
POMFRET

Town Plan

2014

Adopted MM/DD, 2014

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1 **Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION**

2 Preserving the scenic beauty and rural character of Pomfret’s valleys,
3 hillsides, and ridgelines remains the primary goal of this Plan. As measured by
4 growth in surrounding towns, Pomfret’s long-term planning efforts have been
5 extremely effective. This is due in large measure to the foresight of Pomfret’s
6 Planning Commissions, its Selectboard, and its concerned citizens. They have
7 devoted a great deal of time and energy endeavoring to carry out the expressed
8 wishes of the community.
9

10 Pomfret’s natural resources are the main interest of people who responded
11 to the 2006 survey by the Pomfret Planning Commission. Residents and
12 landowners also favor limiting change and growth in Pomfret through planning
13 and zoning. Both sentiments were true in 1968 when the original Pomfret
14 Planning Commission began to work on a Town Plan. The first Town Plan was
15 adopted in October 1971 and was readopted with an amendment on December 21,
16 1977. During that interval Pomfret’s Zoning Ordinance was drafted, approved,
17 and amended twice, including approval of the Subdivision Regulations
18 amendments on March 4, 1975. The Land Use and Development Regulations are
19 currently being amended as of this writing. (Subdivision regulations amended in
20 2012, Ridgeline regulations amended in 2008). These documents and Vermont’s
21 Act 250 have preserved Pomfret as we know it. The Ridgeline and Hillside
22 Conservation Areas amendment to the Zoning Ordinance approved March 7,
23 1989, and currently being amended, assured further protection. It seems that few
24 towns in the Green Mountain State have suffered as little impact from
25 uncontrolled development as Pomfret has.
26

27 Pomfret’s original Town Plan was further amended in November 1982 and
28 December 1987, though the basic 1971 document remained intact. Town Plans in
29 Vermont must be reviewed and rewritten or readopted every five years (Title 24,
30 Chapter 117, Vermont Statutes Annotated). In 1992, it was decided that it was
31 time to completely rewrite Pomfret’s Town Plan. That effort took two years, and
32 the document was adopted in the spring of 1995. The same plan was slightly
33 modified for re-adoption in 2001, 2006 and again in 2014. This current plan
34 incorporates results of a spring 2006 survey of all residents and landowners in the
35 town to which about 34% responded. The residents of Pomfret are urged to
36 review this plan thoughtfully, as the Planning Commission believes that the
37 proposed goals, policies and objectives, and recommended actions all contribute
38 to protecting and preserving Pomfret’s open space and natural resources. They are
39 essential to maintaining a gradual and diversified growth pattern.
40

41 Pomfret residents and landowners should all be aware that without a
42 comprehensive Town Plan and effective zoning and subdivision regulations,
43 uncontrolled development would overwhelm the town. In 1971, the Quechee

**Pomfret 2014 Town Plan
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1 Lakes Corporation (QLC) applied for “Conceptual Approval” of its planned
2 development of 550 acres of land in the Bunker Hill section of Pomfret and 5,000
3 acres in Hartford to create 2,500 home sites. It was the Pomfret Selectboard’s
4 objection to the planned development that it would “permanently alter the Town’s
5 social and economic cohesion.” This led to the Environmental Commission’s
6 decision to eliminate from its approval all land owned by QLC in Pomfret.
7

8 The 2014 Pomfret Town Plan is divided into thirteen chapters according to
9 major planning elements required by state law. Within each chapter, long-range
10 goals are listed, followed by objectives and policies that are intended to guide
11 measures undertaken to accomplish the goals.
12

13 Recommendations are made for actions that can be taken by various
14 groups within Town to achieve specific planning objectives. These lists are not
15 intended to be definitive. Additions and revisions will be necessary from time to
16 time. These goals, policies and objectives, and recommended actions establish a
17 direction ensuring that Pomfret remains a place where harmony between the built
18 and natural environments is demonstrated through appropriate land use.
19

20 Chapter 12 addresses the need for follow-up to the recommended actions
21 suggested in each chapter. Four appendices include maps, and other background
22 material that supports the text and proposals of the Plan. There is also a list of
23 relevant definitions in the Glossary of Terms.
24

25 Planning is by its very nature a continuous activity. The Planning
26 Commission encourages all those residents who value the extraordinary beauty of
27 Pomfret, and who would like to assure future generations the opportunity of living
28 in such a community, to participate in planning activities. Only through the efforts
29 of volunteers can the Town guide growth as effectively as those who began this
30 worthy activity over forty-five years ago.
31

1 Chapter 2 POMFRET HISTORY

2 Pomfret and its neighbors all came into being in the summer of 1761. The
3 town of Pomfret was first laid out by New Hampshire Governor, Benning
4 Wentworth, in a grant dated July 8, 1761. Wentworth had begun selling Town
5 grants to land speculators for land west of the Connecticut River in 1749. During
6 the summer of 1761 he sold many such grants, including Pomfret and its
7 neighboring towns of Hartford, Woodstock, Barnard and Sharon. Most of the
8 Pomfret grant's sixty-seven purchasers, known as "proprietors" (land
9 speculators), came from the Woodstock, Connecticut area. Isaac Dana, one of ten
10 proprietors named Dana, came from Pomfret, Connecticut, and may have been
11 influential in naming the new town. Pomfret, Connecticut, in turn, had been
12 named for Pomfret, England. The name Pomfret is believed to be a corruption of
13 the Latin *ponte fractus* or broken bridge.
14

15 Wentworth's grants were all designed to be six miles square, with borders
16 measuring six miles to a side. The grants were sold without benefit of proper
17 surveys, and each cited boundaries of previous grants. Towns granted along the
18 Connecticut River had readily defined and accurate eastern boundaries along the
19 river, but as grants extended westward, the potential for error increased. Pomfret's
20 continuing boundary disputes with Woodstock and Barnard were resolved for the
21 most part in the late 1800's, though some sections are still not settled. The
22 Taftsville covered bridge now stands where the towns of Hartford, Hartland,
23 Pomfret and Woodstock once met, and the four towns jointly owned the bridge
24 (Pomfret's share was 8/40ths.) To establish responsibility for the bridge's care
25 and upkeep, Pomfret's share was given to Woodstock by the Vermont General
26 Assembly in 1851. Pomfret's final dimensions remain approximately six by six
27 miles (actually 5.6 x 6.8 miles).
28

29 Shortly after Wentworth's flurry of grant activity, the colonial governor
30 of New York, seeing a good opportunity to enrich his own and his colony's
31 coffers, challenged Wentworth's right to grant lands west of the Connecticut
32 River. To protect themselves against questionable grants, proprietors in several
33 towns applied to New York for second grants for holdings already granted by
34 New Hampshire. Woodstock succeeded, but Pomfret never received a second
35 grant, although the town applied.
36

37 The land speculators or "proprietors" who had purchased the grants met
38 and organized in Pomfret, Connecticut in 1761. To ensure that their Pomfret,
39 Vermont lands could be settled or sold, the owners of the grants planned for
40 surveys and the development of roads. In addition, they created lots of land in the
41 first division of the Town. The "proprietors" literally "drew lots" and thus became
42 owners of these individual lots of land that could then be sold to other potential
43 settlers. Money to pay for the development of roads and other needs came from

1 assessing each owner. Fifteen of the original sixty-seven proprietors who did not
2 pay this assessment in a timely fashion lost their rights.

3
4 This early action all took place in Connecticut. Pomfret, Vermont
5 remained unsettled for a decade. Although a few had visited the area the summer
6 before, the first settlers didn't make their "pitches" until the early 1760s. The
7 usual custom would be for a father, accompanied perhaps by a son or neighbor, to
8 travel from southern New England in late winter or early spring. Pomfret's early
9 settlers discovered a hilly land, covered by a dense growth of trees, with few open
10 vistas. The men would spend the summer staking and clearing the new acres,
11 perhaps raising a grain crop to store until the following spring when the entire
12 family would arrive. Most early Pomfret settlers followed this custom.

13
14 The first Pomfret Town Meeting was held in March of 1773, only three
15 years after permanent settlement had begun in the new territory. Proprietors'
16 meetings continued to be held to dispose of land in several divisions. After the
17 success of the American Revolution, England lost interest in the grants fight. The
18 war also distracted the contending colonies of New York and New Hampshire.
19 Settlers paid New York State \$30,000 to release the claim, and when the New
20 Hampshire grants were resolved, and were finally able to form their own state
21 government in 1777. Vermont became the thirteenth State of the United States in
22 1791.

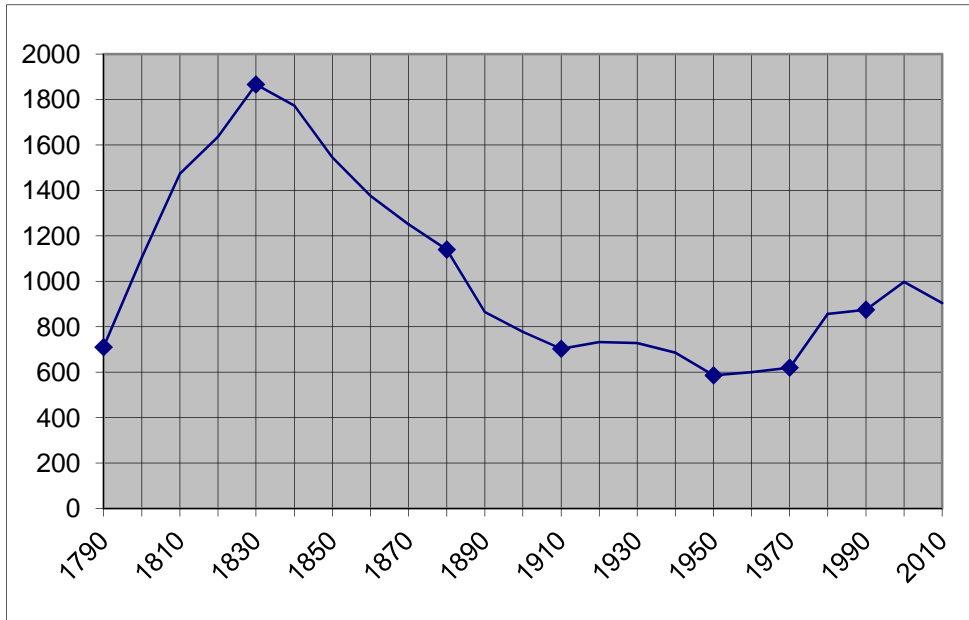
23
24 Many new Pomfret settlers fought in the Revolution (Bunker Hill is so
25 named because many of its residents were in that battle.) Pomfret's closest
26 engagement came when a party of Canadian Indians burned Royalton in 1780.
27 Men from Pomfret responded but could not prevent the town from burning.

28
29 Pomfret's population soared from the 710 who lived in Town in 1791 to a
30 high of 1,867 in 1830 (see Figure 1). The era of high population coincided with
31 the rise of the nearly self-sufficient farm with its labor intensive operations. Large
32 families were the custom, and many sons worked the family farm or acquired
33 their own land nearby. But the days of the hill farm were numbered. The
34 industrial revolution brought new farm equipment requiring new and larger farms
35 with higher productivity. The so-called hill farms were gradually abandoned for
36 easier-to-work and flatter lands, often in the mid or far west. The opening of the
37 Erie Canal in 1830 hastened this westward migration. The Vermont sheep boom
38 began in 1810 with the importation of the first Merino sheep from Spain and
39 peaked by 1840. Many Vermont sheep farmers then saw their income from sheep
40 drop rapidly.

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Figure 1 - Pomfret Population History: 1790-2010



Source: Center for Rural Studies and U.S. Census

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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

1 such “electronic commuters” already live and work in Town. The current
2 population in Pomfret is just over 900 people.

3 **Housing**

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

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

21 **Schools**

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

30
31 The number of school districts in Town rose rapidly until this 36-square-
32 mile town had sixteen schools of its own and two shared districts that served
33 children from Pomfret and neighboring towns. The schools, despite being
34 relatively small, often served as area meeting places for civic and entertainment
35 programs of all sorts. Many area citizens were buried after services held in the
36 former school in South Pomfret located on the Max Boynton property in the
37 Village.

38
39 The number of Pomfret school districts gradually decreased in the
40 twentieth century. The State passed increasingly stringent rules regarding
41 facilities and training requirements for teachers. Taxpayers found it difficult to

1 finance the maintenance of so many buildings. New teachers began to complain
2 that they were not prepared to teach eight grades at once as was the custom in
3 one-room schoolhouses. Pomfret then chose to allocate students by grade so that
4 teachers usually taught no more than two grade levels in each school building.
5 This continued until 1989 when the Town decided to build the K-6 school in
6 South Pomfret that opened for the 1991-92 school year. The same modern
7 transportation that delivered children to different schools by grade now made it
8 practical to bus children to a single site that met state standards.
9

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

18 **Transportation**

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

31 **Institutions**

32 Most of the earliest settlers were Congregationalists. The area's first
33 settled minister, shared with Woodstock, lived and farmed where the new Pomfret
34 School now stands. The first Pomfret minister was granted a lot near Pomfret
35 Center. Later, townspeople raised a handsome church building near the center that
36 burned in 1843 and was not rebuilt. The present North Pomfret Congregational
37 Church was built in 1844 and is still used for worship. The Ladies Circle
38 celebrated its hundredth anniversary in 1992. The present Town Hall was erected
39 in 1845 by the Universalists who donated it to the Town in 1872.
40

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

1 town through their schools, which were designated as branch libraries. From the
2 beginning, the library was the focal point of many public events in the southern
3 part of town and today provides programs for area children. It is administered by
4 a board elected at Town Meeting and supported by Town funds and private gifts.
5

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

12 **Industries**

13 Early Pomfret industries were similar to those of neighboring towns. One
14 of the first commercial products was potash made from the trees that were felled
15 to clear the new farms. Used in the production of soap, Potash brought premium
16 prices in England until 1793. The first U.S. patent was issued to a Vermonter for
17 an improved method of making potash. Lumber mills and general farming were
18 also important. During the 1830s South Pomfret was called the "Slab City"
19 because of its three lumber mills. Farming predominated throughout the
20 nineteenth century. In the 1850 census, the majority of men were farmers and
21 some one hundred others — men and women — were listed as farm help. In 2014
22 the Pomfret Listers counted seven properties¹ as operating farms (properties that
23 include farm buildings), however a 2007 census² by the U.S. Department of
24 Agriculture, using a more inclusive definition of farming, showed 10 farms
25 operating in town. Once devoted to raising dairy cattle, farms are now more
26 diversified. The largest farm in town raises beef cattle as do several others. There
27 are also nurseries, greenhouses, apple orchards, an organic produce farm and
28 similar agricultural enterprises. Many professional people, who commute to jobs
29 in other towns, maintain flocks of sheep, small herds of beef cattle, or pursue
30 other agrarian activities such as sugaring. Further, there are many informal
31 arrangements made between landowners in town and farmers to cut fields so they
32 can remain open. Farming operations of all types are important to maintaining this
33 town's rural character.
34

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

38 **Political Subdivisions**

39 Pomfret has been a town in the Republic of Vermont since 1777, which
40 makes it older than the State. Until 1965, Pomfret elected its own representative

¹ Pomfret Listers' Office, February 26, 2014.

² 2007 Census of Agriculture is the most current release available.

1 to the Vermont General Assembly. Since then it has belonged to a joint district
2 sharing representation with neighboring towns. The towns that make up the
3 district may change every ten years due to population shifts determined by the
4 Federal Census. Pomfret is one of the twenty-four towns in Windsor County that
5 share three elected State Senators, some of whom have been Pomfret residents.
6 Woodstock is the Shire Town of Windsor County. The Windsor County Probate
7 Court and Sheriff's office are located there.

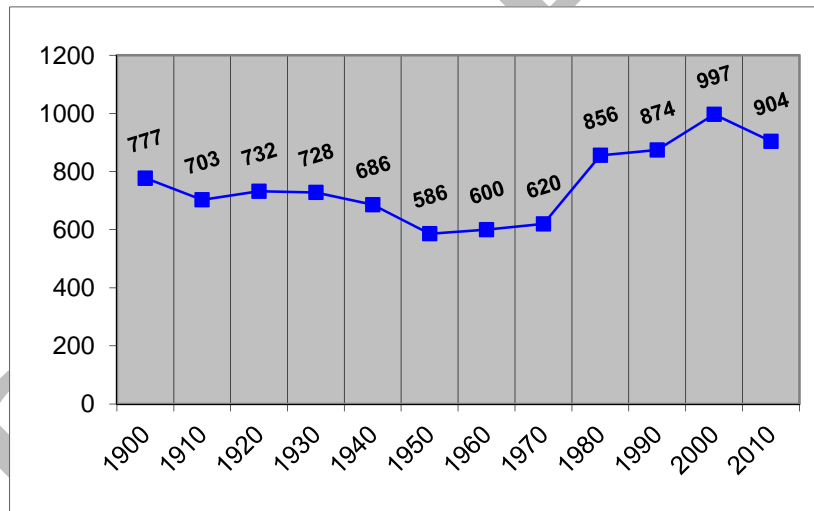
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Chapter 3 POMFRET COMMUNITY PROFILE

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 the most recent data available from the U.S. Census, the Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont, and the Vermont State Department of Taxes.

The population of Pomfret has not returned to its peak of approximately 1,800 residents in 1830. As shown in Figure 2, in 2010, Pomfret's population stood at 904, representing a 9% decline since 2000.

Figure 2 - Pomfret Population History: 1900-2010

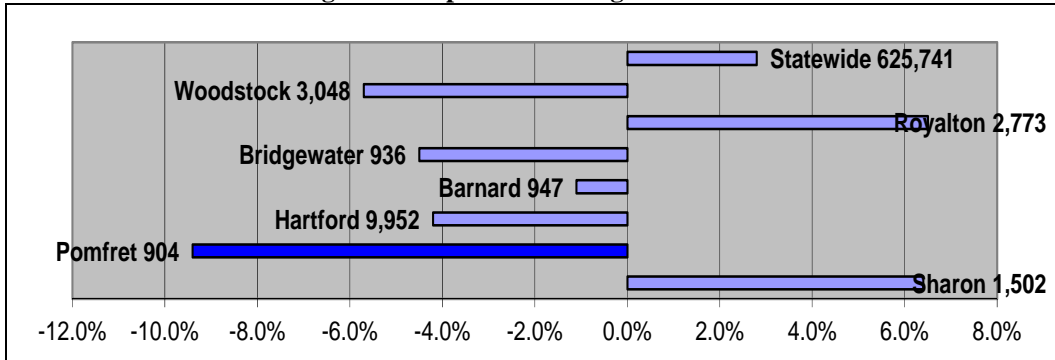


Source: Center for Rural Studies and U.S. Census

Many towns in the region are losing population, including Pomfret. Figure 3 shows that unlike the previous decade, when the Town's population was about four percent larger than the State average, Pomfret's rate of growth between 2000 and 2010 dropped significantly. Figure 3 also shows that while most of the neighboring towns lost population, Pomfret lost the most percentage-wise. The numbers after each town's name was its population in 2010.

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Figure 3 - Population Change: 2000-2010



Source: U.S. Census

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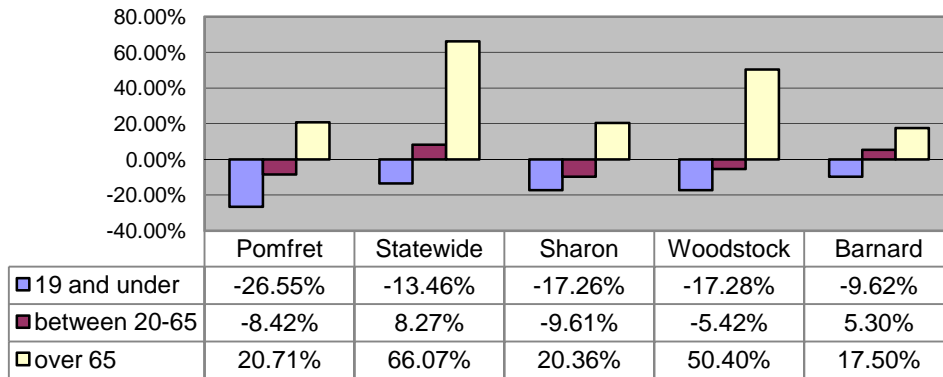
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14

The age of Pomfret's full time residents also changed during the last decade. The number of residents under 19 years of age decreased by 27%, from 275 to 202, a decrease of 73 people. The number of people between 19 and 65 years of age decreased by 8.4%, from 582 to 533, a decrease of 49 people. The number of residents over 65 years of age increased by 17.2%, from 140 to 169, an increase of 29 people. Figure 4 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.

Figure 4 - Percent change in population: 2000-2010



Source: U.S. Census

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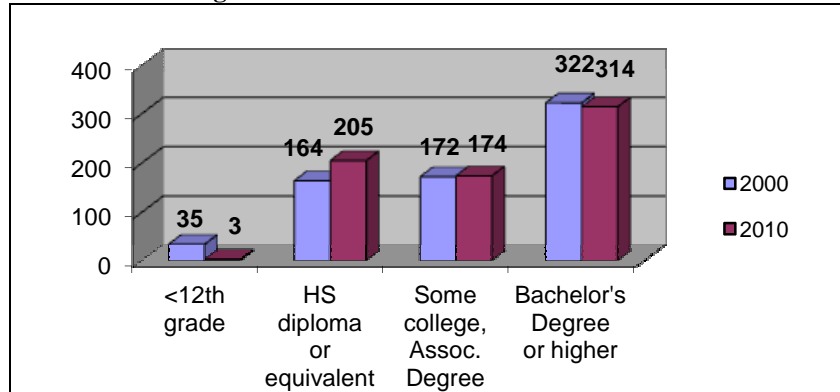
The number of Pomfret residents who were born in this State decreased slightly from 210 in 2000 to 204 in 2010.

Between 2000 and 2010, the percent of Pomfret's adult population attaining a high school diploma or higher increased to 99.6% from 95% in 2000. The number of Pomfret residents with four year college or advanced degrees decreased slightly to 45.1%. In 2010 for Windsor County and the State of Vermont, the percentage of adult residents with four year college or advanced degrees was 33.6% and 33.2%, respectively. The figure below shows that the

1 number of adult residents with a Bachelor's or more advanced degrees has
2 decreased, relative to 2000 figures.

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Figure 5 - Pomfret educational attainment



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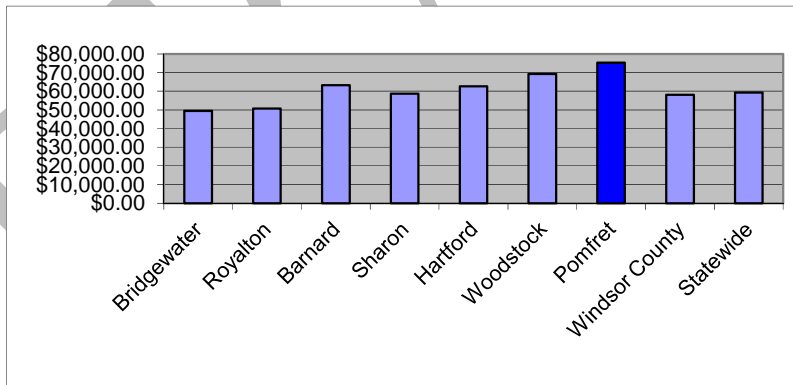
Source: U.S. Census

7 Economy

8 According to data from the Vermont Department of Taxes, the median
9 adjusted gross income for families in Pomfret for the 2012 tax year was higher
10 than any of the surrounding towns. The median adjusted gross income for
11 families was also higher in Pomfret than in Windsor County and the State of
12 Vermont. This information is shown in Figure 6 below.

13
14

Figure 6 - 2012 Median Adjusted Gross Income per Family



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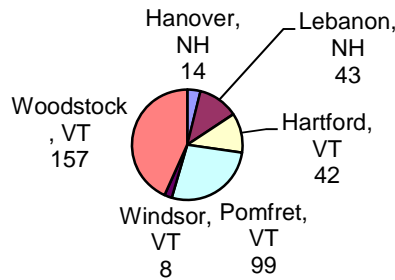
Source: Vermont Tax Department

18 Pomfret typifies a "bedroom community" in that a majority of its labor
19 force is employed outside of the Town. About 24% (127 people) of Pomfret's
20 work force works within the Town and approximately 8% (or 43 people) work at
21 home. The average travel time for Pomfret's commuters is more than 20 minutes
22 and almost without exception, commuting is done by automobile. Following is
23 data on the major employment centers for Pomfret's workers and the number of
24 people traveling to work in these towns.

25

1

Figure 7 - Major Employment Center for Pomfret Workers



Source: Journey to Work Data: 2006-2010 U.S. Census

In the 2006-2010 American Community Survey, Pomfret's residents indicated their type and class of employment as the follows:

Table 1 – Occupations of Pomfret Workers

Occupation	Number	Percent	Statewide
Management, professional	194	37.3%	40.5%
Sales, office positions	132	25.4%	20.8%
Service	105	20.2%	17.7%
Production, transportation	27	5.2%	10.3%
Construction, maintenance	71	13.7%	7.3%
Farming, fishing, forestry	24	4.6%	2.8%

Table 2 - Occupational class of Pomfret workers

Occupational Class	Number	Percentage
Privately employed	333	64%
Self employed	106	20.4%
Government	81	15.6%

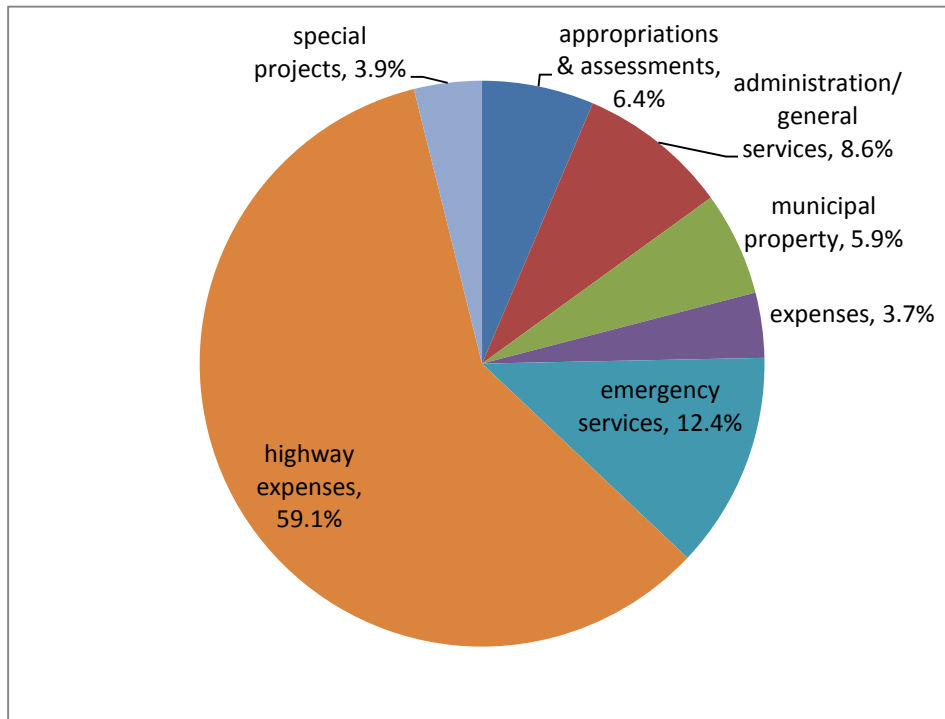
Source: U.S. Census: Selected Economic Characteristics: 2010 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Government

Approximately four/fifths of every Pomfret property tax dollar collected in fiscal year 2012 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:

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Figure 8 - 2013 Pomfret Town Budget (excluding school budget)



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Source: Pomfret Town Report 2013

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The municipal tax rate for the town in Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 is .3651³ (Fiscal Year 2014 runs from July 1, 2013 through June 30 2014). With the exception of FY 2011 when the municipal tax rate was slightly up at .4207, the rate has remained more or less level over the last five years. 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.

