Town of Winhall
Vermont

Town Plan

Approved by the Planning Commission:
Adopted by the Selectboard:

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INTRODUCTION

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, safety, 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. The Town Plan is also a guide for the District Environmental Commission and Public Utility Commission as they review any proposals for development in Winhall that come under their jurisdiction.

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.

Planning Process
The Winhall Planning Commission began the process of updating the 2016 Town Plan in the Winter of 2024. The Town applied for and received a Municipal Planning Grant from the Department of Housing and Community Development that provided funding support for this project. Planning support and technical assistance was provided by the Windham Regional Commission.

The Planning Commission developed a community survey at the beginning of the planning process that was available online and at the Town Office. The survey was promoted using a town-wide postcard mailing to property owners and registered voters. The survey received a total of 232 responses. A public informational meeting was held in May 2024 to present the survey responses and gather additional community feedback. The Planning Commission met regularly during the Spring, Summer, and Fall of 2024 to discuss and review updates to each section of the Town Plan taking into consideration the feedback received from the public. A final draft of the Plan was completed in Fall 2024 for the required public hearings by the Planning Comission and Selectboard.

The Winhall Town Plan has been prepared under the Vermont Planning and Development Act (Chapter 117 of Title 24 V.S.A.). This Plan becomes effective upon adoption by the Selectboard after the required public hearings by the Planning Commission and Selectboard. Under Vermont law, a Town Plan expired eight years from the date of adoption.

Community Profile
The first settlers came to Winhall around 1780 and settled on Taylor Hill. Other centers of early settlement were on Winhall Hollow Road 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

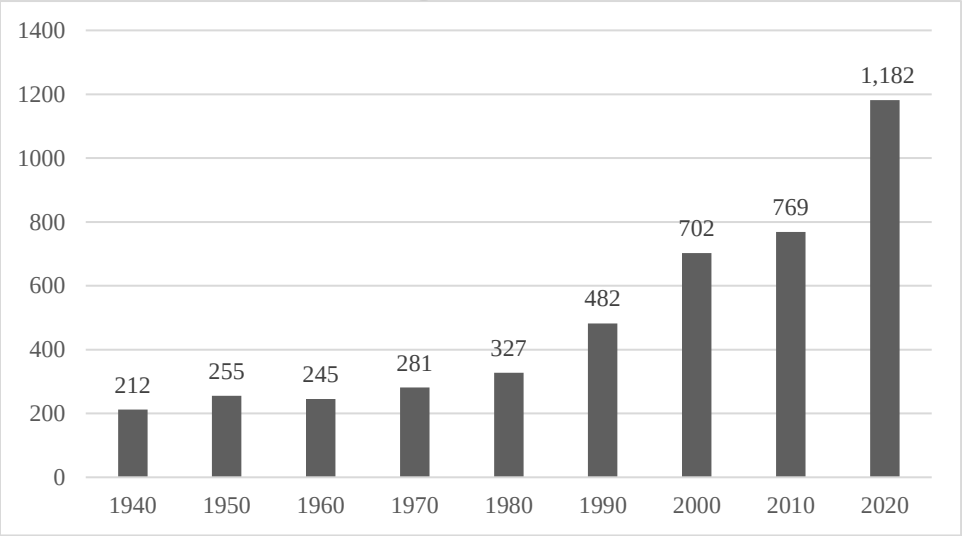
Winhall. In the middle 1800s, the Town was prosperous, and forestry and value added enterprises were the major economic activities. Today, tourism and recreation are the main focuses of the community.

The Town of Winhall is located in Bennington County and consists of rolling topography with elevations that range from approximately 2,680 feet at the highest point to approximately 1,250 feet at the lowest point in the Village of Bondville. As with all towns in the Green Mountains, development tends to occur along major roads and waterways due to topography constraints. Vermont Route 30 is the major thoroughfare in the Town and connects communities in the West River valley with the commercial center of Manchester.

The Town has a recreation and retail based economy, with recreation supporting much of the retail trade. Recreational development has generally occurred in and around the Stratton Mountain Ski Resort, which is 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 and other historically residential areas, like along Winhall Hollow Road.

Winhall's population reached a peak of 842 in 1870 before steadily declining to only 212 residents in 1940. Gradual growth associated with tourism and recreation at the Stratton Mountain Ski Resort brought the population to 769 in 2010. Between 2010 and 2020, the population grew significantly from 769 to 1,182 residents according to the U.S. Census, as shown in the chart below.

Winhall Population, 1940 – 2020



Source: U.S. Census

Some of the population increase between 2010 and 2020 may have been temporary as a large number of second homeowners relocated to Vermont during the Covid-19 Pandemic at the time the 2020 Census conducted. Other towns in the region with a high percentage of seasonal homes, such as Stratton and Peru, saw a similar large percentage increase in population as well. For example, the town of Stratton saw a 104% population increase and the town of Peru saw a 42%

population increase during this 10-year period, compared to a 54% increase in Winhall.

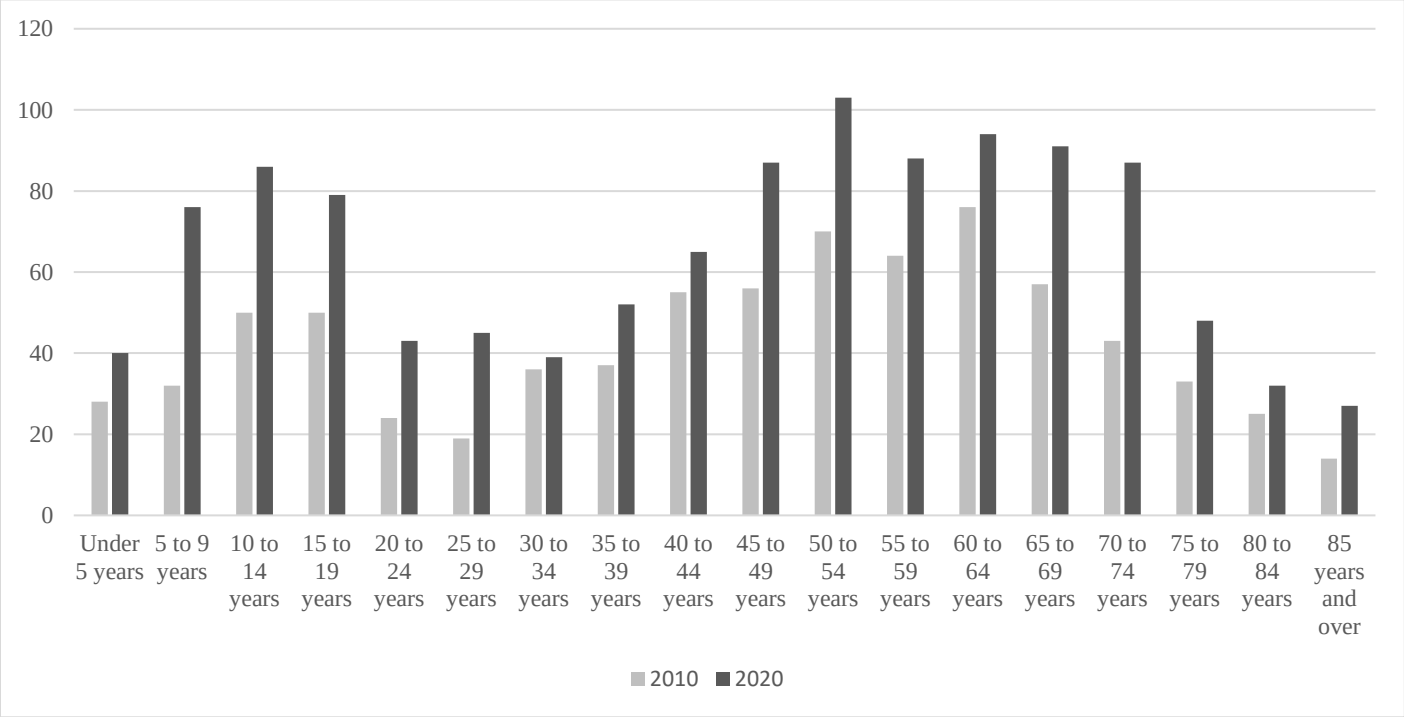
Regional Population Trends, 2000 – 2020

	2000	2010	2020	Total Growth, 2010-2020	% Rate of Growth, 2010 - 2020
Winhall	702	769	1,182	413	54%
Stratton	136	216	440	224	104%
Jamaica	946	1,035	1,005	(30)	-3%
Londonderry	1,709	1,769	1,919	150	8%
Peru	416	375	531	156	42%
Manchester	4,184	4,391	4,484	93	2%
Bennington County	36,994	37,125	37,347	222	1%

Source: U.S. Census

While some seasonal homeowners may have returned to their primary residence following the pandemic, many have made Winhall their permanent home. This growth in population has implications for the town in terms of the provision of municipal services, housing, and commercial services. These issues are addressed in more detail throughout the Town Plan.

Winhall Population by Age Cohort, 2010 - 2020



Source: U.S. Census

Similar to many communities in Vermont, Winhall's population is aging. As shown in the figure above, the number of residents aged 65 or older grew from 172 in 2010 to 285 in 2020. This is

trend has implications for providing services and housing that meets the needs of aging residents. At the same time, there was also a large increase in the number of children between 5 and 19 years in age, with this group increasing from 132 in 2010 to 241 in 2020. The general trend in the Windham Region in recent years has been a decrease in the school-aged population. The recent increase in Winhall may also be a result of families with children who relocated to the area during the pandemic. Finally, Winhall also saw smaller, but still meaningful, increases in the working age population.

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 and recommendations 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 and its residents.

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 and undeveloped areas.

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.

7. To preserve the character of the Village of Bondville with mixed uses at a scale appropriate to the architecture and historic character of the village.

8. To encourage the preservation and enhancement of the community's cultural, historical, architectural, recreational, and scenic resources.

9. To strive to maintain and, where possible, to improve the quality of air, water, wildlife, and land resources.

10. To encourage the efficient use of energy, and work to achieve a balance between the use of renewable energy resources and the aesthetic impact of renewable energy facilities.

11. To provide a safe, convenient, and coordinated transportation system, which respects the integrity of the natural environment, enhances the desired development patterns expressed within this plan, and accommodates different modes of transportation.

12. 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.

13. 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.

14. 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.

15. To protect the life, health, safety, and welfare of the community's residents, visitors, and businesses from flood hazards.

LAND USE

Background
The existing land use pattern in Winhall is generally characterized by denser, mixed use settlement in the historic village of Bondville and along Route 30, the Stratton Mountain Resort area and associated commercial and residential development, and dispersed, low-density residential, agricultural, and forestry uses in remaining areas in town.

Approximately 60% of the total land area in Winhall is also located within the Green Mountain National Forest, and these conserved lands, along with the Gale Meadows State Wildlife Management Area, have influenced development patterns and define the community's character. The Existing Land Use Map provides details on existing land use of each parcel and public or conservation land.

Future Land Use
The Town Plan classifies land within Winhall 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 Future 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.

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.

Forest District (F)
The Forest District includes all U. S. National Forest land, State Wildlife Management Areas, and some privately held contiguous forested lands in Winhall. For the most part, these areas are essentially undeveloped and do not have public road access. They are predominantly forested and generally do not allow for any type of development due to being under public ownership and/or having significant environmental constraints. The Forest District is meant to maintain large, contiguous blocks of forestland for the purposes of encouraging forest stewardship, protecting environmentally sensitive areas, allowing wildlife to access suitable habitat, and continuing to provide areas for recreational use. Residential uses are only allowed at very low densities (25 acre minimum lot size).

Agricultural and Rural-Residential District (RRA)
The Agricultural and Rural-Residential District includes areas which are used predominantly for forestry, agricultural, and low-density residential uses (5 acre minimum lot size). Many of Winhall's ponds, streams, rivers, and wetlands are located within this area as well. These lands are

generally located in the northeast section of Winhall along Winhall Hollow Road, French Hollow Road, and South Road. The District can support limited growth due to topography and soil conditions, limited road access, and the town's goal of preserving the existing rural landscape and scenic and natural resources in these areas.

