

CHELSEA MUNICIPAL PLAN

Adopted April 15, 2008

CHELSEA PLANNING COMMISSION

Phillip Mulligan, Chair
Dick Rogers
Jean Battey
Paul Galdone
Neil Kennedy
Edward Kuban (retired)
Kate Willard
Stan Brinkman
Nyra Whipple (retired)

CHELSEA BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Andy Pomerantz, Chair
Ken Colby
Harry Flint

**This project was partially funded by a municipal planning grant from the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, 2006.
The Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission
supplied staff support in the preparation of this Plan.**

FOREWORD

This is Chelsea's fifth Municipal Plan. In 1973, the Chelsea Selectmen appointed the Town's first Planning Commission. Five years later (1978), a Plan authored by the Commission was duly adopted. The Plan was reviewed and again adopted five years later in 1983, then revised and adopted in 1996. This Plan (as well as the preceding ones) is authorized in Title 24, Chapter 117, Sections 4381 and 4383 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated, allowing a town to carry out a planning program and adopt a plan.

Based on the recommendations of preceding Municipal Plans, Chelsea has adopted three land use tools to safeguard the town's rural character, its historic heritage, and to promote wise land use:

- Flood Hazard Bylaw - adopted in 1972; amended in 1990.
- Zoning Bylaws - adopted in 1978; amended in 1987, 1998, and 2006.
- Design Control District Ordinance - adopted in 1986; amended and incorporated as Article 7 of the 1998 Zoning Bylaw.
- Water and Sewer System Ordinance - adopted August 6, 2002.

This Plan does not recommend additional local regulations at this time. However, possible new regulations are recommended for study where the Planning Commission determined it to be appropriate. The Plan's goals continue to be consistent with the preferences of the Town residents as expressed in the 2006 survey (appended to this Plan as Appendix A) and subsequent expression of preferences in various formal and informal meetings related to the operation of the Town and its facilities. The Planning Commission and the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission have focused their energies on building a base of information upon which planning decisions over the next five years can be made. Some of the recommendations in the Plan suggest that more information be gathered and analyzed.

Important progress has been made during this latest planning effort in preparing accurate resource maps for the Town - a problem identified by previous Planning Commissions. Reduced versions of larger working maps are included in the Plan. In addition, data on the current and future trends in populations, landownership, and taxes has been gathered. High priority issues as perceived by the community are identified in the Plan with recommendations on how these issues might be addressed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. GOALS OF THE PLAN.....	1
A. PLAN DEFINITIONS.....	1
B. GOALS.....	1
C. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	2
II. TOWN SETTING AND HISTORY.....	3
A. SETTING.....	3
B. HISTORY.....	3
III. COMMUNITY PROFILE.....	5
A. POPULATION.....	5
Recommendation.....	7
IV. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES.....	8
A. SCHOOLS.....	8
Chelsea Public School Facilities & Physical Assets.....	8
Enrollment.....	10
Recommendations for Capital Improvements.....	11
Opportunities.....	11
Goals.....	12
Recommendations.....	12
Wellspring School.....	12
Brookhaven Treatment and Learning Center.....	13
B. CHILD CARE SERVICES.....	13
Recommendations.....	14
C. HEALTH SERVICES.....	14
Recommendation.....	14
D. PUBLIC LIBRARY.....	14
Recommendation.....	15
E. CARE (CHELSEA AREA RESOURCE EXCHANGE).....	15
F. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY.....	16
Introduction.....	16
Landline Communications.....	16
Wireless Telecommunications.....	17
Internet Services.....	17
Goals.....	18
Policies.....	18
Recommendations.....	19
G. TOWN GARAGE.....	19
H. TOWN OFFICES.....	19
Goal.....	20
Policies.....	20
Recommendations.....	20
I. RECREATION AND PARKS.....	21
Recreation Committee.....	21
Indoor Facilities.....	21
Outdoor Facilities.....	21
The Commons.....	21
The Town Forest.....	22
Swimming.....	22
Fishing.....	22

Hunting	22
Trails	22
Policy	22
Recommendations	23
J. FIRE PROTECTION	23
Recommendations	24
K. POLICE PROTECTION	24
Recommendations	25
L. SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT	25
Recommendations	26
M. PUBLIC SEWER SYSTEM	27
Recommendations	27
N. PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM	28
Policies	28
Recommendations	29
V. HOUSING	30
A. BACKGROUND AND GOALS	30
B. TOTAL HOUSING UNITS	30
C. TYPE OF HOUSING AND OWNERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS	31
D. HOUSEHOLD SIZE AND HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS	31
E. HOUSING COST, AFFORDABILITY, AND ASSISTANCE	31
Housing Cost	31
Affordability	32
Assistance	32
Goals	33
Policies	33
Recommendations	34
VI. ECONOMIC RESOURCES	35
A. BACKGROUND	35
B. PROPERTY TAX BASE AND BURDEN	35
C. WAGES	36
D. ECONOMIC POTENTIAL	36
E. EARTH RESOURCES	37
Policies	37
Recommendations	37
VII. NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES	39
A. LAND OWNERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS	39
B. FOREST LANDS	39
C. FARMLAND	39
D. HISTORIC RESOURCES	40
Chelsea Historical Society	40
National Register of Historic Places	40
Design Control District	41
Designated Village Center	41
E. WATER RESOURCES	42
Groundwater Protection	42
Surface Water - Flooding	42
Flood Prone Areas	43
Surface Water – Quality	43
F. WILDLIFE	43
G. SCENIC RESOURCES	44

H. GOALS, POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	44
Historic Resources Recommendations.....	44
Water Resources Goals.....	45
Water Resources Policies.....	45
Water Resources Recommendation.....	45
Wildlife Goal.....	45
Wildlife Policies.....	45
Wildlife Recommendations.....	46
VIII. LAND USE PLAN.....	47
A. BACKGROUND.....	47
B. FUTURE LAND USE.....	47
Village Area.....	47
Village Historic Area.....	48
Rural Residential Area.....	48
Flood Hazard Area.....	50
Industrial Area.....	50
C. DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL LANDS.....	51
D. GOALS, POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	51
Land Use Goals.....	51
Land Use Policies.....	52
Land Use Recommendations.....	53
IX. TRANSPORTATION PLAN.....	54
A. INTRODUCTION.....	54
B. EXISTING HIGHWAYS.....	54
State Highways.....	54
Town Highways.....	55
Legal Trails / Unidentified Corridors.....	56
Pedestrian / Bicycle / Recreation Facilities.....	57
Parking.....	58
Public Transit.....	58
Car Pool / Ride Share.....	59
Summary.....	59
Goals.....	59
Policies.....	60
Recommendations.....	61
X. ENERGY.....	62
A. BACKGROUND.....	62
Statement of Purpose.....	62
Energy Demands.....	63
Conservation and Efficiency.....	63
Renewable Energy.....	63
Goals.....	63
Policies.....	64
Recommendations.....	65
XI. RELATIONSHIP OF CHELSEA’S PLANNING ACTIVITIES TO ITS NEIGHBORS.....	66
A. KEEPING THE PLAN REALISTIC AND RELEVANT.....	66
B. NEIGHBORING TOWN’S PLANNING ACTIVITIES.....	66
C. REGIONAL PLANNING ACTIVITIES.....	67
XII. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES.....	68
A. PUBLIC TECHNIQUES.....	68

B. PRIVATE TECHNIQUES	69
Land Trusts	69
Tax Implications	70
Community Land Trusts	70
Recommendation	70
C. FUNDING	71
APPENDICES.....	72
APPENDIX A – PARTIAL LIST OF HISTORICAL SITES	73
APPENDIX B – CHELSEA COMMUNITY SURVEY 2006	74
APPENDIX C – TOWN PLAN MAPS	78
Sources of Information	79

TABLES and FIGURES

TABLE 1 – POPULATION CHANGE 1990 - 2000	5
TABLE 2 – POPULATION PROJECTIONS 2000 – 2020	6
TABLE 3 - COMPARATIVE DEMOGRAPHICS 1990 - 2000	7
TABLE 4 – CHELSEA ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS 2002 – 2006.....	10
TABLE 5 - HOUSING UNIT TYPES	31
TABLE 6 - HOUSING AFFORDABILITY	32
TABLE 7 – SUBSIDIZED RENTAL HOUSING.....	33
FIGURE 1 – 2007/2008 HOMESTEAD EDUCATION PROPERTY TAX RATES	35
FIGURE 2 - CHELSEA TAX BASE - 1995.....	36

I. GOALS OF THE PLAN

It is the intent and purpose of this Plan to guide development and use of land and buildings in the Town of Chelsea in a manner consistent and compatible with the needs and desires of the residents of the Town. In addition, the Plan is designed to promote the public health, safety, efficiency, economy, and general welfare. It is hoped that the development and implementation of this Plan will help the residents of the Town to realize all the benefits of rural life including clean air, clean water and open spaces for recreation, and will promote physical development that will foster a spirit of community among the residents of Chelsea.

A. PLAN DEFINITIONS

Goals, policies and recommendations of a plan must be viewed as an integrated system of statements that have clear relationships to each other and to the body of the Plan. The definitions of these terms must be made clear for the understanding of each plan section as well as the coordination of the plan sections with each other. The terms defined below are used throughout the Plan:

Definitions:

Goal: Why something should be done - the state of affairs that a plan is intended to achieve.

Policy: What should be done - an expression of how to meet a goal.

Recommendation: How should it be done - a specific action that is advised to be taken in order to implement a policy.

Examples:

Goal: Increased public safety for pedestrians.

Policy: All the crosswalks in Chelsea should be painted with diagonal lines to alert vehicular traffic to the crossing of pedestrians.

Recommendation: The crosswalks in front of the greens should be repainted.

The goals, policies and recommendations in the Plan are not listed in ranked order of importance; they are numbered for ease of reference.

B. GOALS

The following items have been identified as the overarching goals of the Municipal Plan:

1. To preserve sufficient space in appropriate locations for forests and agriculture, for residential, recreational, commercial, and industrial development, and for public and semi-public facilities.
2. To achieve the goals of this land use plan through education, facilitation, cooperation and financial incentives.
3. To promote and retain workforce housing.

4. To protect soil, forests, water and natural resources.
5. To protect the historic features of Chelsea, to preserve open space and to provide a sound economic basis for its maintenance, to allow the growth of the Town in a manner that will continue the rural and village environment, to encourage a rational and convenient pattern of settlement, and to encourage and enhance the attractiveness of the Town.
6. To provide adequate and efficient transportation facilities, schools, parks, and other public facilities and to encourage the appropriate and efficient expenditure of public funds.
7. To encourage and give first priority to agricultural and forest uses of suitable lands.
8. To ensure that the Town can adapt to the growth rate in order to be able to provide facilities and services.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

The goals in this Municipal Plan speak directly to protecting those special qualities which Chelsea residents have treasured for over 225 years: its historic village area, rolling farm and forest lands, steep mountain ridges, and clean brooks and rivers. Each of us has a special place in town that we like to visit or just set our eyes upon.

The townspeople have repeatedly endorsed the concept of protecting the landscape and rural character of the Town. The survey of residents conducted in 1992 indicated a consensus for preserving Chelsea's rural character. Subsequent surveys like the one conducted by the Chelsea Facilities Study Committee in 1998, and the *Chelsea Community Survey* that was conducted in 2006, have reinforced this consensus.

The Town has likewise spoken and acted to preserve the historic character of the village through enactment of the Design Control District Ordinance, which was incorporated into the Chelsea Zoning Bylaw adopted at Town Meeting, March 3, 1998, and amended on September 6, 2005.

The Planning Commission recommends that specific actions be implemented over the next five years to promote a balanced approach to growth - supporting both land conservation and sensitive development. The Planning Commission is firmly convinced that such a balance can and must occur through the cooperative efforts of Town leaders, landowners, residents and organizations that promote such efforts.

1. The Selectboard should use its municipal resources and influence to further the goals and recommendations of this Plan. This assistance could be in the form of providing office resources, clerical assistance, fund raising through grants and other sources.
2. Strong consideration should be given to expanding the Administrative Assistant position or retaining a Town Manager to further the goals and recommendations of the Town Plan.

II. TOWN SETTING AND HISTORY

A. SETTING

The Town of Chelsea has an area of approximately 25,655 acres or approximately 40 square miles. The Town is characterized as a rural community. It is located some 35 miles northwest of the intersection of Interstate Routes 89 and 91. Vermont Route 110 is the main artery, which bisects the Town.

Chelsea has a village area of 330 acres, which serves as the focal point for most commercial uses, public buildings, and higher density residential uses.

B. HISTORY

In 1781, the town that is now Chelsea was granted a charter under the name of Turnersburg by the General Assembly of the independent Republic of Vermont.

Settlement was commenced in 1784 and by 1800 there was a listed population of 897 people. 1984 marked the Town's bicentennial. Town government was organized in 1788 and in the fall of that year the town's name was changed to "Chelsea" by petition to the General Assembly. Most of the early settlers here were of English descent and came here from lower New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. It is thought the name Chelsea was promoted by former residents of Norwich, Connecticut.

A unique feature of Chelsea village is the two commons, or "greens", as they were called in the early history of the Town. North Common dates to 1795 when the Town purchased "a piece of land for a public parade", paying five pounds, English money. In 1802, a prominent early citizen of the Town gave land to erect a courthouse and jail and for a "new common" which when cleared became the South Common.

From the early settlement on, the town has had a farm-based economy, evolving through subsistence farming, grain farming, sheep raising and eventually to dairy farming. In 1880, there were 200 farms in Town. Various changes and pressures have reduced the number of working dairy farms in Chelsea. The 1960s began the decrease in Chelsea's agricultural economy and land use. The bulk tank requirement of 1962 contributed to decreases in dairy farming.

Chelsea is located near the center of Orange County and in 1795; it was designated as the seat of county government, thus becoming the "Shire Town" to use an old English term. The courthouse that stands at the head of the South Common was built in 1847, on nearly the same site as the 1801 structure. In 1796, a first jail was erected on nearly the same site as the present one which was built in 1864. Several offices pertinent to county government are located at the courthouse and at other locations around the village.

A Congregational Society was organized in Chelsea in 1789 and in 1989 celebrated its 200th year. In 1813, the group completed construction of their church that stands at the head of the North Common. In 1833, six different religious denominations joined forces to build a Union

meetinghouse on the West Hill. This church, now the West Hill Methodist Church, recently celebrated their 150th anniversary. A Methodist Church was built in 1837 on North Main Street where the Chelsea fire station now stands. In 1929, the two village churches united their congregations. Unable to maintain both church buildings, the Methodist Church was taken down in 1955.

Education was an early priority for New England towns, and Chelsea was no exception. Within ten years of settlement, the Town had erected a schoolhouse in the village. In the early 1800's, when the local population reached its peak of nearly 2,000 inhabitants, the town was divided into 18 school districts and had 17 district schools. There was a Chelsea Academy (1851-1870), from which evolved the Chelsea High School. Since 1971, all students K-12 have been taught at the village school location near the South Common.

Chelsea has received considerable positive recognition for its twin commons and its fine old buildings some dating prior to 1800. Most of the brick buildings were built in the period 1820-1835 with the exception of the Town Hall, which was dedicated in 1894. The local Historical Society was instrumental in establishing a Chelsea Village Historical District; it includes the area between the north and south bridges of the village. The Design Control District Ordinance was adopted in 1986 and then amended and incorporated into the 1998 Zoning Bylaw as Article 7. In 1982, several village buildings were nominated for their historical significance, and in late 1983, the Society was notified that the local Historic District, encompassing nearly all of the central part of the village, had been officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places in Washington, D.C.

III. COMMUNITY PROFILE

A. POPULATION

The following quote typifies the Town's sentiments on growth in Chelsea:

“I like Vermont because it is quiet, because you have a population that is solid and not driven mad by American mania - the mania which considers a town of 4,000 twice as good as a town of 2,000...”
Sinclair Lewis, 1929

From 1990 to 2000, the population of Chelsea increased from 1,166 to 1,250; this was a growth rate of 7.2%. Chelsea grew at nearly the same rate as Orange County, 7.9%, but slower than Brookfield, Corinth, Strafford, Tunbridge, Vershire, Washington, West Fairlee and Williamstown. Randolph had the slowest rate of growth, only 1.9%.

	1990 Census	Census 2000	% Change
Bradford	2,522	2,619	3.8%
Brookfield	1,089	1,222	12.2%
Chelsea	1,166	1,250	7.2%
Corinth	1,244	1,461	17.4%
Fairlee	883	967	9.5%
Orange	915	965	5.5%
Randolph	4,764	4,853	1.9%
Strafford	902	1,045	15.9%
Thetford	2,438	2,617	7.3%
Tunbridge	1,154	1,309	13.4%
Vershire	560	629	12.3%
Washington	937	1,047	11.7%
West Fairlee	633	726	14.7%
Williamstown	2,839	3,225	13.6%
Orange County	26,149	28,226	7.9%

Source: US Census

Population projections only serve as a guide. Many things can change a projection dramatically. The completion of a road, addition of a school, development of a major employment opportunity, drop in interest rates, or the introduction of tax investment credits for business could spur new development in an area above and beyond “typical” projected rates. In the future, Chelsea may become affected by the continuing out-migration to rural areas from employment centers like Montpelier, VT or Hanover, NH because of their very high housing and land costs as compared to Chelsea.

The U.S. Census Bureau estimated the 2005 population for Chelsea to be 1,256; this was nearly identical to the 2005 population that was projected for Chelsea, 1,255. Chelsea is projected to grow slower than the state and county, and much slower than the high growth towns, with growth projected to decline over the next ten years.

Table 2 – Population Projections 2000 – 2020									
	Census 2000	Projection				% Change			
		2005	2010	2015	2020	2000-2005	2005 - 2010	2010 - 2015	2015 - 2020
Bradford	2,619	2,656	2,699	2,742	2,786	1.4	1.6	1.6	1.6
Brookfield	1,222	1,272	1,308	1,338	1,365	4.1	2.9	2.3	2.1
Chelsea	1,250	1,255	1,251	1,248	1,247	0.4	-0.3	-0.3	0.0
Corinth	1,461	1,525	1,574	1,621	1,678	4.4	3.2	3.0	3.5
Fairlee	967	999	1,025	1,050	1,074	3.3	2.7	2.4	2.3
Orange	965	1,001	1,029	1,056	1,083	3.8	2.8	2.6	2.5
Randolph	4,853	4,849	4,845	4,855	4,869	-0.1	-0.1	0.2	0.3
Strafford	1,045	1,086	1,104	1,125	1,153	3.9	1.7	1.9	2.5
Thetford	2,617	2,682	2,724	2,775	2,835	2.5	1.6	1.9	2.2
Tunbridge	1,309	1,353	1,374	1,388	1,409	3.4	1.6	1.0	1.5
Vershire	629	670	701	731	763	6.6	4.6	4.2	4.3
Washington	1,047	1,087	1,111	1,129	1,147	3.8	2.2	1.6	1.6
West Fairlee	726	779	823	868	915	7.3	5.7	5.4	5.5
Williamstown	3,225	3,377	3,501	3,614	3,718	4.7	3.7	3.2	2.9
Orange County	28,226	28,976	29,544	30,122	30,737	2.7	2.0	2.0	2.0
Vermont	608,827	625,935	639,241	652,199	666,041	2.8	2.1	2.0	2.1

Source: Developed by MISER for the Vermont Department of Aging and Independent Living, 2003.

A comparison of Census data in Table 3 shows that over the past decade the size of the children’s populations (less than 5 years old, and under 18 years old) grew smaller as the 65 and over population grew larger. The median age in Chelsea (41.6 years) was older than that of Orange County (38.6) and the State (37.7). A smaller percentage of the population graduated from high school or college between 1990 and 2000. The percentage of family households decreased while the pattern of housing tenure (owned or rented) remained relatively stable over the decade.

