

POMFRET

Town Plan

2007

Adopted November 21, 2007

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the Pomfret Planning Commission with assistance from
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Woodstock, Vermont,
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Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

Preserving the scenic beauty and rural character of Pomfret's valleys, hillsides, and ridgelines remains the primary goal of this Plan. As measured by growth in surrounding towns, Pomfret's long-term planning efforts have been extremely effective. This is due in large measure to the foresight of Pomfret's Planning Commissions, its Selectboard, and its concerned citizens. They have devoted a great deal of time and energy endeavoring to carry out the expressed wishes of the community.

Pomfret's natural resources are the main interest of people who responded to the 2006 survey by the Pomfret Planning Commission. Residents and landowners also favor limiting change and growth in Pomfret through planning and zoning. Both sentiments were true in 1968 when the original Pomfret Planning Commission began to work on a Town Plan. The first Town Plan was adopted in October 1971 and was readopted with an amendment on December 21, 1977. During that interval Pomfret's Zoning Ordinance was drafted, approved, and amended twice, including approval of the Subdivision Regulations amendments on March 4, 1975. The Subdivision Regulations are being amended at this writing. These documents and Vermont's Act 250 have preserved Pomfret as we know it. The Ridgeline and Hillside Conservation Areas amendment to the Zoning Ordinance approved March 7, 1989, and currently being amended, assured further protection. It seems that few towns in the Green Mountain State have suffered as little impact from uncontrolled development as Pomfret has.

Pomfret's original Town Plan was further amended in November 1982 and December 1987, though the basic 1971 document remained intact. Town Plans in Vermont must be reviewed and rewritten or readopted every five years (Title 24, Chapter 117, Vermont Statutes Annotated). In 1992, it was decided that it was time to completely rewrite Pomfret's Town Plan. That effort took two years, and the document was adopted in the spring of 1995. The same plan was slightly modified for re-adoption in 2001 and again in 2006. This current plan incorporates results of a spring 2006 survey of all residents and landowners in the town to which about 34% responded. The residents of Pomfret are urged to review this plan thoughtfully, as the Planning Commission believes that the proposed goals, policies and objectives, and recommended actions all contribute to protecting and preserving Pomfret's open space and natural resources. They are essential to maintaining a gradual and diversified growth pattern.

Pomfret residents and landowners should all be aware that without a comprehensive Town Plan and effective zoning and subdivision regulations,

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uncontrolled development would overwhelm this town. In 1971, the Quechee Lakes Corporation (QLC) applied for “Conceptual Approval” of its planned development of 550 acres of land in the Bunker Hill section of Pomfret and 5,000 acres in Hartford to create 2,500 home sites. It was the Pomfret Selectboard’s objection that such a plan did not conform to Pomfret’s Town Plan, and that it would “permanently alter the Town’s social and economic cohesion,” that led to the Environmental Commission’s decision to eliminate from its approval all land owned by QLC in Pomfret.

The 2007 Pomfret Town Plan is divided into thirteen chapters according to major planning elements required by state law. Within each chapter, long-range goals are listed, followed by objectives and policies that are intended to guide measures undertaken to accomplish the goals. Recommendations are made for actions that can be taken by various groups within Town to achieve specific planning objectives. These lists are not intended to be definitive. Additions and revisions will be necessary from time to time, but these goals, policies and objectives, and recommended actions establish a direction ensuring that Pomfret remains a place where harmony between the built and natural environments is demonstrated through appropriate land use.

Chapter 13 addresses the need for follow-up to the recommended actions suggested in each chapter. It specifically identifies several critical objectives that require immediate action. Three Appendices include maps, and other background material that supports the text and proposals of the Plan. There is also a list of relevant definitions in the Glossary of Terms.

Planning is by its very nature a continuous activity. The Planning Commission encourages all those residents who value the extraordinary beauty of Pomfret, and who would like to assure future generations the opportunity of living in such a community, to participate in planning activities. Only through the efforts of volunteers can the Town guide growth as effectively as those who began this worthy activity thirty-six years ago.

Chapter 2 POMFRET HISTORY

Pomfret and its neighbors all came into being in the summer of 1761. The town of Pomfret was first laid out by New Hampshire Governor Benning Wentworth in a grant dated July 8, 1761. Wentworth had begun selling Town grants to land speculators for land west of the Connecticut River in 1749. During the summer of 1761 he sold many such grants, including Pomfret and its neighboring towns of Hartford, Woodstock, Barnard and Sharon. Most of the Pomfret grant's sixty-seven purchasers, known as "proprietors" (land speculators), came from the Woodstock, Connecticut area. Isaac Dana, one of ten proprietors named Dana, came from Pomfret, Connecticut, and may have been influential in naming the new town. Pomfret, Connecticut, in turn, had been named for Pomfret, England. The name Pomfret is believed to be a corruption of the Latin *ponte fractus* or broken bridge.

Wentworth's grants were all designed to be six miles square, with borders measuring six miles to a side. The grants were sold without benefit of proper surveys, and each cited boundaries of previous grants. Towns granted along the Connecticut River had readily defined and accurate eastern boundaries along the river, but as grants extended westward, the potential for error increased. Pomfret's continuing boundary disputes with Woodstock and Barnard were resolved for the most part in the late 1800's, though some sections are still not settled. The Taftsville covered bridge now stands where the towns of Hartford, Hartland, Pomfret and Woodstock once met, and the four towns jointly owned the bridge (Pomfret's share was 8/40ths.) To establish responsibility for the bridge's care and upkeep, Pomfret's share was given to Woodstock by the Vermont General Assembly in 1851. Pomfret's final dimensions remain approximately six by six miles (actually 5.6 x 6.8 miles).

Shortly after Benning Wentworth's flurry of grant activity, the colonial governor of New York, seeing a good opportunity to enrich his own and his colony's coffers, challenged Wentworth's right to grant lands west of the Connecticut River. To protect themselves against questionable grants, proprietors in several towns applied to New York for second grants for holdings already granted by New Hampshire. Woodstock succeeded, but Pomfret never received a second grant, although the town applied.

The land speculators or "proprietors" who had purchased the grants met and organized in Pomfret, Connecticut in 1761. To insure that their Pomfret, Vermont lands could be settled or sold, the owners of the grants planned for surveys and the development of roads. In addition, they created lots of land in the

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first division of the Town. The “proprietors” literally “drew lots” and thus became owners of these individual lots of land that could then be sold to other potential settlers. Money to pay for the development of roads and other needs came from assessing each owner. Fifteen of the original sixty-seven proprietors who did not pay this assessment in a timely fashion lost their rights.

This early action all took place in Connecticut. Pomfret, Vermont remained unsettled for a decade. Although a few had visited the area the summer before, the first settlers didn’t make their “pitches” until the early 1760s. The usual custom would be for a father, accompanied perhaps by a son or neighbor, to travel from southern New England in late winter or early spring. Pomfret’s early settlers discovered a hilly land, covered by a dense growth of trees, with few open vistas. The men would spend the summer staking and clearing the new acres, perhaps raising a grain crop to store until the following spring when the entire family would arrive. Most early Pomfret settlers followed this custom.

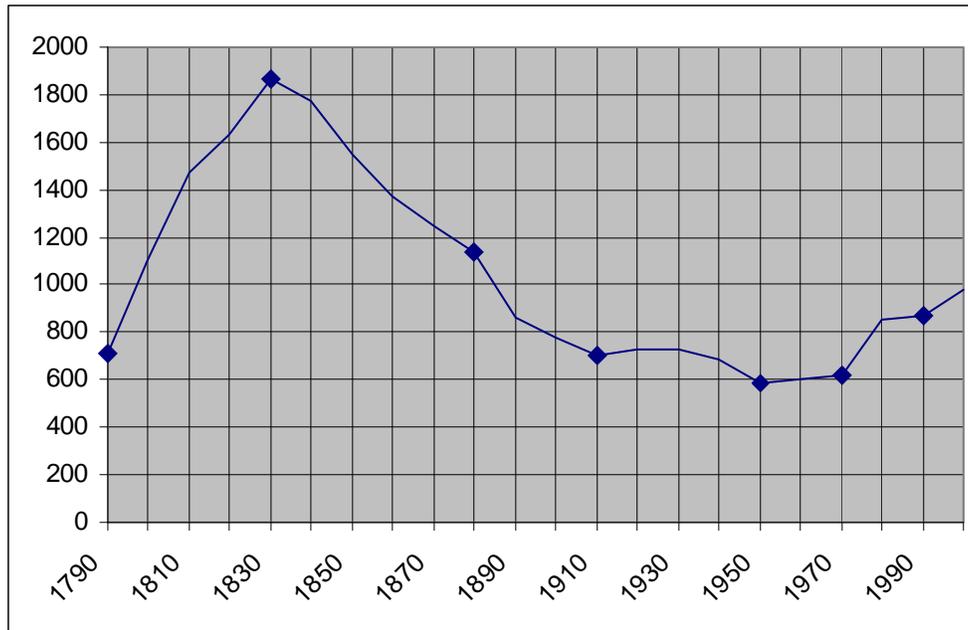
The first Pomfret Town Meeting was held in March of 1773, only three years after permanent settlement had begun in the new territory. Proprietors’ meetings continued to be held to dispose of land in several divisions. After the success of the American Revolution, England lost interest in the grants fight. The war also distracted the contending colonies of New York and New Hampshire. Settlers paid New York State \$30,000 to release the claim, and when the New Hampshire grants were resolved, were finally able to form their own state government in 1777. Vermont became the thirteenth State of the United States in 1790.

Many new Pomfret settlers fought in the Revolution (Bunker Hill is so named because many of its residents were in that battle), but Pomfret’s closest engagement came when a party of Canadian Indians burned Royalton in 1780. Men from Pomfret responded but could not prevent the town from burning.

Pomfret’s population soared from the 710 who lived in Town in 1791 to a high of 1,867 in 1830 (see Figure 1). The era of high population coincided with the rise of the nearly self-sufficient farm with its labor intensive operations. Large families were the custom, and many sons worked the family farm or acquired their own land nearby. But the days of the hill farm were numbered. The industrial revolution brought new farm equipment requiring new and larger farms with higher productivity. The so-called hill farms were gradually abandoned for easier-to-work and flatter lands, often in the mid or far west. The opening of the Erie Canal in 1830 hastened this westward migration. The Vermont sheep boom began in 1810 with the importation of the first Merino sheep from Spain and peaked by 1840. Many Vermont sheep farmers then saw their income from sheep drop rapidly.

Figure 1 - Pomfret Population History

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Source: Center for Rural Studies

The Erie Canal also allowed the Industrial Revolution to affect the Midwest and opened up many economic opportunities in that region. The girls of the farm families were, by the 1840s, leaving home to work in the woolen mills and factories of New Hampshire and southern New England. Others left as the economic activity in the Pomfret area declined.

The Civil War was widely supported in Pomfret. More than 130 men from this town served, and 24 Pomfret enlistees died in that war. Others, having had a taste of adventure and the world outside Vermont, sought their fortunes elsewhere following the conflict.

The remaining population became more mobile during the mid-nineteenth century. Stations in nearby Woodstock and White River Junction made it possible for Pomfret residents to travel freely by train for business and pleasure. Pomfret youth who chose careers in dentistry, medicine or law sought their fortunes in larger towns, in state or out. Many kept an interest in their old home town. According to Henry Hobart Vail's *History of Pomfret*, some 4,000 people came home to Pomfret to celebrate the 1870 centennial of the Town's first settlement.

Just as the Industrial Revolution helped to lower the Town's population a hundred years ago, mid-twentieth century changes in regional transportation caused significant economic growth in the 1970s and 1980s in the Upper Valley area. The development of the Interstate Highway System, air service and communications networks have dramatically changed the economic mix from that which existed one hundred years ago. Electronic media make it possible for many workers to remain at home while conducting business all over the world. Several

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such “electronic commuters” already live and work in Town. Population in Pomfret is currently about 1,000 people.

Housing

The first shelters were probably quickly made lean-tos only suitable for temporary shelter. Men brought their families to these structures, or sometimes to a log cabin. Both would have had dirt floors and few amenities. Once established, the settler would build a more substantial house, usually of wood and clapboard, but sometimes of brick or stone. Pomfret’s second framed house was not built until 1784.

These first settlements are shown on Robert Perkins’ 1915 map inserted in Vail’s *History of Pomfret*. Besides noting the names of those first to settle on a given plot, Perkins listed occupants in 1915 when many of the early sites had been abandoned. According to the Pomfret Grand List of 1824, there were at that time 5,389 acres of improved land, 230 houses, grist mills, 6 blacksmith shops, 6 cider mills, 7 sawmills, 5 cider houses, 3 shops, 1 casting machine, 2 clothing shops and 1 tannery. This was before Pomfret’s 1830 population high of 1,867. The Town’s population was more widely scattered in the early 1800’s, as individual houses sheltered larger families than at present. In 1911, Walter A. Perkins noted that many abandoned hill farms were reverting to forest, a trend that has continued.

Schools

The first schools were naturally crude. Cash was not plentiful on the frontier, and early teachers were paid in grain that often served as currency, each type having a different value. A 1786 teacher contract showed payment promised in grain. One Pomfret resident frequently ran classes to train teachers. By the nineteenth century school was held year-round. Girls generally attended in the summer when the boys were working on family farms. Boys attended mainly in winter when there was less farm work and walking was deemed too hard for girls and younger students.

The number of school districts in Town rose rapidly until this 36-square-mile town had sixteen schools of its own and two shared districts that served children from Pomfret and neighboring towns. The schools, despite being relatively small, often served as area meeting places for civic and entertainment programs of all sorts. Many area citizens were buried after services held in the former school in South Pomfret located on the Max Boynton property in the Village.

The number of Pomfret school districts gradually decreased in the twentieth century. The State passed increasingly stringent rules regarding facilities and training requirements for teachers. Taxpayers found it difficult to

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finance the maintenance of so many buildings. New teachers began to complain that they were not prepared to teach eight grades at once as was the custom in one-room schoolhouses. Pomfret then chose to allocate students by grade so that teachers usually taught no more than two grade levels in each school building. This continued until 1989 when the Town decided to build the K-6 school in South Pomfret that opened for the 1991-92 school year. The same modern transportation that delivered children to different schools by grade now made it practical to bus children to a single site that met state standards.

The Town never formally had its own high school, though at least one teacher advertised that he conducted a high school in Pomfret in the mid-nineteenth century. Some Pomfret students attended the Green Mountain Liberal Institute in South Woodstock after 1848 and Woodstock High School after 1854. Some in the northern part of town attended Royalton High School. Until transportation improved, girls and boys boarded near their schools during the week and returned to Pomfret on weekends. Pomfret has been a member of the Woodstock Union High School District since the Union was formed in 1954.

Transportation

The earliest settlers came up the Connecticut River on flatboats, or in winter dragging belongings on a sled. Often everyone walked; sometimes the wife and youngest children rode a horse. Upon leaving the river they followed marked trails into the Town. The proprietors and then the settlers themselves raised taxes to build roads. The early stage route to Barnard and Royalton crossed Pomfret. Teamsters drove Vermont farm products to Boston and returned with goods to be sold in local shops. The advent of the railroad to nearby Hartford (1849) made Boston markets more accessible to Pomfret farmers, who shipped via the rail head at West Hartford. The Woodstock Railway, which began operation in 1875, provided those in the southern end of town access to passenger and commodity transportation. By the time it ceased operating in 1933, most families in Pomfret had their own automobiles and farmers were shipping by truck.

Institutions

Most of the earliest settlers were Congregationalists. The area's first settled minister, shared with Woodstock, lived and farmed where the new Pomfret School now stands. The first Pomfret minister was granted a lot near Pomfret Center. Later, townspeople raised a handsome church building near the center that burned in 1843 and was not rebuilt. The present North Pomfret Congregational Church was built in 1844 and is still used for worship. The Ladies Circle celebrated its hundredth anniversary in 1992. The present Town Hall was erected in 1845 by the Universalists who donated it to the Town in 1872.

The Abbott Memorial Library in South Pomfret was the gift of native son, Ira Abbott. It was erected in 1905, and for many years served the children of the

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town through their schools, which were designated as branch libraries. From the beginning, the library was the focal point of many public events in the southern part of town and today provides programs for area children. It is administered by a board elected at Town Meeting and supported by Town funds and private gifts.

The Grange movement in America began soon after the Civil War. Pomfret had two Granges that flourished in the last century, providing farm families with social and educational programs. As the Town's agricultural base eroded, so too has the Grange base. Neither organization is active, though the Grange Hall in South Pomfret still stands and is occasionally used for Town functions.

Industries

Early Pomfret industries were similar to those of neighboring towns. One of the first commercial products was potash made from the trees that were felled to clear the new farms. Potash, used in the production of soap, brought premium prices in England until 1793. The first U.S. patent was issued to a Vermonter for an improved method of making potash. Lumber mills and general farming were also important. During the 1830s South Pomfret was called the "Slab City" because of its three lumber mills. Farming predominated throughout the nineteenth century. In the 1850 census, the majority of men were farmers and some one hundred others — men and women — were listed as farm help. In 2005 the Pomfret Listers counted four properties as operating farms (properties that include farm buildings), however a 2002 census by the U.S. Department of Agriculture using a more inclusive definition of farming showed 32 farms operating in town. Once devoted to raising dairy cattle, farms are now more diversified. The largest farm in town raises beef cattle as do several others. There are also nurseries, greenhouses, apple orchards, an organic produce farm and similar agricultural enterprises. Many professional people, who commute to jobs in other towns, maintain flocks of sheep, small herds of beef cattle, or pursue other agrarian activities such as sugaring. Further, there are many informal arrangements made between landowners in town and farmers to cut fields so they can remain open. Farming operations of all types are important to maintaining this town's rural character.

Suicide Six, South Pomfret's ski area, opened in 1935. Now owned and managed by the Woodstock Inn and Resort, it does substantial business in ski season and occasionally rents out the base lodge at other times of the year.

Political Subdivisions

Pomfret has been a town in the Republic of Vermont since 1777, which makes it older than the State. Until 1965, Pomfret elected its own representative to the Vermont General Assembly. Since then it has belonged to a joint district sharing representation with neighboring towns. The towns that make up the

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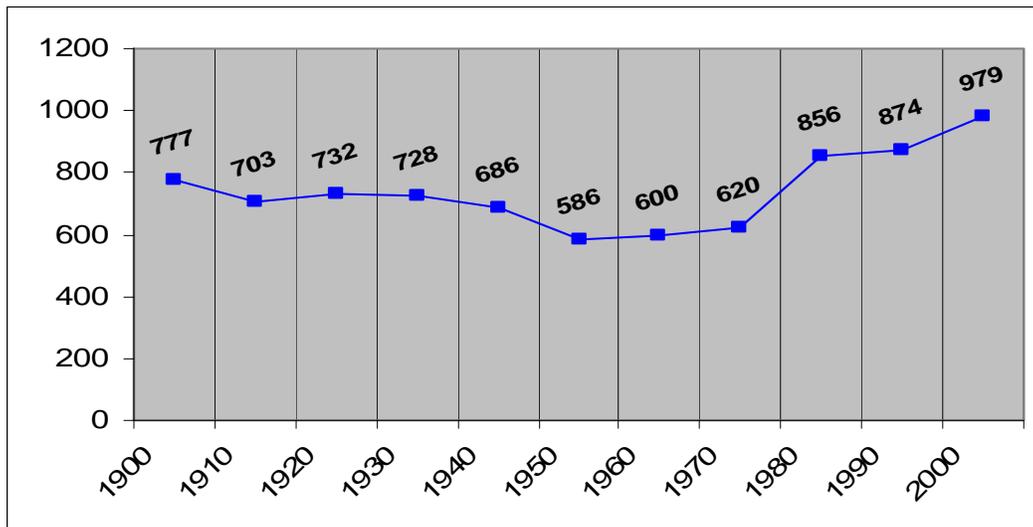
district may change every ten years due to population shifts determined by the Federal Census. Pomfret is one of the twenty-four towns in Windsor County that share three elected State Senators, some of whom have been Pomfret residents. Woodstock is the Shire Town of Windsor County. The Windsor County Probate Court and Sheriff's office are located there.

