



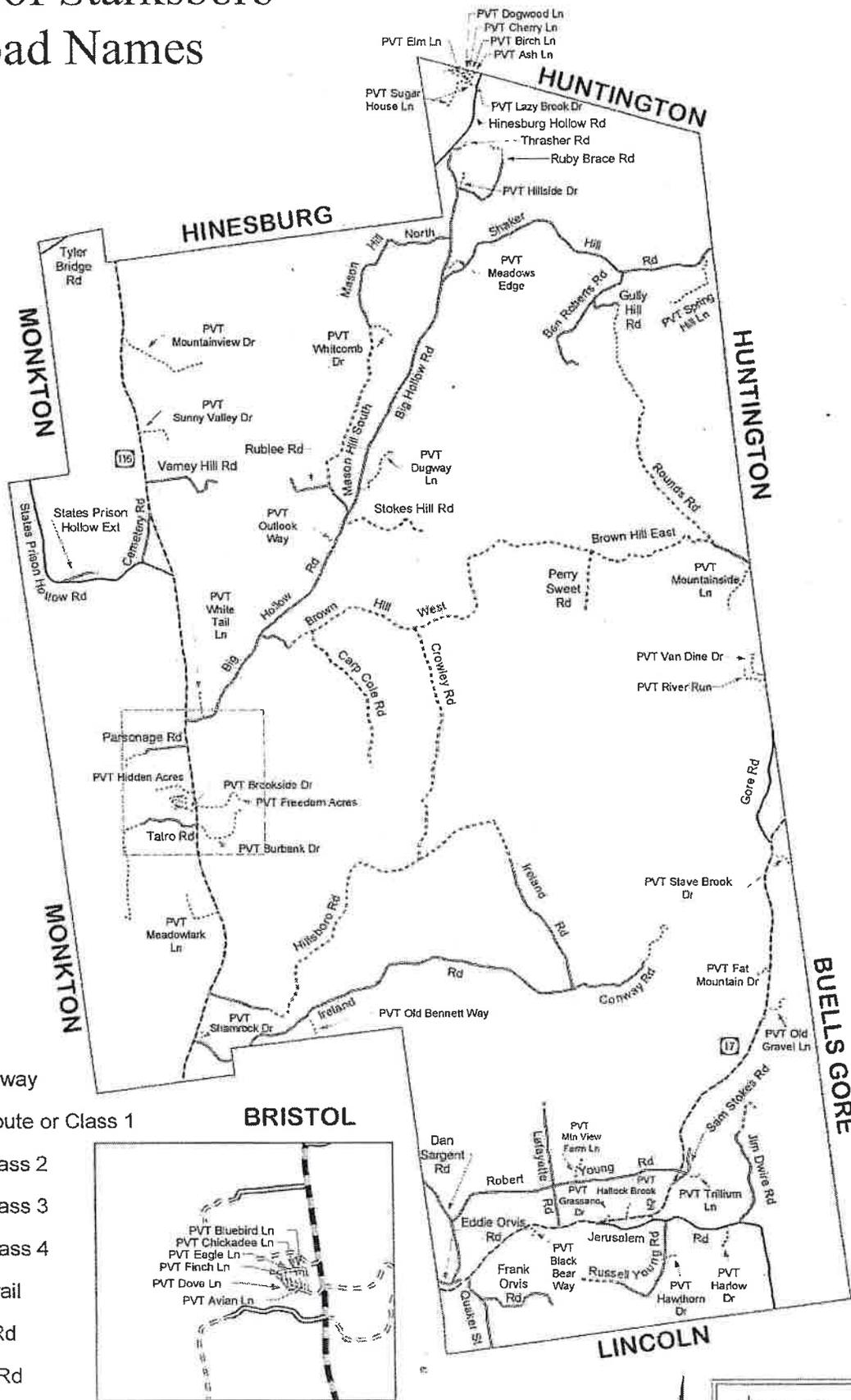
starksboro town plan

2011 - 2016

As Adopted by the Starksboro Selectboard

18 October 2011

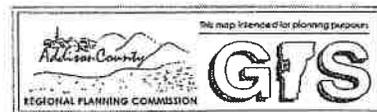
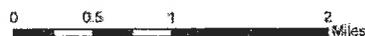
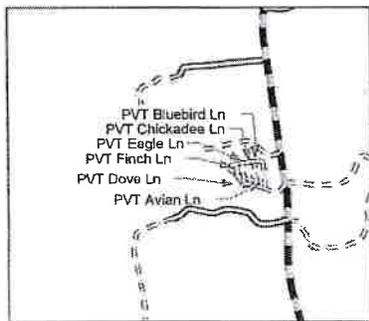
Town of Starksboro Road Names



Legend

Road Class

- US Highway
- State Route or Class 1
- Town Class 2
- Town Class 3
- Town Class 4
- Legal Trail
- Forest Rd
- Private Rd



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introduction

Starksboro, Vermont is a town of 45 square miles and around 1,800 residents located in the northeastern corner of Addison County. It adjoins the towns of Bristol, Lincoln and Monkton in Addison County, as well as Hinesburg and Huntington in Chittenden County.

Starksboro is located in the western foothills of the Green Mountains and is characterized by its terrain, which ranges from 372 to 2,500 feet above sea level. Hogback Mountain, a north-south ridge that defines the town's western border, slopes sharply into the Lewis Creek Valley. The valley is recognized for its high quality agricultural soils and the scenic views of the surrounding hills and ridges visible beyond the fields and pastures. From the valley eastward, the land rises by a series of gradually ascending hills to another significant ridgeline, East Mountain. That north-south ridgeline extends in a broken, irregular manner through nearly the whole length of the town, sloping steeply on the east towards the Huntington River, which flows for a short distance in Starksboro. Most of the town drains to the Lewis Creek, which has its source in the Hillsboro Mountain and Ireland Road area and flows north through the western parts of Starksboro ultimately emptying into Lake Champlain. Numerous small streams, tributaries of Lewis Creek, flow out of Starksboro's hillsides.

Those streams and the rugged terrain have shaped the town's settlement pattern and transportation system. Starksboro Village, the traditional town center, is located in the Lewis Creek Valley, along the town's main north-south highway, now Vermont Route 116. High up above the valley in the southeastern part of town, known as South Starksboro, the historic hamlet of Jerusalem developed along one of the few east-west crossings over the Green Mountains, now Vermont Route 17. A number of town roads wind their way eastward from the valley up into the town's higher elevations following the narrow stream valleys. The hill farms that were once scattered along these roads have largely disappeared, to be replaced in recent decades by rural residences. Large areas of the town's uplands remain inaccessible, creating large tracts of undisturbed forestland.

As detailed on page 45 of this plan, we envision our town remaining largely as it exists today. It is our hope that the future Starksboro will remain recognizable to current residents and that the best parts will be preserved - environmental quality, scenic beauty, diverse working landscapes, rural character, sense of community and quality of life.

Authority

Starksboro has the authority under the Vermont Planning and Development Act, Title 24 V.S.A., Chapter 117, to adopt a town plan. The town plan must be consistent with the 13 state planning goals and include the 10 required elements enumerated in statute. So the plan may accommodate changing conditions, state law requires the town to review, update and readopt our town plan at least every five years. The Starksboro Planning Commission has reviewed the town's conditions and facilities, and has stated its public goals and objectives in the following 2011 Town Plan.

This plan presents a vision for the town's future, and a series of recommendations for achieving that vision. It is intended that this plan guide the town's efforts in land use planning, the provision of public facilities and services, environmental protection, economic development and land conservation. This plan will be implemented through town ordinances and regulations, town participation in state and federal regulatory processes and the town's approach to raising and spending public funds.

Purpose of the Plan

This Town Plan is the principal statement of policy for the Town of Starksboro. A town plan should state the town's aims in terms broad enough to allow application to a wide range of situations, yet with sufficient detail to serve as a strong foundation for land use regulations and other implementation tools. The plan should allow for flexibility and creativity in its application in order to achieve an appropriate balance between competing objectives. The plan is not regulatory in nature, but it serves a number of important purposes in various regulatory and judicial processes.

To be valid, the town's land use regulations require the policy and data foundation of a town plan. Land use regulations must be in conformance with the town plan, which is defined in statute as:

- ✦ Making progress toward attaining, or at least not interfering with, the goals and policies contained in the town plan.
- ✦ Providing for proposed future land uses, densities, and intensities of development contained in the town plan.
- ✦ Carrying out, as applicable, any specific proposals for community facilities, or other proposed actions contained in the town plan.

The courts will look to the town plan if any provisions of the regulations or other related municipal action is legally challenged. The plan is also the foundation for other implementation tools such as a capital budget, permit phasing or impact fees. Indeed, such mechanisms cannot be adopted without a current plan and they must be consistent with the provisions of the plan. The plan will also be considered by the Addison County Regional Planning Commission and the District Environmental Commission in the course of regional and state planning

activities: including regional plans, public good determinations, state subdivision permits and Act 250 permits.

How to Read the Plan

Residents of Starksboro are urged to read and consider this plan carefully, giving thought to goals, objectives and policies that contribute to protecting and preserving Starksboro's valuable resources while guiding a gradual and diversified growth pattern. Without a comprehensive Town Plan and effective land use regulations, uncontrolled development may overwhelm the town.

This plan is divided into sections based on the standards set up by state statute. Each section is further organized as follows:

History of the Plan

Starksboro's long-term planning efforts, initiated in the late 1980s, have been effective in guiding growth and development in such a way as to preserve valuable natural and economic resources while balancing the rights of individuals. In accordance with state law, town plans must be reviewed, revised as needed and readopted every five years. Therefore, Starksboro's plan has been updated several times since it was initially adopted. Most recently in the late 1990s, the Planning Commission initiated a review of the plan with a well-attended public forum, which ultimately led to re-adoption of the revised plan in 2003.

Public Participation

Planning is a continuous activity and the Town Plan is an evolving document that should reflect the goals and vision of Starksboro's residents as that vision changes over time. The Planning Commission, Selectboard and numerous citizens who have participated in town planning activities over the years have contributed time and energy to the goal of creating a document that clearly expresses the wishes of the community. The Planning Commission encourages all residents who value the unique characteristics of our town to participate in planning activities to help effectively guide future growth and ensure that the rural beauty and diversity of our town is preserved for the enjoyment of future generations.

This most recent town plan update included significant public participation including a public opinion survey, community planning workshop and citizen work groups that reviewed the town plan and offered recommended revisions to the Planning Commission. A three-part public opinion survey was distributed in the Gazette during the summer of 2008. The results showed a strong commitment on the part of town residents for preservation of agricultural and forest land, and maintaining rural character.

In September 2008, the Planning Commission hosted Starksboro Day, which included a 3-hour planning workshop in addition to other community events. Workshop participants participated in a brainstorming session to identify the challenges and issues facing the town and the goals and actions that should be

set/taken to address them. The main themes that emerged included energy (renewables and conservation), agriculture, forestry and local food production, and public participation and communication.

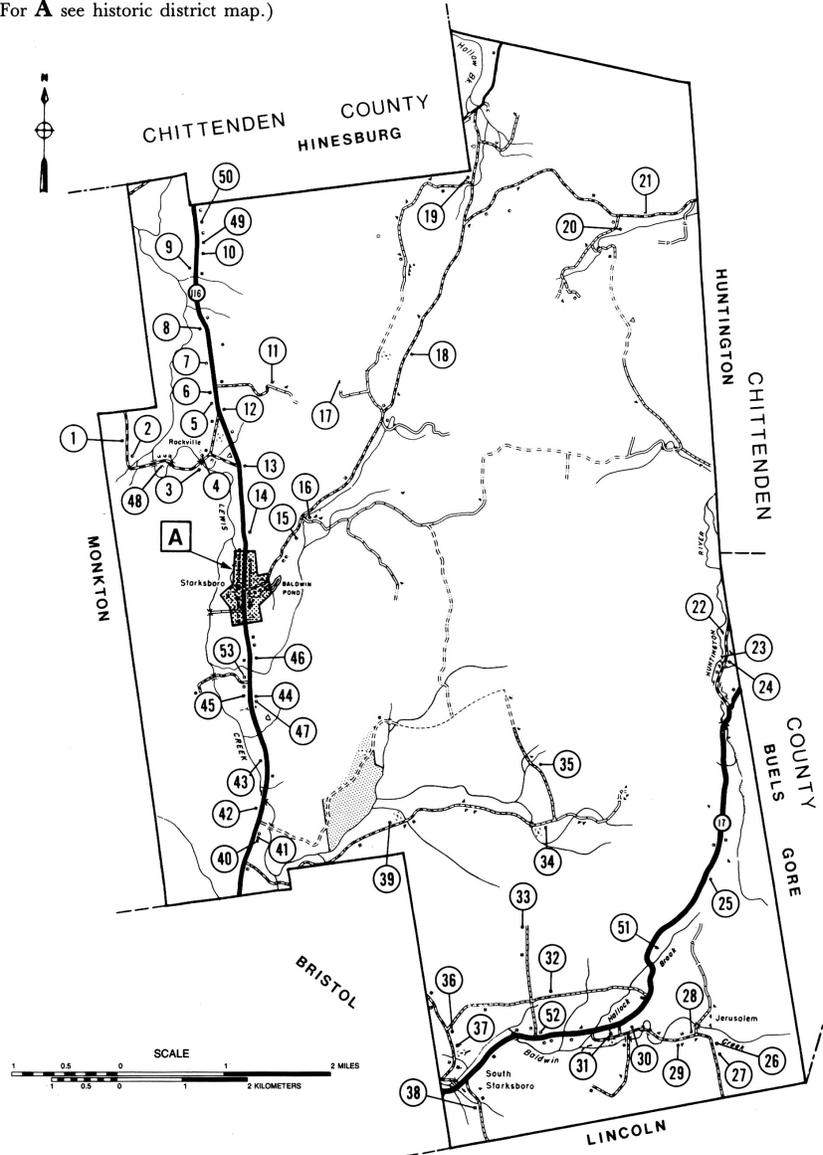
In October and November 2008, around 25 townspeople volunteered to review the previous town plan and offer their recommendations for revisions. Their input has been incorporated into the plan that follows.

In the fall of 2007, residents from all three mobile home parks in Starksboro were asked their opinions about life in the park, including the things they liked most and those that could use improvement. The survey was initiated by the Starksboro Planning Commission as part of the process of collecting information for the Town Plan. The survey was conducted by students from the University of Vermont and is part of an on-going, collaborative project between the Department of Community Development and Applied Economics (CDAE) at the University of Vermont, the Starksboro Planning Commission, Addison County Community Trust (ACCT), and the Mobile Home Project at the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO). A total of 55 surveys were completed in the three parks. Following the survey, meetings were held at each park to discuss the survey. The goals of this project were to assist residents of the mobile home parks in Starksboro develop a vision for the future of their communities and strategies for getting there.

Separate from the plan revision, Starksboro received a \$25,000 grant in 2008 from the Orton Foundation and Vermont Land Trust to engage residents in conversations about the town's future. Information and ideas generated from residents participating in that project have been incorporated into the town plan as well.

TOWN OF STARKSBORO MAP

Sites listed in the State Register of Historic Places
(Numbers correspond to Register listings that follow.
For **A** see historic district map.)



SOURCE: VT. AGENCY OF TRANSPORTATION GENERAL HIGHWAY MAP, 1979.

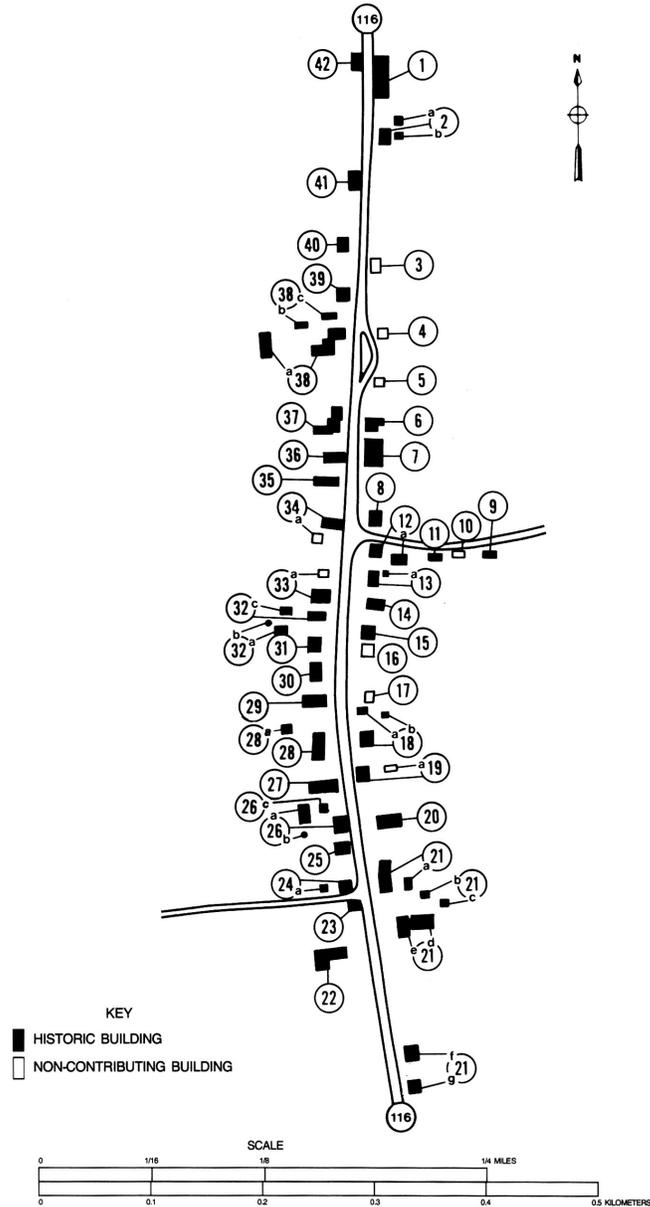
Historic Town Map Key

1. House, c.1873
2. House, c.1800/c.1835
3. House, c.1820
4. Hoag Gristmill, c.1799/c.1838
5. House, c.1835
6. Early Barn, c.1850
7. House, c.1840
8. House, c.1880/c.1900
9. House, c.1870
10. House, c.1809
11. House, c.1850
12. House, c.1810/c.1880
13. House, c.1810
14. House, c.1860
15. House, c.1870
16. House, c.1810
17. House, c.1850
18. House, c.1865
19. House, c.1820
20. School, c.1830
21. House, c.1870
22. House, c.1850
23. School, c.1832/1904
24. House, c.1870
25. House, c.1865
26. House, c.1865
27. House, c.1850
28. House, c.1870
29. House, c.1860
30. Farm, c.1860/c.1870
31. School, 1874/1904
32. Farm, c.1850/c.1870/c.1920
33. House, c.1860
34. School, 1896
35. House, c.1810
36. House, c.1810
37. Meetinghouse, 1826/1871
38. Farm, c.1810/c.1865
39. House, c.1885
40. House, c.1860
41. House, c.1835
42. Farm, c.1850/c.1900
43. House, c.1840
44. House, c.1810
45. House, c.1845
46. House, c.1865
47. House, c.1810
48. House, c.1830/c.1890
49. House, c.1840
50. House, c.1875
51. House, c.1860
52. School, c.1850

Historic District Map Key

1. Creamery, 1898/c.1940
2. House, c.1865; Garage, c.1930; Shed, c.1930
3. House, c.1978
4. Office, 1973
5. Post Office, 1976
6. House, c.1820
7. Store, c.1850/1865
8. Hotel, c.1835
9. House, c.1860
10. Mobile Home, c.1970
11. House, c.1860
12. House, c.1865; Barn, c.1855
13. House, c.1810/c.1900; Garage, c.1925
14. Mill, c.1795/1868
15. House, c.1810
16. House, c.1810
17. Mobile Home, c.1950
18. House, c.1835; Garage, c.1940; Chicken Coop, c.1940
19. House, c.1835; Shed, c.1960
20. Church, c.1869
21. House, c.1840; Garage, c.1930; Shed, c.1900; Shop, c.1900; Barn, c.1860; Barn, c.1900; Carriage Barn; c.1870; Garage, c.1920
22. School, 1892/1941
23. House, c.1865
24. House, c.1810; Carriage Barn, c.1890
25. Shop, c.1820
26. House, c.1865; Barn, c.1850; Silo, c.1920
27. Town Hall, 1911
28. House, c.1850; Barn, c.1840; Garage, c.1930
29. Meetinghouse, 1840
30. House, c.1800
31. House, 1840/c.1865
32. House, c.1880; Garage, c.1932; Silo, c.1950; Barn, c.1860
33. House, c.1830.c.1900; Garage, c.1950
34. Store, 1860/c.1900; Garage, c.1925
35. House, c.1840/c.1890
36. Store, c.1900
37. House, c.1840
38. House, c.1810; Barn, c.1890; Chicken Coop, c.1925; Barn, c.1850
39. House, c.1835/c.1880
40. House, c.1840
41. Store, 1898
42. House, c.1860

A STARKSBORO VILLAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT MAP (Numbers correspond to Register listing that follows.)



SOURCE: VT. MAPPING PROGRAM ORTHOPHOTOS, 1975.

starksboro's history

Starksboro, chartered November 9, 1780 by the Republic of Vermont, was named in honor of Brigadier General John Stark. The first permanent settler, George Bidwell, along with Horace Kellogg received a deed of land in Starksboro on September 12, 1787.

The area of the town has twice been increased by Act of the Legislature. In 1797, a mile wide strip lying east of Hogback Mountain, extending from the Bristol line north as far as the stonewall north of Floyd Shepard's house on Route 116, was annexed from Monkton. Another strip, one-half mile wide, extending north from the stonewall to the Hinesburg line was added from Monkton in 1909.

When the first United States Census was taken in 1791, the town as chartered, had nine families living within its bounds, for a total of 40 people. All settlement was in the Lewis Creek Valley.

In the years just before the Civil War, Starksboro had the second-largest population of any town in Addison County.

