

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**  
**TOWN OF NEWPORT**



Amended and adopted by the Selectboard March 5, 2020

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## INTRODUCTION

The Newport Town Plan includes a short history and general description of the Town, population trends, historical land use patterns, as well as economic and social trends that have and will continue to shape our lives and our Town. The plan is intended to be neither regulatory nor specific in nature, but rather a general outline for an orderly growth process for the Town based on historical and anticipated trends. This plan was developed with input from numerous sources, committee reports, as well as the old municipal development plan. Compatibility to adjacent towns was considered, as Newport Town is a part of a larger economic and social area with responsibilities to its surrounding neighbors.

The plan is divided into sections. Each section discusses a particular segment of the fabric of our town in summary form. At the end of each section there are two categories labeled **STATEMENTS/OBJECTIVES** and **RECOMMENDATIONS/STRATEGIES/GOALS**. **RECOMMENDATIONS/STRATEGIES/GOALS** can best be classified as suggested implementation of the statements and objectives.

No one can predict the future! This board realizes this fact and on the following pages has strived to be flexible and diverse in its recommendations and goals. While realizing the limitations of planning, the board also recognizes the need for planning in order to maintain the cultural, economic heritage and rural atmosphere we all enjoy. So while this document strives to plan for the future it also relies heavily on the past for its guidance and direction.

## TOWN OF NEWPORT

The Town of Newport, consisting of 27,328 total acres, is located in the north-central portion of Orleans County. In 2010 it had a population of 1,540 with an estimated 300 persons in its unincorporated village of Newport Center.

It is bounded on the north by Canada, on the east by Lake Memphremagog, Newport City, Coventry and Irasburg; on the west by Troy and the south by Lowell and Irasburg. The elevations in the Town range from 600 to 2,183 feet above sea level. The majority of the town is in the drainage basin of Mud Creek that flows through the northerly corner of North Troy. This part of the town is in the Mississquoi River Watershed. The east side of the Town is in the Memphremagog watershed. Vermont Route 105 runs in an east-west direction through the Town while Route 100 enters the central-western portion of the Town from Troy and terminates at its intersection with Route 105 approximately two miles south of the Village at Coburn Hill. These two state highways are the major transportation spurs in the Town. In this same general area Route 14 terminates at its junction with Route 100. The railway passes through the Town from Newport to North Troy.

Land use in the Town of Newport has historically been agricultural. Since the 1990's, a number of farms have sold the development rights of considerable acreage to the Vermont Land Trust. The intent here, being the preservation of agriculture land. Employment is found locally in agriculture, forestry and related services. Other employment opportunities are found throughout the county in manufacturing, commerce and various service industries.

Public facilities in the Town include a volunteer fire department, post office, town hall, and elementary school, with an enrollment of approximately 90 students in grades K-6. Approximately 32 students, grades 7-8, are bussed to North Country Union Junior High School in Derby for a total of 112 students. The Town of Newport is a member of the North Country Supervisory Union.

Recreational activities in the Town vary, with considerable outdoor activities being pursued. In the decade between 2010 and 2019, the Town showed an increase in population. This growth has remained relatively consistent in the past 15 years. The growth is expected to increase in the future, as the county develops.

## HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF NEWPORT

Newport Town is located in the County of Orleans in the section of Vermont informally known as the Northeast Kingdom. It was granted by the state as a township of 23,040 acres on October 26, 1781 though its charter was not issued until October 30, 1802. The charter was given to Nathan Fisk and George Duncan under the name Duncansboro.

On November 16, 1816, a small part of Coventry and of Salem was annexed to this territory and the name of the town changed from Duncansboro to Newport.

Newport Village Center was a thriving little post village and station on the southeastern railway located in the central part of the town. In 1883 it contained two churches (Free Will-Baptist and Methodist Episcopal), a hotel, five grocery stores, a steam sawmill, shingle mill, three blacksmith shops, three carriage shops, three cabinet shops, one harness shop, and about fifty dwellings. Situated in the midst of a beautiful valley, surrounded by excellent farming lands, the town was primarily a farming community.

Although the town was not chartered until 1802, settlement was commenced here as early as 1793. During that year, two brothers, Calendar and Deacon Martin Adams, started through the forest from St. Johnsbury, with their young wives, making their way by means of marked trees to Barton Landing (now Orleans). Here they constructed rafts or canoes and embarked with all their earthly possessions following the Barton River to the lake. Arriving at the bay, it is said they became impressed with the fact that the frost had not destroyed the vegetation there, while on the hills around everything had been destroyed by the cold. Here they disembarked their miniature fleet and commenced the first settlement in Newport. These brothers were soon followed by other settlers so that in 1800 there were eleven families in the town. These were the families of John Prouty, Nathaniel Daggett, Abel Parkhurst, Amos Sawyer, Luther Chapin, James C. Adams, Abraham Horton, Simon Carpenter, Enos Bartlett, Joseph Page, and Martin Adams. Sixty acres of land was cleared by six yoke of oxen in the town. The town was organized and the first town meeting was held on March 11, 1800. Alien Adams was the first recorded birth on December 19, 1794. A child, Orville Daggett was said to have been born previous to that date but his birth was not recorded. At some point H. and A. Adams and D. and S. Meacham constructed a dam and put up a sawmill.

The Town of Newport experienced numerous changes since its initial charter as Duncansboro. In addition to a name change, the boundaries substantially changed over the years. In 1880 the Town of Salem was dissolved and merged with the Towns of Newport and Derby. The portion of Newport that was formerly Salem lies in the eastern section near what is now known as the City Farm Road.

The Town of Coventry is also a contributor to the land area of Newport Town. The Coventry leg was a long narrow strip of land lying between the towns of Newport and Salem extending all the way to Lake Memphremagog. The Coventry leg was annexed to Newport Town in 1850.

Around 1900 Newport grew by about 2000 acres when Coventry Gore was annexed at the southerly end of town.

Newport Town's boundaries were finalized in 1917 when the City of Newport was chartered. Newport City is comprised of portions of the Town of Newport and Derby. The Newport Town land records dated prior to 1917 are presently stored in the vault at the Newport City Municipal building.

### **Interesting Historical Facts:**

- At one time there were three post offices in Newport town: one on the Lake Rd., one in South Newport (Collins Mill Road), and one in the village in F. D. Taylor's General Store now the site of Glover's Family Market. After a fire burned the village Post Office in 1920 it was moved to the corner of Rt. 105 and Vance Hill. By 1939 all three buildings had been combined into one at Herbert Tute's home on Cross Road. In 1961 our present post office was built in the village on Rt. 105.
- The town has had just six town clerks since 1918: H.A. Bartlett 1918-1939, Ruth Bartlett 1939-1955, Marjorie H. Parker 1955-1981, Rachel Westover 1981-2000, Marjorie Buck 2000-2001, and Denise Daigle 2001-present.
- The first McIntosh apple tree ever in the United States was planted in Newport Town in 1868 on the farm of the late Gilbert C. Whipple. The 134 year old tree is still going strong and continues to produce fruit.
- Today's single school system replaces schools that were distributed throughout the town. At one time there were at least eight neighborhood schools scattered around town.
- In the mid-1900s there were approximately 110 dairy farms in Newport Town.
- Boston Bruins founder, Charles Adams, was born in Newport Town on October 19, 1876 to Frank and Elizabeth (Benoit) Adams.
- 2019 highest assessment for a single family home is \$2,041,200 for a 201 Tax Bill of \$40,772.97. About 74% of this goes to the education fund.
- The largest operating dairy farm is approximately 2,387 acres consisting of two big tracks of land owned by one farmer. One parcel is 1599 acres and the second is 788 acres.

