

# **Mount Holly**

## **Town Plan**

Adopted September 28, 1993

### **I. TOWN GOAL**

The Town of Mount Holly hopes to preserve its rural lifestyle and appearance. It is a community where townspeople volunteer to provide services along with recreational and cultural opportunities. Excellence in education will be a priority. There will also be concern for the environment as well as economic growth to enable our citizens to afford a quality lifestyle. Roads will be maintained and improved as needs arise. Growth should be encouraged in population centers and considered in certain agricultural and forest areas protecting rural views and wildlife. This will provide continued enjoyment of open fields, woodlands, and lakes. This plan is consistent with Title 24 Vermont Statutes Chapter 117 section 4302.

### **II. HISTORY**

In 1759 General Amherst ordered a road built from Fort Number 4 in New Hampshire to Crown Point, New York. The road crossed the Green Mountains at Mount Holly near Lake Ninevah, bringing settlers into south central Vermont and later became part of the stage coach route between Burlington and Boston.

Needing money to support the Revolutionary War, Vermont's General Assembly decided to sell off "ungranted" lands. On February 23, 1781, Abraham Jackson, along with 29 others, paid 270 English pounds for 9,700 acres between Ludlow and Wallingford, which then came to be known as Jackson's Gore. Among those who settled here were men who fought at Bunker Hill, the Battle of Lexington and were present at Ethan Allen's capture of Fort Ticonderoga.

Abraham Jackson's party moved to Mount Holly from Wallingford and built log cabins in the vicinity of today's Mount Holly General Store. Within a few years, another group of settlers worked their way around Okemo Mountain and built homes near the railroad track crossing of today's Healdville Road. Though within 3 miles, each group of settlers was totally unaware that the other settlement existed until, in 1786, the Healdville men went searching for some wandering livestock, heard a dog bark, realized that a dog meant a master, continued searching, came upon a cabin in the woods and were

pleasantly surprised to find a church service in progress. Before long, paths and roads created a single community.

On October 31, 1792 Vermont's General Assembly formally created Mount Holly from Jackson's Gore and portions of land from Wallingford and Ludlow.

Mount Holly was a mountain community with many assets. The soil was excellent for grazing livestock and growing potatoes. In 1840 Mount Holly led the state in dairy production and exported 65,930 bushels of potatoes. Of the 3 natural ponds, Patch Pond, which we now call Lake Ninevah, was never used for commerce, but Jackson's Pond, which has since been renamed Star Lake, was. Abraham Jackson built the town's first saw mill at the outlet of his pond in the center of what was then called Mechanicsville. At one time 8 mill ponds existed within the town. By 1869 Mount Holly had 14 saw mills in town.

Rich deposits of brick clay were another of Mount Holly's assets and a brick kiln was set up by the depot. Six houses in town were built entirely of brick. Other industry in Mount Holly included grist mills, blacksmiths, a tannery and factories producing chairs, cotton batting, bowls, cheese boxes, rakes and toys.

During the late 1840s, a race developed between the Central Vermont Railroad and the Rutland Railroad. Each wanted to be first to get a train through from Boston to Burlington. Working from both ends, the Rutland Railroad's tracks met and joined at the summit of the Mount Holly pass. There was a great deal of celebrating since they had won by a 2 week margin. While making the cut through Mount Holly, the railroad workers found the remains of a mammoth preserved in a peat bog. A portion of a tusk and a molar tooth are on display at the University of Vermont.

In 1882 the Crowley Cheese Factory was built. Today it is designated as a National Historic Place and listed in the National Register of Historic Places by the Federal Government. In 1889 the toy factory moved away taking most of the Methodists with it. They left behind their church, built in 1884, which is today's town library and community center, after serving for many years as Town Hall.

There were a few lean years as industry died out, but before long a new business began. During the 1890s, Green Mountain Cottage and Lake View Inn opened their doors to summer visitors. It had become a summer community. In 1911 citizens petitioned to have the post office name changed from Mechanicsville to Belmont.

### **III. COMMUNITY PROFILE**

## **1. Locational Data**

Mount Holly is located on a hilly plateau on the central ridge of the Green Mountains. Its elevation ranges from about 1200 feet above sea level to 3343 feet at the summit of Okemo Mountain. The village of Belmont, at 1850 feet, is one of the highest in the State. The Town lies astride the watershed of the Green Mountains since the streams in the eastern part of the town drain eastward into the Black River and on to the Connecticut River, while the waters in the central and western parts of town drain into the Mill River and north into Lake Champlain. The Town's location places it in a belt of high annual snow fall.

