

7. Facilities and Services

7.A Overview

A primary purpose of this plan is to identify services currently available to town residents, evaluate the effectiveness of the Town and other providers in delivering those services, anticipate future demands, and assess whether those demands can be met efficiently. Waitsfield residents enjoy a range of services and facilities, including an efficient municipal government, excellent emergency services, access to a variety of social, recreation and health care services, and state-of-the-art telecommunications infrastructure.

Despite the wide range of excellent services available, the Town faces several challenges regarding specific facilities and services. The lack of municipal water and wastewater hinders efforts to foster a compact settlement pattern, which can result in sprawl and a corresponding loss of the Town's rural character. Local government and education are largely dependent on property tax revenues to fund their operations and taxpayers are stressed by a growing tax burden. Continued growth in the community will require an ongoing assessment and upgrade of specific facilities.

7.B Town Government

Administration. Waitsfield is governed by a five-member Selectboard, which is responsible for preparing the Town's budget, setting policy, administering town finances and a variety of related duties. A full-time Town Administrator reports to the Selectboard and is responsible for the day-to-day management of town affairs. Town staff also includes a full-time appointed Town Clerk and a full-time appointed Treasurer. Currently, the Clerk and Treasurer serve as each other's assistants. A full-time Road Foreman reports to the Selectboard and manages a three-person road department. A full-time Planning and Zoning Administrator, who is hired by the Selectboard, reports to the Town Administrator.

Like most small communities, Waitsfield is heavily dependent upon volunteers to fulfill many governmental duties. Several dozen local residents are elected or appointed to serve on boards and committees, and to represent Waitsfield on regional organizations. This dedication and sense of duty helps define our community, and keeps local institutions open and accessible.

Planning and Zoning. Waitsfield has an active land use planning and community development program that dates back to the late 1960s. Most planning functions are carried out by a volunteer Planning Commission. A Development Review Board is responsible for reviewing

proposed projects in light of the Town's land use and subdivision regulations. With the formation of the Mad River Valley Planning District in the mid-1980s, the Planning Commission has been able to augment its planning capacity with professional assistance.

Conservation. The Conservation Commission is composed of up to nine appointed members, with lead responsibility for stewarding certain lands of the municipality which have natural resource, historic, educational, cultural, scientific, architectural, and/or archaeological values in which the public has an interest. Under its responsibilities to administer particular municipal lands, properties, and other rights, the commission is actively engaged in planning for the management of 793 acres of public land located on the slopes and ridgeline of the Northfield Range (Scrag Mountain Town Forest), alongside the Mad River (Wu Ledges Town Forest, Austin Parcel, Tardy Parcel) and alongside Brook Road (Woliner Parcel), plus easement monitoring on 25 acres adjacent to the Wu Ledges Town Forest (Lawton Parcel) and 10 acres behind the Valley Professional Center (Dowdell/Baked Beads parcel).

In 2012, the Selectboard approved a long-term (10-15 year) management plan for the Scrag Mountain Town Forest. In 2015-16, the Commission spearheaded the first timber harvest and the establishment of a private sugaring license on portions of the Town lands. The Commission also initiated a "Scrag Forest Gateway Project" which resulted in the Town's purchase in 2017 of a 110-acre parcel to enhance public access to the Town Forest, recreational opportunities, and forestland protection. Revenues from the timber harvest and sugaring license are helping to support stewardship and management costs on the Town's Scrag Forest lands.

In 2015, the Selectboard approved a long-term (10-15 year) management plan for Wu Ledges Town Forest. The Commission has begun implementing enhancements to public access and is working toward establishing an official trail network in the Forest.

Other Volunteer Positions. A wide range of other functions are carried out by volunteers appointed or ratified by the Selectboard, including the Fire Warden, Tree Board, Constable, Road Commissioner, Energy Coordinator, Emergency Management Director, Emergency Management Coordinator, Health Officer, Mad River Recreation District, Dog Warden, and Green Up Coordinator. Other, more ceremonial, appointed positions include Fence Viewer, Weigher of Coal, and Inspector of Lumber.

Fiscal Condition. In Vermont, the principal mechanism for funding local government is the property tax. While certain types of outside assistance are available (including state highway aid, fees for services, miscellaneous special purpose grant programs), approximately 80 percent of Waitsfield's annual municipal budget is funded through the local property tax. The fact that non-tax revenues consistently make up around 20 percent Waitsfield's budget

is largely due to an aggressive effort on the part of town government to identify and secure alternative revenue sources, such as grants, to fund specific projects.

Table 7-1 shows annual municipal expenditures between 2004 and 2009. The Town has maintained a relatively stable budget for the past several years; approximately one-third of the budget is dedicated to road maintenance.

Table 7-1: Waitsfield Municipal Budget

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 (Projected)
EXPENSES							
Total Operating Budget Expenses	\$1,104,231	\$1,089,584	\$1,210,673	\$528,400	\$1,196,062	\$1,167,269	\$1,306,899
Total Reserve Fund Allocations	\$178,500	\$230,500	\$206,500	--	\$169,000	\$166,500	\$201,000
Total Debt Expenses					\$108,031	\$273,767	\$320,785
Total Capital & One-Time Expenses	\$233,413	\$144,517	\$286,759	\$90,212	\$236,018	\$318,957	\$154,242
Special Article Expenses	--	--	\$5,000	--	\$7,500	\$10,000	--
Total Expenses	\$1,518,401	\$1,464,601	\$1,708,933	\$618,612	\$1,716,612	\$1,936,494	\$1,981,926
REVENUES							
Total Operating Revenue	--	--	--	\$78,490	\$270,240	\$325,426	\$294,367
Total Debt Revenues	--	--	--	--	\$17,347	\$16,642	\$21,266
Total Capital & One-Time Revenues	--	--	--	\$2,744	\$67,015	\$286,322	\$148,121
Special Articles Revenue	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total Revenues	\$329,346	\$308,314	\$441,171	\$81,234	\$354,692	\$628,389	\$463,753
Tax Revenues	\$1,077,503	\$1,163,071	\$1,219,424	0	\$1,482,762	\$1,297,563	\$1,326,263

Source: Waitsfield Town Annual Reports

Capital Budget & Program. To limit fluctuations in town expenditures, thereby stabilizing tax rates, the Town has adopted a capital budget and program on an annual basis for more than 20 years. The capital budget and program is a planning tool to help the Town anticipate future capital expenditures and to schedule them so to avoid sharp increases in the tax rate during any one year. When combined with a capital reserve fund, the Town can spread capital costs over a number of years, further stabilizing the municipal budget. It is also a mechanism for considering capital expenditures in the context of this plan to ensure that \$78,490 budget decisions are consistent with the Town’s planning goals.

