

Stowe 2050

An 8-Year Plan, A 25-Year Vision

Adopted by the Selectboard on _____.

Cover photo credit: Jim Espey, June 2025

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge and express gratitude to the Abenaki people, who for centuries have cared for and continue to care for this land. We honor their enduring connection to this land, their history, and their culture. We embrace our responsibility to learn from and protect their cultural and traditional connections to this land. We commit to becoming more conscious and respectful stewards of the land we inhabit and care for while building a more inclusive and equitable space for all.

Declaration of Inclusion

The Town of Stowe welcomes all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, family status, age, or ability, and wants everyone to feel safe and welcome in our community. As a town, we formally condemn discrimination in all its forms, commit to fair and equal treatment of everyone in our community, and will strive to ensure all of our actions, policies, and operating procedures reflect this commitment. The Town of Stowe has and will continue to be a place where individuals can live freely and express their opinion.

Stowe Community

Our heartfelt thank you to the community members, residents, and business owners whose voices and ideas helped shape the vision for the future of our cherished town. We are also deeply grateful to the individuals, groups, and organizations on the following page, whose invaluable support has guided the development of this plan and will help turn our shared goals into reality.


Community
Stowe
Town
Outdoor
People
Beauty
Small
town
Love
Mountain
Recreation
Nature
Local
Skiing
Access
Many
Active
Here
Small
Place
Trail
Resort
Restaurant
Amenity
Food
Culture
Tourist
Year
Home
Live
Work
Feel
Kid
Unique
Great
Being
Walk
Find
Know
Each
Use
Well
Close
Round
Store
Preserve
Shop
Trust
Safe
Friendly
Music
Keep
Swim
Strong
Fun
Go
Run
House
Sport
Very
Up
Help
Car
See
Space
Less
Quiet
Traffic
Even
Choice
Village
Thing
Reside
Move
Support
Afford
Time
Vibrant
Downtown
Special
Raise
Always
Surrounds
Much
Good
Best
Big
Set
Few
Visit
Nice
Change
Offers
Knit
Kind
Such
Life
Service
Rec
Path
Allow
Friends
Around
Etc
Farm
Amenity
Wonder
Street
Neighbors
Both
Full
Enjoy
Still
Old
Gets
Visitor
Survey
State
Think
Seasons
Value
Environment
Bike
Way
Destination
Connect
Within
Sense
Comment
Back
Bus
Future
Appreciate
Land
Start
Blend
Fix
Months
Education
Urban
Talk
Developed
Post Office
Safety
Unfortunate Choice
Drink
Anymore
Mtn
Grew
Tradition
Old
Gets
Diverse
New
Add
Age
Hold
Combines
Cost
Protect
Multiple
Center
Ice
Make
More
Care
Light
Paid
Cafe
Spot
Ride
Scene
Hit
Line
Mile
Fall
Bar
Last
Country
Still
Home
Visitor
Year
Survey
Environment
Seasons
Value
Way
Culture
Destination
Connect
Within
Sense
Best
Good
Much
Road
Surrounds
Many
Special
Raise
Always
Peace
Far
Left
Eat
Class
Call
Main
Really
Lifestyle
Vibrant
Though
Time
View
Proximity
Need
Try
Welcome
Scenic
Amazing
Here
Support
Afford
Entertain
Built
Before
Historic
Few
Visit
Nice
Set
Big
Soul
Become
Excellent
Change
Offers
Knit
Kind
Such
Life
Service
Rec
Path
Allow
Friends
Around
Etc
Farm
Resort
Beauty
Small
Place
Trail
Reside
Move
Active
Here
Love
Mountain
Recreation
Stowe
Community
Outdoor
People
Town
Nature
Local
Skiing
Access
Many
Small
town

Selectboard
Francis ‘Paco’ Aumand
Nick Donza
Jo Sabel Courtney
Ethan Carlson
Beth Gadbois
Billy Adams (former)
Lisa Hagerty (former)

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Heather Snyder, Vice Chair
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Jeff Sereni
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Municipal Boards & Commissions
Energy Committee
Historic Preservation Commission
Conservation Commission
Recreation Commission
Cemetery Commission
Arts & Culture Council
Housing Task Force

Stowe Schools & Board Members
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Ryan Bennett
Tiffany Donza
Andrew Kohn
Erica Loomis
Nancy Gleason

Administration
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Will Fricke, Assistant Town Manager

Municipal Staff
Sarah McShane, Planning & Zoning Director
Kayla Hedberg, Planning & Zoning Assistant
Tim Morrisey, Town Assessor
Matt Frazee, Parks & Rec Director
Loren Polk, Library Director
Harry Shepard, Public Works Director
Chris Jolly, Assistant Public Works Director
Kestrel Owens, Public Works Engineer
Joe Donati, Water Superintendent
Brooke O'Steen, Police Chief
Ed Webster, Fire Chief
Jackie Pratt, SED General Manager
Michael Lazorchak, SED Regulatory Compliance Manager
Rich Baker (retired Zoning Director)
Tom Jackman (retired Planning Director)

Project Partners & Supporters
Barbara Baraw, Stowe Historical Society
Lamoille County Planning Commission
Stowe Vibrancy
LFCUD Representatives (Stephen Friedman, John Woods, Andrew Ross)
Solid Waste District (Susan Alexander & Heather Thomas)
Stowe Land Trust
Stowe Trails Partnership
Stowe Area Association
Stowe Reporter, notably reporter Aaron Calvin
Healthy Lamoille Valley, notably Alison Link
Stowe Theatre Guild, Tanya Kateri

Consultants
Rebecca Stone, Community Workshop LLC
Adam Catherine, Stantec
Jeff Sauser, CommunityScale

Executive Summary

Stowe 2050: Building on Our Past, Planning for Tomorrow

The Town Plan is our community's primary policy document for guiding land use, sustainable growth, and community development. It provides a long-range framework for stewarding our historic character, scenic landscapes, and strong sense of place, while thoughtfully responding to the challenges and opportunities of today and tomorrow. The Plan addresses a set of interconnected priorities, including housing and land use, transportation and mobility, economic vitality and tourism, flood resilience and public safety, quality of life, and community services.

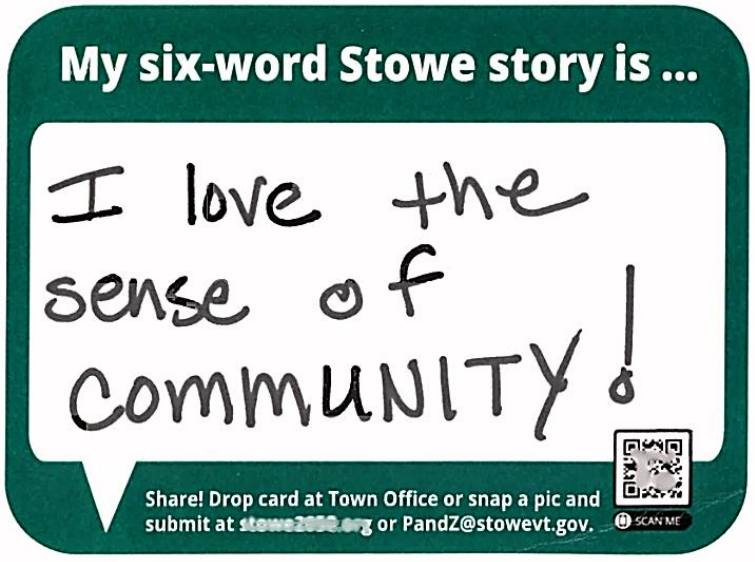
This update to the Town Plan first began on Town Meeting Day in 2023, when voters approved funding for a robust and inclusive community engagement process. With support from the Department of Planning & Zoning, the Commission formally began the plan update process in early 2024, launching community outreach efforts and holding regular meetings over the following two years. Known as *Stowe 2050*, this Plan represents a multi-year, collaborative effort shaped by volunteer leaders from municipal boards, commissions, and committees; municipal staff; regional and local organizations; and many engaged community members. Collectively, hundreds of hours were dedicated to ensuring the Plan reflects the community's shared priorities and long-term vision.

Community voices were central to the development of Stowe 2050. Through focused listening sessions, informal conversations, and ongoing dialogue, residents, business owners, visitors, and local leaders shared ideas, hopes, and concerns. These contributions shaped a bold, collective vision for Stowe's future, one that honors our unique character while embracing opportunity. This vision is the foundation of the Plan and informs everything that follows.

The engagement process also reaffirmed the values that define Stowe and guide its future. Again and again, community members expressed deep appreciation for our forested hillsides and open spaces, historic character, scenic viewsheds, and, above all, a strong sense of place and community. These values are evident not only in our landscapes and buildings, but in everyday moments: familiar faces along the Recreation Path, conversations at the post office, and a simple wave from a passing neighbor. Through this process, community members voiced what matters most to them and shared a collective vision for Stowe's future, including:

- Strengthening Stowe as a year-round community;
- Supporting local businesses and a stable workforce;
- Expanding the range of affordable housing options;
- Maintaining a strong commitment to our local schools;
- Advancing sustainable tourism initiatives;
- Promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy;
- Expanding transportation options;
- Enhancing public amenities; and
- Investing in arts and culture.

Together, our shared vision and values form the foundation of this Plan, reflecting what we cherish today and what we are committed to protecting, strengthening, and carrying forward for future generations. Grounded in stewardship, balance, and opportunity, this vision looks toward a future that expands possibilities for all who call Stowe home, as well as those who come to experience its unique charm. It embraces the responsibility to sustain the qualities that make Stowe distinctive, while thoughtfully evolving into a more balanced, accessible, diverse, and inclusive community.



This Plan is not a rigid set of regulations, but a strategic guide that translates our community vision and values into goals, policies, and actions. It supports informed decision-making while balancing responsible growth, affordability, environmental stewardship, and community well-being. This updated Plan introduces a new format and organization, along with a renewed commitment to implementation and to fostering a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive community.

Resilient Utilities & Infrastructure Investment
Updated Zoning & Subdivision Regulations
Tier 1B Designation
Housing Reserve Fund
Memorial Park Master Plan

BOLD MOVES

Inclusionary Zoning
Public Transit & Rider Amenities
Tier 1B Designation
Luce Hill Road & VT-108 Improvements
Short-Term Rental Management

Recognizing that conditions will continue to evolve, the Plan is designed to be both adaptable and actionable. Chapter 6, *Stowe Tomorrow: Our Shared Future – Vision to Action*, outlines an implementation program grounded in collaboration with community partners and supported by ongoing data collection to track progress and adjust strategies as needed. Given Stowe's enduring appeal as a place to live, work, and visit, the strategies and policies established in the 2018 Town Plan were carefully re-evaluated, discussed, and reaffirmed or modified where appropriate, to ensure the Town continues to enhance the qualities that make Stowe a special place, now and into the future.

The implementation element identifies **BOLD *Moves***, our highest-priority actions that will shape the life of this Plan and lay the groundwork for a strong and sustainable future. Together with the goals, policies, and action tasks that follow, they provide a clear framework for turning our vision into action, with initiatives carried out over varying timeframes and through a range of approaches as priorities, resources, and conditions evolve.

The pages that follow tell the story of Stowe, our rich traditions, treasured landscapes, and shared experiences. Yet our story is still unfolding. The adoption of this Plan marks a transition from vision to action and reflects our collective commitment to shaping Stowe's future with intention, care, and responsibility. By working together, we can translate our shared values into meaningful action and ensure this Plan guides decisions for years to come. We invite you to be part of this next chapter, to stay engaged, to contribute your ideas and energy, and to help steward Stowe's future. This is our shared story, and together we will continue to build a resilient, vibrant, and enduring community.

With gratitude,

Your Planning Commission



[Left to Right: Bob Davison, Mila Lonetto, Brian Hamor, Heather Snyder, Jill Anne, Jeff Sereni. Missing from photograph: Neil Percy, John Muldoon, and Deborah Drinkwater.]

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Photo credit: Town of Stowe

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Chapter 1

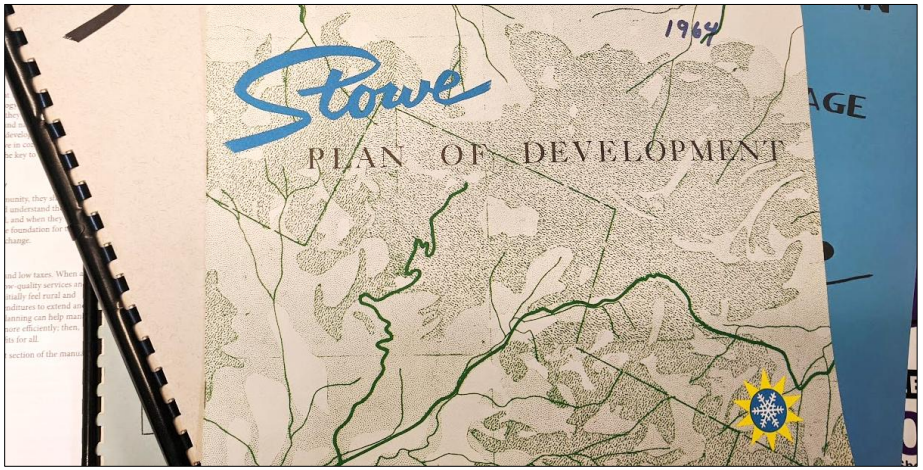
Our Planning Process

Our Planning Process

Introduction- More than Six Decades of Comprehensive Planning

The Stowe community has a proud tradition of thoughtful planning, carefully balancing growth and development with the preservation of our scenic beauty, rural charm, and rich history. Long before adopting our first comprehensive plan in 1964, we were shaping our future with intention, creating a vibrant and welcoming community for both residents and visitors. Today, we continue that legacy with Stowe 2050, a municipal plan designed to manage responsible growth, protect our irreplaceable natural and cultural resources, and sustain a thriving community and local economy. Grounded in decades of planning and community engagement, this Plan reflects our shared vision and commitment to preserving the unique character and values that make Stowe a special place to visit and to call home.

While the Selectboard is responsible for reviewing and adopting municipal plans, the Planning Commission leads the preparation process, as outlined in the Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act (24 V.S.A. Chapter 117). Since our first 'Plan of Development' in 1964, covering both the Town and Village of Stowe, we have continuously reviewed, amended, updated, and adopted a municipal plan which reflects our evolving community priorities and state requirements.



This municipal plan, Stowe 2050, is the Town's guiding policy document for land use, growth, and community development over the next eight years and beyond. It provides a roadmap for how we grow, evolve, and thrive while preserving what makes Stowe special. The Plan reflects on our history, evaluates current conditions, and sets forth a shared vision rooted in the community's core values. Through shared goals and action priorities, the Plan provides a framework for fostering a sustainable and resilient community, while meeting the requirements of 24 V.S.A. §4382.

Purpose of the Stowe Town Plan – Plan Administration

How to Use This Plan – Stowe 2050

Stowe 2050 guides elected and appointed officials, boards and commissions, administration, and municipal staff, in shaping decisions on governance, budgeting, capital planning, and future land use regulations. Its purpose, however, extends beyond municipal government. It is a resource for the entire community. Whether you are a resident, business owner, developer, visitor, or other stakeholder, the plan offers insight into our community identity and shared vision for the future. By building a common understanding of our shared goals, we can work together to shape a future that reflects our collective vision and values.

How the Plan is Used

- Serves as a tool to help the Selectboard identify funding priorities and address community needs
- Provides a framework for intentional, well-planned growth and community development
- Guides decision-making during the development review process
- Establishes a foundation for future amendments to our land use regulations
- Serves as a policy document and standard for review under local, regional and state regulatory proceedings (including Act 250 and Section 248 & 248a reviews)
- Serves as a tool for identifying and recommending further studies on priority issues

- Acts as a resource for understanding our community identity, values, and vision for the future

As our community continues to grow and evolve, the Plan must adapt as well. While our shared vision and community values are unlikely to change significantly over the eight-year planning period, periodic reviews are essential. These reviews will help assess progress, identify emerging challenges, and determine whether new strategies or adjustments are needed to keep us on course toward our long-term vision.

Why Does the Plan Matter?

- **For Residents:** It shapes the future of Stowe, outlining where housing, infrastructure, parks, trails, and community facilities are needed and should be located.
- **For Business & Property Owners:** It sets the stage for responsible growth, providing land use and planning recommendations, and development policies that help businesses and properties thrive, and shape development (and redevelopment) proposals - ensuring that private investments align with our community values.
- **For Municipal Leaders:** It's a powerful tool for shaping budgets, capital improvements, and guiding decisions on development, policies, programs, and essential municipal services to keep our community strong.

In Vermont, municipal plans primarily serve as guidance documents rather than regulatory tools. However, they do play a crucial role in Act 250 and Section 248 & 248a reviews, particularly in assessing whether a proposed development project aligns with local planning goals and policies. When a plan includes clearly written community standards on land use, density, environmental protection, etc., these standards are applied to evaluate whether a project conforms with the municipal plan. A well-crafted municipal plan with clearly articulated community standards strengthens the Town's ability to guide growth and development in alignment with our long-term vision. Additionally, having a municipal plan is a prerequisite for adopting land use regulations, capital improvement programs, and impact fees, as well as for maintaining eligibility for state grant programs.

The primary regulatory mechanism for effectuating the goals and policies within this Plan is through the administration and enforcement of our land use regulations, i.e., zoning and subdivision regulations. Chapter 6 of this plan outlines the regulatory changes necessary to implement our shared vision and goals.

This Plan also includes an Enhanced Energy Plan designed to help shape our clean energy future while giving the community a stronger and more influential voice in the state's energy siting process under Section 248. With an adopted Enhanced Energy Plan, the Town is granted "substantial deference" in Public Utility Commission proceedings, meaning that the energy policies and action items outlined in this Plan carry greater weight when the Public Utility Commission reviews proposals for solar and wind facilities, and energy generation projects. This ensures that our local values, land use priorities, and long-term vision are more meaningfully considered in decisions about where and how energy projects are developed within our town.

Regional Coordination and Neighboring Communities

Stowe shares its borders with six towns and two counties, but its mountainous terrain and distinct transportation corridors naturally limit interaction with most neighboring communities. Our strongest connections are to the north with Morristown and other Lamoille County towns and to the south with Waterbury. As a result, our planning efforts and regional coordination have primarily focused in these two directions.

To ensure local planning aligns with regional goals, the Town actively collaborates with the Lamoille County Planning Commission (LCPC). This partnership provides a broader regional perspective and serves as a platform for addressing shared challenges such as affordable housing, economic development, emergency management, Route 100 access, and natural resource protection. When developing the policies and action priorities in this plan, careful consideration was given to both the Lamoille County Regional Plan and the municipal plans of surrounding towns to ensure compatibility. This Plan is intentionally designed to align both with the Lamoille County Regional Plan and the plans of

neighboring municipalities, reinforcing a coordinated, sustainable approach to municipal and regional planning.

Relationship with Other Plans and Studies

Over the course of the last ten years, the Town and other community partners have conducted a number of planning-related activities, all of which involved many public meetings. These activities have been integral to our planning process and include:

- Mayo Farm Conservation Easement & Management Plan (2013)
- Mountain Road Village Roadway Master Plan (2018)
- Update of the Stowe Town Plan /Enhanced Energy Plan (2018)
- Bylaw Modernization Grant Project (2022)
- Lamoille County/Hardwick Regional Housing Needs Assessment (2024)
- Stowe Traffic & Mobility Plan (2024)
- Memorial Park Master Plan (2024)
- Sterling Forest Management Plan (2025)
- Town of Stowe Housing Needs Assessment (2025)
- Cady Hill Forest Management Plan (2025)
- Moscow Rec Field Management Plan (2025)

This Plan may also help shape future planning efforts, including community discussions around the renewal, modification, and/or elimination of the Mayo Farm conservation easement.

Stowe 2050 – A Community Driven Vision

In 2024, the Town partnered with Community Workshop LLC to design a comprehensive public outreach program, ensuring broad participation and diverse perspectives. The Planning Commission adopted the project name "Stowe 2050" to inspire the community to envision the town's future over the next twenty-five years and beyond.

Public engagement was at the heart of Stowe 2050, celebrating our town's unique character while identifying key trends, community needs, and aspirations. Hundreds of residents, business owners, visitors, and elected officials shared their insights through meetings, events, listening sessions, and surveys, shaping a collective vision for Stowe's future. This input is reflected in the community's shared vision and serves as the foundation of this plan.

The engagement process unfolded in four key phases, each providing opportunities for the community to contribute feedback and help shape the plan.



Over the course of this process, more than 7,000 unique comments, stories, opinions, visions, testimonies, hopes, and experiences were shared. Through this input, municipal staff and the Planning Commission gained valuable insights into both challenges and opportunities facing our community. The feedback gathered helped define a new vision, community values, and action priorities, ultimately shaping a plan that fosters a more resilient, inclusive, and forward-thinking future for Stowe.

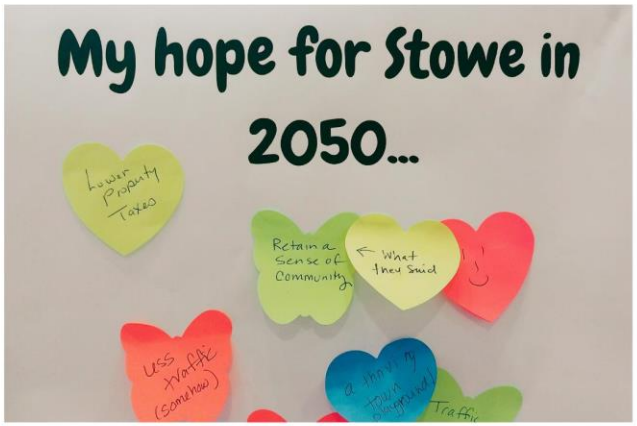




Chapter 2

Our Community Vision & Values



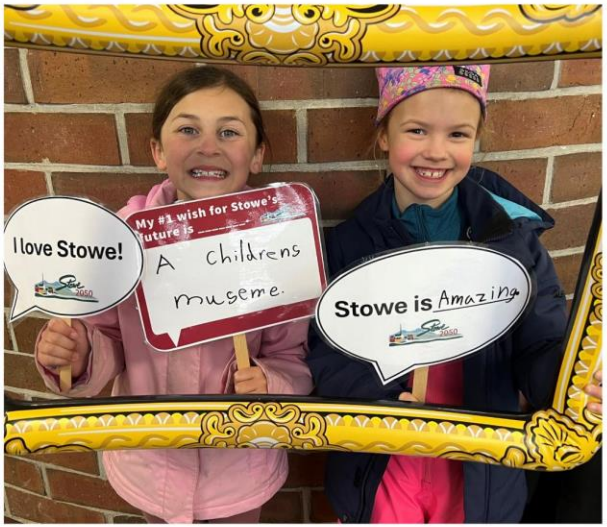

My hope for Stowe in 2050...
Lower Property Taxes
Retain a Sense of Community
What they said
Less Traffic (Somehow)
Traffic


Moscow


What makes Stowe uniquely "Stowe?"
The People
I want ____ in Stowe.
Affordable workforce housing.
Let's improve ____ in Stowe.
parks + rec- a full town park with a playground + pool.
My #1 wish for Stowe is ____
My Stowe is
VERY
Imagine Stowe in 2050. What do you see?
Continued focus on preserving open space & supporting local small businesses
What three words best describe Stowe?
TRANQUILITY
RELAXING
NATURE
I love ____ about Stowe.
Free paperback
My #1 wish for Stowe is ____
traffic!




Please share your thoughts and comments


I love Stowe!
My #1 wish for Stowe's future is ____
A childrens museme.
Stowe is Amazing


ONE WAY
STOP


I ♥ Stowe!
M♥scow

Our Community Vision, Identity, Values & Action Priorities

From our forested hillsides and scenic views of Mount Mansfield to our conserved farms, forests, and sparkling rivers, the natural beauty of our community is treasured by all. Beyond these scenic landscapes, our vibrant community, thriving local economy, and historic character make Stowe truly unique. Our historic downtown and lower village center, with their preserved architecture and beloved Main Street, reflect our heritage and offer a tangible connection to our past. Equally important are the people of Stowe, residents who value their shared sense of place and commitment to preserving Stowe's authentic community identity.

Stowe 2050 lays out a long-term vision for the community, looking ahead twenty-five years to 2050. It emphasizes preserving our community identity, values, and treasured assets while enhancing the quality of life for all residents. Grounded in what the community values most, the Plan guides future decision-making to ensure that the town's growth and development reflect our shared goals and collective vision for the future.

Supplemented by ten action priorities, the Plan articulates the aspirations for what we hope Stowe will become as it grows and evolves. The action priorities stem from input and community discussions throughout the planning and engagement process. Community members contributed their perspectives through listening sessions, workshops, and an online survey. These action priorities reflect that collective input and outline a path for us to leverage our unique assets and opportunities, fostering a healthy, thriving, engaged and connected community.

The ten action priorities strive to balance the diverse needs of our community by strengthening and diversifying our economy, housing options, recreational opportunities, and transportation systems, all while safeguarding our irreplaceable natural, historic, and cultural resources and honoring our town's rich history. The Plan's implementation element is closely aligned with these action priorities and is designed to link our community values to specific steps forward. It guides decision-making, investment, and policy development over time, helping turn our shared vision into reality.

In recent years, our community has experienced increased development pressures, bringing both opportunities and challenges. As we continue to evolve and grow, we have a unique chance to shape our future in a way that reflects our shared values and vision. By embracing smart growth principles and responsible, managed growth, we can expand housing options, strengthen our economy, improve traffic flow, and protect our natural beauty, all while preserving the special character that makes Stowe such a remarkable place to live, work, and visit. By proactively planning for our future, we can create lasting solutions that ensure we remain a vibrant, welcoming community for year-round residents, with excellent schools, essential services, and strong neighborly connections.



This Plan was designed to guide the Selectboard, municipal leaders, and the entire community, equipping us with the tools to navigate challenges and to address our most pressing issues thoughtfully and effectively. While implementing the action priorities outlined in this Plan will require making difficult decisions, we can move toward our shared vision with collaboration, bold action, and a commitment from all of us. Together, we can build on our strengths, embrace change, and ensure Stowe continues to grow and thrive in ways that reflect the community's aspirations and shared values.

Our Community Identity & Values

Uncommon Beauty, Community, and Variety

Stowe is a place of breathtaking natural beauty, rich history and character, world-class outdoor recreation, friendly and welcoming people, and a remarkable array of quality shops, restaurants, events and activities. From the peak of Mount Mansfield to the sidewalks of Main Street, Stowe offers something for everyone: endless places to relax, explore, connect, unwind, and grow. We value each of Stowe's many assets, but it's the unique combination of so many beloved treasures and traditions in one small town that truly make Stowe a one-of-a-kind home for residents and visitors alike.



Strong, Authentic Community and Small Town Feel

We value Stowe's **close, neighborly community;**

culture of **local pride and involvement;**

strong **civic leadership and collaboration**;

and traditional **small town character**.



Healthy, Beautiful Environment and Outdoor Access

We value Stowe's stunning **scenic landscapes**;

our **healthy mountains, rivers, and forests**;

our **rural lands and working farms**;

and our world class **outdoor recreation**.



Quality of Life and Opportunities for All

We value Stowe's **thriving and unique local economy**;

many **quality businesses and offerings**;

and **high-quality town and community services**, facilities, amenities, and infrastructure.



Balanced, Responsible, and Resilient Growth

We value Stowe's **distinctive sense of place**;

strong appeal for residents, visitors, and businesses;

and **thoughtful blend of tradition, progress, and growth**.

Our Vision and Action Priorities

Stewardship, Balance and Opportunity

We envision a future that protects and expands opportunities for all who call Stowe home or come to experience its charm. We aim to maintain the remarkable offerings and assets that set Stowe apart, while we become a more balanced, accessible, diverse, and inclusive community. Our vision includes priorities to enhance each of our community values.




I love ____ about Stowe.
the community
What makes Stowe uniquely "Stowe?"
The People
I want ____ in Stowe.
Affordable workforce housing.
My #1 wish for Stowe is ____.
BETTER PICKLEBALL COURTS
Stowe will thrive in 2050 if ____.
We have full time people + affordable housing
I want ____ in Stowe.
Less tourist, more farms, cleaner rivers, Lower taxes, and Less division
Let's improve ____ in Stowe.
parks + rec - a full town park with a playground + pool.
My #1 wish for Stowe is ____.
That it doesn't become too Exclusive (i.e. NOT Jackson Hole/Aspen) and lose its Sole
My Stowe is ____.
VERY CROWDED!
My best idea for making Stowe better is ____.
Lower My Property Taxes please!
What makes Stowe uniquely "Stowe?"
great community
Imagine Stowe in 2050. What do you see?
Continued focus on preserving Open Space & supporting local small businesses
What three words best describe Stowe?
TRANQUILITY RELAXING NATURE
My #1 wish for Stowe is ____.
new schools
My six-word Stowe story is ...
visited here ... and I never left!
My #1 wish for Stowe is ____.
Keep it Quintessential Stowe
I love ____ about
Free paperboat + town fi. Block parties
My #1 wish for Stowe is ____.
traffic ! Please slow down
I love ____ about Sto
Opportunities, activities, as a person with disabilifi would love sidewalk so could visit neighbors, get my mai safely
Stowe will thrive in 2050 if ____.
A DIVERSITY OF PEOPLE CAN LIVE HERE.



Chapter 3

Our Local Governance






MUNICIPAL
OFFICES
TOWN OF
Stowe
TOWN HALL
THEATRE
Performance Info - 802-253-3961 or
stowetheatre.com






Stowe
HIGH SCHOOL







Our Local Governance

Municipal governments in Vermont play a special and important role in the everyday lives of residents and visitors by providing essential services, maintaining public infrastructure, and helping to shape the character and future of the community. Municipal governments are also responsible for providing a wide range of services, including road maintenance, emergency response, land use planning, water and sewer systems, recreation, public health and safety, elections, collecting property taxes, and managing budgets. While our local schools are a valued part of our community and play an important role in shaping who we are, the municipal government supports and partners with them but does not operate our schools. Under Vermont law, public education is the responsibility of independent school districts. Although school district boundaries often align with municipal boundaries and residents vote on both municipal and school district matters, decisions about education governance, budgeting, and taxation are made separately from municipal government.

What makes municipal government in Vermont truly unique is the strong tradition of local control and direct citizen participation. Through Town Meeting, elected boards, and appointed volunteer committees, residents have meaningful opportunities to influence local policy and decisions. This local involvement promotes participation, responsiveness, and a strong sense of shared community responsibility. The Town of Stowe depends on the dedication of over ninety elected and appointed volunteers to support local services and guide local governance. Throughout the community engagement process to prepare this Plan, residents consistently expressed appreciation for the high-quality services, facilities, and infrastructure that support our exceptional quality of life. From elected and appointed officials to the Town Manager, municipal staff, and engaged community members, every member of the community plays a part in keeping our town a vibrant, welcoming, and resilient place to live and visit. This chapter outlines the structure and financing of our municipal government and our individual and collective responsibilities we all carry in shaping our community's future.

Municipal Government – Town of Stowe

After over a century as separate entities, the Town and Village of Stowe merged in 1996 following voter approval, dissolving the Village as a distinct legal and geographic municipal corporation. Today, the Town of Stowe provides a full range of municipal services, including police, fire, emergency, and rescue services, road maintenance, recreation programs, library services, and water and sanitary services (within designated areas).



The municipal offices are located in the Akeley Memorial Building at 67 Main Street. Photo credit: Town of Stowe

The five-member elected Selectboard serves as the legislative body of the Town. Its responsibilities include enacting ordinances, adopting policies to guide local government administration, authorizing all Town expenditures, approving the general fund budget for voter consideration at Town Meeting, and setting the tax rate. The Selectboard serves as the Water and Sewer Commissions, Liquor Commission, and Cannabis Control Commission, and also appoints the Town Manager and members of various municipal boards and commissions. The Selectboard accepts public infrastructure and classifies town highways.

On November 6, 2006, Stowe voters adopted the Council-Manager form of government, replacing the former Selectboard–Town Meeting structure. This transition was intended to strengthen professional and efficient local governance by separating administrative duties from policy-making responsibilities. Under the new system, the Selectboard continues to serve as the Town's legislative body, responsible for setting policy, approving budgets, enacting local laws, and guiding long-term planning and community priorities. The Town Manager, by contrast, oversees the day-to-day operations of municipal government, hires and manages staff (excluding the Stowe Electric Department), prepares and administers the annual budget, enforces ordinances, advises the Selectboard, and ensures delivery of public services.

Appointed by the Selectboard, the Town Manager acts as the Town's Chief Executive Officer and is selected based on executive, administrative, and professional qualifications rather than political affiliation. The Manager may not hold or seek elective office in Stowe, engage in political party activities, or be employed by the Town in any capacity other than Town Manager. This form of government creates a clear division of responsibilities-administration is handled by the Town Manager, while the Selectboard focuses on policy - resulting in a more streamlined and accountable system.

Additional elected municipal positions include:

Town Moderator. Elected to serve a one-year term, the Town Moderator is the municipal official who presides over Annual Town Meeting, and in some cases, other special Town meetings.

Listers. Consisting of three members, the Board of Listers direct and review the work of the Town Appraiser and is responsible for the Town's Grand List of approximately 4,500 parcels. The Board also hears grievance hearings.

Justices of the Peace (JPs). JPs have a variety of responsibilities, primarily related to elections, tax appeals, marriages, administering oaths, and acting as magistrates. JPs are also members of the Board of Civil Authority (BCA), which plays a crucial role in local elections and tax assessments. At Town Meeting 2026, voters approved increasing the number of JPs to fifteen in response to recent population growth and to help meet the increasingly complex and time-consuming responsibilities.

In addition to elected positions, residents can actively contribute to their community by serving on municipal boards or commissions. Appointed by the Selectboard, municipal boards and commissions play an important role in local governance, serving in both advisory and quasi-judicial capacities. While the Development Review Board serves in an independent quasi-judicial role, many of the other boards and commissions study specific policy areas that affect the community and make recommendations to the Selectboard. For example, the Recreation Commission might advise on recreation programs and facilities, while the Conservation Commission might advise on the management of town-owned conserved properties.

All municipal boards and commissions are supported by a municipal staff person for the purposes of warning the meeting and taking minutes, and to professionally advise the board in their decision-making and assist them with gathering data and information. The Town Manager is an ex-officio member of all municipal boards and commissions but does not vote.

Arts & Culture Council (10 members). The Arts & Culture Council promotes Stowe as an arts and culture destination to enhance quality of life and support economic development. The Council's primary objectives include: representing and advocating for the needs of arts and culture nonprofit and for-profit organizations in Stowe; collaborating with the public, schools, municipality, and business community to advance their goals through arts and cultural activities; exploring and

promoting ways to address cultural, social, and environmental issues through arts education and integration; advising on and participating in the integration of arts and culture in town planning decisions; and encouraging a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion across all sectors of the community.

Cemetery Commission (7 members). The Cemetery Commission is responsible for overseeing the Town's seven cemeteries, administrating cemetery regulations, maintaining records, and planning for future cemetery needs.

Conservation Commission (7 members). The Conservation Commission advises the Selectboard and Planning Commission on the Town's natural resources and is responsible for stewarding and managing town-owned conserved properties.

Development Review Board (DRB) (7 members + Alternates). The DRB is a quasi-judicial body charged with administering the Town's zoning bylaws and subdivision regulations. The DRB also hears appeals of Zoning Administrator decisions.

Energy Committee (7 members). The Energy Committee advises the Selectboard, Planning Commission, and Town Manager on energy policy and works to promote energy efficiency, conservation, renewable energy, and emissions reduction. It engages residents, businesses, and visitors through education and outreach, raises awareness of energy issues, and builds support for sustainable practices.

Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) (5-9 members). The HPC performs design review for exterior alterations, demolition, and relocation of historic buildings and for any development within the Stowe Historic Overlay District (SHOD). The HPC also advises the Selectboard on matters involving historic preservation and the treatment of municipally owned historic properties.

Library Trustees (7 members). The Library Board of Trustees is responsible for assessing library needs for the community, developing a plan of service, and evaluating library performance. The Board is the governing body of the library, carrying full responsibility for general policymaking and for securing funds to implement adopted policies.

Planning Commission (7 members + 2 non-voting members). The Planning Commission is advisory to the Selectboard and is responsible for both long-range planning functions and developing land use regulations. Responsibilities include preparing the Town Plan, drafting land use and development regulations, and offering policy recommendations on matters related to balancing growth and development and other town needs.

Recreation Commission (8 members). The Recreation Commission is advisory to the Selectboard and recommends facility development and use of the Town's recreational facilities including the Stowe Arena, Village and Moscow ball fields, Recreation Path and Quiet Path, David Gale Center, Memorial Park, and Mayo Fields.

Housing Task Force (8 members). The Housing Task Force is an advisory body charged with collecting data and making recommendations to the Selectboard and Planning Commission on how to better support year-round residential housing at more affordable price points. Unless extended or made permanent, the Housing Task Force is set to expire on June 30, 2026.

Stowe Electric Utility Commission (3 members). Appointed by the Selectboard, the Stowe Electric Utility Commission is responsible for hiring the Stowe Electric Department General Manager, subject to a Selectboard veto, and provides policy guidance for the department.

Other appointments by the Selectboard include:

- Lamoille Regional Solid Waste Management District Supervisor
- Health Officer & Deputy Health Officer
- Constable
- Agent to Convey Real Estate
- Fence Viewers
- Tree Warden
- Town Fire Warden
- Appraiser for the Board of Listers
- LCPC Representatives
- LCPC Transportation Advisory Committee
- Lamoille FiberNet CUD Representative

Recognizing the unique insights and energy that young people bring to the community, many municipal boards and commissions include student representatives. These positions not only allow students to share fresh perspectives on local issues but also provide valuable opportunities to learn about the roles and responsibilities of municipal government, fostering civic engagement and a lasting interest in public service.

Municipal Departments

Municipal departments and employees are essential to the safety, well-being, and quality of life in Stowe. They provide important municipal services, from maintaining roads and infrastructure to delivering emergency response, water and sewer services, recreation, and public health and safety, that keep our community running smoothly for both residents and visitors.

The Town of Stowe operates twelve municipal departments, each responsible for key essential services. The Town employs seventy-four full-time staff, sixty-three part-time employees (including police, fire, EMS, and Mountain Rescue), and twenty seasonal workers in parks and summer programs, making the municipality a significant local employer.

The majority of the administrative offices of municipal government are located in the Town Offices in the Akeley Memorial Building on Main Street. This prominent historic brick building was constructed in 1902 as a soldier's memorial, and in the past housed the post office, a jail, the Union Bank, and the Stowe Free Library. Today, it is home to the Town Manager's Office, Town Clerk, Finance Department, Planning & Zoning Department, Human Resources, Assessor's Office, Information Technology, and the Public Works Department. The Stowe Community Theatre is also located on the second floor of the Akeley Memorial Building.

Town Manager's Office/Administration. The Town Manager is the Chief Executive Officer of the Town and is responsible for the day-to-day administration of municipal government. Since 1986 the Selectboard's office has had at least two full-time municipal staff, including the Town Administrator or Town Manager and an Executive Assistant or the Assistant Town Manager.

Town Clerk & Treasurer. The Town Clerk & Treasurer Office is responsible for receiving and recording of all land and vital records, administering elections, receiving the payment of taxes and fees, the issuance of certified copies of birth, death and marriage certificates, and the issuance of civil marriage licenses and dog licenses. In addition to receiving, recording and issuing these documents, this office is responsible for the maintenance, indexing, and storage of these records as required by State law.

Assessor's Office. The Assessor's Office is responsible for establishing property values of all real property within the municipality. The department is responsible for the administration of all laws and regulations regarding property tax assessments.

Public Works Department. The Public Works Department is responsible for the Highway, Sewer and Water Departments, the development and implementation of capital projects, and providing technical assistance to other departments.

Human Resources Department. The Human Resources (HR) Department is responsible for assisting the Town Manager and department heads with employee recruitment, onboarding, counselling, corrective action, training, and termination. HR also assists with benefits and assists the Town Manager with labor negotiations.

Information Technology (IT). The IT Department is responsible for managing technology infrastructure and services and advancing associated capital projects. The department handles everything from computer networks and hardware to software applications and cybersecurity.

Planning & Zoning Department. The Planning & Zoning Department manages comprehensive planning and land use permitting. The department processes development applications, issues zoning permits, guides applicants through the development review process, coordinates e911 addressing, and enforces local zoning and subdivision regulations. It also supports long-range planning efforts related to housing, transportation, conservation, and historic preservation.

Finance Department. The Finance Department supports all departments with the processing of payments for services and goods with vendors, paychecks for all Town employees, monthly financial reporting of expenditures and revenues, and the development of yearly budgets and the benefit administration for all employees. The department also assists the Town Manager with labor negotiations.

Other municipal departments are located at various sites throughout town, including:

Electric Department. An enterprise division of the Town, the Electric Department delivers clean and reliable energy to local customers. In addition to power services, the department manages billing for the Water and Sewer Departments.

Fire & Rescue Department. Formed through the merger of the Fire and EMS departments in 2024, the Fire & Rescue Department is dedicated to protecting life, property, and the environment through prevention, education, and emergency services. The department also provides mutual aid support to surrounding communities when needed.

Stowe Free Library. The Stowe Free Library is a hub for knowledge, discovery, and community engagement. Beyond lending books, it offers access to online resources, computers, internet, and a wide variety of community programs. Committed to lifelong learning and free access to information, the library fosters curiosity and connection for all.

Parks & Recreation Department. Comprised of the Parks Division, Stowe Arena, and the David Gale Recreation Center, the Parks & Recreation Department maintains recreational facilities and offers a broad range of programs and events. Its mission is to enhance community well-being through accessible leisure opportunities.

Police Department. The Police Department provides essential public safety services, including patrol, investigation, and traffic enforcement. Officers respond to emergencies, maintain order during special events, and serve as the primary law enforcement presence for residents and visitors alike.

Public Works – Sewer Department. An enterprise division of the Town, the Sewer Department ensures safe and efficient wastewater management for the community and operates, maintains, and repairs the municipal wastewater treatment plant and its 19-mile collection system, which includes three sanitary sewer pump stations.

Public Works – Water Department. An enterprise division of the Town, the Water Department oversees the operation, maintenance, and repair of the municipal water system, which includes two well sources, treatment works averaging 465,000 gallons daily, nine storage tanks, eleven pump stations, and eighteen miles of distribution lines. The department also supports five connected water systems with varying operational responsibilities.

Public Works – Highway Department. The Highway Department is responsible for maintaining and repairing nearly 100 miles of roads, twenty-four bridges, over 600 culverts, sidewalks, and municipal parking areas. Department staff also support a range of other essential municipal operations.

Stowe Mountain Rescue. Stowe Mountain Rescue provides highly specialized technical rescue services in Stowe and surrounding areas. Their expertise includes backcountry rescue, swift water and flood response, and wilderness search operations.

Financing Municipal Government

Vermont is a Dillon's Rule state, meaning local municipal governments only have the powers expressly granted to them by the state legislature. This legal framework limits the authorities of municipalities, particularly in matters such as taxation and zoning. Essentially, local municipal governments are limited to what the state explicitly allows them to do.

Municipal governments in Vermont primarily fund their General Fund operations through property taxes, local option taxes, and user fees. The property tax is the most significant revenue source, supporting general government services, as well as public schools through the statewide education funding system. Municipalities may also generate revenue through user fees to support water, sewer, and electric utilities.

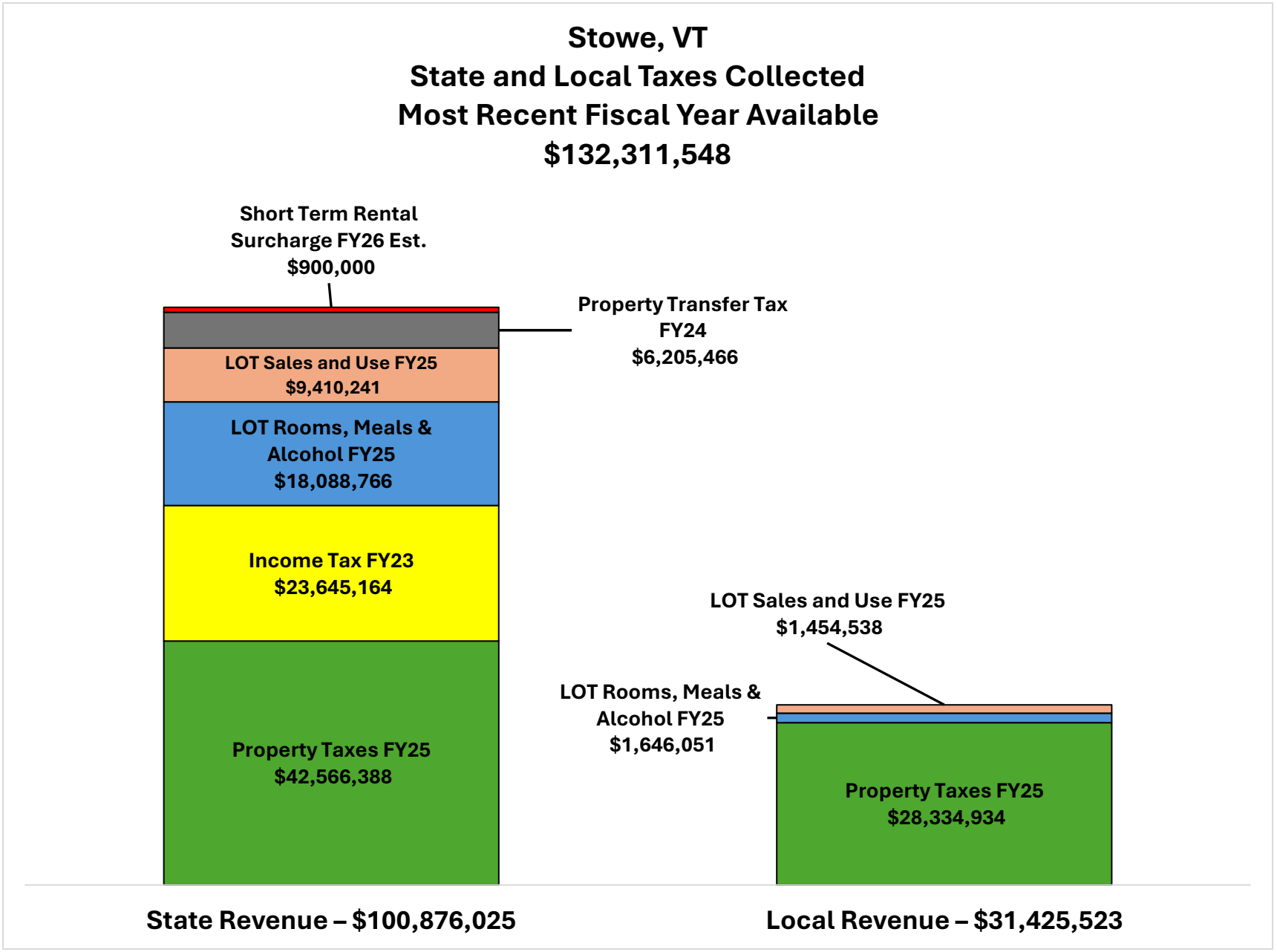


Figure1: Illustrates the portions of state and local taxes collected and those retained by the State of Vermont and the Town.

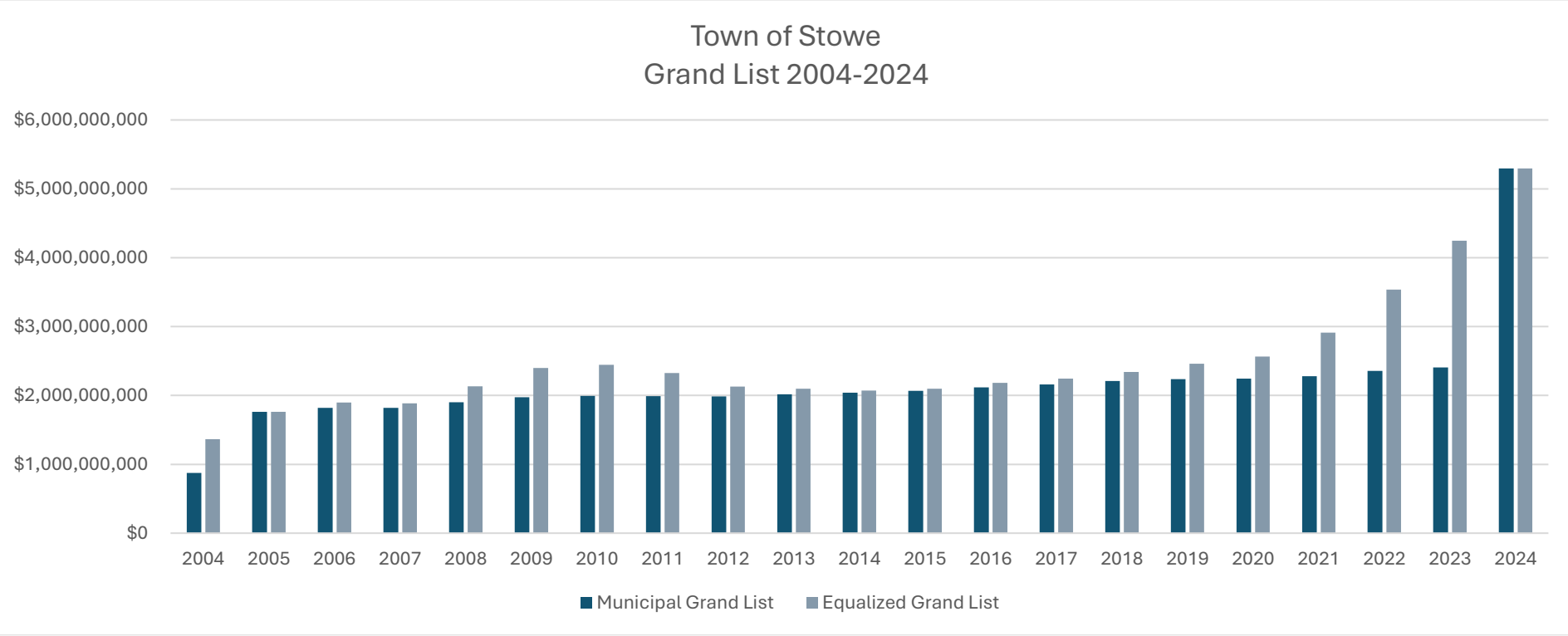


Figure 2: Municipal Grand List, compared with the Equalized Grand List. The Equalized Grand List is the estimated fair market value of all taxable property in a town, calculated by the state to make property values comparable across towns.

In Vermont, property tax bills are made up of two main components:

1. Municipal taxes
2. State education taxes

While they appear together on the same bill, they serve different purposes and are governed by separate processes. Municipal taxes are levied by the Town to fund local services such as road maintenance, police, fire and rescue, recreation, libraries, and general government operations. Each municipality sets its own municipal tax rate based on its annual budget, which is approved by voters via Australian Ballot on Town Meeting Day – annually held on the first Tuesday of March.

Under the Town Charter, the Town Manager is responsible for preparing the annual municipal budget and delivering the proposed budget to the Selectboard for consideration before being advanced to the voters for approval. In collaboration with department heads, the Town Manager evaluates operational needs, reviews expenditures, and drafts a budget for the upcoming fiscal year, which begins on July 1st. The proposed budget is then presented to the Selectboard, which reviews, revises, and ultimately approves the budget to be presented to voters at Town Meeting. Upon voter approval, the adopted municipal budget determines the amount to be raised in taxes. The Selectboard applies this to the Grand List to set the municipal tax rate.

The education portion of the property tax funds Vermont's public schools and is governed by the state's education funding system. The education tax rate is set by the state each year and varies by town depending on local school spending and student enrollment. There are separate homestead and non-homestead education tax rates:

- Homestead rate applies to properties where the property owner has declared it to be their primary residence which they occupy for at least six months of the year.
- Non-homestead rate applies to any taxable property without a homestead declaration.

Homeowners who qualify based on income may receive a property tax credit for their homestead property, which reduces the amount owed on the education portion of the bill.

The Town of Stowe issues quarterly tax bills that combine:

- The municipal tax rate, set locally.
- The education tax rate, set by the state.

Both are applied to the property's assessed value, resulting in a single bill for the taxpayer.

Town	FY25	FY15	% Increase	$ Increase
Stowe	$41,598,457	$19,479,912	114%	$22,118,545
Ludlow	$22,787,287	$15,926,789	43%	$6,860,498
Killington	$16,778,033	$8,885,669	89%	$7,892,364
Dover	$16,680,242	$11,127,038	50%	$5,553,204
Williston	$16,564,958	$3,232,106	413%	$13,332,852
Stratton	$14,342,385	$11,477,312	25%	$2,865,073
Woodstock	$12,404,986	$6,494,108	91%	$5,910,878
Warren	$11,762,237	$6,103,886	93%	$5,658,351
Winhall	$10,384,837	$8,280,241	25%	$2,104,596
South Burlington	$10,123,792	$3,789,932	167%	$6,333,860

Figure 3: The top ten municipalities in the state contributing to the education fund in FY 2025 and the change since FY 2015.

Stowe has long benefited from a relatively strong and stable local tax base, supported by growth in the Grand List, and a history of public and private investment in the community. In 2024, the Town's equalized municipal Grand List was $ 5,025,858,000, which ranked it third in the State after Burlington and South Burlington.

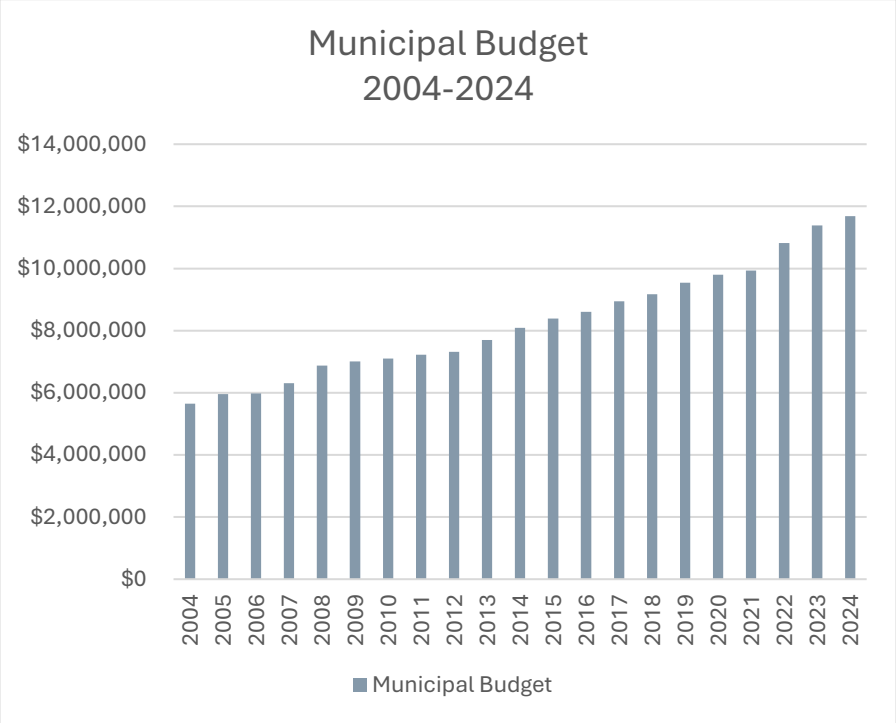


Figure 4: Overall municipal budget from 2004-2024

Because of the high Grand List and low number of weighted students, Stowe taxpayers contribute the largest net payment to the state education fund of any municipality in Vermont. Figure 3 shows the top ten municipalities in the state contributing to the education fund in FY 2025 and the change since FY 2015. The net payment represents the Town's education property tax liability to the State Treasury, after subtracting the property taxes required to fund the local school budget. In FY 2025, 77 out of 256 towns in Vermont contributed more property taxes to the state education fund than they received.

Stowe had a Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) ratio in FY'25 of 105.77. The CLA measures how closely local property assessments match market values and is used to ensure fairness in education property taxation. The following are the FY' 2025 property tax rates:

FY'2025 Property Tax Rates (p/$100)	
Town General Fund Tax	$0.2198
State and Local Education Taxes	$1.1170
Voter Approved Tax Exemptions	$0.0022
Total Homestead Tax Rate	**$1.3390**

Town General Fund Tax	$0.2198
State and Local Education Taxes	$1.1159
Voter Approved Tax Exemptions	$0.0022
Total Non-Homestead Tax Rate	**$1.3379**

Local Option Tax

Local Option Tax (LOT) is a way for municipalities in Vermont to raise additional revenue. A municipality may vote to levy the following 1% local option taxes in addition to state business taxes.

- Local Option Sales Tax: 6% sales tax + 1% = 7% total tax
- Local Option Meals Tax: 9% meals tax + 1% = 10% total tax
- Local Option Alcoholic Beverage Tax: 10% alcohol tax + 1% = 11% total tax
- Local Option Rooms Tax: 9% rooms tax + 1% = 10% total tax

The ability for the Town to collect a tax of this nature was borne out of the State's Act 60, the Equal Educational Opportunity Act, enacted in June 1997. In the process of creating statewide education funding, the state recognized the funding formula, which is primarily derived from property taxes, was going to have a disproportionate impact on some Vermont communities. As a result, they permitted these communities, of which Stowe is one, to collect revenues from an additional 1% tax on rooms, meals, and alcohol. The Town historically received 70% of the 1% collected (minus administrative fees assessed by the State), with the other 30% being directed to the state PILOT fund. However, beginning October 1, 2025, municipalities now retain 75% of the 1% collected.

Additionally, the State permitted the same group of municipalities to collect an additional 1% Local Option Sales and Use Tax. At the March 2006 Annual Town Meeting, voters adopted a 1% Local Options Tax on rooms, meals, and alcoholic beverages and at the Town Meeting in March 2023, voters approved the collection of the additional 1% Local Option Sales and Use Tax to be used to support the General Fund.

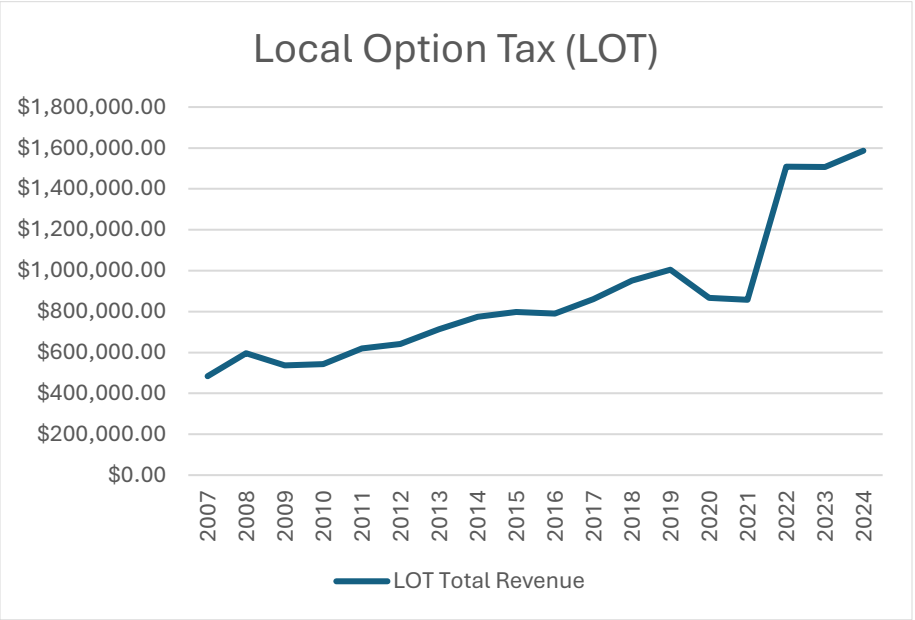


Figure 5: Local Option Tax Revues from 2007-2024.

Through Selectboard policy, monies received from ~~sales,~~ rooms, meals, and alcohol taxes are held in the General Fund Capital Reserve Fund and allocated to capital spending unless the voters have otherwise earmarked the money. Except for vehicles, the Capital Reserve Fund is used to acquire or construct large capital facilities or assets, other than those accounted for in enterprise or trust funds. The Capital Fund Policy outlines the adopted local process for capital planning.

Figure 5 shows the steady increase in Local Option Tax revenue from $483,700 in 2007 to $1,586,501 in 2024. At the 2013 Annual Town Meeting, voters approved a measure to earmark $350,000 per year from the LOT revenue to go towards the bond payment for the Stowe Arena. The bond payment for the Stowe Arena will be paid off in FY'34. Additionally, an estimated $201,327 is applied for the annual debt

payment for the overhead utility line project. Otherwise, LOT revenue is held in the Capital Reserve Fund and is used for capital projects. In 2024, the Capital Reserve Fund had $1,859,554 of unallocated capital reserves. Each year, the Selectboard considers proposed and recommended capital projects as part of the municipal budget process.

On Town Meeting Day 2026, voters approved asking the Vermont Legislature to amend the Charter to increase the sales, rooms, meals, and alcohol LOT tax to 2%. If approved by the Legislature, an additional 1% on the local option sales tax would generate approximately an additional ±$1.7 million of local revenue. An additional 1% on the meals, rooms, and alcohol local option tax would generate approximately an additional ±$1.8 million of local revenue.

Equipment Reserve Fund

In 2008, the town voted to establish an equipment reserve fund, so that each new piece of equipment would not have to be voted on separately at Town Meeting. The purpose of the reserve fund policy to acknowledge the importance of equipment in municipal operations and to plan for its replacement in a financially sustainable manner. Each year the Selectboard considers equipment replacement as part of the general fund budget process.



Photograph of Stowe and Rescue Truck. Photo credit: Town of Stowe.



Chapter 4

Stowe Yesterday: Our Shared Past

Photo Courtesy of Stowe Historical Society

Stowe Yesterday: Our Shared Past

Pre-European Contact

For thousands of years before European settlers arrived, the area now known as Stowe, was inhabited by Indigenous peoples, primarily the Abenaki, part of the larger Algonquin-speaking tribes of the Northeast. The Abenaki people relied on the region's rich natural resources for hunting, fishing, and agriculture and moved seasonally, setting up temporary villages and camps to access different resources throughout the year. The fertile valleys, forests, and rivers provided an abundant environment for the Abenaki, who navigated the area through waterways and trails that would later become part of Vermont's landscape.

Vermont's early history was shaped by the retreat of glaciers from the last Ice Age more than 12,000 years ago. This glacial activity created the valleys, rivers, and mountains that now define our scenic landscape, including Mount Mansfield, Vermont's highest peak. The rich, fertile land and abundant natural resources made the region important for Indigenous peoples and later attracted European settlers to the region. While no known large settlements were established in Stowe before colonial times, the land held great significance for its natural resources, waterways, and biodiversity.

Historic Setting

Until late in the twentieth century, Stowe's development, economic resources and identity were closely connected to the forests of the Worcester Range to the east and Mount Mansfield to the west, as well as to the East and West Branches of the Waterbury River (now called the Little River).

Early Settlement

Chartered in 1763 as part of the New Hampshire land grant, Stow (the original spelling) contained 20,040 acres of mountain slopes, hillsides and two river valleys. Its first inhabitants, the Oliver Luce family, arrived in 1794 from Hartland, Vermont. At the first town meeting, in 1797, highway districts were formed, a penny tax imposed for the maintenance of the town and the majority of the adult men were elected or appointed to various positions in the township. By 1800 the



Photograph courtesy of Stowe Historical Society. Early (pre-1903) view of the village.

population had grown to more than 300 residents and a village that contained a hotel, a school and two shops were formed north of the "Village". South of the Village, surrounding the grist and sawmills, Mill Village (now the Lower Village) grew. It was here that the first post office opened in 1816, the first tannery was built and stores from the North Village moved. Further south along the Waterbury River, Moscow Village grew around the sawmill built in 1822.

Weekly postal service from Waterbury through Stow, Morristown, Hyde Park to Johnson via Gregg Hill from the south and Stagecoach Road to the north increased accessibility to neighboring communities. Other transportation improvements were the construction of Laporte Road (now Route 100) to Morrisville village in 1832 and the Plank Turnpike from Waterbury Center to the southern part of Stowe in 1852.

19th Century Expansion

During the first half of the nineteenth century, Stow's population grew between 300 and 600 people per decade which resulted in increased forest clearing, an increase in the number of district schools to ten, and an increase in the number of saw mills, roads and bridges. The town's

acreage grew to more than 39,000 acres in 1848, when part of the township of Mansfield, which was settled in 1800 by Zimri Luce, Oliver's brother, was annexed to Stow. In 1822, part of the township of Sterling was annexed to Cambridge and in 1855 the rest was divided between the townships of Stow, Morristown and Johnson. Stow's land mass grew to 46,425 acres making it one of the largest townships in Vermont. Neither Mansfield nor Sterling had a civic or commercial center when the annexations took place.

The "Travel Experience" movement that was growing by mid-19th century was not lost on the entrepreneurs of Stow. City people seeking the benefits of mountain air and clean clear water began visiting Stow, staying at the Raymond Hotel or the Mansfield House in the Village and going by coach to Mount Mansfield. In 1851, the "Toll Road" was constructed to the Halfway House with a trail to the summit of Mount Mansfield. A few years later, the trail to the summit was improved and the Tip Top House (Summit House) was constructed.

Between 1861 and 1863 substantial building took place in the Village. The first meetinghouse was moved to its current site (Vermont Ski Museum); the Universalist Church (Community Church) was constructed on the site of the first Meeting House; the Greek Revival Village School (Helen Day Montanari Memorial Library and Art Center building) was built; and the 200-room, four-story Mount Mansfield Hotel and Livery was constructed using local resources. The hotel integrated the Raymond Hotel and the Mansfield House and had a footprint of three blocks by two blocks on the south side of Main Street. Stowe (now with the "e" added) became known as "the Saratoga of Vermont". Theater performances, literature and magazines, music and fashion came to Stowe along with the visitors each summer until 1889 when the hotel burned to the ground, the night after closing for the season. Notables such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Admiral Dewey visited Stowe. The Summit House continued to be popular until the middle of the 20th century when it also burned.

The population of Stowe reached a peak of 2,049 in 1870. It lost about 200 people by 1880 and remained near 1,800 residents until 1903, when it dipped to 1,653. During this time, manufacturing butter tubs, and the packing and shipping of butter, became a major industry in Stowe, along with the manufacturing of other wooden products. By the mid-19th century farmers changed from raising sheep as a cash resource to raising dairy cows. Butter and maple sugar, shipped to Boston, from Waterbury, via the Central Vermont Rail, became a major source of cash. The Mount Mansfield Electric Railroad chartered in 1894, improved the access to the distant markets. Stowe pledged $40,000 of town funds, as did Waterbury, and enlisted Boston investors to build the "Trolley" from the Waterbury Railroad Station to the Depot building next to the Green Mountain Inn. For thirty-five years, passengers and freight were carried on as many as five cars to stop at Waterbury Center. From there, the track lay along the current roadbed of Route 100 to Stowe Lower Village.

During this period, Stowe had as many as twelve mills, the most notable being the P.D. Pike Mill, later the G.M. Culver Mill, and then Stoware, producer of domestic wooden products until 1978; the Smith's Mill and George W. Adams Mill in Moscow (1901-1999); C.E. & F.O Burt Steam Mill in the Village (1891-1963); and the Raymond/H.E. Shaw mill near the site of the Public Safety complex until 1921.

Stowe's third village developed in 1822 with the construction of a dam across the Little River, approximately two miles south of Stowe Village. This small rural factory village was originally known as Smith's Falls and received a second name, Moscow, in 1839. By 1886, when the village established its first post office, Moscow formally replaced Smith's Falls as the village's name. Moscow village grew around its prosperous industrial base, primarily woodworking operations, during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The village developed around two key industrial sites: the Seaver saw and grist mill complex, built in 1822 on the north side of the river, and a woodworking factory constructed in 1889 downstream on the south side of the river, known as the Dillingham Brothers Woodworking Factory and later purchased by George F. Adams.

By the 1894 Centennial Celebration, the south side of Main Street in Stowe Village looked much as it does today. Where the hotel once stood, three Victorian homes were built and one of the hotel's out buildings was moved to become Shaw's General Store. The Depot Building was constructed three years later.

Stowe Village was incorporated in 1896, permitting public financing of service and infrastructure improvements, including the 1904 installation of a municipal water system, the 1911 installation of electric lights, and village sidewalks by 1930. The Stowe Civic Club was active in the efforts to accomplish these efforts. The nineteen district schools were consolidated into one district, a public high school created and housed in the Village School, changing education patterns in Stowe.

Throughout Vermont "Old Home Week" became a call to sons and daughters, who had moved west, to return home and renew connections with their roots and families. In 1903 Stowe's third "Old Home Week" recorded more than 2,000 people attending the dedication of the Akeley Soldier Memorial Building on the north side of Main Street. Leslie Shaw, a Stowe native and Secretary of the U.S. Treasury, was the keynote speaker.

The Stowe Civic Club brought movies to the auditorium in the Memorial Building, published brochures extolling the virtues of Stowe, including the flora, fauna, and the clean air. It also supported the expansion of the 1896 wagon track through Smugglers Notch to accommodate the new form of personal transportation, the automobile. In 1916 Stowe and Cambridge were connected by a gravel road.

20th Century Changes

In 1911, a Swedish immigrant family introduced skiing to Stowe. Climbing Mount Mansfield and descending the Bruce Trail, a logging trail, in informal ski competitions became popular. In 1921, the civic club sponsored the first Winter Carnival with ski jumping, toboggan races, and skating competition. At the second Winter Carnival ice sculpture was added. More than 2,000 competitors and spectators are said to have attended the events.

Shortly after the beginning of the twentieth century, the demand for liquid dairy products replaced that of butter. Butter tubs and butter shipped from Stowe's farms diminished. Many upland farms were abandoned, causing the dislocating of many families and the closing of several mills. By 1930, many had left, but many of those who remained farmed in the summer and logged or worked the seasonal mills in the winter and spring. Governor F. D. Roosevelt visited Adams Mill in Moscow shortly before becoming president of the United States, liked what he saw, and recommended that other rural communities develop a similar economic system.

Because there were fewer mills, the logging camps closed. Ranch Camp in the Ranch Valley and Barnes Camp near the Notch Road, both at the base of Mount Mansfield, were reopened in the mid 1930's as hostelries for skiers. In 1932, the road from Waterbury to Stowe became Route 100 and was paved, creating easier access by automobile, taxi, and bus. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) began cutting trails on Mount Mansfield as part of FDR's work program of employment in 1932. In 1934 the Mount Mansfield Ski Club began promoting skiing in Stowe, first by sponsoring ski train excursions from New York City, then by sponsoring races against other ski clubs and university groups. In 1936 Sepp Ruschp, an accomplished skier from Linz, Austria, arrived in Stowe to teach skiing and to establish a European-style ski school.



Photograph courtesy of the Stowe Historical Society.

By 1937, when the rope tow was installed and a ski instructor hired, ski enthusiasts made Stowe home, converting farmhouses and village houses into small inns, building tourist cabins and opening retail shops that catered to visitors and community members. As the number of ski trails increased, more tourists came and local men and women found

work in ski-related business in the winter and construction, and farming during other seasons. Changing tastes of automobile tourists were the impetus for entrepreneurial immigrants to build motels from the early 1940's to the mid 1970's. The completion of Interstates 91 and 89 in the 1960's and the paving of Route 108 through Smugglers Notch in 1967 opened the natural beauty of Stowe to increased numbers of urbanites.

As Stowe's economy grew, so did its population, and the need for increased community services. By 1950, the town's resident population was once again on the rise, a precursor to rural migration patterns that would substantially alter the town's social fabric over the years to come. In 1954, Stowe's five remaining one-room schools closed when the Stowe Elementary School opened in the Village. By this time, all but one of Stowe's covered bridges had been replaced in deference to the automobile and truck, and the village was facing traffic congestion and parking problems that still exist more than a half century later. The Stowe Historical Society was founded in 1956 and the Stowe Reporter, the town's weekly paper, in 1958.

During the 1970's, the reliance on traditional sources of income, based on natural resources, diminished both nationally and locally. The same amenities that had long attracted seasonal visitors brought new residents to town and Stowe's population increased. During this time the population returned to that of the 1870 census. In the five decades since, the population has more than doubled. A new high school/middle school opened in 1973 outside the village on a former farm. The Jackson Ice Arena was built in the village in 1975 and cross-country skiing began its rise to popularity. With the addition of snowmaking on the ski trails, the winter experience of visitors and residents became more stable and predictable. Additionally, after several years of interim zoning, permanent Zoning Regulations were adopted on December 9, 1975.

The 1980s began with the construction of the town's first wastewater treatment plant in 1980 and the 1983 opening of the rebuilt Trapp Family Lodge after a devastating fire. Community and cultural development followed with the transformation of the former high school into the Stowe Free Library and Helen Day Art Center, and the launch of the Stowe Recreation Path and Conservation Commission in 1984. Conservation gained momentum with the founding of the Stowe Land Trust in 1987. Throughout the decade, the town improved public safety facilities, sidewalks, and recreational spaces, culminating in the completion of the Rec Path and the formation of the Lamoille Regional Solid Waste Management District in 1989. In 1989, the Town also made a landmark investment in its future by purchasing Mayo Farm for conservation, recreation, and community use - including a ±35-acre special events field. The decade's initiatives laid a strong foundation for the Town's continued growth while preserving its natural beauty and community identity.

