

# Pomfret Town Plan

Adopted August 17,  
2016

The Pomfret Town Plan was prepared by the Pomfret Planning Commission with assistance from the Two Rivers-Ottawquechee Regional Commission; funded, in part, by a Municipal Planning Grant from the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

**Pomfret  
Planning  
Commission**

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## Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Preserving the scenic beauty and rural character of Pomfret's valleys, hillsides, and ridgelines remains the primary goal of this Plan. As measured by growth in surrounding towns, Pomfret's long-term planning efforts have been extremely effective. This is due in large measure to the foresight of Pomfret's Planning Commissions, its Selectboard, and its concerned citizens. They have devoted a great deal of time and energy endeavoring to carry out the expressed wishes of the community.

Preservation of Pomfret's natural resources is the main interest of Pomfret residents. Residents and landowners also favor limiting change and growth in Pomfret through planning and zoning. Both sentiments were true in 1968 when the original Pomfret Planning Commission began to work on a Town Plan. The first Town Plan was adopted in October 1971 and was readopted with an amendment on December 21, 1977. During that interval Pomfret's Zoning Ordinance was drafted, approved, and amended twice, including approval of the Subdivision Regulations amendments on March 4, 1975. The Land Use and Development Regulations are currently being amended as of this writing. (Subdivision regulations amended in 2012, Ridgeline regulations amended in 2008). These documents and Vermont's Act 250 have preserved Pomfret as we know it. The Ridgeline and Hillside Conservation Areas amendment to the Zoning Ordinance approved March 7, 1989, and currently being amended, assured further protection. It seems that few towns in the Green Mountain State have suffered as little impact from uncontrolled development as Pomfret has.

Pomfret's original Town Plan was further amended in November 1982 and December 1987, though the basic 1971 document remained intact. Town Plans in Vermont must be reviewed and rewritten or readopted every five years (Title 24, Chapter 117, Vermont Statutes Annotated). In 1992, it was decided that it was time to completely rewrite Pomfret's Town Plan. That effort took two years, and the document was adopted in the spring of 1995. The same plan was slightly modified for re-adoption in 2001, 2006 and again in 2014. The residents of Pomfret are urged to review this plan thoughtfully, as the Planning Commission believes that the proposed goals, policies and objectives, and recommended actions all contribute to protecting and preserving Pomfret's open space and natural resources. They are essential to maintaining a gradual and diversified growth pattern.

Pomfret residents and landowners should all be aware that without a comprehensive Town Plan and effective zoning and subdivision regulations, uncontrolled development would overwhelm the town. In 1971, the Quechee Lakes Corporation (QLC) applied for "Conceptual Approval" of its planned development of 550 acres of land in the Bunker Hill section of Pomfret and 5,000 acres in Hartford to create 2,500 home sites. It was the Pomfret Selectboard's objection to the planned development that it would "permanently alter the Town's social and economic cohesion." This led to the Environmental Commission's decision to eliminate from its approval all land owned by QLC in Pomfret.

The 2014 Pomfret Town Plan is divided into thirteen chapters according to major planning elements required by state law. Within each chapter, long-range goals are listed, followed by objectives and policies that are intended to guide measures undertaken to accomplish the goals.

**Pomfret 2016 Town Plan**  
**Adopted 8/17/2016**

Recommendations are made for actions that can be taken by various groups within Town to achieve specific planning objectives. These lists are not intended to be definitive. Additions and revisions will be necessary from time to time. These goals, policies and objectives, and recommended actions establish a direction ensuring that Pomfret remains a place where harmony between the built and natural environments is demonstrated through appropriate land use.

Chapter 12 addresses the need for follow-up to the recommended actions suggested in each chapter. Four appendices include maps, and other background material that supports the text and proposals of the Plan. There is also a list of relevant definitions in the Glossary of Terms.

Planning is by its very nature a continuous activity. The Planning Commission encourages all those residents who value the extraordinary beauty of Pomfret, and who would like to assure future generations the opportunity of living in such a community, to participate in planning activities. Only through the efforts of volunteers can the Town guide growth as effectively as those who began this worthy activity over forty-five years ago.

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## Chapter 2: POMFRET'S HISTORY

Pomfret and its neighbors all came into being in the summer of 1761. The town of Pomfret was first laid out by New Hampshire Governor, Benning Wentworth, in a grant dated July 8, 1761. Wentworth had begun selling Town grants to land speculators for land west of the Connecticut River in 1749. During the summer of 1761 he sold many such grants, including Pomfret and its neighboring towns of Hartford, Woodstock, Barnard and Sharon. Most of the Pomfret grant's sixty-seven purchasers, known as "proprietors" (land speculators), came from the Woodstock, Connecticut area. Isaac Dana, one of ten proprietors named Dana, came from Pomfret, Connecticut, and may have been influential in naming the new town. Pomfret, Connecticut, in turn, had been named for Pomfret, England. The name Pomfret is believed to be a corruption of the Latin *ponte fractus* or broken bridge.

Wentworth's grants were all designed to be six miles square, with borders measuring six miles to a side. The grants were sold without benefit of proper surveys, and each cited boundaries of previous grants. Towns granted along the Connecticut River had readily defined and accurate eastern boundaries along the river, but as grants extended westward, the potential for error increased. Pomfret's continuing boundary disputes with Woodstock and Barnard were resolved for the most part in the late 1800's, though some sections are still not settled. The recently reconstructed Taftsville covered bridge now stands where the towns of Hartford, Hartland, Pomfret and Woodstock once met, and the four towns jointly owned the bridge (Pomfret's share was 8/40ths.) To establish responsibility for the bridge's care and upkeep, Pomfret's share was given to Woodstock by the Vermont General Assembly in 1851. Pomfret's final dimensions remain approximately six by six miles (actually 5.6 x 6.8 miles).

Shortly after Wentworth's flurry of grant activity, the colonial governor of New York, seeing a good opportunity to enrich his own and his colony's coffers, challenged Wentworth's right to grant lands west of the Connecticut River. To protect themselves against questionable grants, proprietors in several towns applied to New York for second grants for holdings already granted by New Hampshire. Woodstock succeeded, but Pomfret never received a second grant, although the town applied.

The land speculators or "proprietors" who had purchased the grants met and organized in Pomfret, Connecticut in 1761. To ensure that their Pomfret, Vermont lands could be settled or sold, the owners of the grants planned for surveys and the development of roads. In addition, they created lots of land in the first division of the Town. The "proprietors" literally "drew lots" and thus became owners of these individual lots of land that could then be sold to other potential settlers. Money to pay for the development of roads and other needs came from assessing each owner. Fifteen of the original sixty-seven proprietors who did not pay this assessment in a timely fashion lost their rights.

This early action all took place in Connecticut. Pomfret, Vermont remained unsettled for a decade. Although a few had visited the area the summer before, the first settlers didn't make their "pitches" until the early 1760s. The usual custom would be for a father, accompanied perhaps by a son or neighbor, to travel from southern New England in late winter or early spring. Pomfret's early settlers discovered a hilly land, covered by a dense growth of trees, with few open vistas. The men

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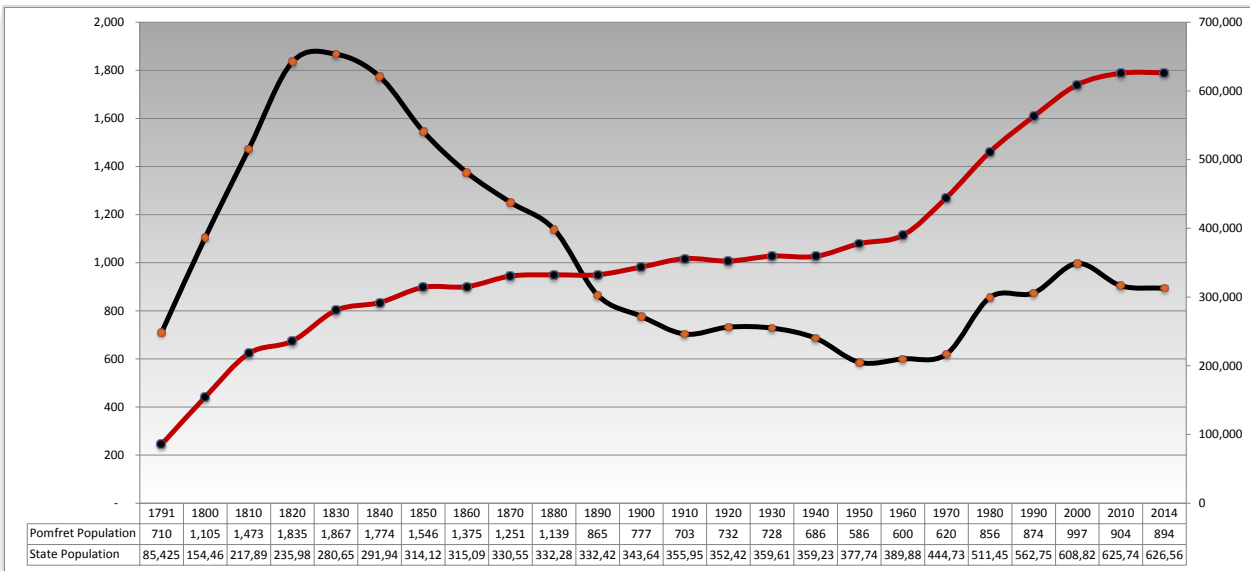
would spend the summer staking and clearing the new acres, perhaps raising a grain crop to store until the following spring when the entire family would arrive. Most early Pomfret settlers followed this custom.

The first Pomfret Town Meeting was held in March of 1773, only three years after permanent settlement had begun in the new territory. Proprietors' meetings continued to be held to dispose of land in several divisions. After the success of the American Revolution, England lost interest in the grants fight. The war also distracted the contending colonies of New York and New Hampshire. Settlers paid New York State \$30,000 to release the claim, and when the New Hampshire grants were resolved, they were finally able to form their own state government in 1777. Vermont became the thirteenth State of the United States in 1791.

Many new Pomfret settlers fought in the Revolution (Bunker Hill is so named because many of its residents were in that battle.) Pomfret's closest engagement came when a party of Canadian Indians burned Royalton in 1780. Men from Pomfret responded but could not prevent the town from burning.

Pomfret's population soared from the 710 who lived in Town in 1791 to a high of 1,867 in 1830 (see Figure 1). The era of high population coincided with the rise of the nearly self-sufficient farm with its labor intensive operations. Large families were the custom, and many sons worked the family farm or acquired their own land nearby. But the days of the hill farm were numbered. The industrial revolution brought new farm equipment requiring new and larger farms with higher productivity. The so-called hill farms were gradually abandoned for easier-to-work and flatter lands, often in the mid or far west. The opening of the Erie Canal in 1830 hastened this westward migration. The Vermont sheep boom began in 1810 with the importation of the first Merino sheep from Spain and peaked by 1840. Many Vermont sheep farmers then saw their income from sheep drop rapidly.

**Figure 1 - Pomfret Population History: 1790-2014**



**Source:** Vermont Historical Society & Vermont Department of Health

The Erie Canal also allowed the Industrial Revolution to affect the Midwest and opened up many economic opportunities in that region. The girls of the farm families were, by the 1840s, leaving home to work in the woolen mills and factories of New Hampshire and southern New England. Others left as the economic activity in the Pomfret area declined.

The Civil War was widely supported in Pomfret. More than 130 men from this town served, and 24 Pomfret enlistees died in that war. Others, having had a taste of adventure and the world outside Vermont, sought their fortunes elsewhere following the conflict.

The remaining population became more mobile during the mid-nineteenth century. Stations in nearby Woodstock and White River Junction made it possible for Pomfret residents to travel freely by train for business and pleasure. Pomfret youth who chose careers in dentistry, medicine or law sought their fortunes in larger towns, in state or out. Many kept an interest in their old home town. According to Henry Hobart Vail's *History of Pomfret*, some 4,000 people came home to Pomfret to celebrate the 1870 centennial of the Town's first settlement.

Just as the Industrial Revolution helped to lower the Town's population a hundred years earlier, mid-twentieth century changes in regional transportation caused significant economic growth in the 1970s and 1980s in the Upper Valley area. The development of the Interstate Highway System, air service and communications networks have dramatically changed the economic mix from that which existed one hundred years ago. Electronic media make it possible for many workers to remain at home while conducting business all over the world. Several such "electronic commuters" already live and work in Town. The current population in Pomfret is just over 900 people.



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## Housing

The first shelters were probably quickly made lean-tos only suitable for temporary shelter. Men brought their families to these structures, or sometimes to a log cabin. Both would have had dirt floors and few amenities. Once established, the settler would build a more substantial house, usually of wood and clapboard, but sometimes of brick or stone. Pomfret's second framed house was not built until 1784.

These first settlements are shown on Robert Perkins' 1915 map inserted in Vail's *History of Pomfret*. Besides noting the names of those first to settle on a given plot, Perkins listed occupants in 1915 when many of the early sites had been abandoned. According to the Pomfret Grand List of 1824, there were at that time 5,389 acres of improved land, 230 houses, grist mills, 6 blacksmith shops, 6 cider mills, 7 sawmills, 5 cider houses, 3 shops, 1 casting machine, 2 clothing shops and 1 tannery. This was before Pomfret's 1830 population high of 1,867. The Town's population was more widely scattered in the early 1800's, as individual houses sheltered larger families than at present. In 1911, Walter A. Perkins noted that many abandoned hill farms were reverting to forest. A trend of reforestation continues to this day, albeit from conservation efforts rather than abandoned farms.

## Schools

The first schools were naturally crude. Cash was not plentiful on the frontier, and early teachers were paid in grain that often served as currency, each type having a different value. A 1786 teacher contract showed payment promised in grain. One Pomfret resident frequently ran classes to train teachers. By the nineteenth century school was held year-round. Girls generally attended in the summer when the boys were working on family farms. Boys attended mainly in winter when there was less farm work and walking was deemed too hard for girls and younger students.

The number of school districts in Town rose rapidly until this 36-square-mile town had sixteen schools of its own and two shared districts that served children from Pomfret and neighboring towns. The schools, despite being relatively small, often served as area meeting places for civic and entertainment programs of all sorts. Many area citizens were buried after services held in the former school in South Pomfret located on the Max Boynton property in the Village.

The number of Pomfret school districts gradually decreased in the twentieth century. The State passed increasingly stringent rules regarding facilities and training requirements for teachers. Taxpayers found it difficult to finance the maintenance of so many buildings. New teachers began to complain that they were not prepared to teach eight grades at once as was the custom in one-room schoolhouses. Pomfret then chose to allocate students by grade so that teachers usually taught no more than two grade levels in each school building. This continued until 1989 when the Town decided to build the K-6 school in South Pomfret that opened for the 1991-92 school year. The same modern transportation that delivered children to different schools by grade now made it practical to bus children to a single site that met state standards.

The Town never formally had its own high school, though at least one teacher advertised that he conducted a high school in Pomfret in the mid-nineteenth century. Some Pomfret students attended the Green Mountain Liberal Institute in South Woodstock after 1848 and Woodstock High School

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after 1854. Some in the northern part of town attended Royalton High School. Until transportation improved, girls and boys boarded near their schools during the week and returned to Pomfret on weekends. Pomfret has been a member of the Woodstock Union High School District since the Union was formed in 1954.

## **Transportation**

The earliest settlers came up the Connecticut River on flatboats, or in winter dragging belongings on a sled. Often everyone walked; sometimes the wife and youngest children rode a horse. Upon leaving the river they followed marked trails into the Town. The proprietors and then the settlers themselves raised taxes to build roads. The early stage route to Barnard and Royalton crossed Pomfret. Teamsters drove Vermont farm products to Boston and returned with goods to be sold in local shops. The advent of the railroad to nearby Hartford (1849) made Boston markets more accessible to Pomfret farmers, who shipped via the rail head at West Hartford. The Woodstock Railway, which began operation in 1875, provided those in the southern end of town access to passenger and commodity transportation. By the time it ceased operating in 1933, most families in Pomfret had their own automobiles and farmers were shipping by truck.

## **Institutions**

Most of the earliest settlers were Congregationalists. The area's first settled minister, shared with Woodstock, lived and farmed where the Prosper Valley School now stands. The first Pomfret minister was granted a lot near Pomfret Center. Later, townspeople raised a handsome church building near the center that burned in 1843 and was not rebuilt. The present North Pomfret Congregational Church was built in 1844 and is still used for worship. The Ladies Circle celebrated its hundredth anniversary in 1992. The present Town Hall was erected in 1845 by the Universalists who donated it to the Town in 1872.

The Abbott Memorial Library in South Pomfret was the gift of native son, Ira Abbott. It was erected in 1905, and for many years served the children of the town through their schools, which were designated as branch libraries. From the beginning, the library was the focal point of many public events in the southern part of town and today provides programs for area children. It is administered by a board elected at Town Meeting and supported by Town funds and private gifts.

The Grange movement in America began soon after the Civil War. Pomfret had two Granges that flourished in the last century, providing farm families with social and educational programs. As the Town's agricultural base eroded, so too has the Grange base. Neither organization is active, though the Grange Hall in South Pomfret still stands and is occasionally used for Town functions.

## **Industries**

Early Pomfret industries were similar to those of neighboring towns. One of the first commercial products was potash made from the trees that were felled to clear the new farms. Used in the production of soap, Potash brought premium prices in England until 1793. The first U.S. patent was issued to a Vermonter for an improved method of making potash. Lumber mills and general farming were also important. During the 1830s South Pomfret was called the "Slab City" because of its three lumber mills. Farming predominated throughout the nineteenth century. In the 1850

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census, the majority of men were farmers and some one hundred others — men and women — were listed as farm help. In 2014 the Pomfret Listers counted seven properties<sup>1</sup> as operating farms (properties that include farm buildings), however a 2007 census<sup>2</sup> by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, using a more inclusive definition of farming, showed 10 farms operating in town. Once devoted to raising dairy cattle, farms are now more diversified. The largest farm in town raises beef cattle as do several others. There are also nurseries, greenhouses, apple orchards, an organic produce farm and similar agricultural enterprises. Many professional people, who commute to jobs in other towns, maintain flocks of sheep, small herds of beef cattle, or pursue other agrarian activities such as sugaring. Further, there are many informal arrangements made between landowners in town and farmers to cut fields so they can remain open. Farming operations of all types are important to maintaining this town's rural character.

Suicide Six, South Pomfret's ski area, opened in 1935. Now owned and managed by the Woodstock Inn and Resort, it does substantial business in ski season and occasionally rents out the base lodge at other times of the year.

### **Political Subdivisions**

Pomfret has been a town in the Republic of Vermont since 1777, which makes it older than the State. Until 1965, Pomfret elected its own representative to the Vermont General Assembly. Since then it has belonged to a joint district sharing representation with neighboring towns. The towns that make up the district may change every ten years due to population shifts determined by the Federal Census. Pomfret is one of the twenty-four towns in Windsor County that share three elected State Senators, some of whom have been Pomfret residents. Woodstock is the Shire Town of Windsor County. The Windsor County Probate Court and Sheriff's office are located there.

## **Chapter 3: POMFRET COMMUNITY PROFILE**

This chapter provides the reader with a "profile" of Pomfret through a series of graphs and charts. Recent trends can be determined from this information. This overview of the major characteristics that make up Pomfret is divided into the following headings: Population, Economy, and Government. The graphs and charts and most of the material in the accompanying text under each of these headings come from the most recent data available from the U.S. Census, the Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont, and the Vermont State Department of Taxes.

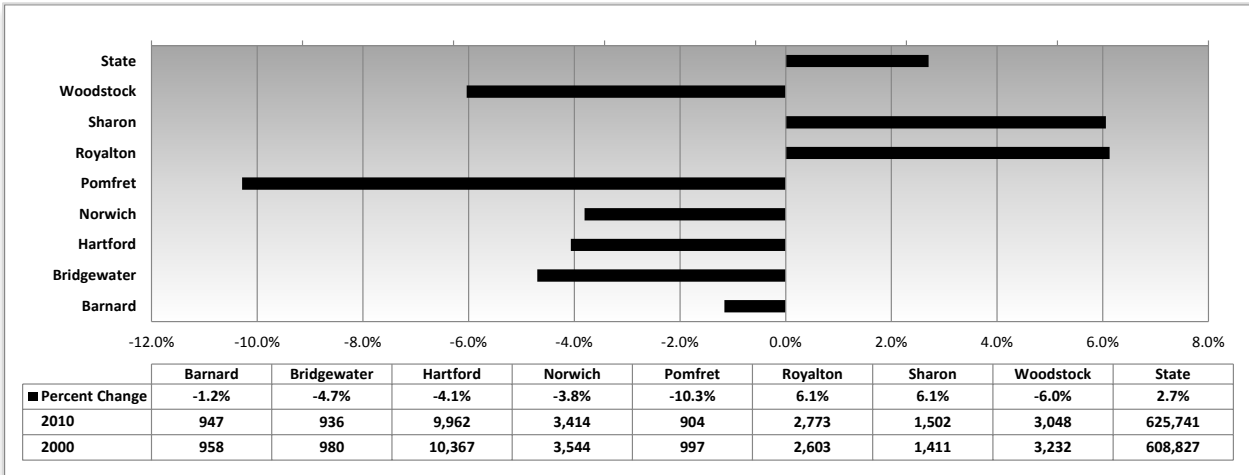
The population of Pomfret has not returned to its peak of 1,867 residents in 1830. As shown in Figure 2, in 2010, Pomfret's population stood at 904, representing a 9% decline since 2000. Many towns in the region are losing population, including Pomfret. Figure 3 shows that unlike the previous decade, when the Town's population was about four percent larger than the State average, Pomfret's rate of growth between 2000 and 2010 dropped significantly. Figure 3 also shows that while most of the neighboring towns lost population, Pomfret lost the most percentage-wise. The numbers after each town's name was its population in 2010.

**Figure 2 - Population Changes: 2000-2010**

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<sup>1</sup> Pomfret Listers' Office, February 26, 2014.

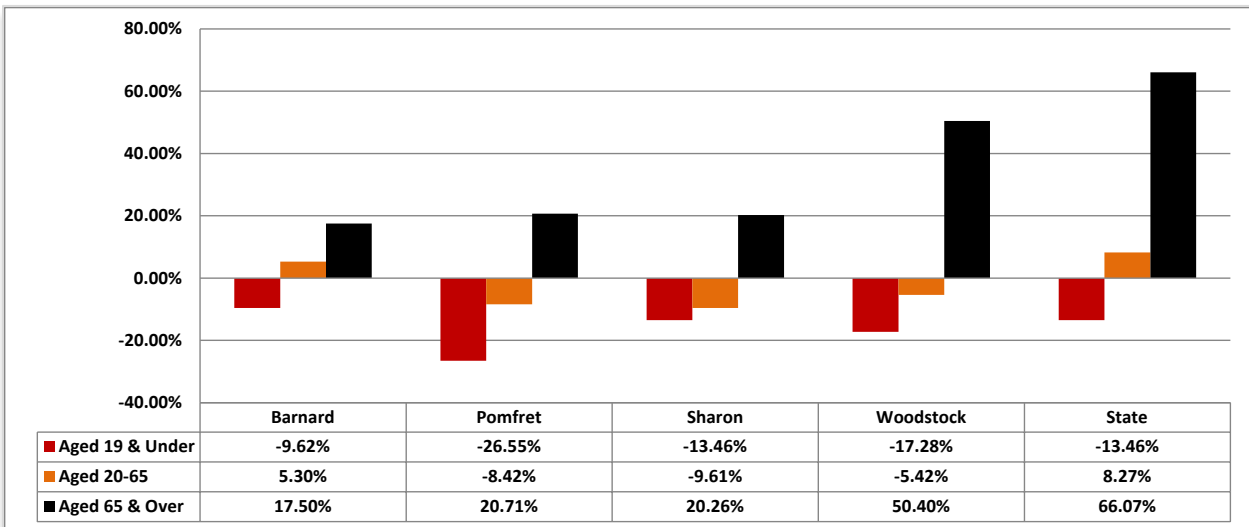
<sup>2</sup> 2007 Census of Agriculture is the most current release available.



Source: U.S Census

The age of Pomfret's full time residents also changed during the last decade. The number of residents under 19 years of age decreased by 27%, from 275 to 202, a decrease of 73 people. The number of people between 19 and 65 years of age decreased by 8.4%, from 582 to 533, a decrease of 49 people. The number of residents over 65 years of age increased by 17.2%, from 140 to 169, an increase of 29 people. Figure 4 illustrates how these demographic changes compare to the same age groups in the towns of Sharon, Barnard, and Woodstock, as well as to statewide figures.

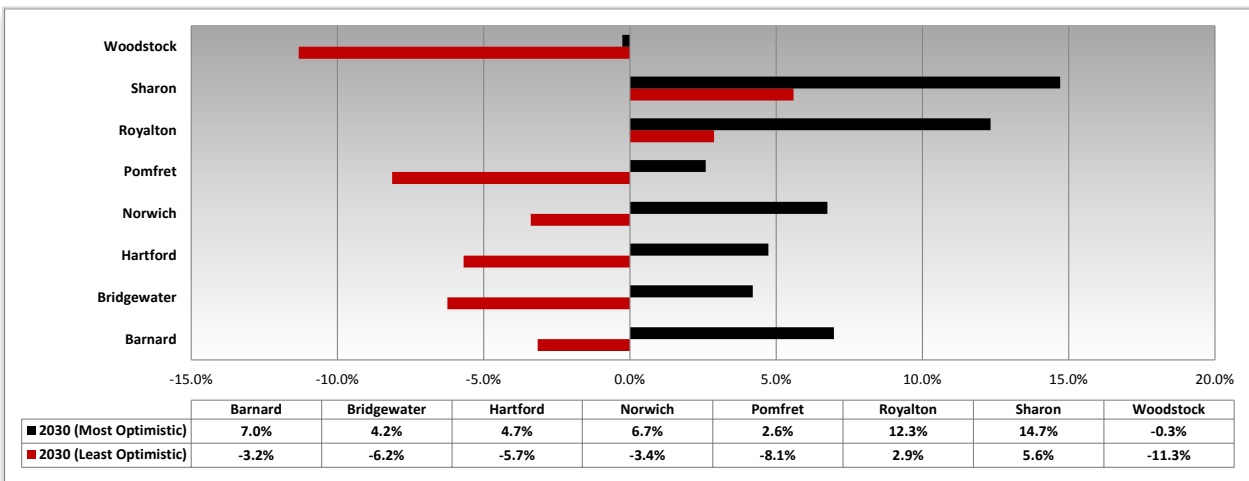
**Figure 3 - Changes in Population by Demographics: 2000-2010**



Source: U.S. Census

The number of Pomfret residents who were born in this State decreased slightly from 210 in 2000 to 204 in 2010.

**Figure 4 - Population Projection Changes from 2010 to 2030 (Least & Most Optimistic)**

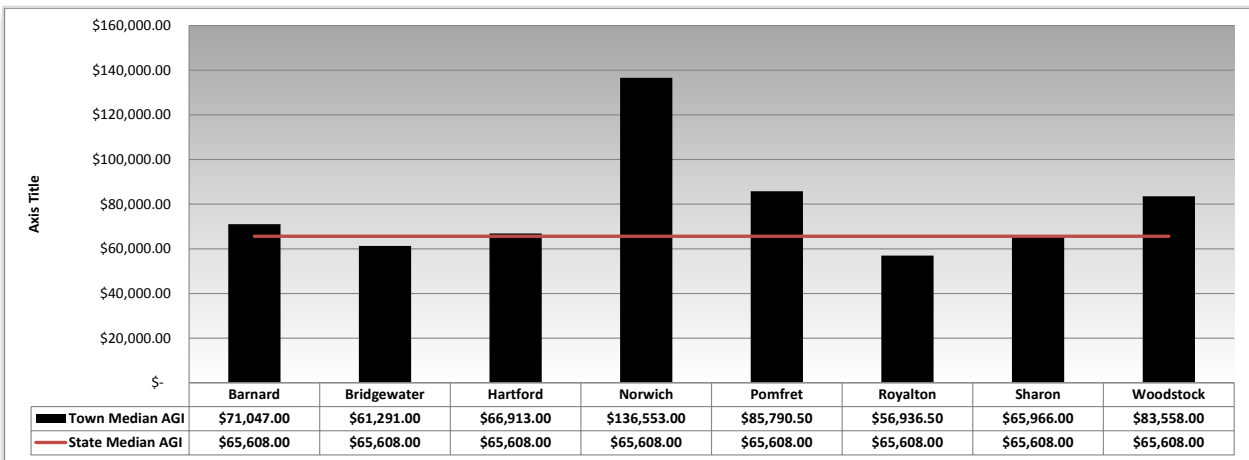


Source: Vermont Population Projections – 2010 – 2030, Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development

## Economy

According to data from the Vermont Department of Taxes, the median adjusted gross income (AGI) for families in Pomfret for the 2014 Tax Year was higher than most of the surrounding towns. Norwich has a substantially higher AGI. The median adjusted gross income for families was also higher in Pomfret than the median for the State of Vermont. This information is shown in Figure 5 below.