7.C Town Properties

The Town owns several properties used for a variety of civic, recreation, conservation, working forestland, and cultural purposes. The following is a partial list of town properties and a description of relevant considerations related to each.

Town Office. The Town Office was formerly located in the first floor of the Joslin Memorial Library. Limitations associated with that site and vulnerability to flooding, which occurred most recently during Tropical Storm Irene in August 2011, led to the determination that expansion of the library building would not be an option to accommodate new town office operations. The Town began actively planning for a new municipal facility in 2010. A Town Office Task Force, appointed that same year, hired Maclay Architects to evaluate the suitability of various sites in Waitsfield Village and Irasville.

Following more in-depth analysis and public input, the Selectboard accepted the Town Office Task Force's recommendation that the Town purchase an option for the site in Waitsfield Village owned by Wrenn Compere adjacent to the Flemer Field Community Green and occupied by a farmstand, to allow further study as the preferred site for a new town office. An anonymous donor purchased the farmstand property specifically for the new Town Office site. The project was funded primarily from a CDBG-DR grant award in the amount of \$873,200 and a Town Office bond in the amount of \$650,000. The new two-story, 5,142 square foot building is fully ADA accessible. As part of a group net-metering arrangement with Green Mountain Power and the Town's solar array, the building will be completely net-zero in terms of energy consumption. The state-of-the-art facility was completed in July 2016 and operations began in the new building that same month.

Joslin Memorial Library. The Joslin Memorial Library, located in Waitsfield Village, is administered by a Board of Trustees. A private organization, Friends of the Joslin Library, provides support on a regular basis. A part time librarian maintains library hours Monday through Saturday. Library staff is supplemented by a dedicated group of volunteers who perform a variety of tasks. Without these volunteers, the high level of service library patrons have grown accustomed to would suffer.

The library houses over 9,700 books, supplemented by an interlibrary loan program with other libraries in the state. The library offers children's programs including a pre-school story hour, a Saturday reading program for school-aged children in addition to a summer program. The library also provides internet access, a large collection of audio book tapes, home book delivery for elderly and disabled residents and, also with support of a foundation grant, a newly expanded adult program. In addition to private fund-raising and income from various endowments, a large portion of the Library's operating costs are provided by the towns of Fayston and Waitsfield.

General Wait House. The historic General Wait House, the original home of Waitsfield's founder, Benjamin Wait, was purchased in 1995. Funded with the assistance of an enhancement grant from VTrans, a grant from the Vermont Housing Conservation Board, town funds, and private donations raised by the Waitsfield Historical Society, the building accommodates display space for the Historical Society, the Mad River Planning District office, the Friends of the Mad River office, the Mad River Path office, public rest rooms, community meeting space and office space for rent-paying tenants.



The main house was restored to serve the aforementioned functions; the attached barns were only stabilized and remain in need of restoration. The Waitsfield Historical Society made much progress in 2010 restoring the Carriage Barn for expanded display space for the Historical Society, and additional space for larger community meetings and functions than can be accommodated within the main house. In addition, the Carriage Barn roof was replaced in 2009. Federal stimulus funds in 2010 helped provide for the weatherization of the main house, including new insulation, installation of an energy efficient boiler, and new storm windows. Any future renovations should provide a worthwhile community service, improve the outward appearance of the building, and enhance the northern gateway to Waitsfield Village. The General Wait House should continue to manage and have a detailed upkeep and maintenance plan in order to properly care for this important community resource.

Town Garage. The Town's highway department, discussed in Chapter 8, is housed in a garage located off the Tremblay Road, near its intersection with North Road. Built in 1986 after a fire destroyed the previous garage, the garage is located on a 10.8-acre parcel. The current facility is barely adequate to meet current needs, and additional space will be needed in the near future. The current location can accommodate expansion as it becomes necessary. A

new solar array was constructed on-site in 2014 by Aegis Renewable Energy. The 102.3 kW DC ground mounted system includes 330 310-watt solar modules designed to produce 102,106 kWh per year off-setting the electricity needs of the Waitsfield Elementary School, Waitsfield-Fayston Fire Station, Town Garage, General Wait House, Joslin Memorial Library, the Town Office, and the metered lights at the Waitsfield Village Covered Bridge.

Cemeteries. Waitsfield owns and maintains four cemeteries:

- Irasville Cemetery, on Route 100 in Irasville;
- Village/Mill Cemetery, on Bridge Street just east of Waitsfield Village;
- General Wait Cemetery, behind the fire station in Waitsfield Village; and
- Common Cemetery adjacent to Waits-field Common.

The Waitsfield Cemetery Commission is the body responsible for the maintenance and management of the cemeteries. The Town is fortunate that, due to decisions of current and past cemetery commissioners, Waitsfield has a perpetual care fund that is among the largest in Vermont. Although the Town has a cemetery endowment fund which provides funds for maintenance of the cemeteries, increased expenses and lack of growth in the fund may require additional funds or support from the Town at some point in the future.

Capacity exists in each of the cemeteries, although space is limited in all but the Common Cemetery (which was expanded with the purchase of nearly an acre in the early 1990s). Total remaining capacity, however, is approximately 521 spaces. The Cemetery Commission may need to seek expansion of existing cemeteries, consideration of the use of mausoleums, or an additional cemetery location as a last resort in order to provide for future burial needs.

Other Properties. In addition to the Waitsfield-Fayston Fire Department, which is discussed below, the Town owns several parcels used for conservation, recreation, and other community uses. These parcels are described in appropriate sections of this plan.

