



WAITSFIELD PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA

June 16, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

Planning Commission

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

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
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1. **CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL**
2. **REVISIONS TO AGENDA, IF ANY (5 +/- min)**
3. **PUBLIC FORUM (10 +/- min)**
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES –JUNE 2 (10 +/- min)**
5. **SHORT-TERM RENTALS (10 +/- min) Emma, Beth & Becca**
6. **WASTEWATER PLANNING PROJECT UPDATE (10 +/- min) JB/Bob**
7. **CVRPC – REGIONAL PLAN & FUTURE LAND USE MAP (20 +/- min)**
8. **OTHER BUSINESS (10+/-min)**
 - a. Town Plan Amendment public hearing 7/7
 - b. PC Vacancy update
 - c. DRB Update
9. **ADJOURNMENT**

**Waitsfield Planning and Zoning Administrators Report
Planning Commission June 16, 2026 meeting**

5. Short-Term Rentals

The PZA is in the process of redrafting the Town ordinance on Short-Term Rentals (STRs). As discussed at last meeting, Joshua Schwartz strongly recommends utilizing the model ordinance from VLCT instead of the recent Warren STR ordinance. The PZA is using the VLCT model and adapting it the preferences of the STR committee. The PZA is also incorporating some of the language from the Stowe Rental Registry Ordinance, adopted in March of 2026.

For reference, and in preparation for a full review and discussion of a revamped draft ordinance at the July 7th meeting, the PZA has included both the VLCT model ordinance as well as the Stowe Rental Registry Ordinance. Commissioners are urged to review these ahead of the July 7th meeting.

The STR committee is meeting next on June 17th to review the draft and suggested standards.

Recently, SB member Larissa Ursprung has inquired as to the status of the draft. The hope is that the PC can forward the recommended ordinance to the SB by the end of July.

If you have yet to watch the MRVTV recording of the Chamber of Commerce's STR collaboration, please do so ahead of the meeting. The video can be watched [here](#).

6. Wastewater Project Update

Team members have met twice with Dubois & King to review the current cost projection. As costs have continued to rise over the last two years, the main objective at this point to keep the overall project cost – minus grants and subsidies – to less than the Town's approved bonding capacity of \$15 million. Several cost cutting measures have been approved by the team, including removal of the sole connection to Old County Road. The project cannot go out to bid until the overall project cost, minus grants and subsidies, is less than \$15 million.

In addition to being a prerequisite to the bid process, the above cost reduction work is necessary prior to execution of the amended Engineering Services Agreement. (ESA). This would constitute ESA Amendment #5, the final amendment prior to project construction. The hope is that this will be finalized next week.

The Project Coordination team is set to meet again on Monday June June 15th. The Engineering Technical Team will meet again on Wednesday June 24th.

The project website has been updated by Planning District staff and can be found [here](#).

7. CVRPC – Regional Plan & Future Land Use Map

Alice provided some email updates on the CVRPC’s work on the Regional Land Use Plan and the Future Land Use Map.

To meet certain statutory requirements of Act 181, passed by the legislature in 2024, CVRPC is drafting a new Regional Plan. This document is a guide for regional coordination and planning in Central Vermont. The 2026 draft Plan has minimal updates from the one adopted by the CVRPC Board of Commissioners in 2024.

To see a current draft of the Plan, projected housing needs for Waitsfield, and view and comment on the draft Future Land Use Map, learn more about outreach events over the summer, or to review the application timeline, please visit the Regional Plan page:

<https://bit.ly/CVRPC2026PLAN>.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP: The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission has released a draft Future Land Use map that assigns Future Land Use Area classifications to each parcel. You can comment on the draft map here: <https://bit.ly/CVRPCFLUMAP>. Left-click on a parcel to review its properties. Use the scroll arrows on the side and the bottom of the pop-up to see all the information. Parcels were categorized using the state methodology for Future Land Use Area classifications. You can find more information here: <https://bit.ly/VAPDAFLUA>.

HOUSING TARGETS: After commissioner feedback, staff are revising the municipal housing targets that were shared at the 5/12/2026 board meeting and have drafted an FAQ document. New targets will assign 40% of the total target by each municipality’s proportion of the Downtown Centers and Planned Growth Areas FLUAs, 20% by the proportion of Village Centers and Village Areas FLUAs, and 40% by the proportion of the regional population. Updated targets and explanations can be found here: <https://bit.ly/CVRPC2026HOUSINGTARGETS>.

Please reach out to Alice if you have questions about the Regional Planning Commission, the Regional Plan, or the Future Land Use Map. If you’d like to be added to the weekly email newsletter to learn more about what the Regional Planning Commission is working on, please email CVRPC@cvregion.com.

8. Other Business

Town Plan Update

Included in the packet is the final draft of the amended Chapter 7 of the 2023 Town Plan. In addition, the public hearing notice and the required Reporting Form are also included. All statutory notice requirements have been met.

The public hearing for the amendment will take place on July 7th during a regularly scheduled PC meeting. Once approved, the amendment goes to the Selectboard for its own public hearing, likely to occur sometime in August.

The Town webpage has been updated with the amendment materials and can be found [here](#).

PC Vacancy

There remains no applicant yet for the PC vacancy. The PZA has sent the vacancy advertisement to the Valley Reporter for publication in the June 4 issue.

MRVPD

Jonathan may have an update on the work of the Mad River Valley Planning District.

DRB Update

On June 23, the DRB will hear one application for an office/workshop addition within the FHO and FEHO off Main Street. Labrador Builders owns one of the North Branch Condominium units accessed via the Meadow Road parking lot.

On July 14, the DRB will hear two applications for setback waivers – one for side setback waiver for a future garage off Hastings Meadow Lane, and the other for a front setback waiver for a shed off Village Woods Road.

There are other pending applications that have not been set for agenda yet. These include a 2-lot subdivision off North Road and the 9-lot subdivision off Bushnell Road. Both applications have gone through sketch plan review and will be proceeding to Preliminary Plan Review.

