

West Windsor Town Plan

Adopted May 27, 2014

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

In July of 2010, as the Planning Commission was putting the finishing touches on our Town Plan, the Ascutney Mountain Resort went into foreclosure and our local ski area closed. The nation's economy was already in recession, and this event further exacerbated the effects of the recession on our local economy. Unemployment increased, tourism fell sharply, and housing values plummeted. The following summer, Tropical Storm Irene severely damaged the transportation infrastructure in West Windsor and much of Vermont, worsening an already tenuous situation. In typical Vermont fashion, state and local road crews and contractors worked feverishly to rebuild the roads and bridges that had been destroyed, while friends and neighbors helped each other repair their homes. In the midst of all this damage to our homes, our highways, and our economy, the Planning Commission decided they would start planning for a more vibrant future immediately.

The state of Vermont requires towns to revise their plans every five years but, given the severity of the situation facing West Windsor, the Planning Commission agreed that they could not afford to wait and they resolved to move forward with a new plan ahead of schedule. Although the Ascutney Mountain Resort has been an extremely valuable asset to our small community, bankruptcy in the early 1990s and foreclosure in 2010 have demonstrated that relying on a single entity to drive the local economy can be risky. West Windsor has many assets, including scenic beauty and extensive recreational trails, which can be promoted to attract visitors to our community and improve our economy. Likewise, there are deficiencies that our town must address in order to thrive in the 21st century. To attract visitors, inspire young families to move to our town, and grow our economy, universal, reliable high-speed internet access is essential. To enable new residential and business development in the village of Brownsville, a sewer system is necessary.

West Windsor is a small, rural community that has faced many complex issues in its evolution from an agricultural economy to a ski town and second home community. Now, with our identity as a ski town in jeopardy, it appears that the community must re-invent itself once again to maintain our position as a "destination" rather than a "drive by." While West Windsor may remain a bedroom community for Dartmouth College and the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, our town has the potential to be much more than that. The purpose of this plan is to provide the town with strategies for building on our strengths, overcoming our weaknesses, and emerging from our current economic crisis as a more vibrant community. While a Town Plan is not a law, it is a legal document upon which regulations may be developed. It provides benchmarks by which new development and planning projects may be measured and serves as an integral component of the Act 250 process. The Town Plan also encourages the use of non-regulatory measures, such as conservation easements and land acquisition, to achieve town goals. In addition, the plan reviews the status of town services and infrastructure and the condition of town properties to assess and prioritize needs.

Since the adoption of the 2010 Town Plan, town and school officials, highway department employees, emergency responders, and local citizens have made considerable progress in implementing its recommendations. In addition to the herculean task of rebuilding after Tropical Storm Irene, our highway department reconstructed sections of Coon Club and Cemetery Roads, replaced under-sized bridges on Wardner, Silver Hill, and Brook Roads, stabilized the stream

bank along Lower Sheddsville Road, and repaired several large slides along Rush Meadow Road. To secure public access to recreational trails, West Windsor obtained an Act 250 permit for the trail system in the Town Forest, improved the road to the Town Forest parking area to provide year-round access and entered into trail license agreements with Snowdance LLC, OLCC Vermont LLC, and several other private property owners. To address critical public safety issues, the town installed a new UHF repeater on the tower on Mt. Ascutney and entered into an intermunicipal agreement with Windsor for police services. Comcast, Wavecomm, Fairpoint, EC Fiber, and a number of satellite companies have expanded, or plan to expand, the availability of high-speed internet. The Mary L. Blood Library has a new roof and a number of improvements have been made to the Town Hall. In addition, the Town Forest Committee has updated the Town Forest Management Plan, the Wastewater Committee has conducted a village wastewater feasibility study, the Selectboard has adopted revised zoning regulations, the Listers have completed a town-wide property reappraisal, and the town website has been revamped.

As noted above, several major changes have occurred over the past few years (i.e. since the 2010 Town Plan was adopted) that have affected the policies and recommendations included in the 2014 Town Plan. In addition to the changes already noted, work has begun on the reclamation of the tailing ponds area behind the vacant talc plant, and the talc plant itself has been purchased by Pellet Property Holdings LLC for conversion to a wood pellet plant. Once restored, the property behind the plant may be donated to the town. Planning for the possible future recreational use of this property should begin now.

Wastewater concerns at the resort and in the village resulted in the town purchasing the existing resort sewer line and collection system on February 12, 2014, and seeking funding for the construction of a new collection system in the village.

Slow but steady progress by EC Fiber in providing high-speed fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) internet service to customers in member towns to our north (e.g. Barnard, Bethel, etc.) inspired West Windsor's EC Fiber delegates to ask voters and local investors to help finance an initial fiber optic loop in West Windsor. While the response from voters was enthusiastic, the response from investors has been lukewarm. On May 30, 2013, voters approved funding for a fiber-optic line to serve West Windsor's municipal buildings and to provide the foundation for expanded high-speed residential service in other areas of town. However, additional funding from private investors is needed to finance the residential portion of the network before the project can move forward.

During 2012 and 2013, the Planning Commission held public meetings and a community forum and conducted a recreation survey to facilitate public input in the planning process. The results of the survey (see Appendix B) helped focus the recommendations included in this plan.

The residents of West Windsor have decided that the town's highly valued features are scenic beauty, natural resources, wildlife habitat and recreational trails. The Town is committed to protecting these features for future generations.

Many West Windsor residents and second home owners are also concerned about having universal access to state-of-the-art telecommunications technology, including high-speed

internet, and favor small-scale alternative energy projects that are in keeping with the rural character of the town.

HISTORY OF WEST WINDSOR

See Appendix A for additional information

West Windsor originally was the West Parish of Windsor. On July 6, 1761, Josiah Willard of Winchester, New Hampshire "sued out" a six mile square grant for Windsor from Benning Wentworth, governor of New Hampshire, in the name of King George III of Great Britain. It was seven years later that the second division of house lots was mapped for the entire grant, setting the tone for dividing the township into two parishes.

It was not long before a crude church was built, and a cemetery was established high on a hill by the well-traveled track, which led west through the township. Settlers were "making pitches," buying land, and establishing their subsistence farms. The first central hamlet of the West Parish was the cluster of homes in the bowl of hills just west of the church. So many members of the Shedd family settled there, that the tiny community, with its tannery, potash works, blacksmith, store (complete with library), tavern, and school, has always been known as Sheddsville.

Settlers in the hills carved rough roads to sawmills and gristmills in the soggy valley along Mill Brook. By 1810 a fulling and carding mill was using waterpower to process the wool from sheep that were thriving on the rocky hillsides. As mills drew settlers to the valley, and Return Brown built his brick home with seven chimneys near where Potash Brook flows into Mill Brook, the community grew and thrived. By this time, children in the large families had the opportunity to get a basic education, for there were eleven one-room schoolhouses scattered throughout the township.

When Merino sheep were imported into Vermont by Consul-General William Jarvis of Weathersfield, local farmers began to enlarge and improve their flocks. As the more successful farmers bought out smaller farms, many families moved west to land that was more fertile and more easily cultivated.

Over the years there had been underlying friction between the urban East Parish on the river and the agricultural West Parish. Much of the problem had to do with money, roads and caring for the indigent and poor. By an act of the Vermont legislature, the two parishes were legally separated November 4, 1814. Less than a year and a half later they made up their differences and were rejoined on March 1, 1816.

The sheep industry continued to flourish until the middle of the century when there were over 7,000 sheep denuding the once forested hills. Some of the farmers who were concentrating on breeding their sheep for even higher wool quality were selling prize rams not only to shepherds in our own western territories, but also to sheep-men in Australia and South Africa.

Friction continued between the two parishes. In 1848 they were again legally separated. Since that time they have remained two distinct townships. The first census taken after West Windsor was an independent township records the town as having 1,002 inhabitants.

In the late 1800's, as the sheep industry waned, the dairy business began to grow. A cheese factory bought milk from the local farmers. Several varieties of cheese were made and sent by rail to the Boston market. As refrigeration improved and more cows were taking over old sheep pastures, a creamery was established which also shipped milk to Massachusetts. By 1930, at the height of dairying, West Windsor's population had dropped to 512. There were 94 herds of cattle, and a total of 1,148 cows. That same year there were 91 students in the four existing schools.

In the mid 1990s, the last "milking" farm went out of business. Horse farms and high-value second homes continued to be built in many rural areas of town. The social impact of nearby Dartmouth College and Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center grew larger.

In 1946, when skiing began to be a popular sport, a rope tow pulled avid skiers up a hill south of Brownsville at the base of Mount Ascutney. From that early start, a substantial family ski area was developed with tows, snowmaking, chair lifts, central lodges, and an ever-increasing number of trails. The operation changed hands a number of times, each time expanding until it had a hotel, fitness center, and many condominiums.

During the early 1990's, the Mount Ascutney Resort went into bankruptcy. The bankruptcy extended over several years and, when the court finally sold the property, the town only received a portion of the total taxes due. Deeply in debt, with local banks reluctant to lend to the town, the Selectboard raised the property tax rate enough to pay off the town's borrowing debt in a single year. As a result, property values grew over the next few years and the town rebounded.

From 1993 until 2008, the Resort was owned exclusively by Snowdance LLC. In 2008, the fitness center and several of the hotel buildings at the Resort were sold to Orange Lake Resorts, a Florida-based timeshare company. In 2010, the senior lender to Snowdance LLC foreclosed on the property and the ski area ceased operations. Town officials, residents and property owners are hopeful that the ski area will reopen now that the foreclosure action has been resolved but, currently, it remains closed. Due to the housing crisis in 2008 and the closing of the ski area in 2010, property values at the resort have fallen substantially. A town-wide reappraisal in 2013 resulted in a 17% decline in the Grand List.

As of the 2010 U. S. Census, there were 1,099 residents in West Windsor. In the central village of Brownsville there is one church, one school, one general store, a library, the town hall, and the West Windsor Historical Society, headquartered in the old grange hall. Though West Windsor is no longer considered an agricultural-farming community, there are many homeowners who have gardens and animals. There are many small businesses and cottage industries throughout the township. Most West Windsor workers commute to work in other towns. Many residents are retired. A number of dwellings are second homes. West Windsor's quiet dirt roads, which are great for recreational use, have attracted many outdoor enthusiasts to the area.

The town's decision not to pave any additional roads has helped West Windsor retain its rural character.

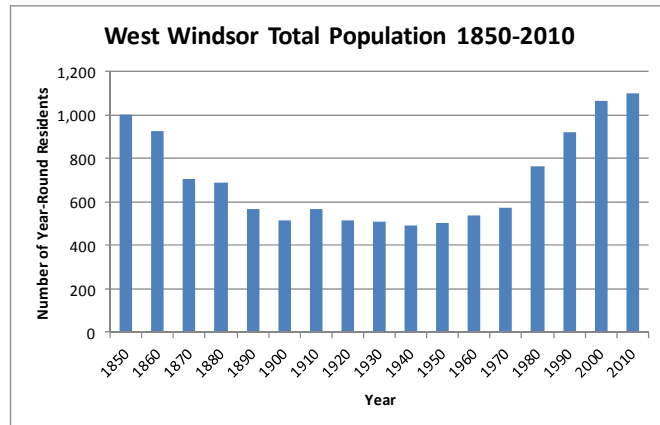
POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS¹

Population

The town of West Windsor experienced a high rate of population growth between 1970 and 2000. Based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the rate of growth between 1970 and 1980 was 33.6 percent. The rate of growth between 1980 and 1990 was 21.0 percent and the rate of growth from 1990 to 2000 was 15.6 percent. In other words, the total population of West Windsor almost doubled over the thirty year period from 1970 to 2000. Between 2000 and 2010, population only increased by 3%.

Population			
Year	Town of West Windsor	Windsor County	State of Vermont
1850	1,002	38,504	314,304
1860	924	37,193	315,098
1870	708	36,063	330,551
1880	690	35,196	332,286
1890	570	31,706	332,422
1900	513	32,225	343,641
1910	569	33,681	355,956
1920	514	36,984	352,428
1930	512	37,416	359,611
1940	494	37,862	359,281
1950	504	40,885	377,747
1960	539	42,483	389,881
1970	571	44,082	444,731
1980	763	51,030	511,466
1990	923	54,055	562,767
2000	1,067	57,418	608,827
2010	1,099	56,670	625,741

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - Census of Population & Housing, 2010



Age Distribution

In 2010, relative to Windsor County, West Windsor had experienced a much higher percentage increase in the number of residents over the age of 54, and a much higher percentage decrease in the number of residents under the age of 5. The decrease in the number of high school and college aged students is also much higher in West Windsor. Stability in the number of grade school students may be a reflection of the quality of our local elementary school. Since 2010, the number of elementary school students has increased further. See the Education chapter for additional, updated information.

Age	Windsor County				West Windsor			
	2000	2010	-/+	% chng.	2000	2010	-/+	% chng.
< 5 years	2854	2672	-182	-6.4%	50	35	-15	-30.0%
5 to 9 years	3636	3027	-609	-16.7%	63	67	4	+6.3%
10 to 14 yrs	4294	3349	-945	-22.0%	62	56	-6	-9.7%
15 to 19 yrs	3763	3244	-519	-13.8%	75	58	-17	-22.7%

¹ Based on U.S. Census of Population and Housing (1850-2000), VT Department of Taxes, UVM Center for Rural Studies

20 to 24 yrs	2241	2598	357	+15.9%	33	20	-13	-39.4%
25 to 34 yrs	6202	6097	-105	-1.7%	82	72	-10	-12.2%
35 to 44 yrs	9495	6664	-2831	-29.8%	164	131	-33	-20.1%
45 to 54 yrs	9611	9747	136	+1.4%	231	215	-16	-6.9%
55 to 59 yrs	3561	4933	1372	+38.5%	86	124	38	+44.2%
60 to 64 yrs	2688	4248	1560	+58.0%	55	100	45	+81.8%
65 to 74 yrs	4650	5530	880	+18.9%	100	142	42	+42.0%
75 to 84 yrs	3297	3086	-211	-6.4%	56	61	5	+8.9%
85 years +	1126	1475	349	+31.0%	10	18	8	+80.0%
Total	57,418	56,670	-748		1,067	1,099	32	

Housing

The total number of housing units from 1970-1990 grew by 180% percent - the fastest rate of growth in the region. Since 1990, however, the total number of housing units has only grown by 3%.

Year	Owner-Occupied Units	Renter-Occupied Units	Seasonal (Vacant) Units	Vacant Units	Total Housing Units
1940					159
1950					170
1960					174
1970	142	35			276
1980	241	59	9	169	487
1990	273	101	374	22	773
2000	377	79	226	34	716
2010	420	79	264	36	799

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - Census of Population & Housing, 2010

The median value of an owner occupied housing unit in West Windsor tripled between 1980 and 2000, going from \$53,700 to \$173,700. Median housing value increased significantly to \$331,000 in 2005-2009². In 2005-2009, West Windsor also had the highest median rent in the region at \$1,097 per month.

Economy

Information from the Vermont Tax Department indicates that West Windsor families have the highest median adjusted gross income in the region at \$66,870.

² Estimates for 2005-2009 and subsequent years' data may not be comparable to earlier statistics. For more information, see guidance provided by the Census Bureau.

Median Family Adjusted Gross Income			
Year	Town of West Windsor	Windsor County	State of Vermont
2000	\$55,117	\$46,381	\$46,113
2001	\$53,560	\$46,397	\$47,296
2002	\$57,102	\$46,573	\$47,090
2003	\$55,045	\$47,603	\$48,162
2004	\$61,537	\$50,107	\$50,396
2005	\$64,460	\$52,526	\$52,682
2006	\$67,711	\$55,371	\$55,090
2007	\$70,456	\$58,103	\$57,433
2008	\$72,034	\$57,870	\$58,069
2009	\$69,076	\$55,597	\$56,392
2010	\$66,870	\$56,971	\$57,665

Source: Vermont Department of Taxes
(housingdata.org)

In 2012, West Windsor had the lowest residential school tax rate in the area (\$1.16 per \$100), the second lowest municipal property tax rate (\$0.30 per \$100), and the second lowest non-residential school tax rate (\$1.205 per \$100).

PROPERTY TAX RATES (PER \$100) 2012

TOWN	SCHOOL/ RESIDENTIAL	SCHOOL/ NONRESIDENTIAL	MUNICIPAL
ANDOVER	1.261	1.367	0.310
BALTIMORE	1.284	1.191	0.440
CAVENDISH	1.395	1.376	0.367
CHESTER	1.200	1.308	0.583
HARTLAND	1.507	1.399	0.375
LUDLOW	1.630	1.488	0.250
READING	1.562	1.208	0.354
SPRINGFIELD	1.500	1.309	1.265
WEATHERSFIELD	1.672	1.519	0.605
WEST WINDSOR	1.160	1.205	0.300
WINDSOR	1.326	1.370	1.154
WOODSTOCK	1.537	1.430	0.339

GOALS

Our town plan is the expression of our community values and vision and our blueprint to promote and protect this vision and these values.

- 1. Improve economic development (including real estate values) by:**
 - a) promoting recreational opportunities and facilities, historic resources, and local businesses;**
 - b) expanding the availability of high-speed internet;**
 - c) constructing a municipal sewer system to serve the village of Brownsville and connecting it to the existing sewer line to Windsor.**
- 2. To the extent possible, facilitate the re-opening of the resort for a variety of year-round recreational uses.**
- 3. Preserve and protect West Windsor's recreational, historic, natural and scenic resources.**
- 4. Develop strategies to attract enough young families to West Windsor to maintain a stable school population and a dynamic community.**

CHAPTER 2. LAND USE

Decisions about the appropriate use of public and private land in West Windsor should reflect the values and vision of our community of year-round and seasonal residents. These decisions must take into account the natural resources and environmental constraints that are unique features of our town. West Windsor's scenic beauty and recreational opportunities are valuable assets which attract both residents and visitors. Land use decisions must take these assets into consideration. Historic land use patterns, the efficient and cost-effective provision of public services, and housing that supports a diverse population are also important considerations. Together, these factors form the basis for West Windsor's land use plan.

CURRENT LAND USE

West Windsor remains a small town with a traditional Vermont village surrounded primarily by rural areas. The unincorporated village of Brownsville has a limited mix of commercial, residential, and public buildings including a general store, library, post office, elementary school, historical society, and municipal offices. Most of the existing buildings in the village are small in scale, close to the roadway and to each other, and are architecturally compatible. Adjacent to the village is the Ascutney Mountain Resort, which includes a ski area, base lodge, health club, hotel and time-share units, restaurants, seasonal housing, and various ski services. The ski area closed in 2010 and remains closed as of 2014. The resort area is served by a sewer system, which the town acquired in February of 2014, while the remainder of the town is served by on-site septic systems. Until it closed in 2003, the talc plant south of VT Route 44 at the Reading town line was the only active industrial site in West Windsor. The Light Industrial/Commercial district is now home to a wood pellet manufacturing facility, the Lucy MacKenzie Humane Society, and the Evergreen Equine Veterinary Clinic. Outside the village and the Resort, West Windsor is characterized by low-density development.

Although it is located in three towns, West Windsor, Windsor and Weathersfield, Mount Ascutney is the prominent feature of the landscape. The Ascutney Mountain Resort is located entirely in West Windsor, on the northern side of the mountain. There are also telecommunications facilities located near the summit. In West Windsor, much of the remainder of the mountain is undeveloped and under town ownership – the West Windsor Town Forest. Recent residential development indicates that those who are building houses in the area have a strong preference for locations with scenic views.

The majority of the land area in town is undeveloped forest or open land, much of which is in the state's Use Value Appraisal Program (AKA "current use"). Steep slopes, undeveloped ridgelines and wetland areas add to the scenic beauty of West Windsor and provide habitat for a variety of wildlife. The pastures and fields along VT Route 44 and Mill Brook are among the most valued scenic resources in town.

Of West Windsor's 15,808 total approximate acres, 18.4 percent are agricultural lands, 7.1 percent are non-agricultural open space lands and 54.8 percent are forested. The Ascutney Mountain Resort comprises 4.7% of West Windsor's acreage, while an additional 6.3% is used for other outdoor recreational purposes. Less than 9 percent is currently developed for residential, commercial, industrial or institutional uses. Public lands include the West Windsor

Town Forest (1,342 acres) and the state-owned Little Ascutney Wildlife Management Area (673.4 acres), with a majority of its land holdings in Weathersfield.

FUTURE LAND USE

In order to implement the goals, policies and recommendations of this Plan through zoning and other measures, the following land use categories are established and shown on the Future Land Use Map: Primary Growth, Secondary Growth, Resort/Residential, Resort/Conservation, Rural Residential, Light Industrial/Commercial, and Conservation. A half-acre district is proposed for the east end of the primary growth district, within 1,000 feet of the existing sewer line (see Map #2). Generally, land within the delineated areas is suitable for the uses and densities proposed in this Plan. However, the physical characteristics of certain individual properties may be such that environmental considerations could further limit development. Therefore, the descriptions of appropriate land uses and densities should be interpreted generally – individual properties may have additional limitations.

A 2004 survey and a series of public hearings on zoning in 2007 and 2008 indicate that protecting the rural character, open spaces, historic buildings, and natural and scenic resources of West Windsor is a priority for most residents. Public hearing participants made it clear, however, that respecting the rights of individual property owners is also important.

Along with the suitability of the land for development and the protection of valuable natural resources, the efficient provision and expansion of public services provide the basis for West Windsor's land use categories. Directing growth to areas most effectively and efficiently serviced by utilities, roads and schools will help the town maintain its rural character and control the cost of public services. Policies and regulations which encourage growth in or near the village area, especially in the vicinity of the existing sewer line, are consistent with these goals. In general, future growth shall be encouraged in high density areas first and rural areas last.

New development should blend into the existing landscape to the extent possible. Ridgeline development restrictions, siting and screening standards, building envelopes and conservation subdivision design should be considered for inclusion in West Windsor's zoning and subdivision regulations as a means of preserving the town's natural and scenic resources, rural character, and open spaces.

