



Municipal Plan

Adopted XX/XX/2025



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Plan Overview:

Municipal plans serve as a guiding framework for Vermont communities to navigate change and growth over time. These plans are living documents which require updating and review throughout their 8-year lifespan in order to stay relevant and keep the town moving toward its vision. By developing a picture for the future and setting clear goals, a municipal plan can help communities and individuals connect many smaller actions and measure achievement toward a larger goal. Having a town plan can also open up funding opportunities and other incentives that would otherwise be unavailable.

Objectives and Policies:

The Maidstone Municipal Plan is a guide for reaching long-term community goals while balancing the wide range of competing interests and short-term needs in town. The goals and strategies included within this document are intended to preserve and protect the town's assets while providing a future vision for town officials, residents, and businesses. This plan is NOT a regulatory document but can serve as the foundation for guiding future town initiatives and regulatory changes.

Each section of this plan contains goals, objectives, and policy suggestions pertaining to each of the required elements of a town plan (24 VSA 4382(a)). These required elements were used as an outline for the 13 sections of the plan and help align our town with the broader goals of surrounding towns, our region, and the rest of the state.

Using this plan:

As Maidstone works toward its goals, this document should:

- Inform decision-making, influence the Town's budget and capital expenditures, community development efforts, and natural resource protection initiatives
- Be given full effect in all appropriate regulatory proceedings, such as Act 250
- Be a tool for ongoing community discussion. The information can be valuable but should constantly be reviewed and amended (as needed).

Community Engagement and Town Plan Update Process

On November 2, 2023 the Maidstone Planning Commission began their community engagement process to gather feedback for the municipal plan update. A survey produced by the planning commission was mailed to all registered voters and property owners in town. The survey was also distributed townwide via email to all residents who had provided the town with their contact information and was made available in person at the Town Hall. A reminder was sent out via email at the end of November, including the deadline date for responses of December 22nd. Although the survey was considered closed after this date, it was made available at the town hall on January 18, 2024 for residents who had not submitted a response before the initial survey closure date. The final response was collected on January 25th and the survey was officially closed. In total the town received 145 responses which were used as a guiding framework throughout the drafting process of the new Town Plan, specifically informing the recommended actions at the end of each section.

Following the official closure of the survey, the Planning Commission began the process of writing the new Town Plan which spanned a year and a half from January 2024 through August 2025. The Planning Commission met monthly with planners from NVDA at publicly-warned meetings to work on the writing and editing of each of the 13 content sections of the plan. The culmination of this hard work and feedback collected during the public engagement process resulted in the following plan, which is believed to accurately represent the current state and future goals of the Town of Maidstone.



Town Overview

Maidstone is a quiet, peaceful and healthy agricultural community located in Essex County, Vermont. Comprised of 20,436 acres, it is bounded on the northeast by the Town of Brunswick, east by the Connecticut River, and southwest by the Towns of Guildhall and Granby and west by the Town of Ferdinand.

The land along the Connecticut River is fine sandy loam and very productive land for hay, silage corn and pasture. This area is subject to the overflow from the Connecticut River. Between the Connecticut River bottomlands and the uplands is a stretch of very fertile soil great for potatoes and gardens. The uplands are mostly mountainous and rocky; not being well adapted to cultivation, they are mostly wooded.

Maidstone has an abundant supply of surface water. In the northwest corner of town lies West Mountain Pond, 1,235 feet above sea level; its outlet is West Mountain Brook, which runs eastward. Dutton Pond is located in the center of town and has its outlet in Dutton Brook, which flows eastward to Cutler Mill Brook. Steven's Pond is located in the southeastern part of town about a half mile from US Route 102. Maidstone Lake, which lies in the southwest corner of the town, is 3 miles long and 1 mile wide. While ponds are basically undeveloped, Maidstone Lake has extensive house development and is a popular summer resort with an increasing number of year-round residences. Paul Stream flows through the northwestern part.

Maidstone's most spectacular scenic views, which are rarely observed by tourists, can be seen from Maidstone Hill, Bear Hill and Stoneham Mountain. Bear Hill, with an elevation of 1,765 feet is located between Route 102 and the North Road. Many early farm settlements were first started here. Those who wander to this high pinnacle may see a breathtaking view of the valley. There are splendid views from Maidstone Hill, west to Maidstone Lake and east to the valley below. Maidstone Hill's natural wonders include a number of caves.

The population of Maidstone has changed dramatically over the past 200 years. It seemed to rise again between 2000-2010, but has remained stagnant since then with a population of just over 200. The number of nonresidents fluctuates with the seasons, peaking during the warmer months of the year.

Maidstone has no village, post office, school, store, gas station, tavern or doctor's office. It depends on the neighboring towns for all these services.

MAIDSTONE TOTAL POPULATION, 1790-2020

| 1790 | 1800 | 1810 | 1820 | 1830 | 1840 | 1850 | 1860 | 1870 | 1880 | 1890 | 1900 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 125 | 152 | 177 | 166 | 236 | 271 | 237 | 259 | 254 | 286 | 198 | 206 |

| 1910 | 1920 | 1930 | 1940 | 1950 | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 | 2020 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 175 | 171 | 123 | 96 | 81 | 78 | 94 | 100 | 131 | 105 | 208 | 211 |



Town History

There are many interesting aspects to Maidstone's history. Mrs. Amy taught the first public school in town in a log house in 1786. This school stood just east of the J.W. Webb place (now LeFoll's). The 1840 school statistics show that Maidstone had four school districts with four common schools totaling 90 pupils. The total operating cost was \$534.76. There were nine teachers employed, one male and eight females. The average weekly salary including board was \$3.13. The entire school income was \$422.56 and the total amount expended was \$534.76. Mrs. Jennie K. Stanley was superintendent.

The first Town Clerk was Haines French. He helped organize the town in 1788. James Lucas was the moderator at the first Town Meeting in March, 1788.

The first physician was Dr. Cheney, who remained only a short time. Isaac Stevens owned the first tavern and the first two stores were owned by Abraham Gile and Isaac Smith.

The defendants in the first lawsuit ever put on the docket in Essex County Court were James and Nancy Lucas of Maidstone. This suit for slander was continued from the first term at Lunenburg to the second term in 1801 at Brunswick where the plaintiffs, John and Anna Hugh obtained a verdict of \$14.41 in damages and \$0.70 for costs. Elijah Foote of Guildhall was the lawyer for James and Nancy Lucas.

The first known suicide in Essex County took place in Maidstone in 1802 when Dr. Taber's wife's body was found in the Connecticut River. A jury brought in a verdict as to the cause and determined it had to have been homesickness and discouragement. One of the first deaths in town was Jeremy Merrill who was killed by a falling tree limb.

There used to be a Last Factory located on what used to be the old Drew place on the North Road. Lasts were soles of shoes made mostly from rock maple. Most of the work was done by hand with saws. The wood was split by hand finished with a drawshave.

There was an up-and-down sawmill located somewhere behind the old Booth place (now Cardin's). They did quite a business there and used the brook as a source of power with a water wheel to run the saw. A ditch was dug in the vicinity of Stevens Pond and allowed to fill with water, which was then released to power the mill. This ditch would hold enough water to power the sawmill for an entire days' sawing. All finish work and planing was done by hand. Many of the timbers in the old houses in town were sawn there.

By the old Howe farm (now Fay's), between the main road and the old railroad bed, there used to be a place where potato whiskey was made. Potatoes were crushed in something like a cider press. They would boil and catch the steam through coal and let it run down in a bottle. This would then ferment. In those days, you could buy a jug of liquor in any store with no tax or license. This whiskey business ran for some 49 years but went out before the railroad went through.

The Honorable John G. Beattie, a long time Maidstone resident born in 1891, stated that the townspeople of his day *"scratched around in the dirt and raised a few vegetables and had a cow or two. Lumbering was the most important industry and that's what my grandfather did"*.

In the olden days, most every farm at one time or another would be the Keeper of the Pound. A pound was a place where stray animals were kept, usually a resident's barnyard.

Mr. Beattie was well informed about the schools of his day, his mother being a teacher who taught school on Bear Hill in one room of a house called the Hawkins House. There were 17 pupils at the time and 15 or 20 families living in that area at the time. There were three schools on the River Road at one time: one near the old Booth house, one at McDade's and one near what is now Fay's. There was also a school on the North Road near Allin's. As more families moved in an area of town, a schoolhouse was built or moved to accommodate pupils in that area.

When asking Mr. Beattie about his recollections of past town history, and in talking about old town buildings and property, he stated that the first log house in town was built on the hill across from the Beattie house. When asked about how old he thought his home to be, he answered, *"This house was built by Jesse Hughes who was a Superior Judge. He died in 1839. His wife Dorcas died in 1837. Mr. Hughes built this house but didn't live to enjoy it long. I have called the building of this place 1820-21-22. The up and down plank partitions are characteristic of the early 1800's. Mr. Beattie's grandfather bought the place in January 1842 and put on the ell part of the house and the flat roof.*

Below what is now the McVetty property, across from the old Crown place, there used to be a blacksmith shop. It has probably been gone since the early 1920's. The Noble residence used to be called the old Schoff place and the meadow across the road by the river was known as the Schoff meadow. There also used to be a large brick house near what is now Norman Young's barn.

George Taylor ran a post office that was located where Mr. Lamoureux now lives. The mail came and went on the Main Central Railroad. It is said that in the hallway there were some 20 boxes at a time.

In 1902, ten people from Guildhall made arrangements with Mr. Beattie's father to build a camp on the first flat beyond the Beattie's homestead. This later became known as Camp Essex. They would come

on weekends with a horse and wagon. Mr. Beattie's father was raising buckwheat there at the time.

Electricity first came to town when Col. Benton bought what is now the old Ford homestead (where Knight's currently live). This would have been somewhere around 1925.

The first cars in town were remembered well by Mr. Beattie. He recalled: "*The first cars were hupmobiles*". Frank Curtis had one, I remember. In 1914 he could never get up Berge Hill in Guildhall in low no matter how much juice he gave it. The older cars had more noise than power.

When Mr. Beattie was a little boy, he remembers that there weren't many woods around – mostly open country. He remembers attending school in the McDade schoolhouse. A teacher by the name of Miss Coyne walked night and morning to school across these pastures from the North Road area.

Mr. Beattie also remembered the log drives that used to come through our area on the Connecticut River. When asked if he ever took part in these drives, he commented: *I always got around eating some of the baked beans and cookies the cook would make*". The drives went through between March and the first of June. It would depend on how high the water was. They sometimes camped on the Lamoureux place, near the old Sullivan place and Mr. Beattie's land, too. Any place that was dry but near the river was a good place for a camp. There would be two or three six-horse teams that would pull the logs in the river. Some of the logs would get stranded on sandbars and meadows on their long ride to Massachusetts.

As for the original records of the town, it has been said that whoever had the field book in his possession was crossing the river on the ice in the spring and lost it in the water. Thus not many early records can be found. Our best records lie with our people and their memories of the past. The few stone foundations and markers that are left commemorate what our town has stood for. Our job now is to preserve and not destroy what our town has stood for in the past and what it stands for now.

Notes from the Lake:

- The Maidstone State Forest Lands were purchased in 1938 from the New Hampshire-Vermont Lumber Company (predecessor of St. Regis Paper Company). Ten years later, St. Regis conveyed a right-of-way to Route 102.
- The first recorded timber harvest was in 1899 by the Connecticut Valley Lumber Company to salvage wood during an outbreak of spruce budworm.
- The Connecticut Valley Lumber Company during the period of 1915 to 1921 had log drives down Paul Stream and the Connecticut River.

- An early record shows that the Lake was stocked during the years 1885 and 1886 when 5,000 salmon were placed in the lake. During this period fish were shipped via rail to a point close to the stocking site and then transported by horses to the received waters.
- In 2001 Maidstone State Park was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Ours is a proud little town, proud of our past and proud of what we have become. Nowhere on earth can one find more peace, beauty and splendor.

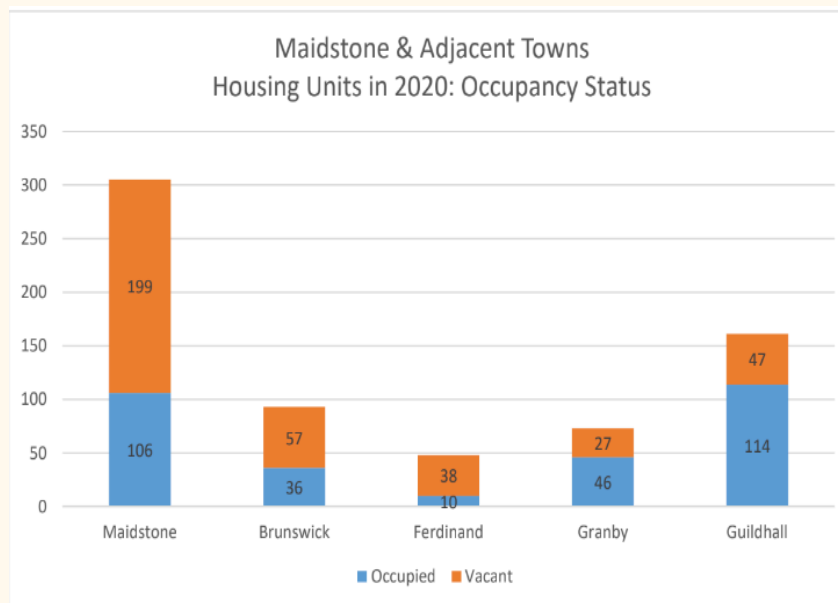


Housing Demographics

At present, there are two developed areas of housing in Maidstone:

1. Seasonal camps and year-round residences located around Maidstone Lake.
2. Seasonal camps and year-round residences along Route 102, Hall Road and North Road.

According to the 2020 U.S. Census, Maidstone has **106** occupied housing units and **199** vacant housing units (which includes seasonal, recreational, or occasional use units). Of the 106 estimated households, 89% own their own home and the remaining 11% are renters. A majority of the “vacant” units are seasonal camps or year-round homes that are vacant more than 6 months of the year located on and around Maidstone Lake. This trend is not entirely unique to Maidstone, as Essex County has the highest rate of seasonal homes as a percentage of its housing stock in the state. The presence of the lake as well as surrounding natural beauty in town and throughout Essex County as a whole makes Maidstone a desirable place for a second home and explains the large number of “vacant” units.



Of the occupied housing units, nearly 69% are 2-3 bedroom single detached dwellings (2021 ACS estimates, www.housingdata.org). 17% of housing units are even larger with 4-5 bedrooms. The average number of rooms per home in Maidstone as of 2022 was 2.6, which is just slightly larger than the average household size of 2.1.

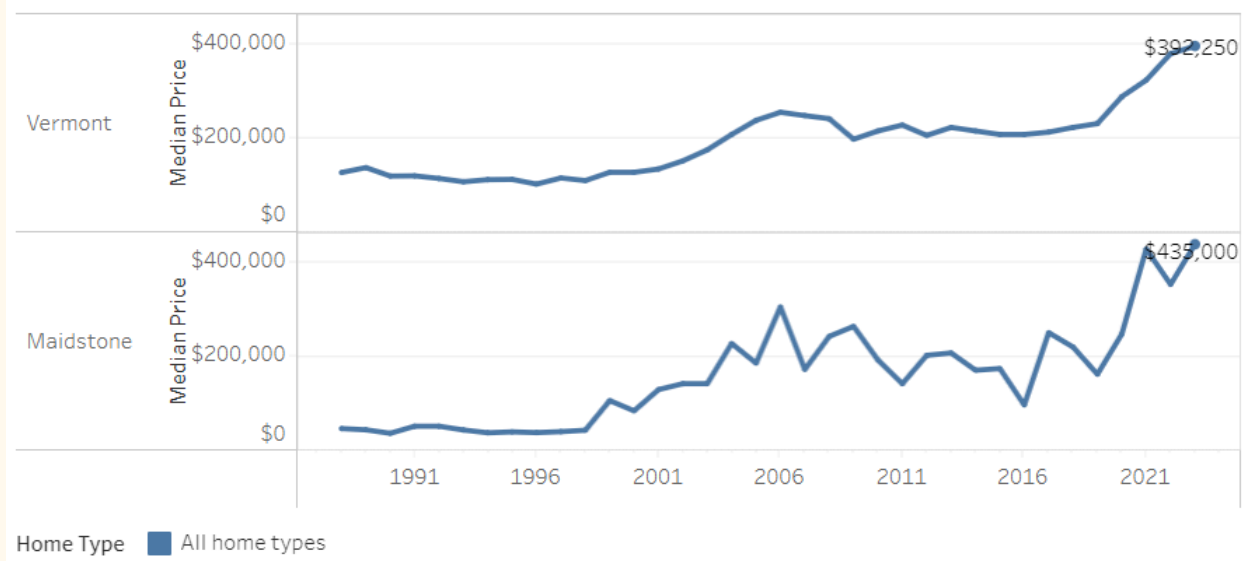
21% of Maidstone's housing stock was built after 2000, which is greater than both the rest of the county (18%) and the state (16%). Many of these new homes are being built around Maidstone lake, sometimes replacing traditional camps. Although Maidstone's housing stock surpasses the county and state average for homes built after 2000, there are still many older homes in town with 42% of the town's housing stock being constructed before 1960. Most older homes were not built with energy

efficiency in mind and may have outdated electrical systems that are more prone to starting fires. They often lack adequate air sealing and insulation and/or high efficiency heating and cooling systems. Older homes are also frequently the largest homes in a community, requiring more energy to heat. These old large homes often outsize the needs of the household.

