



WAITSFIELD PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA

November 4, 2025 at 7:30 p.m.*

Planning Commission

Beth Cook
Robert Cook
Emma Hanson
AnnMarie Harmon, Vice-Chair
Becca Newhall
Alice Peal
Jonathan Ursprung, Chair

THE PLANNING COMMISSION WILL BE HOLDING A HYBRID MEETING. THE PUBLIC MAY ATTEND IN PERSON AT WAITSFIELD TOWN HALL OR REMOTE VIA ZOOM WITH TELEPHONE AND/OR VIDEO ACCESS. THOSE PARTICIPATING MAY SPEAK DURING THE DESIGNATED PERIODS.

To join the meeting remotely, use this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9190265312>

Meeting ID: 919 026 5312

Or call: 1 929 205 6099

Planning & Zoning Administrator

J. B. Weir

Town Administrator

York Haverkamp

Town Clerk

Jennifer Peterson

Town Treasurer

Steve Lewis

Waitsfield Town Office

4144 Main Street
Waitsfield, VT 05673
(802) 496-2218
www.waitsfieldvt.us

1. **CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL**
2. **REVISIONS TO AGENDA, IF ANY (5 +/- min)**
3. **PUBLIC FORUM (5 +/- min)**
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES –OCTOBER 7 (10 +/- min)**
5. **VILLAGE MASTER PLAN UPDATE (60 +/-min) AnnMarie/Jonathan/JB**
6. **OTHER BUSINESS (10+/-min)**
 - a. Wastewater Planning Project Update
 - b. Municipal Day recap pushed to 11/18
 - c. CVRPC 10/27 Presentation recap pushed to 11/18
7. **ADJOURNMENT**

**Meeting time changed to 7:30pm due to Elections being held in Meeting room.*

**Waitsfield Planning and Zoning Administrators Report
Planning Commission November 4, 2025 meeting**

5. Village Master Plan

The core focus of this meeting will be on the draft Irasville Master Plan document. The Village Master Plan Steering Committee met on October 30th to discuss the draft document. The committee did provide overwhelmingly-positive feedback on the draft. However, some suggested revisions were made. The PZA is including both the initial draft in addition to the working draft with committee feedback.

The recording of the 10/30 VMPSC meeting can be watched [here](#).

The grant end date is November 30, 2025. All feedback on the draft plan must be provided to SE Group after this meeting. *The PZA strongly recommends that commissioners review the draft plan and watch the meeting ahead of this PC meeting.* The plan will be presented to the Selectboard at a regularly-scheduled meeting in late November during which a public comment period will be underway. All grant closeout documentation must be provided by the first of the new year.

10. Other Business

A notice from Green Mountain Power is included in the packet.

Also included in the packet is an email from both the current owner as well as a potential buyer of the Wilder Farm Inn. The inn is located in the Agricultural-Residential District. The potential buyer of the existing bed and breakfast is looking to use the property as dormitory-type housing for the True North school.

One matter of note, VTTrans has not included the Route 100/Route 17 intersection scoping study in its planned work for the upcoming year.

Upcoming trainings/webinars:

VTDEC's Drop-In Discussions are informal gatherings on the third Thursday of the month from 9 – 10 am hosted by VTDEC's River Corridor and Floodplain Protection program. No registration is required. Come on by!

The discussions support the work of municipal officials who are responsible for floodplain and river corridor regulations, and others who are involved in the work of flood resilience in Vermont. To support casual dialogue the discussions are not recorded.

If you have questions about the event, or using Teams, feel free to reach out
toned.swanberg@vermont.gov or tessa.yip@vermont.gov

Future invitations to the Drop In Discussions will be posted to the Flood Resilience Listserv and also as News on www.floodready.vt.gov

And – let's talk about what's on your mind! Your feedback and suggestions are requested.

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 211 704 798 739

Passcode: N9BU9kf6

Dial in by phone

+1 802-828-7667,942347713# United States, Montpelier

Find a local number

Phone conference ID: 942 347 713#

Living with Bears

Living with bears takes a community! Join us for a discussion about Vermont's black bears and what individuals and communities can do to better share Vermont with these curious and powerful animals. We will discuss bear biology, ecology, the factors that bring bears into our communities, and what we can do to resolve ongoing issues and prevent future conflicts with bears. Participants will leave this workshop with specific action items they can implement at home and in their community.

Dates: Repeat sessions of this webinar will be offered on the following two dates:

Session 2: Thursday, November 6th, 2025 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. [Register](#)

Presenters:

Jaclyn Comeau, Black Bear Project Leader, VT Fish & Wildlife Department; Jens Hilke, Conservation Planner, VT Fish & Wildlife Department

Developing an Outreach Plan to Celebrate your Town's Woods, Wetlands and Wildlife

It can be daunting to plan the outreach for a series of events or plan an outreach strategy that may lead up to a proposed municipal change, sometimes years in the making. In this webinar you'll learn more about creating an outreach plan with multiple events, separating messages for different audiences and identifying an over-arching theme that helps tie the series together. The

panel of presenters includes Elise Schadler and Jens Hilke with years of municipal technical assistance experience and Megan Davin a Communications and Outreach specialist. Join us for this exciting event to help improve your commission's communications.

Date & Time:

Repeat sessions of this webinar will be offered on the following two dates:

Session 2: Thursday, December 4th 2025, 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. [Register](#)

Presenters:

Elise Schadler, Program Manager VT Urban & Community Forestry Program, Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation; Megan Davin, Communications and Outreach Specialist, Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation; Jens Hilke, Conservation Planner, VT Fish & Wildlife Department

Using Overlay Districts to Protect Connecting Habitat

Connecting habitat has emerged over the last twenty years as an important issue to plan for to maintain Vermont's biological diversity and provide resilience in the face of changing climate. Many of us gravitate toward the use of Overlay Districts as an important regulatory tool in maintaining this sort of pattern on the landscape. There are a variety of municipal tools that could be used to address land use pattern and it can be helpful to review all of the options before deciding on one. In this webinar, we'll address the pros and cons of Overlay Districts for protecting habitat connectivity and use real world case studies to see what has worked.

Date & Time: Repeat sessions of this webinar will be offered on the following two dates:

Session 2: Tuesday, November 18th 2025, 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. [Register](#)

Presenters: Jens Hilke, Conservation Planner, VT Fish & Wildlife Department

Vermont's Land Conservation: Where Do We Go From Here?

Vermont has an incredible track record of protecting land for people and nature. Using the Conserved Lands Inventory developed by Vermont Housing & Conservation Board as part of Vermont's 30x30 effort, we reflect on the distribution of permanently conserved lands around the state, and how those lands intersect our most ecologically important places seen in Vermont Conservation Design. By looking at these past patterns, we can celebrate the work by federal, state, town, and NGOs. We can also reflect on the types of lands and parts of the state that have

been historically under-represented in our land conservation investments, and prioritize future places to work for both people and nature. Join us for this exciting webinar to learn how your town's efforts can contribute to making our conserved lands more diverse, equitable, and ecologically impactful.

Dates: Repeat sessions of this webinar will be offered on the following two dates:

Session 2: Wednesday, November 12th 2025, 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. [Register](#)

Presenters: Bob Zaino, Ecologist, VT Fish & Wildlife Department; Jens Hilke, Conservation Planner, VT Fish & Wildlife Department

Respectfully submitted,

J.B. Weir

TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 7, 2025

Draft

Members Present: Bob Cook, Emma Hanson, AnnMarie Harmon, Becca Newhall, Jonathan Ursprung

Members Absent: Beth Cook, Alice Peal

Staff Present: JB Weir, Zoning Administrator

Others Present: None

II. Regular Business

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Jonathan Ursprung. The meeting was held in person at the Town Offices and remotely via Zoom.

2. Review agenda for addition, removal, or adjustment of any items

No changes were made to the agenda.

3. Public Forum

Nobody requested an opportunity to comment.

4. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of September 16, 2025 were approved.

5. Village Master Plan Update

JB had provided a summary of the recent Steering Committee (SC) meeting in the PC meeting packet, and AnnMarie highlighted some of the content. She noted that the response from Shannon Morrison indicating that there had never been a moratorium/limit on Irasville area Wetland permitting was in conflict with what was understood by the SC and others, and also noted that no response had yet been received from Mike of the Army Corps.

Next, AnnMarie pointed out the new, more limited, wetland regulations to be developed based upon Governor Scott's recently issued Executive Order. She explained that Tucker of SE Group will be working to clarify what is considered unmapped Class II wetlands in the Irasville area, as those areas will not need to follow Wetland Rules as had been anticipated. SE Group will also be working to clarify what is meant by the term 'housing development' in the Executive Order, to determine whether mixed use development or conversion of existing development will be included in the definition of 'housing development.'

SE Group had also provided the SC with a preview of the final report, which is organized into three sections: Vision, implementation actions, and implementation strategies. This is planned to be presented to the PC in December.

JB reported on the progress of grant applications, including the CDBG (Carroll Road culvert and other items) and NBRC (wastewater project) grants, both of which coincide with the Master Planning work.

The next SC meeting will be held the week of October 27.

6. CVRPC Update

Alice had provided updates in an email, including a CHIP update, a Wetlands update statement from DEC (which was noted as being inaccurate during the meeting, as certain wetland buffers have been reduced to 25 feet), and a reminder of the presentation by CVRPC regarding Future Land Use mapping on October 27.

7. Wastewater Planning Project Update

JB spoke of the workshop recently held with the Selectboard, where information was provided by Joshua Schwartz and York Haverkamp regarding the project, funding, and plans moving forward. The topic of initiation a Local Options Tax (LOT) was discussed at that meeting, based upon information provided in a white paper drafted by Joshua and Sam of the MRVPD. JB indicated that 80% of the revenue generated from a LOT is anticipated to be from non-residents, and also noted that some of the funds would be set aside specifically for wastewater development. Materials related to this were included in the meeting packet.

Emma raised the concept of crowdfunding a portion of the Wastewater Project financing.

Bob explained that work is continuing on having all needed property owners agree to pumping station locations.

8. 2025-2026 Work Plan

Town Plan update – it was agreed that the PC will move forward with an amendment to address child care requirements, and be prepared to draft a full revision for 2031.

Short term rentals – Jonathan reported on a conversation he had with Dan Raddock and Jim Crafts of Warren regarding the Granicus software that Warren is putting to use in implementation of their Short Term Rental Ordinance. He explained some of the features of the software, and confirmed that there may be potential for partnering with Warren to negotiate with Granicus for a reduced annual software fee.

PC members were in agreement that the Warren Ordinance covers the aspects of STRs that Waitsfield would likely prefer to regulate, and discussed that it would be helpful to gain an understanding of the objections heard in Warren as their ordinance was drafted, as well as some other data points, such as whether STRs are leading to more emergency response calls. It was also noted that funds collected through an STR registration process might be used for expenses related to visitors, such as road maintenance.

The timeline for this work was discussed, and Jonathan indicated that the PC would work on this topic based upon Selectboard preference for a completion date.

9. Other Business

Jonathan noted some items covered at the recent MRVPD meeting: Sam Robinson will be departing his position at the PD, Warren is applying for an NDA designation, and discussion of the potential for a Valley-wide MOU and Mutual Aid agreement to ensure that towns can be compensated for assistance provided (primarily by road crews) during an emergency.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary

IRASVILLE VILLAGE MASTER PLAN

OCTOBER 2025



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. A VILLAGE HELD IN CHECK: THE STORY OF IRASVILLE.....3

Then & Now: The Development of Irasville..... 5

Irasville Today: Existing Conditions..... 6

Building on Plans & Studies: Past & Present..... 8

Putting it all Together: Goals for Irasville 10

2. VIBRANT VILLAGE: THE VISION FOR IRASVILLE.....12

The Village-Wide Vision for Irasville 13

Spotlights: Key Elements of the Vision.. 14

3. THREE KEY ACTIONS TO MOVE IRASVILLE FORWARD.....16

Key Action #1: Implement the Community Wastewater System 17

Key Action #2: Implement a Local & Regional Wetlands Strategy 18

Key Action #3: Establish Slow Road as Irasville’s “Main Street” 19

4. COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES TO COMPLETE THE VISION.....21

Transportation Network 22

Outdoor Recreation 25

Land Use & Governance 26

5. THE PROCESS: HOW WE BUILT THIS PLAN.....27

6. APPENDICES.....31

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

VILLAGE MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

AnnMarie Harmon	Josh Schwartz
Brian Shupe	Luke Foley
Kaziah Haviland	Mac Rood
Ira Shadis	Sam Robinson
Jonathan Ursprung	Sean Lawson

TOWN OF WAITSFIELD STAFF

JB Weir, Planning & Zoning Administrator
York Haverkamp, Town Administrator

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Our sincere thanks to the residents of the Town of Waitsfield and Mad River Valley who lent their time, energy, and ideas to this planning process.

CONSULTING TEAM

 **SE GROUP**

Alex Belenz
Elena Juodisius
Patrick Olstad
Amelia Chandler
Mark Kane

CHAPTER 1

A Village Held in Check: The Story of Irasville

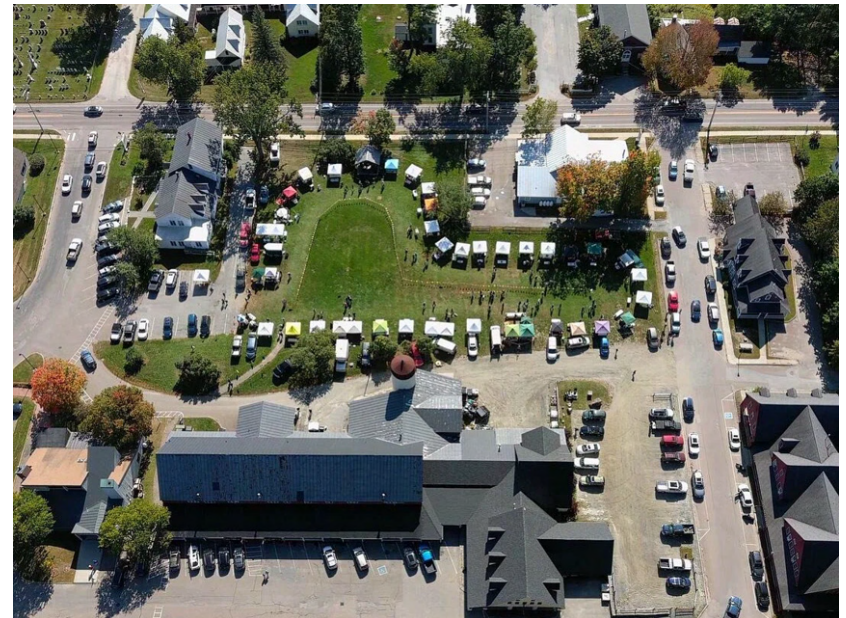
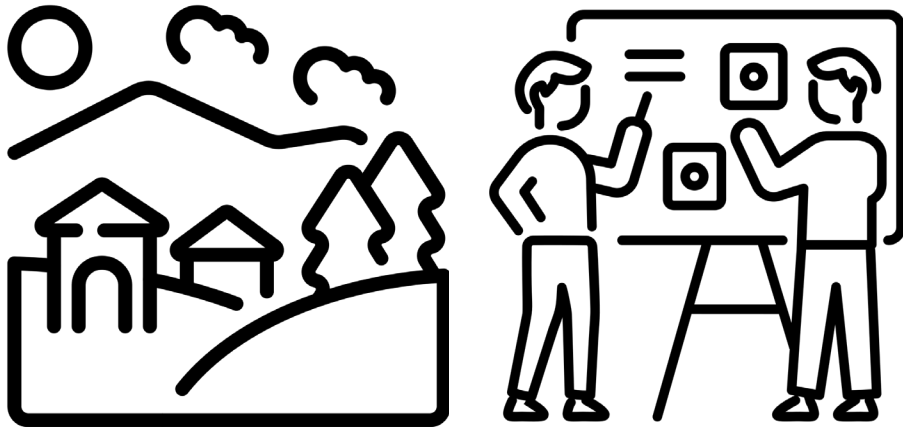
Project Focus Area: The Irasville Village District, as identified on the Town of Waitsfield Zoning Map.



Community gathering place. Hub of the Mad River Valley. Jumping off point for the great outdoors.

Irasville is where the Mad River Valley comes to shop, dine, gather, and play. One of two villages in Waitsfield, VT, this area has long been envisioned as a vibrant regional center, featuring a thoughtful mix of homes, local businesses, services, and recreational amenities. For years this vision has been held back, challenged by insufficient infrastructure, natural resource constraints, and a lack of planning progress.

Thanks to sustained efforts by local and regional partners, the time is ripe to reestablish an actionable, pragmatic, and forward-looking vision and action plan for Irasville. The **Irasville Village Master Plan** aims to do just that.



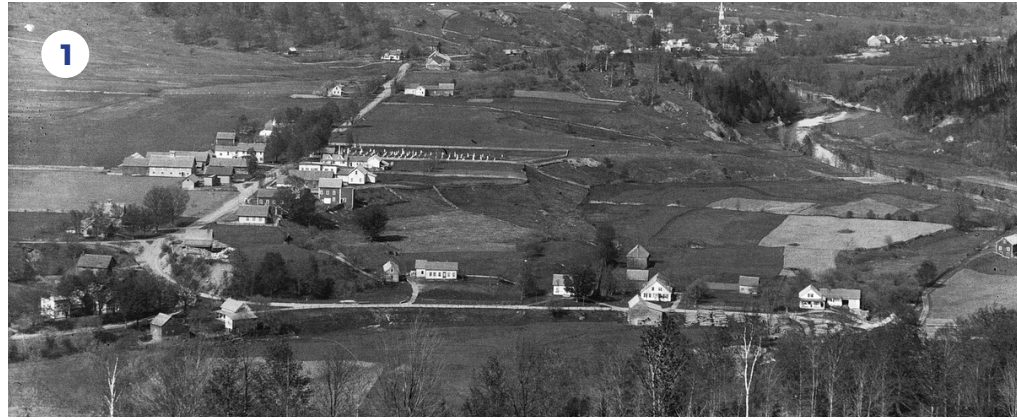
Above: Irasville from the air.

Below: Waitsfield Farmer's Market on a fall day in Irasville.

THEN & NOW: THE DEVELOPMENT OF IRASVILLE

1. INITIAL DEVELOPMENT

The early development of Irasville was similar to many other historic Vermont villages - a relatively dense cluster of homes and businesses surrounded by agricultural uses. Fortunately, early development was located above the floodplain of the Mad River.



Up and Away

Irasville is a rarity in the Mad River Valley - relatively level land along the base of the valley that is elevated out of the floodplain. Historically, this has made Irasville an attractive location for development.

2. AUTOMOBILE-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

In the mid-20th century, a more automobile-oriented development pattern emerged as Irasville evolved into a commercial center. During this time, local planning focused on clustering commercial development in Irasville to avoid sprawling development patterns along VT Route 100. Accompanying this commercial development was a series of roads, commercial driveways, and large surface parking areas.



