

## VII. CULTURAL & AESTHETIC RESOURCES

### A. Cultural and Historic Resources

The cultural, natural, economic, and political history of southern Windsor County has shaped the character of the Region. This character is reflected in the buildings, archeological sites, structures, events, and traditions established by residents throughout the Region's history. The importance of these cultural and historic resources is reflected in their ability to provide a sense of continuity and permanence to the Region's cultural fabric. A shared sense of history and cultural pride creates stronger communities and encourages the appreciation of other cultures. Historic and cultural sites, buildings, and events can also provide economic benefits - from the reuse of existing structures as unique community gathering places for the enjoyment of music, theater, and other cultural performances, to the attraction of tourists to the Region. It is therefore important to protect significant cultural and historic resources from destruction or inappropriate alteration in order to avoid losing the sense of place that has been developed over hundreds of years.

The Region and its residents have played an important role in shaping Vermont and American history and culture. The Vermont Constitution was drafted and signed in Windsor. Adopted in 1777, it was the first constitution in North America to abolish slavery, and was also ahead of its time in expanding voting rights. The Crown Point Military Road, begun in 1759 and connecting Fort No. 4 in New Hampshire with the fortifications at Crown Point and Mt. Independence on Lake Champlain, was built through Springfield, Weathersfield, Cavendish, and Ludlow. It originally served as a military supply route for the British army, and later for American forces during the Revolutionary War. U.S. Congressman and General Lewis Morris, and U.S. Consul William Jarvis, both residents of the Region, were major contributors to the character of the national government and economy in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Their homes still stand, serving as reminders of the Region's proud political and agricultural history. U.S. Secretary of State William Evarts made his home in Windsor, and President Calvin Coolidge was educated at the Black River Academy in Ludlow.

Southern Windsor County was home to the birth and development of the American machine tool industry, a tradition which continues today. Mass production of machine parts began at the former state prison in Windsor. This venture later became the Robbins and Lawrence Armory, which was an early manufacturer of rifles for the United States government, and produced 50,000 rifles during the Civil War for use by Union troops. Today it houses the American Precision Museum. Out of the armory came the Jones and Lamson (J&L) Company, which began a thriving machine tool industry in Springfield. J&L was followed by other familiar names, such as Fellows Gear Shaper, Bryant Grinder, and Lovejoy Tool. Since that time, only Lovejoy continues to operate today in a diminished capacity. Up north in Windsor, the industry continued after the demise of the armory, with the evolution of the Cone-Blanchard Company, which closed in the late 1990s. The building is now occupied by Seldon Technologies, which specializes in nanotechnology.

The woolen mill was also an important part of Vermont's history and economy in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Although the mills no longer operate, some of them can still be

seen across the Region. The Woolen Mill complex in Ludlow and the Mack Molding building in Cavendish are both excellent examples of how historic buildings can be reused while preserving their historic character. The old mill in Proctorsville serves as an example of how important historical development patterns are to Vermont communities.

Besides the traditional, historic building types prevalent in Vermont and New England towns, there are other, more distinct architectural styles common to the Region. The most obvious example is the “Snecked Ashlar” or glimmer stone veneer sheathed rubblestone masonry, which were built in the 1830's and 1840's by itinerant masons with stone from the nearby hills. Making up Chester's Stone Village are the original ten snecked ashlar buildings built on North Street which are still occupied and in pristine condition. These buildings can also be seen in homes, schoolhouses, and churches across the Region. In Vermont, this type of construction is found almost exclusively in southern Windsor County. Another distinct architectural feature found more often in the Region than in other parts of New England is the recessed balcony, which can be seen, among other places, in Ascutney, Perkinsville, and Ludlow.



