

# **Starksboro Town Plan**

*Adopted August 4, 2003*



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# INTRODUCTION

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## **Planning in Starksboro**

Starksboro's Town Plan is developed under the authority of Chapter 117, Title 24, Vermont Statutes Annotated.

Starksboro's long-term planning efforts, initiated in the late 1980s, have been effective in guiding growth and development in such a way as to preserve valuable natural and economic resources while balancing the rights of individuals. In accordance with Title 24, town plans must be reviewed, revised as needed and readopted every five years.

The current review and revision began with a well-attended planning forum and it is anticipated that the final version of this Plan revision will be complete in early 2003.

The Planning Commission, Selectboard and numerous citizens who have participated in the town planning forums have contributed time and energy to the goal of creating a document that clearly expresses the wishes of the community.

Planning is a continuous activity and the Town Plan is an evolving document that should reflect the goals and vision of Starksboro's residents as that vision changes over time. The Planning Commission encourages all residents who value the unique characteristics of our Town to participate in planning activities to help effectively guide future growth and ensure that the rural beauty and diversity of our Town is preserved for the enjoyment of future generations.

## **Purpose of the Plan**

Starksboro's Town Plan is not regulatory in nature, but it serves a number of purposes.

The plan is the foundation for town zoning bylaws, subdivision regulations, capital budget programs and impact fees. Indeed, such mechanisms cannot be adopted without a current plan and they must be consistent with the provisions of the plan.

The Plan will also be considered by the Addison County Regional Planning Commission and the District Environmental Commission in the course of regional and state planning activities: including regional plans, public good determinations, state subdivision permits and Act 250 permits.

## **How to Read the Plan**

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

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

## **Goals and Strategies**

These are the timeless concepts that guide the Plan. Goals are developed by applying our community's vision for the future to the present conditions. This vision is inspired by many sources - other plans and planning guides, other planners, the Addison County Regional Planning Commission - but most importantly from the people of Starksboro through the work of the

Planning Commission, planning forums and surveys.

Where appropriate, each goal is followed by specific actions or policies for achieving that goal.

### **Data and Analysis**

This section brings together maps, charts and other factual data from federal, state, regional

and Town sources. There is also a brief discussion of the data. This information serves as a basis for planning as well as providing an “encyclopedia” of diverse information about our Town.

The Plan is intended to be taken as a whole. No section should be considered on its own; each is interrelated with, and often overlaps, other sections of the Plan.

# STATEMENT OF VISION

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Based on the input that the Planning Commission received from the community, Starksboro's vision is to maintain the qualities of our community's scenic beauty, diverse working landscape and rural small-town character. The Town of Starksboro shall pursue the following overall goals:

- 1. Preserve the interrelated values of community, independence and privacy essential to the character of Starksboro.**
- 2. Maintain and enhance Starksboro's rural, small-town character and its diverse working landscape comprised of agricultural and forest land.**
  - A. Guide the land use and development of the Town in such a way as to protect the long-term interests of the community, while minimizing infringements on individual rights.
- 3. Review all housing through our existing zoning and subdivision regulations.**
  - A. Restrain rapid and inappropriate growth that would negatively impact Starksboro's fiscal condition.
- 4. Promote development in a way that is appropriate to Starksboro's scenic beauty, the Town's residents and environment.**
  - A. Preserve clean water sources, promote the health of the environment and protect scenic resources.





# HISTORY AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

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## Starksboro's History

### Formation and Early Settlement

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

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

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

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

### Population Centers

Although most of the Town's population is now centered in and around Starksboro village on Route 116, in earlier times there were many other villages and hamlets:

- ◆ Brownsboro, named for the Brown family;
- ◆ Little Boston, a small industrial center located in the southern part of Town where Route 116 now crosses Lewis Creek;
- ◆ Hillsboro, named for Samuel Hill who settled there from New Hampshire in 1805; and

- ◆ Jerusalem, the factories and hotel that used to be there are long gone. Located on a mountain road in the extreme southeastern part of Town, it still retains some of its individuality, with a small school, that closed in 1968, a cemetery and cluster of houses.

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

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

### Community Facilities

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Agricultural Heritage**

Starksboro has always been primarily an agricultural Town. In the early 1800s the small local iron industry and the Monkton Iron Works in Vergennes, provided a ready market for charcoal. Settlers clearing land for farming were

thus enabled to convert unwanted trees into cash.

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

Toward the end of the century cheese factories were established. The McDonough farm in Hinesburg (now owned by the Hinesburg Sand & Gravel Company, Inc.) operated a plant that provided farmers in the north part of Starksboro with a market for their milk.

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

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

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

Maple products have always been important to Starksboro agriculture. Individual farmers

usually built up a market for their product both in and out of the state. For many years maple syrup that was not sold in cans or made into maple sugar was put into large casks and hauled by wagon to the railroad in Bristol.

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

### Population Change

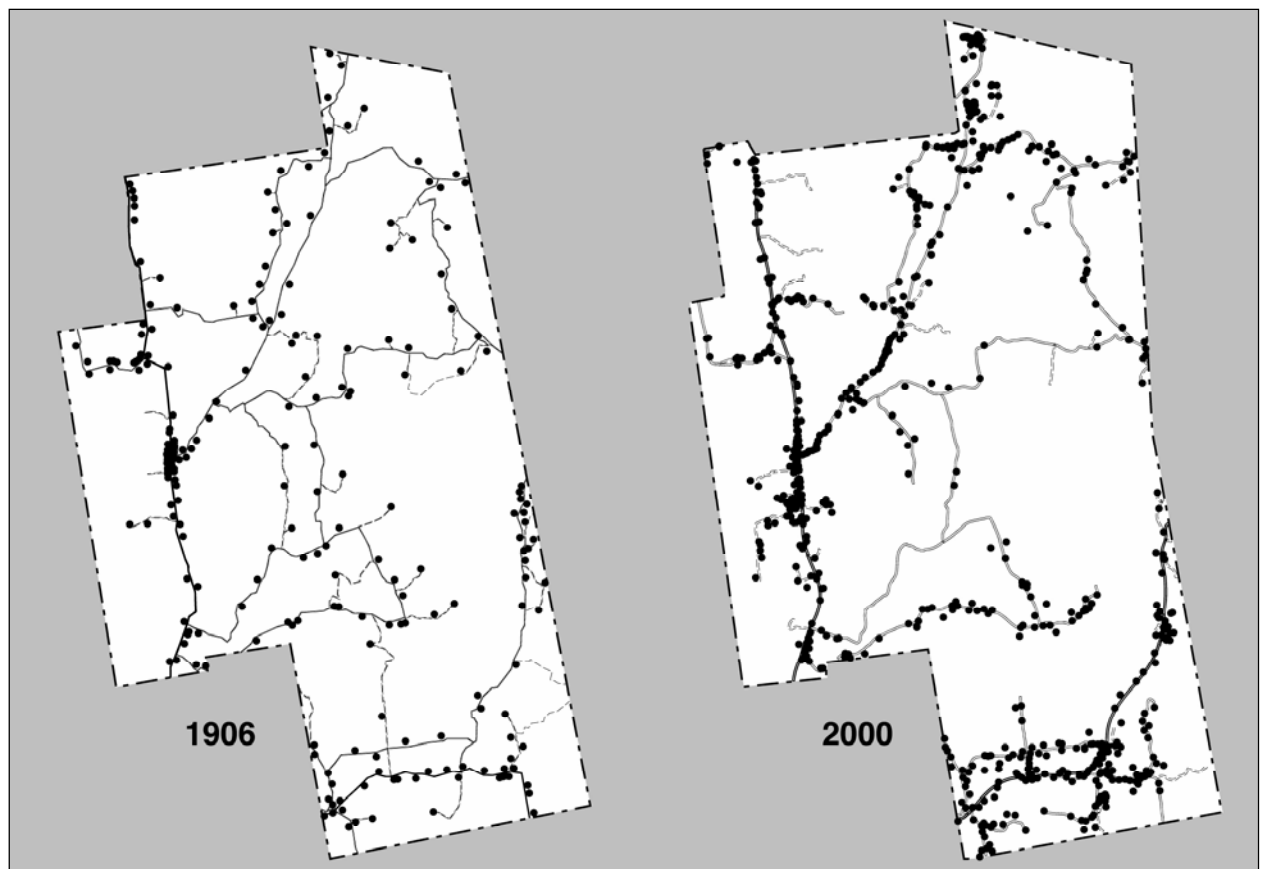
Between 1860 and 1960 westward migration and changing economic conditions causing the

abandonment of hill farms and the loss of small business resulted in a steady decline in population.

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

Beers' Atlas, originally published in 1871, provides a unique point of reference in considering how Starksboro has changed over the last century. Starksboro village and South

**Figure 1: Starksboro's Settlement Pattern 1906 to 2000**



*Source: Early 1900s Edition of the U.S.G.S. Topographic Maps and 2000 Vermont E-911 residential points.  
Note: Boundary of Starksboro as drawn on the early 1900s map is not accurate.*

Starksboro were the more densely developed hubs of economic activity in that time and they continue in that role today.

However as seen in Figure 1, development is now less dense on what had served as connecting roads in earlier days. These areas of Town are now predominantly forested and dotted with seasonal camps.

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

### **Historic Resources**

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

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

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

# POPULATION

## Data and Analysis

### Population Growth

According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2000, Starksboro's population stood at 1,898 people.

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

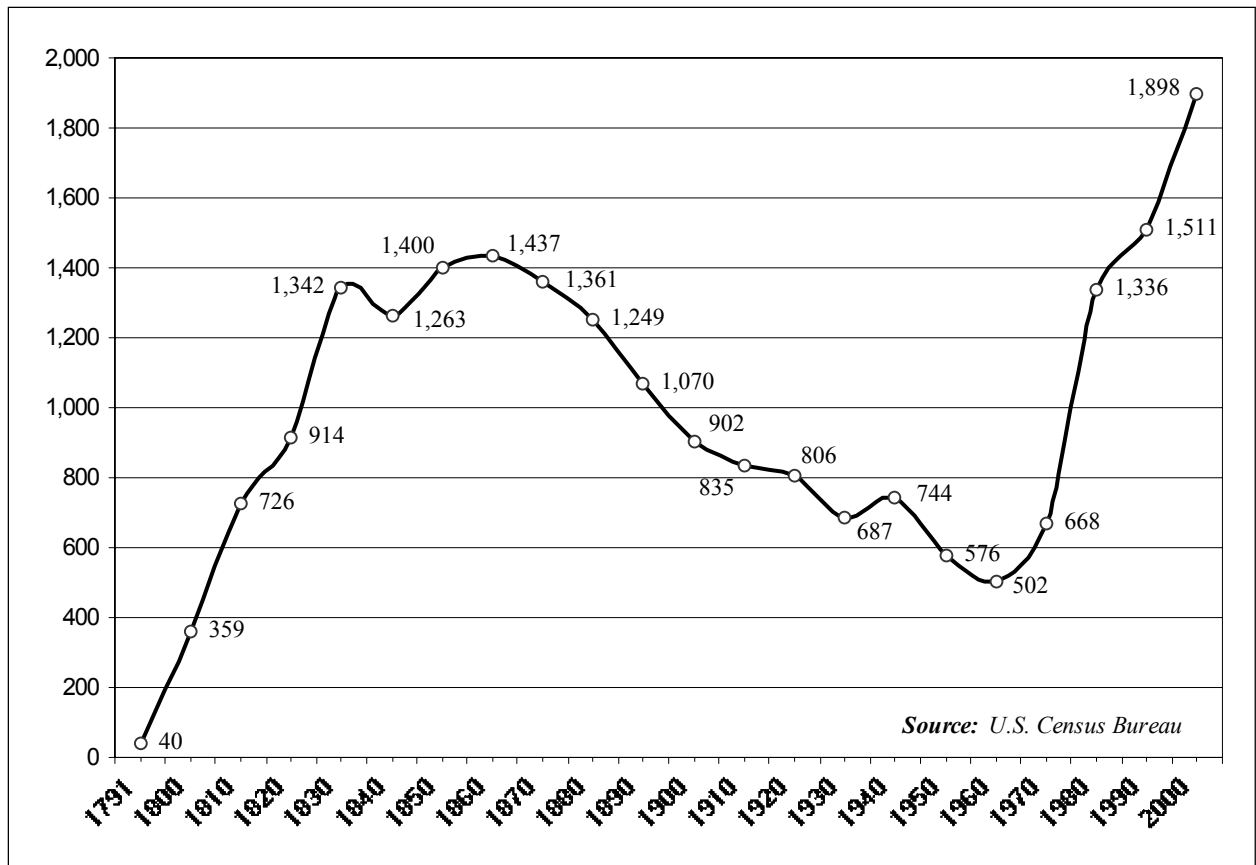
Currently, Starksboro is undergoing its second major growth period since the first settlers arrived in 1788. Since 1960, Starksboro has

experienced exceptional population growth, doubling in size between 1970 and 1980, Fig. 2.

Starksboro now has a larger population than at any time since the Town was settled. The proximity of Starksboro to Burlington, and the relatively easy commute to other job centers in Chittenden County, Middlebury and Vergennes make Starksboro a desirable place to live for people who would like to settle in the region.

Figure 3 compares Starksboro's population growth with that experienced by neighboring towns. Unlike its northern neighbors, following Starksboro's population boom in the 1970s growth slowed substantially in the 1980s.

**Figure 2: Starksboro's Historic Population 1791 to 2000**



During the 1990s, Starksboro grew at a faster rate than any of its neighbors. If regional growth continues it is likely that Starksboro will again experience significant population growth pressures.

Future growth projections by Addison County Regional Planning Commission estimate Starksboro's population to be in the range of 3,200 to 3,700 by 2025, which represents an average annual growth rate of 2.14 to 2.74 percent. During the 1990s, Starksboro's average annual growth rate was 2.31 percent.

