

In framing these issues we are mindful that the PSB operates under Section 248. We are also mindful of Windham's unique topography, character, settlement patterns and natural resources, including much of the region's public water supplies. The Town is not suggesting that monetary payments are adequate to compensate it or its residents for the destruction of our unique qualities and settlement patterns or the health and safety of our residents or of those who rely on our critical resources.

CHAPTER VI

HISTORIC, RECREATIONAL, AND SCENIC RESOURCES

The cultural resources of Windham include, but are not limited to the important historical structures and archeological sites; outdoor recreational resources; and significant scenic lands, vistas, and viewsheds. These attributes are considered to be the very essence of Vermont and the reason why many people find Windham to be a desirable place to live. The loss of these special areas diminishes the community's identity and ignores the needs of future generations. Therefore, the protection and enhancement of these shared cultural and natural resources are vital community standards.

A. HISTORIC RESOURCES

Windham has an abundance of historic resources which contribute to the Town character and quality of life (see Utilities and Community Resources Map). Places of historic interest located in Windham include:

Windham Village Historic District - The Windham Village Historic District received National Register designation in 1984.

South Windham Village Historic District - The South Windham Village Historic District received National Register designation in 1988.

Windham Meetinghouse - The Windham Meeting House was built by subscription beginning in 1802. It was finished some years later. This clapboard building with a slate roof is a dominant visual landmark in Windham Village. Uses of the structure include the Congregational Church, Town Hall, the Windham Library, the Windham Summer Day Camp program and a variety of community classes. The Meetinghouse is located in the Windham Village Historic District.

South Windham Church - The South Windham Church (presently occupied by the Valley Bible Church) was built in 1825. This church is an example of vernacular Greek Revival architecture that uses both brick and clapboard on the exterior. The recessed arcaded wall treatment is found in many domestic building types built throughout Eastern Vermont as far north as Chester between the years of 1814 and 1830. This church is in the South Windham Village Historic District.

Town Cemeteries - There are four known cemeteries in Windham that are maintained by private

and public funds. They are Center Cemetery, North Windham Cemetery, West Windham Cemetery, and Woodburn Cemetery.

Existing Stone Walls - Stone walls are part of the fabric that ties Windham's landscape to its past. They are remnants of the agricultural society and were most commonly used for the purpose of subdividing property (boundary markers, field subdivisions, and livestock enclosures). Windham's stone walls are a part of the town's heritage and sense of place. Most walls lie on private property.

As noted above, both South Windham Village and Windham Village are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This is the official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation in the United States. While listing on the National Register honors the property by recognizing its importance to the community, there are few restrictions on private property owners in place that help to preserve these important structures. The State of Vermont has authorized the creation of locally designated Design Review Districts and Historic Districts as regulatory tools in the zoning bylaw. The creation of an overlay district would help protect the neighborhood and community character by encouraging sensitivity to the architectural and historic resources that exist.

Policy 1: Promote historic preservation and development that enhances the historic resources of Windham.

Actions

1. Amend the zoning bylaw to incorporate incentives for historic preservation in the zoning bylaw by including provisions for adaptive reuse and considering the creation of a historic district or design review district in the villages of Windham and South Windham.
2. Promote grant opportunities, in cooperation with community organizations, to continue to protect and preserve Windham's historic resources.
3. Amend the zoning by law to require that stonewalls and cellar holes be shown on a site plan so that they can be considered during development review.

B. OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

The natural recreational resources of Windham are its waterways and forests. These areas provide fishing, hunting, hiking, cross-country skiing, wildlife viewing, and other activities. VAST (Vermont Association of Snow Travelers) maintains a network of trails that run through town. The Town recognizes the importance of the variety of recreational resources, natural and manmade that currently co-exists in town. Special attention must be given to the unpaved rural road system, wildlife habitats, and water features.

