

Adopted 11/2/16

# WINHALL TOWN PLAN

Winhall Planning Commission  
115 VT Route 30  
Bondville, Vermont 05340

TOWN OF WINHALL  
Bondville, Vermont 05340


November 2, 2016

In accordance with the Vermont Planning & Development Act 24 VSA, Chapter 117, Subchapter 4, Sections 4384 & 4385, the Winhall Town Plan has been amended and readopted by vote of the Winhall Selectboard on November 2, 2016.

To affect the purpose and goals of 24 VSA, Subchapter 1, Section 4302, Subchapter 4, Section 4382, the Plan is established to provide for and guide the future growth and development of the Town in a responsible manner.



Stuart Coleman, Chair



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William Schwartz, Esq. Vice-Chair



David Glabach, Member



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Elizabeth Grant, Town Clerk



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## **INTRODUCTION**

The first settlers came to Winhall around 1780 and settled on Taylor Hill; other centers of early settlement were on Winhall Hollow and Old Town Road. These settlers came in search of the good country life afforded by a mountain town. Bondville is the only remaining village in Winhall. In the middle 1800s the Town was prosperous; forestry and value added enterprises were the major economic activities. Today tourism and recreation are the main focuses of the community.

The Town of Winhall consists of rolling topography with elevations that range from approximately 2,680' at the highest point to approximately 1,250' at the lowest point in the unincorporated Village of Bondville (aka Village of Bondville). As with all towns in the Green Mountains, development tends to occur along major thoroughfares. Vermont Route 30 is the major thoroughfare in the Town with an elevation of approximately 1,293' in the area of the Village of Bondville. The Town has a recreation and retail based economy with recreation supporting much of the retail trade. Recreational development has generally occurred in the highlands with Stratton Mountain Corporation being the area's largest employer. Seasonal residential development consists of subdivisions spread throughout the Town along with condominiums clustered near the resort area. Year round residential development tends to be around the Village center. Winhall is located in Bennington County.

In 1870, the Town of Winhall had 842 residents which is the largest population in Winhall's long history. From 1870, the population declined to only 212 residents in 1940. Gradual growth brought the population up to 702 residents in 2000 and grew to 769 residents in 2010.

## **PURPOSE OF THE TOWN PLAN**

It is the intent of the Town of Winhall through the implementation of this Town Plan, to encourage the development of the community in a manner, which promotes the health and general welfare of the public, mitigates problems associated with land development and growth, and retains the highest characteristics of a rural-residential and recreational area.

Specifically, the objectives, policies and recommendations expressed within this plan, along with the various Town Plan maps, will serve to guide the Town's efforts in land use planning and growth management, in the provision of public services and facilities, and in environmental protection, economic development and resource conservation.

Throughout this Plan, words such as "encourage, should, require, recommend, support, shall, protect, etc." are used. These words have been carefully chosen to convey an intent and to allow future Town Boards to interpret the Plan in a manner appropriate for the circumstances being considered.

## **STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES**

The statements listed represent the overall objectives of the Town of Winhall and further establish a foundation upon which specific Town Plan policies have been based.

It is the objective of the Town of Winhall:

1. To accommodate the changing needs of the Town through a continuous planning program and to encourage public participation.
2. To encourage Winhall's growth in a manner which helps to assure that the basic needs of the health, safety, welfare, education, and housing of the Town's residents are met and maintained at satisfactory levels within the financial means of the Town.
3. To encourage a strong, stable and diverse economy that provides satisfying and rewarding job opportunities to meet the needs of the Town.
4. To maintain the Town's characteristic pattern of settlement typified by the small Village of Bondville, recreational and resort areas, and clustered residential developments separated by rural countryside.
5. To support the availability of safe and affordable housing for all residents.
6. To encourage continued use of lands for agriculture, forestry and recreational uses in order to ensure availability of open spaces and non-renewable resources, and to preserve the character the Village of Bondville.
7. To encourage the preservation and enhancement of the community's cultural, historical, architectural, recreational, and scenic resources.
8. To strive to maintain and, where possible, to improve the quality of air, water, wildlife and land resources.
9. To encourage the efficient use of energy and the use of renewable energy resources.
10. To provide a safe, convenient, and coordinated transportation system, which respects the integrity of the natural environment and enhances the desired development patterns expressed within this plan.
11. To ensure the policies and recommendations outlined in this Town Plan are carried out in a manner which balances both the shared and individual rights of Winhall's citizens.
12. To encourage the availability of safe and affordable childcare and to integrate childcare into the planning process, including childcare financing, infrastructure, business assistance for childcare providers, and childcare workforce development.
13. To enable the purchase or acceptance of development rights as a non-regulatory method to protect and preserve important natural, historic, and scenic features of Winhall.

### **TOWN PLAN REVISION PROCESS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

In 1999 the Winhall Planning Commission conducted a Bondville Village Water & Septic Capacity Study. Based on this study, the expansion of community facilities and businesses, which would require increased water and septic capacities, could be difficult within the Village center. This study

also helped the Planning Commission to delineate the boundary of the Village District. More details from this study can be found in the Economic Development section of the plan.

From 2001 to 2005, the Planning Commission worked through an extensive public process to update the Winhall Zoning Bylaw. The Bylaw was updated to bring it into compliance with the Town Plan and to incorporate changes made to Title 24 V.S.A., Chapter 117. Changes addressed affordable housing, multifamily dwellings, employee housing, and accessory apartments. A Village Zoning District was created to encourage mixed uses and centralized growth in a traditional village center. Revisions to the Winhall Zoning Regulations included amendments to the Zoning District Use Chart and were adopted in 2011. Revisions to the Winhall Subdivision Regulations resulted in the Regulations being updated to facilitate the review/procedure process and were adopted in 2009. The Planning Commission along with the Winhall Selectboard wrote the Winhall Highway Policy with a comprehensive section on “work within the right of way.” The Highway Policy was adopted in 2016. In 2011 Winhall adopted revised Flood Hazard Regulations to incorporate State mandated changes.

