

APPROVED MINUTES
MAIDSTONE PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Thursday, July 20, 2023, 7:00pm
Held by Zoom Video Conference

Members present (via Zoom): Bruce Barker, Bob Champagne-Willis, Chris von Alt

Other members of Town Government present (via Zoom): Town Clerk Amy Pear; Zoning Administrator Mike Otis; Lister, Auditor, and Health Officer Sandra Gray; Administrative Assistant to the Zoning Board, Planning Commission, and Selectboard Mary von Alt

Also present (via Zoom): Laurie and Bob Snowman, Burt and Carol Kline

At 7:02 pm, the meeting was called to order by Chris von Alt, Chairman.

APPROVE 2023-06-21 MINUTES:

Bob pointed out that a survey is not required as part of the process of creating/revising a Town Plan, but is one option for obtaining community input. The minutes will therefore be amended to include that accurate information. Bob made a motion to accept the minutes as amended for the 6/21/2023 Planning Commission Meeting; Bruce seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

RULES OF PARTICIPATION:

Chris reminded meeting attendees that the Rules of Participation are in effect; this is a public meeting, but not a meeting of the public. It is a working meeting, so the discussion will mostly be among the Commission members, but public participation will be welcomed as scheduled on the Agenda and during the meeting, as possible.

CONTINUE TO WORK ON REVISING THE TOWN PLAN, DISCUSSING AND ACTING UPON AS NECESSARY:

Bob told everyone that according to the official State method for developing/revising a Town Plan, we are at Step One, which is conducting a community assessment to gather and evaluate information about current conditions, resources, and trends that tells us where Maidstone is now and where it appears to be heading. Bob has shared maps and charts via email that he found and downloaded that provide wide-ranging data about demographic, housing, land use, etc. Bruce has shared maps via email that he found and downloaded regarding land use, natural resources, constraints, energy, etc.

Bob addressed several areas that are and will continue to be driving factors in trends occurring in Maidstone:

1. Land use restrictions on certain parcels: About 70% - 80% of the land in Maidstone is protected through Vermont's Current Use program or through State ownership with its inherent restrictions. Current Use enrollment is recorded at Town Hall in the Land Records and stays with the property for perpetuity, regardless of ownership. Bob described the process of withdrawing from Current Use as onerous; a significant tax penalty is incurred when land is removed from Current Use. Burt questioned what happens when a property is thrown out of the Current Use program, but that answer was not totally clear. Bob said that there is not a lot of room for change in land use when such a large portion of the land is already restricted, though people do have the option of removing their land from Current Use. Chris shared his screen to display the Current Use map that Bob had shared, and pointed out that the map did not provide a detailed view that included smaller parcels; to be in Current Use, said Bob, a parcel must be 25 acres or more in size.
2. Property taxes: The 2023 property taxes will be considerably higher than last year's. The Town is doing a Statistical Reappraisal for 2024; on the 2024 tax bill, Maidstone properties will reflect their fair market value based on the market on April 1, 2024. Bob anticipates that a number of properties will double in value on the Grand List. (As an example, he cited a property on North Road valued by the Town on the Grand List at \$28,900, which recently sold for 2 1/2 times that amount.) The education portion of the taxes will therefore double for those properties. The municipal tax rate may be adjusted

to approximately half of the prior rate, keeping the municipal taxes about the same. The impact of this large increase in property taxes may be an exodus of people from Maidstone, similar to the effect of the sale of leased properties on Maidstone Lake by Champion in the late 1990s..

3. Short-term Property Rentals: *(this topic was addressed later in the meeting, but is a trend, so is included here by M. von Alt)* Bob said Maidstone is experiencing an increase in short-term property rentals throughout the Town through Air BnB, VRBO, etc., as well as individual arrangements. No data is collected about such rentals; they are not separately or differently handled than other properties in our property taxes. The State Park's campsite rentals are short-term rentals that significantly impact the traffic and roads in the Town, but the State park does not generate revenue for the Town and does not pay property taxes; instead, the State sends the Town annually a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT), the amount of which is determined at a reduced rate in comparison with the Town's property taxes. The Commission members expressed concern about who would take responsibility for actions of short-term renters that negatively impacted the Town, and questioned what sort of controls the Town might impose on such rentals. Bob spoke of the measures that Killington has put into place, now that the Town has a majority of its properties being rental in nature, measures such as a rental registry and regulations addressing safety. In general, the feeling was that this is an area that needs consideration. The possibility of a Local Option tax that might include some sort of tax on rentals was mentioned.

A survey will provide input from the Maidstone public regarding where they want the Town to be in the future.

A discussion about such a survey ensued that included the following topics:

- the questions on the 2006 Town Survey and the various options for answers:
- the inclusion and value of comments from the public in that 2006 survey:
- consideration of using questions from the 2006 survey, as well as additional topics for which questions should be designed to gather input including septic systems and rental properties:
- the questions on an Irasburg Town survey shared by Chris via email as an example:
- what questions to include on the planned 2023 Town Survey and what answer options:
- the importance of clear, concise questions and answer options to encourage participation:
- how to administer the survey in order to maximize participation and the accurate reflection of opinion:
- the need to address the Required Elements as well as the State's Planning Goals:
- the fact that not all Required Elements can be addressed through survey questions.

Each Commission member, at the previous meeting, had been assigned four of the twelve Required Elements listed in the State Planning Manual for Municipal Plans. Each discussed their Elements to the degree that they had been able to address them; some of the Elements refer to tasks that the Planning Commission must undertake; some of the Elements prompt relevant survey questions. Chris shared the screen to display the document he had created in response to his assigned elements, including questions he had created to be included in the survey. In particular, he drew attention to two of his assigned Elements - an Energy Plan and Economic Development. Chris pointed out that currently the Town requires a Certificate of Occupancy, a fact that has elicited much discussion and questioning of whether or not the Town should continue to require that in its Bylaws, as the Certificate, by State law, requires that applicants submit documentation from the State that they have received a Residential Building Energy Standards or Commercial Building Energy Standards certificate of compliance. Chris suggested that Maidstone's Certificate of Occupancy bylaw should be considered in light of the new State law requirement to "develop a policy on the conservation of energy, including programs, such as thermal integrity" for inclusion in the Town Plan. Town policy encouraging commercial and/or individual renewable energy installations should also be included in the survey. He suggested that the survey include a question about whether or not people want economic development in Town, another Required Element. Bruce went through a document that he created examining his assigned four Elements, linking applicable Vermont Statutes, and including which 2006 questions still were applicable and suggestions for expanded and/or additional questions. (Both documents are attached in the Addendum.)

At the conclusion of the discussion, several Action Items were decided upon:

- Bob will contact Alison Low of NVDA (Northeastern Vermont Development Association) about means of administering the survey to ensure accuracy and maximize inclusion of residents and property owners;

- Bob will talk with the Town Clerk in Irasburg to find out how they conducted the survey; the Town Clerk has already agreed to send Bob a Word version of the survey they utilized;
- Each of the Commission members will continue to further develop their suggested survey questions and send them to Mary, who will compile them in one document with the corresponding Required Element and any tasks stipulated in the Elements;
- Mary will send that document to the Commission members for their review, revisions, and additions prior to the next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Chris invited the public to ask questions or make comments, but all attendees said they had no questions or comments.

OTHER BUSINESS:

There was no other business.

SET DATE FOR NEXT MEETING:

The Commission decided to meet next on Thursday, August 24, at 7:00 pm via Zoom.

ADJOURN:

Bob made a motion to adjourn; Bruce seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:47pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary von Alt

Addendum

From Bruce Barker:

Document Section for 2023-07-20 Meeting

Questions and Comments

Readoption?

We are considering “readopting” a town plan per 24 V.S.A. [§ 4387](#), correct?

§ 4387. Readoption of plans

(a) All plans, including all prior amendments, shall expire every eight years *unless they are readopted* according to the procedures in section [4385](#) of this title.

(b)(1) A municipality may readopt any plan that has expired or is about to expire. Prior to any readoption, *the planning commission shall review and update the information on which the plan is based*, and shall consider this information in evaluating the continuing applicability of the plan. In its review, the planning commission shall:

(A) consider the *recommendations of the regional planning commission* provided pursuant to subdivision [4350\(c\)\(2\)](#) of this title;

(B) *engage in community outreach and involvement* in updating the plan;

(C) consider *consistency with the goals established in section 4302* of this title;

(D) *address the required plan elements under section 4382* of this title;

(E) *evaluate the plan for internal consistency* among plan elements, goals, objectives, and community standards;

(F) *address compatibility with the regional plan and the approved plans of adjoining municipalities*; and

(G) establish a *program and schedule* for implementing the plan.

(2) The readopted plan shall remain in effect for the ensuing eight years unless earlier readopted.

(c) Upon the expiration of a plan, all bylaws and capital budgets and programs then in effect shall remain in effect, but shall not be amended until a plan is in effect.