Public Parks/Spaces. The Selectboard accepted the donation by the Flemer family in 2009 of a 7-acre parcel of open common land on the north end of Waitsfield Village. A grant from the Trees for Local Communities Foundation and community partnerships resulted in the development of a fruit orchard in 2010 on the western boundary of the Flemer Field Community Green. There is also a small park adjacent to the Joslin Library, and the two undeveloped commons located at the intersections of the Common at Joslin Hill and East Roads. The Town acquired the former barber shop parcel on Bridge Street adjacent to the Big Eddy Covered Bridge in 2012 and was awarded a grant in 2014 to develop the small parcel into a public park (“Lovett Park”); site development was completed in July 2017. The so-called Munn Site is a 12-acre vacant parcel located on Route 100 by Kingsbury Road which was originally purchased for use as a centralized wastewater treatment plant. After a failed bond vote, the property has not been developed and remains open field down to the

Mad River. The Town-owned pond at Carroll Road and Main Street serves as common land in Irasville. The Town should consider ways it or additional lands could serve as a focal point for future pedestrian-oriented, village-style development in Irasville as called for in this plan.

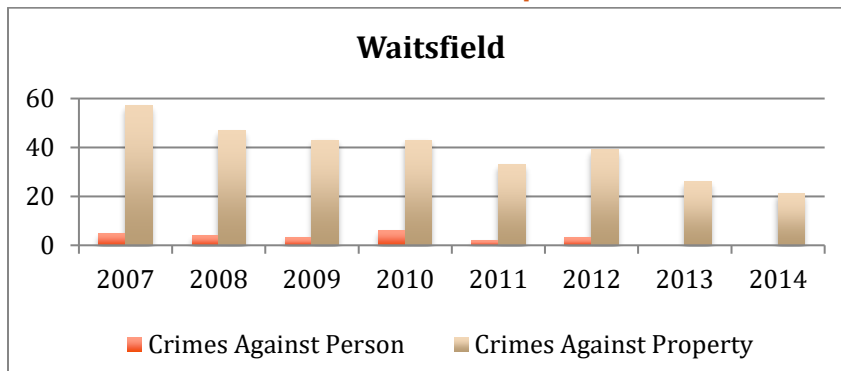
7.D Public Safety

Law Enforcement. The Vermont State Police are responsible for law enforcement in the Mad River Valley. The State Police operate out of the Middlesex Barracks located on Route 2 in Middlesex, and are primarily responsible for all law enforcement matters in our area, particularly major criminal investigations.

Waitsfield has contracted with the Washington County Sheriff’s Department for local police coverage for nearly two decades. The goals of this program are to enforce traffic safety and provide emergency response services in a cost-effective without the burden of a local police department.

Table 7-2 indicates the extent to which the number of crimes in Waitsfield has declined steadily in recent years and the predominance of property crimes (arson, bribery, burglary, embezzlement, vandalism, theft, and drug violations). Waitsfield’s crime rate remains lower than state and county averages.

Table 7-2: Total Instances of Crime Reported in Waitsfield



Source: VT Dept. of Public Safety, Vermont Crime Information Center

Waitsfield-Fayston Fire Department. Fire protection services are currently provided by the Waitsfield-Fayston Volunteer Fire Department. The department covers both Waitsfield and Fayston and maintains a mutual assistance agreement with other nearby fire departments. Fayston funds 40 percent of the annual operating and capital costs of the department. This 60/40 split was determined by the approximate percentage of responses within each town. In addition to the funding agreement, many Fayston residents serve as volunteers. As both

towns grow, the breakdown of calls should be monitored to ensure that funding remains fairly allocated.

Presently, the department is staffed by 19 active volunteers and responds to around 98 incidents in a typical year. Over the past decade, the department has seen its average number of calls per year increase by 70 percent, while the number of personnel has decreased significantly. Volunteers are reimbursed a nominal fee for time spent on emergency responses; however, the bulk of time spent on administration, training and maintenance is voluntary.

In order to maintain the excellent level of service presently provided, the number of volunteers should be monitored and additional fire fighters actively recruited. In particular, it is important for the department to include volunteers that are in town and available to respond to emergencies during normal workday hours. Recruitment is done through advertising and events such as Labor Day at the Irasville Country Store.

Fires actually represent only a minor component of fire department calls and the department most frequently responds to motor vehicle accidents. Several calls are also related to malfunctioning heating systems that are resolved before a fire starts. In addition to emergency response, the department has emphasized fire prevention and education. The past performance of the fire department has been exceptional, and there is no reason to believe that performance will change in the coming years.

Table 7-3: Emergency Response Statistics

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Waitsfield-Fayston Volunteer Fire Department					
Motor Vehicle Accident	31	25	47	29	24
Fire Alarm (smoke)	22	34	26	23	26
CO Detector	4	5	4	11	5
Power line emergency	8	6	11	8	4
Chimney Fire	4	4	2	4	4
Structure Fire	9	5	10	3	4
Ambulance Assist	3	3			4
Propane Leak/Gas Odor	2	1	7	2	2
Smoke Investigation		1			3
Kitchen Fire	1				
Car Fire		2	1	6	3
Equipment Fire			1		1
Wildland Fire		3	4	3	1
Unauthorized Burn					3
Brush Fire	4				
Dumpster Fire	1				
Flooding		2	1		1
Good Intent	4		15	9	
Elevator Emergency				2	
Appliance Fire/Malfunction	1	1	2	4	

Table 7-3: Emergency Response Statistics

Service Call	4				3
Waitsfield Calls	49	49	81	62	48
Fayston Calls	37	38	38	31	31
Buels Gore M/A			2	2	0
Granville M/A		1			
Middlesex M/A					1
Moretown M/A	9	2	12	11	6
Northfield M/A			1		
Warren M/A	3	4	3	0	2
Total Calls	98	108	137	106	88
Mad River Valley Ambulance Service					
Total Calls	473	423	440	440	502

Source: Waitsfield Town Annual Reports

Major equipment, which is maintained in the fire station located adjacent to the General Wait House in Waitsfield Village, includes a 2013 International tanker pumper, a 2003 1,000-gallon International pumper, a 1987 Ford pumper, and a 2000 Chevrolet van. A 1943 Ford Model A pumper is also maintained, which symbolizes the department's years of dedicated service to the community. Annual contributions to a reserve fund, in the average amount of \$15,000, are made toward future equipment replacement.

