

CHAPTER III COMMUNITY UTILITIES, FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Community utilities, facilities and services are the infrastructure provided by the Town of Windham, or provided in cooperation with the Town, for the health, safety, benefit and enjoyment of the general public. These include municipal government facilities, emergency services, schools, solid waste disposal, and recreational facilities.

A. TOWN GOVERNMENT AND FACILITIES

1. Government

The official business of the Town is conducted at the annual Town Meeting held in March and at occasional special Town Meetings. The three-member Selectboard conducts most of the regular business of the Town between Town Meetings. All elected officials are chosen by ballot and, with the exception of education items which are voted on at the appropriate school district meeting, the other items on the Warrant are voted on at the Town Meeting. The Town functions through the active participation of its residents and volunteer groups. Residents serve on boards and committees. Various ordinances and bylaws are in force in Windham, including, but not limited to the Zoning Regulation and Traffic Ordinance, Dog Ordinance and Road Ordinance.

2. Facilities

The following facilities are owned by the Town of Windham (see Utilities and Community Facilities Map for locations):

- **Town Office** - The Town Office is located on Windham Hill Road, adjacent to Windham Elementary School. It is a new building that was erected in 2001. In addition to housing the Town Clerk and the Town Treasurer, the Listers have an office which they share with the Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission, and Zoning Board of Adjustment. The Selectboard's office also has meeting space that is used by the various boards.
- **Town Garage** - The Town Garage is located on Windham Hill Road. It houses the town highway maintenance equipment. A covered salt and sand shed is also located on the property.
- **Windham Meetinghouse** - The Windham Meetinghouse is located on Windham Hill Road. Built in 1802, the Meetinghouse contains the Town Hall which is owned by the Town and the Congregational Church. The Meetinghouse is located in the Windham Historic District which is on the National Register of Historic Places.
- **Windham Town Library** - The Windham Town Library is located within the Windham Meetinghouse. The Library offers programming for both adults and children. Membership is free and books and videos are available for borrowing. It is open from 3-5 P.M. on Wednesdays and during the Windham Day Camp. The Library offers many programs including a Swap Table, reading group, knitting class, strength building and yoga classes and serves as a community meeting place. In 2013, the library participated in a statewide grant program to bring high speed internet service to Vermont's schools and library at a reduced rate. This installation was a precursor to the entire community having high speed internet service.

- **Town Cemeteries** - The Town maintains cemeteries, each under the supervision of a separate cemetery commission. There are four cemeteries in Windham: Center Cemetery, North Windham Cemetery, West Windham Cemetery, and Woodburn Cemetery.
- **Windham Elementary School** - The Windham Elementary School is located on Windham Hill Road. It serves Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 6 and has two classrooms, an auditorium, and offices. (Windham's school is designated as a remote school.)

Policy 1: Provide as efficient, effective, and convenient municipal services as is possible keeping within the financial capabilities of the Town.

Actions

1. Proactively assess the evolving needs of Windham concerning its current Utilities, Facilities and Services. Request the Windham Select Board appoint a committee to assess the changing needs of the Town as relates to the Windham Elementary School, Town Meeting House, Town Garage and Volunteer Fire Service.
2. Promote volunteerism and recruit to fill vacancies on Town committees as appropriate.
3. Continue to evaluate and strengthen local government with technical assistance from appropriate state and regional agencies.
4. Encourage the use of the Windham Elementary School facility by community groups.

Policy 2: Maintain library services.

Actions

1. Provide necessary funding to the Windham Library so that the Library can meet the State of Vermont's minimum standards.
2. Maintain a public access internet station at the Library.

B. COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. Solid Waste Disposal, Recycling, and periodic Hazardous Waste Removal

Windham is a member of the Londonderry Group Solid Waste District which includes the towns of Landgrove, Londonderry, Peru, and Weston. Town residents utilize the Waste Disposal Center in Londonderry located on Route 100 North. Permits are obtained and fees are paid at the Waste Disposal Center.

2. Education

Windham is a member of the Windham Central Supervisory Union, which includes the towns of Jamaica, Townshend, Newfane, Brookline, Marlboro, Wardsboro, and Dover, and is also a member of the Leland & Gray Union. Middle and High School (grades 7 through 12) are provided at Leland & Gray Union High School which is located in Townshend.