### Birth Rates and Age of the Population

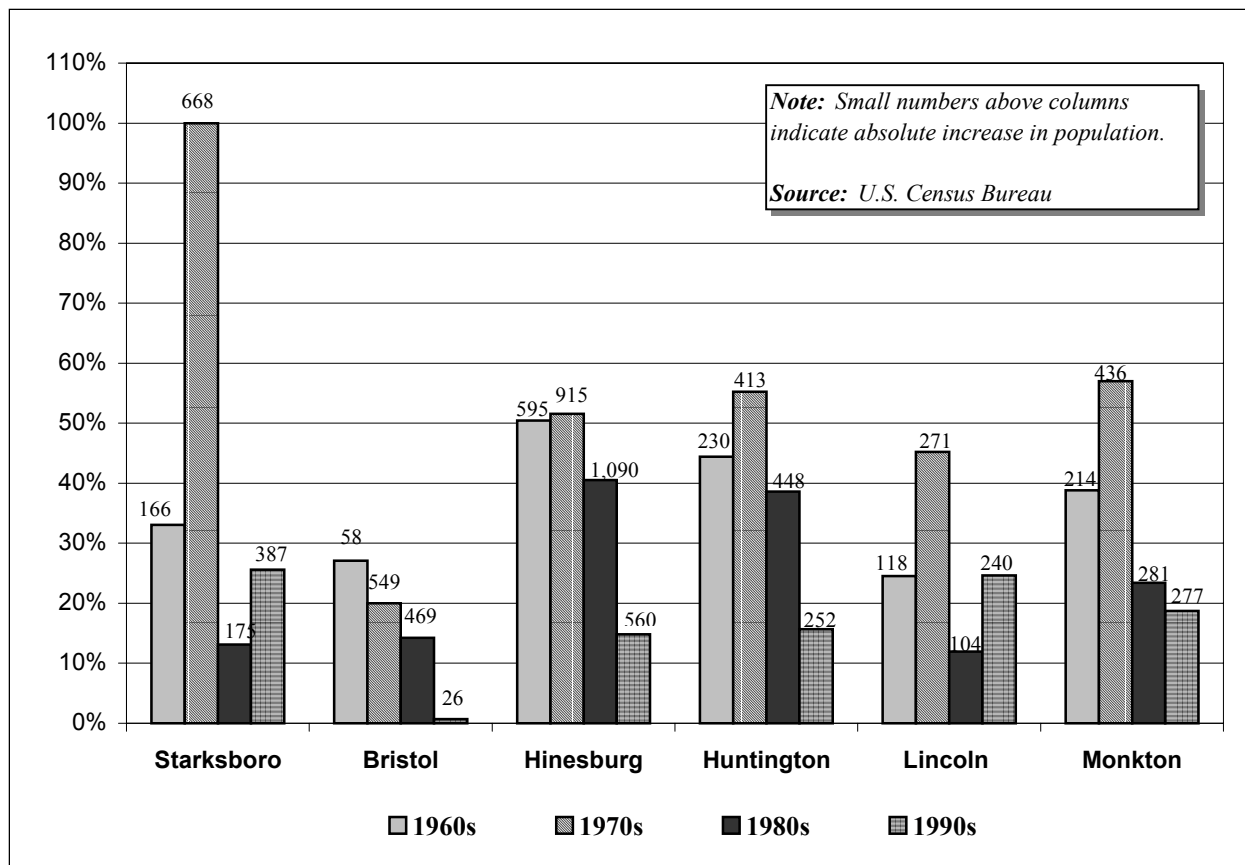
In addition to in-migration, Starksboro has had one of the highest crude birth rates (births divided by total population) in the county since

at least 1980, combined with one of the lowest death rates. During the 1980s and 1990s, Starksboro's population increase was largely due to natural increase (births minus deaths).

As shown in Figure 4, the proportion of the population under age 18 has not changed significantly over the past 20 years. Starksboro's population is younger than state and regional averages. In the year 2000, the median age in Starksboro was 34 compared to 36.1 for Addison County and 37.7 statewide.

However, a significant percentage of Starksboro's population is in the 45 to 64 age group. Over the next two decades, this group will be retiring with changing lifestyles and needs. Starksboro will likely need to consider

**Figure 3: Population Growth Rate in Starksboro Compared to Neighboring Towns**



the needs of older residents and provide housing types and services appropriate to this population.

### Household and Family Composition

Starksboro had 668 households in 2000 with an average size of 2.84 people, according to the census. The number of households continues to rise faster than the rate of population growth, due to declining household size.

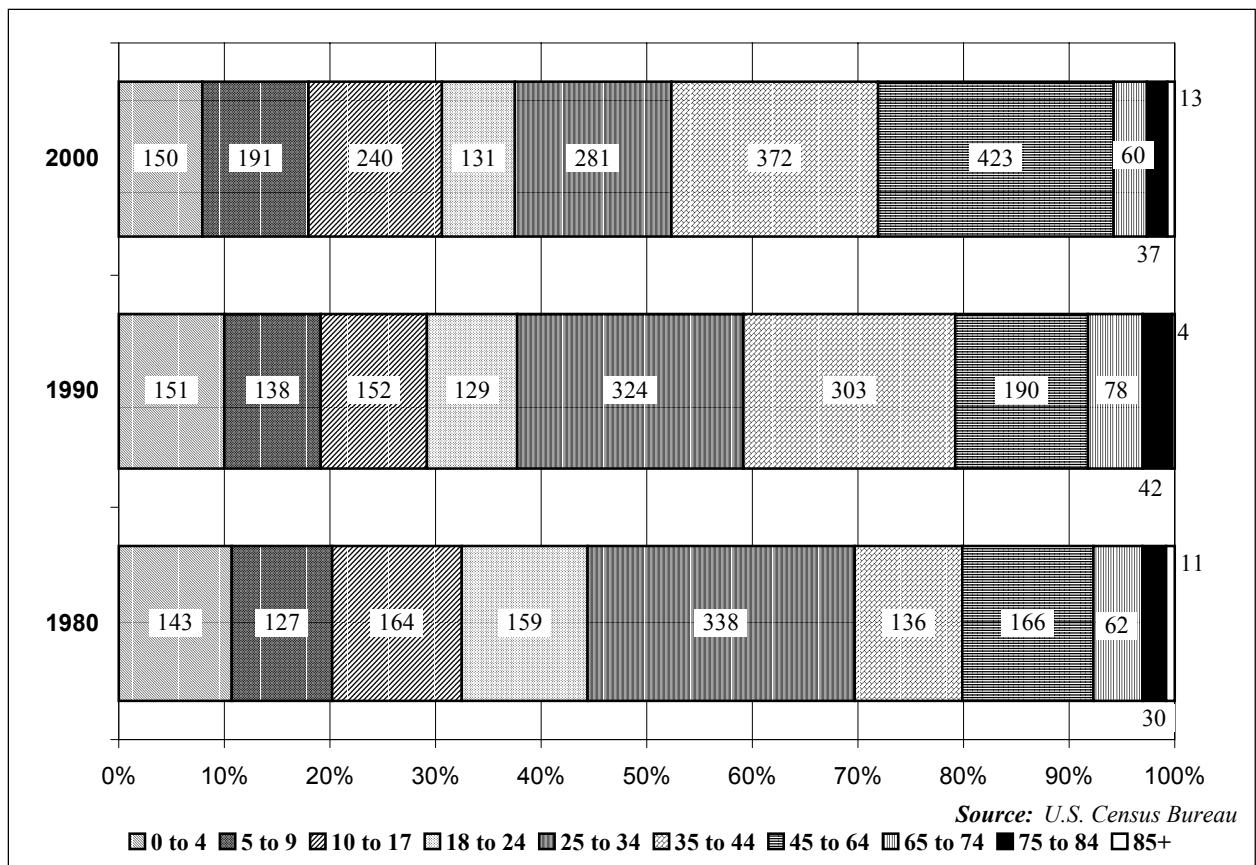
Of Starksboro's households in 2000, 395 or 59 percent were married-couple families, 223 of

which had children under age 18. 119 people lived alone.

### Population Density

Starksboro's overall population density was over 41 people per square mile in 2000, an increase of nearly 27 people per square mile since 1970. However, there are several settlement areas in Starksboro with much higher population densities.

**Figure 4: Starksboro's Population by Age Group 1980 to 2000**







# HOUSING

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## Goals and Strategies

- 1. Continue to provide the diverse range of housing types now prevalent throughout Starksboro.**
- 2. Assure high quality, affordable housing for all Starksboro residents, but at the same time discourage overdevelopment of one particular type of housing.**
  - A. Review and administer all housing development proposals utilizing our regulations to ensure that the Town will provide an equitable mix of housing types, but will not result in Starksboro providing more than its regional fair share of any one type or price of housing.
- 3. Encourage housing that will allow Starksboro's elderly residents to continue to live in the community.**
  - A. Develop a plan for housing needs of the elderly.
- 4. Encourage development to occur in Starksboro's high-density districts.**
- 5. Maintain Starksboro's historic buildings.**
- 6. Discourage residential development on the open agricultural areas and in those sections of Starksboro that are far from any services.**
  - A. Continue to monitor, and adjust, if necessary, the present land use districts in the Town to be consistent with the goals of this Plan.
  - B. Review all housing development through our existing zoning and subdivision regulations.
  - C. Discourage the conversion of seasonal camps located in the Forest and Conservation District to year-round residences.

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## Data and Analysis

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

Changes in Starksboro's population and housing needs are likely to reflect changes in the economic pressures of northwestern Vermont.

Employment changes at large employers such as Middlebury College, IBM, UVM, Fletcher-Allen Health Care, IDX and others now influence the pattern of development in bedroom communities like Starksboro.

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

- ◆ The Town's rural character and lack of public transportation, which leads to heavy reliance on personal transportation;

- ◆ Economic variables tied to growth or constriction of large employers in the region; and
- ◆ The stated goals of this Plan related to preservation of rural, small-town character, agriculture and forested landscape.

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

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

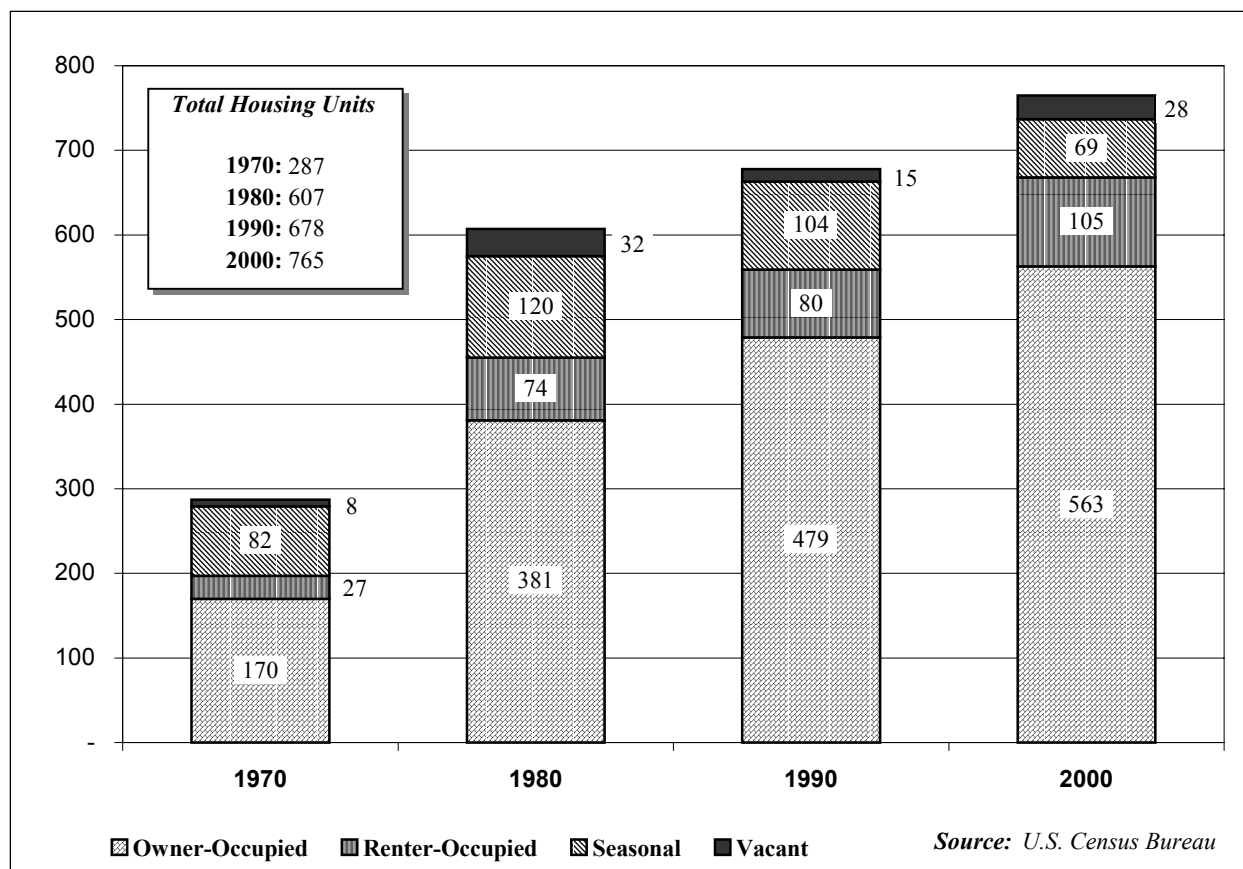
## Growth in Housing

Over the last 30 years, Starksboro's housing stock, like its population, has grown rapidly with nearly 500 new year-round homes being built.

Since 1993, Starksboro has issued an average of 11 building permits for new structures a year. Since 1990, there have been, on average, seven subdivision requests resulting in the creation of more than 13 new lots annually.

As shown in Figure 5, some of the increase in year-round housing has come from the conversion of seasonal camps to year-round use. This type of conversion has been particularly prevalent in South Starksboro and along the Ireland Road. Both these areas are heavily forested with steep slopes and shallow soils.

**Figure 5: Growth in Housing 1970 to 2000**



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

### Affordable Housing

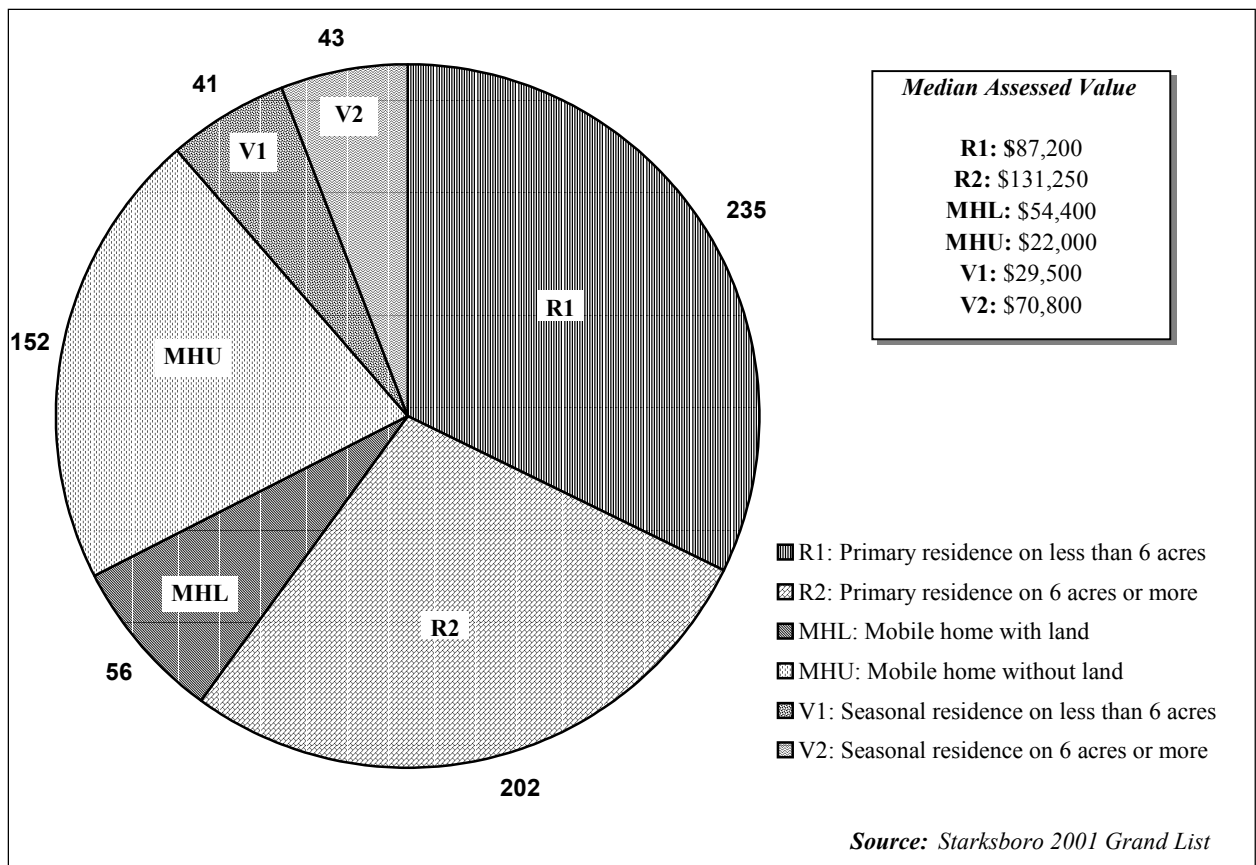
The type of housing found in Starksboro is overwhelmingly single-family homes, either as "stick built" or as sited mobile homes (Fig. 6).

