

# **Weybridge Town Plan**

## **2019**

### **DEDICATION**

**The 2019 Weybridge Town Plan is dedicated to the committee that spent countless hours on the Enhanced Energy Plan, ensuring that the town has a “seat at the table” when it comes to energy site development in the town. The committee was led by former Planning Commission member Bill Roper, and his team included Gale Hurd, Robin Foster Cole, Peggy Lyons, and Spence Putnam. It was also aided by Cornwall citizens Bobby Carnwath and Gary Barnett, as well as Claire Tebbs, Adam Lougee, and Kevin Behm from the Addison County Regional Planning Commission.**

**The town owes the committee and those who helped it a big debt of gratitude.**

**Adopted October 3, 2019**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Town of Weybridge was chartered in 1761. It is a small, rural town located near the center of Addison County in west-central Vermont. Otter Creek flows along the eastern boundary of the town and along most of the northern border. Snake Mountain lies along the western edge. The southern border is formed by a straight administrative line separating Weybridge from Cornwall. The Lemon Fair River flows through the western section of town. (Map 1 Aerial Photograph of Weybridge)

Weybridge's population, 828 as of the 2014 census, only grew by 4 from the figure of 824 in 2000. The town grew significantly in the 1990s, but the population has since been almost static. The town's population growth is tied directly to job opportunities offered in Middlebury, as well as Chittenden County. Middlebury, the economic and cultural center of Addison County, is less than a 10-minute drive for most residents. Over 60% of the town's workforce is employed there. (Map 11 Population Density)

Although many people commute out of Weybridge to work, agriculture continues to tie the people and the landscape together. Many townspeople consider Weybridge an agricultural community and support the preservation of our valuable farms and open landscapes. Given the development pressures and economic trends of our region, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain the viability of farming. As a community, we are striving to maintain that balance between preserving our heritage and our environment, and changing to meet today's demands and allow new families to settle here.

## THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Town Plan is a statement of how the town's future development should proceed in order to best promote the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens. The Plan serves as the foundation for zoning and other bylaws that implement the Plan. The Plan by itself may affect development through the Act 250 process. Therefore, it is important that the citizens of the town consider the Plan so that it reflects the best interests of the community.

Weybridge's Selectboard adopted this, the most recent Town Plan, in 2019, under the authority of the Vermont Planning and Development Act, Title 24 VSA, Chapter 117 ("Act 200"). A plan should not be a static document, but should adapt to changing times and conditions, and Section 4387 of the Act mandates that a municipality review, amend, and readopt the existing plan or adopt a new plan at least every 5 years. The 1996 Town Plan was developed by the Planning Commission beginning in 1990 and was the subject of several public hearings held in 1992 and 1993. In response to public comments, the Planning Commission made several revisions in form and content intended to reflect the expressed views of the community. That Plan was adopted by the Weybridge Selectboard in July 1996.

The Plan adopted in 2001 differed from the 1996 Plan ONLY by updating of certain statistics, dates and verb forms; the format and substance of the Plan remained unchanged. The process

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leading to the 2011 Town Plan also involved a careful review of dates and statistics. A new section was added on Communications (17), in response both to recent technological advances and to growing awareness of the need to conserve resources. A section on Air Quality (14) was added to be parallel to other Town Plans in adjacent communities. There were also, for similar reasons, significant additions made to the section on Energy (16). Section 5 (Housing) also saw some modifications to reflect the need for energy conservation and an allowance for greater diversity in housing stock. One highlight of the 2011 Plan was a new set of maps that provided a great deal of information about the town. Many of these same maps are referenced in the text and can be found at the end of the 2017 Plan.

The major change in this 2019 Town Plan is a completely revamped Energy Plan (Section 16). Changes to this Town Plan are minor, except for its Energy section. In 2018 Weybridge was selected as one of the three pilot towns in Addison County to work with the Addison County Regional Planning Commission to amend its Town Plan to take advantage of the enhanced energy planning set forth in 24 VSA 4352. That meant writing an all-new energy section of the town plan. After working for over a year, first through a task force and now after Weybridge Planning Commission review, the new energy section completely replaces the 2017 version in its entirety.

In 2014, the Planning Commission carefully updated the Town's Zoning Regulations to reflect the 2011 Town Plan updates. While revising the Zoning Regulations, the Planning Commission reviewed the 2011 Town Plan and found it consistent with the town's vision for development. Thus, the updates to the Plan in 2017, proposed only 2 years after a thorough review of the Zoning Regulations and the Town Plan they implement, include modest changes, except for the Energy and Rivers and Streams sections. The updates to the Plan in 2019 likewise required some updates to zoning and subdivision regulations. But in all other respects, the 2019 version of the Weybridge Town Plan continues to be similar in form and substance to previous plans.

## **AN OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN**

This plan contains goals and policies that can help Weybridge guide future growth and development in ways that are compatible with the town's rural character and its agricultural economy. It is based on an extensive body of factual information about Weybridge's history, environment, population, and economics gathered by the Planning Commission. The plan itself is a general guide, not a set of regulations, and can serve official town bodies as well as individual citizens in planning for future development.

The broadest goals of this plan – sustaining the town's rural character and agricultural economy – find expression in suggestions for preserving prime agricultural land, undeveloped land, and significant natural areas. Preservation of these resources has the support of the majority of Weybridge citizens who were surveyed during the planning process. And although no town of

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diverse individuals will be unanimous on all plan details, many Weybridge residents who have attended hearings and information sessions on this plan have expressed their support.

A hallmark of this plan is flexibility. In place of rigid lot sizes, setbacks, and other land-use regulations, this plan suggests that landowners and developers think creatively about designing projects for compatibility with individual sites in ways that enhance the quality of development while helping maintain open space and agricultural potential. The plan emphasizes that there is no one way to achieve these goals, and that different sites, different parts of town, and different scales of development may require different approaches. This plan attempts to enable, even encourage, growth without sacrificing the town's essentially rural and open landscapes and character.

The plan recognizes that land-use regulations alone cannot achieve the plan goals. Other town policies, especially those relating to sewage disposal and taxation, as well as actions and policies of adjacent towns, have a direct impact on Weybridge's character and development. This plan therefore includes suggestions to help all town officials work in consonance with the plan goals. It also describes ways Weybridge can be involved in regional decisions that impact the town.

## **HOW TO USE THIS PLAN**

The essential recommendations of the Plan are presented as a set of broad Goals desirable for Weybridge and Policies, which should assist in reaching these Goals. These are grouped under the following categories:

1. Roots and Traditions
2. Land Resources
3. Land Use Planning
4. Jobs
5. Housing
6. School
7. Transportation
8. Public Facilities
9. Paying for Government
10. Biological Diversity
11. Rivers, Streams, and Flood Resiliency
12. Wetlands
13. Groundwater
14. Air Quality
15. Recreation
16. Energy
17. Communications
18. Regional Relationships
19. Implementation Program

## GOALS and POLICIES (by category)

### 1. ROOTS & TRADITIONS

How the people of the past lived and died, and what they lived for, have created the town today. For each of us here today, whether our ancestors were among the first settlers of the town, or we have come here only a season ago, by living in Weybridge we have become part of a chain in time, descendants of the people who lived here one hundred and two hundred years ago, and ancestors of those who will follow us. We live within laws and customs they established as surely as within the land boundaries of our own houses and fields. In turn, future generations will live with our successes and our mistakes, just as we live with those of our forbears.

-- Ida H. Washington, *History of Weybridge, Vermont*

Over the years, Weybridge residents have shown their commitment to preserving the town's historic and prehistoric resources. In part, our traditions, established over time, define much of what our community is about today. In our history, we find the roots of the agricultural and home-based businesses that are a part of Weybridge today. It is, therefore, desirable to preserve and celebrate as many of the historic aspects of our town as we can. (Map 13 Significant Historical Resources).

#### GOALS

Identify and preserve where possible significant historic structures, sites, or districts; known prehistoric archeological sites; and be aware of areas where prehistoric sites are likely to be found.

Preserve the historic traditions, values, and landscapes, that give Weybridge its rural character and make it a special place to live.

#### POLICIES

Regard the town's cultural resources and historic settlement pattern as significant, non-renewable resources that create a special sense of place and community well-being.

Cooperate with historians and archeologists researching Weybridge's past.

Consider all known archeological sites to be significant until evaluated and proven otherwise.

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Consider the significance of all historic districts, structures, and known archeological sites prior to disturbance or alteration.

Apply the current State of Vermont Division for Historic Preservation's "Criteria for Listing in the State Register of Historic Places" when determining the significance of historic districts, structures and sites.

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## 2. LAND RESOURCES

Among material resources, the greatest, unquestionably, is the land. Study how a society uses its land, and you come to pretty reliable conclusions as to what its future will be.

-- E. F. Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful*

Weybridge's land – mountains and valleys, cliffs and waterfalls, rocks and soils – was shaped by geologic processes beginning hundreds of millions of years ago. The resulting characteristics of the land and their pattern on the landscape both enable and constrain human activities and biological systems. For example, deep, well-drained soils enable us to grow crops or build effective septic systems; ledges and clay soils prevent us from doing so; wetlands and larger tracks of undeveloped lands provide important wildlife habitat and corridors. Recognizing and understanding the land's opportunities and limitations are the underpinnings of sound development, efficient conservation and utilization of natural resources and retention of habitat. (Map 2 General Land Cover, Map 3 Landscape Slope, and Map 4 Earth Resources).

Weybridge's rural character is determined largely by the patterns of development that have evolved. Most of Weybridge's land area is in farms or forest; there are a few small areas of relatively concentrated housing in the eastern half of the town, with other dwellings widely dispersed through the rest of the town. In an effort to maintain the rural character and healthy wildlife habitat so attractive to us, this plan seeks to balance the opportunities and limitations of Weybridge's land with the historic patterns of land use. A significant amount of land in the town is in public hands or has been. (Map 14 Public, Conserved and Institutional Lands).

### GOALS

Promote and protect the long-term productivity and viability of agricultural soils.

Protect and encourage the maintenance of agricultural lands for the production of food and other agricultural products.

Maintain the scenic, aesthetic, wildlife and economic value of Weybridge's landscape of hills and forests, farms, open lands, large undeveloped tracts, and long views.

### POLICIES

Conserve the town's primary agricultural soils for agricultural uses. Steer development away from primary agricultural soils. Primary agricultural soils are Class 1, Class 2, and Class 3 soils as determined by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.



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Guard against waste of valuable earth resources such as topsoil, building stone, sand, and gravel.

Work actively with landowners and developers to achieve the goals, policies, and objectives of this plan. Provide information, assistance, and advice as needed.

Uphold farmers' right to produce food and other agricultural products, encouraging best practices that protect water quality, and minimize pesticide and artificial hormone use, without unnecessary interference from local regulation and private litigation.

Carefully review and condition the approval of any proposals for resource extraction in order to balance potentially competing interests such as economic benefits, rights of property owners, and environmental and community impacts. Special attention should be given to safety concerns when extraction occurs in residential areas, and where extraction-related traffic competes with bicycles, pedestrians, children at play, and commuter, residential, and tourist traffic. Audio, visual, and atmospheric pollution must be considered with respect to the quality of life in surrounding areas.

Consider impact on wildlife habitat and corridors when new development is proposed near or in areas identified as important to wildlife habitat and travel corridor, and consider how to mitigate the impact.

Balance the need for siting renewable energy facilities serving Weybridge and/or beyond with Weybridge's productive agricultural lands, wildlife corridors, and its defining rural aesthetics and landscapes.

## 3. LAND USE PLANNING

Our town's rural character and welfare are determined largely by the mixture of farm, forest, and villages; by the patterns of buildings on the landscape; and by the sense of community that comes from people of mixed incomes and lifestyles living and working together. Experience has shown that neither working landscapes nor economic integration are ensured by imposing large lot requirements and large setbacks. In some instances they create sprawling development that uses land inefficiently, inhibits diversity of incomes within neighborhoods, and gradually undermines the welfare of the community.

Weybridge's landscape is a rich mosaic of farms, forests, villages, neighborhoods, and isolated houses. The pattern they create varies substantially from one part of town to another. These differences -- and the reasons for them -- must be taken into account when setting land use goals

### GOALS

Maintain the historic settlement pattern of villages and neighborhoods surrounded by working farm and forestland, while allowing for growth to support the tax base and the local school.

Provide residents with a variety of living opportunities in different settings, including villages, rural neighborhoods, and farms.

Assure that type, location, and intensity of land use is compatible with the environmental and economic capability of the community to sustain it over the long term.

### POLICIES

Recognize the opportunities and limitations presented by geology and soils when planning and regulating land use.

Adopt maximum average housing density<sup>1</sup>, rather than minimum lot size, as the basis of zoning district definition, and encourage the use of Planned Unit Developments in order to achieve flexibility in development planning, allow most favorable placement of homes relative to terrain, and preserve desirable open areas.

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<sup>1</sup> Maximum average housing density (MAHD) may be illustrated by the following example: A 20 acre development in a Planned Agricultural Residential District (PAR), with MAHD = one dwelling per five acres, could contain four dwellings, although each individual lot need not be five acres in size; the four lots could even all be smaller than five acres if the remainder of the 20 acres were set aside by covenant as common land restricted from further development.

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Base development densities for different areas of town on existing and desired settlement patterns and physical suitability of the land for development, with a willingness to grow along the edges.

Conserve the town's primary agricultural soils for agricultural use by steering development away from primary agricultural soils.

Distribute growth over space and time so that the town's facilities, services, and natural resources are not overburdened by development while recognizing the relationship between housing and school enrollment.

Prohibit big box or large-scale commercial development throughout the Town of Weybridge, thereby preserving the rural character of the town.

Promote the efficiency of providing public facilities and services by concentrating growth in designated areas while simultaneously conserving open space in the surrounding countryside. Plan public investments to minimize development pressure on agricultural and forestland and natural areas and reduce visual impacts on the rural aesthetics of our town.

Recognize that a major factor limiting development is the unsuitability of soils in most areas of town for conventional on-site sewage disposal systems, while keeping informed of innovative systems that may allow development in some previously unsuitable areas.

Plan public investments to minimize development pressure on agricultural and forestland and natural areas.

Specify the appropriate land uses in the various areas of Weybridge in terms of **land use districts** allocated to particular **planning regions** as described below:

## LAND USE DISTRICTS

The recommended use of land in certain areas is described in terms of districts similar to those used in Weybridge zoning for over ten years, are meant to tie the vision of this Plan to the town's zoning regulations, and constitute a description of types of sub-districts that may be or are incorporated in each planning area. They reflect historical patterns, as well as water resources and sewage disposal capacity. In the past, districts have been characterized by the minimum lot size permitted. In this plan, to reflect new trends in residential and commercial growth and to allow flexibility in land-use planning, maximum average densities are specified, rather than minimum lot sizes.

The six types of land use districts are:

Neighborhood Commercial  
High Density Residential

(NC) District  
(HDR) District

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Medium Density Residential	(MDR) District
Planned Agricultural Residential	(PAR) District
Flood Hazard Area	(FHA) District
Conservation	(CON) District

This Plan specifies which of these land use districts are to be located in particular regions of Weybridge. (See Map 15 Weybridge Planning Regions with Land Use Districts for these particular designations.) Precise locations and boundaries, and permitted and conditional uses of the districts, will be defined in Zoning Regulations which should be rewritten as necessary to be consistent with this Plan. Introduction of new methods of sewage disposal could significantly affect the assignment of land use districts. Furthermore, a look at how to promote affordable housing and a greater diversity of housing and ownership types to provide diversity in our residents and a more reliable flow of students to our school may require amendments to both this plan and the implementing zoning regulations.

## **Neighborhood Commercial District (NC)**

This district should only be located in one planning region adjoining a High Density Residential District. To protect environmental quality, yet avoid the necessity for instituting costly public sewage disposal facilities, the intensity of uses in this district should be limited to their on-site sewage disposal capacity and water supply. Residential use should be limited to a maximum average density of one dwelling per acre. For non-residential uses, special regulations may be imposed to limit the type and scale of development and to ensure adequate site servicing, screening, and district residential and/or rural character.

## **High Density Residential District (HDR)**

This type of district should be located in three of the planning regions in areas where soils have suitability for more intensive development, where there is minimum of agricultural tillage, and where the road network provides reasonably good access. Much of the population is already centered in these areas. Residential use should be limited to a maximum average density of one dwelling per acre, subject to the site sewage disposal capacity limits.

## **Medium Density Residential District (MDR)**

This type of district should be located in four of the planning regions, where there are compatible existing settlement patterns and/or the soil is reasonably suitable for development. Maximum average density should be one dwelling per two acres, to allow space for a mound septic system, if necessary, as well as a replacement septic drainage field. Non-residential conditional uses may have additional requirements to preserve scenic quality and residential character.

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## **Planned Agricultural Residential District (PAR)**

This type of district should cover the majority of Weybridge's land in areas typically devoted to agricultural and forest use. Lands in this district are vital to Weybridge's agricultural economy and provide the open space that gives Weybridge its rural character and scenic beauty. Maximum average density is one dwelling per five acres.

Use of the Planned Unit Development (PUD) provisions of 24 V.S.A. Sections 4417 and 4303 is strongly encouraged for all developments in the PAR district. For developments involving three or more lots, whether proposed at one time or over a period of up to five years, the owner shall propose a PUD that incorporates significant open-space preservation features. An owner preferring to propose a conventional plan shall also submit a PUD plan, with the final plan to be determined in consultation with the Planning Commission.

In evaluating applications for subdivision and development in PAR districts, the Planning Commission should be guided by the goal of assuring orderly growth while preserving as much as possible Weybridge's open space, rural character, and agricultural potential. When necessary, the Commission will work with applicants to modify or formulate PUD plans that meet these goals. When a PUD calls for retention of open space apart from individual lots, that space should be guaranteed by means that provide legal guarantees against future development. Plans shall also provide for adequate maintenance of open space. Planned Residential Developments should also conform to standards set forth in the State of Vermont Environmental Protection Rules, and should also meet special use and site plan review provisions if required by the Weybridge Zoning Ordinance.