There is also a vacancy on the DRB due to the departure of Steve McKenzie.

Thank you, Steve, for all of your time and efforts in recent years. You will be missed.

Upcoming trainings/webinars: None at this time

Respectfully submitted,

J.B. Weir

TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 2, 2026
Draft

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

Members Absent:

Staff Present: JB Weir, Zoning Administrator

Others Present: Joshua Schwartz (MRVPD)

II. Regular Business

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm by Emma Hanson. 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 time to address the PC.

4. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of May 19, 2026 were amended and approved.

5. Town Plan Update

JB reported that all documentation had been disseminated as required, and the public hearing has been warned for July 7.

6. Short Term Rentals (STR)

Joshua Schwartz had provided written feedback on the draft STR ordinance language prior to the meeting. He provided a background of local and state-level work which has taken place regarding STRs; this was followed by a discussion of Waitsfield's draft ordinance language.

Joshua explained that he found the draft STR ordinance confusing, and suggested that the VLCT template might better serve Waitsfield's needs. Emma indicated that the primary goals of implementing an ordinance in Town are to address fire safety and establish a registration process. She agreed that it would likely be useful reconvene the committee and rework the draft, using the VLCT template as a basis.

Some of the specifics discussed included:

- Using the statutory definition of STR rather than the 14 days outlined in the current Waitsfield draft.
- Whether the town has the authority to enact an ordinance for all rentals; Joshua noted this is likely not allowable.
- The use of the word 'guest' in addressing parties – as this could also pertain to homeowners if it is prohibited to allow overnight parking in public spaces for 'guests.'
 - It was agreed that it is difficult to attempt to address neighborhood impacts.

- A metric to use in determining impacts to long-term rentals needs to be determined, if possible.
- The Stowe registration purpose statement may be useful.

How to proceed was outlined. It was agreed that the STR committee will reconvene and consider changes to the draft. JB will ask the town attorney for input prior to this reworking of the ordinance. The committee will restructure the draft based on the VLCT template and Stowe's registration process; parking will be revisited, as well as the 14-days included in the definition. JB offered to provide an updated draft for discussion by the committee. Josh also noted that he is willing to participate as requested.

7. Wastewater Planning Project Update

Bob and JB spoke of efforts to ensure that the current pricing will be covered by the financing which is available for the project, noted that easements continue to be drafted, and indicated that the bid process will likely begin in July. Joshua also confirmed that permitting is underway now that the 90% design is complete, and that the Selectboard will be discussing allocations.

8. Other Business

PC Vacancy Update – The ad is being published again in the Valley Reporter, and Emma will post the vacancy on Front Porch Forum.

DRB Update – JB outlined upcoming hearings.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary

Short-Term Rental Regulations Overview and Model Ordinance



Is your municipality considering short-term rental regulations? If so, this overview provides options and considerations for your municipality. While every effort is made to provide members with the most accurate information possible, this resource does not constitute legal advice and any ordinance or bylaw to regulate short-term rentals should be reviewed by an attorney prior to adoption.

Enabling Authority

As a Dillon's Rule state, Vermont municipalities can only exercise that authority which is expressly granted to them by the Legislature, or that which is implied by and/or necessary to carry out those explicit grants of authority. Vermont law specifically allows municipalities to regulate short-term rentals (STRs) either through the authority granted them to regulate land use through the enactment of zoning bylaws and/or its police powers by adopting a standalone ordinance.

The specific enabling provision permitting municipalities to regulate STRs is [24 V.S.A. § 2291\(29\)](#), which states:

For the purpose of promoting the public health, safety, welfare, and convenience, a town, city, or incorporated village shall have the following powers:

(29) To regulate by means of an ordinance or bylaw the operation of short-term rentals within the municipality, provided that the ordinance or bylaw does not adversely impact the availability of long-term rental housing. As used in this subdivision, "short-term rental" means a furnished house, condominium, or other dwelling room or self-contained dwelling unit rented to the transient, traveling, or vacationing public for a period of fewer than 30 consecutive days and for more than 14 days per calendar year.



This law identifies an STR by how long it's rented (fewer than 30 consecutive days and for more than 14 days per calendar year). We interpret "fewer than 30 consecutive days" to mean a single rental transaction that is less than 30 days. In other words, for example, a house that is leased by a landlord to a tenant on a month-to-month basis wouldn't fall under the statute's definition of an STR. We interpret the second qualifier of this definition ("more than 14 days per calendar year") to mean that a residence could be rented for up to 14 days during a calendar year without being subject to STR regulations; in other words, residences rented for 14 days in a calendar year would be exempt. We don't interpret this as being limited to consecutive days. For example, 14 one-day rentals or one 14-day rental would not trigger the regulation. If a property in your municipality doesn't fall within this definition, it cannot be regulated as an STR.

The law's only express limitation on municipal regulatory authority is that no STR ordinance or bylaw can "adversely impact the availability of long-term rental housing" stock. This standard appears to be results-oriented. However, there is no clear direction from the Legislature as to how this standard would be applied and, consequently, will likely be left to the courts' interpretation.

Overall, this legal framework means that local regulations can be customized to suit each municipality's needs within the law's relatively broad parameters. Choosing which form of regulation (ordinance and/or zoning bylaw) is the best fit for your municipality will depend on various factors and considerations, as elaborated in this resource.

Ordinances

An ordinance is a legislative act by a municipality's legislative body – its selectboard, city council, aldermen, or trustees – that forbids or restricts an activity or requires one



to be performed in a certain way. It's an expression of municipal will affecting the conduct of its inhabitants that carries the state's authority and has the same effect within its territorial limits as state law does. An ordinance sets expectations that the townspeople have for behavior in public and notifies them of potential consequences when these expectations are not met, including fines. Once adopted according to the statutorily prescribed process, an ordinance becomes a legally enforceable local law within that community. You can download our model Short-Term Rental Ordinance from this page to use as a template. Additionally, you can find more information on ordinances on our Policies and Ordinances home page.