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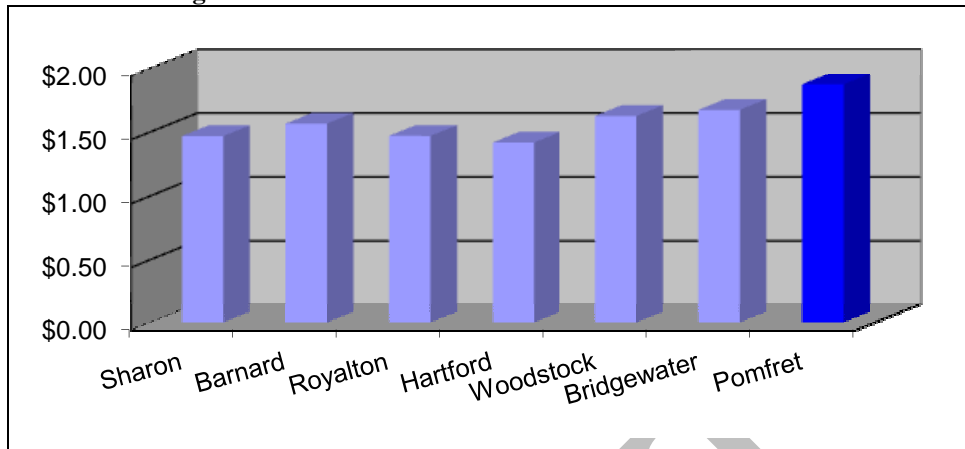
The education tax rate for a homestead property (a primary residence on six acres of land or less) is \$1.6826 for FY 2014 up from FY 2013's rate of \$1.5789.⁴ Figure 9 shows how the education tax rate for a homestead property compares to the surrounding towns.

³ "FY 2014 Annual Report." Vermont Department of Taxes, Division of Property Valuation and Review. (January 13, 2014)

⁴ "Annual Report: Year Ending December 31, 2013." Pomfret, Vermont. (2013).

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Figure 9 - FY 2014 Education Tax Rate for Homesteads



Source: State of Vermont Department of Taxes

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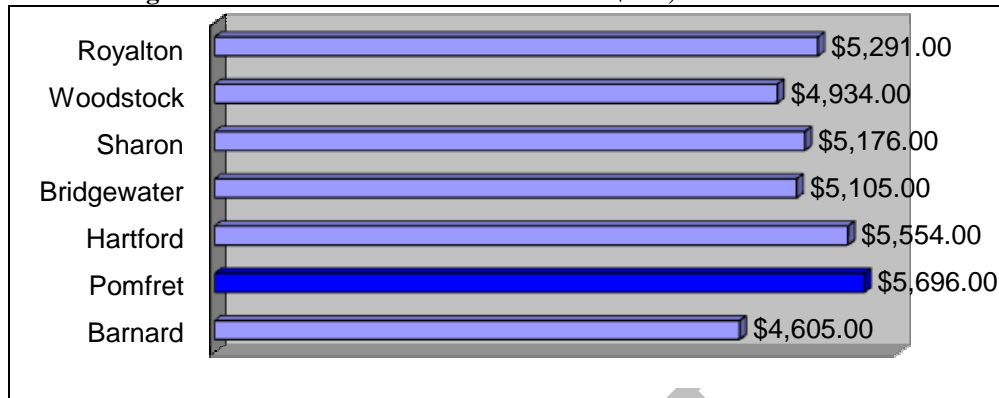
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Property taxes in Vermont are paid at two tax rates, depending on whether the property is a homestead or not. Homesteads are principal dwellings that you live in and surrounding lands. Tax rates are made up of education tax rates that pay for schools and municipal tax rates that pay for local services, primarily roads in Pomfret. All tax rates are “equalized” in Vermont into an *effective* tax rate to account for towns that have grand lists that do not accurately reflect their current market value. Overall, the grand list is determined to be over or under fair market value, resulting in a number called the “common level of appraisal” or CLA. If the CLA is below 1, then properties are undervalued. Pomfret is currently determined to have an overall assessment rate of about 11% above market rate. It does not matter that one house may be assessed very accurately and other under-assessed in the same town; both of their taxes will be adjusted by the CLA the same.

With this background in mind, if one is trying to understand the comparative position of a town’s taxes to that of other towns as it might affect a homeowner, it is best to look at effective education (school) and municipal tax rates for homesteads. In the chart, you can see that Pomfret in 2013 has the highest school taxes of any neighboring towns, with a mid-range municipal tax rate, resulting in the highest overall rate by 8.7 cents. This means that a homestead worth \$250,000 in Pomfret pays over \$400 more in taxes than the next closest town (Royalton) and almost \$1,100 more than the least expensive town of Barnard. It should be noted that with small schools and large road projects, a town’s tax rate can swing considerably from year to year.

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Figure 10 - 2013 Relative Tax Burden on a \$250,000 homestead



Source: Vermont Department of Taxes

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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 2013, the average sales price of a primary residence in Pomfret was \$296,667⁵. Even if the property were appraised at this selling price, the total tax assessment on the property would only yield \$6,760 for the Town. This tax bill would not pay the cost of educating one student in 2013, at a cost of \$14,775 per pupil. See Chapter 10 for further discussion of this issue.

⁵“Vermont housing data profiles.” Vermont HousingData v2. Accessed 2014 from <http://www.housingdata.org/profile/resultsMain.php?town=027065>.

1

2 **Chapter 4 LAND USE AND NATURAL**
3 **RESOURCES**

4 **Introduction**

5
6 This section of the town plan is designed to guide land use decisions in a
7 manner that balances existing and future uses. Striking a balance means
8 establishing a framework that harmonizes the historic pastoral use of Pomfret
9 lands with uses that will occur in the future such that these uses do not get in the
10 way of or overshadow each other. The land use goals, policies, and strategies are
11 supportive of and intended to provide a means to measure the success of this
12 balancing act. While guiding and regulating land use decisions are important
13 goals alone, it must not be lost that the overarching point of this effort is to
14 support and enrich the sense of community that already exists in Pomfret.
15 Pomfret is a small town and because of that we are all neighbors.

16 **The Setting**

17 The town of Pomfret is located in Windsor County, Vermont. It is
18 situated in east-central Vermont, part of the southern piedmont, or foothills, of the
19 Green Mountains. Pomfret is comprised of about 39.4 square miles, bordered by
20 Royalton and Sharon in the north, West Hartford and Quechee in the east,
21 Woodstock and Bridgewater in the south, and Barnard in the west. Pomfret's
22 landscape is generally characterized by narrow open valleys with an occasional
23 expanse of open hay fields flanked by wooded hillsides, some very steep. The
24 center of Pomfret straddles two watersheds. The north side of Pomfret drains into
25 the White River watershed while the south side empties into the Ottauquechee
26 River. Both the White and Ottauquechee Rivers flow into the Connecticut River.
27 Pomfret is among the special areas of Vermont that remain unspoiled by high
28 density or large-scale development.

29 **Physical Characteristics**

30

31 *Geology:*

32

33 The predominant bedrock geologic feature of Pomfret is the Pomfret Dome, one
34 of several ancient geologic formations running along the east side of the Green
35 Mountains. The Pomfret Dome consists primarily of rocks and minerals of the
36 Gile Mountain Formation. The Gile Mountain Formation includes well-known
37 local attractions such as the Quechee Gorge and Gile Mountain in Norwich.

1 Pomfret’s bedrock is composed of phyllite, mica schist and amphibolite. Some of
 2 these rocks can be seen at or just below the surface, particularly along the banks
 3 of streams. The surficial geology of Pomfret is composed of glacial till, mainly of
 4 weathered limestone, schist, and quartzite. This historical description of Pomfret’s
 5 geologic landscape, from Henry Hobart Vail’s 1930 history of Pomfret, remains
 6 true today:

7 Nearly all the town is composed in its rocky surface
 8 of schistose slate [mica schist]. The land has been
 9 smoothed over in geologic ages by ice caps which
 10 have more than once covered all the state. Boulders
 11 have been dropped here and there and some of them
 12 have been brought long distances. Pomfret has no
 13 lake or pond within its borders. Even the swamps
 14 are very few and small. In places the effects of old
 15 beaver dams may be seen. Mr. Hosea Doton, who
 16 knew the town thoroughly well, used to say that
 17 there was not in Pomfret a plot of ground large
 18 enough for a house location without leveling. On
 19 the other hand, the land is cultivable wherever oxen
 20 can haul a plow, and the tops of the some of the
 21 highest hills have produced beautiful crops of corn
 22 and potatoes.

23
 24 *Geologic Soil Composition:*

25
 26 An understanding of Pomfret’s soil composition is important for both
 27 agricultural and forestry purposes, as well as for determining the suitability of it
 28 for new construction. The vast majority of soil types in Pomfret are less than
 29 ideal for development, mostly because of the steep slopes on which the soils are
 30 found, but also because of the difficulty in finding the right soil for residential
 31 septic systems. The following soil types are rated as “very limited” or “somewhat
 32 limited” for construction of dwellings with or without basements, and small
 33 commercial buildings and included here is the categorization of those soils for
 34 septic systems:
 35
 36

Table 3 - Pomfret Soil Composition

Soil Type	Description	Acres	Septic Suitability
20D	Glover-Vershire complex, 15 to 35 percent slopes, very rocky	3,569.1	IIIa
20E	Glover-Vershire complex, 35 to 60 percent slopes, very rocky	3,205.3	IVb
36E	Teago-Pomfret complex, 25 to 50 percent slopes, rocky	2,707.5	IVb

Soil Type	Description	Acres	Septic Suitability
19D	Vershire-Dummerston complex, 15 to 25 percent slopes, rocky	2,307.9	IId
19E	Vershire-Dummerston complex, 25 to 60 percent slopes, rocky	2,194.4	IVb
20C	Glover-Vershire complex, 3 to 15 percent slopes, very rocky	1,527.0	IIIa
26E	Buckland very fine sandy loam, 35 to 60 percent slopes, very stony	1,133.0	IVd
36D	Teago-Pomfret complex, 15 to 25 percent slopes, rocky	1,083.5	IId
25C	Buckland loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	939.2	IIIId
25D	Buckland loam, 15 to 25 percent slopes	729.3	IIIe
36C	Teago-Pomfret complex, 8 to 15 percent slopes, rocky	553.9	IId

Soil types with a septic group rating of I (well suited) or II (moderately suited) are the best soils for residential development and roughly 15% of Pomfret's soils fall into this category. Soils with a septic group rating of III are marginally suited for residential development and may require more investigation to find spots for a septic field, or may require installation of a mound system. Soils with a group rating of IV are generally not suitable for residential development and therefore may also require installation of a mound system.

Elevation & Slopes

Pomfret's topography is another limitation on new development. Pomfret sits at an average of 1,499 feet above mean sea level, higher than any of the surrounding towns. The change in elevation is best perceived by driving from Town Hall north on Pomfret Rd. toward the Pomfret/West Hartford town line. The road twists and winds, gradually dropping in over 1,000 feet of elevation before arriving at the White River. Pomfret's topography is dotted with hilltops ranging from 1,200 to over 1,900 feet. The highest points in Pomfret are:

- Seaver Hill on the top of the ridge on the south side of the Appalachian Trail, between Granite Ledge and Pomfret Farms Dr. (1,960 ft. in elevation, lat./long.: 43.696076°/-72.480400°)
- Top of the ridge between Windy Ln. and Hidden Ridge Rd. (1,860 ft. in elevation, lat./long.: 43.724405°/-72.534643°)

-
- 1 • Top of the ridge just south of Webster Hill Rd. and east of Wild Apple Rd.
2 (1,846 ft. in elevation, lat./long.: 43.712345°/-72.538694°)
 - 3 • Top of ridge between Allen Hill Rd. and Blackmer Rd. (1,783 ft. in
4 elevation, lat./long.: 43.745217°/-72.516999°)
 - 5 • Top of ridge between Wild Apple Rd. and Bartlett Brook Rd. (1,783 ft. in
6 elevation, lat./long.: 43.699929°/-72.548066°)

7 About 3,459 acres (or 14%) of Pomfret's 25,280 acres have slopes of 10% or less.
8 These areas represent the most suitable terrain for development. The vast
9 majority of development has occurred in these areas. Another 3,055 acres of
10 Pomfret's land is situated on slopes of 10-15%. This land is also developable, but
11 only for less intensive uses at a greater cost. Additionally, there are 5,984 acres
12 with slopes of 15-20% and another 12,573 acres with slopes of greater than 20%,
13 neither category offers much opportunity for development, except for the
14 occasional ridgeline project. Combined, these last two categories comprise about
15 75% of Pomfret's land area.

16 **Flood Hazards**

17
18
19 Approximately 521 acres of Pomfret are in the floodplain (see flood
20 hazard areas visible on the Future Land Use Map, in Appendix D). Floodplains
21 and Fluvial Erosion Hazard Areas are generally unsuitable for development
22 because of the high potential for loss of life and property, as well as the limited
23 ability of septic systems to perform adequately during periods of high water. (See
24 Chapter 13: Flood Resilience for more information.)

25 **Current Land Use**

26 *Patterns of Development*

27
28
29
30 The Pomfret history in Chapter 2 describes the rapid rise in population
31 from the first settlers in the early 1770s. The population peaked at a high of 1,867
32 in 1830 followed by a dramatic drop to 777 by 1900. By 1950 the population
33 stood at 586. By the turn of the 20th Century, farmers moved west to land more
34 suitable for farming than the hills of Vermont. Until the 1950s, the prevailing
35 land uses in Pomfret were agriculture and forestry. Beginning slowly in the
36 1940s, and then continuing more rapidly into the 60s, 70s, and 80's, Pomfret
37 experienced growth in non-farm residences, both primary and second homes.
38 According to census figures, the largest jump in housing units occurred between
39 1970 and 1990 with an increase of 189 units in that 20 year period. Seasonal
40 homes account for 93% of the growth between 1980 and 1990 (80 of 86 units).
41 This growth resulted from the rise of the post-war generation. Increases in
42 wealth, the affordability of automobiles and the construction of the interstate
43 highway system all helped to bring new growth to Vermont, including the newly

1 labeled “Upper Valley.” As in most rural Vermont towns, land has been sold for
2 residential development at higher cash value than land kept in farming. Despite
3 the demise of the traditional working dairy farm, recent years have seen a trend of
4 increased agricultural activity with added-value products including specialty
5 cheeses, expanded direct “farm to market” sales to individuals and restaurants, as
6 well as forest products.

7
8 In the early 1970’s, to counter rapid growth in Pomfret and in neighboring
9 towns, the town of Pomfret adopted zoning laws with restrictions on larger
10 subdivisions, including limits on how quickly new lots could be sold. The first
11 four new subdivided lots of an existing parcel were not subject to regulation. The
12 entire town was zoned at 2 acre minimum lot size.

13
14 The primary land use is rural residential housing. The 2013 Pomfret Grand
15 List includes 475 residential parcels of which 129 are second homes. However,
16 the true number of residential units is higher because there are several parcels
17 with multiple units, such as hamlet areas throughout the town. Roughly 55% of
18 the land is owned by people living in Pomfret while the other 45% is held by
19 people living elsewhere. The housing units on these lands are generally spread
20 along the main roads and in the low lying areas below the hillsides. Pomfret’s
21 housing stock is diverse, reflecting the mix and values of its population. Most
22 houses are along and close to either the paved roads or the better class 3 gravel
23 roads which provide access to less steep land. Many of these houses are grouped
24 in neighborhoods including:

- 25
- 26 • South Pomfret Village Area
- 27 • Bartlett Brook Road
- 28 • Hewitt Hill Road including a portion of the Pomfret Road east past Howe
29 Hill Road
- 30 • North Pomfret including Bunker Hill Road, Caper Street, Starbuck Road
31 and the connecting portions of the Pomfret Road

32 **See Appendix D –Current Settlement Patterns**

33
34 Factoring Pomfret’s two acre minimum lot size, there are 12,640 potential
35 residential development sites. However, the true number of development sites is
36 much smaller because the soils and slopes mentioned earlier. In total, the number
37 of housing units that Pomfret’s developable land can support is estimated to be
38 approximately 1,250 units. Current consumption of this capacity is 40%. But this
39 is still a theoretical capacity because it does not take into account land in
40 developable areas that contain long-term restrictions, such as deed restrictions,
41 conservation easements or property enrolled in the Current Use Program.

1 Portions of many of the larger residential lots are also used for agricultural
2 activities, including use as pasture land and maple sugaring, as are many of the
3 104 “miscellaneous” lots that do not have farm buildings.

4 5 **Agriculture and Forestry**

6
7 There is very little “prime” agricultural soil, the most protected soil not
8 only in Vermont, but across the nation. However, the amount of “prime”
9 agricultural soil does not necessarily relate to how the land is used for agricultural
10 and forestry purposes. Much of the land in Pomfret used in agricultural is
11 important not because of the classification of agricultural value, but because of
12 the location and current use of the land as hayfields, pasture and the growing of
13 timber for a variety of uses.

14
15 **See Appendix D – Pomfret Agricultural Soils**

16 17 **Natural Resources**

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

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

- 27 • Open fields and meadows (86%)
- 28 • Forest land (82%)
- 29 • Agricultural land (81%)
- 30 • Scenic views (80%)
- 31 • Streams (80%)

32 Further discussion of these important resources follows.

33
34 **See Appendix D – Map of Pomfret’s Natural Resources**

35 36 **Wildlife Habitat**

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

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

3
4 In addition to deer yards, Pomfret has some unique and fragile habitats,
5 possibly including those of rare and endangered species. Through the years some
6 habitat areas have been placed under permanent protection. Although there has
7 never been a comprehensive town wide study of significant habitats, an inventory
8 limited to the Appalachian Trail Corridor found several wetland areas supporting
9 rare ferns and some vernal pools that may be breeding grounds for rare
10 salamanders. To protect additional habitats it is necessary to continue updating
11 inventories, reviewing development plans that may affect these habitats, and
12 encouraging landowners to arrange for permanent protection of important
13 habitats. The cumulative effect of scattered development on larger contiguous
14 wildlife habitats is important. It is possible to separate deer, bears, and other
15 animals from their wintering areas by scattered development, which, for this
16 reason, should be avoided.

17
18 Following is a list of the important habitat areas that are protected in
19 Pomfret:

- 20 • Sharon-Pomfret Seep (Nature Conservancy)
- 21 • Amity Pond (State of Vermont)
- 22 • Wetlands on the National Wetlands Inventory (Federal and State)

23 In addition, there are other conserved lands in town that contain important
24 habitat area, including the Appalachian Trail Corridor and other parcels of land.
25 As of 2014, a total of 5,940 acres of land are conserved of which 1,817 acres are
26 public and 4,123 acres are private land. In total, 24% of Pomfret's land is
27 conserved and this number does not include other privately conserved land
28 through deed restriction.

29
30 As of the 2013 tax year, there is also 17,518 acres of land enrolled in
31 Vermont's Current Use Program.

32
33 **See Appendix D Current Use Map for Conserved Lands**

34 **Wetlands**

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

42
43 In addition to providing important support for fisheries and wildlife

1 habitats, wetlands protect drinking water supplies by filtering out excess toxins
2 and nutrients and by helping to recharge aquifers. Wetlands also play an
3 important role in minimizing flood damage by storing flood waters.
4 There are 215 acres of wetlands in Pomfret that are on the National Wetlands
5 Inventory (NWI) and are protected by the 1990 Vermont Wetlands Rules. The
6 NWI was completed in 1978 but was never field checked. Field observations by
7 the Vermont Wetlands Office staff indicate that this is an underestimation. A
8 more accurate up-to-date inventory would be useful for identifying important
9 wetlands that must be protected in Pomfret. Landowners should be made aware of
10 significant wetlands on their property.

11

12 **Surface Waters**

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

19

20 Two of the more common local sources of stream pollution and siltation
21 are farming and highway drainage maintenance. While farming is not as
22 significant of a contributor to this problem as it is in other towns, awareness is
23 none the less important to stream protection. Both of these activities are vital to
24 the Town but could be managed in such a way as to have little or no negative
25 effect on streams. Local farming activities and highway maintenance should be
26 reviewed to determine if there is unnecessary stream damage from chemicals,
27 road salt, and drainage ditches.

28

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

41

42 **Water Supply**

43 All Pomfret households depend on ground water for domestic use. This
44 water flows in underground streams on uncharted pathways. It is tapped from
45 underground storage areas called aquifers or from underground streams and

1 springs. Ground water is the least understood of all natural resources, yet it is
2 essential to the preservation and quality of life and to economic stability. As a
3 result, the protection of ground water quality and quantity deserves the highest
4 priority when formulating plans for the future of Pomfret.

5
6 There appears to be no immediate threat to Pomfret's water supply. A
7 local well driller reports that Pomfret has plentiful water supplies and that existing
8 wells very seldom need to be drilled deeper. Pomfret is not as subject to major
9 hazardous material spills as many other communities due to its distance from
10 major highways, railroads, and waste sites. Still, a safe water supply was a top
11 priority of respondents to the Conservation Commission survey in 1990, and
12 water quality should be monitored. The long term effect of any form of
13 development on the quality of the water supply is a major factor in the review of
14 development plans.

15 16 **Air Quality**

17 Air quality problems in Vermont are mostly created elsewhere and must
18 be solved at a state, national, or international level. Local wood stoves, backyard
19 burning of trash and excessive brush burning contribute to air pollution. Clean air
20 is a natural resource that cannot be taken for granted, even in rural states like
21 Vermont. Enforcement of existing State and Federal air pollution regulations is
22 important. However, we are all responsible for maintaining a healthy living
23 environment and for being kind to our neighbors. Pomfret residents are generally
24 conscientious people and the Town should continue to encourage responsible
25 behavior through its zoning laws.

26 **Gravel and Other Mineral Extraction**

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

35 36 **Agricultural and Forest Lands**

37 Agricultural and forest lands are critical natural resources to Pomfret.
38 Agriculture and forest management activities form the anchor of all other
39 activities in Pomfret and the Town should strive to preserve the resources that
40 underpin these activities.

41 42 **Rural Character and Scenic Beauty**

1 When the 2006 Planning Commission Survey asked the question, "What
2 makes Pomfret a special place?," 90 percent answered "rural character." In
3 addition, a similar number of respondents highly value the town's scenic beauty
4 (88%) and open fields (79%). When asked what could be done to make Pomfret a
5 better place, 72 percent said the Town should preserve productive agricultural and
6 forest land.

7
8 The visual elements of rural character in Pomfret are the traditional
9 working landscape and land use patterns relating to Pomfret's agricultural and
10 forestry heritage, the undeveloped ridgelines and hillsides, and the scenic roads
11 lined with mature trees and old stone walls. Historic resources related to the
12 Town's agricultural and forestry heritage, such as old barns and farmhouses, are
13 other elements of rural character that need to be preserved. Additional elements
14 of rural character may be the people and their institutions: local government
15 mostly made up of volunteers, volunteer fire departments and Fast Squad, and
16 citizens concerned about and caring for their neighbors.

17
18 Virtually every chapter of this Plan examines a different aspect of rural
19 character. Preserving and encouraging agricultural and forestry activity is a major
20 goal expressed in the Land Use chapter.

21
22 The Town Services and Education chapters emphasize the importance of
23 community involvement and volunteer support in governing the Town and in
24 educating Pomfret's children.

25
26 Respondents to the 2006 Survey rated the challenge posed by
27 development pressure on agricultural land (71%) and open land (68%) as two of
28 the top most important issues facing the Town. In 1989, the Town adopted a
29 Ridgeline and Hillside Conservation Area section to the Zoning Ordinance,
30 reacting to concern that one of Pomfret's most significant scenic resources could
31 be destroyed by insensitive development. The ordinance was updated in 2008.
32 High priority should be given to preserving specific "scenic vistas" or "scenic
33 view sheds" and "scenic roads" including roads and their rights of way that may
34 be bordered by stone walls and maple and other mature trees. These roads need to
35 be protected from efforts to widen and "improve" them to accommodate
36 development. Road maintenance should be limited to the existing roadbed and
37 ditches. Cutting of trees, widening, or any other activity which may change the
38 character of the road should be subject to review by the public.

39
40 "Scenic vistas" or "view sheds" are areas of scenic beauty as viewed from
41 Town roads that may need special protection from insensitive development,
42 including private or public road construction and utility pole relocation. We all
43 may know scenic beauty when we see it, but the challenge is to adopt a method
44 for protection using both qualitative and quantitative criteria.

45 46 **Ridgelines and Hillsides**

1
2 Among Pomfret's most valuable resources are the exceptional scenic
3 qualities of many of its ridgelines and hilltops. These physical formations have
4 influenced the location of village settlements and the pattern of agriculture and
5 forestry. The attractiveness of these areas is directly attributable to the variety of
6 elements which make up the land use pattern of the area.

7
8 These characteristics serve to comprise these scenic values in ridgeline
9 and hilltop areas. They include the mixed pattern of open meadowland to wooded
10 areas, the prominence of clear unobstructed panoramic views of distant ridges
11 from other ridges as well as from the valley floor and the non-intensive nature of
12 the use of the land. Other integral elements of these scenic areas are the type of
13 characteristics of roads which lead to and from the areas and the accessibility of
14 the ridgelines' scenic resource to the public.

15
16 The scenic value of the hillsides and ridgelines benefit more than just the
17 people of Pomfret. These areas, coupled with the other elements of the pastoral
18 landscape, combine to attract a large tourist population which accounts for a large
19 portion of the area's economy. While its economic value can be considered
20 appreciable, its contribution to the well-being of the area is perhaps more
21 significant.

22
23 Historically, the typically rugged character of these areas has limited
24 development opportunities. However, the location of development in future years
25 in Pomfret cannot be assumed to be confined to those areas traditionally
26 considered suitable or desirable for development. With adequate financial
27 resources and quality engineering (incl. innovative technologies for wastewater
28 system design and operation), land, including ridge tops and hilltops, can or will
29 be developed without appropriate zoning regulations.

30 31 **Historic Resources**

32 According to Henry Hobart Vail's history of Pomfret, the name derives
33 indirectly from Pontefract, England, an historic town in West Yorkshire. In Latin,
34 Pontefract means "broken bridge" and the English town was commonly known as
35 "Pomfret." That name passed on to Pomfret, CT, the town from which many of
36 Pomfret, VT's settlers first came. Pomfret, VT has had a number of noteworthy
37 natives. Among them are: Elmer B. Adams (U.S. Federal judge for the Eight
38 Circuit), Marshall Conant (almanac writer and astronomer), Hosea Doton
39 (educator, author, map maker, state legislator), Rush C. Hawkins (Brigadier
40 General, Union Army and veteran of Antietam), Robert A. Perkins (editor of the
41 Rutland Herald), Thomas O. Seaver (Colonel, Union Army and winner of the
42 Congressional Medal of Honor), Camilla Ware (writer and abolitionist). The
43 people of Pomfret have traditionally been learned and close to the land.

1 Pomfret’s history is typical of many agricultural towns and was once
 2 among the most important dairy farming towns in Vermont. By the turn of the
 3 20th Century, sheep farming had given way to dairy farming. Pomfret soon
 4 became known as a place to purchase purebred Jersey cows (“Butter Queens”).
 5 Dairy cows from Pomfret were of the highest quality and were sold around the
 6 world. In proportion to its small population, Pomfret at one point had the highest
 7 number of members in the Dairy Association across Vermont. Pomfret’s dairy
 8 farmers consistently won awards. In the 1909 State Fair, for example, Pomfret
 9 dairy farmers were ubiquitous. L.R. Dana won the ten pound dairy butter tub
 10 category. W.H. Harrington came in second for the five pound dairy butter box
 11 category. In the creamery butter category, A.E. Sherburne won first place. The
 12 Sherburne Creamery also dominated the maple sugar and candy categories,
 13 winning a number of 1st and 2nd place prizes. Today, that tradition of quality
 14 continues in earnest. This history is important to the current and future residents
 15 of Pomfret who gain more of an understanding of the community through
 16 knowledge of the past. Written histories, old paintings and photographs, various
 17 artifacts, and structures built by earlier residents are an important record of earlier
 18 life in Pomfret.