Starksboro was an early leader in accepting a sizable share of their housing in mobile homes. In 1980, Addison County as a whole had about nine percent of its housing stock in mobile homes. At that time, Starksboro had almost 25 percent of its housing dedicated to mobile

homes. As seen in Figure 7, this trend has continued. Currently, mobile and manufactured housing is the affordable choice for low and middle-income households in Starksboro, the region and the state as a whole.

Mobile homes are located on individual parcels throughout the community and within mobile home parks. Addison County Community Trust owns three mobile home parks in Town in which the residents own the mobile homes and lease a site.

**Figure 6: Starksboro's Housing by Type 2001**



### Seasonal Camps in the FCD

The Forest and Conservation District (FCD) provides many of the values critical to Starksboro. Starksboro's extensive and largely contiguous forest provides wildlife habitat, cleans the water, provides fresh air and the opportunity to "get away from it all" for a while.

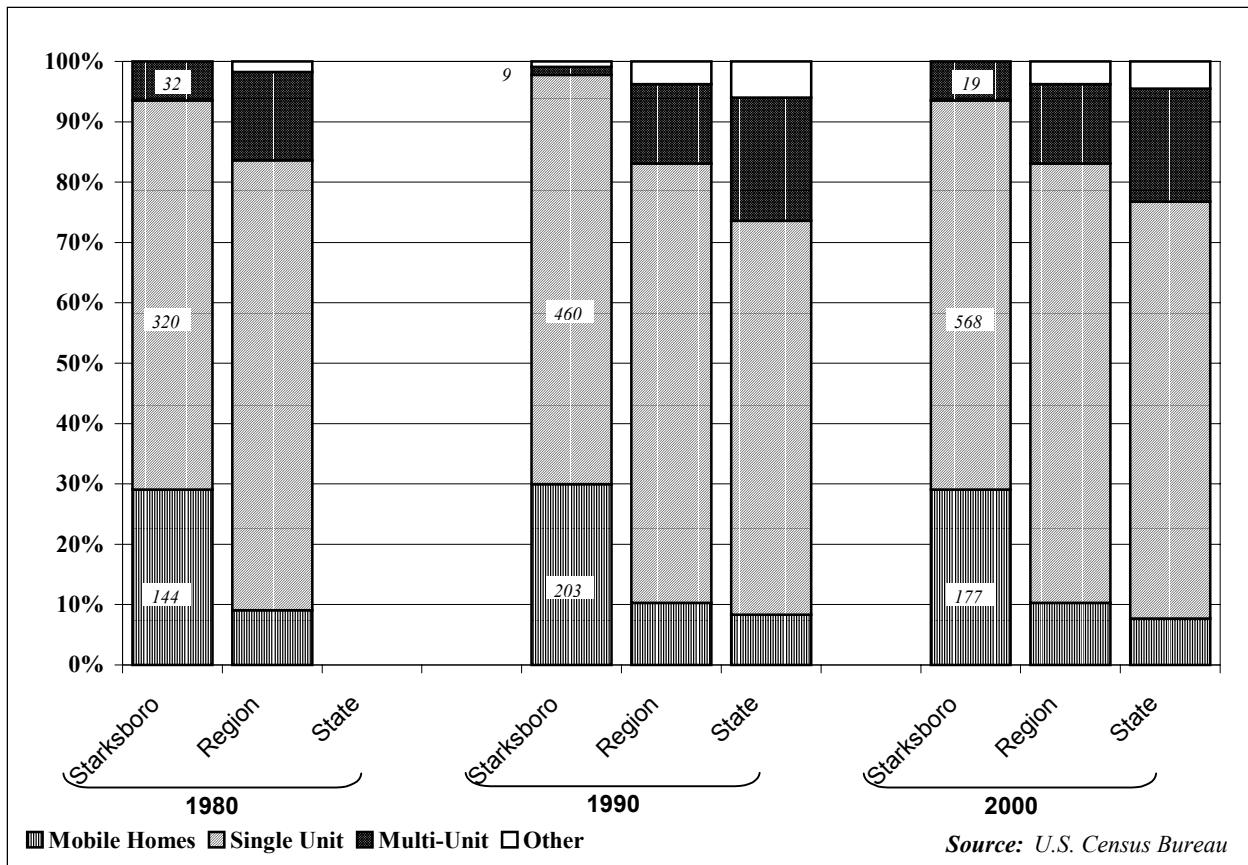
Many of these areas are particularly susceptible to damage from development, either due to poor soils, occupation by species that are easily displaced by human activities, or because the area is in the upper reaches of the watershed where small quantities of pollutants can have a cumulative impact on water quality. Much remains to be learned about how humans can live in sensitive areas without causing undue

disturbance. Increasing our understanding in this area is critically important to improved planning for the district.

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

Furthermore, development in this area would be costly to the Town due to the difficulty of providing services to these remote areas. Although no local studies have been conducted, nationally a number of studies examining the

**Figure 7: Comparison of Housing by Type 1980 to 2000**



cost of serving spread-out development versus compact development have been carried out by academics, groups representing developers and government agencies. Each concludes that spread-out development is more expensive.

Municipal and education costs rise because the per unit cost of activities such as maintaining roads, snow plowing and busing school children is higher as longer distances have to be served. Studies indicate that these increased costs are paid for either in higher costs of housing or higher property taxes.

Use of land in the FCD should be restricted to sustainable forestry that meets minimum accepted management practice standards, low-impact recreation, sustainable harvesting of non-timber forest products and seasonal camps as a conditional use.

The Town currently regulates seasonal use based on a standard of not more than 100 days occupancy per year. Comments received at a public forum in December 1998 suggested that there was strong support for the goals of the district, but there was interest in achieving these goals through alternatives to the 100-day rule.

Reflecting on this forum, the Planning Commission believes that implementing a set of standards that speak directly to the seasonal nature of the buildings, rather than trying to determine and enforce a maximum length of use, would better achieve the goals of the district. Therefore, the Planning Commission will work to modify the conditional use standards of the district to enable greater flexibility in the district while actively seeking to achieve the district's goals.

The Planning Commission wants to ensure that seasonal camps in the FCD are not converted to year-round homes. To accomplish this goal, revisions to the zoning regulations will be needed. The commission will implement

conditions to seasonal-use permits to prevent adverse impacts in the FCD and limit the negative impact on the Town's fiscal condition of seasonal camp conversion. Such conditions should:

- ◆ Prevent occupants of a seasonal dwelling from receiving municipal services such as attending school and registering as a voter in Town, unless the owner has a year-round residence elsewhere in Starksboro.
- ◆ Substantially reduce noise through mechanisms like limiting hours of generator operation or placing generators inside an insulated box.
- ◆ Minimize outdoor lighting of any structure by downshielding, reduced wattage and restricting use of timers and motion detectors. Prevent outdoor lights from being left on overnight.
- ◆ Restrict openings in the forest canopy for construction of roads, structures or power lines.

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

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

### **Multiple Dwellings per Lot**

The Planning Commission has encountered cases where a landowner has sufficient acreage to subdivide, but wants to build additional housing without subdividing the parcel.

When the zoning and subdivision regulations are amended, the Town should consider regulations that enable a landowner to construct additional housing on their lot, provided that the required permits are issued. Part of the criteria for allowing the additional house should be that an

approvable subdivision plan be included in the permit for each dwelling.

### **Farm Worker Housing**

Working farms have traditionally offered farm employee housing as part of the labor arrangement. Today farms in Starksboro face many challenges attracting and keeping employees. Retaining the option of offering housing as a part of the employment package is a strategy supported in this Town Plan.

Future amendments to the zoning and subdivision regulations should consider enabling working farms to construct additional housing, specifically for farm labor, without obtaining a subdivision permit. All other aspects of the zoning bylaws would still apply.

Any such regulation should clearly state that farmers should consider the potential for creating a subdivision in the future, including the potential to lose that option if the employee housing is built in a location that prevents a legal subdivision in the future.

### **Multi-Family Housing**

As family size continues to decline and Starksboro's elderly population increases, there may be an increased demand for smaller, rental housing. Additionally, there are larger, older homes and outbuildings in Starksboro that could be converted to income-producing, multi-family housing.

Starksboro's zoning regulations currently allow for two-family homes and elderly housing as a conditional use in the High Density Residential and Commercial District. Accessory or "mother-in-law" apartments as required by the state are allowed in an existing owner-occupied residence if the statutory criteria are met.

When discussing future amendments to the zoning and subdivision regulations the Planning Commission should consider allowing for accessory apartments or multi-family housing in the High Density Residential and Commercial District.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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## Goals and Strategies

1. **Seek new, well-compensated economic opportunities that utilize the skills of local residents (traditional crafts to new technologies) while supporting the Town's goals related to preservation of rural character, agriculture and forested landscape.**
    - A. Seek data pertaining to the trend toward increased numbers of telecommuters in Starksboro, particularly the impact this form of employment has on Town resources, culture, dynamics and other criteria.
  2. **Build a Town economy based on clean businesses that provide healthy working conditions and reasonable compensation for local people and that minimally impact the environment.**
  3. **Sustain Starksboro's agricultural economy, encouraging future generations to continue farming in Town.**
  4. **Support continued small-scale commercial activity in Starksboro's downtown.**
- 

## Data and Analysis

### Agriculture

Historically, much of Starksboro's economic base was tied to agriculture and forestry with these industries providing many of the jobs for early residents of the Town. In more recent times, the economic base of Starksboro has shifted, with most residents now working in service industries outside the community.

According to the 1980 Census, 62 Starksboro residents worked in agriculture or forestry. In 2000, that number had fallen to 32.

Five dairy and two market gardening farms remain in Starksboro, located in the Lewis Creek Valley. Availability of housing for farm labor has become a critical issue in recruitment and retention of farm employees (See Housing Section).

There are many high quality sugar maple orchards in Town, a beef farm in Hinesburg

Hollow and a number of small "supplemental" farms.

The lands occupied by these farms, together with part time farming operations, keep the land open with scenic vistas. Open land also exists in the hill country area where part-time agricultural operations continue to be pursued.

### Place of Employment

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

A growing, but unknown number of people work out of their homes or telecommute. Figure 8 seems to contradict that perception, since it

shows that the number of people working at home has declined since 1980. However, given the decline in the number of people working on their own farms, there has likely been an increase in other types of work people are doing at home. The Town should have a better understanding of this trend.

### Commuting

Over the past 20 years, the average travel time to work has increased only slightly for Starksboro's commuting residents from just under 31 minutes to just over 32 minutes.

In 1990, approximately 200 Starksboro residents worked in Burlington and another 120 worked in South Burlington. Forty-six percent of Starksboro's workforce was employed in these

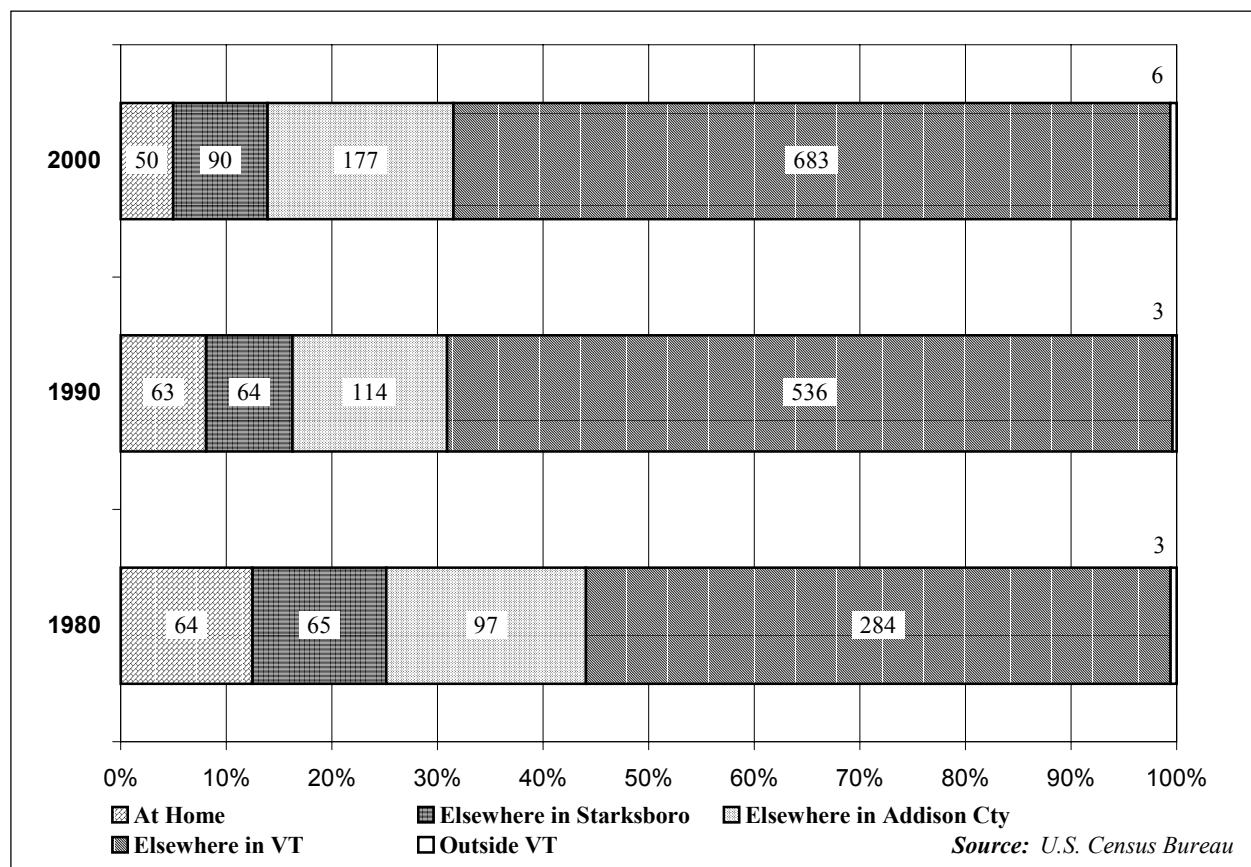
two cities.

In 2000, 85 percent of commuters leaving Starksboro drove alone and 12 percent carpooled. This is a significant decline in carpooling since 1980, when 38 percent of commuters shared a ride.

### Employment by Type

Over the past 20 years, the primary economic sectors employing Starksboro's residents have shifted. As seen in Figure 9, the percentage of people employed in agriculture and manufacturing has declined, while the number working in trade, education and healthcare have increased.

