

STRATTON TOWN PLAN



2014

STRATTON PLANNING COMMISSION 2014:

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STRATTON

A UNIQUE TOWN IN WINDHAM COUNTY VERMONT

Adopted on October 27, 2014 by the Stratton Selectboard

Approved by Windham Regional Commissioners Final Voting on _____

Town Clerk: _____

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PART 1

INTRODUCTION

Objectives of the Stratton Town Plan

This Town Plan was created by the Citizens of the Town of Stratton, through their Planning Commission, to provide a guide for the development of the Town of Stratton. In general our objective is to protect the health and general welfare of the public, while allowing the Town to develop as a rural-residential and second-home community, with a popular resort area, within the Green Mountain National Forest. Subsequently, a variety of goals and objectives have been laid out on the pages that follow to promote many of the favorable aspects and social responsibilities this town offers to its community and the State of Vermont. Land use planning, growth management, economic development, resource conservation and environmental protection are all priorities that have been, and will continue to be, weighed, measured and then balanced to provide an optimum guide by which to regulate development within Stratton.

Framework for Planning

The Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act (Chapter 117, 24 VSA, as amended by Acts 200 and 115) enables municipalities to undertake planning for the appropriate development of land in order *“to promote the public health and safety against fire, floods, explosions and other dangers; to promote prosperity, comfort, access to adequate light, air, convenience, efficiency, economy and the general welfare; to enable mitigation of the burden of property taxes on agricultural, forest and other open lands; to encourage appropriate architectural design; to encourage the development of renewable resources; to protect residential, agricultural and other areas from undue concentrations of populations and overcrowding of land and buildings, from traffic congestion and from inadequate parking, and the invasion of traffic, and the loss of peace, quiet and privacy; to facilitate the growth of villages, towns, and cities and of their communities and neighborhoods so as to create an optimum environment with good civic design; to encourage development of a rich cultural environment; to foster the arts; to provide means and methods for the municipalities of this state to plan for the prevention, minimization and future eliminations of such land development problems as may presently exist or which may be foreseen and to implement those plans when and where appropriate.”* In accordance with statutory regulations, a Town Plan must be reviewed and revised or readopted every five years. This plan is a modification of the Stratton Town Plan adopted February 22, 1999 and subsequently readopted on September 27, 2004 and June 22, 2009.

Interpretation and Implementation of the Town Plan

The Stratton Town Plan is a plan and not a bylaw in itself. It is the responsibility of the Planning Commission and the Selectmen to create, revise and implement enforceable laws and bylaws that reflect the intentions of the Town Plan. During the development of the Town Plan, certain language was used within the objectives of the plan to stress the importance of these guidelines for implementation. In this language, verbs such as “should,” “can” or “may” have been used to suggest that some action is encouraged, but not mandated, while verbs such as “shall” “will” and “must” are used where the Town has strong intentions to ensure that a requirement is to be implemented.

Specifically, this plan is to be used by Town boards, commissions, departments, residents, and businesses in the following ways:

1. to provide a framework for planning the future growth of the Town of Stratton;
2. to guide decision making in site development plans, and conditional use permits;
3. to serve as a guide in responding to Act 250 permit application requests.
4. to provide the Town of Stratton's position during Act 250 application considerations by the State of Vermont.
5. to provide a framework for updating zoning bylaws.
6. to provide a guide for the preparation of subdivision regulations;
7. to recommend future planning studies;
8. to assist in the development of a capital budget and program; and
9. to serve as a source of information and guidance to individuals and businesses making decisions regarding their development plans.

Town Land Use Regulations

The Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act enables nine specific regulatory tools which can implement the Plan.

- (1) Zoning bylaws.
- (2) Site plan bylaws.
- (3) Subdivision bylaws.
- (4) Unified development bylaws.
- (5) Official map.
- (6) Impact fees.
- (7) Phasing.
- (8) Transfer of development rights.
- (9) Special or freestanding bylaws.

Of the nine, the two below are in use in Stratton.

Zoning Regulations

The zoning regulations shall implement the Town Plan and shall be in accord with its policies.

Subdivision Regulations

Subdivision regulations should supervise the manner in which land may be developed by setting forth the submission, processing, and design of plats. They should provide for suitable layout of lots, improvement of roads, installation of utilities, open space, landscaping and screening, recreation areas and the protection

of natural areas. Subdivision regulations should incorporate performance standards reflecting Town policies.

How This Plan Was Developed

The planning process for this Town Plan was begun in 2005. The 1999 Town Plan was reviewed and updated for current use. This document was a revision of the 1992 Town Plan, which was based on a public opinion survey. Windham Regional Commission (WRC) Staff reviewed the Town Plan in 2007 and 2008 and actively worked with the Stratton Planning Commission to focus on revisions to the Town Plan in preparation for achieving Regional Approval of the Plan in 2009. WRC staff assisted the Planning Commission with 2014 updates with the same objective.

PART 2

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

GOAL 1: SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

To plan development to maintain the Town's characteristic settlement pattern in the designated growth area which is typified by a recreation-oriented village within a rural and forested setting that includes adequate undeveloped land. To plan development that is characteristic of the settlement pattern of the rest of the Town which is typified by individual homes and a small government center all surrounded by forested land.

Policies of Goal 1

1. Intensive residential development should be encouraged within the designated growth area, Zoning District Commercial Residential 1 (CR1).
2. Strip development should be discouraged.
3. Commercial growth should be encouraged within the designated growth area.
4. Any expansion of the infrastructure should reinforce this growth pattern.
5. In general, mixed use development will be encouraged in the designated growth area to provide for multiple uses on the same lot

Action Items under Goal 1

1. Planned Unit Development (PUD), Resort PUD, Ski PUD and Commercial Industrial PUD shall be encouraged.
2. In order to maximize the development potential of the Zoning District CR1 and to minimize environmental impact, the Town shall encourage developers to in-fill the land ignored in the earlier development process. Most of this District has municipal sewer and water. Because of these services, the Town shall encourage developers to devote a portion of the area to be developed, whether contiguous to the site or not, to affordable housing at densities greater than one unit per two acres. There are provisions for several kinds of Planned Unit Development included in the Stratton Zoning Bylaw that can be used for the development of affordable housing. Private home development should remain at the density of one unit per two acres.
3. Any proposed development plan shall be evaluated to ensure that the high scenic quality of the area will be maintained.
4. In order to prevent strip development and to minimize traffic congestion and other problems, commercial uses in the designated growth area should share access and parking facilities and shall maintain ample landscape buffers between commercial and noncommercial uses.

5. Within any development, either residential or commercial, landscaping and tree planting, in keeping with the surrounding area, should be required.
 6. Signs shall be regulated to minimize the impact on scenic views, to avoid confusion, and to prevent unsafe conditions.
 7. The residential area of the Town of Stratton should continue to be developed in single-family lots or in Planned Unit Developments, with ample buffers around clustered dwellings, in order to maintain the forested appearance of the Town and to maintain the residential character of the Town.
 8. Town Highway 8, *Mountain Road*, should be maintained as the principal route connecting the designated growth area with the rest of the Town.
 9. Revise the existing Zoning Bylaw to include a new Commercial Residential Zone, CR3, as shown on the Proposed Land Use map, to promote a village area, in the Vermont tradition, surrounding the intersection of Stratton-Arlington Road and West Jamaica Road.
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GOAL 2: ECONOMIC GROWTH

To encourage economic growth activities that provide year-round, satisfying, and rewarding job opportunities and that maintain environmental standards.

Policies of Goal 2

1. To encourage multi-use growth, especially within individual structures and / or individual projects.
2. To discourage incompatible and uncoordinated development activity that could jeopardize public and private investment.
3. To allow for the orderly and imaginative development of the designated growth area.
4. To encourage the protection of the quality of life of Stratton residents.
5. To allow for a diversity of economic activities which brings diverse job growth

Action Items under Goal 2

1. Economic, cultural and recreational development opportunities should be pursued to provide long-range economic benefits and stable employment.
2. Encourage business growth in town from high wage job sectors such as professional jobs, light industry, and technology sectors

3. If an effort has the potential to directly or indirectly accelerate economic growth, it should satisfy all the planning goals, objectives and policies of this Plan.
 4. Allow for a mix of economic activities for consumers such as retail chains, restaurants, appropriate developers, and tourism-related business
 5. In planning for development the following shall be considered: transportation, preservation of scenic character, utilities and conservation of natural resources.
 6. All business and industry shall control and dispose of all wastes, relate favorably with existing land use, and account to the Town for both direct and indirect municipal costs.
 7. The quality of life of Stratton residents should be protected.
 8. The Town of Stratton accepts service-type businesses and vacation home and resort development, which provide adequate protection of natural resources and the quality of life of the residents and which maintain Vermont's traditional character for visitors.
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GOAL 3: EDUCATION

To broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities sufficient to ensure the full realization of the abilities of the residents of Stratton.

Policies of Goal 3

1. To continually evaluate the quality of education provided for Stratton school children.
2. To investigate ways in which to enhance the educational experience of all residents.

Action Items under Goal 3

1. The education of the residents of Stratton is important and should be evaluated continually.
2. The Town should monitor population and school enrollment trends to address future needs in an efficient and cost effective manner
3. Rely on Selectboard for leadership in efficiently developing and maintaining the highest quality educational opportunities consistent with the financial capabilities of the community

GOAL 4: TRANSPORTATION

To provide for safe, convenient, economic and energy efficient transportation systems which reflect the integrity of the natural environment.

Policies of Goal 4

1. To consider the development of paths for pedestrians and other non-motorized use.
2. To encourage the integration of transportation facilities and public utilities into corridors to minimize the impact on the environment and to assist desired development patterns.
3. To provide for an adequate system of roads through proper short and long-term maintenance practices, through the construction of all roads to Town and / or State specifications, and through a future-needs-survey.
4. To encourage current use and expanded use of private and public shuttle buses, which provide transportation services between various residential communities and the Stratton Mountain resort area as well as to neighboring towns and facilities.
5. Encourage road design standards that allow for adequate shoulder width for pedestrians and bicyclists.
6. Support community services that provide transportation for elderly and physically handicapped residents of Stratton.
7. Coordinate with the Vermont Agency of Transportation and neighboring towns in planning for road improvements along VT 100 and adjacent collector roads.

Action Items under Goal 4

1. Stratton's road infrastructure should ensure public safety and provide convenience, balancing necessity with a respect for the integrity of the environment, the Town's scenic beauty, rural character and historic sites.
2. Continue to financially support public transit providers such as Connecticut River Transit through annual donations (Selectboard)
3. Continue to work toward adding sidewalks, crosswalks, and traffic calming treatments throughout Town where feasible to accommodate a mix of users (Selectboard, Planning Commission, Road Commissioners)
4. Work to identify and map Class 4 highways and legal Town trails (Selectboard)

5. Complete a Townwide Infrastructure Inventory to assist in future transportation planning efforts

GOAL 5: NATURAL AND HISTORIC FEATURES

To identify, protect and preserve important natural and historic features of the Stratton landscape including:

- unique natural areas from uses that would significantly alter their unique, scenic, educational, or scientific value;
- the Town's water resources;
- scenic roads, waterways and scenic views;
- sites of historic or geologic significance;
- historic structures and designs relating to the development of Stratton Ski Resort.

Policies of Goal 5

1. To protect wetlands, which in turn protects wildlife habitat, the retention of surface runoff, and provides for scientific and educational values of these areas.
2. To keep shorelines and banks of permanent streams in natural vegetation.
3. To protect flood hazard areas.
4. To protect and enhance scenic views and sites.
5. To protect historic structures and sites.
6. To improve the sites of the Old Town common.
7. To encourage preservation of the original character of the Stratton Ski Resort.

Action Items under Goal 5

1. It is the policy of the Town of Stratton to regulate the use of land above 2500 feet of elevation so that the resources and / or conditions are not threatened, and the public good is upheld.
2. Slopes greater than 25% should remain in forest cover; slopes exceeding 15% should not be planned for intensive development unless served by municipal / community sewer and water systems.
3. Areas characterized by shallow soils should not be planned for intensive development.
4. Forests should be utilized in a manner that will not significantly reduce their ecological function of replenishing surface and ground water.

