

# Maidstone Town Plan

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## **ABOUT THIS PLAN**

The plan is intended to be a dynamic document that provides basic guidelines and an overall vision for the future of the community. It is comprehensive and addresses many different issues facing the Town today. Each section contains background information, a discussion of the current issues and needs, and recommended actions to address these needs.

It is recognized that planning for the future is a process which can best be done as a continuing activity, and this Town Plan is a policy guideline that should change as the needs and desires of the community change.

## **OVERALL VISION STATEMENT/PROPOSED LAND USE**

The small scale, rural lifestyle will be maintained. The farms will continue to be within the river floodplain and the cottages and homes clustered around Maidstone Lake. Most of the other lakeshore and ponds will remain undeveloped. The economy will continue to rely on extracting timber resources that are now managed in a sustainable manner. New residential development will occur along previously established roads and be concentrated on Route 102, North Road and Hall Road. Hunting and snowmobile camps will increase in the forest area, however, access to these roads should be done in such a manner that will be safe and will not impede the smooth flow of traffic. The Town encourages private landowners to allow access to their lands for recreational purposes.

## **STATEMENT OF PLANNING GOALS**

1. Maintain the scale, the traditions and the rural character of Maidstone. Preserve those qualities that make Maidstone an attractive community in which to live, work, and raise a family.
2. Maintain the agricultural lands that are essential to the overall objective of preserving open space, scenic qualities and rural flavor.
3. Preserve the unique natural areas and ecosystems that make up Maidstone's diverse and scenic landscape.
4. Recreational opportunities on public lands should be maintained and encouraged on private lands only when landowners are willing to allow public access to their lands. Those habitats that provide opportunities for hunting, fishing, berry picking, hiking and so on need to be carefully monitored and protected.
5. Encourage slow, orderly growth on the lands that are suited for development.
6. Promote small scale, decentralized economic development, including home-based businesses, that does not detract from Maidstone's rural character.

7. Provide high quality public services (i.e. roads, solid waste disposal) while recognizing the limitations of the property tax system.
8. Protect private property values in the Town of Maidstone.
9. Protect the Town's water resources.
10. Protect the rights of landowners.
11. Protect the forests lands and agricultural lands within the Town.
12. Provide for the proper maintenance of all roads in Town.

## **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

The plan recommends many different actions to work toward our vision for the future.

## **PROPOSED LAND USE**

1. Improve the local permitting inspection process.
2. Update and revise the zoning bylaws.
3. Foster more dynamic relationships between the planning commission, zoning board of adjustment, local leaders and the public.

## **AGRICULTURE**

1. Encourage diversified agricultural use of this prime land.
2. Encourage the use and sale of Vermont Made Products.

## **FORESTRY**

1. Encourage individual landowners to consider working with a professional forester to draw up a forestry plan which will consider sustainable harvesting.
2. Encourage new development to use creative ways to develop land with a minimal impact on forest lands.

## **NATURAL AREAS**

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

## **SHORELAND**

1. Adopt erosion control standards.
2. Continue to work with the Maidstone Lake Association on lake issues.
3. Revise the current Zoning Bylaws to protect water quality and the quiet lifestyle.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

1. Encourage the State of Vermont to reconstruct the portions of Route 102 at the dangerous curves near the McDade, McKenzie and Lafontaine residences.
2. Educate landowners concerning the State Liability Law.
3. Encourage the widening of the shoulders on Route 102 to provide safe passage for cyclists and motorists.

## **RECREATION**

1. Encourage an open dialogue between landowners and recreation users to foster the traditional public use of private lands.
2. Continually investigate ways to establish and maintain public access to rivers, streams and lakes in town. This will include working with the 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 cross country ski trails around Maidstone Lake.
4. Work with the Maidstone Lake Association to encourage them to continue to educate personal watercraft users and all boaters to be respectful of others.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

1. Ensure that the Zoning Bylaws encourage small scale economic growth.
2. Balance the use of our forests, lake, 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.

## **EDUCATION**

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

## **HOUSING**

1. Comply with 24 V.S.A., Chapter 117 while still maintaining the rural characteristics of Maidstone.
2. Encourage the preservation of historic sites and buildings that add to the character of the town.
3. Give careful consideration to regulations governing the creation of mobile home parks and low and moderate income housing.

## **UTILITIES/FACILITIES**

1. Select board 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 Maidstone Zoning Bylaw to include regulations for telecommunication facilities and Flood Hazard Area Regulations.

## **ENERGY**

1. Educate our homeowners and farms about the services offered by Efficiency Vermont.



## ADJACENT COMMUNITIES

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

## 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 Unorganized 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 camp 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 seems to be rising again and unofficially the 2010 estimate is 208. The number of nonresidents fluctuates with the seasons. According to the 2012 Maidstone Grand List there were 104 residential dwellings, 210 vacation

homes, 8 mobile homes and 2 farms. There were 93 households in Maidstone in 2010 and the median age was 52.7. Finally, according to the U.S. Census, the median household income was \$19,107 in 1999 and \$45,625 in 2012.