The lands surrounding Cobb Brook are designated a Class A1 Watershed by the state of Vermont. The two largest tracts of forest in Windham are in private ownership. These are the McGraw Family Partnership, LP properties on the western edge of Windham and the Meadowsend Timberlands, LLC, Stiles Brook Tract, located on the eastern edge of Windham, which has numerous snowmobile and biking trails running throughout it.

The focus for Windham's recreational resources must be on the preservation of and access to the Town's natural environment. The Town should be alert to future or upcoming changes that would limit public access to these large recreational resources and be prepared to negotiate for

mitigation for any loss of access.

Policy 1: Preserve Windham's natural environment for outdoor recreation.

Actions

1. Retain all existing town roads in order to provide rights-of-way for public access to recreational activities.
2. Continue to provide for natural and community resource benefits by protecting large contiguous parcels of land in the Forest District.
3. Investigate ways to ensure continued public access to significant holdings of land that are in private ownership, including, but not limited to, negotiation for mitigation of any loss of access..

C. SCENIC RESOURCES

The scenic resources of Windham are numerous and varied. Together, they form the pattern that has come to be associated with Windham's landscape. There are numerous excellent views and vistas available from many points in Windham. The following is a partial list of the scenic landscapes and views that contribute to the cultural resources of Windham. (See Utilities and Community Resources Map)

- From Route 121 at Lawrence Four Corners looking south toward the Village encompassing the wetlands east of Windham Hill Road (TH #1) and the west facing ridge.
- The view from the Windham Center down the valley toward the south, east, and west.
- The view of Windham Center and its historic buildings from any direction.
- The view of Burbee Pond and the undeveloped, natural appearing ridgeline and east face of Glebe Mountain from the vicinity of Burbee Pond Road (TH #24) and West Windham Road (TH #20) looking west and north.
- The view looking south from Golding Road (TH #19) encompassing the West Windham Valley and distant ski areas.
- The view of the West Windham Valley including Cobb Brook from near the intersection of West Windham Road (TH #20) and Toad Road (TH #22) looking in any direction.
- The view across the same valley as above from Toad Road (TH #22) looking east over Turkey Mountain Ridge.
- The view of South Windham Village from Windham Hill Road (TH #1).
- The view of South Windham Village and surrounding farm land from Old Cheney Road (TH #25) looking east.
- The view from Old Cheney road looking west toward Turkey Mountain.
- The view from Center Cemetery looking east to the Stiles Brook Ridge and west to Glebe Mountain.
- View from Tater Hill Country Club in all directions.
- The view from Chase Road, including Smith Farm and Lemay Farm.
- The view from Timber Ridge looking in all directions.

- Views from elevation 2,000 feet and higher from the main corridors looking up, e.g., from Windham Hill Road looking north and south and from Route 121 looking east and west.
- The view from White Road toward the south.
- The view from Hitchcock Hill Road toward the south.
- Numerous views of Glebe Mountain and Turkey Mountain from along Windham Hill Road, Abbott Road, Wheeler Road.
- Views of Stiles Brook area from Ingalls Road, Old Cheney Road and Corn Hill and Old Farm Roads.

This Plan encourages the use of residential and community scale solar, but any larger projects, not specifically prohibited in the Plan, shall be adequately screened to protect and preserve scenic views and values.

Windham's wetlands and water bodies, as well as ridgelines and hilltops and their upper slopes, are visible for great distances and give the landscape form and coherence. Open meadowlands provide contrast with the predominant forests, reminding one of the agricultural productivity of the past. Structures such as industrial wind generation towers are aesthetically incongruous with the scenic landscape and are prohibited.

Light pollution or "sky glow" is a problem that is facing many rural towns. The overuse of lighting can be harmful to the character of a town. It can also be detrimental to road safety (through distraction and glare), energy conservation, and wildlife interests. Development in Windham has been overwhelmingly residential in nature. Nonetheless, appropriate lighting must be designed to prevent private and public nuisances and protect property value.

Policy 1: Protect and enhance Windham's Scenic Landscapes and Resources.