## STATEMENT OF PLANNING GOALS

1. Maintain the scale, the traditions and the rural character of Newport Town, as these qualities make Newport Town an attractive community in which to live, work, and raise a family.
2. Encourage residential, agricultural and business growth that preserves open space, scenic qualities, and the rural nature of the town.
3. Identify & promote growth on lands that are suitable for development while maintaining compatibility with existing land use.
4. Identify important historical and cultural landmarks for the benefit of future generations.
5. Encourage opportunities for recreational activities on public and private lands.
6. Encourage development of a variety of housing units for all income levels with an emphasis on renovation of existing structures.
7. Strive to provide the best possible public services and safety (roads, Village water, recycling, and solid waste disposal) while recognizing the limitations of the property tax system.
8. Continue to provide quality educational opportunities for all residents.
9. Encourage the protection of our natural resources such as ground water, lakes and streams, forest land, agricultural land and wildlife habitat.
10. Maintain compatible land use with adjacent towns and municipalities that reflect present and anticipated growth.
11. For future Village growth the “Village Vision”, a document created for the Town in 2004 at the request of the Planning Committee (available at the Town Clerk’s Office) could be used as a base to build a Village growth plan. Although not implemented at that time, the circumstances and conditions it covered still exist. There were too many obstacles to pursue the idea of the Village Center and Neighborhood Development Area Designation at the time of that report and up to this Town Plan revision. What the future holds remains to be seen.

## CURRENT LAND USE

The town of Newport has 27,328 acres of land (U.S. Census). The total amount of farm and forestland has decreased slightly, and residential use has increased. The vast majority of the land in town remains forested. Farms use 9,550 acres for crops and pasture.

### Land use according to Grand List, 2019

06/02/2015  
03:26 pm

2014 As Billed Grand List Grand List  
All CU Parcels  
Town Code 10438 Newport Town CLA: 1.0577

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Clerk

SUMMARY TOTALS 70 records

ACRES	Homestead	VALUES	Total	HS	NR
Agricultural	6133.91	Dwelling/NonFarm Bldg	9189,300	6780,500	2408,800
Forest	4442.17	Eligible Farm Bldg 100%	2463,000	0	2463,000
NonProd For	228.17	Excl Land 1053.60ac.	2597,336	1555,400	1041,936
For > 1 Mile	0.00	Enrl Land 10804.25ac.	10420,864	4154,000	6266,864
NP For >1 Mi.	0.00	Total Listed Value	24670,500	12489,900	12180,600
Total Program	10804.25	Use Value Enrl Acres	2393,500	915,000	1478,500
Excl Acres	1053.60	Owners Grand List	14180,136	9250,900	4929,236
Total Parcel	11857.85	Exemption	10490,364	3239,000	7251,364

Note: Acreage varies due to changes in calculation methods, and new surveys recorded. Totals do not include public properties and other land exempt from taxation.

Count	Municipal LV	Education LV	Education LV	Totals	
	(taxable)	(taxable)	(taxable)	Education LV (taxable)	
Residential I	329	\$69,360,500	\$41,808,900	\$27,551,600	\$69,360,500
Residential II	292	\$78,408,000	\$51,761,800	\$26,646,200	\$78,408,000
Mobile Homes-U	11	\$325,000	\$247,800	\$77,200	\$325,000
Mobile Homes-L	55	\$4,473,800	\$2,380,200	\$2,093,600	\$4,473,800
Vacation I	20	\$5,329,900	\$68,600	\$5,261,300	\$5,329,900
Vacation II	25	\$3,599,800	\$350,200	\$3,249,600	\$3,599,800
Commercial	14	\$3,484,400	\$728,700	\$2,755,700	\$3,484,400
Commercial Apts.	3	\$561,000	\$0	\$561,000	\$561,000
Industrial	0	\$	\$	\$	\$
Utilities-E	2	\$4,196,600	\$0	\$4,196,600	\$4,196,600

Utilities-O	1	\$1,316,000	\$0	\$1,316,000	\$1,316,000
Farm	31	\$15,263,400	\$7,909,900	\$7,353,500	\$15,263,400
Woodland	34	\$2,587,600	\$0	\$2,587,600	\$2,587,600
Other	45	\$6,437,950	\$609,900	\$5,828,050	\$6,437,950
Miscellaneous	109	\$9,542,600	\$1,352,700	\$8,189,900	\$9,542,600
TOTALS	972	\$204,866,550	\$107,218,700	\$97,667,850	\$204,886,550
Cable		\$381,109	\$0	\$381,109	\$381,109
Machinery & Equip.		\$0			
Inventory		\$0			
TOTAL TAXABLE		\$205,267,659	\$107,218,700	\$98,048,959	\$205,267,659
TOTAL GRAND LIST		\$1,936,864.27	\$1,033,127.00	\$908,563,27	\$1,941,690,27

#### AREA POPULATION CHART

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Newport Town	1,125	1,319	1,367	1,511	1,594
Newport City	4,664	4,756	4,434	5,055	4,589
Troy	1,457	1,498	1,609	1,564	1,559
Westfield	375	418	422	503	461
Lowell	515	573	594	738	710
Irasburg	775	870	907	1,077	1,035
Coventry	492	674	806	1,014	1,086
Derby Town	3,252	4,222	4,479	4,604	4,828
Orleans County	20,153	23,440	24,053	26,277	27,231
Vermont	444,732	511,456	562,758	608,827	625,741

The Town can be divided into four areas for more specific discussion of current land use:

1. South Newport (also known as Coventry Gore) – mostly uninhabited with its northern section being primarily residential and some agriculture.
2. Agriculture – located along Routes 100 and 105.
3. Village – Residential/Commercial center of Town using municipal water and sewer.
4. Vance Hill and lake area – (recreational/residential)

**Statements/Objectives:**

1. Newport Town has experienced a growth change from agricultural to a residential community. We would like to continue to provide opportunities for village growth.

**Recommendations/Strategies/Goals:**

1. Consider use of local and state road policies as they affect the amount and type of development in each part of Town.
2. Consider establishing zoning districts to reflect different character and uses in different parts of Town. May want to vary setbacks and minimum lot sizes.
3. Reference the Acceptable Management Practices for Forestry and Agriculture in the Town Plan and zoning ordinances.
4. Consider existing and historical land use patterns in adjacent towns when revisiting Zoning Bylaws.
5. Maintaining options for future village growth, re-visiting the 2004 Village Vision document determining what is still pertinent or what needs revision.

6. Preservation of land should not inhibit the future growth of the Town.
7. All development and structures should be designed to minimize flood damage.
8. It is important to review historical land use and neighborhood land uses in planning for economic growth in the Town.
9. To allow further growth in town, economically, changes are needed in zoning, infrastructure use and land use.