Ambulance & Rescue Services. The Mad River Valley Ambulance Service is organized as a non-profit corporation and provides 24-hour service to residents and visitors of the Mad River Valley.

The service operates from a facility in Waitsfield Village, which was purchased in 2001. In addition to providing four garage bays, space is available for equipment storage, administrative offices, and meeting and training facilities. The facility has an emergency generator, base station radio and 25 pair phone cable so that it can operate as an emergency operations center during a disaster. Rescue equipment currently in use includes three fully equipped ambulances, a rescue/extraction vehicle (not used for transport) that carries heavy equipment, a "mass-accident" trailer, off-road rescue equipment, a dispatch radio and field radios, as well as a substantial amount of emergency medical equipment.

The service has grown considerably over the years to meet the needs of the growing community. Since its inception in 1971, the annual number of calls has increased by 81 percent. The service currently has a roster of 60 volunteers Valley-wide. The average first responder response time is 7 minutes, while the ambulance response time is less than 17 minutes. One reason for such a fast first responder time is the local dispatch service, which notifies volunteers in scattered locations around the Mad River Valley of a call. Since the late 1990s, E-911 emergency response service has been available in The Valley.

Emergency Shelter. The Town of Waitsfield has an approved Local Emergency Operations Plan that was adopted in March 2016. The Waitsfield Elementary School serves as the Town’s primary emergency shelter and the Town Office is the Emergency Operations Center. The newly constructed town office has an elevator and backup power generation.

7.E Solid Waste

Efforts to reduce the amount of waste before it enters the waste stream and recycle the broadest range of waste in a cost-effective manner will become increasingly important as population increases.

Waitsfield is a member of the Mad River Resource Management Alliance (“MRRMA”). The alliance is a six-town district formed through an inter-local agreement in 1994. Other member towns are Duxbury, Fayston, Moretown, Warren and Waterbury. Northfield and Roxbury were added to the MRRMA in 2010. The alliance is responsible for the preparation, adoption, and regular update of a Solid Waste Implementation Plan, which is required under the state’s solid waste law and is submitted to the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources for review and approval.

A representative and alternate from each town serves on the alliance board, which meets bi-monthly to set policy, determine programs and oversee the activities of a part-time administrator. A per capita assessment is charged to cover administrative and program costs.

Free or low-cost disposal of appliances, tires, electronic waste, and collected roadside trash is also provided in association with annual alliance-sponsored events such as Green Up Day, Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days, and tire collections. The alliance works with the Association of Vermont Recyclers, and is a member of the Northeast Resource Recovery Association, which helps market some recyclable commodities.

Hauling, recycling, and landfill services are provided under agreement with Earth Wise, Inc.. Trash collection services also are provided by other private haulers. A regional transfer facility, located in Waitsfield’s Limited Business District and operated by Casella Waste Management, provides area residents with a convenient solid waste disposal site as well as a place to recycle materials. In 2012, the Vermont Legislature unanimously passed the Universal Recycling Law (Act 148), which effectively bans disposal of three major types of waste materials over the course of six years: “blue bin” recyclables by July 2015, leaf/yard debris and clean wood by July 2016, and food scraps by July 2020.

7.F Sewage Disposal & Water Supply

Municipal Wastewater Treatment. Currently, all of the Town’s sewage disposal needs are addressed by individual on-site systems. Lacking a central wastewater collection and treatment facility, town officials have studied the feasibility of developing such a facility to serve the high-density portions of town, especially Irasville and Waitsfield Village. In 1999, the Town secured funding from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources’ revolving fund to study the feasibility of developing a municipal wastewater disposal facility to serve Irasville and, possibly, Waitsfield Village. As a result of preliminary analysis, the Town purchased a 12.2-acre parcel (the Munn site) located south of Irasville for \$126,000 in November, 2000 as a potential wastewater treatment site.

In 2008, a two-phase plan to provide a sewer system in Irasville and pipe the waste to Munn field for treatment was developed. The total two-phase system was estimated to cost approximately \$12 million. With grants and users funding the bulk of the project, a bond vote was held in March 2008 to finance the balance of the Phase I cost of \$5.7 million project but was defeated. The Selectboard deferred reconsideration of a municipal wastewater system while proceeding with the municipal water system, which was approved in November 2008 after being narrowly defeated in two prior votes.

In 2011, a plan for a town-sponsored loan program to finance privately-owned, shared, decentralized wastewater systems was developed as an alternative to a municipally-owned system. The same year, a wastewater study entitled “Assessment of Decentralized Wastewater Options: A Survey of Needs, Capacity, and Solutions for Historic Waitsfield Village and Irasville, Vermont” was completed. The townspeople voted at the 2012 Town Meeting to approve allowing the Town to bond up to \$250,000 to develop this program and this amount was subsequently supplemented by \$750,000. The wastewater loan program allowed property owners in the Town center to borrow funds to build or repair wastewater systems and pay off the loans over 20 years to the Town which in turn borrowed from the State of Vermont’s revolving loan fund. Six property owners took advantage of this program through 2016 with the funding that was available.

On-Site Disposal. Shared wastewater options are continuing to be explored to serve designated growth areas in Irasville and Waitsfield Village as well as future designated residential hamlets; however, many properties in Waitsfield will continue to be served by on-site, in-ground disposal. In 2002 the Vermont Legislature amended the state’s on-site septic rules to require all new development, regardless of lot size, to meet state septic system standards. This effectively eliminated the “10-acre loophole,” which exempted lots greater than 10 acres from any design standards.

The new standards also allow for a number of alternative septic system designs which allow for the placement of septic systems on land that could not have met the previous standards. As a result of the rule changes, on-site disposal systems may now be located on hundreds of acres in Waitsfield previously unsuitable for on-site systems.

Water Supply. In 2008, Waitsfield voters approved the bonds for construction of a municipal water system to serve Irasville and Waitsfield village, and construction of this project began in 2010. The \$7.6 million project will be paid for by \$4.5 million in federal grants, connection fees, and a \$3.014 million loan.

The municipal water system begins at the Reed Road wellhead and follows the Town's rights-of-way along Long Road, down Bushnell Road to a new storage tank constructed on the Town-owned former LeClair gravel pit site. From the tank, the transmission main follows a right-of-way to Tremblay Road, where it meets Route 100 and continues on to Waitsfield Village (including Old County Road), Irasville, and Eagles Resort. Hydrants and bollards provide fire protection along the route.