3. INFILL DEVELOPMENT

In more recent years, some infill development has occurred in Irasville. There has also been an increased emphasis on improving pedestrian connectivity in the village. The lack of a centralized wastewater system has been the primary restriction on further infill development.



Infill Development

The Mad River Taste Place (bottom right) is example of infill development - the creation of new buildings within already developed areas. Benefits include limiting sprawl and using existing infrastructure.

Regional Context

Irasville sits on the floor of Vermont's Mad River Valley, a mountainous and well-conserved watershed where headwater streams quickly reach the main stem of the Mad River. This topography supports the Valley's vaunted outdoor recreation amenities and famous scenery while presenting constraints and threats for local infrastructure and development, such as steep slopes and flooding. With flat and flood resilient topography, Irasville will play a key role in the future climate and economic resiliency of the Mad River Valley.



Nestled in the Valley: Fiddler's Green as seen from Wu Ledges Town Forest.

IRASVILLE TODAY: EXISTING CONDITIONS

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT

- » Irasville is known as the **commercial** center of the Mad River Valley; however, it contains a multitude of other land uses. There are a number of **residences** in Irasville, with clusters of multi-family homes in the southern part of the village as well as **mixed-use buildings** with apartments located above commercial establishments. There are also several industrial operators in the village area.
- » **Irasville is far less densely developed than Waitsfield Village.** The median lot size in Irasville is 1.1 acres, compared to 0.32 acres for the Waitsfield Village Business Zoning District and 0.71 acres for the Village Residential Zoning District.

TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

- » Irasville's transportation network consists of roads, parking areas, sidewalks, and recreational trails.
- » Historically, Irasville has had an **automobile-oriented development pattern** featuring roads, driveways, and large surface parking areas. There has been work in recent decades to improve pedestrian access in the village; however, there are still **significant gaps in the pedestrian network**, with limited sidewalks and crosswalks.

NATURAL ASSETS & CONSTRAINTS

- » Irasville is nestled above the banks of the Mad River at the base of a steep valley wall. Most of the village area is elevated above the 100-year floodplain. Irasville is one of the few larger areas of flat topography in the Mad River Valley with **minimal flood risk**. Historically, this has made Irasville an attractive location for commercial and residential development.
- » Irasville's flat topography supports a **significant wetlands complex**, with approximately 25 acres of wetlands. These range from low-function wetlands with little ecological value to higher-function wetlands that provide important habitat and help mitigate flooding. Historical development in Irasville has impacted these wetlands, with nearly an acre of wetlands impacts since 1992.
- » Located on the floor of the Mad River Valley, Irasville is bounded by (and contains) areas of **steep slope**. These steep areas are typically unsuitable for future development. Clearing and developing steep slopes can accelerate flood events and erosion.
- » While Irasville has significant existing development, there are also areas of **unfragmented forest and habitat** in and around the village.



(1) Northfield Savings Bank in Irasville is an example of a mixed-use building, with residential apartments above the ground-floor bank.

(2) Recent pedestrian safety improvements along Route 100. There is now a continuous sidewalk connection between Waitsfield Village and Irasville, as well as integration with the Mad River Path.



(3) A boardwalk installed by Mad River Path along Carroll Rd forms a key linkage in the transportation and recreational path network in Irasville.

(4) Wetlands along Slow Road. A 2021 study by Arrowwood Environmental found that these wetlands have little ecological value, while wetland complexes near Carroll Rd provide important habitat and flood mitigation functions.

A Four-Season Outdoor Recreation Hub

The Mad River Valley has long been a haven for outdoor recreation, anchored by prominent ski areas. In recent years, there has been a concerted effort to broaden the Valley's year-round outdoor recreation offerings - improving quality of life for residents and enhancing the tourism economy. Significant effort has been applied to expanding the Valley's multi-use trail networks, improving trail access through trailhead and signage improvements, and enhancing promotion of warm-weather recreation opportunities.

Irasville is the emerging center of four-season recreation for the Valley. The Mad River Valley Recreation Hub, located in Irasville, serves as the primary trailhead for the popular mountain bike trails in Camel's Hump State Forest while also hosting the Mad River Valley Welcome Center, a bike shop, and restaurant and brewery. The Mad River Path connects the Hub to destinations throughout Irasville.



BUILDING ON PLANS & STUDIES: PAST & PRESENT

HELD IN CHECK: PAST EFFORTS

Community and regional partners have explored visions for a vibrant Irasville for decades. Irasville has always held potential, attracting visionary ideas and creative designs from a variety of community members and organizations. Themes from past plans for Irasville included rethinking the village's relationship to Route 100, finding opportunities for a vibrant mix of homes and businesses, and improving pedestrian access.

Unfortunately, past planning efforts for Irasville largely did not gain traction.

Amongst other factors, insufficient infrastructure and mixed community support contributed to a stalling out of progress. In 2008, Town voters declined to support a bond measure for the development of a community wastewater system, which had been identified as an essential step to enable infill development in Irasville while protecting water quality.

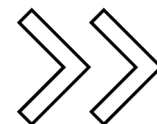
Without community wastewater infrastructure in place, redevelopment efforts in Irasville have been significantly hindered.

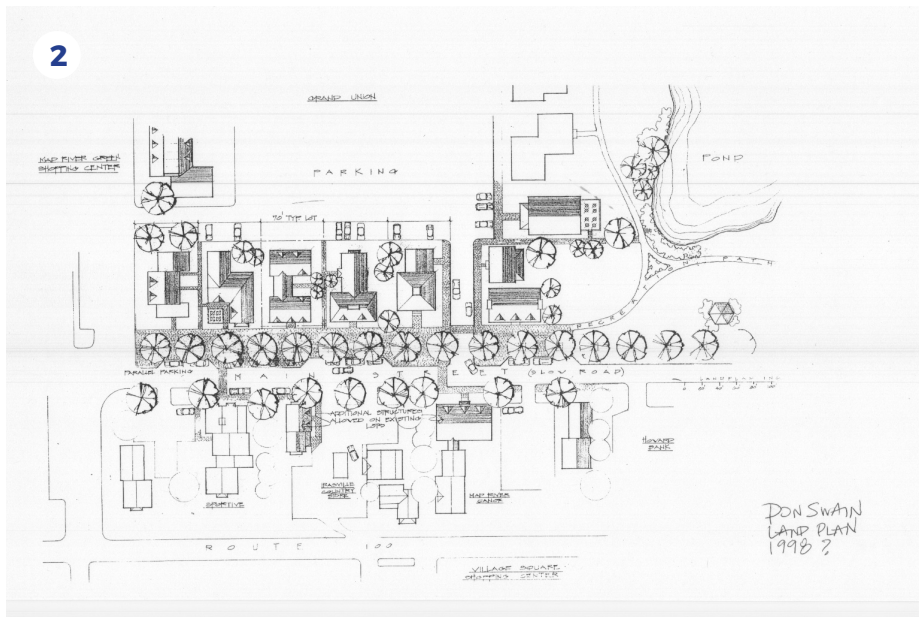
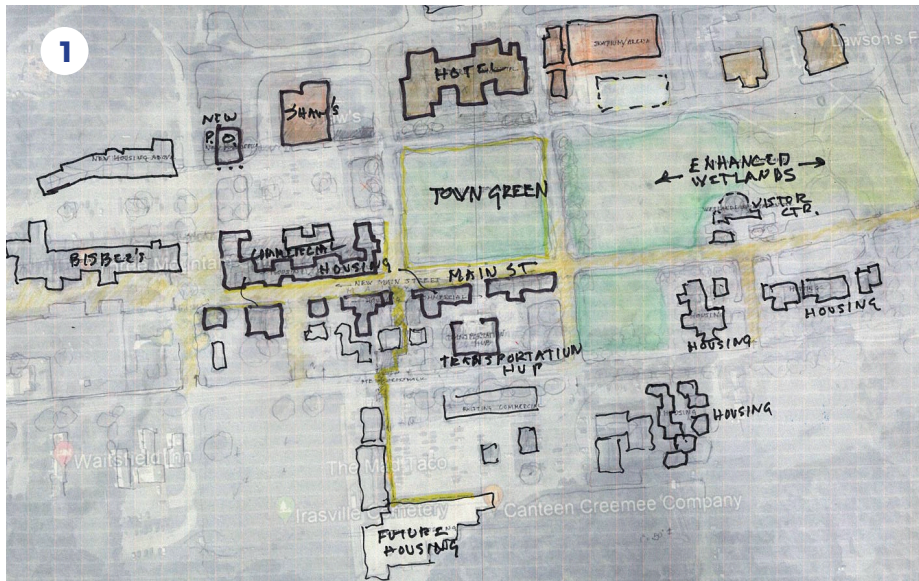


RECENT PROGRESS & MOMENTUM

In recent years, efforts to plan for a vibrant Irasville have regained steam, catalyzed by thoughtful, iterative planning and a commitment to community engagement.

- ✓ **Waitsfield Community Wastewater Project:** a project to support environmentally responsible infill development in Waitsfield's village areas (completion expected in 2027).
- ✓ **Mad River Valley Active Transportation Corridor:** an initiative to connect the villages of the Mad River Valley with pedestrian and bicycle paths (scoping study completed in 2025).
- ✓ **Vibrant Villages Initiative:** a comprehensive update of zoning bylaws to support walkable infill development in Waitsfield's village areas (completed in 2024).
- ✓ **Waitsfield Town Plan Update:** a thorough rewrite of the Town's guiding document, identifying Irasville as the regional growth center for the Mad River Valley (completed in 2023).





(1) & (2) Past planning concepts for infill development and village vibrancy in Irasville. Many past planning efforts have explored similar ideas, such as Slow Road becoming a “Main Street” for Irasville.

Irasville Focus Areas (1/2)

3

Rate your level of support for the following potential land use strategies in Irasville:

Current regulation: Lots in Irasville are required to be at least one acre in size.

Potential Strategy: Reduce the minimum lot size in Irasville to one-quarter acre or smaller to allow for a greater variety of development opportunities (Town Plan Goal 4.G-6).

Current challenge: It is difficult to walk around Irasville due to a lack of sidewalk connections and jumbled development pattern.

Potential Strategy: Require new developments in Irasville to include sidewalks (where appropriate) or contribute funds to the Town towards the creation of new pedestrian connections (Town Plan Goals 8.F-12; 8.F-13; 9.I-19.a).

Current challenge: A large portion of Irasville already has some level of development.

Potential Strategy: Enable additional housing development in areas directly adjacent to Irasville (Town Plan Goal 4.G-6).

Potential Strategy: Adjust development standards to concentrate “infill” development within already-developed areas of Irasville (Town Plan Goal 4.H-1; 9.I-19.a).

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Irasville lacks a complete sidewalk network due to challenging intersections and large lots. Large lots can make an area feel less walkable – Irasville requires a minimum lot size of 1 acre, while the Watfield Village Business District requires 1/4 acre lot sizes.

STRONG VILLAGES OPEN HOUSE | MARCH 2023

WATSFIELD, VT

vibrant villages



(3) Feedback on potential zoning bylaw changes for Irasville at a 2023 open house event for the Vibrant Villages Initiative.

(4) Community discussions at an event for the Mad River Valley Active Transportation Corridor in October 2025.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: GOALS FOR IRASVILLE

The following goals represent the highest-priority needs, opportunities, and desires from decades of planning, dreaming, and strategizing for Irasville. These planning goals were developed by the Village Master Plan Steering Committee and refined using feedback received at a community open houses in November 2024 and March 2025.

1. COMMUNITY DESIGN

- » 1A. Promote **village-style development** within already-developed areas of Irasville.
- » 1B. Establish a true “**Main Street**” area for Irasville as the future hub of community development.
- » 1C. Encourage a **mix of two and three story buildings**.

2. NATURAL ASSETS & CONSTRAINTS

- » 2A. **100% of higher-function wetland areas in Irasville remain undeveloped in perpetuity.** At least 85% of total wetland areas in Irasville remain undeveloped in perpetuity, with all development impacts occurring in lower-functioning wetlands.
- » 2B. There is **no net loss of stormwater management and flood mitigation function of wetlands** in Irasville affecting the main stem of the Mad River.

3. HOUSING

- » 3A. Create **up to 70 new homes** in Irasville (based on the anticipated capacity of the planned Community Wastewater System).
- » 3B. Encourage a **variety of types of homes**, including below-market-rate rentals aimed at younger households and seniors and homes for first-time homebuyers.



- (1) Main Street areas can be the hub of community gathering and events, as seen above in Steamboat Springs, CO.
- (2) Rain gardens in Village Square help manage stormwater in parking areas.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: GOALS FOR IRASVILLE (CONTINUED)

4. COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

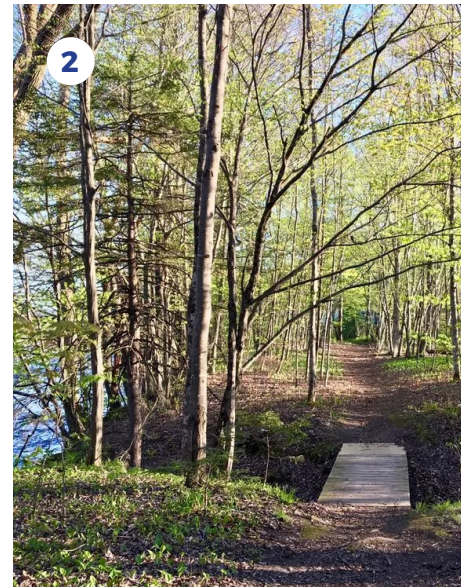
- » 4A. Encourage **mixed-use development** (e.g., ground level retail with upper story apartments) with local-serving, customer-facing commercial uses.
- » 4B. Evaluate opportunities for **redevelopment of shopping plazas** and other properties with redevelopment potential.
- » 4C. Preserve and **sustain key commercial services** in Irasville (e.g., grocery stores) and explore pathways for needed services.

5. TRANSPORTATION

- » 5A. Plan for new roadway connections to support the **creation of village blocks**.
- » 5B. Aim for a seamless, safe, and convenient **pedestrian and bicycle network**.
- » **5C. Limit new surface parking** to the extent possible, including evaluating opportunities for consolidate or share parking facilities.
- » 5D. Encourage **slow vehicular speeds** and increase driver awareness of pedestrians and bicyclists on all roads in Irasville, including Route 100.
- » 5E. Promote a “**park once and walk**” experience for visitors to Irasville.

6. OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMY

- » 6A. Position Irasville as a **jumping off point** for year-round outdoor recreation pursuits.
- » 6B. Integrate **recreational trails** into the pedestrian and bicycle network.



(1) A mixed-use building in downtown Bellows Falls, VT with ground-floor commercial businesses and upper-floor residences..

(2) The Fiddler's Walk trail connects central Irasville to the banks of the Mad River and the new MRV Recreation Hub.

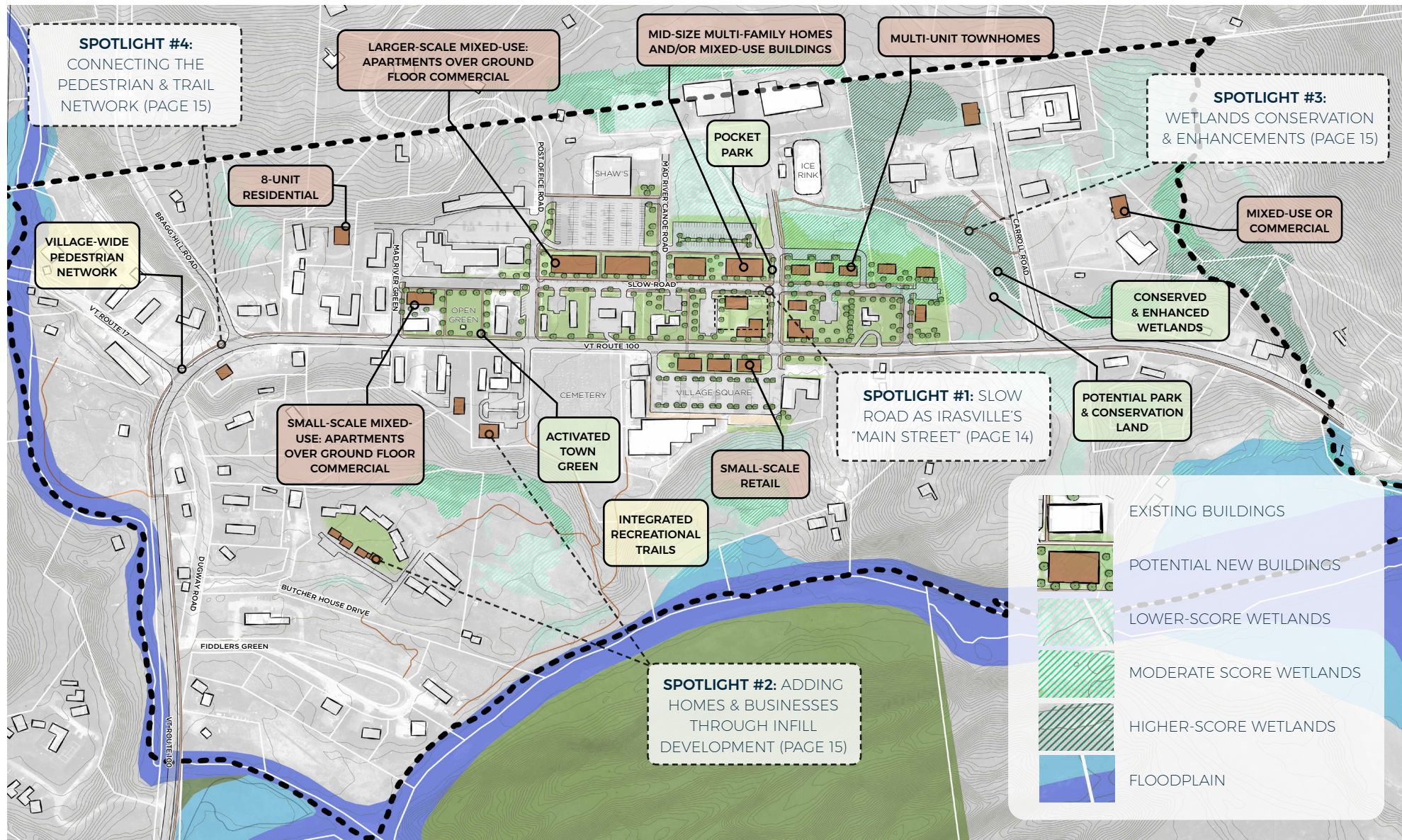
CHAPTER 2

Vibrant Village: The Vision for Irasville



Irasville should be developed and maintained as the area's downtown core with a mix of uses that include a full range of commercial services, civic and cultural facilities, offices, multi-family housing, and upper-story dwellings where practical. - Waitsfield Town Plan, 2024

THE VILLAGE-WIDE VISION FOR IRASVILLE



The Vision for Irasville, Visualized. This conceptual vision aims to demonstrate what is possible in Irasville through planning, regulation, public-private partnerships, and infrastructure investment. While the form of future residential and commercial development will be up to private property owners and developers, the Town of Waitsfield and its partners will play an active role in encouraging and facilitating desired infill development, pedestrian safety improvements, and other village enhancements.

