

Fairfax, Vermont Town Plan



*Adopted by the Fairfax Selectboard on
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Acknowledgements

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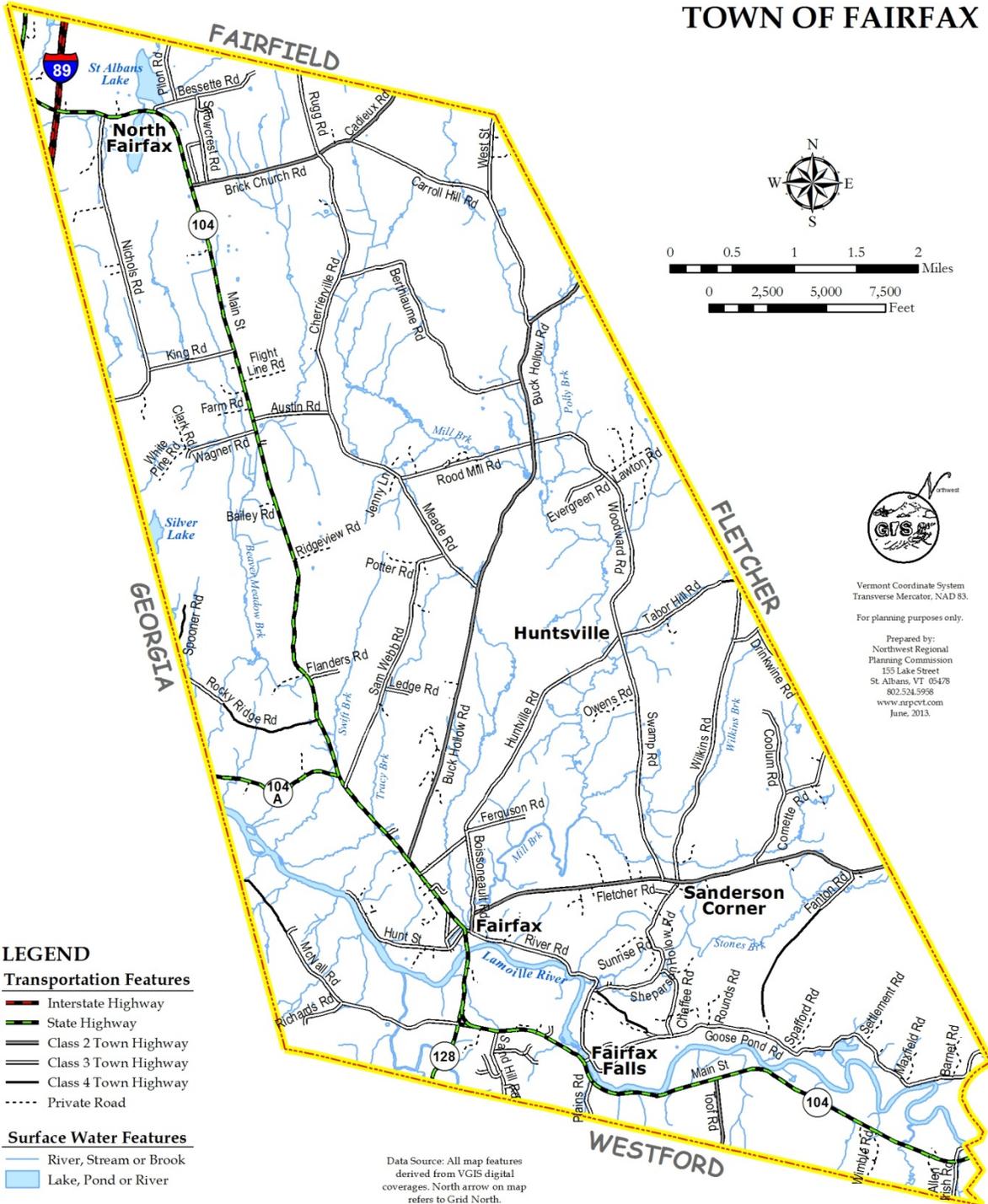
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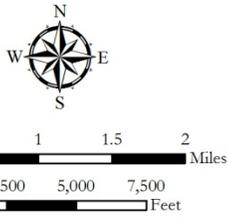
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Map 1

BASE MAP TOWN OF FAIRFAX



- LEGEND**
- Transportation Features**
- Interstate Highway
 - State Highway
 - Class 2 Town Highway
 - Class 3 Town Highway
 - Class 4 Town Highway
 - Private Road
- Surface Water Features**
- River, Stream or Brook
 - Lake, Pond or River
- Other Feature**
- Town Boundary





Vermont Coordinate System
Transverse Mercator, NAD 83.

For planning purposes only.

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Location: z:/gis/projects/county/franklin/fairfax/townplan08/final/basemap

CHAPTER 1: PURPOSE

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Town of Fairfax is engaged in a planning process to encourage the appropriate development of land, facilities, and services located within the Town in a manner that will promote the health, safety, and general welfare of its residents. The Fairfax Town Plan provides a framework for the achievement of recognized community goals and policies, while the planning process serves to coordinate public and private actions with these goals and policies. A Town plan can serve as a foundation for implementation devices such as the Fairfax Development Regulations and capital programming. A plan can also serve as an important function in the evaluation of major development under Vermont's Land Use and Development Law, Act 250.

Planning is a means of preparing for the future in order to overcome problems, meet opportunities, and achieve community goals. In response to changes in the community, problems must be addressed by comprehensive forethought to ensure that future decisions will provide long-term solutions rather than stopgap measures. Since communities exist primarily for the health and enjoyment of those who live in them, it follows that the nature, location, and timing of any future development should be determined by the people of Fairfax rather than left solely to chance.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Citizen participation is important in all levels of the planning process. Opportunities for citizen involvement have been assured throughout the Plan update process through several ongoing initiatives (Figure 1.2). These efforts are intended to foster the broadest level of public participation possible, and to utilize the planning process as a vehicle for exercising an inclusive, community-wide vision for the future of Fairfax.

Figure 1.1

We need your input!
Fairfax Village Vision and Plan

Introductory and Background Information

- The Planning Commission is working on an update to the Fairfax Town Plan and has hired the Northwest Regional Planning Commission to assist them with the project.
- In addition, the Planning Commission and Village Vision Steering Committee, with assistance from the NRPC, are drafting a Village Vision and Plan which will be incorporated as a chapter to the Town Plan.
- This project will present a vision for the future, analyze existing conditions, and provide strategies for the community to implement. Some existing goals, policies and strategies will be revised, deleted or relocated to the Village Center chapter.
- Defining a vision for the future of the Village clarifies existing challenges and weaknesses, and capitalizes on strengths and opportunities.

Public Involvement

- We are seeking public involvement for the Village Vision and Plan - join your neighbors to help create the future of our community during these summer events: **Ice Cream Social, Blood Drive & Egg Run - your opportunity to contribute to the plan.**
- Reach out to the Village Vision Steering Committee -- which seeks to involve community members in developing a vision with tangible results. The idea is to create a transparent hands-on planning process.
Email: astori@nrpcvt.com

This project is supported by a Municipal Planning Grant from the VT Agency of Commerce & Community Development.

Details on the Village Vision and Plan
The Village Vision Steering Committee and the NRPC have been doing background research and analysis for the plan through a series of meetings and discussions on topics important to the Village -- these include:

<input type="checkbox"/> Village Identity & Image	Rate these topics 1-5 in order of importance to the Village in the next 10 years
<input type="checkbox"/> Streetscap	
<input type="checkbox"/> Trail Network	
<input type="checkbox"/> Town Green	
<input type="checkbox"/> Access to Local Food	
<input type="checkbox"/> Downtown Revitalization	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation, Open Space & Community Programs/Events
<input type="checkbox"/> Design Standards	<input type="checkbox"/> Municipal Water Supply & Wastewater Treatment
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic Development & Redevelopment
<input type="checkbox"/> Development	
<input type="checkbox"/> Siting & Form	

**** What are we Missing?:**

Your comments: _____

Notice for one of the public forums held

Figure 1.2

Citizen Participation: *A History of Involvement*

The first meeting of the Fairfax Planning Commission was held March 22, 1971. The first Town Plan was adopted in 1984. Since the expiration of that Plan in 1989 and the subsequent revisions, citizen input has been utilized in formulating plan updates, through several unique and ongoing ways:

- 1990** A community survey was mailed to all postal patrons in the Town of Fairfax. The survey received 395 responses. Questions were focused on identifying community needs and concerns, and on defining areas which are most important to protect from future development.
- 1991-95** Citizen committees were developed to formulate goals, objectives, and policies regarding the future of the Town. Focus areas included recreation; business and commerce; housing; historical and cultural resources; agriculture and natural resources; and roads. Reports from each group were submitted to the Planning Commission for further action.
- 1997** A follow-up survey similar to that of 1990 was distributed to Fairfax residents. Results were tabulated and compared to results from 1990 to gauge similarities and changes in citizen ideas and concerns.
- Two public forums were held to receive citizen input and comments regarding the draft Town Plan.
- 2002-03** Citizen focus groups were formed according to geography, to stimulate discussion and receive input. The Planning Commission coordinated ten separate meetings through late 2002 into early 2003.
- 2007-08** A community survey was mailed to all postal patrons in the Town of Fairfax. The survey received a 19% response rate. The survey asked questions about the rate and pattern of growth in the community, important community issues, and the quality of town services.
- 2012-2013** The Village Vision Steering Committee held four public informational events to inform community members about the on-going project and to provide an opportunity for residents to identify opportunities, express concerns and foster open dialogue.

Once adopted, the comprehensive plan allows the Town to legitimately and reasonably exercise its authority with regard to the course of its future growth and development, and becomes essential to the decision-making process. It forms the basis for policy implementation at the local level and permits greater participation in regional and state planning efforts and project review (e.g. Act 250). Public and private interests are made aware of the desires of the Town through stated goals and policies.

PLANNING COMMISSION ROLES

It is the charge of the Fairfax Planning Commission to prepare and periodically update a comprehensive Town Plan and Development Regulations to implement the plan. State law requires that the plan be updated and readopted every five years to remain in effect.

The Fairfax Planning Commission has a responsible role in all phases of the planning process. This role does not end with the adoption of a comprehensive plan, but continues in the following areas:

- Plan implementation, which may include the preparation of appropriate regulations and programs directing the course of future growth and development (e.g., zoning and or subdivision regulations);
- Preparation of further studies to identify and plan for specific problems or situations that may arise; and
- The regular review and revision of the Plan, Development Regulations, and programs to ensure that they reflect changing conditions and requirements.

WHAT'S IN THE PLAN?

The plan for the Town of Fairfax must consider many inter-related factors. It is helpful to understand Fairfax's history and traditions to give a perspective for considering our present and our future. Present trends and their likely future impact must be analyzed. These components plus knowledge of the natural resource limitations and suitability for various uses provide the basis for determining what is possible and what may be desirable in our Future. To begin, broad public goals should be stated. Consideration of these in light of Fairfax's past and present enables specific policies and land use, transportation, and recreation plans to be developed.

The format for this document is based on Section 4382 of Title 24, Chapter 117, Vermont Statutes Annotated, which outlines 11 required plan components. They are, briefly:

- 1) a statement of growth related goals, policies, and programs;
- 2) a land use plan;
- 3) a transportation plan;
- 4) a utility and facility plan;

- 5) a statement of policies on the preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas, scenic, and historic features and resources;
- 6) an educational facilities plan;
- 7) a recommended plan implementation program;
- 8) a statement indicating plan compatibility with plans and trends in adjacent municipalities, the region, and state;
- 9) an energy plan;
- 10) a housing element; and
- 11) an economic development element.

OVERALL COMMUNITY GOALS

Although specific goals, policies, and implementation strategies are included within each section, several broad statements may be made regarding the future of Fairfax in the focus areas previously described. These are included below as overall community goals.

- 1) To accomplish the goals, policies, and implementation strategies set forth by the Town of Fairfax Plan to the extent that they comply with all applicable state and federal regulations, rules and standards.
- 2) To develop, maintain and implement any plans or studies as necessary to achieve the goals and policies set forth by the Town of Fairfax Plan.
- 3) To preserve the natural, cultural, and historic features and activities which define the rural character and scenic beauty of Fairfax.
- 4) To promote safe and healthful housing for all segments of the population.
- 5) To maintain and enhance recreational opportunities for all residents.
- 6) To insure the provision of efficient, environmentally sound public utilities.
- 7) To build and maintain a strong and diverse local economy, encourage the efficient use of public funds, and to maintain a sound fiscal balance.
- 8) To provide broad access to quality educational and vocational services which respond to the needs of a growing community.

- 9) To promote the efficient use of energy and encourage the development of renewable energy resources.
- 10) To focus future development toward areas most suitable for that purpose, and to promote planned development which does not exceed the physical capability of the land to support it.
- 11) To ensure that future growth, including commercial and industrial development, is in harmony with the traditional pattern and scale of existing development, and to promote complimentary development patterns of open space and concentrated growth in traditional, mixed use areas.
- 12) To provide for safe, convenient, economic and energy efficient transportation systems that respect the natural environment and utilize a variety of transit modes, including bicycle and pedestrian travel wherever existing or desired future development densities would support it.



Photo 1 - Aerial Photograph of Fairfax in the 1990's
Courtesy: Ralph Tracy

CHAPTER 2: HISTORY

The written historical record of northwestern Vermont begins in 1609 with the exploration of Lake Champlain by Samuel de Champlain. At that time, he took note of the lands intermediate between the lake and the Green Mountains, and named the Lamoille River. In the eighteenth century, these and other lands claimed by Champlain for France were assigned as land grants (seigneuries) to noblemen for the purpose of promoting their settlement. The Fairfax area was included in a tract assigned to the Raimbault Family. It

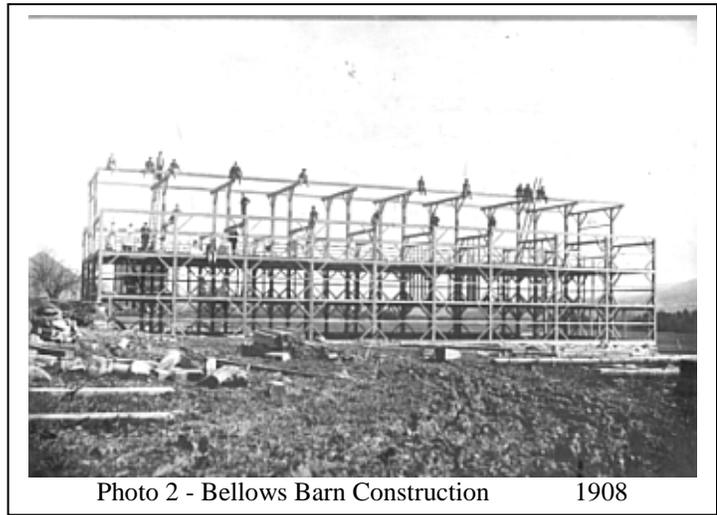


Photo 2 - Bellows Barn Construction 1908

appears, however, that any French settlement in this tract that did occur was restricted to the shores of Lake Champlain and its immediate environs. Actual settlement in Fairfax did not begin until after the establishment of British control of Vermont.

In August of 1763, Governor Wentworth of New Hampshire granted a land parcel of 23,000 acres for the purpose of establishing a new plantation to be named Fairfax. In August of 1786, a town meeting voted to survey out these parcels, most parcels being square lots of 100 acres each, with 64 people drawing for the lots (Figure 2.1). It's doubtful that many of these people ever saw or settled in Fairfax, it being determined that a tax would be imposed to pay surveyors for laying out the highways. Being unable to pay the tax, most of the original landowners lost their parcels to either the tax collector or the surveyor. The first settlers then bought their land from them.

Figure 2.1

"Voted: That the proprietor will lay out as soon as may be, one Hundred acres as each might for the first Division in such a manner that the length of the lots shall not more than twice exceed the Breadth of the same."

- From meeting of the Proprietors of the Town of Fairfax 1786

When the early settlers arrived in Fairfax, Western Abenaki Native American groups inhabited western Vermont. Subsistence strategies for the Abenaki people entailed alternating between living in a village setting where crops were grown and surplus foodstuffs stored, and periodic dispersion into smaller groups that traveled to other locations, primarily for hunting purposes.

The Western Abenaki were organized into several major bands or organizations, each occupying its own village site. No doubt, the first European settlers to the area encountered the Abenaki on their hunting expeditions.

The first settler, Captain Broadstreet Spafford, found the land which today is the Town of Fairfax in virgin forests which were the Abenaki hunting grounds. Captain Spafford, and his two sons Asa and Nathan, arrived in 1783 from Piermont, New Hampshire and built a cabin on the north bank of the river, on what is now called the Goose Pond Road. Gradually, other settlers arrived, coming by way of the lake and the river.

Joseph Beeman and his son were the first to settle in North Fairfax. The first actual settlement in the village area was by Thomas Belcher, a hunter, in 1787. Stephen England, who arrived a year later, purchased the land and later built the first hotel in the village at the corner of Main Street and Hunt Street, where the St. Luke's rectory was formerly located. Hampton Lovegrove purchased the hotel from England and it remained in operation for over 100 years. In 1791, Gould Buck and his wife, Abigail Hawley, from Arlington, settled Buck Hollow. The first Town Meeting was held at Captain Spafford's house on March 22, 1787, and before the century was out, such issues as roads, schools, and the regulation of swine were being addressed.

The initial growth of Fairfax was fueled in part by access to waterpower. Throughout the history of this area, the Lamoille River and several of its tributaries in the immediate vicinity were utilized to drive mills. With its 88 foot descent, Fairfax Falls has been the most heavily utilized hydropower location in the Lamoille drainage. The first mill at Fairfax Falls was constructed in 1791 by Judge Amos Fassett. This was undoubtedly a major economic development, as prior to this time, residents had been forced to rely on facilities in Burlington and Vergennes for milling. Tributaries of the Lamoille in and around the town of Fairfax itself were also quickly utilized for power. In 1792, a fulling mill was constructed on Mill Brook, which flows through Fairfax before emptying in the Lamoille. By 1800, Fairfax had a substantial population of 778.

Fairfax village was actually first settled in the Plains, south of its present location across the Lamoille River. In addition to a tavern, shops, schools and potteries, the Plains had a parade ground where the men bivouacked before leaving to go off to war.

The war of 1812-1814 was in one sense a war of convenience; the men planted their crops, then left for Plattsburgh, leaving their wives and children to tend the farms. They returned in the fall to harvest, wait out the winter, and repeat the cycle the next year. The convenience; however, was far outweighed by the death and disease suffered.

In 1826, a man by the name of Woodward established a saddle and harness business for the Town in return for a free house and the position of toll collector at the Lamoille River bridge. In the spring of 1832, a flood called the Great Freshet carried off the first clothing mill at the Falls, and Fairfax's pride and joy, the Toll Bridge. A ferry boat joined the Town of Fairfax until 1833 when citizens voted \$1,500 to build a new arched bridge a few rods upstream. As businesses grew in the town center, taverns sprouted to serve the entertainment and resort needs of weary travelers. One of these, the Valley Hotel, still stands at its original location in the center of town after several renovations.

In 1853, the New Hampton Institute moved to Fairfax from New Hampshire. Rev. Eli B. Smith was the first President, and the school enrollment totaled nearly 300 men and women. The Institute provided an excellent education, graduating lawyers, teachers, and ministers for over 50

The Civil War took a much greater toll than the War of 1812. Five commissioned officers and 139 enlisted men left; 26 native sons were lost in battles such as Bull Run, Brandy Station and at Andersonville. Some who returned again brought disease, and epidemics swept the Town.

The end of the war also brought prosperity. By 1870, there were ten general merchandise stores, a drug store, two hotels, four shoe shops, two butter dealers, a tannery, a harness shop, three wagon and sleigh shops, nine blacksmiths, a wagon, tub and coffin manufacturer, four saw mills, two grist mills, a planing mill, a woolen mill, two carpenters, a brickyard, a saloon and shortly thereafter there were three potteries. In addition, there were two lawyers, three doctors, and several professors. The next 20 years saw tree nurseries, new stage routes, and post offices in the Village, North Fairfax, Beaver Meadow, Buck Hollow, and Huntville, as well as carrier deliveries provided.

Fairfax was most prosperous in the early to mid-nineteenth century. Wool, lumber, and cattle were the most important industries at the time. In 1871, the town of Fairfax contained 84 dwellings and 31 commercial establishments. Use of the Lamoille River at Fairfax Falls for a range of hydropower facilities was heavy throughout the nineteenth century. The Beers Atlas of Fairfax Falls (1871) depicts four mills at this location. Three of these, a woolen mill, a planing mill, and a grist mill, were situated along the east bank of the falls. Because of the shallowness of the soil over the steep ledges along the east bank, an excavated headrace to power this last facility would not have been feasible. Instead, this saw mill was probably

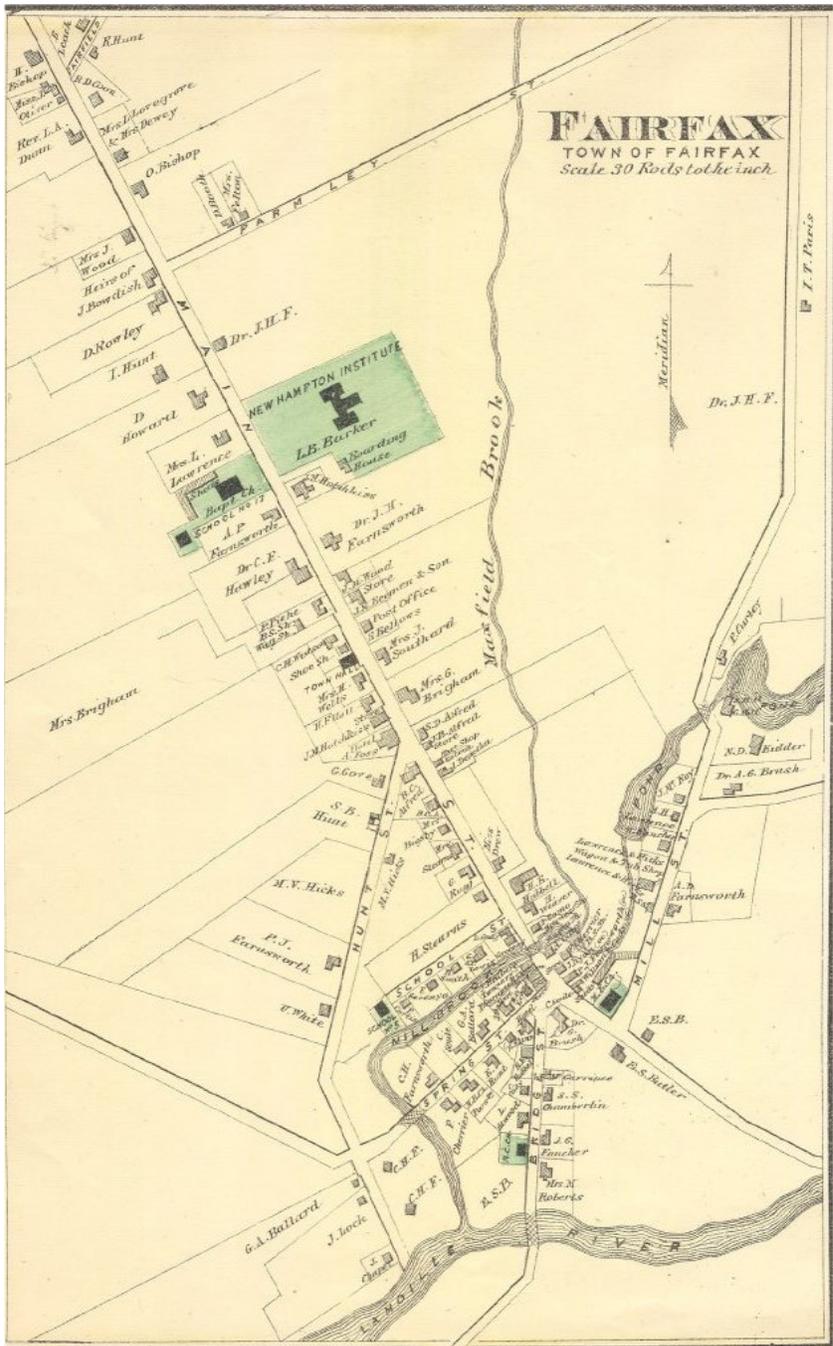


Figure 2.3 1871 Map of Fairfax Village – F.W. Beers Atlas

powered by an above ground flume or penstock construction drawing water from the Falls above. In addition to the three mills, Beers Atlas (1871) also depicts a store, a blacksmith shop and five residences along the east bank of the Falls at this time.

The reason for such a diversity of enterprises was that the emphasis on lumber and mill manufacturing which had grown enormously was beginning to shift to the dairy industry. By the 1880's, there were four cattle breeders and four cattle dealers listed and many farms. However, the dairy industry at this time was oriented to the production of butter rather than milk, due to the capability of the railroads. Yet the Village continued to thrive, in the next years adding dress shops, millinery shops, and jewelry stores, and around the turn of the century further boasting a skating rink, dance hall, theater, cheese factory, candy factory, and ice cream parlor.

The gold rush and the availability of homesteads attracted many residents westward to California, Oregon, Michigan, Iowa, and Kansas. The population began to decrease and soon after, the area fell into economic decline. During this time, there was a shift from heavy reliance on the wool industry to dairy farming in the area. In large measure this was due to the increasing dependence of economies of the Champlain Valley on manufactured goods, with the larger settlements of Burlington and St. Albans becoming the centers for such production. Although railroad connections in the Lamoille Valley did exist at the time, they extended no further than East Georgia, four miles west of Fairfax, requiring transport along the 104A corridor of any goods produced for export. In 1897 and 1898, major fires accelerated the population decline of Fairfax and destroyed several important buildings in the town.

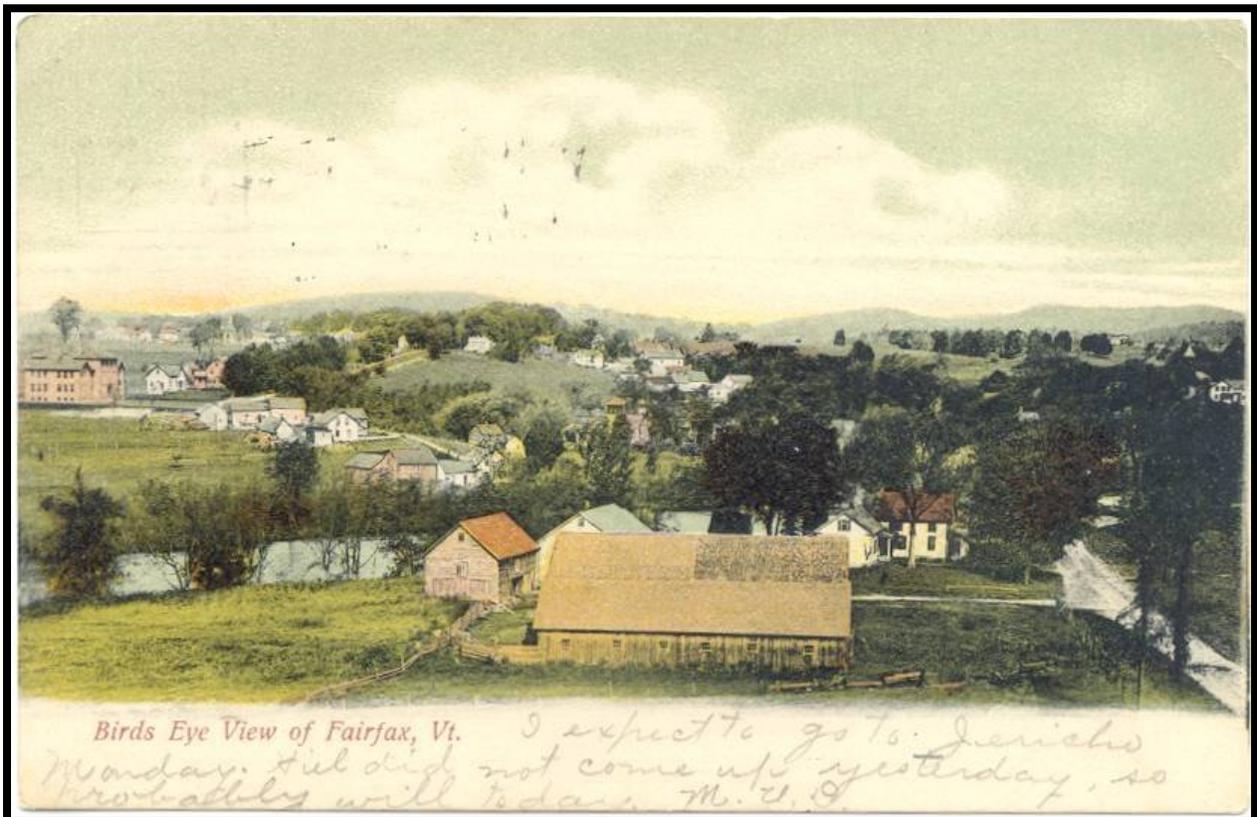


Photo 3 - #59 Birds Eye View of Fairfax Post Card
Courtesy: Mike McNall

In the early twentieth century, electricity came to Fairfax, with the construction of the Lamoille River dam at the Falls. Vermont Power and Manufacturing Company completed construction of the Northside underground hydroelectric plant in 1904. In 1916, VPMC and its Northside Station was purchased by Public Electric Light Company. PELCo subsequently constructed the west bank hydroelectric plant, completing the existing building with one generating unit in 1919. A second unit was added to the works in 1921. A severe flood in the Fall of 1927, precipitated by four days of heavy rain on the frozen ground, heavily damaged the Northside Station facility on the east bank, resulting in its abandonment at that time.

It was also about this time that Hiram Bellows, a St. Albans businessman, provided the money for schools in Fairfax and St. Albans, both to be named Bellows Free Academy (B.F.A.). Thus, by 1906 (after the fire at New Hampton Institute) Fairfax once again had a beautiful school, but it too was destined to burn 40 years later. A portion of the present B.F.A. was built following that fire, with later additions.

The fact that Fairfax has a water system in the village was also due to the generosity of Mr. Bellows. The system was built in 1911 chiefly to serve the school, with the reservoir (in the woods off the Fletcher Road) replacing the wind-driven pump (which stood behind the school) as the new supply. The annual fee charged the first customers was \$2.00.

The 1927 flood miraculously took no lives in Fairfax. It did, however, destroy many roads and buildings. Most of the wooden mill buildings were destroyed, as well as all but one bridge. The covered bridge on Maple Street, built in 1865, was turned end for end in the flood, but was saved. A steel bridge was erected two years later to replace the two lane bridge.

Perhaps more damaging was the stock market Crash of 1929. With the closing of banks, Fairfax returned for a period to a barter economy; many people were forced to exchange work for goods and goods for food. Many also were unable to hold onto their homes and farms, and structures which burned were rarely replaced. Soon afterwards, the Second World War saw an exodus of young people leaving for military service, and for better paying jobs in other states. The population in 1940 was 1,229 residents. At the same time, there were 80 farms with a total of 2,400 milking cows.

It was not until 1947 that town officials embarked on capital improvements for better fire protection. The town received a trailer-mounted pump from civil defense, and voted to purchase a used truck and firefighting equipment. A new truck was put into service in 1948, and a Volunteer Fire Department was founded.

For several years more, family farms continued to dominate Fairfax's economy and land use. While a few shops remained, most of the others such as the potteries, mills, and the blacksmiths had vanished. The 1950's saw an out-migration of young people in Fairfax due to the lack of employment opportunities. Fairfax's employment base began to diminish and the Fairfax Branch of the Cooperative Creamery shut down.

With the 1970's approaching, roads improved, cars went faster, and the cities of St. Albans and Burlington seemed much closer than they had before. Nearby production facilities such as IBM

attracted a growing workforce to the area, and Fairfax's convenient access contributed to a reverse in previously declining population trends.

Development prompted town officials to study the feasibility of a public sewage treatment system in 1965. A year later, the first zoning bylaws were adopted, after a series of previous defeats at the polls.

The 1970's continued to witness a steady growth rate. Among major projects were new residential developments in North Fairfax, and in Fairfax Plains. A new high school was completed in 1975 while preservation of the old continued with the renovation of the Maple Street covered bridge. In 1977, the passage of a village pollution control bond was finally set in motion.

The 1980's marked a time when the population level of the town rose to that of the late 1800's. The 1990 census showed Fairfax's population to be 2,486, the highest since 1850. More people meant more homes being built, especially on back roads. This led to a need for an increase in services provided by the town, (i.e. road repair, town water system, fire department and rescue squad, and especially BFA Fairfax). Most services are housed in new buildings: (1982) - The new Town Garage was built on the Fletcher Road, (1984) - The Town Clerk's office moved from BFA to the old principal's house, (1987) - The old iron bridge across the Lamoille River on Main Street was replaced by a modern concrete bridge, (1990) - The Fairfax Fire Department and Fairfax Rescue moved to a new, larger building, (1989-90) - BFA Fairfax added its second major addition in 20 years to house grades 5-8, and (1998) the new Elementary Wing was constructed and the old middle school was rehabilitated.