Windham Elementary School provides education for Pre-kindergarten through Grade 6. An addition to the school was completed in 1996. The population at the school has generally remained between 18 and 32 students. No significant change in the student census is projected and therefore expansion of the facility is not anticipated to be required.

3. Child Care

According to the 2002 Windham County Vermont Child Care Needs Assessment, Vermont has a large percentage of women in the workforce. If this trend continues it is possible that there will be an increased need in the community for child care.

As of August 2013, the Vermont Department for Children and Families website reported that there was only one registered or licensed child care facility in the Town of Windham, the Windham School Pre-K Program. Child care facilities can be found in some of the towns that surround Windham including Grafton, Londonderry, Townshend, and Chester.

4. Senior Services

As a small, rural town, Windham depends on regional services to offer opportunities for its seniors. Some of the services that they can take advantage of include:

- **Meals on Wheels** – While there are no community dinners held in Windham, residents can take advantage of meals in the neighboring towns of Grafton, Londonderry, and Townshend. The Council on Aging for Southeastern Vermont (COASEV) also coordinates home delivery of meals by using volunteer networks that bring the meal to the individuals.
- **Transportation** - Local transit services are provided by CT River Transit. They provide transportation for Medicaid recipients; non-Medicaid medical transportation for life threatening conditions, and bus service for groups of people as long as 20% of the cost of the service is recovered from donations.
- **Housing** - The Smith Haven Home in neighboring South Londonderry is the closest subsidized housing facility, offering 24 units for the elderly. The West River Valley Senior Housing complex in Townshend was completed in 2007 with 24 units in affordable housing and 28 units for assisted living. Other senior housing opportunities are available in the Windham Region.

Senior Solutions also provides support services to seniors aged 60 years and older living independently. This organization can assist seniors in obtaining information on caregiver support, nutrition and legal services, transportation, housing, as well as many other services.

5. Recreation

Windham's recreational resources are predominantly based on its natural resources. There is a playground and an adjacent area that can accommodate field games such as soccer at the Elementary School. In July, the Windham Day Camp is operated for children ages 3 to 12 at the Windham Meeting House. Funding for the camp is provided by donations and camp fees. Other recreational facilities include the Tater Hill Golf Club which provides 18 holes of golf. There are five major ski areas (Okemo, Magic Mountain, Bromley Mountain, Stratton Mountain, and Mount Snow) that are located within 35 miles of Windham. School children are accommodated at some of the ski areas. Other recreational activities include hiking, hunting, fishing, trapping, snowshoeing, camping, ice skating, and snowmobiling on VAST trails.

6. Fire and Emergency Services

The Town of Windham is served by a voluntary fire department located in North Windham. A two-bay garage houses equipment consisting of two fire trucks and a water tanker. The Windham Volunteer Fire Company is a member of the Tri-Mountain Mutual Aid. Emergency services in Windham are provided by the Londonderry Volunteer Rescue Squad, Inc. Both are volunteer non-profit organizations which are funded through donations and fundraisers. The Town is part of the Enhanced 911 state service.

Windham also supports a small Emergency Management team of volunteers whose role it is to stay informed about emergency management methods for situations other than structure and wildland fires. Their role includes keeping the Town's Basic Emergency Operating Plan (LEOP) up to date; seeing that appropriate training opportunities are made available to team members and town officials; communicating with Emergency Management counterparts in nearby towns and the region and informing the community members regarding emergency management resources. The designated Incident Command Center is the Town Office, and the Elementary School and Meeting House are both designated Red Cross Shelters. Windham was an early participant in the Red Cross Community Shelter Initiative and has a trained group of volunteers to open and manage a shelter if needed.

7. Police

Windham is served by the State Police and the Windham County Sheriff's Department which are on call for emergencies.

8. Health Services

Healthcare services are available in nearby towns. Medical care is usually obtained at one of the area facilities including Grace Cottage Hospital in Townshend or the Mountain Valley Medical Clinic in Londonderry. The Mountain Valley Medical Clinic is a non-profit organization that is supported by its own fundraising, volunteers, and community stipends and fees. Other health services in the area include the Ellsworth Home Health Agency, Visiting Nurses Alliance and Health Care and Rehabilitation Services of Southeastern Vermont along with nearby regional hospitals in Springfield, Brattleboro, and Lebanon, New Hampshire.