## **Conservation District (CON)**

The primary purpose of this area is open space conservation. This includes agriculture and forest use, public outdoor recreation, wildlife refuges, and reservoirs. This district consists of land on which development is currently restricted. Any development in this district is to be a conditional use and must be reviewed by the Zoning Board. All approved residential development must have a maximum average density of one dwelling per 25 acres

## **Flood Hazard Area (FHA)**

This district will be located throughout Weybridge in areas designated by the Federal Flood Insurance Administration as indicated on a Flood Hazard Boundary, most recently amended, which, although a separate document, will be considered an integral part of the Land Use Plan Map. Agricultural and recreational use is permitted, but any development in this district should be a conditional use and should be reviewed by the Zoning Board. (The flood plan is shown on Map 5 Significant Natural Resources and Wildlife Habitat.)

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## PLANNING REGIONS

This part of the plan describes the patterns of Weybridge's current land uses and our vision of how the land should be used in the future to protect and promote the town's rural character and other goals. The planning regions are shown in Map 15 Weybridge Planning Regions with Land Use Districts. More detailed descriptions of each region's features and present uses are given in [Weybridge Facts and Figures](#). Differences in land characteristics and current uses between the regions are used as the basis of guidelines for appropriate future land use.

### Snake Mountain

The Snake Mountain region is located west of Snake Mountain Road and covers 14% of town. Most of the land is steep, rocky and forested; topography and cracks in exposed bedrock indicate it may be a groundwater recharge area (Section 13). It contains the town's largest woodland, deer wintering area, and block of public land, and is very important to wildlife and recreationists (Sections 10 and 15). Almost half the area is owned by the state The Nature Conservancy.

Future development should not impair the significant wildlife, water quality, recreational, and aesthetic benefits of this area. Overall housing density should remain low to moderate, with new buildings close to the road, near the edge of the forest, away from the deer wintering area and wildlife corridors. Additional public ownership of land or rights to land -- particularly in-holdings, sensitive areas and access points -- is desired. Commercial timber cutting should follow accepted sustainable forestry management practices.

Zoning districts in the Snake Mountain region of town are Conservation and Planned Agricultural Residential.

### Lemon Fair Valley

The Lemon Fair Valley region is located east of Snake Mountain Road, south of Otter Creek and west of Bittersweet Falls Road and Route 23. It covers 41% of town and includes most of the town's farmland. Almost all land is flat, fertile and well-suited for agriculture. This region also contains important wetlands, a major waterfowl staging area, and sizable woodlands (Sections 10 and 12).

Agriculture should remain the dominant land use in this region. The right to farm -- despite the presence of nearby residential development -- should be protected. Construction of non-farm dwellings should be limited. New dwellings should be located to leave the largest possible portion of land and the most productive soils in agriculture. New development should be compatible with waterfowl staging areas, wetlands, major woodlands, wildlife corridors, and other biologically significant areas. (Sections 10-12).

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Zoning districts in the Lemon Fair Valley are Flood Hazard Area, Planned Agricultural Residential, and Conservation.

## **Goose Neck Bend**

The Goose Neck Bend region lies north of Otter Creek and covers 7% of town. Its characteristics and distribution of land uses are very similar to the Lemon Fair Valley -- a high proportion of prime farmland, with significant areas of forest, floodplain and waterfowl staging lands (Sections 10-12).

Land use in this region should follow the same guidelines as in the Lemon Fair Valley, with agriculture remaining the dominant land use. Likewise, the same zoning districts should be assigned: Flood Hazard Area, Planned Agricultural Residential, and Conservation.

## **Sheep Farm Region**

The Sheep Farm region lies south of Hamilton Road, west of Morgan Horse Farm Road and east of Bittersweet Falls Road, covering 17% of the town area. It is the town's third major agricultural area, although soil productivity is not as uniformly high as in the Lemon Fair Valley and Goose Neck Bend regions. Substantially more residential development occurs here than in these other two regions, putting pressure on the continued viability of farming. It also contains a major woodland, a deeryard, and the scenic Bittersweet Falls/Beaver Brook Gorge. (Sections 10-12).

Agriculture should remain a viable land use in this region; the overall proportion of functional farmland to buildings should be kept as high as possible. New dwellings should be located away from farmland, near the edge of large woodlands, and located to leave the largest possible portion of land and most productive soils in agriculture and forest. New development should be compatible with biologically significant areas and increased development or density should have a discernable relationship with existing development.

Zoning districts in the Sheep Farm region are High Density Residential, Medium Density Residential and Planned Agricultural Residential.

## **Cave Hill**

The Cave Hill region covers 12% of town north of Hamilton Road, east of Quaker Village Road and west of Morgan Horse Farm Road. Present land uses are principally forest and residential, with a smaller area of farmland in the southeast corner. Exposed bedrock and thin soils are common. Housing -- much of it clustered on small lots -- is concentrated along Cave Hill Road. The region also includes major woodlands,

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Weybridge Cave, and state lands suitable for recreation but presently lacking public access points. (Sections 10 and 15).

This may be an appropriate area for additional residential development. Any new development should be located near the existing settlements, and efforts should be made to conserve existing farmlands, woodlands, wildlife corridors and potential groundwater recharge areas.

Zoning districts in the Cave Hill region are Conservation, Planned Agricultural Residential, and Medium Density Residential. This is a good area for implementation of Planned Residential Development regulations.

### **Otter Creek Gorge Region**

The Otter Creek Gorge region covers 6% of town and is located east of the Morgan Horse Farm Road. It is largely forest, non-agricultural open land and pasture; there is a limited amount of productive agricultural soil in this region. A high proportion of the land is unlikely to be available for development, as it is owned by Middlebury College, University of Vermont, and Otter Creek Land Trust. Large parcels predominate.

Conservation of the river corridor, undeveloped woodland and pasture should be the primary objective in this section. Residential development should preferably be directed to other areas of town. Any residential development should be compatible with the outstanding natural resources in this section -- Otter Creek Gorge, large undeveloped woodlands, and deer wintering areas. New buildings should be located near existing development and away from the shoreline of Otter Creek. Planned Residential Developments (PUDs) might be employed to assure a maximum ratio of open land to buildings.

Zoning districts in the Otter Creek Gorge region are Conservation, Planned Agricultural Residential, and Flood Hazard.

### **Residential Villages and Neighborhoods -- Pulp Mill Bridge, Weybridge Hill, Quaker Village, Terrace Heights, Pleasant View Terrace, and Meadow Lane**

This "planning region" comprises the six separate relatively concentrated residential areas of Weybridge. Together they cover 3% of the town's area and contain approximately 39% of the town's housing. Lot sizes are generally very small (0.5 to 2.0 acres). There is an opportunity for "in-filling" since some houses are located on relatively large lots (5 or more acres) and several undeveloped lots exist. Present average housing density is one house per 3.2 acres.



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Future growth -- residential and commercial -- should be oriented to these settlements. Housing for a mixture of incomes should be available along with opportunities -- such as general stores -- for residents to find basic goods and services. Working farm and forestlands surrounding these settlements should be maintained to keep them separate and distinct. New development should efficiently utilize available space, be environmentally sound, and be consistent with the existing character of these areas. The historic character of portions of these areas should be retained. Setbacks may be less than other sections of town. Maximum average housing density should not exceed one dwelling per acre, although some lots may be smaller than one acre. Water supply and sewage disposal capacity may necessitate lower density in some locations. Public greens or recreation parks (open common lands) of adequate size and location, and public trails and greenways connecting these areas and other parts of town are desirable.

Zoning districts in these areas are as follows:

**Pulp Mill Bridge:** High Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, Planned Agricultural Residential,

**Weybridge Hill:** Neighborhood Commercial, High Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, and Planned Agricultural Residential;

**Quaker Village:** Neighborhood Commercial and High Density Residential.

**Terrace Heights:** High Density Residential

**Pleasant View Terrace:** High Density Residential

**Meadow Lane:** High Density Residential

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## 4. JOBS

There is universal agreement that a fundamental source of wealth is human labor.

-- E. F. Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful*

Increasingly, Weybridge has become a bedroom community for employment centers within and without Addison County. Because of its proximity to Middlebury, as well as Vergennes and even Burlington, and because of its physical beauty, Weybridge is a desirable place to live. Technological advances have made working from home feasible for more residents. Weybridge has a direct stake in the types of jobs created in the region, since those jobs will have an impact on the town's population, as well as provide employment for present and future residents. (See Map 10 Town of Weybridge, showing where people who work commute to.)

### GOALS

Nurture a strong and diverse economy in Weybridge and the Addison County region that provides job opportunities for residents and maintains high environmental and social standards.

Encourage regional commercial development that meets the goals and policies of this plan.

Encourage home-based businesses as a way to provide local employment opportunities and curtail the need for commuting.

Strengthen and protect the town's agricultural economy, including farming, forestry, and related activities.

Foster development of housing options that permit jobholders at all economic levels to maintain residences in Weybridge.

### POLICIES

Support local and regional efforts that encourage economic development and meet the goals and policies of this plan

Cooperate with other towns to maintain a balance between type and number of jobs created and natural growth in the region's workforce.

Participate in Act 250 reviews of major business proposals.

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Support development of local and regional businesses that create markets for locally produced goods and services or which themselves create value-added products from locally produced goods.

Encourage manufacturing and marketing of value-added agricultural and forest products.

Encourage use of locally grown agricultural and forest products.

Encourage regional clean, low-environmental-impact commercial or light industrial development consistent with the goals and policies of this plan.

Support the construction/development of dwellings and apartments that serve the needs of lower-income jobholders and families with children.

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## 5. HOUSING

We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us.

— Winston Churchill

One of the most outstanding and attractive features of Weybridge is the diversity of its population. Our town is home to farmers, workers, business and professional people, and retirees, and there is a corresponding wide range in the size, type, and price range of local housing. Recent trends have been toward higher-end housing construction in Weybridge. The dense clay soil of Weybridge limits septic capacity in much of the town, making house construction more expensive in those areas. (Map 6 Soil Septic Suitability) This has made it increasingly difficult for the children of long-time residents to raise their own families in town. Our housing policy is designed to help maintain diversity in the town's housing stock, so that Weybridge can be home to individuals and families at a broad range of income levels. (Map 11 Population Density provides an overview of where housing is concentrated).

### GOALS

Ensure that the rate of housing growth does not exceed the community's ability to provide adequate public facilities and services. Currently, in 2017, this does not seem to be an issue thanks to the cost of wastewater systems and the lack of strong demand for housing in the town.

Provide housing that meets the needs of a diversity of age, social, and income groups.

Promote energy efficiency in new construction and renovations, including the use of the Vermont Energy Star Program.

Support the provision of affordable housing that will allow young people to buy homes and raise their families in the community.

Support the provision of housing that will allow elderly residents to live in the community.

Encourage the creation of a greater range of rental options in town for related adults and families.

### POLICIES

Encourage housing that would be appropriate for a range of household incomes.

## Weybridge Town Plan

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Support the provision of housing for special needs populations such as the physically or mentally handicapped, single-parent households, and elderly.

Allow creative development for a diverse community through the use of:

- \* accessory apartments;
- \* developments served by common facilities;
- \* innovations in design;
- \* energy efficient construction;
- \* flexibility in local regulations;
- \* land trusts and other vehicles assuring perpetual affordability;
- \* other reasonable provisions.

Promote the creation of smaller infill lots or developments in parts of Weybridge where village patterns of development already prevail, allowing for more reasonably priced new construction.

Recognize the limitations on development imposed by the poor sewage disposal capacity of soils in most of Weybridge.

Ask that a portion of all developments of four or more housing units in one subdivision be affordable<sup>2</sup> and encourage this provision by granting a density bonus where appropriate.

Encourage owners of housing developments to use construction methods that result in savings in utility and maintenance costs.

Work with other towns and the Regional Planning Commission, and possibly through the Act 250 process, to ensure that housing demand resulting from significant job expansion is equitably shared throughout the region.

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<sup>2</sup> This plan defines “affordable housing” as those households in which those earning the county’s median income could afford to have no more than 30% of their incomes spent on housing costs. For homeowners, housing costs include payments for mortgage principal and interest, property taxes, and property insurance. For renters, housing costs include rent and utilities.

## 6. SCHOOL

School is not a place, but a set of relationships among individuals, some are teaching and some are learning... School is a community institution... Parents are partners... The business community works closely with schools, providing support and opportunities for work-study, employment and training... Every child experiences school as a place of challenge, hard work and engagement in things that matter.

-- Vermont Department of Education, 1990, Vermont's Education Goals:  
A Vision of What Could Be

Education has always been a priority of Weybridge residents. A substantial addition and improvement to the Weybridge School was completed in 1996. Today the school serves as the town's primary community center by offering educational opportunities to each child as well as by offering a gathering place for non-school functions. A strong school plays an important role in attracting families with young children to Weybridge. Current trends show declining enrollment (2015-2016 enrollment in mid to high 40's is well below historic highs, which reached a peak of 106 in 2005-2006. The school's reputation remains strong as of this writing and attracts families—just not enough of them. The influx of families with elementary school-aged children should be encouraged through other sections in this plan. Discussions at both state and regional levels are ongoing with regard to property tax burdens, school and school board consolidations, and resource sharing at the time of this plan update. The plan addresses issues related to maintaining the school in a way that continues to meet the town's needs.

Early childhood and adult learning opportunities are not available in Weybridge. The town should encourage childcare centers that serve the town in close proximity. With shrinking enrollment, programs such as these could be offered in Weybridge to diversify the resources offered and maximize functions of the school facility.

At this time there are very few after-school care private home providers in Weybridge. They are not affiliated with the school.

Community access to the school library is limited and only available to the students enrolled in the school. The town library is not an active lending library and the town does not currently support adult access to the Ilsley Library in Middlebury (only school-aged children are eligible for free Ilsley library cards). (Map 12 Utilities, Facilities and Education)

### GOALS

Provide educational programs and facilities that encourage every child to become a competent, caring, productive, responsible individual and citizen who is committed to continued learning throughout life.

## Weybridge Town Plan

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Maintain a safe, secure learning environment where quality educational opportunities are provided to all students.

Maintain a vibrant, active and appropriate center for educating children and supporting community activities.

Support broader early childhood and adult learning programs in Weybridge and the adjoining communities.

Recognize that low enrollment goes beyond housing affordability barriers.

Improve access to county library resources for adult residents of Weybridge to encourage learning and provide access to the internet.

### **POLICIES**

Provide sufficient and appropriate physical space to meet current and projected educational needs. Right now, in 2017, our school space remains underutilized.

Design and operate the school and grounds as models for responsible citizenship and environmental stewardship.

Encourage the use of the school as an educational facility and a community resource.

Monitor the rates of growth of housing and population so that they do not exceed the school's ability to keep pace. Again, as things stand, pressures remain slight and do not threaten the town's ability to provide enough space for all students.

Explore coordination with adjoining communities to meet educational needs of Weybridge. Respond to state and regional discussions with regard to school district consolidation and sharing resources.

Use the school to foster early childhood education, including but not limited to pre-school story hours, after school, and summer programs.

Encourage town-wide subscription to the Ilsley Library Lending system for all Weybridge residents, not just school-aged children.

## 7. TRANSPORTATION

ACTR's mission is to enhance the economic, social and environmental health of the region (county) by providing public transportation services that are safe, reliable, accessible and affordable for everyone.

*--Addison County Transit Resources' Mission Statement*

As a result of living in a rural community, Weybridge residents are almost exclusively dependent on private means of transportation, principally the car. While the Planning Commission cannot eliminate reliance on automobiles, in reviewing development proposals we will seek to minimize impact on our current network of roads and consider development proposals that acknowledge and plan for public transportation infrastructure access. Weybridge residents should be encouraged to consider and support options that seek to reverse greenhouse gas emissions. In Vermont the transportation sector is responsible for 46% of greenhouse gas emissions that cause global climate change. (Map 9 Transportation and Road Names; see also Map 10, showing commuting into and out of Weybridge.)

### GOALS

Provide and maintain a road infrastructure system that is safe, efficient, and environmentally sound.

Support regional efforts to provide public transportation systems that meet the needs of all segments of our population – including the elderly and disabled as well as those who can afford to own and operate automobiles.

Coordinate with regional transportation goals that support alternative clean energy technologies and behaviors including: commuting and school-drop off single car reductions such as rideshare and bike/pedestrian options (i.e. Safe Routes to School and Way to Go! Commuter Challenge behavior-change programs).

### POLICIES

The Town's position and policy is that construction of new through roads is neither necessary nor desirable for the planning period. Specifically, the Town is opposed to the location of any new traffic arteries or bypasses within its boundaries. Construction of access roads for new developments should have as few curb cuts as possible.

Maintain or improve the current conditions on all roads in town to meet community demand. Pave existing gravel roads when justified by traffic load and by comparative costs of paving and



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maintenance, using the Vermont Local Roads Program for guidance. Consult the residents along any road being considered for paving before proceeding.

Preserve the town's historic bridges as an integral part of the automotive and pedestrian infrastructure.

Promote energy conservation, public transportation, and ride sharing programs.

Investigate Scenic Road designation (see [Designating Scenic Roads: A Vermont Field Guide](#)) to promote the esthetic values of Weybridge's rural character.

Support the development of bike and pedestrian paths on some of the Town's highways, such as Pulp Mill Bridge Road and Morgan Horse Farm Road, to provide increased recreational opportunity and safety and energy-conserving alternatives to the automobile for personal transportation.

Continue to limit the use of an existing aircraft landing strip and oppose its extension or the establishment of further airport facilities.