Table 3 - Comparative Demographics 1990 - 2000			
		1990	2000
Age:	Under 5 years old	7%	5%
	Under 18 years old	28%	25%
	18 years old and older	72%	75%
	65 years old and over	16%	19%
	Median Age	47	41.6
Education Levels:	Less than Grade 9	7%	8%
	Grade 9-12	8%	10%
	High School	46%	38%
	Some College	9%	16%
	Associates Degree	8%	7%
	College	12%	16%
	Graduate or Professional Degree	9%	6%
Household Information:	Family Households	74%	65.5%
	Non-Family Households	26%	34.5%
	Median Family Income	\$30,238	\$40,625
	Percentage Working at Home	7.4%	4.2%
	Average Commute Time	22.8 minutes	26.2 minutes
Housing:	Median Home Value	\$81,900	\$90,300
	Owner Occupied	77%	75%
	Renter Occupied	23%	25%
Economics:	Job Growth	1.70%	
	Projected to 2010	14.40%	
	Property Tax/1,000	2.02	
Cost of Living versus the US Average:	Transportation	103.40%	
	Housing	129.99%	
	Utilities	129.60%	
	Groceries	104.90%	
	Health	117.30%	
	Miscellaneous	105.30%	
	Overall	112.57%	

Source: US Census

Recommendation

1. The Planning Commission and School Board should work with state and local officials to estimate the age breakdown of the expected population increase to determine what demands will be placed on the school system and other public services, housing needs, and on the tax base.

IV. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

A significant portion of this chapter of the Municipal Plan has been generated with the help of the following individuals who served on the Municipal Facilities and School Resources Committees that formed after the Vermont Council on Rural Development Community Visit in 2005.

Bethann Finlay	Helen Heslop	Alan Ackerman	Kevin Marshia
Lynn Amber	Betsy Button	Stan Brinkman	Rhoda Ackerman
Dan Breslaw	Joe Spinella	Chris Byrne	Mark Lembke

A. SCHOOLS

Chelsea Public School Facilities & Physical Assets

The Chelsea Public School and the Chelsea community share many ties; some even consider the K-12 school to be the heart of our rural, close-knit community. The school is viewed as a community center, a gathering place for events during all seasons, a meeting place for community-based organizations, and a central site for recreational activities. Chelsea residents have long displayed an appreciation for the unique kind of education afforded by a small school along with a willingness to support the school, both financially through taxes and donations, as well as philosophically, through volunteerism, in-kind gestures, and intense interest.

The buildings and grounds of the Chelsea Public School have changed in recent years, creating a campus-like atmosphere. Physically, the main difference is that there is no longer thru traffic permitted between the school and the gymnasium. The roadway that intersected the grounds at one time has been eliminated. The original school building is the two-story wooden building, which faces the south common. It was built in 1912 and houses grade K-5 classrooms, elementary Special Education classrooms, a foreign language classroom, and the elementary guidance office. The basement level of the building hosts the school's cafeteria and the middle and high school Special Education classroom.

The newer brick wing, which extends south of the original building, was built in 1977-1978. It connects the original school with an Industrial Arts facility (40' X 80') built in 1970. This wing houses the school library, administrative offices, the middle and high school guidance office, the school nurse's office, staff and student restrooms, as well as eight classrooms. The Industrial Arts facility has been converted into two classrooms and one workshop, as there is presently no formal Industrial Arts program. While it is disappointing to many faculty, students, and community members that a formal Industrial Arts program is no longer active, many trade skills are encouraged throughout the curriculum. A shining example of this is the middle school post and beam construction program, in which students have designed and built a number of impressive, post and beam structures. The K-12 art classroom and a student lounge are also located in this section of the building. Attached to the southeast end of the building is a 13' X 16' room, constructed in 1988, which is currently used as office space.

The school gymnasium is the other main building on campus. It was built in 1951 and later expanded upon in 1984. In addition to the main gymnasium/auditorium space, the building also houses the K-12 music classroom, boys' and girls' locker rooms, restrooms, the physical education teacher's office, and a coach's room. The stage area is currently used as a classroom space. In September 2001, the wooden gym floor was sanded down and resurfaced. It is refinished annually. A heavy-duty plastic cover protects the floor during non-athletic events. The gymnasium boiler was also replaced in 2001. During the summer of 2006, the main lighting in the gymnasium was replaced with energy efficient fixtures.

A new approach to the gym was designed and constructed in 2004. A universally accessible ramp and two-tiered angled concrete stairway now form the perimeter of an outdoor courtyard between the school and gym. A roof covers a portion of the ramp, which runs parallel with the gym and the general entrance area to the gym. Sidewalks delineate paths between the two buildings and various plantings by staff and students have significantly enhanced the entry points of the school. Teachers often host classes outdoors in this space, students enjoy lunches on picnic tables and benches, and safety is preserved with the elimination of thru traffic.

Adjacent to the gymnasium is the Roberts-Gould baseball field, which is owned by the Town of Chelsea. New dugouts, an equipment storage shed, and a concessions stand have been built in recent years to neatly house the varying functions of athletic events. The baseball field is used by the high school baseball team, as well as the senior baseball league, town team baseball league, and Babe Ruth baseball team. The school leases a field from the Brookhaven Episcopal Home for Boys, at no charge. The field is located ½ mile north of the school on Route 110 and is used for soccer and lacrosse practices and games. The school also utilizes the Heath Recreation Field south of the village on Route 110 for soccer and lacrosse.

The summer of 2007 brought the greatly anticipated installation of a new school playground. Thanks to the fundraising efforts of the Friends of Chelsea School and monies earmarked in the school budget, Phase One of Chelsea's School's new playground came to life with extraordinary volunteer efforts and donations from the greater Chelsea community. The main structure features four slides, multiple climbing towers, monkey bars, and a climbing wall. New swings were also installed in the shade of the maple trees on the south boundary. In addition, the middle school post & beam program designed and built an open-sided pavilion building, which is intended for shaded reading, games, outdoor performances, and outdoor classroom sessions. The structure will be an integral part of developing a new sense of space on the school playground; it is located on the plateau overlooking the playground. Additional elements of the new playground include a stand-up sandbox, a newly paved area for basketball, four-square, hopscotch, and jump roping, and a large log for climbing and exploring. Future phases of playground development focus on bringing natural elements to the playground landscape to encourage activities to stimulate students' minds and senses in non-traditional and thought-provoking ways. Potential examples include relocating the school gardens on playground space, bringing electricity and water sources to the playground, and inventing innovative ways to involve local businesses and community members in sponsoring interactive elements.

The playground project is directly tied to the reorganization of the school's rear parking lot, located at the south end of the building. The present drop-off and pick-up scenario before and

after school is considered unsafe because there is no physical coordination of the space at the front or rear of the building. The bus-loading zone in the rear parking lot cannot safely coexist with staff/student parking and parents entering the parking lot to pick up students.

Enrollment

The future direction of the Chelsea Public School has indeed reached a crossroads of sorts. Declining enrollment, which is being experienced as a state-wide trend, combined with the challenging realities of an aging building, an increasing diversity in the needs and interests of students and their families, and higher expectations for public education, are all contributing to larger conversations about how Chelsea can best educate its children.

Enrollment for the 2006-2007 school year for grades K-12 was 195 students. This breaks down into 73 elementary students (K-5), 24 middle school students (6-8), and 98 high school students (9-12).

Declining enrollment at area schools as well as increased competition among area high schools, both public and private, has produced fewer tuition students from Chelsea's sending schools, which include Tunbridge, Washington, Corinth, and Orange. A relatively stable percentage of students continue to attend Chelsea from each sending town, but the overall number of students is down, resulting in smaller tuition numbers. In 1989, Chelsea experienced an all-time high in enrollment, serving 354 students. At this time, the school had reached its maximum capacity.

Table 4 – Chelsea Elementary and High School Enrollments 2002 – 2006					
School Participation Information	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	Vermont 2005 - 2006
Total School Enrollment	236	236	237	207	96,636
Attendance Rate	94.30%	94.00%	95.20%	94.70%	95%
Retention Rate	0.40%	0.40%	1.30%	1%	2.90%
Estimated HS Cohort Graduation Rate	73.20%	86.40%	95.20%	N/A	N/A
Student/Teacher Ratio	10.7	8.7	9.7	8.2	11.3
Eligible Special Education	10.60%	10.20%	11.00%	15.90%	14.30%
11-12 Technical Education Rate	5.20%	12.10%	12.30%	6.50%	11.00%
9-12 Dropout Rate	5.60%	2.50%	1.70%	1.90%	3.10%
Home Study (Number)	3	5	6	4	2,138

Source: Vermont Department of Education

The school faculty consists of approximately 24 full time teachers, one principal, an elementary guidance counselor, a middle/high school guidance counselor, and a K-12 student support specialist, along with various educational support staff, which can change each year based on need.

Recommendations for Capital Improvements

At the March 2007 Chelsea School District Meeting, voters approved an allocation of \$22,536 to a Capital Reserve Fund, specifically earmarked for making school building improvements. This money was generated by a budget surplus in the 2005-2006 school year. An additional \$5,000 was added into the budget as revenue under a line item for the construction on the new playground. This brings the school budgeted commitment to the playground fund to just over \$14,000 total.

The school board's intention is to prioritize building improvements for implementation in the near future. The improvements identified at the present time include:

- Replacement of the existing lobby entryway to include new metal doors, frames, and glass.
- Reorganization of rear parking lot to include bus loading/unloading zone, parking, and overhead lighting.
- Installation of air conditioning/heat in administrative offices & server hub area.
- Installation of tile in main hallway.
- Installation of additional new roofing on brick building.
- Installation of additional insulation in school and gym.
- Installation of new boiler and ventilation system.

Opportunities

There are several opportunities for the community to become involved in and with the school, from volunteering to read with children, joining a class for lunch in the cafeteria, or serving as a mentor for a student project. Teachers welcome hands-on support as well as the opportunity to bring local expertise into the classroom. The great successes of the FEED program (Food Education Every Day) in past years is a shining example of the breadth and energy the community can bring into the school and the school can bring out into the community.

Other areas of constant need in the school include: coaching, after school enrichment activities like the former Math and Chess Clubs. Extra-curricular programs such as the annual school musical, debate & forensics, outing club, and student councils have seasonal needs for volunteers as well. In addition, with the lack of a formal Industrial Arts program, the school appreciates the possibility of forming relationships with local builders, contractors, and trades persons to provide students with exposure to more hands-on forms of learning.

Another great way to become involved is by becoming a member of the Friends of Chelsea School organization. This group provides fundraising and morale support to the school as a

whole through scholarships, stipends for field trips and special projects, and school spirit-boosting activities.

Goals

The Chelsea School Board's energy has become increasingly focused on fostering a stimulating, cooperative, and nurturing culture within the school, operating on the belief that in a school with a positive self image and a commitment to academic rigor and community-minded relationships, opportunities to enrich student experiences will be abundant, yet individual. Conversations within the community and within the school have begun to center around a proactive approach to celebrating our small K-12 school in unique ways to not only remind ourselves why we might support its continuation, but also to serve as indirect positive publicity for the kind of education we can offer in a broadening world.

As the Chelsea community prepares for the future, conversations that have been postponed in the past about the town's ability to maintain its K-12 school are increasing in momentum and necessity.

The school board is actively engaging in discussion with the school faculty, students, parents, and the community about what we, in the Chelsea community, value in our small school. Threads from these discussions will inform our searches for leadership as well as our path toward an inherently local form of education, an extended possibility of consolidation, or some combination thereof. The school board passionately encourages and appreciates input from the school community.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the Chelsea School investigate Economic and Policy Research by Jeff Carr that projects which careers will be most needed in Orange County in the next decade and share this with junior high and high school students.
2. It is also recommended that Chelsea Scholl take advantage of the local technical career center to expose all students to technical and vocational offerings.

Wellspring School

Wellspring School is a 501(c)3 educational non-profit organization serving families with children up to grade eight. Wellspring is committed to the development of the emotional, practical, intellectual and spiritual qualities of the child through Waldorf education.

Currently, Wellspring has 19 children (four from Chelsea) in the Early Childhood programs and 42 children (six from Chelsea) in the grades one to seven. Over the past three years an average of 18.6 percent of our students have come from Chelsea, the rest primarily come from nearby towns.

Wellspring has some combined classes and currently has a faculty of six class teachers and five part time "specials teachers" for Spanish, Handwork, Woodworking, Outdoor Education, and Strings. The School has one full time administrator and a part time outreach and enrollment

coordinator. The school has a volunteer Board of Trustees to oversee administrative and financial concerns.

Wellspring is planning for slow growth to 85 students in the next five years. It is looking for a new location as the current buildings located on the South Common which have limited indoor and outdoor space.

Wellspring is funded through tuition pledges, work exchanges and annual fundraising. It is committed to serve all families who want a Waldorf education for their children, regardless of income.

Brookhaven Treatment and Learning Center

Brookhaven is located on 170 acres in Chelsea with the buildings being located on the north end of Main St. The land includes a large playing field, swimming brook, hiking trails, garden and other recreational fields as well as our new pavilion over the basketball court. The Brookhaven Board of Directors oversees the programs.

Brookhaven has two Programs:

1. **Residential Program** - The residential program serves ten boys, ages six to fourteen, who are victims of abuse, neglect and / or diagnosed with emotional behavioral disorders. Many of the boys referred to us have school related issues, are unmanageable in their homes and communities. The therapeutic milieu consists of a 24 hour structured environment. Individual, group and family therapies, confidence and community building activities, and self-management are integral to the program.
2. **Brookhaven Learning Center / Dr. Brewster D. Martin Learning Center** - The Brookhaven Learning Center is an independent school with a therapeutic and family based educational curriculum for residential and day students. Teachers utilize diverse teaching methods to present our curriculum and meet the goals of each child's Individual Education Plan (IEP). Teachers are trained to consider the emotional state of each student and to tailor educational expectations and teaching strategies to each child's level of functioning. Brookhaven is licensed to accept 14 day students in grades K-8.

B. CHILD CARE SERVICES

With 96% of the workforce working outside the home, it is important to assure that quality and convenient childcare is available within the town for working families with children. Current childcare programs fulfill some of the need for full-time, part-time, after-school and pre-school childcare, but there remains a need for year-round childcare programs for children of all ages (especially infants), preferably located close to village centers.

According to *Vermont Child Care: A Survey of Market Rates and Capacity*, 15% of school-age childcare facilities, and 39% of infant care facilities in the state, have to turn away families that request services due to lack of capacity. Data from the Vermont Bright Futures Child Care Information System reports that half of the licensed child care providers or registered homes available in Chelsea provide services only during the school year. Presently in Chelsea, full-time

childcare services are provided by three licensed Early Childhood Programs – Orange County Parent Child Centers at the Chelsea Playschool and the First Branch Early Education Program, plus the Wellspring School’s kindergarten. Only the First Branch Early Education Program takes infants. There is one registered home that provides full-time services in Chelsea.

Recommendations

1. The Town of Chelsea should encourage and support the creation of additional childcare facilities that meet the diverse requirements of the working population.
2. The Town of Chelsea should support the creation of licensed childcare facilities that are run from the home as home occupations.

C. HEALTH SERVICES

Chelsea is fortunate to have its own medical care facility in town, The Chelsea Health Center, established in 1953. The Center is a non-profit organization that leases the facility to The Gifford Medical Center. Two practitioners provide services at the center, Monday through Friday. A new health care center is under consideration.

Other health services available to Chelsea residents include:

- **RIVERBEND** - provides residential care primarily for elderly persons not able to be at home, 23-bed capacity.
- **FIRST BRANCH AMBULANCE** - volunteer, 24-hour emergency service, the fee is based on ability to pay.
- **VERMONT-NEW HAMPSHIRE VISITING NURSE ALLIANCE** - provides care for patients in their residences, based in White River.
- **HOSPITAL SERVICES** - Central Vermont Hospital, Berlin; Gifford Hospital, Randolph; Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, Lebanon, NH.
- **DENTAL SERVICES** - available in Barre, Montpelier, Randolph and Royalton.
- **SENIOR CITIZEN CENTER** - providing meals twice weekly, monthly blood pressure checks, flu shots, and foot clinics.

Recommendation

1. People are living to be older. In order for older people to continue to stay in their homes, it is imperative that all of the services currently available continue to remain in place.

D. PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Chelsea Town Hall and Public Library was built in 1894 with a gift of \$5,000.00 from Alden Speare and a matching \$5,000.00 from the Town. One hundred and fourteen years later, it continues to operate in the same location.

The Library currently houses over 6,000 volumes of books, in addition to a growing collection of video/DVD and audio materials. Our staff consists of both a part-time librarian and a part-time assistant librarian, along with a core group of dedicated volunteers. Annual circulation and

patron visits have continued to increase since the last town planning report in 2000. For the year ending 2005, circulation was 13,274 and patron visits topped 6,280. Circulation increased 25% from the year 2000, while patron visits showed a nominal rise in numbers. The Library extended its hours in November of 2001 with the help of a grant from the Freeman Foundation, and continues to remain open for 20 hours per week.

Over the past year, the library has offered many services and featured a number of library programs for all ages. Free Internet access for the community via two computer workstations, with wireless service will be made available before the end of the year. Through the inter-library loan program, the librarian is able to procure books outside of the local collection from the statewide library system. The library also participates in the new Vermont Online Database, which provides patron access to an enormous collection of full-text periodical articles. The twice monthly children's hour has been well attended. For the second year in a row, the library hosted a summer story tent at the weekly Farmer's Market on the North Common. In addition, the library hosts an adult book discussion group.

The most ambitious endeavor over the past two years has been the catalog and circulation automation project. This project is in the final phase of updating collection records and installing the necessary hardware and software. Our hope is to do the installation and have the system up and running by spring of 2008.

The Trustees of the Chelsea Public Library continue to recognize the need for additional space for books, a growing video and audio collection, work and storage space for the librarian and a need to accommodate additional computers. We have participated in meetings of the Town's Facilities Committee, discussing and investigating different options for integrating our space needs with those of other town entities. The Library is currently housed in a space of less than 1,000 square feet, but could optimally use more than 4,000 square feet.

Recommendation

1. Pursue expansion of library resources to meet the future needs of the community.

E. CARE (Chelsea Area Resource Exchange)

CARE (Chelsea Area Resource Exchange) began in January 2006 as a coalition of community organizations, mostly human service groups, meeting to share ideas, increase communication, and become familiar with the services each provides for area communities. It was born out of multiple responsive partnerships between groups who intersected regularly, but not purposefully. The intent was to foster exchanges of information and resources, stimulate cooperation, and minimize duplication of programs and services.

CARE was awarded a Vermont Department of Health CHAMPPS grant (Coordinated Healthy Activity, Motivation and Prevention Programs) which funded the hiring of a coordinator and establishment of an office space in town. The membership of CARE is expanding to include all organizations and individuals in Chelsea, Washington, Tunbridge, and Vershire.

The immediate work of CARE, in its capacity-building phase, is to conduct an extensive survey of the community to assess its strengths, needs and opportunities, identify issues to address, and formulate goals and strategies. A subsequent implementation grant would enable the organization to provide resources to its partners in working towards those goals.

The long term mission of CARE is to facilitate consistent, comprehensive communication and coordination of programs, services and activities in the Chelsea area in order to maximize resources and enhance community wellness. It should be noted that CARE values facets of our community that are not traditionally associated with health and wellness, such as employment, education, and transportation, recognizing that these areas indeed have great bearing on health and wellness.

CARE aspires to become a permanent, central hub in the community: a clearinghouse of information and a resource for supporting activities by facilitating collaborations and securing funds.

F. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Introduction

Information Technology (Voice and Data Telecommunications, Broadband Internet) has become increasingly important to the economic needs of residents and businesses in Vermont. Likewise, telecommunications infrastructure and services are key elements in supporting the present and future economy in Chelsea.

Advancements in technology and the availability of powerful, yet relatively inexpensive equipment have allowed the development of an “Internet Economy”. Telecommunications reduce demand for travel thereby creating new opportunities for the relocation and growth of decentralized business operations. Businesses are now able to use broadband internet and telecommunications infrastructure to conduct the types of business that were previously infeasible in a rural state. The Vermont Telecommunications Plan (VTP) cites that this “Internet Economy” was responsible for a major increase of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the late 1990s, jumping from a growth rate of 2.4 percent per year to 4.1 percent per year.

With the increasing economic dependence of this technology, it is clear that Chelsea, and Vermont as a whole, must continue to keep pace with advancements in technology to be a desirable place to do business in the U.S.

Landline Communications

Landline communications (the traditional, wired connections that most people have in their homes) have been the backbone of United States communication activities for decades. Even as wireless communications revolutionize the way people keep in touch, landlines continues to provide critical functions. Without the capabilities of landlines, our country would not have the tools to evenly distribute power across the nation. Emergency services depend on landlines for the “traceability” of 911 information. The medical industry depends on landlines for linking health care providers and networks of information.

Over ninety-seven percent of all households have access to traditional landline telephone services. Chelsea is currently served exclusively by Verizon.