## **MAPS**

Various maps were developed as a part of this plan and are on file for public inspection at the Town Clerk's office. The maps are a part of and are incorporated by reference to the Town Plan. They include:

- The map on page 11A ANR Map of the Village
- The map on page 11B Newport Town Boundaries & Mileage Map
- The map on page 11C of the Vance Hill water facility
- The map on page 11D of the recreational land on Poginy Hill
- The map on page 11E of Conserved Land and current Use in Newport Town
- The map on page 11F of Lakeshore Property along Lake Memphremagog
- The map on page 11G Newport Town Public Facilities
- The map on page 11H Newport Town River Corridors
- The map on page 28 of the Source Protection Areas (water) from the VT Agency of Natural Resources

A series of maps from the VT Fish & Wildlife as mentioned in the **WILDLIFE HABITAT AND SIGNIFICANT NATURAL RESOURCES** section starting on page 13. They are on file at the Town Clerk's office and include:

- Map 1-Conserved Lands Water Resources
- Map 2- Land Cover
- Map 3- State and Regional Scale Biodiversity resource
- Map 4- Wildlife Resources
- Map 5- Fine Scale Wildlife Resources
- Map 6- (Town) Physical Features

- Map 7- Aerial Photo of Town (2013)

### **PUBLIC LANDS AND BUILDINGS**

The following list comprises the extent of the Town of Newport Holdings:

Municipal Office	.24 acres
Town Garage (1)	4.28 acres
Recycling Center	.5 acres
Town Sewer Plant	6.9 acres
Town Water	6.0 acres
Ball Field	4.0 acres
Vance Hill (includes solar garden)	97.90 acres
School	6.0 acres
Fire Dept.	1.0 acre
Newport Center Cemetery on Rt. 100	9.0 acres
Lake Road Cemetery	3.4 acres

Collins Mill Cemetery	1.0 acre
Coventry gravel pit	52.50 acres
Fishing Access – Strawberry Acres (state owned)	1.45 acres
Fishing Access – Laurel Lane (north access state owned)	1.75 acres
Poginy Hill Conservation Park	400+ acres

**Statements/Objectives:**

1. The Town of Newport owns several parcels of land for our residents and will continue to provide opportunities regarding use of Town land.

**Recommendations/Strategies/Goals:**

1. Ownership of these parcels should be reviewed periodically to see if the need for the property can still be justified.
2. Maintain a committee to develop options, proposals and recommendations for current as well as future use of the Town owned lands.

**WILDLIFE HABITAT AND SIGNIFICANT NATURAL RESOURCES**

Newport Town contains many acres of wild and uncultivated land within its boundaries. The wooded area of South Newport and the high elevation of Bear Mountain located in the northwest corner of town provide relatively uninterrupted Habitat Blocks and travel corridors for upland wildlife. The Lake Road and Leadville Road also have large tracts of forest and are home to one of the largest whitetail deer yards in Vermont.

“Habitat Blocks” are areas of contiguous forest and other natural habitats that are un-fragmented by roads, development, or agriculture. Vermont’s habitat blocks are primarily forests, but also include wetlands, rivers and streams, lakes and ponds, cliffs, and rock outcrops. Forests included in habitat blocks may be young, early-successional stands, actively managed forests, or mature forests with little or no recent logging activity. The defining factor is that there is little or no permanent habitat fragmentation from roads, agricultural lands and other forms of development within a habitat block. Habitat blocks support the biological requirements of many native plants and animals. They support viable populations of wide-ranging animals, including bobcat, American Marten, and black bear, that require large areas to survive by allowing access to important feeding habitat, the ability to move and find mates for reproduction, and as a result ensure genetic integrity of populations.

Newport enjoys a mix of habitat blocks from large expanses of forest to comparatively small ones. This includes a portion of the 15,500 acre block of the Lowell range, a 6,000 acre block associated with Lake Memphremagog and several blocks in the 1,000 to 2,000 acre range. All of

these are significant for wildlife populations in the region and even the smaller blocks can play a role in the larger network of habitat connectivity.

“Habitat Connectivity” is important for large mammals like deer, moose, and bear to have these large uninterrupted areas away from humans to travel through and feed to get what they need. But “islands of habitat”, even very large “islands” like the 15,000 acre habitat block in southern Newport are not enough to sustain wildlife populations that have large home ranges to get what they need. Habitat Connectivity is a complex process that functions at different scales for different species. Generally speaking, connecting habitat is represented by land that links larger patches of habitat within a landscape, allowing the movement, migration, and dispersal of animals and plants. Riparian areas along streams and rivers, strips of forest cover between developed areas, and even hedgerows/ fencerows all represent potential connecting habitat for wildlife and other organisms.

Therefore local and regional connectivity are both vital to the long-term sustainability of wildlife populations and the ecological functions that they support. The conservation of large areas of undeveloped land with diverse habitat conditions will assist in supporting ecosystem functions and related public benefits.

“Wetlands” are vegetated ecosystems characterized by abundant water. Wetlands include the vegetated, shallow-water margins of lakes and ponds and the seasonally flooded borders of rivers and streams. They occur in an amazing diversity of topographic settings across the landscape, including basins, seepage slopes, and wet flats. All wetlands have three characteristics in common. First, all are inundated by or saturated with water during varying periods of the growing season. Second, they contain wetland or hydric soils, which develop in saturated conditions and include peat, muck, and mineral soil types. Finally, wetlands are dominated by plants that are adapted to life in saturated or inundated soils. Wetlands store large volumes of water and attenuate downstream flooding, a function that is likely to increase in importance in Vermont as climate change brings more frequent and larger storm events. Wetlands help maintain surface water quality by trapping sediments and removing nutrients and pollutants from surface waters before that water reaches streams or lakes.

A “rare species” is one that has only a few populations in the state and that faces threats to its continued existence in Vermont. Rare species face threats from development of their habitat, harassment, collection, and suppression of natural processes, such as fire. Rare species, especially populations occurring at the edge of the species’ geographic range, provide important genetic diversity which may be especially significant in allowing species to adapt and evolve to changes in the environment, such as climate change. Newport Town is home to several rare species:

- The Upland Sand Piper nests along the Number 12 Road
- There is a Great Blue Heron rookery located in Newport Town
- There is a rare species called the Silver Minnow found here
- There is a rare species of Water Milfoil found in the Lake, not to be confused with the abundance of Eurasian Milfoil found in Lake Memphremagog

Newport Town is also the home of two recognized “state significant grasslands” recognized by the Agency of Natural resources (ANR). There are only three such grasslands located outside of Champlain Valley and Newport Town has two of them. Grasslands are open lands dominated by grasses, sedges, and broadleaf herbs, with little or no woody vegetation. Most of Vermont’s grassland habitats occur in the Champlain Valley and, to a lesser extent, in the Connecticut River Valley and the area around Lake Memphremagog. Conversion of natural grasslands has led to the decline of grassland birds in their historic natural habitats. ANR has provided maps of these areas which are on file at the Town Clerk’s office.

**Statements/Objectives:**

Newport Town has many unique physical characteristics that can serve as attractions to many types of visitors, tourists, current or new residents, and outdoor enthusiasts. They include Lake Memphremagog, Bear Mountain, Coventry Gore, Poginy Hill and hiking, snowmobiling, and recreational vehicle trails. These areas plus the aforementioned habitat blocks, wetlands, and grasslands have to be safeguarded with a higher level of review before development occurs. If development occurs in these areas Newport Town needs to have a heightened level of review and some conditional use language in its Zoning By-laws. This will ensure that these habitat blocks, wetlands, and grasslands remain intact to a large degree allowing limited development. The Planning Board has met with Agency of Natural Resources representatives to see how to best address future development in these areas.

**Recommendations/Strategies/Goals:**

1. Instruct the conservation and recreation committee to maintain and develop recreational uses for the Poginy Hill Conservation Park property and to maintain active forest management.
2. Encourage the local school to utilize the Poginy Hill Conservation Park for science and a nature education resource.
3. Charge the conservation committee with developing a policy and having the responsibility of monitoring the quality of the local streams and lakes (utilizing the resources of the State of Vermont and local watershed associations).
4. Encourage a riparian network on streams and lakeshores.
5. Utilizing the Agency of Natural Resources as a source of information to help safeguard against damaging development.
6. Utilizing BioFinder Maps ([BIOFINDER.Vermont.gov](http://BIOFINDER.Vermont.gov)), the ANR Atlas, and referring to “Conserving Vermont’s Natural Heritage” as the Town’s Zoning By-laws are updated.
7. Explore the possibility of enacting form(s) of Density Based Zoning.
8. Explore the possibility of a town-wide inventory of land types.

