



# Huntington, Vermont Town Plan

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by the Huntington Selectboard

Prepared by the Huntington Planning Commission

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# Town Plan Introduction & Overview

## Use of the Town Plan

This Town Plan (Plan) has been prepared for the Huntington Selectboard, Huntington Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Huntington Conservation Commission, Brewster-Pierce School Board, employers and employees of the Town of Huntington (Town), and most of all, the residents of Huntington. In its most basic form, it is a tool and guide for decision-making: a point of reference.

The intent of the Town Plan is to:

- invite people and organizations to think about and set priorities for the future of the Town
- bring people together to discuss and take action on issues of common concern
- be a basis for the development and revision of the Town's Land Use Regulations.
- guide the Town's capital budget process
- be a guide and a resource for the development of community programs and other critical community decisions so that they reflect the Town's priorities
- be Huntington's standard for review by The State of Vermont (State) and regional organizations under the provisions of the regional plan, the provisions of Act 200 and Act 250, and other legislative considerations
- be a resource for decision making and cooperative projects with neighboring and regional municipalities and the State
- provide a comprehensive and reliable source of information about the Town

## A Vision for Huntington's Future

The Town Plan represents a vision for the future of Huntington. A vision is a frame of reference; it is not a blueprint. Its purpose is to encourage discussion, debate, and consensus so that we can realize the kind of future that we want for ourselves and future generations.

This vision reflects Huntington's history, its physical characteristics, and the current social and economic conditions that impact life in the town. It also reflects our desires for the future of Huntington.

In the Town Plan, two primary resources are intertwined: the distinctive and beautiful Huntington Valley; and the diverse and hard working people in our community. These are the most important resources upon which we build the future.

We are well-equipped to face the future. We have a strong democratic tradition in Huntington with our annual town meeting as a hallmark of community decision-making. Despite

differences, we agree on many issues; and we work hard to communicate with one another, to respect the rules of decision making processes, to achieve broad consensus, and to demonstrate respect for one another. We have sound administrative resources including: the Town Clerk; the Town Treasurer; the Town Administrator; and organized elected and volunteer boards and commissions that further the delivery of quality services and enhance strong citizen participation.

Huntington is a town that presents us with challenges and opportunities that include:

- promoting social and economic diversity in the community through actions that encourage affordable housing, enhance the agricultural and local business economy, provide essential services, and enable us to feel a sense of belonging in the community
- respecting the rights of individuals to maintain and use their property
- preserving the Town's unique natural and cultural resources
- providing recreational and cultural resources for citizens
- promoting efforts to build a more self-sustaining community
- reinforcing historic settlement patterns, to the extent that is feasible, by focusing growth in the village centers
- encouraging rural development that is thoughtful, well-planned, and enhances the Town's scenic beauty, open space, and the productivity of farm land
- planning capital improvements for community facilities and services without creating undue financial burden on taxpayers
- ensuring that we have opportunities for input on the decisions that affect us
- promoting quality of life for our community

The Town Plan emphasizes three essential elements:

1. maintenance of Huntington's democratic decision-making tradition and sound administrative and organizational structures that provide quality services in a cost-effective manner
2. ongoing identification, recognition, and support of the Town's natural and human resources and the willingness of the community to make decisions and take actions that develop and protect the interest of broad sectors of the community
3. the ability of Huntington's leaders to formulate directions, goals, priorities, and vision that receive broad-based public support and enable individuals and organizations to act and move ahead: a Town Plan is only as good as the concrete decisions and actions it generates.

## Managing, Amending, & Updating the Town Plan

The Huntington Planning Commission is Huntington's elected body for developing, maintaining, reviewing, and revising the Town Plan.

The Huntington Planning Commission undertook a significant overhaul of the 1995 Town Plan when writing the 2001 Town Plan. The Town Plan before you is a revision of the 2001 Town Plan. There have been minor changes; there have not been changes of the magnitude of the previous rewrite.

The Town Plan before you has undergone public discussion for over a year. In addition to the work done by the members of the Huntington Planning Commission at their regular meetings several committees, boards, and individuals have reviewed and revised sections of the 2001 Town Plan—culminating in this 2007 Town Plan.

In August 1999, a survey was sent to all households in the Town of Huntington asking residents for their opinions and comments regarding aspects of and issues to be addressed in the 2001 Plan. The results of that survey, which was returned by 245 community members, played a significant role in the direction taken by the members of the Huntington Planning Commission in the development of the 2001 Town Plan. The direction of this current Plan (2007) remains essentially unchanged from the 2001 Plan.

The Huntington Planning Commission invited townspeople to comment on the Town Plan in its 2005 Annual Report. Extensive comments were received from the Huntington Conservation Commission and the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission. Comments from these organizations were thoroughly discussed and have been incorporated into this Plan update as deemed appropriate.

Community members continue to be encouraged to participate in all discussions related to the Huntington Town Plan updates. Huntington Planning Commission meetings are open to the public and are regularly held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of each month. Throughout the process of updating the Plan, townspeople have also had opportunity to provide comments to the Huntington Planning Commission in one public hearing held on December 19, 2006 and continued to February 13, 2007.

All town plans must be consistent with the statewide planning goals in 24 V.S.A. §117 (Vermont Statutes Annotated). Huntington's Plan must be coordinated with the plans of neighboring municipalities and needs to be compatible with the Chittenden County Regional Plan. To this end, the Huntington Planning Commission has consulted with the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission staff—who has helped determine the Town's compliance with the requirements of the Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act.

The Huntington Planning Commission has the authority to recommend amendments to the Town Plan, in between the mandatory five-year update cycle that is required by law, through a hearing process. Under such circumstances, the Huntington Planning Commission will advise the Huntington Selectboard, the Huntington Conservation Commission, and the Brewster-Pierce

School Board of needed changes. Proposed changes will be warned and separate hearings will be held by the Huntington Planning Commission and the Huntington Selectboard. Thus, the Town Plan is a living document with flexibility for change and ongoing citizen participation. When considering an amendment to the Huntington Town Plan, the Huntington Planning Commission is required to prepare a written report of the proposal. The contents of the report are specified in 24 V.S.A. §4384 (c).

The Huntington Town Plan will undergo another mandatory update in 2012, as required by Vermont's state statutes. In preparation for this next five-year update, the Huntington Planning Commission will conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the current plan. Statistical data, public opinion, and changes that have occurred in the Town will be reviewed; and the status and success of implementation strategies will be reviewed and reassessed. With this information the Town's policies and goals will be amended and new strategies will be developed as necessary. This is the same method by which the 2007 Town Plan was developed.

The Huntington Planning Commission will annually review the Plan for the purpose of determining progress toward implementation and to determine if amendments are needed.

# Land Use

Huntington is located in the Northern Green Mountain Biophysical Region of Vermont and includes the Green Mountains and its foothills, which are punctuated by river and stream valleys. The Town is about 38 square miles, or 24,539 acres, in size and is approximately 86% forested, 11% open, and 3% developed according to a Land Cover Land Use layer based on 2002 Landsat data. An updated land use map included in this Plan shows the locations of residential and major out-buildings (Vermont Center for Geographic Information's 2005 E911 site layer, updated by Bill Hegman).

From the existing land use map (Appendix 2), one can clearly see the historical concentration of structures in the Huntington River Valley. Development has also occurred along the valleys of several tributaries to the Huntington River such as Texas Hill and Sherman Hollow. The river valleys generally offer the most accessible locations and the best soil for on-site septic systems. Nearly all development in Huntington within the past three decades has been residential in nature.

Prior agricultural and meadow lands continue to convert to shrub and forestland, accelerated by the demise of small family farms that were common at the turn of the 20th century. Within the past decade, residential development has been common on the hill slopes and rural unpaved roads such as Salvias, Carse, Economou, Texas Hill Circle, and Bert White Roads. The Town is losing both open space and forestlands in the river valleys and upland areas as a result of residential development and associated parcelization of lots. Given the current land use trends, it is expected that the loss of open space will continue into the future. However, within the context of the rest of Chittenden County, the Town of Huntington's landscape remains relatively unfragmented.

The expansion of residential development has decreased the availability of viable agricultural land in both the river valleys and along the back roads. Economic competition between agricultural purposes and residential development threatens active farming in Huntington. In the 1900s, there were 127 working farms in Huntington, supporting a creamery in each of the three villages. The 1940 topographic map shows a number of areas of open land by Delfrate, Trapp, Charlie Smith, Taft, Moody, and Salvias Roads—land that is now shown to have reverted to young forested land, as depicted in the 2003 National Agricultural Imagery Program (NAIP) aerial photos.

Today, there are approximately 30 distinct working farm properties in the Town, including one active dairy farm. State Park land comprises 5,000 acres or approximately 20% of the town. The Vermont Land Trust has easements on 391 acres of forest and agricultural land which will help protect this land from development, provide open space, and create an opportunity for continued agricultural and forestry use.

While the number of farms in Huntington has significantly decreased, a rich and diverse, small scale agricultural base has evolved. Current types of farming operations include: 1 dairy farm, 1 organic greenhouse and nursery, 2 perennial flower stands, 4 vegetable farms, 2 vegetable produce stands, 2 beef operations, 1 turkey operation, 2 sheep operations, 1 alpaca farm, 5

horse farms, 1 veal operation, 3 or more Christmas tree operations, and 5 large (and at least an additional 6 smaller) sugaring operations. There is a continued interest in small family operations including the sale of maple syrup and other agricultural products.

Huntington residents expressed widespread interest in a 1999 Town Plan Survey in keeping land in active farm production. Results of this 1999 Survey show that 91% of the respondents thought the Town should take steps to protect and maintain working farms and agricultural land. A common theme discussed at each of the Revision Workshops held during the 2001 Town Plan update process, was a fear that the current pattern of development will harm the expressed values of farmland and open space. One reason for this concern was the acceleration in land subdivisions and the construction of single family housing—especially in open land along road frontages. While this likely continues to be a concern among citizens, there is no updated survey data to confirm this.

Another indication of the value of a working landscape to Huntington is the number of residents and acres that are currently enrolled in the State of Vermont Use Value Appraisal Program (commonly known as the Current Use Program). This program provides property tax reduction for landowners who have land in active farm or forest production. Due to the wooded nature of much of Huntington, forestry has been and will continue to be a significant land use. There were 40 residents and a total of 8,210 acres enrolled in 1994. In 1999 there were 52 landowners enrolled—however, the acreage remained approximately the same. As of May 2005, there were 74 landowners and 9,422 acres enrolled in the Current Use Program.

In an effort to reduce the stress on agricultural and forestland, the Huntington Town Plan provides for greater development densities in the areas designated as Village Districts I and II—which include the Lower Village, Huntington Center, and Hanksville—and through Planned Residential Developments (PRD)<sup>1</sup>. Industrial and commercial uses are limited in Huntington, and will most likely continue to be limited, although two recreational businesses have been established since the last Town Plan. Limits to industrial and commercial growth include availability of suitable land and lack of infrastructure.

## District Overview

The recent trends in land development in Chittenden County raise many issues for the residents of Huntington, and have led the Huntington Planning Commission to evaluate the effectiveness of the established districts. Some of these issues are:

1. subdivision of open land formerly used for farmland, forestland, and wildlife habitat
2. scattered development of housing along roads and in open meadows affecting vistas and views

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<sup>1</sup> A **planned residential development (PRD)** is an area of land, controlled by a landowner, to be developed as a single entity for a number dwelling units.

3. public costs for roads, as emergency services and school transportation requirements are increased by rural development
4. increase of on-site septic disposal systems that could impact groundwater resources

There are six districts described in this Town Plan, as illustrated on the *Future Land Use Map* (see Appendix 4):

- Groundwater Protection Overlay
- Flood Hazard District
- Conservation
- Woodland
- Rural Residential
- Village

These districts are defined based on current or potential use. Agricultural uses are permitted, with no limitations, in all six districts. Residential development is permitted in all but the Conservation and the Flood Hazard districts. The permitted and conditional uses for these districts are described below. In future land use and development regulations any additional conditional uses that are deemed appropriate will be added for each district.

## Groundwater Protection Overlay

The purpose of the Groundwater Protection Overlay is to protect public health and safety by minimizing contamination of vulnerable aquifers; and by preserving and protecting existing and potential sources of drinking water supplies.

Residents rely on groundwater for their safe supply of drinking water. Certain land uses can contaminate groundwater: particularly in shallow/surficial aquifers, or where contaminants, such as pesticides and herbicides, can get into a bedrock aquifer. To ensure the protection of these drinking water supplies, this Town Plan establishes the Groundwater Protection Overlay.

Public water systems<sup>2</sup> are required to develop Source Protection Areas (SPA)<sup>3</sup> and Plans<sup>4</sup> to protect their water source. A Source Protection Area is the surface and subsurface area from or through which contaminants are reasonably likely to reach a public water system source.

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<sup>2</sup> **Public water systems** provide drinking water to the public and have at least 15 service connections or serve an average of at least 25 individuals daily for at least 60 days out of the year.

<sup>3</sup> A **Source Protection Area** is the surface and subsurface area from or through which contaminants are reasonably likely to reach a public water system source and are necessary to meet the federal requirements of the Source Water Assessment Program.

