

TOWN OF BROOKFIELD, VERMONT

TOWN PLAN

Adopted by the Selectboard

September 12, 2005

SELECTBOARD MEMBERS

William Johnson, Chair
Jeff Kimmel
Mike McPhetres

PLANNING COMMISSION

Aaron Adler, Chair
Steve Hill
Martha Judy
Richard Mallery
Dan Mason
Susan Shea
Terry Teitsch

SECTION I. AUTHORIZATION

The Town of Brookfield is authorized to develop a town plan by 24 VSA, Chapter 117.

SECTION II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to encourage the appropriate development of the land in Brookfield in a manner that will promote the health, safety, prosperity, comfort, convenience and general welfare of all residents in the town. As conditions change, this plan will be modified to meet new needs and correct inequities. The plan attempts to express the intent and desires of the town's residents and is designed to serve as a guide for future growth and development in the town. The plan is a general and philosophical statement of the desired future growth and development of the town. In the event that it may be inconsistent with or in conflict with more specific bylaws or ordinances of the town, they shall have precedence. Although the plan may serve as a guide for future public activities or investments, any significant expenditure of town funds will continue to be determined by the voters of the town at meeting assembled.

SECTION III. PLANNING PHILOSOPHY

The basic philosophy underlying this plan is that the attainment of the town's planning objectives should be achieved with a minimum of regulation. Any necessary regulation should balance public needs and desires with the rights of property owners and should be limited to purposes that are clearly in the public interest. It is also a basic premise underlying this plan that the future growth and development of the town should be guided so that it does not impose undue financial burdens on the taxpayers.

SECTION IV. PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions underlie the development of this plan:

- A. That the town's population will continue to grow gradually at a pace projected on the table in Section VI.
- B. That continued growth in the number of residential structures will continue as projected in the table in Section VII.
- C. That, unless otherwise guided, development will tend to concentrate in areas that are easily accessible by road and where public utilities are available.
- D. That education and highways will continue to be the major public expenditures.

SECTION V. OBJECTIVES

Among the primary objectives of this plan are the following:

- A. To promote a safe, healthy, pleasant and manageable environment. In doing so, the plan considers the following:
 - 1. Housing, including affordable housing.
 - 2. Public health and safety issues, including water resources, sewage and solid waste disposal.
 - 3. Maintenance of a high quality school system.
 - 4. Comprehensive transportation needs.
 - 5. Development of public recreational facilities.
 - 6. Maintenance of an environment conducive to the conduct of home occupations and clean small scale businesses.

- B. To preserve the town's rural character and conserve the town's natural, historic, scenic and cultural resources. In doing so, the plan considers the following:
1. Agricultural and forest lands, wetlands, wildlife habitat and other sensitive natural areas.
 2. Plans to assure that future residential, commercial and recreational development is located in appropriate areas.
 3. Means to encourage effective forest and woodlot management.
 4. The development of an organizational framework for the management and control of existing and future historic sites and areas.
 5. Investigating the designation and protection of scenic roads, ridgelines and vistas .
- C. In addition to these broad objectives, the plan enumerates specific goals in some of the succeeding sections.

SECTION VI. DESCRIPTION OF TOWN AND PRESENT STATUS OF PLANNING

A. DESCRIPTION OF TOWN

Brookfield was chartered in 1791. It is a predominantly rural and agricultural community of 24,472 acres located in the southwestern corner of Orange County. Over 1,000 acres are publicly owned conservation and recreation lands including: State Forests and Parks - 803 acres; State Fish and Game areas -51 acres; and Town Forest - 170 acres. The town's topography is quite typical of the area east of the Green Mountains. It ranges from hills up to about 1800 feet elevation on the easterly border of the town through brook valleys slightly below 700 feet elevation, to Bear Hill, the town's highest point, on the west at just over 2100 feet. Ayers Brook and its tributaries and upper Sunny Brook are the major streams in the western part of the town. The Second Branch of the White River drains the eastern valley. Five ponds are designated as state waters because they are over 25 acres in size: Sunset Lake and Baker, Lamson, North and Rood Ponds. In addition to approximately 6 miles of I-89, Brookfield has 17.42miles of State highway (Routes 12, 14, and 65) and 75.3 miles of town roads: Class II - 19.18 miles., Class III - 38.96 miles., and Class IV - 17.17. A portion of Pond Village is designated a State Historic District with smaller historic districts located around the churches in East and West Brookfield.

Between 1970 and 1980 the town's population grew from 606 to 969, by 1990 the population had risen to 1089 and by 2000 the census recorded a population of 1149. In 1990 there were 25-30 farms concentrating on dairy, beef, sheep, horses, fruits and vegetables. By 2004, there were only 17 parcels listed as farms on the town grand list. In addition to these farms, there are also tree farms producing Christmas trees, hardwoods & conifers for timber, pulp and fuel wood and a number of sugarbushes with sugar houses producing syrup for owners and surplus for sale. The farmers' markets in Randolph and Montpelier provide outlets for growers of small fruits and vegetables.

The population consists of: families whose wage-earners are employed out of town, many in the Randolph-Bethel corridor, but as far south as Lebanon, New Hampshire and to the north in Barre, Montpelier and Waterbury; retired people who reside full time or part time in the town; second home owners and seasonal camp owners who reside in Brookfield a few months a year; and families who earn their livelihood in the Town.