Actions

1. Prominent ridgelines above 2,000 feet elevation shall be left in their natural condition, free from all development, including roads, building structures, utilities, wireless broadcast telecommunications facilities, and industrial wind turbines (except camps as provided for in Chapter IX Land Use.)
2. Preserve & protect Windham's Scenic Resources (inventoried on page 70) that represent the Town's scenic and cultural resources.
3. Enact a telecommunications ordinance to minimize the visual impacts of communication towers through co-location, design, siting, and color choice.
4. Encourage the donation or sale of easements to public and private natural resource/conservation agencies and organizations.
5. Buildings and structures should comport to the size and scale of existing buildings and structures to protect the historic scale, natural landscape, and sense of community. Under no circumstances shall any building be greater than 60 feet high, and no structure shall exceed 100 feet high.

Policy 2: Protect scenic landscape resources from sky-glow.

Actions

1. Reduce light pollution by using fixtures that direct light below the horizontal plane,

utilizing energy efficient lamps, and using light levels appropriate for the use of the property.

2. Communication and other high elevation towers must be designed and sited so that they do not require night-time lighting.
3. Illuminate structures and exterior areas only at levels necessary to ensure safety and security of persons and property.

CHAPTER VII TRANSPORTATION

The public road network in Windham consists of town highways and roads (see Transportation System Map). Windham can be reached from Windham Hill Road which connects with Route 30 in West Townshend; Route 121 which runs east/west through Town and connects Windham with its neighbors Grafton and Londonderry; and from a small section of State Highway 11 which runs through the northwest corner of Town. Several smaller roads also enter Windham from neighboring towns.

The State of Vermont has developed a classification for Town Highway Mapping and Inventories, maintenance schedules, and State aid. Class 1 roads are those highways that are the responsibility of the town, but are also extensions of the state highway system. Class 2 roads serve as main corridors between Windham and other towns. Most Class 2 roads are paved. Class 3 roads are comprised of secondary town highways that are passable year round by standard vehicles. Class 4 roads are all other town highways. Typically Class 4 roads are seasonally functional for normal vehicular traffic and have a dirt surface.

The State of Vermont Highway Map classifies Windham's public roads as follows:

Table 12: Mileage Summary of Town Highway/Roadway

<i>Class</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>Total Mileage</i>
Town Roadways	0	9.2	22.8	1.1	33.1
State Highways					.4
Total					34.1

(Source: State of VT Highway Map, 2009)

The Windham Highway Department maintains the roads within Town. There are two people employed by the Highway Department, including the Road Foreman. The section of State Route 11 that runs through Windham is the responsibility of the State's District #2 personnel. Many residents and visitors use the existing street system for walking, bicycling, jogging, and horseback riding.

Windham's side roads off Route 121 and Windham Hill Road are narrow dirt residential roads. All are tree lined, often with canopies, and many have old stone fences adjacent to the roadway. They are not to be widened or straightened for any commercial purposes. Notwithstanding the prohibition of industrial scale wind development contained in the Plan, in the event of approval by the Public Service Board of an industrial scale wind development on the Stiles Brook Tract or Glebe Mountain access to the site by large transport vehicles is prohibited on Class 2 and 3 side roads and permitted only off Rtes. 11 and 121.

A. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

The Town maintains its road equipment at the Town Garage located on Windham Hill Road. A covered salt and sand shed, built in 2000, is located on site. There is a reserve fund to assist in the planning for the purchasing of new equipment for the Highway Department.

At this time there is a need for several improvements to the town garage. The building is in need of external paint. It would also be useful for a third bay to be added to include a bay area and space for a bathroom and designated office space.

B. ROAD AND BRIDGE INFRASTRUCTURE

In 2003 and again in 2011 (Tropical Storm Irene) heavy flooding devastated many roads and culverts in Windham. Several of the Class 2 and Class 3 roads were washed out due to culvert inadequacy. Damaged or collapsed culverts have been replaced and one bridge replaced according to state mitigation standards. Roads and bridges are maintained according to established state standards in order to guarantee safe and efficient passage.