19
 20 The Pomfret Historical Society erected at least six historic markers
 21 between 1962 and 1966. These plaques identify important sites in Pomfret’s early
 22 history and provide clues about life in Pomfret during the eighteenth and
 23 nineteenth centuries. The sites so commemorated are:

24
 25 **Table 4 - Historical Buildings**

Building	Date	Location
Abbott Memorial Library	1905	South Pomfret Village
Winslow Tavern	1801-1850	Stage Rd.
Teago Grange Hall	1906 (used as meeting house)	Stage Rd.
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

1
2 Between the 1760s and 1800, when Pomfret was settled, primitive log
3 cabins were built, then houses, and barns. Many of these old cellar holes can still
4 be seen along the earliest roads, particularly the King's Highway, Allen Hill
5 Road, Breakneck Hill, and the road from the Town Road over to Howe Hill.
6 Two of the oldest homes still in use are the Deake house on the ridge overlooking
7 Hewittville and the Snow house behind the North Pomfret Church. The Bunker
8 Hill Cemetery is the oldest in Town, though the Hewittville and Burns Cemeteries
9 are also quite old.

10
11 The inventories of old houses in Pomfret started over the years do not
12 appear to be complete. A 1915 map by Robert Perkins shows only some of the
13 original grants, locations of homesteads, original owners, and owners at that time.
14 A 1973 map prepared by the Pomfret Historical Society of "Historical Sites"
15 shows the locations of homesteads with names and dates of original owners and
16 current owners. Whether some of the structures or portions of the structures on
17 these sites are the original ones is not certain. Many of the original buildings
18 burned and were replaced at a later date. Also, some houses were moved to new
19 sites.

20
21 Original structures are an important resource for local historians in
22 understanding what life was like during periods of Pomfret's past. Particularly
23 important is the documentation of these buildings prior to renovations or
24 demolition.

25 26 **Special Features**

27
28 All of Pomfret is special and there are a number of places and natural
29 features that warrant special mention. Just a few of them are:

- 30 • Cloudland Farm and the surrounding hillsides in South Pomfret
- 31 • Galaxy Hill (formerly one of Pomfret's poor farms)
- 32 • Sherburne Farm in North Pomfret
- 33 • The hillsides and open areas along Blackmer Rd.
- 34 • The Dana St. John farm and surrounding hillsides
- 35 • Thistle Hill Farm in North Pomfret
- 36 • Sugarbush Farm in South Pomfret
- 37 • Town Hall (formerly the Unitarian Church)
- 38 • The Congregational Church in North Pomfret
- 39 • The views and hillsides of Wild Apple Rd.

-
- 1 • The views of pasture land and hayfields around Hewittville
 - 2 • The view from Webster Hill Rd. looking south along Pomfret Rd.
 - 3 • The view from Allen Hill Rd. near the Leavitt farm
 - 4 • Teago General Store in South Pomfret
 - 5 • The Suicide Six Ski Area in South Pomfret
 - 6 • The Appalachian Trail corridor
 - 7 • Amity Pond Natural Area
 - 8 • The Abbott Library in South Pomfret

9 **Future Land Use**

10 *Drivers of Future Growth*

11 In looking to the future, the past must ever be considered. The collective
12 challenge is planning for future growth while maintaining valued elements of
13 historic and existing settlement patterns. While that may sound straight-forward
14 on the surface, it is important to remember that Pomfret's settlement patters have
15 gone through periods of ebbs and flow. The historical settlement patterns have
16 naturally followed the population of the Town at any given moment time. For
17 example, Pomfret had more village or hamlet areas when the population was
18 highest and that occurred in the first half of the 1800's (see Appendix D). In fact,
19 historical documents refer to at least three village areas: North Pomfret (Pomfret
20 Rd. and Caper St. area), Pomfret (the area around Town Hall), and South Pomfret
21 (by Teago General Store). During periods when the population is smaller,
22 however, the settlement pattern is more dispersed. The Pomfret of today is most
23 like the Pomfret of 1890 in terms of population size. Today, the settlement
24 pattern is best characterized as being dispersed. Future land use areas are not
25 necessarily required to mimic these historic patterns, but instead should reflect a
26 vision of the future, even if the proposed land use settlement pattern suggested
27 differs from the present pattern.
28
29

30
31 Since 1940, Pomfret has added an average of 47 homes per decade, but
32 more recently that trend has slowed to 27 homes per decade since 1990. The
33 highest period of growth occurred in the years between 1960 and 1990. Since that
34 time Pomfret, like other rural towns in Vermont, has experienced a significant
35 reduction in the pace of growth. The population of Pomfret dropped 9% between
36 2000 and 2010 matching a continuing trend throughout rural Vermont. Although
37 there was a slight increase in new housing between 2000 and 2010 (9 units), it
38 appears the increase was in non-resident or second homes. This trend of little or
39 no growth in total population, declines in school age children, and an aging of the
40 adult population is common in the entire rural northern New England area. This

1 may continue until there is significant growth in the economy or other unforeseen
2 external events, bearing in mind that the country has been in its worst economic
3 condition since the Great Depression.

4
5 There are two predicted key drivers for Pomfret’s future land use, both
6 residential and agricultural/forestry. First, a growing “back to the land”
7 movement is expected to bring a steady trickle of demand for housing and land.
8 That movement includes small-scale farming (including the increasing
9 consolidation and commercialization of the maple sugaring industry), an influx of
10 artisans and small-scale farmers (bakers, woodworkers, cattle farmers who lease
11 or buy land for pasture) and a corresponding growth in services supporting those
12 activities. A second and perhaps more pronounced factor is growth in nearby
13 healthcare employment opportunities (e.g., Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center
14 (DHMC)) and a corresponding growth for supporting services (e.g., health
15 administration).

16
17 The Town recognizes a growing movement of small-scale farming and
18 supports the continued use of the land for agricultural and forest management
19 activities. The definition of what constitutes farming is undergoing change, but in
20 general Pomfret favors continued productive use of the land.

21
22 With the nation’s aging population and an expansion in the availability of
23 health care, there will undoubtedly be an ever increasing consumption of health
24 care services in the Upper Valley. Healthcare workers represent the most
25 significant category of employment of those living in Pomfret (20.3% annual
26 growth since 2002). The 2010 U.S. Census shows that there were 452 workers
27 residing in Pomfret and of those 66 (14%) were employed in the health care
28 industry (NAICS code 62), up from just 15 workers in 2002. A 2012 regional
29 housing needs assessment, published by the New Hampshire Upper Valley Lake
30 Sunapee Regional Planning Commission, estimates that health care will account
31 for 68% of the job growth in the Upper Valley by 2018. Pomfret should expect
32 that some share of those workers will want to live in Pomfret due to its
33 desirability and proximity to health care facilities in the immediate area. North
34 Pomfret is approximately 19 miles from DHMC with a commute time of about 36
35 minutes, thus within reasonable commuting distance and time (South Pomfret is
36 further away by Route 4).

37
38 **See Appendix D – Pomfret Future Land Use Map**

39 Even without these demands for new housing, Pomfret should prepare for
40 the possibility of increased development pressure in the future. Newer
41 technology permits the use of septic systems in areas where they were not feasible
42 in the past. Other factors that could create more future development and demands
43 for housing are:

-
- 1 • A weakening of the Current Use program, resulting in higher taxes on
2 undeveloped land, and thereby forcing the sale of what is today open
3 space
- 4 • Continued improvements in internet availability and technology that
5 will allow more people to work from home
- 6 • A return of people who grew up in or near Pomfret and have achieved
7 at least some degree of financial independence after having lived
8 elsewhere in the country
- 9 • Improved, more efficient modes of transportation improving access to
10 this area for people seeking to escape urban areas

11 While some of this growth will continue to be for second homes, the
12 expectation is that the bulk of growth will be for housing demands resulting from
13 increased economic opportunities, both job opportunities in nearby cities and
14 towns, as well as increases in local small-scale agricultural and forestry activities.
15 Even by 2030 at the highest estimate, the intensity of development is not expected
16 to be more than 39% of Pomfret’s most developable land (up from 31% in 2010).
17 Thus, Pomfret should be able to retain its rural character while making room for
18 new residents.

19 **South Pomfret Village Area**

20
21 The Pomfret Planning Commission has collected input from members of
22 the community and has used this guidance to create a framework through which
23 the citizen’s vision can be implemented. This vision includes changes to land
24 use areas that support the goals of the community while remaining consistent with
25 state law. The **South Pomfret Village Area** will be established to implement this
26 vision.

27
28 The South Pomfret Village area is the one area that has developed into a
29 small community center with mixed land uses at higher densities as compared to
30 the more rural areas of Pomfret. South Pomfret has the most densely clustered
31 mixed-use pattern of development in Pomfret and is home to a general store with
32 a Post Office, the Abbott Memorial Library, a fire station, the local grade school,
33 and a new arts center. Adjacent to the South Pomfret Village Area is the Suicide
34 Six ski area, a small historic privately owned ski area. Having this Village Area
35 is consistent within historical settlement patters, but it also accomplishes a
36 modern goal by reducing the impact of growth on the more rural areas of the
37 town, thereby helping to retain the important rural character of the town.

38
39 The South Pomfret Village Area may support housing types at densities
40 that are higher than the surrounding areas. However, because South Pomfret has
41 neither public water nor sewer, all development should be at a density that can be
42 supported by the ability of the soils to support on-site wastewater systems. In the

1 future, community wastewater, water supply, or both could facilitate a more
2 typical village pattern.

3
4

Figure 11 - Satellite Image of the Delineated South Pomfret Village Area



5
6
7
8

Figure 12 - Aerial Image of the South Pomfret Village Area



9

1
2
3

**Figure 13 - Aerial Image of the South Pomfret Village Area & Suicide Six,
Showing countours of the surrounding hillsides**



4
5
6

Figure 14 - Teago General Store, circa 1970



7

1
2 In time, the South Pomfret Village Area may be suitable for retail stores
3 and services, tourist businesses, lodging, public facilities and other business
4 enterprises at a small scale with appropriate site plan design characteristics fitting
5 the context of their surroundings. Growth in the South Pomfret Village Area may
6 depend, to some degree, on eventually developing a means to deliver public water
7 and sewer.

8
9 **Rural Areas**

10
11 Rural Areas in Pomfret consist primarily of residential, forestry, and
12 agricultural land uses, with some home business, outdoor recreational and natural
13 resource uses. Home businesses are appropriate land uses within Rural Areas and
14 are valuable to both the quality of life and the economic character of the region.
15 Historically some home businesses in Pomfret have extended outside of the
16 residential buildings with product and equipment into accessory structures or in
17 the open. To maintain the character of the area, larger home businesses extending
18 beyond the residential and accessory structures should be subject to site plan
19 review ensuring compatibility with the residential uses.

20
21 Non-residential uses including small service businesses, small
22 professional offices and inns maybe acceptable land uses for Rural Areas
23 provided that such uses are planned as relatively small in size or scale, do not
24 unduly conflict with existing or planned residential, forestry or agricultural uses,
25 and do not unduly affect rural character. Larger retail establishments serving a
26 regional market are not appropriate for Rural Areas but appropriately scaled
27 businesses with a secondary retail component may be allowed. In circumstances
28 where lands are proposed for residential or non-residential uses, development
29 should be sited to minimize or avoid adverse impacts on agricultural and forest
30 land, wetlands, river/stream corridors, and mapped wildlife habitat blocks and
31 corridors.

32
33 The future character of the town will be affected by the location and
34 density of future development of new lots. The number of new houses in a
35 subdivision may not have as much negative impact as where those houses are
36 sited with regard to the working landscape, and scenic and natural resources.

37
38 **General Land Use Goals**

- 39
40 1. Preserve the traditional Vermont land use pattern of a concentrated South
41 Pomfret village area surrounded by rural countryside.
42
43 2. Increase the number of people who are able to work closer to home.
44

45 **General Land Use Policies**

-
- 1 1. With the exception of PUD's, the Town should continue with 2 acre minimum
2 lot size zoning. In the future, the Town should consider other forms of zoning
3 (e.g., larger minimum lot size or density-based formulas) as the demand for
4 other kinds of zoning arises.
 - 5 2. Pomfret supports land use which fosters a pattern of small, concentrated
6 settlement along with the preservation of agriculture and forestry, as well as
7 other areas of high public value. The Town will attempt to direct the majority
8 of future growth into the South Pomfret Village Area and hamlet areas.
 - 9 3. Pomfret encourages land use decisions that will result in local employment
10 opportunities, recognizing that most residents of Pomfret work elsewhere.
 - 11
12 4. In the case of multiple unit projects, e.g., Planned Unit Developments
13 (PUD's), buildings shall be clustered. Approval of future subdivision
14 development within PUD's should be reviewed based on a system that permits
15 smaller residential lots and larger open space parcels for agriculture, forestry,
16 while limiting the total number of new lots on a specific parcel. Topography,
17 limited access, scenic and natural resources should be taken into consideration
18 and will be taken into consideration where mandated by statute.
 - 19 5. Light commercial or light industrial activities are encouraged as a part of
20 home-based businesses in the rural areas and as part of home-based
21 businesses, or stand-alone businesses in the South Pomfret Village Area.
22 Heavy commercial or industrial activities are generally inconsistent with
23 Pomfret's character and should be located in more suitable areas that already
24 have core business districts, such as Woodstock and Hartford.
 - 25 6. Encourage projects that will result in new construction of affordable housing
26 and conversion of existing structures to affordable housing as part of PUD's.
 - 27 7. Above and beyond meeting state-regulations, new development should:
 - 28 ▪ Avoid adverse impacts on significant natural resources including
29 stream corridors, wetlands, habitat areas
 - 30 ▪ Minimize use of existing farmland or land with a high potential for
31 future agricultural or forestry use
 - 32 ▪ Maintain scenic vistas of the working landscape, hillsides, and
33 ridgelines
 - 34 8. Density of new development will be limited to the physical capacity of the
35 land and without degradation of the environment.
 - 36 9. The rate of development shall not exceed the ability of existing and planned
37 town services and facilities to support it.

-
- 1 10. Developers should consider thoughtful siting and grouping of structures to
2 replicate traditional settlement patterns.
 - 3 11. The Town will promote traditional agricultural and forestry activities and
4 encourage innovative new ones. These agricultural and forestry activities
5 should include the use of tillable land, pastureland, and all kinds of forestland.
 - 6 12. Home-based businesses are encouraged in all areas of the Town.
 - 7 13. Manage future growth in Pomfret so that economic development does not
8 create commercial and industrial districts.

9
10 **General Land Use Recommended Actions**
11

- 12 1. The Town should research the true number of housing units that exist in
13 Pomfret. The Grand List only reflects what properties are billed for property
14 taxes, but some properties may have more than one housing unit (e.g., those
15 with rental units). (Planning Commission)
- 16 2. The Town should develop a strategy to work with land owners to convert
17 existing structures into affordable housing. (Selectboard)

18 **Specific Land Use Policies: South Pomfret Village Area**
19

- 20 1. Light commercial and industrial activities, and primary retail establishments,
21 shall be located within or adjacent to the Village Area. All activities in the
22 village area will be reviewed to ensure that the scale is commensurate with the
23 Town's ability to support those activities.
- 24 2. Shops and services, tourist businesses, lodging and public facilities, at a scale
25 and design appropriate to the existing characteristics, are encouraged.
- 26 3. Development in the South Pomfret Village Area shall reflect existing
27 settlement patterns, land capacity, and the availability of utilities and
28 infrastructure for expansion.
- 29 4. Conversion of structures and older buildings of historic merit is encouraged to
30 increase longevity and enable new, more economical, and energy efficient
31 uses of property and to avoid obsolescence.
- 32 5. Where new development is planned, efforts must be made to ensure that it is
33 complementary and compatible with the architecture and configuration of

1 existing buildings and streetscape, and respects the traditional size and scale,
2 proportions, and shape of the neighborhood.

3 6. Single, two, and multiple family housing at medium to high densities is
4 encouraged in the village area.

5 7. New businesses shall be limited to uses that do not adversely affect the quality
6 of life, the unique character and historic atmosphere of the village, or the rural
7 residential nature of the Town.

8 **Specific Land Use Recommended Actions:** *South Pomfret Village Area*

9

10 1. Consideration should be given to the future of the Suicide Six ski area and
11 what future uses of that area will be consistent with the Town's long-term
12 vision. (Selectboard)

13 2. The Town should explore funding opportunities to determine the feasibility
14 and cost to establish a municipal water and sewer system for the South
15 Pomfret Village Area. Funding may be available through the Drinking Water
16 State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) or municipal planning grants made available
17 by the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development.
18 (Selectboard)

19 **Specific Land Use Policies:** *Historic Districts and Buildings*

20

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

24 **Specific Land Use Recommended Actions:** *Historic Districts and Buildings*

25

26 1. The Town should inventory sites and structures of historic significance and
27 establish criteria for the degree of protection and maintenance needed.

28 2. The Town should assemble an informational guideline for buildings and areas
29 on the State of Vermont Division of Historic Preservation Historic Sites &
30 Structures Survey, which will be advisory only, and will provide information
31 to protect and enhance the historic character and resources of these buildings
32 and areas.

33 **Specific Land Use Goals:** *Rural Areas*

34

35 1. Maintenance of a rural living environment is the primary goal for the Rural
36 Residential Area.

1
2 **Specific Land Use Policies: *Rural Areas***
3

- 4 1. New development needs to observe and promote this goal. Projects that
5 adversely affect the rural setting and conflict with existing rural land uses
6 shall not be located in this Area.
- 7 2. Residential, agricultural, and forestry uses are to be the primary and dominant
8 land uses in the Rural Residential Area. Except for new home-based
9 businesses, secondary retail, or existing commercial or industrial activities,
10 new commercial or industrial activities not associated with home-based
11 businesses shall not be located in the rural areas. Primary retail activities
12 shall not be located in the rural areas.
- 13 3. Residents are permitted to conduct home-based businesses, provided that the
14 nature of the occupation is customary or appropriate in rural residential areas,
15 that it does not detract from the rural character of the area, and that it does not
16 cause an undue burden on the ability of the town to provide services such as
17 highways and fire protection.
- 18 4. New land development shall be planned and sited to promote its continued use
19 for agriculture and forestry. This can be accomplished by siting residential
20 and other non-agricultural uses on the least productive soils or at the edges of
21 woodlands and fields, relatively close to roads. In addition, the layout of
22 building lots shall be designed to preserve crop and pasture land and managed
23 woodlands.
- 24 5. Non-residential development within the Rural Areas shall be consistent with
25 the existing character of the neighborhood.
- 26 6. Where possible, conversion of farm buildings into new residential structures
27 is encouraged.
- 28 7. Continue the Town's subdivision policies and regulations that discourage
29 rapid development of land in a way that outpaces the current Town's ability to
30 provide for infrastructure.

31 **Specific Land Use Policies: *Ridgeline Areas***
32

- 33 1. The Town shall protect the ridgelines through continued application of the
34 Ridgeline Overlay and enforcement of Ridgeline zoning.
- 35 2. Siting of telecommunications towers or other infrastructure shall be sited to
36 preserve the scenic beauty of the landscape.

37 **Specific Land Use Policies: *Flood Hazard Areas***
38

-
- 1 1. The Town shall protect the flood hazard areas through continued application
2 of the Flood Overlay and enforcement of Flood zoning.
- 3 2. The Town will strive to avoid and minimize the loss of life and property, the
4 disruption of commerce, and the extraordinary public expenditures and
5 demands on public services that result from flooding related inundation and
6 erosion.
- 7 3. The Town shall ensure that the selection, design, creation, and use of
8 development in hazard areas is safe and accomplished in a manner that is
9 consistent with public well-being, does not impair stream equilibrium, flood
10 plain services, or the stream corridor.
- 11 4. The Town shall manage all flood hazard areas designated pursuant to 10
12 V.S.A. Chapter 32 § 753, the municipal hazard mitigation plan; and make the
13 Town of Pomfret, its citizens, and businesses eligible for federal flood
14 insurance, federal disaster recovery funds, and hazard mitigation funds as may
15 be available.
- 16 5. The Town will endeavor to protect the environmental and recreational value
17 of Pomfret rivers and streams.

18

1 **Specific Land Use Policies: *Agriculture and Forestry***

- 2
- 3 1. Pomfret supports agriculture and forestry because these activities help to
- 4 retain the rural character of the town, and provide primary and secondary
- 5 sources of income that foster local economic opportunities.
- 6 2. The community understands the importance of agriculture and forestry to the
- 7 Town and recognizes that agricultural and forestry practices may create
- 8 conditions, including noise and odors that may create conflicts with
- 9 residential use. Purchasers of homes should understand that the town cannot
- 10 retain its rural character without reasonably exposing home owners to the
- 11 sights, sounds and smells of a working landscape. Neighbors will try to
- 12 resolve any problems among themselves; however, it is understood that
- 13 reasonable agricultural practices, which are defined by State policy, benefit
- 14 farming operations and contribute to a working landscape, harmony with
- 15 neighbors and community pride.
- 16 3. The Town supports the use of “Accepted Agricultural and Forest Management
- 17 Practices” and encourages the use of “Best Agricultural Practices.”
- 18 4. Encourage sound agricultural practices such as crop rotation, organic farming,
- 19 and sustainable woodlot management practices that do not deplete natural
- 20 resources.
- 21 5. Where residential subdivisions and PUDs are proposed adjacent to farm
- 22 operations or farm districts, reasonable setbacks may be required from the lot
- 23 lines next to cropland for wells and residences under the subdivision
- 24 regulations. Reasonable buffers between residences and cropland, including
- 25 roads and pasture land, may be required. This requirement is designed to
- 26 minimize conflicts between farm operations and residential uses, however
- 27 mechanisms other than buffers may be permitted to achieve such goals.
- 28 6. Promoting sustainable, economically viable farming and forestry alternatives
- 29 is important to the future of farming and forestry in Pomfret. Diverse
- 30 agricultural enterprises, including dairying, hay production, livestock
- 31 production, produce stands, and specialty farms such as wildflowers,
- 32 nurseries, berries, orchards, produce, and value-added products in general will
- 33 be encouraged. Included here are growing activities related to Vermont’s
- 34 “farm to plate” movement. Pomfret encourages local production and
- 35 consumption.
- 36 7. Land in active agricultural or forest use should continue to be taxed at a rate
- 37 that allows the land to stay in active use. The Town should consider measures
- 38 of its own in the event state tax incentives are abolished.

39

1 **Specific Land Use Policies:** *Natural Resources*

- 2
- 3 1. Avoid land use decisions that will result in habitat fragmentation.
- 4
- 5 2. Awareness is crucial to the protection of the town's natural resources. The
- 6 town encourages and should support land owners to become more
- 7 educated on the impacts that development has on habitat, wildlife
- 8 corridors, and other natural resources. Land owners should consider these
- 9 impacts before starting a development project, including the impacts of
- 10 constructing new or expanding existing roads.
- 11
- 12 3. Ensure that agricultural practices and Town road maintenance do not
- 13 degrade the water quality of Pomfret's streams and brooks.
- 14
- 15 4. Preserve any existing Town rights-of-way that can provide access to
- 16 natural resource, historic and scenic vista sites.
- 17
- 18 5. Ensure that the installation or relocation of utility poles, other utility
- 19 equipment, and towers is done in a manner that has little or no impact on
- 20 scenic roads and vistas.
- 21
- 22 6. For air quality and safety purposes, excessive brush burning in Pomfret
- 23 that adversely affects surrounding landowners should be limited.
- 24
- 25 7. Encourage best practices that reduce the Town's collective carbon
- 26 footprint.

26 **Specific Land Use Recommendation Actions:** *Natural Resources*

- 27
- 28 1. Inventory and recommend protection measures to ensure preservation and
- 29 protection of Pomfret's natural resources, including:
- 30 • Habitats of rare, threatened or endangered animal and plant species
- 31 • Brooks, streams, fisheries, stream banks
- 32 • Wetlands, vernal pools
- 33 • Wildlife habitats
- 34 • Agricultural and forest land
- 35 • Mineral resources: gravel, sand, rock
- 36
- 37 2. Identify the sources of public drinking water (aquifers) in Pomfret and
- develop and implement a long-range land use plan to protect them.
- 38
- 39 3. Identify, inventory, and prioritize those elements that significantly contribute
- to Pomfret's rural character and scenic beauty. These include:
- 40 • Hilltops and ridgelines

-
- 1 • Scenic vistas
2 • Open pastures and meadows
3 • Scenic roads
4 • Barns and houses
5 • Stone walls
6 • Village settlement patterns
7 • Town and community buildings
- 8 4. Identify those resources that could be accessible by trails.
- 9 5. Review development projects to limit the impact on:
- 10 • Elements that significantly contribute to the rural character and scenic
11 beauty of Pomfret;
- 12 • Natural resources that need to be preserved and protected

Chapter 5 ENERGY

Introduction

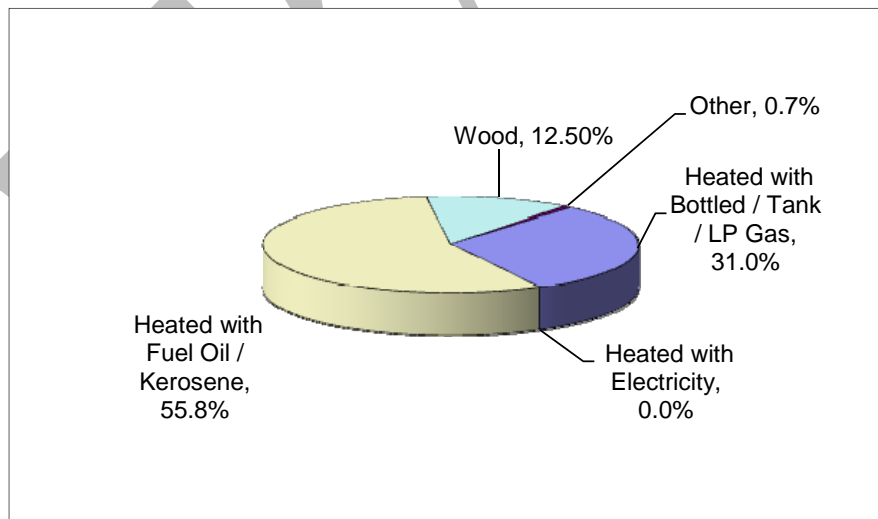
Historically, energy supply has been taken for granted because it is relatively abundant and cheap. Only during “crisis” has society considered the finite supply of non-renewable energy sources. Although earth’s limited supply of natural resources for energy production is a global problem, steps taken 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.

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.

Energy Use and Sources

Of the 416 occupied homes in Pomfret, approximately 55% heat with oil, 31% heat with gas, and 12.5% heat with wood.

Figure 15 - Pomfret Home Heating Fuel: 2007-2011



Source: Housingdata.org

According to the most recent data collected by Efficiency Vermont, in 2011 the Average Residential kWh Usage per household in Pomfret was 7,904 kWh. Although, this may seem high when compared to other towns in the region, this number may be skewed due to the way in which farms are metered. If a farm

1 has a meter hooked up to a main house, then there's no way to segregate farm
2 consumption from home consumption; this type of configuration causes the
3 residential consumption rate to look high compared to non-farming towns.

4 **Fossil Fuel**

5
6 Fossil fuel accounts for more than 50% of all energy consumed in
7 Vermont. Pomfret, like most other towns, depends on fossil fuels for heating (See
8 Figure 15) and transportation. Since public transportation in Pomfret is nearly
9 non-existent, there are few alternatives, if any, to the automobile. Public
10 transportation, one way to reduce energy consumption, is not cost effective for a
11 rural town such as Pomfret.

12
13 **Propane Fuel:** Propane Fuel (Liquefied Petroleum Gas) is a by-product of
14 natural gas processing and crude oil refining; however, it is designated by the
15 U.S. Department of Energy as a clean-burning, high-energy alternative fuel and
16 accounts for 31% of home heating in Pomfret.

17 **Renewable Resources**

18
19 For the municipality, individual or small group of homeowners, the key to
20 sustainable energy production will be renewable sources of energy. The term
21 “renewable energy” refers to the production of electricity and fuels from energy
22 sources that are naturally and continually replenished, such as wind, solar power,
23 geothermal (using the earth’s heat to create power), hydropower, and various
24 forms of biomass (trees, crops, manure, etc.). Alternative fuels produced from
25 renewable sources are attractive options for displacing some of the petroleum-
26 based fuels.