Topographically, the Town is composed of a series of hills and low mountains, some in excess of 2000 feet, which are separated by mountain streams and brooks. There are three lakes in the Town: Star Lake in Belmont, Lake Ninevah in the north near the Town's boundary with Plymouth, and Tiny Pond which the Town shares with Ludlow in the northeastern corner.

In total area, Mount Holly is one of the larger towns in Rutland County with 29,338 acres. About one-fifth of the Town is public land in Okemo State Forest on the eastern border, Green Mountain National Forest on the west and about 92 acres on the northeast side of Star Lake owned by the State of Vermont.

## **2. Adjacent Municipalities**

The Town of Mount Holly borders the following towns: Wallingford, Mount Tabor, Weston, Ludlow, Plymouth, and Shrewsbury.

Most of the border with Wallingford and all of the border with Mount Tabor occurs within Green Mountain National Forest. All such lands will continue to be managed by the United States Forest Service so uses will be compatible among these towns. The remaining border with Wallingford and all of the border with Shrewsbury and Plymouth involves lands rural in nature with low density housing and related farming or forestry uses. Such similar uses would not appear to conflict with each other.

The border between Mount Holly and Ludlow occurs on the east slope of Okemo Mountain and primarily within Okemo State Forest. The primary activity along this border is skiing. This is compatible with the Ludlow Town Plan and from the ridge eastward, with the Mount Holly Town Plan.

The Mount Holly-Weston border is along an area of very low housing density. Part of the border is within Green Mountain National Forest and will continue

under United States Forest Service management along both sides. Part is within Okemo State Forest and will continue under Vermont Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation management. The remainder, due to its remote location in both towns, will likely remain in very low density and use should remain compatible.

Regional Plans are designed to support town plans, and Mount Holly's plan is consistent with the Rutland Regional Plan.

### **3. Population and Employment**

Mount Holly's population was at its maximum, 1,582, in the 1870s. Dairying and forestry supported most of the population on widely dispersed farmsteads. With the decline of upland farming the population decreased until there were only 567 residents in 1950. A gradual increase began in the 1960s as the state highway system serving the Town improved and commuting to job centers in the region provided a variety of employment. Mount Holly became an attractive place for those locating in the area for job opportunities, for retirement and for vacation homes. The 1980 census figures show that our population was 938, in 1990 we numbered 1,093 and the population is projected to be 1248 in the year 2000.

The 1990 census showed an average wage in Mount Holly of \$18,207. When looking at household income, which includes single person and non-related member households earning an income, the median income is \$27,986. This figure places Mount Holly 15th out of the 27 towns in Rutland County and within the moderate income group in Vermont as a whole.

It is interesting to note that in 1990, 27.2% of Mount Holly's population was under age 18, while 12.9% was over age 65. Several challenges face the community. Some of these challenges include the needs for education, needs for job opportunities, housing and the welfare of our senior citizens.

## **IV. COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

### **1. Recreation: Inventory**

Recreational activities in Mount Holly have historically revolved around the fact that it is a hill country town. Much of the land was forested thereby providing excellent wildlife habitat fostering hunting and fishing. Today, hiking, horseback riding, and camping are popular, while the ponds and streams provide excellent swimming, boating and fishing. Winter sports include snowmobiling and cross country skiing. Part of the eastern slope of

Okemo Mountain is in Mount Holly and downhill skiing currently occurs on the mountain road and trails associated with the Okemo Mountain Ski Area.

### Specific Areas

The following list includes areas of special note but is not all inclusive. The very dispersed nature of the recreation activities in town prohibits the naming of every location.