Although Starksboro village on Route 116 is now commonly recognized as the town's primary center, in earlier times there were many other villages and hamlets:

- ✦ Brownsboro, named for the Brown family;
- ✦ Little Boston, a small industrial center located in the southern part of town where Route 116 now crosses Lewis Creek;
- ✦ Hillsboro, named for Samuel Hill who settled there from New Hampshire in 1805; and
- ✦ Jerusalem, the factories and hotel that used to be there are long gone. Located on a mountain road in the extreme southeastern part of town, it retains some of its individuality, with a small school, that closed in 1968, a cemetery and cluster of houses.

Abundant water power was available in every section of town. As settlers continued to arrive, small industrial centers grew up in several areas. As early as 1797, mills were operated along Baldwin Brook in Starksboro village. By the early 1800s, the town was home to a variety of mills and manufactures.

By 1860, the town had a record population of 1,437. Though the population had declined somewhat by 1886, the village then boasted a foundry, two stores, a carriage shop, a hotel, a gristmill, a sawmill and a butter tub factory. A grist mill and saw mill operated at the Great Falls of Lewis Creek. South Starksboro had a post office, gristmill, a stave mill, a rake factory and butter tub factory.

Formation and Early Settlement

Population Centers

Community Facilities

Schools were among the first concerns of the settlers. The earliest school record in Starksboro, dated 1805, states, “the scholars numbered and found to be one-hundred-eighty-nine.” By 1816, the number had increased to 382.

At Town Meeting in 1832, the town was divided into 17 school districts. By 1927, the number had been reduced to eight. In 1941, Starksboro Village School, constructed as a one-room building in 1892, was enlarged into the two-room Robinson School. In succeeding years, schools were closed in various parts of town and the students transported to the village or to Jerusalem School.

When Mt. Abraham Union High School opened in the fall of 1968 with accommodations for grades seven through 12, Jerusalem School, the last one-room school in town, was closed and all elementary students were transported to Robinson School. The elementary school population has grown rapidly since that time, making three necessary additions to the building between 1978 and 1996.

The first house of worship in town was the Quaker Meeting House built in 1812 in the north part of Green Mount Cemetery. The building was sold and moved by ox team to Charlotte in the winter of 1858-1859 where it became the nucleus of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Roman Catholic Church.

South Starksboro Friends were, during the early years of their history a part of the Lincoln Friends Meeting. In 1826, they built the present South Starksboro Friends Meeting House. Enlarged in 1870, it is the oldest operating Friends Meeting House in the state.

The Starksboro Village Meeting House was completed in 1840 and served three denominations as well as providing accommodations for a Town Hall in the basement.

A Methodist Episcopal Church was constructed near the present Clifford tenant house in the north part of town about 1840. It served the people in the north part of Starksboro and near-by residents of Monkton and Hinesburg. The building, sold to a neighboring farmer for a horse barn, has since been demolished.

Agricultural Heritage

Starksboro has always been primarily an agricultural town. In the early 1800s the small local iron industry and the Monkton Iron Works in Vergennes provided a ready market for charcoal. Settlers clearing land for farming were thus enabled to convert unwanted trees into cash.

With the coming of railroads in the mid-1800s, dairying began to be an important source of income. Many farmhouses boasted a “cheese room” where the farmer’s wife made large wheels of cheese. Butter was also made on the farm. Buyers went from farm to farm purchasing these products for city markets.

Toward the end of the century, cheese factories were established. The McDonough farm in Hinesburg (now owned by the Hinesburg Sand & Gravel

Company, Inc.) operated a plant that provided farmers in the north part of Starksboro with a market for their milk.

A small cooperative creamery in South Starksboro manufactured and sold butter for several years. Green Mountain Cold Spring Creamery in Starksboro village was incorporated in 1898 for the purpose of manufacturing butter, buying, selling and dealing generally in milk and milk products. With the increased use of trucks for transportation, markets for fluid milk in the large industrial centers of southern New England became accessible to farmers in northern Vermont.

In 1929, Silverman Brothers, then owners of the creamery, began to process whole milk. By 1935, the plant, then known as Mountain View Creamery, had become a very successful business enterprise providing employment for several local people. It continued to be the most important industry in town well into the 1960s. Changing economic conditions resulted in the closing of the plant in the early 1970s.

When the first Town Plan was adopted in 1973, there were 19 operating dairy farms in Starksboro. Presently, there are five.

Maple products have always been important to Starksboro agriculture. Individual farmers usually built up a market for their product both in and out of the state. For many years, maple syrup that was not sold in cans or made into maple sugar was put into large casks and hauled by wagon to the railroad in Bristol.

It is interesting to note that one farm in town has remained in the same family, generation after generation. In 1807 James Kinsley, Sr., a native of Scotland, purchased 100 acres of land in Starksboro. That land is now part of the farm owned and operated by his seventh and eighth generation descendants, Arthur and Eric Clifford.

Between 1860 and 1960, westward migration and changing economic conditions causing the abandonment of hill farms and the loss of small business resulted in a steady decline in population.

In 1960 there were only 502 people living in Starksboro. By 1973, when the first Town Plan was adopted, Starksboro was already rapidly changing from an agricultural community with a few small businesses to a quasi-suburban environment. Proximity to the rapidly developing northwestern Vermont industrial center has since resulted in unprecedented growth. The 2000 census lists our population at an all time high of 1,898 residents.

Beers' Atlas, originally published in 1871, provides a unique point of reference in considering how Starksboro has changed over the last century. Starksboro village and South Starksboro were the more densely developed hubs of economic activity in that time and they continue in that role today.

Population Change

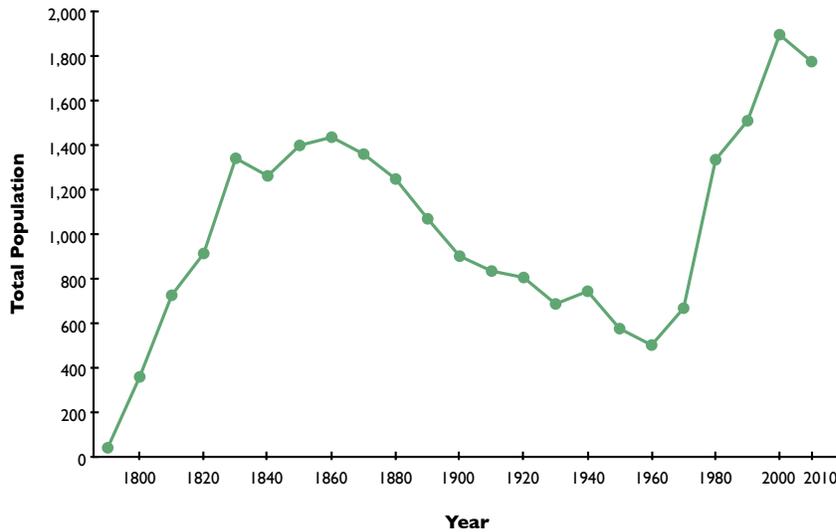
However, development is now less dense on what had served as connecting roads in earlier days. These areas of town are now predominantly forested and dotted with seasonal camps.

A significant percentage of the houses listed in Beers' Atlas are still here and provide some of the most attractive housing in town. This is particularly true of Starksboro village where almost every building shown in the atlas is still standing.

community assessment

Population Growth

According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2010, Starksboro's population stood at 1,777 people.



Population

Figure 1

Starksboro Population, 1791-2010

Source: US Census Bureau

As shown in Figure 1, Starksboro's population grew rapidly during the early 1800s from 40 people in 1791 to 1,437 by 1860. Throughout the remainder of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th, Starksboro's population declined, reaching a low of 502 people in 1960.

In 1960, Starksboro entered its second major growth period since the first settlers arrived in 1788. From 1960 until 2000, Starksboro experienced exceptional population growth, doubling in size between 1970 and 1980. This period of population growth ended during the 2000s with the town population declining by 121 residents.

Despite the recent decline, Starksboro's current population remains significantly greater than its peak in the mid-1880s. The town's proximity to Burlington and the relatively easy commute to other job centers in Chittenden County, Middlebury and Vergennes have made Starksboro a desirable place to live for people who would like to settle in the region.

Figure 2 compares Starksboro's population growth with that experienced by neighboring towns. Unlike its northern neighbors, following Starksboro's population boom in the 1970s, growth slowed substantially in the 1980s. During the 1990s, Starksboro grew at a faster rate than any of its neighbors.

A statewide population projection completed in 2003, suggested that Starksboro's population would grow to 2,392 people by 2020, which represents an

average annual growth rate of 1.2 percent. Future growth projections by Addison County Regional Planning Commission estimate Starksboro’s population will be in the range of 3,200 to 3,700 by 2025, which represents an average annual growth rate of 2.14 to 2.74 percent. Given that the town lost population rather than grew during 2000s, both projections seem too high at the present time. Projecting future population trends in small communities is challenging and changes in the regional economy could significantly alter anticipated growth.

Figure 2

Average Annual Growth in Population, 1960-2010

Source: US Census Bureau

	Total Population						Ave. Annual Growth Rate				
	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	'60s	'70s	'80s	'90s	'00s
Starksboro	502	668	1,336	1,511	1,898	1,777	2.9%	7.2%	1.2%	2.3%	-0.7%
Hinesburg	1,180	1,775	2,690	3,780	4,340	4,396	4.2%	4.2%	3.5%	1.4%	0.1%
Huntington	518	748	1,161	1,609	1,861	1,938	3.7%	4.5%	3.3%	1.5%	0.4%
Monkton	551	765	1,201	1,482	1,759	1,980	3.3%	4.6%	2.1%	1.7%	1.2%
Lincoln	481	599	870	974	1,214	1,271	2.2%	3.8%	1.1%	2.2%	0.5%
Bristol	2,159	2,744	3,293	3,762	3,788	3,894	2.4%	1.8%	1.3%	0.1%	0.3%
Addison Co.	20,076	24,266	29,406	32,953	35,974	36,821	1.9%	1.9%	1.1%	0.9%	0.2%
Chittenden Co.	74,425	99,131	115,534	131,761	146,571	156,545	2.9%	1.5%	1.3%	1.1%	0.7%
Vermont	389,881	444,731	511,456	562,758	608,827	625,741	1.3%	1.4%	1.0%	0.8%	0.3%

Birth Rates and Age of the Population

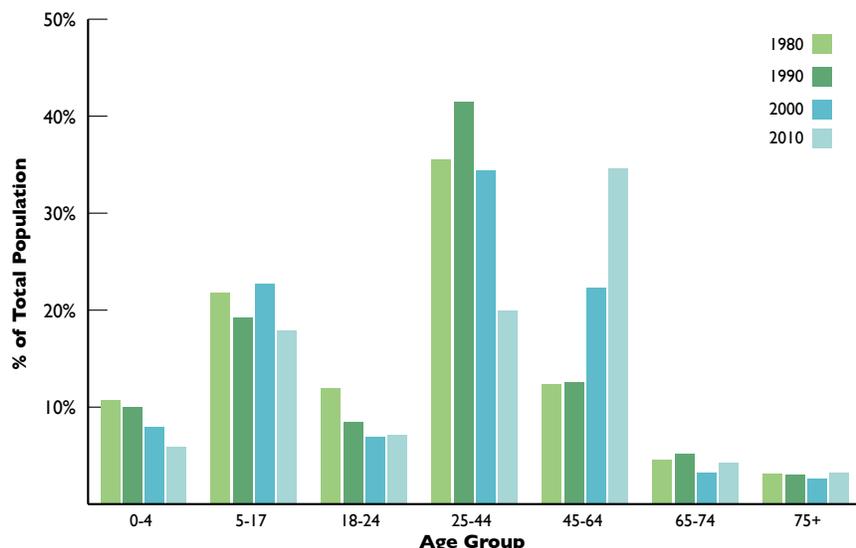
In addition to new people moving into town, Starksboro had one of the highest birth rates in the county for more than 20 years. During the 1980s and 1990s, Starksboro’s population increase was largely due to natural increase (births minus deaths). In recent years, however, Starksboro’s birth rate has declined noticeably and is now closer to state and county averages than in past decades.

As shown in Figure 3, the proportion of the population under age 18 did not change significantly from 1980 through 2000 but has declined somewhat during the past decade. Starksboro’s population remains younger than state and re-

Figure 3

Starksboro’s Population by Age Group, 1980-2010

Source: US Census Bureau



gional averages, but the gap is narrowing. In the year 2010, the median age in Starksboro was 40.2 compared to 41.3 for Addison County and 41.5 statewide.

The largest percentage of Starksboro's population is in the 45 to 64 age group. Over the next two decades, this group will be retiring with changing lifestyles and needs. Starksboro will likely need to consider the needs of older residents and provide housing types and services appropriate to this population.

Household and Family Composition

Starksboro had 698 households in 2010 with an average size of 2.54 people, according to the census. The number of households increased in the 2000s, despite the fact the population declined due to declining household size.

Of Starksboro's households in 2010, 376 (54%) were married-couple families, 172 of which had children under age 18. Another 71 non-married households also included children under age 18. There were 152 people living alone.

Population Density

Starksboro's overall population density was more than 39 people per square mile in 2010, an increase of nearly 25 people per square mile since 1970. However, there are several settlement areas in Starksboro with much higher population densities.

A housing plan should allow people from a range of ages and income levels to live and own homes in Starksboro. While there are still working farms in town, Starksboro has evolved from a predominantly agricultural-based community to one that is mainly residential and serves as a bedroom community for larger economic areas in the region.

Changes in Starksboro's population and housing needs are likely to reflect changes in the economic pressures of northwestern Vermont. Employment changes at large employers such as Middlebury College, IBM, UVM, Fletcher-Allen Health Care and others now influence the pattern of development in bedroom communities like Starksboro.

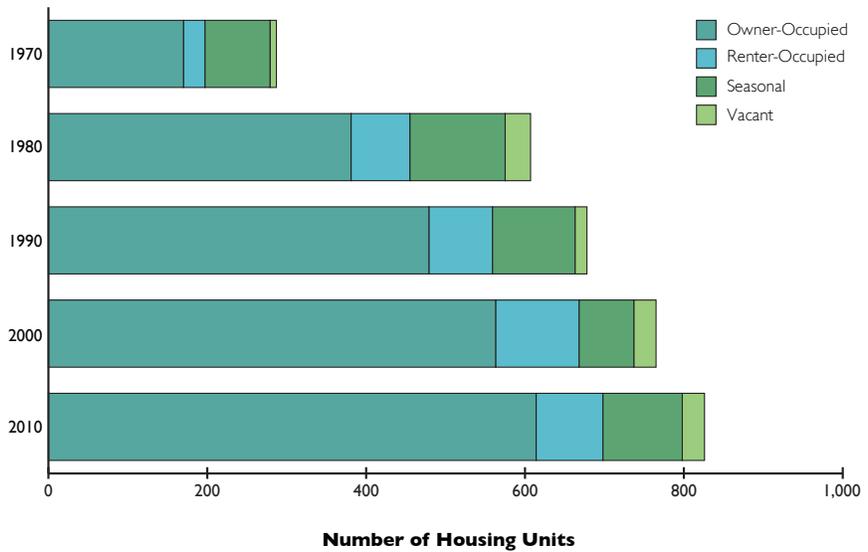
In trying to establish housing goals for Starksboro, a number of diverse factors must be considered including:

- ✦ The town's rural character and lack of public transportation, which leads to heavy reliance on personal transportation;
- ✦ Economic variables tied to growth or constriction of large employers in the region; and
- ✦ The stated goals of this plan related to preservation of rural, small-town character, agriculture and forested landscape.

Further, availability of land parcels, sales and turnover of homes and land, income of residents, and property taxes each contribute to availability of housing for those wishing to move to Starksboro.

It is in the interest of the town to plan for housing development that creates an environment that is socially and environmentally healthy. The town’s subdivision and zoning regulations are intended to do that.

Figure 4
Starksboro’s Housing Units by Tenure, 1970-2010
Source: US Census Bureau



Growth in Housing

The type of housing found in Starksboro is overwhelmingly single-family homes, either as “stick built” or as sited mobile homes. Over the last 40 years, Starksboro’s housing stock, like its population, has grown rapidly with nearly 550 new homes being built.

Since 1993, Starksboro has issued an average of 9 building permits for new structures a year and there have been, on average, six subdivision requests resulting in the creation of more than 12 new lots annually.

Figure 5
Development Trends in Starksboro, 1993-2010

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
New Homes	9	13	15	7	11	6	19	10
Subdivision Applications	5	7	8	5	5	8	6	6
New Lots	8	15	14	13	6	16	15	11

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
New Homes	4	9	4	6	14	6	5	9	2	7
Subdivision Applications	3	5	5	4	6	9	8	8	8	2
New Lots	6	10	11	12	15	25	21	14	8	2

As shown in Figure 4, some of the increase in year-round housing has come from the conversion of seasonal camps to year-round use. This type of conversion has been particularly prevalent in South Starksboro and along the Ireland Road. Both these areas are heavily forested with steep slopes and shallow soils.

The continued increase in year-round housing units and the associated loss of seasonal housing has direct impacts on the community’s tax base demands, which are largely tied to education costs and to a lesser extent, expenses such as road maintenance and emergency response.

Mobile Homes

A substantial share of Starksboro’s housing stock is composed of mobile homes, most of which are located in one of three mobile home parks. Addison County Community Trust owns the three mobile home parks – Brookside, Lazy Brook and Hillside – in which the residents own the mobile homes and lease a site. Starksboro’s mobile home parks provide a stable source of affordable housing in the town.

	First Opened	Purchased by ACCT	Number of Lots	Estimated Population (2007)
Brookside	1969	2001	48	116
Lazy Brook	c. 1960	1992	51	153
Hillside Manor	c. 1968	1993	29	78
Total			128	347

Figure 6

Starksboro’s Mobile Home Parks

Note: Population estimates by Sarah Weintraub, CDAE UVM based on census data.

Starksboro is among a small group of towns statewide with a high concentration of residents living in mobile home parks. In 2007, the population of the three parks was estimated by students at the University of Vermont to be at least 347 residents, amounting to nearly 20 percent of the town’s total population.

In 2007, 55 mobile home park residents were surveyed and expressed general satisfaction with the quality of life in the parks. Respondents liked the neighborliness of life in the parks and the affordability of the housing. Forty-five percent of respondents planned to live in the park for at least five more years and around 40 percent had already lived in Starksboro for more than 10 years. While most residents interviewed were generally happy with the quality of their current housing, nearly 30 percent reported that the most urgent improvement needed to their homes involved roof repairs or replacement, followed by needs to replace floors (18%), skirting (7%) and windows (7%).

The average household in the parks had more than one person employed and most worked outside of Starksboro. Employment tended to concentrate in the greater Burlington metropolitan area. Nearly all respondents traveled to work using a personal vehicle, but there was a very strong interest in commuting via public transportation. Sixty percent of respondents stated that if public transportation were available someone in their house would use it for commuting to work and shopping.

At the park meetings the need for additional recreational facilities was commonly voiced. This included activities for not only youth and children, but also adults. Residents also noted that recreational facilities for youth and children need to be supported with adequate supervision.

Seasonal Camps

Starksboro's upland forest provides many of the values critical to the town's identity, character and quality of life. Starksboro's extensive and largely contiguous forest provides wildlife habitat, cleans the water, provides fresh air and the opportunity to "get away from it all" for a while. There are approximately 75 seasonal camps located in the forest. Conversion of these existing camps to year-round homes or construction of new year-round homes in difficult to access and environmentally sensitive areas is an ongoing issue for the town.

Much of the upland forest includes lands that are particularly susceptible to damage from development, either due to poor soils, occupation by species that are easily displaced by human activities, or because the area is in the upper reaches of the watershed where small quantities of pollutants can have a cumulative impact on water quality. Much remains to be learned about how people can live in sensitive areas without causing undue disturbance. Increasing our understanding in this area is critically important to improved planning for the town's forested uplands.

In addition to the extremely important ecological functions provided by remote and contiguous forest habitat, the area also provides a number of additional amenities to visitors and residents. These include the opportunity for remote outdoor recreation, solitude and a variety of sustainable economic activities including forestry and maple sugaring.

Furthermore, development in this area would be costly to the town due to the difficulty of providing services to these remote areas. Although no local studies have been conducted, nationally a number of studies examining the cost of serving spread-out development versus compact development have been carried out by academics, groups representing developers and government agencies. Each concludes that spread-out development is more expensive. Municipal and education costs rise because the per unit cost of activities such as maintaining roads, snow plowing and busing school children is higher as longer distances have to be traveled. Studies indicate that these increased costs are paid for either in higher costs of housing or higher property taxes.

In response to these concerns, when Starksboro adopted its first zoning ordinance in 1993, much of its upland forestland was placed into a zoning district where year-round homes are a conditional use. The town now regulates seasonal use based on a standard of not more than 100 days occupancy per year. This system of limiting occupancy still poses some challenges for the town. Comments received at a public forum in December 1998 suggested that there was strong support for the goal of restricting conversion to or development of year-round homes in the upland forest, but there was interest in achieving these

goals through alternatives to the 100-day rule. Public comments heard during this most recent plan revision suggest that public sentiment remains essentially the same a decade later – seasonal homes should not be converted and few to no year-round homes should be constructed in areas characterized by difficult access and sensitive resources.

Farm Worker Housing

Working farms have traditionally offered farm employee housing as part of the labor arrangement. Today farms in Starksboro face many challenges attracting and keeping employees. The town’s farming community wants to retain the option of offering housing as a part of the employment package.

Multi-Unit Housing

As family size continues to decline and Starksboro’s elderly population increases, there may be an increased demand for alternatives to detached single-family homes such as smaller, attached, rental, condominium or congregate housing. Additionally, there are larger, older homes and outbuildings in Starksboro that could be converted to income-producing, multi-family housing.

Starksboro’s zoning regulations currently allow for duplexes and three-unit structures as a conditional use in the HDRC and LDRC districts. Accessory apartments as required by the state are allowed in an existing owner-occupied residence if the statutory criteria are met. Responses to the 2008 survey and public comments received during the most recent plan revision suggest that residents are interested in expanding housing options, especially in relation to providing housing suitable for seniors so that people do not have to move out of town when they can no longer, or no longer want to, live in their current home.