## **8. PUBLIC FACILITIES**

Public facilities -- such as schools, parks, the town forest, the town hall, the town garage and fire station, the library, the recycling center, and town offices are provided to meet the needs of present and future residents. The town provides some of these facilities, while others are provided in a joint effort with regional and state government. A significant growth in population in Weybridge may require an increase in services and, consequently, in the facilities that support these services. (Map 12 Utilities, Facilities and Education)

### **GOALS**

Provide an environmentally sound and energy- and cost-efficient system of public facilities and services to meet present and future demands for education, government, transportation, fire protection, public safety, emergency medical services, and other essential needs.

Reduce environmental degradation by encouraging waste reduction, recycling, composting of food, and other proper waste disposal.

### **POLICIES**

Ensure that the construction, expansion or provision of public facilities and services are consistent with the goals and policies of this plan.

Ensure that the design, construction and maintenance of private facilities and services used by the general public are consistent with the goals of the plan.

Locate, to the greatest extent practicable, new or expanded public utilities within existing highway or utility rights-of-way. For solar or wind installations, the Energy Section in this Town Plan should also be referenced.

Encourage maximum waste reduction, composting of food, conservation and recycling to reduce need for new solid waste management facilities.

Encourage the development and use of a ten-year capital budget for the acquisition and replacement of town facilities and equipment.

Support the maintenance and use in Weybridge of the statewide E-911 emergency response system.

Assure effective fire protection and emergency services for Weybridge, either through continued service of the Weybridge Volunteer Fire Department, Middlebury Regional EMT or through contractual arrangements with neighboring towns.

## 9. TOWN GOVERNMENT

Residents enjoy the quality of life in Weybridge. That is due in part to the services the Town is able to provide and in part to the active involvement of the citizenry. As Weybridge grows and services become more expensive, the Town, in an effort to maintain economic diversity, must strive to balance need for those services with their cost and the residents' ability to pay.

### GOALS

Carefully balance the cost of Weybridge's governmental and school services with the taxpayers' ability to pay.

Encourage efforts to develop a tax structure and assessment policy that complement rather than contradict the other goals and policies of the plan. In particular, ensure that tax policies are consistent with the preservation of open space and supportive of Weybridge's agricultural economy.

Encourage commercial activity appropriate to Weybridge's scale and consistent with the preservation of open space, agriculture, and a rural landscape.

Encourage participation in town government, especially through Town Meeting, hearings, board meetings, other government functions, and participation on elected and volunteer boards, town commissions and other positions.

### POLICIES

Work to minimize adverse fiscal impact of proposed projects both in Weybridge and in the region.

Investigate and support alternative tax structures that would more equitably distribute the tax burden, while providing an adequate level of services.

Manage growth so there are no sudden significant tax increases, and phase major capital expenditures to protect taxpayers from sudden increases in tax bills.

Seek a balance of residential, commercial, and agricultural development, and avoid burdening town services with an excess of residential growth.

Investigate alternative sources of funding (e.g., Federal, state, or foundation grants) for facilities and programs of benefit to the community.

Help landowners to take advantage of state programs for abatement of tax on open land; develop a Town program to complement the state's land use plan; ensure that land for which

## Weybridge Town Plan

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development rights have been sold to land trusts or other conservation groups be taxed at rates more appropriate to its limited use potential.

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## 10. BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

The first rule of intelligent tinkering is to save all the pieces.

-- Aldo Leopold

In 1990, the Town of Weybridge hired biologist Jim Andrews to locate, map, and describe areas of biological significance. His report (available at the Town Clerk's office) describes 18 different areas in town, each with its own individual characteristics. He identified what many of us already know -- that Weybridge is rich with biological diversity in both the plant and animal kingdoms, as well as rich in natural beauty. This plan states goals and policies to serve as the framework within which development can occur in harmony with our natural resources. (Map 5 Significant Natural Resources and Wildlife Habitat)

### GOALS

Maintain and improve native biological diversity in the town and region to the fullest extent possible.

Provide suitable conditions for plant and animal communities in areas that are densely developed as well as those areas that are relatively undisturbed.

### POLICIES

Identify, protect and preserve important natural features of the Weybridge environment, including rare, endangered, and threatened species and habitats, paying particular attention to the "Blue Spotted Valley," "Blue Spotted Swamp," "Lemon Fair Valley," "LaFountains' Upland Sandpipers," "Otter Creek Gorge," "Otter Creek Waterfowl Staging Areas and Wildlife Corridor," "Weybridge Bat Caves," and the "Wonnacott Floodplain" areas as more particularly described in Jim Andrews' report.

Consider Weybridge's major habitats to be areas of regional significance because of their relative scarcity, their important roles within Addison County, and their interconnectedness with other habitats in the region. Work within the town and with neighboring communities to protect this functional, interconnected system of habitats.

Minimize impacts of development on and support the system of interconnected habitats and the functional qualities of individual areas of biological significance.

Help landowners design development proposals that would fully comply with the goals and policies for biological diversity.

Design development to minimize disruption to waterfowl staging in major lowlands.

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Minimize fragmentation of large woodlands.

Work with landowners to identify significant deer wintering areas and guide development to minimize adverse effects on the ability of this habitat to support deer.

Ensure that operation of hydropower facilities, large wind turbines and large solar installations are compatible with the long-term conservation of outstanding natural areas and uncommon plant and animal species in and along Otter Creek, a regionally significant resource and habitat.

## 11. RIVERS, STREAMS and FLOOD RESILIENCY

Weybridge's rivers and streams are held in trust by the state for the common and public use of all citizens. The state's policy is to protect and manage public waters to provide the greatest net benefits to present and future citizens of the state. While only the state can set standards by which public waters are managed and used, Weybridge can help influence the creation of those standards. To do so, we must understand the functions of our waterways. While rivers and streams are a water source and provide important recreation opportunities and wildlife habitats, they also can be the source of destructive flooding and erosion.

According to information on the town developed by the state (see, <https://anrweb.vt.gov/DEC/FoFReports/SSRSReportViewer.aspx?RepName=ExpandedCommunityReport&Municipality=Weybridge>), the town has 11 buildings in the Special Flood Hazard Area, which is 3% of all buildings in Weybridge. Only 9% of the buildings in this area have flood insurance. While the town does have some relevant standards in place regarding roads and bridges, additional attention should be given to land use and development.

Weybridge residents place high value on public access to public waters. Individual landowners and environmental organizations also place a high value on private waters. These goals and policies reflect our reliance on and value of those resources while acknowledging that in times of heavy rainfalls and tropical storms, for example, those same rivers and streams can pose a threat to residents, to their property, homes and business, and to town roads and bridges.

Furthermore, stormwater runoff from residential, commercial or industrial development can seriously--even severely--impact the amount and quality of water in our rivers, streams, ditches, and culverts during times of rainfall and must be considered when development is proposed.

### GOALS

Protect public waters for public purposes and uses that promote the greatest benefits to present and future citizens.

Maintain a high level of water quality.

Protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitats, feeding areas, travel corridors, and the ecology of rivers and streams.

Make present and future citizens aware of which areas of Weybridge are prone to flooding and/or erosion and discourage building or development in areas that are prone to flooding and/or erosion.

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## **POLICIES**

Present the town's views on the highest and best uses of public waters to the state through its regulatory processes.

Site new development to minimize stormwater runoff and disruptions of ecological functions of the river and stream corridor and strongly discourage new development in erosion and flood-prone areas.

When considering development pay particular attention to the River Corridors and Floodplain map and other maps and information incorporated in this plan or on file at the Town offices.

Monitor actions of towns and state and federal agencies that directly affect Weybridge's surface water quality and intervene as appropriate.

Protect surface water quality from new development by using natural buffer strips along river and stream banks and banks of ponds of more than 5 acres, and by using other techniques to reduce stormwater runoff.

Ensure that adequate flooding and erosion control measures are taken in the rare event that development activities are allowed within the buffer strip.

Encourage use of best management practices for timber harvesting and agricultural practices for farming.

Limit development in areas of high erosion potential (e.g., steep slopes, thin soils and areas which have been subject to erosion in the past) and high susceptibility to surface water pollution (e.g., along wetlands, rivers, streams, and ponds), and in areas with a high potential for surface flooding and stormwater runoff.

Use the "Vermont Backroad Erosion Control Handbook" and "Vermont Road and Bridge Standards" to guide construction and major alteration of roads. Use "Better Back Roads Program" standards and suggestions as a guide for road maintenance.

Prepare for Vermont's Municipal Road Permit standards for stormwater mitigation: <http://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/stormwater/permit-information-applications-fees/municipalroadsprogram>.

Prohibit or control the removal of gravel from rivers and streambeds and banks.

Require developers requesting planning approval or zoning permits for projects within a designated floodplain or area of high erosion potential or surface flooding potential to prepare



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reports for submission by the town to the Agency of Natural Resources. The reports will contain the information required in 24 V.S.A. Section 4409 (c).

Allow 30 days for comments from a fisheries biologist from Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department prior to permitting construction of any pond on any stream, or the use of stream water as a source for a pond.

Support policies and regulations to minimize stormwater runoff and to protect water recharge areas.

Cooperate with Addison County River Watch Collaborative in monitoring water quality and support the extension of this program to the Weybridge portions of Otter Creek and Lemon Fair.

Maintain at the Town Offices maps and information concerning Weybridge's small streams, rivers and river corridors, flood hazard areas, and known sites of roadway flooding, plus known addresses of homes and house sites where surface flooding and/or erosion are distinct possibilities. Maps entitled Water Resources and River Corridors & Floodplain with Municipal Facilities (Maps 7 and 8) are incorporated in this plan.

## 12. WETLANDS

Weybridge has 614 acres of wetlands made up of swampy and marshy lands. These wetlands contribute to the ecological balance of our community. These wetlands, along with the adjoining woods and fields, provide a variety of habitats for plants and animals, as well as a system of water purification, storage, and groundwater recharge for human consumption. Protection of these wetlands does not preclude their use for agricultural and recreational purposes. Our increased understanding of their value will enhance our enjoyment of them.

### GOALS

Retain the present amount (no net loss) of significant (Class One and Class Two) wetlands and the values and functions that they serve. These values and functions include, but are not limited to, those listed in Vermont Wetlands Rules.

### POLICIES

Protect wetlands of importance to the town, including:

- \* Non-designated wetlands, serving a significant function, recommended by the Selectboard to the Water Resources Board for reclassification;
- \* Wetlands contiguous to all National Wetlands Inventory wetlands, including those near or on a river or lake;
- \* All significant wetlands designated by the Water Resources Board at the time this plan is adopted;
- \* Wetlands above one acre in size;
- \* Wetlands that possess uncommon or outstanding values and functions to the town or region based on an evaluation of the criteria and review standards in Vermont Wetland Rules, Section Five.
- \* Ledge side Woods, Cedar Swamp and Red Maple Swamp, Wyman's Hackberry Floodplain, as labeled in said Jim Andrews' report.

Recognize and protect property owners' rights to agricultural and recreational use of wetlands within the Vermont Wetland Rules.

Ensure that new development is located and designed so that it will not impair the values and functions of important wetlands.

Require developers requesting zoning permits for projects within the buffer zone of important wetlands to prepare reports for submittal by the town to the Agency of Natural Resources. The reports will contain the information required in 24 V.S.A. Section 4409 (c). Local approval should not be granted prior to the expiration of a period of thirty days following the submission of the report to the Agency of Natural Resources.

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Use the Federal Manual for Identifying and Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands, 1989, when delineating the boundaries of important wetlands unless the planning commission recommends the use of other recognized federal or state guidelines.

## 13. GROUNDWATER

When the well is dry, we know the worth of water.

-- Benjamin Franklin, Poor Richard's Almanac, 1746

In response to a 1990 survey, Weybridge residents identified groundwater as the town's most important natural resource. Since most Weybridge residents rely on wells and springs for their domestic water needs, proper siting of new growth is critical. While the state through the Agency of Natural Resources has jurisdiction over all wastewater systems and impacts to wells associated with those systems, ensuring adequate quality and amount of water over the long term may require Weybridge and neighboring towns to limit the type, density, and amount of activities around surface waters, aquifers and recharge areas, to the extent, if any, allowed under state law.

### GOALS

Maintain high quality groundwater and sufficient yields to adequately serve current and future residents of Weybridge.

Protect the quality of surface water, wetlands and groundwater recharge areas.

### POLICIES (to the extent allowed under state law)

Guide new development and land use activities to minimize impact on groundwater quality and supply.

Encourage consideration of off-site locations for community water and septic systems, while avoiding adverse impact on neighboring landowners, to enable additional development in villages and other areas where high-density growth is desired.

Plan Weybridge's land uses so that the groundwater supplies of neighboring towns are not likely to be impaired. Ask neighboring towns to do the same.

Participate in Act 250 hearings on projects in neighboring towns that are likely to impair Weybridge's or the region's groundwater supplies.

Ensure renewable energy systems utilizing native groundwater are designed to have a neutral impact on groundwater quality and supply.

## **14. AIR QUALITY**

While the State of Vermont is complying with the standards set by the Clean Air Act, tougher health-based standards are being established that will make it harder for the state to maintain attainment on some criteria pollutants including fine particulate matter and ozone. This will make it especially important for local practices to support the voluntary and mandatory rules and regulations as established by the State of Vermont Air Pollution Control Division.

Due to the topography, working landscapes and rural nature of the town of Weybridge the town is vulnerable to localized compromised air quality. Such practices as the spreading of manure on local farmlands, the use of wood for home heating, as well as the dependence on the automobile due to lack of other alternatives can have negative health impacts for vulnerable populations including the elderly and the very young.

The town could encourage and adopt practices for clean wood-burning for home heating as well as establish idle-free zones (Weybridge Elementary School has been an “idle-free” zone as of January 2005) to reduce both criteria air pollutants as defined by the EPA and hazardous air pollutants as defined by the State of Vermont. Other sources of greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change should also be minimized.

### **GOALS**

Maintain high standards for air quality based on state standards to protect the health of Weybridge residents and minimize the town’s overall contribution to greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change.

### **POLICIES**

Guide new development and land use activities to minimize impact on air quality.

Encourage participation in programs such as Idle-Free Vermont, Way to Go! Commuter Challenge, Safe Routes to school, and educational programs on proper wood combustion for home heating.

Plan Weybridge's land uses so that the air qualities of neighboring towns are not likely to be impaired. Ask neighboring towns to do the same.

Participate in Act 250 hearings on projects in neighboring towns that are likely to impair Weybridge's air quality.

Regularly evaluate information on the state data for air quality monitoring including criteria pollutants and hazardous air pollutants.



## 15. RECREATION

What are the natural features that make a township handsome? A river, with its waterfalls and meadows, a lake, a hill, a cliff or individual rocks, a forest, and ancient trees standing singly. Such things are beautiful; they have a high use which dollars and cents never represent. If the inhabitants of a town were wise, they would seek to preserve these things...for such things educate more than any hired teachers or preachers....

It would be worthwhile if in each town there were a committee appointed to see that the beauty of the town received no detriment. If we have the largest boulder in the country, then it should not belong to an individual, nor be made into doorsteps. As in many countries precious metals belong to the crown, so here more precious natural objects of rare beauty should belong to the public.

-- Henry David Thoreau 1861

Weybridge citizens have identified their preference for enjoying recreation in open, natural areas. There are several areas that provide opportunities such as hiking, boating, fishing, hunting, and cross-country skiing. In addition, the school grounds provide access to baseball, basketball, and soccer. Public access to these recreational areas will improve town residents' appreciation for and enjoyment of Weybridge.

### GOALS

Protect and enhance the natural beauty and scenic characteristics of significance to local landscapes, including focal points and characteristics such as:

- \* landscape diversity,
- \* order and harmony of landscape elements,
- \* unique combinations of natural and cultural features,
- \* distinctive distant views
- \* foregrounds in harmony with distinctive distant views
- \* skylines,
- \* shorelines,
- \* steep slopes,
- \* agricultural and forest land,
- \* traditional villages and streetscapes,
- \* historic buildings and cultural features,
- \* significant scenic roads and pathways,
- \* bird watching.

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## **POLICIES**

Ensure that new development is located and designed to minimize adverse impacts on recreation resources and important scenic views.

Ask proponents of major subdivisions to set aside land or facilities for parks, public access, or trails if the need for those lands or facilities have been identified by the community and would benefit Weybridge residents.

Continue to support the Middlebury Area Land Trust's work with the "Trail Around Middlebury," the "Bob Collins Conservation Farm and Preserve," and the North Country National Scenic Trail system, and other future land acquisition or conservation efforts in order to preserve recreation access by Weybridge residents and the greater community.

Support the state and The Nature Conservancy's acquisition of land or rights to land in and around the Snake Mountain Wildlife Management Area and the Town Forest.

Encourage the creation of designated rights of way for bicycles and pedestrians on all roads in conjunction with the reconstruction of those roads.

Continue efforts by the town (through the Conservation Commission or other appropriate means) to gain access to the town forest for educational and recreational opportunities.



## 16. ENHANCED ENERGY PLAN

### Introduction

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#### Intent of Energy Plan

The intent of this section is for the Town of Weybridge to meet the municipal determination standards for enhanced energy planning enabled in 24 V.S.A. 4352. The purpose of enhanced energy planning is to further regional and state energy goals, including the goal of having 90% of the energy used in Vermont obtained through renewable sources by 2050 (“90 x 50”) and the following:

- A. *Vermont's greenhouse gas reduction goals under 10 V.S.A. § 578(a);*
- B. *Vermont's 25 by 25 goal for renewable energy under 10 V.S.A. § 580;*
- C. *Vermont's building efficiency goals under 10 V.S.A. § 581;*
- D. *State energy policy under 30 V.S.A. § 202a and the recommendations for regional and municipal energy planning pertaining to the efficient use of energy and the siting and development of renewable energy resources contained in the State energy plans adopted pursuant to 30 V.S.A. §§ 202 and 202b (State energy plans); and*
- E. *the distributed renewable generation and energy transformation categories of resources to meet the requirements of the Renewable Energy Standard under 30 V.S.A. §§ 8004 and 8005; and*

A positive determination of compliance with the requirements of enhanced energy planning, as provided by the Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC), will enable Weybridge to achieve “substantial deference” instead of “due consideration” in Section 248 applications for energy generation facilities (ex. wind facilities, solar facilities, hydro facilities, etc.) under Criterion (b)(1)-Orderly Development.