A few more essential services were added in the 1990's, such as a local doctor's office, pharmacy, hardware store, and restaurant along with a small grocery, convenience stores, and auto repair shops. In addition, a community recreation park was completed in 2007 that includes athletic fields and a recreation path.

Well into the Information Age, Fairfax continues to change. The wires that first carried electricity to Fairfax in 1904 now carry high speed internet to the computers of home offices and cable television to home entertainment centers. Although a strong focus on agriculture is still present, the number of family farms continues to decline. Industry is expanding in neighboring towns and Chittenden County, further increasing development pressures. Population increase is bound to continue, as a growing number of families discover Fairfax's unique combination of convenient access to major cities and towns, its small town atmosphere, and peaceful environment.

CHAPTER 3: COMMUNITY PROFILE

DISCLAIMER

The Bureau of the Census, an agency within the Department of Commerce, carries out the Census of Population and Housing every ten years. The first census was taken in 1790 and latest census was taken in 2010. Due to the amount of time that is needed to compile the data, a majority of the data was not available until the year 2012.. The Fairfax Town Plan contains the 2010 Census because, in most cases, this is the most current data available. In the course of ten years, many things can change in a town, a county, a state, and so forth. The 2010 Census data that has been used in this Town Plan was at the time of the count, accurate and did reflect what was happening in Town at that time.

LOCATION AND BOUNDARIES

The Town of Fairfax is located in the western foothills of the Green Mountains. It is the southernmost town in Franklin County sharing its southern border with the Town of Westford in Chittenden County. On the west, it is bordered by Georgia, on the north by Fairfield, and on the east by Fletcher and Cambridge. It is proximate to the towns of Milton, Underhill, and St. Albans.

Fairfax is served by State Routes 104 and 104A, the major inter-municipal roadways linking Fairfax with St. Albans, Interstate 89 and communities to the east, and State Route 128 connecting to points south in Chittenden County. The Town of Fairfax currently covers a 41.7 square mile area equivalent to 26,688 acres. It is characterized by irregular terrain consisting of open farmland and wooded slopes with panoramic views of Mt. Mansfield and the Lamoille River.

THE PEOPLE

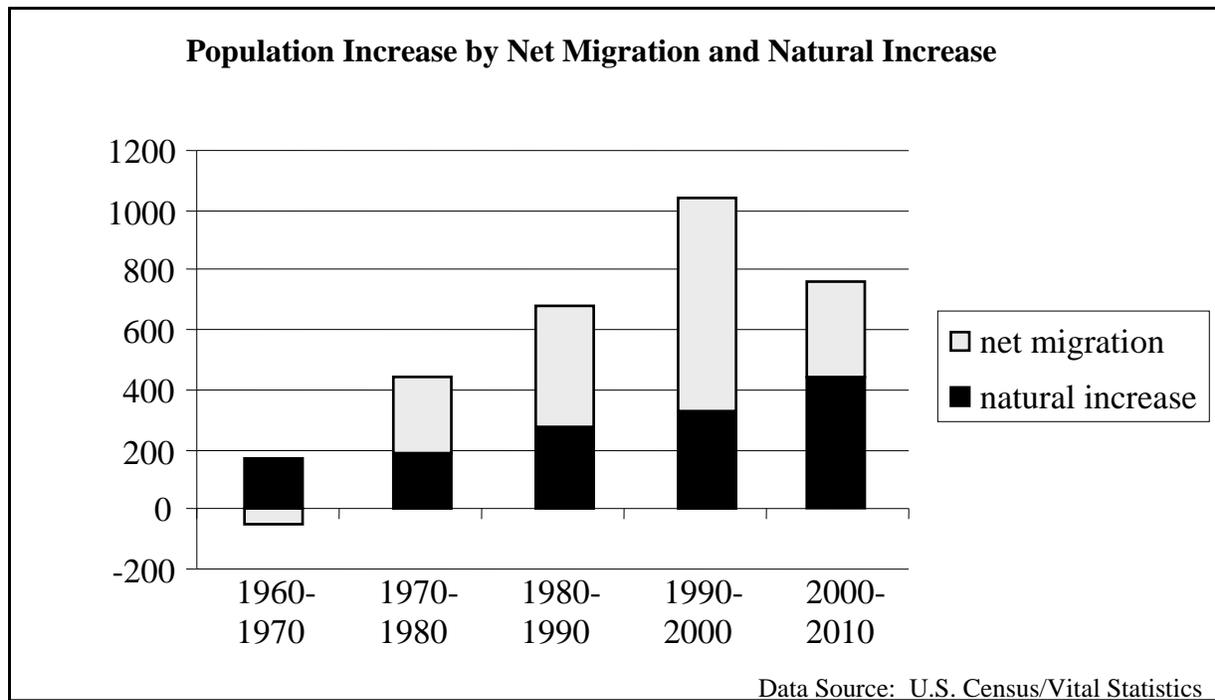
POPULATION TRENDS

Fairfax's population has risen to historically high levels; due in large part to a period of sustained, accelerated growth that began in the 1970's and has continued to the present decade. As shown in Table 3.1, Fairfax has more than tripled its population between 1960 and 2010 and has a significantly higher growth rate than that of the County as a whole. Forecasts for future growth show Fairfax's population continuing to grow at a fast rate. Between 1970 and 2000, increasing numbers of people moving into Fairfax were contributing to population growth, with natural increase (births minus deaths) making up a much smaller percentage of population growth (Figure 3.1). After 2000 however, natural increase contributed to 60 percent of the overall population growth in Fairfax; with the birth/death rate rapidly rising and net migration substantially slowing.

Table 3.1. Population Trends and Projections, 1950 - 2015								
	Population						Estimates	Projections
	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2015
Fairfax	1,129	1,244	1,366	1,805	2,486	3,527	4,285	5,049
% Change	n/a	10.20%	9.80%	32.10%	37.70%	41.90%	21.50%	17.83%
% of County Total	3.80%	4.20%	4.40%	5.20%	6.20%	7.80%	8.97%	9.77%
Franklin County	29,894	29,473	31,281	34,788	39,980	45,417	47,746	51,701
% Change	n/a	-1.40%	6.10%	11.20%	14.90%	13.60%	5.13%	8.28%

Source: U.S. Census Data, 1950-2010, MISER Population Projections 2015.

Figure 3.1

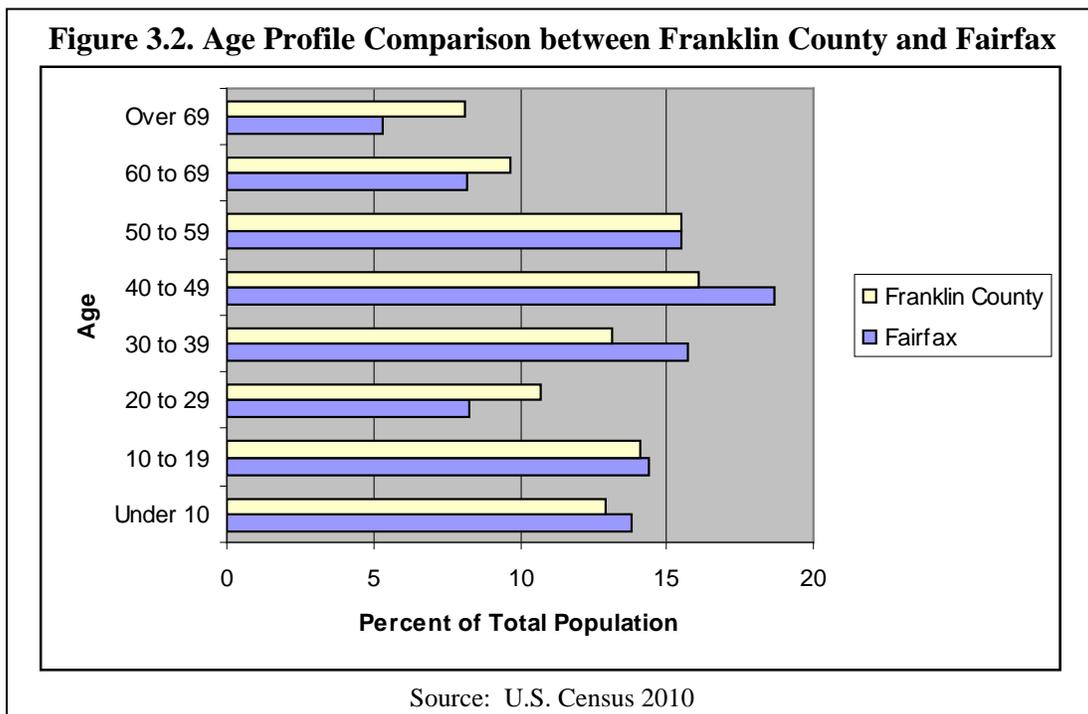


Fairfax was among the fastest growing towns in the State from 2000 to 2010 based on U.S. Census population estimates, with only 13 towns having a greater percent increase in estimated population during that period (second fastest within Franklin County behind Berkshire). The population of Fairfax as a percentage of the County population has continued to increase, from 3.8% in 1950 to 8.97% sixty years later. Without a change in the predominant growth trends of the past, Fairfax will continue to grow at a faster rate than the County. The Town’s accessibility to Interstate 89 and to Chittenden County employment centers has significantly contributed to the accelerated growth that Fairfax has experienced. The vast majority of daily commuter trips leave Fairfax for Chittenden County destinations (see also Chapter 10, Transportation). Further, Fairfax offers the rare combination of country charm, accessibility, and quality services such as excellent schools – all of which are powerful attractions for potential homebuyers.

Continued growth at projected rates will likely challenge the ability of the town to provide adequate services needed to accommodate it. Policies and programs are needed which manage growth to rates that can be absorbed by the land, and may be adequately served by municipal facilities.

AGE PROFILE

Figure 3.2 shows the population of Fairfax broken down by age bracket. These figures were derived from the 2010 U.S. Census. They are useful in comparing the general age breakdown of the Town and County for similarities and differences, which may have importance in planning for the future.



The graphs in Figure 3.2 indicate a very similar stratification of ages in Fairfax and in Franklin County, although differences may be seen upon close examination. The population of Fairfax includes a smaller percentage of people age 60 and over, and a greater percentage of people aged 30 to 49 than Franklin County as a whole. In both instances, the majority of the population resides in the “working age” groups between 22 and 60, with the greatest number of residents in their forties and fifties in Franklin County and thirties, forties, and fifties in Fairfax. The population of Fairfax as a whole is nearly identical with that of Franklin County and markedly younger than that of the State. The median age in 2010 was 38.7 years in Fairfax, compared to 39.6 and 41.5 for the County and State, respectively.

EDUCATION

The people of Fairfax enjoy the benefits of an excellent school system. This is reflected, unsurprisingly, in the level of educational attainment of Fairfax residents. Table 3.2 illustrates this point by comparing education levels of Fairfax with those of the entire County. Fairfax

shows higher attainment levels in nearly all secondary and post-secondary educational categories shown. Most striking is the percentage of residents with Bachelor’s and Graduate degrees, which total nearly 30% of the twenty five years and older population.

Table 3.2: Education Attainment, 25 years and older			
	Fairfax	Franklin County (Entire)	Franklin County (Average/Town)
Population 25 years and older	2,724 (100%)	31,963	1,901
% of total population	63.6%	70.4%	70.4%
Less than 9th grade	71 (2.6%)	1,630 (5.1%)	99 (5.5%)
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	95 (3.5%)	2,269 (7.1%)	126 (7.0%)
High School Diploma	940 (34.5%)	12,945 (40.5%)	771 (40.9%)
Some college, no degree	463 (17%)	5,242 (16.4%)	320 (17.3%)
Associate Degree	346 (12.7%)	3,100 (9.7%)	182 (9.4%)
Bachelor’s Degree	564 (20.7%)	4,379 (13.7%)	252 (12.5%)
Graduate or Professional Degree	245 (9%)	2,397 (7.5%)	151 (7.4%)
Source: U.S. Census Data, 2010.			

INCOME

Income levels in Fairfax are generally higher than the rest of Franklin County. Table 3.3 shows Fairfax’s profile compared to Franklin County and the State. Data from the 2010 U.S. Census shows that the 2010 median household income was nearly 31% higher in Fairfax than Franklin County and 42% higher than Vermont. Differences between median family incomes were 22% greater than the county and 23% higher than the state. Consequently; the percentage of Fairfax residents living in poverty is markedly less than County and State-wide figures.

Table 3.3. Income and Poverty Profile, 2010				
	Income			% Pop. Below Poverty Level
	Per Capita	Median		
		Household	Family	
Fairfax	\$28,389	\$70,348	\$77,159	4.1%
Franklin County	\$24,767	\$53,623	\$63,009	10.5%
Vermont	\$26,876	\$49,406	\$62,575	12.7%
Source: U.S. Census Data, 2010.				

GROWTH

Growth in a community is commonly difficult to control, even if residents desire to do so. To better understand growth through Fairfax’s history, Table 3.4 outlines building permit trends for the period 2001 to 2011. Table 3.5 illustrates land uses as reported in the Fairfax Town Report.

Table 3.4. Zoning and Subdivision Permits, 2001-2011

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Average
Building Cap in Effect?	No											
Single Family Homes	28	37	23	32	42	42	30	25	24	25	14	29
Multi-Family/Duplex	13	7	10	3	4	65	28	8	0	6	0	13
Additions	12	23	12	21	20	4	16	9	13	13	10	14
Garage/Barns	26	20	22	22	12	11	20	13	10	10	19	17
Other (decks, sheds, pools)	44	21	39	44	30	46	43	27	26	34	25	34
Commercial	7	4	0	0	0	1	5	3	4	0	0	2
Replacement Home	9	6	4	5	6	1	9	3	1	5	3	5
Changes in Use	NA	0	0	16	4	7	0	0	1	1	0	3
Total Zoning Permits	139	118	110	143	118	177	151	87	83	98	74	109

Table 3.5. Number of Parcels by Land Use, 2001-2011

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	% Change
Residential 1	746	790	778	806	802	856	890	900	921	945	970	30.0
Residential 2	343	358	362	373	381	389	391	395	397	401	403	17.5
Mobile Home w/o land	30	28	28	28	26	24	19	11	10	10	7	-76.7
Mobile Home w/land	60	59	57	54	52	48	49	48	50	49	52	-13.3
Vacation	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	-20.0
Commercial	36	39	39	39	36	37	36	33	31	31	29	-19.4
Industrial	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-50.0
Utilities	6	6	6	6	8	8	7	7	5	7	7	16.7
Farm	30	29	29	29	44	46	31	31	31	31	31	3.3
Other	0	0	0	71	48	52	108	124	88	88	88	23.9
Woodland	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	-66.7
Miscellaneous	161	150	152	142	136	140	134	130	136	136	136	-15.5
Total Parcels	1,424	1,468	1,531	1,557	1,541	1,607	1,672	1,685	1,675	1,704	1,729	21.4

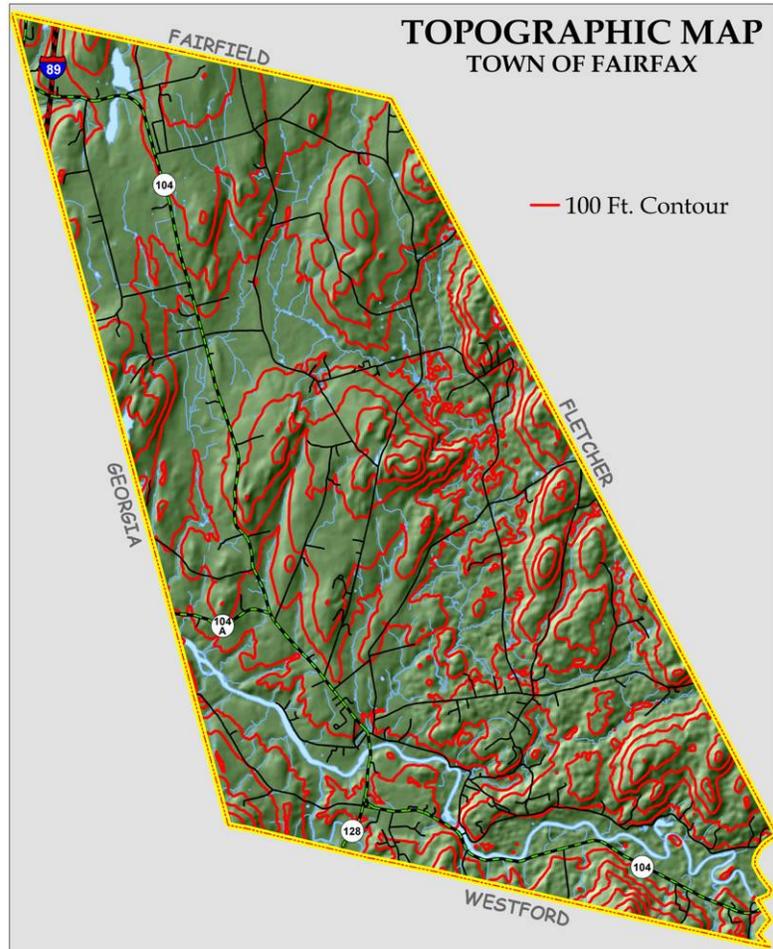
CHAPTER 4: NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

NATURAL RESOURCES

GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Fairfax is located in the rolling hill terrain of the central uplands of Franklin County. A major fault-line runs adjacent to the western edge of the town and separates the more erosion resistant upward-faulted rock under the Town of Fairfax from the much less resistant rocks that generally underlie the Town of Georgia to the West. Glacial erosion and deposition has left many hilltops scoured to bedrock, thin layers of till overlying much of the rest of the landscape, and (glacial) lake-deposited silts and clays filling many of the valleys. Streams from the melting of the glacier deposited thick areas of sand and gravel in various places in the town. Over the next few thousand years, numerous small streams and the Lamoille River further modified the topography, carving valleys and creating perhaps the most dominant geologic feature of the town, Fairfax Falls (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1



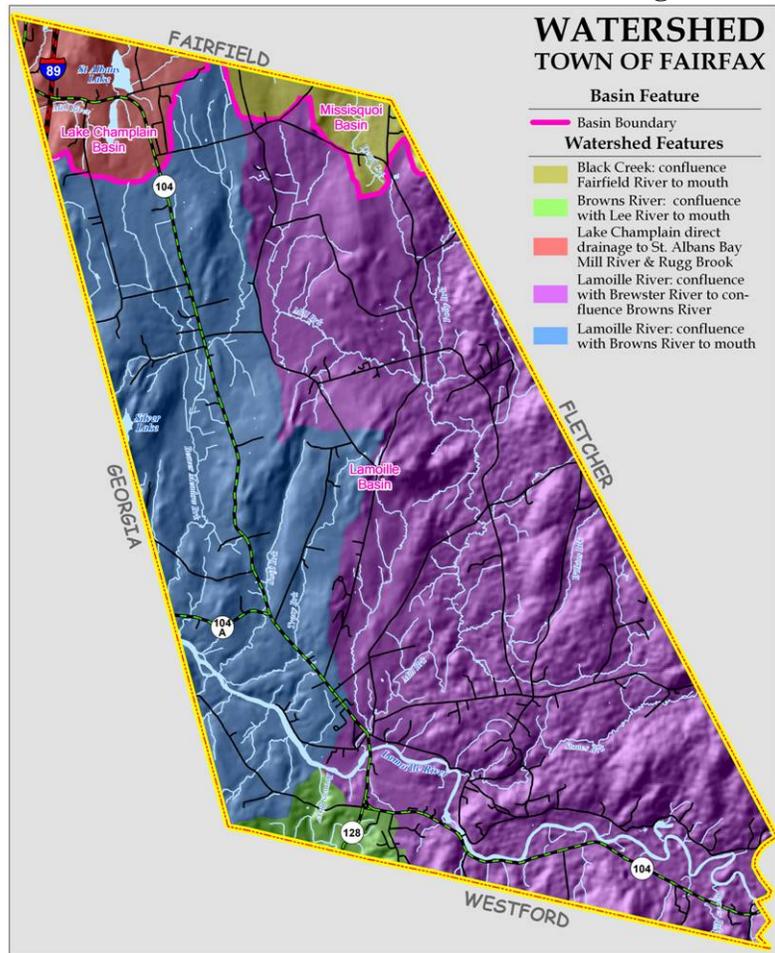
SURFACE WATER

Surface water accounts for 1,824 acres of land in Fairfax, or 7.1% of the overall acreage. The majority of Fairfax is part of the Lamoille River Basin, which covers an area of 706 square miles and flows west to northwest. A small area in northwest Fairfax is part of the Lake Champlain Basin, while a small area in northeast Fairfax is part of the Missisquoi Basin. The main stem of the Lamoille River flows over 84 miles from its headwaters in Glover to the outer Mallets Bay in Lake Champlain. The two major watersheds of the Lamoille River Basin located in Fairfax include the Lamoille River from its confluence with Brewster River to its confluence with Browns River and the Lamoille River from its confluence with Browns River to its mouth (Figure 4.2). Major tributaries to the Lamoille River include the Wild Branch, North Branch,

Brewster River, and Browns River. Extensive brook systems within Fairfax include Beaver Meadow, Mill, Wilkins, Stones, Polly, Swift, Tracy, Olin, and Baker.

The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources has completed a watershed plan for the Lamoille River, the Lamoille River Basin Plan (LRBP), for the purpose of improving water quality and aquatic habitat in the watershed. The plan identifies many issues that need to be addressed to improve water quality in the Lamoille River Basin. According to the LRBP, sediment and nutrient pollutants, likely from agricultural activities within the watershed, impair the Mill Brook. The plan notes possible sources of erosion from gravel pit extraction operations as an additional potential source. The LRBP identifies specific actions to improve the water quality in Mill Brook (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.2



Portions of the Lamoille are designated as Waste Management Zones (formerly Class C waters) by the Vermont Water Resources Board, including a stretch immediately downstream from Fairfax’s Sewage treatment facility. Waste Management Zones (WMZ’s) are areas of rivers which are found immediately downstream from Wastewater Treatment outfall points, and extend for one to several miles downstream from these discharge locations. Concerns for water quality within WMZ’s can result in restrictions on permissible uses of the water in these zones (e.g. drinking water supply restrictions).

Figure 4.3

Many surface waters in Fairfax exhibit unique wildlife habitat and/or archeological sensitivity. Beaver Meadow Brook is known for wildlife habitat and expected archaeological sensitivity and Wilkins Brook is known as a natural area. In addition, the Lamoille River Corridor running westward from Fairfax Village is designated as having known archaeological sensitivity and the corridor running eastward from Fairfax Village is expected to have moderate to high archaeological sensitivity. Known archaeological sensitivity also involves portions of Olin, Swift, and Tracy Brooks. An area in the far northwest portion of the town west of the I-89 interstate has been noted to contain expected archaeological resources.

There are two significant surface water bodies in Fairfax, Silver Lake and St. Albans Reservoir. St. Albans Reservoir is a public water supply source for St. Albans' drinking water. St. Albans Reservoir is located in North Fairfax. Silver Lake straddles the border between Georgia and Fairfax, in the central-western area of town.

Headwaters

Stream headwaters, located in the upper reaches of a watershed are usually cool, have high oxygen content, and low nutrient content. For this reason, upland streams tend to be highly productive per unit area and are extremely sensitive to sedimentation and pollution discharges.

Specific Actions to Improve Water Quality in Mill Brook (Lamoille River Basin Plan):

Action – Implement agricultural and stormwater BMPs that reduce nutrient and sediment non-point sources in the Mill Brook watershed. Implement practices such as woody riparian buffers, filter strips, livestock exclusion from waterways, nutrient management, composting, LID practices and cover crops with watershed farmers. Reassess the water quality and remove from the List of Impaired Waters when appropriate.

Lead Partner(s): DEC, NRCDs, CAV, NRCS, VAAFM, UVM Extension, landowners, and VLCT.

Potential Funding Sources: EQIP, Partners in Wildlife, and CWA Section 319 grants

Timeline: 2009-2013/Initiated

Action- Evaluate whether gravel pits in the Mill Brook watershed are contributing to the excess sediment discharges and address erosion if necessary. Conduct turbidity assessments up and downstream of watershed gravel pits. Implement erosion reduction and sediment control measures as needed.

Lead Partner(s): DEC and landowners

Potential Funding Sources: CWA Section 319 grants and LCBP

Timeline: 2008-2012

Action- Develop capital budgets for the Town of Fairfax for stream crossings and road improvement projects. Remediation measures may include bridge and culvert upgrades, road crowning, and stone and grass lined road ditches.

Lead Partner(s): DEC, Northern Vermont RC&D, consultants, and watershed towns

Potential Funding Sources: Better Backroads and DEC River Corridor grant

Timeline: 2009-2013

Many streams only flow during periods of high runoff when the water table rises and intersects the stream channel. All of these factors make headwaters and pristine streams extremely sensitive to disturbances resulting from forestry and urbanization.

Streambanks and Shorelines

Vegetation along streambanks not only shades the water, keeping it cooler and thus more tolerable for certain species of fish, but also provides cover for other wildlife, is aesthetically desirable, and prevents streambank erosion.



Photo 4 - Goose Pond, by Skip Taylor

Removal of riparian vegetation for development or conversion to agricultural uses is detrimental to water quality for the Town, and the state as a whole. The Vermont Best Management Practice Rules (1995) outline standards for riparian vegetative buffers. The effects of erosion on downstream environments is often more severe than at the point of erosion itself, resulting in decreased water quality from additional suspended sediments, increased nutrient loading from overland runoff and increased risk of flooding due to losses in flood storage capacity and increased velocity.

Maintenance or construction of vegetative buffers in riparian areas should be adamantly pursued. The short term drawbacks of lost tillable land acreage are more than offset by the bank stabilization power of buffers, which results in long term conservation of important agricultural resources. Road construction projects should avoid riparian areas, and filling, dredging or gravel extraction in or near rivers and streams should be avoided. Further, maintenance of roads should utilize the best mechanisms and standards.

Shorelands contribute to the prevention and control of water pollution, protection of spawning grounds, fish and aquatic life, preservation of shore cover and natural beauty and the multiple use of waters.

Floodplains

Construction within floodplain areas has several negative impacts, including restriction of flood flows, and decreases in flood storage capacity. Construction of impervious surfaces, such as driveways and homes, hamper the ability of floodplains to absorb water, and to assimilate nutrients from residential and agricultural runoff. More suitable uses, such as recreation and agriculture, will ensure a higher level of riverine health, and will prevent property and environmental damages associated with flooding.

Communities are required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to adopt flood hazard regulations under the National Flood Insurance Program, which is structured to minimize risk to life and property. Regulations are required for property owners to become eligible for home mortgage loans and flood insurance. Fairfax adopted a stand-alone Flood Hazard Area Regulation Ordinance in September of 2006, which places an additional set of regulations on

areas of Special Flood Hazard as identified on the Federal Emergency Management Association's (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Maps; flood hazard areas are also subject to the Development Regulations for the Town of Fairfax. The areas designated as Zone A in the Special Flood Hazard Areas are those that have a 1 percent chance of flooding in any given year (the 100-year floodplain). The 100 year floodplain is shown in Figure 4.4.

While the FEMA maps indicate areas that are at risk of inundation by floodwaters, they may not adequately identify areas at risk of erosion. To address this issue, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources is using the results of geomorphic assessment studies to map fluvial erosion hazard (FEH) corridors. Limiting development within these areas will minimize risk and provide streams the opportunity to reestablish a stable, equilibrium condition. Maintaining vegetated buffers around waterways also helps to minimize risk to property and provides water quality benefits. These buffers can be incorporated into the local zoning bylaws to ensure that future development does not further encroach on the Town's waterways. FEH maps and other resources provide a way to identify the appropriate buffer width needed to protect a river corridor.

GROUNDWATER

Ground water is defined as all water that exists beneath the surface of the earth. The geology of the region is the most important factor in determining the flow of subsurface water. Wells and springs generally receive groundwater from precipitation on up-slope areas, through saturated gravel deposits or water filled bedrock fractures (Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, Water Supply Division). The availability of ground water suitable for drinking water supply varies considerably throughout the town. According to the Groundwater Favorability Map of the Lamoille River Basin (Vermont Department of Water Resources, 1967), the town has low-groundwater potential likely suitable for domestic purposes only, while the Lamoille River Floodplains may have potential for higher yields.

All Fairfax residents rely on groundwater as their source of drinking water through individual or community wells or springs, or by the Fairfax municipal water system, which is supplied by a well. An investigation of a well or spring, including an analysis of available flow, water quality data, and surrounding geology can determine the land surface area where the drinking water is drawn, which is called the recharge area or Source Protection Areas (SPA), (Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, Water Supply Division). Recharge areas should be protected from unrestricted dumping and other practices that might harm the potability of water supplies. Potential sources of groundwater contamination include stormwater runoff, underground storage tanks, aboveground storage tanks, gas stations, septic systems/leach fields, auto body and repair facilities, businesses, such as dry cleaning, photo finishers, printers, furniture strippers, health clinics, beauty salons, and dental offices, agricultural activities includes areas of pesticide and fertilizer application and storage, road salt storage and use, industrial facilities, waste disposal sites, salvage yards, hazardous storage or disposal sites, private wells, high traffic areas, forestry operations, mining operations or drainage, and radioactive waste storage facilities or disposal sites.

Public water supplies should be carefully guarded from contamination and are required to have Source Protection Plans (SPP's) approved by the state. Public water supplies include community

water systems (municipal water systems or development water systems that serve at least 25 residents or 15 service connections), non-transient, non-community water systems (i.e. a school, daycare, or business), and transient, non-community water systems (i.e. motels, gas stations, and restaurants with their own source of water). SPP's are required to include delineation of a source water assessment or protection area; inventory of the potential contaminants of concern to that area; assessment of the susceptibility of the drinking water source to contamination; a management plan for the potential risks; and a contingency plan in case of an emergency.

There are six SPA's within Fairfax, including around the St. Albans Reservoir, around the water supply well for the Fairfax Municipal Water System, and four community water supply wells for residential developments. The Development Review Board should carefully review development located in Source Protection Areas to assure that public and private drinking water remains available and clean. See also Chapter 7, Public Utilities, Fairfax Water Department for a discussion on Source Protection Areas.

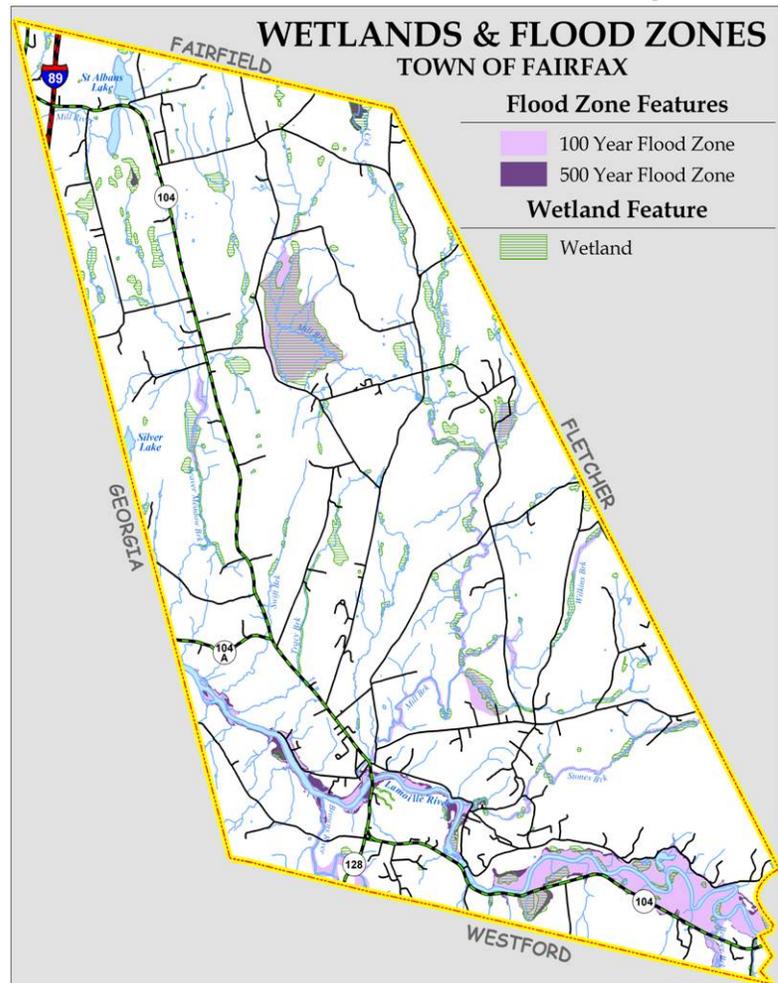
Seasonal High Water Table

Low elevation areas with high water tables contribute to ground water recharge. Often these are identified with significant wetlands or bogs, which when near development should be buffered. These areas have unconfined groundwater at or near the ground surface for part of the year and may be polluted easily by application of nutrients from septic tanks or other sources. Once contaminated, these waters may present health hazards locally and pollution of surface waters should the groundwater contribute to stream flow or wetlands.

WETLANDS

Wetlands provide critical habitat and are of crucial importance to the surface water regime. They store large quantities of water during periods of high runoff and gradually release water during low flow periods. Therefore, wetlands regulate stream discharge both during low flow and peak flow. Loss of this storage capacity would not only adversely affect stream behavior but would also increase floods and reduce stream flow during crucial low flow periods.