Agriculture

Historically, much of Starksboro’s economic base was tied to agriculture and forestry with these industries providing a living for most town residents for more than 150 years. In more recent times, the economic base of Starksboro has shifted with most residents now working outside the community, largely in the service sector.

According to the 1980 Census, 62 Starksboro residents worked in agriculture or forestry, and 120 people lived on a farm. In 2000, those numbers had fallen to 32 residents employed in agriculture or forestry and 54 people living on a farm. The 1980 Census counted 36 farm residences, while the 2000 Census found only 20.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture undertakes an Agricultural Census every five years, but data is not available at the town level. In recent years, this census data has been available by zip code; the 05487 zip code includes most of Starksboro’s agricultural land. The census results show a slight increase in the number of farms over the past decade with 29 farms counted in 1997, 41 counted in

Economic Development

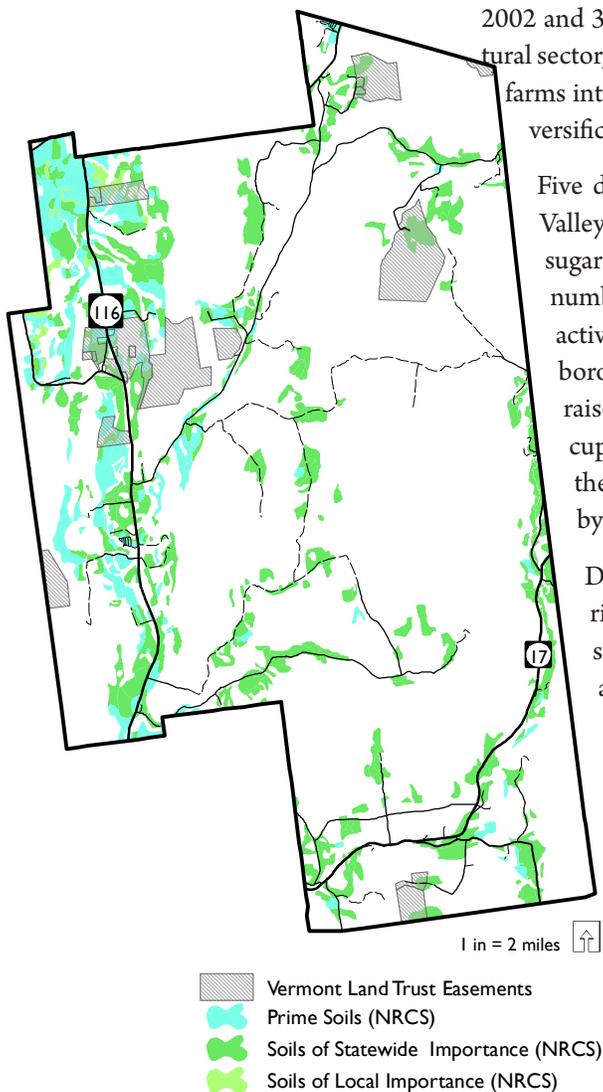


Figure 7
Agricultural Soils and Conserved Lands Map

2002 and 34 counted in 2007. The statistics point to two trends in the agricultural sector, which are visible throughout New England – consolidation of dairy farms into fewer, larger operations on one hand and on the other, greater diversification with new, small farms producing food and specialty products.

Five dairy and two market gardening farms located in the Lewis Creek Valley are the largest operations in Starksboro. There are many high quality sugar maple orchards in town, a beef farm in Hinesburg Hollow and a number of smaller farms located throughout town. Farming is a part-time activity, undertaken more for the lifestyle than for profit, for many Starksboro residents who may have horses, do some sugaring, keep chickens, raise small numbers of livestock, have large gardens, etc. The lands occupied by these farms, both the full-time and part-time operations, keep the land open creating the scenic vistas valued by residents and enjoyed by visitors.

Despite recent gains in the number of farms operating in town, the agricultural sector in Starksboro and the larger region has experienced significant changes over the past five decades. Beyond ongoing fluctuations in the price of fluid milk and other commodities and the recent increase in fuel and input costs, Starksboro’s agricultural sector faces challenges shared by farmers throughout the region – some of which are directly or indirectly related to local land use policies. The availability of housing for farm labor has become a critical issue in recruitment and retention of farm employees. In addition to a loss of farms over the past several decades, the region has lost many agricultural-support businesses that are essential components of the farm economy. Not only have these businesses – feed/seed sales, equipment sales/repair, veterinary service, slaughterhouses, etc. – seen their customer base decline, they have been zoned out of many rural communities.

Employment and Income

Despite little change in the amount of land devoted to agriculture or forestry in town, most residents now commute out of town to places of employment. The percentage of people working outside of Starksboro has increased from 75 percent in 1980 to 86 percent, or 866 people, in 2000. As Figure 8 indicates, most Starksboro residents travel north into Chittenden County to work. Despite this trend, the absolute number of people working in Starksboro has increased from around 130 in 1980 to 140 in 2000.

Over the past 20 years, the average travel time to work has increased only slightly for Starksboro’s commuting residents from just under 31 minutes to just over 32 minutes. In 2000, 85 percent of commuters leaving Starksboro drove alone and 12 percent carpooled. This is a significant decline in carpooling since 1980, when 38 percent of commuters shared a ride.

	1990		2000	
	#	%	#	%
Starksboro	127	16%	140	14%
Burlington	201	26%	182	18%
South Burlington	122	16%	132	13%
Williston	30	4%	91	9%
Essex	42	5%	76	8%
Middlebury	47	6%	65	6%
Bristol	44	6%	61	6%
Elsewhere in Addison Co.	23	3%	51	5%
Elsewhere in Chittenden Co.	78	10%	161	16%
Elsewhere in Vermont	25	3%	41	4%
Outside Vermont	3	0%	6	1%
Total	780		1,006	

Figure 8

Place of Work for Starksboro Residents, 1990-2000

Source: US Census Bureau

A growing, but unknown number of people work out of their homes or telecommute. The number of people working in Starksboro seems to contradict that perception, since it shows that the number of people working at home has declined since 1980. However, given the decline in the number of people working on their own farms, there has likely been an increase in other types of work people are doing in town, including home-based businesses or telecommuting. Residents noted the need for more reliable and state-of-the-art energy and communication infrastructure in Starksboro to support residents' ability to work from home in their responses to the 2008 planning survey and workshop.

Over the past 30 years, the primary economic sectors employing Starksboro's residents have shifted. The percentage of people employed in agriculture and manufacturing has declined, while the number working in trade, education and health care have increased. Income levels in Starksboro have risen over the past 30 years at rates higher than state and regional averages. This rise is the result of several factors. The percentage of people working in higher-paid management and professional occupations has increased. More significantly, however, most families in Starksboro are two-income.

Local Businesses

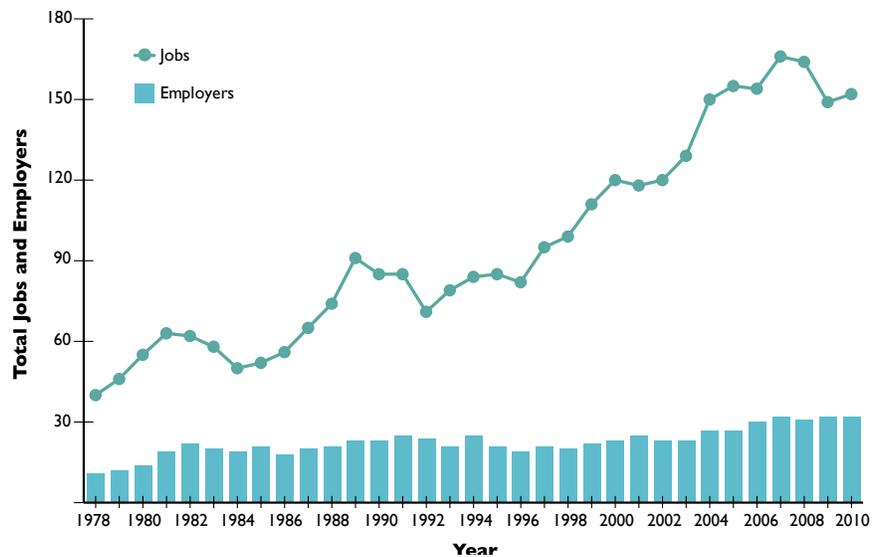
According to the Vermont Department of Labor, which tracks the number of employers and jobs in the state covered by unemployment, there were 152 jobs in Starksboro as of 2010 and 32 employers, as shown in Figure 9. The local school system is the town's largest employer with 44 jobs as reported by the Department of Labor in 2010. With the addition of the town and postal service, there were another 10 government jobs in Starksboro in 2010. The remaining 98 jobs and 29 employers were in the private sector including 27 jobs in manufacturing, 10 in construction and 41 in services. As shown in Figure 9, the number of jobs in Starksboro has increased substantially over the past 30 years, while the number of employers has grown only slightly. This suggests that a number of Starksboro's small businesses have been growing over the years.

Figure 9

Jobs and Employers in Starksboro, 1978-2010

Source: VT Department of Labor

Note: Includes only those jobs covered by unemployment insurance.



Historically, Starksboro’s village centers were a mix of residential, commercial and industrial activity. Over time, these settlements have become predominately residential and the number of businesses has declined. For town residents, the downtowns of Bristol and Hinesburg are close by and their businesses provide many needed services, many of which could not operate profitably in Starksboro. Starksboro’s village centers are appropriate places for small-scale businesses, especially those that provide goods and services primarily to those who live in the area, and clean light industries that would provide quality jobs for town residents. The 2008 public opinion survey and other public comments gathered during the most recent plan revision suggest that residents want more convenient access to basic goods and services along with more job opportunities in town, but they do not want to see out-of-scale or unsightly commercial or industrial buildings, franchise architecture, increased traffic, etc.

Education

Facilities

Starksboro is located in the Addison Northeast Supervisory District, which serves the towns of Bristol, Lincoln, Monkton, New Haven and Starksboro. Students in grades K-6 attend the Robinson Elementary School located in the village. Students in grades 7-12 attend Mt. Abraham Union High School (District #28) located in Bristol. The Hannaford Career Center located in Middlebury offers vocational training to high school students and adults who do not have diplomas.

There is an elected three-member school board for the elementary school. For the Union School, there are two elected board members each from Starksboro, Lincoln, Monkton and New Haven, plus five from Bristol.

The Robinson School Philosophy fosters cooperation and respect, promotes responsibility and learning, and encourages family awareness and involvement.

The school believes a nurturing environment has a positive effect on the attitude, interaction and learning of children. The school encourages active community involvement and maintains a high standard of education.

The school develops a “local action plan” as required under state statues, to direct how the school will improve the performance of all enrolled students. That plan details goals and strategies for improving student learning. Budget priorities for instruction have been tied to the action plan with positive results.

	Robinson School (K-6)							Mt. Abraham (7-12)							Total	
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	7	8	9	10	11	12		Total
1995-96									27	30	30	22	23	14	146	
1996-97								228	31	27	32	31	22	23	166	394
1997-98								218	17	29	29	27	23	25	150	368
1998-99								222	24	18	29	27	25	20	143	365
1999-00	31	35	37	34	35	33	24	229	25	27	21	26	21	23	143	372
2000-01	25	34	32	36	35	40	31	233	26	22	31	20	21	24	144	377
2001-02	21	22	30	31	34	30	37	205	36	24	23	28	15	23	149	354
2002-03	23	24	19	29	32	37	32	196	34	23	27	23	26	15	148	344
2003-04	24	21	23	18	28	32	35	181	34	33	25	26	21	27	166	347
2004-05	22	23	21	25	15	26	32	164	30	33	35	24	24	22	168	332
2005-06	24	22	19	18	24	15	25	147	30	38	36	38	27	19	188	337
2006-07	17	25	22	14	16	26	16	136	27	34	40	30	36	25	192	328
2007-08	18	16	26	25	16	16	26	143	17	25	36	41	24	32	179	322
2008-09	24	17	19	26	26	16	15	143	27	17	25	36	41	24	161	304
2009-10	25	25	19	23	26	25	17	160							154	314
2010-11	26	26	24	18	24	27	24	169							132	301

Figure 10

Student Enrollment

Source: K-6 enrollment from VT Department of Education Annual School Report; 7-12 enrollment provided by school district

Enrollment

During the 2010-11 school year, there were 169 students at the Robinson School. During the 2000s, enrollment at the Robinson School declined from a peak of 233 students in the 2000-01 school year to a low of 136 students in 2006-07. Birth rates appear to have stabilized at around 25 each year, so no significant changes in enrollment levels is anticipated over the next five years

Two important pieces of data the projections do not take into account are the number of building permits issued each year and job growth within a commutable distance from the town. During the 1990s, Starksboro was the only Addison County town whose average family size rose. In 2010, it was 3.01 people, one of the highest in the county. While enrollments and birth rates are down, Starksboro remains an attractive community for families with school-age children. It is important to continue to track the relationship between new home construction and school enrollments to ensure that town’s rate of growth does not exceed its ability to provide services.

Future Needs

Given the school's capacity, current facilities are anticipated to be adequate for the foreseeable future. Total capacity, however, does not address any individual program limitations. The need for improvements in safety and circulation around the school for buses, private vehicles and pedestrians/bicyclists has long been noted. The lack of sidewalks within Starksboro village, coupled with the heavy volume and unsafe speed on Route 116 through the village limit the ability of children to safely walk or bike to school, and to nearby recreation areas. Within the school building itself, the lack of storage space has been identified as an on-going problem.

School Funding

In 1997, Act 60 initiated a new method of determining need and obtaining funding for new educational facilities. Through a statewide application process, proposals are reviewed and decisions regarding funding are rendered by the legislature on an annual basis. Robinson School has been expanded three times over the past several decades. Additions were constructed at the school in 1976, 1985 and again in 1989. The first addition was financed with federal funds, the second and third were funded by bond issues. Bonds payments resulting from recent renovations of the school will continue through 2028. Any further expenditures before the bonds are paid off would put a burden on Starksboro residents.

Early Childhood Education, After-School and Childcare Services

For the past 10 years, the RASY (Robinson School After School Youth) program, operated by the Mary Johnson Children's Center, has been held in the Robinson School on a daily basis during the regular school year. In 2007, there were 45 children enrolled in this state-licensed program.

Childcare providers located in Starksboro in 2009 included the Starksboro Cooperative Pre-School, which operates four-days a week out of the Meeting House, and one in-home day care. There are numerous childcare options in nearby communities.

Community Utilities, Facilities and Services

Community Facilities

Starksboro's community facilities include the following:

- ✦ The Town Hall was constructed in 1911. It is located in Starksboro village and is available for a variety of community activities such as weddings, educational activities or classes.
- ✦ Jerusalem Schoolhouse/Fire Station #2, located on about an acre of town-owned land in South Starksboro, is used for local meetings and activities and for the storage of a fire department pumper.

- ✦ The Robinson School located on Parsonage Road and Route 116 is the principal facility for school functions, town meetings, elections, sports, fund-raising affairs and other community gatherings.
- ✦ In 2002, the town voted to purchase the Shepard property on Route 116 in Starksboro village. In 2003, renovations were completed and the town's administrative functions were moved to the new site. Moving the town offices to the upgraded building between the Town Hall/Library and the Meeting House has provided plenty of space for town offices and boards, as well as a much-needed larger vault for storage of town records. The project also provided improved access and parking for all three buildings and overflow parking for the Baptist Church across the street.
- ✦ The former town office building is still owned by the town. Most recently, it was leased to the Starksboro Country Store. The store closed in 2010 and the building remains available for lease or for future town needs. This building shares a parking lot with the Starksboro Post Office.
- ✦ The Starksboro Post Office also located in the village was built in 1976 on town property and leased to the U.S. Postal Service.
- ✦ A town garage, built in 1975, provides for the housing and repair of town equipment in a five-bay facility. There is also a separate salt shed on the site.
- ✦ In 1998, the town voted to purchase, with the assistance of the Vermont Land Trust, the Cota Farm and former Colton Gravel Pit with its facilities. The town uses the former Colton gravel pit for its gravel needs. The steel building associated with the gravel pit now houses Starksboro's Volunteer Fire Department.

Town Land and Holdings

Starksboro also owns the following:

- ✦ Starksboro owns more than 13 acres that contain a sand pit with a limited supply of material for regular maintenance of local roads. This land was also the site of the town's capped landfill.
- ✦ In 1998, the town acquired 42 acres, which comprised the former Cota/Colton gravel pit operation. In addition to the facilities and uses described above, two riparian areas associated with Lewis Creek were retained in town ownership for a combination of protection and recreation. The northern area, approximately 92 acres, is located north of State's Prison Hollow Road. The southern area, around 63 acres, containing the ball field is located south of State's Prison Hollow Road. A large wooded parcel formerly associated with Cota/Colton property

is privately owned and the four farm-related parcels remain with the Vermont Land Trust.

- ✦ Two “farms” in Hillsboro make up the 265-acre Town Forest. The Town Forest Committee manages the forest for multiple uses including timber harvesting, recreation and wildlife habitat. In 2004, the committee reported that its first sale of timber netted more than \$11,000 for the town, a portion of which has financed the ongoing maintenance and use of the forest.

Starksboro’s Current Fiscal Condition

The only significant revenue base for the town is the property tax. The Grand List in 2010 was composed of around 922 parcels with a total real value of approximately \$170 million. Housing, including mobile homes, comprised nearly 65 percent of the total value.

Two state agencies, Forest and Parks and Fish and Wildlife own a total of 2,331 acres in Starksboro. Payment in lieu of taxes is computed at one percent of fair market value. Land enrolled in Use Value Appraisal prior to state ownership remains in this program once transferred to the state and is taxed based on a per acre value.

In 2010, Fish and Wildlife paid Starksboro nearly \$8,000 on a total of about 2,000 acres (860 acres of which were enrolled in the Use Value program). Forest and Parks paid about \$2,000 on nearly 400 acres (126 acres of which were enrolled in the Use Value program) in 2010. Total payment in lieu of taxes made to the Town of Starksboro by the state in 2010 was approximately \$10,000.

As of 1999, the town developed sinking funds for town and fire equipment that set aside a depreciation amount against the replacement cost of each large dollar item. The equipment reserve fund, which is funded annually, assures that when equipment must be replaced sufficient dollars are available to meet these expenses.

Library

The Friendship Homemakers Extension Club started the Starksboro Public Library in 1972. The library has been housed on the ground floor of the Starksboro Town Hall since 2001, when it transformed the space into an inviting community resource. That year, the library also hired its first paid librarian.

In 2010, the library reported that it had 686 registered borrowers and had around 3,200 patron visits annually. There are more than 6,400 books in the library’s collection. Besides books for everyone from infants to seniors, the library offers computers with Internet access, music CDs, magazines, newspapers and books on tape. The library sponsors a range of programs for adults and children – including a Bone Builders class, and Adult Reading group and Story Time – along with special programs and lectures throughout the year. The library’s annual budget has ranged between \$20,000 and \$25,000 in recent years.

Cemeteries

There are ten historic cemeteries in Starksboro overseen by the Town's Cemetery Commission. At this time, there may be an occasional burial in these historic cemeteries, but there are no new lots for sale. The Gore Cemetery, located partly in Huntington, is maintained privately.

- ✦ Village Cemetery, Route 116
- ✦ Hillsboro Cemetery, Hillsboro Road
- ✦ Crowley Road Cemetery
- ✦ Cemetery by Ruby Brace land, behind Dan Paquette
- ✦ Mason Hill Cemetery
- ✦ Jerusalem Cemetery
- ✦ Ireland Road Cemetery
- ✦ Quaker Meeting Cemetery, Dan Sargent Road
- ✦ Cemetery by Red Schoolhouse, Ireland Road
- ✦ Rounds Cemetery
- ✦ Green Mountain Cemetery, Cemetery Road

The Green Mountain Cemetery Association oversees the Green Mount Cemetery, which contains the only vault in town. At this time, it is the only cemetery with lots for sale. In 1983, the fifth division was laid out with 1,094 total possible burial sites. It is the association's assessment that there is ample burial space for the near future.

If there was a need to expand the cemetery in the future, there may be a possibility to expand in a terraced fashion at Green Mount. However, the area has some ledge, so it may not be the best spot for a cemetery expansion. In the future, the best remaining available site for cemetery expansion may need to be identified so that any remaining viable sites are not dedicated to development without that consideration.

Starksboro Volunteer Fire Department

Starksboro Fire Department has been incorporated as a private nonprofit since 1959. The department serves the entire Town of Starksboro, as well as the area of Buels Gore. The Fire Department is funded through private effort and budget contributions from the town. The department is a member of Addison County Mutual Aid, and also has mutual aid arrangements with Huntington and Hinesburg.

The department could have a full roster of up to 30 volunteers, although membership typically runs closer to 22 members. Like many Vermont fire departments, availability of volunteers during business hours is particularly difficult. In 2010, the department responded to 34 calls.

During 1998-1999, there were two significant changes in the department's infrastructure. With the town's help they acquired the former Colton building,

which houses vehicles and equipment, and provides improved space for training. During the fall of 1999, the department took possession of a new (2000) engine #1 pumper, a 1,250 gallon per minute pump with 1,000-gallon capacity.

The former Colton building has become Fire Station #1 and houses the pumper truck, the 1986 Mack 2,100-gallon tanker truck and a utility truck. Fire Station #2 is a single bay facility located in Jerusalem. The 2003 engine #2 pumper with a 1,250 pump and 1,000-gallon capacity is housed in this location. The Old Fire Station #1 now houses the Starksboro Rescue Squad.

In recent years, the department has been working to install dry hydrants throughout Starksboro. Dry hydrants are now located on the property of the Common Ground Center on Tatro Road, on Robert Young Road and at the Fire Station. Another was added in 2007 on Ireland Road.