Chapter 3 POMFRET COMMUNITY PROFILE

This chapter provides the reader with a "profile" of Pomfret through a series of graphs and charts. Recent trends can be determined from this information. This overview of the major characteristics that make up Pomfret is divided into the following headings: Population, Economy, and Government. The graphs and charts and most of the material in the accompanying text under each of these headings come from U.S. Census 2000 data and the Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont. The Center for Rural Studies' data is available on the web at <http://crs.uvm.edu/>

Population

Figure 2 - Pomfret Population, 1900-2000

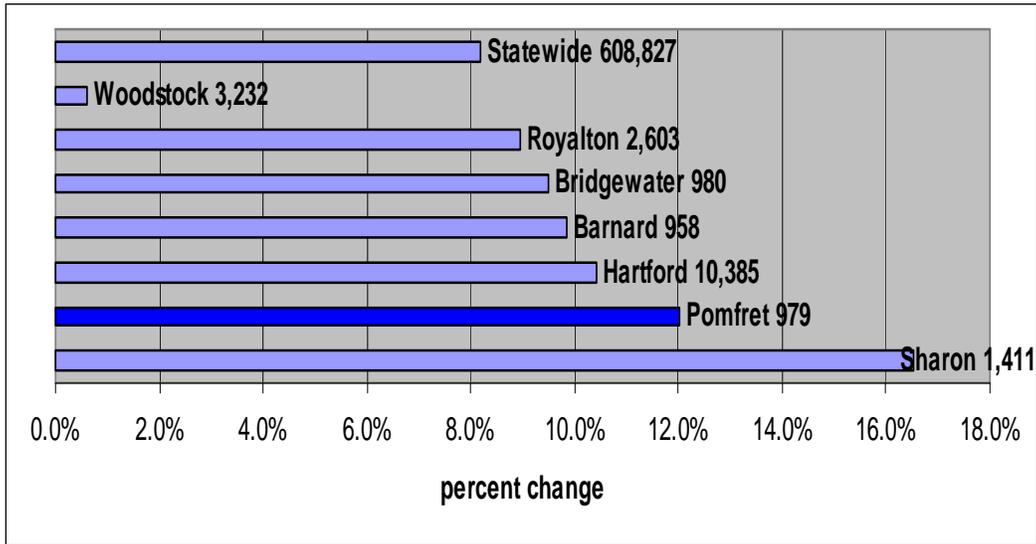


Source: Center for Rural Studies

Although it has increased more than 55% since 1970 when the Interstate opened, the population of Pomfret has not returned to its peak of approximately 1,800 residents in 1830. As shown in Figure 2 above, in 2000, Pomfret's population stood at 979, representing a growth rate of about 12% over the previous ten years. Note that the Town's population grew by 38% between 1970 and 1980.

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Figure 3 - Population Change, 1990-2000



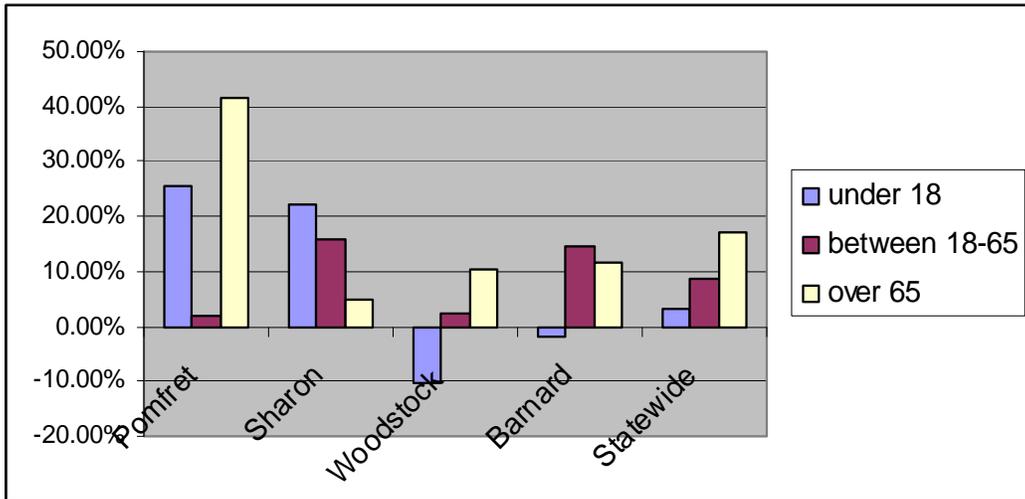
Source: Center for Rural Studies

The figure above shows the Town's rate of growth was about four percent larger than the State average during the same period and, as compared to other towns in the Upper Valley, it was second only to Sharon (which has no zoning regulations) for the highest rate of growth overall. The numbers after each town's name indicate its population in the year 2000.

The age of Pomfret's full time residents also changed during the 1990's. The number of residents under 18 years of age rose by 25% to 262 people, an increase of 53 people. The number of people between 18 and 65 years of age increased by only about 2% to a total of 577, an increase of 11. The number of residents over 65 years of age increased by more than 40% to a total of 140 people, increasing by 41 people. The next figure illustrates how these demographic changes compare to the same age groups in the towns of Sharon, Barnard, and Woodstock, as well as to statewide figures.

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Figure 4 - Percent change in population, 1990-2000

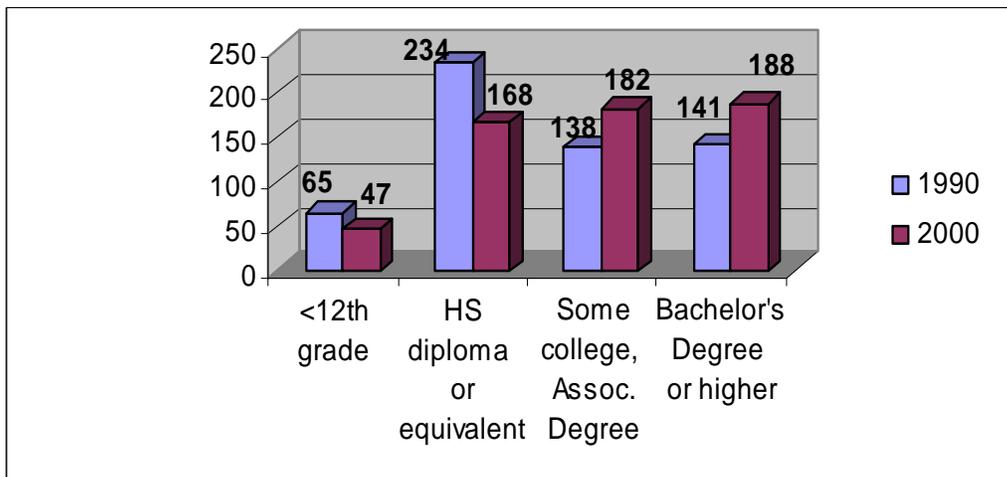


Source: Center for Rural Studies

The number of Pomfret residents who were born in this State increased slightly from 182 in 1990 to 210 in 2000, a trend typical of Vermont as a whole.

Between 1990 and 2000, the number of Pomfret's adult population attaining at least a high school diploma (that is, those with a high school diploma plus those who attended college, received a two year or four year degree, and those with graduate education) increased slightly to 94%. The number of Pomfret residents with four year college or advanced degrees increased to 46%. In 2000 for Windsor County and the State of Vermont, the percentage of adult residents with four year college or advanced degrees was 29% and 27%, respectively. The figure below shows that the number of adult residents with a Bachelor's or more advanced degrees has increased, relative to 1990 figures.

Figure 5 - Pomfret educational attainment



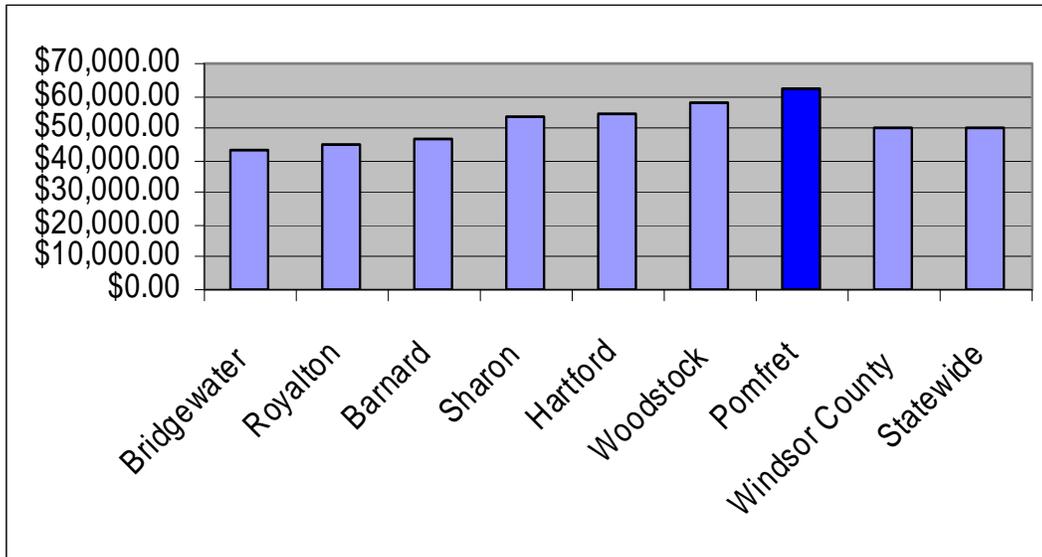
Source: Center for Rural Studies

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Economy

According to Vermont Tax Department data, the median adjusted gross income for families in Pomfret for the 2004 tax year was higher than any of the surrounding towns. Median adjusted gross income for families was also higher in Pomfret than in Windsor County and the State of Vermont. This information is shown in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6 - 2004 Median Adjusted Gross Income per family

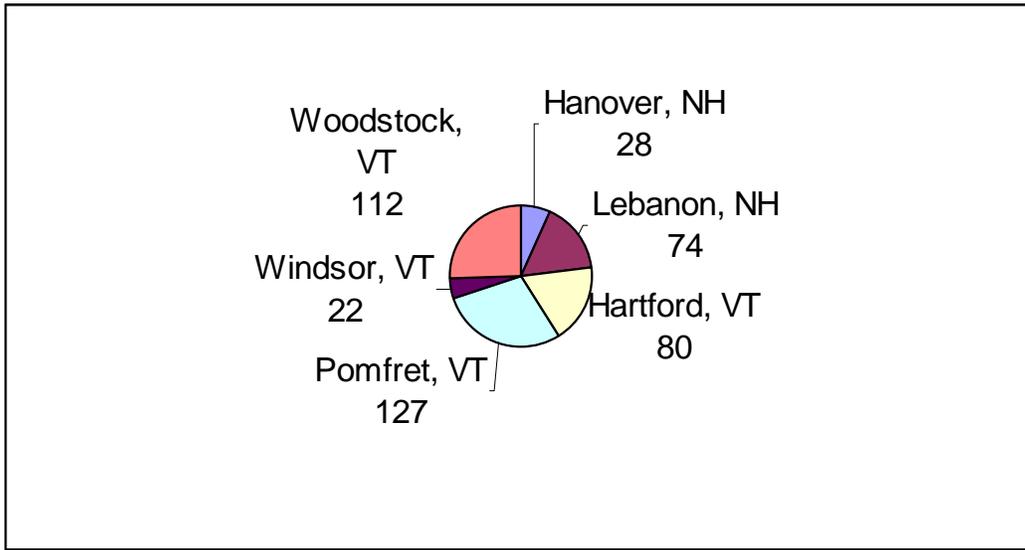


Source: Vermont Tax Department

Pomfret typifies a "bedroom community" in that a majority of its labor force is employed outside of the Town. About 24% (127 people) of Pomfret's work force works within the Town and approximately 8% (or 43 people) work at home. These two numbers are expected to change, however, because a major employer in town is closing and 30 jobs are expected to be lost. The average travel time for Pomfret's commuters is more than 20 minutes and almost without exception, commuting is done by automobile. Following is data on the major employment centers for Pomfret's workers and the number of people traveling to work in these towns.

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Figure 7 – Major employment centers for Pomfret workers *



* Note this is not a complete list

Source: US Census Bureau

In the 2000 U.S. Census, Pomfret's residents indicated their type and class of employment as the following tables reflect. Based upon this analysis, Pomfret's work force closely profiles the typical work force for the State, though there are more management and professional workers in Pomfret, and more service employees at the state level.

Table 1 – Occupations of Pomfret workers

Occupation	Number	Percent	Statewide
Management, professional	277	50.6%	36.3%
Sales, office positions	106	19.4%	14.6%
Service	81	14.8%	24.5%
Production, transportation	40	7.3%	1.3%
Construction, maintenance	38	6.9%	9.3%
Farming, fishing, forestry	5	0.9%	14.0%

Table 2 - Occupational class of Pomfret workers

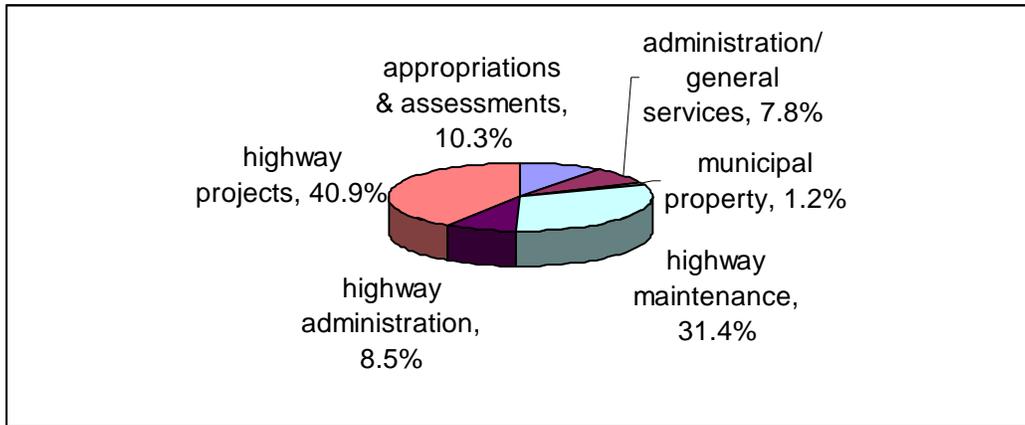
Occupational Class	Number	Percentage
Privately employed	320	58.5%
Self employed	130	23.8%
Government	97	17.7%

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Government

Two-thirds of every Pomfret property tax dollar collected in fiscal year 2005 went to support schools and the balance supports town administration, public safety, social services, and highway maintenance and construction. The following Figure indicates how non-school tax dollars are spent in Pomfret:

Figure 8 - 2005 Pomfret Town Budget (excluding school budget)



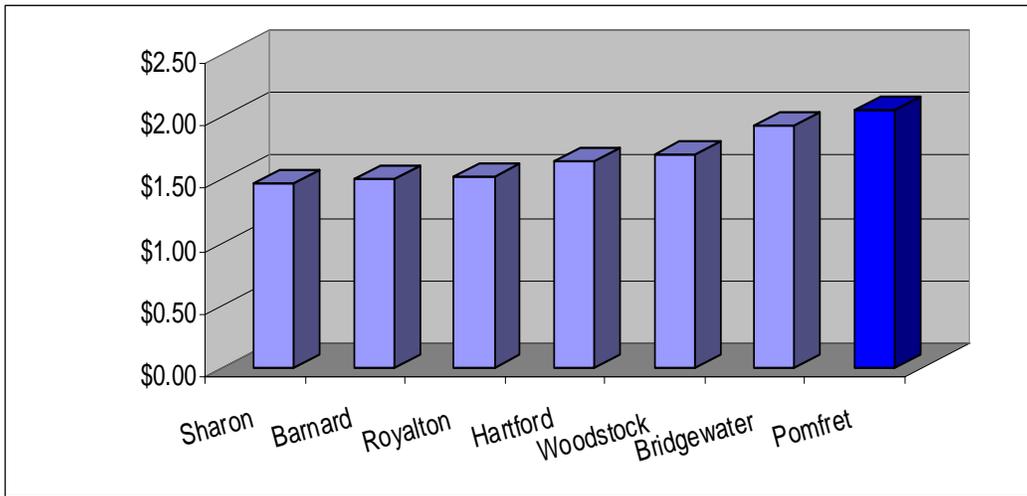
Source: Pomfret Town Report 2005

The municipal tax rate for the town in 2006 was \$0.40, slightly down from \$0.42 in 2005. This tax figure includes any applicable local agreement rate and highway rates, but does not include any fire districts, service districts, or local construction rates. This rate has remained more or less level over the last five years.

The education tax rate for a homestead property (a primary residence on six acres of land or less) was \$2.04 in 2006, which was up substantially from \$1.74 in 2005. The figure below shows how the education tax rate for a homestead property compares to the surrounding towns.

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Figure 9 - FY 2006 Education Tax Rate for Homesteads

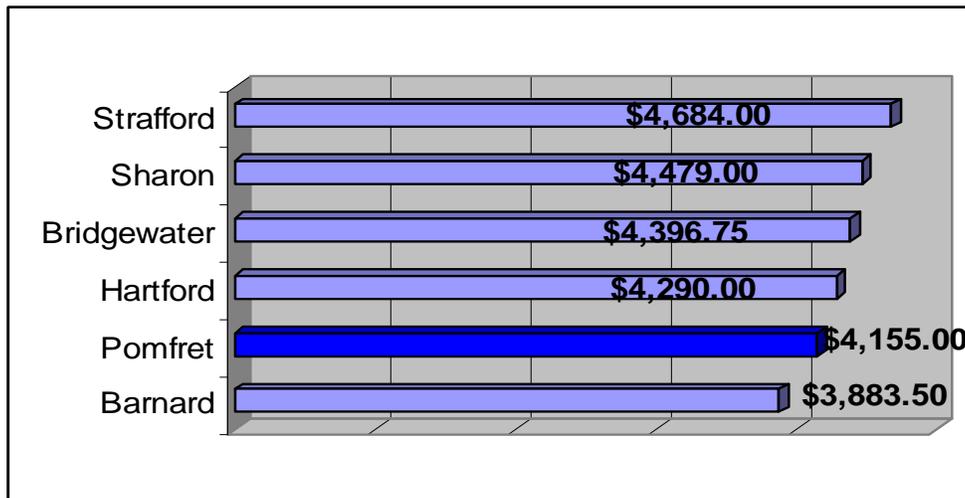


Source: Center for Rural Studies

Even though the education tax rate in Pomfret is higher than many surrounding towns, the effective rate is lower than in many of the surrounding municipalities because properties in town are not assessed at 100% of their fair market value. The effective tax rate is calculated by multiplying the total tax rate by the common level of appraisal (CLA), which is 0.6810 in Pomfret for FY2007. The CLA will increase when town-wide reappraisal is complete by April 1, 2008. See Appendix C for more information.

Using a residence value of \$250,000 in each town and multiplying that number by the effective tax rate in each town, the tax bill would be:

Figure 10 - 2005 Relative Tax Burden on a \$250,000 homestead



Source: Center for Rural Studies

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As of 2007, the only tax Vermont towns are allowed to levy for governmental services is the property tax. For Vermont in general, year round residences are fiscal drains on towns, meaning that they pay less in taxes (income to the town) than it costs to provide services to them. In 2005, the average sales price of a primary residence in Pomfret was \$357,250. Even if the property were appraised at this selling price, the total tax assessment on the property would only yield \$8,719 for the Town. This tax bill would not pay the cost of educating one student in 2005, a cost estimated at \$10,526 per pupil. See Chapter 10 for further discussion of this issue.

Chapter 4 LAND USE

Introduction

Pomfret is one of a few special areas in the Vermont which remain unspoiled by high density or large tract development. The outstanding landscape feature of Pomfret is its typically wooded hills flanked by narrow open valleys. It is in the public interest of the Town of Pomfret to seek methods which will allow for orderly development in a manner which is not ecologically or aesthetically destructive.

The policies set forth below are not intended to prohibit or unduly constrain development in these areas. Rather, they are being offered as planning guidelines to assure that future land use changes are ecologically sensitive to the site and are visually compatible to the public which benefits from those special qualities noted herein. Future review of development in these areas shall be directed at supporting growth, but only on finding that the activity meets reasonable environmental standards and is not unduly adverse to the visual characteristics of the area as viewed from public areas, particularly highways.

It is intended that prospective developers and conservationists will be aided by these policies. Furthermore, it is intended that these policies are to serve as the basis on which future bylaw revisions regulating developments may be developed. Through well-conceived planning programs, the citizens of the Town of Pomfret have a window of opportunity to conserve areas of exceptional merit yet at the same time allow for orderly development of its resources.

The long range goals, policies, and actions (page 21-23) in this chapter describing land use in Pomfret are consistent with historical patterns and with the residents' desire to preserve Pomfret's rural, scenic and agricultural character. Future development should be evaluated by its impact on the character of the Town, as well as by its impact on both the cost of Town services and the general quality of life in Pomfret. The experience of other towns demonstrates that unplanned, uncontrolled growth leads to a change in the town's character along with higher taxes. Once begun, neither trend can be reversed.