Population Projections

	Population	Projection				% Change			
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2000 - '05	2005 - '10	2010 - '15	2015 - '20
Braintree	1,194	1,200	1,201	1,208	1,209	0.5	0.1	0.5	0.1
Brookfield	1,149	1,196	1,231	1,259	1,286	4.1	2.9	2.3	2.1
Chelsea	1,250	1,255	1,251	1,248	1,247	0.4	-0.3	-0.3	0.0
Randolph	4,853	4,849	4,845	4,855	4,869	-0.1	-0.1	0.2	0.3
Williamstown	3,225	3,377	3,501	3,614	3,718	4.7	3.7	3.2	2.9
Orange County	28,226	28,976	29,544	30,122	30,737	2.7	2.0	2.0	2.0
Windsor County	57,418	58,154	58,553	58,960	59,446	1.3	0.7	0.7	0.8
State Vermont	608,827	625,935	639,241	652,199	666,041	2.8	2.1	2.0	2.1

Source: Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research, 2004 (based on Census 2000 population, Brookfield figures updated to reflect correction to 2000 census figures).

Public facilities in the Town include the following:

- The Municipal Building in Pond Village houses the Town Clerk's Office, vital records, town vault and the Free Public Library.
- The Brookfield Elementary School for grades K-6 was built in 1967 and enlarged in 1979. Students in grades 7-12 are transported to the Randolph Union High School and the Area Vocational Center in Randolph.
- The Town Garage on State Route 65 was built in 1975.
- The United States Postal Service office on State Route 65.

Primary fire protection is provided by the volunteer fire company based in East Brookfield and by the Randolph Fire Department for West Brookfield. Law enforcement services are provided by the Town Constable, the County Sheriff, and the State Police. Electric power services are provided by Central Vermont Public Service Corporation and Washington Electric Cooperative. Telephone service is provided by Verizon and telecommunications competitors. There is no cable service in town and DSL service is limited. All water and sewage facilities are privately owned. Brookfield is a member of a waste disposal district with Randolph and Braintree. Trash is now collected in Randolph and trucked by a contractor to a landfill outside the district.

B. PRESENT STATUS OF PLANNING

Planning by an appointed commission began in 1969, and a temporary plan was adopted in 1970. A comprehensive town plan was adopted by the Selectmen in 1974. The plan was thoroughly reexamined and rewritten in 1992-95 and was adopted by the town on March 29, 1995. The plan was refined and readopted by the selectmen on September 25, 2000.

1. Subdivision Regulations were adopted in 1970, and have been amended four times in 1977, 1980, 1999 and 2003.
2. Interim Zoning was in effect in 1978-80.
3. Flood Hazard Area Zoning was adopted in 1978.
4. Shorelands Zoning was adopted in 1980.
5. A Sewage Ordinance was adopted in 1986 and amended in 1991
6. The Selectmen have adopted an ordinance regulating parking on town highways during the winter months.
7. In 1990 the Town adopted the Brookfield Development Bylaw and amended it in 1999 and 2003.

SECTION VII. LAND USE

A. FACTS

Land and property in Brookfield is classified by the listers into several categories. Outlined below is a listing of parcel types and numbers for the Town for 1992, 1998 and 2004.

Brookfield Grand List 1992, 1998, 2004									
	1992	1998	2004	Actual	%	Actual	%	Actual	%
				Change	Change	Change	Change	Change	Change
				92 - 98	92 - 98	98 - 04	98 - 04	92 - 04	92 - 04
Year-round Residential	316	354	389	38	12.0%	35	9.9%	73	23.1%
Mobile Homes	57	61	59	4	7.0%	-2	-3.3%	2	3.5%
Vacation Residences	160	159	162	-1	-0.6%	3	1.9%	2	1.3%
Commercial	11	12	11	1	9.1%	-1	-8.3%	0	0.0%
Farms	22	19	17	-3	-13.6%	-2	-10.5%	-5	-22.7%
Woodland/Misc.	269	262	218	-7	-2.6%	-44	-16.8%	-51	-19.0%
Total Parcels			856						

Source: Town of Brookfield, VT.

Of this land, the following areas were controlled by departments of the State of Vermont: Fish & Wildlife, 57.17 acres and Forest & Parks, 805.30 acres. On the 2004 Form 411 for the town, there were 856 parcels listed, with 12 additional exempt parcels not included. Of the parcels in town, 392 were of ten acres or less. The smallest listed parcel was 0.08 acres and the largest was 411 acres. Of the parcels exempt from taxation, six are owned by the State of Vermont and the others by the town, churches or the historical society.

In 2003, 96 parcels totaling 8268 acres were in the Current Use Taxation Program. Of a similar acreage enrolled in 1992, the acreage included 1,265 acres for farmland and 7,102 acres for woodland.

B. DESCRIPTION

Land use in Brookfield is still largely rural, with a strong agricultural presence and a large proportion of the Town currently in forested tracts. The town also has a strong residential component since Brookfield serves as a bedroom community for the nearby employment centers of Randolph, Bethel, Northfield, Montpelier, Barre and Waterbury. Another important use of land in Brookfield is either as nonresident second homes or nonresident land investment. Roughly 50% of the homes and land parcels in Brookfield are owned by nonresidents.

Land use regulations in Brookfield are an overlapping mix of various bylaws passed between 1970 and 2003. They are listed in this document.

Subdivision regulations provide for the orderly review of subdivisions creating lots of less than 10 acres.

Floodplain regulations meet federal guidelines limiting construction of buildings in a floodplain. They affect about 509 acres in Brookfield, or 1.9% of the area of the town.

The Sewage Ordinance requires a functioning septic system meeting appropriate standards to be designed for any residence. The ordinance currently meets state standards and will continue in effect until state assumption of full responsibility in 2007.