Response time in the community is generally good. However, due to the layout of the community with “Up-South” both a good distance away from the main station and significantly uphill, response times are longer in the Jerusalem area and in Buels Gore. Location of the pumper in Jerusalem helps. Wildland or forest fires depending on their location can be difficult to access.

The ability to access new buildings for fire or rescue purposes can also be an issue. Homeowners often do not consider fire or rescue vehicle access in their construction or winter maintenance plan. Yet, these are critical considerations.

Rescue and First Response Squads

In Vermont, emergency services organizations are organized into three levels. There are Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Districts. Starksboro is located in District #7. Under the EMS Districts, there are licensed emergency transport services, which for Starksboro is Bristol Rescue Squad Inc.

The most direct link to emergency services for Starksboro residents is the town’s licensed first response squad. The Emergency Rescue Unit of the Starksboro Volunteer Fire Department, the “First Response Squad,” is a nonprofit volunteer group, which was formed in May 1975. In 1999, with the movement of the Fire Department to the former Colton building, the squad secured the use of Old Fire Station #1, their first dedicated facility, which provided improved training, meeting and storage space.

The squad arrives on the scene of an emergency before the ambulance to treat, stabilize and prepare patients that need transport. In 2010, the squad consisted of four EMTs, which responded to 110 calls. There is a standing need for more trained volunteers. Due to the significant amount of time and resources required to train new members, one year of residency in Starksboro is required before initiating the training program.

The squad’s response time varies by the location in town relative to where squad members are when a call is received. Historical response time has averaged four

minutes. The fire department provides important assistance to the squad in car accidents, lifting and other special calls (such as woods rescues).

Currently the squad has four defibrillators. This equipment has been proven to increase the survival rate of heart attack victims when used within the first few minutes after the heart has stopped beating. Thus, having two defibrillators, together with additional oxygen units, located “Up-South” may improve the chances of a Jerusalem or Buels Gore resident’s survival.

Currently the squad is funded through a combination of town contributions, auxiliary fund raising and other donations. The fund-raising work of the Fire Department Auxiliary is a very important service for both the fire department and the first response squad.

Emergency services are provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week with backup from Bristol when required. Bristol’s response time runs about 15 to 20 minutes depending on where in town a call is located. The squad offers CPR training to people who are interested in learning this most basic level of medical intervention.

Dispatch services are provided through Porter Hospital. Heavy rescue services are provided through the Bristol Fire Department, although some Starksboro firefighters are trained in the use of heavy rescue equipment. There are also letters of agreement with Richmond ambulance regarding transport, and rarely Vergennes ambulance might be called. Transport is generally to either Porter Hospital in Middlebury or Fletcher-Allen Medical Center in Burlington.

Law Enforcement

The Vermont State Police and the Addison County Sheriff’s Office provide police protection in Starksboro. State police are dispatched from the Williston barracks. There are currently no contract services for law enforcement coverage in Starksboro and no outpost officer in this area.

The Addison County Sheriff’s Office also has jurisdiction to provide law enforcement and public safety services such as transport of prisoners and some special needs patients, court security at the county court, and crowd control and traffic control. They are the agency primarily responsible for civil service process in the county.

Court services are provided at the Addison County Court House in Middlebury. At the Addison County Court House the Family, Superior and District Courts are held. The residents of the county finance the Court House facilities through a county tax.

A 2008 town meeting vote limited Starksboro’s constables from exercising law enforcement authority. Their duties are now limited to serving civil process, removing disorderly people from public gatherings, collecting taxes (in the absence of an elected tax collector), assisting the town health officer and animal control officer, and other such duties as requested.

An Animal Control Officer is available to address concerns related to dogs or other animals and to conduct reviews of resident compliance with dog registration in town. This position has been difficult to fill and keep filled. The game warden deals with any wild animals.

Water

The majority of residents in the town make use of private on-site water systems. There are separate public community water systems serving the three mobile home parks and residents of the village. A public community water system is defined in the Vermont water supply regulations as a system for provision to the public of piped water for human consumption, if such system has at least 15 service connections or regularly serves an average of at least 25 individuals daily at least 60 days of the year.

The Starksboro Village Water Co-Op, a privately incorporated water system, serves the village area. Spring fed, the system supplies 63 private connections as well as two farms, the Robinson School and the Town Hall. The size of the pipe connecting the spring with system customers is limited to its present size - four inches - by deed restriction. The nearby privately owned "Creamery Spring" supplies about 10 connections.

The Starksboro Village Water Co-Op is a cooperative of the system's users and is now responsible for operating the system on a nonprofit basis. Now that the system is operating as a nonprofit it is eligible to apply for revolving grant funding to address system improvements that were not available to the system when it was a privately held water system.

Brookside Mobile Home Park has 48 connections. The Brookside Water System is fed from several drilled wells.

Hillside Manor has 29 connections all on "public" systems. The Addison County Community Trust has connected the Hillside Trailer Park water system to the Lazy Brook Trailer Park water system with 47 connections in an attempt to solve a potable water problem. The Lazy Brook Trailer Park water source is located in the middle of the field near Hinesburg Hollow Road.

Addison County Community Trust plans to initiate a request for the siting of a low salt sign adjacent to the source protection area. Each park's water system does have a source protection plan. These plans have been shared with the Planning Commission and Development Review Board so that when development review occurs in that area of the community, no potentially contaminating development activities are approved for that area.

Wastewater

State legislation, passed in the 2002 legislative session, regarding on-site septic systems has resulted in the creation of new statewide on-site regulations. The new legislation, among other things, closes the so-called "10-acre loophole," and allows for the use of innovative septic system design. Subdivisions, construction,

additions, changes in use and system replacements have been regulated by the new statewide regulations since 2007, when the state rules replaced the town's sewer ordinance.

Solid Waste

In 1992, Starksboro closed and capped its unlined landfill according to state and federal regulations. Currently, the town belongs to the Addison County Solid Waste District and municipal solid waste generated in the town goes to the district's transfer station in Middlebury. From there, trash is hauled to a landfill outside the district for disposal.

The district has mandatory recycling and Starksboro participates in the program. Since 1998, Starksboro has hosted an organized recycling program. The town owns two recycling trailers and has a drop-off located at the town garage 1.5 miles south of the village. The town currently recycles cardboard, fiber and containers such as glass, box board, and plastics, newspapers, magazines, tin and aluminum. As with any volunteer-operated program, there is a continuing need for more volunteers.

In 1995, the Addison County Solid Waste Management District adopted an ordinance prohibiting open burning. This ordinance is enforceable through the Addison County Sheriff's Office and those caught in violation will be fined. To burn clean, untreated or unpainted, wood or brush requires a permit from the local fire warden.

Electrical Service

Three separate electric power companies serve Starksboro. Vermont Electric Cooperative serves the northeastern part of town. Green Mountain Power services the northwestern and central part of town. Central Vermont Public Service Corporation serves the southwestern part of town. There are no major transmission facilities (33-46 kV lines or 115 kV lines) running through the community. The majority of the electric demand of the town and school buildings are provided by 25 solar trackers installed on two net metering systems.

Telecommunications

Demand for telecommunications is likely to continue to increase in coming years. Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom provides land line telephone service throughout town and high-speed internet service over DSL in some areas of town. Cable television service has recently been extended to parts of town, which may allow residents to receive high-speed internet service via cable. Currently, there are no telecommunication towers located in town, but an antenna array mounted on a silo was installed in Starksboro around 2007. This has improved the cell phone service in some parts of town, but areas with no coverage remain.

In the 2008 public opinion survey and in public comments gathered during this plan revision, many residents expressed a desire for improved telecommunica-

tions service including cell phone coverage and high-speed Internet connection. However, there is concern about the impacts of infrastructure like telecommunications towers and utility lines on the town's scenic character and environmental quality.

Recreation

Public recreation areas and facilities in Starksboro include the Lewis Creek and East Mountain Wildlife Management Areas (state-owned and managed), the Starksboro Municipal Forest and the Robinson Elementary School playground. Also available for recreational use are the Vermont Association of Snow Traveler's snowmobile trails. There are ball fields at the Robinson School and the Cota lot. The Starksboro Sports program provides athletic programs for elementary-aged children, including basketball, baseball and soccer. The program's volunteers have spearheaded improvements at Cota Field and have plans for ongoing work at this town-owned recreation area.

There are also a number of good trails for horseback riding. There are great swimming holes in the New Haven River, as well as numerous ponds. Hiking trails abound including the Jerusalem Trail off Jim Dwire Road, which leads you to the top of Mount Ellen.

Due to the abundance of natural areas, diversity of topography, and a balance of large tracts of forested, open and farm land, Starksboro has the habitat to support many species of game animals. This makes Starksboro a great place for traditional outdoor sports (hunting, fishing, shooting). Historically these sports have been popular among Starksboro residents and have brought visitors to our town to enjoy these forms of recreation over the years.

The above-mentioned natural features and a network of agricultural roads (field accesses, log roads, etc.) make motorized ATV use another popular form of recreation in Starksboro. These activities have no designated areas. They take place across property lines and boundary lines. These activities have potential safety risks and inevitable impacts on the land and or people. As our town grows we need to find a balance to keep these recreational opportunities available while recognizing the rights of landowners and assuring these pursuits are enjoyed safely and in accordance with state law.

Transportation

State Highways

Starksboro has two major state highways passing through town, Route 116 and Route 17. Of these two, Route 116, classified as a minor arterial, has the greater traffic volumes and passes through the most densely populated part of town – Starksboro village.

In 1997, the Route 116 area was included in a traffic calming study commissioned by Addison County Regional Planning Commission. Due to a combination of excessive speeds, traffic accidents, pedestrian volumes, as well as the high traffic volumes, Starksboro village was ranked the area in greatest need of

traffic calming measures among the five Addison County towns examined. The study concluded with recommendations for traffic calming in the village area. The 1997 study found Route 116 in Starksboro village to have an average daily traffic volume of nearly 3,000 vehicles per day. In 2000, the average daily volume on Route 116 through Starksboro was 2,400 vehicles at the Bristol town line and 3,400 at the Hinesburg town line. By 2006, those figures had grown to 2,900 and 3,600 respectively.

Route 116 also passes through the town's agricultural and scenic district. This area is a critical to Starksboro's goal of maintaining a viable and vibrant local farm economy. High traffic volumes and speeds negatively impact the ability of farmers to efficiently utilize their land, increase the hazards associated with driving farm equipment along or across the road, and limit the feasibility of getting livestock from one side of the road to the other safely.

There are also many people in town who use the roadway network for pedestrian and bicycle travel. In some areas of town, particularly the Route 116 and Route 17 corridors, increasing numbers of pedestrians use the shoulder of the road for walking and jogging. The enjoyment and safety of the roadway system for pedestrian and bicyclists is an important issue as documented in the 2008 public opinion survey and from public comments received during the plan revision.

Route 17 passes through Jerusalem, the town center of South Starksboro. This highway is rapidly developing into a main east-west artery for commercial, agricultural, forestry, recreational and commuter traffic. In 2006, VTrans reported that the average daily traffic on 17 at the Bristol town line was 1,600 vehicles and at the Fayston town line it was 990. On Route 17 steep ascent and sharp turns provide spectacular views and challenging terrain for bicycle and motorcycle enthusiasts. Increasing numbers of pedestrians also share this busy roadway, characterized by its limited sight distance in many locations, with motorized traffic. With additional traffic has come an increased demand for emergency services responding to traffic accidents often in difficult weather conditions.

Town Roads

Starksboro's Class 2 and 3 town roads serve as feeders to the state highway system. Town roads, significant portions of which are unpaved, serve the majority of Starksboro's residential areas. The town is responsible for maintaining 5.3 miles of Class 2 and 27.08 miles of Class 3 roads. No data is available to measure changes in traffic volumes or speeds on these roads. However, increased development has led to higher levels of usage and increased safety concerns on many of these town roads. Data indicates that higher levels of usage lead to increased maintenance costs.

Private Roads and Driveways

Private roads and driveways are a significant part of Starksboro's transportation system. There are 3.26 miles of private roads in Starksboro, serving approximately 240 residences. It is likely that much of the future residential develop-

ment in town will be accessed via private roads. The town is not responsible for the maintenance of these roads, but it does have a responsibility to ensure that such roads are constructed to basic standards in order to protect public safety and prevent damage to public infrastructure from improperly designed or constructed private roads. Given the costs of road maintenance, the town is unlikely to accept any existing or future private roads.

Energy

The challenge for the future will be to reduce energy consumption in general and to shift demand towards energy sources that are renewable and have an overall low environmental impact. In 2010, Starksboro partnered with All Earth Renewables, Inc. to provide up to 100 kilowatts of solar power to both Robinson School and town buildings. Twenty-five “All Sun Tracker” solar panels were installed on approximately 1.5 acres of the 11-acre parcel of land adjacent to the school. Over the course of the year the photovoltaic system is expected to produce enough electricity to supply most if not all the electrical needs for the school and town owned buildings.

Energy conservation is an important step in developing a comprehensive energy plan for the future of Starksboro. At the local level, energy conservation concerns generally fall into four categories:

- ✦ Energy efficiency of municipal buildings.
- ✦ Promotion of energy conservation.
- ✦ Efficient development patterns.
- ✦ Energy used for transportation.

Starksboro can promote energy conservation in many different ways. Replacing fixtures and components with energy efficient units can save money in heating and lighting while helping to protect the environment.

Starksboro can also work with local utility companies to promote energy conservation programs aimed at residences and businesses - such as Addison County Weatherization Program - to reduce energy demand, save money and preserve natural resources.

Land use and energy are closely related. Land use patterns exert a strong influence on major end uses of energy, including transportation, heating and cooling of buildings, and the energy used in developing infrastructure.

Energy conservation and efficiency can also be promoted through attention to development that reflects the principles of energy conservation and incorporates the best available technology for efficient use of recovery of energy.

Development that is clustered provides for greater efficiency. Clustering means fewer miles of road are needed to connect the homes or commercial buildings, school buses and snow plows travel smaller distances, and electric utility lines need not extend as far.

Carefully considered placement of a building on a lot adds to the efficiency of any new development by increasing passive solar gain and decreasing wind pressures.

While the clustering of development helps decrease transportation costs, it is not the only answer. The majority of the town's residents travel to work outside of Starksboro. Carpooling can be beneficial for these residents not only in fuel conservation, but also in reduced wear and tear and maintenance on vehicles. The Vermont Public Transportation Association maintains a website with a carpool bulletin board. Other options include vanpools and use of park-and-ride areas, such as the lot at the intersection of Route 17 and Route 116.

Many old houses and remaining commercial and business structures in Starksboro have both local historical significance and architectural merit.

The Hoag Grist Mill and the Knight House Complex at the Great Falls of Lewis Creek, the South Starksboro Friends Meeting House built in 1826, and the Starksboro Village Meeting House completed in 1840 to provide a meeting place for Methodists, Free Will Baptists and members of the Christian Church as well as a basement that was used as a town hall, have been listed in the Register of National Historic Places.

The State Register of Historic Places includes many more Starksboro buildings, as well as the Starksboro Village Historic District. The maps of State Register sites are from "The Historic Architecture of Addison County" by Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. See that publication for a detailed description keyed to the numbered circles.

The Starksboro Historical Society was formed in 2005. During the past several years, the society has sponsored lectures and programs. Society members are also working to inventory the town's cemeteries and to record and transcribe interviews with long-time residents. The society is continuing to expand the historical information and photographs available on its website, www.starksboro-historicalsociety.org.

Natural systems are the basis for life. Starksboro's natural environment is composed of a rich and diverse mix of resources. Our use of these resources sustains us; we, in turn, must insure that we use these resources in a manner that preserves their value both to us and to future generations. The continued viability of the town's natural resources and working landscape is dependent upon our individual and collective acts of responsible stewardship.

Some of the impacts to these resources are beyond our local control. We can do little to stop acid rain, prevent damaging insect infestations, or improve the air quality. We can, however, take prudent steps to control the impacts that are

Historic Resources

Natural Resources

directly related to our living here. Many of these steps involve personal choice – driving fewer miles, insulating our houses, supporting local farms and farmers, promoting wise use of our resources. Individually, we must be good stewards. It is our responsibility to use resources wisely and town actions can help to inform that use by encouraging good behavior.

Earth Resources

The Route 116 valley and South Starksboro contain significant deposits of gravel. The town's gravel supply is taken from the former Colton gravel pit located to the north of Starksboro village. A small pit south of the village, located at the town garage, is also owned and used by the town. There are also a number of small, private gravel pits throughout Starksboro.

Groundwater

Groundwater is the source of virtually every Starksboro resident's drinking water. A state assessment in the 1970s classified groundwater potential as good in a zone running along the western edge of Lewis Creek and along some of its tributaries. The Huntington River Valley and a zone along the eastern edge of Lewis Creek were classified as having moderate groundwater potential. Groundwater supplies are replenished at locations known as groundwater recharge areas. Because recharge areas are generally unprotected, almost all activities within them, including forestry and agriculture, can directly affect the quantity and quality of water produced.

Starksboro has only minimal information regarding aquifer recharge potential in the various areas of town, as only rudimentary aquifer maps can be created using existing soils, geological, and topographic maps and data currently available for town. A more complete knowledge of bedrock geology, surficial geology (the soils, glacial till, and sand and gravel that overlie the bedrock), and the nature of the wells around town would be required to adequately characterize and categorize groundwater recharge potential. Several towns around Vermont have successfully completed such mapping in an effort to better understand their groundwater resources.

Groundwater is inextricably tied to surface water. Groundwater contributes flow to surface water that in turn protects and supports aquatic life and wildlife. Lakes, streams, and wetlands are recharged by groundwater. Groundwater is an essential resource for both human use and ecological balance.

Private Water Supplies

There have been approximately 350 wells drilled in Starksboro since 1966, when well drilling records were first required by the State of Vermont. The majority of these wells have been drilled into bedrock, with the groundwater recharging these wells coming from fractures in the bedrock. Other Starksboro residents obtain their drinking water from springs and shallow, or dug, wells.

Community Water Supplies

Source Protection Areas (SPAs) have been delineated and approved for the three public community water systems in Starksboro and approved by the State of Vermont based on the hydro-geology and topography of the area surrounding the sources. A Source Protection Area is the land beneath which groundwater flows to a spring, well, or other groundwater source. The Source Protection Areas for water systems represent land areas in town where land use activities may affect the water quality for these vital sources. There are designated SPAs for both Starksboro's municipal water supply and the supplies of the community systems serving the town's mobile home parks. Starksboro village system's SPA is reinforced through the watershed protection zoning district, which roughly overlays that area, in which all development activities are conditional uses.

These community water systems for the mobile home parks are served by drilled wells. The village community water system, the Starksboro Village Water Co-Op, is served by a spring source. This vital system serves several homes as well as the Robinson School, Town Office, Starksboro Public Library and Post Office.

Under Vermont's water supply rules, each system should have a source protection plan, which identifies existing and potential sources of contamination within their SPA. The system operator should also develop the means to ensure long-term protection of the source, as well as the identification of alternative water supplies. The village system's SPA is reinforced through the watershed protection zoning district, which roughly overlays that area, in which all development activities are conditional uses.

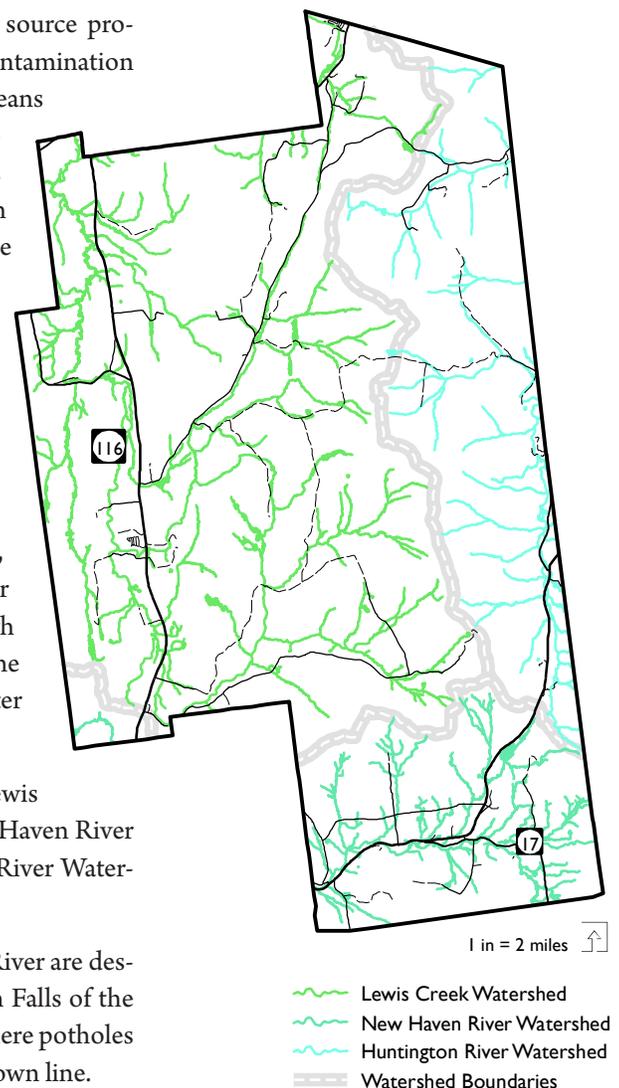
Surface Water

The term "surface water" refers to moving or standing water that is above ground. Surface water and groundwater are linked, each flowing to the other. Watersheds are the catchment areas down which water flows into streams of increasing size. When the lands within watersheds are managed to reduce erosion and pollution, and to maintain tree cover, surface waters generally stay healthier for wildlife, swimming, and fishing. The forested land in town lies high above the valley floor with steep slopes and limited road access. The stewardship of these forests has important implications for the water quality of the Lewis Creek Watershed and beyond.

Starksboro is part of three watersheds, the primary one being the Lewis Creek Watershed. Portions of southern Starksboro are in the New Haven River Watershed and parts of eastern Starksboro are in the Huntington River Watershed. Starksboro is also home to a variety of wetlands and ponds.

