

Town of Corinth

Town Plan

2012

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I. Introduction

A. Town Planning

In 1968, the Vermont General Assembly enacted the state's Planning and Development Act. This act enables all Vermont municipalities to guide their future growth through preparation, implementation, and maintenance of a comprehensive plan.

A plan is intended to set out goals for Town action. It provides the basis for further planning efforts. A plan may be implemented by bylaws approved by the voters and by ordinances adopted by the Board of Selectmen.

The first step in creating a Town Plan was for the legislative body, the Board of Selectmen, to appoint a Planning Commission, which consists of from three to nine members. In Corinth, the original seven members and all subsequent appointees were chosen with a deliberate attempt to provide for a representative cross section of townspeople, thereby insuring the diversity of opinions that are critical to the formulation of any plan. The present Planning Commission has seven members serving 3-year terms.

To more fully explain the powers and duties of the Corinth Planning Commission, the following list has been included from the Vermont Planning and Development Act, Title 24, Chapter 117, Section 4325.

4325: Powers and duties of Planning Commissions

- 1) Prepare a plan and amendments thereof for consideration by the legislative body and review any thereof initiated by others as set forth in Subchapter 5 of this Chapter.
- 2) Prepare and present to the legislative body proposed by-laws, and make recommendations to the legislative body on proposed amendments to such by-laws as set forth in Subchapter 9 of this Chapter.
- 3) Administer by-laws adopted under this Chapter.
- 4) Undertake capacity studies and make recommendations on matters of land development, urban renewal, transportation, economic and social

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development, urban beautification and design improvements, historic and scenic preservation, the conservation of energy and the development of renewable energy sources and wetland protection. Data gathered by the Planning Commission that is relevant to the geographic information system established under 3 V.S.A. Section 20 shall be compatible with, useful to, and shared with that system.

- 5) Prepare and present to the legislative body recommended building, plumbing, fire, electrical, housing and related codes and enforcement procedures, and construction specifications for streets and related public improvements.
- 6) Prepare and present a recommended capital budget and program for a period of five years for action by the legislative body.
- 7) Hold public meetings.
- 8) Require from other departments and agencies of the municipality such available information as relates to the work of the Planning Commission.
- 9) In the performance of its functions, enter upon land to make examinations and surveys.
- 10) Participate in a regional planning program.
- 11) Retain staff and consultant assistance in carrying out its duties and powers.
- 12) Undertake comprehensive planning, including related preliminary planning and engineering studies.
- 13) Perform such other acts or functions as it may deem necessary or appropriate to fulfill the duties and obligations imposed by, and the intent and purpose of this chapter.

B. Plan Preparation

The original Town Plan was prepared by the Planning Commission for the purpose of establishing growth policies intended to help direct future development of the Town.

With a growing population and the likelihood of mounting development pressures, the Town of Corinth saw fit at Town Meeting in March of 1977 to vote to begin a comprehensive planning program aimed at preparing plans that would address the many

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complex issues pertaining to community development.

In the ten months that followed, the Planning Commission, with staff assistance from the Two Rivers Planning and Development Commission, met regularly to place together the elements of a town plan.

The overall planning effort was broken down into three major phases, the first being a detailed inventory of the existing social, economic and physical conditions in Corinth including such elements as population, housing, community attitudes, highways, and capability information.

Phase two consisted of an analysis of the data in an attempt to understand the many interrelationships between these elements and future town growth. Generally, the analysis revealed to the Planning Commission a need for a balanced community, identifying natural and fragile areas worth protecting as well as other land areas capable of supporting varying densities and types of development.

The third phase involved compiling all this information to formulate the actual plan. In final form, the plan is an official statement of policies and recommendations based on the findings and results of the two preceding phases of study.

Public hearings were held by the Planning Commission and the Board of Selectmen in January and February of 1978 as required by law. At the Town Meeting in March of that year the proposed plan was approved by the voters with no dissent. Following this directive from Corinth residents, the Board of Selectmen formally adopted the town plan at the next regularly scheduled meeting held on March 13, 1978.

State law requires town plans be reviewed and revised every five years. Following a several year delay, work on an updated version began in 1990 and was completed in 1993. The Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission assisted in the revisions and the new plan was adopted by the Town on October 21, 1993.

Work on the current revision of the Town Plan adopted in 2001 was begun by the Planning Commission in November 2005 through a survey of all registered voters and land owners. A survey was mailed to 1,352 people and 402 were returned, a 29.7 percent return rate. The results were tabulated and analyzed by the Planning Commission. Since many respondents did not completely answer each survey question, the results presented in this Town Plan show only the responses that were provided. A summary of the survey results is provided in Appendix B.

In no way will this document alone affect land use in existence prior to the plan's acceptance. It does not have the power of law designated to a zoning ordinance and should not be confused with such. It can, however, serve as testimony at an Act 250 land use hearing regarding major new development.

This plan is based upon the best current information available and is keyed to existing conditions. Changes or amendments may be considered at any time that conditions make such changes or amendments seem proper. The plan will serve as a

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consistent guide to present and future elected and appointed town officers in the exercise of their official duties. It will ensure that the expressed desires of the people of Corinth will play a major role in guiding decisions affecting Corinth's future.

C. Long Term Goals

To address the needs of the Town of Corinth and to guide planning and the direction of growth, the Planning Commission has listed the long term goals below. These goals are included in this plan as statements of the Town's intentions and aspirations for maintaining the rural character, resources, health, safety, and welfare, and economic development of the Town of Corinth. They are attainable goals to guide decision making and orderly and sensible management of the Town's resources.

- 1) Maintain Corinth's rural character.
- 2) Conserve Corinth's natural resources.
- 3) Protect the public health, safety and welfare of the Town of Corinth.
- 4) Promote economic growth that is appropriate to the rural character of the Town of Corinth.

We define rural character as a pattern of settlement and land use that consists of relatively densely populated village centers separated by productive farm and forestland where the scattered dwellings are adjacent to town highways and public utilities. This pattern maintains the opportunity for the land and its natural resources to be a source of employment for significant numbers of local residents.

The remainder of this Town Plan is divided into chapters according to major planning elements. Within each chapter, planning objectives for attaining each goal are listed and recommendations are given as a means of implementation. The planning objectives are specific, measurable targets for accomplishing the Plan's long term goals. Recommendations are made for actions that can be taken by various groups within Town to achieve specific planning objectives.

It is important to note that these goals, objectives and recommendations are not laws or regulations.

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II. Town Description

A. Location

The Town of Corinth, Vermont is located in the central portion of Orange County and comprises an area of approximately 31,000 acres. It is bounded by eight towns, three of which share only a small segment of common boundary with Corinth. The four major neighboring towns are Topsham to the north, Bradford to the east, Vershire to the south, and Washington to the west.

Corinth is rural in nature with population being somewhat concentrated along existing main roads and in hamlet areas. The largest of these hamlets, East Corinth, serves as a community focal point and contains a store, library, health center, fire station, and post office. Town offices, a second post office, a fire station, and Town Hall are located in Cookeville. The other hamlets are Goose Green, Corinth Corners, South Corinth, Corinth Center, and West Corinth.

The Town's topography and the relatively undeveloped nature of the wooded landscape has attracted many residents and visitors to Corinth. In the rugged western portions of the Town, slopes are steep and elevations exceed 2,000 feet above sea level in certain places. The eastern part of town is more rolling with elevations dropping below 1,000 feet along the Town's three main waterways, the Waits River, the Tabor Branch and the South Branch of the Waits River.

The major roadway serving Corinth is Route 25, which ties in with Route 302 to the north and Route 5 and Interstate 91 in Bradford to the southeast.

B. Population and Future Projections

Existing population characteristics, past trends and future projections are all major considerations in the town planning process. An increasing population within a community is in most cases associated with an increase in demands for municipal services. Often, tax revenues that are derived from new growth are not sufficient to pay the additional burden placed on the local budget. The result usually takes the form of an overall increase in the town tax rate. At some point, budgets begin to rise sharply and major capital expenditures are required in order to keep pace with the burgeoning population. In Corinth, as in other area towns, the largest percentage of local tax dollars goes toward education.

The idea behind proper community planning is to anticipate, plan for and guide growth in such a way that the increasing demand for municipal services does not outweigh the town's ability to accommodate this growth.

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The following table illustrates population patterns over a 60-year period. The population figures have been taken from the U.S. Census.

Table 1 - Corinth population history

Year	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Corinth population	786	775	683	904	1,244	1,461	1,367
Percent change from previous period		-1.4	-11.87	32.36	37.61	17.44	-6.43
Orange County population	17,027	16,014	17,676	22,739	26,149	28,226	28,936
Percent change from previous period		-5.95	10.38	28.64	15.0	7.94	2.52

(source: U.S. Census Bureau)

The figures show that the growth rate of the Town of Corinth in the period 1980-2010 has not quite doubled that of Orange County. Corinth has grown by 51% in that period; Orange County has grown by 27%. Population growth had declined since 2000.

C. Town History

The end of hostilities between the British and the French around 1760 began a period of expansion into wilderness areas of northern New England. The West was not yet open, and in an agrarian society land was wealth and good productive land was already spoken for. It is no wonder that Vermont appeared to be a promised land to many young land-poor southern New Englanders.

Corinth was first issued a charter on February 4, 1764 by Governor Benning Wentworth of the Province of New Hampshire.

The next 27 years were a turbulent time with furious land speculation between the original proprietors, charter disputes between New Hampshire and New York, and the

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eventual arrival of the first settlers. The only original proprietor to actually settle in Corinth was Colonel John Taplin.

The first gristmill was probably built in Cookeville by Col. John Nutting in 1777, and the first doctor arrived in 1795 in the person of John Tenney. This early pioneer period -- and the Republic of Vermont -- came to an end when Vermont became the 14th state in 1791.

These events ushered in a period of stable development and growth lasting into the 1850s. An agrarian society developed that was heavily engaged in sheep farming and the processing of wool. Potash was an early export from Corinth until the virgin land was cleared. Wheat enjoyed a short period of prominence until declining yields and competition from newly settled western lands ended its production.

This period saw the building of the Town, with the first appropriation for schools in March 1792 and the building of the first church in Corinth Center in 1800. Between 1790 and 1810, the population of Vermont grew an astonishing 150% and the 1800 census revealed that two-thirds of the population was under 26 years of age. By the 1850s, Corinth had reached its maximum growth with a town population of approximately 1,970 residents. Records show that in 1824 the town boasted 10 blacksmiths, 3 distillers, 4 tanneries, 5 clothing works as well as 6 gristmills and 8 sawmills.

The opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 and the development of railroads 25 years later opened the West to development and Vermont population began to decline. During the 100 years following 1825, dairy farming became prominent. The railroads brought beneficial changes to Corinth farmers, who no longer needed to produce products for local markets alone. Cheese, then butter, then fluid milk found urban markets through rapid shipping. Creameries were established in Goose Green and East Corinth in the 1890s. Maple products from Corinth also came to be well-known.

This was also the time of the development of the Pike Hill copper mines, which operated off and on from 1855 to 1915 when the mines closed for good.

Lumber and lumber products continued to be a major industry, both in raw materials and finished products. The East Corinth bobbin mills were the most historically notable producers of these products.

The next major catalyst for change in Vermont was the development of the interstate highway system in the 1950s and 60s. Corinth retained its rural character and only in the past 20 years has it begun to participate in Vermont's population growth.

Use of marginal farmland for primary and secondary residential homes is changing the face of Corinth, as open land is gradually being replaced with brushland and the beginnings of reforestation, while traditional housing becomes increasingly interspersed with more current architecture. This process, noted in the previous Town Plan, continues unabated.

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III. Local Economy

A. Employment and Income

Agriculture continues to decline in Corinth, and thus continues to represent a decreasing segment of the town's tax base. In 1983 the town had 15 working farms with some of the best cattle herds in the state. In 2010 that number was down to five full time farming operations and several small diversified agricultural operations.

Part-time farming activities include hay sales; cheese making; poultry farming; beeswax and honey production; and raising vegetables, sheep, goats, and replacement heifers. The Corinth maple industry is strong, with several major producers and many small family sugar houses.

