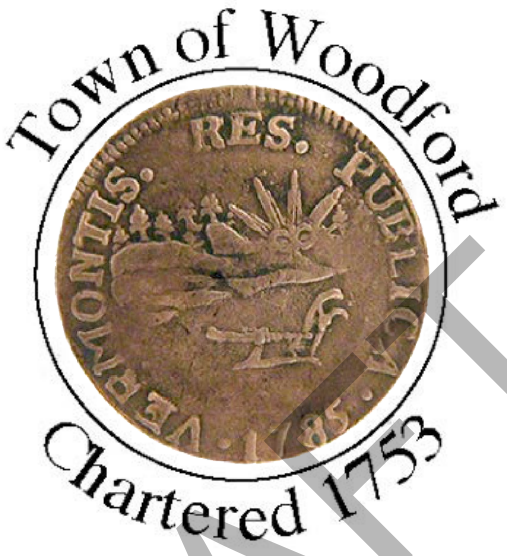
Woodford Town Plan

Adopted _____



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PREPARED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION

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WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE SIGNIFICANT ASSISTANCE AND GUIDANCE OF THE BENNINGTON COUNTY REGIONAL COMMISSION~~, ESPECIALLY SENIOR PLANNER JIM HENDERSON~~.

THE ABOVE IMAGE IS A "VERMONT CENT"- STRUCK IN RUPERT, VERMONT. THE VERMONT STATE LEGISLATURE AUTHORIZED THE MINTING OF CENTS FOR THE REPUBLIC IN 1785. VERMONT WAS THE FOURTEENTH STATE JOINING THE UNION IN 1791. PHOTO COURTESY CHUCK SUSS.

Table of Contents

1.0 SHORT HISTORY, TODAY, DEMOGRAPHICS

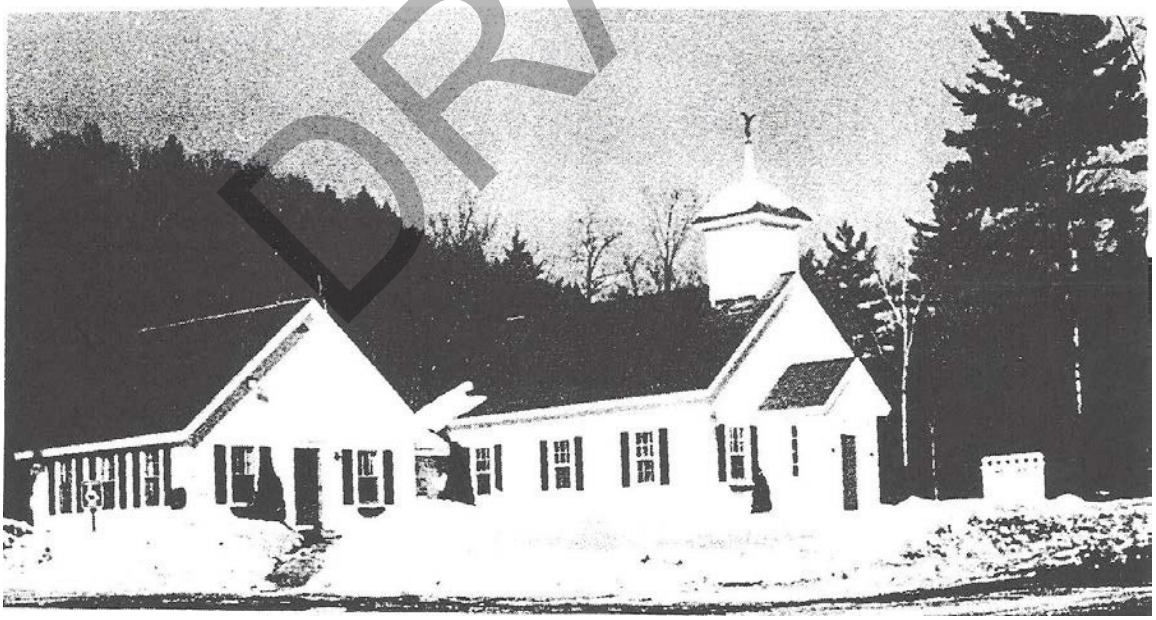
ORIGIN OF THE NAME OF WOODFORD

"WOODFORD was named in 1753 when granted by Governor Benning Wentworth of New Hampshire, at a time when our area was still part of Great Britain and Wentworth was a colonial governor. He named 128 grants of land in what later became Vermont, without explaining the names. He preferred names of places in the British Isles he visited personally on two or more trips there, although his exact route is not known. An exception is Bennington, which he named for himself.

"Woodford was a little village northeast of London, named for a ford in the edge of Epping Forest. Place names around our Woodford which he named, and also around Woodford in England, are Glastonbury, Somerset and Shaftsbury. For ages Woodford was outside London, then after Wentworth's time it became a suburb. Today it is part of London."

BENNINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Joseph Parks
August 5, 1994



1.1 BEGINNINGS IN PLANNING

In 1970, the Bennington County Regional Commission retained Technical Planning Associates, a consultant firm in New Haven, Connecticut, to work with the Commission and the towns to develop a regional as well as town plans. The first draft plan for Woodford is dated May 1970. The proposed land use plan at that time included several designations: Rural Residential – 2 acres or more per family, and one acre minimum on favorable soils; Roadside Commercial – near Big Pond; limited Industrial – on the Burgess Road near the town forest; and Forest and Recreation District – comprising the majority of the town. National Forest lands were approximately 50% of the land area (Approximately 90% today). One of the driving conditions of the Woodford Plan is the rugged mountain land with limited accessibility and the narrow valley on the Bennington side with little room for development potential.

A comparison of the plan adopted in December 1974 and the present plan several years later is essentially identical. They provided for three residential districts of 1, 5, and 10 acres (adjusted for builders' acreage). Roadside commercial area zones included areas of existing uses. The balance of the town was designated Forest. Changes since that time included a Recreation District (Prospect Mountain Ski Area), Flood Hazard designations, and a small amount of land rezoned for commercial and residential.

~~This 2015 amended plan brings into consistency the land use classification between the land use map in the plan and the zoning district classification in the zoning bylaws. For example prior plan land use maps showed districts as R 1, 5, and 10 depicting minimum acreage requirements for building lots while the zoning districts used a 'Builders' lot size of even dimension such as R1 is 40,000 sq. ft. instead of (43,560 sq. ft.). This updated plan uses the original classification for residential districts with the following minimum standards: R-1 (1 Acre), R-5 (5 Acres), and R-10 (10 Acres).~~

Updating the Plan

State law (Title 24 VSA, Chapter 117) is the enabling authority for the plan and implementing bylaws. The plan expires and must be re-adopted every eight years by statute. In the meantime a community is encouraged to revisit and update the plan based on new information and changing conditions. The plan adopted under statute ~~this Chapter~~ must contain certain elements, e.g. objectives and policies, land use, transportation, education, maps, etc. ~~The law also encourages a~~ Statute also requires that a community ~~to consider the~~ incorporate statewide planning goals, and where appropriate to coordinate the plan with its neighbors and the region. In a nutshell, the purpose of the plan is to provide a comprehensive framework to guide community development for the benefit of Woodford residents, the town as a whole, and with consideration to its neighbors. Additionally, the plan sets forth the policy framework for implementing the town's zoning bylaws which must be consistent with the plan.

The process of preparing a plan or comprehensive update is important. Woodford residents have an opportunity early on in the process to actively participate in its development through attendance at public planning commission meetings. ~~and its recommendations and policies. To that end, a survey was distributed to land owners to gauge opinion about current conditions and the future of the town. There was significant uniformity in opinion about maintaining the quality of the environment and its relationship to future development. The plan takes into consideration the results of the survey as it relates to various sections of the plan. A summary or full version of the survey can be reviewed at the Woodford Town Office.~~ A public hearing process is required for adoption of the updated plan.

1.2 SHORT HISTORY

Included in this section is researched information that is not necessarily accurate in substance or context. It is intended to provide a sense of some of the events and characteristics of Woodford as written in different sources. These include the Vermont Historical Gazetteer, Bennington Historical Society papers, The Shires of Bennington, among other sources.

The name "Vermont"

"The first English settlement in Vermont dates from 1724 (Fort Dummer near present day Brattleboro). However, historians note no significant occupation until 1749 when Governor Wentworth made his first grant (Bennington). The first map to show English settlements in present-day Vermont is a plan of Williamstown and Adams. Massachusetts, along with several townships in Vermont (Bennington, Arlington, Glastenbury, Pownal, Stamford, Shaftsbury, Stratton, Sunderland and Woodford). The plan was drawn by Nathaniel Dwight in November 1749."

History of the Town of Woodford

Originally, "This town was chartered by Governor Wentworth on the 6th of March 1753. It was the intention of the worthy Governor of the province to make no township of greater than thirty-six square miles, but for some reason Woodford was made an exception, it containing no less than forty-two square miles of land, and being six miles in north and south measurement and seven miles east and west.

Although Woodford was chartered in 1753, settlement did not actually commence until some twenty-five years later, and the town organization was not affected earlier than February, 1789. In the "Gazetteer of Vermont," Hayward, 1849, states: "The town began to be settled immediately after the revolutionary war."

The town of Woodford cannot be said to have made much of any history, in fact none at all, during the period of the controversy with New York, the War of the Revolution, and subsequent proceedings which preceded the admission of Vermont to the

Union; but its history really commenced with the town organization, which event occurred in 1789."

The construction of the railroad that ran from Bennington to Glastenbury "gave to the denizens of the "Hollow" a dignity not previously theirs, and resulted in a change of name, at least, among residents there, of the locality from the "Hollow" to "Slab City," by which it was known for some time. One of the first to locate on Bolles Brook was Phineas Bolles about 1829-30. Jacob Harbour settled soon after on Harbour Road. Then by a subsequent change, brought about by the extensive industries operated by the HARBOUR Brothers, the place became known as Harbourville. But the reader who is not acquainted with this immediate locality must not for a moment imagine that Harbourville, formerly Slab City, formerly Woodford Hollow, is a snug little hamlet on Bolles Brook, for such is hardly the case. The "Hollow" begins as one enters the defile between the mountains and ends where the ravine becomes lost in the mountains, a distance of two miles or more. There was a time when Woodford Hollow, throughout its entire length, was an exceedingly busy community. About 1801-2 the first forge was built in Woodford Hollow, for the manufacture of bar iron. It was two or three years later when the furnace was erected just west of the town line, in Bennington.

The other and the principal manufacturing point of the township was the hamlet known for at least three score of years by the name of "Woodford City." It is said that "a city set on a hill shall not be hid; "therefore, here must be a city, for it is on one of the highest elevations upon which a town could possibly be built up in the township, unless perhaps, the extreme heights of Mount Prospect were used for that purpose.

Woodford City, although never regularly laid out, and having no corporate existence apart from the balance of the township, was a busy little hamlet. The population of the township of Woodford, according to the census of 1880, numbered four hundred and eighty-eight souls."

The town of Woodford had two churches. The Union Church (edifice built in 1783) at Woodford City, at which all denominations were entitled to hold services and the other located in the Hollow, and was the denomination known as the Advent Christian Church. The society was organized in 1871 by elders of that faith with twelve members. The church building was erected during the same year.

In the town were three schools. The schoolhouses were located in the Hollow, Woodford City, and in the extreme eastern part of the township." [1]

Woodford City encompasses an area on the Woodford Mountain plateau from the proximity of Mount Prospect to the eastern end of the lake known as "Big Pond." Reference to Big Pond: "Child's Gazetteer and Directory"

[1] Source: History of Bennington County, Vt. With illustrations and Biological Sketches of Some of its Prominent Men and Pioneers. edited by Lewis Cass Aldrich. Syracuse, N.Y.,D Mason &Co., Publishers, 1889 Chapter XXX, Page 465 - 480 Transcribed by Karima, 2004, Material provided by Ray Brown.

Brief Chronology

1749	Governor Benning Wentworth of New Hampshire, knowing of conflicting grants between New Hampshire and New York, decides to grant townships in the area starting with Bennington, named after himself.
1753	The Townships of Woodford and Stamford were chartered.
1779:	The first inhabitant of Woodford was Caleb Moore, at about the same time Mathew and Zerah Scott and Benjamin Reed settled. 'Woodford City' is reported to have inhabitants prior to 1820 and Mr. Cutler as the first settler. There was quite a settlement in the Hollow before there were any inhabitants on the hill or "Woodford City," so called.
1789	US Constitution is adopted but Vermont is not accepted as a state because of a land grant problem. Woodford sets up municipal government about 15 years after the first settlement. It is reported that Woodford was organized on February 11, 1789
1799	A toll road is begun from Bennington to Brattleboro and finished in 1800.
1831-1832	The new road or so-called Searsburg Turnpike (through the center of Woodford) was built and opened for travel in '32. It commences at the Bennington line, by the stream leading to the outlet of Woodford Pond and follows the stream to the pond, thence east to Searsburg.
1872	Bennington & Glastenbury Railroad is built for logging.
1870's	Industry flourishes with an abundance of saw mills.
1897	A trolley line is extended to Woodford from the Bennington/North Bennington lines.
1932	The Green Mountain National Forest is established by presidential proclamation. ~~Today~~ approximately 90% of Woodford is in the Green Mt. National Forest.
1936	Alexander B.R. Drysdale opens a ski area at Prospect Mountain and introduces a rope tow in 1938 for two years until World War II. "Alex's Tow was alternately named Hedge Hog Hovel Ski Area, and the Woodford City Ski Center depending on the year." [2]
1948	United Development Corporation prepares development plans for Big Pond with 916 lots (Woodford Lake Estates).

[2] Source. Article with picture of "Alex's Tow in the 2010 publication of Lost Ski Areas of Southern Vermont.

1960's	W.H. Morse purchased the Woodford Ski Area since named Prospect Ski Area on June 1, 1961 from William Mundell, the original owner and developer. William H. Morse, well known as "Willie" Morse developed and operated Prospect as a small family/area alpine ski Mt. with a rope tow and two "T" bars for approximately 20 years. The next two owners, Joseph Parks and his successor Tommy Trant tried operating Prospect for a number of years as a combined alpine and xc ski area.
1964	Woodford State park is developed. This 398-acre park has the highest elevation campground of any park in Vermont, at 2400 feet. Woodford SP is located on a mountain plateau and surrounds Adams Reservoir. It borders the Aiken Wilderness Area, which is in the Green Mountain National Forest. Adams saw mill was in the vicinity of Adams Reservoir.
1966	Mt. Anthony Union High School assumes responsibility for 7-12 Woodford students.
1970-74	Woodford develops its first land use plan and implementing bylaws.
1980's	George D. Aiken Wilderness area is established in the Green Mountain National Forest pursuant to the Preservation Act of 1964.
1984	'Woodford Snobusters' snowmobile club is founded in true Vermont fashion; on the front porch of everyday townsfolk- in this case the McKenna family – who wanted to organize around a central interest. This passion was to share the surrounding woodlands with other snowmobiling aficionados. Today, it is the largest club in the country with over 5,000 members and 122 miles of groomed trails.
2012	Steve Whitham and Andrea Amodeo purchased the Prospect Mountain Ski Area Corp. from the Merchants Bank during 1992. They have since operated it primarily for cross country skiing. When Joseph Parks was the owner, he invested a considerable sum to have the W.H. Morse Construction Company build a first class, high elevation extensive network of trails on Prospect and adjacent National Forest Property. Consequently, Prospect became home to two Olympians, Dave Jarecki, and Andy Newell from Bennington and Shaftsbury respectively. Bill Koch, another Olympian of renown from Brattleboro often practiced and skied at Prospect. He was the father of the "Bill Koch League". The original cross country trails were built by Bucky Broomhall and the MAUHS ski team to zig-zag up and across Mt. Prospect on the Greenwood Lodge side of the mountain where remnants of the Alexander B. Drysdale ski tow can still be found above the old sheep yard off Pent Road. The Greenwood Lodge side supports xc skiing, xc racing, snowshoeing, and a VAST snowmobile trail.

2013 The Vermont Legislature granted Woodford a Vermont Municipal Charter during May of 2013. It is included with Vermont Municipal Charters in the Vermont Statutes online Title 24 Appendix Chapter 162 Town of Woodford.

From the above one can begin to appreciate the nature of the change and use in Woodford. The historic references point to the importance of the timber industry and recreation. There were approximately eight sawmills in the late 1800s (Bugbee's, Knapp's, Pine Valley, Barton, J. Foot & Son, Mallory, Harbour Brothers) as well as several charcoal kilns. About 1801 the first forge was built in Woodford Hollow for the manufacture of bar iron, and another was built on the Bennington town line for the manufacture of anchors for gunboats. Fish and wildlife were bountiful with some claims of pickerel weighing in at a mill pond between 2 and 4 pounds, not to mention bear, elk, moose, and deer.

Perhaps the most important influence on the land use pattern was the new road (toll-pike) built in 1832, referred to by some sources as "The Revolution of 1832 in Woodford." This opened up the interior of Woodford where previously east-west travel was in the southern end of the town in the vicinity of Burgess Road. The new road caused a considerable rearrangement of the settlement pattern, which is essentially that of today. Absent the industry of earlier years, the residential and commercial patterns (accommodations for travelers) and some services continue. One other ~~major event~~ important factor regarding land use patterns is that Green Mountain National Forest currently owns approximately 90% of the town land base, some of which is designated wilderness. In some respects, some might say that parts of Woodford are returning to a natural wilderness state, as it was more than two hundred years ago. However, the nature of recreation has changed with the advent and increasing popularity of off-road motorized recreation. This is merely a glimpse at a rich history, and justice to the many residents (past and present) is not possible here. Evidence and remnants/artifacts of the past are still evident in Woodford today and efforts should be continued to preserve and protect these special historic and cultural assets.

WOODFORD CITY (Historic context provided by Joe Parks): Until the late 1830s, there was no road through Woodford along the line of the Molly Stark Trail (misnamed in the 1930s as a tourism gimmick). Nothing but logging roads went through there previously.
The way to go east from Bennington before that was on what is now called the Old Stage Coach Road, which was built as an emergency military road in 1777 as Burgoyne was approaching. It was a terrible road when built, the worst part being the steep face of the Harmon Hill ridge which the road probably climbed by switchbacks somewhere off of South Stream Road in the area of the fish hatchery. To correct that, a turnpike was built in the early 1800s which became Burgess Road, and then went diagonally south-east up the slope without switchbacks. That is the present road to Sucker Pond, except that at the elbow, it met the original military road and turned east to Heartwellville. That was an improvement over 1777, but it was never good enough. In the 1880s, however, the present road, Stage Coach Trail, was built and the stagecoach traffic immediately switched to using the new road.

At the summit a little community grew up, including some hotels which, after the Civil War, began serving vacationers. It was one of those hotels, the Green Hotel, standing where the Prospect parking lot is now, which improved an old logging road to the summit so that vacationers could go up for the view. In those days a Prospect meant a place to get a view, as in Lookout Mountain. Starting in Mundell's time (1938/39) some of that road served the ski area as a downhill ski trail. ~~A section of it may now be on the new cellular phone road.~~

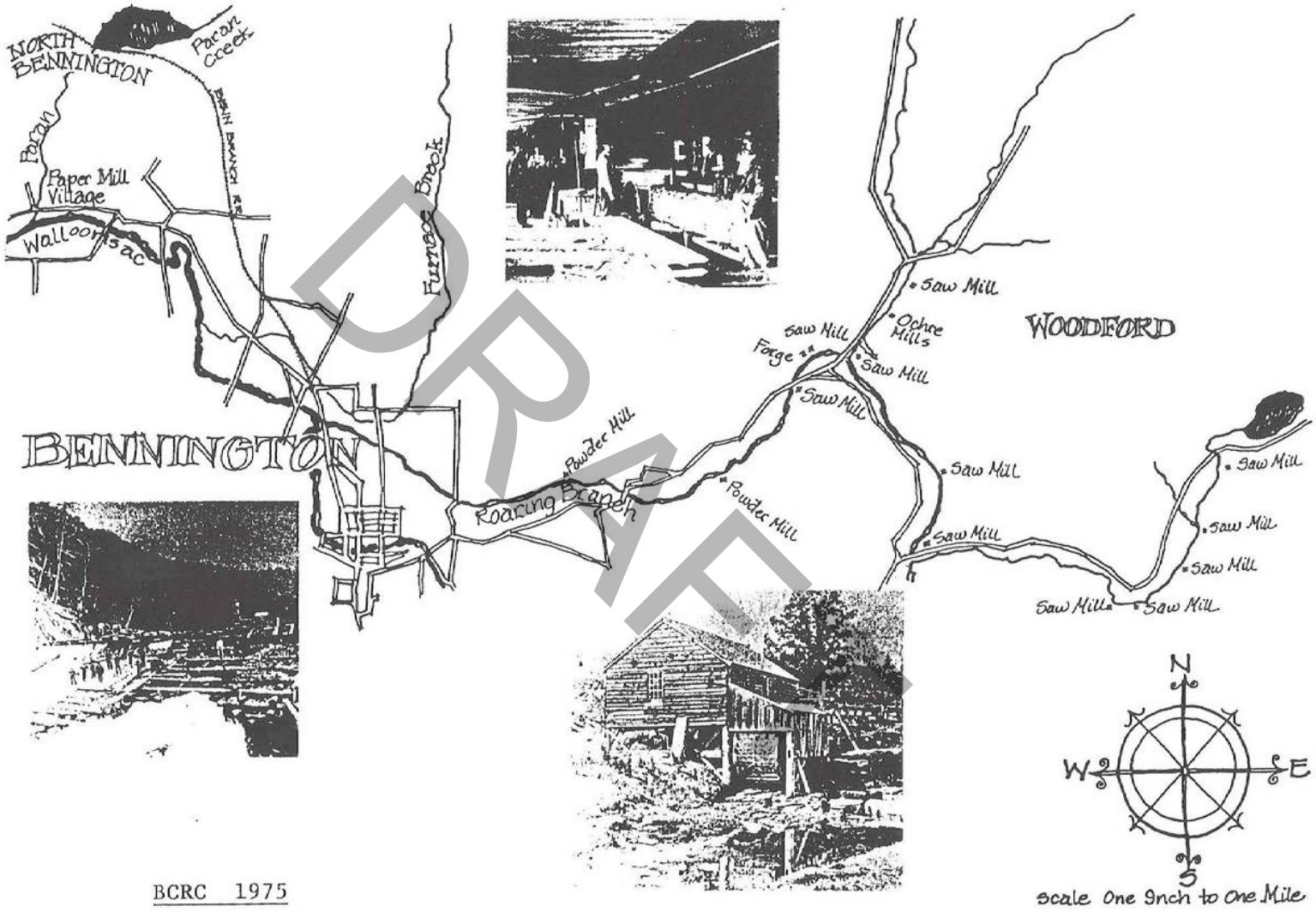
For some reason, instead of calling the new little community at the summit just plain Woodford, it was called Woodford City. A little boosterism and ambitious, perhaps. The stream which the highway followed to get up there is called City Stream, which is short for Woodford City stream.

An excerpt from the Gazetteer and Business Directory of Bennington County, Vt. for 1880-81, by Hamilton Child, reads as follows: " Woodford p.o., known as Woodford City, located on the summit of the Green Mountain, is a straggling village a mile long, containing about 100 inhabitants, one church, (Union), a comfortable hotel, three sawmills, one grocery, one blacksmith shop, and one box factory."

PROSPECT SKI MOUNTAIN About 1937, Alexander Drysdale's ski slope was the first commercial ski activity in the area. It was located on what is now Ed and Ann Shea's Greenwood Lodge property to the north. It was on the lower slopes of the mountain, but not on the Prospect property as it was and is today. There was a single rope tow lift made from an automobile, which may have been called Drysdale's Ski Tow. The tow, which was powered by an old automobile, and the short ski slope near the mill pond, were fairly short lived.

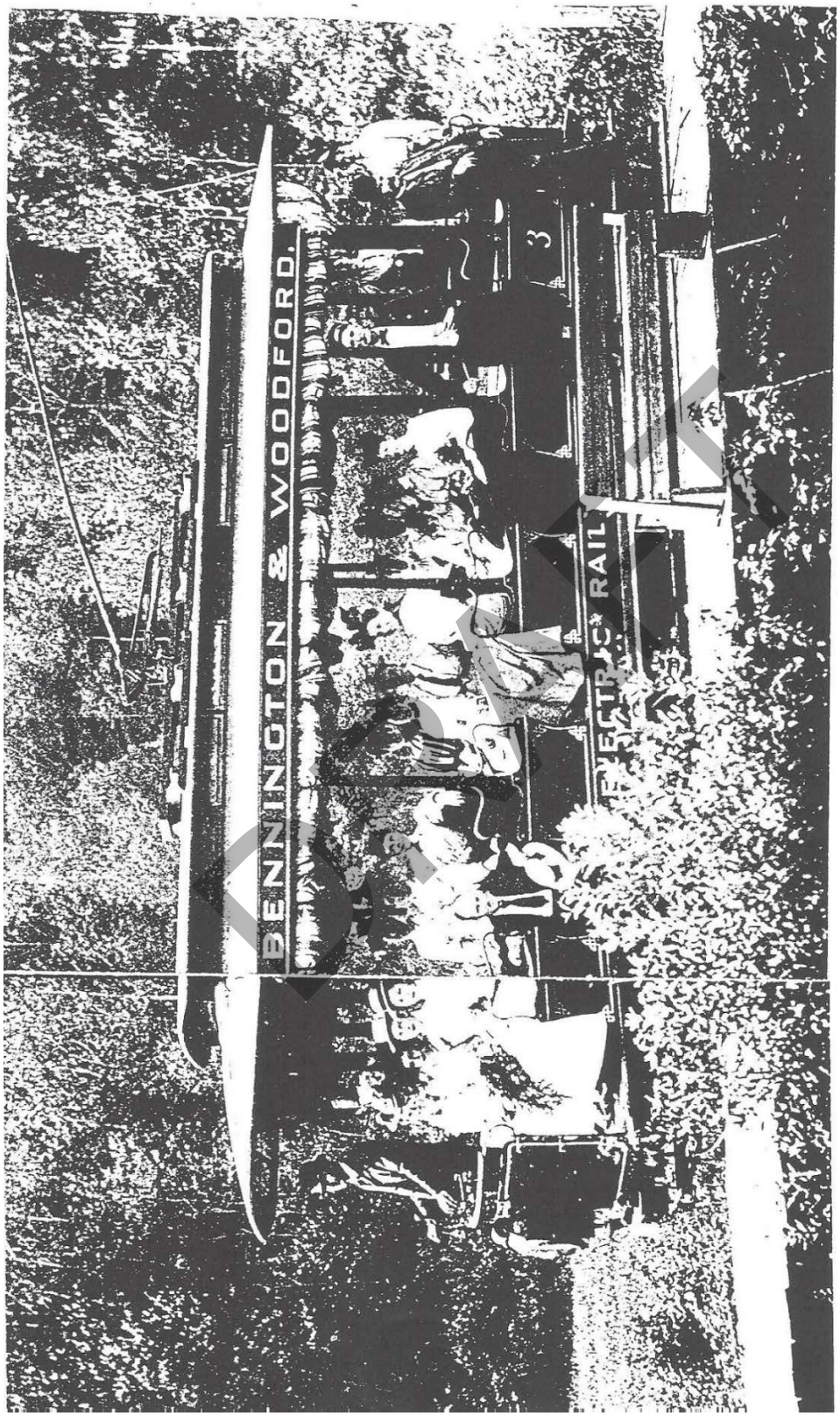
About 1938 or 1939, Mundell of Newfane acquired the first parcel of the ski area as we know it today. It was a more ambitious expansion, but it only went up the mountain about one-third of the way. It also depended on an automobile, in that case a jacked-up truck, for power. The warming hut is still part of the base lodge. This operation may have been called the Woodford Ski Trails. It did not open for the 1941 season because the owner left for the war.