To receive a positive determination of energy compliance, an enhanced energy plan must be duly adopted, regionally approved and contain the following information:

- A. An analysis of current energy resources, needs, scarcities, costs, and problems.
- B. Targets for future energy use and generation.
- C. “Pathways,” or implementation actions, to help the municipality achieve the established targets.
- D. Mapping to help guide the conversation about the siting of renewables.

This section will include the required analysis, target data, the goals, policies and implementation actions, and associated mapping. Topics covered include energy conservation and efficiency as it relates to thermal and electrical energy usage, transportation and land use planning. Energy generation and siting will also be discussed. The Town feels it is important to note Weybridge has historically supported conservation and efficiencies, beginning with our town-wide recycling program in the 1980s, establishment of a Conservation Commission in 1991, establishment and funding of a Conservation Fund with local tax dollars in 1995, investment in a new recycling center, formation and success of the Weybridge Energy Committee (WEC), and voters approving a 4-year 2 cent property tax for fund an Energy Fund devoted to efficiencies in its town buildings and other energy-efficiency initiatives. Weybridge is proud of its forward-thinking approaches, which try to reasonably weigh the benefits of development and need for consumption with ways to sustainably reduce environmental and visual

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impacts. It approaches the topics of energy usage and production with this similar progressive and balanced mindset.

## **Weybridge Energy Committee**

Established in 2011, the Weybridge Energy Committee (WEC) is actively addressing energy conservation and alternative energy practices in Weybridge and was awarded funding to weatherize the Town Office and lead the community in weatherizing residential and municipal buildings. The Weybridge Energy Committee is also addressing transportation alternatives through education and advocacy. Weybridge presently has a representative on the Tri-Valley Transit Board of Directors who also sits on the Addison Regional Operating Committee. The Weybridge Energy Committee and the Town of Weybridge recognize that the consumption of energy requires an individual and collective responsibility to help reduce and otherwise mitigate energy usage, especially non-renewable, fossil fuel-based usage. Weybridge therefore supports **responsibly sited and developed renewable energy projects** within its boundaries.

Weybridge recognizes that financial considerations require large solar and wind projects be located in close proximity to electric power lines capable of transmitting the load proposed to be generated and with easy access to major transportation networks for construction. However, Weybridge also desires to maintain the working and open landscapes, adopted conservation and habitat protection measures, and scenic rural views important to its economy and to the rural, cultural aesthetic and quality of life. Not all commercial or community scale solar projects that may be proposed can meet the policies and standards set forth in the Weybridge Town Plan and this energy section in particular.

## **Outline of How to Read this Plan**

This plan separates Weybridge energy demand and usage into the following four energy topics:

1. Thermal Use: this section focuses mostly on Energy used for heating.
2. Electrical Use: this section focuses mostly on energy used for operating equipment, but is predicted to expand significantly to include transportation and heating equipment.
3. Transportation Use: this section focuses on energy used for transportation.
4. Land Use, Generation and Transmission: this section focuses on land use planning strategies that reduce energy consumption and inform the siting of generation and transmission resources.

Each section noted above will be broken into three sub-sections:

1. The first sub-section, entitled, "Use Analysis" will analyze current usage data in Weybridge for each of the four energy sectors. It includes charts of usage and a discussion concerning the usage data.
2. The second sub-section will look at future projections of usage assuming Weybridge intends to meet the State goals of using 90% renewables by 2050. This sub-section, entitled "Targets" contains projections of usage targets. In 2016 Addison County Regional Planning Commission worked with the Vermont Energy Investment Corporation (VEIC) and the Vermont Department of Public Service to develop regional targets for future energy use and generation. The intent of these targets is to meet the State of Vermont's 90 x 50 goal. The targets represent one scenario of what meeting this goal may look like. However, there could be numerous different ways for Vermont

# Weybridge Town Plan

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and Weybridge to achieve the 90 x 50 goal. For more information about the regional targets, please see the [Addison County Regional Energy Plan](#).

3. The third sub-section in each section provides goals, policies and recommended actions to implement the plan. Additionally, the Land Use, Generation and Transmission section includes a mapping analysis of Weybridge’s energy resources and constraints and a ***Community Standards for Siting and Decommissioning Energy Projects section***.
4. **‘Local Considerations’**: Throughout the plan there are tables and discussions labeled ‘Local Considerations’. These provide additional data, analysis, information or discussions that are not necessarily highlighted or clarified within state and regional level analysis.

## Energy Plan Assumptions

This plan is based on the assumptions that:

- ✓ energy may not be abundant or cheap in the future;
- ✓ the full social, environmental, and economic costs of energy are not reflected in present market prices;
- ✓ the public interest is served by conserving energy, reducing consumption of nonrenewable energy and shifting reliance to renewable energy; and,
- ✓ each town must play a role in shaping and implementing policies and actions that promote wise energy use.

## Thermal Use Analysis

### Thermal Use

An estimate of current residential thermal energy demand in Weybridge, based on data from the American Community Survey (2011-2015), is shown in Table 1. The data shows that the majority of residences in Weybridge heat their homes with oil, and to a lesser degree with wood and propane. Table 1a. highlights residential use of solar hot water systems based on data available from Energy Action Network. Other renewable sources for heating homes, but for which data is currently unavailable, include wood pellets, wood chips and efficient heat pumps.

Estimates for commercial and industrial thermal energy use are more difficult to calculate. An estimate of total commercial energy use (thermal) is provided in Table 1b, based on data from the Vermont Department of Labor (VT DOL) and the Vermont Department of Public Service (VT DPS).

1. Municipal Current Residential Thermal Energy Use				
Fuel Source	Weybridge Households (ACS 2011-2015)	Weybridge % of Households	Municipal Square Footage Heated	Weybridge BTU (in Billions)
Natural Gas	0	0.0%	0	0
Propane	40	11.6%	78,248	5

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Electricity	2	0.6%	4,096	0
Fuel Oil	250	72.3%	478,952	29
Coal	0	0.0%	0	0
Wood	50	14.5%	100,564	6
*Solar	0	0.0%	0	0
Other	4	1.2%	8,192	0
No Fuel	0	0.0%	0	0
Total	346	101.2%	670,052	40

\*see *Local Considerations* Table 1a. below.

1a. Local Considerations – Solar Hot Water		
Households	% of households	Total Heat Capacity
5	.6%	0.31 MMBTU

[Vermont Energy Dashboard](#)

1b. Current Municipal Commercial Energy Demand			
	Commercial Establishments in Municipality (VT DOL)	Estimated Thermal Energy BTUs per Commercial Establishment (in Billions) (VT Dept. of Public Service)	Estimated Thermal Energy BTUs by Commercial Establishments in Municipality (in Billions)
Municipal Commercial Energy Use	10	0.725	7.2

## Thermal Targets

Thermal targets for Weybridge include increasing weatherization of homes, new, efficient wood heat systems, and switching to efficient heat pump systems. See tables below for ideal target numbers to meet the 2050 State goal. The Weybridge Energy Committee believes the interim targets for residential efficiency (i.e. 2025 and 2035) could be increased from that which is shown in table 1b. due to the rate of success current residents have had with energy improvements to their homes.

*1b. Residential Thermal Efficiency Targets	2025	2035	2050
Residential - Increased Efficiency and Conservation (% of municipal households to be weatherized)	2%	9%	47%
1c. Commercial Thermal Efficiency Targets	2025	2035	2050
Commercial - Increased Efficiency and Conservation (% of commercial establishments to be weatherized)	17%	18%	51%

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<b>1d. Thermal Fuel Switching Targets (Residential and Commercial) - Wood Systems</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>2050</b>
New Efficient Wood Heat Systems (in units)	1	1	13
<b>1e. Thermal Fuel Switching Targets (Residential and Commercial) - Heat Pumps</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>2050</b>
New Heat Pumps (in units)	36	86	170

### \*Local Considerations – Residential Thermal Targets

In 2013, in a statewide competition sponsored by *Efficiency Vermont*, the Weybridge Energy Committee oversaw the successful weatherization of 19 Weybridge homes and has since then informally documented an additional eight home weatherization projects. Because of this high participation rate, the Town of Weybridge has met the 2035 target for thermal efficiency and is on track to meeting the 2050 target of 47%.

## Thermal Pathways to Implementation - Goals, Policies and Recommended Actions

### Goals

1. Increase Weybridge’s thermal energy efficiency and self-sufficiency by reducing its energy use, and reducing its carbon footprint to meet local and State targets of 90% renewable energy by 2050.
2. Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and substances that cause acid rain.

### Policies and Recommended Actions

1. Support the conversion of oil and propane heating to efficient wood heating or electric heat pump systems.
2. Lead by example. Encourage efficiency and the use of alternative means for energy production such as geothermal and solar in town buildings, the school and residences
3. Conserve forest land as a renewable energy resource, tempered by the responsible use of wood for biomass energy production.
4. The WEC will coordinate with ACRPC and *Efficiency Vermont* and any other state and low-income weatherization programs to encourage Weybridge residents to participate in weatherization programs.
5. The Zoning Administrator will promote the use of the residential and commercial building energy standards by distributing code information to permit applicants and by acting as a clearinghouse for new information as it comes along.
6. The Selectboard and WEC, to the extent necessary, will conduct an energy audit of municipal buildings to identify weatherization retrofits and incorporate the recommendations into the municipal capital budget.
7. The WEC and Selectboard will explore the funding opportunities and implementation possibilities to upgrade the efficiencies in (1) all town buildings including the school, town hall, library, town garage, volunteer fire department building, and town offices, and (2) private residences and farms.
8. The Planning Commission will investigate a revision to the zoning bylaw that would incentivize compliance with the state’s stretch code, or similarly high environmental standard, through the issuance of a density bonus when approving PUD-density applications.

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9. The Selectboard will exert leadership on municipal, commercial and residential energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources through relevant updates in the Weybridge newsletter or other means of communications with town residents.

## Electrical Use Analysis

### Electrical Use

An estimate of current electricity use in Weybridge is shown in Table 2. This data is from 2016 and is available from *Efficiency Vermont*. These numbers represent everyday electrical use by Weybridge residents. Agricultural businesses such as Monument Farms account for the Commercial and Industrial category in the table below.

2. Current Electricity Use - Town of Weybridge	
Sector	Current Electricity Use (Efficiency Vermont)
<b>Residential (kWh)</b>	3,487,491
<b>Commercial and Industrial (kWh)</b>	627,273
<b>Total (kWh)</b>	4,114,764

### Electrical Targets

Conservation and efficiency are important strategies in decreasing demand for electrical energy. The Weybridge Energy Committee understands this work is done household by household and business by business, through weatherization programs, energy auditing, construction standards, education and outreach, and incentives. Currently, residential use comprises 84% of the electrical consumption in Weybridge. In order to meet the conservation targets, individual home owners will need to substantially increase the efficiency of their homes' electrical fixtures and appliances. Simply by switching out incandescent bulbs with compact florescent 70% less energy is used per bulb. Weybridge must increase its electricity efficiency and conservation to 59.2% to meet the 2050 goals. See Table 2a

2a. Electricity Efficiency Targets	2025	2035	2050
<b>Increase Efficiency and Conservation</b>	10.8%	37.2%	59.2%

## Electrical Pathways to Implementation- Goals, Policies and Recommended Actions

### Goals

1. Reduce reliance on nonrenewable energy sources such as oil and gas, and shift reliance to renewable electrical energy sources, thereby reducing carbon emissions and acid rain.

# Weybridge Town Plan

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2. Conserve renewable and nonrenewable energy resources.

### Policies and Recommended Actions

1. Support energy conservation efforts and the efficient use of energy across all sectors.
2. Promote energy efficiency and increased use of renewable fuels in all buildings, especially new ones.
3. Plan for increased electric demand with the support of Green Mountain Power.
4. Encourage the shift from nonrenewable energy reliance to renewable energy sources by encouraging conversion to electric heat pumps and electric cars.
5. Continue the policy of requiring builders to adhere to the Residential and Commercial Building Energy Standards (RBES and CBES) by distributing code information to permit applicants and working closely with the Zoning Administrator.
6. Selectboard and WEC will investigate the installation of a municipal solar and/or wind net-metering facilities to off-set municipal electric use.
7. Selectboard and WEC will investigate installation of a community-based renewable energy project.
8. Selectboard will consider funding for firefighters to receive training in fighting fires on structures which have roof-mounted solar installations.
9. WEC and Selectboard will explore the funding opportunities and implementation possibilities to upgrade the efficiencies in (1) all town buildings including the school, town hall, library, town garage, volunteer fire department building, and town offices, and (2) private residences and farms.

### Transportation Analysis

3a. Current Municipal Transportation Energy Use	
Transportation Data	Municipal Data
Total # of Vehicles (ACS 2011-2015)	665
Average Miles per Vehicle (VTrans)	11,356
Total Miles Traveled	7,551,740
Realized MPG (2013 - VTrans 2015 Energy Profile)	18.6
Total Gallons Use per Year	406,008
Transportation BTUs (Billion)	49
Average Cost per Gallon of Gasoline (RPC)	*\$2
Gasoline Cost per Year	\$937,877

### Transportation Use

Table 3a. shows number of vehicles, average miles for vehicle and miles traveled by vehicles per year for Weybridge. It also shows the gallons of fuel used per year. Weybridge currently does not have access to public transportation throughout the town and has little in designated walking and/or cycling paths which would offer a safe alternative to single

occupancy vehicles.

\*According to a Vermont news report in September 2017, the average cost per gallon of gas in Vermont was \$2.50. This increases the cost per year, shown in the above regional data table, by 25 percent.

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## Transportation Targets

The targets below are state and regionally generated data, and suggest there should be at least 58 electrical vehicles in Weybridge by 2025, 397 by 2035 and 775 by 2050. Weybridge recognizes that the Town currently has little ability to mandate private use of gas cars to electric cars. This change will depend on market demand, availability and affordability of electric vehicles in the future. However, the Town is planning on installing electric vehicle charging infrastructure on municipal property to encourage residents to switch to renewably powered transportation. In the short-term, transportation goals, policies and actions will focus on increasing access to alternative mobility such as public transportation, car-pooling, safe cycling and walking, and stressing the need for new growth to occur closest to existing services and amenities.

<b>3b. Use of Renewables - Transportation</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>2050</b>
<b>Renewable Energy Use - Transportation</b>	2.7%	18.2%	83.5%

<b>3c. Transportation Fuel Switching Target - Electric Vehicles</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>2050</b>
<b>Electric Vehicles</b>	58	397	775
<b>3d. Transportation Fuel Switching Target - Biodiesel Vehicles</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>2050</b>
<b>Biodiesel Vehicles</b>	13	22	31

## Transportation Pathways to Implementation- Goals, Policies and Recommended Actions

### Goals

1. Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and substances that cause acid rain.
2. Increase access to fuel efficient and carbon neutral multi-modal transportation options.
3. Increase the amount of pedestrian and bicycle commute trips.
4. Hold vehicle miles traveled per capita to 2011 levels through reducing the amount of single occupancy vehicle (SOV) commute trips.

### Policies and Recommended Actions

1. Support the reduction of transportation energy demand, reduction of single-occupancy vehicle use, and the transition to renewable and lower-emission energy sources for transportation.
2. Continue to pursue sidewalk, recreation path, bicycle lanes, public parking and transit projects in part to reduce local transportation energy use.
3. Support regional efforts to increase access to safe every day walking and cycling within and across municipal borders.
4. Support state and regional public transportation programs serving Weybridge. WEC and Selectboard will work with ACTR and other service providers to understand ways in which service to Weybridge could be improved.
5. Encourage road, street and pathway designs which incorporate multi-modal design elements appropriate in scale for rights-of-way in Weybridge.



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6. Selectboard and WEC will promote and provide information about the *GoVermont* website which provides information to citizens regarding ride share, vanpool, and park-and-ride options.
7. Selectboard and WEC will plan for and install electric vehicle charging infrastructure on municipal property, or in other appropriate locations, to the extent funding is available.
8. Road Commissioner will review municipal road standards to ensure that they reflect all “complete streets” principles applicable to our rural roads.
9. Selectboard will nominate a Weybridge representative to sit on the *Walk-Bike Council of Addison County* to foster safe and accessible opportunities for walking and cycling as an alternative to SOV.
10. Support locating a Park and Ride in Weybridge and encourage Weybridge residents to consider using ride-sharing programs in order to reduce use of fossil fuels.
11. Review subdivision street and driveway design standards to insure they are energy efficient and incorporate multimodal amenities.

## Land Use, Generation and Transmission Analysis

### Land Use

*Please refer to the Land Use Chapter of the Weybridge Town Plan for a full description of landscape characteristics, land use types, and land use planning areas and polices. Please refer to our Transportation Chapter for details on transportation policy and our Natural Resources Chapter for detailed natural, scenic, recreational and agricultural policies.*

Weybridge recognizes that the way we manage and guide land use and development has a direct impact on energy conservation per household. Our land use plan and zoning bylaws encourage development in existing clusters of residential areas such as Pulp Mill Bridge Road, Pleasant View Terrace, Weybridge Hill, and Cave Road for example. Clustering growth and development decreases the need for new infrastructure and utilities and lessens vehicle miles travelled (VMT) to and from amenities and services in Middlebury and beyond. It also provides future opportunities to connect to walking, cycling and public transit infrastructure, essential to decreasing single vehicle occupancy and daily fossil fuel dependence. Our residential areas support residential and home-based businesses. Our village center district encourages a future general store. Conservation of forest and open lands provides access to local, outdoor recreation opportunities. All encourage in-town access to work, play and essential goods, which would otherwise demand single occupancy trips out of town. In order to maintain our town’s defining bucolic, visual character and to support the generation of sustainably managed renewable energies such as wood and biomass, our land use plan discourages the fragmentation of working landscapes – both open and forested. Our land use plan also seeks to manage and preserve upland forests, meadows, wetlands and river corridors for their ecological, energy-saving functions in mitigating flooding, temperature fluctuation, stormwater run-off and erosion. Thoughtful siting of residential and commercial uses, services, utilities and facilities plays an important role in preserving unique landscape character, such as long reaching views, and minimizing negative impacts to property values.