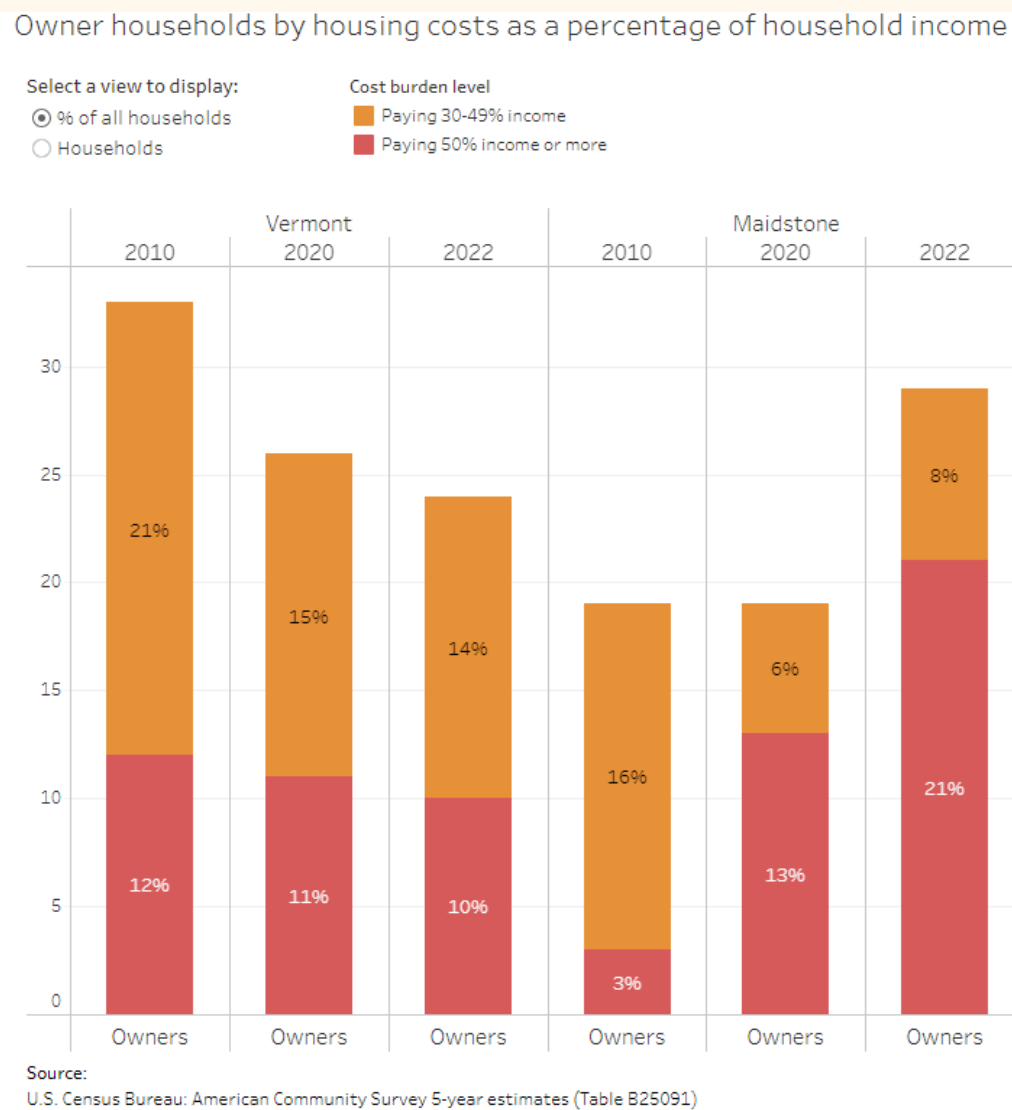
Housing Concerns

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the cost of homes around Maidstone lake have increased substantially, nearly doubling over a period of just a few years. Proximity to the lake and the desire of many to move out of higher density areas since the pandemic is likely one of the drivers for this significant increase. Although this trend is not entirely unique to Maidstone, the significant jump in property value and increase in the number of second homes around the lake could possibly make it more difficult for longtime residents to continue to afford their homes and age in place.

Vacation home sales



Another concerning trend is the increase in the number of households spending over 50% of their total income on housing-related expenses. While the state has seen a slight but gradual decrease in the percentage of cost-burdened households since 2010, Maidstone has experienced the opposite trend. It is estimated that as of 2022, 29% of households in Maidstone pay more than 30% of their monthly income on housing, with 21% of these households paying 50% of their income or more. This trend raises concerns for the ability of some Maidstone residents to be able to afford living in town long-term. Another concerning trend is the school tax is increasing the taxes on the number of households.



A 2023 regional housing study conducted by Rural Edge for the Northeast Kingdom identified Maidstone as one of 14 towns showing potential for housing stress in the coming years. This can be due to a number of factors, but in particular the large number of seasonal/vacation homes, availability of affordable rentals, and lack of accessible senior housing likely play a part in earning Maidstone this designation. Small, rural communities like Maidstone often cannot support new, multi-family housing developments, nor would one fit the rural character of Maidstone. Despite this, there are still approaches to addressing rural housing issues that the town can pursue to ease housing stress.

1. Adaptive reuse of large single-family homes can be an effective way to increase housing availability in rural areas with an aging housing stock. This approach encourages the

preservation of older residences and provides lower income seniors with housing that is less expensive than maintaining an owned home as well as providing opportunities for social interaction.

2. Home rehabilitation programs (such as VHIP) can assist with improving the efficiency of ‘livability’ of older single-family or small subdivided single-family residences.
3. Providing assistance with small water and wastewater systems, either for existing systems that have failed or for new systems that could support small-scale residential development efforts.

Survey Results

1. While survey respondents acknowledged that there was a lack of affordable housing in Maidstone, only a quarter of all respondents deemed access to affordable housing a long-term goal for Maidstone.
 - a. Although not a long-term goal according to survey respondents, a town’s zoning bylaw cannot exclude multi-unit homes and mobile home parks and must designate certain areas for these developments. Moreover, a **single family year-round residence** must be allowed to have one accessory apartment. Any revisions to Maidstone’s zoning land use policies must therefore ensure that all forms of affordable housing are dealt with fairly.
 - b. A town’s zoning bylaw must also allow for duplexes with the same dimensional standards as single-unit dwellings in any district that allows year-round residential development
2. 42% of all survey respondents supported the development of energy-efficient affordable housing in Maidstone while 29% disagreed. The remaining 29% had “no opinion” or did not respond to this question.
3. Establishing a policy on short term rentals was split down the middle, with 39% of respondents supporting a policy and 37% against it.

Vision:

1. Maintain the current housing and rural character of Maidstone while promoting an adequate standard of affordable housing for all residents regardless of income or socioeconomic status.
2. Adopt and implement the newly required zoning regulations in 24 VSA, Chapter 117 regarding affordable housing, mobile home parks and accessory dwellings.

Issues/Concerns:

1. Maintaining the rural character of Maidstone and the pristine character of Maidstone Lake.

Recommended Actions:

1. Comply with Vermont Statutes, specifically [24 VSA Chapter 117](#), while still maintaining the rural characteristics of Maidstone.
2. Closely monitor the development of year-round homes on Maidstone Lake. This is even

more crucial with the advent of accessory dwellings on the lake.

3. Encourage the preservation of historic sites and buildings that add to the character of the town.

4. Carefully formulate the regulations governing the creation of mobile home parks and low and moderate income housing.



Education

Vermont's education system is complex. Due to court decisions and legislative acts, there is diminished local control over education decisions and education tax rates. Maidstone's future is directly affected by the complicated education opportunities for the students in our town and unpredictable education tax rates.

Current Situation:

The Town of Maidstone has been part of a ten-town school district, the NEK Choice School District. The ten towns are Bloomfield, Brunswick, East Haven, Granby, Guildhall, Kirby, Lemington, Maidstone, Norton and Victory. Each town elects a representative, who serves a three year term, that form the school board for the NEK Choice School District. None of the ten towns in the NEK Choice School District has a school, therefore all students attend schools outside the district, including schools in New Hampshire. Vocational and work force training, while also not offered in town, is available through the Canaan Technical Center CTE program or other remote educational offerings.

This school district is supervised by the Essex North Supervisory Union (ENSU) which also supervises the Canaan School District. The ENSU coordinates the eligibility, enrollment and tuition payments to the participating schools.

The choice of which schools parents select to send their children is a private decision. The Town of Maidstone has no say in where its students are attending school and therefore has minimal ability to maximize educational opportunities. The Town can encourage local participation in the NEK Choice School District and the ENSU's board meetings where local education decisions including the local school budget are set.

Current Education Taxes:

Vermont raises most of the funding necessary to cover the cost of education through property taxes. Maidstone's property tax bills are comprised of the municipal tax, covering the cost of running the town, and the education tax, which represents the largest portion of the tax bill. In recent years, the education tax portion of the property tax bills exceeds 80%.

All property owners in Maidstone pay the non-homestead education tax as part of their property tax bills, unless they annually declare their homestead. Those that declare their homestead pay the homestead education tax rate.

Education tax rates are calculated at the state level by the Agency of Education.

The non-homestead education tax has two components, one of which has local control. The non-homestead education tax rate is set by the legislature and is the same rate for all of Vermont. Each municipality's non-homestead education tax rate is adjusted by the municipality's Common Level of Appraisal (CLA). The CLA is locally controlled and is the end result of the year-long work of the

Maidstone Board of Listers. The CLA is generated by comparing valid sales that have occurred in the town with the value delineated to that property in the grand list, then attributing that percentage to all similar properties in the grand list.

The homestead education tax rate has four components, three of which have some degree of local control. The homestead education tax rate is determined by the NEK Choice School District's budget, approved by Australian ballot at the Annual Meeting of each of the ten towns. The approved budget is divided by the student count, called the Long-Term Average Daily Membership, to determine the cost per student. This number is divided by the homestead yield, a number set by the legislature to guarantee that, statewide, enough education taxes are raised to pay for the cost of education. This determines the base homestead education tax rate that the ten towns in the NEK Choice School District pay. Each municipality's base homestead education tax rate is adjusted by the municipality's CLA.

Because the non-homestead and homestead education tax rates are derived from different sources, there is no guarantee that one rate will be higher or lower than the other. Over the past few years, Maidstone's homestead education tax rate has been higher than the non-homestead education tax rate, but in 2024, Maidstone's homestead education tax rate is lower than the non-homestead education tax rate.

To aid those who declare their homestead in Maidstone from the high cost of education, the state calculates the maximum amount of education taxes that the taxpayer is obligated to pay by comparing the education taxes paid to a percentage of the taxpayer's income. If the state determines that the taxpayer paid more than a certain percentage of their income, the state returns the overpayment in a credit to the next year's property tax bill. This is called a state payment. In Maidstone, anywhere between two thirds and three quarters of the homestead education taxpayers receive a state payment each year, meaning that these taxpayers are paying their education tax payments based on their income, not their grand list property value.

The areas of local control over the education tax rates need to be encouraged and supported at the Town level.

Recommended Actions:

1. Encourage participation in the NEK Choice School District and the ENSU board meetings or their successor's board meetings.
2. Encourage parents with children in the education system to complete all paperwork from the school district to ensure that the Town can take advantage of every opportunity afforded by legislative initiatives.
3. Encourage our state legislators to explore other alternatives for funding the education system and lowering the education tax rates.
4. Support the work of the Board of Listers to generate the most accurate CLA possible because the CLA is the most locally controlled component of our education tax rates.

5. Encourage homestead property taxpayers to complete their annual filings.

Natural Areas

The preservation of sensitive and irreplaceable natural areas 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.



Significant Natural and Fragile Areas

Maidstone Caves

The Maidstone cave situated on the west slope of Stoneham Mountain is particularly interesting. Vertical and almost horizontal jointing which developed in the bedrock prior to the glaciation produced huge blocks of rock. As a result of the glaciation the blocks were rearranged so that some are pulled apart by as much as 6 feet and all of them are moved to some degree downslope. Some of the upper blocks overrode the lower ones to produce the roof of the cave. Pre-glacial depressions were either ice scoured, or partially scoured and subsequently sealed off by glacial debris to form the seat of most ponds, lakes, and swamps in the area. Glacial ice effectively carved the basin that confines Maidstone Lake. As of 1996, Maidstone Cave had 1692 feet of surveyed passage, placing it as the second-longest cave in Vermont and the third-longest in New England.

Maidstone State Forest.

Maidstone State Forest was purchased from the New Hampshire and Vermont Lumber Company in 1938 specifically for developing a state park. Much of the area is undeveloped and is mainly a mixed northern hardwood forest. Many species of wildlife inhabit the area, including moose, bear, and deer. Maidstone State Park, developed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1938, is also located in the state forest and provides public access to Maidstone Lake as well as hiking, camping, and other recreational opportunities throughout the summer. The park was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001 and is one of six state parks located along the Connecticut River Byway.

West Mountain Wildlife Management Area

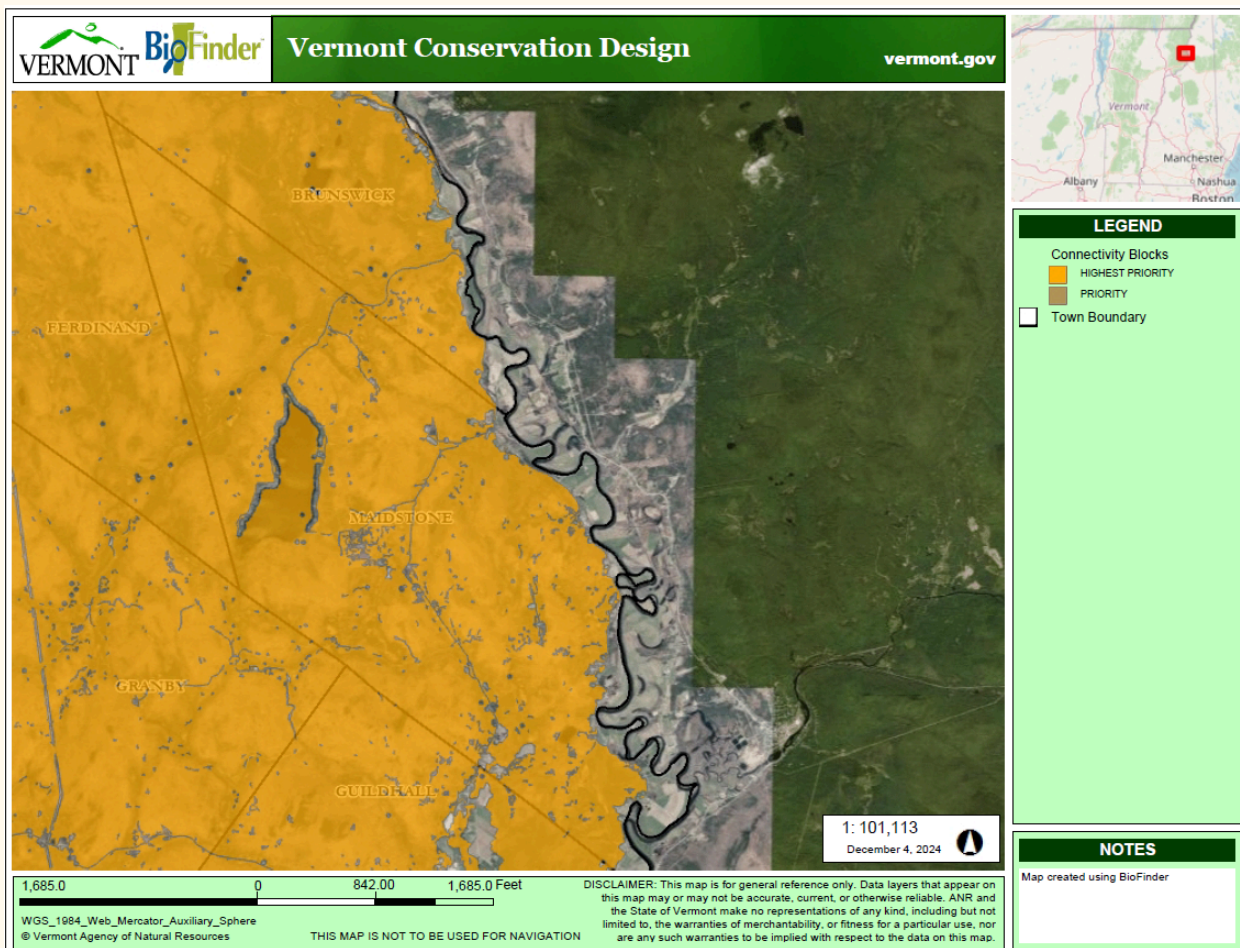
West Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is a 22,736-acre parcel of land owned by the State of Vermont and managed by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. Located in the towns of

Maidstone, Ferdinand and Brunswick, the WMA ranges north from Maidstone Lake to Route 105, and east from South America Pond to the Connecticut River.

Habitat Blocks

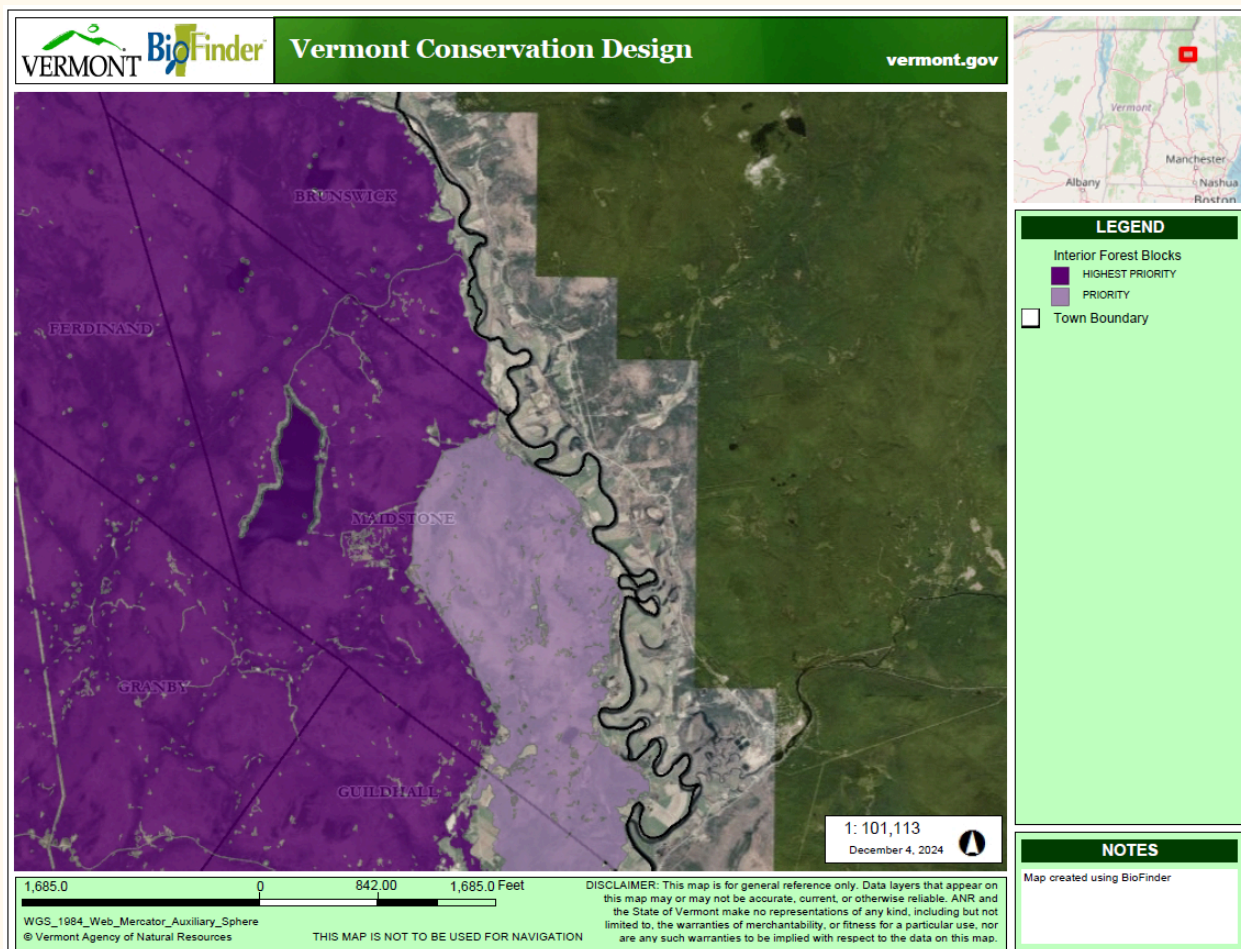
Habitat blocks are areas of contiguous forest and other natural habitats that are unfragmented by roads, development, or agriculture. Vermont's habitat blocks are primarily forests, but also include wetlands, rivers, and streams, lakes and ponds, cliffs, and rock outcrops. Forests included in habitat blocks may be young, early-successional strands, actively managed forests, or mature forests with little or no recent logging activity. The defining factor is that there is little or no permanent habitat fragmentation from roads or other forms of development within a habitat block.