The Shoreland regulations require a 50 foot setback from the five largest ponds in Brookfield.

The Development Bylaw is the only comprehensive bylaw regulating land use in Brookfield. Almost all of the town, with the exception of the areas within the villages and a conservation district, has a 5 acre minimum lot size. Wetlands of more than one acre (759 acres) and areas of steep slopes over 25% (3,227 acres) are deemed undevelopable with structures. There is also a 75 foot setback for buildings near any wetlands or stream (4,749 acres). These regulations provide 8,735 acres of greenspace in the town, mostly in the form of narrow corridors along watercourses and on high elevation land. Commercial uses are permitted throughout the town, but only after they have received a conditional use permit from the Board of Adjustment. The Bylaw allows the use of clustering to encourage the protection of additional open space in the town.

1. RESIDENTIAL

The table above reveals a shift in land use over the last twelve years toward more residences. Since 1992, the number of year round residences increased by 73 or by 23%, the number of farms declined by 5 or 22% and 51 lots or 19% are no longer classified as woodland or other property. At the present time the town is not heavily subdivided. Many of the 392 lots of ten acres or less in town are undeveloped, so the potential for growth in new houses is clearly present. There has been in the past a demand for seasonal camp lots in the town, and recently some seasonal dwellings have been converted to year-round residences.

Pond Village is considered by many to be the "town center." Though there is no town green or commercial focal point, this area has a higher population density and the Town Municipal Building, the "Old Town Hall", the Floating Bridge and the associated park, Ariel's Restaurant, and Green Trails Inn are located there. The town also has three hamlets known as West Brookfield, East Brookfield, and Brookfield Center. A few other sections of town have clusters of houses together, but no formal name.

Since the last town plan, Brookfield has seen the construction of several large residential structures scattered around town. Because of their size, and in some cases height, these structures can be prominent and potentially inconsistent with the existing character of the areas in which they are located. Goals of the plan are that the siting of large residential structures use vegetation and existing topography to reduce the intrusiveness of the homes and that new development in town is not unduly inconsistent with the historic and rural character of the town.

Also, since the last town plan, state laws have changed significantly with respect to subdivision of land and sewage disposal. The former exemption of subdivided lots of more than ten acres from the requirement of septic suitability has been eliminated. The state will also assume full responsibility for waste water disposal permits after 2007, while, at the same time, being authorized to issue permits for new and innovative waste disposal systems. These changes will make the regulation of waste disposal and land development more uniform across the state, and may also permit development on lands that were previously unsuitable for conventional septic system waste disposal.

The intent of this plan is to maintain the current mix of low density housing and viable farms and woodland along existing Class 2 and 3 roads outside the town centers and their immediate periphery. Another intent is to maintain the mix of permanent and seasonal residences and homes. This provides a high quality life style for all residents and nonresidents, while minimizing the cost of services for those residents.

The town should consider the implementation of zoning districts or other bylaw amendments that would allow for continued growth but would encourage the clustering of homes in and around “town centers” and protect open space in outlying districts. These could permit smaller lot sizes in zones around “town centers” and larger lot sizes in outlying districts. Maintaining the rural aspect of the town should be encouraged. Enrollment of properties in Current Use Taxation and sale or gift to the State of Vermont, Vermont Land Trust, Nature Conservancy and other preservation organizations is strongly encouraged to reduce the tax burden on large holdings and to preserve farms and large tracts of land.

The clustering of homes to protect open space and to mimic the natural hamlet development of the town is also encouraged.

The town encourages affordable housing through the recommended zoning districts and through the various land trust mechanisms that are available to create lower cost single family homes.

The bylaw should be amended to permit accessory apartments or dwellings consistent with applicable state law.

2. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

Agriculture and forestry are still major land uses in Brookfield. 2180 acres are listed as cropland, 772 are considered pasture, and 6547 are woodland. The number of acres listed as cropland, pasture and woodland is significantly decreased since the last town plan. Land in these categories is threatened with fragmentation through subdivision and development, with the greatest threat to agriculture. In 1992, Brookfield had a total of 35 active farms including dairy, beef, horse, deer, sheep, and fruit and vegetable farms. Dairy farms made up 19 of the active farms, so the town had a fair amount of agricultural diversity within its farm community. In 1999, Brookfield had 13 active dairy farms and in 2005 there are only 6 such active farms although there are probably

more dairy cows in town than in either previous year. Overall, many of the farms also included maple syrup production or timber management.

According to the Natural Resource Conservation Service, 2,915 acres in Brookfield are prime agricultural soils and 4,390 more acres are agricultural soils of statewide importance. These highest quality soils make up a relatively small proportion of the total area of the town and should be protected for continued agricultural use. Some of the prime land is already located in floodplain, but Brookfield does contain large tracts of such land that does not receive other protection.

One major goal of the town plan is to maintain this agricultural base. The most important task is to protect the important croplands - making up about 2180 acres of the town. This can be accomplished by regulations that encourage development outside of these lands, as well as encouraging the protection of these operating farms through local and state tax policy or the purchase of development rights. Protection of other important forestry and agricultural lands can be encouraged through regulations and incentives that discourage the fragmentation of large land blocks. Flexible zoning that provides development of portions of this land while protecting viable agricultural or forestry land units is encouraged.

3. COMMERCIAL

Brookfield's commercial uses tend to be very small scale and scattered widely throughout the town. Home occupations are an important component of the non-farm commercial base. The three most visible commercial uses are a small inn, a small restaurant and a small convenience store. A publisher and distributor of books has recently closed and moved to a more urban area. There are no industrial uses in the town.