9. Community Service and Education

The Windham Community Organization (WCO) provides financial and other assistance to families experiencing short term needs and sponsors activities and education to encourage a strong sense of community. The WCO sponsors a bi-monthly newsletter informing all residents and non-resident subscribers of Town activities. The newsletter includes public service announcements, local news, personal profiles of town residents, articles relating to Windham's history and a calendar of town events.

10. Public Utilities

Electric: Electric service in Windham is provided by Green Mountain Power (GMP).

The Vermont Electric Power Company (VELCO) maintains a major transmission line that runs north to south through Town near Windham's boundary with Grafton.

Telecommunications: There are two different phone companies providing service to customers in town, FairPoint (south of Windham Center) and VTel, (Windham Center and North Windham.)

As of 2013 both companies are well along in a major upgrade of their outside plant which includes the installation of fiber optic cable. A variety of “last mile” programs should see high speed internet service and improved telephone service throughout the Town by 2014.

Cell Phone: There are some areas of the Town that are able to utilize cell phone communications, but due to the hilly contours of the Town, this is not available to all residents and visitors.

Policy 1: Maintain effective safety services.

Actions

1. Continue to provide support to the Windham Volunteer Fire Company so that an effective fire protection and fire prevention system can be maintained.
2. Continue to work with neighboring communities to ensure adequate ambulance services for the Town.
3. Ensure necessary police services for the Town by periodically reviewing the police protection available to residents.

Policy 2: Provide quality education while keeping within the financial capabilities of the Town through the stewardship of the School Board.

Actions

1. Monitor population and school enrollment trends to address future needs in an efficient manner.
2. Plan cooperatively with the Windham Central Supervisory Union and Leland & Gray Union Middle and High School to prevent undue burdens on the schools and Town.

Policy 3: Support regional efforts to provide affordable childcare.

Action

1. Continue to allow state registered and/or licensed child care facilities serving 6 or fewer children as a permitted use of a single-family home in accordance with state law.

Policy 4: Support the well-being and quality of life for seniors in Windham.

Action

1. Provide information to community members of services available to seniors.
2. Insure that policies, regulations and ordinances are written to afford maximum protection of land values for all property owners.

Policy 5: The development and provision of public and community utility facilities and services should be based upon projection of reasonably expected population increase and economic growth and shall recognize the limits of the town’s human, financial and natural resources.

Action

1. Natural and cultural resource areas, as identified elsewhere in this Plan, shall be avoided in the location or routing of new power generation stations, distribution lines and phone lines and substations.

Policy 6: The location of utility poles and transmission and distribution line routes shall be designed to minimize aesthetic impacts.

Action

1. Use of appropriate support structures, appropriate conductor colors for the background and direct burial is encouraged.

Policy 7: Advocate for communication and internet upgrades to the latest technology in Windham.

Action

1. Communicate to the Public Service Board and providers expressing concerns over service in Windham.

Policy 8: Promote efficient and environmentally sound solid waste disposal and recycling.

Action

1. Support local recycling efforts, hazardous material collection, battery and electronics collection, etc.
2. Participate in Green-Up Day.
3. Position recycling bins in all public buildings.

C. LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING

The Town of Windham supports emergency planning and disaster preparedness. Planning and preparedness may help reduce the risk to life and health, the damage to public and private property and the environmental damage that often occurs as a result of a disaster. This encourages the Town to prepare calmly and realistically for likely emergencies; to know the location of resources and equipment that will be needed; to inform residents of the potential dangers and the ways to avoid these potential dangers; and to quickly arrange for help when it is needed.

With the problems resulting from Tropical Storm Irene and other recent storms it is incumbent on Windham to better understand how our mountains and high elevations wetlands and waterways help to protect our settled communities from unnecessary flooding and other damage. Our Forest areas retain water and retard run off thus acting as a flood deterrent that prevents even greater stormwater runoff.

1. Hazardous Materials

The Federal Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act (EPCRA) requires that when certain quantities of hazardous materials are stored at a facility, they must be reported to state and local officials. According to the 2003 list of Vermont's Tier II sites, the Windham Mine, Hamm Mine, and Town Garage are listed as storing hazardous chemicals at such a quantity to require reporting to the State and local fire department. Information about EPCRA can be found here: <http://www.epa.gov/agriculture/lcra.html>)

2. Inundation Flood Hazards

Windham participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Maps published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in 2007 show flood information for town,

including Flood Hazard Areas. These are defined as locations that have a 1% chance of flooding in any given year (i.e., they are expected to be inundated by a 100-year flood).