Residential District (R)
The Residential District 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. This area can support low to moderate density residential uses (1-acre minimum lot size). Residential areas are expected to accommodate most of the growth of primary and seasonal homes in Winhall.

Recreational District (REC)
The Recreational District currently includes areas which encompass and surround the Stratton Mountain Ski Resort area and the former Snow Valley Area. This district includes recreational, lodging, and commercial uses associated with the ski resort, and close-by housing, which is generally used for seasonal purposes. The commercial development is meant to primarily meet the needs of visitors accessing the resort area. Because the Stratton Mountain Resort is serviced by the Winhall-Stratton Fire District wastewater infrastructure, there is an opportunity for more intensive development in this area. The Recreational District area may include additional lands as identified by the Town in the future.

Special Purpose District (SP)
The Special Purposes District includes areas within Winhall for which special consideration should be given to the preservation of natural, recreational, and scenic resource values. Special Purpose areas have been designated to provide a buffer zone to surrounding land uses and are shown on the Proposed Land Use Map as overlay districts. Specifically, these areas include the following:

- ***Shoreland Protection Areas:*** highly fragile ecological areas surrounding Winhall's major shoreland areas.

- ***Conservation Protection Areas***: unique conservation protection areas bordering the Appalachian and Long Trails.

- ***Scenic Restriction Area***: scenic areas along the Stratton Mountain Access Road.

Transient Lodging District (TL)
The Transient Lodging District currently includes areas near the intersection of Routes 11 and 30 and the intersection of Winhall Hollow Road and Lake Road. This area supports existing transient lodging businesses and associated uses and services. These areas also support residential development, as well as other compatible uses, if existing transient lodging uses were to cease.

Commercial District (C)
The Commercial District includes areas along Route 30 to the west of Bondville where commercial development currently exists and future commercial uses could be supported. The Commercial District also includes the town office, fire station, police station, library, and The Mountain School. Appropriate uses include moderate and high density residential uses, commercial uses, public buildings and facilities, and associated services. Small-scale, light industrial uses may be

appropriate if these uses do not have a negative impact on the existing character of the area. Special consideration should be given to access management and site and building design given that this area is located on Route 30 and is adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods.

Village District (V)
The Village District includes land in the village of Bondville along Route 30, River Road, Ameden Road, and West Hill Road. This area is characterized by a concentration of structures containing small-scale commercial, residential, cultural, and civic uses. The purpose of the Village District is to continue the historic development center of Bondville by encouraging compact and compatible mixed use development. Appropriate uses include moderate and high density residential uses, commercial uses, public buildings and facilities, and associated services. Small-scale, light industrial uses may be appropriate if these uses do not have a negative impact on the existing character of the village.

In order to support the continued vitality of the Village of Bondville, the Town intends to apply for a Village Center Designation through the Department of Housing and Community Development. The Village Center Designation will support the Town's efforts to preserve and revitalize the historic village center of Bondville and will further the statewide planning goal of planning for development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of a compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside.

Land Use Policies:

1. Encourage land use and development that is consistent with the town's existing settlement pattern of dense, mixed use settlement in the village of Bondville and along Route 30, well-defined recreational resort and associated residential areas, and dispersed, low-density residential, agricultural, and forestry uses in remaining areas.

2. Encourage the preservation of scenic views, natural resources, agricultural lands, large tracts of forestland, and open space.

3. Lands within the Forest District may be suitable for very low intensity development and shall be reserved for outdoor recreation, forest management, wildlife habitat, and watershed protection purposes. Residential development should be limited to very low density uses only.

4. Development in the Agricultural and Rural-Residential District shall result in the protection of resource values and the perpetuation of the contiguous open space patterns which have traditionally characterized such lands.

5. Where feasible, commercial development in the Recreational District should support associated residential and recreational uses and should clearly be secondary to the commercial uses in Bondville and on Route 30.

6. In Conservation Protection Areas, agricultural, forestry, and recreational uses that do not result in erosion or sedimentation are allowed. All other uses shall not be permitted.

7. Preserve and enhance water quality and wildlife habitat in Shoreland Protection Areas through the careful regulation of the location, design, and intensity of land use activities.

8. Preserve scenic areas within the Scenic Protection Areas by prohibiting permanent structures, other than signs, and maintaining the natural buffers provided by existing trees.

9. Development in the Commercial District shall be compatible with surrounding land uses, not exceed the capability of municipal services, or conflict with the stated policies contained throughout this Plan.

10. The character of the Village is an important asset to the community and development in the Village shall remain as small-scale, mixed commercial, residential, and public uses. Development in the Village shall be carried out in a manner which improves and enhances the attractiveness, cohesiveness, and utility of the Village.

Land Use Recommendations:

1. Maintain and update the Winhall Zoning Bylaws and Zoning Map to be consistent with the Future Land Use Plan.

2. Explore strategies to better protect Shoreland Protection Areas, Conservation Protection Areas, and Scenic Restriction Areas.

3. Submit an application for a Village Center Designation for the Village of Bondville with the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development.

4. Consider additional site plan design standards for commercial and industrial development to address traffic and pedestrian safety and ensure compatibility with surrounding land uses.

5. Explore opportunities to expand the Village District and Commercial District to accommodate additional business and residential opportunities in and around the Village of Bondville.

6. Review and update the Transfer of Development Rights Overlay District in the Zoning Bylaws as needed to encourage conservation of sensitive lands and direct additional growth to appropriate areas.

7. Encourage the restoration and preservation of existing buildings in the Village of Bondville, the use of appropriate landscaping materials, and the implementation of design standards for architectural and other building and site improvements.

8. Submit an application for a Village Center Designation for the Village of Bondville with the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development

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. This chapter provides an overview of existing housing characteristics in terms of housing types and age, household size, seasonal housing and short-term rentals, and affordability. The chapter identifies general housing needs for Winhall, and recommended policies and actions to address these needs.

Current Housing Conditions

According to the U.S. Census, there were a total of 1,710 housing units in Winhall as of 2020. Since 2000, the number of units has remained relatively stable, with a net decrease of 8 units during this 20-year period according to the Census. This takes into account new homes that have been constructed and houses that have been demolished. It is estimated that approximately 79% of homes in Winhall are detached, single-family residences. There is a relatively large number of 1-unit attached dwellings, which are typically condominium townhomes, comprising 8% of all units in Winhall. The remaining units are either within buildings with 2 or more units (9%) or mobile homes (3%).

Winhall's housing stock is relatively newer as compared to the Windham Region. Only 18% of housing units in Winhall are estimated to have been built before 1960, compared to 36% for the region. Winhall saw significant housing construction beginning in 1960 through 1990. Approximately 61% of dwellings were built during this 30-year period. This corresponds with the development of the Stratton Mountain resort and other ski resorts in the area, and the associated increase in seasonal homes. Winhall first adopted zoning bylaws in 1971 and the Town has limited records for homes constructed before zoning went into effect.

Household Characteristics

Between 2010 and 2020, Winhall's population grew by 413 residents and the number of households increased from 343 to 496. As of 2020, approximately 25% of households were comprised of one person and 36% of two people. A statewide trend is smaller household sizes as the population ages and families choose to have fewer children. At the same time, there was also an increase in the number of households with four or more persons, from 56 in 2010 to 123 in 2020, indicating an increase in the number of families with children living in Winhall.

Seasonal Housing and Short-Term Rentals

Winhall has one of the highest rates of seasonal home ownership in Vermont. Of the 1,710 total housing units in 2020, 1,142 of these were for seasonal use, or roughly 67% of all units. While the second-home market helps support local economic activity, it can put upward pressure on land costs, construction costs, and the availability of contractors, and have the effect of discouraging more modest, year-round housing opportunities. As shown in the table below, there was a decrease in seasonal homes and corresponding increase in owner-occupied homes between 2010 and 2020. This may be the result of seasonal homeowners becoming permanent or temporary full-time residents during the COVID 19 pandemic.

Winhall Housing Occupancy, 2000 – 2010

	2000	2010	2020
Seasonal Units	1,394	1,356	1,142
Owner-Occupied Units	249	267	424
Renter Occupied Units	61	76	72
Vacant Units	14	50	72
Total Units	1,718	1,749	1,710

Source: U.S. Census

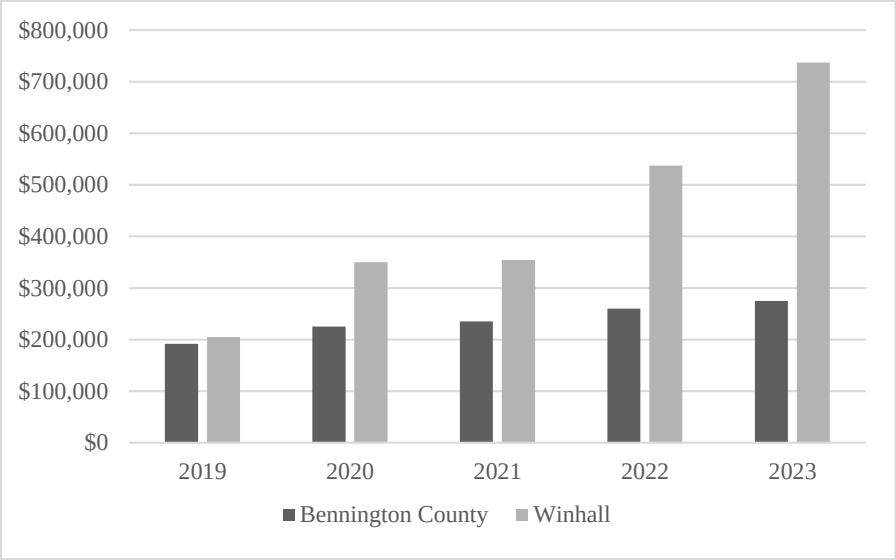
Winhall has seen an increase in the number of short-term rental (STR) units in recent years, similar to other resort communities in the state. According to Air DNA, a website that compiles data on STRs, there were 299 active listings in Winhall as of February 2024. STRs bring benefits and challenges. They can attract visitors by offering more and different types of lodging, and can provide a supplemental income source to residents. However, they can also result in noise, safety, and parking issues, which can especially impact existing residential neighborhoods. Some STR units could also provide long-term rental housing or ownership opportunities as well.

Housing Affordability

Housing affordability can be measured in several different ways. The U.S. Census Bureau considers housing to be affordable when a household spends less than 30% of its gross income on housing costs. The 2018-2022 American Community Survey estimated 22% of homeowners paid 30 – 49% of their income towards housing, and 6% paid 50% or more. For rental housing, it was estimated 39% of renters were paying more than 50% of their income towards housing. While this does not factor in different household types or the costs of other basic necessities, it still provides a good indication of housing affordability in a community. The 2018-2022 American Community Survey estimated the median household income in Winhall was $65,558. A household earing this amount could afford an approximately $218,000 home or $1,639 in monthly rent, based on the definition provided above.

The chart below shows the annual median homes sale price in Winhall and Bennington County from 2019 to 2023 according to data from the Vermont Department of Taxes. The median sales price is the price where half of the homes sales are lower and the other half higher than it. This data includes primary home sales only and not homes for seasonal use. For Winhall, the median price has increased from $205,000 in 2019 when there were a total of 11 homes sales to $737,000 in 2023 when there were 12 home sales. This represents an increase of 259% and compares to an increase of only 43% for Bennington County as a whole.

Median Primary Home Sale Price in Winhall and Bennington County, 2019-2023



Source: Vermont Department of Taxes

Housing Needs

Based on the town's existing housing and population characteristics, and public input, there are several challenges impacting the local housing market. Housing costs, especially for ownership, have increased at a significantly higher rate than median household incomes over the last five years. Homeowners and renters either need to pay a higher percentage of their income towards housing or find more affordable options outside of Winhall. This can result in long-term residents having to leave the community, younger people not being able to return to Winhall, and local businesses struggling to find workers because of the lack of close by, affordable housing.

Winhall's population is aging and many residents will not be able to or want to continue to live in their current homes as they age and look to downsize. The average household size is also declining and in 2020, 61% of households were either comprised of one person or two people. These households may prefer smaller homes, such as a townhomes or an apartment unit in a multi-family dwelling. As household sizes decline, new housing demand can also outpace population growth.