Following the war, the operation was run as a combination business and volunteer operation that tried to keep it afloat. W. Morse of Bennington, who got the contract to rebuild the highway up from Bennington, used material from that job to create the big parking lot. He then bought the mountain side and installed two T-bars, one of which reached the top. It continued to operate in the 1970s and 1980s without many major changes, except for the addition of the cross-country trails on the National Forest lands. In 1990, the base lodge and other buildings were refurbished, but there was no investment in snow-making, chair lifts, or grooming capacity, probably given the small market/weekend use and costly improvements. The development of a restaurant/bar was to complement downhill ski operations, but it did not work out. The facility now serves the cross- country ski demand, and the restaurant follows the ski area usage and demand. (Joe Parks)



Map of settlement patterns along the Walloomsac and neighboring tributaries from an actual survey done in 1856 by E. Rice & C.E. Harwood

Pre-1898 Bennington & Woodford Trolley run to Glastenbury. Conductor Ed Moore.



1.3 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Population Trends Between 2010 and 2020, the population decreased by 16.3% losing about 70 residents – a significant decline compared to the 2000-2010 growth rate of 2.4%. The 2020 US Census reports a number of characteristics: median age 54.1, age 65 and older 28.5%, age 5-19 12%, male 49.6%, female 50.4%. Woodford's decline in population between 2010-2020 mirrored regional trends in population decline. Housing costs in Woodford tend to be more affordable which may attract additional residents if there is a significant growth in the labor force.

TABLE #1

Population Growth 1970-2020[3]

1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	90-2000	2000-10	2010-20
286	314	331	414	424	25.1%	2.4%	-16.3%

TABLE #2

Population 1930-2020[4]

1930:	138	1960:	207	1990:	331	2020:	355
1940:	170	1970:	286	2000:	414		
1950:	198	1980:	314	2010:	424		

[3] SOURCE: U.S. Census,

[4] SOURCE: U.S. Census

Household Characteristics

There was a significant decrease in households of 27.2% between 2010 and 2020 versus the 4.6% increase which occurred between 2000 and 2010. The total number of single person households and households with at least one member over 65 also decreased. The average persons per household and family size have remained relatively constant.

TABLE #3

Household Characteristics[5]

	2010	2020	% Change
Total Population	424	355	-16.30%
Total # Households	180	131	-27.20%
# Single Person Households	48	16	-66.70%
# Households with Children (under 18)	-	21	-
# Households Age 65+	64	48	-25.00%
Median Age of Population	54.1		
Average Household Size	2.09		
Average Family Size	2.83		

Households: Include one or more persons living in separate living quarters as a single unit.

[5] SOURCE: U.S. Census

2.0 WOODFORD – THE PLACE

2.1 SETTING

Woodford has 30,332 acres making it the largest of all towns in the Bennington Region. Much of the town is on the upper plateau of the Green Mountain range with typical elevations exceeding 2,000 feet. The town is nearly divided between the Hudson (Walloomsac) and Connecticut (West Branch - Deerfield) River Basins. The plateau supports a rich variety of aquatic environments including ponds and wetlands. Woodford Hollow on the western side of town is rugged with a narrow valley, and an extensive watershed including Bolles Brook, Bickford Hollow Brook, City Stream, and Stamford Stream. Much of the rural development is near Route 9, the principal means of access.

The balance of the land is largely in the Green Mountain National Forest which includes a section of the Long Trail (Appalachian Trail system) and the George D. Aiken Wilderness Area. The town is also host to Woodford State Park.

2.2 HOW IS THE LAND USED?

For purposes of this section, the settlement areas of the town are divided into five areas: Woodford Hollow, Burgess Road, Woodford City, Red Mill Pond, and the balance is in Green Mountain National Forest/public lands.

Woodford Hollow

Woodford Hollow starts at the Bennington town line, to the town office, and continues along Harbor Road of the Bolles Brook watershed. The area has mixed uses characterized mostly by single-family homes on smaller lots (+/- 1 acre) along Route 9 and larger lots in the Bolles Brook area. Businesses and residents are scattered in this area and include a former motel and mini-mart (used for State assisted housing in 2012), antique shop and apartment complex, home occupation small engine repair and sales, used automotive sales and repair garage, Woodford Elementary School, mobile home park, Bennington water filtration plan, excavation, septic and agricultural businesses.

Burgess Road

This area is at the foothills of Harmon Hill of the Green Mountain Range. ~~The area had been zoned Rural Residential and Forest. However, due to the nature of use, the Land Use Map and Bylaws need to be amended to indicate current as well as proposed future use of the Burgess Road area.~~ It has supported some farming in the past, and has about eight residences. The area is accessed from the extension of Bennington town roads (Burgess and Gore). Both roads are Class 3 town highways in the Town of Woodford. The area is generally characterized by moderate to steep slopes and some prime agricultural soils (Pittsfield soil type). It is said that Harmon Hill was a large meadow and supported a sheep pasture in 1888.

Woodford City

For planning purposes, this is an area on the plateau which encompasses the largest area of private holdings outside the Green Mountain National Forest. This general area has a mix of uses including year-round and vacation homes, Roadside Commercial services, Woodford City and Woodford Union Church. The church is considered to be the highest in elevation in Vermont. The largest concentration of seasonal-vacation homes is in Woodford Lake Estates along the northwest shoreline of Big Pond. Prospect Ski Mountain (see historic context, page 3), is a prominent use for cross country skiing. The facilities include a building for ski equipment rental and sales, and a restaurant including the sale of gifts and crafts. Greenwood Lodge, located immediately to the east of Prospect, was the original site for downhill skiing. The lodge and campsites provide accommodations and recreation for individuals and groups. Big Pond, Bugbee Pond, Beaver Pond, and the interconnecting streams and wetlands are an important natural system in this area. It is important that the quality of this upland aquatic environment habitat be protected. Chapter 5 classifies this area into different planning/zoning districts.

Red Mill Pond

This area includes the Woodford State Park and extends to the Searsburg town line. Red Mill Pond and Adams Reservoir contribute to the recreational emphasis of this area. Woodford State Park, the fish and game access at the Red Mill Pond and access to the Green Mountain National Forest are the primary recreational uses. The George D. Aiken Wilderness Area in the Green Mountain National Forest forms the southerly edge of the state park. Woodford State Park, A to Z Snowmobile Sales and Repair, McKenna Machine Shop and Woodford SnoBusters headquarters as well as some scattered residences and camps are located along Route 9 in this area. Although currently closed, the Red Mill NF Campground, Twin Brooks "Woodford Mall" store and Red Mill Gift Shop are also located along Route 9.

Green Mountain National Forest/Public Lands

Of Woodford's 30,332 acres, 26,618 acres (88%) are in the Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF) and another 398 acres comprises Woodford State Park (WSP). Nearly 20% of the town is in the George D. Aiken Wilderness Area located entirely within the Town of Woodford. How the Green Mountain National Forest is managed influences how the land is used. Emphasis has been on recreation and natural resource protection. The U.S. Forest Service Land and Resource Management Plan, 2006, provides the blueprint for managing the forest. Management Areas in Woodford include the following:

<u>Diverse Forest Use (3.1)</u>
Emphasis on variety of use, high quality saw timber, mix of habitats and wildlife species, full range of activities motorized and non-motorized.

<u>Diverse Backcountry(6.2)</u>
Large landscapes, backcountry recreational motorized & foot trails, longer rotation for timber harvest, mix of wildlife habitat.

Wilderness Study Area WSA (5.1) (Glastenbury &Woodford)
Protect wilderness characteristics pending legislation as to their designated and existing compatible uses. If not designated it remains WSA until the Plan is amended.

George D. Aiken Wilderness (5.1)
Maintenance of wilderness values without human intrusion and driven by ecological/natural processes. Prohibits motorized/mechanized transport.

Eligible Wild, Scenic, or Recreational Rivers (or sections)
Stamford Stream-Sucker Pond, City Stream, Bolles Brook. Emphasis is to protect and enhance the "outstanding remarkable values" (ORVs) that led to potential for designation as provided in this category. Must be free of impoundments.

Long/Appalachian Trail (LT/AT)
Traverses entirety (north-south) through Woodford: Much of the AT trail in southern Vermont is shared with the LT. The management area is approximately 500' on either side of the trails. The trails traverse portions of the Wilderness Study Area which may require special treatment and management of the bordering areas.

Ecological Special Area (Sax)
Are characterized by physical or biological features of forest or regional significance. Examples include geological, botanical, zoological, and ecological values.

3.0 Local Economy and Resources

3.1 Resident Workforce

Resident Labor Force

According to the U.S. Census, Woodford's resident workforce in 2021 – including all town residents aged 16 and over who were working or actively seeking employment – numbered 128, representing 55% of the town's total population compared to 57% for the County and 61% for the State. Between 2014 and 2021, the unemployment rate decreased from 4.6% to 3.4% but the labor force also decreased by 46.7% ~~which may be due to demographic changes or the US economic slowdown. However, the workforce has been fairly consistent during the past decade, except for noted variations in the unemployment rate~~ as noted in Table 4.

TABLE #4

Woodford Resident Labor Force (16+ yrs.) 2000 – 2021

Source: Vermont Dept. of Labor, Economic & Labor Market Information & ACS 5-Year Estimates

Employment 16+	Total	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate	Bennington County/VT
2021	128	120	8	3.4	3.4/2.7
2014	240	230	10	4.6	4.8/4.1
2009	250	210	40	16.6	7.6/6.6
2005	250	210	40	15.9	3.6/3.5
2000	230	220	10	2.7	3.0/ 2.8

Employed Civilian population

The class of workers in 2021 included: Employee of private company workers (56.7%), Government workers (7.5%), Self-employed workers in own not incorporated business and unpaid family workers(10.8%), self-employed in own incorporated business workers (3.3%), and private not-for-profit wage and salary workers (21.7%). The workforce can be further divided into occupations and employment by industry. With the exception of farming, fishing and forestry there is a relatively even distribution among the occupation categories.

TABLE #5

Employed Civilian population 16 yrs. and over
Class and Occupation
US Census Bureau 2017-2021 5-Year American Community Survey

Occupation	#	%
Management, Business, Science and Arts Occupations	39	32.5
Service Occupations	20	16.6
Sales/Office Occupations	18	15
Farm, Fish, Forestry Occupations	0	0
Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance Occupations	13	10.8
Production, Transportation, material moving	30	25
Total	120	100%

Employment by Industry

In the year 2013, a majority of residents (63%) worked in Manufacturing, Education, Health, Social Services, and Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Food, Accommodations. It is interesting to note the higher percentage in manufacturing compared to VT and the US since manufacturing jobs tend to have high wages.

TABLE #6

Civilian Employment by Industry
(Selected Industries) US Census Bureau 2017-2021 5-Year American Community Survey

	Woodford		VT	US
	Number	Pct	Pct	Pct
Manufacturing	28	23.3	10.1	10.1
Construction	11	9.2	8.5	6.9
Retail Trade	6	5.0	11.4	11.1
Education, Health, Social Services.	35	29.2	28.8	23.5
Public Administration	1	0.8	4.7	4.8
Art, Entertainment, Recreation, Food, Accommodations	12	10.0	7.8	8.2
Professional, Scientific, Management, and administration	10	8.3	9.6	12.4

Median Family Income

According to the US Census Bureau, the median household income in Woodford is $57,813, slightly lower than the Bennington County median of $63,448. Approximately 15% of people in Woodford live below the poverty level, compared to 11.3% county-wide. Woodford's median household income in 2021 was comparable to surround towns with the exception of Stamford.

TABLE #7

Median Adjusted Gross Household Income
US Census Bureau 2017-2021 5-Year American Community Survey

Town	Area
Woodford	$57,813
Bennington	$51,851
Stamford	$69,000
Readsboro	$60,833
Bennington County	$63,448
Vermont	$72,431

Business/Gov. Establishments

Not surprisingly, Woodford is host to a modest number of establishments. This can be attributed to a number of reasons including land base, land suitability, ownership, existing land uses, transportation and access, and infrastructure such as water/sewer. Those that do exist are fairly small and may be part of a residential use. Only about 8% (10) of Woodford's workforce actually work in-town according to the Vermont Department of Labor.

TABLE #8

Number of Establishments
(Woodford)
US Census/VT Dept. of Labor

Industry	2005	2009	2014	2021
Manufacturing*	2	2	1	1
Construction	2	2	1	1
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	1	4	0	1
Wholesale Trade				1
Leisure & Hospitality	2	1	1	0
Professional & Business Services				2
Other Services	1	0	0	0
Gov/Schools	1	1	1	1

Journey to Work/Commuting Patterns

Not surprisingly, the percentage of local commuters who work outside of Woodford is about 90%. As previously indicated, there is a small number of business establishments with only a few employees. Larger employment centers such as Bennington and bordering counties attract workers which results in bedroom communities such as Woodford. Nevertheless, Woodford attracts significant transient and seasonal recreational users given the natural attractions of Woodford. Over 90% of Woodford's workforce commutes to work, and the average commute time is 17 minutes.

~~Woodford Residents Place of Work~~[6]

~~Place~~	~~Number~~	~~%~~
~~Woodford~~	~~23~~	~~10.8~~
~~Bennington~~	~~122~~	~~57.5~~
~~Bennington Co.~~	~~19~~	~~9.0~~
~~Windham Co.~~	~~20~~	~~9.4~~
~~MA~~	~~13~~	~~6.1~~
~~NY~~	~~15~~	~~7.0~~

3.2 DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

A review of municipal property listings in the Grand List shows a decrease in the non-vacation residential 1 and 2 count of 136 (2009) to 126 (2022) for a total decrease of 7.3%. Vacation units 1 and 2 increased from 160 (2009) to 174 (2022) or 8.75% during the same period. In 2022, total residential units including mobile homes totaled 151 compared to those classified as vacation at 174, reflecting the trend of a decrease in residential properties and an increase in vacation units. Commercial counts slightly increased and industrial counts decreased.

Future Development

All but approximately 10% of Woodford's land base is in public ownership (USFS and State Park). The greatest density of development is in Woodford Hollow and Woodford Lake Estates. Much of the Hollow is built-out and borders the Green Mt. National Forest. This area is not likely to support any significant increases in growth and development. On Woodford Mountain there remain additional tracts of land that could be developed.

Table #9: Grand List Trends, 2002-2022 Parcels/Count[7]

	2002	2005	2009	2022	% Change 2009-22
Residential 1 (<6 ac)	100	112	116	109	-6.0%
Residential 2 (6+ ac)	18	19	20	17	-15.0%
Mobile Home	24	21	19	19	0%
Mobile Home/ land	8	7	7	6	-14.3%
Vacation 1 (<6 ac)	148	142	142	152	7.0%
Vacation 2 (6+ ac)	23	18	18	22	22.2%
Commercial	11	10	10	13	30.0%
Commercial Apts.	-	-	-	1	-
Industrial	2	2	2	0	-
Utilities/Electric	1	1	1	2	-100%
Utilities/Other	2	2	2	1	-50.0%
Farm	0	0	0	0	0%
Woodland	11	12	13	12	7.7%
Miscellaneous	186	159	132	103	22.0%
Total	**534**	**505**	**482**	**457**	

However, the lack of infrastructure, land suitability, and the low-density land use and zoning plan limit the degree of development in this area. Woodford Lake Estates, which dates back before zoning is a compact and dense development surrounding Woodford Lake. Much of this area is built-out and is dependent upon on-site water supply and wastewater disposal. Because much of the Woodford Mountain lands have fragile environments, the protection of important natural resources needs to be carefully considered and integrated into the planning and site layout. Cluster design is one means of integrating development with on-site resources or limitations that are worthy of protection.

3.3 RECREATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

A predominant characteristic of the Woodford environment is the abundance of natural resources, and rural and back-country recreational opportunities. Because of direct access from Route 9, Woodford serves as a hub in southern Vermont to a vast network of trails both north and south. Among the many visitors attracted to Woodford, there are a number of clubs and organizations that utilize facilities and recreational trails such as: Green Mt. Club, Mt. Bike/Cycle Club, Woodford Snobusters (largest snowmobile member organization in country), VT Trail Trotters (equestrian), among others.

Types of recreational attractions in Woodford include: AT/Long Trail crossing and parking access (est. 7,700 hikers/yr.), Woodford State Park (~~Attendance visits 15,135 (2011)~~), George Aiken Wilderness, Little Pond Parking area, Red Mill Pond Access,

[7] Source: Woodford Grand List – Form 411

Adams Reservoir Access, Pine Valley Access, Prospect XC Ski Mountain, and Greenwood Lodge Hostel and Campsites. Hunting and fishing continue to be traditionally popular throughout Woodford.

Route 9, traversing Woodford is a national scenic byway (Molly Stark Scenic Byway) which recognizes the special cultural, historic, scenic and natural resources throughout the corridor from the NY/VT border on the west to the VT/NH border on the east. The scenic byway management plan recommends proposed improvements particularly with respect to signage and vehicular/recreational safety. Some of this has been accomplished with a byways grant. The economic impact of and attraction to Vermont is quite profound and can be attributed to the quality of the environment for leisure and active recreation. Woodford, no doubt plays an important role and contribution to the area's economy.

3.4 Economic Outlook

Despite Woodford's decline in population and workforce, economic development trends have remained stable. Advances in technology and telecommunication have made telecommuting and home based businesses or cottage industries more attractive in rural areas which is a trend that Woodford is likely to experience. The wealth of natural resources the Town of Woodford offers makes it even more attractive albeit 'winter challenging' for the year-round resident. Given the lack of any significant infrastructure and challenging access Woodford is likely to continue as a bedroom community. Indeed, nearly 90% of the residents commute elsewhere for their primary employment.

3.5 Economic Related Policies and Recommendations

1. Provide opportunities for businesses and mixed Rural Residential/Roadside Commercial uses on the Land Use Map along Route 9, in suitable locations to support local needs and visitors to the area.

2. Continue membership in the Southern Vermont Communications Union District to promote high speed internet and cell services for the town's residents and transient population.

3. Provide opportunities for home business occupations with appropriate standards to assure compatibility with neighboring properties. Work from home (remote job sites) are expanding with rapid increases in Information Communication Technology (ICT).

4. Promote the effective management and utilization of the communities' natural resource base and associated economic benefits in concert with environmental quality. Support efficient use of energy resources and renewable resources.

5. Review the existing planning/zoning boundaries as part of this plan update to accommodate suitable business uses and potential expansions.

6. Encourage educational, research, and green/knowledge-based enterprises and institutions that may benefit from the diversity of the Woodford natural environment.

7. Evaluate existing and future recreational uses for compatibility with each other and their relationship to the environment and habitat.

4.0 Vision and Goals

The Goals serve as a beacon for direction of the plan, measuring progress of the planning process, and guiding implementation of the plan. They are listed in the same order as the State's planning goals in T.24 V.S.A. Chapter 117. As part of the following goals and the planning process, residents and property owners of the Town are encouraged to take an active role in the community for the benefit of all residents guided by the principle of improving Woodford as a special place.

4.1 Settlement and Use Pattern:

Maintain the historic settlement pattern of the town with a variety of land uses which will not detract from the rural, residential, scenic, natural and forested character of the Town. Assure the pattern of development is compact and in proximity to services to effectively manage growth and minimize public cost. Recognize the importance of maintaining and strengthening the existing development pattern by encouraging planned residential and commercial development in suitable locations and especially maintaining the natural qualities along the Route 9 corridor. Natural resources which contribute to the quality of this corridor (Woodford's main street) must be maintained for their values. Development and changes in land use must be carefully sited through planned and clustered techniques consistent with protection of natural values sought in this goal. Back country forested areas, especially large, unfragmented forest blocks and connectors must be maintained and managed for their natural and resource value. The use of these backlands should not only be compatible with each other but support protection and wise use of the resource(s), as well. Access to open and forested areas should be reasonable and managed to accommodate multiple and reasonable use without conflict and compromise of safety of the residents and traveling public.

4.2 Strong Diverse Economy/Rewarding Job Opportunities

Encourage businesses that provide satisfying and rewarding employment while maintaining high social and environmental standards. Provide for suitable locations along Route 9 to accommodate businesses and to assure their compatible with neighboring land uses. Natural resource and recreation-based enterprises are also encouraged and must adhere to sound environmental standards. Small cottage and home-based business are a growing trend in the workplace because of growing communication technologies. These provide an opportunity to more traditional travel to work places and are well suited to Woodford so long as they do not create an adverse effect to neighboring residential uses. High quality employment opportunities for Woodford residents is encouraged throughout the Region and bordering States which contributes substantially to the opportunities for the Town's residents.

4.3 Access to Education and Vocational Training

Maintain a high quality of educational and vocational institutions to meets the needs of the communities' youth and residents. Provide local education opportunities that perform, provide value and are sustainable. Consider new models of delivery if educational opportunities can be enhanced to meet changing needs. The overall cost of education must be taken into account; especially in instances where community affordability is seriously challenged and residents take an active role to weigh the alternatives.

4.4 Safe, Convenient, Economic and Energy Efficient Transportation Systems:

Provide for safe, convenient, economic, and energy efficient transportation systems within the town. Route 9 at Woodford Mountain continues to experience serious accidents and fatalities and efforts must continue as a high priority to manage, enforce, and educate the users and public about the road's condition throughout the year. Encourage the state to report annually on efforts to manage safety and to monitor conditions, including DMV and State Police patrol. Direct access along Route 9 should be subject to road safety audits to assure adequate signage, sight distances and turning movements for entering together with through traffic movement. The high volume of pedestrian/recreational vehicle access via parking areas and along Route 9, must be carefully managed for safety, as well. Appropriate signage should be evaluated and upgraded as appropriate in high use areas.

4.5 Identify, Protect and Preserve Important Natural and Historic Features

Identify areas, sites, and buildings of special historic, prehistoric, cultural, natural and scientific value or significance. Encourage education and protection about such sites and features and avoid development or incompatible uses that would negatively impact on such resources. Several forges, mining, lumbering, and charcoal production gave rise to the early settlements in Woodford reported to be 423 in 1850. The first forge made anchors for gunboats. Remnants of the past remain today. Encourage the protection of natural landscapes and features such as: significant natural and fragile areas, lakes, streams and rivers, aquifers, shorelands, wetlands, scenic areas, special and productive habitats and unfragmented forest blocks and connections between forest blocks.

4.6 Maintain and Improve Quality of Air, Water, Wildlife, Land Resources

Protect and encourage the wise use of natural resources. Emphasis should be on the side of quality while protecting special resources and habitat from overuse or inappropriate use. Woodford has a vast rich natural environment which requires careful and thoughtful stewardship. Maintain a high quality of air, water (surface & groundwater), aquatic lands, and ~~timber/vegetated~~ forested lands, particularly large, unfragmented forest blocks and other open land resources through protection and careful management, and improved habitat for wildlife.

4.7 Encourage Efficient Use of Energy and Development of Renewable Energy.

Support efforts to develop renewable energy resources and generating facilities in areas where environmental and aesthetic concerns are minimized and do not cause undue adverse impacts. Seek funding to support energy conservation in municipal and other historic buildings of significance and importance to Woodford. Encourage the Town's residents to support and implement energy conservation initiatives to augment and reduce fossil fuel usage. Explore opportunities on public lands to utilize timber resources for local space heating. Avoid outdoor boiler type heating systems in areas close to residents and where air inversion limitations may not effectively dissipate boiler emissions and assure conformance to Vermont and EPA air emission standards.

4.8 Maintain and Enhance Recreational Opportunities for Vermont Residents/ Visitors

Provide for a variety of recreational resources in Woodford that emphasizes the quality of recreational experience(s) without compromising environmental quality or safety by the users. Recreational improvements and facilities on public lands should be part of an overall plan with public input from the Town's residents and municipal officials. Private recreational facilities should be in keeping with the small scale of the Woodford environment without creating undue impacts to the environment and providing appropriate facilities such as parking, sanitary provisions, etc. for the activities. Management plans and activities of the U.S. Forest Service and VT Department of Forest and Recreation should be communicated to the Town on a periodic and as-needed basis.

4.9 Encourage and Strengthen Agricultural and Forest Industries (timber)

Encourage the maintenance and strengthening of the forest industry and related secondary industries as appropriate to forested lands in Woodford. Assure that timber resources and removal are undertaken with an effective management plan as guided or approved by the County Forester and in accordance with the GMNF Plan for publicly owned lands. While Woodford does not have agricultural activities of any significance, significant agricultural soils so identified should be protected for potential use.

4.10 Wise and Efficient Use of Natural Resources (earth, groundwater, etc.)

Allow for the reasonable and efficient extraction of earth resources that are suitably located while avoiding undue impacts on adjoining lands or in public view in travel corridors. Upon completion of extraction, assure an effective and timely site reclamation and closure. In instances of removal over time assure an effective sequencing of activities/extraction which minimizes impacts to surrounding areas.

4.11 Availability of Safe and Affordable Housing

Provide for a variety of housing types to meet the broad needs of the community and for affordable and workforce housing commensurate with Woodford's needs. Allow for accessory apartments to facilitate the provision of such housing. Lacking public water and sewers Woodford housing must rely on on-site water and wastewater disposal systems that are maintained and function properly. Encourage efforts to provide housing suited to Woodford's needs in suitable locations that can be serviced efficiently. Seek practical solutions to the gap between house prices and housing affordability which may be projects like modest single family dwellings.

4.12 Plan for Finance, Efficient System of Public Facilities/Services to meet needs

Fortunately, much of the development in Woodford is along Route 9, which provides direct access for services. This relative compact settlement pattern is promoted in the plan and as a result creates an efficient community to operate. With the exception of the existing WLE District, low-density requirements in the upland mountain areas of Woodford should be included in the Bylaws to mitigate any overdevelopment and/or sprawl. This area also contains a number of fragile landscapes that limit development potential. Nevertheless, Woodford is a small community with limited resources and vast holdings of public lands and thus the need to carefully budget and finance the services and

improvements to meet the resident's needs. Consideration should also be given to development projects relative to their financial benefit and/or impact on the community.

