

PEACHAM TOWN PLAN
Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow
Adopted June 15, 2005

DEDICATION

This plan is dedicated to all those who work within town government dealing with the daily struggle and increasing complexities of modern life, and to those volunteers who read quietly with a child, who make it possible for us to recycle our trash, who wear beepers to be called to a fire. It is these local citizens who make Peacham such a special place to live, who offer so much to this small rural community, and to them we are deeply grateful.

Peacham Planning Commission

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would also like to acknowledge the Northeastern Vermont Development Association for its assistance in the preparation of maps and for other advice, and the Department of Housing and Community Affairs of the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development for a Municipal Planning Grant in support of the production of village surveys, new town maps, village planning and costs associated with public meetings.

In addition, several individuals and organizations have spent many hours discussing the plan revision and offering specific suggestions to the Planning Commission. The Commission appreciates these efforts and the list of people that have been involved is too long to include here. These include people who responded to our 2003 survey of planning issues, attendees at several village and town-wide meetings on the plan, and those who have drafted portions of the plan for our consideration.

Special thanks go to Bobbie Smith who again has provided her excellent word processing skills and has been so patient in accommodating various changes, and to David Brown who volunteered to edit the final draft of the revised plan for the Commission.

Note: Peacham Village and Peacham Corner are used interchangeably in the Town Plan.

PLAN'S INTENT

The plan is intended to provide basic guidelines and an overall vision for the future of the community. It is comprehensive and addresses many issues facing the Town today. Each section contains background information, often a vision statement, a list of the current issues and needs, and recommended actions to address these needs.

A town plan sets forth the vision of the community in the future. It is a non-regulatory document that establishes the goals and policies of the town in broad terms. It also serves as the basis for local zoning and subdivision regulation. The primary purposes of the plan are to provide background on our people, landscape, and institutions, to document those things we value, and to provide both a blueprint and policy vehicle to help Peacham achieve its vision. Methods of implementation of the plan go beyond constructing zoning and subdivision ordinances. Plan implementation, like the town itself, will forever be a work in progress. The strategies for implementation within this plan simply illustrate some of the many and diverse ways we can continue to work together toward our common goals.

A major influence on the Town Plan has been the results of a planning survey carried out in 2003 as a first step in the plan revision process. Over fifty individuals took the time to complete the survey and here are some of their responses.

Q. What do you like best about Peacham?

A. Overwhelmingly, people said: the people and the rural setting, farmland in use as farmland, Amy view, privacy and part of a great community, "peaceful beauty," sense of community, excellent school, friends, farms, views and scenery.

Q. What would you like to see improved?

B. Among the many suggestions: Traffic control in Peacham Village, more equitable relationship between property taxes and cost of education, Tax protection for farmers, Keep things the way they are, Public discourse with civility and fairness, Parking at the Town Clerk's office, Zoning restrictions to protect the natural beauty, Dust control on Macks Mountain Road, More dump hours.

Q. What are the biggest challenges facing Peacham?

C. Responses included: Taxes and excessive school costs, Maintaining its character and traditional agricultural base, Retaining and attracting families, Protecting property rights, Land preservation, Funding education; keeping land in viable farms, concerted and positive attitude toward its schools, Maintaining a dynamic community with citizens of mixed economic resources, Making affordable housing available.

Finally, a range of personal suggestions were made to the Planning Commission regarding road maintenance and improvements, municipal facilities, affordable housing, outdoor recreation, agricultural land protection, the protection of private development rights, historic and cultural resources, forest and wildlife management, and other areas of interest.

The obvious pride that these residents reflect in their response to the survey demonstrates a love and commitment that override the variety of often-conflicting goals and priorities that every community wrestles with. The revised plan tries to provide a common ground, help suggest priorities that will lead to the greatest good for the greatest number, and address issues that

deserve attention. Copies of the Town Planning Survey Results are available from the Planning Commission.

STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS

According to Title 24, Chapter 117 ' 4382 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated, a plan for a municipality shall include ten specific elements. The following summarizes the state requirements and identifies the location of each element in the plan:

#	Required Plan Element	Plan Page Location
1	Statement of objectives, policies and programs to guide the future growth and development of land, public services and facilities, and to protect the environment.	Vision, p. 1 Goals, p. 2 Programs and policies, throughout by section
2	A land use plan, consisting of a map and statement of present and prospective land uses, indicating those areas proposed for forests, recreation, agriculture, residence, commerce, industry, etc.	Land use map, Supplement
3	A transportation plan, consisting of a map and statement of present and prospective transportation facilities.	Transportation, p. 39 Town base map, Supplement
4	Utility and facility plan, consisting of a map and statement of present and prospective community facilities and public utilities (education, recreation, fire stations, etc.)	Town base map
5	A statement on policies on the preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas, scenic and historic features and resources.	Natural areas overlay and sections on natural areas, Supplement historic/ cultural resources, p. 40
6	An educational facilities plan consisting of a map and statement of uses and the local public school system.	Town base map and education section, p. 43
7	A recommended program for the implementation of plan objectives.	Individual sections throughout the plan
8	Statement indicating how the plan relates to development trends and plans for adjacent municipalities, areas, and the region.	Plan is reviewed by NVDA and incorporates reference where found appropriate.
9	An energy plan, including an analysis of energy resources, needs cost and problems within the municipality, a statement on energy conservation and policies on patterns and density of land use to result in energy conservation.	Energy section, p. 37
10	A housing program for addressing low and moderate income persons' housing needs as identified by the NVDA.	Housing section, p. 53

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A VISION OF PEACHAM IN THE FUTURE

Peacham in the future will look much as it does today - a small scale, rural community that supports the New England traditions of farmers working the land, sap being boiled to maple sugar, a parent taking a child hunting, the democratic forum of town meeting, gravel roads lined by maple trees. The way of life is still deliberate, relaxed, and rural.

Peacham continues to be a special place. A mixture of landscapes and a diverse population contribute to its unique character. Preserving working dairy and other types of farming are a top priority for the community, as is improved management of forest lands through individual initiative. Recreation is available through the Groton State Forest, various trails, and town facilities. The special and unique places in town are protected through a variety of methods.

Housing choices are available for all income levels. Educational opportunities exist for both children and adults. Peacham residents continue to be active in town government, and to meet challenges as they strive for greater efficiency in the provision of town services. As issues have become more complex, the residents contribute even more volunteer time. This tradition is important to maintain the democratic way of life.

"By the end of World War II, the majority of Vermonters had never plowed a field or run their hands down the smooth, glossy flanks of their own cows. Yet, Vermont's sense of itself remained tied to the hard-won nature of its farming, the gift of community agriculture bequeathed to the state, and the beauty of lush valley fields ringed by the dark green of the mountains. If we want to understand where Vermont has been in the past few decades and where we want it to go in the future, the place to start is still in the rock-ribbed fields where generations of men and women have put their hands on the land."

Jan Albers, *Hands on the Land, A History of the Vermont Landscape*, published for the Orton Family Foundation by M.I.T. Press, 2000

STATEMENT OF PLANNING GOALS

1. Maintain the scale, the traditions, and the rural character of Peacham. Preserve those rural, pastoral qualities of agriculture, forests and settlement patterns which make Peacham an attractive community in which to live, work, and raise a family.
2. Promote family-owned agricultural enterprises essential to the overall town objectives of preserving open space, scenic qualities, and the rural flavor while improving wildlife, forest, water, and agricultural land management. Encourage small-scale farming and home occupations.
3. Preserve unique natural areas and ecosystems that make up Peacham's diverse and scenic landscape. Discourage development on agricultural lands, hilltops, and environmentally sensitive areas. Encourage environmentally responsible land use. Work toward the elimination of private illegal disposal sites and discourage environmentally damaging ATV activity.
4. Preserve important historic and cultural resources for future generations to enjoy.
5. Maintain opportunities for recreational activities. Protect the habitats that provide for hunting, fishing, berry-picking, hiking, and outdoor interests.
6. Address traffic problems throughout the Town.
7. Provide an environment to encourage a variety of housing units to be available for all income levels with an emphasis on rehabilitating existing structures.
8. Provide public services (e.g. roads, solid waste disposal, schools) while recognizing the limitations of the property tax system. The negative impact high taxes have on the viability of agriculture and on maintaining a community open to all levels of income must also be considered.
9. Continue to provide excellent educational opportunities for all ages.
10. provide an environment that encourages safe and affordable child care.

PEACHAM: A BRIEF HISTORY

In 1763 Governor Benning Wentworth of New Hampshire gave a charter for the Town of Peacham to a group of proprietors. He also gave Peacham its name. The proprietors were speculators whose main role was to survey the town, sell lots, and lay out roads. In 1775, settlers, primarily from Connecticut and Massachusetts, bought the lots, built dwellings and developed the land. Crops, including wheat, grew abundantly in the fertile soil. Nine years later, records show about 200 people in town.

The first recorded town meeting took place in 1784. Selectmen were duly elected to govern the affairs of the town. According to local tradition, as early as 1795 scholars studied in a log structure on the Bayley-Hazen Road, half way between the Corner and Water Street (South Peacham). In 1795 Caledonia County Grammar School received its charter. In 1799, a library was established. (See P. 51).

A group of men established the Congregational Church in 1794. James Bayley organized a Free Will Baptist Church and served as its minister. It disbanded in 1819. Yet another group began the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1831 and built a chapel in 1832. Because of declining membership, the Methodists closed the church. The building later became the Academy gym and is currently the Town Hall.

The early farmers traded butter, eggs, and wheat for goods which they could not make at home. The distillation of whiskey produced a cash crop for distant markets, as did the making of potash. From 1800 to 1830, sheep farming flourished and, in 1840, the town reached its greatest population, 1,443. From that date, census numbers steadily declined. (See the following population chart developed from data provided by the Center for Rural Studies, University of Vermont). Farming methods changed and dairying became predominant. Even the labor-intensive farms of the late 1800's could not accommodate all members of the large families. Over the years Peacham had sent teachers and missionaries to distant parts. Now young men and women went to the mills in Massachusetts and New Hampshire or, especially after the discovery of gold in California, they trekked west to seek their fortunes.

Almost from the beginning various trades and industries - as many as 30 - 35 at a given time - flourished in Peacham. Lumbering, coopering, milling, butter making, tin ware, tanneries and leather goods provided goods for local consumption. Today, carpenters, small contractors, and builders continue a long tradition, while local crafters, artisans, and artists prepare their wares for the tourist market.

Tourism became important during the 1900's as people opened their homes to visitors from away.® With the advent of the railroad in Barnet and then motor vehicles, Peacham became a popular location for summer residents, some of whom were educators from Boston and New York. Their interest and stimulation enhanced the cultural interests of the town.

We find a few dairy, beef, and sheep farms in the 2000's. Peacham serves as a bedroom community for many who work in St. Johnsbury - some commute to Hanover, Montpelier, and Burlington. Wide-spread computer use has enabled many residents to work in their homes or telecommute with their businesses and clients.

Demographic Information for Peacham

Population, 2000

Categories	Peacham,	Peacham, %	Caledonia	Vermont, %
Total	665	100.0%		
Male Population, 2000	331	49.8%		
Female Population, 2000	334	50.2%		
Under Age 5	25	3.8%	5.5%	5.6%
Under Age 18	184	27.7%	25.3%	24.2%
Under Age 24	215	32.3%	34.1%	33.5%
Between Ages 25 and 44	132	19.8%	26.3%	29.0%
Between Ages 45 and 64	216	32.5%	25.3%	24.8%
Age 65 and Older	102	15.3%	14.4%	12.7%
Median Age	43.0		38.5	37.7

Selected Housing Data, 2000

Categories	Peacham, Total	% Distribution	Caledonia County, % Distribution	Vermont, % Distribution
House Ownership Rate		84.8%	72.9%	70.6%
Family Household with		36.9 %	32.4 %	31.8 %
Female Household with no Husband		9.1%	10.4 %	9.3 %
Total Housing Units	503	100%		
Occupied	263	5.3%	80.4%	81.7%
Owner Occupied	223	44.3%		
Renter Occupied	40	8.0%		
Seasonal	224	44.5%	13.8%	14.6%
Houses, Year Built	Peacham	%	%,Vermont	%,U.S.
1990-2000	80	15.5		17.0
1980-1989	118	22.8		15.8
1970-1979	45	8.7		18.5
1960-1969	28	5.4		13.7
Before 1960	246	47.6		35.0
Units with 6 Rooms or more	248	48.0		46.4
	Peacham	Caledonia County	Vermont	
Persons Per Square Mile	14.7	45.7	65.8	

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Educational Attainment of Population 25 Years Old and Older

	Peacham	% Distribution	Caledonia County, % Distribution	Vermont, % Distribution
High School Diploma or Greater	421	91.3	82.6	86.4
Bachelors Degree or Greater	242	52.5	22.5	29.4
Per Capita Income	\$19,808		\$16,976	\$20,625

Other Economic Data, 2000

Employment	
In labor force	342
Not in labor force	161
Males in labor force	173 (73.9% of men age 25 or over)
Females in labor force	169 (62.8% of females age 25 or over)
Total No. of workers, age 16 or older	325
Work at home	56 (17.2%)
Family Income	
Total Families	186
Less than \$25,000	45 (24.2%)
\$25,000 to \$49,999	45 (24.2%)
\$50,000 to \$74,999	51 (27.4%)
\$75,000 to \$99,999	26 (14.0%)
Over \$100,000	19 (10.2%)
Median Family Income	\$50,938

Source: US Census

NOTE: Additional data at Town Clerks Office.

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LAND RESOURCES

The Land Resources section of this plan provides insight into the town's stated vision for future growth and land use development.