Primary Growth Areas

The primary growth areas, as shown on the Future Land Use Map, are where future commercial and higher density residential development should be encouraged. These areas include the village of Brownsville and the Ascutney Mountain Resort base area. In order to maintain the aesthetic value and historic character of the village, increased density must include open space.

Minimum lot sizes shall be determined by proximity to the sewer line, suitability for on-site septic systems, and ability to meet state regulations pertaining to water supply and waste disposal. Building scale, architectural style and setbacks of new development should be consistent with the character of the area in which it is located. The village and resort areas shall maintain their separate and distinct appearances and character.

Village

The village of Brownsville currently has a mixture of moderate density residential, commercial and institutional uses. Low-impact non-residential development has historically been located in the village, and should remain in this area to respect historic settlement patterns. Because there are currently no public water or sewer services in the village center, a community wastewater system would be required to accommodate future development and protect water quality in this area. Commercial development in the village should be interspersed with higher density residential and institutional uses. This area should retain the appearance of a traditional Vermont village. Village development should be of moderate to high density depending on septic capacity, sewer availability, and parking. Zoning regulations call for one-acre minimum lot sizes in this area. Smaller lots or higher densities should be considered if a sewer system is constructed to serve this area as planned. The traffic circulation system should accommodate pedestrians and other non-motorized travel. New development in the village should be consistent with its historic character and aesthetic qualities. Parking should be located behind, or to the side of, commercial and institutional buildings.

The Proposed Sewer Service Overlay shown on the Future Land Use map depicts the proposed sewer service area, where existing development is dense and isolation distances are inadequate, as well as an area to the east of the village where the presence of the sewer line could allow for additional connections. The cost of land in West Windsor is the greatest limiting factor in housing affordability. The Proposed Sewer Service Overlay will allow for greater densities and smaller lot sizes, which will support the development of affordable housing. Connection to “forcemain” portions of the sewer line may not be feasible and/or may require special engineering. All costs (including engineering, permitting and construction) associated with any proposed connection to an existing sewer line are to be assumed by the developer.

Resort/Residential

Although the ski area is no longer operating, Ascutney Mountain Resort offers biking, tennis, swimming, restaurants, conference facilities, a health club, and special events. Accommodations include hotel, time-share, and condominium buildings. The base area of the Ascutney Mountain Resort currently has a mixture of high density accommodations and commercial, recreational and residential uses. This area is served by water and sewer systems. Zoning regulations allow for ¼-acre to 1-acre minimum lot sizes in this district, depending on whether proposed development will be connected to the existing sewer system or not. PUD review is required. Future resort housing development shall not be built adjacent to ski trails or at elevations higher than existing resort development. Resort development shall not have an adverse impact on village aesthetics or water quality. Resort lighting shall be limited to the minimum required for safety and security and shall incorporate cut-off style fixtures wherever possible. Noise associated with resort uses should be minimized or mitigated. Screening of new resort development with trees and other native vegetation may be required to limit visual impacts on the village and/or protect scenic views. Future resort development should provide a safe traffic circulation system for bicycles and pedestrians.

Secondary Growth Area / Residential

Moderate density residential uses shall be allowed in the area north of the village along Coon Club Road, Bible Hill Road, East Rowe Hill, Westgate Road, and the lower portion of

Brownsville-Hartland Road, as shown on the future land use map. Facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists should be considered when planning new development in this area. This area is currently served by private wells and on-site septic systems. Minimum lot sizes of 4-5 acres are required per zoning standards.

Rural Residential

Rural residential areas can support a variety of uses including residential, forestry, and agricultural (e.g. livestock, tree farms and other horticultural uses). The designation of this area is based on its current uses and distance from town facilities and services. The primary concern in rural residential areas shall be to preserve open space, wildlife habitat, forest cover, and scenic resources, and to maintain low-density settlement patterns. In this area, 5-acre minimum lot sizes prevail per zoning standards. Recreational resources should be preserved wherever possible. Particular consideration should be given to protecting, and maintaining public access to the existing network of trails for hiking, biking, horseback riding, snowmobiling and other recreational activities. New residential development shall only occur in rural residential areas that are accessible from existing town or state highways.

Conservation Area

Conservation areas are lands that possess outstanding wildlife habitat, recreational or educational resources, fragile natural areas, economic assets (generating revenue from recreation or tourism) or scenic resource values. These areas include: Mount Ascutney, headwater areas, floodplains, vegetated areas next to surface waters, wetlands, vernal pools, Natural Heritage Inventory sites, critical deer wintering habitat and bear habitat as defined by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, locally and regionally significant historic sites, and other locally defined sensitive natural areas. Conservation areas also include existing private residences and public lands owned by the town and state. Conservation lands represent relatively pristine areas or special resource areas of the town, such as the Town Forest, that residents wish to preserve in their natural state for future generations, and that should, therefore, receive the highest level of protection from development. Special care should be taken in any resource management or extraction plans to maintain the character and value of these areas. Conservation areas are especially beneficial when surrounded by compatible uses such as forestry and agriculture. Zoning regulations call for a 30-acre minimum lot size in this district.

Resort/Conservation area

The purpose of the Resort/Conservation area is to provide for the orderly growth of single-family residences affiliated with the Ascutney Mountain Resort in such a manner as to preserve, to the maximum extent possible, the important open space, scenic, agricultural/forestry and natural resource characteristics of the district. For residential development that makes a demonstrable contribution to the recreational development of the area in accordance with the goals of the Recreation and Economic Development chapters of this Town Plan, current zoning allows one-acre lots with connection to a state-approved sewage treatment plant, and five-acre lots with on-site water and septic. Residential development that does not make a demonstrable contribution to the recreational development of the area requires a 30-acre minimum lot size. The preservation of Mile Long Field is of particular importance to the Town of West Windsor. All land uses in this area, other than forestry and agriculture, shall be reviewed and approved by the Development Review Board before a zoning permit may be issued. There shall be no

development, other than infrastructure, in Mile Long Field. Development of the acreage adjacent to Mile Long Field extending to the west toward Coaching Lane shall be given special consideration (see “Special Considerations” below) and shall be planned to protect the area’s natural features to the greatest extent possible.

Commercial / Light Industrial

Light industrial and commercial uses may result in noise, light, traffic, emission, or waste generation levels that are incompatible with typical residential or recreational uses and shall, therefore, be located in the Light Industrial/Commercial district. Redevelopment of the former talc plant as a wood pellet manufacturing facility is expected to have a positive impact on the local economy. New development or redevelopment shall not adversely affect the natural, aesthetic or scenic resources in this area, which serves as a gateway to West Windsor. Parking lots should be located away from the road and properly screened. To limit noise and light pollution, adequate screening from VT Route 44 and adjacent parcels shall be provided, and access management techniques shall be implemented. Zoning regulations call for a two-acre minimum lot size in this district.

Special Considerations

In addition, special considerations shall be observed with the following resources:

Agricultural Areas – Agriculture has historically been important to the town’s economy, food supply and cultural heritage. Lands currently being used for agricultural purposes and prime agricultural soils (as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture) located in open meadow areas that are large enough for an economically viable farming operation, should be protected for their contributions to the local economy and the scenic quality of the community.

Floodplains – To protect the natural function of floodplains and minimize property damage and loss of life during flooding events, new development should be strongly discouraged in Special Flood Hazard Areas as shown on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps produced by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Forests – Forests are lands currently dominated by a dense growth of trees and other plants. Forest land is an essential component of rural life. Forests protect air, water and wildlife resources that are vital to the town’s environmental, physical and economic health. Both by providing areas for recreation and by providing the basis for a sustainable forest products industry, forests directly support the local economy. All future development shall strive to preserve existing forest cover and minimize fragmentation of large forested areas.

Headwater Areas – Development in headwater areas, as defined in 10 V.S.A. 6086(a)(1)(A) shall be prohibited to avoid contamination of the headwaters of local streams, brooks and rivers, and the wildlife found in these areas.

Mile Long Field – Mile Long Field and adjacent acreage to the west extending toward Coaching Lane is highly valued by West Windsor residents for its many natural and

recreational resources including, but not limited to, trails, open space, prime agricultural soils, wetlands, wildlife habitat, headwaters, streams, and springs. If development (including infrastructure development) is proposed for the area, a natural resources inventory shall be performed and all significant natural features shall be mapped. Special consideration must be given to site plans to ensure that development is designed to protect the area's natural features to the maximum extent possible.

Ridgelines — Any development along ridgelines should demonstrate that appropriate measures have been taken so the development is not visually obtrusive to surrounding neighbors or from public roadways.

Scenic Resources – West Windsor's scenic resources make the town a desirable place to live, work and visit. Scenic resources should be inventoried and protected from future development.

Steep Slopes and Shallow Soils - Land with less than two feet of soil between the surface and the water table or between the surface and bedrock is poorly suited for development. Special consideration with regard to drainage may be necessary for development proposed in areas with shallow soils. Likewise, development in areas with slopes over 25% may require special erosion and sedimentation control measures. Development in such areas must be accessible year-round by emergency vehicles.

West Windsor Town Forest – The West Windsor Town Forest is highly valued by residents for its wildlife habitat and its trails, which are used frequently for low-impact, non-motorized recreational activities.

TIMING OF DEVELOPMENT

In order to ensure that public infrastructure is built in the most efficient and cost-effective manner, efforts should be made to encourage growth in and around the village, the resort base area, and the commercial/light industrial area instead of in the more rural areas of town. In addition, to prevent sudden dramatic increases in population which would place undue stress on town facilities and services, the town may require phasing for new subdivisions or Planned Unit Developments.

LAND USE POLICIES

In order to achieve the desired future land uses, as discussed in this chapter, the town should pursue the policies and recommendations listed below.

1. Promote orderly growth in a way that encourages compatibility among adjacent land uses, without the degradation of waterways, large forested or agricultural areas, wildlife habitat, scenic views, open space or public recreational facilities. Adverse impacts to these significant natural resources should be minimized or mitigated with appropriate techniques.
2. Encourage development to locate along existing roads, utility lines and services.
3. Support the use of compact development techniques to encourage less expensive municipal

services, energy efficiency and the preservation of open space.

4. Ensure that the provision of municipal services and infrastructure is in keeping with the rural character of West Windsor.
5. Maintain historic settlement patterns by promoting moderate to high density residential and low-impact non-residential uses in the primary growth areas.
6. Ensure that important historic sites and structures are maintained.
7. Because West Windsor's recreational trails are an important asset, maintain access to them and connectivity among them.
8. Support programs (such as "current use") that reduce the cost of resource protection for farm and forestland owners.
9. Resort development shall make a demonstrable contribution to the recreational development of the area in accordance with the goals of the Recreation and Economic Development chapters of this Town Plan and shall not adversely impact the village or the town.
10. Development should be consistent with the intent of the future land use map and categories.

LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Revise the land use regulations so they are consistent with the purpose and intent of the Town Plan.
2. Inventory and map open space, agricultural and forest lands, wildlife habitat, scenic views, ridgelines and other important resources in town, and establish appropriate methods for their protection.
3. Adopt an official map, pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §4421, showing future utility and facility improvements including, but not limited to, rights-of-way for recreational paths and sewer lines.
4. Review and strengthen West Windsor's outdoor lighting standards.
5. Investigate non-regulatory means for protecting natural and scenic resources, critical wildlife habitat, and recreational trails, including increased support for a dedicated funding source for the purchase of conservation easements or development rights.
6. Educate landowners about conservation incentive programs.
7. Investigate the possibility of applying for "Village Center" designation to allow property owners to get tax credits for renovating historic structures.
8. Consider including ridgeline development restrictions, siting and screening standards, building envelopes and conservation subdivision design in West Windsor's zoning and subdivision regulations as a means of preserving the town's natural and scenic resources, rural character, and open spaces.

9. Charge the Planning Commission with ensuring that local land use regulations support the adaptive reuse of architecturally or historically significant structures, and provide guidelines for development in the historic village area.
10. Consider revising the zoning regulations to increase the minimum lot size in the Resort/Conservation district.

CHAPTER 3. UTILITIES AND FACILITIES

Note: See Map #3 - Base Features

Current utilities, facilities, and services in West Windsor are those that are characteristic of a small, rural Vermont town. Services found within the resort area are the exception. In some ways, the resort area is like another community within the town.

Unless otherwise specified in this Town Plan, existing utilities, facilities and municipal services are anticipated to be adequate to meet the expected needs over the next 5 years. Public investment in new facilities and services, such as public sewer and water systems, or the enlargement of any public buildings, should occur when a need for such investments arises. Developers shall be required to pay for the additional utilities and facilities needed for new developments.

ELECTRIC UTILITIES

Electrical service throughout most of West Windsor, including the resort and the industrial zone, is supplied by Green Mountain Power from the Brownsville substation at the corner of VT Route 44 and Churchill Road. Power to that substation is supplied by a transmission line that runs north from Weathersfield. A small portion of the northeastern part of town is served from a Windsor substation.

There are no power generation facilities in West Windsor, except for residential-scale renewable systems (i.e. solar, wind) that homeowners have installed.

WATER AND SEWER

At this time, only the resort area contains properties that are served by a sewer system. Construction of the pipeline, which runs from the Ascutney Mountain Resort to the Windsor sewage treatment plant, was completed in 1987. Although a majority of the buildings in the resort area are hooked up to the sewer line, some residences have on-site systems. At Town Meeting in 2012, West Windsor voters authorized the Selectboard to purchase the resort sewer system. The purchase transpired on February 12, 2014. Immediately following the purchase, the portion of the system located in Windsor was transferred to the Town of Windsor. A Sewer Advisory Committee, with representatives from the various user groups, has been established to assist the Selectboard with system operations.

In 2010, the Selectboard authorized the creation of a Wastewater Committee to oversee the evaluation of wastewater options for the village of Brownsville. At the committee's recommendation, the Selectboard engaged the engineering firm of Aldrich & Elliott to conduct the evaluation. Aldrich & Elliott found inadequate isolation distances among existing on-site wells and septic systems in the village. These conditions, along with the proximity of Mill Brook, present environmental concerns and limit the future growth potential of the village and the school.

A small community wastewater system would alleviate existing environmental concerns but would not allow for future growth in the village or at the school. Alternatively, connecting the village of Brownsville to the existing pipeline to Windsor would allow for business and

residential development, including smaller lots and more affordable housing; expansion of the student body and the establishment of a cafeteria at the school; and indoor plumbing at the library, which currently has no restroom facilities. In addition, because the village of Brownsville is in the Resort's "well protection zone," connecting to the existing pipeline would protect the Resort's water supply.

It was the consensus opinion of the members of the Selectboard and the Wastewater Committee that connecting the village to the existing pipeline would be the best option. With negotiations to purchase the pipeline underway, the Selectboard authorized Aldrich & Elliott to proceed with the preliminary engineering necessary to determine the best alternative for establishing the connection. A final report on the alternatives was issued in April of 2013. The construction of a spur connecting the village to the existing pipeline must not adversely impact the historic and scenic attributes of the village, which are highly valued by the residents of West Windsor.

Water is supplied to most buildings in and around the resort, and to the General Store, through one of three commonly owned water systems. The largest of these three systems was constructed during Phases I and II of the Ascutney Mountain Resort development and serves the hotel complex (including the 100 condo/hotel units), the health club, the Mountains Edge condo complex and the privately owned homes in the area known as the "Upper Loop." The two smaller systems are shared by homeowners on Sky Hawk Lane. The remaining residences in the resort have private, on-site water supplies.

The main water system, constructed during the 1980s expansion of the resort, includes supply lines, hydrants, and a storage area for fire protection and snowmaking. Water for the fire protection system that serves the resort buildings comes from the same wells that provide domestic water to the buildings. The additional water needed to fight the January 2007 fire at the Mountain's Edge Condos came from a nearby fire pond and the snowmaking system. Water for the snowmaking system comes from Mill Brook, and is pumped from a pumping station located behind the town's firehouse. An underground storage tank, located near the pumping station, holds water that may be used for snowmaking and an additional water supply that may be used by the fire department for firefighting in the village.

To accommodate the expansion of the school, a new bedrock well was drilled on the school grounds in 2003. The new well supplies the school, the town hall, and the church. Throughout the remainder of the town, all buildings are served by on-site septic disposal and water supply systems. Maintaining and improving the water quality of the brooks and streams in town, and assuring that quality groundwater supplies continue to exist, are priorities for the town. This is particularly true in the village of Brownsville which has the densest concentration of on-site septic systems. Recent water quality assessments have indicated the presence of E. coli in Mill Brook. Efforts are underway to secure funding for the construction of a village wastewater system, which would help protect ground water, surface water, and drinking water quality.

Groundwater resources are an often overlooked and under-valued asset, but one which a rural community like West Windsor should not take for granted. Reliance throughout most of the town on individual wells and springs for domestic water supply makes this an important planning consideration when contemplating development of any kind.

ELECTRIC, WATER AND SEWER POLICIES

1. Encourage the expansion of the existing sewer system to serve the village of Brownsville.
2. Encourage the installation of innovative septic systems and alternative methods of waste disposal.
3. Encourage the underground placement of new utility lines.
4. Support efforts to educate owners about proper maintenance of on-site systems.
5. Maintain or improve the water quality of Mill Brook and its tributaries.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION:

1. Implement the recommendations of the Brownsville Sewer System Preliminary Engineering Report dated April 2013.
2. Assess the water quality of Mill Brook and its tributaries periodically, and address any situations that negatively impact water quality.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Recent years have seen rapid improvements in the technology employed to deliver phone, television and internet services. Unfortunately, in many areas of West Windsor, cutting edge telecommunications technology is not yet available. Substandard telecommunications technology is frustrating for residents and places severe limitations on economic development in underserved areas of town.

PHONE SERVICE

Phone service for most residents of West Windsor is provided by FairPoint's Reading exchange: 484; others are served by FairPoint's Windsor exchange: 674. A handful of families in the northwestern section of town are served by Vtel's 436 exchange. All calls within the town, regardless of the exchange, are considered local calls, and towns in adjoining exchanges are also part of the local calling area. Numerous companies provide long distance service throughout the town. Aboveground telephone lines handle most of the telecommunications activity at this time. When considering the installation of any new lines, the town should require that, when possible, these lines be buried or co-located to enable the preservation of the canopy of trees along the roadways for aesthetic reasons.

The use of pagers and cellular phones has enhanced the communications capabilities of businesses and private citizens, and improved communications for emergency providers, which is an asset to all. Existing towers on Mount Ascutney provide telecommunications companies with the opportunity to share tower space ("collocation"). Over the past few years, several telecommunications companies have added capacity to the existing cell towers on Mt. Ascutney. In 2008, an antenna "canister" was installed on the old base lodge at the Ascutney Mountain

Resort. Although cell coverage has improved as a result, especially in the village area, there are still many areas of town where coverage is spotty at best. In 2012, to resolve deficiencies in area police communications, the town applied for a narrowband FCC license and installed a new UHF repeater on the tower on Mt. Ascutney.

INTERNET

In 2006, Comcast installed cable in the resort area and the southeastern portion of West Windsor. As a result, residents in that area of town have access to cable television and high-speed internet services. In 2008, FairPoint also expanded its broadband service in parts of town. Wireless internet service is available through a number of providers to residents who have an unobstructed view of Mt. Ascutney. Satellite service is also available. However, many West Windsor residents have limited access to the internet.

In 2008, West Windsor joined with 22 other towns in East Central Vermont to create East Central Vermont Community Fiber (ECFiber), which is committed to making high-speed communication services available to all homes and businesses in participating towns. The ECFiber network will be owned by the participating towns and will consist entirely of fiber-optic cable, with the goal of providing fast and reliable internet, phone and TV service. In 2011, EC Fiber built a network operating center and a 24-mile fiber loop through Bethel and Barnard. In 2012, coverage was expanded into Royalton and Pomfret and more than 300 customers were connected. In 2013, EC Fiber added 140 miles of fiber optic cable to the network and, by the end of the year, was serving approximately 550 customers in ten towns.

On May 30, 2013, West Windsor voters approved funding for a fiber-optic line to serve the town's municipal buildings and to provide the foundation for expanded high-speed residential service in other areas of town. However, additional funding from private investors is needed to finance the residential portion of the network before the project can move forward. Our local EC Fiber delegates are continuing their efforts to raise the capital needed to expand the network into West Windsor.

TOWERS

Communication towers are one of the most visible indicators of the technological age. These metal towers can stand 300 feet tall and the footprint can encompass up to two acres depending on road access. In 2005, West Windsor amended its zoning regulations to include specific standards for the review and permitting of proposed wireless telecommunications facilities. In addition, the State of Vermont relies on Act 250 to review the development of communication towers. Because towers often exceed 20 feet and are located above 2,500 feet in elevation, applicants are required to get an Act 250 permit. However, the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 (TCA) allows the preemption of local zoning authority by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

The town should be prepared to take advantage of growth in this industry to access emerging technologies for economic development potential. The town should be ready to emphasize its needs from a general public as well as an industrial viewpoint. This means paying attention to and having a voice in the location of existing and future infrastructure, and the needs of the

community. Because communication towers have an immediate and negative visual impact on the aesthetics of the town, the development of these towers must be done with sensitivity and foresight.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICIES

1. Require applicants to comply with all federal, state and town telecommunication ordinances, bylaws and/or regulations, including annual reporting requirements.
2. Preserve the historic character, appearance and natural resources of the town while encouraging the development of up-to-date wireless telecommunications services.
3. Minimize tower and antenna proliferation by requiring the sharing of existing communications facilities, towers and sites where possible and feasible.
4. Continue to pursue state-of-the-art telecommunications services for town residences and businesses.
5. Encourage the location of towers and antennas in non-residential areas and away from sensitive areas, including schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

1. Investigate specific means for developing the infrastructure needed to provide West Windsor residents and businesses with up-to-date telecommunications technology.
2. Update zoning regulations, as necessary, to reflect advances in knowledge, experience, and technology.

CHAPTER 4. MUNICIPAL SERVICES & GOVERNMENT

FIRE, AMBULANCE AND POLICE SERVICES

The West Windsor Volunteer Fire Department (WWVFD)

West Windsor is served by a volunteer fire department. The department, in turn, is part of mutual aid, a system organized to enable neighboring towns to assist each other when needed. Initial dispatching for fires and all other emergencies is done in Hartford.

