrounding natural environment are all contributing factors to the total aesthetic environment. Attention must be paid, therefore, to all levels of the physical character of the Town and Village.

The preservation of the visual quality of the built environment should consider all structures in the village, hamlets, and outlying town areas. Residential, institutional, commercial, and agricultural buildings all contribute to this environment. Many of our most important structures are historic and should be valued for their place in the history and culture of the Town and the region. Structures with less historic significance, however, can be equally important to our visual environment.

The landscape and setting of structures play a vital role in defining aesthetic quality. In the Village, the "street scape" environment as a whole and the spaces between buildings are of equal importance to the buildings themselves. Likewise, in the hamlets and outlying town areas, the landscape elements such as driveways, parking lots, lighting, fences, and plants all contribute to the quality of the visual environment.

On the largest scale, the patterns of open space and woods, pastures, ponds, roads, and natural elements have developed over time, through the works of both man and nature, into what we now consider to be typically "Vermont." At this scale, too, it is important to consider and to preserve the quality of the visual environment.

It is important to recognize the separate but complementary issues of historic preservation and the enhancement of our visual environment. The preservation of an asset for strictly its historic or cultural value and the protection of an important visual asset, can be separate goals. A historically important building may not necessarily be aesthetically valuable, while a visually important structure may have no historical significance. The richest environments are those which have both, and Woodstock has a good share of these.

Although Woodstock recognizes the effects of climate change and supports alternative energy to lower one's carbon footprint, it is well known that its historic character is key to the local economy. Many of the homes, especially in the Village, are well over a hundred years old and were not built for energy conservation. Proper insulation, energy efficient windows/doors and improved heating systems are just a few of the methods one can do to reduce energy loads without changing the historic look. Geothermal energy is a proven technology that allows one an "invisible" form of alternative energy. To this end, the municipality supports conservation and energy efficiency as a priority above the placement of alternative energy devices such as solar panels or wind turbines.

Historic preservation and the preservation of the visual environment for Woodstock include eight broad goals:

1. Recognize and protect outlying and isolated visual and historical resources throughout the Town;
2. Protect identified visual and historical resources within the Village;

3. Protect open space and other environmental resources that are scenic or historic or both;
4. Protect the integrity and authenticity of Woodstock's aesthetic and historical character and its place in history;
5. Improve Design Review procedures, possibly incorporate Historic Preservation review into the process where appropriate, and possibly establish additional Design Review/Historic Preservation districts and landmarks in the Town;
6. Review and improve laws, ordinances, bureaucratic, and educational procedures as they relate to historic preservation and the visual environment;
7. Develop a balanced relationship between aesthetic and historical resources and current and future needs, and;
8. Provide guidance for appropriate energy upgrades.

Proposed solutions to these goals are listed separately, but several issues raised in the goals bear further discussion.

PROTECT HISTORICAL RESOURCES

Although most attention has been paid to the historical resources of the Village, the outlying areas of the Town have been addressed in a thorough and systematic survey. Completion of a thorough survey of the Town was a major accomplishment. The survey identified several districts, such as South Woodstock and Taftsville, which ought to be protected as such. It also identified several individual properties which may be protected individually as landmarks. The hamlets of South Woodstock Village and Woodstock Village are currently listed with the National Register of Historic Places and have design review protection.

PROTECT VILLAGE RESOURCES

The historical resources of the Village are well documented. Measures can be taken to afford protection of these resources while accommodating state and local codes.

PROTECT ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Environmental surroundings are crucial elements in the preservation of historical resources. Views and other vistas, open space, green spaces, river views and access, are all key elements that bear upon historic preservation both in the Village and in the Town. The Town's rural agricultural character is essential, as is the Village's character as a modest rural community related to its surrounding farms and hills.

PRESERVE INTEGRITY & AUTHENTICITY

Woodstock is a living community with a visible historical heritage, and its past should be protected authentically. History is a continuum, with the past providing perspective, place, and continuity, and with the present becoming the future's past. Thus, the community must both preserve its heritage and continue to evolve into the future while allowing protection of important key features such as the Windsor County Courthouse.

Action 1.2.3. Designate all historic landmarks and structures in the Village and develop a plan for appropriate preservation.

Goal 2: Protect open spaces which are scenic or historic

Objective 2.1. Establish awareness of historic preservation and protection of the visual environment.

Action 2.1.1. Support incentives for maintaining agricultural land use.

Action 2.1.2. Study the feasibility of a scenic easement program.

Action 2.1.3. Study the use of a transfer of development rights programs.

Action 2.1.4. Study the idea of a program for the acquisition of land with scenic and/or historic characteristics.