Local Zoning Regulations (“Zoning Bylaws”)

Zoning bylaws are the most common regulatory tool used for implementing a municipality's vision for land development within its borders. Vermont law ([Title 24, Chapter 117](#)) enables local land use planning and development regulation, so long as a municipality's zoning bylaws conform with its town plan. The law includes parameters for required and prohibited content in local bylaws and prescribes the statutory process for adopting and amending them. Zoning bylaws may “define different and separate zoning districts and identify within these districts which land uses are permitted as of right, and which are conditional uses requiring review and approval....” [24 V.S.A. § 4414\(1\)](#). Therefore, if STRs are to be allowed and regulated by zoning bylaws, they will need to be deemed either a permitted use subject to administrative review (by the administrative officer, aka zoning administrator or ZA) or a conditional use subject to review by the appropriate municipal panel(s) (i.e., DRB, PC, ZBA) exercising development review authority. Municipalities that have already adopted zoning bylaws benefit from having the structure in place to implement their vision using these types of review. For more background information on ways to



achieve your planning goals, see the Vermont Association of Planning & Development Agencies (VAPDA) [Planning Resources](#).

General Considerations

Adoption: Ordinance. An ordinance is adopted by the selectboard at a duly warned open meeting. After its adoption, posting, and publication, an ordinance can be challenged by voter petition. If not, it will become effective 60 days following the date of its adoption. Overall, it's a much easier and quicker process than adopting a zoning bylaw. More information on ordinance adoption can be found [VLCT's Ordinance Adoption, Amendment, and Repeal Toolkit](#).

Adoption: Zoning Bylaw. The statutorily prescribed process for adopting, amending, or repealing a zoning bylaw, which can be found in [24 V.S.A. §§ 4441-4442](#), first requires the planning commission to create a written report that ensures the bylaw proposal conforms with the town plan. Subsequently, the planning commission and selectboard must hold public hearings on the proposed bylaw. In both cases, there is a minimum statutory requirement for the number of public hearings they must hold and allowances for public participation, but both bodies can certainly hold more hearings to maximize public engagement and inform voters. Zoning bylaws are adopted, amended, or repealed by the selectboard after its final hearing or by the voters by Australian ballot if so warned by the selectboard. VAPDA has created helpful guidance for adopting zoning bylaws, which you can find [on the VAPDA website](#). Your [Regional Planning Commission](#) (RPC) can provide helpful resources on zoning bylaws, as well.

Enforcement: Ordinance. A municipal ordinance must be designated as either civil or criminal. Vermont law allows for enforcement of violations in either the Judicial



Bureau or Superior Court. [24 V.S.A. § 1974a](#). The Judicial Bureau is generally less expensive and less time-consuming than Superior Court and does not require the assistance of an attorney. Enforcement in the Judicial Bureau is more appropriate for less severe ordinance violations and situations where monetary penalties of less than \$800.00 per violation are imposed. In instances where a town seeks either penalties that escalate beyond \$800.00 or “injunctive relief” (a court order to do or not do something), enforcement must be pursued in Superior Court [24 V.S.A. § 1974a\(b\)](#) since the Judicial Bureau lacks this authority.

Enforcement: Zoning Bylaw. Zoning bylaws can also be enforced in two ways. [24 V.S.A. § 1972a\(d\)](#). According to the law, zoning bylaw violations can be enforced through Judicial Bureau ticketing like an ordinance, or as a civil action in the Environmental Division of Superior Court (aka environmental court) under [24 V.S.A. §§ 4451-4452](#). A civil action in Environmental Court takes longer to resolve than ticketing through the Judicial Bureau and likely requires more resources since an attorney will need to represent the town.

Purpose. An ordinance in particular needs a strong basis to sustain legal challenge, and a clear purpose helps establish that basis. The enabling law for STRs sets the broad purpose for exercising this authority as, “promoting the public health, safety, welfare, and convenience” of the municipality. If an STR regulation is contained within the zoning bylaws, it will also need to conform with the town's land use plan and existing self-executing provisions of Vermont's planning and development law (i.e., Title 24, Chapter 117). A town adopting STR regulations as an ordinance faces no such restrictions.

If a town wants to regulate STRs from both a land use perspective (to specify which districts they're allowed in, if any, and under what conditions) through zoning and a quality-of-life perspective through an ordinance, then it can adopt both a standalone



STR ordinance and a STR zoning bylaw, though it should be mindful to ensure they're consistent and don't conflict with each other.

Content/Terms

How you want to regulate STRs will also help inform the decision of which tool to use. For example, identifying suitable locations for STRs is best addressed by zoning bylaws, whereas municipalities are seemingly on firmer legal ground creating things like an STR registry, residency requirement, and a cap on total annual stays through an ordinance rather than through zoning bylaws.

Some regulations of negative secondary effects (e.g., noise, lighting, solid waste) have been tested in court more than others and, therefore, the parameters for such regulations are more clearly defined. Others, such as local STR regulations addressing occupancy limits and total capacity, remain untested in Vermont. Zoning bylaws can require proof of a wastewater permit before construction may commence, and conditional use review can indirectly address capacity and occupancy concerns, but zoning bylaws would not likely be able to include an explicit occupancy limit. An ordinance can restrict total occupancy or link capacity to number of bedrooms; however, it is important to include a waiver when such a limit is overly restrictive (i.e., the total occupancy limit doesn't allow for more than one person to a bedroom) as it could otherwise be challenged on constitutional grounds. Some local regulations might cap the number of rentals per year. Data supporting the likely impact of such a regulation on the availability of long-term housing, as stated in the regulation's purpose section, could help protect such a provision from legal challenge.

A tracking mechanism such as an annual registry is also a common element found in local STR ordinances. Once a person opens their property to STRs, they become



subject to State laws, rules, and codes. A registry furthers public safety goals by ensuring the public is aware of properly licensed, registered, and compliant STRs. It also ensures proper advertising of legitimate STRs and can help in identifying violations.