<sup>4</sup> **Source Protection Area Plans** are developed by the applicant, and must be approved by the Water Supply Division of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources.

Included in a Source Protection Area are Zones 1, 2, and 3 and a Two Year Travel Time (2YTT) Zone. The following is a description of these zones:

**Zone 1** consists of a water system controlled area immediately around the water source. This is the area where impacts from contamination are likely to be immediate and certain, and is generally the 200-foot area around the water supply.

**Zone 2** consists of the contributions of water from outside Zone 1. This is an area where there will be probable impacts to the water supply if contamination were to happen in the area.

**Zone 3** consists of the remaining area that recharges or contributes water to the source that is not delineated as Zone 2, and where there may be possible impacts from potential sources of contamination. This is usually the area upslope from Zone 2 to the watershed boundary.

**The Two Year Travel Time Zone** is identified as an area where bacteria and virus threats (such as from onsite disposal of sewage) would reach the water supply source in less than two years, by traveling through the soils. Two years is the length of time that it takes most pathogens in groundwater to either die off or become non-infectious.

The Source Protection Area Plan has been used to help inform landowners about groundwater protection. Examples of things residents can do to protect groundwater are: disposing of hazardous wastes, such as oil, pesticides, and fertilizers in a hazardous waste facility; and routinely pumping out septic tanks. Source protection plans will be developed based on the approved source protection area. Huntington may enact ordinances to further protect the water supply within a Source Protection Area in future land use regulations.

## Flood Hazard District

The purpose of the Flood Hazard District is:

1. to protect public health, safety, and welfare by preventing or minimizing hazards to life and property due to flooding
2. to discourage further building and other incompatible development within flood prone areas
3. to ensure that private property owners within designated flood hazard areas are eligible for flood insurance under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)

This district encompasses all land within Zone A<sup>5</sup> that has been designated as a flood hazard area by the Federal Insurance Administration on its Flood Insurance Study for the Town of Huntington, with the accompanying Flood Insurance Rate Maps and Flood Boundary and Floodway Maps, dated 17-July-1978.

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<sup>5</sup> **Zone A** of the Flood Hazard Overlay District is separate from the zones that are defined in the Groundwater Protection Overlay section.

Watercourses and flood plains are an extremely important natural resource base for riparian<sup>6</sup> corridors, wildlife, recreation, and the rural atmosphere of Huntington. Development should be limited, and dwellings should not be constructed in this district.

## Conservation District

The purpose of the Conservation District, which includes all land in Huntington over 2,000 feet in elevation above mean sea level, is to:

1. protect the Town's forests, watersheds, wildlife habitat, and environmentally sensitive upland areas
2. maintain the scenic beauty of the mountain ridge and skyline

Most of this land is within the Camel's Hump State Forest and is, therefore, managed by the State of Vermont, in cooperation with the respective towns. There are few buildings in this district. Few taxes are derived from land within this district; thus, the long-term benefit of designating an area as a conservation district is primarily of social and visual value. Forestry, agriculture, and related uses are permitted. There are no conditional uses allowed within a Conservation District.

## Woodland District

As in the 2001 Town Plan, the purpose of the Woodland District, which includes all land from 1,500 to 2,000 feet in elevation above mean sea level in the eastern portion of Huntington, is to protect environmentally fragile high elevation areas and critical wildlife habitat from incompatible use.

Most of the land is forested; there are a number of camps, but only a few residential structures. Slopes are generally severe; and soils are shallow to bedrock. Development in this district is discouraged: (1) because the soils are generally not suitable for on-site septic disposal; and (2) in order to provide for unfragmented forest and wildlife habitat.

Huntington's goal is to limit the demand for services—such as road maintenance and school bussing—in outlying areas. Permitted uses in this district include agriculture, forestry, and accessory structures. Seasonal dwellings may be allowed in future land use and development regulations. Conditional uses include recreational and cultural activities, and seasonal residences.

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<sup>6</sup> **Riparian areas** are ecosystems comprised of streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands, and floodplains and their borders that form a complex and interrelated hydrological system.

# Rural Residential District

The purpose of the Rural Residential District is to:

1. provide for a reasonable rate of residential development in the town
2. encourage moderate densities of residential development in areas near village centers and in close proximity to existing road networks where soils are suitable for on-site septic systems
3. encourage efficient development of land and protection of rural resources through planned residential developments (PRD)<sup>7</sup> and planned unit developments (PUD)<sup>8</sup>

This area includes all land in Huntington that is not in one of the other districts. This district comprises the Huntington River Valley and its tributaries outside of the Village Districts. It also contains the lower slopes of the surrounding mountains and hills.

There are areas of Huntington with unique characteristics, and each area requires special provisions for guiding development within it. Significant natural resources to be protected include the following (the majority of which are located on the maps at the end of this document):

- prime agricultural soils and productive farmland
- open space, scenic vistas, and views
- significant wildlife habitat
- significant biological natural areas including rare, threatened, and endangered species and significant natural communities
- aquifer protection areas
- wetlands

The Town Plan and Land Use Regulations are designed to protect valuable natural resources. Agriculture and open space in Huntington is encouraged. Therefore, the Rural Residential District, as well as the Village District, will be subject to Source Water Protection Area regulations and the Flood Hazard Overlay District regulations.

The recommended overall density for the Rural Residential District is one unit per five acres.

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<sup>7</sup> A **planned residential development (PRD)** is an area of land, controlled by a landowner, to be developed as a single entity for a number dwelling units.

<sup>8</sup> A **planned unit development (PUD)** is an area of land, controlled by a landowner, to be developed as a single entity for a number of dwelling units and commercial and industrial uses.

However, density may vary to reflect site conditions and to provide a variety of housing opportunities: planned residential developments (PRD), elderly housing, and planned unit developments (PUD).

Property owners and developers will be required to plan for the best management of resources for the entire parcel of land on which a subdivision is proposed. The development review process will offer maximum protection for the resource base.

It is important to maintain reasonable control of the Town's rate of growth. The timing and the number of units that are allowed to be developed annually will depend on the approved capital budget and program; the schools' budget and capacity to absorb student enrollment; and the Town's ability to provide services. Permitted uses in this district include agriculture, forestry, and accessory structures; single-family and accessory dwellings; and planned residential developments (PRD). Future land use and development regulations may include two-family dwellings and other uses. Conditional uses are for multifamily residential and planned unit development (PUD); light commercial and industrial uses; power generation; cultural and recreational uses; utilities; and health care facilities.

## Village District

The Village District is comprised of approximately 1,000 acres of land in Huntington's Lower Village, Huntington Center, and Hanksville. The Village District is characterized by a historic pattern of development.

The purpose of the Village District is to: 1) encourage a concentrated mix of higher density residential, commercial, and civic development that is compatible with traditional patterns of subdivision and development in the district; and 2) protect agricultural land and open space areas that functionally and visually define village boundaries. Efforts should continue to revitalize the village neighborhoods, especially in Huntington Center, the Lower Village, and Hanksville.

Overall goals for this district are to:

- Encourage the social, cultural, and historic aspects of the village communities
- Provide community services efficiently
- Preserve the viability of Prime Agricultural Soils in the district
- Promote safe and efficient transportation and pedestrian patterns
- Protect open space

Permitted uses in the Village District include: forestry, agriculture, and accessory, single-family, and two family dwellings. Future land use regulations may also include: home occupations; family child care homes; outdoor markets; places of worship; offices; personal services; and group homes. Conditional uses may include: multi-family residential units; group homes; commercial uses; recreational facilities; utilities; and government uses.

Relatively high-density residential development, commercial facilities, municipal facilities, schools, and farmland characterize the Village District.

Higher densities than 1 unit per acre may be allowed in the Village District in future land use regulations, with planned residential developments (PRDs) and planned unit developments (PUDs). However, the actual number of units or density will be determined based on if the sites can support density increases. The determination will be based on wastewater capacity, groundwater study, and development of a design plan to ensure the compatibility of new development with the existing character of the area. The number of units necessitating a PRD will be determined in future land use regulations.

The purpose of PRDs and PUDs is to encourage flexibility of design and the appropriate use of the land; facilitate safe and economic provision of utilities and roads; and preserve natural resources and scenic qualities of the open lands of the district.

## Goals: Land Use

1. Protect and preserve the historic and scenic features of Huntington's landscape and villages.
2. Preserve open space (including farm and forest lands), conserve natural resources, and provide a sound economic basis for the maintenance of these resources.
3. Encourage an environmentally-sensitive pattern of settlement throughout the town.
4. Encourage good civic design within the Village District.
5. Conserve existing farmland and Prime Agricultural Soils.
6. Allow property owners reasonable use of their land.
7. Encourage growth in locations that have suitable site conditions, that are consistent with existing development patterns, and that do not contain resources designated for protection.
8. Manage the scale and character of development to harmonize with the rural character of the Town and that promote a high quality of life for Huntington residents.
9. Limit the demand for services such as road maintenance and school busing in outlying areas.
10. Protect source water protection areas.

## Implementation Recommendations: Land Use

1. Establish land use regulations that provide for balanced, orderly growth and that include a zoning map that defines the districts as presented and described in the Town Plan.
2. Develop incentive programs to encourage development in the Village District that are consistent with land use regulations and the historic character of the village areas.
3. Identify and prioritize land for conservation.
4. Develop criteria to define what valuable/significant open space areas and scenic vistas are; identify specific areas throughout Huntington that meet those criteria; and develop incentive programs to encourage the preservation of these resources.
5. Identify Prime Agricultural Soils within each of the districts and develop incentives to conserve these lands.
6. Work with organizations such as NOFA, the Intervale Foundation, The Vermont Land Trust, and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to develop strategies to maintain open space and farm land. The Town should use land trusts; state preservation funds and programs; the Town's conservation fund, tax incentives; and/or outright municipal ownership to maintain open spaces.
7. Develop health regulations to ensure that the public health is protected.
8. Develop mechanisms and regulations to protect the Huntington River watershed, including educational workshops and materials.
9. Amend the Land Use Regulations:
  - a. encourage residential and commercial activities within planned unit developments (PUD)
  - b. revise the planned unit development (PUD) and planned residential development (PRD) standards in the Land Use Regulations in order to implement the goals outlined above
  - c. require a planned residential development (PRD) for major (4 units or more) subdivisions and set forth protective standards for resource lands
  - d. establish scenic road guidelines under state-enabling legislation (Vermont Scenic Roads Law—Title 19 V.S.A. §25)
10. Amend the Subdivision Regulations:
  - a. reference planned residential development (PRD) standards in Land Use

## Regulations

- b. establish requirements for use of building envelopes<sup>9</sup>
11. Determine compatible and incompatible uses for the source protection areas.

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<sup>9</sup> **Building envelopes** are comprised of the outer elements of the building— foundations, walls, roof, windows, doors and floors.

# Transportation

The topography, geography, and geology of Huntington provide unique opportunities for transporting our residents and visitors. We have roads that climb up mountains and roll down to the river valley; we have roads of pavement, dirt, stone, and sometimes, mud. We have roads that service farms, sugaring operations, woodshops, grocery stores, and conservation lands. We have roads that go to new developments and others that were carved out of the forests before the Civil War. Our roads and trails bring us to work and allow us to play.

The existing transportation infrastructure in Huntington is comprised of 43.96 miles of roads and 30 bridges. These are shown on the Transportation Map. The Main Road (running from Richmond to Buel's Gore) and the Hinesburg Hollow Road (linking Huntington to Route 116 in Hinesburg) are located in the river valleys and are major routes through Huntington. They make up nearly all Huntington's 11.18 miles of Class 2 roads. There are 32.78 miles of Class 3 roads of varying non-paved surfaces—with stretches of steep slopes, sharp turns, and narrow roadbeds. Extensive maintenance is necessary to keep these Class 3 roads passable throughout the year. There are also Class 4 roads—or ancient roads—that remain unmapped. In 2006, the Town acquired a grant to hire a consultant to help research the location of ancient roads.

## Major Issues

In the 2000 Town Plan, the condition of the Town's bridges was identified as the most pressing problem facing the Huntington transportation system. In these last five years, we have made superb progress: the Audubon, Bridge Street, Salvus Road, and Texas Hill Circle bridges have all been replaced. The third Camel's Hump Road bridge has also been replaced. In addition, improvements have been made to bridges on Moody Road and the last bridge on Camel's Hump Road. The extensive East Street bridge project began in late summer 2006.

Bridge replacement/rehabilitation is primarily the responsibility of the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans). Federal funds pay 80% of the cost, with the remaining 20% generally split equally between VTrans and the Town. Repair schedules can be prolonged due to several factors including the fact that VTrans, with its statewide responsibility and limited financial resources, has a backlog of Vermont's bridges that are in need of extensive repair.