C. LOCAL ROAD POLICIES

The Selectboard is responsible for the maintenance and repair of public roads in Windham. It is the policy of the Selectboard to not take over new roads. In order for private roads or driveways to access town roads the Selectboard must issue an access permit. Applicants must adhere to driveway design standards which follow the State's recommended standards. www.aot.state.vt.usa/standards.

All Windham roads are built and maintained to the standards of the State of Vermont. Windham does not enforce design standards for private roads.

The Selectboard grades Class 4 roads on a yearly basis and oversees the placement and maintenance of culverts throughout town. None of the roads in Windham has been designated for use by ATVs.

D. RSMS/CULVERT INVENTORY

In 2012 the Windham Regional Commission assisted the Town with a culvert inventory and an associated map. Culvert locations are based on Global Positioning System (GPS) data. This inventory can serve as a helpful management tool to keep track of additions or deletions to the infrastructure and to plan for and schedule maintenance and repairs. Windham at present does not have an inventory of road surface conditions. Inventories of this type are excellent tools to help plan for roadway projects and culvert replacement programs. The Town intends to utilize the Road Surface Management System, or RSMS, which is specific software that can be used to inventory and prioritize roadway surface improvement projects. It is most useful for tracking construction needs on paved roads.

Regardless of the level of technical commitment to these efforts, an inventory should be kept and updated as often as possible and it should be used to manage all components of the transportation system infrastructure. (Reference Windhamvt.info)

E. PUBLIC TRANSIT

Windham, being a rural town, does not have any mass transportation systems, however, transit service is provided by CT River Transit. The Town contributes towards CT River Transit's operational costs. Based in Rockingham, CT River Transit offers transportation for Medicaid recipients and non-Medicaid medical transportation for Windham residence for life threatening conditions. The Windham Congregational Church provides transportation to Windham residents for both medical, such as doctor's appointments, and non-medical reasons. The Londonderry Volunteer Rescue Squad is available for emergency medical transport. Windham has one certified first responder (EMT) and frequently publicizes the need for more.

Policy 1: Maintain a safe and functional public road system that respects the integrity of the natural environment.

Actions

1. Enforce existing standards for road construction and maintenance. Continue to review sight distance when issuing access permits.
2. Shoulders should be widened when upgrading or reconstructing Windham Hill Road
3. New subdivisions shall not be permitted to have individual driveway access for each unit on a town highway. Collector roads or common driveways shall be constructed in order to prevent strip development.
4. Continue budgeting for highway department needs.
5. Periodically update the culvert inventory and conduct a road inventory.
6. Install and implement the RSMS software program
7. The Town shall not take over private roads.
8. Consider reducing speed limits on Windham Hill Road in the Town Hamlets (South Windham and Windham Center)

Policy 2: The Town shall not discontinue any roads without first consulting the Planning Commission and Conservation Commission to make a finding that no public benefit exists.

Action

1. Research town roads and make a list of those roads which should be retained because a public benefit has been determined.

Policy 3: Protect the physical features that contribute to the scenic and rural character of roads in Town.

Action

1. Conduct an inventory of scenic roads in Windham and establish management guidelines to protect the distinctive features located in the right-of-way, such as road surface and width, canopy trees, and stone walls.

Policy 4: Support CT River Transit in providing transportation options that meet the mobility needs of all of Windham's residents, as well as people who come to Windham for work.

Actions

1. Publicize community transit options available to Windham residents in the Windham News and Notes publication.
2. Encourage ride share opportunities and encourage the Windham Community Organization (WCO) to organize multiple shoppers to join together to make trips to distant shopping locations.

CHAPTER VIII HOUSING

An adequate supply of year-round housing that offers varieties of size, cost, and location is essential to the economic and social health of Windham. Communities benefit when employees are able to live close to their workplace, young adults are able to buy or rent in their hometowns, and elderly residents are able to remain in the community where they have family, friends, and history. Also, housing represents an opportunity for Windham to practice and promote energy conservation and efficiency. The Town, working closely with the Energy Coordinator, will proactively promote information/education initiatives centered on conservation practices for home heating, transportation and electrical usage.

