

Guilford Town Plan

July, 2010

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NOTES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Guilford Town Plan replaces the plan which was adopted July 25, 2005. Vermont towns are required to revise their plans every five years. The Guilford Planning Commission made extensive revisions to the Town Plan in 2005. Those revisions were completed after reviewing the results of the 2001 public survey and conferring with Guilford citizens in several public meetings and hearing. The Guilford Town Plan needed only minor updating this year, 2010. Public hearings were held in the spring of 2010, and the Town Plan was adopted by the Selectboard following those hearings.

We would like to thank all the members of the Guilford public who took the time to attend the hearings and offer their thoughtful comments. We are also appreciative of the support of the Select Board. In addition, we would like to thank the Windham Regional Commission, particularly John Bennett, whose patience and professional eye helped us over many hurdles.

GUILFORD PLANNING COMMISSION:

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INTRODUCTION

Town Plan Objectives

The Guilford Town Plan is meant to provide guidance to the Town as it grows and changes. The Planning Commission carried out the Town Survey in 2001 in order to allow residents to express their feelings and concerns about Guilford today and what they would like the Town to be in the future. In writing this Town Plan, we have tried to keep faith with the large percentage of residents who took the time to complete the Survey, and to incorporate your feelings about our Town into this important planning document.

All of us place great value on the rural, small-town character of Guilford and want to retain it. We want to preserve the natural beauty of our surroundings and the historic aspects of the Town we love. At the same time, we know that we can't keep the Town forever as it is now. Guilford has changed significantly during our lifetimes and it will inevitably continue to change in the future. What this Town Plan attempts to do is to plan for future growth and change so that it will disrupt the high quality of life in Guilford as little as possible, so that our children and grandchildren will cherish this place as we do.

The Town Plan contains Policies and Recommended Actions concerning land use, natural resources, housing, economic opportunity, education, transportation, historic and aesthetic features, environmental quality, recreation, agriculture, public facilities and child care. These Policies will be interpreted by the Planning Commission and the Select Board as guidelines for implementing the Town Plan, and they will aid the State and the Windham Regional Commission in planning; they will also help the District II Environmental Commission to know the will of the Town when they evaluate Act 250 applications concerning projects in Guilford. The Recommended Actions are steps which the Planning Commission thinks it would be prudent for the Town to take, in a number of areas. Once the Town Plan is adopted the Planning Commission will consider all the means of implementation discussed in the Implementation section and will invite the public to participate in the process.

For all these reasons, we urge Guilford residents to read the Town Plan carefully.

The Town Plan addresses the following issues, each of which the Planning Commission considers critical to the future of Guilford:

- 1.) Maintaining Guilford's historic settlement pattern, with population centers in the village of Algiers and the hamlets of Guilford Center and Green River. Between these centers, we encourage the preservation of pastures and mowings, woodlands and the rural character of our roads.
- 2.) Planning to meet the Town's future needs for education, Town services, housing, health and safety, and employment opportunities.

- 3.) Encouraging, wherever possible, the preservation of undeveloped ridgelines and large tracts of undeveloped woodland, in order to protect wildlife habitat and biodiversity within the Town.
- 4.) Discouraging development which adversely affects the rural character of the Town or neighboring properties.
- 5.) Encouraging the vitality and protection of agriculture within Town boundaries.
- 6.) Protecting significant historic and natural resources.
- 7.) Encouraging a mix of appropriate economic activities, including services, agriculture, small businesses, light manufacturing and home enterprises.
- 8.) Promoting awareness of Guilford's special qualities of community and natural beauty.
- 9.) Asking residents to think about how we can best balance property rights with the common good, so that we can plan well for the future of Guilford.

Purpose of the Town Plan

The purpose of Guilford's Town Plan is to establish goals and objectives for future social, economic and land use development of the Town to benefit the people of Guilford, the region and the State. We hope the Plan will serve as a guide for responsible development and the preservation of the natural, historic and cultural resources, and the vitality of the Town.

Development of this Town Plan

This plan has been developed by the Planning Commission through a continuing planning process considering the vision of the Town's citizens, elected officials, and community organizations. The Planning Commission based its work on the results of the Town Survey and analysis of existing resources, conditions, and demographic and development trends.

Interpretation of the Town Plan

In situations where interpretation of the Plan is required it is the responsibility of the Planning Commission, in cooperation with the Guilford Select Board, to conduct any necessary review and provide an opinion. Throughout the text of this Plan many of the policies and recommended action statements include imperative verbs. "Shall" or "must" means that the Town has strong intentions of ensuring a requirement is accomplished, whereas "should" or "may" means that a requirement is encouraged but not mandated.

Adoption and Modification of the Town Plan

A Town Plan is drafted by the Planning Commission, reviewed by the public in one or more Public Hearings, then forwarded by the Planning Commission to the legislative body (Select Board) for adoption. A Plan is adopted by the Select Board after one or more Public Hearings. A plan expires five years after adoption, so the planning process

should be a continuing and evolutionary one, leading to a new Plan every five years. A Plan may be modified before expiration by the same process followed to adopt one.

Town Profile

Physical Features

The Town of Guilford is 40.3 square miles, or a little more than 6 miles square. The population density is 51 people per square mile, up from 38 people per square mile in 1980 and 48 in 1990. The east side of Town borders Vernon; Brattleboro is to our north and Halifax is to our west. Guilford is bordered on the south by three Massachusetts towns: Colrain, Leyden and Bernardston.

Topography

There are two major ridgelines in Town, running north-south. East Mountain extends almost the length of Guilford in the east; it's a chain of heights reaching a maximum elevation of 1424 feet. In the west are Governor's Mountain (the Town's highest elevation at 1823 feet), Pulpit Mountain (1236'), French Hill (1586'), Owl's Head (1430') and Amidon Pinnacle (1241'). The lowest point in town is 250 feet above sea level, where the Broad Brook enters Vernon. Guilford's topography resulted in its original settlement pattern of five hamlets: Algiers, Guilford Center, Green River, Hinesburg (West Guilford) and Packer Corners.

Drainage, Wetlands, Streams, and Ponds

The Town is blessed with many streams and wetlands, which form important elements of Town ecosystems and wildlife habitats. There are two major drainage basins in Town, both of which ultimately deliver their waters to the Connecticut River. Brooks near the western border empty into the Green River, flowing south into Massachusetts. The Broad Brook drains the center and northeaster corner of Town, flowing east into Vernon. Brooks in the southeastern portion of Guilford drain into the Fall River, a tributary of the Connecticut.

The Town has two major ponds, both man-made: Sweet Pond and Weatherhead Hollow Pond. There are also two State Parks in Town: Sweet Pond State Park and Fort Dummer State Park.

Landscape

After nearly 250 years as a town, Guilford has kept its rural landscape of small, scattered settlements set among forests and fields. As the number of working farms in Town has dwindled, the forests have returned to abandoned mowings. The Town is now heavily wooded, compared to the open landscape of 150 years ago, when field adjoined field in nearly all parts of Town. We are very fortunate to have four working dairy farms left in Town, and several farms devoted to vegetables, fruit, and maple sugaring. The hard work of the families which run the farms helps to preserve the remaining agricultural landscape, which is so important to the beautiful visual character of Guilford.

Wildlife

The citizens of Guilford share the woods and fields with an abundance of wildlife. Thanks to the return of the forests and the large tracts of undeveloped land in Town, we have deer, bear, wild turkeys, warblers and an occasional moose in our woods, Great Blue Herons and kingfishers in our wetlands, and snakes, woodcocks and songbirds in our fields. It is our responsibility to help preserve the region's biodiversity by protecting as much of their habitat as we can.

Town Roads

The Town maintains almost 80 miles of roads. The Town's three paved roads are Hinesburg Road, Weatherhead Hollow Road, and the Guilford Center Road, and together they comprise roughly 25% of the total amount of public roads. The Guilford Center Road (including its extension into Stage Road into Green River) is the only major east-west road in Town. There are two U.S. highways running north-south through town, but one of them (Interstate 91) is not accessible from Guilford. The other, U.S. Route 5 (The Calvin Coolidge Memorial Highway), is one of the Town's main roads.

We also have a network of public and private dirt roads in Town, which are well maintained the year round, but which can be difficult to travel on during snow and ice storms in winter, and during Mud Season.

Town History

Guilford was first chartered on April 2, 1754; first settled in 1761, and then re-chartered in 1764. The first Town Meeting was held in 1772 and, like most other towns in Vermont, Guilford still holds Town Meetings to pass budgets and to settle large issues. During the late 18th century, the territory of what's now Vermont was subject to the sometimes violent disputes between New York and New Hampshire over which state had the authority to grant title to lands in Vermont (much of which was known then as the "Hampshire Grants.") Probably because of their proximity to New Hampshire, and New Hampshire sheriffs, the people of Guilford tended to side with the "Yorkers" in these disputes, just as people in the western part of Vermont tended to favor New Hampshire, for the same reasons.