Action 2.1.5. Develop strategies to encourage sensitive and enlightened use of community resources.

Objective 2.2. Recognize farming, forestry and agricultural open space as key threatened elements of Woodstock's heritage and identity.

Action 2.2.1. Take steps to preserve ways of life and land use.

Action 2.2.2. Support working landscape initiatives that promote our agricultural heritage.

Goal 3: Protect the integrity and authenticity of Woodstock's place in history.

Objective 3.1. Encourage community involvement in preservation and evolution of our community.

Action 3.1.1. Involve schools in historic education and town planning.

Action 3.1.2. Continue to utilize our local resources such as Woodstock Historical Society, Billings Farm and Museum and the Marsh Billings Rockefeller National Historic Park to educate the public about our heritage.

Goal 4: Improve Design Review procedures.

Objective 4.1. Modify the Design Review procedures.

Action 4.1.1. Disseminate information to prospective applicants in a timely manner.

Action 4.1.2. Re-evaluate design review criteria and districts for current applicability.

Goal 5: Ensure that Design Review and the Conservation Commission work hand in hand for the overall preservation and appropriate development of Woodstock.

Objective 5.1. Develop an interrelationship between design review, and

environmental review by the Conservation Commission.

Action 5.1.1. Monitor criteria for design review and environmental review by the Conservation Commission to ensure that they are complementary.

Goal 6: Allow placement of alternative energy devices while maintaining character of historic districts.

Objective 6.1. Develop criteria for placement of alternative energy devices in historic districts.

***Action 6.1.1.** Assure appropriate energy savings have been met through conservation and energy efficiency before placement of devices.

***Action 6.1.2.** Choose devices that mesh best with proposed location.

***Action 6.1.3.** Assure alternative energy devices are placed in least visible area of property.

***Action 6.1.4.** If placed in Design Review District, assure compliance with underlying criteria.



HOUSING

Shelter, like food and clothing, represents one of the most essential of human needs. In an affluent society, shelter also represents a ‘want’. Wanting to purchase a “first home” in this beautiful town for the average citizen is a very difficult task. Wanting to own a “second home” in Woodstock for vacation and recreational use has long been a reality.

The decision to limit the quantity of housing in favor of the quality of life engendered by retaining traditional settlement patterns and land use has the effect of confrontation between those who “need” and those who “want.” A policy designed to protect and preserve the continuity of life in Woodstock has produced a lifestyle that Vermonters, dependent on local sources of income, are finding it difficult to afford. The competition for limited housing is no contest at all, and those people most responsible for the sense of place that non-natives admire will have to seek shelter elsewhere.

Local businesses are forced to import labor from nearby – and some not so nearby - areas

G.I.S. & DATA RETRIEVAL

To provide a "pool" of information on Woodstock's natural resources, a data retrieval system is maintained, by the Planning and Zoning Office, to help the Planning Commission and Development Review Boards, as well as other groups and individuals, make more informed decisions.

To better protect Woodstock's diverse plant and animal life for all future generations to enjoy, the Conservation Commission plans to expand the town's natural resources database to include native plant and animal populations and the habitats that support them. Town-wide natural communities mapping together with flora and fauna inventories of representative communities will provide detailed baseline data against which future development proposals and suggested changes in land use may be evaluated.

OPEN SPACE

Of prime importance to the quality of life and character of Woodstock are its open spaces, which include not only open fields and meadows, but also wooded hillsides, forests, stream corridors and other natural vistas.

The Woodstock Conservation Commission will oversee open space issues and act as an advisory group to the Planning Commission, Selectboard, Village Trustees, Town and Village Development Review Boards and the community at large. Involvement by the Conservation Commission should be encouraged when any development is proposed involving the town's open spaces.

Woodstock's appealing landscape is defined by its unique combination of rural countryside and densely settled villages and hamlets. The Village of Woodstock is the largest of these, with the centers of South Woodstock, Taftsville, Prosper, and West Woodstock serving as important sub-centers. These hamlets are the result of historical development that was influenced by the flow of transportation along the flat river bottoms as well as a diversified economy of in-town trade and rural agriculture.

Protecting and maintaining Woodstock's open spaces is vital to the community's economic, social and environmental future. Maintaining the economic base provided by both tourism and agriculture in the Town requires a generous resource of scenic beauty in the countryside, in the Village, and in the areas adjacent to the Village and hamlets of Woodstock. The primary threats to the rural character of the town and its open spaces are natural reforestation of previously farmed fields, and development, both residential and commercial, that is insensitive to the agrarian heritage and pastoral aesthetics that have historically defined the unique attributes of Woodstock.