**Figure 8: Place of Work for Starksboro's Residents 1980 to 2000**





### **Income**

Income levels in Starksboro have risen over the past 20 years at rates higher than state and regional averages. Family median income (FMI), when adjusted for inflation, has risen more than \$13,500 to nearly \$47,000.

This rise is the result of several factors. The percentage of people working in higher-paid management and professional occupations has increased. More significantly however, most families in Starksboro are two-income. Median income in 1999 for all those employed was just over \$23,000, just about half the FMI.

### **Downtown Development**

Historically, Starksboro's hamlets and village center were a mix of residential, commercial and industrial activity. Over time, these settlements

have become predominately residential and the number of businesses has declined.

For Starksboro's residents, the downtowns of Bristol and Hinesburg are close-by and provide many needed services. Starksboro's village centers remain appropriate places for small-scale commercial activity, light industry and agricultural operations.

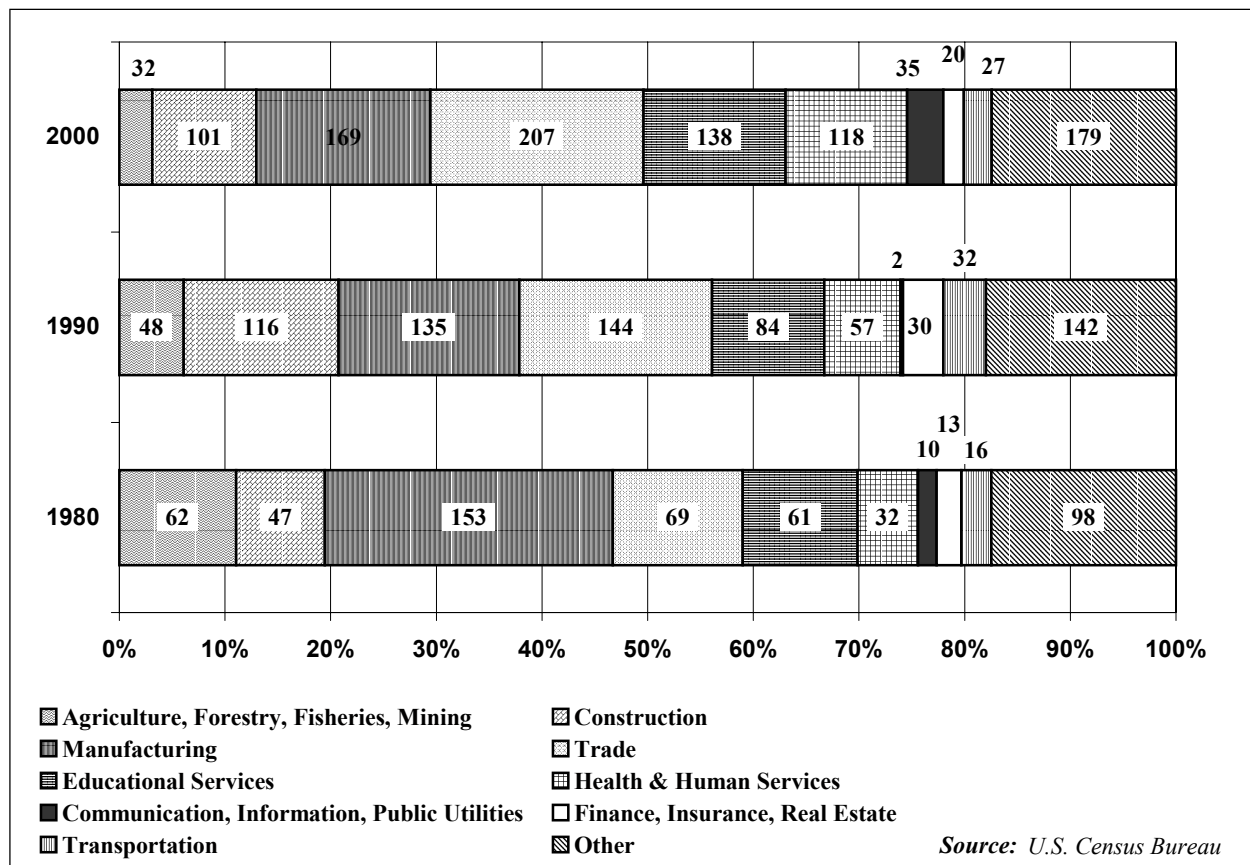
### **Economic Development**

The economic climate in the Chittenden-Addison County region has a significant impact on Starksboro's economy, however the Town's ability to have any significant impact on economic development in the region is very limited. Starksboro has the power to manage economic change only within the Town itself.

Economic development in Starksboro should be evaluated based on how new businesses affect neighbors and the community as a whole. Starksboro's zoning regulations outline specific evaluation criteria, but in the review process special consideration should be given to public safety, potential danger to community health,

pollution, adverse impact on natural resources, drainage problems, traffic, light and noise pollution. In addition, the business' impact on facilities and Town services, tax structure and the potential to adversely affect Starksboro's rural character and scenic beauty should be considered.

**Figure 9: Type of Employment for Starksboro's Residents 1980 to 2000**



# EDUCATION

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## Goals and Strategies

1. **Maintain and continue to improve the quality of the educational programs at Robinson School, Mount Abraham Union High School and the Addison County Vocational Center as resources permit.**
  2. **Work with the supervisory district to develop more accurate projections of population growth that are more sensitive to the actual conditions affecting the community.**
- 

## Data and Analysis

### Facilities

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

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

The Robinson School Philosophy fosters cooperation and respect, promotes responsibility and learning, and encourages family awareness and involvement. The school believes a nurturing environment has a positive effect on the attitude, interaction and learning of children. The school encourages active community involvement and maintains a high standard of education.

The school develops a “local action plan” as required under state statutes, to state how the

school will improve the performance of all the students enrolled in the school. This Plan details goals and strategies for improving student learning. Budget priorities for instruction have been tied to action plan with positive results.

### Enrollment

In the fall of 2000, there were 233 students at the Robinson School. Student enrollment between 1975 and 2000 has been variable from year to year. However, the overall trend has been for enrollments to continue to rise. During the 1990s, enrollment increased by 90 students, an average annual growth rate of 4.5 percent.

The 2000 Census indicated that there were approximately 150 children under age five in Starksboro. These children will be entering the school system over the next few years. That is a smaller number than are in the age five to nine group.

The enrollment at Robinson School is projected to peak and then to decrease slightly for the following five years. A sustained growth spurt is projected to follow.

Two important pieces of data the projections do not take into account are the number of building permits issued each year and job growth within a commutable distance from the Town.

Given the school's capacity, current facilities are anticipated to be adequate if the community's growth rate does not change significantly. Total capacity, however, does not address any individual program limitations. The lack of storage space was identified as an on-going problem.

### Future Needs

During the 1990s, Starksboro was the only Addison County town whose average family size rose. In 2000, it was 3.37 people.

Between 1993 and 2000, the Town has issued an average of 11 building permits annually for a total of 90. Currently, it is estimated that each new house contributes one to 1.5 students.

One identified facility need is the improvement in safety and circulation on the Route 116 side of the school, and the ingress and egress from Parsonage Road.

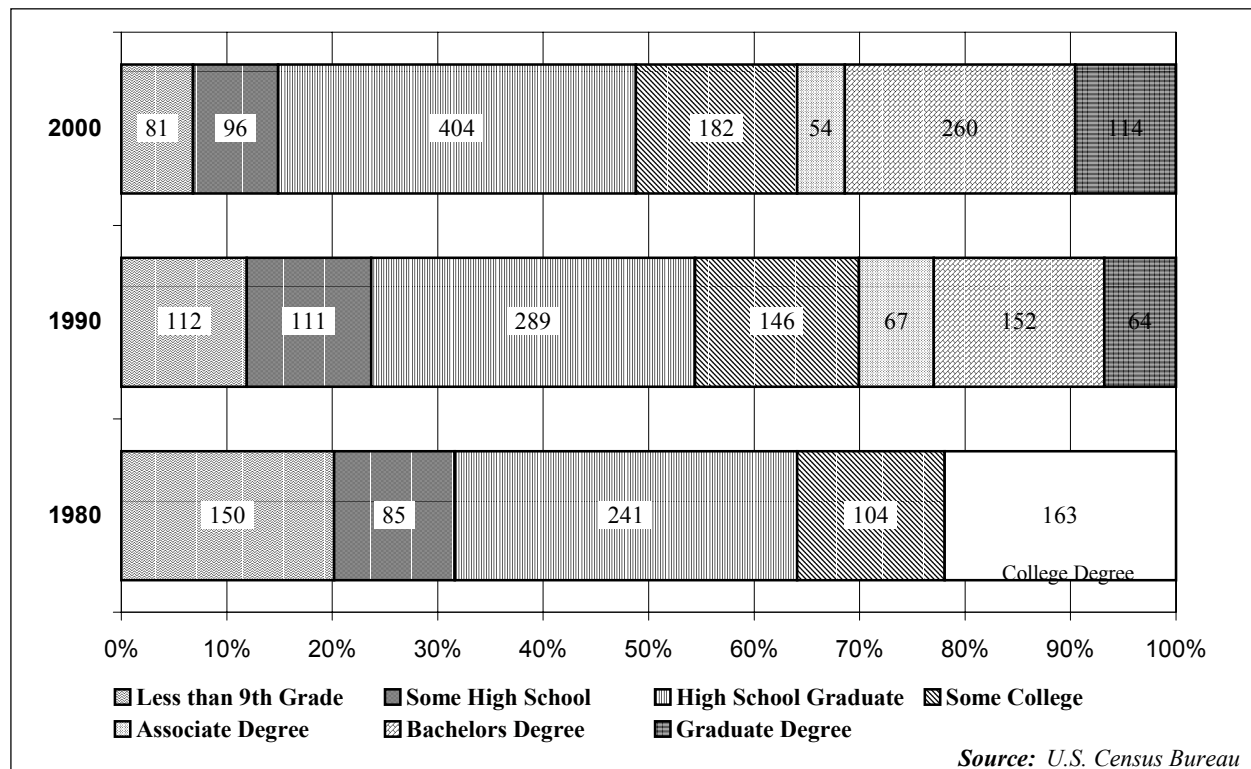
### School Funding

Act 60 initiated a new method of determining need and obtaining funding for new educational facilities. Through a statewide application process, proposals are reviewed and decisions regarding funding are rendered by the legislature on an annual basis.

Robinson School has been expanded three times in the recent past. Additions were constructed at the school in 1976, 1985 and again in 1989. The first addition was financed with federal funds, the second and third were funded by bond issues. The Town has significant bonded indebtedness.

Any further expenditures prior to when the bonds are paid off would put a significant burden on Starksboro residents.

**Figure 10: Education Level in Starksboro 1980 to 2000**



# COMMUNITY UTILITIES, FACILITIES AND SERVICES

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## Goals and Strategies

- 1. Achieve a rate and pattern of development and population growth that is consistent with the Town's ability to assimilate new residents and development and that will minimize the impact on the fiscal condition of the Town.**
    - A. Develop a capital program and budget that will assess the fiscal condition of the Town and decide upon a rate of population, housing and budget growth consistent with that assessment and the Town's ability to meet its current and future obligations. Seek state and regional funding or assistance to develop the budget and program.
    - B. Establish a growth management program.
    - C. Consider adopting a reasonable impact fee ordinance to offset the municipal and community costs of development.
    - D. Discourage development that will have a negative impact on the Town's fiscal condition.
    - E. Encourage development that adds significantly to the Town's tax base while increasing only minimally the demand for Town services.
  - 2. Discourage municipal wastewater treatment systems.**
  - 3. Maintain groundwater quality to allow for continued development of clean, untreated drinking water sources.**
    - A. Use all feasible means to safeguard the purity of drinking water supplies in the Watershed Protection District.
  - 4. No nuclear power facilities or commercial storage sites for hazardous materials will be located in Starksboro.**
  - 5. Discourage energy transmission lines that travel through or within Town boundaries, including gas and high voltage electric.**
  - 6. Encourage co-location of telecommunication infrastructure on existing towers or structures and discourage placement of telecommunication towers in visually or environmentally sensitive areas.**
    - A. Improve and strengthen the telecommunications section of Starksboro's zoning.
  - 7. Continue to support high quality fire and rescue services in Starksboro.**
    - A. Establish dry hydrants at selected points in Town to facilitate water access for fire equipment.
  - 8. Continue planning for the Town's solid waste disposal needs.**
-

## **Data and Analysis**

### **Community Facilities**

The Town Hall was constructed in 1911. It is located in the village and is available for a variety of community activities such as weddings, educational activities or classes.

Jerusalem Schoolhouse/Fire Station #2, located on about an acre of Town-owned land in South Starksboro, is used for local meetings and activities and for the storage of a fire department pumper.

The Robinson School located on Parsonage Road and Route 116 is the principal facility for school functions, Town meetings, elections, sports, fundraising affairs and other community gatherings.

The municipal building located in the village, was constructed in 1972 with a vault for record storage, the Town clerk's office and a conference room. In 1986-1987 a lister's office and a storage room were added. In 2002, the Town voted to purchase the Shepard property on Route 116 in the village for a future site of Town office functions.

The Starksboro Post Office also located in the village was built in 1976 on Town property and leased to the U.S. Postal Service.

A Town garage, built in 1975, provides for the housing and repair of Town equipment in a five-bay facility. There is also a separate salt shed on the site.

In 1998 the Town voted to purchase, with the assistance of the Vermont Land Trust, the Cota

Farm and former Colton Gravel Pit with its facilities. The two riparian areas associated with Lewis Creek were retained in Town ownership for a combination of protection and recreation.

The Town uses the former Colton gravel pit for its gravel needs. The steel building associated with the gravel pit now houses Starksboro's Volunteer Fire Department. A large wooded parcel is privately owned and the four farm related parcels remain with the Vermont Land Trust.

### **Town Land and Holdings**

Starksboro owns seven acres that contain a gravel pit with a limited supply of gravel for regular maintenance of local roads. This land was also the site of the Town's capped landfill. In 1998 the Town acquired the 42 acres, which comprised the former Cota/Colton gravel pit operation.

Two "farms" in Hillsboro make up the Town forest. In 1998, as described above, the Town acquired two riparian areas both west of Route 116. The northern area, approximately 92 acres, is located north of State's Prison Hollow Road. The southern area, around 63 acres, containing the ball field is located south of State's Prison Hollow Road.

### **Starksboro's Current Fiscal Condition**

The only significant revenue base for the Town is the property tax. The Grand List in 2001 was composed of around 940 parcels with a total real value of approximately \$77 million. As seen in Figure 11, housing, including mobile homes, comprised nearly 75 percent of the total value.

Two state agencies, Forest and Parks and Fish and Wildlife own a total of 2,331 acres in Starksboro. Payment in lieu of taxes is computed at one percent of fair market value. Land enrolled in Use Value Appraisal prior to state ownership remains in this program once transferred to the state and is taxed based on the per acre value of \$103 per acre (or one percent of the Use Value for lands enrolled in this program).