The Great Falls of Lewis Creek and the Seven Falls of Huntington River are designated as important natural scenic areas in Starksboro. The Seven Falls of the Huntington River are a series of waterfalls cutting through rocks where potholes are forming. They are located in Starksboro near the Huntington Town line.

Figure 11
Surface Waters and Watersheds Map



Partners in Water Quality

There are several organizations that partner to help preserve and improve surface water quality in Starksboro. The Lewis Creek Association, which was founded in 1990, monitors stations on the river, including several in Starksboro, in order to understand water quality fluctuations. The organization also educates students and regularly reports to town boards on important water quality parameters of the creek, including E. coli, one measure of potentially harmful pathogens in the water. The Lewis Creek Association helped launch the Addison County River-watch Collaborative in 2002. The Collaborative pools resources among different watersheds in the county in order to carry out river water quality monitoring and reporting.

Other organizations including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (also a federal agency) have collaborated with Starksboro farmers, the town and the river monitoring groups to implement river buffer tree plantings and fence improvements to keep cows out of streams.

Lewis Creek Monitoring

Years of monitoring data at four different monitoring points on Lewis Creek within the town limits of Starksboro have revealed some discernible patterns. Since 1992, the Lewis Creek Association has monitored for E. coli and phosphorous, an indicator of nutrient imbalance in water. Starting in 2006, the Collaborative also added the parameters of turbidity and nitrogen (also a nutrient which can damage ecological integrity even with small increases) to its measurements. Excessive nutrients in surface water can create algal blooms that disrupt healthy aquatic ecosystems by diminishing oxygen levels, lowering diversity of macro-invertebrate life, thereby having negative impacts on fisheries and other aquatic species. Excessive turbidity can cause similar disturbances.

The data show that in Starksboro's hilly terrain Lewis Creek is a "flashy stream," meaning it is prone to rapid fluctuations in water level due to the steep topography of our uplands. Small tributaries such as Hogback Brook, High Knob Brook, and other upland tributaries running down from the hills gain speed. When these swift waters meet the agricultural soils of the Lewis Creek Valley erosion and bank failure can occur. In addition to the loss of valuable land and threats to property, this causes nutrient loading in the water column – a major threat to Lake Champlain.

Results also showed that E. coli is consistently above state water quality standards at regularly monitored sampling stations upstream to the Parsonage Road bridge in Starksboro. The State of Vermont has listed a 12.3-mile length of the Lewis Creek main stem, from Charlotte to the vicinity of Parsonage Road bridge in Starksboro as impaired due to E. coli impacts (VTDEC WQD, 2006a).

Flood and Erosion Hazards

Of all the hazards in Vermont, flooding is the most frequent, damaging and costly. Starksboro has adopted Flood Hazard Area regulations and works to

limit development within floodplains as identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The Flood Hazard Area is the 100-year floodplain, which includes all areas determined to have a one percent chance of being flooded in any given year.

In addition to the danger from inundation, a river causes erosion, deposition, and sediment transport. Flowing water is always moving the land that it flows over, through and around. Rivers and streams flow in channels that change over the seasons and years. Rivers continuously adjust their position in the landscape, both vertically and laterally, in an attempt to optimize their slope and channel dimensions to efficiently carry the water and sediment loads supplied from the upstream watershed. The science of the interaction between rivers and landform is known as fluvial geomorphology.

State and federal agencies over the past decades have become increasingly concerned and aware of fluvial geomorphology and how it affects river health, humans, and the built environment. There has been an effort in Vermont, including some projects in Starksboro, to understand and restore some of the natural and beneficial fluvial characteristics of our streams and rivers. There has also been a recognition that fluvial erosion (stream bank erosion and moving stream channels) is causing more damage and is more of a hazard than inundation flooding in most Vermont communities.

Fortunately, the present degree of residential/commercial development along the Lewis Creek corridor is relatively minor and much of Starksboro's riparian areas remain forested. As of 1995, 72 percent of the town's riparian buffer was forested. Woody vegetation along streams provides many environmental services including root systems that stabilize soil and tree canopies that intercept rainfall. Starksboro implements a 100-foot setback from streams for most development, which was established largely to protect water quality. It is likely that this setback has also worked to prevent development within fluvial erosion hazard areas.

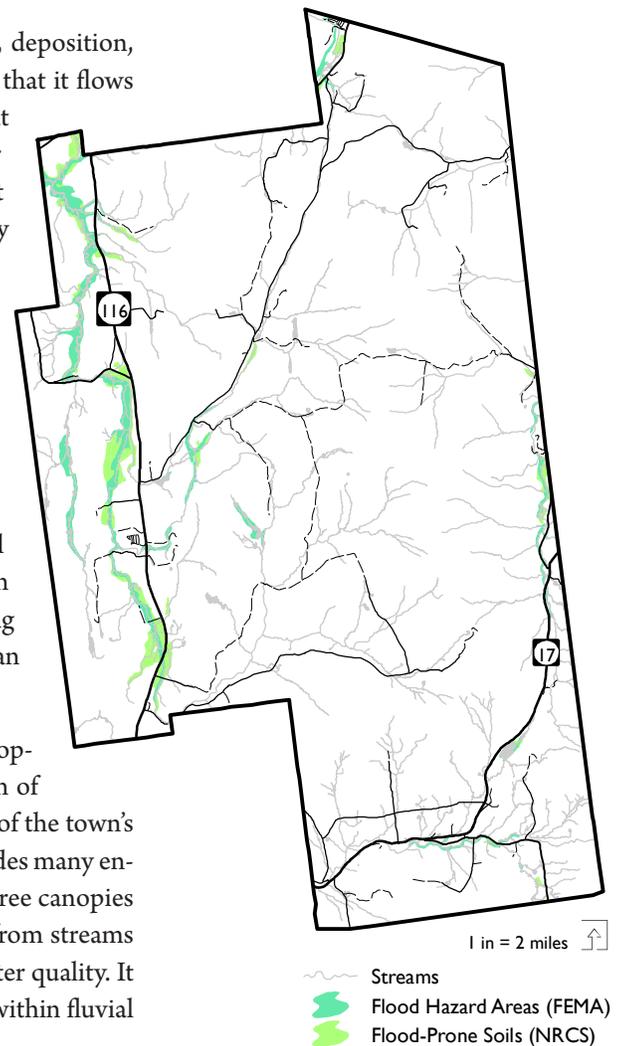
A proactive planning process can support the river's ability to move toward an equilibrium condition and reduce losses and expensive repairs in future flood events. Planning efforts can include "avoidance" strategies to ensure that new development does not:

- ✦ Further encroach on the river corridor.
- ✦ Reduce the sediment and flow attenuation functions of the floodplain area.
- ✦ Place infrastructure at risk.

A river corridor management area that acknowledges the dynamic nature of rivers and which is based on the geomorphic condition of the channel has advantages over a no-build setback from the river. Fluvial Erosion Hazard (FEH)

Figure 12

Flood Hazard and Flood-Prone Areas Map



zones are contained in the recently completed corridor plans for Lewis Creek and can inform the creation of appropriate setback zones. River channels vary in width along their length, depending on the size and nature of the upstream watershed draining to a given location, and the valley setting of the channel. A default setback is often inadequate and difficult to administer where a river is adjusting laterally at a rate of several feet per year.

Stormwater Runoff

Stormwater runoff is the surge of energy that comes with a large amount of water running off the land’s surface and potentially causing erosion in unvegetated and/or steep areas. Some studies show that in hilly and mountainous terrain, such as in Starksboro, management of stormwater runoff from roads is the most critical factor in reducing the impact of rain storms and spring melt-off. Some “Best Management Practices” for reducing stormwater runoff from roads include building settling ponds near culverts, and well-placed stone check dams and silt fences.

The Low Impact Development (LID) approach aims to retain the natural ability of any pre-development site to absorb water by capturing, detaining and infiltrating precipitation. LID often uses a series of small-scale non-structural and structural practices linked together on the development site. For example, the development site can maintain native vegetation, incorporate rain gardens and divert water from downspouts into planting beds.

Wetlands

Starksboro’s numerous wetlands are a critical piece of the natural environment. Wetlands serve as storage areas for floodwater. They help cleanse water before it reaches groundwater or surface water bodies. Wetlands are prime habitat for a variety of plant and animal species. Wetlands also are often groundwater recharge zones.

The Gazetteer and Business Directory of Addison County, Vermont for 1881-82 makes particular note of the large wetland called Big Beaver Meadows along what is now Route 17. This wetland remains a significant natural area. Today, moose, bear, otter, heron, geese, wood ducks and numerous other creatures are regular visitors to the Big Beaver Meadows. The area is unique in its proximity to the state highway, which provides travelers the opportunity to view numerous large and small birds and animals.

The wetland is also a significant groundwater recharge area and watershed for streams flowing down from the mountains on either side of Route 17. A large wetland west of Lewis Creek is an occasional blue heron rookery and home to rare plant and animal communities.

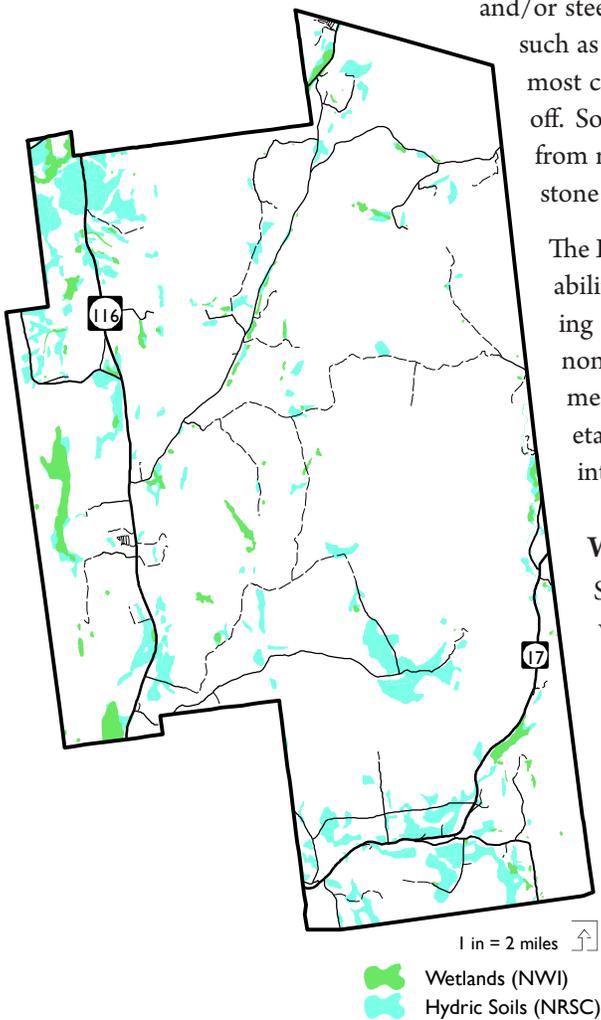


Figure 13
Wetlands and Hydric Soils Map

Forestland

A significant portion of Starksboro's land area is forested and the bulk of this forestland is relatively unbroken by development and roads. These forests exist along the northern terminus of the Green Mountain National Forest boundary, more than 20,000 acres of federally designated wilderness, and at the edge of more developed land use to the north and west. One of the main ecological functions of Starksboro's forests is to buffer the more pristine landscape of the Green Mountains against the more intensive land uses to the north and west. The stewardship of these forests has important implications for the water quality, wildlife and general ecological functions.

The forest provides numerous benefits to area residents. Forest management and sugaring yield important revenues to landowners and local woods workers. Recreation in forests, from hiking and skiing to hunting and snowmobiling provide both enjoyment for residents and economic benefits to local businesses. Maintaining open land in an undeveloped state stabilizes property tax burdens for the entire town. Forests also provide benefits such as wildlife habitat, improved ground water quality and yield, and sequestration of atmospheric carbon. Feedback from various recent town forums and surveys show that residents value these benefits highly. Since the benefits seem to flow with little intervention by humans, we also tend to take them for granted.

The forested land in town lies high above the valley floor with steep slopes and limited road access. The stewardship of these forests has important implications for the water quality of the Lewis Creek and New Haven River watersheds and beyond.

Landowners should bear in mind the responsibilities inherent in the ownership and use of forestland. To promote continuous forest cover in Starksboro, the Town Plan discourages clear cuts larger than 40 acres in size. Starksboro also encourages the use of best management practices in forestry and timber harvesting.

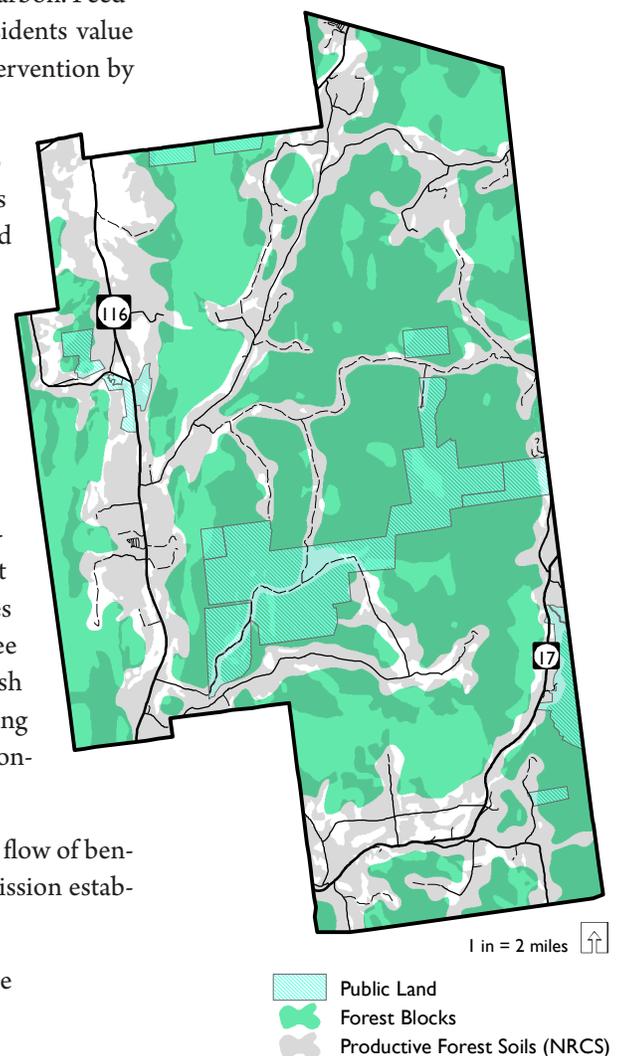
Threats to Starksboro's forest resources do exist. Subdivision continues to occur in the upland forest and pressure is building to convert some seasonal camps to year-round residences. Acid rain continues to stress forests, complicating the efforts of managers to improve tree quality. A full suite of forest pests is on the horizon – emerald ash borer, Asian long-horned beetle, hemlock woolly adelgid. Increasing property taxes burden forest landowners and may force many to consider subdivision and development of residential lots.

Measuring the status or condition of the forest and monitoring the flow of benefits is challenging. A project by Starksboro's Conservation Commission established the following baseline measures for the town's forestland.

- ✦ 16,800 acres of "core" forest in 1995 with little change since

Figure 14

Forest Resources Map



- ✦ 15,930 acres of forest and agricultural land enrolled in the Current Use Program in the 2010 Grand List
- ✦ 1,476 acres of forestland conserved by easement
- ✦ 72 percent of the town's riparian buffer is forested
- ✦ Approximately 85,000 maple sugaring taps producing \$750,000 worth of product annually

Public Forestland

Starksboro's forests include more than 2,500 acres of state-owned wildlife management areas (Lewis Creek WMA and Fred Johnson WMA) and roughly 500 acres of state forest (the Stevens Block of Camel's Hump State Forest). WMAs are managed primarily to enhance habitat for game species, while the state forests generally have a broader mandate. The state is embarking on a policy of greater public input for its management planning and Starksboro is in a good position to contribute constructively.

Starksboro's municipal forest consists of 300 acres adjacent to the Lewis Creek WMA (Hillsboro Lot) and 100 acres northerly of State's Prison Hollow Road (Cota Lot). A comprehensive inventory and management plan was completed in 1998 on these parcels resulting in a comprehensive management plan and Forest Stewardship Council "green-certification." Green-certification, commits the town to high management standards and may make our harvested logs eligible for market "premiums." The town used maple lumber from the town forest for library shelving and similar uses for town forest products are anticipated. The town has also used this land in educational programs with the school and may develop an educational trail on the property. The Cota lot is reserved as a natural area and will see no active management. The town was awarded the 2002 Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Stewardship award for its forest-related activities.

Habitat Areas

Residents of Starksboro have expressed a strong desire to preserve the town's rich and varied wildlife populations. Black bear, whitetail deer, bobcat, moose, fisher, mink, fox, otter, snowshoe hare, great blue heron, wood turtle, rainbow trout are just some of the species found in Starksboro. It is natural to think that what is here, will always remain. However, without a better understanding of the habitat needs of wildlife species, town residents could easily lose some of these neighbors that we assume will always be around.

Starksboro's significant areas of largely unbroken forest provide habitat for many wildlife species vulnerable to development pressures. Two important reasons that wildlife is relatively abundant in Starksboro are:

- ✦ A diversity of habitats that are available to support a diversity of species and functions, and

- ✦ The town occupies a rich position in the landscape – an ecotone between the more open habitat in the Champlain Valley and the more remote habitat of the Green Mountains.

Wildlife habitat can be thought of as having landscape and “local” components. Landscape components include core and linkage habitat; while local components describe smaller, parcel-level features such as deer wintering areas or wetland—features with very specific functions. One important component of good wildlife planning is understanding the relationship between these elements.

Core Habitat

Core habitat can be described as large areas of contiguous forested land unbroken by human disturbances such as roads or development. Core forests mapped by the state have boundary buffers of at least 330 feet. Large areas of contiguous forest land are essential to the health and vitality of wildlife species. Many plant and animal species require a large and varied landscape to provide for feeding habitat, reproductive needs and genetic exchange. Deer wintering areas, often south-facing locations of mixed conifers, provide important shelter and feeding areas during times of deep snow. Deer wintering maps tend to be areas likely to be utilized by deer. However, these maps have not been checked in many years. Mast stands of mature beech trees, ideally including some cherry or oak, are of primary importance to the black bear population, providing the necessary calories to prepare bears for the long Vermont winters. Equally as important to bear are the tubers and plants found in wetlands, especially in spring when little else is available and their reserves are severely depleted.

Core forest values are completely compatible with sustainable forest management practices, allowing for the need of an income producing, working landscape while ensuring that there will be healthy and productive forest land for future generations to enjoy.

Connecting Habitat

Travel “corridors” or connecting habitat is the land that links large or specialized habitat areas to one another, thereby facilitating the movement of wildlife to a variety of landscape features necessary for seasonal feeding, denning, and mating. Typically, travel corridors are found where dense forest, heavy shrub cover, or streams approach a road or other developed area from both sides, allowing for some sense of protection for the traveling species. By studying the movement patterns of wildlife species, we can identify key crossing points essential to the continued survival of our most valued species, and take steps to ensure that these critical corridors remain intact.

The Conservation Commission is currently working on a project with Mt. Abe students, in an effort to learn about and protect two “umbrella species,” bear and bobcat. An umbrella species is a wide-ranging species whose protection automatically offers protection to a host of less demanding species that share similar

habitat requirements. By studying the needs and habits of bear and bobcat populations, and offering thoughtful suggestions of methods to protect their habitat needs, we will simultaneously be providing necessary habitat for many others.

As we collect data and evidence from local residents and scientists pertaining to the basic needs and habits of our wild neighbors, we will be better equipped to make informed and well planned decisions regarding best practices for development. Public interest, input and awareness combined with scientific data collection, monitoring and study can help ensure that Starksboro maintains a rich and healthy balance of human and wildlife cohabitation.

Wildlife Management Areas

Lewis Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is completely forested with aspen, paper and yellow birch, red and sugar maple, beech and hemlock. There are small acreages of old field and apple orchards. There are also several small streams and some limited area of wetland.

The Fred Johnson WMA is located partially in Starksboro. The WMA is forested with a mix of hemlock, white pine, planted red pine, yellow, paper, black and grey birch, red and sugar maple, beech, white ash, red oak and aspen.

Fragile and Unique Areas

While large areas of forested land and well-known species of animals and plants are relatively easy to recognize, gather data on and take steps to protect, some areas and species are either particularly fragile or especially hard to find (existing in small and highly specific ecosystems). These areas and species deserve our attention and care because they are so easily disturbed or lost forever. Wetlands, rare, threatened and endangered species, natural communities, steep slopes and vernal pools are a few of the areas and species that fit into this category.

Wetlands are quite varied and can be primarily swamp, marsh, fen or bog, or a mix of these features. Each type supports a unique collection of animals and plants, many of which would cease to exist without the specific conditions provided by these areas. While less than five percent of Vermont is currently wetlands, 50 percent of the historic wetlands (wetlands that have existed in the past) have been lost or severely impaired due largely to drainage, dredging, filling or excavation associated with industrial, residential and agricultural development. Loss of wetlands is an issue of local, statewide and national concern. While Class II wetlands that show up on the National Wetlands Inventory maps are protected by state and federal regulations. However, many Class II wetlands and all Class III wetlands are not yet mapped.

Rare, threatened and endangered species are species that are either on the brink of extinction or are declining in numbers due to habitat loss or human disturbance, or because they are living on the edges of their home range or are a long distance from their main populations. Many of our rare species reside in rare natural communities or highly specific habitat types. It is up to us to identify our rare, threat-

ened and endangered species and to find ways to maintain, provide stewardship for, and conserve the habitats and natural communities that support them.

Vernal pools are usually found in upland forests or forested swamps. Often they may appear as simply a small depression in the forest floor. Influenced by fall and winter precipitation as well as groundwater levels, these pools vary year by year in size and duration of water retention. Amphibians such as spotted salamanders, blue spotted salamanders, Jefferson salamanders and wood frogs all rely on vernal pools for breeding. Additionally, many birds, mammals and reptiles rely on these amphibians and frogs as a large part of their diet. Because of their inconspicuous appearance and the general lack of understanding surrounding their importance, vernal pools are especially susceptible to being disturbed or obliterated by nearby construction or timber practices. Knowledge of their locations and an understanding of the needs of the species that depend on them, can help prevent the needless loss of many of these pools.