U.S. Route 4 (a major East-West artery) and State Routes 12 and 106, are well-traveled corridors leading to and from Woodstock. Currently the character of these roads varies from residential and commercial development to relatively sparsely populated open spaces.

Recent years have seen increased development along these routes that pass directly through the center of Woodstock Village and the Town's hamlets. Resulting loss of scenic differentiation between the Village and hamlets and the rural countryside that surrounds them could unduly impact the aesthetic and environmental quality of the entire town. Woodstock should establish a clear definition of commercial and open space zones along Routes 4, 12, and 106. Concepts for these zones should include provisions for scenic vistas, preservation of agricultural lands, river corridor conservation zones, and creative use of setback requirements to create a clear "greenway" through which travelers to Woodstock would move.

Many residents view the continued commercial expansion along these state and federal roads as uncontrolled "strip development." This sort of development raises the following concerns, which should be considered by the Town when reviewing applications for development along these corridors:

1. Loss of scenic vistas and open wooded hillsides;
2. Loss of the scenic differentiation between town and countryside;
3. Loss of natural habitats along stream/river corridors;
4. Loss of prime agricultural lands and flood plains;
5. Traffic congestion and environmental impacts resulting ill-designed commercial expansion along major thoroughfares;
6. The proliferation of unattractive commercial properties and continuous curb cuts unbuffered by sufficient landscaping, and;
7. Traffic patterns designed exclusively for automobile use that are dangerous to pedestrians and cyclists.

VILLAGE PARKS/OPEN SPACES

The Village of Woodstock is fortunate to have a broad range of parks and open spaces. Ranging from active playing fields to trail-laced woodlands, these parklands are well used by many citizens, visitors, and organized groups. Each park has a group of civic-minded persons who are involved in their upkeep and basic maintenance.

The presence of these open spaces is a primary component of Village and hamlet identity. The Village Green is an excellent example of a public landscape. Faulkner Park (11 acres), privately owned and maintained by The Faulkner Trust, provides a quiet, more passive park environment. Vail Field is a recreational park run by the Woodstock Recreation Department, with assistance from Woodstock Associates. Billings Park on Mt. Tom (130 acres) and Billings Park on Mt. Peg (62 acres), managed by the Billings Park Commission, provide hiking trails and spectacular views from their summits, and serve as important wooded backdrops to the Village.

Another important component of Village identity is its open expanse of riverscape and residential areas that remain unbroken by high, solid fencing. These neighborhoods and the riverscape's open and unbroken vistas epitomize and enhance the sense of congeniality and

security that has defined this community for generations. The openness of our riverscape and neighborhoods must be preserved, unbroken by solid fences, private docks, and other structures.

Plans for a proposed riverside park are outlined in the East End Study and the earlier Woodstock Conservation and Development Report. The Village also encourages construction of a pedestrian/bike path that will enhance enjoyment and access to the envisioned riverside park. This path has been designed and mapped to run from the Frost Mills lot eastward along the river on land abutting the Billings Farm fields.

The "Route 4 Corridor Street Tree Master Plan", completed in 1994, mapped all existing trees along the Village portion of Route 4. Incorporated into the plan were recommendations to add future tree plantings within this corridor to enhance the scenic qualities of the Village. Expansion of the tree plan to include other highly visible residential streets in the Village should be considered.

MARSH-BILLINGS-ROCKEFELLER NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

In 1992, the Billings mansion and approximately 550 acres of the land abutting the Pogue between the Prosper Road and Route 12 was given to the United States government to create the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park

The land contained within Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park has long played an important and respected role in the recreational and open space environment of Woodstock. Many residents and visitors to Woodstock enjoy hiking, cross-country skiing, horse-related activities, and a variety of other recreational pursuits encouraged by the system of carriage roads that pass through the forests and fields and alongside the Pogue.

Woodstock supports and is grateful for the conservation and preservation of this property, which is an enormous asset to the community. It is important, however, that the planning and implementation of the Park's programs conform with the Town and Village Plans and that the Park's operations are in harmony with the rhythms and patterns of life that make Woodstock an attractive place to live and work.

The Town should continue to evaluate the impact that increased use of national park lands may have on the community, whether that increase arises through implementation of the Park's plans and programs or simply because the Park becomes better known through publicity and reputation. In this regard, it is also important that residents and officials of the Town participate in the Park's management and planning processes. Of primary concern to the Town and Village are increased traffic congestion and parking demand, the need for additional municipal services, and the increased property burdens of those who live within proximity to the park.