### **ADJACENT TOWNS AND THE REGION: HOW THE WINHALL TOWN PLAN RELATES**

Winhall is but one town in a region of diverse and changing communities. The Town is a member of the Windham Regional Commission and borders Jamaica, Londonderry, and Stratton in Windham County. Dorset, Landgrove, Manchester, Peru, and Sunderland border the town in Bennington County. It is linked to these communities via roadways, waterways, recreation resources, contiguous forestland and wildlife habitat, and through the sharing of important community facilities and services. In addition, many of Winhall’s residents have strong social and economic ties to the region’s important employment and cultural centers.

Overall, the objective, policies, and recommended land use patterns outlined with this Town Plan, including those along the Town’s borders, are generally compatible with those of neighboring communities. In addition, the Winhall Town Plan is compatible with the Windham Regional Plan, both in terms of overall regional policies and general recommendations for regional land use.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Winhall’s economy has been diverse, including retail commerce, inns, small farms producing agricultural products, and small manufacturers refining locally produced natural resources.

The current economy is largely dependent on transient visitors and second homeowners. The Town is centrally located among several major ski resorts. Route 30 and Route 11 provide a steady stream of scenic beauty of the river valley, and the forested ridges surrounding the Town make it a desirable tourist destination, inviting visitors to stop and shop, eat and sleep, and take advantage of the outdoors. An abundance of recreational opportunities are easily accessible, including golf, fishing, skiing, hunting, swimming, boating, snowmobiling, and hiking.

The increased number of vacation homes has also stimulated the economy, creating opportunities such as construction, landscaping, sales and rentals, caretaking and maintenance. Winhall’s continued preservation of its scenic resources contributes to this.

## **Economic Policies**

1. Encourage economic development, which maximizes the circulation of dollars within the community, provides diversified local employment opportunities, and enhances Winhall's small-town, rural character while promoting the wise and sustainable use of Winhall's natural resources to protect its overall environmental quality.
2. Require that town planning for change and growth be guided by the following considerations: (1) future village land needs; (2) encouragement of residential and expanded commercial uses; (3) provision of adequate municipal services and facilities; (4) preservation of architecturally and historically significant buildings; and (5) preservation of open spaces.
3. Encourage expansion of home occupations which provide varied employment opportunities and have minimal adverse impacts on the rural-residential character of the community.
4. Support the strengthening and diversification of the existing economic base of tourism and recreation in a manner which maintains high environmental quality.
5. Encourage the local manufacture and marketing of value-added agricultural and forestry products.
6. Encourage development consistent with existing uses which will positively impact Winhall's natural, physical, and social environment.

## **Economic Recommendations**

1. Encourage that the Village remain the center of mixed-use activity in Winhall.
2. The Town should review the Winhall Zoning Bylaw and Subdivision Regulations and make improvements. The new Bylaws and Regulations should provide for more economic development opportunities and contain appropriate development standards.
3. The Town recommends preparing and issuing a development handbook which summarizes local permit requirements and provides other information that would expedite the local permit review process.

## **VILLAGE OF BONDVILLE**

In the Village of Bondville, development is characterized by a concentration of structures and land uses. Bondville does not have public sewer or drinking water facilities. All such facilities in the Village are privately owned water systems which include drilled, dug, and spring fed wells and individual septic systems which are either mound or below grade septic systems. Approximate locations of the septic disposal and water supply systems in the Village are shown on the Well and Septic Systems Map contained in the Bondville Village Water & Septic Capacity Study. Results of this study would be used to understand if the Village was nearing the limits of its present capacity and to help the Town with planning to accommodate future growth.



In Bondville there is one private water system connecting a number of properties to a spring fed water supply. This supply runs along Route 30 and is gravity fed. It is unlikely that this system can be expanded to serve broader commercial or residential needs.

### **Survey Results**

The study consisted of 42 parcels of land held by 33 property owners. Out of the 33 surveys sent 70% of the property owners responded. The data gathered by the survey indicated that parcel sizes ranged from over 10 acres to less than .25 acres. Buildings in the Village are a mix of uses consisting of single-family homes, apartments, businesses and combinations of businesses and homes. 40% of owners have either owned or resided in the structure for over 20 years, have drilled wells, have standard in-ground septic systems that were installed between 1970 and 1990, and have septic tanks with capacities in excess of 1,000 gallons.

Any expansion of community facilities and businesses within the Village center would require increased water and septic capacities. The study findings suggest that such an increase could be difficult. There are a few parcels near the Village center which may have the carrying capacity needed to add septic systems and allow for new wells for potable water.

### **Municipal Services Agreement**

There is a Municipal Services Agreement between the Stratton Corporation and the Town of Winhall which provides for, among other things, the reservation of 20,000 gallons per day of sewage treatment capacity for such purposes as the Selectboard shall direct. The capacity reservation may be sold or transferred as may be necessary to alleviate or abate disposal deficiencies within Winhall.

### **Village Policies**

1. Development in the Village District is characterized by a concentration of structures and land uses devoted to small-scale commercial, residential, governmental and recreational uses. The Village of Bondville has historically been, the center of such mixed-use activity in Winhall.
2. Town planning for change and growth within the Village should be guided by the following considerations: (1) future village land needs; (2) encouragement of residential and commercial uses; (3) provision of adequate municipal services and facilities; (4) preservation of architecturally and historically significant buildings; and (5) preservation of open spaces.
3. The character of the Village of Bondville is an important social and economic asset to the community. Therefore, development should be carried out in a manner which improves and enhances the attractiveness, cohesiveness, and utility of the Village.

### **Village Recommendations**

1. The Town recognized that existing site conditions presented limitations to future development within the Village. Therefore, the Town recognizes that additional business opportunities could only occur by expanding the commercial zone.

2. To enhance the Village of Bondville, the Town encourages the restoration and preservation of existing Village buildings, the use of appropriate landscaping materials, and the implementation of design standards for architectural and other improvements.

## **HOUSING**

An adequate supply of year-round housing that offers varieties of size, cost, and location is essential to the economic and social health of every town in the Region. Communities benefit when employees are able to live close to their workplace; young adults are able to buy or rent in their hometowns; and elderly residents are able to remain in the community where they have family, friends, and history.

### **Housing Policies**

1. Require that new or rehabilitated housing be safe and sanitary, available in adequate supply to meet the requirements of all of the Town's residents, and coordinated with the provision of necessary public facilities and utilities.
2. Encourage the use of permitted accessory dwelling units as affordable housing.