**Figure 5 - 2014 Median Adjusted Gross Income per Family**

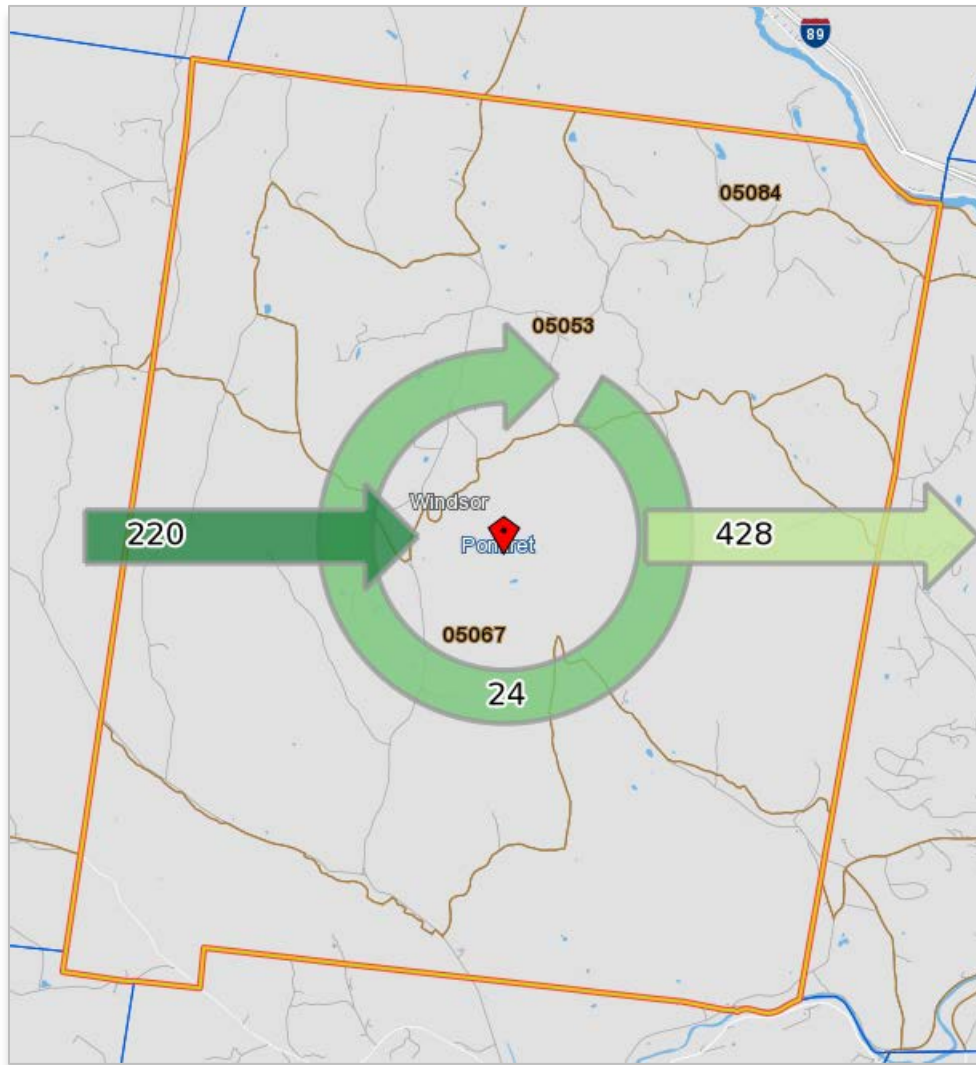


Source: 2014 Vermont Tax Statistics - Department of Taxes

See Appendix B for detailed information on income tax filings for Pomfret residents as of 2014

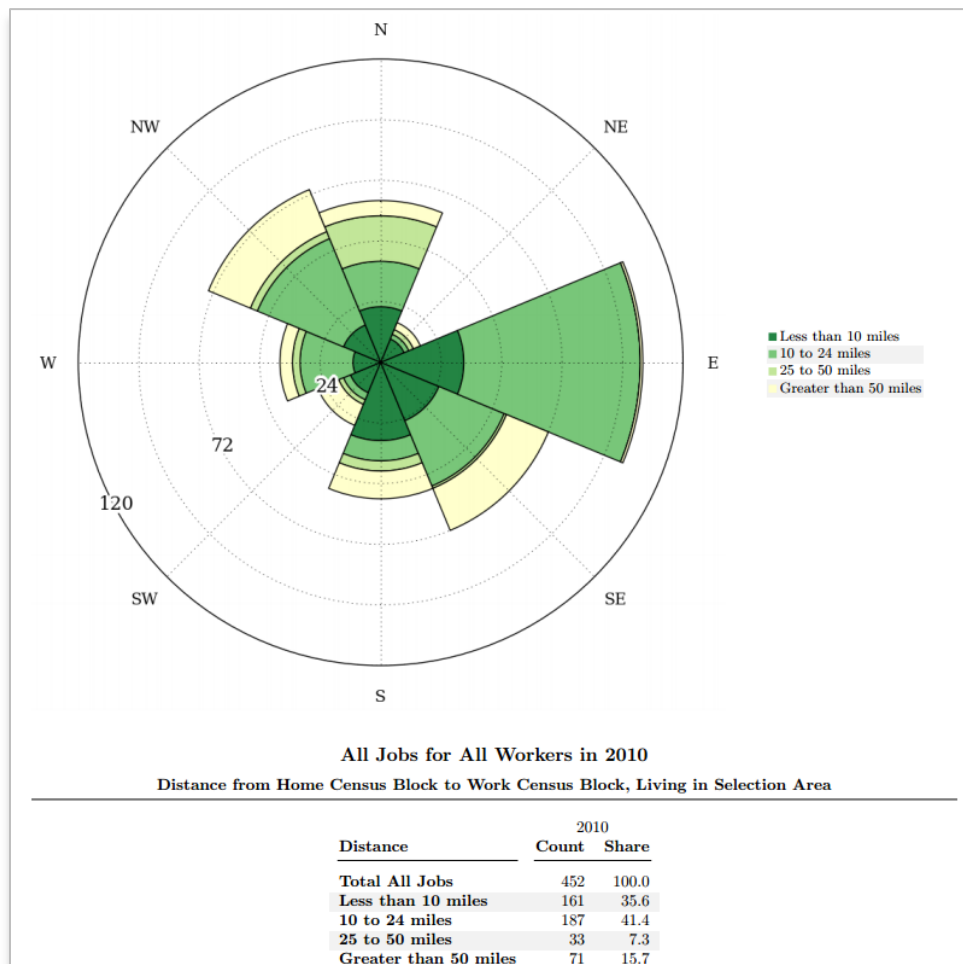
Pomfret typifies a "bedroom community" in that a majority of its labor force is employed outside of the Town. Of Pomfret's 452 workers (as of 2010 and including both full and part-time workers), about 95% (428) commute elsewhere for work while 220 people from other places come to work in Pomfret. This results in a net outflow of 208 workers who live in Pomfret, but work elsewhere.

**Figure 6 - Inflow/Outflow of Pomfret Employment**



The average commuting travel time is just over 20 minutes and almost without exception, commuting is done by automobile. The following data shows the general distance and direction of Pomfret's workers. The majority of workers travel to Lebanon (46), Hanover (34), Woodstock (30), White River Junction (22), and Randolph (15).

**Figure 7 - Distance and Direction for Pomfret Workers**



*Source:* Journey to Work Data: 2010 U.S. Census (<http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>)

In the 2010-2014 American Community Survey Estimates, Pomfret's resident workforce occupied the following professions:

**Table 1 – Occupations of Pomfret Workers**

| Occupation                 | Pomfret | Percent | Statewide |
|----------------------------|---------|---------|-----------|
| Management, professional   | 190     | 39.3%   | 39.0%     |
| Sales, office positions    | 129     | 26.7%   | 17.0%     |
| Service                    | 97      | 20.0%   | 22.8%     |
| Production, transportation | 13      | 2.7%    | 10.7%     |



| Occupation                                   | Pomfret | Percent | Statewide |
|--|---------|---------|-----------|
| Natural Resources, construction, maintenance | 55      | 11.4%   | 10.5%     |
| <i>Total</i>                                 | 484     | 100.0%  | 100.0%    |

**Table 2 - Occupational Class of Pomfret workers**

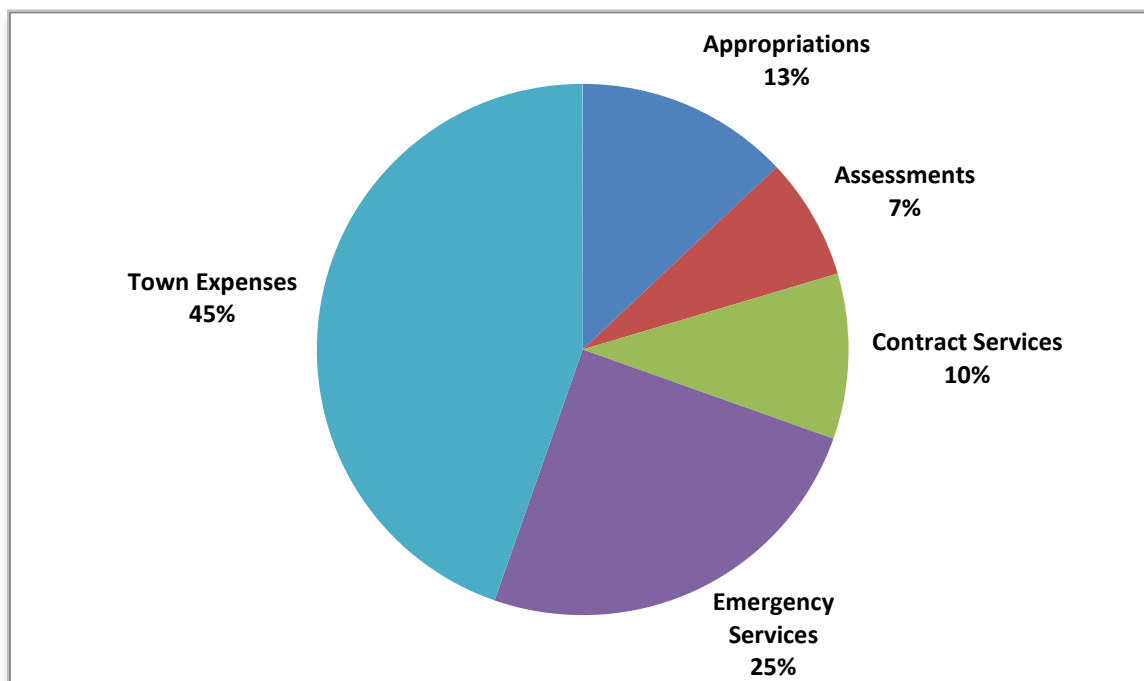
| Occupational Class | Number | Percentage |
|--------------------|--------|------------|
| Privately employed | 286    | 59%        |
| Self employed      | 135    | 28%        |
| Government         | 63     | 13%        |

*Source:* U.S. Census: Selected Economic Characteristics: 2014 ACS 5-Year Estimates

## Government

The following chart and table shows the breakdown of the FY2016 Town Budget:

**Figure 8 - FY2016 Pomfret Town Budget**



*Source:* Pomfret Town Report 2015

**Table 3 - Pomfret FY2016 Town Budget**

|             | Budget Category                              | FY2016 Amount |
|-------------|--|---------------|
| <b>Town</b> | Outside Appropriations                       | \$ 59,583.00  |
| <b>Town</b> | County/Local Assessments                     | \$ 33,966.00  |
| <b>Town</b> | Contract Services (incl. Sheriff, Ambulance) | \$ 46,120.00  |

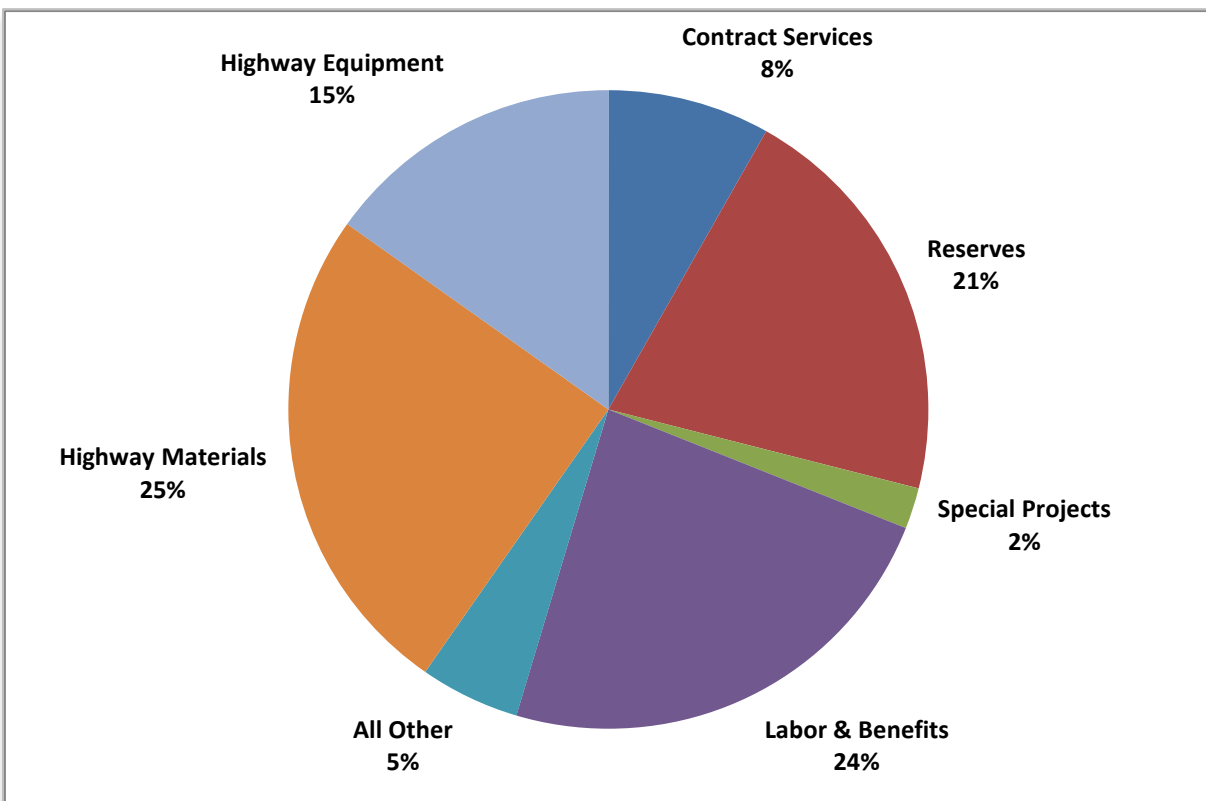
|      | Budget Category                      | FY2016 Amount        |
|------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Town | Emergency Services Operating/Capital | \$ 114,358.00        |
| Town | Municipal Expenses                   | \$ 204,834.00        |
|      |                                      | <b>\$ 458,861.00</b> |

Note: Excludes highway

The FY2016 budget reflects a variety of service level improvements, including additional budget resources for the Town Treasurer, the Town Clerk and the Listers. Increases will allow the Treasurer to effectively deal with the burdens of a more rigorous accounting system. The Assistant Town Clerk position helps to alleviate the greater time demand of administration. In the past, the Listers have donated an extraordinary amount of time and this budget provides greater compensation for that effort, as well as positioning the group with technology and funds for a town-wide reassessment that will need to be done in the near future. Additionally, \$20,000 is programmed for the renovation of Town Hall in a new reserve account.

The following chart and table shows the breakdown of the FY2016 Highway Budget:

**Figure 9 – FY2016 Pomfret Highway Budget**



**Table 4 - Pomfret FY2016 Highway Budget**

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|         | Budget Category   | FY2016 Amount        |
|---------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Highway | Contract Services | \$ 78,900.00         |
| Highway | Reserves          | \$ 200,000.00        |
| Highway | Special Projects  | \$ 20,000.00         |
| Highway | Labor & Benefits  | \$ 227,000.00        |
| Highway | Materials         | \$ 48,600.000        |
| Highway | Equipment         | \$ 242,250.00        |
| Highway | All Other         | \$ 145,850.00        |
|         |                   | <b>\$ 962,600.00</b> |

Note: Excludes Town expenses

Highway service levels will generally remain as they have in the past. The FY2016 budget also includes funds for leasing or purchasing a new tractor which will help with roadside mowing. A new paving reserve account and an initial allocation of \$25,000 will allow the repaving of 2-3 miles of hardtop, a project that is estimated to cost about \$225,000 over several years. Pomfret, like many other towns, continues to experience increases in the costs of material necessary to care for our roads year-round, especially salt and gravel.

The municipal tax rate for the town in Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 is .3767 <sup>iii</sup> (Fiscal Year 2016 runs from July 1, 2015 through June 30 2016). With the exception of Calendar Year 2010 when the municipal tax rate was slightly up at .4207, the rate has remained more or less level over the last five years (.3648 on average). This tax figure includes any applicable local agreement rate and highway rates, but does not include any fire districts, service districts, or local construction rates.

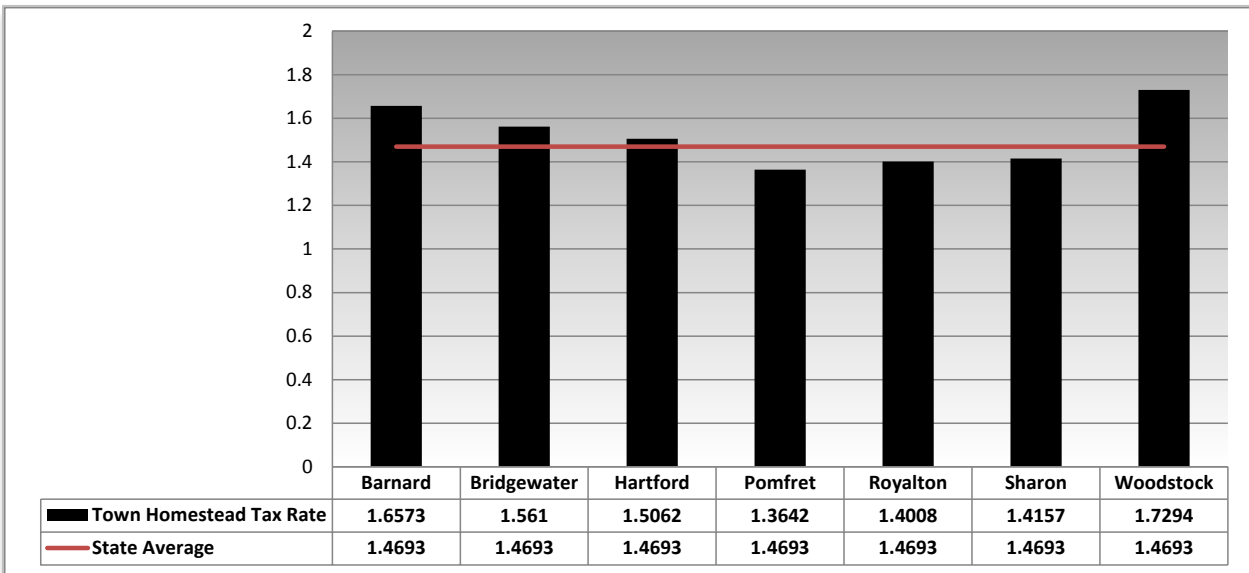
The residential education tax rate for a homestead property (a primary residence on six acres of land or less) is \$1.3642 for FY 2016; down from FY 2015's rate of \$1.5707.<sup>iv</sup> Figure 9 shows how the education tax rate for a homestead property compares to the surrounding towns.

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<sup>iii</sup> 2015 Town Report, pg. 10.

<sup>iv</sup> 2015 Town Report, pg. 10.

**Figure 9 - FY 2016 Education Homestead Tax Rates**



*Source:* State of Vermont Department of Taxes

Property taxes in Vermont are paid at two tax rates, depending on whether the property is a homestead or not. Homesteads are principal dwellings that you live in, including the surrounding lands. All education tax rates are “equalized” in Vermont into an *effective* tax rate to account for towns that have grand lists that do not accurately reflect their current market value. Overall, the grand list is determined to be over or under fair market value, resulting in a number called the “common level of appraisal” or CLA. If the CLA is below 1, then properties are undervalued. Pomfret is currently determined to have an overall assessment rate of about 6.4% above market rate. It does not matter that one house may be assessed very accurately and other under-assessed in the same town; both of their taxes will be adjusted by the CLA the same.

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## Chapter 4: LAND USE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

### Introduction

This section of the town plan is designed to guide land use decisions in a manner that balances existing and future uses. Striking a balance means establishing a framework that harmonizes the historic pastoral use of Pomfret lands with uses that will occur in the future such that these uses do not get in the way of or overshadow each other. The land use goals, policies, and strategies are supportive of and intended to provide a means to measure the success of this balancing act. While guiding and regulating land use decisions are important goals alone, it must not be lost that the overarching point of this effort is to support and enrich the sense of community that already exists in Pomfret. Pomfret is a small town and because of that we are all neighbors.

### The Setting

The town of Pomfret is located in Windsor County, Vermont. It is situated in east-central Vermont, part of the southern piedmont, or foothills, of the Green Mountains. Pomfret is comprised of about 39.4 square miles, bordered by Royalton and Sharon in the north, West Hartford and Quechee in the east, Woodstock and Bridgewater in the south, and Barnard in the west. Pomfret's landscape is generally characterized by narrow open valleys with an occasional expanse of open hay fields flanked by wooded hillsides, some very steep. The center of Pomfret straddles two watersheds. The north side of Pomfret drains into the White River watershed while the south side empties into the Ottauquechee River. Both the White and Ottauquechee Rivers flow into the Connecticut River. Pomfret is among the special areas of Vermont that remain unspoiled by high density or large-scale development.

### Physical Characteristics

#### *Geology:*

The predominant bedrock geologic feature of Pomfret is the Pomfret Dome, one of several ancient geologic formations running along the east side of the Green Mountains. The Pomfret Dome consists primarily of rocks and minerals of the Gile Mountain Formation. The Gile Mountain Formation includes well-known local attractions such as the Quechee Gorge and Gile Mountain in Norwich. Pomfret's bedrock is composed of phyllite, mica schist and amphibolite. Some of these rocks can be seen at or just below the surface, particularly along the banks of streams. The surficial geology of Pomfret is composed of glacial till, mainly of weathered limestone, schist, and quartzite. This historical description of Pomfret's geologic landscape, from Henry Hobart Vail's 1930 history of Pomfret, remains true today:

Nearly all the town is composed in its rocky surface of schistose slate [mica schist]. The land has been smoothed over in geologic ages by ice caps which have more than once covered all the state. Boulders have been dropped here and there and some of them have been brought long distances. Pomfret has no lake or pond within its

borders. Even the swamps are very few and small. In places the effects of old beaver dams may be seen. Mr. Hosea Doton, who knew the town thoroughly well, used to say that there was not in Pomfret a plot of ground large enough for a house location without leveling. On the other hand, the land is cultivable wherever oxen can haul a plow, and the tops of the some of the highest hills have produced beautiful crops of corn and potatoes.

*Geologic Soil Composition:*

An understanding of Pomfret's soil composition is important for both agricultural and forestry purposes, as well as for determining the suitability of it for new construction. The vast majority of soil types in Pomfret are less than ideal for development, mostly because of the steep slopes on which the soils are found, but also because of the difficulty in finding the right soil for residential septic systems. The following soil types are rated as "very limited" or "somewhat limited" for construction of dwellings, with or without basements, and small commercial buildings and included here is the categorization of those soils for septic systems:

**Table 5 - Pomfret Soil Composition**

| <b>Soil Type</b> | <b>Description</b>   | <b>Acres</b> | <b>Septic Suitability</b> |
|------------------|--|--------------|---------------------------|
| 20D              | Glover-Vershire complex, 15 to 35 percent slopes, very rocky       | 3,569.1      | IIIa                      |
| 20E              | Glover-Vershire complex, 35 to 60 percent slopes, very rocky       | 3,205.3      | IVb                       |
| 36E              | Teago-Pomfret complex, 25 to 50 percent slopes, rocky              | 2,707.5      | IVb                       |
| 19D              | Vershire-Dummerston complex, 15 to 25 percent slopes, rocky        | 2,307.9      | IId                       |
| 19E              | Vershire-Dummerston complex, 25 to 60 percent slopes, rocky        | 2,194.4      | IVb                       |
| 20C              | Glover-Vershire complex, 3 to 15 percent slopes, very rocky        | 1,527.0      | IIIa                      |
| 26E              | Buckland very fine sandy loam, 35 to 60 percent slopes, very stony | 1,133.0      | IVd                       |
| 36D              | Teago-Pomfret complex, 15 to 25 percent slopes, rocky              | 1,083.5      | IId                       |
| 25C              | Buckland loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes                              | 939.2        | IIId                      |
| 25D              | Buckland loam, 15 to 25 percent slopes                             | 729.3        | IIIe                      |
| 36C              | Teago-Pomfret complex, 8 to 15 percent slopes, rocky               | 553.9        | IIC                       |

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Soil types with a septic group rating of I (well suited) or II (moderately suited) are the best soils for residential development and roughly 15% of Pomfret's soils fall into this category. Soils with a septic group rating of III are marginally suited for residential development and may require more investigation to find spots for a septic field, or may require installation of a mound system. Soils with a group rating of IV are generally not suitable for residential development and therefore may also require installation of a mound system.

## **Elevation & Slopes**

Pomfret's topography is another limitation on new development. Pomfret sits at an average of 1,499 feet above mean sea level, higher than any of the surrounding towns. The change in elevation is best perceived by driving from Town Hall north on Pomfret Rd. toward the Pomfret/West Hartford town line. The road twists and winds, gradually dropping in over 1,000 feet of elevation before arriving at the White River. Pomfret's topography is dotted with hilltops ranging from 1,200 to over 1,900 feet. The highest points in Pomfret are:

- Seaver Hill on the top of the ridge on the south side of the Appalachian Trail, between Granite Ledge and Pomfret Farms Dr. (1,960 ft. in elevation, lat./long.: 43.696076°/-72.480400°)
- Top of the ridge between Windy Ln. and Hidden Ridge Rd. (1,860 ft. in elevation, lat./long.: 43.724405°/-72.534643°)
- Top of the ridge just south of Webster Hill Rd. and east of Wild Apple Rd. (1,846 ft. in elevation, lat./long.: 43.712345°/-72.538694°)
- Top of ridge between Allen Hill Rd. and Blackmer Rd. (1,783 ft. in elevation, lat./long.: 43.745217°/-72.516999°)
- Top of ridge between Wild Apple Rd. and Bartlett Brook Rd. (1,783 ft. in elevation, lat./long.: 43.699929°/-72.548066°)

About 3,459 acres (or 14%) of Pomfret's 25,280 acres have slopes of 10% or less. These areas represent the most suitable terrain for development. The vast majority of development has occurred in these areas. Another 3,055 acres of Pomfret's land is situated on slopes of 10-15%. This land is also developable, but only for less intensive uses at a greater cost. Additionally, there are 5,984 acres with slopes of 15-20% and another 12,573 acres with slopes of greater than 20%, neither category offers much opportunity for development, except for the occasional ridgeline project. Combined, these last two categories comprise about 75% of Pomfret's land area.

## **Flood Hazards**

Approximately 521 acres of Pomfret are in the floodplain (see flood hazard areas visible on the Future Land Use Map, in Appendix D). Floodplains and Fluvial Erosion Hazard Areas are generally unsuitable for development because of the high potential for loss of life and property, as

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well as the limited ability of septic systems to perform adequately during periods of high water. (See Chapter 13: Flood Resilience for more information.)

## **Current Land Use**

### *Patterns of Development*

The Pomfret history in Chapter 2 describes the rapid rise in population from the first settlers in the early 1770s. The population peaked at a high of 1,867 in 1830 followed by a dramatic drop to 777 by 1900. By 1950 the population stood at 586. By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, farmers moved west to land more suitable for farming than the hills of Vermont. Until the 1950s, the prevailing land uses in Pomfret were agriculture and forestry. Beginning slowly in the 1940s, and then continuing more rapidly into the 60s, 70s, and 80's, Pomfret experienced growth in non-farm residences, both primary and second homes.

According to census figures, the largest jump in housing units occurred between 1970 and 1990 with an increase of 189 units in that 20 year period. Seasonal homes account for 93% of the growth between 1980 and 1990 (80 of 86 units). This growth resulted from the rise of the post-war generation. Increases in wealth, the affordability of automobiles and the construction of the interstate highway system all helped to bring new growth to Vermont, including the newly labeled "Upper Valley." As in most rural Vermont towns, land has been sold for residential development at higher cash value than land kept in farming. Despite the demise of the traditional working dairy farm, recent years have seen a trend of increased agricultural activity with added-value products including specialty cheeses, expanded direct "farm to market" sales to individuals and restaurants, as well as forest products.

In the early 1970's, to counter rapid growth in Pomfret and in neighboring towns, the town of Pomfret adopted zoning laws with restrictions on larger subdivisions, including limits on how quickly new lots could be sold. The first four new subdivided lots of an existing parcel were not subject to regulation. The entire town was zoned at 2 acre minimum lot size.

The primary land use is rural residential housing. The 2013 Pomfret Grand List includes 475 residential parcels of which 129 are second homes. However, the true number of residential units is higher because there are several parcels with multiple units, such as hamlet areas throughout the town. Roughly 55% of the land is owned by people living in Pomfret while the other 45% is held by people living elsewhere. The housing units on these lands are generally spread along the main roads and in the low lying areas below the hillsides. Pomfret's housing stock is diverse, reflecting the mix and values of its population. Most houses are along and close to either the paved roads or the better class 3 gravel roads which provide access to less steep land. Many of these houses are grouped in neighborhoods including:

- South Pomfret Village Area
- Bartlett Brook Road
- Hewitt Hill Road including a portion of the Pomfret Road east past Howe Hill Road



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- North Pomfret including Bunker Hill Road, Caper Street, Starbuck Road and the connecting portions of the Pomfret Road

**See Appendix C –Map of Current Settlement Patterns**

Factoring Pomfret's two acre minimum lot size, there are 12,640 potential residential development sites. However, the true number of development sites is much smaller because of the soils and slopes mentioned earlier. In total, the number of housing units that Pomfret's developable land can support is estimated to be approximately 1,250 units. Current consumption of this capacity is 40%. But this is still a theoretical capacity because it does not take into account land in developable areas that contain long-term restrictions, such as deed restrictions, conservation easements or property enrolled in the Current Use Program. Portions of many of the larger residential lots are also used for agricultural activities, including use as pasture land and maple sugaring, as are many of the 104 "miscellaneous" lots that do not have farm buildings.

### **Agriculture and Forestry**

There is very little "prime" agricultural soil, the most protected soil not only in Vermont, but across the nation. However, the amount of "prime" agricultural soil does not necessarily relate to how the land is used for agricultural and forestry purposes. Much of the land in Pomfret used in agricultural is important not because of the classification of agricultural value, but because of the location and current use of the land as hayfields, pasture and the growing of timber for a variety of uses.