4.13 Availability of Safe and Affordable Child Care

Provide opportunities in the community for safe and affordable childcare. This may be accomplished in a home setting as provided by law or in specially designed facilities with structured programs more commonly found in the greater Bennington Area. Because Woodford's workforce largely commutes to work in other places, childcare options and choice vary. Nonetheless, the provision of childcare is very important and a reality to much of the workforce today dependent upon two wage earners.

4.14 ENCOURAGE FLOOD RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

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

4.15 ADDITIONAL TOWN GOALS

The Town of Woodford has established the following additional goals:

- Woodford is committed to fostering health and well-being, and a high quality of life for all residents.
- Woodford will consider impacts on community health and well-being when making decisions and setting policy.
- Woodford will maintain relationships with neighboring municipalities and community service providers to ensure that Woodford residents have access to essential resources.

5.0 NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LAND

This section is divided into two parts: Physical Conditions, and Sensitive Lands-Natural Resources. Physical conditions may present constraints to land development or may result in costly site improvements. Finding the right site(s) for development can minimize both financial and environmental costs. Sensitive lands- natural resources may also present a limitation for land use ~~for a slightly different reason in that~~ because they may represent important attributes or values the community wishes to protect. ~~Whatever the category, conditions will vary from site to site or area to area.~~

5.1 PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

Woodford falls within the Southern Green Mountains Biophysical Region. Detailed mapping of cover types has not been completed except that available from the National Land Cover Dataset. From that source, the major cover types are deciduous forest (60.1%), mixed forest (26.4%) and coniferous forest (3.4%), along with wetlands, most of which are forested (7.5%) (Map 1). Matrix forest types (Thompson, et al. 2019) likely within this biophysical region include:

Montane Spruce-Fir Forest
Montane Yellow Birch-Red Spruce Forest
Northern Hardwood Forest
Red Spruce-Northern Hardwood Forest

These matrix forest types cover large areas and may have numerous other community types, including terrestrial communities, wetlands, and stream courses within them. Matrix forests form the "basket" in which a diverse array of natural communities exists (Poiani et al., 2000). These smaller communities are maintained by variations in environmental gradients such as soil depth, depth to groundwater, exposure to wind and solar radiation, disturbance, and other factors.

An ecologically functional landscape is one that provides for connectivity across a broad range of habitat types and physical features such as slope, aspect, and elevation. (Vermont Wildlife Action Team, 2015). The following are the key types:

Interior Forest Blocks are areas of contiguous forest, unfragmented by roads, development or agricultural lands that may also contain wetlands, waterbodies, and other features. These areas are critical to wide ranging species as well as Neotropical migratory bird (Vermont Wildlife Action Team, 2015; Rosenberg et al., 2016). They also are likely to be most resilient to climate change (Anderson et al., 2016).

Connectivity Blocks overlap with the High Priority Interior Forest Blocks and link forests and other habitat providing for the movement of wide-ranging species such as black bear and bobcat and animals with small ranges such as amphibians that breed in wetlands and

vernal pools. They also provide habitat for many forest nesting birds that migrate to and from the tropics. These blocks cross local, county and state and sometimes international boundaries.

Physical Landscapes Diversity Blocks are areas of natural vegetation that may contain unique geologic, topographic and vegetation characteristics, and may also overlap with the above-mentioned types. Within Woodford are over 90 types categorized by elevation (high, low to mid, mid to upper), geology (acidic, calcareous, moderately calcareous, metasedimentary/calcareous) and slope position. These categories represent different potential habitat types as well as landscape variants that may be more or less vulnerable to climate change.

Physical Landscape Blocks (none mapped in Woodford): Relatively unchanged and discrete landscape features.

Terrestrial Wildlife Crossings are road segments with suitable habitat on both sides of the road that provide connections for movement of animals. Basically, all roads in Woodford fall into this category (Map 3).

Riparian Wildlife Crossings are areas where wildlife may cross streams near roads and largely match up with terrestrial wildlife crossings.

The interior forest blocks map shows connectivity blocks across southern Vermont including the towns adjacent to Woodford.

Elevation

A high percentage of Woodford's land base is at higher elevations (2,000 feet plus). Although much is in the Green Mountain National Forest, it is important to note the conditions: Harmon Hill – 2,320 feet elevation and 2,549; Prospect Mountain – 2,767 feet elevation; Maple Hill – 2,690 feet elevation; Bald Mountain – 2,857 feet elevation; and Hagar Hill – 2,760 feet elevation, to mention a few. The significance of the higher elevations creates a more sensitive environment, and when damaged is not as easily recoverable. Conditions include lower temperatures, precipitation increases, soils become shallow with stone or outcroppings, and plant communities become more susceptible to disturbance. Any proposed development should consider elevation constraints.

Soils

Early settlers of Woodford (1888) described their experience in the following quote:

"Years agone at different times many men with steel muscles and iron wills have tried to wrest a scanty living from the inhospitable soils, but they finally gave up the fight."

Fundamental to the proper functioning of septic systems is the hydrologic condition of the soil. Properly functioning systems can protect water supplies as well as surface and groundwater. Woodford has certain soil types suitable for development, but generally when the slopes are steeper (+15%-20%) conditions become less favorable. In the Woodford Hollow and Harbour Road area some favorable soils include Berkshire (106) and Peru (108 and 115). This area also contains a soil type (#27) which has not been rated. In the Burgess Road area good soils include Pittsfield (93 and 94), Peru (115), and Berkshire (106 and 117). In the Prospect Mountain and Big Pond area suitable soils include Houghtonville-Monadnock (905) and Rawsonville-Mundal (905D - Marginal). A large section of Big Pond is Mundal-Wilmington (903C) which has limitations for septic disposal because of severe seasonal wetness. The Red Mill Pond area and east is similar to the Prospect-Big Pond area with some suitable and marginally suitable soils. Table #10, page 45, lists soil types and septic system suitability.

Slope

The slope, or gradient, of the land is another important indicator of an area's suitability for development. Where prevailing slopes do not exceed 10%, topographic limitations to development tend to be minor. Moderate limitations are found when slopes fall in the 10%-15% range. In areas where slopes exceed 15%, very careful planning and design are required to overcome problems caused by thin soils, erosion hazards, and difficult road construction. Grades in excess of 20% pose particularly severe problems, and development in these areas ~~should be avoided~~ is not permitted. The predominant areas of steep slopes tend to be in the eastern half of the town.

5.2 SENSITIVE AREAS

Lakes and Ponds

The surface area of lakes and ponds in Woodford ranks among the highest of all towns in the region. Big Pond is the largest at 31 acres, followed by Adams (21 acres) and Little Pond (16 acres). These surface waters serve many important functions, ~~but all seem to be predicated upon maintaining~~ and should be protected to maintain water quality. Recreation, fish and wildlife, aesthetics, and aquatic plant species all come into play when characterizing surface waters. In some cases adjoining wetlands, owing sometimes to beaver activity, contribute to the aquatic environment. All of the water bodies are at elevations in excess of 2,000 feet. The fragile ecosystems associated with these upland lakes and ponds suggest the need for careful management. Impacts are not always local. ~~It is felt that~~ higher elevation water bodies may be particularly susceptible to acid rain. Some are near the so-called orange and red zone, a designation reflecting negative impact on aquatic life. Additionally, it is important to recognize ponds simply for their natural beauty whether they are highly visible or are in a remote setting. It should be noted that Little

Pond, which is undeveloped in a remote setting, is becoming a more rare occurrence and special precautions must be taken to protect these special natural attributes.

Table #10: Lakes and Ponds in Woodford

Lake Name	Lake Area (Acres)	Basin Area (Acres)	Elevation (Feet)
Adams Reservoir	21	817	2,320
Big Pond	31	715	2,265
Bugbee Pond	8	1,428	2,171
Little Pond	16	326	2,602
Mill Pond	7	988	2,040
Mud Pond	6	23	2,240
Red Mill Pond	7	1,258	2,260

Lake watersheds include surrounding land that drains into the lake. Sediments and nutrients which get to a lake in runoff from the land can fill in a lake/pond and lead to excessive algae and other plant growth. This increased plant growth can result in reduced water clarity, reduced pond oxygen levels, and an accelerated rate of eutrophication – an aging process by which a lake/pond gradually becomes a wetland. How land is cleared, developed, or supports septic disposal are important considerations. Big Pond (Woodford Lake), which has the greatest amount of development activity, should be considered for a lakeshore and watershed management project. This area's residents and the lake could benefit from such a planning/management project. Road maintenance and shoreline restoration and buffers among other treatments can reduce erosion and pollutants and improve overall water quality.

Wetlands

Woodford has an extensive wetland system, mostly at higher elevations in the eastern half of the town. The most extensive is in the George D. Aiken wilderness area including the West Branch of the Deerfield River. This area includes Beaver Meadows and Camp Meadows. Beavers have much to say about wetlands such as the Hell Hollow Beaver Ponds. Another wetland system is at Mill Pond, east of Little Pond. Several upland wetlands border Route 9 which contributes to the diversity of the landscape. Wetlands serve a variety of ecological functions; some have a special classification under state law to protect their particular attributes. The natural resources map provides a good base of information for locating wetlands. The common definition of wetlands is those areas inundated by surface or groundwater with a 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, swamps, sloughs, potholes, fens, river and lake overflows, mud flats, bogs and ponds, but exclude such areas that grow food or crops in connection with farming activities.

Rare Plant and Animal Species

The Vermont Natural Heritage Program, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, maintains a registry of rare plants and animals. Two such plant communities are identified. They are located in the vicinity of Little Pond and Big Pond. These areas contain unique plants and wild-marsh flowers and some immersed plants. They also serve an important habitat function. The Heritage program also identifies a rare animal species at Woodford State Park. Any activities near these designations, whether public or private, need to consider these special designations.

Deer Yards

The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife continuously monitors Vermont's deer yards. These areas provide shelter for the deer herd during the winter months. The policy of the State is to leave these areas undisturbed. However, this may only be exercised in conjunction with an activity involving a State permit. Woodford presently has one deer yard designated on the natural resource map. Any activities in this area should consider the importance of this resource.

Woodford is Bear Country

With the exception of Woodford Hollow (Route 9 and Harbor Road), Big Pond, and the Red Mill Pond area, all of Woodford is designated as Bear Habitat Production. Uninhabited remote forestland is the general rule for such a designation together with beach stands, wetlands, and travel corridors. One travel corridor is identified crossing Route 9 in the vicinity of Stamford Stream. Fragmentation of habitat is not likely to be a significant concern in Woodford, since most development is or will be along Route 9. Land owners in more remote locations need to be cognizant of this designation which recognizes most land as a critical habitat for bear survival.

Scenic Resources

Scenic resources in the town can mean a lot of different things depending on the observer and experience. There may be a special landscape feature such as a millpond, or the variety of the landscape. Scenic views may be especially apparent in some locations, or landscape variety may be particularly interesting in a travel corridor. Much of Woodford is at a higher elevation in the upland plateau with a variety of upland landscapes. Residents view the landscape (natural and man-made) from their homes and during travel. Others passing through will largely experience Woodford along the Route 9 corridor. Since this route is also Woodford's "main street," attention should be given to its appearance, whether from the perspective as an adjoining resident/property owner, or as a traveler. Route 9 is also a state highway with approximately 50% of the frontage in state and federal ownership. Their programs and actions can also affect the appearance of the corridor. The treatment of signage, landscaping, pull-offs for parking, or encouraging recreational use can contribute or detract from

the scenic qualities. Scenery from the Long Trail may mean a natural-wilderness setting, a view and solitude of an experience in the absence of noise.
Whether actions are public or private, consideration should be given to the appearance of the Route 9 corridor or other areas in the town having scenic landscape attributes while taking safety into account.

The "Molly Stark Scenic Byway" (Route 9) through Woodford is one of a number of scenic byways in the state of Vermont designated by the Federal government because of its historic, cultural, natural, and scenic values. It follows Vermont Route 9 from the New Hampshire border in the east to the New York border in the west. Designation opens up funding eligibility for a variety of projects such as the interpretive kiosks that have been installed.

Streams and Rivers

Streams and rivers in Woodford drain to the Hudson and Connecticut River basins. Many streams are at higher elevations and function as headwaters in the watershed. For some, gradients are steep and stream banks are susceptible to erosion. Some are important spawning streams and support smaller sized Brook Trout common to the streams of the Green Mountains. Streams provide other functions, such as the Bolles Brook which is a primary water supply for the Town of Bennington. Many of the streams also were sites of sawmills and industrial uses in the previous century. Principal streams of the Walloomsac watershed include: Bolles Brook, Bickford Hollow Brook, Hell Hollow Brook, Stamford Stream, City Stream, and the Roaring Branch. The Connecticut/Deerfield River watershed on the east side includes: Little Pond Brook, Mill Pond Brook, Redfield Brook, Red Mill Pond Brook, Yaw Pond Brook, Reservoir Brook, and the West Branch of the Deerfield River. Maintaining the integrity of the streams is an important goal of this plan. Streams on the west side of town are within the Basin 1 watershed management program. A basin plan (Basin 1, Batten Kill, Walloomsac River, Hoosic River Watershed management Plan, 2016) is a comprehensive assessment of conditions and overview of the watershed's health and steps to restore and protect water quality. Much of the emphasis is on achieving a high standard of water quality whether influenced by land activities or air quality such as acid rain. The Basin Plan serves as an important reference and action document as part of the town's planning process.

Flood Hazard Areas and River Corridors

Woodford joined the National Flood Insurance Program in 1985 thereby providing access to flood insurance for anyone in the community including structures within high risk flood hazard zones. This insurance helps to protect owners from financial loss as private insurers mostly do not provide coverage for damage due to overland flow. The current maps became effective thirty years ago on 9/18/1985.

FEMA is currently in the process of developing revised flood hazard maps and model flood hazard bylaws. These new maps will re-delineate certain flood hazard zones.

Additionally, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, the Bennington County Regional Commission and the Bennington County Conservation District have cooperatively completed a series of studies of the Roaring Branch resulting in the mapping of River Corridors.

The following hazard zones are mapped for the Town of Woodford:

Special Flood Hazard Areas (Zone A): areas subject to inundation by a one percent annual chance "base flood" event. This area is also known as the 100-year flood zone however this is a misnomer and the area has an independent 1 percent chance of flooding on any year. Some areas within this zone will flood more frequently. Over a 30 year mortgage, sites within this zone have more than a one in four chance of experiencing flooding.

Floodways: an established right-of-way for floodwater within the Special Flood Hazard Area including the channel of a river and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than one foot. This area is typically characterized by higher velocities.

River Corridors: these areas identify the extent needed for horizontal adjustments of river and stream channels as they meander. This space allows the channel to maintain a stable slope and least erosive/damaging form. This area accommodates the water, sediment, debris and energy of the system without causing a down-cutting (incision) process. Channels in an equilibrium slope can maintain their ability to flood (and disperse energy and sediment) thereby reducing the damaging erosive power of the flow.

Dynamic equilibrium is determined at the channel reach scale. These areas are subject to fluvial erosion hazards, from gradual stream bank erosion to catastrophic channel enlargement, bank failure. More importantly the corridors provide the space needed by the channel to handle large flows and moderate damage. River Corridors have been mapped by The Vermont River Management Program in accordance with accepted state fluvial geomorphic assessment and mapping protocols. ~~In the coming year it is anticipated that the fluvial geomorphic data for the Roaring Branch will be used to update the current (Jan 3, 2015) version of mapped River Corridors.~~

River corridor and flood maps can be found at http://bit.ly/floodatlas.

Information about the new FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps can be found at https://floodtraining.vermont.gov/protection-tools/get-ready-new-fema-flood-insurance-rate-maps

The Special Flood Hazard Areas address hazards from flooding due to inundation. However, most flood damage in Vermont streams is the result of erosion. Vermont has now established a statewide goal of flood resilience, encourages communities to protect river corridors and has established the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF) as an incentive for communities to take hazard mitigation actions before the next declared disaster.

River Corridor protection is also in alignment with other state and community goals such as clean water, wildlife habitat, and public recreation.

The table below shows the number of structures by type from E911 data that are in the Special Flood Hazard Areas or within a River Corridor. These numbers are ~~really~~ estimates as the E911 points are not always located exactly where structures are.

Structures in the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) and/or River Corridors (RC) in Woodford. Source: BCRC GIS analyses		
Type	SFHA	RC
Single family	`0	20
Mobile home	0	5
Multi-Family Residential	0	3

Structures in the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) and/or River Corridors (RC) in Woodford. Source: BCRC GIS analyses		
Type	SFHA	RC
Commercial	0	38
Industrial	0	0
Government	0	12

As of March 2023, there were no structures located within the Special Flood Hazard Area. There are properties vulnerable to flooding or to flooding-caused-erosion that are not currently protected through the National Flood Insurance Program.

Most of the 59 structures already in the River Corridors are probably older "Pre-FIRM" structures. Such buildings, built before the Flood Insurance Rate Maps were available may be able to access a special lower rate flood insurance at this time. Over the coming years the premiums for Pre-FIRM residential structures will rise at 5 to 18% per year plus fees until at actuarial cost for the risk of the group. The cost of insurance for non-residential structures is rising at 5 – 25% a year. The owners of these structures may need help, notably in the form of grants, to elevate or relocate. The community should assess the extent of this need and identify strategies.

Surface Water and Flood Resiliency Policies and Actions

Surface Waters Policy: The ecological and hydrological integrity of rivers, streams and wetlands should be maintained to provide key ecosystem services such as water purification, pollutant abatement, nutrient dispersal and cycling and flood water retention. Rivers, streams and wetlands should also be protected to allow for continued recreational use and to provide valuable scenic resources. Development within identified Special Flood Hazard Areas and River Corridors should be avoided. The Town, BCRC and Vermont ANR should work cooperatively to complete and maintain updated flood hazard and fluvial erosion hazard maps and identify specific areas of concern.

Actions:

1. The Town and organizations including the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, BCRC, the Bennington County Conservation District and others should work together to maintain and enhance the ecological integrity of rivers, streams, wetlands and upland forests.

2. An undisturbed buffer of natural vegetation should be established between rivers, streams and other water bodies to reduce nutrient input and attenuate overland flow. This buffer should be at least 50 feet for streams such as Bolles Brook with minimal potential for lateral or vertical adjustment or 100 feet for streams such as The Roaring Branch with significant potential for such adjustment.

3. Developments or activities that would have an undo adverse effect on the quality of the Town's surface waters should be prohibited.

Flood Resiliency Policy: To protect the public health, safety and welfare, new development should be avoided in identified Special Flood Hazard Areas and River Corridors.

Actions:

1. The Town should maintain flood hazard regulations to guide development toward safer locations and to incrementally achieve safer building stocks where they already exist in flood hazard areas. These regulations are designed to protect property and the health and safety of the population against the hazards of flood water inundation, and to protect the community against the costs which may be incurred when unsuitable development occurs in areas prone to flooding.

2. New development in Special Flood Hazard Areas and the River Corridors should be avoided where possible. Any new development that does occur should be designed and sited so as to avoid any increase in flooding or erosion and have no adverse impact.

3. Support acquisition by public entities or conservation organizations of buffers and River Corridors, especially those identified in hazard mitigation and river corridor plans.

4. Woodford should prioritize bridge and culvert repairs and replacements to address condition, geomorphic compatibility and ability to provide functional passage for aquatic organisms. Bridges and culverts that impede flow during flooding events should be reconstructed or replaced.

5. The Town should maintain a current Local Emergency Management Plan that provides for emergency response and flood preparedness.

6. The Town should develop a local hazard mitigation plan that meets FEMA requirements and provides access to grant funds that will reduce current risks.

7. Forested lands should be protected to assure that precipitation can be absorbed by forest soils and litter and the peak flow attenuated. Acquisition of land or easements or Current Use assessment should be used to protect these areas, especially along the tributaries.

8. The Town should collaborate with other municipalities, the BCRC, and the State of Vermont in planning for the use and protection of regional water resources such as the Roaring Branch. This could involve an inter-municipal agreement between these towns for the long-term protection of these resources and to address flood hazards.

9. The Town should reach out to property owners within the flood zones to support elevation or acquisition of structures subject to repeated flooding and eligible for funding under the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

10. The Town should encourage owners in flood hazard zones to secure propane tanks, fire wood, boats and other items that could float away in a flood, thereby creating hazards for those downstream.

11. The Town should consider participation in the FEMA Community Rating System program by implementing projects that would ultimately lead to rate reductions in flood insurance premiums for residents and businesses.

12. The Town should take comprehensive steps to increase flood resilience including the five elements that allow Woodford to maximize post-disaster funding through the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund.

Forestry and Agricultural Lands

Most of the managed forested land in Woodford is under Federal/U.S. Forest Service ownership. "The Green Mountain National Forest 2006 Land and Resource Management Plan," is the guiding document for management, use, and activities within the forest. Alternative "E modified" is the effective plan as a result of the EIS and decision process. The plan is a 10-to-15-year strategy developed in accordance with the National Forest Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1604, et seq.) ~~It replaces 1987 Forest Plan for the GMNF.~~ The 2006 Plan can be amended or revised and in response to changing conditions, new information or Congressional actions. The land use section in this Town Plan will provide further information about the land use categories in the GMNF Plan and more information may be viewed at www.fs.fed.us/r9/gmfl.

Shallow soils, rough topography, steep grades, bedrock and boulders ~~pretty much~~ largely characterize the agricultural potential of Woodford. The Burgess Road area contains some prime agricultural soils. In the previous century this area provided pasture for sheep. Today there are still open fields for growing crops.

Earth Resources

Unlike colonial times with aggressive mining of iron ore, Woodford has limited earth resources with the exception of a quarry off of Burgess Road. Consequently, the Town relies on much of its aggregate needs from nearby towns. Nevertheless, should new earth resources be identified efforts should be made to assure the potential availability for future use. Additionally new or existing removal operations should make provision for restoration and monitoring so that neighboring properties and property values will not be unduly impacted.

Natural Resource Mapping

Several natural resource maps are included in the plan and serve as a reference to augment policy and for use in project reviews, if applicable. Mapped data and updates are an on-going process and thus the natural resource related maps in this adopted plan may have new features or data added from time to time.

5.3 Natural Resource POLICIES

1. Maintain a low density of development in the higher elevations, especially above the 2,000 feet elevation due to the fragile nature of the upland environment.

2. The type and intensity of development on a given site should be compatible with soil conditions. Land use and density should be evaluated in light of prevailing soil conditions to ensure that development is being directed to appropriate areas and that important resource areas are protected. Contamination of surface or groundwater from poorly functioning septic systems must be avoided.

3. Development should be carefully planned in areas where the natural slopes are Greater than 15%. On slopes greater than 20%, development ~~should~~ is not ~~be~~ permitted.

4. Development or filling in the floodplain should comply with accepted standards and not be allowed in a floodway. The storage of hazardous materials, waste products, or other materials that can contaminate surface and groundwater should be carefully managed and monitored and avoided in sensitive/hazardous areas. Land use must be carefully managed in fluvial erosion hazard areas to avoid erosion and to maintain the natural stream/river conditions.

5. Lake watersheds and shore lands need to be carefully managed for land use in order to maintain high quality natural values and water quality. The density and type of new development in shoreland areas need to avoid environmental impacts. The maintenance of vegetation and buffer strips, less disturbed areas for construction, avoiding erosion, shoreline stabilization and properly installed and maintained septic systems contribute to the quality of surface waters.

6. Recreational use of the upland and backwoods ponds and wetlands should be ~~especially cautious~~ carefully managed to avoid over-use of these fragile aquatic environments.

7. Maintain the natural condition and values of important wetlands: water storage, vegetation, habitat, water quality, etc.

8. Any activity or development in the vicinity of rare plant or animal species must be carefully planned to avoid adverse impacts. Additionally, special precautions are necessary to avoid impacts to any known deeryards.

9. Nearly all of Woodford is designated as bear habitat. Disturbances from people must be minimized. Remote forest lands, critical habitats (beech stands, wetlands), and travel corridors need to be carefully managed.

10. The natural landscape of Woodford's upland plateau is a special scenic resource. Whenever possible this should be enhanced by careful planning and siting of uses, facilities, or structures.

11. Protect the natural state of streams by maintaining vegetation and other measures to avoid streamside erosion. Upland tributaries and watersheds should be managed to ensure high water quality of upland and valley streams.

12. Encourage uses which are compatible with the primitive/semi-primitive characteristics of the backland forest. Multiple uses include timber management, and wildlife appreciation, recreation, solitude, hiking, etc. Any significant improvements or uses in the GMNF should be carefully evaluated for potential impact on Woodford and its residents and environmental compatibility.

13. Development on prime agricultural soils should be carefully sited to retain this valuable resource as much as possible.

14. Encourage the protection of earth resources for needed and potential future utilization. Extraction of existing and future earth resource operations must not have an undue/adverse impact on the environment, surrounding land use and viewing locations. Underutilized and spent sites should be restored to a natural condition or used as permitted by the zoning bylaw.

15. Much of Woodford falls within large, interior forest blocks that overlap with connecting blocks and physical landscapes. These areas are critical habitat for wide ranging species including black bear and neotropical migrants. These areas should remain unfragmented and connections between blocks maintained so that movement of species remains possible.

TABLE #11

Septic Suitability and Soil Ratings

NOTE: The following soils are generally representative of each area.
Steep slopes (15-20%, 20%+) will impact suitability.

Soil #	Name	Septic Design	Class
Woodford Hollow			
27	Udipsamments	Not Rated	--
28	Udifluvents	Not Rated	--
104	Colton	Conventional	1
105	Monadnock	Conventional	2
106	Berkshire	Conventional	2
108/115	Peru	Test, Mound	4
113	Cabot Silt	Not Suited	6
118	Tunbridge	Marginal	5
Burgess Road			
27	Udipsamments	Not Rated	--
69	Massena	Not Suited	6
93/94	Pittsfield	Conventional	2
106	Berkshire	Conventional	2
109	Tunbridge-Berkshire	Mound	3
117	Berkshire	Conventional	2
118	Tunbridge-Lyman	Not Suited	5/6
Prospect - Big Pond			
702	Rawson-Houghton	Not Suited	6
715	Houghton-Rawson	Not Suited	5
903	Mundal-Wilmington	Not Suited	6
905	Houghton-Monadnock	Conventional	2
923	Wilmington-Mundal	Not Suited	6
Red Mill Pond			
702	Rawson-Houghton	Not Suited	6
715	Houghton-Rawson	Not Suited	5
903	Mundal-Wilmington	Not Suited	6
905	Houghton-Monadnock	Conventional	2
923	Wilmington-Mundal	Not Suited	6

CLASS DESCRIPTION

1. Conventional – coarse, sandy, glacial outwash, rapid permeability.
2. Conventional – well drained glacial till.
3. Mound – slow permeability, seasonal high water table, bedrock.
4. Test Mound – seasonal high water table, curtain drains.
5. Marginal – generally unsuited, bedrock, other conditions.
6. Unsuitable – rock, wet, steep, or combination

6.0 LAND USE ELEMENT

Previous chapters have set the tone for the recommendations in this section of the land use plan. They addressed the beginnings in planning, goals for Woodford, and its physical setting and characteristics. All of these together form the basis for translation into the land use plan. Not to be overlooked is the fact that Woodford has had a plan for forty+ years and during this time there have been only modest changes. The approach taken by the Planning Commission in this update is to fine tune and build on the present plan to maintain continuity with the Town bylaws which were updated in 2020. A comprehensive set of maps were prepared using the (GIS) – Geographic Information System. As new data is assembled it can be readily added to the system. The scale of mapped information can vary but typically a large scale map, available at the Town Office, is one inch = ¼ mile (1,320 feet). Mapped information includes roads, surface waters, natural resources, U.S. Forest Service boundaries, trails, existing land use, etc. This information was helpful in developing the land use plan. The USGS map was also used as a reference.