### **Housing Recommendations**

1. The Town recognizes the need for affordable family and elderly housing in Winhall convenient to services, and should identify and implement solutions to address these needs. Solutions should be designed to provide affordable housing.
2. Support the efforts of nonprofit housing organizations, as well as private developers, to identify the need and implement opportunities in Winhall that meet the guidelines for affordable housing.

## **COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

**Winhall Town Offices:** Located at #115 VT, Route 30 north of the Village; this Town facility houses the offices of the Winhall Town Clerk, Winhall Selectboard, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Zoning Administrator, Town Listers, Town Treasurer, 911 Coordinator, Buildings Manager, and Town Administrator. Most public hearings as well as the day-to-day operation of the Town of Winhall are conducted in this facility.

**Winhall Police & Rescue:** Located at #113 VT, Route 30 north of the Village. The Town facility is also home to the Winhall Police & Rescue Department and its staff.

**Winhall Town Garage:** Located at #66 Old Town Road, this facility houses the Town's road maintenance equipment and supplies and is headquarters for the Winhall Highway Department.

**Winhall Transfer Station:** Located at #64 Old Town Road and adjacent to the Town Garage, this facility is the center for recycling, collection of hazardous waste material, and distribution of solid waste.

**Winhall Memorial Library & Park:** Located at #2 Lower Taylor Hill Road; formerly a school house, this building houses the Winhall Library. A Board of Trustees manages the library with annual financial support from the Town of Winhall. A wide variety of recreational, cultural and reading activities are available to all residents of Winhall and surrounding communities. The park features the Winhall Veterans Memorial.

**Winhall Volunteer Fire Department Building:** Located at #107 VT Route 30 and next to the Town offices, this facility houses the volunteer Winhall Fire Department and its staff.

**Winhall Community Center:** Located at #9 School Road, this facility is home to both the Mountain School and community at large. Community and educational events, March Town Meeting, fairs, and celebrations are held in this facility.

**Winhall Cemeteries:** Cemeteries are located throughout the Town of Winhall as identified on Map 2.

**The Bondville Post Office** is located in the center of the Village Bondville.

**Winhall Municipal Land:** Approximately 250 acres, this forested Town-owned tract of land is located on Kendall Farm Road and includes a gravel pit. The Winhall Town Forest, consisting of 623 acres, is located predominantly in the Town of Jamaica.

**Old Town Hall:** Located at #3 River Road in the Village of Bondville currently houses the Winhall Community Arts Center, a municipal based facility for Winhall and surrounding neighborhoods.

### **Facility Policies**

1. Require an adequate tax base to support adequate municipal facilities and services.
2. Require that the pace of new development be phased so that municipal and other income or aid to the Town can be reasonably balanced against necessary and anticipated increases in municipal services and facilities.
3. Discourage the takeover of any privately owned facility, including but not limited to, roads, water systems, and sewerage systems, unless it is in the interest of the public good and does not significantly burden the municipal budget.
4. Require that existing or planned municipal facilities and lands, public utilities, or adjacent lands be used in a manner that results in minimal adverse impact.

### **Facility Recommendations**

1. Prepare a budget which addresses fire and police protection; public education; town land acquisition; public parking; solid waste disposal; and town highway and bridge program(s). In general, the growth of Winhall should not exceed the Town's fiscal capacity as identified in the budget program.

## **SOLID WASTE & RECYCLING SERVICES**

Winhall is a mandatory recycling town abiding by all applicable local, State, and Federal laws. The Town does not provide for refuse collection; residents may contract with one of several private waste haulers or bring their refuse to the facility themselves. The Winhall Transfer Station & Recycling Center provides facilities for recyclable items including newspapers and magazines, electronic devices, metal, glass, corrugated cardboard, plastics, bottles and cans. The facility includes various bins and containers as well as a used clothes depository, swap shop, and composting area. In addition to the Recycling Center, the facility provides for the collection and distribution of Winhall's solid waste.

### **Solid Waste Policies**

1. Require developers of commercial and industrial uses which are responsible for unique or large amounts of solid waste to demonstrate that the methods of disposal will not adversely affect the environment. Businesses generating such waste are responsible for disposal and associated costs.
2. Require that no hazardous waste be produced or disposed of anywhere in the Town unless in conformance with all applicable local, Federal and State laws.

### **Solid Waste Recommendations**

1. The Town should continue to enforce its waste disposal ordinance.
2. The Town supports methods for reducing the overall quantity of waste generated and encourages recycling. The Town should continue to provide opportunities and facilities for recycling.

## **PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICES: POLICE, FIRE, RESCUE & HEALTH CARE**

**Emergency Services:** The Winhall Police & Rescue and Volunteer Fire Department provide the residents of Winhall with police and emergency services. The Town of Winhall supports emergency services through substantial annual appropriations. The Police Department also provides first responder services to the area.

**Winhall-Stratton Fire District #1:** The Winhall-Stratton Fire District #1 was created to construct and maintain public water supply, sewers, and sewage treatment works and equipment. State codes apply to fire districts. With these responsibilities comes the right to levy a tax subject to a vote at an annual meeting of the Fire District. The boundaries of the District can be found on the Community Facilities Map.

**Emergency Planning & Disaster Preparedness:** The Town encourages emergency planning and disaster preparedness. Planning and preparedness may help reduce the risk to life and health, the damage to public and private property, and the environmental damage that often occurs as a result of a disaster. The Town encourages calm and realistic disaster preparedness for likely emergencies; to know the location of resources and equipment that will be needed; to inform residents of the potential dangers and the ways to avoid these potential dangers; and to quickly arrange for help when needed. The Town participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP); has adopted Town road, bridge, and culvert standards; and has adopted a Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP).

**Health Care:** The Town has no health care facilities and relies on services in adjacent towns which include Mountain Valley Medical Clinic in Londonderry; the Otis Clinic at Stratton Mountain; Grace Cottage Hospital in Townshend; and Southwestern Vermont Medical Center in Manchester. Nearby hospitals include Bennington, Rutland, Springfield, and Brattleboro Hospital(s).