MUNICIPAL AND STATE FORESTS

Public forest lands within the Town of Woodstock include two municipal forest tracts located off Grassy Lane (23 acres) in northwest Woodstock and Long Hill Road (97 acres) in South Woodstock as well as 797 acres of forest reserve in South Woodstock that is part of the Coolidge State Forest. Although no stewardship or management plan for Woodstock's municipal forests currently exists, such a plan should be developed to ensure the forests' continued health and sustainability.

PRIVATELY CONSERVED LANDS

Of no less importance are the open spaces (fields, forests, and special places) conserved by Woodstock's private landowners. Through their visionary actions over 2,170 individually held acres within the Town have been permanently conserved through land trust conservation easements.

SCENIC RIDGELINE DISTRICT

Woodstock's Scenic Ridgeline District was established in 1992 in response to the adverse visual impacts of development on the scenic qualities of the Town's prominent ridges and hillsides, which contribute significantly to the Town's aesthetic identity. Conditional use review and approval are now required for any proposed development within 500 feet of the Town's primary ridges, as identified on the Scenic Ridgeline Map located in the Planning and Zoning Office. The Scenic Viewshed Map was completed in 2005 using computer analysis to identify all viewsheds visible from the town's principal road corridors. Regulations strengthening the Town's ability to restrict inappropriate development within the Scenic Ridgeline District are recommended.

ACTION PROGRAM

Following are the identified problems and issues facing Woodstock and the corresponding goals, objectives, and actions for resolution. Those actions with an asterisk are of high priority.

Goal 1: Maintain or improve groundwater and surface water quality for public and aquatic health and related recreational benefits.

Objective 1.1. Protect groundwater resources from the adverse impacts of development and maintain or improve the water quality and ecological functions of Woodstock's waterways.

****Action 1.1.1.*** Actively participate in and implement the development of the State's Ottawaquechee/Black River Watershed Basin 10 Plan.

Action 1.1.2. Ensure that information on all residential and commercial septic systems and water well locations is available in the Town's Planning Office.

and Class III wetlands based on plant, invertebrate and wildlife requirements.

Action 1.2.2. Work with foresters and loggers to minimize the impacts of timber harvesting on the hydrological functions and ecological integrity of vernal pools and wetland communities.

Action 1.2.3. Provide informational materials to landowners explaining the functions of vernal pools and wetlands and the integral importance of each in maintaining the Town's hydrological balance and ecological fabric, including critical habitat for plant, animal, and rare species.

***Action 1.2.4.** Continue to update Woodstock's Wetlands Inventory Map and database as new information becomes available.

Goal 2: Preserve the character of Woodstock's community and natural environment which is threatened by incremental development and subdivision.

Objective 2.1. Strengthen Woodstock's ability to thoroughly review and anticipate the impact of development proposals.

Action 2.1.1. Utilize education materials and workshops specifically designed to improve the ability of Vermont towns to review development proposals.

Action 2.1.2. Analyze the 2011 TRORC build out planning scenario to help town officials and the public visualize and plan for future growth and development in Woodstock.

***Action 2.1.3.** Consider the impact of exterior lighting in all development proposals, for conformance with the criteria outlined in the towns zoning regulations and the Outdoor Lighting Manual for Vermont Municipalities

***Action 2.1.4.** Utilize the current G.I.S. data layers to analyze the potential impact of all proposed development on the natural landscape and integrate this information into the permit application file for use by permit applicants, the Planning Commission and Development Review Boards.

Action 2.1.5. Continue a liaison between the Conservation Commission, the Planning Commission, and the Development Review Boards.

Action 2.1.6. Consider developing Subdivision Regulations.

Action 2.1.7. Develop tree canopy retention regulations.

Objective 2.2. Use and maintain the Woodstock Natural Communities Inventory assessment and data base.

erosion and compaction problems arising from improper harvesting practices.

Action 3.1.3. Direct landowners to websites that provide educational materials to landowners wishing to enhance the natural ecological integrity of their woodlands by adopting forest stewardship techniques that encourage the establishment of mature forests with a median canopy age of 150 years.

***Action 3.1.4.** Develop a stewardship plan for Woodstock's municipal forests.

***Action 3.1.5.** Update the zoning regulations to clarify allowances for clearing for development in the R5 District to retain maximum tree canopy.

Objective 3.2. Maintain and preserve large forest tracts as sustainable biological and economic resources.

Action 3.2.1. Minimize forest fragmentation by utilizing cluster housing, Planning concepts, and use of forest conservation easements.

Action 3.2.2. Encourage dedicated forest conservation easements to retain integrity of larger parcels.

Goal 4: Limit the spread of invasive plants into Woodstock's natural areas, working forests, and agricultural fields.

Objective 4.1. Control invasive plant species to minimize ecological and economic impacts to our native species and habitats, working forests and agricultural fields.

