

# **WHEELOCK TOWN PLAN**

**ADOPTED**

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## Planning Commission Members

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# WHEELOCK TOWN PLAN

Wheelock is a rural town in Caledonia County Vermont, with total land area of 23,400 acres. This land is a limited resource and should be developed for purposes of providing the town with a slow orderly rate of population growth. The quaint rural atmosphere of this small town should be protected and enhanced by the town plan.

## GOALS OF A TOWN PLAN (24 VSA § 4302)

1. To establish a coordinated, comprehensive planning process and policy framework which shall guide decisions by municipalities, regional planning commissions, and state agencies.
2. To encourage citizen participation at all levels of the planning process, and to assure that decisions shall be made at the most local level possible commensurate with their impact.
3. To consider the use of resources and the consequences of growth and development for the region and the state, as well as the community win which it takes place.
4. To encourage and assist municipalities to work creatively together to develop and implement plans.

## TOWN HISTORY

Wheelock, presently a town of approximately 521 inhabitants was chartered in 1785. The charter was issued to President Eleazar Wheelock of Dartmouth College, for the support of the college, "the incomes and profits" from the land to be used for its benefit.

The first Wheelock settlers were Joseph Page and his wife Abigail Morrill, who was the first bride in Danville in 1788. By 1790 the population had grown to ten "males over 16", a total of 33 inhabitants including wives and children. The first recorded birth was in 1795, that of Henry Sherburne Jr.

The early farmers of Wheelock were paid handsomely for clearing their land of large stands of hardwood that made excellent potash. Erastus Fairbanks began his first independent business venture in Wheelock and afterwards went on to form the original Fairbanks Scale Works in St. Johnsbury in partnership with his brothers. Wheelock though a wilderness settlement, was on the direct stage and mail route between Boston and Montreal. The post office was established in the home of Abner Hoyt in Wheelock and remained there until his death in 1803. Augustine Clark is the first Wheelock postmaster recorded in the U. S. Post Office Department and was appointed in 1806. The post office was discontinued on August 31, 1955.

By 1842 Wheelock had 12 School Districts, 3 saw mills, 1 gristmill, 1 fulling mill, 1 store, 264 horses, 1,472 cattle, 4,787 sheep and 881 inhabitants. The 1860 census shows a slight drop in population, but also shows the addition of a tavern, meeting house, law office, starch factory, 2 blacksmith shops and 2 shoe shops.

Judge Thomas Jefferson Cree made his home in Wheelock until his death in 1880 and had great influence on the town. Wheelock had its share of well-known ministers and other influential men. Perhaps one of the best known and beloved was Ozias Danforth Mathewson, born in Wheelock in 1864. A man of many scholastic and civic honors and active in State and Regional politics, he became the headmaster of Lyndon Institute in 1912 and served there until his retirement in 1943.

Wheelock was well known for its medicinal spring, "Caledonia Mineral Spring" and for a few years in the late 1880's supported the Caledonia Springs Hotel. In earlier years Fifield Tavern on the stagecoach road served the traveling public.

From: Town of Wheelock  
By: Eleanor Hutchinson  
Published 1961

## OVERALL VISION STATEMENT

Wheelock will be a dynamic community. The village center will grow, as available space will permit. New homes will be placed on the edge of fields or a short distance into the woods. Wheelock's rural nature will be retained, through the growth of a diverse agricultural community.

## PLAN'S INTENT

The plan is intended to be a dynamic document, which provides basic guidelines and an overall vision for the future of the community. It is comprehensive and addresses many different issues facing the town today. Each section contains background information, a vision statement, and a discussion of actions to address these needs.

## WHEELOCK

Wheelock has both rural and village residential housing. Agriculture, i.e. dairy farming, Christmas tree plantations, and logging provide employment. Service industries i.e. automotive "body and engine" repair, small engine repair, snowmobile repair, and the village store provide job opportunities within the town. The majority of the people commute to nearby towns to work.