### **Health & Safety Policies**

1. Provide facilities and effective equipment for adequate police and fire protection to meet the changing needs of the community within the financial capabilities of the Town.
2. The Winhall Police Department should continue to provide for the safety and welfare of the property owners, residents and visitors of the Town, and the security of their property, and should work towards developing a relationship of trust and respect within the community.

### **Health & Safety Recommendations**

1. Necessary common fire protection features such as fire ponds and/or dry or charged hydrants should be installed where practicable by developers and subdividers to ensure the safety of the public.
2. Regional hospitals, clinics, rescue services and other health facilities exist throughout the region. The Town should continue to support the rescue and health services which directly serve Winhall residents, businesses and visitors including, but not limited to, Winhall Police & Rescue Squad, Mountain Valley Medical Clinic and Londonderry Rescue in Londonderry, Grace Cottage Hospital in Townshend, Vermont Visiting Nurses, and Neighborhood Connections.

### **RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

An abundance of important outdoor recreational opportunities, including hiking, riding, skiing, hunting, fishing, snowmobiling and picnicking are made available to the public by private landowners with their permission and through the use of public lands such as the National Forest. The Town appreciates and supports the continued availability of these opportunities.

### **Recreational & Cultural Policies**

1. Encourage the provision of varied and accessible opportunities for public and private recreation in a manner which maintains high environmental quality.

### **Recreational & Cultural Recommendations**

1. Encourage opportunities for people of all ages of the Town.
2. Encourage appropriate activities which serve to support and enhance the provision of local library services and facilities by the Winhall Memorial Library and Park, and historical services and facilities by the Winhall Museum.

3. Cemeteries are located throughout the Town of Winhall; measures should be implemented to protect the integrity of these areas and to ensure that they are not damaged, relocated, or destroyed.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Town of Winhall Highways are under the general supervision and control of the Winhall Selectboard. Town Highways are classified from Class 1 to Class 4 depending on use and condition; this classification assists in determining the distribution of the State's annual Town Highway allocation. The Town recognizes the intermittent seasonal traffic congestion which exists at the intersection of Route 30, Stratton Mountain Access Road, and Routes 11/30 due primarily to the commuting patterns of visitors to the Stratton Mountain area.

Winhall's network of roads includes 47 miles of Town roads and State highways. As a small, rural Town, Winhall's transportation does not currently include railways, water transportation, airports, or formal bikeways or pedestrian routes. Private shuttle bus service is provided between many of Winhall's residential areas and the Stratton Mountain Resort. State Routes 30 and 11, the Town's major arterial highways, provide important connections between Winhall, the West River valley area, and the towns of Manchester and Peru. The Stratton Mountain Access Road, Winhall Hollow Road, French Hollow Road, and Old Town Road comprise the Town's collector roads.

**Traffic Calming Study:** In 2001, the Town of Winhall participated in the Route 30 Traffic Calming Study which included a comprehensive community participation program through surveys, workshops, and public meetings. Traffic calming is best described as a combination of physical devices added to roadways or intersections that slow traffic down and reduce the negative effects of vehicular traffic; for example pedestrian cross walks, lowered speed limits, and textured pavement. Volume of traffic and rate of speed were identified as major concerns in Winhall. As a result of the Study, speed limits in the participating towns along Route 30 were lowered and pedestrian cross walks installed.

**Winhall Highway Ordinance:** In 2011 the Selectboard adopted an ordinance to manage its Town Highways. The Ordinance details the road acceptance policy, establishes minimum construction standards, and application for work in the Town right-of-way i.e. curb cuts. The Town regulates access onto Town Highways to provide reasonable and safe access and prevent unsafe conditions from poor construction and maintenance of any access.

The Town's road network consists of the following classifications:

WINHALL TOWN ROAD CLASSIFICATION	
Class 2 Roads	10.15 miles
Class 3 Roads	33.51 miles
Class 4 Roads	2.93 miles
Trails	0.49 miles

### **Transportation Policies**

1. Ensure that the road system throughout Winhall provides for public safety and convenience commensurate with need, while respecting the integrity of the natural environment and maintaining the community's scenic, rural character and historic sites.

2. Require any traffic changes affecting the Town be sensitive in preserving the integrity of the Village of Bondville.
3. Major reconfiguration of Route 30 at the intersection with the Stratton Mountain Access Road should only be undertaken after careful consideration.

### **Transportation Recommendations**

1. The Town should work with other regional communities and the regional planning commission to identify and implement alternative means of transportation which would reduce the level of traffic on local and regional roads.
2. In order to minimize traffic congestion, developers should provide off-street loading facilities, shared parking areas, and avoid unnecessary new road intersection/curb cuts by sharing access driveways.
3. The Town encourages the continued and expanded use of private shuttle buses which provide transportation services between various residential communities in Winhall and the Stratton Mountain resort area.

### **EDUCATION & EARLY CHILDCARE**

#### **Day Care:**

Currently there is one licensed childcare provider at the Mountain School @ Winhall. Also refer to Bright Futures Information Systems (BFIS) on line.

#### **Primary Education:**

In the spring of 1998, the residents of Winhall voted to change their existing public school to an independent school. The establishment of an independent school presented an opportunity to provide a high level of academic excellence for all students in the area at a cost manageable to taxpayers. Students living in the towns of Stratton and Winhall are guaranteed admission to the Mountain School with their respective towns paying the tuition. Students living outside of Stratton and Winhall have the opportunity to attend the Mountain School as tuition students often assisted through financial aid, scholarships, and/or Service-in-Kind. The Mountain School offers pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

The Mountain School building contains onsite classrooms, offices, gym, and multi-purpose room, kitchen, outside recreational facilities including a playground and playing fields as well as a skateboard park; outside facilities are open to the community at large. In addition to its educational function, the school is used as a community gathering place for Winhall's annual Town Meeting and other community activities.

#### **Secondary Education:**

While there are no secondary education facilities in the Town of Winhall, the Town does provide tuition for Winhall students to secondary schools.

### **Education Policies**

1. Provide high quality, cost-effective educational opportunities, facilities, and amenities to all students residing in Winhall.
2. Require new development, which directly or indirectly results in an increase in the number of school-age children, take place in a manner which does not exceed the Town's fiscal capacity so identified in the municipal budget or any duly adopted Town and/or School capital budget and program.
3. In order to meet the needs of Winhall's elementary students, the Town encourages a community school environment which currently exists at the Mountain School.
4. Encourage the Winhall School Board to adopt strict residency requirements for all Winhall parents to ensure that the Town retains a system which offers students and parents a choice of primary and secondary schools.