Local dispatching for the WWVFD is done by volunteers at West Windsor's firehouse at any time the department is called out. The fire department reviews and comments on land development proposals over which the town has jurisdiction. It is the belief of the department that the size and type of development should be carefully monitored to assure that the WWVFD is always able to provide adequate service within the town.

The original fire department building, constructed in 1962, is located in Brownsville village. (The building and the lot on which it sits are actually owned by the department, not the town.) Additions to the building were constructed in 1979 and 1984. The 1984 addition was built specifically to accommodate a ladder truck, which is now more than 30 years old and due to be replaced. Although the WWVFD's building and equipment meet the town's needs at this time, the type and size of future development will impact the adequacy of the current facility.

In 2011, flooding from Tropical Storm Irene damaged the firehouse, the adjacent pump house and the parking area. Fortunately, the fire trucks had been moved to higher ground and were not damaged. To facilitate response during future emergencies or disasters, the town encourages emergency service providers to consider relocating outside of the special flood hazard area.

Generous donations from many individuals and businesses enabled the WWVFD to acquire a Polaris ATV rescue vehicle in the spring of 2013. This type of vehicle is essential for rescuing people from remote areas and, as of January 1, 2014, has already been used in three rescues and four brush fires.

In the next few years, the WWVFD will need a new tanker and a ladder truck with fewer years on it. In about 15 years, the department will need a new pumper.

Emergency Medical Service

First response emergency medical care is currently provided by members of the West Windsor Volunteer First Aid Stabilization Team (FAST) Squad. The FAST Squad is a separate organization from the fire department. Currently licensed by the state at the *Advanced* Life Support level, the squad is able to provide emergency defibrillation. All services are provided by a small core group of dedicated volunteers. Squad members use their own vehicles, and store equipment and supplies in their homes. Members have expressed interest in eventually acquiring both a vehicle and a building of their own for meetings, training, and storage of equipment. Should activity in the town increase, these needs would become more pressing.

The town is fortunate that it is able to depend on volunteers who are continually receiving training and education in order to respond to the emergency needs of townspeople with the best emergency services possible.

Ambulance Service/DHART

Ambulance service is currently provided by Windsor Ambulance in Windsor, VT. A contract is renewed annually by the Selectboard.

Officially designated landing areas for the Dartmouth Hitchcock Air Response Team (DHART) are located at the Ascutney Mountain Resort (in the base lodge parking lot) and across from the former talc plant. The landing pad at the west end of VT Route 44 was constructed specifically for use by DHART.

Enhanced 911 Service

Enhanced 911 services became operational in November 1998. Preparation included providing street addresses for all structures. Structure numbering is based on 1/1000th of a mile increments and assists emergency services personnel in locating structures. When a caller dials 911, the geographic location of the caller appears on the call taker's computer screen, the "enhanced" aspect of Enhanced 911. This feature is especially helpful in communities such as West Windsor with its high percentage of seasonal housing. In 2012, 60% of all "911 calls" in Vermont were placed from cell phones. Cell phones do not provide the dispatcher with the caller's exact location, although newer phones provide an approximate location. West Windsor residents who call 911 from a cell phone should be prepared to provide the address from which they are calling or a clear description of their location.

Law Enforcement

The town is currently served by the Windsor Police Department, which has at least two officers on call to respond to emergencies 24 hours a day. In addition, officers from the Windsor Police Department spend 15 to 20 hours per week patrolling and monitoring speed in West Windsor. Assistance is provided by the Vermont State Police Department as needed.

If recreational development at the Ascutney Mountain Resort is expanded, additional law enforcement services may be required. In that case, the town would encourage resort operators to arrange for private security within the resort area to complement the efforts of local law enforcement.

Emergency Planning

Most disaster preparation and emergency response is done by local and regional organizations such as the fire department, the FAST Squad, the Windsor Police Department, the Vermont Agency of Transportation, the County Sheriff and the State Police. The Town of West Windsor has an Emergency Management Officer to help coordinate town efforts with regional and state officials.

The town encourages emergency planning and disaster preparedness to help reduce the risk to life and health, the damage to public and private property and the environmental damage that often occurs during a disaster. Emergency planning enables the town to prepare calmly and

realistically for likely emergencies, to know the location of resources and equipment that will be needed, to inform residents of potential dangers and ways to avoid those dangers, and to quickly arrange for help when it is needed. West Windsor has an Emergency Management handbook (nicknamed the “Green Book”), a Rapid Response Plan, a Pre-disaster Mitigation Plan, and mutual aid agreements with surrounding towns. West Windsor also participates in the National Flood Insurance Program.

EMERGENCY PLANNING POLICIES

1. Require that all new roads and driveways be properly constructed so that run-off does not damage town or state roads and so that vehicles can respond to emergency situations.
2. Encourage the improvement of existing roads, and design culverts and bridges in accordance with Agency of Transportation hydraulic studies and statewide stream alteration standards.
3. Encourage the recruitment and training of new fire department and FAST Squad members.
4. Encourage the development and improvement of emergency evacuation plans and include plans for the protection of pets and livestock.
5. Annually ensure that the town is meeting the requirements for participation in the National Flood Insurance Program.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

1. Identify at-risk residents who may need assistance during an emergency and develop a comprehensive plan for the evacuation of disabled residents as well as pets and livestock.
2. Ensure that the town’s “Green Book” and Emergency Operations Plan are updated annually by the Emergency Management Coordinator.
3. Inventory the town’s current and historic assets and records to evaluate their vulnerability to, and determine potential loss from, disasters.
4. Revise Flood Hazard Regulations to conform to state model regulations.
5. Evaluate flood hazard regulations and maps at least every five years, or after a flooding incident, and seek funding to mitigate areas prone to flooding.
6. Update the town’s Pre-disaster Mitigation Plan every five years in conjunction with the Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission (SWCRPC), the Fire Chief, the FAST Squad Director, Law Enforcement Officials, and the Emergency Management Coordinator.
7. Amend zoning regulations to require new driveways to have slopes less than or equal to 15% along their entire length to allow access for emergency vehicles.

TOWN GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

Town Governance

West Windsor is governed by a three-member Selectboard. The Town Clerk/Treasurer is the initial contact for those conducting town business and is responsible for the land records, town accounts, and general town business. The Zoning Administrator and a five-member Development Review Board (DRB) handle local permitting issues. A five-member Planning Commission drafts plans and regulations and makes recommendations on a wide variety of land use and economic development matters. The Town Administrator assists the Selectboard, the DRB, and the Planning Commission.

Like most towns in Vermont, West Windsor has a Town Meeting every year on the first Tuesday in March. At Town Meeting, the registered voters discuss and act on the business of the town, which includes the annual operating budget. All business is conducted “from the floor” by voice vote unless otherwise required by law or unless the Moderator determines that the outcome is too close to call, in which case a paper ballot is required.

Town Owned Facilities

Story Memorial Hall

Built in 1915, the "Town Hall," as it is commonly known, serves the public in many ways. In addition to housing the town offices of West Windsor, the upper story is the central gathering place for town-wide meetings and other functions. Various groups, both public and private, use the hall for meetings and social gatherings. As the town continues to grow and government functions become more complex, the town office is again experiencing growing pains. A new vault was constructed in 2002 to preserve the resources located in the town offices, but additional vault space will soon be needed. The furnace used to heat the hall is outdated. Projects to make the town hall more energy efficient should be carefully considered.

The Town Highway Garage

In 1998, the highway garage was replaced with a pre-fabricated steel building capable of housing the highway department's entire equipment inventory, with room to spare for future growth of the department. Environmental considerations, including testing of the drinking water supply and the various lines and tanks associated with the wastewater systems at the highway garage, have been and will continue to be addressed. Because the town sand pile is very close to Route 44, the town should continue to explore plans to relocate or contain the sand pile. Any capital budget planning should also take into consideration the replacement of the underground storage tank at the Town Garage.

Sheddsville Cemetery and Daniel Cady Mausoleum

Both the historic Sheddsville Cemetery and the Cady Mausoleum are under town ownership and jurisdiction, with the Selectboard serving as trustees. The mausoleum is located on a knoll northeast of the village of Brownsville. It is the final resting place of West Windsor native Daniel Cady, and represents a fascinating piece of history. Daniel Cady, who served as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Courts of New York and New Jersey, was most famous for his

poems about rural Vermont. To promote knowledge of and appreciation for the mausoleum, the town should improve access, install signage and designate an appropriate parking area for visitors. There is an index for the Sheddsville Cemetery at the Town Hall. A digital version of the index on the town website would be a useful tool for history buffs and genealogists.

West Windsor Town Forest

A total of 1,342 acres on Mount Ascutney are owned by the townspeople of West Windsor. The 1,042-acre Cross Woodlot was deeded to the town by the Cross family in 1979, and an advisory committee was formed in 1980 to oversee the property. The town forest, which includes the Cross Woodlot and a 300-acre Glebe Lot, is managed by the Town Forest Committee under a multiple use concept which includes preservation of wildlife habitats and scenic vistas, and the use of the land for low intensity recreation (hunting, hiking, fishing, bird watching, mountain biking, picnicking and cross-country skiing). An initial long-range Forest Management Plan was completed in 1986, but the Plan's recommendations for thinning were not implemented. In the fall of 1991, the Vermont Bicentennial Trail was opened to the public. This trail makes the town forest easily accessible for the recreational uses listed above. In 2005, Sports Trails of the Ascutney Basin (STAB) began constructing and improving a low-impact trail network in the Town Forest and on adjacent Resort property. In 2012, the Town Forest Committee produced a new Town Forest Management Plan, which focuses more on recreational use and less on timber management. *See Chapter 6 (Recreation) for more information.*

In order to ensure that the town forest serves the broadest variety of users, the Town Forest Committee, in consultation with the Selectboard, other appropriate town boards/officials, and interested citizens, should regularly evaluate the public use of the forest.

Other Facilities and Services

Mary Blood Memorial Library

Brownsville's public library, originally built in 1900, was refurbished during 1988-89. The hours during which the library is open are limited. There is sufficient room for expansion of the book collection within the existing building, although plans for any type of expansion must take into consideration the lack of plumbing facilities. The building is ADA compliant. Wireless high-speed internet service is accessible from inside or outside the building. If a village sewer collection system is constructed, service should be extended to the library and restroom facilities should be installed.

The Brownsville Cemetery

The Brownsville Cemetery, located just north of Albert Bridge School on the Brownsville-Hartland Road, is under the jurisdiction of the Brownsville Cemetery Association, a private entity. There are burial sites available in the lower northeast section of the cemetery for the foreseeable future.

The West Windsor Historical Society

In 1981, the Gleaner Grange Hall was deeded to the Historical Society with the provision that if the Historical Society ever ceased to exist, the property would be turned over to the town. In addition to serving as the headquarters of the Historical Society, the building is the home of the

"Brownsville Baked Bean Suppers," that benefit both the local elementary school and the Historical Society. Many historic records pertaining to the town are housed in the historic records office while artifacts and memorabilia are displayed in the museum. The second floor of the building is accessible due to the installation of a lift in 2010.

Hospitals

There are no medical or health care facilities in West Windsor. The nearest facilities are in Windsor and include Mount Ascutney Hospital and a number of assisted living facilities. Residents typically travel to hospitals located in Windsor and surrounding larger towns, such as Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center (DHMC) in Lebanon, NH; Springfield Hospital in Springfield, VT; Valley Regional Hospital in Claremont, NH; or the Veterans Administration Hospital in White River Junction, VT.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

1. Improve access to the Daniel Cady Mausoleum and provide adequate parking and signage.
2. Assess the need for energy efficiency upgrades, additional storage space (such as the vault) and other modifications to town buildings every five years as part of a Capital Planning process.
3. Review and update the town's Forest Management Plan every five years.
4. Assess the need to acquire additional land for municipal purposes such as infrastructure, parking, recreational facilities, or the relocation of existing structures or resources (e.g. fire station, town sand pile).
5. Strongly encourage the Historical Society to continue to maintain offsite computer backup of their computer records of town history.

SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Waste Management, has implemented the Revised State of Vermont Solid Waste Management Plan. Under this Plan, Vermont municipalities are expected to work towards meeting the state's solid waste goals summarized in Title 10 V.S.A. Section 6604(a)(1). The priorities outlined in the plan include the following:

1. Implement reduction in the amount of waste generated;
2. Reuse and recycle waste to reduce, to the greatest extent feasible, the volume remaining for processing and disposal;

3. Process waste to reduce the volume or toxicity of the waste stream necessary for disposal, and dispose of residuals.

As part of the Southern Windsor/Windham Counties Solid Waste Management District (SW/WCSWMD), the town of West Windsor must be prepared to meet state and district requirements. In order to comply with State regulations, the SW/WCSWMD prepared a Solid Waste Implementation Plan. This Plan was submitted to the State in 2008 and has been approved. The SW/WCSWMD hired a recycling coordinator to assist district towns with solid waste issues and recycling efforts. The coordinator's position is contracted to and housed at the Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission, which manages the District.

Residents of West Windsor may use the Weathersfield Transfer Station and Recycling Center or the Recycling Center in Windsor, or they may arrange for private haulers to dispose of household trash. The Weathersfield facility accepts a broad range of items for recycling, helping to reduce the amount of waste sent for disposal. (See the District's website at <http://www.vtsolidwastedistrict.org> for detailed information on available trash disposal and recycling information.) In this way, recycling can economically benefit the town by reducing fees for municipal waste disposal. In addition to direct cost savings, recycling is beneficial to the environment by conserving valuable energy and natural resources. For these reasons, local businesses, individual households, and institutions are encouraged to recycle and reuse materials. Both the financial and the environmental costs associated with waste disposal are reminders that source reduction and proper waste management make sense.

Twice a year, on the second Saturdays in May and September, the District hosts a household hazardous waste collection, which provides for free disposal of paints, pesticides and other hazardous wastes. Homeowners are encouraged to participate in these events.

The textile shed at the Weathersfield Transfer Station diverts tons of materials from the landfill and incinerator. Residents may bring all types of clean and dry clothing, including ripped, stained, or out-of-fashion items. Blankets, sheets, towels, curtains, purses, belts, stuffed animals, fabric remnants, hats, mittens, coats and socks are all accepted. Shoes should be tied together and bagged separately. Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) services the shed; the materials are sold and the proceeds are used to fund community programs in the region.

Recent laws will result in significant changes to the provision of solid waste services over the next few years, such as unit based pricing (i.e. pay as you throw). In 2012, the State passed the Universal Recycling Law (Act 148) which includes specific requirements and timelines for mandated recycling and food composting.

SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING POLICIES

1. Support efforts to reduce solid waste generation and incineration.
2. Support efforts to reduce the unnecessary use of toxic and hazardous materials.
3. Support recycling, composting, waste reduction, and reuse programs that are dynamic and productive.

4. Promote environmentally friendly and cost-effective disposal methods for all solid waste that cannot be recycled, composted, or otherwise reused.
5. Support the implementation of reasonable waste disposal fees that are accurately determined and charged to waste generators.
6. Support programs for the recycling of household, commercial and special wastes.
7. Promote cooperation among participating municipalities in the implementation of source reduction, recycling, and composting programs on a District-wide basis.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

1. Work to achieve the goals and action steps outlined in the District's Solid Waste Implementation Plan.
2. Distribute recycling information to local households, businesses, institutions, and realtors through the Town Clerk's Office and the town website.
3. Educate residents on the benefits of home composting.
4. Support on-going educational campaigns for schools, youth, consumers, and businesses.
5. Work with the SW/WCSWMD to implement Act 148 requirements.

CHAPTER 5. EDUCATION

The West Windsor School Board oversees the education of the town's kindergarten through 12th grade students. West Windsor is part of the Windsor Southeast Supervisory Union along with Hartland, Weathersfield and Windsor. Education in Vermont is paid for with a state-wide property tax. *Please see Appendix C for more information on education funding.*

Elementary Education

West Windsor provides in-town education to its kindergarten through sixth grade students at Albert Bridge School (ABS). The town takes great pride in its elementary school, which is at the center of community life. In June 2004, ABS brought all its programs into one space with a building project enlarging the school from 9,000 square feet to 18,000 square feet. The entire facility was renovated and enlarged and the playing fields were resurfaced. In 2007, the community removed the old playground equipment and erected several new play structures on the school grounds. Because the school's Water Supply/Wastewater Disposal Permit (WW-2-1104-1) does not allow for a cafeteria, Albert Bridge's hot lunch program is provided by the Weathersfield School. Alternatively, students may bring their own lunch to school. As a result of the expansion, the school has the capacity to accommodate 133 children and staff.

Since the ski area closed in 2010, many resort property owners are choosing to rent out their homes year-round. The conversion of seasonal homes to full-time residences has resulted in a 12% annual increase in enrollment at ABS - from 68 students in 2011-12 to 85 students in 2013-14. If enrollment continues to increase by 12% per year, the school will exceed its wastewater capacity in three to four years.

Transportation to and from school occurs in several ways. Approximately 15% of the students attending Albert Bridge ride the bus to school, while 5% walk or ride their bikes, and 80% are dropped off by their parents. Additional sidewalks, cross walks and wider shoulders on roads near the school would improve the safety of walking and biking.

West Windsor provides the town's elementary school students with an excellent education, but operating a small school of less than one hundred students is a financial challenge. Most of the school's enrichment programs are made possible through fundraising and volunteer support. The general sentiment of the town is that the benefits of operating a small school, with an emphasis on community involvement, outweigh the challenges, which include the possibility of future consolidation. According to the Vermont Department of Education, there were a total of 77 students enrolled in the Albert Bridge School during the 2012-2013 school year, and the student/teacher ratio was 12.83 students per teacher (10.84 is the state average student/teacher ratio).

Albert Bridge School - General School Information

School Participation Information	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	State of Vermont 2010-2011
Total School Enrollment	77	78	68	77	87,774
Student/Teacher Ratio	12.83	13	11.33	12.83	10.84

Source: Vermont Department of Education

According to the *National Vital Statistics Report* (Volume 61, No. 5, October 3, 2012) Vermont had the second lowest birth rate in the nation in 2011. Vermont's birth rate was 9.7 births per 1,000 of population, down from 10.6 in 2007, and significantly lower than the average for the United States (12.7). Although enrollment at ABS has been increasing since the ski area closed, the trend in Vermont's birth rate is likely to result in an overall decrease in enrollment statewide, and continued focus on the issue of school consolidation.

Middle & High School Education

Students in grades seven through twelve receive their education on a tuition basis at various middle/high schools, both public and private. Because West Windsor does not have its own high school, state laws require that the town pay the cost of tuition to any approved public high school in Vermont or an adjoining state. If a family opts to send their children to an approved private secondary school, the town is obligated to pay Vermont state average tuition; the remainder of the payment is the family's responsibility. As of January 1, 2014, there are 54 middle and high school students in the Town of West Windsor.

The town has limited control over rising secondary tuition costs. In 2013-2014, public school tuition in our area averaged \$13,467 and the state provided an average of \$13,078 for students attending private secondary schools. The town has consistently supported secondary school choice over committing students to a specific middle or high school. In 2011-12, a Regional Education District (RED) Study Committee looked at the costs and benefits of forming a single unified union school district encompassing the towns of Windsor, West Windsor, Hartland and Weathersfield. Although some benefits were noted, the towns offering school choice were opposed to losing that option.

Vocational, Continuing & Higher Education

Additional education, beyond high school, helps prepare residents for careers in various trades and professions. Many types of higher education are offered in communities near West Windsor. Community College of Vermont has two convenient sites, one in White River Junction and the other in Springfield, VT. In New Hampshire, River Valley Community College in Claremont, Lebanon College and Granite State College in Lebanon, and Dartmouth College in Hanover also offer higher education and continuing education programs. In Windsor, various enrichment and health related programs are offered by the Prevention Partnership through the Mount Ascutney Hospital.

EDUCATION POLICY

1. Continue to provide high quality educational programs for students at Albert Bridge School.
2. Continue to provide secondary school choice for residents.
3. With school enrollment declining statewide and consolidation occurring throughout the state, the town should stay involved in regional school facility discussions.
4. Consider participating in the "Safe Routes to School" program and other similar programs where possible.

CHILD CARE

While the town is not required to provide child care for infants, toddlers and preschoolers, ensuring the availability of safe and affordable child care is essential to all communities. Although there may be informal child care arrangements that take place in town, according to the Vermont Department for Children and Families, there are no registered child care homes or licensed child care centers for pre-school aged children in West Windsor as of January 2013.

CHILD CARE POLICY

1. Encourage and promote the availability of safe and affordable child care for all families.

CHAPTER 6. RECREATION

For approximately 30 years, recreation in general, and the ski area in particular, were the twin engines that drove the local economy. In 2008 the housing market collapsed and, in 2010, the ski area closed. As a result, the local economy has experienced a substantial decline. However, with the exception of the high-speed quad chairlift, which was dismantled and sold in 2012, the infrastructure needed to revitalize recreation in West Windsor remains in place. In fact, with the expansion of the trail system in the Town Forest and a new outdoor ice skating rink at the school, our local recreation infrastructure has been improved and diversified in recent years, setting the stage for the reemergence of West Windsor as a destination for outdoor enthusiasts. Challenges that remain include securing the recreational infrastructure on which our economic future depends, and promoting the recreational opportunities that are available to residents and visitors.

In 2012, in response to the impact of the ski area closing and without promise of a new operator, the Planning Commission surveyed the townspeople and held public forums to assess the town's recreation preferences for planning purposes. While it is hoped that new owners will come forward to reopen the ski area in some form, the Planning Commission has been exploring ways to enhance and expand other recreational activities in a manner that reflects the town's interests as expressed in the 2012 survey. Hiking, biking, snowmobiling, horseback riding and other activities have made West Windsor an attractive choice for people who value the opportunity to enjoy various forms of recreation in a rural setting. Our planning for the future therefore must reflect these interests in support of both vacation homeowners and permanent residents.