## Maintenance Costs

In recent years, a great deal of progress has been made in the condition of Huntington's roadways, in large part due to an aggressive and consistent road policy. For some years, the paved Class 2 roads have been maintained in good condition. By continuing this commitment to our roadways, they should remain in excellent condition for many years to come. The condition of most of Huntington's Class 3 roads has improved, though some locations remain in poor condition. The roadbed reconstruction using fabric on portions of East Street, Texas Hill Circle, Gillett Pond Road, and Taft Road resulted in a significant improvement. Reflecting the Town's interest in attracting tourism and providing adequate facilities, the Camel's Hump Road has

been upgraded and re-graveled. The efforts to maintain and replace ditches and culverts have also improved the conditions of Class 3 roads.

VTrans has been our partner in maintaining the Town's central artery, the Main Road. VTrans and the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO) are our partners in maintaining our highway infrastructure's eligibility for Federal funding for bridge repair, maintenance, and/or replacement. The Town continues to have an active participation in the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO) and regularly communicates with state legislators and VTrans in an effort to maintain and improve our roadways.

The Town hired the firm of McFarland and Johnson to produce the Huntington Bridge Improvement Plan. This plan provides recommendations for the maintenance and replacement of the Town's bridges. These recommendations have helped the Town pursue an aggressive bridge maintenance and replacement action plan.

## Culverts

Huntington's culverts have been mapped, and that information is being integrated into an ongoing culvert replacement plan. The Town accepts responsibility for new housing culverts that are built adjacent to a Town road, after the property owner/developer has maintained the culvert for one year. This one-year delay in acceptance of responsibility decreases the Town's cost of maintenance required as a result of damage caused by improper driveway culvert installation. There is a continued need for property owners to maintain the drainage of their access beyond the Town right-of-way.

## Present & Future

Many residents of Huntington commute to work in Chittenden County "core" communities such as Burlington, South Burlington, Essex Junction, and Williston. In a recent report looking at the impact of driving on global warming, Huntington was listed among Vermont's top five communities in terms of pounds of pollution per year. The study estimates that commuters from Huntington contribute 2,747 metric tons of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere per year. The Town must explore ways to decrease the number of commuting vehicles. Increased use of car-pools or van-pools could curtail our contribution of greenhouse gasses, as well as reduce wear and tear on the local road system. Methods of promoting increased use of car-pools could range from providing a "bulletin board" for available car-pools to providing a commuter parking area.

In addition to the increase of vehicular traffic, there appears to have been an increase in recreational use of our roads. Our rural countryside attracts bicyclists of all interests and abilities. There have been, however, inevitable safety concerns that flow from having both more cars and more bikes sharing the road. Efforts to establish a bike/pedestrian pathway should be renewed to allow everyone to enjoy the town safely.

A multi-phase approach to the development of a bike/pedestrian path is recommended. The first phases of a bike/pedestrian path should connect the three village areas. Then, a connection should be made to the Audubon Center at the northern border of the town. Finally, in

coordination with the surrounding communities, connections should be provided to Richmond, Hinesburg, and Starksboro.

## **Goals: Transportation**

1. Repair bridges in accordance with priorities as agreed to by the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO).
2. Maintain the quality of Class 2 roads.
3. Continue to upgrade Class 3 roads.
4. Catalogue and map Huntington's Ancient Roads
5. Catalogue and map Huntington's Class 4 roads.
6. Expand car-pooling in Huntington.
7. Encourage cluster development by minimizing curb cuts on public road frontage.
8. Facilitate safe travel in Huntington.

## **Implementation Recommendations: Transportation**

1. Review current repair and maintenance policies.
2. Consider conducting an evaluation of the current levels of road maintenance in relation to sustainability over time.
3. Continue to seek State and Federal grants for the repair of bridges and roads.
4. Identify hazardous travel areas and work toward resolving those hazards.
5. Continue to work with the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO) to get our most needy bridges on the federal and state money schedules.
6. Determine, through a public process, the retention or relinquishment of Ancient Roads.
7. Continue maintenance and upgrade of Class 2 and Class 3 roads.
8. Develop, through a public process, an inventory of stretches of road with significant scenic views for the Town to consider designating as scenic roads.
9. Encourage development in areas that are served by well-established town roads that are already subject to routine maintenance and accessible to emergency service.

10. Continue to prune and mow rights-of-way in a manner consistent with the Town's rural character and safety.
11. Provide a bulletin board for car-pool and public transportation information and encourage interested residents to enroll in the Chittenden County Transportation Authority's (CCTA) region-wide carpool program.
12. Develop ways to increase car- and van-pooling for work and community events through ride boards; review options for a park-and-ride lot; and research community busing options.
13. Explore the means by which we can increase rider-ship on the school buses.
  - a. Explore options for diversifying Huntington's bus fleet
  - b. Diversify Ridership eligibility on school buses

# Facilities, Services, & Utilities

Community services are an integral part of the fabric of a small town. The Town's facilities and utilities discussed in this section include everything except the buildings, operations, and equipment of the Town Office and Town Garage.

Approximately 9% of the Town budget (\$108,325 out of the total 2005-2006 budget of \$1,216,722) is spent on community services which include: the Library, Town Hall, cemeteries, public safety and crime investigation, animal control, services to families and the elderly, recreation, and Green-Up Day.

## Buildings & Grounds

Public buildings in the town include the Brewster-Pierce Memorial School (housing kindergarten through grade 4), the Town Office, the Town Garage, the old Fire Station, a new Fire Station, and the Huntington Town Hall. In March 2000, residents voted to purchase the Union Meeting House in the Lower Village for use as the town library and community center. The historic old Fire Station is used for storage of equipment for the town's popular youth soccer program. The new Fire Station was built in 1992-1993. The latest expansion to the school occurred in 1993, with major renovations done in 2005. The Town Office, originally converted from a one-room schoolhouse in 1982, was renovated in 1993, and a lower level office added. Additional efforts to provide on-site parking at the Town Office are needed.

Huntington residents continue to express interest in establishing space for community events. The Library Board designed the library floor plan in order to allow the Union Meeting House to meet the need for larger group gatherings. Meetings are usually held in the Town Office; meetings for larger groups are held in the training room of the Fire House. Town Meetings and Special Town Meetings are held at Brewster-Pierce Memorial School.

The Town Hall Committee has worked hard to clean the building and make it usable for meetings, classes, workshops, and performances during the warm months; and the building was re-opened in July 2005 after five years of non-use. The Town Hall Committee plans to seek grants for renovation and repair. Previously, suggestions have been proposed to renovate the Town Hall for a senior services center or for additional Town administration space. Parking at the current site is almost non-existent. There has also been discussion about moving the building to a site with more land. The Town Hall is American Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible only on the first floor.

Other town facilities include a playground at the school and a large soccer field, baseball field, horseshoe pits, and picnic shelter located at the Town's Recreation Field. The volunteer Recreation Committee worked with Town officials to develop this well-used recreation area in Huntington Center.

## Library

Huntington recently moved its library to a new location at the Union Meeting House in the Lower Village. The Library received its Certificate of Occupancy in late September 2005 and is well on its way toward becoming a full-service, automated, public library and community center. The Library has two staff members who oversee the operation of the services, and the purchase and lease of books and other materials. With the help of volunteers, the Library has become more established with extended regular operating hours and a larger book collection. The Library user-ship has steadily increased; and the Library continues to strive to find more ways to serve townspeople. The Chittenden County Home Card, which allows residents of participating towns to use their library card to check out books in other participating town libraries, is administered through the Huntington Public Library.

## Cemeteries

The town has 3 cemeteries. Two of the town-owned cemeteries, located in Huntington Center and Hanksville, have long since reached capacity. Until 1997, the Maplewood Cemetery in the Lower Village was maintained and assumed to be owned by an association. When the association looked to purchase property to enlarge the cemetery, it was discovered that the cemetery, in fact, was owned by the Town. The Town, in 1998, voted to purchase 7.51 acres from the estate of Bertha Hanson for expansion. Maplewood Cemetery was expanded in 2000 and another expansion is planned for 2007, which would provide double lots on the hill overlooking the original cemetery. The Town's Cemetery Trustees developed rules of operation. They continue to work on the expansion and details involved with roads and plot layout for the new area; developing rules and maintenance plans for the grounds; assigning space; and collecting fees.

## Public Safety & Crime Investigation

Volunteer services include fire protection and emergency rescue. The Town's Fire Department is staffed by volunteers who are also trained in emergency first response. The Town's fire equipment is housed in a building constructed in 1992. Equipment upgrades are made on a regular basis at the recommendation of the Fire Chief, and as voted on at Town Meeting. The Town contributes to the cost of maintaining emergency rescue services for its residents through an assessment in the Town budget for Richmond Rescue, Inc. Recently, several Huntington residents have been trained in First Response, a service that allows Huntington residents to have treatment and stabilization until Richmond Rescue arrives to take over and transport the patient to a medical facility. The Town recently purchased a vehicle for the First Response Team. These rescue services are provided free to residents.

The Town purchases criminal investigation services through the Vermont State Police. This cost is partially offset by a reimbursement to the Town through judicial fines. An increased police presence in the town, especially for speed control in the villages, has been favorably received by a majority of the residents. The Town has a part-time Animal Control Officer.

## Miscellaneous Contributions

Contributions from the Town also go to a number private and nonprofit organizations to support early education programs (e.g., the Camel's Hump Family Programs through the Lund Family Center); home nursing and services for senior citizens (e.g., the Visiting Nurses Association, Special Services Transportation Agency (SSTA), Champlain Valley Agency on Aging); assistance for handicapped or abused persons (e.g., the Vermont Center for Independent Living;, Women Helping Battered Women, and the Chittenden County Special Crimes Unit); and other services (Chittenden County Emergency Food Shelf, Howard Center for Community Services). Requests are made annually by these groups for contributions from the Town through the General Fund budget.

## Public Water Systems

There are two public water systems in Huntington which serve Huntington Woods and Robinson Park and Brewster-Pierce School. No public sewage disposal systems, flood control facilities, solid waste disposal units, or other public utilities are located in the town. As Huntington grows, a municipal waste water treatment facility may be needed in order to accommodate development.

While presently, there is no interest among most residents toward any municipal sewage disposal facility; three recent severe droughts in Huntington (1995, 1999, and 2003) required the placement of a "water buffalo" from the Vermont National Guard for residents' use, making it prudent for Town Officials to have a plan in place for meeting the possibility of a long-term water crisis.

## Solid Waste Management

In 1987, Huntington joined with nine other towns to form the Chittenden Solid Waste District (CSWD), which now includes all communities in the county except Underhill and Buel's Gore. Chittenden Solid Waste District (CSWD) operates several facilities which serve Huntington residents. In April 1993, Chittenden Solid Waste District (CSWD) established a mandatory recycling program. Curbside trash and recycling collection is offered by private haulers, or residents can utilize a Drop-Off Center (with the closest facilities located in Richmond and Hinesburg) to manage their recyclables. Household hazardous wastes can be managed at a Chittenden Solid Waste District (CSWD) facility in South Burlington that operates year-round or at a mobile facility (The "Rover"), when available. Any fees are paid by the individual.

## Utilities

At present, three local electric companies and Champlain Valley Telecom provide services in Huntington. In 2005, there were at least nine year-round residences supplying their own electricity via solar, hydro, or wind power. Cable TV lines were installed in some parts of the Town in the summer of 1994. DSL is available in Huntington. No transmission lines are located

in Huntington.

Cellular phone towers, if they come to Huntington, will be addressed in the Town's Land Use Regulations.

Wind power continues to gain momentum in Huntington, with two wind turbines installed on different properties in the southern end of the town in 2004-2005.

## **Goals: Facilities, Services, & Utilities**

1. Develop a common vision for the long-term use of Town facilities.
2. Manage the repair and maintenance of the Town's municipal buildings and real estate.
3. Provide schools, adult educational opportunities, library services, parks, fire protection, rescue services, solid waste disposal, animal control, and crime prevention for Huntington residents.

## **Implementation Recommendation: Facilities, Services, & Utilities**

1. Encourage volunteer participation on boards and committees.
2. Support recruitment and training programs for the Fire Department, Richmond Rescue, and Huntington First Response.
3. Continue to support Town funding for crime prevention, animal control, and services for the elderly.
4. Utilize the capital budget for purchase, management, and repair of Town facilities.
5. Encourage the Huntington Selectboard to create a liaison position to manage the repair and maintenance of the Town's buildings and facilitate communication between the various committees regarding long-term use of and a fiscal plan for Town facilities.
6. Continue participation in the Chittenden Solid Waste District (CSWD).
7. In keeping with the goals of the Huntington Library Board of Trustees, the Library should continue to strive to meet the standards in existence for compliance with the Vermont Department of Libraries, and continue participation in the county's Home Card Program.
8. Promote the Union Meeting House / Library as a community meeting and educational facility.
9. Research alternatives for public water supplies and public sewage disposal.

10. Encourage the Cemetery Trustees to continue to develop adequate cemetery space in the Maplewood Cemetery in order to meet the desired needs of the Town's residents and those with ancestral ties to Huntington.
11. Support public recreation facilities, including adequate parking.
12. Continue renovations to the Town Hall and explore options for its future use.
13. Encourage the acquisition of grants and other monies for the Town Green in the Lower Village.
14. Encourage the burying of utilities wherever possible.
15. Encourage residents to use the Huntington Revolving Loan Fund.