The land use classification which follows is a fundamental part of the plan. It identifies planning districts to guide the type, location, and density of land use and future growth. In doing so it takes into account present usage, physical conditions of the land, location of future growth, and the effect on municipal services. Much of Woodford's private land base (which is less than 10% of the town total) is along VT Route 9. Consequently, the type and character of use along this main street of the town bears considerably on the character and livability for the town's residents. With the exception of WLE which is a high density area with development approval on a minimum of a 100' x 100' lot, this plan continues a policy of low density development ranging from one (1) to ten (10) acres per dwelling unit in the residential districts to 15 acres in the R and F Districts and 50 acres in the R District for recreational use provided another 50 acres are available by lease or permit agreement. This plan reclassifies some lands for consistency and area character. Boundaries were also refined over time to more accurately delineate between districts. Some lands that were zoned residential or forest were purchased by the U.S. Forest Service and the map has been adjusted accordingly.

The current land use classifications also now include Rural Residential/Roadside Commercial areas. Historically, some properties were designated as existing commercial areas and only two new areas were added during the past several years. There is a rationale for this approach. Simply stated, residents wanted to protect the integrity and opportunity for the existing land use pattern. Since this pattern exists largely along Route 9 (Woodford's Main Street) it made sense to establish the multi-commercial districting plan separate from the residential districts along Route 9. Woodford's limited tax base also suggested an approach which avoided placing commercial properties in a nonconforming status. One of the challenges of the previously approved plan was whether or not to take a different approach such as creating new commercial zones: dedicated zones, overlay zones, or mixed use (residential-commercial) zones. This plan encourages the creation of Districts and Bylaws that will provide more flexibility of development than traditional District Zoning would allow toward meeting the goals of the Town Plan. Some Residents

expressed their concern about commercial impacts on their residential properties. Another primary concern is the adequacy and safety of Route 9, especially when considering travel speed, sight distances, and turning movements. Any new Roadside Commercial Districts or commercial overlays should be in appropriate locations and the minimum lot size should be no less than two acres. The roadside commercial/rural residential districts east of Woodford State Park should have a minimum lot size of no less than one acre. Additionally, performance standards should be part of the review for commercial projects.

Lands above 2,500 feet in elevation in either public or private ownership are deemed to be highly fragile and as such require careful attention in regard to future use. The Recreation District for Prospect Mountain is retained in its present classification, while recognizing the fragility of lands above 2,500' elevation, which are in the Forest District. The potential for other commercial uses in the Recreation District below the 2,500' elevation need to be evaluated in the existing zoning bylaw.

~~A new district for Woodford Lake Estates (WLE) is recommended for single year-round or seasonal dwellings and accessory structures. The district includes the WLE land area laid out on the master development plan surrounding Woodford Lake, historically known as Big Pond, which was originated during the 1940s. This area is identified as a Planned Residential Development on the Town Plan map and is currently zoned Rural Residential 200.~~

The updated maps also identify physical conditions such as flood hazard areas, slopes and sensitive areas such as wetlands and special habitats. These need to be considered during site planning and development.

6.1 General Land Use Goals and Policies

The limited private land base in Woodford should be treated as a limited resource and used wisely. In addition to the planning and zoning designation for the area, development must be compatible with the environmental and resource characteristics of the site.

1. Provide for low-density residential uses in close proximity to public roads and avoid scattered or remote developments to minimize the need for municipal facilities or services. The rate of growth should not burden the community.

2. Provide for commercial uses along appropriate sections of Route 9. Use either dedicated zones for individual parcels or an overlay designation for the location of such uses. Future commercial uses should have a minimum lot area of two acres.

3. Recreational uses, whether commercial or non-commercial, should be compatible with environmental and natural resources values of the area. Such uses should also be suitably located for convenient and safe access and minimize impacts on adjoining

residential areas.

4. Provide for development of structures and uses such as private camps, residences, lodges and other structures or uses needed for the accessory use in addition to natural resource related businesses. These structures and uses should not cause an adverse effect and meet required regulations and criteria for either permitted or conditional uses in remote areas as provided for in the bylaws.

5. Assure that large, unfragmented interior forest blocks, connecting blocks, and physical landscapes remain unfragmented and the connections for species movement between these blocks remain.

6.2 STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Stormwater runoff is a threat to water quality in our local streams, ponds, and lakes. Stormwater runoff is defined as any precipitation from rain or snow melt that flows over land without percolating into the ground and is eventually discharged into streams, rivers, lakes or coastal water bodies (EPA 2011). Stormwater runoff is typically a problem in areas with a significant amount of impervious surface, including roads, parking lots, driveways, and rooftops. These surfaces prevent rainwater from infiltrating into the ground causing the resulting runoff from these surfaces to accumulate sediment, nutrients, chemicals and other pollutants from the surface which then quickly flow into our surface waters. For streams, the result is a higher volume of water during rain storms, which leads to faster flows and the potential for more erosion and greater flood damage. The amount of impervious surface also reduces opportunities to recharge groundwater, which leads to lower stream flows during dry conditions. These substances eventually become incorporated in major water bodies and contribute to water pollution and degradation. Stormwater runoff connects the characteristics of the land to water.

Vermont's stormwater regulations in 2015 currently address stormwater management in new developments, but not on existing developed land. Both Act 250 and Water Quality Treatment Standards (WQTS) require new developments to apply for permits that ensure proper water management. Woodford Bylaws should provide options necessary to reduce stormwater runoff during re-development and new development projects.

Stormwater Treatment Options

There are a variety of stormwater management techniques that can be used to reduce the impact of impervious surfaces in the watershed. First and foremost, the amount of impervious surface can be reduced by ensuring that development is not creating excessive surfaces, such as unnecessary parking, long driveways, or overly wide roads. When surfaces are built, a variety of practices can be employed that capture and slow the runoff, provide opportunity for infiltration, and allow nutrients and sediment to be removed before stormwater is discharged into a stream.

Low Impact Development

Low Impact Development (LID) is an innovative land planning and engineering design approach which seeks to maintain a site's pre-development ecological and hydrologic function through the protection, enhancement, or mimicry of natural processes. LID is considered a non-structural practice used predominantly with new development. At its core, LID focuses on minimizing the impacts of development on a particular site. In doing so, LID mitigates problems before they start.

The concept of LID is generally thought to encompass eight principles (outlined below). When LID is incorporated as part of a site design the result is wetland and riparian habitat protection, reduction of peak runoff flow and rate through the reduction of impervious surfaces, reduced risk of flooding, improved community value and aesthetics, and long-term cost savings from reduced water infrastructure maintenance.

LID Principles

- Utilize Conservation Development
- Minimize Soil Compaction
- Minimize Total Disturbance
- Protect Natural Flow Patterns
- Protect Riparian Buffers
- Protect Sensitive Areas
- Reduce Impervious Surfaces
- Disconnect Stormwater

Municipalities support the use of LID through the enactment of LID bylaws. Such bylaws help guide future development in a way that protects water quality, encourages environmental protection, provides flexibility, and promotes sustainability.

Green Stormwater Infrastructure

The practice of LID often goes hand–in-hand with the use of Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI). GSI is defined as systems and practices that restore and maintain natural hydrologic processes in order to reduce the volume and water quality impacts of the built environment while providing multiple societal benefits. GSI represents a structural addition to the landscape and can be used to manage development impacts not addressed by LID. It can also be used to retrofit existing sites which were planned with conventional methods.

GSI Best Management Practices (BMP) can be used to effectively restore and maintain natural hydrologic processes when developing/redeveloping land. Examples of GSI BMPs include bioretention systems, porous asphalt systems, and grass filter strips. The core benefit of these systems is that runoff generated from development is infiltrated, evaporated, or recycled rather than polluting downstream resources. The Town recognizes the importance of GSI for protecting its sensitive water resources as well as the State's interest in promoting its use at the municipal level.

Actions or Policies

~~In order to maintain and enhance the chemical, physical and biological quality of surface and ground water the Town should take the following actions:~~
The Town may pursue the following actions:

1. ~~Evaluate the bylaws within the Town regulatory framework to require LID for new development projects and to support the use of GSI.~~ Specifically, the town should consider by-law additions/changes that:
    i. Conserve and strive to enhance existing significant natural features, including steep slopes, wetlands, streams, creeks, trees, and fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas.
    ii. Require that new development be designed in a manner that demonstrates respect of the natural features of the neighborhood, such as terraces, ravines, woodlands, streams and wetlands.
    iii. Provide incentives and support for the preservation of open space corridors to maintain natural transitions between semirural areas and critical areas, in addition to open spaces and protected easements that are adjacent to developed portions of the neighborhood.
    iv. Require the retention and promote the health of landmark trees. Require sidewalk designs that meander around the tree(s) and respective driplines, or include them within curb bulbs in locations along arterials where there is sufficient existing right-of-way, unless said location would prove a danger to public safety.
    v. Preserve native soils, to the extent possible, during development.
    vi. Allow, under the discretion and guidance of the Planning Commission, for the use of privately maintained, smaller and more strategically placed stormwater detention facilities.
    vii. Encourage the use of native and habitat plants in required landscaping.
    viii. Encourage the use of permeable surfaces.
    ix. Minimize excavation, clearing, and grading.
2. Integrate GSI such as raingardens and filter strips at existing Town facilities.
3. Review new development projects for jurisdiction under State Stormwater Operational standards and requiring that the terms of the permit, including the installation and maintenance of GSI systems, are upheld by the project owner.
4. Promote LID and GSI by providing information for landowners and developers on the Town website.
5. Use road maintenance methods and materials that will maintain or improve water quality, such as those described in the *Vermont Better Backroads Manual.*
6. Evaluate standards for private roads and driveways including minimum culvert sizing, culvert spacing, as well as roadside ditch construction and erosion control to reduce the energy and volume of runoff entering the public right-of-way thereby reducing the likelihood of erosion and sedimentation to surface waters.
7. Provide incentives or require parking lot landscaping, shared parking lots

and driveways and encourage creative design approaches that minimize impervious cover while still ensuring public safety and access for emergency vehicles.

8. Maintain the Forest District which prohibits commercial and industrial development in:
   i. Watersheds of upland streams
   ii. Watersheds characterized by steep slopes and shallow soils
   iii. Areas supplying large amounts of recharge waters to aquifers.

6.3 LAND USE CLASSIFICATION AND POLICIES

A keystone of the plan is the designation of land use districts which also forms the basis for the zoning designations. See the Table of Contents for the page number of the Land Use Map to showing the location(s) of the following classifications:

Classification:

Rural Residential (RR) District: 1 Acre, 5 Acre, 10 Acre minimum

Roadside Commercial (RC) District: 2 Acre minimum

Rural Residential/Roadside Commercial (RC/RC) District: 1 Acre minimum residential, 2 Acre minimum commercial

Forest (F) District(s): 15 Acres minimum

Woodford Lake Estate (WLE) District: 100' x 100' lot minimum

Recreation (R) District: 50 Acres minimum

Industrial/Commercial (I/C) District: 5 Acres minimum

Flood Hazard Overlay (FH) District

6.3.1 RURAL RESIDENTIAL (RR) DISTRICTS

The Rural Residential designations provide a range of densities from one to ten acres per dwelling unit. While the minimum densities provide a minimum lot area per unit there may be particular circumstances of a site such as soil or topography or important natural resources which affect the suitability of a given parcel for development. The residential districts are depicted on the Land Use Plan Map. On March 12, 2012 voters approved one acre zoning along portions of Harbour Road and will be colored ivory on the map. In the Burgess Road area the RR-5 designation is retained. On March 12, 2012

voters approved reclassification on the Upper Burgess Road (colored light green on the Town Plan Use Map) from Forest F-15 to Rural Residential RR-10. The upland plateau along and off Route 9 has both RR-5 and RR-10 designations as noted on the Land Use Map. The latter are for more remote locations and have physical constraints for development. These low densities are considered to be more appropriate for the fragile environment of this upland plateau. Poor soil conditions for septic systems also points to lower densities to avoid pollution of surface or groundwater. Woodford Lake Estates is a pre-existing high density development. ~~A new district is recommended for this area.~~ All future development should be planned to avoid adversely impacting the environment.

6.3.2 ROADSIDE COMMERCIAL (RC) DISTRICTS

The existing roadside commercial designations are included as in the present plan. They all front along Route 9 and include individual parcels. This approach accommodates existing uses while preserving the residential districting plan. Additional commercial designations will be considered in those areas where traffic and access can be safely accommodated and impacts on adjoining residential areas can be mitigated. These areas can provide for low density commercial uses in keeping with the character of the rural setting. Excessive curb-cuts and strip-type development should be avoided. Additionally, the appearance of commercial uses should not adversely impact adjoining residential areas.

~~6.3.3 RURAL RESIDENTIAL/ROADSIDE COMMERCIAL (RR/RC) DISTRICTS~~

~~This plan recommends expanding the existing commercial districts along Route 9 by redistricting the area East of the Woodford State Park to the GMNF boundary East of the Red Mill Pond to accommodate both commercial and residential uses. This area has provided support services for snowmobile recreational uses and other related businesses which should be included among other commercial enterprises in this area. A second RR/RC District is proposed commencing at the Bennington/Woodford town line with frontage along Route 9 and proceeding easterly to the Forest Service Long Trail/Appalachian Trail Parking lot. Additionally, Roadside Commercial/Rural Residential classification is proposed for the two adjacent properties on the north side of Route 9 located west of the Woodford Cemetery and east of the GMNF property. Additionally this classification is proposed for the property on the south side of Route 9 located on the west boundary of Prospect Ski Area to the eastern side of the City Stream Road right of way. Commercial and residential uses should be compatible. RR use is one (1) acre minimum, RC use is two (2) acres minimum.~~

6.3.4 FOREST (F) DISTRICT(S)

Forest designations are provided in the Hollow, Burgess Road area and upland plateau. They also include the public lands of the Green Mountain National Forest. These areas are mainly remote backlands, have physical constraints to development, and are best suited for forest and recreational uses. These rugged backlands also contain fragile environments as well as important habitats and as such the level of use needs to be commensurate with these conditions. They also serve an important watershed/aquifer function. Lands above the 2500' elevation are also included in the Forest District. These areas are very fragile/sensitive environments. Permanent improvements and structures for year-round use are inappropriate in these areas unless they serve an important public function under careful controls. Existing uses, while allowed to continue, need to consider the fragile nature of these upland environments.

6.3.5 WOODFORD LAKE ESTATES (WLE) DISTRICT

Background

Woodford lake Estates, Inc., a Non-Profit Corporation became a Uniform Common Interest Ownership Community on June 23, 2005. WLE was originally laid out by the United Development Corporation in 1948 and was subsequently sold in 1950 to the present owners. On September 9, 1952 those owners Incorporated certifying Articles of Association and Bylaws with the State of Vermont for the Woodford Lake Estates, Inc. The original plan provided for 916 lots with the average lots ranging from 5000 – 6000 square feet to accommodate seasonal/cottage/camp use surrounding Woodford Lake, historically known as Big Pond. Since then, the National Forest Service reclaimed 24 lots, #'s 146-152 and #'s 900-916. As of 2011, there are 179 property owners who have purchased one or more (merged) lots with or without structural improvements. It is estimated there are 126 structures built within the community. It is estimated that 70 structures can be considered year round use and 56 structures are considered seasonal use. Thirty three structures are built on single lots while the remaining 93 structures are built on two or more lots. There are 58 landowners who own undeveloped land. There are 10 parcels of undeveloped land that consist of 3 or more lots adjoined. Woodford Lake Association Inc. (WLA) is a Landowners Association.

WLE land owners are stewards of the land they occupy within the development - watershed. According to the WLA Standing Rules of Procedure landowners help manage, protect and preserve the land and lake for future generations by abiding by all Vermont state laws. WLA is the designated "Development" management agency for the operation and maintenance of the development with the objective to:

a) Protect the lake and wetlands through proper stewardship, road stabilization, inlets and stream channels so as to prevent pollution, nutrient runoff and soil erosion that could diminish the water quality, fish and fish habitat or impair other recreational uses of Woodford Lake;

b) Encourage better shore and land conservation and property management;

c) Educate members to identify and prevent infestation of exotic species of nuisance aquatic plans;

d) Inform and cooperate with lot owners regarding the enforcement of such conditions, covenants and restrictions by majority vote of the members as well as work with the Woodford Planning Commission & Zoning Board of Adjustment while recognizing relevant state laws.

New Classification

As previously proposed in the 2014 Town Plan, the Woodford Lake Estate Residential District was created and became part of the 2014 Woodford Zoning Bylaws.

6.3.6 RECREATION (R) DISTRICT (ALSO SEE HISTORIC CONTEXT, PAGE)

A Recreation District has been established for the Prospect Mountain Ski area. The current designation for this area provides for commercial alpine and cross-country skiing and other associated facilities such as the base lodge/restaurant, convenience services, and some retail. Facilities for group meetings and other forms of recreation are allowed in the zoning bylaw. Cross-country ski trails are also located on leased lands of the Green Mountain National Forest and adjacent Greenwood Lodge property. Future uses or expansions need to be consistent with an approved site plan and master plan for the tract if applicable. During the past several decades small alpine ski areas (some large) have found it difficult to continue operating due to high capital costs and insurance costs. This is unfortunate since Prospect Mountain also served an important area need. Continuation of the ski area for cross-country skiing and supporting uses is encouraged in this plan.

6.3.7 INDUSTRIAL/COMMERCIAL (I/C) DISTRICT

The I/C area is land designated for suitable business and service establishment development in order to provide sound economic development and business opportunities for area residents and service facilities needed by them. Approved Industrial/Commercial buildings and uses should be subject to maintaining standards that will assure compatibility with the goals of the Town Plan. The Town Plan encourages the permitting of I/C uses compatible with the surrounding area. The I/C area is designated in order to recognize existing I/C uses and to provide a suitable location of adequate size to continue existing and attract new light I/C development in the town.

Location:
One area in Woodford is designated as the I/C District. Its location is identified on the Land Use Map in the Town Plan. Limited industrial was one of the proposed land use designations in the first draft plan for Woodford dated May 1970 wherein it stated: "Limited Industrial-on Burgess Road near the town forest."

Uses:
Uses in the I/C area should include but not be limited to earth resource extraction, light manufacturing or assembly of goods, offices, distribution center and similar light industry, subject to strict use and performance standards. Additional uses may include public recreational uses.

The extraction and processing of earth resources and disposal of waste must not have an unduly harmful impact on the environment or surrounding land uses and development. Upon completion of the extracting or processing operation, the site should be restored, as required by the zoning bylaw, and left in a condition suited for an approved alternative use or development.

The Zoning Bylaw should be amended to require a posting of a surety bond by applicants for earth products extraction permits to ensure proper and timely restoration.
I/C developments should provide adequate on-site parking, and include provisions for safe and efficient vehicular ingress and egress. To the extent possible, adjacent I/C uses should make use of common parking and access drives.

Any industrial process involving the use of production of a hazardous waste (as classified by the State of Vermont or the United States environmental Protection Agency) should be disclosed at the time of application, and such application should include detailed plans which provide for the safe storage, usage and removal of any hazardous waste, if the permit application is approved.

The Planning Commission should investigate proposed development to assure applicants will possess high standards of performance and low environmental impact and could border residential areas with no adverse impact.

6.3.8 HISTORIC PRESERVATION

This section identifies a few of the historic sites identified in a 1977 survey, and consequently conditions may have changed. One should bear in mind that historic preservation discussed in this chapter is not limited to just preserving historic structures but also preserving and protecting prehistoric, archaeological, and cultural evidence of past settlements. The historic importance of cellar holes, travel ways, former industrial sites of the charcoaling and iron industry, logging industry, recreation, etc., should also be recognized. The plan for the Green Mountain National Forest places special emphasis on a continuing survey to document historic/archaeological sites. This plan encourages such an effort as well as promoting public awareness and appreciation of these historic sites. This could include building a model and visual display for use in the classroom.

Among the listings in the 1977 survey are: Woodford Hollow Elementary School ~~(recently renovated)~~, Woodford Hollow Church, Martin Residence, Woodford City Union Church, Felix Castellano Residence, and the Old Bugbee Sawmill.

Woodford Hollow Elementary School
The original name was District School Number 1. Built in 1890 and still functioning as a grade school on a site continuously in use for Woodford's school since 1809. Additional information and photos are available at www.SVSU.net

Woodford Hollow Church:
Former Advent Christian Church built in 1871 is used for town meetings. This is a simple rural vernacular church and the only one in the Hollow. A newer addition was constructed to serve as the town office.

Martin Residence
This residence on Harbour Road was built in 1860. It is the only residence in Woodford Hollow that retains its original form. It is representative of the settlement in this area from 1850 until 1900.

Woodford City Union Church
This structure is located on the east side of Vermont Route 9 and was built in 1873. Like the Advent Christian Church in Woodford Hollow, this was the only house of worship for the residents on top of Woodford Mountain. ~~as an expression of optimism in Woodford's economic or spiritual future~~. This church, ~~which remains in almost the condition it was built~~, was organized by six members and designed to seat 140. The church building has fallen into disrepair and should be prioritized for historic preservation/restoration. ~~Ten years after construction the congregation had increased to 7.~~

Residence on North Side of Route 9
The old Gleason homestead/sawmill was built pre-1860. Its formal name is Windy Knoll and was also used as a rooming house. The house was owned by one of the Gleasons of Gleason lumbering and milling business, and once was used as housing for itinerant lumberjacks. There is also a barn with hand-hewed beams.

Old Bugbee Sawmill
This is the last existing mill of Woodford's once extensive sawmill industry. It appears to be located on the site of the J. Bugbee sawmill built in 1866. There is no date for this structure. Bugbee owned 700 acres of woodland and his mill was capable of sawing 2500 feet of lumber a day. The Bugbee pond, dam, gatehouse and mill building remain in existence on the Greenwood Lodge Property. The Sawmill is currently used for equipment storage. The gates in the gate house on the dam remain functional.

Cemeteries
The several cemeteries of Woodford are important links to the past. The oldest inscription reported was on a marble slab and read as follows: "In Memory of Mr. Otis Eddy, who died Oct. 22d, 1794, In the 22d year of his age. Death, like an overthrowing stream, Sweeps us away, our life a dream."

6.4 DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Residential

1. Development should maintain a level of density compatible with land capability ~~suitability~~. While minimum densities are established in this plan, not all land has the same development potential.

2. Natural features of the land including terrain, natural ground cover, trees, wetland, natural or unique features should be integrated into site development plans.

3. Residential development (including cottage conversions to year-round uses) needs to be supported by adequate water supply and sewage disposal either on privately owned or commonly owned parcels, as needed, to avoid any adverse impact on the environment.

4. On-site sewage systems must obtain required State permits to ensure adequate design and operation and to avoid contamination of surface or groundwater or water supplies.

5. Projects with several housing units should provide for adequate roads, utilities, and drainage facilities for the intended level or density of use.

6. Development should be consistent with the town's rate of growth and should avoid increased rates which cause a burden to the Town because of increased demands for facilities or services.

Commercial

1. The intensity of commercial development should be compatible with the character of the surrounding area. The amount of noise, glare, and lighting should be controlled to minimize impacts on surrounding properties.

2. Projects should be adequately landscaped and provide for safe and adequate provision for access and parking.

3. Property owners are encouraged to consider the appearance of their properties. Because Route 9 is the main street of Woodford and has a variety of uses, appearance takes on added significance.

4. The location of new commercial uses/zones should be avoided in areas with unsafe road conditions such as grade, sighting distances, speed, and multiple access points in the vicinity.

5. Avoid a proliferation of commercial uses along Route 9 which contribute to" strip" type development.

~~*Rural Residential/Roadside Commercial*~~

~~This is a blend of both Rural Residential and Roadside Commercial . Reference those sections for definitions.~~

Historic Preservation

1. Discourage any development, alterations or additions that encroach upon or threaten any historic feature, building, or site possessing architectural, archaeological, or historic merit. Incorporate historic and archeological site protections into development review process in the zoning bylaw.

2. Buildings and sites of historical or architectural merit should be preserved, whenever possible, and new developments should be compatible with existing historic buildings and development patterns.

3. Encourage the renovation and adaptive re-use of historic structures that might otherwise be lost to deterioration.

4. Developers should consider historic sites near proposed developments in their plans and provide compatible architectural designs and/or screening and buffers, as appropriate.

5. Work with the State of Vermont Preservation Trust and other preservation organizations, where indicated, to identify and acquire rights, easements or ownership of historic resources.

6. To preserve the historic fabric and integrity of historic sites in Woodford this Plan encourages inclusion of major sites in the National and State Register of Historic Sites and Structures.

Other

1. The policies for residential and commercial uses identified above may also be applicable to other uses and should be applied if applicable. This applies to both private and public uses.

2. Encourage uses in the Prospect Mountain Ski area which contribute to the viability of this area for cross country skiing.

7.0 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Woodford's population decreased from 424 in the year 2010 to 355 in 2020 resulting in a of 16.3% decrease over the ten-year period. Unless there is significant development, conversion of seasonal dwellings to year-round residency, or a significant expansion of the region's economy the ~~growth rate~~ population may continue to decrease or remain constant. Likewise the burden on municipal services should be modest, as well.

7.1 PUBLIC SERVICES

Highways and Bridges

Vt. Route 9 is a principal arterial state highway serving east-west traffic in southern Vermont through Woodford. It is also on the national highway system and serves as the "Main Street" for the town. For the most part it is a two lane road with limited shoulders with provision for climbing lanes and emergency turnoffs due to severe grades. In Woodford Hollow the Annual Average Daily Traffic count (AADT) on Rt.9 was 4,607 in 2021 compared to 4,801 in 2019. On the Harbour Road section of Rt. 9 the count was 3,491 (AADT) in 2021 and 4,106 in 2019. Approximately 10% of daytime traffic is trucks. Based on the State's rating system for the condition of highways, 66% is rated less than 60 points out of 100 through Woodford. The rating factors include several categories: physical condition, safety and service~~. Safety remains a critical concern given the high number of accidents. Between January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2010 there were 77 accidents with a vast majority being single vehicles, four head on, and two fatalities.~~
Advanced warnings and patrolling along the steep grades and sharp curves of Woodford Mountain has stepped up in recent years. Nevertheless, this section of road remains a hazard due to driving habits and weather conditions. Route 9 has many functions including access to property, through traffic, and access to destinations such as recreation.