***Please refer to the siting and community standard discussion, on page 17, for policies associated with scenic impacts.***

### Current Renewable Energy Generation

## Weybridge Town Plan

Table 4 and 4a. show current energy generation in Weybridge including residential solar, wind, hydro-electrical and biomass/methane energy production. These are discussed in further detail on the next two pages.

Source	Sites	Generation (in MW)	Generation (in MWh/year)
<b>*Solar</b>	47	0.243	298
<b>Wind</b>	2	.004	12.3
<b>Hydro</b>	2	9.725	34,076
<b>Biomass</b>	1	0.15	614
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>10.1221</b>	<b>35,000</b>

Table 4a breaks down solar generation by type. As of March 2019, 2 new sites have been installed bringing the total residential solar sites to 49 and increasing the existing solar energy generation total (in MWh/year).

4a. Local Considerations – Solar			
Residential Solar	Sites	% of households	Total Generation (MWh/year)
<b>Ground-mounted PV</b>	11	3.1%	86
<b>Ground-mounted PV Trackers</b>	6	1.6%	47
<b>Roof-mounted PV</b>	32	8.9%	230
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>13.6%</b>	<b>363</b>

\*Energy Action Network (EAN) <http://www.vtenergydashboard.org/>

### Types of Generation Potential

#### Hydropower

Weybridge is endowed with substantial hydro resources as Otter Creek drops some 200 feet as it flows north through town. According to LIHI and GMP, in 2014 the average annual hydroelectric generation for Weybridge is at least 16,815 MWH<sup>3</sup>, well over the average residential electricity usage. The Energy Action Network indicates generation from hydro at 35,453MWH<sup>4</sup>. Generally, Weybridge residents benefit economically by having these generating facilities on our tax rolls. In a series of lawsuits Weybridge successfully challenged and changed the basis of hydro plants’ valuation from a depreciated fixed asset value to the present value of future income made by the plant. This raises the plants’ valuation on the tax rolls from tens of thousands to millions of dollars.

<sup>3</sup> (<http://lowimpacthydro.org/lihi-certificate-98-weybridge-hydroelectric-project-weybridge-and-new-haven-vermont/>, n.d.)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.vtenergydashboard.org/my-community/weybridge/statistics>

# Weybridge Town Plan

## Local Considerations – Hydroelectricity

As noted in the above paragraph, generation of electricity by hydroelectric generation in Weybridge is significant. *Efficiency Vermont* determines Weybridge uses 4,114,763 kWh (4,114.763 MWh) of electricity a year. The lowest estimate of generation of electricity from hydro power is 16,815 MWh, four times that of consumption.

## Biomass

### Methane Digester:

Monument Farms, a commercial dairy farm with 500 cows, currently supplies its yearly electricity demand with an anaerobic digester. They have used this system since 2011. It produces approximately 100MWh/year.

### Residential Wood Chip and Wood Pellet heating:

While these numbers are not recorded for Weybridge specifically, it is probable that some residents do use woodchip or wood pellets to heat their homes.

## Residential Solar Generation

According to Energy Action Network, thirty-nine Weybridge residences use photovoltaic systems to supply a portion or all of their electrical energy. Thanks to Vermont’s net-metering law, owners of these systems can sell excess power back to the grid during periods of high solar production, and purchase grid power when needed. The grid serves as a kind of storage system for solar-produced electrical energy. Several other homes have solar domestic hot water systems, including one that has operated continuously for a quarter-century, supplying its owners with 95 percent of their hot water from May to October.

## Residential Wind Generation

A wind turbine operated at one Weybridge home in the late 1970s and early 1980s had a peak power output of 1.5 kW and produced typically 2100 kWh of electrical energy per year. The owner of that long-gone machine has replaced it with a more modern device.

## Residential Geothermal Heating

Finally, several Weybridge homes have groundwater-based geothermal heating systems; one of them is powered by photovoltaically generated electricity.

## Generation Potential and Targets

Based on Table 4, current energy generation in Weybridge is estimated to be 35,000 MWh/year. Table 5 below, using state and regionally derived forecasts, shows a target for new generation of only 1486.5 MWh/year by 2025. Because of its hydro resources, Weybridge already generates significantly more electricity than it uses. Weybridge’s hydro facilities are already included in the electric generation totals. Weybridge’s targets for future generation represent its share of new generation for the region based on its population and available resources areas for solar and wind generation.

## 5. Renewable Generation Targets

2025

2035

2050

# Weybridge Town Plan

<b>Total Renewable Generation Target (in MWh)</b>	1486.5	2973.1	4504.6
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<b>5a. Renewable Generation Potential</b>		
	<b>MW</b>	<b>MWh</b>
Rooftop Solar	1	687
Ground-mounted Solar	431	528,578
Wind	1,878	5,756,415
Hydro	9.725	35,453
Biomass and Methane	0.15	750
<b>Total Renewable Generation Potential</b>	<b>2,320</b>	<b>*6,321,883</b>

The generation potential for wind and solar above represent the theoretical maximum potential energy Weybridge could generate from those resources at full buildout. It will never happen but does demonstrate that Weybridge has the ability to selectively site generation and still achieve its targets. Weybridge chose to add existing generation data for hydro-electrical and biomass to the original data table. The data, collected by Vermont’s Energy Action Network, incorporates the two existing hydro dams and one methane digester currently in Weybridge. The numbers for hydro and biomass do not necessarily represent future potential of these energy producers, but do provide a baseline to incorporate into the total potential.

Energy Action Network (EAN) <http://www.vtenergydashboard.org/>

## **Future Solar**

Solar energy facilities ranging from 150 kW to 2.2 MkW have been constructed in neighboring Addison County towns showing a varying degree of visual and other impacts, and varying degree of advantage to municipalities. As this energy plans discusses, there are open, sun-exposed areas in Weybridge which, if well-sited, could support small-scale<sup>5</sup>, commercial solar operations. These would ideally provide a renewable energy source directly to the Town and residents of Weybridge. Weybridge encourages and anticipates an increase in residential solar usage as installation prices become more affordable.

## **Future Biomass**

Anaerobic digester, biodiesel, Combined Heat and Power (CHP), compost heat, wood chip heat, landfill methane, wood pellet heat and firewood heat all constitute biomass. Although the efficiency is low, Vermont’s large areas of forest make up a substantial rate of solar energy storage in the form of tree biomass, biomass that can be burned for heat or to generate electricity. Vermont hosts the world’s largest municipally owned wood-fired electric power plant, Burlington Electric Company’s 54-megawatt McNeil Station. Closer to home, Middlebury College displaces one million gallons of oil per year—half the oil consumption of its heating plant—with local biomass in the form of wood chips. Many homes in Weybridge use wood either as the primary heating fuel or to supplement another heat source, usually oil but sometimes solar or geothermal. Although accurate figures are not available, burning wood for heat in Weybridge almost certainly makes a significant dent in our town’s oil consumption. Weybridge owns a 38-acre town forest, although it is land locked and its boundary markings are, at best,

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<sup>5</sup> Small-scale commercial solar is defined in this plan as a project 500 kW or smaller.

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inadequate or nonexistent. Addison County and Middlebury College foresters agree that each acre of Addison County forest might sustainably yield about one-third of a cord of firewood each year. That means our town forest could supply some twelve cords annually for home heating.

Our town is thirty four percent forested. Given Weybridge's overall land area of 11,243 acres, this suggests that our forest land could supply up to 1200 cords per year—probably somewhat below what would be needed to heat all 346 households in Weybridge. Biomass should be considered in the context of public health impacts in addition to whether supplies are sustainable and effective to meet short and long term demands for renewable heat source energy. Widespread use of wood and other biomass materials as a heat-producing or energy producing fuel could result in unacceptable levels of air-born particulates and other forms of air pollution unless utilized exclusively in high-efficiency, clean burning heating units.

Any harvesting of trees for biomass or a biomass facility should be carefully accomplished to avoid the potentially serious conflicts with residential uses, wildlife habitat and the intrinsic character of Weybridge. Upland forests are essential to the visual character of the landscape, bringing contrast and depth to the open views, as well as the essential function of carbon sequestration.

## **Future Wind**

Mapping of New England wind resources by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory shows that most of Weybridge has average winds in the Class 1 category (speeds below 12 miles per hour). This is the lowest class and is unsuitable for commercial-scale wind power. The same source shows a small area that is Class 3 category, most likely along Snake Mountain. The Snake Mountain region of the town is primarily zoned Conservation. As stated in Weybridge's Town Plan, the primary purpose of this area is open space conservation, including agricultural and forest use, public outdoor recreation, wildlife refuges and reservoirs. Development in this area is restricted unless conditionally approved by the Weybridge Zoning Board. The Town Plan also discourages the building of freestanding communication towers on Snake Mountain and other ridgelines. For the above reasons this Energy Plan does not support industrial or community scale wind installations in the Snake Mountain region and prohibits industrial scale wind throughout the entire Town. Based on existing residential installations in Weybridge and neighboring towns, Weybridge is likely capable of producing significant wind energy at the smaller scales of residential and community-scale generation.

*See also the **Community Standards for Siting and Decommissioning Energy Projects** section for definitions, generation and siting information for future wind projects.*

## **Future Geothermal**

Energy trickles from Earth's interior to the surface at a modest average rate of about 350 watts per acre, far less than the solar input. For Weybridge, far from major geological activity, that number is almost certainly significantly lower. In addition, solar energy warms the Earth, especially in the summer, and some of that energy is stored as heat in the upper layers of soil and rock. Because of this, soil temperatures a few feet below ground level average around 45°F to 50°F year-round. This temperature is too low for direct heating, although it can help with summer cooling. Nevertheless, the constant ground temperature represents a significant energy resource, and with appropriate technology it can be used as a heat source. Several geothermal systems relying on heat pump technology now operate in Weybridge.

## **Renewable Generation and Transmission Pathways to Implementation**

### **Goals**

1. Generation and transmission of renewable energy in conformance with the goals, strategies, mapping and community standards outlined in this energy plan and the town plan.
2. Promote Land Use planning that supports reducing energy usage and conserving resources

### **Policy and Recommended Actions**

1. Development of generation utilities shall be favored in identified preferred locations over the development of other sites.
2. Support production of energy from methane as a desirable agricultural practice.
3. Encourage the use of wind energy with due regard to aesthetic and environmental considerations, especially in high and medium density residential areas.
4. Given the prominence of Snake Mountain in viewsheds around much of Weybridge (and beyond), location of wind towers on Snake Mountain requires extra scrutiny.
5. Encourage settlement patterns that reduce travel requirements for work, services, and recreation. Concentrate development within medium and high density residential and residential commercial districts.
6. Allow infilling of existing large-lot development where higher density development is desirable and appropriate.
7. The Planning Commission will promote amending zoning regulations to ensure the Town Plan's Energy section is enforceable at the zoning level.
8. The Weybridge Energy Committee (WEC) and Weybridge Energy Coordinator will continue to work closely with the Weybridge Planning Commission, ZBA and Zoning Administrator on any proposed energy development projects within Weybridge.
9. Investigate the installation of or subscription to municipal solar and/or wind net-metering facilities to off-set municipal electric use.
10. Investigate installation of community-owned renewable energy project(s) to allow Weybridge citizens to participate in the economic benefits of local energy production.
11. The Selectboard will consider pursuing an easement to access the town forest for conservation, forestry and carbon sequestration potential.
12. The town create an Energy Fund for the purposes of promoting energy efficiency and renewable fuels and other complimentary efforts, to be managed by Weybridge Energy Committee but with the Selectboard authorizing disbursements.
13. The town should support K-12 schools to bring energy ideas and solutions into the classroom by working with organizations such as Vermont Energy Education Program (<http://veep.org>)

# Weybridge Town Plan

## Mapping Generation Potential

Weybridge has incorporated maps provided to them by ACRPC. These maps show data as required by the Department of Public Service Determination Standards for enhanced energy planning. The maps are a planning tool only and often do not precisely indicate locations where siting a facility is acceptable. These maps show areas with potential access and constraints to energy resources such as: solar, wind, hydro, and biomass. Constraints considered on these maps are only those ones outlined on Table 6.

“Known” and “possible” constraints were subsequently identified on the maps. Known constraints are conservation resources that shall be protected from all future development of renewable generation facilities. Possible constraints are conservation resources that shall be protected, to some extent, from the development of renewable generation facilities. The presence of possible constraints on land does not necessarily impede the siting of renewable generation facilities on a site. Siting in these locations could occur if impacts to the affected possible constraints are mitigated, preferably on-site.

The following table describes the constraints, as identified on the maps, and the source of the specified data.

<b>Table 6 – Mapping Constraints</b>		
<b>Solar, Wind and Biomass Maps - Known Constraints</b>		
Constraint	Description	Source
<b>Confirmed and unconfirmed vernal pools</b>	There is a 600-foot buffer around confirmed or unconfirmed vernal pools.	ANR
<b>State Significant Natural Communities and Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species</b>	Rankings S1 through S3 were used as constraints. These include all of the rare and uncommon rankings within the file. For more information on the specific rankings, explore the methodology for the shapefile.	VCGI
<b>DEC River corridors</b>	Mapped River Corridors were depicted.	ANR
<b>Class 1 and Class 2 Wetlands</b>	<b>Vermont State Wetlands Inventory (VSWI) and advisory layers from site specific work collected by the municipality</b>	VCGI
<b>Solar, Wind and Biomass Maps - Possible Constraints</b>		
Constraint	Description	Source
<b>Protected lands</b>	This constraint includes public lands held by agencies with conservation or natural resource oriented missions, municipal natural resource holdings (ex. Town forests), public boating and fishing access areas, public and private educational institution holdings with natural resource uses and protections, publicly owned rights on private lands, parcels owned in fee by non-profit organizations dedicated to conserving land or resources, and private parcels with conservation easements held by non-profit organizations.	VCGI
<b>Deer wintering areas</b>	Deer wintering habitat as identified by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources.	ANR
<b>Hydric soils</b>	Hydric soils as identified by the US Department of Agriculture.	VCGI
<b>Agricultural soils</b>	Local, statewide, and prime agricultural soils are considered.	VCGI
<b>Act 250 Agricultural Soil Mitigation Areas</b>	Sites conserved as a condition of an Act 250 permit.	ANR

# Weybridge Town Plan

<b>FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) special flood hazard areas</b>	Special flood hazard areas as digitized by the ACRPC were used (just the 100-year flood plain-500-year floodplain not mapped). The inclusion of this resource as a regional constraint is consistent with goals and policies of the Addison County Regional Plan.	ACRPC
<b>Vermont Conservation Design Highest Priority Forest Blocks</b>	The lands and waters identified here are the areas of the state that are of highest priority for maintaining ecological integrity. Together, these lands comprise a connected landscape of large and intact forested habitat, healthy aquatic and riparian systems, and a full range of physical features (bedrock, soils, elevation, slope, and aspect) on which plant and animal natural communities depend. The inclusion of this resource as a regional constraint is consistent with goals and policies of the Addison County Regional Plan. (Source: ANR)	ANR

## Interpretation of Regionally Mapped Data

The maps in this energy plan show areas that are potentially appropriate or inappropriate locations for future renewable generation facilities. They also identify primary and secondary locations for renewable energy sources. These are approximate and only consider known and possible constraints as defined in Table 6. When a generation facility is proposed, the presence of *all* our natural resources, town plan policy, and other specific site characteristics, such as impacts to adjoining properties and impacts to viewsheds identified in this plan, shall be assessed as a part of the application. Given the use of data for mapping that is on the older side and in some cases the “best-approximate,” any proposal for renewable generation facilities shall be accompanied with maps using updated or even more accurate data. The Town reserves the right to change its conclusions on primary and secondary locations when new data is presented.

## Local Considerations

Weybridge supports moving away from the use of conventional fuels and systems to help combat global warming. Weybridge is approaching its energy needs by first reducing the energy needs of its residents, through energy conservation. The strong and effective leadership of the Weybridge Energy Committee has helped Weybridge make some significant strides in this direction. Weybridge also recognizes it needs to meet its targets for new energy generation and has identified preferred areas to encourage siting for future facilities. However, even in these identified areas, developers must also adhere to Weybridge’s **‘Community Standards for Siting and Decommissioning’** set forth below.

## Community Standards for Siting and Decommissioning Energy Projects

### A. INSTALLATION SCALE DEFINITIONS

#### A1. Solar Installations

Residential-scale Solar are projects 15kW or less

Small-scale Commercial Solar is any project 500 kW or smaller

Large-scale Commercial/Industrial Solar is any project over 500kW

#### A2. Wind Installations

Residential Scale Wind consists of a single tower less than 120 feet high generating less than 15kW of energy.



# Weybridge Town Plan

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Community Scale Wind consists of 1 or more towers all less than 200 feet high (so as not to require night lighting) and producing less than 1 MW of electricity.

Industrial Scale Wind consists of wind projects with a total capacity of greater than 1MW or with a tower or towers taller than 200 feet or requiring night lighting for any reason.

## B. SITING - GENERAL

Where a project is placed on the landscape constitutes the most critical element in the aesthetic siting of that project. Poor siting cannot be adequately mitigated. Accordingly, all renewable energy projects must evaluate and address the proposed site's aesthetic impact on the surrounding landscape and significant viewsheds.