LAND USE

Physical Characteristics

Peacham lies in the geographic region known as the Piedmont. This area is characterized by glacial uplands with hilly terrain and the absence of true mountains. The town land formations are the result of ancient uplifting of geologic plates and the subsequent wearing down and erosion through time. The last advance of ice, known as the Shelburne drift, occurred during the Wisconsin glacial period approximately 12,000 years ago, and gave the region the last major change in land forms. At that time, the parent material for the present day soils was laid down by the churning action of the retreating glacier. Since this glacial epoch, the formation of specific drainage patterns, soil formation processes, and ultimately the development of plant and animal life formed pre-settlement Peacham. The advent of white settlers and the clearing of forest land for agricultural purposes shifted the predominantly forest ecosystem to one of nearly all cleared land in many areas. Today, many of the marginal farm areas have reverted back to forest cover.

The Town of Peacham contains approximately 30,000 acres of land. As illustrated on the land use map in Appendix #2, the town is primarily made up of six types of land and/or water: forests, agricultural, open non-agricultural, developed residential, ponds, and wetlands.

Forests:	23,365 acres	78.0%
Agricultural:*	2,879 acres	9.6%
Open Non-Agricultural:	1,395 acres	4.7%
Developed Residential:	627 acres	2.1%
Wetlands:	1,066 acres	3.6%
Ponds:	636 acres	2.1%

* 2,574 acres of the agricultural lands are part of the agricultural overlay

Topographic elevations range from the peak of Cow Hill at 2,566 feet to a low of 888 feet (msl) along the eastern edge in the Peacham Hollow Brook. Peacham has the distinction of containing an important watershed divide. The range of hills starting with Cow Hill to the north and continuing southward including Mack's Mountain, Lookout Mountain, Morse Mountain, Devil's Hill, and Jennision Mountain direct drainage on the west side primarily to the Winooski River and ultimately Lake Champlain. Drainage on the eastern slopes of these hills winds its way to the Connecticut River.

These hills have had a strong influence on the town's development. Population centers, agricultural, and business activity occupy the eastern half. Development in the west remains minimal except for occasional houses and the recreational and seasonal use of shorelands, forests, and mountains.

Groton State Forest and other land and water areas

The Groton State Forest includes 7,122 acres of land and water or about 23% of the Town of Peacham and represents a major natural resource that provides nearby opportunities for hiking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, swimming, and fishing, among other activities. Administered by Vermont's Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, the State Forest is actively managed and, currently, is undergoing a management plan revision.

During 2004, an extensive assessment of the natural communities, archeological and historic sites, timber stands, wildlife and other resources are being made. In 2005, management guidelines and a draft plan for the Forest will be available for review and comment.

Further, the State Forest provides payments in lieu of taxes to the Town of Peacham that amounted to \$9,214.20 for DFPR and \$1,811.00 for Fish and Wildlife Access in FY 2003. These payments to towns included in the State Forest are being reviewed by the State and discussions will likely result between Peacham officials and the DFPR.

Town zoning in the Forest is RR-2, Rural Reserve, and the relationship of the zoning ordinance to the State Forest needs to be examined. It would seem that the State's lands are outside Peacham's direct jurisdiction, but there are some Peacham lands that are in-holdings in the State Forest.

Because of the important resources shared with the State Forest, it is important that Peacham participate actively in the State Forest Plan process. Improving access to State Forest lands, advising on types of recreational use Peacham residents enjoy in the Forest, and enhancing Peacham residents' knowledge of the Forest and its resources are all important. Not only should the planning and conservation commissions maintain an active interest in the State Forest, but the planning commission should appoint a subcommittee to serve specifically as a watchdog for the Town on the Groton State Forest.

Other public lands in town comprise another 479 acres. The balance of the western area is largely privately owned forest land. A limited amount of land in this area is in agricultural production. Peacham has, partially or wholly within its borders, eight lakes and ponds. Peacham Pond (341 acres), bordering on Groton State Forest has extensive cottage development on about a third of its shoreline. Martin's Pond (73 acres) has extensive cottage development on half of its shoreline, with Groton State Forest accounting for much of the remaining undeveloped area. Osmore Pond (51 acres) is completely within Groton State Forest, and has only a picnic area developed along its shore. Kettle Pond is in Groton State Forest with 800 feet of shoreline in Peacham. Foster Pond (56 acres), Ewell Pond (40 acres), and Keiser Pond (34 acres, most of which lies in Danville) have little development. Mud Pond (31 acres), which is largely marsh land, is owned by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife. Public fishing access is available on Peacham, Martin's, Foster, Ewell, and Keiser Ponds.

The two notable bogs in Peacham are owned by the State. Stoddard Bog is on the northern fringe of town and Peacham Bog is in Groton State Forest.

Devil's Hill, along the main mountain ridge, has glacial caves on its western slope. Owl's Head, in Groton State Forest, can be approached by car to within 1/8 mile of its summit, where there is a stone observatory with beautiful views. Extensive panoramas from the wooded summits of Cow Hill and Lookout Mountain have been available in the past. The Northeast Kingdom Audubon Society has set aside land in East Peacham which provides an excellent platform for viewing birds and other wildlife

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along East Peacham brook.

Soil Characteristics

Soils in Peacham result from glacial activity during the recent geological past. The parent material (the material from which soils are derived) was deposited through the violent action of the ice sheet as it gouged and ground along the earth's surface. Eventually melting as the climate became warmer, the glacier dumped this material randomly over the ground. Known as "glacial till", this heterogeneous material gives rise to a variety of soil types from very fine silts and clays to areas covered by large boulders. Soil types consequently can and do change over relatively short distances as the parent material, topography, vegetation, and water regimes shift. Soils derived from glacial till are known as loams and contain varying proportions of sand, silt, and clay.

Soils are classified according to chemical and physical properties and are given common names usually associated with the locality where they were first mapped. The soil called "Peacham" is such an example, and in this case, the name refers to a poorly drained soil found in low lying areas along streams and drainways. This soil is too wet for tillage, but is typically found in unimproved pastures. It is often suitable for pond building, and is scattered throughout town.

Buckland is a finer textured better drained soil than "Peacham", and is capable of supporting agriculture although it has a restrictive layer or "pan" occurring at about 20 inches. This pan can be a limitation to house siting as slow infiltration can necessitate a mound type sewage disposal system at added costs.

The Glover and Lyman soil series are also commonly found in Town and, unlike Buckland, are shallow in depth thus not well suited to tillage. These thin soils lack sufficient water holding capacity for productive forage and are often found atop knolls and hilltops covered with sparse grass or forested.

Dummerston is an excellent example of a deep, very fine sandy loam with excellent drainage. Well suited to tillage, this soil has been recognized by the State of Vermont as a prime agricultural soil of high potential under the land use law Act 250. Many of Peacham's more productive forage and corn land fields are this soil type.

Because of Peacham's geographic location in the "upland" drainage region, it is nearly void of the rich bottomland soils found in towns along the Connecticut River. A few areas along Peacham Hollow Brook and South Peacham Brook are subject to local flooding periodically and would constitute the only farmed land in this category. Landowners are reminded, however, that they often can produce loamy soil by planting crops such as legumes and barley and use rotation as a method to improve texture and richness.

The above are examples of commonly found soil types and give a representative, but not exhaustive picture of soils occurring in Peacham. The United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is currently updating the soil survey and changing the names and classifications of the soil. For an update on this work, contact the NRCS in St. Johnsbury at 748-2641.

ISSUE/CONCERN:

The Groton State Forest represents a valuable resource in and available to Peacham residents.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The Planning Commission should appoint an ad hoc committee to monitor and participate in 2004-2005 Groton State Forest Management Plan process.

CURRENT LAND USE PATTERNS AND CONTROLS

Peacham is often used as a classic example of the pattern of development for which Vermont is well known. Historically, development in Peacham has occurred in and around compact villages with surrounding land uses appearing as a patchwork quilt of open farmland, managed wood lots, and large tracts of forested land. The small amount of residential development that has occurred outside of villages has, for the most part, occurred as low density housing (housing lots of 10 acres or more). Peacham has also benefited from many land owners who have maintained open land even if it is not actively farmed.

There is strong public support for maintaining slow growth and the existing pattern of development through the town planning and development review process. The primary and current land use controls available to help maintain the existing pattern of development are listed and summarized below. (See the Town of Peacham Zoning Ordinance for specific details of zoning requirements.)

Application of Zoning Regulations

New land uses in Peacham are subject to the application of zoning regulations. The purpose of such regulation is to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the populace; protect and conserve the value of property; and guide future development so it conforms to the town's land use plans.

The zoning ordinance, through its terms, conditions, and guidance, is the principal vehicle by which the goals of the Town Plan can be realized. No division of a parcel of land or construction of any type or excavation or change in the use of a building or extension of any use of land can commence except in compliance with the regulations provided for in the adopted ordinance. The Administrative officer is responsible for issuing building permits in accordance with the Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Board of Adjustment and Planning Commission also have roles in zoning administration.

Zoning Districts

Through the Town Zoning Ordinance, Peacham is divided into "zoning districts" intended to identify the key resources, existing land uses, "allowed uses" (uses that may be conducted without need of a permit), and "permitted uses" (uses requiring a permit) of areas of town. For each district, the ordinance provides guidance and requirements intended to promote land use that is consistent with town plan goals. A municipal zoning map is prepared to clearly define district boundaries.

There are seven zoning districts including an "agricultural overlay area" (discussed further below) and a "wellhead protection" district. Each district is defined within the town zoning ordinance and outlined on the town zoning map. Each district has its own requirements and the ordinance outlines district uses that are allowed, uses that are allowed if minimum permitting requirements are met, and uses that may be permitted if higher "conditional use" standards (discussed later) are met. The intent of the districts is to promote certain types and levels of land use that are compatible with existing land uses as well as the goals of the town plan. Conversely, districts plainly and directly discourage land uses that are inconsistent with plan goals. The Peacham Zoning Ordinance should be consulted for a complete description of each of the districts and their respective requirements.

Agricultural Overlay

Historically, a key goal of the Peacham Town Plan has been to promote and, to the extent possible, support the continuation of agriculture. One of the town's zoning districts is an "ag-overlay" district that spans a number of other districts and is "superimposed" over all of them except the Village One and the Wellhead Protection Zones. The "ag-overlay" district reflects those areas of town that contain undeveloped prime soils and other good land features as determined by a 1989 Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Study (LESA). The lands in this overlay district are considered to be essential to the long-term survival of agriculture in Peacham and thus are provided unique treatment. The town zoning ordinance provides that within the overlay district, agricultural uses will be given first priority.

Subdivision and Conditional Use Requirements

Minor Subdivision of land (division of a parcel of land into two lots) must meet the area and dimension requirements of the zoning ordinance and must be approved by the Zoning Administrator. However, in certain zoning districts a minor subdivision is considered a conditional use.

Any Major Subdivision of land (division of a parcel of land into 3 or more lots) is considered a "conditional use". A major subdivision is subject to both Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) and planning board review. In regard to any major subdivision of land, the planning board will issue a report and may make specific recommendations for action to the ZBA. Major subdivisions, and other conditional uses, must meet standards in addition to minimum lot size, dimension and set-back requirements. These standards are intended to be rigorous since conditional uses, by definition, introduce potentially new impacts not necessarily envisioned under existing plans. Ultimately, the zoning board shall not grant a permit unless it finds that the proposed conditional use meets all criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance. Supplemental consideration that must be exercised by the ZBA on proposed conditional uses also covers: the economic impact of the project; the adequacy of minimum lot size, width and building setbacks; the project's impact on air and water quality, noise, light pollution, and wildlife habitat as well as soil erosion, proximity to stream considerations, topography, aquifer recharge impacts, floodplain impacts, storm water issues, and impact to adjacent property.

On Site Sewage Disposal Requirements

The Zoning Ordinance requires that all new dwellings be served by a septic or wastewater system and meet the standards set forth in the Vermont Environmental Protection Rules (Effective August 16, 2002). These rules represent a major overhaul in the State's health regulations. All parties considering the construction or expansion of any type of building in Peacham must comply with these revised rules and contact the St. Johnsbury Office of the Department of Environmental Conservation (Telephone 802-751-0130).

Planned Residential Development (PRD)

The Zoning Ordinance allows the modification of some district regulations to allow for planned residential development subject to conditions and in accordance with procedures. The purpose of the provision is simply to encourage flexibility of design and development of land in such a manner as to promote the most appropriate use of land. The PRD option offers the opportunity to cluster or better place housing so as to preserve the natural, scenic, or agricultural qualities of open land. The PRD option also can be used to achieve a better mixture of housing types at different densities.

Act 250 and State Subdivision Review Law

Additional land use controls exist through state law. Act 250, passed by the legislature in 1970, requires that commercial and large residential subdivisions meet ten environmental and planning criteria prior to the grant of a state permit. Presently, state subdivision law requires that any subdivided lot less than ten acres in size obtain a state subdivision permit. Such lots must meet the standards for water supply and waste water disposal as provided in the State Environmental Protection Rules (EPR).

Act 250 jurisdiction, in regard to residential subdivision, is generally not triggered unless the subdivider of the lots has created more than nine lots over a five-year period within the same Environmental District (Peacham is in District 7 which encompasses Essex, Orleans and Caledonia Counties). Although Act 250 rarely plays an active role in Peacham's development review processes, it can be argued that it does, indirectly, influence land use by acting as a disincentive to the creation of subdivisions greater than nine lots.

ISSUES/CONCERNS:

The Town Plan emphasizes protection of farmland and other land resources, and the Zoning Ordinance allows for the creation of 2 acre lots throughout town.

The slow erosion of agricultural, resource, and habitat areas can be affected by poor road maintenance and careless land development.

The potential conversion of part-time or seasonal housing to permanent housing could have significant impact on roads, septic systems, wells, and land development patterns.

New State Environmental Protection Rules require attention by the Select Board, Planning Commission, and Administrative Officer.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Planning Commission should review the appropriate acreage minimums for each district and appoint a special study group to understand the factors affecting farm and other open land.

Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Adjustment should give greater attention to protecting development from soil erosion and sedimentation.