A growing part of Corinth's economy is the steadily increasing number of homebased businesses. The at-home economy includes people involved in design, internet sales, home baking, catalog sales of varied projects, commercial knitting, business consulting, writing, copy-editing, software design, large scale composting, forestry, logging and many other endeavors. Since 2005, Topsham Telephone Company has offered DSL to all subscribers.

There are a number of small retail businesses operating locally, scattered throughout the town. Corinth is the home of two convenience stores, three auto repair shops, a small engine repair shop, a body shop, and others. In addition to those providing services locally, we are home to a commercial hammock maker, a magazine, a school transportation company, builders and loggers.

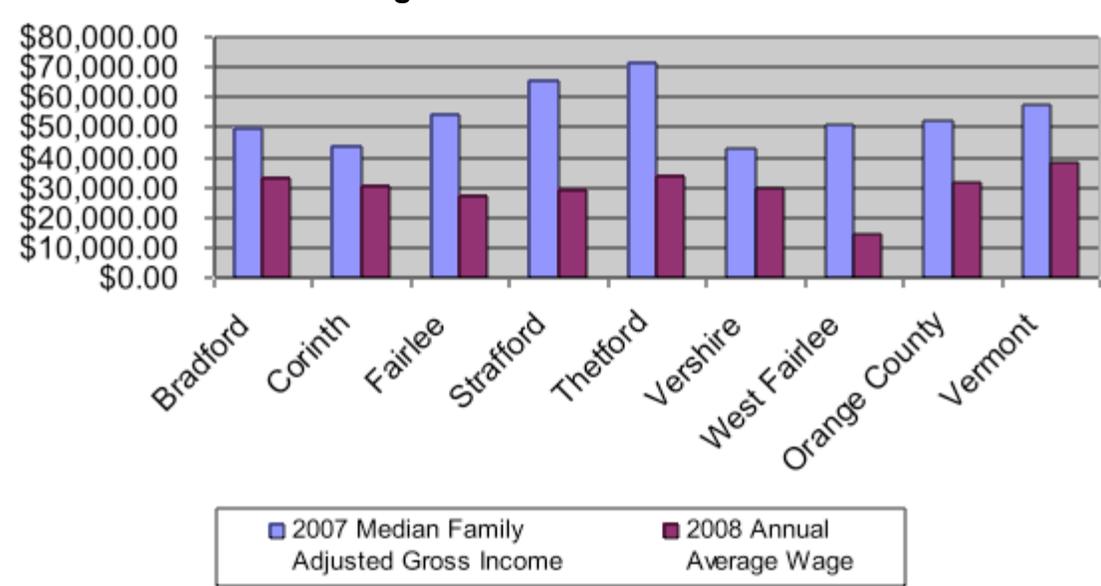
Over 80% of Corinth's residents are 16 years of age and older, according to the 2010 U.S. Census, or 1,119 people. From the 2005-2009 American Community Survey, we know that approximately 694 Corinth Residents were employed during a sample survey conducted sometime between the years 2005 and 2009. Of these residents, more than 75% reported employment in three categories: almost 34.3% (238) worked in management, professional and related occupations; about 21.8% (151) worked in sales and other office occupations; and 19.7% (137) worked in service industries. The remaining people have jobs in: construction, extraction or maintenance occupations, 11.2% (78); production, transportation and material moving operations, 8.8% (61); and farming and forestry categories, 4.2% (29).

Median household income is steadily increasing in Corinth; although the average annual wage has actually declined 2%. In 2010, the annual average was \$29,919, down

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from a peak in 2006 of \$30,642.

Figure 1 – Median Household Income



(Source: Vermont Housing Data website)

Less than 25% of the town's work force is employed in Corinth, the majority of people (approximately 77%, according to the 2005-2009 American Community Survey) worked outside of Corinth. These residents travel to Bradford/Topsham/Newbury/Haverhill (about 27% combined), Thetford/Hanover/Lebanon/Hartford (about 20% combined), Barre/Montpelier (about 5%), and other neighboring areas. The 2005-2009 American Community Survey reports that the mean travel time is estimated to be 32 minutes. The shift from agricultural to nonagricultural employment and the absence of large-scale manufacturing or retailing businesses necessitates travel to outside population centers for employment and goods and services. Any growth in the Hanover/Lebanon/ White River area will place residential development pressure on our community.

In addition, Corinth has many seasonal residents and retirees. These residents make a significant economic contribution to the town through volunteer activities, disposable income and property taxes.

According to responses from the 2005 Corinth survey, a majority of people would like the town to encourage a stronger local economy, though almost as many people are

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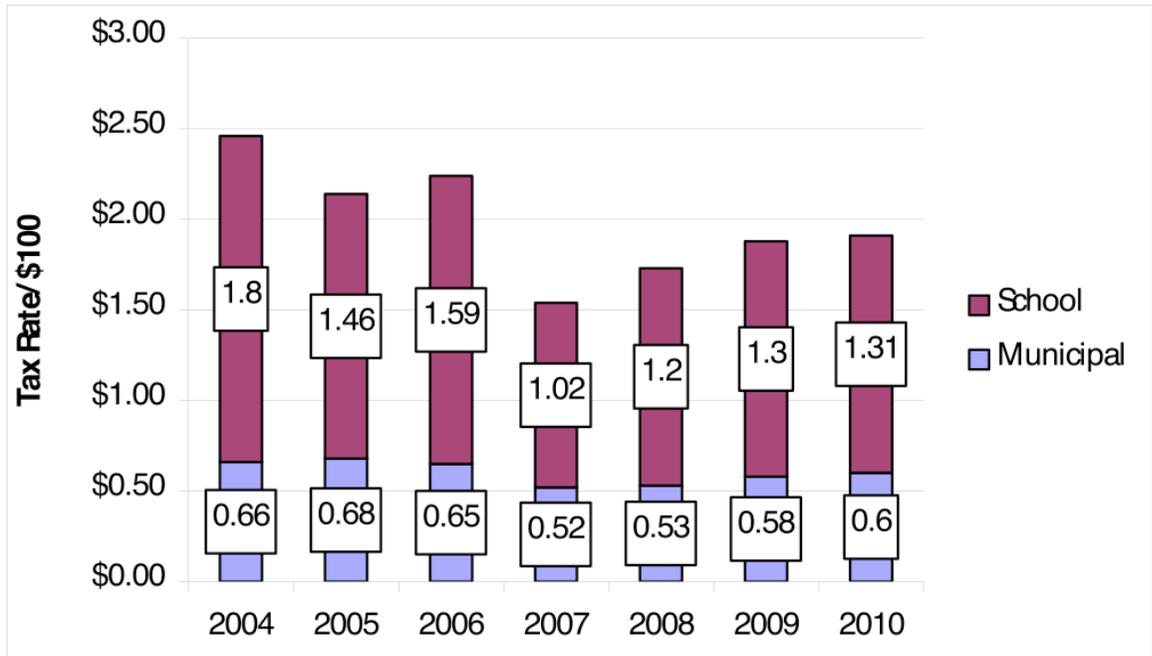
opposed to this idea. They don't believe the town should actively recruit businesses to locate here. Of the ones that do believe this should happen, home based businesses or occupations were favored for encouragement by seeking them out and encouraging them to locate in Corinth. A majority of survey respondents wish to restrict larger commercial business to certain areas of town. A majority of survey respondents want to see small business and retail shops located in village areas. Outside village areas, survey respondents want farms and small, home-based businesses to be developed in Corinth, and otherwise they want no further development.

B. Taxes

Town data show that there was a significant drop in the municipal rate in 2007. This was the year that a town wide reappraisal took effect. The school portion of the tax rate showed a decline in 2007 because of changes in the state's school funding law, Act 68.

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Figure 2 – Tax Rates, Town of Corinth



(source: Corinth Town Office)

The Table below shows how tax rates for the Town of Corinth compare to those in surrounding towns for the year 2006. The educational tax rate shown is for residents. The non-residential rate is different than the residential rate, under state law.

Table 2- 2011 Total Tax Rates

	Education - (Residential)	Municipal	Total
Chelsea	1.5157	.5353	2.051
Newbury	1.2737	.50	1.7737
West Fairlee	1.7924	.6621	2.4545
Vershire	1.8229	.6935	2.5164
Washington	1.2567	.0060	1.2627
Corinth	1.1754	.5745	1.7499
Bradford	1.2316	.6918	1.9234

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Topsham	1.1550	.6416	1.7966
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(source: Each Town Office)

C. Planning Objective and Recommendations

PLANNING OBJECTIVE

A strong local economy that provides jobs for Corinth residents and helps to support the town.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Corinth Selectboard should appoint a citizen committee to devise means to:
 - a. encourage a greater number of home based businesses, perhaps by offering property tax incentives consistent with the objectives of this plan.
 - b. provide community based workshops and vocational programs that offer training for start-up businesses.
 - c. coordinate with neighboring communities to secure the proper balance between population, employment, and housing.
 - d. devise a means to encourage agricultural and forestry related uses of undeveloped land.
2. In planning to attract new businesses to the town, Corinth should ensure that the municipal costs to accommodate this growth do not exceed tax revenues, as is often the case.

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IV. Emergency Services & Emergency Management

The Town's public safety and welfare depends on cooperation among the townspeople, the Town government and the organizations that provide public services.

Services are currently provided by a contracted ambulance service, a volunteer FAST squad, a volunteer Fire Department, two constables, the State Police, and the Orange County Sheriff's office. Enhanced 911 service became available throughout Corinth in November 1998. The Fire Department currently has mutual aid agreements with several area fire departments.

A. Fire Protection

The community is served by the East Corinth Volunteer Fire Department. The department maintains two fire stations, one in East Corinth and one in Cookeville.

The Fire Department has mutual aid agreements with other towns. Locatable addressing was established in 1998 and emergency help can now be summoned by calling 911.

The town has a fire warden, who is appointed by the state. Permission for open burning is by permit only from the fire warden.

It is everyone's responsibility to identify and prevent all possible fire hazards within the town.

B. The Corinth Topsham Emergency Response Team (CTERT)

The Town adopted an emergency management plan called a Rapid Response Plan (RRP) in 2005. Corinth is currently proceeding with updates to the plan. The RRP lists the Town Hall and Town Garage as emergency shelters. The Fire Chief and Road Commissioner are the first lines of contact in an emergency. Flooding is the highest hazard addressed in the plan.

The Town is served by a FAST squad, the CTERT, consisting of volunteers from Topsham and Corinth. Members carry beepers that are linked with a radio dispatch system. A Homeland Security grant was used to fund much needed repairs to the CTERT communication equipment. Members are certified by the American Red Cross in

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advanced first aid. They are emergency care attendants and carry CPR cards. Many, if not all of the members are EMT certified. The FAST squad is equipped with cardiac defibrillators and, when necessary, can summon a helicopter for air transport to Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center.

Funding for equipment and training is provided primarily by the town, as well as an annual raffle and private contributions.

C. Police Protection

Some security, as allowed by state statute, is provided by a First Constable and a Second Constable, elected each year at Town Meeting. The Constable received a Homeland Security grant to purchase a radio to communicate better with the State Police, the Orange County Sheriff, and EMS organizations such as fire, fast squad and ambulance services.

The Constable is not able to carry out all police functions. To help fill the gap, the Town has contracted, on a yearly basis, with the Orange County Sheriff's Office to provide limited patrol and security services. The town also relies on the State Police in Bradford on an on-call basis.

D. Volunteer Services

Available volunteer services include Stagecoach Transportation Services, Meals on Wheels, and area food shelves. Stagecoach uses volunteer drivers, area taxis and Stagecoach commercial routes to provide transportation services to the elderly, persons with disabilities, and the general public in Corinth and elsewhere in the area.

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E. Planning Objective and Recommendations

PLANNING OBJECTIVE

Suitable emergency services are provided for town residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide updated data to the Regional Planning Commission to ensure that town Emergency Locator maps are kept current.
2. The Town should continue to support fire safety training and education of Fire Department volunteers.
3. The Town should continually engage in Emergency Response planning so that unmet needs can be identified and plans can be made to address gaps.

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V. Utilities and Facilities

A. Library

The Blake Memorial Library is located in East Corinth. The present library building was dedicated in 1949 after a 1945 fire destroyed the original building which had been dedicated in 1902.