There was an intensely unsettled and political period between 1774, when opposition to British laws become the dominant sentiment in the Colonies, and 1791, when Vermont was admitted to the union of states. Two crucial Revolutionary battles (Ticonderoga, and the decisive conflicts at Saratoga/Bennington) were fought on Vermont's western border. But perhaps equally important to people in Guilford were the "Westminster Massacre" of 1774 (a violent disagreement among citizens in local towns over New York's authority to judge and imprison people in this part of the region) and Ethan Allen's 'invasion' of Guilford in 1782, to punish the Town for its stubborn allegiance to New York's laws and governor. As deep as the hardships and passions of the American Revolution were, the uncertainties of life caused by the New York-New Hampshire power struggle were perhaps a bigger challenge for the citizens of Guilford and Vermont during the period of the Revolution.

During the 1790s, Guilford was the largest and most important town in the state. In 1790 there were 2432 people living in Town, more than there are now, in 2005. The Town must have seemed like a bustling metropolis to visitors from other parts of the state. It produced two of the period's most important figures: Benjamin Carpenter, who was Vermont's second lieutenant governor (1779-80), and Royall Tyler, a noted author and Chief Justice on the Vermont Supreme Court.

An understanding of Guilford today must look back to the period between 1770 and 1820, when the Town's character was formed. Most people lived outside a cash economy because there was no 'cash' to speak of (the state's first bank didn't open until 1812 and it went out of business eight years later). Barter formed the basis of the economy; consumer items imported from out-of-state were scarce and very expensive, and families needed to be as self-sufficient as possible. Roads were poor and the best time to travel or to move loads was during the winters, when the rivers were frozen and packed snow made an ideal road surface for sleighs.

On the other hand, it was possible for most large families to support themselves through farming and trades. Differences in the standard of living among townspeople were less pronounced than they are today, and the level of political participation was high. (Only men had the right to vote; women wouldn't gain it for another 100 years.) Perhaps most importantly, education was highly valued and the literacy rate in the towns of the Connecticut River valley was 90% in 1800, a civic achievement unequalled almost anywhere else in the world.

As in much of Vermont, Guilford's population declined by as much as 2/3 during the period following the California Gold Rush (1849) and the Civil War (1861 – 65). People left the Town and the state in large numbers for better farmland in the Midwest and in the western territories, and for better economic opportunities in the cities. The railroads bypassed Guilford. The Town had no outlet on the Connecticut River, and it lost its prominence to more prosperous towns (like Brattleboro) along the river to its north. It remained a farming community with a small industrial base, famous for its argillaceous slate quarries, which sometimes employed hundreds of people. Other local industries included a manufacturer of wooden carriages for children, many water-powered mills to grind grain and saw lumber. (One of them turned out 10,000 broom handles a year at its peak.) There were also brickyards and blacksmith shops.

After the Civil War, the Springs Farm in Guilford Center became a popular destination for people seeking its famous "water cure." The spa was both a resort and an exporter of its bottled water throughout the northeast. Until 1882 there was a cider brandy distillery in Town. For most of the 19th century, however, sheep farming was by far the largest source of income, until it was gradually replaced by dairy farming.

In 1945 there were over 30 dairy farms operating in Guilford. Fifty years later there were only seven, and today there are five. In the 1950s, the new requirements for bulk milk handling equipment and refrigeration meant the end of very small herds. Besides its smallest farms, the Town lost traditional industries and services. The Weatherhead

Hollow Creamery ceased operations in the 1930s; the Town's last Post Office (in Green River) closed in 1941; the last blacksmith shop closed in the 1950s, as did the mill in Guilford Center, in the 1970s.

Since then, a multitude of new businesses have arisen in Town. Twenty percent of our employed citizens work in Guilford (up from 15% in 1990), and quite a few of them are self-employed.

Town Character

For nearly 200 years Guilford was a town with five thriving hamlets: Algiers, Guilford Center, Packer Corners, Green River and Hinesburg (West Guilford). Each of them had a school, and all of them except Packer Corners had a church, a post office, a store and light industry and services. Today only Algiers and Guilford Center remain active as public centers. Much of the change is due to the automobile, school buses and better roads; greatly increased mobility meant that people could travel outside their hamlets to work, shop, attend school and worship.

Two profound changes affecting the Town were the abandonment of the old one-room schoolhouse districts, in 1957, in favor of the Central School, and the completion of the first stages of Interstate 91, which connected the Town much more directly with the rest of New England and New York.

The automobile not only made it easier for Town citizens to leave; it also made it easier for outsiders to settle here. The possibility of commuting easily to jobs in Brattleboro made Guilford an attractive place to live for many out-of-staters. A wave of hippies arrived in the late '60s and early '70s (who, admittedly, were not attracted by the local job market) and created several communes out of old farms. Many other individuals and families came to Guilford for a simpler, better life than what they had known down-country. The 1970s and, particularly, the 1980s were a period of enormous population growth, and Guilford's population increased 88% during those two decades. Since then the population has grown more slowly.

For the people who knew the 'old' Guilford of the 1930s, 40s, 50s and early 60s, the period from about 1968 to the present has presented many challenges, as they adapted (willingly or not) to the changes to the Town wrought by the newcomers. Although it has been a time of greatly increased economic opportunity, the cost of living in Guilford has risen alarmingly, due to larger and larger school budgets (and their affect on property taxes) and the astronomical rise in property values and housing costs have made a house in Town beyond the reach of many people who would like to live here, or stay here. Some of the cause for the increase in the cost of living is national and some has to do with the arrival in Town of many newcomers, since it is well-known that population increases in a town inevitably bring increased costs for schools and town services.

For better or worse, Guilford is not the same town it was fifty years ago. The newcomers have added a great deal to the Town by volunteering at the Central School, by serving on Town Boards and Commissions, by getting involved in conservation, and in many other

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ways. In turn, their values and attitudes have been shaped by the enduring small-town Vermont values of Guilford: neighborliness, hard work, love of nature and close families.

Yes, Guilford is a bedroom community and three-quarters of us commute to work outside of Town each day. But the Town also remains a wonderful community where there is a rich 250-year-old heritage, a mosaic of beautiful agricultural and forested landscapes, a great school, and a population of individuals who work hard and care about each other.

The purpose of this Town Plan is to help preserve what is most important to us about Guilford, while preparing as best we can for the changes which are an inevitable part of modern life.

TOWN GOALS

The following 13 Goals are broad statements of the objectives of the Town of Guilford's planning process. They reflect and closely parallel the states specific planning goals as they apply to Guilford. More detailed discussion, policies, and implementation action steps are presented in subsequent sections of the Plan.

Goal 1. To Plan Development which Encourages the Historic Pattern of Compact Hamlets Separated by Rural Countryside.

There are many reasons to maintain the historic settlement pattern of Guilford. Public utilities and facilities are more economical in village centers; compact development allows us to preserve more of our forests and open spaces for future generations; our children have more access to friends and community life in small population centers; and citizens are better able to take care of each other when they are close neighbors.

Goal 2. To Provide a Strong and Diverse Economy Which Provides Satisfying and Rewarding Job Opportunities While Maintaining High Environmental Standards.

Guilford is linked economically with other area towns and with Brattleboro, a growth center and a major employer of our citizens. We favor encouraging environmentally responsible economic activities such as agriculture, light manufacturing, forestry, local service businesses and small-scale home businesses, including technology-related businesses.

Goal 3. To Broaden Access to Educational and Vocational Training Opportunities (Sufficient to Insure the Full Realization of the Abilities of Guilford Citizens).

A well educated population will raise the standard of living for everyone in town. It is essential to prepare our students to be competent and responsible adults who can respond effectively to an increasingly complex world. Education costs are the largest share of the combined town budgets. We recognize that education of children requires high personnel costs, and that our children will need many more technical and personal skills and knowledge than previous generations. School costs will most likely continue to rise, and it will take thoughtful community commitment to carefully plan Guilford's financial resources and to manage the school budgets. (See Goal 12 and the Education section for related information.)

Goal 4. To Provide for Safe, Convenient, Economic and Energy Efficient Transportation Systems that Respect the Integrity of the Natural Environment, including Public Transit Options and Paths for Pedestrians and Bicyclists.

The transportation system of the Town of Guilford should provide convenience and service commensurate with need, should respect the quality of the natural environment, and should avoid waste and inefficiency. Its aim should be to fit the pattern of traffic, present and future, to the environment envisioned in the Town Plan, rather than to let the

demands of motorists and engineers dictate the shape of the Town. Every reasonable effort must be made to preserve the scenic wealth of our landscape for future generations.

Goal 5. To Identify, Protect and Preserve Important Natural and Historic Features of the Guilford Landscape, including Outstanding Water Resources and Wetlands, Agricultural and Forest Land, Significant Scenic Landscapes and Views, Important Archaeological Sites, and Historic Structures, Sites and Districts.