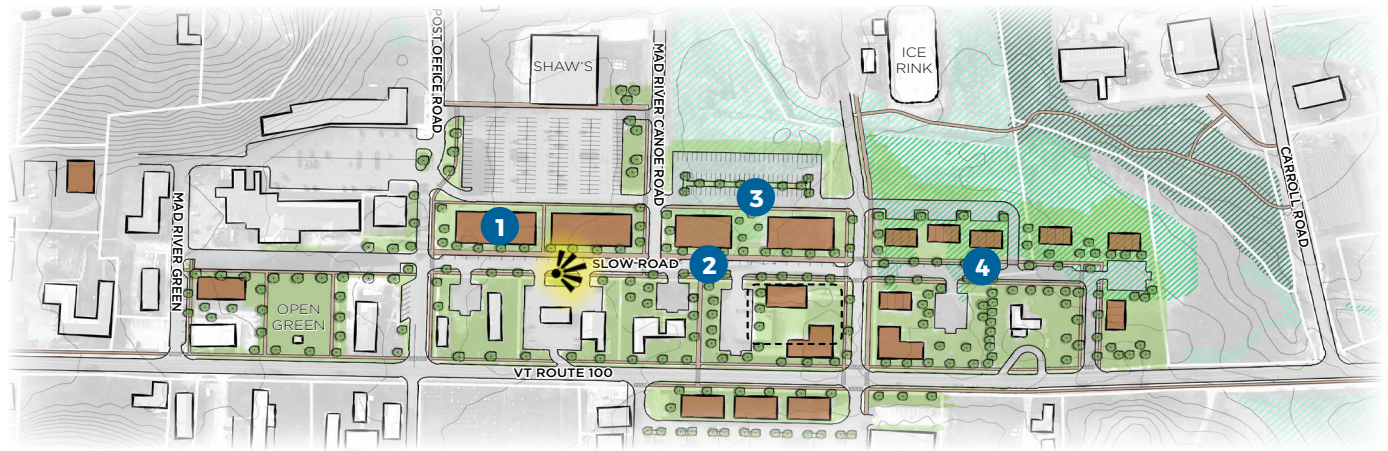
SPOTLIGHTS: KEY ELEMENTS OF THE VISION

SPOTLIGHT #1: SLOW ROAD AS IRASVILLE'S "MAIN STREET"

Great villages are anchored by great Main Streets. Slow Road has long been envisioned as a Main Street for Irasville - a hub of future development to create homes, spaces for community gathering and events, and places of business.

Key elements of this vision include:

- 1 New **mixed-use development** with public-facing, ground floor businesses and upper floor homes, as well as multi-family **apartments** and **townhomes**.
- 2 A low-speed, inviting, **pedestrian-friendly streetscape** with wide sidewalks, protected crosswalks, street trees and greenspace, and flexible spaces for outdoor dining, public art, and pop-up events.
- 3 Auxiliary driveways parallel to Slow Road provide access to additional parking areas and **enable the periodic closure of Slow Road to traffic for community events**.
- 4 An extension of Slow Road enables the **creation of new village blocks**.



Looking down Slow Rd
from the driveway of the
Irasville Country Store.

SPOTLIGHTS: KEY ELEMENTS OF THE VISION (CONTINUED)

SPOTLIGHT #2: ADDING HOMES & BUSINESSES THROUGH INFILL DEVELOPMENT

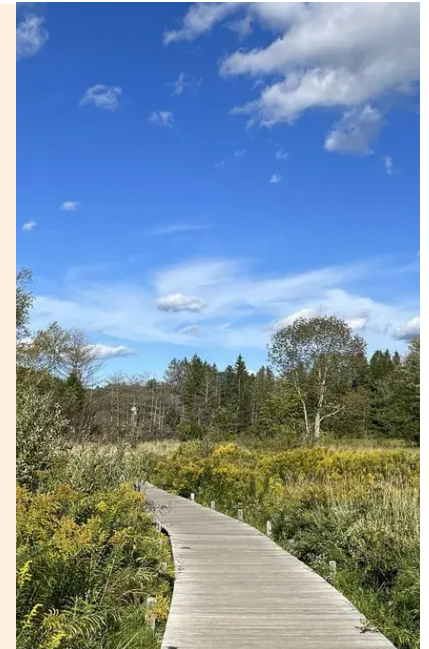
Infill development opportunities will be plentiful in Irasville once the community wastewater project is complete. Under Town zoning bylaws revised in 2024, new homes and businesses can be created on lots as small as 1/5 acre - well below the current median lot size of 1.1 acres in the village.



- (1) A single-family home on a small lot in Shelburne, VT.
- (2) Townhomes integrated into the pedestrian network in South Burlington, VT.

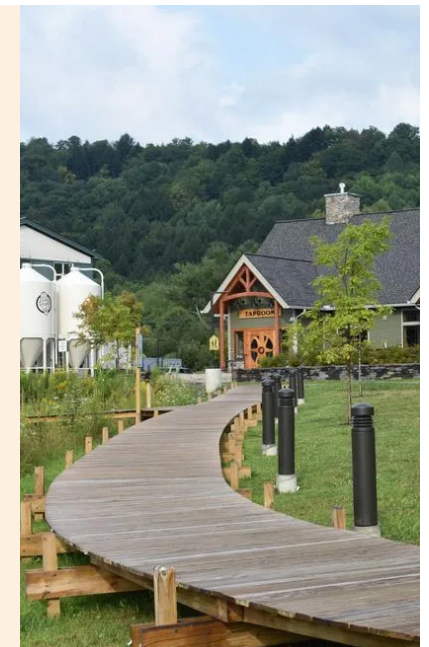
SPOTLIGHT #3: WETLANDS CONSERVATION & ENHANCEMENT

The development of the Slow Road “Main Street” will require some impacts to wetlands that have been identified as having little ecological value in previous studies. Higher value wetlands will be protected and improved using a variety of strategies, including land protection, plantings, and other enhancements to wetlands and wetland buffers.



SPOTLIGHT #4: CONNECTING THE PEDESTRIAN & TRAIL NETWORK

Through long-term efforts, sidewalks have been constructed along VT Route 100 and natural surface paths connect directly into Irasville village. There is an opportunity address gaps in these networks to create seamless connections between homes, businesses, and outdoor recreation destinations and deliver a “park once and walk” experience for visitors.



CHAPTER 3

Three Key Actions to Move Irasville Forward



IDENTIFYING THE KEY CATALYSTS FOR A VIBRANT IRASVILLE

There is no shortage of ideas, opportunities, needs, and challenges for implementing the vision for Irasville. To move forward on this vision, the Town of Waitsfield and its partners will need to prioritize where apply time, effort, and money are applied. The following **Key Actions** were identified as the most critical implementation steps with the potential to advance village vibrancy in Irasville.

- » **Action A:** Implement the Community Wastewater System (p. 17).
- » **Action B:** Implement a Local & Regional Wetlands Strategy (p. 18).
- » **Action C:** Establish Slow Road as Irasville's Main Street (p. 19-20).

Action A: Implement the Community Wastewater System

A centralized wastewater system is needed to enable the creation of new homes and businesses in Irasville while protecting public health and water resources.

WHAT TO KNOW:

The Town of Waitsfield is actively pursuing the implementation of the Community Wastewater System project, with expected completion in 2027. The system will be built and operated with no cost to taxpayers, leveraging grants and state financing to cover implementation costs and covering ongoing operator costs with fees paid by users of the system.

KEY GOALS & OUTCOMES:

- ✓ Irasville is able to grow with sustainable, walkable infill development.
- ✓ Local water quality is protected.
- ✓ Cost of development for new homes and businesses are reduced.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

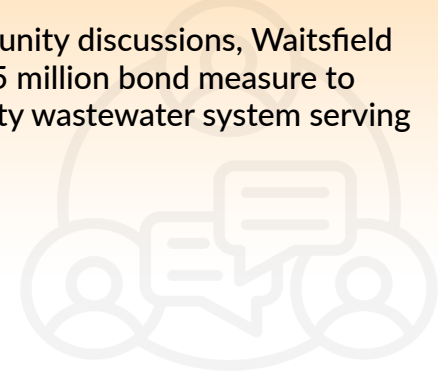
- » The planned wastewater system is expected to provide capacity for approximately **70 new homes as well as additional capacity for new commercial businesses** in Irasville after existing properties are connected to the system. It is possible that additional wastewater capacity for new development could be secured in the future.
- » While there is a defined wastewater service area for the planned system, there is currently no policy governing how much future capacity may be allocated to any particular development or sub-area.
- » There may be an opportunity align wastewater system implementation with improvements to other infrastructure, such as **roadways and sidewalks**, in areas where wastewater utility lines will be constructed and buried.

KEY STEPS

- » **Continue to move forward with financing and implementation planning for the planned wastewater system serving Irasville.**
- » **Identify combined wastewater & transportation infrastructure projects.** Wastewater system construction plans should consider opportunities to phase in roadway and pedestrian improvements that could be completed in a single project.
- » **Develop wastewater allocation policies.** These policies can reserve wastewater capacity for a sub-area of Irasville (e.g., the area around Slow Road) and/or limit that amount of wastewater capacity allocated to any single project.

Public Input Highlight: Community Wastewater Project

Following years of planning and community discussions, Waitsfield voters overwhelmingly approved a \$15 million bond measure to fund the construction of the community wastewater system serving Irasville and Waitsfield Village.



Action B: Implement a Local & Regional Wetlands Strategy

A comprehensive strategy is needed to balance the growth of Irasville as the flood-resilient hub of the Mad River Valley with protections for critical ecological functions provided by local wetlands.

WHAT TO KNOW:

Irasville contains approximately 25 acres of wetlands, ranging from low-functioning wetlands with little ecological value to higher-function wetlands that provide habitat and help mitigate flooding. Since 1992, there have been over an acre of direct impacts to wetlands in Irasville.

KEY GOALS & OUTCOMES:

- ✓ *Irasville is able to grow with flood-resilient, walkable infill development.*
- ✓ *100% of higher-function wetland areas in Irasville remain undeveloped in perpetuity.*
- ✓ *At least 85% of total wetland areas in Irasville remain undeveloped in perpetuity, with all development impacts occurring in lower-functioning wetlands*
- ✓ *Critical local wetland functions and scenic values are permanently conserved, including no net loss of flood mitigation function affecting the main stem of the Mad River.*

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- » Wetland functions in Irasville range from very low to moderately high. Envisioned infill development sites along Slow Road would result in impacts to wetlands with low or very low wetland functions.
- » Irasville does not have a centralized stormwater system and is believed to have a high groundwater table. Both conditions present uncertainties for how future infill development will impact wetlands, even in areas of low wetland function.
- » Wetlands impacts from development are potentially subject to permitting through the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation and the US Army Corps of Engineers. In September 2025, Governor Phil Scott issued an executive order that would result in housing development in Irasville from some state wetlands permitting requirements if the development were to impact unmapped Class II wetlands.
- » Waitsfield's zoning bylaws permit wetlands impacts, provided that the impacts conform to Vermont Wetlands Rules and the development includes a vegetated buffer between wetland areas. For proposed developments going through conditional review, the Development Review Board retains some discretion to limit wetland impacts.

KEY STEPS

- » **Coordinate with state and federal wetlands permitting agencies** to ensure clarity on the location, type, and scale of development that will require wetlands permits.
- » **Conserve remaining wetland areas** through conservation easements, negotiated conditions of development approvals for projects impacting lower-function wetlands, and fee-simple acquisition of targeted properties. Continue to engage with local property owners who have expressed interest in putting wetland areas into conservation.
- » **Enhance flood mitigation functions of remaining lower-functioning wetlands** through plantings, reduced channelization, improved wetland buffers, and other restoration efforts. Work with Friends of the Mad River to engage property owners and identify projects.
- » **Enhance the flood mitigation function of the Town-owned pond** at the intersection of Carroll Road and Route 100.
- » **Commission further studies** to model the localized effects of potential wetlands impacts and identify opportunities for wetlands enhancements and flood mitigation projects upstream of Irasville in the Mad River watershed.

Public Input Highlight: Wetland Conservation

Attendees at a November 2024 open house were supportive of a balanced approach to wetlands in Irasville: preserving critical wetland functions while permitting impacts to low-functioning wetlands if those impacts result in significant community benefit.



Action C: Establish Slow Road as Irasville's Main Street

A Main Street provides a walkable central hub for community development - homes, businesses, gathering places, and events. It also promotes the orderly and efficient development and maintenance of critical infrastructure (e.g., roads, sidewalks, water/wastewater service lines) by limiting scattered development.

WHAT TO KNOW:

Slow Road is well-positioned to serve as Irasville's Main Street, with a central location and ample development sites.

KEY GOALS & OUTCOMES:

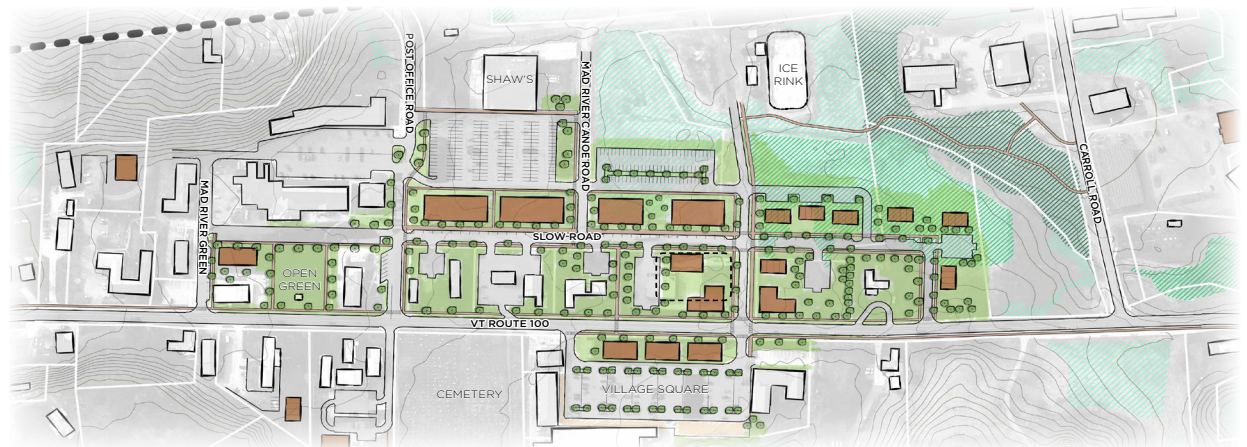
- ✓ A dense mix of homes and public-facing businesses extending at least two blocks.
- ✓ A traffic-calmed, pedestrian-friendly street with on-street parking that can be closed for events. Keep Slow Road slow!
- ✓ Community gathering places, indoors and outdoors.
- ✓ Parking is shared with existing nearby parking lots, reducing the amount of new parking that is needed.
- ✓ Clear signage identifies parking areas and walking routes.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- » Future infill development along the block between Mad River Green Road and Mad River Canoe Road will necessitate retiring of the septic mound adjacent to the Shaw's parking area. This is planned to occur as part of the Community Wastewater System Project.
- » Development impacts to wetland areas along Slow Road north of Mad River Canoe Road may be subject to state and/or federal wetlands permitting, depending on the location, type, and scale of development (see Action B).
- » There will need to be coordination for the timing for new development and supporting infrastructure (e.g., wastewater, road/streetscape improvements, sidewalk).
- » The planned community wastewater system service area will cover all of Irasville and Waitsfield Village. Policies should be considered to ensure there is sufficient wastewater capacity to reserved for future development along Slow Road (Action A).

KEY STEPS

- » **Evaluate the use of a public-private partnership** through the forthcoming Community and Housing Infrastructure Program (CHIP) through the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD). Under this program, a municipality will be able enter into a master development agreement with a private landowner to approve the creation of new homes or mixed-use buildings, and then use the anticipated property tax revenues from that development to finance the costs of new infrastructure that serves the development, such as roads and sidewalks. The program is schedule to go live in January 2026.
- » **Pursue phased development.** Phase 1 of development would cover the existing section of Slow Road between Post Office Road and the Skatium Driveway, with a subsequent Phase 2 for the new northward extension of Slow Road.

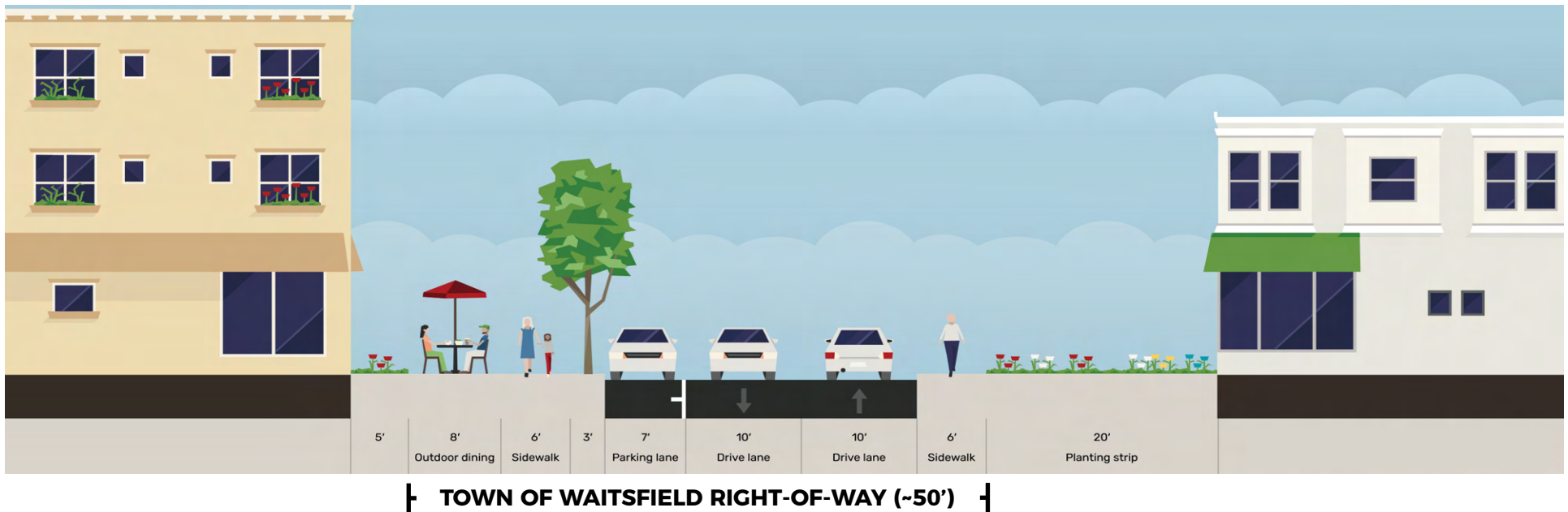


KEY STEPS (CONTINUED)

- » **Conduct preliminary engineering for streetscape improvements along Slow Road.** Evaluate approaches for stormwater retention and mitigation within the streetscape. This can potentially be supported with Municipal Planning Grant funds.
- » **Maintain the Mad River Path trail corridor** along Slow Road using sidewalks, signage, and/or trail relocation.
- » **Create an official Town Map for Waitsfield** that shows an extended Slow Road right-of-way.
- » **Establish an Irasville Main Street organization or coalition** to educate community members about the project. Conduct events and pop-up demonstrations to showcase the potential of Slow Road as the future hub of the community.