The Planning Commission should study the potential for this type of housing transition and the impact it could have.

The Select Board and Planning Commission should become familiar with these rules and ensure that they are followed. Moreover, Peacham may wish to produce its own set of regulations under state statute (deadline; July 1, 2007).

LAND CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

Peacham is made up of a diverse mixture of landscapes. Its unique character comes from the variety of land types and land uses within the town. To maintain this special character, a conservation strategy should be designed to suggest local priorities for conservation initiatives and to provide general guidance to public and private funding sources so that the most valuable lands and attributes may be protected.

Conservation Easements

As of 1998, there were 1,923 acres of private land under conservation easement in Peacham and this figure has increased modestly in the past five years. Fifteen acres of public land at Stoddard Bog are also under deeded conservation easement. When the land is placed under a conservation easement, its deed is amended to restrict future development on the parcel. In general the property remains in private hands and stays on the tax rolls but is protected from future development. It is important to note, however, that often the land owner will "hold out" one or more house sites located on the property to be developed in the future.

Conservation Priorities

In conjunction with the Conservation Commission, the Peacham Planning Commission suggests that some lands in town are more important to protect from development than others. The limited amount of conservation dollars should be focused on certain areas of town. The suggested local priorities are:

- \$Working Farms, including those practicing diversified agriculture and low-impact methods
- \$Open Land Used by Farms
- \$Undeveloped Lake Shorelands, Bogs, and Riparian Lands
- \$Critical Wildlife Habitat and corridors protection and Wetlands
- \$Mountain and hilltops/ridge lines

Conserving these areas is important to preserving the character of the town.

Farmland/LESA Study

Conserving active, prime farmland is a top priority in town. In 1989, a committee appointed by the Selectmen undertook a major initiative to evaluate and score the open land in town. Using a Land Use Evaluation Site Assessment (LESA) system, evaluation criteria were developed and each parcel scored. This study considered a field for its agricultural potential and its value to the town as open land, comparing it to other fields in town. The criteria include soils, slopes, and views to and from each field and became the basis for the agricultural overlay to the zoning maps for the town. A complete copy of the LESA study is available from the Conservation Commission.

Undeveloped Lake Shorelands

In 1992 the Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA) completed a resource inventory of the undeveloped lakeshore in northern Vermont. The study identified undeveloped tracts of lakeshore on lakes over 10 acres. An "undeveloped tract" was defined as having a minimum of 1000 feet of shore frontage with a depth of 250 horizontal feet with no human structures or 2-wheel drive roads.

The study indicates that Peacham has six lakes with a total of 64,320 feet (or 12 miles) of lake shoreline. The Town of Peacham has more undeveloped shoreland than any other community in the Northeast Kingdom with over 72% (46,150 feet) currently undeveloped.

The Planning Commission believes that the large amount of undeveloped lake shoreland offers the residents of Peacham many opportunities not enjoyed by other communities. These shorelands have many valuable attributes including critical wildlife habitat and help to maintain high water quality and recreation opportunities. Therefore, the Commission suggests that undeveloped lakeshore be given high priority for the conservation efforts within the town. In fact, the current zoning ordinance differentiates between developed and undeveloped shorelands, requiring lower density residential development on the latter.

While water quality monitoring of Peacham's lakes is not required, the Conservation Commission has a water-sampling program and the Planning Commission encourages lake front homeowners to keep the Commission aware of any water quality data collected so that future planning decisions can reflect changing conditions.

Natural Heritage Sites/Wetland

Natural Heritage Sites: In 1992, the Vermont Natural Heritage Program completed an inventory of the natural heritage sites within Peacham. Although the study was not necessarily all inclusive, meaning there may be sites still not identified, it does supply a good first step at locating areas with special natural features such as rare and endangered plants and special wildlife habitat. The intent of the inventory is to make landowners aware of what they have on their land and actions they may take to preserve it. Working with the landowners to protect these sites is a priority for the Conservation Commission. The Peacham Base Map gives a general idea of the location of the sites including:

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| -Foster Pond Fen | -Osmore Pond |
| -Goslant Pond | -Owls Head |
| -Keiser Pond | -Peacham Bog |
| -Mud Pond | -Peacham Pond |
| -Stoddard Bog | -Big Deer Mountain |

Wetlands: Peacham contains over 1,150 acres of wetlands. Due to protection already afforded by State and Federal regulations, only those wetland areas directly associated with a wellhead recharge area or the village water supply should be given priority by the town. The Planning Commission supports protecting all the sites listed under the Natural Heritage Sites/Wetlands and encourages creating buffer zones for Water Quality. Information has been provided for the public at the library and town office on water testing and protection of this precious resource.

Maintaining critical wildlife habitat (i.e., nesting areas of rare birds, feeding areas of animals) and the wetland areas associated with the public water supply are important to the town and should get priority in conservation efforts.

Critical Wildlife Habitat: Peacham members of Keeping Track, a state-wide non-profit organization devoted to wildlife information has identified areas in town that are important to wildlife (i.e., deer yards, beech stands, spruce/fir forests) . This information can be used to encourage landowners to maintain the areas most important to wildlife. It should also be used in an advisory fashion by the Zoning Administrator and Zoning Board of Adjustment.

ISSUES/CONCERNS:

There is need for a local pool of money to be used as a local match when trying to obtain public conservation money.

Residents often have the interest but lack the technical knowledge to carry out proper land management and conservation planning.

Areas important to wildlife (e.g. deer yards, beech stands, spruce/fir forests) need to be identified and mapped.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Encourage the expansion of the local conservation fund which can be used for conservation projects. The fund accepts donations and municipal funds raised at town meeting.

The Conservation Commission can advise townspeople about where to go for the best information on natural resource management, wood lot management, and land conservation techniques.

The Conservation Commission should cooperate with Keeping Track and Vermont Coverts Programs to develop a better understanding of the areas important to wildlife.

ISSUES/CONCERNS: (cont'd)

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RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: (cont'd)

The Conservation Commission should create maps that are available for reference by residents and public officials.

Water quality testing may be needed to establish land conservation priorities, such as riparian strips.

The Conservation Commission should continue to work with the State in water quality testing in the ponds of the Town.

AGRICULTURE

Peacham is a rural town where agriculture and dairy farming in particular, has long served as a touchstone for our rural identity. Increasingly, residents have expressed concern for the future of agriculture in Peacham. As dairy farmers become further challenged by higher production costs, tax burdens, and lower prices for milk, the likelihood of farms going out of business increases. In recent years the subdivision of lands formerly used for agriculture has heightened our awareness that agriculture needs to be strongly supported if it is to remain viable. Public input received at the town plan meetings on this issue supports the town's taking a two-prong approach: 1.) Continue to explore tax stabilization measures, financial supports and creative programs to help our remaining farms and farmers; and 2.) Ensure that our local land use policies and regulations guide any development that does occur on agricultural parcels in ways that protect the land's current agricultural use or the potential for future agricultural use.

The Present Situation

While at one time most of Peacham's land area was in open farmland, in 1997 only approximately 3,000 acres remained devoted to active use. An additional 750 acres of abandoned farmland has not yet reverted to forest. This acreage represents only 10 to 12% of the total land mass in Peacham but plays a pivotal role in providing a balance between forest cover and open land, in supporting farms, and in enhancing the aesthetics of the town. Farmland, more than any other land type, is most vulnerable to conversion that results in a visual impact and permanent loss of agricultural uses.

The gradual decline in dairy farming, the mainstay of Peacham's agriculture, has slowed somewhat in recent years. In 2004, five operating dairy farms accounted for about 550 milking dairy cows and approximately 400 additional young stock.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Dairy Farms</u>	<u>Number of Dairy Cows</u>
1948	135	1,350
1958	47	780
1968	26	700
1975	14	639
1982	12	547
1988	11	625
1992	9	610
1998	6	550
2004	5	550

Although the number of farms has decreased through the years, average herd size per farm has increased, and individual farms have increased the amount of land they use, both owned and rented. Peacham farmers use as much rented land as land they own, in some cases much more. Less desirable farmland continues to revert to forest; yet a few farmers have reclaimed many acres in recent years.

The active farmland (crop land, hay land, and pasture) is concentrated in the southeast quarter of town, and includes the majority of Peacham's dairy farms. This core group of contiguous properties represents

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the most productive farmland in town, and is vital to supporting present and future agricultural enterprises.

Farming in beef, heifers, sheep, horses, alpacas, llamas, goats, chickens, honey, vegetables, and Christmas tree production is increasing. Maple products are an important diversification for several dairy farmers and a source of extra income for part-time farmers. Peacham is also seeing an increase in land farmed organically.

Supporting Agriculture

Peacham's dairy farms are suffering from a faltering dairy economy. Several Peacham dairy farmers benefited from the town's tax assistance program instituted in the late 1990s. Founded by an anonymous donor, the town voted to accept a five year \$2,500 per year donation to help offset property taxes on farmland. Peacham approved an additional \$1,000 resulting in \$3,500 in total tax relief divided equally by the participating farm operations.

Vermont's Use Valuation Program has demonstrated its potential to provide significant tax relief to farm land and forest land owners. However, since 1992 the state has at times significantly reduced its financial support for the program. The program allows agricultural land to be taxed based on its potential for agriculture rather than its potential for development. When the Use Valuation Program is not fully funded the tax burden on the farmer is increased unless the town provides program funding. The Use Valuation Program has been fully funded in recent years. Towns may opt to provide their own tax stabilization programs and further exploration of the potential for this approach has been encouraged in public hearings.

Planning for Agriculture

Recognizing that some development of Peacham's remaining open farmland will occur, it is critical that local planning and development review processes guide development so as to protect important farmland and maintain its future potential for agriculture.

As mentioned earlier, the 1989 Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) study inventoried and evaluated significant agricultural land in Peacham. The study evaluated 194 parcels of active farmland covering 2,789 acres of land. An overlay of Peacham's important farmland has been prepared to be used in the town's local review process to guide the appropriate development of important farmland. It is no coincidence that, for the most part, remaining successful farms in Vermont tend to be on the better soils. Soil potential is an indicator of a development's impact on agricultural resources and the LESA study is considered in evaluating new development and subdivision proposals.

Other Approaches

The Vermont Department of Agriculture published "Sustaining Agriculture" in 1994. This handbook is useful in outlining varied approaches and creative planning strategies for keeping agriculture healthy and can serve as a planning aid to the town Planning Commission. [Also, see Peacham Toolkit, page 21.]

One particular approach to preserving farmland urges the acquisition, through purchase or donation, of development easements by a local land trust. Increasingly, land trusts are being formed and utilized throughout Vermont to work in conjunction with the towns to meet clearly defined land and resource protection goals. The Vermont Land Trust and the Passumpsic Valley Land Trust have in recent years been successful in protecting lands in Peacham. A few years ago, the Vermont Land Trust responded to an effort by a group of citizens in town by forming the Peacham Project of the Vermont Land Trust. Continued use of land trusts to meet town plan goals is encouraged.

Increasingly, land trusts and other types of conservation organizations are helping landowners who choose to keep their land open and mowed even if not actively used for agriculture and to protect agricultural, scenic, forest and habitat resources through the voluntary sale or donation of development rights. The use of land trust techniques provides a non-regulatory alternative that has already been utilized in Peacham to help reach town resource protection goals. As understanding and acceptance of such land preservation alternatives grow, preservation easement purchases and donations will likely play even greater roles in the future. .

There are several ways in which the town and residents can assist in maintaining open farm land and thereby support local farmers (dairy and others). These techniques are listed below as a local “tool kit”.

"Tool Kit" for Conserving Peacham's Agricultural and Forest Lands

The following provides information on what landowners and the town can do to conserve agricultural land.

What Individual Landowners Can Do

Land Link Vermont

590 Main Street
Burlington, Vermont 05405
(802)656-0233
dheleba@zoo.uvm.edu

This program, based at the University of Vermont, aims to match recent graduates of the UVM Agricultural Program with retiring farmers and other landowners around the state. The object is to provide new farmers with an opportunity to buy or lease farms or farmable land.

Deed Restrictions

A landowner may place restrictions on the use and development of his/her land by future owners. For example, restrictions could limit the amount and density of land development on that parcel or prohibit certain uses (e.g., trailer homes). It is important to note, however, that deed restrictions are not considered to be legally enforceable forever, and may be challenged successfully after a period of years. Consult an attorney experienced in real estate law.

Donate, Bequeath, or Sell Land to a Non-Profit Organization

A landowner may donate, bequeath, or sell land to a land conservation organization that has the authority and capability to manage the land in perpetuity. It is important that the receiving organization be willing and able to hold the land in perpetuity. If the land is donated, the donor may be eligible for a deduction in federal income tax for the value of the gift. Contact any of the organizations listed below.

Donate, Bequeath, or Sell Development Rights to a Non-Profit Organization

In this case, the landowner retains ownership and use of the land, including the right to sell it, but relinquishes his/her right, and the right of future owners, to develop the land other than for agriculture, forestry, education, non-commercial recreation, and open space. This may reduce the value of the land, including its assessed value. If the development rights are donated, the donor may be eligible for a deduction in federal income tax for the value of the gift. Contact any of the organizations listed below.

Bequeath Property to Charity, with Condition for Conservation

This option allows a landowner to conserve his/her land from development, while at the same time bequeathing the proceeds from the sale of the property to a favorite charity. The property owner, in his/her will, leaves property to a charity, with the condition that before the property is sold the development rights are transferred to a conservation organization such as the Vermont Land Trust. The land is thus conserved, and the charity gets the proceeds from the sale of the conserved property.