- a. Star Lake (formerly Jackson Pond) is approximately 50 acres in size and is important for swimming with a beach located near its outlet. The pond itself is shallow with few areas over six feet in depth. In addition, over the years it has received runoff from surrounding fields which have been, at times, heavily fertilized. Consequently, algae growth often becomes a significant problem in late summer. The Lake originally supported a standard warm water fishery including sunfish, perch, bullhead, and pickerel. Today these have been replaced by bass, channel catfish, and trout, the latter on a put and take basis. The island supports a small bog community of sphagnum moss, pitcher plants, and speckled alder. Ospreys and loons are still seen occasionally on the lake, along with migrating waterfowl both spring and fall. The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife lists the Lake as a significant natural community. (See map)
- b. Lake Ninevah (formerly Patch Pond) is the largest pond in town approximately 270 acres in size and currently supports a standard warm water fishery. Almost all of the land around the pond is privately owned so the public is limited to a small boat access recently purchased by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife. There is no beach or swimming area on the lake. It is listed in the Natural Areas of Vermont: An Inventory of Natural Areas, 1972-73 (Inventory number 939B) by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife as a moderate to good waterfowl nesting and feeding area. Loons have frequently been reported on the lake in recent years.
- c. Tiny Pond, on the boundary between Mount Holly and Ludlow, is smaller than Star Lake and totally surrounded by private land so there is no public access at this time.
- d. Green Mountain National Forest. In 1984 Congress designated much of this land as the White Rocks National Recreation Area, the intent being to retain much of the area in a wild remote state for the benefit of wildlife which require that type of habitat and for recreational use including hunting, fishing, camping, snowmobiling, and cross country skiing. In 1989 this area was the site of the reintroduction of the pine marten into Vermont by the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

- e. Okemo State Forest. Much of the western slope of the mountain is an important black bear corridor between the large block of wild federally owned land to the south and west of town and areas north of Mount Holly on Saltash and Killington Mountains. The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife has identified this as critical bear habitat and it is being managed as such. Fishing, hunting, hiking, snowmobiling and cross country skiing are the principal recreational activities in this area. A portion of Okemo Mountain Ski Area is within the Town of Mount Holly and is part of the long term leasehold of Okemo Mountain, Inc. This is primarily on the eastern side of the mountain. A hiking trail is being constructed from the site of the former Healdville railroad station to the mountain summit.
- f. Ball fields for baseball, softball, soccer and various other activities have been constructed and maintained in the area immediately behind the Mount Holly Elementary School. Swings and other pieces of playground equipment are maintained there as well. A major renovation of the fields was undertaken beginning in the summer of 1990 with assistance of the Army National Guard Engineers from Springfield, Vermont.
- g. Catamount Trail System. The Catamount Trail is a cross country ski trail running the length of Vermont. The proposed route through Mount Holly is across the northwest corner of the town entering about a mile south of East Wallingford and following old town roads to its exit near where Freeman Brook enters Mount Holly.
- h. Much of the remaining private land in town is still open for recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, cross country skiing, snowmobiling, and horseback riding. This land provides important space for these activities. It is hoped that the State of Vermont will begin to recognize this and adopt a program to ease the property tax burden on these lands so they will continue to be available for the future.

## **1. Recreation: Policy**

It is the policy of the town to continue to encourage recreational use of its lands as described under section IV (1) Community Resources: Recreational Inventory. Where open land can be maintained by concentrating activities and facilities this is to be encouraged.

- a. The shore line around Star Lake should be protected from development as much as possible in order to prevent agents leading to further eutrophication from entering the lake and to retain the undeveloped appearance of much of the lake. Any opportunity which would lead to the removal of bottom sediments, with attendant nutrient loads, should be explored in order to retard the eutrophication process.

- b. Lake Ninevah is a major water resource in the Town and as such should be available for use by townspeople. Effort should be made to obtain lake frontage along the lake for public recreation involving swimming and similar activities.
- c. Tiny Pond is a water resource in the Town and as such should be available for use by townspeople. Future consideration should be given to secure a public road to the pond and water frontage for public recreation involving swimming and similar activities.
- d. Green Mountain National Forest: The forest should retain its wild and primitive nature with special emphasis given to wildlife habitat maintenance and dispersed recreation in accordance with the objectives of the National Recreation Area. See comments concerning public lands under Okemo State Forest below.
- e. Okemo State Forest: The dispersed types of recreational activities outlined above (hunting, fishing, hiking etc.) will be encouraged by doing whatever possible to maintain the forest areas, important water courses, and open spaces. In particular, the public lands in town should be managed to provide those activities which may not be possible on private lands in the future. It is the recommendation of the Planning Commission that additional public lands not be converted to use by private interests. These areas should be managed to maintain and promote the various wildlife needs and recreational activities outlined previously.
- f. Developed recreational ball fields should be maintained and improved as funds and resources become available. Every attempt should be made to increase facilities when possible. Development of additional indoor facilities should be pursued as well.
- g. Development of the Catamount Trail should be encouraged since this is of benefit both to town's people with an interest in cross country skiing as well as a benefit to the State as a whole.
- h. Private lands open to recreational use in town still constitute the majority of the acreage. This is a significant asset of the town. Participation in the Use Value Appraisal Program should be continued where possible to encourage productivity of the land and maintain it as a recreational resource.