### **Education Recommendations**

1. The Town recognizes that existing educational facilities may not be adequate to meet the needs of Winhall's future population. In order to better understand and address the community's future needs, the Winhall School Board and the Town should monitor the pace of new local development and population growth and continuously evaluate the existing and projected capacity of Winhall's school system in relation to growth.
2. The Town recognizes that safe and affordable childcare contributes to the economic and social well-being of all Winhall residents. The School Board should maintain a list of current childcare providers in adjacent towns as a source for Winhall parents.

### **NATURAL RESOURCES**

In general, natural resource areas should be protected from intense development which degrades or diminishes the natural function or value of the resource. Development which results in the retention of large expanses of connected wooded area within identified wildlife habitat areas is encouraged. Forestry, agriculture and low intensity and recreational uses should be allowed.

### **GROUND & SURFACE WATER RESOURCES**

Winhall residents and businesses depend upon groundwater wells and springs for their potable water supply. The amount and quality of groundwater appears to be adequate for continued growth, but problems of supply and quality may well occur if the land is used more intensively. Protecting these water resources from pollution is critical to maintaining adequate water supplies for area businesses and residents.

Winhall contains a rich variety of water resources. The most visible of these are the Winhall River, Gale Meadow Pond and several smaller streams. These bodies of water provide an important habitat



component for many wildlife species, offer opportunities for swimming, fishing, and other recreational activities, and contribute to the area's aesthetic appeal.

It is critical that water resources remain free of pollution and the stream banks and riparian vegetation not be damaged. Areas subject to periodic flooding are identified on the flood hazard maps. Development planning shall maintain green space along streams and conform to flood hazard regulations.

### **Wellhead Protection Areas**

Wellhead protection areas include surface and subsurface land areas surrounding water wells in Winhall which supply "public water systems." "Public water systems" include water supply systems with ten or more connections to buildings, units and/or uses. These areas have been identified by the Vermont Department of Health.

### **Wetland Areas**

Includes areas identified on the USGS topographic map as wetlands. In addition to these mapped areas, significant wetlands, identified by the Vermont Significant Wetlands Inventory, exist in Winhall. These maps provide important land use planning information and are incorporated herein by reference.

### **Critical Limitation Areas**

Includes steep slopes over 25% wherein intensive development should be discouraged and all forms of development should be very carefully controlled.

### **Serious and Highly Probable Limitation Areas**

Includes steep slopes from 15%-25%. Also included in this category are areas of bedrock outcrops, shallow soil, and wet soil. Development should be carefully monitored in these areas.

### **Ground & Surface Water Policies**

1. Encourage the maintenance of Winhall's surface waters and shorelines in their natural state. Areas of natural vegetation should be maintained along watercourses, lakes, ponds and wetlands sufficient to protect water quality, enhance wildlife habitat and, in the case of National Forest and Town-owned lands, to maintain scenic and recreational values.
2. Protect ground and surface waters with special attention to the prevention of siltation of streams, soil erosion and pollution of ground and surface waters. The practice of fracking to extract oil or gas is not permitted.
3. Encourage the conservation and/or preservation of waters with exceptional natural, recreational, cultural or scenic values.
4. Protect all wellhead protection areas (existing and future) from contamination by surface activities in and around these areas to ensure an adequate clean drinking water supply. Careful consideration should be given prior to the establishment of wellhead protection areas.

5. Carry out all development within flood hazard areas in a manner which is consistent with local and state flood hazard regulations and federal flood insurance rate maps, (D-FIRM) and which shall adequately ensure the health, safety and welfare of the public during times of flooding.
6. Encourage the use of flood hazard areas for agricultural and conservation uses, open recreation, and other purposes which do not significantly impair the land's natural ability to handle floodwaters.
7. Require on-site sewerage disposal systems for single-family homes, multi-family dwellings, commercial and industrial development, and development utilizing community systems to comply with the Environmental Protection Rules enforced by the Department of Environmental Conservation.
8. Encourage development in areas where the topography and soil conditions are not likely to cause contamination of surface or subsurface waters or to cause the failure of waste disposal systems. (The Natural Resources Conservation Service Soil Survey) should be used as a general guide in determining where appropriate development should satisfactorily be located.)

### **Ground & Surface Water Recommendations**

1. The Town should designate, within the Winhall Zoning Bylaw, setbacks and buffer zones where appropriate to protect water quality.
2. Road sand and salt storage areas should not be sited in the 100-year flood hazard area; Class I or Class II ground water zones; wellhead protection areas; any other area designated by the Town as an important groundwater protection area; or shoreline areas of any surface water.

### **WILDLIFE RESOURCES & NATURAL AREAS**

**Deer Wintering Areas:** These habitats have been identified by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife and are characterized by a high degree of softwood cover, a favorable slope, south or westerly aspects, generally moderate elevations, and low levels of human disturbance in the winter.

**Bear Habitat:** Bear habitat information may be obtained from the District Wildlife Biologist who can provide specific knowledge about bear production habitat, seasonal bear habitat, and "bear low use areas."

**Natural Areas:** Significant natural communities have been identified in Winhall by the Nongame and Natural Heritage Program; reference ANR Atlas under National Heritage Areas. These include Winhall Hollow, Gale Meadows, and spruce-fir habitat where the Sedge Wren, Black-Backed Woodpecker, Tennessee Warbler, and Cape May Warbler respectively have been observed. Natural areas have also been identified including Little Mud Pond which is a good example of a Lowland Bog.

### **Wildlife Policies**

1. Minimize the fragmentation of forest blocks associated with critical deer, bear and other wildlife habitat and maintain the connecting links between such blocks; cluster development is encouraged where it can accomplish these objectives.

2. Protect and preserve habitats supporting rare, threatened, and endangered plants and animals.

### **Wildlife Recommendations**

1. The Town should participate in the National Forest Service's ongoing land use planning and management efforts to identify, protect, and enhance wildlife habitat for fish and wildlife species; the Forest Service activity should not be detrimental to the Town's interests.
2. The Town encourages local landowners to voluntarily and collectively manage their property in a manner which enhances wildlife habitat and protects rare, threatened or endangered species.