NFIP is a Federal program enabling property owners in participating communities to purchase insurance protection against losses from flooding. This insurance is designed to provide an insurance alternative to disaster assistance to meet the escalating costs of repairing damage to buildings and their contents caused by floods. Participation in the NFIP is based on an agreement between the Town and the Federal Government that states if a community adopts and enforces a floodplain management ordinance to reduce future flood risks to new construction in Special Flood Hazard Areas, the Federal Government will make flood insurance available within the community as a financial protection against flood losses.

According to the Flood Hazard Area Maps, the middle and south branches of the Williams River, Saxtons River, and Burbee Pond have areas in the 100-year floodplain. Flooding is a serious problem in Windham. The Town experienced extensive public and private property damage as the result of significant flooding over the period of July 21 through August 18, 2003, resulting in approximately \$700,000 in damages. The storm all but destroyed Route 121 and was so significant that the Town had to obtain financial aid from a local bank in order to subsidize the repairs. This disaster was declared a federal emergency and federal funding was provided for road assessment and repairs. (\$834,874 was provided Windham.)

Extensive damage was done to Windham's roads and culverts in August 2012 during Tropical Storm Irene. The southern end of Harrington Road was destroyed and almost all town roads sustained some damage. Although Windham received all but 5% of the \$718,667 spent on recovery, we continue to seek grants to enable us to upgrade culverts and bridges in order to meet new state requirements.

3. Fluvial Erosion Hazards

In addition to inundation hazards, flooding can cause fluvial erosion hazards. While some flood losses are caused by inundation (i.e., waters rise, fill, and damage low-lying structures), most flood losses in Vermont are caused by "fluvial erosion," erosion caused by rivers and streams, which can range from gradual bank erosion to catastrophic changes in river channel location and dimension during flood events. The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources notes that NFIP "floodway" and "flood fringe" areas are often inadequate as an indicator of flood hazards, especially erosion.

Areas subject to fluvial erosion hazards, from gradual stream bank erosion to catastrophic channel enlargement, bank failure, and change in course, due to naturally occurring stream channel adjustments, can be identified and mapped in accordance with accepted state fluvial geomorphic assessment and mapping protocols. Windham should seek resources to determine fluvial erosion hazard areas associated with streams, such as the Williams and Saxtons Rivers, and augment the town's flood hazard area regulations to include fluvial erosion hazards. (For further information regarding management of area watersheds see River Corridor Plan for the Saxtons River Watershed, Sept 30, 2010 by Fitzgerald Environmental Associates and the Windham Regional Commission and Basin 11 Management Plan West River, Williams River, Saxtons River by Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, May 2008.)

There are open mine pits at the U.S. Talc/North Windham Talc Mine which have been subject to flooding. As a result of litigation among the current mine owner, the original Act 250 permit holder, the Town of Windham and one or more of its landowners, this hazard has been mitigated as of 2012. A state of the art system for flood control and fluvial diversion has been installed and is monitored and maintained both physically and electronically to standards set by the State of Vermont Dam Safety Department.

Policy 1: Land subject to periodic inundation flooding and fluvial erosion hazards shall be limited to development which will not restrict, accelerate, or divert the flow of flooded waters and thereby endanger the health, safety, and welfare of the public during flooding.

Action

1. Continue to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program.
2. Work to identify fluvial erosion hazard areas and add protections for them to the existing (inundation) flood hazard area regulations.
3. Work to preserve forested areas at higher elevations to protect settled areas.

Policy 2: All new public and private roads and driveways shall be properly constructed so that they do not contribute to the damage of Town roads from run-off.

Actions

1. Continue to enforce the Windham Road Ordinance.
2. Review the Ordinance and update as necessary.

Policy 3: The Town will actively pursue emergency preparedness.

Actions

1. Annually update the Local Emergency Operating Plan (LEOP) for the Town.
2. Adopt an all hazards pre-disaster mitigation plan.
3. Maintain the generator supporting the town office, which is a Red Cross Emergency Command Center, and the school, which is a Red Cross Shelter.
4. Pursue funding for a generator for the Meeting House and Congregational Church, which is a Red Cross Shelter.