The loss of cherished natural features or historic landmarks diminishes a community's identity and ignores the rights and needs of future generations. The wise use and preservation of the Guilford landscape and historic sites are a matter of the public good, as well as being vital to the economic health of our Town. Guilford's rural appearance and character are of critical importance to us, the people of Guilford, and to the visitors to our town, upon whom many of us are directly or indirectly dependent for our livelihoods.

A significant portion of the total area of Guilford has various resource values of vital importance, and should be protected. These resources include productive agricultural and forest lands, wetlands, floodplains, ponds and streams, ridges and steep slopes with fragile soils, and wildlife areas. They also include archaeological, architectural and historic sites, and other places of significant value.

Goal 6. To Maintain and Improve the Quality of Air, Water, Wildlife, and Land Resources.

We all want to preserve the quality of Guilford's natural environment. The purity of our air and water, the abundance of wildlife, and the integrity of our land resources are vital to Guilford's strength and character, as well as to the health and welfare of all Guilford citizens. Unless we pay careful attention to the type, location, and quality of development, these resources will soon be diminished or lost.

Goal 7. To Encourage the Efficient Use of Energy and the Development of Renewable Energy Resources.

We need energy for transportation, heating, lighting, business and industry, electrical generation, and for our work and our entertainment. It is as precious a resource as clean air and water. Its proper use can improve our living conditions. Its misuse can diminish, damage, or destroy a healthy environment.

Conserving energy improves the regional economy and the residents' quality of life. It also reduces the consequences of our dependence on foreign supplies of gas and oil. Living in a well-insulated home reduces the amount a family spends on fuel; a business that reduces its energy consumption can invest the savings in expansion.

Goal 8. To Maintain and Enhance Recreational Opportunities for Guilford Residents and Visitors.

Recreational opportunities contribute to the quality of life in Guilford and should be encouraged. Tourism, the largest sector of Vermont's economy, is based on recreation. Our state's economic prosperity since the second half of the 20th century derives in large

part from the development of a recreational industry which has brought millions of visitors to the state. At the same time, this development has had negative consequences. Increased land development has driven up the cost of land and housing and reduced access to the land and to non-commercial outdoor recreational activities.

Goal 9. To Encourage and Strengthen Agricultural and Forest Industries.

Farming and forestry have played important roles throughout the history of Guilford, though they are no longer dominant, and citizens remain supportive of both. In recent years there has been an increase in the number of Vermont farms devoted to vegetable, fruit, and maple sugar products. This trend should be encouraged.

Vigorous agriculture and forestry industries not only produce great economic benefits, but are compatible with (and vitally important to) the tourist industry that is central to the economy of Vermont. They maintain a landscape attractive to visitors and help maintain biodiversity. They also produce many benefits beyond the production of food and wood. These resources are valuable and deserve consideration when placing roads, houses, utility lines and septic systems. We owe it to our children, grandchildren and to future generations to conserve this landscape, so that it will be there for them as it is for us.

Goal 10. To Provide for the Wise and Efficient Use of Vermont's Natural Resources and to Facilitate the Appropriate Extraction of Earth and Mineral Resources and the Proper Restoration and Preservation of the Aesthetic Qualities of the Area.

Deposits of natural resources do not recognize town and property boundaries, and the management of some resources may require the efforts of several towns or the region as a whole. Although there are identifiable sand, gravel and slate deposits in Town, there is currently only limited commercial extraction of these and other earth resources within the Town's boundaries.

Excavation and extraction of these resources should be carried out in such a way that they don't unduly impact neighbors with loud noise, dust, unusual hours of operation or heavy truck and equipment traffic on Town roads. Mineral resource operations should be mindful of the need to leave adequate supplies of earth resources for future generations.

Goal 11. To Ensure the Availability of Safe and Affordable Housing for All Guilford Residents

Guilford draws strength from the fact that our neighborhoods are economically mixed. Unlike much of the United States and some areas of Vermont, Windham County is not divided into rich towns and poor towns, and Guilford is not divided into wealthy, middle class and lower income neighborhoods. Disparities in income, and the tensions they produce, are an unfortunate fact of life, but living close to people in other income brackets can help us understand each other and reduce tension and resentment. If the only time we encountered people richer or poorer than we are was at Town Meeting or at work, Guilford would have a much harder time resolving contentious issues like the school budget. We are lucky to have the opportunity to get to know each other as

neighbors, to see the points of view of those with higher or lower incomes than we have, and we should keep it that way.

For these reasons, and because of basic human fairness, we need to ensure that there is always an adequate supply of affordable housing in Guilford. Land prices and construction costs have made the dream of owning a home impossible to achieve for many of our residents or people who would like to live in Guilford. The closing of the trailer park on Partridge Road caused a significant drop in the amount of affordable housing in Town. We need to replace that housing. Similarly, many of our older citizens have to leave town for nursing homes in Brattleboro or Vernon because there is no assisted living facility here, nor is there an affordable alternative to selling their homes. In the Planning Commission's Town Survey, two thirds of residents responded that "the Town should work to provide affordable housing for seniors or disabled persons."

The lack of affordable housing remains a problem for the Town. The development of safe, affordable, and adequate housing for all of the Town's residents remains in the interest of the Town as a whole.

Goal 12. To Plan for, Finance, and Provide an Efficient System of Public Facilities and Services to Meet Future Needs

Both the income and expenses of the Town government are affected by increases and decreases in population. School expenses are particularly sensitive to such issues. Population growth also increases the need for other services, such as fire and police protection. It is important that Town officials and citizens review both short- and long-term community changes, in order to make informed decisions regarding policies and finances to address the needs of the Town.

Goal 13. To Ensure the Availability of Safe and Affordable Child Care and to Integrate Child Care Issues into the Planning Process, including Child Care Financing, Infrastructure, Business Assistance for Child Care Providers, and Child Care Work Force Development.

Although Guilford is not a large enough town to offer significant child care assistance, it is important that the Town be aware of the constant need for quality child care and look for opportunities to support it whenever possible. Because so many of our parents are working, and many residents do not have family members who can help with child care, it is important for the Town to support good quality child care. High quality child care improves the overall health of our community.

TRANSPORTATION

At present the town road system includes one Interstate highway, Interstate 91, which runs north and south for 3.9 miles in two sections along the east side of Town; one U.S. highway, Route 5, which also runs north and south roughly parallel to Interstate 91 for 6.8 miles, in two sections along the east side of Town; and 66.9 miles of Town highways: none in Class 1, 17.2 miles in Class 2, and 49.6 miles in Class 3. Currently there are no additional Federal or State highways planned for the Town.

Algiers Village is a relatively compact area with residences, churches, a general store, services and businesses. A sidewalk extends from Coolidge Highway, (Route 5), along a short distance of Guilford Center Road. Additional sidewalks, pathways, and traffic calming measures would improve safety and access for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Transportation Policies

It is the policy of the Town of Guilford that:

1. New access points (driveways and private roads) to Town-maintained roads be constructed in a safe and environmentally safe manner, and that the Town Road Commissioner will enforce Town regulations regarding culverts, run-off, set-backs and safe engineering when approving new driveways and private roads.
2. The development, expansion and maintenance of public utilities should occur within or parallel to highway or public utility rights-of-way corridors, so that they may be readily maintained. This both reduces adverse physical and visual impact on the landscape and achieves greater efficiency in the expenditure of public funds. This provision includes the possibility of placing wires and transmission lines a short distance from the road, in a field, to preserve a tree line.
3. The Town shall retain all present public rights-of-way, whether or not they are currently being maintained by the Town. No tract of land should be allowed to become “land-locked” by the relinquishment of a public right-of-way.
4. The transportation system of the Town of Guilford should provide the convenience and service which citizens need, while respecting the integrity of the environment. When new construction, or major reconstruction, of roads and highways is undertaken, the Town shall consider the feasibility of providing paths solely for the use of pedestrians, bicyclists or other non-motorized means of transportation. Within Algiers Village, the Town shall consider the feasibility of extending the existing sidewalk and pathways along with improving pedestrian access and safety.
5. The Town opposes any further major Federal or State highways through its territory.
6. Further paving of existing Town roads shall be subject to review by the Select Board, and it should be based on engineering studies, the relative cost of maintenance and

available funds. New paving projects shall be placed before the voters at Town Meeting after an informational meeting has been held.

7. Before roads are improved, the Town should consider the effects of the improvement on traffic speed. The speed limits in Town should be enforced.

8. Public parking areas shall be provided in hamlet areas as the need arises, especially in Algiers and Guilford Center. In order to achieve this Policy, the Town should consider purchasing, or accepting as a gift, property that becomes available in these areas.

9. The Town should be alert to the possibility of some sort of public bus service between Guilford and Brattleboro, should the possibility prove feasible in the future.

10. When bridges on public roads need to be replaced, the Town shall consider the impact of the new structures, both in terms of safety and the rural character of the Town.