Traditional Land Use in Pomfret

When the first settlers reached Pomfret in the late 1700's, their primary concern was to clear enough land so they could pasture their cattle and produce crops and enough food for their families. Given the rocky nature of Pomfret's hillsides and the fact that many settlers built their log cabins high in the hills, agricultural activity was a constant struggle. Land use in those days was focused on meeting basic needs. It is not likely that those early farmers visualized a time when most of the land in Pomfret would be used for other purposes. Until the 1950s, Pomfret land was used almost exclusively for agriculture, not only for raising livestock and crops, but also for the harvesting of timber and making maple syrup. Land values were determined by agricultural productivity. Beginning slowly in the 1940s and continuing more rapidly in the 1960s, non-farm primary residences and vacation homes began to appear. Land became a commodity bought and sold for residential development; development and farming have coexisted since then. As in most rural Vermont towns, land sold for residential development has had a higher cash value than land kept in farming. This has hastened the demise of the working farm.

Land Use Today

According to 2005 data from the Pomfret Listers, only four farm properties are in operation in town. The Lister's Handbook defines an operating farm as one that includes buildings. Properties that were formerly farmed and now have a highest and best use as a residential or vacation property are not included, nor is vacant land used in the farming operation, such as land upon which corn or hay is grown. Vacant land of this type is coded as Miscellaneous, and there were 99 such properties in town in 2005.

In contrast to town figures, the 2002 Census of Agriculture conducted by the US Department of Agriculture shows a total of 32 farms in Pomfret. A farm, by the USDA definition, is any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year.

Agritourism, as defined by the Vermont Farms Association, is the practice of keeping a farm open to the public to allow visitors. Agritourism allows farms to remain financially viable by diversifying their operations. According to the USDA, income from agritourism-related activities on Vermont farms in 2002 totaled \$19.5 million, an 86% increase from the same value in 2000.

Pomfret has become primarily a community of residential properties, but in appearance remains an agricultural community because of the many large contiguous parcels of open land and woods. The following table illustrates land cover/use in Pomfret based on 2003 satellite imagery. Maps 1 and 2 in Appendix D depict current and future land use in Pomfret.

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Table 3 – 2003 Land Use in Pomfret

Land Use	Acres
Forest	17,908
Open	4,642
Residential	2,700
Total:	25,250

Source: Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission

In general, the amount of forest land in town appears not to have changed since a 1975 Orthophotography study was conducted. The ratio of open land to residential land, however, appears to have changed quite significantly between 1975 and 2003. Because the examination of orthophotos is far more precise than review of a digital satellite photo, it is not possible to offer a reliable numerical comparison of the acreage from 1975 to 2003.

Based on 309 responses to the 2006 Planning Commission Survey, 95 percent of the respondents preferred to have Pomfret remain primarily residential and agricultural in character, and a combined total of 87 percent wanted "as little growth as possible" or "controlled growth using zoning and subdivision laws." (See Appendix B for complete survey results). Clearly there is an overwhelming desire on the part of the people who responded to the survey to preserve Pomfret's rural character and to manage growth through wise land use policies.

The traditional rural landscape of some towns in this part of Vermont has given way to types of development that destroy the historic rural character, such as building houses in the center of open fields or on scenic ridgelines, or by dividing land so that it can never again be used for agriculture. The 2006 Survey asked residents and landowners if they support restrictions on building in open fields in Pomfret, and 77% were in favor. However, when asked if they support a pattern of compact settlements surrounded by rural countryside, a slim majority of 56 percent favored this pattern, and 33 percent opposed it. Thirty four percent of survey respondents favor the current 2 acre zoning outside villages and hamlets, while 26% favor 5 acre zoning, 23% favor 10 acre zoning, and 8% favor 20 acre zoning. Larger parcel sizing outside of villages and hamlets, however, will allow preservation of a more traditional rural development pattern and allows the town to meet the State goal to plan development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village centers separated by rural countryside.

Other towns in Vermont have also discovered that rapid residential growth can dramatically increase taxes. Under current tax laws, residential development does not pay for itself unless the homes are very expensive or are vacation homes.

Residential development has not overwhelmed Pomfret. This is partially a result of zoning and subdivision regulations enacted in the 1970s that discouraged

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large-scale development of residential tracts, and of the desire of many land owners to continue an agricultural tradition and way of life.

Local zoning, subdivision, and ridgeline regulations are not the only factors limiting growth in Pomfret. Other restraints to development include such physical limitations as steep terrain, soils unsuitable for septic systems, cultural limitations such as State subdivision and wetlands regulations or the Vermont Land Gains Tax, the State Act 250 Land Use Regulations, conservation easements, the state's Current Use Program, and public land. State data from 1999 show that more than 13% of the town was publicly or privately conserved at the time, totaling nearly 3,500 acres. Even with these restrictions in place and with Pomfret's current regulations, the number of houses in the Town could increase substantially.

Since Pomfret has grown in the last decade, the Town should be concerned with the possibility of increased growth in the future. New, available technology now permits the use of septic systems in areas where they were not feasible in the past. Other factors that could create a significantly higher rate of development in Pomfret in the future are:

- Higher taxes on undeveloped land, thereby forcing the sale of this land.
- A strong regional economy creating more demand for housing.
- A continued weakening of the agricultural economy.
- Outdated and inadequate zoning and subdivision regulations.
- Access to local airports for private jets and helicopters.
- Easy access to the Upper Valley, a desirable area for people seeking to escape urban areas.

Pomfret residents must remain aware of potential changes in this community and what those changes could mean to the rural character, tax structure, and quality of life in Pomfret. There is a need for widespread public understanding of how development forces can exert tremendous pressures to subdivide larger properties. Without this awareness, Pomfret's extraordinary beauty will not be preserved. The community also needs to identify steps it can take to guide the future development of the Town in order to preserve its rural character and scenic beauty, and to control the cost of local government.

A Conservation Commission was created in Pomfret during the 1990s to act as an advisory board to the Planning Commission, the Selectboard, and the Town. The Commission's responsibilities were to include creation of inventories of natural, historic, and scenic resources. The Pomfret Conservation Commission has not been active for several years, and should be re-established in order to further the goals, objectives and policies of this Town Plan.

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Long-Range Goals

The following long-range goals accommodate diversity of land use consistent with high regard for the environment and the natural beauty of Pomfret. They will help us fulfill the expressed wishes of a large majority of Pomfret residents.

1. Preserve the rural character and scenic beauty of Pomfret.
2. Preserve open space for current or future agricultural use of all types.
3. Limit density of development to the physical capacity of the land to handle the development without degrading the environment.
4. Ensure that the rate of development does not exceed the ability of existing and planned town services and facilities to support it.
5. Promote traditional agricultural activities and encourage new ones. These agricultural activities should include the use of tillable land, pastureland, and all kinds of forestland.
6. Plan for a reasonable level of growth, incorporating the land use goals of this plan and employing thoughtful siting and grouping of structures to replicate traditional settlement patterns.

Policies and Objectives

1. Manage growth so it does not detract from the rural character of Pomfret.
2. Maintain an inventory of operating farms and agricultural land and review all development on these parcels to minimize the impact of such growth.
3. Support State and local tax policies that encourage the preservation of agricultural and other open space.
4. Allow non-agricultural commercial development which will utilize existing farm structures, preserve existing agricultural and productive forest land, and which will not detract from Pomfret's rural character.
5. Encourage residential development contiguous to existing hamlets or villages, or in areas identified as capable of sustaining development due to readily available access, topography, soils, and other factors.
6. Limit development density in areas where the capacity of the land is limited by shallow soils, steep slopes, limited access, or other factors.

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7. Encourage siting of residential structures in one area of a large land parcel or parcels so that the remaining open space will continue to be available for agriculture, preservation of natural resources, or to maintain the rural character and scenic beauty of the Town.
8. Manage growth and development with respect to the existing municipal facilities, services, and infrastructure and their planned rate of growth, and review proposed developments with respect to same.
9. Encourage agricultural activity that may increase the value of agricultural and forest land above its development value.
10. Encourage full- or part-time agricultural activities that would supplement regular income such as growing food, flowers or animals, horse farming, maple sugaring, selective growing of timber, tree farms, and firewood.
11. Agritourism should be encouraged to promote the viability of agriculture in Pomfret, provided that it does not negatively impact the health, welfare or safety of nearby residents.
12. Residential development and other types of development in the designated Ridgeline and Hillside areas shall occur only in a manner which serves to maintain the focus on important scenic features and the overall visual quality of the landscape by screening visually objectionable structures, maintaining a harmony between the built and natural environment and through placement of manmade structures in places which will not unduly modify the sequences and views from the public highways of Pomfret.

Recommended Actions

1. Re-establish the Pomfret Conservation Commission to further land use goals, objectives and policies in this Town Plan (Selectboard).
2. Define and inventory agricultural and forest land using available soils suitability data. (Conservation Commission)
3. Create a development suitability map based on the capacity of soils, topography, access, etc. to handle development. Determine the maximum development densities to be permitted in different areas of the Town. (Planning Commission)
4. Continue to rewrite Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to include the following:

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- a. Protection of views of Pomfret's Ridgelines and Hillsides from Pomfret's public highways.
 - b. Special review for any development on prime agricultural and productive forestland.
 - c. Development densities that do not exceed capacity of land to sustain them.
 - d. Size and timing of major projects to conform to planned infrastructure growth.
 - e. Provisions for land development patterns that conform to the goals and policies of this section such as cluster development, planned unit developments, and related techniques. These provisions should allow denser development in appropriate locations in exchange for less dense or no development in areas which should remain open. (Planning Commission)
 - f. Allow new structures in areas that will minimize the impact on natural and scenic resources.
5. Educate residents and landowners on the importance of agriculture and preserving land for future agricultural use not only as a source of income and jobs, but also to preserve rural character. (Conservation Commission)
 6. Share information with landowners regarding techniques to preserve open space and reduce taxes using such methods and programs as conservation easements, Current Use, restrictive covenants, and innovative estate planning. (Conservation Commission)
 7. Support ongoing networking between producers and marketers of agricultural and forest products to assure financial viability of existing farms. (Conservation Commission)
 8. Encourage landowners to make their agricultural and forest land available for others to farm and maintain a list of those landowners willing to participate in such a program. (Conservation Commission)
 9. Educate landowners on the benefits of environmentally sound agricultural and forestry practices. (Conservation Commission)
 10. Review Pomfret's zoning regulations to ensure that agritourism, where it is appropriate, is not impeded. (Planning Commission)

Chapter 5 NATURAL, HISTORIC AND SCENIC RESOURCES

Introduction

Pomfret's natural and historic resources, rural character, and scenic beauty must be protected and preserved for the health, safety, and enjoyment of current and future generations. Many of these resources are irreplaceable, and if not preserved, will be gone forever. There are many cases in the world where the benefits of natural resources have not been understood until after a resource is gone. Habitat loss and resultant species loss is probably the most vivid example of this trend. This can still be prevented from happening in Pomfret.

This chapter will explore the past and present state of Pomfret's natural, scenic, and historic resources and suggest how they should be treated in the future. It is divided into three sections:

- Natural Resources
- Rural Character and Scenic Beauty
- Historic Resources

Natural Resources

The 2006 Survey of Pomfret residents and landowners indicated that the following natural resources are of most importance:

- Open fields and meadows (86%)
- Forest land (82%)
- Agricultural land (81%)
- Scenic views (80%)
- Streams (80%)

Further discussion of these important resources follows.

Wildlife Habitat

Wildlife habitat protection is critical to the conservation of plants and animals and hence to the general quality of life in Pomfret. "Natural areas" not only encourage and protect species diversity, they also enhance aesthetic

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enjoyment, recreation, and education. Wildlife habitat should be given consideration in each decision to build in or change the natural environment.

In addition to deer yards, Pomfret has some unique and fragile habitats, possibly including those of rare and endangered species. Through the years some habitat areas have been placed under permanent protection. Although there has never been a comprehensive town wide study of significant habitats, an inventory limited to the Appalachian Trail Corridor found several wetland areas supporting rare ferns and some vernal pools that may be breeding grounds for rare salamanders. To protect additional habitats it is necessary to continue updating inventories, reviewing development plans that may affect these habitats, and encouraging landowners to arrange for permanent protection of important habitats. The cumulative effect of scattered development on larger contiguous wildlife habitats is important. It is possible to separate deer, bears, and other animals from their wintering areas by scattered development, which, for this reason, should be avoided.

Following is a list of the important habitat areas that are protected in Pomfret:

- Sharon-Pomfret Seep
- Amity Pond
- Wetlands on the National Wetlands Inventory

In addition, there are other conserved lands in town that contain important habitat area, including the Appalachian Trail Corridor and other parcels of land. As of 2007, a total of 4,100 acres of land are conserved of which 1,800 acres are public and 2,300 acres are private land. See Map 5 in Appendix D.

Wetlands

The importance of wetlands to the whole ecosystem and to the health, safety, and welfare of the general public, has been recognized in both Federal and Vermont legislation in recent years. The Natural Resources Board estimates that Vermont has already lost more than 35 percent of its original wetlands resources and that the remaining wetlands comprise less than 4 percent of the state's surface area.

In addition to providing important support for fisheries and wildlife habitats, wetlands protect drinking water supplies by filtering out excess toxins and nutrients and by helping to recharge aquifers. Wetlands also play an important role in minimizing flood damage by storing flood waters.

There are 215 acres of wetlands in Pomfret that are on the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) and are protected by the 1990 Vermont Wetlands Rules. The NWI was completed in 1978 but was never field checked. Field observations by the Vermont Wetlands Office staff indicate that this is an

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underestimation. A more accurate up-to-date inventory would be useful for identifying important wetlands that must be protected in Pomfret. Landowners should be made aware of significant wetlands on their property.

Surface Waters

Pomfret's brooks, streams, and fisheries contribute to wetlands and recharge ground water supply. Undisturbed natural vegetation on and along the banks of streams, called a riparian buffer, provides erosion control and protection from the sun which enhances habitat value and water quality. Maintenance of a riparian buffer by private landowners is essential to minimizing flash flood damage on their property and land further down stream.

Two local sources of stream pollution and siltation are farming and highway maintenance. Both of these activities are vital to the Town but could be managed in such a way as to have little or no negative effect on streams. Local farming activities and highway maintenance should be reviewed to determine if there is unnecessary stream damage from chemicals, animals in streams, road salt, and drainage ditches.

Several new private ponds are created every year in Pomfret. Originally farm ponds, many are now used for recreation and aesthetic purposes. The Town Zoning Ordinance requires a permit issued by the Zoning Board of Adjustment before a pond can be constructed. Currently pond construction plans are reviewed to ensure the safety of downstream roads or property. Pond construction also needs to be reviewed for any adverse effects on streams, wildlife habitat, or wetlands. Ponds are a major source of water for fighting fires. Inventories of ponds and regulation of pond construction should take fire protection into consideration. Additionally, no development other than agriculture and forestry should be allowed in flood plain areas without appropriate municipal review after showing that specific engineering and construction standards have been satisfied.

Water Supply

All Pomfret households depend on ground water for domestic use. This water flows in underground streams on uncharted pathways. It is tapped from underground storage areas called aquifers or from underground streams and springs. Ground water is the least understood of all natural resources, yet it is essential to the preservation and quality of life and to economic stability. As a result, the protection of ground water quality and quantity deserves the highest priority when formulating plans for the future of Pomfret.

There appears to be no immediate threat to Pomfret's water supply. A local well driller reports that Pomfret has plentiful water supplies and that existing wells very seldom need to be drilled deeper. Pomfret is not as subject to major hazardous material spills as many other communities due to its distance from

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major highways, railroads, and waste sites. Still, a safe water supply was a top priority of respondents to the Conservation Commission survey in 1990, and water quality should be monitored. The long term effect of any form of development on the quality of the water supply is a major factor in the review of development plans.

Air Quality

Air quality problems in Vermont are mostly created elsewhere and must be solved at a state, national, or international level. Local wood stoves, backyard burning of trash, and excessive brush burning contribute to air pollution. Clean air is a natural resource that can no longer be taken for granted even in less industrialized states such as Vermont. Enforcement of existing State and Federal air pollution regulations is important. Excessive brush burning in Pomfret that adversely affects surrounding landowners should be limited.

Gravel and Other Mineral Extraction

The use of local sand and gravel significantly reduces the cost of road maintenance within the Town, helps the local economy. When proper erosion control and reclamation techniques are used, extraction of gravel and other minerals can have minimal impact on the environment. The land can later be returned to other productive uses. Currently there are no operating gravel pits in Pomfret. Potential gravel reserves should be identified and set aside for future use. The extraction of minerals is to be limited to operations that do not conflict with the other goals, policies, or objectives of this plan.

Agricultural and Forest Lands

Agricultural and forest lands are critical natural resources to Pomfret. The significance of agricultural and forest lands is examined in detail in the Land Use chapter of the Plan and in the Rural Character and Scenic Beauty section of this chapter.

Rural Character and Scenic Beauty

When the 2006 Planning Commission Survey asked the question, "What makes Pomfret a special place?," 90 percent answered "rural character." In addition, a similar number of respondents highly value the town's scenic beauty (88%) and open fields (79%). When asked what could be done to make Pomfret a better place, 72 percent said the Town should preserve productive agricultural and forest land.

The visual elements of rural character in Pomfret are the traditional working landscape and land use patterns relating to Pomfret's agricultural heritage, the undeveloped ridgelines and hillsides, and the scenic roads lined with mature trees and old stone walls. Historic resources related to the Town's

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agricultural heritage, such as old barns and farmhouses, are other elements of rural character that need to be preserved. Additional elements of rural character may be the people and their institutions: local government mostly made up of volunteers, volunteer fire departments and Fast Squad, and citizens concerned about and caring for their neighbors.

Virtually every chapter of this Plan examines a different aspect of rural character. Preserving and encouraging agricultural activity is a major goal expressed in the Land Use chapter. Another goal stated in the Land Use chapter is to direct development to traditional village patterns or to sites where development will have minimal impact on agricultural activity.

The Town Services and Education chapters emphasize the importance of community involvement and volunteer support in governing the Town and in educating Pomfret's children.

Respondents to the 2006 Survey rated the challenge posed by development pressure on agricultural land (71%) and open land (68%) as two of the top most important issues facing the Town. In 1989, the Town adopted a Ridgeline and Hillside Conservation Area section to the Zoning Ordinance, reacting to concern that one of Pomfret's most significant scenic resources could be destroyed by insensitive development. The ordinance was updated in 2007. High priority should be given to preserving specific "scenic vistas" or "scenic view sheds" and "scenic roads" including roads and their rights of way that may be bordered by stone walls and maple and other mature trees. These roads need to be protected from efforts to widen and "improve" them to accommodate development. Road maintenance should be limited to the existing roadbed and ditches. Cutting of trees, widening, or any other activity which may change the character of the road should be subject to review by the public.

"Scenic vistas" or "view sheds" are areas of scenic beauty as viewed from Town roads that may need special protection from insensitive development, including private or public road construction and utility pole relocation. We all may know scenic beauty when we see it, but the challenge is to adopt a method for protection using both qualitative and quantitative criteria.

Ridgelines and Hillsides

Among Pomfret's most valuable resources are the exceptional scenic qualities of many of its ridgelines and hilltops. These physical formations have influenced the location of village settlements and the pattern of agriculture and forestry. The attractiveness of these areas is directly attributable to the variety of elements which make up the land use pattern of the area.

These characteristics serve to comprise these scenic values in ridgeline and hilltop areas. They include the mixed pattern of open meadowland to wooded areas, the prominence of clear, unobstructed panoramic views of distant, ridges

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from other ridges as well as from the valley floor and the non-intensive nature of the use of the land. Other integral elements of these scenic areas are the type of characteristics of roads which lead to and from the area and the accessibility of the ridgelines' scenic resource to the public.

The scenic value of the hillsides and ridgelines benefit more than just the people of Pomfret. These areas, coupled with the other elements of the pastoral landscape, combine to attract a large tourist population which accounts for a large portion of the area's economy. While its economic value can be considered appreciable, its contribution to the well-being of the area is perhaps more significant.

Historically, the typically rugged character of these areas has limited development opportunities. Given the continuing demand for new housing, a strong capital investment market for new homes and innovative technologies for wastewater system design and operation, however, the location of development in future years in Pomfret cannot be assumed to be confined to those areas traditionally considered suitable or desirable for development. Given adequate financial resources and quality engineering, land, including ridgetops and hilltops, can or will be developed without appropriate zoning regulations.