In 2018, Act 171 was passed by State legislation, which requires town plans to identify important areas of forest blocks and habitat connectors and plan for land development in those areas to minimize forest fragmentation and promote the health, viability, and ecological function of forests. The Agency of Natural Resources' (ANR) "Biofinder" mapping tool provides critical insight into the ecological function of unfragmented forest blocks, which provide core habitat as well as vital connectivity to larger forest blocks beyond town boundaries. The following map is from a statewide representation of all habitat blocks larger than 20 acres, as derived from NOAA Coastal Change Analysis Program (CCAP 2006 Era Land Cover Data and ancillary data).



From the map, Maidstone has a lot of area covered in yellow, signifying habitat blocks and wildlife corridors that create a connected network of forest across the state and into adjacent states and provinces. The highlighted area is mostly large forests, however it can also include shrubland, wetland, and smaller connecting blocks that provide terrestrial connectivity. Development almost exclusively hugs existing roadways in town with little disturbance outside of those areas, which is why a majority of Maidstone is made up of these connectivity blocks.

Maidstone also contains large areas of “High Priority Interior Forest Blocks,” which are defined as forested areas that contain the least amount of development and are the most unfragmented from roads or agriculture. As can be seen in the map below, more than half the town is considered to be high priority interior forest habitat, while the eastern portion of the town following Route 102 is considered priority interior forest habitat.



These priority forest areas are important to both the town of Maidstone and the state of Vermont, as the state is now losing forest cover after a century of regeneration. While some of this loss comes from conversion of forests to agricultural and commercial uses, the main cause is incremental, low density residential development. As new residents continue to move into Maidstone and land parcelization

increases statewide, it is important for the town to give special consideration to the effects of development on these critical natural resources.

SHORELAND AREAS

Protecting water quality is a high priority in the Town of Maidstone. Activities such as logging on steep slopes or down to the water's edge, building houses close to the water, and cutting all the vegetation along the shore all affect the quality of water. Eroded soil is the number one pollutant to Vermont lakes and ponds.

| MAIDSTONE BODIES OF WATER | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Lake Names | Size (acres) | Max. Depth (ft.) | Lake type | Watershed area (acres) | Present Uses |
| Dutton | -- | -- | No data | No data | No data |
| Maidstone Lake | 745 | 121 | artificial control | 310 | swimming, boating |
| Stevens Pond | 26 | 9 | artificial | 178 | warm water fishing |
| West Mountain Pond | 60 | 12 | Natural | 2,311 | warm & cold water fishing |

Source: Agency of Natural Resources, Water Quality Division

Maidstone Lake

Traditionally camps were built close to the water's edge to afford the best view from the living room and front porch. Camps were used only two or three weeks a year, and the number of people staying at a camp were usually few. The dishes were done by hand, laundry done in the sink, and taking a bath meant jumping in the lake. The toilet consisted of an outhouse set back from the water's edge.

Life around Maidstone Lake is different today. People use their camps for much longer periods of time and many have been converted to year round homes. Most camps now have showers, dishwashers, washing machines and flush toilets.

As the use of the lake has increased, so has the amount of black water and grey water and other pollution. A lake can naturally treat a certain amount of pollution but if the amount surpasses the lake's natural ability to treat the waste, it starts to accumulate in the sediments and water column. Maidstone Lake is a cold water lake, which means it has a much harder time breaking down soap and other pollution. Once a particular concentration of pollution is reached, large algae blooms will occur and the overall water quality will diminish rapidly. Furthermore, since it takes a long time for algae to build up, it will also take a long time to correct the problem if it occurs. When the water quality goes down, so will the real estate value of the camps and homes.

According to West Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA)'s long range management plan

(2014), Maidstone Lake, although not contained within West Mountain WMA, has most of its shoreland adjacent to WMA land. Furthermore, a large portion of the lake's watershed exists inside West Mountain WMA. Maidstone Lake has shown a slightly increasing trend in its phosphorus concentrations over the past several years. As an extremely low-nutrient lake like Maidstone, even a small increase in nutrient levels is cause for concern. Maidstone ranks in the 23rd percentile of all Vermont ranked lakes, with scores for biological diversity and scenic features. Despite low nutrient levels and very clear water, it does not score well for water quality because of intensive shoreland development. Reducing erosion in the watershed and improving shoreland vegetation management strategies should be priorities for the protection of Maidstone Lake.

There are ways to prevent the degradation of water quality on a lake. It is clear that when you have a lake that is nearly totally built out like Maidstone Lake, that the challenges are quite different than if starting from scratch. But it is also clear that if some fairly strict measures are not adopted, the lake will eventually end up polluted and contain a significant algae bloom.



So the question is “How do we keep our beautiful lake clean?” The answer has several parts. We need to continue working with the Lake Association in monitoring the lake to prevent the introduction of invasive aquatic plants such as Eurasian water milfoil. We have very dedicated lay monitors who test the lake regularly for water clarity, phosphorus, and chlorophyll.

The Town’s regulatory jurisdiction is to the mean water level of the lake; the State of Vermont regulates the lake itself and the mean level is determined by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation. The preventative measures include ensuring that no black water and very little grey water enters the lake, establishing vegetative buffer strips along the shore to help prevent run-off and erosion, keeping land disturbance well back from the water, surrounding a work area with a filter screen, setting the camps back from the water’s edge to allow a greater filtering distance before any pollution that does occur enters the lake, limiting the use of accessory dwellings and travel trailers, and requiring that all year-round or enlarged camps (either horizontally or vertically) have State approved septic systems and meet all setbacks.

Other Surface Waters

Many of the same problems and corrective measures apply to the other surface waters in Maidstone. The town has a real opportunity to develop these lands in a way to prevent problems in the future and maintain the water quality in town.

Dutton Pond

Dutton Pond is a 12 acre pond located in the center of town with an outlet in Dutton Brook, which flows eastward to Cutler Mill Brook. It is a site for the Vermont LoonWatch annual survey which plays a vital role in loon conservation in Vermont.

Paul Stream

Paul Stream flows through the northwestern part of town and runs adjacent to Paul Stream Road.

Steven's Pond

Steven's Pond is a 26 acre pond located in the southeastern part of town about a half mile from US Route 102. Steven's Pond also serves as a location for the Vermont LoonWatch annual survey.

West Mountain Pond

In the northwest corner of town lies West Mountain Pond, 1,235 feet above sea level; its outlet is West Mountain Brook, which runs eastward. It is a shallow, tannic pond and a mature northern white cedar swamp with rare plant habitat.

Historic Structures and Archaeological Sites

The sites listed below are part of a system of enterprises that developed around the economic use of the forests in the Nulhegan and Paul Stream drainages beginning in the early 1800's. There are a number of other sites in close proximity to the West Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) that are part of this larger context, including a saw mill and wood manufacturing shop at the outlet of Maidstone Lake. These sites are irreplaceable and should be taken into consideration when thinking about any future development in town.

Native American Sites

The Nulhegan River was part of a long distance travel route used by Native Americans connecting the St. Lawrence and St. Francis rivers with locations in the Androscoggin, Kennebec, and Penobscot river drainages in Maine, and the Atlantic coast. However, while Native American sites along the lower portion of the Connecticut River are well documented, there is little evidence on record regarding their habitation or activity in the Nulhegan region. Brunswick Springs, in the Dennis and Wheeler Stream drainage near their confluence with the Connecticut River (just beyond the West Mountain WMA boundary), was apparently an important site for Native Americans for medicinal and spiritual

purposes; and a number of sites near Island Pond have produced artifacts. Maidstone Lake is the site of another find.

Beattie Mill and Farms

In 1859 the Beattie brothers established a mill on Paul Stream located just below Browns Mill. Their mill closed in 1876, however the brothers also operated a 600 acre farm in Maidstone which is thought to have been located in the West Mountain WMA.

Browns Mill

Brown's Mill is located on Paul Stream in Maidstone, at the bridge to the West Mountain Pond Road. Photographic evidence suggests a large mill complex was situated here in the early 1900's, on the former site of a mid 1800's mill. Iron rods and embedded eye bolts are among the features that identify this mill site. Landforms in the immediate area suggest the outlines of a mill pond and head-race. There are also portions of cribwork underneath and upstream of the present bridge, which are possibly remnants of the dam

Budweiser's Farm

Located in Maidstone on West Mountain Pond Road, this site contains the remains of a twentieth century logging camp.

Bullthroat Dam/Camp

Photographic documentation identifies this site as a Connecticut Valley Lumber (CVL) logging camp. Probable remnants of the dam exist beneath extensive modern disturbance. The boom anchor is a feature consisting of an eyebolt with an attached iron ring. The bolt has tentatively been associated with the dam at Bullthroat a short distance downstream

Non-Native Plant Species

Nonnative invasive plants pose a threat to native forests of the WMA. These plants may outcompete native species, decreasing the diversity of native species and reducing the regeneration of native forest trees. They may also have a range of impacts on wildlife species and ecosystem function. Populations may be established in areas where heavy equipment has operated in roadside ditches or in areas of recent timber harvesting. The currently low levels and impact of invasive plants at West Mountain WMA, which includes a large portion of Maidstone, adds significantly to its ecological importance. Survey results indicate that the Town should take steps to protect from increasing presence of non-native species (75% of full-time residents and 77% of all respondents agree).

Survey Results

According to the 2023 survey results, "Protect forest lands," "Protect lakes, ponds, rivers, & streams," "Protect wildlife habitats," and "Protect wetlands" are important long-term goals for Maidstone. The survey results also indicate that the Town should take steps to protect from "pollution of lakes, streams, and water supplies," "disappearance of natural and open areas," "disappearance of agricultural lands,"

“disappearance of forest lands,” “disappearance of wildlife habitats,” and to protect from “increasing presence of non-native invasive species.”

There was also strong support for the Town to expand its efforts to preserve the quality of water in Maidstone Lake and keep it free of invasive species.

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
3. To maintain and improve water quality found in Maidstone’s lakes, ponds and streams.
4. To minimize the introduction and work towards the eradication of non-native plant species.

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.
3. In order to decrease the amount of siltation caused by building construction, logging and farming, erosion control standards should be adopted, including the use of silt screen fences.
4. The lakes and pond should be treated in two categories: one to remain essentially unchanged (West Mountain, Dutton and Stevens Pond) and the other to address concerns caused by extensive development around the shore (Maidstone Lake).
5. In order to protect the water quality, wilderness character, wildlife habitat, and rare plant species, large undisturbed buffer strips should be established around the undeveloped ponds and streams. Buffers at least 50 feet wide should be left along all streams and rivers in town. Following State of Vermont guidelines, the buffers around ponds and lakes should be 100 feet of undisturbed vegetation and 200 feet of contiguous vegetative cover. Active farmland would be encouraged but not required to maintain these buffer strips.
6. In order to alleviate unnecessary burdens on the camp owners, protect the water quality and streamline the permit process; the current Zoning Bylaws should be revised to regulate the “mean normal water level”. Revisions to be considered are stated in the recommended actions.
7. Logging practices in Vermont are addressed in the guidelines entitled “Acceptable Management Practice for Logging Practices in Vermont”. Presently local municipalities are not authorized to enact any stricter regulations on clear-cuts or other logging practices. However, they can adopt regulations that reflect the same standards that are contained within the AMP guidelines. Due to increasing concerns about the detrimental effect of logging on water quality, the AMPs should be carefully reviewed and considered for adoption at the local level.

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.
3. Monitor water quality reports.
4. Review and/or adopt erosion control standards.
5. Encourage communication on an annual basis between the Maidstone Lake Association and the Maidstone Planning Commission so that both groups can address land use related issues in the Maidstone Lake area for issues such as noise, light and the road.
6. Educate the public about the threat of non-native plant species and encourage residents to take preventative action against them on their property. Also educate the public about the threat of non-native plant species in Maidstone Lake.
7. Revise the Zoning Bylaws to reflect the following:
 - a. In the Lake District, in order to meet the spirit and intent of equal treatment of housing and required provisions for affordable housing (24 V.S.A. § 4412(1)), while protecting Maidstone Lake as a valuable resource, for duplexes and accessory dwelling units, the following is intended to regulate short-term rental units distinctly from residential rental units, as allowed by 24 V.S.A. § 4412(1)(F)(ii):
 - i. Any duplex shall be held to the same dimensional standards as single-unit dwellings.
 - ii. Any accessory dwelling unit is to be located within or appurtenant to a single-family dwelling on an owner-occupied lot, where “owner-occupied lot” refers to the lot that is the owner’s domicile (primary residence and legal address).
 - iii. Any duplex or accessory dwelling unit shall only be utilized as the domicile (primary residence and legal address) of any occupants, not as short-term rental units.

Land Use

The Planning Commission reports the traditional use of land, whether it is for timber harvesting, recreation, agriculture, seasonal camps, residential living, home occupation, or small clean development. This plan, in its entirety, functions as our land use plan. It spells out a general direction

in which we want to proceed and identifies certain policies we want to encourage to help achieve our vision for the area.

Our zoning bylaws currently separate the town into six districts, they are Rural Lands 1, Rural Lands 2, Lake, Ponds, Agricultural, and Forest.

Rural Lands 1- The purpose of Rural Lands 1 is to encourage residential, affordable housing, and limited light commercial use. This district includes the land within 1000 feet of the road centerline West of Route 102, all land East of Route 102, all lands at 860 feet elevation or more from the southern boundary of the town to the stream by the oxbow on the Connecticut River, and all land at 870 feet elevation or more from that point north. It also includes those lands 1000 feet either side of the North Road from the Maidstone/Guildhall town boundary to the Wildwood Drive except those lands 1000 feet either side of Tamarack Lane. The minimum lot size in this district is 3.5 acres.

Rural Lands 2- The purpose of Rural Lands 2 is to encourage limited residential uses close to existing public roads and continued forest management practices. This district includes the land within 1000 feet of North Road, Masters Road, the Hall Road starting 1000 feet from Route 102 on the north end to Wildwood Drive on the south end, and Tamarack Lane. The minimum lot size in this district is 15 acres.

Lake- The Lake district includes the land between the mean water level of Maidstone Lake at normal water level and the rear lot line. This district provides seasonal and year-round residential development, and is intended to prevent unlawful structure encroachments along Maidstone Lake whenever the lake level is reduced. The minimum lot size in this district is 2 acres.

Ponds- The Ponds district includes land within 500 feet of lakes and ponds over 10 acres excluding Maidstone Lake. The objective for this district is to maintain the wilderness character of these areas while providing limited residential development with the continuance of good forestry activities. The minimum lot size for this district is 2 acres.

Agricultural- The agricultural district is meant to protect major areas of prime agricultural land while allowing other uses that are secondary to agriculture. This includes land along the Connecticut River at an elevation of 860 feet or less from the southern boundary of the town to the stream by the oxbow, and lands at an elevation of 870 feet or less from that point north. The minimum lot size for this district is 15 acres.

Forest- The forest district includes all land not within any of the other five districts in town, and is intended to encourage forestry activities while providing for limited residential development. The minimum lot size in this district is 25 acres.

Because of new state regulations and the needs of some of our residents, we do foresee several changes to our zoning bylaws. These changes include updating existing bylaws to match state legislation, specifically the Vermont HOME Act passed in July of 2023. This legislation, often referred to as S. 100, made universal amendments to zoning in an effort to increase the number of housing units throughout the state. The HOME Act allows any homeowner to modify an existing single-household dwelling into a two-household dwelling as permitted use anywhere that a municipality permits a single-household dwelling. Additionally, any owner-occupied single-household dwelling is permitted to create an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) on the parcel adherent to proper size requirements. We also plan to improve the permitting and inspection process.

Land use patterns in Maidstone have changed significantly over the years, especially around Maidstone Lake. Prior to Champion Realty selling the lots around Maidstone Lake in 1996, all lots were leased and most remained as they were built 50 to 60 years ago. Many cottages on the Lake are now being converted to year-round homes or winterized for more frequent use (82% of the town's total tax revenue, including education taxes, came from the Lake District in 2024). This trend has become even more prevalent in recent years, as many traditional camps continue to be converted to larger, year-round homes. This trend is expected to continue in coming years as demand for properties around Maidstone Lake remains high. It is of the utmost importance for the town to monitor the rapidly changing landscape around the lake to ensure that these changes do not negatively impact the environmental conditions of Maidstone Lake or fundamentally change the area's historic features and rural characteristics.

Outside of Maidstone Lake, many of the dairy farms previously located in town are no longer here, but the fertile land along the Connecticut River is still being hayed. North Road has seen some subdivision, which means more seasonal and residential dwellings. Route 102 still has about the same number of residential dwellings and commercial development.

In the future land use patterns will look very similar to the way they do today. In general, there will be farmland along the Connecticut River, year-round residential dwellings and commercial development along Route 102, seasonal and residential dwellings along North Road and larger residential dwellings at Maidstone Lake as smaller camps are expanded or rebuilt. The rest of the land will be used for forestry, recreation, natural habitat and other similar uses. There are always exceptions to the rule, but in general current patterns should continue.

Current Use Program

Vermont's Use Value Appraisal (UVA) Program, commonly known as "Current Use", enables the valuation and taxation of farm and forest land based on its agricultural or silvicultural value instead of

its development value. The primary objectives of the program are to keep Vermont's agricultural and forest land in production, help slow the development of these lands, and achieve greater equity in property taxation on undeveloped land. If land is removed from the program and is developed, the landowner must pay a land use change tax. As of 2023, there are 47 parcels in Maidstone enrolled in the Current Use Appraisal Program consisting of 1,685 homestead acres, 8,014 non-homestead acres, 9,031 acres of forest, and 669 agricultural acres.

