

Summary of Proposed Updates to the Windham Town Plan  
10/10/19

The Windham Planning Commission has reviewed the Town Plan and has made the following proposed updates:

Chapter I Introduction and Overview

No significant changes

Chapter II Community Profile

Updated statistics on population, housing units, median age of residents

Chapter III Community Utilities/Facilities/ Services

Minor changes updating information; Action Steps added to advocate for better high speed internet and improvements to the carrying capacity of Windham's electricity lines.

Chapter IV Natural Resources

References to protecting ridgelines eliminated in favor of protecting lands above 2000 feet, especially in Forest Districts. This change was made because of the difficulty of legally defining a ridgeline. Zoning Regulations have been updated to create a High Elevation Resource Protection Overlay district in keeping with the Town Plan. This should have little impact upon landowners (all of whom have been informed of this change) because the previous version of the Town Plan limited development on all land above 2000 feet, even if it was not on a ridgeline or in a Forest District. Creation of the HERPO district will have no impact upon the municipal tax base or public facilities.

Other updates include statements and two new policies supporting the preservation of forest blocks and wildlife corridors, which are in keeping with Act 171. Updates also reflect the purchase of a large forest block on the west side of town by The Nature Conservancy.

The sound standards for industrial wind turbines, should they be installed despite prohibitions in the plan, have been changed to 41dBA Fast Lmax daytime and 39 dBA Fast Lmax at night.

There are additional minor grammatical and statistical updates or corrections in this chapter.

Chapter V Energy

Windham's Enhanced Energy Plan has become the basis of this revised chapter on energy. This includes data provided by the WRC regarding energy consumption in Windham and town targets for reducing energy use and generating renewable energy.

Some parts of the energy chapter from the current Town Plan have been retained to supplement the Enhanced Energy Plan. This chapter reaffirms the town's opposition to industrial wind turbines and affirms support for small scale, appropriately sited wind and solar energy systems. Most of the actions steps which support policies in this chapter involve educating and informing town residents about energy issues. Prohibitions upon development in wetlands, on steep slopes or on land above 2000 feet in Forest Districts, for example, are not new restrictions and existed in previous iterations of the Town Plan and our zoning regulations. No impact upon the town's tax base or its municipal facilities is anticipated by any policies or action steps in this revised chapter.

#### Chapter VI Historic, Recreational and Scenic Resources

Minor changes omit action steps that have been achieved since the last version of the Town Plan was written, update information about the purchase of land by the Nature Conservancy and substitute "land above 2000 feet in Forest Districts" for the indistinct term "prominent ridgelines".

#### Chapter VII Transportation

Minor changes updating information about the condition of the town garage and noting that the Windham Highway Department now uses Road Surface Management Software to maintain an inventory of road conditions in town and to prioritize road improvement projects. One new policy added supporting state efforts to reduce carbon emissions from transportation by publicizing public transit options and by encouraging ride sharing and carpooling.

#### Chapter VIII Housing

Minor changes updating information on the number of housing units, the median price of housing in Windham and factors which affect housing affordability in town.

#### Chapter IX Land Use

Minor changes which eliminate references to ridgelines in favor of protecting lands above 2000 feet in Forest Districts and eliminate action steps which have been achieved. New policies added which encourage the town to investigate new ways to protect natural and scenic resources, wildlife habitats, recreational trails and forest blocks.

#### Chapter X Economic Development

Updated information about farms and businesses in Windham. One new policy encouraging the town to form a representative local task force to develop a vision for Windham's future as a place friendly to entrepreneurs interested in creating businesses that harmonize with our Town Plan and community values.

#### Chapter XI Implementation

No proposed changes to this chapter

Chapter XII Compatibility with Other Plans  
No proposed changes to this chapter

Chapter XIII Severability  
No proposed changes to this chapter

Chapter XIV Town Plan Maps  
Several improved maps, one of which more clearly shows zoning districts, including the new High Elevation Resource Protection Overlay district.