**See Appendix C – Map of Pomfret Agricultural Soils**

### **Natural Resources**

Pomfret's natural and historic resources, rural character, and scenic beauty must be protected and preserved for the health, safety, and enjoyment of current and future generations. Many of these resources are irreplaceable, and if not preserved, will be gone forever. There are many cases in the world where the benefits of natural resources have not been understood until after a resource is gone. Habitat loss and resultant species loss is probably the most vivid example of this trend. This can still be prevented from happening in Pomfret.

**See Appendix C – Map of Pomfret's Natural Resources**

### **Wildlife Habitat**

Wildlife habitat protection is critical to the conservation of plants and animals and hence to the general quality of life in Pomfret. "Natural areas" not only encourage and protect species diversity, but they also enhance aesthetic enjoyment, recreation, and education. Wildlife habitat should be given consideration in each decision to build in or change the natural environment.

In addition to deer yards, Pomfret has some unique and fragile habitats, possibly including those of rare and endangered species. Through the years some habitat areas have been placed under

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permanent protection. Although there has never been a comprehensive town wide study of significant habitats, an inventory limited to the Appalachian Trail Corridor found several wetland areas supporting rare ferns and some vernal pools that may be breeding grounds for rare salamanders. To protect additional habitats it is necessary to continue updating inventories, reviewing development plans that may affect these habitats, and encouraging landowners to arrange for permanent protection of important habitats. The cumulative effect of scattered development on larger contiguous wildlife habitats is important. It is possible to separate deer, bears, and other animals from their wintering areas by scattered development, which, for this reason, should be avoided. The following is a list of the important habitat areas that are protected in Pomfret:

- Sharon-Pomfret Seep (Nature Conservancy)
- Amity Pond (State of Vermont)
- Wetlands on the National Wetlands Inventory (Federal and State)

In addition, there are other conserved lands in town that contain important habitat area, including the Appalachian Trail Corridor and other parcels of land. As of 2016, a total of 5,835 acres of land are conserved of which 1,817 acres are public and 4,018 acres are private land. In total, 24% of Pomfret's land is conserved and this number does not include other privately conserved land through deed restriction. As of the 2016 tax year, there is also 16,913 acres of land enrolled in Vermont's Current Use Program.

## **Wetlands**

The importance of wetlands to the whole ecosystem and to the health, safety, and welfare of the general public, has been recognized in both Federal and Vermont legislation in recent years. The Natural Resources Board estimates that Vermont has already lost more than 35 percent of its original wetlands resources and that the remaining wetlands comprise less than 4 percent of the state's surface area.

In addition to providing important support for fisheries and wildlife habitats, wetlands protect drinking water supplies by filtering out excess toxins and nutrients and by helping to recharge aquifers. Wetlands also play an important role in minimizing flood damage by storing flood waters.

There are 215 acres of wetlands in Pomfret that are on the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) and are protected by the 1990 Vermont Wetlands Rules. The NWI was completed in 1978 but was never field checked. Field observations by the Vermont Wetlands Office staff indicate that this is an underestimation. A more accurate up-to-date inventory would be useful for identifying important wetlands that must be protected in Pomfret. Landowners should be made aware of significant wetlands on their property.

## **Surface Waters**

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Pomfret's brooks, streams, and fisheries contribute to wetlands and recharge ground water supply. Undisturbed natural vegetation on and along the banks of streams, called a riparian buffer, provides erosion control and protection from the sun which enhances habitat value and water quality. Maintenance of a riparian buffer by private landowners is essential to minimizing flash flood damage on their property and land further downstream.

Two of the more common local sources of stream pollution and siltation are farming and highway drainage maintenance. While farming is not as significant of a contributor to this problem as it is in other towns, awareness is none the less important to stream protection. Both of these activities are vital to the Town but could be managed in such a way as to have little or no negative effect on streams. Local farming activities and highway maintenance should be reviewed to determine if there is unnecessary stream damage from chemicals, road salt, and drainage ditches.

New private ponds are created every year in Pomfret. Many ponds originally used for farming are now used for recreation and aesthetic purposes. The Town Zoning Ordinance requires a permit issued by the Zoning Board of Adjustment before a pond can be constructed. Currently pond construction plans are reviewed to ensure the safety of downstream roads or property. Pond construction also needs to be reviewed for any adverse effects on streams, wildlife habitat, or wetlands. Ponds are a major source of water for fighting fires. Inventories of ponds and regulation of pond construction should take fire protection into consideration. Additionally, no development other than agriculture and forestry should be allowed in flood plain areas without appropriate municipal review showing that specific engineering and construction standards have been satisfied.

## **Water Supply**

All Pomfret households depend on ground water for domestic use. This water flows in underground streams on uncharted pathways. It is tapped from underground storage areas called aquifers or from underground streams and springs. Ground water is the least understood of all natural resources, yet it is essential to the preservation and quality of life and to economic stability. As a result, the protection of ground water quality and quantity deserves the highest priority when formulating plans for the future of Pomfret.

There appears to be no immediate threat to Pomfret's water supply. A local well driller reports that Pomfret has plentiful water supplies and that existing wells very seldom need to be drilled deeper. Pomfret is not as subject to major hazardous material spills as many other communities due to its distance from major highways, railroads, and waste sites. Still, a safe water supply was a top priority of respondents to the Conservation Commission survey in 1990, and water quality should be monitored. The long term effect of any form of development on the quality of the water supply is a major factor in the review of development plans.

## **Air Quality**

Air quality problems in Vermont are mostly created elsewhere and must be solved at a state, national, or international level. Local wood stoves, backyard burning of trash and excessive brush burning contribute to air pollution. Clean air is a natural resource that cannot be taken for granted,

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even in rural states like Vermont. Enforcement of existing State and Federal air pollution regulations is important. However, we are all responsible for maintaining a healthy living environment and for being kind to our neighbors. Pomfret residents are generally conscientious people and the Town should continue to encourage responsible behavior through its zoning laws.

### **Gravel and Other Mineral Extraction**

The use of local sand and gravel significantly reduces the cost of road maintenance within the Town and helps to support the local economy. When proper erosion control and reclamation techniques are used, extraction of gravel and other minerals can have minimal impact on the environment. The land can later be returned to other productive uses. Currently there are no operating gravel pits in Pomfret. Potential gravel reserves should be identified and set aside for future use. The extraction of minerals is to be limited to operations that do not conflict with the other goals, policies, or objectives of this plan.

### **Agricultural and Forest Lands**

Agricultural and forest lands are critical natural resources to Pomfret. Agriculture and forest management activities form the anchor of all other activities in Pomfret and the Town should strive to preserve the resources that underpin these activities.

### **Rural Character and Scenic Beauty**

The visual elements of rural character in Pomfret are the traditional working landscape and land use patterns relating to Pomfret's agricultural and forestry heritage, the undeveloped ridgelines and hillsides, and the scenic roads lined with mature trees and old stone walls. Historic resources related to the Town's agricultural and forestry heritage, such as old barns and farmhouses, are other elements of rural character that need to be preserved. Additional elements of rural character may be the people and their institutions: local government mostly made up of volunteers, volunteer fire departments and Fast Squad, and citizens concerned about and caring for their neighbors.

Virtually every chapter of this Plan examines a different aspect of rural character. Preserving and encouraging agricultural and forestry activity is a major goal expressed in the Land Use chapter.

The Town Services and Education chapters emphasize the importance of community involvement and volunteer support in governing the Town and in educating Pomfret's children.

In 1989, the Town adopted a Ridgeline and Hillside Conservation Area section to the Zoning Ordinance, reacting to concern that one of Pomfret's most significant scenic resources could be destroyed by insensitive development. The ordinance was updated in 2008. High priority should be given to preventing adverse effects on specific "scenic vistas" or "scenic view sheds" and "scenic roads" including roads and their rights of way that may be bordered by stone walls and maple and other mature trees. These roads need to be protected from efforts to widen and "improve" them to accommodate development. Road maintenance should be limited to the existing roadbed and ditches. Cutting of trees, widening, or any other activity which may change the character of the road should be subject to review by the public.

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"Scenic vistas" or "view sheds" are areas of scenic beauty as viewed from Town roads that may need special protection from insensitive development, including private or public road construction and utility pole relocation. We all may know scenic beauty when we see it, but the challenge is to adopt a method for protection using both qualitative and quantitative criteria.

### **Ridgelines and Hillsides**

Among Pomfret's most valuable resources are the exceptional scenic qualities of many of its ridgelines and hilltops. These physical formations have influenced the location of village settlements and the pattern of agriculture and forestry. The attractiveness of these areas is directly attributable to the variety of elements which make up the land use pattern of the area.

These characteristics serve to comprise these scenic values in ridgeline and hilltop areas. They include the mixed pattern of open meadowland to wooded areas, the prominence of clear unobstructed panoramic views of distant ridges from other ridges as well as from the valley floor and the non-intensive nature of the use of the land. Other integral elements of these scenic areas are the type of characteristics of roads which lead to and from the areas and the accessibility of the ridgelines' scenic resource to the public.

The scenic value of the hillsides and ridgelines benefit more than just the people of Pomfret. These areas, coupled with the other elements of the pastoral landscape, combine to attract a large tourist population which accounts for a large portion of the area's economy. While its economic value can be considered appreciable, its contribution to the well-being of the area is perhaps more significant.

Historically, the typically rugged character of these areas has limited development opportunities. However, the location of development in future years in Pomfret cannot be assumed to be confined to those areas traditionally considered suitable or desirable for development. With adequate financial resources and quality engineering (incl. innovative technologies for wastewater system design and operation), land, including ridge tops and hilltops, can or will be developed without appropriate zoning regulations.

### **Historic Resources**

According to Henry Hobart Vail's history of Pomfret (available online at <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/006685202>), the name derives indirectly from Pontefract, England, an historic town in West Yorkshire. In Latin, Pontefract means "broken bridge" and the English town was commonly known as "Pomfret." That name passed on to Pomfret, CT, the town from which many of Pomfret, VT's settlers first came. Pomfret, VT has had a number of noteworthy natives. Among them are: Elmer B. Adams (U.S. Federal judge for the Eight Circuit), Marshall Conant (almanac writer and astronomer), Hosea Doton (educator, author, map maker, state legislator), Rush C. Hawkins (Brigadier General, Union Army and veteran of Antietam), Robert A. Perkins (editor of the Rutland Herald), Thomas O. Seaver (Colonel, Union Army and winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor), Camilla Ware (writer and abolitionist). The people of Pomfret have traditionally been learned and close to the land.

Pomfret's history is typical of many agricultural towns and Pomfret was once among the most important dairy farming towns in Vermont. By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, sheep farming had given way to dairy farming. Pomfret soon became known as a place to purchase purebred Jersey cows ("Butter Queens"). Dairy cows from Pomfret were of the highest quality and were sold around the world. In proportion to its small population, Pomfret at one point had the highest number of members in the Dairy Association across Vermont.

Pomfret's dairy farmers consistently won awards. In the 1909 State Fair, for example, Pomfret dairy farmers were ubiquitous. L.R. Dana won the ten pound dairy butter tub category. W.H. Harrington came in second for the five pound dairy butter box category. In the creamery butter category, A.E. Sherburne won first place. The Sherburne Creamery also dominated the maple sugar and candy categories, winning a number of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place prizes. Today, that tradition of quality continues in earnest. This history is important to the current and future residents of Pomfret who gain more of an understanding of the community through knowledge of the past. Written histories, old paintings and photographs, various artifacts, and structures built by earlier residents are an important record of earlier life in Pomfret.

The Pomfret Historical Society erected at least six historic markers between 1962 and 1966. These plaques identify important sites in Pomfret's early history and provide clues about life in Pomfret during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The sites so commemorated are:

**Table 6 - Historical Buildings**

| <b>Building</b>   | <b>Date</b>                  | <b>Location</b>        |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Abbott Memorial Library   | 1905                         | South Pomfret Village  |
| Winslow Tavern  | 1801-1850                    | Stage Rd.              |
| Teago Grange Hall   | 1906 (used as meeting house) | Stage Rd.              |
| First Pomfret Meeting House   | Prior to 1795                | Cloudland Road         |
| King's Highway  | Surveyed 1765                | Near the St. John farm |
| First Schoolhouse   | 1786                         | Dorothy Moore's yard   |
| First Town Hall   | Built 1831                   | South of Town Hall     |
| Unitarian Church given to Town of Pomfret for use as a Town Hall 1872 | Built 1845                   | Town Hall              |

Between the 1760s and 1800, when Pomfret was settled, primitive log cabins were built, then

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houses, and barns. Many of these old cellar holes can still be seen along the earliest roads, particularly the King's Highway, Allen Hill Road, Breakneck Hill, and the road from the Town Road over to Howe Hill.

Two of the oldest homes still in use are the Deake house on the ridge overlooking Hewittville and the Snow house behind the North Pomfret Church. Pomfret maintains three cemeteries and there are also a few inactive and historical family cemeteries. The three current cemeteries are the Hewittville Cemetery, the Bunker Hill Cemetery and the Burns Cemetery, all of which date to around the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, the Hewittville Cemetery being the oldest of the three. However, the first official town cemetery was near or on what is today Cloudland Farm and was simply called the "Old First Cemetery," active from 1774 to around 1820.

The first family cemetery was probably the Perry family cemetery on Allen Hill Rd. where the first recorded burial of Lucy Perry, who died at just over two weeks old, occurred in 1783. Additional family cemeteries listed by the Vermont Old Cemetery Association are the Fraser and Edmonds family cemeteries. The Fraser Cemetery is located along Stage Rd. between Suicide Six and Wild Apple Rd. It is not known where the Edmonds Cemetery is located. Other cemeteries where early Pomfret residents are remembered are the East Barnard Cemetery and the Cushing Cemetery, the latter located at the end of Cloudland Rd. in Woodstock.

The inventories of old houses in Pomfret started over the years do not appear to be complete. A 1915 map by Robert Perkins shows only some of the original grants, locations of homesteads, original owners, and owners at that time. A 1973 map prepared by the Pomfret Historical Society of "Historical Sites" shows the locations of homesteads with names and dates of original owners and current owners. Whether some of the structures or portions of the structures on these sites are the original ones is not certain. Many of the original buildings burned and were replaced at a later date. Also, some houses were moved to new sites.

Original structures are an important resource for local historians in understanding what life was like during periods of Pomfret's past. Particularly important is the documentation of these buildings prior to renovations or demolition.

## **Special Features**

All of Pomfret is special and there are a number of places and natural features that warrant special mention. Just a few of them are:

- Cloudland Farm, the original center of Pomfret, and the surrounding hillsides
- Galaxy Hill (formerly one of Pomfret's poor farms)
- Sherburne Farm in North Pomfret
- Pomfret's town and family cemeteries
- The views of pasture land and hayfields around Hewittville
- The hillsides and open areas along Blackmer Road

- 
- The Dana-St. John farm and surrounding hillsides
  - Thistle Hill Farm in North Pomfret
  - Sugarbush Farm in South Pomfret
  - Town Hall (formerly the Unitarian Church)
  - The Congregational Church in North Pomfret
  - The views and hillsides along Wild Apple Road
  - The view from Webster Hill Rd. looking south along Pomfret Road
  - The view from Allen Hill Rd. near the Leavitt Farm
  - Teago General Store in South Pomfret
  - The Suicide Six Ski Area in South Pomfret
  - The Appalachian Trail corridor
  - Amity Pond Natural Area
  - The Abbott Library in South Pomfret

## **Future Land Use**

### *Drivers of Future Growth*

In looking to the future, the past must ever be considered. The collective challenge is planning for future growth while maintaining valued elements of historic and existing settlement patterns. While that may sound straight-forward on the surface, it is important to remember that Pomfret's settlement patterns have gone through periods of ebbs and flow. The historical settlement patterns have naturally followed the population of the Town at any given moment time. For example, Pomfret had more village or hamlet areas when the population was highest and that occurred in the first half of the 1800's (see Appendix C). In fact, historical documents refer to at least three village areas: North Pomfret (Pomfret Rd. and Caper St. area), Pomfret (the area around Town Hall), and South Pomfret (by Teago General Store). During periods when the population is smaller, however, the settlement pattern has typically been more dispersed.

The Pomfret of today is most like the Pomfret of 1890 in terms of population size. Today, the settlement pattern is best characterized as being dispersed. Future land use areas are not necessarily required to mimic these historic patterns, but instead should reflect a vision of the future, even if the proposed land use settlement pattern suggested differs from the present pattern.

Since 1940, Pomfret has added an average of 47 homes per decade, but more recently that trend has slowed to 27 homes per decade since 1990. The highest period of growth occurred in the years between 1960 and 1990. Since that time Pomfret, like other rural towns in Vermont, has



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experienced a significant reduction in the pace of growth. The population of Pomfret dropped 9% between 2000 and 2010 matching a continuing trend throughout rural Vermont.

Although there was a slight increase in new housing between 2000 and 2010 (9 units), it appears the increase was in non-resident or second homes. This trend of little or no growth in total population, declines in school age children, and an aging of the adult population is common in the entire rural northern New England area. This may continue until there is significant growth in the economy or other unforeseen external events, bearing in mind that the country has been in its worst economic condition since the Great Depression.

There are two predicted key drivers for Pomfret's future land use, both residential and agricultural/forestry. First, a growing "back to the land" movement is expected to bring a steady trickle of demand for housing and land. That movement includes small-scale farming (including the increasing consolidation and commercialization of the maple sugaring industry), an influx of artisans and small-scale farmers (bakers, woodworkers, cattle farmers who lease or buy land for pasture) and a corresponding growth in services supporting those activities. A second and perhaps more pronounced factor is growth in nearby healthcare employment opportunities (e.g., Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center (DHMC)) and a corresponding growth for supporting services (e.g., health administration).

The Town recognizes a growing movement of small-scale farming and supports the continued use of the land for agricultural and forest management activities. The definition of what constitutes farming is undergoing change, but in general Pomfret favors continued productive use of the land.

With the nation's aging population and an expansion in the availability of health care, there will undoubtedly be an ever increasing consumption of health care services in the Upper Valley. Healthcare workers represent the most significant category of employment of those living in Pomfret (20.3% annual growth since 2002). The 2010 U.S. Census shows that there were 452 workers residing in Pomfret and of those 66 (14%) were employed in the health care industry (NAICS code 62), up from just 15 workers in 2002.

A 2012 regional housing needs assessment, published by the New Hampshire Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission, estimates that health care will account for 68% of the job growth in the Upper Valley by 2018. Pomfret should expect that some share of those workers will want to live in Pomfret due to its desirability and proximity to health care facilities in the immediate area. North Pomfret is approximately 19 miles from DHMC with a commute time of about 36 minutes, thus within reasonable commuting distance and time (South Pomfret is further away by Route 4).

#### **See Appendix C – Pomfret Future Land Use Map**

Even without these demands for new housing, Pomfret should prepare for the possibility of increased development pressure in the future. Newer technology permits the use of septic systems in areas where they were not feasible in the past. Other factors that could create more future development and demands for housing are:

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- A weakening of the Current Use program, resulting in higher taxes on undeveloped land, and thereby forcing the sale of what is today open space
  - Continued improvements in internet availability and technology that will allow more people to work from home
  - A return of people who grew up in or near Pomfret and have achieved at least some degree of financial independence after having lived elsewhere in the country
  - Improved, more efficient modes of transportation improving access to this area for people seeking to escape urban areas

While some of this growth will continue to be for second homes, the expectation is that the bulk of growth will be for housing demands resulting from increased economic opportunities, both job opportunities in nearby cities and towns, as well as increases in local small-scale agricultural and forestry activities. Even by 2030 at the highest estimate, the intensity of development is not expected to be more than 39% of Pomfret's most developable land (up from 31% in 2010). Thus, Pomfret should be able to retain its rural character while making room for new residents.

### **South Pomfret Village Area**

The Pomfret Planning Commission has collected input from members of the community and has used this guidance to create a framework through which the citizens' vision can be implemented. This vision includes changes to land use areas that support the goals of the community while remaining consistent with state law. The **South Pomfret Village Area** will be established to implement this vision.

The South Pomfret Village area is the one area that has developed into a small community center with mixed land uses at higher densities as compared to the more rural areas of Pomfret. South Pomfret has the most densely clustered mixed-use pattern of development in Pomfret and is home to a general store with a Post Office, the Abbott Memorial Library, a fire station, the local grade school, and a new arts center. Adjacent to the South Pomfret Village Area is the Suicide Six ski area, a small historic privately owned ski area. Having this Village Area is consistent with historical settlement patterns, but it also accomplishes a modern goal by reducing the impact of growth on the more rural areas of the town, thereby helping to retain the important rural character of the town.

The South Pomfret Village Area may support housing types at densities that are higher than the surrounding areas. However, because South Pomfret has neither public water nor sewer, all development should be at a density that can be supported by the ability of the soils to support on-site wastewater systems. In the future, community wastewater, water supply, or both could facilitate a more typical village pattern.

**Figure 10 - Satellite Image of the Delineated South Pomfret Village Area**



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**Figure 11 - Aerial Image of the South Pomfret Village Area**



**Figure 12 - Aerial Image of the South Pomfret Village Area & Suicide Six**





**Figure 13 - Teago General Store, circa 1970**



In time, the South Pomfret Village Area may be suitable for retail stores and services, tourist businesses, lodging, public facilities and other business enterprises at a small scale with appropriate site plan design characteristics fitting the context of their surroundings. Growth in the South Pomfret Village Area may depend, to some degree, on eventually developing a means to deliver public water and sewer.

### **Rural Areas**

Rural Areas in Pomfret consist primarily of residential, forestry, and agricultural land uses, with some home business, outdoor recreational and natural resource uses. Home businesses are appropriate land uses within Rural Areas and are valuable to both the quality of life and the economic character of the region. Historically some home businesses in Pomfret have extended outside of the residential buildings with product and equipment into accessory structures or in the open. To maintain the character of the area, larger home businesses extending beyond the residential and accessory structures should be subject to site plan review ensuring compatibility with the residential uses.

Non-residential uses including small service businesses, small professional offices and inns may be acceptable land uses for Rural Areas provided that such uses are planned as relatively small in size or scale, do not unduly conflict with existing or planned residential, forestry or agricultural uses, and do not unduly affect rural character. Larger retail establishments serving a regional market are not appropriate for Rural Areas, but appropriately scaled businesses with a secondary retail component may be allowed. In circumstances where land is proposed for residential or non-

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residential uses, development should be sited to minimize or avoid adverse impacts on agricultural and forest land, wetlands, river/stream corridors, and mapped wildlife habitat blocks and corridors.

The future character of the town will be affected by the location and density of future development of new lots. The number of new houses in a subdivision may not have as much negative impact as where those houses are sited with regard to the working landscape, and scenic and natural resources.

### **General Land Use Goals**

1. Preserve the traditional Vermont land use pattern of a concentrated South Pomfret Village Area surrounded by rural countryside.
2. Promote economic development while balancing the Town's preservation goals.
3. Increase the number of people who are able to work closer to home.

### **General Land Use Policies**

1. Pomfret supports land uses that foster preservation of the Town's character. Pomfret is characterized by working rural landscape with pockets of small and concentrated residential settlements. Pomfret generally discourages intensive land uses. One factor in determining intensity is the amount of area a new development project would consume relative to the amount of open space remaining.
2. Very Low intensity residential, agricultural and forestry projects are generally permissible in the Rural Residential Area. Other low intensity projects may be permitted, depending on the impact the project would have and whether the impacts can be mitigated, e.g., by screening.
3. Pomfret does not generally have the physical infrastructure to support high intensity land uses (for example, commercial-scale utility projects, large warehouses or primary retail). High intensity uses that cannot be supported by existing infrastructure will be located in more suitable areas, such as Woodstock and Hartford. Pomfret does not have a commercial district.
4. With the exception of Planned Unit Development (PUD's), the Town will continue with 2 acre minimum lot size zoning. In the future, the Town should consider other methods (e.g., larger minimum lot size or density-based formulas) as the demand for other kinds of zoning arises.
5. In the case of multiple unit projects, e.g., PUD's, buildings shall be clustered. Approval of future subdivision development within PUD's should be reviewed based on a system that permits smaller residential lots and larger open space parcels for agriculture, forestry, while limiting the total number of new lots on a specific parcel. Topography, limited access, scenic and natural resources should be taken into consideration and will be taken into consideration where mandated by statute.

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6. Encourage projects that will result in new construction of affordable housing and conversion of existing structures to affordable housing as part of PUD's.
  7. Above and beyond meeting state-regulations, new development shall:
    - Minimize development of existing farmland or land with a high potential for future agricultural or forestry use;
    - Avoid undue adverse effects on significant natural resources including stream corridors, wetlands, and habitat areas; Discourage the introduction and spread of invasive plant species.
    - Avoid undue adverse visual effects on open meadows and forest lands as viewed from public right-of-ways;
    - Maintain scenic vistas of the working landscape, hillsides and ridgelines.
  8. Density of new development will be limited to the physical capacity of the land and without degradation of the environment.
  9. The rate of development shall not exceed the ability of existing and planned town services and facilities to support it.
  10. Developers should consider thoughtful siting and grouping of structures to replicate traditional settlement patterns.
  11. The Town will promote traditional agricultural and forestry activities and encourage innovative new ones. These agricultural and forestry activities should include the use of tillable land, pastureland, and all kinds of forestland and help provide primary and secondary sources of income that foster local economic opportunities.
  12. Home-based businesses are encouraged in all areas of the Town. To maintain the character of the area, larger home businesses extending beyond the residential and accessory structures should be subject to site plan review ensuring compatibility with the residential uses.
  13. Manage future growth in Pomfret so that economic development does not create distinct commercial and industrial districts.
  14. Placement of telecommunications towers, energy generation facilities, or other infrastructure shall be sited to preserve the scenic beauty of the landscape and do not cause any undue adverse effect. Commercial-scale solar and wind development projects shall be screened so they cannot be seen from any public road or trail.
  15. Discourage the spread of invasive plants that change the traditional landscape and compromise wildlife habitats by crowding out native species.

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## **General Land Use Recommended Actions**

1. The Town should research the true number of housing units that exist in Pomfret. The Grand List only reflects what properties are billed for property taxes, but some properties may have more than one housing unit (e.g., those with rental units). (Planning Commission)
2. The Town should develop a strategy to work with land owners to convert existing structures into affordable housing. (Selectboard)
3. Inventory and recommend measures against invasive plant species on roadsides and stream banks and in forests and fields (Invasive plant committee)
4. The Town should develop a list of scenic vistas that the Town would like to protect through its zoning regulations (Planning Commission).

## **Specific Land Use Policies: South Pomfret Village Area**

1. The South Pomfret Village Area is designed for mixed uses (within the same structures or adjacent structures). The Town will generally direct medium intensity non-residential uses into the South Pomfret Village Area where the proximity of land uses is closer together and the need for open space is lower. The South Pomfret Village Area still reflects Pomfret's rural character and any new development must be consistent with the existing character of that Area (for example, a recent project that converted a barn into a community arts center).
2. Light commercial and industrial activities, and primary retail establishments, shall be located within or adjacent to the Village Area. All activities in the village area will be reviewed to ensure that the scale is commensurate with the Town's ability to support those activities.
3. Shops and services, tourist businesses, lodging and public facilities, at a scale and design appropriate to the existing characteristics, are encouraged.
4. Development in the South Pomfret Village Area shall reflect existing settlement patterns, land capacity, and the availability of utilities and infrastructure for expansion.
5. Conversion of structures and older buildings of historic merit is encouraged to increase longevity and enable new, more economical, and energy efficient uses of property and to avoid obsolescence.
6. Where new development is planned, efforts must be made to ensure that it is complementary and compatible with the architecture and configuration of existing buildings and streetscape, and respects the traditional size and scale, proportions, and shape of the neighborhood.
7. Single, two, and multiple family housing at medium to high densities is encouraged in the village area.



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8. New businesses shall be limited to uses that do not adversely affect the quality of life, the unique character and historic atmosphere of the village, or the rural residential nature of the Town.

**Specific Land Use Recommended Actions:** *South Pomfret Village Area*

1. Consideration should be given to the future of the Suicide Six ski area and what future uses of that area will be consistent with the Town's long-term vision. (Selectboard)
2. The Town should explore funding opportunities to determine the feasibility and cost to establish a municipal water and sewer system for the South Pomfret Village Area. Funding may be available through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) or municipal planning grants made available by the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development. (Selectboard)

**Specific Land Use Policies:** *Historic Districts and Buildings*

1. Protect and preserve Pomfret's natural and historic resources, rural character, and scenic beauty for the health, safety, and enjoyment of current and future generations.

**Specific Land Use Recommended Actions:** *Historic Districts and Buildings*

1. The Town should inventory sites and structures of historic significance and establish criteria for the degree of protection and maintenance needed (Planning Commission).
2. The Town should assemble an informational guideline for buildings and areas on the State of Vermont Division of Historic Preservation Historic Sites & Structures Survey, which will be advisory only, and will provide information to protect and enhance the historic character and resources of these buildings and areas (Planning Commission).

**Specific Land Use Goals:** *Rural Areas*

1. Maintenance of a rural living environment is the primary goal for the Rural Residential Area.

**Specific Land Use Policies:** *Rural Areas*

1. Residential, agricultural, and forestry uses are to be the primary and dominant land uses in the Rural Residential Area. Except for new home-based businesses, secondary retail, or existing commercial or industrial activities, new commercial or industrial activities not associated with home-based businesses shall not be located in the rural areas. Primary retail activities shall not be located in the rural areas.
2. Residents are permitted to conduct home-based businesses, provided that the nature of the occupation is customary or appropriate in rural residential areas, that it does not detract from the rural character of the area, and that it does not cause an undue burden on the ability of the town to provide services such as highways and fire protection.

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3. New land development shall be planned and sited to promote its continued use for agriculture and forestry. This can be accomplished by siting residential and other non-agricultural uses on the least productive soils or at the edges of woodlands and fields, relatively close to roads. In addition, the layout of building lots shall be designed to preserve crop and pasture land and managed woodlands.
  4. Non-residential development within the Rural Areas shall be consistent with the existing character of the neighborhood.
  5. Where possible, conversion of farm buildings into new residential structures is encouraged.
  6. Continue the Town's subdivision policies and regulations that discourage rapid development of land in a way that outpaces the current Town's ability to provide for infrastructure.