Conservation Easements

Land Trusts, such as the Vermont Land Trust or The Nature Conservancy, use conservation easements as a way to preserve prime agricultural lands, protect natural areas, and limit the amount of subdivisions that can occur on a parcel. Conservation easements may be placed on a property title when the property owner requests to conserve an area or sells the development rights to a land trust. Conservation easements, once executed, are a permanent element within a property's title and are maintained through property transfer. They may only be removed through the permission of the land trust, which usually requires swapping for other land and a detailed case as to why the property now needs to allow development.

Agriculture

Maintaining the active farmland in Maidstone is of major concern to the residents and seasonal landowners of town. Finding ways to protect the land from development while respecting an individual's property rights is an ongoing challenge.

In the past eighteen years we have lost all four of our previously active dairy farms. Some of the prior dairy farms have been converted to farms raising beef cattle or boarding horses. Most of the rich land along the Connecticut River is still under cultivation producing hay or other crops or being pastured. Some of this land is rented or leased by nearby farmers. As most of this land is in the floodplain, development potential is extremely limited.

Beautiful vegetable, flower and herb gardens abound in Maidstone. Several landowners supplement their income by selling these products locally and we encourage the sale and consumption of Vermont Made Products. In the summer, Farmer's Markets are held in both Lancaster and Colebrook, N.H., with many Maidstone area people involved.

Forestry

Forestland plays a critical role in supporting recreation and hunting in the town of Maidstone. Timber harvesting was a traditional way of life in the past, however timber harvesting has diminished considerably with the exception of large parcel landowners. Some of these large lots are being clear-cut with the intent of subdivisions for residences and others are being cut to implement timber

management practices. Although some concerns are raised on these matters, it should be noted that much of the subdividing and building is now closely monitored by the State.

Recreation

Enjoying outdoor recreational activities has been a long time tradition in Maidstone and something that everyone in town participates in. At Maidstone Lake we have the Day Use Area/Beach and the State Park/Camping Area that includes three short hiking trails. Many of the activities such as hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, skiing, canoeing and walking occur on or involve public use of private land. Public access to private land is a privilege and not a right. While landowners are strongly encouraged to keep their land open, we recognize their right to close it to public use at any time. Traditionally, landowners have been very generous and have only asked that their property is respected and permission sought prior to using their land. We hope that this longstanding tradition can continue in Maidstone.

Survey Results

1. Most respondents think that Maidstone is either an “excellent” or “good” place to live and value the outdoor recreational opportunities, small town environment, large blocks of forest and farm land, and the town’s overall natural beauty.
2. Most respondents feel that Maidstone should be a “small residential community with limited business and industry,” and “a residential community with most of the land in forest and agriculture.”
3. The only type of growth that the majority of respondents agreed with is in the agricultural sector.
 - a. A majority of residents disagreed with growth in commercial, industrial, gas stations, and mobile home parks. A majority of respondents who identified as full-time residents also disagreed with growth in shops/convenience stores.
4. Growth in residential, vacation homes, and recreational facilities received mixed responses with no majority either way.

Vision

1. Support reasonable and controlled residential development that maintains Maidstone’s rural character while also honoring the town’s agricultural history by supporting the continued viability of agricultural lands.
2. Maintain a healthy forest through long-term forest stewardship to provide a natural habitat for wildlife, an area that will provide an enjoyable recreation area, prevent soil erosion and maintain the beauty of the community.

Agricultural Issues/Concerns:

1. The local zoning regulations should be designed to support local agriculture and discourage development of the best farmland.
2. The Maidstone Planning Commission is concerned about the effects property tax increases will have on the ownership of large parcels of agricultural land. Tax policies should be established that would encourage the maintenance and/or working of these large agricultural parcels of land.

Agricultural Recommended Actions:

1. Continue to promote the current use program and conservation easements.
2. Encourage diversified agricultural use of this prime land
3. Encourage the use and sale of Vermont Made Products

Forestry Issues/Concerns:

1. There is a perceived detrimental impact on water quality, biological diversity, soil erosion and the visual quality of the area due to timber harvesting emphasizing the importance of sustainable forest harvesting techniques.

Forestry Recommended Actions:

1. Encourage individual landowners to consider working with a professional forester to draw up a forestry plan which will consider sustainable harvesting techniques, timber stand mix, and continuous renewal of the forest resource.
2. Encourage new development to use creative ways to develop land with a minimal impact on forest lands such as encouraging cluster development and sensible land subdivision.

Recreation Issues/Concerns:

1. There are very limited safe places to bicycle in Maidstone. Creating a bike lane along Route 102 should be encouraged.
2. A traditional public access to private lands should be continued where possible.
3. Although not encouraged, a landowner has the right to set up an “exclusive club” or limit access to their lands to a certain group of people. An “exclusive club” is defined as an area that is leased or rented for a fee to a group of people or organization(s) and that restricts access to only those involved with that organization. If this type of business or club does occur, the land valuation and taxes should be adjusted to recognize the increased value and income derived from the land. Instead of being classified as forestland it should be appraised as recreation land

which may pay higher taxes.

4. Snowmobiles, cross-country skiers, hikers and sled dog owners share the same trails.

Recreation Recommended Actions:

1. Encourage an open dialogue between landowners and recreation users to foster the traditional public use of private lands.
 - a. Private landowners that allow public access on their land need to be educated on the State's Liability Laws. This may help prevent the problem of landowners limiting access to their land.
2. Continually investigate ways to establish and maintain public access to rivers, streams and lakes in town. This will include working with Connecticut River Byway, following up on grant programs, maintaining relations with landowners and seeking donations of right-of-way.
3. Actively work with the State of Vermont to encourage the creation of a bike lane along Route 102 and mixed-use recreation trails around Maidstone Lake for cross country skiing, snowshoeing, walking, and biking.
4. Work with the Maidstone Lake Association to encourage them to educate personal watercraft users and all boaters to be respectful of others.

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, bringing summer residents to the area that stimulate the local economy, and supporting community endeavors such as medical services and schools. In turn, the adjacent communities provide shopping facilities, medical services, fire protection, schools, and other key services.

Population Data

| 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 |

2020 census data indicates that Maidstone has continued to follow similar trends in population change as other surrounding towns since 2010. A majority of adjacent towns have seen a slight decline in population over the ten year period between 2010-2020, with Granby and Guildhall's population remaining virtually unchanged similar to Maidstone.

Land Use

Review of the land use plans of surrounding communities suggests that the future land use patterns proposed in this plan are compatible with those of our adjacent communities and the Northeast Kingdom Regional Plan. Information from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources shows that Maidstone and adjacent communities are all included as “forest targets,” as they contain mostly “high priority” and “priority” interior forest blocks. Maidstone and adjacent communities also have mostly “highest priority,” with some “priority,” habitat blocks and geological diversity blocks, and “highest priority” connectivity blocks, surface waters and riparian areas, with many areas of riparian wildlife connectivity. The following are objectives from neighboring communities that demonstrate their shared values in regard to protecting our natural areas:

1. In Brunswick, 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. Further, Brunswick will endeavor to protect its streams and bodies of water as natural resources subject to pollution and infringement.
2. For UTG, including Ferdinand, maintaining and protecting water quality in lakes, ponds, rivers, wetlands, and streams is a priority. Also, the protection of the unspoiled mountainous and forested landscape from the impacts of large-scale development is a priority.
3. Granby desires to maintain the character of the Town, including its traditional way of life, environmental quality, and land use patterns, and to maintain accessible large tract forested lands.
4. Guildhall desires to maintain the forested landscape and healthy waterways while supporting appropriately scaled development in the established village cluster and along the main roads in Guildhall.

Infrastructure

One important long-term goal identified by our survey respondents is to improve telecommunications in town. For the United Towns and Gores (UTG), which includes Ferdinand, bringing cellular and broadband service to the UTG towns is a priority as well. Improving telecommunications not only in Maidstone but in surrounding towns as well would be beneficial to our residents and residents of adjacent communities.

Housing

There is a high percentage of seasonal, recreational or occasional use in the towns of Maidstone, Brunswick and Ferdinand. According to Census data, the percentage of “vacant” units in Maidstone (65.2%), Brunswick (61.3%) and Ferdinand (70.2%) exceeds the percentage of occupied units. These “vacant” units include seasonal, recreational or occasional use dwellings, which presumably account for most of the “vacant” units. There are less “vacant” units in Granby (37.0%) and Guildhall (29.2%). The percentage of “vacant” units in Maidstone and some surrounding towns outpace the state of Vermont as a whole, as 18% of the State’s housing stock is made up of vacant, seasonal, recreational, or occasional use units.

Recommended Actions:

Continue to work with neighboring communities to support one another and our shared vision for future land use and development

Flood resilience

As of July 1, 2014, all duly adopted municipal plans must contain a flood resilience plan that identifies flood hazard and fluvial erosion hazard areas 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 recommends policies and strategies to protect the areas.

Existing Conditions

Maidstone is within the Upper Connecticut Watershed, Basin 16, which consists of Connecticut River mainstream segments and smaller drainage areas that go directly to the Connecticut River. Watersheds in this area include the Paul Stream (drainage area of 43.9 square miles) and the Wheeler Stream watershed (drainage area 17 square miles). There are seasonal residences located along the Paul Stream.

The Connecticut River and its adjacent floodplain and wetlands are ecologically and socially significant in that they provide important wildlife habitat (such as migrating waterfowl). They also store floodwaters to help attenuate the risk of downstream flooding. Floodplains also reduce phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment loading to the Connecticut River and on to Long Island Sound.

Floodplain Mapping

The first and most recent Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) for Maidstone dates back to 1974. This map was prepared from a Flood Hazard Boundary Map and consists of areas east of Route 102, along the Connecticut River. This area represents what is considered to be the 100-year floodplain, an area that has a 1% annual chance of flooding. The maps do not have base flood elevations, and they are not accompanied by any flood insurance study. It is difficult to estimate the total number of structures in the 100-year floodplain on Maidstone's FIRM, because the maps do not match up to the E911 maps that are based on the structure's geographical location (latitude and longitude).

Because of the damage caused by Hurricane Irene in 2011 FEMA and the USGS began the process of developing modern, digital, LIDAR-based floodplain mapping in 2019. The process to develop these maps is long and involves many steps. The process has been delayed several times and new Flood Insurance Rate Maps for our region are not scheduled to be available until 2026-27.

FLOOD RISKS IN MAIDSTONE

In 2023 and 2024, the state of Vermont was impacted by multiple historically large flooding events which impacted towns across the state. These events highlight the importance of planning for potential future flooding in order to ensure that Maidstone is positioned as best as possible to deal with these disasters when they occur.

There are two types of flood-related risks to consider:

1. Inundation: Where the water rises from a lake or stream into low-lying land (such as a floodplain); and
2. Erosion: Where an unstable river channel is undergoing a physical adjustment process. This may cause a stream bank to either erode gradually over time – or suddenly collapse in a major storm event (such as during May 2011 and Tropical Storm Irene). This type of flood-related damage occurs frequently in Vermont, due in part to the state’s mountainous terrain.

The National Flood Insurance Program, administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, addresses inundation hazards. This program allows property owners to purchase flood insurance for buildings and their contents in participating communities. A municipalities participation in the NFIP is voluntary, however FEMA does require flood insurance for any federally-backed mortgage, grant or loan to a structure in the 100-year floodplain regardless. Because Maidstone does not currently participate in the National Flood Insurance Program, that insurance must be obtained from a private insurer, which can be cost-prohibitive.

Towns that do participate enable flood insurance availability for every resident, not just those mapped in the floodplain. About 90% of Vermont’s communities participate in the NFIP. The cost of flood insurance is not mitigated by NFIP participation, it is a matter of legal availability that lenders are required to offer. To participate, a community must regulate all new developments in Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA) to ensure it is safe from flood damage. FEMA administers the insurance program.

Upon opting into the NFIP, the community will select a local administrative officer, review board, and permitting process for floodplain development projects. The floodplain manager at VT Dept. of Environmental Conservation will assist the community with evaluating new projects by providing written technical review comments.

An individual property owner without a loan/mortgage may opt whether or not to buy flood insurance. However, any property owner wanting to do earthwork or a building project in a flood hazard area would need to get a permit from the community, whether or not that property owner has flood insurance. This allows all projects to be reviewed by the community, to ensure projects do not have negative flooding consequences for neighbors, public roads, or the owner. Bank lenders must require flood insurance for properties in the floodplain for the landowner to secure a mortgage. While that sounds like something homeowners may not want to be forced to do, it is meant to protect predatory lending.

Vermont’s Flood Ready tool provides summary sheets for municipalities’ flood hazard assessment, listing the number of structures in a Special Flood Hazard Area (based on limited available mapping), a town’s floodplain compliance, and their Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF) rate. According to the state’s Summary Report, Maidstone has 16 structures in the SFHA. This data coincides with the town’s previous estimate of roughly 15 structures in or near flood areas based on the 1974 FIRM. Maidstone’s current ERAF rate is 7.5%, meaning that the state matches that amount of funding and assistance from federally declared disasters on top of the 75% covered by federal funds.

Were the town to participate in the NFIP, the town's rate would increase to 12.5%, as the requirements for a Local Emergency Management Plan and Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, along with town road and bridge standards have all been met. Establishing River Corridor bylaws, which establish regulations from encroaching development upon riverbanks, would increase disaster assistance to 17.5%. This difference in assistance can accumulate to over \$1 million per disaster depending on the damage experienced. Below is a breakdown of potential savings for a town in a hypothetical flood event causing \$1 million worth of damage broken down by ERAF rates.

| | 7.5% ERAF Rate | 12.5% ERAF Rate | 17.5% ERAF Rate |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Federal Share | \$750,000 | \$750,000 | \$750,000 |
| State Share | \$75,000 | \$125,000 | \$175,000 |
| Municipal Share | \$175,000 | \$125,000 | \$75,000 |
| Total | \$1,000,000 | \$1,000,000 | \$1,000,000 |

At the time of this plan being written the Town's Select Board, with support from the Planning Commission, has approved moving forward with joining the NFIP and has begun the process of establishing river corridor bylaws. Should both of these be completed, the Town's ERAF Rate would increase to 17.5%, allowing for access to the highest level of disaster recovery assistance.

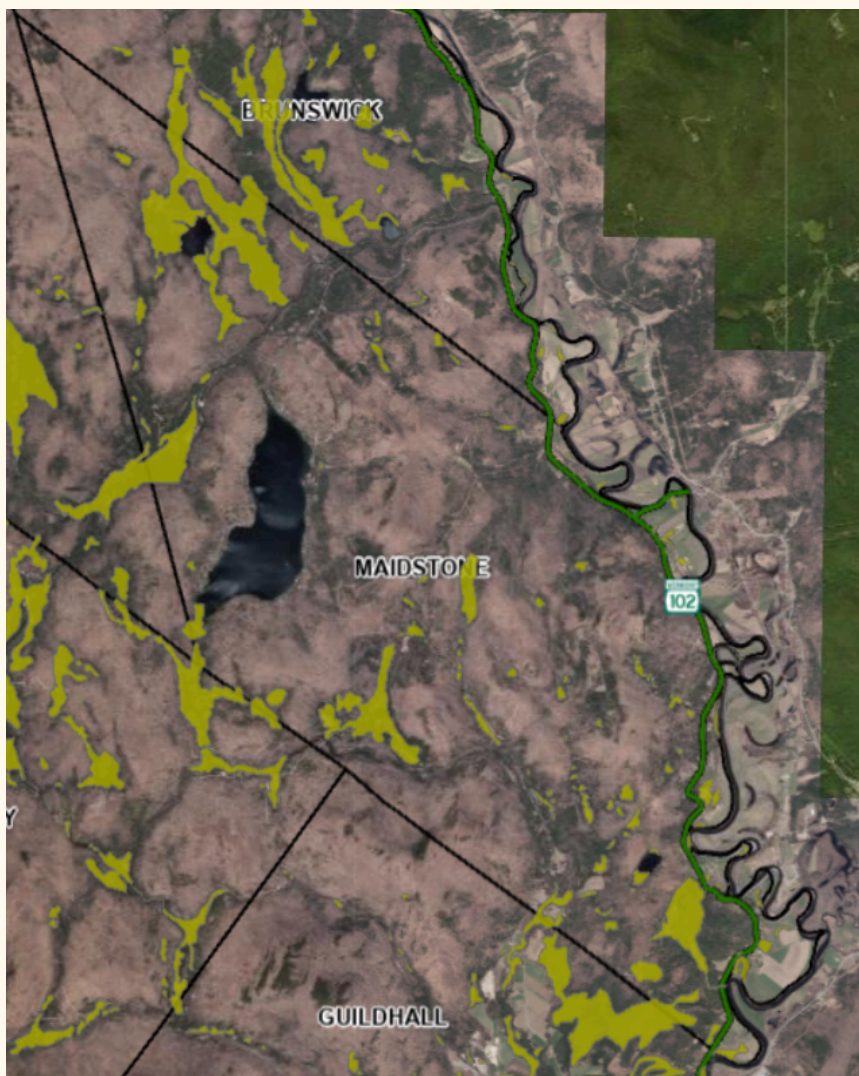
Erosion hazards are a significant concern in town as well, especially along the Connecticut River just north of the Guildhall border. Land near stream banks are particularly vulnerable to erosion damage by flash flooding, bank collapse, and stream channel dynamics. The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, Agency of Natural Resources, has identified river corridors, which consist of the minimum area adjacent to a river that is required to accommodate the dimensions, slope, plan form, and buffer of the naturally stable channel and that is necessary for the natural maintenance or natural restoration of a dynamic equilibrium condition. In other words, the river corridor provides “wobble room” for a stream as its channel changes over time. Keeping development out of the river corridors therefore reduces vulnerability to erosion. Below is a screenshot of Maidstone's river corridor map from the Vermont Flood Ready Atlas



Uplands and Wetlands

Proper management of upland areas also plays an important role in flood hazard management. Limiting clearing of upland slopes will help to attenuate flood flows and reduce storm water runoff. Maidstone's forest cover, particularly in areas with steep slopes draining into the Connecticut River should be protected from clear-cutting. Conservation easements and enrollment in the Current Use Program may be an effective way to protect existing forested cover.

Wetlands also have capacity to retain significant amounts of water. The State of Vermont regulates activities in and adjacent to wetlands. These rules apply to the wetlands and associated buffer zones within 100 feet of Class I wetlands, and 50 feet of Class II wetlands. Any activity in a Class I or II wetland requires a state permit. Below is a screenshot of the wetlands map for Maidstone from the [Vermont Flood Ready Atlas](#).⁶



Transportation Infrastructure

Maidstone's culvert and bridge inventory noting the location, size and condition of all culverts and bridges in Town can be found in the Vermont Online Bridge and Culvert Inventory Tool (VOBCIT). This database is an excellent resource for local officials, and Northeastern Vermont Development Association provides assistance

with maintaining this information. According to the VOBCIT, there are currently 27 culverts in town that are considered to be in “poor” condition.