Wireless Telecommunications

As Chelsea's cell phone coverage is limited at best, most residents are unable to use cell phones as part of their day-to-day activities in Town. The cell phone tower nearest to Chelsea is in Randolph Center, but the distinct north-south hills that make up much of the local topography eliminates most possibilities of finding reasonable coverage unless the user is on top of the ridge between Chelsea and Brookfield. Within Chelsea's village, there is no cell coverage.

There has been concern about the proliferation of cell phone towers throughout Vermont. Tower height and the number of towers for wireless services has been a matter of public controversy in recent years. In a poll conducted as part of the Vermont Telecommunications Plan, 45.6% of Vermont residents indicated a preference toward a larger number of short towers, compared to 38.9% who favored fewer larger towers and 16.7% who wanted neither option.

In Chelsea, a careful balance between those concerned with the impacts of cell towers and those who demand improved infrastructure needs to be considered. State statute prohibits the exclusion of cell towers in towns through zoning or other bylaws, but rigorous regulations can have the effect of zoning towers out.

Internet Services

The internet has become a useful tool for business in Vermont. Manufacturing is dependent on information technology and business-to-business networking. Broadband internet connectivity fills a dual role for hospitality and tourism, providing a key marketing channel as well as an important amenity for travelers. In Vermont between 1999 and 2002, there was a 40% increase in businesses making business-to-business transactions over the internet.

Options for Internet access include:

- Landline dial-up
- Cable
- Digital Subscriber Line (DSL)
- Satellite
- Wireless

While access to the internet is available to Vermont residents virtually everywhere, broadband access is more limited. According to the Vermont Telecommunications Plan, in Orange County, 42% of the total population (28,226) have access to DSL or Cable. In Chelsea, broadband internet is provided by Charter Communications, Inc. via their cable service.

In the past five years, wireless internet has become a popular alternative to traditional methods of receiving broadband internet. Remote access wireless (or wi-fi) is commonly used either in the home or office, or as a service provided by a business such as a coffee house or internet café. Wi-fi technology has advanced and is now able to operate on a much larger scale. Throughout

Vermont, small companies are developing fixed wireless internet systems that make high-speed internet access possible in the most remote areas of a town or region. These Wireless Internet Service Providers (WISPs) may offer the best potential to get high-speed internet access to the entire region. WISPs in the Upper Valley region include Finowen, WaveComm and New ISP.

During the drafting of this Plan, a new option has appeared that could offer Chelsea residents an exceptional source of broadband internet – Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH). FTTH is a fiber-optic network connected all the way to the subscriber's home. It is the most reliable, fastest technology available. At present, the East Central Fiber Network (a coalition of Upper Valley towns that includes Chelsea) is working with broadband provider Burlington Telecom to create a FTTH broadband service that would serve a wide area in the Upper Valley. Although this organization is only in the early stages of its development, the quality and speed of FTTH presents a vast number of possibilities for broadband internet use in a very rural area.

Goals

1. Continue to keep the telecommunications element of the Chelsea Zoning Bylaw relevant and up-to-date with current technologies.
2. Facilitate the provision of telecommunications services to the residents and businesses of Chelsea.
3. Direct the location and design of towers to keep them out of sensitive areas, including schools, historic and highly scenic areas, as well as protect environment and natural resources, through the Chelsea Zoning Bylaw.
4. To enable new economic opportunities through the use of landline telecommunications technology and maximize existing infrastructure.
5. To enable new economic opportunities through the use of wireless telecommunications or FTTH technology.
6. To make high-speed internet access available to most areas in Chelsea.
7. To support the enhancement of the broadband internet network when such facilities do not have significant adverse environmental, health, or aesthetic impacts.

Policies

1. Actively participate in the Act 250 review process on wireless telecommunications facilities proposed for Chelsea and the surrounding area.
2. To support the State of Vermont in its maintenance of a Statewide Telecommunications Plan.
3. To support the development of a fiber network when such facilities do not have significant adverse environmental, health, or aesthetic impacts. A wireless network is a second of fallback option.

Recommendations

1. The Town of Chelsea should participate in efforts to bring a last-mile fiber network to residents.
2. The Town of Chelsea should facilitate the development of cell phone towers to enhance coverage in the village.

G. TOWN GARAGE

Background

The current Town Highway Garage is located on a lot in the center of the Village south of the Chelsea Country Store. The lot runs from VT RT 110 back to the River behind the building. Located directly behind the building is the Keyser Well one of the Towns two sources of Municipal water which currently provides approximately half of the Towns Water. The area in front of the Garage is used for public parking. The building is a 1600 square foot metal building on a badly broken concrete slab. The building was constructed in the 1930's. For many years the building was used only for cold storage until the town changed from contracting equipment from the Road Commissioner to having a Road Foreman and owning equipment of its own. Recent renovations have been made to the building to improve insulation, replace doors and add a small office space and bathroom to make the building useable until a new facility is constructed.

Current Space and Situation

The building is viewed by the Town to be substandard in all regards, and replacement has been identified by both the Town Facilities Committee and Select Board as a Priority for the Town. The current space only accommodates 3 of the 8 pieces of Equipment owned by the Town with the balance being stored outside at two separate sites. The building is grossly energy inefficient resulting in operating cost that is extremely high for a building of this size. The badly broken concrete floor makes maintenance of equipment and clean up very difficult.

Safety issues are a major concern with the Town's water supply directly behind the building and with equipment traffic in a very busy pedestrian and parking area in front of the garage.

Currently there is a significant amount of effort to settle on a new site that will accommodate the town's road equipment, the garage and the sand pile. Designs for the garage have been drafted and it is hoped that by the end of the year the voters will commit the funds necessary to move to construction in early 2008.

H. TOWN OFFICES

Chelsea's present Town Hall was built in 1894. At the time the building contained a public library, as it does today, but not the Town office (in those days Town Clerks generally worked out of their own houses). In approximately the 1940's an office and vault were fitted into the left front circular corner of the building, opposite the library. As it was still customary for the Town Clerk and Treasurer positions to be held by the same person, this space was adequate until recently. In 1995 the workload of each position had expanded enough so that the Town was

forced to split the two positions. At that point, the space was accommodating the Town Clerk, Treasurer, and 3 listers - an impossible situation. In 1998 a separate space was rented for the Treasurer's office.

Presently the office and vault space in the Town Hall totals 244 square feet and is shared by the Town Clerk and 3 listers. The two-room Treasurer's office across the street consists of approximately 120 square feet of office space and 100 square feet of storage. This office is shared by the Treasurer and the auditors; the Selectboard also holds its meetings there. The Planning Commission meets in the Library, as do other Town committees generally.

The space in both facilities is inadequate. The Town Clerk and Listers office is especially cramped. When the Listers are working, it is very difficult for the Clerk to conduct business with the public. Storage has reached a point of crisis. The under counter shelves are completely filled, while the shelves of the vault are full to overflowing.

The Treasurer's office is somewhat less crowded with regard to working space, but storage is problematic. The Treasurer's office is inadequate as a space for Selectboard meetings; when attendance is large, there is no room for the public.

A Town Office under one roof, designed with current and future needs in mind, would be ideal. Work spaces for the various officers need to be larger and better linked together. There should be access to a conference table as well as a space for public meetings. Better located and equipped computer stations would make work more efficient. Adequate storage space is critical, and should be located where it can be easily accessed by all Town officers. It should be noted that even if the Library were to vacate, there may not be room for work and storage needs within the confines of the Town Hall building.

Goal

1. Develop more Town Office space that is efficient and welcoming.

Policies

1. Actions should consider all town facility needs and assets for coordination and development.
2. Town Offices should be kept in the village.
3. The historic town hall exterior should be preserved.

Recommendations

1. Engage in a capital budget plan to assess the scope of office possibilities. Investigate short term design and storage solutions.
2. Use Facilities Committee report dated February, 2007 as a launching point to continue to explore needs and solutions.

I. RECREATION AND PARKS

Recreation Committee

The Chelsea Recreation committee exists to encourage and support recreation for all ages in the Chelsea community. This organization was formed in 1994 and took on the task in of establishing and maintaining the Heath Recreation Area. Fund raising for over 10 years has created a perpetual care fund established to ensure the maintenance of these fields.

The Chelsea Recreation committee supports summer and winter basketball camps as well as a 2 week long summer camp and one week soccer camp. Other activities too numerous to mention have been supported by CRC as the season or people demand.

Indoor Facilities

- The Town Hall auditorium houses a full-sized proscenium stage and balcony with limited back stage space. The main floor is often used for dances and private parties. The forced air heating system has recently been changed from a wood fired operation to an oil fired system. This has made preparing the hall for functions much simpler.
- The Chelsea School Gym is used primarily by the school, but is also heavily used in off hours by town recreational teams and informal sport activities and performances.

Outdoor Facilities

- The Robert Gould field - a baseball field located at the school grounds.
- The Brookhaven field - used for softball, lacrosse and soccer by the school and recreational users. This field is owned by the Brookhaven Home for Boys and rented by the school; a longer lease would be desirable.
- The Heath Field that serves the town Little League is located south of the village beside the sewage treatment plant. In 1999, this was expanded into two fields with room for parking and public picnic area. A volleyball court was added in 2001.
- Horseshoe pits, also located by the sewage treatment plant, are used frequently.
- The Atwood lot - directly across from the bank in the village center has an outdoor asphalt basketball court, a swing set and other playground equipment for young children. In the winter, the basketball court is flooded for ice skating and lighted at night. During 1996, through community efforts, the playground was significantly improved.
- School Playground - located on the south end of the school grounds has a slide, swings and various climbing structures which are being upgraded in 2007.

The Commons

The two Village Commons are important public space used for a variety of activities from picnicking and Frisbee throwing to the weekly summer farmers market and the annual flea market. The Park Commission has made the commons more users friendly with benches and trash barrels.

The Town Forest

The Town owns 2 parcels of forest land in the south east corner of town. One parcel is approximately 20 acres and the other approximately 330 acres. Currently little recreation use is made of these parcels except for an occasional skier in the winter. A new ski trail was developed in the spring of 2007 which might inspire more use.

Swimming

At present, the Town has no public swimming facilities. Private ponds, nearby lakes and the First Branch are currently the only available areas for swimming. The Recreation Committee provides lessons at summer camp.

Fishing

Fishing on the First Branch of the White River and its tributaries is a popular activity for residents and visitors alike. There are a number of parking places along Route 110 that provide access to the First Branch. The First Branch is a public water way along the highway and, therefore, available for public use at the points where the highway borders the water. On other river sections, the landowner determines fishing access. Sections of the river have been specifically reserved for Chelsea's young people including:

- A Children's Brook for children under 13 has been designated from the Bobbin Shop bridge to the Brookhaven Dam;
- There is also a fishing access south of the village on the First Branch of the White River, which is owned by the State of Vermont (approx. 1 acre).

Hunting

Many local visiting sportsmen hunt within the Town's boundaries, deer and grouse being the most sought game. At this point, access to land for hunting does not appear to be a concern. Nevertheless, as land has become divided into smaller parcels for residential development, increasingly gets posted, and houses and camps press into the back woodland, availability of land for hunting and other recreational use has been jeopardized. In more populated Vermont communities, this scenario has proven to be the case. The Chelsea Fish and Game Club own 155 acres on the East Randolph Road where there is a rifle range which doubles as a great sliding hill in the winter. The Club completed a new clubhouse in 2001.

Trails

A large network of Town trails and old roads provides access to most of the Town's backcountry. Designated trails are open to snowmobilers and are open as well to hikers, skiers, and horse riders. Excessive rutting and washing by four-wheel drive vehicles is a problem in some cases.

Policy

1. It is Town policy not to abandon Class 4 roads and trails if they have recreational and/or historical value.

Recommendations

1. Because the school gym is heavily booked in the winter months, expansion of recreational activities might occur in the Town Hall if supervision is provided and costs are covered.
2. During the warm months, Routes 110 and 113 bring large numbers of bicycle tour groups through Chelsea. It is recommended that any State highway improvements include a bicycle lane to make the highways safer for both motorists and bikers.
3. A recent survey done by the Parks and Recreation Committees revealed a desire on the part of many for walking trails, for bicycle trails and for X-country ski trails. These should be part of a long-range plan for the community.
4. Install a sign to identify public fishing access on Route 110.

J. FIRE PROTECTION

Volunteer personnel and the equipment of the Fire District Number One provide fire protection for the Town. The Fire Station is located near the center of Chelsea Village on Rt. 110. It is fully insulated wood-frame structure of 44 by 140 feet with 5 bays, set back 30 ft. from the street. All the fire fighting apparatus is housed within this building along with rented space used by First Branch Ambulance. The department has 28 volunteers. The communication system consists of a two-way radio system hooked up with Rockingham Barracks State Police that is being upgraded to allow direct communication with mutual aid departments.

The Fire District has an agreement with the Town of Washington to respond to calls south of the height of land and has a mutual assistance agreement with the Tunbridge Fire District and Vershire Fire Department. Further, the District is a member of the Capital Fire Mutual Aid System.

In 1995, the Municipal Water System was completed along with a very adequate fire hydrant system. In 1995, the Department purchased an air compressor for breathable air. This gives the Department the capability to refill the air bottles on the self-contained breathing apparatus used by firefighters. In 2001 the District approved the purchase of a 1,250-gallon tank/ 1,250 GPM pumper with the ability to accommodate 5 firefighters in full gear in the cab to replace a worn out 1966 vehicle.

EQUIPMENT	YEAR
300 GPM 288-Gallon Tank Truck	1982
2000-Gallon Tanker with 1000 gpm pump	2007
1,250 GPM Pumper 1,250-Gallon Tank Truck	2001
1000 GPM 1000 Gallon: Tank Truck	1993
2 Portable Pumps; Trash Pumps	
1800 Gallon and 2000-Gallon Portable Tanks	
Air Compressor for Breathable Air	
1 Winter Rescue Sled	
1 30kw back-up generator	

Recommendations

1. Ensure adequate water supplies for fire fighting and protection throughout Chelsea. The Town should carefully evaluate fire flows for developments that will be served by a community water system and, if possible, hydrants and sprinkler systems should be installed. For developments with on-site water, the Planning Commission should require, as a part of subdivision approval, the installation of fire ponds and/or dry hydrants when recommended by the Fire Chief. Construction of new ponds should be coordinated with the Fire District to equip dry hydrants where appropriate.
2. Carefully evaluate road and driveway access to proposed developments for fire trucks and other emergency vehicles. Fire trucks are very large vehicles that travel at high speeds enroute to a fire. The safety of the firemen and the expensive trucks should not be endangered by roads and driveways, which are too steep or narrow, or in poor condition.
3. Require installation of smoke detectors and sprinklers in new construction. Smoke detectors are inexpensive, easy to install and should be required in all new, renovated or enlarged buildings. Sprinkler systems should be required for any new large commercial/industrial buildings and school buildings. Retrofitting existing buildings should be promoted.
4. The District should continue to manage its financial affairs, anticipating the need for additional or replacement equipment and planning accordingly. It should monitor the availability of grant money for equipment and training and apply when possible.
5. The Zoning Administration process should be modified to assure the District is notified of approvals for new structures or major modifications to existing structures in order for it to update its firefighting plan and, where appropriate, offer advice to the applicant on modification that would improve fire safety.
6. Although the recent implementation of enhanced 911 has had some positive effect on response, the District should continue to monitor improvements in the technology for efficiently responding to unfamiliar locations aided by on-board automated mapping and guidance equipment.
7. Although the Town has six dry hydrants, more should be pursued.

K. POLICE PROTECTION

The Orange County Sheriff, Chief Deputy Sheriff and an Administrative Manager provide police services for Chelsea and 16 other towns. The Orange County Sheriff's Office and adjacent facility are located in Chelsea Village on Route 113 (Jail Street). The police facility consists of a set of four rooms for the office, a block of six cells to accommodate 12 detainees on the ground floor. Detention is limited to 72 hours or to weekend prisoners. A Duty clerk is on duty at this location 24 hours a day to accept calls and dispatch a Deputy if one is available.

There are 30 part-time Deputies residing throughout the County. In addition to law enforcement, court security services and transporting prisoners, the Deputy Sheriffs serve all civil processes and, on request, provide traffic control for public occasions. The Department operates ten motor vehicles with radar; seven have video cameras, and two snowmobiles in enforcing the law within

the 692 square miles, 17 towns and 3 villages that make up Orange County. The Sheriff and Deputies also conduct the D.A.R.E. program in many of the schools in the County to teach 5th & 6th graders how to avoid drugs.

Since State Law does not provide for the County to tax residents for law enforcement expenses, including salaries and equipment, the Sheriff's Department operates under contract to towns desiring their patrolling and response services. Currently, eleven towns including Chelsea are among billed at the rate of \$25 per hour. In addition, the Department contracts for traffic control during road paving, utility construction and other projects at a higher rate. The difference allows the Sheriff to provide law enforcement to towns in addition to the contracted amount. The Sheriff's Department also applies for grants, such as DUI, Safe Highway (Speed Enforcement), Click It Or Ticket, Start (Underage Drinking) and Community Drug Interdiction Program. These grants help provide a higher presence of the Orange County Sheriff's Department throughout the County at no cost to the Tax payer.

During January through October 2007, the Sheriff's Department recorded 345 contacts in Chelsea ranging from citizen assists to vandalism, larceny, disorderly conduct, suspicious complaints, motor vehicle complaints, juvenile problems and cultivation of marijuana and other drugs.

The Town of Chelsea also elects a Constable who provides such services as requested by the Selectmen. The Constable has the authority given by the Selectboard and must have adequate training.

Recommendations

1. The Town of Chelsea Selectmen should monitor Town growth and assess on a regular basis, the adequacy of police protection. The need for additional equipment or facilities for the elected Constable should be part of the annual assessment.
2. The Town presently receives 80% of all traffic fines resulting from citations on town roads. By adopting an amendment to the town traffic ordinance to include the stop signs and speed limits posted on the state roads, the Town can receive a similar return on citations issued on these roads as well, which could be used to increase patrolling if needed.
3. The Selectboard and townspeople should encourage the development of additional activities to provide constructive alternatives for teenagers during evenings and weekends.

L. SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

In the fall of 1992, the town closed and capped its landfill site per Act 78. A fenced area was provided on the same site for collection of solid waste in 4 or 5 dumpsters to be transported by a contractor to a disposal site elsewhere. A trash compactor was added in 1994. The site is available to residents for disposal of household waste on Saturdays. (Most businesses contract their disposal with private carriers.) The initial fee was \$1.25 per 30-gallon container to support staffing of the site as well as the fee to the contractor for removal and disposal. Due to increasing costs, that fee was raised to \$2.00 in 1995 and to \$2.50 in 1999.

Currently, in July 2007, about 15 tons of garbage is collected per week, not including the recyclables. At present, the program is operating satisfactorily with the Town supplementing the collected fees by approximately \$2000 a year. Our recyclables are running about 25% of the total weekly waste stream, which is comparable with other Central Vermont towns. Its capacity is adequate to support population growth in the area for the foreseeable future.

Initially, the only material accepted for recycling was cardboard. During the years between 1992 and 1995 the recycling program was expanded significantly to include newspaper, magazines, boxboard, green, brown and clear container glass, most plastic containers, cans, and motor oil, all at no charge to Chelsea residents. As of April 2007, the money for shipping of recyclables is refunded by Central Vermont Solid Waste (CVSW). Metal, vehicle tires, construction debris and appliances are also accepted on a regular basis for a nominal charge, the money is sent to CVSW, they administer the program. Co-mingling of recyclables began in 2002. A compactor was added for recyclables in 2002.

In the summer of 2005 many Chelsea residents piloted a backyard compost system called “Green Cones”. For \$25 residents of Chelsea were given composting cones for their organic waste. The Central Vermont Solid Waste feels the cones were a success, leading to plans to significantly expand the program throughout the district during the summer of 2007.

In 1999 Chelsea residents and the CVSW cleaned up a large road side dump on the Old Strafford Road as part of the “Adapt a Site” program. Monitors were set up to watch the site. The project was initially a success but roadside dumping still continues in the area, and volunteers again cleaned it in May, 2007.

Mattresses and other furniture are taken from early May until November at a nominal charge.