### **AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY RESOURCES**

It is estimated that more than 60% of Winhall is in the National Forest. The headwaters of the major streams and rivers are heavily buffered by forestland, preserving soils and water purity at its source. Forestry plays a role in the ecological and recreational health of the area. This type of land provides habitat for wildlife, contributes to water and air quality, provides for a forestry and tourism industry, and enhances recreation. For these reasons, it is vital to maintain sound forestry practices and regulate development. The Winhall Town Forest is located predominantly in the Town of Jamaica and is managed by the Town for timber and recreational purposes.

Past agricultural activities played a role in defining the area's landscape and contributed to the diversity of the economy. There is a growing demand for local retail products including maple syrup, cheeses, fruits and vegetables, meat and wool. Agricultural uses in Winhall consist of livestock, forage and hay, maple syrup products, and landscape materials.

### **Agriculture & Forest Policies**

1. Encourage the use of existing open lands for agricultural uses.
2. Encourage the use of cluster development and other creative strategies which prevent the fragmentation of Winhall's forestlands and contiguous farmlands.
3. Protect surface waters, shorelines and stream banks, and minimize all adverse, short term and long term environmental impacts including those on neighboring properties from timber harvesting, agricultural practices, or animal husbandry.

### **Agriculture & Forest Recommendations**

1. The Town should participate with the National Forest Service's ongoing forest management efforts encouraging environmentally sound and sustainable harvests.

### **HISTORIC RESOURCES**

Winhall was first settled around 1780 by people in search of the good country life afforded by a mountain town. Many of the buildings, school houses, and homesteads remain today. Some have been relocated, others altered to serve current needs. Photographs and locations of those remaining

structures along with information about their inhabitants can be found in “Winhall Then and Now” which is a brief pictorial and written history of the Town of Winhall.

### **Historic Policies**

1. The Village of Bondville should remain a center of mixed use activity within Winhall.
2. Measures should be implemented to maintain the integrity of the cemeteries throughout Winhall.

### **Historic Recommendations**

1. Encourage the restoration and preservation of existing buildings that have characterized Winhall as a rural mountain community.
2. Require protection of Winhall cemeteries from damage, relocation, and destruction.

### **SCENIC RESOURCES**

One of the Town’s most valuable resources is the exceptional scenic quality of its landscape. Scenic resources provide a unique aesthetic and visual experience for residents. These aesthetic qualities attract a significant tourist population and are important to the Town’s economy.

### **Scenic Policies**

1. Discourage the use and development of land in Winhall which will significantly detract from scenic resources including open lands, river and road corridors, ridgelines, mountaintops and other scenic views, as well as historic sites.
2. Discourage the use of objectionable lighting which causes glare, unnecessarily illuminates beyond boundaries of a development, or is detrimental to the safety, health and welfare of the general public.

### **Scenic Recommendations**

1. The Town encourages the use of planning and zoning tools which enhance the overall visual quality of Winhall. Earth and Mineral Resources

Sand and gravel deposits of varying quality are scattered throughout the Windham Region and are the principal mineral resources being extracted in the Region. Deposits of good quality sand and gravel are small within the Town.

### **EARTH & MINERAL RESOURCES**

Sand and gravel deposits of varying quality are scattered throughout the Windham Region and are the principal mineral resources being extracted in the Region. Deposits of good quality sand and gravel are small within the Town.

### **Earth & Mineral Policies**

1. Require commercial earth and mineral extraction be carried out in a manner and in locations which result in minimal adverse impact on the environment and character of the area.
2. Protect sand and gravel deposits which are shown to provide significant aquifer recharge from extraction activity.
3. Require a site rehabilitation plan for local approval of commercial earth and mineral extraction operations.

### **Earth & Mineral Recommendations**

1. Work to identify sites with potential for extraction of sand and gravel in accordance with earth and mineral policies stated above.

### **AIR QUALITY RESOURCES**

Air quality is generally good in the Town. Local threats to air quality include combustion by-products from wood stoves, industry and manufacturing, and agricultural, forestry and waste management practices. The main locally generated cause of air pollution is from auto emissions; however, not all the pollutants are from sources within the Town. The topography, prevailing wind and weather system patterns result in air pollution traveling from other states and other regions of the State of Vermont. Due to the transport of air pollutants, it is difficult to control air quality at a local level. The Town is dependent upon federal standards to regulate air pollution and should incorporate its own standards into zoning bylaw performance standards.

### **Air quality Policies**

1. Discourage Development or activity which significantly degrades local air quality.

### **Air quality Recommendations**

1. The Town should monitor the effectiveness of existing performance standards in controlling air emissions as contained within the Winhall Zoning Bylaws.

### **RENEWABLE ENERGY RESOURCES**

30 VSA Section 248 provides that the Vermont Public Service Board issue a Certificate of Public Good for all electric generating facilities. In making its determination, the PSB must give consideration to the recommendations of municipal planning commissions and their respective town plans. The Town of Winhall supports, where designated, responsibly sited and developed renewable energy resource projects. The Town will only offer its support for individual projects on a case by case basis. Winhall wishes to maintain its scenic resources including open landscapes, scenic views, and rural

countryside vital to its community and tourist economy. Not all commercial or community scale projects proposed will meet this standard. Therefore, facilities shall be sited in locations that reinforce the community's traditional and planned patterns of growth. The Winhall Town Plan includes policies and recommendations with respect to renewable energy resources and provides guidelines to town officials as well as to the Vermont Public Service Board.

#### **Renewable Energy Resources Policies:**

1. Support development of solar generated electricity on roof-mounted systems which are mounted flush with and at the same angle as the existing roof surface along with other small scale renewable energy systems serving an individual user.
2. Require proximity to existing natural buffers or other topographical features that naturally screen the proposed energy project; adequate screening must be provided where natural buffers do not exist.
3. Meet minimum setback requirements based on the size of the project rather than the district in which it is located.
4. Limit the need for new or extended access roads, utility corridors, site clearing, signage, and lighting; utility controls and onsite line connections shall be wireless or buried, except at the point of connection with distribution lines.
5. Minimize noise generated by any energy facility as measured at any property line not to exceed 5 decibels above the ambient sound level.
6. Require a decommissioning plan be provided including required sureties for facility removal and site restoration to a safe, useful, and environmentally stable condition.
7. Does not support development that causes a facility to be visible against any skyline or from common vantage points such as roads, homes and neighborhoods or causes other adverse visual impacts.