**Specific Land Use Policies:** *Ridgeline Areas*

1. The Town shall protect the ridgelines through continued application of the Ridgeline Overlay and enforcement of Ridgeline zoning.

**Specific Land Use Policies:** *Flood Hazard Areas*

1. The Town shall protect the flood hazard areas through continued application of the Flood Overlay and enforcement of Flood zoning.
2. The Town will strive to avoid and minimize the loss of life and property, the disruption of commerce, and the extraordinary public expenditures and demands on public services that result from flooding related inundation and erosion.
3. The Town shall ensure that the selection, design, creation, and use of development in hazard areas is safe and accomplished in a manner that is consistent with public well-being, does not impair stream equilibrium, flood plain services, or the stream corridor.
4. The Town shall manage all flood hazard areas designated pursuant to 10 V.S.A. Chapter 32 § 753, the municipal hazard mitigation plan; and make the Town of Pomfret, its citizens, and businesses eligible for federal flood insurance, federal disaster recovery funds, and hazard mitigation funds as may be available.
5. The Town will endeavor to protect the environmental and recreational value of Pomfret's rivers and streams.

**Specific Land Use Policies:** *Agriculture and Forestry*

1. Pomfret supports agriculture and forestry because these activities help to retain the rural character of the town, and provide primary and secondary sources of income that foster local economic opportunities.

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2. The community understands the importance of agriculture and forestry to the Town and recognizes that agricultural and forestry practices may create conditions, including noise and odors that may create conflicts with residential use. Purchasers of homes should understand that the town cannot retain its rural character without reasonably exposing home owners to the sights, sounds and smells of a working landscape. Neighbors will try to resolve any problems among themselves; however, it is understood that reasonable agricultural practices, which are defined by State policy, benefit farming operations and contribute to a working landscape, harmony with neighbors and community pride.
  3. The Town supports the use of “Accepted Agricultural and Forest Management Practices” and encourages the use of “Best Agricultural Practices.”
  4. Encourage sound agricultural practices such as crop rotation, organic farming, and sustainable woodlot management practices that do not deplete natural resources.
  5. Where residential subdivisions and PUDs are proposed adjacent to farm operations, reasonable setbacks may be required from the lot lines next to cropland for wells and residences under the subdivision regulations. Reasonable buffers between residences and cropland, including roads and pasture land, may be required. This requirement is designed to minimize conflicts between farm operations and residential uses, however mechanisms other than buffers may be permitted to achieve such goals.
  6. Promoting sustainable, economically viable farming and forestry alternatives is important to the future of farming and forestry in Pomfret. Diverse agricultural enterprises, including dairying, hay production, livestock production, produce stands, and specialty farms such as wildflowers, nurseries, berries, orchards, produce, and value-added products in general will be encouraged. Included here are growing activities related to Vermont’s “farm to plate” movement. Pomfret encourages local production and consumption.
  7. Land in active agricultural or forest use should continue to be taxed at a rate that allows the land to stay in active use. The Town should consider measures of its own in the event state tax incentives are abolished.

#### **Specific Land Use Policies:** *Natural Resources*

1. Avoid land use decisions that will result in habitat fragmentation.
2. Awareness is crucial to the protection of the town’s natural resources. The town encourages and should support land owners becoming more educated on the impacts that development has on habitat, wildlife corridors, and other natural resources. Land owners should consider these impacts before starting a development project, including the impacts of constructing new or expanding existing roads.
3. Ensure that agricultural practices and Town road maintenance do not degrade the water quality of Pomfret’s streams and brooks. Ensure that the town road maintenance practices minimize the spread of invasive or detrimental plants and encourage land owners

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to adopt agriculture and land management practices to minimize the spread of invasive and detrimental plants.

4. Preserve any existing Town rights-of-way that can provide access to natural resource, historic and scenic vista sites.
5. Ensure that the installation or relocation of utility poles, other utility equipment, and towers is done in a manner that has little or no impact on scenic roads and vistas.
6. For air quality and safety purposes, excessive brush burning in Pomfret that adversely affects surrounding landowners should be limited.
7. Encourage best practices that reduce the Town's collective carbon footprint.

**Specific Land Use Recommendation Actions:** *Natural Resources*

1. Inventory and recommend protection measures to ensure preservation and protection of Pomfret's natural resources, including:
  - Habitats of rare, threatened or endangered animal and plant species
  - Brooks, streams, fisheries, stream banks
  - Wetlands, vernal pools
  - Wildlife habitats
  - Agricultural and forest land
  - Mineral resources: gravel, sand, rock
2. Identify the sources of public drinking water (aquifers) in Pomfret and develop and implement a long-range land use plan to protect them.
3. Identify, inventory, and prioritize those elements that significantly contribute to Pomfret's rural character and scenic beauty. These include:
  - Hilltops and ridgelines
  - Scenic vistas
  - Open pastures and meadows
  - Scenic roads
  - Barns and houses
  - Stone walls
  - Village settlement patterns
  - Town and community buildings

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4. Identify those resources that could be accessible by trails.
  5. Review development projects to limit the impact on:
    - Elements that significantly contribute to the rural character and scenic beauty of Pomfret;
    - Natural resources that need to be preserved and protected

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## Chapter 5: ENERGY

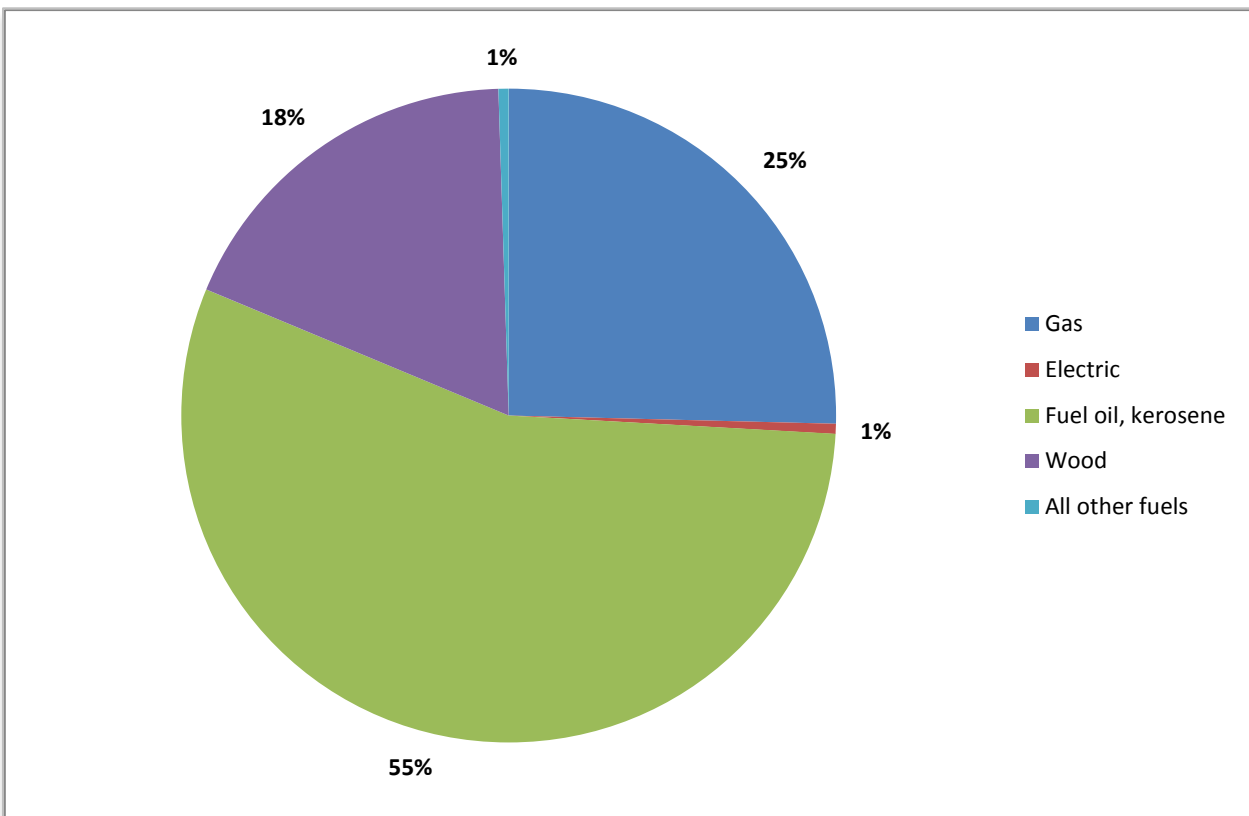
### Introduction

Historically, energy supply has been taken for granted because it is relatively abundant and cheap. Only during “crisis” has society considered the finite supply of non-renewable energy sources. Although earth’s limited supply of natural resources for energy production is a global problem, steps taken at a local level can have a significant impact if taken by all towns. This is why Vermont’s planning law requires an energy program for each community.

### Energy Use and Sources

Of the 413 occupied homes in Pomfret, approximately 55% heat with oil, 25% heat with gas, and 18% heat with wood. Use of heating oil has dropped slightly and use of gas has dropped by 6% while the use of wood has increased substantially from 12.5%.

**Figure 14 - Pomfret Home Heating Fuel: 2009-2013**



*Source:* Housingdata.org

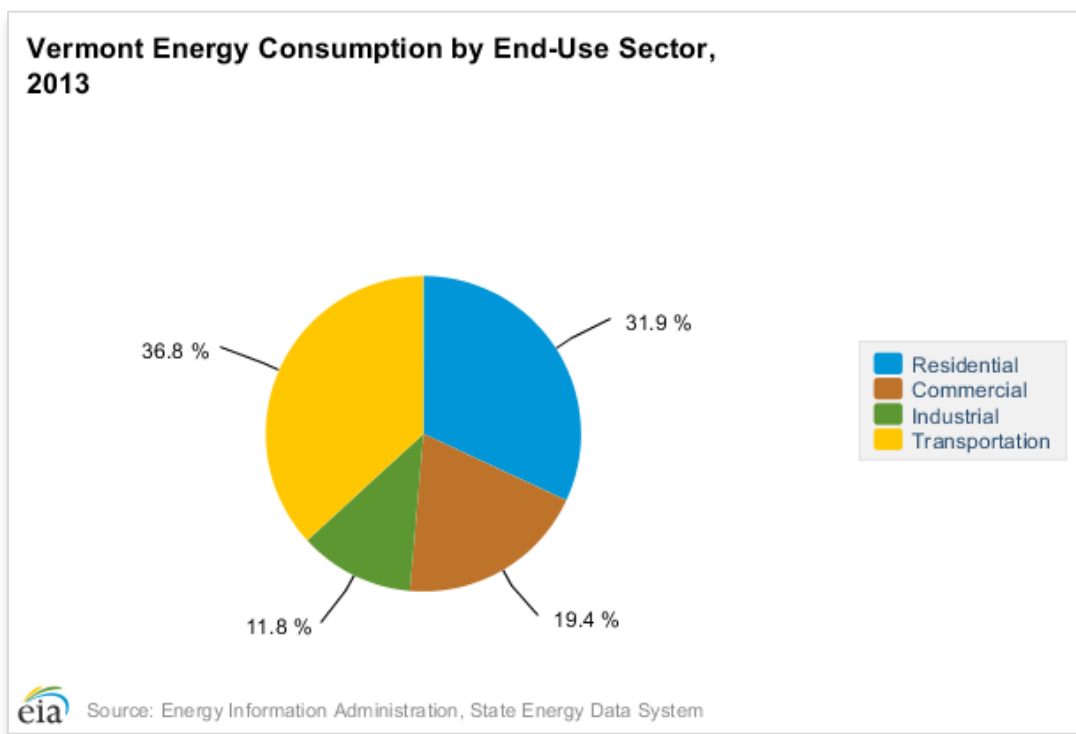
According to the most recent data collected by Efficiency Vermont, in 2014 the average Residential kWh Usage per household in Pomfret was 7,370 kWh. Although, this may seem high when compared to other towns in the region, this number is likely skewed because of the way in

which farms are metered. For example, if a farm has a meter hooked up to a main house, then there's no way to segregate farm consumption from home consumption; this type of configuration causes the residential consumption rate to look high compared to non-farming towns.

## Fossil Fuels

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration's "Vermont State Energy Profile" (2013), 60% of all energy consumed in Vermont is petroleum based. Pomfret, like most other towns, depends on fossil fuels primarily for residential home heating (See Figure 15) and transportation needs. Pomfret residents are almost entirely reliant on driving for commuting purposes and personal needs.

**Figure 15 - Vermont Energy Consumption**



Propane Fuel (Liquefied Petroleum Gas) is a by-product of natural gas processing and crude oil refining. Propane is designated by the U.S. Department of Energy as a clean-burning, high-energy alternative fuel and accounts for 25% of home heating in Pomfret and when combined with wood Pomfret's reliance on fossil fuels is more even when it comes to home heating (43% non-petroleum versus 55% fossil fuel). In comparison to overall fossil fuel consumption across the state, Pomfret is about on par with the rest of Vermont in terms of relying on fossil fuels for home heating needs.

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## Renewable Resources

For the Town, individuals or small groups of homeowners, the keys to becoming a more sustainable community are increasing measures to become more energy efficient, including conservation, as well as developing renewable energy. The term “renewable energy” refers to the production of electricity and fuels from energy sources that are naturally and continually replenished, such as wind, solar, geothermal (using the earth’s heat to create power), hydropower, and various forms of biomass (trees, crops, manure, etc.). Alternative fuels produced from renewable sources are attractive options for displacing petroleum-based fuels.

Although initial set-up costs for renewable energy generation systems can be high, these systems can save money over the long-term. Renewable energy also creates a more distributed energy system, thereby relying less on centralized plants.

**Wood:** Wood is considered a renewable resource and heating with wood saves non-renewable energy sources, eliminates the use of fuel to transport sources long distances, and supports the local economy. The Department of Public Service has estimated that the average wood burning house-hold uses between 3 and 4 cords of wood each year during the heating season. Although burning wood can increase air pollution, particularly in the valleys, clean burning furnaces and stoves can mitigate this problem which will help reduce the purchase of energy from utilities. The Town encourages residents to operate wood burning furnaces and stoves that meet the EPA’s efficiency ratings, available on the EPA website at: <https://www.epa.gov/compliance/list-epa-certified-wood-stoves>.

**Solar Energy:** Solar has potential for providing clean, reliable, and safe energy. The cost of photovoltaic panels has come down dramatically in recent years. Most areas in Vermont have the potential for some solar energy production though Vermont generally ranks toward the bottom nationally in terms of the number of clear days (49<sup>th</sup>) and number of hours of sunlight (43<sup>rd</sup>). In general, Vermont has about 2,295 hours of sunlight per year (26% of total annual hours, as compared to Arizona which has about 3,806 hours of sunlight per year, or 43% of total annual hours). Still, “going solar” can be cost-effective for the individual home owner. The potential for solar depends on whether the site (whether roof mounted or pole mounted) faces south and whether there are any obstructions that would impede solar absorption.

Water Heating – Solar water heating is the most common form of residential-scale solar use in Vermont. Solar systems are not regulated at the state level and are subject to local regulations. According to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, it has been shown that water heating by solar is not generally cost effective due to high up-front costs and in colder climates due to the increased energy demand and “solar fraction” (see, e.g., report entitled “*Break-even Cost for Residential Solar Water Heating in the United States: Key Drivers and Sensitivities*”). More recent studies have shown that a solar PV option or combination solar PV and heat pump is more cost-effective than a solar thermal system (see, e.g., Green Building Advisor, cost analysis, December 26, 2014).

Net Metering – Decreasing costs of equipment have made solar electric generation systems more prevalent. Solar systems are no longer utilized exclusively by “off-grid” buildings.



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The advent of net-metering allows buildings to be connected to the grid while utilizing renewable energy. Act 99 (passed in 2014) requires net metering regulations to be revised as of January 1, 2017. If the current draft Rule 5.100 (March 30, 2016) goes into effect, it may make it less advantageous for Vermonters to go solar because the renewable attributes would be devalued or transferred to the utilities. As of the drafting of this plan, the PSB has been unable to finalize Rule 5.100 by the deadline established in Act 99 (2014).

**Preferred Siting** – Pomfret generally encourages development of roof-mounted solar of less than 10KW. This is the preferred type of siting. One pole-mounted solar arrays at a scale appropriate for one residential private use (less than 10KW) are allowed where roof-mounted panels are not feasible, with reservation about adverse visual impact, both individually and cumulatively. Pomfret does not have Town owned land that would be suitable for the siting of larger solar projects, including community-scale projects. However, if land became available for acquisition or if a private land owner was willing to host a community scale solar project, then a larger scale, community project would be allowed. All ground or pole-mounted solar arrays will provide screening so it cannot be seen from public roads and trails.

At the 2016 Town Meeting, 61% of the 23 residents who completed a survey of attitudes toward solar installations strongly supported residential solar systems of less than 15KW, and no resident marked “strongly do NOT support.” Ratings for community solar systems greater than 15KW were mixed, but more negative; 22% “strongly support,” but 41% “strongly do NOT support,” with the average midway between the extremes. On siting, 39% thought solar systems should be limited to rooftops. For ground-mounted systems, about half the respondents wanted complete screening and half would be satisfied with limited or no screening.

**Community/Commercial-scale solar:** Pomfret prefers solar development at a scale of 10KW or less and is generally not suitable for larger projects greater than 10KW. The reasons are as follows (see the Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission website, Regional Energy Plan, TRORC Region Potential Solar Sites as a reference):

- The only three-phase power in Pomfret is approximately ¾ mile from the Pomfret road, at the Woodstock Property Line, to the Suicide Six ski area.
- Steep slopes, wetlands, and meadows that are used for agriculture, scenic vistas, as well as limitations in the South Pomfret village area.
- Much of the most viable land for community or commercial-scale solar is on or near prime, productive agricultural soil and productive forest land.
- Some land suitable for community or commercial-scale solar abuts endangered species habitat.
- The Town does not own land that would be suitable for community or commercial-scale solar (e.g., gravel pits or brownfields).

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- The Prosper Valley School has land but any available land is currently used for parking, sports rec. field, and hillside used as for Agriculture, Biology, and Forestry education and recreation activities for the students.
  - Pomfret's topography limits large-scale solar development. Additionally, South facing land and other land in the rural area are limited by the following factors:
    - Extremely steep slopes of greater than 20% grade make up 12,573 acres (49%) of Pomfret's total acres.
    - Steep slopes of 15% to 20% grade make up 5,904 Acres (23%) of Pomfret's, 25,280 total acres.
    - Clearing forested areas on steep slopes for any kind of large-scale development increases erosion and disrupts wildlife habitat.
    - South facing sites have some of the most desirable open meadows and pastures currently being farmed and managed forested land. These areas have scenic vistas and command some of the highest property values.
    - 5,835 acres of conserved land not subject to development.
    - As of 2016; 16,913 acres enrolled in the Current Use program.

### **Community Standards**

The following community standards will be considered in undertaking solar development projects, in updating Pomfret's land use regulations to address solar facilities subject to local regulation, and in the review of new or upgraded solar facilities by the Town of Pomfret and the Public Service Board (Section 248 review).

**Plan Conformance:** New solar facilities and proposed system upgrades should be consistent with the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan, the Vermont Long-Range Transmission Plan, and utilities Integrated Resource Planning (IRP).

**Benefits:** A financial cost/benefit analysis, to include a detailed landscape maintenance plan underneath the array, demonstrating public need that outweighs adverse impacts to local residents and resources must be documented for municipal support of new solar facilities located within or which may otherwise affect Pomfret. Facility development must benefit Town of Pomfret's residents, businesses, and property owners in proportion to the impacts of the proposed development. Development must also benefit the State of Vermont insofar as the retirement of Renewable Energy Credits (RECs). Pomfret favors renewable energy development where Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) are retired against the State's renewable energy targets. While developers and property owners are free to sell the RECs as they wish, the Town strongly encourages developers and property owners to retain the RECs and retire them against the State's goals. For large-scale development projects, the developer must inform the Town whether the RECs will be sold out of state, or retired.

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**Impacts:** Ground and pole mounted shall avoid undue adverse impacts to significant cultural, natural and scenic resources.

**Decommissioning:** All facilities greater than 10 KW shall specify conditions for system abandonment and decommissioning, including required sureties (bonds) for facility removal and site restoration to a safe, useful, and environmentally stable condition. All hazardous materials and structures, including foundations, pads and accessory structures, must be removed from the site.

The decommissioning plan for the a solar development project will provide details and a cost estimate for removal of the solar facility and rehabilitation of the project property back to its pre-project condition. At the end of the life, the project will be evaluated whether (1) it is financially viable to continue to operate the project as is; or (2) A Section 248 amendment should be filed to repower the project with new solar modules and equipment at that time; or (3) the project should be decommissioned. The decommission plan also will address decommissioning in the event of project abandonment. A detailed cost estimate will be included in the decommissioning plan. The petitioner will establish a decommissioning fund in the cost estimate amount, prior to project construction and name the Public Service Board as beneficiary. The decommissioning fund would initially be funded by an irrevocable standby letter of credit that includes an auto-extension provision provide for inflation using the CPI for the length of the contract and would be issued by an A-rated financial institution solely for the benefit of the Board, or security deposit to held in a federally insured bank in the United States.

- **Solar facility siting requirements:** New solar facilities shall be sited in locations that do not adversely impact the South Pomfret Village Area, and the rural residential areas including working farm and forest land. Solar facilities shall, therefore, not be sited in locations that adversely impact scenic views, roads, and views across open fields, hillsides, or ridgelines. All solar development must not use reflective colors; only earth-tone colors acceptable.

**Prohibited Areas:** Solar facilities are prohibited in the following locations:

- Floodways.
- Fluvial erosion hazard areas.
- Surface waters and riparian buffer areas (except stream crossings).
- Classified wetlands.
- Areas that will result in fragmentation of Pomfret's working landscape, including underdeveloped forestland and open meadows and pastures. Any development must minimize the clearing of natural vegetation. These areas provide on going employment and income for land owners.
- Rare, threatened, or endangered species habitat or communities as mapped or identified through site investigation, and core habitat areas, migratory routes and travel corridors.

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**Wind Energy:** Power generated from wind is done through a wind turbine installed on top of a tall tower, where it collects and converts wind into electricity. Towers for home use are generally 80-100 feet in height and are far less obtrusive than larger, commercial “wind farms” that have become a subject of great debate throughout Vermont.

Similar to solar, wind energy is an intermittent resource and its generation fluctuates in response to environmental conditions. The amount of energy produced by a specific wind tower can depend greatly on location, height of the tower and proximity to other obstructions.

There are multiple levels of potential wind energy generation, ranging from Class 1 (10-11 mph) to Class 7 (19-25 mph). Commercial wind farms generally are sited in Class 3 or higher areas. With this in mind, and as illustrated in Table 5, Pomfret has potential for 81 acres of large commercial-scale wind energy. However, the majority of these lands are conserved.

**Table 7 - Potential Wind Development Areas (Acres)**

|  | <b>Class 1</b><br>(10-11<br>mph) | <b>Class 2</b><br>(12-13<br>mph) | <b>Class 3</b><br>(13-14<br>mph) | <b>Class 4</b><br>(15-16<br>mph) | <b>Class 5</b><br>(16-17<br>mph) | <b>Class 6</b><br>(17-18<br>mph) | <b>Class 7</b><br>(19-25<br>mph) |
|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Residential</b><br><b>(30-meter)</b>                | 8,852                            | 453                              | 0                                | 0                                | 0                                | 0                                | 0                                |
| <b>Small</b><br><b>Commercial</b><br><b>(50-meter)</b> | 0                                | 1,138                            | 427                              | 0                                | 0                                | 0                                | 0                                |
| <b>Large</b><br><b>Commercial</b><br><b>(70-meter)</b> | 0                                | 0                                | 5                                | 76                               | 0                                | 0                                | 0                                |

*Source:* Vermont Energy Atlas

## **Agriculture:**

*Cow-power:* Cow power is the conversion of manure to usable energy. While cow power is successful in certain areas of Vermont, Pomfret does not have large scale dairy farms that would allow for the quantities of manure needed for viable cow power.

*Biomass:* Biomass energy has the potential to supply a significant portion of energy needs, while improving rural economies, increasing energy independence, and reducing pollution. Biomass energy comes in many forms; virtually all plants and organic wastes can be used to produce heat, power, or fuel.

A commercial biomass power plant would require a great deal of space to accommodate the various stages of collection and conversion of the mass into fuel before burning it to produce electricity. Therefore, commercial biomass energy generation facilities should be located close to available biofuels to reduce transportation impacts and costs. Water can also pose a problem as

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large commercial biomass facilities require large quantities to handle the recycling process of waste materials. Materials would have to be transported to and from the facility, so truck traffic should be a consideration in selecting a site.

There are currently no biomass energy generation facilities in Pomfret. Before a biomass energy generation facility is located in Pomfret, developers should prove that their proposed project will not negatively impact the rural character of the community or the local road system.

**Hydropower:** According to the Vermont Energy Atlas in 2013 three potential hydro sites were identified in Pomfret: Freeman and McCord, both located on Mill Brook Stream and Martin located on Cloudland Brook Stream. Martin-Cloudland Brook, is considered “in-service,” meaning while it is not actively producing power, it has the basic infrastructure to do so. Retrofitting the “in-service” existing sites presents the most effective means of adding potential hydropower while keeping environmental impacts low.

While these sites have been identified as “having potential,” a wide range of environmental, economic, and permitting challenges exist.

## **Section 248 Considerations**

To the extent possible, placement of energy generation systems should meet the purpose and intent of “Ridgeline and Hillside Conservation Areas” (Part 15) of the Pomfret Zoning Ordinance.

Placement of infrastructure systems of any type in Pomfret should ultimately and directly benefit Pomfret residents in some measurable way.

For all large infrastructure systems, with regard to preferred, prohibited, and significant areas, please reference page 286, section F. Permitting Considerations of the Two Rivers-Ottawquechee Regional Plan (2015).

## **Residential Energy Efficiency**

There are a number of ways that the town of Pomfret can meet its local energy demand, first by lowering that demand, and then by working to meet the remaining need with local, untapped energy resources.

*Decreasing Energy Use by Changing Behavior:* Decreasing energy use by changing behavior and by decreasing energy use by implementing energy efficiencies are key. Please refer to the Vermont Residential Building Code handbook for compliance with residential building energy and standards (RBES) available at [http://publicservice.vermont.gov/energy\\_efficiency/rbes](http://publicservice.vermont.gov/energy_efficiency/rbes).

## **Municipal Role in Energy Efficiency**

Although communities are unlikely to have an impact on energy consumption at the global level, they do have an impact at the local level given their demand for and use of energy. The relationship

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between a municipality and its energy use creates opportunities to have an impact on local energy use reduction.

**Energy Committee:** Pomfret does not have an Energy Committee (EC), which acts as an advisory board to the Selectboard and Planning Commission (PC) on all things energy related. The EC is a volunteer group that is appointed by the Selectboard for the purpose of establishing and implementing the town's energy goals. EC's activities can include conducting energy audits on municipal buildings, tracking energy use for these buildings, and working with the PC on the Energy Plan.

**Auditing Municipally Owned Buildings:** Many towns in Vermont own buildings that are old and inefficient in many respects. For instance, older buildings often have insufficient insulation, wasteful heating and cooling systems, and out-of-date lighting. These kinds of infrastructure problems result in higher energy use with the resulting cost passed onto taxpayers.

Municipal officials should consider conducting audits on additional Pomfret buildings in order to determine what improvements are necessary, and which projects would have the highest cost-benefit ratio in terms of energy and financial savings.

**Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE):** Vermont enacted legislation in May 2009 (Act 45) that authorizes local governments to create Clean Energy Assessment districts. Once created, municipalities can offer financing to property owners for renewable energy and energy-efficiency projects. Eligible projects include the installation of solar water and space heating, photovoltaic panels (PV), and biomass heating, small wind, and micro-hydroelectric systems. Property-Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing effectively allows property owners to borrow money to pay for energy improvements. The amount borrowed is typically repaid via a special assessment on the property over a period of up to 20 years; if the property owner wishes to sell the parcel before fully repaying the obligation, then the obligation is transferred to the new property owner at the time of sale.

## **Energy, Land Use, and Transportation**

Pomfret recognizes that energy efficient land use patterns that utilize existing infrastructure and are designed to accommodate all modes of travel are vital parts of increasing energy efficiency and reducing the carbon footprint.

Vermont promotes development policies that maintains and enhances the "historic development pattern of compact centers surrounded by rural landscape." Pomfret by its very history and nature is that "surrounding rural landscape." Currently there is no compact center. Efforts to direct future development to existing hamlets or village areas as proposed in the Land Use chapter of this plan could reduce energy expended for transportation within the town.

Pomfret has no public transportation (beyond on-demand for the elderly) and is unlikely to have any in the near future. However, because transportation is such a substantial portion of local energy use, Pomfret supports the continued development of conveniently located Park-n-Ride facilities.

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The closest Park-n-Ride to Pomfret is currently in Sharon; however a Woodstock Park-n-Ride is currently under development and will be convenient for Pomfret commuters.

### **Long Range Goals**

1. To support increased energy efficiencies in existing and new buildings, in transportation and to support the long-term availability of safe, reliable, renewable and affordable energy supplies.

### **Objectives and Policies**

1. Pomfret officials (the Selectboard and Planning Commission) will participate in the Public Service Board's Certificate of Public Good review of new or expanded generation and transmission facilities to ensure that local energy, resource conservation and development objectives are identified and considered in future utility development.
2. Pomfret supports the development and use of private renewable energy resources. As a guide, solar projects should be less than 10 KW and should ideally be of a scale that promotes individual use, or group net-metering.
3. Developers must make all possible efforts to minimize damage to important natural areas as identified in the Land Use and Natural Resource section of this Town Plan. Developers must also make all possible efforts to ensure that projects are sited and designed so that they do not create undue adverse effects on the scenic and rural character of the Town.
4. Pomfret officials will work in cooperation with state, regional and local agencies, emergency service providers, regional suppliers and municipalities to develop local emergency contingency plans that ensure access to critical energy supplies and measures to reduce nonessential energy consumption in the event of an abrupt energy shortage.
5. Pomfret encourages new significant public investments (including, public recreational areas and municipal facilities) to be located in close proximity to existing infrastructure that utilizes existing roads whenever possible.