Approximately 50% of the frontage is in public ownership including the Green Mt. National Forest and Woodford State park. Access (curb cuts) for whatever purposes along Route 9 are required to be state permitted. Town road access needs to provide safe sighting distances and avoid backing onto the roadway.

Route 9 was officially named "Molly Stark Trail" by the State of Vermont in 1967. It was designated as the Molly Stark Scenic Byway in 1995 given its historic cultural, natural, and scenic values. Interpretive kiosks and educational materials serve to enrich the experience about the road and area's history and attributes. Supporting and sustaining the designation as a scenic byway helps contribute to the local/regional economy. ~~www.mollystarkbyway.org~~

There is a total of 2.5 miles of Class 3 town roads which are designated as follows: #1 - Harbour Road, 1.74 miles; #2 - Burgess Road, 0.30 miles; #3 - Gore Road, 0.08 miles; and Stamford Stream (Notch) Road, 0.38 miles. These local roads provide access

to the town's residents and the National Forest. There are 6.57 miles of Class 4 roads and there are nine bridges/structures along town roads. Highway expenditures in 2022 were $34,715 and state aid revenue was $4,242. ~~Damage was incurred for roads and bridges due to Hurricane Irene in September of 2011 and a declaration of disaster was proclaimed.~~

Other access roads include those of the Green Mt. National Forest and the Woodford State Park. The USFS may participate in some projects which affect access to national forest service lands. ~~Both the US Forest Service System roads, trails and snowmobile trails sustained moderate to severe damage from Hurricane Irene during 2011. Thankfully, restoration was accomplished to a great degree in an expedient manner because of the importance of these facilities for recreation and the local economy~~.

Schools

Woodford is a member of the Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union. Elementary students, K-6, attend the Woodford Hollow School while grades 7-12 attend schools in Bennington. In 1992/1993, major renovations were made to the Woodford School. As a result, the facilities and grounds substantially improved the learning environment for Woodford students and thus contributed to the school's favorable position for public school approval. School enrollment has varied over the past several years with the highest level in the 1994 school year at 69 students, and the lowest level in the 2014 school year at 20 students. Enrollment at Woodford Hollow has been gradually decreasing since 2010 with a few years remaining constant or slightly increasing~~, but the overall trend shows a decline~~. ~~Population growth between the years 2000 and 2010 is almost constant with 414 and 424 residents respectively.~~

TABLE 12: SVSU School Enrollment 2018-2022

School	Grades	2018 Enrollment	2019 Enrollment	2020 Enrollment	2021 Enrollment	2022 Enrollment
Arlington Memorial*	6th-12th	-	-	-	-	204
Bennington Elementary School	PK-5th	387	325	315	320	310
Fisher School*	PK-5th	-	-	-	-	211
Molly Stark School	PK-5th	544	525	483	442	426
Monument Elementary School	PK-5th	173	175	173	173	163
Mt Anthony Senior HS #14	9th-12th	918	881	918	923	963
Mt Anthony Union Middle School	6th-8th	611	600	598	578	578
Pownal Elementary School	PK-6th	280	259	269	248	249
Shaftsbury Elementary School	PK-6th	282	253	256	258	246
Woodford Hollow School	PK-6th	25	23	21	23	21

**Joined SVSU in 2021*

Emergency Services

The Town of Woodford does not provide emergency services. It relies on the Bennington Rural Fire Department (Beech Street Station) and the Bennington Rescue Squad. Each year the town budgets funds as a contribution to the volunteer fire department and rescue squad. The contribution in 2022 was $30,000 (Rural Fire Department) and $5,000 (Rescue Squad). The availability of fire protection is factored into homeowner's insurance. The U.S. Forest Service also assumes responsibility for fire prevention, detection, and suppression in the Green Mountain National Forest. The Bennington Rescue Squad service area includes Woodford. Police protection is provided by the Vermont State Police and the County Sheriff who have jurisdiction throughout the Region. Additionally, the Town elects constables and Justices of the Peace as provided in State law.

Government Administrative Services

All of the local governmental services are provided at the Woodford Town Offices. This center is used to maintain all of the vital records of the Town and to conduct business by the various boards of the town. In 2022 the cost of general government administrative services was $61,503. (Selectboard, Legal, Town Clerk, Treasurer, Town Hall expenses). This is 47% of total non-highway expenditures. In addition to these basic government administrative services, stipends are also paid to various boards (Board of Civil Authority, Listers, Auditors, Planning and Zoning Board, Zoning Administrator, Tax Collector, etc.).

Solid Waste and Recycling

The Town of Woodford does not have any facilities for solid waste disposal or recycling. Homeowners and businesses assume their own responsibility for proper disposal and recycling or contract with private operators. The Town of Bennington operates a transfer station at the former landfill off of Houghton Lane which is the closest available to the Town. Disposal at this location is on a fee basis. Woodford is a member of the Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance, and residents can take their hazardous waste to the Permanent Household Hazardous Waste facility at the Bennington Transfer Station. Recreational use of forest lands, parking areas, or use of remote locations have a tendency to attract rubbish disposal. This situation should be monitored by the Selectboard ~~from time to time~~ and management/educational responsibilities should be identified. Residents, businesses, organizations and the Woodford School should be encouraged to adopt a section of the Town for Green-Up Day. The US Forest Service which manages the Green Mountain National Forest could coordinate periodic clean-up events with various users of the forest (Green Mt. Club, Snobusters/VAST, ATV/Bike Clubs, Vermont Trotters, etc.) and provide educational materials.

The Universal Recycling Law or Act 148 was passed by the Vermont Legislature in 2012. The primary purpose of this law was to significantly reduce the amount of material going into landfills. Over the past decade 30% to 36% of materials have been diverted from landfills. At the same time, the average amount of material each Vermonter generates has increased. This means that many useful and recyclable materials still end up in those landfills, which are gradually becoming full. The Universal Recycling Law seeks to provide more choices and convenience for Vermont residents, businesses and institutions to make it easier for them to recycle. The law is being phased in over time to allow for the creation of the systems for managing materials.

Effective July 1, 2020, food scraps and other compostable materials were banned from Vermont landfills under Act 148. This ban was enacted to divert more material away from landfills and reduce food waste and greenhouse gas emissions. Vermont residents are required separate their food scraps from other disposable materials and either compost on their property, take their food scraps to a local food waste drop-off site (such as the Bennington transfer station), or contract with a curbside food scrap hauler.

The towns of Arlington, Bennington, Dorset, Glastenbury, Manchester, Pownal, Rupert, Sandgate, Searsburg, Shaftsbury, Stamford, Sunderland and Woodford have worked together to develop a Solid Waste Implementation Plan or "SWIP" consistent with the Universal Recycling Law. ~~This plan will supersede previous plans~~. The SWIP describes a series of actions that the Alliance will implement ~~between 2015 and 2020~~ to increase recycling of plastics, glass, metals, textiles and other materials banned from landfills, management of organics through composting, anaerobic digesters or other means, the proper disposal of household hazardous waste, the disposal of construction and demolition debris, and the proper management of biosolids. As part of the planning process, the towns formed the Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance (BCSWA) through an interlocal contract, pursuant to 24 V.S.A. Chapter 24, to implement the plan.

The Woodford Selectboard on November 17, 2015 approved a SWIP ordinance which can be found on line at www.woodfordvt.org.

Bennington Water Supply and Treatment Plant

The Town of Bennington operates a water supply treatment plant on Route 9, directly across from the Woodford town office. This system serves more than half of the Bennington population and is supplied by a vast watershed of Bolles Brook, Bickford Hollow Brook, Hell Hollow Brook and the surrounding land area. Some residents and businesses in the immediate area of the plant in the Hollow are connected, as well. The watershed is generally bounded by: Maple Hill, Hagar Hill, Little Pond, Glastenbury Mountain, East Mountain, Bald Mountain, and the ridgeline south. The water intake is in the vicinity of the Bolles and Hell Hollow brooks.

There are some private properties above the intake. While the treatment plant can handle most of the water purification needs it is still preferable to avoid any contamination of the water source via onsite septic disposal. Consequently, this plan requires the proper design and management of on-site septic systems.

7.2 PRIVATE SERVICES

Roads, sewage disposal, and water supply are for the most part provided by individual homeowners, project developers, or a homeowners association. The town's interest in the provision of private services is to advocate compliance with local or state standards as applicable. The town must also protect the interests of all the residents and act to avoid situations which burden all the taxpayers.

Private Roads

Private roads consist of Erbs Way and Woodford Lake Estates. The latter consists of the following road network: Sycamore, Hickory, Birch, Beach Roads; Cresent, Simon, Honeysuckle, Hillside, Mountain, and Evergreen Lane. Erbs Way road is maintained by the roadway residents. As provided in its bylaws, the WLE Association is responsible for managing the WLE development and maintenance of its roads. A grant was used at WLE to evaluate sediment erosion along certain roads. ~~A culvert inventory will be completed in 2021 by BCRC/GIS system with a water quality grant.~~

Water Supply

(This section will be updated if comparable information is reported in the 2010 US Census.)

~~The source of water for housing units in Woodford as reported in the 1990 U.S. Census includes: Public system or private company - 49; Individual drilled well - 81; Individual dug well - 8; Some other source - 131. Some sources may include springs, surface waters, and carry in. These figures indicate a variety of sources which may or may not comply with current State standards.~~

Woodford residents that live west of the water treatment plant on Route 7 and Burgess Road receive water from the Town of Bennington. All other residents have a private water supply. The Town of Woodford does not have the financial or administrative capacity to aid property owners to upgrade their systems. Consequently, individuals need to take the initiative to ensure a safe and adequate supply. If grants or other sources of funds become available, the town may help facilitate a proposal. Special assessment districts are sometimes formed to address a particular problem or serve a particular entity with a common need. However, many town residents have historically resisted sharing the cost of a capital project that is publicly funded or subsidized if they do not receive a direct benefit. The largest public water system in Woodford (public or privately owned) is the Town of Bennington serving residents, businesses, and public facilities in the Hollow.

Sewage Disposal

Sewage disposal in Woodford is the responsibility of all the residents since all systems are privately owned. The State Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) has universal authority for required standards and permitting of water supply and wastewater disposal. ~~Of the total 269 housing units reported in the 1990 census, 234 have septic tank or cesspool and 35 are by other means (to be updated if comparable information is reported in the 2000 or 2010 US Census).~~ The housing unit count in the 2020 census for Woodford is 337 (approximately 170 are seasonal, recreational or occasional use). In 2010, the total number of housing units was 363. Note the substantial decrease in housing units between 2010 and 2020. It is required of all residents, whether year-round or seasonal, to have properly functioning systems. This is to avoid surface or groundwater contamination from adversely affecting water supplies needed to ensure a high quality environment.

It is also the responsibility of residents, business owners and organization leaders to obtain the required permits for septic system modifications, additions, or new installations. Wastewater disposal systems are now under the jurisdiction of the ANR. A copy of applications and permits must be filed with the Town for recording with land records. The Selectboard acts as the Board of Health for the Town and may require mitigation or removal of health risks.

Telecommunications

Telecommunication facilities and related infrastructure require careful consideration. These structures tend to be located in highly visible locations on mountaintops and ridgelines. The federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 placed certain limitations over municipal control of these structures; however, within those confines, Woodford must act to protect its historic character, rural nature and aesthetic beauty.

Toward that end, the zoning by-laws incorporate specific provisions to guide and govern the placement of antennas and tower structures. Among other issues that may arise, the town is concerned about aesthetics, ridgeline protection, environmental protection and co-location of facilities.

When planning new infrastructure or upgrades to existing facilities, special consideration should be given to any primary or secondary impacts that would reduce resource values, including but not limited to aesthetics, natural areas, wildlife habitat, and historic sites. In addition, when a new facility is planned, there must be clear evidence that the proposed location is necessary based on economic considerations, potential impacts on resource values, and the resulting public benefits. In all cases, appropriate and suitable techniques should be used to minimize or prevent any adverse impact from the placement of towers and related infrastructure.

7.3 RECREATIONAL SERVICES

This category of services includes State, Federal, and Private facilities, which to some extent are described in previous sections. It serves as a reminder that Woodford is a significant destination for recreational use. Unlike more developed recreational areas, Woodford offers a unique quasi-primitive and backland experience. As travel and tourism continue to grow and be promoted in Vermont because of its natural beauty, there will be an increased demand for services. Herein lays the challenge. As the demand grows, resources become threatened from overuse and users begin to experience conflict. Foremost from the perspective of this plan is the retention of the quality of the resources. Also of concern to the town is the role of local officials in the decision-making process particularly on public lands. There has been an effort at the federal and state levels to respond to local needs and strengthen the decision process at the local level. The Town Plan encourages this process.

State

The State of Vermont owns 415 acres in Woodford. First opened to the public in 1964, the 398-acre Woodford State Park (WSP) is the highest elevation campground in Vermont, at 2,400 feet. WSP is located on a mountain plateau and surrounds Adams Reservoir. This park borders the George Aiken Wilderness Area in the Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF). The campground has 103 camp sites, 20 lean-tos, and four camping cabins were constructed in 2011. Camping cabins have quickly gained popularity during recent years. This facility provides water-based recreation, day use, camping, and winter use. Naturalist programs are presented throughout the summer. There is a small beach and picnic area near the dam. Rowboats, canoes and kayaks are available for rent. There are several hiking trails, including a 2.7 mile trail around the lake. Use of the park is encouraged during the closed season at no fee. Cross country skiing is allowed anywhere a skier can travel, while snowmobiling is restricted to the Adams Reservoir. Permission from the Regional manager is required for winter camping. The Park has a capacity of 42,000 camping visitors per season. ~~Attendance (visits) have been fairly constant in the past several years with 12,683 in 2005 compared with 12,686 in 2009 (average for this five year period is 12,565). Of the 12,686 visits in 2009, 1,782 were day use and 10,904 were overnight camping use. Of the 17,045 visits in 2010, 3619 were day use and 13,426 were overnight camping use. Of the 15,135 visits in 2011, 3074 were day use and 12,061 were camping use. Revenue from park use has been constant over the past five years averaging $105,923 annually and $106,606 in 2009~~. Any shifts of policies or usage including privatization of services should be communicated to local officials. Vermont also owns Fish & Wildlife access areas including: Red Mill Pond (0.1 acres), and Billings Pond (mostly in Searsburg, 14.8 acres).

Federal

The Green Mountain National Forest is host to multiple recreational uses, both motorized and non-motorized. The blueprint for how the forest is managed is the Land and Resource Management Plan (2006) of which recreation is one component. The management plan map selected is Alternative E. The classification for Woodford includes: diverse forest, wilderness, wilderness study area, diverse backcountry, and recognition of the Long Trail, eligible wild, scenic, recreational rivers and ecologically special areas. If recreation and tourism continue to grow in the State so will usage on public lands. Access via trailheads, parking areas, forest roads, trails for hiking and snowmobiling will need to be carefully managed. Unless demand increases dramatically the need for new facilities is unlikely. Camping in the GMNF is available at campsites off Forest Road 74 in the George D. Aiken Wilderness. The Red Mill Campground in the GMNF has been closed because of cost and lack of use. ~~The GMNF has held public opinion meetings, after the closing, which did not produce any viable plan for re-opening the campground.~~ Special uses such as snowmobiling, x-country skiing, snowshoeing, horseback riding, cycling, and 4-wheel motorized recreation will need to be carefully accommodated in a multiple use management system. Dispersed recreation such as camping, hunting, and fishing benefit from a quality environment. Wildlife habitat improvements and development of the fish program are important pieces to the management strategy. Management also means provision for fire management, law enforcement, sanitary facilities, garbage removal, and road/access management which can impact the community. These may not have the high visibility of other programs and projects but are equally important to the Town of Woodford.

Private

Other private recreational services include the Prospect Mountain Nordic Ski Area and adjacent Greenwood Lodge and Campsites. The Prospect Mountain Nordic Ski Area provides high elevation facilities for a snow dependent season of cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Its large base area ski lodge/restaurant is also used occasionally during other seasons for group use such as weddings, reunions, and private parties. Prospect Ski Mountain Corporation, established in 1960 provided downhill skiing until its conversion to a popular XC Ski Center. Prospect continues to serve as an area resource as a first class Nordic facility. As previously indicated Woodford should continue to encourage the viability of the Prospect Mountain Nordic Ski Area. While Prospect provides recreational facilities mainly during the winter season, adjacent Greenwood Lodge and Campsites provides overnight hostel and tent/RV camping unit accommodations including water and other recreational facilities for individuals, families, and groups from May through October. Greenwood Lodge, also established during 1960, is the longest continuously operated, privately owned hostel in Vermont ~~affiliated with Hosteling International, a worldwide non-profit travel organization.~~

Snowmobiling in Vermont has been a favorite winter pastime for over 40 years, rivaling skiing and snowboarding as the reason tourists are coming to Vermont during the winter months. Started in 1984, Woodford has the largest Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) snowmobile club in the state. The Woodford SnoBusters Inc., (SB) headquarters is located off Route 9 at the east end of Woodford in their large maintenance

building. It is a non-profit, volunteer organization which maintains over 100 miles of groomed trails enjoyed by not only snowmobilers but cross country skiers and hikers. The SB growth is the result of the elevation of 2300' and the amount of snow neighboring towns don't get. ~~Tropical storm Irene caused heavy damage to the Snowmobile trails in 2011. The future use of some trails in the network of trails severely damaged by the storm was considered uncertain after the storm due to funding and other factors.~~ The Vermont State Police conduct snowmobile training courses at the SB headquarters. The SBs have also served as a community resource providing free events for special needs people, young and old. Snowmobile sales, service and tours have been provided by private businesses in the SB headquarter vicinity.

7.4 POLICIES AND ACTIONS

1. Maintain a modest growth rate to minimize the cost of government services.

2. Emphasis should be on the maintenance of the existing town roads and bridges rather than adding new road mileage. Woodford needs to establish minimum town road and bridge standards. Private roads or bridges should also meet established town standards to ensure safe passage of emergency vehicles. Forest Service roads should be properly managed and maintained for their intended purpose including provision for fire access and control.

3. Safety is a primary concern for the management and maintenance of Route 9. In addition to surface management (paving & shoulders), consideration should be given to improvements along the several sections having poor sufficiency ratings. Advance warning, patrolling and surface maintenance along Route 9 is especially important during inclement weather conditions.

4. Access nodes, parking areas, and safety pull-offs must be properly located and maintained.

5. Encourage the continued support and coordination of emergency services whether they be local volunteers, State, or federal officials.

6. Residents and businesses are encouraged to properly recycle or dispose of all hazardous or household wastes and to avoid any on-site disposal which causes a public nuisance, impacts adjoining landowners, or can pollute surface or ground waters. The Town should promote use of the permanent household hazardous waste facility at the Bennington Transfer Station ~~educational materials, participation in household hazardous waste collection events, and other means of communication to encourage proper disposal~~. Public lands that encourage transient users should ensure that there are adequate provisions for managing solid waste and not burden the residents of Woodford.

7. Land uses and activities in the Bolles Brook Watershed (Bennington Water Supply – Watershed also serving Woodford) must avoid contamination of this important

resource. When applicable input from Bennington and State officials needs to be sought.

8. Sewage disposal systems must comply with new State standards. If existing systems fail they should also be brought into compliance with the standards approved by the State.

9. Emphasis should be placed on the quality and management of existing facilities and services in the Woodford State Park and Green Mountain National Forest. Any new recreational facilities or changes in use must be weighed against the impact on the town's residents and other natural resource, land use, and municipal policies in this plan.

10. Other recreational uses such as at Prospect Mountain are encouraged to continue and prosper. Any significant changes in recreational use or adaptive reuse should avoid undue adverse impacts, such as noise on the community and adjoining residential or commercial areas. A growing trend is to develop facilities as year-round destination resorts for economic viability. This plan encourages compatible year-round uses consistent with uses allowed in the zoning bylaws.

8.0 THE COST OF GOVERNMENTAL SERVICES

Woodford expenditures include general government, roads, fire prevention, general and assessments/donations. Sources of income include local, State and federal sources. As in other communities, schools typically represent the largest percent of total municipal expenditures. In 2022 total municipal expenses (general fund and highway) was $203,714.56. Woodford's tax rate is among the lowest in the State, ~~for both homestead (#3) and non-residential property taxes (#1).~~ however, it should be noted that resident incomes and the value of residential properties also tend to be lower than other towns in the region. Overall, the town is in good financial shape and there are no major capital needs anticipated in the next several years. Notwithstanding this condition, unanticipated events such as flooding or other natural disasters ~~tropical storm Irene~~ can have a significant impact on small budgets such as Woodford's if State and federal reimbursements do not cover costs. The figures used herein attempt to avoid duplications in how data is reported in the town and school financial reports but there could be a discrepancy.

8.1 EXPENDITURES

Total municipal expenditures increased by 12.3% from $154,306 in 2015 (not including school expenditures) to $173,215 in 2020. Municipal expenditures increased by 17.6% between 2020 and 2022 from $173,215 to $203,715. The total 2022 expenditures can be further broken out as a percentage of total as follows: roads (17%), fire prevention (14.7%), General Government/Other (57.8%), and assessment/donations (10.5%).
The largest absolute increase in expenditures between 2020 and 2022 was roads ($23,431). Fire protection expenditures have remained constant at $30,000 per year since 2010.

8.2 REVENUES

Between 2015 and 2022 revenue from all sources increased by nearly 20% from $847,754 to $1,016,178. Income growth was less than expenses for this same period (20% versus 32%). ~~Income growth on the school side for this same period was 56.2% compared to 101.9% for municipal government.~~ Significant sources of revenue include property taxes, federal funds and delinquent tax receipts ~~the Green Mt. National Forest and Payment in Lieu of Taxes~~. Shortfalls for both municipal and school budgets for a given year are made-up from fund balances in previous years and are either budgeted as such or reflected in financial statements. Property tax revenues in 2022 were $784,616 (77.2%) of total revenue generated in the amount of $1,016,178.

8.3 PROPERTY TAXES

Property taxes increased from $674,101 in 2015 to $784,617 in 2022. This represents an increase of 16.4% for an average of 2.3% annually. The state tax system bears directly on the value of property (Grand Lists) for the redistribution of state aid for education. The Grand List shows that in 2022 the values were distributed as follows:

Residential (41.5%), Mobile Homes (1.8%), Vacation Homes (39.2%), Commercial (7.1%), Industrial (0%), Utilities (4.7%), Woodland (1.8%) and Misc. (3.8%). In 2022 the average value of a residential home irrespective of lot size was $189,035. The average value of a vacation (seasonal) home was $129,152. Year-round residences (Homesteads) and seasonal homes are taxed at Different rates in Vermont. Together, year round dwellings and seasonal homes make up over 80% of the Property values on the grand list (2022). They also represent 93% of the 457 total parcels in the Town.

TABLE 13

Woodford Expenditures 2010, 2015, 2020, 2022

Service	2010	2015	2020	2022
Schools*	$705,960	$471,675	-	-
Roads	$22,947	$20,509	$11,284	$34,715
Fire Prevention	$30,000	$30,000	$30,000	$30,000
Gen Gov/Other	$76,913	$76,755	$111,088	$117,710
Assess & Donations	$33,572	$27,042	$20,843	$21,290
TOTAL	**$869,392**	**$625,981**	**$173,215**	**$203,715**

*Woodford Hollow School District merged with SVSU in 2019

Note: Because of differences in reporting (town/school) figures may need clarification and/or correction

TABLE 14

Total Municipal Income & Expenses

	2010	2015	2020	2022
Income	$215,075	$847,754	$978,270	$1,016,178
Expense	$163,432	$154,306	$173,215	$203,715

Note: Figures may not account for special funds, accounts, and investments.

TABLE 15

Woodford Grand List Values

Percent of Total

Property	1990	2000	2010	2022
Residential	38.3	42.7	44.5	41.5
Mobile Homes	2.8	3.8	2.2	1.8
Vacation Homes	34.0	32.0	34.0	39.2
Commercial	10.5	8.1	6.5	7.1
Industrial	0.7	0.8	0.8	0
Utilities	4.9	4.1	4.0	4.7
Woodland	-	2.0	2.4	1.8
Misc.*	-	5.3	5.5	3.8

*Undeveloped land that is not mostly forested; shore lots, residential bldg. Lots, unimproved ag. land , etc.

TABLE 16

Woodford Grand List Parcels

Number of Parcels

Property	1990	2000	2010	2022
Residential	104	122	138	126
M.H. (Units)	31	32	27	25
Vacation	181	165	160	174
Commercial	10	13	13	14
Industrial	2	2	2	0
Utilities	2	3	3	3
Woodland	-	11	12	12
Misc.		191	120	103
Total	525	539	475	457

[8] Source: Woodford Grand List – Form 411

9.0 HOUSING

9.1 HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

In 2020 Woodford had a total of 337 housing units, a decrease of 7.2% from 2010. Approximately 164 (48.6%) were occupied year round while 173 (51.3%) were considered vacant for occasional use and for sale. ~~Approximately 154 (42.4%) of the housing units are classified as vacation/seasonal.~~ It is estimated that 70% of occupied units are owner occupied while 30% are renter occupied. Single family homes dominate the type of housing with single family detached units representing 70.2 % of the total occupied housing stock. Mobile homes have remained fairly constant as a percent of total housing stock totaling 35 in 2020, representing 26.7% of total occupied housing stock. ~~Average housing values in 2010 as provided in the Grand List are as follows: Single Family (regardless of lot size) $186,752; Mobile Homes (with and without land) $46,948; and Seasonal Homes (regardless of lot size) $123,103.~~ The amount of seasonal/vacation homes in Woodford has increased 12.3% between 2010 and 2020. Approximately 40% of the housing stock was built after 1980.

The American Community Survey of the US Census reported that in 2021, the median monthly housing cost for mortgaged owners was $1,236, non-mortgaged owners $504 and renters $ 965. 59.5% of owners had mortgages, 40.5% without mortgages, and 66.7% of renters in Woodford spent 30% or more of household income on housing. People who spend more than 30% of their household income on housing are considered to be cost-burdened. With respect to affordability, housing costs/values in Woodford tend to be less than surrounding towns, the region, and the State thus providing a more affordable community for both family and non-family households.

~~In a survey of residents, five indicated that paying ongoing home ownership costs (rent, mortgage, heating, utilities) were a concern, four indicated finding an affordable house to buy and no one indicated finding affordable rental housing.~~

Household Characteristics

A significant decrease in households (27.2%) occurred between 2010 and 2020. ~~This includes both married couples and other families. The number of occupants in family household has remained fairly constant over the past several decades. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of non family households increased by 10.5% and the number of single person households increased by 26.3%. In most of the non-family households there were people living alone, but some households were comprised of people living together where no one was related to the householder. The average person per family has remained fairly constant at 2.85 while the average persons per household dropped to 2.36.~~ The average number of persons per household decreased slightly between 2010 and 2020 and the average number of persons per family remained constant.