## **ECONOMY**

The economy of Newport Town is a diverse mixture of small-scale business and industry. Economic activities are related to agriculture, forest products, manufacturing and services for the Town and region. The Town appears to be following the regional trend towards small-scale community based development and services. This is due in part to the need to create jobs in this area that has traditionally lacked large-scale manufacturing and service opportunities. The median income in 2010 was \$23,274 per household (Department of Education data).

As represented throughout this plan, the residents of the Town wish to maintain the character and lifestyle that residents have historically enjoyed.

The village has existing infrastructure in place to allow commercial and business growth and is in the process of revising Zoning By-laws to accommodate this.

### **Statements/Objectives:**

1. There is currently commercial expansion along Route 100. That area has seen the most commercial development.
2. Availability of water and sewer is an asset to residential and commercial expansion and growth in the village confines.
3. A three-quarter (3/4) acre minimum commercial lot size exists in the village.

### **Recommendations/Strategies/Goals:**

1. Identify and promote business and commercial expansion where the land and infrastructure will support it.
2. Allow smaller lot sizes in the village to make use of existing infrastructure.
3. Establish specific guidelines (zoning by-law) for business operation in residential neighborhoods which is reviewed by the zoning board.

## **AGRICULTURE**

The economy of Newport Town has historically been tied to agriculture and related business. The Town has been and continues to be one of the largest farming communities in the State of Vermont. There are currently 10 active dairy farms operating within the Town and many acres of non-working farmland that has not yet reverted to forestland. Currently, much of the agricultural acreage surrounding Newport Center village has had the development rights acquired by the Vermont Land Trust. In the future, this will determine the direction and amount of growth the village can sustain. Farmers play a pivotal role in providing a balance between forest cover and open land, enhancing the esthetics and providing recreational opportunities for many people.

The residents of this Town have expressed a sentiment and desire to maintain the rural characteristics that the Town has historically maintained. Farming has played a pivotal role in this regard. When farming is no longer economically viable, then the character and fabric of the Town will be substantially affected.

The primary control the Town can exercise to help farms economically is through property taxes and zoning. Valuation of agricultural land at its current use will help the farm community by lowering the tax burden. The Vermont use value appraisal program accomplishes this goal by refunding to the Town, the difference in use value vs. fair market value. In exchange for this the landowner promises not to develop the land for non-agricultural uses for a specified period of time. Zoning can help the farmer survive economically by identifying and allowing certain areas to be developed at a higher density in return for restrictions of the balance of the land. This

allows a farmer to receive full value for their land while retaining the use of the prime agricultural soils. This would have the side benefit of lowered prices for agricultural land.

If agriculture is to remain a viable part of the fabric of our Town, the farming and non-farming community must maintain an ongoing dialogue working together to achieve a common goal. The farm community must strive to use accepted agricultural practices and the non-farm community should be willing to bear with seasonal inconveniences.

**Statements/Objectives:**

1. Farming is essential to the overall objective of preserving open space and the rural character of the Town.

**Recommendations/Strategies/Goals:**

1. Encourage zoning by-laws to allow higher density development in exchange for keeping larger tracts of land open.
2. Negotiate with land conservation organizations for the best interest of the Town.

## **HOUSING**

As Orleans County faces potential growth, so will the demand for adequate affordable housing will be needed in the town. The current town zoning ordinance allows for all types of housing including traditional single family homes, mobile homes, 2-4 family homes, multi-family homes, condominiums, as well as seasonal and vacation homes. The largest type of housing available, by far, is the traditional single family home outside of the village, with on-site septic and water systems, with a 2-acre minimum lot size. Current zoning by-laws allow a ¾ acre minimum lot size where municipal water and sewer is available.

Per the 2013 US Census statistics there are 919 total housing units in the Town with 121 of them in Newport Center Village. Occupied dwellings account for 680 of those with 239 vacant. There are 687 (74.8%) 1-unit detached dwellings and 16 1-unit attached dwellings. There are (49) 2-unit dwellings, (35) 3 or 4- unit dwellings, (19) 5-9 unit dwellings, and (117) mobile homes in the Town. Homes built before 1939 account for 23% of the dwellings with 22.5% being built between 1980 and 1989.

There are no senior housing units available in the Town at this time. Many area towns have teamed up with governmental and/or private enterprise to provide affordable senior housing.

With development comes the possibility of Sprawl Development. The Planning Boards needs to work with the Zoning Board to address how this issue will be governed in the zoning updates.

### **Statements/Objectives:**

1. The Town owns 98 +/- acres of land adjacent to the village with access to municipal services.
2. There is an increasing demand for affordable housing in the area.
3. The growth of the Newport-Derby area and Jay Peak expansion may place a demand on land and housing requirement in the Town.
4. The water source on Town land and the municipal waste water system will allow the village to expand.
5. Ensure development doesn't allow "Sprawl Development" to occur without significant forethought beforehand.

### **Recommendations/Strategies/Goals:**

1. Revise zoning regulations to ensure a variety of options for future housing development.
2. Identify areas in town, especially the village, able to support higher density housing development and revise zoning to reflect this.
3. Review growth in relation to services required to ensure that municipal services are adequate.
4. Develop a plan for the Town owned land to allow an acceptable expansion of the village.
5. Explore the option of developing senior housing in the Town.

## **SCHOOL**

At present, there are several child care and early childhood providers in town, and the Newport Town School has an after-school program for grades 1-6. According to the State of Vermont Building Bright Futures Database, accessed year-end of 2013, Newport Town had a total accommodation capacity for 79 children, either through registered home daycares or daycare centers. Presently there are 135 students in grades K-12. After grade 6 the majority of the children attend North Country Union Junior High School and the Senior High School.

According to the State Department of Education, the Newport Town's equalized per pupil cost spending in grades K-12 was \$ 16,277.00 in fiscal year 2019.

The Vermont Department of Education's June 2011 publication, Vermont's Education Funding System provides a good overview the state funding system and the relationship between per-pupil spending and the homestead education tax rate.

The state pays each school district the amount needed to fund the district's locally adopted budget through an education fund. The amount funded by the state equals the total voter approved expenditure budget less any expenditure that have specific funding through other sources such as federal programs or state categorical grants. The state funded portion is called the district's "education spending."

The state divides each school district's education spending by the district's equalized pupil count to determine per-pupil spending. The equalized pupil count is determined by using a weighting system for various student types; for example, high school students are weighted more heavily than elementary school students.

Spending per equalized pupil is used to determine the school district's homestead education-property tax rate. The rates start at a low level and are associated with a base per pupil spending amount, then increase proportionally at higher per pupil spending amounts. A district with a per pupil spending amount 20% above the base will have a tax rate 20% above the base tax rate. Schools that operate at full capacity therefore can realize lower per pupil spending, and education tax rates that are closer to the base rate.

**Statements/Objectives:**

1. The school has served the community well. Recently there have been some renovations and upgrades that are presently being done and will continue until completion.

**Recommendations/Strategies/Goals:**

1. An addition and/or renovations to the school are an option being implemented to deal with space and program needs.

2. With educational costs and mandates increasing, continued study and modification of educational needs is required with input and involvement of town residents.

3. Support affordable quality child care opportunities within the town.

4. Address the issue of handicap accessibility as mandated by State & Federal regulations.

5. Mechanization and industrialization were the driving force to a better future 100 years ago. Information and technology are the driving forces to the future for today's children. We must, as a community, continue to make the information age technology available to our Newport Town students.