# Housing—General

All of Chittenden County—Huntington included— is experiencing a housing crisis characterized by limited housing choice and rapidly increasing housing costs. The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) has outlined target numbers for each community’s fair share of housing, based on population data, housing stock and affordability.<sup>10</sup> Huntington’s task is to develop strategies in its planning for this growth, accommodating all economic sectors of the housing market.

The most recent 2000 Vermont Housing Profile (2004) prepared by the Vermont Housing Finance Agency indicates that Huntington’s housing stock has exhibited growth trends relative to its population growth. The 2000 Census indicated a population of 1,861 with a projected population in 2003 of 1,937. The number of total housing units in Huntington in 2000 totaled 744. Of these 744 housing units, 52 were seasonal, recreational or vacant. These figures were used in the Chittenden County Housing Inventory for 2000. Although trends have indicated a lower numbers of persons per dwelling unit in Vermont and across the country, Huntington’s average household size of 2.68 persons is higher than the number for Chittenden County (2.47) and for the state (2.44).

As the Housing Section of the 2001 town plan indicated the previous 5 year period produced 66 new residences and 3 seasonal residences an average (13) new housing units per year. Table 1 below shows the number of new units in the past 5 years and Table 2 provides a historical view of housing in Huntington. Table I indicates an average of 13 units/year for years 2001 thru 2005, approximately the same as the previous 5 year period.

Table 1: New Houses

Year Built	New Dwelling
2001	11
2002	11
2003	15
2004	17
2005	9
Total	63

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<sup>10</sup> **Recommended Municipal Housing Targets**, Housing Task Force, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC, November 22, 2004.)

Table 2: A Historical View of Housing 1950-2010<sup>11</sup>

Year	Total Dwellings	Seasonal Dwellings	Year-Round Dwellings
1950	N/A	N/A	N/A
1960	174	N/A	N/A
1970	268	62	206
1980	448	59	389
1990	622	43	579
2000 census	744	52	692
2010 <sup>12</sup>	830	-	815

Although Table I indicates no change from the previous five-year average, we might realistically expect 15 units per year in the years 2005-2010. Adding the 2000-2005 actual new units from Table I (63 units) to the anticipated units in the 2006-2010 time frame (75 units), we would expect a total increase of 138 dwelling units, which is below the Chittenden County Housing Task Force Committee's projection of 199 units as Huntington's share of county growth projection for the 2000-2010 time period (2006 Chittenden County Regional Plan Table 7.13). By adding the projected 138 units, to the 2000 census figure of 692 units, the number of year-round dwelling units in January 2010 is 830 units (shown projected for 2010 in Table II above).

This data suggests that the projections made for 2010 (943 units) by the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission will, in all likelihood, not be realized. In order to meet this number, the town would need to see an additional 113 units in the next five years (this is 22 units/year), or an average of 9 more units per year than the 13 units per year average we have experienced. These numbers have implications for the housing targets in the Chittenden County Regional Plan, since 10% of moderate income housing<sup>13</sup> and 10% of affordable housing<sup>14</sup> are based on the estimate of total units for the years 2000-2010 (Table 7.13 of the 2006 Chittenden County Regional Plan). Based on the ten-year Huntington projection, we might anticipate 14 moderate income units and 14 affordable units (10% of 138 units) during the ten-year period. This becomes important in meeting the State's requirements of section 4382(10), *The Plan for a Municipality*, as amended in 2004. To achieve this goal we would need to provide nearly double these numbers (28 vs. 14) since very few of the units built in the past five years fit these categories.

## Type of Dwellings

<sup>11</sup> The **APPENDIX 5 map** shows the locations of all new houses in Town from 1995 to 2005. From the map, it is clear that the majority of new houses were built in the northern part of the town. This most likely has to do with its proximity to Richmond and access to the greater Burlington metropolitan area, as well as availability of land for building.

<sup>12</sup> The **data in Table 2 for the year 2010** is an estimate.

<sup>13</sup> **Moderate income housing** is defined as housing units that can be afforded by households earning 80% to 120% of the Burlington MSA's median housing income.

<sup>14</sup> **Affordable housing** is defined as housing units that can be afforded by households earning less than 80% of the Burlington MSA's median household income.

It is important to maintain a mixture of dwelling unit types in order to meet the diverse housing needs of the various segments of the population. Elderly and special needs individuals are particularly important to consider. (See the *Housing—for the Elderly* section in this Plan.)

Most of the seasonal housing units in Huntington are three-season camps. In recent years, there have been several instances where camps have been converted from seasonal to year-round residences. When rural camps are converted to year round residences, there is an increased demand for road maintenance, school bus transportation, and other Town services, as well as potential wildlife impacts. Land use regulations need to include provisions for adequate fire safety, water and wastewater, and other safety concerns if these seasonal facilities are to be converted to year-round dwellings.

## Housing Costs

The median household income<sup>15</sup> for Huntington, from the most recent census (1999 Housing Finances Agency), was \$49,559 (higher than either the Chittenden County or State figures). The median affordable household income for a family of four in 2005 is \$74,750 according to the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The average price of the 26 primary Huntington single family residences sold in 2004 was \$205,440. There were 4 mobile homes sold (with land) at an average sale price of \$122,500. Median monthly owner costs with mortgage in 2000 were \$1,047. The median gross rent (includes utilities) for all units in 2000 was \$563/month, \$100 dollars less than the county median. It is apparent that Huntington, like other Chittenden County towns has a significant gap between household income and affordable or even moderate income housing.

## Affordable Housing <sup>16</sup>

The 2000 Census data reveals that low and very low-income families cannot afford to buy starter homes in Huntington. This data also reveals that there are very few affordable or moderate income units<sup>17</sup> available for these families. Since 2000, and especially in the 2002-2005 period, Huntington has experienced increased land prices and increased costs for housing and rental units. This is due, in part, to the increase in population growth of the greater Burlington metropolitan area and desirability of country living. There are increasingly more opportunities for work in Williston, Waterbury and even Montpelier that are accessible from Huntington. In addition, with the advent of the Internet and Web-based businesses, Internet commerce is becoming a real option, thus allowing people to live where they choose without worrying about commuting long distances. These are factors that will tend to drive prices higher

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<sup>15</sup> **Median household income** is established in accordance with the Burlington MSA, as established by Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. Median household income changes annually; in 2004= \$68,800; 80%= \$55,404; 120%= \$82,560.

<sup>16</sup> **Affordable housing** is defined as housing units that can be afforded by households earning less than 80% of the Burlington MSA's median household income.

<sup>17</sup> **Moderate income housing** is defined as housing units that can be afforded by households earning 80% to 120% of the Burlington MSA's median household income.

and further limit availability of affordable housing opportunities for the moderate, elderly and affordable income households.

## **Goals: Housing—General**

1. Meet the diverse housing needs of the various segments of the population.
2. Encourage sound site planning methods be used for development of all housing.

## **Implementation Recommendations: Housing—General**

1. Amend the Land Use Regulations to allow housing units in accessory structures in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4412.1E.
2. Develop standards for the conversion of existing seasonal dwellings to year-round residences.
3. Amend the Land Use Regulations to provide further incentives for affordable housing by:
  - a) requiring that 25% of the housing in subdivision of greater than 4 lots to be affordable
  - b) providing density incentives in planned residential developments (PRD)
4. Work with the Huntington Conservation Commission to provide public presentations and forums on sound site planning that encourages cluster planning; and planned residential developments (PRD) that encourage accommodation of moderate and affordable housing.
5. Encourage developers to work with non-profit housing corporations to provide affordable housing options in town.

# HOUSING — for the Elderly

Huntington's elderly population can be expected to increase in accordance with US elderly population trends and the Chittenden County population growth indicators. According to the 2000 census, 5.5% of Huntington's population of 1,861 was aged 65 or older—of whom 19 (or 5%) were living at or below the poverty level. Following national and regional demographic trends, there is a predicted increase that will escalate dramatically in the next 10 years and beyond as “Baby Boomers” (identified as birth years 1946-1963) reach retirement age.

The community of Huntington must make a commitment to provide senior housing as a living option for its elderly population. The Huntington Senior Housing Committee was formed in 1991 to explore the feasibility of developing an elderly housing project within or adjacent to one of the village centers.

A survey conducted by the Senior Housing Committee identified 25 Huntington residents who were interested in senior housing as a future living option. The Committee interviewed and gathered valuable information from experts in senior housing development, grant funding, and land conservation. Unfortunately, the Committee suspended its efforts in 1995 when it was unable to obtain a suitable site for a senior housing project.

A subsequent survey conducted by the Huntington Planning Commission in 1999 indicated that there was a strong interest in and need for elderly housing in Huntington. The availability of housing within walking distance of the stores, post office, and library is a high priority. In addition, most respondents agreed that Huntington should support services such as Meals on Wheels, Lifeline telephone, medical and transportation services, and recreational opportunities for the elderly.

The Senior Housing Committee was reactivated in 2001. In 2004 a potential housing site was identified and feasibility studies were initiated. The site appears to meet location requirements and has potential for 24 units. At issue is the site's access to Main Road. The Committee continues to pursue this site with the assistance of Cathedral Square, a nonprofit housing organization.

## Goals: Housing—for the Elderly

1. Identify a suitable site for elderly housing in or near one of the Huntington's Villages.
2. Continue communication with supporting agencies that provide services for the elderly.
3. Provide opportunities for seniors to remain active, productive members of the community.

## Implementation Recommendations: Housing—for the Elderly

1. Encourage the Senior Housing Committee to renew their efforts to realize the acquisition and development of a village site.
2. Provide pedestrian access from the elderly housing to the village.
3. Provide specific programs in the schools, Library and Church, and other venues that encourage and facilitate elderly participation in the community.
4. Continue to work with human service agencies in Chittenden and Addison Counties to provide services such as Meals on Wheels, Special Services Transportation Agency (SSTA), and Lifeline telephone.
5. Amend the land Use Regulations to establish special provisions for elderly housing as enabled by the 2004 revisions to 24 V.S.A. §117 in regard to Accessory Dwellings.
6. Provide bonus provisions for elderly housing units in planned residential developments (PRD) in Village and Rural Residential Districts.

# Population Data

Huntington's population has more than tripled in the last four decades and is expected to continue increasing over the next several years. The data included in this section are based on US Census Bureau, Census 2000, and information obtained from the Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont (<http://crs.uvm.edu/>).

Table 3: Huntington's Population

Year	Huntington	County	% of County	Vermont
1950	601	62,570	1.0	377,231
1960	581	74,425	0.7	389,811
1970	748	99,131	0.8	444,732
1980	1,161	115,534	1.0	511,456
1990	1,609	131,761	1.2	562,758
2000	1,861	144,001	1.3	608,827
2003	1,937	148,990	1.3	619,107

As Table 3 illustrates, Huntington's population has grown from 1,609 to 1,861 in the last ten years. This represents a 15.66% increase, compared to an 11.24% increase for Chittenden County and an 8.18% increase for the State. It is possible that the rate of increase will stabilize because of the geographic constraints of the narrow river valley and steep slopes that limit the availability of new housing sites, and a lack of infrastructure (water and sewer) to support major and/or extensive development.

## Demographic Characteristics

Demographic characteristics of Huntington residents include the following:

- the median age is 36.6 years old
- school age children (ages 5-19) make up 23% of the population
- 69.5% of the residents are 21 years and over
- 6.3% of the residents are over the age of 62
- the 35-44 age group (23.1%) has the largest number of residents
- the population is comprised of 924 females (49.7%) and 937 males (50.3%)

- 97.5% of the individuals residing in Huntington are white—with the remaining 2.5% reporting their race as Black; American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; “some other race”; or multiracial
- approximately 89% of residents have at least a high school education—with 39.8% of those having a bachelor’s degree or higher

## Labor Force Participation

The majority of Huntington residents over the age of 16 years are employed (79.2%). The most frequently reported occupations are: management, professional, and related (38.5%); sales and office (22.6%); educational, health and social services (22.5%); and manufacturing (17.1%). The median household income is \$49,559. However, 5.1% of families and 6.0% of individuals in Huntington have annual incomes that are below the poverty level.

# Child Care

In addition to school-aged education, child care and early childhood education are important components of the overall Huntington community and its future. Ensuring accessible, affordable, and high quality child care is integral to the community's success and its economic development. Child care is an issue of statewide and national importance as evidenced by the Vermont Legislature's decision in 2003 to add it as the 13<sup>th</sup> goal to be addressed by local, regional, and statewide planning efforts.

## Numbers

The Vermont workforce includes approximately 37,500 working parents who rely on the availability of affordable and reliable child care. Currently, there are approximately 40,000 children (birth through age 12) receiving child care in Vermont. Child care is the seventh largest occupation in Vermont, employing 5,000 state-regulated child care providers. As of the 2000 Census, 65% of Huntington's 146 children under the age of six (or a total of 95 children) live in households with both parents in the workforce. Similarly, Huntington had 210 children from the age six to twelve, with approximately 69% of them (or 145 children) living in households with both parents in the workforce.