## **2. Fire: Inventory**

The Mount Holly Volunteer Fire Department is an organization of 24 active members which provides fire protection to the town along with assistance in other emergencies. The main station is on School Street. The old town garage in Belmont served as a substation until its recent collapse. The Town will now have to decide whether to rebuild it. The Fire Department has a current

operating budget of \$24,200. Additional moneys are generated through fund raising projects such as snowmobile races, raffles, and coin drops. The Department provides public fire prevention programs to local schools, and other organizations as requested. Working in conjunction with the Rescue Squad, the Department provides an additional rescue truck which was purchased completely by funds raised by the members. In addition, a new fire truck (primary pumper) was purchased by the town in December of 1991 and is being paid for over a 5 year period.

Fire dispatching is provided by the Vermont State Police. The current number is 259-2700.

## **2. Fire: Policy**

The primary responsibility for fire fighting in Mount Holly should be the Mount Holly Volunteer Fire Department, and the town is committed to providing adequate resources for training and equipment for this to be done. In a rural situation, fire protection can be a significant problem. There are, however, certain things which can be done to reduce the danger and increase that protection. Installation of a few hydrants connecting Star Lake to points in Belmont would provide improved fire protection for village residents. Relocating the Belmont substation is also a priority. In the more rural areas of town construction of fire ponds with dry hydrants is encouraged. The Agency of Natural Resources has set up helpful guidelines for locating fire ponds. In general, the fire department is directing its efforts to lowering the Town's insurance rating, therefore reducing insurance premiums for town residents.

## **3. Police: Inventory**

Local police protection is provided through three separate entities. The Town has two part time constables elected by popular vote. The operating budget is \$1440. The Rutland County Sheriff's Department is available as needed and has been requested by the Selectmen to enforce traffic laws in problem areas. The Vermont State Police, based in Rutland, are responsible for handling traffic, criminal and civil issues in Mount Holly. The constable's phone number is 259-2341 and the Vermont State Police number is 773-9101.

## **3. Police: Policy**

The primary police function shall be handled by the Vermont State Police with support from the Sheriff's Department and the Town Constables. Town constables shall have completed the basic police training course.



#### **4. Rescue Squad: Inventory**

The Mount Holly Volunteer Rescue Squad provides treatment to residents and visitors on an emergency call basis transporting regularly to either Rutland or Springfield hospitals. If paramedics are needed, they will meet the Rescue Squad enroute to Rutland. The Rescue Squad has a volunteer staff, eight of whom are certified Emergency Medical Technicians. members are required to receive, at a minimum, 66 hours of Advanced First Aid training and a ten hour Emergency Care Attendant program before beginning any field work. The current Rescue Squad budget is \$10,500. The Vermont State Police provides dispatching for these calls. The current number Rescue Squad phone number is 775-3133.

#### **4. Rescue Squad: Policy**

The primary responsibility for responding to medical emergencies should be the Mount Holly Volunteer Rescue Squad. The town is committed to staffing this organization with adequately trained volunteers and providing the necessary equipment.

#### **5. Health Care Services: Inventory**

There are no medical facilities located in the town of Mount Holly. The Rutland Regional Medical Center is a 188 bed, recently renovated, full service medical facility. This is the closest hospital to Mount Holly, but Springfield Hospital is also available. Based in Rutland is the Visiting Nurse Association which provides "Home Care" services such as skilled nursing, physical, occupational and speech therapy, home health aides, homemaker services as well as a Hospice program. Fees are based on actual cost and no one is turned down for "inability to pay as long as care is needed". In addition to the above services, Rutland Area Community Services, Vermont Achievement Center and Convenient Medical Care, Inc. provide further health services as needed. There is also available, in Ludlow, a medical clinic staffed and operated by the Springfield Hospital.

#### **5. Health Care Services: Policy**

As a small rural community, we will continue to depend on larger neighboring communities for comprehensive health care.