Recent housing production has not been able to meet the needs of Winhall residents. While owner-occupied units increased during between 2010 and 2020, this may be the result of seasonal residents making their second homes full-time residences rather than a significant increase in year-round home construction. During this time, the number of rental units declined from 76 to 72.

In 2024, the town of Winhall participated in a project led by the Windham Regional Commission and the University of Massachusetts - Amherst (UMass) to identify housing needs in Winhall, Jamaica, Londonderry, and Weston. According to the analysis done by UMass, it was estimated that Winhall will need an additional 133 housing units by 2030 and 353 housing units by 2040 to meet current and future housing needs. This estimate was based on an analysis of expected population growth and household composition change. To meet this goal, approximately 20 new units would need to be added per year between 2024 and 2040.

Housing Strategies

More housing options are needed in Winhall, particularly for young families, seniors, employees working in the community, and low and moderate-income households. The Land Use Chapter and the Proposed Land Use Map identify appropriate areas in town that could support a variety of different low, moderate, and high density residential housing types. Some implementation strategies the town can consider to encourage more housing include:

- Promote accessory dwelling units on single-family residential properties. These include units that are within or attached to an existing single-family home, or located in a detached structure like the second floor of a garage. Accessory dwelling units can provide homeowners with supplemental rental income and can also be a good housing option for aging or young family members.

- Support the conversion of existing single-family dwellings into multiple units, in particular 2, 3, or 4 units, and ensure zoning regulations allow for small multi-family dwellings in appropriate areas of town.

- Evaluate existing minimum lot size and density limits in the zoning bylaws and make adjustments to encourage more compact development in appropriate areas in town where infrastructure and soil conditions permit.

- Evaluate the feasibility and appropriateness of residential development on vacant or underutilized town land. For example, the 250-acre municipal property at the end of Kendall Farm Road may provide opportunities for residential development.

- Continue to provide and improve upon zoning regulations that allow for Planned Units Developments (PUDs) where homes are clustered on smaller lot sizes with the remaining land left for open space. Towns can encourage these types of development by providing incentives, such as allowing for a higher number of units to be built within an PUD than the underlying zoning district would otherwise permit.

In addition to supporting an increase in housing supply, the Town can promote programs that support the continued availability of safe and affordable housing. The Agency of Commerce and Community Development's Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP) provides grants or forgivable loans for rehabilitating existing vacant units, developing new accessory dwelling units, creating new units in an existing structure, or creating new structures with 5 or fewer units. Efficiency Vermont also provides homeowners with incentives to complete energy efficiency projects, which can lower a homeowner's overall housing costs.

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. Support the development of a variety of housing options, including housing that is affordable

for young families, seniors, employees working in the Town, and households with low and moderate incomes.

3. Promote resources for the rehabilitation and conservation of the existing housing stock.

4. Direct residential development to areas where infrastructure and services are readily available. Avoid residential development in areas vulnerable to natural hazards, including flood hazard areas, river corridors, and steep slopes.

5. Encourage the development and use of permitted accessory dwelling units on single-family residential properties.

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.

3. Pursue a short-term rental ordinance to address life and safety and public nuisance concerns and a registration program to track the location and contact information for short-term rentals.

4. Promote programs and resources available to homeowners and renters through the State of Vermont, Efficiency Vermont, and other regional non-profit organizations that support the continued availability of affordable and safe housing.

5. Review and revise zoning bylaws as needed to remove barriers to creating accessory dwelling units, two-family dwellings, and multi-family residential buildings.

6. Continue to offer Planned Unit Development options that encourage compact design and conservation, and evaluate appropriate incentives to encourage this approach to residential development.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic and Workforce Characteristics

Winhall's economy was historically diverse, including retail commerce, inns, small farms producing agricultural products, and small manufacturers refining locally produced natural resources. Today, the economy is largely dependent on tourism and second homeowners. Much of the economic activity today is centered in the village of Bondville and along Route 30. Local businesses include restaurants, convenience stores, a general store, bank branch, retail stores, and a hardware store. The table below shows the industries Winhall residents were employed in as of 2022. Many of the largest industries by employment are associated with the tourism economy, including recreation, accommodation and food service jobs, construction trades, and retail trade.

Winhall Residents Employment by Industry, 2022

Educational, health and social services	98
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	78
Construction	66
Retail trade	62
Professional, scientific, and management services	59
Finance, insurance and real estate, rental and leasing	31
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting & mining	12
Wholesale trade	10
Manufacturing	3
Public administration	3

Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimate, 2018-2022

The median household income in Winhall has increased slowly but steadily over the last five years, according to data from the American Community Survey. Between 2018 and 2022, the median household increased from $49,348 to $66,397, an increase of approximately 34%. This growth in median income is generally consistent with what was seen in Bennington County as a whole, as shown in the table below. In comparison, the median household income for the State was $73,991 in 2022.

Winhall and Bennington County Median Household Income, 2018 – 2022

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Winhall	$49,348	$54,306	$58,750	$69,375	$66,397
Bennington County	$53,040	$56,183	$58,200	$63,448	$68,558

Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates

The table below shows Vermont Department of Labor wage estimates for a selection of occupations that the highest number of Winhall residents are currently employed in. Jobs in tourism-related industries tend to have lower average earnings and a higher level of seasonality.

Given the high number of residents employed in these types of industries, this may be impacting median household income in Winhall. Lower household incomes can mean that residents may struggle to keep up with increasing housing, transportation, energy, and health care costs.

Occupational Wage Estimates for the Southern Balance of Vermont, April 2023

Occupation	Mean Hourly Wage	Mean Annual Wages
Retail Salespersons	$18.83	$39,170
Construction and Extraction Occupations	$24.31	$50,570
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	$29.40	$61,150
Cooks, Restaurant	$18.77	$39,050
Waiters and Waitresses	$21.49	$44,700

Source: Vermont Department of Labor

Economic Development Issues and Opportunities

The historic village of Bondville, small town character, and scenic beauty of the area make Winhall a desirable tourist destination, inviting visitors to stop and shop, eat and sleep, and take advantage of the outdoors. The Town is centrally located between several major ski resorts, including Stratton Mountain, Bromley Mountain, and Magic Mountain, and it has convenient access via Route 30 and Route 11. An abundance of other recreational opportunities are easily accessible, including golf, fishing, hunting, swimming, boating, snowmobiling, mountain biking, and hiking. In recent years, there has been growth in new arts and cultural opportunities, like the summer concert series and farmers markets at the Bondville Fairgrounds, and classes at the Winhall Community Arts Center.

Winhall should continue to focus its economic development efforts on building on these existing community assets while preserving the town's small town rural character and natural and scenic resources. There is an opportunity to encourage more year-round tourism by promoting and supporting recreational and cultural activities during non-winter months.

The increased number of seasonal homes has also stimulated the economy, creating opportunities such as construction, landscaping, sales and rentals, caretaking, and maintenance. However, there have also been associated negative side effects from this, including traffic congestion and safety concerns during peak seasons, increased housing costs due to high demand and limited supply, and a cyclical annual business pattern that can make it challenging for local businesses to be financially sustainable. Policies and recommendations elsewhere in this Plan, specifically in the Transportation and Housing sections, address some of these concerns.

As is true in many rural towns, there is a desire amongst residents for more basic services in Winhall, such as restaurants, groceries, and pharmacies. While there may be opportunities for some of these businesses in Bondville, there will be the on-going challenge of the town's small population and relative proximity to the larger commercial center of Manchester where more businesses and services are located. One opportunity for the Town to support existing and new businesses is to pursue wastewater improvements in Bondville.

Economic Development Policies

1. Encourage economic development, which maximizes the circulation of dollars within the community, provides diversified and stable local employment opportunities, and enhances Winhall's small town, rural character while maintaining the wise and sustainable use of Winhall's natural resources to protect its overall environmental quality.

2. Encourage expansion of home occupations which provide varied employment opportunities and have minimal adverse impacts on the rural-residential character of the community.

3. Support the strengthening and diversification of the existing economic base of tourism and recreation in a manner which maintains high environmental quality.

4. Encourage farm and forest lands to remain in a productive state, and encourage the local manufacturing and marketing of value-added agricultural and forestry products.

5. Encourage new and expanding businesses and services that provide basic goods and services to meet the needs of Winhall residents, second homeowners, and visitors.

6. Encourage development consistent with existing uses which will positively impact Winhall's natural, physical, and social environment.

7. Support the provision of adequate housing opportunities to retain and attract employees that work at local businesses.

Economic Development Recommendations

1. Ensure that the Village of Bondville remains the center of mixed-use and economic activity in Winhall, and provide for adequate municipal infrastructure and services to meet the needs of businesses, including wastewater infrastructure.

2. Review the Winhall Zoning Bylaw and Subdivision Regulations to provide for more economic development opportunities in appropriate locations and include appropriate development standards.

3. Prepare and issue a development handbook which summarizes local permit requirements and provides other information that would expedite the local permit review process.

4. Explore opportunities to partner with adjacent communities on marketing strategies for the region to increase tourism and business revenue.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Community Facilities

Winhall Town Offices: Located at #115 VT, Route 30 west 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 west of the Village. The Town facility is also home to the Winhall Police & Rescue Department, who are trained EMTs along with their supporting staff. Rescue services are also provided by home-based volunteers who are trained VEFR, EMT, AEMT, and paramedics.

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 library provides 24/7 free WIFI access. 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 Arts Center: Located at #9 School Road, this facility serves both the Mountain School and community at large. Community and educational events, artisan fairs, private events, tech support, and holiday celebrations of all sorts are held in this facility. Another important function is providing services for the community food shelf to help those in need.

Winhall Cemeteries: Cemeteries are located throughout the Town of Winhall as identified on Map 2. The Town has an appointed Cemetery Commissioner.

Bondville Post Office: located in the center of the Village Bondville.

Winhall Municipal Land: A 250-acre forested tract of land is located on Kendall Farm Road and includes a gravel pit. It is also the site of the closed Town dump. The Town may want to consider evaluating possible future uses of the property to best meet the needs of residents. Opportunities may include recreational amenities given its proximity to the Green Mountain Forest, and/or housing. There is also a municipal 0.2 acre parcel on the Stratton Mountain Access Road near Roberts Road.

Winhall Town Forest: The Winhall Town Forest, consisting of 623 acres, is located predominantly in the Town of Jamaica. The Town Forest has multiple access points, the primary one being from Sugarbush Drive Extension in the Forest Farms subdivision. The Town has a management plan for the forest that consists of periodic selected cutting. There may be opportunities for additional recreational uses and activities on the Town Forest land, as discussed further under Recreational Resources.

Winhall-Stratton Fire District #1: The Winhall-Stratton Fire District #1 was created to construct and maintain public water supply, sewers, and sewage treatment 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 District provides public wastewater to several residential subdivisions off of Stratton Mountain Access Road. The boundaries of the District can be found on the Community Facilities Map.

There is a Municipal Services Agreement between the Fire District and the Town that reserves 50,000 gallons per day of sewage treatment capacity. The Town is exploring the construction of a wastewater collection system in Bondville and pumping to the Fire District's treatment facility. The Town is pursuing State grant opportunities to support the design and construction of this infrastructure, which would likely be the most efficient and cost effective solution to provide public wastewater for businesses and residences in Bondville.

Telecommunications: Winhall is a part of the Southern Vermont Communications District (SVCD), which is comprised of towns in Bennington County and is working to provide broadband internet to its member communities. In partnership with Fidium Fiber, SVCD has completed construction of a broadband network in Winhall as of August 2023.

According to 2022 data from VTrans, AT&T, First Net, T-Mobile, and US Cellular have relatively good coverage along Route 30, Winhall Hollow Road, and around the Stratton Mountain resort. Verizon's coverage is more limited along Route 30 as it passes through Winhall.

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 compost, 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, and swap shop. In addition to the Recycling Center, the facility provides for the collection and distribution of Winhall's solid waste.

