

IRASVILLE VILLAGE MASTER PLAN

2025



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CHAPTER 1

A Village of Potential: The Story of Irasville

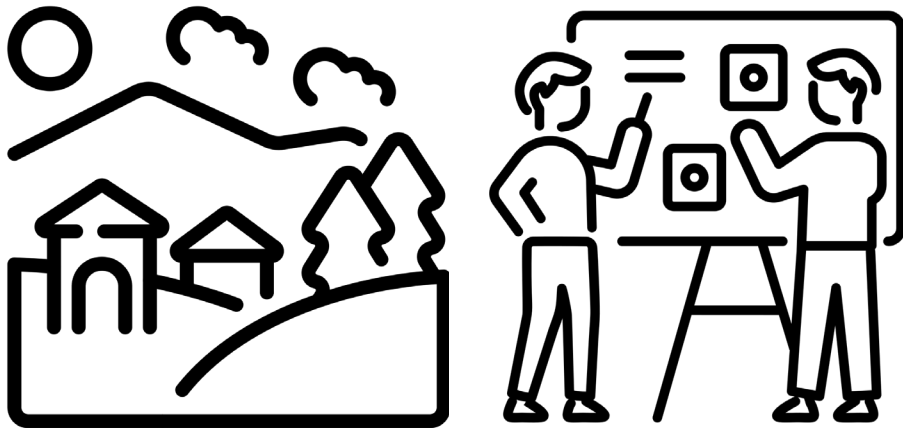
Project Focus Area: The Irasville Village District, as identified on the Town of Waitsfield Zoning Map.



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

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

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



Above: Irasville from the air (credit: Steve Butcher).

Below: Waitsfield Farmers Market on a fall day in Irasville.

THEN & NOW: THE DEVELOPMENT OF IRASVILLE

1. INITIAL DEVELOPMENT

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



Up and Away

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

2. AUTOMOBILE-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

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



3. INFILL DEVELOPMENT

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



Infill Development

5th Quarter Butcher + Provisions (bottom right) is example of infill development - the creation of new buildings within already developed areas. Benefits include limiting sprawl and using existing infrastructure.

Regional Context

Irasville sits on the floor of Vermont's Mad River Valley, a mountainous and well-conserved watershed where headwater streams quickly reach the main stem of the Mad River. This topography supports the Valley's vaunted outdoor recreation amenities and famous scenery while presenting real constraints and threats for local infrastructure and development, such as steep slopes and flooding.

With flat and flood-resilient topography, Irasville will play a key role in the future climate and economic resiliency of the Mad River Valley.



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

IRASVILLE TODAY: EXISTING CONDITIONS

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT

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

TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

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

NATURAL ASSETS & CONSTRAINTS

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



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



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



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



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

A Four-Season Outdoor Recreation Hub

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

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



BUILDING ON PLANS & STUDIES: PAST & PRESENT

HELD IN CHECK: PAST EFFORTS

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

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

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

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

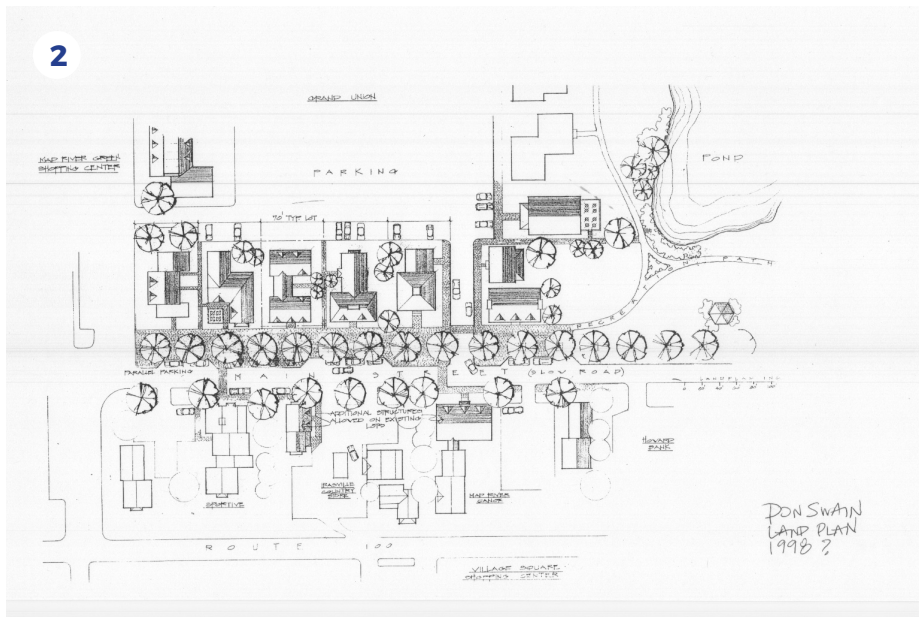
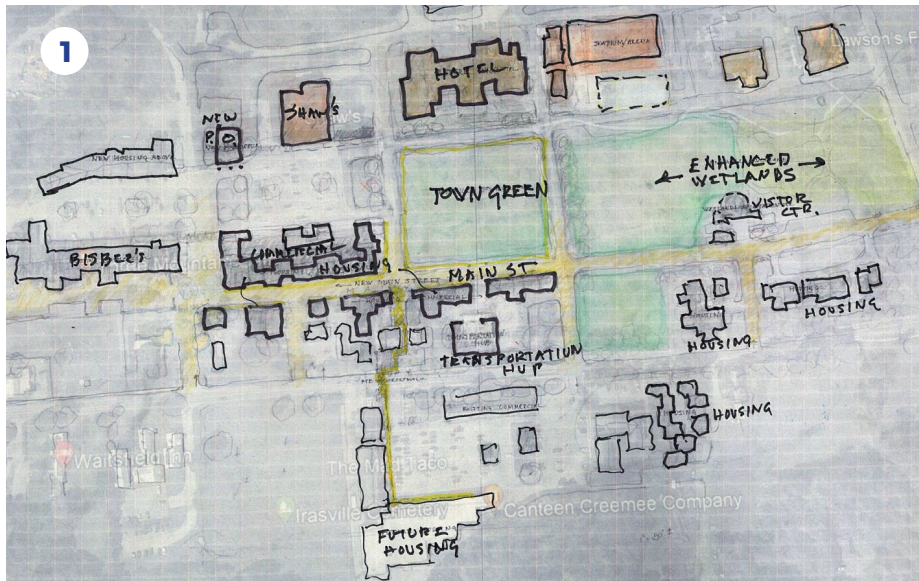


RECENT PROGRESS & MOMENTUM

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

- ✓ **Waitsfield Community Wastewater Project:** a project to support environmentally responsible infill development in Waitsfield's village areas (construction expected to commence in late 2026).
- ✓ **Mad River Valley Active Transportation Corridor:** an initiative to connect the villages of the Mad River Valley with pedestrian and bicycle paths (scoping study completed in 2025).
- ✓ **Vibrant Villages Initiative:** a comprehensive update of zoning bylaws to support walkable infill development in Waitsfield's village areas (completed in 2024).
- ✓ **Waitsfield Town Plan Update:** a thorough rewrite of the Town's guiding document, identifying Irasville as the regional growth center for the Mad River Valley (completed in 2023).





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

Irasville Focus Areas (1/2)

3

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

VIBRANT VILLAGES OPEN HOUSE | MARCH 2023 WATSFIELD, VT



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

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

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: GOALS FOR IRASVILLE

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

1. COMMUNITY DESIGN

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

2. NATURAL ASSETS & CONSTRAINTS

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

3. HOMES

- » Accommodate new residents in Irasville by adding **new homes** in the service area for the planned Community Wastewater System (anticipated as up to 70 homes across the entire service area, consisting of Irasville and Waitsfield Village).
- » Encourage a **variety of types of homes** - apartments, townhomes, mixed-use development - including long-term, year-round residences, below-market-rate rentals aimed at younger households and seniors and homes for first-time homebuyers.



Main Street areas can be the hub of community gathering and events, as seen above in Steamboat Springs, CO.

Understanding Wetland Function

The Vermont DEC has identified ten beneficial functions and values of wetlands, including wildlife habitat, flood mitigation, erosion control, recreational value, and water quality protection. For brevity, this plan uses the term “function” to refer to wetland functions and values.

A 2021 Irasville wetlands study performed by Arrowwood Environmental identified a range of wetland functions in Irasville. Some wetlands received higher scores for providing important habitat and flood storage functions; others received very low scores, offering minimal ecological value.

The goal of preserving 85% of wetland areas in Irasville balances preservation of critical wetland functions while allowing minor impacts to low-functioning wetlands that are in or adjacent to areas envisioned for infill development.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: GOALS FOR IRASVILLE (CONTINUED)

4. BUSINESSES

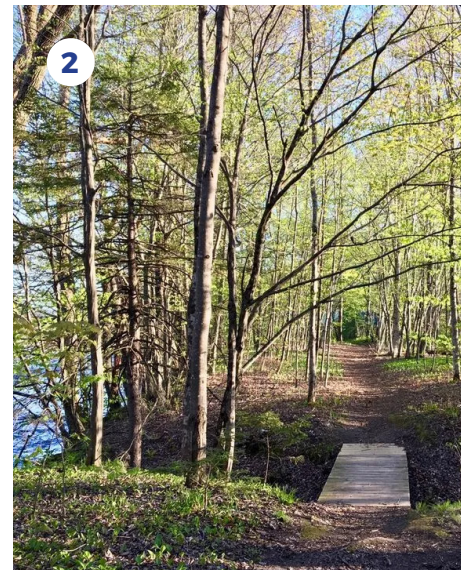
- » Encourage **mixed-use development** (e.g., ground level retail with upper story apartments) with local-serving, customer-facing commercial uses, such as retail, lodging, food service, and other needed services.
- » Evaluate opportunities for **redevelopment of shopping plazas** and other properties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