Vision:

1. Mitigate flood hazards, qualify the Town to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program.

Recommended Actions:

1. Continue the process of enrolling in the NFIP and adopting river corridor bylaws in order to reach the 17.5% ERAF rate
2. Amend the zoning regulations to include a Flood Hazard Overlay. This overlay will include the areas depicted on the FEMA Firm.
3. Review the Statewide River Corridor data and consider adding this data to the flood hazard overlay
4. Identify streams not on the Statewide River Corridor map (streams with a drainage of less than 2 square miles) and protect and stabilize any erosion-prone streams with vegetation buffers.
5. Get training from Northeastern Vermont Development Association to update and maintain the inventory of roads and bridges

Transportation

Maidstone has 8.245 miles of state highway, 9.91 miles of Class 3 town roads and 4.75 miles of Class 4 town roads. In order to access the camps on Maidstone Lake and the State campground, there are 5.93 miles of Class 2 roads from Route 102 to the campground gate and 2.49 miles of Class 3 town roads on the West Side Road.

MAIDSTONE ROADS

| | |
|----------------------|-------------|
| State Highways | 8.245 miles |
| Town: Class 2 | 5.93 miles |
| Town: Class 3 | 9.91 miles |
| Town: Class 4 | 4.75 miles |

Historically, there has been a network of snowmobile trails across private land. The town appreciates the generosity of the landowners and recognizes this access as a privilege, not a right. We recognize the issue of liability of the private landowner that allows public access on his/her land and endorses Vermont Statutes Chapter 203, Section 5793:

“Liability limited. (a) Land. An owner shall not be liable for property damage or personal injury sustained by a person who, without consideration, enters or goes upon the owner’s land for a recreational use unless the damage or injury is the result of the willful or wanton misconduct of the owner. (Note: See rest of statute).”

In September of 2005, the Connecticut River Byway received its national designation. It is the first nationally designated byway in Vermont. This includes all of Maidstone’s Route 102. The program can be a source of federal transportation funds to assist with improvements related to tourism or resource conservation. The federal funds can be used for safety improvements, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, rest areas, shoulder improvements, recreation area investments, protecting cultural and historic resources along the route, providing tourist information and interpretive facilities. Colebrook, N.H. to the north and Lancaster, N.H. to the south have volunteered to host welcome centers for byway visitors.

The Maidstone/Stratford Hollow Bridge has become a reality. This allows for an access across the river without traveling to Bloomfield or Guildhall. The reopening of the bridge has greatly reduced the

travel time to Groveton. More importantly, it reduces the time it takes for emergency vehicles to reach Maidstone residents at times when response time is crucial.

As is the case in much of the Northeast Kingdom, public transportation in Maidstone is limited. Rural Community Transport (RCT) is the main provider for public transportation in the NEK, however there are currently no routes connecting to Maidstone. On-demand, individual rides are available through RCT and can provide transportation to and from school, health care appointments, jobs and more. Across the river, in NH, there is some public transportation provided by Tri County Transit servicing Lancaster, Whitefield and Littleton, again with no direct connections to Maidstone. Should either RCT or TCT connect with Maidstone, community members would have a public transit option to accessing goods and services, including grocery and healthcare resources. For some groups in Maidstone, a neighborhood network could support the transportation needs of the community. Front Porch Forum is one platform that could be used to support ride sharing.

Residents and the average travel time to work according to the 2020 census is 27 minutes. Route 102 is the main traffic artery in the town and is the sole connection to other areas, including New Hampshire. New Hampshire is the nearest location for shopping, groceries, drug stores and health care facilities. A small airport exists in Whitefield, N.H. but for most flights people have to travel about 3 hours to Manchester, N.H. or Burlington, VT. More information regarding the roads in Maidstone, including a current road inventory and progress report, can be found on the State of Vermont's MRPG Implementation Table Portal. Additionally, bridge and culvert inventories can be found on the Vermont Agency of Transportation's VT Culverts page. This database handles data entry, access and status reporting for all state bridges and culverts as collected by the Regional Planning Commissions.

Vision:

Maintain existing town roads and encourage the expansion of snowmobile and hiking trails available for public use.

Issues/Concerns:

1. Route 102 has several notoriously dangerous curves. These curves have become more problematic due to the increase in travel to the lake and the increase in year-round residents traveling to employment and for errands. The curves in proximity to the McDade, McKenzie and Lafontaine residences are especially dangerous.
2. Because of the number of bicycles that travel on Route 102 there is concern for the safety of both motorists and cyclists. Thought should be given to widening the shoulder of the road so motorists can pass cyclists safely.

3. Encourage ride sharing using platforms such as Front Porch Forum to decrease vehicle miles driven and provide options for residents who may not be able to drive themselves.

Recommended Actions:

1. Encourage the State of Vermont to reconstruct the portions of Route 102 at the dangerous curves in proximity to the McDade, McKenzie and Lafontaine residences.
2. Encourage the widening of the shoulders on Route 102 to provide safe passage for cyclists and motorists.



Enhanced Energy Plan

The **Town of Maidstone** aligns with the goals of NVDA's Regional Energy Plan, adhering to Vermont's Act 174, and aligning with Vermont's 2022 Comprehensive Energy Plan (CEP), and Vermont's 2021 Climate Action Plan. To meet state energy and climate goals, Vermont is planning for a major shift away from fossil fuels in the transportation, heating (thermal), and electricity sectors to renewable sources of energy, efficiency in all sectors, and increase in-state renewable energy generation. Energy efficiency and conservation, as well as efforts to reduce energy burden remain at the forefront. Even with these aspirations, it is important to be clear-eyed about where Vermont can focus its sustainability efforts (EAN 2024 Report):

- Second highest per capita greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in New England
- Third highest average energy burden in the U.S. (8.3%)
- Among the four states with the highest reliance on fossil fuel oil and propane for home heating
- Highest annual vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita in the Northeast

It is important to incorporate equity and justice into all energy planning aspects. As goals, objectives and actions are considered and implemented, it is critical to consider three questions to empower more inclusive decision-making in Maidstone and across the NEK:

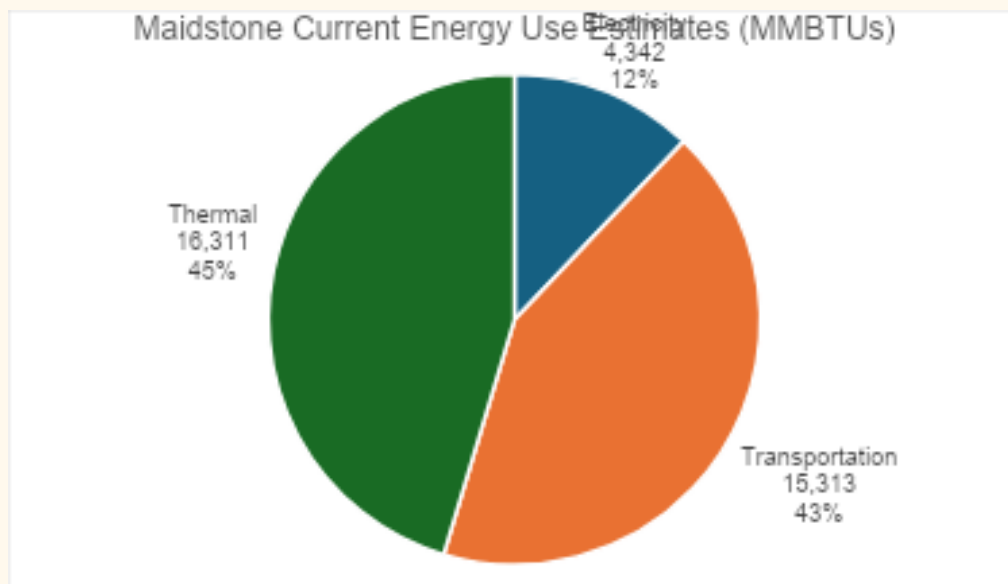
- 1) Who is helped? 2) Who is harmed? 3) Who is missing?

In alignment with NVDA's Regional Energy Plan, Maidstone aspires to follow the overarching goals and principles detailed in the Energy Equity Project (EEP) Framework:

- Everyone has continuous access to energy.
- Everyone lives in a healthy, safe, and comfortable home.
- No one spends more than 6% of their income on energy bills.
- Those who are most impacted have the most powerful voice in decision making and receive a share of benefits. Refer to the Vermont Municipal Vulnerability Indicators (MVI) Tool, for special consideration and inclusion of more vulnerable populations that should be incorporated into local planning efforts.

Maidstone, VT - Energy Analysis and Targets:

The data in this section is intended to provide an overview of current energy use in Maidstone and a sense of the trajectories and pace of change needed to help meet the State's climate and energy goals. According to NVDA estimates, the thermal sector (residential and commercial heating and hot water) is the largest at 45%, followed by the transportation sector at 43%, and then electricity at 12%.



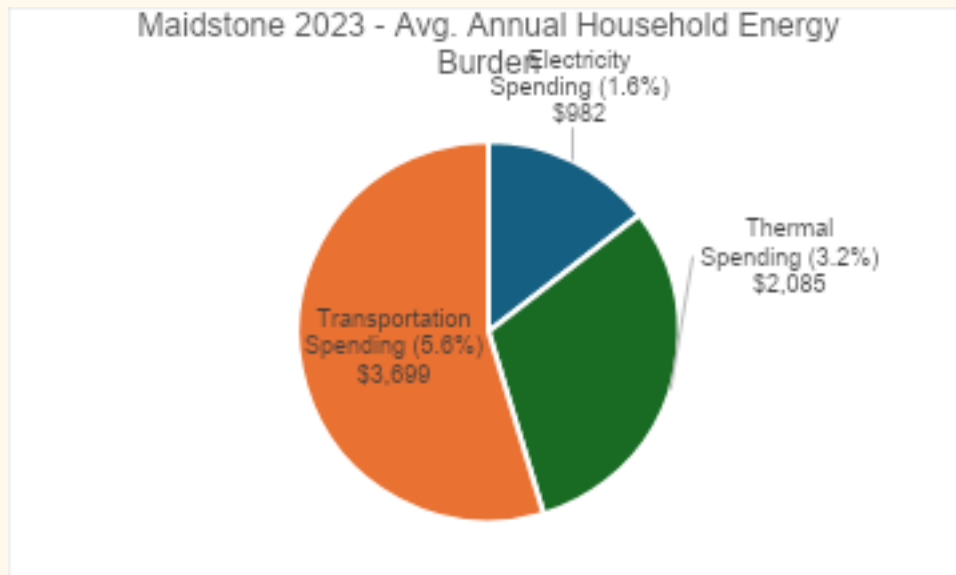
Sources: Current energy estimates were developed using multiple sources with assistance from NVDA in 2025, including the Vermont Department of Public Service, Efficiency Vermont, U.S. Census American Community Survey, and Vermont Department of Labor.

Analysis of Resources, Needs, Scarcities, Costs, & Problems:

Energy burden is one way to understand the impact of energy expenses on Vermont households. It calculates how much Vermonters spend on electricity, heating, and driving, as a percentage of their households' income. Nationally, an energy burden *greater than* 6% (excluding transportation) is considered high and is correlated with a “greater risk for respiratory diseases, increased stress and economic hardship, and difficulty in moving out of poverty” (ACEEE). According to the [2023 Efficiency Vermont Energy Burden Report](#):

- About half of NEK communities have > 6% combined thermal + electricity energy burden
- Over one-third of NEK communities have > 6% transportation energy burden

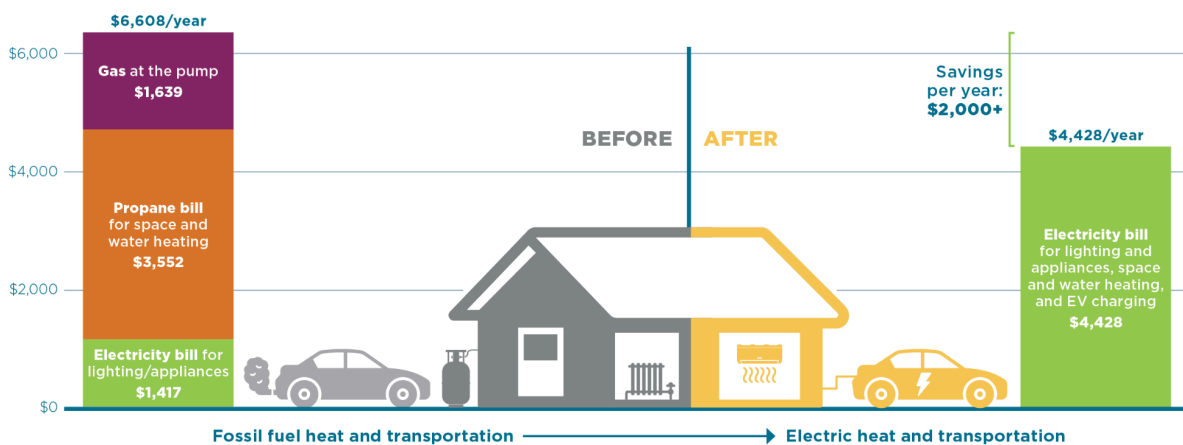
Maidstone’s total energy burden is over 10% (including transportation, electricity and thermal). That equates to nearly \$6,800 in annual energy expenses across the average household. The pie chart below shows the breakdown of average energy spending for households in Maidstone, with transportation burden highest, followed by thermal (heating), then electricity. Reducing reliance on fossil fuels can have significant benefits when it comes to lowering costs for those who face the highest energy burdens.



Source: 2023 Efficiency Vermont Energy Burden Report

NEK households with lower and fixed incomes typically use *less* energy than those with higher incomes, yet on average, spend *more* of their income on energy expenses, like heating, electricity, and transportation. High energy burdens can increase the risk of transitioning into poverty or of experiencing long-term poverty by 150-200% (EAN 2024). Weatherization and switching away from fossil fuels to more electrification are effective ways to reduce household energy burden and increase comfort.

Estimated annual energy bill costs for a sample Vermont single-family household, before and after electrification

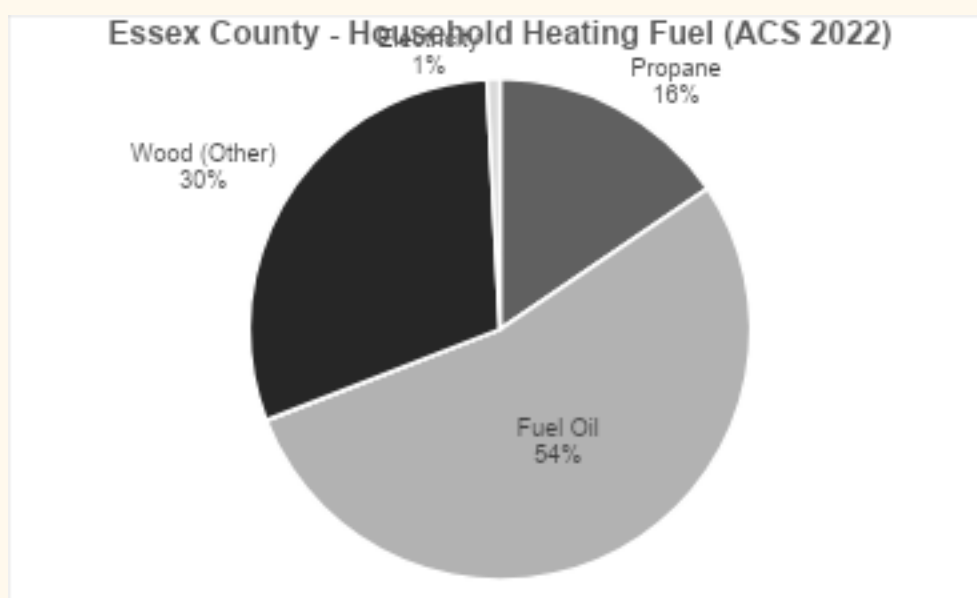


Sources: Energy bill savings calculated based on the average monthly prices for propane, gasoline, and electricity in 2023, from the Vermont Department of Public Service and EIA. Electricity bill costs for lighting and appliances reflect statewide average annual household electricity expenditures (Efficiency Vermont, "Vermont Energy Burden Report," 2023). Annual transportation fuel costs calculated using average fuel efficiency of 23.4 MPG for vehicles registered in VT from the 2021 Vermont Transportation Energy Profile and VT average annual vehicle miles traveled (VMT) of 11,084 miles/year from the Federal Highway Administration. **Note:** Actual energy bill savings will depend on a number of factors, including a household's electricity rate. Several Vermont utilities offer lower electric rates for managed EV charging, providing additional savings to households with access to those rates. Upfront equipment/vehicle costs vary based on model and incentive eligibility; because of this variance, upfront costs are not quantified here. Savings estimates are for a one car household. Savings will be higher for households replacing multiple gas vehicles with electric vehicles.

Current Energy Use across Three Sectors (Thermal, Transportation, Electricity)

#1 - Thermal/Heating (45% of Maidstone Energy)

The data below describes how occupied homes are heated in Essex County. According to the U.S. Census Data, nearly 70% burn fossil fuels (oil and propane) to heat their homes, followed by 30% wood heating. In fact, oil is often the back-up fuel source for homes that primarily burn wood for heat. While the region has no utility fossil gas, propane was used by 15% of homes. Electricity is used least, at just 1% for household heating needs. As of 2023 in Maidstone, there are a cumulative total of eight (8) cold climate heat pumps, six (6) heat pump water heaters, and a total of 13 out of 279 occupied homes weatherized according to the [EAN Vermont Energy Dashboard](#).



Source: [U.S. Census Bureau](#). "Physical Housing Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S2504, 2022.

The age of housing stock is likely the most significant contributor to the overall thermal usage in Maidstone, with nearly one-third of NEK housing units built prior to 1940. Older homes are likely to be poorly insulated and leakier, driving up energy consumption and costs. Weatherization programs and assistance provided by NETO and Efficiency Vermont are a critical first step, alongside beneficial electrification, to drive down thermal energy burden in Maidstone and improve occupants' comfort and health.

#2 - Transportation (43% of Maidstone Energy)

It is estimated that there are 190 fossil-fuel burning light-duty vehicles in Maidstone, each driving an average of 15,000 miles a year. According to Efficiency Vermont records, there are now three (3) registered electric vehicles (EVs) in Maidstone as of 2023, an increase from two (2) EVs in 2021.