The intent of the plan is to maintain this type of small scale commercial use and to encourage any proposed commercial development to locate in areas adjacent to existing villages or hamlets. No industrial uses are planned or encouraged and the intent of the town plan is to neither encourage nor discourage the location of new commercial enterprises in town. The Development Bylaw provides for their placement anywhere in town after obtaining a conditional use permit. All new commercial uses should be adequately sized, sited and screened so as to be compatible with the residential use found throughout the town.

4. RECREATION

There are just over 1,000 acres of publicly owned open land in Brookfield, of which 854 acres is owned by the state - largely in the form of two state parks. The Town maintains a 170 acre town forest. All of this land remains accessible for recreational use -- such as hiking and cross-country skiing. Some of the land includes trails for horseback riding and snow machines. Camping is available in the summer and the land is open to hunting in the fall.

Most of the recreational use in the town is a byproduct of other land use. The town maintains a very small "park" for swimming on Sunset Lake, but the intensive use the lake gets for swimming and fishing results primarily from the floating bridge crossing the lake. This area receives the most intensive public use in the town from both residents and nonresidents, and yet no formal steps have been taken to accommodate or support such use.

The other most intensive recreational use of land in the town is hiking, cross-country skiing, and hunting on private land. The informal private network of trails for skiing, hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding probably totals over 50 miles. In addition, all town highways,

particularly Class 3 and 4, totaling 60 miles, are used for horseback riding, biking, jogging, hiking and hunting. So far, much of the land in Brookfield remains unposted but there has been an increase in recent years in the number of acres posted. There are several miles of trails in Brookfield marked and maintained by the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) that are available for use in the winter by snowmobilers. The town should consider developing a policy concerning the use of all terrain vehicles in town.

The most important recreation objective is to encourage the informal recreational use provided by private landowners. This use accommodates a large number of people and is an important component of the quality of life in Brookfield. In addition, the town should encourage the creation of public rights-of-way for trail use and make sure that Class 4 roads that are not suited to motorized use remain open to public access.

C. GOALS

The major land use objectives of the Plan are summarized as follows:

- Encourage the clustering of houses.
- Encourage any new subdivision and construction to maintain the current mix of lot sizes and building setbacks from the road, so as to continue the rural character of the Town; and similarly, to discourage building placement and site design that creates a suburban aspect to the Town.
- Have large residential structures use vegetation and existing topography to reduce their intrusiveness.
- Assure that new development in town is not unduly inconsistent with the historic and rural character of the town
- Maintain or improve the agricultural and forestry base in the Town.
- Focus new housing on existing town roads that currently have electric utility service.
- Generally discourage the conversion of Class 4 roads to Class 3 roads unless there are significant advantages to the town.
- Keep the best agricultural soils (prime land and land of statewide importance) available for long-term agriculture use.
- Maintain the small scale, "in-home" aspect of the Town's non-farm commercial base. Discourage commercial strip development in the Town.
- Maintain the highest quality water resources with a specific goal of not having to provide public infrastructure to provide clean water in the Town. Because of the density of population and soil conditions, steps may have to be taken to provide a common system of water or septic treatment for Pond Village.
- Protect sensitive ecological areas such as steep slopes, wetlands, deer yards, and endangered species sites.
- Encourage the maintenance and improvement of public and private lands in the town for recreational use and make sure that all Class 4 roads remain accessible to the public.
- Encourage the creation of appropriate greenbelts in the subdivision process or through other methods by reserving undeveloped portions of land that serve as corridors to connect larger and coherent blocks of undeveloped land.
- Encourage landowners voluntarily to conserve their farm and forest lands through donation and sale of development rights to qualified non-profit land trusts.
- Provide an environment where people can maintain domestic animals.
- Provide an environment where people can conduct home-based businesses and small commercial enterprises.

- Encourage the creation of public recreational land.
- Encourage and improve appropriate recreational fields and facilities at the school for public use.

SECTION VIII. TRANSPORTATION

- A. While Brookfield has one village and three clusters of housing (which may be described as hamlets) the great majority of homes are outside those areas scattered over some 75 miles of roads, and on four major ridges and hillsides. Three state highways and 3 1/2 miles of town highway are paved. The Town has no direct access to I-89. Exits 4 and 5 off I-89 are 11 miles apart and are not located in Brookfield.

Because of the need for many Brookfield workers to commute to their places of work, carpooling should be encouraged. There is no central location in Brookfield for a natural "park and ride" collection point. Carpooling should be a continuing matter for consideration.

- B. The Commission recommends that the Selectboard should maintain a schedule for major road improvements and provide opportunity for public input.
- C. In order to provide information to the public, the Commission recommends that there be maintained at the office of the Town Clerk a map showing classifications of all town roads and that the School Board post in the office of the Town Clerk a map showing school bus routes.
- D. The conversion of Class 4 roads to Class 3 roads should be discouraged unless there are significant advantages to the town.

SECTION IX. FACILITIES

- A. The public facilities described in Section VI are generally adequate, though the Town lacks a community center at which residents can informally gather. Such a community center would help improve community cohesiveness by providing an additional location for community events as well as broadening the type of events that are possible. This Plan makes two recommendations with respect to public facilities. They are, that the Town:
- 1) Develop a Capital Budget for highways and equipment and fire protection, and
 - 2) Support the renovation of the historic old town hall in Pond Village into a community facility that could provide a mix of uses, including large meeting space with kitchen, stage, smaller meeting rooms or studios, and possibly small offices.
- B. In addition to the public buildings, there are churches and other facilities that are available for rent to community groups.
- C. Brookfield has no municipal water or sewage facilities, but studies should be made as to how those needs will be addressed in the future for the Pond Village area. Buildings outside of the hamlets are widely spaced and have private water and wastewater systems.
- D. Brookfield uses the waste disposal and recycling facilities provided by the town of Randolph. Some residents may also use the facilities provided by other towns. Brookfield encourages all residents and businesses to reduce their wastes through source reduction, reuse and recycling. Trash burning or dumping and roadside dumping are

banned under state law. The town seeks to enforce these laws and its local zoning ordinances to reduce unpermitted waste disposal.