5. TRANSPORTATION

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

6. OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMY

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



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

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

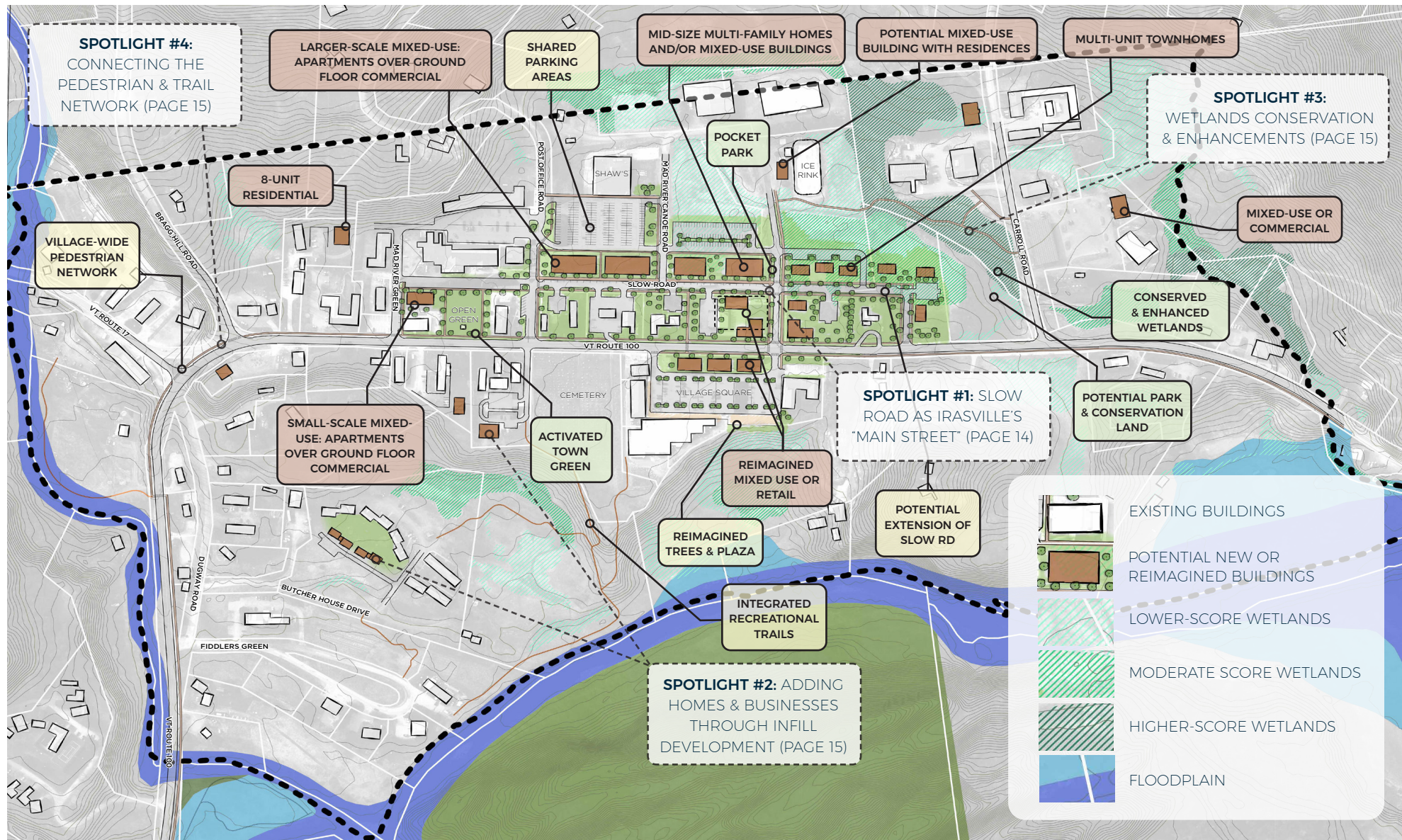
CHAPTER 2

Vibrant Village: The Vision for Irasville



Irasville should be developed and maintained as the area's downtown core with a mix of uses that include a full range of commercial services, civic and cultural facilities, offices, multi-family housing, and upper-story dwellings where practical. - Waitsfield Town Plan, 2023

THE LONG-TERM VILLAGE-WIDE VISION FOR IRASVILLE



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

SPOTLIGHTS: KEY ELEMENTS OF THE VISION

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

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

Key elements of this vision include:

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



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

SPOTLIGHTS: KEY ELEMENTS OF THE VISION (CONTINUED)

SPOTLIGHT #2: ADDING HOMES & BUSINESSES THROUGH INFILL DEVELOPMENT

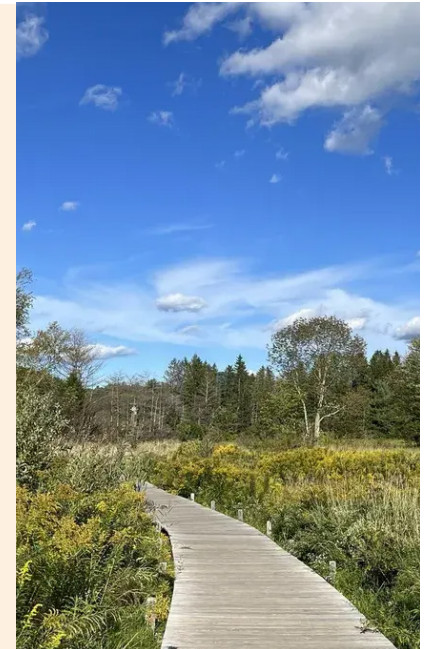
Infill development opportunities will be plentiful in Irasville once the community wastewater project is complete. Under Town zoning bylaws revised in 2024, new homes and businesses in Irasville can be created on lots as small as 1/5 acre - well below the current median lot size of 1.1 acres in the village.



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

SPOTLIGHT #3: WETLANDS CONSERVATION & ENHANCEMENT

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

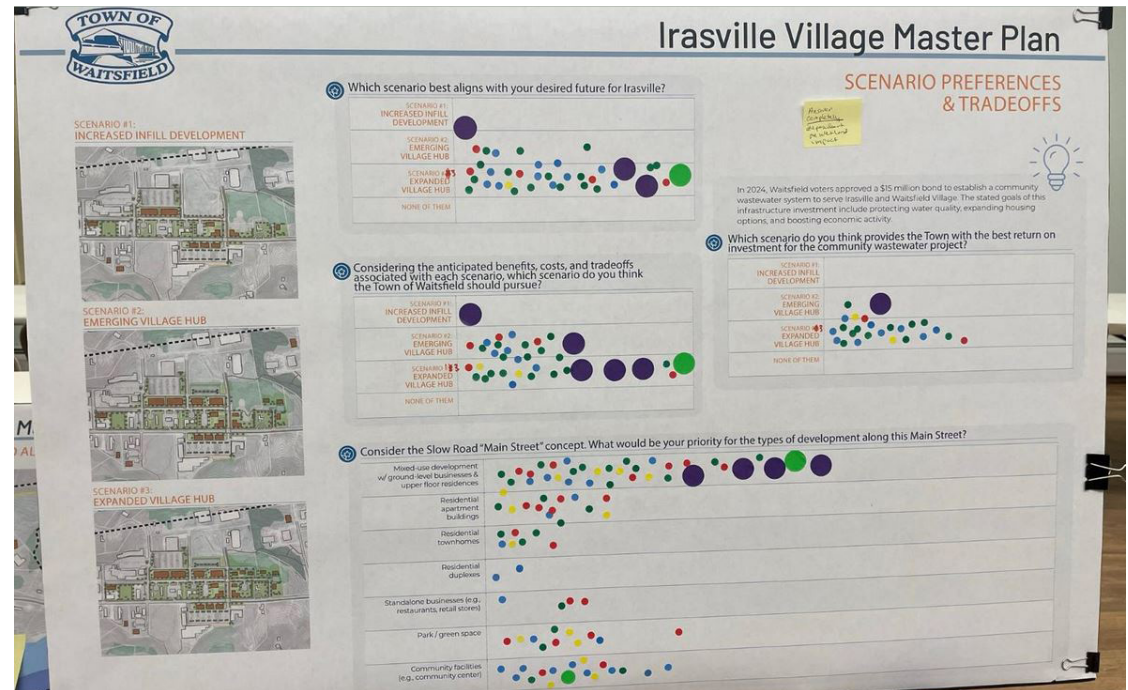
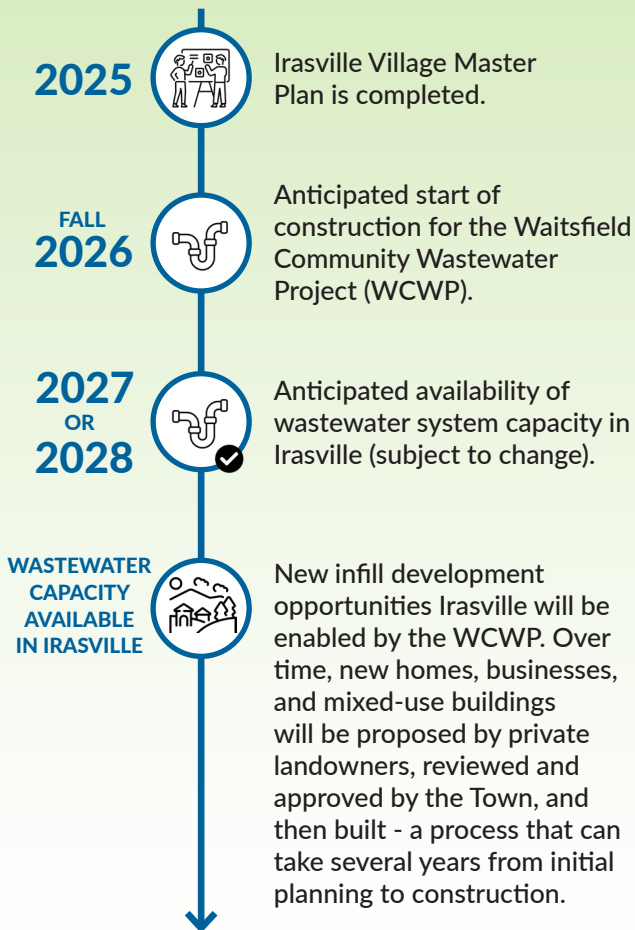


SPOTLIGHT #4: CONNECTING THE PEDESTRIAN & TRAIL NETWORK

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



Envisioned Timeline for Future Development in Irasville



Public Input Highlight: Building Irasville

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

"Compact, mixed-use development, as envisioned for Irasville, can reduce reliance on the automobile, vehicle miles traveled, & inherent system energy costs—including energy costs associated with maintaining roads & related infrastructure. Targeting economic & residential growth within areas intended for more concentrated development allows people to walk or bike to their destinations & creates opportunities for public transit services between growth centers." - Waitsfield Town Plan, 2023

CHAPTER 3

Three Key Actions to Move Irasville Forward



IDENTIFYING THE KEY CATALYSTS FOR A VIBRANT IRASVILLE

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

- » **Action A: Implement the Community Wastewater System (p. 18).**
- » **Action B: Implement a Local & Regional Wetlands Strategy (p. 19).**
- » **Action C: Establish Slow Road as Irasville's Main Street (p. 20-21).**

Action A: Implement the Community Wastewater System

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

WHAT TO KNOW:

The Town of Waitsfield is actively pursuing the implementation of the Waitsfield Community Wastewater System, with construction expected to commence in late 2026.