The 1990s were a period of growth and progress for Stowe, marked by important conservation, infrastructure, and community service projects. In 1992, Stowe saw the introduction of the Trolley System, which enhanced local public transportation, and night skiing made its debut, further solidifying the town's reputation as a premier winter destination. Stowe Elementary School was renovated and Stowe Middle-Senior High School wing added. Infrastructure improvements continued in 1993 with the construction of Mayo Connector Road, which was later paved in 1997. In 1994, the town invested in public amenities: expanding the library building and locally approving wastewater treatment facility and service area for expansion in 1995. 1995 also marked a historic milestone with the approval of the Town and Village merger, effective July 1, 1996 - ending 100 years of semi-independence. The community also saw the completion of the Mayo Farm Quiet Path in 1996, offering residents a scenic and peaceful recreational space.

As the 20th century came to a close, the Town made strategic, community-driven decisions to invest in its future, balancing its evolution into a year-round resort destination with a deep commitment to preserving and enhancing its natural beauty and community character. Sewer infrastructure was extended to Sylvan Park in Lower Village (1997) and Mountain Road to Cottage Club Road (1998). In 1998, comprehensive strategic planning efforts led to the establishment of the Ridgeline & Hillside Overlay District to protect Stowe's scenic uplands and forested hillsides. The Town acquired the Moscow Ball Fields in 1998, expanding recreational opportunities, while Copley Woodlands Condominiums opened, providing additional housing options in the village. Voters approved Phase 1 of the water system expansion, which was completed in the following year. The Town also secured Act 250 approval to expand the sewer plant, ensuring infrastructure could support planned future growth.

The new millennium began with a renewed commitment to environmental stewardship, successfully balancing conservation efforts with essential infrastructure improvements that strengthened the quality of life and preserved the character that makes Stowe unique. The Moscow Stump Dump was closed, and the Stowe Land Trust successfully conserved Sunset Hill and Bingham Falls, ensuring these treasured landscapes would be protected for future generations. History and culture were honored by the renovation of the First Meeting House to become the new home of the Vermont Ski Museum, now the Vermont Ski & Snowboard Museum, adding to the town's deep-rooted connection to skiing and outdoor recreation.

In 2001, major infrastructure projects took center stage with the expansion of the wastewater treatment plant and the commencement of construction of new sewer and water lines, ensuring Stowe could support its growing population and tourism industry. In 2003, the Development Review Board replaced the Zoning Board of Adjustment and the Planning Commission's role shifted to a long-term visioning and community planning focus. This change led to a more strategic and efficient approach to guide and plan Stowe's future.

Historic preservation gained momentum in 2003 by the formation of the Historic Preservation Commission, underscoring the Town's commitment to protecting its architectural and irreplaceable historic resources. Stowe also reinforced its dedication to land conservation by executing a twenty-five year conservation easement with Stowe Land Trust for Mayo Farm, ensuring responsible stewardship of these public lands.

Following several years collaborative planning with Mt. Mansfield Company, the Town and other interested parties, in 2004 the Development Review Board approved the 2000 Stowe Mountain Resort (SMR) Spruce Peak Master Plan. The approved Master Plan included the construction of nearly 400 residential units, new and improved ski lifts and trails, enhanced snowmaking, upscale lodging and dining, and luxury accommodations. Originally approved with a planned build-out of ten years, development of the project slowed during the great recession; the Master Plan was then extended for another ten years and is now nearly complete.





Old Town Hall (1818) – 15 South Main Street. Renovated in 2002. Now home to the Vermont Ski and Snowboard Musuem.

As we entered the mid-2000s, development and investment continued. In 2005, construction began on major improvements at Spruce Peak, enhancing one of the region's premier ski destinations. To support local economic growth, a one-percent local option tax on rooms and meals was introduced in 2006, generating revenue to reinvest in community

needs. In 2007, our municipal government officially adopted the Town Manager form of government through a charter change. That same year, the Trapp Family Lodge and Stowe Land Trust conserved Adams Camp, further expanding protected land for public access, recreation, conservation, and animal habitat.

Community engagement and public investment remained a priority as the decade progressed. Established by the Selectboard in 2008, the Village Vibrancy Committee was created to help cultivate a lively, welcoming experience for both residents and visitors, while encouraging reinvestment and revitalization within Stowe Village. The following year, Stowe invested in public safety with the construction of a new $7.2 million public safety building, while long-awaited repairs to the Helen Day Art Center also commenced. The decade concluded with a meaningful tribute to Stowe's history and heritage. In 2010, the historic 1878 West Branch Schoolhouse / St. John's Church was relocated next to the Stowe Free Library, creating a permanent home for the Stowe Historical Society. Additionally, the Memorial Park Master Plan was completed, laying the groundwork for future community space improvements.

The 2010s were a decade marked by continued growth, major infrastructure investments, and a steadfast commitment to conservation. These years also celebrated key community milestones that strengthened Stowe's identity and reinforced its vision for a vibrant, sustainable future. 2011 was the "year of the Akeley Memorial Building" -with the expansion of the vault, preserving historical records for future generations, and the building's cupola replaced after topping the building for 108 years, restoring a defining piece of its architectural charm. However, natural forces tested the town's strength when Hurricane Irene struck - causing the undermining and failure of the Cape Cod Road embankment and necessitating the replacement of the Little River water main due to a wash-out. Conservation took center stage in 2012 when the Stowe Land Trust and the Town joined to the purchase Cady Hill Forest, securing the future of this popular recreational and natural resource for the community. That same year, Stowe bid farewell to the historic "Rotary Barn" (1839 Congregational Church), a landmark that served the community for more than 150 years. The following year brought both celebration and progress. In 2013, Stowe marked its 250th anniversary of the town charter. The plaques commemorating the veterans of the Korean and Vietnam conflicts were unveiled in Memorial Hall of Akeley Memorial Building, on Veterans' Day. The unveiling of the new Stowe Arena, a $6.5 million facility replacing the aging Jackson Arena, also took place in 2013. Additionally, Marshall Hill, a popular sledding spot, was purchased by the Town, and Cemetery Road underwent reconstruction. Infrastructure projects continued in 2014 with the construction of sidewalks along portions of Mountain Road Village and improvements to the Mayo Events Field and Cady Hill Forest trails.

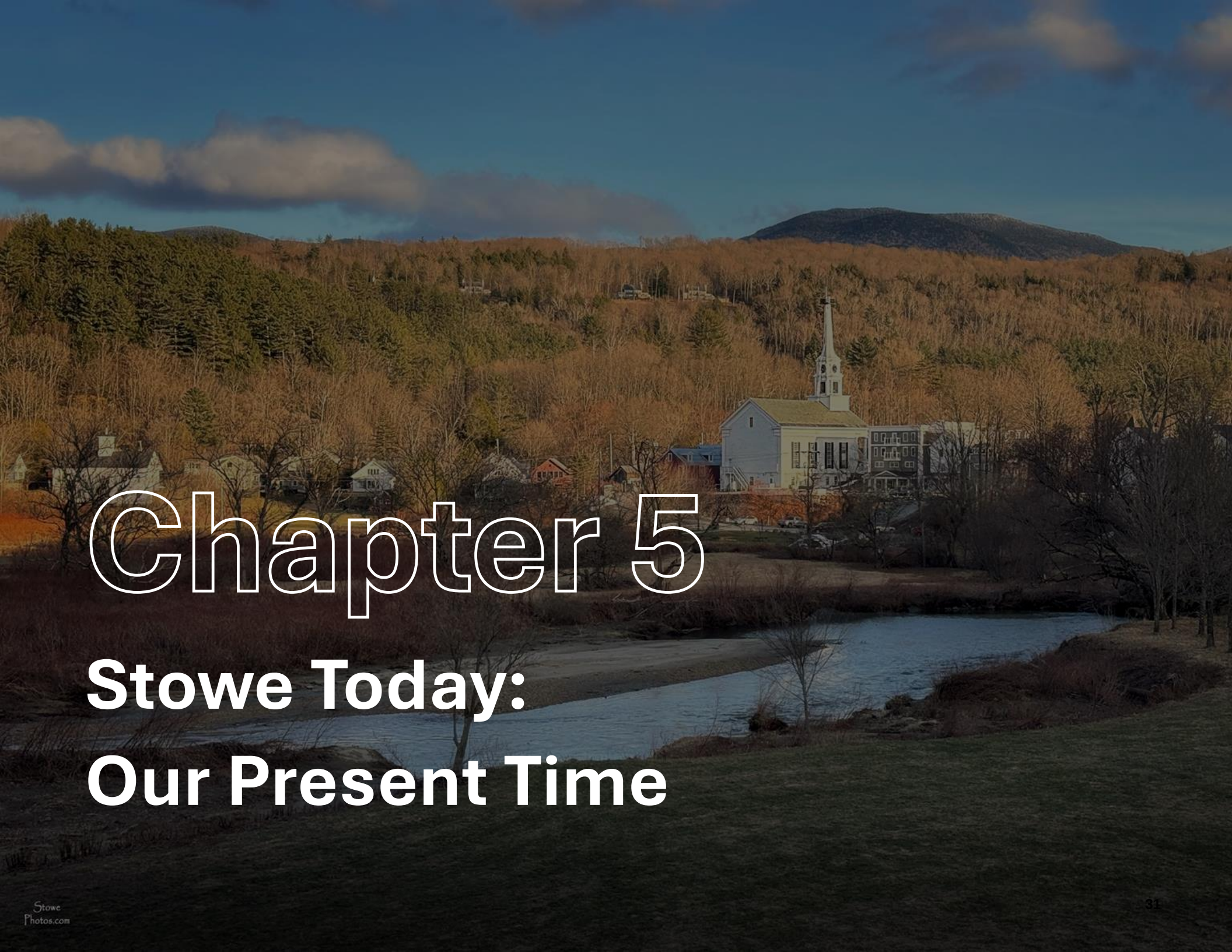
The momentum carried into 2015 with the adoption of the new Stowe Town Plan, the replacement of the Bridge Street bridge, dedicated to Giles Dewey, and the completion of the village staircase leading to the Rec Path parking lot. That year also saw the first phase of the West Branch River/Stowe Rec Path Restoration Project and the opening of new attractions at Stowe Mountain Resort. In 2016, the Vermont Downtown Development Board designated Stowe as an official Designated Downtown, recognizing its historic and economic significance. The year also saw challenges, as a fire heavily damaged the Parks Department garage, and the historic Stone Hut was restored and reopened a year after another devastating fire. The Quiet Path Bridge was also completed and dedicated to Brenda Ross Winter. A significant milestone came in 2017 with the $41 million purchase of Stowe Mountain Resort by Vail Resorts, marking the close of the founding era of skiing and the beginning of a new chapter for our ski and tourism industry. That year also marked another end of an era as the Antique & Classic Car Meet held its 60th and final event in Stowe. Nature struck again later that year with a powerful October windstorm leaving much of Stowe without power, damaging roads, culverts, and trees. Meanwhile, a new one-way traffic pattern on Park Street created additional on-street parking and changed circulation within the village. In 2018, Stowe voters approved the replacement of aging village sidewalks and the burying of utility lines along Main Street. Completed in 2020, our cherished Main Street is now safer, more accessible, and more visually appealing, free from the clutter of overhead utility lines. It offers a welcoming and walkable space where residents and visitors alike can gather, connect, and enjoy the charm of Stowe's historic village.

Life in Stowe, as in many communities across the nation, was profoundly impacted by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The Town faced significant disruptions but responded with resilience, adapting quickly to new challenges while continuing to support the well-being of residents, businesses, and the broader community. The tourism industry struggled because of travel restrictions, business closures, and a decline in visitors, impacting local restaurants, hotels, and shops. However, as restrictions were eased, the town experienced a surge in domestic tourism, with many visitors drawn to our outdoor activities. To ensure public safety, Stowe implemented state-mandated guidelines, including mask mandates, social distancing, and capacity limits for businesses. Restaurants and retailers adapted by offering outdoor dining, takeout, and curbside pickup. Outdoor recreation, including hiking, biking, and skiing, saw a boost as people sought safe and socially distanced activities. The rise of remote work during the pandemic led many individuals and families to seek refuge in places offering both natural beauty and a high quality of life. Stowe, with its stunning landscapes, vibrant outdoor lifestyle, and convenient access to major metropolitan areas, emerged as a highly desirable relocation destination, resulting in increased demand for real estate and a significant rise in home prices.

As we reflect on the first quarter of the 21st century, Stowe stands proudly as a premier four-season destination and an exceptional place to live, work, and visit. This success has been hard-earned, shaped by a strong sense of community, a commitment to quality, and the enduring appeal of our natural beauty and active outdoor lifestyle. Yet, with this success comes a new set of challenges. Rising housing costs, infrastructure demands, workforce shortages, and increased tourism are placing mounting pressure on our natural resources, workforce, and quality of life. As more people are drawn to what makes our community special, we find ourselves at a crossroads. The planning process for this Plan provided the Stowe community with a meaningful opportunity to pause, reflect, to listen and learn from one another, and to come together around a shared vision for where we want to go as a community. More than just a document, this Plan tells the story of our community, reflecting our shared values, aspirations, and our vision for the future. It is our community-driven plan, thoughtfully crafted to guide our growth in a way that is balanced and sustainable for generations to come. It ensures that the values we hold dear today are honored, protected, and thoughtfully carried into 2050 and beyond.



Aeriel view of the Little River looking north-east towards Cemetery Road.
Photo credit: Mark Vandenberg / StoweBeautiful.com



Chapter 5

Stowe Today:
Our Present Time

Our Place & People

Located in Lamoille County, Stowe is one of Vermont's largest towns in land area, covering approximately ±72.57 square miles. Framed by Vermont's tallest peak, Mount Mansfield to the west and the Worcester Range to the east, our landscape features rugged mountains, forested hillsides, and scenic river valleys. Together, these rivers, mountains, and valleys are more than a scenic backdrop, they have shaped our community's people, places, and spirit from its earliest days to the present. They form the foundation of our history and identity, guiding settlement and development while fostering a deep connection to the natural environment. These landscapes are not merely the setting of our story; they are central to who we are and how we live, and they continue to inform the vision we carry into the future.

Population & Demographics

Understanding past and projected demographic trends is essential for planning for our future. Data on population size, age distribution, and income levels provide valuable insights into housing needs, public services, infrastructure, and economic opportunities. Additionally, these statistics reflect the diversity and character of our community. The U.S. Census Bureau collects and updates this demographic information in 10-year increments, serving as a key resource for guiding our community planning efforts.

Stowe's population remained relatively stable until 1970, after which it began a steady upward trend. Over the next five decades, except for a slight decline between 2000 and 2010, our population has gradually increased, reaching 5,223 permanent residents by 2020, representing approximately 20% of Lamoille County's total population.

According to the U.S. Census, Stowe's population grew by 909 residents between 2010 and 2020, a 21.1% increase and one of the highest growth rates among Vermont towns during that period. This marks a significant contrast from the previous decade's small decline of twenty-five residents. While it's unclear whether the recent population growth will continue or was a temporary result of the COVID-19 pandemic, when many seasonal homes became occupied, the broader trend since 1970 shows steady population growth.

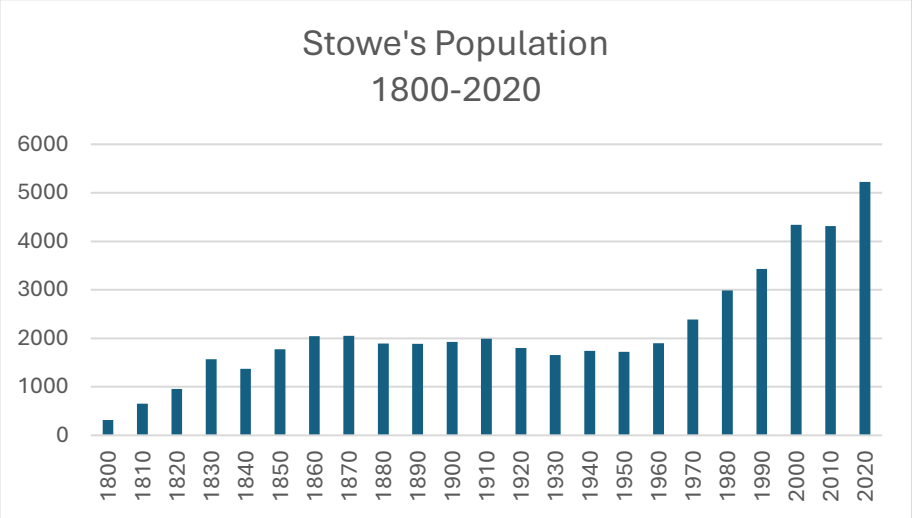


Figure 6: Stowe's estimated population from 1800-2020. Source: US Census

Stowe's Historical Population					
Census	**Population**	**%**	**Census**	**Population**	**%**
1800	316		**1920**	1800	-9.6%
1810	650	+105.7%	**1930**	1654	-8.1%
1820	957	+47.2%	**1940**	1741	+5.3%
1830	1570	+64.1%	**1950**	1720	-1.2%
1840	1371	-12.7%	**1960**	1901	+10.5%
1850	1771	+29.2%	**1970**	2388	+25.6%
1860	2046	+15.5%	**1980**	2991	+25.3%
1870	2049	+0.1%	**1990**	3433	+14.8%
1880	1896	-7.5%	**2000**	4339	+26.4%
1890	1886	-0.5%	**2010**	4314	-0.6%
1900	1926	+2.1%	**2020**	5223	+21.1%
1910	1991	+3.4%			

Figure 7: Historical Census population. Source: US Census

Seasonal Resident and Tourist Population

Given our community's strong tourism economy and wealth of natural amenities, we often experience a significant increase in population during peak tourism seasons and major holidays. While our year-round resident population is just over 5,000, that number can more than double during busy times of the year. Estimates suggest that on peak days, such as holiday weekends or during peak ski or foliage season, the combined number of residents and visitors can exceed 10,000 to 12,000 people. This increase in population is largely fueled and supported by

our hospitality capacity, which includes over 1,400 traditional lodging rooms and an estimated 1,100 short-term rental units, many of which reach full occupancy during peak periods.

Age & Sex Distribution

Age and sex distribution data provide insights into the composition and dynamics of a population. As estimated in the 2020 Census, Stowe's population consists of nearly equal number of men and women with 2614 persons documented as male and 2609 persons documented as female. While Census data is currently only reported within a male/female framework, we recognize and value that our community includes people of diverse gender identities beyond this binary classification.

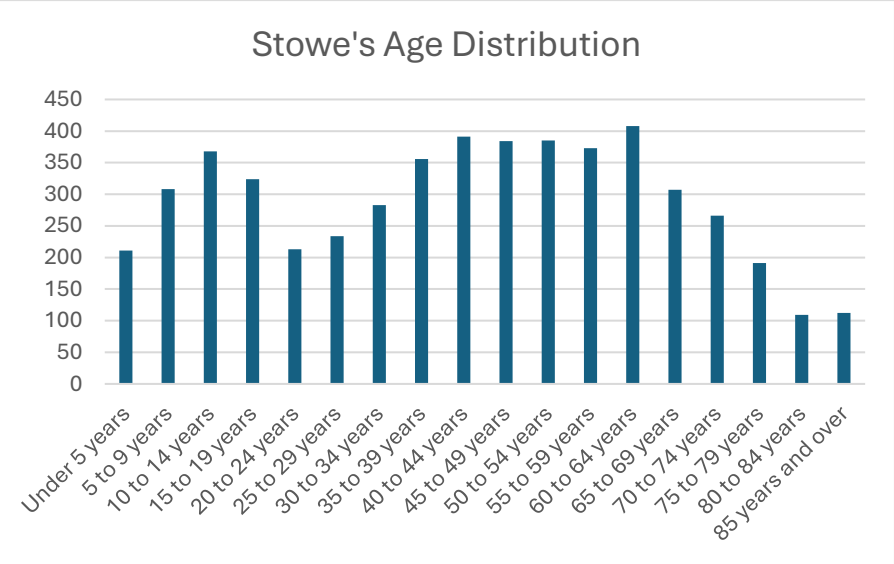


Figure 8: Illustrates the age distribution of Stowe's estimated 5,223 residents. Source: US Census

Stowe's estimated population includes 1,211 individuals under the age of 19, making up approximately 23.1% of our total population. The largest demographic group consists of adults between the ages of 35 and 64, who account for about 53.9% of our population, reflecting the our community's adult working-age population. Roughly 985 residents, or 18.9% of our population, are 65 years or older, indicating a significant (and growing) senior community. For comparison, in 2010 this same age group (65 years or older) represented only 10% of our overall population.

According to the 2020 Census, Stowe's median age was 43.9 years, slightly higher than Vermont's median age of 43.5 and notably above the national median age of 38.8, highlighting our older-than-average population profile.

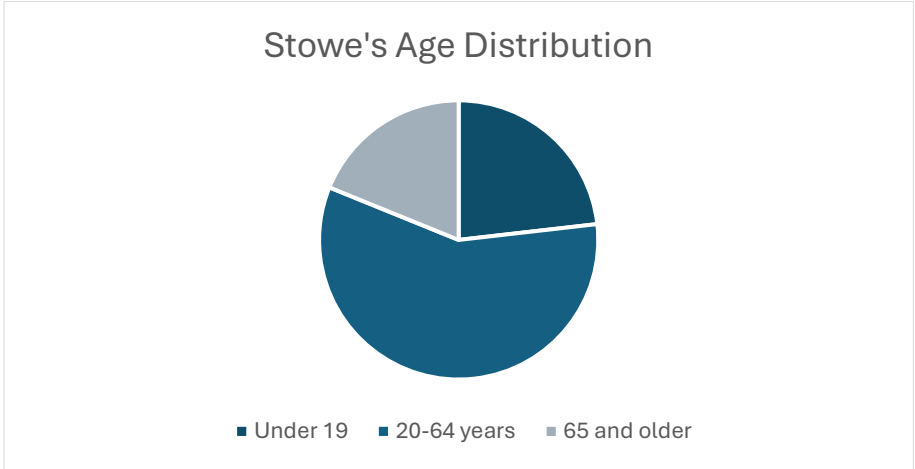


Figure 9: Stowe's estimated age distribution. Source: US Census

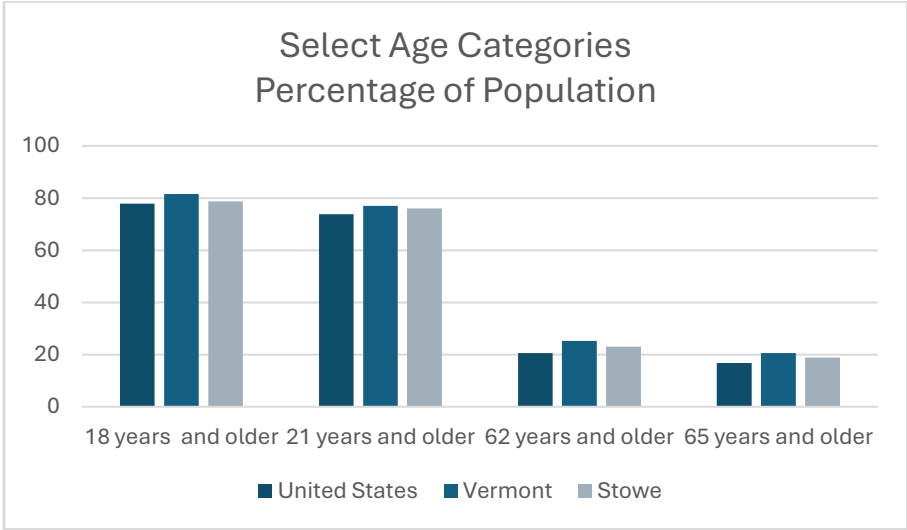


Figure 10: Stowe's select age categories – percentage of population. Source: US Census.

In 2020, Stowe had a slightly higher percentage of residents under 18 years old (21.3%) compared to the statewide average (18.4%), and a slightly lower percentage of residents aged 65 and older (18.9%) compared to the statewide figure of 20.6%, as shown in Figure 10. Only 28% of Stowe's permanent population was born in Vermont, which is lower than the statewide rate, while 92% were born in the United States.

Race & Ethnicity

According to the 2020 Census, Stowe's racial and ethnic composition was predominantly white accounting for 90.8% of the population. Individuals identifying as two or more races made up 6.0%. The Hispanic or Latino population represented 3.4% of our residents. The Black or African American population represented 1.3%. Other racial groups, including Asian, American Indian and Alaska Native each constituted less than 1% of the population.

Income

Stowe's 2023 estimated median household income is $86,304, higher than both the Lamoille County median of $69,897 and the Vermont statewide median household income of $81,211.

Town Name	Returns	Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)
Burlington	19,270	1,565,744,658
South Burlington	10,704	1,166,915,496
Colchester	8,679	832,142,690
Shelburne	4,016	741,089,731
Williston	5,523	684,059,325
Essex Jct.	6,826	609,880,499
Essex Town	4,944	519,907,435
Rutland City	8,065	490,836,778
Milton	5,793	463,770,081
Hartford	5,518	463,653,031
Stowe	2,876	455,101,503
Bennington	7,437	447,640,622
Charlotte	1,859	392,983,213
Montpelier	4,316	374,558,403
Brattleboro	5,544	367,956,579

In 2023, Stowe ranked 11th among Vermont municipalities in total adjusted gross income collected.

Educational Attainment

Our community is highly educated with 94% of our residents aged twenty-five and over having completed high school or higher, and 54% holding a bachelor's degree or higher, rates that surpass those of Lamoille County, and the U.S. overall. This strong educational attainment supports our vibrant community and diverse economy, including tourism, professional services, and entrepreneurship.



View of Stowe village. Photo credit: Mark Vandenberg / StoweBeautiful.com

Our Irreplaceable Natural Resources

From the towering summit of Mount Mansfield to our pristine rivers, forests, and open farmland, our natural resources shape our community's identity, support our economy, and enrich our quality of life. Our forests offer vital wildlife habitat, store carbon, and provide flood resilience, while our rivers sustain ecosystems and year-round recreation. The Town has a long tradition of valuing these assets, committing to conservation and responsible land stewardship to ensure their protection for future generations. By preserving our scenic landscapes and natural resources, we safeguard our rural character, strengthen our sense of place, and sustain a thriving local economy.

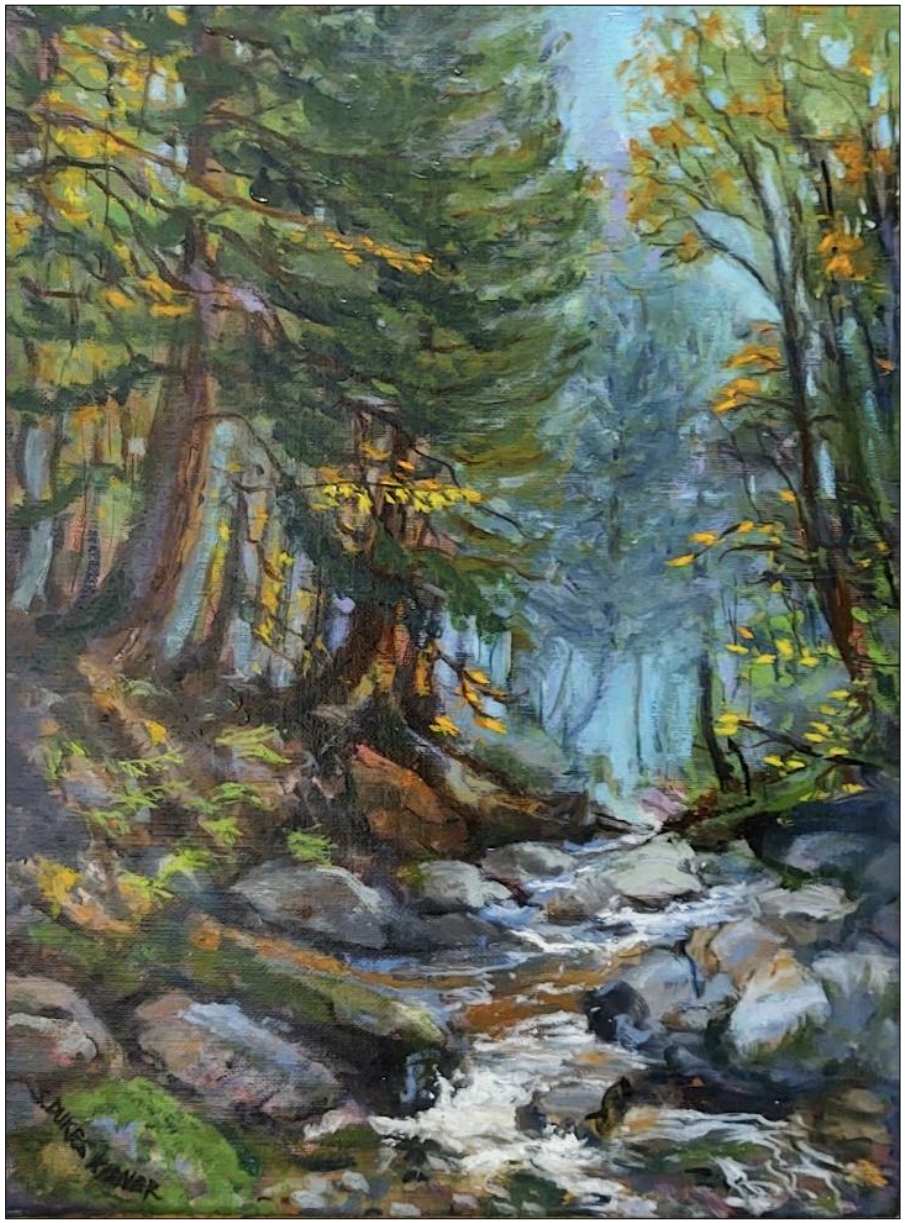
Geology & Earth Resources

The bedrock beneath the Green Mountains was formed and reshaped over hundreds of millions of years across multiple geologic eras. Yet the soils and terrain we see today are the legacy of the last great glaciation, which retreated from this area roughly 12,000 years ago. As the ice withdrew, it carved valleys, sculpted ridgelines, and left behind our distinct and scenic landscape that we cherish today.

Stowe is home to several unique geologic features, including:

- **Smugglers Notch** – Known for its dramatic scenery, rich cultural history, and unique geological and biological resources.
- **Moss Glen Falls** – One of the tallest cascades in Vermont.
- **Bingham Falls** – A stunning gorge and popular swimming spot located on state land.
- **Millers Cirque** – Situated at the head of Nebraska Valley, it is one of the finest glacial cirque complexes in Vermont.
- **Sterling Falls Gorge** – A deep mountain gorge that is home to rare luminous moss.

Beyond these dramatic landscapes and unique features, the composition and distribution of soils and other earth resources are of particular importance to many land use activities.



Upper Sterling Brook by Shari Dukes Kiener

Soils

Soils within our community are primarily composed of glacial till. The Soil Survey of Lamoille County, published by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), provides detailed information on soil types, characteristics, and their suitability for various land uses. Historically, majority of land development outside the village core has depended on on-site septic systems, making soil conditions a key factor in determining where and how development occurs in areas not served by municipal sewer service.



View of Spear Farm Barn. Photo credit: Tim Meehan

Agricultural Soils

Soils best suited for farming are classified as "prime" and "statewide" agricultural soils. "Prime" soils have the highest productivity with minimal limitations for farming, while "statewide" agricultural soils are also productive but may require more intensive management. Both "prime" and "statewide" agricultural soils have been designated a state resource by the Vermont Land Use Review Board (LURB). In Stowe, an estimated 3,417 acres of "prime" agricultural soils and 8,201 acres of "statewide" agricultural soils have been identified. These fertile lands are primarily concentrated within our river valleys, the Sterling Brook basin, Stowe Hollow, and level terrain found on West Hill, Edson Hill, Brush Hill, and Luce Hill.

Climate & Air Quality

Climate refers to the long-term weather patterns that influence factors such as soil erosion, plant growth, air quality, stormwater runoff, flooding, groundwater availability, and even economic activities like skiing and winter sports. Northern Vermont experiences cold, dry winters and warm, moist summers, with local weather patterns influenced by topography. Due to our position on the eastern side of Mount Mansfield, we generally experience slightly colder winter temperatures and higher precipitation rates compared to other parts of Vermont. These climatic factors play an essential role in shaping our environment, infrastructure, and recreational economy.

Annual precipitation in Stowe averages nearly 40 inches. However, snowfall varies significantly with elevation, higher elevations such as Mount Mansfield, receive considerably more snow than lower-lying areas. In the 2024–2025 season, Stowe Mountain Resort recorded an impressive 362 inches of snow, making it a winter to remember. In other years, however, frequent mid-winter thaws can diminish natural snow cover, making snowmaking an essential part of our alpine skiing industry.

Our rural, forested landscape and minimal industrial activity support consistently high air quality, reflecting Vermont's statewide reputation for having some of the cleanest air in the nation. Local emissions are primarily generated by vehicles, home heating systems, and certain agricultural practices, while distant sources, such as wildfires and industrial activity, can occasionally diminish air quality.

Weather patterns strongly influence local conditions: brisk winds and fast-moving fronts help disperse pollutants, while stagnant systems can cause them to linger, especially in mountain valleys. Although no major air quality issues have been identified, continued growth may contribute to cumulative impacts over time.

Occasionally, we experience temporary declines in air quality from events beyond our local control. In recent years, smoke from Canadian wildfires has drifted into the area, creating haze, obscuring views, and triggering health advisories, particularly for children, seniors, and people with respiratory illnesses. Protecting our clean air is essential to environmental health, community well-being, and the vitality of our outdoor recreation economy.



View south towards Stowe Village. Photo credit: Mark Vandenberg / StoweBeautiful.com

Surface Waters

Many of our rivers and streams begin right here within our town, flowing from our hillsides and valleys before joining larger waterways. This gives us something unique, a direct hand in protecting water quality not just for ourselves, but for the communities and ecosystems downstream. Most of Stowe lies within the Winooski River watershed, with the Little River and its tributaries - Miller Brook, Sterling Brook, Gold Brook, and the West Branch - shaping the landscape and nourishing the land. To the north, a small portion of town drains into the Lamoille River watershed, linking us to another great Vermont river system.

Two of our streams hold a special role. A tributary of the West Branch, below Bingham Falls, and the upper reaches of Thatcher Brook near the Waterbury boundary serve as public drinking water supplies. Both are designated as Class A waters by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources - recognizing their exceptional quality and importance as drinking water sources.

Groundwater

Groundwater is a vital source of drinking water for communities across Vermont, including Stowe, where most residents and businesses rely on wells or public water systems supplied by underground aquifers. These aquifers naturally filter and store water, providing a reliable supply that is often cleaner and more consistent than surface water. Protecting groundwater from contamination, whether from septic systems, road salt, fertilizers, or other pollutants, is essential to ensuring safe drinking water, sustaining public health, and supporting the town's long-term water needs.

Stowe is served by fourteen public community water systems, including the municipal system and four consecutive systems it supplies. Public community systems serve at least fifteen year-round service connections or twenty-five year-round residents and are typically operated by condominium associations, fire districts, municipal entities, or homeowners associations. In addition, the town has fourteen non-transient non-community (NTNC) systems, which serve at least twenty-five of the same people daily for more than six months per year, such as schools, daycares, office buildings, and factories. There are also eleven transient non-community (TNC) systems, which serve at least twenty-five different people for more than sixty days per year, including restaurants, motels, and campgrounds.

Because groundwater can be contaminated by waste, chemicals, or other pollutants within recharge areas, federal and state regulations require every public system to have a source protection plan. These plans help guide local land use decisions, ensuring that future development does not compromise water quality. For more information on the municipal water supply, see Chapter 5 – Our Essential Municipal Utilities & Infrastructure.

Designated Natural Areas

Our town contains several natural areas of statewide significance, valued for their ecological, recreational, and scenic importance. The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) has formally designated three such areas within Stowe. These are:

Mt. Mansfield Natural Area – Spanning 3,850 acres within Mt. Mansfield State Forest, this area features Vermont's largest alpine habitat, an extensive subalpine heath krummholz community, and subalpine spruce-fir forests. It also includes Smugglers Notch, a dramatic geological formation known for its rare cold calcareous cliff plants and nesting peregrine falcons. Recognized for its ecological significance, this area is listed on the Vermont Fragile Areas Registry and designated as a National Natural Landmark.

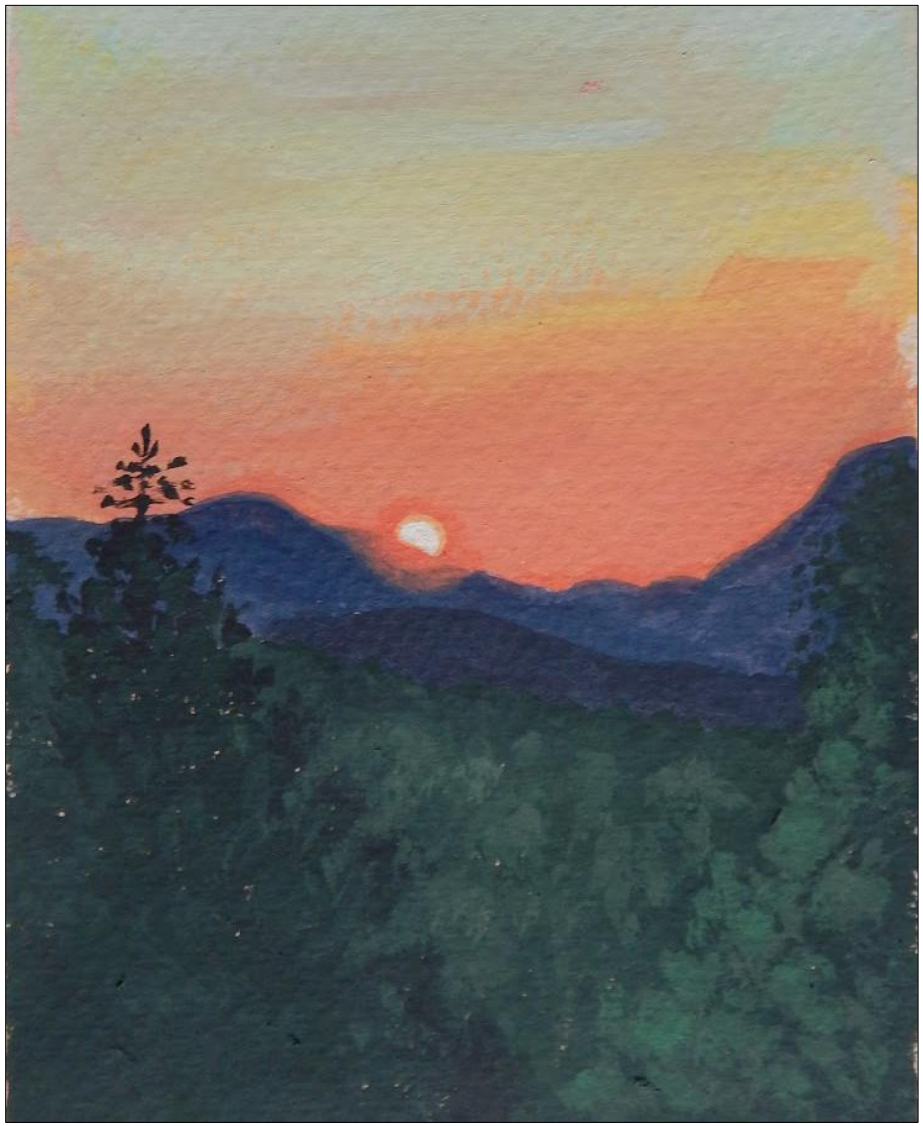
Worcester Range Natural Area – Covering 4,032 acres within C.C. Putnam State Forest, this natural area includes all land above 2,500 feet in elevation. It encompasses the summits of Hunger Mountain, White Rocks, Worcester Mountain, and surrounding peaks, supporting a vast, unbroken subalpine forest of red spruce and balsam fir.

Moss Glen Falls Natural Area – Encompassing 80 acres within C.C. Putnam State Forest, this site is home to one of Vermont's tallest and most picturesque waterfalls, with a total drop of over 100 feet. The falls cascade through a rugged gorge, forming pools and flowing over steep rock walls, surrounded by a dense hemlock forest.

These natural areas, along with many other state parks, wildlife management areas, and conserved lands, contribute to our community's rich biodiversity, natural beauty, and ecological health. Several rare and/or endangered species of plant and animals may be found within some of these areas, especially the summit of Mount Mansfield. Each are owned by the state and managed for resource preservation.

Additional habitats for threatened or endangered plants and animal species may be found in Smugglers Notch and on land owned and operated by the Mount Mansfield Trout Club. The ANR maintains an inventory of significant habitat.

Other significant natural features include Sterling Falls Gorge, which is located on two parcels owned by the Sterling Falls Gorge Natural Areas Trust and the Town of Stowe, Stowe Pinnacle, located in the Putnam State Forest, Sunset Rock, which was acquired by the Town in 1999; and, Bingham Falls, which was purchased by Stowe Land Trust in 2001 and transferred to the State of Vermont.



Quiet Path by Faith Walsh (2026)

Wetlands

Wetlands play a critical role in our environment by naturally filtering water, enhancing flood retention, and providing valuable wildlife habitat. At the same time, they present significant development constraints due to poor drainage and high-water tables. According to the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI), Stowe contains approximately 839 acres of wetlands, though this is likely an underestimate, as not all significant wetlands have been mapped. Nevertheless, the NWI provides a useful overview of the general distribution and concentration of wetlands across the town. The largest concentration of identified wetlands is located adjacent to the Little River in Stowe Village, stretching north beyond Stagecoach Road. Additional large wetland complexes are associated with Molly's Bog near the town's northern boundary; east of Pond Street in Stowe Village along Depot Street; and contiguous to the Little River in the Cotton Brook area. Although all wetlands provide an important purpose, the ecological function of wetlands differs from site to site. Molly's Bog, located near the Morristown boundary, supports rare plant species which are of statewide significance.

Floodplains

Floodplains are vital to the quality of our surface waters and the health and safety of our community. By retaining runoff during periods of heavy rain and spring thaw, floodplains reduce the velocity of rivers and streams. They also present severe limitations for development due to potential hazards resulting from periodic flooding, harmful effects on channel capacity and downstream properties resulting from filling, and improper functioning of sewage disposal systems caused by typically high-water tables. The largest concentration of floodplains in our community stretches along the Little River north of Stowe Village and the lower stretches of the West Branch. Significant areas of floodplain may also be found along the Little River south of Stowe Village and adjacent to Miller Brook. The Town of Stowe currently administers (and enforces) flood hazard regulations as part of the zoning regulations. Adherence to these regulations enables property owners with land located in the floodplain to qualify for flood insurance under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

Ridgelines & Hillsides

Our rugged landscape includes extensive areas of steep slopes and exposed ridgelines. Over half of our town consists of land with an average slope of 15% or greater, with many areas exceeding 25%. Steep slopes present challenges for land use and development: they are prone to erosion and high stormwater runoff, especially when cleared for construction, agriculture, or forestry, and can threaten water quality when used for in-ground septic systems. Development on steep slopes, ridges, and knolls can also impact our scenic character, as buildings at higher elevations are often highly visible, diminishing the forested backdrop of our scenic vistas. To address these concerns, the Selectboard adopted the Ridgeline and Hillside Overlay District (RHOD) in 1998. The RHOD is designed to protect the ecological and scenic resources of high-elevation, steep-slope, and visually sensitive lands while allowing carefully planned, low-impact development. Projects within the district must minimize environmental, aesthetic, and visual impacts.

Wildlife

We share our community with a diverse array of wildlife, including white-tailed deer, black bear, moose, coyote, mink, otter, fisher, bobcat, turkey, ruffed grouse, and numerous songbirds. While the Town has not yet conducted a town-wide comprehensive inventory of species or their habitat needs, the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife offers extensive resources to support both private landowners and the Town in managing and protecting wildlife. Several natural features are recognized as critical to maintaining habitat for a wide range of species. These include:

- Large tracts of undeveloped forest;
- Wetlands;
- Riparian corridors, especially those connecting large tracts of forest;
- Travel corridors, including road crossings;
- Vernal pools;
- Open meadows;
- Habitat for specific species, such as rare and endangered species and deer wintering areas.

Deer

Eastern white-tailed deer are a familiar and valued part of our landscape and are among Vermont's most important game species. While deer are abundant and adaptable to human activity, they rely on specific habitats, especially during winter. Adequate wintering areas, or deeryards, are critical for survival in harsh conditions and are typically coniferous forests on south- or west-facing slopes below 2,000 feet in elevation. These coniferous forests are also essential for nearly half of Vermont's vertebrate wildlife species. In Stowe, over 4,459 acres of deeryard habitat have been mapped, with large concentrations near Moss Glen Falls, Birch Hill, Shaw Hill, the steep slopes east of Route 100 between Waterbury and Lower Village, and Luce Hill between Barrows Road and Trapp Family Lodge.



Photograph of white-tailed deer. Photo credit: Teresa Merelman

Black Bear

Black bears are considered an "umbrella" species in Vermont, meaning that protecting their habitat also supports the conservation of many other wildlife species. Bears require large, undeveloped forested areas, much of which exists on state and municipal lands or properties protected by conservation easements. They also depend on specific habitat features that can be threatened by development and poor land management. Beech tree stands, which provide an important autumn food source, have been identified in Mount Mansfield State Forest and potentially exist in Sterling Valley and the Worcester Range.

Habitat fragmentation from roads and development can isolate bear populations, reducing genetic diversity and threatening long-term survival. Maintaining travel corridors is essential, allowing bears to move between habitats and access low-elevation wetlands, a key early spring food source. One important corridor links Sterling Range habitat with Ranch Valley, crossing Route 108 near Bingham Falls.

Rare & Endangered Species

Endangered species in Stowe include the Bicknell's thrush, Long-tailed shrew, Pygmy shrew, and several plant species. Peregrine Falcons may also be found in Smugglers Notch and are often seen high above Stowe. Current nesting sites are located in neighboring Cambridge.

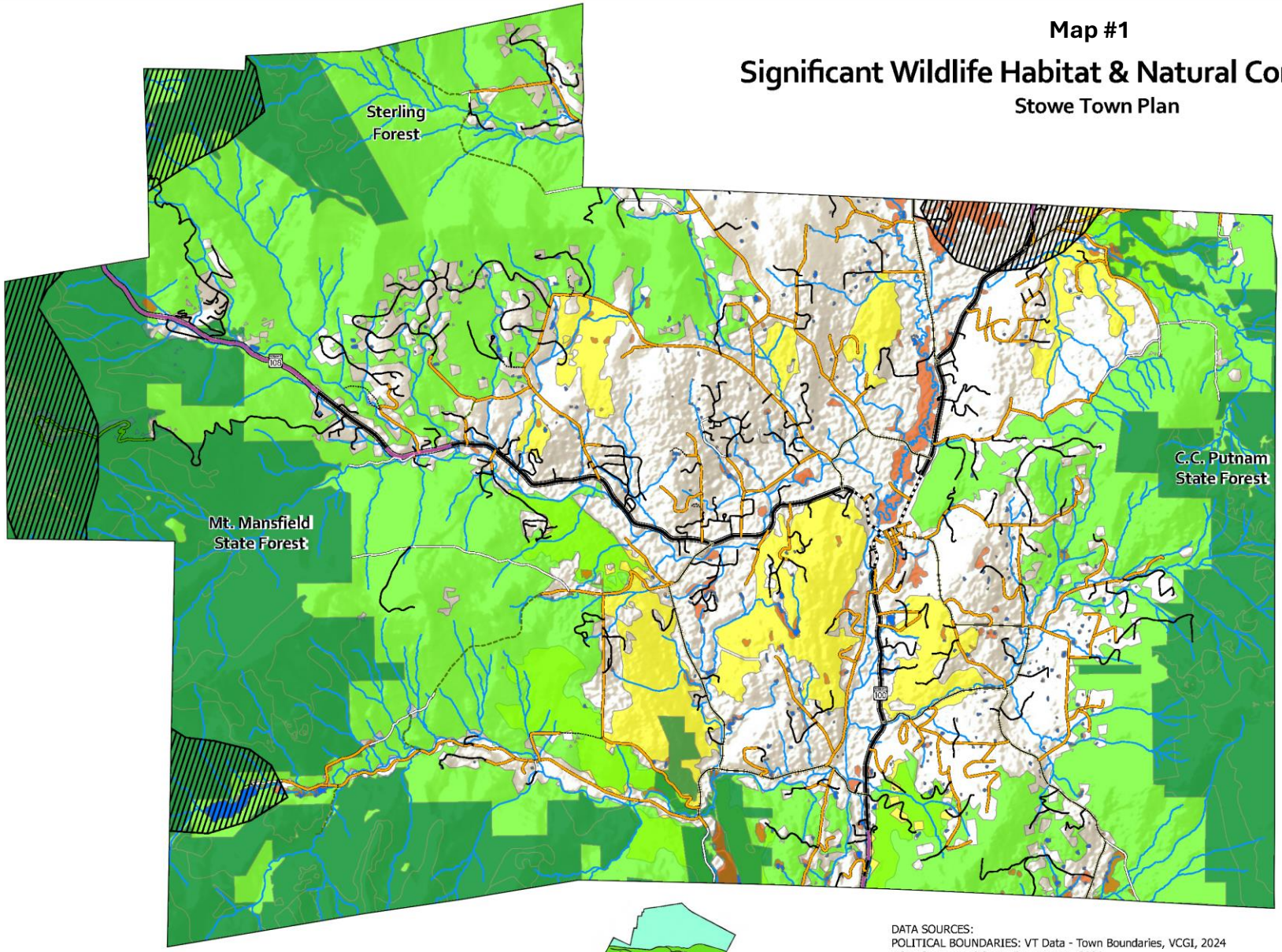
Fisheries

Our streams and rivers support moderately healthy fish populations, with native brook trout thriving in many upper watersheds, including the West Branch and its tributaries, Gold Brook and Sterling Brook. Wild, naturalized populations of brown and rainbow trout are also present, particularly in Miller Brook, the lower reaches of the West Branch, and the Little River, with limited stocking of rainbow and brown trout occurring in the West Branch. The long-term health of these fisheries depends on maintaining riparian vegetation, effective stormwater management, and proper waste disposal. In larger streams, elevated water temperatures and sedimentation from unstable stream banks pose significant challenges to fish populations. Efforts to protect and improve our water quality, such as restoring riparian vegetation and addressing structural deficiencies in the West Branch, will play a crucial role in sustaining our local fisheries.

Map #1

Significant Wildlife Habitat & Natural Communities

Stowe Town Plan



Ecological Hotspots
Priority Wildlife Crossings
Class 2 Wetlands
Significant Natural Communities
Highest Priority Habitat & Connecting Blocks
Deer Wintering Areas

Road Class
State Highway
Town Highway Class 1
Town Highway Class 2
Town Highway Class 3
Town Highway Class 4
State Forest Highway
Legal Trail
Private Road
Discontinued Road
Lake/Pond
Stream/River



0 0.6 1.2 1.8 2.4
Miles



DATA SOURCES:
POLITICAL BOUNDARIES: VT Data - Town Boundaries, VCGI, 2024
ROADS: VT Road Centerline, VTrans, 2021
SURFACE WATER: National Hydrography Dataset, USGS, 2023
ECOLOGICAL HOTSPOTS: VT Biodiversity Project - Biological Hotspots, VCGI, 2024
VSWI WETLANDS: VANR, 2024
NATURAL COMMUNITIES: VANR, 2022
CONNECTIVITY BLOCKS: VANR, 2022
DEER WINTERING AREAS: VANR, 2022
WILDLIFE CROSSINGS: VCGI, 2024

Our Living Forests

Our forests are a defining part of who we are as a community, embodying the values we share and the connection we feel to our natural surroundings. They safeguard our water, purify our air, store carbon, and provide essential habitat for wildlife. At the same time, they offer beauty, adventure, and inspiration, sustaining both our economy and our cultural heritage. Today, roughly 82% of Stowe is forested, a remarkable recovery from the mid-1800s, when nearly half the land was cleared for farming. Over time, our forests have returned, reclaiming former farmland and strengthening our identity as a community deeply connected to its natural surroundings.

After more than a century of forest regeneration, we are now experiencing a decline in forest cover driven by fragmentation and parcelization. While some of this loss results from other types of land conversion, the primary cause is scattered rural residential development. For generations, as a community we have long valued the experience of living among nature in rural settings; however, over time, this pattern has broken up larger forest blocks and led to parcelization. Today, we recognize the need to balance our commitment to healthy, connected forests with other community values, including the desire for rural living on larger, more dispersed lots.

Public Forest Lands

Of our vast forested areas, more than 13,470 acres are owned by the State of Vermont, while the Town of Stowe owns and manages over 1,800 acres. These public lands are carefully stewarded to balance recreation, wildlife conservation, and timber production, ensuring that our forests remain both an ecological and recreation resource for generations to come.

State Forests

Stowe is home to two state forests, Mount Mansfield State Forest, covering over 7,300 acres to the west, and Putnam State Forest, spanning over 3,000 acres to the east. Unlike farming, which demands constant daily oversight, active forest management aligns well with public land management. Logging operations on state forestland in Stowe are typically carried out by private contractors under the supervision of State Foresters, ensuring sustainable practices.

The management plan for Mount Mansfield State Forest, completed in 2002, marked a shift from a timber-focused approach to a more comprehensive strategy. This plan emphasizes the protection of natural communities while addressing the increasing demand for recreational access. C.C. Putnam State Forest is part of the Worcester Range Management Unit (WRMU), which recently adopted a new long-range management plan on September 26, 2024, guiding the future conservation and use of this important forest.



Winter Divine (2022) Photo credit: Linda Giudice

Town Forests

The Town of Stowe owns several forested properties, including the 1,530-acre Sterling Forest in Sterling Valley, the 320-acre Cady Hill Forest, and smaller parcels such as Downer Forest (59 acres) and the Waterworks land on Maple Street (52.5 acres).

Timber management in Sterling Forest has been guided by a thoughtful, three-phase harvest plan developed by Michael Snyder, former Chittenden County State Forester and Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation (FPR). Phase 1, completed in winter 2002, focused on an area along the Catamount Trail north of the Sterling Forest parking lot. Phase 2, which included the Split Rock Trail area, was completed in 2007. Phase 3 began in 2011 as a collaboration between the Town of Stowe Conservation Commission, FPR, the Vermont Land Trust (VLT), and Audubon Vermont, targeting a 100-acre section in the forest's southeast, between Maple Run Lane and the Catamount Trail. Completed in 2017–2018, this phase used a series of small "patch cuts," from ½ to five acres, to enhance songbird habitat and provide browse for moose and deer. This collaborative project has become a model for how sustainable timber management can coexist with recreational use, improve timber quality, and benefit wildlife, especially forest songbirds. Building on this success, the Conservation Commission recently updated the Sterling Forest Management Plan, recommending a new timber and habitat strategy beyond the original three phases. This next phase will explore projects that sustain habitat and timber resources while also creating opportunities to maintain and improve recreational trails.

Private Forests

In addition to publicly owned forests, there are a significant number of private forest holdings in Stowe. As of 2025, there were approximately 124 properties totaling approximately 12,114 acres enrolled in the state's current use forestland program. To be enrolled in the program, each property must maintain an approved forest management plan.

Forests Blocks & Fragmentation

In 2016, Vermont passed Act 171, giving towns new tools to protect forests and wildlife corridors while supporting the local forest products industry. Now, every municipal plan must identify important forest blocks and habitat connectors and set clear policies to keep them healthy and connected.

The biggest threat to forests in our community is not logging or farming, it's scattered rural residential development. This form of development often starts small: a driveway here, a clearing there. Over time, new houses, roads, and lawns break apart what was once a continuous expanse of trees. Large, healthy forests shrink into isolated pockets, making it harder for wildlife to move, for trees to thrive, and for forestry to remain economically viable. When forests fragment, we lose more than trees. We lose wildlife habitat, clean water, flood protection, carbon storage, and the economic benefits of forest management. Small parcels, often less than fifty acres, are especially challenging to manage in a way that sustains both the environment and the local economy.



Stowe forest in autumn. Photo credit: Teresa Merelman

Forests are more than just stands of trees, they are dynamic, living ecosystems. Large, unbroken "forest blocks" are especially valuable, particularly when they connect to other blocks within our town or into neighboring towns. These connections act as ecological lifelines, allowing wildlife to move freely, maintain healthy populations, and adapt to changing conditions. Healthy forests depend on this network, and so does our community.

Habitat connectors are the pathways that keep our scenic landscape thriving. They link larger habitat areas (forests, wetlands, and streams)

so plants and animals can move, migrate, and adapt. A connector might be a wooded streambank, a strip of trees between neighborhoods, a hedgerow along a field, or even a road crossing used year after year by deer, bobcats, or salamanders. They can be small, spanning only a few acres, or vast, stretching for hundreds. These connections function at two scales. At the landscape scale, they link major forest blocks across regions- like the corridors that join Vermont's Green Mountains to New Hampshire's White Mountains- helping wildlife populations stay healthy, diverse, and resilient. At the local scale, smaller habitat patches and safe road crossings help animals travel between feeding, breeding, and nesting areas, sometimes seasonally, sometimes simply in search of food.

The impacts of forest fragmentation are minimized when we protect ecologically functional landscapes, those with large, connected forests, riparian areas, wildlife habitats, and diverse natural communities. High levels of diversity and connectivity are critical for withstanding changes in ecological processes and ensuring species can access the habitats they need. The condition of the landscape determines its ecological value. Conserving only narrow strips of trees or shrubs will not sustain biodiversity or meet long-term habitat needs. While smaller features like hedgerows can serve as short-distance links for some species, wider corridors support a greater variety of wildlife and stronger connectivity. Protecting these corridors, alongside large and diverse forest blocks, is essential for maintaining healthy ecosystems and the many public benefits they provide.

This connectivity is crucial amid climate change. Many species are shifting their ranges, often northward, in response to rising temperatures and changing soil moisture and microclimates. Movement may also occur in multiple directions. Thus, our network of connected forests and habitats, extending throughout Vermont and the Northeast, plays a vital role in enabling plants and animals to migrate and adapt as the climate evolves.

Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor

The Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor (SHWC) is a vital link connecting two expansive forested habitat blocks in Vermont's northern Green Mountains and the Worcester Range. Encompassing lands near VT Route 100 at the Waterbury-Stowe border, the corridor enables wide-ranging species like black bears, moose, and bobcats to move freely, access critical resources, and maintain genetic diversity. The corridor also supports species' adaptation to climate change by providing essential pathways for shifting ranges. Recognized as one of Vermont's most important wildlife crossings, SHWC is part of a larger international network of connected forests across the Northeast.

As the only viable east-west ecological connection between these two mountain ranges for over twenty miles along VT Route 100, SHWC plays a crucial role in a landscape dominated by north-south ridges. The VT Department of Fish & Wildlife lists it among the state's highest priority connectivity areas. Since 2010, local, state, and national partners, including Stowe Land Trust, VT Department of Fish and Wildlife, and The Nature Conservancy, have worked to permanently protect key lands within the corridor. In January 2024, Stowe Land Trust acquired 86 acres at its core, boosting the corridor's ecological resilience. To support ongoing protection, the Town of Stowe collaborates with neighboring towns and conservation organizations through the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor Partnership, coordinating local, regional, and state efforts to conserve this vital and irreplaceable wildlife corridor.

Despite these conservation successes, the corridor remains highly vulnerable to habitat fragmentation and development. Situated between the village of Stowe to the north and Interstate 89 and Waterbury to the south, with easy access to Burlington and Montpelier, the area faces real development pressures. Protecting the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor and similar linkages requires ongoing efforts, including improved zoning and subdivision regulations, compatible land management, public outreach and education, and conservation easements from willing private landowners to maintain critical habitat connectivity.



Winter Town (2025) by Erika Crouse
(10th grade, SHS)

Our Beloved Historic & Cultural Resources

Our community's story is written not only in our landscapes and natural settings, but also in our streets, buildings, and thoughtfully arranged spaces that shape our town's distinctive character. Our historic and cultural resources are more than reminders of the past, they are central to who we are, grounding our sense of place and shared community identity. Preserving these resources, along with traditional development patterns and the historic built environment, is essential to maintaining our quality of life and visual charm. At the same time, we embrace a thoughtful approach to growth, encouraging new development that complements our heritage and strengthens our community for generations to come.

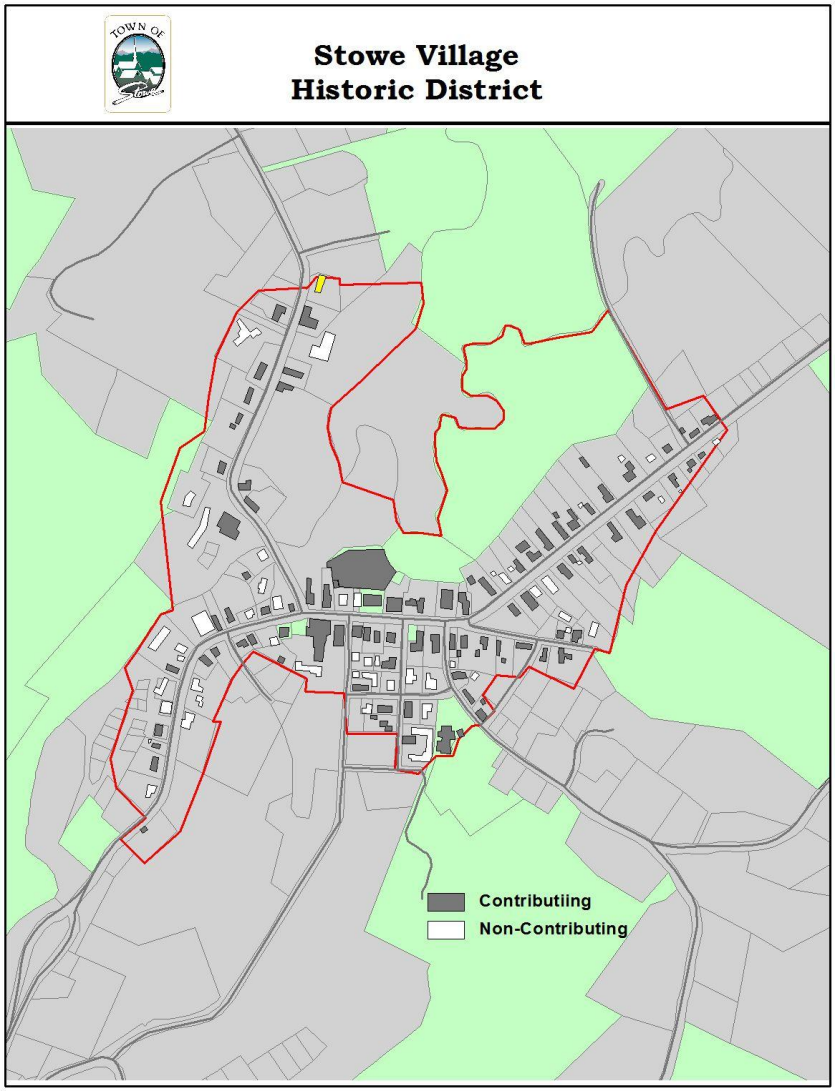
Our historic resources are concentrated in our villages and scattered across our rural areas, painting a rich picture of our heritage and landscape. Historic sites and structures throughout our community provide a tangible connection to our past, linking us to the people and events that have shaped our town. Preserving these resources does not mean halting development or limiting new architectural expression; instead, it ensures that our history remains a cherished part of our cultural fabric while allowing for thoughtful innovation and contemporary design that enhances, rather than diminishes, our historic assets.

Our town contains three designated historic districts:

Stowe Village Historic District

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979, the Stowe Village Historic District is a vibrant, densely settled village that serves as the cultural, political, and commercial heart of Stowe. The character of the district is defined not only by its individual buildings but also by the streetscapes and the spaces between them. While primarily commercial, the district also features a mix of residential, ecclesiastical, and civic structures, including homes converted for commercial use. In 2003, the Town engaged a consultant to update the district. Today, the district includes 102 contributing historic structures, with notable examples including:

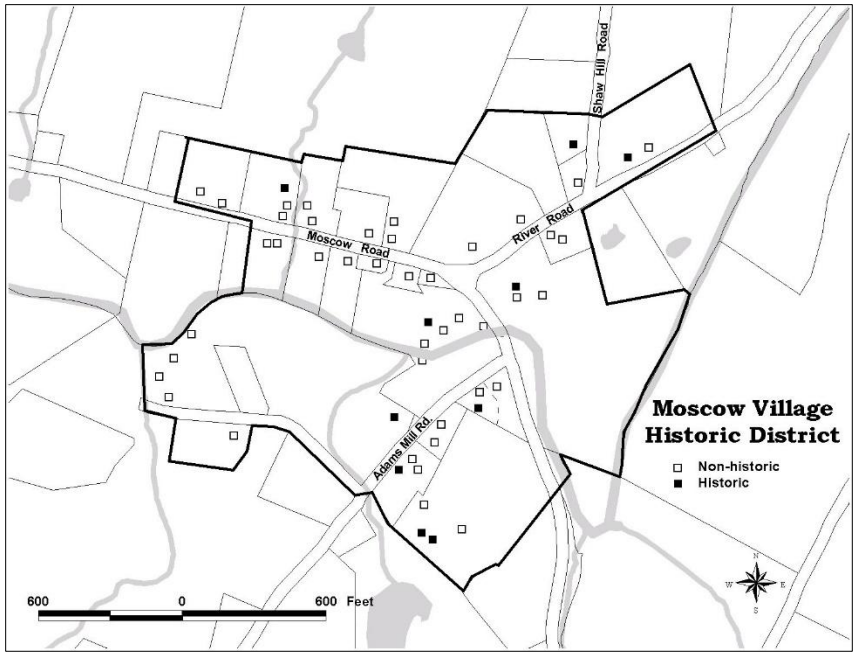
- Akeley Memorial Building (c.1902)
- Green Mountain Inn (1833)
- Stowe Community Church (c.1863)
- Stowe Free Library / Helen Day Arts Center (c.1861)
- Bloody Brook School (c.1840)
- Vermont Ski Museum (1818)
- Lackey's Variety Store (c.1830)
- Old Yard Cemetery



Map of Stowe Historic Overlay District boundaries.

Moscow Village Historic District

The Moscow Village Historic District, situated along the banks of the Little River, encompasses properties north of the river on Moscow Road, River Road, and Shaw Hill Road, as well as properties south of the river on Adams Mill Road. This rural village district includes architectural, commercial, educational, engineering, government, industrial, and transportation resources, providing a comprehensive picture of the Village's 19th- and 20th-century industrial and commercial development. Moscow Village was designated a State Historic District in 1982 and added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2008. The district contains 43 contributing historic resources.



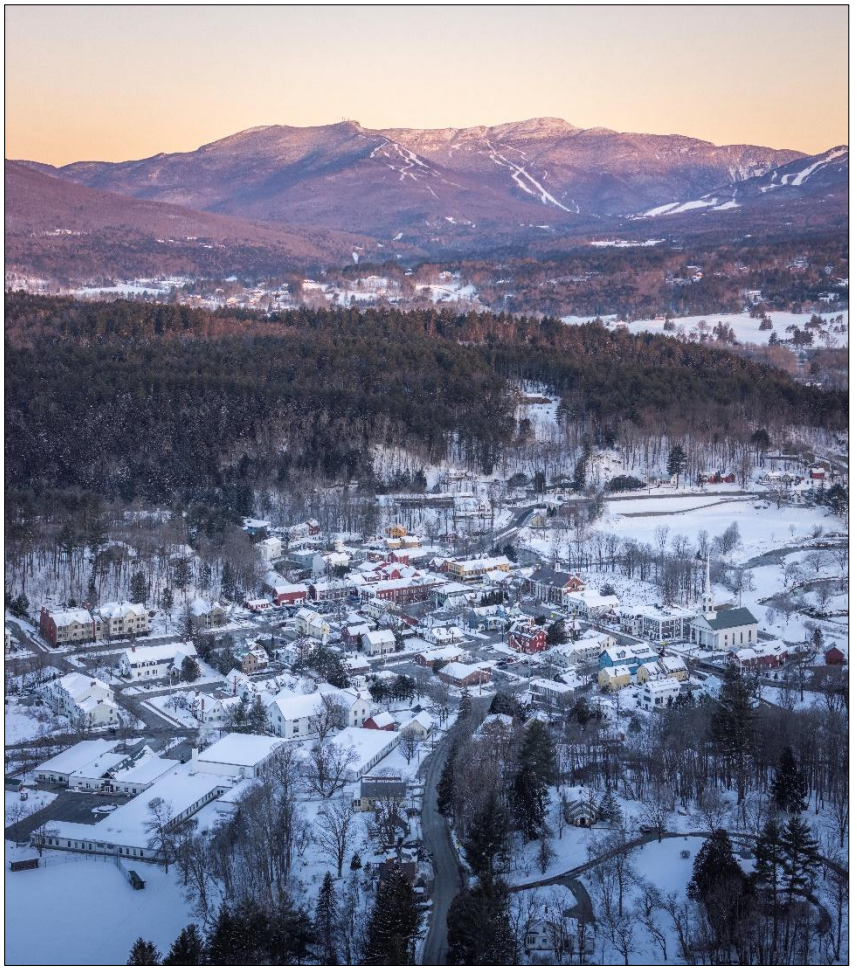
Map of the Moscow Historic District – National Register of Historic Places

Lower Village Historic District

The Lower Village was designated a State Historic District in 1982 and updated in 2006. The district includes 26 contributing historic structures, the most notable being the former Tubbs Snowshoe building, the original mill that spurred the development of the village.

State Historic Sites Survey

In 2006, the Town engaged a preservation consultant to complete a comprehensive update of the Vermont Architectural Resource Inventory (VARI), formerly known as the State Historic Sites Survey, covering all areas outside the Stowe Village Historic District. The survey identified a total of 222 historic buildings throughout the town. Since that time, some of these structures have been lost due to demolition or neglect. Buildings listed in the survey are subject to Section 10 of the zoning regulations, which requires design review for most exterior alterations and building additions.



View north-west towards Mt. Mansfield.
Photo credit: Mark Vandenberg / StoweBeautiful.com

Historic Preservation Efforts

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), established in 2000, plays a central role in protecting and promoting the town's historic resources. Recognizing the value of preserving our architectural and cultural heritage, the Town adopted its first historic preservation ordinance in 2002. This framework was expanded in 2005 with the creation of the Stowe Historic Overlay District (SHOD), which encompasses Stowe Village and Lower Village and provides enhanced protections for these concentrated historic areas and historic buildings outside of the village areas.

Within the SHOD, any new construction or exterior alterations to existing buildings, and any changes to historic structures elsewhere in town, must undergo a design review process before a zoning permit is issued. This review ensures that changes are compatible with the town's historic character, maintain architectural integrity, and respect the traditional scale, materials, and detailing of the surrounding area. Serving as the Design Review Advisory Board, the SHPC provides expert guidance, balancing the preservation of historic assets with thoughtful, contemporary development. This oversight is crucial for sustaining Stowe's unique sense of place, supporting community identity

Cultural Resources

Historic archaeological resources, including historic cellar holes, old sawmills, and other remnants of early settlements, offer vital insights into our past and help tell the story of the town's cultural and economic development. Key areas with notable archaeological features include Sterling Forest Historic Area, Brownsville, Old County Road, and Stowe Land Trust's Mill Trail property. Areas with high pre-European archaeological sensitivity are typically found within 200 feet of rivers and streams. For larger projects subject to Act 250 review or those involving state or federal funding, a preliminary archaeological site assessment is often required to ensure these irreplaceable cultural resources are identified, protected, and considered in planning and development decisions.

Sterling Forest Historic Area

In 2012, the Town received a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant to identify and map historic sites in Sterling Forest, focusing primarily on cellar holes. The survey documented seven former homesteads and farmhouses, as well as a schoolhouse and the original Pike/Shaw Mill site and Boarding House, which are situated on adjacent conserved private land with public access.



Old yard cemetery. Photo credit: Teresa Merelman

Cemeteries

Our town contains a number of cemeteries on public and private land that are often overlooked as historic resources. Cemeteries can provide a unique window into our past and the lives of our early settlers. The stones that mark early residents' graves often provide interesting and valuable information about their lives, deaths, family connections, and the society of their time.

Our Vibrant Economy: Jobs, Economic Development, and Tourism

Our local economy is deeply intertwined with our enduring connection to our community's natural beauty, outdoor recreation, and our historic charm. As one of Vermont's most desirable places to live, work, and visit, Stowe has long attracted visitors from around the globe— bringing with them opportunities that have shaped our thriving local economy.

Our community attracts visitors year-round, with each season offering something special: skiing and snowboarding in the winter, dramatic foliage and festive attractions in the fall, and hiking, biking, and outdoor fun in the summer. During spring and fall shoulder seasons, our many galleries, performances, and community events provide cultural richness for both visitors and residents.

While tourism and outdoor recreation are the anchors of our local economy, the town's growth and resilience are also a reflection of its entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to preserving our community character and quality of life. Throughout the community engagement process for this plan, a consistent theme became apparent: safeguarding Stowe's character, sense of place, and community wellbeing is essential to maintaining our strong and diverse local economy. Our future success depends on a thoughtful, balanced approach - one that understands economic development and environmental stewardship, historic character, and recreation are deeply interconnected. To ensure our community remains vibrant, resilient, and truly sustainable for generations to come, we must grow in ways that honor and protect our natural landscapes, local traditions, and the shared community values that define us. Our continued success lies in this careful balance, which makes our community not only a world-class destination, but also a place residents are proud to call home.

Since the early 2000s, the Town and the Stowe community have made strategic investments to strengthen our future, beginning with infrastructure improvements to support the growth and expansion of Stowe Mountain Resort. Over time, our community has evolved into a world-class destination not just for recreation, but also for arts, culture, and special events. These continued investments have reinforced our community identity as a welcoming, year-round destination, while deepening our commitment to protecting our natural beauty and connection to the outdoors.