## **FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

With the exception of the village of Newport Center, which is served by the municipally-owned and operated Newport Center water system, the water supply systems in the Town are privately owned and operated. A private community water system, Holbrook Bay Commons, serves a population of 95.

All on-site septic and potable water systems are governed by the State of Vermont Environmental Protection Rules. For the most part these consist of springs, although in recent years more and more wells are being drilled for residences, as lot sizes become smaller. It is important to insure that the ground water that feeds these underground water supplies does not become polluted.

The people of Newport Center Village are served by a town-owned water system piped from two rock wells on Vance Hill. It is here that a large reservoir and pump house, where the water is chlorinated, are located. Four other wells were drilled on Town land with the main well producing 60+ gallons per minute.

According to the State Department of Environmental Conservation, the Newport Center water system is estimated to serve a population of 330. Approximately 95 dwellings, two churches, the town hall, elementary school, post office, several commercial operations and the fire station

obtain water from this system on a water rents basis. The fire station is supplied by a two-inch pipe, which gives an adequate supply of water for emergencies.

Public water systems are required to develop Source Protection Areas (SPAs) and plans to protect their drinking water sources. A Groundwater SPA is the land area beneath which groundwater flows to a well, spring, or infiltration gallery. The public water system develops a Source Protection Plan based on the approved SPA. Implementing the plan generally involves cooperation with landowners within the SPA to help protect groundwater from contamination. The wells and source protection areas associated with both community water supply systems in the Town of Newport are shown on Page 28.

#### **Statements/Objectives:**

1. Grants are available at the State and Federal level for infrastructure improvement.
2. Extensive upgrades and repairs have been made to the town's water system.

#### **Recommendation/Strategies/Goals:**

1. Continue a plan to lay new pipes to replace old pipes and other system upgrades.
2. Identify potential contamination sources, and consider modifying zoning ordinances to prohibit land uses that could affect all wells.
3. Contact Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection Division of the VT Department of Environmental Conservation to discuss SPAs and approaches to their protection. General information is available at <http://drinkingwater.vt.gov/pcwssourcewaterprotection.htm>
4. The Select Board should investigate the availability of State and Federal grants for infrastructure improvements that would enhance the town's ability to meet the demands of the water system users.

### **A. WATER QUALITY**

SURFACE WATER – The majority of the township is in the drainage basin of Mud Creek (a tributary of the Mississquoi River) which flows northerly through Newport Town and leaves the United States flowing into Canada in the northeastern corner of Troy.

According to the Vermont Rivers Study (1986), Mud Creek is a Class B – “suitable for bathing and recreation, irrigation and agricultural uses; good fish habitat; good aesthetic value; acceptable for public water supply with filtration and disinfecting.” Threats to water quality in town include agricultural runoff and sediments washing into streams as a result of logging activities, roads and residential and commercial design.

GROUNDWATER – Ground water is the source of all the drinking water supplies in Newport Town. Any activities that introduce contaminants directly into the ground (underground storage tanks, leach fields, agricultural activities) can affect ground water quality.

WETLANDS – Newport Town has about 440 acres of wetlands or approximately 1.6% of the total land in the Town. They are many in number and are distributed throughout the Town.

LAKE MEMPHREMAGOG – A portion of the Town’s easterly boundary fronts on Lake Memphremagog. Lake Memphremagog is an international body of water approximately 27 miles long with the City of Newport located at the southerly end and the City of Magog, Province of Quebec, Canada located at the northerly end.

The Town’s frontage along the lake stretches from the Canadian border southerly to the Newport City line, a distance of about 5 ½ miles. The shoreline is generally steeper and rocky at the northerly end and more level and silty at the southerly end. Much of the shoreline is wooded. Land use is primarily residential with a mix of seasonal cottages, year round homes and condominium apartments. Lakeshore properties have, generally speaking, higher assessed values and contribute a significant share of the Town’s property tax revenues.

The shoreline lacks natural sandy beaches and therefore is not particularly conducive to swimming. There are no public beaches within the town.

The Memphremagog Watershed Association is active in testing tributary and lake waters of Lake Memphremagog.

### The *Vermont Shoreland Protection Act*

Effective July 1, 2014, the Vermont General Assembly passed shoreland protection legislation that applies to activities within 250 feet of the mean water level of all lakes greater than 10 acres in size. The Shoreland Protection Act (Chapter 49A, of Title 10 §1441 et seq.) establishes a new state regulation for guiding shoreland development. The intent of the Act is to prevent degradation of water quality in lakes, preserve habitat and natural stability of shorelines, and maintain the economic benefits of lakes and their shorelands by defining standards for the creation of buildings, driveways, and cleared areas in shorelands. The Act seeks to balance good shoreland management and shoreland development.

The *Shoreland Protection Act* recognizes that many shoreland properties in Vermont are already developed or are small parcels that cannot meet the new standards. This is true along the west shore of Lake Memphremagog in the Town of Newport. Developed properties are “grandfathered” until the owner proposes redevelopment. In the case of small parcels, staff from the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) will work with homeowners so that standards are met to the extent possible.

Some of the regulations of the Act are:

- a. Naturally vegetated areas within 100 feet of the mean water level must be maintained according to the Vegetation Protection Standards in the act.
- b. The Act establishes a maximum of 20% impervious surface coverage unless best management practices are used to mitigate impact. Impervious surfaces are hard surfaces like roofs, driveways, decks, etc. that result in increased runoff during rainstorms.
- c. The Act establishes a maximum of 40% cleared area coverage unless best management practices are used to mitigate impact.
- d. Building on slopes greater than 20% requires demonstrating the development will not compromise stability.

Contact information for Guidance Materials and Questions (re: the Shoreland Protection Act) are available from the *Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Watershed Management Division, Lakes and Ponds Shoreland Permit Program, 1 National Life Drive, Main 2, Montpelier, VT 05620* or at [www.watershedmanagement.vt.gov/lakes.htm](http://www.watershedmanagement.vt.gov/lakes.htm)

### **Statements/Objectives:**

1. The Town needs to maintain and encourage establishment and maintenance of vegetated buffer zones along shorelines of Lake Memphremagog, streams, ponds, and Mud Creek in order to prevent bank erosion, bank collapse and the flow of detrimental sediments into the water.
2. Landowners along the river and lakes have had problems during high water with erosion and collapse of the banks.
3. State regulations address location, design, and installation of on-site septic systems that may affect ground water supplies.

### **Recommendations/Strategies/Goals:**

1. Assess existing land use in flood plain, near wetlands, in wellhead source protection areas (see map on page 28), and identify potential sources of contamination, and make provisions to address any problems.
2. The town should adopt a riparian buffer ordinance.
3. Contact Orleans County Conservation District about assistance to private landowners with flooding and erosion control problems.
4. The Town should continue to rely on State rules and regulations in respect to waste water regulations. (Act 249)
5. FEMA maps are available to be reviewed at the Town Clerk's office.

## **B. WASTE WATER TREATMENT FACILITY**

**Municipal System:** In 1982, the Town of Newport initiated the design and construction of a new wastewater treatment system for the Village area to be paid for by the users. The new system was designed by Phillips and Emberly Inc. of Lyndon Center, VT at a cost of \$973,925.62 and completed in July of 1983.

The system, which was at the time was considered to be innovative, consists of a 50,000-gallon concrete septic tank having four chambers and four leach fields. The septic system is constructed in such a manner as to allow the shutting down of two chambers for cleaning while the two remaining chambers continue to operate. In addition, only two of the leach fields are used at any given time. The system is gravity fed with the exception of one pump in a residence that is lower than the sewer project. The treatment plant is located on the former Leo Patenaude property on Route 105 just north of Newport Center Village.