5. It is the policy of the Town of Stratton to protect its waters by restricting development in:
 - watersheds of upland streams
 - watersheds characterized by steep slopes
 - aquifer recharge areas, and
 - Grout Pond and Stratton Pond watersheds
6. Permanent water courses, lakes, ponds and shorelines should be retained in their natural condition. In logging operations, cutting along stream banks should be minimized to reduce erosion and siltation.
7. Natural areas are places of unique scientific or educational value. These places are not necessarily scenic or historically significant; rather, they are primarily ecological reserves with unique qualities that distinguish them from the general landscape. Unique natural areas should be protected from uses that would have an adverse impact on them.
8. Scenic highways, stream corridors, trails and roads, views and other scenic resources should be protected from development that would have an adverse impact on that resource.
9. Development should not obstruct views. Structures should be sited so that visual conflicts with the existing landscape are minimized.
10. Only selected removal of tree cover along ridge lines should be allowed in order to maintain ridge continuity.
11. Development and timber removal on steep slopes should be planned so that they do not adversely affect scenic quality.
12. Scenic views and areas should be protected from development which would substantially diminish their scenic value.
13. Improvements to scenic back roads should be carried out in a manner that would protect, conserve and enhance their scenic quality.
14. The quality of the wilderness surrounding designated hiking trails should be preserved.
15. Surface waters should be protected from uses which would reduce the scenic appeal of their shorelines.
16. Lands adjacent to, or including, areas or sites of historical, educational, cultural, scientific, architectural and / or archeological value should be used only in a manner that would not reduce or destroy the value of the site or area.
17. The reuse or recycling of historic buildings in community development should be encouraged as a method of preservation.

18. The site of the Old Town should be protected so that its significance will not be diminished.
 19. Development within the Stratton Ski Resort should evaluate ways to preserve the original character of the resort.
 20. Minimize the disturbance of stone walls and foundations.
-

GOAL 6: LAND, WATER AND AIR RESOURCES

To maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife and land resources.

Stratton's air, water, mineral and land resources should be planned for use and development, according to the principles set forth in 10 VSA Section 6086 (a).

Policies of Goal 6

1. To continually evaluate the emissions into the air from the development of the designated growth area.
2. To identify and protect unstable soils.
3. To protect ground water from contamination.

Action Items under Goal 6

1. Limit development to low densities on soils characterized by seasonal high water table, hardpan, areas of significant ground water recharge, and steep slopes.
2. In order to conserve the Town's water resources and minimize the cost of water supply and waste disposal systems, developments should be planned, designed, and operated to minimize water demand.
3. Subdivisions shall have water supplies large enough to serve all the units within the subdivision, as well as to provide fire protection.
4. Any new water supply or waste disposal system shall not deplete or contaminate any existing water supply systems.
5. Areas characterized by unstable soils, i.e., muck, peats, clays or silts, shall not be planned for intensive development.
6. Lands within flood hazard areas shall be devoted to agricultural and open space uses. Where continuation of only agriculture and open space use is feasible, only those forms of development which do not restrict or divert the flow of water or endanger the health, safety and welfare of the public or riparian owners during periods of flooding shall be permitted.

7. Within the floodway fringe, structures shall be allowed, provided they will not:
 - encroach on wetland areas both associated with the floodway fringe and those that do not occur within the floodway fringe;
 - significantly reduce the use of the land for agricultural production;
 - impair the potential use of aquifer recharge areas, identified in the proper way, for community water supply, recreational and fire-protection;
 - significantly reduce the recreational and scenic value of the floodway fringe or floodway.
8. Corridors 75 feet wide on each side of permanent streams and lakes of 20 acres or more are valuable wildlife, recreation and aesthetic resources. These corridors are intended to protect the physical and scenic quality of the streams, lakes and ponds of Stratton to prevent damage from flash-flooding and localized storms and to preclude pollution of the waters. These corridors should be protected from development.
9. Removal of vegetation along stream banks and shorelines of lakes and ponds should be minimized. Except in cases of hardship or special topography, principal buildings should be set back not less than 75 feet from the top of the bank.
10. Deer wintering areas are crucial to the white-tailed deer population. These areas are used perennially by wintering deer and are characterized by softwood growth near young hardwoods and water on south-facing slopes. Deer wintering areas should be protected from any intensity of development that would harm this vital resource.
11. Waterfowl habitat in Vermont is in limited supply and should be protected from harmful development.
12. Stratton's streams are natural habitats of the eastern brook trout; therefore, these streams should be protected to maintain their viability.
13. The current knowledge is that black bears range over most of the land in the Town of Stratton, except for where humans live or use the land continuously. Road crossings are an exception to this. There are two major crossings in the Town of Stratton. One is on *Mountain Rd.*, between the Stratton Ski area and Sage Hill in Jamaica. The other crossing is at *VT Rte. 100* in the southeast section of Town.

Generally, but not always, bears change their behavior when humans come to within 400 meters (¼ mile) of them. In the Town of Stratton, bears have several favorite places. Usually, but not always, the favorite places change on a seasonal basis. The favorite places may be critical for bear survival as stated in the Act 250 definitions of necessary wildlife habitat. At this time it is believed that most of the favored spots shown on the Significant Habitat Map are critical for survival of the bear.

When bears travel, they generally like to be in forest cover, especially coniferous cover. The literature discusses bear corridors. The term corridor is a misnomer. They do not travel down a well-worn game path, nor do individual bears take the same path from one favorite location to another; rather they converge on the favored spot and disperse radially.

Due to the evolving nature of what is known about black bear, it is difficult to write land use policy and law that will always apply to changes in human activity in their range. Any land use policy

regarding the black bear should be with cooperation and consultation with ANR, Department of Fish and Wildlife, and evolve with new information. Any zoning bylaws will have to be flexible enough to satisfy the basic requirements of the bear population, as well as other goals set forth in the Town Plan. Suggestions for changes and inclusions in any changed bylaw follow:

- a. Map all known sensitive black bear habitat in the Town of Stratton.
- b. Provide for special review of any development within sensitive black bear habitat areas.
- c. Provide for a permanent network of conifer tree cover along stream banks, shorelines and roadsides.

14. Encourage private and public landowners to recognize the importance of protecting, maintaining and enhancing fish and wildlife habitat and ecosystems by supporting a variety of community and regional programs and incentives.

15. Any potential development should be evaluated for impact on the quality of the air from gasoline and/or diesel engines.

GOAL 7: ENERGY

To encourage the efficient use of energy and the development of renewable energy resources.

Policies of Goal 7

1. The Town should encourage and promote the use of solar energy, wind power, cogeneration, hydro and other innovative technologies, for commercial, residential and public uses.
2. To encourage the management of local forest resources for use as a sustainable energy resource.
3. Promote the use of alternative forms of energy that respect the built and natural environment
4. Encourage the development of energy efficient subdivisions and buildings
5. Coordinate with public transportation providers regarding alternative transportation opportunities in the region
6. Coordinate with Southern Loop ASC on ongoing initiatives to deal with present and future demand levels for electrical system reliability
7. Encourage the formation of a Town Energy Committee

Action Items under Goal 7

1. Continue to limit the types of land uses and allowable densities in areas outside of the Residential, Commercial - Residential, and Resort districts.

2. Maintain the Conservation District as an area with a very low density in order to promote sustainable management of wood lots.
 3. Continue to maintain provisions in the Zoning Bylaw that encourage clustered and multi-family housing in new residential developments and provide opportunities for appropriate home occupations and larger home-based businesses to minimize commuting to work.
 4. Promote the reduction of transportation energy use by supporting carpooling, public transit, and the use of energy efficient vehicles.
 5. Develop and maintain sidewalks and non-motorized pathways, where feasible.
 6. Stratton shall continue to enforce State residential building energy standards per 21 V.S.A. § 266 for all new residential construction in Town. To assure compliance with 21 V.S.A. § 266 Stratton should consider requiring receipt of the certificate of code compliance prior to permitting.
 7. Encourage new commercial, industrial, and major housing developments to follow design and construction principals that are energy efficient, conserve energy, encourage alternative energy production, conserve important forest and agriculture soils, and minimize contribution to greenhouse gasses. Stratton's Subdivision Regulations, as well as public purchase of easements on private land, can be utilized to accomplish these goals. Grouping of buildings can reduce utility footprint, make cogeneration a possibility, and reduce fractionation of wildlife habitat and agricultural land.
-

GOAL 8: RECREATION

To maintain and enhance recreational opportunities for Stratton residents and visitors.

- Growth should not significantly diminish the value and availability of outdoor recreational activities.
- Public access to noncommercial outdoor recreational opportunities, such as lakes and trails, should be identified, provided, and protected wherever appropriate.

Policies of Goal 8

1. To investigate ways to protect public access to outdoor noncommercial recreational activities.
2. To collect descriptions and maps of trails and other areas of recreational potential currently available to Stratton residents. This collection should include such areas available on lands of the Green Mountain National Forest and the owner of lands that include and surround Somerset Reservoir [TransCanada].
3. The Town should work towards increasing opportunities for outdoor recreation during all seasons generally.

Action Items under Goal 8

1. Public access to noncommercial recreational resources should not be limited by new development.
 2. A system of access trails and paths should be developed. The Town could also require trail development along open space portions of Planned Unit Developments.
 3. The Town should have on hand maps and descriptions of the noncommercial opportunities available to benefit residents and visitors.
-

GOAL 9: AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

To encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest industries.

- Strategies to protect the long-term viability of forest lands should be encouraged.
- The manufacture of value-added forest products should be encouraged.
- Sound forest management practices should be encouraged.
- Public investments should be planned so as to minimize development pressure on forest land.

Policies of Goal 9

1. To encourage the continued sustainable use of land for timber and forestry purposes.

Action Items under Goal 9

1. Forest and secondary agricultural soils have significant potential for forestry. As these soils are often well suited for commercial forestry or pasturage, it is the policy of the town of Stratton to plan for development that will not reduce or eliminate these soils for forestry use.
-

GOAL 10: EARTH AND MINERAL RESOURCES

To provide for the wise and efficient use of Stratton's natural resources and to facilitate the appropriate extraction of earth resources as well as the proper restoration and preservation of the aesthetic qualities of the area.

Policies of Goal 10

1. To protect and conserve natural resources which are intolerant of intensive use and which perform vital functions in creating and maintaining a safe, healthy, beneficial environment for all.
2. To identify and protect earth resources from development that would limit their extraction in the future.
3. To ensure site rehabilitation after earth resources have been extracted.

Action Items under Goal 10

1. Sand and Gravel are nonrenewable resources important for the construction and maintenance of roads and buildings. Development should be avoided on extractable deposits of sand and gravel until they have been removed.
2. The extraction or processing of minerals or earth resources should not have an adverse impact on the environment, result in inconvenience to neighboring property owners, or represent a burden on municipal services. The extraction of such resources must ensure site rehabilitation within one year of completion, or as extracted at the discretion of the Planning Commission.
3. Limit the extraction of earth and mineral resources to areas that are not heavily settled.
4. Extraction sites must handle truck traffic without creating unsafe travel conditions on Town roads and bridges.
5. Any site rehabilitation plan shall provide for the restoration of natural and aesthetic character of the land. Site rehabilitation plans should also provide for suitable alternative uses.

GOAL 11: HOUSING

To ensure the availability of safe and affordable housing for all residents of Stratton.

- Housing should be encouraged to meet the needs of diverse social and income groups in Stratton, particularly for those citizens of low to moderate incomes.
- Sites for multifamily and manufactured housing should be available in locations similar to those generally used for single-family conventional housing.

Policies of Goal 11

1. To encourage the development of affordable housing and employee housing.

2. To encourage the development of year-round housing that meets the needs of the Town's increasing population, and encourage development that provides for the needs of the second-home community.
3. To encourage housing that is energy efficient and does not cause undue burden on municipal services.
4. To encourage the construction of affordable housing and employee housing where developers are able to provide the needed utilities and facilities.

Action Items under Goal 11

1. All housing should be designed to maximize energy efficiency.
2. Stratton's land use regulations should provide for the use of various types of housing such as duplex housing, single-family housing, manufactured housing and / or rehabilitated housing.
3. Stratton's land use regulations shall provide for the use of multifamily housing as stipulated by 24V.S.A. Chapter 117.
4. Working with the Stratton Planning Commission, developers should be encouraged to use a portion of their land for affordable housing and / or employee housing, at a higher density than one unit per two acres. The land devoted to affordable housing and employee housing does not need to be contiguous with the second-home development site but should be served by municipal water and sewer.
5. Reduce permit fees for the creation of affordable housing units.
6. New development and expansion of existing development with a high need for seasonal workers should make provisions for employee housing or assist in placing seasonal employees in housing designed specifically for seasonal use, such as accessory apartments or dormitories.
7. Inventory town-owned land to determine if there are suitable parcels to encourage the creation of affordable housing units. Consider putting out a Request for Proposals from developers to create affordable housing.

GOAL 12: PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

To plan for, finance and provide an efficient system of public facilities and services to meet future needs.

- the full-time residential community of Stratton is too widely dispersed to make municipal water and sewer services feasible for everyone. All subdivisions should provide water and sewer services where possible.
- The rate of growth should not exceed the ability of the Town to regulate the provision of facilities and services.

