MENDON, VERMONT

GATEWAY TO THE HEART OF THE GREEN MOUNTAINS

2020 Mendon Town Plan

Prepared by the Mendon Planning Commission
Adopted on the (insert date)

www.mendonvt.org

Mendon Town Plan
Adopted _____

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Cream Hill Road photos on cover and page ii credit: Cort Jones.

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THE MENDON COMMUNITY

The Town of Mendon is a small, friendly, rural community located in east central Rutland County. The village area is on Route 4 in the northwest section of the Town and contains the Town Office, a church, eateries, gift shops, numerous other commercial enterprises, and several residences. Route 4 is a major east-west traffic corridor through Mendon that connects historic Rutland with the popular Killington-Pico ski areas. It includes pastoral views of mountains, ridges and open spaces that lend a high scenic quality to Mendon as a "Gateway to the Heart of the Green Mountains."

Town sign. Credit: Teri Corsones

Schoolchildren in Mendon attend the pre-kindergarten through grade 8 award-winning Frederick Duclos Barstow Memorial School in neighboring Chittenden. Established in 1933 with significant renovations and additions in 1939, 1965, and 2002, Barstow Memorial School is regarded as a top elementary and middle school in Vermont.

In response to a survey distributed at the March 2018 Town Meeting and at the Mendon Community Potluck event in June of that year, residents had the opportunity to share their views and hopes for the Town. The overwhelming consensus from those who provided feedback agreed that their love of their town was fed by Mendon's beautiful scenery and ability to feel connected to the outdoors. Also important to highlight is that many felt a strong sense of community and appreciation for their neighbors. The feedback underscored that the townspeople of Mendon highly value their proximity to natural resources and the people they share them with.

TOWN GOALS

This Town Plan (the Plan) has been composed to support careful and strategic planning, which will assure that decisions made are consistent with the needs and goals of the Town as listed below:

- *Preserve the present natural environment, character, rural appearance and atmosphere of the Town.*
- *Promote and encourage economic growth in appropriate zoning districts.*
- *Meet the civic, economic, educational, social, recreational, and cultural needs of Mendon residents.*
- *Preserve the rights of Mendon residents to manage their own land, to the fullest extent possible, consistent with Town By-Laws, planning policy and State law.*
- *Preserve the existing high scenic quality of Mendon's gateway natural, scenic, and historic areas.*
- *Aid the Mendon Historical Society in discovering and preserving the history of the Town of Mendon and its role in the State of Vermont and the United States of America.*

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Mendon was chartered in 1781 as Medway and organized in 1806 at its first town meeting. Its name was initially changed to Parkerstown in honor of an early resident and then changed again to Mendon, although the precise origin of the name remains uncertain. The western terminus of both the Rutland-Stockbridge and the Rutland-Woodstock Turnpikes were near the current Town Office, and at one time Mendon's village center had a post office, stagecoach stop, inn and livery stables. Mendon's village center was impacted by the widening of U.S. Route 4 in the 1950s. Construction of the Alpine Pipeline, a private sewer system, in the 1980s led to new commercial development. Many important historic and cultural sites nonetheless remain, reminders of Mendon's past.

HISTORIC SITES

Several houses from the early 1800s still stand along U.S. Route 4, Meadow Lake Drive, and Cream Hill Road. The Mendon Methodist Church was built in 1876. One of Mendon's original five schoolhouses has been converted to a private residence at 267 Meadow Lake Drive. Mendon District School No. 3, often referred to as Sunny Side School, was located on Townline Road at the upper end near Eastridge Acres. The Sunny Side School Bell, donated by Justin Lindholm, resides at the Mendon Town Office. The Mendon Grange Hall on U.S. Route 4 still stands as a private home. General Edward Ripley played a significant role in the history of the town. He donated the land on which the current town office stands and built the original town hall in 1888. It was used for town meetings until the 1950s, when it was converted to the town garage and later was rented to Adi's Woodworking Shop.

Sunny Side School Bell at the present-day Mendon Town Office. Source: Sara Tully.

There are two Vermont State Historic markers in Mendon. One honors Captain John Vincent, a Native American who enlisted with the colonial army in the American Revolution and another honoring General Edward Hastings Ripley who led the first Union troops into Richmond at the end of the Civil War. "Old John," the horse that faithfully carried General Ripley throughout the war and returned with him to Vermont, is buried at the base of the large boulder just west of the current Sugar and Spice Restaurant.

The Wheelerville District and Wheelerville Road were named after M.E. Wheeler of Rutland, a landowner who bought over 40 pieces of property in the first decade of the twentieth century. Totaling over 5000 acres, this estate was reputedly the largest farm in the state. The area was a thriving logging and farming community featuring open fields for planting and grazing, many farmhouses and two schools. Mr. Wheeler died in 1927 and his heirs sold the entire property to the City of Rutland, which purchased it for its watershed along Brewer and Mendon Brooks. There are numerous old cellar holes, foundations, silo bases, rock walls and mill sites in the area that remind us it was an active agricultural area up through the 1920s.

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) established a camp in the Aitken State Forest at the end of the Notch Road in the 1930s. The site was converted to Tamarack Notch Girl Scout Camp in the 1950s and the camp was used into the 1980s. Economics caused the camp to be closed and it fell into disrepair; however, the State of Vermont removed all structures in 1992 allowing the site to revert back to its natural state.

CULTURAL SITES

The Appalachian Trail, running from Georgia to Maine, is managed by the National Park Service. It enters Mendon near Killington Peak, skirts the western flank of Pico Peak and crosses U.S. Route 4 before turning east toward New Hampshire. It is accompanied by Vermont's Long Trail, the United States' first long distance hiking trail.

CEMETERIES

Mendon has seven cemeteries, with only Tenney Cemetery on Meadow Lake Drive still active. Older and now closed cemeteries are: Mountain Cemetery at the northern end of Wheelerville Road, adjacent to the old Stockbridge Turnpike, with the stone marker honoring Captain John Vincent (see above); Saunders Cemetery on Town Line Road, housing the grave of a veteran of the American Revolution; Wilkins Cemetery on Wheelerville Road; "Lydia's" Cemetery on Wheelerville Road; Eggleston Cemetery at the end of Cream Hill Road; and Orchard Cemetery in the Mendon Orchard.

GOALS

- *Identify, preserve, and promote Mendon's past.*

ACTIONS

- *Work with the Mendon Historical Society to identify and preserve significant historic sites.*
- *Develop literature and signage with the Mendon Historical Society to raise awareness of Mendon's history.*
- *Work with the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation to redevelop the old CCC/Tamarack Notch Girl Scout camp.*

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

HISTORIC AND CURRENT ACTIVITIES

The economy of Mendon depends largely on the industries and tourism of the region. The Town offers a variety of services to area residents as well as tourists. The encouragement and stimulation of year-round and seasonal businesses, at-home businesses and industries would serve to strengthen the town's economic base.

Mendon is a rural residential community with a significant number of commercial establishments. Historically, Mendon's rural character and its proximity to major commercial districts resulted in the town's identity as a "bedroom community" with residents commuting to work in adjacent communities. Technological advances and an enhanced appreciation for outdoor recreational activities and associated economic opportunities provide new opportunities for Mendon residents who live and work in Mendon.

Mendon Village Center 1920. Source: www.mendonvt.org

A town-wide survey conducted in 2015 found a strong preference for residential development, followed by the development of business activities that would maintain the rural atmosphere. Residents clearly indicated a preference for the development of recreational businesses and activities to attract tourists, and to maintain the rural appearance of the community. A town survey conducted in 2018 also showed support for the development of businesses that would support recreational activities, including restaurants, delis, country stores, and a U.S. Forest Service information area. Such businesses would both serve the town and also support tourism while maintaining the town's distinctly rural character.

Sugar & Spice Restaurant on Route 4.

Currently, the 2013-2017 American Community Survey estimates the following distribution of employment by nationwide industry:

Industry	# of Mendon Residents in Industry
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	6
Construction	6
Manufacturing	77
Wholesale trade	9
Retail trade	58
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	33
Information	5
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	30
Professional, scientific, management, and administrative and waste management services	59
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	126
Arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation and food services	94
Other services, except public administration	17
Public administration	19

In 2018, Mendon Town residents voted to implement Tax Stabilization to encourage rehabilitation of underutilized commercial properties and development of new commercial properties. The Mendon Economic Development Committee will promote and the Mendon Select Board will implement the Tax Stabilization program to enhance the town's economic vitality and its tax base.

The Town applied to the Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) in 2018 for assistance in further evaluating the potential for sustainable economic growth within the constraints of the town's rural character. There is strong indication that Mendon will be found suitable for VCRD's assistance, with the hope that this could happen in 2021.

BUSINESS NEEDS

Mendon's ability to attract and retain small private businesses and professional services is dependent upon its ability to provide state-of-the-art infrastructure, including, but not limited to, digital connectivity (phone and internet), wireless connectivity, sewer and water services. Efforts should be undertaken to improve existing services and introduce new technologies.

Transportation is an important component of community life and Mendon's economy. Businesses and residences along US Route 4 are served by public transportation, and a park-and-ride facility is available at the Mendon Town Office. Additional information is available in the Transportation section. According to the 2013-2017 American Community Survey (Source: factfinder.census.gov), residents of Mendon commute an average of 22 minutes to work with 532 employed residents (ages 16 years and older) making some level of commute.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

US Route 4 is currently and is likely to remain Mendon's primary commercial zone and, as such, is the public's first impression of the community. Commercial and professional business development along the highway should focus on those activities that enhance Mendon's tax base without adversely affecting the town's rural character, open space, noise, or air and water quality, or that place an undue burden on the town's existing infrastructure. To the extent possible, renovation of existing structures should be encouraged with particular emphasis on the unused hotel and restaurant properties as highlighted during the 2018 Mendon Town Survey. Zoning regulations should be developed that give consideration to the design and appearance of proposed commercial and professional structures, including signage and sign lighting, so as to enhance the aesthetics and rural character of Mendon, while encouraging economic development and vitality. Zoning efforts should be made to eliminate visual clutter and to address derelict structures.

A Village Center Designation should be explored and considered to support Mendon's economic development and preservation of historic and cultural resources. Authorized by 24 V.S.A. §2793a, Village Center Designation recognizes and encourages local efforts to revitalize Vermont's traditional village centers. In accord with the land use goals of the State of Vermont, the designation encourages compact village centers surrounded by working rural lands. The benefits of village center designation include tax-incentives to maintain and enhance buildings as well as priority consideration for various state grants and programs such as Municipal Planning Grants and the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG). The designation must be renewed every eight years

GOALS

- *Maintain and enhance Mendon's economic vitality, both for the benefit of its residents and the overall good of the region, while preserving the Town's rural and scenic nature.*

ACTIONS

- *Promote and implement tax stabilization.*
- *Encourage the growth of commercial and professional services and at-home businesses while preserving the rural character of the town.*
- *Pursue development of recreational opportunities such as mountain biking, hiking, snowmobiling, skiing, snowshoeing, etc. (see Recreation section below).*
- *Consider applying for a grant from the Vermont Outdoors Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC), a 2018 legislative initiative to maximize the economic potential of recreational opportunities.*
- *Adopt commercial signage requirements that do not detract from the Town's scenic beauty and that work to bring "grandfathered," non-compliant signage into compliance.*
- *Revisit signage requirements to ensure they assist businesses in marketing their products and services.*
- *Apply for State of Vermont Village Center Designation.*

- *Promote Mendon businesses and recreational opportunities with town-owned signage (i.e. at trail heads).*
- *Participate actively with the Vermont Council on Rural Development upon award of grants.*
- *Support the Mendon Economic Development Committee in its effort to assist property owners in rehabilitation or redevelopment of new and/or underutilized properties.*
- *Evaluate the possibility of installing fiber optic and securing outside funding to support such a project.*

RECREATION

Mendon's location in the Green Mountains provides ample opportunities for natural and developed forms of recreation with access to two major ski areas and numerous designated trail systems including snowmobiling, hiking, snowshoeing, mountain biking, and backcountry skiing.