Public Input Highlight: Slow Road

At a March 19th, 2025 community open house, attendees wanted Waitsfield to think big. Amongst the different potential future development scenarios presented, there was the strongest support for the creation of a “Main Street” along Slow Road that extends multiple blocks with a mix of new residential and commercial development.



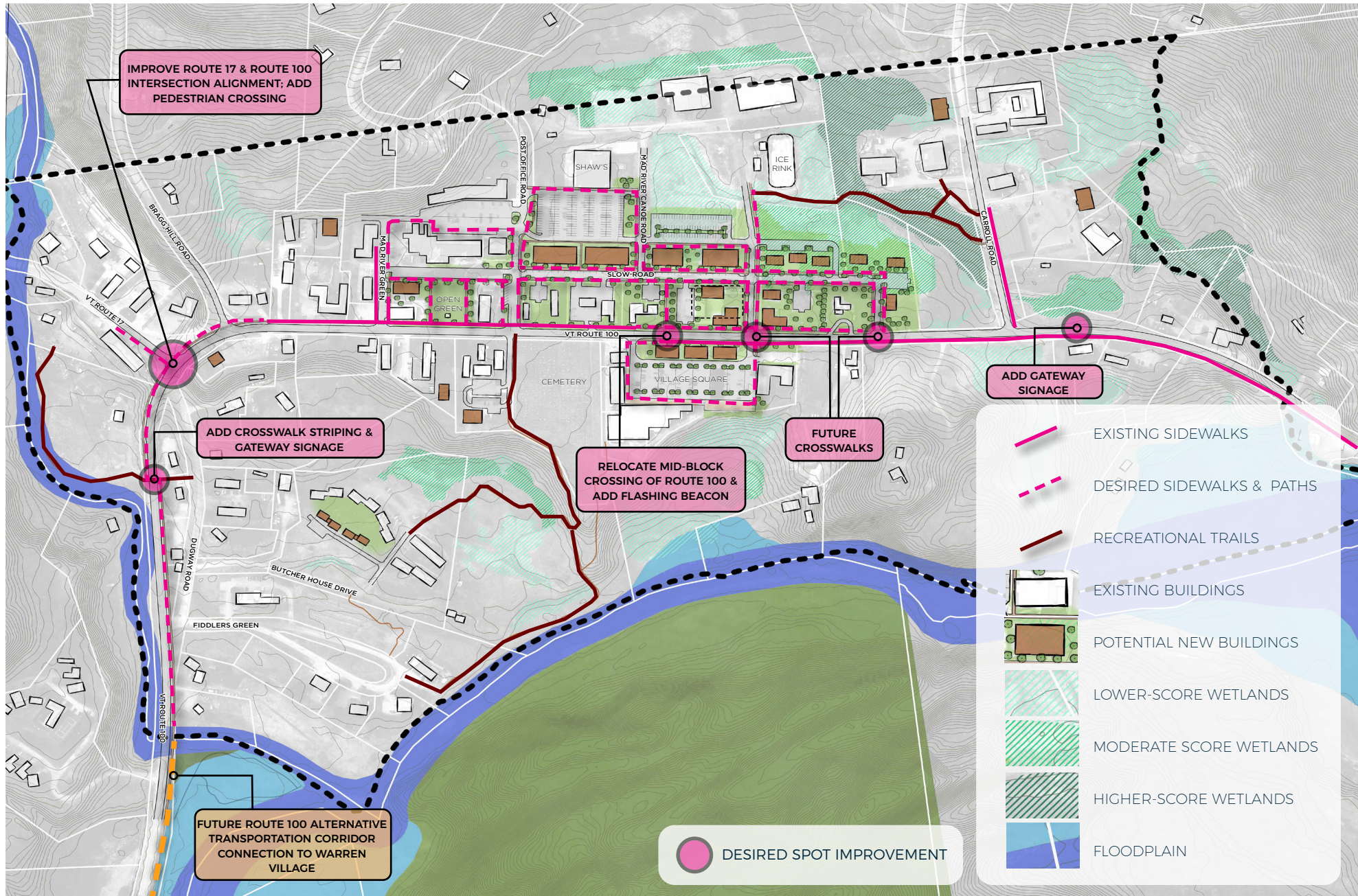
Slow Road Cross Section: The Town of Waitsfield owns an approximately 50-foot right-of-way along Slow Road. This right-of-way is envisioned to host sidewalks, flexible outdoor spaces, and street trees and other greenery, in addition to travel and parking lanes.

CHAPTER 4

Comprehensive Strategies to Complete the Vision



TRANSPORTATION: ENVISIONED NETWORK & SPOT IMPROVEMENTS



TRANSPORTATION: RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

EXPANDING THE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE NETWORK

Creating a seamless and convenient network of sidewalks, paths, and trails (as envisioned on page 22) will be a long-term endeavor. Building out this network will involve both strategic planning to address priority network gaps and taking advantage of potential opportunities as they arise.

- » **Incorporate Wayfinding Signage.** Pedestrian-scale wayfinding signage will support a convenient “park once and walk” experience for visitors to Irasville. Wayfinding signage can also help establish linkages between the sidewalk network and the recreational path network by describing how sidewalks can be used to connect to recreational trails and destinations, such as the Mad River Path and the MRV Recreation Hub.
- » **Evaluate Potential Bicycle Path Connections within Irasville.** The Route 100 Alternative Transportation Corridor project has identified potential pedestrian and bicycle connections from Irasville to other villages but did not explore connections within the village. The Stowe Recreation Path in Stowe, VT provides a potential case study for how to route a bicycle path through a developed village area while minimizing potential conflicts and road and driveway crossings.
- » **Create a Village Sidewalk Policy or Ordinance for Future Developments.** As recommended during the 2024 Vibrant Villages Initiative, this policy or ordinance would establish where public sidewalks or paths would be required to be constructed with future development and provide relevant design and accessibility standards for developers.
- » **Create a Capital Reserve Fund for Sidewalks.** A capital reserve fund will provide a consistent source of funding to implement sidewalk provide matching funds for grants, and cover the costs of ongoing maintenance as the sidewalk network expands.

- » **Develop an Impact Fee Policy or Ordinance.** As recommended during the 2024 Vibrant Villages Initiative, this policy or ordinance would provide the Town with the authority to levy fees on proposed developments for the purposes of contributing to the capital cost of constructing public sidewalk and/or shared use path facilities that will serve the proposed development and neighborhood area. This could also be expanded to apply to other types of needed capital infrastructure projects. Such a policy can also provide a means for developers to contribute to public pedestrian facilities in lieu of constructing facilities themselves.
- » **Pursue grant funding.** Potential grant funding opportunities include:
 - VTrans Bike/Ped Grant Program
 - FHWA Transportation Alternatives Program
 - ACCD Downtown Transportation Fund



Stowe Recreation Path. This multi-use path winds along the VT Route 108 corridor, connecting behind businesses and agricultural fields through a densely developed area. A similar approach could be explored in Irasville (photo courtesy Town of Stowe).

TRANSPORTATION: RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

CREATING SAFE STREETS FOR ALL USERS

As Irasville develops, use of the transportation network by all users - bikes, motor vehicles, pedestrians - will grow. In addition to expanding the network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, planning for transportation system in Irasville should include measures to promote safe driving speeds, increase driver awareness, and reduce potential for conflicts at intersections and crossings.

- » **Install curb extensions at key pedestrian crossings** in Irasville village. Incorporate curb extensions into streetscape planning for Slow Road. In the short-term, deploy temporary curb extensions using materials like bollards or large concrete planters. Along Route 100, where the use of curb extensions may not be permitted by VTrans, evaluate alternative pedestrian crossing treatments, such as high-visibility crosswalk paint and rectangular rapid flashing beacons.
- » **Maintain and enforce a speed limit of 25 MPH** on all roads in Irasville - the lowest allowed by state law.
- » **Install prominent gateway signage** at the entrances to Irasville village along Route 100 and Route 17.
- » **Pursue grant funding.** Potential grant funding opportunities include:
 - VTrans Bike/Ped Grant Program
 - FHWA Transportation Alternatives Program
 - ACCD Downtown Transportation Fund
 - AARP Community Challenge Grant (for temporary improvement projects)



(1) Quick-build curb extension in Burlington, VT.

(2) Curb extensions help reduce pedestrian crossing distances and calm vehicular traffic speeds.

OUTDOOR RECREATION: RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Part of what makes Irasville special is its connection to the outdoors - mountain views, trail connections, and green spaces that support community events. As Irasville grows, special attention should be paid to sustaining this tradition of outdoor spaces and access.

PARKS & OUTDOOR SPACES

- » **Pursue the creation of a conservation-oriented park** along Route 100 south of Carroll Road. This park would protect higher-functioning wetlands and host low-impact recreational amenities, such as trails and boardwalks that connect to existing boardwalks and outdoor classroom features.
- » **Develop a partnership or agreement to permanently establish the Irasville Town Green**, which is currently privately owned. Improve parking and pedestrian access through the Green.
- » **Encourage the development of pocket parks and flexible outdoor spaces along with infill development**, particularly along Slow Road as it is developed into the village's Main Street.
- » **Explore potential improvements to the Skatium Recreation Center**, including potential four-season outdoor amenities that are connected to the adjacent recreational trail network.

RECREATIONAL TRAILS

- » **Maintain the Mad River Path trail corridor through Irasville**, including along Slow Road, using sidewalks, signage, and/or trail relocation where needed.
- » **Activate the connection to the MRV Recreation Hub** through physical infrastructure improvements (sidewalks, crossing, signage) as well as promotional efforts.
- » **Identify “park and hike” and “park and bike” locations in central Irasville** where trail recreationalists can be encouraged to start and end their outings, increasing patronage of village center businesses.



- (1) Flexible outdoor spaces in village areas provide the infrastructure for community events and gathering.
- (2) The MRV Recreation Hub provides in-town access to vast multi-use trail systems, plus many of the amenities a recreationalist might want or need. (Credit: Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce).

LAND USE: RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

CHANGES TO LAND USE REGULATIONS

The 2024 Vibrant Villages Initiative resulted in changes to zoning bylaws in Irasville that support compact residential and commercial development as envisioned in this plan, while maintaining thoughtful limits on the scale and form of development to ensure consistency with the character of the area. Further changes will need to be considered to advance plan goals and ensure alignment with state law.

- » **Update zoning bylaws to reference the Irasville Village Master Plan**, including in the purpose statement for the Irasville Village District and in the provisions for Planned Unit Developments.
- » **Adopt required density bonuses for affordable housing.** Act 47 (the HOME Act), passed in 2023, requires Vermont municipalities to include a density bonus of 40% more units and a bonus of one habitable floor above the height maximum for affordable housing development in areas served by municipal water and sewer. Once the Town's community wastewater system is implemented, the Town will be required to revise zoning bylaws to meet this state requirement.
- » **Encourage or require additional on-site stormwater mitigation measures for new developments.**
- » **Continue to limit building heights to three (3) stories** to align with historic development character and to limit the ability for any single development to utilize an excessive amount of wastewater system capacity.
- » **Create a Village Sidewalk Policy or Ordinance for Future Developments.** As described on page 23, this policy would need to be referenced in the Town's zoning bylaws to be considered as part of the development application process.

GOVERNANCE: RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

PLAN FOR MUNICIPAL FINANCIAL HEALTH & CAPACITY

This plan envisions significant new investments in infrastructure and community facilities to support the desired growth of Irasville as a vibrant hub for the community and region. With these investments come increased long-term maintenance obligations, which will need to be planned for. While increased property tax revenues from future development should help address ongoing costs, the Town should consider supplementary strategies and revenue sources to ensure financial health and the delivery of municipal services amidst increasing costs for goods and services.

- » **Evaluate a 1% local option tax (LOT).** A 1% LOT can be applied to any or all of the following: sales (with exemptions for essential household goods), meals and alcoholic beverages, and/or rooms. LOTs have been adopted in many Vermont towns that serve as regional hubs and/or tourist destinations, including communities like Waterbury, Stowe, Middlebury, Woodstock, Killington, Ludlow, Manchester, St. Albans, and Stratton.
- » **Plan ahead for maintenance operations and associated capital expenses.** Consider needs such as increased road and sidewalk repairs and snow removal.
- » **Evaluate the use of public-private partnerships** for major capital projects through the forthcoming Community and Housing Infrastructure Program (CHIP) (see p. 19).
- » **Create a Capital Reserve Fund for Sidewalks.** (see p. 23)
- » **Develop an Impact Fee Policy or Ordinance.** (see p. 23)

CHAPTER 5

The Process: How We Built This Plan



March 2025 Open House: ideas for Irasville from the next generation of community planners.

HOW WE GOT HERE

The vision and plan for Irasville was developed through an iterative process that involved community engagement, research, analysis, and design development.

RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

The early part of the planning process included a site visit, a thorough analysis of existing development and infrastructure, and a review of past plans, studies, and current land use regulations.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The planning process included two key community events. An initial open house in November 2024 saw community members weigh in on overall project direction and goals. A subsequent open house in March 2025 provided an opportunity for members of the public to share input on initial vision, conceptual design ideas, and master plan recommendations. Individual interviews with key community organizations and stakeholders provided additional perspective on needs and opportunities to be addressed by the plan. The process was overseen by the Village Master Plan Steering Committee, which met over a dozen times during the process to shape the development of the Master Plan.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The project team used the key takeaways from research, analysis, and community engagement to prepare and revise draft conceptual designs and planning recommendations, forming the basis of the Irasville Village Master Plan.

A 1.5-year process, built on decades of planning and dreaming.

The vision for Irasville did not emerge overnight - it is the product of many plans, community meetings, leaders, and lessons learned. Key plans and studies that informed the development of the Irasville Village Master Plan include:

- ✓ **Waitsfield Town Plan (2023)**
- ✓ **Waitsfield In-Street Crosswalk Pilot Report (2021)**
- ✓ **Mad River Valley Housing Demand and Market Analysis (2020)**
- ✓ **Waitsfield Water Management Mapping Project (2018)**
- ✓ **Mad River Valley Active Transportation Plan (2016)**
- ✓ **Master Development Plan for the Irasville Growth Center (2002)**

Additionally, conceptual plans and designs for infill development and improved pedestrian connectivity prepared over the years by a variety of architects and designers - Dave Sellers, Jim Sanford, Don Swain, Rennselaer Polytechnic Institute students, and others - provided essential inspiration for the designs presented in this plan.

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE EVENTS: KEY TAKEAWAYS

NOVEMBER 2024 OPEN HOUSE

Over 50 Mad River Valley residents attended the first Open House event for the Irasville Village Master Plan on November 18th, 2024. The event featured remarks from representatives of the Waitsfield Planning Commission, Waitsfield Selectboard, and Mad River Valley Planning District. Project consultants from SE Group provided an overview of initial findings and takeaways from the planning process. Residents were invited to provide feedback on initial community planning objectives using sticker dot polls placed around the room.

KEY THEMES FROM THE EVENT

- » **Attendees were both excited and concerned about the future of Irasville.** The recent loss of businesses and community services Irasville was top of mind for many participants. At the same time, many expressed that Irasville holds great potential as a vibrant village center for Waitsfield and the Mad River Valley.
- » **Attendees were supportive of an infill development approach** for future redevelopment in Irasville, with a focus on housing, local-serving businesses, and mixed-use development.
- » **Attendees were supportive of a balanced approach to wetlands in Irasville** that preserves critical wetland functions while considering possible impacts to low-functioning wetlands if those impacts result in significant community benefit.
- » **Attendees were supportive of exploring transportation infrastructure improvements** to enhance and facilitate walkable development in Irasville, such as improved pedestrian connections and possible new roadways to create village blocks.
- » **Attendees wanted the planning process to explore enhanced recreational and community facilities**, such as a year-round recreation or community center and community gathering spaces.
- » **Attendees were supportive of exploring a mix of building heights for future development**, with a minimum building height of two stories.



Josh Schwartz, Executive Director of the Mad River Valley Planning District, addresses attendees at the November 2024 community open house event.

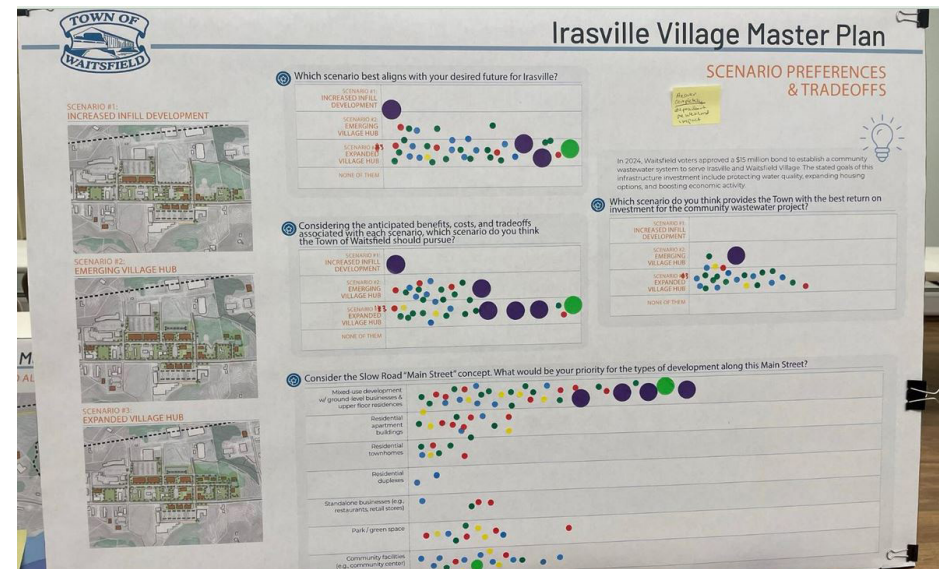
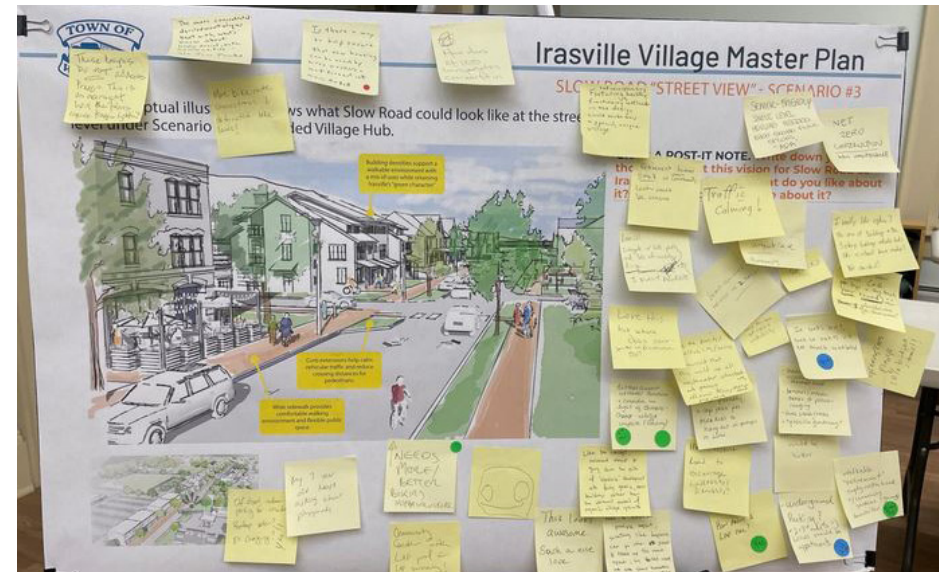
COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE EVENTS: KEY TAKEAWAYS

MARCH 2025 OPEN HOUSE

More than 70 Mad River Valley residents attended the second Open House for the Irasville Village Master Plan on March 19, 2025. To support the Town in developing an actionable plan to meet community needs, Open House attendees provided feedback on different potential scenarios and forms for future development in Irasville, focused on possible infill development opportunities along Slow Road. Through conversations, sticker dot voting, and written comments on poster boards, attendees provided their feedback and ideas while being asked to consider the benefits, costs, and tradeoffs associated with different forms and scales of development.