Policies of Goal 12

1. To ensure that the basic needs of health, safety, education and housing are met and maintained at satisfactory levels.
2. To encourage the assessment of public investment in municipal services and facilities required by increasing private development.
3. Provide efficient and cost effective local government

Action Items under Goal 12

1. The Town of Stratton should continue its efforts to improve solid waste management.
2. Recycling is strongly recommended.
3. Composting is encouraged.
4. It is the policy of the Town of Stratton that no privately owned municipal type facility or service, such as water or sewer systems or roads, be accepted by the Town unless the cost of maintaining and operating such a system or facility conforms to the Town's existing and / or projected operating budget.
5. The Town should be encouraged to plan for future law enforcement requirements. If the need were to arise, the Town should be prepared to join in cooperation with neighboring towns or regions.
6. The Town should regularly evaluate its fire-fighting capacity.
7. All developments and subdivisions should consider providing for water impoundments or hydrant systems. Private individuals and neighborhoods should be encouraged to build ponds and install hydrants.
8. Because the current school population is small and widely dispersed throughout the Town, a school is not planned for the near future. The Town of Stratton pays tuition to surrounding school districts and any other approved elementary or secondary school for its students. Local transportation is provided by the Town. If school facilities become necessary, future population centers and the compatibility of the land should be taken into consideration before a site for a school is chosen. A potential site has been designated at the Stratton Recreation Area.
9. Although there appears to be satisfaction with the existing healthcare services, the Town should evaluate the need for and the benefits of joining with other towns in the sub-region to provide for future additional needs.
10. Promote volunteerism and recruit to fill vacancies on Town committees as appropriate

11. Take advantage of municipal, state, and federal grants, as a means to finance town projects.
-

GOAL 13: CHILDCARE

To ensure the availability of safe and affordable child care and to integrate child care issues into the planning process, including child care financing, infrastructure, business assistance for child care providers, and child care workforce development.

Objectives of Goal 13

1. To ensure that the basic needs of childcare for Stratton residents are met and maintained at satisfactory levels.

Policies under Goal 13

1. Currently, professional childcare facilities exist, and are available to employees and the general public at the Stratton Resort. Additionally there are facilities available in surrounding Towns. The 2010 census indicates that the Town of Stratton had 12 resident children under 5 years of age at that time, compared with only one reported in the 2000 census. and five ages 5-9, 13 ages 10-14, and 12 ages 15-19. Although these absolute numbers are relatively low, the Town of Stratton recognizes the importance of availability of such facilities to its residents. It is the policy of this Town to encourage the continued availability of affordable childcare at the Stratton and Mount Snow resorts and to work with surrounding towns for programs such as summer day camps offered by or within their schools.

Action Items under Goal 13

No further action is required at this time.

GOAL 14: FLOOD RESILIENCE

To encourage a flood resilient community.

Objectives of Goal 14

To ensure that Stratton is as flood resilient a community as it can be.

Policies of Goal 14

1. New development in identified flood hazard, fluvial erosion, and river corridor protection areas should be avoided. If new development is to be built in such areas, it should not exacerbate flooding and fluvial erosion.

2. The protection and restoration of floodplains and upland forested areas that attenuate and moderate flooding and fluvial erosion should be encouraged.
3. Flood emergency preparedness and response planning should be encouraged.

Action Items under Goal 14

1. Consider augmenting flood hazard area regulations with fluvial erosion hazard areas.

Part 3

TOWN PLAN ELEMENTS

LAND USE PLAN

EXISTING LAND USE

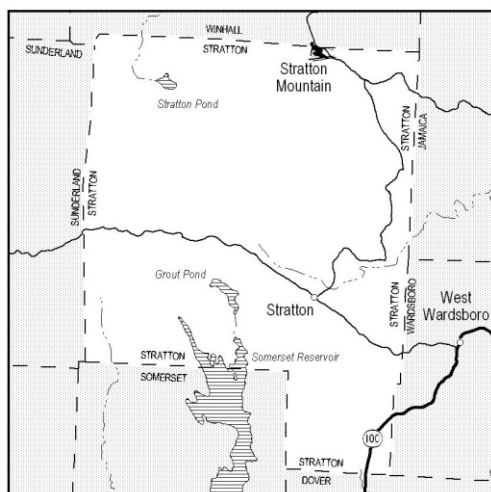
The Town of Stratton is located in northwest Windham County, abutted by the towns of Jamaica, Winhall, Sunderland, Dover, Somerset and Wardsboro. It lies entirely within the Green Mountain National Forest Proclamation Boundary. The mixed softwood and hardwood forest-covered terrain is mountainous with much of the northern part of the Town at an elevation of 2500 feet or more. A portion of the Lye Brook Wilderness Area is located in the northwestern corner of the Town. East of this area, the Appalachian and Long Trails cross the Town in a north-south direction. Within the Town are several ponds, many wetlands and the northern part of Somerset Reservoir. Stratton Mountain Resort and its associated commercial and residential development occupy the northeastern part of the Town.

Land that is level enough to accommodate development is limited. Approximately 79% of the land is in public or quasi-public ownership including the lands of the Green Mountain National Forest, the Stratton Town Forest and the flowed lands of TransCanada. It is important to note that currently, more than 48% of Windham County's total Federally-owned National Forest lands lie within Stratton. The only land not in forest cover is at the Stratton Resort and around the scattered homes in the Town. There is a narrow strip on the eastern boundary of Stratton that is not public or semi-public land. Within this boundary lie the Stratton Mountain Resort Complex and the limited amount of land that can be developed. The Town does not have a commercial center, with the exception of the commercial area at the resort complex. There is a substation of the Londonderry Post Office in the resort area. Industry, other than recreation and limited logging, is not present. Stratton is a residential town.

TOWN OF STRATTON

Town Profile 2014

2010 U.S. Census & American Community Survey – 5-year estimates

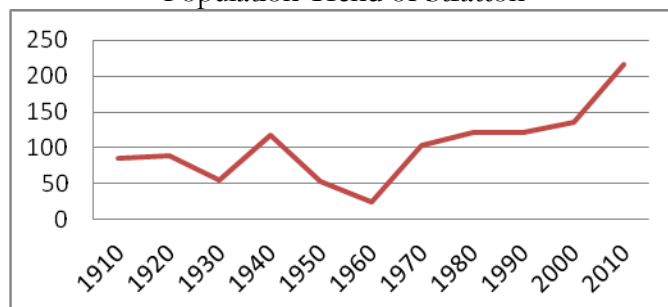


POPULATION 🏠

- 🏠 In 2010, the median age of the town's population was 47, which was up from 43 in 2000. The median age in Windham County also increased from 40 in 2000 to 45 in 2010.
- 🏠 Stratton's population made up less than 1% of the region's 46,720 people in 2010.
- 🏠 Stratton ranked as the third smallest town in the Windham Region in 2100. This was also true in 1990 and 2000.

- 🏠 The population of Stratton increased 79% between 1990-2010, from 121 to 216 people.
- 🏠 Population density in 2010 was 4.7 persons per square mile, a 60% increase from 2.9 persons per square mile in 2000.
- 🏠 21% of the population in 2010 was 65 years or older while 6% of the population was under 5 years of age.
- 🏠 Between 2000 and 2010, the town's population increased 59%. The region experienced less than 1% growth during those same years.

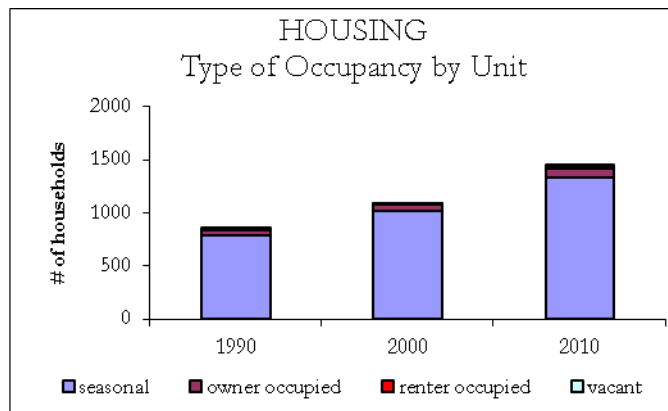
Population Trend of Stratton




HOUSING 🏠


- 🏠 Between 2000 and 2010, the total number of housing units increased by 33%. There was a 31% increase in seasonal units and a 45% increase in owner occupied units.


HOUSING
Type of Occupancy by Unit




- 🏠 Stratton had 98 households in 2010, up from 55 in 1990.


 The average household size in Stratton decreased from 2.27 persons in 2000 to 2.20 persons in 2010. The region's average household size also decreased during this period, from 2.35 in 2000 to 2.23 in 2010.


 Stratton's share of Windham County's seasonal housing supply increased from 11% in 2000 (1,026 units) to 15% in 2010 (1,340 units of 9,122 units in the county).


 The median gross rent in 2000 was \$675, rising to \$1,375 in 2010. The region's median gross rent in 2010 was \$749.


INCOME

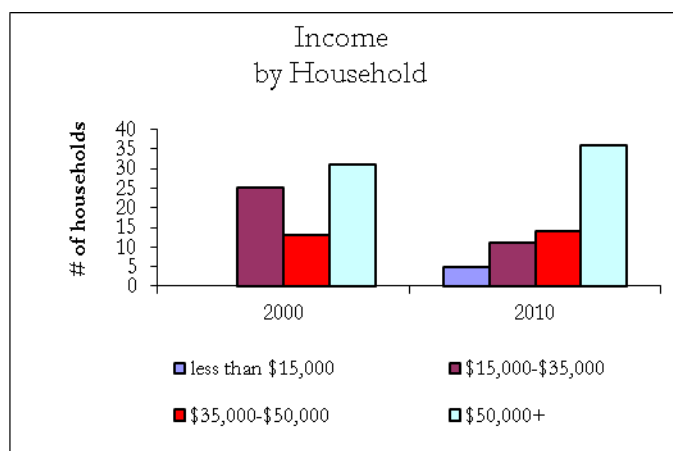
 The median household income in 2010 was \$63,333 up from the 2000 median household income of \$52,258 (adjusted to 2012 dollars).


 In 2010, 8% of households earned less than \$15,000 per year while in 1990, 11% earned less than \$15,000 per year.

 In 2000, 64% of all households earned more than \$35,000 per year while in 2012, an estimated 76% earned more than \$35,000 per year.

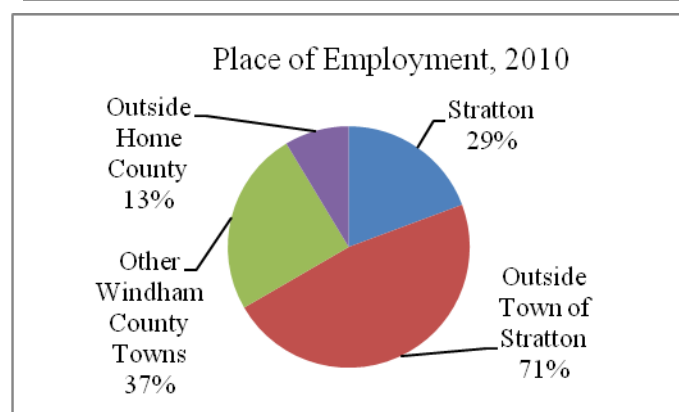
 An estimated 11% of households received public assistance income in 2012.


 An estimated 19% of households received social security income in 2012.




 3% of the population fell below the poverty level in 2010. 11% of the population of the Windham Region and 11% of the population of the State fell below the poverty level in 2010.

EMPLOYMENT



 The education, health, and social services industries employed the largest percentage of employed workers residing in Stratton (27%).

 The number of employed workers residing in Stratton who were age 16 and older increased 14% between 2000 and 2010.

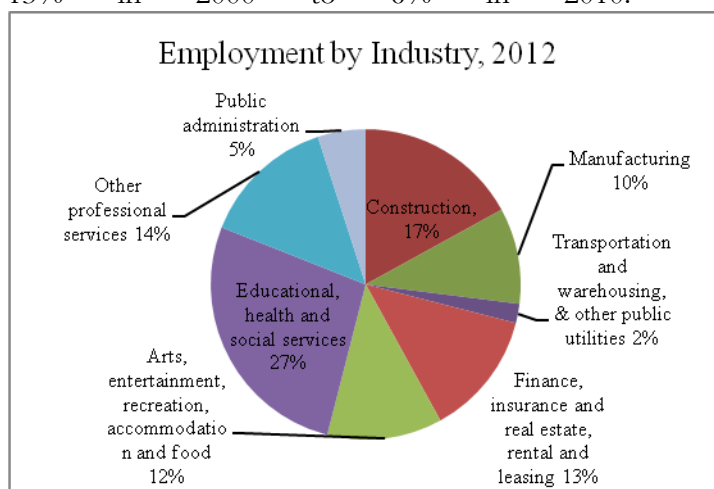
Stratton Town Plan 2014

Finance, insurance and real estate experienced the largest industry increase of Stratton residents employed between 2000 and 2010 with a 450% gain.

Stratton residents traveled an average of 19.3 minutes to work in 2010, an increase from 14.8 minutes in 2000.