Maintaining the rural quality of life, while encouraging orderly growth is the challenge that lies ahead. The rural nature of Wheelock will not support significant residential development. Therefore, the town does not encourage multiple lot subdivisions with less than 10 acres of land per lot in the rural district. Without improved infrastructure such as roads, municipal sewage and water system, the types and size of new developments are limited.

Proposals to increase industries within the town should be considered. However, it needs to be recognized that the extended tax base from a new industry, does not necessarily exceed the cost to the community. The true cost and benefits should be considered prior to the development being approved. What impact will there be on the roads and traffic congestion, on Schools and municipal services, on the rural quality of life? This is not to say that new development is not encouraged, but the entire package of issues should be considered.

### **Vision**

Encourage diversified economic development that is compatible with the rural quality of life in Wheelock.

### **Issues / Concerns**

1. All development proposals should be considered as long as they do not adversely affect the town.

2. The criteria used for evaluating proposals are not clearly spelled out.
3. With improved infrastructure, Wheelock will be more attractive to industry.
4. While considering natural resource constraints, an overall plan be developed to direct the location of new industries.
5. Small scale, light industry of high technology facilities that do not pollute the environment or change the quality of life are encouraged.

#### **Recommended Actions**

1. Criteria for evaluating a development proposal should be clearly spelled out. The criteria should consider the direct and indirect costs and benefits of the proposal.
2. The town should investigate entering a public/private partnership for developing a municipal sewer and water facility within the community. Sources of both state and federal grant moneys should be investigated.
3. While considering existing infrastructure and natural resources, an overall plan for the location of future growth should be developed.
4. Grant money should be sought from such sources as the Community Development Block Grant program (CDBG) and the Vermont Industrial Development Agency (VIDA). Technical assistance could be sought from agencies such as the Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA) and SCORE.
5. The Planning Commission should work closely with any and all proposed developments, within the town, to promote orderly growth.

#### **STATEMENT CONCERNING HISTORIC RESOURCES**

A book culminating an exhaustive study of the history of the Town of Wheelock was written by Eleanor J. Hutchinson in 1961. The following historic resources are identified as having significance in Wheelock:

1. Burial Grounds and Cemeteries. A sextant charged with the care and maintenance cemeteries is elected each year at town meeting
2. Twenty-five Historic Markers were placed in appropriate places around town denoting locations and sites of historic significance. Over the years these cast metal markers have been defaced and vandalized, although a few are still extant. Interested parties should form a committee to help preserve these sites
3. Several War Memorials honoring Wheelock Men in Service are set up in the Town Hall park, one at the South of the village, and at the North end of the village street. These are cared for by the Cemetery sextant
4. The Hearse House and Snow Roller storage site are cared for by the Wheelock Community Club
5. The Town Hall and Town Records and documents are cared for by the selectmen and the Town Clerk
6. The South Wheelock Church is used at least once a year, and its upkeep is by the church trustees
7. The Stannard Mountain Road marker is cared for by the selectmen
8. The town School houses are in private holdings
9. Mill races and runs along the Miller's run are in ruins and in private hands
10. The Dartmouth College Grant sign near the town hall park is cared for by the State of Vermont

### **Visions**

The historical places and things provide a historical reference for life in former times, for townspeople, schoolchildren, and visitors, and care should be taken to preserve them for new generations to enjoy and learn.

### **Issues/Concerns**

The selectmen, various civic groups, and private landowners should maintain interest in the historical assets of Wheelock so that their value can be maintained

### **Recommended Actions**

Renewed sales of the reprint of the Town of Wheelock should be initiated so that newcomers to town and others will be able to appreciate the historical assets and significance of the town of Wheelock so that any changes and improvements to property and to the town plan will be made with the historical perspective in mind.

## **LAND USE**

The gradient of the land, in the town of Wheelock, varies from flat areas to rolling hills, to mountains. The landscape varies from open pasture, to wetlands, to forest. The various soil types found in Wheelock are shown and described on a general soils map along with selected interpretation relating to building construction, septic system design, and access road construction. This map is located in the Town Clerk's office.