Organizations to Consult Regarding Land Conservation

Vermont Land Trust (NEK)
P.O. Box 427
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819
(802)748-6089
vlt.org

Passumpsic Valley Land Trust
P.O. Box 624
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819
(802)748-8089

Peacham Conservation Commission

(802)592-3218
Nature Conservancy Vermont
27 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05602
(802)229-4425
nature.org

Trust for Public Land, Vermont
3 Shipman Place
Montpelier, VT 05602
(802)223-1373
tpl.org

What the Town Can Do

Purchase Land

Through the Conservation Commission the town can purchase land with scenic, ecological, wildlife, or recreational values for use by town residents. The Conservation Commission should establish, advertise, and continually augment a Conservation Fund for such purchases.

Reduce Assessed Value of Conserved Land

Where the development rights to a property have been donated or sold to a conservation organization, the value of the property may decline, in which case the town can reduce its assessment, lowering the owner's taxes. This provides an added incentive to landowners to conserve their land.

VISION:

Promote family farms essential to the overall town objective of preserving open space, scenic qualities, rural character, and local food production. Ensure the potential for future agriculture by protecting prime agricultural soils.

ISSUES/CONCERNS:

The local zoning regulations should be designed to support local agriculture. This can be done by designing flexibility into the review process, and encouraging cluster developments.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

The Zoning Board of Adjustment and Planning Commission review process should ensure that the siting of buildings, roads and other structures have the least significant impact on agriculture. An example might be to locate a proposed house along the edge of a field instead of in the middle thus preserving the field's agricultural potential.

ISSUES/CONCERNS (cont):

People often do not understand estate planning or the Use Valuation Program, or use creative ways to subdivide and develop land.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS (cont):

The Conservation Commission should hold workshops and distribute written materials on estate planning, the Use Valuation Program, and on creative ways to subdivide and develop land to minimize the impact on the agricultural resources.

High property taxes make farming more difficult and jeopardize the long term viability of farming, forestry, and maintaining open space.

The Conservation Commission should examine ways to encourage farming in Peacham.

FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE

Forests cover 78% of Peacham Town's land area, are significant in the town's economy and, along with mountains, ponds and streams, and working farms, are a major feature of the town's lovely physical setting. They also provide habitat for the Town's varied and bountiful wildlife, income from timber harvesting, maple sugaring, and tourism, and enjoyment for residents and visitors. Forests and other

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aspects of the physical environment are critical to the sightseeing, hunting, snowmobiling, and other recreation that are vital contributors to the State and local economies. The fall foliage season in late September and early October, when many visitors come from elsewhere in the U.S. and abroad to view Peacham's splendors, is second to none in beauty and visitor appreciation, and it vividly expresses the meaning of Peacham to its inhabitants and others.

In the past two centuries our forests have come full circle. When the first colonists arrived, late in the 18th century, our area was almost entirely forested. By the 1830s and 1840s, it had been transformed into open land and subsistence agriculture, with more than double the present population. Then a few decades later the land devoted to agriculture began to recede, and over the next century the forest steadily re-established itself as the dominant factor in the landscape.

Our forest is a mixed forest, typical of this region. The three major forest types are spruce-fir, pine-hemlock, and northern hardwoods. Among the latter are maple, beech, ash, and birch. The predominant softwoods are fir, spruce, hemlock, pine, and cedar. Wood products regularly harvested include saw and veneer logs, pulp, chips, and firewood. There are a few small, intensively managed Christmas tree plantations from which, in some cases, green boughs are also cut for seasonal ornaments. Maple sugaring generates income and satisfaction to sugarmakers, and interest among Town inhabitants and visitors.

Peacham is home to eight small lakes, all of which enjoy excellent water quality. This is due in part to the intact forest that makes up their watersheds.

Around 7,000 acres, or roughly a quarter of the Town's area, is owned and managed by the State of Vermont as a portion of the Groton State Forest. About 740 acres of this total are in a wetland known as the Peacham Bog, which attracts much attention from forestry and wildlife scholars. Aside from small parcels owned by the Town and the Village Fire District #1, virtually all of the remaining forested land in Peacham consists of private holdings.

The small forests owned by the Town and the Village provide protection for water supplies, wildlife habitat, and public recreational sites. In order to improve their visibility to residents and ensure proper long-term maintenance, the Town Forester must update the management plan for these parcels.

Here and there in the Town are undeveloped and relatively undisturbed forest areas of several hundred to two thousand acres. These are important for wildlife and also for the sturdy hiker and skier who likes to explore the wilderness.

The current predominance of forest cover in Town makes this resource less threatened at the moment than open agricultural land. But the forestry sector does have two principal problems, both of which have aroused wide public concern: poor management on the part of a few, and fragmentation through subdivision of large timber tracts into smaller lots. The former problem results either from neglect, lack of knowledge of good forestry practices or, from the desire of some landowners and loggers to extract maximum immediate financial return at the expense of long-term forest health and income. The second problem stems from the purchase and subdivision of land for profit without regard for the good of the Town, or from needy residents who see in subdivision a means of enlarging their modest income or financing their retirement.

The health of the forest is of paramount concern to Peacham. The Town looks with favor upon wise forest management on the part of both private and public owners because it enhances timber quality and beauty as well as higher long-term financial return to owners when it is harvested.

There is a need for a greater awareness in Peacham of the availability, without charge, of County Forester and State District Biologists for advice and assistance in forestry and wildlife matters.

Conservation and improvement of the forest and wildlife habitat are essential to the preservation of Peacham's character. Important specific objectives include maintaining forest beauty, improving forest quality and economic potential, holding fragmentation and destructive logging practices in check, fostering wildlife habitat, and ensuring access for recreation.

VISION:

Maintain in Peacham a healthy and vibrant forest and forestry industry as well as foster wildlife habitat through improved forest practices, long-term stewardship, and protection of the land resource from degradation and fragmentation.

ISSUES/CONCERNS:

Private land owners may need advice and assistance to improve the quality, beauty and economic value of their timber.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Forest land owners can obtain free assistance and advice from the County Forester, State Biologists and several local Vermont Coverts_“Cooperators.”

New forest land owners should be provided packets containing information on sources of advice and assistance. One of the best sources of helpful information and advice is the paperback Working With Your Woodland: A Landowner's Guide by Mollie Beattie with Thompson & Levine, University Press of New England.

ISSUES AND CONCERNS (Cont.)

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS (cont.)

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The Peacham Conservation Commission can promote the education of landowners regarding the short-sightedness and bad economics of cutting timber haphazardly or pre-maturely. Those owners in the Vermont Current Use Value Appraisal Program should arrange any logging in accordance with their State-approved individual management plans.

Land owners should be encouraged to engage only loggers dedicated to acceptable silviculture practices and State rules, particularly loggers who have completed the LEAP certification program established by the UVM Extension Service.

There is need for more constructive ideas on effective forest management.

Thorough treatment of this subject is available in the Congressionally- sponsored Northern Forest Lands Council study (1988-94), particularly in Council recommendations to Vermont and the other three participating states.

Wildlife habitats are evermore threatened by new development and insufficient knowledge regarding what wildlife is in the woods, their likely habitat locations, and what can be done better to protect and enhance them.

Free advice and assistance can be obtained from the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife District Biologists in St. Johnsbury (phone 751-0100).

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service offers the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) to help landowners implement management practices (Telephone 748-3885. Also local Vermont Coverts cooperators can be consulted.

Fragmentation of the forest will reduce wildlife habitat for such species as bear, bobcat, and certain birds that rely on unbroken forest.

The Town should consider zoning rules that discourage subdivision of large forest tracts, which introduces housing, industry, and other human activity and dogs into the wilderness.

Conservation of forest and meadow is important to maintenance of the beauty and unspoiled character of Peacham.

Conservation arrangements with the Vermont Land Trust and the formation of voluntary neighborhood woodland owners' associations should be encouraged.

High property taxes often prove unduly burdensome for land owners committed to long-term ownership and management of their forest lands.

The Peacham Conservation Commission should explore the use of the FLESA system to develop criteria better to assess forest parcels relating to town planning issues. Grants are available to the Town to help cover the costs of such a project.

Forest land owners can participate in the State's Current Use Value Appraisal Program, and the

ISSUES AND CONCERNS (Cont.)

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS (cont.)

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More Town input is needed in the management of the Peacham portion of the Groton State Forest, which occupies nearly 25% of the Town's area.

The forests owned by the Town and Village offer opportunities that are currently underutilized.

Town should consider additional incentives for sound long-term private forest management.

The Peacham Conservation Commission or a committee of the Planning Commission should monitor the State Forest's long-term management plans and, as maintain dialogue with the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation planners. Peacham residents should be encouraged to participate in Groton State Forest hearings and other public meetings involving the State Forest.

Town Forester should develop and keep current long-term, multiple-use management plans for these forests.

RECREATION

A variety of recreational programs and activities are available in Peacham. The town provides recreation through elementary school programs and furnishes financial assistance to the swimming program which serves town residents at Harvey's Lake. There is a small poorly maintained tennis court located adjacent to the former Peacham Academy gymnasium, now the town municipal building. The Peacham Recreation Committee manages the Luther Fletcher Parker Memorial Field and sponsors a number of recreational and educational programs using the talents and skills of residents who serve as instructors. The Historical Association occasionally sponsors programs of old-fashioned games and recreations. Other organizations such as Scouting and 4-H are encouraged; nature programs run by citizens have been held during the summer.

The Peacham Conservation Commission maintains a "blue blazed" signed trail to and around Devil's Hill. There is a blue-blazed Nordic trail from Martin's Pond to Peacham Bog and Groton State Forest. More trails are being considered.

The Bayley-Hazen Snowmobile Club maintains a clubhouse and trails in Peacham. These trails which interconnect with the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) system are enjoyed by snowmobile operators and cross-country skiers alike. They are a valuable asset to the community and the efforts of the Club to locate and manage trails so as not to conflict with other land uses are much appreciated.

Hiking, fishing, swimming, horseback riding, cross country skiing, snowmobiling and hunting are enjoyed on public lands and on much of the privately owned land in Peacham. Posting of private land against hunting and trapping has been on the increase and will further increase unless users are careful to respect the rights of property owners.

Public fishing access is available at five of the town's ponds.

The Peacham Fire District #1 has its own picnic grounds on Mack's Mountain Road at which at least one village event takes place in the summer, the village water picnic.

There is increased interest in bicycling by children to and after school. Local residents as well as bike tour groups are more commonly seen biking on our roads.

VISION:

Continue to improve and encourage the use of present recreational facilities primarily through voluntary efforts. Responsible public use of private lands for recreational use is important to the town.

ISSUES/CONCERNS:

Residents who want to play on a good tennis court must travel to Danville.

Abuses by boaters may detrimentally affect wildlife habitats on small ponds.

Infestation of Eurasian milfoil into our lakes is a growing concern.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

The town should either repair the existing court or consider building a new one.

The town should support the State of Vermont's efforts to determine and regulate appropriate use of ponds and lakes.

Encourage boaters to check their boats and motors for Eurasian milfoil before using Peacham's ponds.

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ISSUES AND CONCERNS (Cont.)

Protection of Town land from illegal motor vehicle use is needed.

The trail network throughout town should be maintained. Particular consideration should be given to the possibility of a nature/cross country ski trail connecting the three villages.

The recreational needs of residents change and facilities require maintenance.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS (cont.)

The Select Board should monitor state rules relating to such vehicles.

A nature/cross country ski trail was completed in East Peacham. An extension is being considered to reach Peacham Corner. Other trails are being considered, both nature and cross country ski, such as a trail into Peacham Bog.

Encourage the Conservation Commission to complete the nature trail, cross country ski and additional trails as interest and need arise. Work with the Groton State Forest to promote and integrate trail development and maintenance.

The Recreation Committee and Conservation Commission should work to maintain the trail network throughout town. The existing public rights of way and legal trails should be maintained.

The residents should be encouraged to support the Recreation Committee primarily through voluntary action.

VILLAGE ISSUES

There are three village centers in the town of Peacham: Peacham Corner, South Peacham and East Peacham. This type of development with homes clustered tightly together surrounded by open farm land is the essence of the vision for the future of Peacham and should be encouraged in every way possible. However, the close proximity of homes and business in a village setting raises issues that are not shared throughout the entire community. These issues have been traditionally dealt with by the Peacham Fire District #1 made up of residents from within the village area. See other sections throughout the plan for additional discussion of village-related matters.

All three villages are concerned with safety and especially with road traffic exceeding posted speed limits. In Peacham Corner, parking is inadequate for some events and the major intersection is unsightly and can be confusing for people unaccustomed to its traffic patterns.

Peacham Corner has recently been designated as a Village Center by the State of Vermont. This designation can enhance the opportunities for state financial support in the Village and carries some tax credit possibilities for other houses being rehabilitated to commercial use. In addition, the Town has received planning funds to assist in more detailed planning for each of the three villages. Village resident involvement will be an important feature in this planning. A land survey of the Village roads, buildings, trees, and other facilities is currently underway and will help to form one basis for improved planning. Discussions on upgrading Village apartments are also underway.

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The Town also received State funding from the Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation (through the Urban and Community Forest Program) to assist in conducting an inventory of the conditions of trees in the villages, cemetery and Town Forest.

VISION:

Maintain the historical character of the village centers.

ISSUES/CONCERNS:

The historic character of the villages adds to the community and should be maintained.

Future development around the three villages could substantially change the current character of the town.

A tree planting plan is needed for the villages and throughout town so trees are planted in appropriate places.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Information gathered by the Peacham Historical Association during the recent historic district study should be distributed to residents.

The Planning Commission should discuss with citizens possible direction for development in these villages through a process funded by the Vermont Department of Communities and Development.

Using a matching grant from the Urban and Community Forestry Program the Town should complete a tree inventory and then the Conservation Commission should draft a tree planting plan for the town, including the Peacham Village Cemetery.

PEACHAM CEMETERY

Peacham contains five public cemeteries. There is one on the Peacham/Groton town line, the Worcester Cemetery, the Old Cemetery, Woodard Cemetery, and the current cemetery that is on a beautiful site overlooking South Peacham. The main cemetery has been enlarged to accommodate future needs. The Select Board is the Cemetery Committee and appoints sextons.