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Mendon is blessed with spectacular opportunities for hiking, mountain biking, snowshoeing, backcountry skiing, and snowmobiling.

- *Hiking/Snowshoeing: Trails within the Town of Mendon include the Appalachian Trail/Long Trail, Canty Trail to Blueridge Mountain, the Bucklin Trail to Killington Peak, the Bald Mountain Trails and the trails of Tamarack Notch Girl Scout Camp.*
- *Mountain Biking: Numerous legal trails throughout Mendon are available for backcountry biking.*
- *Backcountry skiing: The Catamount Trail which runs north-south through Vermont has approximately 11 miles of trail in Mendon which can be accessed from numerous locations.*

Snowshoeing with Bald Mountain vistas. Credit: Teri Corsones

- *Snowmobiling: the VAST snowmobile trails cover approximately 14 miles within Mendon.*

Opportunities exist to collaborate with mountain biking enthusiasts and the Green Mountain National Forest to develop additional mountain biking trails in Mendon, potentially connecting to trail systems at Killington Ski area, Pine Hill Park in Rutland City, and the Sherburne Trails.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Mendon Recreation Area playground and baseball field. Credit: Teri Corsones

Mendon residents currently utilize two recreational facilities. The Mendon Recreation Area located on South Mendon Road consists of a Little League baseball field with two dugouts, a playground, a basketball court, and over two miles of nature trails that are available year round for hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and other passive uses. Motorized vehicles are not allowed beyond the parking lot. The Barstow Memorial School in Chittenden, to which Mendon residents have access, provides outdoor playgrounds, baseball, soccer, tennis, and other recreational facilities.

TRAILS

There are various legal town trails available for use in Mendon, the use of which are at the discretion of the Select **B**oard. Mendon contains several maintained hiking trails to destinations with expansive regional vistas.

The Appalachian Trail/Long Trail (AT/LT): The AT which runs from Maine to Georgia and the LT which traverses the Green Mountain spine from Massachusetts to Canada are combined as they enter Mendon from the south at the Shrewsbury line, leave town at the summit of Killington peak, then reenter Mendon on the west flank of Pico Peak and cross US Route 4 where there is a trailhead and parking lot. The trails split north of Deers' Leap where the AT enters Killington to the east and the LT proceeds into Chittenden to the north.

Long Trail trailhead.

The Bucklin Trail: This trail in the Coolidge State Forest is maintained by the Green Mountain Club. It starts at Brewer's Corner, four miles from U.S. Route 4 on the Wheelerville Road, where there is a parking lot and kiosk. After crossing two bridges over Brewer's Brook, it follows old logging roads 3.3 miles to the AT/LT at Cooper Lodge, where there is a spur trail to Killington Peak from which there are expansive views in all directions.

The Canty Trail to Blue Ridge: This 2.5 mile trail in the Green Mountain National Forest starts 1.3 miles east of U.S. Route 4 off Old Turnpike Road. It traverses several small streams, then follows an old logging road along a series of tumbling cascades before veering west to a lookout over the Otter Creek valley to the west with views of Pico, Killington and Mendon Peaks to the south.

Bald Mountain Trail: This 3.3 mile trail system in Aitken State Forest is accessed from a parking lot and kiosk at the end of the Notch Road. The trail is a figure-of-eight loop over Bald Mountain with multiple vistas over the Otter Creek valley, the Cold River and Mendon, Killington and Pico Mountains.

Tamarack Notch Trail: At the end of the Notch Road is the site of a former CCC camp and Girl Scout Camp with a .75 mile loop trail on flat ground. The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation in the near future plans to improve accessibility of the existing trail with the possibility of expanding the trail system.

Mendon Recreation Area Trails: This easy two-mile mile loop follows a small stream through pine, fir and hardwood forests. It begins just beyond the ball field at the Mendon Recreation Area off South Mendon Road.

The Catamount Trail: The trail is a back country ski trail that runs from Canada to Massachusetts; it enters Mendon from the north at Old Turnpike Road and crosses U.S. Route 4 at the AT/LT trail head, then proceeds south until it enters Shrewsbury beyond Brewer's Corner.

In addition, there are opportunities to bushwhack to the summit of Mendon Peak, the highest summit in Vermont without designated trails to its summit. There are also four legal town trails that were formerly Mendon Class IV roads, the use of which are at the discretion of the Select Board.

HUNTING AND FISHING

Hunting and fishing have always been favorite sports for many citizens of Mendon. To be in compliance with the law, permission must be obtained from the property owner before hunting on posted property. Hunters and fishermen from out of state must possess Vermont licenses. Other recreational facilities exist in adjoining towns and are available by fee to Mendon residents. The surrounding rural nature of the Town provides for other activities such as camping, hiking, biking, snowshoeing, picnicking, nature walks, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling.

Green Mountain National Forest Parking Area

GOALS

- *Assure Mendon's wealth of recreational possibilities continue to be available to Town residents and residents of the greater Rutland region.*
- *Utilize all Class IV roads in the Town for recreational trails and promote the development of the Town's designated trails for hiking and mountain biking.*
- *Encourage voluntary development and maintenance of these trails under the direction of and in concert with the Town. Partner with potential partners such as the Vermont Conservation Corp or local trail organizations to develop and maintain these trails.*
- *Encourage the opening of as much undeveloped private land as possible for hunting, fishing, trapping, fishing, hiking, skiing, mountain biking, and other non-invasive or non-destructive outdoor activities.*
- *Encourage the development of suitable parking at designated trail heads*

ACTIONS

- *Work with the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation to facilitate and expedite the rehabilitation and development of the lands of the former Tamarack Notch Girl Scout Camp.*
- *Consider requiring that an adequate percentage of the total area of development in new subdivisions be set aside for private and structured recreational facilities. (Zoning has addressed this for PUD's)*
- *Work with regional and state entities to encourage the development of mountain biking and multi-use trails.*
- *Promote Mendon's recreational opportunities to the wider regional and national audience such that these assets continue to make Mendon an attractive place to live and work.*
- *Investigate suitable locations for parking near recreational activities.*
- *Work with landowners to develop suitable parking facilities.*
- *Develop mapping of the numerous hiking trails throughout Mendon.*

HOUSING

Mendon is a desirable community in which to live, given its proximity to employment in Rutland, its rural and pastoral environment and an excellent education system through the Barstow Memorial School. Mendon has the second highest median home value in Rutland County and the highest median family income. There is a very low vacancy rate in housing, including rental housing.

Blue Ridge Mountain view from Park Lane showing Mendon Methodist Church.

HOUSING MARKET

Per the 2010 Census, the total number of housing units in Mendon in 2010 increased 9% to 683 from 616 units in 2000. Because of its rural nature and its proximity to local year round resorts, one third or approximately 230 of the housing units in town are seasonal. Eighty percent of homes are owner-occupied and single-family homes comprise 72% of the total housing. The 2010 census showed approximately 165 multi-family housing units, almost entirely condominiums, and showed approximately forty (40) rental units for year-round families.

HOUSING GROWTH

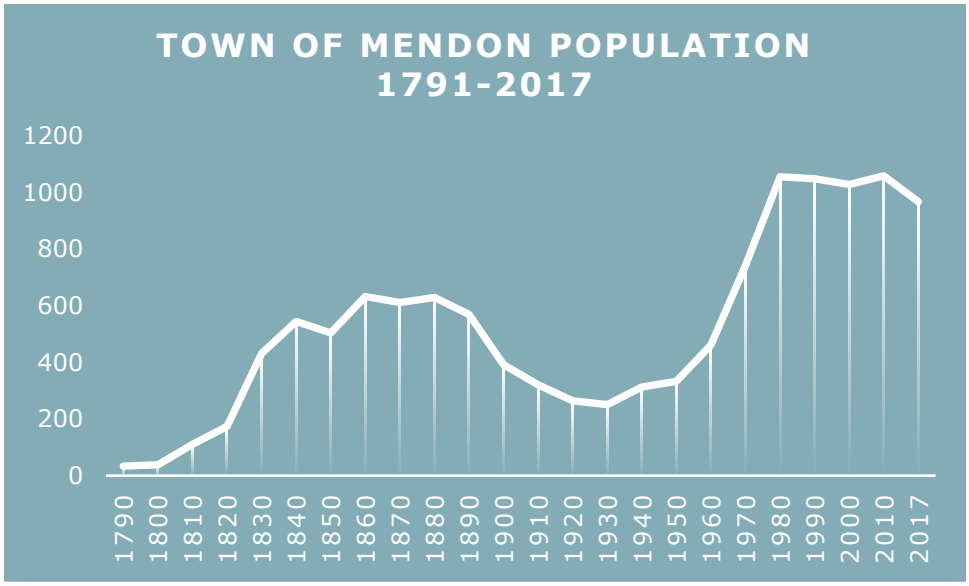
Additional statistics on housing demographics are available from the 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS), a five-year estimate produced by the U.S. Census Bureau. These statistics show growth in total housing units numbering 769, with 387 of these units being owner occupied housing. The median home value in Mendon is estimated by the ACS to be $254,100 and a median monthly owner costs (of homes with a mortgage) of $1,568.

New housing development in Mendon is limited due to steep terrain, sensitive watersheds, some soils that are not suitable for septic systems, limitations on building above an elevation of 2000 feet and zoning districts with minimum lot size (e.g., 2, 3 or 5 acres.) Changing septic technologies are increasing the options for septic construction, though.

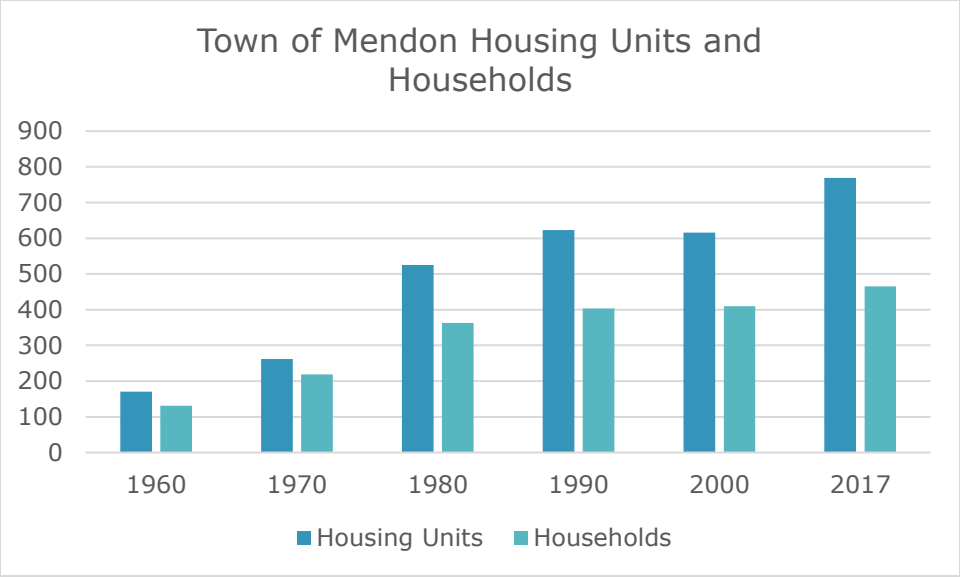
POPULATION AND GROWTH TRENDS

The Town of Mendon has experienced moderate population growth over the past several decades, as well as a steady increase in the number of households. The population of Mendon in 2017 was 968 with a median age of 52 years as noted in the 2017 America Community Survey by the US Census Bureau (Source: US Census Bureau American FactFinder 2013-2017 Community Survey).