Public Health and Safety Services: Police, Fire, Rescue, and Health Care

Emergency Services: The Winhall Police & Rescue and the Volunteer Fire Department provide the residents of Winhall with police and emergency services. The Londonderry Rescue Squad located in Londonderry provides emergency rescue services to the towns of Winhall, Londonderry, Peru, Windham, and Stratton. The Town of Winhall supports emergency services through annual appropriations. The Police & Rescue Department provides first responder services to the area.

Under the guidance of the Police Chief, home-based volunteers whose members are trained also provide excellent emergency services.

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 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; Manchester Medical Center (urgent care and general practice services); Grace Cottage Hospital in Townshend; and Southwestern Vermont Medical Center in Manchester. Nearby hospitals include Bennington, Rutland, Springfield, and Brattleboro Hospital(s). The Vermont Visiting Nurses program provides Winhall residents with home health and hospice services. As the population ages, there will be an increasing need for these types service providers so residents can continue to live at home independently.

Community Facilities and Services Policies

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. Require that existing or planned municipal facilities and lands, public utilities, or lands adjacent to such facilities be used in a manner that results in minimal adverse impact.

4. Support efforts to upgrade, expand, and improve telecommunications systems in the area to continue to serve the needs of residents and visitors.

5. 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.

6. 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.
7. 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.

8. 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.

Community Facilities and Services Recommendations

1. Prepare a budget which addresses fire and police protection; emergency services; 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.

2. Evaluate potential uses of the Kendall Farm Road municipal property to benefit the community, including recreational and/or housing opportunities.

3. Evaluate opportunities to develop recreational facilities on the Town Forest property.

4. Continue to enforce its waste disposal ordinance.

5. Support methods for reducing the overall quantity of waste generated and encourages recycling and composting. The Town should continue to provide opportunities and facilities for recycling and composting.

6. 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.

7. Continue to support the rescue and health services in the region which directly serve Winhall residents, businesses, and visitors, including, but not limited to, Winhall Police & Rescue Squad, Winhall Fire Department, Mountain Valley Medical Clinic and Londonderry Rescue in Londonderry, Grace Cottage Hospital in Townshend, Vermont Visiting Nurses, and Neighborhood Connections.

8. Encourage calm and realistic disaster preparedness for likely emergencies; know the location of resources and equipment that will be needed; inform residents of the potential dangers and the ways to avoid these potential dangers; and quickly arrange for help when needed.

9. Provide facilities and equipment to support residents and area visitors within the financial capabilities of the Town.

10. Pursue grant opportunities to support the Town's effort to provide public wastewater infrastructure in the Village of Bondville under the Municipal Services Agreement with the Winhall-Stratton Fire District.

RECREATIONAL, CULTURAL, HISTORIC, AND SCENIC RESOURCES

Recreational Resources

An abundance of important outdoor recreational opportunities, including hiking, mountain biking, horseback 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 Green Mountain National Forest. The Town appreciates and supports the continued availability of these opportunities. In addition to benefiting residents, these recreational resources also attract visitors and promote investment in the community.

Two long distance hiking trails traverse Winhall through the Green Mountain National Forest: the Long Trail and the Appalachian Trail. The Long Trail runs the entire length of the Vermont along the Green Mountains, and the Appalachian Trail runs 2,190 miles from northern Georgia to Maine. Public access to the Long Trail and Appalachian Trail is available at the trailhead on Route 11/Route 30. From this point, users can access Bromley Mountain to the north and the Lye Brook Wilderness and Stratton Mountain to the south.

The backcountry Catamount Ski Trail can be accessed from Kendall Farm Road and Upper French Hollow Road. The Catamount Trail is 300 miles long and runs from the Massachusetts to Canadian border. It travels over ungroomed trails, groomed ski areas, and aligns in some areas with snowmobile trails. A long distance mountain biking trail, the Velemont Trail, is currently in the planning phase and would travel through Winhall. The vision for the Velemont Trail is to connect 485 miles of existing and new mountain biking trails across the length of Vermont.

The Gale Meadows State Wildlife Management Area is located around Gale Meadows Pond on the eastern side of town. Access is available from River Road in Bondville and Haven Road in Londonderry. Recreational opportunities at Gale Meadows include canoeing, kayaking, boating, fishing, and wildlife viewing.

The Stratton Mountain Ski Resort is located partially in Winhall and the adjacent town of Stratton. In addition to downhill and cross-country skiing, the resort includes a 27-hole golf course and a mountain bike park. The Bromley Mountain Ski Resort is located in the adjacent town of Peru and Magic Mountain is located in Londonderry.

The Mountain School has outdoor recreational facilities, including a playground, sports fields, and pavilion with picnic tables. These facilities are open to the public during times when school is not in session.

In 2023, Winhall residents approved an article at Town Meeting to fund the hiring of a Mountain Towns Recreation Director. The cost of this position is shared, proportionately, with four surrounding towns. Mountain Towns Recreation supports recreational activities in the region for youth and adults, including youth sports, adult programming, outdoor recreation, and community events.

As the number of young families increases and the population ages, the Town should evaluate whether the current recreational options meet the needs of its changing population. This could

include an additional playground area that is not on The Mountain School property that can be used at all times, and additional, more accessible walking paths. The Town Forest property and the municipally-owned Kendall Farm Road property present opportunities for developing new recreational amenities.

Cultural Resources

The Winhall Memorial Library and the Winhall Community Arts Center offer regular cultural and arts programming for residents. Programs at the library include musical performances, film screenings, and book clubs. The Arts Center offers a variety of different classes and is also home to the Vito Salvato Art Gallery, which features works by local artists.

The Bondville Fair takes placed every year at the end of August and is the oldest continuous fair in Vermont. The fairgrounds are located on Route 30 in the village of Bondville, and are managed by the Winhall Industrial Society. Activities include pulling track events live music, and a quilt and floral hall. The Bondville Fairgrounds host a summer concert series and farmers market on select Friday evenings as well.

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.

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.

Recreational, Cultural, Historic, and Scenic Resources Policies

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

2. Require that all developments and capital investments that involve or potentially affect access to an important recreational resource include provisions to ensure protection of the resource and the continued availability of public access.

3. The Village of Bondville should remain a center of mixed use activity within Winhall.

4. Measures should be implemented to maintain the integrity of the cemeteries throughout Winhall.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. Carefully regulate land uses which affect the residential characteristics of existing residential areas.

Recreational, Cultural, Historic, and Scenic Resources Recommendations

1. Encourage recreational and cultural opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities.

2. Encourage appropriate activities which serve to support and enhance the Winhall Memorial Library and the Winhall Community Arts Center.

3. Consider completing a recreational master plan that that would help the Town develop a vision and implementation goals to meet the recreational needs for current and future residents.

4. Encourage the restoration and preservation of existing buildings that have characterized Winhall as a rural mountain community.

5. Require protection of Winhall cemeteries from damage, relocation, and destruction.

6. Review and update the zoning bylaws to protect and enhance the overall scenic quality of Winhall

TRANSPORTATION

Town and State Highways

Town of Winhall Highways are under the general supervision and control of the Winhall Selectboard. Town Highways are classified as Class 2, 3, or 4, or Town trail, depending on the use and condition; this classification assists in determining the distribution of the State's annual Town Highway allocation. There are two State highways in Winhall: Route 30 and Route 11. Route 30 generally traverses the town from west to east and connects communities in the West River valley to Manchester. Route 11 runs through the northwest corner of Winhall connecting Londonderry and Manchester.

The Town recognizes the intermittent seasonal traffic congestion which exists at the intersection of Route 30 and Stratton Mountain Access Road, and on Routes 11 and 30, due primarily to the commuting patterns of visitors to the Stratton Mountain and Bromley Mountain Ski Resorts. According to the most recent crash location analysis done by VTrans (2012 – 2016), the Route 30 and Stratton Mountain Access Road intersection and the Route 30 and Route 11 intersection are identified as high crash intersections. VTrans recently completed modifications to the truck lane on Route 30/Route 11 for northbound traffic before the intersection with Route 30 to improve safety.

Winhall's network of roads includes approximately 55 miles of Town roads and State highways, excluding Class 4 Roads and Legal Trails. The Stratton Mountain Access Road, Winhall Hollow Road, French Hollow Road, and Old Town Road comprise the Town's main collector roads. The Town's road network consists of the following classifications:

Winhall Town and State Highway Classification	
State Highway	12.19 miles
Class 2 Roads	11.52 miles
Class 3 Roads	31.87 miles
Class 4 Roads	2.00 miles
Legal Trails	1.89 miles

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.

Similar to many towns, Winhall has seen the cost of road maintenance increase over recent years due to increased costs for gravel, materials, equipment, and labor, as well the higher frequency of heavy rain and flood events. The Town is implementing the State stormwater management standards for municipal roads and upgrading road infrastructure. These steps should help mitigate the impacts from heavy rain events.

Pedestrians and Bicyclists
As a small, rural town, Winhall's transportation network does not currently include formal bikeways or pedestrian routes. There are sidewalks in the village of Bondville that support pedestrian traffic in this area. Other steps that have been taken to improve pedestrian safety include installing crosswalks and vehicle speed signs on Route 30 at either end of the village. With the concentration of businesses and services in the village, and concerns about the volume and speed of traffic on Route 30, the Town should continue to evaluate and discuss with VTrans ways to improve pedestrian safety and support local businesses in Bondville. This may include improvements to the existing sidewalk network and extension of sidewalks in more heavily trafficked areas.

Public Transportation
Private shuttle bus service is provided between many of Winhall's residential areas and the Stratton Mountain Resort. In addition, Southeast Vermont Transit operates a MOOver bus route from the Stratton Mountain Resort to Manchester Center from mid-November through early April. This bus route has one designated stop in Winhall at the Pinnacle Lodge, but riders may wave the bus down to be picked up as long as the driver considers the area safe enough to pull over. Providing bus transportation to and from Stratton Mountain helps reduce the number of vehicles on local roadways, leading to less traffic and congestion.

Neighborhood Connections in Londonderry operates the Mountain Town Connector, which provides on-demand transportation for residents in 10 area towns, including Winhall. While medical rides are prioritized, rides are also provided for shopping for food and necessities, social and recreational outings, and addressing unexpected transportation hardships. As Winhall's population ages, it will be important for the Town to continue to support these transportation services and ensure residents are aware of their availability.

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 and in-depth study by qualified professionals.

4. Retain all existing public rights-of-way, whether or not the Town is presently maintaining them, in order to maintain access and provide for future growth.

5. Encourage efficient and safe pedestrian traffic circulation within the village of Bondville.

Transportation Recommendations

1. The Town should work with the State, 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 and property owners 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 and Southeast Vermont Transit bus routes which provide transportation services between various residential communities in Winhall, the village of Bondville, and the Stratton Mountain resort area.

4. Support the Mountain Town Connector program managed by Neighborhood Connections and increase public awareness of these services.

5. Support efforts by local businesses to install electric vehicle charging stations.

6. Work with the Vermont Department of Transportation to study additional pedestrian safety and traffic calming improvements for the village of Bondville.

EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDCARE

Childcare
There are not currently any licensed childcare providers in Winhall. The closest licensed providers are located in Manchester, Londonderry, and Weston. Registered home-based childcare programs are also available in the area. The Vermont Bright Futures website provides up-to-date information about local childcare options.

Winhall School District
The Winhall School District is a non-operating, Pre-K-12 School District within the Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union (BRSU). It is overseen by a School Board that is comprised of three members who serve staggered three-year terms. The School Board's Vision Statement is to support each child's growth and academic success while encouraging creativity, independence, and responsibility to self and others.

As a non-operating district, the Winhall School District does not operate any schools. Instead, the District pays at least a portion of the educational expenses for each of its resident students. The District pays for up to 20 hours of programming for resident students enrolled at an approved pre-Kindergarten site. For resident students enrolled in Kindergarten through 12th grade, the School District pays the announced tuition rate for any public school and, with the exception of Burr & Burton Academy, up to the Vermont Announced State Average for approved independent schools. Winhall is a "sending town" for Burr & Burton Academy and pays its announced tuition rate.