Cemetery maintenance is a continuing challenge and involves expenses for cutting, trimming, removing, planting, and replacing trees. The Select Board is in the process of developing a long-range plan for all of the Town's cemeteries.

PEACHAM FIRE DISTRICT #1

The Peacham Fire District #1 supplies water to all homes, apartments and public buildings in the Village (as defined in 1927). This service is managed and paid for by those to whom water is provided in Peacham Village. In addition, the Fire District provides and maintains the street lights within the Village, the Village Picnic Ground on Mack Mountain Road, and the Village Green Christmas tree. The Fire District's major responsibility, the water system, was originally put in place in 1927 using spring water from Kettle Springs on Mack Mountain Road to supply a reservoir located just below the Kemble property and near the Shenck property. As supplemental sources, two wells were created, one in 1968 and a second in 2000. The spring provides water to the Village normally from October through June without supplement from the wells. Most years the wells are needed in the drier, summer months only.

A major upgrade to the system was completed in 2000. This included: 1) a new 24,000 gallon reservoir and electronic controls to monitor input from the spring and wells and the water level in the reservoir; and 2) a new four-inch main line of pipe starting below the reservoir on Mack Mountain Road and ending at a point on Church Street across from the Historical House. The water lines in the Village proper and about 800 feet of pipe from the reservoir to where it connects with the new pipe at Maple Tree Lane remain old system piping. The District is proposing to replace the 800 feet of two-inch pipe just below the reservoir with new insulated four-inch pipe. This is needed because the old pipe is too near the surface (less than 17 inches in many places) to be safe from freezing without continuously running water through it and possibly distributing thereby chlorinated water directly onto the land. To meet additional state standards, the Fire District will be removing the hydrant at the corner of the Village. The hydrant in front of the Goss residence on Church Street will be replaced with a flush valve.

There are no plans at this time to replace the old pipes within the Village. The costs would be significant to the users of the system. Additional users could be added when the main line passes their property and a curb stop is in place. If there were to be new residents within the Village boundaries, the system would be obligated to serve them. Any expansion beyond the Village limits and significant changes and improvements to the system would require approval from the Village residents.

EMPLOYMENT AND LOCAL ECONOMY

Despite the decline in farming, Peacham still has a variety of home-based industries: maple sugaring, saw mills, small scale textiles, and specialty food products. Commercial activities include arts and crafts, antiques, builders, carpenters, an insurance agency, home day care, and bed & breakfasts.

Peacham should strive to remain a place to live and work. Commercial activities provide employment, convenience, and add to a sense of community. Home industries should be encouraged. Limited commercial and light industrial development should not be discouraged if it meets environmental and aesthetic criteria and objectives of this plan.

Due to the vast network of gravel roads, beautiful landscape, and abundance of large homes, Peacham is a prime area for "green tourism." This is where people come for extended weekends or vacations, stay at a bed and breakfast, walk the country roads, patronize village stores, and generally support the local economy. Tourist bus traffic is considerable during the summer and fall.

Commercial Development, Tax Base and Other Economic Matters

While the vision for Peacham is often considered in terms of its natural beauty, the warmth of community life, and a continuation of the working landscape, it is important that attention be given to the economic realities and prospects for the town and its residents.

Peacham is largely a residential community with few businesses providing jobs or taxes to run town government or the school system. In order for the town to continue providing the services its residents desire and for residents to find employment, income-generating jobs either in Peacham or the surrounding region are essential. While there are a number of summer residents and retirees in Peacham who do provide valuable tax revenue and tend to demand few services, there is a difficult balance to maintain among jobs, personal income, and local tax revenues.

This section looks at the prospects for the economic side of the town plan.

Employment

Men and women are fairly equally represented in the 2000 town labor force. 74% of men age 25 or older and 63% of women in the same age bracket are in the labor force in 2000. Most of the work force in Peacham is dependent on jobs outside town. St. Johnsbury, Montpelier, and other smaller communities provide a large portion of the employment available to Peacham residents. An increasing number of jobs, however, are found within Peacham. In addition to teachers and other local government employees, there are several in the construction trades, agricultural enterprises, retail trade, and home occupations. As communication technology advances, one can assume that a larger number of home occupations, (56, or 17% in 2000) especially those tied to clients and larger businesses in other parts of the state and country, may grow.

Currently, the job opportunities revolve around the regional economy centered in St. Johnsbury and to a lesser extent the Upper Connecticut River Valley and the Capital Region (Barre and Montpelier). Prospects in these regions for the near future are uncertain; however, the growth in the Northeast Kingdom is projected to be the lowest in the state in the next few years. The Town of Peacham must remain attentive to the region of which it is a part in projecting its own growth in population, its school age population, and its tax base.

Commercial Development

There currently are limited, but important opportunities for commercial growth in Peacham. The one remaining store, for instance, could benefit from increased business through regional cultural heritage tourism programs, bicycle tours, snowmobile travelers as well as the annual fall foliage activities and other holiday celebrations in town. Regional cultural heritage programs hold promise because they can divert tourists from typical routes that skirt Peacham in favor of those that have Peacham as a destination.

Developing and advertising the historic and cultural resources of the community and providing information for self guided tours of the community for those who visit Peacham could be important elements of these programs. Participating as part of a regional effort could also pay dividends in terms of commercial revenues.

Home occupations are another area for growth. These span traditional “cottage industries” to a range of professional services. These opportunities result largely from the communication revolution. There may be steps that can be taken by the town to further encourage and support these businesses. Favorable zoning bylaws exist that provide substantial flexibility for home occupations.

Tax Revenues and Expenditures

The chart below shows the municipal, highway and school expenditures in Peacham each year for the past 12 years. It also portrays the grand list over that period of time and the effective tax rate to property owners in town.

Fiscal Year	Municipal	Highway	School	Grand List	Munic. Tax (per \$100)	Highway Tax Rate	School Tax (per \$100)	Total Tax Rate (per \$100)
1991	121974	168388	659520	540206	.226	.312	1.222	1.760
1992	123993	171306	661840	544830	.228	.315	1.217	1.760
1993	102934	232841	755219	551251	.187	.423	1.372	1.982
1994	77749	231581	823029	555105	.140	.417	1.482	2.039
1995	103309	262042	802563	561304	.175	.457	1.430	2.062
1996	123074	250862	817005	523721	.235	.479	1.560	2.274
1997	126226	238605	872398	532599	.237	.448	1.638	2.323
1998	177555	259972	838730	543534	.327	.478	1.540	2.287
1999	149625	269202	868346	548890	.272	.490	1.520	2.260
2000	168198	292132	977431	562207	.299	.520	1.536	2.480
2001	190369	298770	994364	573078	.331	.519	1.700	2.495
2002	228955	268745	1135140	585684	.391	.459	1.700	2.701
2003	207472	278917	1321977	802032	.54		1.65	2.19
2004	258699	278052	1424975	812665	.59			

Source: Peacham Town Reports

The recently (2003) enacted Act 68 of the State of Vermont replaces Act 60 and modifies the funding scheme for state participation in meeting municipal school budgets. Under Act 60, the system was constantly a source of confusion to local residents because of the formulas used to determine what portion of locally raised taxes would go to a large state pool for school funding and what share of that pool Peacham would receive in return. In the last couple of years, Peacham became a “gold town”, i.e., the amount it received from the state was less than what it contributed to that state pool. With the enactment of Act 68, this system has again changed. At this printing it is unknown just what immediate and long-term impact this legislation will have on Peacham.

Capital Fund for Future Expenditures

Peacham has a capital funding program to help spread the costs of certain new expenditures over a number of years.

Setting aside money on an annual basis to meet future anticipated capital expenditures is a tool for the Town to use. Capital funds spread obligations over a number of years thereby minimizing any jump in taxes in any one year, and they allow the town to be flexible regarding expenditures for equipment, buildings, and road and bridge repairs from these funds. This can be financially beneficial if the Town can take advantage of sales inducements or minimize costly annual repairs. Moreover, because there are often cost-share programs using state or federal programs, having a capital fund allows the town to be flexible in responding to such opportunities.

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Planning for Future Road and Related Investments

The Select Board and Administrative Assistant have prepared a ten-year plan to guide decisions and timing of investments and repairs. Annual updates of this plan will greatly assist the town in making cost-effective investments.

Road Policy

The Town's Road Policy is attached as Appendix A.

VISION:

Peacham will encourage the growth and prosperity of small businesses, home industries and occupations and farming- and forest-based industries that maintain or enhance the rural and scenic character of the town. The town will strive to maintain a tax burden that is moderate.

ISSUES/CONCERNS:

New State regulations and standards and usual "wear and tear" on the town's buildings and equipment require attention to likely future maintenance expenditures.

New demands for roads or changes in road classification could affect municipal and highway budgets.

The Town Garage needs improvement.

Act 68 presents another challenging approach to school financing.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Town Hall and gymnasium access needs to be reviewed. A new Town recycling shed will be constructed at the recycling center.

The Select Board annually revises a written capital budget that identifies likely capital expenditures over the next 5 to 10 years.

The Select Board should periodically update its road policy and analyze the impact of proposed changes.

The select board should consider upgrades to the town garage.

The School Board and others should be aware of the impact of Act 68 on Peacham and promote its understanding among residents.

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LOCAL SERVICES AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

ENERGY

Energy resources in Peacham include electrical service provided by Green Mountain Power for most of the area and Washington Electric Co-op for western and northern parts. A few people have incorporated solar energy in their homes, and many homes use wood as a source of heat.

There is a growing awareness of the long-term economic, environmental and social costs of our energy choices. The use of energy is an important consideration in local decisions about municipal services and facilities, land use, building standards, and our local economy.

Most of the money Vermonters spend on fossil fuels leaves the local economy. Only 20 percent of the dollars spent on non-renewable fuels stay in the state, while 80 percent of that spent on wood remains in Vermont. Reducing fossil fuel systems with wood energy and possibly supplemental wind and solar systems would keep the energy dollar within our local economy.

There are no real energy resource scarcities in Peacham. Some residences have chosen not to be linked to a public electrical system, either from choice or cost. A personal photo-voltaic system is often the choice of these people.

The opportunities for conserving energy are limited to voluntary choices made by individuals and organizations in reducing personal energy consumption. These opportunities are encouraged, especially those of car pooling. To the degree that new development in town might be channeled to the existing villages, some additional energy savings may result in fewer and shorter vehicle trips for convenience goods and more economies in the distribution of electrical systems. By seeking to limit the development of new roads in town, expenses for road maintenance and plowing are kept in check.

VISION:

Promote a reduction in dependence upon costly non-renewable energy resources by encouraging conservation and the development of renewable energy resources.

ISSUES/CONCERNS:

There may be opportunities to improve the energy efficiency of public buildings.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Continue the energy improvements on the municipal buildings and update energy audits.

Establish a municipal policy that all new construction and maintenance of public buildings will consider the long term costs of energy and maintenance.

Contact the Public Service Board, Vermont Housing Authority, and other agencies about state and federal programs that would help defray the cost of building renovation.

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ISSUES/CONCERNS (cont.)

Long-term costs of public equipment and roads need to be considered.

People commute long distances to work each day.

Methods of alternative transportation need to be developed within the town.

Use of renewable energy resources and energy efficient techniques should be encouraged.

Small wind turbines (less than 100 kw) can be located in all zones where structures of any sort are allowed. Tower heights are limited to 80 feet in village zone. Tower heights elsewhere must meet FAA limits. Noise levels at the closest neighboring dwelling should not exceed 60 dBA.

The electric utilities serving Peacham have their own strategies and programs for maintaining service and protecting utility lines.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS (cont.)

Establish a town policy that the life cycle costs be considered when purchasing a town vehicle or piece of equipment.

Encourage car pooling.

Consider construction of a bike lane and walkway along paved roads within the villages.

Encourage educational opportunities to promote the use of solar and wind energy. Ensure that local regulations address the issue of building modifications for solar and wind energy.

Promote small woodlot management practices which would supply locally grown fuel wood.

The Planning Commission should consider developing a wind turbine ordinance for the town.

The Planning Commission should meet regularly with the utility companies to ensure cooperation and coordination in following the Town Plan.

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TRANSPORTATION

Peacham residents are dependent on a well maintained road system, summer and winter. They are also concerned with safety for travelers and pedestrians and that the roads support and enhance the rural and scenic character of the town. Except for travel along the Groton-Peacham, Danville-Peacham and Macks Mountain Road there is little through traffic. The major routes in the region (1-91 and U.S. Rte. 5 to the east, U.S. Rte 2 to the north and west, and Rte. 302 to the south) provide excellent access to the region, to Canada, and to other parts of New England.

Status of Major Roads Into and Out of Peacham

There are seven principal routes for travel from Peacham to other towns in the region, the status of these roads, currently and in the future are shown in the tables below.

Road	Current Status (2004)	Future Status(2008)
Danville-Peacham Road	Resurfaced in 2004.	Maintain as is.
East Peacham-Danville Road	Was reconstructed and is in good condition.	Maintain as is.
East Peacham Road (East)	Gravel in good condition.	Maintain as is.
Peacham-West Barnet Road	Resurfaced in 2004.	Maintain as is.
Peacham-Groton Road	Resurfaced and in good condition.	Maintain as is.
Mack's Mountain Road	Gravel in good condition.	Maintain as is.
Bayley-Hazen/Main Street (Peacham Corner - South)	Paved and in fair condition.	Maintain as is.

The road network consists of:

\$ Class I town highways - 1.6 miles:

Class I town highways are those town highways that form the extension of a state highway route. The Agency of Transportation shall determine which highways are to be Class 1 highways. The only Class I highway in Peacham is the 1.6 miles of the Groton-Marshfield highway - Route 232.

\$ Class II town highways - 10.0 miles:

These are the most important highways in each town. As far as practicable, they shall be selected with the purpose of securing main lines of improved highways from town to town and to places which by their nature have more than the normal amount of traffic. They are designated by the Select Board and approved by the Vermont State Highway Board.