A. EXISTING CONDITIONS

Windham is a quiet rural residential community. The 2010 Census reported that there were 396 total housing units. Most new development has occurred along road frontage and has been built on a lot-by-lot basis as opposed to a large subdivision. Trends since 1990 include a substantial increase in year-round owner and renter-occupied units.

The rate of new housing construction has varied. Town records indicate that 4 zoning permits were issued for new houses in 2005. This compared to 9 zoning permits in 2004, 13 in 2003, and 3 in 2002. Since 2010, the rate has been relatively stable at 2-3 new home permits per year.

The town has a minimal supply of rental housing. Information from the 2010 Census showed that there were 20 occupied rental housing units at that time and 11 total vacant units. Based on a 2000 sample of 20 occupied rental housing units, all 20 units were single family homes. Forty-five (45) percent of the units were built prior to 1950 with none of the occupied rental units being constructed in the last 10 years. The Town's Zoning Regulations does provide for accessory units (also known as in-law apartments) to be constructed within or appurtenant to a primary single family residence. Prior to 2005, these units were restricted to family members only; however, state law was revised to take away this requirement.

Special Needs Housing - The special needs population for the purposes of this plan includes single parent households, physically and mentally challenged persons, and the elderly. In addition to requiring certain services that differ from a typical single-family household (i.e., physical accessibility, assisted living), these groups tend to fall into a lower income category.

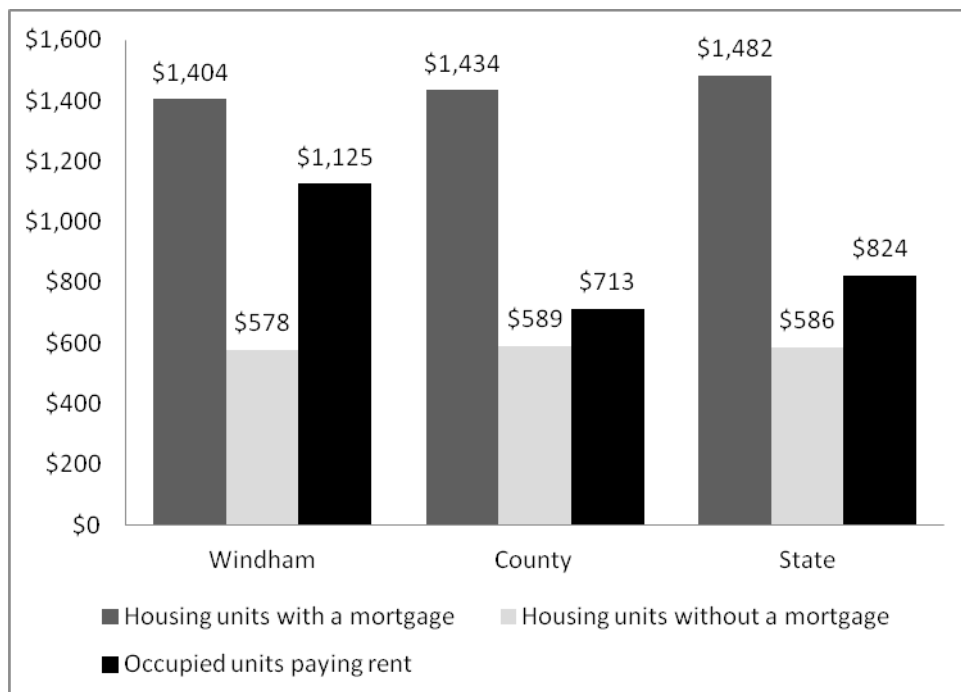
There is no project based rent-subsidized housing available in Windham. This is housing in which the subsidy is attached to a particular unit. The neighboring towns of Londonderry and Chester both have subsidized elderly and disabled housing units.