INVENTORY OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Mount Ascutney

The mountain is a dominant physical feature in town and a popular area for recreation. Large tracts of publicly owned lands around the mountain combine to create an extensive network of protected lands for wildlife, water quality, scenic enjoyment and recreational benefit. These areas include West Windsor Town Forest, Ascutney State Park (Windsor), and Little Ascutney Wildlife Management Area (Weathersfield). An expanding system of public hiking trails, including the Brownsville Trail, Windsor Trail, Weathersfield Trail and Futures Trail, attract many visitors to the mountain. These trails are maintained by the Ascutney Trails Association. The Vermont Bicentennial Trail, accessed from the West Windsor Town Forest parking area, is maintained by local volunteers. There are two hang gliding platforms near the summit of the mountain, one in the West Windsor Town Forest and the other in the Ascutney State Park in Windsor. Both are accessed through the state park. The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation is in the initial stages of planning a 6.5-mile multi-use trail connecting the state park to the trail system in West Windsor.

Ascutney Mountain Resort

Ski Area: Until it closed in 2010, the ski area was responsible for most of the tourism in West Windsor. Local skiers and snowboarders also enjoyed the opportunity to pursue their sport so close to home. With the ski area closed, a substantial portion of the private recreational infrastructure in town is no longer contributing to the local economy. Although the quad chairlift

has been disassembled and sold, four other chairlifts remain. Without regular maintenance, the lifts are deteriorating and the trails are becoming overgrown. An overwhelming majority of respondents to the 2012 recreation survey indicated a strong desire to see the ski area re-open.

The town remains in close communication with the owners of the ski area and is doing everything reasonably possible to remove impediments to its eventual sale and re-opening. The Planning Commission strongly supports these efforts and encourages the consideration of creative approaches to the situation. However, because the town does not have direct control over the re-opening of the ski area, the Planning Commission also recommends diversifying the town's recreational portfolio by expanding and promoting other activities and facilities. West Windsor's equestrian, snowmobile and mountain bike trails are highly regarded and well maintained but underutilized. The Planning Commission recommends the active promotion of public trail networks as a means to attract visitors to our community and stabilize our local economy. *For a description of the ski area and a discussion of its history, please see the Economic Development Chapter.*

Sports & Fitness Center: In 2008, three of the five hotel buildings and the fitness center were purchased by Orange Lake Resorts. The fitness center offers a variety of recreational opportunities including swimming, weight lifting, exercise classes, yoga, tennis, basketball, racquetball, volleyball, and a playground.

West Windsor Town Forest

The town forest comprises 1,342 acres that are managed primarily to conserve natural and scenic resources and to provide for outdoor recreation activities (see the *Town Forest Management Plan* for more information). A 25-mile trail system for hiking, jogging, snow shoeing, cross-country skiing, mountain biking and other activities extends from the town forest onto adjacent resort property. This trail network is enjoyed by both residents and visitors, and is used for annual events such as the Vermont 50, Forest Five and Dime, and 2013 Vermont Mountain Bike Festival. Although the town has an agreement with the owners of the resort allowing for the use of the trail system on resort property, the agreement can be cancelled by either party with 30-days notice. If permission were revoked, approximately half the trail system would be off limits and the town's efforts to boost the local economy by diversifying its recreational infrastructure would be jeopardized. Securing this infrastructure, through purchase or long-term lease, is therefore a key component of our local recreation and economic development strategy. Although survey respondents were slightly in favor of reconsidering the purchase of Mile Long Field, many indicated that they were not familiar enough with the issue to have an opinion. These survey results highlight the need to raise awareness about the importance of protecting access to Mile Long Field and the entire trail system.

Other Trail Networks

Trails are found throughout West Windsor on both public and private land. Sports Trails of Ascutney Basin (STAB) has been creating, mapping, improving, and maintaining low-impact recreational trails since 2005. The West Windsor Moonlighters, a local chapter of the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST), maintains two snowmobile trails through West Windsor covering more than 23 miles. The Green Mountain Horse Association (GMHA) and local

horseback riders have established riding trails throughout Town. Survey results indicate that the town should consider grooming cross-country ski trails on public land.

Town Roads

According to the 2012 survey, town highways are the most frequently used public recreation facility in West Windsor. Fifty-nine percent of residents and visitors use town roads for walking, bicycling, jogging and horseback riding at least once a week. Town roads are also used for the Vermont 100 endurance race, which starts and ends in West Windsor. With so many people using the roads for purposes other than transportation, it is important to consider safety improvements (e.g. signage, increased shoulder width) where feasible. In addition to the nearly 52 miles of state or town maintained highways, there are about 5 miles of Class 4 roads and legal trails available for public use.

Other Public Recreation Sites or Facilities

Although the town forest comprises the largest land area for public recreation, the school grounds, the Cady Trail, and Tribute Park are also used by townspeople. Tribute Park, which is owned by the Brownsville Community Church, is located along Beaver Brook in the village. Picnic tables, stone fireplaces, and tall pine trees make the park an ideal setting for family and group get-togethers. Although serving the outdoor recreational needs of the students is the primary function of the school grounds, the playground and soccer field at the school also provide an area for public recreation when school is not in session. There are no other public playgrounds or ball fields in West Windsor. In 2013, a group of local families raised the money necessary to establish an outdoor skating rink on the soccer field during the winter months. The Cady Trail is located on a parcel of land just north of the school, between Beaver Brook and the Brownsville Cemetery. The land was purchased by the Town in 2006. In addition, the Town Hall and the Albert Bridge School gym have potential as venues for a wide variety of recreational activities including indoor sports, concerts, plays, and community events. Most survey respondents would like the town hall and the school gym to be more available for public recreation purposes.

Future Recreation Facilities

Behind the wood pellet plant on Route 44, there is a 207-acre parcel of land with a number of tailing ponds that are in the process of being drained and filled. Once the project is complete, the current owner may donate the property to the town. This would be an excellent location for additional public recreation facilities, possibly including ATV trails. The western boundary of the property borders the Town of Reading, creating the opportunity for inter-municipal trail connections. The Town should begin planning for the possible future recreational use of this site.

Existing trails, and ongoing trail expansion efforts in West Windsor and surrounding towns, present an initial framework for the development of an outstanding regional recreation trail system. West Windsor should work with neighboring towns to plan trails that connect Mt. Ascutney, the West Windsor Town Forest, Windsor's Paradise Park, and other trails in Hartland and Reading.

SUMMARY OF 2012 RECREATION SURVEY

In 2012, the Planning Commission conducted public outreach in order to focus its efforts on establishing and/or expanding those activities and facilities that are of greatest interest to residents and property owners. Sixty-five percent of the 211 respondents were primary residents, 31 percent owned second homes and less than 1 percent owned a business in West Windsor. The following key findings are based on the responses received:

- The most common recreation activities of respondents are walking, running, hiking, alpine skiing/snowboarding, cross country skiing, snow shoeing, road bicycling, swimming and mountain bicycling.
- There is general agreement that the existing trail networks are adequate to serve the interests of residents and visitors. However, the survey responses suggest a need for improving or creating trails for cross country skiing.
- The priority recreation need is reopening the ski area. There is also significant support for additional bicycle or pedestrian paths, expanding into a four-season resort with adventure-park type activities, and non-motorized trail network extensions and connections.
- Respondents also indicated a desire for a broader range of recreational opportunities, including fitness, wellness and nature programs.
- Survey results identified local preferences for recreation facilities or activities that would most benefit the community economically. Reopening the ski area ~~is~~ was the top priority. Other supported facilities or activities included expanding the trail systems; expanding four-season offerings at the resort; hosting and promoting concerts, fairs, festivals or similar events; and hosting and promoting sporting events.

STRATEGIES TO MEET FUTURE RECREATION NEEDS

The following strategies are established to provide a prioritized list of actions the Town wishes to take in order to address future recreation needs:

1. **Reopen Ski Area:** The Selectboard will continue the current efforts being made to help reopen the ski area in order to provide recreational opportunities, sustain home values and implement economic development strategies.
2. **Maintain, Improve and Promote Existing Trail Networks:** The Selectboard, STAB, the West Windsor Moonlighters Snowmobile Club, and trail maintenance staff will maintain, improve and promote existing trail networks and implement the recommendations of the Town Forest Management Plan.
3. **Promote Local Facilities, Programs and Events:** The Selectboard will establish a town staff position or committee to coordinate recreation and economic development initiatives and work with local boards and groups to organize, schedule and promote events that will attract visitors to West Windsor.

4. **Encourage the Expansion of Four-Season Offerings at Ascutney Mountain Resort** to serve both visitors and residents.
5. **Protect Trail Network:** The Town will pursue permanent easements for existing trails on private lands (e.g. Mile Long Field) in order to maintain the trail network for the recreational enjoyment of residents and visitors.
6. **Expand Utilization of Town and School Properties:** The Town and School should coordinate to expand the utilization of the school gym and Town Hall facilities for recreational activities. This may involve developing a shared use policy, and establishing applications and protocols for the use of each facility.
7. **Widen Highway Shoulders for Recreation:** The Town should plan for widening roadway shoulders along VT Route 44 and sections of the Hartland-Brownsville Road. Coordination with the Vermont Agency of Transportation for VT Route 44 shoulders will be required.
8. **Develop a Capital Budget and Program:** The Town will consider developing a Capital Budget and Program for the infrastructure projects, equipment purchases, and land acquisitions required to achieve the above strategies [in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §§ 4430, 4443].

RECREATION POLICIES

1. Development shall minimize negative impacts on established local trail easements and rights-of-way.
2. Encourage trail connections when development is proposed for lands between two key recreational trails.
3. Focus development of commercial recreational activities within the existing Resort/ Residential District.
4. Conservation Fund revenues may be used for Town recreation facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Actively pursue implementation of the recreation strategies as outlined in this chapter.
2. Coordinate with neighboring towns to develop a regional, non-motorized trail network.
3. Increase annual contributions to the Conservation Fund for the purchase of trail easements.
4. Plan for the future recreational use of the property behind the wood pellet plant.
5. Develop a policy for the use of the Town Hall and other town-owned properties.

CHAPTER 7. NATURAL, SCENIC AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

West Windsor has abundant natural, cultural, historic, scenic, and recreational resources. These areas should not be overlooked and are important to consider and keep in the forefront during the planning process. (Note: Some of the cultural resources in West Windsor are inventoried in *Chapter IV. Municipal Services and Government – Town Government and Administration*).

NATURAL RESOURCES

The following natural areas warrant consideration for protection: agricultural soils, surface waters, wetlands, riparian zones, floodplains, wildlife habitat, and large contiguous tracts of undeveloped land, including Mount Ascutney, Ascutney Basin, Mile Long Field and Pierson's Peak. In addition, the VT Route 44 valley area, west of the village of Brownsville, is important for its prime agricultural land, flood hazard potential and scenic view of Mount Ascutney.

Much has already been done to preserve the natural condition of these areas. Several large tracts have been in public ownership for some time and additional lands, creating a corridor between Mount Ascutney and Little Ascutney Mountain, have been protected through public acquisition, conservation easements, and purchase of development rights. Efforts to preserve the natural beauty of these areas should continue. To the extent that regulatory measures can contribute to this objective, the town should maintain standards that will encourage low density, minimum impact development outside the primary and secondary growth areas. The town should also continue to support the West Windsor Conservation Fund for the purchase of conservation easements or development rights on land with exceptional scenic beauty, significant natural resources, critical wildlife habitat, or important recreational trails.

Surface Waters

Surface waters (rivers, permanent and intermittent brooks, streams, ponds, vernal pools, and wetlands) are an abundant and valuable resource providing habitat, fishing, swimming, drinking water, irrigation, aquifer recharge, and scenic beauty. Measures to protect one of these uses may also protect others. For example, steps taken to assure that pollutants and turbidity do not exceed acceptable levels will protect these waterways for swimming and fishing.

Farm runoff, failing or nonexistent septic disposal systems, and stream bank erosion contribute to poor water quality in local ground and surface waters. Stream crossing structures (bridges and culverts), road run-off, and the presence or absence of vegetated buffer strips along rivers and streams also affect water quality, fish habitat, and scenic beauty.

The location of surface waters often influences both the location and form of development. Major waterways in West Windsor include the Mill Brook and its tributaries: Willow Brook and Beaver Brook. (See Map #4)

A number of studies have been conducted over the past 20 years to assess water quality and erosion in Mill Brook. The erosion studies identified areas where vegetated buffers would reduce erosion. A 2003 geomorphic assessment on two sections of Mill Brook found that road and road fill encroachment in the floodplain, inadequately sized public and private bridges that impair

stream flow during high-water periods, and inadequate vegetated buffers are affecting the West Windsor Flats section of the brook, which is just west of the village. A more comprehensive geomorphic assessment of the Mill Brook watershed is planned for 2013 and 2014.

E. coli levels in Mill Brook adjacent to village development measured between 33 and 42 MPN/100 mL in mid-October 2013. The federal threshold for water discharged from wastewater treatment plants is 77 MPN/100mL. Given the absence of a wastewater treatment facility in the village, strategies to reduce the amount of E. coli in Mill Brook should be developed and implemented. One of the strategies that should be considered is the construction of a sewage collection system in the village.

Flood Resilience

Flood hazard areas are depicted on Map #4. These areas serve as flood storage areas during periods of heavy rain and spring snow melt, and may serve other important functions as agricultural fields, wildlife habitat and wildlife travel corridors. These areas also present limitations to development due to the hazards of flooding and related damage.

West Windsor has regulations that establish development standards for flood hazard areas identified by FEMA. Residents or business owners with buildings in or near the floodplain may purchase flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Any development in flood hazard areas requires local flood hazard review.

On August 28, 2011, West Windsor and much of Vermont experienced significant infrastructure and personal property damage from Tropical Storm Irene. The West Windsor Volunteer Fire Department was flooded. The historic Bowers Covered Bridge was washed down stream. Twenty-four town roads and numerous culverts were washed out. The cost of repairing the damage to town infrastructure totaled \$750,000. Ninety-five percent of the cost was reimbursed by FEMA and the Vermont Agency of Transportation. Some of the damage occurred outside the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). West Windsor's Flood Hazard Area Regulations should be reviewed and updated to conform with new state and federal laws, and model regulations as they become available.

Owners with property in a special flood hazard area should be aware that, as a result of the 2012 Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act, subsidized flood insurance rates are being phased out. Anyone purchasing a new flood insurance policy will need an Elevation Certificate (EC). Owners of older structures with Lowest Floor Elevations (including basement) below the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) may face very high flood insurance rates unless they adapt the structure to make it safer from flood damage.

River corridor protection areas have not been mapped for West Windsor by the Agency of Natural Resources. This plan anticipates the provision of river corridor maps by the Secretary of Natural Resources pursuant to 10 V.S.A. §1428(a) and incorporates by reference the most recently published such maps.

In 2013, the Vermont House and Senate passed H.401, which the Governor then signed into law. H.401 requires town plans to include a flood resilience component that identifies flood and fluvial erosion hazard areas and recommends strategies to protect these areas and “to mitigate

risks to public safety, critical infrastructure, historic structures, and municipal investments.” In West Windsor, hay bales stored in the floodplain were washed downstream during Tropical Storm Irene and exacerbated an already dangerous and destructive situation. To prevent future damage to private property and municipal infrastructure, the town should adopt policies or ordinances addressing the storage of unsecured objects in the floodplain.

Although many areas of town were initially inaccessible immediately following Tropical Storm Irene, most had adequate access restored within 48 hours. An exception was the Ascutney Mountain Resort. Because the storm washed out both Bridge #7 on Route 44 and the bridge over Mill Brook on Brook Road, the Resort was cut off from the rest of town and therefore could not be effectively served by the West Windsor Volunteer Fire Department or the West Windsor FAST Squad. Fortunately the town has mutual aid agreements in place with the other towns in our area and there were no serious illnesses, injuries or fires during the two weeks that the resort was isolated from the rest of town.

A similar situation occurred in 2010, when flood waters prevented an ambulance from reaching an injured resident in Yale Heights. In this instance, the highway department was able to ferry EMTs and the patient across the flood waters in the bucket of the town’s loader. However, both of these recent situations highlight the need for additional investigation, contingency planning and alternative means of access to areas that may be cut off from emergency services in a future flood event.

West Windsor will be participating in a geomorphic assessment of the Mill Brook watershed in 2013 and 2014. The Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission (SWCRPC) received an Ecosystem Restoration Grant from the Agency of Natural Resources to conduct the study. The end product will be a map of fluvial erosion hazard areas for the watershed, which will aid the town in transportation, land use and emergency services planning. Once this effort is completed, West Windsor’s All-Hazard Mitigation Plan should be updated to promote erosion resilience.

Wetlands

Wetlands are those areas that are inundated by surface or ground water sufficient to support vegetation and/or aquatic life that depend on saturated or seasonally saturated areas for growth and reproduction. Such areas include marshes, swamps, vernal pools, mud flats, bogs and ponds. Wetland benefits include fish and wildlife habitat, flood and erosion protection, pollution filtration, ground water recharge, and sites for education, recreation and scenic enjoyment. Map #4 depicts inventoried Class 2 wetlands in West Windsor, but it does not include Class 3 wetlands or vernal pools. As part of a statewide mapping project coordinated by the Vermont Center for Eco Studies, the Conservation Commission is mapping vernal pools in West Windsor.

Riparian Buffers

A riparian buffer zone is defined as the strip of land bordering a body of surface water, whether still or flowing. A vegetated buffer zone is meant, at a minimum, to provide a protective strip between a body of water and any adjacent land that has undergone human transformation to farmland, roadway, or other type of development and, at an optimum, to contribute to the well-being of the biota both in and adjacent to the body of water. Currently, West Windsor Zoning

Bylaws require a minimum 50 foot buffer along wetlands, streams and rivers that are under state or federal jurisdiction. Wider buffer widths may be required for adequate pollution and erosion protection due to the soil and slope conditions of each site. Narrower buffer widths may be allowed under certain circumstances. State regulations regarding wetlands and riparian buffers were revised in 2010. Local regulations should be reviewed for conformance with state regulations.

Agricultural and Forest Lands

Steady population growth and second-home growth have increased development pressure in open, agricultural, and forested areas. Forestry plays an active role in the ecological, economic, and social health of the area. This type of land provides habitat for wildlife, contributes to water and air quality, provides for a forestry industry and enhances recreation and the tourism industry. For these reasons, it is vital to maintain sound forestry practices, limit the spread of development and prevent fragmentation of large (generally 50 acres and larger) tracts of contiguous forested lands.

Agriculture plays an important role in defining the area's lifestyle and landscape and contributes to the stability and diversity of the economy and local communities. Although the amount of farmland in the State is decreasing, the number of small farms is actually on the rise. There is a growing demand for local retail products, including maple syrup, cheeses, fruits and vegetables, meat and wool. There are also many horse farms and active horse pastures located in town.

Map #5 shows the most likely productive agricultural soils as identified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Soils categorized by the NRCS as "prime agricultural soils" have the greatest potential for productivity and are important for current and future food production. Areas designated as having "soils of statewide significance" are also important, but limited in their productive capacity by slope or other mitigating factors. Development shall be designed to minimize, or reasonably mitigate, impacts on these agricultural soils.

Vermont's Use Value Appraisal Program (AKA "current use") encourages landowners with 27 acres or more to use their property for farming or forestry by reducing the assessed value, and therefore the tax burden, on the property. The amount of land enrolled in "current use" in West Windsor has increased from 1,965 acres in 2004 (12.4% of the total acreage of the town) to 6,087 acres in 2012 (38.5% of the total acreage of the town). By providing tangible financial incentives to keep land open and undeveloped, current use helps maintain the rural character of the town. See Map #9.

Soils and Steep Slopes

Soils vary greatly in their composition, which can determine what types of land use are most appropriate. Outside of the resort base area, which is served by a sewer system, one of the major factors in determining the development potential of each site is its capacity for on-site wastewater disposal (See Map #6). Water supply and wastewater disposal are currently regulated by the State of Vermont.

Steep slope areas may not be suitable for development due to limitations for septic systems, erosion and stormwater runoff problems and high construction costs. (See Map #5) All

development on slope gradients in excess of 25 percent are required to provide erosion and sedimentation control plans to avoid these potential problems. Driveways over 15 percent in grade are generally considered too steep for safe emergency vehicle access.

STRATEGIES FOR PROTECTING NATURAL RESOURCES

There are a number of threats to West Windsor's natural resources of which town officials and residents should be aware. Chief among these threats are poorly planned development, fragmentation of habitat by new roads, pollution in the form of farm and road runoff, failed septic systems, erosion, and invasive exotic plant and animal species.

There are a number of strategies that can be used to minimize these threats to our natural resources including regulations, buffers, monitoring, education, and incentive programs like current use. For example, existing zoning regulations protect wetlands, streams, floodplains, and critical wildlife habitat. Subdivision regulations protect agricultural soils, forest land, ridgelines, open space and threatened or endangered species. Buffers can be an effective means of separating scenic or natural resources from incompatible uses.

NATURAL RESOURCE POLICIES

1. Encourage the protection of ground and surface waters, wetlands, steep slopes, shallow soils, and areas supplying significant recharge waters to aquifers and watersheds for future water supplies.
2. The storage and transportation of hazardous chemicals should not pollute water resources.
3. Encourage landowners to establish and/or maintain appropriate undisturbed vegetated buffers along watercourses, ponds, wetlands, and vernal pools in order to protect shorelines, provide shading to prevent undue increase in stream temperatures, minimize effects of erosion, sedimentation and other sources of pollution, and maintain scenic, recreational, and habitat values.
4. Encourage the safe and sustainable use of forest land for fuel, wood products, maple syrup, recreation, wildlife habitat, and scenic beauty.
5. Support the development of local industries which produce "value added" agricultural and forest products.
6. Maintain standards that will encourage low density, minimum impact development in the vicinity of Mount Ascutney, Little Ascutney Mountain, Ascutney Basin, Pierson's Peak, Mile Long Field and associated acreage, and the valley area along Route 44, west of the village of Brownsville.