Recommendations

1. Continue to participate in the Central Vermont Solid Waste District(CVSWD). We support the CVSWD participation in Zero Waste Inc. and their efforts to reduce the waste stream in Central Vermont. In particular we want to see reduced packaging by manufacturers, use of biodegradable packaging when appropriate and an expansion of the bottle bill to require deposits on the drink containers that are currently exempt.
2. Support regional hazardous waste and electronics collection through the CVWD. There is adequate space at the site for electronics collection in Chelsea and we need to offer it in the future.
3. Continue to support the development and increased participation in the recycling effort to reduce the amount of waste that will ultimately need to be transported to a regional site. To encourage recycling the town will continue the present no charge system for recyclables.
4. Continue land application of biosolids from the sewage treatment plant but support education efforts for proper disposal of medicines and heavy metals.
5. Encourage the CVSW to continue their “Adopt a Site” program to clean up road side dumps. Chelsea continues to have problems with the roadside dumping of trash.

6. Continue to support roadside volunteer trash pickups like “Green Up Day”, which has traditionally been the first Saturday in May.
7. Support both the home composting of organic waste and the collection of food waste for large composting projects from Chelsea school and restaurants and stores in town. Encourage the expansions of the green cone project to reduce food waste.

M. PUBLIC SEWER SYSTEM

The Chelsea Village operates a sewage treatment plant to which 269 village properties are connected. The system was constructed in 1974 with a Federal grant and financing by a municipal bond. Operating costs are covered by an assessment of the users.

All other town residents rely on approved on-site treatment systems. The current Zoning Bylaw requires that sewage disposal be by connection to the municipal system or an approved on-site wastewater disposal system. The Water and Sewer System Ordinance (adopted August 6, 2002) requires that any buildings used for human occupancy that are located within 200 feet of a municipal sewer line must use the municipal system and cannot process wastewater with a private onsite disposal system (Article V, Section 1).

The municipal sewer system was designed to process a maximum of 55,000 gallons per day (gpd). At the present time, the system is treating 28,000 gpd, using 51% of the system’s capacity. The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources requires future planning for systems that operate at-or-above 80% of design capacity. An additional 76 housing units could be connected to the system before reaching the 80% threshold in Chelsea - there is a presently unused capacity of 16,000 gpd and each housing unit produces 210 gallons of waste. Stormwater creates high flows of wastewater which indicates that illegal connections to the sewer system (such as by floor drains and sump pumps) still exists in the community. A second clarifier was installed on the system in 2007. Seventy-five percent of the cost of the clarifier was funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Development Program; the other 25% was paid for by the Town. The new clarifier eliminates the threat of river contamination in the event of system failure by providing a back up to the original clarifier. There is no plan to extend the system to serve more rural areas.

Recommendations

1. Town leaders should consider the advantages and disadvantages of encouraging increased density in village being served by the thirty year old municipal sewer system.
2. The issue of stormwater infiltrating the Chelsea sewer system must be addressed.

N. PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM

Since about 1908, privately owned multiple user water systems existed in the village of Chelsea. These were fed by a combination of wells and springs. By 1985, these systems had been consolidated to two, which were then purchased by the town and joined together. Users were charged a flat fee of \$110 per year, as the system lacked meters.

Having been built piecemeal, the system did not provide comparable service to all users, with some suffering low pressure from time to time. Though providing acceptable service to its users, it was operating at or near capacity. This being the case, there was no opportunity to add fire protection to it.

In 1991, the Town undertook the effort to upgrade the system by essentially replacing it. Supported by a combination of Federal grant and bond financing, a contract was let for a new system. The specifications included:

Rate of Flow - 27,000 gallons per day
Storage Tank Capacity - 244,000 gallons
Main Line Capacity - 90,000 gallons

Chelsea has three wells:

The Kennedy Well - 14 gal/min.
The Village Well - 20gal/min
Brookhaven Well 50+/- min.
(Brookhaven Well is not on line but has passed state inspection)
Current daily use is ~23,000gal/day

Construction was begun in the spring of 1995 and essentially completed by year-end. Meters were installed for each user. Fire hydrants were also installed thus improving fire protection for the village. The system user and not the town-at-large are financing these improvements. The Selectboard does not foresee any immediate needs for further improvements. Long-term needs do include, however, securing additional water supplies to the system.

Currently there are 219 users, with some residents opting to continue using their own wells or springs instead of hooking up.

When fully operational with adequate well water supply, the system should have about 25% of excess capacity, enough to support expected growth in the area served for the foreseeable future.

The Town Zoning Bylaws have provisions to protect the sources of water for this system.

Policies

1. In order to prevent contamination of this vital resource, it is critically important that all Town and other public wells be protected from pollution.
2. Should it be determined that the system can withstand a sizable increase in use, any large expansion of this system should be paid for by the parties benefiting from the expansion.

Recommendations

1. The Town's Zoning Bylaws should be modified to ensure protection of the Town's Well Head Areas and aquifer recharge area as defined by the Town of Chelsea Water System Source Protection Plan. This should include a requirement for the Zoning Administrator to notify the Chief Operator of the water system prior to issuing any permit for projects within close proximity of the wells so that they may identify possible risks to the supply that may result.
2. The Selectboard should consider contracting for a study to determine the effect those new wells would have on the aquifer.
3. The Selectboard should identify future sites for wells for the Town Water System and identify strategies needed to protect these sites.

V. HOUSING

A. BACKGROUND AND GOALS

The following housing goals have been established to guide housing development:

- To encourage safe, decent, adequate and suitable housing for all of Chelsea's residents;
- To conserve and protect the quality of existing residential neighborhoods and to renew or rehabilitate obsolete and deteriorating dwelling units and neighborhoods; and
- To encourage private sector development of new dwelling units compatible with existing neighborhoods.

Many towns in New England have experienced rapid economic growth and residential sprawl over the last forty years. Sprawl is a low-density, auto-dependent pattern of development. Quite often, their present appearance bears little resemblance to the historical development of the town. While Chelsea has not yet experienced a great deal of dislocated development, the potential pressures for it are present. A key element in the character of the Town is its housing - the quality, availability and variety of places for its residents to live. Housing has a large influence on the rate and direction of business and industrial growth.

A major function of planning is to meet two important community goals. First, safe, adequate, and affordable shelter for present and future populations. Second, suitable density and distribution of housing throughout the town. Although the provision and maintenance of a town's housing stock is primarily a private sector activity, the growth and development of housing affects the environment of the town and the facilities and services it provides or will provide. Housing constructed in the absence of adequate planning for public facilities can overburden schools, sewage treatment plants, public water supplies, roads, etc. Poorly located housing can pollute a water supply or destroy an important wildlife habitat. Housing that is inadequate to meet the demand in a town or region can strain adjacent towns and prevent people from living close to their jobs or closer together.

B. TOTAL HOUSING UNITS

From the US Census Bureau:

- 1990 – 610 total housing units
- 2000 – 657 total housing units

8% rate of growth over ten years.

C. TYPE OF HOUSING AND OWNERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS

The 2000 Census reported that 525 units or 80% of Chelsea’s housing stock consisted of single-family homes. In 1990, 465 single-family residences constituted 76% of the total housing stock (610 units). The percentage of mobile homes in Chelsea off-set the increases in single-family development. The table below compares the types of housing units in Chelsea from 1990 to 2000.

Table 5 - Housing Unit Types		
	2000	1990
1-unit detached	79.9%	76.2%
1-unit attached	0.8%	0.3%
2 to 4 units	7.6%	7.0%
10 or more units	4.0%	3.9%
Mobile home, RV, van, boat	7.8%	12.5%

Source: US Census

There were 657 homes in Chelsea in 2000, 528 or 80% were year-round and 129 or 20% were vacation homes. There were 610 homes in Chelsea in 1990 and 124 or 20% were vacation homes. The percentage of vacation homes was constant at the beginning and end of the decade.

D. HOUSEHOLD SIZE AND HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Chelsea, like many communities in Vermont and the nation, has experienced a trend toward a smaller household size. The average household size in 1990 was 2.67; the average household size in 2000 was 2.41. Coupled with any increase in population and the result is an increased demand for housing. This trend also affects the type of units required in Chelsea. Several household types, such as the elderly and single heads of households, have specific housing needs.

E. HOUSING COST, AFFORDABILITY, AND ASSISTANCE

Housing Cost

During the period 1991 - 1995, the average purchase price of a year-round residence on a lot with less than six acres in Chelsea was \$71,500; this average was based on 35 sales recorded with the Vermont Department of Taxes. In 2005 the average purchase price of a year-round residence on a lot with less than six acres in Chelsea was \$94,441; this average was based on 21 sales recorded with the Vermont Department of Taxes. The minimum income level necessary to qualify for a mortgage in this range is roughly \$30,000. A large portion of Chelsea’s tax filers, if they were to purchase housing today, could not maintain the financial commitment needed to purchase a conventional home based upon current values. In conclusion, there continues to be an “affordability gap” in Chelsea’s housing, particularly for younger couples with children and the elderly who are often on fixed incomes.

From a regional perspective, despite the high cost of housing relative to incomes, median housing values in Chelsea (\$94,800) were below the median value for Orange County (\$98,600) and the State (\$111,200).

Affordability

The definition of “affordable housing” is housing that costs the residents no more than 30% of their household income; this applies to households of any income range. The table below compares Chelsea to the county, state, and nation. The percentage of people paying 30% or more for owned or rented housing is higher in Chelsea than it is in the county, state, or nation. Forty-three percent of households renting in Chelsea live unaffordably while 29% of households owning their home area living unaffordably. A quick gage for estimating the number of affordably priced housing units needed in an area is to divide the number of households living unaffordably (spending 30% or more) by three. Applying this rule of thumb to the 2000 Census data for Chelsea would estimate that 18 affordable homeownership units and 14 affordable rental units could be absorbed in Chelsea and lessen the financial burden of escalating housing costs.

Table 6 - Housing Affordability				
	Chelsea	Orange County	Vermont	United States
# of Owner-Occupied Units Sampled	188	4,273	105,962	55,212,108
Owner Households Spending 30% or more on Housing Costs	55	1,039	24,493	12,044,731
Percentage of Owner Households Spending 30% or More on Housing	29%	24%	23%	22%
# of Renter-Occupied Units Sampled	101	2,078	67,193	35,199,502
Renter Households Spending 30% or more on Housing Costs	43	615	25,208	12,969,286
Percentage of Renter Households Spending 30% or More on Housing	43%	30%	38%	37%

Source: US Census

Assistance

There traditionally have been two basic approaches to reducing housing costs for low and moderate-income families, the elderly, and other groups. The first approach involves interest subsidies that reduce interest on mortgages to a level below market interest rates, thus reducing the total costs required to cover home ownership or rental costs. The second approach involves direct subsidies through either a housing authority, private developer, or tenant to cover the difference between what is affordable and not.

The Vermont State Housing Authority (VSHA) manages the Section 8 housing program for Vermont. The program provides rental certificates to families or the elderly who have very low incomes. Qualifying persons receive public assistance in meeting monthly rent. Holders of the

certificates are able to select privately owned housing units and pay no more than 30% of their monthly income for housing.

In addition to the certificate program, there are a total of thirty-six publicly assisted housing units in Chelsea as 2005. These units are funded under the Section 8 program, also. The two subsidized rental housing developments in Chelsea are:

Table 7 – Subsidized Rental Housing

<u>Name</u>	<u>Units</u>
Chelsea Court	24
Hillside Homes	<u>12</u>
	36 Total Units

These projects receive or qualify for operating or mortgage subsidies, which provide housing to low-income families or the elderly.

Goals

1. To continue to promote sufficient affordable primary housing for Chelsea residents by revitalizing existing housing.
2. To help Chelsea remain a well-balanced community that offers housing for all income levels.
3. To encourage innovative planning, design and construction of primary housing which minimizes the cost, energy consumption and environmental impacts of housing.

Policies

1. The distribution of and associated costs to meet the housing requirements of Vermonters are the responsibilities of all Vermonters. Thus, it is appropriate public policy that Chelsea examines its respective role for housing its citizens and encourages Vermont communities to pursue a similar approach. Chelsea should assume its relative fair share of the Region’s low costs housing, but it should not in any case be unduly burdened with uneconomic costs for the provision of such housing. Instead, Chelsea shall be a well-balanced community that offers housing for all income levels.
2. The Town should allow for growth of housing for all incomes levels at a rate consistent with the community’s ability to provide services in a fiscally sound manner and consistent with the other goals and policies expressed in this Plan.
3. Use of public funds in the form of subsidies may be necessary to preserve maintenance of or access to affordable housing. Where such projects involve public funds, they should only be encouraged when these investments result in developments that are affordable on a long-term basis and a clear public benefit to the community can be demonstrated.
4. Priority should be given to the preservation and improvement of affordable housing already in existence. Conversion of such housing to other uses should be discouraged unless there is a clear public benefit resulting.

5. Multiple family housing and senior housing should be encouraged where adequate public sewer and water services are available and access to schools and other services reasonably are afforded.
6. Conversion of larger homes to two and multiple family units to meet the needs of the community is appropriate where the historic character of a building or neighborhood is not unnecessarily destroyed or diminished.
7. The Town should direct residential growth into relatively dense settlement areas to maintain open space and preserve natural areas.

Recommendations

1. As a means of increasing affordable housing alternatives and possibly supplementing homeowner's incomes, educate homeowners on their right to develop an accessory apartment on their owner-occupied single-family residence (24 VSA §4412(E)).
2. Educate homeowners on how to make use of Central Vermont Community Land Trust's "Green Mountain Fund" loan program for housing rehabilitation in Orange County.
3. Investigate the potential to use some of the Town's revolving loan fund for home improvements.

VI. ECONOMIC RESOURCES

A. BACKGROUND

The prosperity of a community depends upon the number and types of jobs available to its residents, as well as the quality of the commercial enterprises in Town. An economically depressed area is characterized by a high unemployment rate, low wages, lack of opportunities for advancement, poor community facilities and services, scarcity of good commercial enterprises and a low standard of living. Conversely, a healthy economy is characterized by vigor and stability; it is comprised of businesses with a good future and that offer good wages and opportunities for advancement. A strong tax base is the result.

Schools, police and fire departments, water and sewer systems and other community facilities often need to be expanded to accommodate the population growth, which accompanies economic expansion.

It is interesting to note that the towns in the Region with the greatest amount of commercial and industrial development also have the highest tax rates, while the towns with the lowest tax rates tend to be small, residentially-based. It appears that the quality not the quantity of the economic development influences the tax rates. This indicates how important it is to evaluate the secondary impacts of proposed development rather than encouraging indiscriminate business growth in Chelsea.

The following information provides part of the data needed to get an objective picture of the state of Chelsea's economy. More information is required, particularly on employment levels, types of employment and individual \family income distribution.

B. PROPERTY TAX BASE AND BURDEN

Chelsea	1.2178
Randolph	1.1041
Royalton	1.8232
Strafford	1.0377
Tunbridge	1.4250
Vershire	1.5595
Washington	.08623

Figure 1 – 2007/2008 Homestead Education Property Tax Rates

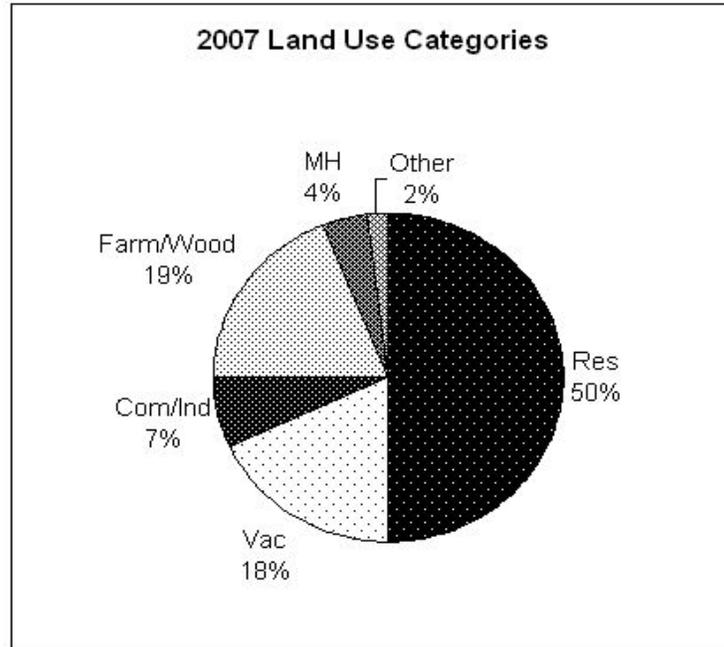


Figure 2 - Chelsea Tax Base - 2007

The 2007 tax base is 50% Residential (R1/R2), 18% Vacation (V1V2), 4% Mobile Home, 7% Commercial/Industrial, 19% Farm, Woodland, Utilities and 2% other

C. WAGES

2000 Census Reports included data on income by Town, County and State. Median family income for Chelsea was \$40,625, compared to Orange County at \$45,771 and the State at \$48,625.

D. ECONOMIC POTENTIAL

Bypassed by the railroad in the 19th century and the interstate highway system in the 20th, Chelsea has never been and is unlikely to become a major economic center. Land and infrastructure for proper commercial and industrial development is lacking, especially in the village area.

Agriculture, small scale commercial and light manufacturing should continue to contribute substantially to the local economy. Entrepreneurial and home-based ventures have the potential to create new local jobs and reduce the need for out of town commuting. Large manufacturing and commercial enterprises are not likely to be attracted to Chelsea, nor are they desirable.

The Town's natural and historical resources are its greatest assets and should be prudently managed, since tourism is one of the most important elements of the regional and local economy.

The presence of three schools and the Orange County District Court helps ensure some commercial viability of the village. Based on the foregoing discussion, the following recommendations have been offered.

E. EARTH RESOURCES

Historically and potentially in the future, the extraction of earth resources was and may be important for the area's economy. These materials provide a resource for local construction and may be used regionally depending on transportation costs. It is important to balance the use of these resources with impacts associated with truck traffic, dust, noise, water quality and aesthetics.

Policies

1. Commercial or private mining and extraction projects shall be reviewed carefully for concerns about safety, traffic, noise and other environmental and social concerns, including aesthetics.
2. Upon completion of excavation or mining activities, the ground surface shall be left in a safe and vegetated condition as close to its natural surroundings as possible.

Recommendations

1. The Town encourages traffic generating industrial growth to take place in the southern part of the Town along Route 110 and discourage strip development along the Route 110 corridor.
2. The Town should work with the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission or the Green Mountain Economic Development Corporation to obtain funds to reserve lands in the Industrial Area for small-scale industrial development.
3. The Development Review Board should review applications for industrial development with careful attention to the environmental and fiscal impacts.
4. The Town should create an ongoing series of events to both promote established local businesses and encourage new ventures.
5. The Town should work to promote and find markets for local agricultural products.
6. The Town should encourage and support the responsible development of the information technology and communication infrastructure necessary for new economic growth.
7. The Town should provide assistance and incentives to entrepreneurs in order to encourage new business start-ups.

Chelsea's local economy was, for many years largely based on agriculture, specifically dairy farming. Since the mid 20th century, farming has steadily declined as an occupation and in economic importance. Remaining, however, is the example of independence and entrepreneurial initiative set by generations of Chelsea farmers. These traits, along with a tradition of connection with the land, are reflected in the range of local occupations and businesses. These are currently estimated to include:

- 6 dairy farms
- 10 individuals engaged in misc. types of farming
- 1 retail Christmas tree farm

10 maple sugar makers
7 loggers
2 sawmills
12 landscape and forestry related services
37 individuals involved in building trades and construction
2 machinists
4 automotive and equipment repair shops
26 miscellaneous service and home based businesses
4 attorneys
5 consultants
7 financial, insurance and real estate services
6 retail establishments
6 businesses providing food and/or lodging
1 branch of a regional savings bank
1 manufacturing facility employing 50 people
1 quarry

VII. NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

A. LAND OWNERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS

Many Vermont communities have been concerned about the loss of local land control due to out-of-state land purchases. In 1995, 68% of the land in town was owned by Chelsea residents; in 2006, 62% of the land in town was owned by Chelsea residents.

B. FOREST LANDS

There are a total of 25,655 acres in Chelsea. Approximately 65% (16,672 acres) of the Town is forested.

Chelsea's forests provide both a source of income for landowners and employment for some members of the Town, particularly foresters and loggers; they also support hunting, hiking, snowmobiling, and other recreational activities. Vital watersheds are protected by our forests, which produce clean, cold water that feeds the first branch of the White River. Critical forested wildlife habitats also exist here. The scenic character of the interspersed forest and farmland in Chelsea is valued by residents and visitors alike.