Housing Affordability - Affordable housing is defined as housing that is owned or rented by its inhabitants whose gross annual income does not exceed 80% of the county median income and housing costs should be no more than 30% of a household's income. For rental housing this includes rent and utilities. For homeownership this includes mortgage (principal and interest), taxes, and property insurance.

The median monthly housing cost for renters and homeowners in Windham is illustrated in

Figure 3. Windham generally follows the trends that are occurring at both the state and county level.

Figure 3: Median Monthly Housing Costs in 2010



(Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Windham, 2008-2010 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, County & State)

According to Vermont Housing Data, from 2000 to 2004, housing values and prices increased in Windham as in the rest of Vermont as the median price of primary residences that were sold rose by nearly 200%. The Vermont Department of Taxes Property Transfer Return Report listed the median sales price in 2004 for a residential home on less than six acres in Windham as \$239,000.

Since that time, the average purchase price of a house in Windham has generally declined, as shown by the following figures from the equalization study for Windham, Produce by the PVR department of The Vermont Department of Taxes:

2008 -	\$235,786	
2009 -	\$232,929	-1%
2010 -	\$181,179	-23%
2011 -	\$198,000	+9%
2012 -	\$192,816	-3%

Housing trends are cyclical in nature. For example, in the third quarter of 2004, the Vermont Housing Price Index, which tracks percentage increases in homes, reached a record level, accelerating faster than the real estate market boom of the 1980s. According to the Vermont Housing Awareness Campaign, in order for housing to become more affordable, home prices would need to fall significantly, interest rates would need to stay low, and Vermonters would need to see increases in their income.

Housing affordability is in part addressed through the activities of non-profit agencies in the area. Windham and Windsor Housing Trust provides affordable rental housing to low and moderate income households, including families and individuals, persons with disabilities or special needs, and the elderly. The Trust can also provide income-eligible homebuyers with a subsidy towards the purchase of a qualifying home. In addition, homebuyers under this program have access to below market rate mortgages as well as financial assistance with closing costs. The Land Trust is committed to preserving the affordability of housing in perpetuity by conveying parcels of land to individual homeowners through long-term land leases. Southeastern Vermont Community Action Agency (SEVCA) provides referrals to area shelters, landlord lists, and assists individuals in completing applications for affordable housing possibilities.

Windham does have a Housing Rehabilitation Program. The program is designed to benefit elderly, handicapped, and income-eligible homeowners with rehabilitation activities. It is a revolving low-interest loan program. The Citizen's Advisory Committee administers the program and puts all interest and principle back into the fund to keep loans available in perpetuity. Applications are available at the town office.

B. LOCATION OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

According to the Vermont Department of Aging and Independent Living, Vermont Population Projections 2000-2020 (August 2003), Windham was projected to have 416 people by 2020. (In 2013 Windham's actual population was at 419.) There is a sufficient amount of land that is not unduly steep (slopes of 20% or greater) that likely has soil suitable for on-site wastewater management, and that is located outside of the Forest District to accommodate additional housing growth associated with the projected population growth.

There are certain locations that are more appropriate to handle residential growth than others (see the Future Land Use Section). Higher density residential development should occur in the historic settlement areas of South Windham and Windham Center. The Forest Districts are not appropriate areas for residential development because the purpose of these areas is to provide for forestry uses while protecting large, contiguous areas of timber and wildlife and water resources. Due to the remote nature of the Forest Districts, residential development may serve to increase municipal expenses and therefore is generally discouraged.

C. FUTURE HOUSING NEEDS

Windham must continue to address the need for affordable housing in the town. As with other towns located near vacation and resort areas, the availability of affordable housing has become a problem for Windham. During the past 20 years, second home construction has boomed in this area, generally increasing the prices of real estate. Even when those second homes become available for year-round resident housing, the eventual sale price is likely to be the seller's offering price, or more, resulting in a cost that is usually higher than a local family can afford. This imbalance makes it very difficult for local families to find adequate, affordable housing or land on which to build. An exception to this is Timber Ridge where high density ski resort seasonal homes are being converted to year round and are relatively affordable.