SECTION X. SPECIAL NATURAL AND HISTORIC FEATURES

A. SCENIC NATURAL FEATURES

1. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Brookfield has many scenic natural features. Probably its most unique natural features are its gulfs - two deep long ravines. Brookfield Gulf, almost three miles long, is found in the western part of town and is traversed by Route 12. Williamstown Gulf, approximately 1 1/2 miles long, is found in the northeast part of Town and is traversed by Route 14. Approximately 1/2 mile of the southern portion of Williamstown Gulf is located in Brookfield. These areas are highly scenic due to their natural beauty, their visibility from public roads, and the fact that they are largely undeveloped (except for a handful of structures), and contain no overhead power lines.

The Brookfield portion of the Williamstown Gulf receives a high degree of protection as it lies almost entirely within Ainsworth State Park. Approximately 1/3 of Brookfield Gulf lies within Allis State Park. The gulfs also receive a degree of protection by inclusion in the town's Conservation District, in which structures are prohibited, and a Scenic Protection District. The permanent protection of the remainder of Brookfield Gulf through fee acquisition or conservation easements by the State, town, or private land trusts is encouraged.

Town roads are especially scenic where they afford views of the surrounding mountains and hills or of the major lakes and ponds in town, or are lined with stone walls or large sugar maples. The widening of these roads and the cutting of large trees (where it would adversely affect the scenic quality) should be discouraged. When development is proposed that would affect scenic vistas from town roads, efforts should be taken to minimize its effects on the scenic vista(s), by placement of buildings, clustering of buildings or other mechanisms. The town should consider developing an inventory of town roads that are especially scenic and of significant scenic vistas from town roads.

Brookfield has several good-sized lakes and ponds which can be seen from town roads and state highways: Sunset Lake, Lamson, Baker, Rood, South, Holdens, Pickles and Twin Ponds. Lamson Pond is also visible from Interstate 89. The Twin Ponds are especially scenic and distinctive as they are nestled in a depression and can be viewed from above.

Brookfield has many streams. One of the principal streams is the Second Branch of the White River, which runs through the Route 14 valley on the east side of town, fed by its tributaries, Sunset and Halfway Brooks. The other major stream is Ayers Brook which runs through the Route 12 valley on the west side of town, fed by its tributary, Open Meadow Brook. Significant cascades have been identified along brooks at the following sites: at the outlet of Sunset Lake, at two old mill sites in West Brookfield village and west of West Brookfield Village on Cram Hill Road, and at an old mill site on the outlet stream from Twin Ponds. The Town should be inventoried to determine the existence of other significant cascades.

Brookfield's Bylaws require the following building setbacks from water bodies:

- The shorelands bylaw requires a 50-foot building setback from the mean water mark of the lakes and ponds covered by the bylaw.
- The development bylaw requires a 75-foot building setback from rivers, streams, ponds, and wetlands of one acre or more.
- The flood hazard zoning bylaw permits only open space uses within federally designated flood hazard areas or 100 feet from the center line of any stream designated as an area of special flood hazard on the town's official flood hazard area map, except that the bylaw authorizes the Board of Adjustment to allow structures in these areas as conditional uses.

The Town should consider clarifying the setback provisions applicable to water bodies and, as appropriate, requiring a greater building setback and supporting the permanent protection of the land around some of these water bodies to protect their water quality and scenic character.

Brookfield is marked by open and forested hills. These views have been marred in several places by the building of structures on ridgetops. The town should identify ridgetops that are aesthetically significant and consider adopting an ordinance to minimize any adverse effects that might result from their development. In 1999, the town amended its development bylaw to regulate the construction of large telecommunication facilities to protect the scenic qualities of the town's ridgetops.

2. CRITICAL WILDLIFE HABITATS

Brookfield is home to many species of wildlife, and opportunities to view wildlife are one of the pleasures of living in Brookfield for many town residents. Critical habitat areas in Brookfield for a few selected species have been mapped by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife. A goal of the Town Plan is to preserve critical habitat areas for wildlife.

Several significant deer wintering areas are found in Brookfield. Many of these areas receive protection by virtue of their location on steep slopes, and inclusion in Brookfield's Conservation District. As the boundaries of mapped wintering areas are inexact and subject to change over time, and normally only a small portion of a deer wintering area is heavily used by deer, when development is proposed in these areas a biologist should determine whether the area is critical deer habitat. Development should be discouraged in areas determined to be critical habitat.

A small area in West Brookfield has been mapped by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife as seasonal bear habitat. A wildlife biologist should be consulted if development is proposed for this area.

Wetlands provide habitat for many species of wildlife. Brookfield's wetlands include emergent, scrub/shrub, and forested wetlands, and combinations of these categories. These areas are delineated and classified on the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) Maps. Wetlands are scattered around town; the larger wetland complexes in Brookfield include: those in the East Brookfield Valley, around Sunset Lake, Lamson Pond and Baker Pond. Fens, rare natural communities, are discussed below.