Figure 4.4



Wetlands are also important for the maintenance of water quality. The biological activity of a wetland area enables the absorption and assimilation of nutrients and thus purifies to some extent the water that is discharged.

Numerous wetlands complexes have been identified within Fairfax. Wetlands in the Town range from less than 1 acre to over 350 acres (on Mill Brook between TH 13 and TH 16). In all, over 1,300 acres of wetlands in the Town have been identified by the National Wetlands Inventory.

The Vermont Wetlands Rules, revised and adopted in 2001, protect areas identified by the Vermont Water Resources Board as significant. A number of activities are allowed inside significant wetlands, including silvicultural and agricultural activities, providing no dredging, filling, or alterations to water flow occur. Significant wetlands fall under three separate classifications:

- ⇒ Class I wetlands are those which are considered exceptional or irreplaceable, and merit a high degree of protection under the Vermont Wetlands Rules. Class I wetlands must be specifically designated by the Water Resources Board. They are protected by a 100 foot minimum buffer zone in which only certain activities are conditionally allowed. There are no class 1 wetlands in the Town of Fairfax.
- ⇒ Class II wetlands are those that appear on NWI maps and any contiguous unmapped wetlands, and are protected by a minimum 50 foot buffer. There are 1,326 acres of class II wetlands in the Town of Fairfax (5.2% of total land area) (Figure 4.4). The largest wetland in town is Fairfax Swamp at approximately 357 acres.
- ⇒ Class III wetlands are those that do not appear on National Wetlands Inventory maps, and are not considered significant by the Water Resources Board. Total acreage and their locations are therefore not known. As a result, Class III wetlands are not protected under the Vermont Wetlands Rules, but may be regulated under the Clean Water Act, Sec 404.

SOILS

Immense geological forces -- the scouring and depositional action of glaciers during the last ice age (approximately 11,000 years ago) -- have created the special landscape of Fairfax. The current patterns of development and land use are directly related to the underlying geology. Listed in Table 4.1 are the major soil types in Fairfax.

Table 4.1 Major Soils Types in Fairfax

The Lyman-Peru-Marlow

Occupies the largest proportion of Fairfax's acreage. These soils were formed in glacial tills on uplands and are characteristically loamy, low in lime, and have hardpan layer or bedrock near the surface. The deeper and better-drained soils of this group have good agricultural potential. Due to steep slopes, and shallow depth to bedrock, construction restrictions are severe.

Munson-Buxton-Belgrade-Scantic

Formed in water-deposited material on old lake plains. These are generally deep, moderately well-drained to poorly-drained silty and clay soils which are medium in lime. Where slope and drainage are also favorable, these are classified as prime agricultural soils, but restrictions for construction are severe.

Limerick-Hadley-Winooski

Deep, silty floodplain soils medium in lime. Assuming adequate drainage, these have prime agricultural standing.

Windsor-Eldridge (Missisquoi)

Covers a substantial portion of the town. Deep, sandy, and sandy-over-silty soils on terraces and old lake plains. The low lime and excessive leaching characteristics, however, limit their agricultural capability, but present only moderate restrictions for construction.

The Carlisle-Terric Medisaprists

Very poorly drained black decomposed material with slopes of less than 1% characterized by bog. The depth to bedrock is more than five feet in places placing severe restrictions on construction.

Woodstock-Tunbridge-Rock outcrop

Shallow to moderately deep soils and is excessively drained. It is shallow to bedrock with slopes of 25 - 60%. It is severe for construction due to slope and depth to bedrock.

Cabot-Westbury

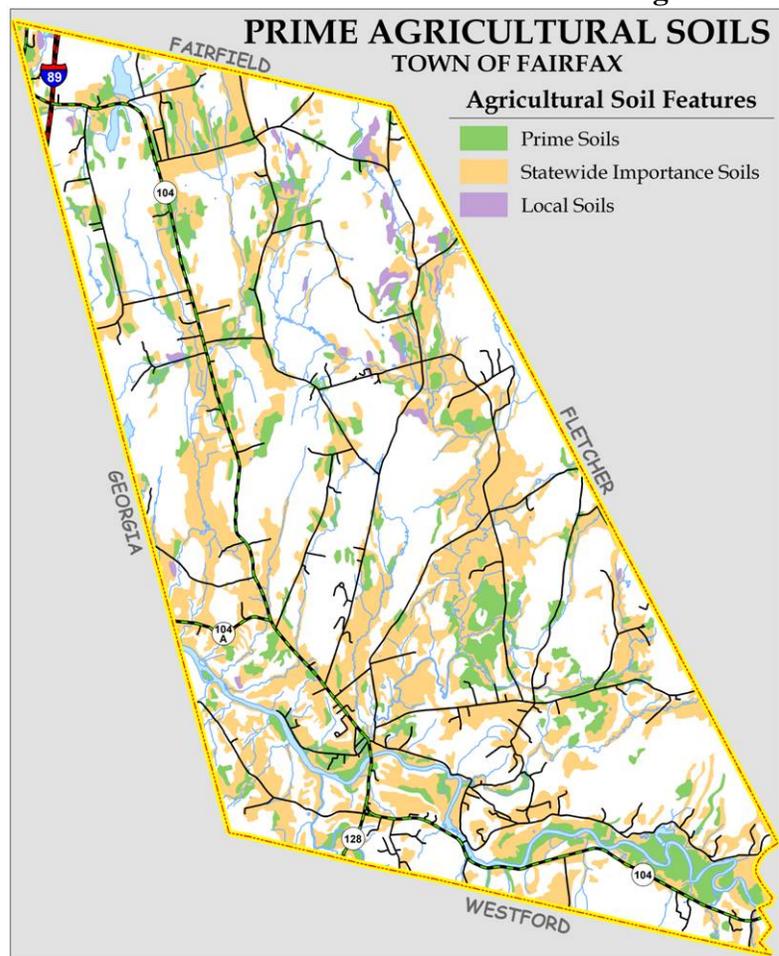
Deep and nearly level to sloping. It is somewhat poorly drained loamy soils, and stony to extremely stony. It presents severe constraints for construction due to large stones and wetness.

Conversion of traditional paper soil surveys to digital formats included in the Vermont Geographic Information System (VGIS) have provided manifold increases in the ability to view and analyze soil suitability for a host of uses, with relative ease. Using GIS, spatial attributes of each soil type (e.g. extent, location) are directly linked to information regarding an extensive number of soil attributes. These include:

- *suitability for on-site septic disposal*
- *prime agricultural attributes*
- *frequency of flooding*
- *depth to bedrock*
- *slope classifications*
- *drainage information*
- *potential for woodland productivity*

Use of these digital data layers can be an invaluable resource for land use planning, since numerous

Figure 4.5



factors can be considered simultaneously, and with immeasurable time savings. Contact the Vermont Center for Geographic Information (VCGI), or the Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) for additional resources and information.

Prime Agricultural Soils

Prime agricultural soils represent truly unique, irreplaceable resources due to their unique physical qualities, the importance of fertile soils to a stable economy, and the need for increased food production.

Prime agricultural soils have natural fertility retention qualities, high organic matter content, favorable drainage, level to gently rolling slopes, sufficient depth and textural qualities as well as a high available moisture content. These factors in combination make such soils intrinsically suitable for crop production.

Areas of primary agricultural production potential are particularly vulnerable to loss or alteration. Prime agricultural areas have few local regulatory protections, and from a purely physical perspective, are often extremely suitable for residential, commercial, and industrial development. Preservation of primary agricultural soils should be considered when reviewing development proposals.

A significant portion of Fairfax contains areas recognized by the United States Department of Agriculture, or by the State of Vermont, as having primary agricultural potential (Figure 4.5). These areas of high productivity potential coincide well with areas which are currently in agricultural production. This fact is certainly not by chance alone. Over time, farmers have found and maintained the most productive land available for their farm operations. As a result, effective conservation of prime agricultural resources may be practically achieved by concentrating conservation efforts on existing productive farmland.

Conserving agricultural resources is important to preserving rural character, and sustaining the traditional and economic resources which agriculture provides to Vermont’s working landscape. Finding innovative ways to balance future growth with maintaining critical resources is central to the planning process for Fairfax. To ensure that these important resources will be available for agricultural use in the future, mechanisms to enhance agricultural opportunities and the industry should generally be encouraged and supported. This interactive process between landowners and the Development

Table 4.2 Soil Slope Classifications	
0-3%	generally suitable for most types of development but may require drainage
3-8%	most desirable for development because these areas generally have the least restrictions
8-15%	suitable for low-density development with particular attention given to erosion control, runoff, and septic design
15-25%	unsuitable for most types of development and septic systems, construction costly, erosion and runoff problems likely
>25%	all types of construction should be avoided, careful land management for other uses is needed

Review Board will not completely prohibit growth in these areas, but will ensure site planning that is sensitive to these irreplaceable resources, while enabling landowners to realize a fair

economic return. To best implement conservation practices, soil resources should be measured against the economic viability and practicality of its use and the Fairfax Town Plan as a whole.

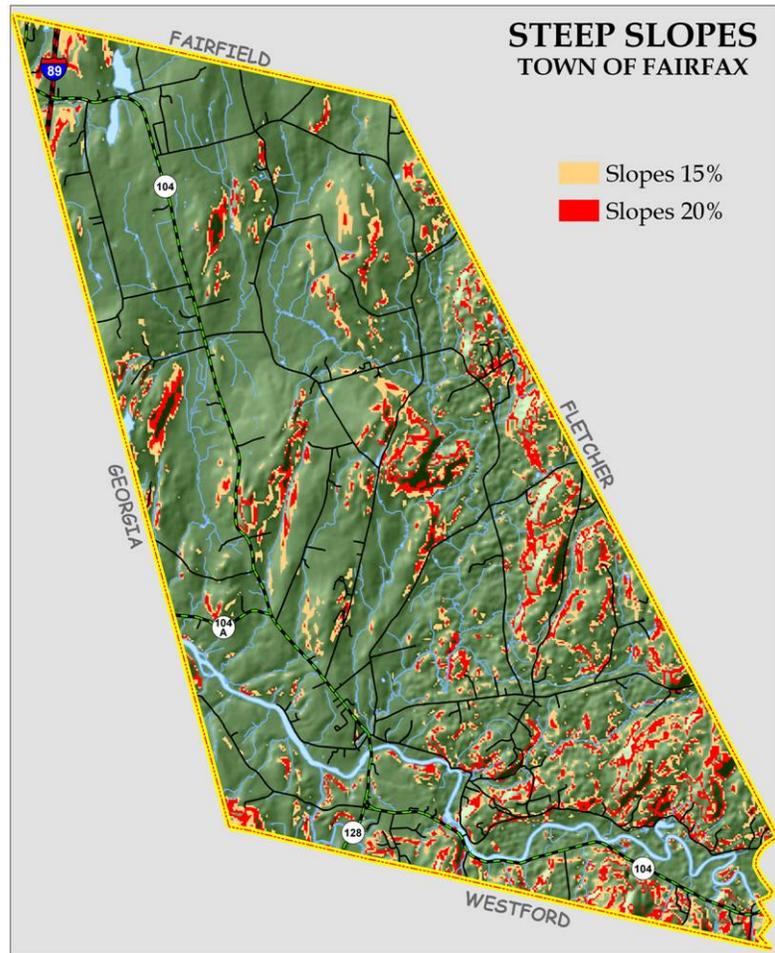
STEEP SLOPES

Steep slopes present considerable constraints to many types of development. They are characteristically covered by shallow soils often having fragipans, which makes development more problematic. The necessary cuts and slope stabilization for foundations, parking areas, road access and utilities are expensive and often, unless well designed, unattractive. Considerable environmental problems may arise from development on steep slopes presenting hazards to those residing within the areas as well as those outside. Development on steep slopes may upset the natural slope repose angle and by removal of vegetation and the injection of effluent by onsite sewage disposal will increase runoff, erosion, and the possibility of mass movement or slumping. Slippage of foundations is not uncommon in steep sloping areas.

In addition, areas characterized by a slope of greater than 20% are usually not suitable for on-site septic systems due to risk of septic seepage. Septic tank disposal fields located on slopes greater than 20% may result in partially treated effluent surfacing and seeping onto the downslope surface causing health hazards and possible nutrient enrichment of surface water not to mention aesthetic problems. Of the effluent that does remain under the shallow soil characteristics of steep slopes, much of it may flow laterally and result in groundwater contamination or the surfacing of effluent at outcrop or fragipan areas.

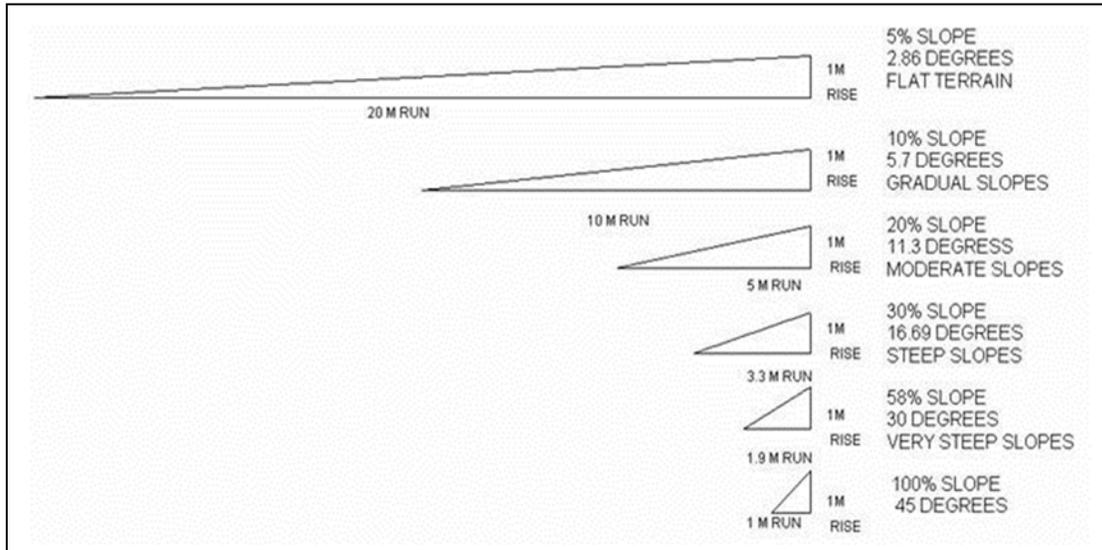
Development on steep slopes may also increase the costs of road maintenance; runoff maintenance and sedimentation problems are much higher on steep slope areas. School bus and fire service may also be difficult, expensive or even impossible depending on weather conditions.

Figure 4.6



The Soil Conservation Service provides general guidelines for development limitations on steep slopes, listed in Table 4.2. Figure 4.6 provides a visual of the relative steepness of different slopes in percentages and degrees.

Figure 4.7 Visual Depiction of Slope in Percentage and Degree



FOREST RESOURCES

Wood and wood products are becoming increasingly valuable commodities, yet future forest productivity is often neglected in harvest practices. Productive local woodlands can provide a source for raw materials for various forest products industries., and value-added products such as maple syrup.

Much of Fairfax’s landscape is heavily wooded with a mixture of hardwood and softwood types. According to Landsat Thematic Mapper Imagery, 11,088 acres or 42.9% of the land in Fairfax consists of either coniferous, deciduous or mixed forests. See Map 4 for a depiction of forestland in town. Careful management of these resources in the future could reap benefits in recreational, scenic, habitat and economic realms.

WILDLIFE HABITAT

Vermont has identified several unique natural habitats in Fairfax, including wetlands, deer habitat, bear habitat, and locations of rare, threatened, and endangered species (Figure 4.8).

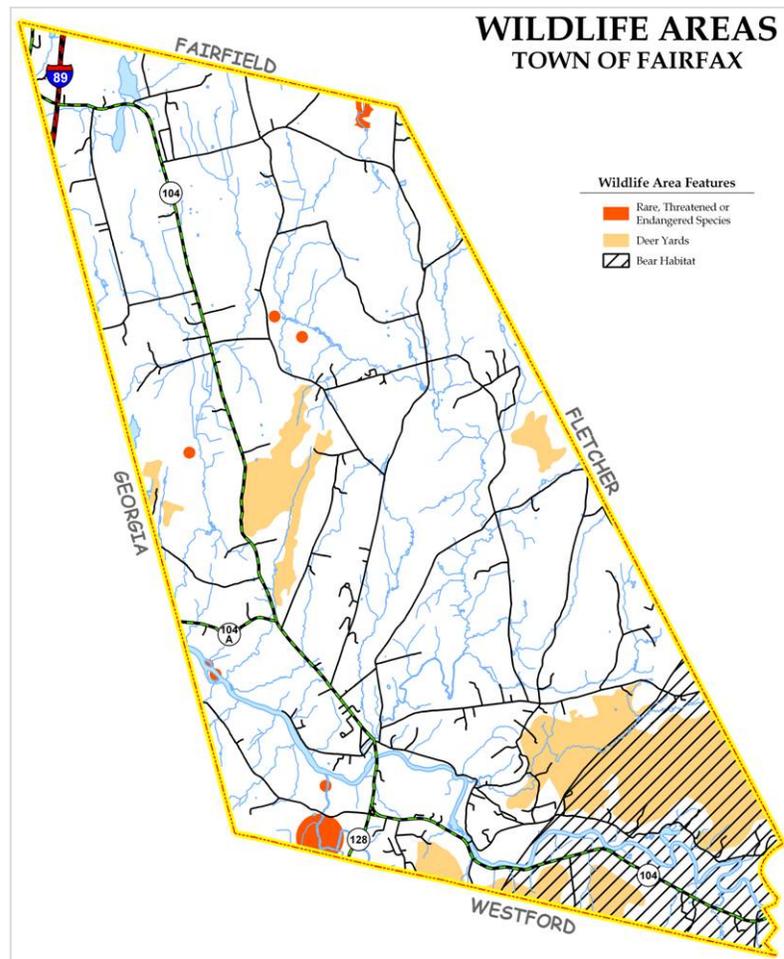
Wetlands

Wetlands provide habitat for a wide floral and faunal diversity, including habitat for threatened and endangered species in numbers which are disproportionately higher than are found in other habitat types. Many species are completely dependent on wetlands for their habitat requirements. Wetlands provide food and shelter for many species of fish, small mammals such as muskrat, beaver, and raccoon, large mammals such as deer, bear, and moose, and many species of waterfowl and migratory birds.

Deer Wintering Areas

Winter deer ranges have been mapped in portions of the town. The largest area borders the Town of Fletcher along and south of Stones Brook. Smaller areas in central Fairfax and along the southern border with Chittenden County are also noted. Deer wintering areas provide critical habitat for white tail deer and other species of vertebrates. These areas of hemlock, spruce, fir, cedar, and pine species provide shelter from deep snows, and permit easier winter travel for deer, compared to deciduous forests where the leafless tree branches do not prevent snow from reaching the ground. Occasionally, deer wintering areas will be found where softwood species are not dominant. These areas are usually found where south-facing slopes provide adequate solar radiation to limit snow depth.

Figure 4.8



These micro-climatic conditions - combinations of elevation, vegetation, and solar aspect - significantly increase the winter survival rates of deer populations, and so critically impact Vermont's landscape ecology and recreation. These areas have been targeted for protection by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and are a consideration in development review under Criterion 8A of Act 250.

Black Bear Habitat

The forested areas in the far southeastern part of Town are considered important seasonal bear habitat, which include feeding areas and travel corridors. The black bear is a sensitive indicator of the health of Vermont's forest. These areas are considered critical to the black bear's long-term survival in Vermont.

Threatened and Endangered Species Habitat

Numerous locations within the Town have been identified which support populations of designated rare, threatened, or endangered plants and animals. Locational data and descriptions for these areas have been entered into the Vermont Nongame and Natural Heritage Program database. The species identified have very particular habitat requirements, or have been

identified because they are at the edge of their natural range, are vulnerable to collection or disturbance, or have difficulty reproducing.

EARTH RESOURCES

There is potential for sand and gravel extraction in Fairfax (Figure 4.9). Soil erosion and the laying to waste of land by stripping, quarrying, or drilling operations deplete the natural wealth of the Town, resulting in environmental and municipal costs. Any extraction or processing proposal must include a plan, acceptable by the Development Review Board, for the rehabilitation of the site at the conclusion of extraction or processing activities. Appropriate guarantees may be required to ensure the rehabilitation at the operator's expense.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

HISTORIC STRUCTURES

Fairfax has many older homes and historical buildings indicating a rich past. The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation has placed many homes, farms, and buildings, as well as the Fairfax Falls, Fairfax Village, and Brown's River bridges, in the Vermont State Register of Historic Places. Although the covered bridge located on Maple Street is not listed in the register, it is an important part of the village landscape. The Vermont State Register is available for review at the Town Clerk's office. It contains the location of all the registered historic sites within the Town. Unfortunately, several have been lost, including; Rood House, McClure House, and the Howell House. The Fairfax Bridge and the Browns River Bridge were replaced for safety reasons.

Figure 4.9

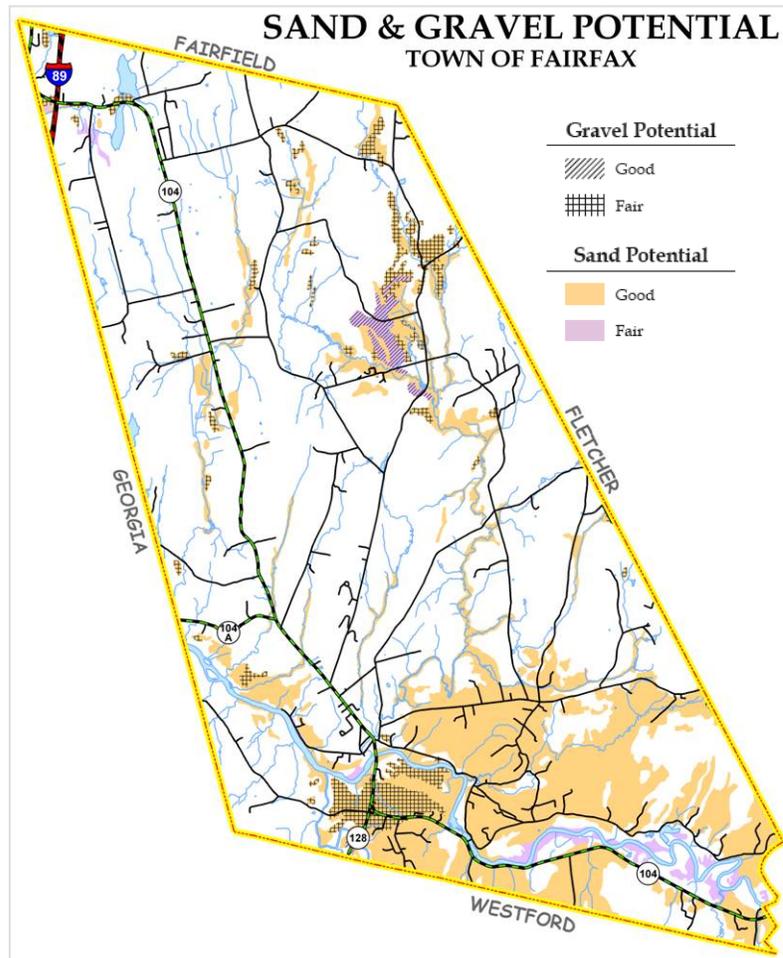


Photo 5 - Maple Street Covered Bridge, by Skip Taylor

In addition to individual properties listed in the register, the Fairfax Village Historic District is defined as having approximately the same boundary as the Village of Fairfax when it was first laid out in 1820. Today, the district encompasses all of Maple, School, and Hunt Streets, as well as a portion of Fletcher Road, and all of Main Street from near the Lamoille River to just north of Buck Hollow Road. Historic sites in the Town their location, and site number are shown in Table 4.3.

Note: Table 4.3 is not an official list of all Historic Properties, and some omissions may occur. An official list, which is updated as new properties are added, is available for review from the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation.

Table 4.3. Registered Historic Properties in the Town of Fairfax		
Site Name	Location	Site #
Drinkwine-Roig House	Carroll Hill	1
Gillan-Kuhn House		2
Hawley-Bailey Barn		3
Webb Farm-Maplewood Dairy	Buck Hollow	4
Rugg-Austin-Webb House		5
Coddings House		6
Parsonage-Collins House		7
Ovitt House		8
Rugg-Gaudette House		9
Rugg-Meigs House		10
Buck-Ovitt Place		11
Hunt-Dufford-Meade House	Mead Road	12
Bludgeon Farm		13
Wycoff-Irwin House	Huntville	14
Wheeler-Heyer Farm		15
Learnerd-Martin-Wold House		16
McClure House		17
Woodward Farm-Echo Valley		18
Howard-Blum House		19
Tabor House	Tabor Hill	20
Wilkins Farm	Wilkins Road	21
Megars-Tanner House	Fletcher Road	22
Clokey Farm		23
Wilson-Tracey Farm		24
Maxfield-Faymond House		25
Old Minor House		26
Chaffee House	River Road	27
Lovegrove-Zeno House		28
Cameron House		29
Howell House		30
Howell Place		31
Fairfax Falls Bridge	Fairfax Falls	32
Bernard Bessette House	Goose Pond	33
Bishop-Goldsmith House		34
Maxfield House		35
Prindle-Maxfield House		36
Giddings-Wimble Farm		37
Dezotelle House-Old Stone		38

Table 4.3. Registered Historic Properties in the Town of Fairfax		
Site Name	Location	Site #
Gerald Minor House		39
Foss-McNall House	McNall Road	40
Billado Farm	Richards Road	41
Fairfax Bridge		42
Methodist Parsonage		43
Fairfax Historic District ¹		44
Parsonage-Ballard-Langelier House	Route 104	45
James Bellows Farm		46
Blenerhasset Farm – Holmes House		48
Napoli House		49
Bouthilette Farm		50
Bailey House		51
Bessette House		52
Orton-McNall House		53
Parah House		54
Ayers-Bessette House		55
Boucher House		56
Duval House		57
Magnan House		58
Pease-Ladoux House	Nichols Road	59
Nichols House		60
Hilbard House		61
Brown’s River Bridge		62
Brown’s Creek Warren Pony Truss Bridge		63
Source:Books/Maps in Town Office		

CEMETERIES

In addition to Fairfax's historic structures, numerous cemeteries are located around the town. A complete listing of all stones, the information on them and a map of each cemetery is in the town office. Since a lot of the writing on the stones was becoming unreadable, and many of the stones had fallen or were damaged, volunteers went to each cemetery in Fairfax during the summer of 1996. Efforts were made to record all legible information.....

Listed in Table 4.4 below, are all the cemeteries in Town of Fairfax with their location and party responsible for maintenance.

Table 4.4 Fairfax Cemeteries		
Name and # of Stones	Location	Maintained By
Kingsbury-Hibbard 62 Stones	Off Route 104 and Oakland Station Road leading to Georgia in North Fairfax.	Town of Fairfax and Town of Georgia
North Fairfax or	On Route 104 near St. Albans	Town of Fairfax

¹ 99 identified individual structures, including the Baptist Building, are encompassed within the Fairfax Historic District (site #44). For more information see the VT Division of Historic Preservation Historic Sites and Structures Survey on file at the Town Clerks Office.

Table 4.4 Fairfax Cemeteries		
Name and # of Stones	Location	Maintained By
Beeman Cemetery 235 Stones	reservoir.	
Central or Beaver Cemetery 132 Stones	Off Route 104 in North Fairfax just north of the McNall farm.	Members of Harold Craft's family
Carroll Hill Cemetery 257 Stones	On Carroll Hill Road north of the Webb farm.	Town of Fairfax
Safford Cemetery 142 Stones	On Buck Hollow Road north of the Albert Ledoux residence.	Town of Fairfax
St. Luke's Cemetery 301 Stones	Off 104 across from the Fairfax Commons.	St. Luke's Catholic Church
Fairfax Plains Cemetery 588 Stones	Off the McNall Road across from the Raymond McNall residence.	Fairfax Plains Association with annual \$250 appropriation from the Town
Sanderson Cemetery 1667 Stones	On Fletcher Road near the town highway garage.	Fairfax Cemetery Association with annual appropriation from the Town
Mudgett Cemetery 50 Stones	Off Fletcher and Wilkins Road.	Not maintained
Spafford Cemetery 19 Stones	Off Goose Pond and Spafford Road near the McGough residence.	Not maintained
Bowditch Cemetery	Behind the former Tellstone residence in Fairfax Village, but no evidence of the cemetery remains.	Not maintained
Kezer Cemetery 4 Stones	Off the Spooner Road on Gilles Rainville farm.	Not maintained
Learned Cemetery 10 Stones	Off the Huntville Road on the Heyer farm	Not maintained

Source: Fairfax Cemetery Commission

It is known that there are a number of people buried in the Town's cemeteries with no markers and a number of people have been buried in private grave sites outside of the known cemeteries. Preserving the history of the town and its residents is very important and well worth the time. To the Town's knowledge, no other town has accomplished the task of a complete inventory of cemeteries and the Town has received many compliments on the work. There is extensive work that needs to be done in the Town's cemeteries, but funding is a problem. Taking the time to visit Fairfax's cemeteries is a favorite pastime of many residents as well as visitors to the town and care should be taken to preserve them.

ARCHAEOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

Archaeological resources provide evidence of human habitation dating from prehistoric times. This includes evidence of prehistoric habitation and use, including villages, trails, and trade networks, and burial grounds, as well as remnants of historic settlement and use, including old foundations and cellar holes, quarry, mill, kiln and foundry sites, and unmarked cemeteries and roads.

When found intact, archaeological sites can provide a wealth of information about past ways of life, but because they are hidden, they may be easily disturbed or destroyed. It is often not the artifacts themselves that are important, but rather the context in which they are found.

The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation maintains listings of known sites, made available on a “need to know” basis in order to protect their integrity. For planning purposes, the Division has identified more broadly defined “sensitive areas,” using modeling based on known site conditions in which archaeological sites are known or expected to occur. These include a 200 foot buffer along all major rivers and tributaries in the region, particularly in the vicinity of major confluences, and the Lake Champlain shoreland, which is considered highly sensitive. Historic sites may be identified and located from historic records, including historic atlases and gazetteers and local records.

Development in known or anticipated sensitive areas should be reviewed with particular attention given to the possibility of buried sites. Assistance with the identification, protection and/or excavation of sites is available from the Division for Historic Preservation.

The Lamoille River running westward from Fairfax Village is designated as being an archaeologically sensitive area. Portions of the Olin, Swift, Tracy and Beaver Meadow Brooks may also contain archaeologically sensitive sites.

SCENIC RESOURCES

Scenic resources should be considerations in planning and development, including ridgelines, foregrounds of distant views, open land, vistas, and historic villages and settlements. These scenic features contribute to the local quality of life and a sense of place, and are instrumental in defining the rural character of the Town, so prized by its inhabitants.

The scenic views in Fairfax extend from the winding curves of the Lamoille River to the peak of Mt. Mansfield, with a varied pattern of wooded hills and open farm fields in between. Views of the river can be enjoyed from points along both Routes 104 and 104A, Goose Pond Road, Hunt Street, and River Road. Mt Mansfield can be seen from several roads throughout the town. Many roads in Fairfax allow for the enjoyment of a drive through countryside with tree covered roads, wide open farm land, and views of the neighboring hillsides and mountains.

Promontories are of relative significance geologically and aesthetically since they are visible and often protected from most types of building development. Special consideration for the protection of ridgelines is encouraged when establishing telecommunications (or cellular phone) towers, or wind turbines, which often favor ridgeline siting for their many benefits.

Future development should be sensitive to these often unprotected elements of the landscape. Proper siting for development, avoidance of steep slopes and hilltops for construction, and development which fits the existing historic settlement pattern of the town should be encouraged at every level of Town planning. Many of these factors can be addressed through the subdivision review process. Implementation of flexible, creative zoning which pays more attention to the character of the landscape than to strict dimensional requirements may enable the Town to preserve its rural character and scenic resources, while not imposing overly restrictive conditions on potential future growth.

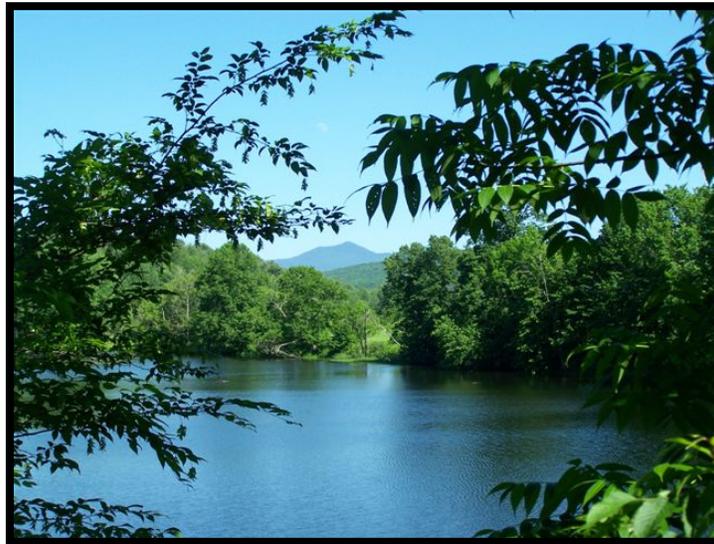


Photo 6 - Goose Pond, by Skip Taylor

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal

- 1) Protect and preserve natural, cultural, and scenic resources, which help define the Town's rural character, natural environment, and traditional working landscape.