The Blake Memorial Library Association elects a board of trustees who administer the library. Income from trust funds pays for some of the library's expenses and improvements.

Although the library is privately funded and governed, for several years Corinth and Topsham each have voted financial support of \$1.00 per capita for the library. This support makes the library eligible to apply for various public and private grants.

B. Town Buildings and Properties

The **Town Hall** is located in Cookeville on a site of approximately two acres. The building, formerly a store and later the Corinth School, has approximately 3,500 square feet on the main floor, a storage attic and a cellar.

The offices of the Town Clerk, Treasurer, Selectmen and Listers are located in the Town Hall. The building also houses a walk-in vault containing town records and official documents.

Space is available for town meetings, conferences and social events. The building includes handicap-accessible public restrooms, a kitchen, and a central heating system.

The building has undergone renovations to replace the porch, restoring the building as it appeared during its historic use and has had the Town Clerk/Lister space renovated.

The **Corinth Academy Building** is located in Cookeville on approximately 3/4 of an acre. This building was used for Town Meetings and other events before the current Town Hall became available. There are currently no utilities in the building. It is used and maintained as a museum by the Corinth Historical Society.

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The **Corliss-Prescott House and Barn** were donated to the Town's Historical Society in the 1990s for use as Corinth's Agricultural and Trades Museum. This building in East Corinth is in the process of being renovated and will be similarly maintained by the Historical Society.

The Town of Corinth maintains cemeteries located in the following areas: South Corinth, Corinth Corners, Corinth Center, Pike Hill, two in West Corinth and two in East Corinth. The Meadow Cemetery is privately owned and managed. The Town also owns several other properties including the old landfill site on Brook Road, a small part of the Cahill Swamp on Brook Road from a tax sale, and a small piece of land and remnants of an old creamery plant at the bottom of Young Road.

C. Health Center

Little Rivers Health Care was founded in 2003 to join together the Wells River Clinic, Bradford Health Services and the Valley Health Center as one organization. These three centers are now a unified health care practice system for the region, governed by a Board of Trustees. Little Rivers has achieved non-profit, tax exempt status and recently received a substantial federal grant to add dental and mental health services.

Little Rivers Health Center is located in the village of East Corinth and is incorporated as a nonprofit rural health center. The center is equipped with medical diagnostic and therapeutic equipment.

D. Solid Waste

Waste Transfer Station. The Town maintains a Transfer Station for the collection of non-hazardous solid waste and recyclables. It is located on the property of the Town Garage.

Until the mid-1980's, the Town maintained a landfill for disposal of waste materials. When space ran out, the Town contracted with a private operator who maintained a landfill on Route 25. This landfill was closed in July 1992 according to Vermont statutes, and the Town contracted with a licensed hauler to have its nonhazardous solid waste collected at the Transfer Station. In July 2005, the Town instituted a Pay-As-You-Throw program, costing \$1.50 per bag, with the goal of decreasing waste generation through increased recycling.

The Town has a yearly contract with Casella Waste Systems with an option to renew annually, and they handle all waste and recycling. Trash is taken to a certified landfill in Coventry. In addition to the Town-sponsored collections at the Transfer Station, trash pickup is available for a fee from private contractors.

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Glass, metal cans, newspapers, corrugated cardboard, magazines and plastic items are collected for recycling. Tires and appliances are collected for a fee at the Transfer Station.

Household hazardous waste collections have been arranged periodically with the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District at their site in Bradford, Vermont, and other central Vermont towns. The Town has been charged a fee for each Corinth household that participates. This system is evolving.

In 2012 the Town joined North East Kingdom Waste Management District.

Corinth has a Solid Waste Implementation Plan, originally adopted in 1993, which was updated by the Town in 2005 and is awaiting state approval. It analyzes the waste generated in the Town, describes the waste management practices existing at that time, analyzes alternatives, and presents an implementation plan for reducing solid waste generation.

E. Public Utilities

The Town of Corinth is mostly rural. Development is spread over a wide area with only a few hamlet-type areas including East Corinth, Cookeville, and Corinth Center, that have higher population densities. The only public utilities available are electrical power and a telephone system. All domestic water systems and sewage disposal systems are owned and developed by the landowner.

A vital local economic base will be dependent, especially in the coming years, on reliable, affordable, up-to-date public utilities. It will be necessary for the Town to work together with the utility companies to ensure this kind of service is available to its citizens.

It may become necessary, especially in the villages, to consider developing water and sewer districts.

F. Telecommunications and Internet

Telecommunications have become increasingly important to the security and economic needs of residents and businesses in Vermont. This trend will continue. It will play a key role in our economic future, creating new opportunities for the relocation and growth of decentralized business operations and reducing demands for travel by conventional modes. With an improved telecommunications infrastructure, large amounts of information can be conveniently moved over long distances at competitive rates.

Internet access is fundamental to the growing number of homebased businesses in Corinth's economy. Fortunately, Topsham Telephone Company has offered DSL to all its subscribers with a 439 exchange since 2005.

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The field of telecommunications is undergoing rapid change. Advancements in this technology have and will continue to impact growth in rural areas like Corinth. The implications for land use are significant, as this technology has enabled people to move into rural areas and to "telecommute" to other remote or central offices more readily.

Under present standards, transmission towers are the dominant telecommunication facilities. These towers have emerged as planning concerns. They can conflict with other forms of development and raise issues of aesthetic impact. To ensure adequate transmission of signals in mountainous areas, towers and related facilities often need to be sited on hilltops or high elevation points. Due to their higher visibility from multiple vantage points, they conflict with scenic landscapes.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) retains jurisdiction over public airwaves and the telecommunications industry in general. Additionally, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) exercises control over the location and height of towers and similar structures to prevent interference with airport operations. Under Vermont law (24 V.S.A. Chapter 117), municipalities may require that certain standards be met prior to the erection of telecommunication facilities. Local bylaws may regulate the use, dimension, location, and density of towers, however FCC rules are preemptive of local and State law where conflicts exist. Since 1997, Act 250 has required a permit prior to the construction of a communications tower or similar structure over 20 feet in height.

G. Energy Resources

Vermont planning law requires that municipal plans include an energy program for the community. Such a program is intended to promote efficient utilization of energy.

Most of the Town of Corinth is in the Washington Electric Cooperative (WEC) service area. CVPS and GMP also provide electric service to some areas.

While it is recognized that energy supply and demand are directed largely by economic forces at the state, federal, and international levels, the manner in which the Town plans for future growth can have an impact on energy. For example, a highly dispersed and unplanned pattern of land use can waste both land and energy resources. By planning the location of jobs, public services and housing in close proximity to growth centers, the consumption of fuel and need for additional roads and power lines can be reduced. Because WEC is a cooperative with an elected board of directors, there is a real opportunity for Corinth residents to influence energy policy.

The Vermont residential energy code, called the Residential Building Energy Standards (RBES), was passed by the Vermont legislature in May 1997. The energy code is a minimum standard of energy efficiency that has applied to virtually all new residential construction in Vermont since July 1, 1998. It includes minimum standards for energy-efficient building components and construction practices, as well as a certification

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requirement for reporting compliance, but there is no state enforcement of the code. It is a self-certifying compliance program, placing the responsibility on the builder to understand the Energy Code, to build to the minimum technical efficiency standards, and to certify that the building complies with the law. This certification form must be posted in the home and filed at the town clerk's office.

According to the Corinth Listers files, the main fuels used in Corinth for home heating are; fuel oil/kerosene/propane 578 households (76 %), wood 126 households (16%), and electric 47 households (6%). Like other New England states, Vermont relies heavily on fuel oil for home heating.

Wood is a local renewable resource that can off-set some demand for expensive alternative sources. The Department of Public Service has estimated that the average wood burning household uses between 3 to 5 cords of wood each year during the heating season. Given the number of homes in Corinth that heated with wood in 2010 (126), it is estimated that between 400 and 650 cords of wood are consumed annually. Corinth's forests could supply significantly more of this resource for home heating. Significant use of wood could contribute to increased air pollution, particularly in valley areas, but clean burning stoves can mitigate this problem.

About half of all energy used in Vermont is for transportation. Since public transportation in Corinth is nearly non-existent, there are few alternatives, if any, to the automobile.

H. Planning Objective and Recommendations

PLANNING OBJECTIVE

Utilities and facilities meet the needs of residents in a cost effective manner.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Planning Commission should review and revise subdivision bylaws to define requirements that will encourage a pattern of settlement and land use that uses energy efficiently.
- 2.
3. The Town should further promote the state's energy efficiency standards by reviewing the state law and comparing the town's development regulations to it.
4. The Town should promote the design and construction of buildings and structures that are energy efficient and reduce the need for costly new sources of energy.

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5. The Town should encourage the development of local renewable energy sources at an appropriate scale to reduce dependence on outside foreign energy sources.
6. Energy and efficiency standards should be applied to the operation of municipal facilities and departments, and in any future municipal construction.
7. The Town should work with utility companies to develop utility overlays in conjunction with the town's GIS mapping system to assist in planning for the future regarding conservation of energy, long-term development plans and upgrading utility service.
8. The Town should support density and development patterns that are likely to result in the conservation of energy. The Town should encourage residents and businesses to identify and use renewable energy resources.
9. The Town should continue to monitor and guide the Transfer Station and recycling programs.
10. The town should develop bylaws regulating the installation of private utility towers or structures.
10. The Conservation Commission should make information available about state and federal programs concerning conservation and development of alternative sources of energy available to residents and landowners in the Town Offices.
11. The town should support and encourage the development of local health care facilities and counseling to help residents obtain the health care they need as close to home as possible.

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VI. Education

Together with the neighboring Town of Topsham, Corinth is part of a unified school district (Unified School District #36) which provides education for grades K through 8. High school students may attend the high school of their choice; most of them attend Oxbow High School. The largest part of funds collected for property taxes is allocated for education.

A. Schools

The cost of education consumes 70% of each property tax dollar paid by Corinth residents (non-resident property owners pay a higher proportion for education by state law). This money supports primary education at the Waits River Valley School and tuition for high school and vocational students attending schools elsewhere. Over the past five years, per-student spending has increased steadily, as shown in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3 – Town of Corinth: Budgeted and Amount Actually Spent per Pupil for High School and elementary Students

(source: Vermont Education Department)

Unified School District #36 has the responsibility of educating our children. The

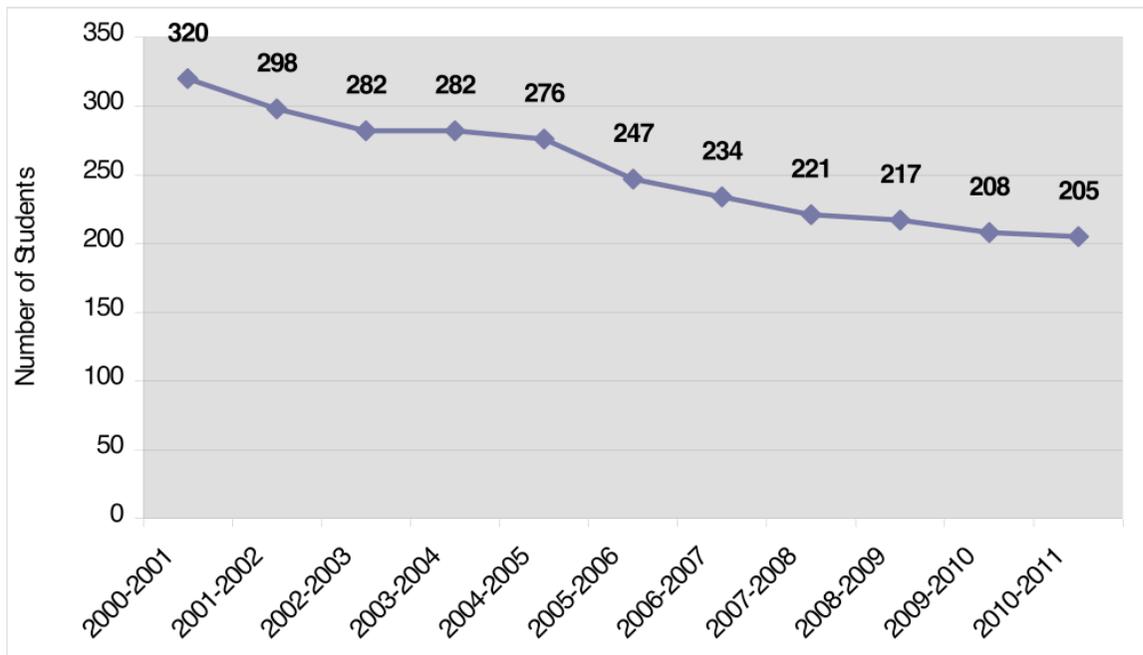


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district runs the Waits River Valley School, located on State Highway 25 in Topsham, near to the Corinth boundary.