11. The Town should cooperate with surrounding communities to promote Amtrak and other appropriate means of mass transportation in the area. Because of the rural character of the Town, air and rail transportation facilities are not appropriate within the limits of the Town of Guilford.

Recommended Transportation Actions:

1. That the Town explore the possibility of using State Aid and/or private funds for the development and maintenance of recreational trails in the Town.

2. That the Town retain all public rights-of-way.

3. That the Town explore the costs of additional policing of speed limits on Town roads.

4. That the Town enforce the existing Driveway Ordinance, including slopes when entering public roads, adequate culverts and proper drainage, safe engineering and adequate lines-of-sight for oncoming traffic.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND PUBLIC UTILITIES

Public facilities in Guilford include: the Algiers Fire (Sewer) District, the Town Offices, the Central School, the Town Garage, the Guilford Library, the Historical Society building, the Welcome Center on Interstate 91, Sweet Pond, Weatherhead Hollow Pond and Fort Dummer State Park.

During the 1970’s and the 1980’s Guilford’s population grew rapidly, and the Town’s revenues struggled to keep pace with increasing population and rising costs. During the 1990’s, however, the Town’s population grew more slowly. In order to plan for how population changes affect the school and other Town facilities and public utilities, it is essential to have an accurate projection of these changes.

The chart below indicates the importance of reviewing four aspects of Guilford’s population change over a thirty year period. No one aspect or decade accurately reflects community changes.

| | <u>1970</u> | <u>1980</u> | <u>1990</u> | <u>2000</u> |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <u>RESIDENTS</u> | 1108 | 1532 +38% | 1941 +27% | 2046 +5% |
| <u>SCHOOL ENROLLMENT</u> (kindergarten to grade 8) | 205 | 188 -8% | 274 +46% | 237 -14% |
| <u>HOUSING UNITS</u> | 464 | 645 +39% | 873 +35% | 931 +7% |
| <u>MEDIAN AGE</u> | 28 | 30 | 34 | 40 |

- 2009 School Enrollment (kindergarten to grade eight): 164 (-31%)

Demographics (from the 2000 U.S. Census and school board data 2009-2010)

The population of Guilford in 2000, according to the US Census, was 2,046, half male and half female, with a median age of 40.1 years. In looking at different age groups there was a relatively even distribution with one notable exception. Most five-year age groups (under 5, 5-9, etc.) contained between 100 and 200 individuals, but the 20-24 group had only 68. This likely reflects young adults leaving town for employment or educational opportunities.

Guilford had 811 occupied housing units, with 62 considered to be seasonal, recreational, or for occasional use. 270 were built before 1940 and fewer than 100 were built per decade in the 1950s and 1960s. Then there was then a sharp increase in development: 195 houses were built in the 1970s, 171 in the 1980s, and 127 in the 1990s.

In 2000, there were 576 family households averaging 2.95 people. The median household income was \$45,982. Residents’ types of employment varied, with the greatest number

(269) in educational, health, and social services, then manufacturing (149), and retail trade (126).

In 2001 the Guilford Planning Commission conducted a comprehensive community wide survey. The resulting information was published in the 2001-2002 Community Profile, which also included some of the data from the 2000 Federal Census. Although the growth in the 1990's was moderate, the population of Guilford has almost doubled since 1970. While elementary school enrollment has dropped recently, enrollment has increased over the past thirty years. The general trend over the thirty years has been a steady growth of the Guilford population. The Town population is gradually including a smaller percentage of children and a larger percentage of adults. This aging of Guilford reflects a common trend in many communities and suggests that the Town may need to consider providing more assistance to its older citizens as their numbers and needs increase.

The difficulty of anticipating population changes and fully understanding the effects of school funding on Guilford's finances are ongoing challenges for the Town. In planning for population changes the Guilford Select Board and School Board should continue to closely monitor changes in the population, school enrollment and funding, and housing units.

TOWN GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

The official business of the Town is conducted at the annual March Town Meeting. The Guilford Select Board conducts business of the Town between Town Meetings, with the assistance of an Administrative Assistant. Since the expense and administration of Town business has become more costly and complex in recent years, the Town, through the Select Board, should pursue the actions enumerated in the policies section, below.

RECREATION

The only Town-owned recreational facilities are the playing fields at the Guilford Central School. The Guilford Recreation Club owns the playing field by the Fairgrounds on Weatherhead Hollow, which is made available for public use. The State owns the two largest ponds in Town, Weatherhead Hollow Pond (and its boat access) and Sweet Pond (and the trail around it). Opportunities for outdoor recreation abound, and private land is often made available for public use with permission. These opportunities include hunting and fishing, shooting (at the Sportsman's Club rifle range), hiking, horseback and ATV riding, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling on established and well-marked trails, and picnicking.

HEALTH SERVICES

The Town appoints a Health Officer whose duties include testing drinking water in apartment buildings, if asked, and organizing the Town's response to challenges arising from water contamination and/or communicable diseases. The State has new septic regulations and is responsible for issuing septic system permits and investigating violations of septic regulations.

FIRE AND POLICE PROTECTION, EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE, AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Fire protection and emergency medical service is provided to the Town by the Guilford Volunteer Fire Department (GVFD). Founded in 1949 and incorporated in 1955, the GVFD is headquartered at 108 Guilford Center Road. It maintains two pumpers, one tanker, and one brush/utility truck. It provides fire fighting protection for buildings and its specially trained First Responders respond to all town 911 calls for emergency medical and accident services, including the nearly four miles of Interstate 91 within the town boundaries. Its 22 volunteers serve without pay and respond to about 200 calls each year.

The protection of the Town from natural and man-made disasters is vested in the Emergency Management Organization (EMO), which is chartered by the State Department of Public Safety. The EMO is primarily responsible in cases of fire, flood, storms (ice, snow, and wind), earthquakes, radioactive release, terrorist attack, energy shortages, etc., as well as any other emergencies.

In March, 2002 the Town adopted An Ordinance for Emergency Management of the Town of Guilford. The Select Board appoints a volunteer organization for emergency management utilizing to the fullest extent, the existing local and regional agencies, organizations and individuals. The Select Board also appoints a Local Emergency Director (LED). The LED and the EMO are responsible for emergency administration and operation in Guilford. A volunteer emergency staff, separate from the Fire Department and First Responders, is organized to manage a Guilford Emergency Operations Center (EOC), currently located in the Fire Department.

The Town uses three existing emergency plans:

- Rapid Response Plan – a list of resources and personnel available in an emergency
- The State designed Radiological Emergency Response Plan – to manage an event at Entergy Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant.
- An All-Hazards Plan developed by the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) in cooperation with the Windham Regional Commission. (The LEPC is a regional committee made of representatives of the local emergency officials from each regional town).

Development Affecting Public Investments Policy

It is the policy of the Town of Guilford that:

Lands adjacent to public or quasi-public facilities, and services to such facilities (including, but not limited to, highways, fire and police stations, schools, libraries, parks, the Fairgrounds, and hiking trails), shall be used in such a manner as not to endanger, jeopardize or interfere with the public's use and enjoyment of, or access to, the facility, service or lands.

Community Facilities and Public Utilities Policies

Construction or Expansion of Public Facilities Policy

It is the policy of the Town of Guilford that:

The construction or expansion of public facilities shall not significantly reduce the resource value of adjoining forestry or agricultural lands, unless there is no reasonable alternative. Any construction shall be planned to minimize its effect on adjoining lands and property.

Public Utility Corridors Policy

It is the policy of the Town of Guilford that:

In order to reduce their impact, new or expanded public utility corridors (including power lines and telecommunications towers) shall be placed, where feasible, within or parallel with existing roads and utility rights-of-way. This will reduce their visual impact on the landscape and will also facilitate maintenance. At the same time, every effort shall be made to preserve tree lines along our roads, which may require power lines to be placed in a field behind a tree line, a short distance from the road.

Waste Disposal Policy

It is the policy of the Town of Guilford that:

The Town should continue to participate in regional solid waste disposal programs, including the Windham Solid Waste Management District's recycling of paper, plastic and glass in the collection bins here in town.

Privately Owned Facilities and Services Policies

It is the policy of the Town of Guilford that:

1. Any privately owned community-type facility or service, such as a private water or sewage system, shall be built to meet town specification.
2. Any privately owned community-type facility or service, such as a private water or sewage system, shall not be accepted by the Town until the cost of maintaining such facility is in conformance with the Town's operating budget.
3. Private commercial development shall not be allowed unless it is bonded to insure that the infrastructure is completed. No parcel within the development should be transferred without such a bond.

Fire and Police Protection, Emergency Medical Service, and Emergency Management Policies

It is the policy of the Town of Guilford that:

1. There should be adequate police protection in Guilford, as determined by the Select Board.
2. The Fire Department should remain affiliated with Tri-State Mutual Aid and Southwestern New Hampshire Mutual Aid systems, or in any other such system deemed important by the Chief and Trustees.