The system will be built and operated with no impact on the Waitsfield municipal tax rate. Grants and state and federal financing will cover implementation cost; fees paid by users of the system will cover ongoing operating and maintenance costs.

KEY GOALS & OUTCOMES:

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

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- » The planned wastewater system is expected to serve approximately 70 new homes and provide capacity for future commercial development, with the potential to secure additional wastewater capacity for new development in the future.
- » While there is a defined wastewater service area for the planned system, encompassing Irasville and Waitsfield Village, there is currently no policy governing how much future capacity may be allocated to any particular development or sub-area.
- » There may be opportunities to align wastewater system implementation with improvements to other infrastructure, such as **roadways and sidewalks**, in areas where wastewater utility lines will be constructed and buried. Aligning complementary infrastructure projects can save time and money.

KEY STEPS

- » **Continue to move forward with financing and implementation planning for the planned wastewater system serving Irasville.**
- » **Identify combined wastewater & transportation infrastructure projects.** Wastewater system construction plans should consider opportunities to phase in roadway and pedestrian improvements that could be completed in a single project. For example, wastewater lines are planned to run under Slow Road, where additional improvements to the streetscape are envisioned (see p. 14 & 20).
- » **Develop wastewater allocation policies.** These policies can reserve wastewater capacity for a sub-area of Irasville (e.g., the area around Slow Road) and/or limit that amount of wastewater capacity allocated to any single project.

Public Input Highlight: Community Wastewater Project

In June 2024, following years of planning and community discussions, Waitsfield voters overwhelmingly approved a \$15 million bond measure to fund the construction of the community wastewater system serving Irasville and Waitsfield Village.



Action B: Implement a Local & Regional Wetlands Strategy

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

WHAT TO KNOW:

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

KEY GOALS & OUTCOMES:

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

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- » Wetland functions in Irasville range from very low to moderately high. Envisioned infill development sites along Slow Road would result in impacts to wetlands with low or very low wetland functions.
- » Irasville does not have a centralized stormwater system and is believed to have a high groundwater table. Both conditions present uncertainties for how future infill development will impact wetlands, even in areas of low wetland function.
- » Wetlands impacts from development are potentially subject to permitting through the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation and the US Army Corps of Engineers. In September 2025, Governor Phil Scott issued Executive Order 06-25. Under this order, housing development in Irasville could be exempt from some state wetlands permitting requirements if the development were to impact unmapped Class II wetlands.
- » Waitsfield's zoning bylaws permit wetlands impacts, provided that the impacts conform to Vermont Wetlands Rules and the development includes a vegetated buffer between wetland areas. For proposed developments going through Conditional Use Review, the Town's Development Review Board retains some discretion to limit wetland impacts.

KEY STEPS

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

Public Input Highlight: Wetland Conservation

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



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

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

WHAT TO KNOW:

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

KEY GOALS & OUTCOMES:

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

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

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

KEY STEPS

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

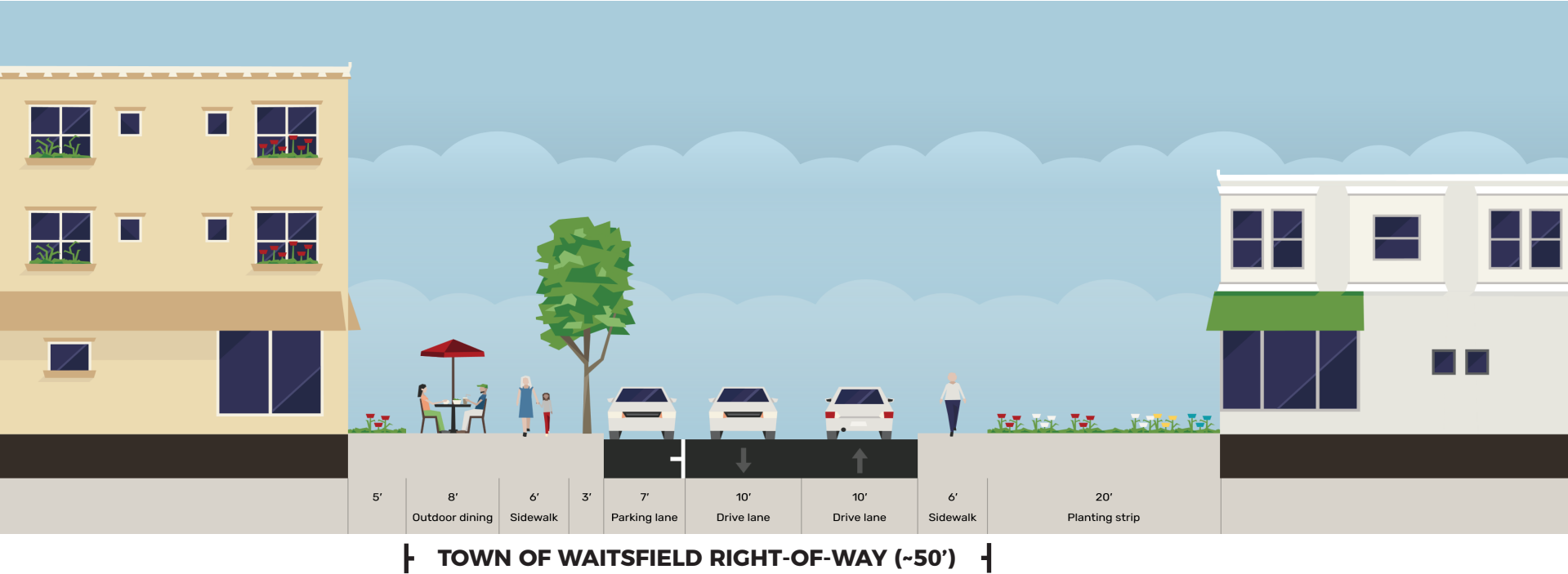
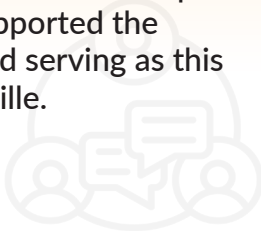


KEY STEPS (CONTINUED)

- » **Conduct preliminary engineering for streetscape improvements along Slow Road.** Evaluate approaches for stormwater retention and mitigation within the streetscape. This can potentially be supported with Municipal Planning Grant funds.
- » **Establish an Irasville Main Street organization or coalition** to educate community members about the project. Conduct events and pop-up demonstrations to showcase the potential of Slow Road as the future hub of the community.
- » **Maintain the Mad River Path trail corridor** along Slow Road using sidewalks, signage, and/or trail relocation.
- » **Create an official Town Map for Waitsfield** that shows a desired right-of-way for a potential extension of Slow Rd, as well as other desired pedestrian connections.
- » **Bury new utility lines along Slow Rd,** if and where feasible, to create a more attractive streetscape and more resilient infrastructure.

Public Input Highlight: Slow Road

Attendees at the November 2024 community open house event expressed strong support for establishing a Main Street in Irasville. At the subsequent March 2025 open house, attendees supported the concept of Slow Road serving as this Main Street for Irasville.



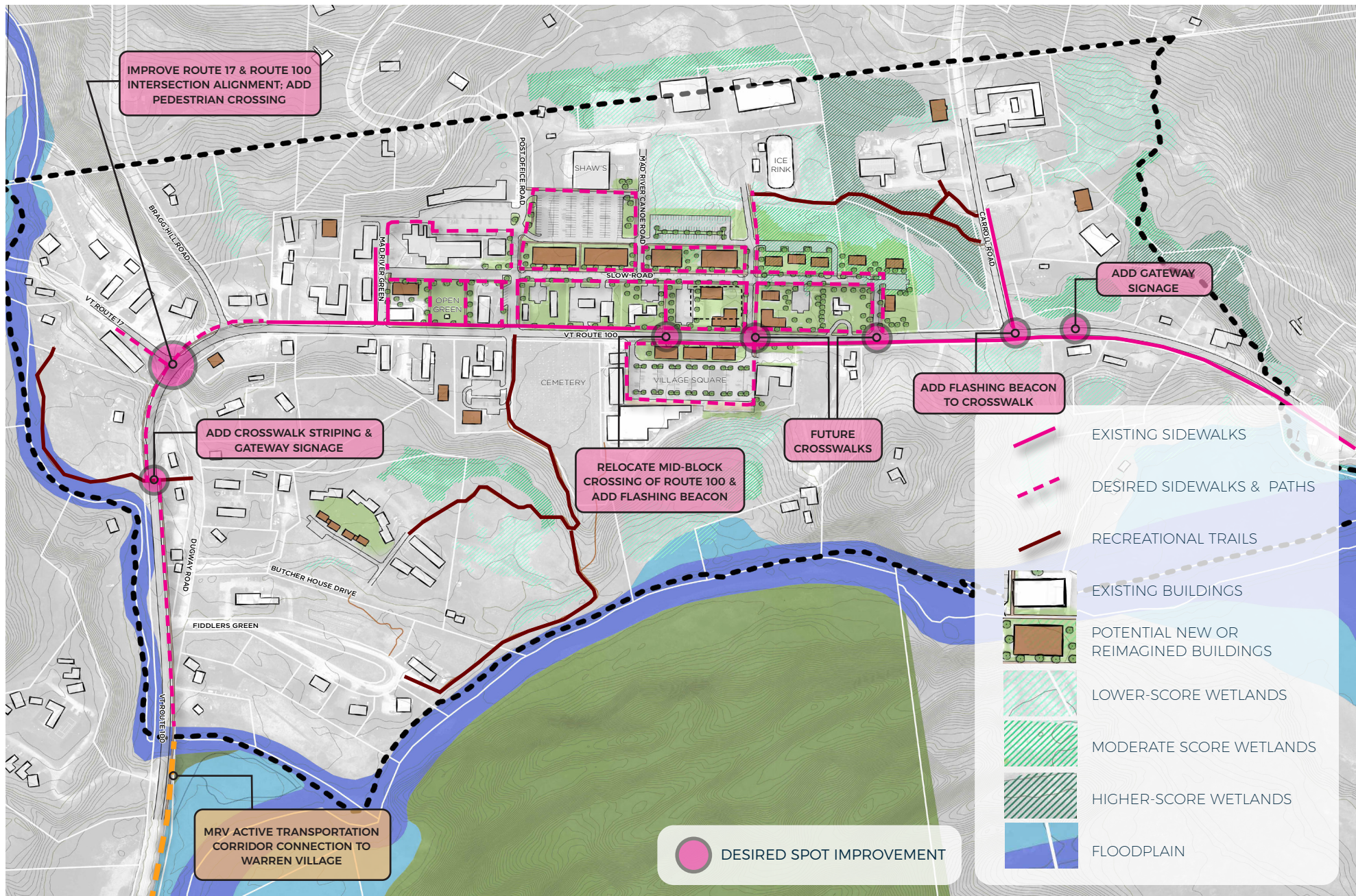
Future Slow Road Cross Section: The Town of Waitsfield owns an approximately 50-foot right-of-way along Slow Road. This right-of-way is envisioned to host sidewalks, flexible outdoor spaces, and street trees and other greenery, in addition to travel and parking lanes.