27
28 Although initial set-up costs for renewable energy generation systems can
29 be high, these systems can save users money over the long term, and they reduce
30 the consumption of carbon-based fuels, which helps to protect our environment
31 and reduce our reliance on large power plants producing energy from a single
32 location (centralized energy). In Vermont, some of these energy sources are more
33 readily available than others and some are more cost effective for the individual
34 energy producer.

35
36 **Wood:** Wood from managed resources is considered a renewable resource
37 and heating with wood saves non-renewable energy sources, eliminates the use of
38 fuel to transport sources long distances, and supports the local economy. The
39 Department of Public Service has estimated that the average wood burning
40 household uses between 3 and 4 cords of wood each year during the heating
41 season. Although significant use of wood can contribute to increased air
42 pollution, particularly in valley areas, clean burning furnaces and stoves can
43 mitigate this problem. As indicated in Figure 1, approximately 12.5 % of homes
44 are heated with wood.

1
2 **Solar Energy:** Solar energy has potential for providing clean, reliable,
3 and safe energy. Most areas in Vermont have the potential for some solar energy
4 production.

5
6 Water Heating – Solar water heating is the most common form of
7 residential-scale solar use in Vermont. Solar systems are not regulated at
8 the state level and are subject to local regulations.

9
10 Electricity Generation – Decreasing costs of equipment have made solar
11 electric generation systems more prevalent. Solar systems are no longer
12 utilized exclusively by “off-grid” buildings. The advent of net-metering
13 allows buildings to be connected to the grid while utilizing renewable
14 energy. Systems that are net-metered are overseen by the Public Service
15 Board and are not required to get a local permit.

16
17 There are no commercial-scale solar electricity generation facilities in
18 Pomfret. Because of the nature of solar arrays, they are in some ways more
19 desirable than wind towers. This is primarily due to the fact that they do not need
20 to be located on high ground and are therefore less visually prominent. In
21 addition, these facilities can be located in areas that are less rural in nature,
22 requiring fewer access roads and reducing adverse impacts on wild lands.

23
24 If not properly sited, large solar facilities can impact soil and water
25 resources, as well as wildlife habitat and corridors. Considerations must also be
26 given to public safety. Commercial solar facilities should be developed so as to
27 avoid negative impacts on the rural character of the area in which they are
28 proposed to be located. Developers should make all possible efforts to minimize
29 damage to important natural areas as identified in the Natural Resources section
30 of this Plan. Additionally, such facilities should be located as close to existing
31 roads as possible to avoid creating an increased need for Pomfret services, such as
32 road maintenance.

33
34 **Wind Energy:** Power generated from wind is done through a wind turbine
35 installed on top of a tall tower, where it collects and converts wind into
36 electricity. Towers for home use are generally 80-100 feet in height and are far
37 less obtrusive than larger, commercial “wind farms” that have become a subject
38 of great debate throughout Vermont.

39
40 Similar to solar, wind energy is an intermittent resource and its generation
41 fluctuates in response to environmental conditions. The amount of energy
42 produced by a specific wind tower can depend greatly on location, height of the
43 tower and proximity to other obstructions.

44
45 There are multiple levels of potential wind energy generation, ranging
46 from Class 1 (10-11 mph) to Class 7 (19-25 mph). Commercial wind farms

1 generally are sited in Class 3 or higher areas. With this in mind, and as illustrated
 2 in Table 5, Pomfret has potential for 81 acres of large commercial-scale wind
 3 energy. However, the majority of these lands are conserved.

4
 5

Table 5 - Potential Wind Development Areas (Acres)

	Class 1 (10-11 mph)	Class 2 (12-13 mph)	Class 3 (13-14 mph)	Class 4 (15-16 mph)	Class 5 (16-17 mph)	Class 6 (17-18 mph)	Class 7 (19-25 mph)
Residential (30-meter)	8,852	453	0	0	0	0	0
Small Commercial (50-meter)	0	1,138	427	0	0	0	0
Large Commercial (70-meter)	0	0	5	76	0	0	0

Source: Vermont Energy Atlas

6

7 The 2006 Pomfret Survey showed many people oppose development of
 8 commercial-scale wind energy while a slight majority favors development of
 9 private, residential wind power.

10

Agriculture:

11

12

Cow-power: Cow power is the conversion of manure to usable energy. While cow power is successful in certain areas of Vermont, Pomfret does not have large scale dairy farms that would allow for the quantities of manure needed for viable cow power.

13

14

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17

Biomass: Biomass energy has the potential to supply a significant portion of energy needs, while improving rural economies, increasing energy independence, and reducing pollution. Biomass energy comes in many forms; virtually all plants and organic wastes can be used to produce heat, power, or fuel.

18

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24 A commercial biomass power plant would require a great deal of space to
 25 accommodate the various stages of collection and conversion of the mass into fuel
 26 before burning it to produce electricity. Therefore, commercial biomass energy
 27 generation facilities should be located close to available biofuels to reduce
 28 transportation impacts and costs. Water can also pose a problem as large
 29 commercial biomass facilities require large quantities to handle the recycling
 30 process of waste materials. Materials would have to be transported to and from
 31 the facility, so truck traffic should be a consideration in selecting a site.

24

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1 There are currently no biomass energy generation facilities in Pomfret.
2 Before a biomass energy generation facility is located in Pomfret, developers
3 should prove that their proposed project will not negatively impact the rural
4 character of the community or the local road system.
5

6 **Hydropower:** According to the Vermont Energy Atlas in 2013 three
7 potential hydro sites were identified in Pomfret: Freeman and McCord, both
8 located on Mill Brook Stream and Martin located on Cloudland Brook Stream.
9 Martin-Cloudland Brook, is considered “in-service,” meaning while it is not
10 actively producing power, it has the basic infrastructure to do so. Retrofitting the
11 “in-service” existing sites presents the most effective means of adding potential
12 hydropower while keeping environmental impacts low.
13

14 While these sites have been identified as “having potential,” a wide range
15 of environmental, economic, and permitting challenges exist.
16

17 **Section 248 Considerations**

18
19 To the extent possible, placement of energy generation systems, including
20 large infrastructure systems of any type, should meet the purpose and intent of
21 “Ridgeline and Hillside Conservation Areas” (Part 15) of the Pomfret Zoning
22 Ordinance.
23

24 Placement of large infrastructure systems of any type in Pomfret should
25 ultimately benefit Pomfret residents in some way.
26

27 For all large infrastructure systems, with regard to preferred, prohibited,
28 and significant areas, please reference pages 248 - 250: F. Permitting
29 Consideration of the Two Rivers-Ottawquechee Regional Plan (2012).
30
31
32

1 **Residential Energy Efficiency**

2
3 There are a number of ways that the town of Pomfret can meet its local
4 energy demand, first by lowering that demand, and then by working to meet the
5 remaining need with local, untapped energy resources.

6
7 *Decreasing Energy Use by Changing Behavior:* Decreasing energy use by
8 changing behavior and by decreasing energy use by implementing energy
9 efficiencies are key. Please refer to the Vermont Residential Building Code
10 handbook for compliance with residential building energy and standards (RBES).

11
12
13 **Municipal Role in Energy Efficiency**

14
15 Although communities are unlikely to have an impact on energy
16 consumption at the global level, they do have an impact at the local level given
17 their demand for and use of energy. The relationship between a municipality and
18 its energy use creates opportunities to have an impact on local energy use
19 reduction.

20
21 **Energy Committee:** Pomfret does not have an Energy Committee (EC),
22 which acts as an advisory board to the Selectboard and Planning Commission
23 (PC) on all things energy related. The EC is a volunteer group that is appointed by
24 the Selectboard for the purpose of establishing and implementing the town’s
25 energy goals. EC’s activities can include conducting energy audits on municipal
26 buildings, tracking energy use for these buildings, and working with the PC on
27 the Energy Plan.

28
29 **Auditing Municipally Owned Buildings:** Many towns in Vermont own
30 buildings that are old and inefficient in many respects. For instance, older
31 buildings often have insufficient insulation, wasteful heating and cooling systems,
32 and out-of-date lighting. These kinds of infrastructure problems result in higher
33 energy use with the resulting cost passed onto taxpayers.

34
35 Municipal officials should consider conducting audits on additional
36 Pomfret buildings in order to determine what improvements are necessary, and
37 which projects would have the highest cost-benefit ratio in terms of energy and
38 financial savings.

39
40 **Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE):** Vermont enacted legislation
41 in May 2009 (Act 45) that authorizes local governments to create Clean Energy
42 Assessment districts. Once created, municipalities can offer financing to property
43 owners for renewable energy and energy-efficiency projects. Eligible projects
44 include the installation of solar water and space heating, photovoltaic panels
45 (PV), and biomass heating, small wind, and micro-hydroelectric systems.
46 Property-Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing effectively allows property

1 owners to borrow money to pay for energy improvements. The amount borrowed
2 is typically repaid via a special assessment on the property over a period of up to
3 20 years; if the property owner wishes to sell the parcel before fully repaying the
4 obligation, then the obligation is transferred to the new property owner at the time
5 of sale.

6 7 **Energy, Land Use, and Transportation**

8
9 Pomfret recognizes that energy efficient land use patterns that utilize
10 existing infrastructure and are designed to accommodate all modes of travel are
11 vital parts of increasing energy efficiency and reducing the carbon footprint.

12
13 Vermont promotes development policies that maintains and enhances the
14 “historic development pattern of compact centers surrounded by rural landscape.”
15 Pomfret by its very history and nature is that “surrounding rural landscape.”
16 Currently there is no compact center. Efforts to direct future development to
17 existing hamlets or village areas as proposed in the Land Use chapter of this plan
18 could reduce energy expended for transportation within the town.

19
20 Pomfret has no public transportation (beyond on-demand for the elderly)
21 and is unlikely to have any in the near future. However, because transportation is
22 such a substantial portion of local energy use, Pomfret supports the continued
23 development of conveniently located Park-n-Ride facilities. The closest Park-n-
24 Ride to Pomfret is currently in Sharon; however a Woodstock Park-n-Ride is
25 currently under development and will be convenient for Pomfret commuters.

26 27 **Long Range Goals**

- 28
29 1. To support increased energy efficiencies in existing and new buildings, in
30 transportation and to support the long-term availability of safe, reliable,
31 renewable and affordable energy supplies.

32 33 **Objectives and Policies**

- 34
35 1. Pomfret officials will participate in the Public Service Board’s review of
36 new and expanded generation and transmission facilities to ensure that
37 local energy, resource conservation and development objectives are
38 identified and considered in future utility development.
- 39
40 2. Any commercial energy generation facility proposed in Pomfret must be
41 developed so as to avoid negative impacts on the rural character of the
42 surrounding area. Developers should make all possible efforts to
43 minimize damage to important natural areas as identified in the Natural
44 Resource section of this Pomfret Plan. Additionally, such facilities should
45 be located as close to existing roads as possible to avoid any increase in
46 services provided by Pomfret.

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3. Pomfret supports the development and use of renewable energy resources.
4. Pomfret officials will work in cooperation with state, regional and local agencies, emergency service providers, regional suppliers and municipalities to develop local emergency contingency plans that ensure access to critical energy supplies and measures to reduce nonessential energy consumption in the event of an abrupt energy shortage.
5. Pomfret encourages new significant public investments (including, public recreational areas and municipal facilities) to be located in close proximity to existing infrastructure that utilizes existing roads whenever possible.

Recommendation Actions

1. Increase awareness and use of energy conservation practices, energy-efficient products, and efficiency/weatherization programs through educational outreach to the public with the assistance of Efficiency Vermont and local utilities.
2. Pomfret officials or volunteers are encouraged to track municipal energy use and costs (for example: through the EPA's free Energy Star® Portfolio Manager Program), and develop an overall energy budget to manage Pomfret's energy consumption, which may also include the development of local generating capacity.
3. Implementation of energy efficiency measures are encouraged for existing and future facilities as opportunities arise (e.g., facility retrofits, renovations, and equipment upgrades).
4. Town officials are encouraged to develop municipal procurement and purchasing policies that incorporate life-cycle costs (purchase, energy, operation, maintenance and disposal costs) for future purchases that emphasize products that are energy efficient (e.g., Energy Star® rated). There should be available locally, durable, recyclable, nontoxic, and manufactured products with post-consumer recycled material.
5. Facility maintenance and operation policies that maximize energy efficiency while maintaining comfort levels for employees and visitors are encouraged. Examples include: installation of day-lighting tubes, programmable thermostats, occupancy light sensors, smart strips and energy star appliances.
6. Development of municipal vehicle purchase, maintenance and use policies, including minimum fuel efficiency standards for new vehicles is encouraged.

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7. Consideration of the benefits of using regionally available alternative-fuels, such as biodiesel, in municipal vehicles is encouraged.

DRAFT

1 Chapter 6 TRANSPORTATION

3 Introduction

4 Transportation in Pomfret relies primarily on a network of paved and
5 gravel town highways. Preserving the rural and agricultural character of Pomfret
6 is an important aspect of many sections of the Town plan. Since improving roads
7 can lead to development pressure, it is not Pomfret's intention to build new roads,
8 significantly improve old roads or to pave existing Class 3 roads. Because, among
9 other things, more roads lead to more energy use, the Town will continue to
10 provide economical ways of moving goods, services, and people at a safe speed
11 within and through Pomfret via an existing network of roads.

12 Town Highways

13 The State uses four classifications of roads to distribute financial aid to
14 towns for road repair. State aid to a town decreases on a per mile basis from Class
15 1 to Class 3. According to the 2013 Town Report, in Fiscal Year 2013, the town
16 received a total of \$133,111.90 to maintain these roads. The roads and their
17 respective classifications in Pomfret are:

18
19 **State Highways** are major roads with state route numbers entirely
20 maintained by the state. Pomfret's only state highway is the 1.4-mile section of
21 Route 12 in the southwest corner of the Town.

22
23 **Class 1** Town highways are extensions of a state highway route with a
24 state route number. Pomfret has no Class 1 Town highways.

25
26 **Class 2** Town highways serve through traffic from one community to
27 another and are paved. The Town of Pomfret maintains 14.7 miles of Class 2
28 highways. These are:

- 29 • Woodstock Town Line to South Pomfret - Pomfret Road: 1.16 Mi.
- 30 • South Pomfret to Barnard Town Line - Stage Road: 2.81 Mi.
- 31 • South Pomfret to Hewitts Corners - Pomfret Road: 4.42 Mi.
- 32 • Hewitts Corners to Sharon Town Line - Howe Hill Road: 1.77 Mi.
- 33 • Hewitts Corners to W. Hartford Town Line - Pomfret Road: 4.57 Mi.
- 34

35
36 **Class 3** Town highways are all the other Town roads that are maintained
37 year round. In Pomfret, there are 47.25 miles of Class 3 roads that are all gravel.

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

4
5 All town highways have a 3-rod or 49.5-foot right-of-way by state statute,
6 unless surveyed or otherwise deeded.

7
8 **Legal Trails** are Town rights-of-way, usually former Class 4 roads. They
9 are no longer maintained and may be restricted to non-motorized use.

10
11 **Discontinued highways** were previously Town roads but their rights-of-
12 way have been transferred to adjoining landowners. Neither the public nor the
13 Town has any residual rights in discontinued highways.

14 **Road Maintenance**

15 In August 2013, the Town of Pomfret, was awarded a Better Backroads
16 Category A Grant for a new town-wide inventory of the Town’s highways and for
17 the development of a Road Surface Management System . This project’s scope of
18 work included the following major steps:

- 19 • Inventory of road surfaces,
20 • Survey of road surface and drainage conditions,
21 • An update to the existing culvert inventory, and
22 • A final report recommending a major maintenance program with
23 the associated costs for the next five years.

24 The purpose of this project was to identify specific road segments and
25 culvert/drainage problem in the Town and to determine effective repair solutions
26 to each problem according to the Vermont Better Backroads Manual and the road
27 standards of the Town of Pomfret. The Town adopted the 2013 Town Road and
28 Bridge Standards from VTrans and the State of Vermont on March 20, 2013. The
29 roads and culverts throughout the Town of Pomfret, based on the findings of this
30 grant project, are generally in fair to good condition.⁶

31 The cost of maintaining the Town highways is second only to the cost of
32 education in the Town budget. Pomfret’s public highway system is by far the
33 largest asset in Pomfret. With this fact in mind, maintenance practices should be
34 directed to preserve the life of this asset over the long term for the benefit of the
35 greatest number of users.

36
37 Summer maintenance is a matter of trying to repair and prevent the
38 deterioration of the roads, both gravel and paved. A regular reclaiming and

⁶ “Town of Pomfret - Road Surface and Culvert Maintenance Plan.” 2013.

1 repaving program has continued for several years, retreatment should be done as
2 needed. Some years several miles have been repaved, some of which will barely
3 last a year because of poor underlying road structure. In other years short sections
4 of highway have been completely rebuilt including the underlying base, whose
5 repairs should last for many years.

6
7 A majority of the people who responded to the 2006 survey are opposed to
8 paying higher taxes to improve the quality of roads in town. In keeping with this,
9 Pomfret as a policy matter will not attempt to provide roads that an unlimited
10 highway budget would make possible.

11 **Safety**

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

17 **Highway Department**

18 The Highway Department has a Road Foreman, appointed by the
19 Selectboard, and two full-time employees. See the Pomfret Annual Report for a
20 current listing of Town Highway Equipment. Major equipment replacement is
21 based on a ten year Capital Equipment Replacement plan with annual allocations
22 to the Highway Equipment Reserve Account. Both the Replacement Plan and the
23 Reserve Account are included in the annual Town Reports and updated each year
24 based on projected costs and the anticipated service life of the equipment. This
25 plan allows for equipment to be replaced before the maintenance costs become
26 excessive and provides for level funding from year to year.

27
28 The Town Garage, which houses all the highway equipment, is in
29 marginal condition and needs a major overhaul with a small addition. It is
30 important that all the equipment used in the winter be stored in a heated building
31 with adequate space for regular maintenance and repair work. Improvements to
32 the Town Garage are long overdue: it is not in compliance with waste handling
33 best practices and safety issues. Energy efficiency issues need to be addressed.
34 The town will need to study and decide as to whether a major renovation will be
35 more cost effective than short-term fixes.

36
37 With the current population, the operation of the highway department and
38 its inventory of equipment seem to be adequate. If the population were to increase
39 significantly, particularly in areas served by Class 3 gravel roads, the highway
40 department might need to add employees and equipment, as well as more garage
41 space.

1 **Ordinances**

2 There are Town Highway Ordinances relating to speeding, road
3 improvement, and driveway access. A map of Town roads (Map #3) is included in
4 Appendix D.
5

6 **Private Roads**

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

- 9 • First, the intersection of private roads with town roads must be safe and
10 not cause damage to town roads. The sight lines must allow for the speed
11 limit on the road. Ideally, the intersection angle should be as close to 90°
12 as possible, and the elevation and grade of the private road, relative to the
13 town road, should be designed to prevent water erosion damage to the
14 town road. All new driveways require an Access Permit issued by the
15 Selectboard after they review the proposed plans and determine that they
16 meet the specifications of the Town driveway access ordinance.
17
- 18 • Second, new private roads should be constructed so that emergency
19 vehicles are able to reach residences and businesses year-round. Pomfret
20 currently does not review or approve plans for private roads except where
21 they intersect with the town road unless they are part of a major
22 subdivision or are in the Ridgeline Zone. Many towns have regulations
23 setting minimum standards for construction of private roads, particularly
24 the maximum grade and minimum width.
25
- 26 • Third, new private roads can have a negative impact on the natural
27 resources and scenic beauty of the Town. Poorly constructed roads can
28 cause soil erosion during and after construction. Improper installation of
29 driveway culverts can exacerbate siltation and drainage problems. Poorly
30 sited roads can disturb wetlands or wildlife habitats. Roads built in open
31 fields and on ridgelines can intrude on agricultural land and viewsheds.

32 **Bicycle/Pedestrian Transportation**

33
34 Pomfret does not have any sidewalks or bicycle facilities (such as racks)
35 anywhere in town. However, bicyclists within town and across the region travel
36 Pomfret's roads to enjoy the scenic and rural landscapes. Road improvements
37 that would reduce bicycle safety or discourage bicycling will not be supported in
38 any sense.

1 **Public Transportation**

2 To be efficient, public transportation requires that a large number of
3 people go to the same place at the same time. The common view is that rural
4 communities like Pomfret do not have the population to support a public
5 transportation system. The exception is the school bus system where a portion of
6 the community, approximately 15 percent, goes to the same places (the Pomfret
7 School and Woodstock Union High School) at the same time each school day
8 morning. The van picking up senior citizens at their homes and transporting them
9 to the Thompson Senior Center in Woodstock is also a public transportation
10 system. Although not as efficient as the school bus system, it is an important
11 service to many of Pomfret’s older residents.

12
13 Stagecoach Transportation Services, a non-profit organization based in
14 Randolph, Vermont, is the local transit provider in this region. Essentially, they
15 respond to individual needs for transportation to medical centers or elsewhere by
16 acting as a coordination center for a list of volunteer drivers. The service,
17 available to Pomfret residents, is supported by minimal fees in addition to federal
18 and state funding. The Thompson Senior Center also has a van for the same
19 purpose.

20
21 There are situations now and there may be new ones in the future that
22 justify some additional form of public transportation in Pomfret. Similarly,
23 carpooling, either by private arrangements or through Vermont Rideshare, would
24 also have the benefit of minimizing dependence on private autos. Location of
25 Park and Ride facilities in Pomfret would facilitate carpooling and are being
26 established in other small Vermont towns. Full state funding for Park and Ride
27 lots is available every year for this purpose.

28
29 The Vermonter is a passenger train line running between Washington,
30 D.C., and St. Albans, Vermont. It stops locally in Randolph and White River
31 Junction.

32 **Regional Transportation**

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

40
41 Of special concern to Pomfret is traffic generated in other towns and
42 flowing through Pomfret to other towns such as Hartford or Woodstock, or to

1 Interstate 89. Further, the Town will not support so-called transportation system
2 improvements that would effectively divert traffic from neighboring communities
3 with state highways to or through rural townships such as Pomfret.

4 **Long-Range Goal**

5
6 Maintain Pomfret's roads in a manner that promotes public safety, is
7 consistent with land use goals, does not degrade the environment, and efficiently
8 moves people, goods, and services.

9 **Objectives and Policies**

- 10
11 1. Continue to schedule resurfacing of paved highways on a yearly basis, in a
12 cost effective manner that will prevent road deterioration.
13
14 2. Continue to grade gravel roads and apply new material on a minimal basis.
15 Continue to improve side ditches to keep the roads from significantly
16 degrading without widening or straightening unless this becomes
17 necessary to handle existing traffic.
18
19 3. Continue roadside mowing and removal of brush, dead trees, stumps, and
20 rocks that interfere with vision on town roads.
21
22 4. Schedule regular inspections of roads, bridges, and culverts to determine
23 repair needs on a priority basis.
24
25 5. Continue to allocate tax dollars to the Reserve Funds each year.
26
27 6. Encourage the Selectboard to continue use of the maximum amounts of
28 federal and state aid available for highways.
29
30 7. Provide for enforcement of the Town Traffic Ordinance by the County
31 Sheriff to reduce the high number of trucks and automobiles that travel at
32 excessive speeds and damage paved roads.
33
34 8. Enhance safety by designing road improvements that do not encourage
35 drivers to speed by setting appropriate speed limits.
36
37 9. Appropriate speed limits, while promoting efficient movement of traffic,
38 should take into consideration pedestrian use, built-up areas, and schools.
39
40 10. The Town will not build new roads, improve old roads, pave existing
41 Class 3 roads, or accept ownership of private roads to accommodate
42 development unless such actions provide long term benefits outweighing
43 costs to the Town as a whole.

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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 forest land, and scenic beauty.
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 affect the environment.
16. When improving, widening, opening or closing a road, the Town should do a cost benefit analysis.
17. Develop and maintain a Capital Budget and Replacement Plan for the purchase of highway and fire vehicles and equipment.

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)

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- 6. Work with legislative representatives to change State regulations governing speed limits on gravel roads by granting more local control. (Selectboard)
- 7. Identify roads not used for access to properties and change their classification to legal trails for recreation. (Planning Commission)
- 8. Make recommendations to the Selectboard about road widening and straightening. (Road Foreman)

DRAFT

1 **Chapter 7 TOWN SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

2 **Introduction**

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

12 **Town Government**

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

23
24 The Pomfret Town Clerk and Treasurer are also elected at Town Meeting
25 and are part-time, salaried positions. In addition to performing official duties, the
26 Town Clerk serves as the liaison between other Town officials and the public. An
27 increase in land sales and the rate of development could increase the
28 administrative workload of the Town Clerk.

29
30 The three elected Listers are paid by the hour to perform a highly
31 technical job of evaluating Town property. The Listers, Town Clerk, Treasurer,
32 and anyone else working on Town business share space in the Town Office in the
33 brick building built in 1908 across the road from the Town Hall. The Selectboard
34 meets there regularly, and most of the Town's records are protected there in a
35 fireproof vault.

1 **Emergency Services**

2 **FAST Squad and Ambulance**

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

8
9 Ambulance service in Pomfret is provided by the Town of Woodstock
10 which has two ambulances and full-time dispatch service. The Town pays an
11 annual assessment to have this service available, and the patients are charged for
12 actual usage. Unpaid bills are charged to the Town.

13 **Fire Protection**

14 In November of 2012, Pomfret’s two independent fire departments merged
15 into the Pomfret-Teago Volunteer Fire Department and now benefit from a
16 coordinated department with improved training, a single efficient leadership team,
17 and streamlined administrative, budgetary, and long-range planning.

18 Pomfret’s fire protection is enhanced through mutual aid agreements with
19 neighboring towns. A long-range plan for fire protection was accepted at the 1995
20 Town Meeting and will continue to be implemented and supported by municipal
21 funds annually, as well as donations and grants.

22
23 Fire protection in Pomfret can be addressed from other perspectives. The
24 best fire protection is prevention, which is the responsibility of the entire
25 community, not just the fire departments. Community financial support and able
26 volunteers are essential to fire protection in Pomfret. It is important that all new
27 development be accessible to standard fire equipment in all seasons. Where
28 possible, water should be available in all areas of the Town through hydrants on
29 new and existing ponds. Anyone planning to build a new pond or to upgrade an
30 old pond should consider consulting one of the fire departments about installation
31 of a dry hydrant. An inventory of all dry hydrants is on the Town’s GIS system
32 and easily available to firefighters. Existing burning regulations must be strictly
33 enforced. Houses and other inhabited buildings should be permitted if they are
34 designed to specifications allowing evacuation by existing municipal fire
35 equipment. Houses and access roads should be designed for access by fire and
36 emergency vehicles at all time of the year. Houses with steep access roads, those
37 that are very large, or those without a nearby water source should consider
38 installation of a sprinkler system.

39
40 Community volunteers can assist the departments in such non-firefighting
41 jobs as fundraising, collecting important information, informing homeowners of

1 the state law requiring smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and recommending
2 fire extinguishers in appropriate locations. They can also assist the Pomfret Fire
3 Department in sales of this equipment.

4 **911 and Emergency Dispatch**

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

8 **Police Protection**

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

14
15 The Selectboard can appoint First and Second Town Constables. The
16 Town Constable handles violations of the dog ordinance and assists in other
17 emergencies. If the citizens want a higher level of protection, options include
18 hiring a sheriff to be available certain hours, having the Town Constable trained,
19 certified and officially on call for emergencies, or sharing an "outpost" trooper
20 with a neighboring town.

21
22 For several years, the Town has hired a Windsor County Sheriff to patrol
23 roads to enforce speed limits. In 2013, the Town's share of fines totaled over
24 \$7,000 at a cost of less than \$19,000.

25 **Emergency Planning**

26 *Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan*

27
28 The Pomfret Selectboard adopted a Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Plan in
29 January 2005 that lays out local hazards and actions to reduce damage from future
30 disasters. When combined with the Regional Pre-Disaster Mitigation plan, the
31 local PDM Plan is the mitigation plan for the town. The Plan includes a critical
32 facilities map that cites flood zones and frequently flooded areas.