#### **Renewable Energy Recommendations:**

1. That the Town require any proposed commercial facility demonstrate a public need that outweighs adverse impacts to local resources, residents, businesses, and property owners or which otherwise affects the Town;
- 2) That the Town require any proposed commercial facility be considered only after potential alternatives are evaluated and found to be insufficient.
- 3) That The Town require any proposed commercial facility be in accordance with the Winhall Town Plan, Zoning Bylaws, Flood Hazard and Subdivision Regulations, Regional Plan, and be consistent with community and regional development objectives and avoid undue adverse impacts to cultural, natural, and scenic resources identified by the Town.

#### **Preferred Areas:**

Preferred areas include brownfields, disused gravel pits or landfills or areas reasonably removed and isolated from neighborhoods. These areas should be naturally screened and pose no threat to soil erosion and water run-off.

## **ENERGY CONSERVATION RESOURCES**

Energy is a resource that should be considered in any comprehensive land use planning process. Homes and businesses use a variety of energy for heating. With a heating season that generally lasts seven months, it is evident that home and business energy consumption is a significant issue for everyone in the area. Substantial economic savings can be realized through energy conservation. In addition, a reduction in energy usage also reduces the production of environmental pollutants. Energy conservation can be facilitated through effective land use planning, building standards and design, and improved transportation efficiency.

The siting, design, and construction of buildings strongly influences the amount of energy required for heating and cooling as well as the amount of electricity needed for lighting. Proper subdivision design, building orientation, construction and landscaping provide opportunities for passive solar space and domestic hot water heating, natural lighting and photovoltaic electricity production. Additional energy savings can be realized by retrofitting existing buildings with insulation, weather-stripping, compact fluorescent lights and efficient appliances.

Winhall uses a variety of fuel sources to meet energy needs. Increased and more effective public education regarding not only the environmental benefits of conservation, but also the potential financial savings, will likely be needed in the future.

### **Energy Conservation Policies**

1. Require all new construction be designed and built to be energy efficient.
2. Encourage the maximum conservation of energy resources.
3. Support the clustering of development, the reduction and recycling of waste materials, and the use of renewable energy resources, all of which are important energy conservation strategies that can be implemented by small, rural communities like Winhall.
4. Carefully consider the development of renewable energy resources on a commercial level to help preserve the appeal of the forested mountains which are a valued natural resource.

### **Energy Conservation Recommendations**

1. The Town should monitor municipal energy use and should, where feasible, implement energy conservation measures to promote the use of renewable energy sources.
2. The Town encourages the continued and expanded use of private shuttle buses which provide transportation services between various residential communities and the Stratton Mountain resort area.
3. The Town supports, where appropriate, voluntary approaches to energy conservation by landowners through careful management and utilization of natural resources.
4. The Town supports, where appropriate, renewable energy resources on the residential level.

## **FLOOD RESILIENCE PLAN**

This plan identifies flood hazards as the Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA) shown on the National Flood Insurance Program and Flood Insurance Rate Maps (D-FIRM) and identifies fluvial erosion hazard areas as those shown on the Agency of Natural Resources River Corridor maps. Further, this plan designates both those identified areas as areas to be protected, including floodplains, river corridors, and land adjacent to streams, wetlands, and upland forests to reduce the risk of flood damage to infrastructure and improved property. In addition, this plan incorporates by reference the Town of Winhall Flood Hazard Regulations and the Winhall Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. Finally this plan recommends the following policies and recommendations to protect the designated areas to mitigate risks to public safety, critical infrastructure, historic structures, and municipal investments.

### **Flood Resilience Policies**

1. It is the policy of the Town to protect floodplains, river corridors, land adjacent to streams, wetlands, and upland forests through adoption and administration of flood hazard area regulations governing development in designated Special Flood Hazard Areas and River Corridors, in order to reduce the risk of flood damage to infrastructure, improved property, people, and the environment.
2. New development in identified flood hazard, fluvial erosion, and river corridor protection areas should be avoided. If new development is to be built in such areas, it should not exacerbate flooding and fluvial erosion.
3. The Town encourages flood emergency preparedness and response planning.

### **Flood Resilience Recommendations**

1. The Town will be familiar with Flood Insurance Rate Maps that delineate areas that could be inundated by water during flooding.
2. The Town will be familiar with the ANR River Corridor Maps that delineate the land area adjacent to streams and rivers required to accommodate a stable channel.
3. The Town will regulate any new development in identified flood hazard areas, fluvial erosion hazard areas, and/or River Corridors to ensure that development does not exacerbate flooding and fluvial erosion, and extend these provisions to development activities that might increase the amount and/or rate of runoff and soil erosion from upland areas.

## **TOWN PLAN MAPS AND LAND USE PLAN**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Winhall Planning Commission and the Windham Regional Commission prepared a portfolio of GIS-based land use and resource maps for this plan. These maps identify natural, physical and cultural features in Winhall and are designed to show areas within the community where Town Plan policies should directly influence future land use. Each map is supported by accompanying text which



describes map features and establishes generalized policies and recommendations to further guide development in Winhall.

Town Plan maps include:

- Transportation & Community Facilities
- Existing Land Use
- Proposed Land Use
- Flood & Fluvial Erosion Hazard Areas

In some cases, available information is not detailed or accurate enough to characterize every potential building lot. The information mapped is most useful in evaluating major developments and subdivisions that may have a significant effect upon the Town's rural character and its extensive natural, scenic, and recreational resources. Town Plan maps, reduced to a small size and generalized for public information, are attached to this Winhall Town Plan. Larger maps including Natural Resources and Physical and Topographical Limitations to Development as well as Flood Hazard Maps are available for review at the Winhall Town Hall.

## **LAND USE**

Winhall is approximately 60% National Forest and significant portions of the National Forest were turned over by private property owners. As a reflection of the current Plan, and in the most recent updated zoning bylaw, the Town created a Village District which allows mixed-use development, multi-family dwellings, employee housing and commercial development. Further, commercial zones were created to encourage development around intersections of area roads.