Policies

- 1) To conserve viable agricultural and forest land resources.
- 2) To enhance and protect the surface and ground water resources in the Town.
- 3) To protect fragile and sensitive resources, endangered species, and archeological sites, including but not limited to critical habitat, wetlands, steep slopes, prime agricultural soils, and floodplains.
- 4) To discourage development that compromises the archaeological or visual integrity of significant scenic views or cultural features, such as the Fairfax Historic District and cemeteries.
- 5) To maintain the historic, cultural, and scenic sense of place in the Village.
- 6) To protect natural, scenic, and recreational areas so that they may be maintained as destinations for hiking, biking, and other physical activities.
- 4) To seek to establish public access to hunting and fishing, and other outdoor recreational activities.

CHAPTER 5: ENERGY

Vermont planning law requires that municipal plans include an energy element, which is intended to plan for and promote the efficient and economic utilization of energy in the community. While it is recognized that energy supply and demand are currently directed largely by political and economic forces at the state, federal, and international levels, there is a lot that can be done on a household and community level to promote the use of renewable resources, to promote energy efficiency, and to conserve energy.

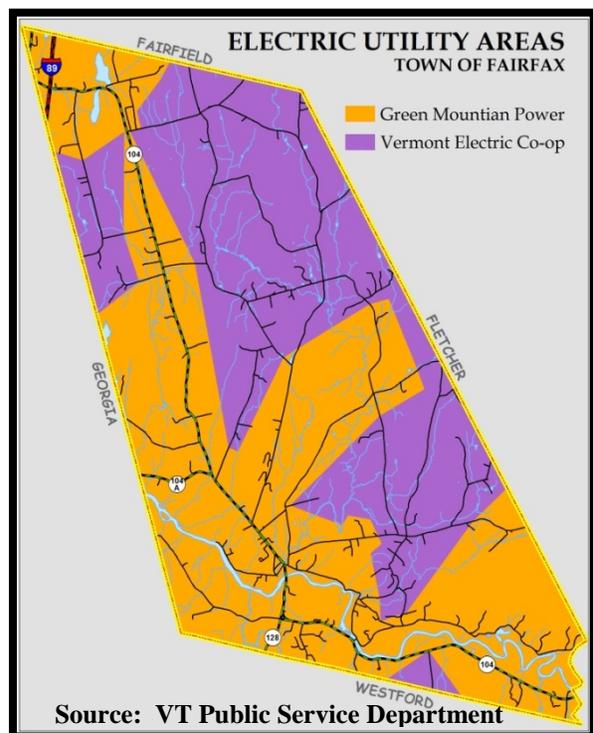
ELECTRICITY

There are seventeen electric utilities serving Vermont. Green Mountain Power (GMP), and Vermont Electric Co-op (VEC) serve Fairfax (Figure 5.1). GMP is an investor-owned utility and VEC is one of two coop utilities. VEC and GMP are two of only three utilities in Vermont with over 10,000 customers.

In 2013 GMP expects to purchase about one-third of its electricity from Hydro Quebec, about 26% of its electricity from premium and other renewable sources, 7% from CT and NH nuclear, 1% from GMP-owned fossil fuel with the remainder purchased from New England system contracts. The Vermont Electric Cooperative purchases about fifty-seven percent of its electricity from large hydro, sixteen percent from the NEPOOL, and ten percent from small hydro and other renewable sources (2011). About majority is generated through Hydro Quebec. The remaining sources of electricity consist of purchases from the NEPOOL, small hydroelectric and other renewable operations within the state, and a small percentage of gas and oil.

High-voltage electricity produced by generation facilities and purchased by GMP and VEC is moved long-distances through transmission lines across the state. There are three transformers at substations located in Fairfax, one at Fairfax Falls, one on Goose Pond Rd, and one on Carroll Hill that reduce, or step down, the high-voltage electricity so it can be moved along the distribution system. The distribution lines are the smaller poles and wires on streets that connect to individual homes or businesses. According to the Vermont Department of Public Service, these wires deliver electricity to the customers, either in the form of a three-phase (or three-wire) line or a single-phase (or one-wire) line. Three-phase lines are typically used by large commercial customers who run heavy machinery, while single-phase power serves the needs of

Figure 5.1 Electric Utility Areas



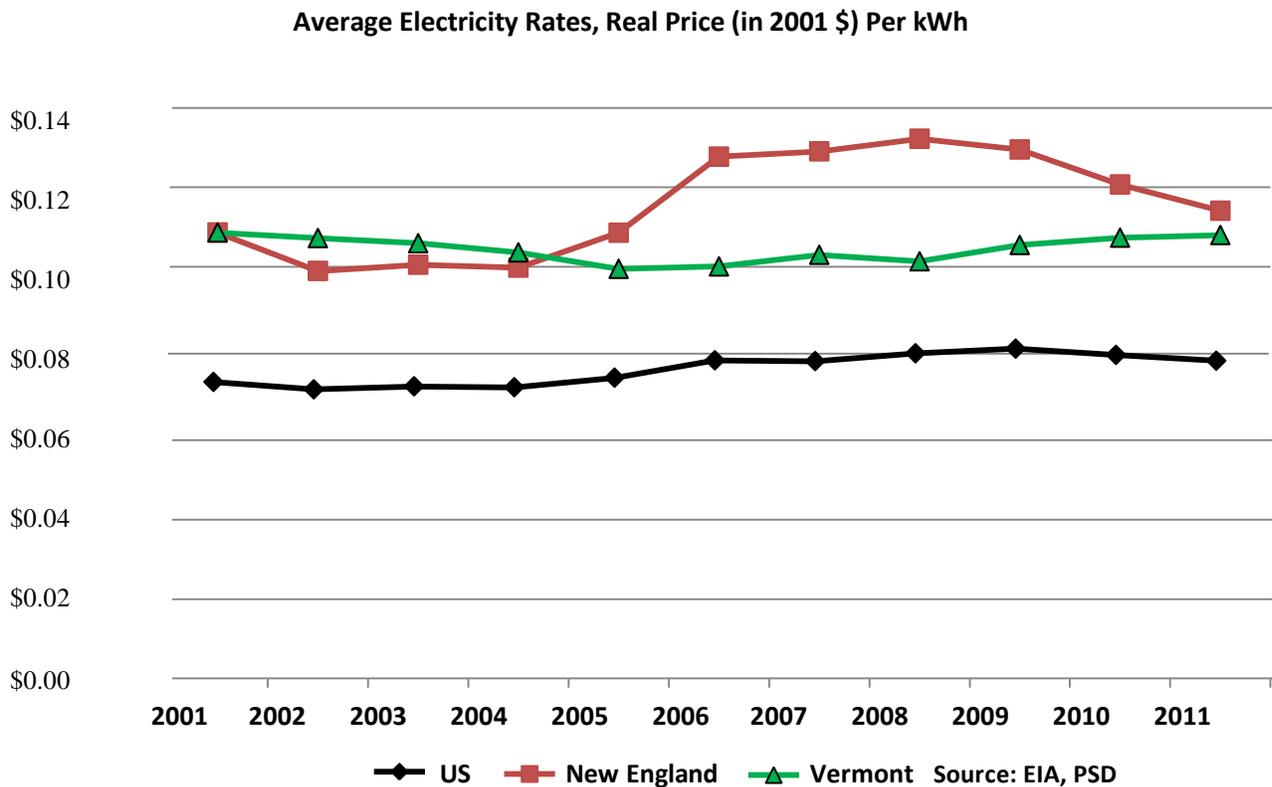
residential and smaller commercial customers. There is currently limited three- phase service in Fairfax, but upon request and payment of a fee, it can be extended.



Photo 7 - Fairfax Falls Substation, by Skip Taylor

Vermont’s electrical rates have generally stayed stable over time and have not experienced the same sharp increases seen elsewhere in New England. The price stability in Vermont is largely due to the fact that the two largest sources of power, Hydro Quebec and Vermont Yankee have been under long-term contract. In March of 2011 Vermont Yankee was issued a renewed license to operate for 20 years beyond its scheduled shutdown date of March 2012. The contract with Hydro-Quebec will expire in 2015. Other factors, such as regional transmission costs, will also play a role in future electricity rates.

Figure 5.2



RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES

Locally generated power from renewable sources, such as solar, wind, biomass, and methane, can provide cost- saving and environmental benefits for Vermont municipalities. The more power produced locally (on a household, neighborhood, or community basis), the less dependent communities, and the state as a whole, are on purchasing non-renewable and/or non-locally produced power. This in turn reduces the impact of volatile electric and heating fuel costs on the community and the state as a whole. The 2011 Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan (CEP) recommends that Vermont obtain Ninety (90) percent of its total energy from renewable sources by the year 2050.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 15% of all occupied housing units in Fairfax use wood as a primary source of heating fuel, up from 8% in 2000. With an abundance of woodlands in Fairfax and the surrounding region, use of wood as a primary home heating fuel has the potential for greater increase in the future. With careful management, local forests could provide a sustainable, local fuel source that promotes economic vigor at an affordable cost per BTU.

In addition to using wood as a heating source on an individual household basis, the clean combustion of wood chips for heat and electricity production is another method of producing electricity from wood. This method of electricity generation has been promoted by the Vermont Department of Public Service, including a program directed at heating schools. Virtually all of Vermont's wood chip usage comes from mill wastes or sustainably harvested chips from low quality trees.

Potential for other forms of renewable energy generation, such as solar, wind, and methane power, exist in Fairfax, and may provide affordable, local, non-polluting heat and power if utilized to their full potential. Also in use in Fairfax are geothermal heating systems. Heat pumps use the natural thermal stability of the earth to partially heat a system of underground water pipes, which in turn heat the home through a forced hot water system.

Despite the initial emergence of solar power in the 1970's, solar technologies, especially in the State, are becoming more widely utilized. This use should continue to grow as the consequences of climate change are more widely known and accepted, and as crude oil prices rise and sources for purchasing it become less secure. These factors are leading to the creation of new programs and incentives for developing renewable and clean sources of power and fuel. Solar power, though proven successful even in Vermont's northern climate, was not used as a heat source in any homes in Fairfax or Franklin County at the time of the 2010 U.S. Census. Small-scale wind



Photo 8 - Alburgh Welcome Center Wind Tower, Courtesy VT Public Service Department

power was not part of the 2010 census for Fairfax. Since the Census, solar and wind power have gained popularity on a household and neighborhood basis.

There is great potential in Vermont for anaerobic digestion and methane recovery as an energy source from a variety of sources including manure, industrial waste, and solid waste. Specifically, the number of methane digesters on farms is growing in Franklin County as dairy farmers are recognizing not only the energy potential, but environmental and economic benefits as well. Currently, methane digesters are profitable for large farms with more than 500 cows, but there is research being conducted on making digesters work for smaller farms in the future.

Net-metering power back into the grid provides an opportunity to offset some costs and potentially generate revenue from investing in local, renewable energy generation on a household or farm basis. Power produced from any renewable source, whether it be solar, wind, small-hydro, or methane can qualify for net-metering. A Certificate of Public Good under Act 248 is required and it is exempt from local zoning, though the Public Service Board considers local town plans and regulations in the review.

HEAT

As shown in Table 5.1, fossil fuels are the primary source of home heating fuel in Fairfax by a wide margin. Fuel oil and kerosene heat nearly 60% of all occupied housing units in the Town, compared to 47% in Franklin County. This difference may be explained by the lack of utility gas available in Fairfax, which is used in 21.9% of all homes in the county. Despite the lack of

available utility gas in town, it accounts for 1.2% of all home heating in Fairfax. The use of bottled or liquid propane gas accounts for 22.9% of all home heating in Fairfax.

This reliance on non-local, unsustainable energy sources for heat could have negative implications for future energy affordability and reliability. Fuel oil, as the primary home heating type in

Fairfax also burdens the local transportation network, increases carbon emissions and is one of the least efficient heating sources available. Alternatives to current heating sources should be investigated which provide greater public benefit at lower economic, social, and environmental costs.

	Fairfax	Franklin County
Utility Gas	1.2%	21.9%
Bottled, Tank or LP	22.9%	13.1%
Electricity	2.6%	2.4%
Fuel Oil/Kerosene	57.8%	46.9%
Coal/Coke	0.0%	0.3%
Wood	14.9%	13.7%
Solar	0.0%	0.0%
Other Fuel	0.7%	1.2%
No Fuel Used	0.0%	0.5%
Source: U. S. Census, 2010		

ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION

At the local level, concerns related to energy efficiency, conservation, and the use of renewable energy resources generally fall into four categories: town-owned or town-maintained buildings,

utilities, and vehicles; private energy use in residences and businesses; development patterns and the construction and siting of buildings; and energy used for transportation.

MUNICIPAL ENERGY

The Town has taken several steps to ensure that efficient use of energy and the development and implementation of renewable energy resources are supported.

- ⇒ The older public buildings such as Bellows Free Academy receive energy audits periodically. Past audits have resulted in improvements to the windows, lighting, and heating systems in both facilities.
- ⇒ The Fairfax Fire Department received an energy audit in January 2012. The report included a number of energy conservation measures recommendations. In 2013, with funds from the U.S. Department of Energy, through the NRPC, a portion of the recommended building improvements were made. The portion of completed retrofits are estimated to save over \$850.00 annually and 4926 annual CO₂ (lbs) savings.
- ⇒ The Town Garage and Fire Department buildings are heated to minimum levels when not in use. The purchase of a waste oil heating unit will both save on energy costs and recycle oil. The Town currently accepts waste oil from residents for use in the unit.
- ⇒ The Town's truck fleet is completely diesel at this time. The school maintained bus fleet is also diesel. The quality of this maintenance program is evidenced by a 14 year life span for a bus owned by the school district.

According to Annual Reports, total municipal energy expenditures, for heating fuel, electricity, street lights, and vehicle fuels (excluding school) have consistently risen since 2006. The efficient uses of energy in the operation of Town facilities and services promote savings in municipal energy costs, and places less demand on available energy resources.

The Selectboard is authorized by Vermont Statute to appoint an energy coordinator and/or an energy committee as an official resource to town planners. Since local information on the use of energy is limited, an energy coordinator or committee may be able to collect valuable data to further energy planning in town. According to statute, an energy coordinator and/or committee would take on a view toward the more efficient and economical utilization of existing and potential energy resources and with that in mind, could coordinate energy resources within the town, cooperate with the Planning Commission and with those federal, state, and regional agencies of government responsible for energy matters, and study and evaluate alternative sources of energy. The Planning Commission supports the creation of an energy coordinator and committee in Fairfax. At this time the Town is participating in the Regional Energy Committee through Northwest Regional Planning which offers a variety of energy assistance and programs for participating municipalities.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION IN HOMES AND BUSINESSES

While the Town has less direct control over private energy use, it is possible to encourage weatherization, the use of improved windows, the installation of insulation, and the use of

renewable energy resources. Efficiency Vermont is the nation's first statewide provider of energy efficiency services and is available to provide technical assistance and financial incentives to Vermont households and businesses to help them reduce their energy costs with energy-efficient equipment and lighting and with energy-efficient approaches to construction and renovation.

The farming community has been specifically targeted by utilities for assistance in increasing efficiencies and reducing electrical costs. Both GMP and VEC offer programs to help reduce energy demand through conservation. Statewide efforts aimed at agriculture include proposals to improve energy efficiencies in farm buildings and machinery. Alternative technologies which produce new sources of renewable energy are increasing in popularity, including digesters which capture methane for use as an energy source.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

Land- use related energy consumption and conservation are critical considerations in formulating sound energy policy. Dispersed settlement patterns put a greater strain on energy supplies by increasing transportation related consumption, and by reducing space efficiencies in the delivery of essential services. By developing in the historic patterns that include compact village centers supports these initiatives. Reliance on automotive travel for work, school, shopping, and recreation also results in greater energy expenditures for both individuals and municipalities.

By encouraging future development in a concentrated, mixed-use center, such as the current village area, the Town will achieve better efficiency in the delivery of existing essential services, such as fire and rescue services, solid waste pick-up, and mail delivery. The Village's street network should limit dead ends and improve interconnectivity to reduce transportation related energy consumption by improving circulation and efficiency. The street network should also provide opportunities for pedestrian and other non-vehicular traffic to enable and encourage walking and biking instead of driving.

The Town's current Development Regulations encourage planned unit developments (PUDs), in which buildings are clustered for more efficient uses of land and energy resources. PUDs "facilitate the adequate and economic provision of streets and utilities and preserve the agricultural, forested, natural and scenic qualities of the Town." PUD's are widely used tools in land use planning because they promote energy efficient siting and design. PUD's and other innovative techniques should be investigated further and utilized wherever possible and appropriate.

BUILDING SITING AND DESIGN

The way that buildings are sited and constructed can affect the amount of energy needed to access and use them. Development regulations can include incentives to site buildings with south- facing orientation for maximum solar gain, use trees for wind breaks and shade, use appropriate glazing (windows) on the south wall, install "thermal mass" (such as concrete, brick, quarry tile, or water) to store the sun's energy, employ high levels of insulation, and use solar water heating,

By nature of their design, single family structures are generally less energy efficient in northern climates such as Vermont, due to the number of outside walls per dwelling unit. Multi-family

structures, with more common interior walls, provide greater thermal integrity against the elements. A greater mix of single and multiple unit structures would improve energy efficiency on the municipal level, resulting in reductions in per capita energy consumption.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation accounts for a significant amount of energy demand, which can be reduced through conservation efforts. Fairfax's rural transportation system contributes to energy costs. Ridesharing and encouraging local and home businesses help reduce transportation related energy consumption, and promote economic vitality in accordance with state energy goals.



**Photo 9 - Park and Ride Lot at Exit 18,
Courtesy VT Agency of Transportation**

According to the latest U.S. Census (2010), over 85.9% of all Fairfax commuters drive alone to work, while 12.2% carpool, 1.1% use other motorized transportation, and 0.8% use non-motorized transportation. Given that most work trips are to destinations outside Franklin County, commuter use results in significant energy consumption by the Town. Alternatives to consumptive, long distance, single occupancy work trips would greatly decrease energy demand and pollution resulting from the combustion of fossil fuels. Some alternatives include constructing park and ride lots to encourage carpooling, and seeking ways to develop the local economy to decrease the necessity for long distance commuter trips.

Transportation energy demand is also affected by the orientation of facilities and services relative to the population. Compact, mixed-use centers of activity reduce fuel consumption by enabling accessibility to bicycle and pedestrian traffic.

ENERGY GOALS AND POLICIES

Goals

- 1) To conserve energy and encourage the use of renewable resources.
- 2) To promote land settlement and economic development patterns that minimize energy use.
- 3) To develop a safe and interconnected system of pathways and sidewalks for bicycle and pedestrian use.

Policies

- 1) To encourage future development at greater densities in the growth center so that residents have access to a variety of public and private services with a minimum of travel.
- 2) To encourage and enable public and private installation and application of appropriately sited, small scale renewable energy production systems, such as wind energy conversion and photo voltaic systems.

- 3) To encourage energy efficiency in the provision of municipal services and programs.
- 4) To encourage and facilitate road connectivity.

CHAPTER 6: EDUCATION



BFA Fairfax is committed to ensuring that all students become informed, literate, critical thinkers who demonstrate responsible civic and social behaviors.

EXISTING FACILITIES

Bellows Free Academy Fairfax (BFA-Fairfax) is a PreK-12 public educational facility serving residents of Fairfax in grades PreK-12. BFA also accepts tuition students from Fletcher in grades 7-12, as well as grade 9-12 students from Georgia, Westford, and the surrounding communities. BFA Fairfax provides a high-quality educational program with access to vocational training at the Northwest Technical Center, Center for Technology at Essex, and Burlington Technical Center. Students can participate in over 20 Advanced Placement (AP) courses taught both on-site and virtually through a partnership with the Virtual High School Collaborative. Students may also access courses through Community College of Vermont.

BFA has also made significant upgrades to its technology infrastructure (bandwidth and wireless networks) and has invested in the use of digital technologies for learning. Students in grades 6-12 have access to the 1:1 digital learning environment. While not included in the 1:1 initiative, elementary classrooms still have general access to the schools technology resources as well.

The facility includes two gymnasiums, one combination gym and cafeteria, one combination cafeteria and multi-purpose room, eighty classrooms, and multiple fields that accommodate a rapidly growing co-curricular program. BFA employs 87 FTE (full time equivalent) teachers, three full-time administrators, and approximately 70 support staff including office administrative support, paraprofessionals, custodial staff, and bus drivers.

BFA Fairfax is an important hub for community activities including church dinners, local community meetings, and athletic events. The Fairfax Community Library is also located on the school campus and offers educational programs for students and community. BFA remains proudly committed to providing the community of Fairfax with access to school facilities and grounds.

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

In the past, population growth severely stretched the BFA's original design for 800-student capacity. This problem was resolved in 1996 when voters approved a bond issue to finance the construction of a new elementary wing. The addition was constructed in 1998 and increased the capacity of Bellows Free Academy to 1,200 students. The addition provided more classroom space, improved the existing kitchen facilities, added parking, provided greater separation of elementary and high school facilities, and installed fiber-optic technology. Based on these trends, BFA Fairfax has sufficient capacity for the near future. On Town Meeting Day in 2003 voters passed a motion to purchase three lots adjacent to the school campus. These lots will

provide additional area for school facilities in the future, though specific plans do not currently exist at this time.

Continued public use of the facility has mandated an effective maintenance program and has increased the demands for custodial supervision and cleaning. Additional help may be warranted as community use and evening school activities have an impact on the custodial staff's cleaning and maintenance schedule. Community use of the building typically includes meeting spaces used by local government, service organizations, adult recreation, self-help groups, youth activity groups, and cultural groups. Even though the school board has encouraged community use of the facility, the increase in school programs has started to restrict community use of the building due to increases in curricular and co-curricular opportunities. Gym space in particular is in high demand between November and March.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Continuing education is located either in or around Burlington, in St. Albans, and in Johnson. The Community College of Vermont (CCV) offers courses and degree programs in both Winooski and St. Albans. The CCV is part of the Vermont State College System and has links to other higher education facilities around the State. The University of Vermont, St. Michael's College, Burlington College, and Champlain College are all located in the Burlington area while Johnson State College is located in Johnson.

Below is a chart showing enrollment history over the past several years at BFA Fairfax:

Figure 6.1

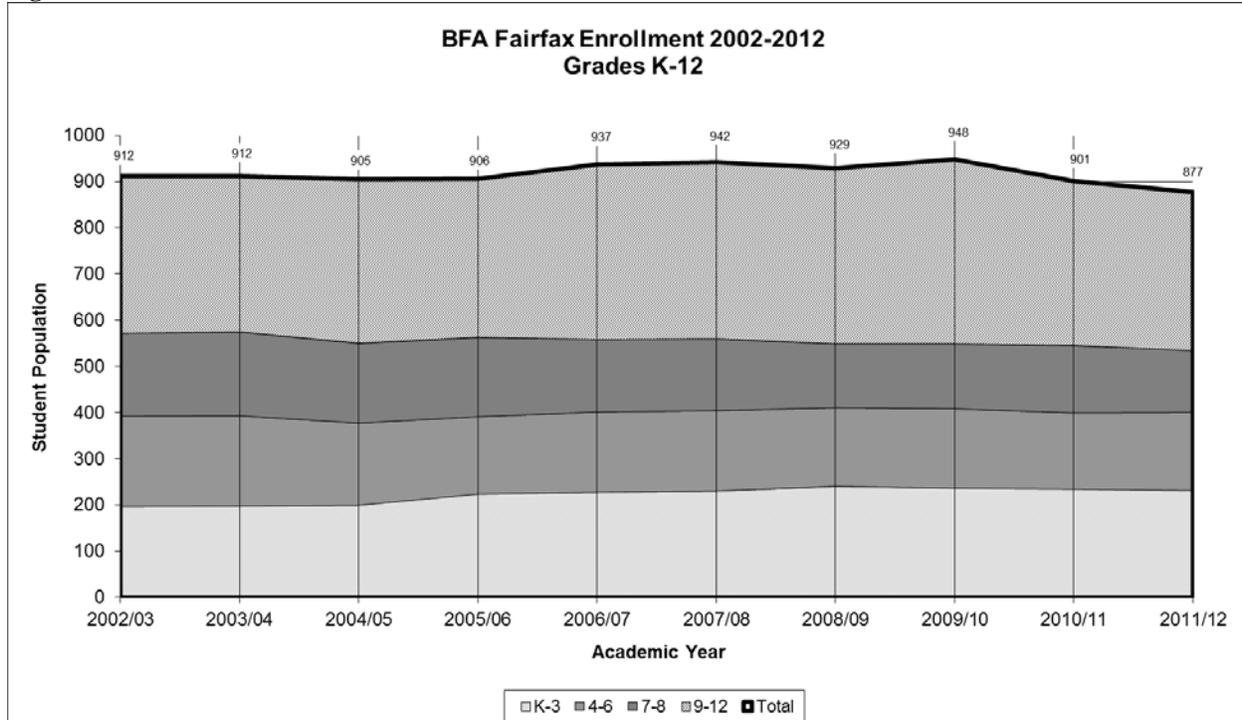


Table 6.1

BFA Fairfax 10-Year Enrollment Trend Grades K-12											
Grade	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	Change
K-3	196	197	199	223	227	230	240	236	234	231	15%
4-6	196	196	178	168	174	174	170	172	165	169	- 16%
7-8	179	181	172	171	157	155	138	140	145	135	- 33%
9-12	341	338	356	344	379	383	381	400	357	342	.3%
Total	912	912	905	906	937	942	929	948	901	877	- 4%

Based on these trends, total enrollment has decreased by 4% from the 2003/04 school year to the current 2011/12 school year. During this 10 year period, the most significant decrease was in middle school population, which down 33% in grades 7-8. At the same time, BFA has seen steady growth in early elementary enrollment which is up 15%. High school enrollment may fluctuate due to tuition students from Westford, Georgia, Fletcher, and other surrounding towns which offer students a choice of attending any public high school. This offers a potential for larger changes in student enrollment based on choice rather than population of high school age students in the district.

To provide some perspective based on national trends, school enrollment has seen a decrease during the current decade as a result of the aging of the baby boomers (generally born between the years of 1946 and 1964); however, small to moderate increases in enrollment are expected from the children of the baby boom echo population. At this time we do not expect significant growth or decline of school population.

EDUCATION GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal

- 1) Bellows Free Academy – Fairfax is committed to ensuring all students become informed, literate, critical thinkers who demonstrate responsible social and civic behaviors.

Policies

- 1) Student-Centered Learning: BFA-Fairfax Students will engage in personalized learning involving collaborative inquiry, problem solving, and creative learning opportunities.
- 2) Leadership in a Student-Centered Learning Environment: BFA-Fairfax will foster development of teacher and student leaders who provide innovative opportunities for local and global student-centered learning.
- 3) Flexible Learning Environments: BFA Fairfax will maximize flexible learning environments by redefining the school day, promoting learning experiences that extend

beyond the school classroom, and fostering creativity, innovation, and differentiated learning opportunities for all.

- 4) Engaged Staff Partners: BFA-Fairfax staff and students will collaborate, innovate, create and conceptualize ideas and learning with local, state, and global partners to make a difference in their community, state, and world.
- 5) To work closely with the School Board if there's a need to renovate or rebuild schools to ensure students can easily walk or bicycle to and from, or when building new schools, ensure that they are located in areas that are easily accessible by walking and bicycling.
- 6) To pursue joint-use agreements for community use of school facilities for physical activity and recreation, and for using school sites for community gardens and, if needed, farmers' markets.

CHAPTER 7: FACILITIES, UTILITIES, AND SERVICES

OVERVIEW: GROWTH AND FUNDING

In the past few decades, Fairfax’s population has continued to grow. Housing statistics indicate that growth is not likely to abate in the near future. Fairfax’s population as a percentage of the County total continues to rise, asserting the Town’s position as a major area of potential growth in the region.

The potential for significant future growth is evidenced by the variety and quality of services and facilities available to residents, while still providing the charm of small town life in an enriching social and natural environment. By and large, Fairfax offers a greater level of services than do surrounding communities, including excellent schools (with school recreational facilities), municipal water distribution and wastewater treatment systems, an extensive community library, curbside trash, recycling, and household hazardous waste collection.

As the Town continues to experience growth pressures, especially in light of continued expansion of the Chittenden County commutershed, and major industrial job creation to the South, a need for additional or improved services and facilities will likely occur. Clear forethought and aggressive planning within limited monetary resources will be necessary to ensure that the rate of future growth in Fairfax does not exceed the ability of the community and the area to provide necessary facilities and services to maintain public safety, environmental integrity, and a high quality of life.



**Photo 11 - Housing Development in Fairfax,
by Skip Taylor**

Currently, the majority of services and facilities are funded through local property taxes, with additional revenue coming from water and sewer user fees and impact fees. The policy of depending largely upon property tax assessments to fund municipal services should be carefully examined, in light of the need for additional or improved services, including additional water supply and expansion to the wastewater treatment facility.

Fairfax is poised at a difficult crossroads. Successfully managing growth while adequately funding municipal services in need of improvement will require careful fiscal planning. Maintaining the town’s capital budget and program will allow the Town to plan for municipal improvements, leading to the most efficient use of tax revenues. Both the Capital Budget & Program and the Impact Fee Ordinance were reviewed, updated, and re-adopted in 2012.

Additionally, non-repayable funding sources (such as grant programs for facility and service improvements) should continue to be aggressively sought to minimize the need to raise taxes in the future.

TOWN GOVERNMENT

PERSONNEL

Selectboard

The Town of Fairfax is managed by a five member Selectboard elected during the March Town meeting and serving for three-year or two-year staggered terms. The primary responsibilities of the Selectboard are to provide for the general health and welfare of the community, to see to the maintenance of the roads, to draft the town budget, and to set a tax rate. The budget is presented at Town Meeting for approval by the voters. The Selectboard also appoints the members of Town commissions.



Photo 12 - Town Offices, by Skip Taylor

Town Clerk

The Town Clerk is elected for a three year term at the March Town Meeting. Duties of the office include maintenance of Town land records, overseeing elections, maintaining the voter check list and issuing licenses for which the town has authority.

Treasurer

The Treasurer is elected for a three year term at March Town Meeting. In Fairfax, the Treasurer handles the collection of taxes banking, and accounting for both the Town and the School District. The Town runs on a calendar year while the school runs on a fiscal year starting in July. Taxes are due on November 15th.

Listers

Listers are elected at March Town Meeting for three-year staggered terms. The Listers assess property and maintain the Grand List. The most recent assessment was completed in 2005. Property evaluations are at 94% (2008) of fair market value.

Board of Civil Authority

The sixteen members of the Board of Civil Authority validate the voter checklist before each election and assist in counting votes. In addition, the board hears appeals of property appraisals and must view each property in question. All five Selectboard members serve on the board. The remaining members are Justices of the Peace, who automatically serve as members of the Board of Civil Authority. The five members nominated by each political party are elected by the people. The Town Clerk serves as clerk of the board; in addition, the Town Clerk has the power to cast a vote in the event of a tied vote on the board.

Town Constable

The constable is elected annually at March Town Meeting. At this time the Town Constable is primarily responsible for traffic safety issues in conjunction with the County Sheriff's Department. If no one runs for the position the Selectboard will appoint a Constable.

Animal Control Officer

Deals predominately with issues concerning dog complaints in town.

Public Works Department

The Fairfax Public Works Department includes the Fairfax Road Crew, the Fairfax Water Department, and the Fairfax Sewer Department.

The full time road crew employed by the Town of Fairfax is made up of one foreman, and two crew members. The full-time crew is responsible for winter and summer maintenance of all Town roads. They also make any necessary repairs to the town water distribution lines. The Selectboard assumes the duties of road commissioners, instituting a regular maintenance program and continually evaluating pending projects. Part-time help is hired by the town as needed.

The Selectboard assumes the duties of Water and Sewer Commissioners. The Fairfax Utility Department(Water and Sewer) has employed a full-time supervisor since August 1996. In addition, there is one part-time office manager and two part-time Utility Department assistants. Several improvements to existing systems have been made. The Town continues to search for a secondary water source to augment the current system.

Health Officer

The Vermont Commissioner of Health appoints the Health Officer on the recommendation of the Selectboard. The Health Officer is responsible for protecting the Town against the cause, spread and development of disease.

Planning and Zoning Department

The Planning and Zoning Department consists of the Zoning Administrator and the Planning and Zoning Assistant. The Zoning Administrator is the enforcement officer for the Town's ordinances and Development Regulations and administers the development review process on behalf of the Town. Specifically, the Zoning Administrator issues zoning permits in accordance with the Town's Development Regulations. The Planning and Zoning Assistant assists the Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission, and the Development Review Board with meeting notices, meeting minutes, and issuing decisions in accordance with the Town's development review process.

Recreation Department

The Recreation Department consists of two part-time employees: a Recreation Director, who coordinates the activities and projects of the recreation committee, and a Grounds keeper. The Recreation Department is supported by a recreation advisory board comprised of town residents.