Increasing Transportation Equity - Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

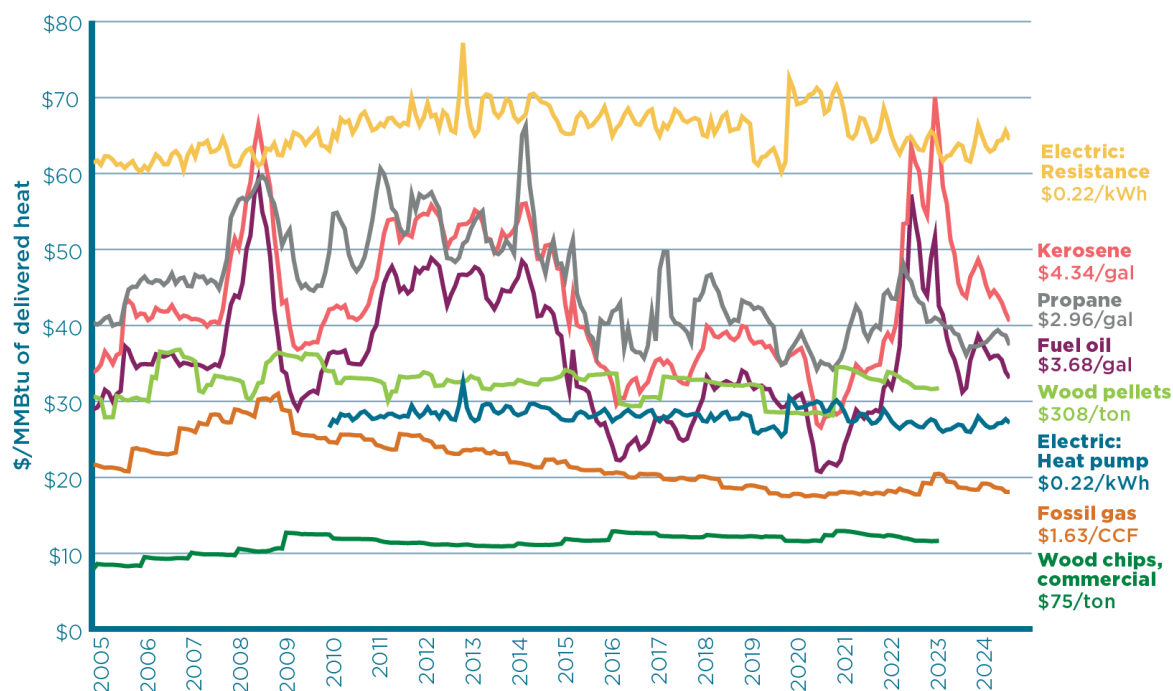
Transportation infrastructure that increases the quality and types of available transportation choices is referred to as Transportation Demand Management, or TDM, and is a priority of the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan. Multi-modal choices like public transit, carpooling, ridesharing, bicycling, and walking — all of which provide alternatives to getting around by single-occupancy vehicle — can increase the affordability of transport for Vermonters, encourage economic development in village centers and promote an active and healthy lifestyle. Multi-modal transportation that connects people to jobs and services (affordably and conveniently) can reduce single-occupancy trips, lower transportation costs and fossil fuel pollution, while improving health and economic opportunities. As transportation and land use policies are considered for Maidstone, it will be important to closely work and plan with, not just for, our most impacted community members. This will help ensure that NEK transportation energy burden, the highest in the state, is reduced equitably and that people with low incomes, disabilities, older Vermonters, and renters do not struggle to afford electric vehicles, electric bikes/scooters, charging equipment, and other desired mobility options. Please see NVDA's Regional Plan for suggested land use and transportation strategies that encourage not only reduced transportation energy consumption but also offer important health equity benefits.

#3 - Electricity (12% of Maidstone Energy)

According to Efficiency Vermont data provided to NVDA in 2024, Maidstone average residential electric usage was 4,196 kilowatt hours (kWh) a year, which is less than the Vermont annual average of 6,337 kWh from 2021 through 2023. For comparison, the United States' average annual residential electricity usage was 10,500 kWh, an average of about 875 kWh per month ([EIA](#), 2023). It is worth noting that electricity consumption patterns are expected to increase as more beneficial electrification takes place.

In Vermont, renewable heat sources have historically seen less price volatility over time than fossil fuel options, meaning efficient heating systems powered by electricity can help reduce energy burden over time. The following EAN chart shows the cost of various Vermont heating options through June 2024.

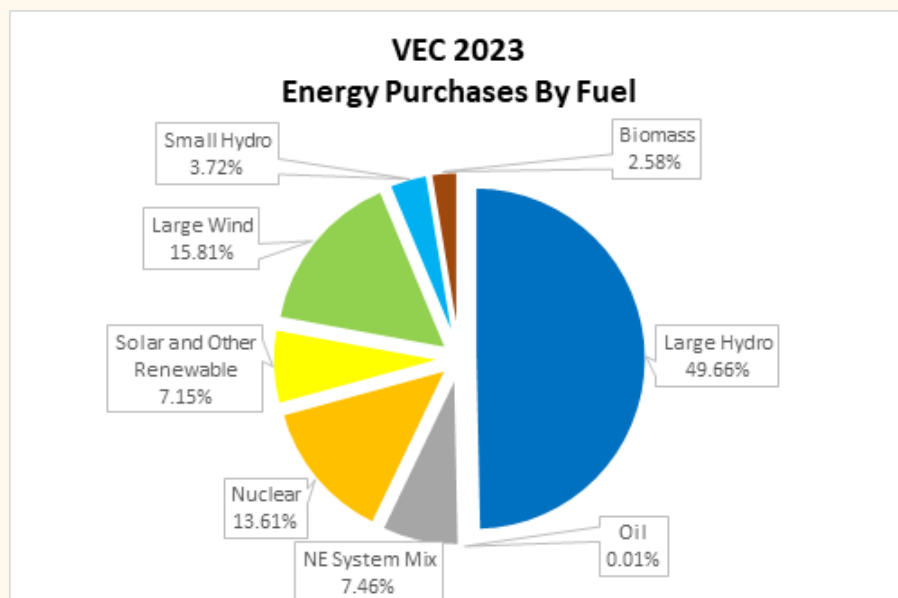
Cost comparison of different heating fuel options over time (adjusted for inflation, June 2024 dollars)



Sources: Fuel oil, propane, kerosene prices: VT Department of Public Service, Retail Prices of Heating Fuels, 2024. Fossil gas: VGS, 2024. Electricity: EIA, 2024. Wood chips, wood pellets: Biomass Energy Research Center, 2023. **Notes:** Electricity prices presented here are a statewide average but vary by utility territory. The reason propane is usually more expensive per MMBtu than fuel oil but less expensive on a per gallon basis is because propane has a lower energy content per gallon (66% of the energy of fuel oil per gallon). Prices reflect data availability at the time of publication: through June 2024. Prices shown are in June 2024 dollars, using the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index.



Maidstone receives electricity from the Vermont Electric Cooperative (VEC) distribution utility. VEC can buy power through contracts with counterparties or purchase power through the ISO-New England energy market. VEC's long-term power supply needs are projected based on forecasts conducted every three years and detailed in their Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) required by the VT Public Utilities Commission (PUC). Below is VEC's breakdown of electricity purchases by fuel type in 2023 from their website.



Source: <https://vermontelectric.coop/electric-system/power-supply>

In addition to incentives and other energy transformation programs, VEC's Community Solar program offers Co-op members the opportunity to sponsor panels on VEC solar arrays for either 10 or 20 years and receive a fixed, guaranteed monthly credit on their electric bill, which can help reduce energy burden.

LEAP - Low Emissions Analysis Platform - Hypothetical Targets for 2025, 2035, and 2050

The following LEAP projections estimate the rate of technological adoption across the thermal, transportation, and electricity sectors needed to meet Vermont Climate Action Plan (CAP) goals. These are hypothetical targets to help imagine the pace at which the Town might consider weatherizing its building stock, switching to efficient, electric heating (cold climate heat pumps and heat pump water heaters) and transitioning to electric vehicles.

| Regional Residential New Retrofits | | | | | | |
|--|--------------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Scenario | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 | 2035 | 2040 | 2050 |
| Baseline Scenario | 1,105 | 2,283 | 3,372 | 4,408 | 5,480 | 7,745 |
| CAP Mitigation | 1,766 | 6,221 | 10,677 | 13,446 | 16,215 | 21,752 |
| Maidstone | 0.40% | 25 | 43 | 54 | 65 | 87 |
| | | | | | | |
| Regional Residential New Heat Pump Water Heaters | | | | | | |
| Scenario | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 | 2035 | 2040 | 2050 |
| Baseline Scenario | 388 | 457 | 460 | 463 | 466 | 476 |
| CAP Mitigation | 388 | 5,650 | 12,200 | 18,817 | 25,509 | 25,819 |
| Maidstone | 0.40% | 23 | 49 | 75 | 102 | 103 |

| CAP Mitigation Regional Residential New Cold Climate Heat Pumps | | | | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 | 2035 | 2040 | 2050 |
| ASHP 2 Head | 340 | 2,044 | 3,758 | 5,482 | 7,214 | 8,094 |
| ASHP Central | 527 | 3,179 | 5,863 | 8,584 | 11,351 | 12,612 |
| ASHP HE | 499 | 3,002 | 5,519 | 8,050 | 10,593 | 11,886 |
| GSHP HE | 62 | 371 | 682 | 995 | 1,309 | 1,469 |
| Total | 1,427 | 8,597 | 15,822 | 23,112 | 30,468 | 34,060 |
| Maidstone | 0.40% | 34 | 63 | 92 | 122 | 136 |

| CAP Mitigation Regional Commercial New Cold Climate Heat Pumps | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|
| | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 | 2035 | 2040 | 2050 |
| New CCHP | 178 | 3,201 | 6,365 | 9,680 | 11,898 | 12,380 |
| Maidstone | 0.20% | 6 | 13 | 19 | 24 | 25 |

| CAP Mitigation Regional Passenger Car EV and PHEV Stock | | | | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Vehicle Type | 2015 | 2025 | 2030 | 2035 | 2040 | 2050 |
| Battery Electric | 20 | 985 | 4,253 | 10,159 | 16,127 | 23,926 |
| Plug In Hybrid | 50 | 187 | 175 | 144 | 91 | 33 |
| Total | 70 | 1,172 | 4,428 | 10,303 | 16,218 | 23,959 |
| Maidstone | 0.40% | 5 | 18 | 41 | 65 | 96 |

| CAP Mitigation Regional Light Duty Truck EV and PHEV Stock | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Vehicle Type | 2015 | 2025 | 2030 | 2035 | 2040 | 2050 |
| Battery Electric | 3 | 1,158 | 6,896 | 16,217 | 24,560 | 33,073 |
| Plug In Hybrid | 33 | 122 | 168 | 161 | 107 | 40 |
| Total | 36 | 1,280 | 7,064 | 16,378 | 24,667 | 33,113 |
| Maidstone | 0.40% | 5 | 28 | 66 | 99 | 132 |

Renewable Energy, Storage, Transmission & Distribution Resources

In support of the State's goal of 90% energy from renewable sources by 2050, each region in Vermont has a set of renewable energy generation targets. Generation targets can be met through a variety of renewable technologies, including solar, wind, geothermal, hydro and biomass. Because NVDA's region already generates a disproportionate share of renewables relative to our low population, the Northeast Kingdom is well on track for its contributions to the 2050 targets for renewable energy generation, based on our population and energy resource potential. See the updated NVDA Regional Energy Plan for more information about renewable energy, storage, transmission, and distribution resources relevant to Maidstone, and specifically the "NEK Policy on the Development of Renewable Energy Resources" (**NVDA 2023 Enhanced Energy Plan, pg. 17**) which can be used to identify areas unsuitable for development, but more importantly guide decision-making around identified potential (and preferred) areas for renewable energy development to meet regional energy demand, reduce energy burden, and contribute to the state energy and climate goals. Underlying assumptions were made

about suitability factors, such as slope and direction of land, elevation and wind speeds, and access and proximity to grid-related infrastructure.

NVDA has provided Maidstone with maps depicting solar, wind, woody biomass and hydroelectric renewable energy potential in the Town. All maps are included in the appendix of this Plan. Based on Maidstone population and energy resource potential, shown on the maps provided by NVDA, sufficient land has been identified to reasonably contribute to Vermont reaching its 2050 targets for renewable electric generation. For context, approximately one acre of land can host ~300-kW solar array. For rural areas, solar arrays offer positive co-benefits when combined with agriculture, also known as agrivoltaics. Additionally, siting renewable generation (possibly combined with energy storage such as a battery) in proximity to key food resources like food shelves, community gardens/fridges, grocery stores, etc. can be a way to improve access to local, more affordable, and healthier food options. Maidstone does not support the production of industrial-scale wind turbines in town so as to protect the natural features in town that our residents enjoy. While the town does support hydro-power, any hydroelectric energy generation in town must be environmentally-sound and ensure the protection of fish and other wildlife.

Maidstone Existing Renewable Energy Capacity & Estimated Generation:

- **Solar** – 33.11 kW total capacity (5 existing sites: largest 10 kW; smallest 3 kW)
 - 46 MWh total estimated renewable energy generation
 - Average system size: 6.6 kW

Maidstone Potential Renewable Energy Generation with No State Constraints:

- Solar - 44 acres of potential
- Wind – zero (0) acres of potential
- Geothermal – 82 wells of potential
- Hydroelectric - 2 kWh of potential

Maidstone Energy Pathways: Goals, Objectives & Actions

The following NEK Energy Pathways goals and objectives are aligned with the Vermont Climate Action Plan and Comprehensive Energy Plan. For the full, detailed list of recommended implementation actions for achieving regional goals and objectives please reference the **NVDA 2023 Regional Enhanced Energy Plan, pg.18**. The Town is supportive of the NVDA Regional Energy Plan Pathways as they will help achieve the targets identified earlier in this Enhanced Energy Plan. In addition, the Town has set and is committed to its own local energy implementation actions, detailed below in italics, within each goal and their objectives.

GOAL #1 – Help shift the Region’s Energy System to meet the goals of Vermont’s energy and greenhouse gas reduction goals while balancing economic vitality and affordability.

- **Objective:** Reduce regional energy burden and fossil fuel pollution to support the State’s climate and weatherization goals.

- o *Provide educational resources on affordable means of weatherization, i.e., upgrading insulation, windows, and HVAC systems, that will reduce the amount and cost of energy consumption in Maidstone homes and make homes more comfortable.*
- o *Establish a plan to help our community transition to clean, affordable energy, and help to weatherize homes in the community by reducing air leakage, properly insulating, and upgrading inefficient heating systems, in a manner that does not unfairly burden our citizens.*
- **Objective:** Promote climate-ready and resilient buildings and communities.
 - o *Educate our homeowners and farmers about the services offered by Efficiency Vermont.*
- **Objective:** Support the development of new, community-scale renewable energy in the region to meet the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan's goal of using 90% renewable energy by 2050, in a manner that is affordable, equitable, and respects the natural environment and its inhabitants.
 - o *Provide residents with resources to support small-scale residential renewable energy generation projects and adopt renewable energy policies that encourage private residential solar projects.*
 - o *Encourage wood-based energy generation to support the Town's forest industry while protecting forests and wildlife habitats*
 - o *Discourage commercial wind projects that may diminish or interfere with forest blocks, wildlife habitats, wildlife connectivity, riparian areas, wetlands and the aesthetics of the Town.*

GOAL #2– Decrease Transportation Energy Burden Costs & Fossil Fuel Pollution

- **Objective:** Promote a shift away from single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips and reduce fossil-fuel Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) in the NEK.
 - o *Encourage the state to widen the shoulders of Route 102 to provide safe passage for cyclists, including electric bikes and scooters.*
- **Objective:** Shift away from gas/diesel vehicles to electric or other non-fossil fuel transportation options.
 - o *Encourage residents to consider electric vehicles for personal use and provide information on rebates for electric vehicle charging equipment.*

Utilities and Facilities

Public Buildings

Maidstone has only one public building, the Town Hall.

Town Vehicles

The town does not own any vehicles and leases all required services. This situation will continue in the foreseeable future.

Public Utilities

The town's electric power is supplied by Vermont Electric Cooperative, Inc. Consolidated Communications provides the telephone service, but other telephone providers are in the area.

Telecommunication Facilities

Towers and related infrastructure require careful consideration. These structures tend to be located on highly visible locations on mountaintops, ridgelines and in residential areas. The need for additional facilities is projected to increase dramatically in the next five to ten years. The Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 placed certain limitations over municipal control of these structures; however, with those confines, Maidstone must act to protect the Town's historic character, rural nature and aesthetic beauty.

Internet and Broadband

Connecting to the internet is becoming more of a necessity and less of a luxury. Having reliable and affordable high-speed internet access is a must for small, rural communities. Education, health care, social services, and employment are available through the internet. These are services and opportunities that are not often available within the community or region.

NEK Broadband is a municipal non-profit organization serving the Northeast Kingdom with the mission to provide high quality, affordable, and reliable broadband internet to all residences currently connected to the electrical grid. In 2025, NEK Broadband is beginning a 351 mile project set to provide service to all 25 towns in Essex County as a result of a USDA ReConnect grant awarded in 2024. Construction is expected to last through 2026. New England Wireless and Fidium Fiber by Consolidated Communications are also options for Maidstone residents.

Water and Septic

The town has no public water or sewer systems. Each homeowner provides his/her own water either through springs or wells and also provides and maintains his/her own septic system. This does adversely affect the availability of affordable housing.

Fire Protection

Maidstone does not have a fire station or structural firefighting equipment. The town does maintain some forest firefighting tools and equipment. The town relies on the fire stations in Stratford and Groveton, N.H. A dry hydrant was installed at Maidstone Lake in 2005. A second one was installed on Route 102 at Cardin's in 2007. A third one was installed on North Road at Wildwood Drive in 2009.

Police Protection

Maidstone relies on the Essex County Sheriff and the Vermont State Police for law enforcement

Medical Care/Ambulance Services

Maidstone residents receive their primary medical care in Lancaster and Groveton, N.H. Doctor's offices are also provided in St. Johnsbury, VT and Colebrook, N.H. The Groveton Ambulance Squad provides ambulance services.

Childcare

Town bylaws allow for home daycares in accordance with state statute. This, along with arrangements made on an individual basis with family and friends, adequately meet the town's childcare needs.

Solid Waste

Maidstone is a member of the Northeast Kingdom Solid Waste District. Vaughn Hodgdon is currently the hauler.

Cemeteries

Maidstone has two public cemeteries, McDade and Taylor.

Flood Hazard

Maidstone has adopted a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) and is working on 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.