3. Fire ponds and dry hydrants should be encouraged throughout the Town. Any person planning a pond or a pool should be encouraged to discuss the plans with the Fire Chief or his designated representative.
4. The Town should continue to support the Guilford Volunteer Fire Department through its appropriations from General Funds. **Such** funds should be used to help provide adequate expenses of the Department, including bonding for **the** new fire station, and the regular replacement of fire fighting apparatus and equipment as needed to provide for the safety of the firefighters and First Responders and for the protection of Guilford residents and their properties.

Health Services Policy

It is the policy of the Town of Guilford that:

Regional health facilities, services and organizations should be investigated, supported and utilized when they are in the Town's interest.

Town Government Administration Policies

It is the policy of the Town of Guilford to:

1. Hold semi-annual joint meetings of Town Boards and officers to facilitate communication on issues and matters of mutual interest; other special meetings should be called as necessary.
2. Maintain a central filing system for all Town records and publish in one booklet all Town ordinances, regulations and standards.
3. Estimate annually capital expenditures for the next five years, providing the Town with a Capital Budget that would include the budgets of both the Select Board and the School Board.
4. Consider the addition of a Town Manager to administer the daily business of the Town, if the Town grows significantly.
5. Consider whether one or more members should be added to the Select Board as the Town grows.

Recommended Community Facilities and Public Utilities Actions:

1. That the Town map all fire ponds and dry hydrants.
2. That the Town appoint a committee to develop a rolling five-year capital budget that includes the budgets of both the Select Board and the School Board.

Recreation Policies

It is the policy of the Town of Guilford to:

1. Encourage recreational areas and activities, while simultaneously balancing these recreational advantages with possible adverse effects on the land.

2. Encourage use and development of land and waters in such a way as not to significantly diminish the value and availability of existing outdoor recreational facilities.
3. Include where feasible a system of paths to provide for the safety of bicyclists, horseback riders, and pedestrians along town roads. All such paths should be shown on the Town's Transportation Map.
4. Plan systems of recreational trails for hiking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, horseback and ATV riding, and bicycling, and to acquire easements for the Town for public use. Separate trails should be recommended for motorized and non-motorized recreation. Such trails should be shown on the Town Transportation Map.
5. Make every effort to preserve scenic views and other scenic resources that may require protection.

Recommended Recreation Actions:

1. That the Town identify scenic roads or parts of roads, and determine what is involved in preserving them.
2. That the Town seek funds for the planning and construction of a system of paths along our roads to provide for the safety of pedestrians, horseback riders and bicyclists.
3. That the Town seek funds to identify and seek easements for a system of recreational trails for hiking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, horseback riding, and bicycling.
4. That the Town support the efforts of private citizens to preserve recreational facilities on private land, such as the Green River Dam, a structure of priceless recreational and historic value to the Town.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Guilford has a long and rich history. During Guilford's early years as an official state town, it was the largest town in the young state of Vermont. There are many locations in our Town of historical and cultural significance. These buildings and sites deserve respectful consideration in our efforts to preserve Guilford's historical and cultural heritage. This heritage forms the foundation for Guilford's current and future vitality. In the 2001 Guilford Town Survey citizens clearly stated that protecting our historical and cultural character was an important priority.

At present there are 34 identified historic buildings or sites in the Town. These include federally and state designated historic resources, as well as locally recognized resources. The list includes:

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Benjamin Carpenter House | Green River Mill Foundation and Dam |
| Site of the Old Guilford Springs | Green River Tavern |
| Brick Schoolhouse | Guilford Country Store |
| Captain Henry Chase Tavern | Broad Brook House |
| Old Town Pound | Guilford Historical Museum |
| Christ Church | Old Town Hall |
| West Guilford Baptist Church | Houghton Tavern |
| Broad Brook Grange Hall | Guilford Free Library, and |
| Green River Church | Guilford Center Meeting House. |
| Green River Covered Bridge | Tontine Building |
| Herm Ashworth House | |

In addition there are many cemeteries of note, including:

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Blanchard Cemetery | Guilford Center Cemetery |
| Baker Cemetery | Lee Cemetery |
| Billings Cemetery | Maplehurst Cemetery |
| Carpenter Cemetery | Stark Cemetery |
| Christ Church Cemetery | Weatherhead Hollow Cemetery |
| Colgrove Cemetery | West Guilford Cemetery, and |
| Franklin Cemetery | Wilkins Hill Cemetery. |
| Groll Cemetery | |

Historic and Cultural Resources Policies

It is the policy of the Town of Guilford:

1. To identify, maintain and preserve archaeological, architectural and historic sites and districts.
2. That, when considering Town ordinances affecting commercial activity, the location of businesses should be governed by the concept that the rural character of the Town should be preserved.

Recommended Cultural Resources Actions:

1. That the Town continue identifying, cataloging, and mapping important archaeological sites, as well as historic structures, sites and districts.

NATURAL RESOURCES

A diverse and dynamic natural environment is fundamental for the perpetuation of a healthy and vital community, and Guilford is fortunate to possess diverse natural resources. In the 2001 Guilford Town Survey a large percentage of our citizens indicated that the preservation of high quality natural resources was a significant priority. Included in our Town Plan discussion of Natural Resources are the following important topics: Air Quality, Water Resources, Waste Water Disposal, Wildlife Habitat and Endangered Species, Use of Agricultural and Forest Soils, and Earth Resources.

Natural Resources Policies

It is the policy of the Town of Guilford to:

1. Improve the quality of our air, land, water and wildlife resources.
2. Encourage land use which does not threaten or degrade natural resources.
3. Require, where possible, that public utilities and transportation facilities integrate use of the same corridors in order to minimize their visual and environmental impact.
4. Protect and preserve significant natural areas, as well as sites of special educational, scientific, historical, architectural or archaeological significance or beauty.
5. Identify, establish, and maintain reserves for wetlands and prime agricultural and forest lands.
6. Purchase or accept rights to properties which need protection and/or would be of benefit to the Town; to encourage and support the purchase or lease of private property for public use, and to support a mechanism, such as Guilford Preservation, Inc., whereby these transactions are possible.
7. Identify, map and preserve special natural areas, including those containing rare plant and animal species.

Recommended Natural Resources Actions:

1. That the Town Conservation Commission continue identifying, cataloging and mapping outstanding water resources and wetlands, agricultural and forest lands, significant scenic landscapes and views, and important archaeological sites, as well as historic structures, sites and districts.
2. That the Town support and participate in community resources computer mapping and resulting data base. The resulting information should be made available on the Town website; such information is available in the Town offices for the use of residents and people who want to learn about Guilford.

3. That the Town map wildlife habitat and the location of endangered species as a way of helping to protect these resources.

AIR QUALITY

Although Guilford's air quality is generally good, because of low population density and the lack of heavy traffic and heavy industry, the potential for air pollution is present. Local threats to air quality include combustion by-products from wood, coal, oil furnaces, fireplaces, vehicular exhaust, poor waste management and improper disposal of toxic substances. Air quality is also affected by pollutants from distant sources, including acid rain, mist and snow generated in neighboring states. An accident at the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant has the potential to produce large amounts of atmospheric radiation.

Air Quality Policies

It is the policy of the Town of Guilford to:

1. Continue cooperating with any program to monitor air quality, such as the current monitoring program in cooperation with Vermont Yankee.
2. Discourage any activity which degrades air quality in any part of the Town.
3. Encourage the use of the cleanest burning technologies, such as catalytic converters or non catalytic combustion, and wood pellets, for wood stoves and in fireplaces.
4. Encourage energy efficiency upgrades as a means to reduce the use of carbon fuels.

WATER RESOURCES

Guilford contains many exemplary rivers, streams and ponds, such as the Green River and Broad Brook and Weatherhead Hollow and Sweet Ponds. These provide recreational opportunities such as swimming and fishing, so protecting surface water quality is very important to the future of the Town. Guilford residents and businesses rely primarily on individual groundwater supplies for potable water; therefore protecting groundwater quality is critical to the future wellbeing of the Town and its residents.

Water Resources Policies

It is the policy of the town of Guilford to:

1. Protect our watercourses, streams, ponds and wetlands from contamination, including run-off from fertilizer, animal waste, septic systems, junkyards, and other pollutants and toxins.
2. Encourage the preservation of the beauty of our streams, ponds and wetlands.
3. Consider cooperating with any program to monitor and improve water quality, such as the Green River Watershed Alliance.
4. Educate our students about the importance of water quality and, when practical, to help provide learning experiences in the field related to water quality preservation.

5. Protect our waters and watersheds by limiting the intensity of development within the following areas:
 - a) Headwaters of watersheds characterized by steep slopes and shallow soils.
 - b) Drainage areas of pristine or upland streams; within these areas special attention should be given to preservation of shade trees on stream banks, preventing soil erosion and siltation of streams, and preventing pollution of ground and surface waters.

WASTE WATER DISPOSAL

There are two methods of waste water disposal in Guilford. For a limited area of Town there is the connection to the Algiers sewer; for the remainder, the vast majority, of Town it must be through on-site septic disposal works.