Chelsea's forests are made up of a combination of hardwoods such as maple, ash, birch and beech and softwood such as pine, hemlock, fir and spruce. The solids are generally well suited for producing high quality timber. As has been the pattern over the past century, farmland continues to be abandoned and reclaimed by the forest. While there is concern for the loss of farmland, the reverting of open land to forest also has benefits as described above. The quality of the first generation timber on this reclaimed land, however, is often poor and can therefore often be of low value.

Threats to the forests of Chelsea currently come from environmental factors such as acid rain, invasive species and developing global climate change. Parcel fragmentation and rural residential development continues to challenge the economic and recreational vitality of the forest resource.

Reduced taxation for forest land is available through Vermont's Current Use Program. In 2007, 11,208 acres of forest land are enrolled. Chelsea also has 237 acres of forest land conserved by private landowners through the Vermont Land Trust and 350 acres in the Town Forest which has been overwhelmingly supported as an important town resource.

C. FARMLAND

Chelsea's quality of life and scenic beauty are directly tied to the working landscape created by the Town's full and part time farmers. A significant amount of acreage is kept agriculturally available by part time farmers and landowners who keep their fields mown. Chelsea's prime and secondary statewide agricultural lands (approximately 700 acres see map #3) are 3% of its total land mass and are widely spread throughout the town. This distribution of quality soils and the small size of the fields make Chelsea unsuited to large scale agriculture but still viable for

smaller niche and specialty producers. Currently most of the dairies in town are marketing or planning to market their milk as organic.

Threats to Chelsea's farmland come primarily from the lack of economic opportunity in the industry. Without viable agriculture the agricultural land often reverts to forest or rural residential uses. Land values for residential use also can create higher one time financial reward for farmland owners than farming will create incentives to take land out of production.

Reduce taxation for agricultural land is available through the Vermont's Current Use Program. In 2007, 4,464 acres of agricultural land are enrolled. Fifty-three acres of farmland has been conserved by private landowners through the Vermont Land Trust, and 975 by the Upper Valley Land Trust.

D. HISTORIC RESOURCES

Chelsea Historical Society

The Chelsea Historical Society, Inc. was organized in August 1960 to gather, preserve and maintain all available manuscripts, photos, documents and artifacts relating to the Town's history. In 1965, the Society purchased the Lewis house on Main Street for storage. The house was kept open daily for one summer, but interest was low and since then is opened on local holidays and by appointment.

The Society has played an active role in local historical observances, such as old Home Days, reenactment of the granting of the Town's Charter (1981), and the celebration of the Town's bicentennial of settlement (1984). In conjunction with the bicentennial, a committee of Society members spent five years writing a history of the Town from 1784-1984.

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's cultural resources worthy of preservation. Established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and administered by the National Park Service, the National Register lists properties of local, state and/or national significance.

In the fall of 1982, the Chelsea Historical Society contracted with the Historic Preservation Division of the Vermont Agency of Development and Community Affairs to examine those properties in Chelsea village that were deemed to have historical significance, and if applicable to nominate them for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. A preliminary survey showed that nearly all the structures in the central part of the village could be included in the nomination. The Chelsea Fish and Game Club assisted the Historical Society in funding this venture. Photographs were taken of all the buildings in the District and written architectural descriptions and special highlights accompanied the pictures.

In November 1983, the local Historical Society was notified that the Chelsea Historic District had been officially entered in the National Register of Historic Places.

Design Control District

Within the Village Area is situated a concentration of historic buildings and sites of exceptional architectural merit. On September 29, 1983, most of these buildings and the Village were entered in the National Register of Historic Places. For the purpose of preserving and enhancing most of these unique historic buildings, the Town, in the mid-1980's enacted a Design Control District Ordinance encompassing most of the Village Historic District between, and inclusive of, the Health Center and Creamery Bridges. The ordinance provides that prior to any exterior renovation of a building or structure, design plan approval is granted by the Development Review Board. Its review is based upon specific criteria to ensure compatibility in design.

The purpose of the Design Control District Ordinance is to:

- safeguard the heritage of the District by providing guidelines and design criteria so future development will be compatible and appropriate with present structures within the District;
- preserve the natural beauty and visual character of the District and thereby foster civic pride;
- strengthen the local economy and its tax base; and
- promote the use and preservation of the Commons and the District for the education, welfare, and pleasure of the residents of Chelsea.

Designated Village Center

In 2006, an area within the National Register District was granted Village Center Designation by the Vermont Downtown Board under Vermont's Historic Downtown Development Act (24 VSA Chapter 76A). Commercial property owners within the designated village are eligible for state tax credits for rehabilitation of historic structures, facade improvements and building code improvements; if the tax credits cannot be used by the property owner, they may be sold to banks. Designated villages receive priority consideration in Vermont's Municipal Planning Grant Program and federal funding programs guided by the Vermont Consolidated Plan, including the Vermont Community Development Program

Historic structures outside the Village include the West Hill Church (1833), the Moxley covered bridge (1883) and certainly some old homes (both frame and brick) that represent certain eras of building in Town.

Other notable historic sites include: the lead mine off Hall Road; the small granite quarry near the Tunbridge Town line; the Justin Morgan Memorial; all of the old cemeteries; early mill remains and sites that backed up water to furnish power to all our early industries until the coming of the gasoline engine. One roadside water tub remains as evidence of a turnpike road on Jenkins Brook Road. Relocated roads are of historic interest and should be recorded on paper or in digital format and, in some instances, are worthy of on-the-site markers.

Details on the seven historic Chelsea sites can be found on file with the Town and the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation, along with sources of information on the Town's history.

E. WATER RESOURCES

Groundwater Protection

Groundwater refers to the water found beneath the surface of the earth, in saturated soils or geologic formations. Groundwater is found in useable quantity and quality in geologic formations called aquifers. Recharge is defined as the replenishment of groundwater in an aquifer. The Town of Chelsea has a number of source protection areas as well as well sites, which should be protected from contamination. Some of these areas and sites have been mapped by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources and are filed with the Agency and the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission. They are depicted on the Utilities, Facilities, and Education map that accompanies this Plan. A town such as Chelsea, which is dependent on a public water supply, should be concerned with protecting its existing and future well fields from inappropriate land uses and development. To this end, the Town has in place a Source Protection Plan approved by the State.

Surface Water - Flooding

The Town of Chelsea maintains a Flood Hazard Bylaw based on the following facts:

1. Flooding is a natural and recurring phenomenon due to variations in rainfall and the volume of surface water.
2. Flooding and lands that are subject to flooding (flood prone lands) serve the following important functions in the regional hydrologic cycle and ecological system:
 - Flood prone lands provide natural storage and conveyance of flood waters;
 - The water on flooded lands may provide recharge to groundwater and is a basic source of flow to rivers and streams;
 - Temporary storage of surface waters on flood prone lands regulates flood elevations and the timing, velocity, and rate of flood discharges;
 - Flood prone lands maintain water quality by reducing erosion, removing nutrients and other pollutants, and allowing sediment to settle; and
 - Natural flood prone lands export nutrients and other food sources to open water bodies and are vital habitat for fish, birds, wildlife, and native plant communities.

Uncontrolled development of flood prone lands inconsistent with their natural functions and improper management of flood waters have the following significant adverse impacts on the health, safety and welfare of the town:

- The owners of homes and business structures located in frequently flooded areas and their customers, guests, employees, children and future generations are subjected to unreasonable risk of personal injury and property damage;
- Roads and utilities associated with development are subject to damage from flooding at great expense to taxpayers and rate payers;
- Flooding of developed properties leads to demands for government of construct expensive and environmentally damaging projects to control flood waters;

- Loss of natural water storage capacity leads to reduction in available water supply, and water quality can be degraded;
- The level, velocity, frequency and duration of flooding on other lands are often increased when flood waters are obstructed, diverted, displaced or channelized;
- Property values are lowered and damaging floods disrupts economic activity.

Flood Prone Areas

Flood prone areas are those areas adjacent to rivers, streams, ponds, lakes or wetlands, which are likely to be flooded due to snow melting, severe rainstorms and other saturation of the soil during prolonged periods of rain. Not all floodplains areas, which have alluvial soil, are mapped as federal flood hazard areas; only areas likely to be inundated during a 100-year flood are shown. Other flood-prone areas have not yet been identified.

Building construction in these areas endangered by seasonal flooding should not be permitted except under stringent controls. The Flood Hazard Bylaw restricts development in the flood hazard area. Continued enforcement of these regulations is essential to enable the property owners in the flood hazard area to qualify for subsidized flood insurance.

Surface Water – Quality

The Town has participated on the First Branch Stream Bank Team to monitor activities that may influence the quality of the environment surrounding the First Branch of the White River, then develop appropriate policies and programs to achieve and maintain as high a quality as possible.

F. WILDLIFE

The presence of wildlife in Chelsea's environment adds an important dimension to the quality of life to Chelsea's human population. Whether for hunting, fishing, photography or simply knowing that Chelsea is a good place for other animal species to live, it is in the Town's interest to work at maintaining a habitat for a wide range of wildlife. Wildlife management requires management of human activities around animals as much as management of animals around human activities. Managing for specific species is not as desirable as managing for the entire ecosystem supporting the species.

Most important when considering development and its impact on wildlife is the concept of habitat fragmentation. Albert Todd, in the February 1999 issue of *Journal of Forestry*, summed up the impact of forest fragmentation: "Forest fragmentation affects water quality and quantity, fish and wildlife populations, and the biological health and diversity of the forest itself. When many small habitat losses occur over time, the combined effect may be as dramatic as one large loss. Forest fragmentation can disrupt animal travel corridors, increase flooding, promote the invasion of exotic vegetation, expose forest interiors, and create conflicts between people and wildlife. Habitat loss reduces the number of many wildlife species and totally eliminates others."

Chelsea's forests, fields, marshes, streams, riverbanks and ponds are home to a variety of species. Nearly all-open space provides habitat for game and non-game species. There are, however, some areas in Chelsea, which provide critical habitat that must remain intact. These areas include wetlands, deer winter yards and remote areas.

G. SCENIC RESOURCES

One of Chelsea's most important assets is the way the Town looks. Its varied terrain and traditional settlement pattern are of high visual quality. Chelsea's individual landscape elements as well as the overall pattern of structures, open space and vegetation contribute significantly to the quality of life and the community's sense of pride. This asset is not a static resource. Though the hills do not change much within a thousand years, the demographics and economics of the town do. Changes in Chelsea's "look" have been slow but steady. The loss of dairy farms over the past 50 years has made cleared land available to forest regeneration and/or homes. Consequently the agricultural New England town image that we value is diminished and continues to be threatened.

New development is inevitable and necessary for a town to survive and can co-exist with traditional and valuable scenic resources. Many new homes in town are built to fit within the scale and character of our existing architecture. Many new residents maintain the open fields that they own.

During 2001, The Parks Commission completed the Chelsea Village Streetscape Master Plan, taking advantage of a grant from the Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program. The plan is based upon the thoughts and ideas expressed by Chelsea residents in a series of public forums and a town meeting survey about the ways in which Chelsea's green spaces and community focal points could be enhanced to create a more attractive and functional village. The plan identifies the village assets and problems, and makes recommendations for changes that could solve problems, and retain and enhance the existing character of the village. It provides an implementation strategy which defines a five year plan of specific actions including planning, funding, construction and planting, and maintenance.

H. GOALS, POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Historic Resources Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the Chelsea Historical Society, in conjunction with the Town's residents, investigate the suitability of eligible structures for National Register landmarking.
2. Create a handout with a map of historic sites and short histories and make it available to the public in stores and at the Town Offices.
3. Notify residents and property owners in the Historic District of grants, loans, and other financial incentives like tax credits for building improvements, etc.

Water Resources Goals

1. To maintain or improve ground and surface water quality and quantity for purposes of recreation, aquatic habitat and drinking water by, among other activities, actively supporting the efforts of the First Branch Stream Bank Team of the White River Partnership.
2. To identify and protect wetlands - that exhibit significant functions and value - from development.
3. To protect flood prone areas from the development of structures, except where development is planned to not impede floodwaters. Structural developments should not be located in a floodway.

Water Resources Policies

1. Land use activities which potentially threaten water quality should be carefully reviewed to prevent degradation of water quality. Potentially harmful activities include, but are not limited to: underground storage tanks, pesticide and herbicide applications, failed septic systems, old industrial sites, road salt, and landfill leachate.
2. Maintenance or enhancement of recreation, fisheries, wildlife habitats, and water quality are high priorities. Land use decisions that impact water should protect these resources.
3. Preservation of the natural state of streams should be encouraged by the protection of adjacent wetlands and natural areas, natural scenic areas, the maintenance of existing stream banks and vegetation, and-wildlife habitat.

Water Resources Recommendation

1. The Planning Commission and other interested parties are encouraged to cooperate at the watershed level to develop a river basin water quality plan for the First Branch of the White River. This effort should be coordinated with the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources.

Wildlife Goal

1. To maintain or enhance the natural diversity and population of wildlife.

Wildlife Policies

1. Development should be designed and sited to preserve contiguous areas of active or potential habitat. Fragmentation of wildlife habitat is discouraged.
2. Along waterways, landowners are encouraged to preserve or create naturally vegetated riparian buffer zones of a width that is sufficient to sustain wildlife mobility.
3. Preference is given to developments that utilize existing roads and field lines.

Wildlife Recommendations

1. The Planning Commission should work with interested parties to inventory wildlife species, sensitive areas, and critical habitats. This information should be considered in evaluating projects proposed in or near these areas.
2. The Planning Commission should consider available wildlife habitat information when reviewing subdivision applications, especially in the rural residential zone. Sources of information include: the Conservation Area and Water Resources Maps of Chelsea; site visits to reveal the extent of edge and/or microhabitat; the Department of Fish and Wildlife provides valuable services at no charge.

VIII. LAND USE PLAN

A. BACKGROUND

The Land Use Plan is the most important section of a Municipal Plan. It is used as a guide for the Town's decision-makers to evaluate development proposals. The Land Use Plan in conjunction with the Town's Bylaws is used to implement the Municipal Plan and the wishes of the community.

The foundation of a Land Use Plan is: (1) a detailed analysis of land use capability; (2) the existing transportation network; (3) the existing land use inventory; (4) the goals of the community. By evaluating these factors simultaneously, it is then possible to determine which areas are appropriate for new or increased development and which ones are unsuitable or should be protected. In addition, this analysis yields specific areas which should be preserved or protected and areas which are inaccessible and unsuitable for any development. The town's goals are then applied through planning tools like established development densities and land use districts for specific uses.

Six land use categories have been defined and mapped in Chelsea. As development proposals come forth for permits and review, it is the intention of this Plan to be a guide for suggesting modifications which will allow the development to occur in a manner consistent with the policies in the Plan.

Chelsea was settled following a land use pattern similar to other small rural New England towns. This consists of a village area compactly settled, surrounded by less dense settlements (rural in character) with large tracts in natural vegetation or forests. Overall, this pattern has proven itself to be of sociological, economical, and aesthetic benefit to Chelsea's citizens. The village of Chelsea provides an efficient place to conduct business and support social and community facilities and services. Accordingly, it is the goal of Chelsea to protect and enhance this pattern whenever practical.

B. FUTURE LAND USE

Based on the Land Use Goals contained in Section D., the following future land use categories are recommended.

Village Area

The existing Village Area of Chelsea centers around two commons, the Court House, United Church and the majority of Chelsea's commercial establishments. Because the Village Area is served by off-site public sewer system with a secondary sewage treatment, higher density and intensity uses are appropriate, providing they are of the same character as the development. Except for the area, which lies in the floodplain, land exists within the Village Area, which is suitable for increased development. Enlarging the Village Area around the margins of the existing district to areas that could be served by the municipal sewer system is also a viable means of meeting the development needs of the town and strengthen the village center.

Commercial development is especially appropriate within the Village Area. It is important for the Town to continue to make public infrastructure investments in the Village area to further induce development. The Village Area should support a mixture of housing types, commercial uses, services, small industry, and community facilities and services. Principal retail establishments should be located in the Village Area or in a designated expansion area adjacent to the Village Area to minimize sprawl and loss of rural character.

Entranceways, the sequence of views as one arrives into, or departs from, Chelsea's village areas are critically important to the visual quality of the Town. Entranceways are where first impressions about a place are formed and are often the visual character non-residents associate with the Town. The views of Chelsea's village directly impact the experience of those places. Views to the wooded hillsides and natural skyline add to the historic character of Chelsea's village.

Village Historic Area

When new buildings or structures are proposed, they should have a design that fits with the area and is sensitive to the character of the neighborhood. Unnecessary destruction of historic structures is discouraged. Public improvements such as bridge rehabilitation or replacement, roadway reconstruction, signage, and lighting should be designed to avoid unnecessary degradation of this recognized historic area.

Rural Residential Area

The Rural Residential Area are all lands not included in either the Village Area or the Industrial Area. This area is predominantly forested and interspersed by farmland, it is also the location for much of Chelsea's housing stock.

This Area can support moderate residential development provided that on-site effluent disposal systems can be operated properly. The least developed portion of the Town typically is severe to moderately inaccessible except by trails and roads that are not maintained by the Town (Class 4). Much of the area is steep and has shallow soils with elevations that range from 1,500' to 2,200' in elevation. Residential density should vary depending upon the limitations found during the detailed land capability analysis and the degree of utilization of cluster housing development. Residential development should occur in a manner that reduces the loss of agricultural and forested land. The fragmentation of quality agricultural and forested lands is discouraged.

Non-residential uses, including service businesses, professional offices, and inns, are acceptable land uses for rural areas provided that such uses are planned as relatively small in size or scale. Major retail enterprises or service centers are not recommended for rural areas and are encouraged to locate within the Village Area or specific areas identified per this Plan.

The shape of Vermont's agriculture has changed and this trend is reflected in Chelsea as well. The amount of land devoted to farming has decreased, as has the number of people making a living from farming. Current dairy producers are mostly moving toward organic production to increase profits and small and part-time farm pursuits directed at non-dairy and specialty markets have found a foothold by focusing on local markets.

The agricultural industry is by no means secure. The industry is facing tremendous economic pressures from market forces outside of Vermont. Much of these are beyond the control or influence of the citizens of the Town. The continuance of agriculture and its related activities define the desired character of Chelsea. These activities allow for rural lifestyles and a working landscape. In order for agriculture to be a part of the Town's economic community, it must remain viable. Access to strong and stable markets, the availability of productive soils, and equitable taxation are key factors.

It is the fundamental principle of this Plan to enable owners of farmland to receive a fair and real return on their investment. To do this, owners of farmland should be given reasonable incentives and freedoms to care for and manage their lands. It is the goal of this Plan to encourage the conservation of the Town's agricultural resources and to maintain an environment that fosters agricultural entrepreneurship.

Local farmers, businesspeople and other community members are helping to build local economic activity to help keep land in working use. Their efforts constitute private, locally-driven strategies that support the Land Use Plan chapter's goal to maintain working lands and the Economic Resources chapter's recommendation to work to create new markets for agricultural products. Their efforts should be supported and expanded. Efforts include: support of organic farming, the farmers market, the Harvest Festival and the school FEED program.

Where contiguous farming activities exist, fragmentation of these areas into uses other than those incidental to agriculture should be carefully evaluated and be discouraged.

To minimize the loss of existing or potential agricultural land within the Agricultural Area, use of cluster housing concepts for non-agricultural activities is the preferred alternative to traditional land subdivision. Through the use of this concept limited development may be provided for as well as the bulk of the resource conserved. When land development is proposed, the construction of utilities, roads, and other physical modifications should skirt tracts of farmland rather than divide them. Recommended uses in this Area are limited to agriculture, low density residential and recreation.

As Chelsea's farm lands have diminished its forest lands have increased. Forest products is a considerable portion of land owner revenues in town and as the forests mature the quality and income from forests can be expected to increase. Chelsea's forests provide both a source of income for landowners and employment for some members of the Town, they also support hunting, hiking, snowmobiling, and other recreational opportunities. Vital watersheds are protected by our forests, as are critical wildlife habitats. The mix of forest and farmland in Chelsea is a scenic benefit that its residents value highly.

Preservation of productive forests will require attention to the same development pressures that are affecting agriculture.

Scenic areas extend to every corner of the Town. Though scenic views are generally agreed upon, they can also be very subjective and personal. Following the goals, policies and recommendations of this Plan will inherently create a varied, interesting, functional and scenic landscape. Preserving a view shed strictly for visual reasons has the potential of reducing the land's uses and productivity and limiting landowner options. Chelsea's scenic resources should be preserved and created by being a consideration in all land use decision-making.