Shown below is Mendon's current population and population history, as reported by the U.S. Census. These figures represent the year-round population and do not include seasonal residents. Approximately one third of the housing units are for seasonal or occasional use (Source: Vermont Housing Finance Agency housingdata.org).



Source: US Census Bureau, University of Vermont Center for Rural Studies (crs.uvm.edu/indicators), & Vermont Housing Finance Agency (housingdata.org).



Source: US Census Bureau, University of Vermont Center for Rural Studies (crs.uvm.edu/indicators), & Vermont Housing Finance Agency (housingdata.org).

GOALS

- *Maintain quality housing in Mendon.*
- *Encourage Planned Residential Development (PRDs) where appropriate.*
- *Assure that future residential housing development conforms to Mendon's rural and pastoral nature.*

ACTIONS

- *Promote zoning regulations that encourage maintenance of a sound housing stock, including PRDs and PUDs, in compliance with the Town's rural nature.*
- *Evaluate density requirements in zoning districts in light of changing septic technologies.*

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

TOWN GOVERNMENT

The Select Board is the official governing body of the Town of Mendon. The Select Board consists of three elected residents who are registered voters, each serving a three-year term. The responsibilities of the Select Board cover the general administration of town affairs, the annual budget, and the appointment of various town officials. A town administrator supports the Select Board and the town providing support in day to day operations, meetings, interfacing with state and federal agencies, and enforcing policies and procedures of the Select Board. Town officials and employee information can be found at www.mendonvt.org.

Capital Budget and Program

The Town Plan determines the Capital Budget, which must be approved by the Select Board and the voters. A capital budget lists and describes the capital projects to be undertaken during the coming fiscal year; the Capital Program is a plan of capital projects to be undertaken, their estimated costs, and methods of financing. The Capital Budget and Program are reviewed annually.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

Mendon Town Office. Source: www.mendonvt.org

There are three Mendon town facilities: the Town Office (2282 U.S. Route 4), the Town Garage (157 Park Lane) and the Recreation Area (South Mendon Road). Mendon currently does not have a town hall or community meeting room. These facilities, among others, can be identified on the Education, Transportation, and Community Facilities Map on page 39.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mendon's goal is to allow for the installation of wireless communication facilities within the town limits that will provide good service for residents and local businesses to enhance the quality of life and property values in town while preserving the aesthetic character of Mendon's neighborhoods, natural areas, ridgelines, and historic districts.

The popularity of cell phones, computers and mobile devices, both at home and in the business community, dictate that Mendon take the necessary steps to allow for state-of-the-art telecommunication facilities. Mendon should always have the mechanisms in place that will clearly describe the guidelines for new telecommunication facilities.

CHILDCARE

Ensuring accessible, affordable, quality childcare is integral to sound economic development and is important to community well-being. The State of Vermont requires childcare facilities of a certain size to be registered and the Town encourages compliance with that requirement. In 2019 there was one (1) childcare facility in Mendon licensed by the State of Vermont. It is recognized that many children cared for in these facilities are not Mendon residents and likewise many Mendon children receive childcare in neighboring communities. Demographic changes affecting Mendon, the Rutland region and the State of Vermont may dictate a decreasing need for childcare among Mendon residents. Nonetheless, the Town of Mendon should allow for and encourage the availability of quality childcare for its residents.

Mendon Children Ages 0 – 14 Years, 2010 / 2017

AGE	2010	2017	% CHANGE
Infant-Preschool (0-5yrs)	31	43	38%
6-14 years	106	78	-26%
Total	137	121	-11%

(Source: US Census, American FactFinder 2017)

EDUCATION

Barstow Memorial School. Source: http://barstow.rnesu.org/.

The Town of Mendon is a member of the Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union District and operates a cooperative education program with the Town of Chittenden at Barstow Memorial School for pre-school, grades K-8 and after school care. In 2016 the Barstow Unified Union School District (BUUSD) was created; voters of both Mendon and Chittenden are eligible voters in this district. Barstow no longer tracks what percentage of students comes from each town. Senior high school students (grades 9-12) in Mendon can elect to attend public or private, non-sectarian schools with funding provided by the BUUSD.

WATER SUPPLY

Given the rural nature of the town, no municipal water system exists; therefore, the majority of residents depend on individual wells or springs for their water supply. There are also several private water systems that serve multi-unit and commercial properties.

Residents are encouraged to periodically test their water supply to ensure the continued quality of their potable water and take steps to mitigate any sources that do not meet current drinking standards. Protection of the watersheds in the Town should be a priority to ensure the continued potable quality of the water supply to springs and wells.

SEWER

Along the U.S. Route 4 corridor, residents and businesses are able to connect to the Alpine Pipeline, a private sewer system that discharges into the Rutland City treatment plant. Built in 1984, the pipeline runs along U.S. Route 4 from Sherburne Pass through Mendon. Sewer connections to the Alpine Pipeline are encouraged for new construction along U.S. Route 4 due to the fact that challenging soils may limit the suitability of on-site wastewater treatment systems. Mendon's allotment for discharge into the pipeline is sufficient to allow additional development.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Having emergency services available is among the basic needs of residents in Mendon. The Town strives to be active in all phases of emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

Mitigation means acting before the next disaster to reduce losses of life and property. Mendon's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan is updated every five years and was last updated in 2017. The Plan identifies the highest risk natural hazards facing the community - floods, winter storms, ice storms, high winds - and their corresponding impacts on public safety, property, and the natural environment. Flooding is identified as the Town's highest and most prevalent risk hazard. The Plan includes goals and actions designed to reduce the risks from identified natural hazards.

Preparedness involves activities and measures – such as training, plans, procedures, and equipment – taken in advance of an incident to ensure effective response. Mendon's Director of Public Safety also serves as the local Emergency Management Director. This position is responsible for coordinating the various components of the Town's emergency management program. Mendon has a robust emergency management program with a designated local emergency operations center and sufficient sheltering capacity with both overnight services and warming centers provided at Barstow Memorial School. These and other emergency preparedness and response measures are documented in the Mendon Local Emergency Management Plan. This plan is updated and adopted by the Select Board annually.

Response activities address the short-term, direct effects of an incident and seek to save lives, protect property, and meet basic human needs. The safety of Mendon's residents and visitors is a high priority. In Mendon, response services include fire protection, rescue, and public safety/police. Mendon is served by the Rutland City Fire Department on a contractual basis, since there are no fire protection facilities located in town. At present, contracted fire protection services appear to be the most economical and best

arrangement for the Town. Rescue services are provided by the Regional Ambulance Service, based in Rutland. Mendon relies on the Rutland Barracks of the Vermont State Police, the Rutland County Sheriff's Department, and the Mendon Constable for neighborhood policing and enforcement of traffic laws on streets and highways.

Recovery is the process of rebuilding, restoring, and rehabilitating the community following an emergency. Mendon maintains records of costs incurred in the recovery from disasters, including road and culvert repairs. This information is critical to ensuring the Town receives the fullest amount of government financial assistance legally allowed during a federally declared disaster.

GOALS

- *Maintain Mendon's quality of life through good governance, citizen participation and timely, appropriate review of the Town's goals and needs.*

ACTIONS

- *Monitor and encourage state-of-the art telecommunications*
- *Work with local residents and employers to assure available, affordable, quality childcare*
- *Work with Barstow School to continue after-school child care*
- *Develop zoning regulations that allow for childcare facilities that meet Mendon's and regional needs*
- *Update the Town's Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP) annually and the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan every five years.*
- *Implement the actions identified in the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.*
- *Assure that the position of Emergency Management Director is always filled.*
- *Study the possibility of establishing a town hall or a community meeting facility.*

TRANSPORTATION

An effective transportation network is paramount for the safety and convenience of Mendon residents and is a major component of land use development. As such, effective transportation policies can increase a municipality's capacity to manage growth, foster economic development, improve community health, and assure accessibility, efficiency, and most importantly, safety.

Mendon's road network is dictated, in large part, by the town's topography of mountains, steep terrain and narrow river valleys. Because of its terrain, Mendon is home to regionally important forest blocks and wildlife connectors, which to date have largely been protected in spite of the town's road network.

HIGHWAYS AND ROADS

Roads constitute the most significant component of Mendon's current transportation network, which includes one major arterial highway, three collectors and several local roads. Almost six miles of U.S. Route 4, from Town Line Road to the Mendon/Killington line, pass through the heart of Mendon. U.S. Route 4 serves as the main link between Rutland City and Killington and connects New York to New Hampshire, serving as one of the primary east-west corridors across the state. Classified as a U.S. Highway and managed and maintained by VTrans, its potential impact for development is significant. VTrans has the legal authority to define access to Route 4 and is responsible for its maintenance. The town's Class 2, 3, and 4 highways are managed and maintained by the Mendon Highway Department that includes an appointed Road Commissioner and staff. Road maintenance, including road upgrades and snow removal, is a critical need for residents and visitors and is a significant item in the town's municipal budget. Mendon has adopted Town Road and Bridge Standards for maintenance as promoted by VTrans. Mendon has a Highway Specifications Ordinance and is compliant with the Municipal Roads General Permit and Complete Streets requirements.

Town of Mendon Highways by Class					
(VTrans Data)	**U.S. Highway**	**Class 2 Town Highway**	**Class 3 Town Highway**	**Class 4 Town Highway**	**Total Highway (Excludes Class 4)**
Miles	**5.92**	**4.44**	**16.82**	**3.28**	**27.18**
Percent Total	**21.8%**	**16.3%**	**61.9%**	**EXCLUDED**	**100%**

BRIDGES

The ownership of bridges determines the responsibility for their maintenance. Mendon has nine (9) municipal bridges in town over 20 feet in length (making them eligible for federal funding), one (1) bridge less than 20' and 205 highway culverts on municipal roads. One bridge (over Mendon Brook) and several culverts are owned by the State of Vermont along U.S. Route 4. The condition of local and state bridges is evaluated every two (2) years by VTrans, which annually prioritizes bridge projects with input from the Rutland Regional Transportation Council (RRTC), an adjunct council of the Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC)

TRAFFIC VOLUME

The most recent VTrans traffic counts in Mendon, taken in 2017, indicate an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) of 13,200 vehicles along Route 4 from Town Line Road east to Park Lane; 11,400 vehicles from Park Lane to Meadow Lake Drive; and 10,700 vehicles from Meadow Lake Drive to Old Coach Road (the first major side road off Route 4 in Killington, directly across from Pico Ski area). The 2017 data also reported an AADT of 1200 vehicles on Park Lane and 1600 vehicles on Town Line Road.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Marble Valley Regional Transit District (MVRTD) or "The Bus" provides public transportation, also known as the Rutland Killington Commuter, seven days a week along Route 4. This fixed route service stops in Mendon at Town Line Road, Mendon Mountain Orchards, Sugar & Spice Restaurant, Old Turnpike Road, Pico Mountain Commons, and Mendon Mountainview Lodge. MVRTD will make "Flag Down" stops along Route 4 if the driver determines it is safe to stop. MVRTD also offers complimentary para-transit service, service for Medicare patients and the elderly, and service for persons with disabilities. It can be noted that this service is being increasingly used, especially in the winter, to support the seasonal employees and patrons of the nearby ski slopes.