CHAPTER 4

Comprehensive Strategies to Complete the Vision



TRANSPORTATION: ENVISIONED PED-BIKE NETWORK & SPOT IMPROVEMENTS



TRANSPORTATION: RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

EXPANDING THE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE NETWORK

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

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

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



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

TRANSPORTATION: RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

CREATING SAFE STREETS FOR ALL USERS

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

- » **Install curb extensions at key pedestrian crossings** in Irasville village. Incorporate curb extensions into streetscape planning for Slow Road. In the short-term, deploy temporary curb extensions using materials like bollards or large concrete planters. Along Route 100, where the use of curb extensions may not be permitted by VTrans, evaluate alternative pedestrian crossing treatments, such as high-visibility crosswalk paint and rectangular rapid flashing beacons.
- » **Maintain and enforce a speed limit of 25 MPH** on all roads in Irasville - the lowest allowed by state law.
- » **Install prominent gateway signage** at the entrances to Irasville village along Route 100 and Route 17.
- » **Work proactively with VTrans** to monitor and mitigate traffic impacts on Route 100. Future development applicants may be required by the Town Development Review Board to perform traffic studies.
- » **Work with owners of key private roads** in Irasville to identify potential roadway and pedestrian safety improvements as part of future redevelopment. Explore the possibility of implementing roadway improvements as part of future wastewater line construction.
- » **Study parking lot utilization** to inform future shared use parking arrangements.
- » **Pursue grant funding.** Potential grant funding opportunities include:
 - VTrans Bike/Ped Grant Program
 - FHWA Transportation Alternatives Program
 - ACCD Downtown Transportation Fund
 - AARP Community Challenge Grant (for temporary improvements)

- » Long-term, the Town could explore the possibility of taking ownership of Route 100 in Irasville as a Class 1 Town Highway, which is currently owned and maintained by VTrans. This would allow the Town to pursue more aggressive traffic calming and pedestrian safety measures in exchange for taking on increased roadway maintenance activities and costs.



- (1) Quick-build curb extension (credit: City of Burlington, VT).
- (2) Curb extensions help reduce pedestrian crossing distances and calm vehicular traffic speeds.

OUTDOOR RECREATION: RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

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

PARKS & OUTDOOR SPACES

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

RECREATIONAL TRAILS

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



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

LAND USE: RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

CHANGES TO LAND USE REGULATIONS

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

- » **Update zoning bylaws to reference the Irasville Village Master Plan**, including in the purpose statement for the Irasville Village District and in the provisions for Planned Unit Developments.
- » **Adopt required density bonuses for affordable housing.** Act 47 (the HOME Act), passed in 2023, requires Vermont municipalities to include a density bonus of 40% more units and a bonus of one habitable floor above the height maximum for affordable housing development in areas served by municipal water and sewer. Once the Town's wastewater system is implemented, the Town will be required to revise zoning bylaws to meet this state requirement.
- » **Encourage or require additional on-site stormwater mitigation measures for new developments.**
- » **Continue to limit building heights to three (3) stories** to align with historic development character and to limit the ability for any single development to use an excessive amount of wastewater capacity.
- » **Create a Village Sidewalk Policy or Ordinance.** (see p. 24).

Changes to State Land Use Law & Regional Land Use Planning

Act 181, passed in 2024, included reforms to Act 250 (Vermont's land use law) to make it easier to build housing near existing village centers and areas that are planned for growth. Interim rules under Act 181 exempt most new housing in these areas (including Irasville) from Act 250 permitting. The next Regional Plan update by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission will include proposed designation areas for permanent Act 250 exemptions, with final approval by the State Land Use Review Board.

GOVERNANCE: RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

MUNICIPAL CAPACITY & FINANCIAL HEALTH

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

- » **Evaluate a 1% local option tax (LOT).** LOT revenues can offset a wide variety of municipal expenditures, including infrastructure development and maintenance. LOTs have been adopted in many Vermont towns that serve as regional hubs and/or tourist destinations, including towns like Waterbury, Stowe, Middlebury, Woodstock, Killington, and Ludlow, .
- » **Plan ahead for maintenance operations and associated capital expenses.** Consider needs such as increased road and sidewalk repairs and snow removal.
- » **Evaluate the use of public-private partnerships** for major capital projects through the forthcoming Community and Housing Infrastructure Program (CHIP) (see p. 20).
- » **Create a Capital Reserve Fund for sidewalks.** (see p. 24)
- » **Develop an Impact Fee Policy or Ordinance.** (see p. 24)

CHAPTER 5

The Process: How We Built This Plan



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

HOW WE GOT HERE

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

RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

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

COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The planning process included two key community open house events. An initial open house in **November 2024** saw community members weigh in on overall project direction and goals. A subsequent open house in **March 2025** provided an opportunity for members of the public to share input on initial vision, conceptual design ideas, and master plan recommendations. Individual **interviews** with key community organizations and stakeholders provided additional perspective on needs and opportunities to be addressed by the plan.

The process was overseen by the **Village Master Plan Steering Committee**, which met over a dozen times during the process to shape the development of the Master Plan. Additionally, the project team coordinated extensively with Wetlands Program staff at the VT Department of Environmental Conservation at key milestones in the planning process.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

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

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

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

- ✓ **Waitsfield Town Plan (2023)**
- ✓ **Waitsfield Vibrant Villages Initiative (2023)**
- ✓ **Waitsfield + VTrans Tiger Team Collaboration: Pedestrian Safety Improvements along Vermont Route 100 (2021)**
- ✓ **Mad River Valley Housing Demand and Market Analysis (2020)**
- ✓ **Waitsfield Water Management Mapping Project (2018)**
- ✓ **Mad River Valley Active Transportation Plan (2016)**
- ✓ **Master Development Plan for the Irasville Growth Center (2002)**

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

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE EVENTS: KEY TAKEAWAYS

NOVEMBER 2024 OPEN HOUSE

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

KEY THEMES FROM THE EVENT

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



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

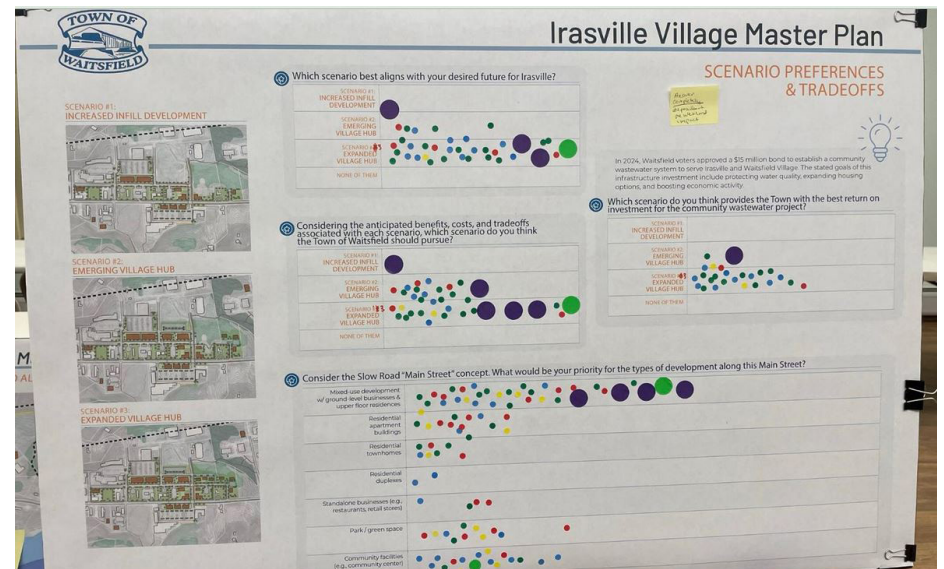
COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE EVENTS: KEY TAKEAWAYS

MARCH 2025 OPEN HOUSE

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

KEY THEMES FROM THE EVENT

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



Input recorded from March 2025 open house attendees.

Appendices

IRASVILLE VILLAGE MASTER PLAN – BUILT ENVIRONMENT DATA SHEET

LAND USE

LAND USE CLASSIFICATION

- Nearly two-thirds (64%) of building units in Irasville contain commercial operations.
- There are mix of residential units in Irasville, including single-family homes, multi-family homes, and mixed-use buildings.