Waste Water Disposal Policies

It is the policy of the Town of Guilford to:

1. Permit development to occur where soil conditions and topography will not cause erosion or contamination of ground or surface waters.
2. Continue to update and enforce health regulations to ensure adequate sewage disposal encompassing traditional and proven new technologies, and to report violations of State septic regulations when they occur.

WILDLIFE HABITAT AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

Guilford citizens share an appreciation of the Town's varied wildlife and plant life and of the importance of protecting their habitat. Healthy habitat and ecosystems provide the critical basis for Guilford's natural environment in which all of us go about our daily lives. Presently there are six sites in Guilford identified as containing rare plant or animal species. These sites are indicated on the Natural Resources Map. Wildlife corridors are important to the preservation of biodiversity, especially among large mammals, which need extensive territories in which to mate, breed and sustain themselves.

Wildlife Habitat and Endangered Species Policies

It is the policy of the Town of Guilford to:

1. Protect natural areas, fragile areas, and critical plant and animal habitats, especially those of state and regional significance.
2. Protect habitats of threatened, endangered, and economically significant species and important ecosystems.
3. Maintain or enhance the habitat needs and travel corridors required by our Town's wildlife.

USE OF AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST SOILS

Careful management of our agricultural and forest lands and soils is particularly important to Guilford citizens, and especially to the many residents who earn their livelihoods on our farms and in our forests. The preservation of the balance of rural

character and residential development will continue to be an important challenge which we must address in order to maintain the vitality of our agricultural lands and forests.

Use of Agricultural and Forest Soils Policies

It is the policy of the Town of Guilford to:

1. Maintain and, where it can be done sustainably, increase the production of forestry and agricultural products. Any action which decreases the productivity of agricultural or forest land should be discouraged.
2. Encourage proper management of agricultural and forest lands, such as the practices of sustainability required under the Current Use program.
3. Encourage the use of open fields for agriculture, siting new houses at the edges (not in the middle) of mowings, and to always consider the importance of the visual impact of open fields, which are attractive to visitors and residents alike.
4. Encourage Guilford citizens to participate in the Current Use Program, which encourages the preservation of open land and good forestry practices.

EARTH AND MINERAL RESOURCES

Guilford's history of slate quarries was an important part of our past. Argillaceous (clay-like) slate was quarried in Guilford from at least the first decade of the 19th century and, on a much smaller scale, it is still quarried today. In the 1870 census report the Wait & Johnson Company was listed as the Town's single largest industrial employer, with 20 employees. The industry has now diminished to a small operation, however, there are several piles of tailings in the eastern part of town. The excavation and extraction of our stone and mineral deposits require careful management and considerations.

Earth and Mineral Resources Policies

It is the policy of the Town of Guilford that:

1. Land with high potential for the extraction of earth and mineral resources shall not be developed in a manner which will prevent future extraction or processing of the resource.
2. When such lands are developed, the development should not have an adverse environmental impact, resulting in hardship to neighboring property owners involving noise, dust, vibration, and hours of operation, nor create an undue burden on municipal services or facilities.
3. Those who propose the extraction of earth and mineral resources shall assure site rehabilitation suitable for alternative uses and compatible with the surrounding countryside.
4. The extraction of earth and mineral resources shall not interfere with, or have undue negative impacts on, surface waters or groundwater, air quality (dust), special

community resources (historic sites, recreation and scenic areas), nor shall it create undue levels of noise.

5. Extraction sites shall handle truck traffic without creating unsafe, noisy or dusty conditions for neighboring landowners.
6. Any operator of an earth resources extraction operation shall meet strict health, safety and environmental performance standards in conformance with Act 250 criteria or other relevant regulations.
7. Heavy trucking and heavy equipment traffic to and from extraction sites within and outside of Town boundaries shall obey weight and load limits on all Town bridges and roads.
8. The Town shall use local sources of sand and gravel for Town construction projects whenever to do so is cost effective and consistent with the Earth and Mineral Resources policies in this Town Plan.

Recommended Earth and Mineral Resources Actions:

1. That the Town should work with the Agency of Natural Resources to identify, locate and map deposits of important earth and mineral resources.
2. That the Town determine permissible noise levels in Town and adopt them in a Noise Ordinance or zoning bylaw.

ECONOMY

Our town does not have a diverse economy which includes large-scale businesses and manufacturing. According to the results of the Guilford Town Survey (2001), roughly 24% of our employed citizens work here in town, 46% work in Brattleboro, 2% work in Vernon and 28% work in other towns. The best place for concentration of future growth of light manufacturing and non-home-based services and businesses is in areas along Route 5 which are already heavily developed, especially those in or adjacent to the Algiers Sewer District. This area provides adequate transportation resources and, in Algiers, allows access to a public sewer line linked to the Brattleboro waste treatment plant. Future development throughout Town should allow for designated breaks for deer yards and wildlife corridors, as shown in the Proposed Land Use Map of this Town Plan.

Economy Policies

It is the policy of the Town of Guilford to:

1. Recognize that communities need local employment opportunities.
2. Encourage opportunities for citizens to develop employable skills.
3. Encourage opportunities in agriculture and forestry which use environmentally sustainable practices.
4. Encourage small-scale businesses, including technology-related home businesses.
5. Promote economic growth which is consistent with local and regional objectives, including this Town Plan and the Windham Regional Plan.
6. Ensure that industries and businesses act in an environmentally responsible manner, including the safe handling and disposal of toxic waste and hazardous materials.
7. Encourage the concentration of future growth of light manufacturing and non-home-based services and businesses in areas along Route 5 which are already heavily developed, and particularly, in or adjacent to the Algiers Sewer District.
8. Future development throughout Town should allow for designated breaks for critical wildlife corridors, as shown in the Proposed Land Use Map of this Town Plan.
9. Continue to participate with Brattleboro, Dummerston and the Windham Regional Commission in Regional Growth Center planning for future economic development.

EDUCATION

Until the late '50s, Guilford had 13 one-room schoolhouses located throughout the Town. Since 1957 the Town has consolidated elementary education in the Guilford Central School. The school, containing a kindergarten and grades 1 – 8, has strong support from the citizens. It is considered one of the best schools in the District. Students in grades 9 – 12 attend the Union High School in Brattleboro. At present the Guilford Central School is not overcrowded. In the 1990's, when the school population was higher, the on-site sewage disposal system was operating at full capacity, and could not be expanded due to regulatory constraints. Since then, septic regulations have been changed to allow for higher performance systems that have greater capacity, which may make expansion of the school possible in the future, if it is needed.

Not only does the academic program compare favorably with other small towns in Vermont, but the newspaper, *The Guilford Gazette*, produced by the students, is playing a valuable role in raising community awareness. The school's community service program is helping to bring the school and the community together. The school is also working with the Historical Society in researching and recording the history of Guilford. A good education will raise the standard of living for everyone. On the other hand, we recognize that increased school spending leads directly to higher property taxes for all Guilford citizens.

Other educational opportunities in our area include the School for International Training, a General Education Degree program (GED), Marlboro College and its Graduate Center, branches of Community College of Vermont, Vermont College, Norwich University, Southern Vermont College, Union Institute and University, and programs offered by the University of Vermont. Within commuting distance are Landmark College, Greenfield Community College, Keene State, the graduate programs of Antioch College, the Five Colleges in the Amherst area (Amherst, Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, Smith, and the University of Massachusetts).

Education Policies

It is the policy of the Town of Guilford to:

1. Provide an adequate public education to all the children of the Town.
2. Encourage lifelong learning;
3. Keep the 7th and 8th grades at the Central School, but to remain alert to alternatives should conditions at the school change.
4. Be informed about new high performance septic systems and their appropriateness for Guilford School.
5. Continue to make use of the Brattleboro Union High School and the Southeastern Vermont Career Education Center in Brattleboro.

6. Encourage the use of the facilities at the Guilford Central School in the evenings and during the summer.
7. Support such activities as *The Guilford Gazette*, the community service learning program, and other programs which deepen the links between our children and our community.
8. Facilitate the development and use, by students and adults, of educational programs in Guilford and the region. These include a wide spectrum of academic, vocational and technical opportunities offered by colleges in the area.
9. Support school and private efforts, such as the Windham County Reads, to improve the literacy rate for all Guilford citizens.
10. Encourage the support and use of the Library and the Historical Society by children and adults.

Recommended Education Actions:

1. That the Town stay informed about changes in the State regulations involving schools.
2. That the Town continues to allow the school to be available for educational, community, and recreational activities.
3. Determine if the school property is suitable for a high performance septic system, which may be needed in the future.
4. That the Town urge our federal and state elected officials to increase their financial commitment to education, to fully fund existing mandates and ease the burden on towns.
5. That the School Board should maintain a five-year Plan so that information for Town planning is available.