## Need

As of June of 2006, data from the Child Care Resource of Chittenden County indicated that Huntington has three family, or home-based child care programs, with a total of 23 places for children. Of these 23 slots: 3 are for infants, with 2 vacancies; 9 are for preschoolers, with no vacancies; and 15 are for school-aged children, with 2 vacancies. A total of 21 children are enrolled in home-based child care in Huntington. Of these, 14 (66%) are Huntington residents.

The number of family child care homes has decreased significantly in the past 2 years.

Table 4: Family Care Homes

Year	Number of Family Care Homes
1992	8
1995	9
1998	7
2001	6
2004	7
2006	3

This trend is similar to the overall trend in Chittenden County. The number of family child care homes has decreased by 51% since 1992 (458 family child care homes in 1992 as compared with 224 today).

The most likely factors contributing to this trend are:

- the decrease in birth rate (16% decrease since 1992) has created a corresponding decrease in the pool of families needing child care and also reduces the number of individuals who are likely to start a registered family child care home because they have young children of their own
- the increase in center-based care (e.g., North American Playcare Center in Richmond) and school-based programs (e.g., Brewster-Pierce after school program)
- a State of Vermont policy change now allows State of Vermont Child Care Payments for care that is provided by relatives, friends, and neighbors who are caring for children from 2 or fewer families and who are considered legally exempt from licensing regulations (there are currently 2 legally exempt providers in Huntington)
- the increasing difficulty of obtaining liability insurance
- the increasing cost of health insurance and the decreasing access to health insurance through providers' spouses' employers

## Services

After-school care for Huntington children is also provided by the Lund Family Center at Brewster-Pierce Memorial School. The current program will be taken over by the YMCA Live Wires in the fall of 2006, and will be run at the same capacity. The school's after school program has 20 slots, which have never been filled on a daily basis.

Child care during the summer months is supplemented by a number of summer camps offering part-day opportunities, such as the Audubon Center and On the Loose Expeditions. Although not child care in the traditional sense, these activities represent private efforts to enrich, care for, and educate our children.

## Cost

The Town makes an extraordinary effort each year to meet the needs of Huntington children by funding the Town's education costs. For school year 2005-2006, the Town approved a school budget of \$1,720,962 for an estimated enrollment of 119 children. That represented a spending level of more than \$14,461 per child.

## Future

In the near-term future, the number of young children in Vermont will be decreasing. The most recent population estimate for the State (for the years 2000 to 2003) shows that the number of young children has decreased. In the last three years the number of children aged five to thirteen decreased by 9.6%, while the number of children less than five years old decreased by

8.7%. In Huntington, school enrollment has declined by approximately 1% at the elementary level and 1% in the total Huntington grade K-12 population in the past three years. Recent (2004-2005) student counts are: 119 elementary students; 106 middle school students; and 100 high school students. Therefore, over the planning horizon of this Town Plan, the number of children needing day care is forecast to remain the same.

## **The Town**

The Town has taken steps to allow for the provision of day care. Since 1995, a “day care center” has been a conditional use in the areas that are currently designated as Rural Residential and Village District. This is sufficiently broad to allow an adequate supply of child care facilities to be developed. The conditionality of this use is necessary to protect each district from the potential adverse impacts of such centers (such as traffic, parking, etc.) while allowing for approval of such centers when needed and where appropriate. In addition, the home occupation provisions in the Land Use Regulations are sufficiently broad to allow the establishment of home-based child care programs.

## **Goals: Childcare**

1. Help address financial difficulties associated with providing child care.
2. Ensure that adequate opportunities exist for the creation and maintenance of child care infrastructure.
3. Ensure the provision of quality child care via appropriate business assistance and work force development.

## **Implementation Recommendations: Child Care**

1. Participate in local and regional forums to explore ways the Town can assist child care providers with financial barriers.
2. Encourage the continued use of “Average Daily Membership” State education funds in order to help pay for preschool child care in qualified home-based and center-based facilities.
3. Review the Town’s Land Use Regulations for barriers to both center-based and home-based care facilities.
4. Encourage the continued use of municipal and school facilities for private and public child care opportunities.
5. Work with developers of major subdivision and residential developments on child care issues and possibilities (e.g., allowing home-based child care businesses).

6. Work with the schools, the Town Library, and the Town Recreation Department to ensure quality after-school programs are available.
7. Consider participating in the annual kindergarten readiness survey that is conducted by the Vermont Department of Education.
8. Assist child care providers by developing a local referral system or by supporting existing regional referral systems and agencies.
9. Include child care referral information, agency links, and training opportunities on the Town's website.
10. Promote accreditation and child development credentials, particularly for home-based care providers, by providing facilities and logistical support for training opportunities.

# Natural Resources

## Riparian & Surface Water

Riparian areas are ecosystems comprised of streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands, and floodplains and their borders that form a complex and interrelated hydrological system. These ecosystems extend up, down, and along Huntington's surface waters. Healthy riparian ecosystems give life to all the species that inhabit them and are also essential for what they provide to the nearby waters.

The downed wood, leaves, and similar organic material that riparian areas contribute to aquatic systems are important components of the food base and habitat structure in Huntington's water bodies. Mature trees in riparian areas also shade aquatic habitats, which helps to reduce temperatures. Riparian vegetation is crucial in filtering overland runoff, thus protecting water quality; and in stabilizing stream banks, thus preventing excessive stream bank erosion and sediment buildup in aquatic communities. Riparian areas protect our property and stream resources from flood and ice flow damage, protect our water quality for drinking, and provide for recreation.

Surface waters occupy close to 90 acres in Huntington and are an important resource for the Town. The rivers, streams, and ponds are used for fishing, swimming, canoeing, and scenic enjoyment. Most notable is the Huntington River, which flows through the middle of the Huntington Valley, linking the three villages. Designated by the State as Class B waters, this river should be swim-able and boat-able. Class B waters are also considered drinkable, if filtered and disinfected. The Huntington Conservation Commission has been monitoring the Huntington River for water quality for the past five years and has detected high levels of E. coli counts after rain events. This may indicate failing septic systems. Additional testing is being conducted in conjunction with the Town Health Officer to identify the sources. Contamination from a variety of natural resources, as yet unidentified, also appear to be an issue.

Due to many factors over the past decade, including channelization in several places, important fishery habitats have been lost along the river. Some of the most notable channelization has occurred behind the Town Recreation Area.

Flowing from south to north, the Huntington River is fed by many tributaries including Jones Brook in Hanksville; Cobb Brook by Charlie Smith Road; Brush Brook in Huntington Center; Carpenter Brook south of Shaker Mountain Road; Hollow Brook by the Huntington Hollow Road; Fargo Brook by East Street; Texas Hill Brook by Huntington Acres; Sherman Hollow Brook by the Audubon lands; and Johns Brook, which is the most northerly tributary in Huntington.

Gillette Pond—a surface water popular with Huntingtonians—is actually located in the Town of Richmond. It provides fishing opportunities and habitat for many large and small mammals. An important wetland adjacent to the pond is found in Huntington.

## Ground Water

Ground water is an important resource because it is the primary source of drinking water in Huntington and because of its interconnection with surface waters. Ground waters discharge into surface waters; and surface waters replenish ground waters. The quality of ground water can be impacted by land use practices such as septic systems, underground fuel tanks, solid waste, unused vehicles, road salt, fertilizers, storm water runoff, and hazardous waste. Ground water provides water for home, business, and agricultural needs. Most residences are served by individual wells. There are two public water systems in Town: the Huntington Fire District #1 along East Street and Huntington Woods; and the Brewster-Pierce School in Huntington Center.

## Wetlands <sup>18</sup>

Wetland communities include the vegetated, shallow-water margins of lakes and ponds; the seasonally flooded borders of rivers and streams; and a diversity of topographic settings across the landscape including: basins, hillside seeps, and wet flats. Wetlands are found in the upland areas and the river valley; and they serve many important functions for the Town. They act as filters to purify water and as “sponges” and storage areas to minimize flooding. They stabilize shorelines from erosion, recharge groundwater, and provide critical habitat for fish and wildlife.

Wetlands have three basic characteristics: (1) they are inundated by or saturated with water for some period during the growing season; (2) they contain wet or hydric soils; and (3) they are dominated by plants that are adapted to saturated soils. While wetlands are given many names, for common understanding, wetland names have been applied more consistently. Swamps are wetlands dominated by woody plants, either trees or shrubs; while marshes are wetlands dominated by herbaceous plants. Fens and bogs are peat accumulating open wetlands. Vernal pools are small seasonal isolated wetlands that may or may not have woody or emergent vegetation. Seeps are sloping wetlands and can be open or covered with woody vegetation. In Huntington, we have examples of all wetlands types, with the possible exception of fens and bogs.

Wetlands provide habitat for most species of wildlife at some point in their life cycle. Huntington’s wetlands support a variety of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates, and plant life. Some species are largely dependent on the wetlands while other species use wetlands occasionally. Vernal pools, while small in size, provide important breeding habitat for pool breeding amphibians and invertebrates. A number of wetlands in Town have beaver activity and are dynamic with respect to size, vegetation, and amount of open water.

The National Wetland Inventory (NWI) identifies 159 acres of wetlands in the Town of Huntington. The wetlands shown on the natural resources map are derived from this inventory. While not complete or thoroughly field checked, this is the best source of wetlands information the Town currently has available. Wetlands shown on the National Wetland Inventory maps are considered to be Class II wetlands under the Vermont Wetland Rules and require a 50 foot buffer zone in most instances.

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<sup>18</sup> For additional information on **wetlands**, see: *Conserving Vermont's Natural Heritage*, Austin, John, et al., published by the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, Agency of Natural Resources, Waterbury, Vermont. 2004.

The Town of Huntington contains many scattered river valley (floodplain) wetlands associated with the Huntington River and its larger tributaries. An important river valley wetland is also located along Hinesburg Hollow Road. It is a large, connected complex of shrub and emergent wetlands that provides habitat for many species of birds and other wildlife.

Many of the larger floodplains along the Huntington River have been converted to agricultural land because of their alluvial soils, which are well suited for crop or pasture land. Even these converted floodplains are important for protection of the river's functions and values. Restoration to naturally forested floodplain may be a consideration for some of the land. Floodplains in town are shown on the Natural Resources Map, Appendix 3. The boundaries are subject to field verification.

## Natural Areas & Sites of Biological Significance

Huntington has several areas identified by the State Natural Heritage Program that are considered to have statewide biological significance.

The largest area of biological significance identified is part of the Camel's Hump State Forest in the northeast part of town. The following natural communities are considered to be significant examples: montane spruce-fir forest; montane yellow birch-red spruce forest; and alpine meadow. The alpine meadow is the second largest example in the state and harbors a number of rare arctic-alpine plants. The montane spruce-fir forest is one of the larger examples identified in the state during a statewide assessment of this natural community type. Currently the State is completing a natural community base map for the entire Camel's Hump State Forest; and it is likely that other significant sites will be identified.

One area outside of Camel's Hump State land that has been identified as significant by the State is the dry oak-hickory-hophornbeam forest of Mayo Mountain. This forest type is also found on the ridge tops of the western side of Town, but needs further investigation.

Future town-wide inventories should identify sites of local significance for natural community types, including wetlands and rare species. Identification of these sites provides a starting point for prioritizing protection of natural resources in town through purchase, transfer of development rights, covenants, and other mechanisms. Protecting these and other natural resources will be considered in the Town's Land Use Regulations subdivision process.

## Forestland

Huntington is largely forested with contiguous forest on the eastern side of town, and large interconnected forest blocks on the western side of town. Development along the Huntington River Valley fragments the forestland from the east to the west side of town. To a lesser extent, development along the lower portion of the tributaries also fragments the forestland. However, the forests of the town are largely intact. These forestlands provide ample habitat for animals, including wide ranging species such as bear. Well planned development is necessary to minimize future impacts to these large unfragmented blocks.

Huntington forests are a mixture of hardwood and softwood. Much of the lower elevation forest can be characterized as hardwood including: red and sugar maple, beech, yellow birch, and white ash. Ravines and north facing slopes occasionally have a strong hemlock component. The tops of the low hills also have a strong red oak component, and white pine is commonly scattered here too. White pine also can be the dominant species in forests that were abandoned from agriculture. The higher elevation woodlands are a mixture of softwood including: red spruce, balsam fir, and yellow and heart leaved paper birch. The forests of Huntington are characteristic of the northern Appalachian Mountains. Nearly 5,000 acres of forest is within the Camel's Hump State Forest. The forests contribute both directly and indirectly to the economy of Huntington. The lower elevation woodlands provide wood for timber harvest, maple sugaring, and valuable wildlife habitat. Huntington's woodlands also provide a place for hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, hiking, mountain biking, snowshoeing, wildlife observation, and simply for enjoyment.