KEY THEMES FROM THE EVENT

- » **An opportunity to think big.** Amongst the different potential future development scenarios presented, there was the strongest support for the creation of a “Main Street” along Slow Road that extends multiple blocks with a mix of new residential and commercial development.
- » **Mixed-use development is wanted.** An example three-story design with ground-level retail and upper-floor residences received the most support, with the highest number of votes to encourage or incentivize this style of development.
- » **Wetland considerations** play an important role in determining suitable development locations, preserving ecological functions, and guiding planning decisions. This theme remained consistent across both open house events.
- » **Improving pedestrian connectivity** and **providing community gathering spaces** were both top of mind for many attendees.



Input recorded from March 2025 open house attendees.

IRASVILLE VILLAGE MASTER PLAN

OCTOBER 2025



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. A VILLAGE HELD IN CHECK: THE STORY OF IRASVILLE.....3

Then & Now: The Development of Irasville..... 5

Irasville Today: Existing Conditions..... 6

Building on Plans & Studies: Past & Present..... 8

Putting it all Together: Goals for Irasville 10

2. VIBRANT VILLAGE: THE VISION FOR IRASVILLE.....12

The Village-Wide Vision for Irasville 13

Spotlights: Key Elements of the Vision.. 14

3. THREE KEY ACTIONS TO MOVE IRASVILLE FORWARD.....16

Key Action #1: Implement the Community Wastewater System..... 17

Key Action #2: Implement a Local & Regional Wetlands Strategy 18

Key Action #3: Establish Slow Road as Irasville’s “Main Street” 19

4. COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES TO COMPLETE THE VISION.....21

Transportation Network 22

Outdoor Recreation 25

Land Use & Governance 26

5. THE PROCESS: HOW WE BUILT THIS PLAN.....27

6. APPENDICES.....31

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Our sincere thanks to the residents of the Town of Waitsfield and Mad River Valley who lent their time, energy, and ideas to this planning process.

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CHAPTER 1

A Village Held in Check: The Story of Irasville

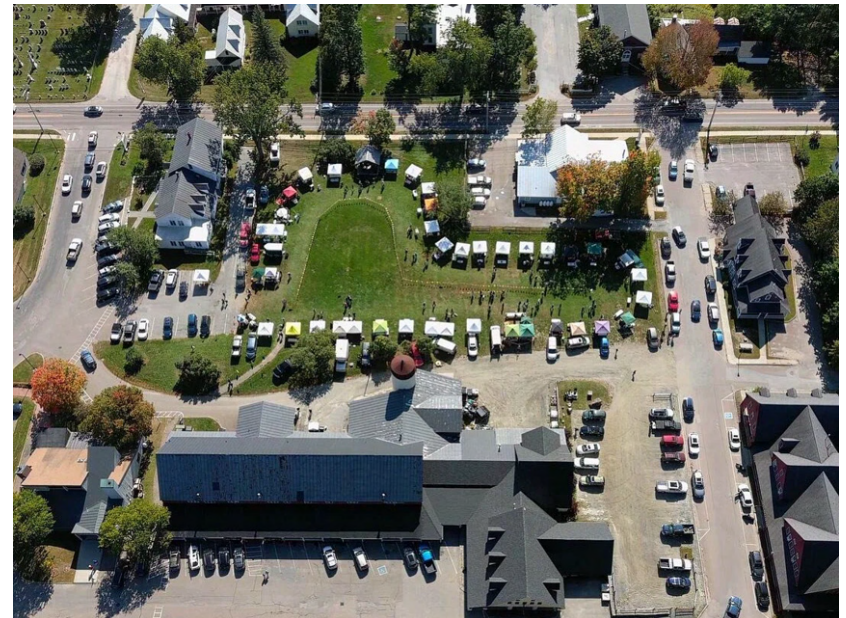
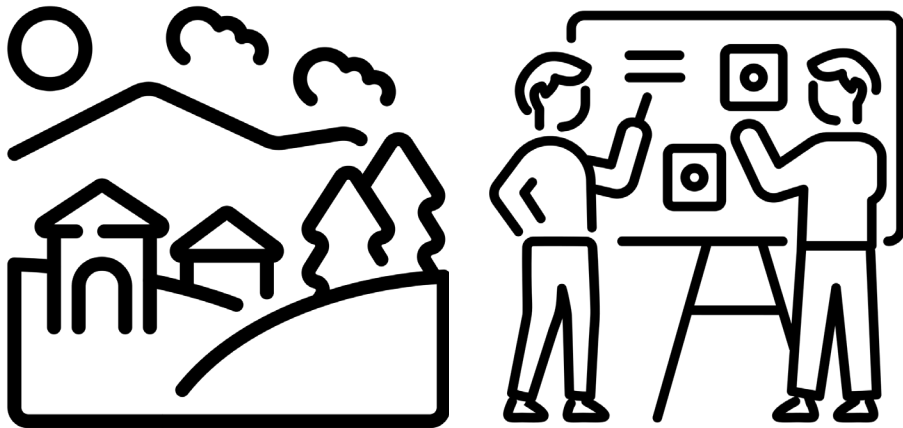
Project Focus Area: The Irasville Village District, as identified on the Town of Waitsfield Zoning Map.



Community gathering place. Hub of the Mad River Valley. Jumping off point for the great outdoors.

Irasville is where the Mad River Valley comes to shop, dine, gather, and play. One of two villages in Waitsfield, VT, this area has long been envisioned as a vibrant regional center, featuring a thoughtful mix of homes, local businesses, services, and recreational amenities. For years this vision has been held back, challenged by insufficient infrastructure, natural resource constraints, and a lack of planning progress.

Thanks to sustained efforts by local and regional partners, the time is ripe to reestablish an actionable, pragmatic, and forward-looking vision and action plan for Irasville. The **Irasville Village Master Plan** aims to do just that.



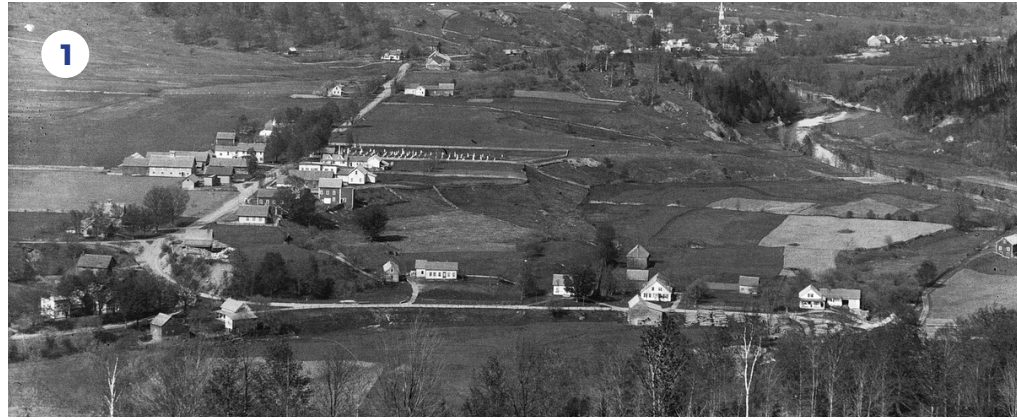
Above: Irasville from the air.

Below: Waitsfield Farmer's Market on a fall day in Irasville.

THEN & NOW: THE DEVELOPMENT OF IRASVILLE

1. INITIAL DEVELOPMENT

The early development of Irasville was similar to many other historic Vermont villages - a relatively dense cluster of homes and businesses surrounded by agricultural uses. Fortunately, early development was located above the floodplain of the Mad River.



Up and Away

Irasville is a rarity in the Mad River Valley - relatively level land along the base of the valley that is elevated out of the floodplain. Historically, this has made Irasville an attractive location for development.

2. AUTOMOBILE-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

In the mid-20th century, a more automobile-oriented development pattern emerged as Irasville evolved into a commercial center. During this time, local planning focused on clustering commercial development in Irasville to avoid sprawling development patterns along VT Route 100. Accompanying this commercial development was a series of roads, commercial driveways, and large surface parking areas.



3. INFILL DEVELOPMENT

In more recent years, some infill development has occurred in Irasville. There has also been an increased emphasis on improving pedestrian connectivity in the village. The lack of a centralized wastewater system has been the primary restriction on further infill development.



Infill Development

The Mad River Taste Place (bottom right) is example of infill development - the creation of new buildings within already developed areas. Benefits include limiting sprawl and using existing infrastructure.

Regional Context

Irasville sits on the floor of Vermont's Mad River Valley, a mountainous and well-conserved watershed where headwater streams quickly reach the main stem of the Mad River. This topography supports the Valley's vaunted outdoor recreation amenities and famous scenery while presenting constraints and threats for local infrastructure and development, such as steep slopes and flooding. With flat and flood resilient topography, Irasville will play a key role in the future climate and economic resiliency of the Mad River Valley.



Nestled in the Valley: Fiddler's Green as seen from Wu Ledges Town Forest.

IRASVILLE TODAY: EXISTING CONDITIONS

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT

- » Irasville is known as the **commercial** center of the Mad River Valley; however, it contains a multitude of other land uses. There are a number of **residences** in Irasville, with clusters of multi-family homes in the southern part of the village as well as **mixed-use buildings** with apartments located above commercial establishments. There are also several industrial operators in the village area.
- » **Irasville is far less densely developed than Waitsfield Village.** The median lot size in Irasville is 1.1 acres, compared to 0.32 acres for the Waitsfield Village Business Zoning District and 0.71 acres for the Village Residential Zoning District.

TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

- » Irasville's transportation network consists of roads, parking areas, sidewalks, and recreational trails.
- » Historically, Irasville has had an **automobile-oriented development pattern** featuring roads, driveways, and large surface parking areas. There has been work in recent decades to improve pedestrian access in the village; however, there are still **significant gaps in the pedestrian network**, with limited sidewalks and crosswalks.

NATURAL ASSETS & CONSTRAINTS

- » Irasville is nestled above the banks of the Mad River at the base of a steep valley wall. Most of the village area is elevated above the 100-year floodplain. Irasville is one of the few larger areas of flat topography in the Mad River Valley with **minimal flood risk**. Historically, this has made Irasville an attractive location for commercial and residential development.
- » Irasville's flat topography supports a **significant wetlands complex**, with approximately 25 acres of wetlands. These range from low-function wetlands with little ecological value to higher-function wetlands that provide important habitat and help mitigate flooding. Historical development in Irasville has impacted these wetlands, with nearly an acre of wetlands impacts since 1992.
- » Located on the floor of the Mad River Valley, Irasville is bounded by (and contains) areas of **steep slope**. These steep areas are typically unsuitable for future development. Clearing and developing steep slopes can accelerate flood events and erosion.
- » While Irasville has significant existing development, there are also areas of **unfragmented forest and habitat** in and around the village.



(1) Northfield Savings Bank in Irasville is an example of a mixed-use building, with residential apartments above the ground-floor bank.

(2) Recent pedestrian safety improvements along Route 100. There is now a continuous sidewalk connection between Waitsfield Village and Irasville, as well as integration with the Mad River Path.



(3) A boardwalk installed by Mad River Path along Carroll Rd forms a key linkage in the transportation and recreational path network in Irasville.

(4) Wetlands along Slow Road. A 2021 study by Arrowwood Environmental found that these wetlands have little ecological value, while wetland complexes near Carroll Rd provide important habitat and flood mitigation functions.

A Four-Season Outdoor Recreation Hub

The Mad River Valley has long been a haven for outdoor recreation, anchored by prominent ski areas. In recent years, there has been a concerted effort to broaden the Valley's year-round outdoor recreation offerings - improving quality of life for residents and enhancing the tourism economy. Significant effort has been applied to expanding the Valley's multi-use trail networks, improving trail access through trailhead and signage improvements, and enhancing promotion of warm-weather recreation opportunities.

Irasville is the emerging center of four-season recreation for the Valley. The Mad River Valley Recreation Hub, located in Irasville, serves as the primary trailhead for the popular mountain bike trails in Camel's Hump State Forest while also hosting the Mad River Valley Welcome Center, a bike shop, and restaurant and brewery. The Mad River Path connects the Hub to destinations throughout Irasville.



BUILDING ON PLANS & STUDIES: PAST & PRESENT

HELD IN CHECK: PAST EFFORTS

Community and regional partners have explored visions for a vibrant Irasville for decades. Irasville has always held potential, attracting visionary ideas and creative designs from a variety of community members and organizations. Themes from past plans for Irasville included rethinking the village's relationship to Route 100, finding opportunities for a vibrant mix of homes and businesses, and improving pedestrian access.

Unfortunately, past planning efforts for Irasville largely did not gain traction.

Amongst other factors, insufficient infrastructure and mixed community support contributed to a stalling out of progress. In 2008, Town voters declined to support a bond measure for the development of a community wastewater system, which had been identified as an essential step to enable infill development in Irasville while protecting water quality.

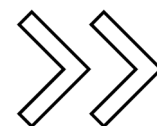
Without community wastewater infrastructure in place, redevelopment efforts in Irasville have been significantly hindered.

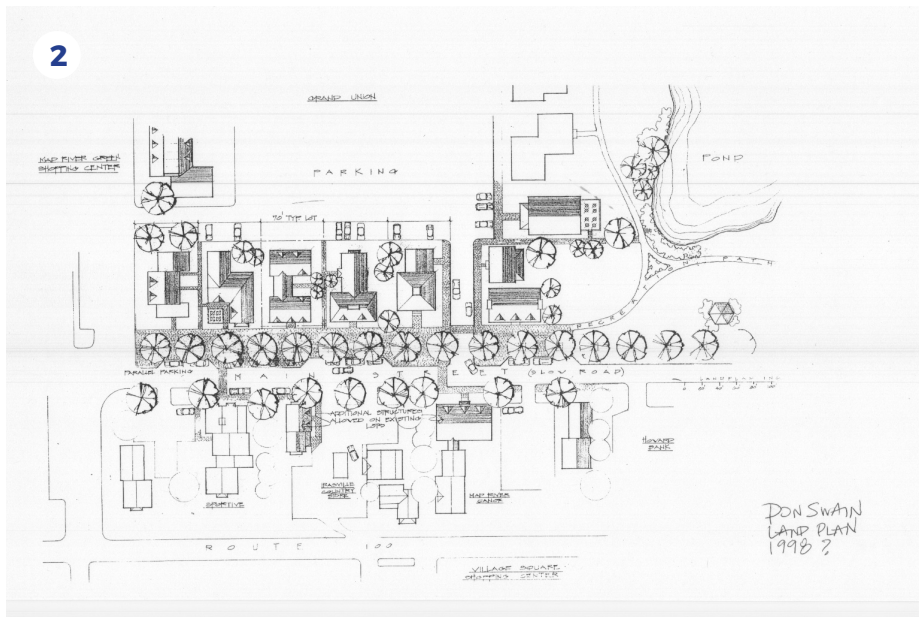
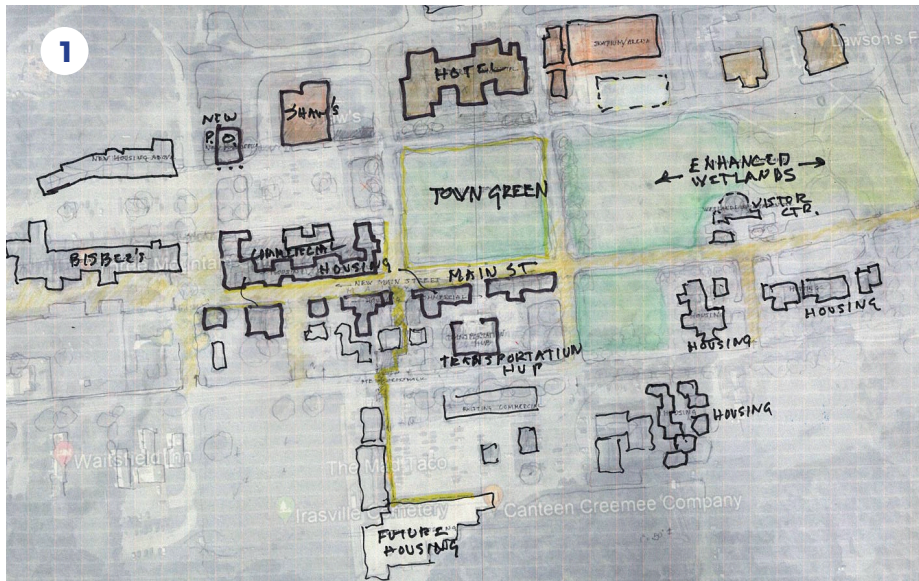


RECENT PROGRESS & MOMENTUM

In recent years, efforts to plan for a vibrant Irasville have regained steam, catalyzed by thoughtful, iterative planning and a commitment to community engagement.