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\$ Class III town highways - 51.6 miles:

These are all traveled highways other than Class I or II. The Select Board, after conferencing with a representative of the State Agency of Transportation, shall determine Class III highways. The minimum standards for Class III highways are that they be negotiable under normal conditions all seasons of the year. This would include, but not be limited to, sufficient surface and base, adequate drainage, and sufficient width to permit winter maintenance.

\$ Class IV town highways - 7.9 miles:

Class IV town highways include all other town highways as designated by the Select Board. These roads are typically 3 rods wide (unless otherwise recorded), are not eligible for state aid funds, are not maintained for winter use, and may be reclassified or discontinued.

These highways are maintained for summer service only; persons erecting dwellings served by these roads cannot expect winter service.

There has been little change in the classification of roads in the past five years, and there is no anticipated change during the current planning period.

Road and Roadside Safety

The quality of roads and their surfaces affect their safety for vehicular traffic as well as the safety of pedestrians, and bicyclists. In addition to effective signage in the villages, other techniques for traffic control and calming should be considered. Among these are zebra lines for frequently used pedestrian crossings along Bayley-Hazen Road in Peacham Corner where school children walk to and from school and to the gymnasium and the library.

Sidewalks recently built or renovated have greatly benefited town residents, school children and tourists visiting the village. Also, Peacham has recently explored with the County Sheriff's office having extended hours of surveillance and with the State Police the concept of "neighborhood watch." This concept encourages residents to be vigilant for vehicular traffic that violates local speed limits or otherwise endangers local residents.

Other road maintenance techniques should be considered. For instance, a town-wide inventory should be made of guard rails that can protect road traffic especially at bridge crossings. Road drainage should be tapered from the road so as not to pose a safety hazard for vehicles needing to use the shoulders of roads. Tree and branch removal to aid lines of sight for travelers should be balanced with the desire to maintain attractive vegetative cover along Peacham's roads. Trees removed from the right-of-way by the town should be offered to adjoining property owners.

Guidelines have been developed by the Local Roads Program of the State of Vermont to assist the road crew including guidelines for erosion control, the issuance of driveway permits, and cost effective solutions to protect water quality near town roads. Peacham should take full advantage of these materials and others provided by the Agency of Transportation, the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, NVDA, and others.

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Storm drainage

Storm drainage is a significant problem on a few roads in Peacham. Without adequate facilities, such as drainage ditches or underground pipes, erosion can and does occur, consuming time and expense in road maintenance. Areas that consistently suffer from erosion or drainage into streams and other water bodies should be identified and corrected. Such rudimentary measures as plowing a temporary drainage swale from a road should be undertaken only after considering the effect of such measures on the scenic and landscape properties of the road. Sometimes, revising the contour of the road, or adding an attractive drainage ditch, can be a more effective and less aesthetically damaging approach.

Road Policy

The Select Board has recently revised the town road policy and it appears as an Appendix to this Plan.

VISION:

Safe vehicular and pedestrian traffic is assured while travel routes are maintained in a manner consistent with the rural character of the town.

ISSUES/CONCERNS:

Safety is the primary transportation concern in Peacham, but every effort should be made to preserve (and enhance) the beauty of the roadways.

The long-term costs of road maintenance are substantial.

New driveways can produce erosion and drainage problems.

The classification and maintenance of roads affects development patterns and access for recreational

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Tree removal along roads should be minimized.

Guard rails throughout town are replaced where appropriate to help ensure safe travel.

The Planning Commission should develop a scenic byways plan to guide road management for scenic purposes.

In the management of roads and roadsides, including road widths, grading, and drainage ditches, the Administrative Assistant should take into account aesthetic beauty as well as safety.

The Select Board should continue its no new roads policy for Peacham, and consider the long-term costs and effects of upgrading roads from one class to another.

State guidelines are considered in issuing new driveway permits.

The Selectboard should analyze the current classification of town roads.

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use, forest fire protection, and other uses.

Travel speed is a major concern in the villages.

The Selectboard should consider strategies for controlling the speed of vehicles.

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E DUCATION

History

In 1795, Peacham voted to be the home of the Caledonia County Grammar School rather than the County Courthouse. The Town has maintained schools since that time, including various one-room schoolhouses, Peacham Academy, and presently Peacham Elementary School. This historical tradition is evidence of the commitment Peacham has shown for providing high quality education at a local level.

Present situation

The Peacham School District is a member of the Caledonia Central Supervisory Union (CCSU), which maintains administrative offices in Danville. The CCSU includes the Towns of Barnet, Danville, Peacham, and Walden. Peacham shares administrative and program service with the other districts and members of the Peacham School Board serve on the CCSU Board of Directors.

The Peacham Elementary School operates a pre-school through grade six program. In 1993, through a bond vote, the school facility was enlarged to include two new classrooms, a multi-purpose room, a library, an office, teacher's conference room, and a nurse's station. The school is on a 12-acre site. The school population is approximately 48 students (K-6). Bus transportation is offered to and from school along routes defined by the School Board in conjunction with the service provider.

Pupils in grades seven through twelve attend a school of their choice including Danville High School, St. Johnsbury Academy, St. Johnsbury Middle School, Blue Mountain Union School, Barnet School, Riverside Day School, Highland School, and Cabot School, and the Stevens School of Peacham, which has recently expanded to include fifth through eighth grades.

Pre-school children and their families are served by the Caledonia Rural Early Education Project, CREEP, which provides shared experiences, structured activities, parental guidance, and developmental screening for three, four, and five year olds. This program is administered through the CCSU office located in Danville.

The statewide education funding law, Act 60, combined with the 2003 amendment, Act 68, will inevitably continue to present opportunities and challenges to the Town.

VISION:

The Peacham Elementary School is a community of learners and teachers dedicated to developing the ability of each individual to think and communicate clearly, to solve problems creatively, to explore the world, to make responsible decisions, and to have concern for the common good. To that end, Peacham School strives for the continuation of excellent educational opportunities for students in grades K-6.

Peacham benefits from the intrinsic value of its schools in maintaining the vitality and community engagement of all citizens. Quality educational services contribute to the enticement of young families to Peacham and assists in maintaining the current population of families with school-aged children. These young families are essential to the future of Peacham, as they benefit the Town in a multitude of ways:

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volunteering for the Fire Department, working with the snowmobile club, providing community services to their neighbors, and enriching our Town through progressive diversity in demographics.

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ISSUES/CONERNS:

It is important to plan for long-term stewardship of the school's building and land.

Deferred maintenance is a problem. The school kitchen is in need of upgrades.

Maintain multi-year plans for the improvement and maintenance of facilities and equipment.

Take necessary steps to implement the needed upgrades of kitchen facilities.

Complete an inventory of trees and shrubs on school property and develop a plan for their long-term maintenance.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

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CHILD CARE FACILITIES

It is the Town of Peacham's goal to ensure the availability of safe and affordable child care for all children in Peacham. The State of Vermont has recently added this important topic to the set of goals towns must address in their town plans and guidance is being developed to assist towns on this subject.

According to the US Census Bureau 2000 Report, there are 25 children under the age of five living in Peacham. This report also reflects that there are 20 households with single parents and 11 households with income below the poverty level. Access to affordable day care for young children of Peacham contributes both to the income-generating potential of families and to the educational and social development of those pre-school children.

In June 2004, there were two licensed child care centers in Peacham. One program operates through the public school system (Peacham Elementary School) offering part day program during the school year with the capacity to serve 20 children ages three to five. The other program operates a full day, year round program (Countryside Daycare) with the capacity to serve 12 children ages six weeks to five years. Parents of other children may take them to another day care out of town or have family or friends watch their children while they are working. In September 2004, another child care center may be operating that will be able to serve 8 children. This will be very helpful as the Countryside Daycare is up for sale and will be moving out of town.

Umbrella, out of St. Johnsbury, Vermont, assists parents and child care providers. Umbrella's Child Care Referral Program helps parents locate child care programs. In 2003, two parents accessed this program. There is another program through Umbrella's Child Care Subsidy Program to help offset the costs for paying for child care. Four parents in 2003 received state subsidy to help with child care costs. The last program which may be helpful would be Umbrella's Child Care Support Services Program which encourages any opportunities to increase the number of registered and licensed child care programs offering full day, year round services in the Town of Peacham.

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ISSUES/CONCERNS:

There is a need for information about the need for and provision of child care.

Look at steps to accommodate current and prospective facilities through modification of the Zoning Ordinance.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

The Planning Commission and Peacham School should undertake a study on the need for pre-school child care and education.

Review Town Zoning Ordinance regarding child care centers.

8/11/2005

HISTORIC/CULTURAL RESOURCES

The unique character of a community comes from both its natural and built environments. Peacham is blessed with rolling topography and fertile soils that provide for a variety of land uses. The community is also fortunate to have many historic and interesting buildings. These add to the "specialness" of the community as much as the scenery.

This plan's intent is to work toward protecting both the natural and built environments. In order to do that, a comprehensive inventory and plan need to be developed. The inventory should identify those areas with historic or cultural qualities such as cemeteries, monuments, buildings, old cellar holes, spiritual grounds, and the like.

The 1999 Town Plan had recommended investigation of establishing a historic district in town and placing it on the state and national registers. A committee of interested citizens worked with owners and the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation to prepare detailed documentation of each building as part of the extensive application. With the consent of the majority of owners the application was approved by the State Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. In December 2003 Peacham Corner was officially listed as a Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places, which is administered by the U.S. Park Service. The listing of Peacham Corner recognizes the architectural and historic significance and documents historic resources in Peacham. (Full text and photo documentation of the District is available through the Historic Association and specific buildings are identified on Historic District Map. See p.72.)

Several other areas in town contain homes and barns dating back to the early settlement period of the town. A series of past and ongoing preservation activities has enhanced the historical integrity of Peacham. In 1998, the Peacham Historical Association purchased and began restoration of the square brick building located in Peacham Corner behind the Town Clerk's Office. This building, a relic from 1820, formerly housed the Ashbel Goodenough Blacksmith Shop. Guided by professionals, the Association conducted archeological digs in the summer of 1998 and 1999. The Association restored the building to a working blacksmith shop, fitted with antique tools, which opens on special occasions and serves as a museum and teaching tool for the Northeast Kingdom communities. As part of a grant from IBM and Verizon the Historical Association, the Peacham Elementary School and the Stevens School entered into a partnership to take a detailed census of the barns remaining in the year 2000. Twenty barns had been researched, measured, and mapped by 2003.

General Description of Peacham Corners Historical District

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The Village of Peacham is a relatively intact late 18th century/early 19th century Vermont hill town. It is set on a rise of land 1310 feet above sea level and 800 feet in elevation above the Connecticut River several miles to the east. The initial clearing of the forests opened up vistas to the White Mountains of New Hampshire to the southeast, and Mount Washington some forty miles to the east, providing a dramatic setting for the new settlement and a broad geographical orientation. Originally organized around a Common at the high point of the village, the settlement by the 1840's had become concentrated at the crossroads just down the hill to the east. It was here that the road from the green joined the Bayley-Hazen Military Road (1776), one of the important north-south thoroughfares of the time. The settlement pattern and the architectural character of the village were well defined by 1860, and have survived substantially unaltered to this day. Two important layers within this early development give the village its physical distinction - the Federal style houses, barns, and church of the late 1700's and early 1800's and the predominantly Greek Revival homes and institutional buildings of the 1840's, 50's and 60's. A few large homes were built on the edges of the village during the late 19th century, and a few summer homes were built at higher elevations in the early part of the 20th century. In recent years, a few additional new homes have been built around the edges and in some of the vacant land created by the loss of the central Peacham Academy building. However, the pre-1860 buildings are still predominant and provide the essential character and continuity within the village. Nearly all of the properties in the district retain their integrity in regard to location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

1861 marked the beginning of the Civil War period, and the emigration of many young men from Peacham. Many never returned. It was also the beginning of a shift in population to the newly emerging industrial centers, which tended to be in the river valleys and not up in the hills. With little in the way of subsequent population growth, the formal shape of the town has stayed somewhat frozen through time since the mid-19th century. From an architectural point of view, what is equally interesting is that 1860 marks the end of a primary use of hand-made and hand-finished materials for buildings, and the beginning of a new era of manufactured structural and finish materials. These new materials spawned the increasingly complex and ornate Victorian buildings of the 1870's, 80's and 90's, many of which replaced simpler, earlier buildings in towns like St. Johnsbury. But this layer never appeared in Peacham, so the earlier architectural character continues to be remarkably consistent. The continuity is further reinforced by the Colonial Revival style of the sprinkling of new homes, and the uniform choice of white as the exterior color for the homes and institutional buildings, many with dark green louvered shutters. Occasional contrast is provided by red brick and by red or natural siding on a few of the homes and barns. Although the white color may not always be the original, it reflects a collective 21st century preference for interpreting early Vermont architecture in a particular way. The light color also highlights the fine detailing of many of the buildings.

Federal Layer

The early layer of buildings is concentrated at the crossroads, and in the scattering of early village farmsteads. The homes are mostly timber frame side-gabled buildings, one-and-a-half and two-and-a-half stories, with central chimneys or pairs of interior chimneys. The majority are gable-roofed examples of the Cape Cod and Classic Cottage house forms. A striking exception is the handsome Governor Mattocks home (#1), a substantial hip-roofed Georgian house form with Adamesque detailing, set at the main crossroads and helping to define the village center. A similar hip-roofed farm residence (#31) survives on the northern edge of the village, although modified. Most of these early homes have attached wings and barns, and fit the general pattern of big-house, small-house, back-house, and barn. Many show signs of evolution, with more recent shed dormers, bracketed door hoods, and extensions. However, much of the original fabric survives in the stone foundations, featheredge horizontal wood siding, and finely crafted

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doors, windows, and transoms. A brick blacksmith shop dates from this period as does the original Methodist Church which has been transformed several times through its use by the Peacham Academy to its present role as a town building with post office, town clerk's office, and gymnasium. The Peacham Congregational Church was also built during this initial phase (1806)- it was moved soon after (1844) from the upper village green down to the crossroads area, and was overlaid with Greek Revival detailing characteristic of the next dominant architectural layer.