The plant has a capacity of 41,500 gallons per day. The monthly average as calculated by the engineering firm of A+E Water Resource Engineers was 17,988 gpd. The calculated average is about 40% of the design flow. There are approximately 100 residential homes emptying into the system and 24 non-residential utilizing the system. Non-residential are stores, garages, the school, churches, post office and town office, etc. The current condition of the water and sewer system is very good. Many upgrades have been made.

The municipal water system is governed by the State of Vermont Environmental Protection Rules.

The plant is capable of being enlarged.

**Statements/Objectives:**

1. The system is currently adequate and in good repair and recently a filtering system was installed as well as a new switching valve stall system.
2. Figures on capacity, remaining life, and availability of new hookups are not readily available.
3. A citizen board (volunteer) has been formed to monitor and assess capacity, requested hookups and annual cost to maintain.
4. A formal written policy has been developed in regards to future hookups, capacity, etc.

**Recommendations/Strategies/Goals:**

1. Continue to monitor the system on a periodic basis so as to be prepared for any potential problems before they become emergencies.

**C. SOLID WASTE**

Waste disposal – The Town of Newport has a contract to dispose of municipal solid waste. All solid waste is handled by private haulers or individuals going to the landfill.

The Town is a member of the Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District and follows the recommended solid waste plan. Their web site is [www.nekwmd.org](http://www.nekwmd.org). A town recycling facility is available to all residents on Saturday mornings and Wednesday afternoons.

Vermont’s Universal Recycling Law (Act 148) requires all municipalities to implement variable rate pricing systems (pay as you throw) that charge for the collection of residential solid waste by volume or weight by July 1, 2015. The Solid Waste Management Program of the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation is making a guide to the new regulations available to all Vermont municipalities.

**Statements/Objectives:**

1. Citizen, school, and business participation in recycling is critical to its success. Waste reduction through recycling is attainable.

**Recommendations/Strategies/Goals:**

1. Appoint a solid waste agent under article IX: to enforce an ordinance to regulate collection and disposal of solid waste.
2. Educate the public, businesses and schools in the importance of achieving waste reduction through recycling.
3. Review the solid waste plan every year to promote the conservation of natural resources and wise use of the environment.
4. Evaluate junk car ordinance and determine procedure for enforcement.

**D. FLOOD RESILIENCE**

As of July 1, 2014 all duly adopted municipal plans must contain a flood resilience plan that identifies flood and fluvial erosion hazard areas and designates those areas to be protected. This includes floodplains, river corridors, land adjacent to streams, wetlands, and upland forests to reduce the risk of flood damage to infrastructure and property; and recommends policies and strategies to protect the areas.

The Town of Newport is located in the Lake Memphremagog Tactical Basin Planning region. There are two water bodies listed in the 2012 State of Vermont list of “303(d)” impaired surface waters in need of Total Maximum Daily Load development (TMDL): the Mud Creek and Lake Memphremagog. The term “303(d) list” is short for the impaired and threatened waters that the Clean Water Act requires states to submit for EPA approval every two years. The TMDL calculates the maximum amount of a pollutant allowed to enter a water body so that the water body will meet and continue to meet water quality standards for that particular pollutant. Both water bodies attribute their surface water quality problems to non-point sources: nutrients and sediment from agricultural runoff in Mud Creek, and excessive algae blooms phosphorous, and nutrients in Lake Memphremagog.

Newport Town has a history of flooding. In 2002 and 2004 there was moderate road damage throughout the Town. Mud Creek runs through the community and there is a small dam called the Old Mill Dam in the village. A dam breach would likely not have a significant impact on downstream lands that are mainly floodplain and farmland.

The town’s floodplains are identified and depicted in FEMA’s Flood Insurance Rate Map of 1985. This map depicts the special flood hazard areas that would likely become inundated during a significant flood known as a “base flood” often referred to as the “100-year flood”. These areas are along the Dunn Brook, the Beetle Brook, Mud Creek, Lake Memphremagog, and an unnamed tributary near the rail line. Keeping development out of river corridors reduces vulnerability to erosion. Statewide river corridor maps will be available in the near future which will allow the town to begin to develop a fluvial erosion hazard map if applicable.

To be eligible for emergency relief and assistance funds the town has to take the following steps to reduce flood damage: adopt the Town Road and Bridge Standards (2013 version adopted), adopt flood regulations meeting minimum standards for enrollment in the National Flood Insurance Program (currently met), maintain a Local Emergency Operations Plan, adopt a FEMA-approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. FEMA maps are available for review at the Town Clerk's office.

**Statements/Objectives:**

1. The town has adopted the 2018 Town Road and Bridge Standards.
2. The town has participated in the National Flood Insurance program since 1985.
3. The town will mitigate flood hazards in the most cost-effective manner possible minimizing the risk and expense to taxpayers.
4. The town will ensure its facilities are prepared to meet the demands of future floods and take the necessary steps to ensure the town can receive the maximum outside assistance in the event of a future federally declared disaster.

**Recommendations/Strategies/Goals:**

1. Identify and protect the Town of Newport's natural flood protection assets including floodplains, river corridors, lands adjacent to streams, wetlands, and upland forested cover.
2. Review and evaluate statewide river corridor information when available and consider adopting regulations to protect erosion prone areas.
3. Adopt most current versions of the Road and Bridge Standards and participate in regional road foreman trainings.
4. Maintain and regularly update the Local Emergency Operations Plan.
5. Update the town's transportation infrastructure information in the VT Online Bridge and Culvert Inventory Tool.
6. Replace undersized and failing culverts.
7. Consider developing a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.
8. Contact Orleans County Conservation District about assistance to private landowners with flooding and erosion control problems.