Brookfield's wetlands receive a degree of protection from the Vermont Wetlands Rules. Any change to a "significant wetland" as defined under the Vermont Wetland Rules requires a conditional use determination from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. The Brookfield Development Bylaw requires a 75 foot building setback from wetlands.

3. RARE SPECIES AND NATURAL COMMUNITIES

The Vermont Natural Heritage and Nongame Program of the Department of Fish and Wildlife has mapped 14 known occurrences of rare plant and animal species and six rare natural communities in Brookfield. A goal of the Town Plan is to preserve these unique species and places. Five of these rare natural communities are fens, nutrient-rich wetlands characterized by a sedge mat. Many of the rare plant species occur in fens. The other ecologically significant community is Halfway Brook Swamp, a red maple-black ash seepage swamp. The fens, the swamp, and the rare plants that grow there receive some degree of protection under the Vermont Wetlands Rules. Part of one fen has been acquired by The Nature Conservancy. Permanent protection should be considered for occurrences of rare species or natural communities which are not on public or conservation land. If development is proposed near any of these mapped occurrences, the town should contact the Vermont Natural Heritage and Nongame Program to identify its exact location. Development should be steered away from rare species and natural communities.

4. GOALS

It is the intent of the plan to protect the scenery and integrity of these special natural features by discouraging growth in these sensitive areas, adopting, when needed, regulations to protect special features, and encouraging the permanent protection of important areas through the acquisition of land or conservation restrictions by public agencies or private land trusts. The town is encouraged to form a Conservation Commission to work with the Planning Commission to further these goals. Brookfield has a town Conservation and Recreation Fund that can be used to fund land acquisition.

B. HISTORIC AREAS AND FEATURES

1. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Brookfield, settled in 1779, has four relatively intact 19th century villages. They are Pond Village, Brookfield Center, East Brookfield, and West Brookfield. Although some of the early structures are gone, few new buildings have been constructed in these villages during the past one hundred years. In addition to the residences and churches which currently exist, at one time these villages were the site of many businesses and industries, including sawmills, grist mills, stores, blacksmiths, creameries, cheese factories and other manufacturers. The stonework from several of the old mill sites remains intact. The Vermont Division of Historic Preservation has listed Pond Village, East Brookfield Village, and West Brookfield Village as State significant historic districts which provide good examples of 19th century villagescapes. Pond Village is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Many historic structures and buildings survive in Brookfield, including three churches, several former one-room schoolhouses, homes, barns, and silos. The Vermont Division of Historic Preservation's Historic Sites and Structures Survey includes 98 sites in Brookfield. Noteworthy historic structures include the following:

- The floating bridge, Brookfield's chief tourist attraction, first built in 1820 across Sunset Lake (then Colt's Pond).
- The Marvin Newton House, located in Brookfield Center, is owned and operated as a museum by Brookfield Historical Society. The house was built in 1835 and is an example of federal style architecture. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

- The Ebenezer Stratton Tavern, a private home on East Street built in the 1780's, is listed on the National Register.
- The Old Town Hall in Pond Village, now owned by the Brookfield Community Partnership, was built in 1850, and added to in 1902; it is considered historically significant by the state.

Brookfield has five cemeteries with gravestones dating from the early 1800's. Cemeteries are located in Brookfield Center (two locations), East Brookfield, East Hill, and West Brookfield.

Potential sites for archaeological research in Brookfield include areas of old cellar holes and foundations, particularly those in the vicinity of Brookfield Center and Sunset Lake. Scuba divers have found many artifacts from Brookfield's early settlement well-preserved in the thick layers of mud on the lake bottom. A student project overseen by an archaeologist found some artifacts at the site of the Old Town Hall dating from its use as a Masonic hall.

2. GOALS

It is the intent of the Plan to encourage the preservation of the architectural integrity of Brookfield's historic villages and structures through the use of techniques such as local historic districts and the listing of districts and individual buildings on the State and National Registers. It is the purpose of the Plan to preserve potential archaeological sites and promote archaeological research. This Plan specifically recommends the renovation of the Old Town Hall in Pond Village in such a manner that maintains both its historic character and its original use as a public gathering place. This large structure still has many of its original features intact, including its stage and curtain, and the large dining area, and a long history of providing space for community activities. The Brookfield Community Partnership, a 501(c)(3) organization, took control of the building in 2002 and is working on restoring it as a community center with the support of the town.

SECTION XI. WATER RESOURCES

Brookfield has an abundance of high-quality water resources, including its surface waters -- lakes, ponds, streams -- and its springs, wetlands, and groundwater. Land use planning and regulation can play an important role in the maintenance of the quality of the Town's water resources.

There are currently no community water supplies in Brookfield. Town residents are self-supplied through wells and springs. Brookfield's several villages or future developments may need to consider community water supplies in the future. The Town should research and map the location of any underground aquifers which have the potential to serve as future community water supplies. The Town should consider establishing an aquifer protection overlay district in which special regulations would apply around important aquifers.

The maintenance of high water quality is important for public health, fisheries, ecosystem health, and water-based recreation. There are currently no permitted point discharges to surface waters in Brookfield. However nonpoint pollution from inadequate septic systems, runoff from roads and construction projects, and improper agricultural practices are all potential problems. The Town should take advantage of State programs to control nonpoint pollution, and should provide input to the State when it is considering any applications for discharge permits in Brookfield.

SECTION XII. EDUCATION

Brookfield voters elect one of five members of the Randolph Union High School Board. At the Annual Meeting of the District, voters elect the moderator, secretary, treasurer, and three auditors, and adopt the budget for the next fiscal year.