(d) The fact that a plan has not been approved shall not make it inapplicable, except as specifically provided by this chapter. Bylaws, capital budgets, and programs shall remain in effect, even if the plan has not been approved. (Added 1967, No. 334 (Adj. Sess.), § 1, eff. March 23, 1968; amended 1975, No. 164 (Adj. Sess.), § 4; 1981, No. 132 (Adj. Sess.), § 11; 1987, No. 200 (Adj. Sess.), § 14, eff. July 1, 1989; 1989, No. 280 (Adj. Sess.), § 10; 2015, No. 90 (Adj. Sess.), § 3.)

Since the town already has a Town Plan, my guess is that we should be following “Readoption of plans.”

Preparation of a plan

See 24 V.S.A. [§ 4384](#), **Preparation of plan; hearings by planning commission**

(a) ... *At the outset of the planning process and throughout the process, planning commissions shall solicit the participation of local citizens and organizations by holding informal working sessions that suit the needs of local people. ...*

(e) *At least 30 days prior to the first hearing, a copy of the proposed plan or amendment and the written report shall be delivered physically or electronically with proof of receipt, or mailed by certified mail, return receipt requested, to each of the following:*

- (1) the chair of the planning commission of each abutting municipality, or in the absence of any planning commission in an abutting municipality, to the clerk of that municipality;
- (2) the executive director of the regional planning commission of the area in which the municipality is located;
- (3) the Department of Housing and Community Development within the Agency of Commerce and Community Development; and
- (4) business, conservation, low-income advocacy, and other community or interest groups or organizations that have requested notice in writing prior to the date the hearing is warned.

Any of the foregoing bodies, or their representatives, may thereafter submit comments on the proposed plan or amendment to the planning commission, and may appear and be heard in any further proceeding with respect to the adoption of the proposed plan or amendment. The planning commission shall demonstrate that it has solicited comment from planning commissions of abutting municipalities and from the regional planning commission with respect to the compatibility of their respective plans with its own plan.

PC Meeting of 2023-06-21, Working Meeting to discuss and decide upon process and methods for updating the Town Plan

1. To conduct a survey

From 2023-06-21 PC Draft minutes: After discussion, it was decided that each PC member would take four elements and *craft survey questions to address these elements*. Bob will take the first four, Bruce will take the next four, and Chris will take the last four. They will each prepare proposed survey questions and bring them to the next meeting.

Notes: It is my understanding that the purpose of the survey is to obtain input from the citizens about their vision of where the town is and where they would like it be in the future. A survey is not required, but is one method to “engage in community outreach and involvement in updating the plan” (per 24 V.S.A. [§ 4387\(B\)](#)). The questions would not necessarily correspond to the 12 requirements of a town plan, although there may be overlap.

For the purpose of obtaining citizen input, I think that the 16 questions on the 2006 Town Plan Survey does quite well. They seem to be clear and concise (at least to me). If these 16 questions are included in the new survey (maybe with some modifications), then it would result in an easier comparison of the 2006 results with the 2023 results. (It is easier to compare like questions with like questions vs. one set of questions to a different set of questions.) However, it may be desirable to include additional questions to obtain additional information not obtained from the original 16.

One modification to question 6 (if it is retained) may be to change “five years” to “eight years” to correspond to the “lifetime” of the town plan.

According to “Citizen Participation Strategies for Municipal Planning in Vermont, Community Planning Surveys, “Careful question design and a meaningful community context are the most effective strategies for ensuring good responses.”¹

¹ Will Sawyer, and Fred Schmidt, *Citizen Participation Strategies for Municipal Planning in Vermont, Community Planning Surveys*, (University of Vermont Center for Rural Studies, 2004), https://www.trorc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/CRS_survey-guide.pdf.

2. To consider the twelve required elements that a Municipal Plan must include from 24 V.S.A. § 4382(a).

Note: There are also sections (b) ... maps ..., (c) other things to base a municipal plan on, and (d) parking.

3. Consistency with state-wide planning goals, listed in 24 V.S.A. § 4302

It was noted at the June meeting that agriculture is decreasing, but even so, if the citizens continue to desire to “Protect the forests lands and agricultural lands within the Town”, wouldn’t this still be a valid objective? Maybe the PC could consider possible incentives to protect and/or promote agriculture? Note, also, that 24 V.S.A. § 4302 (c)(9) includes as a State planning goal “To encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest industries.” (And the town plan “shall” be consistent with this state-wide planning goal(?)).

Conclusions:

- The purpose of the survey is to obtain data relative to the citizens’ vision of the current state of the town and the future of the town, and does not need to deal directly with the 12 required elements of a town plan. It is the PC that needs to address those required elements (per 24 V.S.A. § 4387(D)). These survey questions should be clear, concise and meaningful to the intended audience.
- **One survey question may deal with one, multiple or no required elements (or state planning goals). Also, one required element may be suitable for one, multiple or no survey questions.**
- The Town Plan needs to address the twelve required elements in 24 V.S.A. § 4382(a) **and** it must be consistent with the state-wide planning goals listed in 24 V.S.A. § 4302

2016 Town Plan – Notes and comments

- The current town plan has sections dealing with all the required elements (Although “Flood Resilience” is missing as a subsection under “IMPLEMENTATION.”)
- There is a subsection “Flood Hazard,” that states that: Maidstone is in the process of working on an All Hazard Mitigation Plan and also adopting Flood Hazard Area Regulations. This is necessary in order to apply for FEMA grants that may be available to the town after any natural disaster..

Required Elements 5 – 8; Survey Questions and Comments

(5) A statement of policies on the preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas, scenic and historic features and resources;

Question 8. From the 2006 Survey Questions appears adequate to me, except maybe add: Disappearance of forest lands?

2006 Survey question:

8. Should steps be taken to protect the town from:

- A. **Pollution of streams and water supplies** Yes No
- B. **Disappearance of natural and open areas** Yes No
- C. Disappearance of agricultural lands Yes No
- D. Other Comments:

***Proposed 2023 Survey question:

Should steps be taken to protect the town from:

- A. **Pollution of streams and water supplies** Yes ___ No ___
 - B. **Disappearance of natural and open areas** Yes ___ No ___
 - C. Disappearance of agricultural lands Yes ___ No ___
 - D. **Disappearance of forest lands** Yes ___ No ___
 - E. Other Comments:
-

*** Bruce added to this question in an email sent on 7/20/2023:

Possible 2023 Survey question:

Should steps be taken to protect the town from:

- A. **Pollution of streams and water supplies** Yes ___ No ___
- B. **Disappearance of natural and open areas** Yes ___ No ___
- C. Disappearance of agricultural lands Yes ___ No ___
- D. **Disappearance of forest lands** Yes ___ No ___
- E. **Disappearance of wildlife habitats** Yes ___ No ___
- F. **Pollution or deterioration of air quality** Yes ___ No ___
- G. **Disappearance of threatened or endangered species** Yes ___ No ___
- H. **Non-native invasive species** Yes ___ No ___

G. Other Comments:

One might consider instead of “Yes” and “No” a scale such as: *Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly disagree?* In which case, the question might read: “Steps should be taken to protect the town from:”

(6) An EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES PLAN consisting of a map and statement of present and projected uses and the local public school system.

I propose using the 2006 Survey Questions:

1. How important are the following goals for updating our town plan? Please rate the following from 1 to 9, 1 being the most important.

...

I. To provide educational opportunities

[Instead of 1 to 9, use “Very Important”, “Important”, “Somewhat Important” or “Not Important”?]

10. Are you satisfied with the current educational options available to Maidstone school children?

Yes ___ No ___

If no, what changes would you suggest that might improve the current educational system?

Keep the above, or maybe ask “How satisfied are you with the current educational options available to Maidstone school children?”

Very satisfied ___; Satisfied ___; Somewhat satisfied ___; Unsatisfied ___.

(7) A recommended program for the IMPLEMENTATION of the objectives of the development plan.

24 V.S.A. § 4401 states:

Any municipality that has adopted and has in effect a plan and has created a planning commission under this chapter may **implement the plan by adopting, amending, and enforcing any or all of the regulatory and non-regulatory tools provided for in this chapter.**

24 V.S.A. § 4402 lists 9 regulatory tools and 24 V.S.A. § 4403 lists 6 non-regulatory tools. Although some of the tools may be familiar to the citizens (such as Zoning, site plan and subdivision bylaws), I don't think that all of them would, such as "Tax increment financing" or "Tax stabilization contracts."

I would recommend that the survey not deal explicitly with "a **program** for the implementation of objectives of the development plan," and the PC propose such a program and submit it to the town at a public meeting.

However, some "implementation" related questions from the 2006 Survey, regarding current implementation details and quality of implementation, may be appropriate:

5. Please rate, on the scale below, the effectiveness of the administration and enforcement of the Maidstone Zoning Bylaw?

Great! 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ Needs improvement

[Maybe use: Excellent ___; Very good ___; Good ___; Satisfactory ___; Unsatisfactory ___?]

Comments: _____

15.