- ✓ **Waitsfield Community Wastewater Project:** a project to support environmentally responsible infill development in Waitsfield's village areas (completion expected in 2027).
- ✓ **Mad River Valley Active Transportation Corridor:** an initiative to connect the villages of the Mad River Valley with pedestrian and bicycle paths (scoping study completed in 2025).
- ✓ **Vibrant Villages Initiative:** a comprehensive update of zoning bylaws to support walkable infill development in Waitsfield's village areas (completed in 2024).
- ✓ **Waitsfield Town Plan Update:** a thorough rewrite of the Town's guiding document, identifying Irasville as the regional growth center for the Mad River Valley (completed in 2023).





(1) & (2) Past planning concepts for infill development and village vibrancy in Irasville. Many past planning efforts have explored similar ideas, such as Slow Road becoming a “Main Street” for Irasville.

Irasville Focus Areas (1/2)

3

Rate your level of support for the following potential land use strategies in Irasville:

Current regulation: Lots in Irasville are required to be at least one acre in size.

Potential Strategy: Reduce the minimum lot size in Irasville to one-quarter acre or smaller to allow for a greater variety of development opportunities (Town Plan Goal 4.G-6).

Current challenge: It is difficult to walk around Irasville due to a lack of sidewalk connections and jumbled development pattern.

Potential Strategy: Require new developments in Irasville to include sidewalks (where appropriate) or contribute funds to the Town towards the creation of new pedestrian connections (Town Plan Goals 8.F-12; 8.F-13; 9.I-19.a).

Current challenge: A large portion of Irasville already has some level of development.

Potential Strategy: Enable additional housing development in areas directly adjacent to Irasville (Town Plan Goal 4.G-6).

Potential Strategy: Adjust development standards to concentrate “infill” development within already-developed areas of Irasville (Town Plan Goal 4.H-1; 9.I-19.a).

Current challenge: Irasville lacks a complete sidewalk network due to challenging intersections and large lots. Large lots can make an area feel less walkable – Irasville requires a minimum lot size of 1 acre, while the Watfield Village Business District requires 1/4 acre lot sizes.

STRONGLY DISAGREE **DISAGREE** **NEUTRAL** **AGREE** **STRONGLY AGREE**

VIBRANT VILLAGES OPEN HOUSE | MARCH 2023

WATSFIELD, VT

vibrant villages



(3) Feedback on potential zoning bylaw changes for Irasville at a 2023 open house event for the Vibrant Villages Initiative.

(4) Community discussions at an event for the Mad River Valley Active Transportation Corridor in October 2025.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: GOALS FOR IRASVILLE

The following goals represent the highest-priority needs, opportunities, and desires from decades of planning, dreaming, and strategizing for Irasville. These planning goals were developed by the Village Master Plan Steering Committee and refined using feedback received at a community open houses in November 2024 and March 2025.

1. COMMUNITY DESIGN

- » 1A. Promote **village-style development** within already-developed areas of Irasville.
- » 1B. Establish a true “**Main Street**” area for Irasville as the future hub of community development.
- » 1C. Encourage a **mix of two and three story buildings**.

2. NATURAL ASSETS & CONSTRAINTS

- » 2A. **100% of higher-function wetland areas in Irasville remain undeveloped in perpetuity.** At least 85% of total wetland areas in Irasville remain undeveloped in perpetuity, with all development impacts occurring in lower-functioning wetlands.
- » 2B. There is **no net loss of stormwater management and flood mitigation function of wetlands** in Irasville affecting the main stem of the Mad River.

3. HOUSING

- » 3A. Create **up to 70 new homes** in Irasville (based on the anticipated capacity of the planned Community Wastewater System).
- » 3B. Encourage a **variety of types of homes**, including below-market-rate rentals aimed at younger households and seniors and homes for first-time homebuyers.



- (1) Main Street areas can be the hub of community gathering and events, as seen above in Steamboat Springs, CO.
- (2) Rain gardens in Village Square help manage stormwater in parking areas.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: GOALS FOR IRASVILLE (CONTINUED)

4. COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

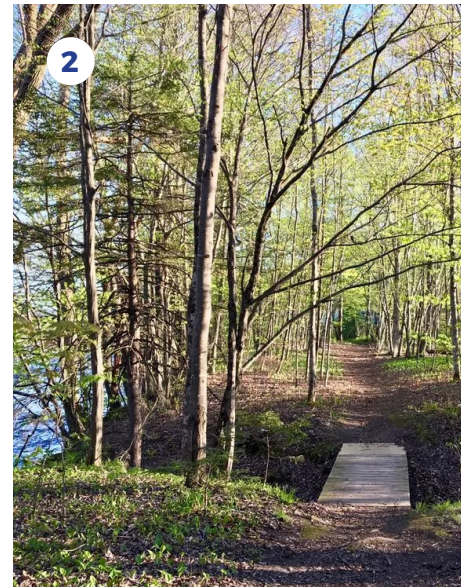
- » 4A. Encourage **mixed-use development** (e.g., ground level retail with upper story apartments) with local-serving, customer-facing commercial uses.
- » 4B. Evaluate opportunities for **redevelopment of shopping plazas** and other properties with redevelopment potential.
- » 4C. Preserve and **sustain key commercial services** in Irasville (e.g., grocery stores) and explore pathways for needed services.

5. TRANSPORTATION

- » 5A. Plan for new roadway connections to support the **creation of village blocks**.
- » 5B. Aim for a seamless, safe, and convenient **pedestrian and bicycle network**.
- » **5C. Limit new surface parking** to the extent possible, including evaluating opportunities for consolidate or share parking facilities.
- » 5D. Encourage **slow vehicular speeds** and increase driver awareness of pedestrians and bicyclists on all roads in Irasville, including Route 100.
- » 5E. Promote a “**park once and walk**” experience for visitors to Irasville.

6. OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMY

- » 6A. Position Irasville as a **jumping off point** for year-round outdoor recreation pursuits.
- » 6B. Integrate **recreational trails** into the pedestrian and bicycle network.



(1) A mixed-use building in downtown Bellows Falls, VT with ground-floor commercial businesses and upper-floor residences..

(2) The Fiddler's Walk trail connects central Irasville to the banks of the Mad River and the new MRV Recreation Hub.

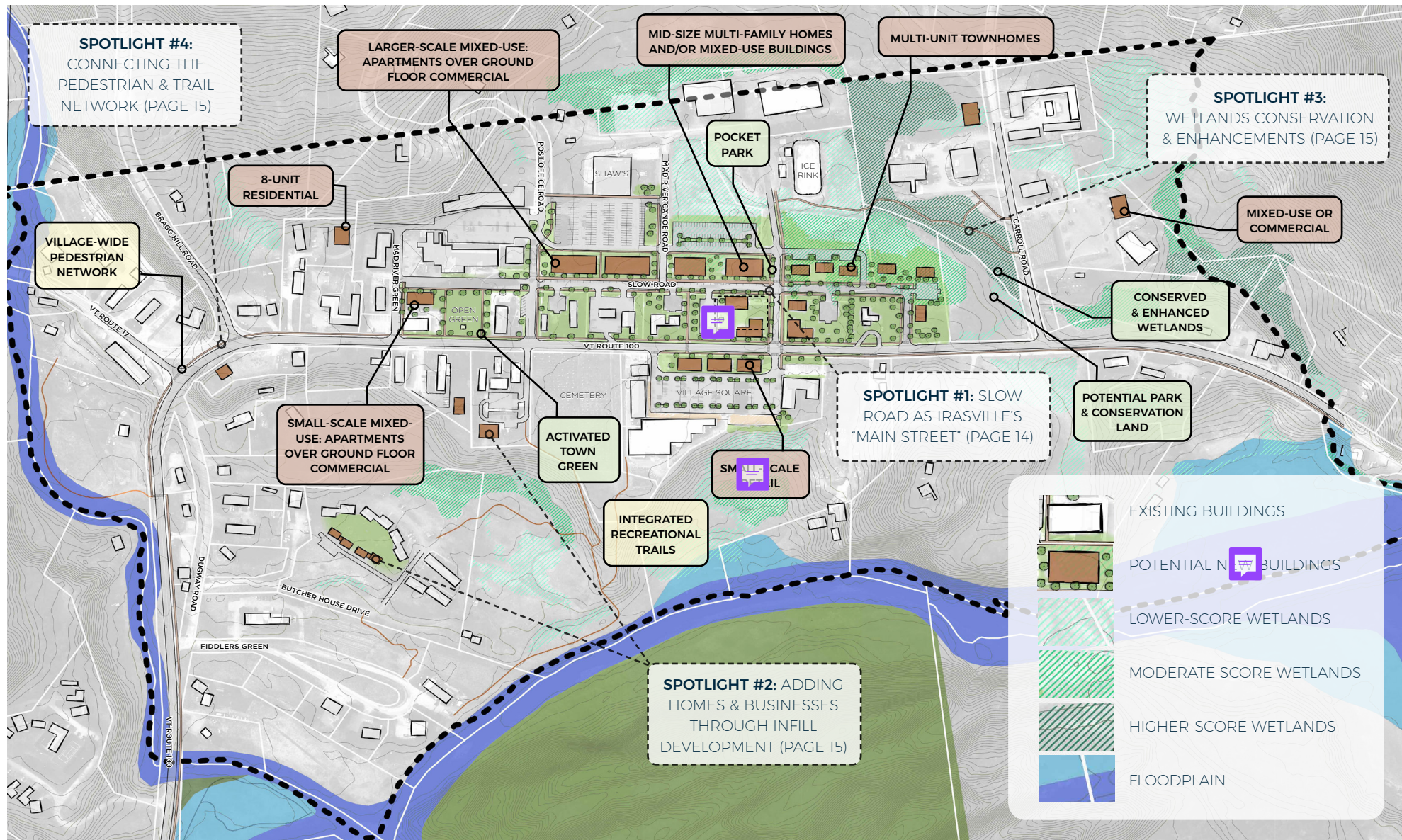
CHAPTER 2

Vibrant Village: The Vision for Irasville



Irasville should be developed and maintained as the area's downtown core with a mix of uses that include a full range of commercial services, civic and cultural facilities, offices, multi-family housing, and upper-story dwellings where practical. - Waitsfield Town Plan, 2024

THE VILLAGE-WIDE VISION FOR IRASVILLE



The Vision for Irasville, Visualized. This conceptual vision aims to demonstrate what is possible in Irasville through planning, regulation, public-private partnerships, and infrastructure investment. While the form of future residential and commercial development will be up to private property owners and developers, the Town of Waitsfield and its partners will play an active role in encouraging and facilitating desired infill development, pedestrian safety improvements, and other village enhancements.

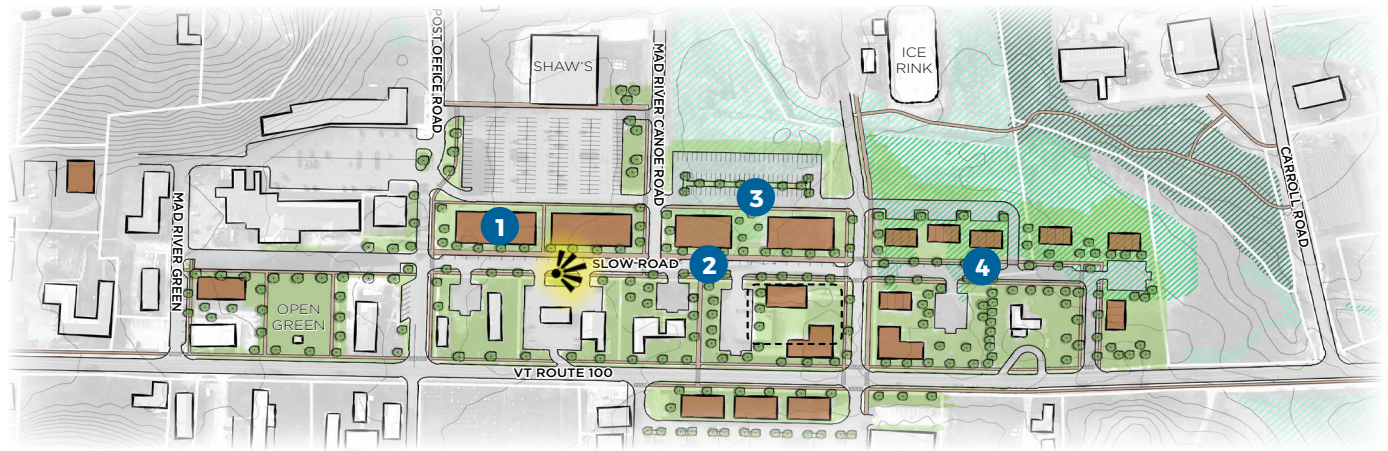
SPOTLIGHTS: KEY ELEMENTS OF THE VISION

SPOTLIGHT #1: SLOW ROAD AS IRASVILLE'S "MAIN STREET"

Great villages are anchored by great Main Streets. Slow Road has long been envisioned as a Main Street for Irasville - a hub of future development to create homes, spaces for community gathering and events, and places of business.

Key elements of this vision include:

- 1 New **mixed-use development** with public-facing, ground floor businesses and upper floor homes, as well as multi-family **apartments** and **townhomes**.
- 2 A low-speed, inviting, **pedestrian-friendly streetscape** with wide sidewalks, protected crosswalks, street trees and greenspace, and flexible spaces for outdoor dining, public art, and pop-up events.
- 3 Auxiliary driveways parallel to Slow Road provide access to additional parking areas and **enable the periodic closure of Slow Road to traffic for community events**.
- 4 An extension of Slow Road enables the **creation of new village blocks**.



Looking down Slow Rd from the driveway of the Irasville Country Store.

SPOTLIGHTS: KEY ELEMENTS OF THE VISION (CONTINUED)

SPOTLIGHT #2: ADDING HOMES & BUSINESSES THROUGH INFILL DEVELOPMENT

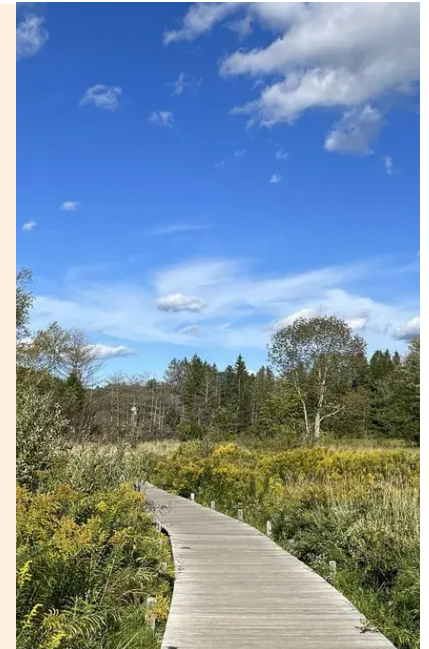
Infill development opportunities will be plentiful in Irasville once the community wastewater project is complete. Under Town zoning bylaws revised in 2024, new homes and businesses can be created on lots as small as 1/5 acre - well below the current median lot size of 1.1 acres in the village.



- (1) A single-family home on a small lot in Shelburne, VT.
- (2) Townhomes integrated into the pedestrian network in South Burlington, VT.

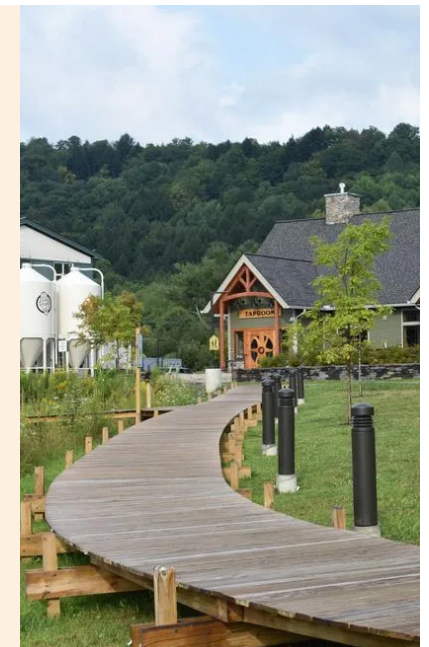
SPOTLIGHT #3: WETLANDS CONSERVATION & ENHANCEMENT

The development of the Slow Road “Main Street” will require some impacts to wetlands that have been identified as having little ecological value in previous studies. Higher value wetlands will be protected and improved using a variety of strategies, including land protection, plantings, and other enhancements to wetlands and wetland buffers.



SPOTLIGHT #4: CONNECTING THE PEDESTRIAN & TRAIL NETWORK

Through long-term efforts, sidewalks have been constructed along VT Route 100 and natural surface paths connect directly into Irasville village. There is an opportunity address gaps in these networks to create seamless connections between homes, businesses, and outdoor recreation destinations and deliver a “park once and walk” experience for visitors.



CHAPTER 3

Three Key Actions to Move Irasville Forward



IDENTIFYING THE KEY CATALYSTS FOR A VIBRANT IRASVILLE

There is no shortage of ideas, opportunities, needs, and challenges for implementing the vision for Irasville. To move forward on this vision, the Town of Waitsfield and its partners will need to prioritize where apply time, effort, and money are applied. The following **Key Actions** were identified as the most critical implementation steps with the potential to advance village vibrancy in Irasville.

- » **Action A:** Implement the Community Wastewater System (p. 17).
- » **Action B:** Implement a Local & Regional Wetlands Strategy (p. 18).
- » **Action C:** Establish Slow Road as Irasville's Main Street (p. 19-20).

Action A: Implement the Community Wastewater System

A centralized wastewater system is needed to enable the creation of new homes and businesses in Irasville while protecting public health and water resources.

WHAT TO KNOW:

The Town of Waitsfield is actively pursuing the implementation of the Community Wastewater System project, with expected completion in 2027. The system will be built and operated with no cost to taxpayers, leveraging grants and state financing to cover implementation costs and covering ongoing operator costs with fees paid by users of the system.

KEY GOALS & OUTCOMES:

- ✓ Irasville is able to grow with sustainable, walkable infill development.
- ✓ Local water quality is protected.
- ✓ Cost of development for new homes and businesses are reduced.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

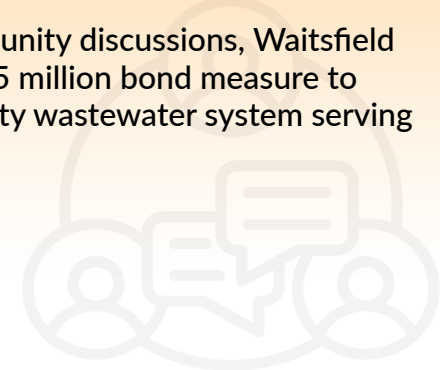
- » The planned wastewater system is expected to provide capacity for approximately **70 new homes as well as additional capacity for new commercial businesses** in Irasville after existing properties are connected to the system. It is possible that additional wastewater capacity for new development could be secured in the future.
- » While there is a defined wastewater service area for the planned system, there is currently no policy governing how much future capacity may be allocated to any particular development or sub-area.
- » There may be an opportunity align wastewater system implementation with improvements to other infrastructure, such as **roadways and sidewalks**, in areas where wastewater utility lines will be constructed and buried.