Outside the existing service territory for the new municipal water system, development will continue to rely on private wells.

7.G Community Services

Local Health Services. The Mad River Valley Health Center, Inc. (MRVHC) in Waitsfield is a non-profit community-owned facility leasing space to a variety of healthcare providers. The mission of the MRVHC is to provide a quality facility to ensure the availability of local health care to residents of the Mad River Valley, neighboring towns and visitors. The health center is governed by a community Board of Directors composed of individuals representing the towns of Warren, Waitsfield, Fayston, and Moretown. Healthcare providers at the health center include the Mad River Family Practice (owned by University of Vermont - Central Vermont Medical Center), a physical therapist, an alternative healthcare practice and mental health providers.

Other health care services available to local residents include:

- **Ambulance.** The Mad River Valley Ambulance Service provides 24-hour emergency response throughout the Mad River Valley.
- **Dentist.** Valley Dental Associates provides full service general dentistry.
- **Hospitals.** Hospitals serving Mad River Valley residents are University of Vermont - Central Vermont Medical Center in Berlin, Gifford Memorial in Randolph, Fletcher Allen Health Care/University of Vermont Medical Center in Burlington and the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, New Hampshire.

- **Urgent Care.** University of Vermont - Central Vermont Medical Center operates several ExpressCare facilities locally: two in Berlin, and one in Waterbury Center. The walk-in care clinics are open 7 days per week for adults and children with minor illnesses or injuries who are unable to get an immediate appointment with their primary care doctor. No appointment is necessary.
- **Pharmacy.** Kinney Drugs is a community pharmacy with full prescription drug services and an on-site pharmacist.
- **Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice.** Home health care services which include therapy (physical, speech, occupational) and), counseling, and consoling the elderly; homemaker service (meals, shopping, housekeeping); Hospice consoling and counseling the terminally ill and their families; and child birthing classes.
- **Vermont Department of Health.** Well Child Clinic (preschool immunization), WIC Programs (prenatal and preschool nutritional programs).
- **Washington County Mental Health.** 24-hour emergency service, out-patient clinic, substance abuse programs, job placement, day and hospital-based programs, day hospital and resident programs.
- **Evergreen Place.** Evergreen Place is located at 5305 Main Street, Route 100 in Irasville, and is one of Downstreet Housing & Community Development's subsidized rental apartments in which the rent charged is equal to 30 percent of the household's adjusted income. Evergreen Place offers 17 one-bedroom apartments and one two-bedroom apartment for seniors.



~~**Day Care.** Presently, only two home child care operators are registered in the Town—a reduction from past years, when as many as five home child care services were registered in Waitsfield. Currently, six licensed facilities operate in Waitsfield, including the after-school program which uses the elementary school. It is not known how adequately child care needs are now being served.~~

Childcare. Ensuring accessible, affordable, quality childcare is important to sound economic development. Recognizing the reality that most families lead lives that require full or at least part-time childcare outside of their homes, childcare is seen as a critical community need. Accessible, affordable and quality childcare in the area affects parents' ability to enter the workforce, be productive while at work, and remain employed. In addition, the childcare industry itself contributes to the local economy through the jobs it sustains, the revenues childcare workers take in, and the taxes they pay.

Waitsfield currently has only two registered childcare facilities: Neck of the Woods (NOW) and the Spring Hill School.

Spring Hill School – founded in 1985 - is a licensed nonprofit school, which offers a morning preschool program and afternoon program of early care and education. In 2024, the Town allocated \$4,500 of ARPA funds to the school to rehab the school's outdoor learning space and aging equipment.

Neck of the Woods - a licensed nonprofit preschool and childcare program- was established in 2020 at the outset of the pandemic. NOW currently runs full-time early childhood programs for infants through preschool at the main campus in Waitsfield. NOW also runs the after-school enrichment program at the Moretown Elementary School and summer camps for pre-school through 12-year-old children. In NOW's main building, current enrollment consists of 70 children and will continue to expand as renovations are completed to the second floor of the building. Upon completion of the renovations in the fall of 2026, the building will have capacity for up to 100 children. In 2024, the Town allocated \$25,000 of ARPA funds to NOW to build a commercial kitchen and cafeteria to become a Head Start Program. This program offers free childcare to low-income families that meet eligibility requirements and allows eligible families to choose from a wide array of child development and family support services at no cost.

The Town's commitment to childcare was also demonstrated through an additional 2024 ARPA allocation of \$25,000 to the now defunct Waitsfield Children's Center (WCC). The money was allocated for the design of an updated water system to accommodate more children. The WCC program had operated for nearly 50 years until fiscal realities led to its closure in July of 2024. However, Neck of the Woods was able to accommodate all of the staff and families who'd been at the Waitsfield Children's Center. The Town then shifted the remaining funds from WCC to Neck of the Woods.

The Town of Waitsfield has also historically waived zoning fees for all childcare centers.

Senior Services. The Mad River Valley Senior Citizens Inc. is a non-profit corporation which operates to coordinate and provide services for the elderly population of Fayston, Moretown, Warren and Waitsfield. Funding is provided through a combination of local, state, and federal grant funds and donated time and energy of Valley residents. The most important program provided to seniors is the operation of the Senior Center and the senior meals program, both of which operate out of Evergreen Place.

Social Services. Most social services are provided by state government through a variety of programs coordinated through the Agency of Human Services. In addition to state programs, all of which are delivered from offices located elsewhere in Washington County outside the Mad River Valley, several private non-profit organizations provide varying types

and levels of assistance to local residents. Several of these Central Vermont (“CV”) service providers receive annual appropriations from the Town.