Because this law is new and local STR regulations are relatively untested in Vermont, municipalities might want to approach their regulations cautiously in terms of some of the aforementioned elements where legal footing is unclear. For example, residency requirements in STR ordinances have been challenged in other federal jurisdictions with varying results. The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals struck down a local ordinance that required STRs to be owner-occupied as unconstitutional because it violated the dormant Commerce Clause by discriminating against non-resident owners. See *Hignell-Stark v. City of New Orleans*, 46 F.4th 317 (5th Cir. 2022). But the Ninth Circuit upheld local ordinances' owner- or *host/property manager*-occupied requirement as constitutional. See *Rosenblatt v. City of Santa Monica*, 940 F.3d 439 (9th Cir. 2019), and *Short-Term Rental Alliance of San Diego v. City of San Diego*, 2023 WL 3964059 (9th Cir. 2023). While neither of these decisions are controlling in Vermont, similar arguments can be made here, and the question ultimately remains open as it has yet to be definitively ruled upon by either the Vermont Supreme Court or the Second Circuit Court of Appeals (the federal appellate court covering the districts of Connecticut, New York, and Vermont). The Chittenden County Superior Court recently upheld the City of Burlington's short-term rental regulations ruling that "24 V.S.A. § 2291(29) clearly authorized the City to impose duration limits and owner occupancy requirements on short-term rentals." However, that decision, though undoubtedly persuasive in other Vermont counties, is binding precedent only in Chittenden County. You can read more about this case on our website [VLCT Journal Article: "Superior Court Upholds Burlington's Short-Term Rental Regulations"](#). The more your ordinance regulates evenhandedly and serves legitimate local interests, the more likely it is to be upheld.



Another option, completely banning or prohibiting STRs from a municipality, raises enough legal issues and implicates financial interests to such an extent that considering it will require close consultation with the town's attorney. The existence of STRs prior to adopting a prohibition adds legal complications, as well, given their pre-existing status, though they may potentially be regulated as nonconforming uses. Each municipality faces its own unique circumstances, which is why their town attorneys will need to tailor their regulatory scheme to suit their specific facts.

One last note relative to zoning specific STR bylaws. As with all other zoning bylaw provisions, STR regulations must include measurable standards. It may help to think of your bylaws as a road map for your zoning administration program and applicants alike. The lack of any signs makes it difficult to know where to go. For this reason, bylaws must include standards for when discretion is allowed; otherwise, a court could find them unenforceable (e.g. void for vagueness). Conditions imposed must also be reasonably related to the specified review criteria and supported by findings or the decision is likely to be considered arbitrary. As the Vermont Supreme Court held in *In re Appeal of JAM Golf*, "[s]uch standardless discretion violates property owners' due process rights." *In re Appeal of JAM Golf, LLC*, 2008 VT 110. Regulations with a vague or no standard at all need to be revised to ensure that they're measurable for the town to determine compliance; otherwise, they should be removed. A town wishing to include STRs in its zoning regulations will need to have clear bylaws that express the intent to regulate STRs.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of common elements found in STR regulations, and which tool (bylaw or ordinance or both) might be best to address them. Note that, just because we consider one mechanism better for regulating STRs than the other, doesn't mean that either or both can't be used.





Ordinances

- Traffic Control
- Noise
- Parking Control
- Capacity/Occupancy Limits
- Solid Waste/Trash
- Annual Registry/Tracking Mechanism
- Cap On Total Annual Stays
- Residency Requirement

of Owner/Host



Zoning Bylaws

- Determining Allowable Locations
- Type of Development Review Required (classify STR as permitted or conditional use)
- Traffic Pattern/Access
- Lighting
- Parking Pattern

Complete prohibition? Consult with an attorney.

VLCT's Model Short-Term Rental Ordinance

VLCT has developed a Model Short-Term Rental Ordinance as a starting point for those municipalities first considering whether and how to regulate STRs under an ordinance, either individually or in conjunction with a STR zoning bylaw.

A legal expert on STRs at a recent national municipal law conference said that it is difficult for municipalities to regulate STRs because the goal posts on what the law allows keep moving. Another complicating consideration is the fact that STRs have become a big business. According to [Consumer Affairs](#), the market size for short-term rentals in the U.S. in 2023 was valued at \$29.09 billion. Between 2023 and 2024 that market was estimated to grow to \$32.25 billion and projected to reach \$81.63 billion by 2033. In Vermont, there are an estimated [11,935](#) STRs as of September 2025 and



the number keeps growing. It's axiomatic that regulating any activity brings with it its own inherent legal risks (e.g. Does the ordinance further a legitimate government interest? Was it properly adopted? Does it define the prohibited conduct with sufficient clarity that people of ordinary intelligence can understand it?). Given the money at stake, the growing ubiquity of STRs, and the seemingly direct correlation between the economic impact of an ordinance and the litigation that arises from it, municipalities, probably more so than with any of our other model ordinances, will need to balance their aversion to litigation against the need to protect the public health, welfare, and convenience of its inhabitants from the negative externalities commonly associated with the STR marketplace.

Given these legal uncertainties and the heightened risk of litigation associated with regulating STRs, our model ordinance takes stock of the reality that some policy choices just pose more of a legal risk than others.

For instance, our model ordinance doesn't require STRs to be owner-occupied, nor do they impose higher licensing fees on non-owner occupied STRs than owner occupied ones because, as stated above, they've both been met with varying degrees of success when challenged for violating the Constitution's dormant Commerce Clause.

The dormant Commerce Clause (aka the "negative Commerce Clause") is a legal doctrine courts infer from the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution meant to safeguard against economic protectionism by prohibiting state and local laws from discriminating against, or unduly burdening, interstate commerce. A regulation that discriminates on its face against out-of-state property owners is unlikely to survive judicial scrutiny unless it's determined to be narrowly tailored to advance a legitimate public interest – which it's almost never found to do. But where an ordinance only has an incidental effect on interstate commerce, it will only be overturned if the burdens it places on interstate commerce are found to be "clearly excessive in relation to the



local benefits (i.e. the Pike balancing test).”