PARK AND RIDE

Mendon owns and maintains a free public Park and Ride facility that contains 10 parking spaces located on U.S. Route 4 at the Mendon Town Office.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN

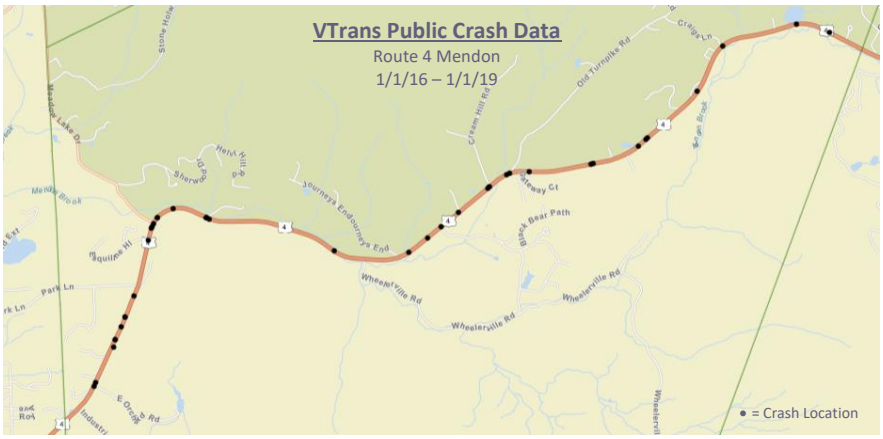
Bicycle and pedestrian travel are critical elements in creating a balanced and resilient transportation network and bicycling and walking are efficient means of transportation with community health and energy conservation benefits. While Mendon does encourage bicycling and walking in road areas that are safe, currently there are no designated bicycle facilities due to historic development patterns, difficult terrain, and roadway design. The Town is endeavoring, however, in concert with local and regional partners, to develop mountain biking and off-road biking elsewhere in town.

IMPACT OF REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION

Mendon participates in regional transportation planning through a member appointment to the Rutland Regional Transportation Council (RRTC), which consists of representatives from all Rutland region towns. The RRTC identifies and develops solutions to regional transportation issues and serves to promote and support an integrated, sustainable, and resilient transportation system.

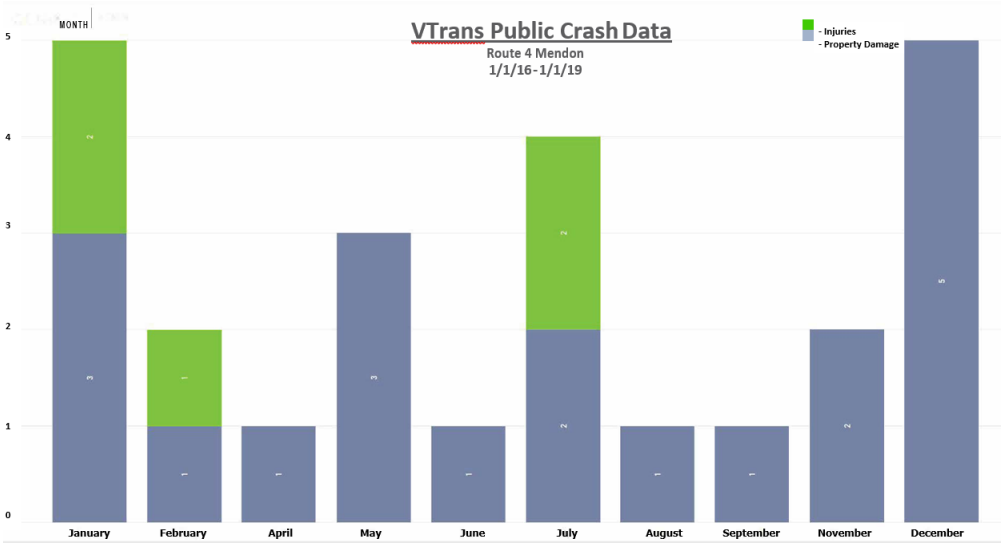
TRAFFIC SAFETY

According to the VTrans Public Crash Data Report, from 1/1/16 to 1/1/19 Mendon experienced 37 crashes with five injuries on U.S. Route 4. According to data, the highest accident rate on U.S. Route 4 occurs at its intersection with Park Lane, the curve by Meadow Lake Drive, and at its junction with Gateway Court/Old Turnpike Road (see Figure below.) The VTrans Crash Location Report (2012-2016) indicates there were eleven (11) crashes and two (2) injuries in the vicinity of the Gateway Court/Old Turnpike intersections with U.S. Route 4.



Crash location along Route 4 from 1/1/16 to 1/1/19.
Source: http://apps.vtrans.vermont.gov/CrashPublicQueryTool/

Higher crash rates occur during the winter months when seasonally hazardous driving conditions are compounded by high speeds and greater traffic volume. In the warmer months, July experiences a higher rate due to an increase in holiday volume. This issue is compounded by an increase of bicycle traffic along Route 4. (see Figure 2 below.)



Number of crashes per month along Route 4 from 1/1/16 to 1/1/19.

ACCESS MANAGEMENT

Roads provide mobility for the travelling public and accessibility to adjacent land and property. Therefore, both the efficiency and safety of town roads are directly affected by the frequency and location of points of access (or curb cuts.) Incorporating Vermont Access Management Best Practices can work to optimize safety and efficiency of roadway access by reducing the number of conflict points where accidents typically occur. Consistent and comprehensive access management policies are necessary to balance the needs of roadway users with the needs for land development. Strategies for improving access management include: adequate sight distance at a driveway or intersection, distance between curb cuts and driveways, shared driveways, driveway turnarounds, appropriate on-site and shared parking, landscaping and buffers to define and limit access points.

MUNICIPAL ROADS GENERAL PERMIT

The Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) is intended to achieve significant reductions in stormwater-related erosion from municipal roads, both paved and unpaved. In order to comply with the MRGP, towns implement a customized, multi-year plan to stabilize their road drainage system. Mendon, with the assistance of the RRPC, has conducted both a culvert inventory and a road erosion inventory to identify and track areas for improvement and develop implementation strategies. Wheelerville Road and Orchard Road are two roadways of very high priority due to their gravel surface, adjacent sleep slopes, and hydrological connectivity.

GOALS

- *Improve traffic safety and traffic patterns.*
- *Promote a multi-modal transportation system by supporting infrastructure improvements.*
- *Manage growth and development through a safe, resilient and sustainable transportation network.*
- *Develop a transportation network that respects the integrity of historical, natural, and residential environments.*
- *Encourage and maintain highway law enforcement patrols to control speeding.*
- *Preserve the scenic quality of Mendon's "back roads".*
- *Avoid or minimize fragmentation of identified forest blocks and wildlife connectors.*

ACTIONS

- *Implement strategies to improve traffic safety:*
    - *Encourage the State to reduce speed limits on U.S. Route 4 in the Commercial and Village Districts.*
    - *Expand traffic law enforcement throughout the Town.*
    - *Improve signage of road hazards in compliance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.*
    - *Conduct safety studies of high crash locations with the assistance of VTrans and RRPC and procure such improvements as may reduce crash potential.*
- *Implement Vermont Access Management Best Practices and develop an Access Master Plan for U.S. Route 4.*
- *Work with private landowners, both commercial and residential, to minimize "curb cuts" on U.S. Route 4 and other major town roads.*

- *Work with local partners to improve the overall status of the U.S. Route 4 corridor, such as improved parking at public trail heads and public transportation crossing points.*
- *Adopt "Codes and Standards" for road maintenance as promoted by VTrans and assure such "Codes and Standards" are updated as new recommendations are published.*
- *Include "Complete Streets" principles as part of town transportation projects to accommodate all modes of transportation.*
- *Develop a transportation capital improvement program that refines and advances the goals and actions of this Plan.*
- *Encourage efficient and sustainable modes of transportation by promoting and expanding public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and other transportation alternatives.*
- *Pursue alternative funding sources for improvements to alternative transportation.*
- *Continue to comply with the MRGP.*
    - *Develop an MRGP implementation plan.*
    - *Maintain culvert and road erosion inventories.*
    - *Pursue grant funding for road improvements through state programs such as the State Structures Program, the Class 2 Roadways Program, Grants in Aid and the Better Roads Program.*
- *Design roads, driveways, and utilities so as to avoid or minimize impacts on forests and wildlife.*
- *Continue participation in regional transportation planning through the Rutland Regional Transportation Council.*

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mendon is unique in Rutland County in that a major portion of its approximately 22,000 acres is devoted to the public welfare, with managed and/or conserved forest lands owned by the United States Forest Service, the State of Vermont Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation, and the City of Rutland. In addition, large portions of privately-owned forestland in Mendon are open to the public. As a result, Mendon is a critical resource for Rutland County as residents of many nearby towns hike, bike, ski, and snowmobile within Mendon's boundaries.

The Rutland City Forest lies within the town boundaries and provides a major portion of the water supply for the City of Rutland. The land has moderate to severe limitations for development because of either steep slopes, shallow depth to bedrock, very rocky soil, or extreme wetness. It is therefore essential that proper planning is undertaken prior to any proposed development. One example of potential development for the Rutland City Forest is the identification of portions of the area as a "preferred site" in Mendon's Enhanced Energy Plan. Identification of the site as a preferred site would comport with the long-standing critical goal of protecting viewsheds and the renewable energy goals set forth in a future

Enhanced Energy Plan but would be contingent upon negotiations with and approval by the City of Rutland.

GEOLOGY

Mendon is a rural mountain community with large portions of the town comprised of steep and high terrain, such as East Mountain, Mendon Peak, Killington Peak and Blue Ridge. These high elevations and steep slopes have thin soil over Cambrian and pre-Cambrian gneiss and schist. The portion of Mendon along Town Line Road as far east as the Village District sits upon the Mendon Moraine left over from the last glacial epoch. The portion of town served by Wheelerville Road consists of glacial eskers and outwash till which allowed some agriculture in the 19th century and currently supports a timber industry. In many areas of town, shallow soils and little depth to bedrock will limit excavation and sewage disposal.

TERRAIN AND SLOPE

The mountains and forests in Mendon serve as an important regional resource for watersheds, wildlife habitat, climactic barrier and recreation. Since many land uses, such as residential development, are dependent on slope and terrain, such uses should only be allowed with attention to environmental concerns. Natural habitat and compatibility with the landscape should be of primary concern to development in the town.

The steep slopes of East Mountain, Mendon Peak, Killington Peak and Blue Ridge define much of Mendon and as a result soils in town are generally thin. Elevations in the town range from 805 feet above sea level on Town Line Road to 4235 on the summit of Killington Peak.

SOILS

Mendon has scattered areas of prime agricultural, secondary and tertiary soils. These areas are considered by the Town to be irreplaceable resources. It is the intention of the Town to protect these lands and preserve the long-term viability of farmland and forestland. To the extent zoning permits, the Town will encourage cluster development Planned Unit Development (P.U.D) and Planned Residential Development (P.R.D) in order to preserve as much greenspace as possible. Other uses of forest and agricultural land that are compatible with this goal may also be allowed.

AGRICULTURE, FORESTS AND WILDLIFE

Vermont's Act 171 requires that municipalities and regions that are updating their town and regional plans to identify areas that are important as "forest blocks" and "habitat connectors" and plan for development in those areas to minimize forest fragmentation and promote the health, viability, and ecological function of forests. This is particularly relevant and important to Mendon.