A. What district do you reside in or pay taxes on?

Rural Lands 1 ___ Rural Lands 2 ___ Lake ___ Forest ___ Agricultural ___ Unsure ___

B. Is the current minimum lot size in your district:

Adequate ___ Too large ___ Too small ___

Comment: _____

C. Should the current minimum setbacks in your district:

Remain the same ___ Increase ___ Decrease ___

Comment: _____

Maybe add:

D. Should the current frontage requirements in your district:

Remain the same ___ Increase ___ Decrease ___

Comment: _____

16. The intent of the Town Plan is 'to provide the basic guidelines and an overall vision for the future of the community.' Has it been successful?

Yes ___ No ___

[Or, maybe change "Has it been successful" to "How successful has it been," and then use: Very successful ___; Successful ___; Somewhat successful ___; Unsuccessful ___?]

Comments: _____

Additional suggestions and comments for the Maidstone Planning/Zoning Board:

(8) A statement indicating how the plan relates to development trends and plans for ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES, areas and the region developed under this title;

Again, I do not see an appropriate survey question for this requirement. I suppose one might ask something like “Is it important to you that Maidstone’s objectives be consistent with those of adjacent communities?”, but how much does it deal with “vision” and does it really deal with this item, which is a statement, presumably based upon an analysis of development trends and plans of adjacent communities.

I think that the PC needs to analyze the trends and plans of adjacent communities and then create a statement that relates Maidstone’s proposed or updated Town Plan to those of the adjacent communities. (Note that Maidstone’s Town Plan may or may not be consistent with adjacent communities, and the statement should state that relationship. E.g. it should point out the consistencies or inconsistencies).

So, I recommend that the survey not deal with this item, and that the PC perform any necessary analysis and create a statement to meet the requirements of this element.

If interested, see section 8 [A statement indicating how the plan relates to development trends and plans for adjacent communities, areas and the region developed under this title](#), under “The Plan for a Municipality[Required Elements],” below. This is what I have accumulated so far relating to Maidstone and adjacent communities. (Nothing on New Hampshire towns, yet). This includes information from the 1993, 2007 and 2016 Maidstone Town Plans (I don’t think there is anything from the 1973 town plan).

POPULATION GROWTH – 1990 - 2020

TOWN	1990	2000	2010	2020
Brunswick	92	107	112	88
Ferdinand	23	33	32	16
Granby	85	86	88	81
Guildhall	270	268	261	262
Maidstone	131	105	208	211
Stratford, NH	928	942	746	662
Northumberland, NH	2,495	2,438	2,288	2,126

Source: Years 1990-2010, Maidstone 2016 Town Plan citing U.S. Census Bureau; Year 2020, U.S. Census Bureau

24 V.S.A. [§ 4382](#). The Plan for a Municipality [Required Elements]

(a) Consistent with and compatible

(a) A plan for a municipality may be consistent with the goals established in section [4302](#) of this title and compatible with approved plans of other municipalities in the region and with the regional plan and **shall include the following:**

(1) A statement of OBJECTIVES, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS of the municipality to guide the future growth and development of land, public services, and facilities, and to protect the environment.

1993, 2007 and 2016 Town Plans: Statement of Planning Goals

1. Maintain the scale, the traditions and the rural character of Maidstone. Preserve those qualities that make Maidstone an attractive community in which to live, work, and raise a family.
2. Maintain the agricultural lands that are essential to the overall objective of preserving open space, scenic qualities and rural flavor.
3. Preserve the unique natural areas and ecosystems that make up Maidstone's diverse and scenic landscape.
4. Recreational opportunities on public lands should be maintained and encouraged on private lands only when landowners are willing to allow public access to their lands. Those habitats that provide opportunities for hunting, fishing, berry picking, hiking and so on need to be carefully monitored and protected. [1993 Town Plan: Maintain opportunities for recreational activities on public and private lands. Protect the habitats that provide for hunting, fishing, berry—picking, hiking, and so on.]
5. Encourage slow, orderly growth on the [1993: "non-agricultural"] lands that are suited for development.
6. Promote small scale, decentralized economic development, including home-based businesses, that does not detract from Maidstone's rural character. [1993: omits " , including home-based businesses,"]
7. Provide high quality public services (i.e. roads, solid waste disposal [1993: " , schools"]) while recognizing the limitations of the property tax system.
[1993 Town Plan does not include items 8 to 12; added in 2007]
8. Protect private property values in the Town of Maidstone.
9. Protect the Town's water resources.
10. Protect the rights of landowners.
11. Protect the forests lands and agricultural lands within the Town.
12. Provide for the proper maintenance of all roads in Town.

(2) A LAND USE PLAN, which shall consist of a map and statement of present and prospective land uses, that:

(A) Indicates those areas proposed for forests, recreation, agriculture (using the agricultural lands identification process established in 6 V.S.A. § 8), residence, commerce, industry, public and semi-public uses, and open spaces, areas reserved for flood plain, and areas identified by the State, the regional planning commission, or the municipality that require special consideration for aquifer protection; for wetland protection; for the maintenance of forest blocks, wildlife habitat, and habitat connectors; or for other conservation purposes.

(B) Sets forth the present and prospective location, amount, intensity, and character of such land uses and the appropriate timing or sequence of land development activities in relation to the provision of necessary community facilities and service.

(C) Identifies those areas, if any, proposed for designation under chapter 76A of this title, together with, for each area proposed for designation, an explanation of how the designation would further the plan's goals and the goals of section [4302](#) of this title, and how the area meets the requirements for the type of designation to be sought.

(D) Indicates those areas that are important as forest blocks and habitat connectors and plans for land development in those areas to minimize forest fragmentation and promote the health, viability, and ecological function of forests. A plan may include specific policies to encourage the active management

of those areas for wildlife habitat, water quality, timber production, recreation, or other values or functions identified by the municipality.

(3) A TRANSPORTATION PLAN, consisting of a map and statement of present and prospective transportation and circulation facilities showing existing and proposed highways and streets by type and character of improvement, and where pertinent, parking facilities, transit routes, terminals, bicycle paths and trails, scenic roads, airports, railroads, and port facilities, and other similar facilities or uses, with indications of priority of need.

(4) A UTILITY AND FACILITY PLAN, consisting of a map and statement of present and prospective community facilities and public utilities showing existing and proposed educational, recreational and other public sites, buildings and facilities, including hospitals, libraries, power generating plants and transmission lines, water supply, sewage disposal, refuse disposal, storm drainage, and other similar facilities and activities, and recommendations to meet future needs for community facilities and services, with indications of priority of need, costs, and method of financing.

(5) A statement of policies on the preservation of rare and irreplaceable NATURAL AREAS, scenic and historic features and resources.

2007 and 2016 Town Plan: Implementation Plan: Natural Areas

1. Obtain educational materials about the values of natural areas and make them available to all.
2. Protect and preserve the significant natural areas within Maidstone.

2016 Town Plan: Natural Areas

The preservation of sensitive natural environments is a priority for the Town of Maidstone. In the past, Maidstone has relied on the natural goodwill of its citizens to retain the intrinsic natural and scenic qualities of the land. The current pleasant visual quality of the landscape is largely the result of the energies of generations of woodcutters and farmers. It now becomes our task to preserve this landscape.

In 1988, there was a comprehensive natural areas inventory completed for Essex County. This was updated by the Agency of Natural Resources in Montpelier. Through that study, the most significant natural areas were identified. They included things like endangered plant species, special wildlife habitat, and nesting areas for rare birds. Several areas were identified in Maidstone, including lowlands along the Connecticut River, Stevens Pond, Dutton Pond, West Mountain Pond and Loon Island on Maidstone Lake (see attached map). In 2005, the Connecticut River Byway received its national designation. This includes all of Maidstone's Route 102 and may lead to increased tourism, both in the form of bikers and canoe paddlers.

Vision:

1. To protect and preserve the significant natural areas within Maidstone.
2. To educate all users of the land of the importance of these natural areas

Issues/Concerns:

1. In general, people do not understand the significance of natural areas and they may unknowingly impact the area or species.
2. With several ponds having lots of undeveloped shoreline (two completely undeveloped), Maidstone is in a unique situation to protect this resource.

Recommended Actions:

1. Obtain educational materials about the values of natural areas and make them available to all.
2. Protect and preserve the significant natural areas within Maidstone.

2006 Survey Questions

8. Should steps be taken to protect the town from:

A Pollution of streams and water supplies

Yes _____ No _____

B Disappearance of natural and open areas

Yes _____ No _____

C Disappearance of agricultural lands

Yes _____ No _____

D Other Comments:

(6) An EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES PLAN consisting of a map and statement of present and projected uses and the local public school system.

2016 Town Plan: Implementation Plan: Education

1. Continue to provide the best and most cost-effective educational opportunities to all our students.
2. Encourage our local and state representative to investigate alternative school funding sources to lower property taxes.

[The **2007 Town Plan** included the above two items plus the item: “Investigate the possibility of creating our own school or forming a cooperative school district with neighboring towns.”]

2016 Town Plan: Education

Currently, Maidstone does not have a school. As of December, 2013, the 15 school-aged children were tutitioned to area schools. Four (4) of these students went to Northumberland schools, two (2) to Guildhall School and one (1) to White Mountains Regional. We also have students that attend St. Johnsbury Academy and Lyndon Institute. Presently, this is the only option for the town to provide the best and most cost effective education possible for our students.