Scenic Resources

While Starksboro has not inventoried its scenic resources, input heard during planning forum and in opinion surveys suggests that the town's scenic character is important to a large percentage of town residents.

Conservation Commission

Starksboro has a 9-member Conservation Commission. In 2007, the commission completed work on the Cota Field Creekside Trail, which runs ½ mile from the Cota Field parking lot along Lewis Creek to a location off Route 116 north of the village. The commission also has an important role in a number of annual community events including the Sugarmakers Open House, Green Up Day and the Harvest Dinner.

Land Ownership Patterns

The majority of land in the town is privately owned. The state, however, maintains a significant presence through its holdings in the Lewis Creek and Fred Johnson Wildlife Management Areas and the Camel's Hump State Forest. According to the 1999 Grand List, the state cumulatively owned 2,259.2 acres in six separate parcels, through the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation.

In 1998, Starksboro residents held more than 70.6 percent of the taxable value of real property in the town, while Vermont residents living outside of Starksboro held 17.8 percent, out-of-state residents 9.9 percent and corporations 1.7 percent (most of this value was in utility lines). The State of Vermont makes payments in lieu of taxes on 2,259 acres owned by the State Fish and Wildlife Department and Camels Hump State Forest.

Land Use and Community Character

Noise

Growth and development are having an effect on the rural peace and quiet that has historically been a part of the appeal of Starksboro. The proximity of neighbors in areas of town where neighbors were historically out of sight and earshot of one another has contributed to an increase in the number of noise complaints and neighbor concerns related to noise issues. Evidence implicating excessive noise as a detriment to public health and quality of life continues to expand. Fortunately, science and technology have contributed to the development of mechanisms for the substantial abatement of excessive sound.

Heightened sensitivity on the part of neighbors to those sounds that disturb Starksboro's predominantly rural environment is becoming more critical. Although Starksboro has used decibel meters in efforts to resolve noise complaints, they are not an effective tool for measuring noise and its impacts on quality of life in all situations. Noise that would go virtually unnoticed in the village may constitute an excessive disruption in the forest district. The community would be best served through increased awareness of the environment in which we live and courtesy toward the neighbors with whom we share Starksboro's natural beauty and numerous resources.

Physical Features and Land Use

The town covers about 44 square miles, or about 29,000 acres. Terrain, land use and historic development patterns have been used to divide the town into the following areas for planning purposes:

Lewis Creek Valley

The Lewis Creek Valley runs north-south in the western part of town. A large portion of the town's agricultural land remaining in productive use is located in the valley. Five dairy farms and two vegetable farms are supported by the well-drained and fertile soil. Vermont Route 116, which runs through the valley, provides good transportation access. The open land created and maintained by agricultural use is valued for production, but as an essential component of the town's character – the scenic qualities generated by the pattern of fields, hedgerows and woodlots defined by the steep forested uplands to the east and west. The valley's farmland also contributes to maintaining a relatively modest town budget as these lands create minimal demand for public services as compared to residential property. The agricultural land is also important for its support of the local economy through family farms and the resulting contribution to community values and the character.

Starksboro Village

Starksboro village, located in the Lewis Creek Valley, is the principal town center. This historic center contains a mix of small businesses, agriculture and most of the town's public facilities and services, in addition to approximately 40 homes. There has been little new development in Starksboro village for nearly a century, with most of the buildings shown in the 1871 Beers' Atlas still standing.

It is served by a private water system fed by springs from the northeast of the village. Route 116 is the village's "main street." Big Hollow Road to the east and State Prison Hollow Road to the west provides further access.

Just south of the historic village center is Brookside Mobile Home Park. Established in 1969, the 48 homes in this neighborhood are within walking distance of the school and other public facilities.

In the heart of the village is the Lewis Creek Farm, the Leslie Rublee farm, and other land used by farms located outside the village. Having working farms in the center of Starksboro village has been a defining element of the town's identity for many years. Most of the undeveloped land within the village center is farmland. The possibility of conservation of the Leslie Rublee Farm has spurred an important public debate about the future of the village. If the farm were to be conserved, the possibility of significantly increasing the number of residences and businesses in the village in future years may largely disappear. On the other hand, many residents would prefer to maintain this land in agricultural use and maintain the village largely as it has existed for more than 100 years. Two principal goals of this plan, and previous town plans, are in conflict in this situation and it remains to be seen how they can be balanced.

South Starksboro

The area, locally known as "up south," high above and to the east of the Lewis Creek Valley includes the historic hamlet of Jerusalem. This area along the Route 17 corridor has long been one of the main transportation routes across the Green Mountains and a number of town roads intersect with the highway in this area. The hamlet of Jerusalem includes a general store, fire station and the old Jerusalem schoolhouse. While most of the small businesses have long-since disappeared from South Starksboro, this area has seen significant amounts of residential development in recent decades. A large percentage of South Starksboro residents do not want to see further residential development in the area.

Once home to a number of hill farms, the area remains generally open, creating a beautiful scenic and natural environment. While there are no large-scale farms currently operating in South Starksboro, there are a number of small or supplemental farms in the area. However, much of the open land is slowly returning to a predominately wooded state. Maintenance of the open landscape through full-time or supplemental agriculture is key to preventing the further overgrowth of pasture land, which would significantly alter the scenic character of the area.

Rural Areas

In recent decades, a large percentage of Starksboro's new homes have been built at low densities, scattered along the town's Class 2 and 3 roads. These roads travel up into the town's upland forest, following the terrain and various streams to create relatively narrow bands of level to moderately sloped land on either side. In places, that band widens out and vestiges of former hill farms are still visible on the landscape – pastures, hedgerows, stone walls.

Upland Forest

Starksboro's upland forest comprises the major part of the land in town. This land is used for forestry, recreation, scattered homes and isolated open land in limited agricultural use. Much of the upland forest provides opportunity for hunting, fishing, skiing and hiking. Many significant natural areas are found in this area. Large swaths of this land currently lack access to Class 2 or 3 town roads.

The town benefits economically from this area in a number of ways. While the tax income from the undeveloped forested parcels is relatively low, there is no impact on schools, and little on roads and other services. This area serves many vital ecological functions, including cleansing surface and ground water, and serving as the recharge area for the village water supply. These areas provide a resource base for firewood and timber production, maple sugaring, providing local employment, fuel for local homes, and raw material for local mills and other businesses. Tourism and hunting contribute directly and indirectly to the local economy.

Residential development of this area would be very costly to the town, since in addition to the normal school impacts from residential developments, there are increased transportation and road maintenance costs in these more remote areas. Access to the homes in this area is by gravel roads and many of the seasonal residences are located on roads that are generally not maintained during the winter months.

community plan

Starksboro's collective vision is to maintain our town's environmental quality, scenic beauty, diverse working landscapes, rural character, sense of community and quality of life. It is our hope that the future Starksboro will remain recognizable to current residents – that the best parts will be conserved. While most residents want to maintain our town largely as it exists today, we recognize that change is an ongoing and necessary process. We should strive to properly manage that change, so that it will be beneficial to individual residents and the community as a whole.

In future decades, we hope agriculture becomes an increasingly vital and economically viable enterprise, which can support farmers and their families. We want our town to move towards greater sustainability – producing food and energy locally. We would like our economy to expand – providing more jobs in town in a diversity of small businesses, which are built on our natural and human assets.

To maintain productive working lands, we will need to find ways to live in carefully planned, compact neighborhoods that are compatible with their surroundings. We want Starksboro to continue to be a place where someone can live and be an active citizen for their entire life. We will need homes and services that meet the needs of residents of all ages. We should build upon our strong tradition of volunteerism and looking out for our neighbors to ensure that Starksboro will become an even more close-knit community than it is today, and one that encourages respectful civic participation and pride.

Finally, Starksboro residents will continue to place a high value on the town's natural resources. We want future generations to enjoy the healthy environment, connection to nature and scenic beauty we often take for granted. We should increase understanding and appreciation of our wildlife populations and their habitat needs. We want there to be clean air and water, productive fields and forests, and abundant wildlife, so we need to carefully consider our choices and their effects on the natural systems around us. We envision water, air, soil, forest and wildlife resources being used wisely and residents acting in ways that will sustain these resources for the use and enjoyment of current and future generations.

Vision Statement

General Goals

2008 Survey

Do you agree that Starksboro should plan to be..

- 91% A community where many residents actively manage their farm and forest lands for productive use.
- 62% A self-sufficient community with more job opportunities in town.
- 42% A bedroom community for people working in the region's employment centers.
- 28% A recreation destination for people from outside of town.

In order to move closer to being the community we envision becoming, the Town of Starksboro shall pursue the following general goals, specific objectives and policies:

1. Maintain the land base needed to support environmentally sustainable and economically viable farming and forestry in town, thus preserving our rural way of life.
2. Preserve the interrelated values of community, neighborliness, independence and privacy essential to Starksboro's small-town character.
3. Guide the land use and development of the town in such a way as to protect the health of the natural environment and the scenic quality of the landscape around us.
4. Guide the land use and development of the town in such a way as to protect the long-term interests of the community, while minimizing infringements on individual rights.
5. Restrain rapid, large-scale or otherwise inappropriate growth that would negatively affect Starksboro's fiscal condition, environmental quality and/or rural character.
6. Protect and enhance the natural resources of the town for the health, safety, and enjoyment of all residents, current and future.
7. Protect the health of residents through the maintenance of a clean environment, and safe and adequate water supply.
8. Mitigate, to the extent possible, the impacts of development on clean water; clean air; soils, forests and wildlife.
9. Support our working landscapes – farms, forests and sugar bushes – and the livelihoods of residents that make their living off the land.
10. Support the stewardship of natural resources in ways that do not degrade the resource.

Housing

Goals

1. Maintain a mix of high quality housing consistent with the character of Starksboro for households with a range of incomes.
2. Improve the quality of housing in the town by addressing common housing issues, such as energy, health and safety.
3. Maintain Starksboro's historic homes and recognize their importance to the character of the community.

Objectives

1. Limit the amount of residential development in those parts of Starksboro where homes would be far from services and difficult to access.
2. Continue to use a permit cap to limit the number of new homes built in a year.
3. Minimize the amount of productive farm and forest land that is converted to developed lots.
4. Improve the quality of housing in the mobile home parks by addressing common housing issues, such as inadequate roofs, windows and skirting by seeking low-cost and energy efficient strategies to assist residents improve their housing
 - A. Recognize the role that the town's existing mobile home parks play in meeting the need for affordable housing in the region.
 - B. Explore options such as cooperative purchasing of materials to lower the cost of home repairs to maintain the quality of the town's affordable housing stock.
 - C. Seek alternatives to the traditional mobile home that would preserve affordability while offering greater homeowner equity, reduced energy costs and better living spaces.
5. The town should implement a set of standards that speak directly to the seasonal nature of seasonal dwellings, to better achieve the goals of limiting impacts to sensitive resources or areas, limiting the cost of providing public services and maintaining the character of the Upland Forest Planning Area as a place people go to "get away:"
 - A. Seasonal camps in the Upland Forest Planning Area should not be converted to year-round homes. The land use regulations should be revised to implement conditions to seasonal-use permits to prevent adverse impacts and limit the negative impact on the town's fiscal condition of seasonal camp conversion. Such conditions should:
 - ✦ Prevent occupants of a seasonal dwelling from receiving municipal services such as attending school and registering as a voter in town, unless the owner has a year-round residence elsewhere in Starksboro.
 - ✦ Substantially reduce noise through mechanisms like limiting hours of generator operation or placing generators inside an insulated box.
 - ✦ Minimize outdoor lighting of any structure by down-shielding, reduced wattage and restricting use of timers

2008 Survey

Since 1990, the number of homes in Starksboro has grown from 678 to 830. Do you consider the town's rate of residential development:

6%	Too slow
63%	About right
30%	Too fast
1%	No response

Encourage housing that will allow elderly residents to continue to live in the community.

59%	Strongly Agree
33%	Agree
1%	Disagree
1%	Strongly Disagree
6%	Not Sure / No Response

Encourage additional residential development to occur in or adjacent to Starksboro Village.

28%	Strongly Agree
44%	Agree
8%	Disagree
10%	Strongly Disagree
9%	Not Sure / No Response

Encourage additional residential development to occur in or adjacent to Jerusalem.

14%	Strongly Agree
38%	Agree
16%	Disagree
22%	Strongly Disagree
10%	Not Sure / No Response

Discourage residential development on the open agricultural areas and remote forested lands.

57%	Strongly Agree
19%	Agree
7%	Disagree
10%	Strongly Disagree
6%	Not Sure / No Response

and motion detectors. Prevent outdoor lights from being left on overnight.

- ✦ Restrict openings in the forest canopy for construction of roads, structures or power lines.

B. Applicants seeking a seasonal-use permit and all existing seasonal residents should be able to prove that they have a principal residence elsewhere. A list of accepted proof of primary residence like those listed below should be developed:

- ✦ Current voter registration.
- ✦ Tax records.
- ✦ Utility bills.
- ✦ Vehicle registration.
- ✦ Annual affidavits.

Policies

- 1.** Starksboro's land use regulations should continue to restrict use of land in the Upland Forest Planning Area to sustainable forestry that meets minimum accepted Vermont management practice standards, low-impact recreation, sustainable harvesting of non-timber forest products.
- 2.** Construction of year-round homes and conversion of seasonal camps to year-round homes in the Upland Forest Planning Area is generally inappropriate and should be discouraged. The town should continue to review residential development, including seasonal camps, as conditional uses.
- 3.** Under Starksboro's land use regulations, working farms, meeting the state definition of farming, should be allowed to construct accessory units to house farm workers and their families without having to subdivide property. Approval of such units should include conditions that require the removal, subdivision or conversion of the unit to an allowed use if it is no longer to be used to house farm workers. Seasonal labor housing will be exempted from the annual cap on permits for new dwellings.
- 4.** Starksboro's land use regulations should allow for accessory apartments where residences are permitted uses and multi-family housing in suitable areas, such as within or near existing settlements, in accordance with state law.
- 5.** Guide most of our future residential development to areas in or close to Starksboro's existing population centers.
- 6.** Guide residential development away from our most productive land.

7. Recognize that those rural lands currently accessible from public roads that are maintained year-round are more suitable for residential development than lands that do not have such access.
8. Protect environmental quality by locating new homes away from critical resources or fragile features such as steep slopes, wetlands, vernal pools, important wildlife habitat or travel corridors, streams, flood or fluvial erosion hazard areas, and source protection areas.
9. Encourage housing that will allow Starksboro's residents to continue to live in the community through all stages of life.
10. Encourage increased energy efficiency in construction of new dwellings and in renovations to existing homes.

Goals

1. Support a diverse, sustainable local economy that provides well-compensated economic opportunities.
2. Maintain the land base needed to support environmentally sustainable and economically viable farming and forestry in town, thus preserving our rural way of life.
3. Support our working landscapes - farms, forests and sugar bushes - for the livelihoods of residents and future generations who make their living off the land.
4. Improve the balance between the number of people in the labor force living in Starksboro and the number of jobs located in town in order to reduce impacts associated with commuting and to enhance residents' sense of being part of this community.

Objectives

1. Expand the town's economy with clean businesses that provide healthy working conditions and livable compensation for local people while causing minimal impact to the environment.
 - A. Seek new, well-compensated economic opportunities that utilize the skills of local residents from traditional crafts to new technologies and that are of a type and scale compatible with the infrastructure that exists or is planned in town.
 - B. Recognize the importance of providing affordable and reliable access to energy and communications infrastructure to the town's economic future, especially as it relates to supporting residents who work from home and small businesses in Starksboro.

Economic Development

2008 Survey

Since 1990, the number of people employed in Starksboro has grown from 85 to 154. Do you consider the town's rate of economic development..

26%	Too slow
69%	About right
5%	Too fast
1%	No response

Support the agricultural economy encouraging future generations to continue farming and forestry in town.

73%	Strongly Agree
26%	Agree
0%	Disagree
0%	Strongly Disagree
1%	Not Sure / No Response

C. Recognize the importance of providing high quality and affordable childcare locally, not only in the lives of Starksboro's families, but also as part of the town's economic development strategy.

2. Sustain Starksboro's rural economy, encouraging future generations to continue farming, sugarmaking and forestry in town, thus maintaining these traditional activities as town's primary industry.

A. Encourage innovative, alternative strategies to allow their owners to profitably use these lands for agriculture and forestry.

B. Offer farmers the flexibility to diversify their operations to include agriculture-related businesses such as farm-product sales, manufacturing of value-added products, on-site processing, agri-tourism, recreation, or education in an effort to increase the profitability of the town's primary industry.

C. Encourage businesses that provide residents opportunities to purchase local foods and other products, and/or increase awareness of the products and foods available locally.

Policies

1. Economic development in Starksboro should be evaluated based on how new businesses affect neighbors and the community as a whole. Commercial and light industrial development should be in character and scale with surrounding properties.

2. When reviewing applications for new or expanding businesses, special consideration should be given to public safety, potential danger to community health, pollution (including odor), adverse impact on natural resources and environmental quality, drainage problems, traffic, light and noise pollution. In addition, the business' impact on facilities and town services, tax structure and the potential to adversely affect Starksboro's rural character should be considered.

3. Allow the types of agriculture-supporting businesses that are necessary for farming to remain viable in the town and region, while ensuring that they are appropriate in scale and impact for their surroundings.

4. Starksboro should recognize the value of supplemental and part-time agricultural operations in maintaining the town's open lands, scenic beauty, landscape diversity, tourism and wild-life habitat.

5. Support continued small-scale, community-serving retail and service businesses primarily in Starksboro village and Jerusalem, and to a limited degree within the town's other population centers.
6. Allow construction of structures associated with business enterprises, while ensuring their scale and architectural style is compatible with the character of their surroundings.
7. Discourage large-scale or strip commercial development and franchise architecture throughout Starksboro.
8. Provide flexibility for residents working from home or operating small businesses from their residential property that are compatible with the character of their surroundings, including consideration of the suitability of the road(s) serving the property to accommodate any increased traffic related to the business.
9. Encourage affordable and reliable access to energy and communications infrastructure.

2008 Survey

Encourage additional small-scale businesses in Starksboro.

45%	Strongly Agree
43%	Agree
3%	Disagree
2%	Strongly Disagree
7%	Not Sure / No Response

Support the ability of people to work from their homes.

64%	Strongly Agree
32%	Agree
1%	Disagree
0%	Strongly Disagree
3%	Not Sure / No Response

Goal

1. Provide high quality educational opportunities for all Starksboro residents.

Objectives

1. Maintain and continue to improve the quality of the educational programs at Robinson School, Mount Abraham Union High School and the Addison County Vocational Center as resources permit.
2. Provide lifelong learning opportunities for Starksboro residents.
3. Investigate and address transportation and supervision issues so that children and youth have access to after-school and summer activities.

Policies

1. Support efforts to provide early childhood education programs in town.
2. Encourage increased access to educational programs for children and youth that need additional support.
3. Encourage broad access to a range of after-school programs that include a mix of educational and recreational activities.

Education

4. Encourage youth to participate in programs, such as those offered by AmeriCorps/VISTA that can provide after-school and summer activities supervision
5. Support efforts to develop an activities bus or other alternatives that can provide after-school and summer activities to children and youth in different parts of the town.
6. Restrain inappropriate growth that would negatively affect Starksboro's ability to provide a quality education.
7. Utilize existing community resources and facilities to provide lifelong learning opportunities.

Community Utilities, Facilities and Services

Goals

1. Achieve a pattern of development and rate of population growth that is consistent with the town's ability to provide services and minimize the impact on the fiscal condition of the town.
2. Maintain quality groundwater as the supply of safe and clean drinking water throughout town.

Objectives

1. Maintain groundwater quality to provide a supply of safe and clean drinking water throughout town, and to prevent the village water supply from needing to be treated.
2. Support efforts to accurately map the town's groundwater resources and aquifer recharge areas, and to improve our knowledge of the quantity and quality of groundwater available in Starksboro.
3. Encourage utilities and property owners to take the actions needed to increase the reliability of Starksboro's electric and communications infrastructure.
4. Encourage utilities and service providers to improve Starksboro's access to communication technologies, such as high-speed Internet and cell service, and make upgrades as necessary in the future to continue to provide state-of-the-art service.
5. Support the efforts of the library, school and other community organizations to provide free access to and training in the use of computers and internet technology.
6. Recognize the services provided by the town's volunteer emergency responders as critical to the town and continue to support their efforts to provide high quality fire and rescue services in Starksboro.

7. Maintain the firehouse and rescue squad station within Starksboro village and the fire department substation in South Starksboro, and explore the feasibility of other actions that could minimize response times, especially in the town's more densely populated areas.

Policies

1. Encourage development that would minimize the negative impact on the town's fiscal health and ability to provide necessary services and facilities.
2. Encourage the types of land use and development that would be beneficial to the town.
3. Avoid construction of municipal wastewater treatment systems that would be costly for taxpayers and would promote a pattern of development inconsistent with this plan.
4. Regulate land use within identified source protection areas in order to limit the potential for pollution and to safeguard the purity of drinking water supplies.
5. Prohibit those land uses with significant potential for pollution that could endanger the health of residents and the environment including, but not limited to, nuclear power facilities, heavy industries, or storage or landfill sites for hazardous materials.
6. Encourage new utility lines be buried in order to increase reliability and limit the visual impacts of overhead lines where feasible and cost-effective.
7. Discourage the location of energy transmission corridors in Starksboro whose primary purpose would be to transport energy supplies through the town and region, rather than to provide necessary energy within the town or region.
8. Encourage telecommunication antennas that provide service in Starksboro preferably on or within existing structures (steeple, silos, utility poles, etc.).
9. Discourage wind and telecommunication towers in environmentally sensitive areas and take all reasonable measures in accordance with state and federal law to prevent towers that would require warning lights.
10. Consider the town's ability to provide emergency services, especially during the winter months and mud season, when determining the appropriate types and densities of land use that will be allowed in outlying areas.
11. Support a system of dry hydrants, fire ponds, cisterns, etc. to facilitate fire fighting efforts, and consider the needs of emergency responders when reviewing development proposals.