Special Housing Needs and Affordability

Woodford has one mobile home park which is perhaps one of the most affordable housing types to address affordability. It contains 16 lots/mobile homes and nine are leased lots. Also, some former motel units receive subsidies for eligible occupants. There has been no assessment of special housing needs most suited to Woodford, but such an assessment would likely include accommodation on a small scale consistent with the existing housing stock. The Town ~~has amended its zoning bylaw to~~ allows accessory dwelling, three family dwellings, group 'residential care' homes, and childcare services in dwellings.

The bordering Town of Bennington has the largest supply of affordable and special needs housing in the Region. As such, it provides an option for Woodford residents should special housing be needed with the benefit of close proximity to services. Some of the more active housing assistance organizations in the region include: Shires Housing, Bennington Housing Authority, Bennington Rutland Opportunity Council (BROC), Habitat for Humanity, and Efficiency Vermont (energy conservation). Section 8, rent subsidies may be available to some households.

TABLE 17

Household Characteristics[9]

	2000	2010	2020	% Change 2010-20
Total Population	414	424	355	-16.30%
# Households	172	180	131	-27.20%
# Family Households	115	117	-	-
# Nonfamily Houhseholds	57	63	-	-
# Single Person Households	38	48	16	-66.70%
Avg Persons per Household	2.41	2.56	2.09	-
Avg Persons per Family	2.85	2.85	2.83	-

Households: Include one or more persons living in separate living quarters as a single unit.

TABLE 18

Housing Units 1990-2020

	1990	2000	2010	2020	% Change 2010-20
Housing Units	267	334	363	337	-7.20%
Occupied Units	121	172	180	164	-8.90%
Vacation/Seasonal	130	150	154	173	12.30%

TABLE 18

Housing Characteristics 2010-2020[11]

	2010	% Total	2020	% Total
1 Unit Detached	308	84.8%	92	70.2%
1 Unit Attached	8	2.2%	2	1.5%
2-4 Units	7	1.9%	2	1.5%
20 Units +	11	3.1%	0	3.1%
Mobile Homes	29	8.0%	35	26.7%
Boat/RV/Van	0	--	0	--
	363	100%	131	100%

Note: 2020 Housing characteristics for occupied housing units only

9.2 POLICIES AND ACTIONS

1. Encourage the provision of safe, decent and affordable housing for Woodford's residents.

2. ~~Determine resident interest in~~ Promote housing assistance programs such as favorable financing or grants for special hardships, and housing rehabilitation including structural, water, sewer, energy efficiency, etc.

3. Help facilitate programs or projects which benefit the community and its residents.

[10] Source: US Census

10.0 ENERGY

10.1 OVERVIEW

The uncertain and dramatic fluctuations in the prices and a declining supply of fuel oil and gasoline bear directly on local economies, businesses and households. The closing of Vermont Yankee as a continuing source of meeting a major portion of electrical needs in the State has forced utilities to seek reliable alternative energy sources including existing sources such as Hydro Quebec. The CVPS Southern Vermont Reliability Study "Southern Vermont Loop" demonstrated capacity and quantity issues in meeting electrical demand and the need for additional generation. The use of renewables (small scale energy generators) at a local level can help meet local demand and together with aggressive energy conservation programs can position the Region and municipalities such as Woodford to become more self-sufficient for an uncertain future.

Woodford's Energy Goals

1. ~~Promote sustainable development in Woodford by reinforcing traditional land use patterns and municipal development policies.~~

2. Maximize energy conservation through weatherization of existing structures and appropriate and ensure that new construction complies with the Vermont Residential Building Energy Standards Code.

3. Encourage appropriate development and use of renewable energy resources while protecting natural and cultural resources.

4. Ensure the long-term availability of safe, reliable and affordable energy supplies to meet the needs of the town and neighboring communities.

5. Reduce municipal energy consumption and costs, community reliance on fossil fuels and foreign oil supplies, and greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change through increased energy and fuel efficiency, energy conservation, and active transition to alternative fuels and renewable energy sources.

6. Sustainably develop Woodford's renewable energy resources and local distributed energy generation capacity - including municipal and community generation and supporting smart grid technology - consistent with adopted plan policies and community energy facility and siting Bylaw standards.

7. Avoid or minimize the adverse impacts of energy development on public health, safety and welfare, the Town's historic and planned pattern of development, environmentally sensitive area, and Woodford's most highly valued natural, cultural and scenic resources, consistent with adopted town policies. and community standards for energy development, resource protection and land conservation.

Energy Use

~~The use of fossil fuels for home heating in Woodford is illustrated in the rolling US Census for between the years of 2005 and 2009 : Total occupied housing units 151: propane 31.1%, electric 4.6%, fuel oil/kerosene 47.0%, wood 17.2%. Compared to Bennington County and Vermont, Woodford ranks higher in propane, electricity, and wood use. Woodford ranks less in fuel oil use than the County and State respectively by 24% and 6.6%. The use of wood in owner occupied housing is 19.4% compared to the County at 11.6% and State 14.6%.~~ Woodford homes are predominantly heated with fossil fuels, specifically oil and propane, but a significant number of homes are heated by other fuels (33.6%) which include some renewable resources such as wood.

TABLE 19: Proportion of Home Heating Fuels

Heating Fuel	% of Homes Heated Woodford	Bennington County
Utility Gas	3.10%	2%
Propane	12.20%	16.50%
Electricity	1.50%	5.20%
Fuel oil	49.60%	61.50%
All other fuels	33.60%	13.40%

Total Occupied Housing Units: 131

Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

Efficiency Vermont data from 2019-2022 show that electricity usage in Woodford has been gradually increasing across all sectors. Efficiency Vermont has a variety of programs and technologies which can help people reduce their electricity consumption.

TABLE 20: Woodford Electricity Usage 2019-2022 (KWH)

Sector	2019	2020	2021	2022
Residential	1,519,779	1,616,274	1,675,869	3,360,266
Commercial & Industrial	510,038	538,352	558,731	582,179
TOTAL	**2,029,817**	**2,154,627**	**2,234,600**	**4,212,445**

The land use pattern in Woodford is constrained to Route 9 and a few side roads. As such this linear pattern of development is energy efficient as opposed to a sprawling pattern over a broader area. This linear pattern will remain unchanged due to the terrain and public ownership of lands (GMNF).

Renewable Energy Resources

There is potential in Woodford for thoughtfully sited renewable energy generation. ~~A recent survey of Woodford residents indicated support for renewable energy resources such as wind, small-scale hydro, solar photovoltaic panels, biomass (woodchip), and cordwood/pellet for home heating.~~ Any generating facilities would need to be carefully planned to avoid adverse effects on the environment and air quality (a primary goal of the Town Plan). Some of the higher elevations that may be suited to commercial wind generation include: Bald Mt., Prospect Mt., Maple Hill, Hagar Hill, and ridgelines in the vicinity of Dunville Hollow. However, some of these areas have protected corridors for the Long/Appalachian Trail and would need to conform to the Green Mt. National Forest Plan. Woodford has a vast wood supply which if managed properly can provide a wood resource well into the future. A commercial scale biomass generation plant should not be ruled out if a location on private or public lands with suitable access and environmental suitability can support such a project. Access to and from such a facility may be more problematic on the mountain due to unsafe conditions of Route 9 with steep grades and curves.

10.2 ENERGY CONSERVATION

~~Of all the energy strategies that can be implemented locally is managing energy consumption (life style) and energy undertaking conservation measures in new construction and existing buildings.~~ Energy conservation measures in new and existing buildings are a strategy that can be implemented locally. In the case of Woodford, residential homes are the predominant form of building and the greatest consumer of energy for space heating. Strategies for new construction and the retrofit of existing buildings will yield the most beneficial reduction in energy consumption and the most cost-effective payback for a given improvement. The town can promote residential energy efficiency and conservation through the following programs and resources: the "Energy Star" building performance rating system; educational programming and appliance upgrade rebates available through Efficiency Vermont; and weatherization assistance provided by the Bennington Rutland Opportunity Council (BROC) and the NeighborWorks of Western Vermont (NWWVT) Heat Squad program.

Residential Buildings

New buildings should be sited and designed to maximize opportunities for the use of renewable energy resources and fully insulated to reduce the consumption of energy for heating and cooling. New building design should seek to encourage Energy Star ratings at the highest level possible with consideration of cost and construction in order to achieve the Vermont Residential Building Energy Standards. This should be promoted through education and alerting applicants when applying for building permits. Programs to retrofit

existing buildings with insulation, air sealing, weather-stripping should be aggressively promoted. Additionally, insulation of pipes and water heaters plus installation of the most efficient means of indoor and outdoor lighting can contribute significantly to reduce energy consumption. ~~Encourage the use of support organizations to promote efficiency programs such as the Bennington Rutland Opportunity Council weatherization program for eligible households and Efficiency Vermont. The use of energy audits for the retrofit of existing homes is vitally important to maximize conservation measures cost/payback objectives.~~ Residents can have the efficiency of their home assessed through an energy audit performed by Heat Squad, BROC (for income-qualifying households), or a variety of private contractors.

The Vermont Residential Building Energy Standards apply to all new homes built after July 1, 1998. The law applies to residential and certain non-residential buildings including additions, alterations, renovations, and repairs to existing structures. The law recognizes the builder's responsibility to understand and comply with the code through a reporting and certification requirement ~~(one page report).~~ No plan reviews or final inspections are involved. ~~It is one of the few codes in the country in which the builder self-certifies compliance.~~ The code identifies buildings and construction that are exempt from the standards. ~~In instances of non-compliance, a homeowner may seek damages in court within six years of occupancy or the filing of the required certification.~~ Certificates of compliance are to be filed with the Town Clerk and Vermont Department of Public Service who administers the Code. More information can be found on the Department of Public Service website: https://publicservice.vermont.gov/efficiency/building-energy-standards/residential-building-energy-standards

10.3 MUNICIPAL - SCHOOL BUILDINGS

The Woodford Town Office is annexed to a historic building, formerly a church, now a meeting place for community functions. It is currently insulated to 1970 standards. ~~In 2009, a grant proposal sought to insulate the connected buildings which could have reduced energy consumption by 30% but it was not funded. The estimated cost of the project at that time of $11,000 would have a payback in slightly more than three years.~~ An energy audit should be conducted by a qualified energy audit specialist ~~with the guidance of Efficiency Vermont to update the cost and to determine the likely payback period given existing and potential fuel costs~~ to assess the efficiency of the building and identify potential upgrades.

The Woodford Hollow Elementary School has had some efficiency improvements in the past decade including ~~had a walk-through energy assessment by the Vermont School Energy Management Program (SEMP) in May 2011. As a result, new lighting supported by a grant,~~ new appliances, and roof/attic insulation ~~were installed resulting in a payback of energy savings on investment of just over one year. No changes were made to the heating system.~~ Any future improvements are the responsibility of the Southwest Supervisory Union.

~~Other/Smart Meters/Grid~~ Energy Resiliency/Storage

Green Mountain Power Corporation is upgrading its system to more effectively manage supply and use of electricity. As part of this effort, GMP customers can conserve energy and improve grid resiliency through the use of home energy storage devices. These devices store energy for later use during times of peak demand or power outages. Battery storage devices can also be installed at municipal buildings and provide a backup power source in the event of an emergency. ~~smart meters are offered to customers who can then manage their own use in real time down to the hour for electrical consuming devices. Customer use accounts can be monitored on a secure web portal. It is reported that there should be no change in cost for the new service. However, there may be the potential to reduce energy consumption at the household level. Residents of the Town should learn more about the use of this technology, security, and the cost in preparation of the companies offer of smart meters in the very near future.~~ The Town of Woodford and its residents should consider installing battery storage devices to help them monitor their energy consumption and increase their preparedness and resiliency in the event of an emergency.

10.4 SOLAR FACILITIES

The contribution of solar energy to Woodford's total energy supply is anticipated to grow. To this end more structures will be sited, oriented and designed to incorporate solar construction techniques for space heating and natural lighting. Passive solar building design and solar thermal heating systems can significantly increase energy efficiencies and reduce costs. Until recently, the upfront costs of solar photovoltaic (PV) systems were generally too costly for the average homeowner, but emerging technologies and state, federal and utility incentives have made grid connected net-metered PV systems more affordable.

Technological advances, including the incorporation of photovoltaic components in roofing and siding materials, may make solar power an even more viable source of electricity in the near future.

The scale and siting of some proposed and/or existing solar installations in some communities have raised concerns about the impacts that such facilities can have on the town's residential neighborhoods and its scenic, natural, agricultural, and historic resources. ~~As a result, the Woodford Planning Commission has proposed bylaw standards that are intended to avoid and mitigate potential impacts of solar facility development, while promoting new installations in appropriate locations, and achieving proportionality in Woodford's contribution to renewable energy solutions.~~

Any proposed renewable energy project that will be connected to the grid must apply to the Public Utility Commission (PUC) for a Certificate of Public Good (CPG). A solar project's location, size, and visibility, together with the context of the surrounding land uses, will be relevant in the PUC's consideration of whether the proposed project would have an undue adverse impact. The PUC will give the policies in the Woodford Town Plan due consideration when reviewing a CPG application. Substantial deference by the PUC is

given to towns with enhanced energy plans that meet the requirements of Act 174.

~~Therefore, the effective participation of the town of Woodford in the PUC's review process requires the development of specific community bylaw standards in order to ensure that local conservation and development objectives are considered and weighted by the PBS in its review of a Certificate of Public Good (CPG) application for a solar facility. To achieve that goal the Woodford Planning Commission has developed specific community bylaw standards for the siting and development of a solar energy facility in Woodford.~~

Energy generation and transmission systems powered by solar energy are renewable energy resources. Such energy facilities in Woodford should ~~adopt policies that~~ be sited to limit the adverse impacts of such development on public health, safety and welfare, the town's historic and planned pattern of development, environmentally sensitive areas, and our most highly-valued natural, cultural and scenic resources. Any renewable energy development should be consistent with related development, resource protection and land conservation policies included elsewhere in this plan.

These policies should also be considered in undertaking municipal solar energy projects and programs, in enacting or updating municipal solar screening ordinances, ~~the town's bylaws to address renewable energy development~~, and in the review of new or upgraded energy facilities and systems by the town and in Section 248 PUC proceedings.

Small net-metered or off-grid solar energy projects, including a solar array system intended solely to serve an individual residence or business, are encouraged ~~should be considered an accessory structure allowed in all land use in which structures are allowed by zoning bylaws.~~

10.5 WIND ENERGY RESOURCES

The recent success of wind energy projects has led to searches for sites that might be suitable for commercial scale (10 to 20 MW / 20 to 60 turbines) wind energy facilities. Woodford's high ridges and remote location make it potentially suitable as a site for the development of a wind-driven electric generating facility. Although a number of these ridges are not appropriate because of environmental impacts, access and aesthetics, efforts to locate a suitable site and develop a commercial wind energy facility should be considered. ~~The municipal zoning Bylaws should provide specific standards for wind energy facilities in Woodford.~~

10.6 POLICIES AND ACTIONS

~~1. Encourage energy efficiency and conservation programs for occupied buildings in Woodford.~~

2. For new construction (especially occupied buildings) take into consideration siting and orientation to maximize renewables and encourage compliance to achieve state residential and commercial energy efficiency standards and Energy Star construction.

3. Encourage the use of renewable resources such as wood, wind, and solar, provided that there are no significant impacts on the environment and the town's residents. ~~Review the zoning requirements for application of these facilities.~~ Commercial scale renewable energy projects are encouraged provided there is benefit to Woodford residents and the quality of the environment (air, water, resources) is not diminished.

4. Encourage qualifying households to take advantage of programs such as BROC's weatherization program to improve energy efficiency. Similarly, promote the use of energy audits ~~(Efficiency Vermont)~~ to demonstrate the cost/benefit of improving structures to reduce energy consumption and cost.

~~5. When applicable and if available, participate in purchasing programs to reduce the cost of heating fuels at the school and town offices needs to be considered.~~ Municipal infrastructure should be evaluated to identify opportunities for efficiency improvements and renewable energy generation and use. A professional energy audit should be pursued at the town office to identify cost-effective energy-saving strategies.

6. Promote and encourage residents to participate in energy efficiency workshops ~~whether sponsored by the Town or other organizations~~ and have ~~helpful literature~~ information about energy efficiency programs and incentives available at the Town Office.

11.0 PUTTING THE PLAN TO WORK

11.1 IMPLEMENTATION

Town Plan

The Town Plan establishes the overall comprehensive framework for the many facets of community growth, development, services, and environmental matters. As such it serves as a benchmark from which to discuss and evaluate actions which bear on the community and its residents. It also serves a legal function in that it precedes and lays the foundation for implementing the zoning bylaws. While the plan expires every eight years, the Planning Commission should review the document annually to measure progress and to evaluate unanticipated issues or changing conditions in the community that should be addressed by an amendment to the plan.

Chapter 117 of Title 24 provides the policy framework for planning in the State. It encourages a coordinated effort among State and regional planning agencies and municipalities and requires citizen participation at all levels of a planning process. Effective community engagement requires an open, informed dialog among municipal officials and members of the community. A public engagement process is not only necessary under Vermont law – it also leads to buy-in by citizens and the recognition that the process and outcomes were designed by and for the community.

Land Use Regulations & Zoning Bylaws

~~With a revised town plan in place the zoning bylaws will need to be reviewed for consistency and updated if necessary. Consideration is given to the new land use classifications for Woodford Lake Estates District and updating the zoning map using the BCRC Geographic Information System (GIS). The Bylaws will need to be updated with new flood hazard regulations including the current flood hazard maps. A tentative deadline for the flood hazard zoning update is during 2015. The flood hazard bylaws are not optional and will need to be enforced in compliance with new standards approved by the State FEMA coordinator in the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources in order for the municipality to qualify for the national flood insurance program (NFIP). Woodford bylaws could also include subdivision regulations. Unlike zoning which tends to look at individual parcels, subdivision review looks at an entire tract for future development. Since Woodford's private land base is relatively small due to public ownership, and zoning can provide some degree of comprehensive review, subdivision regulations do not appear necessary in the foreseeable future. Furthermore, the Selectboard may adopt interim subdivision regulations if they are deemed necessary. Interim bylaws may also be applied to other situations which may present problems to the residents or the community.~~ The Town maintains land use regulations that implements the Town Plan. Subdivision regulations were added in 2020. The use of districts in the Bylaw directs various land uses within certain predetermined areas. The Town Plan protects districts from adverse and

conflicting uses, protects capital investments of private residences and the public sector, and natural resources. It also provides a process whereby development can be evaluated in terms of community vision. The Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Adjustment both have a role in carrying out the intent of the Plan and Bylaws.

Rules of procedure are now required by State law. Act 115 of the 2003 adjourned session requires local "appropriate municipal panels" including planning commissions performing development review, zoning boards of adjustment, and development review boards to adopt rules of procedure and rules of ethics with respect to conflicts of interest (24 V.S.A. 4461(a). Without rules of procedure and conflict of interest policies, it is difficult to meet either the legal requirements for quasi-judicial proceedings, or the public's expectation for orderly and consistent public proceedings. A simplified form of rules of procedure may be helpful for the planning commission and zoning board of adjustment due to the turnover of volunteer boards. This would also provide greater consistency in operating procedures and decision making.

Vermont Waste Water and Potable Water Supply Rules

The Vermont Agency of Natural Resource has universal jurisdiction of water supplies and wastewater disposal permits and enforcement. Before any construction or development requiring a zoning permit proceeds, any required permits must be obtained pursuant to 10 V.S.A., Chapter 64, and Vermont's Wastewater System and Potable Water Supply Rules. Copies of applications, permits, and supporting documentation need to be filed with the Town for recording with the land records pursuant to 24 V.S.A. sections 1154 and 1161. The town retains authority acting through the Woodford Board of Health to abate public nuisances or to abate or remove public health risks.

Mapping - Geographic Information System (GIS)

Updated maps in the plan were prepared using the GIS system at the BCRC. This system has an extensive database which enables the display of various types of mapped information. Existing land use was digitized from the most recent orthophotos and 911 database. New attribute data continues to be added to the system. Mapped boundaries can also be readily modified to reflect changed conditions. The system is also helpful for specialized analysis or enlarging a particular area. Consideration should be given to the development of official tax (parcel) maps. This would be beneficial to the landowners, local boards, and for the ability to relate parcels to other mapped information.

Town Road-Bridge Standards

This Town Plan proposes that Town road-bridge standards as required by State and Federal agencies for receiving grants, funding/reimbursement for flood hazard or other emergency events or their mitigation should be established. These standards should be reviewed when deemed necessary by the Select Board to ensure they are updated to meet or exceed the current Road and Bridge Code and Standards (Act 110 Sec.17 19VSA 996 (a)).

This will help to provide for an appropriate level of service for the present conditions and to guide future development on town roads. Direct access to Town roads from driveways or private roads should also meet minimum standards to ensure proper drainage, sight distance, slope, or location to intersections. The authority for Town road standards is with the Selectboard (19 VSA, 304 and 1111(b)). While Woodford has only a small amount of town road mileage, the standards are nevertheless important.

Grants

The Town should ~~be vigilant in taking advantage of~~ pursue grant opportunities that provide beneficial outcomes and minimize costs otherwise paid for through local taxes. Favorable low interest loans to municipalities may also be available in situations that require local action not budgeted for, thus requiring voter approval. ~~During 2009, the Town submitted a grant application for stimulus funding to improve energy efficiency of the Town Office/Meeting hall but was not successful obtaining the competitive grant. Nevertheless, projects such as this should be pursued when opportunities arise.~~

Citizen Participation

This plan encourages the citizens to stay involved with the planning process by attending meetings or communicating their thoughts to the Planning Commission and/or Selectboard. ~~At the outset of updating this plan, an initiative was made to communicate the efforts of this planning process to the citizens and to other interests which may be affected by the plan; such an initiative needs to be part of the ongoing process.~~ The Planning Commission and Selectboard, as required by statute, will hold informational meetings and hearings so that residents and others have an opportunity to ~~evaluate~~ provide input on the plan's updated policies and recommendations. ~~Some individuals or organizations may have a particular interest, such as the history of Woodford, and they are encouraged to help advance this appreciation of the community. Others may have an idea or concept and are encouraged to participate.~~ Members of the public are encouraged to attend these meetings.

Vermont Act 250

Act 250 is a comprehensive land use permit process that reviews projects of a certain size/threshold. Because one of the criteria relates a project to the Town Plan, it is important that the Town Plan accurately reflect Town values ~~be represented to present its views~~. The Planning Commission and Selectboard are the statutory parties to this process. Other laws such as the State wetlands, wastewater disposal and solid waste, to mention a few also provide a place for input. The municipal boards should be aware of their requirements and advise the public as needed.

TABLE 21: Town Plan Implementation Actions

Plan Section	Task	Who	Time Frame	Funding	Priority
5. Natural Characteristics – *Flood Resiliency*	Identify bridge and culvert repairs and replacements to address condition geomorphic compatibility and ability to provide functional passage for aquatic organisms. Bridges and culverts that impede flow during flooding events should be reconstructed or replaced.	Select board, planning commission	Ongoing	State of VT DEC	High
	Maintain a Local Emergency Management Plan	Local emergency management director	Ongoing		High
	Update the Woodford Hazard Mitigation Plan	EMD, planning commission, BCRC	Ongoing	State of VT VEM	Medium
	Pursue an inter-municipal agreement for the use and protection of regional water resources.	Select board	Ongoing		Low
	Educate property owners in the flood zone on ways to reduce hazards during a flood event.	EMD, planning commission	Ongoing		Medium
	Participate in the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF).	EMD, planning commission, select board	Ongoing		Medium
6. Land Use	Integrate Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) practices at town facilities.	Select board, planning commission	Ongoing		Low
	Educate landowners about GSI and low-impact development practices	Planning commission	Ongoing		Low
Historic Preservation	Work with the Preservation Trust of VT and other organizations to identify, acquire and rehabilitate historic resources such as Woodford City Union Church.	Select board, planning commission, local community groups, Preservation Trust	Ongoing	Preservation Trust of VT	Low
7. Community Facilities & Services	Educate residents and businesses about proper disposal of solid waste.	Select board, planning commission,	Ongoing		Low

		Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance			
9. Housing	Promote housing assistance programs and organizations to residents.	Select board, planning commission	Ongoing		Medium
10. Energy	Ensure that new construction complies with the Vermont Residential Building Energy Code.	Zoning Administrator, home builder	Ongoing		Medium
	Promote energy efficiency and home weatherization programs.	Select board, planning commission	Ongoing		Medium

11.2 COORDINATION

Municipal

Coordination starts at home. While there are many outside influences that affect Woodford, it is critical that the local boards meet periodically to compare notes. ~~The lack of good communication is often the culprit of unintentional results.~~ Simply, people have to work together to achieve a common good. ~~That is not to say that there are differences of opinion or that solutions cannot be readily found.~~ It is important that there is a process to find common ground. Roads, emergency services, fire protection, water supply, educational facilities, watershed issues, etc. can have municipal or inter-municipal implications. While this plan tries to take these into account in a comprehensive fashion, it is still necessary to coordinate the actions or programs, or at least their expectations. It is also necessary to maintain communication with other entities and programs that have a direct bearing on Woodford such as the Green Mountain National Forest, State/Federal Agencies, and Green Mountain Power. ~~Corporation (formerly CVPS).~~

Regional

The Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) updates and maintains a Regional Plan which provides a big picture of growth and change in the Region. Woodford is a member of the Commission. The Woodford Plan takes the Regional Plan into consideration, and ~~it is felt that~~ the two reinforce each other in the substantive policy areas. Woodford should continue to take an active role in the BCRC via appointed representatives, not only to ~~express the Woodford point of view~~ provide the Woodford perspective but also to have a say in other areas of regional or statewide concern.

State

The Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act includes statewide goals for state agencies, regions, and municipalities. Each is encouraged to consider them in their planning process. Included with this plan in an appendix is a listing of each of the statewide goals and how they are addressed in various sections of the updated Woodford Town Plan. This not only demonstrates compliance with the goals but facilitates any review of the plan by others.

Federal

The Green Mountain National Forest (U.S. Forest Service) owns a majority of the land in Woodford. The manner in which it is used and managed can affect certain policies of the plan as well as advancing the intent of the plan. Like Woodford, the Green Mountain National Forest is guided by a plan called the Land and Resource Management Plan, 2006. It may be that both plans have much in common, but the town should compare the two carefully and communicate the town plan recommendations to the Forest Service, if necessary, as the USFS plan is implemented. The Town should also take an active role in evaluating proposals/projects of the USFS and participate in any long range planning endeavors of the federal agency. Aside from planning are the day to day operations of the Forest Service. Access to lands, fire protection, use of leased lands, etc. may lend themselves to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) which prescribes responsibilities and procedures especially in emergency situations including motorized access to restricted Wilderness Areas.