Legislative Representation

The Town of Fairfax is Vermont Legislative District Franklin-2. As a municipality of Franklin County, Fairfax participates in electing two representatives to the Vermont State Senate.

TOWN COMMISSIONS

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission consists of five members appointed by the Selectboard for four year staggered terms. Primarily, the commission is responsible for preparing the five year Town Plan and the Development Regulations. A full description of the Planning Commission's responsibilities is located in Chapter 1 of this Plan.

Development Review Board

The Development Review Board meets on a regular basis to rule on requests for development proposals, including conditional uses, subdivisions, right of ways, and site plans. In addition, the DRB hears requests for any variance from the Development Regulations and appeals of the decisions of the Zoning Administrator. It suggests changes to zoning regulations where advisable. The Board has five full time members and three alternates appointed by the Selectboard, for staggered four-year terms of service.

Cemetery Commission

The Cemetery Commission is in charge of maintaining several cemeteries in the town and is elected at March Town meeting each year.

Northwest Regional Planning Commission

The Northwest Regional Planning Commission is an organization formed by and serving the municipalities of Franklin and Grand Isle Counties. The Commission has been providing planning and development assistance to communities for over 25 years. All communities, including Fairfax, are entitled to equal voting representation by two locally appointed members of the governing Board of Commissioners. As a member of the Commission, the Town typically receives assistance with planning and zoning issues including mapping, plan and bylaw revisions, and grant applications, with special projects such as the Safe Routes to School program, and with emergency and transportation planning. In addition, the Town is able to participate in regional planning programs, such as hazard mitigation planning and emergency planning/exercises, the development of a regional plan, Act 250 project review for conformance with the regional plan, and other issues of a regional scale.

DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS AND TOWN ORDINANCES

DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

Fairfax first adopted a zoning bylaw in the late 1960's. After a state planning law amendment, the bylaw was rewritten in 1980.nd The current Fairfax Development Regulations, which incorporate and supersede the previous Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations, were approved by the Selectboard on February 14, 2011 and amended on August 15, 2011. Copies of the Development Regulations are available in the Town Office.

Pursuant to 24 V.S.A. 4411 a municipality may regulate land development in conformance with its adopted municipal plan and for the purposes set forth in Section 4302 of the same title to govern the use of land and the placement, spacing, and size of structures and other factors specified in the bylaws related to public health, safety, or welfare. Development Regulations may permit, prohibit, restrict, regulate and determine land development including the following:

1. *specific uses of land and shoreland facilities;*
2. *dimensions, location, erection, construction, repair, maintenance, alteration, razing, removal, and use of structures;*
3. *areas and dimensions of land to be occupied by uses and structures, as well as areas, courts, yards, and other open spaces and distances to be left unoccupied by uses and structures;*
4. *timing and sequence of growth, density of population, and intensity of use.*

The following are examples of Town ordinances and are not a complete list:

Sewage Allocation and Connection Ordinance

A village sewer use ordinance is in effect, which provides rules for the control and regulation of the use of, and connection to, the public sewer system. Copies of the ordinance are available for review at the Town Office.

Water Use Ordinance

A Village water use ordinance is in effect, which provides rules for the control and regulation of the use of, and connection to, the public water system. A copy of this ordinance is open for review at the Town Office.

Dog Ordinance

An ordinance addressing the rights and responsibilities of dog owners is available in the town office for review.

Solid Waste Management

A Solid Waste Implementation Plan (SWIP) has been approved by the state and adopted by the Town in 2007. Fairfax's Solid Waste Implementation Plan prescribes a program of education, collection, recycling, processing and disposal for wastes generated in the Town. Goals of the Plan include 100% participation in municipal recycling, and in-state disposal of Fairfax's solid waste. Complete copies of these regulations are available for review in the town office.

Highway Ordinance

Fairfax first adopted a highway ordinance in 1972. It has been amended many times, most recently in 2011 to consolidate three previous documents [Town Road and Bridge Standards; Town of Fairfax Highway Ordinance; Town of Fairfax Statement of Procedures and Standards Regarding Town Highways] to better address and regulate the construction of new roads and driveways throughout the town. Copies of the Town of Fairfax Statement of Procedures and Standards Regarding Town Highways are available for review in the Town Office.

Regulation of Open Fires and Incineration

To protect public health and safety and to promote the responsible use of resources and protection of the environment.

Flood Hazard Regulation Ordinance

For areas of special floods hazards in the Town of Fairfax

Emergency Operations Plan

The Fairfax Emergency Operations Plan was approved April 19, 2010 and last updated on May 18, 2012. It identifies the emergency responsibilities of all appropriate municipal officials and officers; identifies local shelters and emergency operation centers; and outlines necessary communication and command protocols. Copies of the emergency operations plan are available for review at the Town Office. Rapid Response Plans are a short form of the Emergency Operation Plan. The most current Rapid Response Plan for the Town of Fairfax was last adopted in June of 2007.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND MUNICIPAL PROPERTIES

TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

The Town Clerk's Office is currently on the first floor of the former principal's house owned by the Fairfax School District. The office houses working space for the Town Clerk, Town Treasurer, the Listers, the Zoning Administrator, and the water and sewer departments. It also serves as a meeting place for the Selectboard, Planning Commission and Development Review Board, and is handicapped accessible. The Town Clerk's Office is normally open Monday-Friday, 9AM to 4PM.

On November 6, 2012 the voters of the Town of Fairfax approved an Article to allow for the acquisition of property and the design and construction of a new Town Office building. The property is at the northern corner of Buck Hollow Road and Route 104, to the right of Nan's. The Committee of volunteers appointed by the Selectboard to work on the New Town Office project is now focused on the implementation phases of this project. In addition to the land acquisition and design work that is underway in the winter and spring of 2013, the committee

Table 7.2. Town of Fairfax: Municipal Properties

Location	Type	Acres
Wheezy Way	Land & well	4.00
Route 104	Land - Historic	0.2
² *Maple Street	Land, Recreation	23.5
Fletcher Rd	Land & water system	55.5
Route 104	Land	7.2
Route 104	Land	98.0
Hunt St	Pollution control plant	7.1
Hunt St	Pollution control	6.7
Goodall St	Fire Station	1.6
Beeman Rd	Road	0.9
Broadstreet Rd	First settlers cellar	0.1
Anderson Rd	Old Route 104	7.1
Total Acres		211.8

² (* owned jointly with the school)

members are arranging for the most favorable financing available and researching whether there are any public or private grants available to offset some of the cost. It is worth noting that changes to the Capital Budget and Impact Fee Ordinance, adopted in 2012, provide some funding for the new Town Office. This is money that does not come out of property taxes, but rather is paid by developers of new homes in Fairfax.

Once the design is complete the Selectboard plans to put the construction phase out to bid, with expected completion in 2014. This new facility will enable Town officers and employees to provide even better service to the growing population of Fairfax for many years to come.

TOWN PROPERTY

The Town is currently listed as the owner or part-owner of several pieces of property in town. These are listed in Table 7.2.

FEDERAL POST OFFICE

The post office is located in the Fairfax Commons. There are approximately 378 lock boxes that can be rented at the post office building. Rural route carriers serve approximately 150 miles of postal routes for Fairfax residents. These routes also serve parts of East Georgia, Westford, Fletcher and Fairfield. The post offices in Cambridge and Fairfield also service small parts of Fairfax.

THE FAIRFAX COMMUNITY LIBRARY

A combined school and public library, the Fairfax Community Library is located in the BFA-Fairfax school complex. One of only a few combined school and community libraries in the State, it is the only one to serve a K-12 school. The Library is overseen by an elected Board of Trustees as well as a Working Committee made up of trustees, school representatives, and the school administration. It is funded by both Town and School budgets. The combined nature of the Library allows it to offer more hours and a larger collection than would otherwise be possible.

Our Fairfax Community Library is a valuable and unique resource that provides a wide variety of services:

- Books, e-books, downloadable audiobooks, large-print books, home delivery
- Magazines and journals, DVDs, and videos
- Online subscription-only databases
- Public-access computers, printers and photocopy machines
- Free WiFi
- Adult education classes through Universal Class and programs for all ages.

The Library's staff collaborates with other organizations in town and seek grants from outside the community in order to provide these diverse services. The Library is open to the public during school hours and additional hours after school, evenings, and Saturdays, for a total of 54.25 hours per week. During the summer the Library is open 6 days a week, for a total of 48.5 hours. The Library enjoys constantly high usage.

RECREATION IN FAIRFAX

The outdoors provides an abundance of recreation opportunities for Fairfax residents. The Lamoille River, which flows through the southern portion of town, is used for fishing and canoeing, and the wooded areas and fields found throughout the town are used for hunting and walking, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing. There is also a large biking and running community as well as a variety of both team and individual sports program in which to participate.

RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The Parks and Recreation Department offers recreation and fitness programs for the community. The fitness programs include Yoga, Zumba, Boot Camp, Wellness classes, Couch to 5K, and stroller strolling. The classes meet one or two times a week and many have attendance of over 20 people per class.

Parks and Recreation annual events are expanding yearly. Currently, the Parks and Recreation Department sponsors or co-sponsors the following annual events:

- The Run To Chocolate, in February
- The Community Egg Hunt, in April
- The 511 Rescue Run, in May
- The Fairfax Fourth of July celebration, including parade
- Fairfax Community Day, in July
- The Ducky Race (currently in its 20th year)
- The Egg Run, in August
- The Fall Festival, with Halloween parade
- Haunted House
- Hunters' and Community Breakfast
- Annual Tree Lighting

The Department is also seeking to expand recreation opportunities to meet the needs of all the residents of the town. The Town owns nearly 100 acres near the St. Albans reservoir that it hopes to have ready for resident use for low-impact recreational activities such as hiking and skiing. The Recreation Department is currently pursuing grants and plans to implement the use of this area.

RECREATION FACILITIES

Fairfax Community Recreation Park

In the early 1990's, the Fairfax Recreation Path Steering Committee began to pursue the implementation and development of a community recreation park in Fairfax. In 1992 the Bellows Free Academy –Fairfax identified a need for athletic space due to school population growth and began looking for land. The Fairfax Recreation Path Committee raised \$7,000 for a path. In 1995, a recreation park was designated along the Lamoille River and in 2000, after extensive archeological studies, the development of the park began. This was to include a large multi-use playing field, a mowed recreational path, a ½-mile paved path, a picnic area, and restroom facilities. The mowed path was created in 2004, and in 2005 the park recreation path

was paved. In 2007, the large multi-use field was used for Varsity, JV, and Adult soccer games, and in 2009 the large lower field was put into use for Patriots Youth Football and Varsity and JV football teams.

In 2010, a softball field was built, the first field in Fairfax designed specifically for softball, meeting a much needed goal of Fairfax youth. The Little League of Fairfax, Fletcher, and Westford use the field for practices and games as well as the Middle School softball team. The year 2010 saw the creation of three regulation-sized horseshoe pits. In 2011, we built an additional Little League field and women's soccer, and Ultimate Frisbee began to use the main multipurpose field for their practices. The athletic fields have also been used for youth soccer, Fairfax Community Day, men's adult soccer, and BFA-Fairfax soccer games. The park is used for picnics, fundraisers, Success By Six stroller strolling, and many other events. In the summers of 2012 and 2013, a restroom facility and pavilion, with concession area, will be built in the Fairfax Recreation Park.

The 100-Acre Woods

In the late 1960's the Catholic Diocese gave the Town two parcels of land in North Fairfax totaling 100 acres. The Diocese intended that Fairfax should use this land for recreation. The land is heavily wooded with a network of trails. For many years the land remained unused, except for occasional trail riding by members of the adjacent Riding Stable, and briefly as a sugar woods by a maple sugar farmer. About five years ago the Town decided to have the land selectively logged and to have dangerous fallen and leaning trees removed. This took two years and was followed by an additional year to let the logging damage heal. Then a neighboring Town asked if it could log its adjacent parcel and remove the timber through the 100 acre woods. Permission to do so was granted. While this logging was taking place the Fairfax Recreation Department was beginning to formulate a plan to open this fabulous resource to the residents of Fairfax. To this end the Recreation Department contacted Nancy Patch, Franklin County Forester, who assisted in the development of a Forest Management Plan for the 100 acre woods. This plan lays out how the forest will be cared for and used. Work still remains before the forest is officially open to all, but progress is being made. During the summer of 2013 it is planned that both the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps and the Project SOAR Watershed Project will assist in the development of a trail system within the 100 acre woods.

Recreational Facilities in Collaboration with BFA Fairfax

Traditionally Bellows Free Academy has served as the social, recreational, and educational center of the community. The single complex houses grades K-12, as well as the Community Library. The school has made classrooms, meeting rooms, gyms, and kitchens available for the general public when available. In 2007, Bellows Free Academy implemented a security system and updated their room-use policy. The school board and the recreation committee have worked together to continue to provide public access to the building. This access is generally available each evening when school is in session, but at times can be limited. Athletic fields and tennis courts are in continual use by the school. Available space at the school is so completely utilized that there is not available time for intramural programs for the middle or high school, and no programs for elementary students. This continual use of the school building and athletic fields demonstrates the value of the school to the entire community but at an increase in maintenance costs beyond those of a normal educational facility. In addition, population growth within the

school may encroach on existing recreational space. A community group has been meeting since January of 2008 to work on the need for a community center to address the recreation department's needs, as well as the needs of other community organizations (theatre, seniors, etc.).

COMMUNITY CENTER

In preparation for the 2008 Fairfax Town Plan, community meetings were held at which citizens were asked to identify topics of interest. One topic that emerged from these discussions was the need for a Community Center. A committee of volunteers was formed to consider how to address this identified need. The Committee, known as Citizens for Fairfax Community (CFC), has been working for 5 years and has accomplished a great deal, but much still needs to be done before a Fairfax Community Center becomes a reality.

Among the work done by the Committee:

- organized as non-profit organization,
- identified groups interested in having a community center,
- met with various state officials to discuss grants and other possible sources of funding,
- surveyed possible sites suitable for a community center,
- zeroed in on the Baptist Building on Main Street,
- developed cost estimates for renovation of the Baptist Building,
- held several fund raising events designed to raise community awareness.
- held monthly and annual meetings to communicate progress and continue work

While CFC is a private non-profit today, partnership with the Fairfax Parks and Recreation Department should bring additional resources to bear on this important project.

Recreation Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goals

- 1) Maintain and enhance recreational and scenic resources for the enjoyment of all residents of Fairfax.
- 2) Increase the availability of fitness programs to the residents of Fairfax.
- 3) Continue to work toward the creation of a Fairfax community center.
- 4) Expand the use of the 100-acre woods.
- 5) Build a pavilion and restroom facility in the Fairfax Community Park.
- 6) Continue the annual recreation events.
- 7) Maintain and improve a recreation path system for non-motorized recreation use.

Policies

- 1) To provide recreational areas and facilities for the use and enjoyment of residents in convenient and suitable locations.
- 2) To conserve prime recreational resources from incompatible land uses.
- 3) To provide an open space system for the preservation, protection, and enhancement of major physical and environmental features, such as mountains, waterways and bodies, wildlife, and other natural resources for the townspeople of Fairfax, including students.
- 4) To incorporate shared-use trails to connect communities, schools, and other facilities, and to increase residents' options for physical activity.

- 5) To create and maintain recreational facilities and opportunities for all community users – with special attention to the needs of the handicapped, youth, elders, those with low incomes, and people from a variety of ethnic groups, who may be current users.



**Photo 13 - Fairfax Community Park and Bike Path Sign,
by Allison Stori**

SOLID WASTE

The Town currently has a contract with Casella Waste Management, which collects household solid waste through curbside pickup weekly. The solid waste is then trucked to the Coventry, Vermont landfill. Recyclable items are picked up once a week. There are two hazardous waste collection days a year at the Town Garage.

The Town left the Northwest Solid Waste District in 1993 in an effort to provide more local flexibility regarding solid waste management strategies. Since that time, the Town has operated under its own Solid Waste Plan. The Town's current Solid Waste Implementation Plan was approved by the Agency of Natural Resources in 2007 and adopted by the Town later that year. The Plan places an emphasis on cost-effective waste reduction and re-use through a program of public education, and through the provision of accessible recycling opportunities to the community.

PUBLIC FACILITIES & UTILITIES TOWN OF FAIRFAX

LEGEND

Facility Features	Transportation Features
Church	Interstate Highway
Fire Station	State Highway
Town Garage	Class 2 Town Highway
Historical Society	Class 3 Town Highway
Community Library	Class 4 Town Highway
Town Office	Private Road
School	Surface Water Features
Wastewater Treatment Plant	River, Stream or Brook
Town Well	Lake, Pond or River
Water System Building	Other Feature
	Town Boundary



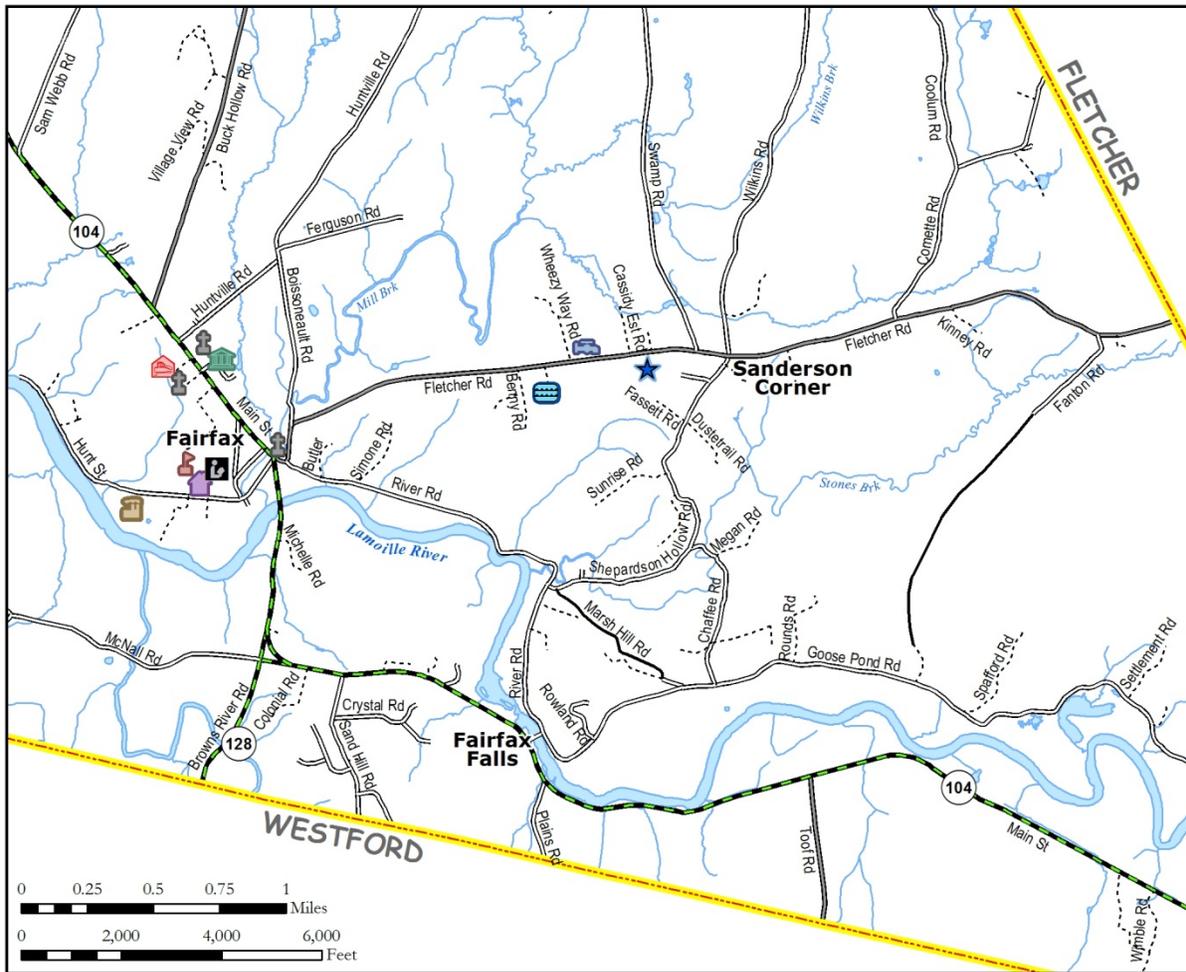
Vermont Coordinate System
Transverse Mercator, NAD 83.
For planning purposes only.

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June, 2013.



Data Source: All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

Location: z:/gis/projects/county/franklin/fairfax/townplan08/final/facilities&utilities



PUBLIC UTILITIES

FAIRFAX WATER DEPARTMENT

The Fairfax Water Department distributes water to the Village population through a system which was updated in 1999. The system was originally intended to serve only the school, but as time went on the system was expanded to include houses in the Village. The system currently serves approximately 289 connections, including the school. The total possible yield of the well is 60,000 gallons per day. In 2008, the estimated demand for water was 37,000 gallons per day, with another 23,000 gallons per day allocated to future development, which places the water system at capacity. The well has been at capacity since 2001. The well does not meet the water supply needs for the Town of Fairfax. An additional water source is needed to expand capacity and as a backup source of water in the case of contamination or other emergency.

The water source is a well located on the Wheezy Way Road, which produces 60 gallons per minute. The maximum daily capacity of water available from our source (well) is 60,000 gal/day – sixteen and a half hours of pumping per day. Water is pumped from the source on demand to two 176,000 gallon storage reservoirs, which are controlled by a computer and radio frequency communications, and then distributed to the Village by gravity flow. Two pump stations, located within the system, provide water to above gravity fed elevations. The system is chlorinated and controls levels of manganese in the water.

In 2002, the Town hired Green Mountain Engineering to explore locations for additional water supply wells. Green Mountain Engineering completed a hydrology study that located four potential sites, none of which were located on the preferred location – a 56 acre parcel by the water control building owned by the town. Before looking into Green Mountain Engineering’s recommended sites, the Selectboard pursued other options for determining water source potential on the town owned 56 acres, which were unsuccessful. The Selectboard also pursued one of Green Mountain Engineering’s recommended sites, which abuts the Town’s existing supply well and is assumed to be in the same aquifer. However, securing this well site has stalled due to its proximity to the existing well. If it is in the same aquifer, it would not serve well as a backup in the case of contamination. It is possible that the well could serve as additional capacity, but the well needs to be drilled and a pump test completed to determine if it would affect the current well’s existing capacity. The Town continues to investigate other sites. In the winter of 2012 the Selectboard chose a potential site for a back-up water supply. Presently, details are being discussed with the owner of the property and the Vermont Water Supply Division.

Current user fees are sufficient to maintain the existing water system; however, they are not adequate to fund an increase in capacity of the water system, which would require drilling and constructing infrastructure for an additional supply well.

The State of Vermont has delineated a Source Protection Area (SPA) around the Village’s drinking water supply well of just under 120 acres. SPA’s are defined by the Department of Environmental Conservation as "surface or subsurface areas from or through which contaminants are reasonably likely to reach a public water system source". Fairfax is required to have a Source Protection Area Plan that delineates the boundaries of the protection area, inventories the potential contaminants of concern to the area, assesses the susceptibility of the drinking water

source to contamination, a management plan for potential risks, and a contingency plan in case of an emergency. The plan was first adopted in November of 2001 and last updated in March of 2006. There were ten residences and one industry located within the Source Protection Area in 2008.

There are 33 fire hydrants in Fairfax which are for immediate response to fires and not for extended use due to capacity limitations. The Fire Department has a map of other water sources available in the case of a fire, including numerous fire ponds.

WASTEWATER TREATMENT

A village sewer system and treatment plant were installed in Fairfax in 1980. The present system is capable of discharging 78,000 gallons of treated waste per day. The system continues to discharge an average of 42,000 gallons of treated waste a day or 53% of capacity. The Town reserves ten percent of capacity for municipal use and an additional 17,828 gallons per day have been allocated to planned or recently approved development. This places the system at near capacity (as of early 2013) and able to serve only limited future wastewater management needs within the Village.

Significant improvements have been made to the system since August 1996. A new system was installed to deliver oxygen to the three sewage treatment lagoons. Previously, bacteria in the treatment lagoon were dying as a result of a lack of oxygen. This resulted in decreased efficiency in waste treatment, as well as an increase in odors from the plant. The new oxygen delivery system has improved the treatment efficiency (and therefore capacity) of the facility, and has alleviated the previous problem of excessive odor. In addition, two main pumps have been replaced since the system was built. The system is entirely paid for and the fees being charged are currently covering the yearly maintenance costs, however they are not sufficient to cover the needed expansion in treatment capacity.

The system is monitored by the State when monthly samples and reports are submitted. Sludge is cleared from the facility and spread every five to seven years according to sludge accumulation. The available spreading area is sufficient for the capacity of the plant for the next 75 years; however, if the system is expanded, sludge would need to be spread every two to three years and the area would only serve for the next 35 years. The Fairfax Wastewater Department is currently investigating innovations which would eliminate the need for the cleaning and subsequent spreading of sludge; however, it is the cheapest method. Sludge-eating bacteria are currently being used in other localities that eliminate the need for frequent cleaning of treatment lagoons. Alternative approaches such as this could significantly improve the efficiency of the current treatment system.

As noted above, the current system is not adequate to meet the needs of the future population of the village area and has been near capacity since 1999. Without improvements to the current system, the town will not achieve the desired density or see new economic development and services in the Village. The Selectboard recently commissioned a Wastewater Feasibility Study to look at doubling the discharge capacity and completing required upgrades to the existing Wastewater Treatment Plant. The final results of the Feasibility Study were presented in June of 2007, which reported a total estimated cost of 2.5 million. The Selectboard held a public

meeting in December of 2007 to present the results of the Feasibility Study and to discuss potential financing and action plans for securing additional sewer treatment capacity and additional drinking water supply; however, no decisions have been made as a result of the meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

Local telephone service for residents of Fairfax is provided by FairPoint. Several long-distance service providers are available. Cell phone service has improved in recent years, but dead areas still exist in some areas in town.

Internet service is available in town through a variety of means. Dial-up internet service is available throughout the town by several service providers, while DSL high-speed service has been extended throughout most of Fairfax. Satellite high-speed internet service is available throughout town, but requires good exposure for the satellite. While wireless broadband internet is available throughout town, the Town supports additional reliable broadband internet options such as fiber optic cable.

Cable television lines were installed in 2006, prior to which satellite was the only option for picking up more than basic local television channels. Television service (more than basic local channels) is provided through Comcast, Dish Network, and DirecTV. In addition, Lake Champlain Access Television (LCATV) provides coverage of Town Selectboard meetings.

Local newspaper media coverage is supplied through *The Buyer's Digest* and the local monthly *Fairfax News*. Local news and information is also available at www.franklinone.com, www.vtgrandpa.com, and www.fairfaxvt.com. Regional newspaper coverage, including Fairfax, is provided in the *St. Albans Messenger*, which is published daily.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fairfax has a combination career/paid-per-call department consisting of one full-time Lieutenant and an average of 30 volunteers. The department operates out of one station located on Goodall St. providing services to the citizens of Fairfax as well as contract fire protection to the Town of Fletcher. The Department is also entered into a formal mutual-aid contract with Franklin County, where we both give and receive aid to/from neighboring communities per request.

The current fire station was built in 1990 and supports the administrative and apparatus-housing needs of the department in its current state. The station includes: 4 apparatus bays, 2 administrative offices, a training room, full kitchen, and sleeping quarters.

The Fairfax Fire Department responds to an average of 150 calls per year, ranging from auto crashes, carbon monoxide alarms, hazardous materials, hazardous conditions, automatic fire alarms, public event standbys, and fires of all types. Since 2006 the department has seen an average of a 20% increase in call-volume each year with no apparent plateau in sight. The department meets every Tuesday evening to conduct station and fleet maintenance, business

meetings, and training to maintain continuing-education credits and annual certification requirements.

The term “Fire Department” has changed greatly over the years, transitioning its primary focus from fires only, to dealing with any issues deemed important enough for the requester to dial 911. As a direct result of this, the number of emergency responses has increased, as well as the State and Federal training requirements. This has a significant impact on the family lives of the firefighters, keeping in mind that all these functions and responses are outside of their normal 40+ hour work week. Oftentimes both parents are working and the children have several after-school or sports activities that parents attend or assist with. The Fairfax firefighters have less and less time available to commit to the fire department activities, yet demand for their time continues to increase. This rationale prompted the department to hire its first full-time employee in 2012.

The Town of Fairfax has an ISO rating of 6 within 1000 feet of a municipal fire hydrant, and a rating of 9 for all other areas outside the municipal system. Water supply for fire protection is provided by hydrants within the municipal water system and a combination of dry hydrants, ponds, and rivers throughout the rest of Town.

The current equipment inventory and capabilities of the fire department include:

Engine 1 – 2004; 1250-gal/min pump, 5-person cab set up for structural firefighting.

Engine 2 – 1995; 1250-gal/min pump, 2-person cab set up for auto accidents, water supply, and structural firefighting

Ladder 1 – 1982; 100-ft rear-mount aerial, 5-person cab set up for all nature of calls

Tanker 3 – 2010; 2000-gal tanker, 3-person cab set up for rural water supply delivery, and for urban/wild land interface.

Tanker 1 – 1995; 2000-gal tanker, 2-person cab set up for rural water supply delivery and set-up

Rescue 1 – Chevy 2500 (2006); 2-person cab with rescue body set up for daily use and used in support of a variety of calls

Rescue Trailer – Equipped with a 2005 Yamaha Grizzly 660 4-wheeler and rescue sled/wagon for all off-road and trail rescues, as well as serving needs for wildfires

Equipment is replaced based on a formal equipment replacement plan which includes detailed specifications and dates that factor service and technological lives of the apparatus. Ladder 1 and Tanker 1 are both scheduled to be replaced by 2015.

FAIRFAX RESCUE

Ambulance and emergency rescue service in town is currently provided by Fairfax EMS Inc. (dba Fairfax Rescue), a 503(c)3 charitable corporation. Fairfax EMS Inc. is licensed by the State of Vermont to provide emergency medical care and transport at the Advanced Life Support level. Fairfax Rescue serves as primary provider for the towns of Fairfax, Fletcher, and northern Westford, Vermont. It also provides backup service to southern Westford, Milton, Georgia, St. Albans, Fairfield, Cambridge, and Essex. Fairfax Rescue is staffed by 34 members, mostly volunteer, from Fairfax and surrounding communities.

Currently Fairfax Rescue operates a 2009 ambulance as well as a 1999 ambulance. It is funded primarily through billing for ambulance service. Additional funding is through the use of a subscription plan, fundraising, donations, and from the voters of Fairfax, Fletcher, and Westford. Request for ambulance service has risen steadily by about 3 to 5% per year over the past 5 years. It is expected that this trend will continue as more people move into the area, and as the population ages.

Fairfax Rescue members are required to complete 72 hours of in-service training during each 2-year training cycle. To accomplish this goal, the squad holds monthly training. Crews are encouraged to train on their shifts. Members also have the opportunity and are encouraged to train with other rescue services.

Fairfax Rescue has members that are certified as drivers (must be CPR certified), as ECAs (Emergency Care Attendant), as EMT-Bs (Emergency Medical Technician – Basic level), and EMT-I (Emergency Medical Technician – Intermediate level). Currently emergency medical services is restructuring at the National level which will require additional training to transition. The State of Vermont and Fairfax Rescue will be complying with the national standard as the training becomes available. All members are trained and certified in CPR and the use of a defibrillator.

Fairfax Rescue continues to have a difficult time recruiting and retaining sufficient volunteer members. To remedy this, it retains a few paid staff members to fill shifts that cannot be covered with volunteers. It also hired one full-time person who manages its business interests as well as covering as the daytime crew chief on the ambulance, and as training officer, assuring that all members have access to quality training to maintain their skills and certifications. There is an active quality assurance program, and response times, generally within 5 minutes of the time the first call is received, are one of their key indicators.

The Fairfax Rescue Squad has housed one ambulance at the Fire Department and rented off-site space for the second. In the spring of 2013 the squad moved into new quarters next door to the current fire station on Goodall Road.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law enforcement is primarily provided by the Franklin County Sheriff's Office through a contract with a deputy sheriff for 56 hours a week. During 2012 in Fairfax, the Sheriff's Office responded to complaints, made arrests, and issued traffic tickets.

In addition to coverage provided by the Sheriff's Office, the Vermont State Police provide law enforcement to Fairfax, although their presence has decreased in recent years due to budget cuts.

The Town Constable is primarily responsible for traffic safety issues in conjunction with the County Sheriff's Department.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

High quality medical services are within easy travel distances of Fairfax. The Northwest Medical Center, Medical Center Hospital of Vermont, and the Cambridge Medical Center are all located within 25 miles of Fairfax. A variety of medical and dental offices are located in neighboring towns. Nursing homes are available in St. Albans, Swanton, Richford, and Burlington. Family support services are available from Franklin-Grand Isle Mental Health and Social and Rehabilitative Services based in St. Albans. Two physicians, a pharmacy, a physical therapy office, and a residential care home are based in Fairfax. The school has a referral agreement and provides some preventative and rehabilitative counseling through Champlain Valley Drug and Alcohol. The Town supports additional services by contributing to the following: Franklin County Home Health Agency, Franklin-Grand Isle Mental Health Services, Inc., Franklin County Citizen Advocacy and Champlain Valley Agency on Aging. Meals on Wheels for Fairfax senior citizens is an all-volunteer service.