12. Continue planning for the town's solid waste disposal needs through participation in the Addison County Solid Waste Management District.
13. Ensure that use and management of the town forest and other public land is consistent with the needs of recreational users and wildlife.

Recreation

Goals

1. Preserve the interrelated values of community, neighborliness, independence and privacy essential to Starksboro's small-town character.
2. Protect and enhance the natural resources of the town for the health, safety and enjoyment of all residents, current and future.
3. Encourage all recreational users to be informed and respectful of the property rights of landowners and the users' responsibilities.

Objectives

1. Develop low-impact recreation paths, including bike and walking paths throughout town.
2. Support traditional outdoor recreational activities such as, but not limited to, hunting, fishing and hiking, with an emphasis towards education and safety.
3. Support existing recreational infrastructure and programs that benefit youth and adult sports.
4. Support development of recreational facilities for adults and children within or near the town's population centers that can be shared with all town residents.

Policies

1. Discourage recreational uses and development that cause adverse impact to soils, water and other natural resources.
2. Allow low-impact recreational activities within the Town Forest and state-managed public paths.
3. Encourage development of and improve existing environmentally low-impact recreational opportunities for town residents.

Goals

1. Restrain inappropriate growth that would negatively affect Starksboro's transportation network system.
2. Provide a safe transportation network that protects water quality and meets the needs of automobiles, agriculture, forestry, pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as other users within the town's financial means.
3. Provide a roadway system that recognizes the needs of wildlife populations and seeks to minimize disruptions to wildlife travel corridors.
4. Reduce reliance on personal automobile use by promoting energy-efficient modes of transportation, public transportation, carpooling and other alternatives that reduce reliance on the automobile and petroleum products.

Objectives

1. Maintain town roads consistent with their use and with state standards established for their class.
2. Minimize the number of new curb cuts onto public roads and promote construction of shared driveways whenever feasible in order to protect public safety, preserve environmental quality, reduce infrastructure costs and encourage clustering of new development.
3. Enforce established speed limits on all public roads in town.
4. Seek opportunities to improve traffic and pedestrian safety, especially within Starksboro's population centers.
5. Discourage use or designation of roads in Starksboro as "truck routes" and support efforts to redirect truck traffic off Route 17 during the winter months.
6. Encourage public transportation along Starksboro's major travel corridors in order to provide reliable, affordable and energy efficient transportation opportunities for commuters traveling to and from work.
7. Support the development of small-scale commuter parking areas along Starksboro's major travel corridors.
8. Seek opportunities and funding to construct pedestrian and bike paths within Starksboro's population centers.
9. Seek opportunities and funding to provide safe routes for children to walk or bicycle to the Robinson School and the town's recreation areas.
10. Support efforts to improve bicycle and pedestrian access and safety along the Route 116 and Route 17 corridors. An off-road

path system within the village may provide an option to either sidewalks, wider shoulders or an on-road bike lane.

Policies

1. Public roads should not be upgraded or extended unless such action is deemed to have significant benefits for the community as whole, rather than primarily benefiting a small number of landowners. The town should develop a policy, largely based on trip generation and maintenance costs, to determine when upgrades – such as road paving or widening – should be undertaken. The town should approve extensions of town roads or accept new roads only when such action will not adversely affect town finances, public safety or conflict with other town goals, including avoiding further fragmentations of the town’s core forest areas.
2. Private roads and driveways are a significant part of Starksboro’s transportation system. Therefore, the town’s land use regulations, road construction standards and highway access policies should be revised as necessary in accordance with the following policies:
 - A. The town should develop and adopt construction standards for private roads and drives to ensure reasonable access by emergency vehicles and protect the safety of travelers. Private roads and driveways should be constructed in a manner that:
 - ✦ Minimizes the number of curb cuts onto state and town roads.
 - ✦ Provides safe access for emergency vehicles.
 - ✦ Provides for safe intersections with local roads.
 - ✦ Prevents erosion and protects water quality.
 - ✦ Reduces damage to public roads.
 - ✦ Minimizes the number of trees removed.
 - ✦ Is guided by construction standards such as the Vermont Local Roads Program.
3. The town should work with the state and other partners to find options for bicycle and pedestrian access that would not have unwanted consequences. Particularly within Starksboro village, the town should discourage any further widening of Route 116 unless it can be shown that traffic calming measures are being implemented to prevent any increase in the speed of traffic on the road.

4. Mitigate, to the greatest extent practical, the impacts of development and maintenance of town roads on clean water, clean air, soils, forests and wildlife.
5. Perform maintenance of town roads consistent with their use and with state standards established for their class.
6. Limit upgrades to the classification of town roads, the expansion of the town highway system and the acceptance of new town roads.
7. Maintain safe and efficient use of the access to public roads, in accordance with the town's road access policy.
8. Promote construction of shared driveways whenever feasible in order to protect public safety, preserve environmental quality, reduce infrastructure costs and encourage clustering of new development.
9. Limit the amount of over-weight and over-length trucks and the transport of hazardous materials to the greatest extent feasible under state and federal law.
10. Manage a roadway system that recognizes the needs of wildlife populations and seeks to minimize disruptions to wildlife travel corridors.
11. Operate a roadway system that manages water-related issues including erosion, runoff and flooding.

Goals

1. Ensure safe and reliable energy sources and infrastructure for future generations and seek renewable energy sources whenever feasible.
2. Minimize any adverse effects related to the generation or use of energy on environmental quality and rural character.
3. Minimize the use of energy and attempt to conserve all forms of non-renewable energy.
4. Raise general awareness of means, methods and opportunities provided by improved energy-related technologies.
5. Reduce transportation energy needs.

Objectives

1. Encourage the use of safe non-motorized transportation.
2. Promote the use and development of local renewable energy sources as a replacement for imported nonrenewable resources.

Energy

3. Promote programs that inform and assist townspeople with energy conservation.
4. Support regular energy audits for town and school buildings and seek opportunities and funding for improvements when shown to be cost-effective.
5. Starksboro's newly formed Energy Committee should begin the process of planning for the town's long-term energy needs through actions such as the following:
 - A. Conduct an energy audit of all town and school buildings that will identify steps that would improve the efficiency of these buildings, and provide a baseline for measuring progress towards achieving energy efficiency goals.
 - B. Conduct an audit of energy resources available in town such as hydropower, wood and biomass, and wind corridors.
 - C. Develop educational materials that can be issued with zoning permits related to energy-efficient siting and construction of buildings.
 - D. Undertake outreach and education efforts to assist residents with improving the efficiency and sustainability of their homes and lifestyles.

Policies

1. Promote energy efficiency.
2. Promote programs that inform and assist townspeople with energy conservation, such as Efficiency Vermont.
3. Promote awareness of energy issues in the design and siting of all new homes.
4. Encourage cluster development and other energy efficient patterns of land use.
5. Support the creation of regional mass transit.
6. Encourage the use of safe non-motorized transportation.
7. Ensure that the development of both renewable and non-renewable energy resources is consistent with sound environmental practices and will minimize negative environmental impacts including air, noise and light pollution.
8. Support the use and development of local renewable energy sources.

9. Starksboro's land use regulations should allow landowners to construct clean, independent, alternative energy systems by considering them an accessory use to residential uses.
10. Avoid the construction of new overhead transmission lines to the greatest extent feasible by burying required infrastructure.
11. Inform permittees of their obligations under the Vermont Residential Building Energy Standard and the Vermont Commercial Building Energy Standard.
12. Support the Energy Committee as it explores energy-related financing opportunities such as the Property Assessed Clean Energy program that enable homeowners to finance larger-scale energy retrofits and renewable energy systems for their homes.

Goals

Eight out of ten of this plan's General Goals (see page 46) are directly related to natural resources. Survey results support these goals and encourage both natural resource protection and wise use. Residents see value in land-based enterprise (farming, forestry, sugar making), but also in recreation, tourism, local energy, and other ecosystem services (clean water, flood control, biological diversity) – all of which are provided by these resources. The objectives below attempt to balance these goals and describe policies that can help achieve them. Any mapping or inventorying suggested can only be accomplished with landowner permission.

Objectives

1. Encourage multiple-use management of Starksboro's forestland, including sustainable forestry activities that incorporate best management practices for soil and water protection.
2. Avoid degradation of water quality, disruption of wildlife corridors and large-scale fragmentation of wildlife habitat and productive forestland by carefully controlling development.
3. Support voluntary protection of open space through conservation easements and other mechanisms.
4. Encourage increased town-wide understanding of the ecological functions of different components of Starksboro's landscape, including the contributions of wetlands, stream corridors and areas of unbroken forest.
5. Ensure the protection of groundwater resources and drinking water supplies.

Natural Resources

2008 Survey

Discourage development on prominent ridgelines and steep hillsides.

46%	Strongly Agree
30%	Agree
8%	Disagree
6%	Strongly Disagree
9%	Not Sure / No Response

Further protect scenic resources through zoning.

51%	Strongly Agree
26%	Agree
6%	Disagree
7%	Strongly Disagree
10%	Not Sure / No Response

Continue to limit the number of new homes that can be built in town each year.

42%	Strongly Agree
32%	Agree
12%	Disagree
6%	Strongly Disagree
8%	Not Sure / No Response

2008 Survey

There are approximately 2,900 acres of state- or town-owned land and 1,335 acres of conserved land in Starksboro, a town of 29,150 acres. Do you consider the amount of protected land in town..

45%	Too little
47%	About right
8%	Too much
0%	No response

Support the conservation of scenic agriculturally viable or ecologically valuable parcels of land.

50%	Strongly Agree
32%	Agree
7%	Disagree
3%	Strongly Disagree
6%	Not Sure / No Response

Encourage preservation by reducing property taxes on undeveloped land.

52%	Strongly Agree
28%	Agree
9%	Disagree
1%	Strongly Disagree
10%	Not Sure / No Response

6. Restrict development along and in the headwater areas of major streams, including Lewis Creek and Baldwin Creek.
7. Ensure that both landowner property within the Lewis Creek corridor and the ecological functioning of the Lewis Creek are protected. For the purpose of this plan, the terms "Lewis Creek Corridor" and "Fluvial Erosion Hazard Areas" are assumed to be the same. These areas are defined and delineated in the "Lewis Creek Corridor Plan: Reaches M14-M-18", dated February 2008 and revised March 2008.
8. Protect or provide for long-term stewardship of wetlands that support significant functions and values for natural communities, rare species habitat, or wildlife habitat, and prevent additional loss of wetlands within the town. Support efforts to enhance the functions and values of wetlands negatively affected by human disturbance.
9. Strive to maintain a high quality of Starksboro's surface waters.

Policies

1. Revise the town's land use regulations to ensure that any subdivision of forestland provides reasonable access to "back" lots for forestry uses. Land use and development should be compatible with natural resource-based enterprise.
2. Roughly half of the land in Starksboro is enrolled in the Current Use program. This program helps to reduce the property tax burden on forest landowners and ensures these lands are managed responsibly. The town should support this program.
3. Clear-cuts larger than 40 acres in size will be discouraged.
4. The town's land use regulations should be revised to guide development away from steep slopes, significant wildlife habitat, and fragile natural features.
5. Much of Starksboro's scenic quality is due to its large sweeps of unbroken forest and farm land. Maintaining the Forest and Conservation and Agriculture and Rural Residential districts will continue to protect these scenic resources. Developing an inventory of views that the townspeople find particularly valuable could be a useful tool in future planning efforts and help in the exploration of creative ways of preserving them.
6. Starksboro is unusual for our region in that it still has large areas of core forest in relatively large parcels. The Planning Commission and Development Review Board should recognize this feature and discourage development that fragments this core. New roads into the core should be limited. Existing camps should remain as seasonal dwellings if they are within the Upland Forest Planning Area.

7. Zoning and subdivision regulations help ensure that use is appropriate and compatible, but the town will also support voluntary conservation. This can be accomplished in various ways including:
 - A. Inventory important natural resources and educate the public about their occurrence and value. Use these reports to guide decisions of the Planning Commission and Development Review Board and to mitigate impacts and prioritize important natural assets for protection.
 - B. Ask town boards to write statements of support for conservation projects as opportunities arise that are appropriate and in the best interest of the town.
 - C. Continue to encourage public dialogue on the balance between conservation and land development.
 - D. Investigate the willingness of residents to support a local conservation fund.
 - E. Evaluate and consider innovative, alternative strategies, including the transfer of development rights from significant natural resource properties to other parcels more suitable for development.
8. Engage the Conservation Commission with identifying, mapping and studying the town's natural features and areas, outdoor recreation resources, and important wildlife habitat in order to better understand the environment around us and how we can develop and use land in a way that is less disruptive or damaging to the environment.
9. Engage the Conservation Commission in helping to bring the best available ecological information into the town's land use planning and development review efforts.
10. Place a high priority on monitoring, mapping and inventory, in order to better understand the town's natural resources. Seek grants and assistance from experts to build up our information base. In particular,
 - A. Locate amphibian road crossing sites and organize public participation in assisting safe migrations.
 - B. Begin mapping of vernal pools.
 - C. Begin inventory of hard-nut mast stands, which are important feeding areas for deer, bear, and other species.
 - D. Expand on existing road crossing data, including input from the town road crew, and develop a more accurate map of these areas. Take steps toward protect-

2008 Survey

Maintain Starksboro's existing areas of unbroken forest.

65%	Strongly Agree
19%	Agree
5%	Disagree
2%	Strongly Disagree
10%	Not Sure / No Response

Further protect large blocks of forest through zoning.

62%	Strongly Agree
20%	Agree
4%	Disagree
7%	Strongly Disagree
7%	Not Sure / No Response

Further protect wildlife resources through zoning.

62%	Strongly Agree
21%	Agree
2%	Disagree
7%	Strongly Disagree
7%	Not Sure / No Response

Further protect water resources through zoning.

62%	Strongly Agree
28%	Agree
1%	Disagree
2%	Strongly Disagree
6%	Not Sure / No Response

ing key wildlife road crossing sites and coordinate with similar efforts in neighboring towns.

E. Upgrade mapping of deer wintering areas.

11. Under Vermont's water supply rules each public water system should have a Source Protection Plan, which identifies existing and potential sources of contamination within their SPA. The system operator should also develop the means to ensure long-term protection of the source, as well as the identification of alternative water supplies.
12. The town should support efforts to better map and understand the town's groundwater supplies. Opportunities for grants should be explored, such as the STATEMAP program grant from the U.S. Geological Survey administered by the Vermont Geological Survey. The use of such grant money, combined with volunteer efforts of interested town residents, would help to enable the completion of groundwater mapping for Starksboro to help in planning efforts concerning this invaluable resource, including the identification of potential future public water supply areas.
13. The town should support efforts to study the bedrock, surficial geology and hydrology in other areas of Starksboro to identify those areas that, if developed, may impact groundwater quality. Develop a water supply protection strategy and use the town's land use regulations to protect identified source protection areas from incompatible development or land use.
14. These headwater areas exist in the Upland Forest Planning Area and have considerable protection under current zoning. Most of the upper reaches of Lewis Creek are within the state-owned Lewis Creek Wildlife Management Area. The town should coordinate with the state to develop a mutually acceptable plan for use of the approximately 3,000 acres of public land in this planning area in a manner that is consistent with this plan and the interests of the town.
15. Delineate Fluvial Erosion Hazard areas for the major tributaries of the Lewis Creek watershed that have been identified in Phase I Stream Geomorphic Assessments and press for updated FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps upon which to base regulations intended to limit property damage and loss of life from natural hazards.
16. Pursue funding to undertake a comprehensive inventory of wetlands in the town, with landowner permission, to update and enhance existing wetland maps.
17. Monitor wetlands of high value and/or those that are under threat and pursue efforts to voluntarily protect such wetlands.

18. Remove invasive species when possible to preserve the integrity of the town's wetlands.
19. Use wetlands in the Town Forest for educational purposes, including programs for area schoolchildren.
20. Seek opportunities to work with state, federal, and other partners to continue monitoring water quality, pursue improvements in water quality when opportunities arise, and improve vegetated stream buffers.
21. Review, on an ongoing basis, the water quality reports prepared by the Lewis Creek Association and the Addison County Riverwatch Collaborative, and consider their recommendations for methods to improve water quality in our town for swimmers, anglers, and wildlife.
22. Starksboro's land use regulations should more clearly define "adverse effect" in the current language regarding stream setbacks, so that applicants have more specific guidance on what they must demonstrate in order to be exempted from the 100-foot setback from streams. Protections could be increased by changing all or a portion of the setback dimension to a buffer requirement. A simple no-build setback still permits removal of native vegetation along the riverbanks, which can lead to bank destabilization and accelerated erosion. Naturally vegetated buffers are important to filter sediment and nutrients from stormwater runoff, and attenuate flood flows.
23. Starksboro should develop a comprehensive stormwater management plan, of which many models exist in Vermont. A variety of management practices such as vegetative and landscaping controls and other low impact development (LID) techniques should be considered as a component of this plan. Development on steep slopes equal to or in excess of 15 percent should be sited and constructed (and slopes stabilized) to minimize risks to surface and ground waters and to protect neighboring properties from damage.

Goals

1. Limit growth to a rate that does not negatively affect the sense of community, economic well-being, fiscal condition, existing infrastructure or environmental quality of the Town of Starksboro.
2. Achieve a pattern of growth that maintains the rural agricultural and forested character of the town.

Land Use, Community Development and Growth Management

Objectives

1. Continue to limit the rate of growth and monitor the affects to the fiscal condition, existing infrastructure or environmental quality of the Town of Starksboro.
2. Encourage residential and business development to concentrate in and around the town's existing villages, hamlets and neighborhoods.
3. Acknowledge that not all residential development can or will occur in or around existing villages, hamlets and neighborhoods. Development in the agricultural district should not unduly reduce the amount of open agricultural land or disturb ecologically sensitive areas.
4. Ensure that development in Starksboro is compatible with existing land uses and minimize adverse impacts from traffic, noise, light, odor and other off-site impacts.
5. Seek to have development occur in areas where soils and other site characteristics are capable of supporting such development.
6. Support the conservation of agriculturally viable or ecologically valuable parcels of land through the use of donations, conservation easements, purchase or transfer of development rights, and the use of permitting methods such as set-asides or building envelopes.
7. Support the conservation of scenic vistas through the use of donations, easements or purchase or transfer of development rights.
8. Encourage development to minimize impact on the visual landscape and discourage development on prominent ridgelines and steep slopes.
9. Utilize ASRR and FC districts in order to discourage subdivision of land with agricultural and forestry value into parcels that are economically non viable for those purposes due to shape, size or limited access.
10. Encourage cluster development by granting developers a density bonus for preserving large amounts of open land.
11. Minimize light trespass, appropriate to the zoning district, from excessive negative effects associated with exterior lighting.
12. Maintain land use regulations consistent with the goals of this plan.

Land Use Planning Areas

This plan sets forth the following strategy to guide future land use and development in Starksboro in accordance with the vision, goals objectives, and policies. The town has been divided into a number of land use planning areas for the purpose of describing the types and densities of development deemed appropriate based on factors such as historic and current land use, access and distance to public services, natural resource constraints and value for productive use.

These areas should not be interpreted as zoning districts, although they could form the basis for future revisions to the land use regulations. It should not be assumed that each planning area represents a single zoning district. Planning areas may include multiple zoning districts and/or a single zoning district may include land in multiple planning areas. The town's land use regulations and zoning map shall be used to determine the specific land uses permitted and the densities and dimensional requirements established for a specific property.

Lewis Creek Valley Planning Area

1. As the Lewis Creek Valley includes most of the town's productive agricultural land, all available and feasible means should be used to preserve farmland and limit large-scale, large-lot and/or sprawling residential development in the area. Overall residential densities should remain very low with any additional non-farm residences carefully sited to minimize impacts on quality farmland. In revising the town's land use regulations, consideration should be given to creative approaches to achieving desired development patterns such as:
 - A. Implementation of a sliding scale to establish maximum density of land in the area in a manner that discourages fragmentation of productive land.
 - B. Using a site-based analysis, such as a LESA (land evaluation and site assessment), to establish maximum density of land in the area in a manner that guides development away from the most productive land.
 - C. Offering incentives or bonuses for tightly clustered development and/or limit the size of non-farm residential lots in the area in order to preserve viable tracts of productive land.
2. The town should support the economic viability of agriculture in this area by allowing for farm-related businesses, farm worker housing, farm product sales, agri-tourism and agricultural-support businesses.