33 *Local Emergency Planning Committee*

34
35 Pomfret has four representatives on the Local Emergency Planning
36 Committee (LEPC) #12. LEPC #12 covers 27 member towns in east-central
37 Vermont. While LEPC #12's statutory responsibilities are related only to
38 hazardous materials, the LEPC is also planning for floods and fires.

1 **Solid Waste**

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

12 **Child Care**

13 As of early 2014, there are two providers in Pomfret registered with the
14 State of Vermont for in-home childcare. Pomfret supports the private
15 development of additional facilities to meet the child care needs of its residents
16 and may assist with seeking funding to develop these facilities.

17 **Planning and Zoning**

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

21
22 The Planning Commission prepares the Town Plan for adoption by the
23 Selectboard and prepares zoning and subdivision regulations for approval by the
24 Selectboard and by the Town. The Planning Commission also sits as a quasi-
25 judicial board to hear and review applications for major subdivisions and all
26 development within the Ridgeline Zone.

27
28 The Zoning Administrator issues building and use permits and is
29 responsible for enforcement of the regulations.

30
31 The Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) is a quasi-judicial board that
32 hears and reviews applications for conditional use permits, requests for variances,
33 and appeals of decisions of the Zoning Administrator.

34
35 Planning and zoning activities have cost the taxpayers very little in
36 Pomfret. The Zoning Administrator is a paid position, and the Planning
37 Commission and the Zoning Board of Adjustment are volunteer boards without
38 paid staff. Fees are charged for building permits and for applications requiring a
39 hearing. State planning funds awarded to the Town as grants have substantially
40 contributed to covering the cost of rewriting planning and zoning documents in
41 Pomfret. The Town is a member of the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional

1 Commission (TRORC), and pays a yearly assessment from Town funds, allowing
2 access to technical assistance on planning and other land use issues.

3
4 As long as volunteers continue to be available and the process is kept
5 simple, the present system seems to work. However, if the regulations are
6 changed to require a more extensive review of projects, the result will be more
7 work for these boards and for the Administrator. Should administrative help
8 become necessary, permit fees comparable to those of other towns in the area
9 would cover that expense without using tax money. Any changes in Town zoning
10 regulations should take into consideration the cost of administration and the
11 source of those funds.

12 **Long Range Planning and Capital Budgeting**

13
14 In 2007, the Pomfret Selectboard approved creation of a Long Range
15 Planning and Capital Budgeting Committee with the purpose of developing long-
16 range plans and cost estimates relating to the needs for Town facilities. A Capital
17 Equipment Replacement Plan was established and annually updated for highway
18 equipment, but no long range plan has been established and maintained for town
19 buildings. In 2009, the town offices were moved from the old town clerk building
20 next door to the newly renovated Center School building.

21
22 The Town Hall and the Highway Garage are both in need of major
23 renovations. Although receiving a new roof and other repairs, the Town Hall is in
24 need of substantial structural repairs, energy efficiency improvements,
25 modifications to meet ADA accessibility standards, and life safety code
26 compliance upgrades. The Highway Garage has many functional deficiencies. A
27 Town Building Reserve Fund was established in December of 2013 but a long
28 range plan for upgrading and maintaining town buildings has not been created.

29 **Geographic Data**

30
31 Pomfret has access to VCGI (Vermont Center for Geographic
32 Information) data and maps of the Town's roads, structures, land cover, surface
33 waters, ridgelines, and wetlands. New data are added to the system regularly, the
34 last major update occurring in 2012 from statewide digital orthophotography.
35 Geographic data is an important tool in reviewing proposed development as it
36 pinpoints issues to be addressed early in the process.

37
38 The Geographic Information System (GIS) is useful for long-term
39 planning. Information on soils, roads, topography, natural resources, etc. can be
40 combined to determine areas of Town appropriate for future development or areas
41 where development should be limited. The fire departments and FAST Squad
42 already use maps produced by the GIS for emergency response.

1 **Recreation**

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

12
13 Opportunities for organized recreation at the adult level are available
14 through the Woodstock Recreation Department using Woodstock's facilities.
15 Pomfret residents pay a non-resident fee to participate in the Woodstock programs
16 that include many sports in all seasons, arts and crafts, dance, yoga, and theater.
17 In addition, rock climbing is available at The Wall in Taftsville, owned by the
18 Woodstock Recreation Department.

19
20 Organized sports and other recreational activities are limited in Pomfret by
21 the lack of facilities and the small population. Extensive recreational facilities
22 would be expensive to build and maintain, and it is more cost effective to utilize
23 the facilities of larger towns. Pomfret has land available at the Pomfret School for
24 more facilities. If facilities could be built with donated, State and/or Federal funds
25 (with their inherent restrictions), a real benefit to the residents, particularly young
26 residents could be realized. It is hoped such facilities could be maintained with
27 minimal local tax money. The community is fortunate in having a high quality
28 family ski area, Suicide Six, which offers a variety of skiing terrain.

29
30 Informal recreation such as hiking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling,
31 bicycling, hunting, and fishing contributes significantly to Pomfret's quality of
32 life. Protected areas such as the Appalachian Trail Corridor and the Amity Pond
33 area will always be available. However, as more land is divided and developed,
34 less land will be available for recreation. Existing rights-of-way on Class 4 roads
35 and legal trails should continue to be held by the Town. Whenever possible,
36 easements should be secured from cooperating landowners for future trails.

37 **Cemeteries**

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

1 **Abbott Memorial Library**

2 Since 1905, the Abbott Memorial Library has been an important resource
3 for the Town of Pomfret. A generous gift by the Abbott family provided land and
4 money for the construction of the Library in 1903. For over a century Abbott
5 Library has provided the children and adults of Pomfret access to books, and, in
6 recent years, access to books-on-tape, videos, DVDs, and Internet access. Thanks
7 to supportive community funding through town appropriations and private
8 donations, the Library has met state accreditation standards continually since
9 1999.

10 For the past thirty years, the Library's primary strength has been its
11 commitment to instilling a love of books and reading in the children of Pomfret.
12 Beginning in the 1970s it served as the school library, a role it continued until the
13 consolidated Pomfret School opened in 1991. Today, the Library continues this
14 tradition with active programming for children, a cooperative relationship with
15 the Pomfret School, and an excellent children's collection.

16 While it has focused on children, the Abbott Library is uniquely situated
17 as a valuable resource for all Town residents. Its architecturally striking building
18 (a historic landmark) is recognized as a place where community groups can gather
19 for meetings or library-sponsored programming. In many ways, it serves as a
20 town center for a geographically spread out community. The Library houses a fine
21 historical collection helping to document the history of Pomfret and neighboring
22 towns. A rapid and efficient interlibrary loan system sponsored by the State
23 Library provides Pomfret residents with access to a universe of information and
24 recreational materials.

25 **Town Owned Buildings and Land**

- 26
27 Town Hall with land
28 Town Offices, Brick Building, and town shed with land
29 Town Garage with land
30 The Pomfret School with 38 acres of land, more or less
31 Hewittville Cemetery
32 Burns Cemetery
33 Bunker Hill Cemetery
34 Land, 35 acres, more or less off Joe Ranger Road
35 Land, 100 acres, more or less off Joe Ranger Road
36 Land, small parcel, at Kenyon Hill Bridge
37 North Pomfret picnic area (near firehouse)

38 **Long-Range Goal**

39
40 Provide Town services and facilities that meet the established needs of
41 residents in a cost effective manner.

1 **Objectives and Policies**

- 2
- 3 1. Base planning for future services and facilities on conservative growth
- 4 estimates which reflect the desire of the community to grow at a slow rate.
- 5
- 6 2. Continue Town government as a volunteer effort to the greatest extent
- 7 possible, but utilize technical and administrative assistance when
- 8 necessary and cost effective.
- 9
- 10 3. Develop and maintain current and long-range plans for the utilization,
- 11 maintenance, and improvement of all Town facilities with appropriate
- 12 costs estimates.
- 13
- 14 4. Supplement future fire protection facilities and equipment with
- 15 community-based fire prevention programs and support for the volunteer
- 16 fire departments.
- 17
- 18 5. Design roads and all development in Pomfret to be accessible to
- 19 emergency vehicles year-round.
- 20
- 21 6. Where feasible, install approved hydrants in new and existing ponds. Such
- 22 water sources should be accessible to fire trucks in all parts of the Town.
- 23
- 24 7. Augment the limited police protection in Pomfret by community
- 25 awareness and a willingness to look out for the welfare of one's neighbor.
- 26
- 27 8. Consider the cost and complexity of implementing and enforcing the
- 28 regulations when creating new zoning, subdivision, and other land
- 29 development regulations.
- 30
- 31 9. When appropriate continue and expand regional cooperation in solid
- 32 waste disposal, emergency services, and recreation facilities as the most
- 33 effective way to provide quality services.
- 34
- 35 10. Retain Town rights-of-way as recreational trails. New rights-of-way
- 36 should be accepted by the Town, when offered, for permanent recreational
- 37 trails.
- 38
- 39 11. Acquire enough cemetery land for the future needs of the Town.
- 40
- 41 12. Continue to develop the Abbott Memorial Library as a resource and
- 42 gathering place for residents of the Town.
- 43
- 44 13. Support private sector efforts to seek funding to assist with the
- 45 development of child care infrastructure.
- 46

-
- 1 14. Ensure that no barriers to increasing child care capacity are created by
2 future changes in zoning regulations.
3
- 4 15. Support availability of high speed internet access throughout the town to
5 facilitate economic development, education, and delivery of healthcare
6 services to all homes and businesses in town.

7 **Recommended Actions**

- 8
- 9 1. Update population and household growth projections as new information
10 becomes available so they can be used for planning future services and
11 facilities. (Planning Commission)
12
- 13 2. Study the short- and long-term needs of Town for government operations
14 including facilities, administrative help, and technology, and develop a
15 capital budget. (Selectboard)
16
- 17 3. The volunteer fire departments should continue to enlist the help of non-
18 firefighter volunteers to assist in community fire prevention and
19 preparedness through education, inspections, updating dry hydrant and fire
20 pond inventories, location of new fire ponds, etc. (Emergency Services
21 Committee)
22
- 23 4. Revise land development regulations to ensure that all new development is
24 accessible to emergency vehicles at all times of the year. (Planning
25 Commission)
26
- 27 5. Analyze the need for increased police protection, if necessary.
28 (Selectboard)
29
- 30 6. Purchase additional land for cemeteries. (Selectboard)
31
- 32 7. Advise the Selectboard on appropriate permit fees for land development
33 regulations to cover the cost of administering the regulations. (Planning
34 Commission)
35
- 36 8. Routinely evaluate the use of town owned parcels of land to ensure they
37 are being used according to agreements or deed restrictions (Planning
38 Commission)
39
- 40 9. Annually fund building reserve account through tax dollars or private
41 contributions. (Selectboard)
42

1 **Chapter 8 HOUSING**

2 **Introduction**

3
4
5 The cost of land, taxes, new construction, and existing housing limits the
6 ability of many of the Town's residents and ex-residents who might want to live
7 permanently in Pomfret to build, buy, and maintain homes in the Town. A
8 housing plan should allow a diverse group of people from a range of ages and
9 income levels to live and own homes in Pomfret. The high costs of land and
10 housing have been major factors contributing to emigration from Pomfret, and
11 this has altered the cultural and socio-economic mix of the Town's residents.
12

13 This housing chapter presents information on existing homes, data on the
14 availability of land for housing, and the Town's population and incomes of its
15 residents in examining current housing conditions. It takes into consideration the
16 desire of residents to keep the Town rural and agricultural and the goals and
17 objectives of the Land Use Chapter of this Town Plan to define Pomfret's future
18 housing goals. Information used in this Chapter describing housing ownership in
19 Pomfret comes from several sources: the Pomfret Listers' files, the 2010 U.S.
20 Census, the American Community Survey, various Vermont Housing Data, and
21 summaries from the Vermont Department of Taxes. Statistical information from
22 these sources do not match exactly because of differences in records kept and
23 differing classifications and data categories
24

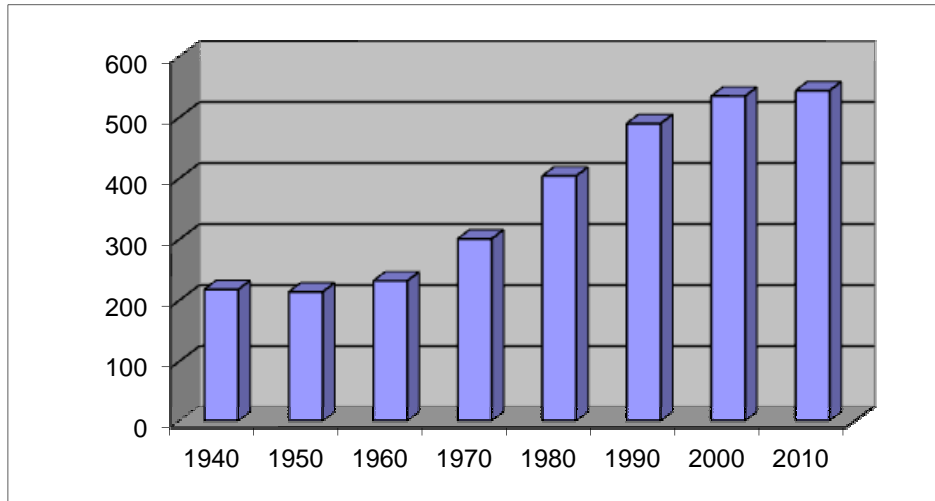
25 **Current Housing Information**

26
27 As the Town has evolved from a primarily agriculture-based community
28 to one that is predominately residential and a bedroom town for regional
29 employment centers, there has been a marked change in the ownership of
30 housing.
31

32 Based on the U.S. Census data, in 2010 there were 544 housing units in
33 Pomfret, a 1.7% increase in the total number of units over the prior ten-year
34 period, or an average rate of housing growth of .9 units per year during the 2000's.
35 This is less growth than Pomfret experienced in its "slow growth era (1940-1960).
36 During that time an average of 1.5 units per year were added to the housing stock.
37 The average rate of increase of housing stock in Windsor County during the
38 2000's was more than Pomfret's, increasing by about 7.9%.
39
40
41
42

1

Figure 16 - Number of housing units in Pomfret

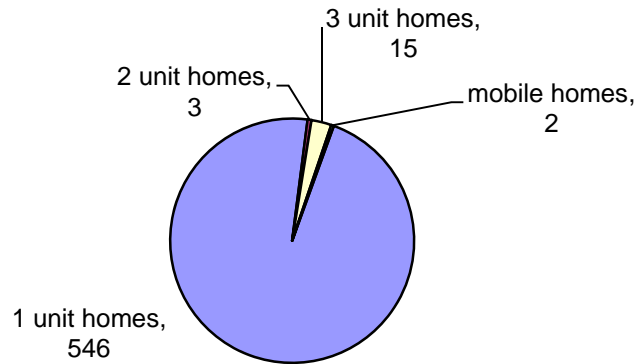


Source: US Census 2010

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9

According to the 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, of all the existing housing units, the vast majority (96.5%) consisted of single family homes.:

Figure 17 - Size of housing units in Pomfret



Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21

Readers may note the total number of housing units in Figure 13 (566) does not match the total number of units given on the previous page (544). This is due to the method of data collection between the Census and the American Community Survey (ACS); the Census collects data from 100% of the population, while the ACS is an ongoing statistical survey that samples a small percentage of the population every year. There were 544 total housing units in Pomfret in 2010.

In 2012, according to Listers' data (see Appendix C), of the primary residences owned by Town residents, 150 stood on less than six acres and 190 on

1 over six acres. Table 6 shows the total number of primary residences is 340, a
 2 decrease of 33 or -8.8% over the number in 2006.

3
 4

Table 6 - Number of Primary Residences

Primary Homes			
2012		2006	
< 6 acres	> 6 acres	< 6 acres	> 6 acres
150	190	142	231
Total		Total	
340		373	

5

6 Appendix C also shows that in 2012, 28 vacation homes were sited on
 7 plots less than six acres and 102 vacation homes on more than six acres, totaling
 8 130 vacation properties. Table 7 shows a decrease of 29 vacation homes, or -
 9 18.2% since 2006.

10
 11

Table 7 - Number of Vacation Residences

Vacation Homes			
2012		2006	
< 6 acres	> 6 acres	< 6 acres	> 6 acres
28	102	36	123
Total		Total	
130		159	

12

13 In the 2010 census, almost a quarter of the homes in Pomfret were listed
 14 as vacation homes: 133 homes or 24.4% of Pomfret's total of 544 homes were
 15 classified as vacation homes.

16

17 According to the 2012 Grand List, Pomfret had five mobile home
 18 structures, six properties classified as "farms," and there are no condominiums in
 19 Town. The 2012 Grand List shows 110 parcels of land without homes.

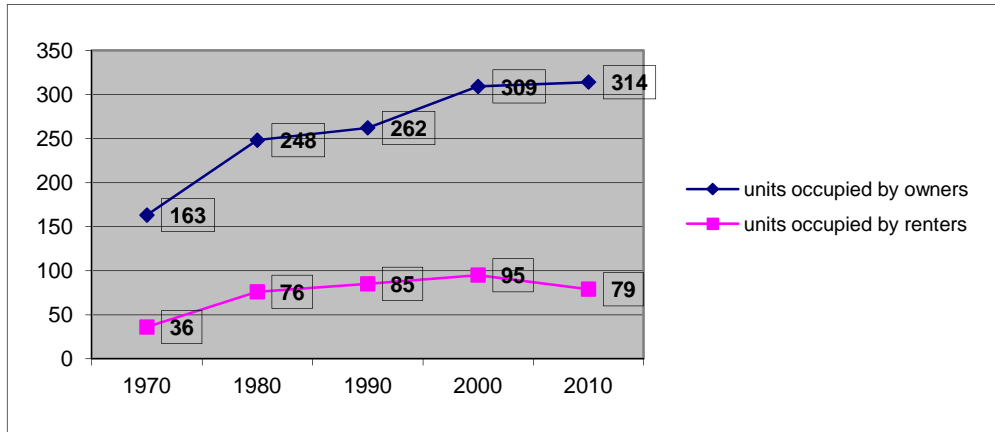
20

21 According to the 2010 US Census, there were 79 occupied rental units in
 22 Pomfret at the time.

23

1

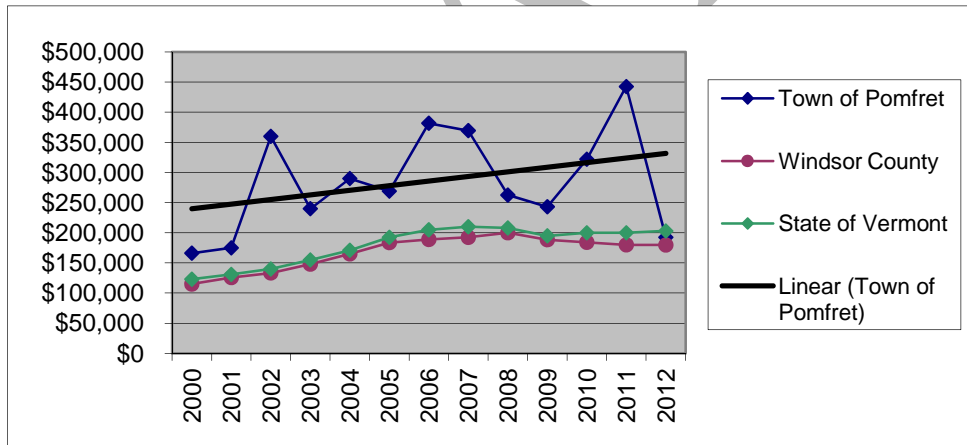
Figure 18 - Pomfret Housing Occupancy Types



Source: Vermont Housing Data

As indicated by the following figure, the median prices on primary single family residences sold between 2000 and 2012 in Pomfret show an 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 19 - Median prices of single family homes sold



Source: Vermont Housing Data

Land Availability

As of the 2013 tax year, 17,518 acres (69.3%) of the 25,280 acres in Pomfret was enrolled in Vermont's Current Use Program.

The availability of land for housing is limited by the low turnover rate in general for properties in Pomfret. In 2012, two single family homes sold in Pomfret according to Vermont Housing data. In other nearby towns, however, these numbers were higher: in Sharon, 12 single family homes were sold; in Royalton, 12; in Woodstock, 24; and in Hartford, 79.

1
2 **Town Population and Income**
3

4 From the 1980s through 2000, Pomfret had been enjoying a steady uptick in
5 population growth (see Figure 2, Chapter 3); however, according to the 2010
6 census, Pomfret's population dropped to 904, a decrease of 75 persons, or a loss
7 of 7.7% population.
8

9 In August 2013, the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community
10 Development produced a study on population projects through 2030. The State
11 Agency created countywide projections to be used as the basis for determining
12 population projections for specific towns throughout Vermont. The study
13 highlights two separate scenarios: Scenario A creates population projections
14 where the national economy is generally healthier (as in the 1990s); Scenario B
15 creates population projections where Vermont sees higher rates of in-migration
16 (as in the 2000s). In either scenario, Pomfret is predicted to see lower population
17 growth than Windsor County:
18

19 **Table 8 - Pomfret Population Projections through 2030**

Scenario	2010 Census	2020 Projection	% change from 2010	2030 Projection	% change from 2010
Scenario A	904	923	2.1%	928	2.7%
Scenario B	904	872	-3.5%	836	-7.5%

20 *Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 and Vermont Population Projections -- 2010-2030*

21
22 Regardless of population increase or decrease, all indications are that, like
23 the rest of Vermont, housing in Pomfret will continue to serve an aging
24 population.
25

26 According to the State's Department of Taxes, in the Town of Pomfret
27 during 2012, 170 filers (39.6% of the total) had incomes of less than \$35,000, out
28 of a total of 429 filers. Additional data on income can be seen in Appendix C.
29

30 For 2013, \$412,481 in property tax adjustments and rebates were
31 reported for Pomfret: 49 persons submitted applications for the Circuit Breaker
32 Rebate Program,⁷ averaging a rebate of \$534; 156 persons submitted applications
33 for the Vermont Property Tax Prebate (on school taxes), averaging rebates of
34 \$2,423; and 9 people requested rebates through the Renter Rebate program,
35 averaging rebates of \$907. (See Appendix C).
36

37 **Future Housing**
38

39 When trying to establish Pomfret's housing goals, one must recognize that
40 any housing plan is subject to regional economic pressures. The location of major
41 employers across the Connecticut River in New Hampshire has a profound effect

⁷ Formerly known as "Homeowner Rebates"

1 on employment in East Central Vermont. These dynamics are explained by the
2 presence of large employers in the education (Dartmouth College, employing
3 4,400) and health care fields (Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center) in nearby
4 Hanover and Lebanon, NH.⁸ Locally, however, Vermont employers have left the
5 region or have cut back their work forces, though, according the 2008-2012
6 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, the unemployment rate for
7 workers in Pomfret is 1.6%.

8
9 While more than half of Pomfret’s workforce is employed in high quality
10 management and sales jobs, (and the majority of the Town’s working residents
11 commute out of Pomfret to work); looking at the trend in wages in the region, real
12 wages (per worker) are an average of 10% lower than real wages at the state level.
13 This trend began in 1980 – nearly 30 years ago – and has grown steadily since.
14 This is significant since Vermont in general is not a high wage state, as are states
15 like Connecticut and Maryland.⁹

16
17 According to Vermont Housing data, the annual average wage for all
18 workers in all industries in Pomfret for 2010 was \$26,972. This translates to an
19 average hourly wage of \$12.97, based on a 40-hour workweek; this is down from
20 \$13.40 in 2005 when this plan was last updated.

21
22 Data from the same source shows the hourly wage needed to afford a two
23 bedroom apartment in Pomfret and only pay 30% of income towards housing
24 costs (which defines “affordability”) in 2010 was \$19.69. The Table below shows
25 the hourly and annual wages necessary to make affordable rental of apartments of
26 several sizes in Pomfret.

27
28 **Table 9 - Wages for Rental Housing Affordability**

	Hourly wage	Annual wage
Two bedroom apartment	\$19.69	\$40,955
Three bedroom apartment	\$24.94	\$51,875
Four bedroom apartment	\$27.38	\$56,950

29 *Source: Vermont Housing data*

30
31 Vermont currently has a shortage of affordable rental units, according to
32 Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA) calculations, and more owner-
33 occupied affordable housing units will be needed statewide going forward. All of
34 the above data indicates an insufficient amount of affordable rental stock in
35 Pomfret.

36
37 According to VHFA estimates, in order to purchase a home valued at
38 \$200,000 (the median purchase price for a home in Vermont during 2013), a

⁸ “2011 East Central Vermont CEDS Plan.” East Central Vermont CEDS Strategy Committee. (2011).

⁹ “2011 East Central Vermont CEDS Plan.” East Central Vermont CEDS Strategy Committee. (2011).

1 household would need an income of approximately \$58,991; this estimate
2 assumes a 5% down payment, average insurance and property tax rates, and a
3 30% housing affordability ratio.

4
5 The county median household income is typically used to calculate
6 housing affordability. In 2011, the Windsor County median AGI was \$53,129,
7 meaning that \$15,939 is available for housing costs each year at the 30% rate, or
8 \$1,328 per month. VHFA's estimates that a family with this income could afford
9 a maximum home price of \$179,500.

10
11 The median sales price of a home in Pomfret in 2013 (according to data
12 from Vermont Housing) was \$240,000. (Note this figure is different from the
13 *average* sales price as shown in Chapter 3. See Appendix C for additional sales
14 data). VHFA estimates indicate that the income necessary to afford a \$240,000
15 home would be about \$79,550.

16
17 National housing experts suggest that communities must provide
18 affordable homes for essential workers, such as teachers, nurses, and law
19 enforcement officials, in order to compete effectively for dedicated workers for
20 these positions. Employers cannot stay in communities that cannot provide an
21 adequate supply of homes affordable to their workers. Local governments, can
22 expand the supply of sites for new development through changes in zoning rules
23 such as:

- 24
25
- 26 • Making new areas available for development (for example, publicly
27 owned land);
 - 28 • Expanding the number of homes that can be built in existing
29 residential areas; and
 - 30 • Zoning for a wider variety of housing types, like multi-family homes.

31 The 2006 town survey showed respondents favor or strongly favor single-
32 family houses on individual lots (88%), housing affordable to working families
33 (79%), and assisted living for elderly people (62%). Respondents were either
34 against or strongly against apartments or town houses (64%) and multi-family
35 homes on individual lots (57%). Although 66% of the respondents to the town's
36 2006 survey supported private development of housing affordable to working
37 families, fewer (50%) supported some kind of community initiative to develop
38 this kind of housing. This data demonstrate that while most people in Pomfret
39 support affordable housing development, there is an apparent discrepancy with
40 how this might be accomplished.

41
42 The aspects of residential land use that 2006 survey respondents are
43 concerned about are:

- 44 Visual impact (71%)
45 Building size and scale (69%)
46 Noise (51%)

-
- 1 Outdoor light (50%)
2 Placement of houses on lots (49%)
3

4 In conclusion, a diversity of housing types and sizes which meet the needs
5 of residents of all ages and financial situations requires flexibility. Housing types
6 may include single-family homes, duplexes, multi-unit buildings, accessory
7 apartments, accessory or guest houses, and planned unit developments with
8 higher-density housing. Smaller homes, such as bungalows and cottages, built in
9 clusters can provide moderate-priced housing. Open space and resource
10 protection incorporated into the site plan designs for multi-unit developments will
11 balance the need for higher-density housing while maintaining rural character. All
12 these should be thoughtfully considered and planned for based upon the Town's
13 needs and its ability to provide services in a fiscally sound manner.

14 **Long-Range Goal**

15
16 The Town should allow for growth of housing stock for all income levels
17 at a rate consistent with the Town's ability to provide services in a fiscally sound
18 manner and consistent with other goals and policies in this Town Plan.