Forest lands in Mendon support a timber industry, offer multiple forms of recreation, sustain a diverse wildlife population, provide drinking water for thousands and account for approximately 94% of Mendon's total land mass, with northern hardwoods predominating. Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF) currently occupies 3,030 acres, with that number potentially increasing (by 420 acres) once the Rolston Rest Project is transferred to GMNF care (Forest Service (FS) Acres on https://www.nbc.gov/pilt/counties.cfm). The State of Vermont has three state forests within Mendon town limits: Aitken State Forest (907 acres), Coolidge State Forest (3216 acres) and Jeffords State Forest (1349 acres) acres. Additionally, the City of Rutland owns 3736 acres of forest in Mendon that support Rutland City's principal watershed via Mendon Brook.

Considering the complexity of land ownership within Mendon's borders, a significant initial effort will be to identify forest conservation and habitat connectivity partners at the national and state levels as well as with the City of Rutland. Efforts to minimize fragmentation of forest blocks and habitat connectors will be evaluated and assessed for feasibility in coordination with the above-mentioned partners. Potential policies to be discussed can include that roads, driveways, and utilities be designed to avoid (or minimize) the fragmentation of identified forest blocks and wildlife connectors.

Mendon has an abundance of diverse wildlife. Deer, bear, moose, marten, porcupines and numerous other mammals as well as countless varieties of year-round and seasonal birds call Mendon home, including a robust wild turkey population. High elevations and relative isolation from human activity provide necessary critical habitat for this diverse range of wildlife. In additional, rare and endangered species of plants exist in Mendon in sites identified by the Vermont Non-Game and Natural Heritage Program.

The Mendon Forest and Wildlife Resources Map as well as the Mendon Habitat Blocks Map highlight where Mendon's rare natural communities occur. These maps can be found on pages 40 and 41. The Town encourages protection of all publicly owned lands to continue protection of our many animal and plant species.

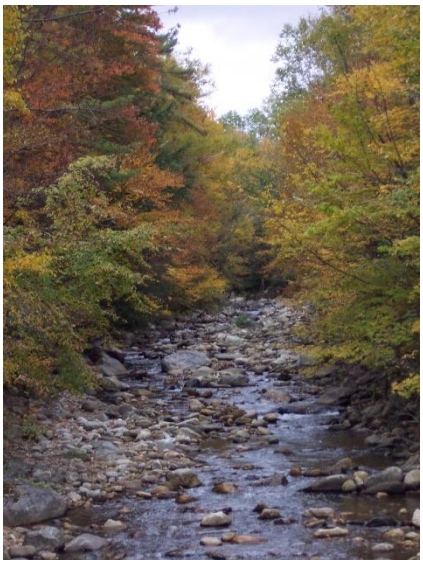
Agriculture in Mendon includes an apple orchard, sheep farming, commercial maple sugaring and small-scale farming. In addition, many residents pursue home vegetable gardening.

SEPTIC DISPOSAL

On-site sewage disposal is usually a soil absorption system consisting of a tank for holding, settling and microbial breakdown, and a distribution system (i.e. leach field) for the resulting effluent. Under ideal conditions the soil acts as a natural filter by absorbing and allowing further bacteriologic processing of that effluent. The characteristics of the soil (permeability, percolation rate, hydraulic conductivity, depth to season high water tables, flooding, slope and depth to bedrock or hardpan) are of major importance to the function of these absorption systems.

Much of the land in Mendon has severe limitations for on-site sewage disposal and these limitations must be addressed by proper engineering and construction. However, newer technology can facilitate development where traditional septic designs could not. Septic design and siting in Mendon are overseen by the State of Vermont.

WATER RESOURCES



Mendon Brook

The Town of Mendon lies principally within the Otter Creek watershed, with a small amount of its water going to the Ottauquechee River in Parker's Gore and a trivial amount of water to the White River. A significant portion of Mendon has seasonal high water tables of 0-4 feet and is therefore easily polluted. Ground water supplies throughout the Town vary but are considered moderate to substantial overall. Public water sources within Mendon Town borders include Mendon Brook which is a water source for the City of Rutland. These resources are identified on page 42 in the Mendon Water Resources Map.

STEEP SLOPES AND RIDGELINES

The suitability of land for development decreases on steep slopes where soils could be shallower and surface water runoff increases. When vegetation is removed for the construction of roads and buildings, the area for absorption of precipitation is reduced. In turn, the susceptibility to increased rates of runoff may result in excessive erosion. Slopes greater than 20% in steepness may present problems in complying with the Vermont Wastewater Regulations governing subdivisions. Serious limitations to steep slope development also include depth of soil and access for emergency and delivery vehicles. In addition, areas with high elevation and ridgelines present striking visual features and are a significant feature of what Mendon residents consider to be the town's unique landscape. Settlement in these areas may be extremely visible from other areas within Mendon and adjacent towns. The Town of Mendon considers it critically important to protect its viewsheds within the town.

Ridgelines also present significant land use development problems. At high elevations, ridgeline precipitation is greater, air and soil temperatures are lower, soils are shallower and lower in nutrients, slopes are steeper, wind speeds are higher and re-establishing vegetative cover is difficult and slow to replenish. In an effort to preserve and protect the ridgelines and steep slopes in the town, a Ridgeline Overlay District has been approved by town voters as part of the overall zoning amendments. To see the areas within the town that have been selected as significant ridgeline and steep slope areas, please refer to the Ridgeline District Overlay Map, referenced in the Mendon Zoning Regulations document.

GOALS

- Maintain Mendon's rural character, respect its wildlife, forests and public lands, and preserve its role in the greater Rutland community.
- Protect the high scenic quality of Mendon's viewsheds.
- Protect Mendon's rare, fragile and irreplaceable natural resources.

ACTIONS

- *Educate residents about the unique nature of Mendon's role in the larger Rutland community (forest lands, watersheds, etc.).*
- *Develop zoning regulations that recognize Mendon's mountains, ridgelines, steep slopes, shallow soils and unique viewsheds.*
- *Encourage private forest owners to allow public access for non-destructive activities.*
- *Evaluate methods that protect and/or enhance the quality of Mendon's water resources.*
- *Identify forest conservation and habitat connectivity partners.*
- *Discuss feasibility of maintaining or enhancing connectivity.*
- *Protect habitat blocks that contain important species, habitats, or natural communities.*
- *Evaluate how to design roads, driveways, and utilities to avoid (or minimize) the fragmentation of identified forest blocks and wildlife connectors.*

ENERGY

In 2018 Mendon ranked 14th in Rutland County for overall electric usage but 7th in per capita usage, suggesting that Mendon could improve its energy usage (Community Energy Dashboard 2018; see www.vtenergydashboard.org). The Town of Mendon is committed to doing its part to meet the State of Vermont's goals of reducing energy consumption through means that comply with the town's desire to maintain its rural character. Vermont State Statute 24 V.S.A. § 4382 (9) requires that municipal plans include an energy plan including, "an analysis of energy resources, needs, scarcities, costs and problems within the municipality, (and) a statement of policy on the conservation of energy …" This section addresses these components and includes a brief discussion on renewable energy.

ENERGY CONSUMPTION

Mendon residents annually consume energy in the following ways:

- *Residential heating– approximately 63% of residences heat with fuel oil, 18% with wood (totally or partially) and 16% with propane, in total consuming approximately 42B BTUs per year.*
- *Residential lighting – with the exception of a few remote residences that are off-the-grid, virtually all electricity in Mendon is supplied by Green Mountain Power. Mendon residences consume approximately 8.8M kWh per year.*
- *Mendon businesses consume approximately 18B BTUs per year for heating and approximately 3.4M kWh for lighting per year.*

- *Transportation – Mendon residents own approximately 850 vehicles driven an average of 12,000 miles per year, consuming approximately 540K gallons of fuel (at average 18 MPG) and burn 64B BTUs.*

(Source: Rutland Reginal Planning Commission)

These numbers highlight that the largest consumption of energy occurs through residential heating and transportation.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

In 2018 there were eighteen (18) domestic solar installations in Mendon, producing approximately 200 MWh of electricity.

Mendon would seem like an ideal location for wind generation due to its exposure to prevailing westerly winds, but its geography with extremely steep slopes, high ridgelines and mountain peaks largely precludes the opportunity for commercial or industrial wind generation. In addition, given the fact that over two-thirds of Mendon is in conserved forest lands held by the Unites States, the State of Vermont and the City of Rutland, there is little private land on which wind generation projects could be sited.

There is open area in Mendon where commercial solar projects could be sited, but such projects should be placed only where they do not interfere with Mendon's long stated goal of maintaining and enhancing its rural aesthetics, and any such proposed projects should not interfere in any way with view sheds from public roadways or private residences.

REDUCING CONSUMPTION

Weatherization of residences and businesses offers the opportunity to substantially reduce domestic and commercial heating costs and installation of LED lighting can significantly reduce the energy demand for residential and commercial lighting. Mendon residents and business owners can connect with Efficiency Vermont to have a business or home energy assessment done to learn where their properties have the biggest energy saving potential (Source: https://www.efficiencyvermont.com/services/energy-assessments). Per the 2013-2017 American Community Survey, approximately 63% of employed Mendon residents commute to work; fuel efficient vehicles, including hybrid and electric cars, and use of public transportation can reduce energy consumption for transportation. Increased domestic solar installation could help offset Mendon's energy consumption. Alternative heating and cooling systems such as air-source heat pumps and geothermal heat pumps offer potentially attractive options to reduce residential and commercial heating needs.

GOALS

- *Reduce Mendon's total energy consumption and the cost of consumption.*
- *Increase home solar generation.*

ACTIONS

- *Create a Mendon Energy Task Force to evaluate town's energy needs and potential.*
- *Develop an Enhanced Energy Plan.*
- *Assure town owned buildings and vehicles comply with state's energy goals if economically feasible.*
- *Consider obtaining grant for electric vehicle charging station at town's Park an*d Ride.
- *Adopt the use of the residential and commercial building energy standards by distributing code information to permit applicants and ensuring code compliance.*
- *Identify a compact center in the municipal plan and contact the Department of Housing and Community Development for assistance in applying for state designation.*
- *When feasible, consider applying for a Village Center Designation so that development in compact, mixed-use centers* is a priority.

FLOOD RESILIENCY

Route 4 damage after Tropical Storm Irene.

REGULATIONS

Flooding is the highest risk and most prevalent natural hazard identified in the Mendon Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. In recognition of this hazard, Mendon adopted a Flood Hazard Overlay District policy by town vote on March 2, 2010. This policy was codified in subsequent language inserted in Section 316 of the Town Zoning Regulations. The regulations were intended to ensure the design and construction of development in flood prone areas are accomplished in such a manner that minimizes or eliminates the potential for flood related damage to property or loss of life. Because of its topography, Mendon has no land areas that are prone to inundation but has large areas that are exposed to fluvial (stream or river) erosion with the potential for severe damage from flash flooding.

HISTORY OF FLOODING

Over the last twenty years, Mendon has experienced flooding in three federally declared disasters. Hurricane Floyd in 1999 caused significant damage to the Notch Road. A rain event in July 2013 washed out Wheelerville Road near bridge 15. However, nothing in Mendon's history compared to Tropical Storm Irene showering Mendon Peak with over 10 inches of rain.