The quality of health and human services available now will continue to meet the needs of the Town well into the foreseeable future. The Fletcher-Allen Hospital is a teaching hospital and the largest hospital in the northern part of Vermont and New York. The standard of medical care available for Fairfax residents is thus the highest provided anywhere in the state. Mental health services are similarly situated.

CHILDCARE SERVICES

Childcare is a strong concern for existing and prospective families with young children, whether it means finding quality services or securing the costs of services. A 2005 Legislative Report from the Vermont Child Care Advisory Board reports that the average cost for center-based care in Vermont is \$140.92 for infants and \$125.71 for preschoolers per week. Statewide, more than 27 percent of low-earning families spend more than one fifth of their income on childcare. High quality, affordable childcare is a critical component to supporting a stable workforce.

Many child development experts believe that children often do not have the maturity and self-care skills to be left unsupervised until the age of 12. The 2010 U.S. Census indicates that there are 905 children under the age of 14 currently living in Fairfax. According to the Vermont Bright Future Childcare Information System, Fairfax currently has sixteen (16) registered childcare homes and five (5) licensed centers, with approximately 29 vacancies as of mid 2008. The total capacity of these facilities is not currently known; however, infant capacity is limited.

The population of children under the age of 14 in Fairfax has slightly increased from 2000 to 2010. However, of the 21 childcare options in Fairfax, spots are filled with children from adjacent municipalities as well as children from Fairfax. In addition, Fairfax children fill spots in adjacent communities, St. Albans, and Chittenden County locations. Further, data on other childcare options, such as grandparents, siblings, stay at home parents, un-registered childcare homes or other opportunities, and the quality and affordability of existing services is not available. Given these data limitations, it is difficult to assess the availability and quality of childcare in the community.

It is also important to note that the childcare industry can contribute to the local economy by creating jobs and supporting a stable workforce. The accessibility, affordability, and quality of childcare may affect a parent's ability to enter and remain in the workforce and to be a productive employee.

FACILITIES, UTILITIES, AND SERVICES GOALS AND POLICIES

Goals

- 1) Provide and plan for efficient and adequate municipal facilities and services, including a community library, recreation opportunities, sewer and water infrastructure, solid waste management, and public safety and emergency response.
- 2) Support access to a variety of community services, including communications, health, and human services.
- 3) Implement procedures that make community health a priority.
- 4) Consider community health when making decisions and setting policy.

Policies

- 1) To balance growth with the Town's ability to provide expanded services and facilities.
- 2) To provide a broad range of quality community programs and services through the combined school/community library.
- 3) To maintain and enhance recreational and scenic resources for the enjoyment of all residents in Fairfax.
- 4) To provide a variety of efficient, environmentally sound, and cost effective long term solid waste options.
- 5) To provide an efficient human waste treatment system within the Wastewater District.
- 6) To provide a safe, reliable source of municipal drinking water within the Water District.
- 7) Provide for the efficient and reliable delivery of sufficient water supplies for fire protection in Fairfax Village.
- 8) To assess when improvements or expansions to the municipal water supply and wastewater treatment plant will be needed and how to finance them.
- 9) To assess fair user fees to fund the municipal water supply and wastewater treatment plant.
- 10) To provide for the physical safety of Fairfax residents through quality fire, emergency response, and law enforcement services.
- 11) To encourage opportunities to provide convenient access to health and human services for Fairfax residents.
- 12) To promote opportunities for increased communications infrastructure, such as broad band internet access, cell phone service, DSL, etc.
- 13) To commit to fostering the health and well-being of all residents.
- 14) To encourage patterns of land use, population density, transportation strategies and street design to promote walking, biking, and public transportation.
- 15) To share information about Health and Wellness programs available in our region.
- 16) To model best practices related to promoting healthy communities to all municipal facilities and events (such as providing nutritious foods).

CHAPTER 8: THE LOCAL ECONOMY

THE ECONOMY

The economy in Fairfax is supported by the businesses and services in the historic village area and mixed use district south of the Lamoille River and the rural economy in the remainder of the Town. The rural economy largely consists of agricultural operations, agriculture-related businesses, and home based businesses. It is important to plan for and enable business and industry that will contribute to and maintain both the traditional village character and rural, agricultural setting.



Photo 14 - Foothills Bakery in Fairfax Village, by Henry Raymond

The Village has a number of retail businesses serving the basic needs of villagers and the surrounding countryside. Future commercial development will likely be in the service sector and in retail businesses, and should continue to be located in the growth center and mixed use district as identified in the Fairfax Development Regulations.



Photo 15 - Marvin's Garden's Farm Stand, by Henry Raymond

Although employment in agriculture is slowly declining with mechanization, the consolidation of small family farms into larger units, and the loss of farm land to development, strength and stability of the agricultural economic base should be promoted. Agribusiness and other support and co-operative services should be encouraged to locate in Town. Home occupations and other small

industries and businesses should also be encouraged as part of the rural economy to encourage local employment opportunities and a diverse economic base.

EMPLOYMENT

Due to the Town’s close proximity to the employment centers in Chittenden County and St. Albans, Fairfax is primarily a bedroom community. Few employment opportunities exist within the Town. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the majority (82%) of employed persons living in Fairfax commuted to work, while 4% worked at home. The proportion of employed persons that work in Fairfax has likely stayed the same or decreased since 2010, as no new industries have located in Fairfax. Turnkey commercial sites are available in three neighboring towns, therefore the likelihood of a major employer locating in Fairfax is limited. Fairfax will likely continue to experience residential and perhaps small-scale commercial growth (without a significant increase in the property tax base) in response to a major employer locating or expanding in an adjacent community.

BUSINESSES IN FAIRFAX

According to the Vermont Department of Labor, there were 79 commercial establishments in Fairfax in 2011, increasing by close to 3% since 1996. The largest industry in Fairfax is construction, with retail trade, manufacturing, and other services also having higher percentages (Table 8.1).

Table 8.1 Industries by Type in Fairfax (2006 and 2011)				
	Number of Establishments		Percent Change from 2006	Absolute Change 1996-2006
	2006	2011		
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	3	4	33.3	1
Construction	20	14	-30	-6
Manufacturing	8	8	0	0
Wholesale Trade	4	6	50	2
Retail Trade	9	9	0	0
Transportation and Warehousing	5	2	-60	-3
Financial Activities	3	5	66.7	2
Professional and Business Services	3	11	266.7	8
Educational and Health Services	5	6	20	1
Leisure and Hospitality	4	3	-25	-1
Other Services (maintenance, housekeeping, etc.)	8	7	-12.5	-1
Government	5	4	-20	-1
Total	77	79		2
Vermont Department of Labor, 2011				

There are four convenience/country stores in addition to various businesses including, but not limited to a pharmacy, a hardware store, and several hair salons. There are also two restaurants and a bakery.



Photo 16 - Steeple Market, by Henry Raymond

CHALLENGES RELATED TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Town is faced with many challenges to local economic development. By working on these challenges, including adequate sewer and water infrastructure, ensuring adequate parking, pedestrian accessibility, and calming traffic, the Town will encourage the continued development of a healthy economy in the Village area. These challenges are discussed in other areas of the plan, but are briefly introduced here as they relate to economic development.

Sewer and Water Infrastructure. Additional sewer and water capacity would encourage new businesses to locate in the Growth Center, and help to realize the goal of a compact village center surrounded by rural countryside. Until the Town addresses this ongoing problem, the village will not realize significant economic development.

Parking. Adequate parking is important to attract people to stop in Fairfax and patronize businesses. Supplying enough parking spaces is a common problem in village centers and downtown areas because the compact settlement pattern does not provide enough space for off-street parking. In such compact commercial areas, it makes sense to encourage common parking

lots and on-street parking. Currently, no research exists on whether parking is adequate in the Growth Center and Mixed Use District. In the future, it may be necessary to conduct a study on parking opportunities.

Sidewalks. A safe pedestrian environment in the Village will contribute to its economic vitality. Continued effort to maintain and improve sidewalks in the Village area and along Route 104 in the mixed use district will encourage people to walk the village streets and patron local businesses. Specific attention should be paid to providing safe pedestrian links from the Mixed Use District to the Growth Center. Further discussion on sidewalks is located in Chapter 10 under Pedestrian and Bicycle Travel.

Traffic. Heavy traffic is an issue along Route 104 through the Growth Center and the Mixed Use District. To improve access and circulation to local businesses, the Town should implement the recommendations of the Route 104/104A Corridor Study (2005) and the Route 104/128 Intersection Study (2007). These studies are discussed in Chapter 10 under Route 104.

LOCAL ECONOMY GOALS AND POLICIES

Goals

- 1) Promote a balanced, diverse economic base, with a focus on locally owned enterprises.
- 2) Encourage a vibrant local food economy with access to healthy foods.

Policies

- 1) To support agriculture and forestry related businesses, and protect productive agricultural and forestry lands from conversion to incompatible land uses.
- 2) To encourage a mixture of commercial uses including retail, personal and professional services, and restaurants in the Growth Center and Mixed Use districts.
- 3) Support the maintenance of and/or upgrade to reliable services that attract commercial development, such as broadband internet, cell phone service, and municipal water supply and wastewater treatment. Promote opportunities to produce, process and distribute locally grown food products and forest resources
- 4) Support and encourage low-impact, home-based businesses.
- 5) To increase availability and access to groceries, farmers' markets, and community gardens to expand healthy eating options.
- 6) To collaborate with interested parties to complete a community food audit to identify existing access and future opportunities to increase access to healthy foods.
- 7) To allow and encourage infrastructure and businesses that are necessary for thriving farm businesses such as machinery supply and repair shops, saw mills, bed and breakfasts, and other businesses that can help farm families improve profitability.

CHAPTER 9: HOUSING

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Fairfax is primarily a bedroom community for residents who work in the Burlington and St. Albans areas. This is due to its accessibility from Routes 104 and I-89, as well as the shortage and cost of housing closer to these employment centers. Undoubtedly, the aesthetic attractiveness of the town also contributes to this trend.

The 2012 Grand List reflects 1,353 parcels in residential use, up from the 1997 Grand List which showed 980 residential parcels in Fairfax. The majority (66%) are single family homes on less than 6 acres of land. These “R-1” properties represent just over half of the total municipal listed value on the 2007 Grand List. Residential properties account for the overwhelming majority of the Town’s tax base at 83%, up slightly from 81% in 1997. R-2, or multi-family residential properties, have also increased as a percentage of the total listed value. Commercial rental properties comprise less than 1% of the total Grand List. Similarly, vacation and seasonal housing also contributes less than 1% of the total Grand List. (A summary of this data can be viewed in Table 3.5 in Chapter 3).

Overall, housing in Fairfax is in sound condition. There are some very beautiful old homes in Fairfax, which the town historical society has recognized as having significance, and are listed in the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, Historic Sites and Structures Survey. Nearly 24% of all housing units in Fairfax were built before 1939. An additional 39.5% were constructed during the Town’s biggest growth period, between 1970 and 1989.

According to 2010 Census figures, there are 1,591 housing units in Fairfax that are occupied throughout the year, up from 1222 in 2000. This averages to 2.7 persons per dwelling, compared to 2.6 for Franklin County. On average, 29 new single family houses were built per year from 2001 to 2011 and 13 multi-family homes during the same period (see Table 3.4 in Chapter 3).

Bakersfield	\$155,286
Berkshire	\$136,500
Enosburg	\$157,356
Fairfax	\$234,900
Fairfield	\$132,556
Fletcher (2007)	\$200,250
Franklin	\$158,455
Georgia	\$237,717
Highgate	\$160,048
Montgomery	\$106,800
Richford	\$93,000
St. Albans City	\$165,950
St. Albans Town	\$205,675
Sheldon	\$211,500
Swanton	\$169,550
Source: VT Housing Data, 2011	

According to Vermont Housing Data, which is based on property transfer taxes, the median sale price for primary single family dwellings in 2011 was the second highest in the County at \$234,900. Georgia was the only town in the County with a higher median sale price at \$237,717 during the same period (Table 9.1). The median sale price in Franklin County for primary single family homes was \$182,500. While significantly higher than the County median, the Town saw a steady increase through 2004, a jump in sale prices through 2006, and then a leveling off of sale prices during 2007-2011, which reflects the downturn of the housing market nationally.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Safe, adequate housing is inarguably one of our most basic needs. It is an important planning consideration to ensure that being able to afford adequate housing is not the luxury of a select few. Instead, a variety of housing types (in equally varying price ranges) needs to be aggressively promoted to foster a diverse community, which is not economically exclusive. Housing which is affordable for first-time buyers, senior citizens (often on fixed incomes), and for lower income residents is especially important in this regard.

To define affordable housing, the state has determined that households with equal to or less than 80% of the median household income (or median metropolitan statistical area (MSA) income, if it applies) can afford to pay no more than 30% of their income on housing. This definition is used as an indicator for the availability of affordable housing in a community. Homeownership housing costs include not only the mortgage, but taxes and insurance, as well. In the case of rental units, the cost is defined as rent plus utilities. All of Franklin and Grand Isle County have recently been added to the Burlington-South Burlington MSA. The 2010 U.S. Census determined the median family income in the Town of Fairfax to be \$77,159 vs. \$73,950 in the Burlington-South Burlington MSA as a whole. Low income households are those in which income is less than 80% of the median.

Income	# Households
Less than \$35,000	242
35,000 to \$99,999	899
\$100,00+	380
Source: US Census, 2010	

Using the state definition of affordable housing outlined above, Tables 9.3 and 9.4 illustrate the income available for homeownership or for rent each month for the median income and 80% of the median income, median sale price for year-round primary dwellings or median gross rent, and the difference between the two, known as the “affordability gap.” The maximum affordable mortgage for the median household income is \$1,849 more than the median price of homes sold in Fairfax during 2011, however the gap for low income households is considerably larger. Rental housing in Fairfax appears to be more affordable for median and low incomes. However, the number of available rental units is extremely limited.

Table 9.3 Affordability Gap for Homeownership Costs in Fairfax								
Income		30% of Income/ Per Month	Taxes & Insurance	Income Available for Housing per Month	5% Down Payment	Maximum Affordable Mortgage	Median Sale Price Primary Residences (2011)	Owner Affordability Gap
Median Fairfax HH Income	\$70,348	\$1,759	\$272	\$1,487	\$12,460	\$236,749	\$234,900	\$1,849
Low HH (80%)	\$56,278	\$1,407	\$272	\$1,135	\$9,512	\$199,759	\$234,900	-\$35,141

Data Source: Median Household Income (2010 U.S. Census); 2012 median family adjusted gross income (VT Department of Taxes); 2011 median home sale price (Vermont Housing Data); taxes and insurance (NRPC estimate); all other figures computed by NRPC.

Table 9.4 Affordability Gap for Rental Costs in Fairfax			
	Income Available for Housing per Month	Median Gross Rent (2010)	Rental Affordability Gap
Median HH Income	\$1,759	\$1091	\$658
Low HH (80%)	\$1,407	\$1091	\$316

Data Source: U.S. Census 2010, NRPC calculations

Rental housing in Fairfax is at a premium. The low vacancy rate for rental properties has a tendency to drive up rental costs, making housing less affordable. Median gross rent for a two bedroom unit between 2005-2009 in Fairfax was \$1091 per month, considerably higher than the \$790 figure for Franklin County; up from \$655 and \$539 in 2000, respectively. Vermont Statute defines "affordable housing development" as a housing development of



Photo 17 - Workman Senior Housing Project, by Henry Raymond

which at least 20 percent of the units, or a minimum of five units, whichever is greater, are affordable housing units. It also states that affordable units shall be subject to covenants or

restrictions that preserve their affordability for a minimum of 15 years or longer as provided in municipal bylaws.

There is currently one development of subsidized low income housing in Fairfax for families, the Lost Tree Condominium Development on Route 104 across from Minor’s Store, which includes 32 2-bedroom condominium units. Some units are managed by Champlain Housing and are available to “very-low” income families making less than 60% of the median income. There are two senior housing complexes, the first with 20 housing units and the second with 47 units.

The Town recognizes that there is a need for senior housing for the growing senior population and affordable housing for low and moderate income households. When possible to develop senior and affordable housing, it should be located conveniently near community services and the Village area to make it easier for residents to access needed services without a vehicle. Construction of new housing in existing centers is inherently more affordable; most particularly, where municipal services, such as municipal water and sewer, are provided. Proximity to services, smaller lot sizes, and less costly road construction help keep construction and maintenance costs at a minimum. These savings can then be passed on to the buyer or renter. Utilizing small, in-town lots for infill development, and rehabilitating existing structures can also help create housing which is “naturally” more affordable. Currently, municipal sewer and water infrastructure in the North Village area of Fairfax is near capacity. The potential for future growth in this area - at higher densities than in other parts of town – will be dependent on the availability of infrastructure. Integrated planning for both public service improvements and affordable housing is of paramount importance for Fairfax’s immediate future.

HOUSING GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal

- 1) Guide the Town in achieving well managed residential growth that includes a diversity of housing opportunities.

Policies

- 1) To encourage the development of a variety of safe, affordable housing options that range in cost, size, and type.
- 2) To encourage the preservation and rehabilitation of Fairfax’s existing affordable housing.
- 3) To encourage infill development of small, existing lots.
- 4) To encourage future residential development within the growth center.
- 5) To encourage the development of housing that is energy efficient to reduce heating and electricity costs.
- 6) To provide a range of housing types and affordable housing units that are within walking distance to schools, safe areas for physical activity, and local businesses via safe walking and biking routes and public transportation.

CHAPTER 10: TRANSPORTATION

EXISTING ROAD NETWORK

Fairfax has a total of 84 miles of paved, gravel, and dirt roads and highways (excluding Class 4 and private roads) Figure 10.1. All roads having more than one dwelling have been measured, renamed, and marked in conjunction with the state-wide E911 emergency system, and 24 VSA, Chapter 61.

Map 3, the Transportation Map, shows the roads in Fairfax and their classification along with streams, which are important for locating culverts.

The Town currently participates in the Road Surface Management System (RSMS); a program to inventory, evaluate and monitor road surfaces and road infrastructure such as culverts and signs.

Roads are classified according to their use and ability to carry traffic. The State has identified several roadways in Fairfax which are regionally important for their role as principal corridors for the flow of traffic around Franklin and Grand Isle Counties. These functional classifications are shown in Figure 10.2.

Figure 10.1
Fairfax Road Inventory by Class

TOWN HIGHWAYS

Class 1 - 0.00 miles
Class 2 - 11.32 miles
Class 3 - 50.12 miles
Class 4 - 5.10 miles

Total Town Highways - 66.54 miles

FEDERAL AND STATE HIGHWAYS

I-89 - 1.24 miles
VT 104 - 14.19 miles
VT 104A - 1.67 miles
VT 128 - 0.79 miles

Total State Highways - 17.4 miles

Figure 10.2. VAOT Functional Classifications for Significant Travel Corridors

<u>Road</u>	<u>Regional Management Objective</u>
Highbridge Rd (VT104A to Cambridge townline)	Minor arterial for general east-west traffic
VT 104 (From VT104A to St. Albans townline)	Major collector for general north-south traffic
Fletcher Rd	Major collector
Brown's River Rd (VT 128)	Major collector
Buck Hollow Rd	Minor collector
Toof Rd	Minor collector

In addition to the functional classifications listed in Figure 10.2, the State's classification system separates Town Highways into four categories:

- **Class 1:** Form extensions of State Highways and are numbered as such.
- **Class 2:** Form connections from town to town, and/or carry a more significant volume of traffic than other roads in town.
- **Class 3:** All other traveled roads receiving State Aid funds.

- **Class 4:** All other Town roads.

Note: Class 4 roads do not receive any state aid, and do not have to be maintained by the town except for culverts and bridges.

Many of the local roads provide scenic views, but there are no locally or state designated scenic roads in the Town.

The Fairfax Selectboard has established the Town of Fairfax Statement of Procedures and Standards Regarding Town Highways, dated July 18, 2011. The purpose of this document is to protect the Town from undue financial burdens associated with maintaining existing roads and new construction of development roads. These documents provide several additional benefits:

- Standardized road evaluation in regards to widths, surface type, safety and use;
- Ensure that any private roads are constructed reasonably to provide for adequate emergency responder access, and future pedestrian amenities; and
- Avoid future issues currently identified on existing streets ('dead end' street issue for example)



Photo 18 - Fairfax Road Crew at Work, by Henry Raymond

It is recommended that the Town keep its road ordinance and policies in effect as a means of dealing with these issues.

ROAD AND BRIDGE MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

The transportation network serving local traffic is adequate. The winter “clear road” policy followed by the Selectboard has continually provided the safest roads possible. Constant communication between the Road Foreman and the school transportation director has assured the safest possible transportation of students to and from school.



Photo 19 - Improved River Road Bridge, by Henry Raymond

Local roads, bridges, and Town-owned culverts and storm drains are maintained on an as needed basis by the Fairfax Road Crew. The state provides aid for the maintenance of class 1, class 2, and class 3 highways from a general sum appropriated each year by the general assembly, which is disbursed quarterly. Six percent of the amount appropriated goes to the Class 1 highways and is distributed based upon mileage, except that an extra amount is provided for multi-lane highways, forty-four percent goes to Class 2 highways, fifty percent goes to Class 3 highways, and no funds are available for Class 4 highway mileage. Use of grant funds are solely for town highway construction, improvement, and maintenance purposes; or as the non-federal share of public transit assistance. Costs directly related to highways and bridges, such as maintenance employee fringe benefits, interest costs on loans or bonds, street lighting, etc. are considered to be eligible uses. Bicycle routes are another eligible use. Tax dollars and impact fees heavily supplement these funds to cover the full cost of road maintenance.

The Town will continue to benefit from an improved system for identifying, prioritizing, and estimating the cost of needed repairs and improvements. Funding has been available within the past few years through the Northwest Regional Planning Commission for towns to implement a Road Surface Management System (RSMS). Using RSMS helps efficiently accomplish the tasks identified above with minimal cost to the Town. Implementing such a system is helping greatly in capital budgeting for future road improvements. Funding should continue to be sought through the Regional Planning Commission for this important tool.

ROUTE 104

Heavy traffic, access management, and dangerous intersections have been issues along Route 104 for many years. The intersections with Route 104A, Fletcher Road/River Road, and Route 128 have been particularly problematic. The Northwest Regional Planning Commission hired Wilbur Smith Associates to complete a study on the Route 104 Corridor that would guide future transportation improvements for Route 104 and 104A. The plan was intended as a blueprint for a long-term sustainable transportation system to address the multi-modal needs of the community. Figure 10.4 lists the key issues affecting the corridor within Fairfax. Excessive speeds, congestion, access, and sight distances at intersections are major issues. The Study includes recommendations for how to address the issues identified. In Fairfax Village, the study recommended posting speed limits clearly and frequently, increasing enforcement of speed, and installing traffic calming measures to address excessive speed. To address congestion, it recommended improving traffic flow through access management for new development, expanding the internal road network, and installing a traffic light or roundabout at the Fletcher Road/River Road/Route 104 intersection; and increasing non-motorized mobility by expanding the sidewalk network and widening the roadway to include bike lanes. The study prioritizes each of these solutions and notes responsibilities and funding sources. The Study provides valuable information that the Town should use in future planning and project development in the Village and along the entire corridor.

Figure 10.3
Route 104/128 Intersection



Figure 10.4

A further study includes valuable information on planning improvements to the Route 104/128 intersection. A study on the specific intersection was completed in July of 2007. According to the study, the Northwest Regional Planning Commission hired Wilbur Smith Associates at the request of the Town “due to growing development pressures around the intersection and the current geometry of the dual intersections, which creates confusing traffic movements for motorists on both Route 104 and Route 128”. The study prepared an analysis of six alternatives to improve the intersection, three of which were determined by the Town to be most appropriate. The first preferred alternative is a no-build situation, where there would be no improvement to traffic or safety, but also no impacts to the right of way or land use. The second preferred alternative is to eliminate the northern intersection and re-align the easterly intersection in front of the Country Pantry. This would require minimal acreage of new right-of-way, with the potential for needing even more if the location of the intersection if moved even further to the north. The third preferred alternative would re-align McNall Road/Route 128 and Route 128/Route 104 intersections, which would require slightly more acreage of new right-of-way, taken primarily from the bank property with a minimal amount needed from the auto repair parcel. The Consultant (Wilbur Smith Associates) recommended the second preferred alternative. This valuable study should be implemented in conjunction with the Route 104/104A Corridor Study.

Key Issues Along Route 104
(According to the Route 104 Corridor Study)

From St. Albans to Fairfax Village:

- Poor pavement conditions,
- Sight distance at intersections,
- Unsafe conditions on the “curves”,
- Excess speeds,
- Shoulder widths/multi-modal potential, and
- Increasing congestion.

Within Fairfax Village:

- Access management,
- Signage,
- Unsafe intersections,
- Sight distance at intersections,
- Excessive speeds,
- Multi-modal potential (pedestrian environment, bike lanes & amenities), and
- Congestion and peak period traffic (increasing development and growth).

Between Fairfax Village and Route 15:

- Poor pavement conditions,
- Sight distance at intersections,
- Shoulder widths/multi-modal potential,
- Excessive speeds,
- Truck stacking, and
- Recreation /pull-outs.

MAJOR COMMUTER FLOW

The majority of commuter trips originating in Fairfax are to employment destinations outside of Town, particularly to Chittenden County’s major employment centers. Of the 2,193 daily work trips from Fairfax, 1,254 (57%) ended in Chittenden County. Only 90 daily trips originated in Chittenden County and ended in Fairfax. For those commuter trips that remained in Franklin

County, 186 of 2,193 stayed within Fairfax. Commuter flow from Fairfax to St. Albans City was also significant, with 123 daily trips (U.S. Census, 2010).

In addition to commuter traffic, some roads in Town, particularly Route 104, carry a significant volume of north/south/east-west truck traffic. While this trend is in keeping with the Vermont Agency of Transportation's management goals, it has been expressed as a disturbance to many Fairfax residents.

Encouraging a pattern of high density, mixed use development within the Village Center could help create more local job opportunities, lessening the demand on the existing road network to carry commuter traffic to destinations outside of Town. Promoting home occupations and local agriculture-related businesses would further assist in reversing current trends.

High density development of this kind would best be performed in conjunction with improvements to municipal infrastructure in the area of the existing village. These infrastructure improvements include water and sewer system improvements; continuing the extension of sidewalks within the village for safe, easy pedestrian travel; and the possible addition of new roads within the village which extend the current pattern of interconnected streets in a "neighborhood" street layout.

Dead end streets should be discouraged whenever possible, especially in the Growth Center District. Dead end streets are detrimental to the efficient flow of automobile travel by creating heavy traffic loading at relatively few connecting points along the street network. Interconnected "neighborhood" streets spread out traffic flow more evenly along the network, keeping traffic flow more diffuse and orderly.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

There are no regional public transportation services in Fairfax, nor does the Town provide any public transportation for its residents. Limited transportation services are provided to the elderly through various service providers. The closest transit stop is located at the Georgia Industrial Park. It is a stop for the St. Albans Link Express, which provides service to Chittenden County. Commuter parking would greatly benefit the community and the transportation infrastructure. Currently, one informal commuter parking lot is used in the Village, but a formal lot is needed. The closest official commuter parking lot is located at Exit 18 in Georgia. The Northwest Regional Planning Commission and VTrans are both available to assist the town in any future considerations.

Amtrak is continuing passenger rail service out of the St. Albans depot. The Franklin County Regional Airport in Swanton, the Burlington International Airport in Burlington, and the Trudeau and Mirabel Airports in Montreal provide air service to the region.

In the past, it has been impractical to offer public transportation services in this rural community due to relatively low ridership potential and a diffuse pattern of land use. Due to the steadily increasing population and the fact that more residents are commuting out of town for employment, the potential for some level of public transportation services may too be increasing.

The Northwest Vermont Public Transit Network ('the NETWORK') and the Chittenden County Transportation Authority (CCTA) are available to examine any possibilities for expansion of existing services; the community may be well served to consider communicating with the Network and/or CCTA.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRAVEL

The Village has just under 5,000 linear feet of sidewalk on the northwest side of Hunt Street and southeast side of School Street, both sides of Route 104 between Hunt and School Street, on the west side of Route 104 north of Hunt Street to Tuttle Street, and on the west side of Route 104 to just before the Lamoille River Bridge.

Efforts to maintain and improve the sidewalk network have been underway for many years. In 2006, the Selectboard completed an investigation of the feasibility of constructing additional sidewalks along Route 104 in the Village area. The purpose of the project was to increase safety for pedestrians, encourage walking to school and the community library, and provide accessibility to other town amenities. The investigation determined that the west side of Route 104 continuing north from where the existing sidewalk ends was the most appropriate location for a sidewalk. The Town applied for construction funding through the Vermont Agency of Transportation Enhancement Program in 2010 and received funding for the first phase of a three-phase plan. Construction on the first phase is projected to begin in Fall of 2013. The Town has applied for second-phase construction funds as of early 2013. All three phases are projected to be completed by 2015.

One result of the sidewalk study was the Town's enrollment in the Safe Routes to School Program. As part of the program, Fairfax will evaluate existing conditions and attitudes, actively encourage walking and bicycling by students, and identify infrastructure projects to make walking and bicycling safer. The State of Vermont provides support to the Safe Routes program in the form of funding and services to participating schools. BFA Fairfax has completed a School Travel Plan that documents the community's problems related to the journey to school and describes the strategies that the community chose to address these problems. The Travel Plan includes a detailed inventory of sidewalk and road conditions as they relate to pedestrian safety and identifies barriers to safe school travel, including locations where there is no or an inadequate crosswalk, areas that lack sidewalks or a direct sidewalk connection, dangerous intersections, and a lack of support infrastructure such as signs and bike racks. This study is a valuable collection of data and strategies and should be central in any planning for new and improved sidewalks in Fairfax.

Bicycle travel in the Village can be accommodated on the roads in Town; however, this can be hazardous as there are no dedicated lanes or wide shoulders. Route 104 and other roads in town would benefit from a dedicated bicycle lane to provide a safe route, especially busy, high-speed Route 104. Bicycle and pedestrian travel for recreation is accommodated by the Fairfax Recreation Path and Class 4 roads.

As part of the 2012-2013 Town Plan update, the Village Vision Steering Committee worked with the NRPC and consultant to develop a vision for Fairfax Village. Included in the vision

development is a long-term network of bicycle and walking facilities in and around the Village that would maximize non-motorized mobility and conveniently link the Village with the rest of the Town. The main focus of the study is the Village area itself, with a more general review of those portions of the Town close to the Village. The purpose of the network is to expand existing facilities that encourage more walking and bicycling within and to the Village area to reduce the number of motor vehicles on the road, promote better public health and active recreation, limit the emission of greenhouse gases, increase safety, promote economic development, encourage more students walking and bicycling to the schools in the Village, contribute to Village revitalization and foster a greater sense of community. The Fairfax Village Non-motorized Travel Plan is available at the Town Clerk's Office for review and will be used as a guide during future reviews.