***Action 4.1.1.** Conduct workshops and provide informational materials to help landowners identify and control invasive plants on their properties.

***Action 4.1.2.** Work with the Billings Park Commission, regional specialists, and other civic groups to control invasive plants on public lands.

***Action 4.1.3.** Encourage town and state road maintenance workers and utility, construction, and logging crews to clean mowers, backhoes, and other equipment before moving on to new sites.

Goal 5: Protect open spaces and scenic vistas.

Objective 5.1. Identify, map, and prioritize Town open spaces and significant scenic vistas.

Action 5.1.1. Work with town officials, boards, land trusts, state, regional and federal agencies to establish and implement open space protection goals through conservation easements, zoning regulations and other land protection mechanisms.

Action 5.1.2. Update and maintain the Scenic Ridgeline overlay map.

Action 5.1.3. Update and maintain the Viewshed map.

Goal 6: Preserve the Village and hamlet's public/private open spaces.

Objective 6.1. Maintain the "sense of place" and scenic value that's created by the Town's open spaces, including those within the Village and outlying hamlets.

Action 6.1.1. Adopt a scenic policy statement that characterizes those values commonly or traditionally associated with Woodstock's village and hamlets.

****Action 6.1.2.*** Encourage the establishment of a riverside park within the Village as proposed in the East End Study and relocation of the Village snow dump.

Action 6.1.3. Develop an open space plan for the Town and the Village that includes existing parks and open spaces and provides: trails, pedestrian/bike paths and scenic overlooks along prominent streams and highway corridors, improved sidewalks to and through neighborhoods, and public easements along river corridors for new parks and greenbelts.

****Action 6.1.4.*** Develop long-term management plans for the maintenance of public open spaces and parks.

Action 6.1.5. Encourage the National Park Service to maintain open space consistent with the goals of the Town and Village Plans.

Action 6.1.6. Establish a new street tree planting program along scenic roads and encourage Action of the Route 4 Corridor Street Tree Master Plan.

Action 6.1.7. Continue to sponsor civic and educational activities such as Green-Up Day and encourage participation by all citizens and school children.

Action 6.1.8. Amend zoning regulations to require Design and Site Plan Review for any development that may obstruct open views and vistas of the Ottauquechee River.

Goal 7: Ensure Compatibility of Alternative Energy Devices in the Scenic Ridgeline District

Objective 7.1. Maintain the character of the Scenic Ridgeline District.

****Action 7.1.1.*** Complete energy assessment report to assure appropriate energy savings have been achieved before placement of devices

Action 7.1.2. Choose devices that would mesh best with proposed location.

Action 7.1.3. Place alternative energy devices in least visible area of property.

demand and peak automobile traffic.

Public bus service is no longer available. Regional bus options need to be explored. A review of existing public transportation facilities reveals that although no regular taxi company exists in Woodstock, such service is available from the White River Junction or West Lebanon area. Woodstock should consider what parking facilities might be required by those taking a bus.

The Senior Citizens Center offers limited van service to participants for travel from home to the center as well as for trips to shopping and banking facilities. Woodstock and surrounding towns contribute through taxes to this service which is also federally supported.

Air travel services are available from the nearby airport in West Lebanon, New Hampshire and no commercial airport or heliport need exist in Woodstock. For emergency services, at least two sites have been designated as landing areas for helicopter or other medical evacuation aviation services, the Woodstock Union High School/Middle School fields in West Woodstock and the Green Mountain Horse Association grounds in South Woodstock. Other sites may need to be designated in the future.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Transportation planning is a collaborative process between town officials and planners, regional planners, state/federal transportation agencies and private landowners and developers. The purpose of transportation planning is to maintain consistent, coordinated, and proactive responses toward preserving the existing transportation system while addressing future infrastructure and service needs.

The Town should continue providing educational opportunities to the volunteers serving on Planning and Conservation Commissions. Basic classes on traffic operations and management, as well as transportation topics in development review, should be held on an as needed basis.

Good transportation planning results in the efficient and timely construction of local and state transportation projects. Town officials should be persistent in pursuing grant funds and advocate for the completion of all state or federally sponsored transportation projects. Woodstock should actively maintain a transportation priorities list and be able to communicate those priorities to elected officials, town citizens, and transportation agencies.

SCENIC ROADWAYS

Woodstock has many local and state roadways highly valued based on their scenic character. Motorists traveling along US Route 4 can traverse a landscape of green hills bordered by rural development and the scenic Ottauquechee River. Similar landscapes also exist along

VT Route 12 with the Gulf Stream and VT Route 106 with Kedron Brook. In smaller scale and with a greater diversity of landscapes, we see similar scenic resources on our local village and town roads where we travel in the company of maple trees, stone walls, and beautiful residential homes.