Primary Education
In 1998, the residents of Winhall voted to close the Winhall Elementary School and open an independent school renamed the Mountain School at Winhall. The establishment of an independent school presented an opportunity to continue 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 Winhall and Stratton are guaranteed admission to the Mountain School with their respective towns paying the tuition. Students living outside of the towns 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 6th grade. In recent years, the Town has seen a population increase, but the Mountain School has adequate capacity for these additional students.

The Mountain School building contains onsite classrooms, offices, gym, and multi-purpose room, kitchen, outside recreational facilities including a playground and playing fields; 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. Students typically attend Burr and Burton Academy in Manchester, Stratton Mountain School in Stratton, or the Long Trail School in Dorset.

Adult Education Programs
The Winhall Community Arts Center in Bondville offers arts, crafts, cooking, exercise, and wellness classes for adults. Other adult education opportunities are available regionally. Vermont Technical College has satellite campuses in Bennington and Brattleboro that offer Associates Degrees and career-related certificates. The Tutorial Center offers adult education and literacy classes in Manchester and Bennington.

Education and Early Childcare 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. Require 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.

5. Encourage residents to take advantage of existing adult education facilities and services in the region.

6. Support the provision of safe and affordable childcare options for Winhall families.

Education and Early Childcare Recommendations

1. The School Board/Town should maintain a list of current childcare providers in adjacent towns as a source for Winhall parents.

2. Review and update zoning bylaws as needed to better support the establishment of State licensed childcare facilities and registered home-based programs.

NATURAL RESOURCES

This section provides an overview of Winhall's natural resources and recommended policies. The section addresses ground and surface water resources, wildlife resources and natural areas, agricultural and forestry resources, earth and mineral resources, and air quality 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 and 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 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. One potential source of pollution is from failing on-site septic systems. In the village of Bondville where there are smaller lots and wells and septic systems are often in close proximity, there is increased risk. Pursuing a public wastewater option for the village of Bondville would help reduce potential groundwater pollution by phasing out the need for on-site septic systems in the village.

Winhall contains a rich variety of water resources. The most visible of these are the Winhall River, Gale Meadow Pond, Bourn Brook, 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.

The 2022 Vermont water quality report shows that the vast majority of surface waters in Winhall are in good condition. The only impaired surface waters noted in the report were Little Pond and Little Mud Pond due to acidification. Both of these ponds are located in the Green Mountain National Forest.

The State has adopted a basin planning approach to protecting, restoring, and enhancing surface water resources. Lands within Winhall drain into the West River watershed (Basin 11) and the Batten Kill watershed (Basin 1). Basin Plans are regularly updated by the State and identify problems that impact water quality and provide plans to address them. Relevant strategies for Winhall include stormwater management for town roads, requiring stormwater management and erosion controls for private development, and providing information and resources to property owners with on-site septic systems close to water resources.

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

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 systems are monitored and regulated by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation. Every public water system is required to develop a Source Protection Plan that identifies actions to minimize the risk of water source contamination. There are several residential public water systems in Winhall associated primarily with condominium developments around the Stratton Mountain Resort, as well as a few commercial public water systems associated with businesses in the village Bondville,

Wetland Areas
Wetland areas in Winhall include areas identified on the USGS topographic map as wetlands and significant wetlands identified by the Vermont Significant Wetlands Inventory. These maps provide important land use planning information and are incorporated herein by reference. Wetlands are protected by State and Federal regulations.

Most of the highest priority wetlands in Winhall are located on Green Mountain National Forest land and around Gale Meadows Pond. There are also several large priority wetlands located to the north and south of French Hollow Road. There are currently no Class I wetlands in Winhall. The Basin 11 Plan identifies the Winhall River headwaters wetlands as a potential candidate for Class I wetland designation by the State.

Steep Slope Areas
Lands with steep slopes are susceptible to erosion and high rates of runoff due to the presence of thin soils and ledges of bedrock. This runoff can result in the impairment of surface waters. Critical limitation areas include 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 include 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.

Wildlife Resources and 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. Larger deer wintering areas in Winhall include along either side of Kendall Farm Road, and along Mill Brook, Eddy Brook, and Cook Brook.

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." A significant portion of Winhall is included with the State-identified bear production habitat as shown on the Natural Resources Map. Route 30 and Route 11 in the northwest corner of town are identified as important bear crossing areas.

Forest Blocks and Habitat Connectors
The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources has identified significant forest blocks and habitat

connectors in the State. Forest blocks refer to large contiguous areas of forest not currently developed for non-forest uses. Forests provide several benefits, including a strong forestry economy, functioning natural ecosystems, recreational resources, and improved quality of life. A healthy forest pattern is one where a town's largest forest blocks connect to one another via smaller forest blocks and riparian areas, as well as connecting with large forest blocks beyond the town's boundaries. Sprawling rural development can result in the fragmentation of forest blocks and result in scattered and disconnected forests. Over time, these smaller forest blocks have diminished economic and ecological value.

Habitat connectors are land or water that link wildlife habitats, allowing the movement, migration, and dispersal of animals and plants, and the functioning of ecological processes. Habitat connectors include forested areas, riparian habitat along a stream or river, or a specific road crossing that is regularly used by wildlife. Habitat connectors should be considered at the landscape scale, where connectivity occurs over large areas or within a region, and at the local scale, where connectivity occurs at specific road crossings.

The Town Plan Natural Resources Map shows the location of the High Priority Forest Blocks and Habitat Connectors in Winhall. Generally, the High Priority Forest Blocks in Winhall correspond with existing land that is within. A small area in southeast Winhall is identified as a High Priority Habitat Connector and extends into the adjacent towns of Jamaica and Stratton.

Natural Areas

Significant natural communities have been identified in Winhall by the Nongame and Natural Heritage Program, as shown in the 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.

Agricultural and Forestry Resources

It is estimated that more than 60% of Winhall is within the Green Mountain 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.

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. In recent years, there has been a decline in the accessibility of gravel and sand resources in the Windham Region. This has contributed to increased costs for municipalities for road maintenance due to increased transportation costs to access materials and more limited supplies.

Earth resource extraction and processing can have an adverse impact to the area where these activities are located. Potential impacts include noise, dust, increased truck traffic, air pollution, surface and groundwater pollution, siltration of streams, increased stormwater runoff, erosion, and limited utility of the site for future uses. Appropriate regulations can help address and mitigate these potential impacts while still supporting important earth and mineral extraction activities.

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. One recent example was wildfire smoke originating in Canada that impacted air quality in Vermont in the summer of 2023. 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.

Natural Resources Policies

Ground and 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, mitigate flood risks, 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.

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 and river corridor areas in a manner which is consistent with local and state flood hazard and river corridor 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 and river corridor 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.

9. Require proper assurances that any new water supply system will not deplete or change the quality of an existing water supply system.

Wildlife Resources and Natural Areas Policies

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

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

Agriculture and Forest Policies

12. Encourage the use of existing open lands for agricultural uses.

13. Encourage the use of cluster development and other creative strategies which prevent the fragmentation of Winhall's forestlands and contiguous farmlands.

14. 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.

Earth and Mineral Policies

15. 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.

16. Protect sand and gravel deposits which are shown to provide significant aquifer recharge from extraction activity.

17. Require a site rehabilitation plan for local approval of commercial earth and mineral extraction operations and require guarantees to ensure the rehabilitation of the site at the operator's expense.

Air Quality Policies

18. Discourage development or activity which significantly degrades local air quality.

Natural Resources Recommendations

1. Designate setbacks and buffer zones within the Winhall Zoning Bylaw to protect water quality, where appropriate.

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.

3. Update the Town Flood Hazard Regulations to meet current standards and incorporate River Corridor regulations. Consider integrating the Town Flood Hazard Regulations with the Winhall Zoning Bylaw.

4. 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.

5. Encourage local landowners to voluntarily and collectively manage their property in a manner which enhances wildlife habitat and protects rare, threatened or endangered species.

6. Consider updates to the Winhall Zoning Bylaws to reduce the fragmentation of areas identified as High Priority Forest Blocks and High Priority Habitat Connectors in Winhall.

7. Participate with the National Forest Service's ongoing forest management efforts encouraging environmentally sound and sustainable harvests.

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

9. Review existing earth extraction standards in the Winhall Zoning Bylaw and update as needed to address the potential impacts of these activities on the environment, neighboring properties, and the character of the area.

10. Monitor the effectiveness of existing performance standards in controlling air emissions as contained within the Winhall Zoning Bylaws.

ENERGY

Renewable Energy Resources

30 VSA Section 248 provides that the Vermont Public Utility Commission issue a Certificate of Public Good for all electric generating facilities. In making its determination, the PUC must consider 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 Utility Commission.

Preferred Areas

Preferred areas for renewable energy resource projects include brownfields, disused gravel pits or landfills, and other lands that have previously been disturbed, 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. Data from the 2018-2022 American Community Survey estimates that approximately 37% of year-round Winhall households use fuel oil for heating, 23% propane gas, 23% wood, and 12% electricity.

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. Based on the 2023 Vermont Energy Burden Report, Winhall residents spend an average of $2,753 annually on heating costs, compared with the State average of $2,447. In addition, Winhall residents spend an average of $1,867 on electricity and $3,549 on transportation annually. The total average energy burden for Winhall residents is $8,169, which is approximately 13% of the estimated 2021 median household income.

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, LED lights, and efficient appliances. Efficiency Vermont provides residents and businesses with energy assessments that identify cost-effective projects to improve efficiency

and offers low-interest loans and rebates to help pay for improvements. Increased and more effective public education regarding not only the environmental benefits of conservation, but also the potential financial savings, will be needed in the future.

Land use and transportation planning that focuses on supporting compact settlement patterns and alternative modes of transportation, like walking, bicycling, and using public transportation, is another effective strategy for reducing energy consumption. Compact settlement areas, like the village of Bondville, include a mix of commercial, residential, and civic uses, and allow residents and visitors to access more goods and services on foot rather than using a vehicle. Typically, homes in village areas are on smaller lots and have a smaller building footprint, which can reduce heating and electricity consumption. For additional information, refer to the Land Use and Transportation sections of the Town Plan.

Energy Policies:

Renewable Energy 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. Require appropriate minimum setbacks from property lines based on the size and scale of the renewable energy 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 for renewable energy projects; 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. Prohibit 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.

Energy Conservation Policies

8. Require all new construction be designed and built to be energy efficient.

9. Encourage the maximum conservation of energy resources.

10. 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.

Energy Recommendations:

Renewable Energy Recommendations

1. Require any proposed commercial renewable energy facility demonstrate a public need that outweighs adverse impacts to local resources, residents, businesses, and property owners or which otherwise affects the Town.

2. Require any proposed commercial renewable energy facility be in accordance with the Winhall Town Plan, Zoning Bylaws, Flood Hazard, and Subdivision Regulations, the Windham 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.

3. Review and update Winhall Zoning Bylaws as needed to ensure that small-scale renewable energy resources serving primarily individual users are supported.

Energy Conservation Recommendations

4. Monitor municipal energy use and should, where feasible, implement energy conservation and efficiency measures and promote the use of renewable energy sources on municipal properties.

5. Encourage the continued and expanded use of private shuttle buses and the Southeast Vermont Transit bus route which provide transportation services between various residential communities and the Stratton Mountain resort area.

6. Encourage, where appropriate, voluntary approaches to energy conservation by landowners through careful management and utilization of natural resources and building efficiency improvements.

FLOOD RESILIENCE

Winhall is vulnerable to two types of flooding: inundation flooding and fluvial erosion. Inundation flooding occurs when there is a rise in water levels that result in a flood event. Fluvial erosion occurs when riverbanks are eroded by the movement of rivers during stream events. The Town Plan identifies inundation 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.

Flood resilience refers to a community's ability to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from a flood event with minimum impact to the well-being of the community, local economy, and the environment. This chapters identifies policies and recommendations to protect the designated areas to mitigate risks to public safety, critical infrastructure, historic structures, and municipal investments.