#### **6. Cultural Facilities: Inventory**

- a. The Mt. Holly Town Library has been a volunteer effort from its beginning in the early 1900s. The library was originally located in different houses. In 1913, the Belmont Improvement Association established a new location for the library in the lower level of the old Methodist Church/Town Hall. Here the library was run by volunteers. In the late 1960s the library was restructured with the introduction of modern methods of library science. Under the auspices of the Mount Holly Community Association, the library was moved to brighter surroundings on the main floor of the former church building (now the Community Center). It has a collection of over 5000 volumes.
- b. A museum was the idea of a descendent of one of the early Mount Holly families. The present museum building was a blacksmith shop during the 1800s, an undertaking parlor in the early 1900s and from mid 1950 until 1968 was Edminster's vanilla and medicinal shop. After Mr. Edminster's death in 1968, a committee was formed to investigate the use of this building and the founding members provided the money to purchase the property. Volunteers worked on repairs and remodeling and the Community Historical Museum of Mount Holly officially opened in September 1969 with 150 members. The Museum is open Sunday afternoons during July and August when programs are often scheduled. The Museum is also open by appointment and there is a special program for elementary school children in the fall. Collections include photographs, quilts, clothing, Chase Toy Factory items, record of all gravestones in Mount Holly cemeteries, genealogies, Town Reports, scrapbooks and many other items illustrative of the area's history.

## **6. Cultural Facilities: Policy**

- a. The Mount Holly Town Library will continue to be supported and managed by volunteers. Donations of printed material and funds will improve the quality and quantity of inventory. The library is planning to be open to the public more than the present two scheduled times a week.
- b. In the Museum constitution the purpose is stated to be "to maintain and perpetuate the historical museum and properties, to collect and catalog memorabilia of Mount Holly and surrounding areas and to present programs to the community". The Museum will continue to promote enrichment for all ages, offering insight into Mount Holly history and promoting better understanding and appreciation of our American heritage. Fund raising events are an important activity to supplement modest membership dues. Payments are offered to those who provide the wide range of programs and there are ongoing

necessary building repairs. The Community Historical Museum of Mount Holly will continue to be an important contribution to the Town's cultural life.

## **7. Education: Inventory**

In 1818, 392 students attended nine separate schools. By 1859 there were 14 of these separate school districts, and in 1893 Mount Holly gave up the idea of separate districts, elected three school directors, and began a town system of schooling. In the 1955-56 school year there were three schools-- Belmont, Mount Holly, and Healdville-- for 63 students. On September 19 of the following school year, 76 students in grades one through eight moved into one building, the beginnings of Mount Holly's current elementary school. In 1971 space had to be found for the newly offered kindergarten program, and so 7th and 8th grades were sent to school in Ludlow. The 1980s were a turning point. In 1981 a kindergarten room, another classroom, a Special Ed, and a Chapter I room were added. In 1985 three more classrooms and a library were added. The current building is close to capacity and the community is in the process of reducing the last two bond issues. The Mount Holly School is governed by an elected 3 member board with an annual budget of approximately \$840,000.

Prior to 1972 Mount Holly high school students attended Rutland High School, Mount Saint Joseph High School, Wallingford High School, and Black River High School. In September 1973, both Mount Holly and Ludlow approved the creation of Union 39 and thereby created a central school for grades seven through twelve. The Union 39 agreement specifically states that the union shall provide transportation and shall not acquire any properties of either of the member districts, but the union would have exclusive use and possession of the Black River High School facility. The agreement further states that each member district is entitled to one school director for every fifty students or fraction thereof, and the assignment of expenses is based on the number of students attending Black River High School from each member district. Mount Holly currently has two of the six representatives on the school board.

During the 1988-89 school year, a study group gathered information relating to the costs of educating students in grades 7 through 12. The group concluded that the best way to effectively reduce the per pupil cost was to have more students, since "the school can take on approximately 100 additional students without significantly increasing overhead." Enrollment is expected to increase which should decrease per pupil cost. However, Mount Holly's share of that cost is increasing since more of the students are coming from Mount Holly.

Additional education is available at the Springfield Vocational Center, Stafford Vocational Center, Community College of Vermont, Castleton State College, and the College of St. Joseph the Provider.

## **7. Education: Policy**

Rising educational and municipal service costs have increased proportionately more for Mount Holly than for Ludlow. Therefore interested citizens in Mount Holly should be encouraged to work cooperatively with the Ludlow community and Union 39 Board of Directors to determine how to best equalize the cost of educating our young people and still maintain excellence in education.

Support for projects such as the proposed School Activity Center addition to the Mount Holly Elementary School should be encouraged.