Communication Towers

The growth of cellular phone service and wireless internet communication has created a need for antennas mounted on towers and other structures. The Town recognizes the many benefits of these services for the residents of the Town and the region. Regardless of the purpose of the tower, it should be sited in a manner that will preserve the scenic beauty of the hills and ridgelines.

Historical Resources

Pomfret, never the seat of county or state government, the home of famous historical people, or the site of great battles, has a history typical of many agricultural towns in central Vermont. This history is important to the current and future residents of Pomfret who gain more of an understanding of the community through knowledge of the past. Written histories, old paintings and photographs, various artifacts, and structures built by earlier residents are an important record of earlier life in Pomfret.

The Pomfret Historical Society erected at least six historic markers between 1962 and 1966. These plaques identify important sites in Pomfret's early history and provide clues about life in Pomfret during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The sites so commemorated are:

<u>Building</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
Winslow Tavern	1801-1850	Stage Road

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First Pomfret Meeting House	Prior to 1795	Cloudland Road
King's Highway	Surveyed 1765	Near the St. John farm
First Schoolhouse	1786	Dorothy Moore's yard
First Town Hall	Built 1831	South of Town Hall
Unitarian Church given to Town of Pomfret for use as a Town Hall 1872	Built 1845	Town Hall

Between the 1760s and 1800, when Pomfret was settled, primitive log cabins were built and then houses and barns. Many of these old cellar holes can still be seen along the earliest roads, particularly the King's Highway, Allen Hill Road, Breakneck Hill, and the road from the Town Road over to Howe Hill.

Two of the oldest homes still in use are the Deake house on the ridge overlooking Hewittville and the Snow house behind the North Pomfret Church. The Bunker Hill Cemetery is the oldest in Town, though the Hewittville and Burns Cemeteries are also quite old.

The inventories of old houses in Pomfret started over the years do not appear to be complete. A 1915 map by Robert Perkins shows only some of the original grants, locations of homesteads, original owners, and owners at that time. A 1973 map prepared by the Pomfret Historical Society of "Historical Sites" shows the locations of homesteads with names and dates of original owners and current owners. Whether some of the structures or portions of the structures on these sites are the original ones is not certain. Many of the original buildings burned and were replaced at a later date. Also, some houses were moved to new sites.

Original structures are an important resource for local historians in understanding what life was like during periods of Pomfret's past. Particularly important is the documentation of these buildings prior to renovations or demolition.

Long-Range Goal

Protect and preserve Pomfret's natural and historic resources, rural character, and scenic beauty for the health, safety, and enjoyment of current and future generations.

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Objectives and Policies

1. Inventory and recommend protection measures to ensure preservation and protection of Pomfret's natural resources, including:
 - a. Habitats of rare animal and plant species
 - b. Brooks, streams, fisheries, stream banks
 - c. Wetlands, vernal pools
 - d. Wildlife habitats
 - e. Agricultural and forest land
 - f. Mineral resources: gravel, sand, rock
2. Identify the sources of public drinking water in Pomfret and develop and implement a long-range land use plan to protect them.
3. Ensure that agricultural practices and Town road maintenance do not degrade the water quality of Pomfret's streams and brooks.
4. Encourage sound agricultural practices such as crop rotation, organic farming, and sustainable woodlot management practices that do not deplete natural resources.
5. Identify, inventory, and prioritize those elements that significantly contribute to Pomfret's rural character and scenic beauty. These include:
 - a. Hilltops and ridgelines
 - b. Scenic vistas
 - c. Open pastures and meadows
 - d. Scenic roads
 - e. Barns and houses
 - f. Stone walls
 - g. Village settlement patterns
 - h. Town and community buildings
6. Inventory sites and structures of historic significance and establish criteria for the degree of protection and maintenance needed.
7. Identify those scenic, natural resource, or historic sites that could be accessible by trails.
8. Review development projects to limit the impact on:
 - a. Elements that significantly contribute to the rural character and scenic beauty of Pomfret.
 - b. Natural resources that need to be preserved and protected.
 - c. Sites and structures of historic significance

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9. Preserve any existing Town rights-of-way that can provide access to natural resource, historic and scenic vista sites.
10. Ensure that the installation or relocation of utility poles, other utility equipment, and towers is done in a manner that has little or no impact on scenic roads and vistas.

Recommended Actions

1. Inventory on GIS all natural, scenic, and historic resources that are potentially in need of protection or preservation. (Conservation Commission)
2. Develop a prioritized inventory of natural resources for protection and preservation measures. (Conservation Commission)
3. Work with private landowners to protect resources on their land by deed restrictions, conservation easements, land donations, and other appropriate techniques.(Conservation Commission)
4. Amend zoning and subdivision regulations to provide for review of the impact of development on significant natural, scenic, and historic resources. (Planning Commission)
5. Educate landowners, school age citizens, and those involved with development in Pomfret about the importance of:
 - a. Recognizing, preserving, and protecting those elements that significantly contribute to the rural character of Pomfret.
 - b. Recognizing, preserving, and protecting significant natural resources.
 - c. Recognizing, preserving, and protecting sites and structures of historic significance.(The Pomfret School, Conservation and Planning Commissions)
6. Educate landowners about mowing practices along stream banks and riparian buffer planting. (Conservation Commission)
7. Seek grant funding to ensure that Pomfret's historic buildings are maintained as necessary and to promote their use by the community. (Historical Society)

Chapter 6 ENERGY

Introduction

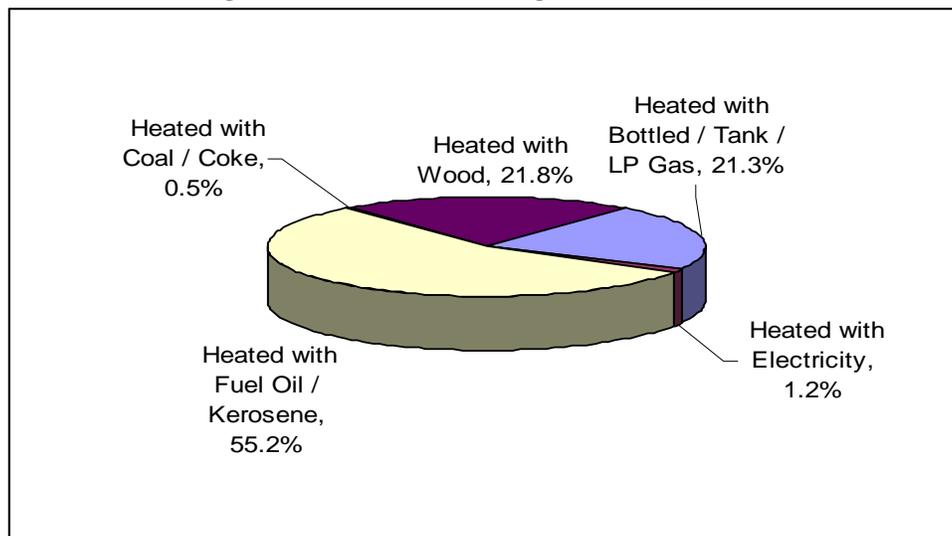
Historically, energy supply has been taken for granted because it is relatively abundant and cheap. Only during “crisis” has society considered the finite supply of non-renewable energy sources. Although earth’s limited supply of natural resources for energy production is a global problem, steps taken at a local level can have a significant impact if taken by all towns. This is why Vermont’s planning law requires an energy program for each community.

It is now an accepted fact in scientific and political circles internationally that global climate change is occurring. This situation is an urgent call to think globally and act locally. Individual efforts to use energy resources more efficiently – through better choices about transportation, home heating, and energy use – can help us meet this worldwide challenge.

Energy Use

About half of the homes in Pomfret heat with oil, and nearly as many use wood and propane gas combined, as shown in the Figure below.

Figure 11 - Home Heating in Pomfret, 2000



Source: Center for Rural Studies

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Heating with wood not only saves non-renewable energy sources, oil and gas, but it eliminates the use of fuel to transport them long distances. Heating with wood also supports the local economy. The Department of Public Service has estimated that the average wood burning household uses between 3 and 4 cords of wood each year during the heating season. Given the number of homes in Pomfret that heated with wood in 2000 (88), it is estimated that between 264 and 352 cords of wood are consumed annually. Although significant use of wood contributes to increased air pollution, particularly in valley areas, clean burning furnaces and stoves can mitigate this problem.

About half of all energy used in Vermont is for transportation. Since public transportation in Pomfret is nearly non-existent, there are few alternatives, if any, to the automobile. Public transportation, the most effective way to reduce energy consumption, is not cost effective for a rural town such as Pomfret.

Energy Conservation

In answer to the 2006 Planning Commission Survey, nearly seventy percent of the respondents said they believe the town should do more to promote energy conservation and development of private renewable resource systems.

Many energy efficiency measures must be undertaken voluntarily by home owners and builders. For instance, efficiency can be gained by siting new homes in a manner that utilizes solar gain and uses existing terrain or trees as wind breaks.

The Vermont residential energy code, called the Residential Building Energy Standards (RBES), was passed by the Vermont legislature in May 1997. The energy code is a minimum standard of energy efficiency that has applied to virtually all new residential construction in Vermont since July 1, 1998. It includes minimum standards for energy-efficient building components and construction practices, as well as a certification requirement for reporting compliance, but there is no state enforcement of the code. It is a self-certifying compliance program, placing the responsibility on the builder to understand the Energy Code, to build to the minimum technical efficiency standards, and to certify that the building complies with the law. This certification form must be posted in the home and filed at the town clerk's office.

A highly dispersed and unplanned pattern of land use can waste both land and energy resources. Efforts to direct future development to existing hamlets or village areas as proposed in the Land Use chapter of this plan could reduce energy expended for transportation within the town.

Lastly, the Town as an energy consumer itself should consider energy efficiency in operation of existing buildings, construction or renovation of municipally-owned buildings, and in the operation of its vehicles. Alternative

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fuels exist that can supplement non-renewable fossil fuels. There are several organizations that can provide the town with suggestions for improving the energy efficiency of buildings.

Renewable Energy Resources

The need for renewable energy may lead to a new interest in wind power, solar power, use of bio-fuels, and other renewable energy resources. The Town recognizes the need to construct such facilities. The 2006 Pomfret Survey showed many people oppose development of commercial wind power resources in Pomfret. However, a slight majority favor development of private, residential wind power resources in town. Wind towers and solar panels should be sited in a manner that will preserve the scenic beauty of the hills and ridgelines.

Long-Range Goal

Energy resources are used efficiently and meet the needs of Pomfret residents in a cost effective manner, with emphasis on conservation and use of renewable resources.

Objectives and Policies

1. The Town should encourage the development of local renewable energy sources at an appropriate scale to reduce dependence on outside foreign energy sources.
2. Private wind towers and solar panels should be sited in a manner that will preserve the scenic beauty of the hills and ridgelines.
3. The Town should promote energy conservation and development of private renewable resource systems.
4. The Town should operate its vehicles and buildings efficiently.
5. The Town should ensure that construction or renovation of municipally-owned buildings is done with efficiency as a goal.
6. To reduce the demand for commuter transportation and energy, and encourage the development of broadband services, energy efficient home occupations and small-scale home business is encouraged.

Recommended Actions

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1. The Town should perform an energy audit of its buildings and follow up on recommendations for more efficient operations. (Conservation Commission)
2. The Town should review and revise subdivision bylaws to incorporate requirements that will encourage a pattern of settlement and land use that uses energy efficiently. (Planning Commission)
3. The Town should develop bylaws regulating the installation of private utility towers or structures for renewable energy resources. (Planning Commission)
4. Educate Pomfret residents about energy conservation and development of alternative forms of energy resources. (Conservation Commission)
5. The Town should consider a practice of requiring high efficiency building standards in new development, and should encourage the use of federal tax credits, and programs for low-income retrofits or energy audits through Efficiency Vermont to improve efficiency in existing buildings. Additionally, new state legislation, cow power and other private power generators may enhance energy efficiency or reduce costs. (Planning Commission)

Chapter 7 TRANSPORTATION

Introduction

Transportation in Pomfret relies primarily on a network of paved and gravel town highways. Preserving the rural and agricultural character of Pomfret is an important aspect of many sections of the Town plan. Since improving roads can lead to development pressure, it is not Pomfret's intention to build new roads, significantly improve old roads or to pave existing Class 3 roads. The Town plans to provide economical ways of moving goods, services, and people at a safe speed within and through Pomfret via an existing network of roads.

Town Highways

The State uses four classifications of roads to distribute financial aid to towns for road repair. State aid to a town decreases on a per mile basis from Class 1 to Class 3. In Fiscal Year 2005, the town received a total of \$128,928 to maintain these roads. The roads and their respective classifications in Pomfret are:

State Highways are major roads with state route numbers entirely maintained by the state. Pomfret's only state highway is the 1.4-mile section of Route 12 in the southwest corner of the Town.

Class 1 Town highways are extensions of a state highway route with a state route number. Pomfret has no Class 1 Town highways.

Class 2 Town highways serve through traffic from one community to another and are paved. The Town of Pomfret maintains 14.7 miles of Class 2 highways. These are:

- Woodstock Town Line to South Pomfret - Pomfret Road: 1.16 Mi.
- South Pomfret to Barnard Town Line - Stage Road: 2.81 Mi.
- South Pomfret to Hewitts Corners - Pomfret Road: 4.42 Mi.
- Hewitts Corners to Sharon Town Line - Howe Hill Road: 1.77 Mi.
- Hewitts Corners to W. Hartford Town Line - Pomfret Road: 4.57 Mi.

Class 3 Town highways are all the other Town roads that are maintained year round. In Pomfret, there are 47.25 miles of Class 3 roads that are all gravel.

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Class 4 Town highways are not maintained by the Town except for bridge and culvert repairs, and occasional grading. The Town receives no state funds for maintaining its 6.6 miles of Class 4 roads.

All town highways have a 3-rod or 49.5-foot right-of-way by state statute, unless surveyed or otherwise deeded.

Legal Trails are Town rights-of-way, usually former Class 4 roads. They are no longer maintained and may be restricted to non-motorized use.

Ancient Roads are town highways that have gone unused or unnoticed for decades or even centuries. A state law passed in 2006 sets out a program to resolve the problems created by these roads, allowing towns an opportunity to add them to their maps as Class 4 roads or trails, or to give them up. By February 2009, municipalities must include town highways "not otherwise clearly observable by physical evidence of their use" on a sworn certificate as Class 4 highways. By March 2014, municipalities must submit a sworn certificate to the State, identifying all Class 1, 2, 3, and 4 highways and trails.

Discontinued highways were previously Town roads but their rights-of-way have been transferred to adjoining landowners. Neither the public nor the Town has any residual rights in discontinued highways.

Road Maintenance

The cost of maintaining the Town highways is second only to the cost of education in the Town budget. This is true even though state aid for roads is currently about \$130,000 per year. Pomfret's public highway system is by far the largest asset in Pomfret. With this fact in mind, maintenance practices should be directed to preserve the life of this asset over the long term for the benefit of the greatest number of users. The highway budget is divided between "winter maintenance" and "summer maintenance." Winter maintenance is a reactive process of trying to keep up with the winter storms. Although some roads are not always plowed or sanded during storms, all are generally taken care of in a timely manner, and residents seem satisfied with the quality of winter maintenance.

Summer maintenance is a matter of trying to repair and prevent the deterioration of the roads, both gravel and paved. A regular reclaiming and repaving program has continued for several years, with possible retreatment grants from the State on an average of once every five years. Some years several miles have been repaved, some of which will barely last a year because of poor underlying road structure. In other years short sections of highway have been completely rebuilt including the underlying base, whose repairs should last for many years.

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There are 10-15 bridges and major culverts that will continue to be monitored for repairs. A major bridge repair could cost approximately \$50,000. The State provided a one-time grant of \$80,000 to the Town in FY2005 for repair of bridges and culverts.

A majority of the people who responded to the 2006 survey are opposed to paying higher taxes to improve the quality of roads in town. In keeping with this, Pomfret as a policy matter will not attempt to provide roads that an unlimited highway budget would make possible.

Safety

Highway improvements in the name of safety quite often have the opposite effect. Straightening, widening, and smoothing out a narrow, curving, bumpy road can make it more dangerous by encouraging drivers to increase their speed, creating safety hazards for bicyclists, pedestrians, and other motor vehicles.

Highway Department

The Highway Department has a Road Commissioner, appointed by the Selectboard, and three full-time employees. Major equipment includes four heavy duty trucks with plows and sanders, a pick-up truck with a plow, a road grader, a loader, and a mowing tractor that can also be used as a back hoe or loader. In recent years equipment replacement has been scheduled on a regular cycle. Money for equipment replacement is budgeted each year. It is important to maintain the equipment reserve fund because it helps the town to moderate highway expenses for any particular year.

The Town Garage, which houses all the highway equipment, is in marginal condition and needs a major overhaul with a small addition. It is important that all the equipment used in the winter be stored in a heated building with adequate space for regular maintenance and repair work.

With the current population, the operation of the highway department and its inventory of equipment seem to be adequate. If the population were to increase significantly, particularly in areas served by Class 3 gravel roads, the highway department might need to add employees and equipment, as well as more garage space.

Ordinances

There are Town Highway Ordinances relating to speeding, road improvement, and driveway access. A map of Town roads (Map #3) is included in Appendix D.

Private Roads

The Town should be concerned about private roads or driveways for three reasons:

- First, the intersection of private roads with town roads must be safe and not cause damage to town roads. The sight lines must allow for the speed limit on the road. Ideally, the intersection angle should be as close to 90° as possible, and the elevation and grade of the private road, relative to the town road, should be designed to prevent water erosion damage to the town road. All new driveways require an Access Permit issued by the Selectboard after they review the proposed plans and determine that they meet the specifications of the Town driveway access ordinance.
- Second, new private roads should be constructed so that emergency vehicles are able to reach residences and businesses year-round. Pomfret currently does not review or approve plans for private roads except where they intersect with the town road unless they are part of a major subdivision or are in the Ridgeline Zone. Many towns have regulations setting minimum standards for construction of private roads, particularly the maximum grade and minimum width.
- Third, new private roads can have a negative impact on the natural resources and scenic beauty of the Town. Poorly constructed roads can cause soil erosion during and after construction, and improper installation of driveway culverts can exacerbate siltation and drainage problems. Poorly sited roads can disturb wetlands or wildlife habitats. Roads built in open fields or on ridgelines can intrude on agricultural land or viewsheds.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Transportation

Pomfret does not have any sidewalks or bicycle facilities (such as racks) anywhere in town. However, bicyclists within town and across the region travel Pomfret's roads to enjoy the scenic and rural landscapes. Road improvements that would reduce bicycle safety or discourage bicycling will not be supported in any sense.

Public Transportation

To be efficient, public transportation requires that a large number of people go to the same place at the same time. The common view is that rural communities like Pomfret do not have the population to support a public transportation system. The exception is the school bus system where a portion of the community, approximately 15 percent, goes to the same places (the Pomfret School and Woodstock Union High School) at the same time each school day morning. The van picking up senior citizens at their homes and transporting them

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to the Thompson Senior Center in Woodstock is also a public transportation system. Although not as efficient as the school bus system, it is an important service to many of Pomfret's older residents.

Stagecoach Transportation Services, a non-profit organization based in Randolph, Vermont, is the local transit provider in this region. Essentially, they respond to individual needs for transportation to medical centers or elsewhere by acting as a coordination center for a list of volunteer drivers. The service, available to Pomfret residents, is supported by minimal fees in addition to federal and state funding. The Thompson Senior Center also has a van for the same purpose.

There are situations now and there may be new ones in the future that justify some additional form of public transportation in Pomfret. Similarly, carpooling, either by private arrangements or through Vermont Rideshare, would also have the benefit of minimizing dependence on private autos. Location of Park and Ride facilities in Pomfret would facilitate carpooling and are being established in other small Vermont towns. Full state funding for Park and Ride lots is available every year for this purpose.

The Vermonter is a passenger train line running between Washington, D.C., and St. Albans, Vermont. It stops locally in Randolph and White River Junction.

Regional Transportation

Regional transportation planning in Vermont is now the joint responsibility of the Regional Planning Commissions and the state highway engineers in Montpelier. The Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Planning Commission has a Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) made up of representatives from all towns in the region. The TAC is charged with creating a regional transportation plan that is coordinated with land use planning and is responsive to local needs and concerns.

Of special concern to Pomfret is traffic generated in other towns and flowing through Pomfret to other towns such as Hartford or Woodstock, or to Interstate 89. Further, the Town will not support so-called transportation system improvements that would effectively divert traffic from neighboring communities with state highways to or through rural townships such as Pomfret.