In 2010, 22% of employed workers residing in Stratton worked at home or walked to work, as compared to 0% in 2000.

73% of Stratton residents drove alone to work in 2010 while 87% drove alone in 2000. The number of residents carpooling to work dropped from 13% in 2000 to 6% in 2010.



POPULATION

Age	1990	2000	2010	% change 1990-2000	% change 2000-2010	% change 1990-2010
younger than 18 yrs	18	29	38	61%	31%	111%
18-64 yrs	86	83	133	-3%	60%	55%
64 yrs and older	17	24	45	41%	88%	165%
total population	121	136	216	12%	59%	79%
Median age (years)	37	43	47			

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Income (actual)	2000	2012	% of Households 2000	% of Households 2012
less than \$15,000	0	5	0%	8%
\$15,000-\$35,000	25	11	36%	17%
\$35,000-\$50,000	13	14	19%	21%
\$50,000+	31	36	45%	55%
total number of households	69	66		
Median household income (adjusted to 2012 dollars ¹)	\$52,258	\$63,333		
Median household income (unadjusted)	\$39,688	\$63,333		

Stratton Town Plan 2014

[†] Adjusted income calculated by using the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis Consumer Price Index

HOUSING

Unit type	1990	2000	2010	% change 1990-2000	% change 2000-2010	% change 1990-2010
seasonal	796	1,026	1,340	29%	31%	68%
owner occupied	41	53	77	29%	45%	88%
renter occupied	10	7	21	-30%	200%	110%
vacant	17	5	9	-71%	80%	-47%
total units	864	1,091	1,447	26%	33%	67%
Average household size	2.37	2.27	2.20	-4%	-3%	-7%
Number of households	55	60	98	9%	63%	78%

TRAVEL TO WORK

How people get to work	2000	2010
Drive Alone	87%	73%
Carpool	13%	6%
Public Transportation	0%	0%
Work at Home or Walk	0%	22%
Other Means	0%	0%
Average travel time (minutes)	14.8	19.3

PLACE OF WORK 2010

Town	Percent
Stratton	29%
Outside Town of Stratton	71%
Outside Windham County	37%
Outside Vermont	13%

EMPLOYMENT

Workplace	2000	2010
out of town	50%	71%
in town	50%	29%

NEED INDICATORS

Indicator	2000	2010
social security recipients	30%	29%
public assistance recipients	0%	11%
persons below poverty level	5%	3%
families with children under the age of 18, headed by a female with no husband present	0%	3%

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY OF STRATTON RESIDENTS, AGE 16 AND OLDER

Industry	2000	2012	% Employed 2000	% Employed 2012	% Change 2000-2012
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting & mining	0	0	0%	0%	0%
Construction	7	14	9%	17%	100%
Manufacturing	3	8	4%	10%	167%
Transportation, warehousing, & other public utilities	0	2	0%	2%	0%

Stratton Town Plan 2014

Wholesale trade	4	0	5%	0%	-100%
Retail trade	5	0	6%	0%	-100%
Information and communication	0	0	0%	0%	0%
Finance, insurance and real estate, rental and leasing	2	11	3%	13%	450%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation & food	16	10	20%	12%	-38%
Educational, health and social services	14	22	18%	27%	57%
Other professional services	9	12	11%	14%	33%
Other services	4	0	5%	0%	-100%
Public administration	15	4	19%	5%	-73%
Total Employed	73	83	100%	100%	14%

Note: Percent change value should be viewed carefully in towns with a small population as a small change in actual numbers may result in a large percent change population.

SOURCES:

MAP: Windham Regional Commission GIS Service Center

POPULATION: U.S. Census, DP-1 (2010), SF3 (2000), STF3 file (1990)

INCOME: American Community Survey DP03 file (2008-2012), U.S. Census, DP-3 file (2000)

HOUSING: U.S. Census, SF file (2010), SF1 file (1990 and 2000)

PLACE OF WORK: Vermont Housing Data (2010), Commuting Worker Flow Files (2000)

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY: American Community Survey, DP03 file (2012), DP-3 file (2000)

PROPOSED LAND USE DISTRICTS

The lands of the Town of Stratton have been divided into six districts. These districts are described below with their permitted uses and conditional uses. The following land use districts shall provide the basis for municipal land use regulations. While the zoning regulations specify use and dimensional standards for each district, the Town Plan sets the foundation. The locations of the districts are represented on the Proposed Land Use Map that is incorporated into this plan.

CONSERVATION DISTRICT

These lands are defined as essentially undeveloped lands which are predominately forested, and have substantial physical limitations for development.

Conservation lands shall be used for forestry, low-density development and open space. They shall be withheld from intensive development until there is a demonstrated public need for their development, until public utilities and services can be provided to these lands, and until it can be determined that overriding benefits to the community would accrue from their development at higher densities.

Permitted Uses: Conservation

Forestry
Single-family dwelling units

Conditional Uses: Mineral and earth extraction
Public utilities and facilities
Telecommunications facilities
Camping, Camper, or Recreational Vehicle site

RECREATION DISTRICT

These lands are defined as lands above 2500 feet which are presently used and will continue to be used by Stratton Ski Area for ski lifts, trails and related purposes, and as lands which may have potential for such use in the future.

The Stratton Planning Commission will continue to work with the Stratton Corporation, and other owners of large tracts of land, for the most beneficial uses for these lands.

Permitted Uses: Conservation
Forestry
Recreation

Permitted Uses requiring Site Plan Review:
Accessory uses incidental to permitted uses
Small wind energy systems

Conditional Uses: Mineral and earth extractions
Public utilities and facilities
Telecommunications facilities
Camping, Camper, or Recreational Vehicle site

RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

These lands are defined as lands which are already committed to rural residential development or which appear capable of accommodating a significant proportion of the expected growth of Stratton. If not already committed for such development, these lands have generally slight or moderate physical limitations to development, and are readily accessible by existing or proposed public highways. They appear generally suitable for residential and associated uses.

These lands shall be used to accommodate a major proportion of the growth of permanent and seasonal homes and associated uses. Development of these lands shall not unnecessarily damage resource values as shown on Town Plan Maps, and should not ignore the physical limitations to development shown on the maps. Forestry, open space, and recreational uses shall be encouraged.

Permitted Uses: Agriculture
Conservation
Forestry

Custom Home industry
Mobile home (single-family residential use)
One-family dwelling
Two-family dwelling
Playground and / or picnic area
Two-family dwelling
Traditional Bed and Breakfast

Permitted Uses requiring Site Plan Review:

Accessory uses incidental to permitted uses
Cemetery
Floating affordable housing
Greenhouse
Nursery
Multi-family dwelling
Planned unit development
Solid waste collection facility
Small wind energy systems

Conditional Uses:

Art center
Church
Commercial Animals
Library
Earth and mineral extraction
Helicopter landing area
Mobile Home Park
Museum
Public utilities and facilities
Private and / or commercial water and / or sewer systems
Restaurant and / or lounge
Retail business
School
Telecommunications facilities
Waste handling and recycling facilities
Bed and Breakfast
Camping, Camper, or Recreational Vehicle site

COMMERCIAL-RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

The Commercial-Residential District 1 (CR 1), which already exists, is located in the northeast corner of the Town and is the designated growth area for the Town of Stratton. Commercial-Residential District 2 (CR 2) exists as a small portion of the southeast corner of Town on VT Rte. 100. A third Commercial-Residential District – (CR 3) was created as part of the 2009 Town Plan update to allow for commercial development in the center of Stratton. Both existing districts and the third new district are described below.

CR 1 – Land, located in the northeast section of the Town, with convenient access to the Stratton Resort Complex, appears suitable for well planned and controlled residential subdivision and commercial uses serving visitors and permanent residents. This district is the designated growth area for the Town of Stratton. It has a wider impact on the region than the rest of the Town. Many people who work in this district live beyond the limits of the Town. Visitors from outside the Town enjoy recreation, housing, dining and other commercial facilities. The growth area has been developing over many decades. Housing development has taken place on slopes in excess of 15%. This area has sensitive black bear habitat. This plan encourages the in-fill of land ignored in the development process. These developments should be designed so that structures are grouped together, roads minimized and intrusions into sensitive bear habitat locations minimized. The use of Planned Unit Development (PUD) should be encouraged. Criteria for planning review and specific requirements for PUD have been set forth in the Stratton Zoning Ordinance. Appropriate development and performance standards shall be applied 1) to ensure that the high scenic quality of this area is maintained 2) to discourage commercial strip development, 3) to avoid traffic congestion, undue noise and other problems which would damage the resort-related values of this area and 4) minimize intrusion into sensitive black bear habitat.

CR 2 – Land is located in the southwestern portion of Stratton with access to Route 100. Although this land may present problems for some potential developers, it may offer advantages for well-planned residential and commercial uses. This area of the Town, within a short distance of Mount Snow Ski Area in Dover, has a motel, a small development of apartments and a number of newer homes. There are some sections of sensitive black bear habitat near this area. Review of development in this area should include provisions that will minimize impact on sensitive bear habitats, maintain the scenic quality of this popular tourist route and avoid the appearance of continuous or strip development directly related to either Mount Snow or West Wardsboro.

Permitted Uses for Commercial-Residential Districts 1 & 2:

- Agriculture
- Customary home industry
- Conservation
- Forestry
- One-family dwelling
- Playground and / or picnic area
- Two-family dwellings
- Traditional Bed and Breakfast

Permitted Uses requiring Site Plan review for Commercial-Residential Districts 1 & 2:

- Accessory uses incidental to permitted uses
- Art center
- Bowling alley
- Cemetery
- Chairlifts, tows, tramways, alpine slides
- Church
- Floating affordable housing
- Financial institution
- Gas station
- Greenhouse

- Hospital, clinic, or nursing home
- Library
- Motel, hotel and /or motor inn with a restaurant
- Multi-family dwelling
- Museum
- Office building
- Other group activities and services
- Planned unit development
- Professional or business office
- Public Utilities and facilities
- Restaurant
- Retail store or stand
- Sales and sales rooms
- Service station
- School
- Skating rinks
- Theater
- Bed and Breakfast

Conditional Uses for Commercial-Residential Districts 1 & 2:

- Earth and mineral extraction
- Fuel storage over 5,000 gallons
- Helicopter landing area
- Mobile home park
- Private and / or commercial water and / or sewer systems
- Telecommunications facilities
- Waste handling and recycling facilities
- Commercial Animals
- Camping, Camper, or Recreation Vehicle site

CR 3 – The Planning Commission recommends that a new Commercial Residential Area Zoning District be developed surrounding the town center at the junction of the West Jamaica Rd. and Stratton-Arlington Rd., in order to promote a village area, in the Vermont tradition, surrounding the Town Hall, Town Office, Old Stratton Meetinghouse and Schoolhouse #5. This area is shown on the Proposed Land Use map. It extends approximately a half-mile from the intersection along those roads. This would place the boundaries of the district at the intersection of Old Forrester Rd. and the Stratton-Arlington Rd., at the intersection of Plimpton Rd. and the Stratton-Arlington Rd. and at the intersections of Ball Farm Rd. / Old Town Rd. with the West Jamaica Rd., to include all lots or portions of lots in this area, extending 1000 ft back from either side of the Stratton-Arlington Road and the West Jamaica Rd. to these intersections, excluding any U.S. Forest Service Land.

Permitted Uses for Commercial-Residential District 3:

- Large gardens
- Customary home industry
- Forestry
- One-family dwelling

Stratton Town Plan 2014

Playground and / or picnic area
Two-family dwellings
Traditional Bed and Breakfast

Permitted Uses requiring Site Plan review for Commercial-Residential District 3:

Accessory uses incidental to permitted uses
Art center
Church
Floating affordable housing
Financial institution
Gas station
Greenhouse
Hospital, clinic, or nursing home
Library
Lounge
Motel, hotel and /or motor inn with a restaurant
Multi-family dwelling
Museum
Office building
Other group activities and services
Planned unit development
Professional or business office
Public Utilities and facilities
Restaurant; lounge only
Retail store or stand
Sales and sales rooms
School
Skating rink
Theater
Bed and Breakfast
Small wind energy systems

Conditional Uses for Commercial-Residential District 3:

Underground storage tanks less than 2,500 gallons
Private and / or commercial water and / or sewer systems
Telecommunications facilities
Waste handling and recycling facilities
Mobile Home Park
Agriculture
Camping, Camper, or Recreation Vehicle Site

PUBLIC, QUASI-PUBLIC AND PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICTS

These lands are owned by public or quasi-public organizations and are used for purposes which might preclude their use for other purposes.