NATURAL RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Support the West Windsor Conservation Commission's continued participation in the statewide vernal pool mapping project coordinated by the Vermont Center for Eco Studies.

2. Participate in a comprehensive geomorphic assessment of the Mill Brook watershed and use the resulting fluvial erosion hazard area maps in transportation, land use and emergency services planning.
3. Consider increasing the town's annual contribution to the Conservation Fund for the purchase of land, conservation easements or development rights on land with exceptional scenic beauty, significant natural resources, critical wildlife habitat, or important recreational trails.
4. By the end of 2015, the Planning Commission will review and revise West Windsor's Flood Hazard Area Regulations to ensure compliance with 24 V.S.A. §4424, new state regulations, and the National Flood Insurance Program (44 C.F.R.).
5. Consider adopting policies to address the storage of unsecured objects in the floodplain.
6. Investigate alternative means of access to areas that may be cut off from emergency services during a flooding event.
7. Consider creating policies and regulations that encourage the preservation of farms, agricultural lands, and timber lands.
8. Ask the Conservation Commission to provide local property owners with information on identifying and controlling common invasive exotic species (e.g. purple loose strife). Make the information available at the Town Hall, and publish it on the town's website.
9. Support the efforts of the Selectboard and the Health Officer to identify, assess and mitigate pollution problems caused by septic systems and other sources.
10. Participate with agencies and organizations that sample water quality in Mill Brook and take action to address any problems that are discovered.
11. Update all local regulations, bylaws and ordinances to reflect current state rules as they relate to natural resources.
12. Coordinate with neighboring towns to maintain large tracts of undeveloped land.

EARTH RESOURCE EXTRACTION

The extraction of earth resources (i.e. sand, gravel, talc, rock) is a typical activity in rural, working landscapes. It provides jobs and can be a valuable source of income for rural communities. Historically, quarrying occurred on Mount Ascutney. The former talc plant located south of VT Route 44 near the Reading town line is no longer in operation. There are no other active extraction sites in West Windsor at this time. However, there are a few potential local sources for sand, gravel and stone for local highway and construction uses. While extraction activities can be a benefit, they can also adversely affect the roads, natural environment, rural

landscape, and the peace and quiet of the rural community. These activities are regulated under Section 4.7 of the Zoning Bylaws and are subject to applicable performance standards.

EARTH RESOURCE POLICIES

1. The extraction of any earth resource shall be permitted only when the effects of such extraction, or related processing, do not have an adverse impact on surrounding properties, essential wildlife habitat, and/or the environment.
2. Property owners shall restore the natural appearance of extraction sites within two years of the discontinuance of regular on-going extraction activities.

EARTH RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Review Zoning Bylaws to make sure that existing provisions are adequate to both encourage desired extraction activities in appropriate locations and mitigate any adverse impacts.

AIR RESOURCES

West Windsor does not have a heavy industrial base or concentrated population. Accordingly, the town's air quality is good and constitutes an environmental resource that has aesthetic as well as human health benefits. Activities that produce noxious odors, particulate matter (from dust, smoke or fumes), radiation, chemical vapors, motor vehicle exhaust or power plant emissions, could have a negative impact on air quality and should be minimized or mitigated.

AIR RESOURCE POLICY

1. All applicable development shall meet the Performance Standards under Section 3.12 of West Windsor Zoning Bylaws in order to maintain the town's good ambient air quality.

AIR RESOURCE RECOMMENDATION

1. Maintain town equipment to meet emission standards.

WILDLIFE HABITAT

Housing, resort, and commercial development can severely diminish the ability of wildlife habitat to support wildlife populations. West Windsor has a variety of fish and wildlife resources including upland forested areas that provide cover and habitat for deer, bear, game birds, small mammals and other species; deeryards which provide a particularly important winter shelter area for deer; and open meadows that support a variety of bird species. (Map #4 shows deer wintering areas.) Water habitats support trout and other aquatic organisms and attract a variety of migratory waterfowl. Undeveloped riparian habitats support amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals and rare vegetation. Wetland habitats support songbirds, game birds, beaver and otter, and are important breeding areas for a variety of species.

Many animal species rely on large contiguous areas of forests, fields and other undeveloped lands for habitat. The fragmentation of such land can result in decreases in the number of species

and the size of populations of many species. Connections between large contiguous wildlife habitat areas may serve as wildlife travel corridors. Map #7 shows wildlife habitat suitability areas as mapped by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife. These areas represent undeveloped areas most likely to support a broad spectrum of wildlife. These mapped wildlife habitat suitability areas serve only as a potential indicator of critical wildlife habitat, and more detailed inventories or site investigations should be used to determine the actual critical wildlife habitat areas and travel corridors.

In September 2011, Forest Ecologist Elisabeth Tii McLane prepared a Natural Communities Report and Management Plan for the West Windsor Town Forest. This report contains detailed information and recommendations on wildlife habitat in the town forest.

West Windsor's zoning and subdivision regulations protect some critical wildlife habitat (e.g. deer wintering areas) and require buffers along streams and around wetlands. Strategies for protecting other habitats (e.g. open meadows) should be explored.

WILDLIFE HABITAT POLICIES

1. Plan development to minimize impact on wildlife habitat and encourage retention and improvement of wildlife habitats using state maps and local resources.
2. Encourage responsible use of wildlife resources as an economic benefit to the town.
3. Protect riparian corridors for wildlife habitat, as well as water quality.

WILDLIFE HABITAT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Review and consider implementing the recommendations of Forest Ecologist Elizabeth Tii McLane as presented in "West Windsor Town Forest: Ecological Assessment and Natural Community Mapping Project, 2011" and in "Forest Management Plan for the West Windsor Town Forest."
2. Charge the Conservation Commission with identifying, mapping, and developing non-regulatory means for protecting, wildlife habitat (including open meadows) through education, easements, or land trusts, or by using our local conservation fund to purchase development rights.

SCENIC AREAS

The rural character of West Windsor is composed of a scenic natural landscape with traditional New England settlement patterns and architectural designs that are of great importance to the community. The natural landscape includes open space, working and non-working agricultural lands, wildlife habitat, and forest land. The town recognizes the irreplaceable value of all these resources and the need to protect them as they serve to preserve local heritage, while enhancing the rural environment, economy, and way of life for residents and visitors.

Few things exemplify the universal enjoyment of, and appreciation for, the Vermont landscape as much as a walk or drive down a country road or an expansive view of the landscape from a

hill or mountain top. Unobstructed, unlit views of the night sky and rural roads lined with mature trees are cherished aspects of life in Vermont. West Windsor has managed to retain virtually every scenic quality that people consider valuable: open mowed fields outlined by stone walls and fencerows; actively cultivated farmland; large tracts of undeveloped forest land; streams and ponds; and, from countless vantage points throughout the town, the dominant presence of a singular large mountain. Enjoying the visual qualities of the land is a form of recreation in itself; one that has value and is worthy of attention when considering ways to direct the changes that will, without question, occur in West Windsor.

Important scenic resources that define West Windsor's rural character include:

- Mt. Ascutney
- Pierson's Peak
- Mile Long Field and associated acreage
- Best and Bowers Historic Covered Bridges
- Unpaved, tree-lined roads
- Ridgelines

Although "scenic beauty" and "views" are intangible qualities, held principally in the eyes of the beholder, townspeople should remember that the local economy is dependent, in large part, on tourism, and that these qualities are what commonly draw visitors to the area. The visual characteristics of the town also contribute to the quality of life that is appreciated and cherished by those who live in West Windsor.

SCENIC AREA POLICIES

1. Maintain natural and man-made features of local scenic and historic significance and protect them from activities that impair their integrity, character and/or quality.
2. Encourage landowners to consider the town's heritage and natural resources when developing their property through careful design and siting of all structures, accesses, parking lots, utility installations (including solar arrays and windmills), landscaping, and screening.
3. Encourage development patterns that prevent the fragmentation of larger parcels of land in order to retain open space and maintain habitat areas.
4. Encourage compatible and responsible use of lands adjacent to or including areas of scenic, historical, educational, architectural, or archaeological value.
5. In order to protect the view of the night sky undiminished by light pollution, lighting should be kept to the minimum necessary for safety and security.
6. Paving of roads should be avoided, not only to contain road maintenance costs, but also to retain the existing rural and scenic quality of the town's gravel roads.
7. Encourage preservation of existing tree canopies along town roads, and mowing of unused pastures to maintain open space.

SCENIC AREA RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Identify locally significant scenic resources and develop strategies for their protection, including local ordinances.
2. Consider reviving the Planning Commission's efforts to incorporate standards for ridgeline development in West Windsor's land use regulations.
3. The Planning Commission and the Highway Department will jointly review the Highway Department's Environmental Mission Statement, a non-regulatory set of road maintenance guidelines, and revise them if necessary to reflect new information, including recently adopted codes and standards.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

West Windsor's historic resources include settlement patterns which feature a distinct village with lower density housing and open space in the surrounding areas. The village of Brownsville and 15 local sites are listed on the State Register of Historic Places by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. In addition, there are two covered bridges in town which are on the National Register, Best's covered bridge and Bowers covered bridge. Opportunities to protect important landmarks of the town's history, including individual buildings, settlements, cellar holes, cemeteries, stone walls, or other important features and their environs, should be considered by the community when they arise. The local historic resources³ listed below deserve recognition and protection:

1. Raymond Spackman House (built circa 1848) on Kimball Farm Road
2. Leigh Harlow House on Route 44, 2.4 miles west of the village
3. Marcus Hurlburt House (AKA The Best House, in the Best family from 1896 to 1972) built circa 1820 on Route 44, 2.9 miles west of the village
4. Louis McMillen House (AKA The Churchill House) built circa 1852 on Churchill Road, 0.2 miles south of Route 44
5. Leigh Banister House, built circa 1808, on Banister Road
6. Edward Langenback House (AKA The Augur Hole, The Delano Place) built circa 1825 on Auger Hole Road
7. Helen Culin House (in the Davis Family from 1861 to 1932) built circa 1825 on Delano Road
8. Hugh Tatlock House (AKA The Ralph Farm) built circa 1825 on Rush Meadow Road, 2.8 miles north of Route 44
9. William Bryant House, built circa 1790, on Bryant Road
10. Dr. Catherine Riley House (built circa 1848, by Peter Taylor) on Dugdale Road
11. Howard Furnas House (AKA Bosson House), built circa 1808 at the intersection of Sheddsville & Cemetery Rd. (north side)
12. The Birmingham House (AKA The Stone House) built circa 1830 at the intersection of Sheddsville & Cemetery Rd. (south side)
13. The Westgate House, built circa 1820, on Westgate Road

³ The Heritage of West Windsor by Earla Bear Scull

14. Brownsville Historic District, including the Sykes house (c. 1827), the Parsonage (c. 1830), the Bascom house (c. 1799), the Church (c. 1859), the Library (c. 1901), the Town Hall (c. 1915), the Pierce house (c. 1828), the Grange Hall (c. 1915), the Bertrand house (c. 1840), the Swallow house (c. 1810), and the old General Store
15. Daniel Cady Mausoleum on Strawberry Hill

HISTORIC RESOURCE POLICIES

1. Help protect places of significant cultural, aesthetic, archeological and/or historical value from development that impairs their character and quality by educating the public about their importance to the community.
2. Encourage rehabilitation that preserves, and development that is compatible with, the historic, cultural and architectural character of the town.

HISTORIC RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Revise local land use regulations to support the adaptive reuse of architecturally or historically significant structures and provide guidelines for development in the historic village area.
2. Encourage the West Windsor Historical Society to participate in the state Historic Sites and Structures Survey to further identify locally significant historic resources.
3. Continue to identify and map locally significant historic resources with assistance from the West Windsor Historical Society.

CHAPTER 8. TRANSPORTATION

West Windsor is a rural community located at the base of the northwestern slope of Mount Ascutney. The road network consists of one paved, secondary state highway and 47 miles of mostly unpaved local public roads.

TRANSPORTATION INVENTORY

Regional Highways

Regional highways, including state highways and Class 2 town highways, connect to large population areas and other state highways outside West Windsor. These paved roads include VT Route 44, Brownsville-Hartland Road and Ski Tow Road. VT Route 44 connects West Windsor to Windsor, and to Reading and Woodstock, via VT Route 106. Brownsville-Hartland Road is a Class 2 town highway that connects Brownsville to Hartland. These roads provide access for businesses in West Windsor and to broader job opportunities in other towns for residents. VT Route 44 is the primary access into town and provides access to the Ascutney Mountain Resort. Ski Tow Road, off VT Route 44, is currently the only road into the Resort. For emergency purposes, consideration should be given to establishing a second access to this densely populated area.

Town Highways

Town highway classifications, as defined in 19 V.S.A. §302, indicate the hierarchy of the local road system, as determined by the prevailing use of each road. West Windsor maintains nearly six miles of paved Class 2 town highways, including Brownsville-Hartland Road and Ski Tow Road, which serve as “regional highways” that connect to other towns or destination areas. Class 2 town highways are considered the most important local roads in town.

There are over 41 miles of Class 3 town highways in West Windsor. Class 3 town highways consist of all other year-round traveled roads in town. With the exception of a few paved roads near Brownsville, the remainder of these roads consists of a network of gravel roads, the quality of which is unrivaled in the surrounding area. Portions of Seems Road and Pierce Hill Road are paved due mainly to the steepness of grade.

Highway Classification	Miles	Total Miles
State Highways	5.044	5.044
Town Highways		
Class 2 Town Highway	5.931	
Class 3 Town Highway	41.1	
Total town-maintained highways		47.031
Class 4 Town Highway	4.22	
Legal Trails	0.330	
Private Roads	10.334	
Total not maintained by town		14.884
Total rights-of-way		66.959

Source: VTrans, VCGI

West Windsor has no interstate highways or Class 1 Town Highways. Class 4 mileage may be underestimated because accurate inventories are not maintained. Class 4 town highways are all town highways that are not Class 1, 2 or 3 town highways or unidentified corridors, and that are not regularly maintained by the town. The Selectboard determines which highways are designated as Class 4.

Class 4 town highways are important resources for recreation, forestry access, and agricultural activities. Recognizing the recreational value of Class 4 highways, the town should discourage development on these roads and consider reclassifying them as Legal Trails, following required procedures and negotiations with adjacent land owners.

Legal Trails are public rights-of-way, but are not considered highways. The town is not responsible for the maintenance of trails. A Class 4 road can be reclassified as a Legal Trail to retain the public right-of-way but eliminate the burden on the town to provide maintenance.

There are over 10 miles of privately-maintained roads in West Windsor. It is important that private roads and driveways provide adequate and safe access for both residents and emergency vehicles. Private roads, which serve three or more residences, should be held to the same standard as class 3 town highways for safety reasons and to protect the town's interest in the event that a private road is reclassified as a Class 2 or 3 town highway. Driveways, which serve one or two residences, shall be held to standards for residential drives to allow vehicular access from the adjacent street and emergency vehicle access to properties.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

There are no formal bicycling facilities in West Windsor except for the existing road network. VT Route 44 has very little in the way of shoulders to accommodate bicycle or pedestrian travel. The highway is scenic with many sharp curves, and steady or declining traffic volumes. Town roads provide additional bicycle access. Because many town roads are unpaved and some are quite steep, younger, less experienced cyclists and cyclists on touring bikes may be reluctant to use them.

The village of Brownsville has five-foot wide sidewalks primarily on the north side of Main Street. The sidewalks were constructed in 1964 and are in need of maintenance. Existing sidewalks on Route 44 in the village provide access from:

- Brook Road to the town offices;
- The intersection of Brownsville-Hartland Road and Route 44 to Seems Road;

There is also a four-foot wide pedestrian bridge owned by Ascutney Mountain Resort crossing Mill Brook behind the West Windsor Fire Station, providing access to Ascutney Mountain Resort via a path connecting to Hotel Road.

In 2013, crosswalks and related signage were established on Hotel Road and the Brownsville-Hartland Road. There are no signalized intersections in West Windsor. A crosswalk should also be considered across Route 44 near the General Store.

Future improvement to the pedestrian facilities should include walking path and sidewalk connectivity throughout Brownsville, to facilitate walking along Route 44 between Seems Road and the Post Office, as noted in the 1999 Pedestrian Master Plan for West Windsor. Services in Brownsville include the library, post office, town hall, elementary school, and general store. Participation in the "Safe Routes to School" program may result in additional improvements that the town should consider implementing. The Pedestrian Master Plan should be updated and

pedestrian improvements should be coordinated with other projects such as bridge replacement, sewer construction, sidewalk repair, burying utility lines and paving.

Parking

Parking requirements are outlined in West Windsor’s Zoning Regulations. Parking is generally limited to off-street, on-site parking spaces. In the village, the absence of a public parking lot could constrain future development of small lots. Consideration should be given to acquiring land for a public parking area in the village. Depending on future development activities at the Ascutney Mountain Resort, there may also be a need to expand the parking area that serves the Town Forest trail network.

Public Transportation, Rail and Air

Currently there are no rail or air services in West Windsor. Connecticut River Transit (CRT), based in Bellows Falls, VT, is the primary transit provider in the region and offers “on demand” service in West Windsor. Volunteers in Action also provide “on demand” service, primarily for elderly residents.

Dartmouth Coach and Greyhound provide long-distance bus service connecting the Upper Valley to many northeast metropolitan areas. Both transit companies also provide service to Logan airport and limited service to Manchester airport.

Amtrak stops at the train station in Windsor, providing West Windsor residents good access to passenger rail service.

Numerous airports – including Rutland; Burlington; Lebanon, NH; Manchester, NH; Hartford, CT; and Logan Airport in Boston – provide West Windsor residents with options for commercial air service. Hartness State Airport in Springfield offers general aviation services.

EXISTING TRAFFIC CONDITIONS

Existing traffic volumes are relatively light on VT Route 44 in West Windsor. The table below shows annual average daily traffic (AADT) volumes at select locations. AADT represent the combined two-way traffic volume at each location. The data have been adjusted to correct for seasonal variation. Road segments in adjacent towns have been included due to a lack of local data.

Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) in West Windsor and Surrounding Towns

Town	Route/Road	Location	Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)							
			2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	
Hartland	Brownsville-Hartland Rd	0.4 miles east of Hampton Rd		1,500					1,400	
Reading	VT 44	0.2 miles east of VT 106			900		970			1,200
Reading	VT 106	Between Tyson/Benjamin Dr			1,400				1,400	
West Windsor	Brownsville-Hartland Rd (TH 1)	0.1 mile north of VT 44		990		960			1,000	1,000
West Windsor	Ski Tow Road	200 feet south of VT 44				240				680

Windsor	VT 44	0.1 mile west of Estey Ln	1,800					1,900	
Windsor	VT 44A	0.1 mile south of I-91 Bridge	1,000					1,100	

Source: Vermont Agency of Transportation

Vehicular traffic speed and truck traffic on VT Route 44 are concerns raised by residents, especially in the village area. The town should seek to identify appropriate traffic calming measures along VT Route 44 through Brownsville in order to slow traffic speeds in the village. Trucks account for between 4% and 6% of the traffic volume on VT Route 44 at both locations described in the AADT Table above. On Brownsville-Hartland Road, trucks are about 6% of the total traffic volume. Traffic speed data are not currently available for the Brownsville area.

A left turn lane into the Resort, for vehicles heading west on Route 44, would improve safety conditions at the intersection. Likewise, the construction of an island on Ski Tow Road, where it intersects with Route 44, would keep left-turning vehicles on the right side of the road. The lack of a second entrance into the Resort was problematic during Tropical Storm Irene when the area was inaccessible by local emergency service providers for twelve days following the washout of Bridge #7 on Route 44.

Seasonal Traffic

Before the ski area closed in 2010, traffic volumes varied significantly from season to season, with heavier traffic volumes on VT Route 44, Ski Tow Road, and the Brownsville-Hartland Road during the winter, due to ski traffic generated by Ascutney Mountain Resort. Statewide, average traffic volumes in the vicinity of active ski resorts are 2.4 times higher during the peak winter season.

COMMUTER PATTERNS

Commuter travel patterns are an important consideration for the transportation network. According to 2007-2011 American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau), 51% of working residents commuted less than 30 minutes to a job. The median travel time for West Windsor workers is 25.9 minutes.

Transportation connections to surrounding towns and major travel corridors are important for the local economy. According to 2010 LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau, only 4% of local working residents are employed in West Windsor. There are likely a number of self-employed or home occupations that are not reported in this data set. The most common work destinations include Lebanon, Woodstock, Bridgewater, Windsor, Killington, Ludlow and Springfield.

The predominant mode of transportation for commuters is by automobile. According to the American Community Survey, only 2.3% of resident workers commuted by walking, 8.4% carpooled and 80.8% drove alone to work; no one used public transportation. Only 8% of residents worked from home; however, home-based employment remains important in West Windsor. Home-based employment opportunities should increase with the expansion and improvement of broadband technology in town.

ROAD POLICY AND MAINTENANCE

The town should continue to maintain the existing highway network in good condition, which can help reduce long-term roadway maintenance costs. Development of additional town roads, widening of existing Class 3 roads, and removal of scenic features, such as tree canopies and stone walls, should be discouraged, except where necessary for public safety. As noted in Chapter 6, town highways are the most frequently used public recreation facility in West Windsor. Consideration should be given to widening the shoulder on Class 2 and 3 town highways where doing so can be accomplished without damage to scenic resources.

Respondents to the 2004 survey indicated a preference for all existing gravel roads to remain unpaved. The town should continue to use geotextiles where needed, and consider reconstructing the road sub-base or employing other engineering techniques to help prolong the life of unpaved roads.

Drainage infrastructure includes ditches, culverts and bridges along the town highway system. The Highway Department maintains about 533 culverts, of which 8% are in fair condition, 3.5% are in poor condition and the rest are in good to excellent condition. Drainage ditches are found along most roadways. The existing drainage system is generally adequate. The Highway Department maintains an inventory of bridges, culverts and ditches. The inventory is used to identify and prioritize needed improvements. The Highway Department replaces drainage structures and cleans or improves ditches as time and funding allow. The Town adopted new road and bridge standards in 2013 for all such work. Three large erosion problem areas were identified in a 2013 inventory – along Hartland-Brownsville Road, Sheddsville Road and Brook Road – which will require grant funding to properly address.