KEY STEPS

- » **Continue to move forward with financing and implementation planning for the planned wastewater system serving Irasville.**
- » **Identify combined wastewater & transportation infrastructure projects.** Wastewater system construction plans should consider opportunities to phase in roadway and pedestrian improvements that could be completed in a single project.
- » **Develop wastewater allocation policies.** These policies can reserve wastewater capacity for a sub-area of Irasville (e.g., the area around Slow Road) and/or limit that amount of wastewater capacity allocated to any single project.

Public Input Highlight: Community Wastewater Project

Following years of planning and community discussions, Waitsfield voters overwhelmingly approved a \$15 million bond measure to fund the construction of the community wastewater system serving Irasville and Waitsfield Village.



Action B: Implement a Local & Regional Wetlands Strategy

A comprehensive strategy is needed to balance the growth of Irasville as the flood-resilient hub of the Mad River Valley with protections for critical ecological functions provided by local wetlands.

WHAT TO KNOW:

Irasville contains approximately 25 acres of wetlands, ranging from low-functioning wetlands with little ecological value to higher-function wetlands that provide habitat and help mitigate flooding. Since 1992, there have been over an acre of direct impacts to wetlands in Irasville.

KEY GOALS & OUTCOMES:

- ✓ *Irasville is able to grow with flood-resilient, walkable infill development.*
- ✓ *100% of higher-function wetland areas in Irasville remain undeveloped in perpetuity.*
- ✓ *At least 85% of total wetland areas in Irasville remain undeveloped in perpetuity, with all development impacts occurring in lower-functioning wetlands*
- ✓ *Critical local wetland functions and scenic values are permanently conserved, including no net loss of flood mitigation function affecting the main stem of the Mad River.*

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- » Wetland functions in Irasville range from very low to moderately high. Envisioned infill development sites along Slow Road would result in impacts to wetlands with low or very low wetland functions.
- » Irasville does not have a centralized stormwater system and is believed to have a high groundwater table. Both conditions present uncertainties for how future infill development will impact wetlands, even in areas of low wetland function.
- » Wetlands impacts from development are potentially subject to permitting through the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation and the US Army Corps of Engineers. In September 2025, Governor Phil Scott issued an executive order that would result in housing development in Irasville from some state wetlands permitting requirements if the development were to impact unmapped Class II wetlands.
- » Waitsfield's zoning bylaws permit wetlands impacts, provided that the impacts conform to Vermont Wetlands Rules and the development includes a vegetated buffer between wetland areas. For proposed developments going through conditional review, the Development Review Board retains some discretion to limit wetland impacts.

KEY STEPS

- » **Coordinate with state and federal wetlands permitting agencies** to ensure clarity on the location, type, and scale of development that will require wetlands permits.
- » **Conserve remaining wetland areas** through conservation easements, negotiated conditions of development approvals for projects impacting lower-function wetlands, and fee-simple acquisition of targeted properties. Continue to engage with local property owners who have expressed interest in putting wetland areas into conservation.
- » **Enhance flood mitigation functions of remaining lower-functioning wetlands** through plantings, reduced channelization, improved wetland buffers, and other restoration efforts. Work with Friends of the Mad River to engage property owners and identify projects.
- » **Enhance the flood mitigation function of the Town-owned pond** at the intersection of Carroll Road and Route 100.
- » **Commission further studies** to model the localized effects of potential wetlands impacts and identify opportunities for wetlands enhancements and flood mitigation projects upstream of Irasville in the Mad River watershed.

Public Input Highlight: Wetland Conservation

Attendees at a November 2024 open house were supportive of a balanced approach to wetlands in Irasville: preserving critical wetland functions while permitting impacts to low-functioning wetlands if those impacts result in significant community benefit.



Action C: Establish Slow Road as Irasville's Main Street

A Main Street provides a walkable central hub for community development - homes, businesses, gathering places, and events. It also promotes the orderly and efficient development and maintenance of critical infrastructure (e.g., roads, sidewalks, water/wastewater service lines) by limiting scattered development.

WHAT TO KNOW:

Slow Road is well-positioned to serve as Irasville's Main Street, with a central location and ample development sites.

KEY GOALS & OUTCOMES:

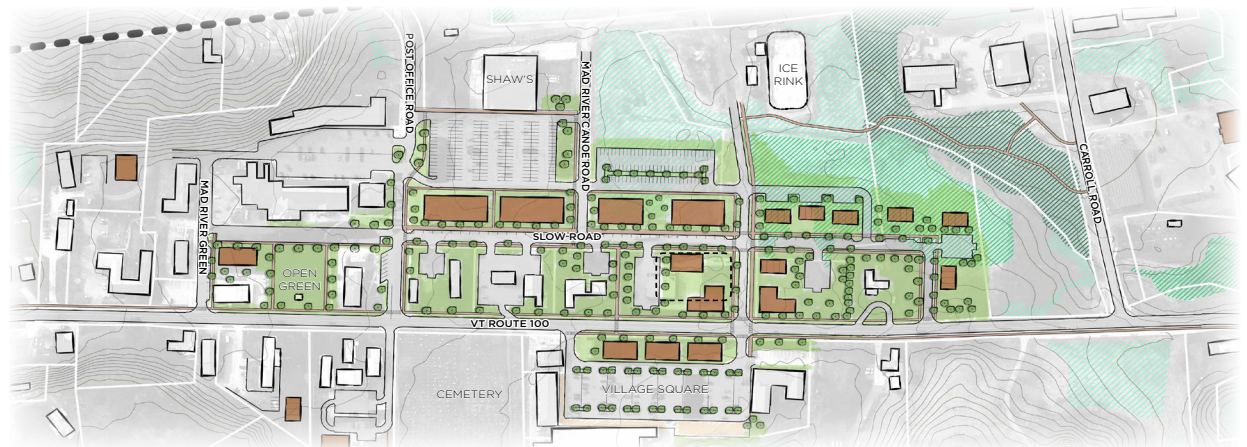
- ✓ A dense mix of homes and public-facing businesses extending at least two blocks.
- ✓ A traffic-calmed, pedestrian-friendly street with on-street parking that can be closed for events. Keep Slow Road slow!
- ✓ Community gathering places, indoors and outdoors.
- ✓ Parking is shared with existing nearby parking lots, reducing the amount of new parking that is needed.
- ✓ Clear signage identifies parking areas and walking routes.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- » Future infill development along the block between Mad River Green Road and Mad River Canoe Road will necessitate retiring of the septic mound adjacent to the Shaw's parking area. This is planned to occur as part of the Community Wastewater System Project.
- » Development impacts to wetland areas along Slow Road north of Mad River Canoe Road may be subject to state and/or federal wetlands permitting, depending on the location, type, and scale of development (see Action B).
- » There will need to be coordination for the timing for new development and supporting infrastructure (e.g., wastewater, road/streetscape improvements, sidewalk).
- » The planned community wastewater system service area will cover all of Irasville and Waitsfield Village. Policies should be considered to ensure there is sufficient wastewater capacity to reserved for future development along Slow Road (Action A).

KEY STEPS

- » **Evaluate the use of a public-private partnership** through the forthcoming Community and Housing Infrastructure Program (CHIP) through the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD). Under this program, a municipality will be able enter into a master development agreement with a private landowner to approve the creation of new homes or mixed-use buildings, and then use the anticipated property tax revenues from that development to finance the costs of new infrastructure that serves the development, such as roads and sidewalks. The program is schedule to go live in January 2026.
- » **Pursue phased development.** Phase 1 of development would cover the existing section of Slow Road between Post Office Road and the Skatium Driveway, with a subsequent Phase 2 for the new northward extension of Slow Road.

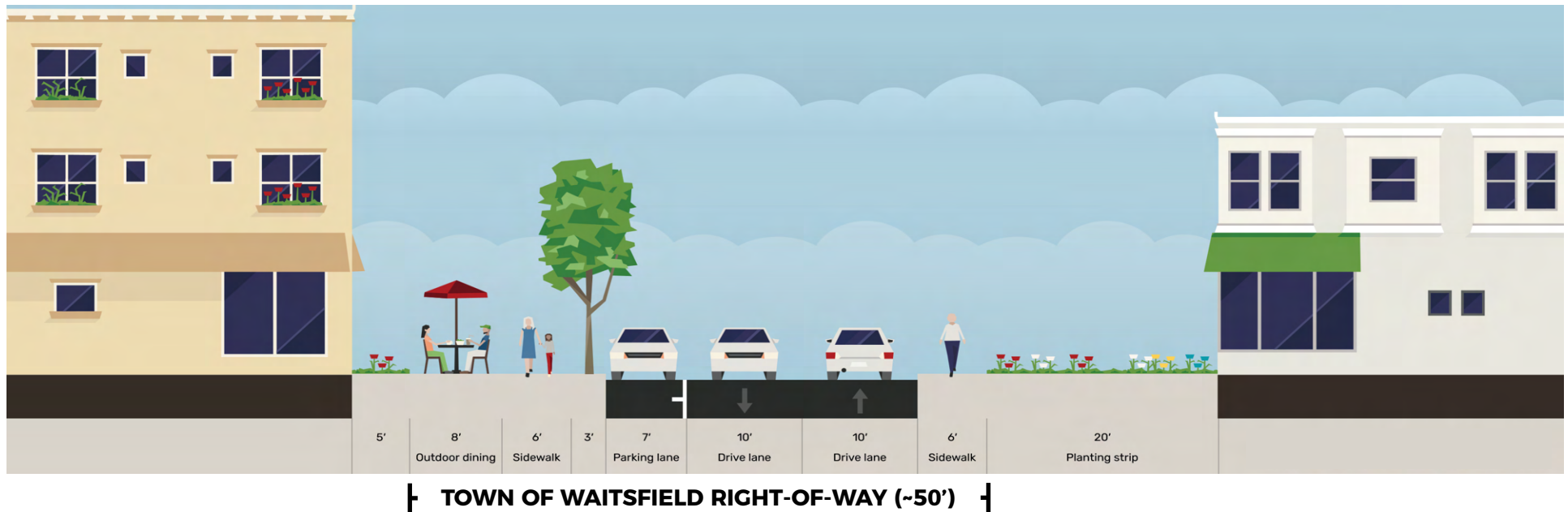


KEY STEPS (CONTINUED)

- » **Conduct preliminary engineering for streetscape improvements along Slow Road.** Evaluate approaches for stormwater retention and mitigation within the streetscape. This can potentially be supported with Municipal Planning Grant funds.
- » **Maintain the Mad River Path trail corridor** along Slow Road using sidewalks, signage, and/or trail relocation.
- » **Create an official Town Map for Waitsfield** that shows an extended Slow Road right-of-way.
- » **Establish an Irasville Main Street organization or coalition** to educate community members about the project. Conduct events and pop-up demonstrations to showcase the potential of Slow Road as the future hub of the community.

Public Input Highlight: Slow Road

At a March 19th, 2025 community open house, attendees wanted Waitsfield to think big. Amongst the different potential future development scenarios presented, there was the strongest support for the creation of a “Main Street” along Slow Road that extends multiple blocks with a mix of new residential and commercial development.



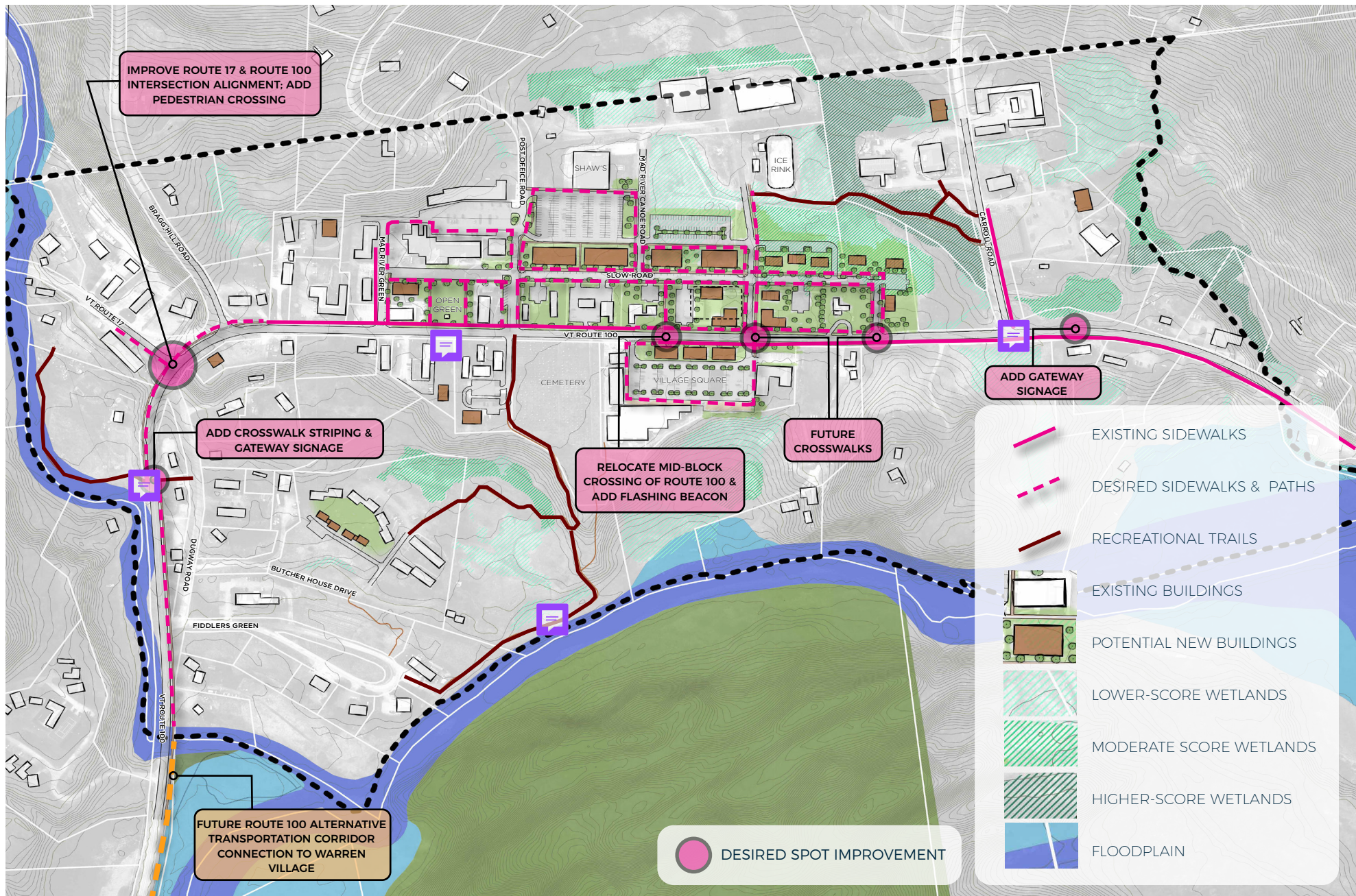
Slow Road Cross Section: The Town of Waitsfield owns an approximately 50-foot right-of-way along Slow Road. This right-of-way is envisioned to host sidewalks, flexible outdoor spaces, and street trees and other greenery, in addition to travel and parking lanes.

CHAPTER 4

Comprehensive Strategies to Complete the Vision



TRANSPORTATION: ENVISIONED NETWORK & SPOT IMPROVEMENTS



TRANSPORTATION: RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

EXPANDING THE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE NETWORK

Creating a seamless and convenient network of sidewalks, paths, and trails (as envisioned on page 22) will be a long-term endeavor. Building out this network will involve both strategic planning to address priority network gaps and taking advantage of potential opportunities as they arise.

- » **Incorporate Wayfinding Signage.** Pedestrian-scale wayfinding signage will support a convenient “park once and walk” experience for visitors to Irasville. Wayfinding signage can also help establish linkages between the sidewalk network and the recreational path network by describing how sidewalks can be used to connect to recreational trails and destinations, such as the Mad River Path and the MRV Recreation Hub.
- » **Evaluate Potential Bicycle Path Connections within Irasville.** The Route 100 Alternative Transportation Corridor project has identified potential pedestrian and bicycle connections from Irasville to other villages but did not explore connections within the village. The Stowe Recreation Path in Stowe, VT provides a potential case study for how to route a bicycle path through a developed village area while minimizing potential conflicts and road and driveway crossings.
- » **Create a Village Sidewalk Policy or Ordinance for Future Developments.** As recommended during the 2024 Vibrant Villages Initiative, this policy or ordinance would establish where public sidewalks or paths would be required to be constructed with future development and provide relevant design and accessibility standards for developers.
- » **Create a Capital Reserve Fund for Sidewalks.** A capital reserve fund will provide a consistent source of funding to implement sidewalk provide matching funds for grants, and cover the costs of ongoing maintenance as the sidewalk network expands.

- » **Develop an Impact Fee Policy or Ordinance.** As recommended during the 2024 Vibrant Villages Initiative, this policy or ordinance would provide the Town with the authority to levy fees on proposed developments for the purposes of contributing to the capital cost of constructing public sidewalk and/or shared use path facilities that will serve the proposed development and neighborhood area. This could also be expanded to apply to other types of needed capital infrastructure projects. Such a policy can also provide a means for developers to contribute to public pedestrian facilities in lieu of constructing facilities themselves.
- » **Pursue grant funding.** Potential grant funding opportunities include:
 - VTrans Bike/Ped Grant Program
 - FHWA Transportation Alternatives Program
 - ACCD Downtown Transportation Fund



Stowe Recreation Path. This multi-use path winds along the VT Route 108 corridor, connecting behind businesses and agricultural fields through a densely developed area. A similar approach could be explored in Irasville (photo courtesy Town of Stowe).

TRANSPORTATION: RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

CREATING SAFE STREETS FOR ALL USERS

As Irasville develops, use of the transportation network by all users - bikes, motor vehicles, pedestrians - will grow. In addition to expanding the network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, planning for transportation system in Irasville should include measures to promote safe driving speeds, increase driver awareness, and reduce potential for conflicts at intersections and crossings.

- » **Install curb extensions at key pedestrian crossings** in Irasville village. Incorporate curb extensions into streetscape planning for Slow Road. In the short-term, deploy temporary curb extensions using materials like bollards or large concrete planters. Along Route 100, where the use of curb extensions may not be permitted by VTrans, evaluate alternative pedestrian crossing treatments, such as high-visibility crosswalk paint and rectangular rapid flashing beacons.
- » **Maintain and enforce a speed limit of 25 MPH** on all roads in Irasville - the lowest allowed by state law.
- » **Install prominent gateway signage** at the entrances to Irasville village along Route 100 and Route 17.
- » **Pursue grant funding.** Potential grant funding opportunities include:
 - VTrans Bike/Ped Grant Program
 - FHWA Transportation Alternatives Program
 - ACCD Downtown Transportation Fund
 - AARP Community Challenge Grant (for temporary improvement projects)



(1) Quick-build curb extension in Burlington, VT.