Elementary Education: In the 2010-2011 school year, the Waits River Valley School (WRVS) served approximately 205 students in grades K-8. It offers a full-time kindergarten program, along with after school activities and a full extracurricular sports program. Enrollment at the WRVS has declined considerably over the last several years (see Figure below). As enrollment declines, many of the costs associated with the school building and infrastructure remain the same; therefore per pupil costs tend to rise.

Figure 4 - Waits River Valley School K-8th Enrollment



(source: Annual School Reports)

The geographic area served by the WRVS is immense. This, along with the scattered housing pattern of Corinth and Topsham results in school bus routes of an hour or more.

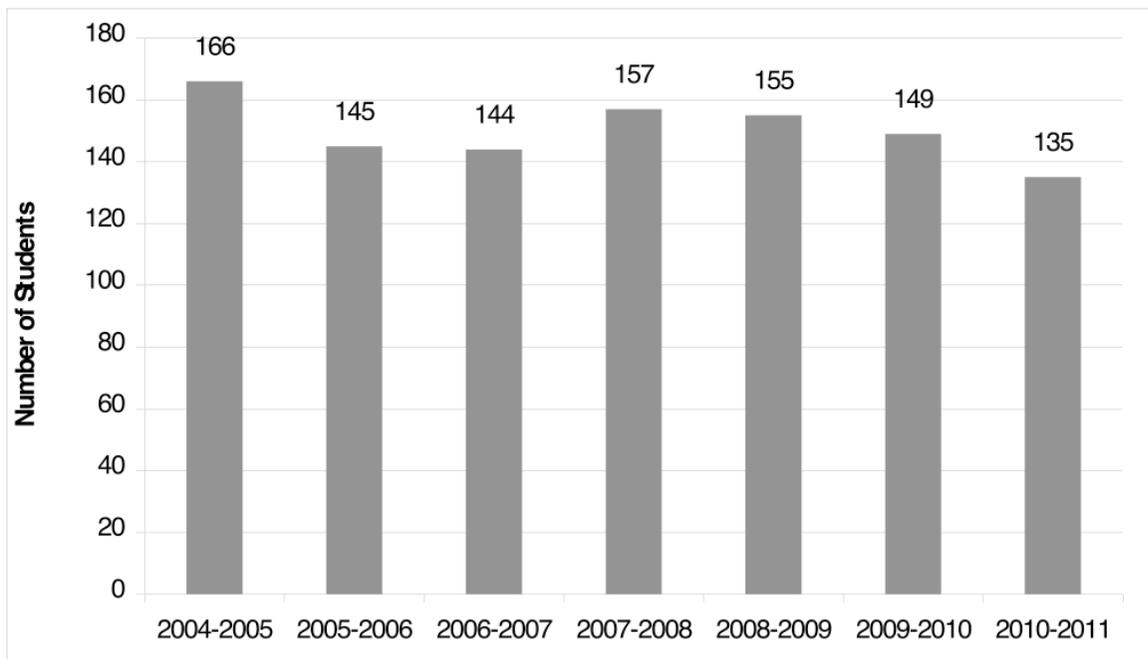
Secondary Education: Since District #36 has no high school, Corinth high schoolers may choose among many schools in the upper valley and beyond. Presently, high school students attend some 10 different institutions. In 2010, 63% (86) students attended Oxbow High School, 15% (21) went to Thetford High School and 7% (10) went to

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Blue Mountain High School. Four each went to Chelsea High & to Spaulding High, 3 each to Saint Johnsbury and Union-32, 2 to Hanover High and 2 to private schools. Bussing is provided by Oxbow, Chelsea and Thetford.

The number of children attending high school or vocational school from Corinth also continues to decline, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 5 - Corinth high school student population

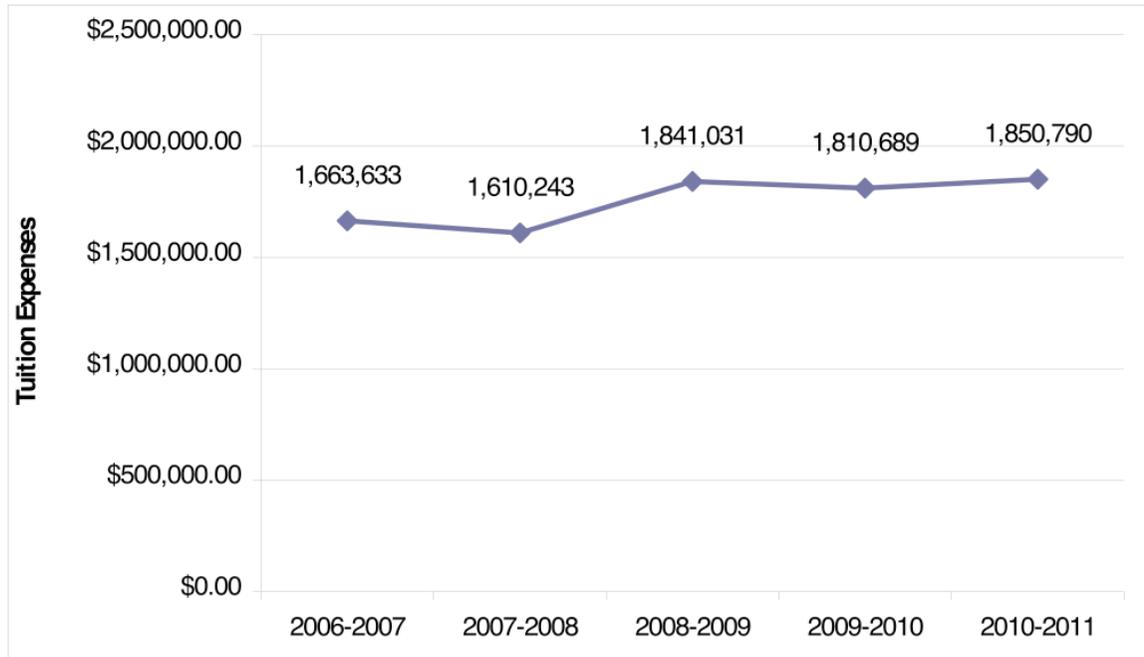


(source: Annual School Reports)

Per pupil spending for high school students has gone up in Corinth as a result of tuition increases. The figure below illustrates this. The secondary and vocational technical school budget for District #36 has also seen steady increases over the last few years, despite the decrease in the number of students that Corinth is sending.

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Figure 6 – Total secondary school tuition expenses for District

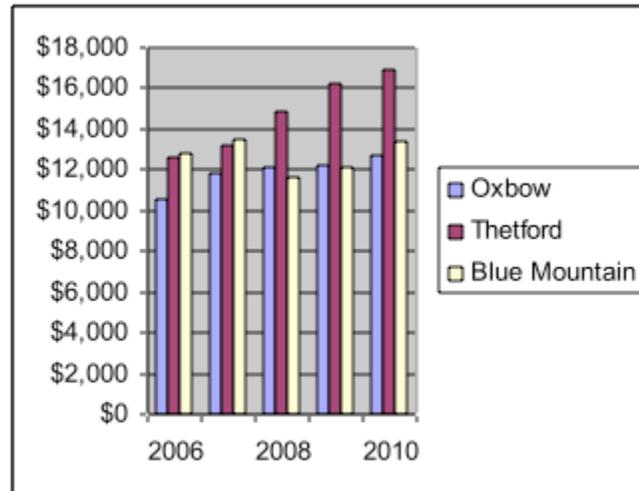


(source: Annual School Reports)

Since we have no designated high school, the tuition line item in our municipal budget is largely out of our control. While secondary school tuitions vary, families are free to choose a school without regard to tuition cost and the burden this places on the community. Some towns are able to exercise some control over the cost of tuition for secondary education by designating a specific school to receive their students. But Corinth has not designated a school and thus assumes responsibility for paying tuition at any secondary school to which families elect to send their children.

Figure 7 - Secondary School Tuition Rates

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(source: Annual School Reports)

B. Vocational Opportunities

The Waits River Valley School could increase its role as a community learning center in the future. The school, which is not at its maximum enrollment capacity, could be developed for after school and adult education, utilizing the building, its library, computer labs, and other resources, as a year round resource for community members.

River Bend Career and Technical Center is located in Bradford and provides technical education programs for students from eight area high schools and for adults. River Bend's facility includes a state-of-the-art automotive garage, heavy equipment training sites and shop, a complete building trades workshop, and a commercial kitchen with its own restaurant. Additionally, there is a fully-outfitted cosmetology lab, a pre-school for training for human services students, Business Technology and Pre-Engineering Technology programs, an Environmental Studies program, and an Emergency Services program. This school serves as an example of what the WRVS could become.

C. Childcare

Corinth has no home childcare providers registered with the State of Vermont. Most residents currently arrange for care with relatives, or take their children to licensed childcare facilities or registered home providers beyond the borders of Corinth to neighboring towns like Vershire, Topsham and Bradford.

The Sugar Maple Preschool in East Corinth offers early childhood education and

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childcare services to the towns of Topsham and Corinth. Corinth taxpayers provide a modest contribution toward the school's operations.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, there were 149 children under the age of 10 in Corinth. There is no after school program in Corinth

D. Planning Objectives and Recommendations

PLANNING OBJECTIVES

1. High quality and affordable education for Corinth's elementary and high school students.
2. Increased early childhood educational opportunities.
3. Community involvement and support of education are important elements of school success.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Selectboard should invite Corinth members of the School Board to report regularly on current school matters.
2. The Corinth members of the School Board and the Planning Commission should meet with the Selectboard to ensure the long term plan for the school is compatible with the Town Plan.
3. The Corinth members of the School Board should consider community learning needs (including preschool and vocational programs) when reassessing the school facilities for utilization, layout and adequacy.
4. A committee established by the Corinth Selectboard should encourage the creation of quality childcare facilities within Corinth.
5. The Planning Commission should revise its subdivision bylaws so that land development that is likely to result in large numbers of school children is phased or planned so as to not place an undue financial burden on the capacity of town to provide educational services.

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6. A committee appointed by the Selectboard should study the costs and benefits of designating a secondary school for Corinth students as a means of containing costs, and report to the Selectboard.

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7.

8.

VII. Transportation

A. Town Roads and Maintenance

Corinth's single most expensive capital asset is its system of roads, bridges, and culverts. The Town has invested more money in transportation than any other town program. The network of back roads is also an integral element of the scenic, rural countryside. These byways are both visually and economically important to the town. If improvements are needed to accommodate increased traffic, it is important to consider the relationship of the road to the surrounding features of the landscape. Improvement of the town highway system should support development that is consistent with other elements of the Town Plan.

Town highways are the second highest annual budget item, beyond schools, in our municipal budget. There are 29 bridges in town maintained through a yearly bridge fund and money for paving in the town budget. The State of Vermont maintains about 4 miles of highway and 5 bridges in town.