Greek Revival Layer

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The Greek Revival buildings reflect the widespread interest in Classical references within the emerging American Republic. Some of the earlier Classic Cottage house forms were simply ornamented with Greek Revival detailing (#7,10,13, 15). But the full expression of the style came when houses were reoriented with the gable end to the street, allowing the development of full pediments and corner trim. Some homes, particularly those along the upper side of Main Street (#4, 5, 8), displayed fully developed Greek temple references, with elaborate pediment gables above colonnaded verandas. Other homes (#19, 21, 35) had more modest Greek Revival details in the pediment gable treatments and the detailing of corner trim as applied pilasters. Almost all of these homes featured fine entranceways, many with six-paneled doors surrounded by transoms and sidelights, encased within classically detailed architrave moldings. As indicated, the Congregational Church (38) took on Greek Revival characteristics. This was also the style chosen for the main building of the Peacham Academy in 1843 (since demolished), and for the William Mattocks House (3), which became an Academy residence. All but one of the Greek Revival buildings were built of wood, with horizontal siding; the other (#18) was done in brick, with stone lintels. Most of the Greek Revival homes continued to have associated barns and outbuildings.

Connected architecture

The majority of homes from both the Federal and Greek Revival periods have connected outbuildings in the big house, little house, back house, barn tradition of northern and eastern New England. Some of these connections are not original (#41), and in some cases the main house has been rebuilt or altered while the outbuildings have remained unchanged (#44). But the connected outbuilding pattern seems to have been well established by the early 19th Century, and the pattern has been sustained by subsequent owners even when the original agricultural uses have disappeared. The main house and rear wing are generally clapboarded with matching trim; the back house and barn have simpler trim and some have unfinished vertical siding.

Subsequent developments

Later 19th century homes were few in number and relatively simple in detail. They were mostly gabled front houses that continued the Greek Revival influence of the earlier period. The only notable change was the addition of verandas with scrollwork detailing. The village is generally without the elaborate Victorian layer that characterizes Danville, St. Johnsbury, and a number of other nearby centers. Some early 20th century summer homes on the edge of the village adopted very distinct styles, more in the shingled Arts and Crafts tradition, which reinforced their separate identity. Late 20th century buildings within the village have been very limited, and have tended to imitate the early 19th century vocabulary with simple side-gable forms, horizontal wood siding, and doors with transoms and/or sidelights.

The village landscape

The village landscape continues to provide an important and appropriate setting for the early homes and outbuildings. The boundaries of the village today are much as they were in the mid-19th Century. They remain clearly defined by the surrounding rural landscape, with its mix of open agricultural land and forest. Active dairy farms sustain the traditional field patterns and uses. Farther afield, the distant views to the White Mountains remain a dominant feature of the village, and help explain the early appearance of inns, rest homes, and summer residences. There is only one paved road - the through road from Groton to Danville that incorporates part of the early Bayley-Hazen thoroughfare. The rest of the village roads are dirt and gravel, as they always have been. The only sidewalk is a gravel path separated from the paved road by a grass boulevard. The soft edges of these roads, combined with the mature trees and bushes, maintain a predominance of soft landscape that has always been characteristic of Peacham. Individual

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plantings, including terraced flower gardens on the sloping lawns of Peacham Corner, also sustain traditional landscape patterns.

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HISTORIC/CULTURAL RESOURCES (cont)

VISION:

Maintain and enhance the historic and cultural features in town.

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ISSUES/CONCERNS:

The recent designation as a historic district evolved from a process of study, understanding and appreciation. This process should continue.

Changes to historic buildings could alter the current character of the town.

Barns are an important part of the town's history and working landscape and should be protected.

A comprehensive inventory and preservation plan needs to be developed to identify and protect historic and cultural features in town.

The information developed for historic district designation should be generally available to residents.

The Planning Commission should encourage this process in other parts of town if there is interest.

Provide information about historic preservation to owners if interested.

The Historical Association should publicize the Vermont State matching barn grants program and continue to provide information to interested owners about maintaining their barns.

Work with interested groups, including the Peacham Historical Association, to inventory and develop a preservation plan for the historic and cultural features in town. This could be achieved in phases including:

- (a) identification of historic and cultural features;
- (b) description of these features; and
- (c) formulation of a plan for preservation of these features.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

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LIBRARY

The Peacham Library exists for the enrichment of the Peacham community. It provides free access to library materials and information services. It promotes reading for enjoyment and self-education for library users of all ages. It also serves a point of access to interlibrary loans, and as a center for community activities and concerns.

The Library Board and Staff believe that: 1. Reading and study are essential to individual growth and enrichment, and are among the most enjoyable forms of recreation. 2. Free and reliable access to information and cultural resources is a right of citizenship in a democracy and fundamental to the preservation of democracy.

Interest in a library in Peacham can be traced to December 21, 1798, when a notice appeared in the *Green Mountain Patriot*, convening a group that eventually called itself "Proprietors of the Federal Library." There are records of books arriving in July 1799, but there is no indication as to how long this first library in Peacham lasted. It is known that a debating society, organized August 9, 1810, in preparing for their debates, keenly felt the lack of a library and therefore organized the library which continues to exist. A major benefactor was Thaddeus Stevens, who in 1868 left the town \$1,000, with the interest to go to the library. Some of the money needed to operate the library today is the result of similar gifts.

The first library building, built in 1909, and a collection of approximately 3600 books, was destroyed by fire on January 27, 1959. A new building was erected in 1960 which included a meeting room used by groups in the community. In 2001 an addition was added to the existing building thanks to a bequest from Horace Gilmore and the generous contributions of local residents and other long-time supporters of the library, and the State of Vermont. In 2003 a Freeman Foundation/Vermont Public Library Foundation Grant provided funds to refurbish the 1960-era portion of the building. The Library currently has four high-speed public access computer stations. The collection numbers over 9,000 items. The Library is now open 20 hours per week, and the number of patrons using the library is increasing and is expected to continue to increase. Because public funds are contributed toward the Library's operating budget, the Town elects one member of the Board of Trustees. Since 1900, the library has been free to all residents of Peacham.

VISION:

The Peacham Library strives to be an important part of the Peacham community's intellectual, educational, leisure and cultural life. The Library Board envisions a future in which all of the community's interests are represented in the Library's collection and all residents use the Library to enrich their lives. The Board envisions meeting the needs of all residents for information and other library resources, either from its own collection or through networks to which it belongs.

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HOUSING

In 1989 the Peacham Housing Committee, now known as the Peacham Community Housing, Inc.,(PCH) studied the needs of moderate income residents, especially the needs of elderly residents. They found there was not a very large need for additional housing at that time. In 1997, a resource directory for Peacham senior residents was published by Peacham Community Housing, Inc. following a survey done in 1996.

In addition, the Planning Commission reviewed the 1990 and 2000 census data, the latest available information, to identify the trends and needs in the Town. Some of the conclusions are stated below:

- \$ Peacham's population grew rapidly in the 1980s (18.1%) despite a slowdown in county growth (7.9%) and statewide (10.0%). From 1990 to 2000, the growth rate dropped to 6%.
- \$ In 1990, 19.6% of Peacham residents were over 65 years old, this compares to 13.2% county wide. In 2000, 15.3% were over 65, compared to 14.4% in the country.
- \$ Over one-third of Peacham's houses have been built since 1980, with over 15% from 1990 to 2000.
- \$ In 2000, there were 263 units of year-round housing while 224 units were used for seasonal houses. The number of seasonal housing units increased nearly 20% in the 1990s.
- \$ There were only 40 renter-occupied dwellings in Peacham in 2000. There are twelve apartments in Peacham Corner.

Discussions have been underway between Peacham Community Housing (PCH) and Housing Vermont to review the current amount and conditions of the Village apartments and the needs of accessibility to its residents. These discussions should continue within the larger Peacham Corner planning community. In addition, Vermont Housing is sponsoring a regional housing study to understand better the nature of housing supply and demand, especially for low and moderate income families and individuals now and into the future.

VISION:

Ensure a variety of housing units for all income levels within the town emphasizing the rehabilitation of existing structures in favor of building new ones. Where possible, existing housing units should be maintained and rehabilitated in favor of building new ones.

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MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Public Buildings

Peacham has many public buildings that serve the different community needs. They include:

Town Hall (including gymnasium and tennis court)
Roller Barn
Fire House
Cemetery Tool Shed
Old Town Clerk's Office
School
Town Garage

Peacham's public buildings are vitally important to the functioning of town government and must be maintained and upgraded periodically. Recent expansion of the fire station is one example.

Evolving issues center on the Town Hall (gymnasium access) repainting, crowding at the Town Garage, the possible need for a Sand Storage Shed and a recycling shed, and improvements to the tennis court. To an increasing extent, the town depends on the generosity of the Peacham Congregational Church for town events. A plan for future town facilities is needed and should be reflected in a realistic capital budget. Such a plan should take into account state and federal guidelines and standards, growing demands of town organizations and commissions and the need for functional offices and meeting space.

VISION:

Maintain and enhance the current public buildings to meet the needs of Peacham residents.

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ISSUES/CONCERNS:

Many of the Town's buildings are of an advanced age.

A storage shed for sand may be required near the Town Garage in the next few years.

The Town Garage is increasingly inadequate for the maintenance and storage functions it serves.

RECOMMEND ACTIONS:

The Select Board is reviewing the adequacy of the Town's buildings to satisfy future town needs.

Plans for the location and construction of the shed should be developed by the Administrative Assistant.

The Select Board (and Administrative Assistant) should develop a plan for the Town Garage and surrounding area.

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Public Lands

Town owned lands include the school yard, cemeteries, the town forest, tennis courts, the athletic field, area around the municipal building, and the Peacham Fire District #1 (Fire District) picnic area. In addition to rights-of-way along the town highways, the Fire District also has easements for underground water supply pipes from Kettle Spring to the Peacham Fire District #1 reservoir and from the reservoir to the water main near the store in Peacham Corner. The town also has an easement for sewage disposal across the main street (Bayley-Hazen Road) from the municipal building to the septic field. The school secondarily shares this septic field with the municipal building. The school's primary septic field, installed when the school built an addition in 1993, is located southeast of the school on the Davis property. The Vermont Land Trust currently owns 3+ acres in Peacham Corner and is considering transferring that property to the Town.

On town roads, many of the public rights-of-way have been determined through surveys and are of varying widths (typically 2, 3 or 4 rods). Others have not been surveyed. Of these, most are assumed to have a right-of-way width of 3 rods (49.5 feet), measured from the center of the road. It is important for landowners as well as the town to know the location of boundaries of rights-of-way. This can assist the landowner in knowing what land he/she has a right to manage, and the town (particularly the road crew) will know in what areas the town has jurisdiction (see also Transportation section of this plan, p. 39).

There are no plans for new public roads in Peacham, or for new public rights-of-way. As land surveys become available, however, more accurate information on these public rights-of-way may emerge. A long-term goal should be to have a directory and map of all the right-of-ways in the town.

Public and private rights-of-way for telephone, electricity and cable services also exist throughout Peacham. The companies responsible for those services also are responsible for the rights-of-way. They should be encouraged to continue to work cooperatively with the town and individual landowners as these rights-of-way and the services they accommodate are modified or expanded over time.

Fire Protection:

The last few years have been exciting ones for the fire department. New equipment has been purchased and a much-needed expansion of the firehouse has been built. The next five years will feature more modest, yet important, improvements.

The current 1989 Ford emergency medical response and rescue van will be due for replacement during this period, and the department expects that a new light rescue vehicle will be purchased. The current van (and its replacement) also serves as a "station" for refilling SCBA (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus) air bottles during emergencies.

Using Homeland Security funding has permitted the purchase of some communication equipment, and it is assumed that with continued funding from this source that additional radios can be acquired.

Currently, the fire department has three dry hydrants in different parts of town. These are ponds that can be used in emergencies to refill the tanker. Two of these are in operation - one at the Hartongs' farm outside South Peacham and a second on Old Cemetery Road. The third, on Thaddeus Stevens Road in East Peacham, is not currently in operation. The long-range plan is to have these three ponds operating and to add two additional sites, one of which would be located in the northern part of town, toward Danville.

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As for personnel, the department now has 18 members and two junior members, but is always interested in others who are available locally during the day - including those who can play a secondary role (e.g., traffic control and maintaining supply lines). All firefighters are required to attend formal training sessions. Additional help, especially for daytime fires, is needed.

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ISSUES/CONCERNS:

The fire department will continue to upgrade its equipment.

The plan for dry hydrants around town needs to be completed.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

It is planned that the 1989 Ford van will be replaced with a new light rescue vehicle during the planning period.

New or repaired dry hydrants should be put into operation as soon as funding is available.

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Police Protection:

Police protection is currently provided by the Vermont State Police, Caledonia County Sheriff, and local constable. Road safety and the effect upon it of traffic speeds, intersections, and the size of trucks continues to be an issue in Peacham, especially along the main road through Peacham Corner.

ISSUES/CONCERNS:

Improved surveillance, road signs and new sidewalks and pathways can all contribute to reducing the risk to both pedestrians and vehicles.

There has been an increasing number of complaints from citizens about public trails and Class IV roads being used as a means of access by vandals.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

The town occasionally borrows speed radar equipment to inform travelers of their speeds and cautions them to be more attentive to the neighborhood through which they are driving.

The Select Board should consider providing additional police protection to these trails and rights-of-way.