In 2001, Fish and Wildlife paid Starksboro nearly \$4,000 on a total of about 2,000 acres (860 acres of which were enrolled in the Use Value program). Forest and Parks paid about \$1,000 on nearly 400 acres (126 acres of which were enrolled in the Use Value program) in 2001. Total payment in lieu of taxes made to the

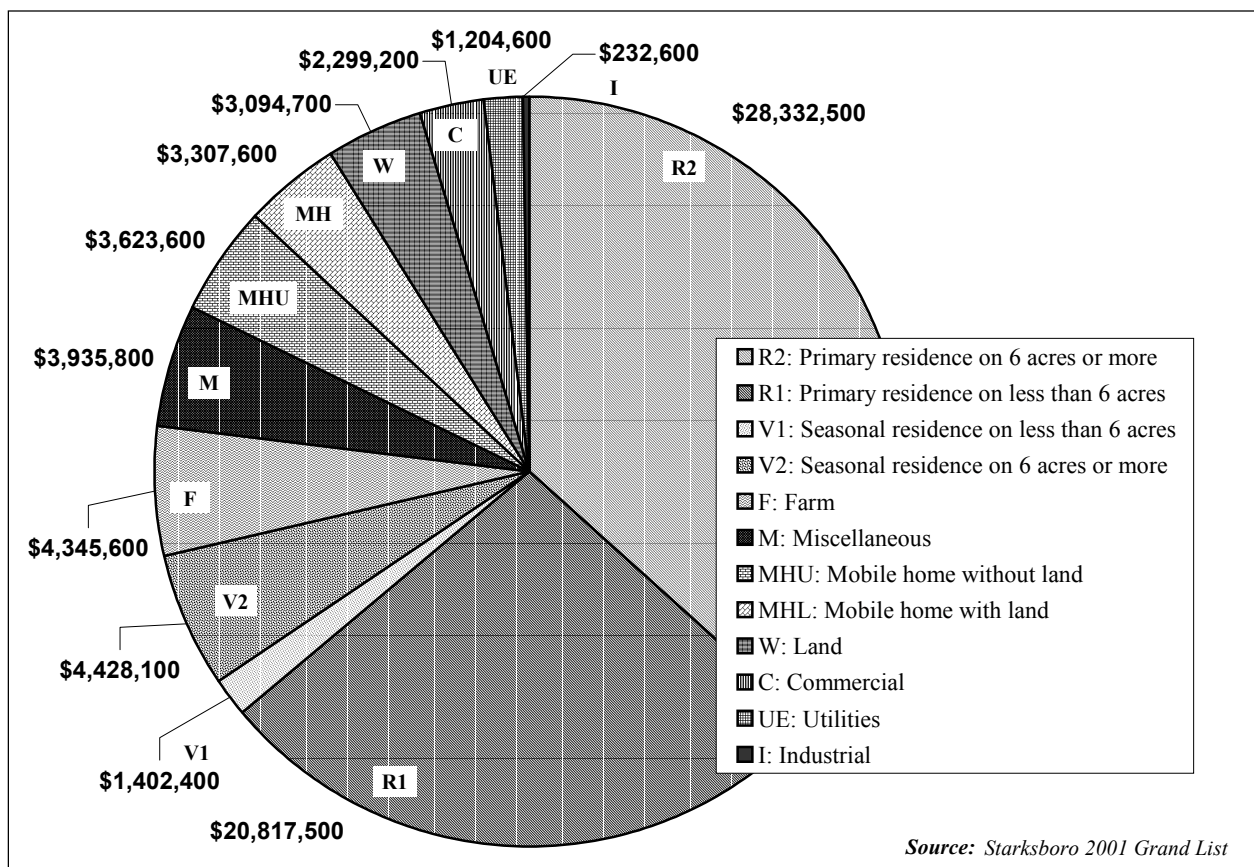
Town of Starksboro by the state in 2001 was approximately \$5,000.

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

### Library

The Friendship Homemakers Extension Club started the Starksboro Public Library in 1972. Run by volunteer librarians, it has been housed in the basement of the Village Meeting House, and hallway and basement of Robinson School, in space within the school library. It is currently

**Figure 11: Starksboro's Grand List 2001**



on the ground floor of the Starksboro Town Hall.

The library became a Town organization in 1976 with a very modest budget. Finally, in 2001, the first paid librarian was hired and the library moved into the Town Hall, transforming the space into an inviting community resource.

Currently there are nearly 275 patrons and almost 3,500 volumes. Besides books for everyone from babies to seniors, the library offers computers with internet access, music CDs, magazines and newspapers and books on tape.

The Starksboro Public Library has established goals and objectives to advance its mission of fostering a community of readers. Some of those include:

- ◆ Finding larger and more accessible space for the library within five years;
- ◆ Increasing library hours within two years;
- ◆ Developing a variety of programs for the community; and
- ◆ Coordinating with other Town and community literacy programs.

### **Cemeteries**

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

- ◆ Village Cemetery, Route 116
- ◆ Hillsboro Cemetery, Hillsboro Road
- ◆ Crowley Road Cemetery
- ◆ Cemetery by Ruby Brace land, behind Dan Paquette
- ◆ Mason Hill Cemetery
- ◆ Jerusalem Cemetery
- ◆ Ireland Road Cemetery
- ◆ Quaker Meeting Cemetery, Dan Sargent Road

- ◆ Cemetery by Red Schoolhouse, Ireland Road
- ◆ Rounds Cemetery
- ◆ Green Mountain Cemetery, Cemetery Road

The Green Mount Cemetery Association oversees the Green Mount Cemetery, which contains the only vault in Town. At this time it is the only cemetery with lots for sale. In 1983 the fifth division was laid out with 1,094 total possible burial sites. Over the last 13 years, 14 lots have been sold. It is the association's assessment that there is ample burial space for the near future.

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

### **Starksboro Volunteer Fire Department**

Starksboro Fire Department has been incorporated as a private nonprofit since 1959. The department serves the entire Town of Starksboro, as well as the area of Buels Gore. The Fire Department is funded through private effort and budget contributions from the Town.

During 1998-1999 there were two significant changes in the department's infrastructure. With the Town's help they acquired the former Colton building, which houses vehicles and equipment, and provides improved space for training. During the fall of 1999 the department took possession of a new (1999) pumper, a 1,250 pump with 1,000-gallon capacity.

The former Colton building has become Fire Station #1 and houses the pumper truck, the 1986 Mack 2,500-gallon tanker truck and the 1977 utility truck. Fire Station #2 is a single bay



facility located in Jerusalem. The 2002 pumper with a 1,250 pump and 1,000-gallon capacity is housed in this location. The Old Fire Station #1 now houses the Starksboro Rescue Squad.

There are currently neither fire hydrants nor dry hydrants in Starksboro, but it is anticipated that a dry hydrant will be located on the property of the Common Ground Center off Route 116 south of Town.

The department's calls are dispatched through the Shelburne Police Department. The department is a member of Addison County Mutual Aid, and also has mutual aid arrangements with Huntington and Hinesburg.

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

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

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

### **Rescue and First Response Squads**

In Vermont, emergency services organizations are organized into three levels. There are Emergency Medical Services Districts. Starksboro is located in District #7, which

includes the Towns of Starksboro, Monkton, New Haven, Bristol and Lincoln.

Under the EMS Districts there are licensed emergency transport services, which for Starksboro is Bristol Rescue Squad Inc.

The most direct link to emergency services for Starksboro residents is the Town's licensed first response squad that works in association with the Bristol rescue. The squad arrives on the scene of an emergency before the ambulance to treat, stabilize and prepare patients that need transport.

In 1998 the squad had an average response time of 4 minutes. The actual response time varies by the location in Town relative to where squad members are when a call is received. The fire department provides important assistance to the squad in car accidents, lifting and other special calls (such as woods rescues).

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

The Emergency Rescue Unit of the Starksboro Volunteer Fire Department, the "First Response Squad," is a nonprofit volunteer group. The squad was first formed in May 1975. In 1999, with the movement of the Fire Department to the former Colton building, the squad secured the use of Old Fire Station #1, their first dedicated facility, which provided improved training, meeting and storage space.

Currently the squad has two defibrillators. This equipment has been proven to increase the

survival rate of heart attack victims when used within the first few minutes after the heart has stopped beating. Thus, having one defibrillator, together with additional oxygen units, located “Up-South” may improve the chances of a Jerusalem or Buels Gore resident’s survival.

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

At this time the squad has five EMT and one ECA members some trained to advanced levels such as EMT-I (intravenous certified) or EMT-D (defibrillator certified). There is a standing need for more trained volunteers. Due to the significant amount of time and resources required to train new members, one year of residency in Starksboro is required prior to initiating the training program.

The squad offers CPR training each year to people who are interested in learning this most basic level of medical intervention.

Emergency services are provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week with backup from Bristol when required. Bristol’s response time runs about 15 to 20 minutes depending on where in Town a call is located.

### **Law Enforcement**

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

The Addison County Sheriff’s Office also has jurisdiction to provide law enforcement and public safety services such as transport of

prisoners and some special needs patients, court security at the county court, and crowd control and traffic control. They are the agency primarily responsible for civil service process in the county.

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

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

### **Water**

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

In Starksboro Village many people are served by the Starksboro Aqueduct Co. (SAC), a privately incorporated water system. Spring fed, the system supplies 63 private connections as well as two farms, the Robinson School and the Town Hall. The size of the pipe connecting the spring with system customers is limited to its present size - four inches - by deed restriction. The nearby privately owned “Creamery Spring” supplies about 10 connections.

SAC conditionally leased, at virtually no cost the Aqueduct Company's infrastructure to a cooperative of the system's users who are now responsible for operating the system on a nonprofit basis. Now that the system is operating as a nonprofit it is eligible to apply for revolving grant funding to address system improvements that were not available to the system when it was a privately held water system.

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

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

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

### **Wastewater**

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

Until July 2007, all parcels in Starksboro will continue to be covered by the Town's sewer ordinance. Subdivisions, construction, additions, changes in use and system replacements will be regulated by the new statewide regulations by 2007.

### **Solid Waste**

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

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

At least once per year a household hazardous waste drop is held in Starksboro for the convenience of the townspeople.

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

### **Electrical Service**

Three separate electric power companies serve Starksboro. Vermont Electric Cooperative serves

the northeastern part of Town. Green Mountain Power services the northwestern and central part of Town. Central Vermont Public Service Corporation serves the southwestern part of Town. There are no major transmission facilities (33-46 kV lines or 115 kV lines) running through the community and no power generation facilities of any size.

### **Telecommunication Towers**

Demand for telecommunications is likely to develop rapidly in coming years and this demand must be balanced with the Town's goals of protecting environmental quality, human health, historic character, agricultural and rural uses, the tourist economy and aesthetics.

Before any new telecommunications towers or structures are constructed, all existing towers should be considered as alternative co-location sites and evidence presented that demonstrates these sites are not feasible before new sites are developed. Utilization of existing structures such as silos and steeples should also be considered.

Any new telecommunication facilities should employ the least visually obtrusive technology with the lowest environmental impact available. Telecommunications facilities should not be located in environmentally sensitive areas. Developers of telecommunication facilities may be required to conduct an environmental impact statement of their proposed site.

In revising the zoning regulations, the Planning Commission will address specific requirements for telecommunications towers and similar structures such as high voltage electric transmission. To be compatible with this Plan such structures would need to:

- ◆ Respect the integrity of residential areas, agricultural uses and natural resources.
- ◆ Minimize aesthetic impacts. Equipment sheds can be hidden in trees or constructed such that their style match local agricultural

or other nearby structures. Depending on site-specific circumstances, tower structures may be monopole, lattice or other structure that minimizes aesthetic impacts. Structures should be of appropriate colors and minimal reflectivity.

- ◆ Be screened from view to the greatest extent possible.
- ◆ Minimize ecological impacts.
- ◆ Co-locate wherever possible, unless the Planning Commission determines that separate facilities would create less visual impact or disturbance to the community.
- ◆ Be only as tall as absolutely necessary. Where towers are located within tree lines, they should be made extendable, so they can "grow" with the trees, and maintain the minimum height above the treetops.
- ◆ Not be lighted or marked. In any case where it is subsequently determined that a tower is required by federal regulation to have obstruction marking or lighting, the least visually obtrusive marking or lighting scheme allowable should be used. Any lights used would need to be shielded in order to minimize aesthetic impacts and cast light only where it is needed.
- ◆ Have no commercial signs or lettering. Signage should be limited to that required by federal or state regulation.
- ◆ Maintain all facilities including, but not limited to, painting, structural integrity and landscaping.

Any permits granted for telecommunications or similar facilities will be for a limited time period. Permits may also have annual reporting requirements. This will allow for periodic review and new permit conditions that reflect advances in knowledge, experience and technology.

Equipment should be downsized as technology improves and should be removed when no longer used or needed. The zoning regulations should establish specific standards regarding removal of structures once operations have ceased and should set bond requirements to ensure that funds are available to properly decommission the site.

# TRANSPORTATION

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## Goals and Strategies

- 1. Maintain a safe roadway network that meets the needs of automobiles, pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as other users within the Town's financial means.**
    - A. Develop and implement a program to maintain Town roads consistent with their use and with state standards established for their class.
    - B. Develop a roadway system that enables agriculture to flourish at a scale appropriate to Starksboro.
    - C. Develop a policy to slow speeding traffic and improve traffic safety, especially within Starksboro's high-density districts.
    - D. Develop a bike/walking path to connect the village to the Cota field.
    - E. Develop a roadway system that recognizes the needs of wildlife populations and seeks to minimize disruptions to wildlife travel corridors.
    - F. Limit truck size and transportation of hazardous materials in Town. Discourage use or designation of roads in Starksboro as "truck routes."
  - 2. Limit upgrades to the classification of Town roads, the expansion of the Town highway system and the acceptance of new roads.**
    - A. Develop a Town policy on extension and upgrade of Town roads consistent with this Plan.
    - B. Approve extensions or acceptance only when such action will not adversely affect Town finances, public safety or conflict with other Town goals.
    - C. Develop a policy on trip generation.
  - 3. Regulate access to public roads to maintain safe and efficient use of those roads.**
    - A. Minimize the number of curb cuts onto state and Town roads.
    - B. When curb cuts are constructed, they should be built to provide safe, level entry and exit to the public road. Road and driveway entrances and exits for vehicles shall be designed to accommodate expected traffic levels, provide smooth flows, allow for controlled and coordinated turning movements and minimize hazards.
    - C. Access to year-round homes and subdivisions must allow for access by fire and emergency equipment. Homes will not be sited in locations that due to slope, length of drive, angle of switchbacks or other access issue preclude the safe and reasonable access to the home by fire and emergency equipment.
    - D. Resolve existing discrepancies in current zoning and subdivision regulations related to the definitions of "roads" and "driveways."
  - 4. Develop minimum road construction and maintenance standards.**
    - A. Develop a roadway system that manages water-related issues including erosion, runoff and flooding.
  - 5. Reduce reliance on personal automobile use.**
    - A. Promote energy-efficient modes of transportation, public transportation, carpooling and other alternatives that reduce reliance on the automobile and petroleum products.
-

## **Data and Analysis**

### **State Highways**

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

In 1997 the Route 116 area was included in a traffic calming study commissioned by Addison County Regional Planning Commission. The study found Route 116 in Starksboro Village to have an average daily traffic volume of nearly 3,000 vehicles per day. In 2000, the average daily volume on Route 116 through Starksboro was 2,400 at the Bristol town line and 3,400 at the Hinesburg town line.