Permitted Uses: Agriculture
 Conservation
 Forestry
 Low-impact Recreation

Permitted uses requiring Site Plan Review:
 Playground and / or picnic area
 Public utilities and facilities
 High-impact recreation
 Small wind energy systems

Conditional Uses: Private community water and sewer systems
 Earth and mineral extractions
 Camping, Camper, or Recreational Vehicle Site

NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Natural and Historic Resources areas and sites of the Town have been mapped. Information for this mapping has come from the U.S.G.S. maps, the Vermont Natural Heritage Inventory, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, including the Vermont River Study, the U.S.D.A. Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, as well as the Department of Fish and Wildlife of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources.

Soils

The soils of the Town of Stratton have been classified by the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. With the exception of a small amount of soil at the head of Somerset Reservoir, none of the soils of the Town are prime agricultural soils as listed by the state.

Water Resources

Streams, lakes, and ponds: The Agency of Natural Resources has classified the major ponds and lakes in Stratton as follows:

<u>LAKES</u>	<u>ACREAGE</u>	<u>CLASSIFICATION</u>
Stratton Pond (GMNF)	50 acres	natural / pristine

Grout Pond (GMNF)	82 acres	natural / pristine
Bourne Pond (GMNF)	Mostly in Sunderland	
	2 acres	natural / pristine
Somerset Reservoir (TransCanada)	Most of this reservoir is in Somerset.	
Stratton acreage is approx.	240.7 acres	natural / pristine

All of these ponds are in public or quasi-public ownership. All shorelines of lakes and ponds are important for maintaining water quality and providing wildlife habitat. They are valuable in reducing soil erosion and excessive siltation and tend to be highly vulnerable to excessive and poorly planned development.

Streams

The Water Resources Board designated the following as Class A waters: Kidder Brook, its watershed and Styles Brook to and including the reservoir. They should be protected as such. The policies listed under Goals 5 and 6 indicate limitations on the use of these lands. Stratton Zoning Bylaws implement these policies.

Wetlands

Wetlands are marshy or swampy areas of at least 2.5 acres which store water and gradually release surface runoff after heavy rains and melting snow. Wetlands help to maintain surface water and ground water flow and quality and are valuable as wildlife habitat. They should be protected.

Aquifer Recharge Areas

Aquifer recharge areas are lands which help to maintain the underground water supply by transmitting surface runoff to underground storage. Two types have been identified:

1. Gravel: recharge to gravel and sand aquifers. If the presence of these areas is confirmed, they may be particularly important as future sources of water for commercial, industrial or municipal purposes.
2. Bedrock: well data, soil studies and geologic maps tend to show that recharge potential is confined to fissures and cavities in bedrock. Wellhead areas of this type should be protected. Excessive or careless development of aquifer recharge areas can result in damaging consequences to the quality of well water.

Wildlife

Wildlife habitats, shown on the Significant Habitats Map, include lands with suitable habitat conditions for significant or endangered species of plants and animals. Before these lands are developed, their value to significant species should be carefully examined. The following general habitats have been identified:

1. Upland habitats including large forested areas of steeper slopes, of coniferous or mixed forests, which provide substantial winter cover for a variety of wildlife.
2. Shoreline habitats include shoreline areas which are undeveloped and otherwise attractive to a variety of amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals.

3. Wetland habitats include lands that are important for a wide variety of song birds, game birds, and other wildlife such as beaver, moose, and black bear. In addition to the habitats specifically identified on the natural resources map, many smaller streams, lakes and ponds have significant potential for fish and migratory waterfowl, and nearly all undeveloped forested areas and hedgerows support significant wildlife.

Historical Sites and Structures

The following have been identified by the Stratton Planning Commission or the state of Vermont as having significant local historical value, and as deserving protection and continued maintenance: the Old Stratton Meetinghouse, Stratton School House (#5), Stratton School House (#2), the Daniel Webster Historical Monument, all local cemeteries, and sites along Old Town Road, within the Stratton Recreational Area, which include the Old Town Common. School House #2 is now a private residence.

The Future

Stratton will continue to take actions to identify and work towards protection of natural resources in town such as soils, and surface and subsurface water. The Town continues to work with the Agency of Natural Resources to assure the protection of wildlife habitat throughout Stratton.

The Planning Goals listed in PART 2 of this Plan identify the following goals as applicable to the LAND USE ELEMENT of this Town Plan: GOALS 1, 2, 5, 6, 9 and 10.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES PLAN

THE PRESENT

Community facilities and services are the infrastructure and services which are provided by the Town, or in cooperation with the Town, for the health, safety, benefit and enjoyment of the general public. They include Emergency services, schools, solid waste disposal and recreational facilities.

The emergency services provided by the Town are police and fire protection. For police services the Town relies on contracted Police services (currently the Winhall Police Dept.), an elected constable, appointed security personnel within the resort area (hired by the Stratton Mountain Resort), and occasionally the Windham County Sheriff's Patrol or Vermont State Police.

The Town now relies on its own volunteer fire department and those of neighboring towns through mutual aid agreements with Wardsboro, Dover, Jamaica, Londonderry, Weston, Peru and Winhall.

The Town makes contributions to the Wardsboro Volunteer Fire Company. Equipment is available at the Stratton Mountain base area. The Stratton Fire Department is supported by the Town, Stratton Corporation and by individual contributions. A fire tanker truck is stationed at the Town Garage on Mountain Rd.

Health care for Stratton residents is provided by Grace Cottage Hospital in Townshend, the hospitals in Bennington and Brattleboro, as well as the clinics in Wilmington, Chester, Londonderry and the Carlos Otis Clinic at Stratton Mountain Resort.

The Town relies upon two different groups of ambulance and rescue service providers. Emergency and ambulance services are provided by Wardsboro Rescue, Inc., the Londonderry Volunteer Rescue Squad, and Rescue Inc. In addition, the Stratton Mountain Ambulance operates during the day during ski season.

The Town of Stratton has been concerned with the problem of solid waste and now operates a Transfer Station at the Stratton Town Garage. Commercial establishments and large residential developments are required to make arrangements for the pick up and disposal of all solid waste generated therein. The Town is part of the Windham Solid Waste Management District, which manages the Town's recyclables. Currently, the Town contracts with Casella Waste Management, Inc. for solid waste disposal.

The Stratton Recreation Area was established in the Town in the late 1990s with a picnicking area, a baseball field, a basketball court / ice skating rink, volleyball and badminton courts, hiking and cross-country ski trails, a playground, and a sledding hill.

The costs for the above-listed community facilities and services are met by municipal taxes.

Because the small permanent population is so widely dispersed throughout the Town, and because there are so few children, a school is not planned. The Town pays tuition to surrounding towns and any other state-approved elementary or secondary school or high school. Local transportation is provided by the Town. Schooling is paid for through the State Education Property Tax. The local budget affects the tax rate set for the Town by the State.

THE FUTURE

If school facilities become necessary, future permanent population centers and the compatibility of the land should be taken into consideration before a site for a school is chosen. One site has been designated within the Stratton Recreation Area.

The Town should consider the development of a capital budget and program.

PART 2 of this Plan provides the Planning GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES of the Town of Stratton. The general statements of the goals that apply to the COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES ELEMENT of the Town Plan may be found in GOALS 3, 8 and 12.

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Existing Transportation System

Roads

The majority of Stratton's transportation infrastructure includes Town roads and State highways. The closest federal highway is Interstate 91, which passes through Brattleboro about 30 miles east of Stratton. Regional access to Stratton from state maintained roads is limited with only 1.3 miles of State Highway running through Town. Those 1.3 miles are on the portion of VT 100 which runs through the southeast section of Town. A major travel corridor for winter ski resorts, VT 100 runs in a north-south direction through the region connecting the Towns of Londonderry, Jamaica, Wardsboro, Dover, Wilmington, and Whitingham.

Table 1: Town and State Road Mileage in Stratton

Town				State
Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	State Highway
0	16.7	11.6	0	1.3

(Vermont Agency of Transportation, February 2013)

No state appropriation is made for maintaining Class 4 roads. These roads are seasonally functional for normal vehicular traffic and have a dirt surface. Like many Vermont communities, Stratton may have Class 4 roads and legal trails that are not mapped on the VTrans Highway Maps. So while the current maps show 0 miles of Class 4 roadway, it is possible that Class 4 roads do exist in Stratton. Recent statutory changes require the accounting of mileage and mapping of Class 4 roads and legal town trails. Many class 4 highways are old, unmapped, and often observable. These particular roads are called "ancient roads". Act 178 requires municipalities to identify these "ancient roads" and formally declare their existence to the State of Vermont by February 10, 2015, by adding them to the official Town Highway Map. Those ancient roads that are not added to the official map by that date will become "unidentified corridors" on July 1, 2015.

Of the town maintained roads just over 15 miles are paved. The surface of the remaining 13 miles is a mix of gravel and dirt. Unpaved roads tend to limit the amount of traffic and discourage speeding, thereby promoting vehicle safety. However, while the traffic calming effect of dirt roads is beneficial, unpaved surfaces are less ideal for commuter bicyclists.

Stratton-Arlington Rd. is a paved Class 2 Town Highway which provides seasonal access to many outdoor recreation activities. This road is popular for hikers who take summer hikes along the Appalachian Trail and Deerfield River. Stratton-Arlington Rd. also provides access to Stratton Mountain Ski Resort via Mountain Rd. VTrans collected Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) data for 2007 which shows that 890 vehicles traveled the section of Stratton-Arlington Road between West Wardsboro and West Jamaica Road. At the same location in 2013, the AADT was 790. AADT falls off considerably for vehicles traveling further west from Grout Pond Road to the Sunderland Town Line to 160 vehicles. A major reason for this is the fact that this section of Stratton-Arlington Road heading west is closed during the winter months. Along West

Jamaica Road which connects to Mountain Road and the Stratton Mountain Ski Resort, AADT in 2011 was 370 approximately a half mile north of Stratton-Arlington Road. On Mountain Road just north of Bear Creek Road AADT was 380, and just north of Sun Bowl Road it was 570.

Alternative Transportation

Increasing energy costs have become a reality for communities and residents throughout Vermont due to decreased global oil supplies and increased demand across the world. The increased costs associated with trips are beginning to discourage residents from using their cars everyday. The effects of \$4.00 a gallon fuel are giving rise to large increases in ridership among public transit providers in the region such as the Deerfield Valley Transit Association and Connecticut River Transit. In general, more residents across the region are choosing to use public transportation and Stratton needs to be aware of and plan for any future public transportation expansion efforts that could impact residents.

The Deerfield Valley Transit Association (DVTA) provides public transit service to the towns along VT Rte. 100 on several different bus routes, serving all the villages between Readsboro and West Dover. In 2008 the Moover had to cut summer service along a fixed route that ran from Wardsboro to West Dover along VT Rte. 100 due to huge increases in the cost of fuel. The Wilmington to West Dover fixed route will still be running until 6:00 pm throughout the summer months. For more information regarding the DVTA's bus services refer to their website at <http://www.moover.com/>.

The Vermont Rideshare Program is another option for commuters in Stratton to reduce transportation costs. This program provides a database of other commuters in nearby areas who are looking to combine trips. The Rideshare program has an easy online form that residents can fill out which will enter them in a statewide database to help match the resident with carpool partners in the area. The cost savings of carpooling to work, especially for residents in a largely rural area where commutes can be lengthy, are potentially quite large. The Vermont Rideshare website can be accessed here <http://www.vermontrideshare.org> and provides a cost savings calculator for residents looking to find out how much money they will save by carpooling to work.

VT Route 100 Corridor Study

Stratton participated in the VT Route 100 Corridor Study (Windham Regional Commission, January 2002) which documented lack of access controls, speed and volume of traffic, and safety issues along the corridor. Of particular concern to the Town were the following issues.

Stratton Town

- The short section through Stratton passes through low density mixed residential and commercial areas. Pavement and shoulder conditions are poor with severe frost heave and steep grades (This section has been repaved since the Corridor Study was released). Repaving commenced in 2006/2007.
- This section has the distinction of providing a very nice view north from one of the highest elevations anywhere on VT Rte. 100. The surrounding forest is prime bear habitat and measures to protect crossing bears and warn drivers should be installed here

- No problem access points or pull-offs noted on this section. Locals use Penny Ave. as a shortcut over to Stratton village in the summertime

While Stratton has the least amount of mileage in Town among the communities that participated in the Corridor Study, there are still some general problems that Stratton officials should consider in future transportation planning efforts. Poor roadway conditions exist throughout the Corridor as physical conditions of narrow valleys and steep hillsides and narrow road width discourage pedestrian and bicycle travel. These physical conditions do sometimes have the effect of creating natural traffic calming areas that keep driving speeds down and can curtail aggressive driving. However, efforts should be made to allow major roadways to have safe shoulders for both pedestrian travel and bicycle travel that occurs throughout Town and between towns.