Child Care

“Child care” refers to the care of children ages birth to twelve years. According to the Year 2000 census, approximately twenty-eight percent of the total population of Guilford was eighteen years old or younger. Vermont has a very high percentage of working mothers, so our need for child care is high. The 2001 Guilford Town Survey and Community Profile indicated that working residents have their children cared for in various child care situations ranging from formal child care programs to informal babysitting with relatives and friends. It is difficult for many families to pay for high quality child care programs, and there is a particular scarcity of child care for children under three years old.

As of January, 2010, Guilford had no registered home child care programs. There are no Town-sponsored pre-school or after school child care programs. There are some town facilities which provide very limited and informal child care options for a few children, such as the Guilford Free Library and, occasionally, the Guilford Community Church.

Childcare Policies

It is the policy of the Town of Guilford to:

1. Support Town and regional efforts to increase the availability and affordability of good quality child care.
2. If the number of Guilford's school-age children continues to decline, consider the use of part of the school for child care activities for our preschool and school-age population.

Recommended Childcare Action:

Have available in the Town Office a list of child care providers in Guilford, which can be obtained through Windham Child Care; update this information annually.

ENERGY

Conserving energy, and switching to renewable sources of energy, can create jobs. Renewable energy resources mean energy available for collection from sunlight, wind, running water, geothermal sources, manure and grown fuels, such as wood, agricultural crops and waste materials. Wood heat is widely used in Guilford homes. Insulating and upgrading existing buildings, and doing energy audits are just a few of the opportunities for enhancing energy conservation.

Many utilities offer businesses and homeowners free energy audits and help pay for water-heater insulation and compact energy-efficient light bulbs that can last 11 times longer than incandescent bulbs while using one quarter the electricity. There is also a statewide provider of energy efficiency services, Efficiency Vermont (EV), operated by an independent, non-profit organization under contract to the Vermont Public Service Board. EV was created in 2000 by the Vermont legislature and the Vermont Public Service Board to help all Vermonters save energy, reduce energy costs and protect the environment. It provides technical advice, financial assistance and design guidance to help make Vermont homes, farms and businesses energy efficient.

Energy Policies

It is the policy of the Town of Guilford:

1. To encourage practices which promote energy conservation, the use of renewable energy, and a clean environment. Energy consumption which depletes a limited resource and/or produces harmful wastes should be actively discouraged. The Town should encourage:
 - a. The use of on-site or locally-obtainable renewable energy sources (e.g., water, solar, wood, wood pellets, bio-mass, manure, wind, and geo-thermal sources).
 - b. The maximum conservation of energy, such as the use of compact fluorescent light bulbs.
 - c. Development to be located near Town services (particularly the school) in order to save energy.
 - d. Home businesses, which reduce fuel consumption for commuting.
 - e. Promotion and facilitation, where practical, of car pooling and public transportation.
 - f. Energy audits for homes, businesses, and public buildings.
 - g. Practices that avoid wasteful forms of energy use.
 - h. Use of new technologies, such as non-catalytic combustion in wood heating.

Recommended Energy Actions:

1. That the Town Planning Commission work with the Listers and Select Board to develop Town policies which encourage energy conservation.
2. That the Town promote education about energy audits and weatherization programs and encourage their use.

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3. That the Town shall periodically conduct an energy audit of all public buildings, especially the Guilford School, and weatherize them, where appropriate.

HOUSING

Although Guilford is fortunate to have a range of housing options available within the Town, there is real concern about a lack of affordable housing. The Friends of Algiers Village, Inc. (FOAV), in collaboration with the Windham Housing Trust, has provided several units of rebuilt affordable housing in the Tontine Building (the old Leader Home Center) in Algiers. This is a significant improvement for Algiers and was accomplished at no cost to the Town. The FOAV is also in the process of purchasing the Guilford Country Store and plans to refurbish part of the store and two apartments.

Like most Vermont towns, and in contrast to much of the U.S., Guilford is fortunate not to have neighborhoods which are segregated by income. People of all income levels live next door to each other along our roads, and this is a source of strength for the Town. However, the cost of land and housing in Guilford continues to be very high relative to incomes. Additionally, the Town lacks a stable and well-managed trailer park, to our detriment.

There were twice as many housing units in 2000 as there were in 1970, a period of 30 years. Nonetheless, Guilford is a remarkably stable community as demonstrated by the following data from the Community Profile.

From Profile:

| | |
|-----|--|
| 2% | have owned property in Guilford less than 1 year |
| 25% | have owned property in Guilford 1 – 9 years |
| 29% | have owned property in Guilford 10 – 19 years |
| 44% | have owned property in Guilford 20 years or more |

Housing is considered to be affordable when households with incomes at the County median pay no more than 30% of their income on housing costs. Housing costs for renters include rent and utilities (heat, hot water, and electricity). Housing cost for homeowners include principal, interest, property taxes, and property insurance.

Housing Policies

It is the policy of the Town of Guilford that:

1. The Town shall encourage development in the hamlets rather than rural sprawl development along Town roads.
2. All housing development shall be coordinated with the adequate provision of public facilities and services. In this regard, there shall be no distinction between permanent and seasonal housing.
3. Within any land use regulation, when drafted, provision should be made for a diversity of housing types in a variety of locations, including provision for low income residents.

4. The Town should cooperate with the Windham Regional Commission, and other appropriate organizations and agencies, such as, Friends of Algiers Village, Inc., Guilford Preservation, Inc., Green River Village Preservation Trust, and the Guilford Conservation Commission [TAKE OUT, JB], in applying for grants to develop affordable housing programs and programs for the repair of existing low income homes.

Recommended Housing Actions:

1. That the Town shall explore innovative land use regulations which are specific to Guilford. Such regulations should include provisions encouraging planned unit development which allows higher housing densities in exchange for the preservation of open land.
2. That the Town consider becoming an active supporter and member of the Windham Housing Trust, a private, non-profit, tax exempt, membership based, housing organization.
3. That the Town shall maintain and use the Community Loan Fund, which provides affordable loans to lower income households to make necessary home repairs.
4. That the Town establish a committee to study affordable housing for low income and elderly residents.

LAND USE AND PATTERNS OF DEVELOPMENT

This section of the Guilford Town Plan presents the Planning Commission's vision for maintaining the rural and community characteristics of Guilford while allowing for moderate growth during the five-year lifespan of this Town Plan and into the future. Although Vermont's planning guidelines, and the Planning Commission's sense of well-planned development, call for 19th century settlement patterns of new growth around the exiting population centers of Algiers, Guilford Center, Green River and West Guilford (Hinesburg), we recognize that many people moving into Town would rather live on a country road with few neighbors. But if we can concentrate most new development in traditional areas near our hamlets, there will be more unspoiled woods, open space and wildlife habitat for everyone in the future. On the other hand, land-intensive scattered development will eventually mean that one part of Town will be just like another, and we will lose our farms, our recreation, hunting, snow-mobile trails, and the rural landscapes which make this such a special place to live. In the next decade or two, we will have to balance our desire for privacy and seclusion with the need to keep large parts of Guilford sparsely settled or uninhabited, in order to preserve Guilford's rural character. If everyone who moves to Guilford needs twenty acres around their new house, eventually every part of Town will look the same, from East Mountain Road to the top of Governor's Mountain. We will fragment our forests and lose our wildlife habitat; farming will become extremely difficult or impossible as fields and mowings sprout houses; and the rural and pleasant character of the Town as we know it will disappear. We need to plan now for the future, in order to preserve what we have for our children and grandchildren.

This section of the Town Plan is closely tied to the Proposed Land Use Map. This map is the heart and soul of this Town Plan. It represents the Planning Commission's best efforts to protect what is most important about Guilford while allowing for moderate growth and change in the future. The Proposed Land Use Map is our attempt to identify the important ridgelines, wetlands, farms and large areas of wildlife habitat in order to begin the process of preserving these critical resources for future generations. The categories of Proposed Land Use which the map describes represent our vision of how we can best balance current types of land use, the demand for new housing and other types of growth in the years ahead, and the need to conserve the natural resources and landscapes which make us happy to live in Guilford. We ask that you study the map carefully.

The Proposed Land Use Map in no way prohibits or prevents development. We hope it will be the beginning of a Town-wide discussion about how we can best conserve our forests, fields and wildlife habitat while suggesting ideas for well-planned and moderate levels of development.

A word about the Wildlife Corridors on the Proposed Land Use Map: Vermont bear biologists studies have shown that a genetically viable bear population needs 120,000 acres or more to survive for the long run. The average town in Windham County is only 30,000 acres so towns will have to work together if they wish to have populations of bear, moose, bobcat, etc. in the area. Neighboring towns have been researching wildlife road

crossings and have traced a bear corridor stretching from the Green Mountain National Forest all the way to the South Pond area in Marlboro. From there the wild Hinesberg Brook brings bears, moose etc into the northwest corner of Guilford. If the people of Guilford would like to have bear and moose in town for the long run, greater protections will be needed.