Other

Utility companies, Green Mountain Club, cable television, and emergency response teams undertake activities in Woodford. It is important to understand their function and programs. What if a runaway truck on Woodford Mountain resulted in a worse case for the driver, and in this case the spillage of hazardous materials? Is there a protocol for response in place, and for what types of events? Do area residents know about the procedures? Matters such as this seem improbable and too distant to think about until it happens. Whoever is assigned responsibility(ies) for emergency management coordination needs to be clearly identified for various situations such as rapid response or hazard mitigation plan (BCRC may provide assistance in these areas).

11.3 MANAGEMENT

Management of Woodford doesn't just happen. Municipal officials, either elected or appointed, have much to do with the future of Woodford as do the residents. The Town Clerk plays a vital role in the administration of town affairs and responding to both citizen and non-citizen requests. Communication among local officials and boards is also a means of management, particularly with respect to implementing the plan. Another type of management is the administration of the Zoning Bylaws which is done by the zoning administrator. ~~Because of the relatively high turnover of the Zoning Administrator (ZA)~~

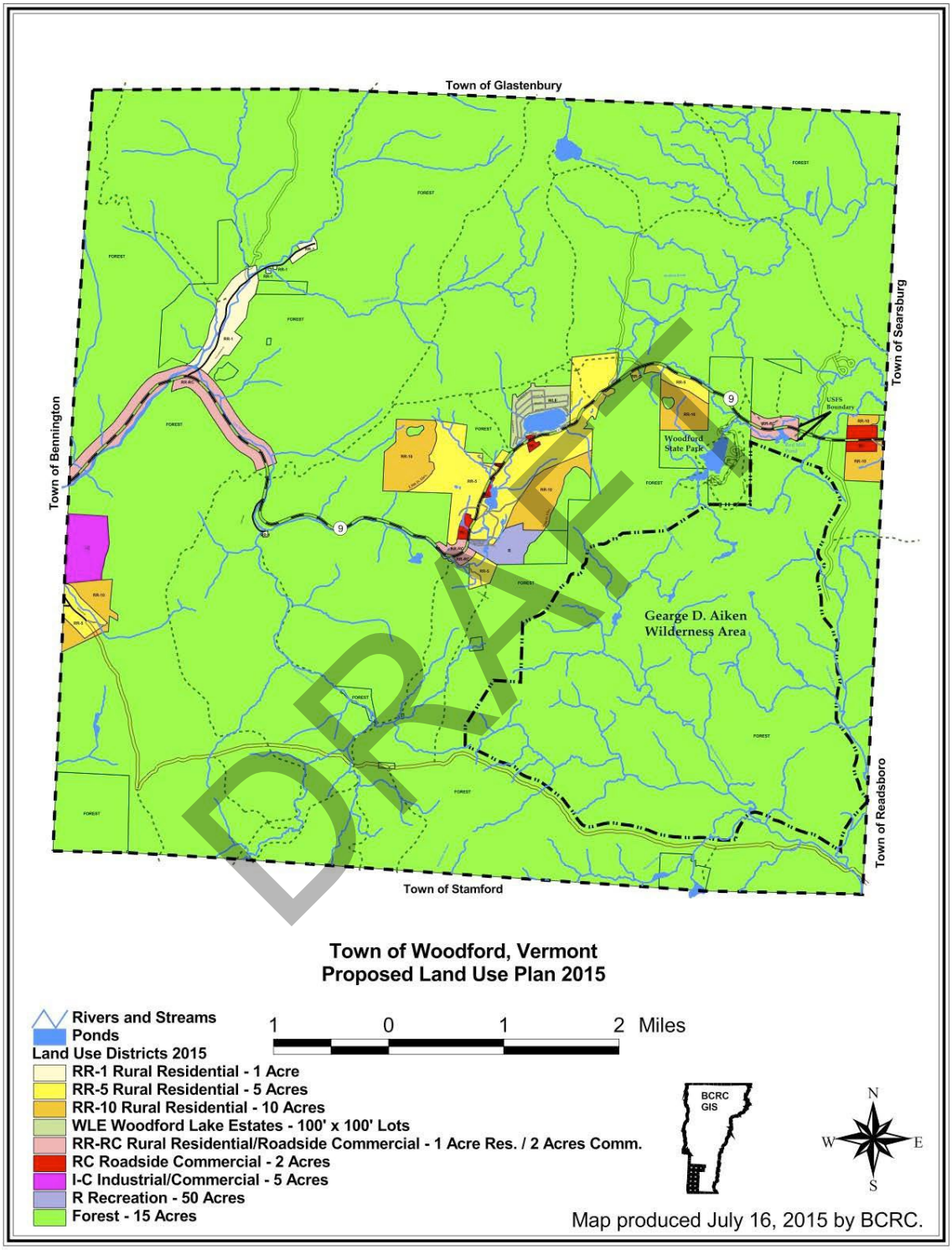
~~post, consideration should be given to some incentives for the job. Perhaps the fees should be compared to the actual cost of someone's time in carrying out the job (process application, attending meetings, travel, site reviews and inspections, telephone calls, etc.).~~ To assure citizens are well served in zoning matters, an acting ZA should be appointed and available during absence of the ZA or when a conflict of interest exists. The Woodford caseload should not be so great as to burden the community. This plan is also mindful of the goal of minimizing the tax burden on the residents and to maintain a sound financial position for the town.

Appendix A

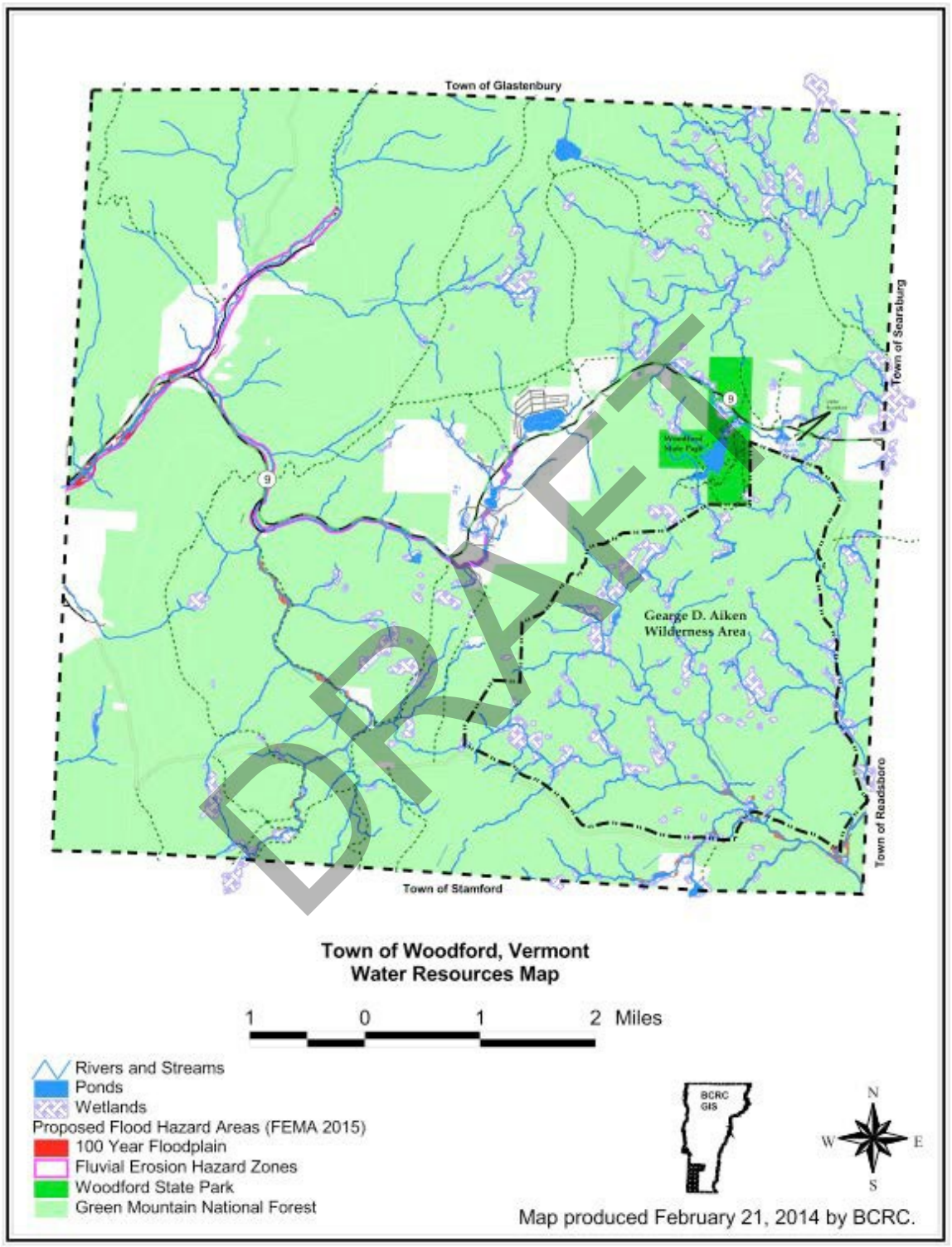
LIST OF MAPS

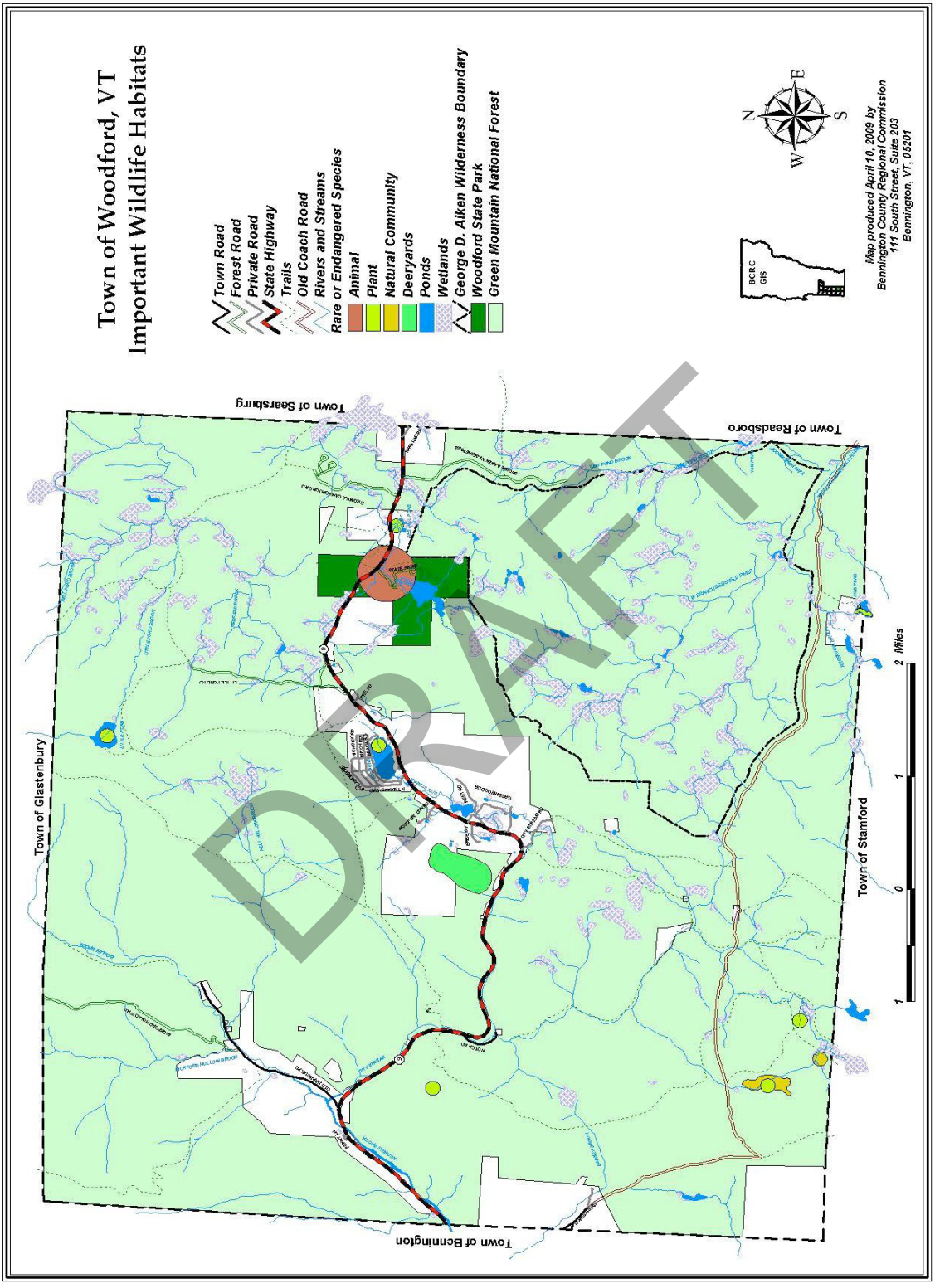
The below listed maps may be found on the page number indicated.

Land Use

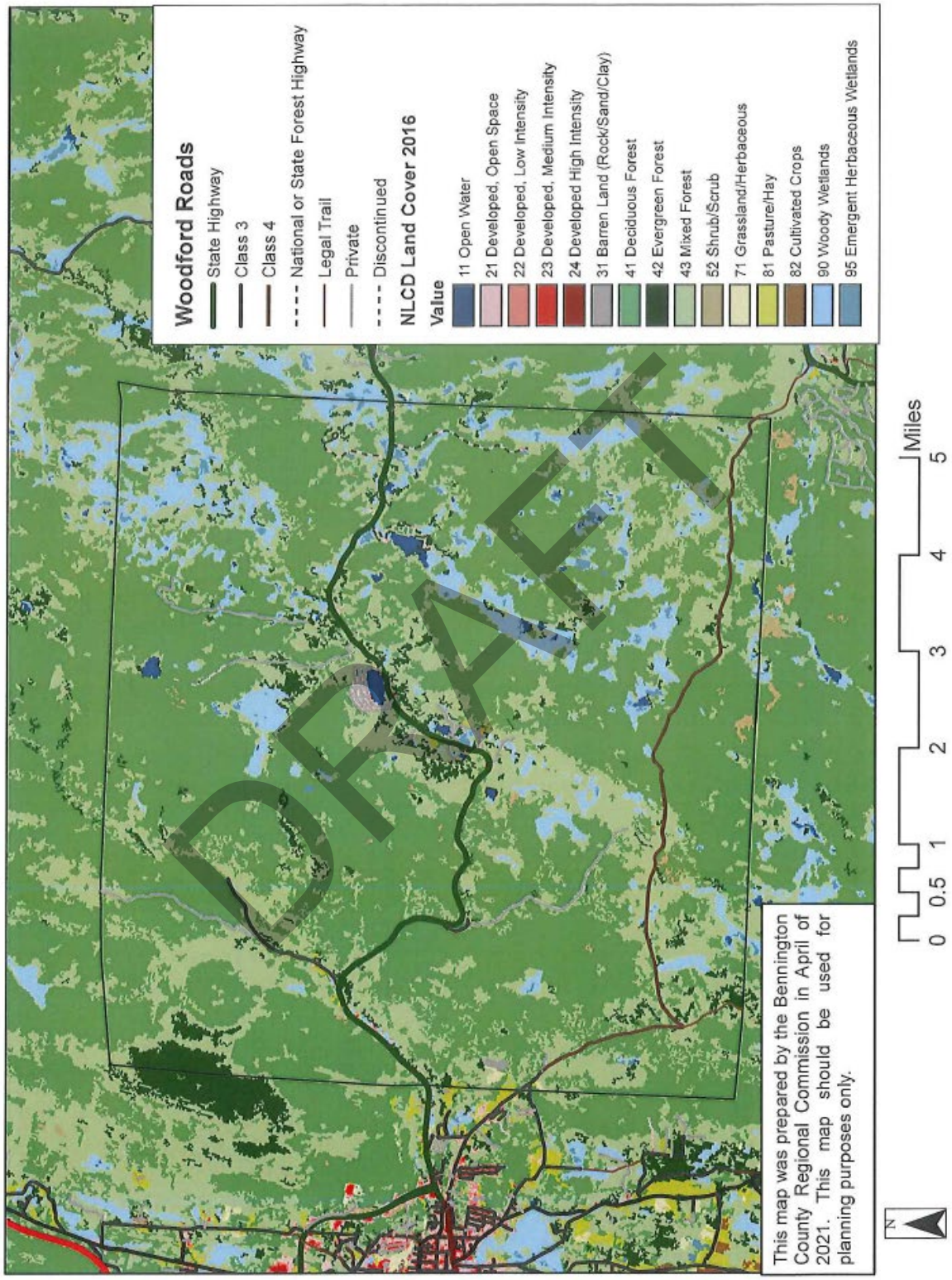

Town of Glastenbury
Town of Bennington
Town of Searsburg
Town of Readsboro
Town of Stamford
Woodford State Park
USFS Boundary
Gearge D. Aiken Wilderness Area
DRAFT
Town of Woodford, Vermont
Proposed Land Use Plan 2015
Rivers and Streams
Ponds
Land Use Districts 2015
RR-1 Rural Residential - 1 Acre
RR-5 Rural Residential - 5 Acres
RR-10 Rural Residential - 10 Acres
WLE Woodford Lake Estates - 100' x 100' Lots
RR-RC Rural Residential/Roadside Commercial - 1 Acre Res. / 2 Acres Comm.
RC Roadside Commercial - 2 Acres
I-C Industrial/Commercial - 5 Acres
R Recreation - 50 Acres
Forest - 15 Acres
1 0 1 2 Miles
BCRC GIS
N
W
E
S
Map produced July 16, 2015 by BCRC.

Water Resources

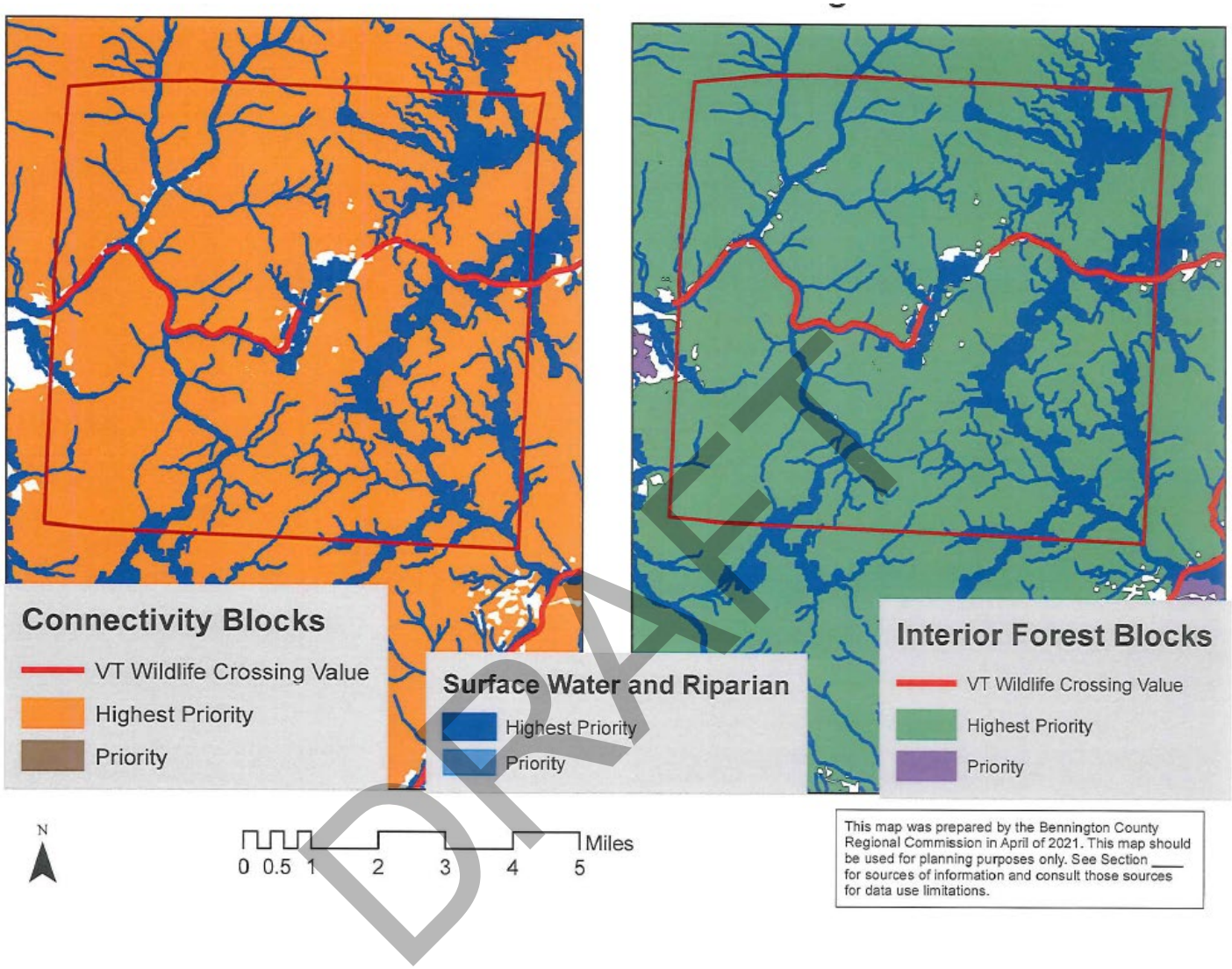



Town of Woodford, VT
Important Wildlife Habitats
Town Road
Forest Road
Private Road
State Highway
Trails
Old Coach Road
Rivers and Streams
Rare or Endangered Species
Animal
Plant
Natural Community
Deeryards
Ponds
Wetlands
George D. Aiken Wilderness Boundary
Woodford State Park
Green Mountain National Forest
N
E
S
W
BCRC GIS
Map produced April 10, 2009 by
Bennington County Regional Commission
111 South Street, Suite 203
Bennington, VT, 05201
Town of Searsburg
Town of Readsboro
Town of Glastenbury
Town of Stamford
Town of Bennington
2 Miles
1
0
1
1
DRAFT