### B1. Siting for Solar Installations

#### Preferred Solar Sites:

- The larger blocks identified as 'primary' areas for solar off the south side of Hamilton Road and abutting Cave Road.
- The larger blocks identified as 'primary' areas on the west side of Sheep Farm Road. These areas combined total approximately 125 acres, with the generation potential of 15.625 MW (19,163 MWhr/yr) Weybridge's target for new generation by 2050 is 4,506 MWhr/yr. Accordingly, Weybridge's preferred areas for solar provide more than adequate generation potential.

*(See also Preferred Net-Metered Solar Locations map in this Energy plan).*

#### Good Solar Sites (include one or more of the following characteristics):

- Roof-mounted systems;
- Systems located in close proximity to existing larger scale, commercial, industrial or agricultural buildings;
- Proximity to existing hedgerows or other topographical features that naturally screen the proposed array from view from at least two sides
- Systems fit the scale and context of their location.
- Reuse of former brownfields or otherwise impacted property.
- Glare is minimized to the extent possible.
- Weybridge preferred site.

#### Poor Solar Sites (Include one or more of the following characteristics):

- No natural screening;
- Topography that causes the arrays to dominate the skyline from common vantage points like roads or neighborhoods;
- Installations that require large amounts of clearing of existing forested areas.<sup>6</sup>
- Any site that requires extensive clearing of meadow or woodland for access.

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<sup>6</sup> For example, the regional maps included in this plan point to some forested areas as being 'primary' solar, wind and biomass resources (such as the forested block along James Road). While the map identifies it as 'primary', it is, in reality, a poor site as clearing this land would conflict with policies within the Town Plan regarding the preservation of upland forests and wildlife corridors.

# Weybridge Town Plan

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- Locations in floodways or mapped river corridors;
- A location in proximity to and interfering with a significant viewshed. Significant viewsheds within the municipality of Weybridge include open farm fields with unobstructed views from roads or other points in Weybridge, including long views across extensive fields. Specifically, these include, but are not limited to, the views down into the Lemon Fair Valley to the east from Snake Mountain Road; to the south from Prunier Road; to the north from Lemon Fair Road; the higher elevations of Snake Mountain and Weybridge Hill from Route 23 and Quaker Village Road; to the east along the southern part of James Road; to the west along Quaker Village Road; views of the valley between Quaker Village Road and Field Days Road, especially from the Weybridge portion of Field Days Road; and to the east along Sheep Farm Road. These viewsheds are admittedly described broadly, and when looked at in the context of a particular location the town might be able to accommodate carefully sited installations. By identifying these viewsheds, the town is making it clear how important retaining the integrity of these areas is to the character of the town;
- The removal of large parcels of productive agricultural land from agriculture use; and
- Sites that require public investment in transmission and distribution infrastructure in order to function properly

## **B2. Siting for Wind Installations**

### **Good Wind Sites** (Include one or more of the following characteristics):

- Reuse of former brownfields or otherwise previously impacted properties (instead of sites with no-previous development).
- Within agricultural, commercial or industrial contexts and where practical, near other structures.
- Proximity to existing transmission system to minimize the new infrastructure required to serve the project.

### **Poor Wind Sites** (Include one or more of the following characteristics):

- In landscapes valued for natural or scenic features, particularly the views of Snake Mountain and Weybridge Hill, siting will be evaluated for potential visual impacts on scenic views and the experience of a natural landscape.
- Impacts the flight and migration patterns of birds

### **Prohibited Wind Sites:**

- Industrial scale wind installations are prohibited in Weybridge (total capacity of greater than 1MW or with a tower or towers taller than 200 feet or requiring night lighting for any reason.)
- Community scale (consists of 1 or more towers all less than 200 feet high, so as not to require night lighting and producing less than 1 MW of electricity) wind is prohibited on Snake Mountain and/or if considered to obstruct views of Snake Mountain

## B3. Siting for Transmissions and Substations

**Good sites** (Include one or more of the following characteristics):

- Systems located in close proximity to existing larger scale, commercial, industrial or agricultural buildings;
- Proximity to existing hedgerows or other topographical features that naturally screen the proposed corridor from view from at least two sides;
- Shared or neighboring ROW with other transmission or transportation infrastructure

**Poor Sites** (Include one or more of the following characteristics):

- No natural screening;
- Topography that causes the lines to be visible against the skyline from common vantage points like roads or neighborhoods;
- A location in proximity to and interfering with a significant viewshed;
- The removal of productive agricultural land from agricultural use

## C. MASS and SCALE

### C1. Solar Mass and Scale

The historical working landscape and other open lands, rural residential development, rolling hills, sweeping Lemon Fair Valley and the backdrop of Snake Mountain define Weybridge and Weybridge desires to preserve these types of viewsheds. Rural structures like barns and silos fit into the landscape because their scale and mass generally do not impact large tracts of otherwise open land. When houses are added to Weybridge's landscape, sensitive siting and appropriate screening are required whenever possible in The Weybridge Town Plan, Zoning and Subdivision Bylaws. Renewable energy systems shall also be limited in mass and scale, or have their mass and scale broken by screening, to fit in with the landscape.

Solar systems of 150 kW and less (which comprise 1.5 acres or less) should fairly easily conform to these standards given the smaller size. All commercial scale solar arrays (i.e. above 150kW) shall also be limited in mass and scale, and/or have their mass and scale broken by screening to fit in with the landscape. Large commercial solar projects larger than 500 kW, which are typically in excess of four acres are larger than any other structure within the municipality of Weybridge and are difficult to screen or otherwise mitigate from visual and ecological perspectives. In the event such inability to adequately screen or otherwise mitigate from visual and ecological perspectives is the case, large-commercial solar projects, above 500kW, are prohibited.

### C2. Wind Mass and Scale

- At a minimum, all wind turbines must observe the setback restrictions contained in Town of Weybridge's Bylaws. However, developers are encouraged to increase setbacks to mitigate noise and shadowing impacts.
- Use white or other colored materials (tower, hub blades) and earth tones for ground infrastructure or fences that blend into the landscape instead of metallic or other brighter colors).

# Weybridge Town Plan

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- **Residential Wind projects:** shall follow the Public Service Department guidelines and scoring system in their [Wind Siting Handbook](#)<sup>7</sup> for small turbines and be reasonably construed to score below the “significant” zone.
- **Community Scale Wind projects:** Shall not exceed 200 feet in height, excepting movable blades.

### **C3. Transmissions and Substations Mass and Scale**

- Industrial and commercial scale transmission lines and associated sub-stations or other buildings may need to be limited in height and scale, and/or have their height and scale broken by screening to fit in with the landscape in any given municipality.

## **D. MITIGATION METHODS.**

### **D1. Solar Mitigation Methods**

In addition to properly siting a project according to the criteria set forth above, solar developers must take the following action to mitigate all project sites:

- Locate the structures on the site to keep them from dominating the skyline above the horizon from public vantage points;
- Shorter panels may be more appropriate in certain spaces than taller panels to keep the project lower on the landscape.
- At a minimum, all solar arrays must observe the setback restrictions contained in Act 56 governing solar installations. However, developers are encouraged to increase setbacks to at least those listed in the Weybridge Zoning Regulations within the Zoning District in which the array lies. Setbacks for any installations within the important viewsheds identified in this plan should be carefully considered and may need to be or exceed 1000 to 2000 feet to reduce the intrusive nature of a less natural, man-made structures on the view and character of these special places.
- Use the existing topography, development or vegetation on the site to screen and/or break the mass of the array;
- In the absence of existing natural vegetation, the commercial development must be screened by native plantings beneficial to wildlife and pollinators that will grow to a sufficient height and depth to provide effective screening within a period of 5 years. Partial screening to break the mass of the site and to protect public and private views may be appropriate.
- Practice a “good neighbor policy”. The siting of the array should be done in such a manner that the array creates no greater burden on neighboring property owners or public infrastructure than it does on the property on which it is sited. As an example, a landowner may not site an array on his or her property in a location calculated to diminish the visual impact of the array from his or her residence, but places the array immediately within their neighbor’s or the public’s viewshed.

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[http://publicservice.vermont.gov/sites/dps/files/documents/Renewable\\_Energy/Resources/Wind/psb\\_wind\\_siting\\_handbook.pdf](http://publicservice.vermont.gov/sites/dps/files/documents/Renewable_Energy/Resources/Wind/psb_wind_siting_handbook.pdf)

# Weybridge Town Plan

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- Use black or earth tone materials (panels, supports, fences) that blend into the landscape instead of metallic or other brighter colors, and take all possible steps to eliminate or reduce reflection on affected properties or views from the public roads.

## **D2. Wind Mitigation Methods**

In addition to properly siting a project, wind developers must take appropriate measures from the list below to reduce the impact of the project:

- At a minimum, all wind turbines must observe setback restrictions such that if a tower falls, the entire structure will land on property owned or controlled by the tower's owner. Commercial Developers must increase setbacks to mitigate noise to State decibel standard and mitigate shadowing impacts.
- Use white or other colored materials (tower, hub blades) and earth tones for ground infrastructure or fences that blend into the landscape instead of metallic or other brighter colors).
- The actual footprint of a wind turbine tends to be small but its resource impact is more substantial within the footprint area, and wind turbines (particularly wind farms) are likely to have scenic or esthetic impacts, sometimes quite dramatic. Scale and landscape context are important considerations in siting wind installations. Because the siting of wind will be more challenging given potential heights and visibilities due to Weybridge's often open and rolling landscapes, proposals need to be considered on a one-by-one, specific basis. Using the criteria in A-E of this *Community Standards* section will be used to evaluate whether on balance potential wind installations meet or violate the Weybridge Town Plan.

## **D.3 Transmissions and Substations Mitigation Methods**

In addition to properly siting a project, transmission and substation developers must take the following action to mitigate all project sites:

- Consider burying the transmission infrastructure as a potential way to lessen visual/aesthetic impacts;
- Locate the structures on the site to keep them from dominating the skyline above the horizon from public vantage points;
- Shorter structures may be more appropriate in certain spaces than taller structures to keep the project lower on the landscape.
- At a minimum, all sub-stations must observe the setback restrictions listed in the Municipal Zoning Regulations within the Zoning District in which it lies;
- Use the existing topography, development or vegetation on the site to screen and/or break the mass of the array;
- In the absence of existing natural vegetation, the commercial development must be screened by berms and/or native plantings beneficial to wildlife and pollinators that will grow to a sufficient height and depth to provide effective screening within a period of 5 years. Partial screening to break the mass of the site and to protect public and private views of the project may be appropriate;

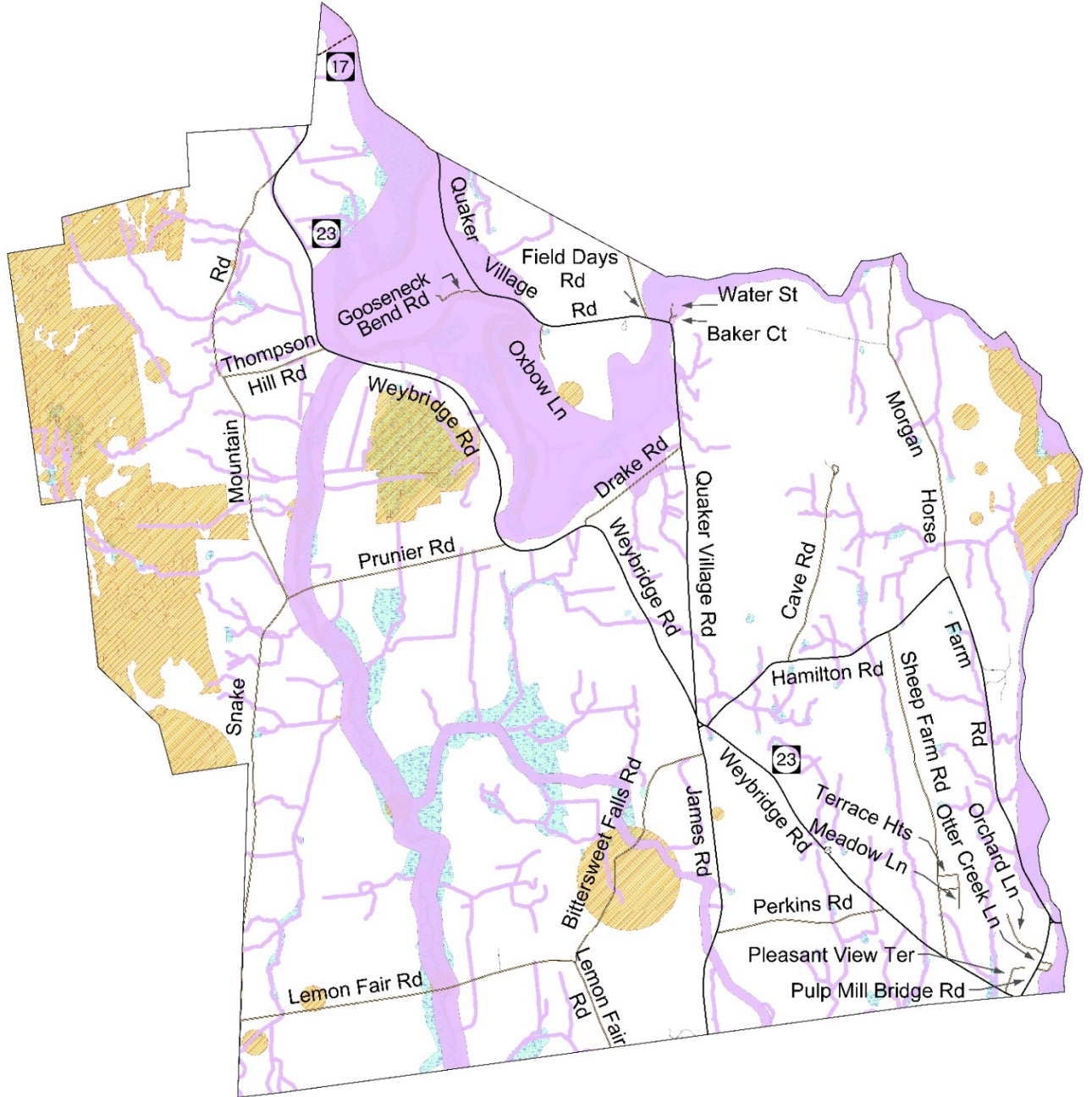
## Weybridge Town Plan

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- Practice a “good neighbor policy”. The siting of the array should be done in such a manner that the substation creates no greater burden on neighboring property owners or public infrastructure than it does on the property on which it is sited. Locating a sub-station in a manner designed to reduce impacts on neighbors or public viewsheds constitutes reasonable mitigation.
  - Use black or earth tone materials (panels, supports fences) that blend into the landscape instead of metallic or other brighter colors).
- E. **DECOMMISSIONING AND RESTORATION.** All projects shall be decommissioned at the end of their useful life. No more than a year shall pass from end of life to the decommissioning and restoration of site. This means equipment shall be removed, landscaping kept and disturbed areas restored. Developers of all projects 150 kW and greater shall provide the municipality with appropriate assurances to guarantee funding exists to decommission the project and restore the site in keeping with Weybridge’s desire to retain its agricultural land base, a solar array’s useful life shall be deemed to be at the end of its useful life when the array(s) are taken off line.



## Renewable Energy Planning: Known Constraints - Weybridge



### Legend

- Vernal Pools (confirmed and unconfirmed layers)
- State River Corridors (inc 50ft buffers on sm streams)
- FEMA Floodways
- Natural Communities and Rare, Threatened and Endangered
- Vermont Significant Wetlands (Class 1 & 2 and advisory layers)
- National Wilderness Areas

Known Constraints (State Energy Planning Guidelines)

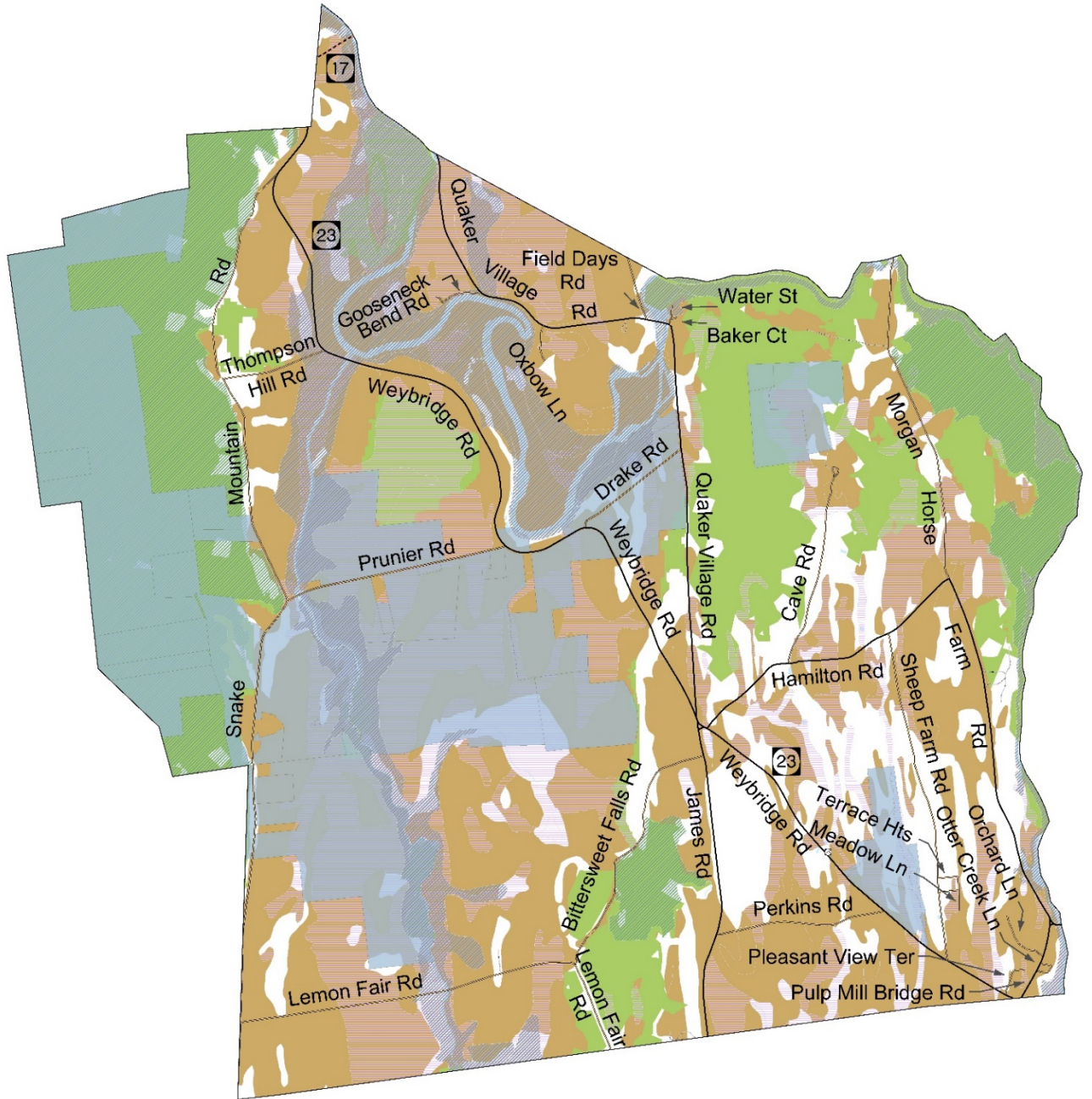
- Vernal Pools (confirmed and unconfirmed)
- DEC River Corridors (inc stream 50ft buffer)
- FEMA Floodways
- State Significant natural Communities and Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species
- National Wilderness Areas
- Class 1 and Class 2 Wetlands (VSWI and advisory layers)
- Regionally or Locally Identified Critical Resources (none currently)



This map was created as part of a Regional Energy Planning Initiative with funding from the Vermont Public Service Department.