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, 1790-2010

1790	1800	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870	1890	1900
<b>125</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>206</b>
1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
<b>175</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>981</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>208</b>

## A BRIEF 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. Maidstone is now a dry town.

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 some 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 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 told 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.

According to the 2012 Lister's Report 41 parcels in Maidstone totaling 4,535.748 acres are now in current use.

**State-Held (Fish & Wildlife or Forest, Parks and Recreation) Lands**  
**And Other Non-Taxable Parcels in Maidstone**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Property Description</b>	<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>Value</b>
Forest, Parks & Rec.	Maidstone State Park	25.00	183,300
Forest, Parks & Rec.	Maidstone State Park	120.00	486,600
Forest, Parks & Rec.	Maidstone State Park	324.00	199,200
Fish & Wildlife	West Mountain WMA North of Lake	4,500.00	1,495,500
Fish & Wildlife	West Mountain WMA South of Lake	548.00	263,300
Forest, Parks & Rec.	Buildings at Maidstone State Park (Day Use Area & Campground)		530,648
Essex County			
Natural Resources	Woodlands	188 (app)	45,400
Town of Maidstone	Taylor Cemetery	.857	15,000
Town of Maidstone	McDade Cemetery	.50	5,900
Town of Maidstone	Town Hall	4.87	74,600

**Recommended Actions:**

1. Improve the local permitting and inspection process.

2. Update and revise the zoning bylaws.
3. Foster more dynamic relationships among the planning commission, zoning board of adjustment, local leaders and the public.

## **PROPOSED 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 separate the town into six districts and we do not anticipate any major changes in these. They are Rural Lands 1, Rural Lands 2, Lake, Ponds, Forest and Agricultural. Because of new state regulations and the needs of some of our residents, we do foresee several changes to our zoning bylaws. We also plan to improve the permitting and inspection process.

Some land use patterns are changing in Maidstone. In 1996, Champion Realty sold all the lots around Maidstone Lake. Prior to that all the lots were leased and most remained as they were built 50 or 60 years ago. Some cottages on the Lake are being converted to year-round homes or being winterized for more frequent use (80% of the town's tax base comes from Maidstone Lake). We are losing dairy farms, 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 increased residential dwellings at Maidstone Lake. 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.

The proposed land use map is also the current use map.



## **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 ten years we have gone from four (4) active dairy farms in Maidstone down to one (1). 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.

### **Vision:**

To maintain and expand the agricultural land base within the Town of Maidstone.

### **Issues/Concerns:**

1. The local zoning regulations should be designed to support local agriculture and discourage development of the best farmland. This can be done by designing flexibility into the review process, encouraging conservation easements on prime farmland, and allowing cluster developments if desired.
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.
3. The loss of the Essex County UVM Extension Professionals located in Guildhall has directly affected our entire rural community, especially our youth.

**Recommended Actions:**

1. Encourage diversified agricultural use of this prime land.
2. Encourage UVM Extension to staff the Guildhall office.
3. Encourage the use and sale of Vermont Made Products.

## **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. The amount of timber harvesting being done now 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.

### **Vision:**

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.

### **Issues/Concerns:**

There is a perceived detrimental impact on water quality, biological diversity, soil erosion and the visual quality of the area due to timber harvesting. To ensure sustainable forest harvesting techniques are used, individual landowners should consider working with a professional forester. There are creative ways to develop land with minimal impact on forest land such as encouraging cluster development and sensible land subdivision.

### **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.

## **NATURAL AREAS**

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

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

### **Vision:**

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

### **Issues/Concerns:**

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

### **Recommended Actions:**

1. Obtain educational materials about the values of natural areas and make them available to all.

2. Protect and preserve the significant natural areas within Maidstone.

## 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.

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

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. The 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 have 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. And since it took a long time to build up, it will also take a long time to correct the problem once it has occurred. When the water quality does down, so will the real estate value of the camps and homes.

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. At the present time the lake is in very good shape.

The Town’s regulatory jurisdiction is to the mean water level of the lake; the State of Vermont regulates the lake itself. The mean level is determined by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation and is currently 18 inches below the benchmark that is at the corner of the outlet dam. 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.

### **Vision:**

To maintain and improve water quality found in Maidstone’s lakes, ponds and streams.

### Issues/Concerns:

1. 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.
2. 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).
3. 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.
4. 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 to the “mean normal water level”. Revisions to be considered are stated in the recommended actions.
5. 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. Monitor water quality reports.
2. Adopt erosion control standards.
3. 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.
4. Revise the Zoning Bylaws to reflect the following:
  - a. Increase the front yard setback.
  - b. Restrict additions or expansion of existing camps, either horizontally or vertically, to meet setbacks whenever possible.