Future Transportation System

Stratton as a rural town on the western periphery of Windham County will still rely heavily on motor vehicles as a primary form of transportation. However, given the increased cost of vehicle transportation, Stratton should encourage residents to use alternative modes of transportation where possible. In doing so, Stratton must be actively involved in efforts to provide expanded public transportation options and continued maintenance of existing routes throughout the region that help Stratton residents get from home to work or from home to shopping centers and grocery markets. The Town should also encourage residents to carpool. Information regarding The Vermont Agency of Transportation's Rideshare Program should be distributed to residents and information should also be posted on boards at municipal facilities. Since the completion of this study, the section of VT Rte. 100 through Stratton has been paved, which has improved conditions appreciably.

PART 2 of this Plan provides the Planning GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES of the Town of Stratton, GOAL 4 relates to transportation issues.

HOUSING ELEMENT

THE PRESENT

An adequate supply of year-round housing of all types and costs is necessary in a town so that all segments of the population can enjoy home ownership or appropriate rental space. Housing for people of all income levels is essential. The elderly, young-adults, middle-aged individuals, small families, and large families all need housing that meets their needs.

A significant part of the growth of the Town has been in the construction of "second homes." These homes far outnumber the homes of year-round residents.

A number of homes in the resort complex have become full-time residences. These residences are compatible with the resort complex. Other new construction of homes should be compatible with the existing architecture and community in which they will be located in the Town. These homes should also be as energy efficient as possible.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is defined as housing that costs no more than 30% of the income of a household earning the county median income. This definition is used not only by Vermont Department of Economic, Housing and Community Affairs, but also by banks and lending establishments. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development lists the 2007 median household income in Windham County as \$58,200.00 for a family of four. An affordable monthly rent (including utilities) for such a household equals \$1,455.00. A household with this income could afford to purchase a house selling for approximately \$133,000 (assuming a 10% down payment, a 10% mortgage interest rate, a 30 year mortgage and a \$150 a month in taxes and insurance.) Affordable housing costs for renters are rent plus utilities; for home owners, principal, interest, property taxes, and property insurance.

There are additional constraints as well: approximately 79% of the land in Stratton is in public or semi-public ownership, while the remaining landscape that is available for potential development is generally characterized by steep wooded slopes, by soils with a shallow depth to bedrock and by upland wetlands. These characteristics indicate probable limits for onsite sewage disposal. As a result, the Stratton Zoning Ordinance allows, as the maximum ratio of housing units to acreage, only one unit per two acres.

In regard to these limitations, the Stratton Planning Commission finds that affordable housing could only be placed in areas that were served by municipal / community sewer and water systems. Currently all of these systems are within the boundaries of the resort. As of July 1, 1997, the entire Stratton Mountain water and sewer system is under the control and ownership of the Winhall / Stratton Fire District, a legislatively approved municipality. Recognizing these constraints, the Stratton Town Plan of 1987 directed that a new zoning ordinance addressing the issue of affordable housing be prepared. This issue has since been addressed. We continue to believe that our recommendation will be an ongoing, integral part of Stratton's zoning ordinance. The following are necessary elements as printed in the current Bylaws:

Floating Affordable Housing District

This district has not been mapped, however, it is limited to the Commercial / Residential Districts (the only district with municipal / community sewer and water systems). The density of building in this district may be increased to 5 dwelling units per acre provided that:

1. An adequate potable water supply is demonstrated and approved by the state of Vermont.
2. A waste water & disposal plan is approved by the state of Vermont.
3. An environmental impact statement is developed showing that the following will not be subject to negative impacts:

- Wildlife

- Aquifer recharge areas
- Wetlands
- Prime agricultural soil
- Aesthetics quality of the landscape.

4. A buffer zone of 50 feet is maintained around the total parcel.
5. All units are clustered so that as much open space is preserved as possible.
6. Homeowners association bylaws have been approved by the Planning Commission.
7. This housing shall be limited to families with low to moderate incomes as defined by the Agency of Development and Community Affairs.
8. Homeowners in this district shall be limited to resale only to future owners in the low to moderate income brackets as defined in (7.) above.

THE FUTURE

Stratton Corporation is the largest employer with some of those employees living within the Town of Stratton and others living in surrounding towns. This issue of employee housing is a critical. The Floating Affordable Housing District provides one answer. The provision for affordable housing by developers and employers will be difficult except where waste water treatment is already in place. The employers should be encouraged to work with the Town in continuing efforts to provide affordable housing.

ENERGY PLAN

Energy Uses

According to the Vermont Department of Public Services 2009 report *Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan 2009: An update to the 2005 Twenty Year Electric Plan*, the majority of energy consumption in Vermont derives from transportation and space heating. About half of Vermont's energy demand is met by the direct consumption of petroleum-based fuels. Of this, 33% is transportation fuels (predominantly gasoline and diesel) and 27% is heating and business processes (including distillate, natural gas, residual, propane and kerosene).

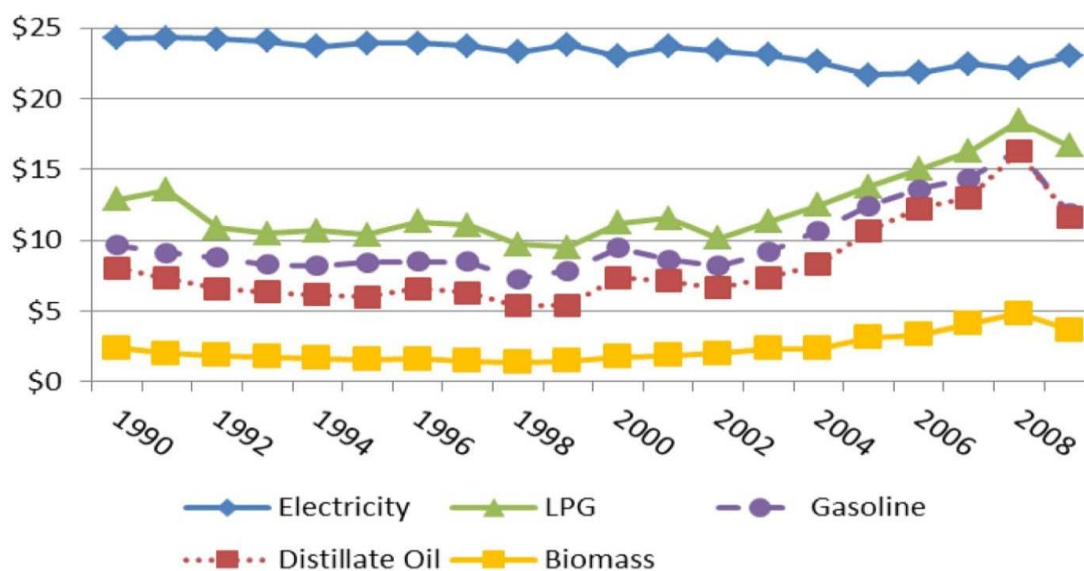
Demand for total energy in Vermont continues to grow, driven largely by the pressures of population growth, economic development, and increases in vehicular travel and commuting distances. Overall energy

demand grew by 25% between 1990 and 2005, with the two largest contributors to this growth being petroleum-based fuels primarily for transportation and heating (33% growth) and electricity (20% growth)¹.

Energy Costs

A price trend chart is provided below to provide some background data on the increases in fuel costs from 1990 to 2008 in Vermont. Following the chart, Table 1 provides tabular and graphic comparisons of costs for various fuels in 2013.

Inflation Adjusted Energy Source Prices (\$/Million BTU)

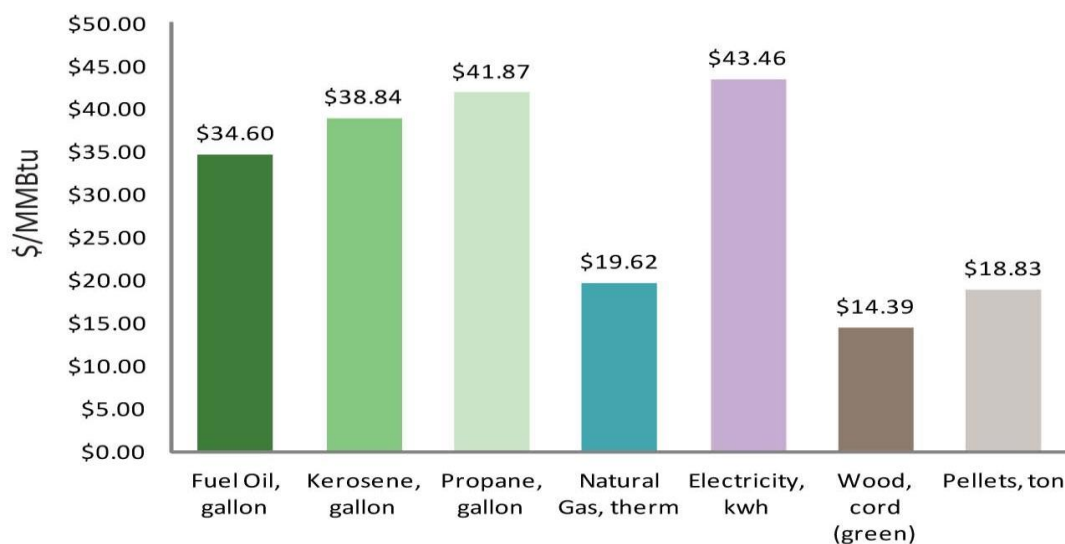


Source: Department of Public Service, Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan 2011

¹ Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan 2009, Pg xii

Table 1
Unit Cost Comparison of Vermont Heating Fuels,
January 2013

Type of Energy	BTU/unit	Adj Efficiency	\$/unit	\$/MMBtu
Fuel Oil, gallon	138,200	80%	\$3.83	\$34.60
Kerosene, gallon	136,600	80%	\$4.24	\$38.84
Propane, gallon	91,600	80%	\$3.07	\$41.87
Natural Gas, therm	100,000	80%	\$1.57	\$19.62
Electricity, kwh	3,412	100%	\$0.15	\$43.46
Wood, cord (green)	22,000,000	60%	\$190.00	\$14.39
Pellets, ton	16,400,000	80%	\$247.00	\$18.83



Source: Vermont Department of Public Service, Vermont Fuel Price Report, January 2013.

http://publicservice.vermont.gov/publications/fuel_report#fuel_reports

Energy Sources

The residents of Stratton use a variety of energy sources for home heating fuel. According to VT Housing Data, Home Heating Fuel for 2007-2011, 42.2% of all occupied housing units in Stratton were primarily

heated with fuel oil or kerosene. Other home heating sources included bottled tank gas or LP (46.9%), and wood (10.9%).

Renewable energy sources are available for use as a means of electrical generation and space heating. Solar, wood, hydro, and wind are all forms of renewable energy that can be more effectively utilized in the years ahead.

Passive solar designs and siting can increase the use of solar energy and the conservation of other heating fuels in homes and businesses. No mechanical means are employed in passive solar heating. Instead, siting and design measures, such as south facing windows, open floor plans, and ventilation are used. Photovoltaic systems, another option, can be used to convert sunlight to electricity. Under Title 21 § 266 of the Vermont State Statutes all new detached one-and two-family dwellings, multifamily and all other residential dwellings three stories or less in height, additions of 500 square feet or more, and factory built modular homes not on a permanent chassis constructed after July 1, 1997 must comply with the Vermont Residential Building Energy Standards (RBES) and generally referred to as simply the Energy Code. This Energy Code is a minimum standard of energy efficiency relating to things like ventilation, appliances, insulation, and percentage of window space on the building envelope, known as the “glazing percentage. These minimum standards are supposed to be certified by the developer and the Town of Stratton should make sure these standards are duly enforced.

Electrical Infrastructure

Green Mountain Power provides service to Stratton. An important regional consideration is the “Southern Loop” transmission facilities, which currently operates at or near capacity much of the time. The loop consists of 75 miles of transmission lines connecting Bennington and Brattleboro with the southern Vermont ski areas between (extending as far north as Bromley). Involved Windham Region towns include Winhall, Stratton, Londonderry, Jamaica, Townshend, Newfane, Dummerston, and Brattleboro. The two major tie-ins to the loop (the Woodford Road substation in Bennington and the Vernon Road substation in Brattleboro) are distant from the areas of growing electrical demand. When either substation fails or is out of service at or near peak load conditions, the other may be unable to compensate. Transformer capacity was added at both substations in 1995, the first such improvement since the early 1970’s. Current demand suggests a need to upgrade the southern loop facilities, and anticipated future growth requires it. In anticipation of this need, utility companies (Vermont Electric Power Company - VELCO and the former Central Vermont Public Service Company - CVPS) inaugurated a major planning project that focused on identifying and implementing needed improvements to the “Southern Loop” that carries power between Brattleboro and Bennington. Some information relating to this study is provided below.

The Southern Loop subtransmission system consists of the 46 kV transmission line extending from the 115 kV substation in Bennington, Vermont to the 155 kV substation in Brattleboro, Vermont and the areas served by that line. Presently, the Southern Loop subtransmission system has only limited ability to support increased electrical demand and is unable to withstand failures of, or to have preventive maintenance conducted on, key components at present demand levels. As the electric demand in southern Vermont has grown, the ability of the Southern Loop to deliver power to all customers in all hours of the year has increasingly become compromised.