Stone Village, Chester, Vermont

In addition to having distinct styles of architecture, the Region also has many individual buildings whose style or scale of construction makes them notable cultural and historic resources. The woolen mills mentioned earlier, along with the J&L and Fellows Gear Shaper complexes in Springfield, are examples. Two more examples, both in Windsor, are the Windsor House and the NAMCO block apartment building. The NAMCO block was built to house employees of the National Acme Manufacturing Co., which occupied the Lawrence and Robbins Armory building after the turn of the century. It is especially noteworthy because of its symmetry, and its efficient use of space, air circulation, and light. It was designed to provide the most comfortable living quarters possible within available space. After years of inattention, the Rockingham Area Community Land Trust and Housing Vermont are rehabilitating the building into 58 safe and affordable housing apartments. The Windsor House, according to the National Register of Historic Places, “served as a prominent hostelry for almost one hundred and fifty years and had many important personages sign its register, including Jenny Lind (famous Swedish opera singer known as the “Swedish Nightingale”) and Theodore Roosevelt.” Perhaps more importantly, the Windsor House is a shining example of the benefits of historic preservation. Threatened with destruction in the 1970s, the Windsor House was rescued by a local group calling itself Historic Windsor. This group saved the building, established it as a newly thriving commercial and cultural center, and engendered a sense of community spirit and pride that has brought new life to downtown Windsor. One of Windsor's greatest assets is its rich history, and that history is the foundation for much of the economic success enjoyed by the town in recent years.

The Region is home to several covered bridges built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Upper Falls in Weathersfield, Bests and Bowers in West Windsor, Baltimore in Springfield, Titcomb in Cavendish), which are representative of Vermont and New England history. Built in 1866, the Cornish-Windsor bridge is 465 feet long and is the second longest covered wooden bridge in the United States. Another transportation feature important to the history of the Region is the railroad. The construction of the railroad system in 1800s was instrumental in the development of industries such as the mining and manufacturing, and it accelerated the trend of westward migration by Vermonters in the latter half of the century. Vermont railroads had another important effect on the state, one that remains a part of its identity long after the decline of the railroads themselves - the creation of the tourist industry. It was the ease of rail travel that first brought vacationers to the state and the Region in large numbers, attracted by pastoral scenery, mineral springs, and mountaintop hotels. By 1950, Vermont was aggressively marketing itself across the country as a tourist destination, and today tourism and related service-oriented businesses are dominant factors in the Region's economy. Passenger rail service is making a comeback across the state and may someday re-emerge as a significant economic force in Vermont. The establishment of an Amtrak stop in Windsor has already started the process in the Region.



Cornish-Windsor Bridge, Windsor, VT

In addition to a rich American history, the Region retains some of its pre-Colonial heritage. People have likely lived in and around the Region for several thousand years. Many place names such as Ascutney, Connecticut, and Okemo are derived from American Indian names. In addition, Mount Ascutney is a prime example of a geological feature called a monadnock which is a Native American term for an isolated hill or lone mountain. The Crown Point Road was built along what had been a major east-west route through the Green Mountains for area Indian populations. In Springfield, an archeological discovery known as the Skitchewaug site has provided insight into the lifestyles of the Sokoki people who inhabited the Region in the centuries immediately preceding European settlement.

The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation (DHP) has produced a book for each town in the Region listing all of the sites and districts on the State Register of Historic Places. There are also numerous sites in the Region listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Chester, Ludlow, Springfield, Weathersfield and Windsor all have historically designated districts listed on the National Register. The Weathersfield Historical Society has produced its own detailed registry for the town, which has been adopted by the Vermont DHP. According to DHP, the state register is a list of “districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects” of local, state, and national significance in “history, architecture, archeology, and culture”; the National Register is “the official federal listing of historic, architectural, and archeological resources worthy of preservation”. The structures, sites, markers, and districts listed in these registries, along with the Region's cemeteries, are all of regional significance. **Table 7.1** below lists the museums located in the Region, celebrating both the cultural heritage and the contemporary talents of the Region's residents. **Table 7.2** below represents

a survey completed by the RPC in 1997 to determine what each town considered to be its five most significant historic and cultural resources.

Andover	None
Baltimore	None
Cavendish	Cavendish Historical Society Museum
Chester	Chester Art Guild Chester Historical Society
Ludlow	Black River Academy Museum
Springfield	Eureka Schoolhouse Miller Art Center – Springfield Art & Historical Society
Reading	Reading Historical Society
Weathersfield	Reverend Dan Foster House – Weathersfield Historical Society
West Windsor	West Windsor Historical Society
Windsor	American Precision Museum Old Constitution House Historic Windsor Cornish Colony Museum