## Soils

Huntington has approximately 2,500 acres (10%) of soils with a prime or statewide agricultural designation. Most of these soils are found along the Huntington River Valley. According to the US Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), prime agricultural soils have the highest potential for crop production, with few limitations. Statewide soils have more limitations for crop production such as steep slopes, stoniness, or flooding problems. The presence of prime and statewide soils is also considered important in the ACT 250 process; and their presence along the river valley may affect the potential for development that is subject to ACT 250 review.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service also rates forest soils according to their potential to grow timber for commercial purposes and for maple syrup production. Forestland soil values are assigned according to slope, wetness, rooting depth, and harvest costs. A total of approximately 2,000 acres (8%) of the soils in Huntington have a high forestry rating, and 1,500 acres (6%) have a median forestry rating. This is not a high percentage of forestland with good soil potential relative to other towns in Vermont that have forests at lower elevations. These soils are also subject to the Act 250 review process.

## Quality of Natural Resources

The Huntington River and its tributaries provide recreational opportunities; and the waters are of acceptable quality for swimming and fishing. There has been a loss of fish habitat in certain sections of the river and concerns about stream bank stability exist. The quality of deep ground water appears to be acceptable in Huntington for drinking. However, there has been degradation of shallow ground waters in the Lower Village and Huntington Center areas, which has impacted the water quality of the Huntington River for swimming. The Town's extensive woodlands support both economic opportunities and habitat for large animals, and are in relatively good shape. Air quality is generally good, except for certain times in winter when woodstove emissions combine with local weather conditions to cause the build-up of airborne particulate matter.

## Wildlife Habitat

The forests, streams, wetlands, and open fields provide habitat for a variety of fish and wildlife species. Necessary wildlife habitat is defined by the State as habitat that is critical to a life stage of a species and must be identifiable. The State has mapped deer wintering habitat in Huntington. Deer winter areas are considered necessary for the survival of deer in winter. They are typically dominated by conifers such as pine, hemlock, and spruce—that provide important shelter from winter snows, and allow deer to move freely. The deer wintering area maps, in reality, indicate areas that are likely to be utilized by deer; but most have not been field checked in recent years. The value of deer wintering areas can be degraded by the close proximity of human disturbance that results from development

There are a few locations mapped by the State as bear mast and wetland feeding areas, although additional unmapped areas exist. In Vermont, mast stands are typically composed of a group of mature beech trees, but may also include oak. The bears will forage on the beechnuts and acorns in the fall. These nuts are highly nutritious and are one of the primary ways bears gain the necessary weight for the inactive wintering months. Wetlands are also important to bears, especially in the early spring when they will feed on the tubers of perennial wetland plants.

Wetlands provide habitat not only for bear, but for a variety of species, such as waterfowl for nesting. Vernal areas provide critical habitat for pool breeding amphibians.

Wildlife corridors are areas that allow a variety of animals to move between or along habitats. Stream and river corridors provide important wildlife corridors, especially when naturally vegetated buffers are present to serve as both habitat and screening for wildlife. The Huntington River's vegetated buffer often only includes the bank and a narrow strip at the top of the bank, with a quick transition to agricultural land. Other corridors can include uninhabited forested land and hedge rows that are in between settled areas and allow wildlife to move freely without disturbance. These areas are especially important where wildlife is crossing our river valleys.

Grassland provide habitat for grassland nesting birds. This habitat has been declining across the state and region wide. Mechanized agriculture has had a major impact on nesting birds. Allowing some land to not be mowed or having delayed mowing can increase the nesting success of grassland birds.

Huntington fisheries are considered cold water habitat, supporting such species as brown and brook trout. The main stem of the Huntington River supports a natural reproducing population of brown trout. The tributaries of the Huntington River and the main stem upstream of the Upper Village support brook trout. The tributaries, with their greater forest cover, create the cooler temperatures that are required by brook trout. The fishery in Huntington is limited, and is supported by stocking. The habitat has been degraded from natural conditions because of the removal of streamside vegetation for agriculture and by stream channelization.

Salmon fries have been successfully stocked in the Huntington River, maturing to smolt and migrate downstream. They tolerate higher temperatures than both trout species. The Huntington River has been identified as having excellent potential for meeting salmon restoration goals with stocking frye.

In conclusion, the type and diversity of wildlife habitat in Huntington needs to be better documented so the town can make informed decisions in land use planning.

## Goals: Natural Resources

1. Restore water quality so that the Huntington River maintains a Class B status of rivers and streams. Improve the quality of shallow ground waters where it has been degraded.
2. Improve the in-stream habitats of Huntington's surface waters to benefit fisheries and river dynamics.
3. Increase the amount of riparian habitat through easements and grants; and provide for long-term stewardship of high-quality riparian habitat.
4. Eliminate or minimize soil erosion into surface waters from roads, construction, agriculture, and areas with a lack of natural vegetation.
5. Provide public access points to the Huntington River—where landowners are willing and where wildlife will not be impacted or disturbed.
6. Protect wetlands in Huntington and restore their functions.
7. Protect the biological diversity and significant habitats for the benefit of wildlife and residents.
8. Conserve valuable soils for agriculture.
9. Conserve rare plant and animal habitat.
10. Protect examples of state and locally significant natural communities.
11. Conserve wildlife habitat and wildlife corridors.
12. Protect, conserve, and restore riverine floodplains.
13. Protect local air quality.
14. Keep large forest blocks intact and minimize fragmentation from development.
15. Control invasive exotic plant species.

## Implementation Recommendations: Natural Resources

1. Work with landowners, ecologists, and transportation planners to find suitable routes to access the Huntington River via foot, bicycle, and automobile.
2. Support and encourage the efforts of local groups as well as interested private landowners to re-vegetate stream banks for control of erosion and creation of valuable wildlife habitat.
3. Encourage forest landowners to enhance the environmental health and economic sustainability of our forests by utilizing the service of public and private foresters.
4. Encourage economic incentives that utilize woodland resources, such as the State Current Use Program.
5. Identify and map wetlands that are not shown on the National Wetland Inventory maps and verify the mapped wetland boundaries and types, including vernal pools. This should be done using residents, including local natural resources experts, in conjunction with other outside experts.
6. Encourage natural community and wildlife habitat mapping to identify, inventory, and access areas of importance to wildlife species and biodiversity.
7. Develop protection strategies for critical or declining habitat features, such as deer wintering habitats, mast stands, grasslands, early successional forests, riparian forests, and wildlife travel corridors.
8. Continue supporting the Huntington Conservation Commission's efforts to develop educational workshops and materials that highlight the Town's natural resources and their associated economic, recreational, and ecological benefits.
9. Continue developing long-term plans for the conservation of the Town's natural resources for economic, recreation, and ecological benefits.
10. Create setbacks from the Huntington River and its major tributaries through the Land Use Regulations.
11. Encourage citizen trackers to survey for the presence of wildlife.
12. Assist local, state, and federal groups in the preservation of natural resources.
13. Inventory the natural communities of the Town and determine those of local and state significance by visiting sites of interested landowners.
14. Conduct an inventory of rare species found in Huntington. This could be included as part of an inventory of natural communities.

15. Identify and maintain the ecological integrity of corridors and networks of corridors that connect critical wildlife habitats.
16. Continue supporting the Huntington Conservation Commission's efforts to monitor and identify impairments to water quality.
17. Establish land use regulations that protect natural resource, using citizen input.
18. Develop a corridor management plan for the Huntington River as a mechanism to protect the Town and landowners from flood and erosion damage.
19. Educate the public, through articles and flyers, that burn barrels are illegal and comprise air quality. Also educate the public about operation of wood stoves in order to minimize air quality impacts and ensure human safety.
20. Identify large forest blocks and discourage development that fragments these forests.
21. Encourage ecologically meaningful setbacks on river and stream courses.
22. Identify and remove invasive exotic plant species. Conservation Fund money is available for riparian restoration projects
23. Encourage use of the town conservation fund for riparian restoration projects.

# Recreation & Open Space

The Town of Huntington is fortunate to have public, private, and State owned land that offers outstanding natural beauty and recreational opportunities for Huntington residents and visitors. In addition to the recreation they provide, these assets help support Huntington's economy.

A number of recreational opportunities currently exist in Huntington including: multiple access points to the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers' (V.A.S.T.) system of snowmobile trails; the Catamount Trail; the Long Trail; and Camel's Hump and the numerous hiking and cross-country skiing trails that surround it. Fishing, swimming, canoeing, and kayaking opportunities abound with access to the Huntington River and its many tributaries. Abundant open land with unrestricted access allows residents and visitors to enjoy hunting the many species in town including, but not limited to, upland birds, deer, moose, and bear.

The Town has several recreational centers. One is the Camels Hump Ski Center that is run as a non-profit cooperative. A second is the Sleepy Hollow Inn (formerly Sherman Hollow) which offers Nordic skiing and mountain biking. A third center is On the Loose Expeditions, which is an adventure travel guide service offering summer day camps for ages seven to thirteen years. A fourth is the Audubon Center, which offers numerous hiking trails, day camps, and other recreational and educational activities. Additionally, the Birds of Vermont Museum offers hiking trails and educational opportunities for residents of all ages. A fifth is the Camels Hump Skiers' Association.

Numerous Class 3, Class 4, and abandoned logging roads provide opportunities for walking, horseback riding, and mountain biking. Huntington also has public facilities that host a variety of activities from youth soccer leagues to horseshoes and volleyball.

Other recreational activities are emerging. One example is the active and growing arts community that founded Huntington Valley Arts, a not-for-profit corporation that provides educational and cultural opportunities for the community.

The future of recreation in Huntington will depend on the efforts of public groups such as the Huntington Conservation Commission and the Recreation Committee; non-profit organizations such as the Audubon Center; private entities; and individual citizens. The Town is becoming a destination spot for recreational and educational opportunities in nature. Ecotourism is already helping, and will likely continue to help, support our local economy.

The Huntington Planning Commission's Town Plan Survey of 1999 showed that Huntington residents have a continued interest in maintaining and developing additional recreational opportunities. The following goals provide for improved recreational opportunities and preservation of existing resources.

## Goals: Recreation & Open Space

1. Support and develop existing recreational opportunities.

2. Provide a broad range of recreational opportunities for all age groups.
3. Provide sufficient space and facilities for public recreation.
4. Enhance the Huntington River as a recreational resource.
5. Protect and preserve the natural and historic features of Huntington.

## **Implementation Recommendations: Recreation & Open Space**

1. Continue to promote cooperation and communication between Huntington residents, the Huntington Recreation Committee, the Huntington Conservation Commission, the Huntington Planning Commission, and the Huntington Selectboard.
2. Continue supporting the Huntington Conservation Commission's efforts to develop educational workshops and materials that promote the wise recreational use of private and public land.
3. Continue supporting the Huntington Conservation Commission's efforts to identify new public and private recreational opportunities including trail networks and parcels of land.
4. Continue supporting the Huntington Conservation Commission and the Recreation Committee's efforts to coordinate research for developing a recreation path to connect the villages and improve access to the Huntington River.
5. Continue supporting the Huntington Conservation Commission and the Recreation Committee's efforts to work with the Town and private landowners to provide space for public recreation facilities and public events.
6. Continue supporting the Huntington Planning Commission's work with developers of future subdivisions to include appropriate links to recreational trails in the community.
7. Continue supporting the Huntington Planning Commission's work on draft amendments to the Land Use Regulations for "set aside" of areas that provide recreational opportunities. (State Statute allows 15% of large developments to be set aside for recreational use.)

# Historic Features

Huntington's long and rich history is expressed in its many fine buildings and structures. Forty-six buildings have been identified by the State Division for Historic Preservation, in survey work conducted in 1979, as being worthy of being listing as State Historic Sites.<sup>19</sup> These individual sites are recorded in book format on individual survey forms with accompanying photos and are on record at the Town Office. The survey forms describe the condition of the buildings, and locate and record their architectural and historic significance.

Many of Huntington's historic buildings are included in the Huntington Center Historic District. The District extends from thirty yards south of Camel's Hump Road to a boundary south of the Town Office. It includes all structures on either side of Main Road, including the Hanks-Bennett house and the Town Office (school house). This District includes eleven historic structures, representing three historical periods of growth: early, middle, and late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Also identified on the survey is a building of national significance, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. This is the Union Meeting House in the Lower Village: a white, Greek Revival gable front structure capped with a three-staged steeple and simple restrained classical details. Restoration efforts for the Union Meeting House have been supported by numerous historic preservation grants. In March 2000, Huntington voters purchased the Union Meeting House from the Huntington Historical Society to use for the Town Library and Community Center.

In February 1999, after a long process, the Town of Huntington applied for and received a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant in the amount of \$444,600 to use for the renovation of the Fuller House in the Lower Village as the new Huntington Post Office, with additional office and studio space. The intent of the grant was to sustain the village community with the location of the post office and revitalize village commercial development. The grant is administered as a loan to the building's owners through the Town. Upon repayment, 100% of the funds will remain in Huntington for additional community development projects as a revolving loan fund administered through a town committee in cooperation with Community Capital of Vermont and the Champlain Housing Trust.

Individuals have purchased and restored some of the town's historical structures, mainly residences. As an example, in recent years, the Randall Barn, owned by Sarah Jane Williamson, is now on the National Register of Historic Places, and has been a recipient of the Chittenden County Historic Society's annual awards for Historic and Architectural Excellence. Since its restoration in 1998, this magnificent barn has served as a community gathering place for artistic and social events, in addition to its role in the production and distribution of vegetables and flowers.