The highway department should continue to inspect and evaluate the condition of bridges and culverts, and replace deficient or undersized drainage structures annually as funding allows. Culverts and drainage ditches should allow for an adequate flow of stormwater so as to protect infrastructure from damage during typical snowmelt and rain events.

In August 2011, Tropical Storm Irene caused considerable damage to West Windsor's transportation infrastructure. Bowers Bridge was washed downstream. Much of Banister Road was destroyed. Culvert and slope failures closed Harrington Road. Brook Road was impassable due to a slope failure in West Windsor and the destruction of the Brook Road Bridge in Windsor. Twenty-one other local roads also experienced damage - some minor, some extensive.

As of 2013, the Brook Road Bridge in Windsor has not been replaced. As a result, Brook Road is no longer a through road for pedestrian, bike, horse, or motor vehicle traffic. Likewise, it is no longer an alternate route to and from Windsor in emergency situations. Consideration should be given to contingency planning for emergency response, and to improving Route 44 to safely accommodate foot and bike traffic.

The town should continue to use best management practices for road construction and maintenance activities to facilitate road drainage, minimize erosion and water quality degradation, avoid unintentional incremental road widening, and protect trees and other scenic resources.

In addition, the town should consider the factors that exacerbated flood damage to transportation infrastructure and pursue projects and policies that will help mitigate those factors in future flooding events. Some factors that contributed to the damage include: storage of hay bales and other materials in the floodplain, pond location and construction techniques, and undersized culverts.

The two covered bridges in West Windsor, the Best Bridge on Churchill Road and the Bowers Bridge on Bible Hill Road, are important scenic and historical resources and should be protected and maintained. After Tropical Storm Irene, Bowers Bridge was restored and replaced on new, higher abutments in the summer of 2012.

According to West Windsor Zoning Regulations, all new development, including development on Class 4 town highways, private roads and driveways, is required to meet appropriate road and driveway standards. Coordination among town officials, including the Selectboard, the Development Review Board, the Highway Department, and Emergency Services, is important in reviewing development proposals for potential transportation impacts.

Access Management

Access management refers to the systematic control of the location, spacing, design, and operation of driveways, median openings and street connections to a roadway. The purpose of access management is to provide vehicular access to land development in a manner that preserves safety and efficiency. Access in terms of highway capacity is not a big concern today in West Windsor, however, the safety of access points and their impacts on the public highway infrastructure are concerns. Driveway permits are required in West Windsor. All driveways must meet Agency of Transportation B-71 Standards for Commercial and Residential driveways. Driveways may not have negative safety or drainage impacts on town highway infrastructure.

Scenic Roads

On the recommendation of the Scenery Preservation Council, the transportation board may designate or discontinue any state highway, or portion of a state highway, as a state scenic road per 19 V.S.A. §2501. The corridor that includes VT Route 44A to VT Route 44 to Ascutney Mountain Resort is designated as a scenic byway and is part of the Connecticut River Scenic Byway.

Towns in Vermont are enabled to designate municipally-maintained roads as “town scenic roads,” as established by 19 V.S.A. §2502. Local scenic roads are subject to the standards established by the State Transportation Board, which address appropriate minimum roadway widths, alignment, landscaping and traffic control methods, pursuant to 10 V.S.A. §425. Although there are no town scenic roads in West Windsor at this time, the scenic qualities of local roads, including tree canopies and stone walls, are highly prized by residents, and should be preserved.

TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

1. Ensure that future transportation related facilities in the town of West Windsor are designed to maintain the beauty, integrity and rural character of the town.
2. When considering roadway widening on gravel roads, town officials should use construction and maintenance techniques that balance cost effectiveness, public safety and aesthetic considerations, especially with regard to the preservation of the tree canopy.
3. Maintain the existing quality of the transportation network to provide for the safe, efficient and cost effective movement of people, goods and services, and to avoid costly replacement in the future.
4. Maintain reasonable standards for road and driveway construction to ensure safe access by emergency vehicles to homes and other buildings.
5. Preserve existing covered bridges.
6. Retain undeveloped Class 4 town highways and legal trails as recreational resources for West Windsor residents.
7. Encourage coordination among town officials, including the Selectboard, Planning Commission, Development Review Board, Highway Department and Emergency Services, in reviewing development proposals for potential transportation and safety impacts.
8. Continue using best management practices during highway maintenance activities in order to minimize erosion, protect water quality, contain costs, and preserve the scenic qualities of local roads.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

1. Periodically review local highway, driveway, road construction and maintenance standards and policies to ensure a balance between public safety and the protection of scenic resources and rural character.
2. Review the West Windsor Highway Department's Environmental Mission Statement, a non-regulatory set of road maintenance guidelines.
3. Review and update the 1999 Pedestrian Master Plan for West Windsor.
4. Ask the Agency of Transportation to consider safety improvements to intersections, sidewalks, cross walks and shoulders along Route 44.
5. Consider amending the subdivision regulations to require a second entrance for subdivisions that exceed a certain size.

6. Facilitate the safe use of the transportation network by pedestrians, bicyclists and horseback riders by maintaining or expanding existing facilities in the village area and improving or widening shoulders along roads, especially between Seems Road and the Post Office.
7. Coordinate pedestrian safety, bridge replacement, sewer construction, sidewalk maintenance, utility and paving projects.
8. Pursue projects and policies that will help minimize damage to transportation infrastructure during flood events by addressing known hazards such as the storage of hay bales in the floodplain, pond location and construction techniques, and undersized culverts.
9. Participate in the Safe Routes to School program.
10. Establish a second entrance to the Ascutney Mountain Resort to ensure access by emergency service providers.

CHAPTER 9. ENERGY

Energy resources are necessary for heating, electrical generation, and transportation. Sufficient energy supplies at an affordable cost are essential to a town's growth and economic development.

Municipalities can play a role in energy development and conservation. At the 2010 Town Meeting, West Windsor voters passed a resolution to exempt from property taxes renewable energy systems, which are defined by Vermont statute (32 V.S.A. §3845) as “any...facility used for the...production of energy used on the premises for private, domestic, or agricultural purposes, *no part of which may be for sale or exchange to the public*. The term shall include...net metering systems regulated by the Public Service Board under 30 V.S.A. §219a, and all component parts thereof including land upon which the facility is located, not to exceed one-half acre.”

Local planning efforts should encourage land use that conserves energy. Zoning bylaws, subdivision regulations, and the Act 250 process are some of the means by which municipalities can promote energy efficient development on the local level. 24 V.S.A. §4449 was recently amended to require towns to provide permit applicants with a copy of the Vermont Residential Building Energy Codes if they are proposing construction that will be heated or cooled, and to prohibit the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy if an applicant has not certified compliance with the Codes.

CURRENT ENERGY USE

Home Heating

West Windsor residents use a variety of fuel sources to heat their homes: fuel oil, including kerosene (53%), bottled, tank, or LP gas (17%), wood (29%), and other (1%).⁴

Electricity

Vermont's electricity currently comes from 38% nuclear power, 30% Hydro Quebec, 11% Vermont hydro power, 9% renewables, and 12% other sources.⁵ Green Mountain Power provides electricity to West Windsor.

Although Vermonters are not heavily dependent on non-renewable carbon-based fuel for electricity, we are dependent on carbon-based fuels for heating and transportation. Because much of this energy is produced outside of our region, most of the money spent on carbon-based energy is exported from our local economy. Local energy sources (wood, wind, solar, and hydropower) offer distinct economic and conservation advantages over nonrenewable energy sources. For every dollar spent on fuel wood, approximately 80% of that dollar stays in the region. On the other hand, for every dollar spent on non-renewable energy sources, the majority of that dollar leaves the region.

⁴ 2007 – 2011 American Community Survey

⁵ 2011 VT Comprehensive Energy Plan

The Town of West Windsor should take every reasonable opportunity to create a sustainable energy future: one that minimizes environmental impact, supports our local economy, and emphasizes energy conservation, efficiency and the increased use of local and regional renewable energy sources.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Commercial & Utility Wind Energy Systems

Commercial and utility wind energy systems (wind farms) are defined as those that are regulated under Section 248 of Title 30 of the Vermont Statutes but not including net metering applications (as per 30 V.S.A. §219a) or temporary meteorological towers. For the purposes of this Municipal Plan, commercial and utility wind energy systems are defined as systems with one or more turbines over 150' in height located on the same parcel. It is the policy of the Town of West Windsor that commercial and utility wind energy systems are prohibited throughout all of town.

West Windsor's high elevation lands - those most desirable for commercial or utility wind energy development - contain many important natural resources and are among the most sensitive sites. For this reason, to the extent allowed by state statute, West Windsor's zoning regulations shall be revised to reflect a town-wide prohibition on the installation of commercial and utility wind energy systems.

While West Windsor rejects commercial and utility wind energy systems, the Town recognizes the fact that they may still be allowed by the Vermont Public Service Board. Should this occur, the Town requests that the Public Service Board require the developer to provide the following:

- A wildlife habitat assessment, including assessment of impact to migratory, resident and breeding avian and bat populations
- A rare species assessment; and mitigation plans (if necessary)
- An audio-visual impact assessment, including a noise contour map, pre- and post-construction photo simulations of the project as seen during the day and night, an analysis of the potential for (and impact of) shadow flicker on neighboring properties, and plans to address aesthetic concerns with design considerations (e.g. the proposed color and finish of the tower & other components, the burial of electrical cables)
- A lighting plan consistent with local, state and federal regulations, including Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations
- Plans to address safety concerns including: (1) construction drawings showing adequate clearance between the blade arc and the ground, and limitations on access to the interior of the wind turbine tower, the electrical equipment, climbing apparatus, and transmission infrastructure; and (2) an analysis of the potential for signal interference and the impact of signal interference on emergency service communication systems
- Alternative sites analysis
- Adequate financial surety, either in cash or letter of credit, to repair damage to local roads and to stabilize the entire construction site during construction of the project. The financial surety should be available to the municipality in the event that the municipality is forced to conduct work to secure the stability of the soil and vegetation on the site, including the access road, after construction is completed.

- Sufficient decommissioning funds, kept in an escrow account associated with the property that is separate from the developer’s general accounts, so that the site will be restored to natural conditions at the end of the project’s useful life
- Financial assistance to the town to pay for the hiring of qualified engineering, environmental, and legal consultants to assist the Town in reviewing the application and establishing local revenue agreements.

Individual Wind Energy Systems

Wind energy systems are occasionally used as an energy source on a residential scale. There are currently two individual wind energy systems in West Windsor. Towns may only regulate wind facilities that do not connect in any way to the public power supply. The Vermont Public Service Board regulates wind systems that are connected to the power grid. Individual wind systems with blades less than 20 feet in diameter are exempt from the height limitations in West Windsor’s Zoning Regulations, but must adhere to all other applicable local, state and federal regulations, including but not limited to setback requirements and performance standards.

Rural areas with low density residential development or working agricultural landscapes are the most appropriate places to locate individual wind systems. Their height and visual prominence make them incompatible with densely settled areas. Individual wind energy systems must be designed so that they are not a focal point. The permitting of these facilities should be considered under a conditional use review process. Zoning Regulations should be amended to include setbacks which are adequate to accommodate a fall zone, and to minimize disturbance to neighboring properties from operational noise levels and lighting. All wind energy systems should be evaluated by the town or Public Service Board to ensure safety and to minimize negative environmental, technological and aesthetic impacts.

Net Metering

Net metering is one way in which a homeowner can realize savings from operating an individual solar or wind energy system. Under net metering, a homeowner is permitted to connect suitable generating equipment to the public power grid. During periods when more energy is generated than the property is using, the metered amount of electrical energy provided to the grid reduces residential electric bills. In order to net meter, the homeowner must receive a Certificate of Public Good. Vermont law allows net metering for renewable energy systems with capacities up to 500 kW. Electric utilities must allow net metering until the cumulative capacity of net metered systems equals 4% of the utility’s peak demand⁶. Net metering is governed by 30 V.S.A. §219a. West Windsor supports net metering, and does not view it as a commercial use.

Hydroelectric

Hydroelectric energy generation is another form of renewable energy. “Micro-hydro” systems do not dam rivers or streams, but their utility depends on the dynamic head, amount of water flow, and the efficiency of the turbine. The Vermont Energy Atlas identifies two sites in West Windsor with the undeveloped potential to produce less than 10 kW of hydroelectric power.

⁶ http://publicservice.vermont.gov/topics/renewable_energy/net_metering

Solar Energy

Passive solar designs can reduce heating and electricity bills. No mechanical means are employed in passive solar heating. Instead, siting and design measures, such as south facing windows, open floor plans, and ventilation are used to collect solar energy. Photovoltaic systems can be used to convert sunlight to electricity. These systems require equipment such as solar panels, a charge controller, batteries, and an inverter, which converts DC current into AC current for use in outlets for regular household appliances. Photovoltaic systems of up to 10 kW or less are eligible for a simplified approval process for a Certificate of Public Good. West Windsor supports the use of private solar energy systems. Commercial solar installations will not be permitted unless they are visually unobtrusive from roads and residential development, and located within 5,000' of an existing substation.

Wood

Wood is considered a biomass fuel. The use of biomass fuel can replace or reduce the use of non-renewable fuels such as heating oil. When grown and harvested in conjunction with effective forest management plans, woodlots can provide an alternative fuel source for landowners, thereby decreasing dependence on non-renewable resources. While burning wood does create air pollution, wood-burning technology has improved and emission requirements have been implemented. West Windsor supports the continued use of wood as a fuel source and encourages residents to use low-emission wood burning appliances that meet minimum EPA standards for wood burning.

Outdoor wood furnaces or boilers are gaining popularity across the country as a home heating method. These are free-standing combustion units located outside the home or structure that is being heated. When used properly these systems can be a clean and economical way to heat a house and water. Nonetheless, concerns exist over the safety and environmental impacts of these heating devices, particularly the production of offensive odors and potential health effects of uncontrolled emissions. The State of Vermont has regulations requiring these systems to be located at least 200 feet from neighboring residences and requiring the stack on the furnace to be higher than the roof line if the furnace is between 200 and 500 feet from the nearest neighboring home.¹ The State regulations also permit towns to have their own ordinances regulating outdoor wood furnaces. Outdoor wood furnaces are not appropriate for neighborhoods characterized by small lots with houses in close proximity to one another. All wood furnaces, indoor and outdoor, should meet minimum state and federal efficiency standards.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Energy resource availability and costs are generally not within the control of West Windsor residents; however, consumption can be influenced through education, technology, and the alteration of use patterns. Effective land use planning can promote energy conservation. Targeting new development towards areas located close to the community's major roads and existing settlements will minimize the energy consumed by residents commuting and will reduce the energy required to deliver essential services to residents and businesses. Decisions

concerning capital expenditures on roads and other municipal infrastructure should be mindful of energy conservation.

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

- Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) - SEVCA runs the Weatherization Assistance Program in Windsor County. Weatherization services include an energy audit, diagnostic tests, analysis, and recommendations, and are available at no cost to income-eligible homeowners and renters. SEVCA can also help purchase oil, kerosene, propane, or wood in the event of a heating emergency. In addition, they work with electric companies to prevent disconnection and help negotiate payment plans.
- Efficiency Vermont - Efficiency Vermont is the State's provider of energy efficiency services. They provide technical and financial assistance to electrical consumers for the purpose of improving the efficiency of existing and new facilities.
- ENERGY STAR Home Rebates - Energy Star Homes meet strict energy efficiency guidelines set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Energy. Efficiency Vermont provides free financial, design, and technical assistance to help build an ENERGY STAR qualified home. Benefits of being an ENERGY STAR home include financial incentives such as product rebates; utility savings; higher resale value; increased comfort and air quality; and other environmental benefits.

ENERGY POLICIES

1. Prohibit commercial and utility wind energy projects in the Town of West Windsor.
2. Participate in any regulatory hearings for any potential commercial or utility-scale wind energy development proposed for West Windsor.
3. Minimize negative impacts to West Windsor's scenic resources from the extension, relocation or upgrading of utility lines above ground and along roadsides.
4. Require the removal of electric poles that have been abandoned due to relocation or consolidation.
5. Support the development and use of individual on-site renewable energy resources including sustainably managed woodlots, and residential-scale net-metered wind, photovoltaic, and micro-hydro energy systems.
6. Support carpooling, public transit, and infrastructure (e.g. high-speed internet facilities) that can support telecommuting.
7. Encourage residents to reduce energy consumption and increase energy efficiency.

8. Consider improvements that result in long-term energy and cost savings in town capital budgets.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

1. Update the zoning regulations to explicitly prohibit commercial and utility-scale wind facilities, and to make residential wind energy systems a conditional use with specific standards that address height, separation of structures, minimum lot size, setbacks, aesthetics, operational noise, environmental impacts and other items as deemed necessary.
2. Evaluate and, as appropriate, propose amendments to the zoning regulations with regard to the siting of renewable residential and commercial solar energy systems. Such regulations may allow for waivers in the application of specific standards, and should also allow for building design and placement that maximize passive solar energy potential.
3. Develop and adopt local regulations and performance standards for wood furnaces.
4. Educate residents about energy issues and options by participating in programs like “Button Up Vermont” and by including information about energy efficiency and assistance programs through SEVCA and Efficiency Vermont at the Town Office and on West Windsor’s website.
5. Encourage local residents to borrow “Kill-a-Watt” devices for measuring the power consumption of individual appliances from the Mary L. Blood Library. Increase awareness about the availability of these devices and consider making them available at other locations such as the Town Hall and the Albert Bridge School.
6. Work with the Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission to encourage energy efficient transportation by developing a plan for expanding and improving bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in West Windsor.
7. Consider participating in Vermont’s Property-Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) district program.
8. When new construction that will be heated or cooled is proposed, provide permit applicants with a copy of the Vermont Residential Building Energy Codes.

CHAPTER 10. HOUSING

Note: Please see I. Introduction, Population and Demographics for more housing data

Housing is a key element of any sustainable community. The amount and type of housing available for sale and for rent can have a direct impact on the landscape and the costs of municipal services. The supply of housing should be adequate to house those who work in the community and should expand at a rate that can accommodate economic growth. With careful planning, housing that is both affordable and attractive can serve area residents and enhance the character of a community.

A variety of housing options should be available for the region's expanding elderly population to ensure that "aging in place" remains a feasible option. In addition, housing should be sufficient to sustain a viable enrollment in our school. Housing issues in Southern Windsor County vary by town. Prior to 2010, when West Windsor had an operating ski area, the demand for seasonal housing resulted in high costs and a shortage of affordable units.

However, the closing of the Ascutney ski area has had a dramatic impact on the value and marketability of local real estate. Since the ski area closed and the demand for weekly rentals plummeted, many resort property owners are choosing to rent out their homes year-round at affordable rates. The conversion of seasonal homes to full-time residences has resulted in a substantial increase in school enrollment over the past two years. Where West Windsor once had a lack of affordable housing, it may now have an excess. Given the school's limited capacity, a large influx of students due to newly affordable rental properties could strain school resources.

West Windsor's housing stock consists of 624 single-family homes with an average value, not including land, of \$226,928; 127 condominiums with an average value of \$108,603; and 14 mobile homes with an average value of \$33,564. There are a handful of camps, duplexes and multi-family homes and approximately 18 accessory dwelling units (AKA apartments). 57% of all West Windsor housing units (single-family, duplex, multi-family, mobile homes and condos) are "owner-occupied," while 43% are renter-occupied, vacant, seasonal, or second homes.

Vermont statute, 24 V.S.A. §4412(1)(E), allows all owner-occupied single-family dwellings to include a one-bedroom apartment provided that the property has sufficient wastewater capacity, the unit does not exceed 30% of the total habitable floor area of the single-family dwelling, and applicable setbacks, coverage and parking requirements are met. State statute also allows local bylaws to be less restrictive of accessory dwelling units. In 2012, West Windsor revised its zoning regulations to allow accessory dwellings to be 750 square feet or 30% of the total habitable floor area of the associated single-family dwelling, whichever is greater. West Windsor's regulations also allow accessory dwellings to have two bedrooms and allow the owner to occupy either the house or the apartment. However, in areas where small lots are prevalent, such as the village of Brownsville, wastewater capacity is generally insufficient unless the existing sewer system is expanded to include the village.

Other than in the Resort/Conservation and Light Industrial/Commercial districts, two-family dwellings are allowed in all districts on the same size lot required for a single-family dwelling as long as all required permits (e.g. wastewater) are obtained. Allowing single-family homes to be converted to two-family homes creates the potential for additional affordable housing.

Generally, housing is considered affordable if rent or mortgage, taxes, and insurance costs are no more than 30 percent of a household's annual income. According to the Vermont Department of Taxes, the median adjusted gross income for a West Windsor family in 2010 was \$66,870. Assuming a 30-year mortgage with a fixed interest rate, average property tax and insurance expenses, a modest down payment, and no other monthly debt, a family with the median income could afford a house with a price tag of approximately \$240,000. Of the 624 single-family homes in West Windsor, there are currently 221 (35%) that are appraised at \$240,000 or less. In addition, all of the condos in town are appraised below \$240,000. This fact highlights a dramatic shift in the affordability of housing units in West Windsor. Immediately prior to the closing of the ski area, only 36% of condos in town were affordable for a family with the median gross income.

A new state law, Act 16, passed in 2013, allows towns to regulate accessory dwellings in the floodplain. Given the passage of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, which will do away with subsidized flood insurance rates over the next few years, West Windsor should reconsider whether it is advisable to allow accessory dwelling units in the floodplain.

The results of a 2006 town-wide reappraisal in West Windsor were shocking to most residents with some experiencing ten-fold increases in the appraised value of their property. Many found themselves suddenly land-rich and cash-poor, which made it difficult to pay their property taxes. Initially there was concern that farms, which had been in the same family for generations, would be broken up and sold, but that did not happen. The primary result of the 2006 reappraisal was a dramatic increase in the amount of land enrolled in the Use Value Appraisal Program (AKA "current use"). In 2004, prior to the reappraisal, there were 1,965 acres (12.4% of the total acreage of the town) enrolled in the program. In 2012, there are 6,087 acres (38.5% of the total acreage of the town) enrolled in the program. Enrollment in the program has more than tripled.