- c. Encourage the creation of vegetative buffer strips along the lakes and streams.
- d. Limit the number of travel trailers that may be placed on a lot.
- e. Limit accessory dwellings in the Lake District to a year-round owner-occupied single family dwelling per lot.

## TRANSPORTATION

Maidstone has 8.245 miles of state highway, 7.42 miles of Class 3 town roads and 4.95 miles of Class 4 town roads. In order to access the camps on Maidstone Lake and the State campground, there are 6 miles of road from Route 102 to the campground gate (which is owned by the Town) and 2.5 miles on the West Side Road.

### MAIDSTONE ROADS

State Highways .....	8.245 miles
Town: Class 2 .....	5.93 miles
Town: Class 3 .....	7.42 miles
Town: Class 4 .....	4.95 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.

There is no public transportation available to Maidstone residents and the average travel time to work in 2000 was 31.09 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.

**Vision:**

Maintaining existing town roads. Encourage the expansion of the network of snowmobile and hiking trails available for public use.

**Issues/Concerns:**

1. 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. 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.
3. 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.

**Recommended Actions:**

1. Encourage the State of Vermont to reconstruct the portions of Route 102 at the dangerous curves noted above.
2. Educate landowners concerning the State Liability Law.
3. Encourage the widening of the shoulders on Route 102 to provide safe passage for cyclists and motorists.

## 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.

### Vision:

1. Traditional recreation opportunities will be maintained and new ones encouraged.
2. Cross country ski trails should be developed.
3. Increased public access to the rivers, streams and lakes is needed.

### 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.

**Recommended Actions:**

1. Encourage an open dialogue between landowners and recreation users to foster the traditional public use of private lands.
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 cross country ski trails around Maidstone Lake.
4. Work with the Maidstone Lake Association to encourage them to educate personal watercraft users and all boaters to be respectful of others.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Maidstone has changed over the years. Dairy farming is on the decline with only one active dairy farm remaining in 2014, although most of the agricultural land is still being used to raise crops. The timber and recreational industries still remain strong. There are a few home-based businesses as well. Many of the locals travel 30+ minutes a day to work in neighboring Groveton, Lancaster, or Colebrook, N.H.

**Vision:**

Maidstone will encourage small scale economic growth while maintaining the small, clean and rural atmosphere.

**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 telecommunication facilities.

**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.

## **EDUCATION**

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

### **Issues/Concerns:**

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

### **Recommended Actions:**

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

## HOUSING

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.

The state defines “affordable housing” as housing that is owned or rented by inhabitants whose gross annual household income does not exceed 80 percent of the county median income, and the total cost of housing (including principal, interest, association fees, or in the case of renters, utilities), does not exceed 30 percent of the household’s gross income.

Recent changes to 24 VSA Chapter 117, the statute that regulates planning and zoning, requires all towns to make provisions for affordable housing. Traditional forms of affordable housing include mobile homes, multi-unit homes (apartments) and accessory apartments. For example, 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.

### **Vision:**

1. To 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. To 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 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. The location of mobile home parks should be chosen carefully with an eye to the future.

## **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. The Maidstone School District owns a 2010 school bus, which transports school children to Groveton and Guildhall schools.

### **Public Utilities**

The town's electric power is supplied by Vermont Electric Cooperative, Inc. Fairpoint 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.

### **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 and a fourth one was installed at McKenzie's Pond on Route 102 in 2010.

### **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.

### **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 is in the process of working on an All Hazard Mitigation Plan and also adopting Flood Hazard Area Regulations. This is necessary in order to apply for FEMA grants that may be available to the town after any natural disaster.

**Recommended Actions:**

1. Select board 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 and Flood Hazard Area Regulations.

## **ENERGY**

There is a growing awareness of the long-term costs of our energy choices, economically, environmentally and socially. It is important to consider the use of energy in local decisions about municipal services and facilities, land use, building standards, and our local economy. Ten years ago the Town Hall was updated with new windows, doors, insulation, new roof and a new handicap ramp. Part of this was paid for by a grant and part by the Town.

Energy in the form of high priced oil and kerosene is available in all of the town, but many homeowners are supplementing this with wood products.

According to the Vermont Wind Resource Map produced by Truewind LLC, the Town of Maidstone is not a good candidate for wind power due to its lack of elevation.

Our local farms are not large enough at the present time to make net-metering cost effective.

With the high price of gasoline and the average daily commute over 30 minutes, the affordability for young people to live in Maidstone is questionable.

### **Vision:**

Encourage conservation and the use of local, renewable energy resources to reduce local dependence upon nonrenewable energy resources.