Source: RPC 1997

Andover	Town Hall; Rowell’s Inn; Middle Town, Pettengill & East Hill Cemeteries	Baltimore	School House; Baltimore Cemetery; Noah Piper House; Cellar Holes; Loomis House
Cavendish	Universalist Church; Academy Building; Historic Society Building; Old Jenney House; Crown Point Road	Chester	“so called” Academy Building; Yosemite Firehouse #2; Heald House; Chester Inn; Stone Village
Ludlow	Ludlow Graded School #10; Black River Academy Museum; Ludlow Woolen Mill; John Garibaldi Sargent House; Baptist Church	Reading	Reading Town Hall; Cellar Holes Bailey’s Mills; Indian Stones; The 1815 House (Amsden Tavern)
Springfield	Eureka School House; Hartness House; Stellafane (observatory) Art/Historic Society Building Comtu Falls	Weathersfield	Upper Falls Covered Bridge; Weathersfield Center Historic District; Weathersfield Bow Historic District; Crown Point Road; Amsden Limekilns
West Windsor	Bowers Covered Bridge; Best’s Covered Bridge; Brownsville Historic District; Sheddsville Historic Area; Daniel Cady Mausoleum	Windsor	Old Constitution House; Old Court House; Old South Church & Burial Grounds; Windsor-Cornish Covered Bridge; American Precision Museum

Source: RPC; this is not a comprehensive list of all historic resources for each town, but only a preliminary survey to determine what the towns consider as five of their most important historic resources.

The Region hosts numerous fairs and festivals that draw visitors from outside, including the Windsor County Agricultural Fair in Springfield, and the Springfield Apple Festival. Local events specific to each town, such as the annual Moon Dance and Heritage Festival in Windsor, also contribute to a strong sense of community.

## **B. Tools for Historic Preservation**

The following are some of the most commonly used tools for protecting historic resources in Vermont. In addition, **Appendix C** lists several additional resources and tools for historic preservation.

**State and National Registers** - Listing on the State or National Register identifies a resource as having historical or cultural significance. While listing does not place any restrictions on property owners, it can foster a sense of pride and responsibility in individuals and communities. Listing on the National Register provides protection against the use of federal funds to negatively affect the historic character of a site; it can also provide communities and individual property owners with federal funding for rehabilitation projects, and with investment tax credits.

**Downtown Designations** - Vermont's "Historic Downtown Development Act" is intended to "encourage investment in and restoration of municipal downtown districts". Areas that receive designation as a "downtown development district" are eligible for benefits in the form of financial aid and tax incentives for certain projects. In order to obtain official district status for its downtown, a municipality must demonstrate that it has met certain criteria. In our Region, Springfield and Windsor have designated downtown status, and Ludlow is seeking designation.

**Designated Village Centers** - Village center designation, as provided for in 24 V.S.A. Chapter 76A, was created by the legislature to recognize and encourage local efforts to revitalize Vermont's traditional village centers. While village center revitalization is an ongoing process to improve a community's vitality and livability, village center designation is only one tool and its focus is on supporting commercial activity in the center of Vermont's villages. In our Region, the villages of Cavendish and Proctorsville are Designated Village Centers.

**Certified Local Governments (CLGs)** - A 1980 amendment to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires that at least 10% of states' Historic Preservation Funds be given to "Certified Local Governments" (CLGs). A local government becomes eligible for this program when the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) certifies that the local government has established its own historic preservation commission and a program that meets state and federal standards. In addition to being eligible for matching survey and planning grants, CLGs review nominations of National Historic Register properties within their jurisdictions and provide local perspective to the plans and programs of the VT Division of Historic Preservation. Windsor is the only town in the Region that is a CLG.

**Local zoning** - Under Vermont law, towns may include Design Review Districts and Historic Districts in their zoning bylaws. Design Review Districts offer communities, after public hearing and preparation of a design plan, the opportunity to review and approve the construction, demolition, substantial alteration, movement, or change in use of a building within the district. Historic Districts offer a more specific set of guidelines for reviewing projects in the district based on historical and architectural significance and a predetermined

set of criteria. Towns may also include review of historic impacts under conditional use and site plan approval guidelines in their zoning bylaws.

**Act 250** - Some development may be subject to review of potential impact on historic resources under criteria 8 and 10 of Act 250. Under criterion 8, applicants must show that a project will “not have an undue adverse effect on the scenic or natural beauty of the area, aesthetics, historic sites or rare and irreplaceable natural areas”. Under Criterion 10, a project must be shown to be in conformance with “any duly adopted local or regional plan or capital program”.

**Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966** – The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation reviews projects when a federal agency/funding is involved with a project.