### **Vision**

The goal of this plan is to maintain the rural character of Wheelock. This plan also recognizes a key factor, in the success of this plan, is the harmonious support of both the rights of the land user (commercial and residential) and a common sense approach in the preservation of the many natural resources of Wheelock. Land use and development must be managed in a manner that does not strain municipal facilities and services.

### **Issues/Concerns**

1. To provide a format to be followed in the determination of when land regulations apply.
2. A diversity of appropriate land uses should be allowed throughout the town.
3. The diversity and vitality of the cultural, residential and economic village center should be maintained.
4. Land is a limited resource. Misuse of land can be detrimental not only to the individual, but also to neighbors and the town of Wheelock.
5. The following categories of land use should be considered:
  - A. Low Density: A low density of development, primarily residential development, agricultural and forestry uses, is appropriate for those areas where road access is limited, where there are severe limitations for sewage disposal, and where there are significant natural resources, which should be protected.
  - B. Medium Density: A medium density of development, which might be a mixture of residential, commercial and industrial uses, is appropriate for areas

where road access is fair to good, where limitations for sewage disposal are moderate and where there is no significant natural resources.

- C. High Density: A higher density of development, primarily residential and commercial uses is appropriate for areas with good road access and slight limitations for sewage disposal. Existing built-up areas are appropriate for this category of use.

### **Recommended Actions**

Establish a Land Commission to:

1. Develop a detailed format to be used as a guide to the requirement of land regulation.
2. Define by-laws that support the vision of land use in Wheelock.

## **AGRICULTURE**

Historically Wheelock has had many small family farms and was an agricultural community. Today, there remain only a few dairy farms along with a limited number of specialized farms that grow hay or vegetables. Yet the connection to the land and desire for open space is strong. Retaining the rural Vermont atmosphere is important.

One of the most important things that the non-farming community can do for farmers is to maintain and stabilize lower taxes. If the town really wants to retain the farms and open land, a tax relief program should be considered. Encouraging traditional village centers surrounded by open land is important for the farming community. There may be possibilities for innovative partnerships between the farmers and the developers to help make farming more economically viable while preserving the active farmland.

### **Vision**

To encourage farming and other land practices and uses that maintain or enhance the agricultural potential of the land.

### **Issues/Concerns**

1. The prime agricultural land needs to be identified.
2. The local regulations should be designed to support local agriculture. Having flexibility into the review process, and encouraging cluster developments, etc can do this.
3. There is a need for people to understand and/or use creative ways to develop land, do estate planning and utilize the Current Use Program.
4. High property taxes make farming more difficult and jeopardize the long-term viability of family farms.
5. Some farmers depend on leased land to sustain their farms. Changing access and fees for using this land makes it difficult for the farmers to do long term financial planning or investments into the land.

### **Recommended Actions**

1. The prime agricultural land as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service needs to be identified and mapped.
2. Local regulations need to be developed to support local agriculture by designing flexibility into the review process, encouraging cluster developments, and so on.

A Conservation Commission should be established to:

- A. Hold workshops and obtain written materials on creative ways to develop land. This will minimize the impact on the agricultural resources, estate planning, the Current Use Program and so on.
- B. Look into a local tax stabilization program for the farming community.
- C. Work with non-agricultural landowners to stabilize lease agreements and conserve their lands, which are vital to the farming community.

## **FORESTS**

At one time, Wheelock was mostly farmland. The reforestation trend of many years is being continued today as abandoned farmland reverts back to forest growth. Today, forest land covers about 70% of Wheelock and provides many benefits ranging from wildlife habitat to commercial uses that provide valuable local jobs.

Forestland plays a critical part in promoting regional tourism, recreation, and hunting which brings outside dollars into the state and local economies. The quantity of forest growth makes this resource less threatened than open agricultural land.

The working forest provides important local jobs for loggers, truckers and sawmill workers. There is increasing concern about the long-term impacts of forest management. There is concern about increased run-off, degrading the long-term forest health and having a negative visual impact. These concerns support the perception that the State mandated Acceptable Management Practices for Protecting Water Quality (Amps) are not being followed or enforced.