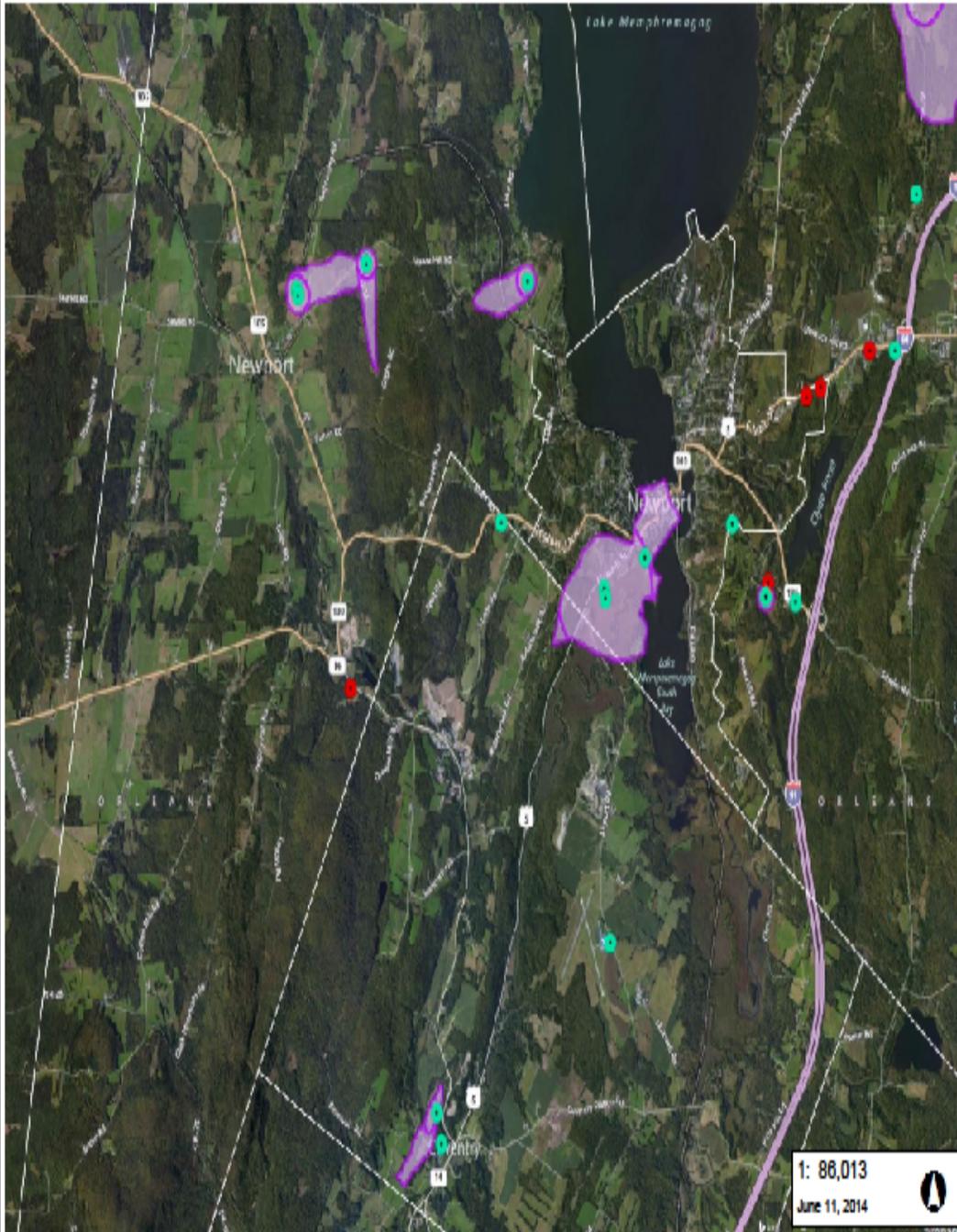
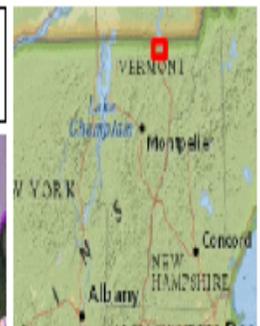




# Source Protection Areas (SPA)

Vermont Agency of Natural Resources

vermont.gov



## LEGEND

- Public Water Sources**
  - Active
  - Proposed
  - Inactive
- Surface Waters SPA**
  - Active
  - Proposed
- Groundwater SPA**
  - Active
  - Proposed
- Groundwater Classification**
  - I - Designated Drinking Water
  - IV - Contaminated
- Town Boundary**

1: 88,013  
June 11, 2014

## NOTES

Map created using ANR's Natural Resources Atlas

4,369.0 0 2,184.00 4,369.0 Meters  
 WGS\_1984\_Web\_Mercator\_Auxiliary\_Sphere 1" = 7168 Ft 1cm = 860 Meters  
 © Vermont Agency of Natural Resources THIS MAP IS NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION

**DISCLAIMER:** This map is for general reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise reliable. ANR and the State of Vermont make no representations of any kind, including but not limited to, the warranties of merchantability, or fitness for a particular use, nor are any such warranties to be implied with respect to the data on this map.

## **ENERGY**

Most of Newport Town homes and businesses heat with oil, wood, propane gas or a combination thereof. A considerable number cook with propane gas. Many have taken advantage of energy audits and weatherization programs offered by State agencies and utilities. Electricity is supplied to Newport Town by Vermont Electric Cooperative in Johnson.

In 1993, Citizens Utilities constructed a new transmission line from Newport to, and through, Newport Town. Citizens Utilities was ultimately sold to Vermont Electric Cooperative.

There is a crude oil underground pipeline crossing Newport Town, originating in Montreal, Quebec and terminating in Portland, Maine. There's been recent discussion, both for and against, using this pipeline to transport sand tar oils.

The majority of the public buildings in the Town use oil for fuel. The Town garage has a combination of wood and oil.

The greatest share of energy (gasoline and diesel) for both public and private use is for transportation (cars, trucks and tractors).

The Town has a new solar garden on Vance Hill on Town property. The Town also relies on outside sources to fulfill its energy needs. This is the case with most area towns.

Dispersed, auto-dependent development can result in sprawling local road networks that require greater use of energy for travel and maintenance. New development that is located in or adjacent to existing commercial centers maximizes energy efficiency. In addition, buildings can be sited so as to best utilize renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind or geothermal systems.

### **Statements/Objectives:**

1. There are still funds available to do energy audits for public buildings. All Town buildings should be energy audited and updated if cost effective.
2. The Town should keep its equipment in good working order and, on a regular cycle, replace and improve it with the latest energy efficient equipment available, where cost effective.
3. The town shall continue to look into renewable energy resources with the addition of the solar garden. Act 92 (State law, February 2008) established goals for Vermont in renewable energy generation and efficiency measures.

### **Recommendations/Strategies/Goals:**

1. Check into funding for energy audits for its buildings and apply the necessary weatherization, where cost effective.
2. Purchase the most energy efficient equipment possible, where cost effective.
3. Study access to use of renewable energy, such as solar, wind, and water.
4. Encourage greater use of renewable energy. Encourage development of local options for renewable energy production.
5. The select board should investigate the possibility of a clean energy district to meet these goals.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Highways in the town of Newport consist of 39.34 miles of town highways, 12.0 miles of state aid highways and 10.745 miles of state highways, a total of 62.085 miles. In 2018, a total of \$535,369.09 was spent for road maintenance and equipment. The Town received \$99,074.64 in state aid for this period.

The growth of an area or town depends heavily on its access to and adequacy of transportation. Newport Town has no public transportation per se, however RCT/Kingdom Express Services are available from Newport City. The local airport is located minutes away in Coventry. Access to the interstate highway system is also located in Newport City. The railroad also passes through the town, but no longer has facilities in town.

### **Statements/Objectives:**

1. With the ever increasing cost of labor, equipment, and supplies, a thorough study of the cost of maintaining and upgrading the Town's roads is essential to the continued growth of the Town.
2. As the more remote areas of the Town are developed, demand for upgrading Class 4 and/or private roads will occur.
3. Residential development on poor quality roads presents an access problem for fire and rescue vehicles.
4. Demands upon the area's remaining gravel supply are increasing. The Town of Newport has purchased a gravel pit for maintenance.
5. The Town has adopted minimum road standards.

### **Recommendations/Strategies/Goals:**

1. Enforce existing regulations in regards to access of Town roads.
2. Require access permit issued by Select Board and/or Road Commissioner as part of the permit process for construction of a dwelling or drive.
3. A clear policy with respect to requests to upgrade Class 4 roads or take over existing private roads is recommended.
4. Use best practices to control erosion and maintain culverts.
5. Determine if there is a need for pedestrian or bicycle facilities as there are grants available to develop the infrastructure to accommodate these modes of transportation.

## **RECREATION**

Newport Town residents have a variety of recreational opportunities for all ages. Area residents are able to participate in outdoor activities such as hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, skiing (downhill & X-Country), swimming, hiking, ATV trails, etc. The Town has a baseball and soccer field beside the town garage on Vance Hill Road. There is also a baseball field at the school. The Town also has a 400 acre recreational tract on Pogony Hill for residents to use for hiking, camping, picnicking, cross country skiing and snowshoeing. Organized sports activities available to the children in the Town are baseball, softball, soccer, basketball and football. Nature trails have been developed under the guidance of the Physical Education teacher of Newport Town School. These trails are located on the north side of the Village next to Mud Creek. The trails are used for hiking, snowshoeing and educational activities. The Vermont Association of Snowmobile Travelers (VAST) maintains approximately 25 miles of trails for winter recreation. The Vermont All-Terrain Vehicles Sportsman's Association, Inc. (VASA) is developing a trail system through Newport Town for ATVs.