**Vermont Historic Preservation Act** – In accordance with 22 V.S.A. §742 the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation reviews projects when a state agency/funding is involved with the project, on behalf of the Vermont Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

The most important tools for historic preservation in any town are a sense of pride and a strong stewardship ethic in its residents. Education and cooperation between local planning and development bodies, historical societies, residents, visitors, the business community, and property owners should be fostered throughout the Region. The cultural and historic resources of southern Windsor County may represent its most distinct and outstanding feature. Recognizing and protecting their value can foster civic pride; stimulate improvements in education; encourage environmental protection and sound land use planning; help attract businesses and expand tourism; and support the agricultural and forestry economies through the preservation of farms and maintenance of historical settlement patterns.

## **C. Aesthetics: Scenic Lands and Open Space**

The harmonious mix of open space, villages, farms, country roads, mountainous terrain, historic architecture, and surface waters in the Region provides for scenic vistas and an attractive landscape. This landscape is also an economic asset, and has a tangible economic value to the Region. The rural lifestyle and scenic landscapes attract many tourists. Tourism is a significant industry in the Region. The preservation of these aesthetic and scenic resources has become increasingly difficult due to economic and development pressures. Over the past several decades, highway strip development has emerged between town village centers and the countryside thus threatening the Region’s traditional land use pattern. Agricultural fields and working forestlands juxtaposed to dense villages combine to create the traditional Vermont landscape that residents and tourists cherish. Development can occur in ways that do not adversely impact this traditional landscape, such as innovative site plans, clustering around already established villages and town centers. Future development needs to be cognizant of the landscape’s heritage and work towards mitigating any adverse impacts to the land’s historic legacy.

Efforts to alleviate these pressures or to mitigate any negative effects of development are necessary to protect, preserve, and improve the significant aesthetic resources within the Region. Such efforts should include a continued emphasis and restructuring of municipal planning and zoning administration, which protects and preserves the landscape heritage in the Region.

The Region has prominent ridgelines and mountain tops that are inherently and especially sensitive, e.g. the Alps and Little Ascutney Mountain. Development in these areas is strongly discouraged. Such proposed development should work towards design plans that retain the prominent natural appearance by locating in less visible areas and away from highly visible ridgelines, blending and or hiding structures within existing wooded hillsides, and where possible, avoid excessive use of reflective glass. Aesthetic resources are protected by Criterion 8 of Vermont's Act 250, which does not relegate scenic beauty to pristine areas alone, but to settled areas and farmlands as well.

Natural beauty, visual harmony, and peace and quiet have all been addressed by the Environmental Board as aesthetic values. In its Quechee Analysis, "Undue Adverse Effects" are clarified by the following factors:

Would the project have any "adverse" aesthetic impact?

- a. What is the surrounding area like?
- b. Is the project compatible with its surrounding area?
- c. Have suitable colors and materials been selected?
- d. How visible is the project?
- e. How does the project affect open space in the area?
- f. Is the project proposed for a visually sensitive type of land?

If there is an adverse effect, is it "undue"?

- a. Would the project violate any clearly written community standard?
- b. Would the average person find the project shocking or offensive?
- c. Has the applicant failed to take reasonable steps to lessen any adverse effects?

The Board has characterized the Vermont settlement pattern as open, rural areas punctuated by village centers and strives to protect that pattern. Though the term "aesthetics" is broadly construed, towns can use these factors when considering policies to guide the protection of aesthetic resources.

## 1. Light Pollution

One of the most valued resources of a rural region is a night sky unimpaired by "sky glow" from the misdirected light of urbanized areas and recreational resorts. Many outdoor lights are poorly designed or improperly aimed, allowing light to project above the horizon and wash out the view of the stars. Poorly designed exterior lighting also creates annoying glare, light trespass on neighboring property, and energy waste. There are now options for outdoor lighting, which are better designed to direct light downward where it belongs. Future consideration of this technology would help reduce cumulative negative effects on aesthetic resources.

## 2. Scenic Roads and Byways

Vermont has been involved with scenery preservation issues as early as 1937. In 1966, the State established the Scenery Preservation Council. Key milestones for the Council were the passage of the “outdoor Advertising Law, i.e., the billboard ban in 1968; numerous studies on Vermont’s scenic qualities; and the publication of the “Vermont Backroads Handbook”. The Scenic Roads Law was passed in 1977, initiating the state Scenic Roads Program. The purpose of the Scenic Roads Program was to protect the physical character and condition of the roadway right-of-way.

The passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) in 1991 initiated the National Scenic Byways Program. In 1992, Vermont received ISTEA funding to develop the Vermont Byway Program which focused scenic byway designation through corridor planning at the local and regional level. The Vermont Byways Program expanded upon the strict approach of the former program to one that gives equal recognition to property rights, land use, and resource planning issues. The Vermont Byways program reflects a multifaceted approach to encourage communities, preservationists, business owners, and property owners to work together to protect Vermont’s rural and scenic character. The purpose of the Byway program is to foster cooperative ventures or public-private partnerships, and to protect, enhance, and/or promote the natural, cultural, historic, archeological, recreational, and scenic qualities of the National Scenic Byways Program. Beginning in 1993 with the reactivation of the Scenery Preservation Council, the Scenic Roads Program was renamed the Vermont Byways Program.

The Scenery Preservation Council primarily focuses on the following:

1. Consultation with municipalities, regional planning commissions, and the Transportation Board for local, state, and federal designation of roads and highways.
2. Encourage and assist fostering awareness on scenery preservation and aesthetic issues related to roads, highways, and related areas.
3. Review applications to the National Scenic Byways Program and make recommendations to the Secretary of the Agency of Transportation.

A state-designated scenic byway may be nominated to be part of the National Scenic Byway program as long as it meets certain criteria and possesses one of six intrinsic qualities. The criteria for state designation to the National Scenic Byway Program are as follows: 1) must have a completed corridor management plan, 2) must accommodate bicycle and pedestrian traffic where feasible, 3) must accommodate two-wheel drive passenger vehicles with standard clearances. “All-American Roads” must meet the National Scenic Byway criteria listed above, and must possess at least two of six intrinsic qualities. The intrinsic qualities for which National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads are recognized are features that are considered representative, unique, or irreplaceable. These features fall under six broad categories: scenic, cultural, historic, archeological, recreational, and natural.

The National Scenic Byways program was established under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) in 1991 in order to “identify, designate and promote



scenic byways and to protect and enhance the recreational, scenic, historic and cultural qualities of the areas through which these byways pass.” Scenic Byways are eligible for federal funding for tourism or resource conservation activities along designated corridors (Vermont’s Highway System Policy Plan, VTrans, 2004).

On September 22, 2005, the Federal Highway Administration awarded national designation to the Connecticut River Byway making it officially a National Scenic Byway. It is a two-state byway, spanning the west and east shores of the Connecticut River in Vermont and New Hampshire. The segment of the Byway in this Region includes the US Route 5 corridor through Windsor, Weathersfield and Springfield. The two spurs including VT Route 44 to Brownsville and VT Route 11 to downtown Springfield, continue to be part of the originally designated Connecticut River Scenic Byway .

State scenic roads may be established by recommendation of the Scenery Preservation Council per 19 V.S.A. §2501. Any construction or maintenance work on designated state scenic roads must be consistent with the standards established by VTrans pursuant to 10 V.S.A. §425. The segment of VT Route 131 in Cavendish is the only designated Scenic Highway in this Region.

Towns in Vermont are enabled to designate municipally-maintained roads as “scenic roads,” as established by 19 V.S.A. §2502. Town scenic roads are also subject to the standards established by the State Transportation Board. Those standards for scenic roads address appropriate minimum roadway widths, alignment, landscaping and traffic control methods, pursuant to 10 VSA §425. There are no scenic roads in this Region at this time.

### 3. Scenic Resource Inventories

As part of the Connecticut River Scenic Byway Study, regional planning commissions developed systems to inventory and evaluate scenic resources. Because evaluation of these resources is subjective, such systems can be highly variable. Areas of scenic significance, including ridgelines, are determined through a process that involves public input by local planning boards, Conservation Commissions, and interested local residents. In addition to determining whether roadways are suitable for scenic byway programs, an inventory of scenic resources contributes to local open space, conservation, and telecommunications tower planning efforts. Currently, only the towns of Reading, Weathersfield and West Windsor have active Conservation Commissions.