It is the policy of the town to provide excellent education. This means uncrowded modern facilities, a dedicated and trained faculty, and a prepared student body. Parental participation and support in the educational process is essential. Education has been funded historically by the town with little aid from the State while mandated programs from the State have been required. It is the goal of the town to have a greater proportion of education cost funded by the State. State mandated educational requirements should not place an excessive financial burden on the taxpayers of Mount Holly but should be equally provided to all the students of Vermont.

## **8. Town Administration: Inventory**

Town administration is governed by a three person Selectboard elected for three year, alternating terms. The three elect one a chairperson and each receives a minimal stipend approved by the voters to cover commuting and communication expenses. There is an additional sum budgeted annually to compensate any selectperson for unusual time and expense devoted to town business. Meetings of the board are held on the second Tuesday of the month at the town office and special meetings are scheduled when necessary.

A Town Clerk and Treasurer are elected annually. These are part time salaried positions.

The Tax Collector is elected annually and is compensated by a percentage of the delinquent taxes collected. Three town auditors and listers are elected by the voters for three year, alternating terms and they are paid on an hourly basis.

The Selectboard hire the road crew. One of the crew is in charge of the recycling and waste disposal center.

The Selectboard appoints the five members of the Planning Commission for rotating terms. The Board also appoints the town's Health Officer and Administrator, Rutland Regional Planning Commission Representative, Representative to the Solid Waste District, and Animal Control Officer. An attorney for the Town is retained on an hourly basis.

The Board of Civil Authority, comprised of the selectpersons, justices of the peace, and town clerk, resolve tax appeals made to the listers and deal with voter registration, election procedure, and counting of votes.

## **8. Town Administration: Policy**

With the ever increasing elementary and Union 39 school budgets placing a greater burden on the community, the Mount Holly Selectboard is forced to operate the town as efficiently and cost consciously as possible.

The Selectboard is working toward a capital funding program for all town equipment and other major expenses.

Continued volunteer participation in town government will be encouraged.

Due to increasing use of the Town Office, space is becoming congested and it may become necessary to consider expansion of the Office in the near future.

## **9. Transportation: Inventory**

The earliest transportation provided in Mount Holly was by road, and the main outlines of the road system were established by the 1800s. Vermont Rte. 103 through Mount Holly was a gravel road in 1925, being paved in 1930. Between 1954 and 1966, 103 was relocated and rebuilt in sections. Vt. Rte. 155 was brought into the state system in 1959 and a short section north of Tarbellville Road was rebuilt ten years later. Sections of Vt. Rte. 140 were paved as local roadway between 1948 and 1953, being brought into the state system in 1967.

Railroads came to Vermont and Mount Holly in the late 1840s and early 1850s. The Rutland and Burlington Railroad was originally built through Mount Holly to Bellows Falls. The Mount Holly section was completed in 1849 and is currently operated by Green Mountain Railway.

The Vermont Transit bus line presently provides daily service to Boston, Albany, Montreal and connections can be made to all major cities. Air service is available from Rutland State airport, and the Green Mountain Railroad has tracks running alongside of Route 103 through Mount Holly currently carrying freight. Amtrak passenger service is available at Bellows Falls, White River Junction, and Whitehall, N.Y. Public transportation for people without cars does not exist in Mount Holly.

In a rural community such as Mount Holly by far the most important component of the transportation network is the highway system. Not only does it provide for auto access to all parts of the town, for commuting to jobs, but it also provides access for school buses and emergency vehicles

Use of town roads by bicycles includes organized tour groups, as well as recreational use by local citizens.

There are four classes of town highways:

1. Class 1 town highways are those which form an extension of a state highway route and carry a state highway route number. There are none in Mount Holly.
2. Class 2 town highways are those selected as the most important highways in each town; Mount Holly has 10.6 miles.

Town Highway #	Name	Limits
1	Tarbellville Road Belmont Road Hortonville Road	Tarbellville at Vt. 155 to the Shrewsbury town line.
2	Healdville Road	TH 1 at Belmont to Vt.103 at Healdville.

3. Class 3 town highways are all other traveled town highways with the minimum standards of being negotiable under normal conditions all seasons of the year by a standard manufactured pleasure car. This includes, but is not limited to, sufficient surface and base, adequate drainage, and sufficient width capable to provide winter maintenance. Mount Holly has 46.7 miles.
4. Class 4 town highways are all other town highways including trails and pent roads. The Selectboard determines which town highways are Class 4; Mount Holly has 12.45 miles.