Long-Range Goal

Maintain Pomfret's roads in a manner that promotes public safety, is consistent with land use goals, does not degrade the environment, and efficiently moves people, goods, and services.

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Objectives and Policies

1. Continue to schedule resurfacing of paved highways on a yearly basis, in a cost effective manner that will prevent road deterioration.
2. Continue to grade gravel roads and apply new material on a minimal basis. Continue to improve side ditches to keep the roads from significantly degrading without widening or straightening unless this becomes necessary to handle existing traffic.
3. Continue roadside mowing and removal of brush, dead trees, stumps, and rocks that interfere with vision on town roads.
4. Schedule regular inspections of roads, bridges, and culverts to determine repair needs on a priority basis.
5. Continue to allocate tax dollars to the Equipment Reserve Fund each year.
6. Encourage the Selectboard to continue use of the maximum amounts of federal and state aid available for highways.
7. Provide for vigorous enforcement of the Town Traffic Ordinance by the County Sheriff to reduce the high number of trucks and automobiles that travel at excessive speeds and damage paved roads.
8. Enhance safety by designing road improvements that do not encourage drivers to speed and by setting appropriate speed limits.
9. Appropriate speed limits, while promoting efficient movement of traffic, should take into consideration pedestrian use, built-up areas, and schools.
10. The Town will not build new roads, improve old roads, pave existing Class 3 roads, or accept ownership of private roads to accommodate development unless such actions provide long term benefits outweighing costs to the Town as a whole.
11. Any proposed new private road or driveway that serves two or more residences should meet minimum standards of construction, grade, and width to permit access by emergency vehicles.
12. Construction of private roads should be regulated in a manner that protects town roads and provides safe intersections.
13. The design and construction of private roads should be reviewed to ensure the protection of significant natural resources, agricultural and forestland, and scenic beauty.

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14. In the interest of keeping roads useable while maintaining rural character, roads should not be widened or straightened at the cost of damaging mature trees or stone walls.
15. Maintain roads so that soil erosion and the use of salt do not adversely effect the environment.
16. Ancient roads should be considered for reclassification as “legal trails” to maintain Town rights-of-way, cited on the Town’s highway map, or dropped from the Town’s highway inventory. The Planning Commission should make recommendations relating to classification of Class 4 roads and ancient highways

Recommended Actions

1. Develop a long-range plan and budget to reconstruct and resurface a percentage of the paved town roads every year to reduce deferred maintenance. (Selectboard)
2. Determine whether the Town Garage and Shed meet the needs of the Highway Department; plan and budget for additional space as required. (Selectboard)
3. Create design and construction specifications for new private roads and driveways to be used in Conditional Use review. (Planning Commission)
4. Where feasible provide and maintain pedestrian and bicycle paths with grant funding. (Conservation Commission and Planning Commission)
5. Work with legislative representatives to change government regulations on posting roads for weight limitations as traffic weights exceed the structural capacity of Pomfret town roads by granting more local control. (Selectboard)
6. Work with legislative representatives to change State regulations governing speed limits on gravel roads by granting more local control. (Selectboard)
7. Create a committee to examine ancient highways. (Selectboard)
8. Identify roads not used for access to properties and change their classification to legal trails for recreation. (Planning Commission)
9. The Planning Commission should make recommendations to the Selectboard about road widening and straightening. (Road Commissioner)

Chapter 8 TOWN SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Introduction

Pomfret's Town government provides services and facilities funded by property taxes. The most expensive of these are education (75 percent of the Town budget) and highway maintenance (20 percent), both of which are discussed in separate chapters. The subject of this chapter is the remaining 5 percent of the Town budget: the cost of Town government, fire and police protection, disposal of solid waste, planning and zoning, and recreation. As towns grow and residents raise their expectations of services their town should provide, the overall cost of these services has the potential to grow at a disproportionately faster rate than the tax base.

Town Government

Pomfret is governed by a three-member Selectboard, elected at Town Meeting for three-year terms and paid a small stipend. Responsibilities of the Selectboard and demands on their time have grown as State and Federal regulations continue to create more mandates for local governments. Compliance with these mandates means that Town officers must occasionally attend conferences to keep up-to-date on requirements and be available for daytime meetings with State officials or contractors. Pomfret has been fortunate to have a Selectboard able to meet these obligations during working hours. If, in the future, the Selectboard should be unable to perform these duties, and especially if the Town were to grow at a fast rate, administrative help may be needed.

The Pomfret Town Clerk and Treasurer are also elected at Town Meeting and are part-time, salaried positions. In addition to performing official duties, the Town Clerk serves as the liaison between other Town officials and the public. An increase in land sales and the rate of development could increase the administrative workload of the Town Clerk.

The three elected Listers are paid by the hour to perform a highly technical job of evaluating Town property. The Listers, Town Clerk, Treasurer, and anyone else working on Town business share space in a cramped Town Office in the brick building built in 1908 across the road from the Town Hall. The Selectboard meets there regularly, and most of the Town's records are protected there in a fireproof vault. The increase in regular activity requires expanded office

space. The Town has begun planning for this now as well as reviewing all capital improvements.

Emergency Services

Emergency Service Committee

The Pomfret Emergency Service Committee acts as a liaison between the Town, the FAST Squad, and the Fire Department. The Fire Department submits emergency plans and financial requests to the Committee. The local Rapid Response Plan is a basic plan that identifies key contacts and emergency information for the town.

FAST Squad and Ambulance

The Pomfret FAST Squad is a group of volunteers with either First Responder or Emergency Medical Training who respond to medical emergencies in the Town. They are dispatched at the same time an ambulance is called but arrive sooner and administer first aid and stabilize the patient until the ambulance arrives. Their equipment is purchased with donated funds.

Ambulance service in Pomfret is provided by the Town of Woodstock which has two ambulances and full-time dispatch service. The Town pays an annual assessment to have this service available, and the patients are charged for actual usage. Unpaid bills are charged to the Town.

Fire Protection

Pomfret currently has two volunteer fire departments, the Pomfret Fire Department based in North Pomfret and the Teago Fire Department in South Pomfret. Pomfret's fire protection is enhanced through mutual aid agreements with neighboring towns. A long-range plan for fire protection was accepted at the 1995 Town Meeting and will continue to be implemented and supported by municipal funds annually, as well as donations and grants.

Fire protection in Pomfret can be addressed from other perspectives. The best fire protection is prevention, which is the responsibility of the entire community, not just the fire departments. Community financial support and able volunteers are essential to fire protection in Pomfret. It is important that all new development be accessible to standard fire equipment in all seasons. Where possible water should be available in all areas of the Town through hydrants on new and existing ponds. Anyone planning to build a new pond or to upgrade an old pond should consider consulting one of the fire departments about installation of a dry hydrant. An inventory of all dry hydrants is on the Town's GIS system and easily available to firefighters. Existing burning regulations must be strictly enforced. Houses and other inhabited buildings should be permitted if they are

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designed to specifications allowing evacuation by existing municipal fire equipment. Houses and access roads should be designed for access by fire and emergency vehicles at all time of the year. Houses with steep access roads, those that are very large, or those without a nearby water source should consider installation of a sprinkler system.

Community volunteers can assist the departments in such non-firefighting jobs as fundraising, collecting important information, informing homeowners of the state law requiring smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and recommending fire extinguishers in appropriate locations. They can also assist the Pomfret Fire Department in sales of this equipment.

911 and Emergency Dispatch

Emergency dispatch services for fire and ambulance emergencies are handled by the Town of Woodstock. Since updated road numbering is complete in Pomfret, all residents can now call "911" to reach this emergency dispatch center.

Police Protection

Pomfret residents depend on the Vermont State Police in Bethel for police protection. The State Police outpost there covers twenty-two towns, sometimes with only one or two officers available to respond to emergencies. Often no officers are on the road between 2:30 and 7 a.m., although they are "on call" during those hours.

The Selectboard can appoint First and Second Town Constables. The Town Constable handles violations of the dog ordinance and assists in other emergencies. If the citizens want a higher level of protection, options include hiring a sheriff to be available certain hours, having the Town Constable trained, certified and officially on call for emergencies, or sharing an "outpost" trooper with a neighboring town.

For several years, the Town has hired a Windsor County Sheriff to patrol roads to enforce speed limits. In 2005, the Town's share of fines totaled over \$9,000 at a cost of less than \$15,000.

Emergency Planning

Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan

The Pomfret Selectboard adopted a Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Plan in January 2005 that lays out local hazards and actions to reduce damage from future disasters. When combined with the Regional Pre-Disaster Mitigation plan, the local PDM Plan is the mitigation plan for the town. The Plan includes a critical facilities map that cites flood zones and frequently flooded areas.

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Local Emergency Planning Committee

Pomfret has four representatives on the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) #12. LEPC #12 covers 27 member towns in east-central Vermont. While LEPC #12's statutory responsibilities are related only to hazardous materials, the LEPC is also planning for floods and fires.

Solid Waste

Pomfret is a member of the Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste Management District (GUVSWMD) created by 12 member towns to cooperatively manage regional solid waste in an environmentally sound manner. The District is responsible for locating sites and acquiring permits for replacement lined landfills in Vermont and is in the process of obtaining permits for and constructing access to a new landfill in Hartland. For the present the District has contracted with the City of Lebanon to use their landfill. The GUVSWMD also contracts for recycling and hazardous household waste disposal with a facility in Hartford. For any single town, regional cooperation is more cost effective than applying for permits, building and operating its own transfer station and recycling center facilities.

Child Care

As of early 2007, there is one provider in Pomfret registered with the State of Vermont for in-home childcare. There is an undocumented need for infant care for young families, as well as for additional day care services in Pomfret. The Utility/Facility Map locates the licensed child day care facility in Pomfret. Pomfret supports the private development of additional facilities to meet the child care needs of its residents and may assist with seeking funding to develop these facilities.

Planning and Zoning

The administration of planning and zoning in Pomfret is the responsibility of the Planning Commission, the Zoning Administrator, and the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

The Planning Commission prepares the Town Plan for adoption by the Selectboard and prepares zoning and subdivision regulations for approval by the Selectboard and by the Town. The Planning Commission also sits as a quasi-judicial board to hear and review applications for major subdivisions and all development within the Ridgeline Zone.

The Zoning Administrator issues building and use permits and is responsible for enforcement of the regulations.

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The Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) is a quasi-judicial board that hears and reviews applications for conditional use permits, requests for variances, and appeals of decisions of the Zoning Administrator.

Planning and zoning activities have cost the taxpayers very little in Pomfret. The Zoning Administrator is a paid position, and the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Adjustment are volunteer boards without paid staff. Fees are charged for building permits and for applications requiring a hearing. State planning funds awarded to the Town as grants have substantially contributed to covering the cost of rewriting planning and zoning documents in Pomfret. The Town is a member of the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (TRORC), and pays a yearly assessment from Town funds, allowing access to technical assistance on planning and other land use issues.

As long as volunteers continue to be available and the process is kept simple, the present system seems to work. However, if the regulations are changed to require a more extensive review of projects, the result will be more work for these boards and for the Administrator. Should administrative help become necessary, permit fees comparable to those of other towns in the area would cover that expense without using tax money. Any changes in Town zoning regulations should take into consideration the cost of administration and the source of those funds.

Long Range Planning and Capital Budgeting

In 2007, the Pomfret Selectboard approved creation of a Long Range Planning and Capital Budgeting Committee. Its purpose is to develop long-range plans and cost estimates relating to the needs for Town facilities.

Conservation

The Conservation Commission was formed to act as an advisory board to the Planning Commission, the Selectboard, and the Town. The Commission's responsibilities include creation of inventories of natural, historic, and scenic resources. Although the Conservation Commission does not have jurisdiction in the review of development projects, it may advise the Planning Commission or the ZBA on the impact a project might have on the environment. The Conservation Commission is currently inactive.

Pomfret, through the TRORC, has access to VCGI (Vermont Center for Geographic Information) data and maps of the Town's roads, structures, land cover, surface waters, ridgelines, and wetlands. New data are added to the system regularly, the last major update occurring in 2003 from statewide digital orthophotography. Geographic data is an important tool in reviewing proposed development as it pinpoints issues to be addressed early in the process.

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The GIS is also useful for long-term planning. Information on soils, roads, topography, natural resources, etc. can be combined to determine areas of Town appropriate for future development or areas where development should be limited. The GIS will also be useful to other Town offices such as the Highway Department and the Listers. The fire departments and FAST Squad already use maps produced by the GIS for emergency response.

Recreation

Pomfret's organized recreation facilities consist of a baseball field, a soccer field, and a playground, all at the school grounds in South Pomfret. The school's multi-purpose room is also used for basketball and volleyball. Pomfret sports activities are organized by volunteers and the Woodstock Recreation Department. Baseball and soccer teams receive heavy participation from girls and boys in the elementary school. All students in the Town and several surrounding communities are served by Ski Runners, a non-profit ski club, which offers alpine skiing at Suicide Six and cross-country ski programs at the Woodstock Touring Center, both at a very low fee. Ice skating and hockey are available at Union Arena in Woodstock.

Opportunities for organized recreation at the adult level are available through the Woodstock Recreation Department using Woodstock's facilities. Pomfret residents pay a non-resident fee to participate in the Woodstock programs that include many sports in all seasons, arts and crafts, dance, yoga, and theater. In addition, rock climbing is available at The Wall in Taftsville, owned by the Woodstock Recreation Department.

Organized sports and other recreational activities are limited in Pomfret by the lack of facilities and the small population. Extensive recreational facilities would be expensive to build and maintain, and it is more cost effective to utilize the facilities of larger towns. Pomfret has land available at the Pomfret School for more facilities. If they could be built with donated, and State and Federal funds (with their inherent restrictions), it could be a real benefit to the residents, particularly the younger ones. It is hoped such facilities could be maintained with minimal local tax money. The community is fortunate in having a high quality family ski area, Suicide Six, which offers a variety of skiing terrain.

Informal recreation such as hiking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, bicycling, hunting, and fishing contributes significantly to Pomfret's quality of life. Protected areas such as the Appalachian Trail Corridor and the Amity Pond area will always be available. However, as more land is divided and developed, less land will be available for recreation. Existing rights-of-way on Class 4 roads and legal trails should continue to be held by the Town. Whenever possible easements for future trails should be secured from cooperating landowners.

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Cemeteries

There are currently three Pomfret cemeteries: Burns, Hewittville, and Bunker Hill. Space in them is extremely limited, and the Town must plan to use existing space efficiently and acquire more cemetery space. Interest from the perpetual care accounts currently pays for all Town cemetery maintenance.

Abbott Memorial Library

The Abbott Memorial Library was a gift to the Town from the Abbott family. Built in 1905, it remains a South Pomfret landmark. Until 1991 when the new Pomfret School opened, the library was used by school teachers and students to supplement their collections. Since then the library has focused on providing programs to encourage independent reading by school age children and to introduce pre-schoolers to reading. Recently, adult programs were added to the Library's offerings.

The library was refurbished in the 1990s with new paint, carpeting, and chairs. Both the adult and children's collections have been enlarged and a phone installed to permit the librarian to request special books from the Vermont Library System. The library is supported by an annual Town appropriation, income from a small endowment, donations, and fundraising.

The Abbott Memorial Library is an important resource to the community as a gathering place, a repository for town information, and as a place where Pomfret's children will discover the joy of reading.

Town Owned Buildings and Land

- Town Clerk's Office
- Center School
- Town Shed with land
- Town Hall with land
- Town Garage with land
- The Pomfret School with 38 acres
- Burns Cemetery
- Bunker Hill Cemetery
- Hewittville Cemetery
- Abbott Memorial Library
- North Pomfret Picnic Area
- Land (35 acres +/-) formerly owned by Joe Ranger
- Land (100 acres +/-) off Joe Ranger Road, called the School Lot
- Land (1 acre +/-) at Mill Brook confluence with the White River
- Land, small parcel at Kenyon Hill Bridge

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Long-Range Goal

Provide Town services and facilities that meet the established needs of residents in a cost effective manner.

Objectives and Policies

1. Base planning for future services and facilities on conservative growth estimates which reflect the desire of the community to grow at a slow rate.
2. Continue Town government as a volunteer effort to the greatest extent possible, but utilize technical and administrative assistance when necessary and cost effective.
3. Develop a current and long-range plan for the utilization and expansion of the Town Offices and for improvement of all Town facilities with appropriate costs estimates.
4. Supplement future fire protection facilities and equipment with community-based fire prevention programs and support for the volunteer fire departments.
5. Design roads and all development in Pomfret to be accessible to emergency vehicles year-round.
6. Where feasible, install approved hydrants in new and existing ponds. Such water sources should be accessible to fire trucks in all parts of the Town.
7. Augment the limited police protection in Pomfret by community awareness and a willingness to look out for the welfare of one's neighbor.
8. Consider the cost and complexity of implementing and enforcing the regulations when creating new zoning, subdivision, and other land development regulations.
9. When appropriate continue and expand regional cooperation in solid waste disposal, emergency services, and recreation facilities as the most effective way to provide quality services.
10. Retain Town rights-of-way as recreational trails. New rights-of-way should be accepted by the Town, when offered, for permanent recreational trails.
11. Acquire enough cemetery land for the future needs of the Town.

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12. Continue to develop the Abbott Memorial Library as a resource and gathering place for residents of the Town.
13. Support private sector efforts to seek funding to assist with the development of child care infrastructure.
14. Ensure that no barriers to increasing child care capacity are created by future changes in zoning regulations.
15. Support availability of high speed internet access throughout the town to facilitate economic development, education, and delivery of healthcare services to all homes and businesses in town.

Recommended Actions

1. Update population and household growth projections as new information becomes available so they can be used for planning future services and facilities. (Planning Commission)
2. Study the short- and long-term needs of Town for office space, government operations including facilities, administrative help, and technology, and develop a capital budget. (Long Range Planning Committee, Selectboard)
3. The volunteer fire departments should continue to enlist the help of non-firefighter volunteers to assist in community fire prevention and preparedness through education, inspections, updating dry hydrant and fire pond inventories, location of new fire ponds, etc. (Emergency Services Committee)
4. Revise land development regulations to ensure that all new development is accessible to emergency vehicles at all times of the year. (Planning Commission)
5. Analyze the need for increased police protection, if necessary. (Selectboard)
6. Purchase additional land for cemeteries. (Selectboard)
7. Advise the Selectboard on appropriate permit fees for land development regulations to cover the cost of administering the regulations. (Planning Commission)
8. Work with the Regional Planning Commission to conduct a regional child daycare needs assessment. (Planning Commission)

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9. Maintain an inventory of all child daycare programs in Pomfret. (Planning Commission)
10. Work with developers to consider the child daycare impacts of developments. (Planning Commission)
11. Routinely evaluate the use of town owned parcels of land to ensure they are being used according to agreements or deed restrictions (Planning Commission)

Chapter 9 HOUSING

Introduction

The cost of land, taxes, new construction, and existing housing limits the ability of many of the Town's residents and ex-residents who might want to live permanently in Pomfret to build, buy, and maintain homes in the Town. A housing plan should allow a diverse group of people from a range of ages and income levels to live and own homes in Pomfret. The high costs of land and housing have been major factors contributing to emigration from Pomfret, and this has altered the cultural and socio-economic mix of the Town's residents.

This housing chapter presents information on existing homes, data on the availability of land for housing, and the Town's population and incomes of its residents in examining current housing conditions. It takes into consideration the desire of residents to keep the Town rural and agricultural and the goals and objectives of the Land Use Chapter of this Town Plan to define Pomfret's future housing goals. Information used in this Chapter describing housing ownership in Pomfret comes from several sources: the Pomfret Listers' files, the 2000 U.S. Census, Vermont Housing, and summaries from the Vermont Department of Taxes. Statistical information from these sources do not match exactly because of differences in records kept and differing classifications and data categories

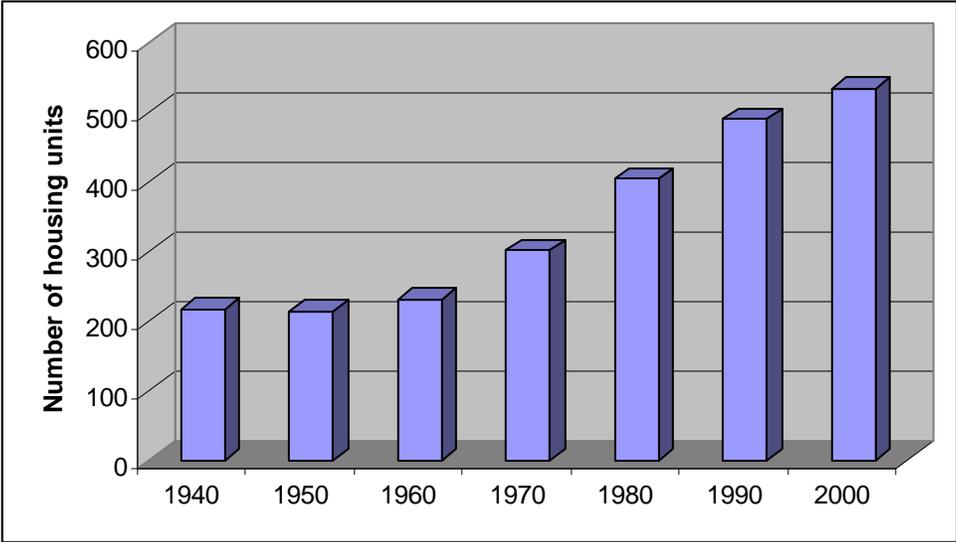
Current Housing Information

As the Town has evolved from a primarily agriculture-based community to one that is predominately residential and a bedroom town for regional employment centers, there has been a marked change in the ownership of housing.