- Circle
- CV Adult Basic Education
- Capstone Community Action Council
- CV Council on Aging
- CV Economic Development Corp.
- CV Home Health & Hospice
- Family Center of Washington County
- Good Beginnings of CV
- Green Up VT
- Green Mountain Transit Agency
- MRV Health Center
- MRV Senior Citizens
- Northern VT RC&D Council
- People’s Health & Wellness Clinic
- Retired Senior Volunteer Program
- Sexual Assault Crisis Team
- VT Center for Independent Living
- Washington County Youth Services

In addition, the following two organizations are located within the Mad River Valley and provide assistance exclusively to Valley residents:

- Valley Community Fund, a non-profit organization serving residents of the Mad River Valley. Funded entirely through contributions, the Community Fund provides financial assistance to local residents experiencing financial hardship.
- Mad River Valley Food Shelf, coordinated by the Valley Clergy Council, distributes donated food and groceries to Valley residents in need of such assistance.

Cultural Organizations. Mad River Valley residents enjoy access to a wide range of homegrown cultural resources and events. While not directly supported by the Town on a regular basis, the following organizations provide a variety of performances and exhibits:

- Vermont Festival of the Arts, which, in cooperation with the Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce sponsors an annual arts festival.

- Valley Players, a theater group operating out of the Odd Fellows Hall in Waitsfield Village.
- Green Mountain Cultural Center, which sponsors a variety of exhibitions, performances and classes in the restored round barn in Waitsfield.
- Mad River Chorale, a local chorus group.
- Phantom Theater, an experimental theater group based in a restored Warren barn.
- Skinner Barn, which hosts a variety of performances and events in a restored barn on the Common Road.
- Waitsfield Farmers Market, which not only provides a direct market for local farmers, cooks, artisans and crafts people, but also provides an opportunity for local residents and visitors to congregate and socialize.
- Yestermorrow Design/Build School, which has hosted public events and lectures for the local community since 1990.
- Madsonian Museum of Industrial Design.
- Big Picture Café and Theater.



In addition, several individual artists and businesses support a strong community arts culture. Artists studios, which often include display space, are located throughout town, although several are concentrated in Waitsfield Village. Musicians regularly perform at Mad Mountain Tavern, Shepherd’s Pub, and the Big Picture Theater, which also functions as the Mad River Valley’s only movie theater.

Community Center. A community center could serve as a gathering place and central recreation facility for The Valley’s youth. It could also serve as a multigenerational facility that could serve as a recreational, social and cultural resource for a broad cross section of the community.

7.H Communications & Media

Waitsfield is served by both traditional and more modern forms of communication that inform the community and connect residents with each other and the wider world. In fact, most Mad River Valley residents have access to high-quality, modern telecommunications technologies.

Newspapers. *The Valley Reporter*, a weekly newspaper since 1971, is the Town’s official newspaper for public warnings, notices, and announcements. Waitsfield also receives limited local coverage in the Times-Argus, central Vermont’s daily paper based in Barre.

Other state and national papers are available through local outlets. Traditional newspapers have been largely replaced by online news media and statewide coverage.

Telephone Service. Waitsfield Telecom, Waitsfield's local, privately owned telephone company, was founded in 1904. In 1994 the company expanded to include GTE's former Central Champlain Valley service area, forming Waitsfield/Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT). The company now has 72 employees and almost 5,000 access lines in the Mad River Valley.

Wireless Services. Because of local topography, cellular phone service remains spotty in certain areas in the Mad River Valley. New towers have been installed at Mad River Glen, Mt. Ellen, and in Fayston to improve service by the two largest providers, AT&T and Verizon Wireless.

Radio, Television & Cable. Because of the mountainous terrain, Waitsfield residents without cable or satellite service get limited radio and television reception. Waitsfield Cable, owned and operated by Waitsfield Telecom, has been serving the Mad River Valley since 1980. The company currently offers within its service area, for monthly fees, cable television, digital cable and radio, and pay-per-view options. Mad River Valley Television ("MRVTV"; Channels 44 & 45) is the Valley's designated public access station. MRVTV, on the air since 2000, provides community access to local airwaves and coverage of local government, school and community events. The station is managed by a board of directors, and maintains a studio and production equipment for use by community groups and individuals.

Town residents outside the cable service area have access to other wireless television services for the price of dish installation and a monthly service fee.

Internet & Web Services. Internet service is provided by Green Mountain Access, which was founded in 1997 as an affiliate of Waitsfield Telecom and has grown from a local ISP to a statewide company that offers many of the latest internet technologies. Residential internet services currently offered in town include dial-up access, high speed digital service lines (DSLs), roaming access, and web hosting. Local businesses, in addition, may also have access to dedicated (ISDN and T1) lines, frame relay services for higher speed service. Satellite providers also offer internet service.

Waitsfield Elementary School has access to on-line services and resources through K12net, an extension of Vermont's GOVnet, which supports local and distance learning programs. The Joslin Library also provides public access. The Town of Waitsfield has an official website that provides a wealth of information about town government, local businesses, community groups, and more.

7.I Recreation

The Mad River Valley offers a rich variety of recreation opportunities to year-round residents, seasonal home owners and visitors. A brief inventory of available facilities includes:

- Two major downhill ski areas;
- Two cross country skiing facilities;
- An 18-hole golf course;
- More than 60 tennis courts;
- An airport offering gliding;
- Several riding stables;
- Biking and mountain biking;
- A clean river system suitable for fishing, paddling, and swimming (the Mad River has been identified as one of Vermont's premier swimming resources) with many sites open to public access;
- Miles of trails, footpaths and old logging roads, including the Mad River Greenway in Waitsfield;
- Ball fields located at the privately owned Couples Club; and
- Several community recreation fields owned by the Recreation District in Mad River Park.



Public Facilities. Public recreation facilities in Waitsfield are limited, although in recent years the Town has expanded the number and type of facilities available. Existing facilities include:

- Ball fields and recreation facilities located at the Waitsfield Elementary School, which are available for public use during non-school hours and the summertime.
- Scrag Town Forest, consisting of 750 acres acquired by the Town (see Chapter 11). The forest offers back country pedestrian recreation opportunities. Access was enhanced in 2011-2012 with the creation of a small parking area and trail access at the end of Bowen Road and it was expanded and enhanced again in 2017 through the Scrag Town Forest Gateway Project.
- Wu Ledges Town Forest: 125 acres of conserved woodland, offering trails leading to an outstanding scenic vista from a rock outcropping that overlooks the Mad River and its confluence with the Mill Brook. A small parking area for these lands has been established at the end of Hastings Road, and the Conservation Commission is continuing efforts to identify and establish other access points.