There are 15.4 miles of state highway within Mount Holly.

The estimated 1991 Average Daily Traffic and Design Hour Volume show that none of the volumes appear excessively high and are well below design capacity. It does not appear that they will become a problem in the near future.

Examination by the Vermont Agency of Transportation of accidents on town roads and streets shows very few accidents with no particular concentration of either. There seems to be, however, a concentration of accidents at the caution light on Vermont route 103.

A significant portion of the Okemo Mountain Road, accessible only from Ludlow, is located in Mount Holly and provides access to the summit of Okemo Mountain which is located in Mount Holly.

Bridges: The Vermont Agency of Transportation surveys the 37 bridges on town highways every other year and determines necessary repairs. Bridge #40 on the Scampsville Road has been scheduled for repair by the State in the very near future. In the 1992 survey, 4 bridges, numbers 61, 64, 65, and 66 were designated in need of work. These will be placed in the priority pool to be repaired by the State although the Town will proceed with work deemed absolutely necessary.

Scenic roads: See below under Scenic Resources.

## **9. Transportation: Policy**

To prevent deterioration of town road infrastructure, (which after schools are the Town's largest expense) they must be continually maintained at a reasonable cost through state funding and local tax revenue. Class 3 gravel roads should be posted for maximum speeds of 35 mph for the safety of the public and to preserve the integrity of the roads. The Town should not encourage the upgrading of Class 3 roads to Class 2 designation. Class 4 roads are not currently maintained by the Town.

Upgrading of roads requires approval of the Selectboard and review by the Planning Commission.

Mount Holly has town road specifications which comply with state regulations. Subdivision regulations allow the Planning Commission to address roadway design for subdivisions. The primary consideration in providing access to roads is to insure adequate sight distance, scenic values, and proper construction. Minimum driveway line of sight distance and driveway separation standards should also be adopted.

Adequate public transportation for citizens unable to drive, should be available by bus or van (such as Marble Valley Regional Transit) to neighboring communities on a regularly scheduled basis.

A limited access highway through Mount Holly would be incompatible with the unity of the community. The Mount Holly citizens want the same access to all parts of town that currently exists whether by vehicle or other means.

Maintaining access in accordance with Act 250 Permit number 2S0351-7A-EB for citizens, over the Okemo Mountain Road to the summit of Okemo Mountain, is encouraged. This permit limits closure of the road to the public.

When traffic demand requires widening of town roads, adequate shoulders should be built for increased safety.

The Planning Commission recommends that the State undertake a study and improvement of Vermont route 103 in the vicinity of the caution light.

## **10. Solid Waste: Inventory**

Mount Holly has (by statute) been responsible for disposal of its solid waste, historically, at its "dump. This was initially acceptable, however new state policies made closure necessary. The site of the capped landfill became the Town Transfer Station. Solid waste is sorted, and non-recyclable material disposed of.

In 1979 the Town joined the Rutland County Solid Waste District (RCSWD) to mutually address the solid waste problems of member towns. In 1989, Mount Holly and eight other towns voted to leave the District. This was finalized on December 10, 1990. Solid waste is presently being voluntarily sorted for recycling and then removed by a private hauler.

Mount Holly and eleven other towns are planning, through the Rutland Regional Planning Commission, for disposal of their solid waste. A study is currently under way to determine the best method of waste disposal.

Mount Holly has made a commitment to recycle as a means of reducing its solid waste, and to levy user fees so that the waste generator pays the true disposal cost of the waste. Recycling is encouraged by offering free disposal of all recyclables. Recyclables must be removed and separated from the waste at the Transfer Station. Additional land has been purchased adjacent to the current transfer site and a building constructed for a recycling center.

## **10. Solid Waste: Policy**



The Town of Mount Holly recognizes its duty to its citizens, to responsibly dispose of its solid waste. It will do so with similarly minded cooperating towns. Participation in any solution to the solid waste problem will be at the Town's discretion.

The Town of Mount Holly is on the threshold of a new beginning in solid waste disposal. This will not only entail programs of "dedicated recycling", intermediate processing, and economically and environmentally sound land-filling, but also waste reduction by recycling. The municipal solid waste, construction, demolition waste, and hazardous waste collection be handled as an integrated process. It is the policy of Mount Holly to work with other towns to solve this problem.