Based on the U.S. Census data, in 2000 there were 535 housing units in Pomfret, a 9.2% increase in the total number of units over the prior ten-year period, or an average rate of housing growth of 4.5 units per year during the 1990's. As an historical comparison, during Pomfret's slow growth era (1940-1960) an average of only 1.5 units per year were added to the housing stock. The average rate of increase of new housing stock in Windsor County during the 1990's was less than Pomfret's, increasing by about 5.9%.

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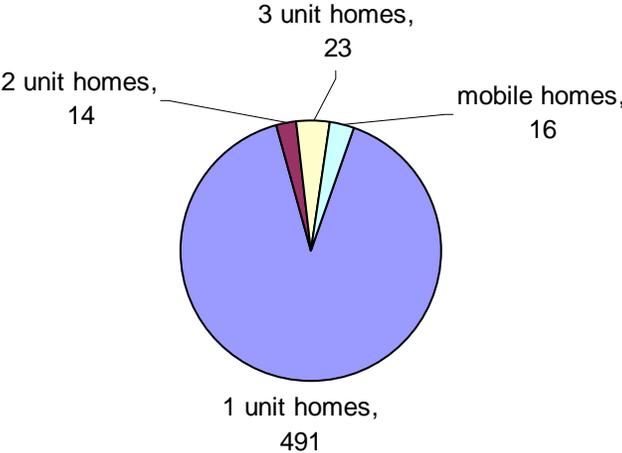
Figure 12 - Number of housing units in Pomfret



Source: US Census 2000

Of all the existing housing units in 2000, the vast majority (92%) consisted of single family homes. These data are shown in the following figure.

Figure 13 – Size of housing units in Pomfret, 2000



Source: Vermont Housing Data

Readers will note the total number of housing units in this figure (544) does not match the total number of units given in Figure 12. This is because the U.S. Census recalculated the total number of housing units in selected Vermont towns, including Pomfret, but did not recalculate how the total was broken down. The total in Figure 12, 535 housing units, is correct.

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In 2006, according to Listers' data (see Appendix C), of the primary residences owned by Town residents, 142 stood on less than six acres and 231 on over six acres. The total number of primary residences is 373, increasing by 83 or 29% over the number in 1993.

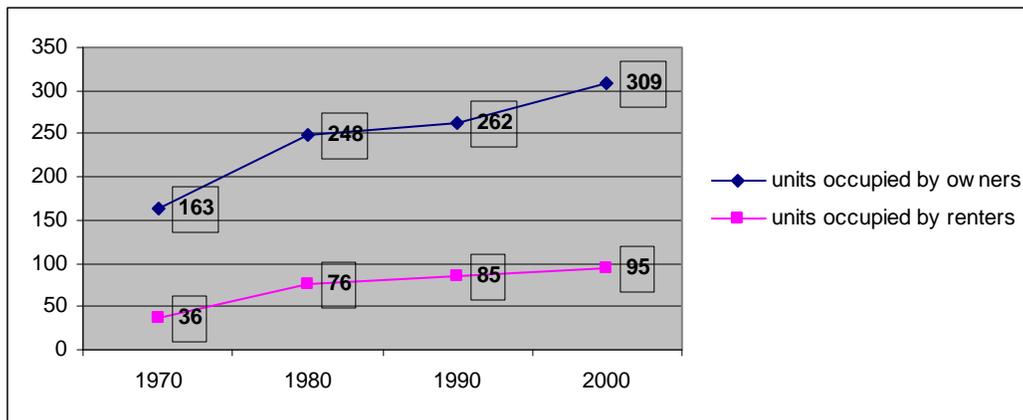
Appendix C also shows that 36 vacation homes were sited on plots less than six acres and 123 vacation homes on more than six acres, totaling 159 vacation properties. This number has not changed significantly since 1993 when the total was 156.

Compared to its neighbors, Pomfret has a greater percentage of its homes listed as vacation homes. In 2000, the last year for which comparative data are widely available, 121 homes or 22.6% of Pomfret's total were classified as vacation homes as compared to only 16.7% for Woodstock.

According to the 2005 Grand List, Pomfret had nine mobile home structures. Four properties were classified as "farms," and had 99 separate parcels of land without homes. There are no condominiums in Town. The 2006 Grand List shows 111 parcels of land without homes (see Appendix C).

According to the 2000 US Census, there were 95 marketable rental units in Pomfret at the time.

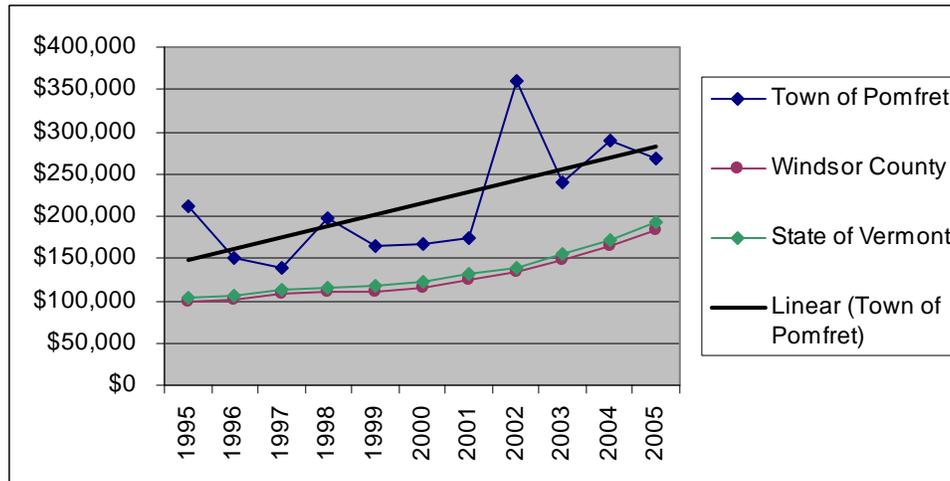
Figure 14 – Pomfret Housing Occupancy Types



Source: Vermont Housing Data

As the following figure explains, Pomfret's real estate market is expanding steadily. The median prices on primary single family residences sold over the last decade in Pomfret show a large overall increase, despite the year-to-year variations, outpacing the price gains in both Windsor County as well as the State of Vermont. Increases in housing prices will yield increases in property taxes.

Figure 15 - Median prices of single family homes sold



Source: Vermont Housing Data

Land Availability

In 2005, 130 parcels of land in Pomfret were enrolled in Vermont's Current Use Program. Twenty nine percent of the acreage (4,357 acres) in this program was owned by year-round residents while 71 percent were owned by non-residents (10,800 acres). According to the Lister's office, 86% of the eligible acreage is enrolled in Current Use. This amounted to a total tax savings of just over \$636,000 to these landowners.

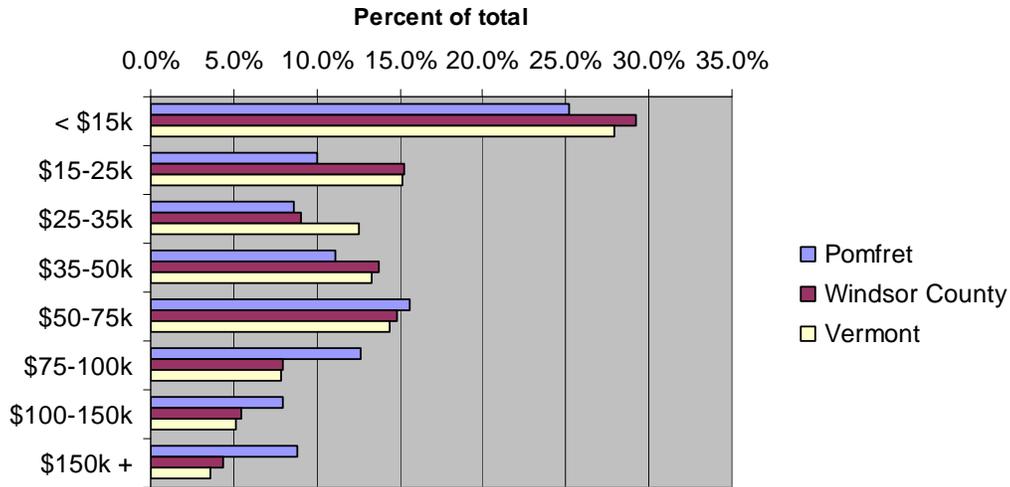
The availability of land for housing is limited by the low turnover rate in general for properties in Pomfret. In 2005, 10 single family homes sold in Pomfret according to Vermont Housing data. In other nearby towns, however, these numbers were much higher: in Sharon, 16 single family homes were sold; in Royalton, 23; in Woodstock 41, and in Hartford, 130. The low number of home sales contributes to the lack of availability of land for housing.

Town Population and Income

According to the 2000 census, Pomfret's population reached 979 people, an increase of 105 persons, or 12% above the 1990 count. Although a 1993 study of Pomfret's population did not project significant increases in Pomfret's population during the 1990s, it appears from current data that the emigration pattern of the 1980s was reversed (see Chapter 3). However, the study did correctly predict that housing in Pomfret would continue to serve an aging population.

Chapter 3 of this Town Plan shows detailed income and demographic information. In addition, the figure below can be used to assess the ability of residents to pay for housing.

Figure 16 - 2005 personal incomes comparison



Source: Vermont Tax Department

This figure illustrates that in the Town of Pomfret during 2005, 209 filers (43.9% of the total) had incomes of less than \$35,000, out of a total of 476 filers. Additional data on income can be seen in Appendix C.

In 2005, 42 persons submitted applications for the Vermont Property Tax Rebate Program, averaging a rebate of \$913. During that same tax year, with 301 Pomfret properties eligible for a Vermont Property Tax Prebate (on school taxes), 172 filers received prebate checks from the State. The average school tax adjustment was \$2,258 (also shown in Appendix C).

Future Housing

When trying to establish Pomfret's housing goals, one must recognize that any housing plan is subject to regional economic pressures. Dartmouth College and the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in Hanover and Lebanon, NH, have both grown substantially in recent years, which may account in part for the population growth in Pomfret. Locally, however, Vermont employers have left the region or have cut back their work forces, though the unemployment rate for workers in Pomfret was 1.6% in 2005.

Strong economic growth in the region could lead to continued housing development pressures in Pomfret, similar to the growth in the number of homes in town during the 1990s. Relative to such growth, however, lower paying service jobs are replacing higher paying manufacturing jobs at both the national and local level. State data show that manufacturing jobs state wide experienced negative growth of 0.2% in 2006. However, more than half of Pomfret's workforce is

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employed in high quality management and sales jobs, with 76 percent of the Town's working residents commuting out of Pomfret to work.

According to Vermont Housing data, the annual average wage for all workers in all industries in Pomfret for 2005 was \$27,862. This translates to an average hourly wage of \$13.40, based on a 40-hour workweek.

Data from the same source show the hourly wage needed to afford a two bedroom apartment in Pomfret and only pay 30% of income towards housing costs (which defines "affordability") was \$13.21. The Table below shows the hourly and annual wages necessary to make affordable rental of apartments of several sizes in Pomfret.

Table 4 - Wages for Rental Housing Affordability

	Hourly wage	Annual wage
Two bedroom apartment	\$13.21	\$27,476.80
Three bedroom apartment	\$17.98	\$37,398.40
Four bedroom apartment	\$21.38	\$44,470.40

Source: Vermont Housing data

From this data, there is evidently insufficient rental stock in Pomfret for residents with incomes of \$30,000 or less. There are enough rental apartments for those with incomes a good deal higher.

Vermont currently has a shortage of affordable rental units, according to Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA) calculations, and more owner-occupied affordable housing units will be needed statewide by the year 2010.

According to VHFA estimates, in order to purchase a home valued at \$182,000 (the median purchase price for a home in Vermont during 2005), a household would need an income of approximately \$65,000. This estimate was based on Freddie Mac's average 2005 interest rate and points for a 30-year mortgage with 5% down payment, average statewide property taxes, property insurance, private mortgage insurance, closing costs, and a 30% housing payment ratio.

The county median adjusted gross family income is typically used to calculate housing affordability. In 2004, the Windsor County median AGI was \$50,107, meaning that \$15,032 is available for housing costs each year at the 30% rate, or \$1,253 per month. Using figures similar to VHFA's, TRORC estimates that a family with this income could afford a maximum home price of \$160,000.

The median sales price of a home in Pomfret in 2005 (according to data from Vermont Housing) was \$269,000 as shown in Figure 15 (see page 58). (Note this figure is different from the average sales price shown in Chapter 3. See

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Appendix C for additional sales data). TRORC estimates that the income necessary to afford this home, again using figures similar to VHFA's, would be about \$90,000.

National housing experts suggest that communities must provide affordable homes for essential workers, such as teachers, nurses, and law enforcement officials, in order to compete effectively for dedicated workers for these positions. Employers cannot stay in communities that cannot provide an adequate supply of homes affordable to their workers. Local governments, they counsel, can expand the supply of sites for new development through changes in zoning rules such as:

- Making new areas available for development (for example, publicly owned land);
- Expanding the number of homes that can be built in existing residential areas;
- Zoning for a wider variety of housing types, like multi-family homes; and
- Inclusionary zoning that would provide incentives for developers to include a modest percentage of affordable homes within newly created developments.

The 2006 town survey showed respondents favor or strongly favor single-family houses on individual lots (88%), housing affordable to working families (79%), and assisted living for elderly people (62%). Respondents were either against or strongly against apartments or town houses (64%) and multi-family homes on individual lots (57%). Although 66% of the respondents to the town's 2006 survey supported private development of housing affordable to working families, fewer (50%) supported some kind of community initiative to develop this kind of housing. These data demonstrate that while most people in Pomfret support affordable housing development, there is an apparent discrepancy with how this might be accomplished.

The aspects of residential land use that 2006 survey respondents are concerned about are:

- Visual impact (71%)
- Building size and scale (69%)
- Noise (51%)
- Outdoor light (50%)
- Placement of houses on lots (49%)

Long-Range Goal

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The Town should allow for growth of housing stock for all income levels at a rate consistent with the Town's ability to provide services in a fiscally sound manner and consistent with other goals and policies in this Town Plan.

Policies and Objectives

1. Manage housing growth through Pomfret's zoning and subdivision ordinances.
2. Review development projects for compatibility with planned rate of growth of Town facilities and services.
3. Encourage housing plans that provide for dwellings clustered on the periphery of open land, serviced by common septic and water supply facilities. The remaining land will then be available for agricultural purposes, preservation of natural resources and open space.
4. Encourage residential development contiguous to existing hamlets or villages or in areas identified as being capable of sustaining development based on soil types, topography, accessibility, and other considerations.
5. Where appropriate, new planned unit developments should set aside a reasonable percentage of the new homes or units for families with lower and moderate incomes.
6. Provide the opportunity for Pomfret residents to have access to quality affordable housing.
7. Ensure construction of new housing meets the natural population growth and does not exceed the community's ability to provide adequate public facilities (e.g. schools and municipal services).
8. Encourage the preservation of historic structures in ways that appropriately serve housing needs.
9. Encourage creation of additional rental properties, especially in villages, that do not put an undue burden on Town services and facilities and do not negatively affect the rural character of the village centers.
10. Encourage innovative planning, design and construction of new housing that minimizes costs, energy consumption, and visual and environmental impacts.
11. Promote preservation of the existing housing stock, particularly in hamlets and other existing neighborhoods of the Town.

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12. Encourage accessory housing and apartments within existing housing structures.

Recommended Actions

1. Explore the use of non-profit housing or land trusts for development of perpetually affordable housing. (Planning Commission)
2. Encourage housing plans that involve restoration of existing structures into single or multi-family rental units, using tax credits where appropriate. (Planning Commission)
3. Encourage clustered housing development in Pomfret where an agriculture-related activity is an integral part of the plan submitted. This activity (for example: truck farming, Christmas tree growing, cattle, maple sugaring,) should provide additional income for Pomfret residents to help with housing affordability. (Planning Commission)
4. A town housing committee should be appointed by the Selectboard for the following purposes:
 - a. to maintain and update relevant statistical information on housing and affordability.
 - b. to consider town owned or other properties that could be made available for development of perpetually affordable housing.
 - c. to coordinate between public and private agencies involved with planning, financing, and developing affordable housing consistent with existing neighborhoods.
 - d. to advise residents of the availability of loan or grant funds for Vermonters to purchase, acquire, or improve their primary homes.
 - e. to preserve existing affordable housing stock and to establish mechanisms that assure the perpetual affordability of that housing.
5. Review Pomfret's zoning and subdivision ordinances to ensure that visual impacts of new housing are evaluated. (Planning Commission)

Chapter 10 EDUCATION

Introduction

It is vital that Pomfret strongly encourage children to seek education beyond high school so they will not only become self-supporting but also more employable in today's technological society. This effort should include academic as well as technical training.

History

In the mid-1800s Pomfret had at least thirteen one-room schools and shared three more schools with bordering towns. Throughout much of the twentieth century Pomfret utilized from three to six schools, primarily North and South Pomfret, Hewittville, the Center School, and occasionally, the Cloudland and Mill Brook Schools.

In 1954 the towns of Woodstock, Pomfret, and Bridgewater formed the Woodstock Union High School District. Barnard, Killington and Reading have since joined. In 1966 a junior high wing was added to the 1956 high school building in West Woodstock, and the District was extended to include grades 7 and 8.

Pomfret's educational facilities changed dramatically when a consolidated K-6 elementary school with eight classrooms, a library, and a multi-purpose room was built in 1990-91 not far from the Woodstock/Pomfret line in South Pomfret. The Pomfret School opened on September 3, 1991 with 103 students, a staff of six full-time teachers, a principal, and nine part-time special teachers and teaching assistants all under one roof.

Pomfret now buses its students to both the Woodstock Union High School location and to the Pomfret School.

The present facilities in Pomfret should meet the educational needs of the school population for many years to come. Although the all-time high population of Pomfret was 1,867 in 1830; the 2000 census showed Pomfret with only 979 residents, including 201 students, 133 in elementary school and 68 in high school. This compares with a total student population of 138 in 1980, and 164 in 1990. The most current projections by the State expect a slowly increasing population, of about two percent every five years. Though these predictions are somewhat uncertain, the new Pomfret School was designed to accommodate 140 pupils and

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can absorb predicted growth easily. Not only can the Pomfret Elementary School accommodate an increase in students from Pomfret, but it could potentially accept elementary school population(s) from surrounding towns should any neighboring schools shrink to a point where they will close.

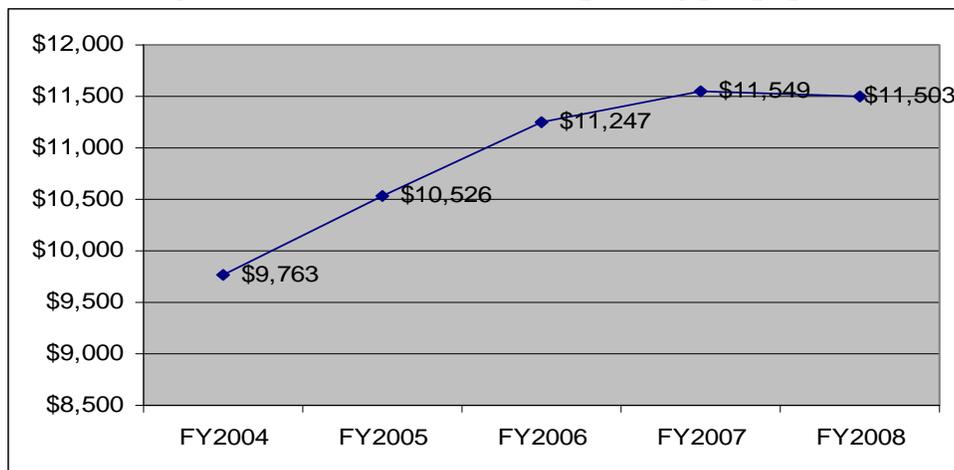
Should Public School Choice policy become a reality, it will be imperative that Pomfret maintain competitive educational programs to retain local students and continue to attract tuition paying students from other towns. It is important that the possibility of implementation of a Public School Choice policy be kept in mind as long-range plans for the education of Pomfret students are developed.