Tourism and its supporting industries remain essential to our local economy. Local businesses - including hotels, inns, restaurants, shops, and service providers - benefit from visitors and seasonal and year-round residents. In turn, these businesses create jobs, support entrepreneurship, and meet community needs. Additionally, popular events like the Stowe Winter Carnival & Ice Sculptures and the British Invasion Car Show draw significant crowds and reinforce our reputation as a welcoming and lively destination.

The Town benefits from a one percent (1%) local option tax on rooms, meals, and alcohol, which directly supports municipal services and infrastructure. The Town receives 75% of the 1% collected, with the remaining 25% being directed to the state PILOT fund. These revenues now exceed pre-pandemic levels, reflecting our resilience and the enduring appeal of our community as a destination. In 2023, Stowe ranked first in Vermont for total taxable room revenue ($92,311 894), second in alcohol sales ($24,254,362) behind Burlington, and third in meals tax receipts ($68,199,464) behind only Burlington and South Burlington. On Town Meeting Day 2026, voters approved a proposed Charter change to increase the sales, rooms, meals, and alcohol LOT tax to 2%. Such change requires approval by the Vermont Legislature. For more information on the local option tax, see Chapter 3- Our Local Governance.

According to the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) Program, Stowe is home to 634 businesses - a notably high number compared to neighboring communities like Morristown (382 businesses) and Waterbury (411 businesses). Our largest employers include Stowe Mountain Resort, Mount Mansfield Company, Lodge at Spruce Peak, and von Trapp Family Lodge and Resort. Interestingly, most businesses in our community are made up of just a single employee, pointing to a strong presence of self-employed individuals and work-from-home professionals. This trend reflects our entrepreneurial spirit and highlights our community's appeal as a place where professional pursuits can thrive alongside a high quality of life.

In addition to its robust small business community, Stowe's broader workforce totaled approximately 4,500 employees in the first quarter of 2024, with an average annual wage of about $54,000. The largest employment sector was leisure and hospitality, accounting for 2,433 jobs - more than half of all employment in Stowe. Other significant sectors include trade, transportation, and utilities (482 employees), professional and business services (455 employees), and education and health services (255 employees). Smaller but equally important sectors such as construction (229 employees), financial activities (182 employees), government (173 employees), and manufacturing (115 employees) also contribute to the local economy.

As our community has flourished, so too have the complexities of managing our success. During the community engagement process to prepare this plan, many residents expressed concern that the town's growing emphasis on tourism may be tipping the balance, prioritizing visitor experiences at the expense of local quality of life. Increasing development pressures, rising housing costs, and seasonal congestion have highlighted the need for a more intentional and measured approach to supporting a sustainable local economy. This shift reflects a broader awareness that protecting the very qualities that make our community special requires thoughtful planning, active stewardship, and collaborative effort.

Sustainable tourism in our community should not be a single initiative but a collective effort involving town leaders, local businesses, conservation groups, and residents. Working together, we should ensure tourism's environmental footprint is minimized, manage the strain on infrastructure and services, and ensure that development aligns with community values. This includes efforts like managing trail use to reduce erosion, encouraging and improving alternative transportation options, supporting energy-efficient lodging, and promoting businesses that operate responsibly and source locally. It also means educating our visitors, by helping guests understand how to engage with our natural environment respectfully - through practices such as Leave No Trace, proper trash disposal, and wildlife awareness to cultivate a culture of shared responsibility that extends beyond economic transactions.



View of Main Street in Stowe. Photo courtesy of Stowe Vibrancy

At the same time, we must continue to address broader challenges: the impact of short-term rentals on housing affordability, the need for infrastructure investment, overcrowding, and peak congestion. Looking ahead, we remain committed to maintaining a strong, diversified economy- one that celebrates its tourism roots while creating space for local entrepreneurs, remote workers, and creative professionals. The goal is not simply growth, but thoughtful and responsible growth: development that enhances our community's appeal without compromising our forested hillsides, quiet trails, and historic character. It means fostering a local economy that thrives in harmony with the needs of our community, ensuring that progress does not come at the expense of what makes Stowe special. By choosing to lead with intention and integrity, we can continue to grow a local economy that serves our residents, welcomes visitors, and safeguards our natural beauty and cultural heritage for generations to come.

Our Unique Arts and Cultural Resources

Our community has a rich history of supporting arts, culture, and special events, dating back to the establishment of its first public library in 1829. For generations, arts and culture have not only enriched the lives of residents but also played a vital role in our local economy. Stowe's first winter carnival in 1921 attracted over 2,000 spectators, paving the way for the town's transformation into a vibrant, four-season destination. Arts, culture, and special events remain central to our identity, attracting visitors and fostering community pride. Our town is home to a vibrant arts community, supported by local organizations that showcase artists from Stowe, across the nation, and around the world, while offering educational programs and opportunities for creative expression across multiple disciplines. These efforts are bolstered by the Town, local businesses, nonprofits, and dedicated volunteers. Together, they sustain our dynamic cultural scene, ensuring that residents and visitors alike continue to enjoy the town's creativity and rich traditions.

Stowe Theatre Guild & Akeley Memorial Building

The Akeley Memorial Building, built as a war memorial in 1902, was once the home of the Stowe Free Library (as reorganized in 1866). The second floor contained a ticket office, gentlemen's and ladies' coat rooms at either end of the corridor, an auditorium with space for 472 opera chairs, a stage with scenery designed by David Richards of Boston, and four dressing rooms. The second floor now houses, along with town office space, the Stowe Theatre Guild. Town-funded building improvements were made in the 1990s to accommodate Guild productions. In return, the Guild provided the main stage curtains, window drapes, comfortable seating for the audience, sound and lighting equipment, and the air conditioning system. Since its first season in 1995 in this historic space, the volunteer-based Guild has been producing four to five shows from summer to fall, which are attended by over 6,000 residents and visitors each year. Productions were temporarily paused in 2024 to allow for essential air conditioning upgrades. The project was recently completed and the space is now available for use.

Town of Stowe's Cultural Campus

Located at the corner of Pond and School Streets, Stowe's Cultural Campus brings together the historic Helen Day Memorial Building and the Bloody Brook Schoolhouse, serving as the community's central hub for visual arts, library and literary programs, and the preservation and sharing of local history.



4th of July celebration on Main Street. Photo courtesy of Stowe Vibrancy

Helen Day Memorial Building

The Helen Day Memorial Building, a striking Greek Revival structure, was originally built as a school in 1863. In 1981, it was renovated and restored through a bequest from Helen Day Montanari, whose trust stipulated that the building be used as an art center and a library. Today, the Stowe Free Library occupies the first floor, while the upper level is home to The Current.

The Current

The Current (formally Helen Day Art Center) was established in 1981 to fulfill the bequest left to the Town of Stowe by Helen Day Montanari. The Current is a nonprofit center for contemporary art and an important community resource, bringing big art and ideas to our small town through exhibitions, public programs, and educational initiatives. Admission-free exhibitions with internationally renowned and regional artists are accompanied by a robust interpretive learning program including lectures, panels, and film screenings, all free to the public. The Current also offers high-quality arts education for all ages, with year-round classes, camps, workshops, and interactive programs. Committed to fostering an inclusive, diverse, and respectful culture, The Current operates on the principle that meaningful art experiences should be accessible to everyone, regardless of age, class, race, ability, or geography.



The Helen Day Memorial Library & Art Center. Photo credit: Town of Stowe

Stowe Free Library

Libraries have been a long-standing cultural entity of our community. Initially funded through private contributions, the Stowe Free Library became Vermont's first municipally funded library in 1866, following a state law that permitted town appropriations. What began with just 51 donated books and a $100 budget has grown into a thriving institution with over 35,000 holdings, including books, DVDs, audio materials, and digital resources. The library also provides access to community meeting rooms, statewide resource sharing through Inter-Library Loan, free technology classes, and free programming for children and adults. Public computers, Wi-Fi access, e-readers, and museum and park passes are also available. The seven-member Library Board of Trustees, appointed by the Selectboard, sets library policy in accordance with the Stowe Town charter. The Library Department, with other municipal employees and a contingent of local and civic-minded volunteers, work to provide services and community space to nearly 70,000 visitors each year. The Friends of the Stowe Free Library, a supporting 501(c)3 non-profit organization, conducts many fundraising efforts to supplement the municipal funding of the library and support additional community programs.

Bloody Brook Schoolhouse & Stowe Historical Society

The Stowe Historical Society, founded in 1956, plays a vital role in documenting and maintaining our community's rich history. The Society curates small exhibits in the Akeley Memorial Building and operates the restored 1825 Bloody Brook Schoolhouse, located next to the Helen Day Memorial Building in Stowe's Cultural Campus. In 2007, Stowe voters approved funding to assist in relocating and restoring the historic West Branch Schoolhouse (formerly St. John's Episcopal Church) for use by the Historical Society. Today, the organization relies on membership dues, town appropriations, and publication sales to sustain its efforts.

The Vermont Ski and Snowboard Museum

Since 1988, the Vermont Ski and Snowboard Museum, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, has been dedicated to collecting, preserving and celebrating the rich history of skiing and snowboarding in Vermont. The heritage of downhill and cross-country skiing and the birth of snowboarding come to life at the Vermont Ski and Snowboard Museum and Hall of Fame in Stowe.

Housed in the historic 1818 Old Town Hall, the museum features a collection of skis, snowboards, boots, bindings, memorabilia, art, photographs, and library and archive materials; more than 10,000 items chronicling the evolution of winter sports in Vermont. Visitors can explore iconic artifacts, view historic and current films and interviews, and discover stories of Vermont's ski areas, athletes, and innovators.

The Museum annually hosts the Hall of Fame Induction, Red Bench Speaker Series, Autumn and Vintage Auctions, and presents both rotating and permanent exhibits that bring Vermont's snow sports heritage to life year-round.

Private Arts Organizations

In addition, our community is home to several private galleries that highlight fine art, photography, sculpture, and crafts. These galleries showcase diverse collections that attract both art enthusiasts and collectors. These galleries not only exhibit and sell artwork but also help foster a thriving arts scene in our community.

Performing arts are a vital part of Stowe's cultural landscape. Stowe Performing Arts and the Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center, both nonprofit organizations led by volunteer Boards of Directors, bring concerts, theater, and film to the community. They expand access to world-class entertainment while fostering cultural enrichment and delivering high-quality performances for residents and visitors.

Beyond these galleries and organizations, numerous independent artists and artisans call Stowe home, contributing to our creative and dynamic community. Together, these artists and private arts organizations help sustain our reputation as a premier arts and cultural destination, offering residents and visitors access to a wide range of artistic experiences.

Special Events

In addition to year-round arts and cultural programming, our community hosts numerous special events that celebrate arts, culture, outdoor recreation, and local traditions. From seasonal festivals to athletic competitions and cultural gatherings, these events draw residents and visitors alike, contributing to a vibrant atmosphere and supporting economic vitality.



Balloons and Mountains by Willow Nichols (10th grade, SHS)



British invasion on Main Street. Photo courtesy of Stowe Vibrancy



Art on Park. Photo courtesy of Stowe Vibrancy

Popular annual events include:

- **Stowe Winter Carnival –** A cherished tradition since 1923, featuring ice carving competitions, ski races, and family-friendly activities that celebrate Stowe's rich winter sports heritage.

- **Stowe Winter Rendezvous** - The annual LGBTQ Pride celebration, held alongside Stowe's Winter Carnival, draws hundreds of LGBTQ skiers, riders, and winter enthusiasts for a variety of activities, including ice skating, sleigh rides, snowmobiling, dog sledding, hot tubs, bonfires, and live entertainment.

- **Stowe Jazz Festival –** A free, multi-day event that brings world-class jazz musicians to venues across town, creating a vibrant musical experience.

- **Old-Fashioned Fourth of July Celebration –** A festive day filled with a patriotic parade, fireworks, and a variety of family-friendly activities.

- **British Invasion –** One of North America's premier British car shows, attracting auto enthusiasts from across the country.

- **Art on Park –** A summer series held on seven Friday evenings, where visitors can stroll down Park Street, enjoy live music, and explore works from local artists and artisan crafters while sampling food and beverages from local vendors.

- **Recreational Races & Outdoor Events –** Including iconic competitions such as the Stowe Derby, the Race to the Top of Vermont, and various cycling and running events that highlight Stowe's stunning landscape.

- **Exposed Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition and Festival –** The Current's annual outdoor sculpture exhibition, showcasing public art throughout town. Sculptures are sited on both public and private land throughout the village and at The Current. The free opening

festival in the summer of every year features complimentary live music, food trucks, ice cream, and a walkabout with artist talks at each sculpture.

While special events bring economic benefits and enhance community vibrancy, they also present challenges such as increased traffic congestion, parking limitations, and added demands on public safety and infrastructure which can strain local resources. Managing noise, waste, traffic, and environmental impacts is essential to preserving our community's natural beauty and quality of life. To address these concerns, the Town established a Special Events Ordinance in 2017 to help regulate large gatherings and mitigate their side effects. In 2024, the Selectboard approved nineteen special events. Finding the right balance between special events and community well-being is essential for maintaining our charm and livability. Thoughtful planning will ensure that our community remains a welcoming and sustainable destination where both residents and visitors can enjoy meaningful experiences year-round.



Music in the meadow. Photo credit: Teresa Merelman



Exposed exhibit. Photo credit: Teresa Merelman

Our Settlement Patterns & Land Use

For generations, our community has embraced a vision of lively village centers nestled within open countryside, shaping growth in ways that celebrates our natural beauty and safeguards the rural character that defines our community identity. This balance remains at the heart of our community's values. Today's land use patterns reflect the legacy of our historic settlement, shaped by natural features, environmental constraints, and transportation networks, and reinforced through decades of thoughtful community planning. The result is a logical and well-organized framework for a mountain community: compact development within Stowe Village and our planned growth centers, complemented by surrounding rural areas that support farming, forestry, low-density residential uses, outdoor recreation, and home occupations.

Land use planning provides the framework for achieving this balance by guiding how land is used and developed to respond to community needs, economic opportunity, and environmental stewardship. Through policies, programs, and regulations, the Town purposefully directs growth in ways that support housing, transportation, infrastructure needs, natural resource protection, and community character. In high-amenity communities like ours - where scenic landscapes, recreational resources, and cultural assets attract both residents and visitors - land use planning is especially important. Without careful planning, unmanaged development threatens to erode the very attributes that define our community identity and support our long-term economic vitality.

Since the 1970s, the Town's land use policies have deliberately guided the location and character of growth and development. New commercial and mixed-use development has been directed to planned growth centers, primarily along Mountain Road/VT-108 and at the base of Spruce Peak, while our historic village centers have remained the focal points of civic, cultural, and economic activity. This pattern reflects our conscious effort to accommodate growth where infrastructure exists or can be efficiently extended, while intentionally limiting the fragmentation of our rural lands, protecting our irreplaceable open spaces, working lands, and scenic landscapes.



View west towards Main Street. Photo credit: Mark Vandenberg / StoweBeautiful.com

Our future land use plan, anchored by the Future Land Use Map, is a central guide for how our town will grow and evolve over the next ten or more years. It reflects our community's shared vision for where and how development should occur. By aligning decisions on housing, jobs, and commercial development, this Plan helps prioritize resources and directs investments to areas best suited for growth. Each land use category identifies the types and scale of development envisioned, whether reinforcing existing patterns or charting a long-term vision for change. Together, the Future Land Use Map and its categories provide a framework for consistent, coordinated decision-making. The Future Land Use Plan also forms the foundation for future updates to our zoning and subdivision regulations, guides investments in public facilities and

infrastructure, and works in tandem with the goals and policies in the Implementation Element to translate our community values into clear action priorities.



View south along Vermont Route 100.
Photo credit: Mark Vandenberg / StoweBeautiful.com

Our zoning and subdivision regulations are the primary regulatory means through which land use and development decisions are made. To remain effective, these regulations must evolve with changing community needs and reflect best practices in land use planning. As growth pressures continue, policies should steer new development toward our planned growth centers, encouraging infill, reuse of existing structures, and compact patterns that strengthen our village centers while protecting our rural countryside. At the same time, our municipal plan and regulations must be adaptable - responsive to emerging housing, commercial, transportation, and employment needs, as well as opportunities to conserve critical lands. By updating these guiding documents as conditions change, we can ensure that land use decisions support both community goals and the long-term stewardship of our natural and historic resources.

Statewide Land Use Planning & Mandates

Act 47 (the HOME Act), adopted in 2023, updated Vermont's land use and housing framework to respond to the statewide housing shortage. The Act requires municipalities to allow higher residential densities and a broader range of housing types, including duplexes and multi-unit dwellings, in areas served by municipal water and sewer infrastructure. For Stowe, the HOME Act has particular relevance given our desirability as a destination for seasonal homes and our existing water and sewer systems, which connect Stowe Village and lower village areas, with our designated growth areas and major resort centers. While we have long supported appropriate growth in these infrastructure-served areas, we have also long planned for the rural lands between and connecting these centers to remain low-density countryside. This historic settlement pattern, compact villages separated by open, scenic landscapes, is a defining feature of our community and central to our identity, character, and long-term vision.

Although our municipal infrastructure physically connects these areas, the community has historically directed density to designated growth centers while intentionally planning for the connecting lands to remain rural countryside. Under the HOME Act, we must now plan for minimum residential densities in certain locations that were not previously envisioned as denser neighborhoods, creating new challenges in balancing state requirements with the preservation of rural character.

While the HOME Act reinforces several of our long-standing goals, including supporting a year-round community, expanding housing options, and directing growth to designated centers, it does not include specific requirements to ensure that new housing serves low- and moderate-income households. As a result, there is concern that market-driven development could continue to favor high-cost and seasonal housing, limiting progress toward housing affordability for local residents and the workforce. Through this Plan, we approach implementation of the HOME Act thoughtfully and with intention. We seek creative and locally responsive solutions that address the growing need for housing affordable to low- and moderate-income households while preserving our shared community values, rural landscape, and historic settlement patterns that define our community and guide this Plan.

Act 181 (H.687), enacted in 2024, represents a significant reform of Vermont's land use and development framework, particularly the state's long-standing Act 250 program. The Act shifts regulation away from a primarily size-based review toward a location-based approach that directs growth to areas where development is planned for and supported by infrastructure, including downtowns, village centers, and other designated growth areas. This approach is intended to support housing production and community development while continuing to protect rural, agricultural, and ecologically sensitive lands.

A central component of Act 181 is the requirement that regional planning commissions prepare standardized future land use maps identifying land use categories across the state. These maps establish a tiered system under which Act 250 jurisdiction and review requirements vary by location: areas planned for growth may be eligible for permitting exemptions or streamlined review, while rural and environmentally sensitive areas remain subject to more comprehensive review. This framework is intended to better align state land use oversight with community-led planning, promote compact settlement patterns, and advance conservation goals.

The Town has proactively collaborated with the Lamoille County Planning Commission (LCPC) in the development of the regional future land use map. Through this process, the Town is seeking Tier 1B designation for the Stowe Village, Lower Village, and Mountain Road Village areas, with the goal of encouraging additional housing in locations planned for higher-density, mixed-use development.



View north through the Smugglers' Notch. Photo credit: Mark Vandenberg / StoweBeautiful.com

Our Scenic Gateways

Vision: Our gateway areas will remain open, scenic landscapes that reflect our community's natural beauty and historic settlement pattern.

Three gateways welcome visitors to our community, each offering a distinctive and picturesque introduction to our treasured scenic landscapes, rich traditions and culture, and distinct character.

The intersection of VT Route 100 and Moscow Road serves as our primary southern gateway, where sweeping views across open fields showcase the dramatic western slopes of Mount Mansfield. This striking entrance introduces visitors to our renowned scenic and natural beauty.

Approaching from the north, VT Route 100 presents a contrasting rural view, with open farmland and distant mountain vistas offering a serene welcome before reaching our historic downtown, Stowe Village. The transition from countryside to our compact, historic village center becomes most apparent near Brush Hill Road and West Hill Road, where the landscape gradually gives way to a more developed and built environment.

Our western gateway, along VT Route 108, emerges dramatically as travelers exit Smugglers' Notch and approach Stowe Mountain Resort. This entrance has been enhanced with improved parking, a small information kiosk, and the Barnes Camp Visitor Center - a historic structure originally built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s and fully restored in 2014. Staffed by volunteers, Barnes Camp has seen a rise in visitors from 3,000 in 2016 to over 10,000 per season, reflecting the growing popularity of our many outdoor recreation opportunities.

In addition to these primary gateways, smaller localized entry points help define our many distinct neighborhoods and zoning districts. The Moscow Road bridge over the Little River marks the eastern edge of Moscow Village, while along VT Route 108, steep slopes and exposed ledge signal the northern boundary of Mountain Road Village, with the VT Route 108 bridge over the West Branch acting as its southern edge.

These gateways, both large and small, contribute to our distinct sense of place and reinforce our connection to our surrounding scenic landscape.

Planned Growth Centers

To guide development in a manner that reinforces our historic and traditional settlement patterns, the Town has designated five areas as "planned growth centers," each with distinct size and function. All of our planned growth centers are served by municipal water and sewer systems and are designed to balance growth with the protection of our natural, cultural, and historic resources, promote infrastructure efficiency, and, above all, preserve our community identity and shared vision. These centers are intended to accommodate higher-density residential uses, commercial, and mixed-use development and include:

- Stowe Village and the Lower Village, which serve as our civic, residential, commercial, and cultural centers and comprise our State-designated downtown and lower village center.

- Two "SKI-PUDs" including Stowe Mountain Resort & Spruce Peak, and von Trapp Family Lodge & Resort, which are intended to support both outdoor recreation and concentrated resort development within one or more areas, while maintaining large tracts of surrounding undeveloped lands.

- Mountain Road Village and Mountain Road Crossroads. These two areas along Mountain Road/VT-108 are planned as village-scale growth centers, separated by green belts and designed to encourage higher-density, mixed-use development with strong pedestrian connections. The goal is to create a compact, walkable environment that functions as a vibrant village center and welcoming destination.

Stowe Village

Vision: Stowe Village serves as the community's civic and commercial heart, featuring compact, walkable development and compatible traditional architecture. Its surrounding residential neighborhoods create a seamless sense of continuity, reinforcing the village's historic character while supporting vibrant, community-focused growth.

Stowe Village is more than a scenic destination; it is the historic and cultural heart of our community. With its distinctive character and walkable scale, the village functions as a vibrant center of civic, commercial, residential, and cultural life, meeting the daily needs of both residents and visitors. Essential services, including grocery stores, personal services, and professional offices, are centrally located, alongside key civic and cultural institutions such as Town Hall, Stowe Elementary School, the Library, The Current (formerly the Helen Day Art

Center), the Vermont Ski Museum, the Post Office, Stowe Arena, Memorial Park, the Gale Recreation Center, and the Public Safety Facility. This diverse mix of uses and institutions reinforces the village's role as our community gathering place and strengthens social, cultural, and economic connections.



View of Main Street. Photo credit: Mark Vandenberg / StoweBeautiful.com

Efforts to preserve and enhance Stowe Village have been ongoing for years and will continue into the future. In 2018 voters approved a bond of $3,400,000 for the purpose of financing the cost of constructing sidewalks, curbs, and associated amenities along Main Street. Voters also approved a bond of $3,200,000 for the purpose of relocating and removing overhead utility lines, equipment, and related apparatus on Main Street. This project was completed in 2020 and has dramatically improved the aesthetics and appearance of our treasured Main Street.

Stowe Village Center Vibrancy Project

As a community, we have long recognized the importance of maintaining our thriving and vibrant historic village center. In 2006, the Town received a grant to explore strategies to strengthen our downtown as the vibrant heart of Stowe - supporting local businesses, fostering community life, and enhancing the town's overall vitality. The Town engaged Crane Associates of Burlington, Vermont, to assess the strengths and challenges, analyze market demand from residents and visitors, and develop revitalization recommendations. A Village Center Committee was appointed by the Selectboard to prioritize and implement these recommendations.

The initiative led to the formation of Stowe Vibrancy, Inc. in 2009, now serving as our official "Downtown Organization". Working closely with the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), Stowe Vibrancy promotes the vitality and economic sustainability of the village through events, and partnerships with local businesses. Signature events, including Newcomers' Night, an Old-Fashioned Fourth of July Celebration, Art on Park, British Invasion, and a Traditional Christmas in Stowe, have solidified our community's reputation as a premier four-season destination. Today, summer tourism surpasses even peak winter ski season, reflecting the success of these collective efforts. Beyond special events, Stowe Vibrancy collaborates with the Town and local businesses to enhance infrastructure and economic development, ensuring that Stowe Village remains a lively and welcoming gathering place.

Designated Downtown & Village Center Programs

The Vermont Downtown Program supports historic community centers by providing financial incentives, technical assistance, and resources to

encourage economic development while preserving Vermont's unique settlement patterns. In 2006, Stowe Village received its Village Center designation, encompassing both Stowe Village and the Lower Village. In 2016, we earned Designated Downtown status, prompting the creation of two separate planning designations:

- Stowe Village - Designated Downtown
- Lower Village - Designated Village Center

These designations have fueled reinvestment and economic growth, reinforcing our long-standing land use goals of maintaining compact village centers surrounded by open countryside. On March 25, 2024, the Lower Village Center Designation was renewed, followed by the Stowe Village Downtown Designation renewal on April 22, 2024. The Town remains committed to maintaining these designations and adapting to any programmatic changes in the future.

Lower Village

Vision: The Lower Village acts as a vibrant center of community life, fostering economic growth, walkable connections, and traditional architectural character, while promoting efficient land use that harmonizes with Stowe Village.

The Lower Village, once known as Mill Village, serves as a natural extension of Stowe Village, blending historic charm with commercial activity along VT Route 100. With small lots and an eclectic mix of historic buildings, the Lower Village retains its classic New England village aesthetic while complementing Stowe Village. Recognized as both a designated Village Center and a State of Vermont Historic District, the Lower Village plays a key role in our community identity.

Over the past decade, significant private and public investments have revitalized the Lower Village, with new construction, infrastructure improvements, and historic property renovations. In 2019, the Town enhanced pedestrian connectivity by adding over 1,000 feet of sidewalks and curbing along South Main Street (VT-100). This project coincided with municipal water main upgrades for improved fire protection and the VT-100 reconstruction, which reconfigured the River Road/South Main Street intersection. These improvements have strengthened pedestrian safety and improved the connection between the Lower Village and Stowe Village.

Mountain Road Village (MRV) & Mountain Road Crossroads (MRC)

Vision: The MRV and MRC areas are envisioned to be compact, mixed-use villages that integrate commercial and residential uses, provide walkable connections, and support our vibrant, four-season travel and tourism community.

The Mountain Road /VT Route 108 stretches roughly seven miles from Stowe Village along the West Branch to Stowe Mountain Resort and through Smugglers' Notch to the Town of Cambridge. Since the 1950s, this corridor has been the focal point for commercial growth and development. By the 1990s, however, concerns emerged about the increase of strip development patterns along the Mountain Road, particularly between Stowe Village and Luce Hill Road. In response, redistricting and zoning changes in 1998 reclassified the area between Stowe Village and Notchbrook Road, establishing the Mountain Road Village (MRV), Mountain Road Crossroads (MRC), and Upper Mountain Road (UMR) zoning districts to guide growth and maintain our unique community character. Overtime, these zoning changes will enable these planned growth centers to develop overtime as compact centers that serve both local residents and our important tourism industry. To support this, moderate to high residential densities and a mix of commercial uses are allowed and encouraged.

SKI-PUD's

Vision: Our SKI-PUDs will serve as year-round resort destinations by focusing growth in compact, mixed-use nodes that integrate lodging, recreation, residential, and commercial opportunities. Development will be paired with open space conservation and protection of scenic and natural resources, while allowing flexibility to adapt to changing needs to ensure continued success as premier recreation destinations.

Two of our planned growth centers, Stowe Mountain Resort/Spruce Peak and Trapp Family Lodge (recently renamed von Trapp Family Lodge & Resort), are designated SKI-PUD's, a tool created to guide the growth of our major resort areas. The purpose of these areas is to support year-

round resort vitality while protecting our natural and scenic resources. SKI-PUDs provide flexibility in siting and design, allowing a mix of residential uses, commercial lodging, recreation facilities, and other amenities that sustain four-season resort operations. At the same time, they require development to be concentrated in compact nodes, coordinated with infrastructure and services, and balanced with meaningful open space. This approach reflects our historic settlement pattern, advances our land use goals, and ensures that resort growth strengthens our local economy while maintaining the rural and scenic character that defines our community.



Stowe Mountain Resort. Photo credit: Teresa Merelman

SKI-PUD: Stowe Mountain Resort & Spruce Peak

Comprised of approximately ±3,188 acres, this SKI-PUD includes Stowe Mountain Resort, the Lodge at Spruce Peak (formerly Stowe Mountain Lodge), the resort amenities within Spruce Peak Village, and surrounding recreational and conserved lands owned by the State of Vermont. Following a multi-year planning process, the Stowe Mountain Resort 2000 Community Master Plan was approved by the Development Review Board in 2004. This plan aimed to enhance trail, lift, and snowmaking infrastructure while supporting a mix of residential, resort, recreational, and commercial development at the base of Spruce Peak. Nearly all improvements outlined in the approved Master Plan have now either been completed or permitted. Now developed, Spruce Peak Village is characterized by its dense, compact design, carefully planned to reflect the area's natural setting and cultural heritage, with architecture that blends sensitively into the surrounding landscape.

Recognized as one of the premier ski destinations in the East, Stowe Mountain Resort (SMR) has a rich history dating back to the 1930s. In February 2017, Vail Resorts, a major player in the ski industry, acquired the resort, marking its first purchase in the Northeast. Prior to the acquisition, SMR was owned and operated by the Mount Mansfield Company, a subsidiary of American International Group (AIG). The sale included the resort's ski operations, base area facilities, and related assets but excluded The Lodge at Spruce Peak and surrounding real estate developments, which remained under separate ownership. At the time of the sale, Stowe Mountain Resort had undergone significant infrastructure investments, including upgraded lifts and expanded amenities, making it an attractive addition to Vail's portfolio. Following the acquisition, SMR was integrated into Vail's Epic Pass, increasing accessibility for skiers and riders nationwide and strengthening the resort's reputation as a premier East Coast destination.

SKI-PUD: von Trapp Family Lodge & Resort

Encompassing approximately ±2,600 acres, this SKI-PUD includes the von Trapp Family Lodge & Resort and associated amenities, surrounding residential areas, and recreational and conserved lands. Recently renamed von Trapp Family Lodge & Resort, the lodge was first established on Luce Hill in 1948 and began welcoming guests in the summer of 1950. After a devastating fire in 1980, the original structure was rebuilt.



Trapp Family Lodge & Resort. Photo courtesy of von Trapp Family Lodge & Resort

As a designated SKI-PUD, it is anticipated that additional resort, residential, and recreation development will continue to occur in future years. Past development of this area has respected our shared community goal of fostering compact settlements surrounded by undeveloped countryside. This was reinforced in 1996 when a conservation easement on 1,110 acres west of the lodge was donated to the Stowe Land Trust. In 2004, an additional 513 acres, known as the Adams Camp property, was also protected through a conservation easement. The Adams Camp conservation easement is co-held by the Town of Stowe, Stowe Land Trust and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. These conservation efforts ensure that a significant portion of this SKI-PUD will remain protected open space, preserving the resort's natural beauty and recreational appeal.

Moscow Village

Vision: Moscow Village will continue to reflect its historic mill village heritage, with modest, compatible development that preserves its small-scale character and strong sense of place.

Moscow Village, an unincorporated hamlet along the Little River at the gateway to Nebraska Valley, was first settled in the early 1800s as Smiths Falls. It stands today as a well-preserved example of a historic New England mill village. In recognition of its heritage, Moscow Village was added to the National Register of Historic Places in the summer of 2008. Among its most prominent features is its unique character, which results in a strong sense of community identity. This character has been strengthened in recent years by the redevelopment of the Adams Mill and construction of the new Stowe Electric Department administrative offices, the revitalization of the Moscow General Stowe, and reinvestment into the surrounding residential properties.

With recent and ongoing redevelopment and reinvestment in Moscow Village, there is growing interest in pursuing Village Center designation for this historic community. This designation aligns with our planning goals, supporting reinvestment and preservation, while fostering economic and community vitality. By partnering with the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), the Planning Commission and Selectboard plan to collaborate with the Moscow community to seek Village Center designation, ensuring that Moscow retains its distinctive character while benefiting from the same revitalization opportunities and financial incentives as Stowe Village and the Lower Village.



Moscow Village. Photo credit: Stowe Electric Department

Mixed-Use/ Moderate Residential Density

Vision: This mixed-use area will accommodate moderate-density residential and commercial uses, with development guided by high-quality site and building design that complements adjacent growth centers and maintains the corridor's distinctive character.

Stretching along Mountain Road (VT-108) between Stowe Village and Mountain Road Village, this area is envisioned to accommodate a balanced mix of moderate-density residential and commercial uses. Thoughtful site and building design will foster a lively, pedestrian-friendly environment with easy access to transit, supporting ongoing economic activity and housing opportunities, while preserving the character and charm of the corridor and its neighboring growth centers.

Residential Neighborhoods

Vision: With access to municipal utility systems, these areas are envisioned as thoughtfully designed residential neighborhoods offering a diverse mix of housing types at medium to high densities, fostering a sense of neighborhood vitality, accessibility, and connection.

Situated in areas with municipal utility services but outside designated growth centers, these residential neighborhoods are designed to meet our housing needs while promoting primarily residential uses at moderate densities. A mix of housing types - such as single-family homes, duplexes, and small multi-family dwellings - are supported, with pedestrian connections to nearby shops, schools, parks, and community facilities. Development should foster a strong sense of neighborhood identity through human-scale design, pedestrian connections, and architecture that is compatible with the surrounding landscape, while also conserving natural features and open spaces. Limited neighborhood-scale services or civic uses may be appropriate when they enhance livability and reinforce the neighborhood character.



Western view above Cape Cod Road. Photo credit: Mark Vandenberg / StoweBeautiful.com

Upper Mountain Road (UMR)

Vision: The Upper Mountain Road will retain its rural scale and scenic qualities, accommodating residential, recreational, and limited commercial uses that fit the landscape while avoiding strip development and preserving open fields and scenic views.

The Upper Mountain Road (UMR) area, established in 1998, runs along VT-108 from Strom Farm Road to the base of Harlow Hill, excluding the Edson Hill Road intersection. This area by design is intended to guide development along the "upper" Mountain Road, discourage strip development, and support low-density residential, recreational, and commercial uses. The area will preserve the scenic and rural character of the landscape, encourage development that respects our natural and cultural environment, and protects our open fields and other natural features. Today, the UMR District is constrained by municipal sewer allocation limits under the Town's Act 250 permit. This plan calls for a re-evaluation of these restrictions to explore innovative solutions that maximize the use of municipal utilities, support additional housing to meet workforce needs, and continue safeguarding the areas scenic and rural character.

Rural Residential

Vision: Our rural residential areas are defined by low-density housing, farming, and forestry, with new development carefully clustered to protect scenic views, farmland, natural resources, and our traditional countryside character.

Historically, our village centers were surrounded by open countryside and scenic hillsides. Over the past fifty years, much of this landscape has gradually been converted to rural residential neighborhoods and subdivisions, shifting these areas from being predominantly rural to a more suburban character. Unlike village centers and planned growth centers, rural areas have absorbed most low-density residential growth. Without careful planning, such development can fragment landscapes, reduce farmland viability, increase automobile dependence, and diminish scenic and ecological values.

Since the 1970s, most of the town has been zoned under four "Rural Residential" (RR) districts, which aim to preserve natural and scenic qualities, protect open space, support agriculture and forestry, maintain rural character, and limit intensive development. RR districts range from one dwelling per five acres (RR5) to one per acre (RR1), with permitted uses including residential, recreational, farming, forestry, and limited commercial activity in RR1. These areas continue to provide low-density development that offers privacy, access to natural amenities, and a connection to the community's rural heritage.

Managing rural residential areas going forward should focus on clustering development, protecting open spaces, and preserving natural and cultural features. This plan calls for a careful review of the subdivision regulations to ensure that future rural residential development continues to reflect our shared vision, values, and commitment to long-term sustainability.

Forests & Conserved Lands

Vision: Forests, farmland, and open spaces will continue to shape our community's identity, with farming and forestry maintained as primary land uses and conservation practices employed to safeguard scenic vistas, natural resources, and the character of our rural landscapes.

Beyond our planned growth centers, residential neighborhoods, and rural residential areas, lie lands designated for forests and conservation, forming a core part of our natural landscape. These areas encompass the slopes of the Green Mountains and Worcester Range, and are valued for their steep terrain, scenic beauty, and sensitive environmental features. Development in these areas is carefully managed to protect fragile soils, headwater streams, wildlife habitat, and scenic resources. By steering growth away from these sensitive lands, we safeguard public health and safety while preserving traditional uses such as forestry, outdoor recreation, and wildlife management.

Our Land Use Regulations

The Town (and Village) of Stowe adopted its first permanent zoning and subdivision regulations in the 1970s, providing a framework that has guided growth and development ever since. Today, all 'land development' requires a municipal zoning permit. Several key regulatory tools have played a central role in shaping development throughout our community, each are described below.

Planned Development. Planned developments, including both Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) and Planned Residential Developments (PRDs) allow flexibility in dimensional requirements - such as lot size and setbacks - enabling clustering of units, creative design, and preservation of open space. Within our community there are four Agricultural PRDs (Stonybrook, Covered Bridge, Little River Farm, and Weeks Hill Meadow), two Ski PUDs (von Trapp Family Lodge and Stowe Mountain Resort), and one Resort PUD (Topnotch). Stowe Club Highlands was formerly a Resort PUD but has since been reclassified as a PRD. Notably, each SKI-PUD contains well over 1,000 acres of permanently protected land. Resort PUDs require a minimum of 100 contiguous acres.

What is a Planned Unit Development?

Often called a Planned Unit Development (PUD) or Planned Residential Development (PRD), a planned development is a land use tool authorized under Vermont law (24 V.S.A. § 4417). It allows for a comprehensive, site-specific design that may not be achievable under standard zoning requirements. Planned developments provide flexibility in how regulations are applied, encouraging creative and efficient land use, compact design, and the preservation of open space.

Ridgeline and Hillside Overlay District (RHOD). Adopted in 1998, the RHOD protects scenic and natural resources in high-elevation, steep-slope, and visually sensitive areas. Development within this district is reviewed to minimize environmental and visual impacts while allowing carefully designed, low-impact growth.

Transferable Development Rights (TDR). The TDR program is intended to direct growth to designated development areas while limiting it in sensitive natural and scenic areas. This is accomplished by transferring development rights from "sending areas" to appropriate "receiving areas," helping to balance conservation and responsible growth. Although TDRs have been part of the Town's zoning toolkit since their adoption in 1998, they have seen limited use. To date, only one transfer of development rights has been approved: from a property in the Upper Mountain Road Zoning District (a designated sending area) to the Stoweflake property in the Mountain Road Village Zoning District (a designated receiving area).

Meadowland Overlay District (MOD). The MOD safeguards our open meadows, floodplains, wetlands, and agricultural lands along the Route 108 corridor. It controls building location and site design and utilizes transferable development rights to direct growth to appropriate receiving zones.

Stowe Historic Overlay District (SHOD). This design review district encourages development in Stowe Village and the Lower Village that is aesthetically compatible with historic character while allowing flexibility in architectural evolution. The regulations also guide alterations to existing historic buildings throughout community, preserving their architectural integrity.

Flood Hazard Overlay District. Development within the 100-year floodplain is carefully regulated to prevent increases in flood height or velocity, protect buildings from flood damage, and ensure land is safe and suitable for development.

Fluvial Erosion Hazard (FEH) Overlay District. The FEH Overlay District regulates development in erosion-prone areas, minimizing property damage and health risks. It discourages uses in areas susceptible to fluvial erosion and restricts development that could increase hazards.

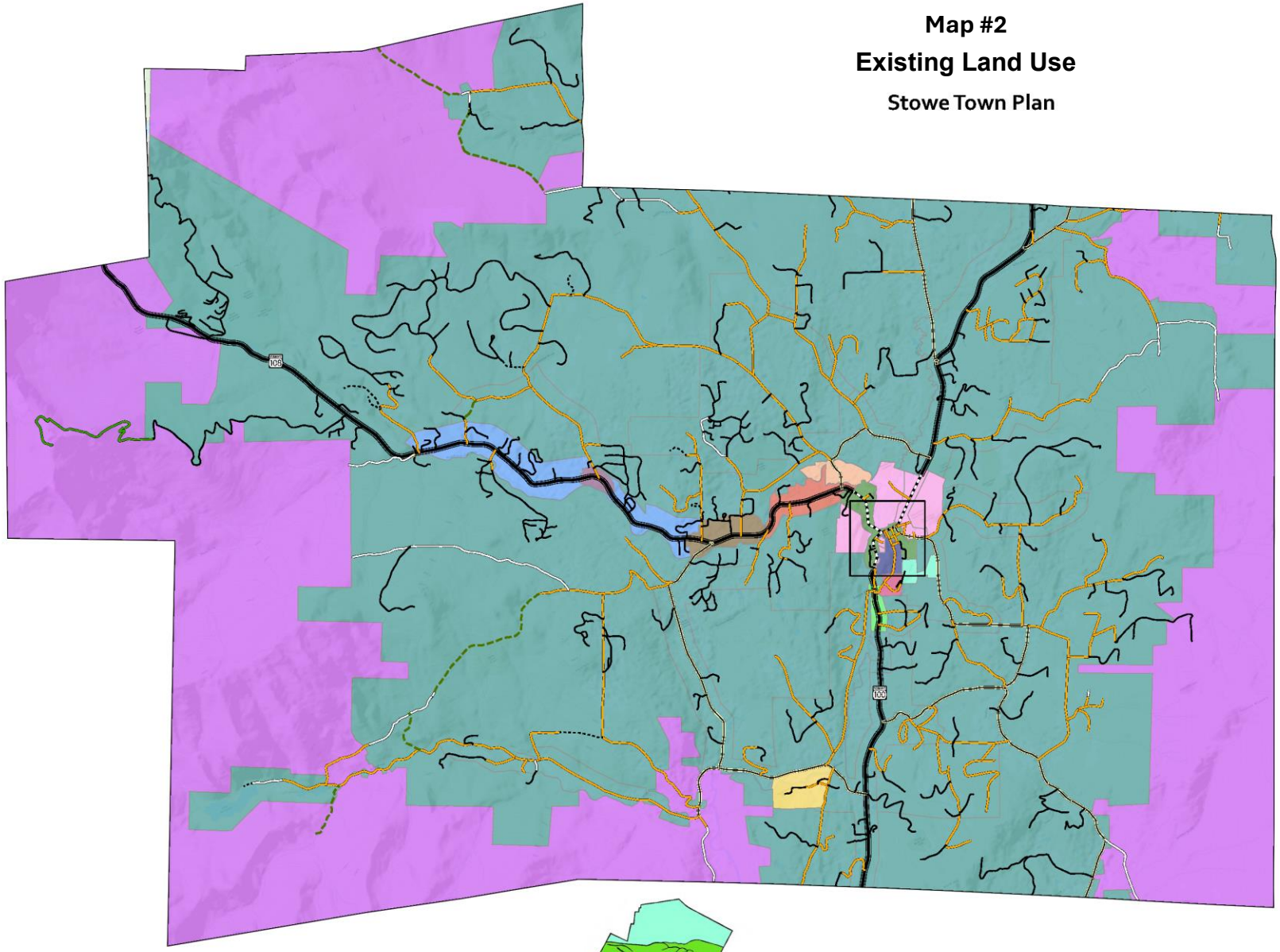
Subdivision Regulations. All land subdivision proposals are reviewed against fourteen planning and design standards, including character of the area, to ensure they do not adversely impact public health and safety, neighboring properties, the environment, or the town's rural and historic character.

Other Regulations. Our municipal land use regulations also manage outdoor lighting, landscaping for commercial properties, development near watercourses, stormwater management, highway access, signage, and outdoor merchandise displays to support community character and environmental protection.



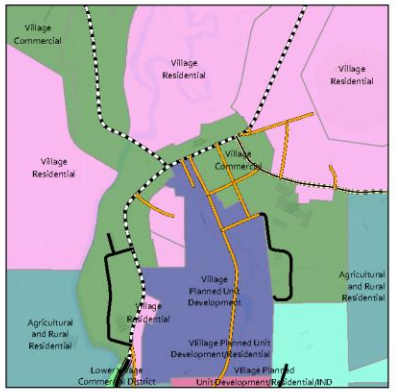
Photo credit: Mark Vandenberg / StoweBeautiful.com

Map #2
Existing Land Use
Stowe Town Plan



Road Class
- State Highway
- Town Highway Class 1
- Town Highway Class 2
- Town Highway Class 3
- Town Highway Class 4
- State Forest Highway
- Legal Trail
- Private Road
- Discontinued Road

Zoning Boundaries
- Agricultural and Rural Residential
- Forest Reserve District
- Highway Tourist District
- Lower Village Commercial District
- Moscow Commercial District
- Mountain Road Crossroads District
- Mountain Road Village District
- Upper Mountain Road
- Village Planned Unit Development/Residential
- Village Planned Unit Development/Residential/IND
- Village Commercial
- Village Planned Unit Development
- Village Residential
- West Branch Community Service District

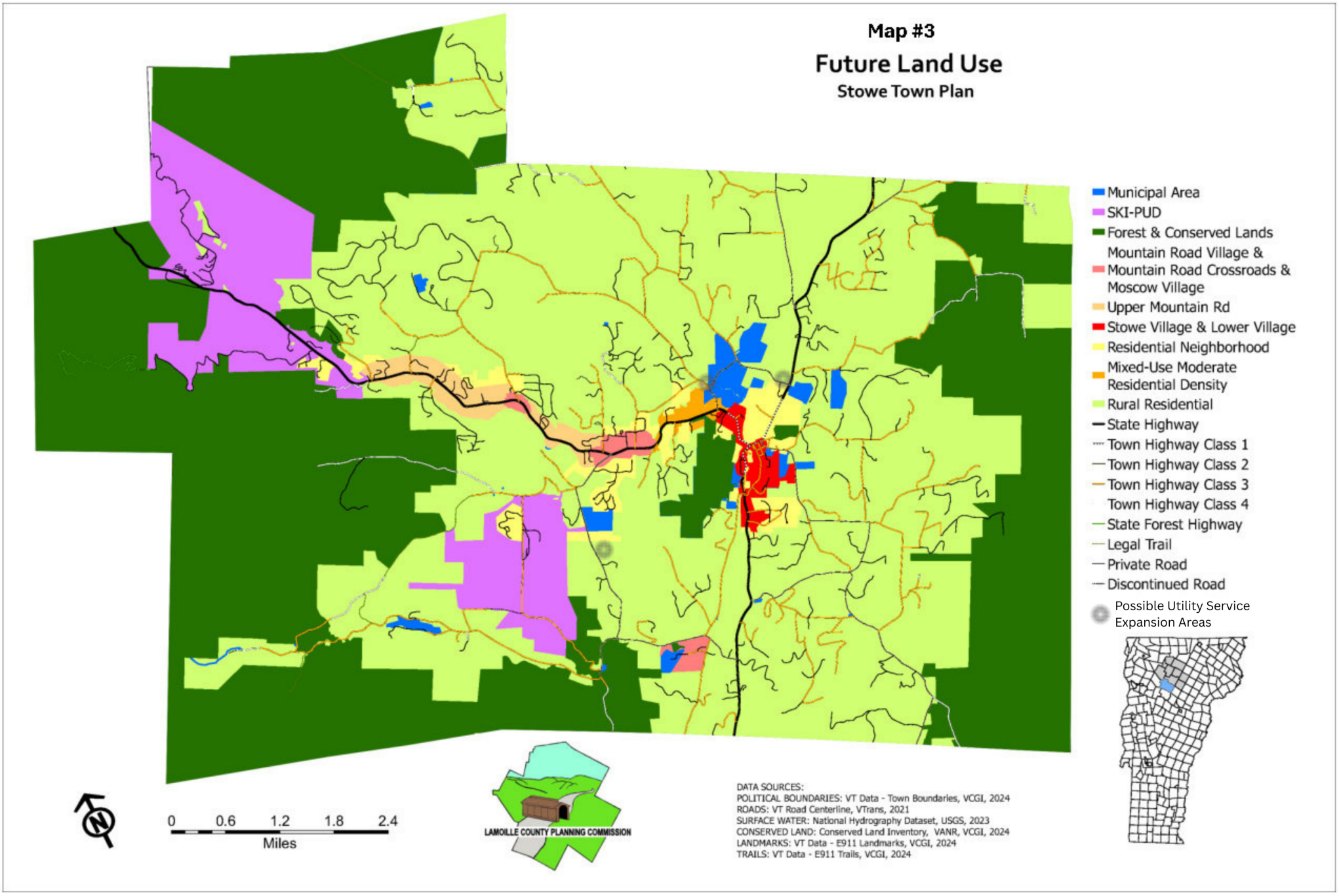




0 0.6 1.2 1.8 2.4
Miles

LAMOILLE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

DATA SOURCES:
POLITICAL BOUNDARIES: VT Data - Town Boundaries, VCGI, 2024
ROADS: VT Road Centerline, VTrans, 2021
SURFACE WATER: National Hydrography Dataset, USGS, 2023
ZONING: Digitized by LCPC, 2017


Map #3
Future Land Use
Stowe Town Plan
Municipal Area
SKI-PUD
Forest & Conserved Lands
Mountain Road Village &
Mountain Road Crossroads &
Moscow Village
Upper Mountain Rd
Stowe Village & Lower Village
Residential Neighborhood
Mixed-Use Moderate
Residential Density
Rural Residential
State Highway
Town Highway Class 1
Town Highway Class 2
Town Highway Class 3
Town Highway Class 4
State Forest Highway
Legal Trail
Private Road
Discontinued Road
Possible Utility Service
Expansion Areas
0 0.6 1.2 1.8 2.4
Miles
LAMOILLE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
DATA SOURCES:
POLITICAL BOUNDARIES: VT Data - Town Boundaries, VCGI, 2024
ROADS: VT Road Centerline, VTrans, 2021
SURFACE WATER: National Hydrography Dataset, USGS, 2023
CONSERVED LAND: Conserved Land Inventory, VANR, VCGI, 2024
LANDMARKS: VT Data - E911 Landmarks, VCGI, 2024
TRAILS: VT Data - E911 Trails, VCGI, 2024

Development Patterns & Trends: Balancing Growth with Community Values

Our landscape and built-environment tell a timeless story, one rooted in the land and shaped by generations of people who have called it home. What began with agricultural roots soon grew into a bustling hub of mills and small industries that lined our rivers and local roadways. Early development naturally clustered around our historic village centers and winding roads, laying the foundation for the close-knit sense of place that continues to define our community today. Over time, as travelers discovered the beauty of our mountains and valleys, our town evolved once more, emerging as one of Vermont's most beloved resort destinations. Yet as decades passed, new pressures and opportunities have continued to shape our community and built-environment, driven by the rise of tourism and the growth of outdoor recreation, especially the transformation brought by the expansion of Stowe Mountain Resort in the early 2000s.

The Town's planning history reflects this journey. In 1964, we adopted our first "Plan of Development," creating the foundation for long-range planning and how growth would be managed over time. The adoption of zoning & subdivision regulations followed in the mid-70s, providing structure for land use decisions that continue to shape our physical and social landscape today. Since then, changes to land use and our built environment have been tracked through zoning permits, subdivision approvals, and growth and changes in the Town Grand List.

Over the past fifty years, our community has experienced steady, moderate growth. While commercial development has increased, particularly since 2010, residential development, especially single-family dwellings, has remained the predominant form of land use and development. Permit activity has often mirrored economic cycles: peaking in 1987, rebounding in the early 2000s, and surging again during the pandemic years of 2020 to 2022, as remote work and shifting lifestyles lured newcomers and seasonal homeowners traded urban environments for the quiet comfort of their seasonal homes. Even as permit activity declined slightly in 2023 and 2024, it has remained above or consistent with historical averages, signaling continued demand.



Stowe Community Church. Photo courtesy of Stowe Vibrancy

However, despite strong development interest, the nature of that growth is changing. Single-family home construction has trended downward since the early 2000s and a closer look at development over time reveals an important shift not just in how much is being built, but where development is located and how it is being used. Monitoring these trends provides valuable insight into the ongoing evolution of our community and helps shape planning efforts. It also provides the Planning Commission with the important opportunity to evaluate whether changes are needed to the Town's adopted land use regulations to ensure that the type and pace of growth reflect our shared community values and is aligned with our long-term community vision.

Our Town Grand List

The Town's Grand List is the official record of all taxable property in the municipality, along with its assessed value, and is used to determine property taxes. Tracking changes in the Grand List over time not only reflects shifts in property values but also provides insight into our evolving built environment and broader development trends. Figure 11

Number and Types of Parcels 1980 – 2025											
	1980	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**2005**	**2010**	**2015**	**2020**	**2025**	**% Change 1980-2025**
Residential 1 (up to 6 acres)*	866	1083	1209	1356	1407	1548	1602	1627	1676	1738	+101%
Residential 2 (6 or more acres)*	182	253	304	354	353	493	511	539	553	577	+217%
Mobile Homes	39	40	42	33	24	22	20	12	8	6	-84%
Commercial	184	195	200	200	194	195	203	241	248	240	+30%
Commercial apartments	N/A	N/A	N/A	15	16	24	26	27	29	35	--
Industrial	4	7	7	5	5	4	3	3	2	0	-100%
Utilities	5	6	6	8	4	4	10	10	7	7	+40%
Farm	17	12	12	11	11	9	8	8	9	9	-47%
Woodland	13	5	4	8	22	20	18	18	18	17	+31%
Other (condos)	230	389	466	513	588	736	914	1007	1098	1297	+464%
Miscellaneous (vacant land)	522	548	511	477	366	327	297	262	217	182	-65%
Total Parcels	2062	2538	2761	2980	3090	3381	3612	3754	3865	4108	+99%
* S1 & S2 and V1 & V2 are all combined under Residential 1 and Residential 2. S1 & S2 are seasonal properties that are not suitable for year-round use.											

Figure 11: Number and Types of Parcels 1980 – 2025 on the Grand List

illustrates the change in the number and types of parcels on the Town's Grand List since 1980.

Commercial Growth

From 1980 to 2025, our town experienced modest yet steady growth in commercial development. In 1980, the Grand List recorded 184 commercial properties. Over the next forty-five years, that number grew to 240, marking a 30% increase. The most significant growth occurred between 2005 and 2015, when commercial parcels rose from 195 to 241. This period of expansion corresponds with a time of increased tourism activity and investment, likely linked to the continued development of Stowe Mountain Resort and the growing demand for visitor-oriented services, shops, and accommodations.

Since 2015, commercial property numbers have remained relatively stable, with a slight decrease from 248 in 2020 to 240 in 2025. This trend suggests a period of market stabilization or consolidation. While commercial development has not outpaced other growth categories, such as residential or condominium development, it continues to play a critical role in shaping the character and functionality of our community. This measured growth reflects our long-standing community values of fostering a strong local economy, enhancing year-round livability, and maintaining the unique charm that defines our community for both residents and visitors alike.

Residential Growth

Over the last forty-five years, residential development has been a major force shaping our built-environment, settlement patterns, and growth in the Grand List. In 1980, there were just over 1,000 residential properties on the Grand List. By 2025, that number had more than doubled to more than 2,300, an 116% increase that reflects our strong and sustained appeal.

Much of this growth occurred during the 1990s and early 2000s, a time marked by rising demand for second homes, mountain getaways, and housing near world-class recreation and outdoor amenities.

In addition to residential properties, the number of condominium units also rose sharply, growing from 230 in 1980 to nearly 1300 by 2025. This shift suggests a broader diversification of housing types, offering more

flexible and lower-maintenance living options to meet the evolving needs of residents, second-home owners, and seasonal visitors alike.

The forces that have shaped this trend, our stunning natural setting, abundant recreational opportunities, and high quality of life, remain as strong as ever. Yet, with continued growth come both opportunity and responsibility. Looking forward, we must balance new development with housing affordability, infrastructure capacity, and environmental stewardship. Ensuring that future growth enhances our unique character and supports the well-being of all who call our community home will require thoughtful planning and a shared commitment to community values.

Zoning Permit Activity

The Town (& Village) of Stowe adopted our first permanent Zoning Regulations on December 9, 1975, establishing a framework to guide land development and preserve the community's character and natural resources. Under Vermont law (24 V.S.A. Chapter 117), "land development" is defined broadly to include the subdivision of land, construction or alteration of buildings and structures, changes in land use, excavation, and other changes to the built and physical environment. Unless explicitly exempt, all land development in our community must first obtain a zoning permit from the Department of Planning & Zoning.

Monitoring zoning permit activity over time allows us to better understand how land use is changing, where growth is occurring, and what development trends are shaping our community. Since adopting zoning regulations in 1975, the total number of zoning permits issued each year, including those for single-family home construction, has been closely documented. Additional insights into development patterns are available through Development Review Board applications and other planning data.

Figure 12 offers a historical overview of zoning permit activity spanning nearly five decades. It reflects the variation of development in response to economic cycles, population changes, and evolving community needs, providing a valuable lens into our ongoing growth and transformation.

In the earlier years, from 1976 through the mid-1980s, permit activity remained relatively stable, with annual totals generally ranging between 110 and 150. A significant spike occurred in 1987, when permit issuance surged to over 250, the highest point on record during this period. Following this peak, permit numbers declined somewhat but remained elevated through the early 1990s before settling into a more stable range during the latter part of the decade.

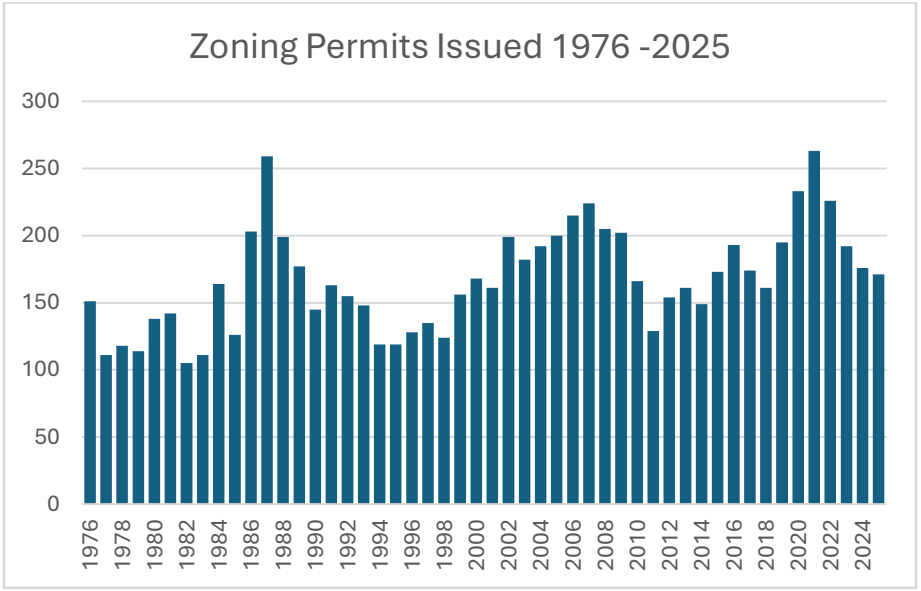


Figure 12: Total number of zoning permits issued between 1976-2025.

The early 2000s saw a renewed increase in permit activity, with consistent growth through the mid-2000s leading up to the 2008 financial crisis. While the immediate years following 2008 saw a slight dip, permit issuance quickly rebounded and remained relatively strong through the 2010s. It was during these years that the Stowe Mountain Resort Master Plan was approved and began construction.

More recently, the years 2020 through 2022 saw another significant increase in permit activity, reaching levels comparable to the 1987 peak. This surge may be attributed to pandemic-related amenity migration trends, increased demand for housing, and investments in home renovations. Permit numbers in 2023 and 2024 show a modest decline from this recent peak, though they remain well above historic averages, indicating sustained interest in development in our desired community.

Residential Development

Figure 13 below illustrates the annual number of single-family dwellings permitted from 1976 to 2025. From 1976 to 2000, we averaged about 49 new single-family dwellings each year. From 2000 to 2010, the average dropped to 31 new single-family dwellings permitted per year. Then from 2010 to 2024, the average dropped to approximately 20 new single-family dwellings per year. However, evaluating the last five years, from 2020 to 2024, the average has increased to 28 single-family dwellings per year – reflecting the post-pandemic increase in development but an overall decline overtime.

The data shows significant fluctuations over the years, with a peak in the late 1980s when permits reached nearly 100 in a single year. After this peak, the number of permits issued generally declined, with occasional short-term increases, such as in the early 2000s and during the pandemic. However, from around 2005 onward, there has been a steady downward trend, with the number of single-family dwellings permitted each year remaining relatively low compared to earlier decades. In recent years, there has been a slight increase in permits issued, particularly around 2020-2022, though the numbers still remain well below historical highs. The trend suggests that the construction of single-family dwellings has slowed over time.

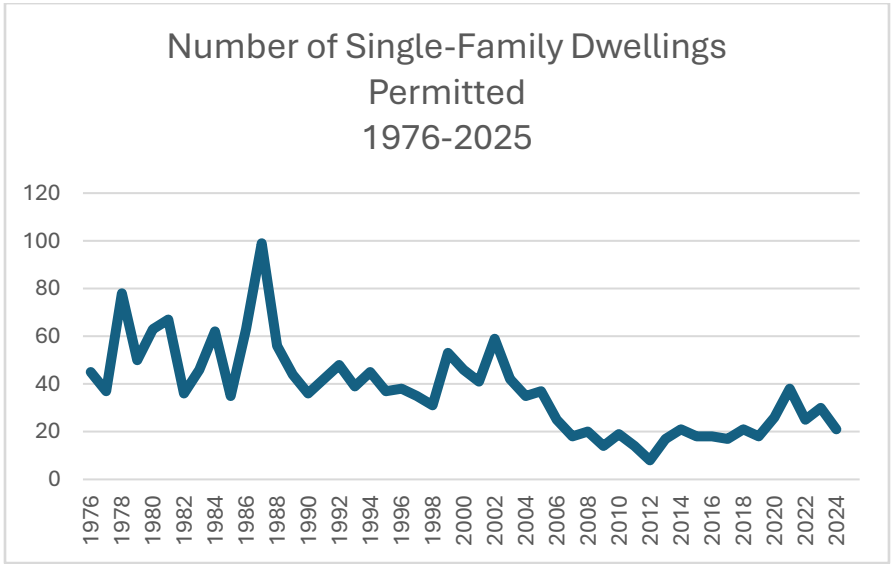


Figure 13: Number of zoning permits issued for single-family dwellings from 1976 to 2025

The Homestead Gap: A Community at a Crossroads

While our community has long been a destination for seasonal and second-home residents, recent data shows a notable decline in the number of properties filing homestead declarations. In Vermont, a homestead declaration is an official statement filed with the Town that designates a property as a homestead, meaning it is the primary residence of the owner. This designation is important because it determines eligibility for certain property tax benefits, most notably the Homestead Property Tax Credit. In the early 2000s, about 38% of properties on the grand list were declared homesteads, the primary residence of the owner. Today, that number has dropped to just 26%.

While the number of properties filing homestead declarations has decreased overtime, our population between 2010-2020 increased by over 21%. Although according to the 2020 Census our overall year-round population has grown over the past decade, this data may be unreliable, as it was collected during the COVID-19 pandemic when many seasonal homes were temporarily occupied.

Understanding changes in homestead declarations highlight important questions about housing availability, affordability, and community cohesion. Many homes are vacant for parts of the year, and as second-home ownership increases, housing for year-round residents has become increasingly out of reach. Rising home prices put local workers and families at a disadvantage. This trend brings growing challenges: declining school enrollment, volunteer shortages, loss of local traditions, and labor gaps in essential industries like hospitality, retail, and public safety. Even critical services and infrastructure feel the strain, as seasonal population spikes place pressure on roads, utilities, and emergency response systems that must operate year-round. Perhaps the most profound loss, though, is the erosion of neighborly connection. The sense of a lived-in, engaged community, where people know each other, volunteer, attend local events, and participate in civic life, is harder to maintain in the current environment.

While housing availability and affordability contribute to the decline in homestead declarations, we recognize they are not the only factors. Demographic trends, including an aging population, along with tax policy considerations and rising property and income taxes, also play a role in shaping these patterns.

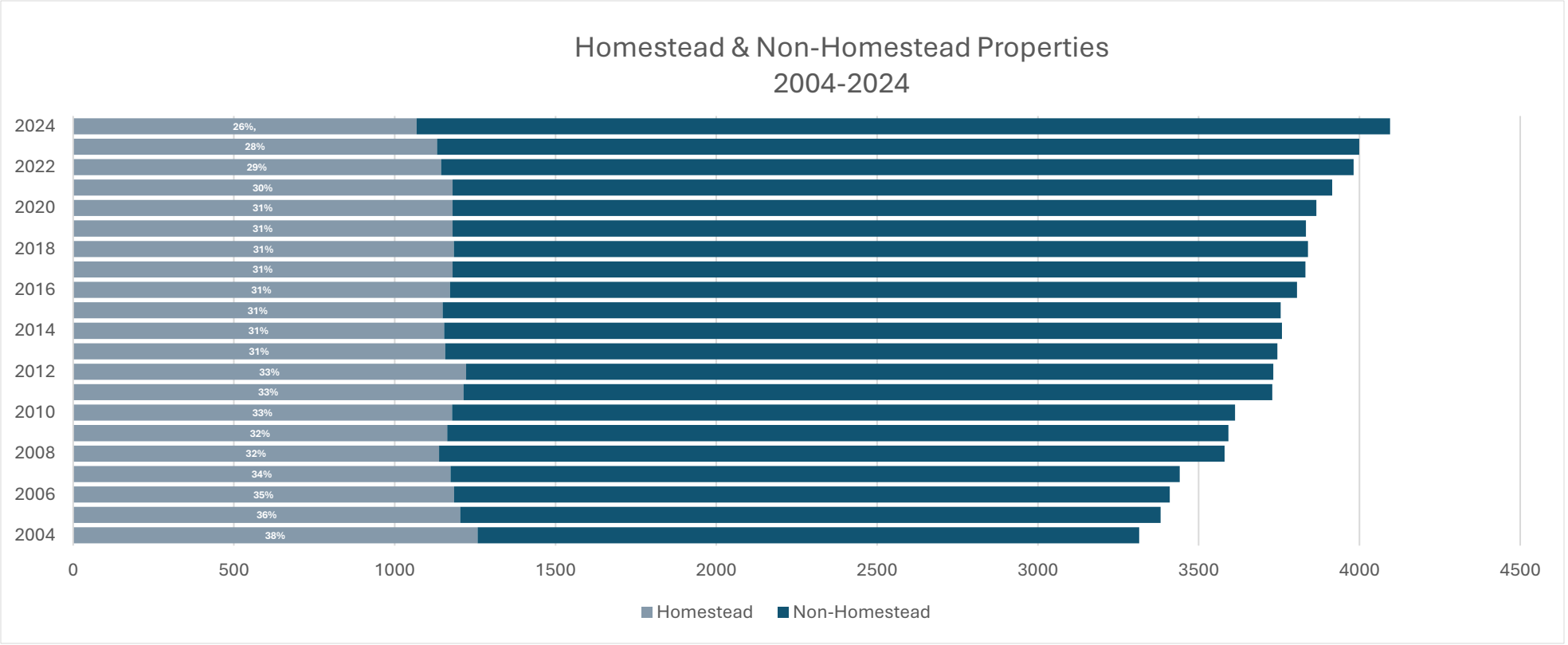


Figure 14: Number of homestead and non-homestead properties from 2004-2024, proportional to the overall of the Grand List.

Despite these challenges, we remain committed to protecting the qualities that make our community unique. The Planning Commission monitors development not just by the numbers, but through the lens of our shared values, asking whether we are building a community that reflects our vision for the future. This includes evaluating policies and programs that support housing for year-round residents, promoting walkable, mixed-use development, and ensuring that infrastructure keeps pace with demand. It also means recognizing the delicate balance between being a world-class destination and a close-knit community and committing to strategies that preserve both. Our story is still being written, and by staying thoughtful, proactive, bold, and rooted in the values that have defined our community for generations, we can guide our community forward.

Our Critical Housing Needs

The strength of our four-season resort community rests on maintaining a stable year-round population, supporting a strong and diverse workforce, and protecting the qualities that residents value most. Yet we face a growing gap between this vision and the realities of our housing market. While our community continues to attract strong investment and development, much of the recent housing growth has been absorbed as vacation homes and short-term rentals, rather than meeting the needs of those who work, learn, raise families, and retire here.

Public engagement throughout the planning process consistently highlighted residents' appreciation for our small-town character, scenic landscapes, and outdoor recreation opportunities. At the same time, many expressed concerns that the shortage of attainable housing threatens the community's long-term vitality. Expanding year-round housing options, particularly for low- and moderate-income households, is essential to sustaining the character, workforce, social fabric, and sense of place that defines our community today and into 2050. Achieving our shared vision will require housing that supports:

- Families with children enrolled in our local schools
- Workers to staff local businesses
- Seniors to downsize without leaving the community
- Young adults who grew up here to stay or return
- Full-time residents to participate in boards, commissions, and lead community organizations

In response to mounting housing pressures, the Town engaged consultants CommunityScale and JM Goldson to conduct a comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment. The findings reaffirm what many residents, employers, and service providers have long experienced firsthand: housing in our community is becoming increasingly scarce and unaffordable. Demand continues to outpace supply, especially in a market where a large share of dwellings function as vacation homes or short-term rentals, resulting in sharply rising costs. Many workers and families who contribute to the community can no longer afford to live here, forcing the local workforce to commute from farther away and limiting opportunities for younger households to establish long-term roots. Key findings of our Stowe Housing Needs Assessment include:

- Housing is foundational to our long-term sustainability and community vision.
- The town has the market demand to support more than 500 additional full-time households by 2035.
- Stowe is building housing at an adequate pace, but many new units are not occupied by year-round residents.
- Non-homestead (second home and investment) properties now outnumber and outcompete primary residences.
- Homeownership is unaffordable for most current and prospective full-time residents.
- The median home price of $907,000 is out of reach for nearly all local occupations.
- Long commutes are eroding the local labor force, while remote workers occupy homes without filling local jobs.
- Smaller rental units are more attainable than ownership, but supply is limited at every size.
- Our population is aging rapidly, while the share of young adults and families continues to decline.
- Local school enrollment will continue to fall without new families moving to town.
- Multiple systemic barriers limit the creation and access of year-round housing.

The study recommends setting a production target of at least 580 new year-round housing units over the next ten years, including a goal of at least 100 permanently affordable units reserved for income-eligible and local households residing in the community. Most importantly, it emphasizes that meeting our housing needs will require an "all of the above" strategy, one that aligns policy reforms, public and private investment, financial incentives, and strong partnerships.

The Housing Needs Assessment serves as the foundation for the goals, policies, and actions outlined in this plan. For a full analysis of Stowe's housing conditions, needs, and projections, you are encouraged to review the Housing Needs Assessment (2025) available on the

municipal website. Additionally, as required by 24 V.S.A. § 4382, this plan includes recommended public and private actions to address local housing needs and targets. This housing element fulfills our statutory requirement and aligns with the state's regional targets.

Existing Housing Stock

Although a range of housing types and residential uses can be found throughout our community, single-family homes remain the predominant form. The 2020 Census counted 3,814 housing units in Stowe. Fifty-nine (59.3%) percent of the counted housing units were occupied. Of the occupied housing units, 65.8% were owner-occupied and 34.2% were renter-occupied. Forty (40.7%) were vacant housing units consisting of units for rent, rented but not occupied, for sale, or seasonal/recreational/occasional units. While this data provides valuable insight into the number and occupancy status of homes in our community, it is important to recognize that the 2020 Census was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, a time when many seasonal and vacation homes were temporarily occupied. As a result, the data may reflect this unusual moment rather than long-term housing trends. Regardless, we recognize that the high percentage of seasonal and occasional-use homes underscores our popularity as a vacation and second-home community, a factor that continues to strongly influence housing availability and affordability in our community and surrounding region.

The Grand List (2025) contains 1297 condominium units which make up 31% of the total number of properties on the Grand List. The Stowe Mountain Resort/Spruce Peak resort area contain approximately 476 condominiums, representing nearly 37% of the total number of condominiums in Town. Approximately 81% of condominiums within our community have mailing addresses outside Stowe. The collective assessed value of condominiums represents approximately $1,255,576,100.

Of the properties listed on the Grand List, 2,315 contain single-family dwelling(s), accounting for roughly 56% of all properties. As shown in the chart below, a significant share of these homes, approximately 64%, are owned by individuals who do not reside in Stowe. While mailing addresses are used to estimate residency, this method has limitations, as some non-residents may list a local address for tax purposes, and some part-time residents may consider Stowe their primary residence despite living elsewhere for part of the year.