Very often the fabric of our landscapes and definition of community are defined by this traveling experience. Scenic roads also accomplish the task of slowing traffic speeds and encouraging bicycling and walking. For this reason, scenic roads are often safer and support a greater diversity of multimodal transportation activity.

It is important to preserve the scenic resources of our roadways. When opportunities develop, it will be a priority to enhance a road's scenic character. Transportation or adjacent land projects that would prove to degrade roadways identified as having scenic resources will be discouraged.

ACCESS MANAGEMENT

This is a process to provide reasonable access to adjacent land uses while maintaining a safe and efficient flow of traffic. An access can be a residential or commercial driveway, or it can be another public highway. A single well-designed access to a public highway presents few concerns for the traveling public. But if access has been poorly designed and/or their frequency increases, the road's *health* declines. Especially on high traffic roadways, Woodstock needs to support adjacent businesses and homes, so everyone maintains safe and efficient access. Simultaneously, the Town will continue to maintain our existing highways for the benefit of the traveling public.

TOWN ROADS AND TRAILS AFFECTING CONSERVATION AREAS

Town roads and legal trails are the primary means of access to land in conservation areas. Principal users of these roads or trails are residents, seasonal camp owners, hikers, snowmobilers, and loggers. Some of these roads accommodate relatively few vehicles. The Selectboard retains jurisdiction over local roads. Roads are classified by the Town. Class 3 highways include the typical back road. Class 4 roads are not regularly maintained and are only improved to the extent required by the necessity of the Town. Legal trails are not highways, and the Town is not required to maintain them.

Future land use planning and development needs to be compatible with and complement the long-term use goals and policies of this Plan. Public investment decisions that have the potential effect of altering the stated land use goals of this Plan are to be discouraged. In considering whether to reclassify or improve a Class 4 road or legal trail, or to lay out or accept a new highway in conservation areas, due consideration should be given as to the extent of development likely to result from the action and whether such action supports the goals of the Plan for the area affected. Upgrading roads and trails could stimulate new development in an area intended primarily for conservation. Over time, the cumulative

Goal 5: Enhance transportation planning.

Objective 5.1. Preserve and enhance the Town's investment in transportation planning. Educate elected and appointed officials.

Action 5.1.1. Provide adequate training.

Action 5.1.2. Host VLCT and Regional Commission courses covering contemporary transportation topics with a focus on transportation and land development issues.

Objective 5.2. Facilitate communication of transportation priorities with town officials and staff, and Regional Commission.

Action 5.2.1. Establish transportation project and planning priorities.

Action 5.2.2. Maintain a listing of transportation project priorities.

Action 5.2.3. Incorporate Town Plan guidance in transportation investment and planning decisions.

Action 5.2.4. Maintain a transportation capital program.

Objective 5.3.1. Develop a Transportation Planning process.

Action 5.3.1. Conduct citizen-based survey on transportation.

Action 5.3.2. Develop and adopt a Transportation Plan.

Goal 6: Preserve scenic roadways. Include the consideration of scenic resources in all public and private investment decisions.

Objective 6. Identify scenic roads. Support Scenic Byway program.

Action 6.1.1. Create a map within the transportation plan that highlights scenic roads.

Action 6.1.2. Consider scenic resource impacts in all road and development projects.

Action 6.1.3. Emphasize a review of scenic resource impacts on River Road, Pomfret Road, US Route 4, VT Route 12, and VT Route 106.

Goal 7: Uncontrolled access compromises the safety and efficiency of our public highways. Promote access management to preserve the safety and mobility for the traveling public.

Objective 7.1. Improve access management standards along our state-controlled highways.

not appropriate for this land use area.

RESIDENTIAL/OFFICE

The purpose of this land use area is to recognize the need for mixed-use transitions between areas that are primarily commercial in nature and areas that are primarily residential in nature. Most of the development within these land use areas is located adjacent to denser village centers or hamlets.

Minimum density for this land use area should be no less than one acre. Uses in this land use area are intended to be mixed in nature, including residences, offices, public facilities, and home occupations/enterprises. Retail development is not appropriate for this land use area.

