

Planning Commission Reporting Form for VSA 4384

Anyone who reads the Windham Town Plan will quickly realize how important the town's natural and historic features are to its residents. As noted in chapter two, parts of the village are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Chapters four and six describe in considerable detail the town's natural, historic, recreational and scenic resources. Those chapters, in particular, articulate policies and specific action steps which are designed to preserve and protect these precious resources. Chapter nine discusses existing and future land use patterns in all of the town's land use districts, including Resource Protection Areas, which have been created to protect the town's most fragile and valuable natural assets, among which are large contiguous forest blocks, wetlands, headwaters and watershed areas.

Care is taken throughout the plan, especially in chapter four (Natural Resources) and chapter ten (Economic Development), to craft policies and action steps which allow the wise use of the town's resources for the purposes of agriculture, forestry, recreation, education, and mineral extraction, with appropriate safeguards for the health and beauty of Windham's natural environment, which is highly valued by all of its citizens.

Windham's Enhanced Energy Element is the heart of a revised fifth chapter on energy which outlines specific policies and actions steps which are designed to conserve energy, reduce carbon emissions and generate renewable energy from appropriately scaled and properly sited wind and solar energy systems. Chapter seven further contains additional strategies for reducing Windham's carbon footprint from transportation, which is especially challenging in a rural town like ours which is located miles from public transportation systems and is too mountainous and isolated to make biking to work or to nearby commercial areas feasible.

Chapters eight (Housing), two (Community Profile) and nine (Land Use) contain policies and action steps designed to encourage settlement in Windham's two hamlets and support multi-unit housing and planned unit developments in all of the town's main residential districts.

Finally, chapter three (Community Utilities/Facilities/Services) addresses the town's efforts to provide child care, high quality education and safe, reliable, resilient public services and facilities for all residents. Policies and actions steps are designed to encourage future development in parts of town which are not prone to flooding and are not beyond the capacity of local emergency services to respond in a crisis. Other policies address the need for better transmission lines and high speed internet, which

can stimulate economic growth and, along with sound emergency preparedness, enhance the resilience of Windham's public services.