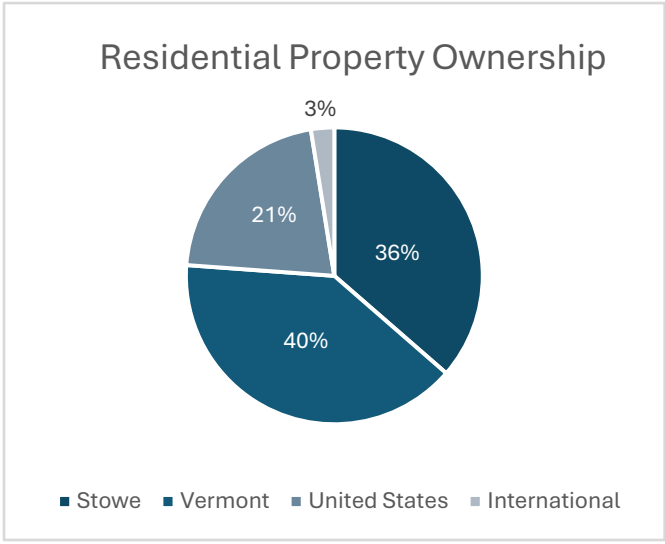


Figure 15: RR1 & RR2 property ownership/mailing address as listed on the Grand List (2025).

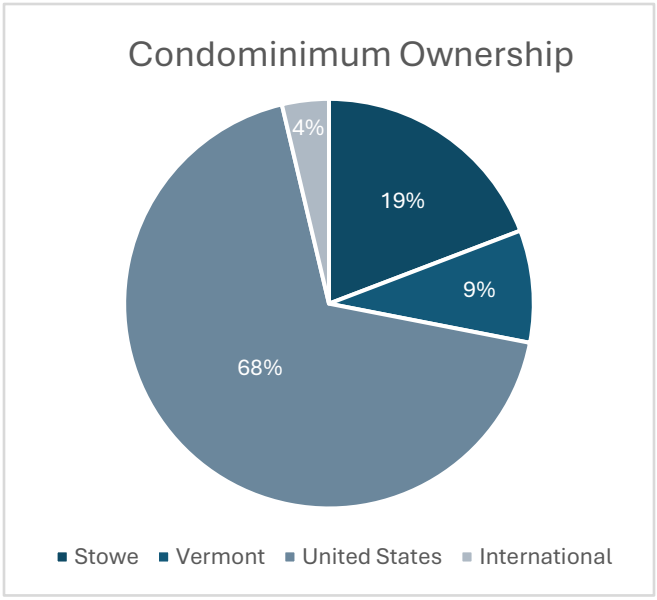


Figure 16: Condominium property ownership/mailing address as listed on the Grand List (2025).

Short-Term Rentals

Vacation rentals have long been part of Vermont's housing landscape, evolving alongside the growth of the ski industry, tourism, and year-round recreation. Short-term rentals are not a new occurrence; for centuries, inns, boarding houses, and rented guest rooms have provided lodging for travelers throughout the state.

With the rise of automobile travel and expanded tourism in the 20th century, dedicated vacation homes and seasonal rentals became increasingly common, particularly in resort communities such as Stowe. These accommodations were traditionally marketed through newspapers, bulletin boards, and local rental agencies. In response, communities including Stowe initially managed short-term rentals indirectly through zoning regulations, refining definitions such as "dwelling unit," "lodging," and "bed & breakfast," and applying occupancy standards.

In recent years, the number of short-term rentals has grown significantly, driven largely by the rise of online platforms such as AirBnB, VRBO, and similar services, as well as Vermont rental laws that some property owners view as making long-term rentals more difficult to manage. In Stowe, particularly during the early to mid-2010s, this growth prompted increasing community discussion regarding housing availability for year-round residents, neighborhood character, and the impacts on traditional lodging providers. During this period, Vermont law did not clearly define municipal authority to regulate short-term rentals, and evolving court decisions contributed to uncertainty regarding the extent to which municipalities could address short term rentals through zoning alone.

Short-term rentals play an increasingly important role in housing markets, particularly in destination communities like ours. While they support tourism, provide income for property owners, and expand lodging options, their growth can also reduce the availability of long-term housing for residents and contribute to rising home prices and rents.

In 2018, the State of Vermont established a more formal statewide framework for short-term rental taxation and registration. Subsequently, in 2021, the Vermont Legislature amended 24 V.S.A. §2291(29) (Act 59) to explicitly authorize municipalities to regulate short-term rentals through local ordinance. This clarification provided towns and cities with clear authority to adopt STR regulations beyond zoning alone.

To better understand how short-term rentals are affecting our local housing supply, and to balance their economic benefits with the need to preserve year-round housing, neighborhood stability, and quality of life, the Selectboard adopted a Short-Term Rental Registry Ordinance on February 29, 2024. The ordinance took effect on May 1, 2025. The purpose of the ordinance is to "*seek to balance the well-established practice of renting residential dwelling units to travelling transients and the visiting public, while preserving the character of residential neighborhoods and minimizing and potential negative impacts of short-term rentals, and continuing to promote public health, safety, and welfare of visitors and residents, both full-time and part-time*."

Short-Term Rental (STR) Registrations			
Housing Type	STRs	Total # of Parcels	% STR
Residential	401	2306	17.4%
Commercial Properties/Apartments	34	290	11.7%
Condominiums	604	1299	46.5%
Total	1039	3895	26.7%

Figure 17: Short-Term Rental (STR) Registration -Types & Numbers as of August 2025.

As of August 2025, there were 1,039 short-term rental registrations across 958 properties. Of these, 401 registrations are located at residential homes, 604 for condominiums, and 34 for commercial buildings or apartments.

Of the 373 registered residential properties (generally meaning single-family dwellings), 96 are for properties with homestead filings, while 277 are for non-homestead properties. These account for a total 401 registrations located on 373 properties, with twenty-two properties having more than one registration, such as a primary dwelling and an accessory dwelling unit. Among the 277 non-homestead properties, at least seventeen are owned by Stowe residents who live elsewhere in town.

Smaller homes are more likely to be used as short-term rentals than larger ones, a trend that is especially pronounced for non-homestead properties. The average home in Stowe is ±2,286 square feet. For homestead properties where the entire home is rented, the average size is ±2,231 square feet, compared to ±2,465 for those that rent accessory dwelling units, and ±2,287 square feet for homesteads without short-term rentals. For homesteads, 12% of homes under 2,000 square feet had short-term rentals, compared with 10% of those over 2,000 square feet. The median assessment for a homestead property with a short-term rental registration is approximately $968,000, with an average of $1,174,000. Those without short-term rental registrations have a median assessment of $928,000 and an average of $1,131,000.

For non-homesteads, short-term rental homes average ±2,302 square feet, compared with ±2,676 square feet for non-short-term rentals homes. Among non-homestead homes under 2,000 square feet, 27% are registered as short-term rentals, compared to 19% of those above 2,000 square feet. The median assessment for a non-homestead home with a short-term rental registration is approximately $972,000, with an average of $1,278,000. Those without short-term rental registrations have a median assessment of $1,230,000 and an average of $1,870,000. Smaller non-homestead residential homes are more likely to be registered as a short-term rental than larger non-homestead residential homes.

Among homestead properties, forty-nine rent an accessory dwelling unit or a room in the house, with fewer than ten occasionally renting the entire home as well. The remaining forty-seven rent the entire home alone. In some cases, the property owner lives in the accessory dwelling unit while renting the main house. For non-homestead residential homes, 252 rent the entire home. The other twenty-five non-homestead residential home properties with short-term rental registrations rent some combination of the home with an accessory dwelling unit, or multiple rooms in the home.

Condominiums make up the largest share of short-term rentals, with 604 registrations. 77% are located in six complexes: Spruce Peak, Topnotch, Mountainside Resort, Stonybrook, Village Green, and Notchbrook. Over half of all condominium short-term rentals are located at Spruce Peak, with about two-thirds of those in the Lodge, where nearly all units are registered. Fewer than 20% of the units located at Spruce Peak outside the Lodge (Treehouse, One Spruce Peak, Mountain Cabins, Village Townhouses, Spruce Club, Big Spruce Road, Liftline Drive, etc.) are registered. Units at Spruce Peak and Trapp Family Lodge are generally located in the SKI-PUD's, and units at Topnotch are generally located within the Resort PUD. Overall, SKI and Resort PUDs account for 360 short-term rental registrations; about one third of total registrations, and approximately 60% of total SKI and Resort PUD units.

Ownership of short-term rentals is spread across different groups and owning multiple is relatively rare. Of the total registrations, 213 are owned by Stowe residents, ninety-six by Vermont residents outside Stowe, and 649 by non-Vermont residents. Multiple ownership is limited. Approximately six individuals own two residential short-term rentals homes, and none own more than two. Another six individuals own more than two short-term rentals overall, though generally within a single condominium complex. About fifty individuals own two short-term rentals (regardless of the type of unit), often in the form of adjacent condo units or divided suites at Spruce Peak. Some others own a single-family home and a condo elsewhere in Stowe. It should be noted that it is often difficult or impossible to precisely know the residence of the owner of a property. Also, homestead filings provide only an imperfect measure of whether a home is owner-occupied. Some full-time residents may not file for financial reasons, while some non-residents may file for business purposes. The data used in this analysis reflects FY25 filings, with the FY26 deadline in November.

The Selectboard and Planning Commission remain committed to ongoing review of short-term rental data to guide future decisions and ensure the ordinance supports both its original purpose and the community's ongoing housing needs.

Housing Affordability

A rising concern for residents is the affordability and the attainability of housing within our community. This issue has been part of local planning discussions since the 1980s, and it is now also a growing concern for businesses seeking to attract and retain employees. Our

popularity as a high-quality, outdoor-focused community has made it a desirable destination for second and seasonal homes, driving up housing costs and limiting the availability of year-round housing.

Local employers, including schools and municipal government, have long depended on the broader regional housing market to accommodate members of our local workforce. However, providing more local housing opportunities is critical to supporting our community's vitality. A diverse year-round population strengthens civic engagement, sustains local schools, businesses, and services, and supports a strong network of volunteers who contribute to community life and local service organizations.

According to www.housingdata.org, the median sale price for a single-family home in Stowe in 2025 was $1,037,500, compared to $396,750 for Lamoille County, a difference of approximately 161%. By comparison, Stowe's median home price was 83% higher than Lamoille County in 2000, 90% higher in 2010, and 154% higher in 2020, illustrating that the gap in single-family home prices has steadily widened over time.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) indicates that expenditures of more than 30% of a household's income for shelter means they are cost-burdened by such expenses and have reduced ability to afford other necessities. By definition, the housing needs of cost burdened households are not being met affordably by the current supply because they must pay more than 30% of their income to afford to live where they do. This can be referred to as the local housing "gap" or "shortage:" the units needed to counteract cost burden by providing a mix of units that matches the household's ability to pay. Using HUD's metric in 2023, 42% of all Stowe households are cost-burdened paying more than 30% of monthly income toward housing costs, which is 11% percentage points higher than households in Vermont. For homeowners in Stowe, 49% are cost burdened. For renters, 21% of renters are cost burdened.

Subsidized & Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is critical to keeping our community vibrant and inclusive, sustaining our workforce, and supporting a strong local economy. Founded in 1991, the Lamoille Housing Partnership (LHP) has played an important role in developing and preserving affordable housing in Stowe and Lamoille County by providing quality homes for lower- and moderate-income households. In 2024, facing operational challenges and an evolving housing landscape, LHP merged with Downstreet. As of December 1, 2024, Downstreet has taken over management of LHP's housing in Stowe. The merger has increased capacity and resources for affordable housing and strengthened the region's ability to develop more affordable homes in Stowe and nearby communities.



Ribbon cutting ceremony at River Bend Apartments. Photograph courtesy of Lamoille Housing Partnership.

~~With financing~~ Beginning with private investment from the Scheuermann family in the early 1970s, 1979, and 1983, and followed by financing from the Vermont Housing ~~Community~~ and Conservation Board (VHCB) and other government sources, a number of affordable rental and owner-occupied housing units have been developed in our community. Affordable housing is defined as housing that lower- and middle-income households can reasonably rent or purchase while still meeting other basic needs. According to www.housingdata.org, the current stock of affordable housing in Stowe includes:

- 28 units at Sylvan Woods – comprised of duplex and triplex buildings, including both rentals and owner-occupied units
- 19 units at River Run Apartments (formerly River Road Apartments) on Holmes Lane
- 48 units at West Branch Apartments on Mountain Road
- 16 units at River Bend Apartments on Maple Street

Despite these achievements, high land values and construction costs continue to limit the development of additional affordable housing. Some of our larger resorts and employers attempt to address workforce housing needs by leasing smaller lodging and residential properties for seasonal employees or provide other employee housing options. Given current market and labor conditions, the challenges to creating new affordable housing are likely to persist, underscoring the urgent need for ongoing public and private strategies to ensure Stowe remains a sustainable community and can support our vibrant local economy.

Regulatory Support for Affordable & Senior Housing

The Zoning Regulations encourage affordable housing by allowing a 50% density bonus in areas with municipal water and sewer, when at least 20% of units are permanently affordable. Senior housing is also exempt from density requirements. Despite these regulatory incentives, high construction and labor costs, along with the ongoing expense of maintaining lower rents, remain significant barriers. Studies show that land acquisition and building costs often exceed what developers can recover without subsidies, making the construction of new affordable housing units challenging, a trend that is expected to continue.

Non-Regulatory Support for Affordable Housing

Providing both reasonably priced and affordable housing is essential in response to the ongoing housing shortage. In 2024, the Selectboard authorized the creation of a Housing Task Force to examine our existing housing stock and identify strategies, both regulatory and non-regulatory, to expand affordable, workforce, and resident housing, while preserving our community's unique character and supporting the goals of the Town Plan. Originally appointed for one year to lead the Housing Needs Assessment, the Housing Task Force has entered a second phase focused on advising the Selectboard on prioritizing and implementing the study's recommendations, developing policies and guidelines for potential municipal housing funds, and defining the role of any future standing housing committee. The Housing Task Force's appointment is set to expire on June 30, 2026, unless otherwise extended by the Selectboard.

2025 Regional & State Housing Targets

The Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), in partnership with the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies (VAPDA) and the Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA), recently released regional housing production targets for the state. The *Statewide and Regional Housing Targets* report, required under the HOME Act of 2023 and Act 181 of 2024, assesses Vermont's housing shortage and establishes a methodology for setting regional targets through 2030 and 2050. These targets are intended to stabilize housing prices, normalize vacancy rates, support workforce growth, and attract new residents. Key findings from the assessment include:

- By 2030: Vermont will need 41,000 new rental and owner-occupied homes, or roughly 8,200 units per year over the next five years.
- By 2050: The projected need rises to 172,000 new homes, averaging 7,000 units per year over the next 25 years.

Housing targets were developed for each county and regional planning commissions (RPCs) were tasked with translating these into specific municipal goals. Each municipality's housing target is proportional to its population. While these targets are not mandatory, they are intended to encourage statewide housing development rather than impose restrictions. Our regional planning commission, Lamoille County Planning Commission (LCPC), has established the following housing targets for Stowe.

Stowe Housing Targets				
	2030 Lower Total # of Dwelling Units	**2030 Higher Total # of Dwelling Units**	**2050 Lower Total # of Dwelling Units**	**2050 Higher Total # of Dwelling Units**
Total # of Units if Goal is Met	4345	4460	4742	5399

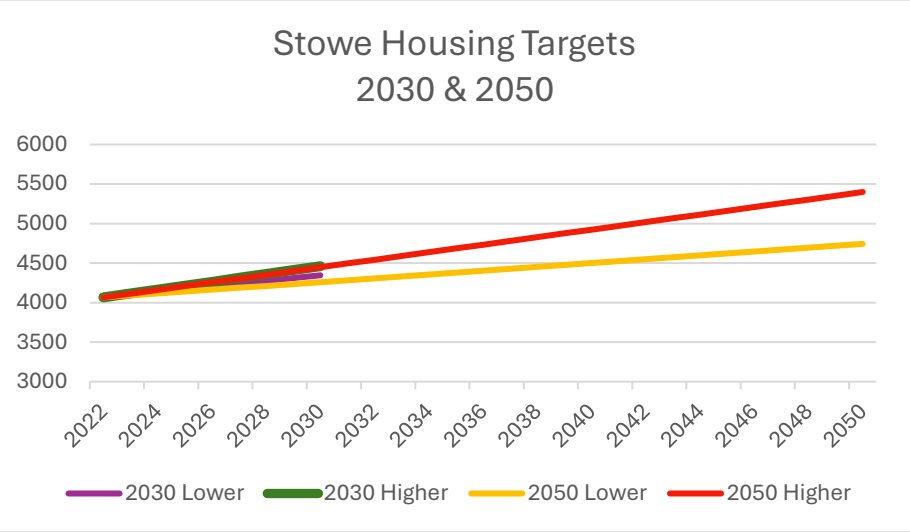


Figure 18: Regional Housing Targets established by LCPC.

The Stowe Housing Targets have both a low and high target. In order to meet our assigned targeted housing production, the following number of dwelling units will need to be produced.

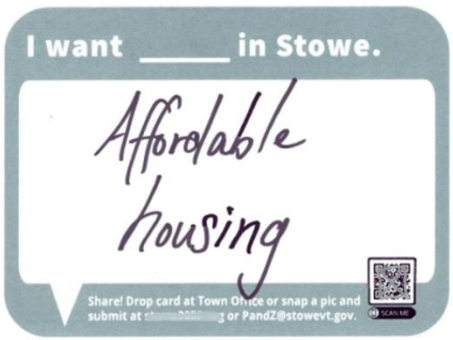
- An average increase of about 88 dwelling units per year were produced in Stowe from 2010-2022, starting at 3012 and ending at 4066.
- To achieve the lower 2030 target, approximately 35 new dwelling units would need to be built each year through 2030.
- To achieve the higher 2030 target, apprximately 49 new dwelling units would need to be built each year through 2030.
- To achieve the lower 2050 target, approximately 24 new dwelling units would need to be built each year through 2050.
- To achieve the higher 2050 target, approximately 48 new dwelling units would need to be built each year through 2050.

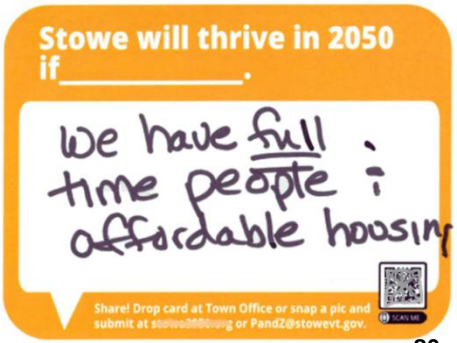
The 2025 Stowe Housing Needs Assessment identifies a need for 580 new year-round housing units over the next decade in order to meet current demand. While this figure exceeds the production target set by LCPC, it reflects our community's unique challenges, including a high proportion of seasonal units, an aging population, and rapidly rising housing costs, which justify a more ambitious approach. At the current trend of constructing two non-homestead units for every homestead unit, achieving this goal could require building approximately 1,700 total units, assuming that roughly 1,120 would be absorbed into the second-home or short-term rental market rather than occupied by full-time residents. Increasing the conversion of seasonal or short-term rental homes into year-round, affordably priced housing would reduce the total number of new units needed to meet the community's needs.

Achieving our local housing targets will require focusing new housing production on the types most needed by year-round residents but are in short supply:

- More small ownership units (currently, less than 15% are 0-2 bedrooms)
- More larger rental units (currently, about 10% are 3+ bedrooms)
- Higher rate of rental units overall (currently 26%)

High-amenity communities like ours face unique housing challenges. The very qualities that make our community desirable, our natural beauty, recreational opportunities, and strong local economy, also contribute to rising housing costs and limited availability for year-round residents. Expanding housing opportunities, through a mix of low- and moderate-income options and diverse housing types and sizes, is vital to sustaining an inclusive community where residents can live, work, support the local economy, and build strong community connections. Ensuring a balance between growth, tourism, and housing needs remains a central priority for maintaining the long-term health and sustainability of our community. These principles are embedded throughout the goals, policies, and action items presented in the implementation element of this plan.





Education & Our Treasured Schools

The public education of local children has long been a high priority for our community. Like many small New England towns, our early education system began with one-room schoolhouses. Stowe's first public school, a log structure located in the Upper Village, was built in 1803. One-room neighborhood schools continued to be built to serve a growing school population, generally within walking distance of the children they served. By 1882 there were nineteen schools, overseen by nineteen independent school districts, scattered throughout town. This district system was abolished in 1893 with the consolidation of neighborhood districts into a single town-wide district. It was not until 1954, however, with the construction of the Stowe Elementary School in Stowe Village, that the last of the town's one-room schools was closed. The elementary school has since been updated and renovated, last in 1992, to meet the needs of the community and state educational standards.

Secondary education took longer to arrive in Stowe. A tuition high school was established by the Village School District in 1863, and took in students from other districts and surrounding communities. Following local district consolidation, the Stowe High School was reorganized to provide publicly supported secondary education, and graduated its first class in 1901. Both high schools were located in the Village District's Village School, built in 1861, which now houses the Current (formerly the Helen Day Art Center) and the Stowe Free Library. The present Stowe High School was built on Barrows Road in 1973, and a middle school wing was added in 1992. A regret expressed in town planning forums was the siting of this important community facility outside of Stowe Village. It is not within easy walking distance of the village and remains physically disconnected to our community center.

In 2014, Vermont passed Act 46, which was designed to encourage the consolidation of school districts across the state. The law aimed to reduce costs and improve educational opportunities for students by creating larger, more efficient school districts. After the passage of Act 46, the Agency of Education sketched out plans for which districts would merge and which could stand alone. Stowe, which had long operated as an independent school district, faced pressure, and was later forced to merge with nearby school districts. In 2018, the Vermont Agency of Education revealed plans to force the Stowe School District to merge with the Elmore-Morristown district into a single unified body, the Lamoille South Unified Union. Controversy sparked and the two districts filed a lawsuit. This merger was met with some controversy, as many in our community valued the independence of a local school district. However, proponents of the merger argued that it would lead to better resource allocation, expanded educational opportunities, and financial stability. In 2019 the Lamoille South Unified Union began to operate.

As a result of Act 46, in 2020 the Stowe School District merged with the neighboring Elmore-Morristown School District to create the Lamoille South School District. In May 2021 Stowe residents overwhelmingly voted to leave the district which created the Lamoille South Supervisory Union (LSSU).



Stowe Elementary School & Memorial Park. Photo credit: Teresa Merelman

LSSU is now comprised of two districts: Stowe and Elmore-Morristown. Each of these districts has their own school board. The two school boards combined create the LSSU Board, which meets every other month. The LSSU serves students from Stowe, Morristown, and Elmore. Under this unified district, schools have increased collaboration and

resource-sharing, but Stowe High & Middle School and Stowe Elementary School continue to maintain a distinct identity within the larger district. LSSU provides human resources, personnel and administrative services- these include fiscal management, grant application and administration, data management, and instructional, curriculum, and assessment support. Student-based services (e.g., speech language pathology and essential early education programs) are paid for based on the number of days/weeks the services are provided locally.

Student Enrollment

Stowe's local schools continue to focus on providing high-quality education for local students. Our school system includes:

- Stowe Elementary School: Serving kindergarten through 5th grade.
- Stowe Middle School: Serving grades 6 through 8.
- Stowe High School: Serving grades 9 through 12

The Stowe School District provided kindergarten through high school education for 694 students in school year 2024-2025. Fluctuations in enrollment over a 20-year period are indicated in Figure 19.

In 2025, the LSSU completed a demographic study to project student enrollment over the next five years. The study reviewed population trends, age distribution, birth rates, housing growth, and historic enrollment data.

Over the past eight years, student enrollment in Stowe schools has generally declined and is projected to continue declining through 2030. The largest decreases are expected in middle and high school grades as smaller elementary school classes move through the system, while elementary school enrollment is expected to remain relatively stable. At Stowe Elementary School, enrollment declined from 331 students in 2016-17 to 272 students in 2025-26. Enrollment is projected to decline slightly over the next several years before stabilizing at approximately 250 students by 2030-31.

At Stowe Middle School, enrollment increased through 2021-22 before beginning to decline. Enrollment is projected to decrease from 179 students in 2025-26 to approximately 130 students by 2030-31.

At Stowe High School, enrollment has generally declined over the past decade before stabilizing in recent years. Enrollment is projected to remain relatively stable in the short term before declining from 231 students in 2025-26 to approximately 207 students by 2030-31.

Under Act 73 minimum class size requirements, we must carefully monitor enrollment trends. Current enrollment of 694 students in K-12 suggests potential challenges meeting minimums in all grade levels. Strategic planning for facility use and potential grade reconfigurations will be essential.

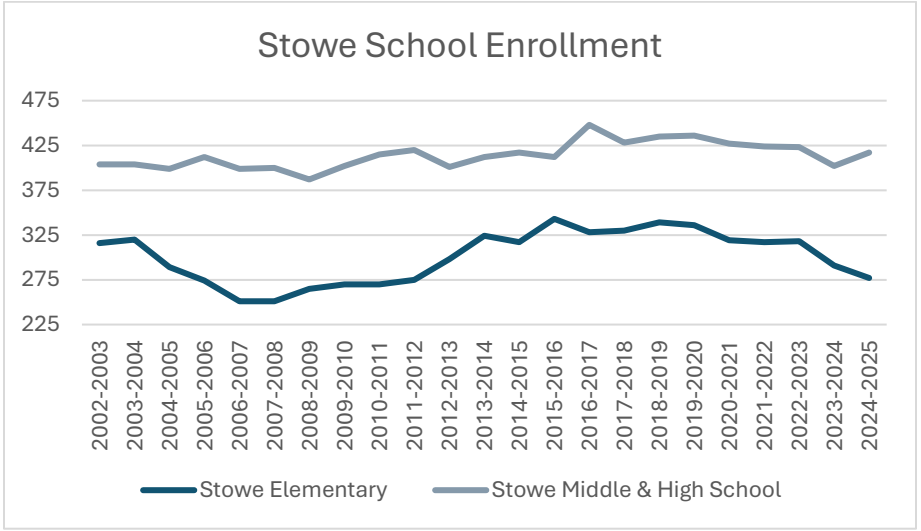


Figure 19: Student enrollment at Stowe Elementary and Stowe Middle & High School 2002 to present.

Academic Data & Student Wellbeing

Stowe students are high performers demonstrating strong success in both academic achievement and overall wellbeing. One of our school district's greatest accomplishments this past year is that 95% of students participate in extracurricular activities, reflecting a high level of student engagement and connection to the school community.

Stowe schools also continue to foster a safe, healthy, and inclusive environment where students feel secure, supported, and connected. Student climate data shows that students take pride in their school, feel physically safe, believe the school is secure from outside threats, and feel supported in managing their academic workload and responsibilities.



Stowe Elementary School students. Photo credit: LSSU

Academically, Stowe students consistently perform at high levels, with proficiency rates in English language arts, mathematics, and science that significantly exceed statewide Vermont averages. Stowe students are also consistently accepted to the top colleges and universities in the country.

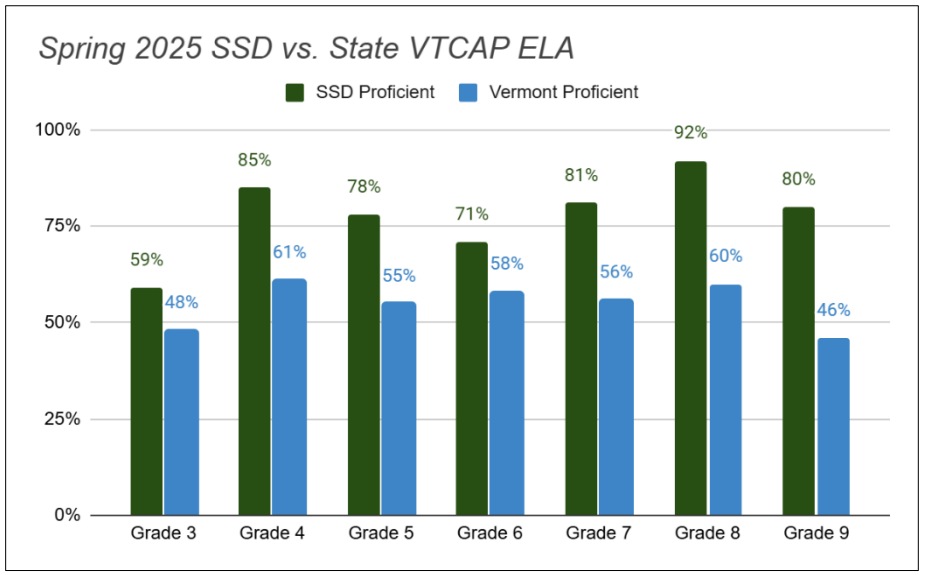


Figure 20: VT-CAP testing results for Stowe students in English language arts (2025)

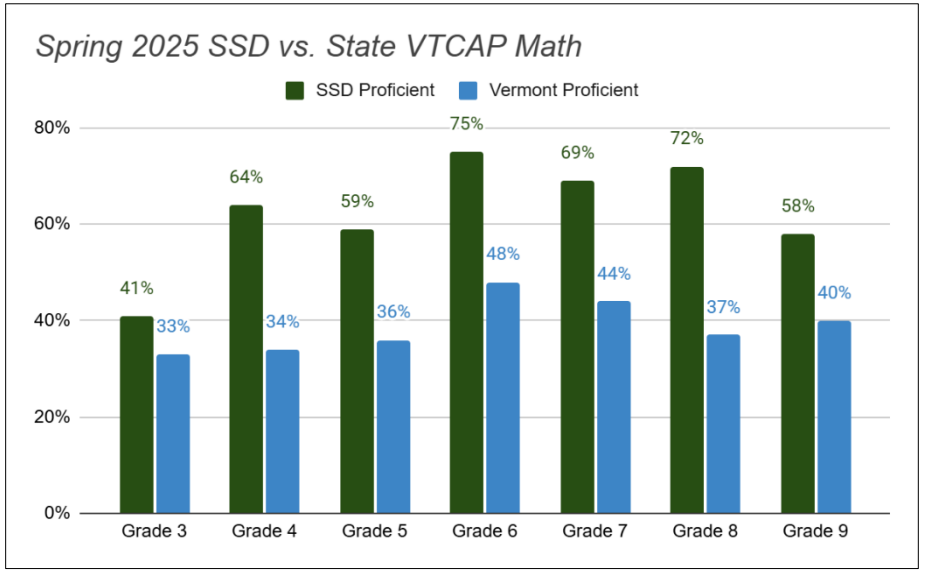


Figure 21: VT-CAP testing results for Stowe students in math (2025)

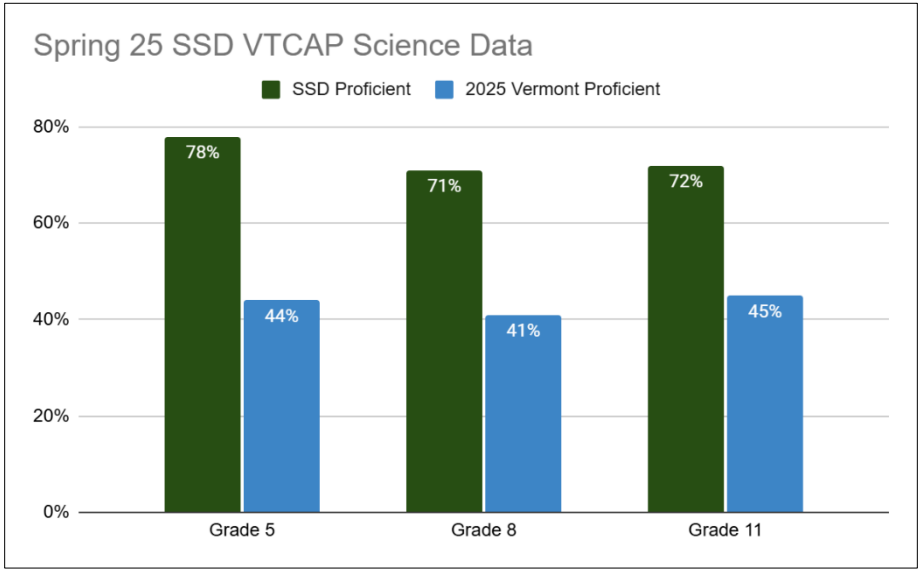


Figure 22: VT-CAP testing results for Stowe students in science (2025)

Cost of Education

Concerns over educational funding remain one of the most pressing issues for our community. Repeated community surveys have identified property taxes as a major challenge. While taxes are not a new concern, the 1997 passage of Act 60 significantly heightened local frustration. Act 60 was implemented following a Vermont Supreme Court ruling requiring equal educational opportunities for all children. It established a statewide property tax to fund a base block grant and created a cost-sharing pool for districts spending above that threshold.

Later reforms - Acts 68 and 130 - further modified the funding structure. Today, Vermont's education system is funded through a combination of sources: the state lottery, a portion of sales and use taxes, purchase and use taxes, the General Fund, and two statewide property tax rates (residential and nonresidential). Residential (homestead) tax rates vary by district based on per-pupil spending, while non-residential rates are fixed annually by the legislature statewide. Any increase in a local school budget is borne entirely by residential taxpayers.

Vermont is presently in the middle of significant education reform. Act 73 (H.454), approved in 2025, is the most significant education reform in decades. As initially approved, key provisions of Act 73 included:

- New district boundaries effective July 1, 2028
- Minimum class size requirements (effective July 1, 2026):
    - Grade 1: 10 students
    - Grades 2–5: 12 students
    - Grades 6–8: 15 students
    - Grades 9–12: 18 students
- Transition to a foundation formula, replacing per-pupil spending
- New uniform statewide property tax, with income-based homestead exemptions replacing current education property tax credits

The law proposes changes to the education funding formula, statewide graduation requirements, and potential school district consolidation. Vermont lawmakers continue to debate major education reform legislation building on the framework established by Act 73, with a focus on restructuring school districts and revising education funding systems. Many details of these proposed changes are still under development and remain uncertain at this time.

Challenges for the Stowe community may include:

- Reduced local control and district autonomy
- Risk of school closures if enrollment does not meet new class size minimums
- Merging districts with different programs and priorities
- Managing assets and consolidating debt across new district lines

Opportunities may include:

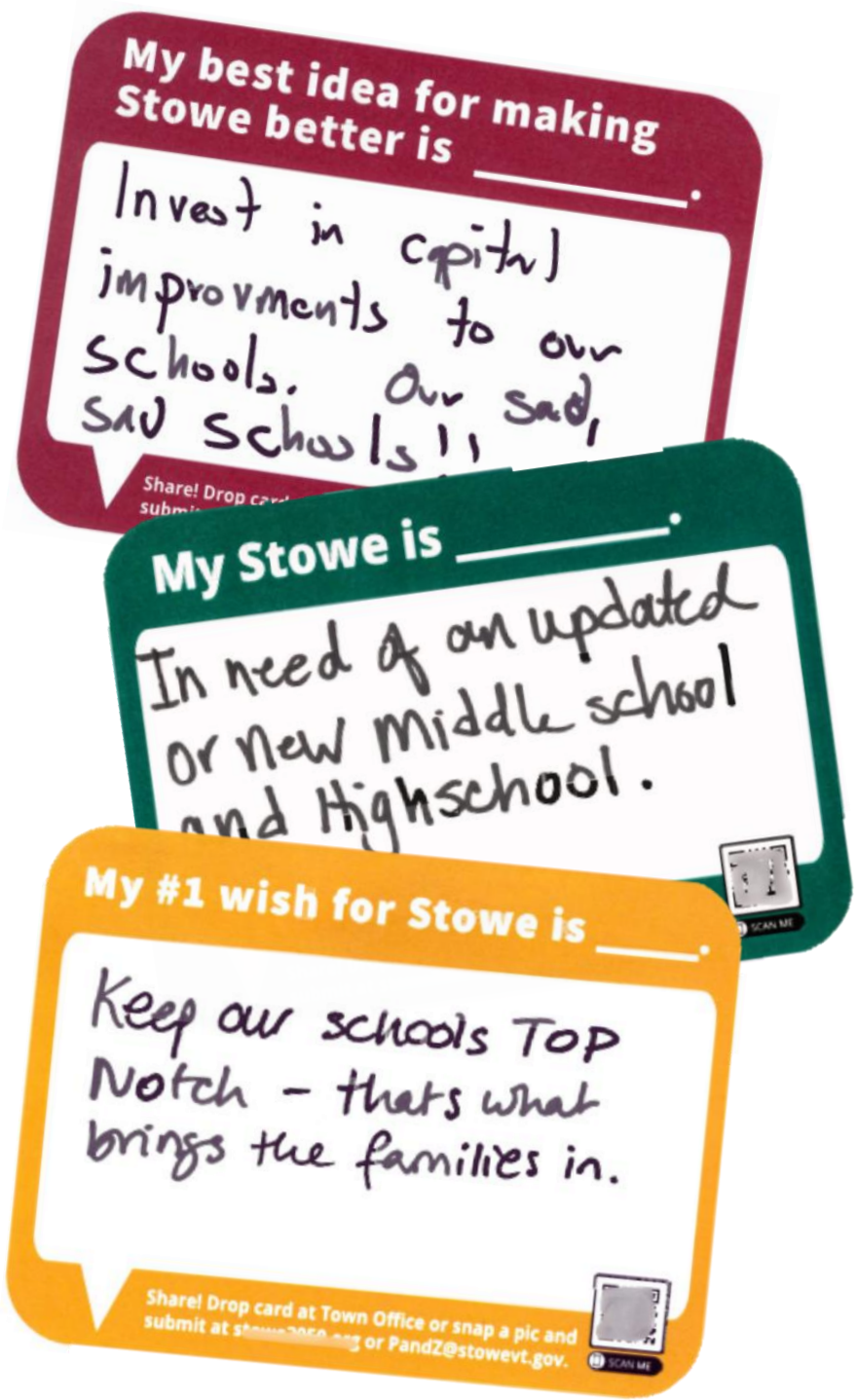
- Eligibility for State Aid for School Construction (covering 20–40% of debt service)
- Expanded course offerings and extracurricular programs
- Greater professional development opportunities and shared staffing
- Operational efficiencies through centralized services

In response to Act 73, in September 2025 the Stowe and Elmore-Morristown school boards passed resolutions supporting a joint district with the Elmore-Morristown Unified Union School District (EMUU).

While our community's current enrollment of 694 students across grades K–12 presents challenges under Act 73's new minimum class size requirements, it also offers an opportunity for the community to come together and plan thoughtfully for the future of our schools. Maintaining healthy student enrollment will depend in part on addressing related issues such as housing availability for families and the balance of short-term rentals. By working collaboratively - through coordinated efforts among school boards, municipal leaders, educators, and community members - we can adapt to these changes, preserve the strengths of our educational system, and support a bright future for our local students.

Private Education

A private school opportunity within the immediate surrounding area serving K-8 students is at the All-Saints Catholic Academy in Morrisville. Stowe residents also have access to technical programs at the Green Mountain Technical and Career Center (formerly called the Lamoille Area Vocational Center) in Hyde Park, and other higher education programs within commuting distance, including but not limited to, the University of Vermont in Burlington, Vermont State University-Johnson Campus, and Community College of Vermont (CCV) programs in Morrisville and Montpelier. CCV is an important center for affordable continuing and adult education.



Our Vital Transportation Network

A safe, reliable, and well-maintained transportation system is essential to our community, connecting residents, visitors, businesses, and recreational destinations. While the Town has long invested in maintaining roads, from our first locally funded improvements in 1797, our rural setting limits options for rail or air travel, and public transit, biking, and pedestrian routes remain limited. As a result, personal vehicles are the primary mode of travel, influencing traffic patterns, where development occurs, and how public facilities are located and designed. Planning for an efficient and sustainable transportation network is essential to accommodate future growth, achieve housing objectives, preserve community character, and meet the needs of residents and visitors alike.

Transportation planning is a collaborative effort among local officials, regional partners, state and federal agencies, and private landowners and developers. Effective planning strengthens the Town's ability to responsibly manage growth, support community and economic development, enhance health and safety, and ensure accessibility and efficiency. To help address community concerns and increasing traffic pressures, the Town commissioned a comprehensive Stowe Highway Capacity & Congestion Evaluation by Stantec in 2023. The study's findings and recommendations form the foundation of this transportation element. As we continue to grow and welcome visitors, stronger coordination between land use planning and transportation policy will be essential to improving walkability, expanding transit options, enhancing safety, and preserving the mobility that contributes to our quality of life.

This transportation element provides an overview of our road network, including state highways, local roads, public transit, traffic safety, and non-motorized travel, and assesses current conditions and emerging challenges.

Roads & Highways

Roadways constitute the most significant component of our local transportation network. There are approximately 190 miles of private and public roads in Stowe, of which the Town provides year-around maintenance for over ±81.4 miles, or almost 51%. All Town Highways in Vermont are classified as Class 1, 2, 3, or 4, based on their use, maintenance responsibilities, and standards. In addition to Town Highways, there are almost ±14 miles of state-maintained roads, approximately ±75 miles of private roads, and ±6.56 miles of state forest roads. The accompanied Transportation Map identifies the location of our public highways and transportation infrastructure.

Road Classification	Mileage
State Highways (Rt.100 & 108)	13.9
Class 1 Town Highways	1.549
Class 2 Town Highways	14.37
Class 3 Town Highways	64.63
Class 4 Town Highways	9.91
Legal Trail	4.76
State Forest Roads	±6.6
Private Roads	±75
Total	±190.7

Gravel resources are a critical component of municipal infrastructure and are fundamental to the construction, maintenance, and long-term resilience of our town highway network, which supports daily transportation and emergency access. Stowe's terrain, soils, and climate, including steep slopes, freeze-thaw cycles, and increasingly frequent extreme weather, place significant demands on our local roads and drainage systems. Reliable access to gravel is essential for building and stabilizing roadbeds, improving drainage, resurfacing unpaved roads, providing winter traction, and enabling timely repairs following erosion, washouts, and flood damage.

The Town's municipal gravel pit in Nebraska Valley is a vital public works and community asset, providing a local source of material for routine road maintenance, capital improvements, and emergency response. Local access to gravel reduces hauling costs, minimizes truck traffic and associated emissions, and enables the Highway Department to respond quickly to seasonal conditions and storm damage. This resource is particularly important given the Town's extensive local road network, more than 90 miles of town highways- including many unpaved and rural roads, which require ongoing maintenance to remain safe and functional. The Town uses an estimated 22,000 cubic yards of material

each year (roughly 12,000 cubic yards of sand and 10,000 cubic yards of gravel) and even more during major storm years like 2024.

If the Town had to purchase this material from the retail market instead of sourcing it locally, it could cost an additional $750,000–$800,000 or more each year. While that estimate includes trucking costs, it does not fully reflect the added strain on Highway Department staff, who would spend far more time hauling materials from farther away instead of making a short 5.5-mile trip to our local gravel pit. Ensuring access to local gravel supports the Town's long-term resilience, helping maintain roads and emergency response capabilities during critical events.



Nebraska Valley gravel pit. Photo credit: Town of Stowe

The Nebraska Valley gravel pit is a finite but strategically important municipal resource. Thoughtful management, including long-term planning for extraction, expansion, reclamation, and potential future adaptive reuse, supports the Town's ability to maintain our town highways in a fiscally responsible manner while balancing environmental stewardship and other community values. In 2018, the Town acquired an adjacent property to allow for future expansion of the gravel pit, helping to ensure continued local access to this key resource. The Public Works Department estimates this acquisition will provide ten or more additional years of material for municipal operations. Maintaining access to local gravel is essential to keeping our transportation system resilient, cost-effective, and responsive to changing conditions over time.

Town Highways

Maintaining and enhancing our local road network in a safe and cost-effective manner is an important community responsibility. Our Town Highways are generally in good condition and adequate to accommodate current traffic volumes. An ongoing program of maintenance and reconstruction is still necessary to maintain a high level of service and address minor deficiencies. The Town does not presently maintain a formal long-term road improvement program, however the Selectboard, Town Manager, and the Public Works Department work closely together to plan and schedule road maintenance projects in a cost-effective manner that minimizes year-to-year fluctuations in the municipal property tax rate.

Since the Mayo Farm Road was constructed in 1994, and the Moscow and Barrows roads were designated as an alternative route from Route 100 to the Mountain Road, the Town has pursued a program of creating an interconnected network of minor collector roads as an alternative to major capacity increases to existing roadways. The most recent road connection was made when Depot Street was extended to Thomas Lane in 1998. Initially developed as a private road, the Town took over ownership in 2008. While the Town recognizes the need for additional and improved transportation infrastructure, such projects must be carefully designed and balanced to preserve our small-town character and avoid large-scale roadway widening or other projects that would diminish the unique qualities that make our community special.

The Town Highway Department maintains over eighty miles of local roads and bridges. Currently, the department is staffed with nine full-time positions and has a fiscal year 2026 budget of $2,964,053, the largest of any Town department. The Town Garage located on the River Road, next to the Wastewater Treatment Plant, is the principle municipal transportation facility. The garage was constructed in 1979 and contains the Highway Department's vehicles and equipment, as

well as providing office and employee areas. Storage space is limited because of the increasing number of municipal vehicles and equipment needed to provide road maintenance. Because of the garage's location near the river, the site may be subject to future requirements for enhanced salt storage to prevent runoff and protect water quality, which could necessitate upgrades and improvements to the existing facility.



Town Highway crew and dump truck. Photo credit: Town of Stowe

The Moscow Garage, located on the Moscow Road, is used to store buses for the area's public transportation needs. The town dog kennels are also located here.

Regular maintenance activities of Town Highways include the grading and ditching of roads, replacement of culverts, and winter snow removal. Potential funding sources used for maintenance include the State AOT programs such as: Better Roads, District Class 2 Highway Paving, District Structure Assistance, Bicycle/Pedestrian Program, and the Transportation Alternatives Program. Other sources that may have funding for eligible projects include the ANR Ecosystem Restoration Program and various State emergency preparedness and mitigation programs.

The Town has received emergency funding in recent years to address damage from multiple storm events and declared disasters. These flooding events have caused significant damage to the local roads, often requiring costly repairs or full replacements. As extreme weather events become more frequent and intense, a trend expected to continue with climate change, the Town recognizes the need to employ best management practices to ensure the long-term, sustainable maintenance. Such practices include constructing or replacing structures with: (a) bridges; (b) larger-diameter culverts; (c) culverts designed to handle a minimum VT Agency of Transportation (VTrans) design storm while allowing passage of sediment, ice, and debris; and (d) other road maintenance measures, such as properly graded ditches and slopes, in accordance with Town road and bridge standards outlined in the most recent VTrans Handbook for Local Officials. In addition to improving our resilience and reducing long-term repair costs, these measures provide ecological benefits by removing barriers to fish, aquatic organisms, and terrestrial wildlife along stream corridors intersected by roads.

The importance of road and bridge standards are also reflected by the ongoing rule making under Act 64, particularly the development of the Municipal Road General Permit (MRGP). The Town has maintained compliance with the MRGP since its initial adoption and, in 2019, hired a consultant to conduct a comprehensive inventory of hydrologically connected road segments. This inventory has guided prioritizing annual maintenance projects. Each year, the Town actively pursues grant opportunities aimed at maintaining these sensitive road segments, including the Grants in Aid and Better Back Roads programs. The State requires that each Town complete a re-assessment of their hydrologically connected segments by the end of October 2027. The Town has secured grant funding to support this effort. These coordinated actions demonstrate our continued commitment to sustainable road management, environmental protection, and long-term infrastructure resilience.

Scenic Roads

To preserve the scenic character of our community, the Selectboard adopted a Scenic Roads Policy in 2013 to guide the repair, maintenance, and upgrades of designated scenic roads. While the reasons for designating a road as scenic are specific to each individual case, common features that contribute to a road's scenic character, including stone walls and canopy trees, are often found within the right-of-way. As such, they are sometimes susceptible to damaging road maintenance practices, including removal, to accommodate widening, ditching and/or paving. The policy directs the Highway Department on routine maintenance activities, such as ditching, grading, and tree trimming, while ensuring that any work with the potential to substantially alter a road's distinctive scenic features is first reviewed and approved by the Selectboard at a public meeting. This approach balances the preservation of our scenic roads for current and future generations with the need for safe and effective everyday maintenance.



Emily's bridge on Covered Bridge Road. Photo credit: Town of Stowe

State Highways

Two state highways, VT Route 100 and VT Route 108, serve as our primary connections to neighboring communities and carry our highest traffic volumes. VTrans is responsible for the maintenance and management of these roadways and has the legal authority to regulate access. Certain portions of these state highways are classified as Class 1 Town Highways: Route 100 from the Stowe Police Department north to just before Shaw's grocery store, and Route 108 from its intersection with Route 100 north to the historic village boundary, near the Field Guide Lodge. The Town is responsible for maintaining these Class 1 road segments.

VT Route 100 runs north–south along the length of Vermont, roughly parallel to the Green Mountains, and passes through the heart of Stowe. It links the community southward to Waterbury and I-89 and northward to Route 15 in Morristown. This corridor has long served as a principal local transportation route, connecting the town to the region since the arrival of its earliest settlers.

VT Route 108, also known as Mountain Road, begins at its intersection with Route 100 near Stowe village center and extends northward through the valley, following the West Branch of the Little River, before climbing into Smugglers' Notch, a scenic mountain pass that connects Stowe to the northern towns of Cambridge and Jeffersonville. This two-lane roadway passes through residential and commercial areas, forested landscapes, and recreational areas, serving both local traffic and visitors accessing Stowe Mountain Resort and other outdoor recreation destinations.

Access Management

Access management is essential for maintaining safe, efficient, and reliable roadways. By carefully controlling the location, design, and number of driveways and intersections, it reduces traffic conflicts, improves travel flow, enhances safety for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists, and preserves the functionality of both local and state highways. Effective access management also supports thoughtful land development while preserving the character and livability of the community. Several techniques for managing highway access, most of

which may be applied through the Town's land use regulations and road policies, include:

- Minimum sight distances at driveway or street intersections;
- Maximum number of driveways per lot;
- Mandatory shared driveways;
- Maximum curb-cut widths;
- Minimum on-site parking, shared-parking, and parking design;
- Minimum areas for loading and unloading; and
- Curbing and landscaping to visually define and enhance access points.

Approval by the Public Works Department is required for access onto Town Highways, and by VTrans for access onto state highways. Ongoing evaluation and careful management of access through municipal ordinances and planning processes help balance the needs of motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists, while improving overall safety and roadway efficiency.

Regional Overview

The Town participates in regional transportation planning through the Lamoille County Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), which includes representatives from all towns in Lamoille County. The TAC identifies and develops solutions to local and regional transportation challenges, promotes an integrated and sustainable transportation system, and helps prioritize projects with VTrans for inclusion on the State Capital List for funding. It also oversees the LCPC's transportation program, serves as a liaison between local communities and VTrans, and provides input on transportation issues important to the region.

Green Mountain Byway

The Green Mountain Byway is a scenic corridor that traverses Stowe, Morristown, Hyde Park, Johnson, Cambridge, and Waterbury, connecting travelers to Vermont's Green Mountains. First designated in 2009 and expanded in 2018, the Byway is recognized for its scenic, historic, cultural, and economic significance to the region. This scenic byway includes forests, rivers, farmland, mountain vistas, historic structures, recreational facilities, local businesses, and other popular attractions. While the Byway and its associated plans are non-regulatory, the Green Mountain Byway Corridor Management Plan (2018) highlights the importance of preserving these intrinsic resources and provides guidance to maintain the scenic, cultural, and recreational qualities of the corridor for current and future generations.



Luce Hill Road and Route 108 intersection. Photo credit: Gordon Miller

Traffic

Our heaviest traffic is primarily experienced along VT-108/Mountain Road, Stowe Village, and near our major recreational destinations during ski season, fall foliage, and summer weekends. These seasonal peaks, when visitor volumes far exceed our normal daily traffic, contribute to slower travel, increased vehicle idling, and safety challenges for pedestrians and cyclists. Congestion affects emergency

response, reduces public transit reliability, and diminishes the overall experience for residents and visitors. As traffic volumes grow with increased tourism and regional development, the Town faces mounting pressure to address these challenges in ways that balance mobility and safety while preserving the community's small-town character.

The recent Highway Capacity & Congestion Evaluation by Stantec used traffic modeling and capacity analysis to understand how much growth our local road network can handle. Capacity analysis estimates how much traffic a road or intersection can manage and how well it functions under different conditions. It compares the number of vehicles trying to use a road or intersection with the space available. Performance depends on factors such as the number of lanes, lane width, signal timing, and driver response times. Intersections are rated using a "Level of Service" (LOS), which measures the average delay drivers experience, from smooth, free-flowing traffic (A) to heavy congestion and long waits (F).

The capacity analysis documented that most intersections operate reasonably well (LOS D or better), except the following which experience significant delays:

- Moscow Road onto VT 100: LOS E in the afternoon peak
- Park Street onto VT 100: LOS F in the morning peak, LOS E in the afternoon
- School Street onto VT 100: LOS F in both morning and afternoon peaks
- Luce Hill Road onto VT 108: LOS F in both peaks
- Cottage Club Road onto VT 108: LOS E in the afternoon peak

The capacity analysis showed that even though overall traffic was lower during the study period (Presidents Day weekend 2023), several intersections still had very long delays during the late-day peak. This matches what we experience on many roads and highlights the problems that occur when large numbers of cars are leaving the Stowe Mountain Resort area, at the same time others are traveling around to shop, eat, or reach their lodging. It also points out the major choke points in the system, locations that will experience even worse backups when traffic levels return to what they were in 2019 and 2022. During the capacity analysis study period, the intersection of VT100 & VT108 operated at a LOS D. Choosing to maintain this intersection in its current configuration reflects our community's shared commitment to preserving the village's character, celebrating its historic buildings, and protecting the unique charm and aesthetic that make Stowe village special, prioritizing sense of place over maximum traffic.



Traffic along VT-108. Photo credit: Gordon Miller

Traffic modeling was also used to better understand how much growth our road network can handle during busy morning and afternoon periods. Several key intersections, along VT 100 at Park Street, School Street, Moscow Road, and VT 108 at Luce Hill Road and Cottage Club Road, already experience significant delays during peak hours. Sensitivity analyses were conducted to see how traffic would respond to increases of 5% up to 50%, with two scenarios that included planned improvements such as new traffic signals and a proposed roundabout. Results showed that even a small 5% increase in traffic could lead to failing movements at certain intersections. This does not mean development must stop, however it does highlight the need to plan for improvements at affected intersections, even if the new development is not immediately nearby. For growth focused along VT 108, the

intersections at Luce Hill Road and Moscow Road will likely need upgrades to handle additional traffic. Once peak-hour traffic increases by about 15–20%, the intersection at VT 108 and Luce Hill Road may require more substantial improvements beyond signals to prevent serious congestion. Overall, cumulative development that adds more than roughly 173 peak-hour trips, especially along VT 108, should be carefully evaluated to ensure the road network continues to operate safely and efficiently.

Traffic Calming

Traffic calming refers to roadway design strategies that reduce vehicle speeds, enhance pedestrian safety, and create a more comfortable and attractive streetscape in developed areas. Common traffic calming measures include narrowing travel lanes, widening or adding sidewalks, installing medians, on-street parking, roundabouts, raised or textured crosswalks, bulbouts, street trees, and street furniture. Traffic calming is particularly important at busy intersections where pedestrian crossings intersect with turning movements, on streets with high traffic volumes that also support pedestrian activity, and along neighborhood or rural residential roads where slower speeds improve safety and livability.



Main Street in Stowe. Photo credit: Teresa Merelman

Parking

Ensuring adequate and well-managed parking in our village centers has long been a community priority. Public parking supports local businesses and village vitality, promotes efficient land use, reduces congestion by minimizing circling for spaces, and enhances pedestrian circulation. Parking supply and management directly impact residents, visitors, and businesses: excessive free parking can encourage unnecessary vehicle trips, while insufficient parking can frustrate users, increase traffic congestion, and discourage visitation.

The Highway Capacity & Congestion Evaluation assessed public parking in Stowe Village, assessing both supply and operations during summer and fall weekends. The study found that overall parking availability is sufficient, with ample on-street parking along Depot Street south of Park Street, and public off-street spaces behind the Green Mountain Inn. The parking area in Memorial Park was also lightly used. However, observations noted that some drivers experienced difficulty locating available parking spaces, with circulation between Main Street and Pond Street and confusion over whether the Post Office lot was available for public use. Based on these observations, the report recommended improving signage, wayfinding, and overall parking management in a village. These recommendations have been incorporated into the transportation policies and action tasks in this plan, supporting a more efficient and user-friendly parking system for the village.

Transportation Alternatives

The Town is committed to providing a transportation system that accommodates all users, including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit riders. In alignment with Vermont's Complete Streets Act (Act 34 of 2011), the Town strives to ensure that all municipally managed transportation projects consider the needs of every traveler. These "complete streets" principles emphasize designing and constructing transportation improvements that safely and efficiently integrate multiple modes of travel, supporting mobility, accessibility, and community livability.

Public Transportation

Among the most important alternative traffic management strategies is the support of operation of the local public transportation network. Green Mountain Transit (GMT) and Rural Community Transportation (RCT) provide public transit service in Stowe and the surrounding Lamoille and Washington counties. Routes serving the Stowe area include:

Mountain Road Shuttle
Morrisville Shopper
Route 100 Commuter from Morrisville to Waterbury



Green Mountain Transit passenger bus. Photograph courtesy of Green Mountain Transit

The Mountain Road Shuttle is one of the most successful routes in GMTA's entire service area. The shuttle runs from November to April providing daily service from the Lower Village, through Stowe Village, to Stowe Mountain Resort. In 2005, the service was made free of charge, contributing to a significant increase in ridership, from roughly 30,000 riders per season to 108,420 in the 2023–2024 season. The route provides a valuable service to visitors and to our seasonal employees, many of whom do not have their own transportation. The shuttle is funded through a combination of state and federal subsidies and contributions from the Town's operating budget ($38,659 in FY26) and Stowe Mountain Resort ($243,792 in '25/'26 season). As mitigation for traffic impacts associated with the development of Spruce Peak, Stowe Mountain Resort was required under its Act 250 permit to contribute $50,000 annually to the shuttle. Starting in November 2026, RCT will assume operation of the Mountain Road Shuttle.

The Morrisville Shopper is a weekday shuttle service run by RCT connecting Morrisville and Stowe. It makes stops at key locations including Hannaford Supermarket, Dollar General, Price Chopper, Big Lots, Copley Hospital, Lamoille Health Partners, and Stowe Town Hall.

The Route 100 Commuter, established in 2005 and operated by RCT, provides a valuable weekday commuter service linking Morrisville to Waterbury, with connections available to Montpelier and Burlington. This bus route includes stops at Stowe Town Hall and Moscow Road/Rt.100.

The RCT Rides Micro-transit program is also available to anyone within the service area in Lamoille County. Currently the program is available to those traveling within Morrisville, Hyde Park Village, and Johnson Village. This service provides on demand transit service to all users in the service area for a fare-free taxi-style experience. Users can expect the service to make multiple pickups that are traveling in a similar direction. This service is not limited to medical appointments or restricted by Medicaid eligibility like other programs offered in Lamoille County. Due to the reduction in fixed route services in Lamoille County, Micro-transit provides a more targeted service in fuel efficient cars rather than buses. Through implementation of the RCT Transit Development Plan (2024), the service area of this micro-transit service area will first be expanded to include all of Cambridge, Johnson, Stowe, and Morristown. The expansion would then cover Elmore, Wolcott, and extend into Caledonia County. Finally, the Towns of Hyde Park, Eden, Belvidere, and Waterville will be included in the service area. Once the full transit development plan is implemented, all of Lamoille County will be served by RCT Micro-transit. This expansion process is anticipated to

happen over a 10-year time frame. For more information on Micro-transit service in Lamoille County visit https://www.riderct.org/.



Church at Night by Shapleigh Smith

Pedestrian & Bicycle Circulation, Sidewalks & Paths

Expanding opportunities for improved pedestrian and bicycle travel provides substantial community benefits. Enhanced walkability and bike accessibility strengthen connections between residents, visitors, and local businesses; reduces traffic congestion and vehicle emissions; supports healthy lifestyles; offers valued recreational amenities; and reinforces historic, pedestrian-scaled settlement patterns.

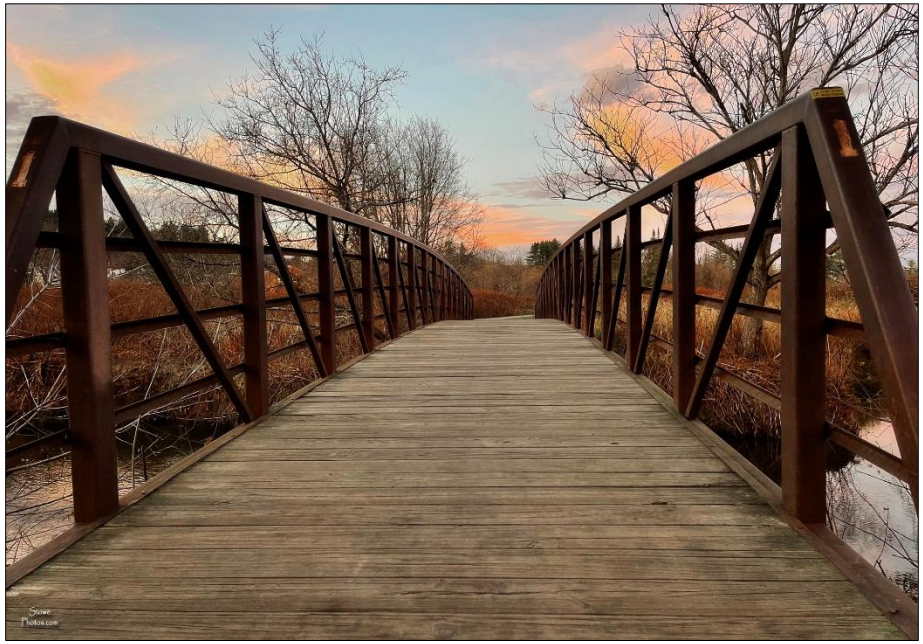
In Stowe Village, these patterns are evident in the traditional, compact center served by an extensive sidewalk network. Maintaining and upgrading this infrastructure is essential to sustaining our desired land use pattern of a walkable, pedestrian friendly village core.

In conjunction with a VTrans paving project on VT 108, new sidewalks and curbing were installed along Mountain Road in 2005/2006. The sidewalk connects Weeks Hill Road to Town Farm Lane, where it turns down Town Farm Lane and terminates at the Rec Path crossing.

Additionally, in 2018, voters approved a $3.4 million bond to construct sidewalks, curbs, and streetscape amenities along Main Street, paired with the relocation and removal of overhead utility lines and related infrastructure. Completed in 2020, the project significantly improved the aesthetics and walkability of our historic Main Street.

In 2019, the Town strengthened pedestrian connectivity by adding more than 1,000 feet of new sidewalks and curbing along South Main Street (VT-100). This project was coordinated with municipal water main upgrades to improve fire protection and the VT-100 reconstruction, which included reconfiguring the River Road/South Main Street intersection. Together, these improvements enhanced pedestrian safety and reinforced the link between the Lower Village and Stowe Village.

Together, these efforts reflect the Town's ongoing commitment to enhancing safety and creating a more walkable, community-focused environment. While recent investments have expanded pedestrian access, maintaining and improving sidewalk conditions remains an important priority.



Stowe Rec Path. Photo credit: Teresa Merelman

The Stowe Recreation Path provides an important bicycle and pedestrian transportation route from Stowe Village to the Topnotch meadow, providing access to the service establishments along Mountain Road. The Riverwalk path provides an important bicycle/pedestrian link from Stowe Village to the Lower Village.

Air Service

Stowe residents and visitors are served by the Burlington International Airport, approximately 45 miles away in the City of South Burlington, and the Morrisville-Stowe State Airport, immediately north of the Stowe/Morristown boundary.

The Morrisville–Stowe State Airport**,** located on VT 100 in Morristown between Morrisville and Stowe, serves area residents, businesses, and visitors. Owned by the State of Vermont and managed by VTrans with a private fixed-base operator handling daily operations, the airport is classified as a Regional Service facility supporting general aviation, charter, and air taxi services. It plays a vital role in connecting the local and regional economy to state and national markets and contributes to tourism and business revenue in Lamoille County.

Rail Service

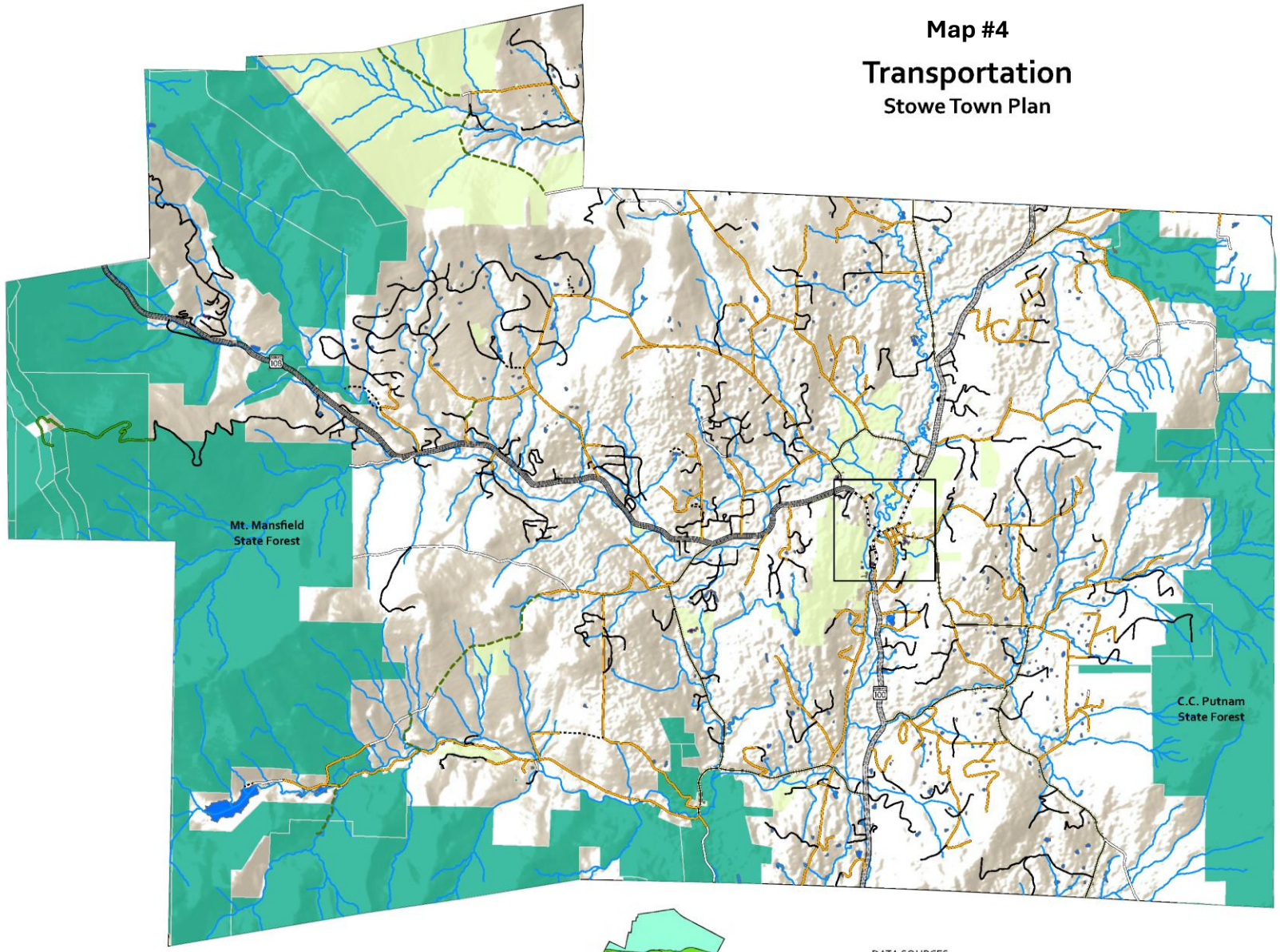
Amtrak's "Vermonter" rail service to New York and Washington D.C. is available in Waterbury. The former rail lines in Morrisville follow the historic route of the Lamoille Valley Railroad and have now been converted into the popular Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT).



Map #4

Transportation

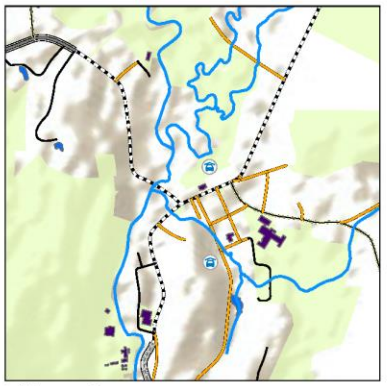
Stowe Town Plan



- Park & Ride
- Public Buildings
- Town-Owned Parcels
- State-Owned Parcels
- Route 100 Commuter
- Mountain Road Shuttle (Winter)

Road Class

- State Highway
- Town Highway Class 1
- Town Highway Class 2
- Town Highway Class 3
- Town Highway Class 4
- State Forest Highway
- Legal Trail
- Private Road
- Discontinued Road
- Lake/Pond
- Stream/River



Village Inset



0 0.6 1.2 1.8 2.4

Miles

LAMOILLE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

DATA SOURCES:
POLITICAL BOUNDARIES: VT Data - Town Boundaries, VCGI, 2024
ROADS: VT Road Centerline, VTrans, 2021
SURFACE WATER: National Hydrography Dataset, USGS, 2023
PARCELS: VT Data - Statewide Standardized Parcel Data - parcel polygons, VCGI, 2024
BUILDINGS: VT Building Footprints, VCGI, 2024

Our Prized Parks, Recreation, Trails & Open Space

Our community's natural beauty is complemented by an exceptional network of trails, parks, conserved lands, and recreational facilities. From summer hiking and biking to winter skiing, fat biking, and snowshoeing, both residents and visitors enjoy endless opportunities to engage with nature, stay active, and be part of a vibrant, outdoor-oriented community. These resources not only define our town as a four-season destination but also serve as a vital part of our community identity. Recreation fosters physical and mental well-being, strengthens our connection to the outdoors, supports our local economy, and brings people together. Recreation is more than just play, it's a shared value that enriches our lives and unites us as a community.



Stowe Rec Path. Photo credit: Town of Stowe

Parks & Recreation Department - "*Promoting healthy living and community vitality through public recreation*."

Stowe Parks and Recreation Department plays a vital role in maintaining our municipal recreational spaces and programs, ensuring residents and visitors have access to quality year-round facilities and services. Funded through a combination of tax dollars and user fees, the department oversees everything from park maintenance to community activities and recreational programming. Guiding the department's long-term vision is the seven-member Recreation Commission, appointed by the Selectboard. This dedicated group of volunteers help shape the future of Stowe's recreational opportunities by recommending facility improvements, new programs, and overall planning strategies to enhance the community's athletic and outdoor recreation experiences.

With a dedicated team of eight full-time and twenty seasonal employees, the department oversees facility maintenance, program coordination, and cemetery care. In winter, efforts are centered on operating the Stowe Arena and plowing sidewalks, while summer tasks shift to managing and maintaining the Stowe Recreation Path, ballfields, and the Mayo Farm Special Events Field. During the growing season, the department mows between 100-150 acres weekly to keep our municipal parks, recreation fields, and cemeteries in top condition.

Beyond maintenance, the department also provides a range of recreational programs for youth and adults, including an eight-week summer camp that engages approximately 200 unique participants. With daily attendance ranging from 80-110, the department's summer camp provides affordable childcare for local families and engages children in games, arts, sports, and field activities.

Parks & Recreation Facilities

Our diverse parks and recreational facilities offer inviting spaces for walkers, cyclists, and outdoor enthusiasts to unwind, recharge, and take in the town's scenic beauty. They also offer important places to gather, connect with neighbors, and build community. The Town's primary athletic and recreational facilities include:

Memorial Park

Nestled behind Stowe Elementary School, Memorial Park serves as a lively center for recreation and community activities. It hosts the department's summer recreation camp and is home to the Gale Recreation Center and Stowe Arena. The park offers a range of outdoor amenities, including basketball and pickleball courts, baseball and softball fields, and the Stowe Community Playground. Its athletic fields

are vital for school baseball, softball, and soccer teams, supporting youth sports while providing a welcoming place for the broader community to gather and connect. However, the park also has a high water table and significant drainage problems that frequently render the fields unusable.



Memorial Park. Photo credit: Town of Stowe

In November 2021, the Recreation Commission presented its vision for Memorial Park to the Selectboard, outlining key priorities for improvement. These included:

- A new 5,000 sq. ft. recreation center to replace the David Gale Recreation Center
- Reconstructed tennis, pickleball, and basketball courts
- A pavilion shelter for community gatherings
- Enhanced site circulation for better accessibility
- Additional site improvements to enhance usability

At Town Meeting in 2022, voters approved a capital project to update the Memorial Park Master Plan, ensuring the Recreation Commission's recommendations were incorporated while addressing site constraints and permit requirements. In 2023, the Town engaged Black River Design to lead the master planning process. Throughout 2023, the Recreation Commission, Parks & Recreation Department, and the Public Works Department collaborated to refine the plan, which was presented to the Selectboard in November 2023. The updated Memorial Park Master Plan proposes a phased redevelopment of Memorial Park, including:

- A new recreation center
- Improved site circulation for safer access
- Upgraded athletic fields for enhanced playability
- Modernized tennis and pickleball courts
- A redesigned basketball court
- An open-sided shelter for outdoor recreation and events
- Space for future recreation programming

While the Memorial Park Master Plan is not a final design, it serves as a guiding framework for potential future redevelopment. The FY26 budget includes $320,000 for preliminary design and permitting, laying the groundwork for the next steps in bringing this vision to life.