### **Statements/Objectives:**

1. Posting of private lands limits certain recreational opportunities.
2. No public beach is available in Town on Lake Memphremagog, although there is public access for launching watercraft.

### **Recommendations/Strategies/Goals:**

1. Establish a recreation director or active recreation committee to promote existing opportunities and explore new possibilities.
2. Investigate the possibility of obtaining grants to fund recreation projects.
3. Reestablish indoor recreational facility at the school gym.

## **EMERGENCY SERVICES**

### **Fire Protection:**

Newport Town is served by a volunteer fire department. The station was built in 2002 adjacent to the RR tracks on the Crossroad, at the junction with the Searles Road. There are currently 23 volunteers. There is a meeting the first Monday of each month and practice every third Wednesday of each month. There are five surrounding towns available for mutual aid. The fire department averages about 500 man hours of training annually. Equipment consists one 1 van, 3 engines, 1 tanker along with some special equipment; ice rescue suits, compressed air foam trucks, some vehicle extraction equipment and a thermal imager to name some. There are 5 dry hydrants located in the Town.

### **Emergency Medical Services:**

The town presently contracts with the Newport Ambulance Service for coverage. North Country Hospital in Newport City is the center of all medical services in the county. Newport Ambulance Service and provides off-site medical transportation to the Town.

### **Police Protection:**

The Orleans County Sheriff's Department and the Vermont State Police in Derby serve the Town. The Town contracts yearly with the Sheriff's Department for the routine patrol duty. A 911 service is available to the residents of the Town through the State Police.

The Town's continued support of the Sheriff's Department, hospital and related facilities, and local fire department should provide the Town with continued quality emergency services.

### **Statements/Objectives:**

1. Evaluate police protection needs on an annual basis to keep pace with community needs,
2. Emergency service planning must keep pace with the growth of the Town and the increased travel on Routes 100 & 105.

### **Recommendations/Strategies/Goals:**

1. Formations of neighborhood watch patrols and increased local citizen participation.
2. Explore alternatives for additional dry hydrants.
3. Maintain the present rapid response plan.
4. Dry hydrants should be located on a GIS map.

## TELECOMMUNICATION FACILITIES/WIND TOWERS

### Telecommunications Facilities:

Towers and related infrastructure require careful consideration. These structures tend to be located on highly visible locations on mountaintops, ridgelines and in residential areas. The need for additional facilities is projected to increase dramatically in the next five to ten years. The Federal Telecommunications Act on 1996 placed certain limitations over municipal control of these telecommunications facilities; however, within those confines, Newport Town must act to protect the Town's historic character, rural nature and aesthetic beauty, regarding both telecommunication facilities and wind towers.

Cell Towers can still be regulated by the Zoning Bylaw, but there are limitations under Chapter 117 and the law was changed a few years ago so that developers now have the option of bypassing local zoning and opting for the Public Service Board's CPG (Certificate of Public Good) process – Section 248. The NVDA website offers examples of potential regulations at [www.nvda.net](http://www.nvda.net).

1. Towers should not exceed a height that would require lighting under FAA regulations (<200ft. in height is good. Some communities limit tower height to 10 ft. above the height of the tree line.)
2. Towers cannot be built on a speculative basis (i.e. build a tower and then try to attract carriers).
3. Towers must be operational. If not operational for a defined period, they need to be removed at the expense of the owner (bond needed).
4. Tower setbacks should be such that if they fall, they won't fall onto an adjoining property. A setback distance of 1-1/2 times the height of the tower is used in other communities.
5. If possible, towers should be collocated with similar, existing facilities or structures.
6. Monopole structures, or camouflaged structures, should be identified.
7. The application should include propagation maps that depict cell coverage before the tower is in operation and one that shows how coverage will improve after construction and operation begins.
8. The ZBA should reserve the right to hire an independent consultant to review any application provided by a developer and this cost should be borne by the developer.
9. Towers should be reviewed under the Conditional Use process so that the ZBA can apply conditions to mitigate any negative impacts.

### Wind Turbines:

Smaller, non-utility scale structures can be regulated in a manner similar to Telecommunications facilities.

1. Towers should not exceed a height that would require lighting under FAA regulations (<200 ft. in height is good. Some communities limit tower height to 10 ft. above the height of the tree line.)
2. Towers cannot be built on a speculative basis (i.e. build a tower and then try to attract carriers).

3. Tower setbacks should be such that if they fall, they won't fall onto an adjoining property. A setback distance of 1-1/2 times the height of the tower is used in other communities.
4. Towers should be reviewed under the Conditional Use process so that the ZBA can apply conditions to litigate any negative impacts.

Provisions could be added to address the following:

- Acceptable noise levels in dB.
- Areas where wind turbines would not be appropriate such as denser village areas.
- Setback dimensions from existing structures on adjoining properties could also be increased to mitigate any negative impacts.
- Mandate removal of towers, at the cost of the owners, if no longer in active use.

### **ADJACENT TOWNS AND THE REGION**

The status of planning and zoning in neighboring towns is as follows:

- Troy has recently updated its town plan and is currently revising its zoning bylaws.
- Lowell has re-adopted its town plan and is planning to update its zoning bylaws
- Coventry is working on a revision to its town plan. It has no zoning regulations in effect.
- Irasburg has no town plan in effect, or zoning regulations.
- The City of Newport has a municipal plan and zoning ordinances in place
- At this time there are significant developments in Jay with neighboring towns being affected if the funding and proper permits are obtained. The Town of Newport needs to stay abreast of these developments and how they might affect Newport Town.
- The NVDA regional plan was adopted in 2006. The land use section of the regional plan notes that the town's village center, with a denser, mixed use development pattern, is surrounded by primarily rural areas of farm and forestland. Goods and services not available locally are primarily obtained in the City of Newport or Derby-both designated as regional urban centers.

### **REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The Northeast Kingdom has long been marked by chronic underemployment and lagging personal incomes. Orleans County has traditionally had one of the highest unemployment rates in the State. (September 2014 unadjusted figures put the county unemployment rate at 5.0%, compared to 4.2% statewide).

In the fall of 2012 an infusion of funds from the federal EB-5 Visa Program proposed to bring many improvements to the area. Planned EB-5 funded projects include:

- Expansion to the Newport State Airport in Coventry. The airport recently renamed the Northeast Kingdom International Airport, has associated plans to construct warehousing facilities, as well as the construction of a 50,000 square-foot airplane assembly plant.
- Resort Development in Jay at Jay Peak consisting of new ski amenities, housing units, and hotels, will draw more visitors to the region.

Another development is the designation of Foreign Trade Zone #286, which allows U.S.-based companies to defer, reduce, or eliminate Customs duties on products admitted to this zone.

These developments will invariably bring more people to the region. Where these newcomers might choose to live remains unclear, but the region should see an increased demand for housing at all income levels. Not only will this affect Newport City, Coventry, and Jay, the municipalities most directly affected, but also adjacent and outlying areas to include the Town of Newport.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

The Town Plan is a working document for Newport Town officials to use over the next five years. It lists all the recommendations in the body of the sections. Since it is a working

document the Town Plan will always be in draft form so that it can remain flexible to adapt to changing needs and circumstances.

Priorities for the next 2-5 years are:

1. Revise the town zoning bylaws for compliance with VT statute.
2. Continue upgrading water and sewer infrastructure.
3. Explore renewable energy options for the Town.
4. Identify suitable lands for new commercial and residential development.
5. Schools shall continue to maintain and improve its educational future to our children.