Inundation Flood Hazard Areas

Inundation flooding can result from heavy rainfall or snowmelt, or when a stream channel is blocked by ice or debris. The Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) includes the *floodway*, which is the channel of a watercourse and adjacent area needed to convey floodwaters, and the *flood fringe*, which is the remaining area of the floodplain. According to FloodReady Vermont, there are 14 buildings in Winhall that are located within a SFHA. Lands along the Winhall River adjacent to Kendall Farm Road and Route 30 are located within the SHFA. Other areas in Winhall that fall within the SFHA include lands adjacent to portions of Mill Brook and Cook Brook. SFHA areas are shown on the Flood and Fluvial Erosion Hazard Areas Map in the Town Plan.

Fluvial Erosion Hazard Areas

A significant amount of flood damage in Vermont occurs as a result of fluvial erosion in areas outside of FEMA mapped floodplains, in particular along smaller upland streams. When a stream cannot spill out of its banks, the power of the trapped water increases and the channel digs down or cuts out to the sides. When roads, bridges, or buildings are nearby, significant damage can occur. Property owners in fluvial erosion hazard areas may be less aware of their flood vulnerability.

The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources has mapped River Corridors showing the area needed to address fluvial erosion hazards. A River Corridor is the area that provides the space needed for a river or stream to safely meander and a 50-foot buffer on both sides to allow for bank stabilization and prevent disturbance. Erosion from heavy rain runoff can also occur outside of River Corridors, in particular along road drainage systems and private driveways.

In Winhall, portions of the Winhall River, Bourn Brook, Mill Brook, Eddy Brook, Cook Brook, and Red Brook are within mapped River Corridors. According to the Vermont Flood Ready Atlas,

there are approximately 44 structures within a River Corridor in Winhall. The highest concentration of buildings in a River Corridor is along the Winhall River, in particular in the village of Bondville and along the Route 30 corridor. Fluvial Erosion Hazard Areas are shown on the Flood and Fluvial Erosion Hazard Areas Map in the Town Plan.

Addressing Flood Resilience

Towns can take several steps to reduce risks associated with flooding. The following are four main strategy areas for towns to improve flood resilience:

- River Corridors: Towns can conserve land in flood hazard and flood storage areas and discourage further development in vulnerable areas. Winhall benefits from having a significant amount of upland forest areas protected in the Green Mountain National Forest. These lands help capture storm water runoff and reduce flood risks downstream. There is an opportunity for the Town to update its Flood Hazard Regulations to meet current standards and adequately address River Corridor protections.

- Vulnerable Settlements: Towns can provide information to residents and property owners in vulnerable areas on how to reduce flood risks and complete floodproofing improvements to their homes and businesses. This can include elevating heating and HVAC systems, utilities, and propane tanks.

- Safer Areas: Towns can plan for and support development in safer areas that are less vulnerable to flood risks. The Land Use chapter in the Town Plan includes a Proposed Land Use map and description of land use districts that supports future development in safer area in the community. Winhall has adopted zoning bylaws that implement the land use plan.

- Watershed-Wide: Towns can participate in planning efforts for the larger watershed area. An example of this is the Agency of Natural Resources Basin Plans, which provide towns with information, recommended project, and assistance for local surface water quality protection. Towns can also implement storm water management strategies that reduce flood risks, like restricting certain types of development on steep slopes and erosion control standards for new development.

<u>Flood Resilience Policies</u>

1. Protect floodplains, river corridors, land adjacent to streams, wetlands, and upland forests through adoption and administration of flood hazard and fluvial erosion 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. Support flood emergency preparedness and response planning.

4. Promote coordination with other towns within shared watershed areas to address flood resiliency.

5. Ensure that land use regulations adequately support new development in safe locations not located within flood hazard or fluvial erosion hazard areas.

Flood Resilience Recommendations

1. Ensure that the Town is familiar with Flood Insurance Rate Maps that delineate areas that could be inundated by water during flooding and the ANR River Corridor Maps that delineate the land area adjacent to streams and rivers required to accommodate a stable channel.

2. Regulate any new development in identified flood hazard areas, fluvial erosion hazard areas, and/or River Corridors to ensure that development does no 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.

3. Complete updates to the Flood Hazard Regulations to meet current standards and to adequately address River Corridor protections. Consider incorporating Flood Hazard and Fluvial Erosion Hazard Regulations into the Winhall Zoning Bylaws.

4. Seek grant funding or other financing to flood proof critical municipal infrastructure and facilities located in the SFHA, River Corridor, or other flood-prone areas.

5. Provide emergency responders and municipal officials with proper training and equipment to respond to anticipated disasters and severe weather events.

6. Provide information to residents and property owners about flood proofing strategies and resources, and emergency preparedness activities.

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 the towns of 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 objectives, policies, and recommended land use patterns outlined within this Town Plan, including those along the Town's borders, are generally compatible with those of neighboring communities, as described in more detail below:

Jamaica: The town of Jamaica is situated to the east of Winhall and the communities are connected by Route 30. The Winhall Town Forest also extends into the town of Jamaica. The area along their shared border is designated as Residential District, and Village District around Bondville. Much of the Residential District area in Winhall has been developed with subdivisions associated with Stratton Mountain. In Jamaica, the adjacent land area is designated Commercial-Residential and Village along Route 30, and Rural Resource Area and Conservation to the north and south of Route 30. There may be opportunities for the towns to work together on common areas of concern, such as land use planning and traffic safety and management along the Route 30 corridor between Bondville and Rawsonville.

Londonderry: The town of Londonderry is situated to the east of Winhall and the towns are connected by Winhall Hollow Road. The area along their shared border is comprised of the Gale Meadows Wildlife Preserve, low-density residential uses, and agricultural and forest lands. The Londonderry Town Plan designates the adjacent area in Londonderry for similar, compatible low-density rural residential uses.

Stratton: The town of Stratton is located to the south of Winhall and the towns are connected by Stratton Mountain Access Road and Upper Taylor Hill Road. The Stratton Mountain Resort is located in both Winhall and Stratton, and much of the resort area and associated residential development spans the boundary between the towns. The Stratton Town Plan designates the resort area as Recreation District and Commercial/Residential District, and surrounding areas as Residential District. The Green Mountain National Forest also spans the boundary between the towns and the Stratton Town Plan designates this area as Conservation District. The towns should continue to work together to address shared planning, transportation, and development issues around the Stratton Mountain Resort.

Dorset: The town of Dorset is located northwest of Winhall and the communities share only a short common boundary. There are no direct road connections between the towns. The adjacent land area in Winhall includes residential subdivisions off Route 11/30 that are largely built out. The adjacent land area in Dorset is part of the Green Mountain National Forest.

Landgove: The town of Landgrove is located northeast of Winhall and the communities share only a short common boundary. There are no direct road connections between the towns. The adjacent areas in each community are rural with very little or no development.

Manchester: The town of Manchester is located to the west of Winhall and the communities are connected by Route 11/30. Much of the common boundary between the towns is within the Green Mountain National Forest. There is an area in Winhall designated as Residential District, which has already been largely developed. In Manchester, this adjacent area is designated as Rural Residential and Agricultural Lands and Forest, Conservation, and Recreation Lands, which is compatible with Winhall's Plan.

Peru: The town of Peru is located to the north of Winhall and the communities are connected by South Road and Route 11. The Bromley Ski Resort is located just north of Winhall and impacts traffic patterns and volume on Route 30 through Winhall. Most of the common boundary between the towns is within the Green Mountain National Forest. Adjacent land areas in Winhall are designated primarily as Forest District or Rural Residential and Agricultural District. In Peru, other than around the Bromley ski area, lands are designated as Forest District or Rural Residential (5 acre) District.

Sunderland: The town of Sunderland is located southwest of Winhall and there are no direct road connections between the towns. The adjacent land areas in each town are entirely comprised of Green Mountain National Forest land.

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. The Regional Plan calls for encouraging growth and development within existing compact settlement areas, such as the village of Bondville, which is supported by the Winhall Town Plan. Important natural resource areas and forest and agricultural lands are protected and maintained in the Winhall Town Plan as well, consistent with the Regional Plan's goals and policies.

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 bylaws and ordinances, 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. Other means of Plan implementation include capital improvements in infrastructure and community facilities, land acquisition for conservation and recreational purposes, and voluntary actions by private landowners. 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.

To assist in the process of implementing the Town Plan, each chapter includes a list of recommended action steps meant to help the Town achieve its goals and objectives. Following the adoption of the Plan, it is recommended that the Selectboard and Planning Commission work with town staff and representatives from the community to discuss priority projects and develop a schedule for possible implementation of these recommendations. The Winhall Town Plan should also be regularly reviewed and, if needed, amended to reflect changing conditions or priorities in the community.

TOWN PLAN MAPS

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 in the Plan, which describes map features and establishes generalized policies and recommendations to further guide development in Winhall.

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.

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, and distinguishes between existing residential buildings, commercial or industrial buildings, or public and institutional buildings. The map also shows public or conservation land and permanent water bodies.

Map 3: Future 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 Land Use Chapter provides additional information on the purpose of each of these districts.

Map 4: Flood & Fluvial Erosion Hazard Areas
This map depicts the FEMA Special Flood Hazard Areas and the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources' River Corridors. Development within these areas is regulated by the Town of Winhall Flood Hazard Regulations.

Map 5: Natural Resources
This map depicts important natural resources in the Town of Winhall, including wetlands, land over 2,500 feet in elevation, Class A watersheds, bear habitat, deer wintering areas, rare or uncommon animal, state threatened, rare, or uncommon plant, significant natural communities, and Forest Blocks and Habitat Connectors.

Existing Land Use

Town of Winhall, Vermont
2024 Town Plan

N

0 1 Mile

map by Windham Regional Commission, Brattleboro, VT
September 2024
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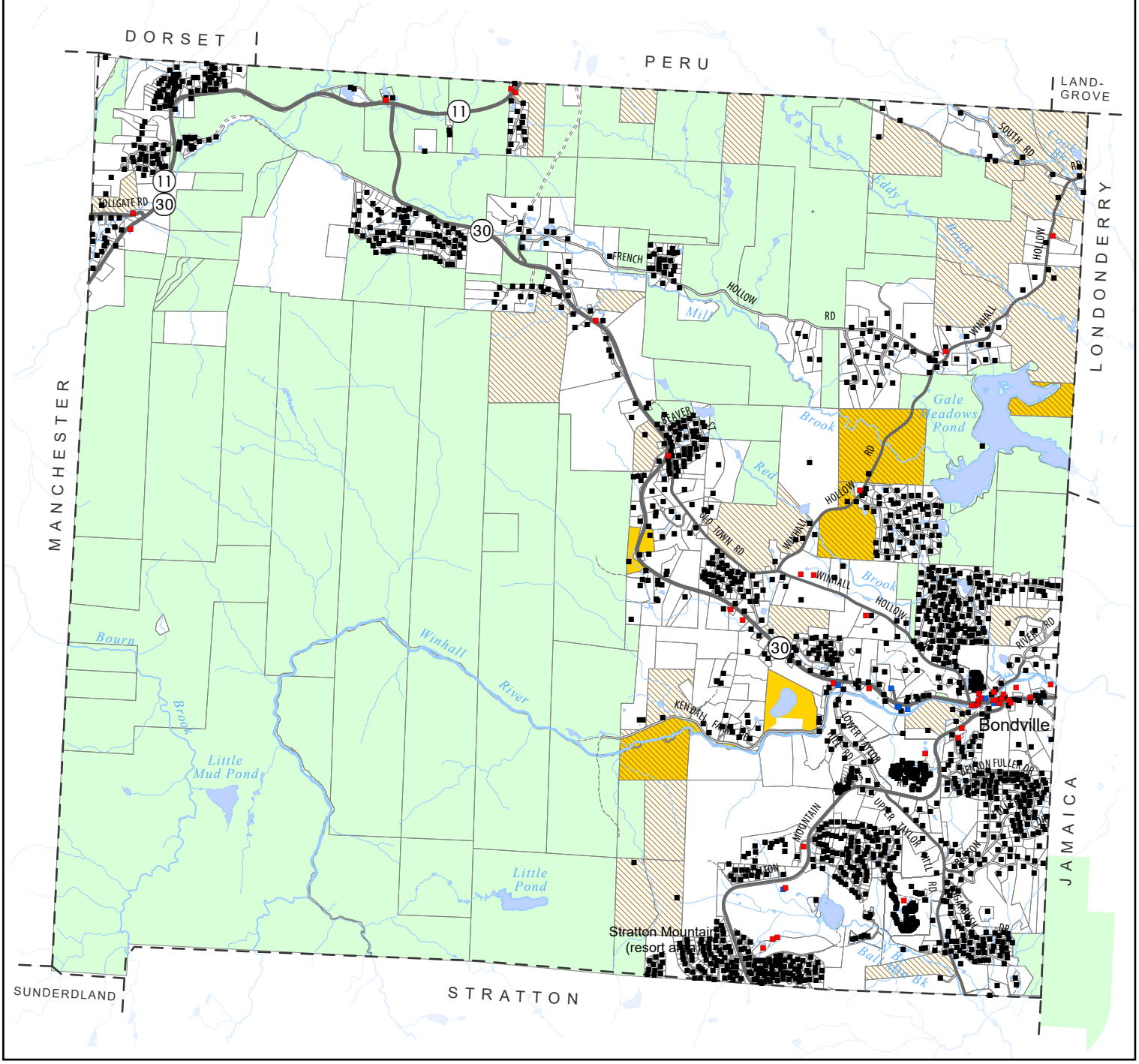
- Commercial building
- Public/Institutional building
- Residential building
- Parcel boundary
- Parcel enrolled in Use Value Appraisal
- Conservation easement
- Public land

Data sources: buildings from Vermont E911 Board ESITE data; parcel boundaries from Winhall parcel data, current to 2023, parcels enrolled in Use Value Appraisal from Vermont Department of Taxes, current to 2022; conservation easements and public land from Vermont Protected Lands Database, 2021, extracted from Winhall parcel data by WRC.