- The Lareau Swimhole Park, constructed with the assistance of a VTrans enhancement grant in 2003, in addition to two adjacent parcels (former Austin and former Tardy properties) that provide less formal access to the Mad River.
- Lovett Park next to the Big Eddy Covered Bridge which serves as a public river/swimming access point.
- 7.3 acres at the Flemer Field Community Green off of Route 100 (the old polo fields) and the community orchard project that was planted in 2010.

Private Not-for-Profit Facilities. Another facility open to the public is the Couples Club, an eight-acre multi-purpose field located in the floodplain of the Mad River in Irasville which offers two baseball fields, a small pavilion and river access. The property is managed by the Couples Club, a private organization, and is exempted from property taxes by the Town on an annual basis. The Valley Little League has entered into a long-term lease with the Couples Club to ensure it will remain available for youth baseball.

The Skatium, an outdoor skating facility is located in Irasville and maintained by a not-for-profit organization. The Skatium has artificial ice and a Zamboni, but is susceptible to weather conditions due to the lack of a cover. The Skatium organization has identified enclosing the facility as a priority, which should be encouraged concurrent with efforts to improve the area's appearance, especially during non-winter months.

Trails. The Mad River Path system is an extremely popular path along the Mad River, recently expanded by the Mad River Path Association (a non-profit, membership-based organization) to include connections and trails elsewhere in the Mad River Valley. The Greenway is maintained through a partnership between the Mad River Path Association and landowners. Similar partnerships maintain a village path network and increasingly in uplands such as the Fayston Town Forest and other Town and private lands throughout the Valley. This network could form the core of what could eventually be a single pathway linking Irasville with Warren Village to the south and the Fayston Elementary School to the west, and linking Waitsfield Village with Moretown Village and Harwood Union Middle and High School to the north.

Some additional trails exist on the Scrag Mountain and Wu Ledges Town Forests, and the Conservation Commission is working with partners including the Mad River Path Association and the Mad River Riders to expand the official trail networks on those lands.

The Town would benefit from developing a Town trail system, starting with the Path connecting Irasville and downtown Waitsfield, where there is copious public engagement with important Valley businesses that support dining, shopping, and entertainment. New investment in these areas could increase opportunities for walking, biking, and public enjoyment of commercial areas in close proximity to each other and to natural resource areas including open space, natural wetlands, the Mad River, and wildlife habitat. It is crucial for the Town, in cooperation with its nonprofit partners, to continue improving

walkability and non-motorized access throughout Waitsfield, consistent with this Plan and the growth of the region’s recreation economy.

An assortment of additional easements and license agreements for trails and paths around town have been made, although an extensive, integrated network has not been completed. Through continued partnerships with the Path Association and landowners, such a network could be developed in the future. In addition to trails, Class 4 Roads which are not maintained for year-round travel, as well as Town roads in year-round use, also provide popular recreational opportunities, especially in the Forest Reserve District, and could be included in the Mad River Path system. The Town and the Mad River Path Association should work with other recreation organizations to provide public information about the Town and Valley trails systems, to interpret and maintain trails throughout the Valley, and to adopt consistent, informative signage for residents and visitors.

Several miles of winter trails for skiers and snow-machines are maintained by the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) on private land in Waitsfield and surrounding towns. Part of an extensive statewide network, the local trails are maintained by the local VAST chapter—the Mad River Ridge Runners.

Recreation Programs and Planning. The Town, together with Fayston and Warren, formed the Mad River Valley Recreation District in 1993. The purpose of the Recreation District is to support local recreation facilities and programs, and to identify and pursue opportunities to expand existing facilities or create new facilities. The District has provided funds to improve the Couples Club fields in addition to providing support to other private non-profit recreation organizations such as the Skatium. In 2017, they acquired 10 acres at the Mad River Park to construct an 80-space parking area and permanently secure several recreation fields for youth and adult sports. This area will continue supporting Valley-wide youth recreation opportunities and could be connected to the Mad River Path system with a trail around the Park.

7.J Goals

- 7.J-1 A full range of community services and facilities appropriate for a small town that are provided in a cost effective and environmentally sound manner without creating an undue burden on local taxpayers.
- 7.J-2 Facilities and services that reinforce the Town’s land use, development, and natural resource protection goals and policies.
- 7.J-3 Continue to support existing childcare facilities to ensure all families have access to high-quality childcare by:

- Exploring allocating local option taxes or using municipal funds for childcare capacity grants or direct operational support to keep tuition affordable.
- Partner on housing initiatives for childcare providers who often struggle to find affordable housing near work.
- Partner with organizations to connect families with available local services.
- Streamline permitting for home-based childcare and designate areas for commercial childcare centers in town plans.

7.K Policies

- 7.K-1** Plan facilities and services to accommodate anticipated future growth and to avoid unreasonable burdens on the Town’s taxpayers. To this end:
- 7.K-1.a** The scale, timing and location of development shall be controlled to ensure that the resulting demand for services and facilities does not exceed the municipality’s ability to provide them; and
 - 7.K-1.b** In the absence of public facilities, the developer shall fund the cost of the facility(ies) needed to accommodate the new development unless the Town determines that the proposed development will provide community benefits which outweigh or offset the cost of the required facility(ies).
- 7.K-2** Coordinate the provision of facilities and services with the land use and development goals and policies outlined in this plan, including the reinforcement of growth centers. To this end:
- 7.K-2.a** Facilities that require regular access by the general public and are compatible with compact, mixed use development, such as municipal offices, post offices, community centers and fire stations, should be located in Waitsfield Village or Irasville;
 - 7.K-2.b** Facilities that do not require regular access by the general public, such as highway maintenance, or are not compatible with compact, mixed use development, such as solid waste transfer facilities, shall be located in appropriate centralized, nonresidential locations, preferably in the Industrial District or Limited Business District.
- 7.K-3** Provide services and facilities in an efficient and cost-effective manner while ensuring a high level of service. To this end:
- 7.K-3.a** Capital expenditures will be programmed to avoid sharp fluctuations in the property tax rate;