Stowe Arena

At the 2011 Town Meeting, voters approved a $6.5 million bond to replace the aging Jackson Arena with a state-of-the-art facility for hockey, ice skating, and indoor turf sports. By fall 2013, the new Stowe Arena was completed, ushering in a new era of recreation for our community. During the winter months, the arena is buzzing with activity-offering public skating, stick time, and team practices daily. By night, it transforms into home ice for the Stowe High School boys and girls hockey teams, Stowe Youth Hockey, Stowe Slugs, and numerous local and regional teams. Each year, the arena hosts exciting tournaments such as:

- The Hyde Cup
- Stowe Winter Carnival
- Stowe Youth Hockey Tournament



Stowe Arena. Photo credit: Town of Stowe

When the ice melts in spring, the arena transitions to indoor turf, welcoming soccer, lacrosse, and baseball teams from March to May. Private rentals are also available through Stowe Parks & Recreation.

The Gale Recreational Center

Built in 1969 and dedicated to David G. Gale for his exceptional contributions to the Stowe community, the Gale Recreation Center is a vibrant, multi-purpose facility that stays active year-round. During the summer, the Recreation Center is home to the Department's summer recreation camp program, creating a fun and engaging space for children. During the school year, it hosts a variety of adult and youth programs, keeping the community connected and active. The David Gale Center also houses the Parks & Recreation administrative offices. When the David Gale Center is not being used by Parks & Recreation, it can be rented for private functions like birthday parties, playgroups, small gatherings and meetings. This important community space is also outdated and in need of significant improvements. The Memorial Park Master Plan includes replacing the existing building to better accommodate the needs of the community and Parks & Recreation Department.

Village Pickleball and Basketball Courts

In the spring of 2025, Memorial Park received an exciting upgrade. The two former tennis courts were repurposed and transformed into pickleball courts. Memorial Park now offers six pickleball courts and one basketball court, all open to the public. These lighted courts provide a great space for recreation and friendly competition and are available for use from May through the end of October.

Chase Park

Chase Park, located near Stonybrook Condominiums on Luce Hill Road, serves as a great entry point to the Stowe Recreation Path. Visitors can take advantage of picnic tables and a bike maintenance station, equipped with tools for basic repairs like fixing a flat or adjusting brakes.

Thompson Park

Thompson Park, nestled off VT Route 108/Mountain Road across from Percy Farm Corn Maze, is the perfect rest stop along the Stowe Recreation Path. With stunning views of Mount Mansfield, picnic tables, and grills, it is an ideal spot to pause for a picnic and soak in our natural beauty.

Lintilhac Park

Lintilhac Park, tucked behind the Stowe Community Church in the village, serves as a trailhead to the Stowe Recreation Path. Like Chase Park, it features picnic tables and a bike maintenance station, ensuring cyclists have the tools they need to fix minor bicycle needs.

Stowe Recreation Path

The Stowe Recreation Path, a beloved community greenway, has been a staple of outdoor activity since its completion in 1989. Stretching approximately ±5.3 miles from Stowe Village to Brook Road and Topnotch Meadow, the paved shared-use path winds its way through our scenic landscapes, crossing the West Branch of the Little River. Born from the efforts of passionate local residents and town officials, and funded through various sources, the award-winning Stowe Recreation Path has become a year-round haven for walkers, bikers, joggers, and even cross-country skiers in the winter.

For years, discussions have centered around expanding the path to further enhance recreational opportunities and improve connectivity within the community. Potential extensions include routes leading to the base of Mount Mansfield at Stowe Mountain Resort, crossing Mayo Farm to reach the Polo Fields, and connecting Luce Hill Road and Barrows Road to Stowe High School. These connections and extensions would not only offer more options for outdoor enthusiasts but also align with our land use and economic development goals, reinforcing the path's role as both a recreational and transportation corridor.

Quiet Path

Nestled within the scenic Mayo Farm, the Quiet Path offers a serene escape for walkers and joggers seeking a peaceful alternative to the more heavily traveled Stowe Recreation Path. Completed in 1996, this natural-surface trail stretches approximately ±1.2 miles, winding alongside the West Branch of the Little River. Designed to preserve its tranquil atmosphere, bicycles are not permitted, allowing visitors to fully immerse themselves in the beauty of our surroundings.

The Quiet Path offers breathtaking panoramic views, making it a favorite spot for open air painters and nature enthusiasts alike. Convenient parking at Mayo Farm Road, Weeks Hill Road, and Cemetery Road ensures easy access for all. The Quiet Path has also become a cherished gathering place for dog owners, providing an open and inviting space to walk, run, and socialize with their companions. Whether seeking solitude, a scenic stroll, or a moment of artistic inspiration, the Quiet Path offers a restorative experience in the heart of our natural landscape.



Quiet Path on Mayo Farm. Photo credit: Town of Stowe

Municipally Owned Conserved Lands & Open Spaces & Cemeteries

Our municipally owned open spaces and conserved lands tell the story of a community deeply connected to its landscape. These cherished places are more than just beautiful backdrops- they are living, breathing parts of our community identity. They protect the quiet forests where wildlife thrives, the clean waters that flow through our valleys, and the scenic vistas that draw people from near and far. But just as importantly, they offer spaces for people to connect- with nature, with each other, and with themselves. As stewards of these lands, we recognize that conserving and caring for these open spaces is not just about protecting what we have; it's about investing in who we are and what we want to leave behind for future generations.

The Town owns five properties protected by conservation easements:

- Mayo Farm (±235 acres)
- Sterling Forest (±1,530 acres)
- Moscow Recreation Field (±5 acres)
- Sunset Rock (±23 acres)
- Cady Hill Forest (±320 acres)

In addition, the Town co-holds conservation easements with Stowe Land Trust and Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) on four other conserved properties:

- Bingham Falls (±73 acres)
- Trapp's Adams Camp (±513 acres)
- Nichol's Field (±37 acres)
- Burnham Farm (±107 acres, public access easement)

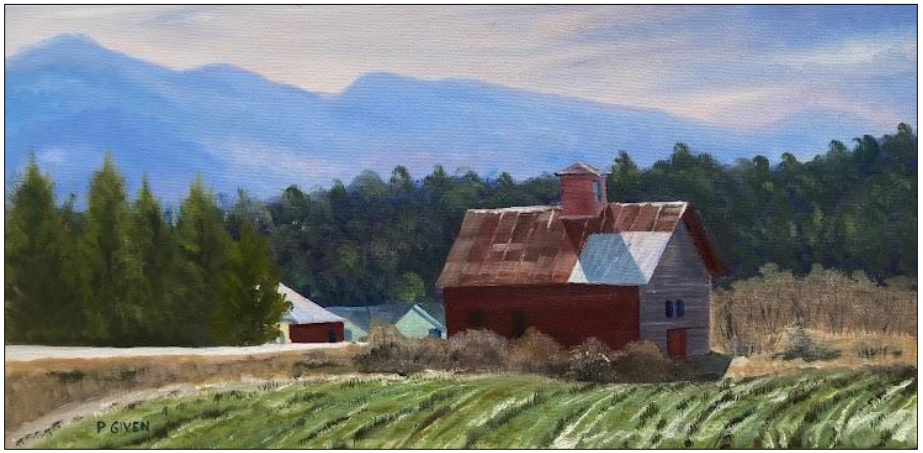
By ensuring that these lands remain open and publicly accessible, we reinforce our commitment to sustainability, balancing growth with environmental stewardship. Through ongoing conservation efforts, partnerships with local organizations, and responsible land management, we continue to enhance our quality of life while preserving the natural resources that make Stowe a premier destination for outdoor enthusiasts.

Mayo Farm

At the heart of our community lies Mayo Farm, a sprawling, 235-acre landscape that has been a cornerstone of the community since its purchase in 1989. More than just open land, Mayo Farm is a living reflection of our agricultural heritage, scenic beauty, and commitment to conservation and recreation. As stated in the deed, the town purchased the farm "*primarily as open green space and will continue to use it primarily for agricultural purposes*." The deed also indicates the purchase was for "*conservation for public purposes*" and for "*recreation*." Mayo Farm is managed by the municipality as open space and is currently used for agriculture, athletic fields, dispersed recreation, and special events.

In 2002, Town voters agreed to subject Mayo Farm to a 25- year term conservation easement held by the Stowe Land Trust. The conservation

easement establishes a hierarchy of purposes that guides management and use of the farm. The primary purpose is to "*provide for and conserve open space values, non-commercial, dispersed recreational opportunities, and scenic resources*". The secondary purpose is to "*conserve agriculture, soil productivity, wildlife habitat, and public open space*". The tertiary purpose is to provide dedicated "zones" that permit ball field recreation, community events, cemetery purposes, and possible future new municipal building(s). The easement also calls for development of a Management Plan for the property, which was prepared by the Conservation Commission and adopted by the Selectboard in 2006, and most recently amended in March 2013.



Mayo Barn (2025) by Peter Given

A majority of Mayo Farm remains in active agricultural use. Currently a local farmer leases approximately 125 acres and uses the lands for agricultural purposes. Farm operations are subject to Accepted Agricultural Practices as established by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture.

The Community Events Field on Mayo Farm consists of a ±19-acre Main Events Field and two smaller adjacent fields for parking or other activities. The Events Fields are subject to a 1995 Act 250 Land Use Permit. The fields are adjacent to the West Branch of the Little River, and as such can be subject to wet conditions. In 2014, the events fields were regraded and filled to improve the drainage characteristics.

The conservation easement also provides for a ±36-acre Recreation Zone on the fields north and east of Weeks Hill Road, where organized ball field activities are permitted. This is also the location of the Stowe community gardens. This plan calls for exploring the possibility of relocating the rec zone to better accommodate community athletic needs.

As specified in the easement, a three-acre zone surrounding the Mayo Farm homestead can be used for construction of municipal buildings, subject to approval of Town voters.

Beginning in 2026, the Conservation Commission will lead a public hearing process to review the conservation easement and gather input from the community and user groups such as farmers, recreation advocates and event organizers, with regard to whether the terms of the conservation easement should remain intact for an additional twenty-five years or if it needs to be revised or terminated. If the community feedback during this process indicates a need for revision, the Town will undertake a process of planning and public input whose end result is a formal amendment to the easement. Any amendment would need to be warned and considered for Town Meeting 2028. If the Selectboard, either on its own initiative or in response to a signed petition, proposes to terminate the easement, the decision would require approval by the majority of the voters. If no actions are taken during this time, the conservation easement will be renewed in its entirety for another 25 years.

Moscow Recreation Field

The Town acquired the Moscow Recreation Field in 1998 with support from the VHCB, the Freeman Foundation, private donations, and town funding. The property is protected under a conservation easement co-held by the Stowe Land Trust and VHCB, ensuring its use remains dedicated to recreation, river access, and open space for public enjoyment.

Spanning approximately ±4.7 acres, the field is primarily maintained as open, mowed space and serves as a valuable community resource. It provides access to the Little River for canoeing, hosts the Stowe Volleyball Club, and features a picnic area, offering a scenic and versatile setting for outdoor activities. Presently, the Recreation

Commission and Conservation Commission are collectively evaluating the potential installation of a community playground at Moscow Recreation Field to attract additional users and enhance this community gathering space.

Sunset Rock

At Town Meeting in March 1999, voters approved a $350,000 bond to go towards the purchase of the Sunset Rock property. Stowe Land Trust raised $129,000 and the VHCB contributed $29,000 to make up a total purchase price of $500,000. Named for its striking bedrock outcrop, Sunset Rock is a ±23-acre scenic property overlooking Stowe Village. As one of the most prominent and visible hillside properties in Stowe village, it can be seen from Main Street, the Lower Village, Mountain Road, Mayo Farm, and beyond. The property was purchased to protect and preserve its scenic beauty, maintain public access, and prevent land development that could adversely impact the village's scenic and historic character. The property features two scenic viewpoints, Sunset Rock and the Upper Overlook, offering breathtaking views of the village, Little River Valley, Sterling Range, and Mount Mansfield. With its short, accessible trails directly from Stowe Village, Sunset Rock remains a cherished outdoor destination for both residents and visitors.

Sterling Forest

Protected by a conservation easement held by Vermont Land Trust, Sterling Forest, located in Sterling Valley, encompasses approximately ±1,530 acres. The Town acquired the original ±1,500-acre parcel in 1995 as part of the Tricentennial Conservation Project, celebrating the Town's 200th anniversary. An additional ±30-acre parcel along Maple Run Lane was donated to the Town by the Stowe Land Trust in 2008. Stowe Land Trust holds the easement on this portion of the property.

The forest offers a network of multi-use trails suitable for hiking, mountain biking, backcountry skiing, and snowshoeing. Notably, trails like Callagy's Trail provide technical challenges for mountain bikers, while the Catamount Trail and the VAST Trail traverse the forest, offering diverse experiences for outdoor enthusiasts. The area also holds historical significance, with remnants of the abandoned town of Sterling, including former homesteads, farms, a schoolhouse, and a sawmill, marked along the trails.

In 2025, the Sterling Forest Management Plan was updated to reflect changes since its last adoption in 2013. These updates included new trails, completed forest management projects, and recent cooperative agreements.



Hikers in Cady Hill Forest. Photo credit: Town of Stowe

Cady Hill Forest

The lands comprising what is now the municipally owned Cady Hill Forest were long identified as one of the highest priority areas for conservation in Stowe. The combination of wildlife habitat, scenic view shed and recreation trails within walking distance of Stowe Village has made this area immensely popular with the community for its ease of accessibility and wilderness-like experience.

Stowe Land Trust, in partnership with the Town, began an intensive year-long process in 2011 to acquire Cady Hill Forest, raising nearly $1.5 million to make the project a reality. The project garnered huge support from the Town of Stowe, the Town of Waterbury, VHCB, the Open Space

Institute and the local community. The property was purchased by Stowe Land Trust in 2012 and deeded to the Town. Combined with the adjacent ±60-acre town-owned Macutchan Forest, Cady Hill Forest now consists of ±320 acres. Upon acquisition, the Town began the process of increasing public access to the property and making it easier for residents and visitors to navigate the trail system. By the end of the summer of 2012 the following projects had been completed:

- The construction of a 20-car parking lot;
- The construction of a new access trail from the parking lot (Cady Hill Climb);
- The installation of a property sign and trailhead kiosk;
- The installation of over 60 trail signs;
- The installation of 11 permanent maps at key intersections.

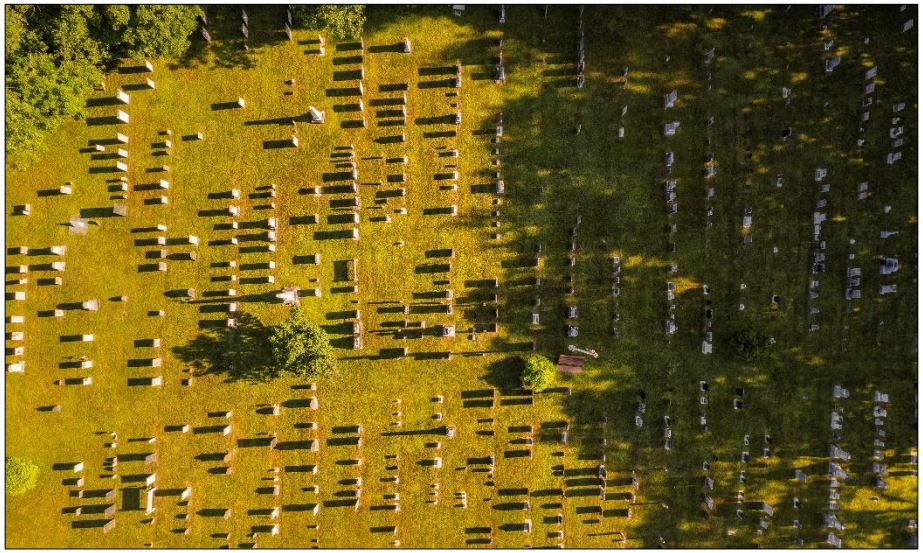
Cady Hill Forest has become extremely popular with mountain bikers and walkers drawing an estimated 100,000 users a year. In 2023, trail counters in Cady Hill Forest counted 88,159 users. The parking area located off from Mountain Road is typically at or near capacity during peak times. To accommodate growing use and ensure long-term sustainability, the Stowe Trails Partnership (STP) created a two-phase trail development plan for the property. Phase 2 of the plan was substantially completed in 2014. In April 2019, the Town of Stowe entered into a cooperative agreement with STP naming the organization as the official corridor manager for all mountain bike trails in Cady Hill Forest (and Sterling Forest) granting them permission to build and maintain the trail system. The Department of Planning & Zoning and Conservation Commission works closely with STP to ensure the trail system in Cady Hill Forest complies with the cooperative agreement, management plan, and underlying conservation easement.

Cemeteries

The Cemetery Commission oversees the management of the Town's cemeteries, while the Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the maintenance. There are seven cemeteries within our town:

- Riverbank
- Old Yard
- West Branch
- Sterling Valley
- Luce Hill Road (2)
- Topnotch field

A small shed located at the Old Yard Cemetery is used to store cemetery equipment. Two antique hearses are stored and on view at the Riverbank Cemetery. The Commission acquired an additional five acres of land to expand the Riverbank Cemetery into the Mayo Farm. A cremation garden was installed in the Riverbank Cemetery in 2000. The Commission also has a landscaping plan and an old monument restoration plan. Finally, a Cemetery Book project was completed to coincide with the 200th anniversary of the interment of Willie Utley, the first person buried in the Old Yard Cemetery. This book lists everyone buried in a Stowe cemetery and those whose remains are outside of cemeteries, but in Stowe.

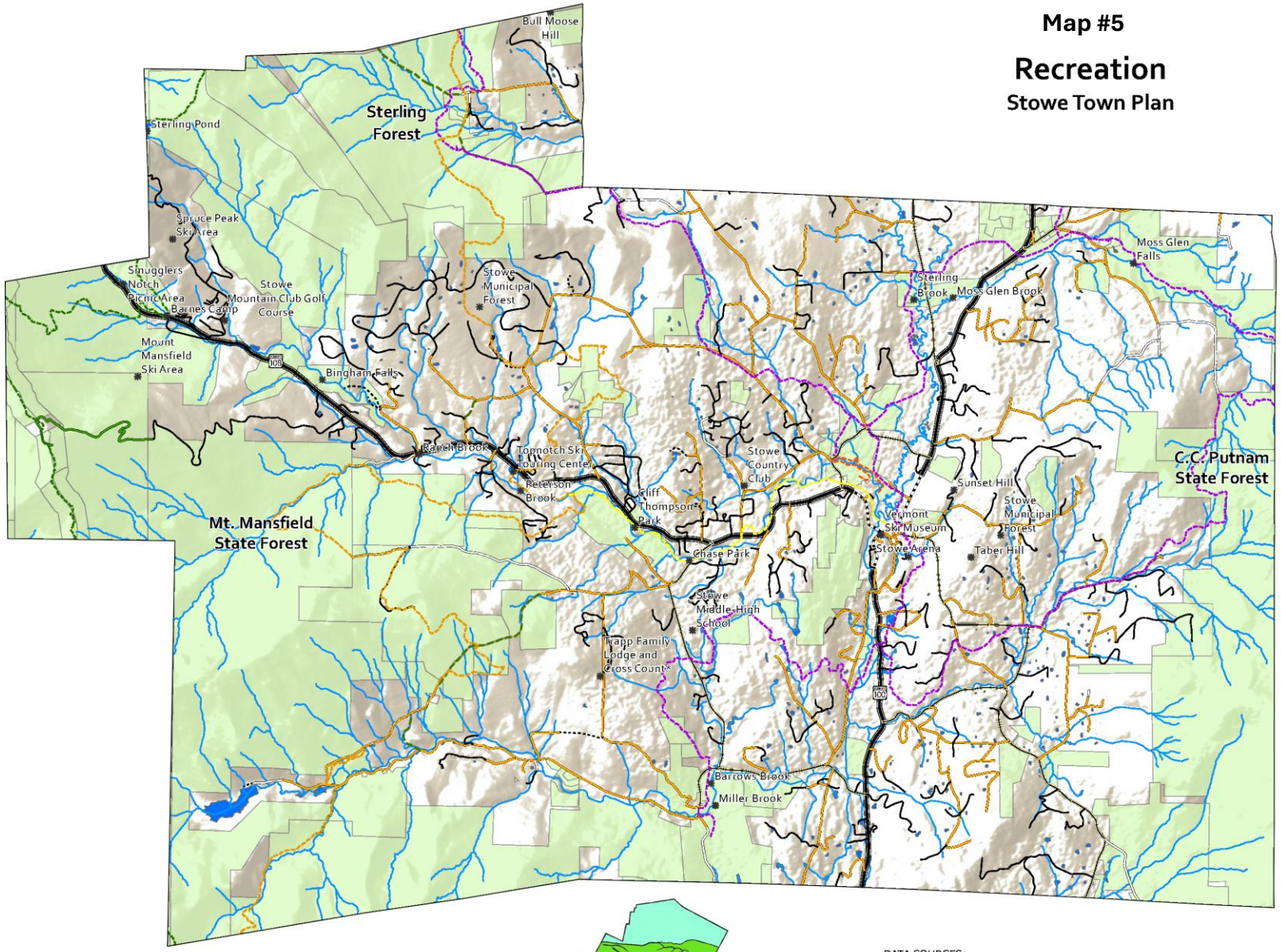


Old Yard Cemetery. Photo credit: Mark Vandenberg / StoweBeautiful.com

Map #5

Recreation

Stowe Town Plan







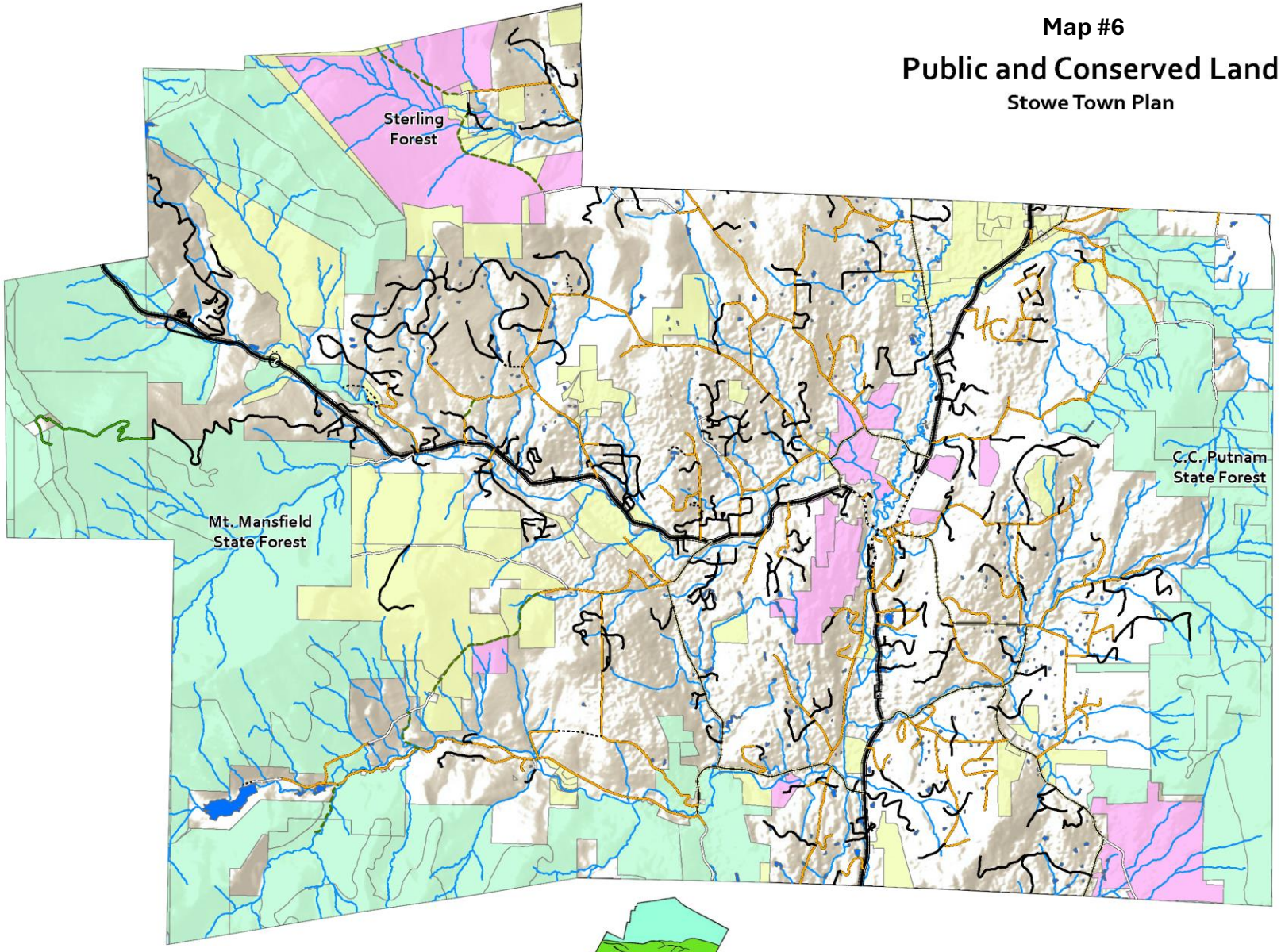
0 0.6 1.2 1.8 2.4
Miles

DATA SOURCES:
POLITICAL BOUNDARIES: VT Data - Town Boundaries, VCGI, 2024
ROADS: VT Road Centerline, VTrans, 2021
SURFACE WATER: National Hydrography Dataset, USGS, 2023
CONSERVED LAND: Conserved Land Inventory, VANR, VCGI, 2024
LANDMARKS: VT Data - E911 Landmarks, VCGI, 2024
TRAILS: VT Data - E911 Trails, VCGI, 2024

Map #6

Public and Conserved Land

Stowe Town Plan



Conserved Land
- FEDERALLY-OWNED LAND
- STATE-OWNED LAND
- TOWN-OWNED LAND
- PRIVATE CONSERVED

Road Class
- State Highway
- Town Highway Class 1
- Town Highway Class 2
- Town Highway Class 3
- Town Highway Class 4
- State Forest Highway
- Legal Trail
- Private Road
- Discontinued Road
- Stream/River
- Lake/Pond



0 0.6 1.2 1.8 2.4
Miles

LAMOILLE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

DATA SOURCES:
POLITICAL BOUNDARIES: VT Data - Town Boundaries, VCGI, 2024
ROADS: VT Road Centerline, VTrans, 2021
SURFACE WATER: National Hydrography Dataset, USGS, 2023
CONSERVED LAND: Conserved Land Inventory, VANR, VCGI, 2024



Floodwaters in the Rec Path Parking Area –Lintilhac Park
Photo credit: Teresa Merelman

Improving Our Flood Resiliency

Flooding is one of the most significant natural hazards facing Vermont communities. The catastrophic flooding caused by Tropical Storm Irene in August 2011 exposed how vulnerable our infrastructure, homes, and landscapes can be during extreme weather events. In response, the State of Vermont passed Act 16 in 2013, requiring all municipal plans adopted after July 1, 2014, to include a flood resiliency element. The Town of Stowe integrated its first flood resiliency element into the Town Plan in 2015.

Building on that foundation, this updated flood resiliency element reflects what we've learned and the increasing urgency to protect our community in the face of more frequent and intense storm events. It is grounded in the four pillars of emergency response and preparedness (mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery) and reaffirms our commitment to reducing risk, safeguarding public infrastructure, and enhancing our ability to recover swiftly from disasters.

Flood resilience involves two key strategies: minimizing exposure to flood hazards by protecting vulnerable areas, and maintaining systems that support rapid, coordinated recovery. We aim to ensure that our town remains a safe, resilient, and adaptive community - one that can withstand and recover from future flooding events while preserving the health of our people, places, and environment.

Situated in a river valley and bordered by steep slopes and mountain streams, our town is highly vulnerable to flooding. Most recently, in June and July 2024, we experienced severe flooding and fluvial erosion, resulting in over 5.4 million dollars in damage to public infrastructure and additional damage to private properties. As our climate changes, it is predicted that heavy rainstorms will become more frequent. With precipitation expected to occur in shorter, more intense bursts, water is more likely to run off the land rather than be absorbed by it, leading to fluvial erosion, a significant risk of severe damage to roads and property. This increased risk of flooding highlights our vulnerability to heavy rain, snowmelt, and rising rivers, leading to serious impacts on our infrastructure and economy.

There are two types of flooding that affect our community. The first is inundation flooding, which occurs when water slowly rises over low-lying areas. While this type of flooding happens gradually, it can cover a large area, and it may take days for the waters to recede, often leading to significant property damage. Prolonged storms can trigger inundation flooding due to the cumulative effects of continuous rain, saturated soils, and elevated water tables or aquifer levels.



Recent flooding event. Photo credit: Town of Stowe

The second type of flooding is flash flooding, a sudden and intense event often accompanied by fluvial (stream bank) erosion. Unlike inundation flooding, flash floods usually do not cover large areas, but the water moves rapidly and can rise quickly. Severe storms with heavy rainfall can trigger flash floods, making them particularly dangerous due to their sudden onset. In both types of flooding, floodplains and river corridors are crucial for providing space for floodwaters and helping disperse erosive energy.

While there are areas impacted by inundation, flood hazards in our community are generally associated with fluvial erosion, streambank instability, and stormwater run-off.

While flooding cannot be completely eliminated, it is possible to identify where they are most severe and take local actions to reduce their impact and risk. The Town of Stowe remains dedicated to enhancing our flood resilience and have implemented policies to better protect our most vulnerable areas. Over the years, the Town has been committed to reducing flood hazards and improving water quality through a combination of regulatory and non-regulatory measures including:

- Adoption of a fifty-foot structure setback from the top of streambanks, including a requirement for maintaining naturally vegetated buffers;
- Adoption of Accepted Agricultural Practices on Mayo Farm;
- Installation of riparian buffer planting along the West Branch;
- Adoption of the Fluvial Erosion Hazard (FEH) Overlay District along the West Branch to control development in erosion-prone areas;
- Adoption of amended Flood Hazard Area Regulations to comply with the latest National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) standards;
- Require stormwater treatment for increases in impervious surfaces;
- Partnered with Stowe Land Trust on the purchase of two River Corridor Easements on the Little River in the Lower Village and the purchase of a conservation easement on Nichols Field; and
- Relocation of the Recreation Path at Bouchard Farm out of the FEH and giving the river an opportunity to create a new floodplain.

This plan also contains additional priority action items to be implemented over the course of the next eight years and beyond. Additional mitigation goals identified in the 2022 Stowe Local Hazard Mitigation Plan that also help the Town build a more flood resilient community include:

- Support the creation of local implementation tools that prevent land use investments from being placed in areas that, over time, would be at risk from or in conflict with fluvial adjustment, erosion, or landslide hazards.
- Integrate hazard mitigation strategies into all municipal plans, policies, and capital projects to strengthen disaster preparedness.
- Partner with the LCPC to implement community hazard mitigation goals that reduce potential disaster damage.
- Develop and maintain emergency preparedness plans for all identified hazards, ensure timely public communication on mitigation efforts, and keep town infrastructure in safe operating condition.
- Provide technical review and guidance for development proposals to protect scenic resources, water quality, hydrology, and public safety.
- Support and implement flood resiliency management plans in collaboration with state and local agencies, ensuring coordinated mitigation actions.

The Town's adopted Flood Hazard Overlay District limits development in flood-prone areas, aiming to protect life and property while enabling property owners to obtain affordable flood insurance and mortgages through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). In 2024, the Selectboard adopted amended flood hazard area regulations that now exceed FEMA's minimum standards.

Previously Declared Disasters in Stowe

In Vermont, disaster costs are shared among local, state, federal, and private sources. Towns handle the immediate response, but when damages exceed local capacity, the state provides additional support through the Vermont Disaster Relief Fund. For major events, the Governor may request a Presidential Disaster Declaration, which makes FEMA assistance available.

For private property, insurance is the primary resource. Because most homeowners' policies do not cover flooding, those without flood insurance often rely on savings, loans, or limited FEMA grants. Hazard mitigation grants may also be awarded to reduce future risks. The Town participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which allows property owners in participating communities to purchase federally backed flood insurance. Participation in the program helps protect residents and businesses from flood losses, promotes safer development in flood-prone areas, and ensures eligibility for federal disaster assistance. By providing access to federally supported flood

insurance, the program also helps property owners manage the high costs of flood damage.

When Vermont receives a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration, municipal governments in affected counties are eligible for 75% reimbursement of eligible public recovery costs, such as repairing roads, bridges, and other infrastructure. The remaining 25% is shared between the local municipality and the State of Vermont, contributing a portion through the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF). The State contribution depends on whether municipalities have taken steps to reduce flood risk. For disasters after October 23, 2014, the State pays an additional 7.5%, and for communities that meet higher flood-resiliency standards, the state pays 12.5% or 17.5%. The Town of Stowe qualifies for the 17.5% contribution, leaving the municipality responsible for 7.5% of costs.

Since 1990, our community has been affected by seventeen declared disasters and has received Public Assistance (PA) funding from FEMA for twelve of them. PA funds are federal dollars provided to state, local, tribal, and certain nonprofit organizations to help them respond to and recover from major disasters. These funds are not for private homeowners; they are focused on public infrastructure and services. The declared disasters Stowe has experienced are identified on the accompanying chart.

Federal-aid highways, including Moscow Road to Barrows Road, portions of Luce Hill Road, Mountain Road (VT-108), Waterbury-Stowe Road (Route 100), and Stagecoach Road, are eligible for Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Emergency Relief funding when damaged by natural disasters or catastrophic events. In Vermont, the cost share for permanent repairs to these roads and bridges is 80% federal, 10% state, and 10% local. The Town also received funding from the Federal Highway Administration for the following:

May 2011 (DR-1995)	$44,817.05
August 2011 (DR-4022)	$170,894.67
November 2019 (DR 4474)	$1,226,772
November 2024 (DR4810)	$74,000

Declared Disaster	Public Assistance	Event Description
June 1990 (DR 875)	$79,852	Flash Floods
August 1995 (DR 1063)	$440,603	Severe Flooding
April 2007 (DR 1698)	$6,308 (Stowe Electric)	Ice storm/ heavy rain
May 2011 (DR-1995)	$561,899	Excessive rain/ Severe Flooding
August 2011 (DR-4022)	$291,039.62	High wind and flooding associated with Tropical Storm Irene
May 29, 2012 (DR-4066)	No PA Requested	Thunderstorms/2 inches of rainfall
May 22-26, 2013 (DR-4120)	No PA Requested	Heavy rainfall
December 20-26, 2013 (DR-4163)	No PA Requested	Ice storm
April 15-18, 2014 (DR-4178)	No PA Requested	Heavy rainfall/snowmelt - flooding
December 9-12, 2014 (DR-4207)	No PA Requested	Snowstorm, 6-18 inches of snowfall across the County
October 29-30, 2017 (DR-4356)	$163,941.68	Total rainfall in Stowe was over 1.8 inches. Sustained winds of 25 to 35 mph with frequent wind gusts of 50 to 70 mph.
May 4-5, 2018 (DR-4380)	No PA Requested	Total rainfall in Stowe was over 1.5 inches. The severe storm and rainfall caused flooding across the region.
October 31, 2019 (DR-4474)	$169,726	Heaving rainfall/flooding. Rainfall across Vermont ranged from 1.5 to 4inches.
January 20, 2020 (DR-4532)	$17,602.20	COVID-19 pandemic
December 22-24, 2022 (DR-4695)	No RPA Submitted	Severe Storm and Flooding
July 7 -21, 2023 (DR-4720-VT)	$48,932	Severe Storms, Flooding, Landslides, and Mudslides
Dec 18 -19, 2023 (DR-4762-VT)	$73,720	Severe Storms and Flooding
July 9-11, 2024 (DR-4810-VT)	$2.2 million	Severe Storm, Flooding, Landslides, and Mudslides
June 22-24, 2024 (DR-4816)	$3.4 million	Severe Storms and Flooding

Hazard Mitigation Planning

With the rising costs of taxpayer-funded flood recovery, the Town is dedicated to developing and implementing flood hazard mitigation strategies to minimize or prevent future damage to homes, businesses, and public infrastructure. The goal of hazard mitigation is to minimize damage from natural or man-made hazards, as well as reduce the financial costs of disaster recovery. Hazard mitigation strategies focus on utilizing natural landscape features, such as floodplains, river corridors, and wetlands, to cost-effectively reduce the impact of floods. These areas act as a first line of defense, storing floodwaters and reducing sediment, nutrient pollution, and debris carried by floods.

The Town has worked closely with LCPC to maintain and update as needed, a FEMA-approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. The purpose of the plan is to identify all hazards facing the community and develop strategies to begin reducing risks from these identified hazards. In March 2022**,** the Town of Stowe re-adopted its amended Local Hazard Mitigation Plan**,** solidifying its ongoing commitment to reducing long-term flood risks and protecting the community. The plan also provides mitigation strategies to make our community more disaster resistant. Hazard mitigation projects prioritized in the 2022 plan included infrastructure projects such as culvert upgrades and the Luce Hill Rd Bridge replacement, continuing to pursue river corridor easements, securing funding for back-up generators, continuing emergency training, and amending our Flood Hazard Area Regulations to comply with the latest NFIP standards. In 2024 the Town amended its zoning regulations to comply with the latest NFIP standards and included updated language for the Fluvial Erosion Hazard Area Overlay District. In 2027 the Town is expected to re-adopt an updated version of our Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and revisit mitigation actions and priorities.

Emergency Preparedness

Improving emergency response is a key part of hazard mitigation planning. The 2022 LHMP includes actions to strengthen readiness, such as providing ongoing training for responders, installing backup generators, fully equipping all emergency shelters, and ensuring every Stowe Emergency Responder has appropriate personal protective equipment. For more information on our LHMP, this document can be viewed on the municipal website at https://www.stowevt.gov/Departments/Emergency-Management.

For a community of our size, the Town provides an excellent level of emergency services. Presently, emergency services include the Stowe Police Department, Stowe Fire & Rescue, and Stowe Mountain Rescue. Facilities for each of the providers are concentrated at the Public Safety Building on South Main Street in Stowe Village. For a detailed description of these departments, visit the public safety and emergency services section of this plan.



Road erosion impacts from recent flooding event. Photo credit: Town of Stowe

Flood Hazard and Fluvial Erosion Mapping

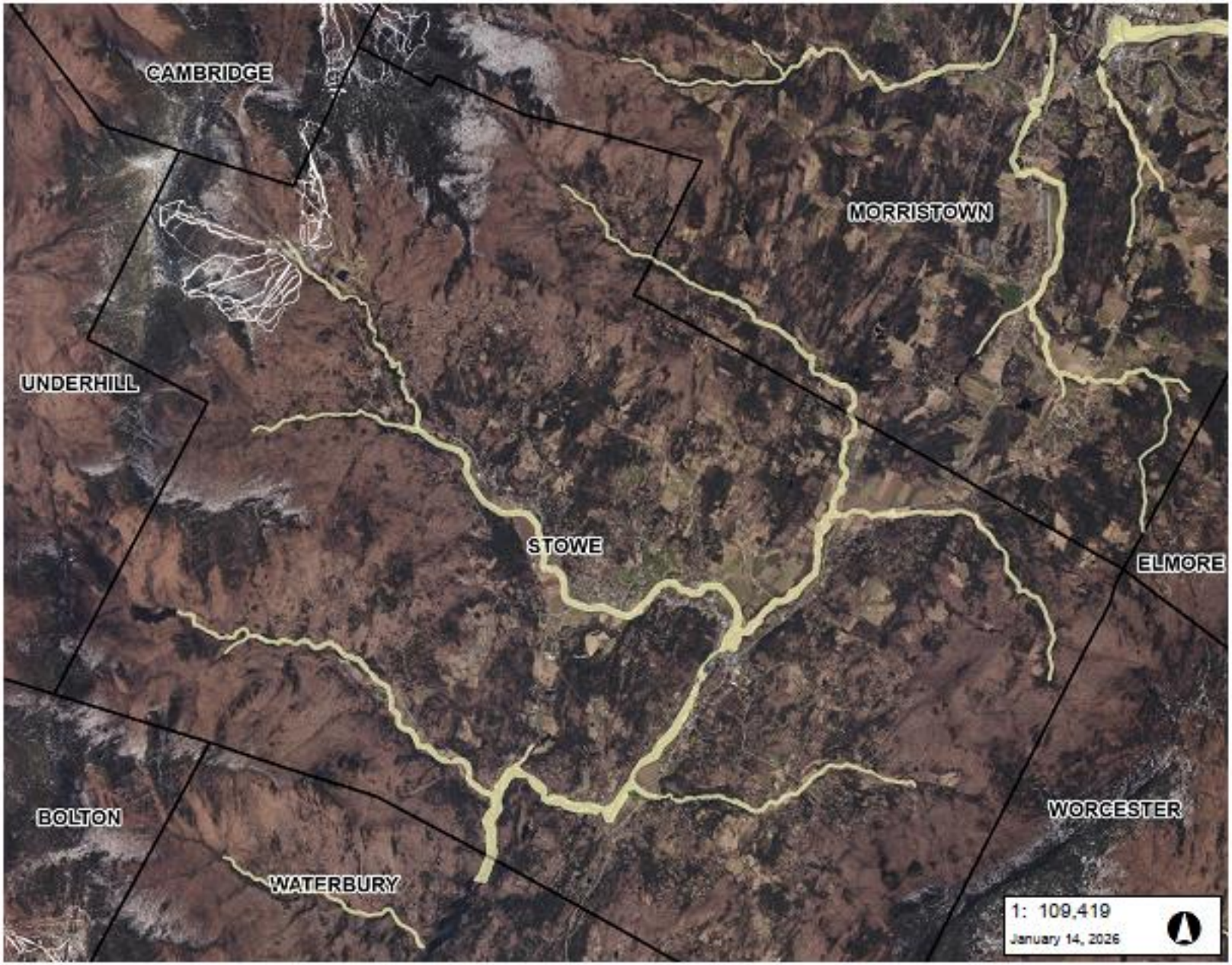
The Town of Stowe accepts and adopts the Flood Ready Map of this plan identifying current fluvial erosion hazard areas based on river corridor maps provided by the Agency of Natural Resources pursuant to 10 VSA §1428(a). In 2024, Act 121 was passed by the Vermont legislature which included authorization of a statewide River Corridor Regulation and municipal adoption of higher floodplain standards including adopting river corridor bylaws. After July 1, 2027, municipal river corridor and floodplain permitting will be administered by the VT Agency of Natural Resources for rivers/streams with a two square mile watershed or greater. To learn more about Act 121 visit: https://legislature.vermont.gov/. In the near future, we will need to update our local Flood Hazard Area bylaws again to comply with Act 121. This Act recognizes the importance of protecting the 500-year floodplain and river corridor and directing new growth out of the floodplain to reduce future loss of life and property, and physical isolation during major flooding events and winter ice jams.

VERMONT

Flood Ready Map Map #7

Vermont Agency of Natural Resources

vermont.gov





LEGEND

River Corridors (Aug 27, 2019)

Town Boundary

River Corridors (Aug 27, 2019)

NOTES

Map created using ANR's Flood Ready Map

5,558.0 0 2,779.00 5,558.0 Meters

WGS_1984_Web_Mercator_Auxiliary_Sphere 1" = 9118 Ft. 1cm = 1094 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.

Our Trusted Public Safety & Emergency Services

Public safety is an important element of our community's well-being and a core responsibility of municipal government. Services like fire protection, emergency medical care, law enforcement, and coordinated emergency response do more than meet our essential needs- they embody our commitment to protecting one another and reflect our shared values. As a community, we have long prioritized safety, preparedness, and mutual aid, recognizing that a strong public safety system and emergency services are vital to protecting lives, supporting residents and visitors, and maintaining a high quality of life.

For a community of our size, the Town provides an exceptional level of emergency services. These include the Police Department, Fire & Rescue, Emergency Management, and Stowe Mountain Rescue. All of these departments are co-located in the Public Safety Facility on South Main Street- a modern facility constructed in 2009 after voters approved a $7.2 million bond. By locating all emergency services under one roof, the Town strengthened collaboration, response coordination, and operational efficiency.

Our public safety and emergency service departments serve a geographic area of approximately 72 square miles and an estimated year-round population of roughly 5,200 residents. This number significantly increases during peak tourism seasons, requiring our emergency services to remain nimble, responsive, and adaptable. These departments maintain mutual aid agreements to provide emergency medical services and fire protection in the Town of Waterbury and actively participate in regional mutual aid networks across Lamoille and Washington Counties.

The following sections provide an overview of each department and the Town's continued commitment to supporting and strengthening public safety for all.

Police Department

The Stowe Police Department is a 24-hour law enforcement agency dedicated to serving the residents and visitors with professionalism, integrity, and respect. Grounded in a philosophy of community policing, the department emphasizes open communication, collaboration, and building trust with the people it serves. Whether patrolling quiet residential neighborhoods, the busy Mountain Road/VT-108 corridor, mountain trails, or the popular Stowe Recreation Path, the department is deeply engaged in preserving public safety and enhancing the well-being of our community.



Stowe Police Department vehicle. Photo credit: Town of Stowe

At the core of the department is a dedicated team of fourteen full-time officers, including the Chief of Police, sergeants, corporals, a detective, patrol officers, and front desk personnel. Each member brings a unique skill set and a shared commitment to public service. Their efforts are bolstered by five part-time officers and a part-time animal control officer, who provide added flexibility and support during peak periods and special events.

This dedicated team serves as the foundation of public safety in our community. On any given day, officers may respond to emergencies,

investigate crimes, or assist at motor vehicle accidents. Their presence is woven into every part of the community - managing traffic during busy weekends, recovering lost property, investigating missing persons, and maintaining order at local events. Our police officers provide a consistent, trusted source of protection and support for residents and visitors alike. The department also collaborates closely with neighboring agencies, including the Morristown Police Department, Lamoille County Sheriff's Department, Vermont State Police, and Vermont Fish and Wildlife. These partnerships enhance the department's capacity to respond effectively to complex incidents and regional needs, ensuring a coordinated approach to public safety.

In 2024, the Stowe Police Department responded to 4,044 incidents - a reflection of its broad responsibilities and consistent presence in the community. A significant share of those calls involved roadway safety: over 1,000 traffic stops, 237 motor vehicle complaints, and 223 crashes. The department's focus on traffic enforcement and accident response plays a key role in keeping both residents and visitors safe.

Beyond traffic, officers remained vigilant in deterring crime, responding to 251 reports of suspicious activity, 179 directed patrols, and numerous theft investigations. Emergencies took many forms - officers responded to 146 medical calls, seventy-four fire alarms, and seventeen fire incidents, and were instrumental in coordinating the response to the year's lone motor vehicle fatality.

Supporting community well-being remains at the heart of the department's mission. Officers conducted sixty-two welfare checks, assisted the public and motorists in 185 cases, and responded to 120 requests from other agencies. These everyday interactions often have a quiet but meaningful impact.

The department also managed some of the most challenging calls, including thirty-one reports of sexual assault, fifteen mental health incidents, and cases involving custodial disputes and abuse prevention orders. Their compassionate and professional response reflects the department's deep commitment to protecting our most vulnerable residents.

From handling noise complaints and juvenile concerns to responding to trespassing and missing persons, every call - no matter the size or complexity - is approached with the same care and commitment to community. As our community continues to grow and evolve - both as a cherished destination and as a year-round home - the Police Department remains steadfast in its mission and committed to protecting the safety, values, and spirit of the community the department proudly serves.



Stowe Fire Department truck. Photo credit: Lindsay Turiello

Stowe Fire & Rescue

Like many towns throughout Vermont and across the country, our community has experienced a decline in local firefighting volunteers, along with challenges related to their availability and the recruitment and retention of new members. Contributing factors include increasingly intensive training requirements, the substantial time commitment expected of volunteers, and the continuing issue of housing affordability. In response to these challenges, the Town took a significant step in 2024 by merging its separate fire and emergency medical services into a

unified municipal department - Stowe Fire & Rescue. This transition was guided by the recommendations of a professional staffing and operations analysis and included the establishment of a full-time Fire & EMS Chief to lead the department.

A key aspect of this new model is the cross-training of full-time employees, which has helped maximize coverage and improve response capabilities. Part-time employees, who are not required to be cross trained, also play a vital role - particularly during major emergency incidents such as structure fires - and help ensure consistent coverage. Both full- and part-time staff are compensated for their service. This consolidation has strengthened the Town's ability to meet growing service demands, enhanced operational flexibility, and positioned Stowe Fire & Rescue to better serve the community now and into the future.



Stowe Fire and Rescue Department vehicles. Photo credit: Town of Stowe

Stowe Fire & Rescue operates year-round, delivering emergency services twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The department is supported by a committed team of approximately thirty-eight members, including ten full-time, cross-trained fire and rescue personnel, along with roughly twelve part-time members who provide essential support across both fire and EMS functions. The department responds to a wide range of emergencies - from residential and commercial fires to motor vehicle crashes, medical emergencies, and technical rescues. It also plays a key role in public education and fire prevention, engaging with the community through safety programs, school visits, and emergency preparedness outreach.

The well-equipped firefighting and EMS fleet consists of:

- One Engine (1000 gallons)
- One Mini Pumper (300 gallons)
- One 107 Ladder truck (400 gallons)
- Two Tanker/Engines (1800 gallons & 2000 gallons)
- One Utility/Forestry Truck
- Two Fully Equipped Transport Ambulances
- One Squad truck for Fire/EMS Response/Back up command vehicle
- One Fire Chiefs command vehicle

The replacement cycle for fire and rescue equipment and vehicles varies depending on the type of equipment. The department is funded through a combination of Town general funds, service fees, and fundraising by the non-profit Stowe Rescue Squad, Inc., which supports community outreach, training, and supplemental equipment.

In 2024, Stowe Fire & Rescue's responded to 506 fire calls and 729 emergency medical responses - a reflection of the department's dedication and service to the community. 2024 brought an increase in fire-related incidents, rising from 468 the previous year to 506. Most of those calls, 309 in total, were alarms, often the first indication of potential danger. Carbon monoxide calls followed with fifty-four, along with thirty-three accident responses and a range of others, from fires and hazard checks to elevator rescues and medical assists. These calls

came in at all hours - 359 during weekdays, 147 on weekends, and with an almost even split between daytime and nighttime, a testament to the department's readiness around the clock.

Throughout 2024, the department also responded to 729 emergency medical calls, each representing a moment when someone needed help fast. While ninety-eight of these calls originated from Stowe Mountain Resort, most of these calls – 612 - came from other areas throughout our community. Nineteen times, the department extended its reach through mutual aid, offering support to neighboring communities when they needed it most.

Of those emergency medical calls, 392 patients were transported to Copley Hospital, the area's primary care facility. Others required longer trips - fifteen patients were taken to the University of Vermont Medical Center, and three to Central Vermont Medical Center. In 319 cases, no transport was necessary, but the department stood by, canceled when appropriate, or provided critical paramedic support.

Behind each of these numbers is a story: a smoke detector triggering in the night, a skier injured on the slopes, a resident experiencing a medical emergency, a neighbor lending a hand across town lines. Day after day, night after night, Stowe Fire & Rescue stands as a vital pillar of public safety**,** responding with professionalism, compassion, and calm under pressure. Their work reflects more than statistics, it represents lives protected, fears eased, and a community made stronger. Now and into the future, the presence of a trusted, capable emergency response team remains not just important - it's essential.

Stowe Mountain Rescue

Rooted in the values of service, preparedness, and care for both people and place, Stowe Mountain Rescue has been a vital part of the Stowe community since its founding in 1980. What began as a small team focused on climbing rescues in the rugged cliffs of Smugglers' Notch has grown into one of the most respected technical rescue teams in the Northeast - providing critical support not only to Stowe but across Vermont.

Today, Stowe Mountain Rescue responds to approximately 45 to 55 calls each year, many of which occur in the remote backcountry areas that define Stowe's outdoor identity. Whether locating a lost hiker, rescuing an injured skier, navigating swiftwater during a flood, or conducting rope-based cliff extractions, the team brings professionalism, precision, and deep compassion to every mission. And when other towns and regions need help, the rescue team extends its hand, offering mutual aid and technical support far beyond town lines.



Stowe Mountain Rescue. Photo credit: Town of Stowe

The team is proud to be an accredited member of the Mountain Rescue Association (MRA) - a national recognition earned through rigorous safety and performance standards - and is certified by the Vermont Department of Health - EMS Division as an Advanced Life Support First Responder Agency. Stowe Mountain Rescue operates in close partnership with Stowe Fire & Rescue, who provide patient transport, and is also designated a Mobile Support Unit by the Vermont Department of Public Safety, allowing them to respond to specialized rescue incidents statewide.

Currently, the team is made up of fifteen active members, each highly trained in:

- Backcountry search and rescue
- High-angle rope operations

- Swiftwater and flood rescue
- Wilderness medical response

Members maintain readiness through monthly scenario-based trainings, regular protocol reviews, and joint exercises with regional and state partners such as Vermont State Police Search and Rescue, Colchester Technical Rescue, and New York State Police Rangers (Helicopter Operations).

No two calls are the same - some rescues take under an hour, while others stretch across multiple days. Each mission demands resilience, skill, and teamwork as members respond to emergencies involving hikers, skiers, snowmobilers, and other outdoor enthusiasts who find themselves in harm's way.

The team operates with:

- Two fully equipped response vehicles
- A snowmobile and trailer for winter access
- A wide range of specialized technical rescue gear

What sets Stowe Mountain Rescue apart is not only its technical capability but its unwavering commitment to public service. The team does not charge for rescue services. Operations are primarily funded by the Town of Stowe, with additional support from community donations that help fund training, equipment, and outreach.

In every mission, Stowe Mountain Rescue reflects the spirit of the community it serves - ready, reliable, and rooted in a deep respect for the outdoors and genuine love for our community. Their work protects lives, supports outdoor access, and ensures that those who explore our rugged outdoor landscapes can do so with a little more confidence, knowing that help is always close at hand.

Emergency Management

Nestled between mountains and rivers - where natural beauty is matched by a strong sense of community – our approach to emergency management is rooted in preparation, care, and collaboration. Though often working behind the scenes, the Department of Emergency Management plays a critical role in protecting the town from both natural and human-caused emergencies.

Appointed by the Town Manager under 20 V.S.A. §6, the Emergency Management Director (EMD) is responsible for organizing, administering, and coordinating the Town's emergency response. As the local leader for emergency readiness, the EMD connects municipal operations with state and federal partners and guides the community through every phase of emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

Whether responding to severe weather or large-scale incidents, the EMD works to ensure that we are not only equipped to respond - but prepared to recover and come back stronger.

At the core of this work is the Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) - a living, evolving blueprint that outlines how the Town prepares for, responds to, and recovers from a wide range of emergencies. From blizzards and flooding to infrastructure failures and public health events, the LEMP guides coordinated action among those tasked with protecting lives, property, and essential services.

When emergencies occur, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) - located in the Stowe Public Safety Building - the central hub for the town's emergency response. It's where local officials, first responders, and partner agencies gather to monitor unfolding events, coordinate efforts, allocate resources, and provide timely information to the public. While supporting field operations, the EOC also plays a critical role in:

- Maintaining situational awareness for municipal leadership
- Managing requests for personnel, equipment, and logistical support
- Coordinating communication between departments and outside agencies
- Ensuring the public receives clear, timely, and accurate updates

Recognizing the urgency and unpredictability of crisis situations, the Town of Stowe's Purchasing Policy allows for flexibility in true emergencies - such as threats to life, municipal property, or critical

services, as well as major permit violations or environmental hazards - so that immediate action can be taken without delay.

The Stowe Emergency Management Team and Stowe Public Safety have recently adopted VT-ALERT as the primary system for local emergency notifications. Operated by the Vermont Department of Public Safety, VT-ALERT delivers alerts via email, text message, or phone call to subscribers. Stowe-specific alerts include storm preparations, traffic disruptions, road closures, and other public safety emergencies. The system is designed not only for residents, but also for anyone who lives in, works in, or visits the Stowe area. Emergency management goes beyond responding to crises - it is a long-term investment in building community resilience. It relies on active collaboration among the Police Department, Fire & Rescue, Stowe Mountain Rescue, DPW, utilities, health officials, Federal and State governments, and private-sector partners to create a comprehensive support network. This whole-community approach ensures that when challenges arise, we can respond effectively and recover more quickly. At its core, emergency management reflects the values of preparedness, trust, and shared responsibility. It embodies what makes our community strong: a commitment to each other, a dedication to safety, and the belief that with careful coordination and compassionate leadership, we can face any storm and emerge stronger together.



Vehicle fire on Main Street. Photo credit: Town of Stowe

Dispatch Services (E-911)

The Lamoille County Sheriff's Department's Communications Center is a vital component of the region's public safety network, operating around the clock to support emergency response efforts throughout Lamoille County. The center manages all 911 calls and provides dispatch services for police, fire, and rescue departments across multiple jurisdictions. The Town has contracted with Lamoille County Sheriff's Department's since the mid-1970s for these services.

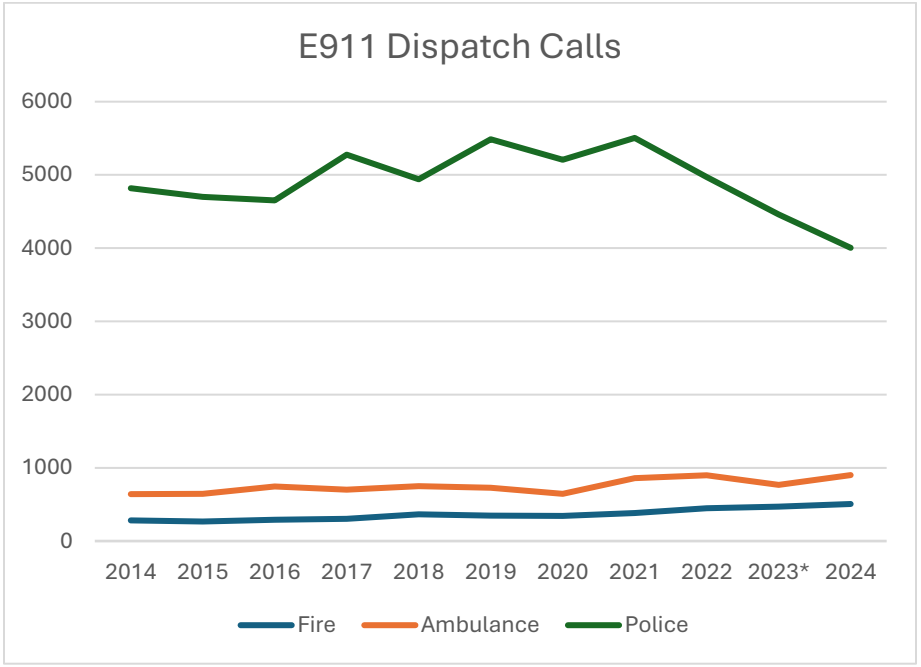


Figure 23: Number of E911 Dispatch Calls. Note: 2023 Data from the Lamoille County Sherrif's office was not available in the Annual Town Report. Totals were pulled from EMS, Fire, and Police reporting documents within the 2023 Town Report.

Staffed by skilled and professional dispatchers, the center handles a wide range of calls, from routine incidents to critical emergencies, ensuring rapid response and clear coordination among agencies. Dispatchers are trained to prioritize calls, coordinate resources, and offer pre-arrival guidance to those in need. These dispatch services are provided to participating municipalities under an annual agreement with the Sheriff's Department, reinforcing a coordinated and reliable system of public safety communication.

Our Healthy Community & Human Services

Stowe's residents consistently emphasize the importance of a strong sense of community, access to nature, recreation, and the well-being of all who live and visit here. The Stowe 2050 community survey reaffirmed these values, highlighting the community's appreciation for social connection, outdoor recreation, housing for all income levels, educational opportunities, and a vibrant historic village. Together, these elements form the foundation of a healthy, thriving community - physically, mentally, socially, and environmentally.

A healthy and sustainable community is one where residents and visitors, regardless of age, income, ability, background, or length of residency, can thrive in a safe, inclusive, and connected environment. Community well-being is shaped by social, environmental, and economic conditions, as well as the quality of local services, infrastructure, and opportunities. When physical, mental, social, and environmental needs are met, both individuals and the broader community benefit. By prioritizing equity, accessibility, and inclusion, the Town can ensure that everyone has access to the resources needed to live healthy, meaningful, and connected lives. The Town is committed to the well-being of the community and will continue to incorporate health and wellness into decision-making, planning, and policy efforts.

The concept of "public interest" in local government has long been understood as protecting public health, safety, and welfare, and this principle continues to guide many municipal services, facilities, and programs. Residents and visitors benefit from a strong and growing network of local and regional health and human service organizations dedicated to promoting community well-being. Vermont law explicitly authorizes municipalities to support these programs. Under 24 V.S.A. §2691, towns may "*appropriate such sums of money as it deems necessary for the support of programs and agencies that provide social services to town residents*." Each year, Stowe voters allocate funding to a variety of social service organizations. In FY 26, these appropriations ranged from $420 to $15,669. Such appropriations ensure that health, human service, and nonprofit agencies can continue to operate in our community, particularly for vulnerable populations and in cases where state and federal funding alone may not be sufficient.

Health Care Services

Copley Hospital, located in Morrisville, serves as the principal regional health care facility for Stowe and the Greater Lamoille Valley. Since opening in 1932, Copley has expanded to meet community needs, offering a full range of inpatient and outpatient care, including 24-hour emergency services and more than two dozen medical specialties.



Photograph courtesy of Copley Hospital

Lamoille Health Partners is a nonprofit Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) based in Lamoille County, with its main office in Morrisville. Services include, but are not limited to, primary care/family medicine, pediatrics, dental care, behavioral health and wellness, pharmacy, and other health care services. In early 2025, Lamoille Health Partners consolidated its family medicine services from its Stowe office on Mountain Road into its larger Morrisville facility.

Home health and hospice services are provided locally by Lamoille Home Health & Hospice**,** the largest recipient of the Town's Social Services appropriations. This non-profit agency serves towns in Lamoille County, offering skilled nursing, rehabilitative therapies, wellness programs, telemedicine, and long-term care.

Mental health services are available through Lamoille County Mental Health Services**,** which operates a walk-in clinic for low-income residents and provides a comprehensive array of programs, including adult, children, family, and outpatient services; substance abuse treatment; community rehabilitation; and emergency services.

Our community also has a robust network of private health care providers serving local residents, visitors, and surrounding communities.

Senior Services

Stowe's older residents are supported by several organizations. The Central Vermont Council on Aging, based in Morrisville, helps seniors remain independent in their homes through federal, state, and local funding, providing services such as meals, transportation, advocacy, and volunteer programs. Meals on Wheels deliver home meals under this framework, and Out & About, the Lamoille Area Adult Day Care Center, offers in-home day care for frail and impaired elders, along with caregiver respite services. Currently, Stowe has no licensed residential care homes. The Woodlands at Stowe, a private retirement community opened in 1998, offers assisted living options, while several nursing homes are available nearby in Morrisville and Waterbury. With an aging population and longer life expectancies, demand for senior services and facilities is expected to increase. The success of the Woodlands signifies that Stowe is becoming an attractive destination for active seniors, and these demographic trends should influence future planning for local services and facilities.

Human & Behavioral Health Services

Residents also benefit from a range of regional behavioral health and human service providers. Central Vermont Community Action (CVCA) in Morrisville assists low-income families with food, fuel, housing, Head Start programs, and micro-loans, offering both short-term aid and long-term support. Downstreet (formerly the Lamoille Housing Partnership) provides affordable housing and housing assistance.

The Lamoille Family Center is a regional Parent Child Center serving children, youth, and families from birth through age 24 across the Lamoille Valley. The organization provides early care and education, home visiting, parent education, playgroups, childcare resource and referral, youth programming, and emergency family support.

The Vermont Center for Independent Living helps residents with significant disabilities live independently and engage in community life. Lamoille Family Center supports families and children through parenting programs, preschool and playgroups, childcare assistance, home visits, and mediation services, reaching approximately 4,000 individuals annually.

Founded in 1981, the Clarina Howard Nichols Center serves Lamoille County by working to end domestic and sexual violence, human trafficking, and stalking through advocacy, education, prevention, and community outreach. The center provides shelter and support services for survivors and offers preventive education programs to promote safety and social change.

The North Central Vermont Recovery Center (NCVRC) in Morrisville is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting individuals and families on their journey to lasting recovery from alcohol and drug addiction. NCVRC provides a welcoming, safe, and substance-free environment where people can access information, connect with others who have lived experience, and participate in substance-free social activities. The center offers education, support, and hope, helping the community build pathways to recovery and wellness.

Sana at Stowe, which opened in 2021 on the former North American Hockey Academy property, is a residential in-patient addiction-treatment center dedicated to supporting long-term recovery. The center provides medically supervised detox and withdrawal services, a range of therapies including trauma-informed care, CBT, DBT, ACT, and peer support, as well as holistic wellness programs.

Lamoille Community House, located in Hyde Park, is a year-round shelter providing a safe and supportive environment for those experiencing homelessness. The shelter offers warm meals, secure accommodations, and access to a range of social services through partnerships with local organizations. Dedicated to treating every guest with dignity and respect, the ADA-compliant facility and trained staff welcome all adults, regardless of race, gender, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.

The programs, services, and organizations listed are not comprehensive. For a single, easy-to-use resource connecting you to local assistance with food, housing, healthcare, and financial support, visit https://www.findhelp.org/.

Our Essential Municipal Utilities & Infrastructure

Municipal utilities are a critical element of what keeps Stowe a safe, healthy, and thriving community. We are served by three essential systems: Stowe Electric Department, municipal water, and municipal sewer - together these utilities meet our basic needs, supporting local businesses, protecting our environment, and strengthening our community's resilience. By planning carefully and investing wisely in these systems, we can ensure reliable service, guide responsible growth, and safeguard the community's long-term well-being and sustainability.

Stowe Electric Department

The Stowe Electric Department (SED) is an essential part of our local infrastructure, supplying our community with electricity for more than a century. Established in 1911, SED's mission is to provide reliable electricity to our many residents and businesses. Originally part of the Village of Stowe municipal corporation, SED became part of the Town of Stowe municipal corporation when the Town and Village merged. SED continues to handle the billing services of the Water and Sewer Departments.

Over the decades, SED has evolved from a small local provider into a modern, forward-thinking utility, playing a central role in achieving our energy resilience, sustainability, and innovation goals. SED has a dedicated team of twenty-two full-time employees and serves more than 4,667 residential, commercial, and municipal customers in Stowe. With a focus on community-first values, SED reinvests all revenues back into system improvements, renewable energy programs, and customer-focused services - all while keeping rates affordable.

As a municipal utility, SED operates under the governance of the Stowe Electric Commission -appointed by the Selectboard, which ensures SED's planning goals reflect community priorities. The Vermont Public Utility Commission and Vermont Department of Public Service have oversight over municipal utilities and remains responsible for approving SED's rates and cost of service, distribution system projects, power supply and renewable energy targets, and consumer protection. This dynamic means that SED has regulatory targets mandated by the State of Vermont but has flexibility to meet these goals through local decision-making.



Stowe Electric Office in Moscow. Photo credit: Stowe Electric Dept.

The department maintains a robust infrastructure that includes:

- 175.52 miles of distribution lines (91.38 miles overhead, 84.14 miles underground)
- Three substations: Lodge, Houston, and Wilkins
- A recently constructed headquarters and administrative office in the heart of Moscow village (built in 2018)

SED's headquarters is located on a parcel in Moscow Village that has been home to various milling and manufacturing operations since the early 1800s. In its heyday, this site served as an economic center for the community. One of SED's most exciting long-term initiatives is the restoration and repowering of the historic Moscow Mills, which began operations in the 1820s. The restoration project is an example of SED's efforts to honor the past while innovating for the future. SED supports obtaining official Village Center Designation for Moscow Village to further advance the revitalization of this historic community.

Planned infrastructure upgrades include:

Projects approved by voters in August 2024 and funded through a USDA Rural Utilities Service loan agreement with 20% forgiveness:

- New distribution circuit and loop feed with automation technology to improve resiliency and restoration of service times.
- Weeks Hill to Percy Hill loop feed project to improve resiliency and restoration of service times.
- Renovation of the Millwright's Office into an emergency operations center and new office space.
- Installation of a new rooftop solar array and a new hydroelectric facility at Smith's Falls in Moscow village.

Proposed projects in response to Winter Storm Elliot that will prevent similar damage and long-duration storm caused outages. They are anticipated to be funded with a combination of FEMA 406 hazard mitigation funding (75% project costs reimbursed by FEMA) and USDA RUS financing (20% loan forgiveness). Stowe voters will have to approve SED's 25% match for the projects.

- Improvements to the off-road and underground segments 34.5kV 'mountain line' to reduce the duration of outages caused by storm damage by improving access to infrastructure, installing storm resilient infrastructure, and installing modern sensing and control equipment
- Improvements to Houston and Lodge substations to modernize the facilities, install automated equipment, and implement a loop feed project that would maintain service to customers in the event storm damage causes outages along the mountain line.

Other potential long-term projects currently under consideration include:

- Additional utility owned solar with the potential to expand Nebraska Valley Solar.
- Utility scale battery storage to improve resiliency and reduce transmission and power supply costs.

These projects highlight SED's commitment to distributed energy generation, local resilience, and historic preservation.

SED has been a leader in bringing advanced technology to its customers, including town-wide Smart Grid technology - smart meters that provide real-time usage data. Through the SED customer portal, residents can monitor their electric consumption and make informed energy choices.



SED line work. Photo credit: Stowe Electric Dept.

To support Vermont's transition to clean energy, SED also offers a broad range of rebates, incentives, and programs to support energy efficiency and electrification, including:

- Heat pumps and weatherization upgrades
- Electric vehicles (EVs), EV charging stations, and e-bikes

- Battery storage and demand response programs
- Smart thermostats and induction cooktops
- Electric yard tools and pellet/wood heating systems
- Public EV charging infrastructure
- Connected Homes flex load management program

For more detailed guidance on local energy production, use, and siting, see the Enhanced Energy Plan found in the appendix of this plan. This plan, formally adopted by the Town, ensures that our local energy policies are given "substantial deference" in the Public Utility Commission's review of proposed energy generation facilities - an important tool for maintaining local control and advancing community-driven energy priorities.

While the majority of properties within our community are served by the SED, other electricity providers operating in the area include Green Mountain Power, the Village of Morrisville Water & Light Department, and Vermont Electric Co-Op.

Our Municipal Wastewater/Sewer System & Clean Water Discharge

The municipal wastewater/sewer system is governed by the Sewer Commissioners who also serve as the Selectboard. The Commissioners establish sewer policies and fees and are responsible for the allocation of treatment capacity. While authority is vested with the Commission, input is sought on issues related to expansion of the sewer service district – which also requires Act 250 approval. Any general obligation bonded debt must be approved by the voters. The Utilities Ordinance (Sanitary Sewer System), last amended in 2018, establishes the process by which uncommitted treatment capacity is allocated.

The Wastewater Department operates, maintains, and repairs our wastewater treatment plant and an existing collection system of approximately nineteen miles of sewer and three sanitary sewer pump stations. The department is staffed by four full-time employees who manage daily operations, with coverage seven days a week - including part-time staffing on weekends. A 24-hour alarm and monitoring system ensures that department personnel are always available to respond to emergencies. Operating costs, along with some capital replacement expenses, are funded through user fees, which are set in accordance with the Utilities Ordinance (Sanitary Sewer System) and 24 VSA § 3311. Additionally, allocation fees help offset the costs of system expansions and upgrades to the treatment plant.



Stowe Wastewater Treatment Facility. Photo credit: Town of Stowe

Our wastewater management system has evolved significantly from its origins in the 1800s. As the wastewater system was initially composed of clay sewer lines that discharged untreated sewage directly into local waterways, the Town began exploring wastewater treatment options in the early 1960s. Driven by new water quality standards in the 1970s - particularly phosphorus removal requirements for the Little River - we constructed our first wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) and collection system in 1980. This facility, permitted for 167,000 gallons per day (0.165 MGD), served Stowe Village, Lower Village, and surrounding nearby areas. The original system included remnants of the outdated clay tile sewers. Funding for the $4.175 million project ($1,514,000 for the plant; $2,661,000 for the sewer lines) came from federal, state, and local sources. In 1988 a new discharge permit was obtained authorizing the processing and discharge of up to an average of 250,000 gallons per day of treated effluent, through construction of additional facilities including a headworks building and sludge storage bunker.

Municipal Sewer Expansion Efforts

In response to recommendations in the 1990 Stowe Town Plan, concerns over failing septic systems, especially in the Lower Village, and the desire to protect water resources, the Town formed a study committee in 1994 to explore options for expanding the municipal sewer system. The first priority of the committee was to correct the situation in the Lower Village. On-site systems in Sylvan Park were determined to be polluting our local waterways and remedial action was needed. The decision to extend a new sewer line in this area and build the flow equalization tanks at the plant to better handle the increased volumes was approved by voters in 1995. The flow equalization tank was constructed in 1996 to allow for better processing of peak flows into the plant. Sewer lines were extended to the Sylvan Park area of the Lower Village in 1995 to service failed septic systems in the area.

Hoping to avoid such crisis situations for other parts of town, the committee turned its attention to redefining the municipal sewer service district and exploring expansion options for the wastewater treatment plant. At Town Meeting in 1995 voters approved an expanded sewer service area and to increase the discharge capacity of the wastewater treatment facility from 250,000 gpd to an average of one million gallons per day (1.0 MGD). The expanded service area focused on the Village and Lower Village area, the developed areas along the Mountain Road/VT-108 and the two SKI-PUDs (von Trapp Family Lodge and Stowe Mountain Resort). The total acreage included in the expanded service area was approximately 7,600 acres (while SKI-PUDs are included, sewer service to the SKI-PUDs is limited to small, developed areas within the total land holdings), representing approximately 16% of the total acreage of our town.