The following landscape types are areas that towns may wish to consider when determining areas of scenic significance:

- shorelands adjacent to public lakes, rivers, or ponds;
- prominent ridgelines, mountain tops, or excessively steep slopes that can be viewed
- from public roadways;
- exceptional agricultural and historic areas, recognized as outstanding resources;
- areas within or immediately adjacent to wetlands and natural areas designated by towns or the state; or

- areas of high scenic quality such as ridgelines which are publicly recognized as exceptionally unique or are noted examples of the dominant characteristics of an area in the Region.

In addition, the diversity of landscape types; the size, scale, and architectural continuity of the manmade landscape; the focal dominance; and the intactness of the landscape are likely to contribute to the scenic qualities of an area.

#### 4. Planning for Open Space

“Open space” may be defined as land which is not developed and is of some benefit to the public for many of the reasons described throughout this chapter and the Natural Resources chapter. Open space that is publicly owned or permanently protected through the sale or donation of development rights may ensure the long-term productive capacity of forest or agricultural land; preserve wildlife habitat; protect groundwater resources; provide recreation land; and preserve important historic, scenic and cultural resources.

Open space may be land that is conserved either through fee simple acquisition by local, state, or federal government or through the sale or donation of development rights to local government or a nonprofit conservation organization, often using a conservation easement which limits development on land while keeping it available for farming, forestry, and recreational enjoyment.

The Upper Valley Land Trust (UFLT) is located in Hanover, New Hampshire, and provides conservation leadership, tools and expertise to permanently protect the working farms, forested ridges, wildlife habitat, water resources, trails and scenic landscapes that surround residential areas and commercial centers. UFLT focuses its mission in 44 Vermont and New Hampshire towns (including Springfield, Weathersfield, Windsor, West Windsor and Reading) in the upper Connecticut River valley. UFLT is a sponsor member of the [Land Trust Alliance](#), an organization that promotes land conservation by providing advocacy and professional resources to over 1600 land trusts nationwide.

In addition, the Vermont Land Trust (VLT) is one of the most effective land trusts in the country. Its primary focus is on permanently conserving productive, recreational, and scenic lands vital to Vermont’s and rural economy and environment. VLT has helped landowners in communicates throughout Vermont, to permanently protect more than 483,000 acres – 8% of Vermont’s privately-owned land. **Table 7.3** below lists conserved lands in the Region.

Open space may also be privately owned agricultural or forestland, which offers economic benefits through productive use and may contribute to the scenic nature of the landscape or be accessible for recreation. Owners of such land may be encouraged to maintain its productive capacity through programs such as Local Tax Stabilization agreements for farmland, forest land, or open space; or through the state’s Use Value Appraisal Program, commonly referred to as “Current Use”, which requires towns to assess enrolled farmland or forest land at use value rather than fair market value. Fear of liability often causes landowners to prohibit public access for recreational uses; however, legislation enacted in

<b>Table 7.3 Conserved Land in Southern Windsor County</b>			
Town	Total Acres	Conserved Acres*	% of Total
Andover	18,432	1,091.20	5.9%
Baltimore	3,008	N/A	N/A
Cavendish	25,344	202.90	.8%
Chester	35,766	230.00	.64%
Ludlow	22,912	29.00	.13%
Reading	26,560	951.59	3.6%
Springfield	31,552	364.90	1.2%
Weathersfield	28,032	2,074.63	7.4%
West Windsor	15,808	741.41	4.7%
Windsor	12,544	768.04	6.1%

Source: State of Vermont Tax Department, Property Valuation and Review, August 2001

\* Includes Development Rights and Fee Simple Transactions

1997 protects a landowner from such liability, 10 V.S.A. §5791-5795. This may encourage landowners to make their land available to the public for hunting, fishing and other recreational uses.

In order to ensure that open lands that provide the greatest public benefit are protected for present and future generations, towns are encouraged to develop open space plans. Open space development is gaining favor as an alternative to large-lot zoning, which swallows up land and leads to sprawl. By clustering lots of smaller sizes and leaving large areas of open land to be enjoyed by residents, these “conservation subdivisions” can actually lower infrastructure costs for developers and produce other economic incentives, while preserving open space. Open space design can help to encourage a better sense of community as well as preserve the aesthetics we value so highly in Vermont. For more on this topic see the Land Use chapter.

### **CULTURAL/HISTORIC RESOURCE GOALS**

1. To ensure the preservation, maintenance and enhancement of significant cultural and historic resources throughout the Region.
2. To promote the historical and cultural heritage of the Region.
3. To develop a policy on significant regional viewsheds.