Due to a combination of excessive speeds, traffic accidents, pedestrian volumes, as well as the high traffic volumes, Starksboro village was ranked the area in greatest need of traffic calming measures among the five Addison County towns examined. The study concluded with recommendations for traffic calming in the village area.

Route 116 also passes through the Town's agricultural and scenic district. This area is a critical component in Starksboro's goal of maintaining a viable and vibrant local farm economy. High traffic volumes and speeds negatively impact the viability of local farms, therefore further widening is discouraged.

There are also many people in Town who use the roadway network for pedestrian and bicycle travel. In some areas of Town, particularly the Route 116 and Route 17 corridors, increasing numbers of pedestrians use the shoulder of the road for walking and jogging. The enjoyment and safety of the roadway system for pedestrian and bicyclists is an important issue for Starksboro.

Route 17 passes through Jerusalem, the Town center of South Starksboro. This highway is rapidly developing into a main east-west artery for commercial, agricultural, forestry, recreational and commuter traffic.

Route 17 provides spectacular views and challenging terrain for bicycle and motorcycle enthusiasts. With the increasing traffic has come an increased demand for emergency services. Increasing numbers of pedestrians also share this busy thoroughfare with motorized traffic.

### **Town Roads**

State Routes 116 and 17 are the main transportation thoroughfares. Class 2 and 3 Town roads serve as feeders to the state highway system.

Town roads, significant portions of which are unpaved, serve the majority of Starksboro's residential areas. No data is available to measure changes in traffic volumes or speeds on these roads. However, increased development has led to higher levels of usage and increased safety concerns on many of these Town highways. Data indicates that higher levels of usage lead to increased maintenance costs.

Over the past 11 years, Class 2 road costs have averaged \$4,600 per mile per year, Class 3 costs about \$2,700 per mile per year and Class 4 costs about \$13 per mile per year.

### **Private Roads and Driveways**

Private roads and driveways are a significant part of Starksboro's transportation system. Private roads and driveways should be constructed in a manner that:

- ◆ Minimizes the number of curb cuts onto state and Town roads.
- ◆ Provides safe access for emergency vehicles.
- ◆ Provides for safe intersections with local roads.
- ◆ Prevents erosion and protects water quality.

- ◆ Minimizes the number of trees removed.

Driveway design should accommodate access from the main road to the house for at least one fire truck and one ambulance. Emergency vehicles should be able to turn around at the house, thus eliminating the need to back down the drive.

The Vermont Local Roads Program recommends driveways should be a minimum of 12 feet wide. This minimum width will provide safe access for fire and rescue vehicles. Fire trucks are eight to nine feet wide and ambulances are eight feet wide; a minimum clearance is needed on each side.

Fire departments in rural areas use a method called the “rural hitch,” which involves stationing one truck adjacent to the house and supplementing the water supply through use of trucks and hose from a more distant location.

This is possible when the trucks can be located roughly within 1,000 feet of each other. If driveways are longer than 1,000 feet, there need

to be pull-off areas wide enough to park a fire truck and let another pass.

The Vermont Local Roads Program also has recommended sight and stopping distances based on posted speed limits to ensure safety at intersections. They also recommend that access should not be located closer than 275 feet to sharp curves and hills or other blind areas.

Intersections of roads and driveways should be as nearly at right angles as possible. The Local Road Program recommends that drives should have a minimum of a 20-foot flat area at the intersection to allow for safe exit and entry. They also recommend an entrance width of 25 to 35 feet at the intersection of a residential drive and the road.

The Planning Commission recognizes existing discrepancies in the wording related to roads and driveways contained in the existing zoning and subdivision regulations. In revising those ordinances, the commission will clarify those definitions to more accurately reflect the intent of this Plan.





# ENERGY

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## Goals and Strategies

### 1. Promote energy efficiency

- A. Promote programs that inform and assist townspeople with energy conservation.
- B. Support regular energy audits for Town and school buildings.
- C. Promote energy efficiency in all new homes.

### 2. Encourage energy efficient and energy conserving patterns of land use.

- A. Encourage cluster development.

### 3. Reduce transportation energy demands

- A. Support the creation of a regional mass transit
- B. Encourage the use of safe non-motorized transportation

### 4. Ensure that the development of nonrenewable earth resources is consistent with sound environmental practices and consistent with this Plan.

### 5. Promote the use and development of local renewable energy sources as a replacement for imported nonrenewable resources.

- A. Encourage renewable energy resources that present minimal negative environmental impacts.

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## Data and Analysis

The main energy source that is produced in Starksboro is wood. There is no significant generation of electricity within the Town. As shown in Figure 12, heat is provided mainly by oil, wood and gas.

Energy consumption is essential to human society and at the same time threatens the environment that sustains us. The challenge for the future will be to reduce energy consumption in general and to shift demand towards energy sources that are renewable and have an overall low environmental impact.

Energy conservation is an important step in developing a comprehensive energy plan for the future of Starksboro. At the local level, energy

conservation concerns generally fall into four categories:

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

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

Starksboro can also work with local utility companies to promote energy conservation programs aimed at residences and businesses – such as Addison County Weatherization

Program – to reduce energy demand, save money and preserve natural resources.

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

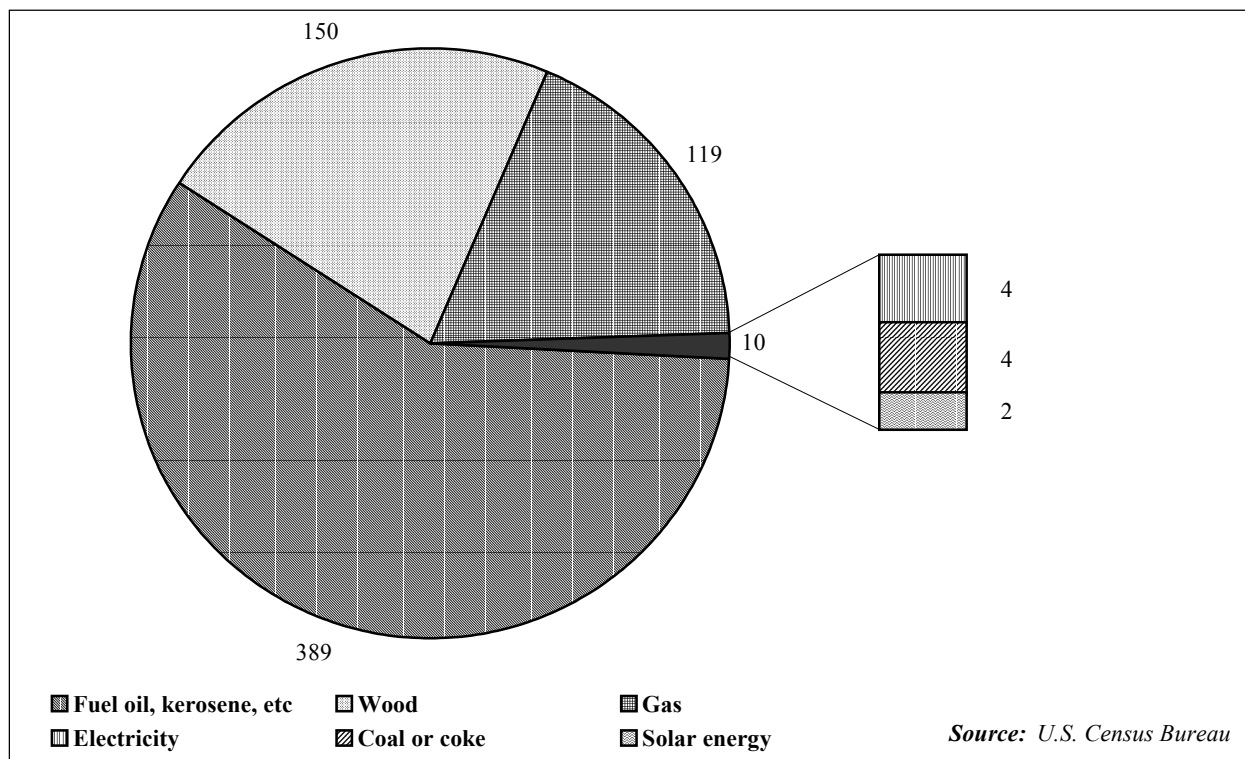
Energy conservation and efficiency can also be promoted through attention to development that reflects the principles of energy conservation and incorporates the best available technology for efficient use or recovery of energy.

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

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

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

**Figure 12: Residential Heating Fuel in Starksboro 2000**



# NATURAL RESOURCES AND RECREATION

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## Goals and Strategies

- 1. Protect and enhance the historic, natural, recreational and wildlife habitat areas of the Town for the health, safety, and enjoyment of current and future generations.**
    - A. Identify historic, natural, recreational and wildlife areas and take reasonable and feasible steps to protect and preserve those areas.
    - B. Encourage increased Town-wide understanding of the ecological functions of different components of Starksboro's landscape, including the contributions of wetlands, stream corridors and areas of unbroken forest.
    - C. Study and recommend strategies to reduce the impact of development on natural and wildlife resources by researching ways to make development less disruptive.
    - D. Encourage the development of businesses that promote the sustainable use of natural resources and a working landscape.
    - E. Discourage fragmentation of the forest.
  - 2. Protect the health of the Town through a clean environment and safe water supply**
    - A. Ensure enforcement of on-site sewage ordinances.
    - B. Develop a water supply protection strategy.
    - C. Ensure that economic development that will not produce unreasonable air, light or noise pollution and does not adversely affect water quality.
  - 3. Ensure that development of the Town forest and other public land is consistent with the needs of recreational users and wildlife.**
    - A. The Town should coordinate with the state a mutually acceptable plan for use of the approximately 3,000 acres of public land in a manner that is consistent with this Plan and the interests of the Town.
  - 4. Develop low-impact recreation paths, including bike and walking paths.**
  - 5. Maintain Starksboro's existing areas of contiguous forest.**
    - A. Discourage fragmentation of the forest.
    - B. Discourage clear cuts larger than 40 acres in size.
    - C. Encourage the use of best management practices in forestry and timber harvesting.
-

## **Data and Analysis**

Starksboro's natural environment is composed of a rich and diverse mix of resources. The continued viability of the Town's natural resources and working landscape is dependent upon our individual and collective acts of responsible stewardship.

As opportunities arise to accumulate information about the community's natural resources those opportunities should be utilized. Any use of that information must be carefully considered and designed to be appropriate for use in Starksboro.

### **Earth Resources**

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

Starksboro's earth resources should be used primarily to meet local needs. Utilizing local sand and gravel resources decreases the cost of road maintenance and other projects, as well as reducing the hauling distance.

The extraction of earth resources should be carried out in a manner that minimizes negative impacts such as erosion, loss of significant habitat or that increases truck traffic. There should be plans for properly closing a site once its use is discontinued.

### **Groundwater**

Groundwater is the source of virtually every Starksboro resident's drinking water. Groundwater potential has been classified as good in a zone running along the western edge of Lewis Creek and along some of its tributaries.

The Huntington River Valley and a zone along the eastern edge of Lewis Creek have been classified as having moderate groundwater potential.

Groundwater supplies are replenished at locations known as groundwater recharge areas. Because recharge areas are generally unprotected, almost all activities within them, including forestry and agriculture, directly affect the quantity and quality of water produced.

Source Protection Areas (SPAs) have been delineated for the three public community water systems in Starksboro. There is a designated SPAs for Starksboro's municipal water supply and the Lazy Brook Trailer Park's water source. The water system for the Brookside Trailer Park has a default 3,000-foot radius SPA associated with their water supply.

Land use protection policies should be designed to protect the identified areas from land use activities that have the potential to contaminate these known public water supplies. Under Vermont's water supply rules each system should have a source protection plan, which identifies existing and potential sources of contamination within their SPA. The system operator should also develop the means to ensure long-term protection of the source, as well as the identification of alternative water supplies.

The village system's SPA is reinforced through the watershed protection zoning district, which roughly overlays that area, in which all development activities are conditional uses.

### **Surface Water**

Starksboro is part of three watersheds, the primary one being the Lewis Creek Watershed. Portions of southern Starksboro are in the New Haven River Watershed and parts of eastern Starksboro are in the Huntington River

Watershed. Land use protection policies should be designed to protect the identified areas from land use activities that have the potential to contaminate water supplies.

### **Wetlands**

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

The Gazetteer and Business Directory of Addison County, Vermont for 1881-82 makes particular note of the large wetland called Big Beaver Meadows along what is now Route 17. This wetland remains a significant natural area.

Today, moose, bear, otter, heron, geese, wood ducks and numerous other creatures are regular visitors to the Big Beaver Meadows. The area is unique in its proximity to the state highway, which provides travelers the opportunity to view numerous large and small birds and animals. The wetland is also a significant groundwater recharge area and watershed for streams flowing down from the mountains on either side of Route 17.

### **Forestland**

A significant portion of Starksboro's land area is forested and the bulk of this forestland is relatively unbroken. There are over 2,500 acres of state wildlife management area and about 500 acres of state forest in Starksboro. The Town lies at the terminus of the Green Mountain National Forest and adjacent to the 18,000-acre Camel's Hump Wilderness Area.

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

The forest provides numerous benefits to area residents. Forest management and sugaring yields vital revenues to landowners and local workers. Recreation in our forests provides both enjoyment, as well as income for local businesses. Maintaining open land in an undeveloped state stabilizes property tax burdens for the entire Town. Wildlife habitat, improved groundwater quality and yield, and sequestration of atmospheric carbon are further benefits provided by the forest.

Starksboro has a green-certified management plan for its 300-acres of municipal forest. The Starksboro Forest Board drew upon the input of Town residents to create a plan that protects and enhances the health of the forest, while addressing the community's diverse management goals.

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

Threats to Starksboro's forest resources do exist. Subdivision continues to occur in the Forest and Conservation District and seasonal camps are being converted to year-round residences. Acid rain continues to stress forests, complicating efforts by managers to improve tree quality. Increasing property taxes burden forest landowners and may force many to consider subdivision and development of residential lots.

Feedback from recent Town forums and surveys show that residents highly value the Town's forest resources. Measuring the status or condition of the forest and monitoring the flow of benefits is challenging.

A recent project by Starksboro's Conservation Commission established the following baseline measures for the Town's forestlands.

- ◆ 16,800 acres of "core" forest in 1995
- ◆ 16,157 acres of forest and agricultural land enrolled in the Current Use Program in the 2001 Grand List
- ◆ 1,476 acres of forestland conserved by easement in 2001
- ◆ 72 percent of the Town's riparian buffer was forested in 1995
- ◆ Approximately 40,000 maple sugaring taps producing \$250,000 worth of product annually
- ◆ 8 subdivisions partially within the FCD between 1997 and 2001

### **Habitat Areas**

Starksboro's significant areas of largely unbroken forest provide habitat for many wildlife species vulnerable to development pressures. There are areas of permanent and seasonal bear habitat. Numerous scattered deer wintering areas are located throughout the Town.

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

A large wetland west of Lewis Creek is an occasional blue heron rookery and home to rare plant and animal communities.