Again, this is probably less of a concern for municipalities in Chittenden County considering the Superior Court's ruling in *32 Intervale, LLC et al v. City of Burlington*. It's also less of a concern considering the trend in federal courts to reject such challenges. For instance, even the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, which struck down the City of New Orleans ordinance requiring STRs to be owner-occupied because it “discriminate[d] on its face against out-of-state property owners,” subsequently upheld the City's amended ordinance which replaced its owner-residency requirement with one requiring an “operator” to reside at the STR. See *Hignell-Stark v. City of New Orleans*, --- F.4th ---- (2025). So, even in those courts where litigants have prevailed in their dormant Commerce Clause challenge, measures can still be taken to further mitigate this risk.

None of this is meant to dissuade your municipality from adopting what could very well be an effective regulatory mechanism to preserve the residential character of your neighborhoods and the affordability of its long-term housing supply. Instead, it's intended to inform you that although such owner-occupancy based restrictions may ultimately be upheld in Vermont, just as they were in Chittenden County, they do pose some legal risk and, as such, they'll need to be carefully crafted in coordination with your town attorney to increase their odds of avoiding and surviving judicial scrutiny.

How to Customize the Ordinance

In addition to referring to this guidance as needed, it is important that you read our [ordinance resources](#) and consider each element related to your own community's expectations and administrative capacity.



While many provisions of our model ordinance are customizable, one that isn't is the definition of "short-term rentals." That term has already been defined by the State as "a furnished house, condominium, or other dwelling room or self-contained dwelling unit rented to the transient, traveling, or vacationing public for a period of fewer than 30 consecutive days and for more than 14 days per calendar year." [24 V.S.A. § 2291\(29\)](#). As such, it shouldn't be changed from how it appears in our model ordinance.

Opportunities for editing this ordinance are designated with brackets or "Optional" italicized text. These include additional regulatory options for municipalities depending on whether they have a local option tax, lack a standalone noise ordinance, or seek to cap the number of STRs, just to name a few. The model also includes an optional Section [see Section 5] for those municipalities that want to license STRs. The difference between a STR licensing program and an STR registry is that a licensing program grants owners the required authority to operate an STR whereas a registry typically just catalogs their operation. Whichever of the ordinance's options you choose, you must remove, replace, or accept the customizable language, and amend the numbering and lettering of the ordinance as necessary before adopting it. The selectboard should also consult with the municipality's staff to ensure that the provisions of the ordinance are relevant and realistic in terms of the resources needed for its administration and enforcement.

Additionally, our model ordinance includes a provision requiring STRs to comply with the State of Vermont's Enhanced 911 Board's Addressing Standards [see Section 4(H)]. While we typically only make reference to State standards, we've taken the additional step of incorporating them right into the body of the model ordinance for ease of reference and compliance as STR owners and operators, especially those from out-of-state, are unlikely to be familiar with them. A practical consequence of including the actual E-911 standards in the model, however, assuming you retain them, means that your municipality will need to amend them whenever the State does. See the



State's [Enhanced 911 Board's Addressing Standards](#).

External Resources

Finally, we've provided a list of links from external organizations that may contain useful information for you to consider as well (left). The National League of Cities has compiled a [Short-term Rental Regulations Guide for Local Governments](#) you might find helpful. Your regional planning commission has several resources and can provide you with direct assistance. Additionally, there are links to State of Vermont Agencies that regulate short-term rentals (see the orange links box on this page). Please note, the Vermont Short-Term Rental Alliance is a nonprofit business association for vacation rentals managers and hosts operating in Vermont.

Disclaimer: This resource is only intended to provide information and it does **NOT** constitute legal advice. Readers with specific legal questions are encouraged to contact an attorney. The use or downloading of this resource does **NOT** create an attorney-client relationship and will not be treated in a confidential manner.

If you have additional questions please use the ask a question button to submit them.

Ask a Question

Publication Date

11/06/2025



TOWN OF STOWE

SHORT-TERM RENTAL REGISTRY ORDINANCE

- I. **Authority:** This Ordinance is adopted pursuant to the authority set forth in Chapters 59 and 61 of Title 24 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated, including specifically 24 V.S.A. § 2291(15), (29), and § 204 of the Town of Stowe Charter. This Ordinance shall be designated as a civil ordinance under 24 V.S.A. § 1971(b).
- II. **Purpose:** The Town of Stowe values its history and status as a vibrant, year-round mountain resort town and recognizes the significant benefit to the local economy and community stemming from tourism. The purpose of this ordinance is to seek to balance the well-established practice of renting residential dwelling units to travelling transients and the visiting public, while preserving the character of residential neighborhoods and minimizing and potential negative impacts of Short-Term Rentals, and continuing to promote public health, safety and welfare of visitors and residents, both full-time and part-time. By establishing an orderly process for identifying Short-Term Rental properties in the Town, and compiling a database of the Designated Responsible Persons and emergency contact information for each Short-Term Rental property, the Town intends to ensure an effective and expedient response to an emergency that may arise in connection with the Short-Term Rental property.

Furthermore, through the establishment of a dynamic Registry of Short-Term Rental properties, the Town seeks to gather information regarding the practice of renting residential dwelling units on a short-term basis, so the Town may better evaluate and determine through data what regulation of such rental properties, if warranted, is appropriate and consistent with the best interests of the Town, its residents (full-time and part-time) and visitors.

- III. **Definitions:** The following definitions shall apply to this Ordinance.
- A. "Dwelling Unit" shall mean one or more rooms, connected together, constituting a separate, independent housekeeping establishment for Owner occupancy, rental or lease, physically separated from any other rooms or dwelling units which may be in the same building, and containing independent cooking, sanitation and sleeping facilities.
- B. "Owner" shall mean the Person(s) in whom is vested title to real property in or on which a STR is located, or that is rented as an STR, regardless of whether that title is undivided or fractional. While an Owner may be

represented by, and Owner obligations under this Ordinance may be performed by, an agent, the Owner is ultimately responsible for the STR and compliance with this Ordinance.