While the current use program is beneficial in preserving large parcels and contiguous habitats, it does shift some of the property tax burden from those with large land holdings to those with small holdings, who are not eligible for the program. The net effect is to make small parcels less affordable.

In 2013, West Windsor had twenty-seven "land only" lots, less than three acres in size, with an average assessed value of \$60,685, and nine lots between 3 and 5 acres in size with an average assessed value of \$56,200. Since 2008, there has been little or no change in value for the smallest lots, while lots of three or more acres have generally decreased in value.

Another town-wide reappraisal in 2013 resulted in a 17.85% decrease in the Grand List and was shocking for different reasons. In general, values for large land holdings and condominiums decreased dramatically, essentially reversing the effect of the 2006 reappraisal and shifting the tax burden to those with single-family homes on small lots.

Coupled with the 2013 reappraisal were a substantial increase in the statewide property tax rate and a moderate increase in the municipal property tax rate. The rate increase was significant enough to result in higher property taxes even for many of those who saw a decline in their assessed value.

In West Windsor and other towns throughout the region, many seasonal homes have been converted to year-round homes as the demand for year-round homes continues to grow. U.S. Census data shows that the number of seasonal units in West Windsor dropped from 374 to 264 units between 1990 and 2010 because of this conversion to year-round use.

HOUSING POLICIES

1. Encourage housing development in West Windsor that meets the needs of residents of all income levels, including the improvement or rehabilitation of existing units.
2. Promote the use of innovative construction and design techniques as developed by “Efficiency Vermont” that enhance the affordability, energy efficiency, and environmental suitability of housing for all residents.
3. Site new rural housing development to preserve as much open space as possible and to blend harmoniously with the natural environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

1. Consider amending zoning regulations to accommodate smaller residential lots at the eastern end of the Primary Growth Village district, on parcels that are in reasonable proximity to the existing sewer line.
2. Periodically review the housing stock available for seniors and low to moderate income families to assure the balance necessary for a sustainable community.

CHAPTER 11. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of this Chapter is to document present and desired local economic conditions in accordance with state law [24 V.S.A. §4382(a)(11)]. Until 2010, West Windsor's economy was centered around a family ski resort that is no longer operating. The local economy also includes 45 businesses (many of which are small home-based operations). Most workers who are not self-employed commute to jobs located in the larger surrounding towns. The desired local economy involves expanding upon existing infrastructure and facilities in order to become a four-season outdoor recreation center, encouraging related entrepreneurialism, and supporting existing local businesses.

The Land Use Chapter generally indicates the location, type and scale of the desired land uses that are identified in this Chapter.

INTRODUCTION

Until the early 1900's, the economy of West Windsor was centered on agriculture. Most residents made their livelihood by farming or in businesses that were associated with the farm industry. Mills of various types could be found along the brooks throughout the town, and factories that made everything from woolen clothing to cheese prospered. Smaller, home-based businesses and industries completed the picture of a town that appears to have had a solid economic base and low unemployment.

In the mid-1900's, West Windsor's economy began to shift away from agriculture. Residents left the farm to work in the large machine shops and factories in Windsor and Springfield. These jobs were attractive because they provided an excellent salary, benefits and other amenities that weren't provided in an agricultural economy. The manufacturing sector remained strong until the 1970s. Beginning in the mid-1970's the manufacturing sector started to decline due to industry consolidation, overseas competition and a host of other financial factors. Cone Blanchard Machine Co., the last large machine tool plant located in the Precision Valley, closed its doors in 2000. Since the mid-1990s, the primary sources of employment in the area are in government, technology, light manufacturing, health care, tourism and services. While the economy seems to transform itself every twenty five years or so, there still remains a close relationship to agriculture in West Windsor. Although the farms are now smaller and there are more horses than cows, the residents in West Windsor still enjoy and feel strongly about the importance of a working landscape in town.

In 2004, a town-wide survey⁷ was performed that looked at quality of life, growth and development, housing, town services and regulations. The overwhelming response to the survey was that people want the town to retain its rural character with historic buildings, open land, scenic roads and beautiful views. Therefore, any future development should consider these natural, historic and visual resources if they want to be successful in their development endeavors. While these sentiments remain representative of the community, a 2012 recreation survey identified the revitalization and expansion of outdoor recreation opportunities as a

⁷ Surveys were sent to all residents and landowners. 285 people responded to the survey.

desirable goal with potentially significant benefits for our local economy (see the Recreation Chapter for more details).

As we look to the future, townspeople should consider the implications of the following issues:

ENCOURAGING HOME-BASED AND SMALL BUSINESSES

The town's policy is to support home-based and small businesses. Although high-speed internet service is available in some sections of West Windsor, availability should be expanded to make working out of one's home a realistic and attractive alternative to employment options that require a commute. Home-based businesses should expand as high-speed internet service expands. West Windsor's zoning regulations were revised in 2008 to include performance standards that address some of the potentially adverse impacts associated with home-based businesses such as excess light, noise, dust, etc. Home-based businesses that create high volumes of traffic should be encouraged to locate along the major routes in West Windsor.

AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY BUSINESSES

It is unlikely that West Windsor will ever return to what would be considered a traditional farming town. In the 1930s, there were 94 dairy operations in town, today there are none. Yet agricultural enterprise is cyclical. Historically, sheep production boomed and then declined and was replaced by dairy farming. It is possible that smaller, more diversified agricultural enterprises will develop to take the place of dairy farms. This diversity can be seen in town today. There are beef cows, horses, llamas, alpacas, sheep, market gardens, tree farms and sugaring operations throughout the Town.

Over the past decade, and especially since West Windsor's 2006 town-wide reappraisal, Vermont's use value appraisal program has dramatically increased the number of acres being used for farming and forestry. In 2000, West Windsor had 1,470 acres (or 9.3% of the total acreage of the town) enrolled in the program. In 2012, West Windsor had 6,087 acres (or 38.5% of the total acreage of the town) enrolled in the program. Most of West Windsor's enrolled land is forest land (79.2%); the remainder is agricultural land (20.8%).

These activities may occur throughout town.

COMMERCIAL-INDUSTRIAL AREAS

The Light Industrial/Commercial district is located at the west end of Route 44, near its intersection with Route 106. The four parcels of land in the Light Industrial/Commercial district include a helicopter landing area, a veterinary clinic, the Lucy MacKenzie Humane Society, and a wood pellet manufacturing plant.

In the mid-1960s, a talc plant was developed for the purpose of processing ore mined in nearby towns. In 2003, the talc plant ceased operations and Windsor Minerals, Inc. agreed to reclaim the 207-acre tailings disposal area south of the plant. The area may be made available to the public, for recreational purposes, after the reclamation is completed. In 2004, Williams & Co. Mining purchased the 12-acre parcel containing the former talc building complex. In 2013, Pellet Property Holdings LLC purchased the property and obtained conditional use approval to convert

the facility to a wood pellet plant. The facility is currently being renovated and is expected to begin operations in late 2014 or early 2015.

Because of West Windsor's desire to remain rural and conserve its natural features and resources, any new industry in Town should be located in the Light Industrial/Commercial district. Any new industry considering the Town for its location would be evaluated based on its compatibility with the town's goals and its potential effects on the environment.

Small-scale development in the Village of Brownsville shall be in accordance with the future land use categories and map, subject to current zoning restrictions. Expansion of the sewer system into the Village will provide the infrastructure needed to protect water quality and accommodate limited commercial growth and redevelopment. Resort-related commercial development is desired in the Resort base area.

TOURISM/VACATION HOME DEVELOPMENT

Tourism has become an increasingly important part of the Town's economy. Towns like West Windsor, with its mountain, open fields, farmland, scenic vistas and traditional village area are an increasingly sought after place for vacationers looking for respite from ever expanding urban and suburban environments. Tourism can provide opportunities for residents who want to open Bed and Breakfasts, Inns and others forms of lodging. Services provided to second home owners can create additional jobs, including maintenance, carpentry, snow plowing, electrical, plumbing and heating services.

A potential result of vacation home development is the possibility of vacation units being converted to year-round family residences, particularly in the resort area. The closure of the ski area in 2010 has already increased the number of year-round residents at the resort and the number of students in our local elementary school. Approximately 50 percent of West Windsor's housing units are considered seasonal.

ASCUTNEY MOUNTAIN RESORT

The first ski operation on Mount Ascutney began in the 1940s with the installation of a rope tow, which offered local families an affordable recreational pastime. In the 1980s there was rapid expansion of the area, including a marked increase in lodging and other forms of on-site accommodations. These changes were driven in part by ski industry market forces which compelled many ski areas, such as Ascutney Mountain Resort, to develop their real estate in order to try to remain profitable. However, this strategy did not prevent the Resort from declaring bankruptcy in the early 1990s. In 1994, the Plausteiner family purchased the Resort out of bankruptcy. Between 1994 and 2010, the Resort owners installed a high-speed quad chairlift, expanded the number of trails, built a skier bridge over Ski Tow Road, and made a number of other improvements to the Resort. In 2008, three of the five hotel buildings and the fitness center were sold to Florida-based Orange Lake Resorts. Due to financial difficulties, the ski area did not open for the 2010/11 ski season. In 2010, the ski area was taken over in foreclosure. The high-speed quad chairlift was sold and removed in 2012. In 2013, the foreclosure action was finally resolved and efforts to market the ski area are ongoing.

The combined Orange Lake Resorts and remaining Ascutney Mountain Resort are the largest taxpayers in Town. The Orange Lake Resorts portion provides the Town with many amenities, such as a restaurant and fitness center, not typically available in a town the size of West Windsor.

The closure of the ski area section of the Resort has adversely affected the economics of the town including employment of Resort staff, diversion of skiers/boarders to other towns/mountains, lost traffic and revenue for town businesses, uncertainty of tax receipts, etc. Complications regarding the operation of the Resort wastewater system added uncertainty to the situation until the town purchased the system in February 2014.

The Town would like the ski area to be sold or leased to an operator who will make the changes necessary to operate a viable ski/recreation resort, preferably a four-season attraction. As the ski industry changes and the Resort ultimately responds to those changes, it is important that the Resort and the Town discuss potential projects that may impact the Town, as early as possible, to avoid potential conflicts during the permitting process.

MUNICIPAL WATER/WASTEWATER EVALUATION

In 2010, the Planning Commission and Selectboard authorized the creation of a Water/Wastewater Committee. At the conclusion of 2010, after soliciting community input, the committee recommended that the Selectboard conduct a state-funded “small community water/wastewater evaluation.” The Selectboard concurred and by the end of 2010 had secured state funding. The charge to the Committee for 2011 was to select a consultant and execute the evaluation of Brownsville Village.

The firm of Aldrich and Elliott was selected and engaged in April 2011 and their final report was delivered in April 2012. Their findings include the following:

- All properties within West Windsor have onsite water and wastewater systems except the Ascutney Mountain Resort. Onsite constraints, including the proximity of Mill Brook in the Village, are limiting the potential future growth of the area. Furthermore, the septic system constraints at the Albert Bridge School are limiting the expansion of the student body. The Ascutney Mountain Resort’s wastewater system, which was recently purchased by the town, is connected to the treatment facility in Windsor. The Resort has its own water system that is separately owned and managed.
- The evaluation of alternatives was presented to the Water/Wastewater Committee and to the public in December of 2011. The majority consensus was that, although a small municipal subsurface disposal system would provide the lowest costs and alleviate the existing environmental concerns, it would not be the best long term solution for the Brownsville area because of capacity and growth limitations.
- The consensus was that connecting to the Town of Windsor through the Resort system was in the best interest of the Brownsville area because it alleviates the environmental concerns and allows for growth and changes of use in the Village center.

At the March 2012 Town Meeting, approval was obtained to have the Town purchase the Resort wastewater system for a price not to exceed \$500,000. In February 2014, the purchase took place. Immediately following the purchase, West Windsor transferred to Windsor the portion of the system located within Windsor’s boundaries, which consists of a pump station and approximately 4 miles of force main. The Windsor Public Works Department will be maintaining the system in both towns. Now that the system is owned by the Town, plans to install a sewer collection system in the village with a connection to the existing system, as recommended in the Brownsville Sewer System Preliminary Engineering Report (April 2013), can proceed pending grant funding and voter approval.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SWOT ANALYSIS

During 2012, the West Windsor Planning Commission engaged the Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission to assist with the revision of the economic development and recreation chapters of the Town Plan. This project included a town-wide questionnaire concerning recreation. See the Recreation Chapter for the findings and recommendations associated with this effort. During this process, it became apparent that there is a close link between West Windsor recreation and economic development. As a result, the Planning Commission undertook a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis (SWOT) relating to Economic Development within the context of the recreation survey/analysis and the complications associated with the ski resort. The results follow:

INTERNAL	
<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical/scenic beauty • Mt Ascutney (landform) • The Resort • Town Forest • Extensive trail networks • Excellent school / school choice • Proximity to interstate highways • Excellent access to health care • Proximity to GMHA • General Store 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited internet & cell phone service • Closed ski area • Lack of sewer system in village • Aging population • VT sales tax (i.e. the NH advantage) • Stagnant real estate market • Few job opportunities in town • Limited # of businesses & customers • Loss of identity (as a ski town) • Resistance to change • Limited night life / “nothing to do”

EXTERNAL	
<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Threats</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underutilized resources (e.g. trail network, town hall, school gym) • VT 50 & 100 races • VT Mountain Bicycling Event • Expand trail networks • Promotion of events • Collaboration with other towns (e.g. multi-town trail networks/promotion) • Grants • Existing ski infrastructure • Talc plant (Imerys) property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of a town in decline • Diminished real estate values • Loss of Mile Long Field (& trail connections) • Loss of school • Closure of the general store • Closure of the post office • Deterioration of ski area infrastructure

Economic Development Vision Statement

The future of West Windsor’s economic development is tied directly to the sustainability of the natural beauty of our town, the enhancement of town infrastructure, and careful development of recreational opportunities within the town. West Windsor will be seen by residents as a home to, and by non-residents as a destination for, a diverse range of recreational opportunities supporting an active, healthy lifestyle. Expanding recreation facilities and utilization will be the engine that will result in:

- Additional families moving into West Windsor
- Sustained school enrollment
- Addition of service and retail businesses to support increased use of recreational facilities
- Increased real estate values
- Increased civic involvement

In order to achieve this vision, the following strategic goals and strategies are adopted, and responsible parties and timeframes identified:

Strategic Goals	Strategies	Responsible Party and Timeframe
1. Facilitate reopening Ascutney Mt. Resort as a four season destination	Work with owner to facilitate sale or lease; explore conservation/recreation options with Trust for Public Land	Select Board; ongoing
2. Actively promote West Windsor’s recreational facilities and events to attract visitors	Appoint task force to work with Selectboard & STAB to promote facilities and events; incorporate funding into Town budget	Select Board, STAB, Task Force & Webmaster; complete by June ‘14
3. Improve cell phone and internet connectivity in West Windsor	Support efforts by EC Fiber to build out fiber network	Select Board & EC Fiber reps; complete by Dec. ‘15

4. Build a village wastewater system to allow residential and business development	A. Obtain grant funding and positive bond vote B. Complete final design and installation	A. Selectboard ; complete by May '14 B. Select Board; complete by Oct. '15
5. Secure permanent use of the Mile Long Field as an integral part of the West Windsor recreational resource base	A. Contact owners and discuss purchase of all or portions of MLF; evaluate possibility of long term lease, possibly in exchange for tax relief B. Utilize existing conservation fund to raise money for this and other local recreation or conservation investments	A. Select Board; complete by June '14 B. Select Board and Conservation Comm.; complete by December '14
6. Finalize and execute a trail master plan	Create a trail master plan including as many "systems" as possible (snow mobile, horse, hiking); identify needed "rights of way" or "purchase" areas, and establish plan to obtain; publish master plan	RPC (with help from STAB, Moonlighters, GMHA, ATA, TFC, CC, neighboring towns); complete by June '16
7. Improve utilization of the Town Hall and Albert Bridge School facilities for recreational purposes	Advertise activities, facilities and events on website and elsewhere; develop Town Hall use policy; coordinate with School Board	Webmaster & Selectboard; complete by Dec. '14

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Note: These policies supplement those inherent in the goals and strategies identified above.

1. Support local businesses that provide well paying, sustainable jobs that support the local economy and are compatible with West Windsor's rural character.
2. Encourage compatible economic growth that includes mixed use and residential development in the area between the bridges in the village.
3. Encourage responsible Resort development that is sensitive to the town's limited services, rural character and conservation ethic.
4. Encourage home-based businesses as long as they consider adjacent land uses, traffic, noise, and other issues that may be offensive to neighbors in the area.
5. Support agricultural enterprises in town that do not adversely impact ground or surface water quality, harm natural resources or degrade the quality of life of adjacent property owners.
6. Balance future tourism and vacation home development against the impacts that such development may have on the qualities that draw people to West Windsor in the first place.
7. Per 24 V.S.A. §138, consider the opportunity to increase local tax revenue without increasing property taxes (e.g. by authorizing a local option tax on rooms and meals).

CHAPTER 12. RELATIONSHIP TO LOCAL & REGIONAL PLANS

In order for the town of West Windsor to carry out its land use planning goals, the town must evaluate the Town Plan in relation to plans of neighboring towns and the region. West Windsor is bordered by the towns of Windsor, Hartland, Woodstock, Reading and Weathersfield in Windsor County. West Windsor is located in the northern portion of the Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission's 10-town region. West Windsor is served by the District 2 Environmental Commission, and is located in Maintenance District 4 of the Vermont Agency of Transportation.

This Chapter evaluates how West Windsor's Town Plan relates to state, regional and local plans or regulations, including, but not limited to, the following per 24 V.S.A. §4350:

- (A) Consistency with State Planning Goals⁸ (24 V.S.A. §4302);
- (B) Compatibility with approved local plans in the region⁹;
- (C) Compatibility with the Southern Windsor County Regional Plan².

NEIGHBORING TOWNS

West Windsor is surrounded by towns that share many similar planning concerns and are faced with varying degrees of development pressure. All of the towns abutting West Windsor have Town Plans and zoning regulations, except Hartland, which has a Town Plan, but no zoning regulations.

All neighboring towns share West Windsor's concern for the protection of natural resources. West Windsor shares the Mill Brook watershed with the towns of Reading and Windsor. Based upon a review of current town plans from neighboring towns, the land use and conservation plans of the neighboring towns appear to be compatible with those of West Windsor as summarized below.

Windsor's 2011 Town Plan focuses dense development within and surrounding the downtown area, with the areas located to the west of I-91 serving primarily as the rural countryside. The conservation area on their Future Land Use Map includes the Ascutney State Park which corresponds with West Windsor's conservation area in the southeast corner of town. The remaining areas along the Windsor/West Windsor town boundary are designated on the Future Land Use Map as forest or agricultural. These are similar to West Windsor's rural residential category. The densities of the secondary growth area (4-5 acres per zoning bylaw standards) are compatible with Windsor. Furthermore, the primary growth area is limited to a small area

⁸ The standard of review to determine consistency with State Planning Goals requires substantial progress toward attainment of the goals. If a planning body determines that a goal is not relevant or attainable, they shall identify the goal, describe the situation and indicate what measures should be taken to mitigate any adverse effects of not making substantial progress toward that goal.

⁹ In order to be compatible with other plans, West Windsor's Town Plan, as implemented, will not significantly reduce the desired effect of the implementation of the other plan. If it will reduce the desired effect of another plan, the Plan may be considered compatible if it addresses the four sub-elements of 24 V.S.A. §4302(f)(2).

surrounding the sewer line, and does not appear to reduce the desired effect of Windsor's Town Plan.

For the purposes of this review, the 2013 Weathersfield Selectboard's public hearing draft of the Land Use Chapter was analyzed. Weathersfield's Town Plan calls for rural areas to surround the villages of Ascutney and Perkinsville and a number of hamlets. It designates most of the area along their boundary with West Windsor for conservation, which corresponds to West Windsor's conservation area as shown on the Future Land Use Map. The northwest corner of Weathersfield is designated as rural, which allows for working landscapes, forestlands, recreation areas and low-density residential uses. This is adjacent to West Windsor's conservation area, which is compatible especially "when surrounded by compatible uses such as forestry and agriculture."

West Windsor's Town Plan appears to be compatible with the 2010 Reading Town Plan. Reading generally calls for dense development in and around the village of Felchville and hamlets of South Reading and Hammondsville, to be surrounded by rural countryside. Reading's Future Land Use Map calls for conservation areas that correspond to West Windsor's conservation area in the southwestern corner of town. Reading's industrial area is a logical extension of West Windsor's commercial/light industrial area, as they are both located where past mining/industrial uses were located. However, West Windsor's Plan is more restrictive on what new uses may occur in the commercial/light industrial area. Reading's industrial area was reduced in size from the previous plan due to wildlife habitat areas and the new location of Reading's fire station. The remainder of Reading's forest area corresponds well with West Windsor's rural residential area.

Hartland does not have zoning, but their Town Plan includes specific policies to guide development subject to an Act 250 permit. Hartland's 2012 Town Plan includes a rural designation along the entire Hartland/West Windsor town boundary area. "Maintaining the Town's natural resource base, agricultural economy and forest industry are primary objectives" for their rural area, which allows for low density residential uses and home occupations. West Windsor's rural residential area, which supports forestry, agriculture, wildlife habitat, and low-density residential, appears to be compatible with Hartland's Town Plan.

Woodstock shares a very small boundary with West Windsor, about 1,100 feet in length in the northwestern corner of West Windsor. Woodstock has an R5 designation in that area as shown on their 2013 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map. That area abuts West Windsor's rural residential area. At this time, the text of Woodstock's Comprehensive Plan is not available. However, it appears that Woodstock's R5 designation is compatible with West Windsor's rural residential designation.