# Weybridge Town Plan

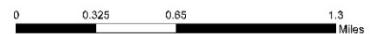
## Renewable Energy Planning: Possible Constraints - Weybridge



### Legend

- Agricultural Soils
- FEMA Special Flood Hazard Areas
- Protected Lands
- Agricultural Soil Mitigation (Act 250)
- Deer Wintering Areas
- Highest Priority Forest Blocks
- Hydric Soils

Possible Constraints (State Energy Planning Guidelines)  
 Agricultural Soils (Prime, Statewide and Local USDA)  
 FEMA Special Flood Hazard Areas  
 Protected Lands (State fee lands and prvt cons lands)  
 Act 250 Agricultural Soil Mitigation areas  
 Deer Wintering Areas  
 ANI's Vermont Conservation Design Highest Priority Forest Blocks  
 Hydric Soils  
 Regionally or Locally Identified Critical Resources (none currently)

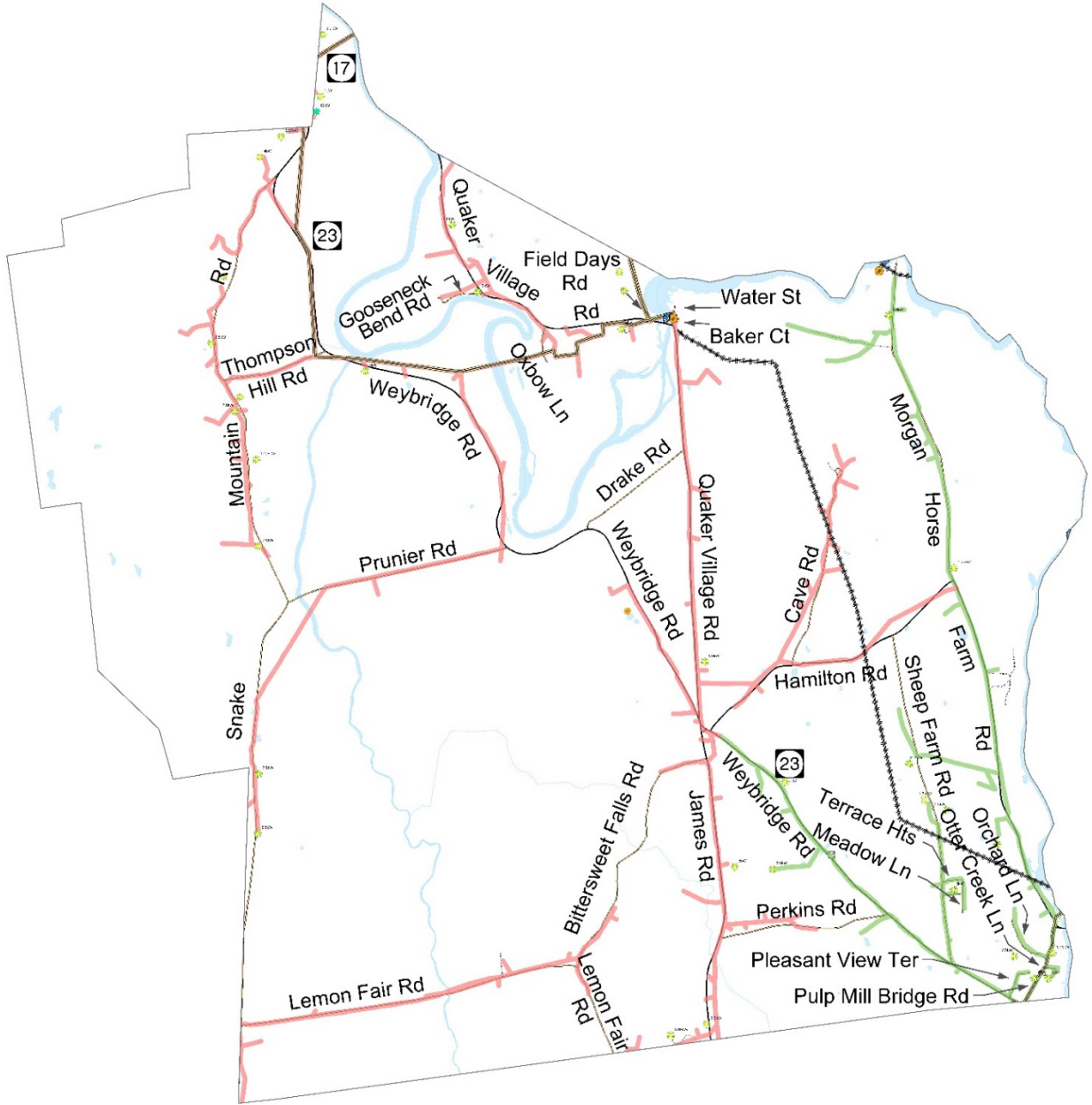


This map was created as part of a Regional Energy Planning Initiative with funding from the Vermont Public Service Department.



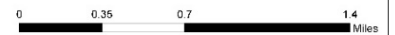
# Weybridge Town Plan

## Renewable Energy Potential: Transmission and Distribution Resources and Constraints - Weybridge



### Legend

- Substations
- Transmission Lines
- 3 Phase Power Lines
- Circuit Ratings
  - Good
  - Fair
  - Poor
- Distributed Generation
  - Solar
  - Wind
  - Bio
  - Other
  - Hydroelectric Dams

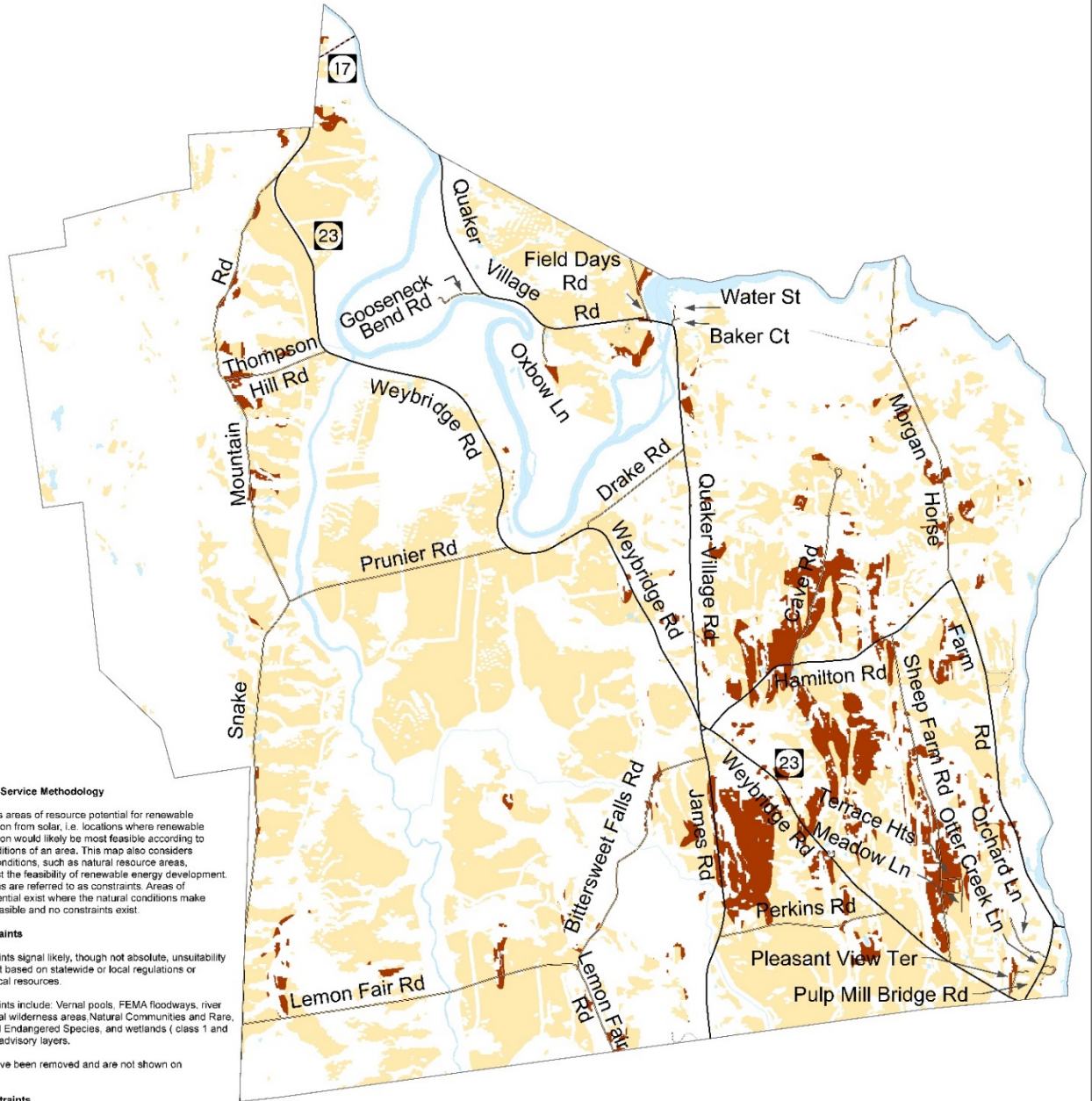


Transmission and Distribution under the State Energy Planning Guidelines.  
Substations, Transmission lines and 3-Phase power distribution lines from Green Mountain Power/ACRPC, Circuit Ratings identifying capacity loads and Distributed Generation also from Green Mountain Power - 4/28/2017.  
Hydroelectric facilities from agency of Natural Resources.



This map was created as part of a Regional Energy Planning Initiative with funding from the Vermont Public Service Department.

## Renewable Energy: Potential Solar Resource Siting Areas - Weybridge



**Dept of Public Service Methodology**

This map shows areas of resource potential for renewable energy generation from solar, i.e. locations where renewable energy generation would likely be most feasible according to the natural conditions of an area. This map also considers various other conditions, such as natural resource areas, that may impact the feasibility of renewable energy development. These conditions are referred to as constraints. Areas of prime solar potential exist where the natural conditions make development feasible and no constraints exist.

**Known Constraints**

Known Constraints signal likely, though not absolute, unsuitability for development based on statewide or local regulations or designated critical resources.

Known Constraints include: Vernal pools, FEMA floodways, river corridors, Federal wilderness areas, Natural Communities and Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species, and wetlands ( class 1 and 2) and wetland advisory layers.

These areas have been removed and are not shown on this map.

**Possible Constraints**

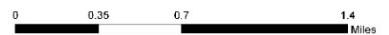
Possible Constraints signal conditions that would likely require mitigation, and which may prove a site unsuitable after site-specific study, based on statewide or regional/local policies that are currently adopted or in effect.

Possible Constraints include: Agricultural soils, FEMA flood areas, Protected Lands, ACT 250 soil mitigation areas, Deer wintering areas, Highest Priority Forest Blocks, and Hydric soils.

These areas are shown on the map where they coincide with areas of renewable solar potential identified in the solar analysis.

**Legend**

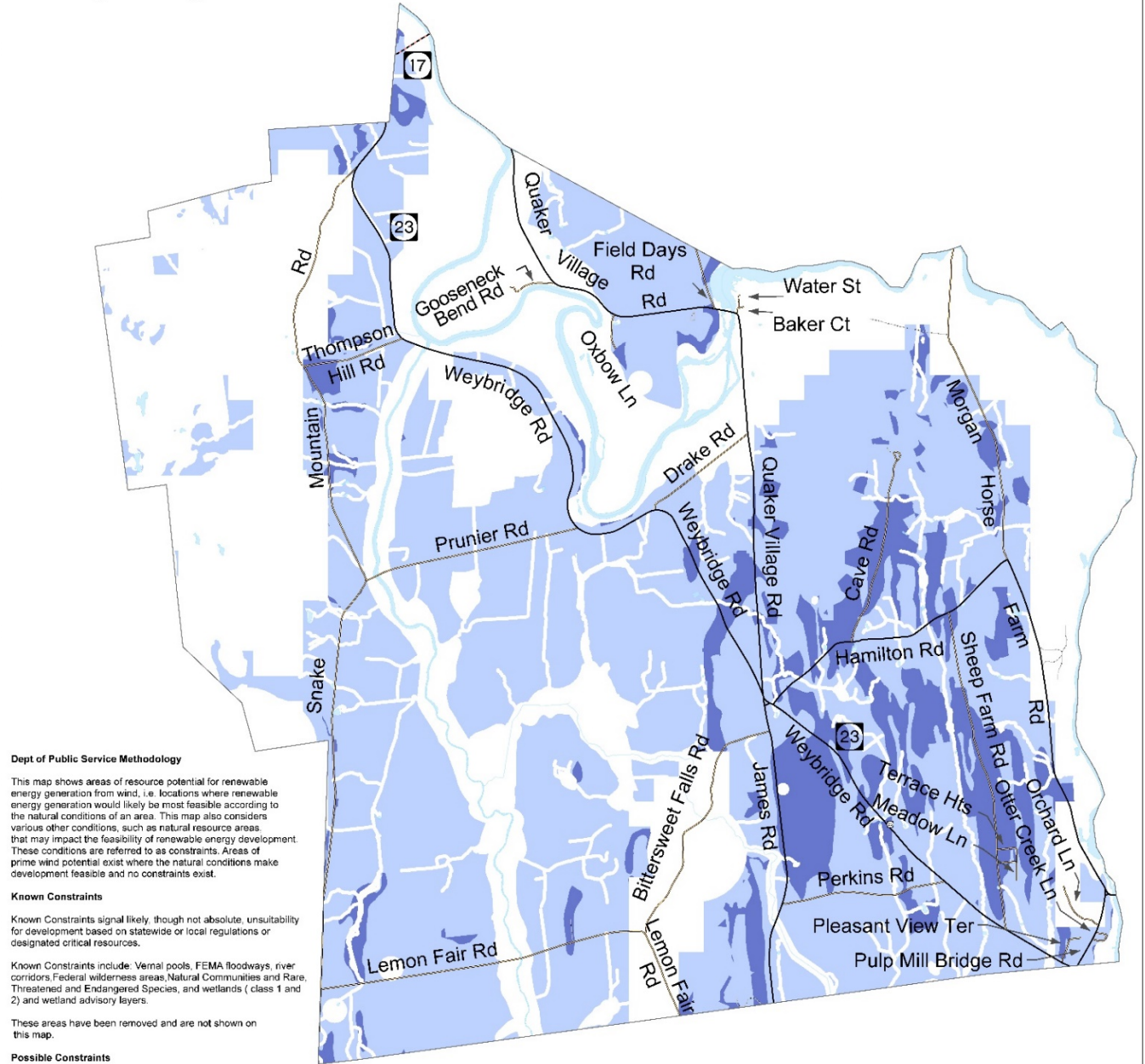
- Primary Solar Resource Siting Areas
- Secondary Solar Resource Siting Areas



This map was created as part of a Regional Energy Planning Initiative with funding from the Vermont Public Service Department.



## Renewable Energy: Potential Wind Resource Siting Areas - Weybridge



**Dept of Public Service Methodology**

This map shows areas of resource potential for renewable energy generation from wind, i.e. locations where renewable energy generation would likely be most feasible according to the natural conditions of an area. This map also considers various other conditions, such as natural resource areas that may impact the feasibility of renewable energy development. These conditions are referred to as constraints. Areas of prime wind potential exist where the natural conditions make development feasible and no constraints exist.

**Known Constraints**

Known Constraints signal likely, though not absolute, unsuitability for development based on statewide or local regulations or designated critical resources.

Known Constraints include: Vernal pools, FEMA floodways, river corridors, Federal wilderness areas, Natural Communities and Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species, and wetlands (class 1 and 2) and wetland advisory layers.

These areas have been removed and are not shown on this map.

**Possible Constraints**

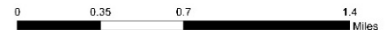
Possible Constraints signal conditions that would likely require mitigation, and which may prove a site unsuitable after site-specific study, based on statewide or regional/local policies that are currently adopted or in effect.