- C. "Person" shall include any natural person, corporation, municipality, the State of Vermont or any department, agency, or subdivision of the State, and any partnership, unincorporated association, or other legal entity.
- D. "Designated Responsible Person" shall mean a Person or Persons designated and authorized by the Owner to act as their agent, or that Person's employee or agent, capable of and responsible for responding to emergency situations and other issues related to the STR when the property is being rented or leased as an STR, including providing first responders with timely interior and exterior access to the Short-Term Rental. For the sake of clarity, the Designated Responsible Person may be the Owner of the STR.
- E. "Short-Term Rental" or "STR" or "Short-Term Rental property" means any lease or rental of residential real property, including a furnished house, condominium, or other dwelling room or self-contained Dwelling Unit, or a portion thereof, to the transient, traveling, or vacationing public for a period of fewer than 30 consecutive days and for more than 14 days per calendar year, but specifically excluding commercial lodging establishments such as hotels, motels, inns and bed and breakfasts. For the sake of clarity, the definition of Short Term Rental shall include residential real property located within a Commercial Lodging Facility that is held in separate and unaffiliated ownership from the Commercial Lodging Establishment itself, as in the case of individually owned rooms within a so-called condominium hotel, where said residential real property is rented to the transient, traveling, or vacationing public for a period of fewer than 30 consecutive days and for more than 14 days per calendar year.
- F. "Short-Term Rental Registration form" shall mean the form that the Owner of a Short-Term Rental property must submit to the Town or its designee containing required information related to the Short-Term Rental property.

IV. Short-Term Rental Registration and Other Requirements:

- A. Prior to renting an STR property, the Owner of the property proposed for Short-Term Rental, or their authorized agent, shall complete and submit to the Town a Short-Term Rental Registration form and pay any required fee(s) for each Dwelling Unit they may separately rent as an STR. An authorized agent may register and pay required fees on behalf of multiple STR owners provided the required fees are paid for each Dwelling Unit. An STR Registration form may be completed and submitted at any time during the calendar year, provided submission of the form precedes rental of the involved STR Dwelling Unit. The STR Registration form, once

completed and submitted, shall cover the STR until April 30 of the next year and shall be subject to the renewal provisions hereof beginning May 1 of the following year.

- B. The Short-Term Rental Registration form shall be developed by the Town Manager and, subject to the requirements of this Ordinance, may be administratively modified or amended from time to time by the Selectboard at the Board's sole discretion.
- C. The Short-Term Rental Registration form shall require that the Owner of Short-Term Rental property provide the following information to the Town, as well as and such additional information about the STR as the Manager or Selectboard may reasonably require:
 - 1. physical (E-911) address(es) of all Short-Term Rental property offered for lease/rental;
 - 2. contact information for the property Owner, including: the Owner's full name, mailing and/or physical address, telephone number and email address;
 - 3. contact information for the Designated Responsible Person and other agent(s) of the Owner, including: Designated Responsible Person's/agent's full name, mailing and/or physical address, telephone number and email address;
 - 4. whether the Short-Term Rental is the Owner's primary residence or, if the Owner is not a natural person, whether the Short-Term Rental is the primary residence of a member, director or authorized representative of the Owner;
 - 5. the number of bedrooms in the Dwelling Unit being leased/rented as STRs.
- D. After completing and submitting a Short-Term Rental Registration form, the Owner shall report to the Town any material change(s) in the required information submitted to the Town within thirty (30) days of the occurrence of the change.
- E. Upon the conveyance of title to any property on the Town's Short-Term Rental Registry, and no later than thirty (30) days from the date of the conveyance as evidenced by the date on an instrument conveying the property filed in the Town's Land Records, the new Owner shall complete a new Short-Term Rental Registration form with updated information to continue to use the property as a Short-Term Rental.

- F. The STR Owner or authorized agent shall post in a visible location within the unit the telephone number of the Designated Responsible Person.
- G. Upon submission of all required STR Registration information, the registered property may be rented as an STR until April 30 of the next year, subject to the requirements of this Ordinance and the payment of any required fee(s). Note, however, that a building in which people rent accommodations constitutes a “public building” under 20 V.S.A. § 2730(a)(1)(D) and, as such is subject to the authority of the State of Vermont Division of Fire Safety, or its designee. Other provisions of federal, State and local law may also apply to Short Term Rentals.
- H. Once submitted, an STR Registration may be renewed prior to May 1 upon the payment of any applicable Registration renewal fee and the provision of any required/updated information.
- I. In addition to non-compliance with other mandatory provisions hereof, it shall be a violation of this Ordinance for the Owner of real property used as an STR to:
1. lease or rent their property as a Short-Term Rental without first registering it with the Town as provided herein.
 2. provide intentionally false or materially misleading information on any Short-Term Rental Registration form.
 3. fail or refuse to pay the STR Registration fee or renewal fee.
- J. The Owners of all STR properties shall ensure that the Stowe Fire Department has year-round, 24-hour access to the STR through a Fire Department approved lock box or other reasonable means of providing immediate access authorized by the Fire Department.
- K. All STR properties shall have a Designated Responsible Person, who may be the STR Owner, who is available and authorized to respond to emergency situations and other issues related to the STR when the property is being rented or leased as an STR. The designated Responsible Person shall respond within 45 minutes of notification by a Stowe Firefighter or Police Officer regarding any issue or problem involving a Short-Term Rental when the property is being rented or leased as an STR. For the purposes of the foregoing sentence, “respond” shall mean arrive, in person, at the location of the involved Short-Term Rental property, unless specifically excused from doing so by a Stowe Firefighter, Police Officer, the Town Manager or other Person authorized to enforce this Ordinance.

This provision is not intended to require a Designated Responsible Person to violate the law, including speed limits, or place themselves or others in an unreasonable at-risk situation to facilitate a timely response.