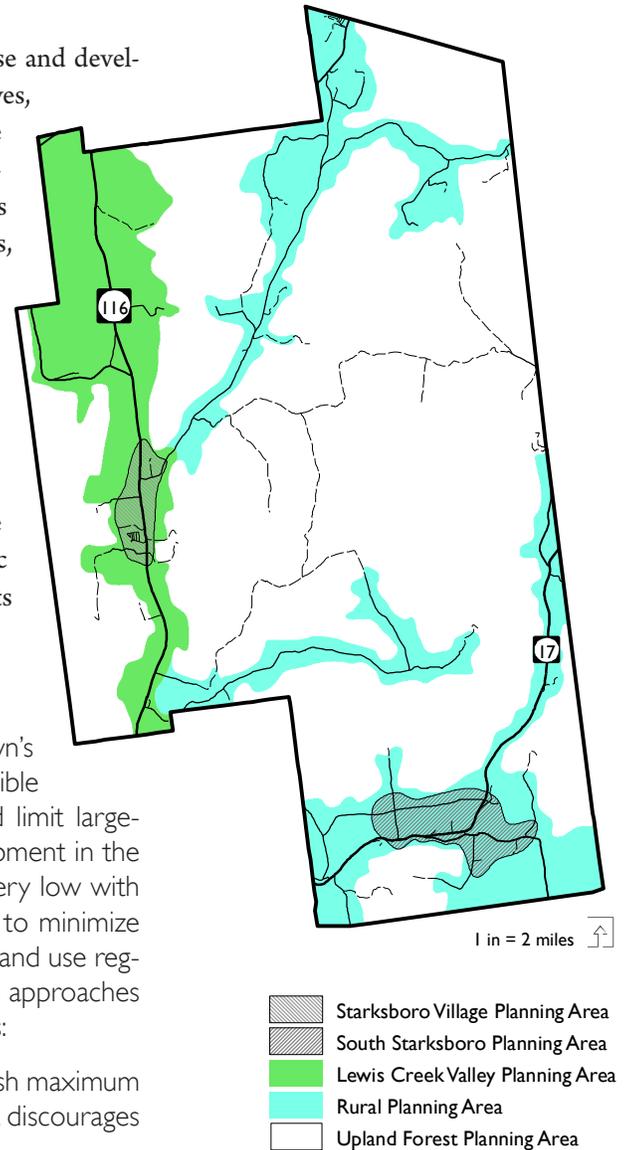


Figure 15

Land Use Planning Areas Map

The **Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA)** is a point-based approach for rating the relative importance of agricultural or forest land resources based upon specific measurable features. LESA models evaluate measures of soil resource quality and factors like a site's size, surrounding working lands, and surrounding protected resource lands. For a given site, the factors are rated, weighted, and combined, resulting in a single numeric score. The score becomes the basis for making a determination of a site's potential significance.

3. The town should support the purchase or transfer of development rights, or other innovative techniques, to ensure that farmland in this area will be conserved for future generations, thus protecting the town's rural heritage, character and way of life.
4. The town should explore the feasibility of and interest in local options to the state's current use program and the Vermont Land Trust's farmland conservation efforts that would offer property tax or other financial benefits to landowners in exchange for keeping land in productive use, but without requiring land conservation in perpetuity.

Starksboro Village Planning Area

1. Starksboro village should remain the town's primary center. The desired character of this planning area is that of a traditional New England village center. Specifically, it should be a place that has:
 - A. A mix of uses in close proximity to each other bringing people together for a variety of activities—including town affairs, work, living, recreation, business, shopping, and entertainment – attracting and benefiting people of all ages and income levels.
 - B. A physical layout with higher densities in comparison to outlying areas and a distinct, defined geographical edge that establishes an identity or a sense of place.
 - C. A strong public presence, such as greens or parks, municipal buildings, post office, school or other public spaces or buildings.
 - D. A presence of special features, such as historic buildings, landmarks and views.
 - E. Diversity in the size of buildings and lots.
 - F. A pedestrian-friendly environment in which most uses are within a five- or ten-minute walk (1,500 to 3,000 feet) of each other and a transportation system that is designed for pedestrian safety, as well as vehicular access.
 - G. Buildings located close to the street with limited amounts of parking between the street and front of the building.
 - H. Multi-story, mixed-use buildings whose main entrance is oriented to the street.
2. This area is an appropriate location for the most compact and highest intensity residential, commercial and mixed-use devel-

opment in town. Most of the town's public uses such as town offices, post office, school and library should be located in the village, although satellite locations for such uses in other areas of town should be considered if deemed necessary to serve nearby residents.

3. The potential for new development within the village area is limited, so use of land within this area should be maximized. Densities should be as high as can be accommodated given the availability of infrastructure and soil capabilities. Dimensional standards within the town's land use regulations should be revised to reflect and extend the existing historic settlement pattern in this area.
4. It should be recognized that this area exists within the Lewis Creek Valley Planning Area and includes important agricultural soils, as well as productive farmland. Indeed, the presence of working farms in the heart of the village is one of Starksboro's distinguishing characteristics. Residents support maintaining farming and farmland within the village, but they also support focusing growth in this area in order to prevent development of outlying rural lands. It has been and will continue to be a challenge to balance these competing goals, but with careful planning and ongoing dialogue creative solutions should be sought. Farm buildings, if no longer used for agriculture, should be considered for adaptive re-use as commercial or residential structures.
5. The state has designated a portion of this area as the Starksboro Village Historic District and has inventoried its contributing historic structures. The importance of these historic resources should be recognized as critical components of the character of this area and the village's sense of place. The town should review its regulations to ensure that they provide flexibility for the ongoing use of historic structures and discourage demolition or inappropriate renovations. The town should consider seeking Village Center designation for Starksboro Village, making income-producing properties eligible for state tax credits in order to support maintenance and appropriate rehabilitation of historic structures. Village Center designation would also enhance the town's ability to obtain grant funding for public improvements in Starksboro Village.
6. The possibility of constructing additional roads parallel to Route 116 in the village should be investigated, as much of the highway frontage is already built-out in this area. The town should undertake the planning necessary to identify potential road corridors and consider adoption of an Official Map to implement the plan.

7. There are large and/or under-utilized buildings in this area that could be renovated into multi-unit or accessory dwellings. The town's regulations should support such re-use of existing buildings and allow for housing options other than single-family detached homes in this area. If new multi-unit buildings are to be built in the village, they should be designed to be compatible to the historic development pattern and be similar in scale and massing to large single-family homes.
8. Consideration should be given to encouraging smart growth planning techniques that would cluster development in areas that provide easy pedestrian access, decreasing reliance on automobiles. This would serve both a conservation function and meet the needs of a growing population of older residents. This area is the most appropriate place in town for elderly housing, which has been recognized as a need by current residents. The town should explore the feasibility of siting a project like Lincoln's Weathervane in Starksboro village.
9. Commercial uses should be permitted to the extent that they are compatible with adjacent residential uses in the village and are in conformance with this plan. The town's land use regulations should be revised to increase the types of businesses allowed in the village, while more tightly controlling their scale and impact. The town's land use regulations should be revised to strongly discourage single-story commercial buildings and franchise architecture in this area. Throughout this area, but especially along Route 116, commercial buildings should have shallow setbacks with little to no parking between the front of the building and the street.
10. The town's land use regulations should be revised to extend its village-type zoning south to include Brookside Mobile Home Park. Efforts should be made to knit this existing high-density neighborhood into the fabric of the village. Within and adjacent to the park, the town's regulations should allow and encourage infill development with modest, affordable homes – starter homes, cottage-style homes, etc. – that would diversify the town's affordable housing stock, provide housing options for young families, empty nesters and seniors, and create a smooth transitions between the historic village neighborhood and mobile home park neighborhood.

Rural Planning Area

1. This planning area includes those lands outside the Lewis Creek Valley that have access from year-round maintained, public roads (state and Class 2 or 3 town roads) and that are not characterized by steep slopes or other significant environmental constraints to development.

2. In the Rural Planning Area, overall intensity of land use and density of development should remain low with any additional residences carefully sited to minimize impacts on environmental quality. In revising the town's land use regulations, consideration should be given to approaches that achieve desired development patterns such as:
 - A. Using a site-based analysis that would take characteristics such as soil conditions, slope and ecological features to establish maximum density of land in the area. Consideration should be given to incorporating distance from existing population centers and/or main transportation corridors as criteria in determining maximum density. The character, quality and accessibility of the road(s) serving the property to be developed could also be considered when determining maximum density.
 - B. Offering incentives or bonuses for tightly clustered development that preserves large areas of undisturbed land.
3. Land use patterns in rural planning areas are diverse and vary in lot use, setbacks and building type. The town's land use regulations should offer flexibility in the rural planning areas in terms of dimensional requirements and land uses while keeping overall density low.
4. The "view from the road" is important in establishing character. As new development occurs in Starksboro's rural areas, consideration should be given to maintaining or enhancing that view to the greatest extent feasible. Where roadsides are forested, new buildings should be set back behind a wooded buffer. Where development will be occurring on open land, new buildings can be placed along the edges of fields or woodlands to reduce their visual impact (and potentially conserve productive farmland).
5. Home-based, ag-based, resource-based and other small-scale businesses, along with forestry uses, should be permitted to the extent that they do not alter the character of the area or decrease quality of life for nearby residents. The town's land use regulations should be revised to increase the types of businesses allowed, while more tightly controlling their scale and impact, in recognition that the most effective way to prevent development of the town's rural lands is to support opportunities for other income-producing uses.
6. No extension or upgrading of existing town roads should be permitted unless consistent with town policy on extension and upgrade of roads.

South Starksboro Planning Area

1. South Starksboro should remain a secondary location for compact residential and small-scale business development in town. The desired character of this planning area is that of a rural, primarily residential hamlet. Specifically, it should be a place:
 - A. That may have public spaces or buildings, and/or small-scale businesses that are readily recognizable and help define the area's identity.
 - B. With a diversity of housing types and varying lot sizes that allow for multiple uses while maintaining the predominantly rural look and feel of the area. Differences in building design, architectural detail and setbacks should break the mold of a cookie cutter, suburban development pattern.
 - C. Offers a connection to nature through a consciously designed open space system, creating a 'livable' neighborhood that balances the convenient access of a traditional hamlet with the natural beauty and tranquility of a rural community.
2. It should be recognized that South Starksboro is considered a rural area by many of its residents and that a significant amount of the residential growth that has occurred in town over the past several decades has been in this area. Residents have called upon the town to more carefully craft the land use regulations within this area to reflect the capability of the land and road infrastructure to support development, and to maintain the rural character of South Starksboro. Still, a majority of town residents support focusing growth within existing population centers. Careful planning and further dialogue is needed to resolve the competing land use objectives in this area.
3. Densities and dimensional standards within the town's land use regulations should consider the existing historic settlement pattern within the traditional hamlet of Jerusalem. Densities in the remainder of the planning area should reflect the level of accessibility and capability of land to support development. Consideration should be given to protecting the important natural resources within this area including wildlife habitat and fragile environmental features.
4. Consideration should be given to encouraging smart growth planning techniques that would cluster development in the parts of the area most suitable for development while maintaining a rural land use pattern and character. Maintain a diverse landscape that includes both compact development and open space, and that protects the view from public roads to the

greatest extent feasible. This is critical to ensuring that the rural character of the area is preserved.

5. Home-based and other small-scale businesses should be permitted to the extent that they do not alter the character of the area or decrease quality of life for nearby residents. The town's land use regulations should be revised to increase the types of businesses allowed, while more tightly controlling their scale and impact. The town's regulations should strongly discourage the construction of franchise architecture in this area.

Upland Forest Planning Area

1. This planning area consists of many large parcels including the Lewis Creek Wildlife Management Area and the Town Forest. Land in this planning area is largely inaccessible from state highways or Class 2 or 3 town roads, and is characterized by steep slopes and unfragmented forests.
2. Residential development in this planning area might have a detrimental impact on the town's fiscal prospects. Residential development might also destroy the natural, scenic and wildlife habitat features valued by residents. Therefore, all available and feasible means should be used to prevent year-round residential development in these areas. The town's land use regulations should continue to allow seasonal camps and recreational uses to the extent that they do not affect the essential character or environmental quality of the area.
3. The town should attempt to ensure that forestry activity in this planning area does not have an unreasonably detrimental impact on environmental quality or the essential character of this area.
4. This area is accessed primarily by class 4 town roads, private roads and trails. Extension or upgrade of town roads in this planning area should not be permitted unless consistent with town policy on extension and upgrade of roads.

Specially Designated Areas

1. **Watershed Protection Area.** The town's land use regulations should continue to protect the quality of drinking water. The existing watershed protection district, currently located south of Brown Hill West and east of Big Hollow Road, should continue to be used to protect water quality. All possible regulatory measures should be taken to prohibit and discourage development that would have an adverse impact on the quality of water supplies in the watershed protection district. The town should explore the feasibility and desirability of public acquisition of land in the watershed protection district to permanently preserve the quality and availability of these resources.

2. **Flood and Erosion Hazard Areas.** The town's land use regulations should continue to prevent development within designated flood hazard areas. Currently, the town's land use regulations include a Flood Hazard Overlay District, which encompasses all land designated by the Federal Insurance Administration in its Flood Insurance Study for the Town of Starksboro, with accompanying maps as most recently amended. The town should consider revising the town's regulations to include protections for fluvial erosion hazard areas, which include lands along the town's small streams that are at risk for flash flooding and significant stream bank erosion. The regulations should ensure that any new construction that is allowed be constructed to minimum standards in order to protect public health and safety, limit damage to public infrastructure and preserve environmental quality.

3. **Mobile Home Parks.** Starksboro has three mobile home parks in town: Brookside, Lazy Brook and Hillside, owned and managed by the Addison County Community Trust. Having three parks in town places Starksboro among a small group of towns statewide with high concentrations of mobile home parks. The population of the three parks was estimated to be at least 347 people in 2008, or nearly 20 percent of the town's population. Starksboro's mobile home parks provide a stable source of affordable housing in the town. While these residents share many of the same issues and goals of townspeople in general, there are some land use planning issues unique to the three parks. There is a recognized need to improve the layout of housing in the parks in order to improve the social atmosphere and address health and safety concerns. Starksboro should consider revisions to its land use regulations, including an overlay or zoning district for these three properties, to address identified concerns including:
 - A. Reconsidering the current layout within the parks to improve public health, safety, welfare and quality of life.
 - B. Establishing setback standards between houses and buildings in order to reduce the likelihood of fire or other hazards to spread between buildings, and to allow access for emergency vehicles.
 - C. Supporting efforts to address critical infrastructure issues in the parks, including road, water system and wastewater deficiencies as they occur.
 - D. Supporting efforts to deconstruct and remove abandoned homes.
 - E. Allowing for other types of affordable housing within the parks.

Growth Management

Starksboro controls the rate of residential development in town through an annual limit on the number of permits issued for new home construction. In recent years, the demand for new homes has been well below the 15-permit limit. Still, the town believes that this method of managing growth is critical to keeping public services affordable for current residents and to protecting the town's rural character and way of life. To continue to support and strengthen this growth management program, Starksboro should:

1. Develop a capital program and budget that will assess the fiscal condition of the town and decide upon a rate of population, housing and budget growth consistent with that assessment and the town's ability to meet its current and future obligations. The town should seek state and regional funding or assistance to develop the budget and program.
2. Establish a reasonable target for Starksboro's rate of growth based on analysis of current demographic and growth trends in the town and region, and the town's fiscal condition and the capacity of public facilities and infrastructure.
3. Consider adjusting the allocation of building permits to support desired development patterns upon adoption of the capital budget.
4. Consider adopting a reasonable impact fee ordinance to offset the municipal and community costs of development upon adoption of the capital budget.

Outdoor Lighting and Signs

1. Starksboro's land use regulations should be revised to ensure that outdoor lighting and sign standards result in development that is compatible with the character of its surroundings. The following should be considered:
 - A. Exterior lighting installations should be turned off during daylight hours or nighttime hours when lighting is not needed.
 - B. Light trespass onto adjacent residential properties should be minimized. Lighting fixtures should be aimed downward and shielded in a manner that does not direct illumination on adjacent property. Fixtures should be shielded and designed to prevent glare from normal viewing angles.
 - C. Outdoor lighting should be designed to prevent light spill into the dark night sky to the greatest extent feasible through use of downward directed and shielded fixtures.

- D. Non-residential security lighting should be installed only when necessary and should use the lowest possible illumination to effectively allow surveillance. Security lighting should be shielded and aimed so that illumination is directed only to designated areas such as doorways, gates, etc.
- E. Conditional use approval shall be required for internally illuminated signs.
- F. Signs should be of the minimum size and height necessary to communicate their message to the traveling public.

Telecommunications Towers

1. There is a desire for improved telecommunications in town, but this demand should be balanced with the town's goals of protecting environmental quality, human health, historic character, agricultural and rural uses, the tourist economy and aesthetics. Starksboro's land use regulations should be revised to improve and strengthen the provisions related to telecommunications in accordance with all applicable provisions of federal and state law and the following policies:
 - A. Any new telecommunication facilities should employ the least visually obtrusive technology with the lowest environmental impact available. Telecommunications facilities should not be located in environmentally sensitive areas. Developers of telecommunication facilities may be required to conduct an environmental impact statement of their proposed site.
 - B. In revising the land use regulations, the Planning Commission will address specific requirements for telecommunications towers and similar structures such as high voltage electric transmission. To be compatible with this plan such structures would need to:
 - ✦ Respect the integrity of residential areas, agricultural uses and natural resources.
 - ✦ Minimize aesthetic impacts. Equipment sheds can be hidden in trees or constructed such that their style match local agricultural or other nearby structures. Depending on site-specific circumstances, tower structures may be monopole, lattice or other structure that minimizes aesthetic impacts. Structures should be of appropriate colors and minimal reflectivity.
 - ✦ Be screened from view to the greatest extent possible.
 - ✦ Minimize ecological impacts.

- ✦ Co-locate wherever possible, unless the Development Review Board determines that separate facilities would create less visual impact or disturbance to the community.
 - ✦ Be only as tall as necessary.
 - ✦ Not be lighted or marked. In any case where it is subsequently determined that a tower is required by federal regulation to have obstruction marking or lighting, the least visually obtrusive marking or lighting scheme allowable should be used. Any lights used would need to be shielded in order to minimize aesthetic impacts and cast light only where it is needed.
 - ✦ Have no commercial signs or lettering. Signs should be limited to that required by federal or state regulation.
 - ✦ Maintain all facilities including, but not limited to, painting, structural integrity and landscaping.
- C. Any permits granted for telecommunications or similar facilities should be for a limited time. Permits should also have annual reporting requirements. This will allow for periodic review and new permit conditions that reflect advances in knowledge, experience and technology.
- D. Equipment should be downsized as technology improves and should be removed when no longer used or needed. The zoning regulations should establish specific standards regarding removal of structures once operations have ceased and should set bond requirements to ensure that funds are available to properly decommission the site.

Extraction

1. The extraction of earth resources should be carried out in a manner that minimizes or mitigates negative impacts such as erosion, or significant habitat. There should be plans for properly closing a site once its use is discontinued. Starksboro's municipally owned earth resources should be used to meet the town's needs in order to decrease the cost of road maintenance and other projects, as well as reduce the cost and impacts of hauling materials from out of town.

Public Land

1. Starksboro acknowledges the value of its publicly owned lands as recreational and educational resources. The town should coordinate with the state a mutually acceptable plan for use of the approximately 3,000 acres of public land in a manner that is consistent with this plan and the interests of the town. If addi-

tional publicly owned lands are to be acquired, the town should only encourage such acquisitions after full consideration as to how it will effect the town's tax base.

Public Participation

1. The Planning Commission should spearhead efforts to involve the townspeople in the planning process on an ongoing basis. Planning forums, educational presentations and other interest generating techniques should be used for the most attended and useful public participation.

Implementation

Strategies

1. Continue to update and improve the plan as necessary to meet the needs of the town and in accordance with state law.
2. Recognize and utilize existing data, planning methods and development trends from other towns or regions that add strength and value to Starksboro's Town Plan.
3. Implement the objectives and policies in this plan through:
 - A. Revisions to the town's regulations;
 - B. Adoption of bylaws and ordinances;
 - C. Adoption of a capital budget;
 - D. Adoption of an official map or other implementation tools;
 - E. Town spending decisions;
 - F. Participation in regional and state planning and regulatory processes; and
 - G. Support for the efforts of non-governmental organizations.
4. Promote on-going participation and civic involvement by townspeople.
5. Support grant writing to locate funding for a variety of in-town and inter-town planning projects.
6. Continue to limit the total number of new homes that may be built in town each year in order to maintain a rate of growth that does not exceed the town's ability to provide necessary services and facilities.
7. Investigate alternative strategies for managing growth.

8. Carefully review the creation or expansion of high density residential development to ensure that it will not create a burden on the town's ability to provide services.
9. Support agricultural, forestry and appropriate businesses that provide healthy working conditions and livable compensation for local people.
10. Work with the supervisory district to develop more accurate projections of population growth that are more sensitive to the actual conditions affecting the community.
11. Support the development and seek funding for bike and pedestrian facilities and paths.
12. Support the efforts of the energy committee to develop an Energy Conservation Policy that will address conservation, sustainability and long-term planning to be incorporated into the next revision of the town plan, which will serve as a guide for future revisions to the town's land use regulations.
13. Continue to charge the Conservation Commission with identifying, mapping and studying the town's natural features and areas, outdoor recreation resources and important wildlife habitat in order to better understand the environment around us and how we can develop and use land in a way that is less disruptive or damaging to the environment.

Strategies

1. Improve communication and coordination with adjoining municipalities regarding land use and planning for future growth.
2. Work with adjoining towns to develop transportation strategies that minimize traffic, air, water and noise pollution, which are energy efficient, appealing and serviceable for the region's people.
3. Work with adjoining towns to develop wildlife corridors that maintain and enhance wildlife habitat and which preserve wildlife migration routes.
4. Work with adjoining towns to develop recreational corridors for enjoyment of the regions agricultural and forested landscape.
5. Collaborate with the neighboring towns to expand recreational opportunities for Starksboro's residents.
6. Work with neighboring towns, organizations and state agencies to develop sustainable energy resources in the region and coordinate energy planning initiatives.

Compatibility

Discussion

There are five towns (Hinesburg, Huntington, Lincoln, Bristol and Monkton) and one gore (Buels Gore) adjoining the Town of Starksboro.

At this time it appears the Monkton, Huntington and a portion of Hinesburg's land use plans and zoning have similar intent as Starksboro's in that they propose to direct development toward existing higher density areas in their existing villages. Their minimum lot sizes once away from the roads, however, are smaller than Starksboro's 25-acre minimum lot size. The portion of Hinesburg west of Route 116 is zoned as 2-acre residential, and the portion immediately east of Route 116 (within 4,300 feet) is zoned industrial. Bristol and Lincoln currently see mostly residential use on their boundaries with Starksboro, however, both allow at least some form of commercial as conditional uses.

The Addison County Regional Plan adopts municipality's land use designations as its own, thus it would be difficult to be in conflict with the region in this area. Additionally, the regional plan supports preservation of the working landscape and continuation of historic settlement patterns. There are no conflicts with the goals of the Regional Plan.