A landscape's scenic quality is an important consideration in land use decision-making. There are many benefits to retaining and improving key elements of the Town's visual quality:

- A high quality Town landscape is one that can be viewed and appreciated by both residents and visitors;
- Retaining a high quality landscape encourages community pride. Chelsea's desire for thoughtful use of its land is closely linked to the high quality in the Town's landscape;
- When seeking to attract development that will enhance the Town's tax base, a community that has retained a high quality landscape will have an advantage over a Town that has not chosen to do so; and
- The development of tourism and tourist related services in a community having an attractive landscape are often possible if the community preserves its landscape.

Flood Hazard Area

The Flood Hazard Area comprises areas along major streams subject to flooding as defined by Federal Emergency Management Agency. Floodplains (flood hazard areas) are that low area adjacent to rivers and streams that periodically become inundated with water during times of high rainfall and spring runoff. They serve to retain water preventing damage elsewhere. Some Flood Hazard Area lands comprise the best agricultural land because of their thick glacial deposits, minimum slope and proximity to surface water.

Development in this Area should be limited in accordance with the Chelsea Flood Hazard Bylaw administered by the Town. Structural developments within the limits of the 100 year floodplain is discouraged. Where such development is to occur, the development should be designed and located so as not to impede floodwaters. No structural development should be located within the actual limits of a floodway.

Industrial Area

The Town recognizes the importance of promoting appropriate industry and providing sound and gainful employment opportunities for its residents. While evidence shows that a majority of Chelsea's industrial job workers have jobs outside of Chelsea, there is a need to provide an area to support industrial activity locally. The Industrial Area has been chosen because of its relative ease of transportation access, power availability, and opportunity to obtain sewer and water services off-site. The preferred uses for this Area include manufacturing and service establishments, corporate offices, and assembly firms. Businesses that are generally classified as clean and non-polluting are encouraged to locate here. Where residential development needs to be accommodated, special considerations for buffering this use from non-residential uses needs to be employed.

During the previous Plan period, the Town took advantage of a grant to develop a land capability analysis as recommended in the prior plan. Titled “Site Feasibility Analysis for Industrial Development”, dated May 1999. In the process, three Town wide Community Forums were held to learn more about how the townspeople felt about economic development and what Chelsea might consider to attract or retain jobs.

C. DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL LANDS

Settlement in the rural areas outside the Village was historically associated with farming and other agricultural uses. This trend has past and now development in rural areas is generally for single-family homes as permanent or vacation residences that are supported by better kept class 3 roads and the wide spread use of four wheel drive vehicles. People wanting to build either a full or part time home in Chelsea tend to prefer the sparsely developed rural lands. Unfortunately, the landscape that was chosen for its bucolic rural qualities slowly begins to resemble more of a suburban setting as large land parcels are divided.

Development of rural lands is driven by willing buyers, a lack luster agricultural economy and Chelsea’s relative proximity to major population and economic centers to the South which keep land values high relative to local incomes.

Poorly planned rural development not only challenges our scenic resources but can also create long term cost for the town through more extensive road maintenance requirements. Fragmentation of land parcels and development are also taxing on the working landscape as smaller lots tend not to focus on forest or agricultural productivity. Wildlife can also suffer as homes move into more remote areas.

The future planning and development of the rural lands in Chelsea should positively contribute to maintaining and creating a land based economy as a strong rural economy is the simplest and most dynamic way to preserve a rural landscape. Farm and forest land, wildlife habitat, historic preservation as well as all of the other land use concerns will in and of themselves, if enabled, create a varied, interesting and functional landscape.

Rural development should be focused on less productive lands and sited to respect the open space qualities of our landscape heritage.

D. GOALS, POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Land Use Goals

1. To provide for development only in areas where roads are readily available and there exists a town financial capacity to reasonably support such development.
2. To protect the character of rural areas and their natural resources by encouraging cluster development.
3. To maintain and enhance the inherent scenic character of the town.

4. To have affordable housing stock available as a means of encouraging community continuity for Chelsea families.

Land Use Policies

1. Developments under Conditional Use, Site Plan, or Act 250 review must honor the historic pattern of a densely settled village surrounded by open lands.
2. Residential and commercial development should be encouraged in the Village District while maintaining the valuable historic qualities.
3. As growth increases, new areas of concentrated development need to be planned and established to provide the opportunity to live compactly and leave open lands undeveloped.
4. Chelsea's important agricultural lands should be recognized for their agricultural value and conserved from development that would destroy their usefulness for growing crops when possible.
5. Future rural development of all types in the town should be planned to keep from materially degrading rural character. Future development should be directed to occur in the following areas:
 - a) Within or adjacent to built-up areas or areas designated for future growth;
 - b) Fields where scenic and agricultural resource values are low;
 - c) Forest lands that are not critical or necessary to wildlife habitats, water supply, or public recreation, including fringe areas.
 - d) Lands where development on the tract is clustered or otherwise allocated in such a manner and intensity so as to maintain the balance of the parcel for productive use and wildlife habitat.
6. In rural areas, the lot size and density of development should be largely determined by the suitability of the land to provide for the proper installation and functioning of subsurface sewage disposal systems.
7. Development should be guided by the land's ability to support it.
8. Slopes greater than 35 percent should be left as open space because of high erosion potential and difficulty for development.
9. Where land development or subdivisions are proposed on prominent landscapes, design plans should retain or enhance the character of the area. Projects that are excessive and unduly compete with the existing natural or cultural features are discouraged.
10. Integral scenic elements of Chelsea's landscape are its views from its roadways and bridges. These features can contribute positively or negatively to a visual experience and the awareness of the landscape. It is in the public interest to retain the special character of many of Chelsea's roads, especially Route 110. Use of design standards scaled to a road's function is encouraged.

Land Use Recommendations

1. The Planning Commission with the advice and assistance of property owners should develop an Open Space Plan. The purpose of the Plan would be to identify those areas in Chelsea ranked highest as a resource based upon relevant criteria.
2. Based upon the findings of an Open Space Plan, the Commission should refine the Municipal Plan to encourage that these areas are provided with an equitable and workable method of protection. Special financial or planning incentives within these areas should be made available for the continuance of these key lands for conservation purposes.
3. The Planning Commission should investigate other areas in the town beyond the village where hamlets or residential nodes might be appropriate. Desirable locations would include but not be limited to: access to good roads and power, septic suitability, environmentally benign sites.
4. The Planning Commission should be investigate development tools such as the Transfer of Development Rights and Planned Unit Development practices that could provide financial incentives for landowners for concentrating development and conserving open land.
5. The Planning Commission should investigate reducing the lot size within the village limits to encourage development.
6. The Planning Commission should investigate extending the Village District to include adjacent areas that could be served by the municipal sewer system.
7. The Planning Commission and the Select Board should support the implementation of the “Streetscape Master Plan”.
8. The Town should review the minimum standards for participation by Chelsea in the National Flood Insurance Program and make any changes to the Flood Hazard Bylaw as required. The Regional Commission can offer assistance.
9. The Town should request that the federal government update and complete the mapping of floodplains in Chelsea and check the accuracy of existing floodplain designations.
10. Chelsea should work to create more markets for agricultural and forest products as a means of preserving a working landscape.

IX. TRANSPORTATION PLAN

A. INTRODUCTION

Transportation is an important component of the economy, safety, land use development and mobility of the all Chelsea residents. The existing transportation infrastructure in Town is comprised of state highways, town highways (gravel and paved), bridges, culverts, legal trails, pedestrian facilities and parking areas. In addition, public transportation is provided in the form of bus service for elderly and disabled residents.

These facilities are assets to our community and region for safety, mobility, land use development and economic prosperity. Investment in preserving and improving these assets is critical to the future of Chelsea.

B. EXISTING HIGHWAYS

There are three types of highway facilities in the Town; state highways, town highways and legal trails/unidentified corridors. This section will address each of these separately.

State Highways

There are two state highways in Town which serve as the towns major conduits in and out of Town; VT 110 and VT 113. There are 6.96 miles of VT 110 beginning to the south in Tunbridge, extending along the First Branch of the White River through the village to the Town of Washington to the north. VT 113 begins at the intersection of VT 110 in the village and extends 3.44 miles to the Vershire town line.

It has been approximately ten years since there were any state roadway or bridge improvement projects on VT 110 or VT 113. During the mid 1990's there was a preventative maintenance project in the village section of VT 110 that addressed the pavement surface and signage. In the late 1990's a much needed project was constructed along VT 110 north of the village that addressed pavement surface, ditching and signing. There are a number of state owned bridges on VT 110 and VT 113. The condition of two of these bridges, one by the Health Center and one by the old Creamery is poor. Evidence of the deterioration of the superstructure of these bridges has been in the form of deteriorating bridge rail and sidewalks, continually necessary patching of the pavement surface and more substantially, a hole opened up through the entire concrete deck on the weekend of the Tunbridge Fair several years ago.

Over the past decade, traffic volumes have steadily increased on both of the state highways in Town. Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) is the measure used to define the amount of traffic on a section of highway normalized over the course of the year. The AADT on VT 110 ranges from 1,300 vehicles per day at the south end of the town to 2,500 in the village. The AADT on VT 113 ranges from 1,300 in the village to 950 at the Vershire town line.

It is in the Town's best interest to continue to communicate any concerns or needs to VTrans and the Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission. As improvements on the state system are identified and as projects move forward, it is important that the Town work closely with

VTrans to ensure that any improvements are consistent with keeping in the context of our historic community.

Town Highways

There are 70.4 miles of town highway in Chelsea. Per state statute, there are four classifications of state highways. The Selectboard, with concurrence from the Agency of Transportation (VTrans), has the authority to determine the classification of a town highway.

Class 1 town highways form the extension of a state highway and carry a state highway route number. Chelsea does not have any Class 1 roadways.

Class 2 town highways are selected with the purposes of securing trunk lines of highways from town to town and to places which by their nature have more than the normal amount of traffic. Three Class 2 town highways totaling 8.76 miles exist in Chelsea. Two are paved, Upper Village Road and East Randolph Road; and one is gravel, Brook Road.

Class 3 town highways are all traveled town highways other than class 1 or 2 town highways. The minimum standards for class 3 highways are that it be negotiable under normal conditions all seasons of the year by a standard pleasure car. There are 51.28 miles of Class 3 town highways in town.

Class 4 town highways are all highways not classified as class 1, 2 and 3 town highways or unidentified corridors. There are 10.96 miles of Class 4 town highways in town.

The Town has 5.2 miles of paved town highways; Upper Village Road, East Randolph Road, Maple Avenue, Highland Avenue and around both Commons. Over the years, the Town has maintained these sections of paved highway in fair condition with the assistance of grant money from VTrans. The East Randolph Road is the most difficult of these highways to maintain due to the higher truck volumes, roadbed materials, presence of water along the hillside in some areas and highway geometry.

In coordination with the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission, all town highway drainage structures were inventoried in the summer of 2006. These structures consist of various types and sizes of bridges and culverts. The size, type, location and basic condition of approximately 620 of these structures was recorded and mapped. These drainage structures, although seldom visible to the passing motorists, are critical assets to the highway system.

There are a number of bridges on town highways in Chelsea. The Town has invested in a number of these structures over the past decade that will preserve their service life for many years to come. Improvements include; a new bridge deck and beams on the bridge at the east end of the Bobbinshop Road, a new large culvert and headwalls on the Bobbinshop Road (just west of Dodge Road), a new bridge over the Jail Brook on Spear Road, a new bridge deck on the bridge over the brook at the east end of the Upper Village Road, a new bridge deck on the over Jenkins Brook on Town Farm Road. Many of these improvements have been partially funded by grants through VTrans' town highway programs. This type of proactive bridge maintenance and rehabilitation is important to maintain a good condition of these structures.

In addition to the road structure, culverts and bridges; highway signs and guardrail are critical highway assets. Signs and guardrails are safety hardware that provide warning to motorists and protection for those vehicles that leave the roadway. Chelsea has been fortunate that there have not been a disproportional number of highway crashes. However, each year there are several major crashes where motorists are transported to the hospital, occasionally suffering life altering injuries. There are a number of highway safety programs that exist at the state level that are intended to address various forms of highway safety improvements. It would be beneficial to the Town to work closely with VTrans to look for opportunities to improve highway safety. Many low cost safety improvements exist, such as; improving intersection sight distance, erection of warning signs, installation of guardrail, removing large obstacles from the roadside to name a few.

Annually the Town receives funding from Agency of Transportation through the Town Highway Aid program based on the mileage of Class 1, 2 and 3 highways. These funds are utilized to supplement town allocated funds for annual maintenance and improvements to town highways. Embracing a system of managing all of these assets and proactively planning for improvements for the future will guide the future of the town highway infrastructure in Chelsea.

In general, the condition of the town highway assets in Chelsea is good. This level of condition is reflective of the support from the tax payers for the annual highway budget, as well as the hard work and commitment of past and present highway crews.

Legal Trails / Unidentified Corridors

There are 6.65 miles of legal trails on eleven different trails throughout Town. These trails are important resources to the Town as they serve many purposes, including but not limited to; snowmobile, horseback riding and skiing trails; access to historic cemeteries, scenic areas, woodlots, fields and camps, as well as providing connections between town highways. Although, legal trails are not considered highways and the Town is not responsible for any maintenance of these facilities, these facilities are important to the future generations of our Town.

In 2006, the legislature passed into a law a bill that provided a new classification for historical roads; unidentified corridors (also known as “ancient roads”). Unidentified corridors are town highways: 1. that were laid by the Town in the past, 2. do not currently appear on town highway maps, 3. are not clearly observable as a highway or trail and 4. are not legal trails. There is great interest statewide in this new legislation and many towns statewide are considering appropriate actions that need to be taken prior to July 1, 2015. It will be important for the Town to take an informed action on the subject of unidentified corridors in the next two years to ensure that the importance of these corridors is decided by all residents of the Town.

Pedestrian / Bicycle / Recreation Facilities

Several pedestrian facilities exist in Town and several others either being planned or have been recently discussed. Currently, a concrete sidewalk exists on the east side of VT 110 from the area of the Health Center south to VT 113; on the west side of VT 110 from the South Common towards Beacon Hill Road and short sections along the two commons. In addition, a gravel path was added along VT 110 from Beacon Hill, south to the Heath Recreation Field several years ago.

There has been discussion in Town regarding the need to extent a sidewalk from the area of the Health Center north to the Upper Village Road area. In addition to the existing gravel path along VT 110, there is ongoing discussion regarding the future potential to extend a pedestrian/recreation path from the school along the east side of the First Branch, connecting to the Heath Recreation Field via a pedestrian bridge across the river.

Student safety is a concern of many parents and the school. Concerns such as traffic flow around the South Common, available sidewalks with access directly to the school and parking are some of those concerns. Safe Routes to School is a new federal program administered by VTrans that makes technical resources, planning and infrastructure improvement resources available to communities. The resources associated with this program should be pursued by the Town to help alleviate the concerns of student safety.

Many bicycling opportunities exist in Town along a number of various facilities. The scenic VT 110 valley draws individual cyclists along with organized cycling groups. The existing shoulder width of VT 110 and VT 113 do not provide adequate shoulder width for cyclists to be completely separated from vehicular traffic and as such bicycling on these routes is in the form of sharing the road. Many mountain bicyclists use the existing town highways, legal trails and other routes for exercise and enjoyment. Many of this type of bicycling is sporadic on various routes, however, a number of organized mountain bike groups in the Upper Valley and Central Vermont have maps that include routes within Chelsea within their trail network.

There are also a number of recreation trails, both marked and unmarked around Town. These exist in the forms of identified VAST trails, hiking trails and horseback riding trails among others. In many instances, these trails are able to exist through the generous permission of private property owners, town highways, legal trails and unidentified corridors. As land development patterns, and demographics change, the availability and accessibility of recreation trails are attributes that many people, including young families, seek out when making decisions about where to live.

As more attention of a state and national level is focused on individual health, global warming and outdoor recreation, the availability and growth of these types of facilities is becoming increasingly popular. The Town should continue to support and foster these types of activities as they not only provide opportunities for residents, but could also prove to be economic generators for some local businesses.

There are a number of programs that through VTrans with assistance of the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission that are available, such as the Enhancement Program, Bike and Pedestrian Program and planning grants that the Town should avail themselves of.

Parking

Parking is an important element in the village of Chelsea. The numerous businesses, post office, bank, court house and school all contribute to a growing need to consider a parking plan in the vicinity of the two greens and along Main Street. On several occasions, parking has been the topic of school board, Selectboard, court house staff and facility committee meetings in an effort to coordinate the parking practices and policies. In addition, the need for adequate parking has been acknowledged if future improvements were to be implemented at the Heath Recreation Field.

Several opportunities exist to improve parking and associated traffic circulation in the village. In the fall of 2006, the Selectboard endorsed a plan to modify the traffic flow and parking configuration around the South Common. The traffic flow would be one-way with entrance at the southerly access along VT 110 towards the school with one-way egress onto VT 113 and the northerly access point to VT 110. Parking would be angular toward the green on the south side of the common, remain similar to existing at the head of the common and parallel parking on the north end of the common. In addition, the school is discussing alternatives for parking, bus loading and unloading in directly in front of the school

The school is also considering changes to the parking area behind the school. Improvement to the parking area behind the school could potentially result in a more efficient parking pattern that would allow for additional parking spaces, thus freeing up some spaces on the South Common for employees and visitors to the Court House.

An opportunity exists, when a new town garage is constructed, to redevelop the area in front of the existing garage and along the front of the basketball courts into a well defined, aesthetically pleasing parking area that can be serve many uses. Many of the issues regarding parking in the village are not solved by one entity, but rather a number of both public and private stakeholders. Several programs exist within VTrans in the form of both projects with a local match and/or grants that could provide resources to the community. The improvements identified in this section are relatively low cost improvements that could have great impact on traffic flow, parking opportunities and aesthetics within the village.

Public Transit

Public transit takes on many forms and in Chelsea is very limited. Currently, the only form of public transit is the service provided by the Stage Coach to provide on demand transportation to the elderly and disabled to access services in other Towns in the region. In addition, Stage Coach provides service for the Senior Center and other social service trips. As the demographics of our town and state continue to change and our population ages, this type of services will become increasingly important.

The Town needs to continue to be supportive of this service and continually look for innovative ways to collaborate with other Towns in our region and with the state officials to ensure the availability and growth of public transit for the future.

Car Pool / Ride Share

A growing number of Chelsea residents commute to jobs outside of Town. Destinations for many of these commuters are concentrated in several areas; Randolph, Chittenden County, Barre/Montpelier, White River Junction/Hanover. Several residents currently car pool to jobs outside of Town. To further encourage this type of commuting, several programs exist at the state level to provide facilities. Informal park and ride opportunities exist in the village. One such example is a parking lot that has park and ride spaces designated for such use. Several current and future opportunities exist for this type of facility as was discussed earlier in the Parking section.

Summary

As the Town experiences changes in development and land use patterns, it is important to recognize the impacts on the transportation network. Increased truck traffic, turning movements or volumes associated with redevelopment have the potential to impact surrounding property owners, the community and highway safety. Development consistent with the Town Plan is important for the future of the community and the mitigation of any traffic impacts of such growth is critical to maintaining the rural character of the Town.

While much has been done on transportation issues, there is great potential for future improvements. Through the VT Council on Rural Development visit, many resources for ideas, technical and potential revenue were identified. Moving forward, it will be very important for the Town to engage these resources for the successful implementation of transportation improvements in Town. Communication with both the Regional Planning Commission and VTrans will be important moving forward. In addition, Town representation on the Regional Planning Commission's Transportation Advisory Committee is a great way to have a voice on regional planning issues, as well as access to planning and technical information that could benefit the community.

Goals

1. To maintain a transportation system that is safe and efficient for motor vehicles and pedestrians alike, and complements the other goals and policies of this Plan.
2. To ensure that future development does not unnecessarily or unreasonably endanger the public investment in town and regional transportation systems or facilities, including highways, bikeways, trails, and rail.
3. To support local, regional and statewide efforts to provide transportation systems that meet the needs of all population segments and not just those who use automobiles.
4. To minimize transportation energy consumption.