### **Vision**

Maintain a healthy and vibrant forest and forestry in Wheelock by encouraging the use of sound scientific harvesting and conservation methods.

### **Issues/Concerns**

1. Not all landowners are aware of modern forest management techniques and could benefit from meeting with a forester prior to "logging off" property. Such consultation would help insure proper harvesting techniques, timber stand mix, and continuous renewal of the forest resources.
2. Landowners should be encouraged to think about the long-term health of the forest, as well as, the short-term economic gain from logging.
3. Increased run-off due to logging and the removal of the forest canopy causes increased erosion and flooding.
4. The Forest Legacy program may offer a conservation option to interested landowners.
5. Wheelock should take steps to become involved with this program.

### **Recommended Action**

Establish a Conservation Committee to:

1. Hold training workshops and provide written materials on proper long-term forest management for landowners.
2. Work with landowners to inform them about contemporary logging techniques.
3. Work with landowners interested in land conservation and the Forest Legacy Program and to promote their proposals.

## NATURAL AREAS

Wheelock's landscape includes a variety of unique and fragile natural areas. Examples of natural areas include a stand of Beech trees used by black bears, an unusual wetland complex where rare plants grown, or a cliff used by rare birds. It should be the Town policy to identify and protect these unique, rare and/or endangered species and habitat.

The State of Vermont has purchased a large tract of land as part of the Steam Mill Brook Wildlife Management Area

### **Vision**

To provide for the wise and efficient use of Vermont's natural resources.

### **Issues/Concerns**

To facilitate the appropriate extraction of Earth's resources and proper restoration and preservation of the esthetic qualities of the area.

### **Recommended Action**

1. Identify natural areas.
2. Create a conservation overlay district, which at a minimum includes natural areas and wellhead protection areas.

## TRANSPORTATION

The residents and visitors of Wheelock depend on a good transportation network. Interstate 91, a major connecting highway extending from major cities in the Northeast Corridor to Montreal, Canada, passes through the northern end of town. Exit 24 of I-91 provides access to and from Wheelock via State Route 122. The present Town road network consists of 2.84 miles of State highway (State routes 122 & 16); 6.15 miles of Class II town highways, (these are designated by the Selectmen and approved by the Vermont State Highway Board); 22.01 miles of Class III town highways, (these are certified as Class III after consultation with the district highway engineer). Minimum requirements are that Class III highways are negotiable under normal conditions, all seasons of the year, by standard manufactured pleasure cars, and thus such highways must have sufficient surface and base, adequate drainage, and enough width to allow winter maintenance. There is 19.35 miles of Class IV highways. The town has no legal obligation to maintain these highways. People erecting dwellings served by these roads could not expect winter service.

A map depicting town highways is on file at the Town Clerk's office.

### **Vision**

To improve the quality of Wheelock's transportation and road system in order to promote safety, alleviate congestion, and maintain the scenic quality of roads whenever possible.

### **Issues/Concerns**

The transportation network affects every part of town life, be it economic developments, busing school children, or directing development. Maintaining a safe and efficient network of roads is vital to Wheelock's economic future and quality of life. The many issues involved with



roads can be packaged into five major categories: safety, cost, congestion, alternatives, and quality of life. The following recommended actions would address these issues.

### **Recommended Action**

#### 1. Transportation Committee:

The Selectmen should appoint a transportation committee to look into the many issues surrounding transportation. The committee, which would deliver a set of recommended actions to the Selectmen, could be made up of members of the Planning Commission, Selectmen, or road crew, and the general public. The committee would consider the following issues:

- A. Weight limits and enforcement on the town roads.
- B. Learn more about the State of Vermont and regional planning commission's (NVDA) transportation initiatives and how much local control the Town has in the decisions.
- C. Consider the merits of developing a road policy on taking over new roads and "throwing them up". What parameters should be in the policy?
- D. Speed limits along town roads.
- E. Consider the merits of developing a capital budget that considers the cost of new equipment and long-term road maintenance. Would it be cheaper and safer in the long term to pave certain roads?
- F. Consider the merits of a policy that ensures the visual quality is maintained along the roads by encouraging trees to be maintained and planted along the roads.