### **Recommendation Actions**

1. Increase awareness and use of energy conservation practices, energy-efficient products, and efficiency/weatherization programs through educational outreach to the public with the assistance of Efficiency Vermont and local utilities..
2. Pomfret officials or volunteers are encouraged to track municipal energy use and costs (for example: through the EPA's free Energy Star® Portfolio Manager Program), and develop an overall energy budget to manage Pomfret's energy consumption, which may also include the development of local generating capacity.

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3. Implementation of energy efficiency measures are encouraged for existing and future facilities as opportunities arise (e.g., facility retrofits, renovations, and equipment upgrades).
  4. Town officials are encouraged to develop municipal procurement and purchasing policies that incorporate life-cycle costs (purchase, energy, operation, maintenance and disposal costs) for future purchases that emphasize products that are energy efficient (e.g., Energy Star® rated). There should be available locally, durable, recyclable, nontoxic, and manufactured products with post-consumer recycled material.
  5. Facility maintenance and operation policies that maximize energy efficiency while maintaining comfort levels for employees and visitors are encouraged. Examples include: installation of day-lighting tubes, programmable thermostats, occupancy light sensors, smart strips and energy star appliances.
  6. Development of municipal vehicle purchase, maintenance and use policies, including minimum fuel efficiency standards for new vehicles is encouraged.
  7. Consideration of the benefits of using regionally available alternative-fuels, such as biodiesel, in municipal vehicles is encouraged.



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## Chapter 6: TRANSPORTATION

### Introduction

Transportation in Pomfret relies primarily on a network of paved and gravel town highways. Preserving the rural and agricultural character of Pomfret is an important aspect of many sections of the Town plan. Since improving roads can lead to development pressure, it is not Pomfret's intention to build new roads, significantly improve old roads or to pave existing Class 3 roads. Because, among other things, more roads lead to more energy use, the Town will continue to provide economical ways of moving goods, services, and people at a safe speed within and through Pomfret via an existing network of roads.

### Town Highways

The State of Vermont periodically publishes road maps for each town in Vermont. Pomfret's 2015 map of roads, including legal trails, is available at the following web link:

[http://vtransmap01.aot.state.vt.us/Maps/TownMapSeries/WINDSOR\\_Co/POMFRET/POMFRET\\_MILEAGE\\_2015.pdf](http://vtransmap01.aot.state.vt.us/Maps/TownMapSeries/WINDSOR_Co/POMFRET/POMFRET_MILEAGE_2015.pdf)

The State uses four classifications of roads to distribute financial aid to towns for road repair. State aid to a town decreases on a per mile basis from Class 1 to Class 3. According to the 2013 Town Report, in Fiscal Year 2013, the town received a total of \$133,111.90 to maintain these roads. The roads and their respective classifications in Pomfret are:

**State Highways** are major roads with state route numbers entirely maintained by the state. Pomfret's only state highway is the 1.4-mile section of Route 12 in the southwest corner of the Town.

**Class 1** Town highways are extensions of a state highway route with a state route number. Pomfret has no Class 1 Town highways.

**Class 2** Town highways serve through traffic from one community to another and are paved. The Town of Pomfret maintains 14.7 miles of Class 2 highways. These are:

- Woodstock Town Line to South Pomfret - Pomfret Road: 1.16 Mi.
- South Pomfret to Barnard Town Line - Stage Road: 2.81 Mi.
- South Pomfret to Hewitt's Corners - Pomfret Road: 4.42 Mi.
- Hewitt's Corners to Sharon Town Line - Howe Hill Road: 1.77 Mi.
- Hewitt's Corners to W. Hartford Town Line - Pomfret Road: 4.57 Mi.

**Class 3** Town highways are all the other Town roads that are maintained year round. In Pomfret, there are 47.25 miles of Class 3 roads that are all gravel.

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**Class 4** Town highways are not maintained by the Town except for bridge and culvert repairs, and occasional grading. The Town receives no state funds for maintaining its 6.6 miles of Class 4 roads.

All town highways have a 3-rod or 49.5-foot right-of-way by state statute, unless surveyed or otherwise deeded.

**Legal Trails** are Town rights-of-way, usually former Class 4 roads. They are no longer maintained and may be restricted to non-motorized use.

**Discontinued highways** were previously Town roads but their rights-of-way have been transferred to adjoining landowners. Neither the public nor the Town has any residual rights in discontinued highways.

## **Road Maintenance**

In 2013, the Town of Pomfret was awarded a Better Backroads Category A Grant for a new town-wide inventory of the Town's highways and for the development of a Road Surface Management System. This project's scope of work included the following major steps:

- Inventory of road surfaces,
- Survey of road surface and drainage conditions,
- An update to the existing culvert inventory, and
- A final report recommending a major maintenance program with the associated costs for the next five years.

The purpose of this project was to identify specific road segments and culvert/drainage problem in the Town and to determine effective repair solutions to each problem according to the Vermont Better Backroads Manual and the road standards of the Town of Pomfret. The Town adopted the 2013 Town Road and Bridge Standards from VTrans and the State of Vermont on March 20, 2013. The roads and culverts throughout the Town of Pomfret, based on the findings of this grant project, are generally in fair to good condition.<sup>5</sup>

The cost of maintaining the Town highways is second only to the cost of education in the Town budget. Pomfret's public highway system is by far the largest asset in Pomfret. With this fact in mind, maintenance practices should be directed to preserve the life of this asset over the long term for the benefit of the greatest number of users.

Summer maintenance is a matter of trying to repair and prevent the deterioration of the roads, both gravel and paved. A regular reclaiming and repaving program has continued for several years, retreatment should be done as needed. Some years several miles have been repaved, some of which will barely last a year because of poor underlying road structure. In other years short sections of highway have been completely rebuilt including the underlying base, whose repairs should last for many years.

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<sup>5</sup> "Town of Pomfret - Road Surface and Culvert Maintenance Plan." 2013.

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## **Safety**

### **Highway Department**

The Highway Department has a Road Foreman, appointed by the Selectboard, and two full-time employees. See the Pomfret Annual Report for a current listing of Town Highway Equipment. Major equipment replacement is based on a ten year Capital Equipment Replacement plan with annual allocations to the Highway Equipment Reserve Account. Both the Replacement Plan and the Reserve Account are included in the annual Town Reports and updated each year based on projected costs and the anticipated service life of the equipment. This plan allows for equipment to be replaced before the maintenance costs become excessive and provides for level funding from year to year.

The Town Garage, which houses all the highway equipment, is in marginal condition and needs a major overhaul with a small addition. It is important that all the equipment used in the winter be stored in a heated building with adequate space for regular maintenance and repair work. Improvements to the Town Garage are long overdue: it is not in compliance with waste handling best practices and safety issues. Energy efficiency issues need to be addressed. The town will need to study and decide as to whether a major renovation will be more cost effective than short-term fixes.

With the current population, the operation of the highway department and its inventory of equipment seem to be adequate. If the population were to increase significantly, particularly in areas served by Class 3 gravel roads, the highway department might need to add employees and equipment, as well as more garage space.

### **Ordinances**

There are Town Highway Ordinances relating to speeding, road improvement, and driveway access. A map of Town roads (Map #3) is included in Appendix C and in the web link provided at the top of this section.

### **Private Roads**

The Town should be concerned about private roads or driveways for three reasons:

- First, the intersection of private roads with town roads must be safe and not cause damage to town roads. The sight lines must allow for the speed limit on the road. Ideally, the intersection angle should be as close to 90° as possible, and the elevation and grade of the private road, relative to the town road, should be designed to prevent water erosion damage to the town road. All new driveways require an Access Permit issued by the Selectboard after they review the proposed plans and determine that they meet the specifications of the Town driveway access ordinance.
- Second, new private roads should be constructed so that emergency vehicles are able to reach residences and businesses year-round. Pomfret currently does not review or approve plans for private roads except where they intersect with the town road unless they are part of a

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major subdivision or are in the Ridgeline Zone. Many towns have regulations setting minimum standards for construction of private roads, particularly the maximum grade and minimum width.

- Third, new private roads can have a negative impact on the natural resources and scenic beauty of the Town. Poorly constructed roads can cause soil erosion during and after construction. Improper installation of driveway culverts can exacerbate siltation and drainage problems. Poorly sited roads can disturb wetlands or wildlife habitats. Roads built in open fields and on ridgelines can intrude on agricultural land and viewsheds.

### **Bicycle/Pedestrian Transportation**

Pomfret does not have any sidewalks or bicycle facilities (such as racks) anywhere in town. However, bicyclists within town and across the region travel Pomfret's roads to enjoy the scenic and rural landscapes. Road improvements that would reduce bicycle safety or discourage bicycling will not be supported in any sense.

### **Public Transportation**

To be efficient, public transportation requires that a large number of people go to the same place at the same time. The common view is that rural communities like Pomfret do not have the population to support a public transportation system. The exception is the school bus system where a portion of the community, approximately 15 percent, goes to the same places (the Prosper Valley School and Woodstock Union High School) at the same time each school day morning. The van picking up senior citizens at their homes and transporting them to the Thompson Senior Center in Woodstock is also a public transportation system. Although not as efficient as the school bus system, it is an important service to many of Pomfret's older residents.

Stagecoach Transportation Services, a non-profit organization based in Randolph, Vermont, is the local transit provider in this region. Essentially, they respond to individual needs for transportation to medical centers or elsewhere by acting as a coordination center for a list of volunteer drivers. The service, available to Pomfret residents, is supported by minimal fees in addition to federal and state funding. The Thompson Senior Center also has a van for the same purpose.

There are situations now and there may be new ones in the future that justify some additional form of public transportation in Pomfret. Similarly, carpooling, either by private arrangements or through Vermont Rideshare, would also have the benefit of minimizing dependence on private autos. Location of Park and Ride facilities in Pomfret would facilitate carpooling and are being established in other small Vermont towns. Full state funding for Park and Ride lots is available every year for this purpose.

The Vermonter is an Amtrak passenger train line running between Washington, D.C., and St. Albans, Vermont. It stops locally in Randolph and White River Junction.

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## **Regional Transportation**

Regional transportation planning in Vermont is now the joint responsibility of the Regional Planning Commissions and the state highway engineers in Montpelier. The Two Rivers-Ottawquechee Regional Planning Commission has a Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) made up of representatives from all towns in the region. The TAC is charged with creating a regional transportation plan that is coordinated with land use planning and is responsive to local needs and concerns.

Of special concern to Pomfret is traffic generated in other towns and flowing through Pomfret to other towns such as Hartford or Woodstock, or to Interstate 89. Further, the Town will not support so-called transportation system improvements that would effectively divert traffic from neighboring communities with state highways to or through rural townships such as Pomfret.

## **Long-Range Goal**

Maintain Pomfret's roads in a manner that promotes public safety, is consistent with land use goals, does not degrade the environment, and efficiently moves people, goods, and services.

## **Objectives and Policies**

1. Continue to schedule resurfacing of paved highways on a yearly basis, in a cost effective manner that will prevent road deterioration.
2. Continue to grade gravel roads and apply new material on a minimal basis. Continue to improve side ditches to keep the roads from significantly degrading without widening or straightening unless this becomes necessary to handle existing traffic.
3. Continue roadside mowing and removal of brush, dead trees, stumps, and rocks that interfere with vision on town roads.
4. Schedule regular inspections of roads, bridges, and culverts to determine repair needs on a priority basis.
5. Continue to allocate tax dollars to the Reserve Funds each year.
6. Encourage the Selectboard to continue use of the maximum amounts of federal and state aid available for highways.
7. May provide for enforcement of the Town Traffic Ordinance by the County Sheriff and State Police to reduce the high number of trucks and automobiles that travel at excessive speeds and damage paved roads.
8. Enhance safety by designing road improvements that do not encourage drivers to speed by setting appropriate speed limits.

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9. Appropriate speed limits, while promoting efficient movement of traffic, should take into consideration pedestrian use, built-up areas, and schools.
  10. The Town will not build new roads, improve old roads, pave existing Class 3 roads, or accept ownership of private roads to accommodate development unless such actions provide long term benefits outweighing costs to the Town as a whole.
  11. Any proposed new private road or driveway that serves two or more residences should meet minimum standards of construction, grade, and width to permit access by emergency vehicles.
  12. Construction of private roads should be regulated in a manner that protects town roads and provides safe intersections.
  13. The design and construction of private roads should be reviewed to ensure the protection of significant natural resources, agricultural and forest land, and scenic beauty.
  14. In the interest of keeping roads useable while maintaining rural character, roads should not be widened or straightened at the cost of damaging mature trees or stone walls.
  15. Maintain roads so that soil erosion and the use of salt do not adversely affect the environment.
  16. When improving, widening, opening or closing a road, the Town should do a cost benefit analysis.
  17. Develop and maintain a Capital Budget and Replacement Plan for the purchase of highway and fire vehicles and equipment.

### **Recommended Actions**

1. Develop a long-range plan and budget to reconstruct and resurface a percentage of the paved town roads every year to reduce deferred maintenance. (Selectboard)
2. Determine whether the Town Garage and Shed meet the needs of the Highway Department; plan and budget for additional space as required. (Selectboard)
3. Create design and construction specifications for new private roads and driveways to be used in Conditional Use review. (Planning Commission)
4. Where feasible provide and maintain pedestrian and bicycle paths with grant funding. (Conservation Commission and Planning Commission)
5. Work with legislative representatives to change government regulations on posting roads for weight limitations as traffic weights exceed the structural capacity of Pomfret town roads by granting more local control. (Selectboard)

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6. Work with legislative representatives to change State regulations governing speed limits on gravel roads by granting more local control. (Selectboard)
  7. Identify roads not used for access to properties and change their classification to legal trails for recreation. (Planning Commission)
  8. Make recommendations to the Selectboard about road widening and straightening. (Road Foreman)

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## **Chapter 7: TOWN SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

### **Introduction**

Pomfret's Town government provides services and facilities funded by property taxes. The most expensive of these are education (75 percent of the Town budget) and highway maintenance (20 percent), both of which are discussed in separate chapters. The subject of this chapter is the remaining 5 percent of the Town budget: the cost of Town government, fire and police protection, disposal of solid waste, planning and zoning, and recreation. As towns grow and residents raise their expectations of services their town should provide, the overall cost of these services has the potential to grow at a disproportionately faster rate than the tax base.

### **Town Government**

Pomfret is governed by an elected five-member Selectboard. The Selectboard also has an part-time administrative assistant. Responsibilities of the Selectboard and demands on their time have grown as State and Federal regulations continue to create more mandates for local governments. Compliance with these mandates means that Town officers must occasionally attend conferences to keep up-to-date on requirements and be available for daytime meetings with State officials or contractors.

The Pomfret Town Clerk and Treasurer are also elected at Town Meeting and are part-time, salaried positions. The Town Clerk and Treasurer each have assistants. In addition to performing official duties, the Town Clerk serves as the liaison between other Town officials and the public. An increase in land sales and the rate of development could increase the administrative workload of the Town Clerk.

The three elected Listers are paid by the hour to perform a highly technical job of evaluating Town property. The Town's core employees and officers – the Listers, Town Clerk, Treasurer, and anyone else working on Town business – share space in the Town Office in the recently updated historic Center School across the road from the Town Hall. The Selectboard meets there regularly, and most of the Town's records are protected there in a fireproof vault.

### **Emergency Services**

#### **FAST Squad and Ambulance**

The Pomfret FAST Squad is a group of volunteers with either First Responder or Emergency Medical Training who respond to medical emergencies in the Town. They are dispatched at the same time an ambulance is called but arrive sooner and administer first aid and stabilize the patient until the ambulance arrives. Their equipment is purchased with donated funds.

Ambulance service in Pomfret is provided by the Town of Woodstock which has two ambulances and full-time dispatch service. The Town pays an annual assessment to have this service available, and the patients are charged for actual usage. Unpaid bills are charged to the Town.



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## **Fire Protection**

In November of 2012, Pomfret's two independent fire departments merged into the Pomfret-Teago Volunteer Fire Department and now benefit from a coordinated department with improved training, a single efficient leadership team, and streamlined administrative, budgetary, and long-range planning.

Pomfret's fire protection is enhanced through mutual aid agreements with neighboring towns. A long-range plan for fire protection was accepted at the 1995 Town Meeting and will continue to be implemented and supported by municipal funds annually, as well as donations and grants.

Fire protection in Pomfret can be addressed from other perspectives. The best fire protection is prevention, which is the responsibility of the entire community, not just the fire department. Community financial support and able volunteers are essential to fire protection in Pomfret. It is important that all new development be accessible to standard fire equipment in all seasons. Where possible, water should be available in all areas of the Town through hydrants on new and existing ponds. Anyone planning to build a new pond or to upgrade an old pond should consider consulting one of the fire departments about installation of a dry hydrant. An inventory of all dry hydrants is on the Town's GIS system and easily available to firefighters. Existing burning regulations must be strictly enforced. Houses and other inhabited buildings should be permitted if they are designed to specifications allowing evacuation by existing municipal fire equipment. Houses and access roads should be designed for access by fire and emergency vehicles at all time of the year. Houses with steep access roads, those that are very large, or those without a nearby water source should consider installation of a sprinkler system.

Community volunteers can assist the departments in such non-firefighting jobs as fundraising, collecting important information, informing homeowners of the state law requiring smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and recommending fire extinguishers in appropriate locations. They can also assist the Pomfret Fire Department in sales of this equipment.

## **911 and Emergency Dispatch**

Emergency dispatch services for fire and ambulance emergencies are handled by the Town of Woodstock. Since updated road numbering is complete in Pomfret, all residents can now call "911" to reach this emergency dispatch center.

## **Police Protection**

Pomfret residents depend on contracted service from the Windsor County Sheriff's Department and Troop D of the Vermont State Police located at the Royalton Barracks in Royalton for speed control, safety and police protection. The State Police outpost there covers nineteen towns, sometimes with only one or two officers available to respond to emergencies. Often no officers are on the road between 2:30 and 7 a.m., although they are "on call" during those hours.

The Selectboard can appoint First and Second Town Constables. The Town Constable handles violations of the dog ordinance and assists in other emergencies. If the citizens want a higher level of protection, options include hiring a sheriff to be available certain hours, having the Town

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Constable trained, certified and officially on call for emergencies, or sharing an "outpost" trooper with a neighboring town.

## **Emergency Planning**

### *Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan*

The Pomfret Selectboard adopted a Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Plan in January 2005 that lays out local hazards and actions to reduce damage from future disasters. When combined with the Regional Pre-Disaster Mitigation plan, the local PDM Plan is the mitigation plan for the town. The Plan includes a critical facilities map that cites flood zones and frequently flooded areas.

### *Local Emergency Planning Committee*

Pomfret has four representatives on the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) #12. LEPC #12 covers 27 member towns in east-central Vermont. While LEPC #12's statutory responsibilities are related only to hazardous materials, the LEPC is also planning for floods and fires.

## **Solid Waste**

Pomfret is a member of the Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste Management District (GUVSWMD) created by 12 member towns to cooperatively manage regional solid waste in an environmentally sound manner. The District is responsible for locating sites and acquiring permits for replacement landfills. The district has obtained permits for access to a new landfill in Hartland and is currently contracted with the City of Lebanon to use their landfill. The GUVSWMD also contracts for recycling and hazardous household waste disposal with a facility in Hartford. For any single town, regional cooperation is more cost effective than applying for permits, building and operating its own transfer station and recycling center facilities.

## **Child Care**

As of early 2014, there are two providers in Pomfret registered with the State of Vermont for in-home childcare. Pomfret supports the private development of additional facilities to meet the child care needs of its residents and may assist with seeking funding to develop these facilities.

## **Planning and Zoning**

The administration of planning and zoning in Pomfret is the responsibility of the Planning Commission, the Zoning Administrator, and the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

The Planning Commission prepares the Town Plan for adoption by the Selectboard and prepares zoning and subdivision regulations for approval by the Selectboard and by the Town. The Planning Commission also sits as a quasi-judicial board to hear and review applications for major subdivisions and all development within the Ridgeline Zone.

The Zoning Administrator issues building and use permits and is responsible for enforcement of the regulations.

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The Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) is a quasi-judicial board that hears and reviews applications for conditional use permits, requests for variances, and appeals of decisions of the Zoning Administrator.

Planning and zoning activities have cost the taxpayers very little in Pomfret. The Zoning Administrator is a paid position, and the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Adjustment are volunteer boards without paid staff. Fees are charged for building permits and for applications requiring a hearing. State planning funds awarded to the Town as grants have substantially contributed to covering the cost of rewriting planning and zoning documents in Pomfret. The Town is a member of the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (TRORC), and pays a yearly assessment from Town funds, allowing access to technical assistance on planning and other land use issues.

As long as volunteers continue to be available and the process is kept simple, the present system seems to work. However, if the regulations are changed to require a more extensive review of projects, the result will be more work for these boards and for the Administrator. Should administrative help become necessary, permit fees comparable to those of other towns in the area would cover that expense without using tax money. Any changes in Town zoning regulations should take into consideration the cost of administration and the source of those funds.

### **Long Range Planning and Capital Budgeting**

In March 2016, Town residents voted and the Pomfret Selectboard appointed a Long Range Planning and Capital Budgeting Committee with the purpose of developing long-range plans and cost estimates relating to the capital needs for Town equipment and facilities. A Capital Equipment Replacement Plan was established and annually updated for Highway equipment, but no long range plan has been established and maintained for town buildings and the Fire Department. In 2009, the town offices were moved from the old town clerk building next door to the newly renovated Center School building.

The Town Hall and the Highway Garage are both in need of major renovations. Although a new roof has been put on the Town Hall, as well as other repairs, the building is in need of substantial structural repairs, energy efficiency improvements, modifications to meet ADA accessibility standards, and life safety code compliance upgrades. The Highway Garage has many functional deficiencies. A Town Building Reserve Fund was established in December of 2013 but a long range plan for upgrading and maintaining town buildings has not been created.

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## **Geographic Data**

Pomfret has access to VCGI (Vermont Center for Geographic Information) data and maps of the Town's roads, structures, land cover, surface waters, ridgelines, and wetlands. New data are added to the system regularly, the last major update occurring in 2012 from statewide digital orthophotography. Geographic data is an important tool in reviewing proposed development as it pinpoints issues to be addressed early in the process.

The Geographic Information System (GIS) is useful for long-term planning. Information on soils, roads, topography, natural resources, etc. can be combined to determine areas of Town appropriate for future development or areas where development should be limited. The fire departments and FAST Squad already use maps produced by the GIS for emergency response.

## **Recreation**

Pomfret's organized recreation facilities consist of a baseball field, a soccer field, and a playground, all at the school grounds in South Pomfret. The school's multi-purpose room is also used for basketball and volleyball. Pomfret sports activities are organized by volunteers and the Woodstock Recreation Department. Baseball and soccer teams receive heavy participation from girls and boys in the elementary school. All students in the Town and several surrounding communities are served by Ski Runners, a non-profit ski club, which offers alpine skiing at Suicide Six and cross-country ski programs at the Woodstock Touring Center, both at a very low fee. Ice skating and hockey are available at Union Arena in Woodstock.

Opportunities for organized recreation at the adult level are available through the Woodstock Recreation Department using Woodstock's facilities. Pomfret residents pay a non-resident fee to participate in the Woodstock programs that include many sports in all seasons, arts and crafts, dance, yoga, and theater. In addition, rock climbing is available at The Wall in Taftsville.

Organized sports and other recreational activities are limited in Pomfret by the lack of facilities and the small population. Extensive recreational facilities would be expensive to build and maintain, and it is more cost effective to utilize the facilities of larger towns. Pomfret has land available at the Prosper Valley School for more facilities. If facilities could be built with donated, State and/or Federal funds (with their inherent restrictions), a real benefit to the residents, particularly young residents, could be realized. It is hoped such facilities could be maintained with minimal local tax money. The community is fortunate in having a high quality family ski area, Suicide Six, which offers a variety of skiing terrain.

Informal recreation such as hiking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, bicycling, hunting, and fishing contributes significantly to Pomfret's quality of life. Protected areas such as the Appalachian Trail Corridor and the Amity Pond area will always be available. However, as more land is divided and developed, less land will be available for recreation. Existing rights-of-way on Class 4 roads and legal trails should continue to be held by the Town. Whenever possible, easements should be secured from cooperating landowners for future trails.

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## **Cemeteries**

There are currently three Pomfret cemeteries: Burns, Hewittville, and Bunker Hill. Space in them is extremely limited, and the Town must plan to use existing space efficiently and acquire more cemetery space. Interest from the perpetual care accounts currently pays for all Town cemetery maintenance.

## **Abbott Memorial Library**

Since 1905, the Abbott Memorial Library has been an important resource for the Town of Pomfret. A generous gift by the Abbott family provided land and money for the construction of the Library in 1903. For over a century Abbott Library has provided the children and adults of Pomfret access to books, and, in recent years, access to books-on-tape, videos, DVDs, and Internet access. Thanks to supportive community funding through town appropriations and private donations, the Library has met state accreditation standards continually since 1999.

For the past thirty years, the Library's primary strength has been its commitment to instilling a love of books and reading in the children of Pomfret. Beginning in the 1970s it served as the school library, a role it continued until the consolidated Pomfret School opened in 1991. Today, the Library continues this tradition with active programming for children, a cooperative relationship with the former Pomfret School (now the Prosper Valley School), and an excellent children's collection.

While it has focused on children, the Abbott Library is uniquely situated as a valuable resource for all Town residents. Its architecturally striking building (a historic landmark) is recognized as a place where community groups can gather for meetings or library-sponsored programming. In many ways, it serves as a town center for a geographically spread out community. The Library houses a fine historical collection helping to document the history of Pomfret and neighboring towns. A rapid and efficient interlibrary loan system sponsored by the State Library provides Pomfret residents with access to a universe of information and recreational materials.

## **Town Owned Buildings and Land**

- Town Hall with land
- Town Offices, Brick Building, and town shed with land
- Town Garage with land
- The Prosper Valley School with 38 acres of land, more or less
- Burns Cemetery
- Bunker Hill Cemetery
- Land, 35 acres, more or less off Joe Ranger Road
- Land, 100 acres, more or less off Joe Ranger Road (former "Lease Land")
- Land, small parcel, at Kenyon Hill Bridge
- North Pomfret picnic area (near firehouse)

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## **Long-Range Goal**

Provide Town services and facilities that meet the established needs of residents in a cost effective manner.

### **Objectives and Policies**

1. Support availability of high speed internet access throughout the town to facilitate economic development, education, and delivery of healthcare services to all homes and businesses in town.
2. Base planning for future services and facilities on conservative growth estimates which reflect the desire of the community to grow at a slow rate.
3. Continue Town government as a volunteer effort to the greatest extent possible, but utilize technical and administrative assistance when necessary and cost effective.
4. Develop and maintain current and long-range plans for the utilization, maintenance, and improvement of all Town facilities with appropriate costs estimates.
5. Supplement future fire protection facilities and equipment with community-based fire prevention programs and support for the volunteer fire departments.
6. Design roads and all development in Pomfret to be accessible to emergency vehicles year-round.
7. Where feasible, install approved hydrants in new and existing ponds. Such water sources should be accessible to fire trucks in all parts of the Town.
8. Augment the limited police protection in Pomfret by community awareness and a willingness to look out for the welfare of one's neighbor.
9. Consider the cost and complexity of implementing and enforcing the regulations when creating new zoning, subdivision, and other land development regulations.
10. When appropriate continue and expand regional cooperation in solid waste disposal, emergency services, and recreation facilities as the most effective way to provide quality services.
11. Retain Town rights-of-way as recreational trails. New rights-of-way should be accepted by the Town, when offered, for permanent recreational trails.
12. Acquire enough cemetery land for the future needs of the Town.
13. Continue to develop the Abbott Memorial Library as a resource and gathering place for residents of the Town.

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14. Support private sector efforts to seek funding to assist with the development of child care infrastructure.

15. Ensure that no barriers to increasing child care capacity are created by future changes in zoning regulations.

### **Recommended Actions**

1. Form an ad-hoc committee to keep track of how many homes and businesses in Pomfret have access to high-speed internet. This committee should also investigate options to expand high-speed internet to those residences and businesses that would like to have it, including engaging with providers to understand their abilities to provide the Town with this service.

2. Update population and household growth projections as new information becomes available so they can be used for planning future services and facilities. (Planning Commission)

3. Study the short- and long-term needs of Town for government operations including facilities, administrative help, and technology, and develop a capital budget. (Selectboard)

4. The volunteer fire departments should continue to enlist the help of non-firefighter volunteers to assist in community fire prevention and preparedness through education, inspections, updating dry hydrant and fire pond inventories, location of new fire ponds, etc. (Emergency Services Committee)

5. Revise land development regulations to ensure that all new development is accessible to emergency vehicles at all times of the year. (Planning Commission)

6. Analyze the need for increased police protection, if necessary. (Selectboard)

7. Purchase additional land for cemeteries. (Selectboard)

8. Advise the Selectboard on appropriate permit fees for land development regulations to cover the cost of administering the regulations. (Planning Commission)

9. Routinely evaluate the use of town owned parcels of land to ensure they are being used according to agreements or deed restrictions (Planning Commission)

10. Annually fund building reserve account through tax dollars or private contributions. (Selectboard)

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## **Chapter 8: HOUSING**

### **Introduction**

The cost of land, taxes, new construction, and existing housing limits the ability of many of the Town's residents and ex-residents who might want to live permanently in Pomfret to build, buy, and maintain homes in the Town. A housing plan should allow a diverse group of people from a range of ages and income levels to live and own homes in Pomfret. The high costs of land and housing have been major factors contributing to emigration from Pomfret, and this has altered the cultural and socio-economic mix of the Town's residents.