The planned sewer expansion project initially received Act 250 approval under Land Use Permit #100035-9 from the District #5 Environmental Commission. However, the permit was overturned in 1998 by the Environmental Commission on appeal, citing concerns about growth impacts, waste disposal, and stream protection. The Town addressed these deficiencies through collaboration with state agencies and ultimately secured Act 250 approval in 1999. Construction began in 2001, with service extending to Stowe Mountain Resort by 2002.

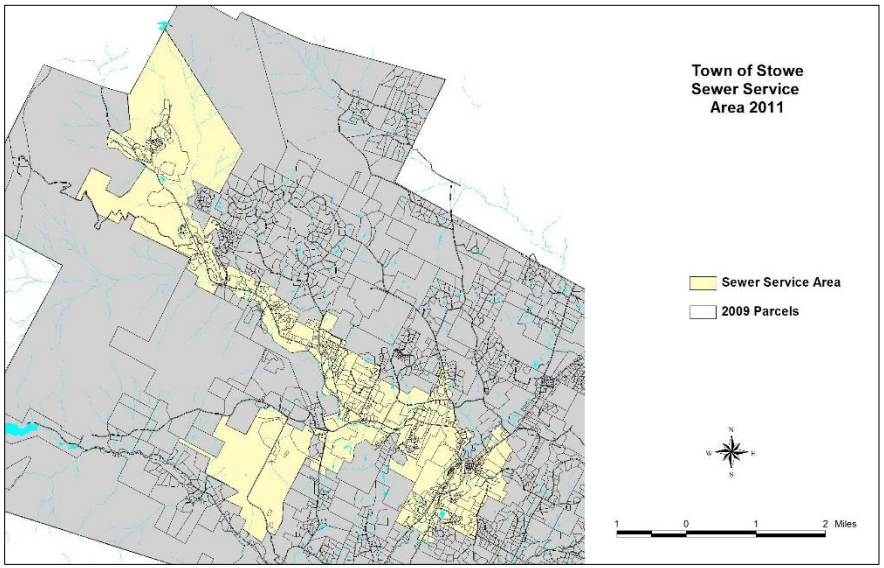


Stowe Wastewater Treatment Facility. Photo credit: Town of Stowe

In 2011 the Town amended its Act 250 Land Use Permit under 100035-9B to reduce the total acreage contained within the sewer service area from 7,635 acres to 6,469 acres. The modified sewer service area included:

- Removal of land previously transferred from the Mt. Mansfield Company to the State of Vermont
- Inclusion of land involving the Mt. Mansfield base lodge within the Mt. Mansfield State Forest
- Inclusion of land involving the Cliff House, the Ski Patrol Building, the Octagon and the Visitor's Center off the Toll Road, all within the Mt. Mansfield State Forest
- Inclusion of pre-existing private parcels surrounded by the Mt. Mansfield Company SKI-PUD
- Removal of land owned by Trapp Family Lodge, Inc. and permanently conserved by the Stowe Land Trust
- Inclusion of tracts recognized by the terms of Land Use Permit 100035-12 and being the tracts of Syn-Cronamics of Canada, Ltd., the Cabral 2004 Family Trust, the Notchbrook Condominium and William and Elizabeth Reichelt; and
- Inclusion of a 17.5-acre portion of a 38-acre tract owned by Beverly Lemery located off Barrows Road upon which a 4-unit mobile home park and 4 apartments were situated.

The current wastewater treatment plant, permitted under VTDEC Discharge Permit No 3-1232, has a hydraulic capacity of 1.0 MGD and discharges into the Little River. Approximately 470 properties are connected to the municipal sewer system. Approximately 70% of sewer customers consist of residential uses and 30% commercial uses.



The present wastewater collection and treatment facility consists of:

- The plant located along the Little River between the Village and Lower Village;
- A pumping station located behind the Stoware Commons in the Lower Village that receives the village waste water to be pumped up to the treatment plant;
- A pumping station on Weeks Hill Road at the Mayo Farm that receives Mountain Road waste water to be pumped to the treatment plant;
- A pumping station at Stowe Mountain Resort that receives waste water from Mansfield Base and Spruce Peak Resort which is pumped to the top of the Mountain Road collection system; and
- The sewer lines throughout the village and adjacent areas, along Mountain Road up to the Stowe Mountain Resort and von Trapp Family Lodge. This system consists of twenty-two miles of municipal sewer mains with an additional seven miles of privately owned sewer mains for which the Town has varying levels of responsibility.

In the mid 2000's, in response to odor control issues, foul air improvements were implemented. In response to continued foul odor challenges, in the mid 2010's, the use of the residuals processing system (ATAD) used to produce Class A biosolid was suspended and odor issues ceased.

This plan identifies three areas on the Future Land Use map for further evaluation and potential expansion of the sewer service area: (1) approximately ±9.3 acres along Barrows Road to support the Stowe Alternate Water Supply Project; (2) the property at the intersection of West Hill Road and Route 100 to accommodate future residential development aligned with the plan's housing goals; and (3) the area near the intersection of Mayo Farm Road and Weeks Hill Road, generally around the Homestead Zone at Mayo Farm.

Sewer System Capacity & Limitations

Over the past twenty-five years, the expanded sewer system has helped guide compact growth and reduce reliance on on-site septic systems. With the completion of major expansions in the early 2000s, we are fortunate to operate a relatively modern wastewater treatment plant. As of 2023, the plant's average daily flow was 0.368 million gallons per day (MGD), but being a resort community, flow varies seasonally, typically between 0.3 and 0.5 MGD. Peak daily flows, often linked to stormwater infiltration during wet weather, have approached 0.8 MGD, as occurred during the July 2024 flood event. Despite these fluctuations, the plant remains well below its permitted hydraulic capacity of 1.0 MGD (average), and influent per residence is relatively low, generally ranging from 0.0002 to 0.0004 MGD.

Our wastewater treatment plant is also subject to organic loading limits under its VTDEC discharge permit. Monthly discharge monitoring reports track both concentration and mass loading of key constituents. While most of the system's influent is domestic in nature, higher-strength wastewater is periodically received from restaurants and beverage producers, including breweries and cideries. As part of a comprehensive

twenty-year performance review required under our discharge permit, all monitored constituents were analyzed and confirmed to be well within allowable limits. Organically, the plant has sufficient capacity for the foreseeable future.

Much of the infrastructure constructed during the early 2000s, particularly the Weeks Hill and Mansfield pump stations, remains in good condition and functions effectively. In general, the system above Weeks Hill Road is considered to have adequate hydraulic capacity to support future growth and development. However, there are notable limitations elsewhere.

One unique constraint stems from an Act 250 condition applied to the Upper Mountain Road (UMR) Zoning District, which stretches along VT-108 from Strom Farm Road to the base of Harlow Hill (excluding the Edson Hill Road intersection). Under this permit condition, no structures located in the UMR District are allowed to connect to and/or discharge sewage into the municipal sewer system, except structures existing as of March 16, 2001 and structures located in planned unit developments. This permit condition effectively limits development capacity for properties within the UMR District and in an area that is served by existing infrastructure.

Further challenges arise in the older collection system below Weeks Hill Road. While generally adequate, key components are aging, most notably the Lower Village Sewer Pump Station (LVPS), which is now over forty-five years old. Although it performs well during dry weather and remains within its 396,000 GPD design capacity, it regularly exceeds that threshold during high-flow storm events. During the July 2024 flood, the LVPS pumped an estimated 847,000 GPD, requiring both pumps to run continuously for an extended time. Such sustained operation increases the risk of mechanical failure, which could result in unauthorized discharges and permit violations. In response, the Town has completed preliminary engineering for a replacement facility, which will include a dry-pit pump station located near the current LVPS. The upgrade will also involve acquiring additional property and evaluating the adequacy of the sewer force main to the wastewater treatment plant headworks, including a river crossing. Construction is aimed for 2028, pending permits and funding, with estimated costs between $4–5 million. Until this upgrade is complete, sewer capacity in the Stowe Village and Lower Village remains constrained. While modest development and growth can be accommodated in the short term, the risks associated with increasingly frequent wet-weather events will persist.

Other capacity limitations include sections of the original system where clay tile pipes remain in service. These deteriorated pipes are typically replaced during capital improvements or as part of private development projects. In addition, certain portions of the sewer service area approach the functional “limits of gravity collection.” These areas, which lack adjacent infrastructure due to grade constraints, cannot be served until new pump stations and collection system extensions are constructed. Such constraints limit future expansion unless significant infrastructure investments are made.

Septage and Sludge Disposal

While the treated liquid effluent from our wastewater treatment facility is discharged into the Little River, the treatment process, and the processing of septage received, also produces a semi-solid by-product known as sludge. Sludge consists of the solids removed from wastewater, containing a mixture of organic material, nutrients, heavy metals, and pathogens. Before it can be disposed of or repurposed, sludge must undergo additional treatment processes such as anaerobic or aerobic, digestion, composting, or dewatering. Our original Class B process, which we reverted too when we suspended use of the Class A ATAD system, is Aerobic Digestion.

During the 1990s, the Town was permitted to land-apply treated sludge, referred to as biosolids, on municipal properties and designated agricultural fields, including Mayo Farm Fields E and F. These biosolids, classified as Class B due to the presence of pathogens, were restricted to non-food crop applications. At the time, this practice of land application of biosolids was actively encouraged by the State of Vermont.

Following the expansion of the wastewater treatment facility in the early 2000s, the facility gained the capability to produce Class A biosolids, which are treated to a higher standard and are considered safe for broader applications. In 2013, the Selectboard adopted the Town of

Stowe Bio-Solids Policy to provide municipal employees direction regarding the distribution, internal use, land application, and disposal of biosolids generated by our wastewater treatment facility. However, due to growing concerns from residents regarding persistent odor issues, the Town suspended Class A biosolids production and, beginning in 2018, transitioned back to producing Class B biosolids. While this switch significantly mitigated odor complaints, it created new challenges around disposal. Unlike Class A biosolids, Class B biosolids are now classified as solid waste and generally must be landfilled rather than applied to land.

Disposal complications intensified when the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation issued new solid waste guidelines, effectively banning land application of wastewater residuals statewide. Simultaneously, many landfills began refusing or limiting acceptance of these materials due to increasing environmental scrutiny. In response, the Town initiated a trial program in 2024: approximately half of our wastewater treatment facility residuals were trucked as liquid sludge to Montpelier for further processing, while the remainder were dewatered and sent to Englobe in Québec. When the Town's contract with Englobe expired at the end of 2024 and renewal terms were not offered, that disposal route was discontinued due to new legislation from the Province of Quebec that now restricts the importation of residuals into Quebec.

At present, about half of our wastewater treatment facility residuals are processed and dewatered onsite before being transported to the Coventry landfill. The other half continues to be hauled as thickened liquid sludge to Montpelier, which handles processing and disposal and also sends the final product to Coventry. The budgeted costs for municipal sludge/residual management have dramatically increased in recent years as shown in the following table:

Fiscal Year	Budget	Sludge Disposal
FY24	$255,177	City of Montpelier $101,579 / Stowe WWTF & Transportation $182,888
FY23	$177,883	Englobe in Québec
FY22	$124,990	Englobe in Québec
FY21	$133,866	Englobe in Québec

The biosolids/residual disposal landscape is rapidly evolving across New England, with increasing regulatory restrictions and diminishing disposal options. Vermont's own shifting policies and landfill limitations underscore the urgency of securing a long-term solution. One potential alternative currently under consideration involves composting, with Casella Waste Systems requesting permission to test biosolid composting at its facility in New York. Volume reduction strategies may also be required to ensure the Town remains in compliance and resilient amid this increasingly uncertain regulatory environment.

While our wastewater infrastructure has grown to support its evolving needs, balancing environmental stewardship, public health, and community development, future planning will need to address aging infrastructure and tightening disposal regulations to maintain reliable service and sustainable growth.

Municipal Water System

The Water Department is responsible for operating, maintaining, and repairing our municipal water system, which serves more than 3,300 persons through 660 connections and 1,380 meters. Approximately 73% of water customers consist of residential uses, and 27% commercial uses. The department has three full-time staff, supported by the Public Works Department for engineering and management needs. The municipal water system provides service to Stowe Village, Lower Village, the Mountain Road (VT-108) corridor up to Stowe Mountain Resort, as well as Edson Hill Road, Stonybrook Condos and the High School, the von Trapp Family Lodge, newer sections of Covered Bridge Highlands, Notchbrook HOA, and the Stowe Club Highlands area. The system is under the control of the Water Commissioners who also serve as the Selectboard. The Commissioners establish water policies and fees and are responsible for allocating water to new connections. While authority is vested with the Commission, input is sought on the expansion of the water core and voter approval is required for any general obligation bonded debt.

The municipal water system, owned by the Village of Stowe until the Town and Village merged in 1996, dates back to 1904 and was originally supplied by springs near the Sunset Hill reservoir and/or the Burt Spring Lot. These springs were later deemed inadequate, especially during dry

weather, and later abandoned due to surface water regulations. In 1934, the Village purchased a 10-acre parcel on Edson Hill with a more dependable spring source, transmitting water via a six-inch cast iron transmission pipe to the Sunset Hill reservoir. For sixty-five years, this source dependably served the Village without treatment or pumping and remains one of the Town's two water supplies. Upgrades for minimal treatment (pH adjustment and disinfection) have occurred and this supply is permitted for 213 gallons per minute (GPM). The six-inch cast-iron transmission pipe (now with some customers on it), which is nearing 100 years old, also remains in service along the upper portions of Edson Hill Road.



Underground municipal water infrastructure work. Photo credit: Town of Stowe

In 1990 the Village accepted the privately constructed Stowe Club Water System and its well on the property of the Village Green condos. Efforts to expand the system began in 1997 with a long-range plan due to increasing demand from operators of small private systems. The 1997 Leach Engineering report outlined a two-phase expansion. Phase I, completed in 1999, involved constructing a treatment plant at Village Green and replacing the transmission line along Mountain Road. Phase II included extending transmission lines from Edson Hill Road to Stowe Mountain Resort and von Trapp Family Lodge, replacing the Sunset Hill reservoirs with a 729,000-gallon tank in 2004. The Notchbrook area was added to the system in 2007 with private funding. The expanded municipal water system was designed to serve our core development areas, largely overlapping with the Sewer Service District, and, like the sewer expansion, was planned to support moderate growth in these targeted locations.

To support this expansion, a second water source was required. The Village Green facility, located above a classic "confined aquifer" (an underground layer of water that sits beneath a layer of fine-grained soil or clay, which acts like a protective cover and helps shield the water from surface influences), was developed in 2000 and is now permitted for 412 GPM. Though high in iron and manganese, it is treated through filtration and disinfection. The plant was built with future growth in mind, including space for an additional filter train to expand capacity. In 2018, a redundant well was added to further increase the facility's water supply capacity to ±1000 GPM, however permitting this well is currently paused due to per- and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) substances concerns.

Our municipal water system now includes thirty-five miles of mains, nine storage tanks, and eleven pump stations serving seventeen pressure zones, some of which incorporate former private systems. The Edson Hill source, a high-elevation spring, provides a steady 186 GPM and operates best continuously, as attempts to alter its flow can cause operational issues. The Village Green water supply offers higher yield but requires more extensive treatment and is located within a designated growth center, making it more susceptible to contamination from development pressures. The system is complex due to our mountainous terrain. Water from Village Green must be pumped five times to reach the most remote users, and capacity within each pressure zone depends on storage volume, pipe size, and elevation. For example, the Sunset zone has substantial reserve capacity, while zones such as AIG and Stowe Club are more limited and may lack adequate fire protection due to smaller pipes or restricted storage.

Demand for municipal water continues to grow, with average daily demand ('ADD') increasing by about 1.7% annually. In 2022, the ADD began exceeding the combined 12-hour permitted withdrawal rate, prompting plans to expand Village Green's capacity. The Vermont Water Supply Rule (WSR) requires that any system that reaches 90% of its current treatment or pumping capacity shall begin planning for the required additional capacity unless the system expects no future growth. However, planning, designing, funding, and construction major

upgrades to water systems can be very time-consuming, so recommended practice for most municipal systems is to start this process when the system reaches 80% of its permitted capacity and start construction when the system reaches 90% of its permitted capacity. Current maximum daily flows are approximately 81% of the system's permitted capacity. Average daily water usage has increased by approximately 8,500 gallons per day (gpd) per year over the past ten years. Maximum daily demand (MDD) remains within our permitted capacity, with room to support an estimated 700 to 2,800 additional bedrooms depending on allocation method. While our municipal water system generally has capacity for moderate growth, limitations in certain areas necessitate careful planning and investment. Efforts are underway to secure additional source capacity and replace aging infrastructure to ensure future service reliability and support responsible growth and development.



Municipal water pump station. Photo credit: Town of Stowe

In 2017 PFAS were identified in the Village Green water supply. Although levels in the water are low, they are detectable, prompting concerns about the integrity of the confining layer above the aquifer. In 2020, the State of Vermont issued interim PFAS regulations that are now a part of the Vermont Water Supply Rule and regulate five specific PFAS compounds: PFOA, PFOS, PFHxS, PFHpA, and PFNA. This MCL is regulated as the sum of the concentrations of all five of these compounds, with a MCL of 20 ppt and an MCLG of 0 ppt. In April 2024, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued the first nationwide drinking water standards for PFAS. Testing has confirmed that our municipal drinking water remains below this threshold. In fact, only PFOA has been detected in some mandated tests, and those levels are below the state's limit. While the Village Green well has never exceeded either the Vermont or the EPA MCL's, the presence of PFAS in this well is of significant concern because the source, distribution, and movement of the PFAS contamination in the groundwater in this area is not understood and there are two other water sources in relative proximity with PFAS contaminations exceeding the prevailing MCLs. Recognizing the risk of future PFAS contamination exceeding the MCL, the Town has proactively explored PFAS treatment options and alternate municipal water sources. In September 2025 the Town entered into a purchase agreement with K2 Realty to purchase 26.5 acres of land on Barrows Road to develop a new municipal well and water treatment facility. The Town is presently conducting capacity testing, engineering, and permitting and has until July 1, 2027 to close on the property.

PFAS have also been detected in private drinking water sources. In Vermont, there is currently no requirement to test private wells or springs for PFAS. The only way to know whether PFAS may be present in your drinking water is to have it tested. Residential well or spring users can obtain water sample bottles by contacting an accredited laboratory. The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation is also working to identify sources and reduce the use, release, and public exposure of PFAS across the state. When planning improvements and expansions to the municipal water system, the Town should consider the potential need for properties with PFAS-contaminated private water systems to connect to the municipal system.

Fire Districts

Fire Districts have long played a key role in providing essential infrastructure and services to our community, especially in areas not directly served by the municipal water system. While fire protection is the responsibility of the Stowe Fire Department, the Town's fire districts focus primarily on managing water systems and other related functions. Established under state statute, fire districts have powers similar to those of municipalities. In our community, four such districts were created, each responsible for operating and managing local water systems.

Fire District #1 was established in 1982 to serve the needs of properties along the Mountain Road. The District was originally established with the intent of extending the municipal sewer system; however, it quickly lost momentum due to opposition related to concerns about potential increased development. The district is no longer active, and no services are currently being provided.

Fire District #2 was formed in 1987 to purchase the privately owned Goldbrook 1 and 2 water systems. The Fire District, operated by a five member Prudential Committee, completed system improvements in 1988 to comply with state orders to improve the water quality provided to users. Two wells, each with a reservoir, serve the district. There are no plans to extend service that now includes the areas of Goldbrook Circle, Wood Road and portions of Gold Brook and Dewey Hill Roads.

Fire District #3 was established in 1991 as an independent municipal corporation to develop, construct, and operate a publicly owned water system serving properties in the Lower Village and along Sylvan Park Road. Between 1992 and 1997, the district successfully completed construction of a new water distribution system, designed to meet the domestic needs of its customers. This system was supplied by the Town's municipal water system. In 1998, the Town agreed to assume many of the district's operational responsibilities, and since then, the Water Department has provided ongoing services to the system. Two decades later, in 2018, Fire District #3, supported financially by local property owners and technically by the Public Works Department and the Water Department, completed a significant system upgrade. A supplemental water main was installed along South Main Street as part of the VTrans Route 100 reconstruction project. Following this upgrade, the Fire District requested to formally merge with the Town and dissolve as a separate municipal entity. The merger was approved by Stowe voters on March 5, 2019, and subsequently authorized by the Vermont General Assembly through legislation (H.539). It became official on July 1, 2019, when signed into law by the Governor, marking the full integration of Fire District #3 into the Town of Stowe.

Fire District #4 was formed in 1993 to serve the needs of the residents in the Glenbrook area of Mansfield View properties. The district is served by two groundwater wells with a permitted system capacity of 34,560 (gpd).

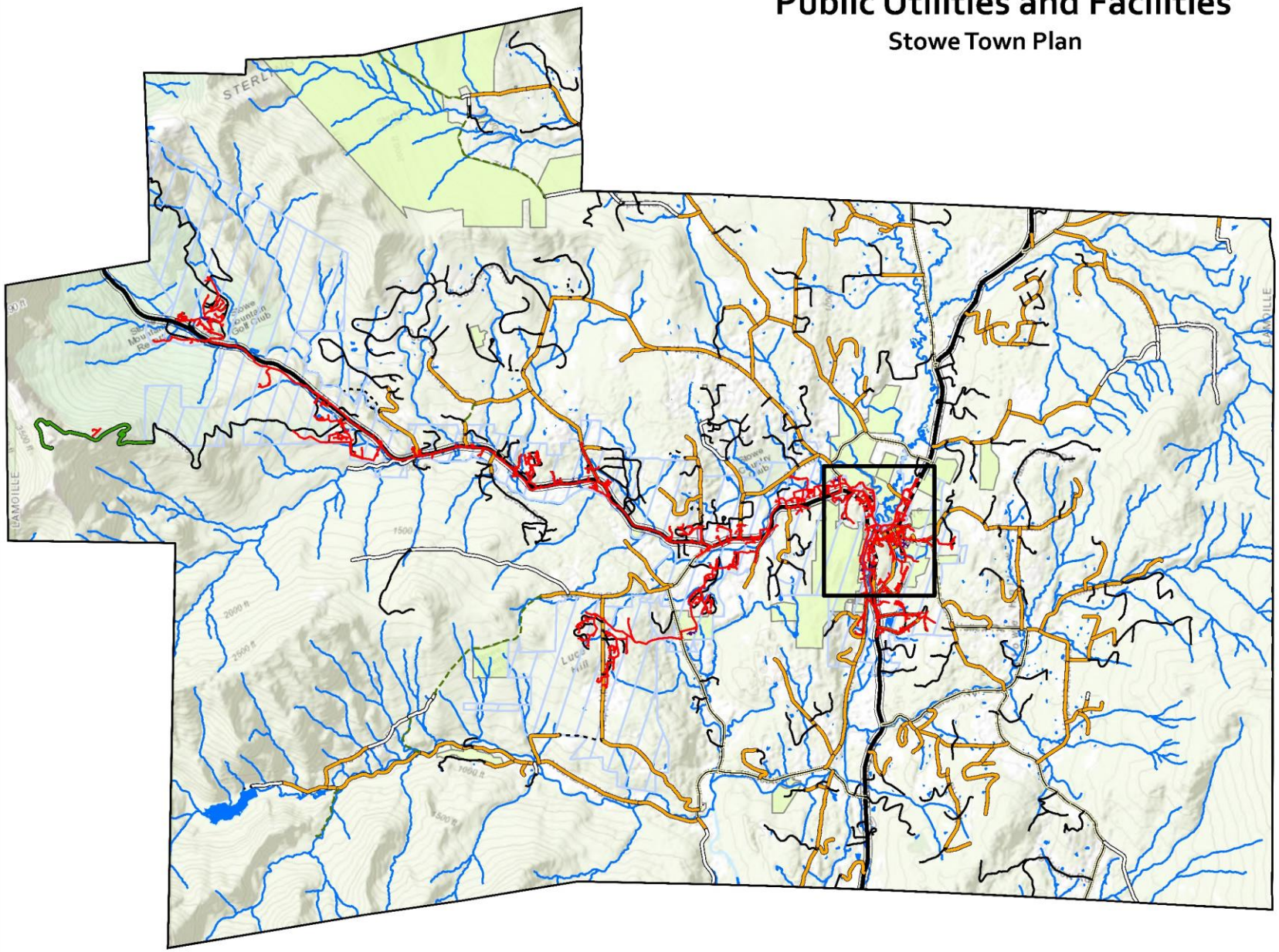


Stowe electric line work. Photo credit: Stowe Electric Department

Map #8

Public Utilities and Facilities

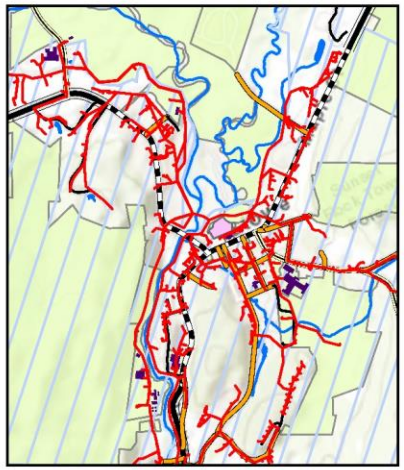
Stowe Town Plan

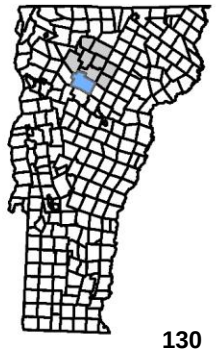


- Public Buildings
- Town-Owned Parcels
- Sewer Lines
- Cemetery

Road Class

- State Highway
- Town Highway Class 1
- Town Highway Class 2
- Town Highway Class 3
- Town Highway Class 4
- State Forest Highway
- Legal Trail
- Private Road
- Discontinued Road
- Sewer District
- Lake/Pond
- Stream/River





0 0.6 1.2 1.8 2.4

Miles

LAMOILLE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

DATA SOURCES:
POLITICAL BOUNDARIES: VT Data - Town Boundaries, VCGI, 2024
ROADS: VT Road Centerline, VTrans, 2021
SURFACE WATER: National Hydrography Dataset, USGS, 2023
PARCELS: VT Data - Statewide Standardized Parcel Data - parcel polygons, VCGI, 2024
SEWER DISTRICT: VT Sewer Service Areas, VCGI, 2020

Our Key Communication Systems

Modern and accessible communications infrastructure is more than a convenience, it is a vital component of our daily life, economic development, and community resilience. Reliable telecommunications and high-speed internet support residents, businesses, and our thriving, year-round tourism economy. High speed internet is increasingly seen as a necessity supporting education, health care access, and business as well as entertainment. The State of Vermont has established a goal that all properties (defined as "911 addresses") should have access to wireline broadband providing a minimum of symmetrical 100 mbps download and 100 mbps upload. As digital connectivity becomes increasingly essential, our community has continued to invest in expanding and improving our communications systems. Today, our infrastructure is diverse, evolving, and robust, featuring a mix of locally owned fiber networks, national service providers, and regional broadband initiatives. As a result, the Stowe community enjoys universal wireline broadband available to all on-grid addresses, competitive high-capacity commercial services, and robust wireless coverage. Together, these efforts are laying the groundwork for a strong digital future, ensuring that everyone who lives, works, or visits Stowe can stay connected. Looking forward, the Town Plan should prioritize universal wireless coverage in the short term, and policies that encourage investment in maintaining networks and expanding new technologies for the long term.



Communication facilities on Mount Mansfield. Photo credit: Town of Stowe

Telecommunications

Telecommunications has evolved rapidly since the last Town Plan. New technologies have eclipsed old ones. Most significantly, traditional copper networks which provided landline phone and DSL service are being retired and replaced by wireless (cellular) and wired (fiber and hybrid coaxial) broadband networks, delivering voice and internet services. Low earth orbit satellite networks also enable broadband internet access. Such improvements have also brought competition to traditional cable and satellite television service providers.

Most wired and wireless networks require physical locations and access to public and utility rights of way to operate and maintain services. Accordingly, this Plan assesses the availability of services and focuses on what the Town can do to maintain state-of-the-art wired and wireless networks.

Wireless Services

Cellular service is available through major national providers, including Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile, and others. However, due to our mountainous terrain and rural geography, and opposition to towers, cell phone coverage remains partial, with service varying by location. Some areas enjoy strong signals, others may experience limited or no coverage. Reliable and ubiquitous cellular service is more than an added convenience, it is vital to public safety and community resiliency. This is a statewide challenge that providers continue to address through infrastructure expansion and modernization. Newer technologies (e.g., small cell solutions) may be able to use the expanded fiber networks to help ameliorate this problem. The Town's collaboration with providers and adjacent communities to identify mutually beneficial sites and alternative technologies may yield new siting opportunities. Minimizing rather than prohibiting aesthetic/viewshed interference may also invite more siting opportunities.

Wired Internet Access & Broadband Services

Internet access in our community has significantly improved in recent years achieving universal wireline broadband coverage with the exception of off-grid locations. Multiple providers offers variety of technologies to serve both our more densely populated and remote areas. Most residents and businesses can choose from fiber-optic,

cable, fixed wireless, 5G home internet, and satellite services. The fastest and most reliable internet connections are delivered through fiber-optic networks, which offer multi-gigabit service. These connections are particularly important, and often essential, for activities like remote work, virtual learning, telehealth, and streaming. The primary providers of wired internet access have been Stowe Communications (both fiber and coaxial cable) and Consolidated Communications (now Fidium). A variety of providers also provide custom commercial connections. Additionally, the growing availability of 5G home internet and low earth orbit satellite (e.g., Starlink), are helping to bridge service gaps. Providers such as T-Mobile, Verizon, and EarthLink are expanding wireless broadband access by using cellular towers to serve areas beyond the reach of traditional wired infrastructure. While there are multiple providers today, historically there were significant gaps in service and cost barriers due to the extent of underground utilities both along roadways and on individual properties necessitating costly underground work to provide conduits or direct burial of suitable fiber. In addition, cost of the lowest level of service is considered challenging for some households.

Current Challenges

There are several current challenges for communications in our community, some of which might be addressable through Town policies and actions, including:

1. Gaps in cellular phone service
2. Expense of long underground service drops, especially in older HOAs and residences with long driveways
3. Ensuring that all new development provides telecommunications/fiber infrastructure and can accommodate future capacity
4. Coordinating and planning infrastructure upgrades, roadway underground, and pole replacements with all parties including the town electric utility.

Regional Broadband Efforts: Lamoille FiberNet

To help close broadband gaps, Stowe and neighboring towns in Lamoille County came together in 2020 to establish the Lamoille FiberNet Communications Union District (LFCUD) - a regional, community-driven initiative aimed at expanding high-speed, affordable internet access across Lamoille County. The long-term goal is to support economic development, educational access, emergency services, and overall quality of life throughout the region.

Rather than providing service directly, Lamoille FiberNet partnered with Fidium to build and maintain a fiber network. Lamoille FiberNet has received state and federal grants to fund construction and works closely with the Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB). The grant funding was used to support the cost of distribution fiber necessary to serve all underserved and unserved addresses as well as addresses that had to be passed to reach them. Fidium paid for all drops as well as extending fiber at its own expense in certain areas. Further, Fidium established a policy of paying for, initially, up to 500 feet of underground drops later expanded to 2000 feet thereby addressing the problem of underground utilities in the areas it serves. Construction in Stowe was completed in 2025. As of the end of 2025, all addresses in Stowe have access to at least one high speed broadband provider. A significant portion of the town is served by two providers. While significant progress has been made, the costs of underground drops in areas not served by Fidium and monthly minimum charges remain a barrier for some.



Communication facilities on Mount Mansfield. Photo credit: Town of Stowe

Our Solid Waste Facility

The Lamoille Regional Solid Waste Management District (LRSWMD) was established in 1989 as a union municipal district with the authority to manage and treat solid waste generated within its member towns. The district includes twelve communities: Belvedere, Cambridge, Eden, Elmore, Hyde Park, Johnson, Morristown, Stowe, Waterville, Wolcott, Craftsbury, and Worcester. The Selectboard appoints a representative to serve on the LRSWMD Board of Supervisors. LRSWMD guides member towns in complying with Vermont's solid waste regulations and operates a range of programs and facilities, including:

- Transfer stations and a commercial composting site
- Annual household hazardous waste collection events
- Educational outreach on responsible materials management
- Free recycling and compost collection containers for community events
- Subsidized sales of composting bins and buckets

The district operates under a Solid Waste Implementation Plan (2021–2025), which outlines how waste will be managed in accordance with state laws. Solid waste is defined as any discarded garbage, refuse, or material (solid, liquid or contained gaseous material), as well as septage or sludge from a waste or water supply treatment facility, but does not include hazardous waste. While regions are not expected to directly manage all forms of hazardous waste, they must ensure that residents and small businesses have access to safe collection and disposal options for hazardous materials such as paints, pesticides, solvents, and certain electronics.

The primary collection point for solid waste in our community is the Stowe Transfer Station, located on Dump Road off Mountain Road (VT-108). All residents and businesses within LRSWMD may use the transfer station. Operated under contract with LRSWMD, the facility accepts:

- Household trash
- Recyclables
- Construction and demolition debris
- Tires and yard waste
- Clothing and household items
- Electronic devices
- Batteries
- Scrap metal
- Bulky items such as furniture and mattress
- Books
- Propane tanks
- And many other items

For a complete list of acceptable items, please see the A – Z Disposal Guide at www.lrswmd.org

The upper yard and scale area are designated for contractors, bulky items, and large loads, using the large compactor. The lower building serves residential users and offers a convenient, one-stop location for trash, recycling, and special items such as batteries, books, and electronic devices.



Transfer station on Dump Road. Photo credit: LRSWMD

Solid waste collected at the transfer station is then transported out of the district to a lined landfill, most often the New England Waste Services (NEWS VT) landfill in Coventry. The district negotiates disposal through contracts with private landfill operators. Operations are funded

by disposal fees and a surcharge paid by district haulers. All five former unlined landfills in Lamoille County have been permanently closed.



Transfer station on Dump Road. Photo credit: LRSWMD

Vermont's Universal Recycling Law (Act 148), enacted in 2012, set a phased timeline to ban landfilling of recyclables and food scraps. The law became fully effective in July 2020, making Vermont a national leader in waste diversion. All residents, businesses, and institutions must separate the following recyclable items from their trash:

- Paper and cardboard
- Plastic containers (#1 and #2)
- Glass bottles and jars
- Metal cans and foil

Haulers and transfer stations must accept these materials at no additional cost. Food scraps are banned from landfills. Residents can compost at home, use the transfer station drop-off, or hire private haulers that collect food scraps. Larger generators, such as schools and grocery stores, were required to comply earlier under the law.

Recently, the Selectboard discussed the Stowe Transfer Station on Dump Road and considered whether the current location and site can meet both the immediate and long-term needs of the LRSWMD and the Stowe community. The Selectboard explored the idea that a different location, or perhaps a larger site, might make operations more efficient. This conversation is ongoing as the Town plans for its solid waste needs well into the future.



Green Up Day volunteers. Photo credit: Town of Stowe



Green Up Day volunteers. Photo credit: Town of Stowe



Chapter 6

Stowe Tomorrow: Our Shared Future

Stowe Tomorrow: Our Shared Future

Implementation: Vision to Action

This plan is rooted in our commitment to sustainability, stewardship, and the values we share as a community. It reflects a collective vision for maintaining our vitality as both a cherished home and a premier destination. Building on that vision, this implementation element provides a community-driven plan for putting our goals into action. It outlines clear steps, identifies priorities, and clarifies who should lead or support each effort. Thoughtfully designed to balance the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors, this element ensures growth is responsibly managed, community character is preserved, and quality of life remains a priority. It serves as a strategic framework that links our values to specific actions, guiding decision-making, investment, and policy development over time.

Achieving this vision will require sustained collaboration among municipal staff, elected and appointed officials, residents, local businesses, developers, regional partners, and other stakeholders. Successful implementation also depends on strong partnerships with public agencies, neighborhood groups, adjacent municipalities, and the local business community. Given the plan's scope, broad participation is essential. A strong implementation program relies on community buy-in, active engagement, and open, ongoing communication with partners such as Downstreet and other housing developers, the Stowe School Board, the Vermont Agency of Transportation, LCPC, and local service and utility providers. Property owners and developers are likewise encouraged to pursue improvements and new construction that support the goals and priorities of this plan.

This implementation element is organized into three key components: **Goals**, **Policies**, and **Action Tasks**, each providing clear direction towards realizing our shared community vision. The Goals, Policies, and Action Tasks reflect a deliberate effort to balance our community's long-term sustainability with its role as a vibrant, year-round tourism destination. They aim to preserve quality of life, enhance services, expand housing availability and affordability, protect natural resources, and improve recreational opportunities, while acknowledging the constraints of limited municipal staff and financial resources. At its core, this approach is guided by the values that define our community: a deep appreciation for our natural beauty, a strong sense of place, and a shared community spirit. While trade-offs are inevitable, the intent is to move forward with care, making thoughtful, balanced decisions that protect the irreplaceable qualities that shape our community character, composition, economy, and future.



Goals express broad, long-term aspirations that reflect our community's vision for the future. They describe what we aim to achieve over time and serve as guiding statements of intent.



Policies provide direction for decision-making and help advance our community's goals. They state the Town's official position or intent on specific issues and guide the actions of Town officials, boards, and commissions. In certain cases, such as Act 250 or Section 248 & 248a proceedings, policy statements may also serve as the basis for determining a project's conformance with our municipal plan.



Action Tasks identify the specific steps, projects, and programs that designated partners can undertake to implement the plan's policies and advance community goals. These tasks translate the community's aspirations into practical next steps. The implementation program is designed to be both strategic and flexible; not all tasks are expected to be completed within the plan's eight-year timeframe, and those requiring Town funding will move forward through the regular budgeting process.

Action Tasks may take many forms, including awareness efforts, incentives, programs, projects, regulations, services, or studies. Some tasks are ready to proceed immediately, while others will require additional analysis, such as feasibility studies, to assess their practicality and potential impact. Once underway, certain initiatives may be completed quickly, whereas others may take many years, or even decades, to fully achieve.

A timeframe is assigned to each Action Task. Ongoing tasks are part of the routine responsibilities of the designated entities; some may occur at set intervals or only as needed. In-progress strategies are actions or projects already underway at the time this plan was written.



Action Tasks are further categorized by anticipated timing: short-term (expected to begin or be completed within one to two years of plan adoption), mid-term (within three to eight years), and long-term (more than eight years). Long-term tasks are not likely to be advanced within the life of this plan but may move forward sooner if conditions change or new opportunities arise.



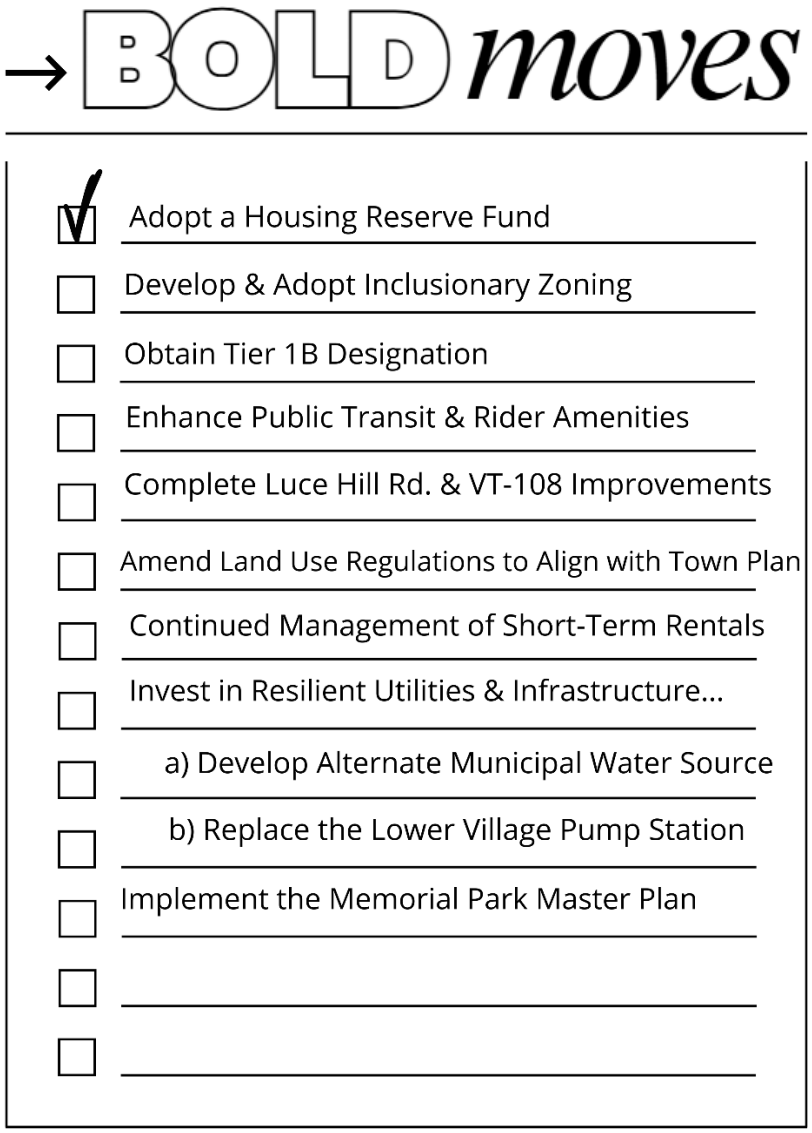
For each **Action Task**, the plan identifies the primary leaders, such as municipal officials, departments, and community partners, responsible for guiding implementation and coordinating administrative efforts and public improvement projects. These assignments are flexible, and effective collaboration between public and private stakeholders is encouraged to help achieve our shared community vision and goals.



Many **Action Tasks** deliver multiple benefits, advancing several community values and priorities at once. Each Action Task emphasizes these connections —illustrating how coordinated efforts bring our shared vision to life.

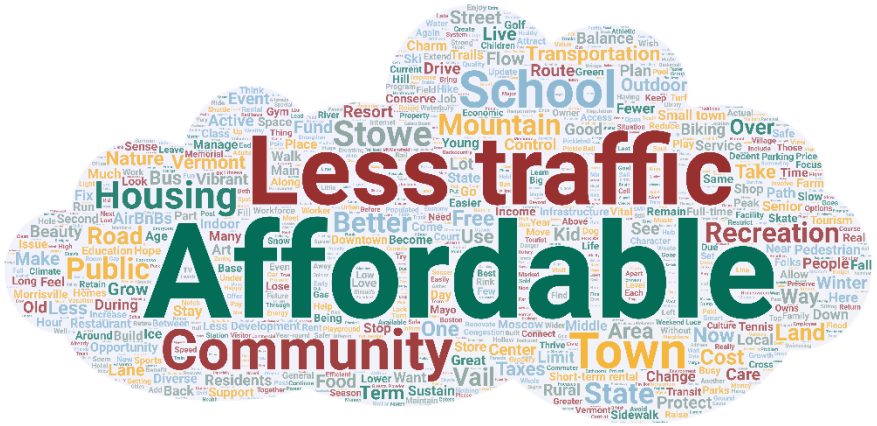
BOLD *Moves* – Priority Implementation Plan

The most important and transformative actions in this Plan are identified as **'BOLD *Moves*'**. These priorities reflect where we choose to focus — rebalancing our housing stock to support year-round residency, guiding growth to the places best suited for it, and investing wisely in the utilities and infrastructure that sustain our community. Together, **BOLD *Moves*** express a shared commitment to lead with purpose, act with intention, and create lasting, meaningful change. By focusing our collective energy and limited resources on these highest priorities, where they matter most and can deliver the greatest long-term benefit, we position this Plan for success. Advancing our **BOLD *Moves*** is essential to strengthening Stowe's vitality, sustainability, and sense of place. Through their implementation, we will shape a thriving community, not only for today, but for generations to come.



This implementation element also serves as the Town's official policy guide and strategic framework for land use, development, municipal programs and services, and public improvements. It is intended as a "go-to" resource for municipal staff, the Selectboard, and other boards and commissions, providing guidance on programs, policies, projects, and other municipal initiatives. To remain relevant, the plan and this implementation element should be consulted annually during budget

preparation and capital improvement planning. Regular review and updates will ensure it reflects evolving community needs and stays closely connected to the work of community leaders and municipal staff.


Less traffic
Affordable
Housing
Community
School
Stowe
Mountain
Transportation
Recreation
Better
Public
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Vermont
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Beauty
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Less
Lane
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Farm
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Peak
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Over
Biking
Service
Small town
Fewer
Plan
Outdoor
Route
Drive
Flow
Trails

Our shared community vision and the goals of this plan may be effectuated through the following tools and statutory authority:

Non-Regulatory Implementation Tools

1. Capital Budget & Program [24 V.S.A. §§ 4403 & 4430] & Town Charter]
2. Tax Stabilization Contracts [24 V.S.A. § 4403, 32 V.S.A. §4969]
3. Special Assessment Districts [24 V.S.A. Chapter 87]
4. Purchase or Acceptance of Development Rights [24 V.S.A. § 4403, 10 V.S.A. Chapter 155]
5. Plans or Inventories Supporting the Municipal Plan [24 V.S.A. § 4403]
6. Advisory Commissions or Committees [24 V.S.A. § 4403]
7. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) [24 V.S.A. § 4403, 24 V.S.A. Chapter 53]
8. Designation under the Vermont Downtown Program [24 V.S.A. §5803]
9. Local conservation fund to purchase important natural lands

Regulatory Implementation Tools

1. Permits for highway access or work within municipal Rights-of-Way [19 V.S.A. §1111]
2. Town Highway & Bridge Standards [19 V.S.A. §304(a)(23)]
3. Subdivision Regulations [24 V.S.A. §4418]
4. Zoning Bylaws [24 V.S.A. §§ 4411, 4414]
5. Site Plan Review [24 V.S.A. §4416]
6. Local Act 250 Review [24 V.S.A. §4420]
7. Official Map [24 V.S.A. §4421]
8. Impact Fees [24 V.S.A. Chapter 131]
9. Adequate Public Facilities & Phasing of Development [24 V.S.A. §4422]
10. Transfer of development Rights [24 V.S.A. §4423]
11. Shoreland or Flood Hazard Area Bylaws [24 V.S.A. §4424]
12. Short-Term Rental Ordinance & Bylaw [24 V.S.A. § 2291(29)]
13. Other Ordinances [24 V.S.A. Chapter 59]

Other Tools

1. Municipal participation in the Public Utility Commission's review of public utility projects that require a Certificate of Public Good under 30 V.S.A. §248 & telecommunication projects under 248a.

Implementation Partners · Abbreviations	
SB Selectboard	**CONS.** Conservation Commission
WC Water Commissioners	**RC** Recreation Commission
SC Sewer Commissioners	**CC** Cemetery Commission
PC Planning Commission	**EC** Energy Committee
HPC Historic Preservation Commission	**IT** Information Technology Dept.
ACC Arts and Cultural Council	**EMD** Emergency Management
LT Library Trustees	**HO** Health Officer
TM Administration/ Town Manager	**P & R** Parks & Recreation Department
SED Stowe Electric Department	**TC** Town Clerk
P & Z Planning & Zoning Department	**F &R** Fire & Rescue Department
DPW Public Works Department	**FD** Finance Department
WD Water Department	**SLT*** Stowe Land Trust
SD Sewer Department	**LRSWMD *** Lamoille Regional Solid Waste Management District
PD Police Department	**HS*** Stowe Historic Society
VTRANS* VT Agency of Transportation	**SSB*** Stowe School Board
SAA* Stowe Area Association	**LCPC*** Lamoille County Planning Commission
SV* Stowe Vibrancy	**RCT*** Rural Community Transportation
TC* The Current	* = Community Partner

Community Engagement & Local Planning Process Goal

Foster an engaged and informed community by ensuring that all Stowe residents and property owners have meaningful opportunities to participate in local planning and decision-making, shaping a future that reflects our shared vision and community values.

Policies

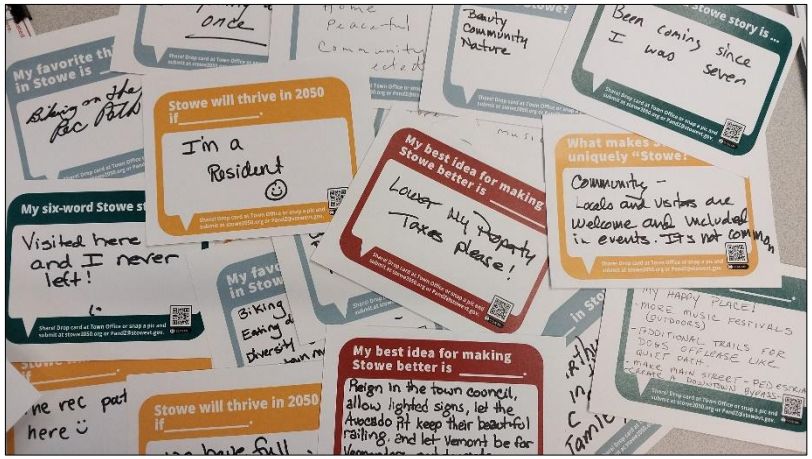
1. Public involvement and community engagement will be actively encouraged in all stages of planning and decision-making, ensuring transparency and open forums for meaningful and inclusive participation.
2. Community engagement and feedback will be sought on all matters of broad community interest. Statutory public hearing requirements will be recognized as an absolute minimum level of public involvement and will be exceeded in all instances where public interest is evident.
3. Regular efforts will be made to solicit community input through diverse and accessible methods using a range of communication tools, including Front Porch Forum, mailings, the municipal website, surveys, social media, and the Stowe Reporter, to keep residents and visitors informed and engaged.
4. The Town will seek input from non-resident property owners, when practical, on matters of broad community interest.
5. Prioritize communication initiatives that are accessible to residents of all ages, abilities, and income levels. Ensure diverse voices are included in planning, decision-making, and program design.
6. Ensure inclusive representation on municipal boards and commissions by fostering participation from individuals of varied ages, backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives so that community leadership reflects the full diversity of the town.



Stowe 2050 community listening session. Photo credit: Town of Stowe

Action Tasks - Community Engagement & Local Planning Process	Responsibility	Priority	Vision Elements
Review the Town Plan each year to ensure progress in the ongoing implementation of the plan. Consider additional municipal staff where needed to advance the **BOLD *Moves*** of this plan.	PC, P & Z	Annually	
Develop and maintain a database system to track key growth indicators on an ongoing basis, including but not limited to population, housing, employment, permits, grand list, energy consumption and seasonal occupancy data.	P & Z, TM, SED	Short-Term/ Ongoing	
Evaluate growth projections for incorporation in the town's planning process and related policies and programs.	PC, P & Z	Ongoing	
Update bylaws, ordinances, and programs as appropriate, including but not limited to, zoning and subdivision regulations, public utility and facility ordinances and policies, short-term rental registry, and the special events ordinance to align with the goals of this plan.	PC, TM, SB	Ongoing	
Develop and annually maintain a capital budget and program that schedules capital improvements in relation to anticipated growth, local development objectives, and available financing and considers the cost/benefit of energy-efficient projects.	TM, SB, DPW, P & Z, PC	Ongoing	
Maintain active membership on the board of the Lamoille County Planning Commission to represent Stowe's interests in local and regional development and growth management initiatives, including the Lamoille County Regional Plan.	SB, PC	Ongoing	
Participate in Act 250, Section 248/248a and other state regulatory proceedings as appropriate to ensure that town growth and development needs and limitations are adequately addressed conform with the goals and policies of this plan.	SB, PC	Ongoing	
Appoint ad hoc committees as appropriate to advise the Selectboard on specific planning-related issues and projects.	SB, PC	Ongoing	
Develop and support community programs and events that foster neighborhood connections, volunteerism, intergenerational engagement, and celebrate diversity and inclusion.	P & R, RC, SB, SV*	Ongoing	







Photographs credit: Town of Stowe

Arts and Culture Goal

To become the primary regional center and visitor destination for arts and culture in northern Vermont, with prominent local arts and culture, that benefits Stowe residents, visitors, and businesses.

Policies

1. Support private initiatives that expand cultural events and facilities, and improve meeting, exhibit, and performance spaces within our designated growth centers, as well as Moscow Village, through the Town's Zoning Regulations.
2. Make municipal facilities available for special events, exhibits, and use by area arts organizations as appropriate, based on availability, capacity, and associated costs.
3. Support the creation of new venues or facilities for the arts and special events, in relation to existing and projected demand, within designated growth centers. Encourage site planning that supports walkability and connections to nearby cultural destinations and public spaces.
4. Support the Cultural Campus, Stowe Free Library, The Current, the Vermont Ski and Snowboard Museum, the Stowe Theater Guild, Stowe Performing Arts, and the Stowe Historical Society. Support improved visibility, access, and pedestrian connections between these destinations as part of a cohesive cultural network.
5. When feasible, the construction or substantial renovation of public buildings, parks, playgrounds, and public spaces, shall incorporate budget expenditure for public art, with advice and counsel of the Stowe Arts and Culture Council. Leverage these investments to also enhance adjacent streetscapes, outdoor gathering spaces, and pedestrian connections that link cultural sites.
6. Preserve, maintain, and enhance Stowe's cultural resources, including its historic sites, buildings, monuments, and the public realm.
7. Locate, design, and build new public buildings to reflect their monumental place within, and long-term importance to the community. Ensure surrounding site design supports pedestrian access, gathering, and integration with nearby cultural and civic spaces.







Photo Courtesy of The Current

Action Tasks - Arts and Culture	Responsibility	Priority	Vision Elements
Invest in local arts organizations through the work of the Stowe Arts and Cultural Council.	SB, ACC	Short-Term	
Evaluate the capacity and improvement needs of municipal facilities, as part of the development of facility plans, for their use by area arts associations for special events and programs. a) Include pedestrian access, plaza improvements, and adjacent public realm upgrades in facility plans to enhance connectivity between municipal buildings and nearby cultural destinations. b) Integrate arts and cultural needs into a Capital Improvement Program by planning and budgeting pedestrian improvements to existing facilities.	SB	Short-Term	
Review and consider amendments to the Special Events Ordinance to: a) Require large events to be held only at venues designed to accommodate large groups. b) Prohibit large special events during peak holiday weekends to reduce travel impacts. c) Evaluate staffing and human resources needs to ensure adequate public safety support.	TM & SB	Short-Term	
Review existing municipal bylaws and ordinances to identify opportunities and potential amendments that would encourage or require the integration of art installations into public projects. a) Include guidance for how art installations and site design can contribute to walkable connections and a more cohesive cultural experience. b) Explore long-term options for developing an Art Spine (pedestrian-only corridor) linking major cultural destinations.	ACC, P & Z, TM, PC & SB	Short-Term	
Develop and deploy as part of its normal upgrading and maintenance programs, wayfinding identifiers and other physical and virtual efforts to help residents and visitors identify and locate Stowe's arts and cultural assets, emphasizing our unique attractiveness as an arts and culture destination. a) Develop an Arts and Culture Map documenting cultural monuments, key sites, and pedestrian connections, identifying opportunities for enhanced public realm. b) Use the Arts and Culture Map to guide investments in wayfinding signage, interpretive markers, and digital guides connecting cultural monuments, municipal facilities, and outdoor art spaces to plazas, trails, and key streets such as Main Street and Moscow Village.	ACC, SV*, SAA* PC	Short-Term to Mid-Term	
Invest in a relevant collection, and a functional and beautiful building, to further the Stowe Free Library's vision of being a vibrant community center and a portal to knowledge, opportunity, and diverse resources. a) Ensure the library's building and surrounding areas include improved outdoor civic space, pedestrian connections, outdoor gathering spaces, and integrated art installations, linking it visually and physically to nearby cultural destinations and pedestrian networks.	SB & LT	Ongoing	
Make town-owned land available for a year-round outdoor sculpture exhibition.	SB & TC*	Ongoing	

Historic & Cultural Resources Goal



Identify, preserve, and protect Stowe's historic and cultural resources, including structures, districts, landscapes, significant views, and archaeological sites, that define our community character and sense of place.

Policies

1. Preserve and protect Stowe's historic buildings and districts, cemeteries, and cultural landscapes as essential components of our heritage, ensuring their integrity, authenticity, and long-term preservation.

2. Foster public understanding and appreciation of Stowe's history, architecture, and cultural resources through education, outreach, and heritage celebrations.

3. Encourage new development that is compatible with the town's historic character, visual quality, and traditional settlement patterns.

4. Protect visual and aesthetic character through zoning, design review, and planning practices that consistently safeguard both historic and contemporary new construction. Encourage streetscape and right-of-way improvements that reinforce historic character and support safe, walkable connections between historic and cultural resources.

5. Maintain Stowe's status as a Certified Local Government to access funding, technical assistance, and educational resources for historic preservation.

6. Promote incentives, programs, and regulatory tools that encourage the preservation, rehabilitation, and ongoing maintenance of historic resources. Support complementary investments in signage, wayfinding, and pedestrian access that improve visibility and connection to these resources.

7. Integrate historic resource considerations into all municipal planning and capital improvement projects, where appropriate. Coordinate these efforts with pedestrian improvements, streetscape enhancements, and public space investments that help link historic sites as part of a broader, connected village experience.

8. Historic residential and mixed-use buildings should be preserved and rehabilitated as feasible.

9. Support the adaptive reuse of historic buildings to meet modern needs while retaining their character defining architectural features. Encourage site design that improves pedestrian access and strengthens connections to nearby historic and cultural destinations.



Photo Courtesy of Stowe Historical Society



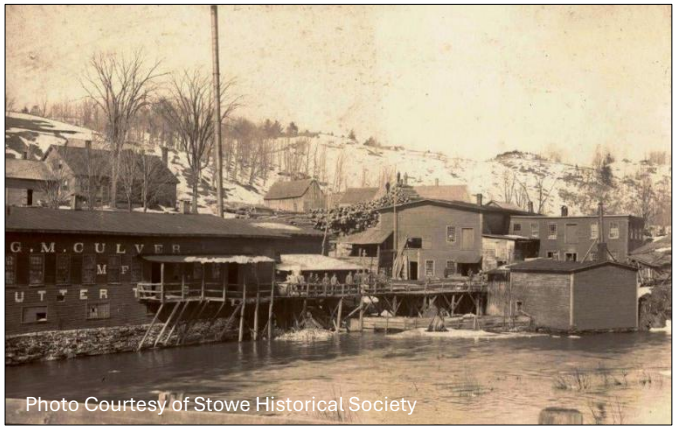


Photo Courtesy of Stowe Historical Society

Action Tasks - Historic & Cultural Resources	Responsibility	Priority	Vision Elements
Maintain and routinely update Stowe's inventory of historic structures and districts. Include updated survey results in future zoning amendments to ensure their continued protection.	HPC, P & Z, PC	Short-Term	
Explore and consider amending the zoning regulations to include demolition by neglect provisions.	HPC, P & Z, PC, SB	Short-Term	
Develop and adopt design guidelines for new construction and the rehabilitation of historic buildings to ensure compatibility with the town's historic character and existing settlement patterns. Include guidance for how site design, frontage, and the right-of-way can support walkability and reinforce connections to nearby historic and cultural resources.	HPC, P & Z	Mid-Term	
Host lectures, tours, and community events celebrating Stowe's history.	HPC, P & Z, SV* & HS*	Ongoing	
Incorporate interpretive elements and storytelling into public spaces, trailheads, and historic sites. Expand beyond signage to include physical design features, public art, and landscape elements that help guide movement and connect sites as part of a cohesive experience.	HPC, ACC	Ongoing	
Maintain the Town's Certified Local Government status to access state and federal preservation grants and resources.	HPC, P & Z, SB	Ongoing	
Provide property owners information on state and federal financial incentives, such as grants, tax credits, or other programs, to support historic building renovation, restoration, and maintenance.	HPC, P & Z	Ongoing	

Natural Resources & Environmental Quality Goal



Preserve and enhance Stowe's natural resources, scenic landscapes, and environmental quality; to strengthen resilience, foster connections to nature, and provide lasting benefits for both current and future residents and visitors.

Policies

1. Support existing land conservation efforts, particularly through partnerships with organizations like Stowe Land Trust, to protect lands of ecological, recreational, agricultural, and scenic value.
2. Safeguard and enhance the health of local rivers, streams, and water quality by maintaining vegetated buffers, controlling runoff and erosion using land use regulations, and implementing accepted agricultural and forestry practices on town-owned lands.
3. Avoid forest fragmentation and adverse impacts on environmentally sensitive areas including wetlands, floodplains, prime agricultural soils, steep slopes, hillsides, ridgelines, and groundwater source protection areas.
4. Protect significant wildlife habitats, including but not limited to, deer wintering areas, rare and/or endangered species habitat, local fisheries, critical bear and bird habitat significant forest habitat blocks and identified travel corridors, as mapped by the VT Department of Fish & Wildlife and shown on Map #1 of this Plan, from harmful development and adverse land management activities.
5. Preserve publicly owned conserved lands for open space and recreation, ensuring their long-term ecological health through responsible management and ongoing stewardship. The Conservation Commission shall serve as the primary steward for town-owned conserved land.
6. Collaborate with neighboring towns and conservation partners to protect significant natural resources, including the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor.
7. Ensure the extraction of sand, gravel, and stone is conducted responsibly, protects water resources, reasonably mitigates impacts to surrounding properties, and that the site is properly restored at the end of its useful life.
8. Land development within municipal water supply source protection areas must be designed and managed to avoid adverse impacts on groundwater resources, consistent with the Town's Source Protection Plans.
9. The economic viability of agriculture and forestry in Stowe will be supported and enhanced by:
    a) Maintaining Farmer's Contracts to reduce property taxes on working farms;
    b) Support for the State's Current Use Program;
    c) Local participation in the State's Current Use Program to support the viability and maintenance of farm and forest land;
    d) Actions that enable the creation of local businesses that provide a market for locally produced value-added agricultural and forestry products;
    e) Opportunities for the public to purchase local and organic agricultural and forest products through farmers markets, community gardens, farm stands and community supported agriculture; and
    f) The continued operation of existing farmers markets.

Action Tasks - Natural Resources/Environmental Quality	Responsibility	Priority	Vision Elements
Evaluate permeable pavement and green stormwater infrastructure in future zoning amendments to improve water quality and increase flood resilience.	PC, P & Z	Short-Term	
Re-evaluate the RHOD boundaries using current tools to ensure Stowe's ridgelines and forested hillsides continue to be well protected.	PC	Short-Term	
Identify areas on town-owned conserved properties where riparian buffer plantings should be added or enhanced.	CONS	Short-Term	
Inventory invasive species on town-owned conserved properties, develop a prevention and control plan, and implement ongoing monitoring to detect and remove new invasions early.	CONS, P & Z, SLT*	Short-Term	
Create a comprehensive inventory and assessment of existing recreational trails on town-owned conserved properties and collaborate with partners to maintain them in accordance with land management plans and sustainable best practices.	CONS, P & Z, P& R	Mid-Term	
Develop a natural resource inventory and ecological assessment for town-owned conserved properties.	CONS	Mid-Term	
Inventory and assess trailhead kiosks on all town-owned conserved properties to ensure updated rules, guidelines, and maps are available, and create educational brochures and maps for distribution.	CONS, P & Z	Ongoing	
Administer and enforce local floodplain regulations to maintain compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program.	P & Z	Ongoing	
Collaborate with Stowe schools to engage students in hands-on water quality monitoring and educational activities that promote community awareness of riparian area protection and watershed health.	CONS	Ongoing	
Monitor and maintain historic sites on town-owned properties. Repair and replace interpretive signage as needed.	CONS, HPC	Ongoing	
Continue to support and expand community environmental education programs, such as the Bear Aware Campaign, by introducing new information, events, and activities each year to increase public awareness and engagement.	CONS	Ongoing	
Protect water quality through regular testing, monitoring, and participation in regional water quality programs.	CONS	Ongoing	
Provide training and educational resources for the Public Works Department on invasive plant prevention and responsible salt application.	CONS	Ongoing	
Update Source Protection Plans for municipal groundwater supplies every three years.	WD	Ongoing	
Develop an annual monitoring and stewardship program for town-owned conserved lands. Review annual monitoring reports and address concerns as needed.	CONS, P & Z, SLT*	Ongoing	
Review and update land management plans for all town-owned conserved properties as needed or as otherwise required by the conservation easement or land management plan.	CONS, P & Z	Ongoing	

Forests Goal



Protect, maintain, and enhance the ecological integrity, size, and connectivity of intact forest blocks and habitat corridors to support healthy ecosystems, thriving wildlife, and sustainable working forests that provide lasting benefits for both nature and our community.

Policies

1. When land is subdivided, provisions should be made to ensure access for future forest management and forestry operations and to avoid potential conflicts between land uses.

2. Major subdivisions and Planned Developments must be designed and sited to protect large, connected areas of Highest Priority Habitat & Connecting Blocks as shown on Map 1.

3. Development must be designed and located to avoid fragmenting large, contiguous forest blocks. Within forests blocks, placement of roads, driveways, utilities, and buildings shall occur along the edges to limit fragmentation from roads, clearing, and buildings. If edge siting is not physically feasible, development must be clustered and located to minimize disruption to the block's integrity.

4. Protect bear habitat and deer wintering areas from development and other uses that may threaten the ability of the habitat to support these animals.

5. When important natural features, soil conditions, or special resources, such as agricultural or forested land, are present, require clustered or peripheral development to protect these resources and avoid fragmentation or scattered development.

6. Prevent fragmentation of large, highest-priority habitats and their connecting blocks as shown on Map #1 by preserving corridors that support wildlife movement and migration. Require cluster development or edge-focused siting so that any new development occurs at the periphery of these connector areas. When edge placement is not reasonably feasible, ensure development is carefully designed to minimize impacts on the continued viability and use of the corridor.

7. Support land conservation in the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor by partnering with non-profit organizations to secure conservation easements and fee title acquisitions on priority parcels, ensuring the permanent protection of forested and open lands to preserve habitat and maintain ecological connectivity.

8. An adequate land base to support present and future forestry and agricultural activities will be maintained through:
   a) The transfer of development rights from designated sending areas to appropriate receiving areas inside growth centers;
   b) The clustering of residential development, related to the subdivision of existing farm, forestland and open space, to facilitate the preservation of open space and keep productive land without reducing allowable density;
   c) Supporting a viable commercial recreation industry to encourage seasonal diversification and multiple uses of farm and forestland; and
   d) The permanent conservation of significant productive farm and forestland.

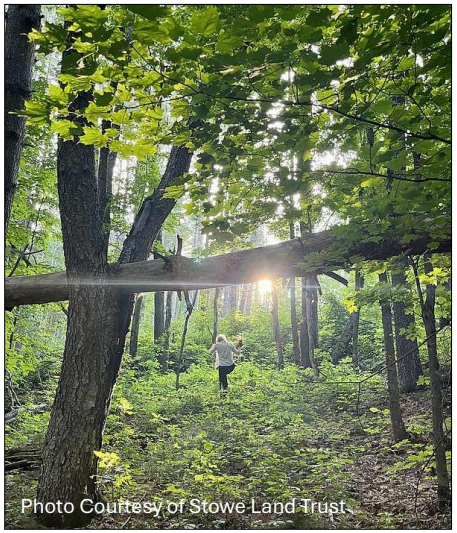


Photo Courtesy of Stowe Land Trust




Photo Courtesy of Stowe Land Trust

Action Tasks- Forests	Responsibility	Priority	Vision Elements
Explore and consider the adoption of a conservation or natural resource overlay district for areas defined by the presence of one or more natural resources that include features such as important wildlife habitat or plant species, high elevations, wildlife corridors and crossing areas (habitat connectors), intact forest blocks, and water source protection areas.	PC, P & Z	Short-Term	
Review, update, and adopt land use regulations to protect forest and wildlife resources by minimizing forest fragmentation, prioritizing significant habitat areas, preserving large forest blocks, and incorporating site plan and performance standards, such as expanded riparian setbacks, clustered development, and context-sensitive design, to safeguard our natural resources, forests, and habitat areas.	PC, P & Z, SB	Short-Term	
Amend subdivision and planned development regulations to protect forest and wildlife resources by improving review standards that guide the placement of clearing, building zones, roads, utilities, structures, and open space. Require clustered development where appropriate to preserve large forest blocks and support wildlife habitat.	PC, P & Z, SB	Short-Term	
Implement, with a licensed forester, a timber and habitat strategy in Sterling Forest to sustain habitat and timber resources while improving recreational trail opportunities.	PC, P & Z, SB	Mid-Term	
Promote the Current Use program and encourage property owners to develop and follow management plans to support long-term stewardship of their land.	CONS., SLT*	Ongoing	
Engage with landowners about the benefits and opportunities of conservation easements.	CONS., SLT*	Ongoing	
Manage municipal forests for multiple purposes, including timber production, water quality, wildlife habitat, education, and recreation, using revenue from sustainable timber harvests to fund stewardship, recreation, and conservation efforts.	CONS., P & Z, SB	Ongoing	
Connect landowners in the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor with nonprofit organizations, providing educational materials on the corridor's local and regional importance, and offering technical assistance to manage their properties in ways that enhance the corridor's ecological function.	CONS., SLT*	Ongoing	
Collaborate with transportation officials to identify, evaluate, and implement improvements along Routes 100 and 108, as well as local roads, to enhance safe wildlife passage.	CONS., P & Z, DPW	Ongoing	

Recreation Goal



Ensure year-round, diverse, and inclusive recreational opportunities that are accessible, affordable, and environmentally sustainable - promoting healthy lifestyles, strengthening community connections, and deepening our appreciation for Stowe's natural beauty.

Policies

1. Prioritize the enhancement and improvement of athletic facilities and the support of recreational programs to attract families and foster a healthy and engaged year-round residential community.
2. Proactively plan for future recreational needs to serve a growing resident population and increasing visitor use.
3. Enhance and improve existing recreational facilities, including trails and trail-related amenities; athletic facilities and ballfields; and recreation programs.
4. Maintain and steward Town-owned conserved properties in accordance with their adopted land management plans as prepared by the Conservation Commission and/or Recreation Commission.
5. Maintain and improve, when necessary, the Mayo Farm Community Events Field for special events and recreational use.
6. Continue to allow snowmobile access to town-owned properties and town highways in appropriate locations.
7. Memorial Park and its associated facilities will serve as the focus of recreational activities in Stowe Village. The Town will continue to advance the Memorial Park Master Plan.
8. Promote the sustainable use and enjoyment of its recreational resources while enhancing our reputation as the region's premier four-season outdoor recreation destination.
9. Retain ownership of Class 4 roads and legal trails as important recreational resources.
10. Maintain, and enhance mountain biking trails in Cady Hill Forest and Sterling Forest to strengthen our reputation as a premier mountain biking destination. Support Stowe Trails Partnership as the designated trail corridor manager of these trails.
11. Provide and protect access to public lands, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of background or ability, have equitable access to recreational activities and spaces.
12. Maintain, enhance, and expand community centers, playgrounds, pools, sports fields, and other public facilities to provide diverse wellness and recreational opportunities for all residents.
13. Protect trails, open spaces, rivers, and scenic landscapes. Integrate green infrastructure and sustainable practices into recreation, wellness, and land use planning.
14. Support the efforts of local public and private organizations working to enhance the recreational assets within the community, including:
    a) Working with VAST and the Stowe Snowmobile Club;
    b) Catamount Trail Association; and
    c) Supporting the Stowe Trails Partnership in their efforts regarding maintaining and building recreational trails.

Action Tasks - Recreation	Responsibility	Priority	Vision Elements
Implement the Memorial Park Master Plan and invest in expanded recreation and community facilities, such as the Gale Center.	P & R, RC	**BOLD *Move***	
Evaluate and consider amending the Mayo Farm Management Plan and conservation easement to potentially allow: a) Expand or relocate the designated recreation zone to better meet existing and future community needs; b) Transition portions of land currently used for agriculture or special events to dedicated recreational use, with clear separation between athletic fields and event spaces; c) Optimize the use of the existing Recreation Zone, including Field K and Polo Fields, for activities and/or amenities, including but not limited to, volleyball courts, additional parking, or other recreational facilities based on community demand.	CC, RC, P & R, P & Z, SB	Short-Term	
Evaluate existing recreation facilities and athletic fields for environmental or site constraints. If current facilities and fields are found to be inadequate, develop a plan to acquire new lands or repurpose existing municipal land to better support community recreation and athletic programs and facilities.	P & R, RC	Short-Term	
Amend the zoning and/or subdivision regulations to require recreation facilities, including but not limited to, trails, pathways, playgrounds, conservation areas, water access, ~~etc.~~and similar amenities, to be incorporated as features of new multi-family development and subdivision projects based on the scale, character, impacts, and location of the proposed development. Such facilities should ~~remain open to the public~~be designed to enhance the quality of life of residents, protect natural resources, and/or promote appropriate pedestrian and recreational connectivity.	PC, SB	Short-Term	
Evaluate existing park and recreation facilities to identify opportunities for adding outdoor fitness stations, playgrounds, and community gardens, and to ensure facilities are ADA-compliant and accessible to users of all abilities.	P & R, RC	Short-Term	
Develop an outdoor recreation and trails master plan that documents existing recreational resources, programs, and facility needs.	P & Z, PC, RC	Mid-Term	
Explore options to enhance existing municipal parks including the following: a) Provide public restroom facilities in municipal parks. b) Installation of fencing, gates, and vehicle barriers with uniform design. c) Construct new picnic shelters and other accessory structures.	P & R, RC	Mid-Term	
Conduct a comprehensive existing conditions assessment of the Stowe Recreation Path to identify infrastructure and bridge conditions and develop a prioritized improvement and/or replacement plan. Where needed, upgrade and replace Rec Path bridges with wider spans to reduce flood risks and enhance resiliency.	P & R, RC	Mid-Term	
Explore long-term options for developing a future recreational field house and community recreation center to support year-round recreational programming and accommodate multi-generational needs.	P & R, RC	Long-Term	
Enhance and expand recreation programs to serve all age groups -teens, seniors, adults, preschoolers, and elementary-aged children - by providing both structured and non-programmed activities, increasing public outreach, and organizing seasonal community events.	P & R, RC	Ongoing	
Enhance the Recreation Path for year-round use including the following: a) Continuing to groom the path for cross country skiing; b) Maintaining adequate signage to delineate use and directions; and c) Exploring the installation of low impact subtle ground lighting for evening usage.	P & R, RC	Ongoing	
In partnership with local organizations, expand and implement monitoring tools, such as trail and vehicle counters, to collect data on usage patterns. Use this data to inform and implement management strategies that enhance visitor experience and protect natural resources.	P & R, P & Z	Ongoing	
Plan and budget for new recreational facilities and improvements to existing facilities. Integrate these recreational needs into a Capital Improvement Program (CIP).	P & R, TM	Ongoing	

Communications Goal



Ensure that all residents, visitors, and businesses in Stowe have access to reliable, modern telecommunications infrastructure and services including universal broadband access and cellular service, while protecting the Stowe's scenic, recreational, and historic character and supporting sustainable economic and community development.