The three members of the Brookfield Elementary School Board are elected at the annual School District Meeting – traditionally held at the time of the March Town Meeting – at which time the voters act on the school budget for the next fiscal year.

In 1990, the Elementary School Board, with the help of parents, teachers and other voters, completed a five-year plan based on a then projected 35% increase in K-6 population. The plan called for the construction of an addition to the existing facilities. Implementation of the plan depended on the solution of the problem of sewage disposal. The type and depth of the soil on the school and adjacent property made an economic solution of the problem difficult. By 1995, the trends in school enrollment had deferred the need for a physical addition to the school. From 1995 to 2000 enrollment dropped each year and in the past 5 years enrollment has remained steady and is projected to remain as such. Volunteer efforts by community members, supplemented by outside assistance and contributions, have resulted in the construction of a recreation field at the school and a mezzanine in the multi-purpose room, which significantly increased the usefulness of the space. The School Board does not have any plans for the construction of additional space in the immediate future, but there is a facilities review in progress to evaluate future replacement or repair needs.

SECTION XIII. ENERGY

A. ENERGY USE

1. Residential: Most of the residences in Brookfield use as their primary heat source either oil, propane (bottled gas), or wood, although some use electricity as a primary or secondary heat source. In those residences where the domestic water supply is not heated by a central heating system (furnace) it is normally heated by propane or electricity. Some homes use passive solar radiation as the primary heat source, although many depend to a greater or lesser extent upon passive solar for a portion of their heating needs.
2. Agricultural: Active farms are significant energy users, depending primarily upon electricity for barn lighting, milk cooling and other motor operated barn equipment. Field work is performed by tractors, which are predominantly diesel operated.
3. Public Buildings: The Brookfield Elementary School and the Town Office are heated with oil. The Town Garage uses wood from the Town Forest, which is managed by the Town Forester.

B. ENERGY SOURCES

1. Electricity: Electricity is provided within their franchise areas by Central Vermont Public Service Corporation and the Washington Electric Cooperative. Most of the Town is supplied only with single phase service. Some residences and farms have the capability to generate electricity through the use of renewable energy systems such as photovoltaic panels, windmills, biomass and microhydro systems. If the

house or farm with a qualifying renewable energy system is connected to utility power, excess power and energy can be sold to the utility by the use of a net metering system.

2. Oil: Heating oil (Number 2) is delivered by several local vendors to the users' storage tanks.
3. Propane: Propane is delivered by local vendors to customers, either in form of fully charged cylinders or by tank trucks which meter deliveries into storage tanks at the users' locations.
4. Wood: Most of the fuel wood is harvested from small privately owned woodlots or purchased from nearby suppliers.

C. GOALS

1. The town encourages the responsible use of energy and the use of the least environmentally damaging sources of energy.
2. The town encourages the use of renewable energy systems in both off-grid and net metering systems. The town may consider whether to create incentives for renewable energy systems.
3. New buildings should be constructed so as to utilize the maximum feasible passive solar heating, use high efficiency lighting and appliances and meet appropriate standards of insulation and air infiltration to minimize energy use. The approval of larger scale residential developments should be made conditional on meeting such standards. The installation of on-peak resistance electric heat should be discouraged.
4. Residents and owners of existing buildings, including the town with respect to the school and town office, should be encouraged to obtain a competent energy audit of the buildings with a view toward identifying and making cost-effective improvements in energy efficiency. When it is found to be practical, they should:
 - a. Be encouraged to retrofit those buildings to improve their insulation and efficiency.
 - b. Be encouraged to install highly efficient heating systems and to maintain and operate their existing heating systems to maximum efficiency possible. Wood heating systems should be designed and operated to achieve efficient and thorough combustion to minimize polluting emissions.
5. Residents and owners of existing buildings, including the town with respect to the school and the town office, should be encouraged to acquire and use high efficiency lighting equipment and appliances.
6. Woodlot owners should be encouraged to manage their woodlots for multiple uses which would include sustained yield of timber and fuel wood.
7. The Brookfield Elementary School should continue its program which teaches the need for and methods of conserving energy.
8. This plan discourages the development of power generation projects in town, the purpose of which is primarily to sell power onto the electric grid, unless each of the following is

true: (a) the total capacity of the generation project is less than 300 kW, (b) the project is proposed to meet the needs of Vermont electric consumers, (c) the generation facilities involved in the project use renewable fuels, and (d) the facilities and any associated lines are sited and designed so that they do not have an undue adverse impact on the scenic and rural character of the town. For purposes of this paragraph, the term "project" includes all generation facilities that are part of a larger undertaking (i.e., multiple wind turbines that are developed according to a common plan).

SECTION XIV. HOUSING

A. DESCRIPTION

1. The town listers have valued the homesteads in Town (residence and 2 acres of land) as follows:

Up to \$25,000	1
\$25,000-50,000	17
\$50,000-75,000	66
\$75,000-100,000	73
\$100,000-\$200,000	199
over \$200,000	22

The above does not include seasonal "camps", prefabricated "trailers" or mobile homes which have no land but are located on family-owned parcels, or rented land.

2. The listers have also classified home sites as follows:

Residential 1	173
Residential 2	217
Vacation 1	56
Vacation 2	107

(Pursuant to Vermont Tax Department guidelines, Residential 1 is residential property with less than 6 acres of land and Residential 2 is property with 6 or more acres of land. Similarly, Vacation 1 has less than 6 acres and Vacation 2 has 6 or more acres.)