This housing chapter presents information on existing homes, data on the availability of land for housing, and the Town's population and incomes of its residents in examining current housing conditions. It takes into consideration the desire of residents to keep the Town rural and agricultural and the goals and objectives of the Land Use Chapter of this Town Plan to define Pomfret's future housing goals. Information used in this Chapter describing housing ownership in Pomfret comes from several sources: the Pomfret Listers' files, the 2010 U.S. Census, the American Community Survey, various Vermont Housing Data, and summaries from the Vermont Department of Taxes. Statistical information from these sources do not match exactly because of differences in records kept and differing classifications and data categories.

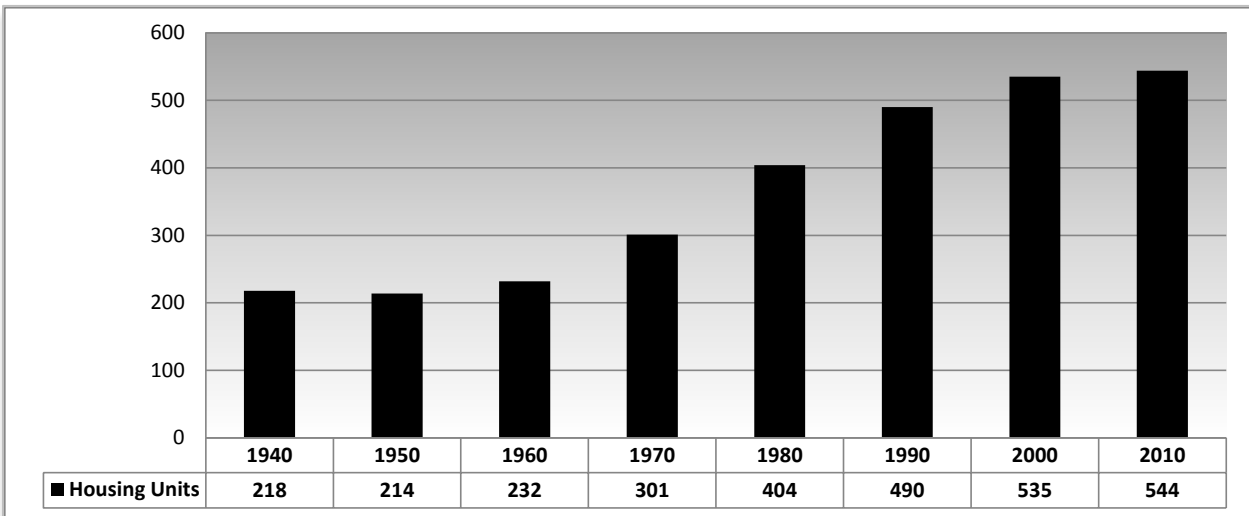
### **Current Housing Information**

As the Town has evolved from a primarily agriculture-based community to one that is predominately residential and a bedroom town for regional employment centers, there has been a marked change in the ownership of housing.

Based on the U.S. Census data, in 2010 there were 544 housing units in Pomfret, a 1.7% increase in the total number of units over the prior ten-year period, or an average rate of housing growth of .9 units per year during the 2000's. This is less growth than Pomfret experienced in its slow growth era (1940-1960). During that time an average of 1.5 units per year were added to the housing stock. The average rate of increase of housing stock in Windsor County during the 2000's was more than Pomfret's, increasing by about 7.9%.



**Figure 16 - Number of Housing Units in Pomfret**



Source: Housingdata.org

As of 2010, the vast majority of Pomfret's housing stock (94.7%) consists of single family homes while 3.1% consist of multi-unit dwellings and 2.2% consist of mobile homes.

In 2012, according to Listers' data (see Appendix B), of the primary residences owned by Town residents, 150 stood on less than six acres and 190 on over six acres. Table 6 shows the total number of primary residences is 340, a decrease of 33 or -8.8% over the number in 2006.

**Table 8 - Number of Primary Residences**

| Primary Homes |           |           |           |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 2012          |           | 2006      |           |
| < 6 acres     | > 6 acres | < 6 acres | > 6 acres |
| 150           | 190       | 142       | 231       |
| Total         |           | Total     |           |
| 340           |           | 373       |           |

Appendix B also shows that in 2012, 28 vacation homes were sited on plots less than six acres and 102 vacation homes on more than six acres, totaling 130 vacation properties. Table 7 shows a decrease of 29 vacation homes, or -18.2% since 2006.

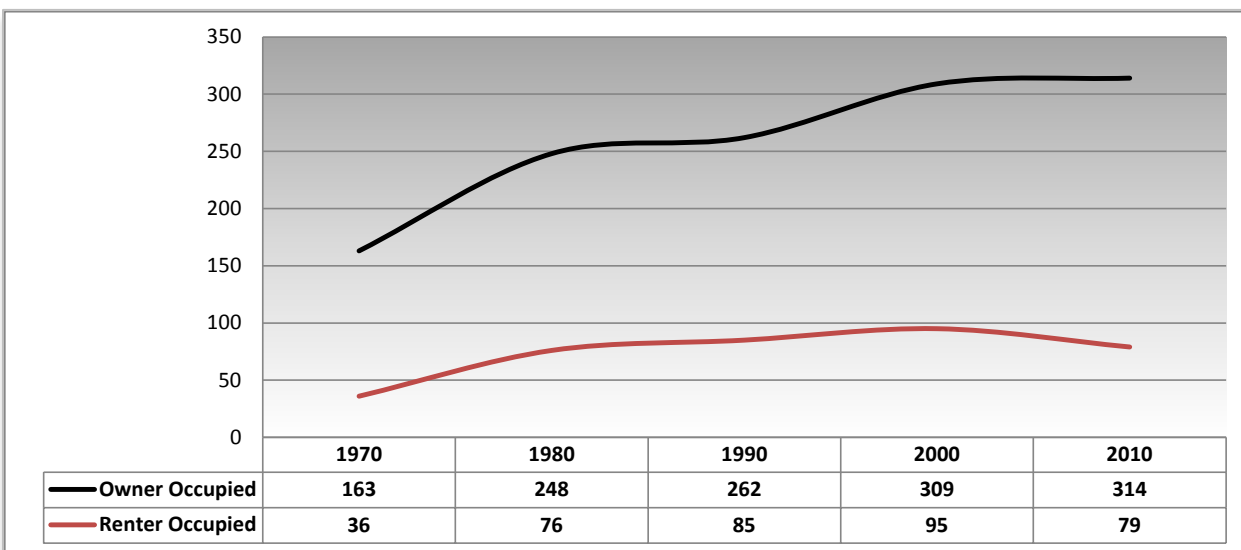
**Table 9 - Number of Vacation Residences**

| Vacation Homes |           |           |           |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 2012           |           | 2006      |           |
| < 6 acres      | > 6 acres | < 6 acres | > 6 acres |
| 28             | 102       | 36        | 123       |
| Total          |           | Total     |           |
| 130            |           | 159       |           |

In the 2010 census, almost a quarter of homes in Pomfret were listed as vacation homes: 133 homes or 24.4% of Pomfret's total of 544 homes were classified as vacation homes.

According to the 2012 Grand List, Pomfret had five mobile home structures, six properties classified as "farms." There are no condominiums in Pomfret. The 2012 Grand List shows 110 parcels of land without homes. According to the 2010 US Census, there were 79 occupied rental units in Pomfret at the time. As of 2013, the median rental price in Pomfret is \$1,016 which is substantially higher than the median for Windsor County (\$852) and the median for the State (\$875). However, the median income for renters is also higher in Pomfret (\$42,250) as compared to both Windsor County and the State (\$30,927 and \$30,943, respectively).

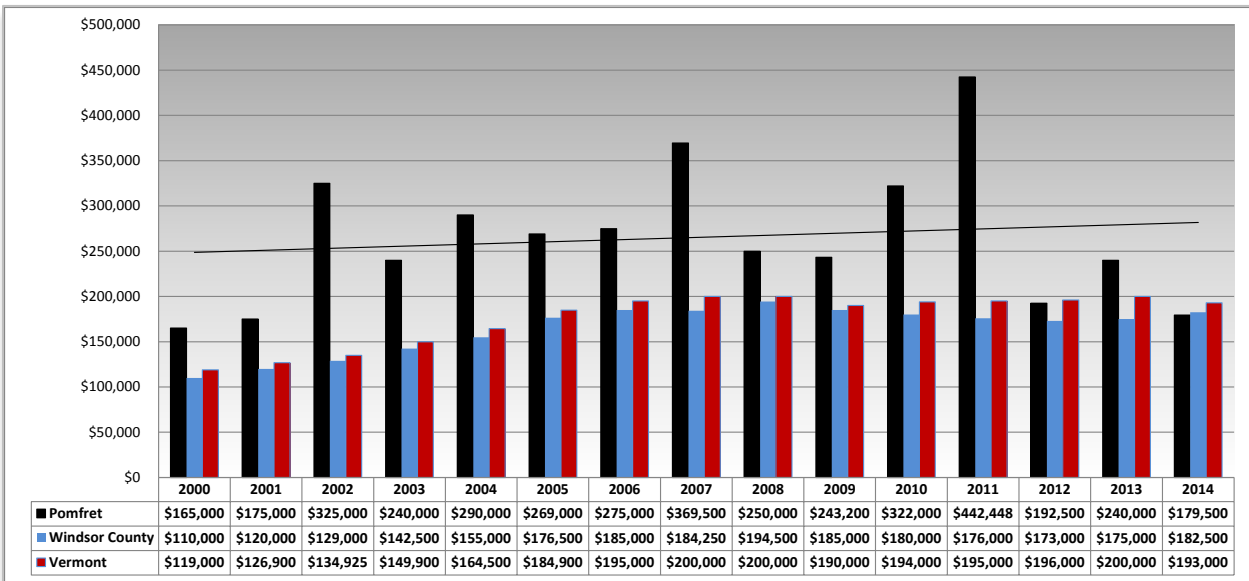
**Figure 17 - Pomfret Housing Occupancy Types**



Source: Housingdata.org

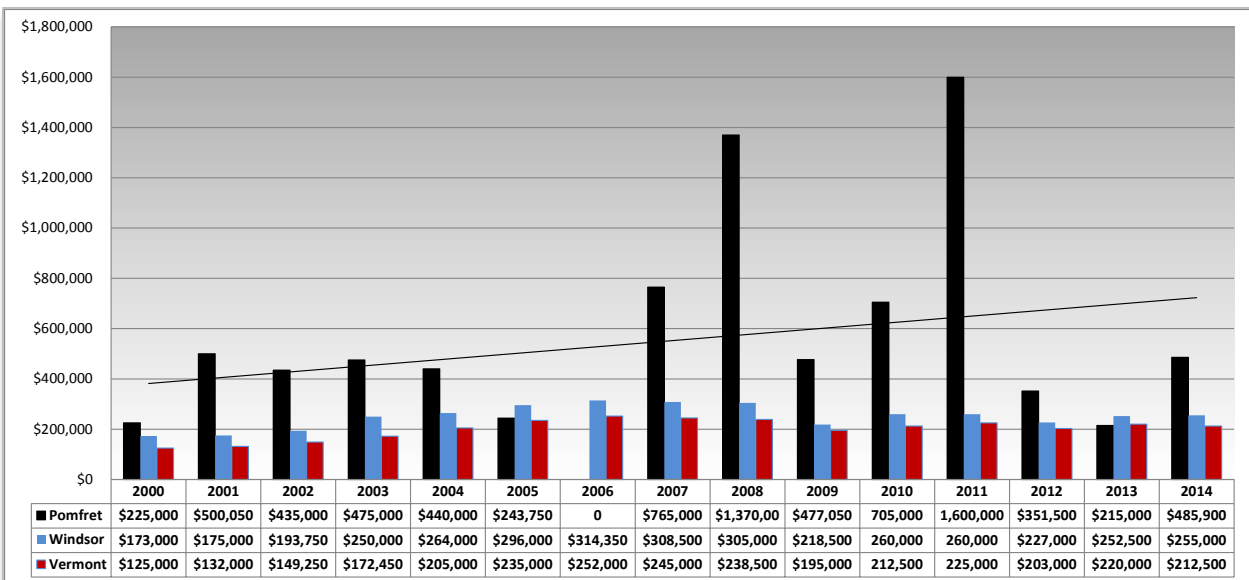
As indicated by the following figure, the median prices on primary single family residences sold between 2000 and 2012 in Pomfret show an overall increase, despite the year-to-year variations, outpacing the price gains in both Windsor County as well as the State of Vermont. Increases in housing prices will yield increases in property taxes.

**Figure 18 - Median Prices of Single Family Homes Sold**



Source: Housingdata.org

**Figure 19 - Median Prices of Vacation Homes Sold**



Source: Housingdata.org

## Land Availability

As of the 2016, 16,913 acres of Pomfret's 25,280 total acres was enrolled in the Use Value Appraisal Program ("Current Use" Program). This number represents 66.9% of Pomfret's total acreage, down 2.4% from 2013. Of the land enrolled in Current Use, 5,835 acres are held in conservation. Roughly 28% of the land in Current Use is owned by Town residents while the other 72% is owned by non-residents. The availability of land for housing is limited by the low turnover

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rate in general for properties in Pomfret. The long-term average of primary residences sold is 8.4 per year since 1988. In the last ten years, the average has been 5.9 units sold, representing a 28% decrease in the units sold. However, in 2014 twelve (12) housing units were sold.

### **Town Population and Income**

From the 1980s through 2000, Pomfret experienced a steady uptick in population growth at 14.1% (from 856 to 997). However, according to 2014 Vermont Department of Health records, Pomfret's population dropped to 894, a decrease of 10.3% from 2000 and an increase of only 4.3% since the 1980s.

In August 2013, the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development produced a study on population projects through 2030. The State Agency created countywide projections to be used as the basis for determining population projections for specific towns throughout Vermont. The study highlights two separate scenarios: Scenario A creates population projections where the national economy is generally healthier (as in the 1990s); Scenario B creates population projections where Vermont sees higher rates of in-migration (as in the 2000s). In either scenario, Pomfret is predicted to see lower population growth than Windsor County:

**Table 10 - Pomfret Population Projections through 2030**

| <b>Scenario</b> | <b>2010 Census</b> | <b>2020 Projection</b> | <b>% change from 2010</b> | <b>2030 Projection</b> | <b>% change from 2010</b> |
|-----------------|--------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Scenario A      | 904                | 923                    | 2.1%                      | 928                    | 2.7%                      |
| Scenario B      | 904                | 872                    | -3.5%                     | 836                    | -7.5%                     |

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 and Vermont Population Projections -- 2010-2030*

Regardless of population increase or decrease, all indications are that, like the rest of Vermont, housing in Pomfret will continue to serve an aging population and people seeking to establish second homes.

According to the State's Department of Taxes, in the Town of Pomfret during Tax Year 2014, 192 filers (43.6% of the total) had incomes of less than \$35,000, out of a total of 440 filers.

For 2013, \$412,481 in property tax adjustments and rebates were reported for Pomfret: 49 persons submitted applications for the Circuit Breaker Rebate Program,<sup>6</sup> averaging a rebate of \$534; 156 persons submitted applications for the Vermont Property Tax Prebate (on school taxes), averaging rebates of \$2,423; and 9 people requested rebates through the Renter Rebate program, averaging rebates of \$907. (See Appendix B).

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<sup>6</sup> Formerly known as "Homeowner Rebates"

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## Future Housing

When trying to establish Pomfret's housing goals, one must recognize that any housing plan is subject to regional economic pressures. The location of major employers across the Connecticut River in New Hampshire has a profound effect on employment in East Central Vermont. These dynamics are explained by the presence of large employers in the education (Dartmouth College, employing 4,400) and health care fields (Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center) in nearby Hanover and Lebanon, NH.<sup>7</sup> Locally, however, Vermont employers have left the region or have cut back their work forces, though, according the 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, the unemployment rate for workers in Pomfret is 1.6%.

While more than half of Pomfret's workforce is employed in high quality management and sales jobs, (and the majority of the Town's working residents commute out of Pomfret to work); looking at the trend in wages in the region, real wages (per worker) are an average of 10% lower than real wages at the state level. This trend began in 1980 – nearly 30 years ago – and has grown steadily since. This is significant since Vermont in general is not a high wage state, as are states like Connecticut and Maryland.<sup>8</sup>

According to Vermont Housing data, the annual average wage for all workers in all industries in Pomfret for 2010 was \$29,815. This translates to an average hourly wage of \$14.33, based on a 40-hour work week; this is up by 6.5% from \$13.40 in 2005 when this plan was last updated (below the rate of inflation).

Data from the same source shows the hourly wage needed to afford a two bedroom apartment in Pomfret and only pay 30% of income towards housing costs (which defines “affordability”) in 2013 was \$19.32. The Table below shows the hourly and annual wages necessary to make affordable rental of apartments of several sizes in Pomfret.

**Table 11 - Wages for Rental Housing Affordability**

|                         | Hourly wage | Annual wage |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Two bedroom apartment   | \$19.56     | \$40,680    |
| Three bedroom apartment | \$23.23     | \$48,320    |
| Four bedroom apartment  | \$25.50     | \$53,040    |

*Source: Vermont Housing data*

Vermont currently has a shortage of affordable rental units, according to Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA) calculations, and more owner-occupied affordable housing units will be needed statewide going forward. All of the above data indicates an insufficient amount of affordable rental stock in Pomfret.

According to VHFA estimates, in order to purchase a home valued at \$200,000 (the median purchase price for a home in Vermont during 2013), a household would need an income of

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<sup>7</sup> “2011 East Central Vermont CEDS Plan.” East Central Vermont CEDS Strategy Committee. (2011).

<sup>8</sup> “2011 East Central Vermont CEDS Plan.” East Central Vermont CEDS Strategy Committee. (2011).

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approximately \$58,991; this estimate assumes a 5% down payment, average insurance and property tax rates, and a 30% housing affordability ratio.

The county median household income is typically used to calculate housing affordability. In 2011, the Windsor County median AGI was \$53,129, meaning that \$15,939 is available for housing costs each year at the 30% rate, or \$1,328 per month. VHFA's estimates that a family with this income could afford a maximum home price of \$179,500.

The median sales price of a home in Pomfret in 2013 (according to data from Vermont Housing) was \$240,000. (Note this figure is different from the *average* sales price as shown in Chapter 3. See Appendix B for additional sales data). VHFA estimates indicate that the income necessary to afford a \$240,000 home would be about \$79,550.

National housing experts suggest that communities must provide affordable homes for essential workers, such as teachers, nurses, and law enforcement officials, in order to compete effectively for dedicated workers for these positions. Employers cannot stay in communities that cannot provide an adequate supply of homes affordable to their workers. Local governments can expand the supply of sites for new development through changes in zoning rules such as:

- Making new areas available for development (for example, publicly owned land);
- Expanding the number of homes that can be built in existing residential areas; and
- Zoning for a wider variety of housing types, like multi-family homes.

A diversity of housing types and sizes which meet the needs of residents of all ages and financial situations requires flexibility. Housing types may include single-family homes, duplexes, multi-unit buildings, accessory apartments, accessory or guest houses, and Planned Unit Developments with higher-density housing. Smaller homes, such as bungalows and cottages, built in clusters can provide moderate-priced housing. Open space and resource protection incorporated into the site plan designs for multi-unit developments will balance the need for higher-density housing while maintaining rural character. All these should be thoughtfully considered and planned for based upon the Town's needs and its ability to provide services in a fiscally sound manner.

### **Long-Range Goal**

The Town should allow for growth of housing stock for all income levels at a rate consistent with the Town's ability to provide services in a fiscally sound manner and consistent with other goals and policies in this Town Plan.

### **Policies and Objectives**

1. Manage housing growth through Pomfret's zoning and subdivision ordinances.
2. Review development projects for compatibility with planned rate of growth of Town facilities and services.

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3. Encourage housing plans that provide for dwellings clustered on the periphery of open land, serviced by common septic and water supply facilities. The remaining land will then be available for agricultural purposes, preservation of natural resources and open space.
  4. Encourage residential development in South Pomfret village area or in areas identified as being capable of sustaining development based on soil types, topography, accessibility, and other considerations.
  5. Where appropriate, new Planned Unit Developments should set aside a reasonable percentage of the new homes or units for families with lower and moderate incomes.
  6. Provide the opportunity for Pomfret residents to have access to quality affordable housing (sometimes referred to as “workforce” housing, not necessarily “affordable” from the perspective of subsidized housing).
  7. Expand high-speed internet access throughout the Town which will not only attract new residents, but will also help increase and preserve property values.
  8. Ensure construction of new housing meets the natural population growth and does not exceed the community's ability to provide adequate public facilities (e.g. schools and municipal services).
  9. Encourage the preservation of historic structures in ways that appropriately serve housing needs.
  10. Encourage innovative planning, design and construction of new housing, or renovation of existing housing, that minimizes costs, energy consumption, and visual and environmental impacts.
  11. Promote preservation of the existing housing stock, particularly in hamlets and other existing neighborhoods of the Town.
  12. Encourage accessory housing and apartments within existing housing structures. Increase awareness among Pomfret residents of Vermont’s law which allows homeowners to add an apartment to their house.

### **Recommended Actions**

1. Explore the use of non-profit housing or land trusts for development of perpetually affordable housing. (Planning Commission)
2. Encourage housing plans that involve restoration of existing structures into single or multi-family rental units, using tax credits where appropriate. (Planning Commission)

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3. Encourage clustered housing development in Pomfret where an agriculture-related activity is an integral part of the plan submitted. This activity (for example: truck farming, Christmas tree growing, cattle, maple sugaring,) should provide additional income for Pomfret residents to help with housing affordability. (Planning Commission)
  4. A town housing committee should be appointed by the Selectboard for the following purposes:
    - a. to maintain and update relevant statistical information on housing and affordability.
    - b. to consider town owned or other properties that could be made available for development of perpetually affordable housing.
    - c. to coordinate between public and private agencies involved with planning, financing, and developing affordable housing consistent with existing neighborhoods.
    - d. to advise residents of the availability of loan or grant funds for Vermonters to purchase, acquire, or improve their primary homes.
    - e. to preserve existing affordable housing stock and to establish mechanisms that assure the perpetual affordability of that housing.
  5. Review Pomfret's zoning and subdivision ordinances to ensure that visual impacts of new housing are evaluated. (Planning Commission)



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## **Chapter: 9 EDUCATION**

### **Introduction**

Pomfret is currently home to one of the highest performing elementary schools in the state.<sup>9</sup> Middle and high school students are bused to Woodstock Union High School and Middle School. Pomfret strongly encourages children to seek education beyond high school so they will not only become self-supporting but also more employable in today's technological society. This effort includes academic as well as technical training.

### **History**

In the mid-1800s Pomfret had at least thirteen one-room schools and shared three more schools with bordering towns. Throughout much of the twentieth century Pomfret utilized from three to six schools, primarily North and South Pomfret, Hewittville, the Center School, and occasionally, the Cloudland and Mill Brook Schools.

In 1954 the towns of Woodstock, Pomfret, and Bridgewater formed the Woodstock Union High School District. Barnard, Killington and Reading have since joined. In 1966 a junior high wing was added to the 1956 high school building in West Woodstock, and the District was extended to include grades 7 and 8.

Pomfret's educational facilities changed dramatically when a consolidated K-6 elementary school with eight classrooms, a library, and a multi-purpose room was built in 1990-91 not far from the Woodstock/Pomfret line in South Pomfret. The consolidated Pomfret School opened on September 3, 1991 with 103 students, a staff of six full-time teachers, a principal, and nine part-time special teachers and teaching assistants all under one roof.

### **Current Education**

As with most Vermont schools, Pomfret continues to be challenged by declining student enrollment. In 2014 Pomfret had 63 students, three more than the previous year; however, the trend is still downward. Here is the breakdown by grades: eight students in kindergarten; four in grade one; eight in grade two; nine in grade three; ten in grade four; thirteen in grade five; and eleven in grade six. This includes four students whose families pay tuition so they can come here and two students who are here through special arrangements with other Windsor Central Supervisory Union (WCSU) schools.

The most current population projections for Pomfret expect a slowly increasing population of about 2.7% through 2030; however, state-wide and Windsor County-wide, the number of school age children is predicted to decline.<sup>10</sup> The Pomfret Elementary School was designed to accommodate 140 pupils; therefore, it can accommodate any increase in Pomfret students, and could potentially accept elementary school population(s) from surrounding towns should any neighboring schools shrink to a point where they close.

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<sup>9</sup> "Annual Report: Year Ending December 31, 2013." Pomfret, Vermont. (2013).

<sup>10</sup> Jones, Ken and Lilly Schwartz. "Vermont Population Projects -- 2010 - 2030." State of Vermont. (August 2013).

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Vermont offers limited school choice within the public education system, including inter-district open enrollment. Therefore, it is important that Pomfret maintain competitive educational programs to retain local students and continue to attract tuition paying students from other towns. The possibility of the implementation of a broader Public School Choice policy should be kept in mind as long-range plans for the education of Pomfret students are developed.

Vermont's declining student population has resulted in the lowest student/teacher ratio of 9.2 and the highest per pupil expenditure in the nation: \$19,752.11 While the town plan points out the declining enrollments, there is nothing to suggest that Pomfret should be merging with a larger school such as Woodstock/Barnard which would improve economies of scale and avoid duplication. Merging would also give students who currently have very few classmates an opportunity for a broader experience, a more varied curriculum, and more peers per class. Population projections continue to indicate a further decline in school enrollments through 2014 and even though enrollments are expected to increase again between 2015 and 2027, that increase is only at a pace of less than one percent per year<sup>12</sup>. While the State is the process of trying to address the problem of rising per pupil costs, Pomfret took an active role in determining solutions to keep property taxes affordable. In the fall of 2013 The School Boards of Barnard, Bridgewater, Pomfret, and Woodstock formed a study committee to examine the sustainability of their four elementary schools in the face of declining enrollment and rising costs.

They looked at several possibilities for actions that would improve elementary educational opportunities and at the same time increase the efficiency of the system. With the support of a small study grant from the Vermont Agency of Education, the committee worked with a consultant to gather and analyze information, sought feedback from citizens through a series of local meetings and electronically, and arrived at a recommendation for a "first phase" action to form a Joint Contract School between the towns of Bridgewater and Pomfret. This proposal went before the voters in those towns March 2015. The vote was positive, a new school opened on the Pomfret campus beginning July 1, 2015.

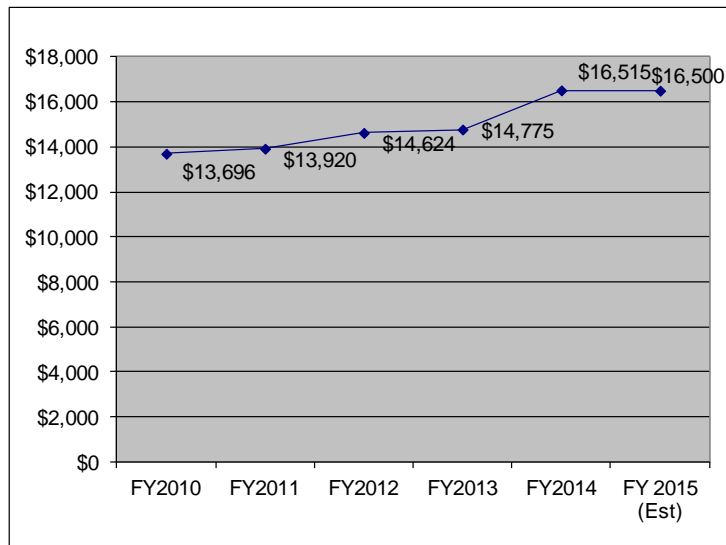
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<sup>11</sup> "Rankings and Estimates: Rankings of the States 2013 and Estimates of School Statistics 2014." National Education Association (NEA) Research. March 2014.

<sup>12</sup> "Housing and Vermont's School Enrollment." Vermont Housing Finance Agency.

The annual cost per pupil ratio is the clearest measure of school costs in any community. The per pupil cost in the Prosper Valley School District for the last five years is shown below.

**Figure 20 - Pomfret Education Spending per Pupil**

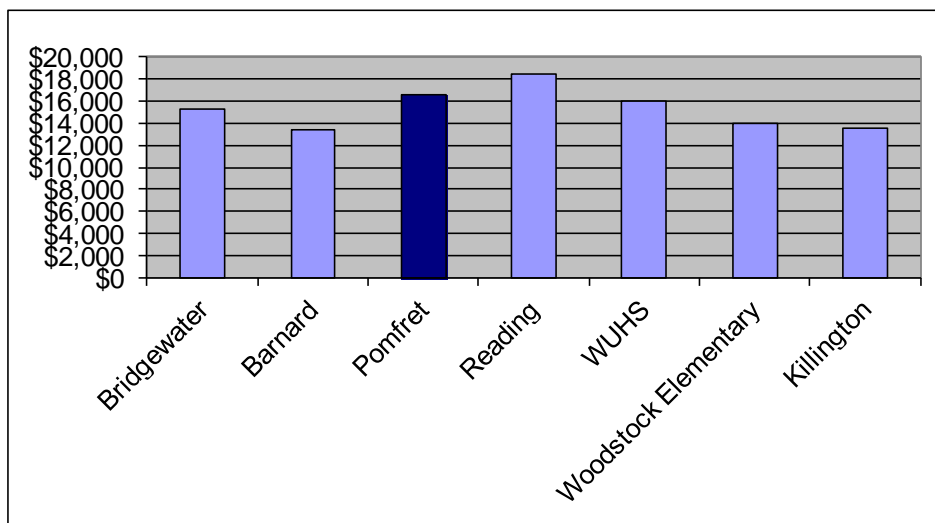


Source: Pomfret Town Report 2013

According to the most recently released figures from the State (May 2013) Vermont's average cost per pupil was \$15,925 in FY2011,<sup>13</sup> while Pomfret spent \$13,920 per pupil in that same year.

A comparison of current per pupil spending in other area schools is shown below.