The Town of Corinth owns and maintains equipment for the upkeep and repair of the town highways. The major pieces of equipment are:

- 1 2000 New Holland Tractor TS 100
- 1 1988 John Deere Backhoe/415B 4x4
- 1 1999 Caterpillar Model 928G Wheel Loader w/Motorola 2 way radio
- 1 1999 Komatsu Excavator
- 1 2006 143 H Caterpillar Motor Grader
- 1 1996 International Truck Model 4900 w/Reversible plow-wing, slide in sander and Motorola 2 way radio
- 1 2002 Mack Truck Model RD690P w/ side dump sander, reversible plow-wing & Kenwood 2 way radio
- 12006 Mack Truck Madel CV 712 w/ side dump sander, reversible plow – wing & Kenwood 2 way radio
- 1 2010 Ford F-550
- 1 2012 International Dump Truck

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- 2 Used Snow Plows
- 1 York Rake
- 1 Chloride System
- 1 Woods Brush Mower
- 1 Culvert Thawer w/Pressure Washer
- 1 Cutmaster Mc 52 208/230V (plasma cutter)
- 1 1,000 Gallon Diesel Fuel Tank
- 1 Air Compressor
- 2 Flammable Cabinets
- 1 Echo brush cutter
- 4 chainsaws, 2 Jonsered and 2 Husqvarna
- 1 trimmer 245R
- 1 Mig welder, Millermatic 251
- Bandit Model 100 Chipper
- 1 Dell OptiPlex 745 Minitower computer
- 1 Kodak Easyshare M753 Zoom digital Camera

The **Town Garage** is a four-bay building located on approximately three acres on Goose Green Road near Goose Green. It was built to house town road maintenance equipment. A new salt shed was added to this facility in the last several years. The Town Road Crew has three members, one of whom is the road foreman, who reports to the road commissioner.

The highway system consists of approximately 98 miles of Class 2, 3 and 4 highways and state highway, approximately 20 of which are paved.

Classification and description:

Class 1 highways are considered by the State to be inter-town connector highways. There are no Class 1 highways in the Town of Corinth and the Town does not anticipate adding any of these roads.

Class 2 highways are considered to be connector highways through the town. Class 2 highways are mostly paved with some areas gravel coated. There are 21.2 miles of Class 2 highways in Town.

Class 3 highways make up the bulk of the highway system in Corinth, totalling 49.2 miles. Class 3 highways are mostly gravel. Critical areas are coated with a crushed stone mixture.

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Class 4 highways are all other highways, and there are 23.3 miles of these roads. Class 4 highways are generally in poor to passable condition. They have limited or low maintenance due to their low incidence of use or seasonal nature, although in recent years a few of these highways have been serving houses converted to year round use from seasonal use, and these roads are therefore seeing more year-round use. As written in V.S.A. Title 19 Section 310, Class 4 Highways “may be maintained to the extent required by the necessity of the town, the public good and the convenience of the inhabitants of the town.” Section 306 of this Title further explains that state funds are only provided for maintenance of Class 1, 2 and 3 roads.

State highways - Approximately four miles of State Highway 25 pass through the Town.

Regional transportation planning in Vermont is now the joint responsibility of the Regional Planning Commissions and the state highway engineers in Montpelier. The Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission has a Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) made up of representatives from all towns in the region, including Corinth. The TAC is charged with creating a regional transportation plan that is coordinated with land use planning and is responsive to local needs and concerns.

Historically, development was restricted to the hamlets and along the well traveled and maintained public highways. That meant the transportation system could have two levels of maintenance and upkeep – one standard for the well traveled roads and another for the inaccessible low traffic volume back roads.

Presently Corinth is adjusting to a new development pattern. The idea that life moves more slowly here appeals to many of our new residents and homes are built on these lower quality back roads for the enjoyment of country life.

But the development comes with a new transportation challenge to provide better maintenance and upkeep. In previous times, the few that lived on these back roads were adequately prepared and the low traffic volumes spared the roads from significant damages. Now, however, the traffic volumes are much higher, on roads never built for this intensity of use, and there is a larger dependence on two-wheel drive vehicles and regular commutes to employment centers in the Upper Valley and the Montpelier-Barre area.

It should be acknowledged that the costs of maintaining an entire transportation system are much higher than the practices employed 10-15 years ago. As development continues along our rural back roads, the Town must anticipate higher transportation

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costs.

There is likely to be an increase in settlement along Class 4 roads and this may result in increased demand for reclassification of these roads to secure town services and maintenance. Careful consideration should therefore be given particularly to Class 4 highways for their potential future use: eventual year-round use by seasonal owners, year-round recreational use, and development. By February 2009, Class 4 highways will have been mapped and included on a sworn certificate of these roads in Corinth to comply with the new state law, Act 178, regarding “ancient roads.” Class 4 roads impassable by vehicles must either be reclassified to “legal trails” to maintain Town rights-of-way, or dropped.

In answer to the Planning Commission’s 2005 survey, townspeople expressed satisfaction with road maintenance. They believe Route 25 is adequately maintained by the State. A large majority do not think more dirt roads should be paved. They answered that town residents want more say in guiding future road improvements.

Survey respondents think that speeding is a problem in town and that more roads should have posted speed limits. They don’t believe town roads should be opened for ATV use, and do believe that laws about ATV use on private land should be more strictly enforced.

B. Public Transportation

About half of all energy used in Vermont is for transportation. Over 50% of this is for residential users who drive private cars. Public transportation in Corinth is nearly non-existent and as a result there are few alternatives, if any, to the automobile. The 2000 Census shows that 10% of the town’s commuters carpool to work, while about 2% walk to work. For those driving to work, the average commute was about 31 miles each way.

People who answered the survey do not think there is need for better public transportation, but do think there should be parking for commuters to share rides.

Stagecoach Transportation Services is a private, nonprofit corporation that provides transportation services to the elderly, persons with disabilities, and the general public across a 26-town area of northern Windsor and Orange Counties. Stagecoach provides fixed route, demand response, and social service transportation. Stagecoach is also the area’s Medicaid broker and arranges passenger trips to medical services using volunteer drivers, taxis and Stagecoach routes.

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c.Planning Objective and Recommendations

PLANNING OBJECTIVE

A transportation system that is safe, efficient and complements the other goals and policies of this Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Selectboard and Road Commissioner should investigate creating parking areas in accessible places to make carpooling easier.
2. The Selectboard should update town road policies and work with the Planning Commission to integrate them with existing and projected land use.
3. The Planning Commission should update subdivision bylaws to require completed driveway permits as part of subdivision proposals.
4. The Selectmen have sole power to change the classification of the roads, and they should seek public input in any decision to substantially change the maintenance level or surface treatment of any town road.
5. The Road Commissioner should update the driveway access process with clearer approval guidelines including drainage and sight lines.
6. The Planning Commission should participate in decision making about classification of Class 4 roads and ancient highways.
7. The Selectboard and Road Commissioner should include consideration of scenic and historic resources, along with the usual economic and safety concerns, when making decisions regarding road maintenance and improvement and bridge replacement and renovation.
8. The Town should ensure that future development does not unnecessarily or unreasonably endanger the public investment in town and regional transportation systems or facilities, including highways, bikeways, and trails.
9. Where possible, in lieu of paving, the Highway Department should upgrade gravel roads with improved materials and geotextiles, and should improve drainage by better construction and maintenance of ditches, to better resist traffic induced road damage.

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10. The Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission should evaluate roads and speeds posted and road signage to reflect current engineering and traffic operation standards.

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VIII. Land Character and Use

The rural character of Corinth is the most important factor in making it a good place to live for most respondents to the 2005 survey. Therefore the maintenance and promotion of rural character, open lands or undeveloped lands are matters of public good. The farm and forest industries depend on open or undeveloped land. Citizens and recreationalists enjoy Corinth's varied scenery and landscape for activities like hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, hiking, and crosscountry skiing.

Many seasonal and year-round residents have relocated to Vermont from overdeveloped areas, which have lost their rural character due to unplanned and uncontrolled development. Given the area's reliance on forestry, agriculture and tourism as a major portion of the economy, future land development of all types should be planned to recognize and accommodate conservation of forest, agricultural and recreational land.

A. Current Land Use

Big changes are already occurring in land use. Old farms are being subdivided and developed. Cabins are being converted to year round use. Growth is increasingly scattered away from main roads. New patterns of development are evolving from the desire for views and privacy, leading to higher prices for land and homes. Large homes are being built on the ends of dirt roads, dispersing settlements.

Four of Corinth's seven hamlets, East Corinth, Goose Green, South Corinth and Cookeville, are situated at approximately 1,000 feet in elevation and in close proximity to the Waits River or its two major tributaries, the Tabor Branch and the South Branch.

Each of the hamlets serves as an identifiable area within the Town. Some, like East Corinth, contain a mix of land uses, while others such as Corinth Corners are primarily residential/agricultural in nature. Those living outside the village areas are scattered out along the approximately 94 miles of town roads and highways, and along the four miles of Vermont Route 25.

A large percentage of the 31,000 total acres in Corinth remains undeveloped. This land is privately owned and is predominantly forest land, with smaller areas being actively tilled or devoted to pasture or other open land use.

A new grassroots conservation project is being implemented in the largely undeveloped northwest section of town and on Hurricane Ridge. The Orange County

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Headwaters Project has joined together about twenty landowners to conserve 3,000 acres of land in Corinth through voluntary donations of development rights. The total area of the project that is in Corinth is about 15,000 acres. The project area includes about the same amount of land in the town of Washington. The goal is to try to keep remote areas remote and available for traditional uses including forestry, sugaring, hunting, fishing, hiking, and other nonmotorized forms of recreation.

B. Future Land Use

The majority of people who responded to the 2005 survey believed that development should occur in and around village areas, and along existing Class 3 roads. Concentrating growth and development within these areas will help maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside. Most survey respondents want to see Corinth stay the same as it is, with no growth or only slight growth. Eighty two percent said they feel that development should be controlled in order to protect the best interests of the people of Corinth.

A majority of survey respondents believed the town should adopt a junk ordinance, a cell tower ordinance, and zoning or other ordinances to regulate development. Some felt the town should adopt a wind tower ordinance, but many did not. They had no opinion on whether the town should adopt or enforce other ordinances.

Survey respondents believed that development should be kept out of prime agricultural lands and forest lands.

The impact on the capacity of available water, sewage disposal, roads, school system and town services must be considered each time a new house is built, a new business is added, a parcel of land is subdivided, or other land altering activity is proposed. In order to manage these impacts in a fair and orderly manner for all landowners and residents of the town, it may be necessary to develop these elements into bylaws and ordinances. The survey showed support for this idea among respondents.

Land use regulations should provide for the appropriate use of all lands in the Town of Corinth in a manner which will promote and protect the public health, safety, prosperity, and general welfare. They should protect high elevations, steep slopes, soils, forests, stream banks, wetlands, critical wildlife habitats, and other natural resources. Further, land use regulations should encourage the density and distribution of settlement to be in character with the rural residential environment of the town. Lastly, any new ordinance must further the purposes set forth in Section 4302 of the Vermont Planning and Development Act (see Appendix C for listing).

Land use regulations must not discriminate against any particular individual or group of people for reasons unrelated to reasonable land use objectives. Any significant changes from existing land uses or any new development should address all the land capability descriptions discussed in the Natural Resources Chapter of this Plan. The

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Town should design land use regulations that will protect agricultural or forestry use of the land.

The Town might consider a differential tax structure that provides an incentive to people to build houses that do not increase the burden on the town (roads, administration, emergency services, etc.) and as a disincentive to those who build new homes that are financially burdensome to the town.

The Town should support density and development patterns that are likely to result in the conservation of energy.

C. Commercial and Industrial Development

Some of the proposed future development in Corinth will be commercial in nature. The Town recognizes the importance of economic vitality and employment for its citizens. Although still primarily a residential community, modern communications are enabling a growing number of citizens to work from their homes at an ever-widening array of jobs and businesses. Because of the overall lack of employment opportunities, many townspeople need to commute to jobs in nearby towns.

The Town recognizes the need to encourage home-based businesses, retail and high-tech businesses and light, non-polluting industry. These businesses should be of a size and nature compatible with the local environment and commensurate with the Town's ability to provide services, and they should have a positive impact on the local and regional economy. The Town could consider a differential tax structure to encourage home-based businesses in Corinth.

The Town is understandably concerned with the potential for commercial or industrial development to adversely affect the town and endanger its safety and welfare. This Town Plan is a step toward protecting the town against adverse development and use. The survey respondents strongly opposed large commercial development.

D. Recreation

In response to the 2005 survey of Corinth residents, friendly people, open spaces and outdoor recreational opportunities were viewed as important by respondents.

The Town of Corinth does not provide recreational facilities for the residents, nor are there any state- or federal-owned facilities in the town. The Town relies on the generosity of landowners for access to trails, open lands, and rivers and streams for recreational use. Land owners are encouraged to allow access to existing trails, open areas, and rivers and streams for recreational use.