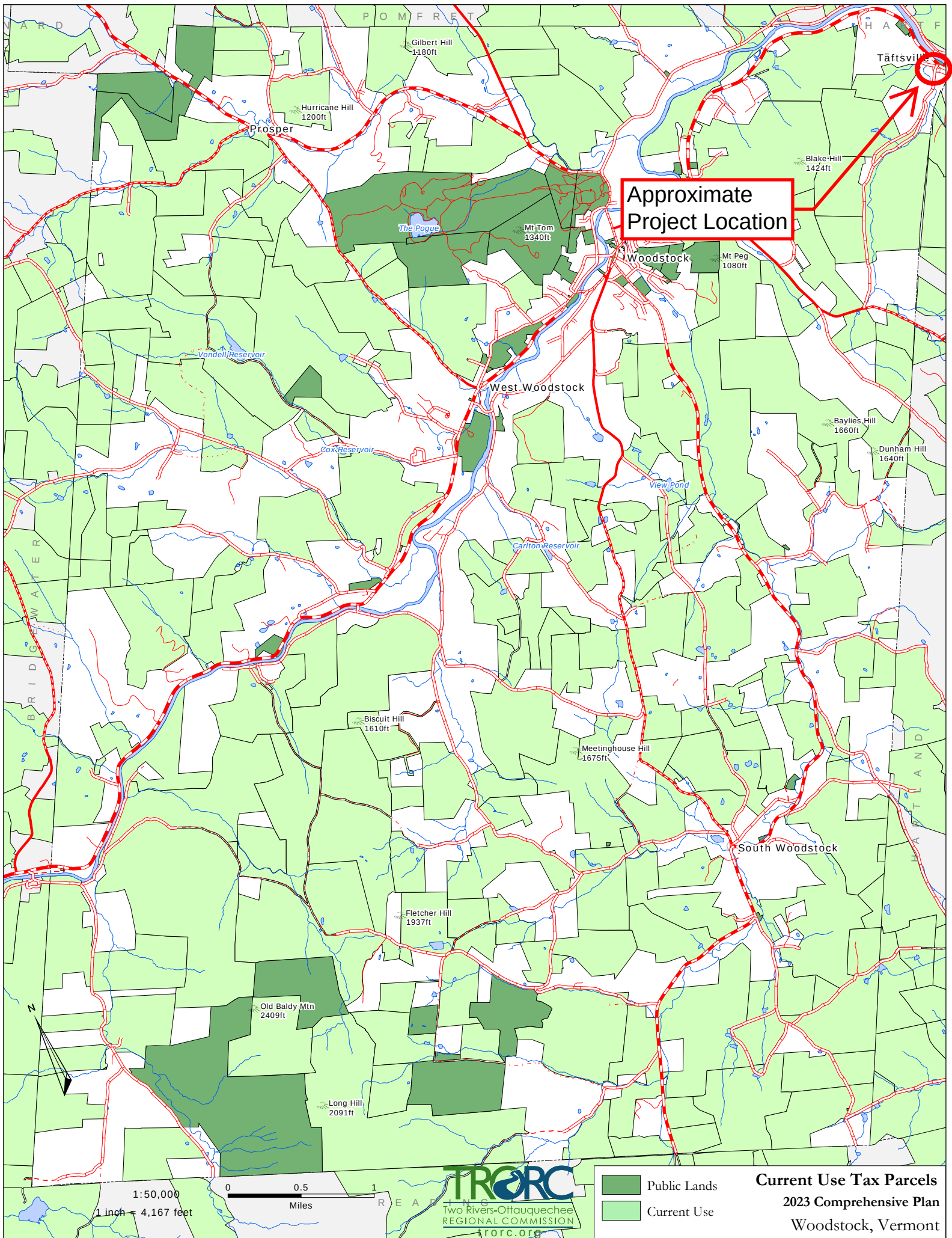
WOODSTOCK VILLAGE AREA

The purpose of the Woodstock Village area is to encourage a broad mix of high-density residential, commercial, and civic development within a cohesive core of the community. Uses within this area include retail, offices, inns, bed and breakfasts as well as other appropriate commercial uses. Density of development in this land use meant to be concentrated. Due to the unique character of Woodstock's Village, sections of this area are subject to design review standards, which are implemented through Woodstock's Village Zoning Regulations. These regulations shall be designed to allow for growth while preserving the integrity and character of the community. Design shall be compatible with Woodstock's historic, architectural and tourist resources through architectural and site review. These areas are depicted in the attached Design Review Overlay Map.