Issues/Concerns:

Because we have no school and high property values, our share of the statewide property tax, remains high.

Recommended Actions:

1. Continue to provide the best and most cost-effective educational opportunities to all our students.
2. Encourage our local and state representatives to investigate alternative school funding sources to lower property taxes.

2007 Town Plan: Education

Currently, Maidstone -does not. have a school. As of December 2005, the 23 school aged children were tuitioned to area Schools, 8 of these students went to Northumberland School District, 1 to Stratford School District, 8 to Guildhall School District and 6 to White Mountains Regional, In the recent past, we have had students attend St. Johnsbury Academy, Riverside School and others. Presently, this is the only option for the town to provide the best and most cost effective education possible for our students. With more and more people calling Maidstone their home, it is anticipated that our school population will continue to grow.

Issues/Concerns:

Because we have no school and high property values, our share of the statewide property tax, Act 68, remains high.

Recommended Actions:

1. Continue to provide the best and most cost-effective educational opportunities to all our students.
2. Investigate the possibility of creating our own school or forming a cooperative school district with neighboring towns.
3. Encourage our local and state representatives to investigate alternative school funding sources to lower property taxes.

Survey Snapshot

Are you satisfied with the current educational options available to Maidstone children?

Yes....92.2%; No....7.8%

"Taxes too high. "Too many options. "

2006 Survey Question

10. Are you satisfied with the current educational options available to Maidstone school children?

Yes _____ No _____

If no, what changes would you suggest that might improve the current educational system?

(7) A recommended program for the IMPLEMENTATION of the objectives of the development plan.

State Statutes:

24 V.S.A. § 4401. Purpose and authority:

Any municipality that has adopted and has in effect a plan and has created a planning commission under this chapter may implement the plan by adopting, amending, and enforcing any or all of the regulatory and nonregulatory tools provided for in this chapter. All such regulatory and nonregulatory tools shall be in conformance with the plan, shall be adopted for the purposes set forth in section 4302 of this title, and shall be in accord with the policies set forth therein. (Added 1967, No. 334 (Adj. Sess.), § 1, eff. March 23, 1968; amended 1969, No. 116, § 5; 1971, No. 257 (Adj. Sess.), §§ 9, 10, eff. April 11, 1972; 1973, No. 261 (Adj. Sess.), § 4, eff. July 1, 1974; 1975, No. 164 (Adj. Sess.), § 5; 1983, No. 249 (Adj. Sess.), § 4; 1993, No. 232 (Adj. Sess.), § 1, eff. March 15, 1995; 2003, No. 115 (Adj. Sess.), § 91.)

24 V.S.A. § 4402 Bylaws and regulatory implementation tools authorized

A municipality may adopt regulatory tools, including the following specific regulatory tools which are more fully described in subchapter 7 of this chapter:

- (1) Zoning bylaws.
- (2) Site plan bylaws.
- (3) Subdivision bylaws.
- (4) Unified development bylaws.
- (5) Official map.
- (6) Impact fees.
- (7) Phasing.

24 V.S.A. § 4403. Nonregulatory implementation tools

A municipality may utilize the following tools, and other tools not specifically listed, in conformance with the municipal plan and for the purposes established in section 4302 of this title, alone or in conjunction with regulatory tools described in section 4402 of this title.

- (1) Capital budget and program. A municipality may adopt a capital budget and five-year program, pursuant to section 4430 of this title.
 - (2) Tax increment financing. Pursuant to chapter 53 of this title, a municipality may create within its jurisdiction one or more tax increment financing districts.
 - (3) Tax stabilization contracts. Pursuant to 32 V.S.A. §§ 4969 and 4985, a municipality may enter into tax stabilization contracts.
 - (4) Purchase or acceptance of development rights. A municipality may purchase or accept development rights as a method to implement its plan, pursuant to 10 V.S.A. chapter 155.
 - (5) Plans supporting the municipal plan. A municipality may develop supporting plans and may incorporate these plans into the municipal plan pursuant to the process described in section 4385 of this title.
 - (6) Advisory commissions. For the purposes of this chapter, the term “advisory commissions” includes advisory committees. A municipality may form commissions that are composed of persons with particular expertise or interest to assist with implementation of the plan in areas such as design review, historic preservation, housing, and conservation. (Added 2003, No. 115 (Adj. Sess.), § 93.)
- tools.

(8) A statement indicating how the plan relates to development trends and plans for ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES, areas and the region developed under this title.

2007 and 2016 Town Plan: Implementation Plan: Adjacent Communities

- 1. Continuously monitor the situation to ensure that relationships with the adjacent communities continue to be positive.

2016 Town Plan: Impact of Adjacent Communities

Maidstone is very closely linked to the adjacent communities in both Vermont and New Hampshire. It is bordered on the northeast by Brunswick, on the east by the Connecticut River (opposite Stratford and Northumberland), on the southwest by Guildhall and Granby, and on the west by Ferdinand. Maidstone supports the adjacent communities by providing labor for their jobs; by bringing summer residents to the area that stimulate the local economy, by supporting community endeavors such as medical services and schools. In turn, the adjacent communities provide shopping facilities, medical services, fire protection, and schools and so on. We rely on each other and maintaining a positive relationship is important. Keeping communications open among communities is critical to maintaining the quiet rural lifestyle that is important to all the residents of the area. We have reviewed the town plans for the surrounding towns and the regional plan and do not foresee any significant impacts.

POPULATION GROWTH – 1990 2010

TOWN	1990	2000	2010
Brunswick	92	107	112
Ferdinand	23	33	32
Granby	85	86	88
Guildhall	270	268	261
Maidstone	131	105	208
Stratford, NH	928	942	746
Northumberland, NH	2,495	2,438	2,288

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Recommended Actions:

Continuously monitor the situation to ensure that relationships with the adjacent communities continue to be positive.

Population Growth

POPULATION GROWTH – 1990 2020

TOWN	1990	2000	2010	2020
Brunswick	92	107	112	88
Ferdinand	23	33	32	16
Granby	85	86	88	81
Guildhall	270	268	261	262
Maidstone	131	105	208	211
Stratford, NH	928	942	746	662
Northumberland, NH	2,495	2,438	2,288	2,126

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Relationship of Maidstone’s Town Plan Objectives with those of adjacent communities

1. Objective: Traditions and rural character

- **24 V.S.A. § 4302 (a) General purposes.** ... to protect residential, agricultural, and other areas from undue concentrations of population and overcrowding of land and buildings ... **(c) In addition, this chapter shall be used to further the following specific goals:** (1) To plan development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside.
- **Maidstone’s** 1993, 2007 and 2016 Town Plan, objective 1, desires to “Maintain the scale, the *traditions and the rural character* of Maidstone. Preserve those qualities that make Maidstone an attractive community in which to live, work, and raise a family.”
- **Brunswick**, objective 1, seeks to *preserve the scenic qualities* of a quiet river-valley countryside which attracts sightseers with its charm and lovely views of pastures, woodlands and mountain scenery.
- **Unified Towns and Gores of Essex County (UTG)**, which includes Ferdinand: *Traditional ways of life and land use patterns* within the UTG should be preserved.
- **Guildhall**, Objective 1: To *remain rural in character*.; Also, Objective 5: To preserve and protect our *historical heritage, character, rural nature and aesthetic beauty*.
- **Granby’s** priority is to: *Maintain the character* of the Town, including its *traditional way of life, environmental quality, and land use patterns*.

Conclusion: Maidstone’s objective of maintaining the scale, traditions and its rural character is consistent with the objective of adjacent communities.

2. Objective: Agricultural and Forest lands:

- **24 V.S.A. § 4302 (a) General purposes.** ... to protect residential, **agricultural**, and other areas from undue concentrations of population and overcrowding of land and buildings ... to enable the mitigation of the burden of property taxes on agricultural, forest, and other open lands; **(c) In addition, this chapter shall be used to further the following specific goals:**
 - (6) To maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife, **forests**, and other land resources.
 - (C) Vermont’s **forestlands** should be managed so as to maintain and improve forest blocks and habitat connectors.
 - (9) To **encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest industries.**
 - (A) Strategies to protect long-term **viability of agricultural and forestlands** should be encouraged and should include maintaining low overall density.
 - (B) The manufacture and marketing of value-added **agricultural and forest products** should be encouraged.
 - (C) The **use of locally-grown food products** should be encouraged.
 - (D) Sound **forest and agricultural management practices** should be encouraged.
 - (E) Public investment should be planned so as to **minimize development pressure on agricultural and forest land.**
- **Maidstone’s** 1993, 2007 and 2016 Town Plan desires to “*Maintain the agricultural lands* that are essential to the overall objective of preserving open space, scenic qualities and rural flavor.” Further, in the 2007 and 2016 Town Plan, objective 12, desires to “*Protect the forests lands and agricultural lands* within the Town.”
- **Brunswick:** Objective 5: All possible lawful aid will be encouraged to benefit and *promote the active productive farms* operating in the Town. Objective 2: All landowners are urged to *maintain* their open fields, pastures and *woodlands* for their own personal enhancement and investment and further to seek the *preservation of the natural plant life and the encouragement of wildlife.*
- **UTG (Ferdinand):** The unspoiled mountainous and *forested landscape* is an important draw to tourists and therefore a key component of UTG’s tourist-based economy. The *protection of these scenic areas* from the impacts of large-scale development is a priority.
- **Guildhall** does not mention agriculture or farms, or forests, in their goals and objectives.
- **Granby** gives the following as a priority: *Maintain accessible large tract forested lands.*

Conclusion: Maidstone’s objective of maintaining or protecting agricultural lands and forests is consistent with the goals of the surrounding communities, except for Guildhall, which does not mention agricultural and forest lands in its objectives.