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The ball field, located on the Fairgrounds Road near East Corinth, is privately owned, and its use has been donated by the owner for many years. The town has historically exempted this area from taxes because it is a privately owned facility that is designated as a town recreation area.

For indoor recreational activities, the Town Hall can be rented for use for conferences, social events and instructional classes, etc. The Waits River Valley school sports facilities are available for community use with permission. There is a ropes course and ball field at the school that are open to use by Corinth residents. School sponsored recreational programs are available for the students.

Northeast Slopes, Inc. is a non-profit community organization that maintains and operates a recreational area on Route 25 used by skiers and snowboarders. The country's oldest continuously operating rope tow can be found there.

Survey respondents think the town should accept donations of land for a town forest, if offered, and would like to see the town purchase land for critical wildlife habitat and forests.

Use of private land for recreational purposes should not cause damage to the land and should not endanger people or livestock. Permitting recreational use should not be construed to be a permanent commitment on the part of the landowner.

E. Scenic and Historic Features

Corinth is fortunate to have both a scenic landscape and a link with its past through the many historic and architecturally significant buildings. The Town's rural character and scenic landscape have attracted many of its current residents and will continue to attract visitors and future residents.

The State of Vermont's Division for Historical Preservation has identified many sites within the Town as historically or architecturally significant. This inventory serves as a useful resource for townspeople interested in historic preservation efforts. (Contact the Corinth Historical Society for further information. See also the History of Corinth Vermont 1764-1964, available for purchase from the Town Clerk, or for reference at the Blake Memorial Library.)

Corinth has an active historical society that maintains a museum that exhibits town artifacts at the renovated Academy building. It is open on Saturday mornings in the summer. Additionally, the Corliss-Prescott buildings (hay barn and shed) in East Corinth have been renovated and will be similarly maintained by the Historical Society as an Agricultural and Trades Museum. It is open to the public once yearly.

F. Mapping

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Accurate and up-to-date mapping of the Town is necessary to help manage land use activities and plan development. GIS maps are attached to this Town Plan including the following: natural features; present land use; future land use; transportation; and utility/facility/education. Maps can also be found at www.trorc.org-Corinth.

Tax parcel mapping work has been completed in Corinth and is updated yearly by the Listers.

G. Planning Objective and Recommendations

PLANNING OBJECTIVE

Maintenance of the Town's historic settlement pattern of compact village centers separated by rural countryside.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Planning Commission should develop land use regulations, incentives, and an appropriate permitting process to encourage development consistent with the Town's historic, rural character. These regulations should be designed to minimize the impact of development on town services, including roads, administration, and emergency services, and maximize open space. These regulations must be consistent with the goals and objectives of this Town Plan
2. The Planning Commission should review the exempt subdivision process and implement improvements.
3. Parcel mapping should be updated yearly by the Listers.
4. The Planning Commission should develop land use regulations to control the way that future industrial and commercial development occur.
5. Land owners should be encouraged by the Conservation Commission to allow access to existing trails, open areas, and rivers and streams for recreational use.
6. The Planning Commission should ensure that non-agricultural development is restricted on prime agricultural land.
7. The Planning Commission should use information from the Corinth Historical Society on historically or architecturally significant sites in land use planning.

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8. The Conservation Commission should pursue the acquisition of a Town Forest.
9. The conservation commission should work to create a network of non-motorized recreational trails in the town that will be open to the public.

IX. Natural Resources

The forested, farmed and open lands of Corinth are essential elements of the Town's rural heritage. Moreover, the quality and quantity of these natural resources create the character of the town and are highly valued for their own sake. The 2005 survey showed strong support for these two sentiments. The natural beauty of the landscape and the presence of many wildlife species and plant communities are important features to many residents.

Corinth's natural resources are the primary attraction to tourists, retirees and second home owners who generate business and revenues that are important to the Town. These natural resources are of vital importance to a major sector of the region's economy.

Natural resources provide a major source of income for many of Corinth's residents. Jobs based upon natural resources are part of the region's cultural heritage. Protection of the vigor and variety of Corinth's natural resources is considered vital to the security of its cultural heritage and economic future.

At one time, the primary land use in the town was agriculture and agriculture related industry. People provided for themselves through full use of the land, producing dairy products, timber, firewood, and maple syrup.

Like many other Vermont towns, Corinth has recently experienced a decline in the number of active farms and an increase in the construction of single-family dwellings.

Residential development has spread from a concentration in the town's seven hamlets to a wider distribution of residences, including seasonal residences.

The Town has to be prepared for increased pressures in the form of residential development by individuals and commercial developers. Large parcels of open land, particularly former farmland, will be seen for their potential by developers.

Another result of the decline in the number of active farms is that open land that

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was formerly used for croplands or pasture is growing up to woods. One of Corinth's distinguishing characteristics has been the physical beauty of its combination of open and wooded land.

The percentage of forest land in the Town has grown to an estimated 80%. A considerable amount of commercial logging is done on this acreage. In addition, many landowners manage their own woodlot for firewood production for personal use.

The land's physical characteristics should be considered when determining its capability to support a proposed use. Some of the most important physical characteristics are as follows:

A. Water Resources

Corinth's inhabitants and visitors rely on wells and springs for their primary water supply. Protection of groundwater requires protection of surface waters, watersheds and recharge areas in a coordinated, ecologically-sound fashion. Recharge is the process by which ground water is replenished. A recharge area is where water from precipitation is transmitted downward to an aquifer.

Withdrawal of ground water or surface water by any party should not interfere with the reasonable withdrawal by other users. The waters of Corinth are for use by all its people, whether for drinking, swimming, or fishing and with no single user having the right to diminish the quality or quantity for others.

Our village centers are seeing increasing water quality problems. Well pollution is on the upswing and the failure of older septic systems in East Corinth bordering the Tabor Branch of the Waits River is a worsening problem.

B. Wildlife

Wildlife resources provide Corinth with direct and indirect benefits. In order to survive, large wildlife or indicator species such as black bear, moose, bobcat, snowshoe hare, mink, otter, and large birds of prey and others require larger expanses of contiguous habitat than deer and smaller animals. The presence of indicator species is one sign of the relative health of its ecosystem as a whole. If we wish to maintain or improve the populations and diversity of these species, the habitat must be managed wisely and protected from unreasonable fragmentation and alteration.

C. Soil Types

The depth of soil over bedrock and its degree of wetness are two of the most

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important characteristics affecting development of a land parcel.

Shallow soils are those which have a depth of less than 20 inches over bedrock and are susceptible to erosion. Soils which are called wet soils are wet nearly all year or have a seasonal high water table within four inches of the surface. Wet soils are not to be confused with wetlands, which are discussed below. Wet soils have severe limitations for development, partly because they are not suitable for septic systems. Please see Map 5 (attached) for an indication of areas that are suitable for septic systems.

Prime agricultural soils are potentially valuable resources that are essential for most kinds of farming. The town has many areas of rich soils that support valuable stands of timber, as shown on Map 5.

The use and management of Corinth's earth and mineral resources are matters of public good. Maintenance of sustainable quantities of gravel, sand, crushed rock, and other materials are essential for the development industry as well as state and local highways. Currently there are no operating gravel pits in Corinth. It is in the interest of the Corinth's business owners and residents to enable utilization of these resources when such uses do not significantly inhibit or conflict with the other goals or objectives of this plan.

D. Wetlands

Wetlands are identified and designated by the federal and state governments and use is severely restricted. Wetlands are important to water quality, wildlife, rare and endangered plants, flood storage, and natural filtering. There are 783 acres in town that are designated wetlands by the State of Vermont, which is quite extensive in size.

E. Floodplain

There are portions of land adjacent to parts of Corinth's rivers and streams that have been described by the Federal Emergency Management Agency as being subject to flooding. These floodplain areas are considered a natural part of the surface water course due to their important function of retaining excess amounts of water occurring during heavy rainfalls and spring thaws. Presence of a floodplain is one of the most critical factors when considering development.

The Town of Corinth Flood Hazard Bylaws adopted November 8, 1988 contain the guidelines in these areas and is to be used in monitoring development. These bylaws should be reviewed and updated so that they remain current and comply with state and federal law.

Undisturbed natural vegetation on and along the banks of streams, called a riparian buffer, provides erosion control and shade which enhances habitat value and water

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quality. Maintenance of a riparian buffer by private landowners is essential to minimizing flash flood damage on their property and land farther down stream.

Vermont experiences far more erosion flooding, or flash flooding, than inundation-related flooding, however. Vermonters suffered nearly \$60,000,000 in flash flood damages between 1995 and 1998 alone; much of these losses are avoidable. For this reason, the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has established a program to identify and map erosion hazards for municipalities. The first step in this process is to conduct a stream geomorphic assessment, allowing the Town to understand the natural tendencies of a stream, its current condition, and what changes may be anticipated in the future. The assessment is invaluable to making sound protection, management, and restoration decisions. The Corinth Conservation Commission is working with neighboring towns on a geomorphic assessment of Waits River watershed, which will identify areas that could suffer erosion flood damage.

F. Slopes

There are physical limitations inherent in developing land on steep slopes. Steep slopes may affect access, utilities, sewage disposal and soil erosion. Steep slopes are considered to be those with a grade greater than 25%. Slopes with a grade of less than 25% but more than 12% are considered to be at risk. Generally speaking, as the slope increases, the suitability for development decreases.

Steep areas, especially cliffs, are important to several wildlife species (bobcat and snowshoe hare) and sometimes home to unusual plants.

G. Planning Objective and Recommendations

PLANNING OBJECTIVE

Maintain the ecological integrity and natural beauty of Corinth's natural resources through proper land use that will minimize or prevent adverse impacts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Planning Commission should consider impacts on wetlands when reviewing any development proposals so that they do not result in undue disturbance to wetland areas or their function.
2. The Planning Commission should consider surface water and ground water quality effects related to proposed uses of land

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3. The Conservation Commission should educate the Town about maintaining or enhancing the natural diversity and population of wildlife, including maintaining appropriate populations of natural predators.
4. Through education, the Conservation Commission should encourage ethical hunting practices and public access to private land for hunting.
5. The Planning Commission should determine whether proposed commercial development would have an adverse effect on the environmental quality or on the scenic or natural character of the area where it is being proposed.
6. The Conservation Commission should identify and map areas important to wildlife, particularly endangered species.
7. The Planning Commission should review applications to discourage fragmentation of significant and necessary wildlife habitat.
8. The Planning Commission should modify subdivision regulations to ensure that proposed development minimizes conflicts with forest and agricultural use and scenic resources.
9. The Planning Commission should modify subdivision regulations to ensure that proposed development projects involving multiple structures or uses on larger land parcels are designed and constructed to group or place buildings, structures, utilities and roads in the least sensitive areas of the site and should reserve open land and forest land for passive uses.
10. The Conservation Commission should encourage through education private land conservation efforts where such efforts are beneficial to the Town.
11. Through education, the Conservation Commission should educate private landowners about maintaining riparian buffers.
12. The Conservation Commission should identify significant natural and fragile areas and significant waterways in Corinth and work with the Planning Commission to protect and preserve them through planned development.
13. The Planning Commission should revise Corinth's subdivision regulations and floodplain ordinance when the geomorphic assessment of the Waits River watershed is

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complete.