DRAFT



Flood and Fluvial Erosion Hazard Areas

Town of Winhall, Vermont
2024 Town Plan

N

0 1 Mile

map by Windham Regional Commission, Brattleboro, VT
September 2024
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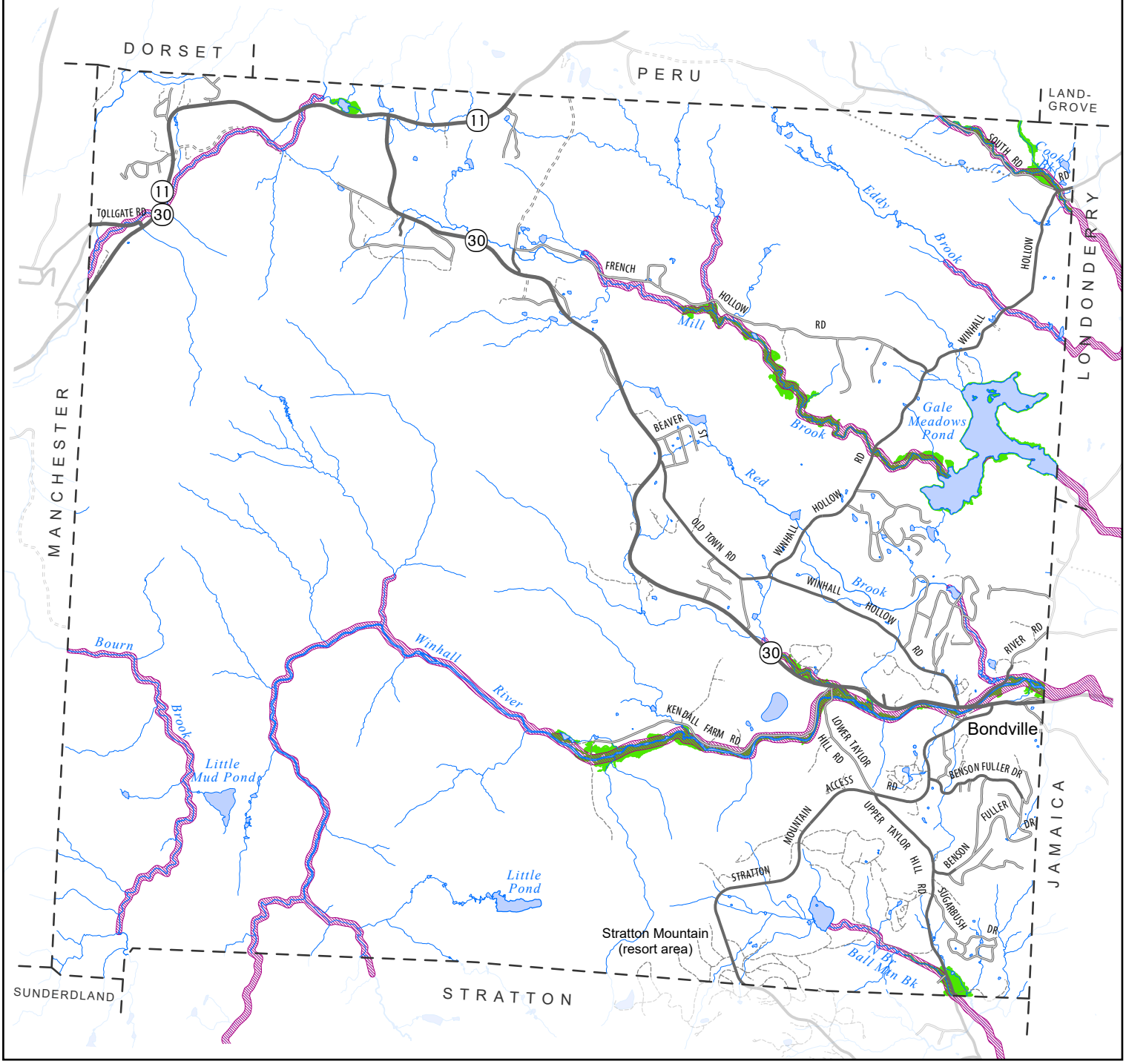
ANR-mapped River Corridor *

FEMA Special Flood Hazard Area

* River Corridor data provided by the Secretary of Natural Resources pursuant to 10 V.S.A. Sec. 1428(a). Official source of River Corridor data is tinyurl.com/floodreadyatlas. Where river corridors are not mapped, the corridor is taken to be the area within 50 feet of a perennial stream (only perennial streams are shown on this map).

Data sources: Special Flood Hazard Area data from FEMA, effective December 2, 2015; mapped River Corridors from Vermont ANR Rivers Program.

DRAFT



Natural Resources

Town of Winhall, Vermont
2024 Town Plan

N

0 1 Mile

map by Windham Regional Commission, Brattleboro, VT
September 2024
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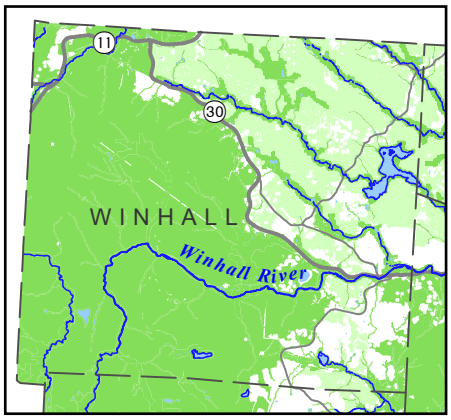
- Natural Heritage occurrence, plant
- Natural Heritage occurrence, animal
- Significant Natural Community
- Wetland
- Deer wintering area
- Lands above 2500 feet
- Class A(1) watershed



Vermont Conservation Design, landscape scale:

- Highest priority areas
- Priority areas

Data sources: Data sources: wetlands from the Vermont Significant Wetlands Inventory, 2023; lands over 2500 feet and Class A(1) waters from Vermont ANR; deer wintering areas from Vermont Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, updated through 2023; Natural Heritage data from VT Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, Natural Heritage Inventory Database, current to spring 2024.

DRAFT

DORSET
PERU
LAND-GROVE
MANCHESTER
LONDONDERRY
JAMAICA
SUNDERLAND
STRATTON
Bondville
Stratton Mountain (resort area)
Winhall River
Bourn Brook
Little Mud Pond
Little Pond
Gale Meadows Pond
Eddy Brook
Mill Brook
Red Brook
Cook Brook
N Br Ball Mtn Bk
TOLLGATE RD
FRENCH HOLLOW RD
BEAVER MEADOW RD
OLD TOWN RD
WINHALL HOLLOW RD
WINHALL HOLLOW
SOUTH RD
RIVER RD
KENDALL FARM RD
LOWER TAYLOR HILL RD
UPPER TAYLOR HILL RD
STRATTON MOUNTAIN ACCESS
BENSON FULLER DR
FULLER DR
BENSON SUGARBUSH DR
11
30

Transportation and Community Facilities

Town of Winhall, Vermont
2024 Town Plan

N

0 1 Mile

map by Windham Regional Commission, Brattleboro, VT
September 2024
U:\GIS\Towns\Winhall\Maps\TownPlanMaps_2024.aprx

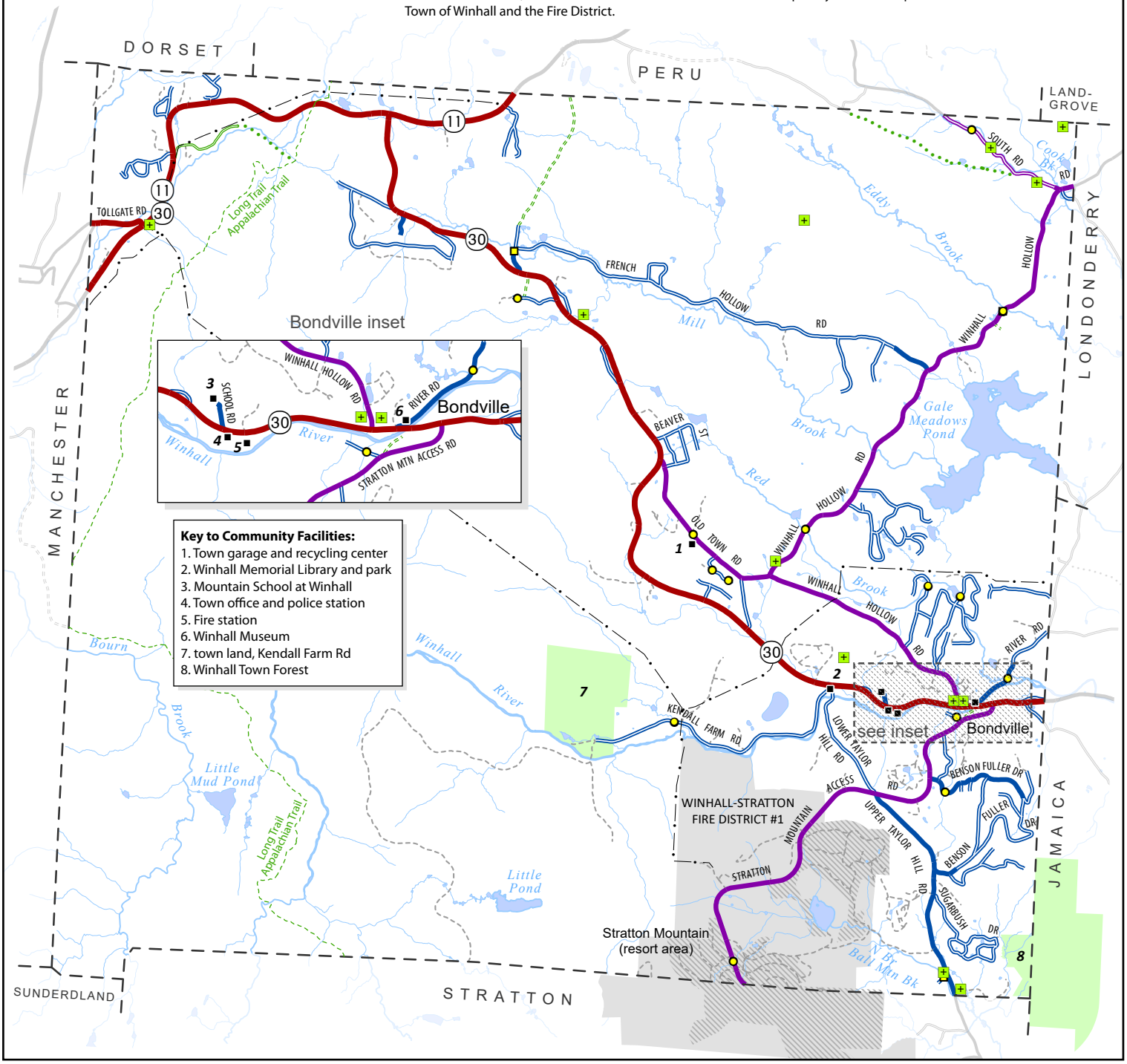
DRAFT

- Cemetery
- Community facility
- Electric transmission line
- Long/Appalachian Trail
- Town land (large parcels)
- Fire district
- General area served by municipal sewer

- State Highway
- Class 2 town highway, paved
- Class 3 town highway, paved
- Class 2 town highway, unpaved
- Class 3 town highway, unpaved
- Class 4 town highway, unpaved, passable
- Class 4 town highway, unpaved, impassable
- Legal trail
- Private road

- Town culvert, 6 feet or greater width
- Town bridge, 6 feet or greater length

Data sources: roads data from Vtrans, updated by WRC in 2024; bridge and culvert data from VtCulverts, maintained by WRC; community facilities, and cemeteries identified by the Winhall Planning Commission and mapped by WRC; town land from GIS parcel data; electric transmission lines from VCGI data; fire district and sewer service area data developed by WRC with input from the Town of Winhall and the Fire District.