Policies

1. Support the development and expansion of modern, reliable, state-of-the-art telecommunications infrastructure throughout Stowe in a manner that fully complies with the town's adopted community standards through collaboration with providers.
2. Continue membership and active participation in the Lamoille FiberNet Communications Union District (LFCUD) and Lamoille County Planning Commission (LCPC) to collaboratively address both new and ongoing telecommunication challenges.
3. Participate in Public Utility Commission (Section 248a) review of new and upgraded telecommunication facilities so that adopted community standards are given due consideration.
4. The Town supports the installation of telecommunication facilities so long as they meet the following community standards:

    a) Telecommunication towers and accessory structures must meet the minimum setback requirements for the zoning district(s) in which they are located.
    b) Telecommunication towers and accessory structures shall be located on non-agricultural land unless located along field edges to avoid fragmentation of, and to minimize and mitigate undue adverse impacts to, aesthetics, agricultural land and open fields.
    c) Telecommunication towers and accessory structures shall be sited outside of, or to the edge of scenic views or viewsheds so that they are not a prominent focal point.
    d) Telecommunication towers and accessory structures shall be reasonably screened from view through the use of existing topography, structures, vegetation or strategically placed tree, shrub and ground cover plantings that do not block distant views.

5. The Town encourages the co-location of telecommunication antennae of multiple providers on shared towers.
6. The Public Utility Commission shall give due consideration to the standards and guidelines of the Ridgeline and Hillside Overlay District when considering applications for any telecommunication facilities proposed within the district.
7. In the Stowe Historic Overlay District, telecommunications antennas, towers, and related fixtures shall be installed in existing structures, such as church steeples or cupolas, rather than free-standing structures.
8. Towers, antennas, and any necessary support structures and facilities must incorporate design elements, such as but not limited to, compatible materials, colors, and finishes, to minimize undue adverse aesthetic impacts and maintain harmony with the surrounding historic and scenic environment.

Policies Continued

9. New or modified towers, antennas, and any necessary support structures, including utility or service lines, shall be designed and located to prevent disruption to the scenic character or beauty of the area and to minimize to the extent reasonably feasible undue adverse aesthetic impact on prominent ridgelines, hilltops, trails, and scenic view corridors.
10. New telecommunications and utility facilities, and related improvements, shall be located and designed so as to not have an undue adverse impact on significant wildlife habitats and natural communities as shown on Map #1.
11. Capital facilities planning for roadway improvements and electric utility improvements shall be coordinated with all identified users of utility poles or providers of underground communications utilities with sufficient advance notice to enable providers to budget resources (labor and materials).
12. All new developments should provide underground telecommunications infrastructure (e.g. spare conduit, colocation facilities) capable of providing a minimum of 100/100 mbps symmetrical broadband access.



Action Tasks- Communications	Responsibility	Priority	Vision Elements
Incorporate telecommunications infrastructure provision into the development review process to ensure all new developments provide appropriate broadband infrastructure, and accommodate future capacity, such as spare conduit.	PC, SB	Short-Term	
Identify and map prominent ridgelines, hilltops, trails, and scenic view corridors that are important to the community and should be protected. Incorporate the map in future Town Plan amendments.	PC, P & Z	Short-Term	
Evaluate options to provide free public Wi-Fi in Stowe Village to improve connectivity, support local businesses, enhance the visitor experience, and ensure equitable internet access for all residents.	IT, SAA*	Short-Term	
Review and enhance, if necessary, coordination of roadway and utility pole improvement and replacement with all telecommunication providers.	DPW, SB	Ongoing	
Conduct a local cellular service planning effort to identify opportunities and strategies to use new technology for expanding access through a collaborative effort with local providers and other interested parties to achieve cell phone coverage throughout Stowe.	SB	Ongoing	
Continue to support the efforts of the Mount Mansfield Collocation Corporation to develop a long-range plan for the maintenance and, to the extent practical without disrupting telecommunications and broadcast service, the reduction of towers on the summit of Mount Mansfield.	SB	Ongoing	

Economic Development Goal



A vibrant, inclusive, and resilient local economy that balances Stowe's unique identity as both a traditional New England village and a four-season destination. We will pursue thoughtful, sustainable growth that balances quality of life for residents, workers, and visitors by protecting our natural environment, strengthening community infrastructure, investing in livability, attracting and retaining a diverse, innovative local workforce, and preserving the character and vitality of the community.

Policies

1. Honor Stowe's heritage, scenic beauty, and shared values, while celebrating our sense of place and community character.
2. Prioritize initiatives that promote responsible tourism practices that minimize environmental impacts, support long-term ecosystem health, and reflect our shared community vision and values.
3. Support accessible and inclusive housing and employment opportunities to strengthen a resilient and diverse year-round community.
4. Strengthen collaboration between the Town, residents, local businesses, and tourism organizations to address shared challenges and opportunities related to housing, tourism, and quality of life.
5. Reinforce Stowe Village as the civic, cultural, and economic heart of the community, supporting its role as a vibrant and welcoming center for community gathering and local business.
6. Support and celebrate local arts, culture, and heritage as vital components of our community identity and tourism economy.
7. Protect our historic, scenic, and ecological resources, the long-term viability of our agricultural lands, and our outdoor recreation economy. Ensure that tourism activities prioritize the protection and sustainable management of these community assets, recognizing the critical role of a healthy environment in supporting our local economy.
8. Promote ongoing coordination with Stowe Mountain Resort, Stowe Area Association, and other major stakeholders to align goals, strengthen partnerships, and manage tourism-related impacts.
9. Encourage diverse, year-round tourism opportunities that reflect the community's long-term vision and preserve Stowe's small-town character.
10. A balance between development at Stowe Mountain Resort and other existing commercial centers (Stowe Village, Lower Village, HT, MRV and MRC) will be maintained by:
    a) Supporting Stowe's Designated Downtown as the civic, cultural, commercial and residential center of the community; and
    b) Improving physical links (e.g., recreation path, public transit service) connecting Stowe Mountain Resort with Stowe Village, and other designated growth centers along the Mountain Road and Route 100.
    c) Supporting in-fill development within designated growth areas.
    d) Seeking Tier 1B designation for Stowe Village, Lower Village, and Mountain Road Village.

Action Tasks - Economic Development	Responsibility	Priority	Vision Elements
Pursue Tier 1B designation for designated growth centers, including the Mountain Road Village, Stowe Village & Lower Village, and village center designation for Moscow Village.	P & Z, PC, SB	**BOLD *Move***	
Evaluate the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations and amend where determined necessary to: a) Encourage mixed-use developments that integrate housing and commercial uses to create vibrant, walkable developments. b) Evaluate current land availability, usage, and future needs for commercial development to ensure sufficient space for sustainable, balanced economic growth that supports a range of local services and employment opportunities. c) Encourage the development of services, housing, and businesses that meet the needs of Stowe's growing senior population and enhance overall community well-being. d) Incentivize infill and redevelopment of underutilized properties to meet commercial needs and support efficient land use.	PC, P & Z	Short-Term	
Advance recommendations in the Housing Needs Assessment to create diverse, year-round housing opportunities for residents and workers.	PC, TM, SB	Short-Term	
Develop a destination stewardship plan to evaluate how recreation, tourism, and residential development affect Stowe's land use and economy. Use the findings and recommendations to guide future amendments to the Town Plan.	P & Z, PC, SAA*	Mid-Term	
Host regular community forums and listening sessions with larger employers and the local business community to address tourism impacts and help identify, understand, and address local workforce housing needs.	PC, SAA*	Ongoing	
Collaborate with Stowe Area Association, Stowe Vibrancy, and other stakeholders to develop and implement educational campaigns that foster respect for our community, culture, and environment, encourage environmental and destination stewardship, and support sustainable transportation.	TM, SB	Ongoing	
Partner with Lamoille County Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) and Stowe Area Association to encourage business diversification that supports the creation of both year-round and seasonal jobs with competitive wages, helping to strengthen the local economy and meet the financial needs of Stowe's workforce.	TM, SB	Ongoing	
Encourage short-term rentals, lodging, and local tourism-related businesses to adopt and model sustainable practices - such as water conservation, energy efficiency, waste reduction, and use of alternative transportation - that reduce environmental impacts, support community well-being, and strengthen long-term resilience.	CONS. & SAA*	Ongoing	
Partner with Stowe Vibrancy to participate in the Designated Downtown program and implement downtown revitalization projects.	TM, SB	Ongoing	
Partner with regional educational institutions to create workforce training programs and educational opportunities that build on Stowe's strengths and support local economic development.	TM, SB	Ongoing	

Education Goal

Preserve Stowe's tradition of educational excellence by supporting academic, athletic, social, cultural, and community programs in safe, engaging facilities that serve all ages and strengthen a connected, informed, and civically active community.

Policies

1. Advocate for Stowe's representation in redistricting and school consolidation discussions to ensure the community's interests are preserved.

2. Prioritize housing development that sustains year-round residency and supports school-aged families to maintain minimum class sizes.

3. Support library programs, recreation activities, childcare programs, and other after-school initiatives that strengthen resources for local children and families.

4. Improve recreational facilities and programs to attract and retain families, increase school enrollment, and foster a close and vibrant community.

5. Collaborate closely with the Stowe School Board to ensure policy alignment and a unified voice in regional and state-level education planning.

6. Make municipal buildings and public spaces available for community events, programs, and gatherings that serve residents of all ages.

7. Encourage student participation in municipal government by including student representatives on boards and commissions and fostering regular engagement with teachers and support networks. Encourage the school board to include a student representative as appropriate.

8. Ensure high-quality schools, recreation programs, and youth services that promote physical, mental, and social wellness, supporting the growth and well-being of young residents.









Action Tasks - Education	Responsibility	Priority	Vision Elements
Meet with the Stowe School Board to align educational services with planned growth and conduct facility assessments to meet minimum class size requirements.	PC, SB, SSB	Annually	
Conduct a walking audit of Stowe Village and Lower Village to identify pedestrian improvements and prioritize them in the capital budget process.	PC, P & Z, DPW, PD	Short-Term	
Implement the Memorial Park Master Plan and invest in expanded recreation and community facilities.	P & R, RC, SB, DPW	**BOLD *Move***	
Monitor legislative actions, engage the community in education visioning under new redistricting structures, assess facilities and programs, and strengthen partnerships with neighboring districts.	SB, SSB	Short-Term	
Create contingency plans for schools at risk of falling below minimum class sizes to ensure long-term viability.	SB, SSB	Short-Term	
Explore extending the Stowe Rec Path to serve Stowe High School and Middle School and investigate options to connect the path to Moscow.	P & R, RC	Mid-Term	
Explore improvements to school transportation, including reducing bus route times and evaluating shared public transportation options.	SB, SSB	Ongoing	
Explore and evaluate opportunities to repurpose underutilized school facility space for adult education, satellite technical training, youth programming, and other activities to support the community.	SB, SSB	Ongoing	
Hold an annual joint meeting between the School Board, Selectboard, and Planning Commission to coordinate on shared priorities.	PC, SB, SSB	Ongoing	
Expand play spaces by constructing new playgrounds in public parks, considering locations such as but not limited to Mayo Farm and Thompson Park.	P & R, RC	Ongoing	
Explore joint Town–School projects for athletic fields and sporting facilities that serve the Stowe community.	P & R, RC, SSB	Ongoing	

Healthy Community & Human Services Goal

To ensure access to high quality health and human services for all Stowe residents.

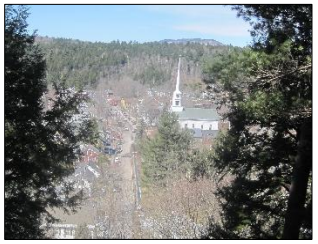
Policies

1. Health and human services should be delivered both locally and regionally to those in need.
2. Affordable public transportation should be provided as appropriate to ensure access to services located in other communities for Stowe's elderly and low-income populations.
3. Assisted living services and facilities should be permitted locally as needed to allow Stowe's elderly and disabled populations to remain independent, in their own homes, and in the community.
4. The development of day care facilities, group homes, and other facilities and services will be supported in appropriate locations under local regulations and ordinances.
5. Health and social services open to the general public should be centrally located in Stowe Village and/or other designated growth centers, on public transit routes.
6. The Town will continue to support, through annual appropriations, the efforts of regional health and human service providers in relation to local demand and the availability of funds.

Action Tasks - A Health Community and Human Services	Responsibility	Priority	Vision Elements
Work with service providers to promote and sustain the local delivery of services, including, but not limited to, the West Branch Meal Site, Lamoille County Food Share and the Morrisville Shopper Shuttle.	SB, TM, P & Z *Service Providers	Ongoing	
Re-evaluate community service appropriations annually in relation to local demand, the local delivery of services, and program cost effectiveness.	SB	Ongoing	
Encourage healthcare providers and community organizations to expand wellness programs, mental health resources, preventive care, and access to nutritious food for all residents.	SB, TM, P & Z *Service Providers	Ongoing	







Municipal Utilities & Infrastructure Goal

A dependable supply of electricity, clean water, and wastewater services with well maintained and improved infrastructure, that also protects public health, the environment, community well-being, and supports balanced, responsible growth.

Policies

1. Operate, and expand when appropriate, our municipal water system and wastewater treatment plant and associated allocation of plant capacity, in a manner that reinforces our land use, economic development, housing, and natural resource protection goals and policies of this plan.
2. Limit the allocation of wastewater treatment capacity to properties located within the sewer service area, with priority given to housing projects that align with the housing goals and policies of this plan and to allow connection of aging or failing on-site septic systems.
3. Future expansions of the sewer service area will be to remedy failing on-site septic systems, to support any approved future expansions of our locally designated growth areas (Ski-PUD, Stowe Village, Lower Village, Mountain Road Village and Mountain Road Crossroads), and/or to serve Moscow Village.
4. The beneficiary of water and/or sewer line expansions should pay for the cost.
5. The Town will not enter into bond agreements for future municipal sewer expansions unless it has confidence that anticipated connection fees and other water or sewer service revenues will be sufficient to service the bonded indebtedness.
6. Land use and development activity within water supply Source Protection Areas (SPAs) shall not result in the pollution or degradation of groundwater quality.
7. Avoid the use lawn chemicals, weed killer, and fertilizers on land surrounding municipal wells in Zone 2 of the Source Protection Areas.
8. Support resiliency planning efforts that mitigate the impacts of extreme weather events on our community and Town utilities and infrastructure.





Action Tasks - Municipal Utilities & Infrastructure	Responsibility	Priority	Vision Elements
Replace the Lower Village pump station.	DPW	**BOLD *Move***	
Identify and develop an alternative PFAS- free municipal water source.	DPW, WD, WC	**BOLD *Move***	
Advance the repowering of the Smith's Falls dam for increased generation and flood mitigation. Convert the historic Millwright's Office into a distribution control room and emergency operations center.	SED	Short-Term	
Install the addition of a 70-kW rooftop solar system to the Moscow Stowe Electric Department Garage.	SED	Short-Term	
Complete the distribution circuit and loop feed with automation technology to improve resiliency and restoration of service times.	SED	Short-Term	
Complete the Weeks Hill to Percy Hill loop feed project to improve resiliency and restoration of service times.	SED	Short-Term	
Complete improvements to the off-road and underground segments 34.5kV 'mountain line' to reduce the duration of outages caused by storm damage by improving access to infrastructure, installing storm resilient infrastructure, and installing modern sensing and control equipment.	SED	Short-Term	
Complete improvements to Houston and Lodge substations to modernize the facilities, install automated equipment, and implement a loop feed project that would maintain service to customers in the event storm damage causes outages along the mountain line.	SED	Short-Term	
Conduct a Risk and Resilience Assessment (RRA) and develop an Emergency Response Plan (ERP) to ensure the safety and reliability of the municipal water supplies and update the assessment regularly.	DPW, WD	Short-Term & Ongoing	
Evaluate possible amendments to the Short-Term Rental Ordinance to ensure that septic systems within Source Protection Overlay Districts operate within their permitted design capacity, thereby protecting groundwater resources from potential contamination.	TM, SB	Short-Term	
Consider amending the zoning regulations to include an Edson Hill Source Protection Overlay District and for any newly acquired and developed municipal water system to control inappropriate land development within the municipal source protection area.	PC, P & Z, SB	Mid-Term	
Develop and adopt a Municipal Water Ordinance.	TM, DPW, WD, SB, WC	Mid-Term	
Consider the upgrading and reclassification of the Town's wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) to a higher capacity if necessary.	SB	Long-Term	
Consider additional utility owned solar with the potential to expand Nebraska Valley Solar facility.	SED, SB	Long-Term	





Action Tasks Cont. - Municipal Utilities & Infrastructure	Responsibility	Priority	Vision Elements
Consider utility scale battery storage to improve resiliency and reduce transmission and power supply costs.	SED	Long-Term	
Update, every three years, source protection plans for municipal water supplies.	WD, DPW	Ongoing	
Replace lines in and around the village core service area as needed.	WD, DPW	Ongoing	
Study expanding water and sewer service to developed areas of town, including Moscow Village, and adjust service boundaries where physical barriers prevent connections.	SB, WC, SC, DPW	Ongoing	
Cross train sewer and water department personnel.	DPW, SD, WD	Ongoing	
Monitor municipal water sources for PFAS, follow EPA & State of Vermont testing procedures, and consider treatment options.	DPW, WD	Ongoing	
Develop a Capital Improvement Program that prioritizes and recognizes the cost of maintaining the water system infrastructure, sewer collection system, and wastewater treatment facility.	TM, DPW, SB	Ongoing	
Reserve capacity for identified aging and/or failed on-site septic systems within the sewer service area and require connection of such systems to the WWTP.	HO, DPW, WD	Ongoing	
Update the Sewer Ordinance as needed, including but not limited to the allocation section to align with the policies of this plan.	TM, DPW, SB, SC	Ongoing	
Maintain and replace new and existing sewer lines, as necessary.	DPW, SD	Ongoing	
Update service line inventory.	WD	Ongoing	

Public Safety & Emergency Services Goal

A safe, resilient, and thriving community adequately served by professional, coordinated, and cost-effective police, fire, rescue, and emergency management services that protect public safety and enhance quality of life for all residents and visitors.

Policies

1. Emergency services will be provided at appropriate levels of service, as determined by locally defined needs and generally accepted standards for communities comparable to Stowe.

2. Plan for anticipated future demand for services and facilities to accommodate future development and population growth.

3. Enhance efficiencies through greater coordination and integration of local emergency services, and ongoing coordination with regional service providers.

4. Stowe High School will serve as the Town's primary emergency shelter during major emergency events, providing safe refuge and essential services for residents and visitors when needed.









Action Tasks - Public Safety & Emergency Services	Responsibility	Priority	Vision Elements
Integrate the Stowe Fire Department Recommended Construction Standards for Roads & Driveways into the Town's Zoning Regulations.	F & R, P & Z, PC, SB	Short-Term	
Participate in cooperative dispatch services with the Lamoille County Sheriff's Department.	PD, SB	Ongoing	
Provide mutual aid service with the Morristown and Waterbury fire departments.	F & R	Ongoing	
Maintain a replacement schedule for emergency response vehicles and equipment.	SB, TM	Ongoing	
Replace undersized water mains when possible to improve firefighting capabilities.	F & R, DPW	Ongoing	
Monitor Fire & Rescue Department staffing to identify and anticipate possible shortages in future years. Develop strategies for recruiting additional staff as necessary.	F & R	Ongoing	
Work with the Lamoille County Planning Commission (LCPC) to coordinate emergency planning with neighboring communities.	PC, DPW, F & R, PD, EMD, LCPC*	Ongoing	
Annually Adopt a Local Emergency Management Plan.	EMD, SB	Ongoing	
Annually review and identify required equipment and building upgrades to ensure the emergency shelter remains fully prepared to protect public safety during disaster events.	EMD, SB	Ongoing	
Annually evaluate development and growth, current service levels, and identified capacity constraints. Integrate future facility and service expansions into the Capital Improvement Program.	TM, SB	Ongoing	

Solid Waste Goal

Ensure that Stowe's solid waste is managed efficiently, safely, and in an environmentally responsible manner, while promoting recycling, reuse, and long-term sustainability for the community.

Policies

1. Promote waste reduction in the community to minimize the amount of waste entering and leaving the Stowe Transfer Station.
2. Support expanded recycling and composting programs to divert materials and food scraps from landfills and promote sustainable waste management.
3. Continue membership and active participation in the Lamoille County Solid Waste Management District to collaboratively address both new and ongoing solid waste challenges.
4. Ensure broad community participation in developing solid waste solutions that are sustainable, environmentally responsible, and fiscally sound.
5. Continue to support the location of a transfer station in Stowe.
6. Promote community use of bear-proof containers and secure waste storage to prevent wildlife conflicts and support safe, responsible solid waste management.
7. Support and promote Green Up Day as an important community tradition that fosters environmental stewardship, community pride, and the beautification of Stowe.

Action Tasks - Solid Waste	Responsibility	Priority	Vision Elements
Consider amending the Health, Sanitation, & Sewer Ordinance to strengthen the requirements for garbage disposal to better protect wildlife and humans.	TM, SB	Short-Term	
Explore the possibility of relocating the Stowe Transfer Station to an alternate site within Stowe.	TM, SB	Mid-Term	
In conjunction with the Lamoille Regional Solid Waste Management District (*LRSWMD*), inform and educate the public on solid waste issues.	SB, LRSWMD*	Ongoing	
Maintain active membership on the LRSWMD board of directors.	SB	Ongoing	
Provide opportunities for recycling at all municipal buildings and parks, as well as in Stowe Village.	SB, P & R	Ongoing	
Upgrade all municipal trash, recycling containers, and dumpsters with bear-resistant models.	P & R	Ongoing	
Provide ongoing education and outreach on best practices for securing trash and food waste.	CONS.	Ongoing	

Cemeteries Goal

To provide adequate, well maintained cemetery space to accommodate future demand.



Policies

1. Provide a well-maintained setting for the interment and commemoration of the dead and for the comfort and inspiration of the bereaved and the general public.

2. Stowe's cemeteries will be enhanced and maintained in accordance with any management plans prepared by the Stowe Cemetery Commission and approved by the Selectboard.

Action Tasks - Cemeteries	Responsibility	Priority	Vision Elements
Explore an alternate secondary access to Riverbank Cemetery.	CC, DPW, P & R	Short-Term	
Continue to explore and consider possible areas for natural burial sites.	CC	Mid-Term	
Maintain the two antique hearses at the Riverbank Cemetery and explore options for making it better known to the public.	CC	Mid-Term	
Explore options and possible funding sources for displaying historic objects.	CC, HPC	Long-Term	
Plan for the expansion of the Riverbank Cemetery to accommodate future demand.	CC	Long-Term	
Renovate the White House at the Riverbank Cemetery to use for memorial services.	CC, HPC	Long-Term	
Develop a plan to restore the historic entrance to the Riverbank Cemetery.	CC	Long-Term	
Review applications for Private Residential Cemeteries and make recommendations to the DRB.	CC	Ongoing	
Prepare and maintain a plot map for the Riverbank Cemetery.	CC, TC, P & R	Ongoing	
Continue to administer, and update as appropriate, Cemetery Rules, Regulations and fees.	CC	Ongoing	
Review and update, as needed, brochure of Stowe cemeteries as a resource for residents and visitors.	CC, HS*	Ongoing	

Flood Resiliency Goal

Strengthen our flood resilience by protecting people, property, and public infrastructure from the impacts of flooding and erosion- safeguarding public safety, reducing long-term risks, and fostering a more prepared and adaptable community.

Policies

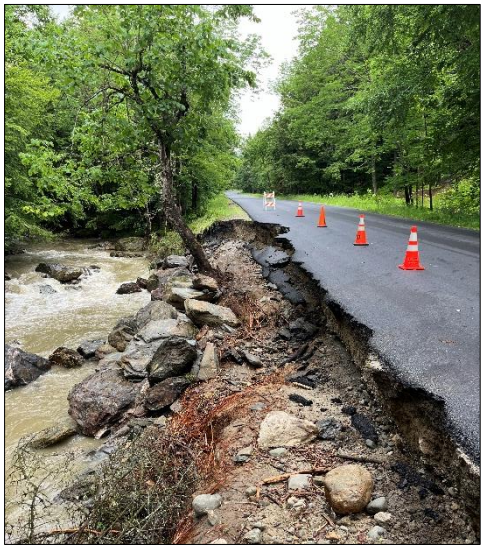
1. Maintain, and update as needed, our Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.
2. Development on steep slopes, hillsides and ridgelines shall be carefully controlled to avoid adverse impacts on scenic resources, water quality, hydrology and public safety.
3. Restrict development in the Flood Hazard and Fluvial Erosion Hazard districts primarily to recreation and agricultural land uses, with the exception of those activities related to the maintenance and continued use of existing structures.
4. Continue to administer its Flood Hazard Regulations, to be updated as needed, to maintain eligibility in the National Flood Insurance Program and compliance with Vermont Act 121.
5. Continue to administer the provisions of the Fluvial Erosion Hazard Overlay District to limit development in the floodplain, erosion-prone areas, and within the River Corridor.
6. Continue to require within the zoning regulations a fifty-foot structure setback from all perennial streams along with required vegetative buffers.
7. Continue to support the Lamoille County Planning Commission, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Agency of Natural Resources, Stowe Land Trust and other organizations in their efforts to protect and improve riparian areas.











Action Tasks - Flood Resiliency	Responsibility	Priority	Vision Elements
Adopt River Corridor Protection in compliance with Act 121 and strengthen the Flood Hazard Regulations to prohibit the construction of new structures within the Flood Hazard Overlay District.	PC, SB	Short-Term	
Amend the stormwater provisions in the zoning regulations to strengthen water detention and storage standards. Incorporate green infrastructure and low-impact development techniques to manage runoff, reduce peak flows, improve water quality, and enhance groundwater infiltration.	PC, P & Z, SB	Short-Term	
Explore potential zoning amendments to limit or prohibit development on steep slopes to protect environmental resources, maintain community character, and minimize long-term infrastructure costs.	PC, P & Z	Short-Term	
Amend the zoning regulations to include enhanced engineering requirements for the construction of man-made ponds.	PC, P & Z, DPW	Short-Term	
Evaluate the creation of a municipal stormwater utility.	PC, P & Z, DPW	Mid-Term	
Evaluate participation in FEMA's Community Rating System in order to reduce flood insurance premiums for affected property owners.	P & Z	Mid-Term	
Implement the recommendations of the 2007 West Branch Corridor Management Plan & 2010 Little River Corridor Management Plan.	P & Z, CONS.	Ongoing	
Work with private landowners to protect and enhance vegetated stream buffers along the town's watercourses.	CONS.	Ongoing	
Work with land conservation organizations and private landowners to continue to acquire river corridor easements along erosion prone watercourses.	CONS.	Ongoing	
Work with private landowners to move sections of the Recreation Path away from the West Branch to avoid armoring in these areas and allowing the river to return to a more natural state.	P & Z, P & R, DPW	Ongoing	
Continue to work with state and regional partners to prioritize upsizing the culverts on Route 108 near recent washout locations.	DPW	Ongoing	
Design, construct, and maintain bridges, culverts, and roadways to withstand flood events consistent with updated hydrologic and hydraulic data.	DPW	Ongoing	
Prioritize flood-resilient infrastructure improvements in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP).	PC, TM, SB	Ongoing	
Ensure that Stowe's emergency shelter is fully equipped, accessible, and ready in the event of a disaster.	EMD, PD, F & R	Ongoing	

Housing Goal



*Balance new construction with the adaptation of existing homes to meet the targets identified in the Housing Needs Assessment. **

See page 74 for a summary of the Housing Needs Assessment and established housing targets.

Policies

1. Prioritize and support the development of a diverse range of livable, affordable, and energy-efficient housing types and sizes, while helping to achieve housing targets and implementing the recommendations of the Housing Needs Assessment.
2. Promote higher-density, mixed-use developments and a diversity of housing types within designated growth centers, utilizing existing services and infrastructure and located within walking distance of public transportation.
3. Consider requiring larger commercial and residential developments, as well as significant expansions to existing uses, to include a portion of low- and moderate- income units or contribute equivalently, either on-site or through a fee-in-lieu program, to increase the supply of attainable housing.
4. Require through regulatory tools large employers to provide adequate housing for their workforce, either through on-site housing, partnerships with housing developers, or other housing initiatives.
5. Support financial and regulatory incentives to advance the production of low- and moderate-income housing in our designated growth centers and areas served by municipal water and sewer.
6. Encourage residential in-fill development in and around Stowe Village, Lower Village and Moscow Village at a scale, and character consistent with existing neighborhoods and historic settlement patterns.
7. Restrict the conversion of residential dwellings to non-residential commercial uses in VR and RR Districts.
8. Actively support public-private partnerships and investment in housing development to advance the housing goal of this plan by producing, acquiring, managing, and preserving low- and moderate-income housing. Partner with appropriate entities to administer affordable housing responsibilities.
9. Support Planned Residential Developments (PRD's) as a tool to provide affordable, workforce, and employee housing and permanent open space.
10. Monitor and adapt short-term rental regulation to balance the community's housing needs for year-round residents with the economic benefits of tourism and hospitality.
11. Leverage Zoning & Subdivision Regulations to encourage a diverse range of housing types and sizes, including accessory dwelling units, in appropriate areas, to expand long-term housing opportunities while preserving community character and natural resources.
12. Invest in public water, wastewater, and other infrastructure necessary to support our housing goal and targets.
13. Promote incentives for developers and property owners, such as density bonuses or other tools, to increase housing options and ensure new units meet the needs of employees to support our local economy.
14. Support and, where appropriate, partner in state or locally authorized programs such as the Community Housing Incentive Program (CHIP) or Tax Increment Financing (TIF) that expand infrastructure and incentives to support our housing goal and targets.
15. Support programs, services, and incentives that maintain year-round housing for families, essential workers, and seniors.

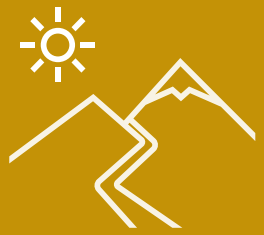
Action Tasks - Housing	Responsibility	Priority	Vision Elements
Establish and maintain housing data to monitor housing supply, affordability, short-term rental activity, and demographic trends.	TM, P & Z, LCPC*	Annually	
Annually evaluate progress toward community housing goal(s) to inform ongoing policy and implementation efforts.	PC	Annually	
Establish and maintain a dedicated Housing Reserve Fund to advance safe and affordable housing.	FD, SB	**BOLD *Move*/ Accomplished**	
Adopt a Housing Reserve Fund policy to direct resources toward advancing safe and affordable housing in alignment with this plan's goals and policies.	TM & SB	Short-Term	
If supported by the community, consider town-owned land for housing opportunities.	PC, CC, TM, SB & SLT*	Short-Term	
Work with the LCPC to obtain the greater "step" benefits available to Village Centers and Downtowns and adopt the local pre-requisites for Tier 1b status per Act 181.	PC, SB	Underway	
Consider municipal revenue sources to support low- and moderate-income housing initiatives and seek a Charter change where necessary.	SB	Underway	
Create clear terms and definitions for housing types and income brackets to improve communication, ensure consistency, and support our housing goal and targets.	P & Z, PC	Short-Term	
Evaluate and consider the creation of an Employee & Workforce Housing PRD in the UMR Zoning District with an emphasis on compatible smaller-scale, multi-unit housing.	P & Z, PC	Short-Term	
Amend the Zoning Regulations to consider allowing additional accessory dwelling units, require smaller housing types and other year-round housing options, evaluate allowed uses in residential districts, and implement further refinements to encourage the development of low- and moderate-income housing.	P & Z, PC	Short-Term	
Develop and adopt inclusionary zoning provisions which require developments to include low- and moderate-income units or provide equivalent contributions that increase the local supply of affordable housing.	P & Z, PC, SB	**BOLD *Move***	
Establish a housing deed restriction program that ensures permanent affordability for residents, with income limits, resale controls, and local residency requirements.	SB, TM	Short-Term	
Develop amendments to water and sewer allocation policies to advance the availability of low- and moderate-income housing consistent with the goals and policies of this plan.	TM, DPW W & S C	Mid-Term	
Identify and maintain an inventory of municipal and potential acquisition sites and prioritize their use or conveyance to support low- and moderate-income housing projects in partnership with non-profit and private developers.	TM, P & Z	Mid-Term	

Action Tasks – Housing Cont.	Responsibility	Priority	Vision Elements
Develop amendments to the Zoning Regulations to require larger developments to submit a housing mitigation plan demonstrating how the project's employee housing needs will be accommodated or mitigated.	P & Z, PC	Mid-Term	
Pursue amending the Town's Act 250 permit to allow for increased municipal sewer allocation in the UMR Zoning District to support the development of employee and low- and moderate-income housing.	P & Z, DPW, TM, PC, SB	Mid-Term	
Work with land conservation and housing organizations to prioritize conservation projects with a low- and moderate-income housing component.	P & Z	Ongoing	
Collaborate with housing developers and other partners to support the transition to/or development of new year-round low- and moderate-income housing units and implement recommendations from the 2025 Stowe's Housing Needs Assessment Report.	P & Z, TM, SB	Ongoing	
Continue to amend the Short-Term Rental Ordinance to protect residential neighborhoods and promote year-round residency through measures such as limiting new registrations and restricting rentals.	TM, PC, SB	**BOLD *Move/*** Ongoing	
Work with the Stowe Health Officer, regional, and state health partners to share information regarding existing state testing programs designed to promote home safety, such as lead paint, radon and water testing, and ensure these resources are accessible to the community through a variety of communication methods.	HO	Ongoing	





Land Use & Settlement Pattern Goal



Growth and development will be focused within our planned growth centers to protect our traditional pattern of compact, vibrant villages framed by open rural countryside.

Policies

1. Future growth will be welcomed when it contributes to the community by providing the infrastructure, services, and facilities needed to support it, ensuring that development not only meets its own needs but also strengthens our community's long-term vitality and resilience.
2. Focus higher-density residential, commercial, and mixed-use development in our planned growth centers, including Stowe Village, Lower Village, Mountain Road Village, Mountain Road Crossroads, and SKI-PUDs. Encourage infill and redevelopment within these areas to minimize outward expansion and protect open countryside.
3. Support Stowe Village and Lower Village as our primary civic, cultural, commercial, and residential centers through mixed-use infill, compatible design, and improved connectivity and infrastructure.
4. Promote well-integrated mixed-use development, streetscape enhancements, and village-scale pedestrian connections in Mountain Road Village and Mountain Road Crossroads.
5. Preserve Moscow Village's historic scale and community character, ensuring new development respects its mill village heritage.
6. Maintain forests, farmland, open space, high-elevation lands, and scenic gateways through zoning, subdivision regulations, and land conservation programs.
7. Require clustering in major subdivisions/planned developments in rural residential districts, to preserve open fields, scenic views, ridgelines, riparian areas, wildlife habitats and other important environments.
8. Maintain the character of Upper Mountain Road by allowing residential and limited commercial uses that are compatible with corridor's scale and character while avoiding strip development and adverse impacts to scenic viewscapes.
9. Support continued investment in and enhancement of SKI-PUDs within concentrated nodes, requiring new development to provide the services, infrastructure, and facilities needed to meet its own demands.
10. Support the conservation of natural areas outside municipal utility service areas, while also encouraging land conservation within growth centers when it provides public access, recreational opportunities, or other community benefits.
11. Work with neighboring communities to preserve compact settlement patterns, rural landscapes, and open spaces, preventing sprawl and strip development along regional corridors, particularly Route 100 from Waterbury to Morristown.
12. Participate in Act 250 proceedings to support locally approved development projects within designated growth centers that comply with the goals and policies of the Stowe Town Plan.
13. Invest in pedestrian pathways, bike lanes, sidewalks, and public transit systems that safely connect homes, schools, parks, and village centers, promoting active and sustainable transportation.
14. Oppose the siting of large-scale data centers in Stowe or any data center which may have an adverse impact on natural resources, utility capacity, or creates a public nuisance such as noise impacts.

Action Tasks - Settlement Pattern & Land Use	Responsibility	Priority	Vision Elements
Seek Tier 1B designation for Stowe Village, Lower Village, and Mountain Road Village areas.	SB	**BOLD *Move***	
Seek Village Center designation for Moscow Village.	PC, P & Z, SB	Short-Term	
Evaluate and consider combining Zoning Regulations and Subdivision Regulations into unified land use regulations.	PC, P & Z	Short-Term	
Amend the Official Map by removing obsolete community needs and incorporate assess new community needs for inclusion.	PC, P & Z, SB	Short-Term	
Develop a capacity-constrained map to identify areas with municipal water and sewer limitations.	PC, P & Z, DPW	Short-Term	
Identify possible water and/or sewer infrastructure extensions and candidate properties for housing development that may be eligible for the CHIP or similar program(s) and amend land use regulations and applicable service areas, where appropriate, to support the housing goals and policies of this plan.	PC, P & Z, DPW	Short-Term	
Evaluate potential amendments to the Subdivision & Zoning Regulations and/or Zoning District Map and enact as appropriate to effectuate the goals and policies of this plan: a) Consider modifications to the Moscow Commercial District boundaries to incorporate existing nonconforming properties and reflect current land uses and development patterns. b) Consider creation of a workforce housing PRD in the UMR with enhanced site plan and design standards. c) Consider redistricting the VIL-PUD by incorporating properties into existing zoning districts or the formation of new district(s) that reflect current land uses and development patterns. d) Evaluate the potential elimination of the Meadowland Overlay District in the MRV to better support the desired development pattern and align with the district's purpose. e) Assess RHOD boundaries, and amend where necessary, to ensure forested hillsides are adequately protected. f) Consider amendments to the SKI-PUD standards to require a master plan that guide how the SKI-PUD will be developed over time. g) Evaluate road standards to limit excessively long dead-end roads and require new roads within and adjacent to village centers to incorporate an interconnected street network. h) Develop enhanced site plan review standards including but not limited to improvements to the landscaping, outdoor lighting, access and circulation, and parking standards.	PC	**BOLD *Move***	
Evaluate the existing Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program for effectiveness and determine whether it should be improved or discontinued based on its ability to meet goals of the Town Plan.	PC, P & Z	Mid-Term	
Consider expansion of the Forest Reserve District to reduce forest fragmentation within the Mount Mansfield and Worcester Range habitat blocks.	PC	Mid-Term	
Evaluate and consider the creation of a stormwater utility district.	PC, P & Z, DPW, TM, SB	Mid-Term	
Regularly review development standards and densities in designated growth centers to ensure alignment with Town Plan goals and policies.	PC, P & Z	Ongoing	

Transportation Goal



Develop an efficient, cost-effective, and accessible multi-modal transportation system that supports the active lifestyles of Stowe's residents and visitors, encourages transit use, leverages technology to improve operations, and addresses local safety and intersection concerns, all while preserving our community's unique historic and scenic character, without relying on widespread roadway expansions.

Policies

1. Provide a range of transportation options, including roads, public transit and bicycle and pedestrian facilities, to accommodate Stowe's current and future travel demand.
2. Plan for current and future transportation needs, ensuring that services and facilities can accommodate anticipated travel demand.
3. Class 1 and 2 town highways will be maintained and upgraded, as needed, to promote the efficient movement of traffic within and through town, without undermining the historic character and pedestrian safety in designated growth centers.
4. Class 3 town highways will be maintained and upgraded, as needed, to accommodate current and anticipated traffic volumes, while maintaining the unique character of the town's residential neighborhoods and rural areas.
5. Retain ownership of Class 4 town highways as important recreational resources and maintain them in accordance with the Class 4 Roads and Legal Trails Policy.
6. The Vermont State Standards for the Design of Transportation Construction, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation on Freeways, Roads and Streets, prepared by the Agency of Transportation, shall serve as the town's standards for maintenance and upgrade of town highways.
7. Stowe Village will continue to be served by multiple modes of transportation.
8. Development within the Stowe Historic Overlay District shall mitigate and manage its traffic impacts through context-sensitive measures designed to preserve and reinforce the historic and scenic character of Stowe Village, including at the Route 100 and Route 108 intersection. Such measures shall prioritize alternative approaches to congestion management, including the development of alternative routes, multimodal transportation options, and transportation demand management strategies, rather than roadway or intersection expansions that would adversely impact community character and diminish the historic integrity of Stowe Village.
9. Within Stowe Village, the Town will seek to provide adequate public parking.
10. Traffic calming improvements will be incorporated, as appropriate, along major roadways in Stowe Village, Lower Village, Moscow Village, and the Mountain Road Village.
11. Regional solutions to traffic management and transportation issues will be coordinated through active municipal participation on the LCPC Transportation Advisory Committee and the Vermont Agency of Transportation.
12. Historic and scenic features located within the rights-of-way of Stowe's scenic roads will be preserved in accordance with our Scenic Roads Policy.
13. The Town will continue to support extensions of and connections to the Stowe Recreation Path.
14. The Town will continue to financially support local public transportation through its operational budget and continually work towards improving and expanding service and increasing ridership.
15. The use of public transportation and non-motorized forms of transportation will be prioritized in an effort to reduce traffic, pollution, and greenhouse gases.
16. All transportation improvement projects will comply with Vermont's "Complete Streets" law when appropriate.
17. Support the continued implementation of the Smugglers' Notch Scenic Corridor Management Plan and the Green Mountain Byway Corridor Management Plan.
18. Support regional planning efforts to improve bicycle and pedestrian connections to neighboring towns.

Action Tasks - Transportation	Responsibility	Priority	Vision Elements
Intersection & Roadways			
Support the advancement of intersection improvements at VT Route 108 and Luce Hill Road.	VTrans*, DPW, SB	**BOLD *Move***	
Support the advancement of intersection improvements at VT Route 100 and Moscow Road.	VTrans*, DPW, SB	Short/ Medium-Term	
Safety & Traffic Calming			
Evaluate traffic safety and operations along VT Route 100 and VT Route 108, including the need for dedicated turn lanes at higher-volume intersections, improvements to emergency vehicle access north of Luce Hill Road, and enhancements to sight distance at driveways and side streets—prioritizing areas with documented crash clusters.	P & Z, VTrans*, LCPC*	Ongoing	
Implement traffic calming in Moscow Village and Lower Stowe Village to reduce vehicle speeds and improve safety.	DPW, VTrans*, SB	Long-Term	
Bicycle & Pedestrian			
Provide bicycle and pedestrian facilities on public properties, including benches, e-bike charging stations, and secure bike parking, focusing on highly traveled areas such as municipal lots, parks, and recreation path entrances.	SED, P & R, P & Z	Ongoing	
Conduct a comprehensive walkability audit of Stowe Village and continue monitoring the Stowe Rec Path to identify opportunities to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and accessibility.	PC, P & Z, DPW	Short-Term	
Evaluate the installation of low impact ground lighting along the Stowe Recreation Path.	P & R, RC, DPW	Medium-Term	
Improve Stowe Recreation Path crossings using FHWA best practices to enhance visibility and safety.	DPW, VTrans*	Ongoing	
Expand the sidewalk network by addressing priority gaps, including: a) VT 100 east side (Sylvan Park Road → 911 South Main Street (i.e., Dunkin Donuts) (*long-term*) b) VT 100 west side (Cemetery Road → Shaw's/W. Hill Road) (*long-term*) c) VT 108 north side (Gale Farm Center → Cottage Club Road/The Alchemist) (short-term/2028) d) Luce Hill Road (→ Chase Park) (long-term)	DPW, VTrans*, TM, SB	At Various Stages	
Signage			
Enhance wayfinding signage to destinations and public parking areas off Main Street.	DPW	Ongoing	
Event & Travel Demand Management			
Review and consider amendments to the Special Event Ordinance to enhance traveler information and signage, improve traffic, parking, and pedestrian flow, coordinate parking and shuttle operations, and promote sustainable transportation options such as biking, carpooling, and extended visitor stays.	TM, SB	Short-Term	
Consider zoning amendments to incorporate Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategies for new development, including transportation impact fees and/or transportation management plans for projects generating trips above a defined threshold.	PC, P & Z, SB	Short-Term	

Public Transit			
Evaluate desired location(s) for a public transportation hub including but not limited to Memorial Park.	DPW, PC	Long-Term	
Enhance the Mountain Road Shuttle by consolidating stops for greater efficiency, adding and upgrading shelters with weather protection and real-time information, improving crossings and bus pull-offs for safety, and coordinating with nearby businesses for maintenance and snow removal.	RCT*, VTrans* PC, DPW, TM, SB	**BOLD *Move***	
Extend Mountain Road Shuttle service during peak visitor periods and major events including summer and fall weekends as demand grows. Focus routes on connecting the Village with lodging, restaurants, recreation areas, and event destinations to reduce vehicle traffic.	RCT*, LCPC*, SB	Mid-Term	
Parking			
Identify and explore options for creating a Park and Ride facilities along Route 100 and Route 108 to encourage ride sharing and increased use of public transportation.	PC, P & Z, LCPC* VTrans*	Mid-Term	
Improve Stowe Village parking information. Develop an online map showing all parking locations, capacity, ADA and EV spaces, and associated regulations.	TM, P & Z, DPW	Short-Term	
Explore entering into shared parking agreements with private property owners in Stowe Village and formalizing a shared use with USPS for the public parking.	TM, SB	Short-Term	
Regulatory Tasks			
Amend the Zoning Regulations to strengthen access management provisions, ensuring careful control of access to public and private roads to enhance safety, improve traffic flow, and minimize conflict points.	P & Z, PC, DPW	Short-Term	
Evaluate amendments to the Subdivision Regulation to require development roads to connect to contiguous existing or planned roads.	PC, P & Z	Short-Term	
Consider amendments to the Traffic & Vehicle Ordinance to encourage long-term parking on side streets and off-street lots by: a) Reducing Main Street parking to a 1-hour limit. b) Allowing 3-hour parking on side streets between Main Street and Park Place. c) Removing time limits south of Park Place and off-street lots south of Pond Street. d) Maintaining 3-hour limits in lots within one block of Main Street.	DPW, TM, SB, PD	Short-Term	
Amend the Official Map to include recreational trail and roadway improvements and remove obsolete projects deemed no longer necessary.	PC, P & Z, SB	Short-Term	
Consider amendments to the Zoning Regulations to strengthen the requirements for bicycle and pedestrian improvements and connections. Consider requirements for bicycle storage and access to electrical outlets for charging.	PC, P & Z	Short-Term	
Amend the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to strengthen the road and driveway standards.	P & Z, PC, DPW, F & R	Short-Term	

Planning Tasks			
Update and implement the Mountain Road Village/VT Route 108 Master Plan, extending it through lower Mountain Road area, and include traffic-calming, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit improvements.	SB, TM, DPW	Ongoing	
Develop a plan to expand the anticipated life of the Town gravel pit and evaluate alternative sources of gravel.	DPW, TM	Mid-Term	
Develop a capital improvement program that plans, prioritizes and recognizes the cost of maintaining transportation infrastructure.	TM, DPW, SB	Short-Term	
Design, budget, and permit the replacement of Luce Hill Road bridge.	DPW	Long-Term	
Improve key village intersections (VT 100 & VT 108, VT 100 & School Street, VT 100 & Depot Street, and Park Street) as identified in the Traffic & Mobility Study.	DPW, SB	Long-Term	
Evaluate options for improving traffic safety at the VT Route 100/Stagecoach Road intersection including, but not limited to: a) Reconfiguring the intersection into a standard "T". b) b. The construction of a roundabout.	DPW	Long-Term	
Evaluate potential extensions of the Stowe Recreation Path, including but not limited to serving the Stowe Middle & High School.	RC, P & R	Mid-Term	
Support and participate in regional planning studies that evaluate recreational trail and path connections between Stowe and Morristown, and/or Waterbury and surrounding areas.	P & Z, PC, LCPC*, VTrans*	Ongoing	
Ongoing & Continuous Tasks			
Support and encourage the implementation (and update as needed) the VT Rte. 100/108 Corridor Management Plan.	LCPC*, VTrans*	Ongoing	
Evaluate options for improving traffic flow at the Route 100/Route 108 intersection without adversely impacting the integrity and aesthetics of the historic district.	DPW, SB	Ongoing	







Photographs credit: Town of Stowe



Appendix

Enhanced Energy Plan

Our Enhanced Energy Plan

Local growth and development, quality of life, and quality of the environment all depend on the availability of clean, affordable energy. Stowe's energy use has changed over time in response to growing demand, new energy sources, and new technologies.

Town residents and businesses historically relied on local wood, water and horsepower to fuel their energy needs. Mills grew up around dam sites, and settlements grew up around mills. With the coming of the first steam powered lumber mill, established by the Burt Company in Stowe Hollow in 1883 and later moved to Stowe Village in 1895, direct access to hydropower was no longer required for production operations.

Wood served as the primary heating and cooking fuel for much of the town's history. Wood fueled cook stoves were first introduced to Stowe in 1820. As the nineteenth century progressed, other imported fuels such as coal, kerosene, and gas came into wider use.

For many years, horses and oxen provided both power for field and domestic work as well as transportation. Electricity first came to Stowe in 1897 with the arrival of the Mount Mansfield Electric Railroad, a trolley line connecting the village to Waterbury and carrying freight, mail, and passengers well into the next century. Initially introduced to power the railroad, electricity also supported early public lighting, including bulbs strung over Main Street, supplied by a transformer station later expanded behind the Memorial Building. Horses, however, were not supplanted as the primary form of local transportation until the advent of the automobile.

Stowe Village was incorporated in 1896 in part to finance the installation of electric power in the village. The Village of Stowe Electric Light & Power System was established in 1911 as a public utility, and electric lighting was installed soon thereafter.

During the twentieth century, the use of electricity grew in importance for power, lighting, and heat as it became recognized as a more convenient, adaptable, and much cleaner energy source. The twentieth century also heralded the widespread adoption of the internal combustion engine, and with it, local and national dependence on relatively cheap supplies of fossil fuels for power, heat, and transportation.

The availability of alternative energy sources fueled Stowe's transition from an economy heavily dependent on natural resources to one based on tourism, including the development of the town's commercial ski industry, which relies entirely on electric energy to power its operations.

Energy Use & Demand

Today, Stowe continues to rely on three major sources of energy: oil (heating, diesel, kerosene, and gasoline), propane gas, and electricity. Wood and solar power are also used for residential heating, but to a much lesser extent.

Our town accounts for approximately 1.42% of the state's total electric power consumption. The Town of Stowe Electric Department ("SED") is one of Vermont's fourteen municipal electric utilities, SED is the second largest municipal electric utility in Vermont in terms of annual sales. According to a recent forecast conducted by ITRON, one of the largest energy resource management firms in the United States, SED expects a 1% load growth each year through 2033. This equates to adding thirty-six new residential and six new commercial customers each year.

A portion of Stowe along Route 100 from the Stagecoach Road to the border with Morristown is served by the Morrisville Water & Light Department. This area includes approximately 280 customers. The Vermont Electric Cooperative delivers electricity to approximately seventy residential customers in sections of Sterling Valley. Green Mountain Power also serves some customers along the Route 100 corridor in Stowe.

SED currently serves approximately 4,530 meters: 3,624 meters are for residential customers and 906 meters are for commercial customers. This is an increase of roughly 1,500 customers since 1994. The residential customer base accounts for 35% of sales, and approximately 70% of our residential meters are held by a customer with a primary residence outside of the Town of Stowe. The commercial and industrial sector accounts for 56% of sales, which includes snowmaking at Stowe Mountain Resort.

Locally, the rate of growth in energy use will depend on three factors:

- The amount of residential, commercial and industrial growth
- The effectiveness of state and local conservation programs
- The local substitution of alternative technologies

Stowe's peak load was 19 megawatts (MW) in 2023 and our minimum load was 9.6MW. Our average monthly load was 13.2MW. SED's system is designed to meet our maximum, minimum, and average loads without negative effects on power quality, reliability, and safety. SED's distribution system is designed to serve their customer's needs and support expected increased growth in electric consumption. SED's system has also been upgraded to allow for increased distributed generation resources, which will support those customers able to participate in net-metering projects. Peak electric demand in Stowe occurs in winter months, which is primarily the result of increased energy consumption associated with ski area operations, and customer's higher heating and lighting demands. Stowe, like most communities in Vermont, has seen increased energy consumption in the summer months largely due to increased deployment of heat pumps.

Energy Infrastructure

SED maintains system distribution lines and a 34.5 kV sub-transmission that feeds three substations, including two primary metering points: the underground Wilkins Substation and the 3360 Line which provides power to the Houston and Lodge substations. The utility service territory covers an area of sixty-three square miles. SED serves its customers with around 8.1 miles of transmission, ninety-one miles of distribution overhead lines, and eighty-three miles of underground distribution line. There is an average of thirty customers per mile of distribution. The town receives most of its power through VELCO's 115kV transmission line that serves the VELCO and SED substation located at Cady Hill.

Historically, SED received most of its power through the "Northern Loop", a 44-mile, 34.5 kV sub-transmission system owned by Green Mountain Power. Today, the primary purpose of the loop is to feed other local utilities, including Morrisville Water and Light, Johnson Electric, Hardwick Electric, and Hyde Park Electric. The construction of VELCO's 115kV line makes the Northern Loop a backup source of power for SED should anything happen on the 115kV line.

SED purchases most of its power from wholesalers and utilities under contractual or joint ownership agreements. As SED is a municipal department, the Town of Stowe's Aa2 credit rating enables the utility to negotiate supply contracts at very favorable rates.

Local generating capacity is limited in Stowe due to the area's terrain. However, SED commissioned the Nebraska Valley Solar Farm in August of 2016. This project is a 1MW generation facility and is predicted to generate roughly 1-2% of SED's energy needs for the next 30 years. It is also located "behind the meter," meaning that the energy it generates will offset the cost of energy that SED would otherwise have to purchase. SED secured financing through a federal program that covers roughly 75% of the interest on the borrowing needed to complete the project. The project is sited on a reclaimed gravel pit that has been leased from the Town, which maximized the use of the gravel pit and could provide an opportunity to expand the solar facility in the future.

Vermont's net metering program encourages the development of solar and other small- scale renewables by allowing a customer to sell the excess electricity that their project generates to the electric utility. As Vermont's net metering program includes significant financial incentives, SED and the rest of the Vermont electric utilities have experienced an influx in net metered generation on its system in the past few years. As of July 1, 2024, SED has 2.16MW of solar generation from net-metering installations. The generation from these net metering customers does reduce the amount of power SED would have to purchase from elsewhere. However, when a utility purchases energy from a net-metering project, the cost of the electricity is the highest source of electricity that a utility can purchase. Net-metering customers who elect to transfer the renewable energy credits generated by their project to SED allows SED to claim the Vermont Class 2 RECs generated by the project, which contributes to SED's Renewable Energy Standard portfolio targets. SED recognizes the benefits that properly sited and installed small scale renewables provide and is committed to integrating more local generation to benefit all of its customers.

Electric vehicles ("EVs") are another emerging technology that has helped to change SED's electric grid in recent years. Today, the utility owns and operates ten EV stations which are all available to the public twenty-four hours a day. SED began installing its EV stations in 2013. With those first installations, SED became the first distribution utility in Vermont to own EV stations and the first to implement an electric tariff designed specifically for EV charging. The data from those first charging stations showed that most of the usage came from EV drivers visiting Stowe. This realization presented an opportunity to achieve two goals. The first was to leverage Stowe's tourism draw to establish it as a prime destination for EV-driving tourists by installing several dispersed and conveniently placed EV stations. The second, to providing the infrastructure that EV drivers require for longer trips in order to promote the use of EVs to reduce fossil fuel consumption and clean transportation technologies. As the usage of SED's EV station fleet grows, the amount of greenhouse gas emissions from transportation decreases as well as smog and particulate matter.

SED's charging stations can be found at the following locations:

- Green Mountain Inn – 7 kW Level 2
- American Flatbread – 7 kW Level 2
- Stoweflake Mountain Resort and Spa – 7 kW Level 2
- Stowe High School – 7 kW Level 2
- Stowe Living – 7 kW Level 2
- Stowe Rec Path behind the Akeley Building – 7 kW Level 2
- Sun and Ski Inn and Suites – 7 kW Level 2
- Stowe Electric's administrative office – 7 kW Level 2
- Trapps Brewery – 7 kW Level 2
- Thompson Park – Level 3

SED and Burlington Electric Department are the only two municipal electric utilities in Vermont that have fully deployed Advanced Metering Infrastructure ("AMI"). SED began implementation of its AMI program in late 2012. SED's AMI system provides several benefits. It eliminates the need for meter readers to visit customer properties to physically read their electric meter. It provides SED customer service representatives with secure access to more detailed information letting them better assist customers with questions about their bill. The AMI system notifies SED staff when a meter loses power which allows staff to begin locating and addressing the issue even before customers contact the utility.

The AMI allows SED customers to view their account and electric usage through a secure online platform. AMI also allows SED to offer dynamic or "time-of-use" rate structures that reflect the cost of purchase and deliver electricity to the grid varies during certain periods. Due to supply and demand, the electricity SED purchases to serve its customers can cost more in certain circumstances, such as when air conditioning demand picks up during a heat wave, which are referred to as "peak periods." Time-of-use or dynamic rate structures can charge a customer more than the standard rate for usage during peak periods, and charge less for usage during other times, referred to as "off-peak periods." This allows customers that participate in these rate structures and can reduce their electric consumption during peak periods to save money on their utility bill. This could be achieved from using their electric clothes dryer in the morning or evening, or charging their electric vehicle during an off-peak hour.

Energy Conservation

In recent years, growing concern over the nation's dependence on non-renewable sources of energy and impacts from the extraction and consumption of these sources have resulted in new policies and programs designed to emphasize energy efficiency and conservation. Such efforts include traditional utility demand side management ("DSM") programs and the creation of Efficiency Vermont ("EVT"), the statewide Energy Efficiency Utility ("EEU"). Most recently, the Vermont Legislature developed the Renewable Energy Standard ("RES") which includes a mandate that electric distribution utilities implement programs to reduce the fossil fuel consumption attributable to their customers and the related greenhouse gas emissions.

EVT, the first EEU in the country, is organized as an independent, non-profit entity and since 1999 has assumed the responsibility for operating and implementing core statewide energy efficiency programs. These programs are supported through the collection of the Energy Efficiency Charge ("EEC"), a volumetric charge which is collected by regulated Vermont's electric and natural gas utilities. The Vermont Public Utility Commission ("PUC") calculates a new EEC rate every year. For example, customers pay based on the number of kWh used in each

month and, for customers served under a demand rate, customers pay based on the number of kW that they are billed for each month. EVT provides a range of services to residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural users to help reduce their electric and heating fuel consumption through efficiency measures.

Although local utilities no longer have the expense of operating their own efficiency programs, they may still elect to implement demand side management programs that are targeted to avoid specific transmission and distribution system investments.

2024 Efficiency Vermont Energy Efficiency Rates	
Customer Class	**2024 EEC**
Residential	$0.01115 per kWh
Commercial	$0.01008 per kWh
Commercial Demand	$0.00640 per kWh plus $1.34343/kW
Industrial	$0.00771 per kWh
Industrial Demand	$0.00519 per kWh plus $1.10773/kW
Street Lights	$0.01008 per kWh times the nominal wattage of the light times 360 hours per month

The Legislature developed the RES in 2015. It establishes mandates for electric utilities to source a percentage of their portfolios from specific types of sources. One of the categories, commonly referred to as the Energy Transformation Category or Tier III, includes a mandate that electric distribution utilities implement programs to reduce the fossil fuel consumption attributable to their customers and the related greenhouse gas emissions. The required percentage rises from 2% in 2017 to 12% in 2032. A utility may meet this category through additional distributed renewable generation or "energy transformation projects." Energy transformation projects must deliver energy goods or services other than electric generation and must result in a net reduction in fossil fuel consumption by a utility's customers and the attributable greenhouse gases. The act states that energy transformation projects may include home weatherization or other thermal energy efficiency measures, air source or geothermal heat pumps, and other measures. SED meets its Tier III requirements by offering rebates on a range of qualifying technologies, which includes EVs, smart thermostats, and battery powered lawn equipment.

The most recent updates to building efficiency standards are an example of another statewide initiative to increase energy conservation. Spurred by legislative goals outlined in Act 89 passed in 2013, they are designed to help achieve the goals set out in the 2011 Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan which states that Vermont should establish a "*…clear path to achieve a goal of having all new buildings built to net zero design by 2030*." The Vermont Department of Public Service ("PSD") was tasked with drafting the Residential Building Energy Standards ("RBES") and Commercial Building Energy Standards ("CBES") and updating these standards every three years. The most recent version of the Standards took effect in 2024. They apply to most new construction projects and provide requirements for building design, ventilation systems, the building's thermal envelope, combustion safety, electric vehicle charging, among others. The project builder is tasked with self-evaluation and enforcement of the RBES and CBES.

Act 89 also authorized the PSD to adopt "stretch" codes for residential buildings which is designed to achieve greater energy savings than the baseline RBES and compliant buildings will gain a presumption of compliance with every conservation criterion of Act 250. The PSD is also in the process of adopting a "stretch" code for commercial buildings. Municipalities have the option to adopt either or both stretch codes as part of their bylaws.

The Town of Stowe does not have an adopted building code(s) however energy conservation is encouraged under local land use regulations through the application of provisions that protect renewable energy resources and support good site design and layout. These include standards for the clustering and location of buildings for passive solar benefits, shared infrastructure, and the preservation of existing vegetation.

Energy Affordability

SED's electric utility rates are competitive with other Vermont utilities, and the high cost of energy locally reflects high energy costs throughout the northeast. According to the latest numbers compiled by the PSD, SED has the 7th lowest electric rates among the 17 electric utilities in

the state. SED, through its partnership with Efficiency Vermont, offers a number of rebates on beneficial electrification technologies that can help Vermonters transition their fuel sources to electricity, which over time has a lower cost than fossil fuels.

Local prices for gasoline, propane, kerosene and heating oil are also typically higher than the national average. The price of heating fuels follows the volatile international market that can double or halve in a single year. Many homes have wood or pellet stoves to supplement winter heating needs as a hedge against high costs of traditional fuels. An increasing number of Vermont households and businesses have begun installing cold climate heat pumps ("CCHPs") to help meet their home heating needs. Recent advancements in air source heat pump ("ASHP") technology have made an established technology suitable for Vermont's cold winters as they can now help heat a space in weather down to 0 degrees Fahrenheit. The PSD has reported that these recent advancements in efficiency have made them among the most cost-effective forms of home heating when compared to traditional fuels such as oil, propane, and wood. This has the potential to change home heating costs for many Vermonters as an ASHP that is utilized and installed properly allows for homeowners to transition off of fossil fuels in favor of Vermont's low-carbon electricity mix.

The high cost of winter fuels represents a real danger to residents with low incomes. There are assistance programs available, including the government funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program ("LIHEAP") and the Weatherization Program which are both administered by the Vermont Department for Children and Families ("DCF"), and the WARMTH program. DCF also compiles lists of community action agencies, many of whom provide fuel assistance and home weatherization services. Efficiency Vermont also provides residential efficiency services such as energy audits, insulation and air sealing, valuable information on efficient appliances, and rebate opportunities to help homeowners afford these efficiency technologies.

Equity and Energy Planning

The Town's Declaration of Inclusion states:

> *The Town of Stowe welcomes all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, family status, age, or ability, and wants everyone to feel safe and welcome in our community. As a town, we formally condemn discrimination in all its forms, commit to fair and equal treatment of everyone in our community, and will strive to ensure all of our actions, policies, and operating procedures reflect this commitment. The Town of Stowe has and will continue to be a place where individuals can live freely and express their opinion.*

This applies to all areas of energy planning, including energy affordability, generation, distribution, and conservation.

Consideration for equity in energy planning can take many forms. Energy equity known as "energy justice" as described in the 2022 Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan (CEP) "aims to make energy accessible, affordable, cleaner, and democratically managed for all communities." This section will discuss energy as it relates to Stowe and the thermal, transportation, and electric sectors, in the context of distributive, procedural, contextual, and corrective equity. According to the 2022 CEP:

- *Distributive Equity* considers whether Vermonters, regardless of racial and other socioeconomic factors, equitable share both the benefits and the burdens of the energy system.

- *Procedural Equity* acknowledges equitable planning and implementation, and the right of communities to participate in decision-making around policies and programs. This considers which stakeholders have a seat at the table, what voices are heard during public engagement processes for siting new generation facilities and infrastructure, and who benefits from those facilities.

- *Contextual Equity* recognizes that come communities are more likely to experience adverse impacts of policies and programs due to vulnerabilities, such as being more vulnerable to natural disasters.

- *Corrective Equity* recognizes the need for a clear process to hold decision makers accountable in community for equity commitments. Advisory committees (e.g., the Energy Committee, Planning Commission) or oversight boards should review clean

energy projects to ensure impacted communities are being appropriately served.

Energy Burden in Stowe

According to the 2023 Efficiency Vermont Energy Burden Report[1], Vermont households spend around $7,000 annually on thermal, electric, and transportation fuels. Households in Stowe have a total energy burden of 9.7%, with about a 4% thermal energy burden, 2% electricity burden, and 4% transportation energy burden. This report highlights distributive inequities of total energy burden, where lower income households are experiencing a higher energy burden in terms of heating and cooling homes, fueling modes of transportation, and electricity costs. Future projects that help improve energy efficiency and provide more opportunities for alternative modes of transportation could help reduce energy burdens experienced in Stowe. SED should also continue to share weatherization, energy efficiency, and other incentives with households.

Thermal Sector

According to the 2020-2024 Vermont Housing Needs Assessment, and American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, much of Vermont's housing stock is older than the national average. The average home in Vermont was built in 1974, compared to the nationwide average of 1977. Over one quarter of the housing stock in Vermont was built before 1939. Aging housing stock can result in an inequitable distribution of energy burden and living conditions. Older homes often use energy less efficiently and could benefit from weatherization services. There is also often a prevalence of lead paint, asbestos, and plumbing and electrical components that do not meet fire and safety codes, which may also act as a barrier to installing residential, clean and renewable energy sources for heating and cooling.

Transportation Sector

The Vermont Agency of Transportation provides a framework for transportation equity[2], and how to equitably plan for access to safe, high-quality, affordable, and convenient transportation options for all Vermonters. The Vermont Health Equity Toolkit also provides policy documents, funding opportunities, and other resources to support equity in transportation.[3] Policies and actions outlined in the transportation element of this plan help achieve goals related to equity in transportation.

Transportation energy costs are consistently the largest portion of household energy spending and burden statewide. According to the 2023 EVT Energy Burden Report, transportation energy burden experienced in Stowe matches the statewide transportation energy burden at 4%. Developing accessible transportation projects guided by the needs expressed within the community can help advance equitable transportation networks. For example, increasing access to public transit, health care, and educational facilities can help lower local transportation energy burdens and spending.

The Lamoille County region relies heavily on automobiles as a primary means of transportation. This reliance is reinforced by the separation of employment areas, commercial services, and housing. Supporting compact, mixed-use development can help create more walkable, bikeable, accessible places. According to the 2022 CEP, Transportation Demand Management (TDM) involves transportation infrastructure that increases the quality and types of transportation choices available. Public transit, ride share, bicycling, and walking are all alternatives to getting around by single-occupancy vehicles. Stowe should continue to enhance mobility by providing transportation alternatives, and provide meaningful transportation choices to children, seniors, residents, visitors, and businesses. Creating more walkable and bikeable communities can help decrease transportation spending, energy burdens, and emissions, facilitate more access to community assets, and increase health equity.

Improved access to electric vehicles (EV), plug-in hybrids, and charging infrastructure can contribute to a cleaner transportation network by reducing fossil fuel usage. Efficiency Vermont's 2023 Energy Burden Report indicates that changing from fossil fuel vehicles to a new or used EV or plug-in hybrid could reduce annual household energy burden

[1] https://www.efficiencyvermont.com/news-blog/whitepapers/vermonts-2023-energy-burden- report

[2] Transportation Equity | Agency of Transportation (vermont.gov)

[3] Health Equity Planning Toolkit - Lamoille County Planning Commission (lcpcvt.org); https://www.lcpcvt.org/vertical/Sites/%7B3C01460C-7F49-40F5-B243-

between 9 – 12% or $700 - $900 per year. EV use raises an equity issue because at present EV drivers do not pay road taxes, which are part of the purchase price of gasoline; as EVs become a higher percentage of vehicles on the road, this inequity should be addressed.

Distribution of Utilities; Equity Strategies for Renewable Energy Access & Affordability

Local leaders and SED should continue to look to programs and policies that encourage locally generated and managed, fossil fuel-free energy, while also prioritizing access and affordability for historically underserved and disadvantaged community members. Providing renewable power and services close to where it is used, also known as distributed energy resources (DER), has multiple benefits including the potential to lower costs for consumers, improve the reliability and resilience of the grid, and increase equity among community members. DERs can promote energy savings and can lead to improved health and equity in Stowe. The Town and SED can work with LCPC to review locally proposed energy projects and how they may meet the goals of the Stowe Enhanced Energy Plan. Some examples of DER projects that can promote energy savings and equity are described below.

Community-owned solar can provide several meaningful benefits to participants and communities, including:

- Increased access for low- to moderate-income households,
- Greater savings on energy costs,
- Energy resilience,
- Community ownership,
- Wealth-building opportunities,
- Equitable workforce development, and
- Pollinator gardens and biodiversity.

Related to the last bullet, "agrivoltaics," or the co-location of agriculture and solar energy, is a land use practice that could benefit both agriculture and renewable energy industries.[4] Pollinator habitat and other crops or livestock production are located under and around panels. Opportunities for this should be explored and supported in Stowe.

SED has planned a community renewable energy project scheduled to come online in 2025 that will apply the combined generation capacity from a micro- hydroelectric and solar project to offer low- and moderate-income households an on-bill credit on their electric bills.

Microgrids are interconnected, locally controlled power systems that can function while connected to the larger grid or completely on their own. Microgrids enhance the resilience of the power grid by providing localized power generation and storage. A microgrid can range in size from a single building, to a hospital complex to a neighborhood and even a distribution circuit. They can keep critical community services running during outages caused by extreme weather events or other disruptions. Low-income and disadvantaged communities in Vermont often face more grid reliability issues. These communities spend a higher percentage of their income on energy bills and are more vulnerable to power outages. Microgrids can ensure reliable energy access for these communities during extreme weather events and other instances where the larger power grid is under duress.

SED completed a micro-grid feasibility study through a grant from the American Public Power Association. The study looked at potential locations for microgrids in Stowe and included public safety and critical infrastructure, customers at the end of distribution feeders, and co-located with SED's Nebraska Valley solar array. The study identified that SED's distribution system would benefit more from investing in traditional system hardening measures (i.e., increased vegetation treatments and improved fault-detection equipment), then building small micro- grids. The study also suggested that locating a utility scale battery storage project in SED's territory would provide a greater benefit to the community than several smaller micro-grids.

Utility Scale Battery Storage Project: SED has been investigating the feasibility and benefits to our customers from a utility scale battery storage project. A battery storage project is not in SED's current five-year annual plan; however, SED anticipates a role for this technology as part of SED's strategy to implement peak-shaving, winter reliability planning, load-shifting, and energy arbitrage (i.e., charging the battery during times of increased PV and hydro generation, and releasing the

[4] https://www.energy.gov/eere/solar/agrivoltaics-solar-and-agriculture-co-location

energy during system peaks). SED identified several locations in Stowe where a battery storage facility can bring resiliency to our system and save our customers' money on their electric bills. The next phase of this study is to develop a budget, timeline to implement the project, and issue a request for information.

System Hardening and Resiliency Capital Projects: Recognizing the financial incentives available to municipal utilities under the Inflation Reduction Act and Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act, SED has applied for federal grants and a low-interest loan under the USDA Powering Affordable Clean Energy program to fund key system hardening and resiliency projects. SED has a rolling 5-year capital plan that is updated annually to adjust to new funding sources and emerging priorities. SED has received over $7,500,000 in grant funding and low-interest loans (with a 20% loan forgiveness component) to build new renewable energy generation, upgrade distribution lines and equipment, install a distribution loop-feed for resiliency, and upgrade our outage detection and management system. These projects are critical system upgrades to address more frequent and intense storms that cause outages and upgrade our system to prepare for increased distributed energy generation, electrification of home heating and cooling loads, electric vehicles, and updated regulatory standards.