Policies

1. Prior to a final decision to proceed with a major capital transportation project, policymakers should first analyze the project against reasonable alternatives.
2. It is in the public interest to maintain the Town's current highways, bridges, and related facilities as is necessary to ensure the current level of service.
3. The Town does not maintain Class 4 Highways, excepting bridges and culverts. Large-scale development in conservation areas or areas remote from Class 2 or Class 3 Town highways and State Highways is generally discouraged. It is the policy of the Town that before it considers adopting a new road or upgrading an existing Highway, the abutting property owners are responsible for the costs of improving and/or building the road to Town specifications. Final decisions regarding the nature of the improvements rest with the Selectboard.
4. Given the interest in and benefits of biking, hiking, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, and similar outdoor recreational activities, the Town should, as an alternative to complete discontinuance of a highway, give full consideration to preserving Class 4 roads for recreational use, or downgrading their status to a legal trail thus retaining the public's interest in them.
5. An integral scenic element of the rural countryside is the network of back roads comprising the Town's highway system. These byways are both visually and economically important to the Town. If improvements are needed to accommodate increased traffic, it is important to consider the relationship of the road to the surrounding features of the landscape.
6. Strip development is not encouraged as a land use pattern. Such development occurs in a linear path along a right-of-way, which often restricts visual and physical access to interior lands.
7. Given the significance of Route 110 as a scenic road, no plans for improvement of the road should be approved unless they are sensitive to the character of roadway, historic resources, village settings, and land uses adjacent to it. Large-scale out of context and off-alignment improvements are discouraged.
8. Road improvements should only be conducted on roads leading into areas where the Town desires to encourage development. By keeping remote areas less accessible, the Town can direct future residential and non-residential development into areas deemed more appropriate and consistent with the land use goals and policies of this Plan.
9. Reviewers of prospective developments should not only evaluate traffic impacts but impacts on other modes of transportation as well. For example, proposed developments within the village or adjacent to it should seriously evaluate plans for sidewalks or paths.
10. Institutional and civic land uses should remain in or adjacent to the village to reduce travel. These uses include: post office facilities, public schools, civic buildings, Town offices, Town Hall, senior centers, and retail stores.
11. Plans for curb cuts or access points onto town and state highways should be reviewed by the Town and Vermont Agency of Transportation to ensure the proper mobility, function,

and performance to a roadway. Concepts that need to be employed in evaluating access for new developments are:

- Limit the number of access points per parcel or per linear foot of roadway;
- Rule out direct access onto a primary road, if a reasonable alternative access exists via a secondary road or shared driveway;
- Provide for the separation between curb cuts and public road intersections to ensure the efficiency and safety of a roadway;
- Consolidate or reconfigure existing access roads to improve or maintain efficiency, safety, and the function of a roadway;
- Require shared access and parking, wherever feasible;
- Require connecting roads between parcels, particularly for non-residential projects;
- Encourage use of municipal parking, shared parking, or flexible parking standards to reduce the amount of land needed for individual developments and to use land more efficiently; and
- Require sidewalks or reserve land for sidewalks along roads or streets in the village, and between buildings and parking areas.

Recommendations

1. The Selectboard, in consultation with the Planning Commission, should evaluate the Chelsea Highway Ordinance to ensure that the access management goals and policies discussed in this Plan are consistent with the standards in the ordinance. In addition, the Planning Commission should evaluate the Chelsea Zoning Regulations and develop an access management review standard for larger development projects.
2. The Town, in conjunction with the Regional Commission, should continue to avail itself of opportunities to obtain grants for the improvement of pedestrian facilities for safety and recreation uses.
3. The Town should review the driveway guidelines, made available to all residents at the Town Clerk's office.
4. The Selectboard should, at a minimum annually communicate needs and concerns to VTrans and the Regional Commission.
5. The Town should maintain representation in the Regional Commission's Transportation Advisory Committee.
6. The Town should investigate the VTrans program that builds small park and ride facilities in villages by providing gravel and signage

X. ENERGY

A. BACKGROUND

Statement of Purpose

Recent history has done little to dispel the perception that our supplies of energy are limitless: Electricity is available at every outlet, gasoline always at the pump, and heating oil and propane easily delivered to our homes. But the reality is that most of our energy comes from sources that are far away from Chelsea and they are nonrenewable, finite. If demand continues to increase, our supply of energy will only become scarcer, and more expensive, putting a drain on our economy, and degrading our environment. Importing fuel from faraway also creates supply line vulnerabilities; natural disasters, terrorism and international issues could shut off our fuel sources at a moment's notice.

In order to plan for the long-term energy security of our town, we must first understand that it is not energy itself that we want or need, but the services that energy provides. We do not demand heating oil; we need heat for our homes. We do not need gasoline; we want cheap transportation. We do not require electricity; we need light for our work place. The energy security of Chelsea depends on being able to provide these energy services consistently, sustainability, and at an affordable price.

Sustainability must be the basic principle of a long-term energy plan. We cannot rely on nonrenewable energy sources indefinitely. Nonrenewable sources are by definition unsustainable. Nor can we rely on energy sources that degrade our natural environment.

Currently, the Chelsea is highly dependent on imported sources of energy. On average, towns in Vermont consume 74% of their energy in the form of fossil fuels (oil, natural gas, and propane), and another 17% in the form of electricity. These figures do not even include transportation, which is almost entirely fossil fuel based. Because these nonrenewable forms of energy are produced outside our region, most of the money spent on that energy is exported from our local economy.

Local energy sources, (wood, wind, solar, and hydropower) offer distinct advantages over nonrenewable energy sources. For every dollar spent on fuel wood, only 12% of that dollar leaves the local community. The rest remains in our own region, creating jobs and buying goods locally. On the other hand, for every dollar spent on nonrenewable energy sources, 85% of that dollar flows out of the community. Another point to consider is the long-term availability of local energy sources. Once developed, these resources are not subject to politically induced shortages, nor to interruptions in the distribution network. In contrast, nonrenewable fuel sources are insecure and unstable, subject to huge price swings and supply shortages beyond our control.

Any energy plan must include the most abundant local energy source available to us - conservation. Every kilowatt of electricity we do not use is that much more money in our pockets, that much more money that stays in the local economy. Increased efficiency means more viable businesses, and greater economic security. And this is available to us with no

reduction in the quality of service or the standard of living, and with no degradation to our natural environment. State energy officials estimate that simple conservation measures incorporated in new housing can result in a 20% to 30% reduction of energy usage.

Therefore, the Town of Chelsea resolves to take action that will create a sustainable energy future; one that minimizes environmental impact, supports our local economy, emphasizes energy conservation and efficiency, and emphasizes the increased use of local and regional renewable energy sources.

Energy Demands

The 2000 Census reported that home heating in Chelsea is fueled by: fuel oil and kerosene- 48.9%, wood- 34.9% and bottled gas- 16.2%. Some southerly facing homes also receive passive solar heat. Transportation is the other major fuel use for Chelsea (50% of all energy used in Vermont is consumed by vehicles according to the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan). Gasoline and diesel fuel are almost exclusively used for this purpose. Petroleum fuels are also heavily integrated into our food supply. Twenty percent of our personal energy requirement is used to produce and transport the food we eat.

Conservation and Efficiency

Heating and cooling cost can be generally reduced by 20-30% through weatherization of building stock. Additional savings can be realized by upgrading appliances, car pooling, eating locally produced food and encouraging local employment and services.

Renewable Energy

Increased reliance on wood as a heating source can offset some demand for expensive traditional sources. Chelsea has thousands of acres of timberland that are underutilized and its own forests could supply heating for all of its homes and businesses without difficulty. There is a potential side effect to this, however, as significant use of wood could contribute to an increased local air pollution. Modern catalytic converters installed on wood burning stoves could be a partial solution. Efficient combustion can greatly reduce this problem, as could conversion of wood into other forms of fuel such as cellulosic ethanol.

Goals

1. Create a pattern of settlement and land use that uses energy efficiently.
2. Have the design and construction of buildings and structures be energy efficient.
3. Encourage the development of local renewable energy sources.
4. To increase public awareness and use of energy conservation practices through educational efforts.
5. Increase the energy efficiency of town buildings.
6. Reduce energy related air pollution and total carbon emissions in the town.

Policies

1. Planning which reduces the dependency and demand for new sources of energy is a matter of public good. Likewise, conservation of energy usage is encouraged. To meet this policy, the following practices are recommended:
 - a) Development of existing and current transportation routes and highways needs to reflect design and location principles that complement the recommended land use and settlement patterns set forth in this Plan. Major public investments, such as schools, public recreational areas, and municipal facilities need to be situated within or in close proximity to the village of Chelsea;
 - b) The rehabilitation or the development of new buildings and equipment should be encouraged where use of proven design principles and practices demonstrates the lowest life cycle costs;
 - c) Where land development or subdivisions are proposed, design plans should work towards the goal of locating structures and buildings on the site which reflect sound energy conservation principles, such as solar and slope orientation and protective wind barriers. Use of the cluster planning concept, where buildings are concentrated in one area of a site with a complementing off-set of open space, is an approach that encourages energy conservation and efficiency; and
 - d) Given that electrical generation, transmission, and distribution facilities are significant visual contributors of the landscape, it is the policy of the town to encourage efforts to monitor the negative effects of these facilities on the landscape and adjacent uses. Accordingly, where such facilities are proposed, design plans should uphold recognized standards and practices to minimize any adverse visual impacts.
2. Where generation, transmission, and distribution facilities or service areas are proposed, such facilities or areas should be encouraged only when they complement the recommended land use patterns set forth in this Plan.
3. As alternatives to the automobile, the acquisition of land or rights to land by the Town or other qualified entities for the future development of bikeways and footpaths is encouraged in the village areas or other areas of concentrated settlement.
4. To reduce the demand for commuter transportation facilities and energy, the development of energy efficient home occupations and small-scale home business is encouraged.
5. Air and water quality should always be part of energy production and usage decisions. The effects of emissions and other unintended consequences should be weighed against offsetting benefits to produce a net result that considers both local and global realities.
6. Local and regional food production and consumption should be encouraged.

Recommendations

1. The town should support, through promotion and publicity, activities of groups and organizations that are working to conserve energy and produce forms of renewable energy.
2. Renewable municipal and/or private thermal and power production should be researched for use in the school and municipal buildings. Consideration should also be given to making any established thermal-power production available to other town users.
3. Research the possibility of using biodiesel in municipal vehicles as a means of reducing air pollution and fossil fuels.
4. Hydropower, once a major source of power for Chelsea, should be reinvestigated by looking into low-head/run-of-the-river projects that include fish ladders to maintain aquatic health.
5. Assess the efficiency and efficacy of street lighting.
6. Assist residents in carpooling by coordinating ride boards.
7. The Town should support complete service of high speed internet service as a means of supporting home-based employment.
8. Municipal buildings should complete energy audits and implement recommended actions that are affordable.

XI. RELATIONSHIP OF CHELSEA'S PLANNING ACTIVITIES TO ITS NEIGHBORS

A. KEEPING THE PLAN REALISTIC AND RELEVANT

In developing this Plan, it was agreed at the outset that statements of goals and policies for guiding future growth in Chelsea must come from the wishes and needs expressed by the people of Chelsea. This Plan must be clear in articulating their vision for the future. The public bears the responsibility to remain involved in implementing the many goals and planning options that this Plan identifies. Likewise, the Planning Commission and other Town officials must see to it that the Plan is dynamic and remains realistic in responding accurately to the community on what it wants to be.

While individuality is recognized, neither the Town nor its citizens have total control over the forces that will affect growth in Chelsea. Chelsea is part of a very complicated global network of social and economic factors directing how we each conduct our lives. For example, this Plan assumes that public policy on land use and property taxation will remain basically unchanged. Property taxes are, however, strong economic forces and, oftentimes, counter our efforts to promote rural character and living.

Towns rely heavily on local real estate taxes to finance public services. Thus, towns have a natural tendency to encourage those types of development that bring in net revenues. Furthermore, this Plan assumes that economic growth in the Upper Valley will remain relatively slow during the 1990's.

B. NEIGHBORING TOWN'S PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Because of these inter-town relationships, this section evaluates the trends and plans of adjacent municipalities. This evaluation discusses how development proposals and planning activities, and adopted plans in neighboring towns could affect Chelsea. Where there are plans that are incompatible with this Plan, it is important to identify them, and to seek ways to mitigate conflicts. Chelsea is bounded by five towns. They are the Towns of Williamstown, Washington, Brookfield, Tunbridge and Vershire. All of these municipalities have planning programs and planning commissions.

Williamstown has a plan in effect adopted in 2005. The Plan has been reviewed and approved by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, which Williamstown is a member. The Plan identifies a growth center within its downtown area and retains rural areas outside of the village area. Williamstown has no zoning or subdivision regulations in effect. Growth in Williamstown continues to increase, as it is a bedroom community for the Barre-Montpelier Area.

Washington borders Chelsea on its northwestern border. It has a plan in effect adopted in 2003 and approved by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission. The plan is a comprehensive plan and supports the goals set forth in this Plan and the Vermont Planning and

Development Act (24 VSA Chapter 117). Washington has a zoning regulation in effect to regulate new development in the community.

Brookfield, Tunbridge and Vershire have duly adopted municipal plans. These plans were formally reviewed and approved by the Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission. They were found to be compatible with the Regional Plan.

Determining the extent of compatibility or conflicts between these plans and Chelsea's plan has been difficult due to the general and non-specific nature of these plans. In spite of this, it would be fair to conclude that the neighboring community planning relates positively with Chelsea's.

C. REGIONAL PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Chelsea is within the Two Rivers - Ottauquechee Regional Commission. It is one of thirty municipalities that comprise the Region. The Region covers northern Windsor County, most of Orange County and the towns of Pittsfield, Hancock and Granville. The Commission was chartered in 1970 by the acts of its constituent towns. All towns are members of the Regional Commission, and town representatives govern its affairs. One of the Regional Commission's primary purposes is to provide technical services to town officials and to undertake a regional planning program. As is the case in many areas of the State, the extent of local planning throughout the Region is varied. Some municipalities are more active than others. Thus, the level of services to each of the towns changes with time.

The Regional Commission adopted a Regional Plan on May 30, 2007. This Plan will remain in effect for a period of five years. The Plan relates to land use, housing, natural resources, historic resources, public utilities and facilities, and energy. Goals and policies for land use settlement are identified. These areas are Town Centers, Village Settlements, Hamlet Areas, Rural Areas, Conservation and Resource Areas and Interchange Areas. The Plan consists of several hundred policies to guide future private and public development and conservation within the Region. Policies for management of growth are substantially similar to those set forth in the Chelsea Plan. Accordingly, given the general nature of these Plans, it is reasonable to conclude that this Plan and the Regional Plan are compatible.

The entire text of the Regional Plan is posted on the Regional Commission website located at www.trorc.org.

XII. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

A. PUBLIC TECHNIQUES

The Municipal Plan for Chelsea sets forth certain recommendations and policies for accomplishing its stated goals. These goals can only be realized by following the provisions for adopting, maintaining and implementing the Municipal Plan as provided for in the Vermont Planning and Development Act.

Adoption of the Municipal Plan represents acceptance of its recommendations and policies for guiding the proper development of the Town. Initially, only land development activities requiring permits under the state environmental laws protected the Town from disorderly improper development.

The Municipal Plan is used to provide input into the state's regulation of land development through Act 250, Vermont's Land Use and Development Law (Chapter 151, 10 VSA). By law, both the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Commission have full party status in all Act 250 proceedings involving Chelsea; they may testify on each of the ten criteria, offer witnesses to present evidence and appeal decisions in which they disagree. The Municipal Plan is especially important in that it provides a standard for review and comment on Act 250 applications. In a broad sense, it establishes a basis for Town testimony on the first nine criteria relating to specific subject areas. Specifically under criterion 10, a proposed project must be found to be in conformance with the Municipal Plan in order for a Land Use Permit to be issued. In this manner, the Municipal Plan has the potential to become a major factor in the regulation of land development that falls under the jurisdiction of Act 250.

In addition to Act 250, Chelsea may implement the Municipal Plan by adopting, amending and enforcing any or all of the following bylaws:

Zoning Regulations: to permit, prohibit, restrict, regulate and determine land development, including specifically, without limitation, the following:

- Specific uses of land, water courses and other bodies of water;
- Dimensions, location, erection, construction, repair, maintenance, alteration, razing, removal, and use of structures;
- Areas and dimensions of land and bodies of water to be occupied by uses and structures, as well as areas, courts, yards and other open spaces and distances to be left unoccupied by uses and structures; and
- Density of population and intensity of use.

Subdivision Regulations: authorizing the *Development Review Board* to approve, modify or disapprove the division of all plats of land into two or more parcels, whether or not showing new streets or highways, and approve the development of such plats previously filed in the office of the clerk of such municipality if such plats are entirely or partially undeveloped, under the

subdivision regulations of the town. Subdivision Regulations may also set forth the procedures, requirements and specifications for the submission, processing and design of plats. Such subdivision regulations must be adopted prior to the exercise of any authority by the *Development Review Board*.

Official Map: showing the location where future utility and facility improvements would be located.

Capital Budget and Program: listing and describing the annual capital projects and those projects expected to be undertaken for a period of not less than five years. No capital project shall be authorized or undertaken unless it is included in the Capital Budget or the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) as adopted or amended.

Historic District Ordinance: an ordinance safeguarding the heritage of Chelsea and preserving the natural beauty and history of the Village. The district acknowledges "the public interest in preserving the general architectural and landscape features within the area and will indicate the desire of the Town to maintain the appearance and use of the area."

Flood Hazard Bylaw: to promote the public health, safety and general welfare, to prevent increases in flooding caused by the uncontrolled development of lands in flood hazard areas, and to minimize losses due to floods.

B. PRIVATE TECHNIQUES

Land Trusts

While local government has an important role in conserving open land, private groups and individuals have much of the control over the future of this resource. Increasingly the private sector is driving the conservation process. Land trusts - non-profit organizations dedicated to the protection of land resources - have developed several techniques for helping individuals to conserve their land. The process begins with the identification of the landowner's conservation goals and financial needs. The final plan will be a balance of these factors.

Because of their non-profit status, most land trusts can receive contributions that are deductible from federal income taxes. This tax incentive has been a major attraction of the land trust process. Donations of land or conservation easements have improved the overall financial picture for some landowners. Cash contributions (which are also tax deductible) equip the land trust to manage the lands it receives.

Besides being advisors to land owners and recipients of donations, land trusts have become financial packagers, organizing conservation-minded individuals to finance or to pledge their credit to secure an important property. Often this is a holding action while the trust seeks a permanent solution for the property. The trust may create a land use plan for the property, and seek to protect important resource lands and provide for limited development of the portions of the property that have low resource value. The revenues generated by the limited development offset the conservation costs.

An individual operating alone can achieve the long-term conservation of land through deed restrictions or covenants. However, such restrictions may prove difficult to monitor and enforce over time. The original titleholder's control of the covenant may also diminish as the property changes hands.

Tax Implications

Because Vermont municipalities obtain most of their revenue from property taxation, reducing the development potential of property in the town will eventually reduce the town's tax base. Land with conservation restrictions often is assessed at a lower value, and so the owner pays less in taxes.

However, there are two countervailing factors here. First, protected land often enhances the market value - and, therefore, may increase the tax value - of surrounding property. Second, conservation restrictions prohibit the type of development that may stimulate demand for roads, road maintenance, schools, emergency services and recreation facilities and therefore, may increase the town budget. The disadvantage of reduced property tax revenues may be offset by the advantage of avoiding these costs.

Community Land Trusts

In the same way that conservation land trusts respond to protection of precious natural resources, community land trusts now actively work to protect housing for traditional Vermont residents. As non-profit organizations, community land trusts obtain private and public funds to purchase land and sometimes buildings. Normally, land ownership is retained by the trust - thus reducing the cost of existing or new housing. Long-term leases of the land are made to individual homeowners.

Unlike normal subsidized housing, which remains affordable only as long as the subsidies continue, the community land trust approach ensures long-term affordability by limiting the resale price of a house to the original construction or purchase price, improvements and sometimes a factor for inflation. Thus, the original homeowner recovers his/her investment and new buyers whether they be a young couple, elderly persons on fixed incomes, or persons with limited finances can obtain housing within their price range.

In the Chelsea area, the Central Community Vermont Land Trust is presently working on housing efforts in eight small towns, including Orange and Washington.

Recommendation

1. Interested Chelsea citizens could form a "Housing and Land Conservation Working Group" to promote one or two land conservation and affordable housing projects in Town.

C. FUNDING

Public forums, surveys, land inventories, improvements in services; new land conservation and housing programs all require funding. Further, any new land use regulations will require increased review and enforcement by the Town and, hence, increased costs. Both the benefits and costs of new initiatives need to be investigated before implementation.