TRANSPORTATION GOALS AND POLICIES

Goals

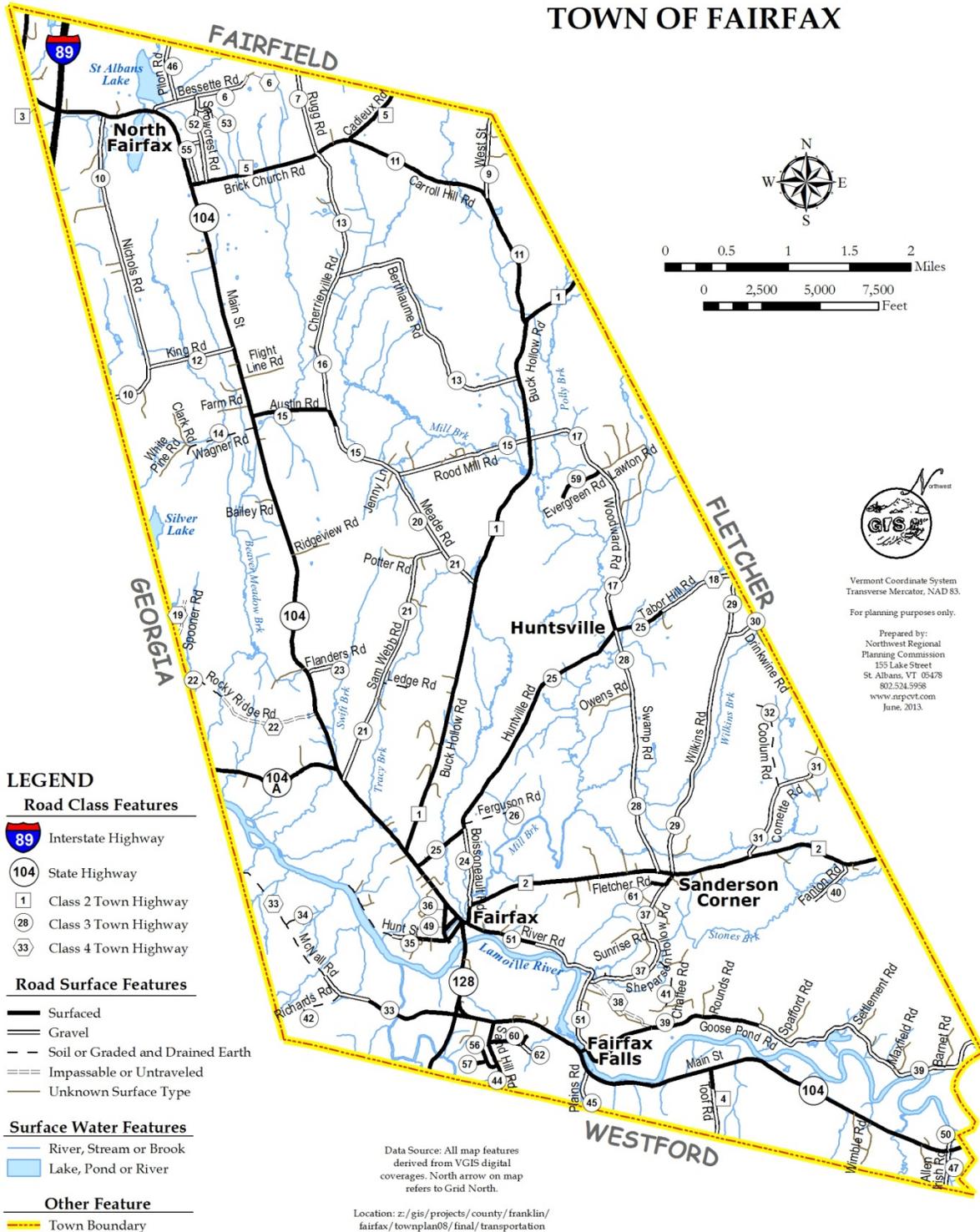
- 1) Provide for safe, convenient, economic, and energy efficient transportation systems that respect the natural environment and utilize a variety of transit modes.
- 2) Create a balanced transportation system that includes provisions for safety and mobility of pedestrians, bicyclists, and those with strollers and in wheelchairs.

Policies

- 1) To maintain roads at a level consistent with their use.
- 2) To provide for pedestrian safety and access to important community places or events, such as the school, Town government, recreation areas, and river access.
- 3) To adopt new roads within the growth center that extend the interconnected Village street network, and that include provisions for safe and efficient vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian travel.
- 4) To encourage appropriate provisions for bicycle and pedestrian use on designated routes, including proper signage and pavement improvements.
- 5) To manage traffic flow and access points throughout the Route 104 corridor.
- 6) To work with regional authorities to improve transit services linking residents with destinations (jobs, retail outlets, health services, education facilities) to decrease residents' reliance on cars, and increase physical activity.
- 7) To encourage the creation and maintenance of a network of continuous bicycle routes and sidewalks.
- 8) To improve the street, sidewalk, and street-crossing safety of routes to schools in order to encourage/allow students to walk or bike to school on a regular basis.
- 9) To incorporate shared-use trails in development planning and connect neighborhoods, schools, and other facilities to increase residents' options for physical activity.

Map 3

TRANSPORTATION MAP TOWN OF FAIRFAX



CHAPTER 11: LAND USE

The Town of Fairfax, though still an agrarian community, is in the midst of changes of considerable importance. High rates of residential development are causing changes to the demographic makeup, visual changes to the landscape, and higher demand for services from the Town. Faced with these changing forces, planners are challenged with maintaining the rural agricultural character and small village setting, while accepting and accommodating a fair share of residential development for the greater region.

Encouraging a diverse, small-scale local economy (including agriculture and forestry enterprises), maintaining and enhancing a mixed use, high density Town Center, minimizing strip development, and preserving natural and cultural features that help define the rural character of Fairfax, have all been stated as goals by the people of the Town. Through proactive planning, this community vision can be translated into actions that best serve the people, the culture, and the land itself.



Photo 20 - Flyover of Fairfax – June, 1994 Courtesy: Ed Nuttall

EXISTING LAND USE

As can be seen in Figure 11.2, the Current Land Cover Map, the dominant land cover in the Town of Fairfax continues to be agricultural and forest lands (82%). Dispersed within

agricultural and forest lands are pockets of residential development, with the existing Village as the most significant concentration of residential and commercial uses in the Town.

AGRICULTURE

Culturally, agriculture has defined the historic rural character of Fairfax. The continuation of this trend to the present day is evidenced by the amount of total land area still in agricultural production. Farming has long contributed to the local and regional economy, and has created the “scenic infrastructure” which is attractive to visitors and residents alike.

According to 2002 LANDSAT satellite imagery, agricultural lands total 39% of the total land area of Fairfax, compared to 32% in the Franklin & Grand Isle region as a whole. County-wide statistics from the U.S. Census of Agriculture note a trend toward decreased farm size, and recent decreased numbers of farms since 2002. This is a shift from the same regional information between 1992 and 1997, which showed a 2% increase in the number of farms. The majority of agricultural acreage in Fairfax (and the region) remains in dairy production, with hay, pasture, and corn being by far the dominant agricultural land use types.

Other forms of agriculture, including “niche farming”, vegetable growing, and landscape nurseries are also present in Fairfax. While these agricultural land uses do not represent a significant acreage in comparison to hay, corn, and dairy farming, they still contribute to the local economy and culture of the area.

FORESTS

Approximately 43% of Fairfax is covered by forest. About 37% of all forest lands are in mixed broadleaf and conifer forests. Another 34% are coniferous, with the balance consisting of scattered stands of broadleaf forests. Diversity in land ownership patterns moderates the current potential for large scale forest products industry. Fairfax’s forests may be well-suited for use as small woodlots, low impact recreation, as well as some limited opportunities for larger scale forest industries.

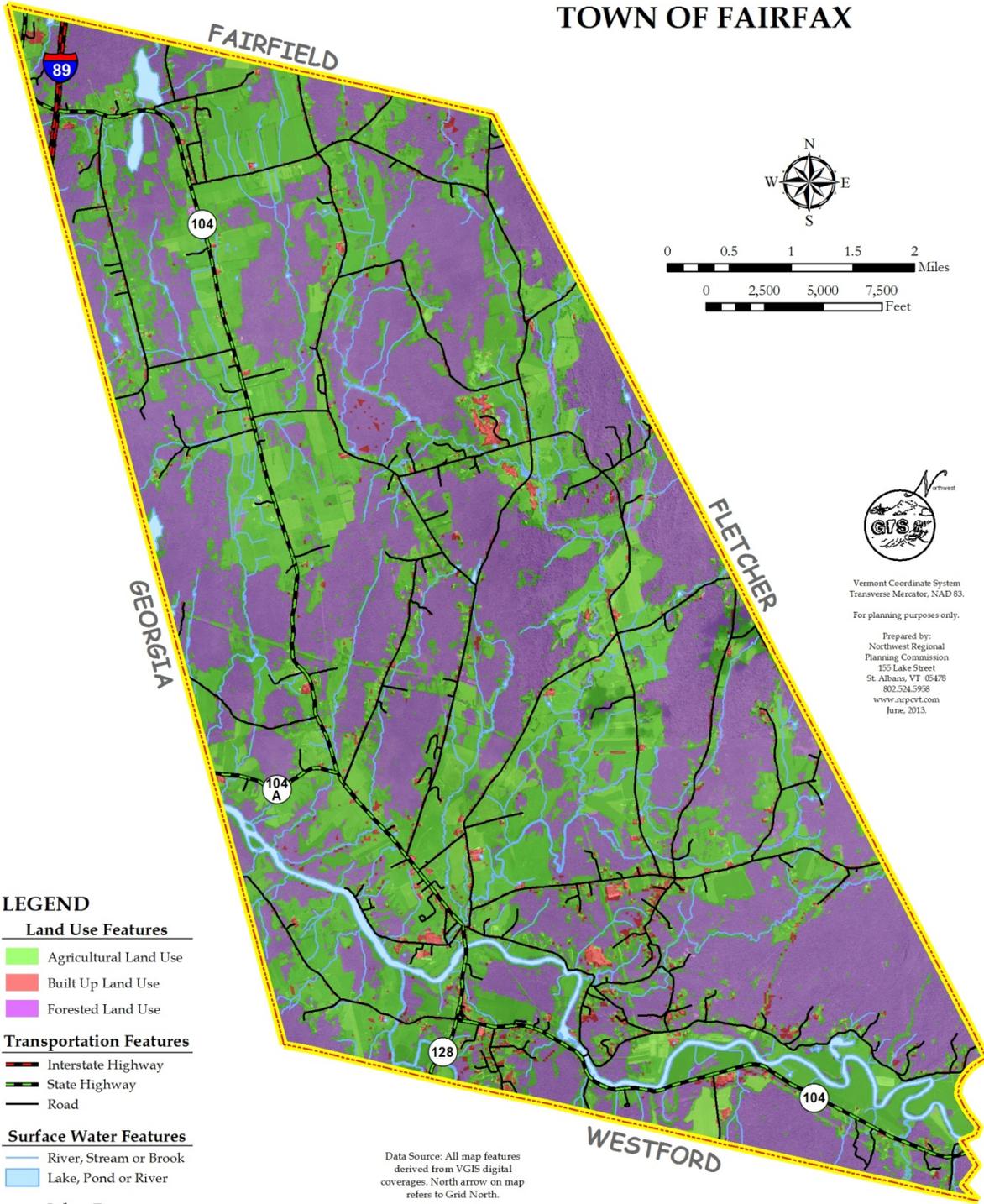
CURRENT USE PROGRAM

In an effort to encourage conservation and sound management of farm and forestlands, the State instituted the current use program where enrolled parcels are taxed according to the use rather than fair market value. Through this program, the state reimburses municipalities for the balance in tax revenue, negating any fiscal municipal impacts for conserving the Town's undeveloped natural resource lands.

In 2012, 103 parcels covering 12,294 acres were enrolled in the program; approximately 47% of the total land acreage in Fairfax. As a whole, enrolled property owners currently experience a \$14,591,733 reduction in the listed value of their property.

Map 4

CURRENT LAND USE TOWN OF FAIRFAX



LEGEND

- Land Use Features**
 - Agricultural Land Use
 - Built Up Land Use
 - Forested Land Use
- Transportation Features**
 - Interstate Highway
 - State Highway
 - Road
- Surface Water Features**
 - River, Stream or Brook
 - Lake, Pond or River
- Other Feature**
 - Town Boundary

Data Source: All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

Location: z:/gis/projects/county/franklin/fairfax/townplan08/final/currentlandcover



Vermont Coordinate System
Transverse Mercator, NAD 83.
For planning purposes only.

Prepared by:
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June, 2013.

RESIDENTIAL USES

Residential land use is concentrated within the existing village area in a network of streets, where water and sewer infrastructure exists. However, recent trends (within the past few decades) have shown an increase in scattered residential development outside the Village area. Given Fairfax's high residential growth rate, in part due to affordable housing shortages in Chittenden County and volatile market pressures that make it difficult for farmers to stay in business, continuation of scattered residential development will impose changes in the rural, agricultural landscape of Fairfax. Encouraging the majority of development in the Village area and balancing the rights of individual landowners with aesthetic and cultural considerations in the rural areas are important challenges for town planners. Creative approaches in subdivision and site design, including encouraging the clustering of residences to prevent strip development and the parcelization of agricultural, forestry, and meadow lands, and flexible zoning that allows for development of building sites that respects natural resources and aesthetic qualities of the land should be incorporated into development review and approval processes.

COMMERCIAL USES

The majority of commercial uses in the Town are concentrated within the existing village, and across the Lamoille River near the intersection of Route 104 and Route 128. Most commercial development in Fairfax is service-oriented, including restaurants, shops, gas stations and convenience stores. Centrally located, small-scale service-oriented commercial development will likely be the trend in the future. It is important to note that until there is additional capacity for municipal sewer and water service or other alternatives for neighborhood/community scale wastewater treatment, little to no additional commercial development will have the opportunity of locating in the Village area.

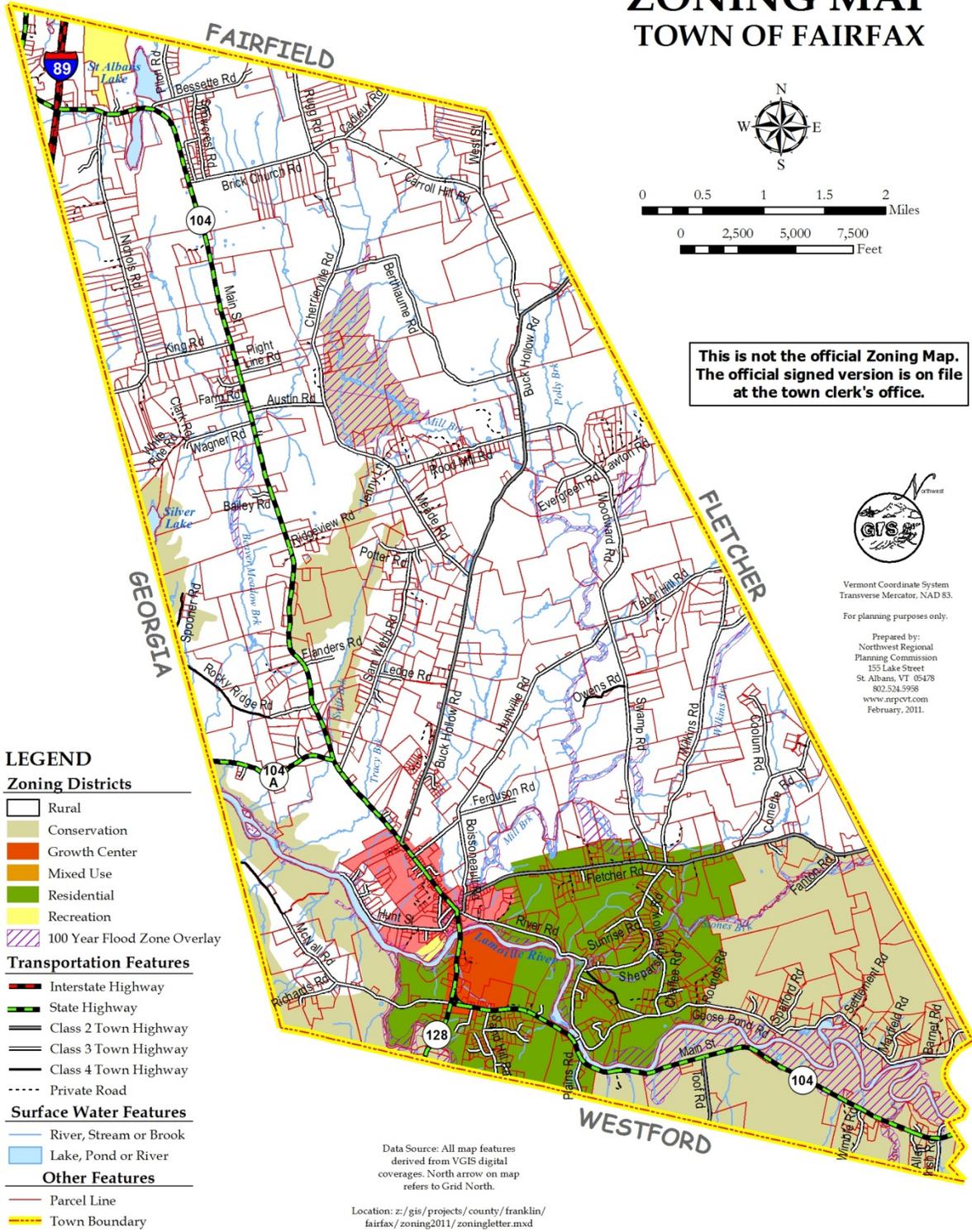
LAND USE REGULATIONS: ZONING DISTRICTS

Fairfax's current Development Regulations (most recently amended on August 15, 2011) divides the Town into six land use districts (Figure 11.2):

- **Conservation**
- **Growth Center**
- **Mixed Use**
- **Recreation**
- **Residential**
- **Rural**

A comprehensive rewrite of the Fairfax Zoning and Subdivision was completed in 2011 to implement the 2008 municipal plan. The goal of this rewrite was to encourage Fairfax to grow and develop in a manner and intensity that reflects its traditional land use patterns and to encourage a mix of uses in the growth areas, especially where infrastructure exists. Regulations were modified in the Rural and Residential districts to encourage clustering and to conserve resources. Another goal of the rewrite was to modernize the bylaws to reflect current state law, and current planning practices.

ZONING MAP TOWN OF FAIRFAX



**This is not the official Zoning Map.
The official signed version is on file
at the town clerk's office.**



Vermont Coordinate System
Transverse Mercator, NAD 83.
For planning purposes only.

Prepared by:
Northwest Regional
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155 Lake Street
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www.nrpcvt.com
February, 2011.

LEGEND

Zoning Districts

- Rural
- Conservation
- Growth Center
- Mixed Use
- Residential
- Recreation
- 100 Year Flood Zone Overlay

Transportation Features

- Interstate Highway
- State Highway
- Class 2 Town Highway
- Class 3 Town Highway
- Class 4 Town Highway
- Private Road

Surface Water Features

- River, Stream or Brook
- Lake, Pond or River

Other Features

- Parcel Line
- Town Boundary

Data Source: All map features
derived from VGIS digital
coverages. North arrow on map
refers to Grid North.

Location: z:/gis/projects/county/franklin/
fairfax/zoning2011/zoningletter.mxd

Land Use District Purposes

GROWTH CENTER

In keeping with Vermont tradition, the people of Fairfax have expressed a strong desire for the higher densities of future growth to occur in designated growth areas, with the remaining land being kept in uses such as agriculture, open space, forestry, and some low density rural residential development. In pursuit of this desire, a high density, mixed use growth center has been defined in the environs of the existing village (See Current Land Use Map.). This growth area is intended to accept the majority of future growth in the Town, and will include a mixture of residential, multi-family and commercial land uses on smaller building areas than are allowed in other parts of town. In short, the Growth Center represents “North Village”, with the typical amenities which downtowns have traditionally offered: pedestrian friendly streets, “neighborhood” living, an integrated street network, shops, government services, schools, parks and playgrounds.

In July of 2001, the Town of Fairfax commissioned a Growth Center Master Plan. According to the Master Plan, “it’s primary purpose is to show appropriate land uses and pedestrian, roadway, and green space connections between parcels.” The Plan is still a valuable tool for the Growth Center. The Plan also identifies transportation improvements to provide additional connections between places within the growth center and alternate routes of travel. The Plan includes valuable information for implementing these goals through The Fairfax Development Regulations and should be used in future growth center planning. It may be appropriate to update and revise the Plan at some time to reflect how the Growth Center has changed and redefine where the town would like it to go in the future.

The Growth Center concept is the engine by which the remainder of Fairfax’s future land use policy is driven. The designation (and enabling) of high density growth in certain areas promotes a contrast in land use outside its borders. This symbiotic relationship between high and low density growth, helps channel growth into areas best suited to absorb it, while better serving the capabilities of surrounding land through decreased human impact. In addition, the contrast between low and high density land uses helps create an “edge” or visual gateway to the core of the community, a welcome alternative to the strip development and automobile-oriented entry corridors which have stifled the underlying character of so many communities.

Figure 11.1

CHARACTERISTICS OF GROWTH CENTERS

- incorporates a mix of uses
- provides public spaces organized around a focal point
- promotes development that is more dense than that outside a growth center supported by existing or planned infrastructure
- results in concentrated development surrounded by rural countryside
- planned in accordance with chapter 117 planning goals and with smart growth principles
- supports the purposes of Act 250

~ ~ ~
*(As enacted into Law under
Title 24 § 2791)*

If the Growth Center is the engine that drives land use policy, then the availability and quality of municipal services and infrastructure is the fuel. The provision of efficient municipal water distribution and wastewater treatment systems is of paramount importance for higher density development to be adequately absorbed by the land. In this regard, Town policies



Photo 21 - Eastfield Condo Development, Mixed Use District, by Skip Taylor

for expansion and improvement of these systems is the keystone of a successful future. Planning for improvements and acquiring the necessary funding for improvements are still being pursued.

The Growth Center is also recognized as encompassing a majority of “North Village.” The State of Vermont offers a voluntary “Village Center Designation” program to municipalities. The benefits to Village Center Designation include eligibility for tax credits and priority consideration from other state programs. Village Center Designation was obtained in September of 2008.

The boundaries of Fairfax’s Growth Center have been recognized by the Northwest Regional Planning Commission, and have been incorporated into the Regional Plan as a Sub-regional Growth Center.

MIXED USE

An area intended for mixed use development has been designated near the junction of Route 128 and Route 104. This area will be limited in scope and due to its lack of municipal water and sewer infrastructure, is not intended for an intensity of uses comparable to the Growth Center. The Mixed Use District is intended to maintain the small-scale commercial, residential, and recreational uses currently in existence, while complementing and providing connection to the Village. Pedestrian accessibility should be considered in future development applications to promote walkable,



Photo 22 - Eastfield Condo Development, Mixed Use District, by Skip Taylor

village scale development. Community wastewater treatment should be required for any new development to encourage density and clustering of uses. Safe pedestrian connection to the Village should be considered through sidewalks or other pedestrian paths.

RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

The area east and south of North Village has been designated for future low density residential development beyond what is accommodated by the Growth Center. Agriculture and significant forestland does not dominate in this district and soils are generally suitable for on-site septic systems. Clustering of building lots and planned unit developments are recommended in these areas in order to preserve tracts of open land, tracts of forestland, and rural character. Development Regulations should discourage linear strip residential development.

CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The Conservation District includes areas generally not physically suited for development, or which should be protected for their inherent value as significant wildlife habitat and forestland. These areas include deer wintering areas; bear habitat; locations of rare, threatened, or endangered species or significant natural communities; or the existence of development constraints such as steep slopes and poor development soils. Development and subdivision should be limited in conservation areas. Fairfax Development Regulations reflect this intent through appropriate land use restrictions, dimensional standards, and development review standards, including the use of planned unit developments.

RURAL DISTRICT

The Rural District consists of areas with significant prime agricultural soils, areas in current agricultural use, significant forestland not included in the Conservation Lands, and the remaining areas of Town not otherwise identified as the Growth Center, Mixed Use, Residential, Recreation or Conservation Lands. Agriculture and forestry should remain a dominant land use and the landscape of rural open countryside and forestland should be maintained. The importance of Agriculture to the local culture and economy continues today. Consequently, provisions should be made to encourage the long term viability of agricultural uses into the future by providing restrictions on the potential encroachment of non-agricultural forms of development. In addition, the intention of this designation is to encourage viable forest practices within the Town, and to protect these areas from incompatible forms of development.



**Photo 23 - The Heyer Farm,
By Skip Taylor**

This district can accommodate a small portion of future residential development at low densities. The Planning Commission should continue to study options for planned unit developments in future zoning amendments, which would have the effect of appropriately siting residential development around significant agricultural lands, forest lands, and meadows, preserving them

from fragmentation and conversion. Opportunities for intact preservation of forest and agricultural resources through single or common ownership (i.e. cluster development around the forest perimeter with common or single ownership of the forest interior) should be encouraged.

RECREATION DISTRICT

Recreation lands are those areas (owned by the Town) which have been set aside for future development as sites for public recreation. Potential construction in these areas will be limited to necessary public facilities associated with these recreation areas. With this exception, recreational lands will essentially remain in their present condition as forested areas and open land for public recreation.

100-YEAR FLOOD ZONE OVERLAY

The purpose of this overlay is to prevent increases in flooding caused by development in flood hazard areas, to minimize future public and private losses due to flood, and to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare. Designation of this area is also required for continued participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and is regulated under the Town's Flood Hazard Regulation Ordinance. Included are all areas in Fairfax identified as areas of special flood hazard on the National Flood Insurance maps.

LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES

Goals

- 1) Maintain the traditional village center surrounded by a landscape of farms, forestry, and rural countryside.
- 2) Protect the historic integrity and character of the existing North Village area.
- 3) Promote development within North and South Village that reinforces the importance of the Village as the Town's social and cultural center.
- 4) Produce and maintain a map that identifies infrastructure and amenities for all roadway, sidewalk, and trail users.
- 5) Protect open space for recreational use.

Policies

- 1) To provide future services and public facilities within a growth center that is conducive to pedestrian and other non-vehicular travel, has a distinct organization around a central focal area, and that includes public spaces that promote social interaction.
- 2) To encourage the economic viability of local agriculture, forestry, and related industries.
- 3) To discourage sprawling development patterns/strip development.
- 4) To encourage an interactive permitting process between landowners and local planning officials to facilitate site sensitive planning and best use of available land.
- 5) To limit development on lands unsuited for that purpose, including fragile and sensitive resources, such as critical habitat, wetlands, steep slopes, prime agricultural soils, and floodplains.
- 6) To encourage infill development and the rehabilitation of historic structures and features that are a part of Fairfax's character.
- 7) To consider long term plans for the entire parcel and adjacent lands during development review and address their potential cumulative impact.

- 8) Future infrastructure expenditures should be concentrated in the growth center.
- 9) To encourage the clustering of development in the rural areas of town to preserve the open rural landscape that defines Fairfax for the future.
- 10) To coordinate the preservation of forestland, agricultural land, and open space throughout the town to create connected corridors of undeveloped land.
- 11) To provide access to parks, shared-use paths and trails, or open spaces within reasonable distance of residential areas.
- 12) To allow select agricultural practices in open spaces set aside in permitting – e.g., community gardens or small agricultural enterprises in open spaces of cluster housing.
- 13) To encourage new residential and mixed-use developments to include sidewalks, outdoor open space, recreational facilities, and community gardens to promote active living.

CHAPTER 12: A VISION FOR THE VILLAGE

VISION STATEMENT

Fairfax takes pride in strengthening the sense of community for residents of all ages. It respects traditional compact form, historic structures, its relationship to the agricultural landscape and its many natural resources. The Village is a vibrant, pedestrian friendly, residential and commercial district at the heart of a diverse economy. The Village is central to daily life, supports its residents and visitors alike and leaves a positive impression.

INTRODUCTION

This Village Vision Plan chapter was funded by the Municipal Planning Grant Program, as administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development. A Steering Committee made up of rotating members of the Planning Commission and Selectboard; students, local business owners and residents worked with the NRPC with the purpose of looking at the Village as a whole and brainstorming a vision for its future. This chapter provides a framework to help guide decisions about the Village's future based on a collective understanding of resources, opportunities and challenges. North and South Village make up the area extending from Nan's store to Fairfax Falls. North Village encompasses the area from Nan's to Steeple Market and includes the Historic District. South Village extends from the Route 104 Lamoille River bridge to Fairfax Falls. When referenced as the "Village" in this chapter it is meant to encompass both North and South Village.

HOW IS A VILLAGE VISION AND PLAN USEFUL TO THE RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF FAIRFAX?

- Basis for revisions to regulatory action
- Information source
- Guide for recommendations
- Useful when considering development applications
- Long-term guide

THE KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE VISION ARE TO:

- Respect North Village's unique historic fabric while accommodating growth
- Support established local businesses
- Maximize pedestrian circulation throughout the Village and beyond

- Maintain a central focus
- Be a sustainable community for the benefit of its residents
- Promote creation of multi-modal streets
- Identify natural features and destinations within and near the Village

The Vision, in conjunction with the Fairfax Village Non-motorized Travel Plan, should be used as a tool to evaluate development, as a guide to modify or develop regulations and guidelines, and for promoting the Village.

VISION PLANNING

The Vision Plan contains a vision statement that is supported by goals, policies and action strategies that will help to achieve this vision. The process of creating this vision brought residents, students and stakeholders together to form the Village Vision Steering Committee to discuss issues and ideas. Through a series of monthly meetings, public events and activities, over the course of 18 months, the Steering Committee worked together with the Northwest Regional Planning Commission to create a long-term vision plan that can be implemented.

Clear themes for discussion and continued research emerged after the Steering Committee’s first several meetings and the initial public outreach events. These themes guided conversations with community members and directed research that is particularly important as the community considers the future of its Village.

THE VILLAGE VISION PROCESS AND PURPOSE: “ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY”

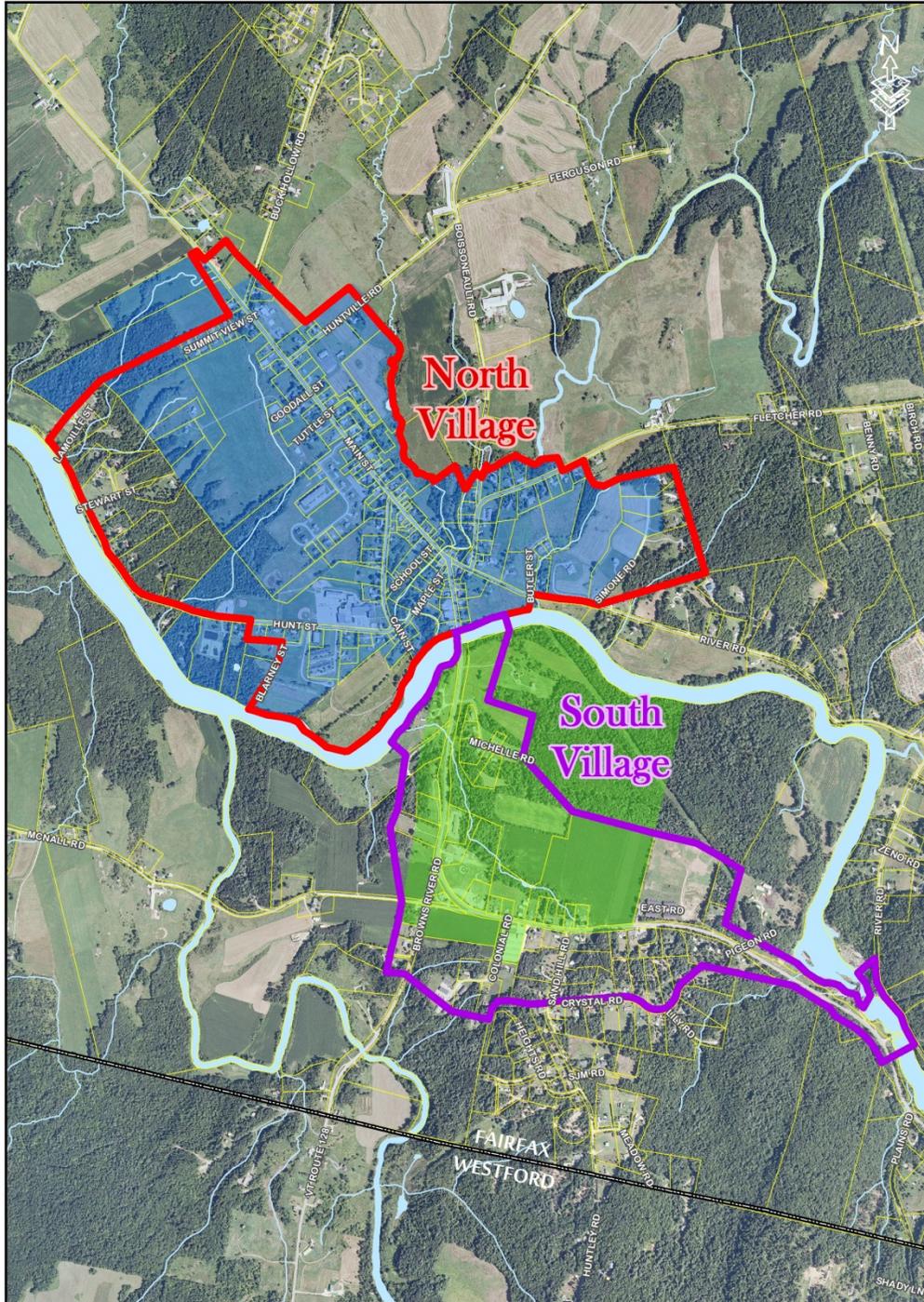
To begin the visioning, Steering Committee members organized the process and outlined the issues and themes they wanted to focus on. Committee members attended a series of local summer events to reach a diversity of groups and residents in the community and establish the practice of working together. The Steering Committee planned and implemented outreach at four community events that included interactive displays and one-on-one conversations. By using a diversity of events, the Steering Committee provided community members who may otherwise not have been aware of the project with information and a forum to provide input.

The intent of the visioning process was to identify opportunities, express concerns and understand their values. The committee meetings and public events were designed to create a comfortable space and foster open dialogue. Following each of the meetings or events, notes were organized to summarize findings and identify common themes.

PROJECT STUDY AREA³

³ No zoning district changes have been made with this Town Plan update. The Village outlined on Map 6 is intended for visioning and discussion purposes only. The map and shown boundaries does not imply any regulatory permissions.