An extensive planning study by CVPS, with input from VELCO, identified five distinct root problems in Southern Vermont that affect the reliability and adequacy of service in this target area and must be resolved: These are listed below:

- 1) The present-day Southern Loop system is vulnerable to an unplanned loss of a transmission line or a transformer much of the time
- 2) The present-day Brattleboro area system is vulnerable to an unplanned loss of a transmission line or a transformer 100% of this time
- 3) The Southern Vermont system and the Southwestern New Hampshire system are vulnerable to a long-term outage of the T4 345/115 kV transformer at the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant
- 4) The Southern Vermont system will soon be unable to supply peak demand within the target area even with all facilities in service, due to demand growth
- 5) Future problems that are related to the Southern Vermont system will soon emerge on the wider regional transmission system

Potential solutions identified by the study tended to fall into one or more of four categories:

- 1) Adding voltage support devices such as capacitors and synchronous condensers. These devices are used to adjust voltage to acceptable levels
- 2) Reductions in customer electric demand and usage, also referred to as Demand Side Management (DSM)
- 3) Development and installation of new electric generators that involve constructing either a relatively large power plant or dispersing smaller power plants along the Southern Loop
- 4) Development of new transmission to add one or more new lines or substations to the existing Southern Loop subtransmission system

Current initiatives have favored the category of voltage support devices by adding synchronous condensers to help provide more slack capacity and thus more breathing room during hours of peak demand. In 2008 the Public Service Board issued a Certificate of Public Good authorizing the installation of a 46kV electrical substation, synchronous condensers, and related equipment in Winhall.

Energy Conservation

State and federal government have far more control of energy supplies, sources, and pricing than local governments and municipalities. However, national leadership on the issue of energy conservation has been lacking and many communities have picked up the ball and been leading the way in setting efficiency goals and carbon reduction strategies. Effective land use planning is one method that communities can use to help reduce energy consumption. Reducing automobile dependency will go along way towards reducing transportation energy consumption. In 2010, 73% of Stratton residents commuting to work drove alone. The Deerfield Valley Transit Authority is one option for residents who commute daily throughout the Windham Region from work to home. Commuters can use the Moover bus to get from Wilmington to Brattleboro. More locally, the Betty Boop bus provides transportation from West Wardsboro to Brattleboro two times per month. While there are no direct routes from Stratton to major commercial/business centers like Brattleboro, commuters can still opt for a “park and ride” type option by driving some distance and then using a bus for the rest.

Effective land use planning can promote energy conservation. Concentrated development and land use patterns can reduce reliance on the automobile, vehicle miles traveled, and inherent system energy costs. Cluster development, where buildings and infrastructure (such as roads, power) are concentrated in specific areas rather than spread out, generally disturbs less land, and requires less fuel, material, and energy to both build and maintain. It also encourages people to walk, rather than drive, to nearby destinations.

PART 2 of this Plan, above, provides the Planning GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES of the Town of Stratton. GOAL 7 is directed toward energy issues.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

THE PRESENT

Most commercial and high density residential activity is concentrated in the growth area around Stratton Mountain Resort.

THE FUTURE

More commercial activities and residential development, that would support services-type businesses, are encouraged in the growth area around Stratton Mountain Resort. Appropriate scale business activities are encouraged in the CR districts. The town is in the process of creating a new district CR-3 in the village. Other types of economic development, such as home-based businesses are encouraged throughout town.

Policies, projects, and programs in support of desired economic development are provided in Part 2, above.

FLOOD RESILIENCE PLAN

THE PRESENT

Background

The town of Stratton, much like the rest of Vermont, is no stranger to significant and damaging flooding. Ball Mountain Brook flows through the eastern side of the Town and the headwaters of Wardsboro brook are in the southeasterly part of town. The worst flooding in Vermont and across the region since the Flood of 1927 occurred on August 28, 2011 as the result of Tropical Storm Irene. Approximately 5-8" of rain fell in the area, on ground that was already saturated, causing extensive flooding. Due to the flooding damage to roads and infrastructure to the north, east, south, and west, Stratton was one of the thirteen towns isolated after floodwaters dissipated. Several roads, bridges, and properties were severely damaged, particularly along Mountain Road, Stratton-Arlington Road, Penny Ave., and Canedy Road.

Flood Hazard & River Corridor Areas in Stratton

Flood Hazard Areas

The town of Stratton's flood hazard areas include FEMA NFIP inundation floodplain, as well as VT ANR river corridor areas. The FEMA floodplain includes the floodway as well as the floodplain needed for a 1% chance annual inundation event. The river corridor protection area includes the area needed for stream meanders and erosion for moderate flood events. In these areas, the lateral movement of the stream and the associated erosion (fluvial erosion hazard - FEH) is more of the threat than inundation by floodwaters. The Town of Stratton may want to consider designating additional areas outside of these defined NFIP and FEH areas as prone to flood hazards.

Local Flood Hazards

Lands adjacent to Ball Mountain Brook and Wardsboro Brook, as well as their tributaries, are subject to periodic flooding. Minor to moderate flooding on the order of every few years is a natural event in a functioning floodplain. Floodplains and river corridor areas are thus unsuitable for development because of the high loss potential for life and property.

The town of Stratton is vulnerable to flooding, especially along Ball Mountain Brook and Wardsboro Brook. The potential for flooding in Stratton is magnified by its mountainous terrain, which increases the velocity of runoff. Narrow valleys then channel water and transform small streams into raging bodies of water. Roads, such as West Jamaica Road and Stratton-Arlington Road can be damaged during large rain events because of the steeply sloping terrain above them.

THE FUTURE

Minimizing Flood Hazards

In order to minimize the effects of flooding, Stratton should look to protect its flood storage areas, as well as work to minimize runoff. Upland headwater areas should be protected from significant development to maintain their runoff storage capacity. Fortunately for Stratton, most of its upland areas are part of the Green Mountain National Forest. Minimizing stormwater runoff through protection and construction of wetlands and less impervious cover can help to lower flood peaks downstream. This will help to protect both the roadway infrastructure and flood hazard areas downstream.

Promoting Flood Resilience in Stratton

Flood Hazard Regulation

Stratton's Flood Hazard regulations set the development standards required by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). They would be strengthened by adding additional river corridor protections (FEH zones).

Any updates to the Stratton's Flood Hazard regulations that were more restrictive than they are now would apply only to new development and new protection areas. Existing development would be grandfathered and could continue to operate within the area, until it suffers major damage or is substantially improved, at which point it has to come into compliance with flood regulations. Potential strategies to protect the Flood Hazard area could cover a wide range of options, including:

- **Increasing Development Standards** – Communities can choose to increase the requirements for

new developments in the floodplain while still allowing all or most forms of development. Examples include limiting fill or impervious surface and encouraging stormwater controls, such as rain gardens, to minimize flood peaks.

- **Additional River Corridor Protection Areas** – Some communities have created an area that extends beyond the mapped flood hazard areas. Often this River Corridor Protection Area uses fluvial erosion hazard data as part of its basis, but can also include simple setbacks from rivers in all parts of the community as a way to deter development in areas that may erode in the event of severe flooding. Other locally known areas that flood can be included in these protections such as confluences and gravel deposition areas.

Future revisions to the Stratton Flood Hazard regulations will require input from the community regarding the level of regulation they believe is necessary to protect citizens and their buildings from severe flood hazard events. Communities have a broad range of flexibility in which to regulate the flood hazard area. For example, a community could prohibit commercial development in the floodplain everywhere except a village, because in some communities such a restriction would be damaging to the village center.

Non-regulatory approaches

Stratton could also pursue riparian easements as a way to protect floodplains from development and preserve flood storage. The Vermont Land Trust and Vermont River Conservancy have worked in several towns in the region to develop river corridor easements along the Saxtons River and Whetstone Brook.

Goals

1. To protect the citizens, property and economy of Stratton and the quality of their streams as natural and recreational resources by using sound planning practices within designated Flood Hazard Areas and beyond.

Planning Principles, Policies and Strategies

1. Only agriculture, recreational and open space uses should be allowed in floodplains and/or river corridors.
2. New development within the town's 100-year floodplain and mapped river corridors is prohibited, excluding properly designed outbuildings and renovations that meet the requirements for Flood Hazard regulation as stipulated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
3. Ensure that any new development allowed creates "no adverse impact" through design and mitigation measures.
4. Reduce impervious cover that leads to flash flooding, and increase retention and infiltration of rain.
5. Lessen the conflict between roads and streams by moving the roads when possible, abandoning redundant bridges, or upsizing water crossings.
6. Adopting road and bridge standards to the 50 or 100 year storm level.
7. Work with the US Forest Service to address flooding on a watershed basis.
8. Reconnect floodplains and streams through berm removal or intentional lowering of streambanks.

9. Promote emergency planning for flood response.
10. Update and re-adopt the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) every five years to ensure access to FEMA programs and funding (Note: Stratton had an “Annex” to the regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, which expired in 2012; the town should develop and adopt a single jurisdiction HMP.)

Recommendations

1. The Planning Commission should strengthen Stratton’s Flood Hazard regulations to mitigate risks to public safety, critical infrastructure, historic structures and municipal investments from inundation and erosion.
2. The Planning Commission or Selectboard should work with VTrans on improving the flood capabilities of state-owned infrastructure or town infrastructure.
3. Work with Stratton’s Emergency Coordinator and Selectboard to continue to develop emergency preparedness procedures.
4. Implement mitigation actions as identified in the Hazard Mitigation Plan, especially for flood prone areas.

PART 4

HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF STRATTON

A detailed history of Stratton was published in two volumes in 1999 / 2000 by the Town. Some interesting facts from various sources mentioned in the History are as follows:

The Town of Stratton was chartered by Benning Wentworth, Governor of New Hampshire under King George III of Great Britain and Ireland, on July 30, 1761 in sixty-nine shares containing 23,040 acres. On October 28, 1799 Stratton Gore, a strip of land about 500 yards wide, across the entire southern border of Stratton, was annexed by the Town, and then the northeast corner of Somerset (approx. two miles by two miles) was annexed in 1859. In the nineteenth century, Stratton was well known in the region as the site of a speech given by Daniel Webster to about 15,000 people gathered for a Whig convention during the presidential campaign of William Henry Harrison on July 7 and 8, 1840.

Child's *Windham County Gazetteer*, published in 1884, describes Stratton this way, "The surface of the town is irregular and mountainous, so much so, as to be in some places unfit for habitation. The cultivated farms are mostly in the eastern and southern portions, where there are tracts of arable land that well repay the toil of the husbandman." It is only in the eastern part of the Town that settlement occurred at any time including the present.

McClellan's *Map of Windham County, Atlas Edition*, published in 1856, shows 68 homes, 4 sawmills, 4 schools, 1 blacksmith shop, 1 machine shop, 1 hotel, and 1 union church in the Town of Stratton at that time. By 1869 Beer's *Atlas of Windham County Vermont* shows 6 schools, 4 sawmills, 1 sawmill with shop, 1 sawmill with a chair shop, 1 sugar house, 1 blacksmith shop, 1 union church and 1 post office. The following businesses are listed: Rufus Lyman, manufacturer and dealer in plain lumber and eave spouting; A. H. Pike, manufacturer and dealer in "lumber, eave spouts, sap conductors & Shingles Planing and fitting to Order also Fitted Lumber Constr. on hand and under cover." Also listed is Lucius Smith, manufacturer and dealer in all kinds of "Building Lumber both Plain and Dressed, also lath, shingle, & Chair Stock." The population from the census of 1860 is given as 366 people.

Hamilton's *Windham County Gazetteer* lists the population from the 1880 census as 302. He reports that "in 1882 had five school districts and four common schools employing two female teachers, to whom was paid an aggregate salary of \$303.12. There were seventy pupils attending common school, while the entire cost of the schools for the year ending October 31st was \$322.60..." The following businesses are reported: Joel F. Grout & Son's sawmill and chair stock factory in the western part of the town, the original mill on the site having been built in 1835; R. Lyman and Son's saw mill with the capacity of turning out 5,000 feet of lumber per day, built in 1835; and Alexander H. Pike's sawmill manufacturing all kinds of lumber, shingles, and supplies with planning and matching, built in 1844.

The Gazetteer says, "Stratton is the only post office, it being located a little south of the center of the township. At the junction of this road and the Road from the northern part of the town there is located a

church, a hotel, and one dwelling. A little distance west of the stage line is a blacksmith shop and the post office just mentioned, while just beyond the post office there is a cluster of about four houses. In the extreme southeastern part of town there is a small hamlet called the Pike settlement, having been first settled by the Pike family, and has had members of that family there ever since.”

Esther Swift in *Vermont Place Names* reports that a post office opened in Stratton in 1838 and continued until 1843, closed for one year, and reopened in 1844. It closed for the last time in 1910.