**Figure 21 - Comparative per Pupil Spending**



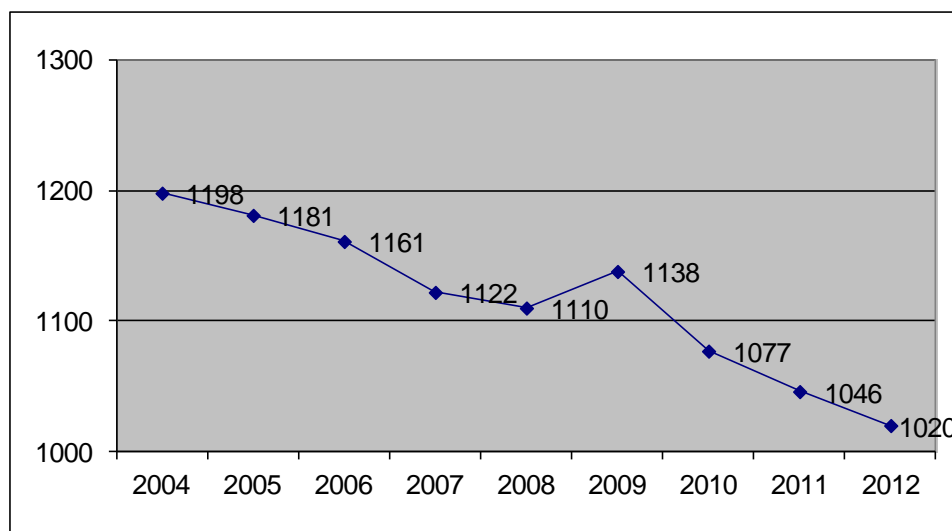
Source: Vermont Agency of Education FY2014

<sup>13</sup> Dixon, Mark. "Public Education Finances: 2011." Governments Division Reports. U.S. Census Bureau (May 2013).

According to a report done for Vermont's Joint Fiscal Office,<sup>14</sup>

- State and local revenues for K-12 education increased by almost 83.7% between FY 2001 and FY 2012.
- This increase is due in part to declining enrollments, and in part to substantial increases in state education revenues.
- Vermont has experienced the second greatest percentage decrease in student population (18.1%) over the time frame of the study.
- Average school district size has dwindled to 299 students – making the state's school districts the smallest in the nation with an average enrollment that is less than 10% of the size of the average school district in the United States.

**Figure 22 - Windsor Central Supervisory Union Opening Enrollment**



*Source: Pomfret Town Report 2013*

Vermont's Acts 60 and 68 concerning education funding, as well as the Brigham court decision, have shifted the burden of school funding largely to local taxpayers. It should also be noted that Pomfret, because of its high property tax base, receives minimal state aid for annual education expenses to offset rising school taxes and must instead send funds to Montpelier for redistribution to less wealthy towns. For example, in 2013, of the total \$3,709,644 to be raised for school taxes, \$2,122,466 (or 57.2%) was paid to the school, while about \$1,587,198 (42.8%) was paid to the State, Act 68.<sup>15</sup>

Historically, between 50-75% of Pomfret high school graduates have gone on to two year technical vocational colleges or four year colleges and universities.

Pomfret residents can be proud of the commitment by the townspeople to ensure that a superior education is provided to elementary school age children by constructing a new K-6 school. It

<sup>14</sup> Picus, Lawrence O., Allan Odden, William Glenn, Michael Griffith, and Michael Wolkoff. "An Evaluation of Vermont's Education Finance System." Lawrence O. Picus and Associates.

<sup>15</sup> "Annual Report: Year Ending December 31, 2013." Pomfret, Vermont. (2013).

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provides highly visible evidence that education is a high priority in the minds of Pomfret taxpayers, and it affords a superb opportunity to continue to improve the academic aspects of student life for Pomfret children. The Prosper Valley School is to be commended for introducing programs at an early elementary level to help students make critical decisions. The number of townspeople, parents, and others who have volunteered time, energy, and expertise to help students and teachers testifies to widespread Town support for quality education. Continuing broad-based participation by all Pomfret residents in the process of developing long-range plans should be encouraged.

### **Adult Education**

While some opportunities for adult education are offered through the Abbott Memorial Library, Pomfret's proximity to both Woodstock, Vermont and various institutions of higher education (including Dartmouth College) provides ample opportunities for extensive adult learning activities.

The Artistree Community Arts Center, has moved to Pomfret and will provide even more opportunities for adult education within Pomfret.

### **Long-Range Goal**

Provide an educational environment that enables every student to strive toward his or her creative and intellectual potential. Prepare every student to be a knowledgeable, constructive, caring citizen ready to participate in community activities.

### **Policies and Objectives**

1. Provide a physical environment that facilitates learning.
2. Establish academic programs that teach practical skills, challenge each student intellectually, and foster creativity, including those students with special needs and talents.
3. Provide education for Pomfret children in a cost-effective manner thereby minimizing property tax increases.

### **Recommended Actions**

1. Continue to schedule school budget information meetings in Pomfret prior to voting on the school budgets. (School Board)
2. Continue to hold community forums every five years to solicit input from the community to help determine the future direction for the school. (School Board)
3. Develop policies to attract tuition-paying students from surrounding communities to fill any excess school capacity in Pomfret. (School Board)
4. Continue to encourage and promote community use of the school facility. (School Board)

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5. Monitor the effectiveness of the Prosper Valley School (Pomfret and Bridgewater School merger) and evaluate whether additional merger(s) are necessary. (School Board, Selectboard, Planning Commission)
  6. Maintain a strong academic program to continue to attract families to Town. (School Board)
  7. Provide high school students with good vocational training so they can become more employable in today's technological society. (School Board)
  8. Where possible, supplement classroom teaching with creative activities funded by grants and foundations, such as the artist-in-residence program of the Pentangle Council on the Arts. (School Board)
  8. Provide community based workshops and vocational programs in the Prosper Valley School for the community and potential start-up businesses. Long-range planning and consideration of outside sources of funding should continue to be included in this process. (School Board)
  9. Continue participation in governance and consolidation studies. (School Board)
  10. Continue to ensure we take full advantage of services at the Central Office (paid for in WCSU assessments) and prevent local duplication. (School Board)

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## Chapter 10: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Introduction

Unplanned economic growth creates adverse conditions that have materially affected many communities in a negative way. Therefore Pomfret should plan for economic growth and expansion in a manner that creates a range of employment opportunities, encourages rising incomes, and raises citizens' living standards while considering the impact of such growth on the Town. The following economic development plan provides for economic growth consistent with the goals and policies of the Town of Pomfret as set forth in other sections of the Town Plan.

### Past and Current Economic Activity

Historically, most of the economic activity in Pomfret was related to agriculture and forestry, providing jobs for many Pomfret dwellers. However, Pomfret's business base has shifted to service industries, retail, distribution, and professional occupations. According to the 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, a majority of employed people work in management, business, science, and the arts, as well as educational, service, sales and office occupations.

The 2006-2012 Journey to Work data indicates that about 24 percent of Pomfret's work force was able to find work locally, which was the same percentage reflected in the 2000 Census. This shows the strength of the town's economy and local employers, including Suicide Six/Woodstock Resort, Chippers, Sugarbush Farm, Teago General Store, River Bend Home and Garden Supply. Further, as shown in Table 2 of this plan, almost 21% of workers in Town are self-employed.

However, as indicated in Table 10, between 2005 and 2013 Pomfret's tax base changed, with residential and vacation properties slightly down, commercial down, and farms increasing slightly.

**Table 12 - Pomfret Tax Base Summary**

|                       | 2005  | 2013  |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|
| Residential           | 55.9% | 49.7% |
| Vacation              | 36.8% | 34.1% |
| Commercial/industrial | 2.4%  | 1.5%  |
| Farms/woodland        | 0.2%  | 3.0%  |
| Mobile homes          | 0.4%  | 0.1%  |
| Other                 | 4.4%  | 11.6% |

*Source:* 2013 Grand List Summary Town Report

Effectively, while the amount of taxes that commercial business contributes is down, when combined with the farm component the total taxes paid increased since 2005 (from 2.6% total to 4.5% percent). As in years past, support for local business development will continue to be important to Pomfret.

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Pomfret's workforce benefits from economic development in the Upper Valley, and many Pomfret residents find employment opportunities outside Town limits. Seventy six percent of Pomfret's work force commutes to jobs elsewhere.

Future developments in the Upper Valley's overall economy and its economic expansion will continue to affect Pomfret significantly in several ways. Expansion in regional commercial, industrial, and governmental sectors will provide more employment opportunities for Pomfret residents. Such expansion may also increase pressure on the Town's housing needs. Any significant economic slowdown in the Upper Valley could force some Pomfret residents to move away from the Town in search of employment elsewhere.

Though the overall economic climate in the Upper Valley has a large influence on Pomfret's economy, the Town's own influence on economic development in the Upper Valley is extremely limited. The Town of Pomfret only has the power to manage economic change within Pomfret itself.

With this in mind, the Town's long-term goal will be to continue to encourage resourcefulness in the development of small businesses, professional services, and agriculture-related activities that will be consistent with the goals and policies in other sections of this Town Plan.

In developing criteria for evaluation of economic development in Pomfret, consideration should be given to how businesses affect neighbors and the community as a whole. The primary criteria for judging such impact will be performance standards detailed in Town Ordinances, with special consideration given to such aspects as public safety, potential danger to community health, pollution, adverse impact on natural resources, drainage and water run-off problems, increases in traffic volume and traffic hazards, noxious fumes, obtrusive lights, and noise pollution.

Equally important criteria will cover the impact of a business on Town facilities and services, and on its tax structure, and the potential for adverse effect on Pomfret's scenic beauty and rural character.

It is acknowledged that initial economic development through rising tax revenues may more than cover the costs of increased demand for town facilities and services (including roads, schools, fire and police protection). Studies have shown, however, that a secondary effect of significant commercial development is likely to be increased taxes for everyone.

### **Long-Range Goal**

Encourage the development of small businesses, professional services, agriculture-related and forestry-related activity in a manner that conforms to overall goals of keeping Pomfret rural and residential and which will not require Town expenditures on infrastructure.



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## **Policies and Objectives**

1. Encourage and foster the extension of high-speed internet services to all residents (see also Chapter 7 Town Services & Facilities, Policies & Objectives #1 and Recommended Actions #1).
2. Support economic development activities that create significant job opportunities for Pomfret residents without compromising Pomfret's natural resources and rural character.
3. Pomfret should ensure that the municipal costs to accommodate economic growth, such as road construction, road maintenance, and fire protection do not exceed the tax revenues generated by economic growth.
4. Encourage business growth that will enhance the rural character that Pomfret's residents so strongly value.

## **Recommended Actions**

1. Create performance standards to evaluate proposed economic development projects for the effects on air, noise, water, and visual impacts. (Planning Commission)
2. Review and modify zoning regulations and performance standards to ensure that they do not inhibit activities that provide supplemental income for Pomfret residents by making use of Pomfret's working landscape (Planning Commission)
3. Review and modify zoning regulations and performance standards to ensure that non-residential and non-working landscape uses will be sited on a lot large enough and screened such that there is no significant odor or visual or audible effect of the project at the property boundary, and that the uses comply with state pollution laws. (Planning Commission)
4. Review and update town landscaping guidelines and ordinances to ensure that applicable structures are appropriately landscaped. (Planning Commission)

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## Chapter 11: REGIONAL PLANNING

### A. Relationship to Municipal Plans

This Plan focuses primarily on development and policy within Pomfret's boundaries; however, it is important to recognize that how a community grows and changes can be directly impacted by development that takes place outside of the community.

Pomfret shares boundaries with Sharon, Royalton, Barnard, Bridgewater, Woodstock, and Hartford. Without exception, the goals expressed in the town plans of Pomfret's neighbors address the need to maintain the existing pattern of compact villages and hamlets surrounded by rural countryside while allowing for appropriate growth and development in ways that protect natural resources.

As Pomfret's Plan has done, those of some of Pomfret's neighbors specifically include objectives and policies that encourage diversified farming activity. This presents an opportunity for a regional approach to preserve prime agricultural and forest land and to diminish and control the effects of development on open space.

There are regional variations in the approach to development. Pomfret's primary concern is to discourage development on land with agricultural and highly productive forestry potential, and to limit development in open space. Open space should remain available for agriculture, preserve natural resources, and maintain the rural character and scenic beauty of the Town.

Pomfret shares the majority of its western border with Barnard. Barnard's Town Plan was adopted in March 2010. The purpose of the Barnard Town Plan is to maintain and to enhance the existing pattern of settlement. The Town wishes to continue moderate development that favors expansion in the villages and discourages inappropriately sited development in open areas. Barnard has adopted Zoning Regulations.

Woodstock is located along the majority of Pomfret's southern border and is in the process of adopting a new 2014 Master Plan. The plan emphasizes encouraging a rational and convenient pattern of development by balancing natural resources and agricultural land protection with residential, recreational, commercial, and light industrial uses. It also encourages affordable housing, public safety, economic growth, and protection of the historic settlement pattern. Both the town of Woodstock and Woodstock Village have Zoning Regulation.

Sharon is along the majority of Pomfret's northern border and adopted a Town Plan in February 2010 that sets out several major land use goals including preservation of the community's history, remaining adaptable to vital changes, and allowing access to the natural environment while protecting it from degradation. The plan defines six separate geographical areas in town, defines a purpose and several policies in each to help determine compatible types of development, intensity of use, and the conservation of natural resources. The Town has flood hazard area bylaws and subdivision regulations.

Bridgewater's Town Plan was adopted in September 2013. There is a limited amount of land area between Bridgewater and Pomfret and that portion of land in Bridgewater where the town borders

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meet, is designated as rural low density on their future land use map. Although the town has no zoning regulations, land use in town is guided by the plan's goal to maintain established compact village and hamlet areas with medium density growth areas adjacent to them. Commercial and light industrial development is planned for existing Village and hamlet areas only with no planned pattern of "strip development" along roadsides outside these Village and hamlet areas. Rural, low-density development is located outside conservation areas or critical areas, while avoiding existing agricultural lands.

The Royalton Town Plan was adopted in March 2010. Like Bridgewater, there is a limited amount of land area between Royalton and Pomfret and that portion of land in Royalton where the town borders meet, is designated as conserved and agricultural/residential lands. Royalton has Flood Hazard Area Regulation, but no zoning regulations. The Plan has a land use goal of maintaining its rural village character, preserving scenic beauty, natural resources and the cultural assets of the Town, while allowing for an acceptable rate of growth.

Pomfret shares its full eastern border with Hartford. Hartford, in many respects, is the most developed town in the region and hosts the largest population. Hartford's land use recommendations in its adopted May 2012 Master Plan encourage appropriate use of the town's manmade and natural resources. Given the steady growth the town has experienced, the plan presents the community's vision to increase density in already developed areas with infrastructure, manage density of future development, protect scenic areas, open space and wildlife corridors, and preserve the historic settlement pattern of compact villages surrounded by rural countryside, while supporting agriculture, forestry and recreation. Hartford has Flood Regulations, Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Ordinances.

None of these variations is so drastic that mutual concern for protection of this regional rural and residential environment is threatened.

## **B. Relationship to the Regional Plan**

Regional consideration of other topics in addition to land use would serve common interests. These include regional solutions to transportation plans covering not only road networks, but also public transportation; fire and police protection; economic development; recreational paths and trails and special wildlife habitats that cross town lines; and prevention of contamination of the water table that recognizes no surface boundaries.

Study in the area of transportation is proceeding under the direction of the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission. The Vermont Agency of Transportation has made major changes in how Vermont's future transportation planning will be done. This effectively places much of the responsibility for transportation planning and decision-making at the regional level. Current transportation activities for the Town of Pomfret include:

- A safety improvement study for the Teago intersection (which includes recommended sign and striping improvement from VTrans)
- An updated culvert inventory completed in fall 2013 which identified out of 668 culverts, 56 were in poor/bad shape (all others were fair or better)

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- Assisting the Town on the VTrans Structures grant for replacement of a town bridge; and,
  - Providing the Town with a new Highway Timesheet Program to help track activity hours, materials and equipment time.

Three following examples illustrate the benefits of regional cooperation to Pomfret.

The Upper Valley Mutual Aid Association, a mutual aid system for fire protection, has existed in this area for many years, rendering considerable benefits to its member communities. These benefits include coordination of skilled labor and access to millions of dollars of equipment for emergency services. Under this umbrella organization fire departments train together regularly and assist at fire sites when necessary.

The Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste Management District provides facilities for the recycling and disposal of many types of solid waste for ten towns in the Ottauquechee, White, and Connecticut River valleys. This cooperative effort offers efficiency of planning, extensive marketing of recyclables, management of household hazardous waste, waste reduction and disposal services for farms and small businesses, and concentrated use of disposal sites that greatly reduces the possibility of widespread contamination of the environment. Towns in the District financed the construction of a bridge across Interstate 91 to provide access to GUV's proposed landfill site in North Hartland. GUV's statutory responsibility is to provide a long-term solution for the disposal of its member communities' municipal solid waste. This landfill has been designed to provide at least 50 years of disposal capacity. No town alone could manage and fund such services.

The District Board is facing several major issues including:

- Significant reductions in the amount of solid waste being generated in the District and state-wide.
- Major changes in Vermont recycling regulations requiring additional services.
- The future economic viability of the landfill site with these changes.

Pomfret has four representatives on the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) #12. This group of 27 towns is responsible for planning and implementing a regional program for coping with emergencies that involve hazardous material and natural disasters. In conjunction with this effort a comprehensive emergency response plan has been developed for Pomfret.

These three entities and the TRORC have successfully demonstrated the value of addressing issues of vital interest to us all on a regional basis. Extending the range of these common concerns and seeking regional solutions to them is the most sensible direction in which to proceed.

### **C. Taxation on the Preservation of Open Space**

There appears to be common concern about the effect of increasing property taxes on the preservation of open space—a higher property tax diminishes the incentive for property owners to hold land as open space and instead drives property owners to shift the land to more profitable uses, typically development projects. But, property owners have both public and private means

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available to reduce their respective tax burdens and to assist the town in preserving its rural character.

**Current Use Program.** Vermont’s so-called “Current Use” Program (technically called the Vermont Use Value Appraisal Program) provides property owners with the ability to reduce their tax burden, so long as the land remains enrolled in a sanctioned use category, e.g., agricultural or timber use. The Program is of vital importance to property owners in Pomfret—69.3% of Pomfret’s land area is included in the Program. As of Tax Year 2016, there are 160 parcels totaling 16,913 acres enrolled in the Program (up from 130 parcels totaling 15,157 acres in 2005). As of Tax Year 2013, Pomfret has the third highest aggregate tax savings from the Program, totaling \$1,338,967 (behind Stowe and Woodstock, respectively). However, the Program is under constant threat of change and navigating the choices of reducing the property tax burden is difficult for the average property owner.

**Transfer of Development Rights.** Property owners may enter into private agreements (generally, conservation easements or leases) to sell or donate development rights to land trusts or other organizations involved in preservation of open space. Sale or donation of development rights typically result in state and federal tax deductions. As of 2016, a total of 5,835 acres of land are conserved of which 1,817 acres are public and 4,123 acres are private land. Because of their perpetual nature, imposing a conservation easement has been a traditional means to preserve land and consequently the rural character of Pomfret. But, an overreliance on the use of conservation easements may have detrimental effects on future land use decisions.

Residents of Pomfret should take the opportunity to learn from each other to benefit from joint discussions about tax policy and how best to leverage existing and alternative land use planning tools to accomplish the twin goals of preserving Pomfret’s rural character while at the same time minimizing tax burden. Any statewide action involving property taxes will have a serious impact on all of us.

## **D. Goals, Policies and Recommendations**

### **Long-Range Goal**

Work with neighboring towns to address problems related to common goals.

### **Objectives**

1. Exchange with neighboring towns planning information that will have an impact on development trends and conservation efforts.
2. Continue to participate actively in TRORC to assure that Pomfret’s goals, objectives, and policies are considered in regional plans.

### **Recommended Actions**

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1. It is in Pomfret's best interest to become and remain involved in any future transportation planning activities. The Selectboard should appoint a representative to serve on the Transportation Advisory Committee, as well as other transportation organizations.
  2. Review the town plans of neighboring towns as they are readopted or rewritten to determine their potential impact on Pomfret's future. (Planning Commission)
  3. Continue to participate in studies that look at the need for public transportation in rural areas of the region through TRORC. (Pomfret's representatives to TRORC and the Transportation Advisory Committee)
  4. Continue to meet with neighboring towns. (Planning Commission)

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## Chapter 12: TOWN PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Planning is significant only if it leads to decisions and actions. This Town Plan clearly expresses the long-range goals of the community that will define the Town that future Pomfret generations can hope to find. The policies and objectives provide guidelines for making decisions.

Everyone should accept that changes will occur in Pomfret. Adoption of this new Town Plan (2015) presents an opportunity to direct those changes. The tools for directing growth are this new Town Plan, Pomfret's Zoning By-laws with the Ridgeline and Hillside Conservation Area Amendment, and Pomfret's Subdivision Regulations. These ordinances must be reviewed and revised based on this Town Plan as well as current needs and conditions. These revisions, guided by the policies and objectives of the Town Plan, will be extremely important to the future of Pomfret. They will be based on decisions made with the long-term common good in mind.

The policies and objectives contained within the Town Plan are designed to establish clear community standards. Equally important is recognition by the residents of Pomfret that many of the goals and objectives of this Plan can be achieved more effectively by voluntary actions than by Town Regulations. Information about conservation easements, restrictive covenants, and other estate planning techniques, when shared with landowners by the Conservation and Planning Commissions, should help to lead to wise decisions by individual landowners. Such information would also convey important tax and land planning options that can help to protect family lands.

Recommended Actions are listed at the end of each chapter of the Plan. These are actions designed to achieve objectives, carry out policies, and determine priorities. The group with primary responsibility for implementing an action is indicated in parentheses.

Immediate action is critical in two areas (see below). This does not diminish the importance of other recommended actions throughout the Plan nor does it imply that those are not also matters of some degree of urgency.

### **Objectives - Immediate Actions**

1. Manage growth so that it does not detract from the rural character and scenic beauty of Pomfret, assuring residents' protection of Pomfret's natural resources.
  - Complete revision of Zoning Regulations to implement the land use plan.
  - Revise land development regulations to ensure that all new development is accessible to emergency vehicles at all times of the year. (Town Services and Facilities Recommended Action #4. Planning Commission)
  - Advise the Selectboard on appropriate permit fees for land development regulations to cover the cost of administering the regulations. (Town Services and Facilities Recommended Action #7. Planning Commission)

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- Develop performance standards for traffic and pedestrian hazards and congested areas, evaluation of air, noise, water, and visual pollution from proposed business development Economic Development Recommended Action # 1. Planning Commission)
2. Review all development on prime agricultural land and productive forests to minimize the impact of such growth.

The less urgent actions recommended in each section of the Plan cover a wide range of topics. Implicit in the word “action” is involvement. Residents are encouraged to consider the many areas in which action is recommended and to identify those that are most interesting to them. Contact the group responsible for future action and get involved. Decisions based on wider participation will be all the more meaningful.



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## Chapter 13: FLOOD RESILIENCE

### Background

The town of Pomfret, much like the rest of Vermont, is no stranger to significant and damaging flooding. Perhaps the worst flooding in recent history occurred on August 28, 2011 as the result of Tropical Storm Irene. Approximately 4-5” of rain fell in the area on ground that was already saturated, causing extensive flash flooding. Due to the flooding, the Sessions Meadow section of town was temporarily cut off; of the sixty-two miles of road in town, 50 miles were damaged, three bridges were washed out, and 200 culverts had to be replaced.<sup>16</sup>

### Flood Hazard & Fluvial Erosion Hazard Areas in Pomfret

Some lands adjacent to the White River as well as tributaries to the Ottauquechee River are subject to periodic flooding. This is to be expected as flooding every few years is natural in a functioning floodplain. Floodplains and Fluvial Erosion Hazard Areas (those areas where lateral erosion is more of the threat than inundation) are unsuitable for development because of the high loss potential for life and property as well as the limited ability of septic systems to perform adequately during periods of high water.

Approximately, 521 acres of Pomfret are in the flood plain (see flood hazard areas visible in the Future Land Use Map in Appendix C). Areas of Pomfret that are vulnerable to flooding or are at risk for erosion include (but are not limited to):

- Bartlett Brook’s lower section, which floods regularly in spring,
- The brook that runs along Pomfret/Stage Road,
- Gulf Stream along VT 12,
- Atwood Brook,
- Pomfret Brook,
- Cloudland Brook,
- Mill Brook, and
- Streams that have been modified in the past.

The Vermont Natural Resource Atlas depicts unnumbered ‘A’ flood zones in Pomfret based on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMS). “A flood zones” are areas subject to inundation by the 1-percent-annual-chance flood event using approximate methodologies. Because detailed hydraulic analyses have not been performed, no Base Flood Elevations (BFEs) or floodways are shown. In the A zone areas, mandatory flood insurance purchase requirements and floodplain management standards apply.

The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) will be preparing and disseminating River Corridor maps this year (2015) that may indicate areas of greater vulnerability than are depicted

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<sup>16</sup> “2012 Town & School District Annual Report.” Pomfret, Vermont. (December 21, 2011).

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in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Areas of Special Flood Hazard may necessitate amending Pomfret's Flood Hazard regulations, possibly requiring buffers that can go beyond the NFIP mapped areas.

## **Promoting Flood Resilience in Pomfret**

### **Flood Hazard Regulation**

The next Irene will come and towns need to minimize damage to infrastructure. Rebuilding and buyouts are slow and can be difficult financially and emotionally. New river corridor maps were released in 2014 by the State. Towns can use these to plan for and protect infrastructure.

Pomfret's adopted Flood Hazard Bylaw sets the minimum development standards allowed by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Considering the potential for severe flooding in Pomfret, it is sensible to consider alternative approaches to Flood Hazard Regulation. Additionally, State Statute requires that all communities have policies and strategies that protect Flood Hazard areas.

Any updates to the Pomfret Flood Hazard Bylaw that are more restrictive than they are now would apply only to new development – existing development would be grandfathered and could continue to operate within the area, until it suffers major damage or is substantially improved, at which point it has to come into compliance with flood regulations. Potential strategies to protect the Flood Hazard area could cover a wide range of options, including:

- **Prohibition on New Development** – No new primary structures (commercial or residential) in the floodplain. New modest accessory structures and additions to existing structures are still allowed. A prohibition within the floodway, however, is a good idea and is essentially mandated by the NFIP.

Also important to consider is exactly what the definition of “new development” will include. The Planning Commission could include adding smaller additions and minor renovations to existing structures over a certain size. This is not a commonly used methodology in most communities as it impacts grandfathered uses and can be challenging to implement. Some additions and any redevelopment over 50% of a structure's value must be done according to NFIP standards, though.

- **Prohibition of Specific Types of Development** – An alternative to an outright prohibition on development is to identify specific types of development that should be kept from being developed within the floodplain. In some communities, new residential and commercial development has been prohibited in the floodplain. In others, only residential has been prohibited. Decisions on which types of uses to prohibit are generally made with substantial citizen input with considerations for what will most substantially reduce risks to lives and property.

- **Increasing Standards** – Communities can choose to increase the requirements for new developments in the floodplain while still allowing all or most forms of development.

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Increased standards could include a requirement that structures be elevated higher than the minimum standards required by the NFIP. Going one foot above the base flood elevation is a common standard in the region, but going even further and requiring two feet of “freeboard” can result in major reductions to flood insurance premiums. Such standards could also include more specific requirements for tying down structures, elevating utilities so that floods are less damaging, making structures more capable of allowing floodwaters to pass through them (such as using piers instead of fill to elevate), and using the No Adverse Impact standard to not increase flood damage elsewhere.

- **Create River Corridor Protection Area** - Some communities have created an area that extends beyond the mapped flood hazard areas. Often this River Corridor Protection Area uses fluvial erosion hazard data as part of its basis, but can also include simple setbacks from rivers in all parts of the community as a way to deter development in areas that may erode in the event of severe flooding.

Future revisions to the Pomfret Flood Hazard Bylaw will require input from the community regarding the level of regulation they believe is necessary to protect citizens and their buildings from severe flood hazard events. Provided that all parts of the Flood Hazard Bylaw meet the minimum requirements of the NFIP, communities have a broad range of flexibility in which to regulate the flood hazard area. For example, a community could prohibit commercial development in the floodplain everywhere except in a village, because in some communities such a restriction would be damaging to the village center.

## **Goals**

1. To protect the citizens, property and economy of Pomfret and the quality of their rivers as natural and recreational resources by using sound planning practices within designated Flood Hazard Areas and beyond.

## **Planning Principles, Policies and Strategies**

1. Only agriculture, recreational and open space uses should be allowed in floodplains.
2. New development within the town’s 100-year floodplain is discouraged, excluding properly designed outbuildings and renovations that meet the requirements for Flood Hazard regulation as stipulated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
3. Ensure that any new development allowed creates "no adverse impact" through design and mitigation measures.
4. Reduce impervious cover that leads to flash flooding, and increase retention and infiltration of rain.
5. Lessen the conflict between roads and streams by moving the roads when possible, abandoning redundant bridges, or upsizing water crossings.
6. Adopt road and bridge standards to the 50 or 100 year storm level.

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7. Continue to promote emergency planning for flood response.

### **Recommendations**

1. Strengthen Pomfret's Flood Hazard Bylaws to mitigate risks to public safety, critical infrastructure, historic structures and municipal investments from inundation and erosion. (Planning Commission)
2. Work with VTrans on improving the flood capabilities of state-owned infrastructure or town infrastructure. (Planning Commission)
3. Continue to develop emergency preparedness procedures. (Emergency Coordinator and Selectboard)

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## Appendix A: Glossary

The following terms are used in this document and may need further explanation for some readers. For an expanded list of terms, please visit the Land Use Planning Dictionary at: <http://www.greenbelt.org/research/land-use-planning-dictionary/>.