3. Objective: Natural areas and ecosystems

- **24 V.S.A. § 4302 (c) In addition, this chapter shall be used to further the following specific goals:** (5) To identify, protect, and preserve important natural and historic features of the Vermont landscape, including:
 - (A) significant natural and fragile areas;
 - (B) outstanding water resources, including lakes, rivers, aquifers, shorelands, and wetlands;
 - (C) significant scenic roads, waterways, and views;
 - (D) important historic structures, sites, or districts, archaeological sites, and archaeologically sensitive areas.

- **Maidstone's** 1993, 2007 and 2016 Town Plan desires to “*Preserve the unique natural areas and ecosystems* that make up Maidstone’s diverse and scenic landscape.”
- **Brunswick**; Objective 2: All landowners are urged to *maintain their open fields, pastures and woodlands* for their own personal enhancement and investment and further to **seek the preservation of the natural plant life and the encouragement of wildlife.**

4. Objective: Recreational opportunities

- **24 V.S.A. § 4302 (c) In addition, this chapter shall be used to further the following specific goals:** (8) To maintain and enhance recreational opportunities for Vermont residents and visitors.
 - (A) Growth should not significantly diminish the value and availability of outdoor recreational activities.
 - (B) Public access to noncommercial outdoor recreational opportunities, such as lakes and hiking trails, should be identified, provided, and protected wherever appropriate.
- **Maidstone's** 2007 and 2016 Town Plan states that “*Recreational opportunities* on public lands should be maintained and encouraged on private lands only when landowners are willing to allow public access to their lands. Those habitats that provide opportunities for hunting, fishing, berry picking, hiking and so on need to be carefully monitored and protected.” The 1993 Town Plan states: “Maintain opportunities for recreational activities on public and private lands. Protect the habitats that provide for hunting, fishing, berry—picking, hiking, and so on.”
- **UTG (Ferdinand)** has as a priority: Maintaining and enhancing *recreational opportunities* for the residents and visitors of the UTG is a priority.

5. Objective; Growth and Development

- **24 V.S.A. § 4302 (a) General purposes.** ... It is the intent and purpose of this chapter to encourage the appropriate **development** of all lands in this State by the action of its constituent municipalities and regions, with the aid and assistance of the State, in a manner which will promote the public health, safety against fire, floods, explosions, and other dangers; to promote prosperity, comfort, access to adequate light and air, convenience, efficiency, economy, and general welfare; to enable the mitigation of the burden of property taxes on agricultural, forest, and other open lands; to encourage appropriate architectural design; to encourage the development of renewable resources; to protect residential, agricultural, and other areas from undue concentrations of population and overcrowding of land and buildings, from traffic congestion, from inadequate parking and the invasion of through traffic, and from the loss of peace, quiet, and privacy; to facilitate the growth of villages, towns, and cities and of their communities and neighborhoods so as to create an optimum environment, with good civic design; to encourage development of a rich cultural environment and to foster the arts; and to provide means and methods for the municipalities and regions of this State to plan for the prevention, minimization, and future elimination of such land development problems as may presently exist or which may be foreseen and to implement those plans when and where appropriate. In implementing any regulatory power under this chapter, municipalities shall take care to protect the constitutional right of the people to acquire, possess, and protect property. **(c) In addition, this chapter shall be used to further the following specific goals:** (1) To plan development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside.
 - (A) Intensive residential development should be encouraged primarily in areas related to community centers, and strip development along highways should be discouraged.

- (B) Economic growth should be encouraged in locally designated growth areas, employed to revitalize existing village and urban centers, or both, and should be encouraged in growth centers designated under chapter 76A of this title.
- (C) Public investments, including the construction or expansion of infrastructure, should reinforce the general character and planned growth patterns of the area.
- (D) Development should be undertaken in accordance with smart growth principles as defined in subdivision 2791(13) of this title.
- **Maidstone's** 2007 and 2016 Town Plan, objective 5, desires to “*Encourage slow, orderly growth* on the [1993: “non-agricultural”] lands that are suited for development.
- **Brunswick's** objective 6 states: “Brunswick will *encourage development which is rural residential, farming, or recreational* in character conforming to the limitations described in the Town land use plan.”
- **Guildhall's** objective 2 states: To provide for *orderly, fiscally tolerable growth* in accordance with town bylaws.
- **Granby:** Maintain a *low density of permanent and seasonal housing*;

6. Objective: Economic Development

- **24 V.S.A. § 4302 (c)** In addition, this chapter shall be used to further the following specific goals: (2) To provide a strong and diverse economy that provides satisfying and rewarding job opportunities and that maintains high environmental standards, and to expand economic opportunities in areas with high unemployment or low per capita incomes.
- **Maidstone's** 2007 and 2016 Town Plan desires to “Promote *small scale, decentralized economic development*, including *home-based businesses*, that does not detract from Maidstone's rural character.” The 1993 Town Plan says the same, except for: “, including home-based businesses.”
- **Brunswick**, objective 7 states: Because of the proximity of commercial areas in Bloomfield, Vt., and North Stratford Colebrook, and Groveton N.H., *it is not anticipated there will be a need for a commercial area* within Brunswick. However, commercial uses should not be prohibited, but allowed as conditional uses requiring the approval of the Zoning Board of Adjustment. *This does not preclude the active sale of natural products grown locally or the sale of craft products made by the residents in town.*
- **UTG (Ferdinand)** lists as a priority: The unspoiled mountainous and forested landscape is an important draw to tourists and therefore a key component of the UTG's *tourist-based economy. The protection of these scenic areas from the impacts of large-scale development is a priority*
- **Guildhall**, Objective 3, To promote *clean industry* that will increase the tax base and provide job opportunities.

7. Objective: Public/community services

- **24 V.S.A. § 4302 (c)** In addition, this chapter shall be used to further the following specific goals:
 - (3) To broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities sufficient to ensure the full realization of the abilities of all Vermonters.
 - (4) To provide for safe, convenient, economic, and energy efficient transportation systems that respect the integrity of the natural environment, including public transit options and paths for pedestrians and bicyclers.
 - (A) Highways, air, rail, and other means of transportation should be mutually supportive, balanced, and integrated.

- (12) To plan for, finance, and provide an efficient system of public facilities and services to meet future needs.
 - Public facilities and services should include fire and police protection, emergency medical services, schools, water supply, and sewage and solid waste disposal.
 - The rate of growth should not exceed the ability of the community and the area to provide facilities and services.
- **Maidstone's** 2007 and 2016 Town Plan desires to: Provide high quality *public services* (i.e. *roads*, solid waste disposal [1993 Town Plan includes: “, schools”]) *while recognizing the limitations of the property tax system*. [See also Objectives 8 and 12.]
- **Brunswick**, Objective 8: Brunswick will strive to minimize property taxes within its control by *avoiding developments which will require town services and/or town roads*. [See also Objective 8.]
- **UTG**, The number of *roads should be kept to a minimum* and consideration of environmental quality given priority.
- **Guildhall**, Objective 4, To consider all residents' needs and to provide *services, facilities and amenities the town can reasonably afford*.
- **Granby** lists as a priority: Provide acceptable levels of *community services at an affordable cost* to the community

Town Objectives 8 through 12 are NOT in the 1993 Town Plan, but are all in the 2007 and 2016 Town Plan.

8. Objective: Property values and Taxes

- **24 V.S.A. § 4302 (a) General purposes.** ... to enable the mitigation of the burden of property taxes on agricultural, forest, and other open lands ...
- **Maidstone's** 2007 and 2016 Town Plan, Objective 8: *Protect private property values* in the Town of Maidstone. Also, **Maidstone's** 2007 and 2016 Town Plan desires to “Provide high quality public services (i.e. *roads*, solid waste disposal [1993 Town Plan includes: “, schools”]) *while recognizing the limitations of the property tax system*. [See also Objectives 7 and 12.]
- **Brunswick**, Objective 8: Brunswick will strive to *minimize property taxes* within its control by *avoiding developments which will require town services and/or town roads*. Also, objective 9: Given the large concentration of publicly owned land in Brunswick, as well as *concerns over rising property taxes*, more large tracts of government owned lands are not encouraged.
- **Guildhall**, Objective 6: To *provide a fair taxation system and protect the town's tax base*.
- **Granby**, Maintain an *affordable community cost of living*

9. Objective: Water resources

- **24 V.S.A. § 4302 (c) In addition, this chapter shall be used to further the following specific goals:**
 - (5) To identify, protect, and preserve important natural and historic features of the Vermont landscape, including: ... (B) outstanding water resources, including lakes, rivers, aquifers, shorelands, and wetlands; ...
 - (6) To maintain and improve the quality of air, **water**, wildlife, forests, and other land resources.
 - (A) Vermont's air, **water**, wildlife, mineral, and land resources should be planned for use and development according to the principles set forth in 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a).