- 7.K-3.b Alternatives to the property tax to fund local services and facilities (including user fees, state/federal grants and loans, impact fees and negotiated exactions, special taxing districts, private foundations and assistance from non-governmental and/or local option taxes) will be used wherever practical, providing they do not place an additional burden on residents of limited financial means or undermine other policies of this plan;
 - 7.K-3.c Wherever practical, services and facilities to address Valley-wide growth and development will be provided in conjunction with neighboring towns.
 - 7.K-3.d Statewide efforts to restructure state educational funding to reduce the reliance on the local property tax are strongly supported.
- 7.K-4 Recognize the importance of making the most effective and efficient use of existing services, structures and facilities and utilities before expanding capacity or constructing new buildings or facilities. In the event a new building(s) is required, it shall be designed to reflect the community's historic and architectural heritage, a strong sense of permanence, and to serve as a symbol of civic pride.
- 7.K-5 Continue to use the General Wait House primarily for civic, community and cultural purposes, including public rest rooms, community meeting space, cultural activities, celebration of community history and heritage, and public information. To that end, restoration of the attached barns for one or more of these purposes is encouraged.
- 7.K-6 Maintain town funded emergency services, including fire and police protection, in a manner that continues their current level of service as the community grows. Explore opportunities to coordinate increased law enforcement services and efforts with other towns in the Mad River Valley.
- 7.K-7 Develop municipal wastewater systems to serve the Town center areas of Irasville and Waitsfield Village, in order to meet current needs as well as allow for additional growth in residential and commercial properties. Once constructed, the system capacity shall:
- 7.K-7.a Be allocated in accordance with the land use, housing, and economic development policies of this plan; and
 - 7.K-7.b Be managed, together with the operation of the facility, to ensure maximum protection of water quality in the Mad River and its tributaries.
- 7.K-8 Continue to maintain a municipal water system.

- 7.K-9 Explore opportunities for the Town to acquire land for conservation, recreation, and community facilities. Priority should be given to parcels which provide multiple values to the community.
- 7.K-10 Manage undeveloped and semi-developed town-owned properties, including Scrag Mountain and Wu Ledges Town Forests, the Lareau Swimhole, and other conservation and recreation parcels for the protection of ecological resources and sustainable use.
- 7.K-11 Support the efforts of trail organizations to create a network of walking and bicycling paths in the Mad River Valley, including extending the Mad River Greenway to link Waitsfield Village with Moretown Village to the north, and with Warren Village to the south. To this end, the Town will:
 - 7.K-11.a Hold easements on segments of the path right-of-way;
 - 7.K-11.b Encourage inclusion of trails and pedestrian connections as part of local development review processes; and
 - 7.K-11.c Incorporating path segments into management plans for town-owned land.
 - 7.K-11.d Encourage and support information about trail networks, including safe, planned use of Town roads for walking and biking in the Valley-wide trails system.
- 7.K-12 Continue to work with the Mad River Valley Recreation District, Couples Club, and other organizations to ensure recreation fields remain viable and accessible to local residents and youth sports leagues.
- 7.K-13 Continue to encourage the efforts of VAST to provide an integrated network of winter recreation trails in a manner that does not adversely impact neighboring homeowners and the natural environment, and allow VAST trail use of Class 4 roads on a case-by-case basis to avoid conflict with other users of the road and neighboring residential properties.
- 7.K-14 Limit changes to the classification, maintenance, or use of Class 4 roads that would result in an increase of automobile use unless existing recreational uses are maintained or replaced or mitigated with comparable recreation opportunities. The upgrade and/or reclassification of Class 4 roads within the Forest Reserve District shall not be permitted to allow year-round vehicular access and land development.
- 7.K-15 Manage town cemeteries, and expand if needed, to ensure that burial opportunities will exist for the foreseeable future.

- 7.K-16 Continue to participate as a member of the Mad River Valley-Waterbury Solid Waste Alliance, including the alliance's efforts to reduce waste generation and provide environmentally sound waste disposal opportunities.
- 7.K-17 Encourage continued operation of the Valley Transfer Station in its present location, and encourage a privately-operated bottle redemption center in conjunction with the Transfer Station, or at a separate location in Irasville or Waitsfield Village.
- 7.K-18 Encourage public and private social service providers, including state, regional and local agencies and nongovernmental organizations, to continue providing services to local residents. To this end, the Town will continue to consider funding such organizations on an annual basis, and will support efforts to improve local delivery of such services through partnerships with local organizations.
- 7.K-19 Support the development and operation of a multigenerational community center within Irasville or Waitsfield Village.
- 7.K-20 Encourage the Mad River Valley Health Center to continue to meet the needs of local residents.
- 7.K-21 Integrate wireless telecommunications facilities (e.g. cellular) into the existing built environment.
- 7.K-22 Support the expansion of telecommunication service in the community, including broadband Internet access, and efforts to ensure greater public access.
- 7.K-23 Continue to work with and provide support to community arts and cultural organizations.
- 7.K-24 Support and continue to help fund Mad River Valley Television's (Channels 44 and 45) efforts to broadcast meetings of public interest.
- 7.K-25 Keep the Munn Field property in town ownership as a potential shared wastewater facility resource.
- 7.K-26 Encourage the creation of recreation facilities that foster fitness and well-being (e.g. fitness courses) in a manner that is integrated throughout the community.

7.L Tasks

- 7.L-1 Continue to work cooperatively with neighboring towns and the region on issues of mutual concern, and explore additional opportunities to share facilities and services with neighboring towns. [Town Administrator, Selectboard, Town Boards and Commissions]
- 7.L-2 Continue to support shared, privately-owned wastewater system framework to serve Irasville and Waitsfield Village. [Town Administrator, Selectboard, Study Committee]
- 7.L-3 Revise the Waitsfield Subdivision Regulations to include updated facility and infrastructure standards, including those related to stormwater runoff, wastewater disposal, impact on community services and facilities, and trails, sidewalks and pathways. [Planning Commission]
- 7.L-4 Prepare maps for the Irasville Village District depicting options for future public improvements, including roads, sidewalks, paths and park areas, and a town green/common. [Planning Commission]
- 7.L-5 Explore the adoption of stormwater regulations and other recommendations as a result of Ridges to Rivers study. [Planning Commission]
- 7.L-6 Assess the feasibility of on-going maintenance and renovation of Wait House. [Selectboard, Waitsfield Historic Society*]