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X. Housing

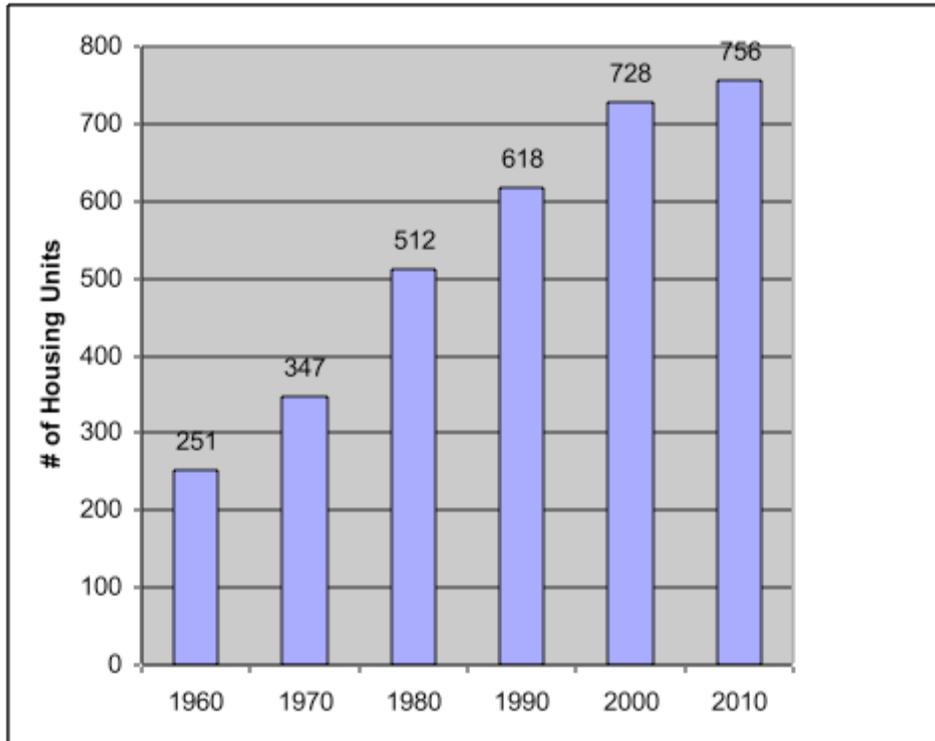
Housing development and costs are major issues in our region and are of central concern to our community.

A. Current Housing

The majority of the townspeople (83%) live in single family units of various types of construction. According to the Corinth Listers files, there were 756 housing units in Corinth in 2011, including permanent residences. This breaks down to 538 year round residences (that is; houses, multi family houses, and mobile homes) and 173 vacation homes (mobile homes, camps and summer residences) or 77% full time residences and 23% vacation homes. In 2006 this split was 70% full time and 30% vacation homes. There are only two multifamily dwellings and about 10% of all residential units are rental properties. The figure below illustrates how housing capacity in Town has increased over the last 35 years.

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Figure 8 - Housing Growth in Corinth



(source: Corinth Listers files)

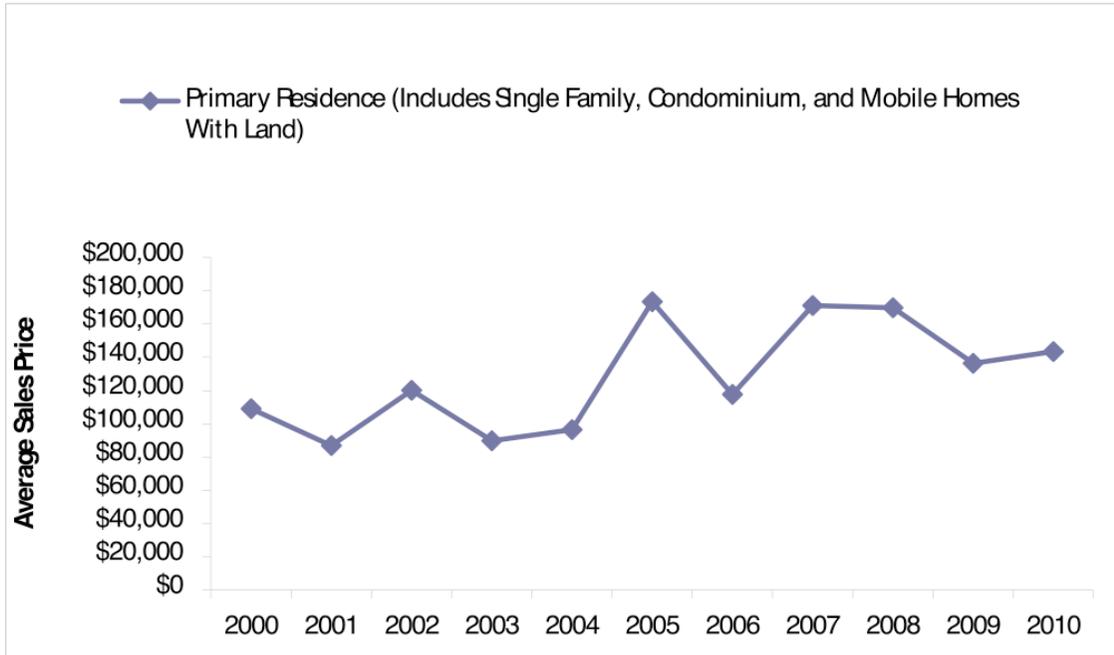
The housing growth rate in Corinth for the period 2000-2010 was less than 4%, less than half the rate in Orange County during that same period (10.9%).

Family or household size is decreasing, similar to the rest of the State. The average household size in Corinth was about 2.46 persons in the year 2010, down from 2.73 in 2000 and 2.99 in 1990.

In 2010, the Vermont Department of Taxes reported that 19 primary residences in Corinth sold, all of which were single-family homes. The average sale price for these primary residences was \$143,547, compared to the average for Orange County of \$147,405. Primary residences include single family and mobile homes. Sales not deemed valid (have not been exposed to the open market) are not included.

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Figure 9 - Average Sales Price of a Primary Residence

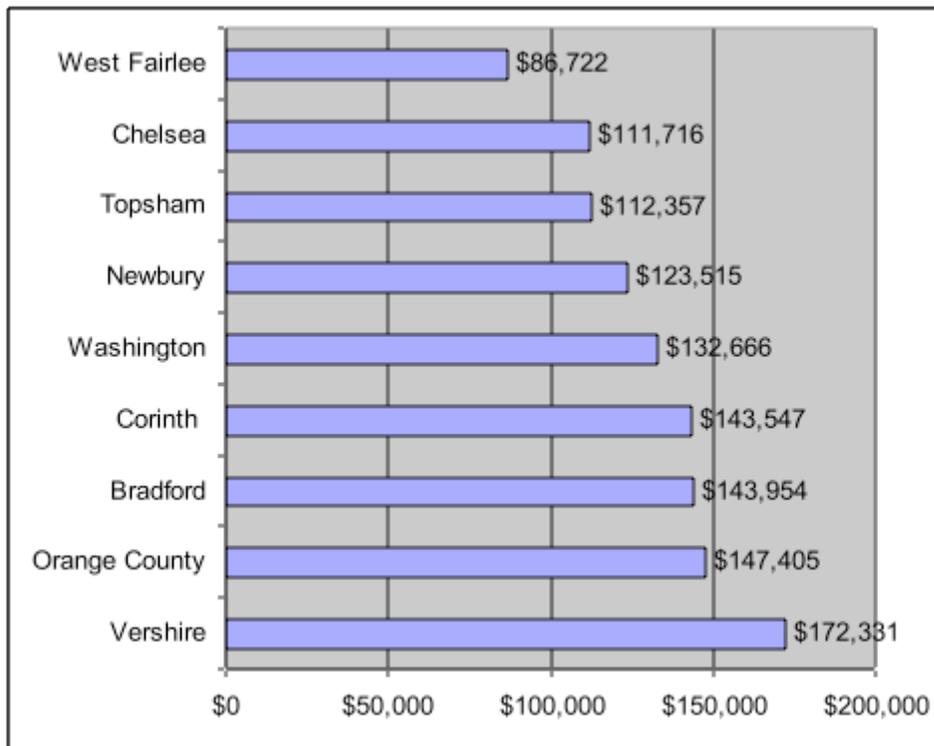


(source: Vermont Tax Department)

Overall, home values are higher in Corinth than in most neighboring towns, but lower than the state average. Here are average sale prices of single family homes in and surrounding Corinth for 2010.

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Figure 10 - Average 2010 single family home sale prices



(Source: Vermont Tax Department)

As Chapter 3 indicates, more than 75% of Corinth's workforce is employed outside of town, and many travel considerable distances. The largest area of employment is the Bradford/Topsham/Newbury/Haverhill area, with about 27% of commuters. As the figure above shows, home sale prices in these towns were lower last year than in Corinth. However in the towns of Thetford and Hartford, Vermont and Hanover and Lebanon, NH, the average sales prices were much higher. These towns account for about 20% of Corinth's commuters. The average sales price in 2010 for a single family home in Hartford was \$198,408, and in Thetford it was \$242,997. Comparable data for the New Hampshire towns were not available, however, Hanover, NH, is listed as the town with the most expensive home sales price for the entire state in 2010 by several real estate websites.

These data attest to the Town's desirability as a place to live and speaks to the problems that young families face in moving to Corinth. Starter homes are affordable only

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for middle income families, not young families. Low income home buyers can neither afford the asking price of most houses on the market in Corinth today, nor can they afford to pay the taxes on these properties. This situation presents a challenge to the Town as it continues to plan for growth.

B. Future Housing

From the information presented above it is unclear whether additional housing is needed in Corinth. What the town can do, however, is take steps to ensure that the timing and rate of new housing construction does not exceed the community's ability to provide adequate public facilities (e.g. schools and municipal services). The Town should try to find ways to encourage quality, attractive housing that maximizes open space and energy efficiency.

The State of Vermont, through Chapter 117, requires towns to address affordable housing needs. Affordable housing is defined by the U. S. government as housing that costs less than 30% of the total household income. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) found that one would need \$29,520 annual income to afford the rental of a one bedroom unit in Corinth. And the Department of Labor found the annual average wage in Corinth in 2010 to be \$29,919. Therefore it is reasonable to conclude that some households cannot afford rental housing in Corinth.

Community housing trusts and loan programs to assist qualified persons or families have had success in Vermont towns. Creation or maintenance of well-paying jobs in Corinth and the area will help increase incomes, thus lessening the housing affordability gap facing many families or individuals.

Housing can be made affordable by planning for appropriately sized lots, accessory apartments, and clustered developments. Options being used in other towns to address the affordability gap are condominiums, apartments, manufactured housing, and multifamily houses. The most recent survey shows that Corinth residents do not favor these types of housing.

A community revolving loan fund exists to help low-income residents with needed home improvements. A very low interest rate is applied to these loans, after qualifying guidelines are met. The maximum loan amount is \$5,000.

C. Planning Objective and Recommendations

PLANNING OBJECTIVE

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Housing that is safe and affordable for all residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Selectboard should form a housing committee to:
 - a. Suggest ways to encourage the creation of additional rental properties throughout town, provided that they do not put an undue burden on Town services and facilities.
 - b. assess the need for senior housing within the Town.
 - c. work with the Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission to better understand housing needs and options for addressing these needs.
2. The Planning Commission should seek grant funding to do a building trend analysis, looking at suitability of soils for septic systems, water supply, steep slopes, and other environmental conditions to determine where development would best be done and how many homes might be built in town.
3. The Planning Commission should suggest some development regulations and an appropriate permitting process to be considered by the town. These regulations could be designed to:
 - a. limit development through innovative planning
 - b. promote design and construction of houses that minimize costs, energy consumption, and environmental and town services impacts.
 - c. encourage the location of future housing so as to complement existing or planned employment patterns, travel times, and energy requirements.
 - d. allow the physical limitations of the site and distance to current or planned public and private services such as roads and commercial/service centers to be taken into account.
 - e. encourage the conservation of existing hamlets including infill development and the rehabilitation of obsolete and deteriorating dwelling units.
 - f. encourage any new dwelling units to be compatible with existing neighborhoods.
4. The Selectboard should maintain the Loan Fund Committee.
5. The Town Clerk's office should make available information on the state's energy efficiency requirements for home construction.

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XI. Compatibility with Local and Regional Plans

Each Town Plan that is developed and approved at the local, regional and state level is required to be compatible with other local plans, especially those of surrounding towns with common borders.

The Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Plan adopted in 2007 is the regional plan that is in effect for The Town Of Corinth. After reviewing the proposed Corinth Town Plan and comparing it with the adopted Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Plan, no conflicts were apparent. In fact, the two plans have similar policy statements regarding the need for development that does not overburden services. In addition, no specific development goals in this plan conflict with any regional goals.

The town of Corinth is bordered by the towns of Washington, Chelsea, Vershire, West Fairlee, Bradford, Newbury, Orange and Topsham. All of these towns have Planning Commissions, and with the exception of Corinth, all have Town Plans that have also been approved by the appropriate Regional Planning Commission.