## **CAPABILITY OF THE LAND: TOWN POLICY REGARDING USE OF INFORMATION**

Knowledge of the capability of the land provides a foundation for land use decision-making in the Town of Winhall. Federal, state, regional and local land capability and natural resource information may be considered as a basis in making such judgments in addition to maps. As such, information, which has not yet been mapped by the Planning Commission in the maps included in this Plan, or has not been specifically referenced herein, may be utilized in judging land use proposals relative to the objectives and policies stated in this Plan.

### **MAP 1: TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

This map identifies the transportation network, utility corridors, educational institutions, and other community facilities and services in Winhall.

### **MAP 2: EXISTING LAND USE**

This map provides details of parcel boundaries, distinguishes between commercial or industrial buildings and others (such as residential and public). The map also shows public or conservation land and permanent water bodies.

### **MAP 3: PROPOSED LAND USE**

The purpose of this map is to classify land within the Town into the following land use areas: forest, agricultural and rural-residential, residential, recreational, special purpose, transient lodging, commercial and village. This general land classification system recognizes existing and proposed land uses as well as the present road system, and encourages a pattern of development which conforms to the objectives and policies outlined within this Plan. The following is a description of Winhall's Land Use Plan which specifically identifies the character of each land use area and sets forth policies for the recommended intensity of development within these areas.

### **MAP 4: FLOOD & FLUVIAL EROSION HAZARD AREAS**

This map depicts the Agency of Natural Resources' River Corridors. Development within these areas is regulated by the Town of Winhall Flood Hazard Regulations.

#### **Forest District (F)**

*Description:* includes all U. S. National Forest land in the Town of Winhall as well as some privately held contiguous forested lands. For the most part, these areas are essentially undeveloped and without public road access. They are predominantly forested and have substantial limitations for development.

*Land Use Policy:* National Forest lands should be withheld from development. Other privately held lands within the Forest Area District may be suitable for very low intensity development and should be reserved for outdoor recreation, forest management, wildlife habitat and watershed protection purposes. Residential development may occur at very low densities in areas where physical limitations can be overcome. Considering over half the land in Winhall is National Forest, future acquisitions should be carefully considered before the Selectboard grants approval.

#### **Agricultural and Rural-Residential District (RRA)**

*Description:* Includes areas which are used predominantly for forestry, agricultural and low density residential uses. Many of Winhall's lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, and wetlands are located within this area.

*Land Use Policy:* Appropriate uses include all types of agriculture, forestry and other related uses as well as residential development. Development should result in the protection of resource values and the perpetuation of the contiguous open space patterns which have traditionally characterized such lands.

#### **Residential District (R)**

*Description:* Includes areas which are now or are proposed for residential use, are generally convenient to the Village Center, or which access primary or secondary roads.

*Land Use Policy:* These areas are generally suitable for development for residential purposes at a moderate density. These areas are expected to accommodate growth of primary and vacation homes in Winhall.

### **Recreational District (REC)**

**Description:** Currently includes areas which encompass and surround the Stratton Mountain Ski Resort area and the former Snow Valley Area. This area may include additional lands as identified by the Town in the future.

**Land Use Policy:** The primary purpose of recreational/resort areas is to provide various recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike, as well as a variety of housing and related commercial uses at relatively high densities. Commercial development, where feasible, should support residential and recreational uses and should clearly be secondary to the commercial uses in Bondville.

### **Special Purpose District (SP)**

**Description:** Includes areas within Winhall for which special consideration should be given to the preservation of natural, recreational, and scenic resource values. Specifically, these areas include highly fragile ecological areas surrounding Winhall's major shoreland areas (**Shoreland Protection Areas**), unique conservation protection areas bordering the Appalachian and Long Trails (**Conservation Protection Areas**), and scenic areas along the Stratton Mountain Access Road (**Scenic Restriction Area**). Special Purpose areas have been designated to provide a buffer zone to surrounding land uses.

**Land Use Policy:** In general, recreational uses not requiring land development, such as hunting, fishing, hiking, touring, etc., should be permitted except where prohibited by individual ownership. In Conservation Protection Areas, agricultural and forestry uses which do not result in erosion or sedimentation, are allowed. No permanent structures other than signs should be allowed in the Scenic Restriction Area.

### **Transient Lodging District (TL)**

**Description:** Currently includes areas near the intersection of Routes 11 and 30 and the intersection of Winhall Hollow Road and Lake Road.

**Land Use Policy:** The purpose of these areas is to provide lodging, eating and accessory retail sales and service uses to area visitors at convenient locations and at moderately low densities. Residential development for primary and vacation homes should be allowed at a moderate density.

### **Commercial District (C)**

**Description:** Includes areas in Winhall along Route 30 where commercial development currently exists and is further described as lands on the north and south sides of Route 30 beginning north of the Village of Bondville and continuing to the east of Lower Stratton Valley Road. Two multi parcel gaps exist on the north side of Route 30 near Stratton View Road and across from Gosslings Way. One area is located on the south side of Route 30 across from Stoney Hill Road.

**Land Use Policy:** These lands are surrounded by residential districts and development in these areas should not exceed the capability of municipal services or conflict with the stated policies contained throughout this Plan.

## **Village District (V)**

**Description:** Includes land in the Village of Bondville along Route 30, River Road, and West Hill Road and is characterized by a concentration of structures containing small scale commercial and residential uses.

**Land Use Policy:** The character of the Village is an important asset to the community and development in the Village should remain as small scale mixed commercial uses and where possible the Town should encourage residential uses.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WINHALL TOWN PLAN**

This Plan describes the goals and objectives that the Town wishes to achieve, and the policies by which the Town will manage its affairs. As with most endeavors, implementation will occur through a multi-faceted approach. It can happen through the adoption and application of supporting documents such as the Winhall Zoning Regulations, Subdivision Regulations, Flood Hazard Regulations, and Highway Ordinance. It is important that any changes proposed to these documents be consistent with this Plan.

In the end, the Winhall Town Plan is only as strong as the respect it is given and the value it adds to the community as a foundation policy document and blueprint for action.