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<sup>19</sup> The **State survey** utilized historic data from the Hemenway (1868) and Child (1882) Gazetteers and the work of Bertha Hanson, Town Historian, in the 1976 publication HUNTINGTON, VERMONT 1786 TO 1976, edited by Olga Hallock.

An example of a new building, that was designed, sited, and built sensitively is the Hegman house on Camel's Hump Road. Located close to the road in an architectural style compatible with its neighbors, the Hegmans continued the compact, coherent form of the village. This house was also recognized by Chittenden County Historic Society's awards program.

In 2000 the Huntington Historic and Community Trust (HHCT) was established as an outgrowth of the Huntington Historical Society, which had been established in 1982. This non-profit entity has been active on several fronts, enabling landowners to purchase land of merit for conservation, recreation, or open space so that it is protected in perpetuity. The Huntington Historic and Community Trust membership is playing an active role in preserving the historic features of the community, and their efforts should be encouraged.

Another example of the community's interest in protecting Huntington's historic and architectural character is found in the work of the Town Hall Committee. Recent improvements have been made to the Town Hall building to provide accessibility to the ground floor. Coupled with other stabilization work, this has enabled new community uses, including the very successful Bingo Nights of 2005 which have provided financial support for ongoing improvements to this historic structure. The building also hosted a series of public workshops in 2005.

Town Hall historical conservation efforts have also resulted in the preservation and documentation of the historic stage curtains from the Henry Family Theater productions held in the hall in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. With the aid of grants and the help of dedicated citizens, many similar projects are possible.

Historic sites and the preservation of this heritage is an important part of keeping Huntington a desirable place to live. Huntington's historic character also adds to its desirability as a tourist destination, hence increasing the Town's economic base with minimal impact on the Town infrastructure.

We are aware of the potential for archeological resources, particularly those that may be found in the river basin area. Over time, we should work with the Division of Historic Preservation to identify sites and protect these valuable resources.

Without precautions, the visual and cultural attributes of Huntington are vulnerable, and our connection to our rich heritage may be lost.

## **Goals: Historic Features**

1. Protect Huntington's historic and archeological sites and the Huntington Center Historic District.
2. Encourage further repair and occupancy of the Union Meeting House for library and community center purposes.

3. Maintain visual and cultural connection to the historic architectural aspects of Huntington.

## Implementation Recommendations: Historic Features

1. Identify significant structures as historic landmarks and protect them through the Land Use Regulations design review criteria. Incorporate the Huntington Center Historic District (as identified in the State Historic Sites and Structures Survey) into the Land Use Regulations in order to afford protection to the historic and architectural heritage of Huntington.
2. Require that public hearings be held prior to approval for removal of or significant alteration to Huntington's historic structures, in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4407(15).
3. Require that new structures proposed within the Historic District be subject to a public hearing process in order to ensure their compatibility with the character of the neighborhood, as described by the State survey or by expanded criteria outlined in advance in a report by the Huntington Planning Commission.
4. Apply for grants and other funding for the preservation of historic structures and sites.
5. Work with the Huntington Historic and Community Trust to update the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation's inventory of historic places and help raise awareness of Huntington's historic structures.
6. Continue efforts to stabilize and utilize the Town Hall.

# Schools

Public educational opportunities for Huntington students include Brewster-Pierce Memorial School (pre-kindergarten through grade 4); Camel's Hump Middle School in Richmond (grades 5 through 8); and Mt. Mansfield Union High School in Jericho (grades 9 through 12). Vocational training opportunities are available at Essex Junction High School and the Burlington Technical Center.

## Huntington's Town School: Brewster-Pierce Memorial School

Members of the Brewster-Pierce Memorial School staff, the Brewster-Pierce School Board, and the community continually develop and implement plans to improve the Town's local school. Toward this end, the Brewster-Pierce School Board drafted a Mission Statement which includes Guiding Principles and Learning Expectations. This is excerpted below:

### **Brewster-Pierce School Board Mission Statement**

The Mission of Brewster-Pierce Memorial School is to create an educational environment that promotes rigorous academic achievement, responsible social behavior, and active civic involvement. Our mission is also to create a foundation that fosters healthy decision-making, creative expression, and environmental awareness.

### **Brewster-Pierce School Board Guiding Principles**

1. We believe that Brewster-Pierce Memorial School is a unique school that strives to teach to the whole of each child. The Town of Huntington is a unique community that provides support and an array of talents and resources that help to create a unique learning community.
2. Every student has the ability to learn. We believe the school and community share the responsibility to ensure that all students have the opportunity to flourish and reach their maximum potential.
3. We believe there are core social values that must be the basis for our interactions with each other. It is vital that we treat each student with complete respect and dignity. We will focus on social interaction and disciplinary work as learning opportunities rather than punitive actions.

4. We believe the school community must nurture in students a love for knowledge, a desire to learn, and awareness that education is a life-long process.
5. We believe learning enhances life culturally, socially, and economically.
6. We believe we must use practices that support the Learning Opportunities: Access, Instruction, Assessment and Reporting, Connections, and Best Practices as outlined in the Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities.

### **Brewster-Pierce School Action Planning Team**

In 1997, the passage of Vermont's Act 60—the Equal Education Opportunity Act—required communities to work together to improve schools. In 1998, an Action Planning Team was established in Huntington comprised of teachers, staff, parents, and community members. After careful consideration of a wide variety of data, the Team prepared the Brewster-Pierce Memorial School Action Plan 1999-2004. The plan has been updated beginning with the 2005-06 school year.

For each Chosen Area of Focus, the Team documented Action Plan Steps. These plans will guide the work of the staff and Brewster-Pierce School Board in planning for programming and professional development. Additionally, the Brewster-Pierce School Board meets once per year in a "retreat" meeting to assess progress and define goals for the coming year.

### **The Areas of Focus are Language Arts, Mathematics, and School Climate**

#### **Language Arts:**

1. Investigate a comprehensive spelling program.
2. Commit to new professional development opportunities.

#### **Mathematics:**

3. Address curriculum mapping for the beginning of the school year.
4. Investigate math facts fluency systems.

#### **Climate:**

5. Have a faculty "book read" with discussions regarding school climate.
6. Survey community for school satisfaction and create actions from there.

## Overall School Enrollment

School enrollment has declined by approximately 1% at the elementary level and 1% for the total Huntington kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade population in the past three years. Current (2004-2005) student counts are: 119 elementary school students; 106 middle school students; and 100 high school students. School facilities in Huntington, the middle school in Richmond, and the high school in Jericho all appear to have adequate capacity for the projected enrollment needs of the next five years.

The Brewster-Pierce facility is currently adequate. Renovations of the roof, siding, insulation, and ventilation systems in the summer/fall of 2005 have gone a long way toward addressing the maintenance and upkeep challenges that come with any large building. The needs of our students will continue to affect budgeting issues, particularly class size. The school staff is committed to keeping class size at or below state recommendations.

## Role in Community

The role of a school within the community is greater than the education of that town's children; schools can serve a social need, providing a focus for members of the community who do not have children or grandchildren in the school itself. In Huntington, there are opportunities for residents to participate at the Brewster-Pierce School through volunteering in classrooms, the library, and throughout the school. Specifically, the school has a *Kinderpartners* reading program, which draws on volunteers; and an active *Partners in Education* organization, that supports the school in numerous ways. Older residents are invited to participate once a month at a Senior Lunch, where they can enjoy a hot meal in the school's cafeteria and are often entertained with a musical program provided by classes at the school. Older residents have also been invited to become Foster Grandparents. Residents are also encouraged to participate in the administration of the school through the five elected positions on the Brewster-Pierce School Board.

The local school can provide opportunities for employment for residents in the community. Brewster-Pierce School is the largest employer in the Town of Huntington. Local residents participate in a variety of positions in the school: work on the grounds, the facility, and in the classroom as substitute teachers. The school also provides temporary and contract employment for local residents.

Younger residents have regular interaction with the school community in Huntington through the Camel's Hump Family Program's preschool and parenting groups. The goal of this program, which is housed in the school, is to provide a safe level of comfort for incoming kindergartners and their families, as well as educational and social opportunities.

Inclusion of community members in the school's operation and in volunteer capacities provides an opportunity for students to experience contact with residents of all ages and backgrounds, and provides them with a sense of belonging within the community they live.

The majority of the education that Huntington students receive through the public school system takes place in other towns. Huntington is part of the Chittenden East School District #12 (CESD). Students travel to Richmond for grades 5 through 8, where they are joined by students from the towns of Richmond and Bolton at the Camel's Hump Middle School. Upon completion of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, Huntington students are bussed to Mt. Mansfield Union High School in Jericho, where they join students from Richmond, Bolton, Jericho, and Underhill. The closest resident will travel 8 miles to Camel's Hump Middle School and the furthest resident will travel 26 miles to Mt. Mansfield Union High School.

While both the middle school and the high school provide opportunities for students to participate in "extracurricular" activities, it is notable that Huntington students, in several activities like interscholastic sports, are not represented in proportion to the population of students enrolled, especially at the high school level. Distance and lack of transportation back to Huntington from activities at the school is often cited as a barrier. Volunteers, too, are often discouraged by the distance they must travel to participate in activities. The school and the community must continue to work together to support students' participation in extracurricular activities.

## Facilities

Huntington residents strongly identify with Brewster-Pierce and do not consider moving events that are beyond capacity for Town buildings to other towns. In Huntington, the largest public facility is the Brewster-Pierce School gymnasium which is used for Town Meeting and other large public meetings.

Brewster-Pierce School was built for 210 students. Currently, there are under 125 students enrolled. With the latest addition to the school building, built in 1994, State standards for the septic system have been met at the existing site, and the school cannot be expanded further. If the building reaches capacity, a new facility located elsewhere in the town will need to be built or other accommodations for septic disposal will need to be made.

Currently, there is adequate space for the foreseeable future to house other programs at the school, including the Camel's Hump Family Program and after-school programs.

An addition built onto Mt. Mansfield Union High School in 1998 will carry the anticipated student load of 1,200 students. Currently, there are 1,077 students enrolled. Some interest in having a second, smaller high school on the southern end of the Chittenden East Supervisory District (CESD) has been expressed at both the administrative and community level.

## Adult Education Opportunities

There are multiple opportunities for Huntington Residents to pursue higher and continuing education in the area, including UVM, CCV, St. Michael's College, Burlington College, and Champlain College. The State of Vermont offers adult education and literacy programs through ten "Learning Works" centers throughout Vermont. These centers offer programs in beginning to advanced literacy in math, reading, writing, interpersonal skills, workplace skills, general

educational development (GED), adult diploma programs (ADP), English to speakers of other languages (ESOL), commercial driver's license (CDL) and basic computer instruction. The closest adult learning centers are located in Colchester, Middlebury and Barre. The Town has had appropriations to support regional services in the past.

## **Goals: Schools**

### **Academic Goals**

1. Increase student performance in the area of higher order thinking skills.
2. Increase early childhood awareness of literature, basic mathematical concepts, and social skills.
3. Promote school/community/parent partnerships.
4. Keep class sizes at or below state recommendations.

### **District Goals**

5. Every student will achieve academic success.
6. Every student will learn to become an involved citizen who meets or exceeds a high level of performance in communication, reasoning, problem solving, personal development, and civic/social responsibility.
7. Each school will provide and maintain a safe learning environment for all students.
8. Each school will provide a learning environment that is relevant and challenging to the learner and which encourages and inspires lifelong learning.
9. Each school will develop a climate that fosters collaboration and ongoing communication among people in the school, home, and community.

### **Town Planning Goals**

10. Wherever development is proposed, consider the impact on the school transportation system.
11. Encourage greater outreach to existing community resources.
12. Establish a process for communication and liaison between the Brewster-Pierce School Board and Huntington Planning Commission on mutually relevant issues.

## **Implementation Recommendations: Schools**

1. Develop a community resource program.

2. Develop appropriate travel corridors and consistent traffic speed limit enforcement in villages and along adjacent neighborhood roads to ensure children's safety.
3. Develop a process for communication between the Brewster-Pierce School Board and the Huntington Planning Commission.

# Energy

Energy sources are required for every aspect of our lives. Energy is used to produce and deliver the food that we eat; produce the cars we drive and the clothes we wear; enable us to get where we are going, and heat our homes—a list that is far from inclusive. Virtually everything that we use, and everything we do, is related to the use of energy.

Huntington is a rural town that is located near a major urban area. It has a very small commercial sector, so the residential sector accounts for most of the total energy demand. In addition, a high number of residents commute to work in neighboring areas, particularly Burlington, Waterbury, and Montpelier, leading to high gasoline consumption.

Fuel oil is the most common fuel used for dwellings in Huntington. Wood and propane are the second and third most common fuel types. It is important to encourage the use of energy conservation features and renewable energy resources, considering current and projected energy resources. The Town should make sure that all new housing starts are aware of tax and other economic incentives from the State through Efficiency Vermont, and from other organizations, in order to encourage energy efficient building before construction begins.