#### 2. Traffic Study

A town wide traffic study should be undertaken to look into the traffic problems in Wheelock. At a minimum the study would consider the following issues:

1. The need for traffic control in the village center.
2. Identify what types and how much traffic are on the roads.
3. Consider the needs for sidewalks along the road in the village.
4. The quality of the existing bridges in town. What maintenance needs to be done?
5. Explore the feasibility of bike paths, snowmobile trails, hiking corridors as alternative methods of transportation.

#### 3. ISTEA

1. The Planning Commission and Selectmen should learn about and become involved with the State of Vermont regional planning commission, and the Federal Efficiency Act (ISTEA) program.
- B. Encourage continuing updates to the E-911 Emergency Response System.

### **WATER SUPPLY**

There is one public water supply in Wheelock, serving much of the Village of Wheelock. The Wheelock Water System is currently owned, operated and maintained by Wheelock Fire District # 1, which takes any responsibility the taxpayers in town might have and shifts it onto the users. Fire Districts are eligible for state and federal grant programs to improve and maintain the systems. This system has recently undergone a complete rebuilding project. This system

provides an important service to the households that are hooked up to it. The operators of the system have a special responsibility to ensure that there is plenty of safe drinking water available.

The land around a public water supply has special significance. This area is called a "wellhead protection area" and should be protected from land uses that might threaten the quality or quantity of the water. One such wellhead protection area is located northeast of the Village on Mathewson Hill. Another wellhead area exists around Chandler Pond in South Wheelock. A third is Walden Springs on Bean Pond Road. A map depicting these wellhead areas is on file at the Town Clerk's office.

#### **Vision**

Maintain and improve the public water supplies while ensuring good quality water is available.

#### **Issues/Concerns**

1. The supply and quality of water may restrict or reduce development potential in the village.
2. To ensure the quality of the water a qualified agent should test it at proper intervals.
3. The Wellhead Protection Areas should be delineated and protected from incompatible land uses. Where the isolation distance of water supplies and septic systems as defined by the Vermont Department of Health crosses a property line, there may be an encroachment on and reduction in property values, as well as potential for harm to the public health.

#### **Recommended Actions**

1. The Wellhead Protection Areas should be delineated. The adoption of local ordinances to protect them from incompatible land uses, should be considered.
2. Local regulation should be modified to address the isolation distance of wells and septic systems.
3. A plan should be developed to supply water in the event of an emergency.

### **SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEMS**

The residences and businesses in Wheelock are served by individual on-site subsurface disposal systems. If the systems are properly installed and maintained, they should be sufficient to protect the ground water and public health.

#### **Vision**

Ensure that all sewage is properly treated and disposed of in a safe manner.

#### **Issues/Concerns**

There are currently no design specifications or ordinances relating to individual septic systems and sewage treatment. Allegedly hazardous septic systems are investigated by the Town Health Officer, but no preventative regulations exist.

#### **Recommended Actions**

Continue to look into Town's options regarding oversight and possible regulation of individual on-site septic systems.

## **RECREATION**

There are a variety of recreational activities and programs in Wheelock and surrounding townships that add to its rural character. Mathewson State Forest offers endless horseback, snowmobile and walking trails. Many private landowners make their land available for these activities, as well as for hunting and fishing. With its natural beauty, the area attracts people with many outdoor recreational interests. There is a park at the edge of Wheelock Village and the Town Hall hosts numerous indoor recreational activities and programs. Millers Run School is the site of many community events as well.

### **Vision**

To preserve Wheelock's rural character, promote positive recreational experiences, pursue good neighbor relationships and to not jeopardize the quality of our environment.

### **Issues/Concerns**

1. The need to keep private lands open to public use.
2. To maintain the wide variety of existing recreational activities.
3. Consider environmental impact of any depth or scope so as to not hinder this way of life.
4. Maintain the rural character and beauty for the public to enjoy.
5. Continue support of regional recreational activities, such as Lyndonville Youth Softball and Baseball, youth soccer, and youth hockey.