- (B) Vermont's **water quality** should be maintained and improved according to the policies and actions developed in the basin plans established by the Secretary of Natural Resources under 10 V.S.A. § 1253.
- (C) Vermont's forestlands should be managed so as to maintain and improve forest blocks and habitat connectors.
- **Maidstone's** 2007 and 2016 Town Plan, Objective 9: *Protect the Town's water resources.*
- **Brunswick's** Objective 3: Brunswick will endeavor to *protect its streams and bodies of water* as natural resources subject to pollution and infringement.
- **UTG (Ferdinand)** lists as a priority: "Maintaining and *protecting water quality in our lakes, ponds, rivers, wetlands, and streams* is a priority."
- **Guildhall** and **Granby** do not list water and streams in their objectives.

10. Objective: Protect the rights of landowners

- **24 V.S.A. § 4302 (a) General purposes.** ... municipalities shall take care to protect the constitutional right of the people to acquire, possess, and protect property.

11. Objective: Protect the forests lands and agricultural lands within the Town

- See objective 2., above.

12. Objective: Town Roads

- **24 V.S.A. § 4302 (c) In addition, this chapter shall be used to further the following specific goals:**
 - (4) To provide for safe, convenient, economic, and energy efficient **transportation** systems that respect the integrity of the natural environment, including public transit options and paths for pedestrians and bicyclers.
 - (A) **Highways**, air, rail, and other means of transportation should be mutually supportive, balanced, and integrated.
- **Maidstone's** 2007 and 2016 Town Plan, Objective 12: Provide for the *proper maintenance of all roads in Town.*
- **UTG**, The number of *roads should be kept to a minimum* and consideration of environmental quality given priority.
- **Granby**, *Limit town roads to the current number of extent*

Objectives from Adjacent Towns:

Flood Lands

- **24 V.S.A. § 4302 (c) In addition, this chapter shall be used to further the following specific goals:**
 - (4) To encourage flood resilient communities.
 - (A) New development in identified flood hazard, fluvial erosion, and river corridor protection areas should be avoided. If new development is to be built in such areas, it should not exacerbate flooding and fluvial erosion.
 - (B) The protection and restoration of floodplains and upland forested areas that attenuate and moderate flooding and fluvial erosion should be encouraged.
 - (C) Flood emergency preparedness and response planning should be encouraged
- **Brunswick**, objective 4: *Flood lands* are to be delineated and restricted from any residential or other development which would impose a financial or legal responsibility on Brunswick in the event of the next flood rampage. Structures on the flood plain shall be limited to recreational or agricultural purposes, other than housing for people or livestock.

Environmental

- **24 V.S.A. § 4302 (c) In addition, this chapter shall be used to further the following specific goals:**
 - (10) To provide for the wise and efficient use of Vermont’s natural resources and to facilitate the appropriate extraction of earth resources and the proper restoration and preservation of the aesthetic qualities of the area.
- **UTG, Minimizing the amount of *soil erosion* caused by logging or new development is a priority.**

Cellular and Broadband

- **UTG, Bringing *cellular and broadband service* to the UTG towns is a priority.**

Maidstone, VT; Town Plans,**1993, 2007 and 2016 Town Plans: Statement of Planning Goals**

1. Maintain the scale, the traditions and the rural character of Maidstone. Preserve those qualities that make Maidstone an attractive community in which to live, work, and raise a family.
2. Maintain the agricultural lands that are essential to the overall objective of preserving open space, scenic qualities and rural flavor.
3. Preserve the unique natural areas and ecosystems that make up Maidstone’s diverse and scenic landscape.
4. Recreational opportunities on public lands should be maintained and encouraged on private lands only when landowners are willing to allow public access to their lands. Those habitats that provide opportunities for hunting, fishing, berry picking, hiking and so on need to be carefully monitored and protected. [1993 Town Plan: Maintain opportunities for recreational activities on public and private lands. Protect the habitats that provide for hunting, fishing, berry—picking, hiking, and so on.]
5. Encourage slow, orderly growth on the [1993: “non-agricultural”] lands that are suited for development.
6. Promote small scale, decentralized economic development, including home-based businesses, that does not detract from Maidstone’s rural character. [1993: omits “, including home-based businesses,”]
7. Provide high quality public services (i.e. roads, solid waste disposal [1993: “, schools”]) while recognizing the limitations of the property tax system.
[1993 Town Plan does not include items 8 to 12; added in 2007]
8. Protect private property values in the Town of Maidstone.
9. Protect the Town’s water resources.
10. Protect the rights of landowners.
11. Protect the forests lands and agricultural lands within the Town.
12. Provide for the proper maintenance of all roads in Town.

Brunswick, VT; 2019 Municipal Plan, Statement of Objectives

1. Brunswick seeks to preserve the scenic qualities of a quiet river-valley countryside which attracts sightseers with its charm and lovely views of pastures, woodlands and mountain scenery. BRUNSWICK, VT: 2019 Municipal Plan Page 3 | 17
2. All landowners are urged to maintain their open fields, pastures and woodlands for their own personal enhancement and investment and further to seek the preservation of the natural plant life and the encouragement of wildlife.
3. Brunswick will endeavor to protect its streams and bodies of water as natural resources subject to pollution and infringement.

4. Flood lands are to be delineated and restricted from any residential or other development which would impose a financial or legal responsibility on Brunswick in the event of the next flood rampage. Structures on the flood plain shall be limited to recreational or agricultural purposes, other than housing for people or livestock.
5. All possible lawful aid will be encouraged to benefit and promote the active productive farms operating in the Town.
6. Brunswick will encourage development which is rural residential, farming, or recreational in character conforming to the limitations described in the Town land use plan.
7. Because of the proximity of commercial areas in Bloomfield, Vt., and North Stratford Colebrook, and Groveton N.H., it is not anticipated there will be a need for a commercial area within Brunswick. However, commercial uses should not be prohibited, but allowed as conditional uses requiring the approval of the Zoning Board of Adjustment. This does not preclude the active sale of natural products grown locally or the sale of craft products made by the residents in town.
8. Brunswick will strive to minimize property taxes within its control by avoiding developments which will require town services and/or town roads.
9. Given the large concentration of publicly owned land in Brunswick, as well as concerns over rising property taxes, more large tracts of government owned lands are not encouraged.

Ferdinand, VT; Unified Towns & Gores of Essex County, VT (UTG), Local Development Plan

Introduction

The towns of Averill, Avery’s Gore, **Ferdinand**, Lewis, Warner’s Grant, and Warren Gore make up the Unified Towns & Gores of Essex County, Vermont (UTG). Daily life moves slowly in the Unified Towns and Gores. One season passes into another. People appreciate that the area has changed little over time and that is what the residents want most - things to stay the same. However, fully realizing that things are continually changing, the residents of the Unified Towns and Gores have attempted to describe the future we most desire. Here, we present our ideas and a vision to be used as a guide in local, regional, state, and federal decision making processes

LIST OF PRIORITIES:

The Planning Commission has identified six (6) major priorities for the Unified Towns and Gores. They are not presented in any particular order, but all are viewed as equally important and appear throughout this document. The Planning Commission will handle conflicts that arise between any of them on a case by case basis.

- Traditional ways of life and land use patterns within the UTG should be preserved.
- The number of roads should be kept to a minimum and consideration of environmental quality given priority.
- Bringing cellular and broadband service to the UTG towns is a priority.
- Minimizing the amount of soil erosion caused by logging or new development is a priority.
- Maintaining and protecting water quality in our lakes, ponds, rivers, wetlands, and streams is a priority. 4 | Page UTG Town Plan Amended October 13, 2014
- Maintaining and enhancing recreational opportunities for the residents and visitors of the UTG is a priority.
- The unspoiled mountainous and forested landscape is an important draw to tourists and therefore a key component of the UTG’s tourist-based economy. The protection of these scenic areas from the impacts of large-scale development is a priority

Guildhall, VT; 2013 Municipal Plan, Goals, Objectives & Component Plans

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND COMPONENT PLANS

The inherent purpose of drawing up this plan includes but is not limited to the following goals:

1. To remain rural in character.
2. To provide for orderly, fiscally tolerable growth in accordance with town bylaws.
3. To promote clean industry that will increase the tax base and provide job opportunities.
4. To consider all residents' needs and to provide services, facilities and amenities the town can reasonably afford.
5. To preserve and protect our historical heritage, character, rural nature and aesthetic beauty.
6. To provide a fair taxation system and protect the town's tax base.