COMMERCIAL / INDUSTRIAL

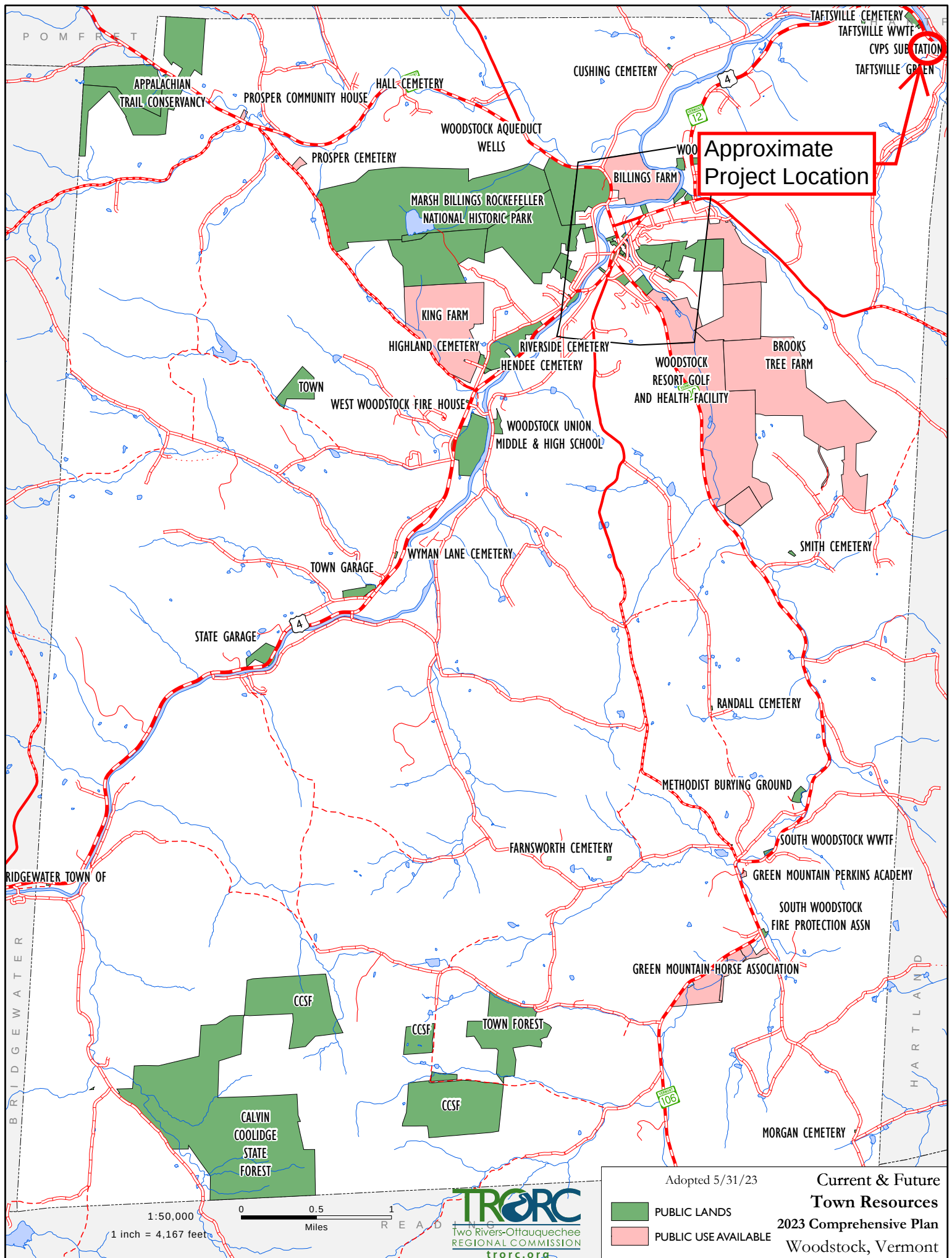
Additional areas of commercial and business potential on a smaller scale are located within the hamlet areas of the town. Taftsville has a country store and post office. There are several office sites along the Route 4 corridor. South Woodstock also has a country store and post office. In addition, the hamlet has a historic inn and a tack shop located next to the Green Mountain Horse Association property. West Woodstock historically had a country store and post office. Today, a 2,500 square foot store serves more than just the hamlet. Additionally, the hamlet has office uses at one end and an inn at the other end. This section of Route 4 is sprinkled with various commercial uses that tend to serve more than just the hamlet. Within areas designated as hamlets, small-scale retail development is appropriate.

Over the years the zoning regulations have been rewritten to recognize the various areas of economic activity. These range from acknowledgment of the unique commercial functions such as single lot zoning uses including the country stores and the inns to light commercial uses that require a square foot maximum. Office uses were a major demand a few years ago, but recently the need has peaked. The Town is investigating the potential for small apartments in the Business Service /Light Industrial zones. This may open housing opportunities for



Approximate
Project Location

Current Use Tax Parcels
2023 Comprehensive Plan
Woodstock, Vermont



Viewshed is derived from 21,050 points placed every 10m along the town highway network. Each pixel represents the number of points that can be seen from that location on the DEM. The existing town ridgeline zoning is shown for comparison.