The neighboring plans have been reviewed in the context of the proposed Corinth Town Plan. Once again, no conflicts exist in either general philosophy or specific development proposals along town borders.

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XII. Plan Implementation

Adoption of the Town Plan represents acceptance of its recommendations for guiding development of the Town. The Town can only implement objectives suggested by the Town Plan by methods that follow the requirements of the Vermont Planning and Development Act. The following methods are ways in which the Plan may be implemented by Corinth after the Plan is adopted:

TOWN OR STATE REGULATORY METHODS

- Act 250: Presently, the State Land Use and Development Law (Act 250) regulates some land development by requiring permits prior to construction. These permits, issued by the District Environmental Commission, determine the objectives for land development in the Town of Corinth based on the ten permit criteria stated in the law.
- By law, the District Environmental Commission must consider Corinth's Town Plan as input in deciding permit conditions. Also by law, both the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Commission have party status in all Act 250 proceedings involving land in Corinth; they may testify on each of the ten criteria, offer witnesses to present evidence and appeal decisions in which they disagree. The Town Plan provides the Town and the District Environmental Commission with an important standard for review and comment on Act 250 applications. The Plan suggests a basis for the Town's testimony on the first nine criteria relating to specific subject areas, and, under criterion 10, a proposed project must be found by the District Environmental Commission to be in conformance with the Town Plan in order for a permit to be issued. In this manner, the Town Plan becomes a major factor in the regulation of land development that falls under the jurisdiction of Act 250.
- Official Map: The "official map," as it is called in the Statutes, documents the location and width of existing and proposed highways and drainageways and the location of all existing and proposed parks, schools and other public facilities.
- Subdivision Regulations: Subdivision regulations are the standards by which the

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Planning Commission may approve, modify or disapprove the division of land into two or more parcels. Subdivision regulations describe the criteria to be considered by the Planning Commission prior to approval. The Town adopted the Subdivision Bylaw Ordinance in March of 1995.

- **Zoning Regulations:** Zoning is a locally administered, locally enforced division of land areas into specific districts (or zones), so that specific types of land use may be encouraged, permitted, discouraged, or not permitted. Some typical classifications of Zones are Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Agricultural, Conservation Areas and Remote Areas. Some type of permitting structure is generally put in place to regulate and guide land development. Zoning regulations are the standards by which the Town can permit, regulate and guide land development in conformance with the Plan. In order to be implemented, Zoning Bylaws would require approval of the Town voters.
- **Design Control District Ordinance:** A design control ordinance can be used to protect and preserve the natural beauty and history of a municipality. The ordinance would describe a design district and document the Town's interest in preserving architectural and landscape features within the district area and state the desire of the Town to maintain the appearance and use of the area.
- **Capital Budget and Program:** A capital budget program lists and describes annual capital projects expected to be undertaken for a period of not less than five years. When a budget is adopted, no capital project can be authorized or undertaken by the town unless it is included in the town's Capital Budget or the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) as adopted or amended. This method of implementation impacts growth and land development as well as types of town services.
- **Flood Hazard District Bylaw:** Flood district bylaws are intended to prevent flooding damage caused by the uncontrolled development of lands in flood hazard areas, and to minimize losses due to floods. Corinth presently has a flood hazard ordinance in force, appended to and made part of this plan.

OTHER METHODS

In addition to implementation methods that are authorized by state law, there are techniques of development control and guidance that are implemented by individual residents or property owners. The Town has little or no ability to enforce these forms of implementation, but may encourage private landowners to use them. These include:

- **Land Trusts:** Land trusts are generally non-profit organizations dedicated to the

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protection of land resources and can be created to help individuals conserve their land. The process begins with the identification of the landowner's conservation objectives and financial needs, and the review of these needs by an established trust. Property owners can also create a land trust. Because of their non-profit status, most contributions of lands or funds are deductible from federal income taxes.

- Restrictive Covenants: An individual property owner can achieve the long-term conservation of land through placing development restrictions or covenants in deeds used to transfer land to new owners. These restrictions or covenants are best used when a large parcel is divided into smaller lots. The original titleholder's control of the covenant usually diminishes as the property changes hands.

The Town Plan, highway ordinance, Subdivision Bylaws and flood hazard ordinances should remain in force and effect, and should be updated as necessary.

Both the benefits and costs of new initiatives for implementing the Town Plan need to be investigated by the Selectmen and the Planning Commission before implementation.

APPENDIX A

Town of Corinth Ordinances and Bylaws

Flood Hazard Area Bylaws. This ordinance was adopted by ballot vote on November 8, 1988. Permits are required for all new construction, substantial improvements, and other developments within all lands to which these regulations apply.

Highway Ordinance. This ordinance has been in effect since October 30, 1987. The purpose of this ordinance is to establish municipal policy and practice on the maintenance and upgrading of existing town highways and to describe construction standards and procedures for accepting new highways into the Town highway system.

Sewage Ordinance. In effect since January 30, 1988, it requires that a town permit be obtained by any person who intends to build, replace or alter a sewage disposal system. Beginning July 1, 2007, every parcel of land will come under the authority of the State's on-site wastewater & potable water supply system program. As a result of this change, a state permit will be needed for most repairs, upgrades, and new construction of on-site wastewater treatment and disposal facilities, on-site potable water supplies, and connections to municipal water distribution and wastewater collection systems.

Speed Zone Ordinances. There are several town speed ordinances. Copies are available at the Town Clerk's Office.

Anti-Nuclear Ordinance. On May 18, 1992, the Selectmen adopted an ordinance to ban: the construction and operation of commercial nuclear reactors and/or mines for fissionable material or any other nuclear facility; and the transportation, storage or disposal of radioactive wastes for such reactors and/or such mines in the land, air or water of the Town of Corinth.

Dog Ordinance. This requires that all dogs be licensed and under the control of the owner at all times.

Subdivision Bylaws. In effect since March 8, 1995, bylaws require Planning Commission approval of all subdivisions. Copies of the Subdivision Bylaws and applications for subdivision approval may be obtained at the Town Clerk's Office.

Solid Waste Ordinance. This ordinance regulates the separation, recovery, collection, removal, storage and disposition of solid waste including recyclables.

Street Naming and Street Addressing Ordinance. Adopted in 1998, this ordinance

establishes a single locatable addressing system for all addressing purposes.

APPENDIX B

Town of Corinth Planning Commission Summary of 2005 Survey Results

In November 2005, the planning commission mailed out 1,354 surveys, one to each person on the checklist and to property owners who are not registered voters. Over 400 were filled out and sent to us; a good return that shows a high level of interest in the future of the town. The complete results are in the town office for anyone to look at.

We separated the surveys according to how long people had lived in town – ranging from “less than 5 years” to “all of your life,” and kept the non-residents’ responses separate as well. Differences in responses between the groups tended to be quite small. The brief summary below will give you an idea of what we found.

LAND CHARACTER AND USE

- The rural character of Corinth is the most important factor making this a good place to live for most respondents. Friendly people and outdoor recreation are also important.
- A majority preferred that the town either “stay the same” or become “more rural or agricultural.” People who have lived in town all their lives are somewhat more in favor of having more businesses than more-recent arrivals.
- Farms are the most desired type of development, but there was significant support for small, home-based businesses and “no further development.”
- The only well-accepted place for future development is in village areas, but even there, frequently “no change” was the first choice, along with small businesses or home-based occupations.
- People are divided about whether or not the town should purchase land. The first choice of those who favor a town land purchase is to protect wildlife habitat.
- 82 percent of those responding to the survey feel that development should be controlled to protect the best interests of the town.
- 83 percent would like the town to accept donations of land for a town forest.

ECONOMY

- A majority of people would like the town to encourage a stronger local economy, but a sizeable number are opposed to this.
- A large majority wishes to restrict big businesses to certain areas.

ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION

- There is general satisfaction with the roads in town, and most people do not want more roads to be paved. They do want a commuter parking area. Speeding is widely considered to be a problem.
- A large majority does not want to open town roads to ATVs and does want stricter enforcement of laws prohibiting unauthorized ATV use on private land.
- Townspeople definitely want more input on road policies.

HOUSING

- Many more people favored having the town encourage elderly housing and single-family housing than opposed it. Conversely, more people opposed apartments or condominiums and trailer parks than supported them.
- More than two-thirds of people believe that residential development should be restricted.

MUNICIPAL SERVICES

- Town services generally got a good rating. People clearly favor having a new town ordinance to regulate the dumping of garbage, and a smaller margin would like cell towers and wind towers to be regulated by the town.
- 64 percent of people said the town should adopt zoning or other ordinances to regulate development; 25 percent were against this; and 11 percent had no opinion.

APPENDIX C

Vermont Planning And Development Goals

Following is a list of the 13 planning goals from Section 4302 of Chapter 117, the Vermont Planning and Development Act (24 V.S.A. § 4302). These goals are designed to steer planning activities at all levels of government, including local. This law requires local plans to be consistent with these state planning goals in order to be approved by the regional planning commission. The State Planning Goals are:

1. To plan development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside.
 - A. Intensive residential development should be encouraged primarily in areas related to community centers, and strip development along highways should be discouraged.
 - B. Economic growth should be encouraged in locally designated growth areas, or employed to revitalize existing village and urban centers, or both.
 - C. Public investments, including the construction or expansion of infrastructure, should reinforce the general character and planned growth patterns of the area.
2. To provide a strong and diverse economy that provides satisfying and rewarding job opportunities and that maintains high environmental standards, and to expand economic opportunities in areas with high unemployment or low per capita incomes.
3. To broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities sufficient to ensure the full realization of the abilities of all Vermonters.
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 bicyclers.
 - A. Highways, air, rail and other means of transportation should be mutually supportive, balanced, and integrated.
5. To identify, protect, and preserve important natural and historic features of the Vermont landscape, including:
 - A. significant natural and fragile areas;
 - B. outstanding water resources, including lakes, rivers, aquifers, shore lands and wetlands;
 - C. significant scenic roads, waterways and views;
 - D. important historic structures, sites, or districts, archaeological sites, and archaeologically sensitive areas.

6. To maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife and land resources.
 - A. Vermont's air, water, wildlife, mineral and land resources should be planned for use and development according to the principles set forth in 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a).
7. To encourage the efficient use of energy and the development of renewable energy resources.
8. To maintain and enhance recreational opportunities for Vermont residents and visitors.
 - A. Growth should not significantly diminish the value and availability of outdoor recreational activities.
 - B. Public access to noncommercial outdoor recreational opportunities, such as lakes and hiking trails, should be identified, provided, and protected wherever appropriate.
9. To encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest industries.
 - A. Strategies to protect long-term viability of agricultural and forest lands should be encouraged and should include maintaining low overall density.
 - B. The manufacture and marketing of value-added agricultural and forest products should be encouraged.
 - C. The use of locally grown food products should be encouraged.
 - D. Sound forest and agricultural management practices should be encouraged.
 - E. Public investment should be planned so as to minimize development pressure on agricultural and forestland.
10. To provide for the wise and efficient use of Vermont's natural resources and to facilitate the appropriate extraction of earth resources and the proper restoration and preservation of the aesthetic qualities of the area.
11. To ensure the availability of safe and affordable housing for all Vermonters.
 - A. Housing should be encouraged to meet the needs of a diversity of social and income groups in each Vermont community, particularly for those citizens of low and moderate income.
 - B. New and rehabilitated housing should be safe, sanitary, located conveniently to employment and commercial centers, and coordinated with the provision of necessary public facilities and utilities.
 - C. Sites for multi-family and manufactured housing should be readily available in locations similar to those generally used for single-family conventional dwellings.
 - D. Accessory apartments within or attached to single family residences which provide affordable housing in close proximity to cost-effective care and supervision for relatives or disabled or elderly persons should be allowed.

12. To plan for, finance and provide an efficient system of public facilities and services to meet future needs.
 - A. Public facilities and services should include fire and police protection, emergency medical services, schools, water supply and sewage and solid waste disposal.
 - B. The rate of growth should not exceed the ability of the community and the area to provide facilities and services.
13. To ensure the availability of safe and affordable childcare and to integrate childcare issues into the planning process, including childcare financing, infrastructure, business assistance for childcare providers, and childcare work force development.

For full text of the statute, visit <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/statutes/sections.cfm?Title=24&Chapter=117>