19 **Policies and Objectives**

- 20
21 1. Manage housing growth through Pomfret's zoning and subdivision
22 ordinances.
23
24 2. Review development projects for compatibility with planned rate of
25 growth of Town facilities and services.
26
27 3. Encourage housing plans that provide for dwellings clustered on the
28 periphery of open land, serviced by common septic and water supply
29 facilities. The remaining land will then be available for agricultural
30 purposes, preservation of natural resources and open space.
31
32 4. Encourage residential development in South Pomfret village area or in
33 areas identified as being capable of sustaining development based on soil
34 types, topography, accessibility, and other considerations.
35
36 5. Where appropriate, new planned unit developments should set aside a
37 reasonable percentage of the new homes or units for families with lower
38 and moderate incomes.
39
40 6. Provide the opportunity for Pomfret residents to have access to quality
41 affordable housing.
42

-
- 1 7. Ensure construction of new housing meets the natural population growth
2 and does not exceed the community's ability to provide adequate public
3 facilities (e.g. schools and municipal services).
4
 - 5 8. Encourage the preservation of historic structures in ways that
6 appropriately serve housing needs.
7
 - 8 9. Encourage innovative planning, design and construction of new housing
9 that minimizes costs, energy consumption, and visual and environmental
10 impacts.
11
 - 12 10. Promote preservation of the existing housing stock, particularly in hamlets
13 and other existing neighborhoods of the Town.
14
 - 15 11. Encourage accessory housing and apartments within existing housing
16 structures. Increase awareness among Pomfret residents of Vermont's law
17 which allows homeowners to add an apartment to their house.

18 **Recommended Actions**

- 19
- 20 1. Explore the use of non-profit housing or land trusts for development of
21 perpetually affordable housing. (Planning Commission)
22
- 23 2. Encourage housing plans that involve restoration of existing structures
24 into single or multi-family rental units, using tax credits where
25 appropriate. (Planning Commission)
26
- 27 3. Encourage clustered housing development in Pomfret where an
28 agriculture-related activity is an integral part of the plan submitted. This
29 activity (for example: truck farming, Christmas tree growing, cattle, maple
30 sugaring,) should provide additional income for Pomfret residents to help
31 with housing affordability. (Planning Commission)
32
- 33 4. A town housing committee should be appointed by the Selectboard for the
34 following purposes:
 - 35 a. to maintain and update relevant statistical information on housing and
36 affordability.
 - 37 b. to consider town owned or other properties that could be made
38 available for development of perpetually affordable housing.
 - 39 c. to coordinate between public and private agencies involved with
40 planning, financing, and developing affordable housing consistent with
41 existing neighborhoods.
 - 42 d. to advise residents of the availability of loan or grant funds for
43 Vermonters to purchase, acquire, or improve their primary homes.
 - 44 e. to preserve existing affordable housing stock and to establish
45 mechanisms that assure the perpetual affordability of that housing.

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5. Review Pomfret's zoning and subdivision ordinances to ensure that visual impacts of new housing are evaluated. (Planning Commission)

DRAFT

1 **Chapter 9 EDUCATION**

2 **Introduction**

3 Pomfret is currently home to one of the highest performing elementary
4 schools in the state.¹⁰ Middle and high school students are bused to Woodstock
5 Union High School and Middle School. Pomfret supports and strongly encourage
6 children to seek education beyond high school so they will not only become self-
7 supporting but also more employable in today's technological society. This effort
8 includes academic as well as technical training.

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

11 **History**

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

17
18 In 1954 the towns of Woodstock, Pomfret, and Bridgewater formed the
19 Woodstock Union High School District. Barnard, Killington and Reading have
20 since joined. In 1966 a junior high wing was added to the 1956 high school
21 building in West Woodstock, and the District was extended to include grades 7
22 and 8.

23
24 Pomfret's educational facilities changed dramatically when a consolidated
25 K-6 elementary school with eight classrooms, a library, and a multi-purpose room
26 was built in 1990-91 not far from the Woodstock/Pomfret line in South Pomfret.
27 The Pomfret School opened on September 3, 1991 with 103 students, a staff of six
28 full-time teachers, a principal, and nine part-time special teachers and teaching
29 assistants all under one roof.

31 **Current Education**

32
33 As with most Vermont schools, Pomfret continues to be challenged by
34 declining student enrollment. In 2014 Pomfret had 63 students, three more than
35 the previous year; however, the trend is still downward. Here is the breakdown by

¹⁰ "Annual Report: Year Ending December 31, 2013." Pomfret, Vermont. (2013).

1 grades: eight students in kindergarten; four in grade one; eight in grade two; nine
2 in grade three; ten in grade four; thirteen in grade five; and eleven in grade six.
3 This includes four students whose families pay tuition so they can come here and
4 two students who are here through special arrangements with other Windsor
5 Central Supervisory Union (WCSU) schools.
6

7 The most current population projections for Pomfret expect a slowly
8 increasing population of about 2.7% through 2030; however, state-wide and
9 Windsor County-wide, the number of school age children are predicted to
10 decline.¹¹ The Pomfret Elementary School was designed to accommodate 140
11 pupils; therefore, it can accommodate any increase in Pomfret students, and could
12 potentially accept elementary school population(s) from surrounding towns
13 should any neighboring schools shrink to a point where they close.
14

15 Vermont offers limited school choice within the public education system,
16 including inter-district open enrollment. Therefore, it is important that Pomfret
17 maintain competitive educational programs to retain local students and continue
18 to attract tuition paying students from other towns. The possibility of the
19 implementation of a broader Public School Choice policy should be kept in mind
20 as long-range plans for the education of Pomfret students are developed.

21 Vermont's declining student population is resulting in the lowest
22 student/teacher ratio of 9.2 and the highest per pupil expenditure in the nation:
23 \$19,752.¹² While the town plan points out the declining enrollments, there is
24 nothing to suggest that Pomfret should be merging with a larger school such as
25 Woodstock/Barnard which would improve economies of scale and avoid
26 duplication. Merging would also give students who currently have very few
27 classmates an opportunity for a broader experience, a more varied curriculum, and
28 more peers per class. Population projections continue to indicate a further decline
29 in school enrollments through 2014 and even though enrollments are expected to
30 increase again between 2015 and 2027, that increase is only at a pace of less than
31 one percent per year¹³. While the State is the process of trying to address the
32 problem of rising per pupil costs, Pomfret should take an active role in
33 determining solutions to keep property taxes affordable.
34

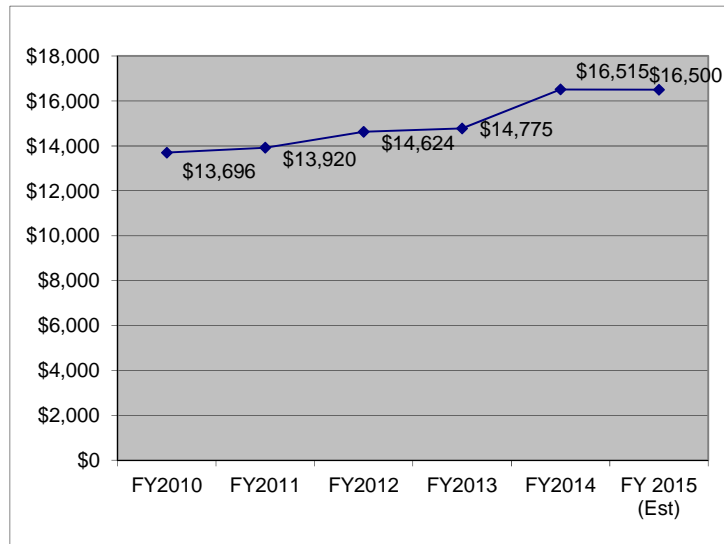
35 The annual cost per pupil ratio is one of the clearest measures of school
36 costs in any community. The per pupil cost for students in the Pomfret school
37 district for five years is shown in Figure 17 below.
38
39

Figure 20 - - Pomfret Education Spending per Pupil

¹¹ Jones, Ken and Lilly Schwartz. "Vermont Population Projects -- 2010 - 2030." State of Vermont. (August 2013).

¹² "Rankings and Estimates: Rankings of the States 2013 and Estimates of School Statistics 2014." National Education Association (NEA) Research. March 2014.

¹³ "Housing and Vermont's School Enrollment." Vermont Housing Finance Agency.

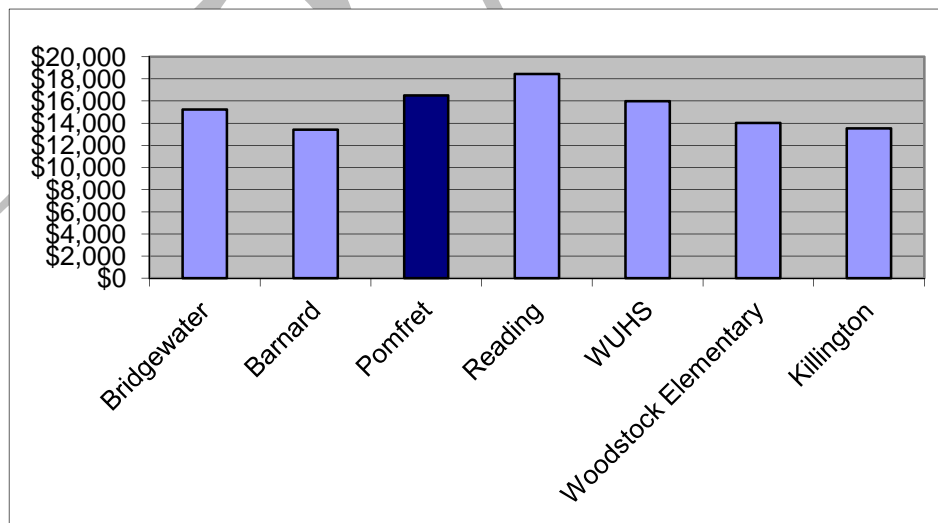


Source: Pomfret Town Report 2013

According to the most recently released figures from the State (May 2013) Vermont's average cost per pupil was \$15,925 in FY2011,¹⁴ while Pomfret spent \$13,920 per pupil in that same year.

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

Figure 21 - Comparative per Pupil Spending



Source: Vermont Agency of Education FY2014

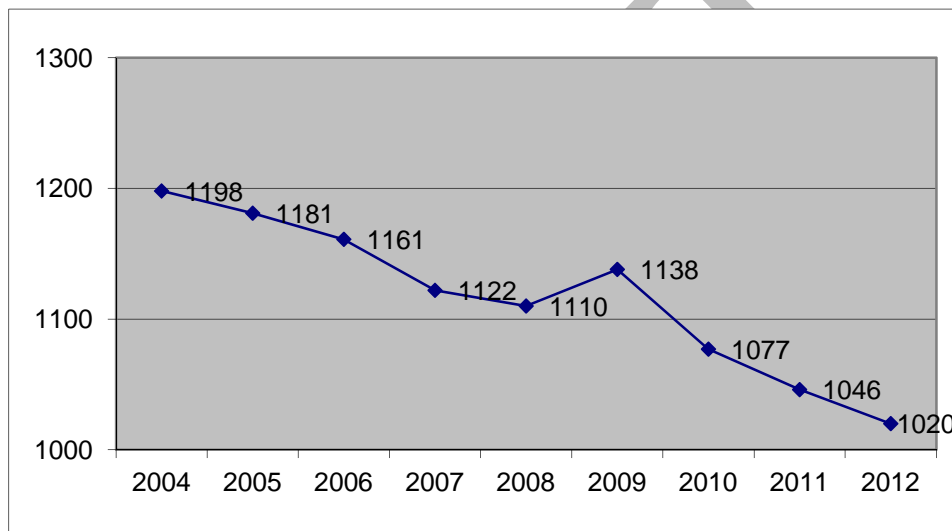
According to a report done for Vermont's Joint Fiscal Office,¹⁵

¹⁴ Dixon, Mark. "Public Education Finances: 2011." Governments Division Reports. U.S. Census Bureau (May 2013).

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- State and local revenues for K-12 education increased by almost 83.7% between FY 2001 and FY 2012.
- This increase is due in part to declining enrollments, and in part to substantial increases in state education revenues.
- Vermont has experienced the second greatest percentage decrease in student population (18.1%) over the time frame of the study.
- Average school district size has dwindled to 299 students – making the state’s school districts the smallest in the nation with an average enrollment that is less than 10% of the size of the average school district in the United States.

Figure 22 - Windsor Central Supervisory Union Opening Enrollment



Source: Pomfret Town Report 2013

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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 2013, of the total \$3,709,644 to be raised for school taxes, \$2,122,466 (or 57.2%) was paid to the school, while about \$1,587,198 (42.8%) was paid to the State, Act 68.¹⁶

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:

¹⁵ Picus, Lawrence O., Allan Odden, William Glenn, Michael Griffith, and Michael Wolkoff. “An Evaluation of Vermont’s Education Finance System.” Lawrence O. Picus and Associates.

¹⁶ “Annual Report: Year Ending December 31, 2013.” Pomfret, Vermont. (2013).

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- 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.

Adult Education

While some opportunities for adult education are offered through the Pomfret Public Library, Pomfret’s proximity to both Woodstock, Vermont and various institutions of higher education (including Dartmouth College) provide ample opportunities for extensive adult learning activities.

The Artistree Community Arts Center, currently located in Woodstock, is in the process of moving to Pomfret and will provide even more opportunities for adult education within Pomfret.

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.

-
- 1 2. Establish academic programs that teach practical skills, challenge each
2 student intellectually, and foster creativity, including those students with
3 special needs and talents.
4
 - 5 3. Provide education for Pomfret children in a cost-effective manner thereby
6 minimizing property tax increases.

7 **Recommended Actions**

- 8
- 9 1. Continue to schedule school budget information meetings in Pomfret prior
10 to voting on the school budgets. (School Board)
11
- 12 2. Continue to hold community forums every five years to take the pulse of
13 the school and its direction. (School Board)
14
- 15 3. Develop policies to attract tuition-paying students from surrounding
16 communities to fill any excess school capacity in Pomfret. (School
17 Board)
18
- 19 4. Continue to encourage and promote community use of the school facility.
20 (School Board)
21
- 22 5. To overcome the decline in school enrollment, work toward shared use of
23 facilities to include merging schools and personnel. (School Board,
24 Selectboard, Planning Commission)
25
- 26 6. Maintain a strong academic program to continue to attract families to
27 Town. (School Board)
28
- 29 7. Provide high school students with good vocational training so they can
30 become more employable in today's technological society. (School
31 Board)
32
- 33 8. Where possible, supplement classroom teaching with creative activities
34 funded by grants and foundations, such as the artist-in-residence program
35 of the Pentangle Council on the Arts. (School Board)
36
- 37 9. Provide community based workshops and vocational programs in Pomfret
38 schools for the community and potential start-up businesses. Long-range
39 planning and consideration of outside sources of funding should continue
40 to be included in this process. (School Board)
41
- 42 10. Continue participation in governance and consolidation studies. (School
43 Board)
44

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

DRAFT

1 **Chapter 10 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

2 **Introduction**

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

11 **Past and Current Economic Activity**

12 Historically, most of the economic activity in Pomfret was related to
13 agriculture and forestry, providing jobs for many Pomfret dwellers. However,
14 Pomfret's business base has shifted to service industries, retail, distribution, and
15 professional occupations. According to the 2008-2012 American Community
16 Survey 5-Year Estimates, a majority of employed people, work in management,
17 business, science, and the arts, as well as educational, service, sales and office
18 occupations.

19
20 The 2006-2012 Journey to Work data indicates that about 24 percent of
21 Pomfret's work force was able to find work locally, which was the same
22 percentage reflected in the 2000 Census. This shows the strength of the town's
23 economy and local employers, including Suicide Six/Woodstock Resort,
24 Chippers, Sugarbush Farm, Teago General Store, River Bend Home and Garden
25 Supply. Further, as shown in Table 2 of this plan, almost 21% of workers in
26 Town are self-employed.

27
28 However, as indicated in Table 10, between 2005 and 2013 Pomfret's tax
29 base changed, with residential and vacation properties slightly down, commercial
30 down, and farms increasing slightly.

1
2

Table 10 - Pomfret Tax Base Summary

	2005	2013
Residential	55.9%	49.7%
Vacation	36.8%	34.1%
Commercial/industrial	2.4%	1.5%
Farms/woodland	0.2%	3.0%
Mobile homes	0.4%	0.1%
Other	4.4%	11.6%

Source: 2013 Grand List Summary Town Report

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Effectively, while the amount of taxes that commercial business contributes is down, when combined with the farm component the total taxes paid increased since 2005 (from 2.6% total to 4.5% percent). As in years past, support for local business development will continue to be important to Pomfret.

10
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13

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

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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.

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26

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.

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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.

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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.

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

9
10 Equally important criteria will cover the impact of a business on Town
11 facilities and services, and on its tax structure, and the potential for adverse effect
12 on Pomfret's scenic beauty and rural character.

13
14 It is acknowledged that initial economic development through rising tax
15 revenues may more than cover the costs of increased demand for town facilities
16 and services (including roads, schools, fire and police protection). Studies have
17 shown, however, that a secondary effect of significant commercial development is
18 likely to be increased taxes for everyone.

19 **Long-Range Goal**

20
21 Encourage the development of small businesses, professional services,
22 agriculture-related and forestry-related activity in a manner that conforms to
23 overall goals of keeping Pomfret rural and residential and which will not require
24 Town expenditures on infrastructure.

25 **Policies and Objectives**

- 26
27 1. Protect residents and the natural environment from aspects of economic
28 development that could adversely affect them through pollution of all
29 kinds and increased traffic volume.
30
31 2. Support new home based businesses in Pomfret, if the nature of the
32 occupation is customary or appropriate in rural residential areas.
33
34 3. To reduce the demand for commuter transportation and energy, and
35 encourage the development of broadband services, energy efficient home
36 occupations, and small-scale home business is encouraged.
37
38 4. Relative to new businesses in town, Pomfret should ensure that the
39 municipal costs to accommodate this growth, such as highways and fire
40 protection do not exceed tax revenues.
41
42 5. Encourage business growth that will enhance the rural character that
43 Pomfret's residents so strongly value.
44

1 6. Encourage the extension of broadband services to all residents.

2 **Recommended Actions**

3

4 1. Develop performance standards for evaluation of air, noise, water, and
5 visual pollution from proposed business development. (Planning
6 Commission)

7

8 2. Update town landscaping guidelines and ordinances for businesses, and
9 require structures used for business purposes to be appropriately
10 landscaped in conformance with such criteria. (Planning Commission)

11

12 3. Encourage agriculture- and forestry-based activities that can provide
13 supplemental income for Pomfret households by making use of Pomfret's
14 agricultural and forestry lands by reviewing zoning regulations for
15 compatibility. (Planning Commission)

16

17 4. Encourage home based businesses by reviewing Pomfret's zoning
18 ordinance to ensure its compatibility with this use. Any home business or
19 commercial development shall be sited on a lot large enough and screened
20 such that there is no significant odor or visual or audible effect of the
21 project at the property boundary, and comply with state pollution laws.
22 (Planning Commission)

1 Chapter 11 REGIONAL PLANNING

2 A. Relationship to Municipal Plans

3
4 This Plan focuses primarily on development and policy within Pomfret's
5 boundaries; however, it is important to recognize that how a community grows
6 and changes can be directly impacted by development that takes place outside of
7 the community.

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

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

18
19 There are regional variations in the approach to development. Pomfret's
20 primary concern is to discourage development on land with agricultural and
21 highly productive forestry potential, and to limit development in open space.
22 Open space should remain available for agriculture, preserve natural resources,
23 and maintain the rural character and scenic beauty of the Town.

24
25 Pomfret shares the majority of its western border with Barnard. Barnard's
26 Town Plan was adopted in March 2010. The purpose of the Barnard Town Plan is
27 to maintain and to enhance the existing pattern of settlement. The Town wishes to
28 continue moderate development that favors expansion in the villages and discourages
29 inappropriately sited development in open areas. Barnard has adopted Zoning
30 Regulations.

31
32 Woodstock is located along the majority of Pomfret's southern border and
33 is in the process of adopting a new 2014 Master Plan. The plan emphasizes
34 encouraging a rational and convenient pattern of development by balancing
35 natural resources and agricultural land protection with residential, recreational,
36 commercial, and light industrial uses. It also encouraged affordable housing,
37 public safety, economic growth, and protection of the historic settlement pattern.
38 Both the town of Woodstock and Woodstock Village has Zoning Regulation.

39
40 Sharon is along the majority of Pomfret's northern border and adopted a
41 Town Plan in February 2010 that sets out several major land use goals including

1 preservation of the community’s history, remaining adaptable to vital changes,
2 and allowing access to the natural environment while protecting it from
3 degradation. The plan defines six separate geographical areas in town, defines a
4 purpose and several policies in each to help determine compatible types of
5 development, intensity of use, and the conservation of natural resources. The Town
6 has flood hazard area bylaws and subdivision regulations.

7
8 Bridgewater’s Town Plan was adopted in September 2013. There is a
9 limited amount of land area between Bridgewater and Pomfret and that portion of
10 land in Bridgewater where the town borders meet, is designated as rural low
11 density on their future land use map. Although the town has no zoning
12 regulations, land use in town is guided by the plans goal to maintain established
13 compact village and hamlet areas with medium density growth areas adjacent to
14 them. Commercial and light industrial development is planned for existing
15 Village and hamlet areas only with no planned pattern of “strip development”
16 along roadsides outside these Village and hamlet areas. Rural, low-density
17 development is located outside conservation areas or critical areas, while avoiding
18 existing agricultural lands.

19
20 The Royalton Town Plan was adopted in March 2010. Like Bridgewater,
21 there is a limited amount of land area between Royalton and Pomfret and that
22 portion of land in Royalton where the town borders meet, is designated as
23 conserved and agricultural/residential lands. Royalton has Flood Hazard Area
24 Regulation, but no zoning regulations. The Plan has a land use goal of
25 maintaining its rural village character, preserving scenic beauty, natural resources
26 and the cultural assets of the Town, while allowing for an acceptable rate of
27 growth.

28
29 Pomfret shares its full eastern border with Hartford. Hartford, in many
30 respects, is the most developed town in the region and hosts the largest
31 population. Hartford’s land use recommendations in its adopted May 2012 Master
32 Plan encourage appropriate use of the town’s manmade and natural resources.
33 Given the steady growth the town has experienced, the plan presents the
34 community’s vision to increase density in already developed areas with
35 infrastructure, manage density of future development, protect scenic areas, open
36 space and wildlife corridors, and preserve the historic settlement pattern of
37 compact villages surrounded by rural countryside, while supporting agriculture,
38 forestry and recreation. Hartford has Flood Regulations, Subdivision Regulations
39 and Zoning Ordinances.

40
41 None of these variations is so drastic that mutual concern for protection of
42 this regional rural and residential environment is threatened.

43
44 **B. Relationship to the Regional Plan**
45 |

1 The Land Use section of the Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Plan,
2 representing as it does the best interests of thirty municipalities in this area, is also
3 compatible with the land use goals and policies of Pomfret and its neighbors.
4

5 Regional consideration of other topics in addition to land use would serve
6 common interests. These include regional solutions to transportation plans
7 covering not only road networks, but also public transportation; fire and police
8 protection; economic development; recreational paths and trails and special
9 wildlife habitats that cross town lines; and prevention of contamination of the
10 water table that recognizes no surface boundaries.
11

12 Study in the area of transportation is proceeding under the direction of the
13 Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission. The Vermont Agency of
14 Transportation has made major changes in how Vermont's future transportation
15 planning will be done. This effectively places much of the responsibility for
16 transportation planning and decision-making at the regional level. Current
17 transportation activities for the Town of Pomfret include:
18

- 19 • A safety improvement study for the Teago intersection (which
20 includes recommended sign and striping improvement from
21 VTrans)
- 22 • An updated culvert inventory completed in fall 2013 which
23 identified out of 668 culverts, 56 were in poor/bad shape (all other
24 were fair or better)
- 25 • Assisting the Town on the VTrans Structures grant for replacement
26 of a town bridge; and,
- 27 • Providing the Town with a new Highway Timesheet Program to
28 help track activity hours, materials and equipment time.
29

30 Three following examples illustrate the benefits of regional cooperation to
31 Pomfret.
32

33 The Upper Valley Mutual Aid Association, a mutual aid system for fire
34 protection, has existed in this area for many years, rendering considerable benefits
35 to its member communities. These benefits include coordination of skilled labor
36 and access to millions of dollars worth of equipment for emergency services.
37 Under this umbrella organization fire departments train together regularly and
38 assist at fire sites when necessary.
39

40 The Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste Management District provides
41 facilities for the recycling and disposal of many types of solid waste for ten towns
42 in the Ottauquechee, White, and Connecticut River valleys. This cooperative
43 effort offers efficiency of planning, extensive marketing of recyclables,
44 management of household hazardous waste, waste reduction and disposal services
45 for farms and small businesses, and concentrated use of disposal sites that greatly

1 reduces the possibility of widespread contamination of the environment. Towns in
2 the District financed the construction of a bridge across Interstate 91 to provide
3 access to GUV's proposed landfill site in North Hartland. GUV's statutory
4 responsibility is to provide a long-term solution for the disposal of its member
5 communities' municipal solid waste. This landfill has been designed to provide at
6 least 50 years of disposal capacity. No town alone could manage and fund such
7 services.

8
9 The District Board is facing several major issues including:

- 10
11
- 12 • Significant reductions in the amount of solid waste being generated
in the District and state-wide.
 - 13 • Major changes in Vermont recycling regulations requiring
14 additional services.
 - 15 • The future economic viability of the landfill site with these
16 changes.
- 17

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

23
24 These three entities and the TRORC have successfully demonstrated the
25 value of addressing issues of vital interest to us all on a regional basis. Extending
26 the range of these common concerns and seeking regional solutions to them is the
27 most sensible direction in which to proceed.

28 **C. Taxation on the Preservation Open Space**

29
30 There appears to be common concern about the effect of increasing
31 property taxes on the preservation of open space—a higher property tax
32 diminishes the incentive for property owners to hold land as open space and
33 instead drives property owners to shift the land to more profitable uses, typically
34 development projects. But, property owners have both public and private means
35 available to reduce their respective tax burdens and to assist the town in
36 preserving its rural character.

37
38 **Current Use Program.** Vermont's so-called "Current Use" Program
39 (technically called the Vermont Use Value Appraisal Program) provides property
40 owners with the ability to reduce their tax burden, so long as the land remains
41 enrolled in a sanctioned use category, e.g., agricultural or timber use. The
42 Program is of vital importance to property owners in Pomfret—69.3% of
43 Pomfret's land area is included in the Program. As of Tax Year 2013, there are
44 160 parcels totaling 17,518 acres enrolled in the Program (up from 130 parcels
45 totaling 15,157 acres in 2005). As of Tax Year 2013, Pomfret has the third

1 highest aggregate tax savings from the Program, totaling \$1,338,967 (behind
2 Stowe and Woodstock, respectively). However, the Program is under constant
3 threat of change and navigating the choices of reducing the property tax burden is
4 difficult for the average property owner.
5

6 **Transfer of Development Rights.** Property owners may enter into
7 private agreements (generally, conservation easements or leases) to sell or donate
8 development rights to land trusts or other organizations involved in preservation
9 of open space. Sale or donation of development rights typically result in state and
10 federal tax deductions. As of 2007, a total of 4,100 acres of land are conserved
11 (16.2% of Pomfret's land area) of which 1,800 acres are public and 2,300 acres
12 are private land. Because of their perpetual nature, imposing a conservation
13 easement has been a traditional means to preserve land and consequently the rural
14 character of Pomfret. But, an overreliance on the use of conservation easements
15 may have detrimental effects on future land use decisions.
16

17 Residents of Pomfret should take the opportunity to learn from each other
18 to benefit from joint discussions about tax policy and how best to leverage
19 existing and alternative land use planning tools to accomplish the twin goals of
20 preserving Pomfret's rural character while at the same time minimizing tax
21 burden. Any statewide action involving property taxes will have a serious impact
22 on all of us.
23

24 **D. Goals, Policies and Recommendations**

25 **Long-Range Goal**

26
27 Work with neighboring towns to address problems related to common
28 goals.

29 **Objectives**

- 30
- 31 1. Exchange with neighboring towns planning information that will have an
32 impact on development trends and conservation efforts.
33
- 34 2. Continue to participate actively in TRORC to assure that Pomfret's goals,
35 objectives, and policies are considered in regional plans.