DENSITY

- Irasville features relatively large lot sizes for a village area (Table 1). Waitsfield Village is approximately 2-3x more densely developed than Irasville.
- Current zoning bylaws for Irasville permit lots as small as 0.5 acre and allow buildings to cover up to 70% of the lot up to a maximum footprint of 15,000 square feet. Prior to 2024, the minimum lot size was 1 acre and the maximum building coverage was 40%.
- Most buildings in Irasville are 1.5 or 2 stories tall. Current zoning bylaws permit mixed-use and multi-family dwellings to be constructed up to 3 stories and 40 feet tall; all other uses are limited to 2 stories and 35 feet tall.

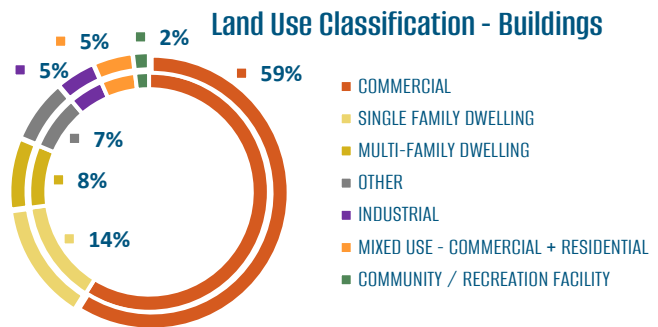


Table 1: Zoning District Density Comparison

Zoning District	Irasville Village District	Village Business District	Village Residential District
Average Lot Size	2.32 acres	0.44 acre	1.81 acres
Median Lot Size	1.11 acres	0.32 acre	0.71 acre
Median Building Lot Coverage*	7.7%	18.2%	10.3%

*Measure of the percentage of a lot covered by building footprint.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE & SERVICES

ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

- State-owned Roads:** Irasville is accessed via Vermont Routes 100 and 17. Along Route 100, traffic volumes range from 6,300 AADT south of Carroll Rd to 7,400 AADT south of Bragg Hill Rd. Route 17 experiences traffic volumes of 2,900 AADT. Both state highways have posted speed limits of 30 MPH.
 - VTrans, Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, Mad River Valley Planning District, and the Town of Waitsfield are in the process of studying options for improving the intersection of Routes 100 and 17.
- Town-owned Roads:** The Town of Waitsfield owns and maintains Slow Rd, Bragg Hill Rd, Post Office Rd, Carroll Rd, and Dugway Rd within Irasville.
- Privately-owned Roads:** There are a number of important roads in Irasville that are privately owned, including Fiddlers Green, Butcher House Dr., Mad River Green, Mad River Canoe Rd.

- **Parking Areas:** Parking in Irasville consists of large and small surface parking areas and several small areas of on-street parking. Nearly all parking areas in Irasville are privately owned. The only municipally-controlled parking area is the on-street parking area along the northern side of Slow Rd.

PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

- There exists a continuous sidewalk connection along Vermont Route 100 between Irasville and Waitsfield Village. In Irasville, the sidewalk terminates at China Fun just north of Bragg Hill Rd.
 - Currently, there are three crosswalks across Route 100 –Village Square, Carroll Rd, and the northern entrance to Mad River Green.
- Starting along Slow Rd is the Heart of the Valley Trail – a series of sidewalks and natural surface trails that connects to Carroll Rd before following sidewalks to Waitsfield Village.
- There are many gaps in the pedestrian network in Irasville, particularly in the commercial area along the northwest side of Vermont Route 100.

BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE

- Bicyclists may use sections of the Heart of the Valley Trail.
- There are marked bicycle lanes along Vermont Route 100 in Irasville north of the Route 17 intersection; however, these lanes may too narrow to provide adequate comfort to most bicyclists, particularly along curbed sections of roadway.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- The Mad Bus is a seasonal bus service connecting Irasville, Waitsfield Village, and Sugarbush Resort. The service is operated by Green Mountain Transit from late December to early April. In Irasville, the route connects Route 100 and shopping plazas, with buses departing hourly from Lincoln Peak between 8:00 AM and 9:00 PM.

WATER & WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

- The Waitsfield Community Water System, constructed in 2012, serves Irasville. The water distribution system comprises 7.4 miles of pipe and a 407,000-gallon reinforced concrete storage tank. It provides drinking water to 118 parcels and fire protection via 31 hydrants. The 2023 *Preliminary Engineering Report* for the Town of Waitsfield Village Water & Wastewater Project identified 46 additional potential water service connections.

WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

- All properties in Irasville currently utilize individual or shared soil-based wastewater disposal systems.
- In 2024, Waitsfield voters approved a \$15 million bond measure to move forward with the development of a community wastewater system that will serve the Irasville area. The future wastewater system will prioritize connections to 105 properties that meet certain criteria (older systems, located in floodplain or well shield area, etc) while retaining approximately 24,000 gallons per day in capacity to accommodate future infill residential and commercial development in Irasville.

STORMWATER

- Stormwater infrastructure drains waters from impervious surfaces and delivers them to natural or pervious surfaces where waters can percolate into the ground. There are significant areas of impervious surface in Irasville, including buildings, roads, parking areas, and sidewalks.
- In Irasville, stormwater infrastructure includes storm drain inlets, underground pipes, areas of overland flow (paved or natural surface areas that have been landscaped to drain water in a particular pattern), and bioretention basins (swales or rain gardens with natural surface areas that allow stormwater to disperse and infiltrate into the ground).
- There is not a centralized stormwater system in Irasville. Stormwater is managed through localized systems associated with individual commercial and residential developments.
- Wetlands play a role in stormwater management in Irasville, with underground pipes delivering stormwater to swales located in wetland areas.

IRASVILLE VILLAGE MASTER PLAN – NATURAL CONTEXT DATA SHEET

WETLANDS

LOCATION, FUNCTIONS, & VALUES

- There are approximately 25 acres of mapped wetlands in Irasville, covering approximately 11% of the total land area. The highest concentration of wetlands is in the vicinity of Carroll Rd north of Vermont Route 100.
- A 2021 study by Arrowwood Environmental documented the functions and values of wetlands in Irasville. Scores for each function and value were tallied to give an overall score highlighting the overall functional significance of the wetland in the landscape. The overall scores for the wetlands in Irasville ranged from 1 to 32 out of a total possible score of 55, indicating low to moderate overall value and functional significance in the broader ecological landscape.
- A primary function of many Irasville wetlands is providing storage for flood waters and stormwater runoff. The location of Irasville between steep mountain slopes to the west and the Mad River to the east makes it an important location for storage of flood waters coming off the mountains and attenuation of peak flows in the Mad River.

WETLAND IMPACTS

- Based on information provided by VTANR dating back to 1992, development in Irasville has resulted in over 35,000 square feet of wetlands impacts, or approximately 2.2% of the total wetlands in Irasville. Additionally, another 101,000 square feet of wetlands buffers were impacted during this time. Prior to 1992, based on aerial imagery and area topography, it is assumed that the development of commercial buildings and parking areas resulted in additional impacts to wetlands and their buffers.
- Per the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, future impacts to existing wetlands in Irasville will likely require mitigation projects to offset lost wetland functions, such as flood storage. This could include creation of wetlands with storage capacity, enhancement of existing wetlands to improve storage capacity, and other non-wetland floodwater storage projects including infiltration basins and/or belowground storage. Due to topographic constraints and presumed high groundwater elevations, opportunities for large-scale mitigation projects within Irasville are likely very limited. Mitigation for small-scale wetlands impacts in Irasville may be possible on a case-by-case basis.
 - While beyond the scope of the Irasville Village Master Plan, a future planning effort could identify watershed-level strategies for wetlands enhancement and flood mitigation in the Mad River Valley to offset wetlands impacts in Irasville.

TOPOGRAPHY

FLOODPLAIN

- There are no structures in Irasville located in the current mapped 100-year flood hazard area along the Mad River or Mill Brook. The only community facility located in the mapped 100-year flood hazard area is the Couples Field ball fields.
- There are several buildings on Fiddler's Green located in the Fluvial Erosion Hazard Area Overlay District (FEHO). The FEHO District is designated through the Town of Waitsfield Zoning Bylaws to limit development in flood prone areas.

SLOPES

- Irasville is largely characterized by flat terrain but is bounded by (and contains) areas of steep slopes. A band of steep slopes effectively divides Irasville into two separate areas of relatively flat terrain along Vermont Route 100 from areas of gently rolling terrain around Butcher House Drive and Fiddler's Green.

IRASVILLE VILLAGE MASTER PLAN – SUMMARY OF PLANS & STUDIES

COMPLETED PLANS

WAITSFIELD TOWN PLAN (2023)

The Waitsfield Town Plan is developed and adopted by the Waitsfield Planning Commission. The Town Plan articulates overall community development goals for the Town and provides a framework for how those goals can be achieved. Importantly, the Town Plan provides a legal basis and strategic guide for adopting and updating zoning bylaws and other regulations. The Town Plan also provides guidance for Town infrastructure, including the development of capital improvement budgets.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The Town Plan acknowledges the regional role of Irasville as the “Mad River Valley’s downtown” for its commercial, residential, and industrial uses. The plan also calls for the majority of future development (>50%) in Waitsfield to be located in village areas. Given the relative build-out of Waitsfield Village, it is assumed that the majority of this future development will be targeted for Irasville.
- Town Plan Task 4.H-1 calls for the development of a master plan for Irasville to “accommodate higher densities of residential and mixed-use development in appropriate locations.”
- The Town Plan clearly identifies Irasville as a desirable growth center, both to improve the vibrancy and community value of the village itself as well as to limit sprawling development in rural areas of the Mad River Valley. The plan identifies numerous strategies related to this goal, including revising land use regulations and improving multi-modal transportation safety and connectivity. A selection of relevant Town Plan policies and tasks is provided below.
 - **Policy 5.I-12:** Promote infill development within the existing Industrial, Village Business, and Irasville Village Zoning Districts.
 - **Policy 5.I-13:** Improving transportation and multi-modal networks and connectivity to commercial centers in Waitsfield Village and Irasville Village to accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, and other active transportation options (e.g. the Mad River Path).
 - **Task 5.J-9:** Develop a plan to enhance the appearance, function, and commercial viability of Irasville and Waitsfield Village by improving and/or upgrading parking, sidewalks, streetscape, pedestrian amenities, trails, and streets.
 - **Policy 8.F-4:** Support transportation improvements that enhance and increase the appeal of the community to visitors, new business operations and residents. Improvements within village centers shall be designed in a manner that reinforces the scale, context and character of the village(s), promotes safe pedestrian and bicycle circulation and incorporates traffic calming. Encourage tree plantings, green strips, crosswalks, and sidewalks, particularly in Waitsfield Village and Irasville.
 - **Policy 8.F-12:** Provide and maintain an interconnected network of sidewalks and other pedestrian and bicycle paths in Irasville and Waitsfield Village, including incorporation of identified road and sidewalk connections into development and subdivision plans. New development shall provide such sidewalks and paths to be connected to existing or planned facilities.