SOUTHERN WINDSOR COUNTY REGION

The 2009 Southern Windsor County Regional Plan provides broad guidelines for planning, coordination and review of the natural, cultural, social and economic features of the Southern Windsor County region. The Southern Windsor County Regional Plan and 2006 Regional Bicycling and Walking Plan are companion documents to the West Windsor Town Plan, providing a broader framework and context for local planning efforts. The Town Plan is generally compatible with the land use and development goals of the Regional Plan as they both

encourage the densest development within and immediately surrounding Brownsville and the resort center, to be surrounded by a rural countryside.

The 2009 Regional Plan identifies the village area of Brownsville as a “Village Center” characterized by a small area of concentrated development with a mix of residential, commercial and civic uses. The Future Land Use section of the Regional Plan indicates that Brownsville cannot sustain a large amount of growth based on its rural setting and limitations of available services. The Regional Plan directs growth and development within the higher density village area, and acknowledges the need to provide wastewater solutions for the village area. This section and the West Windsor Town Plan are compatible, as they designate similar areas for concentrated growth surrounded by rural areas.

West Windsor’s Town Plan and the 2009 Regional Plan are also compatible with respect to the town purchasing the wastewater system that serves the resort, planning a sewer line extension into the village, encouraging affordable housing, and expanding local economic development strategies.

STATE PLANNING GOALS

West Windsor’s Town Plan makes substantial progress toward attainment of the 13 State Planning Goals in 24 V.S.A. §4302, and it addresses related findings of the Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission’s enhanced consultation report dated June 7, 2012. Please note that in 2013 Act 16 added a new State Planning Goal “to encourage flood resilient communities”, which takes effect on July 1, 2014. This Town Plan includes a number of updates addressing flood and erosion hazards, and considering the local impacts of Tropical Storm Irene in 2011 and the flooding of July 2013. However, it does not fully address the new state planning goal for a variety of reasons:

- 1) Adoption of this Town Plan will happen before July 1, 2014;
- 2) Additional guidance and maps from the State will be helpful when they become available in the next year;
- 3) A recent grant award will pay for a stream geomorphic assessment of the Mill Brook to be conducted in 2013 and 2014. West Windsor will have much better information to plan for flood resiliency when the Mill Brook assessment is complete.

CHAPTER 13. TOWN PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the goals, policies and recommendations outlined in this Plan depends on the combined efforts of town residents and local officials, as well as the resources of the Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission, and other regional, state, federal and private entities involved in land use planning activities.

At the state and federal levels, the Plan can be used to justify and prioritize the use of federal funds for community development, transportation improvements, natural resource protection and management, and other investments. In addition, Act 250 requires developers to show that projects conform to local and regional plans.

At the regional level, the Regional Planning Commission can review the Town Plan for compliance with the requirements of Act 200. Act 200 approval makes the town eligible to apply for implementation funding from the State in the form of Municipal Planning Grants.

At the local level, the town may take some of the following actions to implement the goals of this Plan:

1. Review and amend, if necessary, zoning bylaws and subdivision regulations so that they are based on the goals, policies and recommendations outlined in the Town Plan.
2. Refer to the Town Plan when planning additions and improvements to local infrastructure such as local roads and public utilities. Such additions or improvements should be used to plan for appropriate growth and development.
3. Work with public and private entities to help them design development or resource management plans in ways that will further the goals of this Plan.
4. Continue to plan and work to conserve important resource lands.
5. Request that the Regional Planning Commission create and update maps indicating the locations of state recognized natural resource areas.
6. Work with the Regional Planning Commission on meeting local housing needs.

TOOLS

To implement and protect our values and vision, the Town should review, consider and adopt when appropriate the following tools:

- A comprehensive Capital Budget and Program for improvements to town property and infrastructure (to supplement the town's existing capital equipment budget);
- An inventory of natural areas, open space, agricultural and forest lands, aquifer recharge areas, wetlands, vernal pools, wildlife habitat, scenic views, historic sites, ridgelines and recreational trails;

- A Recreation Plan & Trail Map;
- “Village Center” designation to allow property owners to get tax credits for renovating historic structures;
- A ½-acre residential district within the Primary Growth Village district;
- Stronger outdoor lighting standards;
- Ridgeline development restrictions, siting and screening standards, building envelopes and conservation subdivision design standards.
- Revised flood hazard area regulations
- A revised hazard mitigation plan

Priority Recommendations for the Town of West Windsor

Created: Feb. 20, 2014

Recommendation	Chapter	Page #	Responsible Party	Expected Timing			Priority (Low, Medium, High)	Cost Estimate	Method of Financing
				Ongoing	0-2 Years	3-5 Years			
Construct village wastewater system	3, 11	18, 71	Selectboard		x		high	\$2,100,000	bond, grants
Facilitate the development of infrastructure needed to provide up-to-date telecommunications technology	3, 11	20, 70	Selectboard & EC Fiber reps		x		high	\$135,000 town; \$115,000 private investors	debt service on town bond will be covered by lease payments from EC Fiber
Facilitate reopening ski area as a 4-season resort	6, 11	35, 70	Selectboard	x			high	n/a	n/a
Consider increasing the annual contribution to the Conservation Fund for the purchase of land, conservation easements or development rights	2, 6, 7	15, 36, 42	Selectboard, PC, TFC, CC, STAB	x			high	to be determined by voters	town budget
Secure permanent use of Mile Long Field	6, 11	36, 71	Selectboard, PC, TFC, CC, STAB		x		high	\$370,000	private/grants
Promote local recreation facilities & events	11	70	Rec committee, consultant, STAB, Selectboard	x			high	\$5,000	town budget
Amend zoning regs to require roads/driveways to have slopes < 15%	4	23	PC & Selectboard			x	high	n/a	n/a
Explore alternate access to areas (Yale Heights, Happy Canyon) that may be cut off during a flood	7	42	Selectboard			x	high	n/a	n/a
Establish an emergency access to the resort	8	55	Selectboard		x		high	\$75,000	grant, resort owner

Revise local flood regulations to comply with state flood regs.	4, 7	23, 42	<i>PC & Selectboard</i>		x		<i>high</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>
Pursue projects/policies that will protect the transportation infrastructure during floods	7, 8	42, 55	<i>PC & Selectboard</i>		x		<i>high</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>
Develop & update a capital budget program & assess needs for land, equipment and/or building modifications	4, 6	26, 36	<i>PC & Selectboard</i>	x			<i>high</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>
Improve safety of transportation network for all users by expanding existing facilities in the village and improving/widening road shoulders	8	55	<i>Selectboard, Highway Dept, RPC, Agency of Transportation</i>		x		<i>high</i>	<i>to be determined</i>	<i>grants & town matching funds</i>
Review & implement the recommendations of Forest Ecologist E. Tii McLane	7	44	<i>Selectboard & TFC</i>		x		<i>high - wildlife; medium - people</i>	<i>to be determined</i>	<i>grants & town matching funds</i>
Assess the water quality of Mill Brook and its tributaries periodically	3	18	<i>Selectboard</i>	x			<i>medium</i>	<i>minor</i>	<i>town budget</i>
Participate in a geomorphic assessment of Mill Brook watershed	7	42	<i>RPC & CC</i>		x		<i>medium, required by state</i>	<i>no cost to town</i>	<i>grant funded through RPC</i>
Update zoning regulations to prohibit commercial & utility-scale wind facilities	9	61	<i>PC & Selectboard</i>		x		<i>medium</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>
Amend zoning regulations with regard to solar energy systems	9	61	<i>PC & Selectboard</i>		x		<i>medium</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>
Adopt regulations & performance standards for wood furnaces	9	61	<i>PC & Selectboard</i>		x		<i>medium</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>

APPENDIX A

WEST WINDSOR STORY

By Mary B. Fenn

Looking north from the Brownsville Rock, high on Ascutney Mountain, one can view the hills, valleys, fields and forest of the West Windsor township. Deep in the valley below is the tiny village of Brownsville with its white steepled church, yellow brick Town Hall and the large red brick, seven chimneyed home. It is a snug clutch of buildings which has changed little in the last 150 years. Tight to the base of the mountain is the Ascutney Resort, a complex of gray structures. Ski trails sprawl down the steep slopes, merging together by a main lodge. A recently enlarged school/community building makes its own statement on the north edge of the village. One can make out a blacktop highway which threads east and west, between Windsor and Reading. Another one runs north from the village toward the township of Hartland. A few of the houses by the dirt roads that wind through the folding hills date back over 200 years.

West Windsor was organized as an independent township October 26, 1848. Previous to that time it had been the West Parish of Windsor.

It was July 6, 1761 that Governor Benning Wentworth of New Hampshire issued a charter to Colonel Josiah Willard of Winchester, New Hampshire, which "sued out" the grant for Windsor. Parcels of land were sold to settlers from New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Connecticut --to men and families who were anxious to move into this undeveloped country. Land was surveyed, roads laid out, trees were cut and homes were built, as a small community was cleared out of the wilderness.

The first recorded meeting of the proprietors was held November 3, 1767. It was noted that "New York lays claim to all lands west of the Connecticut River that were granted by the governor of New Hampshire." This was a confusing period in the history of what was later to become the state of Vermont. By 1769 early pioneers were making their "pitches" in the western part of the Windsor grant. Three years later the first map was drawn up. Lots and Ranges were laid out. A rough road/track was cut west from the settlement by the river, over several ridges through what was later to become the hamlet of Sheddsville, and on westward over more ridges.

At a July, 1778 town meeting the town of Windsor was officially divided into two equal parts. The East Parish, close to the river, was developing into a thriving commercial village. Self-sufficient farms were scattered through the hills of what was to become the West Parish. In 1783 the Vermont Legislature established the Parishes as two Ecclesiastical Societies.

Sheddsville, where several Shedd families settled, became the center of the West Parish. A meeting house was built and a cemetery laid out high on the hill above the tiny hamlet. A store, school and a blacksmith followed. A road led to the valley where water from Mill Brook produced power for a sawmill and gristmill. Annual Town Meetings were held alternately in the East and West Parishes.

Not only did the family lifestyles in the two parishes differ but there was friction. It was difficult to determine where problems lay. Traveling back and forth over the several steep hills was

difficult. Much of the conflict had to do with the roads, and caring for the poor. Disagreements developed. November 4, 1814 a law was passed by the Legislature of the State of Vermont recording, "An act dividing the East and West Parishes of Windsor into separate and distinct towns." Almost a year and a half later, March 1, 1816, that act was formally repealed.

It was in 1810 that Consul-General William Jarvis of Weathersfield had introduced the Spanish merino sheep into Vermont. Both the people-population and the sheep-count in the parishes were growing steadily as old problems kept surfacing. Education didn't seem to be an issue. In 1823 there were 425 students registered in the 11 West Parish one-room schools. Large families were the rule. By 1847 the population in the West Parish had reached over 1000 people. The festering separation difficulties finally came to a head. On October 26, 1848 the Governor of Vermont approved and signed the House Bill # 69 entitled, "An Act to Divide the Town of Windsor, It is hereby enacted by the general assembly of the state of Vermont, as follows: ..." A line was drawn north and south between seventh and eighth ranges of lots. The portion east of said line was to be known as Windsor, and that portion lying westerly was to be known as West Windsor.

Water power and the mills attracted settlers to the valley. A second village, Brownsville, sprang up. A fulling and carding mill by the brook helped take care of the sheep farmers' wool processing needs.

Many farmers were motivated by the growing sheep industry. More trees were cut. Miles and miles of stone walls were built. The bare hills of West Windsor were dotted with over 7020 heavily jowled merino sheep. 1860 was the height of the sheep era in West Windsor. It was about that time that the American west was opening up and families were being lured to land that was far better for agriculture than the hills of Vermont.

As the sheep bubble started to burst many local farmers who didn't head west were switching their farming efforts from sheep to cows. Cheese and butter were profitable products. The men did the farming. Women made the cheese. In 1850 153 farmers had 506 milch cows which turned out 18,512 pounds of butter, while 72 of them turned out 20,800 pounds of cheese. Thirty years later records show that 114 farmers with 232 cows were producing 41,233 pounds of butter and only 5,652 pounds of cheese.

With the advent of railroads which reached up through Vermont it became possible to ship dairy products to Boston. Late in the 1800s a cooperative cheese factory was built at the west end of the village of Brownsville -- close to Mill Brook. Large barrels of cottage cheese, as well as Neufchatel and other soft cheeses, were shipped to Boston. A few years later a cooling plant for milk was built where the West Windsor Volunteer Fire Department building stands today. After the milk was processed it was poured into 40 quart, heavily jacketed milk cans, packed in ice, and shipped to Windsor where it was loaded on a train for the big city.

For several decades the dairy business remained fairly static. Barns were built, pastures fenced in, hay fields cleared, plowed, fertilized and planted. Milk was cooled and processed before being shipped to the cities. The Gleaner Grange #282 was the organization which supported the farm community with agricultural education, cooperative buying opportunities, and fun social activities. However, families kept leaving the area for "greener pastures." By the turn of the century the population had dwindled to half of what it once was. When automobiles came on the

scene men looked for jobs in surrounding towns. Some of them worked in Windsor's machine tool shops --often keeping a subsistence farm at home. They still kept shipping milk.

1915 was a special year for West Windsor. Members of the Gleaner Grange #282 had raised enough money and given enough of their personal hard labor to build their own hall. Saturday, August 16 the Hall was dedicated with great celebration.

When Dr. Darwin Story, from Proctorsville, died he left money to have a town hall built in the center of Brownsville, in memory of his father, Dr. Dyer Story. It was almost across the road from the Mary Blood Library, which had been given to the community in 1901 by Benjamin Blood. Dr. Dyer Story had cared for the people of West Windsor for over 50 years. At noon October 27, the day of the Town Hall dedication, a dinner was served at noon to 450 souls. It was an all day celebration with plenty of food and many speeches. It is said that 600 enjoyed dancing the night away.

West Windsor dairying reached its peak in 1930. 94 herds. 1706 cows.

For the next several decades times were not easy. Farms began to lose their value. The "depression" somewhat affected the area, though many families had their gardens, chickens and other animals to sustain them. West Windsor felt the impact of World War II as 62 of their men and boys enlisted or were drafted. Only one was killed but many others, knowing that jobs were scarce at home, did not return to the hills and life on the farms. State requirements for dairy farms had becoming more stringent. Pay was low for hired hands.

The complexion of the township was changing. When skiing became a growing sport, a woman who had moved into the area installed a rope ski-tow at the base of Ascutney Mountain. It was a beginning. Trails were cut, slicing the face of the mountain. Bob Ely, back from the war, invented snowmaking. The white stuff helped cover the rocks and steep pitches. Over the years improved lifts were installed. Housing for the skiers was made available as a succession of owners enlarged and upgraded the area.

In 1963 the local selectmen agreed it would be beneficial to the town to have Eastern Magnesia Talc Co. build their talc ore processing plant in the western part of town. Though the ownership changed several times over the next 40 years, the talc plant was a quiet, clean asset to West Windsor. It closed in 2004.

West Windsor had always been a likable, attractive, rural community. Interstate 91 made it reachable for people from "down-country" -- not only to ski, but to stay a while. Some bought old houses; others bought land and put up new houses. Some young people from suburbia and the cities wanted to bring up their children in a small country town. There were those who had a "second home" in the hills. Some folks came and stayed. Others, after a few years, returned from whence they came or moved on. There was a core of families whose forebears dated generations back, to the early days. In the 1960s land values began to rise. Because of the proximity to Woodstock, home of the Green Mountain Horse Association, and some 58 miles of dirt roads, old barns were shored up, new barns built, and a few large horse arenas broke the line of scenic beauty. Property values continued to rise as large parcels were divided into smaller housing lots.

Today, most of those who are employed locally have jobs with the school, the General Store or in their own homes, thanks to computers and the internet. Others have employment in surrounding towns: Windsor, Claremont, Hanover, Lebanon, Woodstock, Springfield. At the end of the day they return to their homes in West Windsor, a wonderfully warm, friendly community -- a community with a white steepled church, a bustling little library, a Town Hall where, on the first Tuesday in March many residents gather for the annual Town Meeting, to have their say in how their town is run.

There are always big doings on the Fourth of July: a flea-market, a fantastic parade, games for the kids, barbecue cookout and a chance to see and enjoy the day with friends in town. And there are always the Bean Suppers in the summer for the benefit of the Historical Society and the School. In the winter months there are the roast beef suppers¹⁰ at the Methodist Episcopal community church. The residents of the town feel safe and protected knowing the high quality of the West Windsor Volunteer Fire Department, the FAST squad and our dependable constable¹¹.

¹⁰ The church no longer offers roast beef suppers.

¹¹ West Windsor's law enforcement needs are no longer provided by a Constable, but rather by the Windsor Police Department.

Appendix B

2012 Recreation Survey Results

There were 211 responses (138 residents, 66 non-resident property owners, and 1 business owner) to the Planning Commission's 2012 recreation survey. Not all respondents answered every question. A summary of results follows:

73% of respondents feel that recreation is important or very important.

Participation in recreation activities (in order of preference):

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Walking or Running (91%) | 7. Mountain biking (40%) |
| 2. Hiking (74%) | 8. Playing on playground (31%) |
| 3. Alpine skiing/snowboarding (64%) | 9. Horseback Riding (30%) |
| 4. X-country skiing/snowshoeing (62%) | 10. Canoeing/kayaking (25%) |
| 5. Road biking (45%) | 11. Snowmobiling (24%) |
| 6. Swimming (45%) | 12. Fishing (24%) |

All existing recreation facilities are considered adequate by a majority of respondents. The "facilities" most often cited as inadequate were cross-country ski trails.

Town roads are the most frequently used "public recreation facility" with 59% of respondents using the roads for recreational purposes at least once a week. The Town Forest is most frequently used for hiking with 25.4% of respondents hiking there at least once a week; 14% of respondents snowshoe in the Town Forest at least once a week; and 12% of respondents mountain bike in the Town Forest at least once a week.

The following facilities are considered desirable by a margin of 2 to 1 or greater:

1. Operating ski resort: 13.2 to 1 in favor
2. Additional bike & pedestrian paths: 3.5 to 1 in favor
3. Extensions & connections of non-motorized trails: 3.4 to 1 in favor
4. Sheltered picnic area/pavilion: 2.4 to 1 in favor
5. Adventure park (e.g. zip line, alpine slide): 2.1 to 1 in favor

Opinions were mildly favorable on an ice rink, a golf course, and an archery range.

The following facilities are considered undesirable by a margin of 2 to 1 or greater:

1. Skateboarding park: 3 to 1 against
2. ATV trails: 2.2 to 1 against

Opinions were mildly unfavorable on sand volleyball courts, a shooting range, additional playing fields, and a teen center.

93% of respondents feel that the Town Hall should be used more for recreational purposes.

85% of respondents feel that the school gym should be open for public use when school is not in session.

Recreation programs (in order of preference):

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Fitness & wellness (78%) | 5. Arts & crafts (52%) |
| 2. Nature & outdoor programs (74%) | 6. Book clubs (46%) |
| 3. Concerts (69%) | 7. Dancing (44%) |
| 4. Theater/drama (55%) | 8. Summer camps (42%) |

38% of those surveyed think the town should reconsider purchasing Mile Long Field, 33% think the town should not reconsider purchasing Mile Long Field, and 29% either don't know enough about the issue or have no opinion.

66.5% of respondents consider themselves skiers or snowboarders. Of those who ski or snowboard, 86% skied at Ascutney when it was open.

56% of respondents use the fitness center at the Ascutney Mountain Resort. For those who do not use the fitness center, the primary reason was cost.

A clear majority of respondents felt that re-opening the ski resort would provide the most economic benefit for West Windsor. Virtually tied for second were expanding the non-motorized trail network and expanding the four-season offerings at the resort. "Sporting events" and "concerts, fairs & festivals" were third and fourth.

APPENDIX C

Overview of Vermont's General Education Funding System

As a result of the Vermont Supreme Court Brigham decision of 1997, Vermont now provides total state funding to its school districts. Prior to this court decision Vermont used a foundation formula to provide state aid to augment local school district property taxes.

In its simplest terms, a state funding system replaces a state aided local tax system. The state now pays each district the amount needed to fund the district's locally adopted budget through an education fund. This amount funded by the state equals the total voter approved expenditure budget less any amounts for expenditures that have specific funding. Examples of specifically funded amounts include federal programs and state categorical grant programs. The state funded portion is called the district's "education spending."

The state then divides each district's education spending by the district's equalized pupil count. The equalized pupil count uses a weighting system for various student types. The resulting spending per pupil amount for a district is used to determine the district's homestead-state education-property tax rate. The rates start at a low level and are associated with a base per pupil spending amount, then increase proportionally at higher per pupil spending amounts. A district with a per pupil spending amount 20% above the base will have a tax rate 20% above the base tax rate.

The resulting school tax rates for residents will apply to one of two tax bases. The homestead education property tax rate is applied as a percentage to a resident's homestead market value. The second rate is applied to the household income of those living in the homestead. The second rate is for households with incomes of \$90,000 or less as an alternative to the property tax should that method yield a lower tax bill.

The system is intended to apply pressure to voters if they approve spending amounts that result in high per pupil spending. If the voters in a district approve a budget that produces higher per pupil spending, the voters will have higher tax rates.

Regardless of the level of per pupil spending approved by the voters, property tax payers with homesteads of the same market value living in districts that have the same per pupil spending amount, pay the same tax within the tolerances of the system. That is, if two districts have the same per pupil spending amount, the tax rates will be the same and tax payers with the same market value homestead or household income will have equal tax bills. This taxing system provides the equity to Vermont's school funding system.

One complexity is a local adjustment to the homestead property tax rate. This adjustment is necessary because it is too difficult for towns to keep properties listed at the current market value. Applying state rates to property listings that vary significantly from market value would produce unequal taxing. Each year the tax department establishes a "common level of appraisal" (CLA) for each town. Homestead tax rates are then adjusted by the town's CLA so that tax amounts will be equalized.

For more information, see "Vermont's Education Funding System, June 2011" at http://education.vermont.gov/documents/EDU-Finance_Education_Funding_System_2011.pdf