36 **Recommended Actions**

- 37
- 38 1. It is in Pomfret's best interest to become and remain involved in any
39 future transportation planning activities. The Selectboard should appoint a
40 representative to serve on the Transportation Advisory Committee, as well
41 as other transportation organizations.
42

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9
2. Review the town plans of neighboring towns as they are readopted or rewritten to determine their potential impact on Pomfret's future. (Planning Commission)
 3. Continue to participate in studies that look at the need for public transportation in rural areas of the region through TRORC. (Pomfret's representatives to TRORC and the Transportation Advisory Committee)
 4. Continue to meet with neighboring towns. (Planning Commission)

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1 **Chapter 12 TOWN PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

2 Planning is significant only if it leads to decisions and actions. This Town
3 Plan clearly expresses the long-range goals of the community that will define the
4 Town that future Pomfret generations can hope to find. The policies and
5 objectives provide guidelines for making decisions.
6

7 Everyone should accept that changes will occur in Pomfret. Adoption of
8 this new Town Plan (2014) presents an opportunity to direct those changes. The
9 tools for directing growth are this new Town Plan, Pomfret's Zoning By-laws
10 with the Ridgeline and Hillside Conservation Area Amendment, and Pomfret's
11 Subdivision Regulations. These ordinances must be reviewed and revised based
12 on this Town Plan as well as current needs and conditions. These revisions,
13 guided by the policies and objectives of the Town Plan, will be extremely
14 important to the future of Pomfret. They will be based on decisions made with the
15 long-term common good in mind.
16

17 Equally important is recognition by the residents of Pomfret that many of
18 the goals and objectives of this Plan can be achieved more effectively by
19 voluntary actions than by Town Regulations. Information about conservation
20 easements, restrictive covenants, and other estate planning techniques, when
21 shared with landowners by the Conservation and Planning Commissions, should
22 help to lead to wise decisions by individual landowners. Such information would
23 also convey important tax and land planning options that can help to protect
24 family lands.
25

26 Recommended Actions are listed at the end of each chapter of the Plan.
27 These are actions designed to achieve objectives, carry out policies, and
28 determine priorities. The group with primary responsibility for implementing an
29 action is indicated in parentheses.
30

31 Immediate action is critical in two areas (see below). This does not
32 diminish the importance of other recommended actions throughout the Plan nor
33 does it imply that those are not also matters of some degree of urgency.
34

35 **Objectives - Immediate Actions**

- 36
- 37 1. Manage growth so that it does not detract from the rural character and
38 scenic beauty of Pomfret, assuring residents' protection of Pomfret's
39 natural resources.
40
 - 41 • Complete revision of Zoning Regulations to implement the land use
42 plan.

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- 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)
 - 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 and productive forest to minimize the impact of such growth.

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.

1 Chapter 13 - FLOOD RESILIENCE

2 Background

3 The town of Pomfret, much like the rest of Vermont, is no stranger to
4 significant and damaging flooding. Perhaps the worst flooding in recent history
5 occurred on August 28, 2011 as the result of Tropical Storm Irene. Approximately
6 4-5” of rain fell in the area on ground that was already saturated, causing
7 extensive flash flooding. Due to the flooding, the Sessions Meadow section of
8 town was temporarily cut off; of the sixty-two miles of road in town, 50 miles
9 were damaged, three bridges were washed out, and 200 culverts had to be
10 replaced.¹⁷

11 Flood Hazard & Fluvial Erosion Hazard Areas in Pomfret

12 Some lands adjacent to the White River as well as tributaries to the
13 Ottauquechee River are subject to periodic flooding. This is to be expected as
14 flooding every few years is natural in a functioning floodplain. Floodplains and
15 Fluvial Erosion Hazard Areas (those areas where lateral erosion is more of the
16 threat than inundation) are unsuitable for development because of the high loss
17 potential for life and property as well as the limited ability of septic systems to
18 perform adequately during periods of high water.

19
20 Approximately, 521 acres of Pomfret are in the flood plain (see flood hazard
21 areas visible in the Future Land Use Map in Appendix D). Areas of Pomfret that
22 are vulnerable to flooding or are at risk for erosion include (but are not limited
23 to):

- 24
- 25 • Bartlett Brook’s lower section, which floods regularly in spring,
- 26 • The brook that runs along Pomfret/Stage Road,
- 27 • Gulf Stream along VT 12,
- 28 • Atwood Brook,
- 29 • Pomfret Brook,
- 30 • Cloudland Brook,
- 31 • Mill Brook, and
- 32 • Streams that have been modified in the past.
- 33

34 The Vermont Natural Resource Atlas depicts unnumbered ‘A’ flood zones in
35 Pomfret based on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMS). “A flood zones”
36 are areas subject to inundation by the 1-percent-annual-chance flood event using
37 approximate methodologies. Because detailed hydraulic analyses have not been

¹⁷ “2012 Town & School District Annual Report.” Pomfret, Vermont. (December 21, 2011).

1 performed, no Base Flood Elevations (BFEs) or floodways are shown. In the A
2 zone areas, mandatory flood insurance purchase requirements and floodplain
3 management standards apply.
4

5 The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) will be preparing and
6 disseminating River Corridor maps next year (2015) that may indicate areas of
7 greater vulnerability than are depicted in the National Flood Insurance Program
8 (NFIP) Areas of Special Flood Hazard which may necessitate amending Pomfret's
9 Flood Hazard regulations, possibly requiring buffers that can go beyond the NFIP
10 mapped areas.

11 **Promoting Flood Resilience in Pomfret**

12 **Flood Hazard Regulation**

13 The next Irene will come and towns need to minimize damage to
14 infrastructure. Rebuilding and buyouts are slow and can be difficult financially
15 and emotionally. New river corridor maps will be released in 2014 by the State.
16 Towns can use these to plan for and protect infrastructure.
17

18 Pomfret's adopted Flood Hazard Bylaw sets the minimum development
19 standards allowed by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Considering
20 the potential for severe flooding in Pomfret, it is sensible to consider alternative
21 approaches to Flood Hazard Regulation. Additionally, State Statute requires that
22 all communities have policies and strategies that protect Flood Hazard areas.
23

24 Any updates to the Pomfret Flood Hazard Bylaw that are more restrictive
25 than they are now would apply only to new development – existing development
26 would be grandfathered and could continue to operate within the area, until it
27 suffers major damage or is substantially improved, at which point it has to come
28 into compliance with flood regulations. Potential strategies to protect the Flood
29 Hazard area could cover a wide range of options, including:
30

- 31 • **Prohibition on New Development** – No new primary structures
32 (commercial or residential) in the floodplain. New modest accessory
33 structures and additions to existing structures are still allowed. A
34 prohibition within the floodway, however, is a good idea and is essentially
35 mandated by the NFIP.
36

37 Also important to consider is exactly what the definition of “new
38 development” will include. The Planning Commission could include
39 adding smaller additions and minor renovations to existing structures over
40 a certain size. This is not a commonly used methodology in most
41 communities as it impacts grandfathered uses and can be challenging to
42 implement. Some additions and any redevelopment over 50% of a

1 structure's value must be done according to NFIP standards, though.

- 2
- 3 • **Prohibition of Specific Types of Development** – An alternative to an
- 4 outright prohibition on development is to identify specific types of
- 5 development that should be kept from being developed within the
- 6 floodplain. In some communities, new residential and commercial
- 7 development has been prohibited in the floodplain. In others, only
- 8 residential has been prohibited. Decisions on which types of uses to
- 9 prohibit are generally made with substantial citizen input with
- 10 considerations for what will most substantially reduce risks to lives and
- 11 property.
- 12
- 13 • **Increasing Standards** – Communities can choose to increase the
- 14 requirements for new developments in the floodplain while still allowing
- 15 all or most forms of development. Increased standards could include a
- 16 requirement that structures be elevated higher than the minimum standards
- 17 required by the NFIP. Going one foot above the base flood elevation is a
- 18 common standard in the region, but going even further and requiring two
- 19 feet of “freeboard” can result in major reductions to flood insurance
- 20 premiums. Such standards could also include more specific requirements
- 21 for tying down structures, elevating utilities so that floods are less
- 22 damaging, making structures more capable of allowing floodwaters to
- 23 pass through them (such as using piers instead of fill to elevate), and using
- 24 the No Adverse Impact standard to not increase flood damage elsewhere.
- 25
- 26 • **Create River Corridor Protection Area** - Some communities have
- 27 created an area that extends beyond the mapped flood hazard areas. Often
- 28 this River Corridor Protection Area uses fluvial erosion hazard data as part
- 29 of its basis, but can also include simple setbacks from rivers in all parts of
- 30 the community as a way to deter development in areas that may erode in
- 31 the event of severe flooding.
- 32

33 Future revisions to the Pomfret Flood Hazard Bylaw will require input

34 from the community regarding the level of regulation they believe is necessary to

35 protect citizens and their buildings from severe flood hazard events. Provided

36 that all parts of the Flood Hazard Bylaw meet the minimum requirements of the

37 NFIP, communities have a broad range of flexibility in which to regulate the

38 flood hazard area. For example, a community could prohibit commercial

39 development in the floodplain everywhere except in a village, because in some

40 communities such a restriction would be damaging to the village center.

41

1 **Goals**

- 2 1. To protect the citizens, property and economy of Pomfret and the quality
3 of their rivers as natural and recreational resources by using sound
4 planning practices within designated Flood Hazard Areas and beyond.

5 **Planning Principles, Policies and Strategies**

- 6
- 7 1. Only agriculture, recreational and open space uses should be allowed in
8 floodplains.
- 9 2. New development within the town's 100-year floodplain is discouraged,
10 excluding properly designed outbuildings and renovations that meet the
11 requirements for Flood Hazard regulation as stipulated by the Federal
12 Emergency Management Agency.
- 13 3. Ensure that any new development allowed creates "no adverse impact"
14 through design and mitigation measures.
- 15 4. Reduce impervious cover that leads to flash flooding, and increase
16 retention and infiltration of rain.
- 17 5. Lessen the conflict between roads and streams by moving the roads when
18 possible, abandoning redundant bridges, or upsizing water crossings.
- 19 6. Adopt road and bridge standards to the 50 or 100 year storm level.
- 20 7. Continue to promote emergency planning for flood response.

21 **Recommendations**

- 22
- 23 1. Strengthen Pomfret's Flood Hazard Bylaws to mitigate risks to public
24 safety, critical infrastructure, historic structures and municipal investments
25 from inundation and erosion. (Planning Commission)
- 26
- 27 2. Work with VTrans on improving the flood capabilities of state-owned
28 infrastructure or town infrastructure. (Planning Commission)
- 29
- 30 3. Continue to develop emergency preparedness procedures. (Emergency
31 Coordinator and Selectboard)

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.

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.

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.

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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

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%)

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

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:

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

Appendix C Pomfret Housing Data

\$200-250,000	8	36	30	15	3	4	13	5
\$250-300,000	5	37	21	19	3	2	8	2
\$300-350,000	2	21	17	16	1	1	7	4
\$350-400,000	0	7	13	19	0	3	6	6
\$400-500,000	1	8	20	35	1	2	17	12
\$500-600,000	0	4	25	16	0	1	14	10
\$600-700,000	0	1	8	19	0	0	5	4
\$700-800,000	0	2	5	7	0	0	4	9
\$800-900,000	0	0	2	8	0	0	2	7
\$900-1,000,000	0	0	1	11	0	3	3	9
\$1,000-1,100,000	0	0	1	5	0	0	2	9
\$1,100-1,200,000	0	0	3	4	0	0	3	2
Over \$1,200,000	0	0	3	14	0	0	7	21
Total	142	150	231	190	36	28	123	102

Total Number of Homes in Pomfret:

	2006	2012
Residences	373	340
Vacation Homes	156	129
Total	529	469

The above numbers exclude mobile homes. In 2012, there were 5 mobile homes with 1 listed at a value of less than \$40,000, 3 between \$50,000-100,000 and the last at \$185,000

The above numbers suggest a significant movement into higher valuations for many properties.

Source: Pomfret Listers

If the State of Vermont's Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) is appropriate at 96.85% (Comparing Assessed Values to Sales Prices), the CLA suggests that most 2012 properties are near the assessed value.

Assessed Value	Possible Market Price	
	2006	2012
\$200,000	\$300,000	\$210,000
\$400,000	\$600,000	\$420,000
\$600,000	\$900,000	\$630,000
\$1,000,000	\$1,600,000	\$1,650,000

Pomfret Sales of Residential and Vacation Homes from April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2012

Category	Number	Range of Prices	Total Listed Values	Total Sale Values
R1	13	\$172,000-424,000	\$2,655,374	\$3,576,000
R2	18	\$175,000-2,000,000	\$10,450,669	\$13,351,010
S1	5	\$61,100-299,000	\$812,387	\$1,031,500
S2	7	\$200,000-\$2,040,000	\$5,715,758	\$6,990,000

As these are extremely small samples, conclusions must be drawn with that in mind. Sales for this time period for residences are 2 1/2 times those of vacation properties at values significantly above assessed values. Averages over the time period are difficult to determine because of a couple of large sales that distort the market.

R1	Residential <6 acres - Average Sales Price: \$275,000
R2	Residential > 6 acres - Average Sales Price: \$741,722
S1	Vacation < 6 acres - Average Sales Price: \$206,300
S2	Vacation > 6 acres - Average Sales Price: 998,572
Misc.	Open Land/Misc: 0

The State of Vermont indicates Pomfret's overall 2012 Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) is 96.85% when comparing sales prices with listed values.

Source: Pomfret Listers

2012 Assessed Values of 114 Parcels of Land

<i>Assessed Value</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2012</i>
Less than \$40,000	22	18
\$40,000-80,000	26	8
\$80,000-120,000	19	6
\$120,000-\$160,000	17	12
\$160,000-200,000	18	12
Over \$200,000		58

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 and beyond to 2012.

Number of Parcels by Acreage

<i>Acreage</i>	<i>2006 Number</i>	<i>2012 Number</i>
< 10 Acres	25	28
10-20	16	19
20-30	14	8
30-40	5	10
40-60	13	10
60-80	16	16
Over 80	13	19

Because there was next to no arms-length land sales between 2006 and December 2012, it is too difficult to establish a market value for sales and land alone.

2013-14 Property Ownership:

<i>Acres</i>	<i>Counts</i>
< than 50 acres	479*
50-100 acres	56
Over 100 acres	59
Total Over 50 acres	115

**5 of these properties have 0 acreage*

2012 Vermont Personal Income Tax Returns by Town and Income Class

AGI Income Class	Returns	Exempt	Married Joint	Single	Marr-ied Sep-arate	Head of House-hold	Adjusted Gross Income
Pomfret							
Loss or None	11	18	4	7	0	0	-20,953,358
0.01 - 4999	36	22	1	34	0	1	88,415
5000 - 9999	28	19	3	25	0	0	201,013
10000 - 14999	14	17	2	12	0	0	164,864
15000 - 19999	22	31	3	15	0	4	376,056
20000 - 24999	21	38	11	8	0	2	468,850
25000 - 29999	21	36	5	11	2	3	589,531
30000 - 34999	17	28	6	10	0	1	550,775
35000 - 39999	17	29	8	8	1	0	637,671
40000 - 44999	15	26	7	7	0	1	629,999
45000 - 49999	16	27	5	6	2	3	754,153
50000 - 59999	25	51	18	6	0	1	1,364,917
60000 - 74999	35	71	22	11	2	0	2,378,221
75000 - 99999	48	119	39	8	0	1	4,153,406
100000 - 149999	55	138	43	8	0	4	6,455,822
150000 +	48	124	38	6	1	3	13,651,814
Grand Total	429	794	215	182	8	24	11,512,149

Average Adjusted Gross Income: \$26,834

Pulling out the 48 with \$150,000 income or greater and the 11 showing loss or none, leaves an average of: \$50,848

Median Pomfret Adjusted Gross Income for all Pomfret Taxpayers is: \$48,517

Source: State of Vermont Department of Taxes

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

2013 Property Tax Adjustments and Rebates¹

Code	Town	School Property Tax ³		Circuit Breaker ^{2,3}		Renter Rebate ³		Total	
		Number	Amount	Number	Amount	Number	Amount	Number	Amount
154	Pomfret	156	378,129	49	26,187	9	8,165	165	412,481

1. Property Tax Adjustments are applied for at the same time as Personal Income Tax returns for Tax Year 2012 and are applied to Fiscal Year 2014 property taxes. Both School Property Tax Adjustments (Prebates) and Circuit Breaker Adjustments (Homeowner Rebates) are calculated on prior year household income and housesite property taxes paid. Renter Rebates are applied for at the same time and calculated on prior year household income and the amount of allowable rent for rebate claim.

2. Circuit Breaker Adjustment is calculated on school property taxes remaining after adjustment and municipal taxes for claimants with Household Income of \$47,000 or less. Also called "Additional Adjustment." Formerly called "Homeowner Rebate." Cells of 3 or fewer returns suppressed. State totals include suppressed data.

3. Circuit Breaker recipient numbers are a subset of the School Property Tax adjustment recipients, Renter Rebate recipients are a separate group. Total numbers are the sum of school property tax and renter rebate recipients. Amounts are additive (School Property Tax plus Circuit Breaker plus Renter Rebate).

Source: Vermont Department of Taxes

From the above one can see that the average prebate (Property Tax Adjustments) for Pomfret residents that qualify was \$2,423. On top of this 56 Pomfret residents also qualified for a 2013 Homeowner Rebate (Circuit Breaker Adjustments) with an average rebate of \$534.

In Chapter 3 it is stated that in 2013 on a Homestead with a value of \$250,000, the property tax burden was \$5,696. It would appear that the prebate and rebate programs do offer assistance to the taxpayer with lower incomes.

Appendix D Maps

Map 1 – Historic Map

Map 2 – Current Land Use

Map 3 – Future Land Use

Map 4 – Agricultural Soils

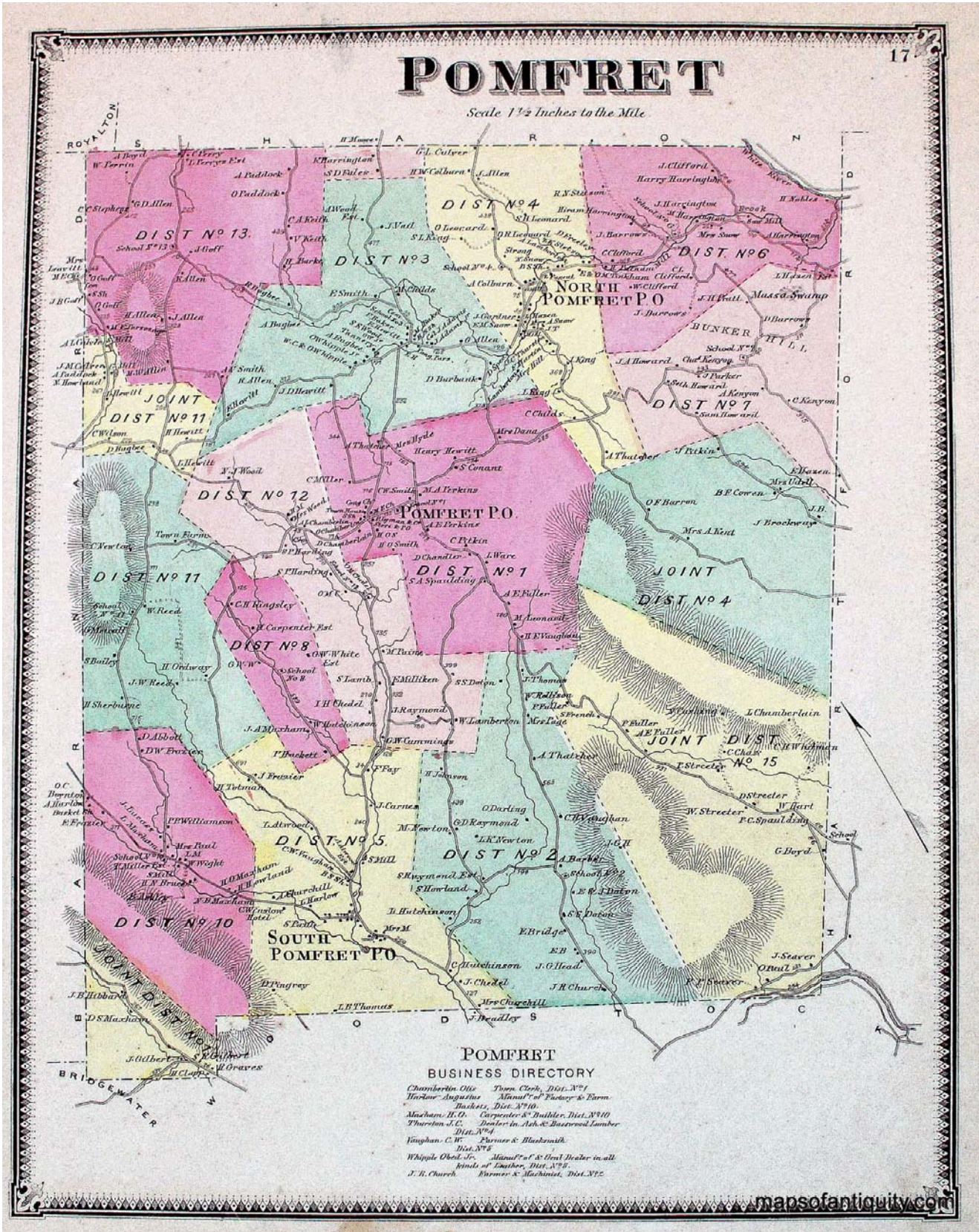
Map 5 – Natural Resources

Map 6 – Roads (Transportation)

Map 7 – Utilities, Facilities and Education

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Map 1 -- Beers 1869 Map of Pomfret Showing More Densely Populated Areas



Current Settlement Pattern & Housing Density (Current Land Use)

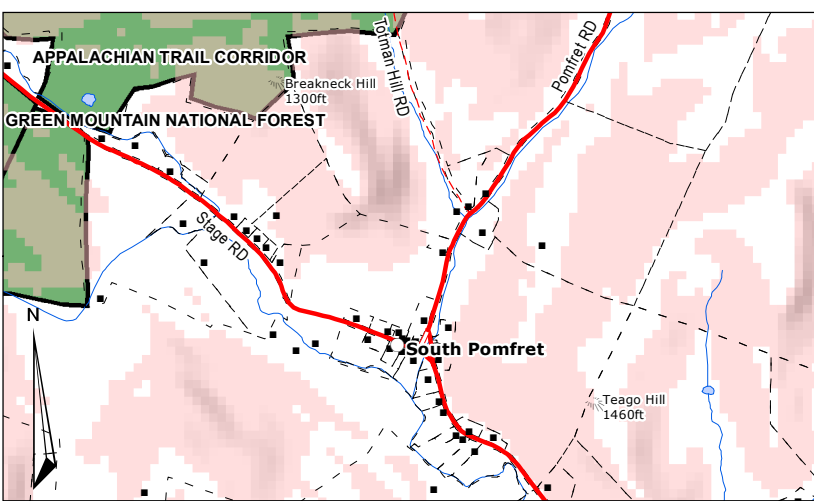
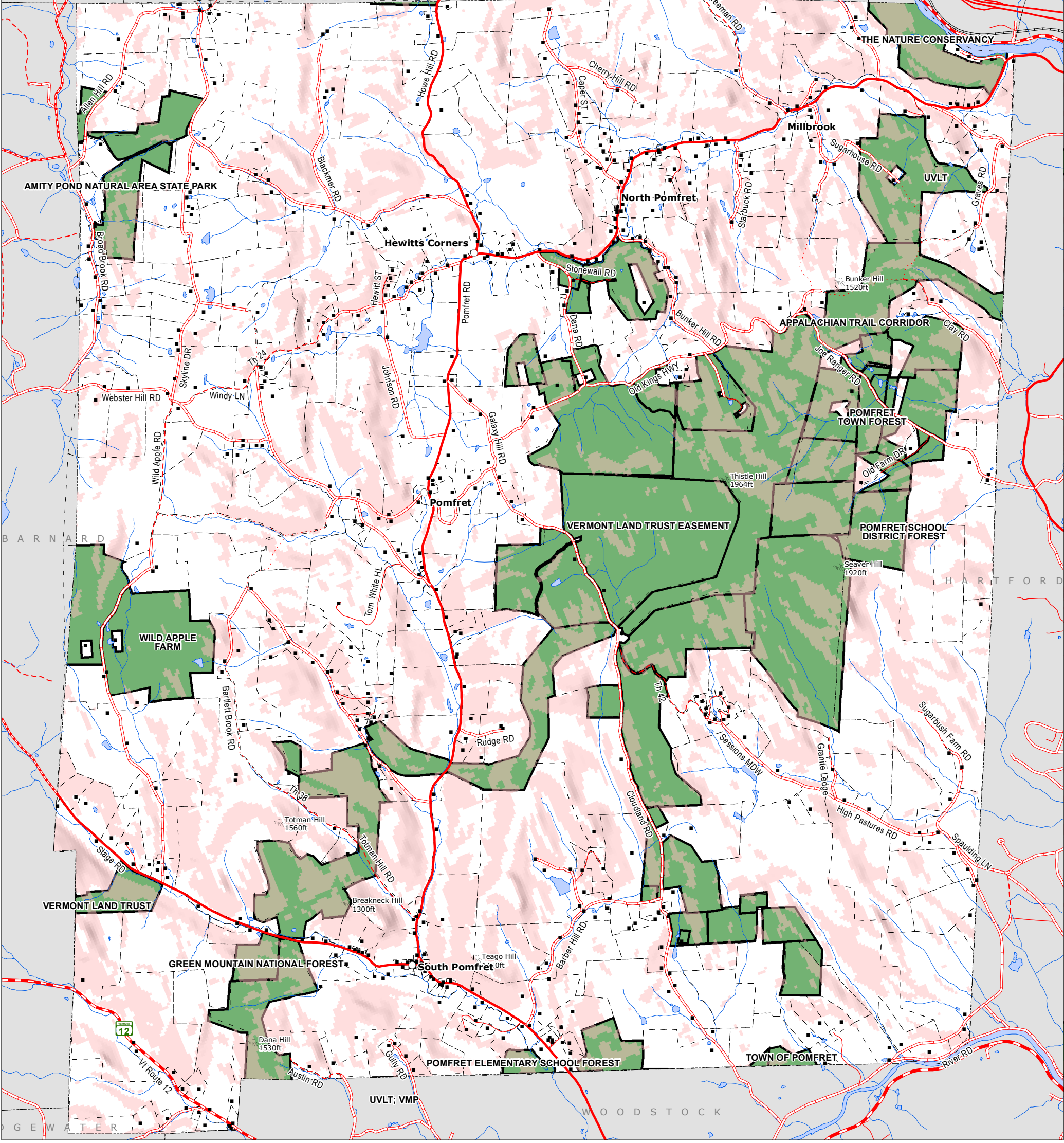
Pomfret, Vermont

Town Plan

Map 2 of 7

DRAFT

SHARON 1:39,500
1 inch = 3,292 feet
0 1 2
Miles



1:24,000
1 inch = 2,000 feet
0 1,000 2,000
Feet

South Pomfret
2011 NAIP
orthophotography

- e911 structures
- surface water
- >25% Slope
- - - tax parcels
- conserved land
- VT route/TH cls 1
- TH cls 2 gravel
- TH cls 3
- TH cls 3 gravel
- TH cls 4 gravel
- VT forest hwy
- trail
- private
- US route
- US interstate
- railroad