### **Issues/Concerns:**

1. The cost of renovating and retrofitting existing homes is often too expensive for the homeowner.

### **Recommended Actions:**

1. Educate our homeowners and farmers about the services offered by Efficiency Vermont.

## IMPACT OF ADJACENT COMMUNITIES

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

### POPULATION GROWTH – 1990 2010

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

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### **Recommended Actions:**

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

## 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 and on to Long Island Sound.

## FLOOD RISKS IN MAIDSTONE

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

Inundation: Where the water rises from a lake or stream into low-lying land (such as a floodplain); and

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. These hazard areas are identified on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), which are sometimes referred to as “FEMA maps”. The FIRM for Maidstone was prepared in 1974 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). However, there are approximately 15 structures in or near the flood areas. FEMA requires flood insurance for any federally-backed mortgage, grant or loan to a structure in the 100-year floodplain. Because Maidstone does not participate in the National Flood Insurance Program, that insurance must be obtained from a private insurer, which can be cost-prohibitive.

The Town of Maidstone does not have flood hazard regulations, which are required in order to join the National Flood Insurance Program. Concerns over the accuracy of Maidstone's FEMA FIRMS have prevented the town from joining the National Flood Insurance Program in the past. While these concerns are certainly warranted, it is important to remember that flood insurance for these impacted structures is still required—regardless of the town's participation in the National Flood Insurance Program — unless a property owner is able to get a Letter of Map Amendment to demonstrate that the structure is located outside of the floodplain. And, if the Town of Maidstone does join the National Flood Insurance Program, any property owner in town can obtain flood insurance. Properties located outside of the floodplain are likely to qualify for preferred risk rates, even if those properties are still subject to flood risks.

There has been one flood event between 1989 and 2004 that has qualified for FEMA assistance. There are no properties that have been identified as repetitively damaged using FEMA funds, although some properties have received repetitive damage on a lesser scale. There have been several tow roads that have received some flood damage due to washouts, but not of a major scale. Flooding is not a main issue, but erosion hazards are a significant concern, 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. Deepening development out of the river corridors therefore reduces vulnerability to erosion. The statewide river corridors maps will be released very soon, and these maps will include the Paul Stream and the Cutler Mill Brook area. Areas that are not included on the statewide river corridor maps may also be protected by requiring a vegetation buffer.



### **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.

### **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 can provide some assistance with maintaining this information. At present there are a number of Maidstone culverts that are identified as URGENT, which means that they are failing or likely to fail in the near future. Unfortunately, this inventory is not up-to-date.

### **Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund**

FEMA funds require a local match of 25%. Until now the State of Vermont has provided half of this match (12.5% of the total cost). In October 2014, however, new legislation will tie the level of State funding to specific local initiatives to reduce flood-related risks and prepare for emergencies.

For disasters that occur after October 23, 2014, the State of Vermont will contribute 12.5% if the town has taken all the following steps to reduce flood damage. If Maidstone has not done all of the following, the level of State funding will be reduced to 7.5%.

- Adopt flood regulations that meet the minimum standards for enrollment in the National Flood Insurance Program.
- Adopt the most current Town Road and Bridge Standards (which can be found in the *VTrans Orange Book: Handbook for Local Officials*).
- Maintain a Local Emergency Operations Plan (adopt annually after town meeting and submit

- before May 1).
- Adopt a FEMA-approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Maidstone has never had a Hazard Mitigation Plan. An annex to the regional plan was adopted back in 2005, but FEMA indicated that it would not approve the plan until the Town joined the National Flood Insurance Program. If the Town does develop a Hazard Mitigation Plan, it will be eligible to receive FEMA disaster mitigation funds to remove or reduce certain risks (such as relocation structures out of the floodplain).

What's more, the new legislation has an incentive to increase the State match to 17.5% of the total cost, if the town adopts an approach to managing flood risks that is more aggressive than the minimum standards of the National Flood Insurance Program. These measures include protecting river corridors from new encroachment, protecting inundation areas from new encroachment, and participating in the FEMA Community Rating System. All of these measures are relevant to flood and flood-related risks in Maidstone, and all should be explored as a way to minimize taxpayer expense in the event of future flood-related losses.

## Goal

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

## Strategies

- Amend the zoning regulations to include a Flood Hazard Overlay. This overlay will include the areas depicted on the FEMA Firm.
- Review the Statewide River Corridor data and consider adding this data to the flood hazard Overlay.
- 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.
- Get training from Northeastern Vermont Development Association to update and maintain the inventory of roads and bridges.
- Update the Maidstone Local Emergency Operations Plan.
- Develop a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan for Maidstone.
- Consider the relative costs and benefits of adopting the latest version of the Agency of Transportation's Road and Bridge Standards.