V. **Fees.** The Selectboard may, from time to time, establish and adopt fees related to the administration of this Ordinance, including STR registration and renewal fees, and may incorporate all such fees into a duly adopted fee schedule, which may be amended from time-to-time at the Selectboard's sole discretion.

VI. **Enforcement.** Any Person who violates a provision of this civil ordinance shall be subject to a civil penalty for each such violation. Each day the violation continues shall constitute a separate offense; provided, however, that liability for continuing violation(s) shall not accrue unless and until seven (7) days have expired after notice of the violation. The Stowe Fire Chief, the Stowe Police Chief, and the Town Manager (or their designees) shall all be designated and authorized to act as Issuing Municipal Officials to issue and pursue before the Judicial Bureau, or another court having jurisdiction, municipal complaints to enforce this Ordinance. An Issuing Municipal Official or the Town Attorney may dismiss or amend a municipal complaint in appropriate circumstances in accordance with law or court rules.

A. **Waiver Fees.** An Issuing Municipal Official is authorized to recover waiver fees, in lieu of a civil penalty, in the following amounts, for any person who declines to contest a municipal complaint and pays the waiver fee:

First Offense -	\$100
Second Offense -	\$200
Third Offense -	\$300
Fourth and Subsequent Offenses -	\$400

Offenses shall be counted on a twelve (12) month basis, beginning May 1 and ending April 30 of each year. An Issuing Municipal Official shall have discretion, for good cause shown, to issue a written warning, without recovering a waiver fee, for any First Offense. In such instance, the written warning shall be counted as a First Offense for calculating the number of annual offenses.

B. **Civil Penalties.** An Issuing Municipal Official is authorized to recover civil penalties in the following amounts for each violation:

First Offense -	\$200
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Second Offense - \$400

Third Offense - \$600

Fourth and Subsequent Offenses - \$800

Offenses shall be counted on a twelve (12) month basis, beginning May 1 and ending April 30 of each year. An Issuing Municipal Official shall have discretion, for good cause shown, to issue a written warning, without recovering a civil penalty, for any First Offense. In such instance, the written warning shall be counted as a First Offense for calculating annual offenses.

C. Other Relief: In addition to the enforcement procedure available under Chapter 59 of Title 24 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated, the Town Manager or Issuing Municipal Official is authorized to commence a civil action in a court of competent jurisdiction to obtain injunctive relief and/or to seek such other appropriate relief to enforce this Ordinance as is authorized by law.

VII. **Severability.** If any provision of this ordinance is deemed by a court of competent jurisdiction to be unconstitutional, invalid or unenforceable, that provision shall be severed from the ordinance and the remaining provisions that can be given effect without the severed provision shall continue in effect.

VIII. **Effective Date.** This Ordinance shall take effect upon adoption.

ADOPTED at Stowe, Vermont, this 25 day of March, 2026.

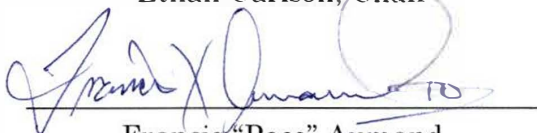
Stowe Selectboard



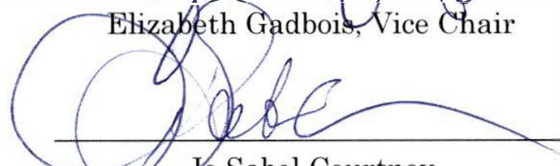
Ethan Carlson, Chair



Elizabeth Gadbois, Vice Chair



Francis "Paco" Aumand



Jo Sabel Courtney



Dominick Donza

Received, filed and recorded in the Town of Stowe this 26th day of March, 2026.



Penny Davis, Town Clerk

Notice of Public Hearing

WAITSFIELD PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING Proposed Amendment to 2023 Town Plan

In accordance with state statute [24 V.S.A. Chapter 117 §4384], the Waitsfield Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on **Tuesday, July 7, 2026, 7:00 P.M. at the Waitsfield Town Offices** (4144 Main Street) to receive public comment regarding the proposed Waitsfield Town Plan. This will be a hybrid meeting and the public may attend in person at the Waitsfield Town Offices or remote via Zoom with telephone and/or video access. 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**

The Waitsfield Planning Commission completed a comprehensive update to its Town Plan in 2023. Although approved by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission at that time, the Board of Commissioners found that the Plan had not adequately addressed the Town's attainment of State Planning Goal 13, relating to childcare.

The Town Plan is consistent with the goals established in 24 V.S.A. §4302, and the revisions do not alter the designation of any land area. The proposed Waitsfield Town Plan includes all of the required elements set forth in the Act [§4382], including the following specific chapters that have been updated:

I. Chapter 7: **Facilities and Services**

This chapter has been updated to reflect the Town's progress toward meeting State Planning Goal 13: "To ensure the availability of safe and affordable childcare and to integrate childcare issues into the planning process, including childcare financing, infrastructure, business assistance for childcare providers, and childcare work force development."

Copies of the full text of the proposed Waitsfield Town Plan are available for examination at the Waitsfield Town Office during regular office hours or can be viewed online at: https://www.waitsfieldvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Boards/Planning_Commission/Amended_7_Facilities_Services_final.pdf. You may also send comments and suggestions to the Planning Commission, 4144 Main St., Waitsfield, VT 05673 or email them to jb.weir@waitsfieldvt.gov.

Dated at Waitsfield, Vermont, May 15, 2026
Emma Hanson, Chair
Waitsfield Planning Commission

Planning Commission Reporting Form for Municipal Plan Amendments

Town of Waitsfield, Vermont

May 14, 2026

This report is in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4384(c) which states: “*When considering an amendment to a plan, the planning commission shall prepare a written report on the proposal. The report shall address the extent to which the plan, as amended, is consistent with the goals established in §4302 of this title.*”

A public hearing by the Planning Commission on the proposed changes to the 2017 Waitsfield Town Plan will be held at **7:00pm on Tuesday July 7, 2026** in the upstairs meeting room at the Waitsfield Town Office, 4144 Main Street, Waitsfield, VT.