Granby, VT, Town Plan, 2016

Granby’s planning priorities are:

- Maintain the character of the Town, including its traditional way of life, environmental quality, and land use patterns;
- Maintain accessible large tract forested lands;
- Maintain an affordable community cost of living;
- Limit town roads to the current number of extent;
- Maintain a low density of permanent and seasonal housing;
- Provide acceptable levels of community services at an affordable cost to the community;
- Continue to explore adaptive reuses for the historic Granby school and identify ways to stabilize the structure.

(9) An ENERGY PLAN, including an analysis of energy resources, needs, scarcities, costs and problems within the municipality, a statement of policy on the conservation of energy, including programs, such as thermal integrity standards for buildings, to implement that policy, a statement of policy on the development of renewable energy resources, a statement of policy on patterns and densities of land use likely to result in conservation of energy.

(10) A HOUSING element that shall include a recommended program for addressing low and moderate income persons' housing needs as identified by the regional planning commission pursuant to subdivision 4348a(a)(9) of this title. The program should account for permitted accessory dwelling units, as defined in subdivision 4412(1)(E) of this title, which provide affordable housing.

(11) An ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT element that describes present economic conditions and the location, type, and scale of desired economic development, and identifies policies, projects, and programs necessary to foster economic growth.

(12) FLOOD RESILIENCE

(A) A flood resilience plan that:

- (i) identifies flood hazard and fluvial erosion hazard areas, based on river corridor maps provided by the Secretary of Natural Resources pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 1428(a) or maps recommended by the Secretary, and designates those areas to be protected, including floodplains, river corridors, land adjacent to streams, wetlands, and upland forests, to reduce the risk of flood damage to infrastructure and improved property; and
- (ii) recommends policies and strategies to protect the areas identified and designated under subdivision (12) (A)(i) of this subsection and to mitigate risks to public safety, critical infrastructure, historic structures, and municipal investments. A flood resilience plan may reference an existing local hazard mitigation plan approved under 44 C.F.R. § 201.6.

(B) A flood resilience plan may reference an existing local hazard mitigation plan approved under 44 C.F.R. § 201.6.

(b) The maps called for by this section may be incorporated on one or more maps, and may be referred to in each separate statement called for by this section.

(c) Where appropriate, and to further the purposes of subsection 4302(b) of this title, a municipal plan shall be based upon inventories, studies, and analyses of current trends and shall consider the probable social and economic consequences of the proposed plan. Such studies may consider or contain, but not be limited to:

- (1) population characteristics and distribution, including income and employment;
- (2) the existing and projected housing needs by amount, type, and location for all economic groups within the municipality and the region;

(3) existing and estimated patterns and rates of growth in the various land use classifications, and desired patterns and rates of growth in terms of the community's ability to finance and provide public facilities and services.

(d) Where appropriate, a municipal plan may provide for the use of "transit passes" or other evidence of reduced demand for parking spaces in lieu of parking spaces. (Added 1967, No. 334 (Adj. Sess.), § 1, eff. March 23, 1968; amended 1971, No. 257 (Adj. Sess.), § 7, eff. April 11, 1972; 1975, No. 236 (Adj. Sess.), § 2; 1979, No. 174 (Adj. Sess.), § 8; 1985, No. 188 (Adj. Sess.), § 10; 1987, No. 200 (Adj. Sess.), §§ 8, 10, eff. July 1, 1989; 1989, No. 280 (Adj. Sess.), § 7; 1991, No. 130 (Adj. Sess.), § 2; 1995, No. 122 (Adj. Sess.), § 2, eff. Apr. 25, 1996; 2003, No. 115 (Adj. Sess.), § 89; 2011, No. 52, § 33, eff. July 1, 2012; 2013, No. 16, § 4, eff. July 1, 2014; 2013, No. 146 (Adj. Sess.), § 6, eff. May 27, 2014; 2015, No. 171 (Adj. Sess.), § 17, eff. Jan. 1, 2018.)

State Planning Goals - 24 V.S.A. § [4302](#). Purpose; goals

(a) General purposes.

(a) General purposes. It is the intent and purpose of this chapter to encourage the appropriate development of all lands in this State by the action of its constituent municipalities and regions, with the aid and assistance of the State, in a manner which will **promote the public health, safety against fire, floods, explosions, and other dangers**; to promote **prosperity, comfort, access to adequate light and air, convenience, efficiency, economy, and general welfare**; to enable the **mitigation of the burden of property taxes on agricultural, forest, and other open lands**; to encourage **appropriate architectural design**; to encourage the development of **renewable resources**; to **protect residential, agricultural, and other areas from undue concentrations of population and overcrowding of land and buildings, from traffic congestion, from inadequate parking and the invasion of through traffic, and from the loss of peace, quiet, and privacy**; to facilitate the growth of villages, towns, and cities and of their communities and neighborhoods so as to create an **optimum environment, with good civic design**; to encourage development of a **rich cultural environment** and to **foster the arts**; and to provide means and methods for the municipalities and regions of this State to plan for the **prevention, minimization, and future elimination of such land development problems as may presently exist or which may be foreseen** and to implement those plans when and where appropriate. In implementing any regulatory power under this chapter, municipalities shall take care to **protect the constitutional right of the people to acquire, possess, and protect property**.

(b) Continuing planning process that will further the following goals

(b) It is also the intent of the Legislature that municipalities, regional planning commissions, and State agencies shall engage in a **continuing planning process** that will further the following goals:

- (1) To establish a coordinated, **comprehensive planning process and policy framework** to guide decisions by municipalities, regional planning commissions, and State agencies.
- (2) To encourage **citizen participation at all levels of the planning process**, and to assure that **decisions shall be made at the most local level possible commensurate with their impact**.
- (3) To consider the **use of resources and the consequences of growth and development** for the region and the State, as well as the community in which it takes place.
- (4) To encourage and assist **municipalities to work creatively together** to develop and implement plans.

(c) *In addition, this chapter shall be used to further the following specific goals:*

(1) *To plan **DEVELOPMENT** so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside.*

(A) Intensive **residential development** should be encouraged primarily in areas related to community centers, and strip development along highways should be discouraged.

(B) **Economic growth** should be encouraged in locally designated growth areas, employed to revitalize existing village and urban centers, or both, and should be encouraged in growth centers designated under chapter [76A](#) of this title.

(C) **Public investments**, including the construction or expansion of infrastructure, should reinforce the general character and planned growth patterns of the area.

(D) **Development** should be undertaken in accordance with **smart growth principles** as defined in subdivision [2791](#)(13) of this title.

(2) *To provide a strong and diverse **ECONOMY** that provides satisfying and rewarding job opportunities and that maintains high environmental standards, and to expand economic opportunities in areas with high unemployment or low per capita incomes.*

(3) *To broaden access to **EDUCATIONAL** and vocational training opportunities sufficient to ensure the full realization of the abilities of all Vermonters.*

(4) *To provide for safe, convenient, economic, and energy efficient **TRANSPORTATION** systems that respect the integrity of the natural environment, including public transit options and paths for pedestrians and bicyclers.*

(A) Highways, air, rail, and other means of transportation should be mutually supportive, balanced, and integrated.

(5) *To identify, protect, and preserve important **NATURAL AND HISTORIC FEATURES** of the Vermont landscape, including:*

(A) significant natural and fragile areas;

(B) outstanding water resources, including lakes, rivers, aquifers, shorelands, and wetlands;

(C) significant scenic roads, waterways, and views;

(D) important historic structures, sites, or districts, archaeological sites, and archaeologically sensitive areas.

(6) *To maintain and improve the **QUALITY OF AIR, WATER, WILDLIFE, FORESTS, AND OTHER LAND RESOURCES.***

(A) Vermont's air, water, wildlife, mineral, and land resources should be planned for use and development according to the principles set forth in 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a).

(B) Vermont's water quality should be maintained and improved according to the policies and actions developed in the basin plans established by the Secretary of Natural Resources under 10 V.S.A. § 1253.

(C) Vermont's forestlands should be managed so as to maintain and improve forest blocks and habitat connectors.

(7) To make efficient use of ENERGY, provide for the development of renewable energy resources, and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

(A) General strategies for achieving these goals include increasing the energy efficiency of new and existing buildings; identifying areas suitable for renewable energy generation; encouraging the use and development of renewable or lower emission energy sources for electricity, heat, and transportation; and reducing transportation energy demand and single occupancy vehicle use.

(B) Specific strategies and recommendations for achieving these goals are identified in the State energy plans prepared under 30 V.S.A. §§ 202 and 202b.

(8) To maintain and enhance RECREATIONAL opportunities for Vermont residents and visitors.

(A) Growth should not significantly diminish the value and availability of outdoor recreational activities.

(B) Public access to noncommercial outdoor recreational opportunities, such as lakes and hiking trails, should be identified, provided, and protected wherever appropriate.

(9) To encourage and strengthen AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST industries.

(A) Strategies to protect long-term viability of agricultural and forestlands should be encouraged and should include maintaining low overall density.

(B) The manufacture and marketing of value-added agricultural and forest products should be encouraged.