She also says that the years between 1830 and 1880 were the “boom” years with timber harvesting the major activity; however, as the trees were cut the population declined. In the early years of the twentieth century the New England Power Company developed its hydroelectric system along the Deerfield River. The most northerly dam was constructed in Somerset, south of Stratton. The most northerly part of the lake that was formed is in Stratton. The New England Power Company acquired a large tract of land for this construction.

When the United States Department of Agriculture formed the Green Mountain National Forest it, too, began to acquire land in Stratton.

Eventually the forests regenerated and timber harvesting began again with paper companies buying large tracts of land. When the ski industry arrived in Stratton it brought with it residential and commercial growth as a second-home community.

Today the Town of Stratton is well known due to the Stratton Mountain Resort.

PART 5

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TOWN PLAN

This Town Plan provides the framework for managing the growth of the Town of Stratton. The goals provide the long-term direction, while the policies may be either short- or long-term and address actions that need to be considered. The action items are the implementable strategies for reaching the goals and policies of the Plan, and for dealing with current problems.

Some of the goals and policies listed in the Stratton Town Plan of 2009 have been met; however, each of the items listed below should be considered by the Stratton Planning Commission, by itself or in conjunction with other town boards.

Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations

The Stratton Planning Commission has reviewed and evaluated the current zoning bylaws and subdivision regulations for compatibility with the Town Plan of 2009. Many changes that are needed are being made, including the addition of a Commercial-Residential Area, CR-3, at the intersection of Stratton-Arlington Road and West Jamaica Road.

Coordination with Neighboring Towns

It is important that the Stratton Planning Commission work with the towns that surround Stratton to facilitate compatible growth in all these towns. It is especially important that Stratton work with the towns of Winhall and Jamaica that border the Stratton Growth Area. The Planning Commission should monitor the impact of its growth center on the neighboring towns in terms of population growth, school costs and housing.

Education

The Town of Stratton should review its educational policies and methods of providing education for the people of Stratton.

Recreation

The Town should continue to work toward greater recreational opportunities for townspeople.

PART 6

COMPATIBILITY

With Other Towns:

When Vermont's Growth Management Law, Act 200, was passed in 1988, Vermont set up a system for communities to work in concert with their neighbors, and with agencies of state government, to shape the future. As envisioned, decisions on local growth issues are to be made by the local communities; decisions of regional significance are to be made by the region's communities acting in consort. Town Plans are to be compatible with the regional plan and compatible with approved plans of other municipalities in the region.

Winhall: (Town Plan adopted 10/30/12) Winhall is located north of Stratton and can be accessed via Stratton Mountain access road. Along the northern border Stratton Mountain Resort Complex straddles the Towns of Winhall and Stratton, with each having roughly 50% of the total area. Much of the land use that abuts Stratton is classified as Forest District which is National Forest Land which should be withheld from intensive development. The area on the eastern border between Winhall and Stratton is in the Recreation-Resort Areas District which encompasses the Stratton Mountain Ski Resort and Snow Valley area. The Town Plans are compatible in these respects.

Jamaica: (Town Plan adopted 5/7/12) Jamaica is located northeast of Stratton and can be accessed via Pikes Falls Rd. Jamaica has two land use districts which abut Stratton; they are the Conservation Areas District and the Rural Resource Areas District. Jamaica's Conservation and Rural Resource areas are meant to encourage continued use of lands for forestry, agriculture, wildlife, and recreation. This is compatible with Stratton's abutting land use residential district which permits rural residential development and forest conservation as well as agriculture. Stratton has encouraged property owners to preserve the Sage Hill bear travel corridor along Kidder Brook.

Wardsboro: (Town Plan adopted 6/17/14) Wardsboro is located southeast of Stratton and can be accessed via VT Route 100, the Stratton-Arlington Road, or Canedy Road. The land uses in the western portion of Wardsboro which directly abut Stratton are Rural Residential and Conservation. These districts are compatible with Stratton's Residential District, which permits rural residential development as well as forestry conservation and agriculture under the assumption that densities remain low and the areas abutting Wardsboro's Conservation area remain primarily for forestry conservation usage. In addition, approximately two-thirds of the Town of Wardsboro is located within the GMNF Proclamation Boundary. If Stratton were to allow for growing residential development along the areas of Wardsboro identified as Conservation there would be a potential incompatibility. It is important to note that since the Wardsboro Town Plan is not presently approved by the Windham Regional Commission any potential incompatibilities would not prevent WRC approval of the Stratton Town Plan. Were the Wardsboro Town Plan to be regionally approved, compatibility issues could arise.

Dover: (Town Plan adopted 1/21/14) Dover lies to the south and southeast of Stratton and can be accessed via VT Route 100. The Route 100 corridor in Dover is classified as Productive Residential, allowing for moderate density residential development. Stratton has a variety of land use classifications on the border including: Conservation, Public, and Commercial/Residential. The Commercial/Residential area proposes to allow planned residential development and commercial uses as conditional uses. Depending on how development occurs in this area it may conflict with the Town of Dover's desire to restrict dense development so that it does not extend all the way up Route 100. While Planned Unit Development can conserve open space and natural resource areas by clustering building units, if the area sees rapid residential development in the years ahead, this may be incompatible growth. If however, the area abutting Dover is used more as a working landscape then the land use would not be in conflict. This is an area that Stratton and Dover should actively discuss. It is important to note that since the Dover Town Plan is not presently approved by the Windham Regional Commission any potential incompatibilities would not prevent WRC approval of the Stratton Town Plan. Were the Dover Town Plan to be regionally approved, compatibility issues could arise.

Somerset: Somerset does not have a Town Plan

Sunderland: The town of Sunderland is in the jurisdiction of the Bennington County Regional Commission and lies west of Stratton. The area of land which borders Stratton is a part of the Green Mountain National Forest and is maintained by the Forest Service. The land uses are compatible since they cover a large area of conservation. Combined, this creates a large area of unfragmented land. This is in line with Stratton's Town Plan Policy under Natural and Historic Features of "Natural areas are places of unique scientific or educational value. These places are not necessarily scenic or historically significant, but rather, they are primarily ecological reserves whose unique qualities distinguish them from the general landscape. Unique natural areas should be protected from uses that would have an adverse impact on them"

With the Windham Regional Plan

The Windham Regional Plan is intended to provide guidelines for the planning and coordination of development which will allow for a shared vision of the region's future that provides for a high quality of life, defined as a composite of our economic, social, cultural, and ecological well being. For the most part The Stratton Town Plan is compatible with the land use and development goals of the Regional Plan

There is one exception between the proposed land use plan and the Windham Regional Plan. The *Commercial-Residential 2* land in the southeast portion of Stratton allows for planned unit development and denser development in general. CR-2 consists of a group of seven lots, totaling 12.29 acres, the largest of which is the Triple Tree Lodging. There are currently eight structures in this small district. The designation is there to reflect what already exists there. This is in contrast with the Regional Plan which identifies the land use a *Productive Rural*. Productive Rural lands are "low density and very low density residential areas containing land-based resources that, when in productive use, contribute to the working landscape and have significant economic value". This density issue is similar to the one between the land use differences as spelled out in the Dover and Stratton Town Plans. Stratton Town officials should work actively with neighbors and with the Windham Regional Commission to assure that future development is in line with regional goals and policies.

PART 7

DEFINITIONS

ACT: This refers to the Vermont Planning and Development Act, 24 Vermont Statutes Annotated, Chapter 117, in effect as of July 1, 1990.

AGRICULTURAL USE: Land used for raising livestock, and / or for agricultural or forestry products. This includes farm structures for the storage of agricultural equipment, or for accessory use, such as the sale of agricultural products raised on the property.

ANIMAL HABITAT: The place where an animal naturally lives. It provides food, cover, water and space.

AQUIFER: Water-bearing stratum of permeable rock, sand and gravel.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIGS: Site of a study of material remains of past human life and activities.

BUILDING: A structure having a roof supported by columns or walls and intended for the shelter or enclosure of persons or animals.

BYLAWS: Zoning regulations, subdivision regulations, or an official map adopted under the authority of 24 VSA, chapter 117.

CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT: Site planning that provides for residential or commercial units on lots which are smaller in size than required by Zoning, but when added to their proportionate area of common land available to them, will equal or exceed in size requirements of the district(s) in which they are located.

COMMERCIAL ANIMALS: Animals kept, used or raised for profit, such as those kept in kennels, or riding / boarding stables. This does not include animals used for wool, meat or food products.

DEER WINTERING AREA: An area used perennially by white-tailed deer in winter. It is characterized by soft wood growth on a south facing slope with available browse and water.

DENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT: The density of development in a residential site is the number of dwelling units per acre. Historically from the time of its first zoning ordinance, Stratton has used gross land area in determining density of development, by: (a) gross land area, and (b) net land area. In the method Stratton uses (Gross Land Area) the density of development is defined by using all the land area included in the site or that portion of the site being donated to a particular use. In the case of the Net Land Area method, the entire site, less specified undevelopable land such as roads and parks, is used.

DEVELOPMENT: A change or modification of Use of lands or structures, such as: the division of a parcel into two or more parcels; or, the construction, reconstruction, conversion, structural alteration, relocation or enlargement of any building or structure; or any mining, excavation, or landfill.

ELEMENT: Component of a plan.

FLOOD HAZARD AREA: Areas subjected to inundation (pursuant to Chapter 23 of Title 10) and further defined as those areas which would be subject to flooding by the “100 year flood,” or an area which has a one percent chance of flooding each year.

FLOODWAY: The channel of a river or other water course, including the adjacent land area that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than one foot.

FLOODWAY FRINGE: The remaining portion of the hazard area excluding the floodway.

GROWTH CENTER: Portions of a town or towns where a concentration of development exists, where there is space available for future growth and development, and where services, facilities and utilities are available.

HISTORIC SITE: Any site or structure, district, or archaeological landmark which has been officially included in the National Register of Historic Places, and / or the State Register of Historic Places, or which is established by testimony of the Vermont Advisory Commission on Historic Preservation as being historically significant (10 VSA 600.9): and those identified by the Town.

INFRASTRUCTURE: The basic facilities, equipment, and installations needed for the growth and functionality of a municipality.

INTENSIVE DEVELOPMENT: Intensive development is development at a density greater than one dwelling unit per two acres, determined by using the gross land area method.

LEGISLATIVE BODY: Select Board, in the case of a Town.

MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT: A single building containing more than one type of use or a single development of more than one building and use, where the different types of land use are in close proximity, planned as a unified complimentary whole, and functionally integrated to the use of shared vehicular and pedestrian access and parking areas.

MOBILE HOME: A trailer used as a permanent dwelling connected to utilities, and designed without a permanent foundation.

MOBILE HOME PARK: An area set aside for mobile homes.

MOTOR VEHICLE: An automotive vehicle not operated on rails; one with rubber tires for use on highways.

MUNICIPALITY: A town.

NATURAL AREA: Areas characterized by native plants, animals, and significant physical features. These areas may have ecological, educational, scientific, scenic, and / or contemplative value.

PERSON: An individual corporation, partnership, association, or any other incorporated or unincorporated organization or group.

PLAN: A plan adopted under Section 4385 of Title 24, V.S.A. Chapter 117.

PLANNING COMMISSION: Specifically, this is a Planning Commission for a municipality, created under subchapter 2 of Title 24, V.S.A. Chapter 117.

PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD): An area of land, controlled by a landowner, to be developed as a single entity for multiple dwelling or commercial units and / or industrial uses, where individual units may not comply with the regulations established under the provisions of the Zoning Bylaws, but when taken as a whole, the development shall comply with the Zoning Bylaws.

PREFABRICATED HOUSE: A house which has standard parts that have been fabricated in a factory, so that construction consists of assemblage of these parts.

PUBLIC ROAD: Public way or proposed public way for vehicular traffic, which affords the principal means of access to abutting properties.

RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCE: Energy available for collection or conversion from direct sunlight, wind, running water, organically derived from fuels including wood, agricultural sources, waste materials, and waste heat.

RURAL TOWN: A town having a population of less than 2500 persons as evidenced by the census.

SHALL: An action is mandated.

SHOULD: An action is encouraged.

STRUCTURE: An assembly of material for occupancy or use, including, but not limited to, a building, mobile home, trailer, billboard, sign, wall, or fence, except a wall or fence on an operating farm.

WETLAND: An area that is inundated by surface or ground water with frequency sufficient to support vegetation or aquatic life that depend on saturated or seasonally saturated soil conditions for growth and reproduction. Such areas include, but are not limited to, marshes, sloughs, potholes, fens, bogs, ponds, river and lake overflows and mudflats, but excluding areas that grow food or crops in connection with farming activities.

PART 8

TOWN PLAN MAPS

Existing Land Use

Transportation and Community Facilities

Significant Habitats

Proposed Land Use