Energy costs have risen substantially over the last few years and predictions are that costs will continue to increase. In addition, there is a growing body of research indicating that greenhouse gas emissions are leading to global climate change. The goals and implementation steps for the Town's energy use are focused on the education of our citizens regarding available local and state resources, and on approaches that will help conserve and use energy efficiently and wisely.

## Goals: Energy

1. Increase the energy efficiency of existing municipal buildings and equipment, and in local residences.
2. Encourage energy efficiency in new construction.
3. Reduce the demand for energy used for transportation.
4. Encourage local renewable energy production that is consistent with the rural character of the Town.

## Implementation Recommendations: Energy

1. Conduct energy audits of all municipal facilities and equipment. These audits can result in low interest loans from banks for improvements in energy efficiency.
2. Educate citizens about Efficiency Vermont<sup>20</sup>, about no-cost home energy efficiency and weatherization services available to income-eligible households through the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity, and other consulting organizations to encourage residential energy audits.
3. Require adherence to Vermont Energy Code for all newly constructed and renovated housing units. (Energy code compliance and certificate filing, per 21 V.S.A. §266, should be a condition of all residential building and subdivision permits.)
4. Continue to educate citizens about the Energy Star<sup>21</sup> (5 Star) certification program for all newly constructed and renovated housing units.
5. Encourage increased energy efficiency in all buildings.
6. Implement energy saving upgrades in Town buildings when maintenance or upgrades occur, or whenever possible.
7. Encourage house siting to take advantage of solar gain possibilities.
8. Inform citizens about Efficiency Vermont's ability to provide life cycle analyses to evaluate home equipment investments.
9. Identify winter fuel assistance and weatherization programs available through the State and other sources (e.g., Chittenden Bank has an energy efficient loan program).
10. Utilize services of Renewable Energy Vermont<sup>22</sup> to provide information and subsidies for the use of renewable energy sources.
11. Plan a series of public education outreach sessions with the Huntington Conservation Commission to present and discuss energy saving measures in the home and at work (e.g., energy savings associated with efficient light bulbs; Energy Star website for information on home appliances).

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<sup>20</sup> **Efficiency Vermont** was created by the Vermont Legislature and the Vermont Public Service Board to help all Vermonters save energy, reduce energy costs, and protect Vermont's environment. Efficiency Vermont is operated by Vermont Energy Investment Corporation, and independent, non-profit organization under contract to the Vermont Public Service Board.

<sup>21</sup> **Energy Star** is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy that is helping save money and protect the environment through energy efficient products and practices.

<sup>22</sup> **Renewable Energy Vermont** (REV) is dedicated solely to working toward increased renewable energy use in Vermont. The organization is comprised of renewable energy companies, institutional and academic partners and concerned citizens of Vermont. REV member businesses are leading experts in helping homes and businesses generate their own clean power and heat.

12. Work with the school district to examine bus travel times, find ways to encourage more student use of buses, and reduce private automobile use for school travel.
13. Create a gravel park-and-ride lot near the Lower Village to facilitate commuter car pooling.
14. Educate citizens about services offered by the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO) regarding transportation and energy efficiency.
15. Educate citizens regarding energy efficient vehicles and engines.
16. Require the Town to examine and compare replacement costs for municipal vehicles and engines, considering energy efficient alternatives.
17. Identify services and resources that support telecommuting.
18. Encourage the Huntington Historical and Community Trust to continue to explore the feasibility of developing bicycle/footpaths through the Town to connect residential areas, recreation areas, schools, and village centers.
19. Provide information to citizens regarding resources that enhance ecologically sound woodland management and timber harvesting techniques.
20. Utilize, through grants or private investments, agriculture through alternative energy supplies from renewable sources (e.g., methane, biodiesel, solar, wind, mini-hydro, biomass, and geothermal).
21. Research options for small scale, local renewable energy generation (Huntington Conservation Commission).
22. Investigate use of biodiesel fuel in municipal vehicles.
23. Revise Land Use Regulations to incorporate Standards for the development of renewable energy facilities.

# Economic Plan

Most of our economy is driven by employment outside of Huntington. However, there are also many resourceful and skilled individuals working in Huntington who provide products and services to those within and beyond the Town's borders. This small scale economic development is in keeping with Huntington's rural character, attracts visitors to town, contributes to the tax base in the Town, and should be encouraged. It is important, considering these factors, to provide resources and infrastructure to those working both inside and outside of Huntington in order to sustain the Town from an economic standpoint.

Industrial and commercial uses are limited in Huntington, and will most likely continue to be limited, although two recreational businesses have been established since the last plan. Limits to industrial and commercial growth include availability of suitable land and lack of infrastructure. The Town has seen an increase in home-based occupations over the last decade and this pattern is likely to continue due, in part, to the recent availability of high-speed Internet access for most of Huntington. There are home carpentry shops; artist studios; bed and breakfasts; auto body and repair shops; environmental consulting services; computer services; and a forge. More and more residents are choosing to work in the town and telecommute. The result of these activities is a more self-sufficient community as goods and services are exchanged between Huntington's residents and with others beyond its borders.

The mountains, the Huntington River, and other areas of natural beauty in Huntington provide business opportunities for local residents in terms of recreation and tourism. It is likely that ecotourism will provide opportunities for existing or new businesses in the future. Recreational uses such as hiking, skiing, and snowmobiling have grown in the past several decades. Indeed, many citizens view recreational uses and an expanding tourist base as a means of bringing additional income into the town without placing many undue demands for services upon Town government.

As we plan for continued economic growth in Huntington, we must gather accurate data about existing businesses and our need for resources and infrastructure in Huntington; determine priorities; and identify sources of funding. The following overall goals provide direction in terms of developing greater local economic diversity while maintaining Huntington's rural character.

## Goals: Economic Planning

1. Encourage small scale business, light industry, farming, forestry, and home occupations to sustain a working landscape.
2. Promote area businesses.
3. Promote natural resources.

## Implementation Recommendations: Economic Planning

1. Inventory existing Town economic activity.
2. Determine citizen interest in developing a local business website or other type of business listing.
3. Promote local businesses through the Richmond Area Business Association (RABA).
4. Market local resources, services, and products through Richmond Area Business Association (RABA) and other suitable venues.
5. Clarify in the Land Use Regulations the difference between a home occupation and commercial use; and identify types of home-based commercial activities that are appropriate for residential settings.
6. Analyze barriers and incentives for economic growth in Town.
7. Develop incentives for small businesses and home occupations while considering positive and negative environmental impacts.
8. Encourage use of buildings that combine residential use with the development of offices, studios, and small-scale shops and stores.
9. Encourage local businesses and residents to seek bids for services from businesses located within Huntington and to give locally based businesses preference whenever cost-effective.
10. Identify and educate townspeople about funding sources and other resources to support business startup.
11. Encourage residents to use the Huntington Revolving Loan Fund for projects that can enhance economic sustainability in Huntington.
12. Stabilize the tax base through local economic infrastructure that has a minimal impact on school and other community resources.
13. Work with Representatives and Senators for statewide tax stabilization, especially for the elderly and economically disadvantaged
14. Support local efforts to establish a Huntington Economic Development Commission.

# Relationship to Surrounding Towns & Region

Huntington is surrounded by a rural, largely forested landscape. The following State and Municipal conservation lands are found near or along Huntington's border with neighboring towns: Camel's Hump State Park and Forest; Robbins Mountain Wildlife Management Area; Lewis Creek Wildlife Management Area; Fred Johnson Wildlife Management Area; Huntington Gap Wildlife Management Area; and Hinesburg Town Forest. There are also several private lands with conservation easements along Huntington's borders. Huntington is connected to surrounding towns by forests that are largely unfragmented and that provide basically intact travel corridors for wildlife species. Similar to surrounding towns, Huntington has small village centers that are the Town's focal point.

## Richmond

The town of Richmond shares the western three-fifths of Huntington's northern boundary. Many local services including banks, restaurants, and other professional services not available in Huntington are available in Richmond.

Richmond's 2002 Town Plan emphasizes carefully planned commercial development that will maintain the small-town character of Richmond; maintain a compact development pattern in the village areas; and maintain rural development that is carefully sited and clustered in a manner that will allow preservation of significant open space (pp.70-71). Some very important natural resources lie across the Richmond/Huntington line: most notably the Huntington River Gorge and Gillette Pond. The Richmond Plan recognizes the importance of these resources in its natural resources section—just as this Plan does. Richmond's goals are compatible with the Huntington Town Plan.

## Bolton

Bolton shares the eastern third of Huntington's northern border. Most of the land on either side of that border is within Camel's Hump State Park, and all of it lies above 1,500 feet. Bolton's Town Plan calls for support of agriculture, forestry, and recreation, as well as commercial development which will offer employment opportunities for local residents—similar to Huntington's Town Plan.

## Hinesburg

The Town of Hinesburg shares Huntington's western border, and has a centrally located village. The goals of the 2005 Hinesburg Town Plan are similar to Huntington's goals, as well as those of surrounding towns. Their emphasis is on maintaining a rural small-town character and environment; planning well-managed growth; providing adequate community facilities and services; and protecting natural resources. Both Hinesburg and Huntington emphasize the importance of the protection of important natural resources and rural character along their common border.

## Starksboro

Starksboro is located southwest of Huntington and shares more of its border with Huntington than with any other town. The terrain along this border is mountainous and the village areas of Starksboro are in the southern and western areas of the town, quite removed from Huntington. Three roads provide direct access to land in Starksboro: Hinesburg Hollow, Shaker Mountain, and Parker Bean. Parker Bean Road, a dead end road, originates in Huntington. In order to reach those areas of Starksboro that are accessed by Parker Bean Road, an alternate route must be taken through Huntington. For this reason, Huntington should stay apprised of the development of land along Parker Bean Road.

## Buel's Gore

Located in the extreme southeastern corner of Chittenden County, Buel's Gore was formed out of land left over after surveys of surrounding towns were completed. A large portion of Camel's Hump State Forest lies within its boundaries. Vermont Route 17 winds its way through the Appalachian Gap in Buel's Gore. A population of 12 live within this rugged, forested community of approximately three square miles.

A January 2000 draft of the Buel's Gore Plan states that "a small amount of low impact commercial development would be appropriate" for their community (p.2) and sets goals to identify areas suitable for economic development. This is potentially significant, as the area most suited for development is likely along the border with Huntington. The Buel's Gore Plan encourages coordination with Huntington's Planning Commission in this endeavor in order to ensure that the goals articulated in Huntington's Town Plan are considered.

## Duxbury & Fayston

Huntington's eastern boundary is formed by the steep, rocky spine of the Green Mountains and is shared with the towns of Duxbury and Fayston. The Duxbury and Fayston Town Plans are compatible with this Plan, and both state that the areas along the Huntington border are sensitive and that development will be discouraged there.

## Chittenden County Regional Plan

The Chittenden County Regional Plan, adopted August 28, 2006, sets the overall framework for land use planning in the county. According to the Regional Plan's future land use map, Huntington contains three Village Planning Area<sup>23</sup> surrounded by the Rural Planning Area.

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<sup>23</sup> A **Village Planning Area** is defined as a "compact area of mixed-use activities that maintains the character of a Vermont village. This type of Planning Area is intended to serve its local surroundings as a municipal center where people can live, work, shop, and recreate."

### **Village Planning Area** (from the *2006 Regional Plan*, page 2.6)

Many of the other chapters of the *Regional Plan* present policies that relate specifically to the Village Planning Areas. Those policies recommend that Village Planning Areas

- ❖ Provide for the commercial, cultural, educational, employment, industrial (where compatible), institutional, and recreational needs of local residents and employers;
- ❖ Have a high priority for public sewer and water infrastructure and for transportation investments (including non-motorized modes) to support future development; and
- ❖ Be developed in accordance with local plans and bylaws to allow for higher-density, mixed-uses, employing design standards that incorporate alternatives to automotive transportation, ensure the compatibility of nearby land uses and minimize adverse impacts on natural resources and ecosystem health.

### **Village Planning Area Policies** (from the *2006 Regional Plan*, page 3.12)

1. Development in a Village Planning Area should include a mixture of land uses at densities and scales that are appropriate to a Vermont Village (see page 2.6).
2. Development in a Village Planning Area should primarily serve the needs of local residents and employers as well as those in smaller nearby towns.
3. The density of development in a Village Planning Area should be distinctly higher than surrounding Rural Planning Areas.
4. Village Planning Areas should contain interconnected, mixed-use development consistent with principles of transit oriented design, rather than isolated enclaves of single use development.

In most respects, the Huntington Town Plan is consistent with goals of the *Regional Plan*; although currently we do not have design standards that incorporate alternatives to automotive transportation or plans for infrastructure that would support the density of development that the *Regional Plan* proposes. The geography of the Huntington River Valley may also preclude the densities in the Villages that are proposed by the *Regional Plan*.

# Appendices

Appendix Map 4a

Appendix Map 4b

Appendix Map 1 – Facilities/Transportation/Historic Structures

Appendix Map 2 – Existing Land Use Map

Appendix Map 3 – Natural Resources Map

Appendix Map 4 – Future Land Use Map

Appendix Map 5 – New Residences 1995-2005