Recommended Actions:

1. Selectboard should stay involved with and informed about the solid waste issue.
2. Continue to maintain the positive relationships with adjacent communities with regards to fire protection, police protection, ambulance services and other public services.
3. Amend the Zoning Bylaws to include regulations for telecommunication facilities.

Economic Development

While always remaining relatively small, Maidstone's economy has changed over the years. The town was once home to four dairy farms, all of which have closed their doors over the past eighteen years. Although this is unfortunate, much of this land is now used to raise crops or has been converted to farms raising beef cattle or boarding horses. Maidstone's forestry and outdoor recreation industries have remained strong over the years and are an important part of the town's economic backbone, similar to many other towns in the region. Outside of farming, forestry, outdoor recreation, and a few home-based businesses, many Maidstone residents travel over 30 minutes a day to neighboring towns such as Groveton, Lancaster, and Colebrook N.H. for work.

Results from the 2023 Town Plan Survey indicate that a majority of Maidstone residents prefer a small, residential community with limited business and industry in order to preserve the town's rural character. 50% of residents also indicated that they believe the town does not need any commercial or industrial development, with 37% of residents in favor of only small, clean development in town. The only type of development a majority of residents indicated they are in favor of is within the agricultural sector, with 68% of respondents agreeing with the idea of agricultural growth.

Although many residents commute to work, some employment sectors have been able to shift to an all remote or hybrid format following the COVID-19 Pandemic. As more people find themselves able to work from home at times rather than in the office, it is important for the town to support the expansion of high speed, affordable, and reliable internet connection to all addresses. This not only supports our workforce and facilitates the growth of at-home businesses, but also improves access to online educational materials and telehealth services among other things.

Vision:

While not looking to encourage large scale economic development, the town of Maidstone is interested in facilitating growth within the town's agricultural sector, as well as continued viability of the forestry and recreational industries. Encouraging small, home-based businesses and connecting residents interested in starting their own business with resources to help facilitate their growth is one way the town can support local economic development while maintaining Maidstone's rural character.

Issues/Concerns:

1. Loss of dairy farms.
2. Over-harvesting of the forests.
3. Impact of recreation on the environment.
4. Roads not suitable for large economic development.
5. Lack of cellular communication infrastructure

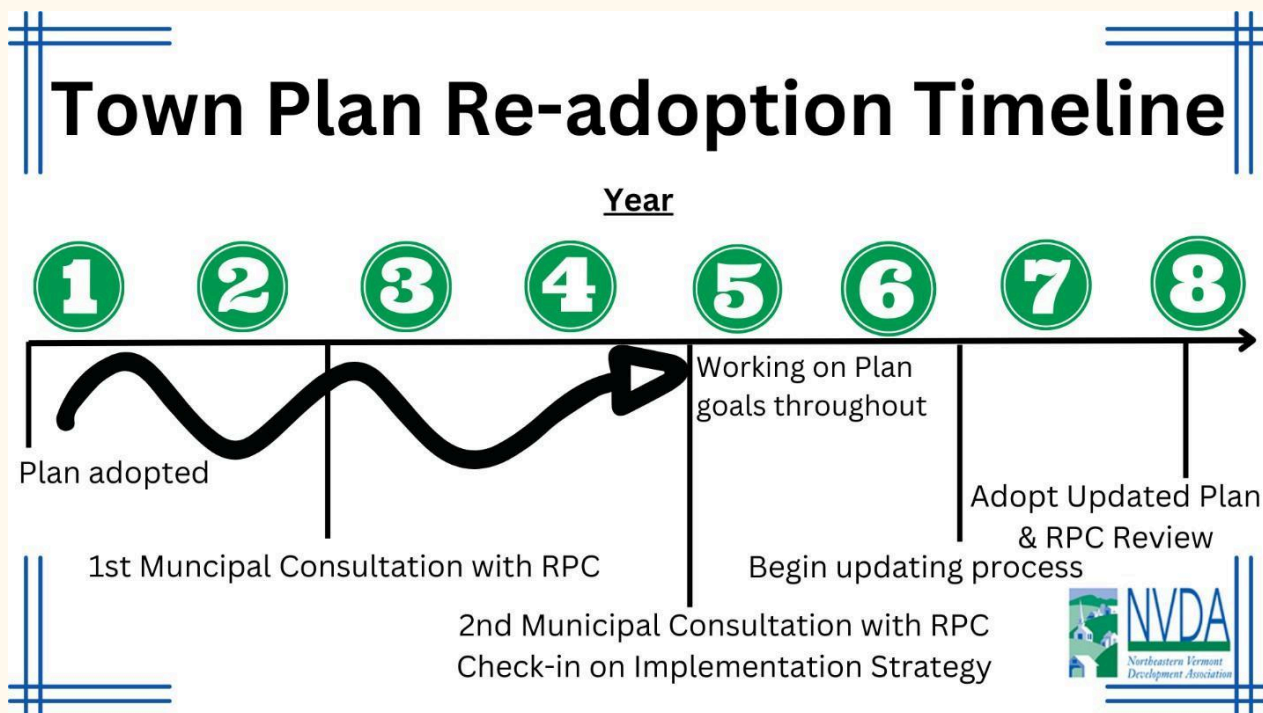
Recommended Actions:

1. Ensure the Zoning Bylaws encourage small scale economic growth.
2. Balance the use of our forests, lakes, ponds, rivers and streams for recreation, agriculture, timber harvesting, and economic growth while maintaining the character of the area.
3. Adopt zoning regulations for telecommunication facilities and related infrastructure to facilitate the growth of small, home-based businesses.
4. Support the Town's forest industry by encouraging environmentally-conscious forest management and sustainable logging practices

Implementation Plan

Evaluating progress, both in performance and conformance with the community, is one of the most important steps in developing a comprehensive plan. The town's municipal government should work to create benchmarks for achievement as this plan is utilized and referenced, to build progress and capacity for the town. Instituting timelines, group evaluations, and developing committees to pursue goals in this plan are basic tools to ensure this plan is functional and its goals are implemented.

Below is a timeline created by NVDA to keep the town in a basic framework towards updating their next plan. Between now and 2033, Maidstone should be actively working to implement this plan as it is adopted. With the guidance of two consultations with NVDA, the town's Planning Commission will be prepared to keep continuity through plan conformance, enabling a smoother process in updating their plan.



Housing

1. Maintain the current housing and rural character of Maidstone while promoting an adequate standard of affordable housing for all residents regardless of income or socioeconomic status.
2. Adopt and implement the newly required zoning regulations in 24 VSA, Chapter 117 regarding affordable housing, mobile home parks and accessory dwellings.

Recommended Actions

1. Comply with Vermont Statutes, specifically [24 VSA Chapter 117](#), while still maintaining the rural characteristics of Maidstone.
2. Closely monitor the development of year-round homes on Maidstone Lake. This is even more crucial with the advent of accessory dwellings on the lake.
3. Encourage preservation of historic sites and buildings that add to the character of the town.
4. Carefully formulate the regulations governing the creation of mobile home parks and low and moderate income housing.

Responsibility: Planning Commission, Select Board

Timeline: Year 1 and ongoing

Education

1. Encourage participation in the NEK Choice School District and the ENSU board meetings or their successor's board meetings.
2. Encourage parents with children in the education system to complete all paperwork from the school district to ensure that the Town can take advantage of every opportunity afforded by legislative initiatives.
3. Encourage our state legislators to explore other alternatives for funding the education system and lowering the education tax rates.
4. Support the work of the Board of Listers to generate the most accurate CLA possible because the CLA is the most locally controlled component of our education tax rates.
5. Encourage homestead property taxpayers to complete their annual filings.

Responsibility: Planning Commission, ENSU Board

Timeline: Year 1 and ongoing

Natural Areas

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
3. To maintain and improve water quality found in Maidstone's lakes, ponds and streams.
4. To minimize the introduction and work towards the eradication of non-native plant species.

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.
3. Monitor water quality reports.
4. Review and/or adopt erosion control standards.
5. Encourage communication on an annual basis between the Maidstone Lake Association and the Maidstone Planning Commission so that both groups can address land use related issues in the Maidstone Lake area for issues such as noise, light and the road.
6. Educate the public about the threat of non-native plant species and encourage residents to take preventative action against them on their property. Also educate the public about the threat of non-native plant species in Maidstone Lake.
7. Revise the Zoning Bylaws to reflect the following:
 - a. In the Lake District, in order to meet the spirit and intent of equal treatment of housing and required provisions for affordable housing (24 V.S.A. § 4412(1)), while protecting Maidstone Lake as a valuable resource, for duplexes and accessory dwelling units, the following is intended to regulate short-term rental units distinctly from residential rental units, as allowed by 24 V.S.A. § 4412(1)(F)(ii):
 - i. Any duplex shall be held to the same dimensional standards as single-unit dwellings.
 - ii. Any accessory dwelling unit is to be located within or appurtenant to a single-family dwelling on an owner-occupied lot, where “owner-occupied lot” refers to the lot that is the owner’s domicile (primary residence and legal address).
 - iii. Any duplex or accessory dwelling unit shall only be utilized as the domicile (primary residence and legal address) of any occupants, not as short-term rental units.

Responsibility: Planning Commission, Selectboard, Maidstone Lake Association

Timeline: Year 1 and ongoing

Land Use

1. Support reasonable and controlled residential development that maintains Maidstone’s rural character while also honoring the town’s agricultural history by supporting the continued viability of agricultural lands.
2. Maintain a healthy forest through long-term forest stewardship to provide a natural habitat for wildlife, an area that will provide an enjoyable recreation area, prevent soil erosion and maintain the beauty of the community.

Recommended Actions:

1. Encourage an open dialogue between landowners and recreation users to foster the traditional public use of private lands.

- b. Private landowners that allow public access on their land need to be educated on the State's Liability Laws. This may help prevent the problem of landowners limiting access to their land.
- 2. Continually investigate ways to establish and maintain public access to rivers, streams and lakes in town. This will include working with Connecticut River Byway, following up on grant programs, maintaining relations with landowners and seeking donations of right-of-way.
- 3. Actively work with the State of Vermont to encourage the creation of a bike lane along Route 102 and mixed-use recreation trails around Maidstone Lake for cross country skiing, snowshoeing, walking, and biking.
- 4. Work with the Maidstone Lake Association to encourage them to educate personal watercraft users and all boaters to be respectful of others.

Responsibility: Planning Commission, Maidstone Lake Association

Timeline: Year 1 and ongoing

Impact on Adjacent Communities

- 1. Continue to work with neighboring communities to support one another and our shared vision for future land use and development

Responsibility: Planning Commission

Timeline: Indefinitely

Flood Resilience

- 1. Mitigate flood hazards, qualify the Town to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program.

Recommended Actions:

- 1. Continue the process of enrolling in the NFIP and adopting river corridor bylaws in order to reach the 17.5% ERAF rate
- 2. Amend the zoning regulations to include a Flood Hazard Overlay. This overlay will include the areas depicted on the FEMA Firm.
- 3. Review the Statewide River Corridor data and consider adding this data to the flood hazard overlay
- 4. Identify streams not on the Statewide River Corridor map (streams with a drainage of less than 2 square miles) and protect and stabilize any erosion-prone streams with vegetation buffers.
- 5. Get training from Northeastern Vermont Development Association to update and maintain the inventory of roads and bridges

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|---|-------------------------------------|
| Responsibility: Planning Commission, Selectboard, NVDA | Timeline: Year 1 and ongoing |
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Transportation

1. Maintain existing town roads and encourage the expansion of snowmobile and hiking trails available for public use.

Recommended Actions:

1. Encourage the State of Vermont to reconstruct the portions of Route 102 at the dangerous curves in proximity to the McDade, McKenzie and Lafontaine residences.
2. Encourage the widening of the shoulders on Route 102 to provide safe passage for cyclists and motorists.

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| Responsibility: Planning Commission | Timeline: Year 1 and ongoing |
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Utilities and Facilities

1. Selectboard should stay involved with and informed about the solid waste issue.
2. Continue to maintain the positive relationships with adjacent communities with regards to fire protection, police protection, ambulance services and other public services.
3. Amend the Zoning Bylaws to include regulations for telecommunication facilities.

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Responsibility: Selectboard, Planning Commission | Timeline: Year 1 and ongoing |
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Economic Development

1. While not looking to encourage large scale economic development, the town of Maidstone is interested in facilitating growth within the town's agricultural sector, as well as continued viability of the forestry and recreational industries. Encouraging small, home-based businesses and connecting residents interested in starting their own business with resources to help facilitate their growth is one way the town can support local economic development while maintaining Maidstone's rural character.

Recommended Actions:

1. Ensure the Zoning Bylaws encourage small scale economic growth.

2. Balance the use of our forests, lakes, ponds, rivers and streams for recreation, agriculture, timber harvesting, and economic growth while maintaining the character of the area.
3. Adopt zoning regulations for telecommunication facilities and related infrastructure to facilitate the growth of small, home-based businesses.
4. Support the Town's forest industry by encouraging environmentally-conscious forest management and sustainable logging practices

Responsibility: Planning Commission, Selectboard

Timeline: Year 1 and ongoing

Energy

1. Help shift the Region's Energy System to meet the goals of Vermont's energy and greenhouse gas reduction goals while balancing economic vitality and affordability.
2. Decrease Transportation Energy Burden Costs & Fossil Fuel Pollution

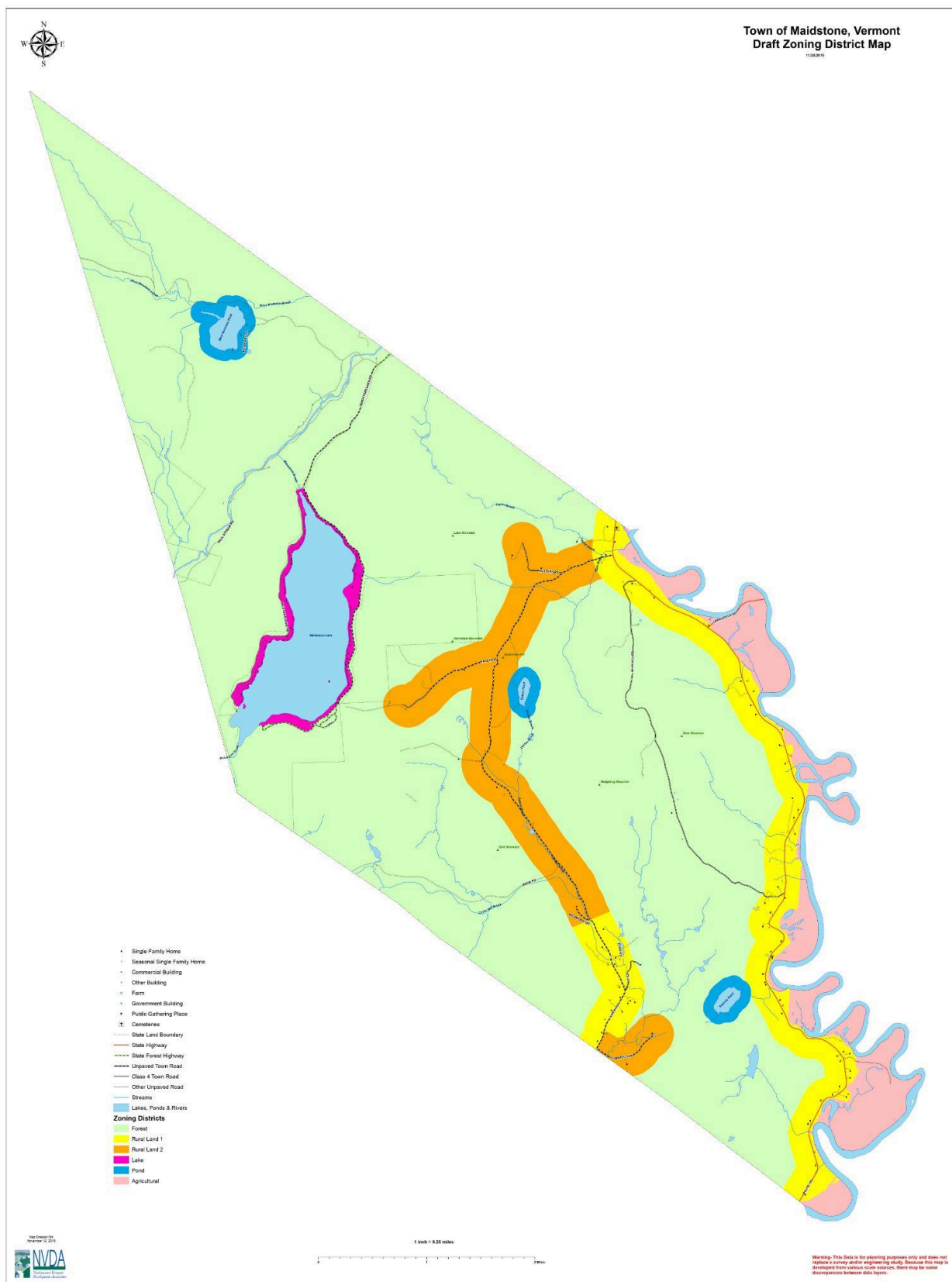
Recommended Actions:

1. Provide educational resources on affordable means of weatherization, i.e., upgrading insulation, windows, and HVAC systems, that will reduce the amount and cost of energy consumption in Maidstone homes and make homes more comfortable.
2. Establish a plan to help our community transition to clean, affordable energy, and help to weatherize homes in the community by reducing air leakage, properly insulating, and upgrading inefficient heating systems, in a manner that does not unfairly burden our citizens.
3. Educate our homeowners and farmers about the services offered by Efficiency Vermont
4. Provide residents with resources to support small-scale residential renewable energy generation projects and adopt renewable energy policies that encourage private residential solar projects.
5. Encourage wood-based energy generation to support the Town's forest industry while protecting forests and wildlife habitats
6. Discourage commercial wind projects that may diminish or interfere with forest blocks, wildlife habitats, wildlife connectivity, riparian areas, wetlands and the aesthetics of the Town.
7. Encourage the state to widen the shoulders of Route 102 to provide safe passage for cyclists, including electric bikes and scooters
8. Encourage residents to consider electric vehicles for personal use and provide information on rebates for electric vehicle charging equipment