Future development in the Town of Guilford is to be guided by the following proposed land use area designations.

Higher Density Mixed Use

Purpose: to accommodate the highest density of uses and to encourage a mix of residential and commercial activities

Description: outskirts of Algiers Fire District outside the historic village center; additional areas along Rte. 5

Lower Density Mixed Use

Purpose: to accommodate low density residential and mixed use (small business) development.

Description: areas such as Weatherhead Hollow Road north of the Fairgrounds, Creamery Road, south end of Bonnyvale Road, School Road

Residential

Purpose: to encourage varying densities of purely residential development on suitable lands consisting of or in proximity to existing consistently residential development.

Description: areas such as Slate Rock Road, Sugar House Hill Road, Melendy Hill Road, Weatherhead Hollow Road south of the Fairgrounds

Historic Village Areas

Purpose: to preserve and protect the historic character of (relatively) densely settled, primarily residential, areas, while making provision for cultural and municipal uses and accommodating some relatively small-scale commercial activity.

Description: historic area in center of Algiers, Guilford Center, Green River, and Hinesburg (West Guilford).

Agricultural Resource

Purpose: to encourage agricultural, forestry, and/or other “resource based” enterprises and to accommodate very low (minimal) density development.

Description: active agricultural lands, including farms, sugar bushes, and managed woodlands, such as Evans Farm, Franklin Farm, old Ashworth farm, old Clark Farm, and Cuttings

Conservation

Purpose: to preserve open space, natural resources, wildlife habitat, and ridgelines, especially in areas characterized by remoteness from infrastructure and services, by limiting development to the greatest extent possible.

Description: areas such East Mountain and Governor's Mountain.

Critical Conservation Corridors

Purpose: to preserve and protect critical links (connectivity) of wildlife habitat and travel corridors and open space.

Description: certain areas along roads that provide critical linkages of open space for wildlife travel corridors and recreation crossing transportation routes, such as just south of Guilford Center, the west side of Green River Hill, Lee Road.

Land Use Policies

It is the policy of the town of Guilford:

1. To encourage the preservation of forest and farm land through taxation based on Current Use.
2. To encourage the use of such organizations as the Vermont Land Trust to conserve large tracts of land, provided such tracts remain open to certain public uses and have management plans.
3. To preserve agricultural lands for agricultural purposes, through available means such as an Agricultural Overlay or Agricultural Resource District, and economic incentives such as the purchase of development rights.
4. To encourage development in or near existing hamlets.
5. To encourage small cluster housing developments, surrounded by preserved and undeveloped land, as an alternative to widely distributed development.
6. To protect our significant natural areas such as ridgelines, wetlands, wildlife corridors and large tracts of open and forested lands.
7. To preserve the rural and historic character of Guilford through the protection of our sites and buildings of special educational, scientific, architectural, archeological and historic significance.
8. To improve and protect the current high quality of our air, our ground and surface waters, and our land and wildlife resources.

Recommended Land Use Actions:

1. That the Town investigate Village Center Designation for the hamlets of Guilford Center and Green River, and apply for this designation, if appropriate.
2. That the Town establish agricultural districts which contain lands deemed important agricultural resources.

3. That the Town identify and map ridgelines, agricultural and forest lands, and wildlife corridors, and investigate opportunities to preserve them via economic incentives or conservation agreements.
4. That the Planning Commission work with neighboring towns to link conservation areas and critical conservation corridors across town boundaries.
5. That the Town Planning Commission develop a Development Review Bylaw and/or Land Use Ordinance, and present it to the Select Board and voters for approval.

Agriculture and Forestry Policies

It is the policy of the Town of Guilford to:

1. Encourage the continued use of lands for agricultural and forestry purposes.
2. Promote productive and sustainable farming and forestry practices.
3. Conserve productive fields and forests as economic resources for future generations.
4. Discourage development which interferes with the productivity or potential of agricultural and forest soils.
5. Provide information to interested landowners about the Current Use program, and the possible benefits of enrollment.
6. Encourage citizens, when building a new house in an existing mowing, to site the house as close to the edge of the mowing as practical, in order to keep the field in production.
7. Discourage the development of new roads on agricultural lands or in large tracts of undeveloped forest.
8. Encourage the creation of conservation easements on large tracts of agricultural and forest lands.
9. Encourage the development of industries which utilize the products of Guilford's farms and forests, by processing raw commodities into finished goods; and to encourage the development of 'value-added' industries and services, and the marketing of these goods.
10. Encourage Guilford's farmers to apply for tax abatement from the Town when necessary, and for the Board of Adjustment to consider importance of working farms to the quality of life in Guilford, when making decisions about whether to grant tax abatement.

Recommended Agriculture and Forestry Action:

That the Planning Commission prepare and submit to the Select Board a model ordinance on the right to farm.

IMPLEMENTATION

Effective implementation of this Plan requires careful consideration and action by the Townspeople, their Selectboard, Planning Commission, and other local boards, commissions and organizations. As the Town continues to grow and come under additional development pressure, Guilford will need to develop methods to deal with the inevitable problems. Among the many available methods which should be considered are the following:

1. Planning: The existing planning program should be strengthened, with the Town Boards, especially the Planning Commission, taking the lead. Discussions of planning issues should become a regular part of their agendas. Effort by all the people of the Town is needed to sustain and enrich such programs.
2. Community Needs/Actions: In each of the issues addressed by the Plan, a set of actions is listed indicating items of concern that are offered for consideration and further discussion by the Town. Following approval of the Plan, it is suggested that representatives of the community establish a schedule for the discussion and possible implementation of these recommendations.
3. Land Use Regulations: Zoning bylaws, including flood hazard, shoreland, and wetland regulations, subdivision regulations, and other ordinances should be considered to promote the public health and safety, environmental quality and protection of the quality of life.
4. Land acquisition: Acquisition by the Town through purchase, by lease, by easements of development rights, and by gift, is the most certain method for protecting valuable scenic and recreational lands, and for ensuring access and enjoyment of them.
5. Taxation: Vermont's Use Value Appraisal Program encourages long-term agriculture and forestry uses of property through tax incentives. The Program encourages the maintenance of undeveloped land for farming, forestry, and public recreation. The Town may also provide property tax relief for qualifying farm, forest, and open space landowners by adopting local tax stabilization programs to reduce local property tax burden. For general purposes, the assessing and taxing of land shall seek to strengthen the policies spelled out in this Town Plan, so long as they do not conflict with State laws or policies.
6. Land Conservation by Guilford Citizens: Landowners can negotiate conservation easements with organizations such as the Vermont Land Trust and The Nature Conservancy to protect productive agricultural and forest lands, wildlife and natural areas, and public recreation lands. Other private means of helping to implement this Town Plan include:
 - a. Privately agreed-upon restrictive covenants (easements) binding on purchasers of land;

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- b. Consideration given to the objectives of this Plan by landowners when they build or subdivide;
- c. Formation of conservation non-profits and/or a Guilford Land Trust;
- d. Participation in the Act 250 review process by abutting landowners; and
- e. Participation in Town planning by citizens concerned about the future of Guilford.

RELATIONSHIP TO ADJACENT MUNICIPAL AND REGIONAL PLANS

In preparing this Plan there was due consideration of development trends, the Town Plans of neighboring Vermont municipalities, and the Windham Regional Plan. This Town Plan addresses development trends in this town and in the area through proposing future land uses that preserve the existing settlement patterns in Guilford and adjacent areas and protecting valuable and common resources. We find it is compatible with the Town Plans of Brattleboro, Halifax, Marlboro, and Vernon and with the Windham Regional Plan.

For example, where Guilford abuts Brattleboro, our proposed high density mixed use area adjoins a planned unit development in Brattleboro, proposed residential areas adjoin similar areas in Brattleboro, and proposed conservation areas adjoin agricultural resource areas in Brattleboro. Similarly, where Guilford abuts Halifax, conservation areas in the two towns meet at the town line, as do low density rural residential areas. Abutting Vernon, across the shared transportation corridors of Route 5 and I-91, are protected lands of the Roaring Brook Wildlife Management Area in both towns.

The Town Plan is compatible with the Windham Regional Plan in land use categories and policies. The Town Plan proposes similar areas for villages and residential areas, as well as for promotion of agricultural and forestry resource lands and conservation areas.

MAPS

Some of the maps called for by statute are incorporated on one or more maps and are referred to in each separate statement called for by statute. There are additional maps not required by statute. The Guilford Town Plan contains the following maps:

- Proposed Land Use – proposed future land use areas in Town
- Existing Land Use – existing land uses in Town
- Transportation – present and prospective transportation and circulation facilities
- Community Facilities and Utilities – present and prospective community facilities and public utilities. This map includes Educational Facilities, the local public school
- Natural Resources – including wetlands, streams, and ponds, deer wintering areas, rare, threatened and endangered species, and scenic ridgelines
- Historic Sites – including historic structures and sites
- Guilford Center and Algiers