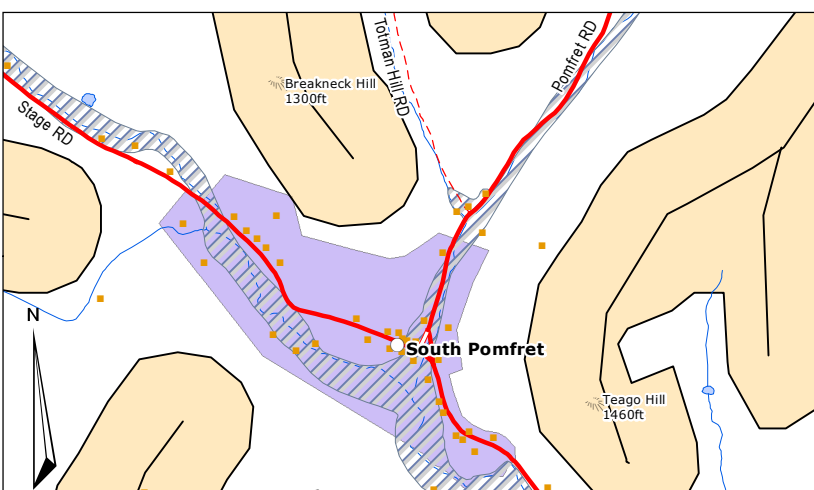
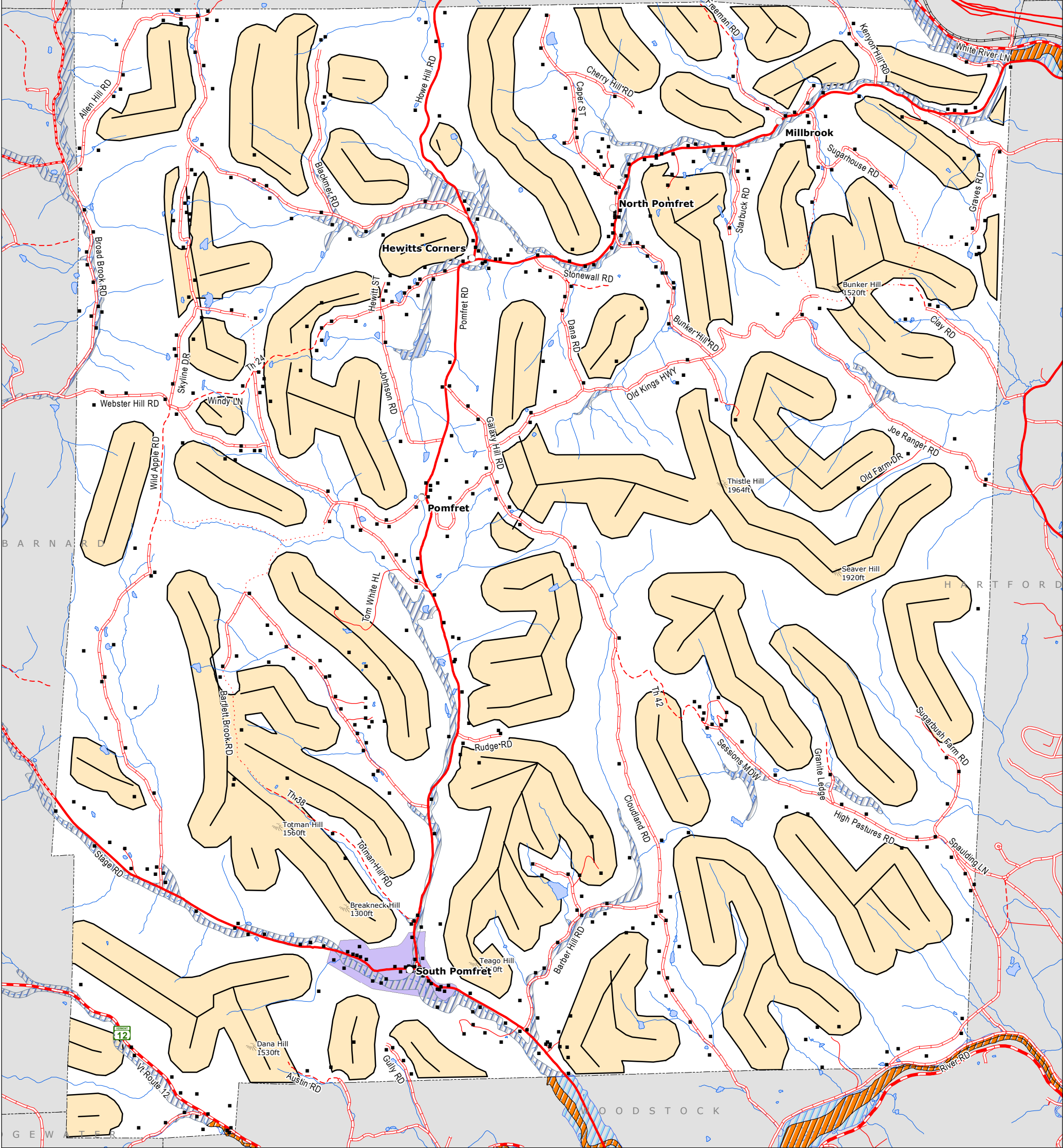
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Future Land Use Pomfret, Vermont Town Plan

Map 3 of 7

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1:39,500
1 inch = 3,292 feet
0 1 2
Miles



1:24,000
1 inch = 2,000 feet
0 1,000 2,000
Feet

South Pomfret

- e911 structures
- surface water
- - - tax parcels
- Rural Residential Area
- Village Area
- ▨ 1% chance of flood per year
- 750' ridge line overlay
- primary ridges
- VT route/TH cls 1
- - - TH cls 2 gravel
- TH cls 3
- - - TH cls 3 gravel
- - - TH cls 4 gravel
- - - VT forest hwy
- ⋯ trail
- private
- US route
- US interstate
- railroad

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Agricultural Soils Pomfret, Vermont Town Plan

Map 4 of 7

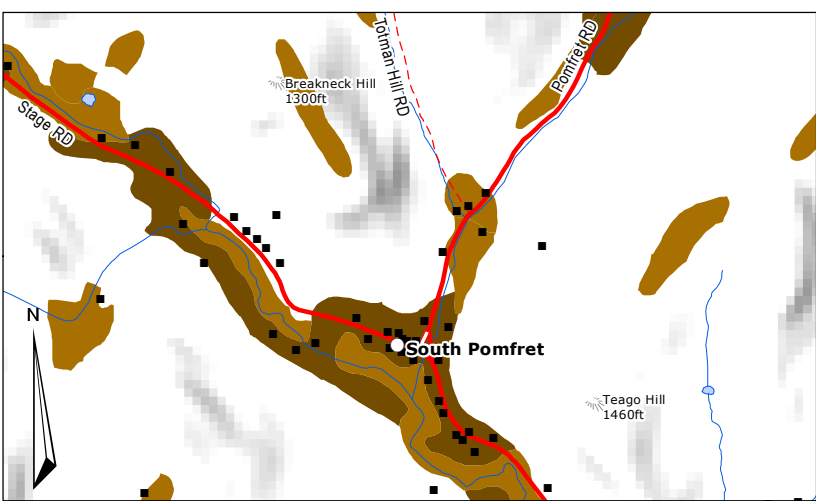
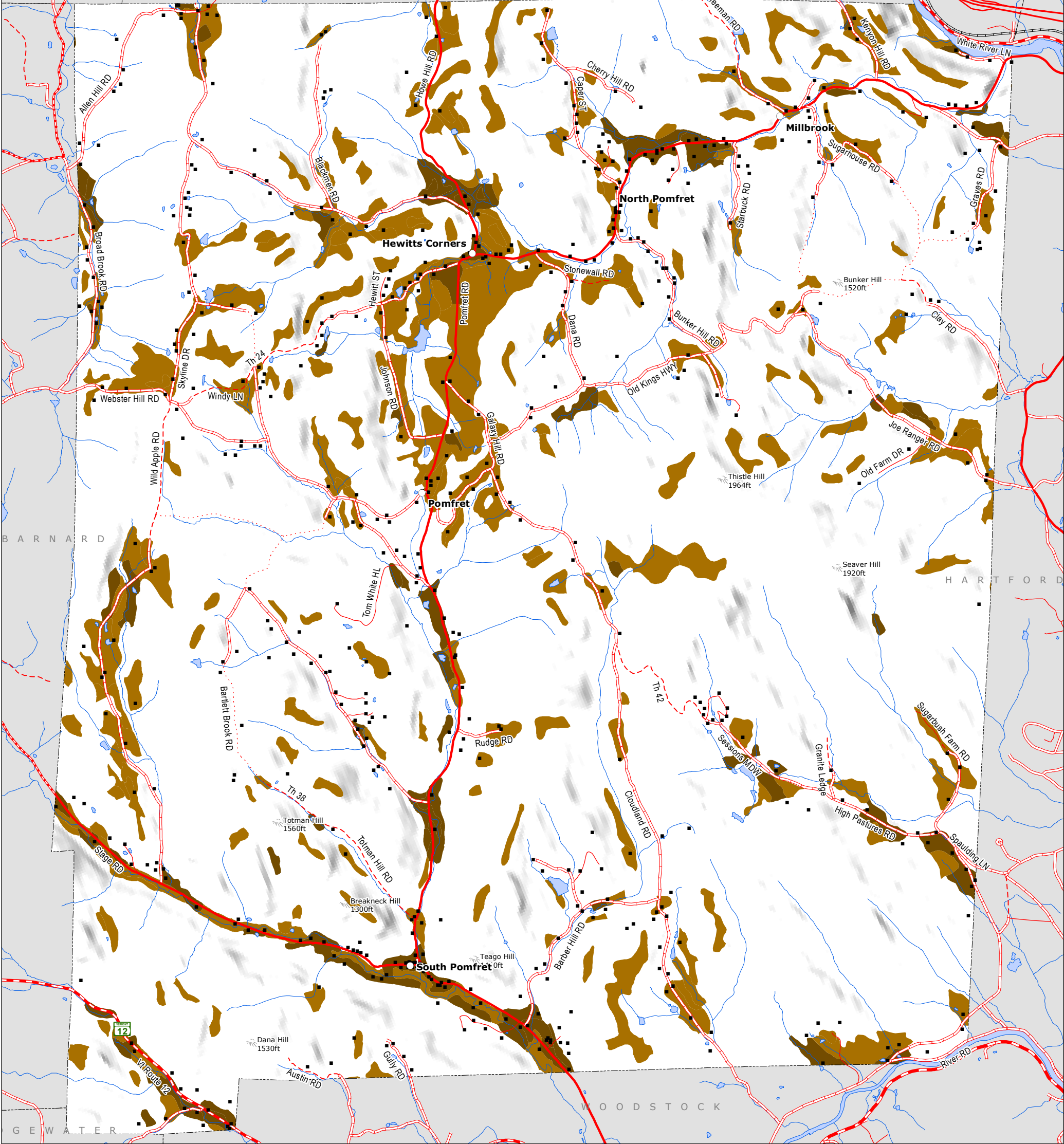
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1:39,500

1 inch = 3,292 feet

Miles

0 1 2



1:24,000
1 inch = 2,000 feet
0 1,000 2,000
Feet

South Pomfret

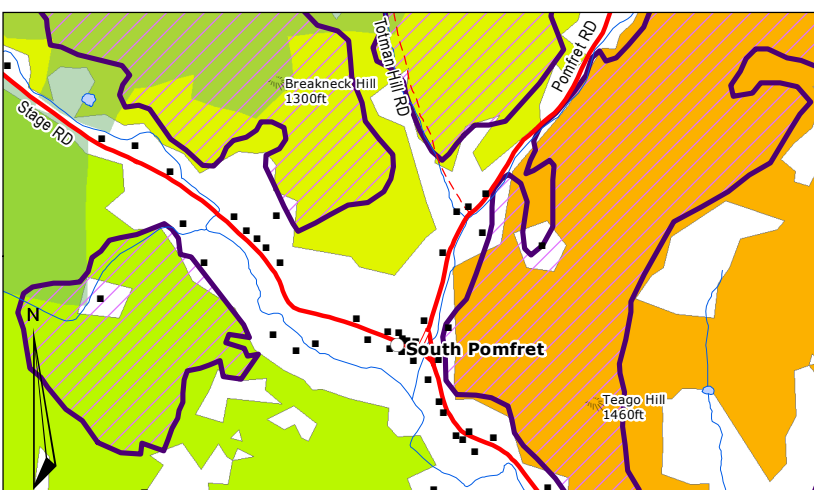
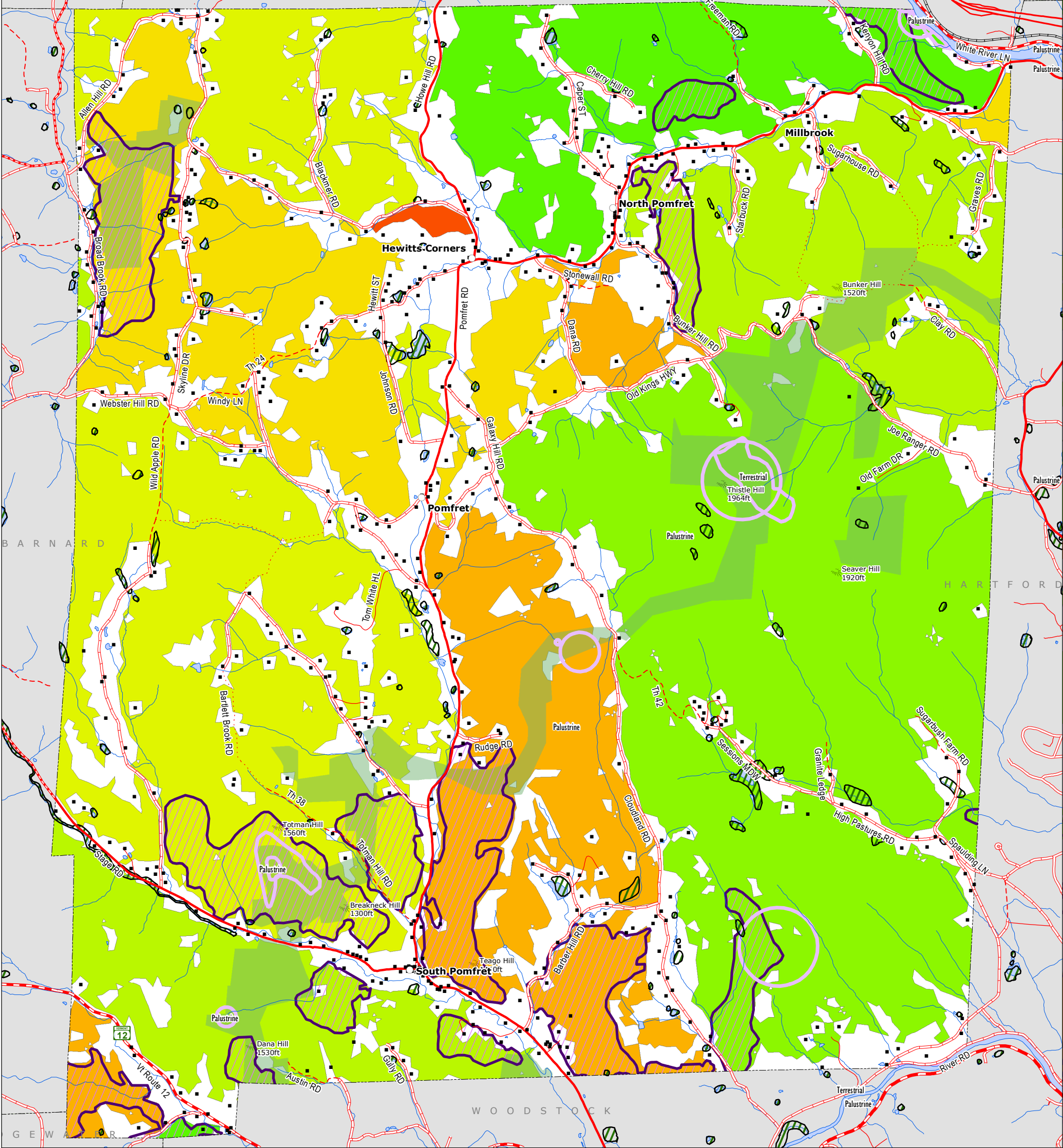
- e911 structures
 - surface water
- ### Soil Types
- prime ag (nat'l signif.)
 - state ag (vt signif.)
- VT route/TH cls 1
 - TH cls 2 gravel
 - TH cls 3
 - TH cls 3 gravel
 - TH cls 4 gravel
 - VT forest hwy
 - trail
 - private
 - US route
 - US interstate
 - railroad

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Natural Resources Pomfret, Vermont Town Plan Map 5 of 7

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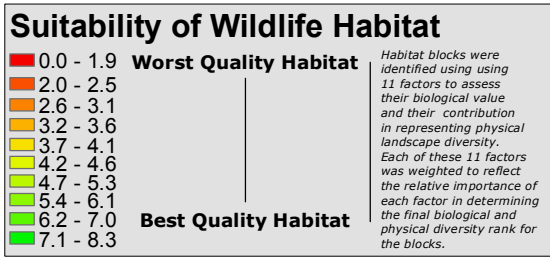
1:39,500
1 inch = 3,292 feet
0 1 2
Miles



1:24,000
1 inch = 2,000 feet
0 1,000 2,000
Feet

South Pomfret

- e911 structures
- surface water
- public land
- ▨ deer wintering yard
- ▭ endangered species
- ▨ Vermont wetlands
- VT route/TH cls 1
- TH cls 2 gravel
- TH cls 3
- TH cls 3 gravel
- TH cls 4 gravel
- VT forest hwy
- trail
- private
- US route
- US interstate
- railroad



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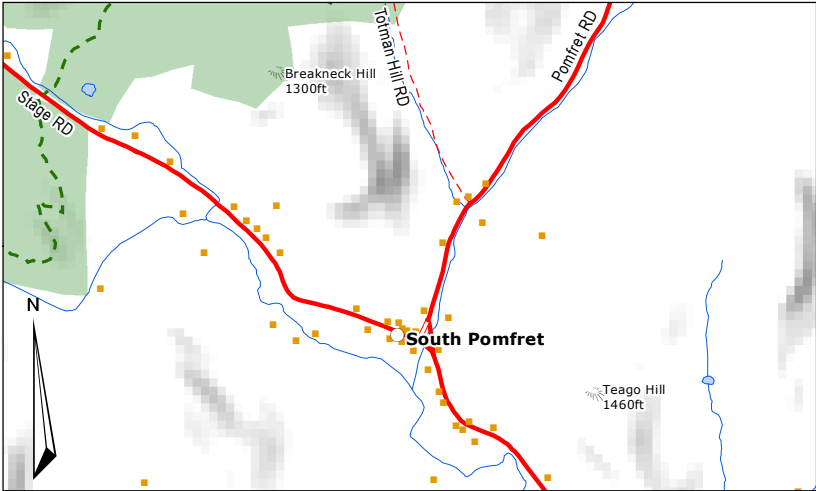
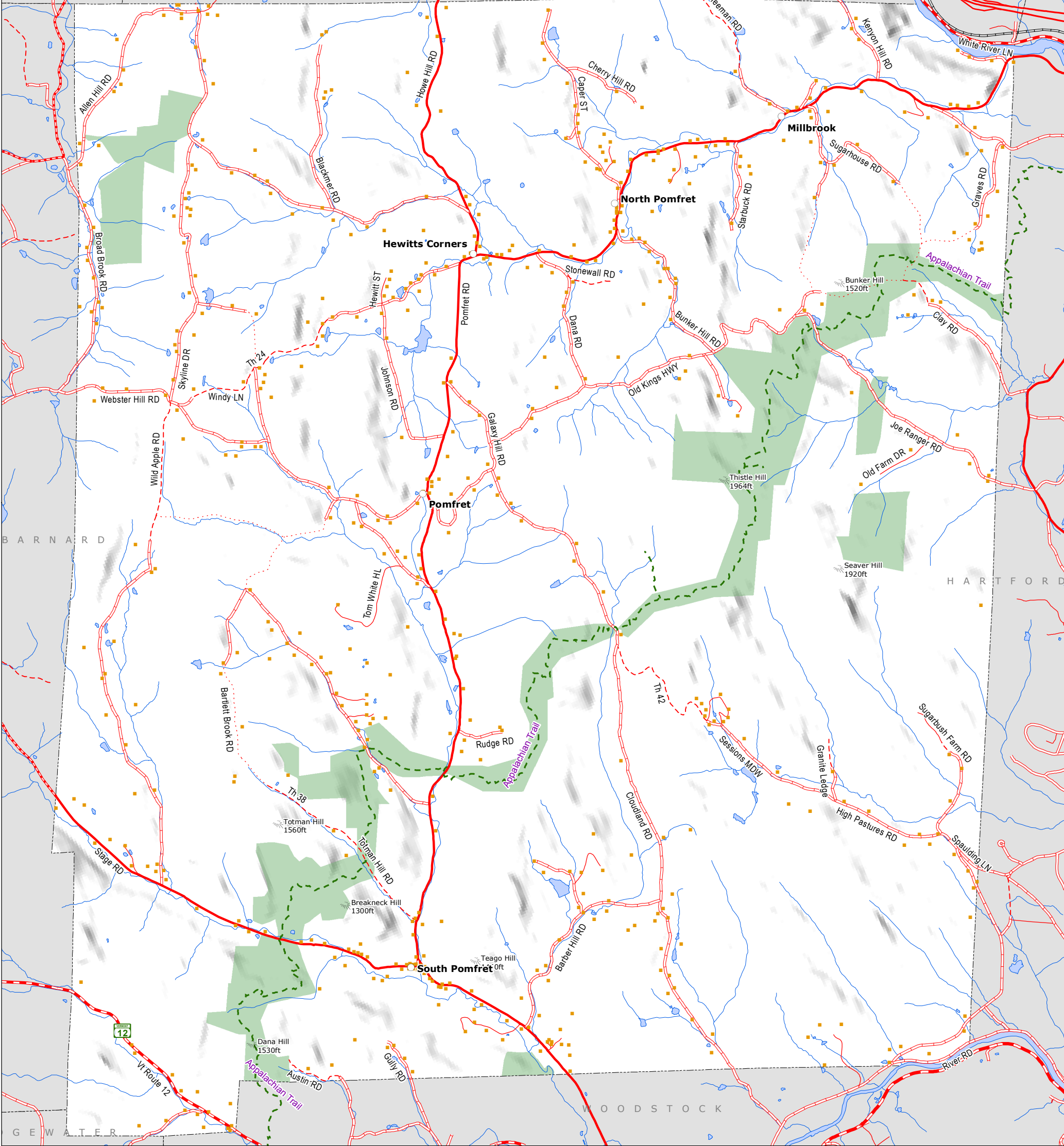
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Transportation Pomfret, Vermont Town Plan

Map 6 of 7

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1:39,500
1 inch = 3,292 feet
0 1 2
Miles



1:24,000
1 inch = 2,000 feet
0 1,000 2,000
Feet

South Pomfret

- e911 structures
- surface water
- public land
- - - Appalachian Trail
- VT route/TH cls 1
- - - TH cls 2 gravel
- TH cls 3
- - - TH cls 3 gravel
- - - TH cls 4 gravel
- - - VT forest hwy
- - - trail
- private
- US route
- US interstate
- railroad

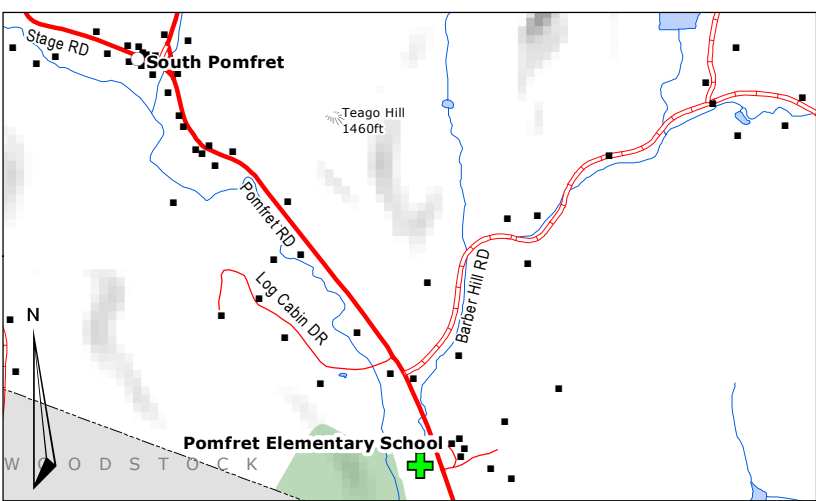
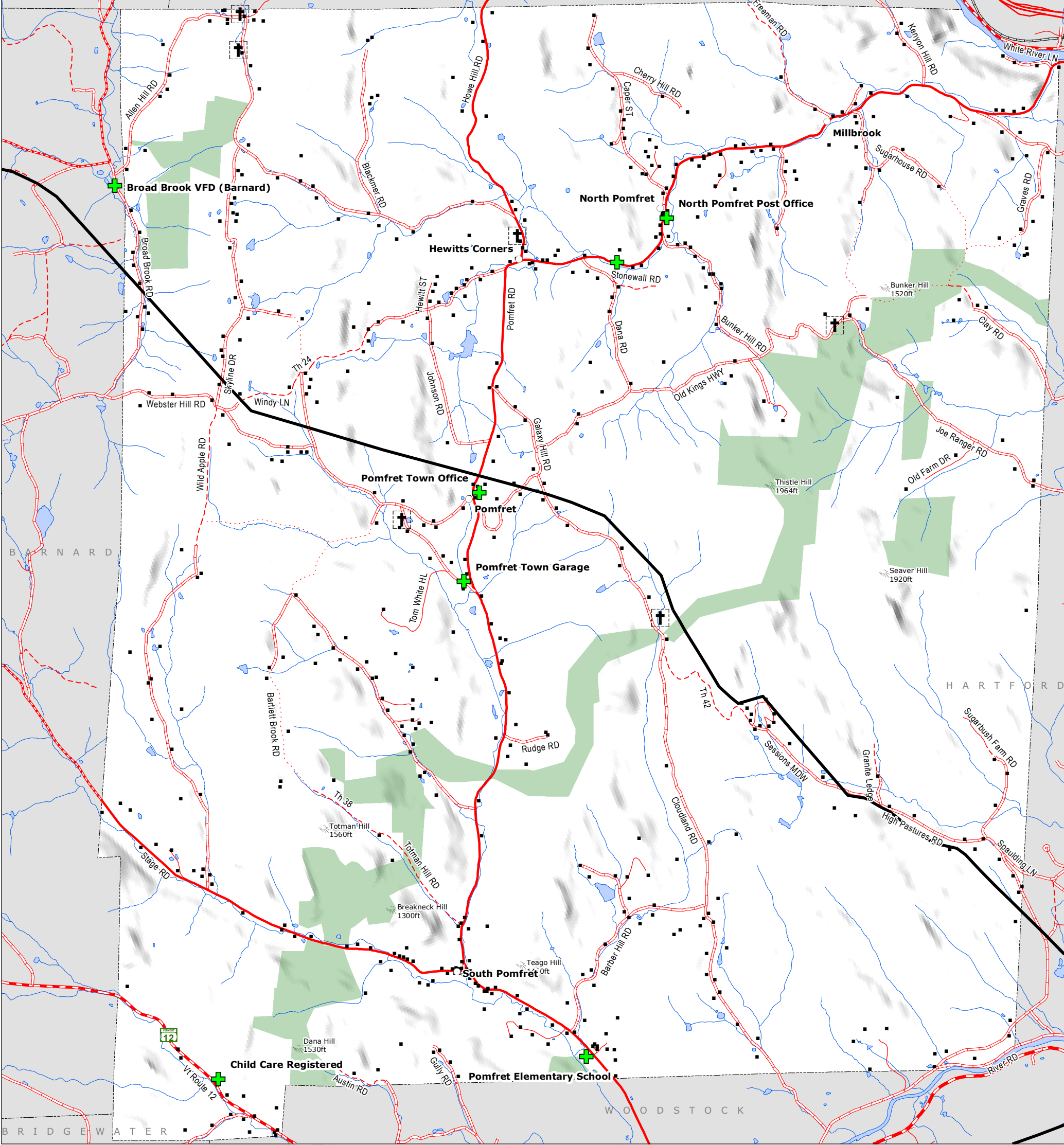
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Utilities, Facilities, & Education Pomfret, Vermont Town Plan

Map 7 of 7

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1:39,500
1 inch = 3,292 feet
Miles



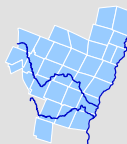
1:24,000
1 inch = 2,000 feet
0 1,000 2,000
Feet

South Pomfret

- e911 structures
- electric transmission lines
- surface water
- public land
- ⊠ cemetery
- ⊕ facilities
- VT route/TH cls 1
- TH cls 2 gravel
- TH cls 3
- TH cls 3 gravel
- TH cls 4 gravel
- VT forest hwy
- trail
- private
- US route
- US interstate
- railroad

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