SED's Emergency Operations Center: SED has received funding from a Congressionally Directed Spending earmark to renovate an existing building at our Moscow Mills campus into a combined distribution system monitoring and emergency management operations center. This facility is the first of its kind for SED that will create a unified grid monitoring, dispatching, and operations control center. The building will have solar and battery storage backup and whole building controls for its electric heating, cooling, and lighting systems. The building will allow SED staff to maximize our grid monitoring and control software and unify the dispatching of SED line crews, right of way maintenance crews, and out of area resources dispatched to assist SED with outage restoration.

Utility-Led Energy Programs increasingly play a role in providing fossil fuel-free energy infrastructure, storage, and programs to ensure reliable, affordable clean energy for all. All Vermont utilities offer programs for income- eligible Vermonters to help lower the cost of energy at home. SED and Efficiency Vermont have various rebates and incentives available to offset the cost of purchasing equipment, such as E-Bikes, Electric Vehicles, electric yard equipment, and heat pump purchases and installation. Furthermore, SED has also helped organize a weatherization event for households in Stowe and other areas of Lamoille. Low-cost window inserts provided by Window Dressers and constructed by members of the community help weatherize homes to conserve energy and lower household utility costs.

Stowe's Historical Load MWH					
	Snow Making Load	Non-Snow Making Load	Total Stowe Load	Snow % Increase/ (Decrease)	Stowe % Increase/ (Decrease)
2017	8,610	69,541	78,151		
2018	7,801	70,003	77,805	-9.39%	-0.44%
2019	7,422	68,205	75,627	-4.87%	-2.80%
2020	7,648	32,523	70,172	3.05%	-7.21%
2021	9,286	67,936	77,222	21.41%	10.05%
2022	8,839	69,546	78,386	-4.81%	1.51%
2023	8,932	69,614	78,546	1.05%	0.20%

Stowe's Forecast Load MWH					
	Snow Making Load	Non-Snow Making Load	Total Stowe Load	Snow % Increase/ (Decrease)	Stowe % Increase/ (Decrease)
2024	9,019	69,962	78,981		
2025	9,109	70,739	79,848	1.0%	1.10%
2026	9,200	71,860	81,061	1.0%	1.52%
2027	9,292	72,986	82,278	1.0%	1.50%
2028	9,385	74,315	83,701	1.0%	1.73%

Figure 1: Stowe's Historical & Forecasted Annual Load Requirements
Source: Stowe Electric Department, 2024

Purchase Power Contracts and Services

Each year Vermont utilities file an Annual Resource Report with the Vermont Public Utility Commission ("PUC") that explains load projections and how the utility will meet their obligations. SED's energy and capacity requirements are provided through a variety of contract obligations and SED has used longer-term power contracts to limit its market exposure from unexpected short-term increases in power costs. SED works with Energy New England, a wholesale power supply contractor, to find least-cost opportunities to address SED's energy

needs and the increased renewable and carbon-free requirements in the Vermont Renewable Energy Standard.

Stowe's actual load data from 2017 to 2023 as well as forecasted load through 2028 is shown in Figure 1. Stowe has long-term contracts and entitlements that provide suppliers, fuel sources, and term diversity. A brief description of each resource is listed in Figure 2.



Photo credit: Stowe Electric Department

Stowe Long-Term and Existing Power Resources, Calendar Year 2023						
Resource	MWH	KWH	% of Load	Fuel	Location	Termination
Niagara	3,169	3,168,815	3.9%	Hydro	Roseton	9/1/2025
St. Lawrence	97	97,425	0.1%	Hydro	Roseton	4/30/2032
HQ Contract	17,462	17,461,600	21.4%	Hydro	HQ Highgate 120	10/31/2038
McNeil	5,544	5,543,755	6.8%	Wood	Essex	Life of Unit
Ryegate	2,444	2,443,765	3.0%	Wood	RYGT	11/1/2032
Stony 1A/1B/1C	278	277,883	0.3%	Natural Gas/Oil	Stonynrk 115	Life of Unit
Saddleback Ridge	1,793	1,792,602	2.2%	Hydro	LUDDN_LN	Exp. 2035
NextEra	546	545,600	0.7%		Mass hub	3/31/2024
Miller Hydro	2,739	2,738,801	3.4%	Hydro	TopSham.Milr	Exp. 2025
Seabrook Offlake	15,281	15,280,521	18.7%	Nuclear	Seabrook 545	Exp. 2034
Shell	9,443	9,442,651	11.6%		Mass hub	4/30/2024
Great River Hydro	2,181	2,180,630	2.7%	Hydro	Moore	12/31/2027
Cabot/Turners	2,355	2,354,601	2.9%	Hydro	Mass hub	Exp. 2030
Standard Offer ISO	105	103,198	0.1%	Methane	VT Nodes	Life of Unit
ISO Energy Net Interchange	15,117	15,117,489	18.5%			
Totals	78,549	78,549,335				
Standard Offer BTM	1,765	1,764,559	2.2%	Solar	Behind Meter	Life of Unit
Nebraska Valley Solar Project	1,220	1,220,103	1.5%	Hydro	Behind Meter	Life of Unit
Reconstituted	81,534	81,533,998	100%			

Figure 2: Long-term and existing power resources in Stowe.

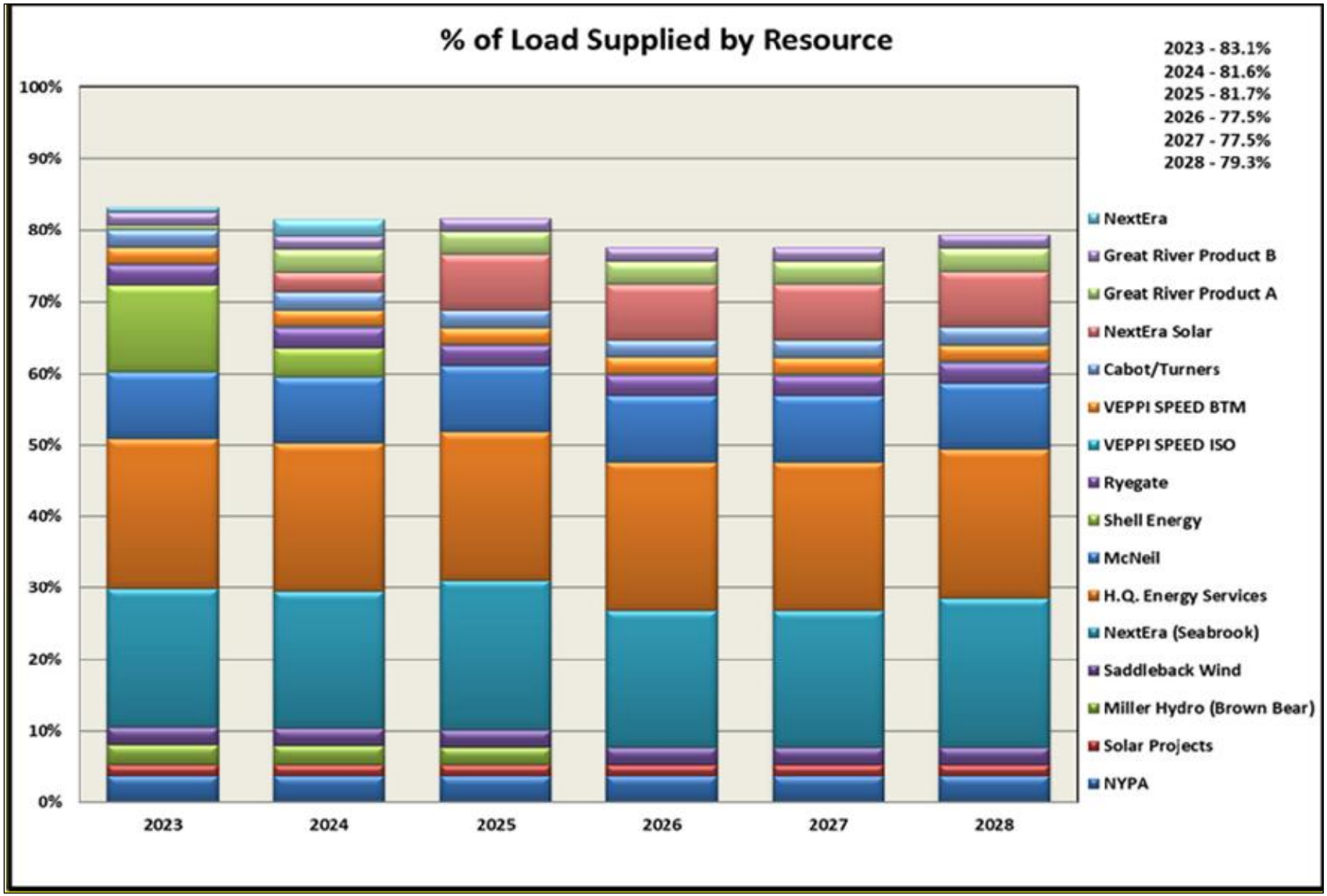


Figure 3: Stowe's Yearly Projected Resource Distribution

In 2024, the Vermont Legislature passed Act 179 which updates to the RES. The Act increases the amount of total renewable energy electric utilities are required to purchase to 100% on or before January 2035, depending on the type of utility. It also changes the definition of new metering, and creates two new Tiers: Tier 4, and Tier 5.

There are now five tiers to the RES program:

Tier I: Meet a 100% by 2035 total renewable energy requirement (63% of annual load by 2025 increasing to 100% by 2035)

- Any class of tradeable renewable attributes that are delivered in New England qualify.

Tier II: Meet 20% of sales with distributed generation in 2035 (5% by 2025 increasing at least 1.5% each year to 2035)

- New Vermont based unit that is 5 MWs or less or renewable generation
- Utilities can petition the Commission to include resources over 5MW to qualify

Tier III: Meet 10⅔ % of sales with "energy transformation projects" in 2032 (6% of annual load in 2025 increasing ⅔% to 2032)

- Excess Tier II-qualifying distributed generation or a project that reduces fossil fuel consumed by their customers and the associated greenhouse gases emissions qualifies for compliance (MW conversion will be determined by the Commission)

Tier IV: Meet 10% of annual load by 2035 from regional renewable energy resources built after January 1, 2010 and can deliver power to ISO-NE. This category encourages increased procurement from renewable generation that supports the reliability of the regional ISO-NE electric system. For municipal utilities the target is 5% of the utility's annual load by 2030 and 10% of their annual load by 2035.

Tier V: involves load growth, and retail utility providers meeting load growth above its 2024 calendar year load with 50% renewable energy beginning January 2025, up to 100% on and after 2028.

Stowe Electric Department's current Energy portfolio contains over 50% renewable generation. See Figure 4 for electric resources by fuel type.

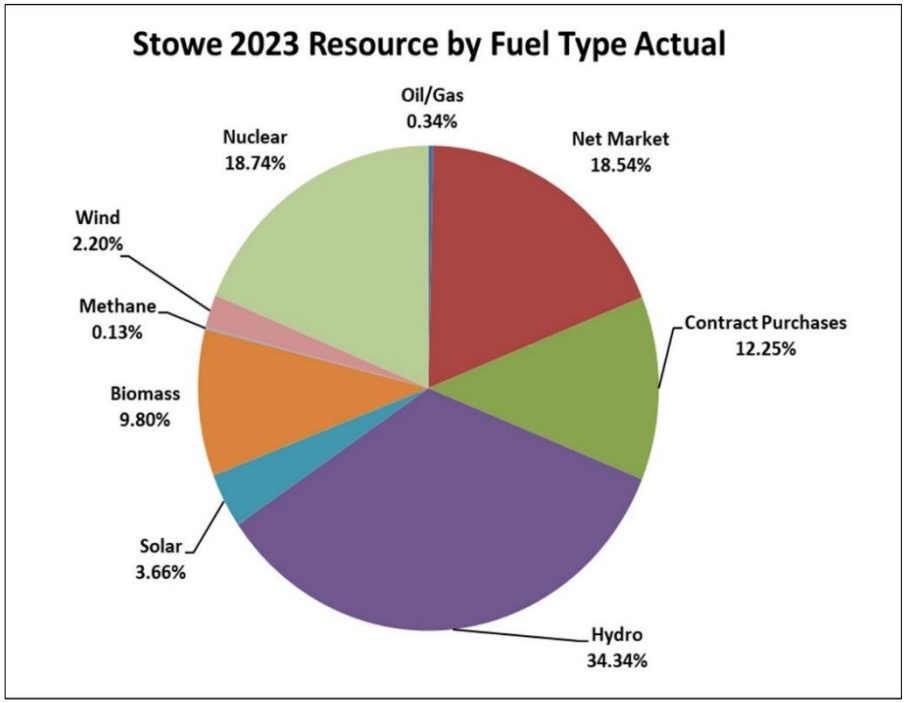


Figure 4: Stowe's Resource by Fuel Type.

Current Energy Use

Estimates of current energy use consist primarily of data available from the American Community Survey, the Vermont Agency of Transportation, the Vermont Department of Labor, Efficiency Vermont and the PSD. These estimates were developed by the LCPC with guidance from the PSD. Future generation potential estimates were developed by LCPC based on guidance from the PSD.

Residential Heating Energy Use

	Utility Gas	Fuel Oil, Propane, Kerosene	Solar Energy	Wood	Electricity	Other	Total
# of Households	178	1,765	68	215	154	88	2,468
% of Households	7.2%	71.5%	2.75%	8.7%	6.2%	3.56%	100%

Source: 2022 American Community Survey

Commercial Heating Energy Use

607 commercial buildings	Total
% of businesses	100%
Total Heat Energy Consumption of Commercial Buildings (Usage in million BTUs)	474,929

Source: 2023 VT PSD Municipal Consumption Tool

Annual Transportation Use

# of Fossil Fuel Burning Light Duty Vehicles	3,547
Total Miles Driven (based on 12,500 average annual miles traveled/vehicle)	44,337,500
Usage in Gallons (based on 22mpg average fuel economy)	2,015,340
Usage in million BTUs	239,795

Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2023 VT PSD Municipal Consumption Tool

Annual Electricity Use

	kWh Usage
Residential	31,761,967
Commercial & Industrial	50,242,529

Source: 2022 Annual Electricity Usage data from Efficiency Vermont

Current Energy Generation

Generation facility	Number of sites	Generation Capacity (kw) as of 03/2024
Hydro (Currently not Operational)	1	93
Solar	145	3,000
	-	-
Residential Wind	-	-
TOTAL	146	3,093

Source: Vermont Public Service Department, March 2024

Electric Vehicle (EV) Adoption and Heat Pump Installation

As Stowe and Vermont as a whole shift from gas powered vehicles to electric vehicles, there is an anticipated increase in electric vehicle adoption. However, data provided by the SED demonstrates a slight downward trend in electric vehicle adoption based on rebates provided since SED started its rebate program in 2019. The table below shows electric vehicle adoption based on SED rebates issued from 2019 to 2024. Total SED has recorded 101 electric vehicle purchases in the SED service area. In terms of weatherization, the table below demonstrates an upward trend in the installation of heat pumps in Stowe since 2019. This is based on those customers receiving rebates through SED. Total heat pump installations recorded by SED's rebate program from 2019 to 2024 is 899. SED covers the majority of the service area for the town of Stowe. Data from other local utilities that cover small portions of Stowe are not reflected in the table below.

Lifetime Participation Tier III		
Yr	Heat Pumps	EVs
2019	43	3
2020	71	10
2021	158	12
2022	286	36
2023	242	24
2024	99	16
Total	899	101

Source: Stowe Electric Department, 2024

Weatherization in Stowe

Aside from fuel switching and installing new heating systems such as heat pumps, weatherization practices such as adding insulation, weather stripping, and installing Energy STAR appliances continue to play an important role in promoting energy efficiency. In addition to heat pump installations, Efficiency Vermont recorded seventy-seven residential weatherization projects in Stowe from 2020-2022.

Stowe was awarded funding in 2023 through the Vermont Climate Catalysts Innovation Fund for a window inserts project that built and installed over 320 window inserts to provide weatherization improvements to residential customers. 55% of orders were completed for income qualifying households. This is a particularly valuable project that allowed the utility to provide meaningful weatherization solutions to our customers and start a conversation regarding how low- and moderate-income families can improve the habitability and weatherization of their homes, while taking advantage of rebates and other financing measures.

Future Energy Use and Generation Targets

Generation Targets

The PSD provides a Generation Scenarios Tool to help set targets for renewable energy generation. The 2024 tool models statewide targets for 10%, 20%, and 25% in-state generation scenarios in the future. Incremental energy generation targets are one output of the tool, as well as capacity targets for different resources and resource availability, with land availability and grid headroom as possible constraints. The LCPC used the 25% in-state generation scenario to align with the 2022 Comprehensive Energy Plan. Statewide targets are broken down by region in the tool, and LCPC broke regional targets to the municipal level, based on population and suitable land area. Population data used in the Generation Scenarios Tool is from the 2020 U.S. Census.

Rather than using total land area available in each town, which the tool defaults to, LCPC used "suitable" acreage for generation as the land area value. Suitable acreage was based on the percentage of total land area that includes both prime and secondary acreage for renewable generation, as displayed in the Regional Enhanced Energy Plan maps. This percentage was then distributed evenly across all towns, for ground-mounted solar and wind generation. Land area does not include area needed to support hydro generation sites or rooftop solar (as these do not occur on land). However, the Generation Scenario Tool assumes that 1 acre is needed per MW of power produced for hydro projects.

To contribute to the goal of 90% renewable energy by 2050, the 2024 Generation Scenarios Tool forecasts that Stowe will need to add new renewable facilities capable of producing an additional 15,683.4 MWh of new renewably generated electricity. Stowe could meet this target with a combination of renewable energy technologies. Ground- mounted solar is the most available generation technology and will likely contribute substantially to the future technology mix for Stowe's renewable energy generation.

Rooftop solar may increase in availability as structures are able to support it. While wind generation potential is limited, there is some land available to support small-scale projects.

Output Target for Renewable Energy Generation

Town	2023 Existing Generation (MWh)*	2025 Incremental output projections (MWh)	2035 Incremental output projections (MWh)	2050 Incremental output projections (MWh)
Stowe	3,863	4,014.0	10,034.8	15,683.4

Source: VT Department of Public Service, 2024 Generation Scenarios Tool
*Based on VT Department of Public Service, 2024 Generation Scenarios Tool

Incremental Renewable Energy Capacity Target for 2050

Town	Ground mounted solar: Potential capacity (MW)	Rooftop Solar: Potential capacity (MW)	Wind: Potential capacity (MW)	Hydro: Potential capacity (MW)
Stowe	7.6	1.2	0.8	0.6**

Source: VT Department of Public Service, 2024 Generation Scenarios Tool
**There may not be enough hydro resources available or grid system headroom to meet the 2050 capacity target for hydro power.

In order for the Town of Stowe to meet this incremental output target for renewable electric generation of 15,683.4 MWh, relying primarily on ground-mounted solar, the 2024 Generation Scenarios Tool predicts that about eighty-four acres of land devoted to solar panels would be needed to meet this target.

Solar and Wind Potential

The solar and wind potential resource maps at the end of this chapter demonstrate there is sufficient land available to meet this target. While the wind map shows limited potential for wind power resources in Stowe given current technology, there is adequate solar resource potential to meet the Generation Scenario Tool target described above. Using the latest resource potential layers from the Energy Atlas published by the PSD, in Stowe there are 1,524 acres of prime solar potential and 8,086 acres of secondary solar potential. Prime solar potential areas shown on the map are areas where there are no known constraints. Secondary, solar areas are locations where there are possible environmental constraints.

However, as discussed in the Electric Grid Limitations section below, land is not the only constraint to meeting the generation targets projected above. Rooftop solar and solar built on parking structures can

contribute to this generation target and reduce the amount of land required to meet projected generation targets. Where possible, rooftop solar should be explored as an option to minimize impacts to Stowe's scenic and natural resources especially Priority Forest Blocks and Habitat Connectors in the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor. Rooftop and ground mounted solar should be explored for municipal properties where feasible and where it is cost effective. In 2020, the Stowe High School was assessed for rooftop solar but the current structure is not compatible with rooftop solar. When the school roof is replaced, building it to meet weight and panel installation requirements should be considered.

Hydro Power Potential

According to existing generation capacity data provided in March of 2024 by the PSD, Stowe has one (not currently operational) hydroelectric power dam with a generation capacity of 93 kw. The Moscow Mills Dam was formerly operational until the Powerplant was inundated with flood waters in 2011 by Tropical Storm Irene. SED is working to restore this hydroelectric facility to an operational status. In 2017, SED purchased the property and built new administrative buildings in 2019. Once restored the expected generation capacity of this project is 411 MWh (411,000KWh).

Thermal Energy Networks (Geothermal Potential)

Thermal Energy Networks are heating and cooling systems that circulate water to capture or reuse thermal energy between buildings. Thermal Energy Networks can capture waste heat from large buildings, refrigeration systems, industrial processes or from moderate temperatures underground. This neighborhood-scale decarbonization approach requires higher density areas such as village centers, other growth centers, or a cluster of housing/ community buildings. This may be a long-term solution as the Town of Stowe recently underwent a sidewalk, paving, and utility upgrade project along Main Street. However, other rights of way may be accessible for Thermal Energy Network development in the near term. The ideal time to install Thermal Energy Networks is with planned utility upgrades, other infrastructure investments or repairs, or when new commercial or residential construction is occurring in an existing neighborhood. Benefits of a thermal energy network system include utilizing heat that already exists and was already paid for and yielding long-term cost savings on heating and cooling buildings. Where Thermal Energy Network shared infrastructure may not be feasible, individual air-source heat pumps are another option. Air Source Heat Pumps pull inherent thermal energy within air or water from outside to heat indoor spaces. This harnessed heat is transferred directly to air or water for circulation in interior spaces, or to provide domestic hot water. All types of heat pumps also provide cooling and dehumidification for buildings by transferring moisture and excess heat to the exterior. Visit vctn.org to learn more about Thermal Energy Networks and other efforts to achieve neighborhood-scale decarbonization.

Electric Grid Limitations

The resource potential and environmental attributes of the land are not the only factors in the consideration of whether a site is viable for the deployment of a particular technology. The capacity of the electric grid to transmit the newly generated electricity is also key and currently poses a serious challenge for meeting the 90x50 energy generation goal for Lamoille County, particularly within the grid in the northern tier of the state known as the Sheffield Highgate Export Interface (SHEI). In Lamoille County, SHEI encompasses the towns of Belvidere, Eden, Johnson, Cambridge and parts of Hyde Park, and Morristown. As of November 2024, SED does not share the grid limitations experienced within the SHEI. Installing a neighborhood scale Thermal Energy Network significantly reduces load on the electrical grid and can help reduce potential future limitations (see previous section).
Currently, existing renewable energy generation plants within SHEI, such as Lowell Wind and Sheffield Wind, produce more electricity than can be consumed within the SHEI region. Given the lack of usage within SHEI, a solution would be to export the electricity to areas with greater electric demand. However, current physical limitations of the grid do not allow for adequate export of power, and exporting the power becomes an issue to the point that existing wind turbines are being forced to curtail energy production in order not to overload the grid. Local utilities are already implementing winter curtailment plans to avoid grid system blackouts.

The 2024 Generation Scenarios Tool provided by the PSD added a new category focused on transmission and distribution headroom. Transmission headroom is the amount of extra capacity a device has available for transmitting power over long distances via high voltage

power lines, while distribution headroom is the capacity available for short distances via lower voltage lines. These categories allow municipalities to understand limitations to the electric system in the region. According to the 2021 VELCO LRTP, and the 2024 Generations Scenario Tool from the PSD, Lamoille County has 25.5 MW of transmission headroom available. However, the 2024 VELCO LRTP shows there is 0 MW of additional "Optimized Distribution" headroom in Lamoille County, meaning that there is no longer any transmission headroom in Lamoille County for additional generation without causing harm to rate payers or hosting capacity in other regions. There remains room on the grid for additional load. Municipalities like Stowe in the region can still encourage electrification such as installing heat pumps and electric efficiency measures. The 2024 VELCO LRTP highlights system upgrades across Vermont, many of which could benefit Stowe and may provide additional transmission system headroom for generation as well as for load. These potential upgrades are found in section "5 Discussion of Peak Demand Results" in the VELCO Long Rage Transmission Plan which can be viewed at: https://www.velco.com/2024-vermont-long-range-transmission-plan. Limitations to the grid affect all sectors of planning (Transportation, Land Use, Housing, Energy, Economic Development etc..) and the Town's ability to continue to grow.

Local electric utility providers and VELCO (Vermont Electric Power Company) are playing an active role in planning for the projected increase in load on the grid system. The 2024 VELCO Vermont Long-Range Transmission Plan recognizes grid system load challenges and forecasts scenarios required to meet statewide energy goals and generation capacity targets by 2050. Load forecasting in the Long-Range Transmission Plan projects the need for a 75-Megawatt load reduction by 2043 to mitigate expected growth in the load on the grid system. These projections include assumptions such as a constant level of increase in electric vehicles being adopted and charged on the local grid system, and an increase in heat pumps by 60% by 2043. The Vermont Roadmap Electric Vehicle Forecast in VELCO's plan predicts that electric vehicle demand during summer peak will grow from 9 MW in 2024 to 256 MW by 2043. See table below for increased grid system load forecasting identified in VELCO's 2024 Long-Range Transmission Plan.

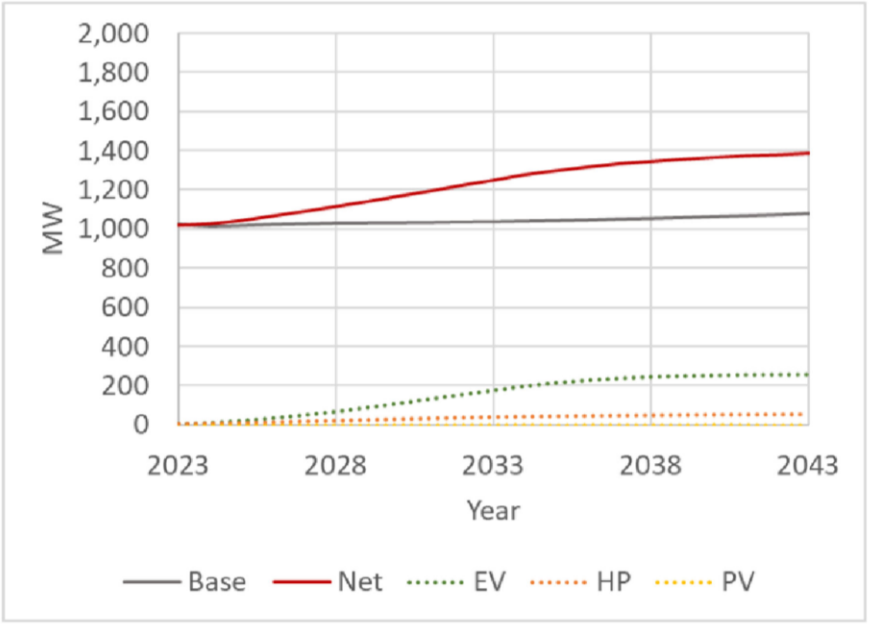


Figure 5: Projected Vermont Summer Peak Load and Its Component Forecasts
Source: VELCO 2024 Long-Range Transmission Plan

The 2024 VELCO Vermont Long-Range Transmission Plan identifies the following actions to meet anticipated grid system growth and the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan statewide goals:

- Increase energy storage available during peak demand times such as in the evening
- Grid system upgrades
- Grid system load curtailment
- Coordination between VELCO and local utilities

At the local level, electric utilities utilize similar forecasting strategies to plan for increased demand on the local grid system as identified in their Integrated Resource Plans (IRP). In accordance with 30 V.S.A.§ 218c, electric and gas companies are required to update Integrated Resource Plans every three years. The IRP established a framework for decision making that utilities utilize to meet the public's need for energy services. It develops methods to evaluate a utility's investment and purchase

decisions.

Current IRPs for local utilities are filed with the Public Utility Commission and PSD as well as housed on a utility company's website. Grid system load forecasting in IRPs is based on a range of economic, technological, and weather data. Load forecasting considers both expected base load and peak load demand such as seasonal winter and summer peaks in energy use. Similar to VELCO's Plan, the IRPs consider growth anticipated due to an increase in electrifying modes of transportation and heating/cooling systems. SED's Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) for example forecasts a steady increase in grid system load demand between 1-2% annually. Figure 1 from SED's 2024 Resource Report demonstrates load forecasting and the expected increase in demand on the local grid system for SED's service area.

Local IRPs also identify load forecasting associated with growth in heat pump installations and electric vehicle adoption. For example, Figure 6 is from SED's 2023 IRP shows the heat pump sales forecast. By 2043 heat pump energy requirements reach 5,200 MWh with a maximum peak demand of 3.2 MW.

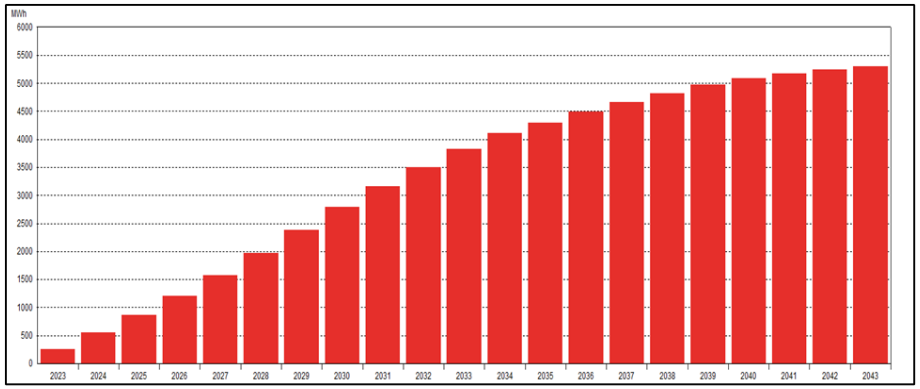


Figure 6: Heat Pump Loads 2043 Source: Stowe Electric Department, 2024

Electric vehicle load forecasting in SED's IRP was developed in conjunction with the 2023 VELCO Long-term Forecast. By 2043 electric vehicles are expected to account for 90% of all registered vehicles in Vermont. See Figure 5 above from the 2024 VELCO Long-Range Transmission Plan for expected increase in load demand on the grid due to electric vehicle adoption.

Stowe IRP Heat Pump Loads 2043

As local utilities cover a smaller area for electric service, they will not see as significant of a load increase as larger utility providers such as Green Mountain Power. In addition to forecasting grid system load increases, local utility providers are exploring alternatives to ensure grid reliability such as energy storage and micro grid systems. SED for example was awarded more than $1.6 million in grant funding for resiliency and infrastructure modernization, including funding for a microgrid feasibility study.

Leap Energy Targets

To support the update of the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan and Climate Action Plan, and to achieve Green House Gas emission reduction requirements of the Global Warming Solutions Act, the PSD developed the Low Emissions Analysis Platform (LEAP Model). The outcome, shown below, projects future energy demand for Lamoille County and represents one possible scenario by which Lamoille County can contribute to achieving state energy goals. The scenario relies on increased efficiency, conservation, and electrification as ways for decreasing the overall amount of energy used. What follows is a simplified explanation of energy usage trends envisioned by the 2023 LEAP Model. The Municipal Consumption Tool, developed by the PSD, was used to develop estimates of current energy use for each town in Lamoille County. Municipal LEAP targets were proportioned based on total local energy shares estimated by the Municipal Consumption Tool.

The figures on the next page show the transition in the amount of energy obtained from renewable and non- renewable fuel sources. Among the most notable trends are:

- The model results show that, despite a growing population and economy, energy use will decline by nearly 35 percent because of increased efficiency and conservation.
- Electricity use will increase with the intensified use of heat pumps as primary heating sources and the use of electric vehicles. Because those choices are powered by electricity, and electricity is three to four times more efficient compared to fossil fuels, overall energy use will decrease.
- Over time, the model projects a near complete elimination of our two principal transportation fuels, gasoline and diesel, as well as

oil, currently the major fuel used for space heating in many parts of the state.

- The 2023 Climate Action Mitigation Scenario which utilizes the LEAP Model framework, places more emphasis on an increase in electrification for heating and cooling needs. The former LEAP modeling placed more emphasis on an increase in wood heating sources. While Lamoille County residents will likely continue to utilize wood heat in some form whether it be a primary or secondary heating source, the new LEAP targets focus on the expected increase in electrification and electric heating and cooling systems such as heat pumps. From a BTUs standpoint, cold climate heat pumps are one of the most efficient and carbon free sources for heating and cooling buildings, allowing Vermonters to use less energy overall for their HVAC system needs.

LEAP Projections

To demonstrate the magnitude of changes that would need to take place to align Stowe's energy profile with the state energy goals, LEAP offers very specific targets to serve as a guidepost for the Town of Stowe's transitions in energy use and generation. The accompanied energy-related policies and action tasks identify steps that can be completed by the Town to help attain the projected targets. Many other policies and action tasks could help the Town attain its energy goals, but these strategies cannot be achieved by the Town of Stowe alone and require the action of the state agencies, public utilities, and private individuals. The latest renewable electrical output targets from the 2023 LEAP Model were added below.

The 2023 LEAP Model also projects energy demand for core sectors: residential, commercial, and industrial. The tool accounts for multiple fuel types including, but not limited to, electricity, wood, solar, heat, and other fossil fuels. There are pathways to meet demand using a "business-as-usual" (baseline) scenario under typical energy planning and programs, and a Climate Action Plan (CAP) mitigation scenario developed to meet GWSA greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

LEAP Targets

Projected total energy demand: Residential Sector

Year	2025	2030	2035	2040	2050
Baseline Total Electrical Demand (Thousand MMBTUs)	326.374	302.005	288.690	283.766	280.495
CAP Mitigation Total Demand (Thousand MMBTUs)	294.423	247.001	211.831	181.850	165.559

Projected total energy demand: Commercial Sector

Year	2025	2030	2035	2040	2050
Baseline Total Electrical Demand (Thousand MMBTUs)	192.735	189.843	187.582	187.025	187.406
CAP Mitigation Total Demand (Thousand MMBTUs)	189.363	187.087	185.609	187.807	191.891

Projected total energy demand: Industrial Sector

Year	2025	2030	2035	2040	2050
Baseline Total Electrical Demand (Thousand MMBTUs)	66.975	66.570	66.006	66.823	68.957
CAP Mitigation Total Demand (Thousand MMBTUs)	66.975	66.570	66.006	66.823	68.957

Projected total energy demand: Transportation Sector

Year	2025	2030	2035	2040	2050
Baseline Total Electrical Demand (Thousand MMBTUs)	58.213	53.430	50.577	47.891	43.210
CAP Mitigation Total Demand (Thousand MMBTUs)	56.663	47.654	38.690	32.231	27.062

Target: Households heated with wood

Year	2025	2030	2035	2040	2050
# of Households	1,042	936	846	739	571
% of Households	26.8%	23.6%	20.9%	17.9%	13.3%

Target: Residential heat pumps

Year	2025	2030	2035	2040	2050
# of Residential Heat Pumps (Baseline Scenario)	493	936	1,197	1,322	4,461
# of Residential Heat Pumps (CAP Mitigation Scenario)	1,054	1,941	2,835	3,737	4,177

Target: Households weatherized

Year	2025	2030	2035	2040	2050
# of Households (Baseline Scenario)	280	414	541	672	950
# of Households (CAP Mitigation Scenario)	763	1,309	1,649	1,989	2,668

Target: Commercial heat pumps

Year	2025	2030	2035	2040	2050
# of Heat Pumps (Baseline Scenario)	107	204	261	289	303
# of Heat Pumps (CAP Mitigation Scenario)	636	1,264	1,922	2,363	2,458

Target: Passenger electric vehicle use

Year	2025	2030	2035	2040	2050
# of vehicles (Baseline Scenario)	193	397	854	1,747	1,648
# of vehicles (CAP Mitigation Scenario)	190	897	2,084	3,191	4,448



Photo credit: Stowe Electric Department

Siting of Renewable Energy Generation Facilities

Areas Preferred for Renewable Energy Development

Areas preferred for renewable energy development are the areas identified as "preferred" in Act 174 unless these areas are identified as unsuitable by municipal plan of the municipality in which the development is proposed. The preferred areas include:

- Parking lots
- Brownfield Sites
- Landfills
- Rooftop installations
- Reclaimed gravel pits

Areas Not Supported for Renewable Energy Development

This plan identifies some areas where renewable energy development is not supported due to their natural or scenic value, or due to the importance of protecting our citizens from potential natural disasters. On the solar and wind maps, these areas are referred to as "no solar" or "no wind", also known as "Known Constraints."

These areas include:

- Floodways
- Special Flood Hazard Areas shown on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps
- River Corridor Areas
- Class 1 and Class 2 Wetlands
- Vernal Pools
- State-significant Natural Communities and Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species
- Wilderness Areas
- Highest Priority Forest Blocks
- Solar installations greater than 15kW located within the Stowe Historic Overlay District
- On primary facades of historic buildings within the Stowe Historic Overlay District and Moscow Historic District that are clearly visible from public rights-of-way, unless the project has been designed to be minimally intrusive and not significantly diminish the historic character of the building. (Note: The

historic buildings noted here are not shown on the energy maps. Renewable energy generation estimates identified in this plan do factor in the historic buildings data).

Areas That May Be Undesirable for Renewable Energy Development

There are many areas that have the potential for renewable energy generation but possess environmental constraints that may pose a barrier to the development of renewable energy facilities. In some cases, these constraints may prohibit the development and in others the development may be suitable. The solar and wind resource maps, name these areas as “secondary solar” or “secondary wind”. Also known as “Possible Constraints”. The areas include:

- Primary agricultural soils
- Protected Lands Act 250 Agricultural Soil Mitigation Areas
- Deer Wintering Areas
- Hydric Soils
- Locations within the Ridgeline and Hillside Overlay District that are clearly visible from public rights of way. (Note: Renewable energy generation estimates do not factor in the Ridgeline and Hillside Overlay District Layer); and
- Working farmland within the Rte. 100 corridor when clearly visible from Rte.100. (Note: The working farmland within the Rte. 100 corridor noted here is not shown on the solar and wind maps. Renewable energy generation estimates do not factor in the working farmland.)



Photo credit: Stowe Electric Department



Photo credit: Stowe Electric Department

Energy Goal



To prioritize the availability, affordability, and efficient use of energy resources, including the development and use of renewable and clean energy resources in a manner that considers equity in planning and siting, protects public health and safety, reduces carbon emissions and costs, supports community resiliency, and minimizes adverse environmental and aesthetic impacts.

Policies

1. The Town will continue to ensure, to the extent of its abilities, the availability of electric energy at reasonable cost to local customers through active involvement in the state's formulation of electric utility policy, including utility restructuring.

2. Municipal energy expenditures will be reduced, to the extent feasible, through energy efficiency and conservation and the use of renewable and clean energy resources.

    a. Energy efficiency and conservation and the use of cost-effective renewable and clean energy resources will be prioritized in new municipal construction projects, renovations projects, equipment purchases and operations.
    b. The Town will use life cycle costing in evaluating energy-related capital expenditures, as appropriate, and provide that information to the Stowe Energy Committee.
    c. When replacing or purchasing Town-owned vehicles and equipment, hybrid and electric alternatives will be considered and prioritized when they are cost effective and meet performance needs.
    d. The Stowe Energy Committee will be notified of planned municipal building and/or energy related capital projects and amendments to the Equipment Fund to allow for comments and recommendations from the Committee.

3. The Town, through the Stowe Electric Department, will promote and prioritize energy efficiency and conservation among its local customer base.

4. Future energy transmission and distribution lines should use existing rights-of way, when possible.

5. The Town encourages high density, mixed-use development, including in-fill development that reflects the historic scale and pattern in our designated planned growth areas and protects the residential character of existing residential neighborhoods.

6. The Town supports a clean energy future by promoting high-efficiency, low-carbon building practices, including compliance with Residential and Commercial Building Energy Standards (RBES and CBES), encouraging the use of renewable energy sources, exploring the development of a thermal energy network, installation of EV chargers, and advancing deep energy retrofits and electrification. These actions align with Vermont's statewide energy goals and reflect Stowe's commitment to long-term environmental and community sustainability.

7. All new commercial construction, including new buildings, additions, renovations, and repairs, shall comply with applicable energy efficiency standards as required by the State of Vermont. Projects are encouraged to incorporate clean energy features such as electric vehicle charging stations (Level 2 or higher), solar energy systems, and renewable heating systems such as air-source heat pumps to comply with the CBES.

8. The Town, through Stowe Electric Department, will support programs that assist owners with weatherizing and improving the efficiency of existing buildings, and/or promote incentive programs for energy-efficient construction or renovation.

9. The Town will promote smart-growth development by incentivizing denser development within our designated growth centers. Emphasis should continue to be placed on non-obstruction of views, building style conformity in the area, appropriate landscaping and screening and street setbacks on major traffic roadways

10. The Town will plan for and promote, where feasible, non-traditional vehicular transport modes (e.g., bike, e-bikes, scooters and pedestrian) using best practices for traffic engineering, including sidewalks, pathways and bike lanes, park and ride lots, public transit services and/or ridesharing programs that reduce transportation energy costs. It will utilize credits and incentives to help defray such costs where available.

11. The Town will encourage owners to manage forested land for long-term, sustainable harvesting of wood as a renewable fuel source and where appropriate promote forested land in order to follow best carbon caption policies.

12. The Town supports the work of local energy committees as partners in education and outreach to the community.

13. The Town encourages the use of clean energy systems, such as electric heat pumps and solar energy, for heating, cooling, lighting, and appliances in both new construction and building upgrades, and supports partnerships with Efficiency Vermont and other state and federal programs that offer energy efficiency incentives.

14. The Stowe Electric Department will actively pursue achieving or exceeding renewable and clean energy and carbon reduction goals established by the State of Vermont.

15. The Town will participate in Public Utility Commission (Section 248) review of new and upgraded generation and transmission facilities as necessary to ensure that adopted community standards are given due consideration in proposed energy facility development.

16. The Town supports the generation of small net-metered or off-grid renewable energy facilities, including solar arrays, small wind facilities or combined systems intended primarily to serve local residences or businesses long as they meet the following standards:

    a) The maximum tower height for net-metered, or similar off-grid wind energy facility shall not (a) exceed 120 feet in total height, as measured vertically from the ground to the rotor blade tip at its highest point, or (b) extend in total height more than 30 feet above the existing tree canopy or other obstructions within 300 feet of the tower, whichever is greater.
    b) Power generating facilities and accessory structures must meet the minimum setback requirements for the zoning district(s) in which they are located.
    c) All ground-mounted wind energy facilities must be setback at least 1.5 times the total facility height, as measured vertically from the ground to the rotor blade tip at its highest point, from all property lines, occupied buildings on adjoining properties, overhead utility lines, public and private rights-of-way and established trail corridors, unless easements are secured from adjoining property owners.
    d) Wind energy facilities shall be sited or screened so that shadows cast by rotor blades will not result in shadow flicker on occupied buildings located in the vicinity of the project.
    e) Ground installations, to the extent functionally feasible, shall be installed in locations that minimize their visibility, such as a side or rear yard, and be screened from view of public rights-of-way and adjoining properties.
    f) Consideration is given to impacts on disadvantaged communities.

17. The Town does not support the installation of large-scale wind installations - defined as one or more turbines, each with a nameplate capacity greater than 100kW, or height of more than 170 feet.

18. The Town supports the installation of commercial/utility scale solar power generating facilities in appropriate locations as long as they provide a clear, direct benefit to the local Stowe community. Power generating facilities and accessory structures must meet the minimum setback requirements for the zoning district(s) in which they are located.

19. The Town discourages the fragmentation of core forest areas when siting renewable energy generation facilities and will evaluate whether the cost of fragmenting forest blocks outweighs the benefits of siting an energy generation facility. Consider carbon sequestration, greenhouse gas emissions, flood resilience, and other values of intact forest blocks.

20. Critical wildlife habitat, including but not limited to, deer wintering areas, rare and/or endangered species habitat, local fisheries, critical bear and bird habitat significant forest habitat blocks and identified travel corridors, as mapped by the VT Department of Fish & Wildlife, shall be protected from inappropriate development and land management activities.

21. The Public Utility Commission shall give due consideration to the standards and guidelines of the Ridgeline and Hillside Overlay District when considering applications for any wind or solar facilities proposed for the district.

22. Ground-mounted solar and wind energy facilities shall not be located within the 100-Year Flood Hazard Area, the Fluvial Erosion Hazard Overlay District or within fifty feet from the top of bank of any watercourse.

23. The Town supports the use of electric vehicles and continued public access to charging stations in Stowe. The Town will utilize the Electric Vehicle Readiness and Charging Roadmap for Stowe, Vermont to facilitate public access to charging stations in Stowe.

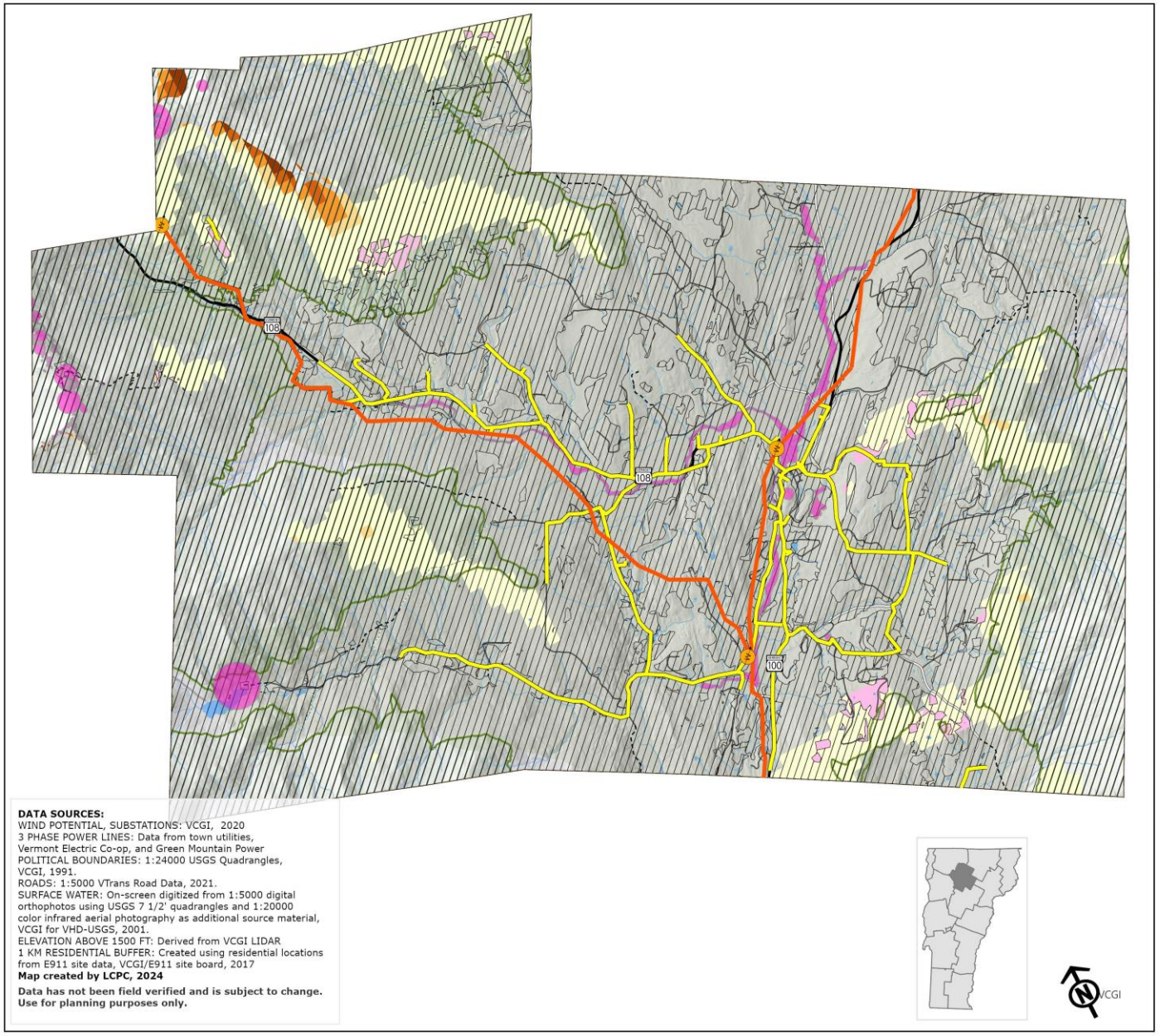
24. The Town will consider equity in planning efforts and work to enhance access to electric vehicles in traditionally underserved communities.

25. The Town will seek, where appropriate, incentive programs, federal Direct Pay credits and other funding mechanisms to transform the energy sector, in particular, electric vehicles and charging infrastructure.

Action Tasks - Energy	Responsibility	Priority	Vision Elements
Explore opportunities for the collection and use of food waste in anaerobic digesters for the production of methane to produce electricity.	CONS., P & Z, *LRSWMD, SED	Short-Term	
Evaluate electric and hybrid alternatives for Town-owned vehicles and equipment, including performance capabilities and life-cycle costs, and develop recommendations for the Selectboard on their adoption when these alternatives meet operational needs and fall within an acceptable cost threshold compared to conventional gas-powered models.	EC, SED, SB	Short-Term	
Consider replacing the metal halide ornamental streetlights on Main St. and Depot St. with LED fixtures once the technology has advanced to the point that they are clearly cost effective.	SB, TM, P & Z SED	Short-Term	
Explore the potential use of neighborhood-scale Thermal Energy Networks.	EC, PC, SB	Short-Term	
Collaborate with SED and Planning & Zoning Department to prepare draft zoning amendments to strengthen site plan and conditional review criteria for electric vehicle (EV) chargers, establish minimum parking requirements for EV-only use, and support the utilization and future availability of renewable energy resources.	PC & EC	Short-Term	
Collaborate with the school district to advance energy efficiency by prioritizing electric vehicles and equipment for fleet and facility use, installing EV charging stations, and supporting clean energy solutions such as heat pumps and solar installations, while promoting these efforts through educational programs and community engagement.	EC, SSB	Short-Term	
Designate the Village of Moscow as a village center – this would unlock funding and technical support that will benefit the village and SED.	PC, P & Z, SB	Short-Term	
Investigate participation with other towns or organizations in bulk-purchasing agreements for municipal fuel supplies.	DPW, SB, TM	Short-Term	
Support the Smith's Falls hydroelectric/solar project and emergency operation center (the Millwright's Office restoration).	SED	Short-Term	
Conduct a Phase I environmental site assessment for the Moscow Highway Garage parcel which could inform future development – solar, battery storage, electric vehicle charging, etc.	DPW, P & Z	Mid-Term	
Encourage the Town to purchase and install a new charger that the SED can operate and maintain – a second fast charger and/or a charger at Stowe Elementary School/Memorial Park area.	EC, PC, P & Z, SB	Mid-Term	
Explore options for conversion to biomass energy and solar systems and other alternative energy sources in public school buildings, using local fuel sources where economically feasible.	SB, SSB	Mid-Term	
Work with local energy committees to create benchmarks for achieving increased energy efficiency and reducing the production of greenhouse gases in town operations to work towards the 2024 LEAP Model targets.	CONS., DPW, P & Z	Mid-Term	

Collaborate with SED to share design standards and incentive programs with Town residents and business owners in support of energy retrofits in existing residential buildings with the goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions.	EC, SED	Ongoing	
Continue to pursue sidewalk, recreation path, bicycle lanes, public parking and transit projects in part to reduce local transportation energy use.	DPW, PC, P & Z, RC, SB	Ongoing	
Conduct periodic energy audits of all municipal buildings and implement the recommendations as appropriate.	DPW, SED	Ongoing	
Review and update as needed existing town policies, bylaws and ordinances to promote energy efficiency and conservation; to encourage renewable energy resources and access for their sustainable use.	DPW, PC, SED	Ongoing	
Develop zoning provisions for public, workplace, and multi-family charging (signage, parking spaces painted, etc.).	PC, P & Z, SB, SED	Ongoing	
Support the partnerships with Efficiency Vermont and Drive Electric to encourage electrification adoption (heat pumps, EVs, etc.)	SED, EC	Ongoing	
Review zoning regulations for opportunities to promote energy conservation, the development of renewable energy resources, and require adherence to RBES Stretch Code for residential buildings.	PC, P & Z, SB	Ongoing	
Explore opportunities for, and make progress as appropriate, towards using alternative fuels, including, but not limited to, biodiesel in town-owned vehicles and consider replacing town vehicles with more energy-efficient models as they are scheduled for replacement and when cost effective and performance standards are met.	DPW, TM, SB	Ongoing	
Collaborate with SED and the Planning & Zoning Department to develop and distribute enhanced informational materials on energy codes, efficiency programs, and available incentives to applicants seeking zoning permits.	EC, SED, P & Z	Ongoing	
Continue to require Certificates of Occupancy (CO) for new construction and additions for all heated and cooled spaces. Ensure that energy code certificates be recorded prior to issuance of a CO. The Energy Committee staff will make quarterly reports to the Energy Committee of RBES and CBES compliance.	P & Z, EC	Ongoing	
Support the installation of additional EV charging stations throughout the town and promote their use.	SB, SED	Ongoing	
Consider installing solar arrays on town-owned properties to cover the electricity use of municipal facilities.	SB, SED	Ongoing	
Explore opportunities for pollinated gardens/habitat on Town owned land to reduce fuel/energy spent on mowing municipal properties.	CONS., P & Z	Ongoing	

Map #1



Stowe
Renewable Energy Potential: WIND

This map illustrates potential for energy development but not necessarily suitability

Wind Energy Potential

- Prime Wind
- Secondary Wind
- Unsuitable for Wind Development

Energy Infrastructure

- Substations
- Transmission Lines
- 3 Phase Power Lines

3 Phase power line data for areas served by Morrisville Water and Light was not available.

- Elevation above 1500 feet
- 1 km Residential Buffer
- Streams
- Waterbodies
- Town Boundary
- Possible Constraints
- Known Constraints
- State Highway
- Class 2 Road
- Class 3 Road
- Class 4 Road
- Private Road
- Legal Trail

Methodology
This map shows areas of resource potential for renewable energy generation from wind, i.e. locations where renewable energy generation would likely be most feasible according to the natural conditions of an area. This map also considers various other conditions, such as ecological zones, that may impact the feasibility of renewable energy development. These conditions are referred to as constraints.

Prime wind
Areas with high wind potential and no environmental constraints.

Secondary wind
Areas with high wind potential and environmental constraints that may pose an obstacle to development. These areas are shown on the map and include the following constraints:

Agricultural soils (local, prime and statewide classifications), FEMA special flood hazard areas, Protected lands, Act 250 agricultural soil mitigation areas, Hydric soils, Deer wintering yards, Highest priority forest blocks

Areas where wind energy is likely unsuitable
Areas with low wind potential or environmental constraints likely to prohibit development. These areas have been removed and are not shown in any way on this map. Environmental constraints are:

Known Constraints:
- Vernal Pools from VCE (None known in Lamoille County)
- FEMA Special Flood Hazard Areas
- Protected Lands (State fee lands and private conservation lands)
- DEC River Corridors
- FEMA Floodways
- State Significant Natural Communities
- Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species
- National Wilderness Areas (None known in Lamoille County)
- Class 1 and 2 Wetlands

Possible Constraints:
- Agricultural Soils
- Act 250 Agricultural Soil Mitigation Areas
- Deer Wintering Areas
- Hydric Soils
- Interior Forest Blocks
- Connectivity Blocks
- Physical Landscape Blocks
- Surface Water

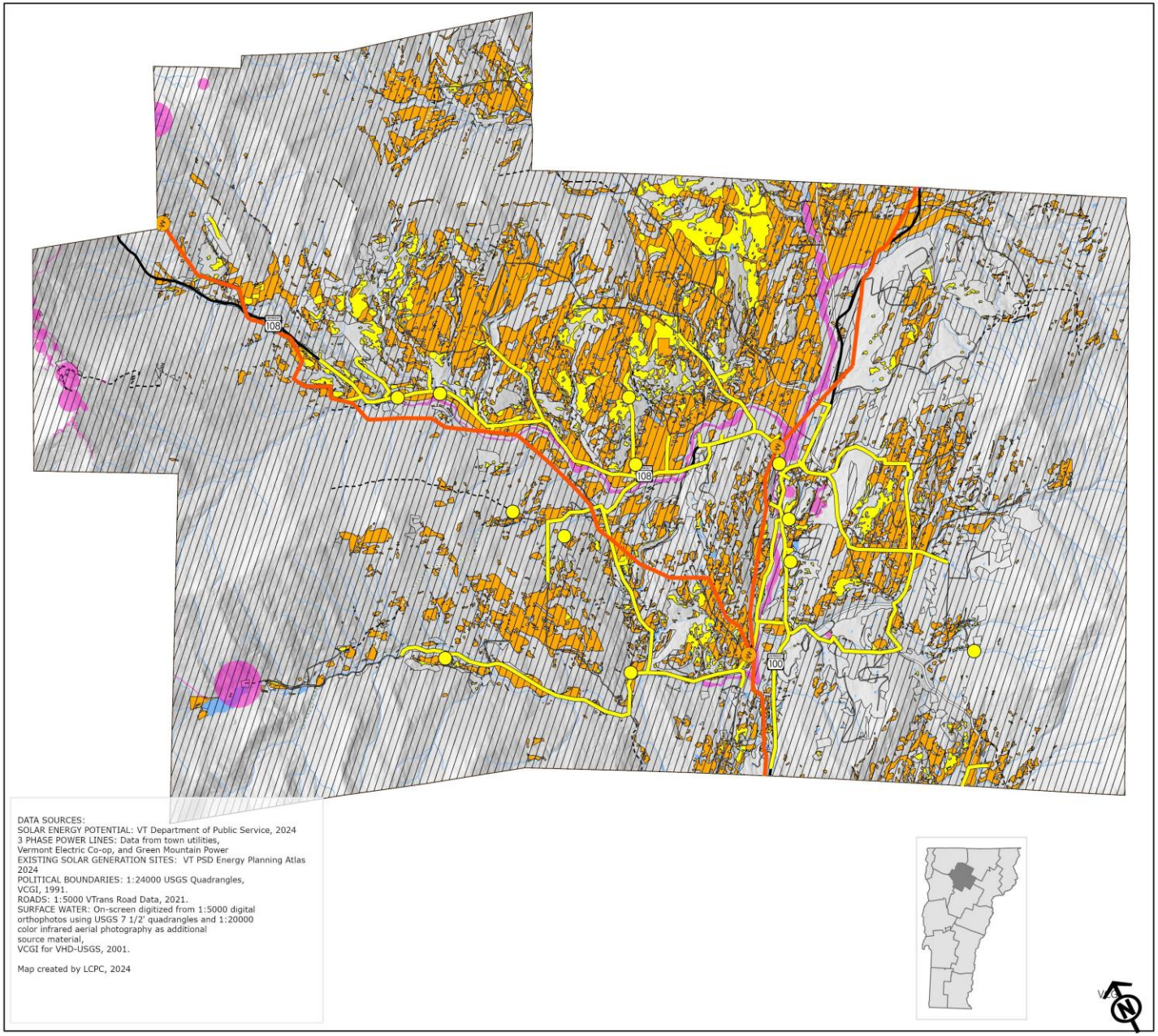
0 4 Miles

DATA SOURCES:
WIND POTENTIAL, SUBSTATIONS: VCGI, 2020
3 PHASE POWER LINES: Data from town utilities, Vermont Electric Co-op, and Green Mountain Power
POLITICAL BOUNDARIES: 1:24000 USGS Quadrangles, VCGI, 1991.
ROADS: 1:5000 VTrans Road Data, 2021.
SURFACE WATER: On-screen digitized from 1:5000 digital orthophotos using USGS 7 1/2' quadrangles and 1:20000 color infrared aerial photography as additional source material, VCGI for VHD-USGS, 2001.
ELEVATION ABOVE 1500 FT: Derived from VCGI LIDAR
1 KM RESIDENTIAL BUFFER: Created using residential locations from E911 site data, VCGI/E911 site board, 2017
Map created by LCPC, 2024

Data has not been field verified and is subject to change. Use for planning purposes only.

VCGI

Map #2



Stowe
Renewable Energy Potential: Solar

This map illustrates potential for energy development but not necessarily suitability

Solar Energy Potential
- Prime Solar
- Secondary Solar
- Unsuitable for Solar Development

Energy Infrastructure
- Substations
- 3 Phase Power Lines
- Transmission Lines

3 Phase power line data for areas served by Morrisville Water and Light was not available.
Solar generation sites with >15kw capacity are shown.
Sites of all sizes are mapped at http://www.vtenergydashboard.org/

Existing Solar Energy Generation Sites
- Solar Energy Generation Sites

- Streams
- Waterbodies
- Town Boundary
- Known Constraints
- Possible Constraints
- State Highway
- Class 2 Road
- Class 3 Road
- Class 4 Road
- Private Road
- Legal Trail

Methodology
This map shows areas of resource potential for renewable energy generation from solar, i.e. locations where renewable energy generation would likely be most feasible according to the natural conditions of an area. This map also considers various other conditions, such as ecological zones, that may impact the feasibility of renewable energy development. These conditions are referred to as constraints.

Prime Solar
Areas with high solar potential and no environmental constraints.

Secondary Solar
Areas with high solar potential and environmental constraints that may pose an obstacle to development. These areas are shown on the map and include the following constraints:

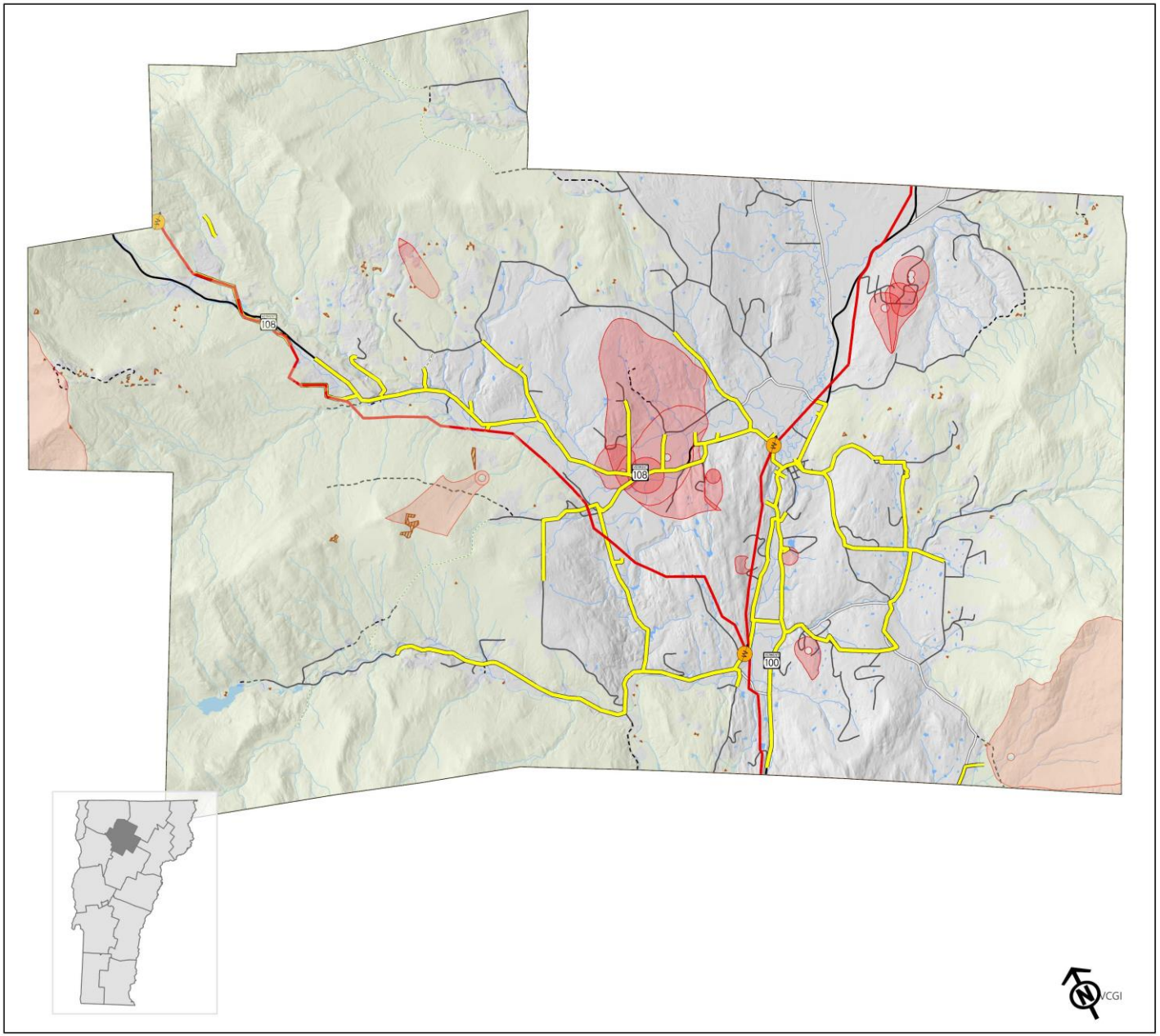
Known Constraints:
- Vernal Pools from VCE (None known in Lamoille County)
- FEMA Special Flood Hazard Areas
- Protected Lands (State fee lands and private conservation lands)
- DEC River Corridors
- FEMA Floodways
- State Significant Natural Communities
- Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species
- National Wilderness Areas (None known in Lamoille County)
- Class 1 and 2 Wetlands

Possible Constraints:
- Agricultural Soils
- Act 250 Agricultural Soil Mitigation Areas
- Deer Wintering Areas
- Hydric Soils
- Interior Forest Blocks
- Connectivity Blocks
- Physical Landscape Blocks
- Surface Water

0 4 Miles

Map #3

Stowe
Renewable Energy Potential: Regional Considerations



Sites identified in Municipalities energy plans as preferred for certain types of energy generation

- Preferred Combined Heat and Power Generation Sites
- Preferred Solar Sites

Energy Infrastructure

- Substations
- 3 Phase Power Lines
- Transmission Lines

3 Phase power line data for areas served by Morrisville Water and Light was not available.

- Streams
- Waterbodies
- Town Boundary

Other Regional Considerations

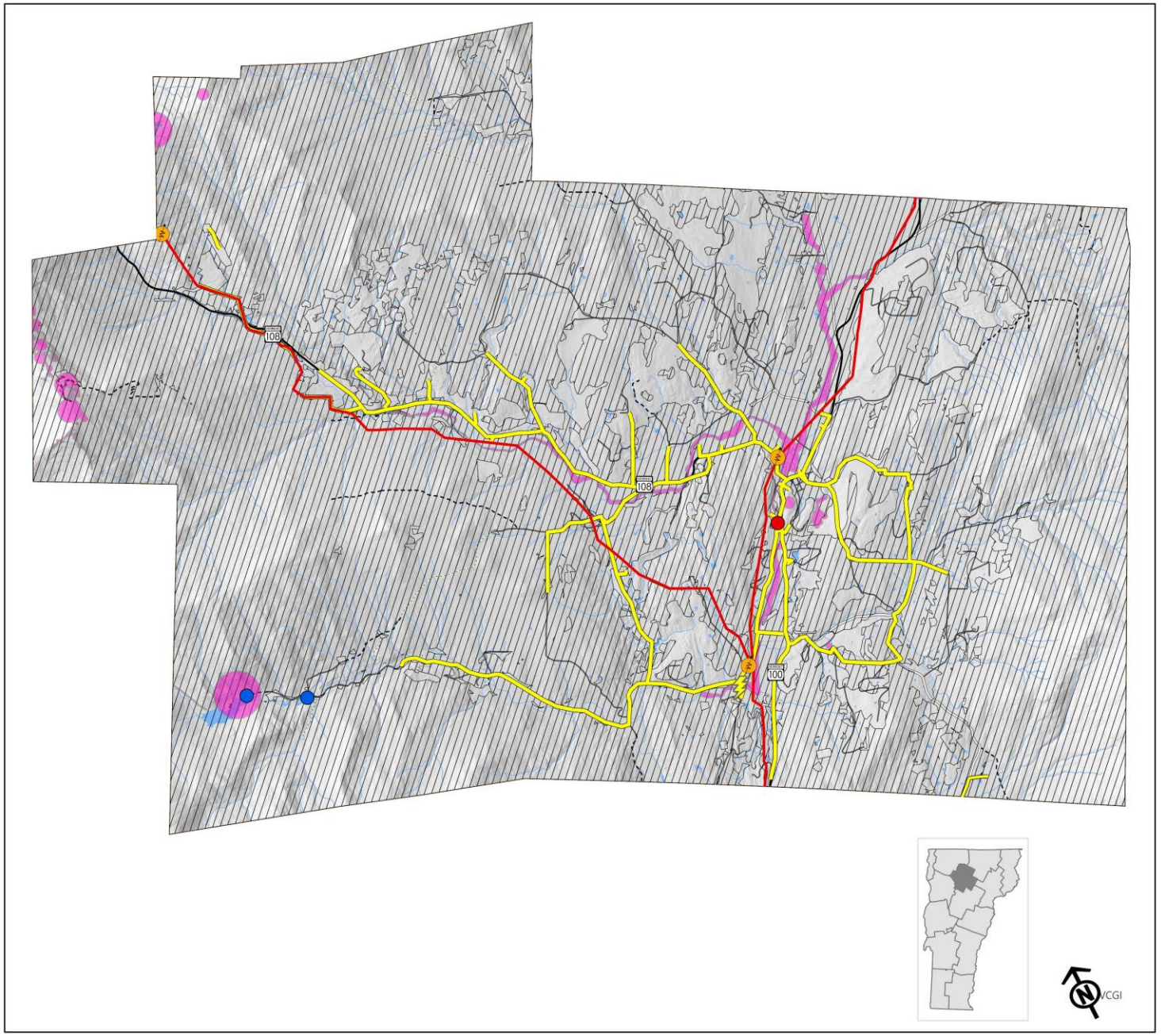
- Ground Water Source Protection Areas: Zones 1, 2 and 3
- Additional High Priority Forest Blocks
- Green River Reservoir
- Highest Priority Forest Blocks

- State Highway
- Class 2 Road
- Class 3 Road
- Class 4 Road
- Private Road
- Legal Trail

DATA SOURCES:
GROUNDWATER SOURCE PROTECTION AREAS: VCGI, 2017
ADDITIONAL HIGH PRIORITY FOREST BLOCKS: Working Forest Lands not within in High Priority Interior Forest Blocks, VCGI, 207
SUBSTATIONS: VCGI, 2017
3 PHASE POWER LINES: Data from town utilities, Vermont Electric Co-op, and Green Mountain Power
POLITICAL BOUNDARIES: 1:24000 USGS Quadrangles, VCGI, 1991.
ROADS: 1:5000 VTrans Road Data, 2021.
SURFACE WATER: On-screen digitized from 1:5000 digital orthophotos using USGS 7 1/2' quadrangles and 1:20000 color infrared aerial photography as additional source material, VCGI for VHD-USGS, 2001.
Map created by LCPC, 2024

0 4 **Miles**

Map #4



Stowe
Renewable Energy Potential: Hydroelectric

This map illustrates potential for energy development but not necessarily suitability

Hydroelectric Facilities

Operational Facilities

Potential sites

<50 kW Capacity

>50 kW Capacity

Energy Infrastructure

Substations

3 Phase Power Lines

Transmission Lines

3 Phase power line data for areas served by Morrisville Water and Light was not available.

Hydroelectric Likely Unsuitable

Areas with low hydroelectric potential or environmental constraints have been removed and are not shown in any way on this map.

Streams

Waterbodies

Town Boundary

Possible Constraints

Known Constraints

State Highway

Class 2 Road

Class 3 Road

Class 4 Road

Private Road

Legal Trail

Methodology

This map shows areas of resource potential for renewable energy generation from hydroelectric, i.e. dams that could be converted into hydroelectric facilities as well as active hydroelectric sites. Existing hydroelectric dam information was extracted from the Vermont Dam Inventory, while potential hydroelectric sites were derived from a study conducted by Community Hydro 2007. Based on estimates conducted within the report, this map categorizes dams based on their potential hydroelectric generation capacity, and the downstream hazard risk that would be involved in hydroelectric production at each site.

Data Sources:

POTENTIAL HYDROELECTRIC SITES: VCGI, 2020
SUBSTATIONS: VCGI, 2017
3 PHASE POWER LINES: Data from town utilities, Vermont Electric Co-op, and Green Mountain Power
POLITICAL BOUNDARIES: 1:24000 USGS Quadrangles, VCGI, 1991.
ROADS: 1:5000 VTrans Road Data, 2021.
SURFACE WATER: On-screen digitized from 1:5000 digital orthophotos using USGS 7 1/2' quadrangles and 1:20000 color infrared aerial photography as additional source material, VCGI for VHD-USGS, 2001.

Map created by LCPC, 2024

0 4 **Miles**


I love _____ about Stowe.
the community
community
What makes Stowe uniquely "Stowe?"
The People
I want _____ in Stowe.
Less tourist
more farms,
cleaner rivers,
Lower taxes,
and Less division
Let's improve _____ in Stowe.
parks & rec - a full
town park with a
playground & pool
What makes Stowe uniquely "Stowe?"
great community
Imagine Stowe in 20
What do you see?
Continued focus
preserving Open
supporting local
businesses
My #1 wish for Stowe is _____.
Keep it
Quintessential Stowe
I love _____ about
Free paperboat
+ own ft.
Block parties
traffic!
please slow down
Share! Drop card at Town Office or snap a pic and submit at stowe2050.org or PandZ@stowevt.gov.
Stowe
2050