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

### **Scenic Resources**

The Great Falls of Lewis Creek and the Seven Falls of Huntington River are designated as

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

### **Recreation**

Sites for recreation are important facilities in any community. In Starksboro, sites for recreation include the Lewis Creek and East Mountain Wildlife Management Areas (state-owned and managed), the Starksboro Municipal forest and the Robinson Elementary School playground.

Also available for recreational use are the Vermont Association of Snow Traveler's snowmobile trails. There are ball fields at the Robinson School and the Cota lot. There are also a number of good trails for horseback riding.

There are great swimming holes in the New Haven River, as well as numerous ponds. Hiking trails abound including the Jerusalem Trail off Jim Dwyer Road, which leads you to the top of Mount Ellen. There is also great birding as you head up hill from the village store. For tennis lovers, the Stark Mountain Tennis Association, which started in 1972, takes memberships and hosts two to three annual summer tournaments for its members.

# LAND USE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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## Goals and Strategies

- 1. Support a level of orderly growth that does not negatively impact the social fabric, economic well-being, fiscal condition, existing infrastructure or environmental quality of the Town of Starksboro.**
  - A. Ensure that development occurs only in those areas where soils are capable of supporting it with adequate depth to bedrock, stability and which do not have high water tables.
  - B. Ensure that development in Starksboro is compatible with existing land uses.
  - C. Identify, preserve and protect important landscape features and scenic resources, including scenic roads, waterways and views.
  - D. Support the conservation of scenic, agriculturally viable, or ecologically valuable parcels of land through the use of donations, conservation easements, purchase or transfer of development rights, and the use of permitting methods such as set-aside and restrictions on development.
  - E. Develop a capital budget and program to assess acceptable levels of growth.
  - F. Investigate alternative strategies for managing growth.
- 2. Achieve a pattern of development that enhances the rural agricultural and forested character of the Town**
  - A. Encourage development to minimize impact on the visual landscape and discourage development on prominent ridgelines and steep slopes with large viewsheds.
  - B. Seek to identify critical forested, scenic and rural upland agricultural areas of Starksboro that reflect the Town's history and diversity and encourage their preservation through strategies such as purchase or transfer of development rights of these parcels.
  - C. Evaluate and consider supporting innovative, alternative strategies to maintain the Town's undeveloped forestland.
  - D. Encourage residential and business development to concentrate in the centers of Starksboro village and South Starksboro.
  - E. Acknowledging the fact that not all residential development can or will occur in existing villages, identify areas of Town suitable for residential development which would not unduly reduce the amount of open agricultural land or disturb ecologically sensitive areas.
  - F. Discourage subdivision of land with agricultural or forest value into parcels that may become economically nonviable because of their shape or size for purposes such as agriculture or forestry.

- G. Maintain road frontage and lot configuration requirements in order to discourage subdivision of land into parcels that decrease the land's economic viability for purposes such as agriculture or forestry.
- H. Encourage cluster development by granting developers a housing density bonus for preserving large amounts of open land.
- I. Discourage large-scale housing or commercial developments.
- J. Discourage strip development.
- K. Promote shared driveways in order to more effectively cluster new homes thereby decreasing the number of curb cuts and conserving natural resources.

**3. Protect the Town's financial condition and its ability to pay for current and future expenses for necessary public services.**

- A. Continue to limit residential and economic growth to a rate that is consistent with the Town's ability to provide municipal and community services.
- B. Encourage development in locations that will have a positive effect on the tax base and discourage development that will require municipal expenditures without commensurate contribution.
- C. Carefully review the creation or expansion of high density residential development to ensure that it will not create a burden on the Town's ability to provide services or result in the Town providing more than its regional fair share of housing of any one type or cost.
- D. Acknowledge the value of publicly owned lands as recreational and educational resources. If additional publicly owned lands are to be acquired, encourage such acquisitions to the extent that the Town's tax base is not adversely affected.
- E. Adopt a capital plan and program to achieve a balance between growth and the Town's ability to afford the costs associated with growth.

**4. Preserve the Town's remaining open agricultural land and continue to support agricultural uses.**

- A. Support the economic viability of the Town's working farms.
- B. Seek to identify critical open and agricultural land in the Route 116 valley and encourage strategies such as purchase or transfer of development rights when feasible.
- C. Recognize the value that supplemental and part-time agricultural operations in maintaining Starksboro's open lands, scenic beauty, landscape diversity, tourism and wildlife habitat.
- D. Evaluate and consider supporting innovative, alternative strategies that keep the Town's open, agricultural land and farms viable.

**5. Improve understanding of the ecological functions of the Forest and Conservation District, and of practices and standards for the district that enable sustainable economic and recreational use of the district's resources.**



- A. Continue to support the collection of ecological data.
  - B. Investigate the use of performance standards to evaluate the impacts of development in the district. These performance standards should specify clear goals and a means of measurement.
- 6. Commercial and light industrial development should be in character and scale with surrounding properties.**
- A. Ensure compatibility with surrounding uses and prevent adverse impacts from traffic, noise, light, odor and other off-site impacts.
- 7. Provide environmentally low-impact recreational opportunities for Town residents.**
- A. Seek funding for bike and pedestrian facilities and paths.
  - B. Collaborate with the neighboring Towns of Bristol and Hinesburg to expand recreational opportunities for Starksboro's residents.
- 8. Protect low density, scenic areas, and those that are environmentally sensitive from the negative effects associated with excessive exterior lighting.**
- A. The following should be considered in all exterior lighting installations: timers, dimmers, sensors, or photocell controllers that turn the lights off during daylight hours or nighttime hours when lighting is not needed, and other innovative technologies to reduce overall energy consumption and eliminate unneeded lighting.
  - B. Signs will not be backlit.
  - C. Site lighting trespass onto adjacent residential properties shall be minimized. Lighting fixtures shall be aimed and shielded in a manner that shall not direct illumination on adjacent residential structures. Fixtures should be of a type or adequately shielded so as to prevent glare from normal viewing angles.
  - D. Site lighting shall minimize light spill into the dark night sky.
  - E. Security lighting should use the lowest possible illumination to effectively allow surveillance and shall be shielded and aimed so that illumination is directed to the designated areas.
- 9. Maintain land use districts consistent with the goals of this Plan.**

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## **Data and Analysis**

### **Land Ownership Patterns**

The majority of land in the Town is privately owned. The state, however, maintains a significant presence through its holdings in the Lewis Creek and Fred Johnson Wildlife Management Areas and the Camel's Hump State

Forest. According to the 1999 Grand List, the state cumulatively owned 2,259.2 acres in six separate parcels, through the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation.

In 1998, Starksboro residents held more than 70.6 percent of the taxable value of real property

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

### **Noise**

Growth and development are having an effect on the rural peace and quiet that has historically been a part of the appeal of Starksboro. The proximity of neighbors in areas of Town where neighbors were historically out of sight and earshot of one another has contributed to an increase in the number of noise complaints and neighbor concerns related to noise issues. Evidence implicating excessive noise as a detriment to public health and quality of life continues to expand. Heightened sensitivity on the part of neighbors to those sounds that disturb Starksboro's predominantly rural environment is becoming more critical.

Science and technology have contributed to the development of mechanisms for the substantial abatement of excessive sound, as well as tools to objectively evaluate noise levels. Noise that would go virtually unnoticed in the village may constitute an excessive disruption in the forest district. Although decibel meters may contribute to a decision regarding excessive sound in a crisis situation, the community is better served through awareness of the environment in which we live and courtesy toward the neighbors with whom we share Starksboro's natural beauty and numerous resources.

### **Physical Features and Land Use**

The Town covers about 44 square miles, or about 29,000 acres.

### ***Route 116 Valley***

The Route 116 valley comprises the principle agricultural land in Starksboro. Six dairy farms and two vegetable farms are supported by the well-drained and fertile soil. Good transportation access is provided by Vermont Route 116. The open land made possible by agricultural use is valued for its scenic beauty that also supports tourism and local property values, as well as for its low impact contribution to the tax base. The agricultural land is important for its support of the local economy through family farms and the resulting contribution to community values and the character.

### ***Starksboro Village***

The village is the principle town center. It contains small businesses, agriculture and most of the Town's public facilities and services. These include the school, the Town offices and the post office. It is served by a private water system fed by springs from the northeast of the village. Primary access is from Route 116. Further access is provided by Big Hollow Road to the east and States Prison Hollow Road to the west.

### ***South Starksboro***

The South Starksboro area is high in elevation and still generally open, creating a beautiful scenic and natural environment. Vermont Route 17 provides good access. Town roads provide access for the remainder of this area. South Starksboro has a small center at Jerusalem consisting of a general store, fire station and the old Jerusalem schoolhouse. The area, once largely agricultural, no longer supports any dairies and is returning to a predominately wooded landscape with scattered areas of diversified agriculture. Maintenance of these areas through full-time or supplemental

agriculture is key to preventing the overgrowth of pastureland.

### ***Hill Country***

The hill country of Starksboro comprises the major part of the land in Town. This land is used for forestry, recreation, scattered homes and isolated open land in limited agricultural use. Much of the hill country provides opportunity for hunting, fishing, skiing and hiking. Many significant natural areas are found in this region.

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

Residential development of this area would be the most costly to the Town, since in addition to the normal school impacts by residential developments, there are increased transportation and road maintenance costs in these more remote areas. The homes in this area are served by dirt roads.

### **Land Use Districts**

#### ***High Density Residential and Business***

Two areas have been identified as areas suitable for further intensive development at a minimal cost to the Town as a whole. The first area is an expanded Starksboro village. The second area is an expanded South Starksboro / Jerusalem

center at the intersections of Route 17 and the Jerusalem Road. Minimum lot sizes shall be as small as is consistent with meeting septic standards.

These expanded areas should be of considerable assistance in meeting the housing needs of the Town at a minimal cost to the Town. Additional roads parallel to Route 116 should be considered for development targeted in the village of Starksboro. Encouraging smart growth that clusters development in areas providing easy pedestrian access and decreasing reliance on automobiles serves both a conservation function and best meets the needs of a growing population of older residents.

Commercial uses should be permitted unless they are incompatible with the expectations of adjacent residential use in a village and are otherwise in conformance with this Plan. Further study is needed to determine what types and locations for commercial development are best for the Town.

#### ***Low Density***

This district consists primarily of the hill country area east of Route 116 and South Starksboro other than the village area accessible to existing Town roads. Road maintenance and compliance with on-site sewage can be difficult in some of these areas. The current minimum lot size is 5 acres. Business and forestry uses should be permitted if consistent with customary residential uses. No extension of existing Town roads should be permitted unless consistent with Town policy on extension and upgrade of roads.

#### ***Agricultural Corridor***

This district consists primarily of the Route 116 valley, other than designated high and low density areas, and includes significant areas capable of being part of productive farm units. The corridor extends approximately 2,000 feet

on either side of the highway or to the low height of land of the first ridge on either side of the highway, whichever is less. All available and feasible means should be used to avoid residential development in the corridor. The current maximum density is one residence or other use per 25 acres or a sliding scale density of up to one use per acre with a nine-acre set aside.

Further study is needed to determine how to best protect this important resource of the Town. Development rights should be considered for purchase if funds are available.

### ***Forest and Conservation***

This district consists of most of the hill country inaccessible to Class III Town roads. Residential development in these areas might have a detrimental impact on the Town's fiscal prospects. Residential development might also destroy the natural, scenic and wildlife habitat features of this area.

The Town should attempt to ensure that forestry activity in this area does not have an unreasonably detrimental impact on these characteristics. The Town should coordinate with the state to develop a mutually acceptable plan for use of the approximately 3,000 acres of public land in a manner that is consistent with this Plan and the interests of the Town.

Minimum lot size is currently 25 acres or 5 acres provided that 20 acres are development restricted. The Planning Commission should consider additional ways to discourage development in the more remote and fragile areas of this district.

### ***Watershed Protection***

The watershed protection district consists of lands widely recognized for their importance as water related resources. The district contains numerous springs, including those from which the Starksboro village water supplies are fed. Surrounding the springs is an Source Protection Area (SPA), identified by the Vermont Agency of Environmental Conservation, as well as an important water supply related watershed.

As clean, reliable water resources are extremely valuable, all possible regulatory measures should be taken to prohibit and discourage development that would have an adverse impact on the quality of water supplies in the watershed protection district. The Town should explore the feasibility and desirability of public acquisition of land in the watershed protection district to permanently preserve the quality and availability of these resources.

### ***Heavy Industrial and Commercial District***

This district is intended to recognize the existing commercial and industrial nature of the district, but is not intended to reflect any geographic expansion of the existing commercial and industrial uses beyond the boundaries of the district.

### ***Flood Hazard Area***

This area encompasses all land designated by the Federal Insurance Administration, in its Flood Insurance Study for the Town of Starksboro, with accompanying maps as approved by the Selectboard on June 18, 1985. Because these areas are subject to flooding, development should be limited and all construction should be flood resistant.

# CONTEXT AND COMPATIBILITY

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## Goals and Strategies

- 1. Improve communication and coordination with adjoining municipalities regarding land use and planning for future growth.**
- 2. Work with adjoining towns to develop transportation strategies that minimize traffic, air, water, and noise pollution, which are energy efficient, appealing and serviceable for the region's people.**
  - A. Establish a transportation liaison to coordinate local transportation solutions with those of adjoining towns to develop regional solutions to growing transportation needs.
- 3. Work with adjoining towns to develop wildlife corridors that maintain and enhance wildlife habitat and which preserve wildlife migration routes.**
  - A. Encourage area conservation commissions to work together on research into wildlife corridors that cross town boundaries
- 4. Work with adjoining towns to develop recreational corridors that encourage low-impact, nonmotorized enjoyment of the regions agricultural and forested landscape.**
  - A. Establish an ongoing relationship with neighboring towns to share information on recreational corridors.

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## Data and Analysis

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

At this time it appears the Monkton, Huntington and a portion of Hinesburg's (more than 4,300 feet to the east of Route 116) land use plans and zoning have similar intent as Starksboro's in that they propose to direct development toward existing higher density areas in their existing villages. Their minimum lot sizes once away from the roads, however, are smaller than Starksboro's 25-acre minimum lot size.

The portion of Hinesburg west of Route 116 is zoned as 2-acre residential, and the portion immediately east of Route 116 (within 4,300 feet) is zoned industrial.

Bristol and Lincoln currently see mostly residential use on their boundaries with Starksboro, however, both allow at least some form of commercial as conditional uses. At this time, Lincoln is in the process of changing their zoning.

At this time Buels Gore does not have an adopted plan or zoning, but they are currently working on a two-part project where they hope a plan and zoning can be adopted at the same time. If Buels Gore's proposed zoning is adopted, it would be a larger acreage minimum, which allowed single-family housing and agriculture.

Starksboro is located in Addison County but is connected to Chittenden County on its north and eastern boundaries. Thus a complete review of

Starksboro's context would not only take into account Addison County's Regional Plan, but also Chittenden County's as its reach adjoins Starksboro.

Chittenden County is in the process of adopting the next version of their plan.

Addison County adopted their first Regional Plan in April of 1994. Amendments were made most recently in May of 2002. The Addison County Regional Plan adopts municipality's land use designations as its own, thus it would be difficult to be in conflict with the region in this area.