- **Policy 8.F-20:** Promote traffic calming measures to control vehicular speeds on Route 100 through Irasville and Waitsfield Village, such as raised pedestrian crossings, curb extensions (or bulbouts), or street trees.
- **Policy 9.I-19.a:** The Irasville Commercial, Waitsfield Village Residential, and Waitsfield Village Business districts, representing the Town's historic and designated growth areas, are targeted to accommodate the majority (more than 50%) of new development, including higher density mixed use, pedestrianfriendly residential and commercial development, to be supported by existing and planned infrastructure, sidewalks, and public transit services. Auto-dependent sprawl outside of these districts shall be avoided.

FURTHER READING

- The Waitsfield Town Plan can be accessed here:
https://www.waitsfieldvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Departments/Planning_Zoning/Adopted_2023_TOWN_PLAN_10-9-2023.pdf

MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE IRASVILLE GROWTH CENTER (2002)

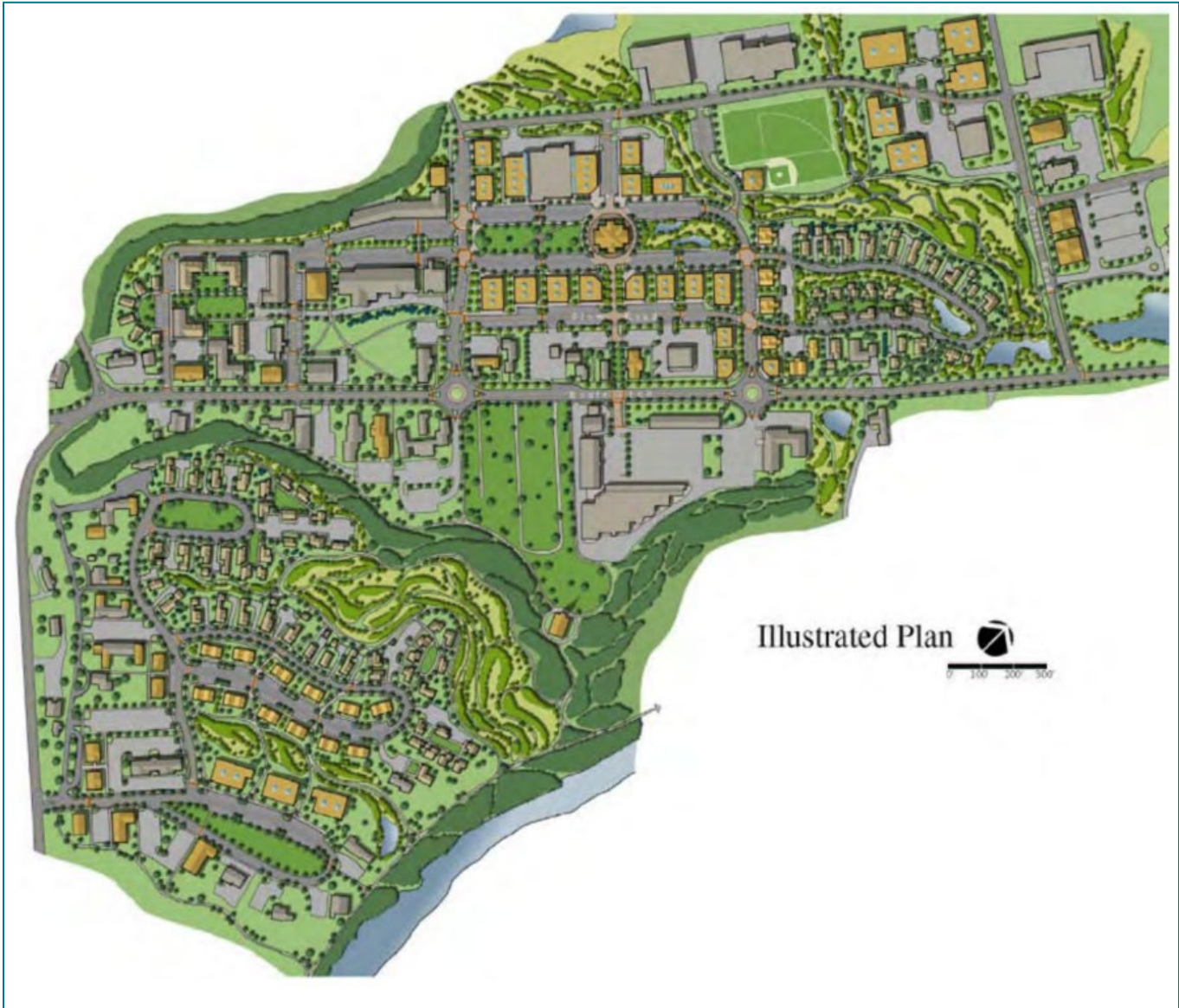
The *Master Development Plan for the Irasville Growth Center* was prepared in 2002 by the Mad River Valley Planning District (MRVPD). The plan includes a conceptual design for future infill development in Irasville as well as detailed strategies for moving the vision forward.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The plan identified four primary challenges for the future of infill development in Irasville: 1) the lack of a comprehensive approach to stormwater management leading to water quality issues and permitting challenges for proposed development; 2) significant acreage of low-value wetlands leading to scattered development patterns; 3) insufficient provisions in zoning regulations for mixed-use, infill development; and 4) a lack of municipal water and sewer infrastructure.
 - *Present-day notes: the Town has developed a centralized water system and is taking steps towards development of a wastewater system. Zoning bylaws were updated in 2024 to address many of the identified challenges, and could be further revised following the completion of the Irasville Village Master Plan. Stormwater management and wetlands will continue to be key considerations.*
- The planning process included a build-out analysis of developable land in Irasville. The analysis concluded that minimal additional development could be accommodated without centralized infrastructure (water, wastewater).
- The planning process considered multiple conceptual alternatives for future redevelopment in Irasville. The final conceptual illustration is presented on page 19 of the plan. Some notable elements of the final plan include:
 - The establishment of a grid of roads and pedestrian areas in the area between Mad River Green/Post Office Rd and Carroll Rd to facilitate significant residential and commercial development.
 - Significant traffic calming along Route 100 to establish a village gateway.
 - A series of connected open space and recreational areas.
 - Significant envisioned residential development in southern areas of Irasville near Settler's Green.
 - A design pathway for the creation of 120 to 230 new residential units, including single-family homes on small lots, "village-style" multi-family homes, and accessory dwelling units.
 - Recommendations for comprehensive stormwater management approaches to mitigate runoff from increased impervious surfaces.
 - Significant impacts to wetland areas, most notably lower-functioning wetlands between Slow Rd and Carroll Rd. The total loss of wetlands totals 8 acres out of 25 acres of mapped wetlands. The plan also proposes a compensatory mitigation strategy (p. 25 – 26) that includes expansion and enhancement

of remaining wetlands as well as completion of new wetlands and stormwater detention/treatment areas.

- *Present-day note: current federal wetlands regulations will require more substantial mitigation for wetlands impacts than was proposed in this plan.*



Final illustrated conceptual plan, 2002 Master Development Plan for the Irasville Growth Center

FURTHER READING

- Read the plan here: <https://cdn.townweb.com/mrvpd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Master-Development-Plan-for-the-Irasville-Growth-Center-Plan-2002.pdf>

MAD RIVER VALLEY ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (2016)

The *Mad River Valley Active Transportation Plan*, prepared by the Mad River Valley Planning District, presents a unified strategy for pedestrian and bicycle connectivity in the Mad River Valley, including Irasville. The plan addresses sidewalk, bikeway, and natural surface trail development, connection, and activation.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The plan identifies Irasville as a “primary node of interest” for trail connections and access, noting the existing Mad Path route between Irasville and Waitsfield Village. An enhanced trail connection between Irasville and Wu Ledges is noted as a potential opportunity.
- To enhance and complement path and trail connectivity, the plan recommends village centers explore streetscape and Complete Streets improvements, such as enhanced crosswalks, new sidewalks and ADA improvements to existing sidewalks, traffic calming improvements, bike lanes, and public space activation (street furniture, public plazas, etc).
- The plan also emphasizes the importance of intentionally activating trail connections through unified signage at trailheads and wayfinding signage through village areas.

FURTHER READING

- Read the plan here: https://mrvmoves.files.wordpress.com/2016/12/mrv-active-transportation-plan-doc_final_opt.pdf

RELEVANT REPORTS & STUDIES

90 PCT PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING REPORT – TOWN OF WAITSFIELD WATER & WASTEWATER FEASIBILITY STUDY (2023)

The Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) provides detailed guidance for the development of a centralized wastewater system to serve Irasville and Waitsfield Village. *This report informed the 2024 vote in which Waitsfield voters approved a \$15 million bond measure to advance the development of a centralized wastewater system, with project costs to be reimbursed through grants and other funding programs. Final design engineering commenced in 2024, with expected completion in summer 2025.*

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The report identifies a wastewater system capacity of 89,000 gallons per day. An estimated 65,000 gallons per day would be allocated to existing priority properties that currently use on-site septic systems, leaving an estimated 24,000 gallons per day of additional capacity to support future infill development.
- The report estimates that the average single-family residence connected to the wastewater system will generate 210 gallons per day of wastewater.

FURTHER READING

- The report can be accessed here: <https://www.waitsfieldvt.gov/departments/projects/wastewater>

MAD RIVER VALLEY HOUSING DEMAND & MARKET ANALYSIS (2020)

The *Mad River Valley Housing Demand & Market Analysis* assesses present and future unmet housing demand based on Mad River Valley-specific supply and demand factors. The report, authored by Doug Kennedy Advisors, results from a partnership between the Mad River Valley Planning District and the towns of Waitsfield, Warren, and Fayston.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The report identifies a significant unmet demand for housing in the Mad River Valley, with approximately 450 new units of housing needed across the valley.
- In particular, there is a major shortage of rental housing that is available to year-round residents. Year-round rentals accounted for only 23% of occupied units in Waitsfield in 2017 (down from 29% in 2000) and 19% of occupied housing in the Mad River Valley (down from 26% in 2000).