On August 28, 2011, just eighteen months after the town adopted a Flood Hazard Overlay District policy, Tropical Storm Irene ravaged Mendon. Town residents and public officials were severely tested and highways, town roads and bridges were severely damaged. Mendon Brook, which runs alongside U. S. Route 4 and which collects water runoff through its tributaries on the flanks of Pico, Killington and Mendon peaks and East Mountain and Blue Ridge, jumped its banks in several locations. The raging water eroded and scoured hillsides and sent an uncountable number of trees and amount of debris downstream. Fortunately, no houses were damaged but sadly, two lives were lost at the Rutland City Water Intake on Meadowlake Drive.

There was extensive damage to U.S. Route 4 from Medway Road to Wheelerville Road. Municipal highways also experienced severe damage which included the Notch Road, Meadowlake Drive, Medway Road, Journeys End, Woodward Road, Cream Hill Road, Old Turnpike Road, and Wheelerville Road. Damage to municipal infrastructure exceeded $2 million dollars. Significant risk mitigation to Wheelerville Road bridges had been accomplished prior to Irene. It is notable that while Wheelerville Road itself sustained extensive damage to its roadbed, structures that were modernly engineered remained in place. Because U.S. Route 4 was also heavily damaged in nearby Killington and Vermont State Highway 100 was severely damaged in Pittsfield to the north and Plymouth to the south, much of Mendon was cut off from the outside world. The area was commonly referred to as "The Island". Electricity and telecommunications were unavailable on the "Island," but were restored quickly after the storm by Central Vermont Public Service (now Green Mountain Power). The Woodward Road area experienced the greatest power outage lasting five days. The Alpine Pipeline that serves all of Route 4 in Mendon was destroyed in multiple locations and was also restored relatively quickly.

The Town rallied during this crisis, using the Town Office as the Incident Command Center overseeing the recovery effort. Relying on the expertise and commitment of Casella Construction Inc., The Belden Company, and Markowski Excavating, the State of Vermont oversaw reconstruction of U.S. Route 4 and the Mendon Town Highway Department oversaw reconstruction of Wheelerville and Woodward Roads. Shortly after the storm a half mile footpath between Journeys End and Helvi Hill Road was discovered as a way around the unpassable damage to US Route 4. The Mendon emergency management team stepped in to manage the safe transportation of people and supplies along the path. Loads of mulch were spread to create a surface to travel on. Donated ATV's from Hendees and local residents and golf carts from the Green Mountain Golf Course were brought in to help transport people and supplies. Portable toilets and information tables were placed at either side of the path. Over 250 volunteers consisting of residents and neighbors managed this alternative access to the "Island." Over the course of the disruption, an estimated 15,000 people, including a regular contingent of Barstow School students, used this "Woodchip Parkway." Incredibly, just eighteen days after the storm struck, U.S. Route 4 was reopened and the long-term recovery process began.

Casella Construction rebuilding Wheelerville Road after Tropical Storm Irene.

The hard work of Mendon Town Office staff, the Select Board, the Town Highway Department and public safety officials, as well as uncountable numbers of local residents allowed Mendon to regain a sense of normalcy in a remarkably short period of time. Ultimately the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursed the Town for a large portion of the reconstruction costs from 28 construction projects.

RESPONSE

While Mendon has endured flooding in the past, no living resident had experienced anything like Tropical Storm Irene. As there is broad consensus among climate scientists that storms such as Irene may become more common, less predictable and more severe, it behooves the Town to continue to plan for and anticipate flooding in the future.

The State has established an incentive program to encourage community flood resiliency – the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF). Communities that take specific steps to reduce flood damage will benefit financially during recovery from a federally declared disaster. The steps include:

1. *Adoption of the most recent VTrans Town Road and Bridge Standards;*
2. *Participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP);*
3. *Annual adoption of a Local Emergency Management Plan;*
4. *Adoption of a FEMA-approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plan; and*
5. *Adopt River Corridor Bylaws OR Participate in FEMA's Community Rating System.*

Mendon has completed steps 1 through 4 and as a result is eligible to receive 12.5% of project costs from the State in addition to the 75% of project costs from FEMA's Public Assistance Program. If the Town were to successfully adopt River Corridor Bylaws, they would become eligible to receive 17.5% ERAF funding.

The Mendon Select Board adopts Town Road and Bridge Standards annually.

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) within FEMA was created to address losses from flooding. Flood insurance rates are based on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) or Digital Flood Insurance Maps (DFIRMs), which delineate areas prone to flooding. These areas are identified as having a 1% chance of flooding (or a one hundred-year flood). Mendon enrolled in the NFIP in 1985.

Since flood damage can occur outside of these federally mapped flood areas, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) has developed a River Corridor and Floodplain Management Program for those areas subject to fluvial erosion. Mapping of Mendon done by the ANR demonstrates the flood potential of Brewer Brook, Mendon Brook, Eddy Brook, and the North Branch of the Cold River (see the Water Resources Map found on page 38).

As described previously, in the Emergency Management section of this Plan, Mendon annually adopts a Local Emergency Management Plan and has a FEMA-approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, dated 2017. For more information about Mendon's flood resiliency measures, refer to the town's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

GOALS

- *Protect Mendon citizens and their property, the town's infrastructure (i.e. roads, bridges, etc.,), important regional resources (i.e. the Alpine Pipeline, telecommunications, watersheds, etc.,), and the town's natural resources from significant flooding.*
- *Ensure Mendon is able to recover quickly from flooding events.*
- *Explore ways to improve Mendon's resilience to flooding.*

ACTIONS

- *Work with regional (e.g. RRPC) and state entities (e.g. ANR, VTrans) to help ground-truth the river corridor mapping and locate areas most prone to fluvial erosion, specifically U.S Route 4 and Wheelerville Road.*
- *Restrict development in mapped areas subject to fluvial erosion by adopting River Corridor Bylaws.*
- *Develop zoning regulations that maintain wetland areas in the Wheelerville District.*
- *Minimize the amount of impervious surfaces in town by utilizing Low Impact Development principles (LID) to increase storm water retention and infiltration.*
- *Maintain the integrity of Mendon roadways in flood prone areas by complying with the town's adopted Road and Bridge Standards.*
- *Develop and implement a communication system to keep Mendon residents informed and up to date about flood related issues.*

FUTURE LAND USE

RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

Preservation of open space and maintaining the rural character of these areas is strongly desired. Development should take place in such a manner that natural areas and resources including viewsheds from public highways and private residences shall be protected.

The purpose of Residential Districts is to designate housing areas and promote various types of housing that will not exceed the physical capabilities of the land or the availability of community facilities and services. In order to enhance and maintain the rural nature of Mendon, Planned Residential Developments (PRD's) are encouraged. Density incentives for PRD's with multi-family dwellings will promote the preservation of woodlands and incorporation of recreational activities within the project area. The same type of development is also encouraged in other districts where commercial and industrial activity is permitted.

Residential building lots will be compatible with the developmental capability of the land. The property owner will have the responsibility for demonstrating the required capability prior to subdivision or development.

COMMERCIAL AND VILLAGE DISTRICTS

The purpose of the Commercial District is to designate areas for commercial uses to serve the needs of both residents and visitors and to enhance opportunities for economic development. Shopping, service, and lodging facilities are an asset to the town. The character and aesthetics of the town should be preserved and enhanced by the provision of suitable structures, landscaping and screening. Planned Unit Developments (PUD's) and Planned Residential Developments (PRD's) are encouraged in the Commercial and Village Districts.

A Village Center Designation is a tool used to protect and enhance the characteristics of the areas that are valued by the community. The designation can improve Mendon's vitality and livability by supporting the goals of this plan, including those regarding land use. The designation can be achieved by applying through the State Department of Housing and Community Development. The potential Village Center Designation area is depicted on the Future Land Use Map found on page 43.

FLOOD HAZARD OVERLAY DISTRICT

The purpose of this district is to raise awareness of properties that may lie within a floodplain and minimize future losses of life or property due to flooding. Flood mapping is available on the State of Vermont's website at anrmaps.vermont.gov or FEMA's website at msc.fema.gov/portal/home. Currently, the town's flood hazard overlay district language does not include language related to river corridor or floodplain protection bylaws that meet or exceed the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Fluvial Erosion Hazard (FEH) model regulations.

CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

The purpose of these districts is to protect those lands which have steep slopes, shallow soils and fragile or limited vegetation and which provide significant recharge of the ground and surface water supplies of the town and region. They will also protect, as a natural resource, those lands which are essentially unsuitable for development and which are important for wildlife habitat or have high potential for commercial forestry use. There are two conservation districts.

The Conservation I District includes Coolidge State Forest, Aitken State Forest, Jeffords State Forest, private lands in Parkers Gore, any other state-owned or federally-owned lands (such as Green Mountain National Forest) in Mendon, and lands north of U.S. Route 4 which are above the elevation of 2,500 feet.

The Conservation II District is an area along U.S. Route 4 which is generally unsuitable for development due to steep slopes, unstable soils, flood plains, and traffic problems.

These two districts encourage wildlife habitat, forestry, agriculture, limited commercial recreation, noncommercial recreation, and limited single family residential in order not to increase the town's need to provide facilities and services.

Highland conservation areas include those lands of 2500 feet or above. Upland conservation areas include lands from 2000 feet to 2499 feet. Forest reserves include lands that belong to the City of Rutland, State of Vermont, or the federal government, and those lands which are unsuitable for development. In the

city forest area snowmaking ponds should be allowed, as well as solar energy generation sites so long as they do not negatively impact viewsheds or water quality.

SKI DISTRICT

The Ski District is remote mountainous land in the eastern part of Parkers' Gore. The purpose of this district is to allow commercial ski area development in portions of the town that are adjacent to those areas already developed for skiing in the Town of Killington. These areas are particularly well suited for skiing due to high elevation and their proximity to existing ski development.

Carefully planned commercial ski development should be allowed in this district provided there is ample opportunity for public feedback, and the services that the town provides should be limited because of the remoteness of the area in relation to the other developed portions of Mendon.

GOALS

- *Make available all public forest lands within the town for recreational use.*
- *Preserve and protect the town's steep slopes and ridgelines and the high scenic quality of its viewsheds.*
- *Enhance and maintain the town's distinctly rural nature – while protecting existing cultural, historic, and natural resources – of Mendon and simultaneously encourage strategic development needs.*
- *Strictly limit development that has an undue adverse impact on view-shed scenic resources.*

ACTIONS

- *In the elevation range from 2,000 feet to 2499 feet, only allow land uses which do not require additional town facilities.*
- *No development should be permitted for elevations above 2500 feet other than limited single family residences or seasonal camps on large lots where the topography and soils will allow.*
- *Allow carefully planned ski area development in the Ski District at any elevation.*
- *Allow single family residences and seasonal camps on large lots where the topography and soils permit.*
- *Research and apply for a Village Center Designation.*
- *Continue working with the City of Rutland regarding identifying portions of the Rutland City Forest as a renewable energy generating preferred site in a future Enhanced Energy Plan.*

STATUTORY BACKGROUND

The Mendon Town Plan is the official policy of the community. It is designed to provide a clear, written standard for orderly development, such that development will not have an undue adverse effect on aesthetics, and such that the town's distinctly rural character and its scenic viewsheds are protected and preserved. Adoption of the Plan provides the legal foundation for the town to establish growth and development regulations. It is intended that the Plan be used in a positive manner as a tool in guiding the direction of growth and development in a way which is both economically feasible and environmentally acceptable.

The Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act (the Act) guides the preparation of town plans and includes required and suggested elements and adoption procedures. The Act, 24 VSA §4382(a), requires that all plans contain twelve elements: a statement of objectives, policies, and programs; a land use plan; a transportation plan; a utility and facilities plan; a statement of policies on the preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas; an educational facilities plan; an implementation program; a statement indicating how the plan relates to development trends in adjacent communities; an energy plan; a housing element; an economic development element; and a flood resilience element. In addition to containing all the required elements, plans must also be consistent with a series of statutory goals listed in 24 VSA §4302. Consistency with the goals means that the goals have been considered and addressed in the process used to prepare the plan, not that the plan include all the goals.

IMPLEMENTATION

As a policy document, the plan provides the legal as well as the conceptual basis for all land use control. There are many ways to implement the goals and action items of this town plan. These fall into two general categories: regulatory and non-regulatory options. Regulatory options include: zoning and subdivision bylaws, flood hazard area regulations, and official maps. Nonregulatory implementation options include but are not limited to a local hazard mitigation plan, a capital budget program, and advisory commissions. Since the bylaws are intended to implement the plan, their content should reflect the findings, recommendations, and policy statements embodied in the plan.

The first step towards implementation of a town plan is its adoption as public policy. As required by the Vermont Planning and Development Act, the Planning Commission shall hold at least one public hearing on the proposed plan. The Planning Commission must then make any necessary revisions and submit the proposed plan to the Select Board. Under the Act the Select Board shall hold one or more public hearings (towns with populations over 2,500 require two public hearings) on the proposed plan. After the final public hearing the plan may be adopted by the Select Board, or if substantial changes are made, may be sent back to the Planning Commission. The plan should then obtain Town Plan Approval and Confirmation of Town Planning Process by the Regional Planning Commission in accordance with §4350 of the Act. Town plans expire eight years from the date of adoption. Because town planning is a flexible, continuing and long-range process, the plan should be reviewed from time to time and be amended in light of changes affecting the municipality.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation at the June 2018 Mendon Town Potluck.

Throughout the review and writing of this town plan, there was coordination and interaction between the Mendon Planning Commission, the public, the Select Board, and the Rutland Regional Planning Commission. Participation occurred at the regularly held Planning Commission meetings as well as at designated Select Board meetings, both of which welcomed public involvement. Public involvement was most directly received through a survey given at the 2018 March Town Meeting and at the Town Potluck on June 9, 2018, hosted by the Mendon Planning Commission, the Mendon Select Board, the Mendon Historical Society, and the Mendon Economic Development Committee. The survey solicited feedback on items such as preferred types of new businesses, what it is that the townspeople love about Mendon, and what about the town they feel could be improved. Popular responses for new businesses included repurposing of the unused hotels along Route 4, new restaurants, businesses geared toward recreational activities, and country store-type businesses. The aspects of what people love about Mendon varied but commonly answered were the natural environment of the town, proximity to nature, and appreciation for the townspeople they share it with. Again when it came to what people would like to see improved, there were multiple comments regarding the unused hotels along Route 4 as well as opportunities to connect with their community- either through community events, better distribution of information so people are informed on what opportunities to connect exist, or businesses that facilitate social interaction (example being a café).

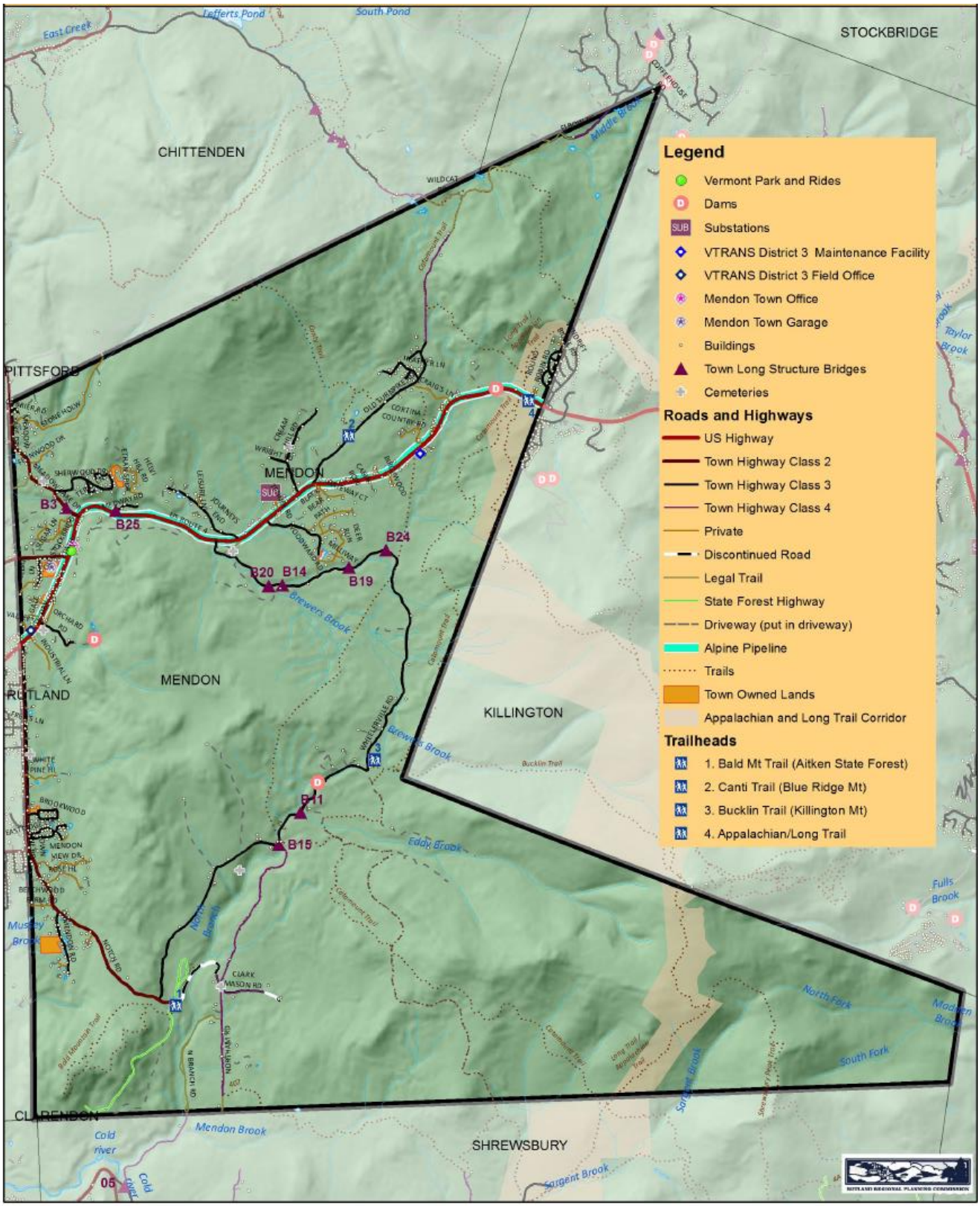
REGIONAL COORDINATION

Mendon is part of Rutland County and the relationship between this Plan and the development trends in the area and plans for the surrounding communities have been considered during the planning process. Towns adjacent to Mendon include: Killington, Shrewsbury, Rutland Town, and Chittenden. Review of the Rutland Regional Plan also indicates that the Mendon Town Plan is consistent with the Regional Plan, adopted in 2018, which supports an overall vision of a region that supports a strong sense of community, responsible management and stewardship of natural resources, and economic development which reflects the town's character. Mendon continues to have community representatives serve on regional committees such as the Regional Planning Commission and the Rutland Region Transportation Council.

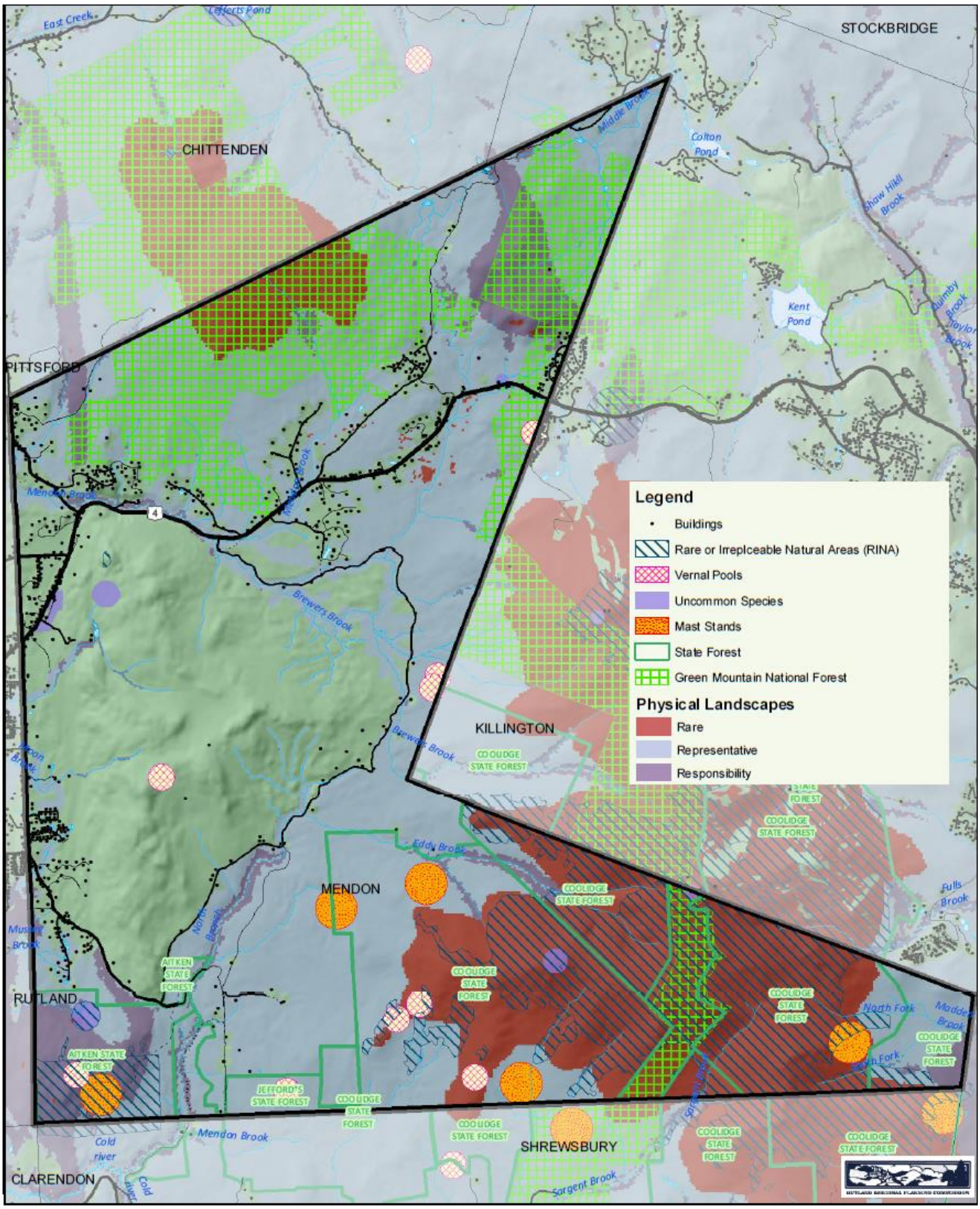
MAPS

- *Education, Transportation, and Community Facilities*
- *Forest and Wildlife Resources*
- *Habitat Blocks*
- *Water Resources*
- *Future Land Use*