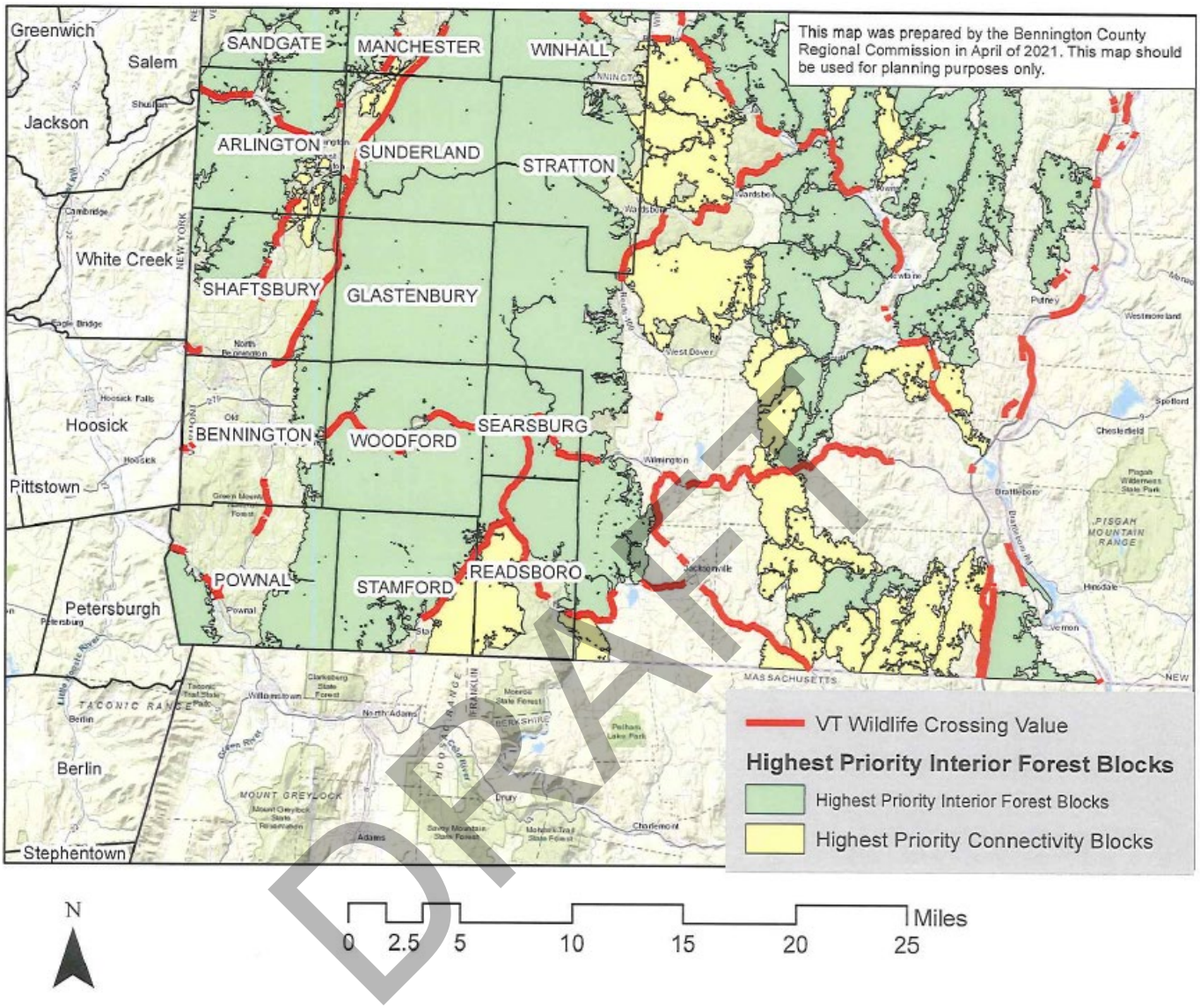
Woodford Land Cover



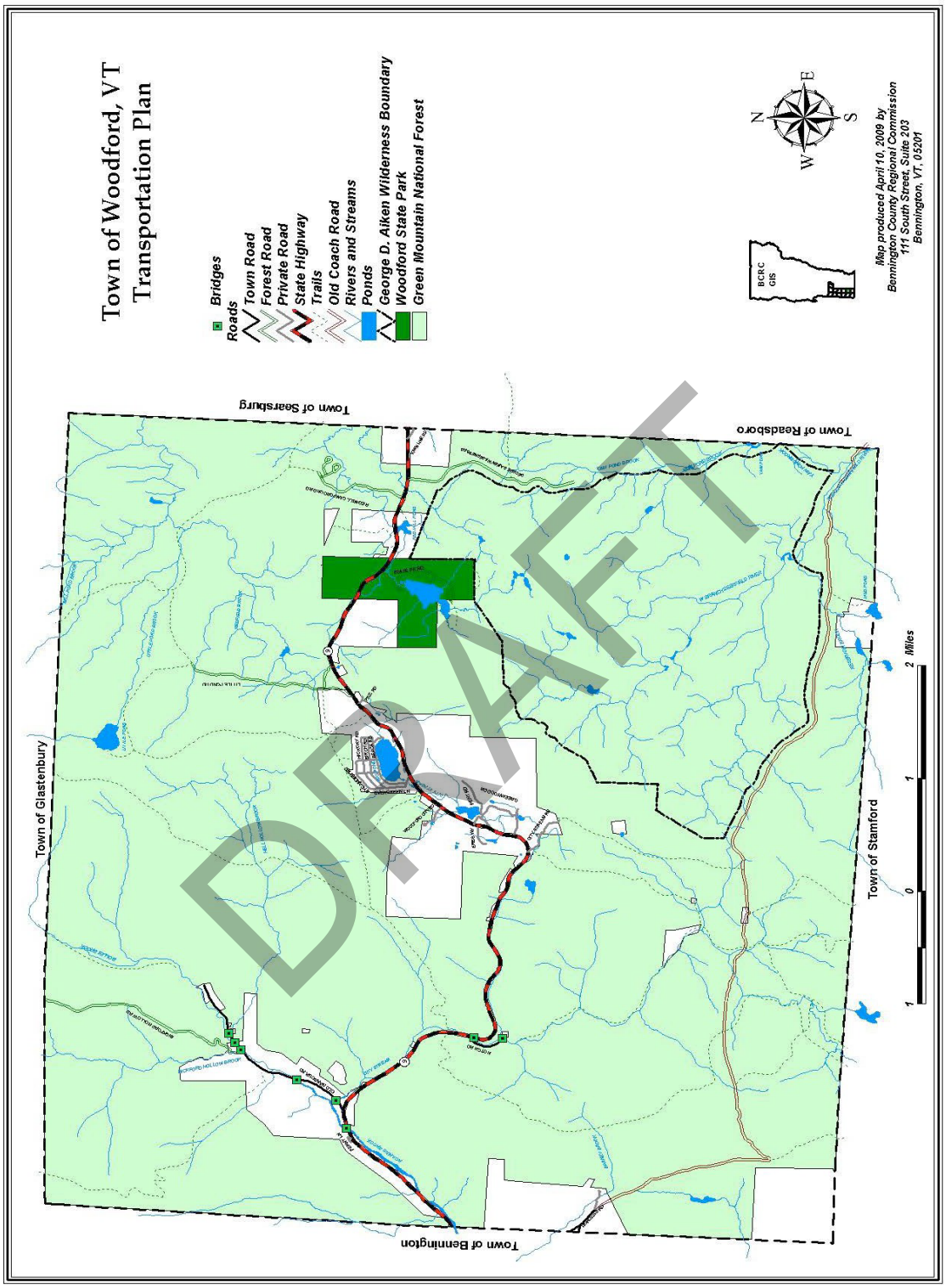
Woodford Conservation Design Elements



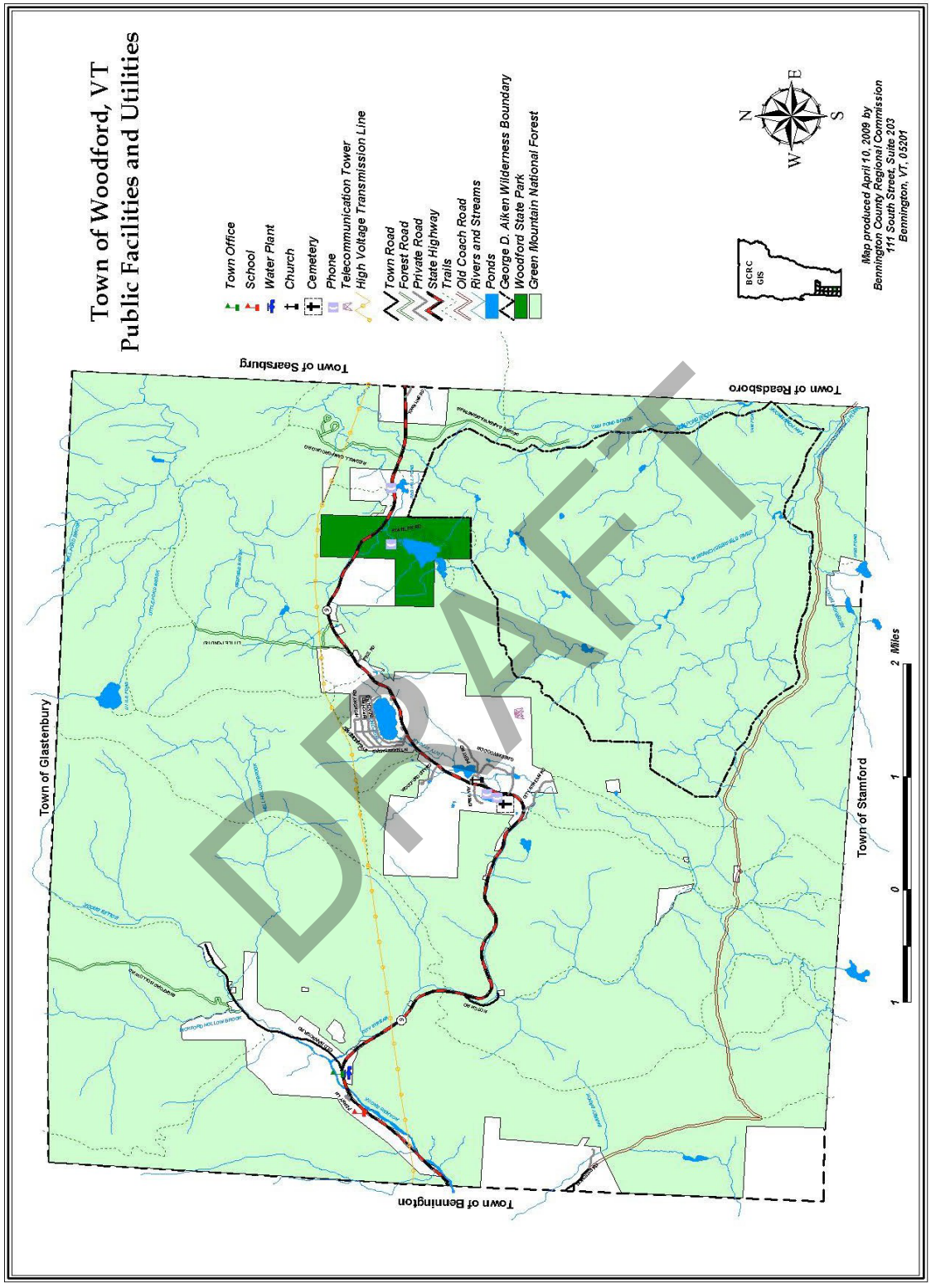
Woodford Forest Blocks in the Surrounding Area



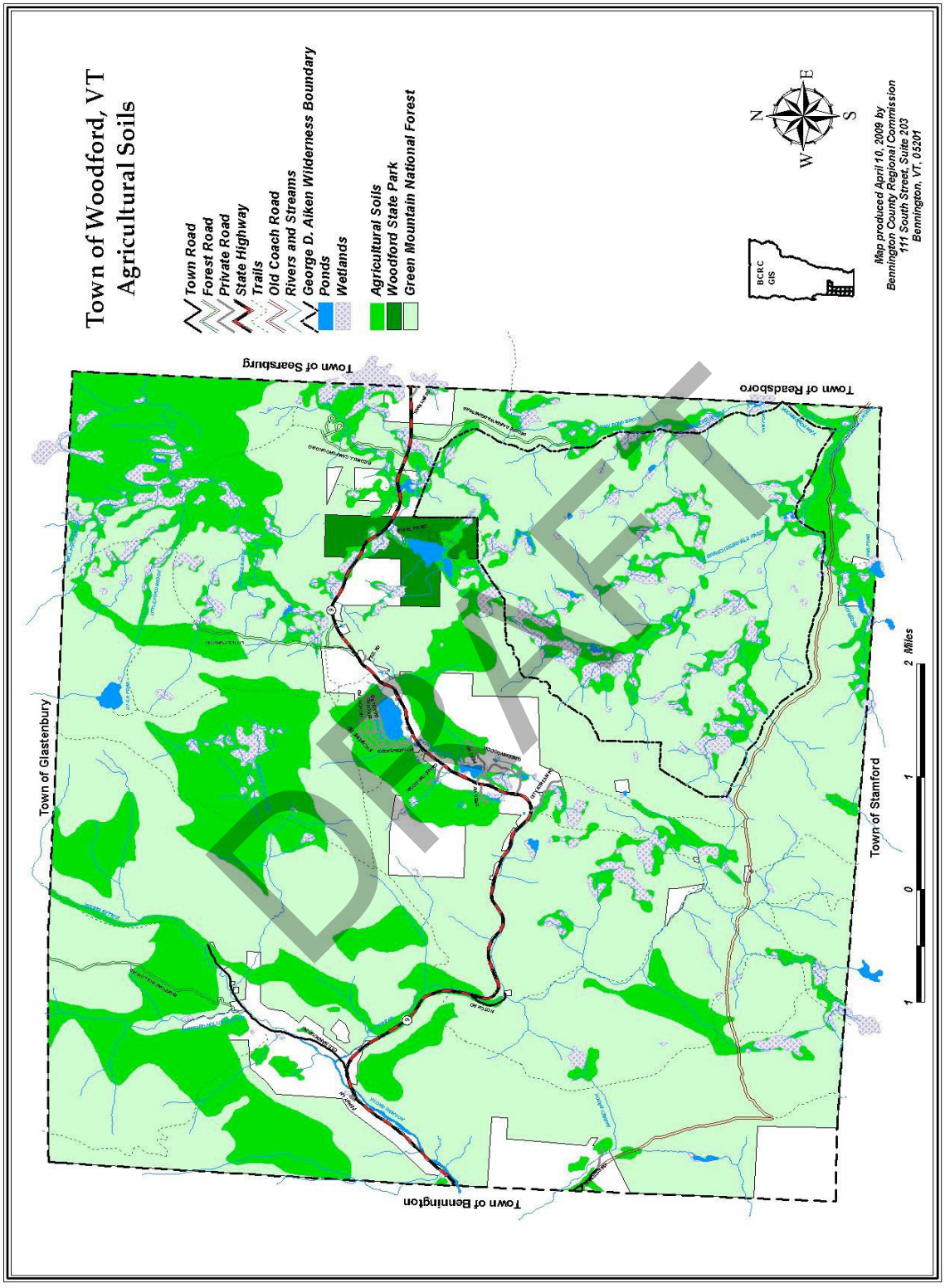
Transportation Plan



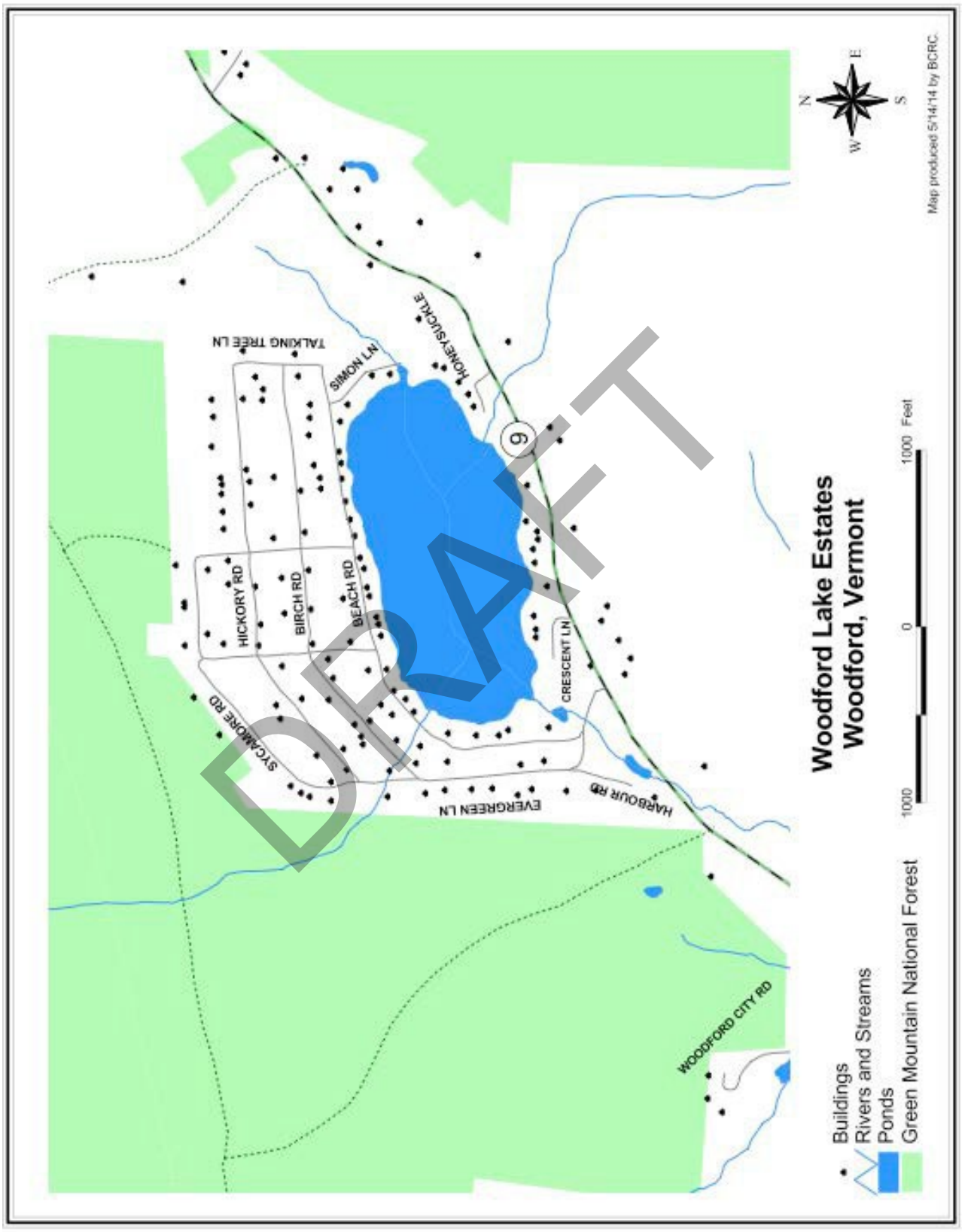
Public Facilities and Utilities



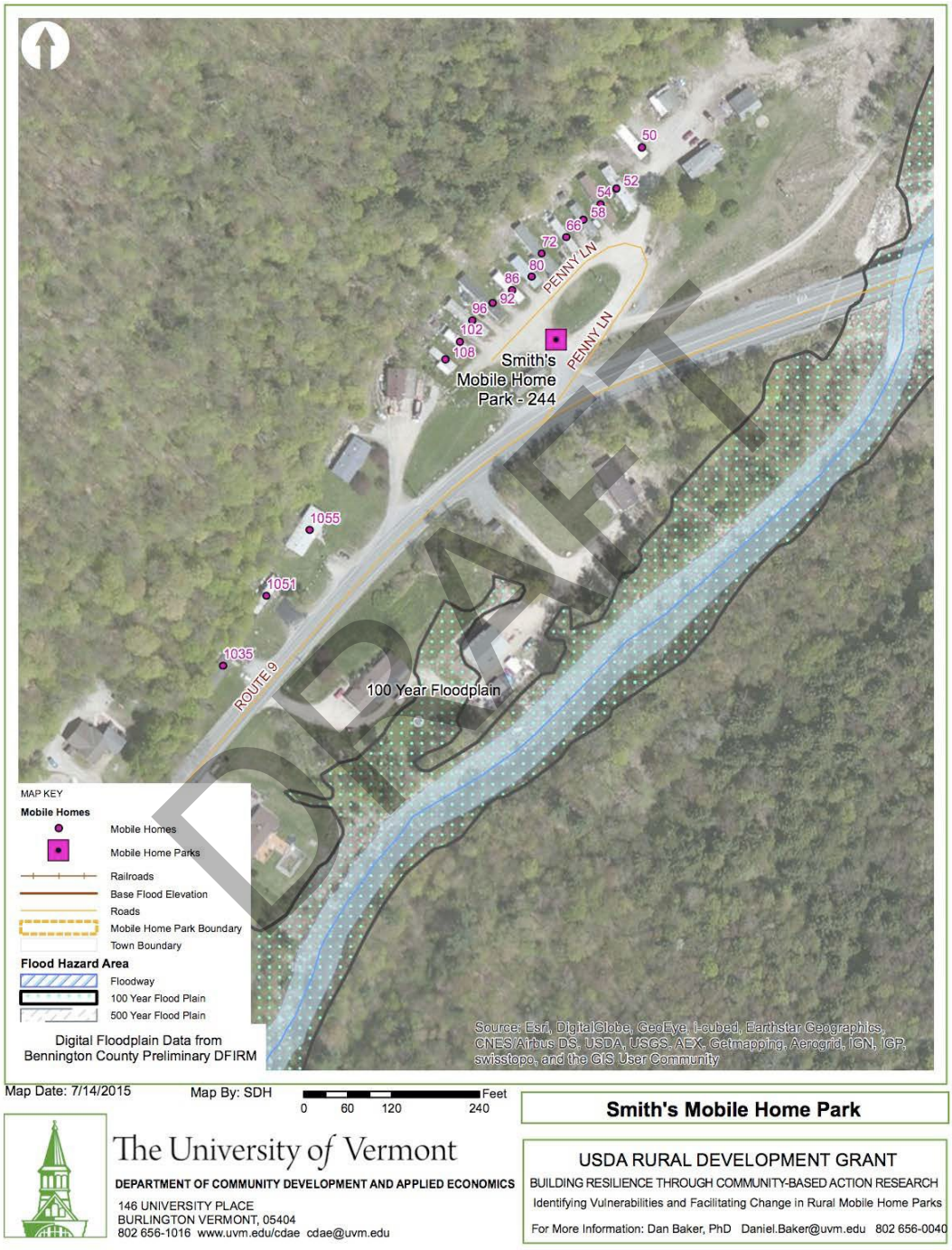
Agricultural Soils



Woodford Lake Estates



Woodford Hollow Trailer Park



Appendix B

Consistency with State Planning Goals and Other Plans

Statutory Requirements

The Woodford Town Plan was prepared in 2023; it contains all of the required statements, plans, elements, and maps required pursuant to 24 VSA Section 4382 including the newly required Act 171 forest block connectivity element.

The Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act encourages towns to develop plans that are compatible with the plans of other municipalities in the region and with the regional plan, and which are consistent with the goals that are contained in 24 V.S.A. Section 4302. The following discussion details the plan's consistency with those goals and a brief discussion of the Woodford Town Plan in the context of the Bennington County Region and its other municipalities. The statute also requires that the plan include a recommended program for implementing the objectives of the plan. That requirement is met through the specific policies and recommendations that accompany each individual element of the plan, as well as an entire chapter devoted to specific implementation programs and activities.

Consistency with State Goals

The Planning and Development Act contains one set of goals that deals with the planning process—24 V.S.A. 4302 (b):

- Establish a coordinated, comprehensive planning process and policy framework;
- Encourage citizen participation;
- Consider the use of resources and the consequences of growth and development;
- Work with other municipalities to develop and implement plans.

The first Town Plan was adopted in May 1970. Through its active role in the BCRC and various inter-municipal and regional projects and studies, the town works on a regular basis with other towns in the region and has particularly close ties with the neighboring Town of Bennington.

Fourteen specific goals (24 V.S.A. 4302(c)) should be reflected in the Town Plan. Those goals are presented below with a discussion of how each is addressed in the Town Plan.

1. **To plan development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside.**

The total land area of Woodford is approximately 30,318 acres. Nearly 90 percent of this land is within the Green Mountain National Forest. The land use plan establishes four residential districts, two commercial districts, one Industrial-Commercial district, one Recreation District (Prospect Mountain Ski Area), with the remaining areas zoned Forest. The plan places an emphasis on restrictive zoning as a way of ensuring longevity to the town's land and natural resources, specifically discouraging development in the Forest Zones. The Town encourages new development to be built in areas close to existing roads to minimize costs to the Town. Development of commercial and industrial lands are to be consistent with the town's desire to maintain its rural character and limit effects on the natural environment.

2. **To provide a strong and diverse economy that provides satisfying and rewarding job opportunities and that maintains high environmental standards, and to expand economic opportunities in areas with high unemployment or low per capita incomes.**

The Town Plan contains an Economic Development section that includes the economic characteristics of the Town and mentions that the only considerable economic activity comes from the various natural resources, recreational opportunities and home occupations. Over 90% of the residents commute to nearby towns for work. The land use plan provides for business and mixed Rural Residential/Roadside Commercial uses along Route 9 and the former Burgess Road quarry was recently re-zoned Commercial-Industrial to support local needs and visitors to the area. Given the lack of any significant infrastructure, Woodford is likely to continue as a bedroom community. It is stated that an increase in telecommunications infrastructure would help make home occupations a more viable option.

3. **To broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities sufficient to ensure the realization of the abilities of all Vermonters.**

Woodford is a member of the Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union. Elementary students, K-6, attend the Woodford Hollow School while grades 7-12 attend schools in Bennington. Students wishing to pursue vocational training attend The Career Development Center located in Bennington. ~~School enrollment has varied over the past several years with the highest level in the 1993/1994 school year at 69 students, and the lowest level in 1999/2000 school year at 27 students.~~

4. **To provide for safe, convenient, economic, and energy efficient transportation systems that respect the integrity of the natural environment, including public transit options and paths for pedestrians and bicyclers.**

Vermont Route 9 is the primary road and is maintained by The State Agency of Transportation. The Town maintains 2.5 miles of class 3 and 6.5 miles of class 4 roads. The plan emphasizes maintenance of existing roads rather than building new roads. The town should establish minimum road and bridge standards which meet the State of Vermont road and bridge standards. Woodford contains an extensive trail network

including the Appalachian/Long Trail and the Old Coach Road. The Green Mountain Club maintains the Appalachian/Long Trail. This town plan encourages the Forest Service to work cooperatively with the Green Mountain Club to assure that the integrity of this national recreational resource is maintained. Public transit and bicycle use are not discussed.

5. To identify, protect, and preserve important natural and historic features of the Vermont landscape.

Natural resources are essential to the environmental character of Woodford. The Town Plan contains a lengthy discussion and policies which describe and treat natural resources as irreplaceable resources of regional significance which can be adversely affected by encroachment or alteration. These policies focus on maintaining natural features while allowing development that will have little impact on those features and resources. These themes are repeated in the Land Use Element. A ~~newly required~~ Flood Resiliency Element is part of this Town Plan revision.

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

The Town Plan contains sections dealing specifically with the protection of water quality, surface and subsurface water resources, fish and wildlife habitat, and land conservation. All resources are identified on town plan maps. Rivers, streams, wetlands, lakes, and groundwater resources are described in detail with recommendations for various regulatory and non-regulatory approaches to protection. The town's land use plan supports land conservation efforts by prohibiting development in the sensitive and mountainous areas of town. ~~A newly required Flood Resiliency Element is part of this Town Plan revision.~~

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

The land use element of this plan reflects how land use planning can promote energy conservation by prohibiting permanent development in Woodford's remote forest areas and encouraging its conservation where practical. This Plan also discourages capital expenditures on roads and other infrastructure that lead to scattered development. The energy section also discusses the possibility of renewable energy resources such as solar, biomass and wind. Woodford's high ridges and remote location makes it potentially suitable as a site for the development of a wind driven electric generating facility. Siting of new buildings to maximize the use of such resources is encouraged as is proper construction in compliance with the Vermont Residential Building Energy Standards.

8. To maintain and enhance recreational opportunities for Vermont residents and visitors.

The availability of undeveloped land is important to the wellbeing of the entire region, and notably so as a resource for recreation. Recreational resources throughout the

town are identified and the importance of maintaining those lands and facilities emphasized. The Plan makes special note of the network of trails in Woodford and advances strategies for ensuring continued public access to and from the existing road and trail system.

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9. To encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest industries.

Although the amount of primary agricultural soils in Woodford is not extensive and few acres are currently being farmed, the Town Plan states that development of these soils should not preclude their future potential for agricultural uses. Development should tread lightly on these lands, which, once developed, permanently lose their agricultural potential. The land use plan prohibits development on high elevation forested mountainsides. A specific objective of the land use plan is preservation of the working forest landscape of the town.

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

With the exception of the Burges Road quarry, Woodford has limited earth resources. The town relies on nearby towns for much of its aggregate needs. The town plan encourages identifying new sources of earth resources as well as their protection for future utilization. The plan states that extraction of earth resources must not have an undue/adverse impact on the environment and surrounding land uses while spent sites should be restores to a natural condition.

11. To ensure the availability of safe and affordable housing for all Vermonters.

The Town Plan recognizes the need to provide a variety of quality housing options for all segments of the local populations. Modest single-family homes are encouraged to maintain housing affordability. The plan emphasizes that on-site water and wastewater systems need to be maintained to function properly.

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

The Town Plan describes the local roads, schools, solid waste disposal program, emergency services, The Bennington water supply/treatment plant, public lands and recreational services. The Plan includes discussion and a recommendation associated with planning for the financing of needed facilities and services and also includes a discussion of areas of existing and potential cooperation with service providers in Bennington and other neighboring communities.

13. To ensure the availability of safe and affordable childcare 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.

The town plan does describe the need for safe and affordable childcare, especially considering that much of the workforce is dependent on two wage earners. It states that childcare is provided in home settings or in structured programs located in Bennington. However, there is no mention of childcare financing, infrastructure or child care workforce development.

14. To encourage flood resilient communities.

A flood resiliency element is included in the Natural Characteristics chapter and the Plan has mapped flood hazard areas, including floodways and river corridors. This Plan discourages development in flood hazard areas and river corridors.

RELATIONSHIP TO REGIONAL AND TOWN PLANS

The Bennington Regional Plan recognizes that Woodford is a mountainous rural community. Residential development and limited commercial uses are planned for the valleys, while the rugged upland forest areas -- roughly corresponding to forest zones -- will allow development on large parcels along with forestry and recreational uses. The Regional Plan acknowledges the importance of Woodford's upland environment: its preservation serves to protect ground and surface water, forest resources, wildlife habitat, and other natural values. The Woodford Plan and the Regional Plan are thus in accord. Both state that Woodford will remain a rural community, accommodating new residential and limited commercial growth where zoning and health regulations permit, thereby allowing for growth while preventing environmental degradation.

Similarly, the plans of adjacent towns (principally Glastenbury, Bennington, Stamford and Searsburg) do not conflict with Woodford's Plan as those towns all have extensive forest and low-density residential land uses and zoning districts along their boundaries with Woodford. The Woodford Plan also identifies a number of issues -- schools, emergency services, recreation, solid waste, water supply, etc. -- where inter-municipal cooperation and communication is necessary. Particular attention should be directed toward issues involving roads and trails that run between Woodford and adjacent towns.

It does not appear that the level of development planned for Woodford will result in any significant impact in any other town. It would be wise, nonetheless, for the town to participate in joint meetings with neighboring towns when issues of common concern arise, and to continue to participate actively in the Bennington County Regional Commission.