The annual cost per pupil ratio is one of the clearest measures of school costs in any community. These costs for the 1993-94 school year were \$6,486 for each elementary student and \$6,983 for each student in grades 7-12. This compared to average State of Vermont costs in 1993-94 of \$6,560 for K-12 students. Data on the current costs of education in Pomfret are shown in the following section.

Current Education

The per pupil cost for students in the Pomfret school district for five years is shown in Figure 17 below. According to Vermont Department of Education data, the costs for the FY2006 school year were \$11,247 for each K-12 student from Pomfret. This compared to average State of Vermont costs in FY2006 of \$9,808 for K-12 students.

Figure 17 - Pomfret Education spending per pupil

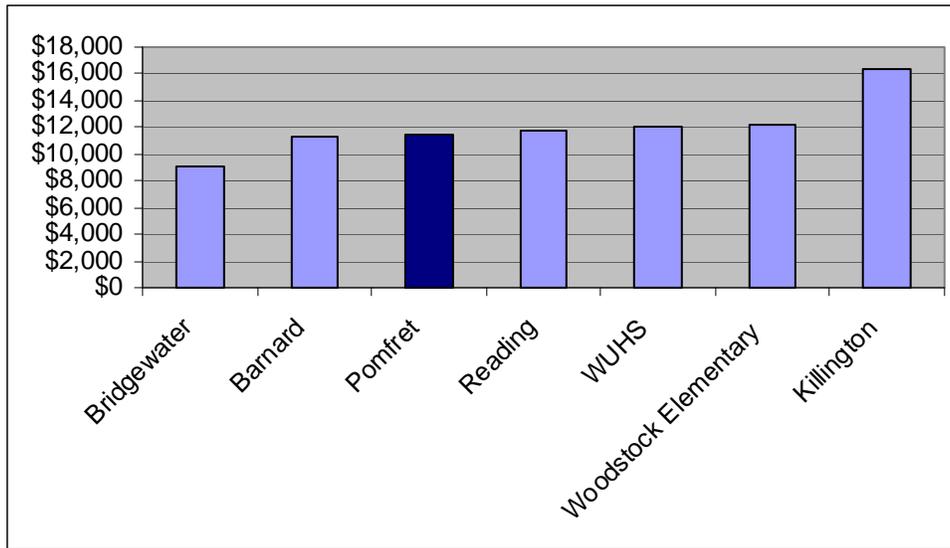


Source: Pomfret Town Reports 2005 & 2006

A comparison of current per pupil spending in other area schools is shown below.

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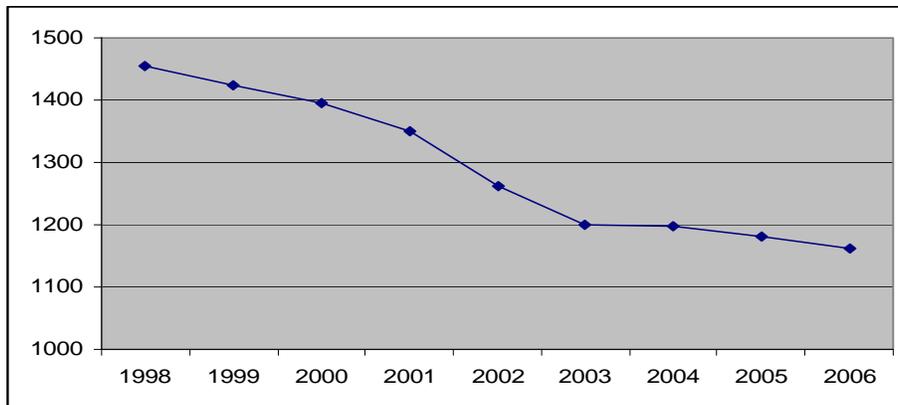
Figure 18 - Comparative per pupil spending



Source: Pomfret School Board

A large portion of the per pupil cost, and its increase from previous years, was inclusion of special education costs into the Town's school district budget. These costs are only reimbursed by state and federal funds at about 50 cents on each dollar spent, though they are mandated by federal legislation. Additionally, health insurance premiums have increased by approximately 12% every year, and fuel costs have risen substantially in recent years as well. The enrollment drop has also caused the cost per student to rise. Figure 19 offers enrollment data.

Figure 19 - WCSU Opening Enrollment



Source: Pomfret Town Report 2006

In the 2006 Pomfret survey, half the respondents (155 out of 309 people) view the school system in Pomfret as excellent.

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Since the late '60's Pomfret School taxes have averaged between 70-75% of total Town taxes. Vermont's Acts 60 and 68 concerning education funding, as well as the Brigham court decision, have shifted the burden of school funding largely to local taxpayers. It should also be noted that Pomfret, because of its high property tax base, receives minimal state aid for annual education expenses to offset rising school taxes and must instead send funds to Montpelier for redistribution to less wealthy towns. For example, in 2005, of the total \$2.726 million to be raised for school taxes, \$1.927 million (or 70.7%) was paid to the school, while about \$800,000 (29.3%) was paid to the State, Act 68.

In response to a question on the 2006 Pomfret survey, respondents voiced support for the following options to address the educational funding problems in Pomfret:

- Scholarship fund to attract more tuition students or endowment fund to reduce per pupil spending (48%)
- Merge with neighboring towns in Pomfret (47%)
- Explore Pomfret's membership in supervisory union and WUMHS (36%)

Historically, between 50-75% of Pomfret high school graduates have gone on to two year technical vocational colleges or four year colleges and universities.

Pomfret residents can be proud of the commitment by the townspeople to ensure that a superior education is provided to elementary school age children by constructing a new K-6 school. It provides highly visible evidence that education is a high priority in the minds of Pomfret taxpayers, and it affords a superb opportunity to continue to improve the academic aspects of student life for Pomfret children. The Pomfret School is to be commended for introducing programs at an early elementary level to help students make critical decisions. The number of townspeople, parents, and others who have volunteered time, energy, and expertise to help students and teachers testifies to widespread Town support for quality education. Continuing broad-based participation by all Pomfret residents in the process of developing long-range plans should be encouraged.

Long-Range Goal

Provide an educational environment that enables every student to strive toward his or her creative and intellectual potential. Prepare every student to be a knowledgeable, constructive, caring citizen ready to participate in community activities.

Policies and Objectives

1. Provide a physical environment that facilitates learning.

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2. Establish academic programs that teach practical skills, challenge each student intellectually, and foster creativity, including those students with special needs and talents.
3. Provide education for Pomfret children in a cost-effective manner thereby minimizing property tax increases.

Recommended Actions

1. Ensure that reasonable student/teacher ratios are maintained as planned growth of the community takes place. (School Board)
2. Continue to schedule school budget information meetings in Pomfret prior to voting on the school budgets. (School Board)
3. Continue to hold community forums every five years to take the pulse of the school and its direction. (School Board)
4. Develop policies to attract tuition-paying students from surrounding communities to fill any excess school capacity in Pomfret. (School Board)
5. Continue to encourage and promote community use of the school facility. (School Board)
6. Work toward shared use of facilities and personnel with neighboring schools. Continue to keep open dialogue with neighboring schools as populations shrink. (School Board)
7. Maintain a strong academic program to continue to attract families to Town. (School Board)
8. Provide high school students with good vocational training so they can become more employable in today's technological society. (School Board)
9. Where possible, supplement classroom teaching with creative activities funded by grants and foundations, such as the artist-in-residence program of the Pentangle Council on the Arts. (School Board)
10. Provide community based workshops and vocational programs in Pomfret schools for the community and potential start-up businesses. Long-range planning and consideration of outside sources of funding should continue to be included in this process. (School Board)

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11. Continue participation in governance and consolidation studies. (School Board)
12. Continue to ensure we take full advantage of services at Central Office (paid for in WCSU assessments) and prevent local duplication. (School Board)

Chapter 11 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Unplanned economic growth creates adverse conditions that have materially affected many communities in a negative way. Therefore Pomfret should plan for economic growth and expansion in a manner that creates a range of employment opportunities, encourages rising incomes, and raises citizens' living standards while considering the impact of such growth on the Town. The following economic development plan provides for economic growth consistent with the goals and policies of the Town of Pomfret as set forth in other sections of the Town Plan.

Past and Current Economic Activity

Historically, most of the economic activity in Pomfret has been related to agriculture and forestry, providing jobs for many Pomfret dwellers. In recent years, Pomfret's business base has shifted to service industries, retail, distribution, and professional. A majority of employed people, however, work in professional, management, administrative, and waste management services, as well as educational, health and social services, and retail.

The 2000 Census showed that about 24 percent of Pomfret's work force was able to find work locally, an increase of almost two percent from 1990 and an increase of about 10 percent from 1980. This shows the strength of the town's economy and the growth of local employers, including Suicide Six/Woodstock Resort, Chippers, Sugarbush Farm, Teago General Store, River Bend Home and Garden Supply. Further, as shown in Table 2 on page 14 of this plan, almost 24% of workers in Town are self-employed.

However, as indicated in the next table, between 1992 and 2005 Pomfret's tax base changed, with residential and vacation properties up, and the commercial, farms and woodlands components decreasing quite substantially.

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Table 5 - Pomfret Tax Base Summary

	1992	2005
Residential	51.0%	55.9%
Vacation	32.0%	36.8%
Commercial/industrial	5.0%	2.4%
Farms/woodland	4.0%	0.2%
Mobile homes	1.0%	0.4%
Other	7.0%	4.4%

Source: Pomfret Listers

Effectively, the amount of taxes that commercial businesses, farms and woodlands contributed to the total taxes paid decreased by more than two thirds (from nine percent total to less than three percent). For this reason, support for local business development will continue to be important to Pomfret.

Pomfret's workforce also benefits from economic development in the Upper Valley in recent years and many Pomfret residents can also find employment opportunities outside Town limits. Seventy six percent of Pomfret's work force commutes to jobs elsewhere.

Future developments in the Upper Valley's overall economy and its economic expansion will continue to affect Pomfret significantly in several ways. Expansion in regional commercial, industrial, and governmental sectors will provide more employment opportunities for Pomfret residents. Such expansion may also increase pressure on the Town's housing needs. Any significant economic slowdown in the Upper Valley could force some Pomfret residents to move away from the Town in search of employment elsewhere.

Though the overall economic climate in the Upper Valley has a large influence on Pomfret's economy, the Town's own influence on economic development in the Upper Valley is extremely limited. The Town of Pomfret only has the power to manage economic change within Pomfret itself.

The 2006 survey shows that the aspects of non-residential land use that respondents are most concerned about are visual (70%), noise (65%), and building size and scale as well as traffic (64%). Preservation of the Town's rural character is reflected in the goals and objectives stated in other sections of this Town Plan. Most of Pomfret's businesses are evenly distributed throughout the Town, and it is not the intention of this Town Plan to create industrial/commercial districts now or in the near future.

With this in mind, the Town's long-term goal will be to continue to encourage resourcefulness in the development of small businesses, professional services, and agriculture-related activities that will be consistent with the goals and policies in other sections of this Town Plan.

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In developing criteria for evaluation of economic development in Pomfret, consideration should be given to how businesses affect neighbors and the community as a whole. The primary criteria for judging such impact will be performance standards detailed in Town Ordinances, with special consideration given to such aspects as public safety, potential danger to community health, pollution, adverse impact on natural resources, drainage and water run-off problems, increases in traffic volume and traffic hazards, noxious fumes, obtrusive lights, and noise pollution.

Equally important criteria will cover the impact of a business on Town facilities and services, and on its tax structure, and the potential for adverse effect on Pomfret's scenic beauty and rural character.

It is acknowledged that initial economic development through rising tax revenues may more than cover the costs of increased demand for town facilities and services (including roads, schools, fire and police protection). Studies have shown, however, that a secondary effect of significant commercial development is likely to be increased taxes for everyone.

Long-Range Goal

Encourage the development of small businesses, professional services and agriculture-related activity in a manner that conforms to overall goals of keeping Pomfret rural and residential and which will not require Town expenditures on infrastructure.

Policies and Objectives

1. Manage future growth in Pomfret so that economic development does not create commercial and industrial districts.
2. Protect residents and the natural environment from aspects of economic development that could adversely affect them through pollution of all kinds and increased traffic volume.
3. Support new home based businesses in Pomfret, if the nature of the occupation is customary or appropriate in rural residential areas.
4. To reduce the demand for commuter transportation and energy, and encourage the development of broadband services, energy efficient home occupations, and small-scale home business is encouraged.
5. Relative to new businesses in town, Pomfret should ensure that the municipal costs to accommodate this growth, such as highways and fire protection do not exceed tax revenues.

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6. Encourage business growth that will enhance the rural character that Pomfret's residents so strongly value.

Recommended Actions

1. Develop performance standards for evaluation of air, noise, water, and visual pollution from proposed business development. (Planning Commission)
2. Update town landscaping guidelines and ordinances for businesses, and require structures used for business purposes to be appropriately landscaped in conformance with such criteria. (Planning Commission)
3. Encourage agriculture-based activities that can provide supplemental income for Pomfret households by making use of Pomfret's agricultural and forestry lands by reviewing zoning regulations for compatibility. (Planning Commission)
4. Encourage home based businesses by reviewing Pomfret's zoning ordinance to ensure its compatibility with this use. Any home business or commercial development shall be sited on a lot large enough and screened such that there is no significant odor or visual or audible effect of the project at the property boundary, and comply with state pollution laws. (Planning Commission)

Chapter 12 REGIONAL PLANNING

Impact on Land Use and Development Trends in Neighboring Towns and the Region

Pomfret shares boundaries with Sharon, Royalton, Barnard, Bridgewater, Woodstock, and Hartford. Without exception, the goals expressed in the town plans of Pomfret's neighbors address the need to maintain the existing pattern of compact villages and hamlets surrounded by rural countryside while allowing for appropriate growth and development in ways that protect natural resources.

As Pomfret's Plan has done, those of some of Pomfret's neighbors specifically include objectives and policies that encourage diversified farming activity. This presents an opportunity for a regional approach to preserve prime agricultural and forest land and to diminish and control the effects of development on open space.

There are regional variations in the approach to development. Pomfret's primary concern is to preclude development on land with agricultural potential, including forestry, and to limit development in open space. The adjoining space would remain available for agriculture, would preserve natural resources, and would maintain the rural character and scenic beauty of the Town.

Barnard's Town Plan was adopted in September 2004. The purpose of the Barnard Town Plan is to maintain and to enhance the existing pattern of settlement. The Town wishes to continue moderate development that favors expansion in the villages and discourages inappropriately sited development in open areas.

The Woodstock Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2001 has expired. The old plan emphasized encouraging a rational and convenient pattern of development by balancing natural resource protection with residential, recreational, commercial, and light industrial uses. It also encouraged affordable housing, public safety, economic growth, and protection of the historic settlement pattern

Sharon adopted a Town Plan in March 2005 that sets out several major land use goals including preservation of the community's history, remaining adaptable to vital changes, and allowing access to the natural environment while protecting it from degradation. The plan defines six separate geographical areas in town, defines a purpose and several policies in each to help determine compatible

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types of development, intensity of use, and the conservation of natural resources. The Town has no zoning, but does have subdivision regulations.

Bridgewater's Town Plan was adopted in January 2003. Although the town has no zoning regulations, land use in town is guided by the plans goal to maintain established compact village and hamlet areas with medium density growth areas adjacent to them. Commercial and light industrial development is planned for existing Village and hamlet areas only with no planned pattern of "strip development" along roadsides outside these Village and hamlet areas. Rural, low-density development is located outside conservation areas or critical areas, while avoiding existing agricultural lands.

The Royalton Town Plan, adopted in March 2002, has expired. This town also has no zoning regulations. The old Town Plan had a land use goal of maintaining its rural village character, preserving scenic beauty, natural resources and the cultural assets of the Town, while allowing for an acceptable rate of growth.

Hartford's land use recommendations in its December 2006 Draft Master Plan encourage appropriate use of the town's manmade and natural resources. Given the steady growth the town has experienced, the plan presents the community's vision to increase density in already developed areas with infrastructure, manage density of future development, protect scenic areas, open space and wildlife corridors, preserve the historic settlement pattern of compact villages surrounded by rural countryside, and support agriculture, forestry and recreation.

None of these variations is so drastic that mutual concern for protection of this regional rural and residential environment is threatened. The Land Use section of the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Plan, representing as it does the best interests of thirty municipalities in this area, is also compatible with the land use goals and policies of Pomfret and its neighbors.

There appears to be common concern about the effect of taxation on the preservation of open space. No precise formula has evolved in state government, but various methods of transferring development rights and utilizing state and local taxation techniques might help to mitigate the tax burden on agricultural, forest, and other open land. Given the difficulties the State Legislature has had attempting to deal with this subject over the years, it is unlikely that Pomfret and its neighbors can quickly and definitively resolve this problem. This does not mean that we cannot learn from each other or benefit from joint discussions about tax policy.

Any statewide action involving property taxes will have a serious impact on all of us. No one should be complacent about the effects of legislative property

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tax reform, as many of the proposals could actually increase the proportional tax burden on large tracts of undeveloped land.

Regional consideration of other topics in addition to land use would serve common interests. These include regional solutions to transportation plans covering not only road networks, but also public transportation; fire and police protection; economic development; recreational paths and trails and special wildlife habitats that cross town lines; and prevention of contamination of the water table that recognizes no surface boundaries.

Study in the area of transportation is proceeding under the direction of the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission. The Vermont Agency of Transportation has made major changes in how Vermont's future transportation planning will be done. This effectively places much of the responsibility for transportation planning and decision-making at the regional level. The Transportation Advisory Committee of the TRORC is currently working on the identification and inventory of Pomfret's road network. This will cover a number of criteria including function and hazards. The Regional Transportation Plan was released with the Regional Plan in 2003.

It is in Pomfret's best interest to become and remain involved in any future transportation planning activities. The Selectboard has appointed a representative to serve in that capacity.

Three following examples illustrate the benefits of regional cooperation to Pomfret.

The Upper Valley Mutual Aid Association, a mutual aid system for fire protection, has existed in this area for many years, rendering considerable benefits to its member communities. These benefits include coordination of skilled labor and access to millions of dollars worth of equipment for emergency services. Under this umbrella organization fire departments train together regularly and assist at fire sites when necessary.

The Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste Management District provides facilities for the recycling and disposal of many types of solid waste for ten towns in the Ottawaquechee, White, and Connecticut River valleys. This cooperative effort offers efficiency of planning, extensive marketing of recyclables, management of household hazardous waste, waste reduction and disposal services for farms and small businesses, and concentrated use of disposal sites that greatly reduces the possibility of widespread contamination of the environment. Towns in the District will finance construction of a bridge across Interstate 91 to provide access to GUV's proposed landfill site in North Hartland. GUV's statutory responsibility is to provide a long-term solution for the disposal of its member communities' municipal solid waste. This landfill has been designed to provide at

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least 50 years of disposal capacity. No town alone could manage and fund such services.

Pomfret has four representatives on the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) #12. This group of 27 towns is responsible for planning and implementing a regional program for coping with emergencies that involve hazardous material and natural disasters. In conjunction with this effort a comprehensive emergency response plan has been developed for Pomfret.

These three entities and the TRORC have successfully demonstrated the value of addressing issues of vital interest to us all on a regional basis. Extending the range of these common concerns and seeking regional solutions to them is the most sensible direction in which to proceed.

Long-Range Goal

Work with neighboring towns to address problems related to common goals.

Objectives

1. Exchange with neighboring towns planning information that will have an impact on development trends and conservation efforts.
2. Continue to participate actively in TRORC to assure that Pomfret's goals, objectives, and policies are considered in regional plans.

Recommended Actions

1. Review the town plans of neighboring towns as they are readopted or rewritten to determine their potential impact on Pomfret's future. (Planning Commission)
2. Study the need for public transportation in rural areas of the region through TRORC. (Pomfret's representatives to TRORC and the Transportation Advisory Committee)
3. Review State agency planning documents that might affect Pomfret. (Planning Commission)
4. Schedule yearly meeting with the Planning Commissions of neighboring towns. (Planning Commission)

Chapter 13 TOWN PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Planning is significant only if it leads to decisions and actions. This Town Plan clearly expresses the long-range goals of the community that will define the Town that future Pomfret generations can hope to find. The policies and objectives provide guidelines for making decisions.