(2) Curb extensions help reduce pedestrian crossing distances and calm vehicular traffic speeds.

OUTDOOR RECREATION: RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Part of what makes Irasville special is its connection to the outdoors - mountain views, trail connections, and green spaces that support community events. As Irasville grows, special attention should be paid to sustaining this tradition of outdoor spaces and access.

PARKS & OUTDOOR SPACES

- » **Pursue the creation of a conservation-oriented park** along Route 100 south of Carroll Road. This park would protect higher-functioning wetlands and host low-impact recreational amenities, such as trails and boardwalks that connect to existing boardwalks and outdoor classroom features.
- » **Develop a partnership or agreement to permanently establish the Irasville Town Green**, which is currently privately owned. Improve parking and pedestrian access through the Green.
- » **Encourage the development of pocket parks and flexible outdoor spaces along with infill development**, particularly along Slow Road as it is developed into the village's Main Street.
- » **Explore potential improvements to the Skatium Recreation Center**, including potential four-season outdoor amenities that are connected to the adjacent recreational trail network.

RECREATIONAL TRAILS

- » **Maintain the Mad River Path trail corridor through Irasville**, including along Slow Road, using sidewalks, signage, and/or trail relocation where needed.
- » **Activate the connection to the MRV Recreation Hub** through physical infrastructure improvements (sidewalks, crossing, signage) as well as promotional efforts.
- » **Identify “park and hike” and “park and bike” locations in central Irasville** where trail recreationalists can be encouraged to start and end their outings, increasing patronage of village center businesses.



- (1) Flexible outdoor spaces in village areas provide the infrastructure for community events and gathering.
- (2) The MRV Recreation Hub provides in-town access to vast multi-use trail systems, plus many of the amenities a recreationalist might want or need. (Credit: Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce).

LAND USE: RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

CHANGES TO LAND USE REGULATIONS

The 2024 Vibrant Villages Initiative resulted in changes to zoning bylaws in Irasville that support compact residential and commercial development as envisioned in this plan, while maintaining thoughtful limits on the scale and form of development to ensure consistency with the character of the area. Further changes will need to be considered to advance plan goals and ensure alignment with state law.

- » **Update zoning bylaws to reference the Irasville Village Master Plan**, including in the purpose statement for the Irasville Village District and in the provisions for Planned Unit Developments.
- » **Adopt required density bonuses for affordable housing.** Act 47 (the HOME Act), passed in 2023, requires Vermont municipalities to include a density bonus of 40% more units and a bonus of one habitable floor above the height maximum for affordable housing development in areas served by municipal water and sewer. Once the Town's community wastewater system is implemented, the Town will be required to revise zoning bylaws to meet this state requirement.
- » **Encourage or require additional on-site stormwater mitigation measures for new developments.**
- » **Continue to limit building heights to three (3) stories** to align with historic development character and to limit the ability for any single development to utilize an excessive amount of wastewater system capacity.
- » **Create a Village Sidewalk Policy or Ordinance for Future Developments.** As described on page 23, this policy would need to be referenced in the Town's zoning bylaws to be considered as part of the development application process.

GOVERNANCE: RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

PLAN FOR MUNICIPAL FINANCIAL HEALTH & CAPACITY

This plan envisions significant new investments in infrastructure and community facilities to support the desired growth of Irasville as a vibrant hub for the community and region. With these investments come increased long-term maintenance obligations, which will need to be planned for. While increased property tax revenues from future development should help address ongoing costs, the Town should consider supplementary strategies and revenue sources to ensure financial health and the delivery of municipal services amidst increasing costs for goods and services.

- » **Evaluate a 1% local option tax (LOT).** A 1% LOT can be applied to any or all of the following: sales (with exemptions for essential household goods), meals and alcoholic beverages, and/or rooms. LOTs have been adopted in many Vermont towns that serve as regional hubs and/or tourist destinations, including communities like Waterbury, Stowe, Middlebury, Woodstock, Killington, Ludlow, Manchester, St. Albans, and Stratton.
- » **Plan ahead for maintenance operations and associated capital expenses.** Consider needs such as increased road and sidewalk repairs and snow removal.
- » **Evaluate the use of public-private partnerships** for major capital projects through the forthcoming Community and Housing Infrastructure Program (CHIP) (see p. 19).
- » **Create a Capital Reserve Fund for Sidewalks.** (see p. 23)
- » **Develop an Impact Fee Policy or Ordinance.** (see p. 23)

CHAPTER 5

The Process: How We Built This Plan



March 2025 Open House: ideas for Irasville from the next generation of community planners.

HOW WE GOT HERE

The vision and plan for Irasville was developed through an iterative process that involved community engagement, research, analysis, and design development.



RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

The early part of the planning process included a site visit, a thorough analysis of existing development and infrastructure, and a review of past plans, studies, and current land use regulations.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The planning process included two key community events. An initial open house in November 2024 saw community members weigh in on overall project direction and goals. A subsequent open house in March 2025 provided an opportunity for members of the public to share input on initial vision, conceptual design ideas, and master plan recommendations. Individual interviews with key community organizations and stakeholders provided additional perspective on needs and opportunities to be addressed by the plan. The process was overseen by the Village Master Plan Steering Committee, which met over a dozen times during the process to shape the development of the Master Plan.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The project team used the key takeaways from research, analysis, and community engagement to prepare and revise draft conceptual designs and planning recommendations, forming the basis of the Irasville Village Master Plan.

A 1.5-year process, built on decades of planning and dreaming.

The vision for Irasville did not emerge overnight - it is the product of many plans, community meetings, leaders, and lessons learned. Key plans and studies that informed the development of the Irasville Village Master Plan include:

- ✓ **Waitsfield Town Plan (2023)**
- ✓ **Waitsfield In-Street Crosswalk Pilot Report (2021)**
- ✓ **Mad River Valley Housing Demand and Market Analysis (2020)**
- ✓ **Waitsfield Water Management Mapping Project (2018)**
- ✓ **Mad River Valley Active Transportation Plan (2016)**
- ✓ **Master Development Plan for the Irasville Growth Center (2002)**

Additionally, conceptual plans and designs for infill development and improved pedestrian connectivity prepared over the years by a variety of architects and designers - Dave Sellers, Jim Sanford, Don Swain, Rennselaer Polytechnic Institute students, and others - provided essential inspiration for the designs presented in this plan.

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE EVENTS: KEY TAKEAWAYS

NOVEMBER 2024 OPEN HOUSE

Over 50 Mad River Valley residents attended the first Open House event for the Irasville Village Master Plan on November 18th, 2024. The event featured remarks from representatives of the Waitsfield Planning Commission, Waitsfield Selectboard, and Mad River Valley Planning District. Project consultants from SE Group provided an overview of initial findings and takeaways from the planning process. Residents were invited to provide feedback on initial community planning objectives using sticker dot polls placed around the room.

KEY THEMES FROM THE EVENT

- » **Attendees were both excited and concerned about the future of Irasville.** The recent loss of businesses and community services Irasville was top of mind for many participants. At the same time, many expressed that Irasville holds great potential as a vibrant village center for Waitsfield and the Mad River Valley.
- » **Attendees were supportive of an infill development approach** for future redevelopment in Irasville, with a focus on housing, local-serving businesses, and mixed-use development.
- » **Attendees were supportive of a balanced approach to wetlands in Irasville** that preserves critical wetland functions while considering possible impacts to low-functioning wetlands if those impacts result in significant community benefit.
- » **Attendees were supportive of exploring transportation infrastructure improvements** to enhance and facilitate walkable development in Irasville, such as improved pedestrian connections and possible new roadways to create village blocks.
- » **Attendees wanted the planning process to explore enhanced recreational and community facilities**, such as a year-round recreation or community center and community gathering spaces.
- » **Attendees were supportive of exploring a mix of building heights for future development**, with a minimum building height of two stories.



Josh Schwartz, Executive Director of the Mad River Valley Planning District, addresses attendees at the November 2024 community open house event.

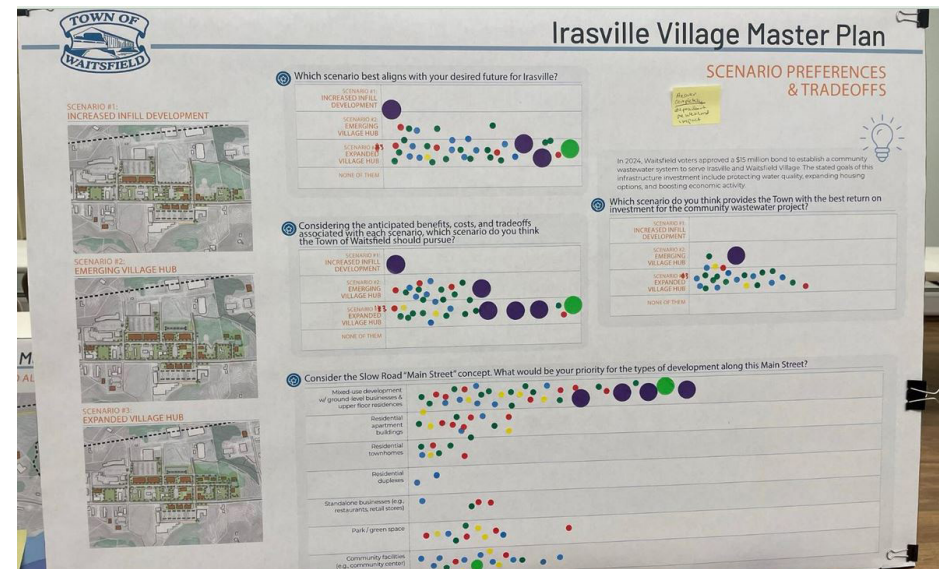
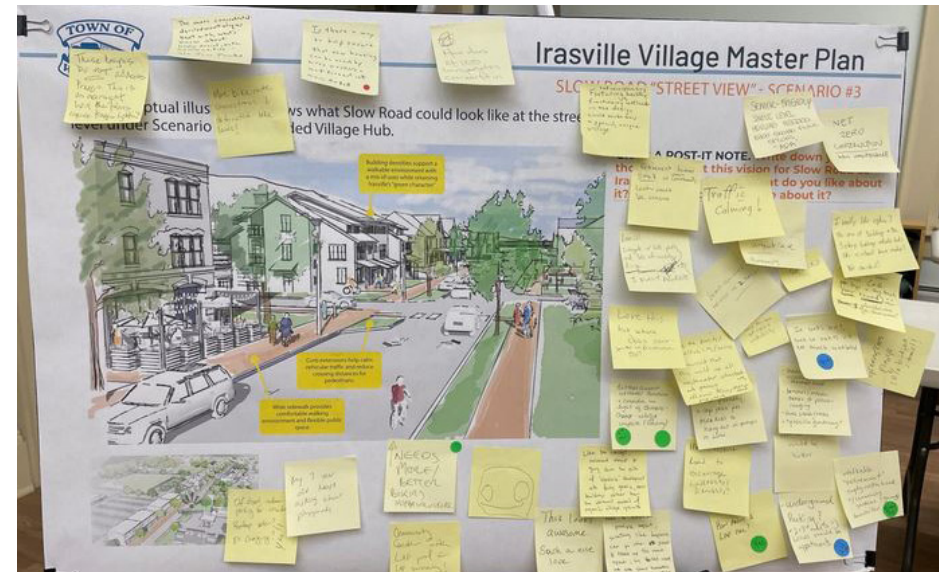
COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE EVENTS: KEY TAKEAWAYS

MARCH 2025 OPEN HOUSE

More than 70 Mad River Valley residents attended the second Open House for the Irasville Village Master Plan on March 19, 2025. To support the Town in developing an actionable plan to meet community needs, Open House attendees provided feedback on different potential scenarios and forms for future development in Irasville, focused on possible infill development opportunities along Slow Road. Through conversations, sticker dot voting, and written comments on poster boards, attendees provided their feedback and ideas while being asked to consider the benefits, costs, and tradeoffs associated with different forms and scales of development.

KEY THEMES FROM THE EVENT

- » **An opportunity to think big.** Amongst the different potential future development scenarios presented, there was the strongest support for the creation of a “Main Street” along Slow Road that extends multiple blocks with a mix of new residential and commercial development.
- » **Mixed-use development is wanted.** An example three-story design with ground-level retail and upper-floor residences received the most support, with the highest number of votes to encourage or incentivize this style of development.
- » **Wetland considerations** play an important role in determining suitable development locations, preserving ecological functions, and guiding planning decisions. This theme remained consistent across both open house events.
- » **Improving pedestrian connectivity** and **providing community gathering spaces** were both top of mind for many attendees.



Input recorded from March 2025 open house attendees.

From: [AnnMarie Harmon](#)
To: [JB Weir](#); [Ursprung](#)
Cc: [York Haverkamp](#)
Subject: Notes and take-aways from today's VMPSC meeting
Date: Thursday, October 30, 2025 10:36:44 PM

First of all I want to say how impressed I was at the turn out of today's meeting!

Of note were the following comments for discussion that I found interesting:

- To include the definitions of high and low functioning wetlands taken from the Arrowwood report. Are there other technical terms that we should include?
- Delineate buildings that are proposed after the demolition of existing buildings differently than the proposed new buildings on vacant land.
- Discussion as to how many homes this project can provide. The use of the word "homes" as opposed to "housing units" and the words "up to 70" to get the audience excited about the potential amount of homes. I would rather see a number more like 50 as I am concerned that this high number of 70 may scare people concerned with over-development.
- The suggestion to create "an official town map" -- what is it and would it be something that the PC could or should pursue?
- The topic of Route 100 being town-owned versus state-owned in the future. How realistic is this? Is it something in the works?
- There is currently a concerning lack of mention of ANR's involvement. Alex will be working on this.
- Storm water management. Doesn't the Town Plan have as a goal to promote or look into green ways rather than gray ways to provide storm water?
- November 30th the "end date" for the project -- talk about the future lay out of the report to the public.
- I am available Nov 24 for a presentation to the SB of this report.
- Josh mentioned that in the future there could be a town organization created for the purposes of developing the concepts in the report. Similar to the town organization that was created in Waterbury and look at all the wonderful things Waterbury has done!

--AnnMarie

RECEIVED

OCT 24 2025

TOWN OF WAITSFIELD

Debra L. Bouffard
dbouffard@sheeheyvt.com

VIA FIRST CLASS MAIL and EMAIL

October 21, 2025

Johnathan Ursprung, Chair
Waitsfield Planning Commission
Waitsfield Town Office
4144 Main Street
Waitsfield, VT 05673
ursprung@gmail.com

Re: Case No. 25-2468-PET - Petition of Green Mountain Power for a Certificate of Public Good, pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 248, authorizing the rebuild of the Irasville #39 Substation in the Towns of Waitsfield and Fayston, Vermont

Waitsfield Planning Commission:

Green Mountain Power ("GMP") has requested that the Vermont Public Utility Commission ("Commission") issue a Certificate of Public Good, pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 248, authorizing the rebuild of GMP's Irasville #39 Substation on the site of the existing substation in the towns of Waitsfield and Fayston, Vermont (the "Project"). The Project is needed to upgrade equipment, which will increase the reliability and safety of service for customers in the towns of Fayston, Waitsfield, and Warren.

On October 17, 2025, the Commission determined that the Petition filing packet submitted by GMP is administratively complete, and it has opened Case No. 25-2468-PET to now review this Project. You can access a copy of the complete petition filing as submitted by GMP to the Commission to download to your computer at this link: <https://sheeheyvt-my.sharepoint.com/:f/p/sgould/EpjPRQsNvGFPg0HKg6HYwAUBIXerq3S9S0qoRV0LTxEBEw?e=11My8J>. If you are not able to access the petition filing documents electronically, please contact me, and we can coordinate on ways for GMP to provide you with a copy of the complete project plans and petition in paper or through other means such as a thumb drive.

For more information on this matter, please reference the following links:

- For information on public participation through public comment or intervention:
 - <http://puc.vermont.gov/document/public-participation-and-intervention-proceedings-public-utility-commission>
 - <http://puc.vermont.gov/document/section-248-procedures>, and

Town of Waitsfield
October 21, 2025
Page 2

- For access to all documents in this case, using the above case number:
 - <http://epuc.vermont.gov>.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. My email address is above, and I may be reached by phone at 802-865-6318.

Sincerely,

SHEEHEY FURLONG & BEHM P.C.

/s/ Debra L. Bouffard

Debra L. Bouffard

DLB/scg

October 30, 2025

Jonathan Ursprung, Chair
Waitsfield Planning Commission
4144 Main Street
Waitsfield, VT 05673

Re: Proposal to Broaden Adaptive Re-Use of Farmsteads Provision

Dear Planning Commission Members,

We write to respectfully suggest the revised Town Plan support a slightly broader scope of uses for adaptive re-uses of farmsteads, and that this be accompanied by a modest amendment to the Waitsfield Zoning Bylaws in Section 4.03 related to the appropriate re-use of these farmstead structures. The current provision has been instrumental in preserving the architectural and cultural heritage of Waitsfield's agricultural landscape while adapting to other appropriate uses for property along Route 100 as our town's needs shift. We believe a slight broadening of the allowed uses could further support the town's goals of rural vitality, diversity, and economic sustainability.

Suggested Town Plan Language:

To support this zoning change, we are hoping the committee might consider the following addition to the Waitsfield Town Plan under the Land Use section:

"Encourage the adaptive reuse of historic farmsteads and barns for purposes that support community well-being and low-impact economic activity, including retreats and accessory housing, provided such uses preserve the architectural character and rural context of the original structure."

This language aligns with the Town Plan's emphasis on preserving rural character while promoting innovative land use strategies.

Proposed Zoning Bylaw Amendment:

We are also inviting the committee to consider expanding the list of uses under Adaptive Re-Use of Farmsteads to include:

- **Retreats** (e.g., wellness, educational, or artist retreats with accommodations) – This is already an allowed adaptive re-use of Historic Barns
- **Accessory Housing** (e.g., small-scale residential units for seasonal or year-round occupancy) – This is already an allowed adaptive re-use of commercial lodging

In addition, we suggest that for these uses, the special requirements acreage minimum of 8 acres should be reduced to 3 acres. This way, acreage not needed for this use can be separated and continued for other agriculture-residential uses.

Finally, as with the “office” allowed use, we ask you to consider removing the \$5,000 gross income from agricultural products as a specific requirement for retreats and accessory housing.

These very modest changes would maintain the integrity of these structures and the special scenic landscape of the Mad River Byway while allowing for a small set of additional uses like those already allowed for the adaptive reuse of other structures along Route 100, which are compatible with the rural character and responsive to community needs.

We appreciate the Planning Commission’s thoughtful stewardship of Waitsfield’s land use policies and hope this proposal can be considered in upcoming discussions. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further or provide additional supporting materials.

Warm regards,

DocuSigned by:

35AC58A55DAB4E6...
Ryan Diehl

Signed by:

CE2350CD2C95454
Madhurii Barefoot