Possible Constraints include: Agricultural soils, FEMA flood areas, Protected Lands, ACT 250 soil mitigation areas, Deer wintering areas, Highest Priority Forest Blocks, and Hydric soils.

These areas are shown on the map where they coincide with areas of renewable wind potential identified in the wind analysis.

**Legend**

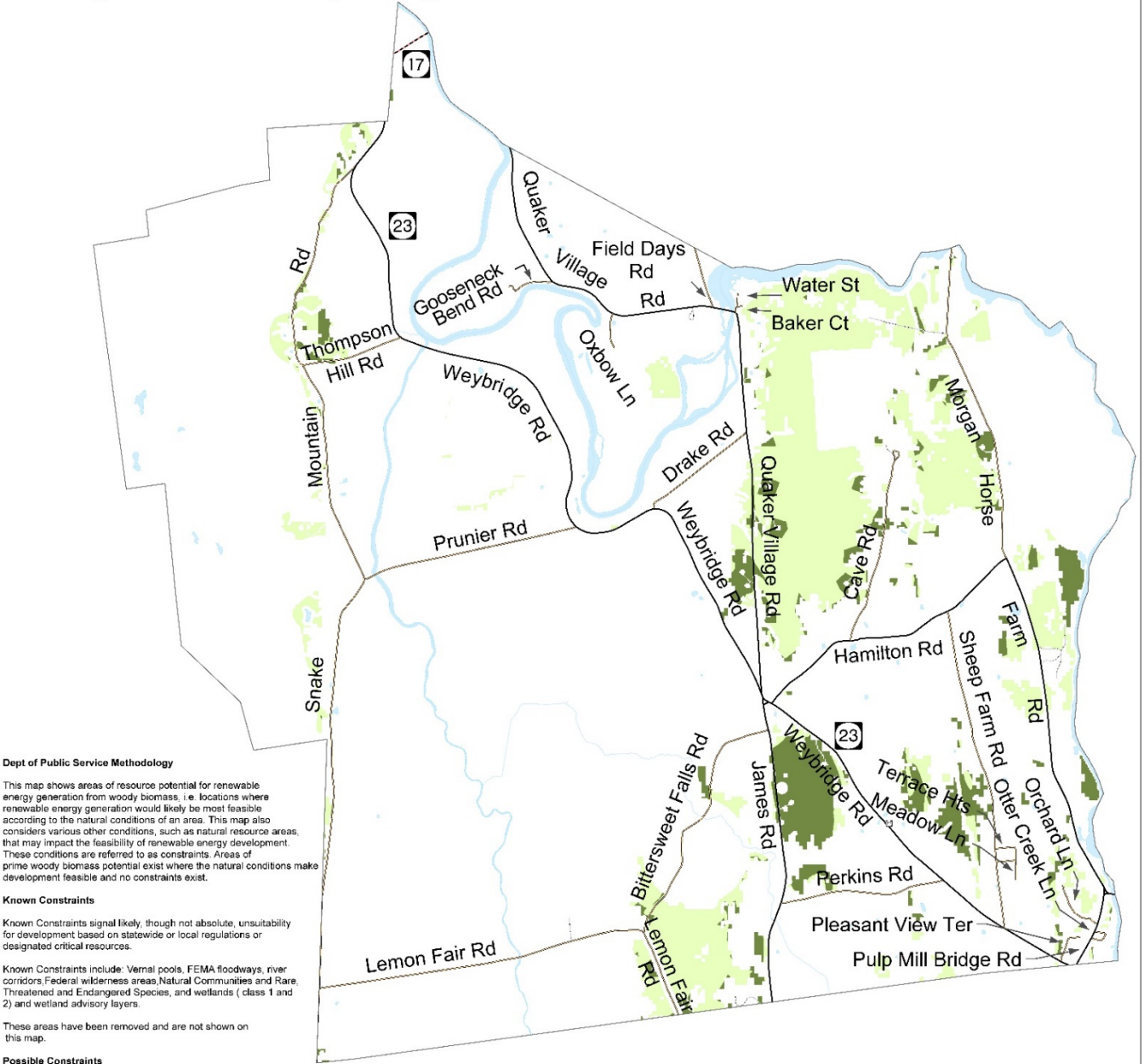
- Primary Wind Resource Siting Areas
- Secondary Wind Resource Siting Areas



Wind Potential Analysis under the State Energy Planning Guidelines.

Statewide 30m, 50m, and 70m wind speed layers from Mass.Tech Collaborative were filtered for minimum wind speed, then merged into a single file by VCGI.

## Renewable Energy: Potential Woody Biomass Resource Siting Areas - Weybridge



**Dept of Public Service Methodology**

This map shows areas of resource potential for renewable energy generation from woody biomass, i.e. locations where renewable energy generation would likely be most feasible according to the natural conditions of an area. This map also considers various other conditions, such as natural resource areas, that may impact the feasibility of renewable energy development. These conditions are referred to as constraints. Areas of prime woody biomass potential exist where the natural conditions make development feasible and no constraints exist.

**Known Constraints**

Known Constraints signal likely, though not absolute, unsuitability for development based on statewide or local regulations or designated critical resources.

Known Constraints include: Vernal pools, FEMA floodways, river corridors, Federal wilderness areas, Natural Communities and Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species, and wetlands ( class 1 and 2) and wetland advisory layers.

These areas have been removed and are not shown on this map.

**Possible Constraints**

Possible Constraints signal conditions that would likely require mitigation, and which may prove a site unsuitable after site-specific study, based on statewide or regional/local policies that are currently adopted or in effect.

Possible Constraints include: Agricultural soils, FEMA flood areas, Protected Lands, ACT 250 soil mitigation areas, Deer wintering areas, Highest Priority Forest Blocks, and Hydric soils.

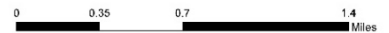
These areas are shown on the map where they coincide with areas of renewable woody biomass potential.

**Legend**

- Primary Biomass Siting Areas
- Secondary Biomass Siting Areas

Woody Biomass Potential Analysis under the State Energy Planning Guidelines.

Statewide forest cover types from the 2006 National Land Cover Dataset (NLCD, 2006) were merged into a single file and used to calculate low-grade green tons per acre by VCGI. The forest cover areal extent was used in this analysis.

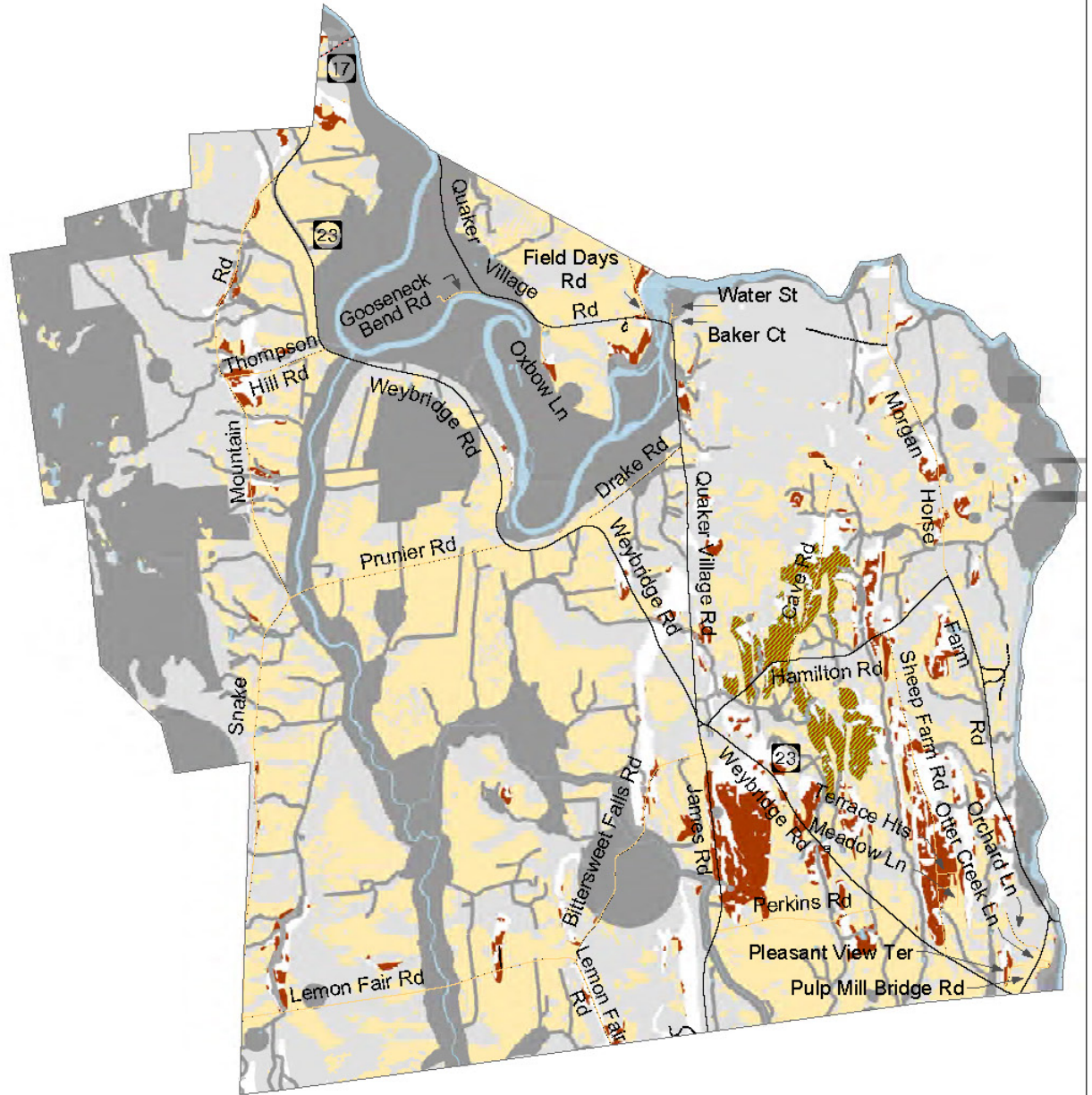


**Addison County REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

This map was created as part of a Regional Energy Planning Initiative with funding from the Vermont Public Service Department.



## Renewable Energy: Preferred Net-Metered Solar Locations - Weybridge



Dept of Public Service Methodology

### Preferred Locations

This map shows locally preferred locations (specific areas or parcels) for siting a generator or a specific size or type of generator, accompanied by any specific siting criteria for these locations.

Locally identified preferred locations are in addition to statewide preferred locations such as rooftops (and other structures), parking lots, previously developed sites, brown fields, gravel pits, quarries, and Superfund sites.

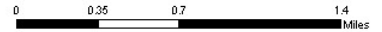
Locally preferred solar locations identified by the Weybridge Planning Commission.

Solar Potential Analysis under the State Energy Planning Guidelines.

Statewide ground based (30m USGS DEM) solar potential layer created with ESRI solar analyst by VCGI. Filtered by SLOPE (<= 14%), ASPECT (90-270 degrees) and values >= 1,000 kWh/sq meter.

### Legend

- Preferred Net-Metered Solar Locations
- Primary Solar Resource Siting Areas
- Secondary Solar Resource Siting Areas
- Known Constraints
- Possible Constraints



Addison County  
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

This map was created as part of a Regional Energy Planning Initiative with funding from the Vermont Public Service Department.

# Weybridge Town Plan

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## 17. COMMUNICATIONS

The Planning Commission recognizes the importance of access to modern communications for the town's residents. The public is increasingly dependent upon cell phones, high speed Internet, Wi-Fi, and other developing technologies for business and personal use.

### GOALS

Promote the availability of state of the art high-speed Internet service throughout the town of Weybridge.

Make reliable cell phone coverage universal throughout the town in a manner that preserves the aesthetic quality of our landscape.

Support emerging communications technologies that do not compromise human health and environmental quality.

### POLICIES

Strongly encourage the extension of wireless telephone service through the siting of antennas out of view within existing structures.

Keep communication antennas as a conditional use, with approval contingent upon a site plan review to assess their aesthetic and other impacts.

Discourage siting of cell phone and other communications antennas where construction of new roads would be required.

Give preference to antenna placements in structures meeting the criteria below, in the order listed. This recognizes that the placement of communication antennas can be a source of income, and preference should be given to public buildings:

- Within town-owned structures, with profits being channeled to uses that would benefit everyone in town. (For example, siting a tower in the steeple of the town hall might be used for the renovation of that historic building).
- Within structures that provide broad community benefits (e.g. church steeples).
- Within structures owned by private individuals (barns, silos, other appropriate sites).

Discourage the building of freestanding cell phone towers on Snake Mountain and other ridgelines.

However, the plan recognizes that there are circumstances in which a cell phone tower may be the only option for supplying service to certain parts of the town.

## Weybridge Town Plan

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The plan requires that any entity/person/company wishing to build a freestanding tower in Weybridge must provide a study demonstrating that they cannot satisfy demand by using existing structures. This study would take the form of a conditional use review, with costs of the town consultant to be paid by the entity/person/company seeking the tower.



## **18. REGIONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

Weybridge is not an isolated community, but an integral part of Addison County and the Champlain Valley region of Vermont. Development including solar and wind energy installations in the surrounding towns inevitably has an impact on Weybridge and the residential, scenic, agricultural and recreational resources of Weybridge are valuable assets for the region. The Weybridge Planning Commission has examined the Addison Regional Plan and the land use planning regions along our borders with neighboring towns. The results are summarized below.

### **The Region**

The Town of Weybridge is located in the Addison Region, which is administered by the Addison County Regional Planning Commission. By Vermont statute, town plans must be compatible with the Regional Plan. The goals and objectives of the Weybridge Town Plan are similar to those found in the Addison Regional Plan. The Regional Plan follows the land use plan of its member towns, so there can be no land use conflict between the local and regional plans.

### **Surrounding Towns**

The Town of Weybridge abuts five towns: Cornwall, Bridport, Addison, New Haven and Middlebury. An examination of land use plans along the Weybridge border found no significant incompatibilities with its neighbors, as shown below.

#### **Addison**

The Town of Addison borders Weybridge on the west, with most of the town line running through the forest on the east side of Snake Mountain. Both towns have designated this a Conservation (CON) area, so they are compatible.

#### **Bridport**

The southwest corner of Weybridge borders Bridport. In Weybridge, this represents the Lemon Fair Valley and Snake Mountain planning regions, primarily suitable for conservation and agricultural uses. Bridport designates this as part of its Upland region.

#### **Cornwall**

The Town of Cornwall borders Weybridge on the south. Weybridge has two planning regions along this border: Lemon Fair Valley and Sheep Farm. The descriptions of these two areas are very similar to the adjacent Cornwall planning regions, Lemon Fair, Ledges and Cider Mill. Both plans recognize the flood-prone nature of the Lemon Fair Valley and the rich agricultural land in the valley.

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## **New Haven**

The northeast corner of Weybridge abuts New Haven. In New Haven most of this region is zoned as an RA-10 district with 10-acre zoning, and most of the border area is designated as agricultural. This is largely compatible with the Weybridge designation of the Otter Creek Gorge and Quaker Village planning areas.

## **Middlebury**

Weybridge borders the Town of Middlebury's Village area in the Pulp Mill Bridge region. On both sides of this border, development is encouraged to remain high and medium density residential, with some planned agricultural residential sections.

## **GOALS**

Encourage and participate in a regional approach to development planning and environmental protection in Addison County.

Seek to ensure developments in Weybridge and surrounding towns are compatible, especially avoiding conflicting land use districts at town boundaries.

## **POLICIES**

Cooperate with adjoining towns in the protection and appropriate use of shared natural, scenic and recreational assets, such as Snake Mountain and Otter Creek.

Work with the Middlebury Area Land Trust to support the Trail Around Middlebury and with MALT and Monument Farms Dairy to support the Bob Collins Conservation Farm.

Participate with adjoining towns in planning for improvements of roads and bridges, and sidewalks and bike paths, connecting Weybridge with its neighbors.

Seek the advice and support of the Addison County Regional Planning Commission in developing local plans, bylaws and regulations.

Cooperate with fire departments of adjoining towns to provide adequate fire protection for the area.

Keep informed of the municipal plans, bylaws and property developments in adjoining towns and take these into consideration in implementing the Weybridge Town Plan.

## **19. IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**

A town plan is essentially a statement of the ways in which a town would like to see itself develop and grow, and is intended to guide the local government and civic agencies in actions affecting the health, safety, comfort, and well-being of the general public. The plan itself, however, does not carry out or mandate these actions -- implementation requires the adoption and execution of by-laws, regulations, and other commitments to perform the appropriate actions.

### **GOAL**

Implement the goals and policies of this Town Plan in a timely and systematic manner.

### **POLICIES**

Periodically review the town zoning and subdivision regulations to keep pace with growth and development in Weybridge and surrounding towns.

Consider updating "Weybridge Facts & Figures 2000" to include new US Census figures and other data as they become available. (This would be a substantial undertaking that might require grant money and committed leadership.)

Throughout the lifetime of this Plan, look for and record goals and policies that could beneficially be revised or added, in order to facilitate renewal of the Plan within five years.

# Weybridge Town Plan

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## **MAP LIST**

**Map 1** Aerial

**Map 2** General Land Cover

**Map 3** Landscape Slope

**Map 4** Earth Resources – Primary Ag. Soils/Sand and Gravel

**Map 5** Significant Natural Resources and Wildlife Habitat

**Map 6** Soil Septic Suitability

**Map 7** Water Resources

**Map 8** River Corridor and Floodplains with Municipal Facilities

**Map 9** Transportation and Road Names

**Map 10** Commute Shed

**Map 11** Population Density

**Map 12** Utilities, Facilities and Education

**Map 13** Significant Historic Resources

**Map 14** Public, Conserved, Institutional Land

**Map 15** Weybridge Planning Regions and Land Use Districts

**Map 16** Weybridge Zoning Districts