(C) The use of locally-grown food products should be encouraged.

(D) Sound forest and agricultural management practices should be encouraged.

(E) Public investment should be planned so as to minimize development pressure on agricultural and forest land.

(10) To provide for the wise and efficient use of Vermont's NATURAL RESOURCES and to facilitate the appropriate extraction of earth resources and the proper restoration and preservation of the aesthetic qualities of the area.

(11) To ensure the availability of safe and AFFORDABLE HOUSING for all Vermonters.

(A) Housing should be encouraged to meet the needs of a diversity of social and income groups in each Vermont community, particularly for those citizens of low and moderate income.

(B) New and rehabilitated housing should be safe, sanitary, located conveniently to employment and commercial centers, and coordinated with the provision of necessary public facilities and utilities.

(C) Sites for multi-family and manufactured housing should be readily available in locations similar to those generally used for single-family conventional dwellings.

(D) Accessory apartments within or attached to single-family residences which provide affordable housing in close proximity to cost-effective care and supervision for relatives, elders, or persons who have a disability should be allowed.

(12) To plan for, finance, and provide an efficient system of PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES to meet future needs.

(A) Public facilities and services should include fire and police protection, emergency medical services, schools, water supply, and sewage and solid waste disposal.

(B) The rate of growth should not exceed the ability of the community and the area to provide facilities and services.

*(13) To ensure the availability of safe and **AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE** and to integrate child care issues into the planning process, including child care financing, infrastructure, business assistance for child care providers, and child care work force development.*

*(14) To encourage **FLOOD RESILIENT COMMUNITIES**.*

(A) New development in identified flood hazard, fluvial erosion, and river corridor protection areas should be avoided. If new development is to be built in such areas, it should not exacerbate flooding and fluvial erosion.

(B) The protection and restoration of floodplains and upland forested areas that attenuate and moderate flooding and fluvial erosion should be encouraged.

(C) Flood emergency preparedness and response planning should be encouraged.

(d) Plans and regulations prepared under the authority of this chapter

(d) All plans and regulations prepared under the authority of this chapter shall be **based upon surveys of existing conditions and probable future trends**, and shall be made in the light of **present and future growth and requirements**, and with **reasonable consideration, for the landowner, to topography, to needs and trends of the municipality, the region and the State**, to the **character of each area** and to its peculiar **suitability for particular uses** in relationship to surrounding areas, and with a view to conserving the **value of buildings**.

(e) Use of goals.

(1) The goals established in this section shall be employed, as provided under this chapter, to carry out the general purposes established in this section.

(2) After July 1, 1989, none of the following shall be prepared or adopted, unless consistent with the goals established in this section:

(A) all plans prepared by **regional planning commissions**, and all plans required of State agencies under 3 V.S.A. § 4020;

(B) measures implementing State agency plans.

(f) Standard of review.

(1) Consistent with the goals

(1) As used in this chapter, “consistent with the goals” requires **substantial progress toward attainment of the goals established in this section, unless the planning body determines that a particular goal is not relevant or attainable**. If such a determination is made, the planning body shall identify the goal in the plan and describe the situation, **explain why the goal is not relevant or attainable**, and **indicate what measures should be taken to mitigate any adverse effects** of not making substantial progress toward that goal. The determination of relevance or attainability shall be subject to review as part of a consistency determination under this chapter.

(2) Compatible with

(2) As used in this chapter, **for one plan to be “compatible with” another**, the plan in question, as implemented, will not significantly reduce the desired effect of the implementation of the other plan. If a plan, as implemented, will significantly reduce the desired effect of the other plan, the plan may be considered compatible if it includes the following:

- (A) a statement that identifies the ways that it will significantly reduce the desired effect of the other plan;
- (B) an explanation of why any incompatible portion of the plan in question is essential to the desired effect of the plan as a whole;
- (C) an explanation of why, with respect to any incompatible portion of the plan in question, there is no reasonable alternative way to achieve the desired effect of the plan; and
- (D) an explanation of how any incompatible portion of the plan in question has been structured to mitigate its detrimental effects on the implementation of the other plan. (Added 1967, No. 334 (Adj. Sess.), § 1, eff. March 23, 1968; amended 1969, No. 116, § 1; 1979, No. 174 (Adj. Sess.), § 1; 1987, No. 200 (Adj. Sess.), § 7, eff. July 1, 1989; 1989, No. 280 (Adj. Sess.), § 1; 1991, No. 130 (Adj. Sess.), § 1; 2003, No. 67, § 7b; 2003, No. 115 (Adj. Sess.), § 82; 2013, No. 16, § 1, eff. July 1, 2014; 2013, No. 96 (Adj. Sess.), § 161; 2013, No. 146 (Adj. Sess.), § 4, eff. May 27, 2014; 2015, No. 64, § 27; 2015, No. 171 (Adj. Sess.), § 14; 2015, No. 174 (Adj. Sess.), § 2.)

From Chris von Alt:

Question answers: Agree, undecided, disagree

Required Element #9: Energy Plan

1. Perform an analysis of energy resources, needs, scarcities, costs and problems within the municipality.
 - Question: none
2. Develop a policy on the conservation of energy, including programs, such as thermal integrity standards for buildings, to implement that policy.
 1. Maidstone Bylaw §514 Certificate of Occupancy:
 - (1) No use or occupancy of any land or structure may commence until the Zoning Administrator has issued a Certificate of Occupancy in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4449 (2)
 - (4) At the time the application for a Certificate of Occupancy is submitted, the applicant shall also submit a certificate of compliance with residential or commercial building energy codes, or credible evidence that no such compliance is required, pursuant to Vermont Public Act No. 89.
 2. Investing in thermal efficiency improvements can dramatically reduce a building's thermal fuel requirements while increasing its affordability, health, and comfort. Investments in thermal demand reductions through weatherization programs are good for Vermont's economy and, perhaps more importantly, for the health of Vermonters.
 3. This Comprehensive Energy Plan sets a new target of weatherizing 120,000 households by 2030
 - Questions:
 - The Maidstone Zoning Bylaws should continue to include §514 a Certificate of Occupancy.
 - Maidstone should seek to provide affordable means of providing insulation, windows and and HVAC upgrades that will reduce your homes energy consumption and make them more comfortable.
3. Develop a policy on the development of renewable energy resources.
 - Questions:
 - The Town should adopt a renewable energy policy that encourages commercial solar projects in Maidstone that provide electricity directly to the town or provide some form of financial benefit to the town.
 - The Town should adopt a renewable energy policy that encourages commercial wind projects in Maidstone that provide electricity directly to the town or provide some form of financial benefit to the town.
 - The Town should adopt a renewable energy policy that encourages private solar projects in Maidstone that provide electricity directly to a home
 - The Town should adopt a renewable energy policy that encourages private wind projects in Maidstone that provide electricity directly to a home.
4. Develop a policy on patterns and densities of land use likely to result in conservation of energy.
 - Questions: none

Required Element #10: Housing

1. Develop a program for addressing low and moderate income persons' housing needs as identified by the regional planning commission pursuant to subdivision 4348a(a)(9) of this title.
 - Questions:
 - Maidstone should support the development of a program that addresses low and moderate income persons' housing needs.
 - Maidstone should encourage the development of affordable housing.
 - Maidstone should encourage the development of senior citizen housing.
 - Maidstone should develop policies for Air B&Bs and other rentals at Maidstone Lake.
 - Maidstone should develop policies for Air B&Bs and other rentals in the rest of the Town.

Required Element #11: Economic Development

1. Describe present economic conditions and the location, type, and scale of desired economic development, and identify policies, projects, and programs necessary to foster economic growth.
 - Questions:
 - Maidstone should encourage economic growth within the Town.
 - Maidstone should encourage tourism & hospitality.
 - Maidstone should encourage office and business parks.
 - Maidstone should encourage day care facilities.
 - Maidstone should encourage agriculture and forestry.
 - Maidstone should encourage commercial businesses.
 - Maidstone should encourage home based businesses.

Required Element #12: A Flood Resilience Plan

1. Develop a flood resilience plan that identifies flood hazard and fluvial erosion hazard areas, based on river corridor maps provided by the Secretary of Natural Resources pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 1428(a) or maps recommended by the Secretary, and designates those areas to be protected, including floodplains, river corridors, land adjacent to streams, wetlands, and upland forests, to reduce the risk of flood damage to infrastructure and improved property; and
 - Question: none

2. Develop a flood resilience plan that recommends policies and strategies to protect the areas identified and designated under subdivision (12)(A)(i) of this subsection and to mitigate risks to public safety, critical infrastructure, historic structures, and municipal investments.
 - Questions:
 - The Janice Peaslee Bridge is a critical infrastructure.
 - The Janice Peaslee Bridge must be maintained to support public safety.
 - Maidstone should discourage building in flood hazard zones.
 - Maidstone should enroll in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

3. A flood resilience plan may reference an existing local hazard mitigation plan approved under 44 C.F.R. § 201.6.
 - Question: Maidstone should complete its local hazard mitigation plan so it can enroll in the NFIP.