### **Recommended Actions**

1. Private landowners should be encouraged to keep their land open to the public and not posted.
2. Work with State and Federal agencies to keep the use of public lands beneficial to the public.
3. Support existing and create new recreational activities within the Town and region that benefit Wheelock residents.

## **EDUCATION**

Miller's Run School, the graded school of Wheelock shared with the Town of Sheffield, served by Unified District # 37, is located in Sheffield Village. The average cost per student is \$5,315.00.

In 1990 the population of Wheelock was 481 of which approximately 22% were school age. The population increase, over the next five years, is projected to be 5%. The percentage of students staying the same, student population should rise from 107 to 111 students. A map depicting the location of Miller's Run School is on file in the Town Clerk's office.

### **Vision**

To ensure quality education in a safe and supportive environment for all students.

### **Issues/Concerns**

1. The possibility of our student population outgrowing our present facilities.
2. Continue adult education.
3. Stress fundamental skills, while keeping abreast of changing education environment.
4. Education cost is a major portion of the town budget.
5. Identify emotional problems at an early age and have them treated.
6. A good school system is an important part of the community.
7. Successful education is possible through efforts of students, parents, faculty and community.

### **Recommended Actions**

1. Pursue a program to provide positive education for our students in an adequate facility.
2. Make facilities available for adult education.
3. Provide education technology to keep our community current.
4. Expand current curriculum to maintain excellence.
5. Encourage intervention programs, for students, at an early age.
6. Notify school board of early enrollment.

### **ADJACENT COMMUNITIES**

Wheelock is surrounded by a total of seven towns. These include Sheffield, Greensboro, Stannard, Danville, Lyndon and Sutton. Lyndon is the largest in the group with a more urban like environment. The other towns are smaller and more rural like Wheelock.

The Town of Wheelock has reciprocal relationships with adjacent communities. Wheelock provides jobs, housing, solid waste transfer facilities and recreational opportunities, while adjacent communities also provide jobs, medical services, places to shop, and educational facilities. The communities have agreed to work together to provide mutual aid in the case of fires and emergencies. The issues of availability of jobs, the cost of housing, and educational overcrowding extend beyond Wheelock's borders and are a concern for the adjacent communities.

We rely on each other and maintaining a positive relationship is important. Keeping communications open between communities is critical to maintaining the lifestyle that is important to all the residents of the area.

### **Vision**

Maintain open communications with adjacent communities to insure awareness of any changes that may have an effect on the lifestyle that is critical to the residents of Wheelock.

### **Issues/Concerns**

1. Sheffield: Due to the close proximity of Sheffield and Wheelock town centers, maintaining awareness of changes has not been a problem. Wheelock shares education responsibilities with Sheffield through the Millers Run School. The towns

have worked together to handle solid waste and to provide mutual aid in the case of fires and emergencies.

2. Greensboro: Greensboro's plan has goals supporting the Wheelock vision. They plan to approach economic development in a regional manner that will benefit communities concerned. They plan on establishing a relationship with neighboring communities that addresses areas of mutual interest while developing goals with mutual benefits. They plan to encourage various boards to interact with their counterparts in neighboring communities. Providing neighboring communities early opportunities to comment on goals will be done by encouraging the exchange of minutes and other information between Select Boards and Planning Bodies of adjacent communities.
3. Stannard: One of Stannard's Town Plan Objectives is to foster regional cooperation. As a small town, Stannard is very sensitive to the actions of its larger neighbors. Their Plan states it is essential that Stannard maintain its long-term policy of working with regional and statewide groups to cooperate in areas of mutual concern.
4. Danville: Danville's Plan has a number of elements that describe their approach to relationships with adjacent towns. Their plan supports retaining the small town character. They offer educational opportunities through greater use of the recently completed school expansion project. The plan supports preservation of natural features, historic landmarks and wildlife habitat. These resources are available to all residents of the region. Recreational opportunities are available to all residents of the region. Their plan supports preservation of farm and forest resources.
5. Lyndon: Lyndon's town government structure is more urban. They have a zoning board that meets on a regular basis. The meetings are open to the public. Issues being decided by the zoning board are announced in the newspaper. Wheelock can monitor items of concern and attend the meetings to be heard.
6. Sutton: Sutton does not have an approved town plan. When they do have an approved plan, Wheelock will support an open and positive relationship to insure awareness of the elements of their plan.