The Planning Commission has prepared draft changes to the Town Plan for the Town of Waitsfield as required for re-adoption in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4387. The proposed 2026 Town Plan revisions are intended to address the statutory criteria for re-adoption, including consideration of:

- Recommendations of the regional planning commission;
- Input from the community;
- Consistency with the State Planning Goals in 24 V.S.A. §4302;
- Address all of the required plan elements as specified in 24 V.S.A. §4382;
- Internal consistency among the different plan elements;
- Compatibility with the Regional Plan and municipal plans from adjoining towns;
- Establishing a program and schedule for implementing the plan.

In consideration of the above criteria, the proposed 2026 update includes the following substantive change:

Chapter 7: **Facilities and Services**

This chapter has been updated to reflect the Town’s progress toward meeting State Planning Goal 13: “To ensure the availability of safe and affordable childcare and to integrate childcare issues into the planning process, including childcare financing, infrastructure, business assistance for childcare providers, and childcare work force development.”

General Notes:

- (1) We do not anticipate significant probable impacts on the surrounding area (e.g., traffic, overall pattern of land use) as a result of these proposed changes.*
- (2) We do not anticipate significant probable impact on the municipal tax base nor the need for public facilities.*
- (3) There is no substantive change proposed in this plan with respect to vacant land.*

(4) The changes proposed are relatively minor, but help to better address the suitability of the areas for the proposed purpose. For example, this plan strongly encourages the most intensive development to occur where existing infrastructure better supports it.

(5) The proposed changes are more appropriate in terms of modifying the Future Land Use Map to be consistent with recent changes and better reflecting existing conditions and future potential for development.

7. Facilities and Services

7.A Overview

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

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

7.B Town Government

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table 7-1: Waitsfield Municipal Budget

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

Source: Waitsfield Town Annual Reports

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

7.C Town Properties

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Cemeteries. Waitsfield owns and maintains four cemeteries:

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

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

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

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

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

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

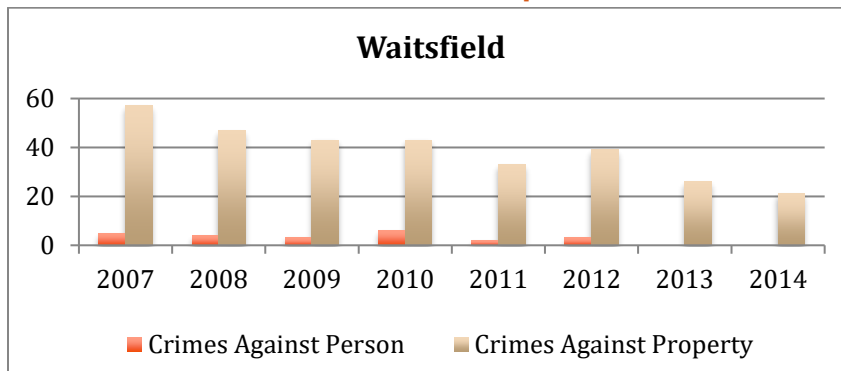
7.D Public Safety

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Table 7-3: Emergency Response Statistics

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

Table 7-3: Emergency Response Statistics

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

Source: Waitsfield Town Annual Reports

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

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

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

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

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

7.E Solid Waste

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

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

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

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

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

7.F Sewage Disposal & Water Supply

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7.G Community Services

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

Other health care services available to local residents include:

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

7.H Communications & Media

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7.I Recreation

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7.J Goals

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

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

7.K Policies

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

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

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

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

7.L Tasks

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

2026 WAITSFIELD PLANNING COMMISSION WORK PLAN

	Tasks	Project	Timeline
		Village Master Planning	
1	Irasville Master Planning	This project will incorporate the updated wetland maps and include a review of the history of planning in Irasville. Segue from the By-Laws Modernization Grant work and Wastewater project.	Completed January 2026
2	Post-Plan	- Creation of Subcommittee to analyze use of CHIP Program to promote and accomplish goals of Master Plan - Other?	
		Zoning and By-Laws	
1	River Corridor Bylaws	River Corridor Bylaws – Adopt model ordinance or similar OR maintain FEH bylaws with some adjustments (i.e., increase minimum standard of development to 2 feet above BFE)	2026
2	Limited Business District	Reviewing standards and purpose. Two landowners have approached the PZA with regard to developing housing in this area. As it stands, residential development is deterred in this area. However, given the proximity to the Town's future disposal field, future phasing of the wastewater system could allow for connections in this area.	2026
3	ADU restrictions	Review and update the 30% threshold for ADUs as this restriction is less common; PZA has email into counsel as to status of this standard in the post-HOME ACT era. Per SE Group: CU for ADU above 900sqft/30% makes little sense now that 2-4 units are allowed outright w/ no size limit.	2026
4	Section 6.02 (F) – Exemption for garage/yard sales	Town Garage Sale Ordinance repealed 8/11/25; Section 6.02 (F) must be revised to accord to intent and removal of ordinance mention *Cleanup only	2026

6	Act 250/LURB/Act 181 Tiers	Assess impacts of changes to Act 250 in addition to Act 181's tiered framework and discuss whether updates to the Zoning Bylaws are necessary or required	TBD pending legislative appeals process
		Town Plan Update	
1	Childcare	Update Childcare language per CVRPC feedback	In Process – hearing July 7
		Town Ordinances	
1	STRs	Work with the Selectboard to draft a framework for registering/regulating short-term rentals; Subcommittee formed w/ kick-off meeting 1/8/2026	In Process

Other:

- 1) Invite Eric Friedman (Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce) to a meeting to discuss the needs and concerns of business community (January 6, 2025). **Complete**
- 2) Invite Ned Swanberg to a meeting to discuss the changes in flood regulation and mapping. **Complete**
- 3) Invite Brian Voigt/Niki Sabado (CVRPC) to a meeting for further clarity on Act 181’s tiered framework and the application processes thereto. TBD