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Solid Waste

Peacham maintains a solid waste transfer facility and recycling center in an enclosed, secure area located on the East Peacham Road. There are seven 8 cubic yard dumpsters for trash that is not recycled. Recyclables are collected in a trailer. The Peacham Parents-Teacher Group (PTG) has an on-going bottle drive and returnables are collected in a small adjacent shed. Two large 30 cubic yard containers are provided for metal and construction materials. Tires may also be left off. The Northeast Kingdom Solid Waste Management District (NEKWMD) has set up a collection center for used oil on the transfer site.

All of the above are available to Peacham residents for a nominal fee. The per bag fee for trash was recently raised from \$1.50 to \$2.00 as costs for managing trash have risen faster than revenues.

The recycling effort has been on-going for 15 years. Currently, plastics, glass (all colors), tin and aluminum cans, and various papers are gathered inside the trailer and are picked up when the containers are full. Below is a table for the tonnage of trash and recyclables collected by the town from 1999 to 2003.

Year	Trash	Recyclables	Total Tonnage	% Recyclables
1999	161.31	16.78	178.09	9.4%
2000	188.42	45.37	233.79	19.4%
2001	221.08	38.46	259.54	14.8%
2002	285.82	39.59	325.41	12.2%
2003	316.42	51.34	367.76	14.0%

Source: Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District

The solid waste that is collected each week in the dumpsters is removed by a contractor and disposed of at the Waste U.S.A. landfill in Coventry, VT. For the period 2001-2003 Peacham recycled approximately 13.5% of its solid waste. In 2003, the Town generated over 316 tons of trash in the regular dumpsters. The cost to dispose of that trash alone was approximately \$30,000. The two 30-yard dumpsters generated nearly 50 tons of waste. The cost per ton to dispose of the material is the same as the smaller dumpsters, currently at \$94/ton. Each time one of the larger dumpsters is emptied there is a hauling fee and a fuel surcharge adding \$2,200 to the cost of the construction debris. Including the salary of the attendant, rental of the dumpsters, recyclables removal, miscellaneous fees and maintenance, the total cost to the town for 2003 for the transfer station was approximately \$40,000. Income for 2003 was about \$23,000.

To compare the volume and cost of the solid waste collected a few years ago is revealing. In 1999 Peacham generated 134.92 tons of waste in the 8-yard dumpsters, only 4 on site. The cost per ton was \$63 compared to the current amount of \$94/ton. 15.52 tons of construction and miscellaneous waste was collected. The annual cost of the transfer station in 1999 was \$28,868. Income was \$18,183.

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ISSUES/CONCERNS:

Since the last town plan in 1999 our volume of solid waste has increased dramatically, nearly doubling in the five-year period 1999 to 2003.

ISSUES/CONCERNS (cont.):

The level of recycling has averaged about 14% of total waste (including construction and metal materials).

Cost of disposing of the solid waste has substantially risen, while the income has only slightly increased.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Increase awareness of the importance of recycling, and investigate methods of encouraging the reduction of waste and more recycling. For

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS (cont.):

households that have waste pick-up for a private hauler, provide incentives and techniques for separating recyclables from other trash.

The Select Board should increase awareness of the costs of solid waste disposal, and carefully monitor the costs and revenues of the transfer station operation.

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Sewage Disposal Systems

Peacham has two community sewage disposal systems. Statewide, many private systems have annual periods of failure, causing pollution of the ground surface, the surface waters, and the atmosphere. Failure usually results from the system's being located in soils that are naturally saturated during wet periods, inadequate capacity of the system in relation to the volume of sewage and the soil's ability to absorb the effluent, and/or faulty installation. While a survey of systems in Peacham has not been undertaken, recent statewide research has discovered that up to one-third of septic systems constructed in an average year are installed to replace systems which have failed.

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The State of Vermont is currently revising its on-site sewage regulations. Some changes have already been made, sewage disposal design standards are being modified, and dates for implementation set. Because these matters are currently in flux and will be until 2007, it is important for the Town of Peacham to keep abreast of these changes, especially those that affect provisions of the Town Zoning Ordinance and the Town's management of septic system design and management. Appendix Two of this document provides a summary of the major changes currently underway under the new state regulations.

ISSUES/CONCERNS:

There could be significant public health threats due to failed septic systems.

Revised state on-site septic system regulations could change the way potential developers determine the size of lots.

Narrow lots may aggravate the potential for failing septic systems to affect adjoining water supplies.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Review existing zoning by-law to ensure that it adequately protects water quality. The Planning Commission should review zoning by-law to ensure that it adequately protects water quality. This includes requiring that certified percolation tests be conducted for any new development.

The town should consider the impact of potential state rule change that these revisions may have on the location of new development in town.

The town should consider requiring larger or alternative lot frontages where soil or other conditions could lead to ground water contamination.

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EMERGENCY SERVICES

Medical services are provided at the Danville Health Center and in nearby communities of St. Johnsbury, Monroe, Woodsville, and Littleton. Emergency medical services are provided by Danville Rescue Inc. and in the Peacham Pond area by Cabot Ambulance, which are supported by the town through an annual appropriation. Peacham Fire Department provides medical first response to the Town of Peacham. These services are adequate at this time.

911 Program

Since the town plan was adopted in 1993, efforts have been underway to develop dependable emergency services for Peacham through the Enhanced 911 program. In this program, developed primarily to assist in medical, fire and police emergency situations, all the roads of the town have been named, or renamed, and all residences and businesses assigned a number related to their location on town roads. Completed in 1998, this program improves the response time for police, fire and other emergency services. All streets and roads in Peacham are designated by signs. Emergency services need cooperation from residents in posting their E-911 house numbers to make them easier to find in an emergency, especially at night. A list of the revised town road names, past and present is available at the Town Clerk's office.

Disaster Contingency Planning

In May 1999, the Peacham Select Board adopted a Rapid Response Plan for disaster management. In 2000, the Town, the Peacham School, and the Peacham Congregational Church entered into "Shelter Agreements" with the American Red Cross. Unforeseen circumstances, such as the disastrous ice storms that severely impacted parts of northern New England, New York State, and Canada in 1998, could result in an extended period of the loss of electric power, telephone, and other such essential services in town.

The town has prepared for such an event by considering alternate means for providing its citizenry (particularly those most vulnerable such as the elderly, the infirm, and the very young) with heat, food, adequate shelter, and access to emergency medical care and firefighting support. Public buildings located in town designated as shelters and emergency operations center will be staffed with personnel to dispense such services. In planning for catastrophic events the town needs to identify not only sources of emergency food supplies, equipment such as electric generators for power and emergency cellular phone service, but personnel to be trained and organized in advance of a disaster to operate equipment and to provide guidance to townspeople on obtaining such services. (These services and material will be provided by the American Red Cross, Vermont Emergency Management and local personnel.) Disaster planning is coordinated with local, county, and state law enforcement, firefighters, emergency medical service providers, and other such professionals to maximize use of available resources.

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ISSUES/CONCERNS:

There is a need to make the Disaster Plan for Peacham known to its residents and leaders and to revise it on an ongoing basis.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

The Selectmen should work with the Emergency Management Coordinator for the Town of Peacham to ensure that the Rapid Response Plan is known and revised on an ongoing basis.

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TELEPHONE SERVICE

Telephone service is provided for the most part by FairPoint New England. A few phones in the northern section and near West Barnet are served by Verizon. Recent upgrading of the local phone system has expanded the local calling area. Calls to the St. Johnsbury exchange area are included in the basic service charge. Increasing use of the internet and other telecommunication services is affecting telephone service accessibility in the Town of Peacham. FairPoint offers high-speed Internet hookups to some of its residential customers in Peacham.

FairPoint, as well as Charter Communications (cable) and the power companies should continue to work with the town in the expansion of services, the maintenance of poles and other facilities, and the modification of services over time.

There is an increased potential for wireless communication towers to be sited in Peacham, as has been the case in other communities, resulting from the demand for cellular phones. The town needs to remain aware of new technological advances in the communications industry and be prepared to respond to requests for additional or modified facilities. Hilltops and other high altitude sites in town are particularly prone to eventual tower construction. Amendments to the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 place communities in a vulnerable position regarding wireless communication facilities. Peacham has developed a communication tower ordinance in anticipation of possible proposals.

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ADJACENT COMMUNITIES

Peacham depends on the adjacent communities for many services. The town is part of a mutual aid agreement for firefighting, the high school students all go out of town for their education, and nearly all the jobs that residents rely on are in other communities.

Peacham shares boundaries with Danville, Barnet, Ryegate, Groton, Marshfield, and Cabot. The development pattern of Peacham is compatible with that of its abutting towns in almost all directions. It is unclear, however, how compatible the town's zoning ordinance is with that of adjoining towns.

After adoption of the revised plan, when a review of the zoning ordinance is appropriate, the Planning Commission should communicate with adjoining towns to ensure that the land use regulations, especially those in effect near border areas are as consistent as possible. This coordination should extend, as it already does, to cooperation on reviewing and regulating, where appropriate, development that occurs at mutual borders or on land parcels with boundaries that lie within two or more towns.

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APPENDIX #1

TOWN OF PEACHAM

ROAD POLICY

Adopted August 4, 2004

Amended May 18, 2005

The following policy is established as a guide for regulating town roads to insure that they are properly maintained, that the interest of the town is protected in the maintenance of Class IV roads, and to insure that there will be equal treatment applied uniformly to any additions to or reclassifications of town roads. The authority for the class and length of town roads shall be the current General Highway map as prepared by the Vermont Agency of Transportation for the Town of Peacham or the appropriate authority of the Vermont Agency of Transportation.

1. Class II Town Roads

- A. The Administrative Assistant will maintain a schedule for the re-treatment of the blacktop portion of Class II roads so that each segment is considered for re-treatment within an 8-year cycle.
- B. Grass and weeds along all Class II roads will be mowed at least once yearly.
- C. Guardrails and culvert-marking posts on Class II roads shall be maintained as permitted by the road budget.

2. Class III town roads are all traveled town roads other than Class II and IV. They are roads that are negotiable, under normal conditions, all seasons of the year by a standard manufactured pleasure car.

- A. The following standards for width and surface depth based on average daily traffic shall apply to all Class III roads in Peacham:

Anticipated Traffic	Width	Surface Depth
A.D.T. 0 to 25	14'	15"
25 to 50	20'	15"
50 to 100	24'	15"

- B. Culverts on all Class III roads shall be no smaller than 18 inches in diameter.
- C. The grass, weeds, and brush shall be cut on the right-of-way of all Class III roads periodically to insure visibility and safe driving conditions.

3. Class IV town roads are those roads so designated on the Town Highway map within the Town of Peacham.

- A. The Town will grade, as conditions require, all Class IV roads at least once each summer.
- B. The Town will maintain the road sufficient to ensure the road is passable from May 1st to October 31st.

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- C. The Town will install and maintain culverts where necessary.
- D. The Town will not plow nor provide any winter maintenance on Class IV roads.

4. Additional Regulations:

A. Access to Town Roads

Access to all Town roads shall be by the permit system as per Section 43, Title 19 V.S.A.

1. Permits: All access permits must be filed in duplicate with the Town Administrative Assistant for approval. The conditions for granting an access permit will specify if a driveway culvert is necessary.
2. Access Culverts: Culverts will be provided at the landowner's expense and will be no less than 15" in diameter. The Town Administrative Assistant shall approve installation of culverts at the landowner's expense.
3. The conditions for granting an access permit will take into consideration the slope of the proposed driveway, the area drainage, and other pertinent conditions.

B. Width of Town Right-of-Way

1. All Town roads are presumed to have a right-of-way of three rods (49.5 feet), as measured from the center of the existing road, unless deeds or other records indicate a specific width of a particular road. Objects, structures, vegetation, plantings or fences in the town right-of-way are at the risk of the resident and not the responsibility of the town. The town reserves the right to remove or cause to be removed any such objects, structures, vegetation, plantings, fences, or other items in the town right-of-way, as the town sees fit to insure proper and safe use of the town right-of-way.
2. All new roads accepted on the Town Highway System must have a right-of-way of not less than fifty (50) feet.

C. Road Materials

1. Gravel: All gravels used on Town roads, as surface or traveled surface material shall be of such a grade that it would be acceptable by the District Highway Engineer of the Vermont Agency of Transportation.

D. New Roads

1. All new road construction in future developments in the Town of Peacham must be constructed to Class III standards as specified in Section 2, subsection A, of this policy.

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APPENDIX #2

New On-Site Septic Regulations

Major changes are taking place in the State of Vermont's On-Site Septic Regulations. The intent of these changes is to reform the permit process so that all septic systems and water supplies are treated consistently under one statute. Among the changes that have been instituted or are planned are the following:

- a. Advanced technologies will be allowed for use at sites for which they are suited;
- b. Towns may administer the program instead of the state if they wish. Further rulemaking is forthcoming on this provision;
- c. The old ten-acre exemption for state approval has ended for lots created on or after June 14, 2002. Until June 1, 2007, existing undeveloped exempt lots can be developed with a single-family residence without a state permit as long as the system design meets the revised state technical standards;
- d. Any new ten-acre plus lot created between June 14, 2002 and November 1, 2004, can be built on through June 1, 2007, with a permit meeting the revised technical standards;
- e. If a single-family residence on its own lot is exempt and in existence before June 14, 2002, or substantially complete before November 1, 2004, modifications to the water supply or septic system or the addition of bedrooms do not require a state permit if they are done before July 1, 2007. On or after July 1, 2007, a permit is required if these actions are taken;
- f. Failed systems are entitled to a 'best fix' permit for replacement considering the expense. A holding tank can be used as a last resort;
- g. Peacham has until July 1, 2007, to plan for the implementation of the new state technical standards;
- h. All new systems need to be designed by a licensed engineer or site technician - further rulemaking is currently underway;
- i. The slope for construction of septic systems on new lots is limited to 20% ;
- j. The Agency of Natural Resources and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development will assist towns with technical assistance and available funds for planning assistance.

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Peacham Base Map

Natural Resource Map

Land Use Map

Historic District Map

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