Everyone should accept that changes will occur in Pomfret. Adoption of this new Town Plan (2007) presents an opportunity to direct those changes. The tools for directing growth are this new Town Plan, Pomfret's Zoning By-laws with the Ridgeline and Hillside Conservation Area Amendment, and Pomfret's Subdivision Regulations. These ordinances must be reviewed and revised based on this Town Plan as well as current needs and conditions. These revisions, guided by the policies and objectives of the Town Plan, will be extremely important to the future of Pomfret. They will be based on decisions made with the long-term common good in mind.

Equally important is recognition by the residents of Pomfret that many of the goals and objectives of this Plan can be achieved more effectively by voluntary actions than by Town Regulations. Information about conservation easements, restrictive covenants, and other estate planning techniques, when shared with landowners by the Conservation and Planning Commissions, should help to lead to wise decisions by individual landowners. Such information would also convey important tax and land planning options that can help to protect family lands.

Recommended Actions are listed at the end of each chapter of the Plan. These are actions designed to achieve objectives, carry out policies, and determine priorities. The group with primary responsibility for implementing an action is indicated in parentheses.

Immediate action is critical in two areas. These are listed here. This does not diminish the importance of other recommended actions throughout the Plan nor does it imply that those are not also matters of some degree of urgency.

Critical Objectives - Immediate Action

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1. Manage growth so that it does not detract from the rural character and scenic beauty of Pomfret, assuring residents' protection of Pomfret's natural resources.
 - Re-establish the Pomfret Conservation Commission to further land use goals, objectives and policies in this Town Plan (Land Use Recommended Action #1. Selectboard).
 - Update natural resources inventories on a regular basis to ensure information in them is current and accurate. (Land Use Recommended Action #2. Conservation Commission)
 - Create a development suitability map based on the capacity of soils, topography, access, etc. to handle development. Determine the maximum development densities to be permitted in different areas of the Town. (Land Use Recommended Action #3. Planning Commission)
 - Continue to rewrite Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to include the following:
 - a. Special review for any development on prime agricultural and productive forestland.
 - b. Development densities that do not exceed capacity of land to sustain them.
 - c. Size and timing of major projects to conform to planned infrastructure growth.
 - d. Provisions for land development patterns that conform to the goals and policies of the Land Use Chapter, such as cluster development, planned residential developments, and related techniques. These provisions should allow denser development in appropriate locations in exchange for less dense or no development in areas which should remain open. (Land Use Recommended Action #4. Planning Commission)
 - Amend Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to provide for review of the impact of development on significant natural, scenic, and historic resources. (Natural Resources Recommended Action #4. Planning Commission)
 - Revise land development regulations to ensure that all new development is accessible to emergency vehicles at all times of the year. (Town Services and Facilities Recommended Action #4. Planning Commission)

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- Advise the Selectboard on appropriate permit fees for land development regulations to cover the cost of administering the regulations. (Town Services and Facilities Recommended Action #7. Planning Commission)
 - Develop performance standards for evaluation of air, noise, water, and visual pollution from proposed business development. (Economic Development Recommended Action # 1. Planning Commission)
2. Review all development on prime agricultural land to minimize the impact of such growth.
- Define and inventory agricultural and forest land using available soils suitability data. (Land Use Recommended Action #2. Conservation Commission)
 - Encourage landowners to make their agricultural and forest land available for others to farm, and maintain a list of those landowners who are willing to participate in such a program. (Land Use Recommended Action #8. Conservation Commission)

The less urgent actions recommended in each section of the Plan cover a wide range of topics. Implicit in the word “action” is involvement. Residents are encouraged to consider the many areas in which action is recommended and to identify those that are most interesting to them. Contact the group responsible for future action and get involved. Decisions based on wider participation will be all the more meaningful.

Appendix A Glossary

The following terms are used in this document and may need further explanation for some readers.

Agricultural Land – tillable land, hayfields, and pastures currently being used for farming. Also land that due to its soil type, slope, and location merits preservation for future farm use.

Assessed Value - the value assigned to real estate by the town's Listers that is used to assess property taxes.

"Arm's Length" - a real estate transaction between parties that are not related in any way that would affect the value of the transaction, e.g. relatives or business associates.

Cluster Development - grouping structures in one area of a parcel or a project thereby permitting the balance of the land to remain open and undeveloped.

Conservation Easement - a permanent legal recorded agreement between a landowner and a conservation group, land trust, or government body, whereby certain uses of the land are restricted, generally the right to develop the land. Other uses such as agriculture, forestry, or recreation may be permitted.

Current Use Program - a State program originally designed to enable owners of working farms and managed woodlots of over 25 contiguous acres to pay property taxes that are based on the agricultural or forestry value of the land as opposed to the development value of the land. The State of Vermont reimburses municipalities for their services, excluding school costs. The effectiveness of this program has been eroded in recent years by being under funded by the legislature.

Development - dividing a parcel of land; building any kind of structure on previously open land and forestland; the reconstruction, conversion, or enlargement of existing structures; and the change in use of a structure or parcel of land relative to any kind of commercial activity.

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Development Rights - the right to develop a parcel of land (see development above). These rights may be transferred to another party independent from the underlying ownership of the land and, when transferred, should be recorded in the Town's land records. (See Conservation Easement)

Forestland - an area with a high density of trees. Historically, a wooded area set aside for hunting.

Forestry - the art, science, and practice of studying and managing forests and related natural resources. Modern forestry generally concerns itself with assisting forests to provide timber as raw material for wood products; wildlife habitat; natural water quality regulation; recreation; landscape and community protection; employment; aesthetically appealing landscapes; and a 'sink' for atmospheric carbon dioxide.

Geographic Information System (GIS) - a computer based mapping and information system. A municipal or regional GIS may include layers for roads, surface waters, topographical features, soils, structures, land cover, land use, and structures. Points, areas, and linear features are represented spatially (on a map) and an unlimited amount of information about each feature may be attached to it in a database. It may be used for resource inventories, transportation and land use planning, and emergency response.

Goals - long range aspirations that establish a direction the town should take.

Infrastructure - public improvements such as roads, schools, municipal buildings, and sewer and water systems that support existing and future development in a community.

Objectives - measurable components of goals that are attainable within a set period.

Open Space - areas that are undeveloped which may include pastures, croplands, forestland, and transitional land that may be reverting from meadow to forestland.

Policies – Frameworks for designing courses of action that will allow achievement of desired goals or objectives, and may be used to solve problems or avoid their recurrence.

Property Tax Prebate - The Act 60 property tax adjustment program (also referred to as income sensitivity) to help homeowners pay school property taxes that exceed a percentage of their household income.

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Property Tax Rebate Program - a state rebate program to ensure that lower income property owners and renters pay less than a certain percentage of their income for rent or property tax for their residence and up to two acres of land.

Recommended Actions- courses of action designed to achieve objectives or carry out policies.

Restrictive Covenant - a restriction on certain land uses, usually development, placed on a parcel and recorded in the land records.

Wetlands - areas that are saturated with water for a sufficient period of time annually to support wetlands vegetation. Also known as swamps, marshes, sloughs, fens, bogs, and ponds.

Appendix B Pomfret Planning Commission 2006 Survey Response

In April 2006, 903 surveys were mailed to landowners and voters, and 309 responses were returned and tabulated, a 34% response rate.

Town Character

1. What makes Pomfret a special place?

Rural character (90%), scenic beauty (88%) and open fields (79%)

2. What would make Pomfret a better place?

Preserve productive agricultural and forest land (72%) and lower taxes (69%).

3. The greatest challenges facing Pomfret?

Top issues ranked as very important:

Tax burden (79%)

Development pressures on ag land (71%)

Development pressures on open land (68%)

Maintain elementary school population (45% very important + 38% somewhat important)

Top issues ranked as not important:

Additional daycare facilities (58%)

Establishing/growing village center (57%)

4. Important natural resources:

Open fields and meadows (86%)

Forest land (82%)

Agricultural land (81%)

Scenic views (80%)

Streams (80%)

In sum, Pomfret's natural resources are the main interest of people who responded to the survey.

Growth

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5. Change in Pomfret:

95% want the town to remain primarily residential and agricultural in character

6. Level of growth for Pomfret:

56% want controlled growth using zoning and subdivision bylaws
31% want as little growth as possible

7. Support for a pattern of compact settlements surrounded by rural countryside:

56% in favor
33% opposed

8. Support for increased building density in Pomfret's villages and hamlets:

48% in favor
43% opposed

9. Support for lot sizes larger than 2 acres outside of villages and hamlets:

34% favor current 2 acre zoning outside villages and hamlets
26% favor 5 acre zoning
23% favor 10 acre zoning
8% favor 20 acre zoning

10. Support for restrictions on building in open fields in Pomfret:

77% in favor

Respondents clearly would like to see no changes to the Town's residential and agricultural character. They favor as little growth as possible and controlled growth using zoning and subdivision bylaws. All of these findings are mutually supportive.

Economic Development

11. Aspects of non-residential land use respondents are concerned about:

Visual impact (70%)
Noise (65%)
Building size and scale (64%)
Traffic (64%)

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Housing

12. Support for private development of housing affordable to working families:

66% in favor

12a. Support for an initiative to develop this kind of housing:

50% in favor

13. Opinions on various types of housing in Pomfret

Strongly favor + favor:

Single family houses on individual lots (88%)

Housing affordable to working families (79%)

Assisted living for elderly people (62%)

Strongly against + against:

Mega houses (84%)

Apartments or town houses (64%)

Multi-family homes on individual lots (57%)

Respondents are interested in and supportive of ensuring that working families can afford to live in Town. There is an apparent discrepancy in the responses, however, with how this might be accomplished.

14. Aspects of residential land use respondents are concerned about:

Visual impact (71%)

Building size and scale (69%)

Noise (51%)

Outdoor light (50%)

Placement of houses on lots (49%)

Roads and Transportation

15. Support for paying higher taxes to improve the quality of roads:

77% opposed

Education

16. Support for options to address educational funding problems in Pomfret:

48% Scholarship fund to attract more tuition students and/or endowment fund to reduce per pupil spending

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- 47% Merge with neighboring towns in Pomfret
- 36% Explore Pomfret's membership in supervisory union and WUMHS

Municipal Services and Regulations

17. Opinions on municipal services:

Excellent:
School (50%)

Good:
Roads (64%)
Town Administration (54%)
Planning & Zoning (52%)

Survey respondents are generally satisfied with municipal services.

18. Should the town adopt an ordinance to regulate cell towers – their location, types, and height?

80% in favor

19. Should the town do more to promote energy conservation and/or development of private renewable resource systems?

69% in favor

20. Do you favor development of commercial wind power resources in Pomfret?

49% in favor
34% opposed

21. Do you favor development of private/residential wind power resources in Pomfret?

59% in favor

Survey respondents are generally supportive of private energy conservation and renewable resource development.

Demographics of respondents

22. Residency status of respondents:

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75% Resident homeowner
4% Renter
6% Resident business owner
16% Non resident homeowner
7% Non resident landowner
<1% Non resident business owner

23. Age of respondents:

<1% under 25 years
7% 25-40 years
38% 41-55 years
34% 56-70 years
22% over 70 years

24. Number of years resident or property owner in Pomfret

3% less than one year
11% one to five years
11% five to ten years
36% ten to 25 years
39% longer than 25 years

25. Place of residence

26% in/near village or hamlet
74% outside village or hamlet

26. Local newspapers read

82% Vermont Standard
77% Valley News

27. Support for receiving information regarding town issues and events via email
or a website

55% in favor
32% opposed

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Appendix C Pomfret Housing Data

Homestead Inventory Value Based on Assessed Values
1993 versus 2006

Assessed Values	Residences				Vacation Homes			
	< 6 acres		>6 acres		<6 acres		>6 acres	
	1993	2006	1993	2006	1993	2006	1993	2006
< than \$50,000	9	5	6	6	4	4	7	4
\$50-100,000	55	26	12	14	9	9	21	3
\$100-150,000	41	59	46	22	12	11	24	14
\$150-200,000	12	36	33	40	3	4	21	11
\$200-250,000	5	8	23	30	2	3	13	13
\$250-300,000	1	5	12	21	0	3	12	8
\$300-350,000	0	2	16	17	0	1	7	7
\$350-400,000	0	0	4	13	0	0	10	6
\$400-500,000	0	1	7	20	0	1	4	17
\$500-600,000	0	0	3	25	0	0	3*	14
\$600-700,000	0	0	1	8	0	0	0	5
\$700-800,000	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	4
\$800-900,000	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
\$900-1,000,000	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
\$1,000-1,100,000	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
\$1,100-1,200,000	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Over \$1,200,000	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	7
Total	123	142	167	231	30	36	126	123

* From 1996 Town Plan

Total Number of Homes in Pomfret:

	June 1993	December 2006
Residences	290	373
Vacation Homes	156	156
Total	446	530

December 2006 numbers exclude 9 Mobile Homes with 5 assessed at less than \$40,000 and 4 between \$75,000 and \$131,000.

From the above there can be seen a significant movement into higher valuations for almost all properties.

Source: Pomfret Listers

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If the State of Vermont's Common Level of Appraisal(CLA) is appropriate at 62%(Comparing Assessed Values to Sales Prices) market values might be as follows:

Assessed Value	Possible Market Price
\$200,000	\$300,000
\$400,000	\$600,000
\$600,000	\$900,000
\$1,000,000	\$1,600,000

Pomfret Sales of Residential and Vacation Homes from April 1, 2003 to March 31 2006

Category	Number	Range of Prices	Total Listed Values	Total Sale Values	CLA
R1	17	\$60,000- \$645,000	\$2,772,875	\$4,714,000	58%
R2	10	\$200,000-\$950,000	\$2,725,171	\$4,314,500	63%
V1	3	\$95,000-\$428,000	\$621,547	\$848,000	73%
V2	3	\$275,000-\$6,250,000	2,351,279	\$7,250,000	32%
Misc.	7	\$5,000-\$425,000	\$521,298	\$1,227,000	42%

As these are extremely small samples, conclusions must be drawn with that in mind. Sales for this time period for residences are three times those of vacation properties at values significantly above assessed values..

- R1 - Residential on less than 6 acres - Average sales Price: \$277,294
- R2 - Residential on more than 6 acres – Average Sales Price: \$431,450
- V1 - Vacation on less than 6 acres - not enough for a valid average
- V2 - Vacation on more than 6 acres – not enough for a valid average
- Misc. – Open Land/Misc

The State of Vermont indicates Pomfret's overall Common Level Of Appraisal(CLA) is 62% when comparing sales prices with listed values.

Source: St. of VT.- Division of Property Valuation and Review – Certified Sales Reports

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2006 Assessed Values of 111 Parcels of Land

Assessed Value	December 2006 Number	Possible Upper Range Adjusted CLA Value
Less Than \$40,000	22	\$60,000
\$40,000-\$80,000	26	\$120,000
\$80,000-\$120,000	19	\$180,000
\$120,000-\$160,000	17	
Over \$160,000	18	

In June of 1993 there were 124 parcels of land assessed at less than \$40,000 with the rest above that but not over \$100,000. Land values have increased significantly since 1993.

2006 Number of Parcels by Acreage

Acreage	Number
Less than 10 acres	25
10-20	16
20-30	14
30-40	5
40-60	13
60-80	16
Over 80	13

Land Sales of all Parcels from January 2000 to December 2006

Parcel Size	Number	Range of Prices Per Acre	Average
1 to 10 acres	12	\$1,000 to \$26,000	\$9,447
10 to 25 acres	11	\$3,000 to \$19,000	\$6,615
27 to 75 acres	15	\$1,100 to \$12,500	\$5,914
Over 100	5	\$1,500 to \$4,000	\$2,964
		Over All Average Per Acre	\$6,736

Acres	Property Ownership		
	Counts	Resident	Non-Resident
Less than 50 acres	535	272	263
50-100 acres	58	21	37
Over 100 acres	57	19	38
Total Over 50 acres	115	40	75

Source: Pomfret Listers

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2005 Vermont Personal Income Tax Returns

AGI Income Class	Returns	Exempt	Marr- ied Joint	Single	Marr- ied Sep- arate	Head of House- hold	Adjusted Gross Income
<u>Pomfret</u>							
Loss or None	15	22	4	11	0	0	-851,244
0.01 - 4999	51	21	2	48	0	1	131,524
5000 - 9999	30	21	4	25	0	1	216,270
10000 - 14999	24	41	6	15	0	3	280,592
15000 - 19999	29	42	8	16	3	2	501,496
20000 - 24999	19	34	6	9	1	3	433,161
25000 - 29999	24	39	8	12	1	3	661,802
30000 - 34999	17	29	4	10	1	2	558,799
35000 - 39999	19	31	6	9	3	1	723,852
40000 - 44999	14	27	8	6	0	0	598,729
45000 - 49999	20	46	12	3	2	3	944,284
50000 - 59999	42	101	31	9	1	1	2,340,316
60000 - 74999	32	86	22	6	2	2	2,153,894
75000 - 99999	60	159	48	9	0	3	5,261,411
100000 - 149999	38	96	29	8	0	1	4,689,036
150000 +	42	97	32	9	0	1	23,406,932
Grand Total	476	892	230	205	14	27	42,050,854

Average Adjusted Gross Income: \$88,340.

Pulling out the 42 with \$150,000 in Income or greater leaves an average of: \$42,958

Median Pomfret Adjusted Gross Income of all Pomfret Taxpayers is: \$44,267

Source: State of Vermont Tax Department -- 2005 Personal Income

NOTE: Exempt is short for "exemptions," or the number of exemptions claimed on returns filed within the income class.

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2006 School Property Tax Adjustments - Claims Received as of December 1, 2006

Household Income Class	Number of Filers	Average Household Income	Median Equalized Homestead Value	Homestead School Tax		Reduction in Homestead School Tax	
				Average Total	Average Adjusted	Average	Total
Pomfret							
0 - 9,999	4	5,205	152,041	2,027.00	116.50	1,910.50	7,642
10,000 - 19,999	15	14,735	154,001	2,520.00	398.07	2,121.93	31,829
20,000 - 29,999	23	24,444	183,189	3,561.78	673.00	2,888.78	66,442
30,000 - 39,999	17	35,274	204,368	3,410.35	972.12	2,438.24	41,450
40,000 - 47,000	21	43,567	220,258	3,967.57	1,206.38	2,761.19	57,985
47,001 - 59,999	32	53,818	214,748	4,355.22	1,503.13	2,852.09	91,267
60,000 +	60	76,423	217,766	3,905.87	2,374.98	1,530.88	91,853
Grand Total	172	50,152	208,352	3,737.46	1,478.92	2,258.53	388,468
Type of Adjustment							
HS Exemption (HEV)							
Income (HIP)	172	50,152	208,352	3,737.46	1,478.92	2,258.53	388,468

2005 Homeowner Rebates - Claims Received as of December 1, 2006

Household Income Class	Number of Applications	Average Household Income	Average Equalized Homestead Value	State and Local Homestead School		Average Rebate Eligible Taxes		Homeowner Rebate	
				Average Total	Average Adjusted	Municipal	Adjusted School + Municipal	Average	Total
Pomfret									
0 - 9,999									
10,000 - 19,999	10	14,178	183,100	2,544.70	627.10	498.60	1,125.70	487.50	4,875
20,000 - 29,999	16	24,357	280,357	3,982.94	1,460.56	782.25	2,242.81	1,086.19	17,379
30,000 +	16	37,460	297,161	4,130.01	2,067.13	812.44	2,879.57	1,006.44	16,103
Grand Total	42	26,925	263,602	3,696.53	1,493.19	726.21	2,219.41	913.26	38,357

Source: Vermont Department of Taxation - 2006

From the above one can see that the average prebate for Pomfret residents that qualify for the 2006 School Property Tax Adjustment is \$2,258. On top of this 42 Pomfret residents also qualified for 2005 Property Tax Rebate with an average rebate of \$913.

In Chapter 3 it is stated that in 2005 on a Homestead with a value of \$250,000, the property tax burden was \$4155. It would appear that the prebate and rebate programs do offer assistance to the taxpayer with lower incomes.

Appendix D Maps

Map 1 – Current Land Use

Map 2 – Future Land Use

Map 3 – Roads

Map 4 – Utilities, Facilities and Education

Map 5 – Conserved Lands