### **Recommended Actions**

Continuously monitor the situation to ensure the relationship continues to be positive. Encourage the sharing of information with the neighboring towns to insure awareness of issues that may affect each other.

## ENERGY

Our society is growing more aware of the long-term costs, economic, social and environmental, of our energy choices. The consumption of energy will become greater as the town develops. Municipal services, land use, building standards: all are affected. Prior to any future developments, these simple questions must be asked and answered. Do we have sufficient energy we can allot, without negatively affecting our present population? Where will the additional energy come from? What is the cost and who will bear the same? What is the energy source?

### **Vision**

Encourage conservation and the use of renewable energy resources in an environmentally safe way.

### **Issues/Concerns**

1. We have three public buildings we heat, excluding the schools.
2. Energy consumption in the home. The initial cost to homeowners of renovation and insulation is often beyond their immediate means.
3. Long-term costs of public property need to be analyzed.
4. Wheelock is a bedroom community. People commute long distances to work.
5. Explore alternative transportation methods.
6. Energy efficient techniques for building houses and roads should be considered.
7. Due to limited supply of certain types of energy resources, which can lead to scarcities, renewable energy resources should be encouraged.

### **Recommended Actions**

1. Complete an energy audit of public buildings. Identify areas where the cost of improvements will be repaid through energy savings.
2. Contact the Public Service Board, Vermont Housing Authority, Northeast Kingdom Community Action and any other agencies about State and Federal programs that would help defray the cost of building renovations.
3. Consider a town policy that when purchasing a town vehicle or any piece of equipment that all costs for the life of the vehicle should be considered including fuel mileage, life expectancy and all operating costs.
4. Ensure that local regulations allow building modifications for wind and solar energy.
5. Consider developing a municipal policy, "that all new construction and building maintenance will consider the long term costs of energy".
  1. Encourage van and car-pooling by providing a parking area for commuters.
  2. Ensure the town plan will accommodate concentrated village centers if at all possible.

## HOUSING

Wheelock has a wide range of housing types. There are many older homes in varied conditions including the typical rural Vermont farm homestead. Due to very little industry in Wheelock, it is considered a bedroom community to the surrounding towns. This factor has led

to an increase in construction of new homes over the past twenty years, as well as the renovation of many older homes. Wheelock's outer areas lend themselves to seasonal homes and hunting camps due to their quiet and remote settings. Mobile homes in a variety of conditions are scattered throughout the town. Nearly 100% of Wheelock's tax base is comprised of single-family homes, camps and land. There is affordable housing located throughout the town. The fluctuation in population is proportional to the demand of services rendered by the town.

### **Vision**

To continue making Wheelock a desirable town for people of all income levels to establish homes and camps and to establish businesses in harmony with rural life.

### **Issues/Concerns**

1. Maintain the rural character of Wheelock.
2. Monitor the needs of low-income and elderly residents and insure they are met.
3. If new zoning regulations or other restrictions are adopted, elderly and low-income housing should be taken into consideration.
4. Any large deviation in townspeople's needs or their income levels could stretch the town's services and affect the cost of operating the town. Studies need to be conducted to assess these effects.
5. Historic buildings are an important part of the town's heritage and need to be preserved whenever possible.

### **Recommended Actions**

1. The Planning Commission should support and monitor the needs of both the elderly and low-income groups.
2. Provide access to Federal, State and Local information on energy efficiency and weatherizing through the Town Clerk's Office
3. Support work with land trust groups, community action, groups, the State of Vermont, or Habitat for Humanity to provide affordable housing in Wheelock.