The Regional Plan also has a required section on "significant regional impact," which could be

triggered by a proposed development in Starksboro or its neighbors. Since the definition is designed to only take affect when larger projects are proposed, it is more likely Starksboro could be on the receiving end of the impact of a larger project in an adjoining community. In that case Starksboro might want to utilize the conflict resolution process laid out in that section.

The Regional Plan's identification of "Regionally Significant Resources" limited itself to those that were physically located in two different municipalities. It did not identify resources that may be of significance in the region, but are only located in one town.

# IMPLEMENTATION

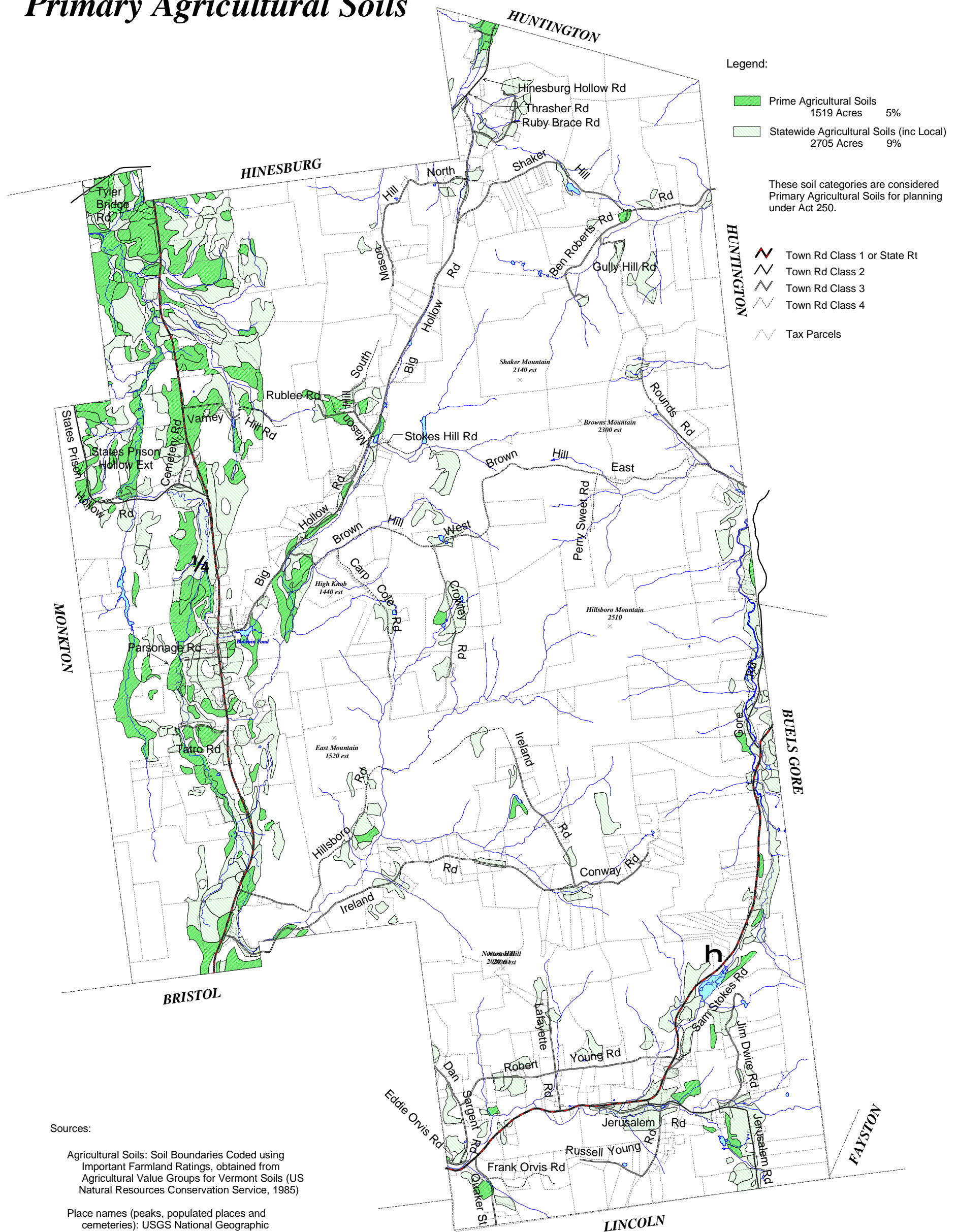
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## Goals and Strategies

- 1. Encourage on-going participation by the townspeople in the creation of a comprehensive plan.**
  - B. Develop creative and effective ways to involve the townspeople in the planning process on an ongoing basis. Planning forums, presentations by outside experts and other interest generating techniques should be used for the most attended and useful public participation.
  - C. Support grant writing to locate funding for a variety of in-town and inter-town planning projects.
- 2. Update and improve the Plan so that it will meet the statutory requirements by the legislative deadline.**
  - A. Revise the Plan on a continuous basis doing several sections each year in order to do the best job on each with the maximum citizen participation.
  - B. Recognize and utilize existing data, planning methods and development trends from other towns or regions that add strength and value to Starksboro's Town Plan.
- 3. Amend Starksboro's zoning regulations to conform to the goals and strategies of this Plan.**
- 4. Implement the objectives and policies in this Plan.**

# *Town of Starksboro*

## *Primary Agricultural Soils*



Sources:

Agricultural Soils: Soil Boundaries Coded using Important Farmland Ratings, obtained from Agricultural Value Groups for Vermont Soils (US Natural Resources Conservation Service, 1985)

Place names (peaks, populated places and cemeteries): USGS National Geographic Names Data Base

Road Centerlines: VT Agency of Transportation  
(1:5000)

Road Names: E911 Contacts for Towns (1998)

Surface Waters: Interpreted from VT Mapping Program Orthophotos, 1:5000, 1978

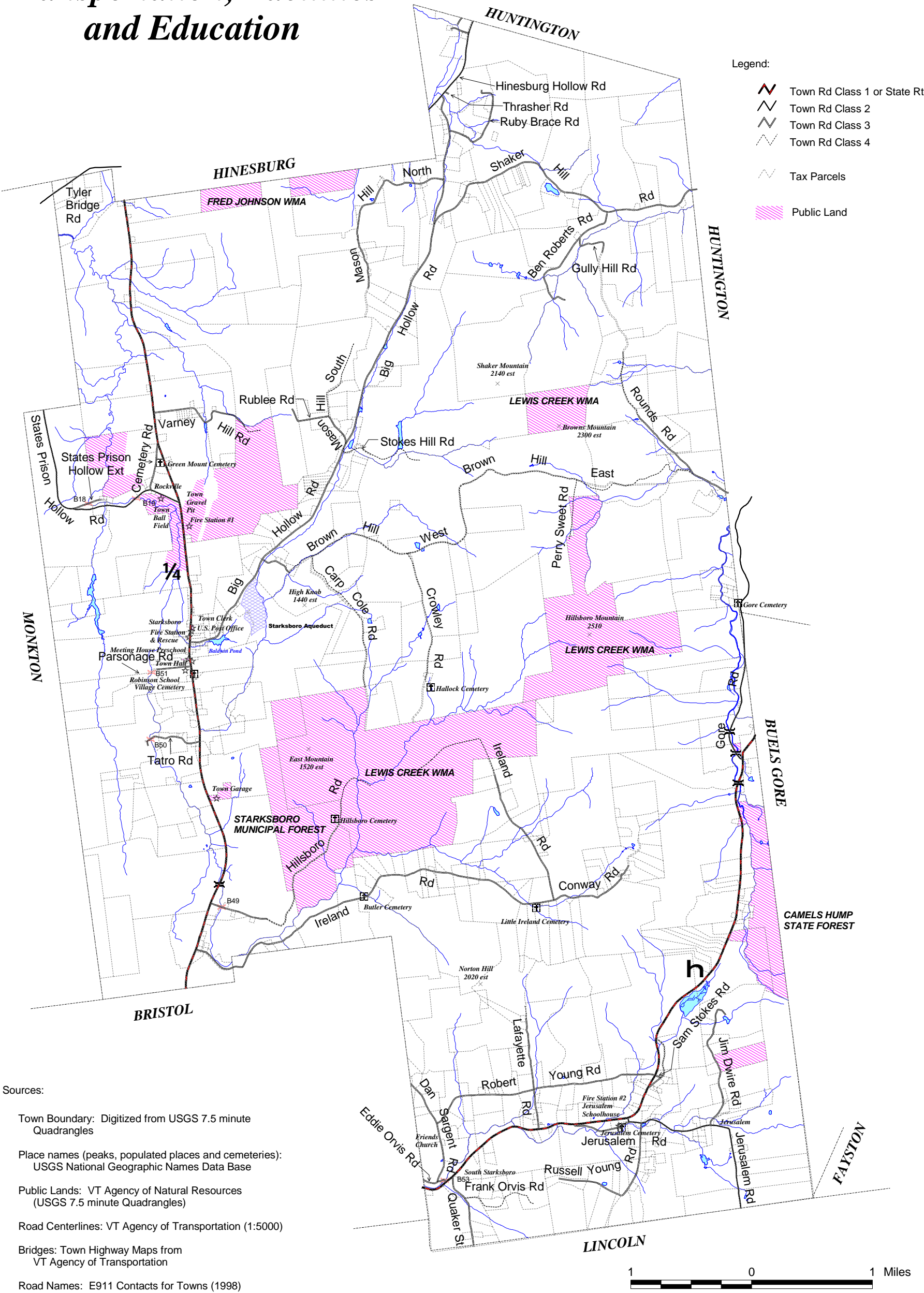
Town Boundary: Digitized from USGS 7.5 minute  
Quadrangles





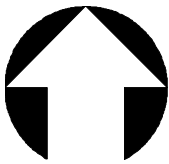
# Town of Starksboro

## Transportation, Facilities and Education



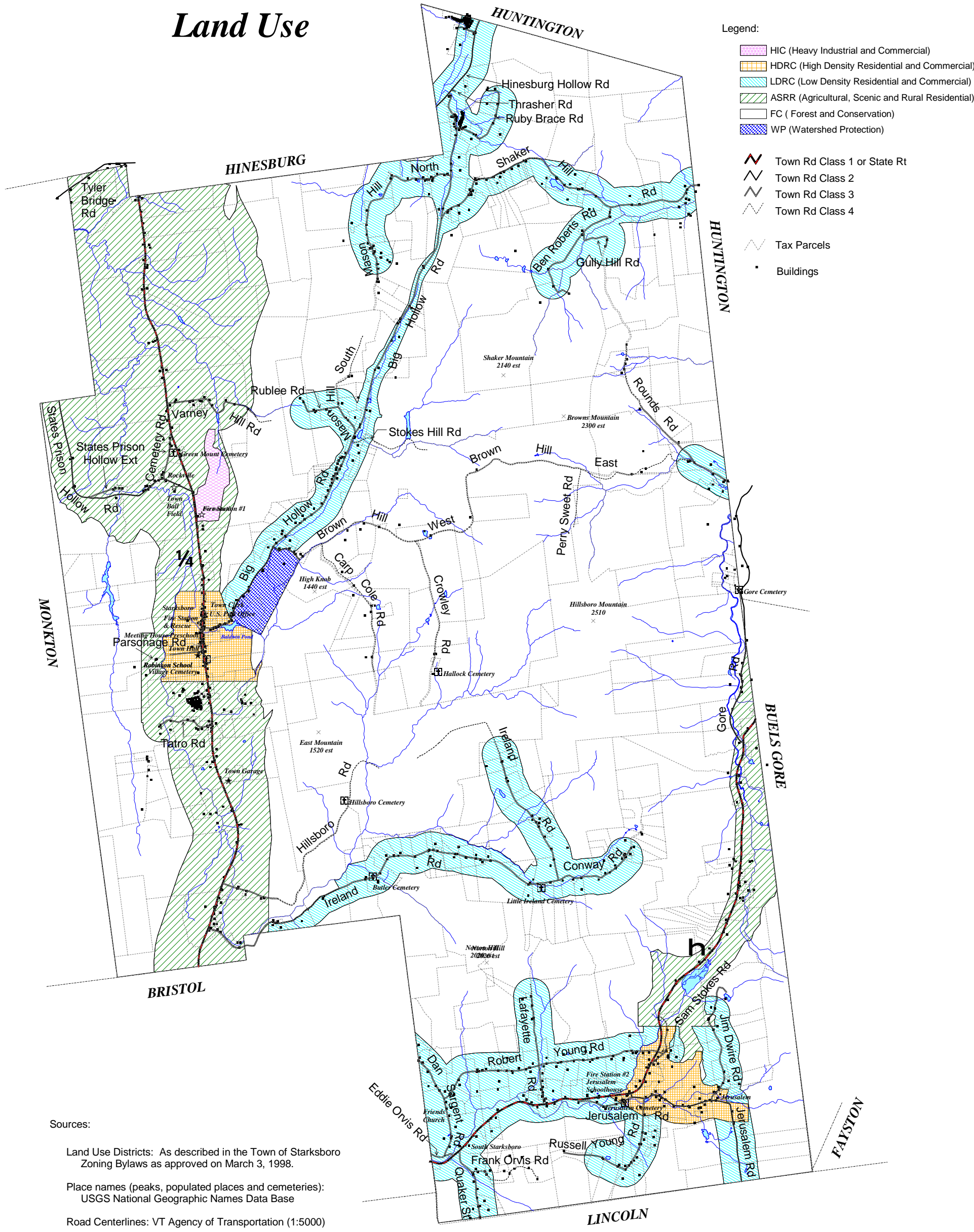
Sources:

- Town Boundary: Digitized from USGS 7.5 minute Quadrangles
- Place names (peaks, populated places and cemeteries): USGS National Geographic Names Data Base
- Public Lands: VT Agency of Natural Resources (USGS 7.5 minute Quadrangles)
- Road Centerlines: VT Agency of Transportation (1:5000)
- Bridges: Town Highway Maps from VT Agency of Transportation
- Road Names: E911 Contacts for Towns (1998)
- Surface Waters: Interpreted from VT Mapping Program Orthophotos, 1:5000, 1978
- Source Protection Areas: Vermont Department of Health, USGS 7.5 minute Quadrangles and GPS



# Town of Starksboro

## Land Use



- Legend:
- HIC (Heavy Industrial and Commercial)
  - HDRC (High Density Residential and Commercial)
  - LDRC (Low Density Residential and Commercial)
  - ASRR (Agricultural, Scenic and Rural Residential)
  - FC (Forest and Conservation)
  - WP (Watershed Protection)
  - Town Rd Class 1 or State Rt
  - Town Rd Class 2
  - Town Rd Class 3
  - Town Rd Class 4
  - Tax Parcels
  - Buildings

Sources:

Land Use Districts: As described in the Town of Starksboro Zoning Bylaws as approved on March 3, 1998.

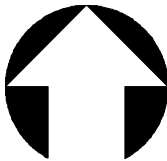
Place names (peaks, populated places and cemeteries): USGS National Geographic Names Data Base

Road Centerlines: VT Agency of Transportation (1:5000)

Road Names: E911 Contacts for Towns (1998)

Surface Waters: Interpreted from VT Mapping Program Orthophotos, 1:5000, 1978

Town Boundary: Digitized from USGS 7.5 minute Quadrangles



**ACRPC**  
Addison County Regional  
Planning Commission  
This map intended for planning purposes