State funding for planning is available from a variety of state sources. The Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP) has historically made available planning grants to municipalities to undertake projects designed to benefit low and moderate-income families; address community infrastructure needs and related needs. The Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund (HCTF) grants towns and non-profit groups funds for housing and conservation related projects. Monies are available for both planning and implementation. The Agency of Natural Resources has in past years administered the Land, Water, and Conservation Fund (LWCF) which funds recreation and conservation projects benefiting the public.

Public funds for planning and implementation activities have been decreasing since the 1990's. The Vermont Agency of Development and Community Affairs has in past years made planning grants available directly to towns or on a competitive basis from a dedicated fund (Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning Fund), however, no funds have been appropriated to it since 1991.

Chelsea needs also to look towards the outstanding wealth of human resources that it has at its disposal - its citizens. The breadth of experience and knowledge within the community needs to be further tapped. Citizen involvement is a fundamental element in generating the financial and political support required for successful locally based projects.

APPENDICES

- A. Partial List of Historic Sites
- B. Chelsea Community Survey - 2006
- C. Maps
 - 1. Future Land Use
 - 2. Current Land Use
 - 3. Primary Agricultural Areas
 - 4. Utilities, Facilities and Education
 - 5. Transportation
 - 6. Vermont Downtown Program Designated Village and National Register of Historic Places Area

Appendix A – Partial List of Historical Sites

1. The Chelsea Mills building, (1827) the last mill building standing in anywhere near its original form. This mill alone remains to represent three to four gristmills, 16 sawmills, shingle mills, woolen mills, trip hammer shops, blacksmith shops and all other commercial buildings of our early history.
2. The Congregational Church (1813) gracing the head or east end of the North Common, being a historic building itself besides being usually associated with the North Common as part of the Chelsea Townscape.
3. The Orange County Courthouse (1847) on the site of the earlier 1801 courthouse. A formidable building besides being a symbol and reminder that the Orange County Court system has had its home in Chelsea since 1795. It heads the South Common and with the church and school has generally been accepted as the focal point of the village landscape.
4. The twin brick stores (circa 1820) among the earlier brick buildings in Town, both built by successful merchants of that period. Joshua Dickinson and Harry Hale built the South Store. Amplus Blake built the North Store. It is probably generally known that the South Store burned in April 1926, but fortunately a local son, Fred Atwood, was interested enough to have the store rebuilt with old bricks so that it still looked much like its companion to the north.
5. The Martin house, located on the north side of Highland Avenue represented early low-posted 1-1/2 story house with attached ell, shed and horse barn. It is representative of many houses still standing in Town being built anywhere from 1800 to 1880. The house clearly shows the original 1-1/2 story, the attached 1-story ell, the attached shed which was originally a horse barn as shown by the cupola and the door for pitching hay into the loft and also has the attached one-car garage of more modern times.
6. The Forbes house, representative of an early, large, two-story house. It has a very early 1-1/2 story ell dating perhaps to 1800 and a large 2-story addition with several fireplaces. The house has fancy woodwork and other status symbols favored by our early builders who had the finances to indulge themselves - in this case merchant, inn owner and clock-maker Nathan Hale. The 2-story part of the house probably was built about 1830. In addition, the property has all the outbuildings common to a village farm including horse barn, cow barn, farm storage buildings, and a brick ash house. Noted in 1873, "the finest farm in Chelsea Village".
7. The Moxley covered bridge represents a time, a style of building, a living connection to our past and makes a statement about the people who planned, built, and maintained it. Built in 1883, at a cost to the town of \$420, it is of "queen post" construction, about 55 feet long, and is the only covered bridge on a public road that Chelsea ever had.

Appendix B – Chelsea Community Survey 2006

Chelsea Community Survey February 2006 Results -- All Respondents (337)

Note: The parenthesized number following each question indicates the number of respondents to that question.

1. How often do you need to make special trips out of town to purchase basic goods and services? ⁱ (332)

Daily	9	3%	More than once a week	66	20%
Weekly	155	47%	Twice a Month	61	18%
Monthly	19	6%	Rarely	22	6%

2. What types of businesses or services would you like to see attracted to Chelsea? (293)

Hardware	173	Housewares	52
Organic goods	70	Pharmacy	159
Automotive Parts	51	Bakery	85
Printer	17	Other	48

3. How should Chelsea work with neighboring towns to support and promote local businesses? (275)

1) Create a Chamber of Commerce	78
2) Co-operative advertising of local businesses in the media	94
3) Promote the Town, local events and attractions	132
4) Publish a business directory or resident resource guide	102
5) Host an annual Business Exposition or Job Fair	53
6) Other	6

4. Do you currently have Internet service or high-speed Internet service at your Chelsea home or business? If so, who is your provider and how much do you pay per month for it? (327)

1) I do not have Internet service	130	40%
2) I have dial-up Internet service	156	48%
3) I have high-speed Internet service	41	12%

Monthly, I pay	less than \$40	\$40 to \$60	\$61 to \$100	more than \$100
Dial	144 97%	4 3%	6 16%	4 11%
HS	4 11%	23 62%		

Providers: Sovernet – 39, Innevi – 37, Charter (HS) – 28, Earthlink – 16, Directway (HS) – 12, PeoplePC – 9, Powershift – 7, AOL – 7, MSN – 5, 11 Others (13) – 26. (Count inflated due to 2 questionnaires for most households.)

5. If you do not already have high-speed Internet service at your Chelsea home or business do you want it? If so, how much would you be willing to pay per month for it? (271)

1) No, I do not want high-speed Internet service.	125	46%
2) Yes, I would like high-speed Internet service.	146	54%

Monthly, I would be willing to pay	less than \$40	\$40 to \$60	\$61 to \$100	more than \$100
	111 78%	28 20%	2 1%	1 1%

6. Which of the following statements best describe your feeling toward communication towers? (329)

1) I don't mind them at all.	121	37%
2) I consider them a necessity, but the aesthetic impacts should be limited.	132	40%
3) They should only be built when needed for essential services.	67	20%
4) They spoil the landscape and should be all torn down.	9	3%

7. How important is keeping the Town Hall available as a large, public meeting space to you? (333)

Very Important	195	58%	Important	109	33%	Not Important	29	9%
----------------	-----	-----	-----------	-----	-----	---------------	----	----

8. What is your reaction to the idea of creating an addition and basement renovation to the Town Hall (in keeping with the historic appearance) to accommodate space needs for the Town Offices and Public Library? (328)

Positive	162	49%	Negative	52	16%	Not sure	114	35%
----------	-----	-----	----------	----	-----	----------	-----	-----

9. If any of the following functions: Town Offices, Public Library or Town Hall had to relocate out of the Town Hall building, which should stay? (You may choose more than one.) (322)			
Town Offices	153	Public Library	150
		Town Hall	227
10. The Facilities Committee is interested in purchase of the creamery property to meet space needs. This property is approximately 6.45 acres adjacent to the Chelsea Public School property & Highland Cemetery and extends south along the First Branch of the White River. The property is large enough to accommodate more than one use. Please indicate your preferred use(s) of this property. (You may choose more than one.) (284)			
Pathway to Heath Field	128	Town Garage	158
Sand Pile	89	Housing	39
Public Library	55	Public Parking	74
Town Hall	11	Town Offices	106
Orange County Parent Child Center	47	Other:	17
11. Which location do you prefer for a new Town Garage? ⁱⁱ (307)			
Creamery Property/Ryan Estate	131 43%	Heath Field	149 48%
		Other locations	27 9%
12. If a Town Garage were to be constructed on a new site, should the existing Town Garage be: (287)			
Removed	119 42%	Used for a different purpose	166 58%
13. If a Town Garage were to be constructed on a new site, what would your reaction be to re-organizing the area in front of the existing garage to maximize the number of parking opportunities? (316)			
Positive	199 63%	Negative	38 12%
		Not sure	79 25%
14. How do you feel about a one-way traffic flow pattern around the South Common to create more efficient, safe parking and student drop-off? (323)			
Positive	211 65%	Negative	64 20%
		Not sure	48 15%
15. What would your reaction be to painted parking lines to designate spaces around both commons? (327)			
Positive	122 37%	Negative	142 43%
		Not sure	63 19%
16. Do you currently have a child or children enrolled in the Chelsea Public School? (331)			
Yes	50 15%	No	281 85%
17. I believe maintaining a K-12 public school is important to Chelsea as a community. (328)			
Strongly agree	145 44%	Agree	104 32%
		No opinion	35 11%
		Disagree	31 9%
		Strongly disagree	13 4%
18. I think the idea of privatizing the Chelsea Public School is an option that deserves investigation. (322)			
Strongly agree	31 10%	Agree	85 27%
		No opinion	72 22%
		Disagree	78 24%
		Strongly disagree	66 17%
19. I think the idea of combining or unionizing with other area schools deserves investigation. (325)			
Strongly agree	61 19%	Agree	117 36%
		No opinion	59 18%
		Disagree	55 17%
		Strongly disagree	33 10%
20. I think the idea of transforming Chelsea Public School from a K-12 into a K-8 deserves investigation. (324)			
Strongly agree	49 15%	Agree	91 28%
		No opinion	47 15%
		Disagree	88 27%
		Strongly disagree	49 15%
21. The Chelsea Public School provides a safe, inviting environment for learning. (324)			
Strongly agree	33 10%	Agree	140 43%
		No opinion	91 28%
		Disagree	38 12%
		Strongly disagree	22 7%
22. The Chelsea Public School provides a well-balanced education for children. (325)			
Strongly agree	17 5%	Agree	122 37%
		No opinion	93 29%
		Disagree	68 21%
		Strongly disagree	25 8%
23. The Chelsea Public School keeps the public informed and offers opportunities for community involvement. (323)			
Strongly agree	22 7%	Agree	159 49%
		No opinion	77 24%
		Disagree	46 14%
		Strongly disagree	19 6%

<p>24. The Chelsea Public School has effective leadership. (322) Strongly agree 21 6% Agree 83 26% No opinion 132 41% Disagree 52 16% Strongly disagree 34 11%</p>																													
<p>25. The Chelsea Public School has demonstrated improvements in the last five years. (323) Strongly agree 35 11% Agree 135 41% No opinion 106 33% Disagree 28 9% Strongly disagree 19 6%</p>																													
<p>26. What places are special to you in Chelsea? Perhaps a particular brook for fishing, a playing field, a view that you love, your favorite road, etc. The most frequently named were: views from Beacon Hill and Densmore Roads, West Hill, the Commons, the cemeteries, many elements of the historic village, First Branch, Heath Field, open land, and even one “sandpile”</p>																													
<p>27. Our town should work with landowners and land trusts to conserve certain land resources in Chelsea. (313) Strongly Agree 92 29% Agree 127 41% No Opinion 47 15% Disagree 32 10% Strongly Disagree 15 5%</p>																													
<p>28. Each of the following issues involves Chelsea land and water resources. How important are these issues to you? (Please rank the issues from Most to Least Important. Number 1 being Most and Number 11 being Least Important) ⁱⁱⁱ (193 valid)</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Avg.</td> <td></td> <td>Avg.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>5.8</td> <td>Affordable housing</td> <td>5.5</td> <td>Village growth and development</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7.1</td> <td>Development in remote locations</td> <td>6.3</td> <td>Development on farmland</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5.3</td> <td>Loss of wildlife habitat</td> <td>7.4</td> <td>Timber production</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6.4</td> <td>Recreational opportunities</td> <td>5.2</td> <td>Agricultural production</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6.0</td> <td>Scenic Areas</td> <td>6.3</td> <td>Areas for business development</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4.2</td> <td>Water quality ^{iv}</td> <td>3.4</td> <td>Other (9 responses)</td> </tr> </table>		Avg.		Avg.		5.8	Affordable housing	5.5	Village growth and development	7.1	Development in remote locations	6.3	Development on farmland	5.3	Loss of wildlife habitat	7.4	Timber production	6.4	Recreational opportunities	5.2	Agricultural production	6.0	Scenic Areas	6.3	Areas for business development	4.2	Water quality ^{iv}	3.4	Other (9 responses)
Avg.		Avg.																											
5.8	Affordable housing	5.5	Village growth and development																										
7.1	Development in remote locations	6.3	Development on farmland																										
5.3	Loss of wildlife habitat	7.4	Timber production																										
6.4	Recreational opportunities	5.2	Agricultural production																										
6.0	Scenic Areas	6.3	Areas for business development																										
4.2	Water quality ^{iv}	3.4	Other (9 responses)																										
<p>29. I think Chelsea should engage in planning efforts to address the top three priorities identified in Question # 28 (296) Strongly Agree 74 25% Agree 162 55% No Opinion 46 16% Disagree 10 3% Strongly Disagree 4 1%</p>																													
<p>30. Is there enough affordable housing available in Chelsea? (321) Yes 57 18% No 151 47% Unsure 113 35%</p>																													
<p>31. If no, should the town encourage the development of additional affordable housing? (269) Yes 127 47% No 72 27% Unsure 70 26%</p>																													
<p>32. Do you think the following types of housing should be encouraged in Chelsea, <u>if the housing was located where it would not negatively affect the rural and historic nature of the town.</u> (288±)</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Single-family homes on individual lots (293)</td> <td>Yes 208 71%</td> <td>No 46 16%</td> <td>Unsure 39 13%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Multi-family homes on individual lots (283)</td> <td>Yes 112 40%</td> <td>No 125 44%</td> <td>Unsure 46 16%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mobile homes on individual lots (283)</td> <td>Yes 57 20%</td> <td>No 181 64%</td> <td>Unsure 45 16%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mobile homes in a park (288)</td> <td>Yes 38 13%</td> <td>No 219 76%</td> <td>Unsure 31 11%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Planned Unit Developments (291)</td> <td>Yes 129 44%</td> <td>No 104 36%</td> <td>Unsure 58 20%</td> </tr> </table>		Single-family homes on individual lots (293)	Yes 208 71%	No 46 16%	Unsure 39 13%	Multi-family homes on individual lots (283)	Yes 112 40%	No 125 44%	Unsure 46 16%	Mobile homes on individual lots (283)	Yes 57 20%	No 181 64%	Unsure 45 16%	Mobile homes in a park (288)	Yes 38 13%	No 219 76%	Unsure 31 11%	Planned Unit Developments (291)	Yes 129 44%	No 104 36%	Unsure 58 20%								
Single-family homes on individual lots (293)	Yes 208 71%	No 46 16%	Unsure 39 13%																										
Multi-family homes on individual lots (283)	Yes 112 40%	No 125 44%	Unsure 46 16%																										
Mobile homes on individual lots (283)	Yes 57 20%	No 181 64%	Unsure 45 16%																										
Mobile homes in a park (288)	Yes 38 13%	No 219 76%	Unsure 31 11%																										
Planned Unit Developments (291)	Yes 129 44%	No 104 36%	Unsure 58 20%																										
<p>33. Would you like to see a retirement complex in Chelsea, either on a rental or ownership basis? (313) Yes 164 52% No 58 19% Unsure 91 29%</p>																													
<p>34. What is the single most critical issue in Chelsea?</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>67 School cost/quality/leadership^v</td> <td>5 High Speed Internet/cell phone service</td> </tr> <tr> <td>45 Taxes</td> <td>3 Lack of businesses in town</td> </tr> <tr> <td>34 Town facilities/garage/sewer plant/parking</td> <td>3 Keeping open lands/viable agriculture industry</td> </tr> <tr> <td>19 Control of development/ maintaining village identity</td> <td>2 Lack of tennis courts/teen center</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13 Different priorities flatlanders and old guard</td> <td>1 Transportation</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14 Lack of jobs/retention of town youth</td> <td>1 Dogs Barking</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10 Law Enforcement</td> <td>1 Gossip</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7 Condition of roads</td> <td>1 Retirement complex</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6 Public communication/getting the word out</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		67 School cost/quality/leadership ^v	5 High Speed Internet/cell phone service	45 Taxes	3 Lack of businesses in town	34 Town facilities/garage/sewer plant/parking	3 Keeping open lands/viable agriculture industry	19 Control of development/ maintaining village identity	2 Lack of tennis courts/teen center	13 Different priorities flatlanders and old guard	1 Transportation	14 Lack of jobs/retention of town youth	1 Dogs Barking	10 Law Enforcement	1 Gossip	7 Condition of roads	1 Retirement complex	6 Public communication/getting the word out											
67 School cost/quality/leadership ^v	5 High Speed Internet/cell phone service																												
45 Taxes	3 Lack of businesses in town																												
34 Town facilities/garage/sewer plant/parking	3 Keeping open lands/viable agriculture industry																												
19 Control of development/ maintaining village identity	2 Lack of tennis courts/teen center																												
13 Different priorities flatlanders and old guard	1 Transportation																												
14 Lack of jobs/retention of town youth	1 Dogs Barking																												
10 Law Enforcement	1 Gossip																												
7 Condition of roads	1 Retirement complex																												
6 Public communication/getting the word out																													

Chelsea Community Survey February 2006 Results -- Child in School (46) – School-related Questions Only

17. I believe maintaining a K-12 public school is important to Chelsea as a community. (50)
 Strongly agree 29 58% Agree 10 20% No opinion 4 8% Disagree 5 10% Strongly disagree 2 4%
18. I think the idea of privatizing the Chelsea Public School is an option that deserves investigation. (48)
 Strongly agree 7 15% Agree 12 25% No opinion 5 10% Disagree 17 35% Strongly disagree 7 15%
19. I think the idea of combining or unionizing with other area schools deserves investigation. (48)
 Strongly agree 7 14% Agree 20 42% No opinion 5 10% Disagree 8 17% Strongly disagree 8 17%
20. I think the idea of transforming Chelsea Public School from a K-12 into a K-8 deserves investigation. (47)
 Strongly agree 9 19% Agree 13 28% No opinion 4 9% Disagree 12 25% Strongly disagree 9 19%
21. The Chelsea Public School provides a safe, inviting environment for learning. (50)
 Strongly agree 7 14% Agree 21 42% No opinion 3 6% Disagree 11 22% Strongly disagree 8 16%
22. The Chelsea Public School provides a well-balanced education for children. (49)
 Strongly agree 2 4% Agree 17 35% No opinion 4 8% Disagree 16 33% Strongly disagree 10 20%
23. The Chelsea Public School keeps the public informed and offers opportunities for community involvement. (48)
 Strongly agree 3 6% Agree 21 44% No opinion 8 17% Disagree 9 19% Strongly disagree 7 14%
24. The Chelsea Public School has effective leadership. (48)
 Strongly agree 6 13% Agree 12 25% No opinion 6 12% Disagree 11 23% Strongly disagree 12 27%
25. The Chelsea Public School has demonstrated improvements in the last five years. (49)
 Strongly agree 9 18% Agree 21 43% No opinion 5 9% Disagree 7 14% Strongly disagree 6 14%

ⁱ In question 1, in some cases it was clear that those indicating “Daily” were actually folks who commute out of town and the trips were not “special” while others who also commute answered the same question “Rarely”

ⁱⁱ In question 11, based on comments made, it seems at least 20 respondents replied Heath Field not because they preferred that to the Creamery but simply because they are against the purchase of the Creamery property.

ⁱⁱⁱ The ranking numbers given to each item in question are the average of the 193 valid rankings. There were 73 respondents to this question who either rated some to all items or gave an incomplete ranking of some or all. These could not validly be included.

^{iv} Water quality in question 28 ranks high but one must question the reliability – those living in the village may have been ranking this considering recent boil orders regarding drinking water while those outside the village answered thinking of the stream water.

^v Many, often conflicting, comments were made regarding the school in question 34, and with the questions related to the atmosphere and administration of the school beginning with question 21. These should be reviewed to fully evaluate the numeric results.

Appendix C – Town Plan Maps

Map 1 – Future Land Use

Map 2 – Current Land Use

Map 3 – Primary Agricultural Areas

Map 4 – Utilities, Facilities & Education

Map 5 – Transportation

Map 6 – VT Downtown Program Designated Village and National Register of Historic Places
Area

Sources of Information

- Town records, including but not limited to land records, road records, reports of the annual town and school meetings;
- Old newspapers published in the area;
- "Orange County Gazetteer", 1888;
- Early Chelseans by J.A. Keyes, 1885;
- "Proceedings of the Centennial Celebration", 1884;
- Comstock's History of Chelsea, 1944;
- The Chelsea Album, 1979; and,
- History of Chelsea, Vermont, 1784-1984.