- The report includes recommendations for housing development priorities to meet community needs:
 - Mixed-income rentals aimed at younger households, including below-market-rate rentals supported by tax credits and/or other subsidies.
 - Rental housing aimed at low to low-moderate income seniors supported by tax credits and/or other subsidies.
 - Homeownership opportunities aimed at first-time homeowners, particularly younger and middle-aged households with incomes at or above 120% of the area median income.

FURTHER READING

- The report can be read here: <https://mrvpd.org/mrv-housing-demand-market-analysis-report/>

VERMONT HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT (2025-2029)

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The assessment projects that an additional 2,289 to 3,385 housing units will be needed in Washington County between 2025 and 2029 to ensure housing market stability. This includes 780 – 1,646 ownership units and 1,509 – 1,739 long-term rental units.

FURTHER READING

- The assessment can be read here: <https://accd.vermont.gov/housing/plans-data-rules/needs-assessment>

WAITSFIELD IN-STREET CROSSWALK PILOT PROJECT REPORT (2021)

In this MRVPD-led pilot project, three in-street crosswalk signs were installed along Vermont Route 100, including at Carroll Rd and Village Square in Irasville. The project included a survey of residents, yielding useful insights on resident sentiments regarding pedestrian safety in Irasville.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Residents largely felt safer using crosswalks with in-street signs. Residents appreciated having greater visibility in crosswalks.
- Residents indicated that the intersection of Route 100 and Route 17 was a priority for improving pedestrian safety in Irasville.
- Residents were generally supportive of permanent crosswalk upgrades and traffic calming measures in Waitsfield's village centers. Rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs) were the most recommended solution.

FURTHER READING

- The report can be read here: <https://mrvpd.org/waitsfeld-in-road-signage-demonstration-project/>

WAITSFIELD WATER MANAGEMENT MAPPING PROJECT (2018)

This report, prepared by a Johns Hopkins student with guidance from the Mad River Valley Planning District, explores the constraints posed by a lack of centralized water and wastewater infrastructure on future development in Waitsfield's villages.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The area available for infill development in Irasville will significantly increase once a community wastewater system is developed and existing local septic systems are retired. It is estimated that creation of community water and wastewater systems would increase the developable areas in Irasville from approximately 6 acres to approximately 40 acres, due to the elimination of wellhead protection areas and septic buffer areas.

- *Present-day note: this analysis assumed that all existing septic systems will be retired. The current community wastewater infrastructure project will retire most, but not all, septic systems in Irasville.*

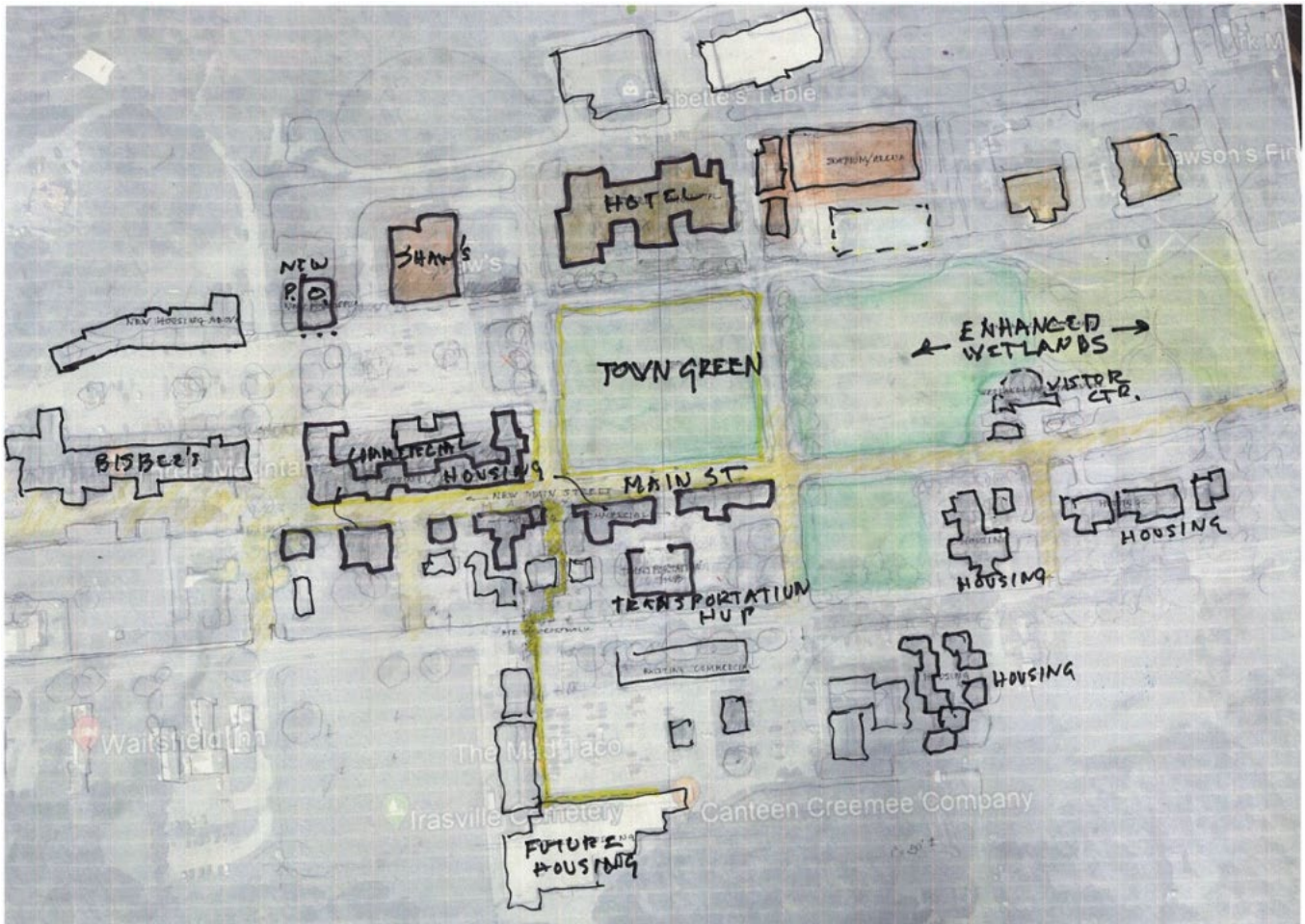
CONCEPTUAL DESIGNS

A number of conceptual designs for Irasville have been prepared over the years by different individuals and entities.

DAVE SELLERS & JIM SANFORD CONCEPTUAL DESIGN (2024)

Local architects Dave Sellers and Jim Sanford have prepared a conceptual design for Irasville. Key elements of this conceptual design include:

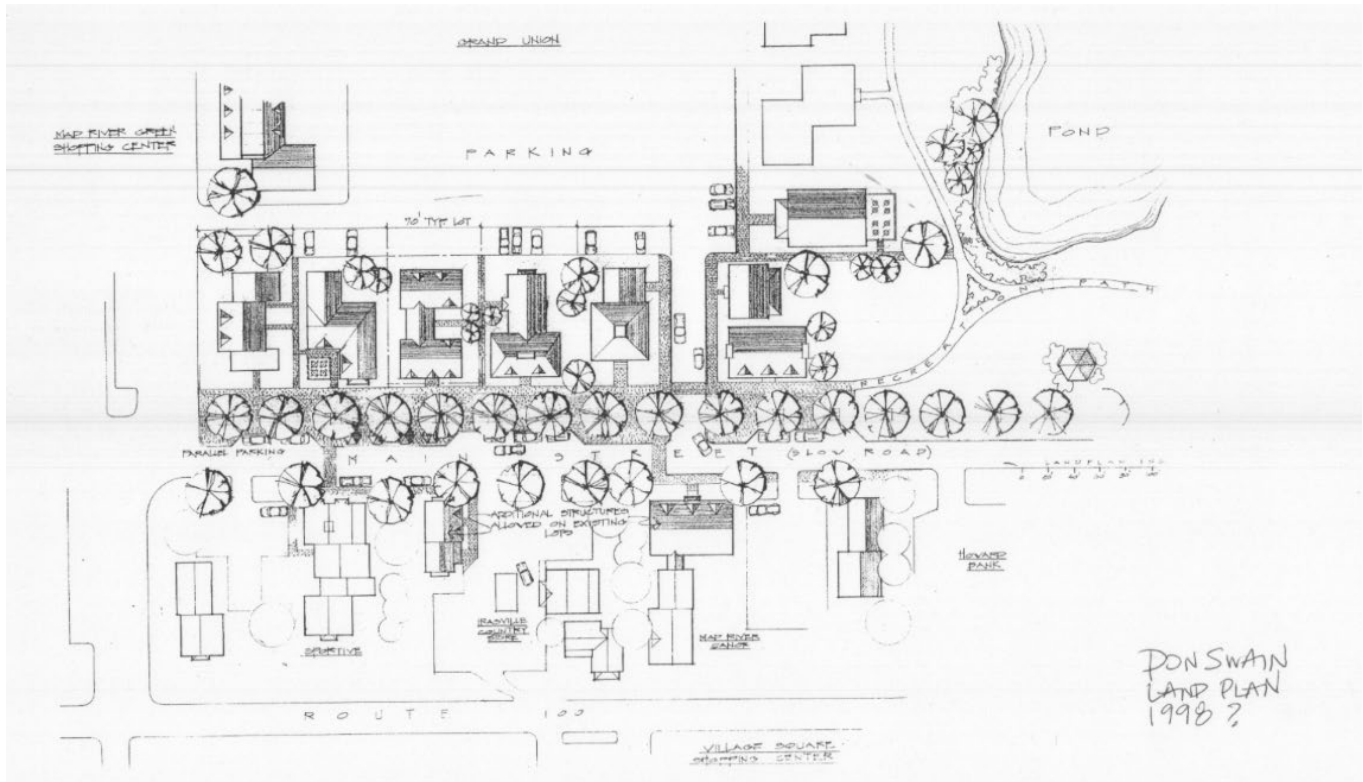
- Several new road connections between Carroll Rd, Mad River Canoe Rd, and Post Office Rd, enabling additional infill development opportunities along new village blocks. The lower road connection would entail an extension of Slow Rd to create a new Main Street for Irasville. Along this Main Street would be new homes and businesses as well as a new Town Green.
- A new hotel next to the Shaw's Plaza.
- Relocation and expansion of the Skatium.
- Additional infill housing development.
- A significant area set aside for enhanced wetlands.