FAIRFAX VILLAGES



Vermont Coordinate System
Transverse Mercator, NAD 83.
For planning purposes only.
Prepared by:
Northern REC
155 Lake Street
St. Albans, VT 05478
802.224.2908
www.nrpsct.com

North Village
South Village
Growth Center Boundary
Mixed Use Boundary

Town Boundary
Parcel Line
River, Stream or Brook
Pond or River

0 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet
0 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 Miles

r:\gis\projects\county\franklin\fairfax\villages2013\abboid.mxd

Workshop 1: Word Associations

The Northwest Regional Planning Commission led the Steering Committee on a visioning exercise for the purpose of identifying key themes for the focus of public involvement events. The Committee brainstormed the Village’s assets and strengths, issues and challenges, and preferred vision for the future. A wide variety of words and short phrases were used to describe the Village. Many of these words described the Village in a positive light, while several words described the Village in a negative context. The activity targeted associated strengths and concerns perceived by the group. The main themes identified by this workshop activity were: Village Identity and Image; Streetscape; Community Facilities and Places; and Development. The insert below captures the full list of assets and strengths; issues and challenges; and visions for the future.

<p>Assets and Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small town feel • Proximity to Burlington/Essex • Density • Close to farm land • Location on river • Good views • Covered bridge • Limited sprawl • Park & Bike/Recreation Path • BFA School • Wonderful people • Community events/theatre/band • Excellent library • Baptist building • Small businesses • Tax rate 	<p>Issues and Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light pollution • Water and sewer system capacity and back-up • Stormwater runoff • Keeping the school competitive • Sidewalk maintenance • Lack of pedestrian connections • Sidewalks not user friendly • Limited public spaces • Lack of activity space • Commuter population • Town and event promotion and communication • No major employers/business centers • Limited road network • 104 truck route • Limited public transit options • Limited traffic calming measures 	<p>Visions for the Future:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of Village to include Nans to Minors • Defined river use • Outdoor ice rink • Wayfinding signs for community and recreation facilities • Community pickup games • Educational trips do not exclude low-income children • More pedestrian friendly sidewalks • Sidewalks to connect North and South villages • Designated bike lanes and more bike paths • Support for domestic violence victims • Embrace cultural diversity • New Town Office • More public spaces • Town Website/Marketing • Green building and renewable energy • More businesses • 104/Fletcher intersection redesign
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Figure 12.2

Workshop 2: Places

Participants were asked to list places they considered as “destinations” within the Village and explain why they thought they were important. From these responses and subsequent discussions it became obvious that the reason these destinations were considered as such were due to historical, social or local significance. These places have been incorporated into Figures 2, 4, 7, 8, and 9 of the Non-motorized Travel Plan maps and the plan includes the full list of identified destinations.

Workshop 3: Photo Survey

At two separate meetings committee members were shown four photo surveys to help paint a visual picture of likes and dislikes from an array of architectural styles and streetscapes. Two of the photo surveys depicted residential and commercial images from within the study area while the other two were of images outside of Fairfax, but contained examples from Vermont. The photo survey helped the Committee discuss the potential for design guidelines for North and South Village.

Village Non-motorized Travel Plan

NRPC and members of the Steering Committee worked with consultant Jim Donovan, of Broadreach Planning & Design, to develop possible alternatives for improved non-motorized travel in and to the Village. Part of the work included examining ways to make it easier to bicycle and walk to destinations in the Village area, including schools, library, stores, and recreation areas. The potential improvements include new sidewalks, shared use paths, bicycle lanes, wide paved shoulders, and designated bicycle routes. A few of the alternatives for new shared use paths cross private parcels. Any paths or trails passing through private property would need easements or rights-of-way from the landowners before they could actually be created. The group held two public work sessions and presented the final recommendations and Plan to the Planning Commission and Selectboard.

Town of Fairfax
Village Non-Motorized Circulation Study
The Town of Fairfax is sponsoring a public work session at
7:00 PM October 23, 2012
in the BFA Multi-Purpose Room
on
Walking and Bicycling improvements for the Village area
on both sides of the Lamoille River.
Come review and comment on various recommendations in the draft
Fairfax Village Non-Motorized Circulation Study, including
suggestions for more sidewalks and shared use paths and potential
improvements to make it easier to bicycle into the Village from other
parts of Town
Refreshments will be served to entice you to join in the discussion!



For more information on this work sessions, you can email
Jim Donovan, project leader for Broadreach Planning & Design, the
Town's consultant, at bikeped@gnvt.net
This project is funded through a Municipal Planning Grant from the Agency of Commerce and
Community Development

Summer Social Events

The purpose of this series of events was to receive input about issues, concerns and strengths of the village as perceived by Fairfax residents. An interactive display was set up at a series of local events and staffed by members of the steering committee. Feedback from these events indicates that a variety of unfilled needs exist within the village. This chapter takes this feedback into consideration and incorporates many of these needs into the Vision.

Village Identity and Image

It is important to recognize that North and South Village have separate identities. Though the two share many features and are in close proximity to one another, they also differ. One important distinction between the two is the difference in zoning. The majority of South Village is in the Mixed Use District, while the majority of North Village includes the Growth Center District. Differences in these two districts play an important role in shaping the image of North

and South Village. While the Growth Center area encompassed by the North Village focuses on the desire for the higher densities of future growth the Mixed Use portion of the South Village focuses on promoting walkable, village scale development that complements and provides connection to North Village.

South Village

The landscape of South Village is dominated by a large number of paved surfaces, lack of green space, sidewalks and plantings along the Route 104 corridor. This presents several issues. The combination of a large amount of impervious surface and roofs places a significant burden on stormwater systems. It also reinforces the fact that South Village is more accommodating to the automobile than to the pedestrian. Expansive parking lots in front of buildings leads to a loss of the rhythm created by buildings along the street.

Addressing issues related to scale, walkability and welcome, combined with utilizing its many positive characteristics, will play a large role in making the vision a reality in South Village. Existing parking lots should be buffered with plant materials and fences that suit the character of the areas. Islands with trees and vegetated plantings can be used to break up the paved surfaces while offering shade and visual interest. The Town should work with existing property owners to discuss the desired appearance, to secure grants for improvements and ensure current zoning allows for renovations.

South Village is home to many well-established businesses that contribute to the economic health of the Village and also includes Fairfax Falls, a cherished and often photographed destination. The area around the Falls is envisioned as a green entry corridor that provides connection to the Village and surrounding neighborhoods and establishes an identity. Improvements to this area could include welcome and wayfinding signage and landscape elements. It is important that South Village utilize consistent landscaping, fencing and signage treatments to shape a discernible identity.

North Village

In contrast, North Village retains patterns of traditional historic development with buildings closer to the street and a presence of sidewalks. Residents take pride in the remaining historic architecture and it is important that the remaining historic features and historic character of North Village be preserved. Many buildings are oriented to pedestrians and a mix of uses is evident. Many of the homes and businesses are within historic buildings that retain architectural details and contribute to the sense of place.

Elements that reinforce the local character of North Village contribute to developing a shared sense of belonging and involvement in community vitality. Private property investments such as the addition of well-maintained awnings or canopies, human-scale signage, and engaging storefronts along the length of Main Street could enhance the pedestrian realm and add character

to North Village. Improvements to North Village should be tailored to those traveling on foot or by bicycle to help improve the pedestrian experience and promote walking. This pedestrian scale should be taken into consideration when adding new signage, lighting, trees or other plant materials.

Landscaping, gateway signage and art can all be incorporated to announce arrival into the Village at key points. These Village entry announcements allow for opportunities to display and promote unique features of the Village to residents, visitors and passerby. In addition, low cost tools and resources should be explored to enliven or promote existing community facilities and places that could include a town website, user friendly maps, bike racks and event announcements.

Long term tools and opportunities to build on the identity and image of North and South Village:

- Identify sites appropriate for use as park-like gathering areas and increase the amount of plantings and seating.
- Develop a creative, high quality, signage and wayfinding program.
- Continue sidewalk enhancement program to form a network of safe, connected sidewalks in both North and South Village.
- Encourage renovation or adaptive reuse that respects historic materials and design.
- Consider “yard of the month” or “parade of homes” type events to encourage maintenance and promote shared responsibility.
- Consider creating a marketing program that promotes Fairfax as a desirable place to locate business.
- Consider developing a Village map that highlights local businesses and natural features within the area.
- Research and consider implementing incentives that support desired development and existing businesses.
- Consider design guidelines for the Village.
- Market and publicize community events to attract residents and visitors.
- Continuously review the regulations to ensure that the regulatory tools support the vision.
- Consider developing a plan for the visual improvement of the gateways to North and South Village.
- Consider developing a street tree planting program to complement the sidewalk enhancement project in North village.
- Consider identifying areas for landscape enhancements and tree plantings in South Village.
- Consider site improvements and amenities such as bike racks and canoe/kayak storage to encourage use of natural destinations.

Streetscape

The streetscape is made up of layers of elements that help build a form that defines and identifies a look or character for that particular location. Streets should be thought of as having the ability to transform a place. The ideals behind the vision are those that promote the creation of multi-modal streets within the Village while also focusing on extending networks outside of the boundaries of the Village to invite folks in and make the Village accessible. A multi-modal street can be defined as a street that provides the practical facilities for public transportation, pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists so that users of all ages and abilities feel comfortable coexisting safely and efficiently. These streets are often much more than that; they are well maintained, and lined with active uses and buildings that help define meaningful public spaces. They help lend character and identity to communities and can evoke a sense of pride and ownership from their users.

Pedestrian access is fundamental to the sense of the Village. The potential for proximity of a range of services makes the Village appealing for groups, such as the elderly, students, and residents alike. This potential has reinforced the need for pedestrian mobility and future patterns of development in the Village must be consistent with this. However, the volume of traffic through Fairfax has increased substantially over the years and will undoubtedly continue to increase in the future. The increase in traffic promulgates safety hazards for pedestrians and future patterns of development must ensure that this is not further pronounced. Interconnecting streets and avoiding cul-de-sacs can help to disperse traffic, increase safety and reduce congestion at key intersections within the Village. While adding street trees and raised planters along the Right-of-Way not only provides a buffer between the automobile and pedestrian they also positively impact traffic calming and have numerous environmental benefits.

Today the **North Village** streetscape is characterized by:

- Recreational facilities.
- Remnants of the historic dense pattern of development, with buildings close to the right-of-way.
- Presence of a sidewalk.
- Mix of commercial and residential uses.

**Photo 24 – North Village Street View,
By Allison Stori**



- Civic uses with municipal offices, fire and rescue stations, school, library and historical society.
- No established connection to South Village

Today the **South Village** streetscape is characterized by:

- Fairfax Falls.
- Commercial uses setback from the road with parking areas in front.
- Well-established commercial businesses.
- Uncomfortable and unsafe walking environment, with no sidewalks on the street or crosswalks, and no other features to support safe and comfortable pedestrian activities.
- Automobile orientation with little attention given to pedestrian activity.

This chapter, in combination with the Fairfax Village Non-motorized Travel Plan, aim to show ideas and initiatives and how their implementation can ultimately lead to a safer and more accessible community. By identifying improvements that vary in scale and cost, the proposals discussed and illustrated can be implemented individually, or as a group of enhancements. Village-specific guidelines and streetscape improvements are most effective when they work together. Street design and landscaping policies could be researched and carefully written to avoid potential conflicts, maintenance issues and climate compatibility.

Development

Fairfax is within close proximity to several regional job centers which makes it a very attractive community. However, further investment in the basic infrastructure is needed to adequately accommodate additional development. Mainly, the village sewer system and treatment plant, installed in 1982, is near capacity and without expansion, is close to being unable to meet additional needs of North Village. While vacant parcels with the potential for development opportunities have already been identified within the village area, without such improvements, North Village will not be able to accommodate appropriate job creating businesses and industry as outlined in this vision. The Selectboard should continue to explore and identify available options to develop a long-term solution.

Fairfax should consider supporting a market study that looks at the regional economy and what types of uses could be supported within the village. By identifying desirable new development and potential sites to accommodate those uses the impact of insufficient water supply and wastewater treatment on North Village may be more evident and help lead to a priority in examining potential solutions.

In North Village it is important to encourage the redevelopment of mixed use buildings on lots to provide both residential and commercial activity. Fairfax residents value the small-scale, locally

owned businesses of North Village and encouraging and assisting vital, diverse locally owned businesses is a priority.

In South Village the development goals include minimizing the visual impact of paved parking in the front of buildings, innovative stormwater management, improving the pedestrian environment; ideas for new land uses include retail businesses and offices, and improving the entry image. Input from community members suggest that the quality of South Village site features, the relationship of buildings to the street, and impacts to neighbors are just as important as architectural style.

It is important that Development Regulations and Ordinances address the unique village context and require suitable design while addressing parking and circulation.

Potential Next Steps:

In order to implement this vision Fairfax will need to pursue a broad range of actions. These will include public actions that will both regulate and support private, market-driven development and may include short-term policy and actions requiring little to no capital outlays. Others will require significant public capital outlays that can occur over time. In the future Fairfax can revise and draft key tools such as updates to Development Regulations and guidelines to realize the Vision. Other implementation tools include work on parking and traffic management, and capital planning of future infrastructure.

Fairfax could develop guidelines for village buildings, streetscape and site improvements that reinforce the traditional walkable main street environment. This work can be funded through the general fund, or potentially a Municipal Planning Grant. Given the goal of preserving history and expanding the character of the Village, while setting the stage for development, it is important to remember that the walkability, bikeability and traffic patterns are impacted by the parcels that line the streets as much as by the design and amenities to be included within the right-of-ways.

Fairfax could conduct an inventory that encompasses the condition and characteristics of vacant commercial and residential properties within the Village. Based upon this inventory, preliminary cost estimates could be developed and priority areas could be determined, for renovation, redevelopment and development potential. The next step to this process is a market study analysis that identifies uses that are appropriate and potentially viable within the Village area. Once the market study is completed Fairfax could begin to develop a marketing plan to attract businesses as identified within the study.

Design proposals, with possible action based on securing funding sources, could be pursued for strengthening entries to the Village. Proposals should look at enhancing street and building design, adding appropriate welcome and wayfinding signage, attractive and energy efficient pedestrian-scale lighting fixtures, and landscape improvement projects.

Several of the Non-motorized Travel Plan recommendations include connections that are on private property. The Town should begin to discuss the plan with individual landowners and research possible easements or right-of-ways. In addition, the Town could begin to produce and mount bicycle route signs, as feasible, and work on tree clearing and other improvements to improve surface quality and sight distance on designated routes.

VILLAGE GOALS AND POLICIES

Goals

- 1) Strengthen sense of community in residents of all ages.
- 2) Create an attractive, safe and friendly village environment that invites and supports safe pedestrian use, community events and an active lifestyle.
- 3) Celebrate and maintain the historic and traditional characteristics that help define North Village.
- 4) Stimulate and maintain a vibrant, diverse economy in the Village.
- 5) Support the economic vitality and growth of established businesses.
- 6) Establish a physical and visual connection between the Village and the Lamoille River and incorporate the river as an active vital corridor.
- 7) Define and establish meaningful public spaces within the Village and surrounding network.
- 8) Provide diverse community recreation areas, cultural programs, pocket parks and greens, including exploring possibilities for a new community center.

Policies

- 1) To encourage the reuse of vacant or underutilized buildings as places for community activities in the Village. Identify sites and buildings; including ownership, condition and physical characteristics, and match appropriately to proposed activities.
- 2) To develop materials encouraging promotion and utilization of local businesses, marketing materials and tourism plan.
- 3) To continue the sidewalk improvement program so that there is a network of continuous, safe, maintained, and accessible sidewalks in the Village.
- 4) To use the comprehensive Fairfax Village Non-motorized Travel Plan in conjunction with existing programs and as a guide for walking and bicycling improvements within the Village.
- 5) To consider developing ways to promote the vision and the Village as an attractive and supportive community where business thrives.
- 6) To encourage renovation or adaptive reuse of historic buildings that respects the historic materials.
- 7) To support needed improvements and resources to strengthen access to the Lamoille River and other natural features and destinations.

CHAPTER 13: COMPATIBILITY WITH THE REGION AND ADJACENT COMMUNITIES

It is important to recognize that municipalities do not exist apart from one another and that land use planning in one community can affect land use in neighboring communities. This Chapter considers the compatibility of proposed land use in this Town Plan with land use in adjacent communities.

Fairfax is located in southern Franklin County, bordering the Chittenden County towns of Milton and Westford and the Lamoille County Town of Cambridge. The towns of Georgia, St. Albans Town, Fairfield, and Fletcher border Fairfax in Franklin County. Fairfax is well connected to adjacent communities via several state and local highways.

CONSIDERATION OF LAND USE PLANNING IN ADJACENT COMMUNITIES

Town of Georgia

The Town of Georgia adopted its most recent municipal plan in September of 2011. The Plan identifies twelve proposed land use districts, which have been adopted as zoning districts in their land-use regulations. The Recreational, Natural, and Agricultural/Rural Residential Districts border Fairfax. The Recreational and Natural Districts are not intended for future development and border Fairfax's Conservation and Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential Lands. Fairfax's Conservation Lands are generally not suited for development and are compatible with Georgia's Recreational and Natural Area Districts. Fairfax's Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential Lands may allow more residential development than in Georgia's Recreational and Natural District, but the scale of development is unlikely to present compatibility issues. Georgia's Agricultural/Rural Residential District is intended for agricultural and forestry uses and low density residential development, which largely borders the similar Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential Lands in Fairfax and is compatible.

The Route 104A corridor connects Georgia to Fairfax. In addition, the following town roads connect Fairfax and Georgia: the Georgia Mountain/McNall Road, the Blake/Rocky Ridge Road, the Goodrich Hill/Nichols Road, and the Oakland Station Road. Currently, there are no issues with proposed land use compatibility or other multi-town issues that should be addressed jointly concerning these shared road corridors.

Silver Lake is located both in the Town of Georgia and the Town of Fairfax. Silver Lake is protected in both towns, in the Natural District in Georgia and the Conservation Lands in Fairfax. The Lamoille River crosses the Fairfax/Georgia border. The floodplain along the Lamoille River is protected in both towns, in the Natural District in Georgia and the Conservation Lands in Fairfax.

Town of St. Albans

The Town of St. Albans adopted its most recent municipal plan in September of 2012. St. Albans Town identifies eleven proposed land use districts, which have been adopted as zoning districts in their land use regulations. A corner of the Rural District borders the Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential Lands in Fairfax. The Rural District in St. Albans Town is intended for agricultural and forestry uses in addition to scattered residences and a few businesses. These land uses are compatible with land use planning in this area of Fairfax.

Route 104 is the only transportation route that connects St. Albans Town with Fairfax. Route 104 has experienced high levels of traffic and increasing congestion, as identified in the Route 104/104A Corridor Study. Fairfax and St. Albans continue to work together in implementing the recommendations of this study, especially in the north of Town.

The St. Albans Town Reservoir is located in the Town of Fairfax. The water supply recharge area is protected under current zoning regulations, which adds an additional set of regulations specific to protecting the recharge.

Town of Fairfield

The Town of Fairfield's most recent municipal plan was adopted in December 2009. The Fairfield Zoning Regulations include seven zoning districts. The Agricultural/Rural Residential and the Fairfield Swamp Districts border the Town of Fairfax. The Agricultural/Rural Residential District borders Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential Lands and the Public Water Supply Protection Area in Fairfax and the Swamp District borders just Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential Lands. Fairfield's Agricultural/Rural Residential District is intended for agricultural and forestry uses and rural residential development, which is compatible with Fairfax's Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential District. It is not clear whether Fairfield is considering potential impacts to the St. Albans reservoir when reviewing land use applications. The Swamp District provides for the protection of the areas surrounding the Fairfield Waterfowl Refuge. The State owned Fairfield Swamp Management District is located in Fairfield and crosses the border into Fairfax between Cadieux Road and West Street. While Fairfax's Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential Lands would allow some residential development, the areas around the Wildlife Management Area are protected by Land Trust, thus the land uses are compatible.

Several Town roads connect Fairfield with Fairfax including Pilon/Gillin Road, Rugg Road, Cadieux/Swamp Road, and West Street Rd. Currently, there are no issues with proposed land use compatibility or other multi-town issues that should be addressed jointly concerning these shared road corridors.

Town of Fletcher

The Town of Fletcher adopted its most recent municipal plan in September of 2005. Fletcher identifies six land use districts, which have been adopted as zoning districts in their land use regulations. The Village, Conservation, and Rural Residential/Agricultural Districts border the Town of Fairfax. The Village District borders Conservation Lands and Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential Lands and is intended to provide for residential, commercial, and other compatible

development that serves the needs of the Town. While Fairfax's Conservation Lands are not generally suitable for future development, the scale of development in the Fletcher Village District will likely not create compatibility issues. There are also no compatibility issues with the Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential Lands. Fletcher's Conservation District largely consists of uplands and is not intended for future development. It borders Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential Lands and Conservation Lands in Fairfax. While the Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential District will allow for some residential development, the scale should not affect compatibility with the Conservation District; this plan recommends appropriate site planning to cluster development and maintain the quality of forestlands. The Conservation District in Fletcher is compatible with the Conservation Lands in Fairfax. The Rural Residential/Agricultural District in Fletcher borders Agricultural/Forest/Rural Residential Lands in Fairfax, where there are no compatibility issues, and Conservation Lands. It is likely that the scale of development in Fletcher's Rural Residential/Agricultural District will not create any compatibility issues with Fairfax's Conservation Lands.

Several Town roads connect Fletcher to Fairfax including Buck Hollow Road, Ellsworth Road (connecting to Tabor Hill and Wilkins Road), Slattery Road, Comette/Rugg Road, the Cambridge/Fairfax Road, and Goose Pond/River Road. Currently, there are no issues with proposed land use compatibility or other multi-town issues that should be addressed jointly concerning these shared road corridors.

Town of Cambridge

The Town of Cambridge adopted its most recent municipal plan in October of 2008. The Plan identifies thirteen proposed land use districts, but the Town has not adopted zoning regulations to implement the proposed land use map. Cambridge does have subdivision regulations with a one acre minimum lot size throughout town. The Agricultural and the Rural Residential/Agricultural proposed land use districts border Fairfax's Conservation Lands. There is unlikely to be any land use incompatibilities between these two town borders.

The Lamoille River crosses the Fairfax/Cambridge border. Both towns are members of the National Flood Insurance Program and regulate development in accordance with flood hazard bylaws in accordance with the program.

Route 104 connects Cambridge to Fairfax. Route 104 has experienced high levels of traffic and increasing congestion, as identified in the Route 104/104A Corridor Study. Fairfax and Cambridge should work together in implementing the recommendations of this study, especially in the east of town.

Town of Westford

The Town of Westford adopted its most recent municipal plan in May 2010. Westford identifies six proposed land use districts, which have been adopted as zoning districts in their land use regulations. The Agriculture, Forestry, and Residential I; Agriculture, Forestry, and Residential II; and Rural Residential Districts border the Town of Fairfax. The Agriculture, Forestry, and Residential I District is intended to enable low density residential development that is compatible with the District's primary uses of agriculture and forestry and it borders Fairfax's Low Density Residential and Conservation Lands. There is unlikely to be any land use incompatibilities with

these proposed land uses. The Agriculture, Forestry, and Residential II District is intended to enable where appropriate certain commercial and industrial uses on good roads while conserving the rural environment of the District and it borders Fairfax's Conservation Lands on either side of Route 128. While commercial development is allowed adjacent to Conservation Lands, if Westford determines it to be appropriate and it conserves the rural environment, these proposed land uses can remain compatible. The Rural Residential District is intended to provide an option for residential development at a higher density than surrounding rural areas and it borders Conservation Lands and Low Density Residential Lands between Plains Road and just east of Toof Road. The District is compatible with the Low Density Residential Lands. If residential development is clustered and appropriately sited to mitigate impact to wildlife habitat and forest land, there are no incompatibilities with Conservation Lands.

Route 128 connects Westford to Fairfax. In addition, the following town roads connect Westford to Fairfax: Sand Hill Road, Plains Road, Toof Road, and Allen Irish Road. Currently, there are no issues with proposed land use compatibility or other multi-town issues that should be addressed jointly concerning these shared road corridors.

Town of Milton

The Town of Milton adopted its most recent municipal plan in 2008, amended June 2011. Milton identifies twenty proposed land use districts, which have been adopted as zoning districts in their land use regulations. The corner of the Agricultural/Rural Residential District borders Conservation Lands in Fairfax and there are no roads connecting the two towns. The Agricultural/Rural Residential District is intended to provide for continued agriculture, forestry, and open space uses together with compatible low density residential development. These land uses are compatible with proposed land use planning in this area of Fairfax.

CONSIDERATION OF LAND USE PLANNING IN THE REGION

Fairfax is a member municipality of the Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NRPC). All communities, including Fairfax, are entitled to equal voting representation by two locally appointed members of the governing Board of Commissioners. The NRPC is legally mandated to prepare a regional plan pursuant to Title 24, Chapter 117, of the Vermont Statutes Annotated. It is intended for use as a legal document, as a guide for decision makers, and as a five year action plan to address issues of regional importance.

To receive an Act 250 permit, a project must conform to the regional plan. The Northwest Regional Plan, most recently adopted in 2007, proposes land use planning areas to encourage the conservation of valued resources and a development pattern that will maintain the character and quality of life important to this region. The planning areas include agricultural resource lands, conservation and forest resource lands, low-density development areas, growth centers, and sub-regional growth centers. Fairfax contains agricultural resource lands, conservation and forest resource lands, and low-density development areas throughout the town. In addition, the Fairfax Growth Center zoning district has been designated a sub-regional growth center. Sub-regional growth centers are expected to serve as economic and cultural hubs for surrounding towns. One factor in designating Fairfax Village as a sub-regional growth center is its desire for managed high density and mixed-use development within the center's boundaries.

However, the Growth Center is limited by the Water and Sewer District which currently can only support limited additional growth due to the minimal available remaining allocations. The Town is actively pursuing a back-up water source to supplement the existing municipal well and currently has a moratorium on additional water allocation within the water district until a stronger source can be attained.

The waste plant has some allocations remaining but cannot currently satisfy all properties in the sewer district. The State Wastewater Management Division has implemented a moratorium on expanding the waste treatment plant until new recommendations for limits on the total allowable phosphorus levels in the Lake Champlain Basin are adopted.

CHAPTER 14: IMPLEMENTATION

*“Even if you’re on the right track, you’ll get run over if you just sit there.”
-- Will Rogers*

INTRODUCTION TO IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

The implementation of the goals and policies of this Town Plan falls into two general categories: regulatory and non-regulatory options. Regulatory options consist of Development Regulations and other Town Ordinances, which can include numerous specific regulations that further goals and policies in the Plan. Non-regulatory implementation options include, but are not limited to capital planning, special studies, and advisory commissions. Listed below are strategies that the Fairfax Planning Commission recommends to implement the goals and policies of this Town Plan.

REGULATORY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Development Regulations

The majority of policies outlined in the Fairfax Town Plan will be implemented through the Development Regulations. The purposes of the Development Regulations are to implement the Fairfax Town Plan and to further the purposes of the Act [Title 24, Chapter 117, Section 4302 of V.S.A]; specifically, to promote the public health, safety, comfort, convenience, economy, and general welfare of the community. The Development Regulations require that all land development, including the subdivision of land, obtain all permits and approvals as required in the regulations before it is commenced. The Fairfax Development Regulations incorporate many tools enabled in the Act, including zoning districts, site plan review, conditional use review, off-street parking and loading space requirements, performance standards, overlay districting, planned unit developments, and setback requirements. The Development Regulations should be reviewed on an ongoing basis to implement the goals, policies, and implementation strategies of this plan. Feedback from developers and residents regarding the Regulations is welcome. Such comments should be submitted to the Zoning Office in writing.

Fairfax Development Regulations: Specific Implementation Strategies

- Natural and Cultural Resources
 - Periodically review the site plan and subdivision review standards for preserving natural, scenic, and cultural resources, and evaluate for conformity to the Town Plan.
 - Strengthen the subdivision review standards that minimize impact to prime agricultural soils and existing farmland, and evaluate for conformity to the Town Plan.
 - Strengthen the standards that limit development on the shorelines of streams and evaluate for conformity to the Town Plan.
- Housing
 - Review the Development Regulations and look for areas where affordable housing could be further encouraged.

- Investigate the implementation of creative zoning techniques such as density bonuses to encourage affordable housing.
- Transportation
 - Review the effectiveness of the access management regulations.
 - Incorporate standards that require new sidewalks to connect to the existing or planned sidewalk network in all developments within the Growth Center where possible.
 - Consider requiring that all new development roads in the Growth Center district connect to the existing road network (i.e. not a dead end road) or if this is not possible, dedicate a right of way for potential future connection.
- Land Use
 - Consider recommendations of the Village Vision chapter to incorporate into future revisions of Development Regulations and Ordinances.
 - Consider ways to enhance planned unit development review standards and procedures in the Residential and Rural Districts to encourage the clustering of development; to preserve agricultural, forest, and open lands; and to discourage strip development along existing roads.
 - Consider strategies to discourage residential development from encroaching on large tracts of forest land.
 - Consider implementing regulatory changes that would enable and encourage community services and businesses to locate in the growth center and mixed use district.
 - Consider expansion of the land use mapping capabilities of the Town to assist in development review.

Town Ordinances

The Town has adopted many regulatory ordinances that implement the goals and policies of the Town Plan.

Town Ordinances: Specific Implementation Strategies

- Reevaluate all Town ordinances to assure conformance with the Town Plan, as appropriate.

NON-REGULATORY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Capital Planning

An important tool for Plan implementation in Fairfax is the use of capital budgeting to plan ahead for future municipal expenditures. The capital budget provides several benefits, including enabling the Town to raise revenue for anticipated needs before they become urgent, providing flexibility in moving priorities around in an emergency, and improving the ability of the school and Town to plan capital projects in accord with one another. It also makes the Town’s financial management and decision-making process more visible to the voters.

Capital budgeting in Fairfax is essential in planning needed improvements and expansions to Town water and sewer systems. Ideally, the existing capital budgeting process would have

anticipated and planned for financing the needed improvements and expansions to the existing systems before they reached capacity. Given that they are currently at capacity, continued effort should be made to secure funding for municipal water and sewer system improvements and a capital budget and program should be appropriately used, managed, and maintained and used in the future. Additionally, road maintenance and improvements could best be planned for utilizing capital budgeting. Continued improvement of the road management system to identify and fund needed improvements and the costs associated with different treatment options would greatly benefit the Town.

Fairfax has been levying an impact fee, which implements the Capital Budget and Program, since 2003. An impact fee is levied on new development to help mitigate its fiscal impacts on the community. Under state law (24 V.S.A. §5200), the purpose of authorizing impact fees is “to enable municipalities to require the beneficiaries of new development to pay their proportionate share of the cost of municipal and school capital projects which benefit them and to require them to pay for or mitigate the negative effects of construction.” Fairfax’s impact fee is important because it offsets a portion of the burden of additional services incurred by new development from the existing taxpayers.

Capital Planning: Specific Implementation Strategies

- Review annually and revise as needed the Capital Budget and Program, and the associated impact fee ordinance.
- Maintain the Capital Budget and Program on an annual basis by revising the first year in the five year program as the current budget and adding another year at the end of the program.
- Annual review of the Fairfax Capital Budget and Program should include a plan to finance improvements for the wastewater treatment system, the water supply system, roads and associated vehicles and equipment, sidewalks, Town buildings, recreation and associated infrastructure, schools, and the fire department.

Special Studies and Projects

Development Regulations and capital planning work best at implementing the goals and policies of municipal plans when they are coupled with studies and projects initiated or recommended by the Planning Commission.

Special Studies and Projects: Specific Implementation Strategies

- General
 - Hold semi-annual meetings with the Planning Commission, Development Review Board, and Selectboard to coordinate the implementation of the goals, policies, and recommendations in this Plan.
- Energy
 - Investigate alternatives that decrease the number of single occupancy commuter vehicles, including, but not limited to, the construction of a park and ride lot.
 - Conduct periodic energy audits of Town facilities and vehicles.
 - Participate in the Regional Energy Committee, sponsored by NRPC.

- Consider the establishment of a municipal energy committee and/or Town energy coordinator.
- Public Facilities, Utilities, and Services
 - Develop a program to improve or expand Town water and sewer systems, including providing a back-up water source, to enable centralization of public services and commercial amenities at higher densities of development in the Growth Center.
 - Pursue State and Federal Grant programs to secure funding for recreational projects that that are consistent with the recreational goals of the Town.
 - Increase the availability of fitness programs to the residents of Fairfax.
 - Investigate and expand the use of the Town Forest.
 - Investigate the need and explore options for establishing a community center in Fairfax that would serve as a venue for services, activities, and events that support community residents of all ages.
 - Work on increasing Town-wide support for funding community infrastructure in the Village, with specific attention to wastewater treatment and water supply.
 - Annually review Town financial support for public health and human service agencies.
 - Investigate and promote viable options for expanding broadband internet access in Fairfax.
 - Investigate and promote viable options for expanding cell phone coverage in Fairfax.
- Transportation
 - Work with the Vermont Agency of Transportation on alternative management strategies for the Route 104 corridor, which would decrease the volume of traffic through the Town.
 - Implement the sidewalk construction and maintenance master plan for the Growth Center.
 - Implement the recommendations of the Route 104/104A Corridor Study and the Route 104/128 Intersection Study, as appropriate.
 - Continue to evaluate the need for improvement of the Town road system, and implement improvements as funding permits.
- Local Economy
 - Develop strategies to encourage centralization of public services and commercial amenities in the Village to promote a healthy localized economy.
 - Develop strategies to encourage businesses to locate or expand in Fairfax.