Of the housing described as "mobile homes," 51 are owned by residents of Brookfield and 21 by nonresidents. Of the housing described as "camps," 15 are owned by residents and 59 by nonresidents

3. Brookfield has a large number of small lots. Nonresidents own 175 parcels of less than 10 acres - the smallest 0.08 acre, several of less than 0.5, most 2, 3, and 4 acres. Some of the smaller lots at current market prices would be suitable for low or moderate cost housing.
4. Brookfield has none of what are generally described as "subdivisions" or "housing developments."
5. Brookfield has no subsidized or public housing.
6. A major cost of housing in Brookfield is the property tax that is principally relied upon to support the cost of education.

B. POLICIES

In the absence of a specific housing program, it is the Town's policy that:

1. All housing, existing and proposed, should be safe, sanitary and provide adequate shelter.
2. While it is probable that housing needs will be met by private initiative, it is the responsibility of the Planning Commission to keep informed of housing trends and to take an active part in public housing initiatives.
3. Brookfield should investigate establishing a local housing and conservation trust fund as some other communities have done.

SECTION XV. PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

- A. The town budget includes contributions to the White River Valley Ambulance Service, Orange County Mental Health Association, and Home Health Service of Gifford Hospital in Randolph, all of which offer services to Brookfield residents.
- B. Law enforcement services are provided by the Town Constable, the County Sheriff and the State Police. Fire protection is provided by a volunteer company in East Brookfield and the Randolph Fire Department provides fire protection for West Brookfield.
- C. The advent of enhanced 911 in Brookfield has vastly improved the ability to rapidly locate residences through its database and installation of road signs. In addition, since the last Town Plan the installation of hydrants by the Brookfield fire department in many locations has improved fire safety and development of such sources of emergency water should continue. Residents are encouraged to contact the Fire Department if they are installing a pond to determine if a hydrant installation is feasible.

SECTION XVI. INTEGRATION WITH PLANS OF ADJACENT TOWNS

This Town Plan for Brookfield is fully consistent with the plans and regulations of all of the contiguous towns. Most of the borders between Brookfield and its neighbors are relatively rural areas where the current uses and the planned future uses are either identical or fully compatible. However, if major developments are planned near town borders, this Plan encourages the close communication and cooperation between towns to address any potential problems.

A. RANDOLPH

The Randolph Town Plan, adopted December 21, 2004, encourages rural and agricultural uses along its northern border with Brookfield. The Rural Agricultural District stretches from the eastern edge of I-89 to Preston Rd and promotes agricultural uses. The Residential District covers the rest of the northern border with the exception of North Randolph and residential uses are intended for this area. Both of these areas recommend 1 unit per 5 acres. North Randolph is covered by the Gateway Commercial land use district which is intended to preserve this compact settlement pattern. Randolph is currently working on new zoning regulations and these future land use zones are to be the starting point for these new regulations.

B. BRAINTREE

The Town of Braintree adjoins the western portion of the southern border of Brookfield. Most of the area is relatively undeveloped and rural and is zoned for rural residential use with lot sizes of two and ten acres. The only area with significant development is along Route #12 just north of the village known as Snowsville or East Braintree. This area of Braintree permits commercial uses and lot sizes of one half acre. Although it does not seem to be an immediate prospect, strip development along the highway could take place up to the Brookfield line. The Town is currently updating its Town Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

C. ROXBURY

The Town of Roxbury adjoins the entire western border of Brookfield. The Roxbury Town Plan encourages continued scattered rural residential development in this area. Roxbury does not have zoning bylaws. The road system along the border of the two towns effectively creates one neighborhood and Brookfield and Roxbury should cooperate on issues affecting road use and upkeep.

D. WILLIAMSTOWN

The Town of Williamstown adjoins Brookfield along almost all of its northern border except for a very short section on the extreme western end. The Williamstown Plan seeks to preserve the agricultural and forest character of the border area with Brookfield. Much of the acreage along Williamstown Gulf is protected by its inclusion in the Ainsworth State Forest. Williamstown does not have zoning bylaws.

E. CHELSEA

The Town of Chelsea adjoins the entire eastern boundary of Brookfield. Chelsea's Town Plan is implemented by its zoning bylaws that call for continued rural agricultural and forest uses of the area adjoining Brookfield. The bylaws permit a minimum lot size of two acres throughout the town outside of the village.

SECTION XVII. IMPLEMENTATION

Brookfield's by-laws for subdivision, shorelands, flood plains and general zoning provide the means for carrying out the goals and objectives of the land use element and parts of Section X.

The Planning Commission should, from time to time, review the Bylaws and propose such amendments as are deemed necessary to implement the Plan.

SECTION XVIII. APPENDIX

Attached and included as a part of this Plan are maps created from the Vermont Geographic Information System (GIS):

- Current Land Use Map
- Future Land Use Map (based on the Brookfield Development Bylaw)
- Development Bylaw Districts
- Transportation Map
- Facility Map
- Natural Communities Map
- Slope Map
- Soil Map (Agricultural and Hydric)
- Soil Map (Generalized Onsite Septic Suitability)

Large versions of the following maps should be maintained in the Town Offices:

- Soils Mapping Units
- Soil Depth Map
- Soil Map (Agricultural and Hydric)
- Soil Map (Generalized Onsite Septic Suitability)
- Slope Map
- Flood Hazard Area Map

Also relevant to this Plan and maintained in the Town Offices or the Town Library are the following:

- Vermont Fish and Wildlife Natural Heritage Map of Brookfield
- Brookfield NWI Wetlands Map
- Vermont Division of Historic Preservation Listings
- The History of Brookfield
- West Brookfield and Thereabouts