**Agricultural Land** – tillable land, hayfields, and pastures currently being used for farming. Also land that due to its soil type, slope, and location merits preservation for future farm use.

**Assessed Value** - the value assigned to real estate by the Town's Listers that is used to assess property taxes.

**"Arm's Length"** - a real estate transaction between parties that are not related in any way that would affect the value of the transaction, e.g. relatives or business associates.

**Cluster Development** - grouping structures in one area of a parcel or a project thereby permitting the balance of the land to remain open and undeveloped.

**Conservation Easement** - a permanent legal recorded agreement between a landowner and a conservation group, land trust, or government body, whereby certain uses of the land are restricted, generally the right to develop the land. Other uses such as agriculture, forestry, or recreation may be permitted.

**Current Use Program** - a State program originally designed to enable owners of working farms and managed woodlots of over 25 contiguous acres to pay property taxes that are based on the agricultural or forestry value of the land as opposed to the development value of the land. The State of Vermont reimburses municipalities for their services, excluding school costs. The effectiveness of this program has been eroded in recent years by being under funded by the legislature.

**Development** - dividing a parcel of land; building any kind of structure on previously open land and forestland; the reconstruction, conversion, or enlargement of existing structures; and the change in use of a structure or parcel of land relative to any kind of commercial activity.

**Development Rights** - the right to develop a parcel of land (see development above). These rights may be transferred to another party independent from the underlying ownership of the land and, when transferred, should be recorded in the Town's land records. (See Conservation Easement)

**Forestland** - an area with a high density of trees. Historically, a wooded area set aside for hunting.

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**Forestry** - the art, science, and practice of studying and managing forests and related natural resources. Modern forestry generally concerns itself with assisting forests to provide timber as raw material for wood products; wildlife habitat; natural water quality regulation; recreation; landscape and community protection; employment; aesthetically appealing landscapes; and a 'sink' for atmospheric carbon dioxide.

**Geographic Information System (GIS)** - a computer based mapping and information system. A municipal or regional GIS may include layers for roads, surface waters, topographical features, soils, structures, land cover, land use, and structures. Points, areas, and linear features are represented spatially (on a map) and an unlimited amount of information about each feature may be attached to it in a database. It may be used for resource inventories, transportation and land use planning, and emergency response.

**Goals** - long range aspirations that establish a direction the town should take.

**Infrastructure** - public improvements such as roads, schools, municipal buildings, and sewer and water systems that support existing and future development in a community.

**Objectives** - measurable components of goals that are attainable within a set period.

**Open Space** - areas that are undeveloped which may include pastures, croplands, forestland, and transitional land that may be reverting from meadow to forestland.

**Policies** – Frameworks for designing courses of action that will allow achievement of desired goals or objectives, and may be used to solve problems or avoid their recurrence.

**Property Tax Adjustment Program (formerly “Prebate”)** - The Act 60 property tax adjustment program (also referred to as income sensitivity) to help homeowners pay school property taxes that exceed a percentage of their household income.

**Property Tax Rebate Program** - a state rebate program to ensure that lower income property owners and renters pay less than a certain percentage of their income for rent or property tax for their residence and up to two acres of land.

**Recommended Actions**- courses of action designed to achieve objectives or carry out policies.

**Restrictive Covenant** - a restriction on certain land uses, usually development, placed on a parcel and recorded in the land records.

**Wetlands** - areas that are saturated with water for a sufficient period of time annually to support wetlands vegetation. Also known as swamps, marshes, sloughs, fens, bogs, and ponds.

[illegible]

If the State of Vermont's Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) is appropriate at 96.85% (Comparing Assessed Values to Sales Prices), the CLA suggests that most 2012 properties are near the assessed value.

|  |  | Assessed Value | Possible Market Price |             |  |  |  |
|--|--|----------------|-----------------------|-------------|--|--|--|
|  |  |                | 2006                  | 2012        |  |  |  |
|  |  | \$200,000      | \$300,000             | \$210,000   |  |  |  |
|  |  | \$400,000      | \$600,000             | \$420,000   |  |  |  |
|  |  | \$600,000      | \$900,000             | \$630,000   |  |  |  |
|  |  | \$1,000,000    | \$1,600,000           | \$1,650,000 |  |  |  |

Pomfret Sales of Residential and Vacation Homes from April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2012

| Category | Number | Range of Prices       | Total Listed Values | Total Sale Values |  |  |  |
|----------|--------|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--|--|--|
| R1       | 13     | \$172,000-424,000     | \$2,655,374         | \$3,576,000       |  |  |  |
| R2       | 18     | \$175,000-2,000,000   | \$10,450,669        | \$13,351,010      |  |  |  |
| S1       | 5      | \$61,100-299,000      | \$812,387           | \$1,031,500       |  |  |  |
| S2       | 7      | \$200,000-\$2,040,000 | \$5,715,758         | \$6,990,000       |  |  |  |

As these are extremely small samples, conclusions must be drawn with that in mind. Sales for this time period for residences are 2 1/2 times those of vacation properties at values significantly above assessed values. Averages over the time period are difficult to determine because of a couple of large sales that distort the market.

|       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| R1    | Residential <6 acres - Average Sales Price: \$275,000  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| R2    | Residential > 6 acres - Average Sales Price: \$741,722 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| S1    | Vacation < 6 acres - Average Sales Price: \$206,300    |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| S2    | Vacation > 6 acres - Average Sales Price: 998,572      |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Misc. | Open Land/Misc: 0                                      |  |  |  |  |  |  |

The State of Vermont indicates Pomfret's overall 2012 Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) is 96.85% when comparing sales prices with listed values.

**Source:** Pomfret Listers

According to the Vermont Department of Taxes, for the 2015 Tax Year, Pomfret's CLA is 105.43.



| <b>2012 Assessed Values of 114 Parcels of Land</b> |                       |             |             |  |  |
|--|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|--|--|
|  | <i>Assessed Value</i> | <i>2006</i> | <i>2012</i> |  |  |
|  | Less than \$40,000    | 22          | 18          |  |  |
|  | \$40,000-80,000       | 26          | 8           |  |  |
|  | \$80,000-120,000      | 19          | 6           |  |  |
|  | \$120,000-\$160,000   | 17          | 12          |  |  |
|  | \$160,000-200,000     | 18          | 12          |  |  |
|  | Over \$200,000        |             | 58          |  |  |

In June of 1993 there were 124 parcels of land assessed at less than \$40,000 with the rest above that but not over \$100,000. Land values have increased significantly since 1993 and beyond to 2012.

| <b>Number of Parcels by Acreage</b> |                |                    |                    |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|--|--|
|                                     | <i>Acreage</i> | <i>2006 Number</i> | <i>2012 Number</i> |  |  |
|                                     | < 10 Acres     | 25                 | 28                 |  |  |
|                                     | 10-20          | 16                 | 19                 |  |  |
|                                     | 20-30          | 14                 | 8                  |  |  |
|                                     | 30-40          | 5                  | 10                 |  |  |
|                                     | 40-60          | 13                 | 10                 |  |  |
|                                     | 60-80          | 16                 | 16                 |  |  |
|                                     | Over 80        | 13                 | 19                 |  |  |

Because there was next to no arms-length land sales between 2006 and December 2012, it is too difficult to establish a market value for sales and land alone.

**2013-14 Property Ownership:**

|  | <i>Acres</i>        | <i>Counts</i> |  |  |  |
|--|---------------------|---------------|--|--|--|
|  | < than 50 acres     | 479*          |  |  |  |
|  | 50-100 acres        | 56            |  |  |  |
|  | Over 100 acres      | 59            |  |  |  |
|  | Total Over 50 acres | 115           |  |  |  |
| <i>*5 of these properties have 0 acreage</i> |                     |               |  |  |  |

Please examine the 2014 State of Vermont Income Tax levels for Pomfret income tax filers as seen below.

### 2014 Income Tax Filing Data for Pomfret

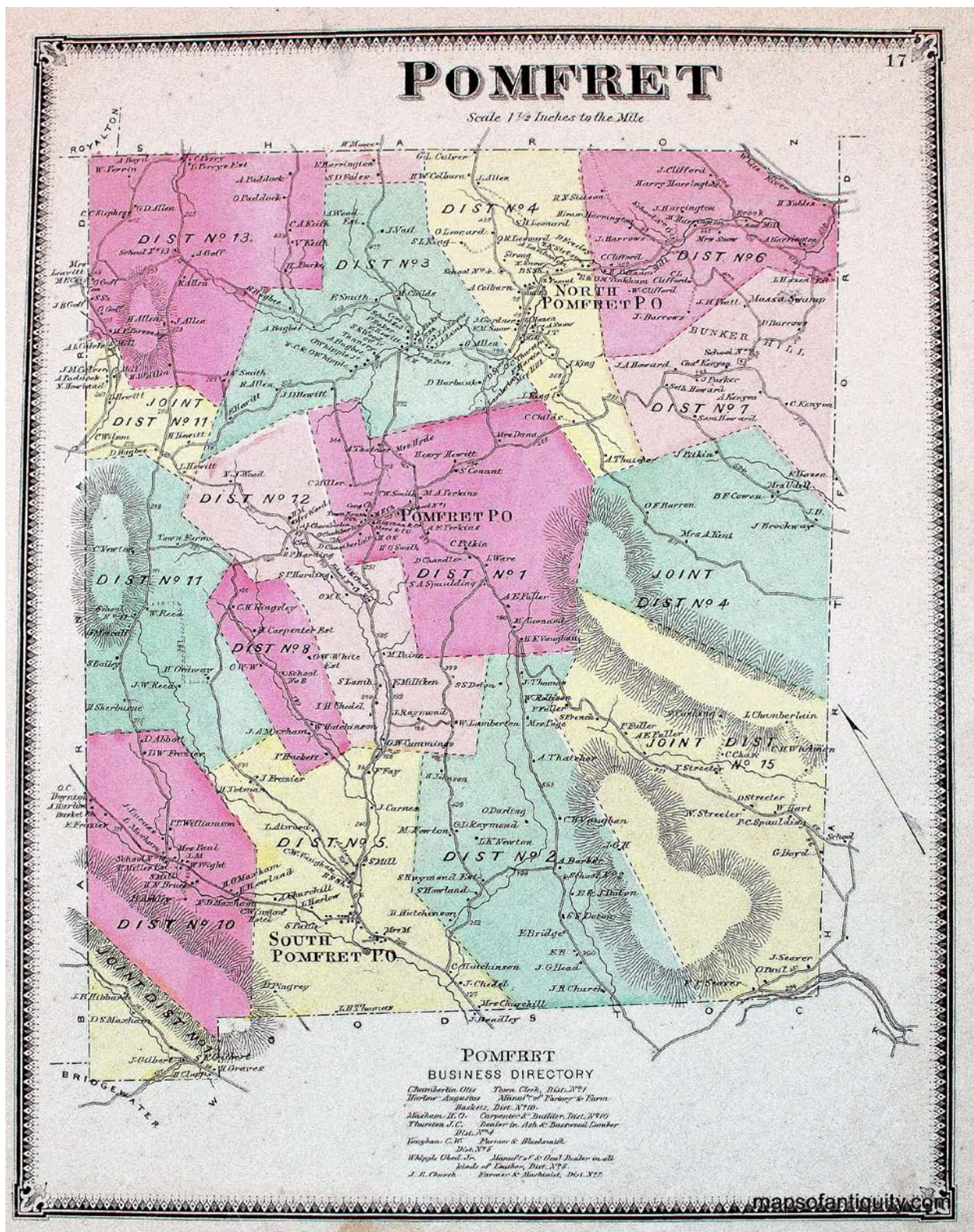
| AGI Income Class   | Returns | Exempt | Married Joint | Single | Married Separate | Head of House-hold | Adjusted Gross Income | Federal Taxable Income | Vermont Taxable Income | Net Vermont Tax |
|--|---------|--------|---------------|--------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| Loss or None   | *       |        |               |        |                  |                    |                       |                        |                        |                 |
| 0.01 - 4999  | 34      | 13     | 1             | 33     | 0                | 0                  | \$88,138.00           | \$6,666.00             | \$5,591.00             | \$198.00        |
| 5000 - 9999  | 36      | 18     | 1             | 35     | 0                | 0                  | \$249,987.00          | \$49,233.00            | \$39,442.00            | \$1,377.00      |
| 10000 - 14999  | 32      | 38     | 8             | 23     | 0                | 1                  | \$386,041.00          | \$55,788.00            | \$55,458.00            | \$1,773.00      |
| 15000 - 19999  | 15      | 21     | 3             | 12     | 0                | 0                  | \$268,730.00          | \$86,967.00            | \$84,411.00            | \$2,759.00      |
| 20000 - 24999  | 22      | 36     | 9             | 10     | 1                | 2                  | \$502,818.00          | \$161,883.00           | \$145,279.00           | \$4,991.03      |
| 25000 - 29999  | 18      | 26     | 2             | 12     | 2                | 2                  | \$494,784.00          | \$233,218.00           | \$233,202.00           | \$7,953.71      |
| 30000 - 34999  | 21      | 29     | 6             | 14     | 0                | 1                  | \$679,020.00          | \$385,021.00           | \$374,719.00           | \$12,744.00     |
| 35000 - 39999  | *       |        |               |        |                  |                    |                       |                        |                        |                 |
| 40000 - 44999  | 13      | 21     | 5             | 7      | 0                | 1                  | \$552,832.00          | \$342,286.00           | \$336,851.00           | \$11,707.00     |
| 45000 - 49999  | *       |        |               |        |                  |                    |                       |                        |                        |                 |
| 50000 - 59999  | 26      | 49     | 11            | 9      | 1                | 5                  | \$1,428,995.01        | \$911,796.00           | \$904,160.00           | \$31,299.01     |
| 60000 - 74999  | 36      | 66     | 22            | 14     | 0                | 0                  | \$2,436,554.00        | \$1,663,090.00         | \$1,623,181.00         | \$63,012.00     |
| 75000 - 99999  | 52      | 122    | 38            | 11     | 0                | 3                  | \$4,519,480.00        | \$3,165,840.00         | \$3,152,531.00         | \$124,291.39    |
| 100000 - 149999  | 54      | 136    | 42            | 9      | 0                | 3                  | \$6,347,931.00        | \$4,676,888.00         | \$4,675,056.00         | \$208,333.97    |
| 150000 +   | 56      | 142    | 44            | 7      | 2                | 3                  | \$16,601,481.00       | \$13,345,614.00        | \$14,182,091.00        | \$927,206.00    |
| *Indicates 10 or fewer returns and data has been suppressed. |         |        |               |        |                  |                    |                       |                        |                        |                 |

**Source:** Vermont Department of Taxes, Town Income 2014 Detailed Report



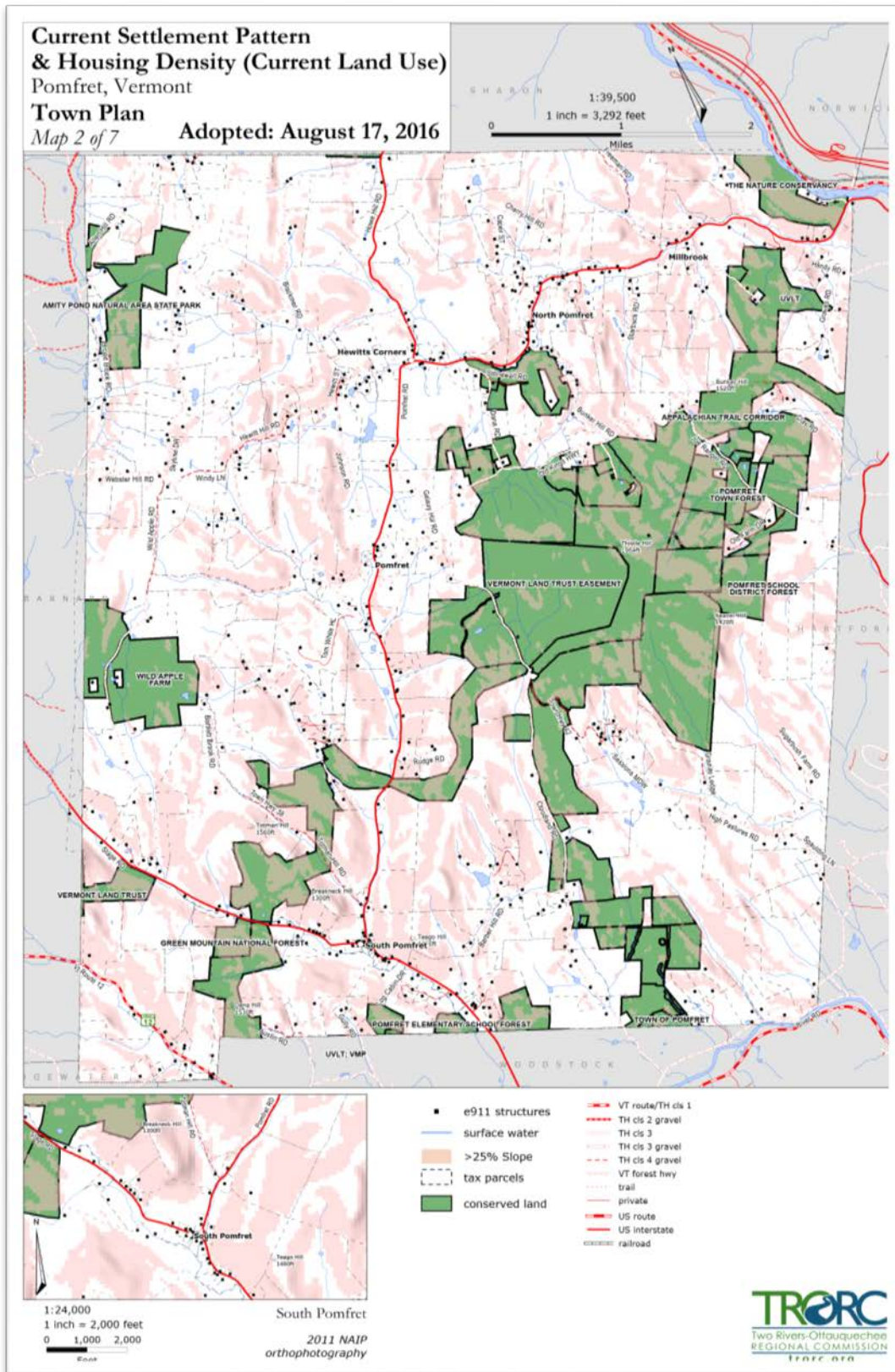
# Appendix C Maps

## Pomfret Historical Settlement Map (F. W. Beers & Co., 1869)





## Current Settlement Map

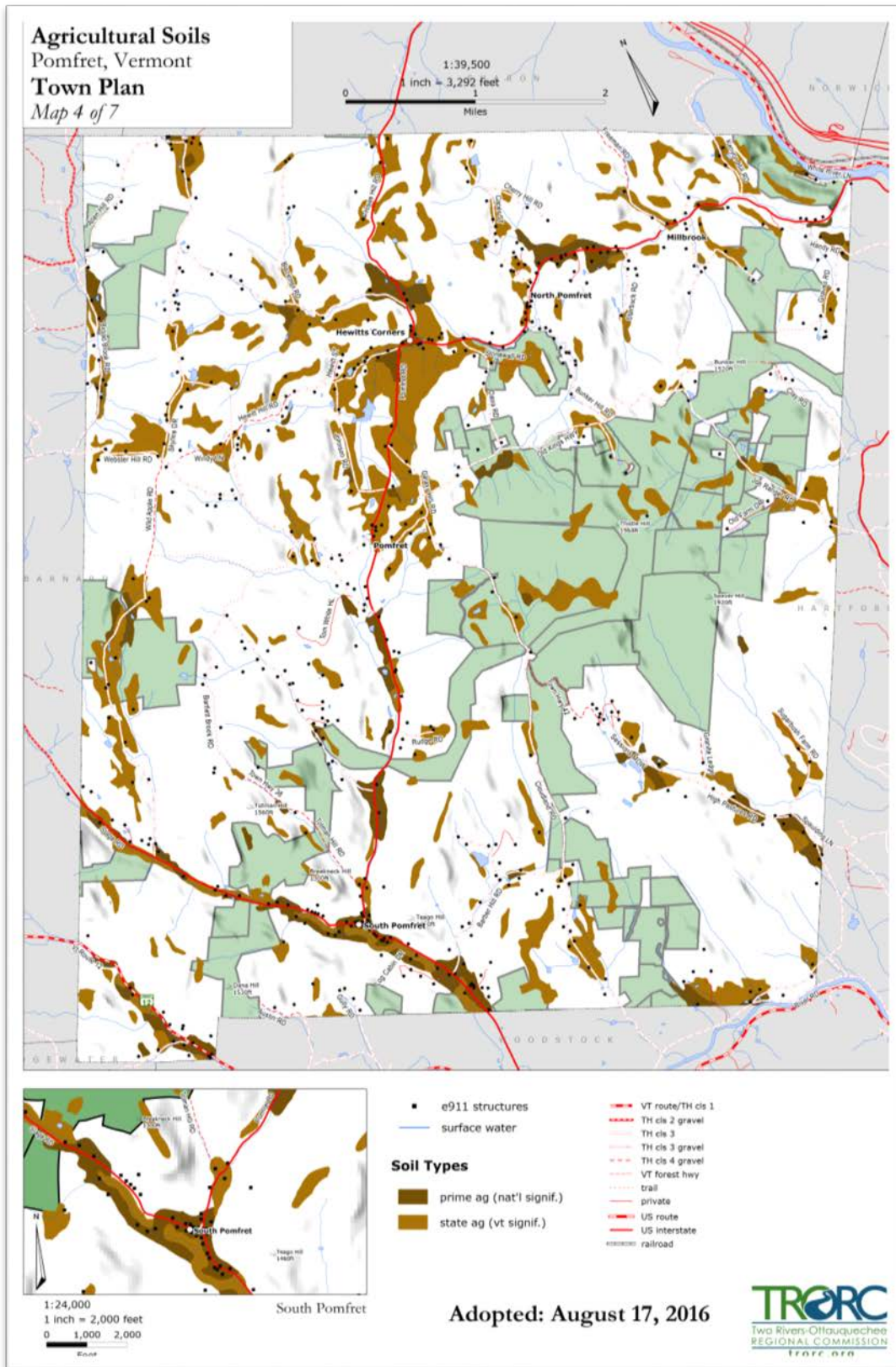




## Future Land Use Map

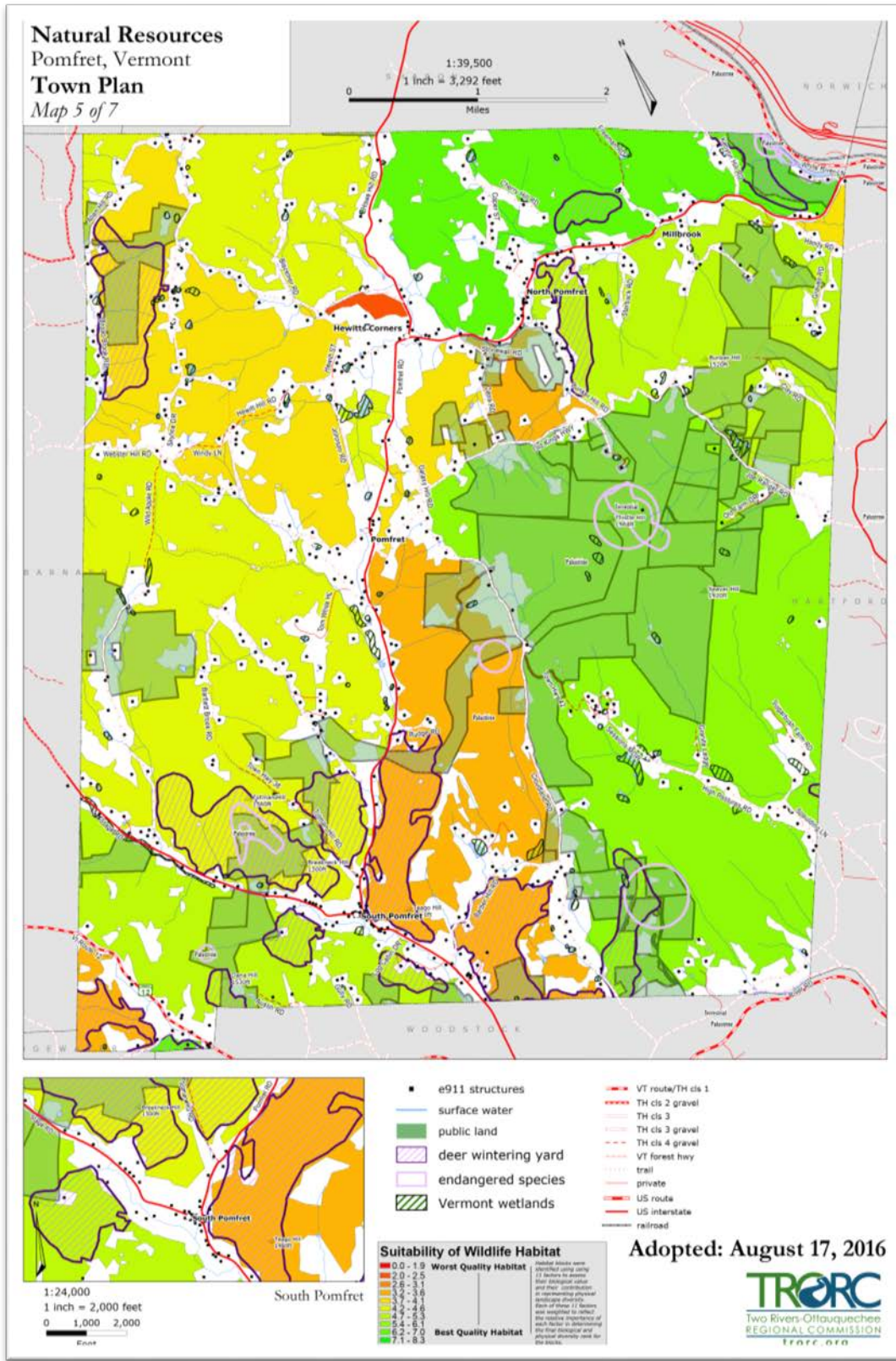


## Agricultural Soils Map

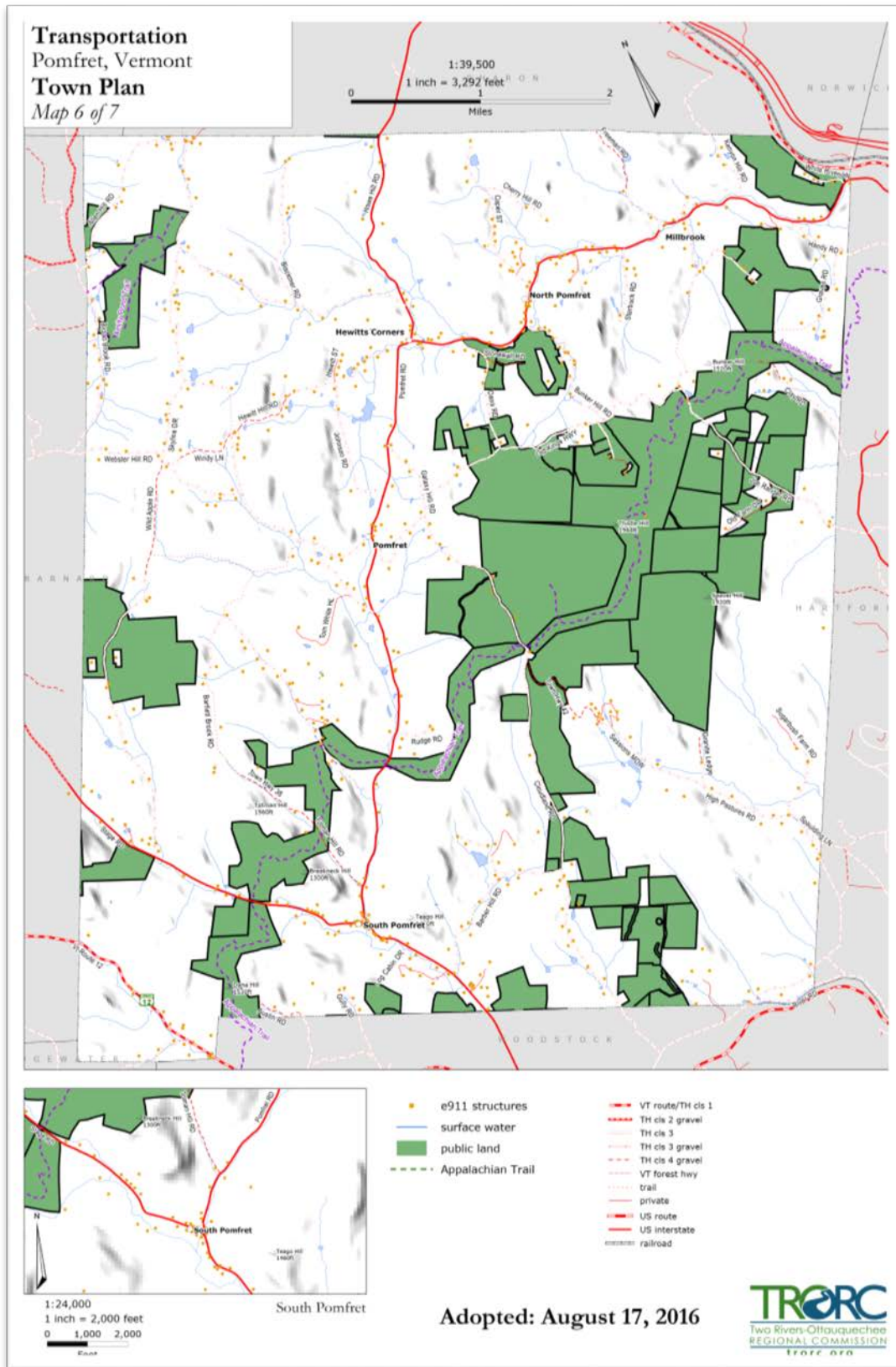




## Natural Resources Map



## Transportation Map





## Utilities, Facilities and Education Map