### **CULTURAL/HISTORIC RESOURCE POLICIES**

1. Towns are encouraged to inventory and prioritize local resources to protect significant cultural and historic resources in their town plans and implementation documents.
2. Proposed development adjacent to or within significant historic or cultural sites should be compatible with the resources, and should enhance their historic value and appreciation where possible.

3. Efforts of community, regional, state, and federal organizations which sponsor or provide financial or technical assistance for cultural and historic preservation and education in the Region should be supported.
4. Reuse of historically significant buildings and sites that maintains and preserves their architectural and historic character is encouraged.
5. Regionally significant historic buildings and sites should be preserved. Necessary renovations should reflect the historic character of the resource. In the case of private homes, owners are encouraged to consider the site's historic, cultural, and economic value to themselves and the community when deciding how best to maintain and manage them.
6. Encourage towns, through their Planning Commissions and on-site visits, to educate the public and promote awareness of significant cultural/aesthetic resources, such as cellar holes and stonework, etc.

### **CULTURAL/HISTORIC RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Work cooperatively with local communities to inventory and map significant cultural and historic resources to ensure their protection.
2. Work with communities to develop criteria for evaluating the impacts that projects may have on designated historic sites or districts.
3. Continue to support cooperative efforts to designate National Historic Register Sites and Districts and evaluate federally funded projects in the Region that impact designated properties and resources.
4. Support the development of programs focusing on local, regional, and state history and culture in the Region's schools.
5. Provide support for towns wishing to include design control districts or local historic districts in their zoning bylaws under 24 V.S.A. §4407.

### **SCENIC LANDS AND OPEN SPACE GOALS**

1. Achieve a balance between scenic or open land uses and other land uses in the best interest of the environment and the Region's residents.
2. Maintain or enhance the diversity of ecosystems throughout the Region and promote connectivity between conserved lands wherever possible.
3. Protect the environmental character and integrity of significant natural and scenic resources as identified by member towns.

**SCENIC LANDS AND OPEN SPACE POLICIES** (*see also Natural Resources Chapter*)

1. Local, state or federal programs and legislative efforts which protect and enhance the economic, cultural, environmental, and aesthetic values of forested and scenic resources should be supported.
2. Local Tax Stabilization (Current Use) programs that provide incentives for landowners to conserve farmland, forestland, and open space should be supported.
3. Towns should be encouraged to develop policies that promote clustering or other development patterns that will maximize forested areas and open space.
4. Conservation of open and scenic lands through the use of public/private funds for the purchase of development rights, fee simple purchase, and other such measures should be supported.
5. The preservation of historic and archeological resources that enhance the significant scenic resources of the Region should be supported.
6. Development projects which complement or enhance significant scenic resources should be supported.
7. The following sites are inherently and especially sensitive, and as such, development in these areas is discouraged:
  - Hawks Mountain in Cavendish, Baltimore, and Weathersfield
  - The Alps region of Cavendish and Reading
  - Little Ascutney Mountain in Weathersfield and West Windsor
  - Terrible Mountain in Andover and Ludlow
  - The Pinnacle in Ludlow
8. Towns should be encouraged to develop policies for the protection of regional scenic viewsheds.
9. Structures and exterior areas should be illuminated only at levels necessary to ensure safety and security of persons and property.
10. Encourage exterior lighting that is designed so that light projects downward and is shielded from public roads, adjacent residences, and distant vantage points.
11. Encourage additional scenic byway designation where appropriate.

**SCENIC LANDS AND OPEN SPACE RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Work with local communities to identify and develop a comprehensive inventory of forested lands, open space, and significant scenic resources throughout the Region,

- and analyze the results. Assist communities in developing conservation strategies for locally and regionally significant scenic resources.
2. Work with member towns and appropriate agencies to secure donations or acquisitions of scenic easements, greenways segments, forested land or other land and water areas that will enhance the significant scenic resources of the Region.
  3. Continue to work with, and assist in the development of, local Conservation Commissions.
  4. When the opportunity arises, work with local organizations, neighboring regional planning commissions, and state entities to evaluate certain roadways and corridors for Vermont Byway designation suitability.
  5. Assist member towns to update town plans and implementation measures which protect and preserve the landscape heritage in the Region.