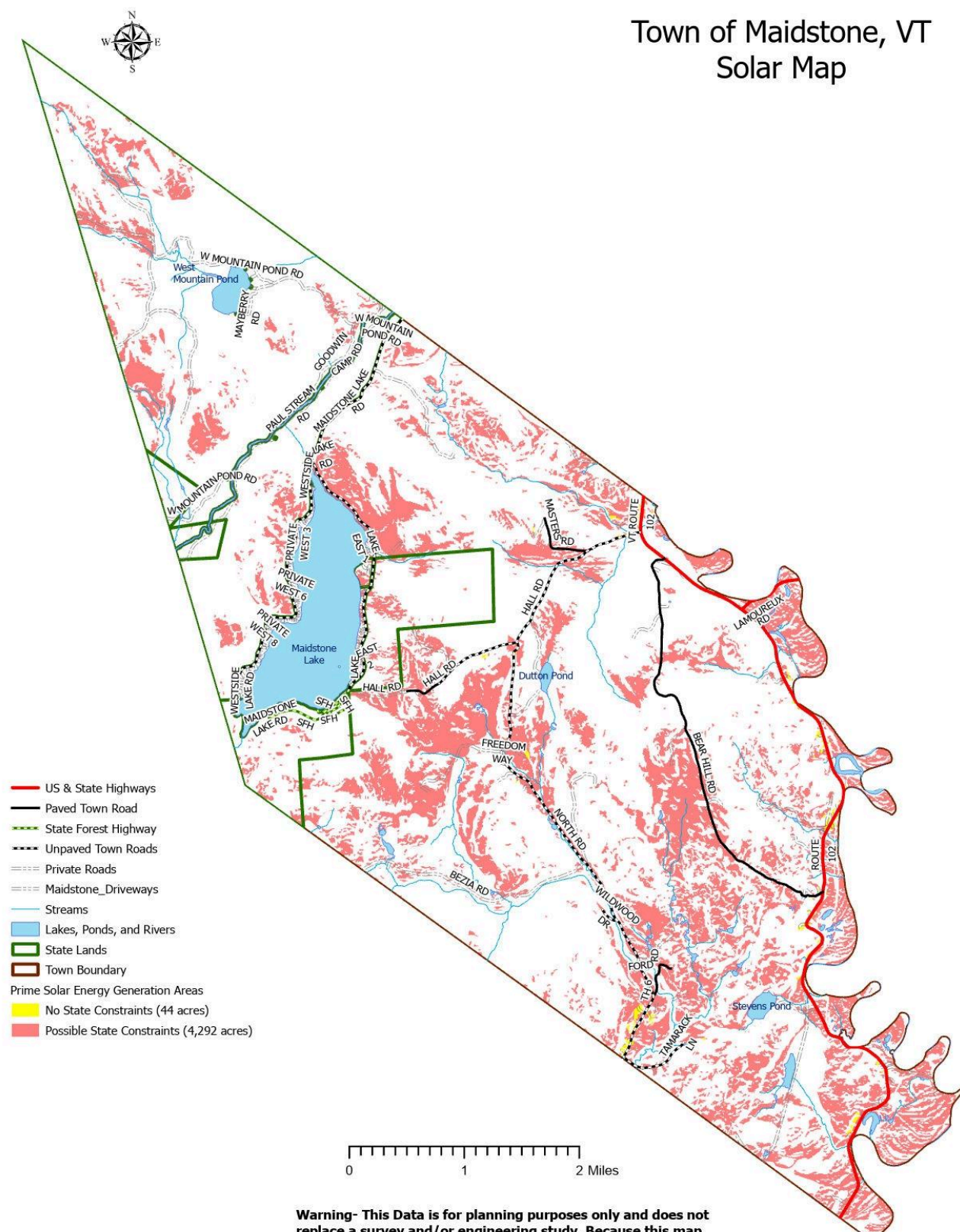
Responsibility: Selectboard, Planning Commission

Timeline: Ongoing

Appendix

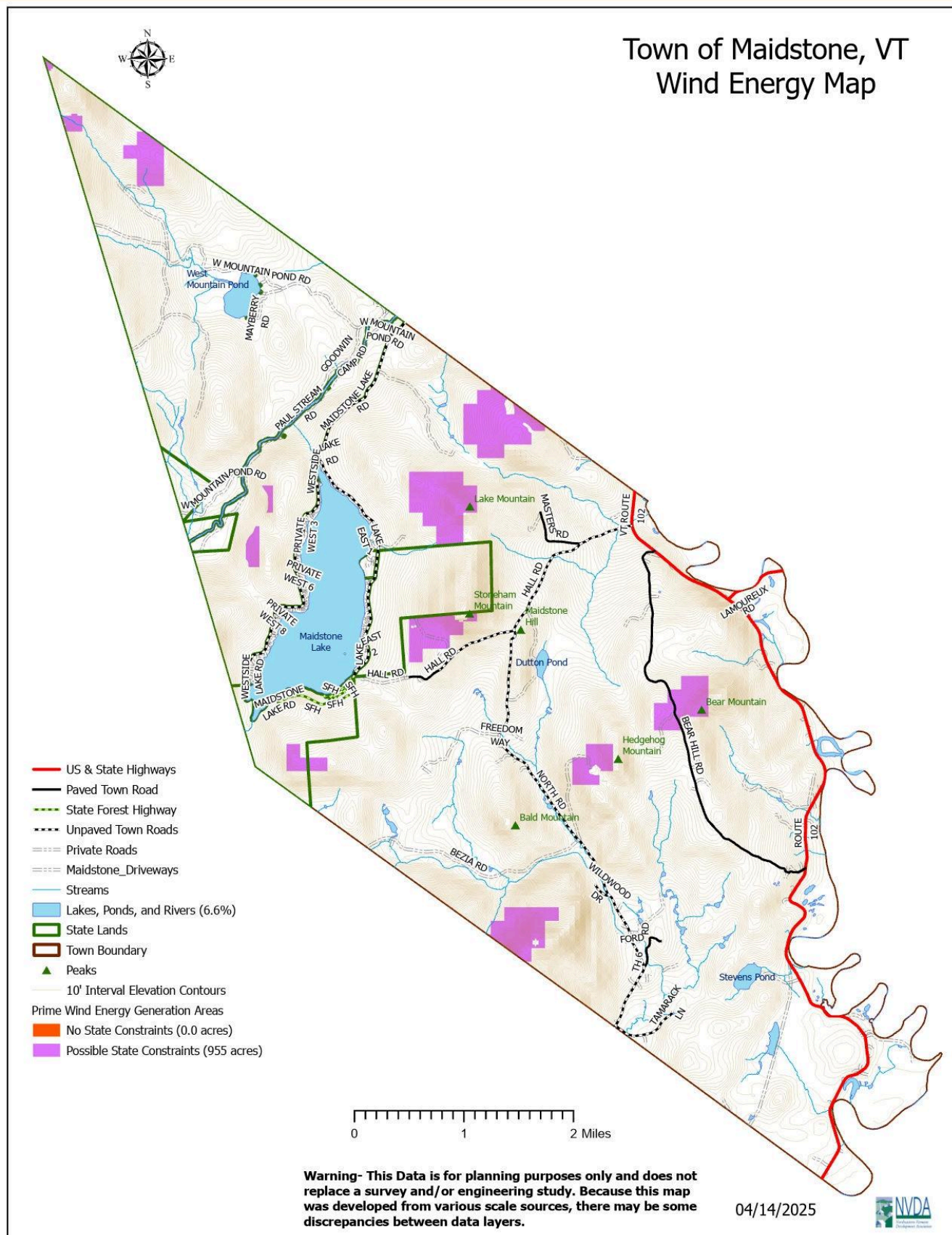


Town of Maidstone, VT Solar Map

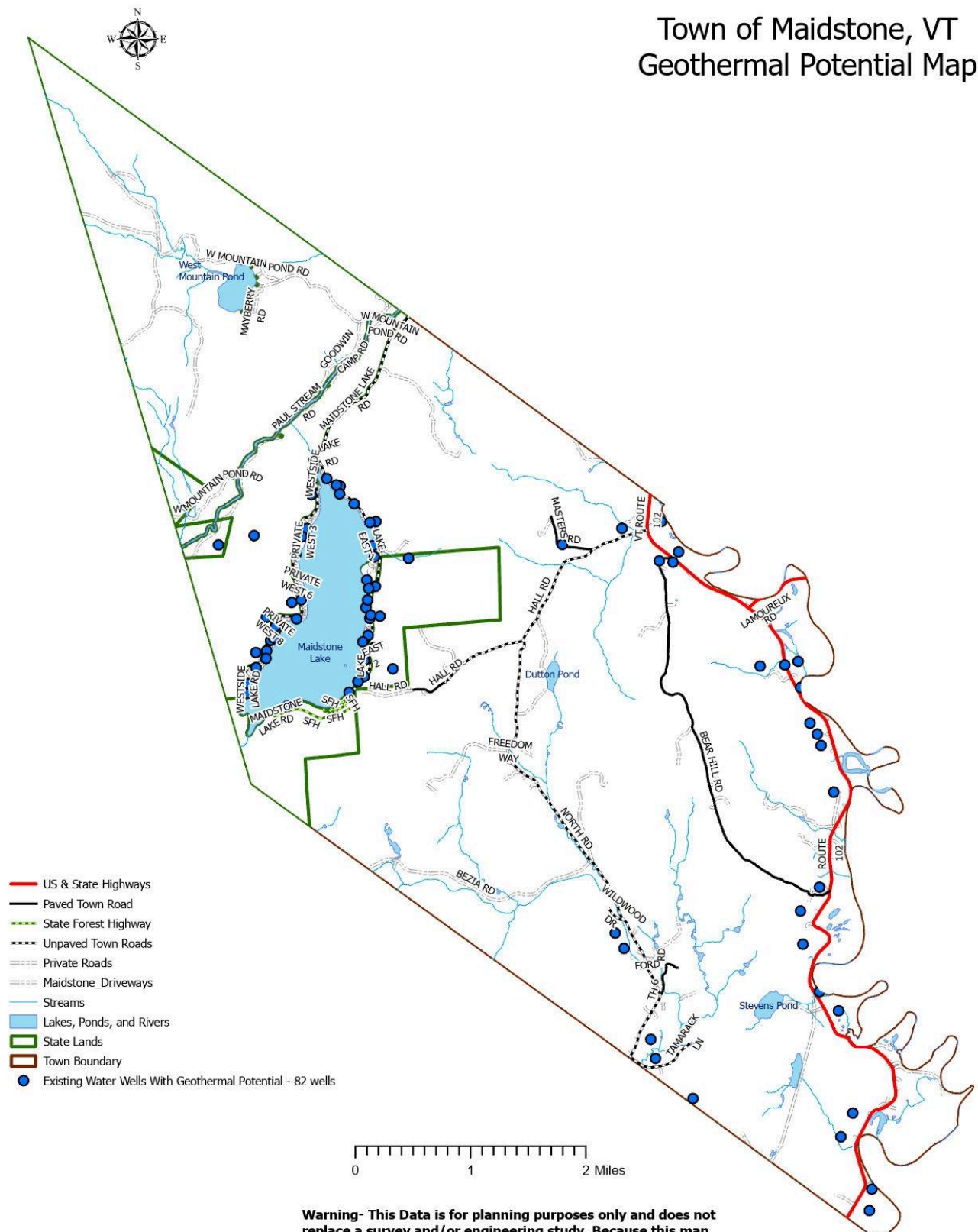


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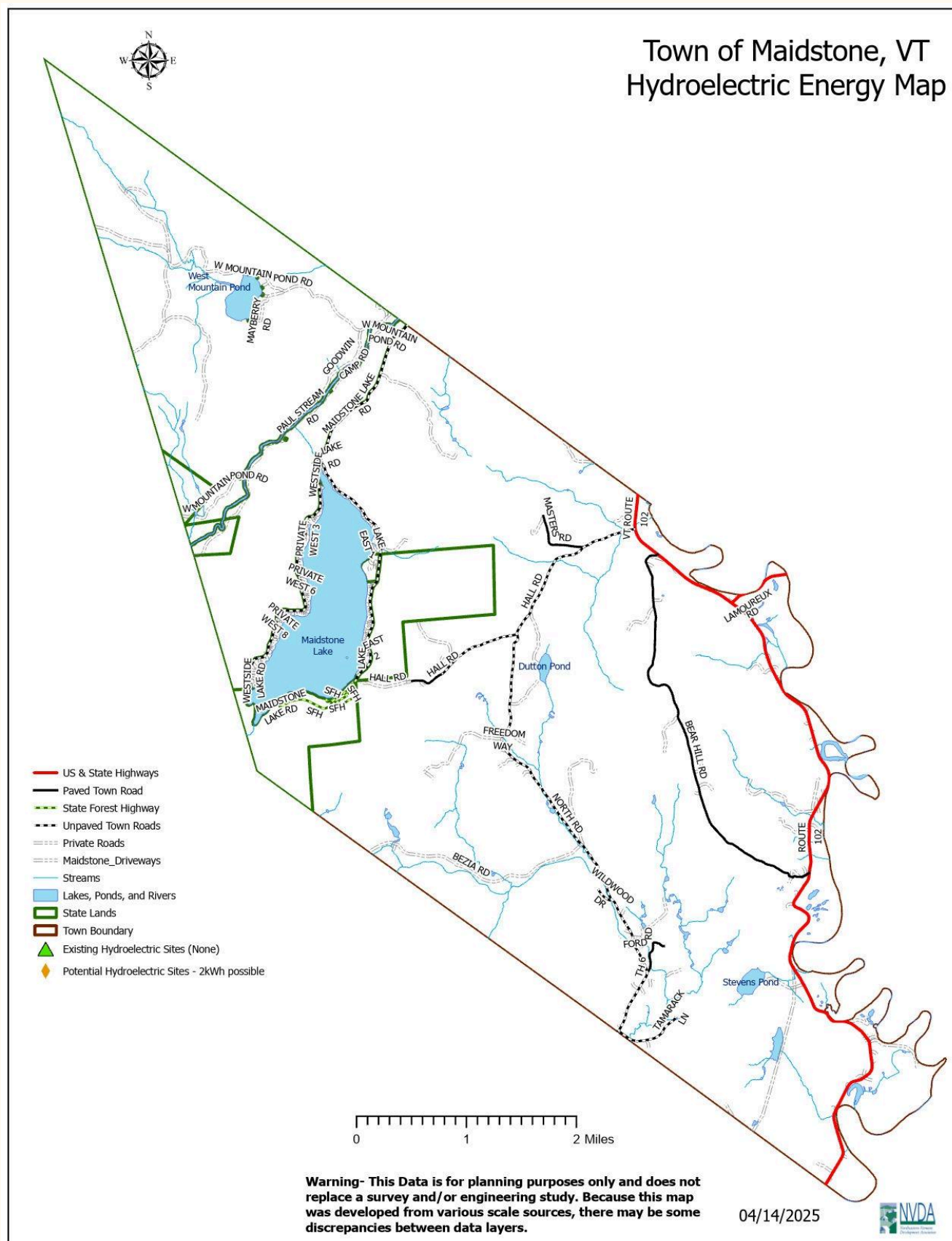


Town of Maidstone, VT Geothermal Potential Map

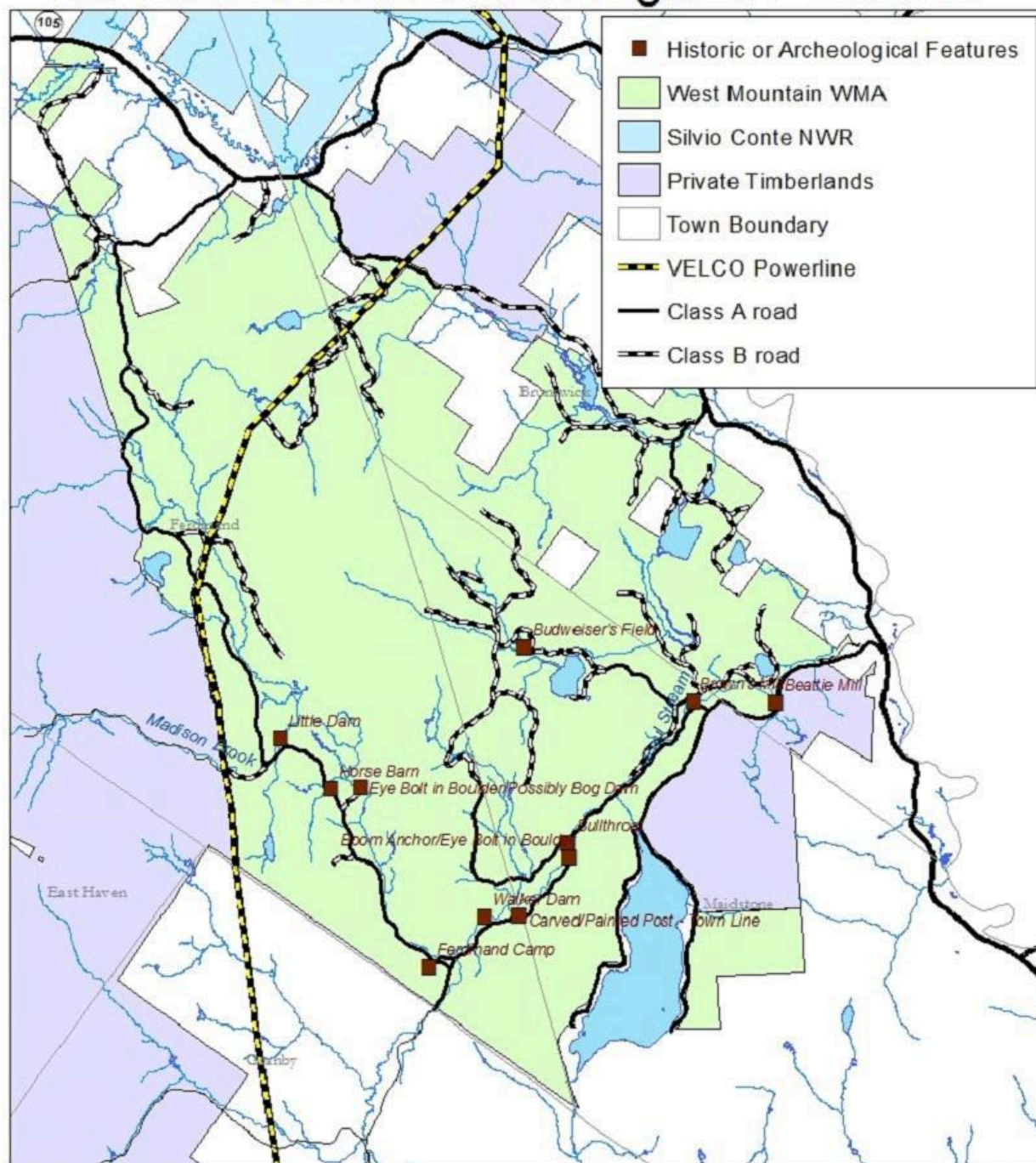


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Historical and Archeological Features



Created by Doug Morin
Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department
April 2014

0 1 2 4 Miles

For planning purposes only. Not survey accurate.