SLOW ROAD LAND PLAN (1998)

A conceptual design for Slow Rd was prepared by local architect and planner Don Swain in 1998. This design envisions Slow Rd transformed into a Main Street for Irasville. Key elements of this conceptual design include:

- Clustered development on small lots along the northern side of Slow Rd and the start of Mad River Canoe Rd.
- An activated streetscape with a pedestrian plaza, outdoor dining and gathering spaces, and connection to a recreational path.
- Utilizing the existing surface parking lot for Grand Union (now Shaw's), with some new parking areas along Slow Rd.

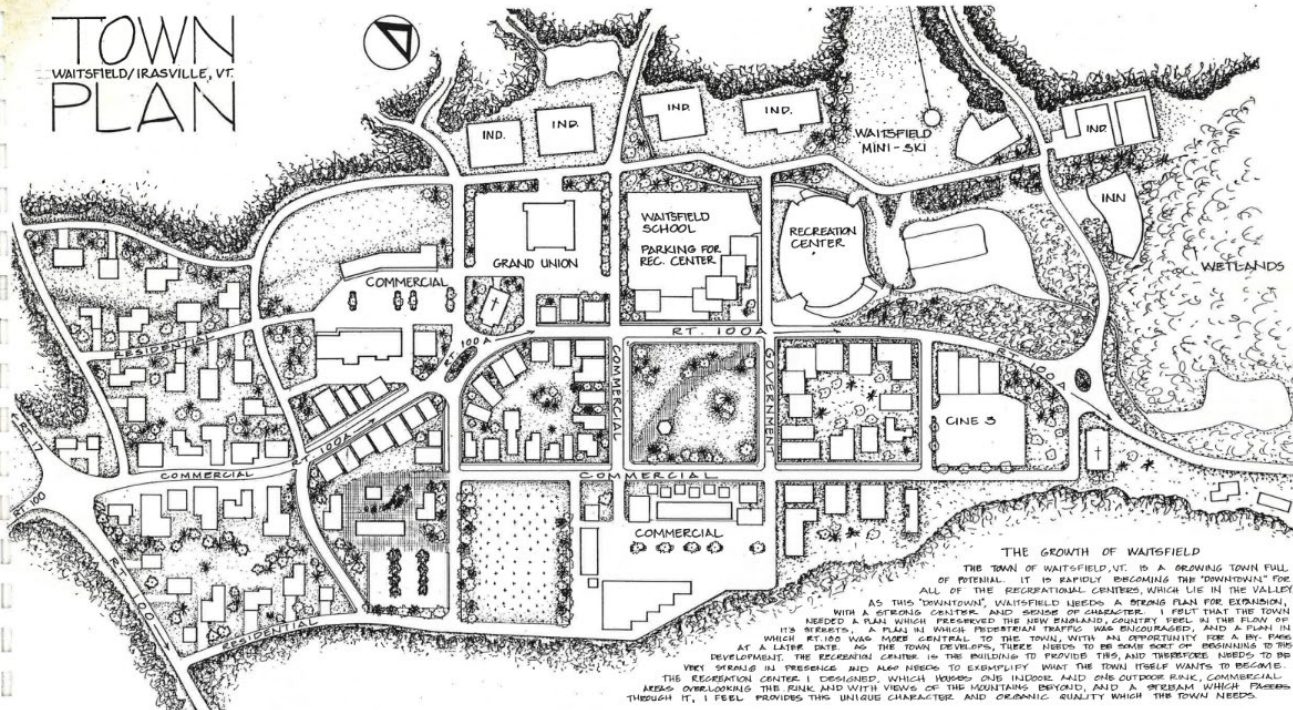


RPI DESIGN STUDIO CONCEPTS FOR IRASVILLE (1993)

A 1993 studio course at the School of Architecture at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute had students develop conceptual designs for redevelopment of Irasville. The final report presents a number of different conceptual designs.

- Many of the conceptual designs depict ambitious redevelopment visions, with major reconfigurations of existing built patterns, shopping areas, and/or roadways (including Vermont Route 100). Most concepts involved a reroute or major redesign of Vermont Route 100.
- A theme throughout many concepts is the establishment of new village blocks through creation of new roadways.
- Many concepts also emphasized the creation of community spaces, including recreational facilities.
- Most concepts involved significant wetlands impacts.

TOWN WAITSFIELD/IRASVILLE, VT. PLAN



THE GROWTH OF WAITSFIELD

THE TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VT. IS A GROWING TOWN FULL OF POTENTIAL. IT IS RAPIDLY BECOMING THE "DOWNTOWN" FOR ALL OF THE RECREATIONAL CENTERS WHICH LIE IN THE VALLEY. AS THIS "DOWNTOWN", WAITSFIELD NEEDS A BROAD PLAN FOR REDEVELOPMENT. WITH A STRONG CENTER AND SENSE OF CHARACTER. I FELT THAT THE TOWN NEEDED A PLAN WHICH PRESERVED THE NEW ENGLAND COUNTRY FEEL IN THE PLAN OF ITS REDEVELOPMENT. A PLAN IN WHICH PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC WAS ENCOURAGED, AND A PLAN IN WHICH RT. 100 WAS MORE CENTRAL TO THE TOWN, WITH AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A BICYCLE PARK AT A LATER DATE. AND THE TOWN DEVELOPER, THERE NEEDED TO BE SOME SORT OF BEGINNING TO THIS DEVELOPMENT. THE RECREATION CENTER IN THE BUILDING TO PROVIDE THIS, AND THEREFORE NEEDED TO BE VERY STRONG IN PRESENCE AND MAY NEED TO EXHIBIT WHAT THE TOWN ITSELF WANTS TO BECOME. THE RECREATION CENTER I DESIGNED, WHICH HOUSES ONE INDOOR AND ONE OUTDOOR RINK, COMMERCIAL AREAS OVERLOOKING THE RINK AND WITH VIEWS OF THE MOUNTAINS BEYOND, AND A STREAM WHICH FLOWS THROUGH IT, I FEEL PROVIDES THE UNIQUE CHARACTER AND ORGANIC QUALITY WHICH THE TOWN NEEDS.

Waitsfield, VT

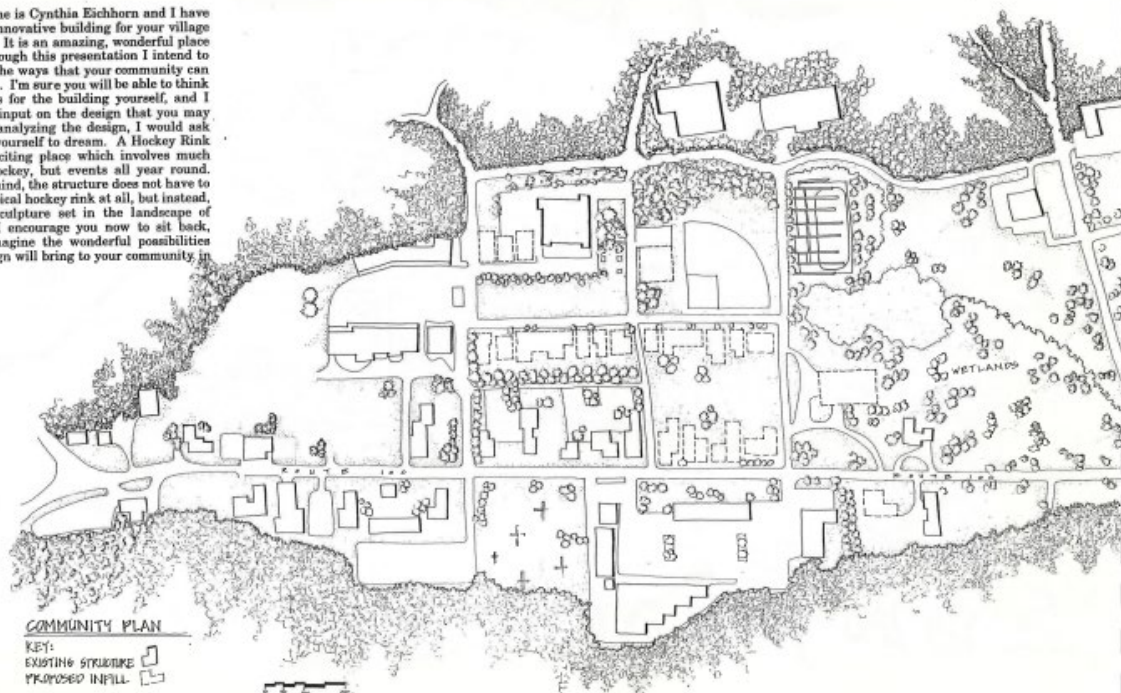
Plans for Sustainable Development
design studio Rensselaer School of Architecture Fall 1993

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Mary Fletcher

WAITSFIELD,

Hil My name is Cynthia Eichhorn and I have designed an innovative building for your village of Waitsfield. It is an amazing, wonderful place to be, and through this presentation I intend to show you all the ways that your community can benefit from it. I'm sure you will be able to think of lots of uses for the building yourself, and I welcome any input on the design that you may have. Upon analyzing the design, I would ask you to allow yourself to dream. A Hockey Rink can be an exciting place which involves much more than hockey, but events all year round. With this in mind, the structure does not have to look like a typical hockey rink at all, but instead, a beautiful sculpture set in the landscape of Waitsfield. I encourage you now to sit back, relax, and imagine the wonderful possibilities that this design will bring to your community in the future.



COMMUNITY PLAN

KEY:
EXISTING STRUCTURE
PROPOSED INFILL

Cynthia

Waitsfield, VT

Plans for Sustainable Development
design studio Rensselaer School of Architecture Fall 1993

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