Future Land Use

Town of Winhall, Vermont
2024 Town Plan

N

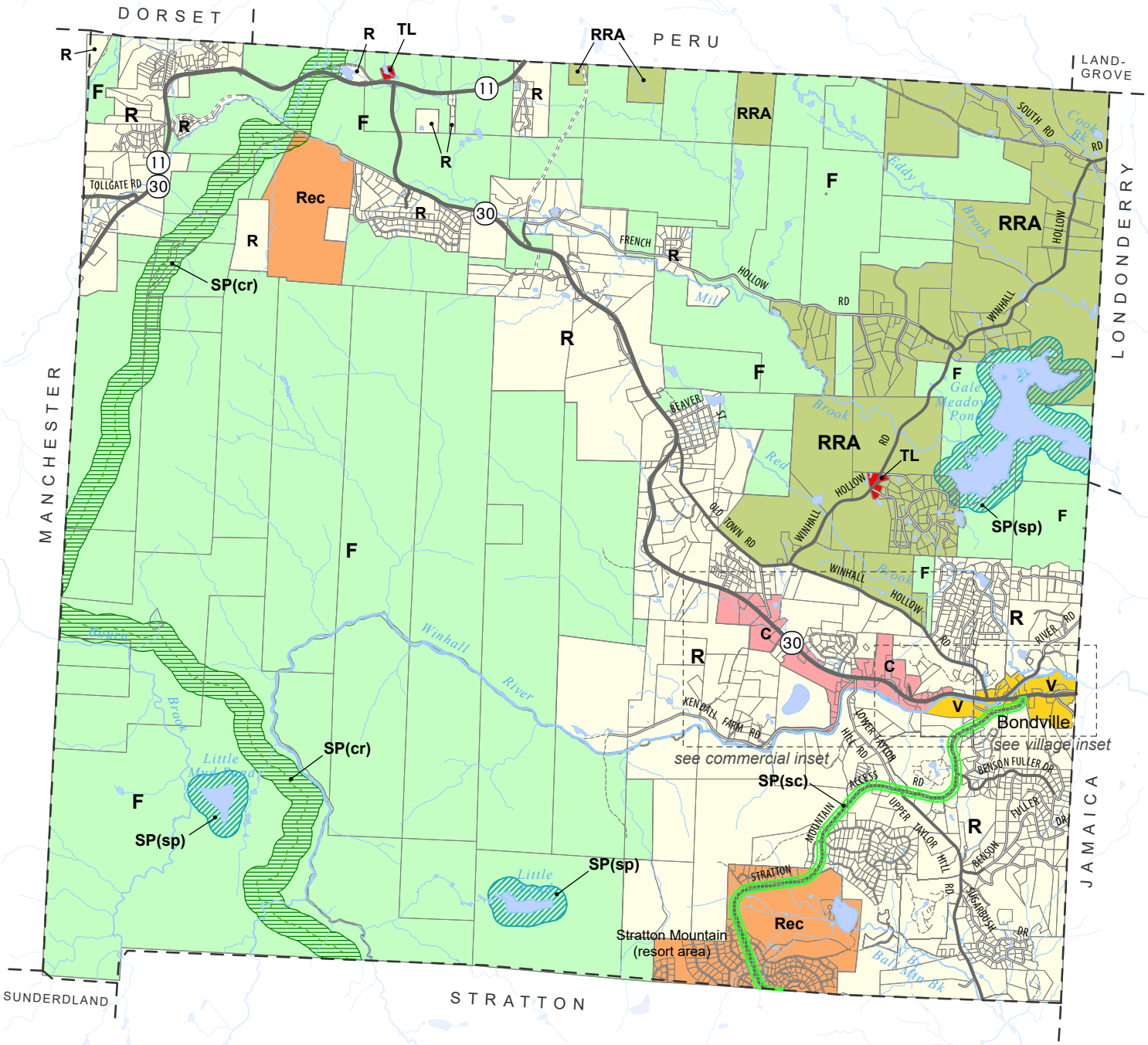
0 1 Mile

map by Windham Regional Commission, Brattleboro, VT
September 2024
U:\GIS\Towns\Winhall\Maps\TownPlanMaps_2024.aprx

F	Forest
RRA	Rural Residential and Agricultural
Rec	Recreational
TL	Transient Lodging
C	Commercial
R	Residential
V	Village
SP(cp)	Special Purpose District: conservation protection
SP(sp)	Special Purpose District: shoreland protection (500' from water)
SP(sr)	Special Purpose District: scenic restriction

DRAFT

Data source: future land use district boundaries are designated by the Town of Winhall., and GIS data representing these boundaries were developed by WRC in 2003, updated 2006, 2016, and 2024, using various GIS base data layers including parcels, road centerlines, surface waters, and the Long Trail.



Future Land Use Inset Maps

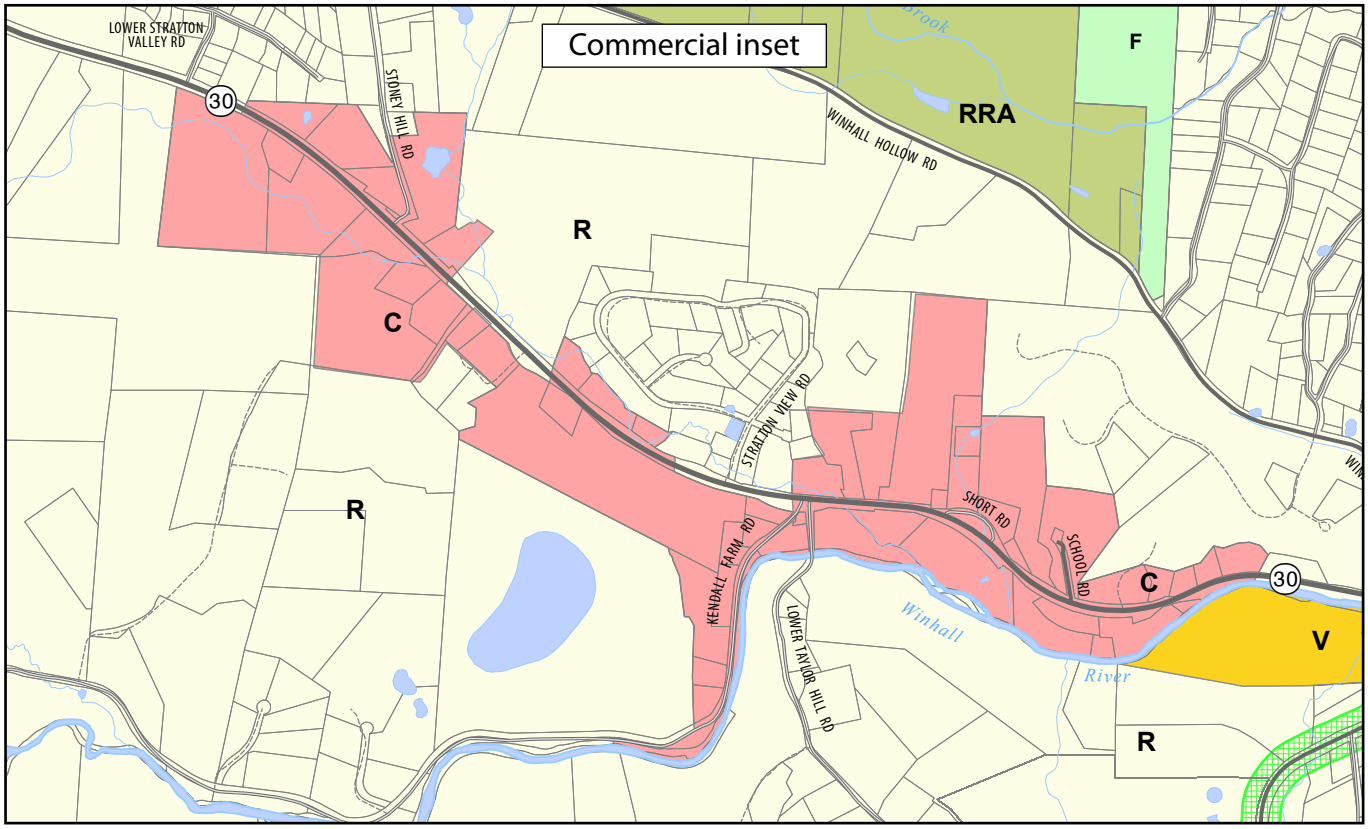
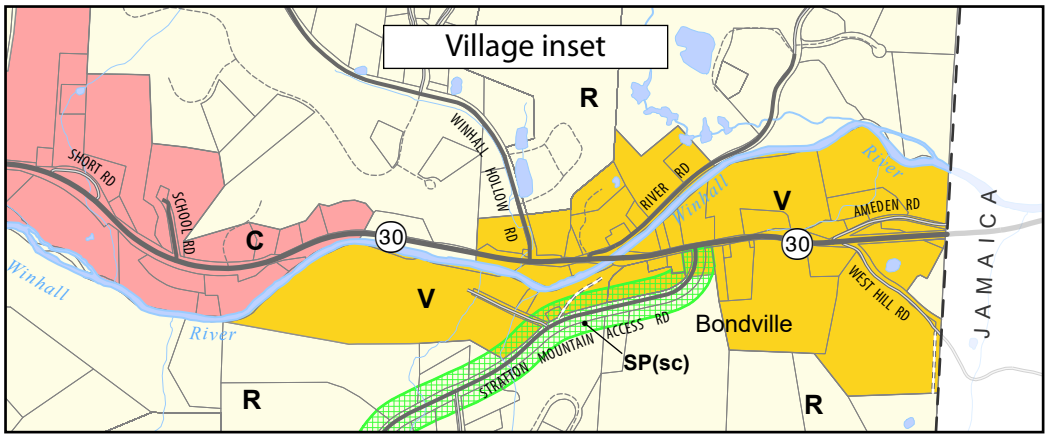
Town of Winhall, Vermont
2024 Town Plan

N

0 0.25 Mile

map by Windham Regional Commission, Brattleboro, VT
September 2024
U:\GIS\Towns\Winhall\Maps\TownPlanMaps_2024.aprx

DRAFT

F	Forest
RRA	Rural Residential and Agricultural
Rec	Recreational
TL	Transient Lodging
C	Commercial
R	Residential
V	Village
SP(cp)	Special Purpose District: conservation protection
SP(sp)	Special Purpose District: shoreland protection (500' from water)
SP(sr)	Special Purpose District: scenic restriction

Data source: future land use district boundaries are designated by the Town of Winhall., and GIS data representing these boundaries were developed by WRC in 2003, updated 2006, 2016, and 2024, using various GIS base data layers including parcels, road centerlines, surface waters, and the Long Trail.