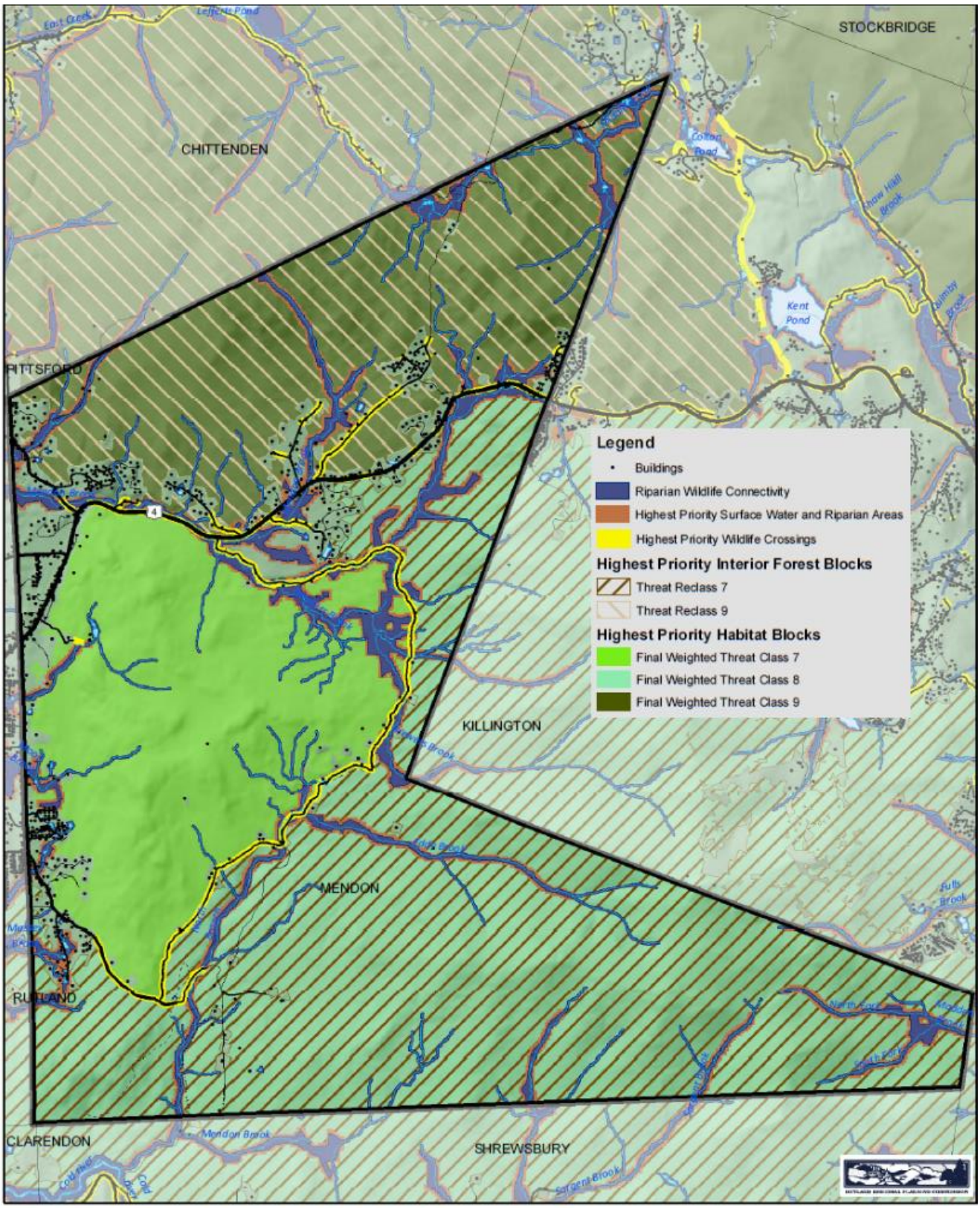
EDUCATION, TRANSPORTATION, AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES



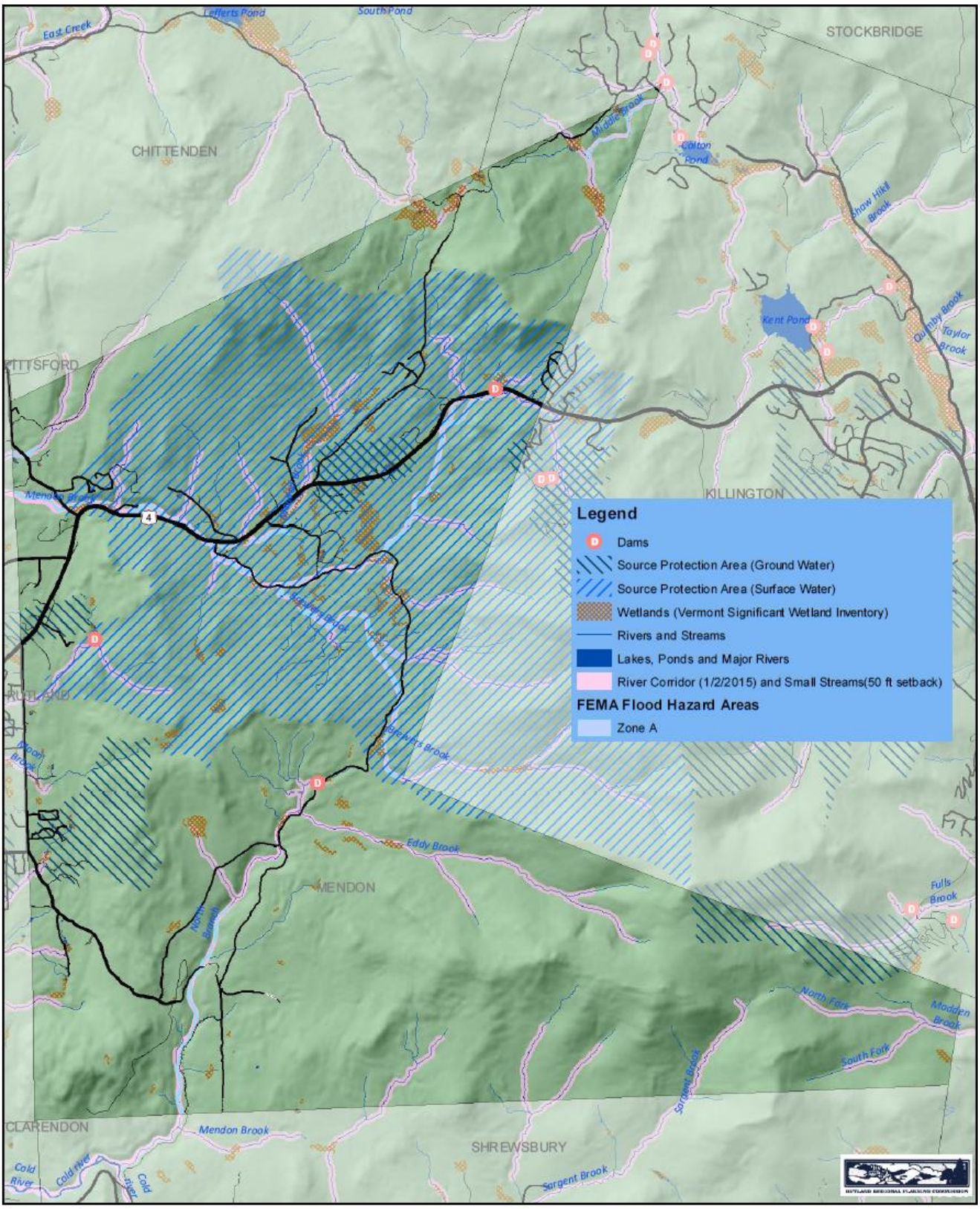
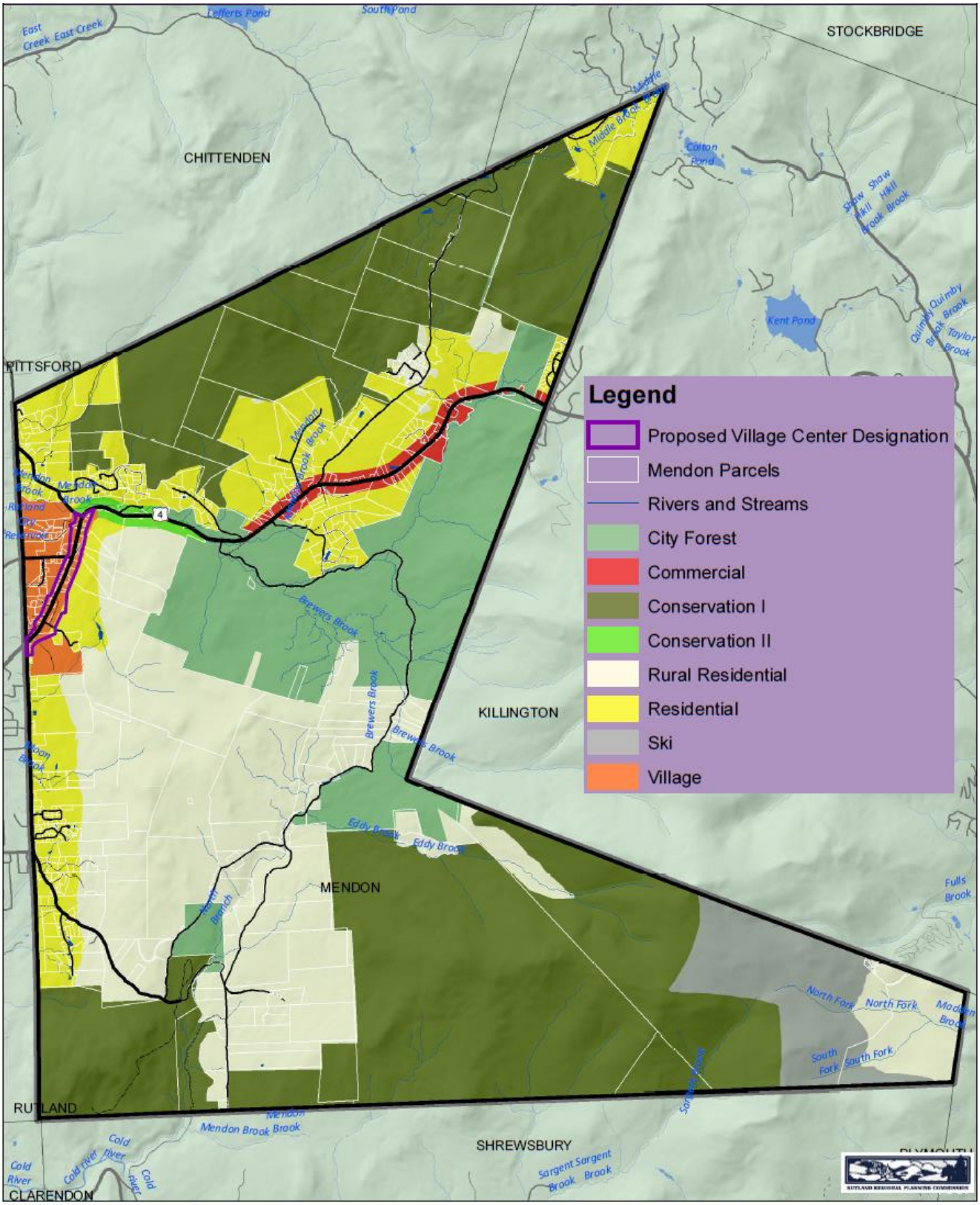
FOREST AND WILDLIFE RESOURCES



HABITAT BLOCKS



WATER RESOURCES



FUTURE LAND USE