### **11. Sewage Disposal: Inventory**

There is no public sewage disposal system in the Town of Mount Holly. All sewage is disposed "onsite". There is currently no control or regulation on the construction and location of sewage disposal facilities unless the development is covered by State permit or the Town of Mount Holly Subdivision

Regulations. Failed systems can only be shut down when a violation of State health laws is reported and the Town's health officer takes enforcement action. The present situation may put the Town of Mount Holly at risk for liability caused by a private landowner's actions.

Because of Mount Holly's hydro-geology with minimal distance to bedrock and impervious soils failed sewage disposal systems pose a substantial threat of groundwater contamination exposing both the town and private landowners to substantial liability.

In results of the 1990 Community Attitude Survey by the Planning Commission, there was nearly a 4 to 1 ratio indicating that a majority of the citizens of Mount Holly wanted a septic system permit required for new dwellings. A similar permit should be required for failed systems.

### **11. Sewage Disposal: Policy**

The Town of Mount Holly, in order to assure the safety and health of its citizens should adopt and enforce the necessary regulation so that every property owner can attempt to access pure water from the ground without fear of contamination by others. The Town of Mount Holly is responsible for the protection of groundwater within its borders and should limit its liability

by adopting and enforcing such regulations which are preventive in their effect rather than reacting to any violation that has already caused damage.

Regulations would be intended to insure that waste discharged to various on-site sewage disposal systems is done in such a way that it:

- (a) does not contaminate or pollute any drinking water supply or ground water supply.
- (b) is not accessible to insects, rodents, or other possible carriers of disease which may come into contact with food or drinking water.
- (c) is not a health hazard by being accessible to persons.
- (d) does not give rise to nuisance due to odor or unsightly appearance.
- (e) will not violate any state laws or regulations governing water pollution or sewage treatment.

## **12. Building Permits: Inventory**

No building permits are required to commence construction in the Town of Mount Holly other than projects requiring Act 250 approval or those which are covered by the Town's subdivision regulations. This impacts the town negatively since most construction and its effects on education, recreation, power transmission lines, water supply, sewage and refuse disposal, storm drainage and other similar facilities and activities cannot be assessed prior to completion and occupancy. Furthermore, on completion of construction, no regulation exists on the part of the Town other than control and correction of violations of State law by the Town Health Officer/Subdivision Administrator.

## **12. Building Permits: Policy**

The Town of Mount Holly, in order to assure orderly growth and prevent negative impacts by any construction, should adopt and enforce the necessary ordinances and by-laws so that any construction will require a Town permit prior to construction.

## **V. PHYSICAL FEATURES**

### **1. Ground Water Resources: Inventory**

- a. Aquifer Recharge Areas  
A significant recharge area occurs on the summit of Hedgehog Hill. A seasonal pond and permanent wetland marks the location covering approximately an acre. This area provides water to numerous springs

on the flanks of the hill in addition to providing the water to spring systems feeding the village of Belmont.

b. Well Heads and Water Systems

A spring fed water system supplies some houses in Belmont with water. All other houses in Town depend either on drilled wells or natural springs.

## **1. Ground Water Resources: Policy**

a. Aquifer Recharge Areas

Good water is available from numerous springs fed by these areas and is of great importance to the people dependent on it. Therefore development or alteration of this area should be prohibited.

b. Well Heads and Water Systems

Contamination or disruption of existing wells or springs must not occur. Depth to either bedrock or impervious soils (hardpan) is minimal in Mount Holly. Therefore subsurface water more readily moves laterally rather than downward. It is the policy that no new construction will disrupt existing water systems be they sources feeding single or multiple houses.

## **2. Surface Water Resources: Inventory**

a. Wetlands

Winslow' Flats Wetlands: This extensive area of wetland, marsh and alder swamp extends along the south side of Vt. Route 103. The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife has identified this area (Inventory number 941B) as a significant natural community. (Natural Areas of Vermont: An Inventory of Natural Areas, 1972-73). Winslow's Flats Wetland has been listed as excellent for food and cover of moderate use by nesting waterfowl and for various fur bearing animals. More recently moose have been seen in the area. Though close to the highway, its size and the undeveloped area surrounding it provide excellent habitat. Historically the fossil remains of a woolly mammoth were found here during construction of the railroad. Undoubtedly more fossils remain below the surface. See attached map.

b. Floodplains: Floodplains are important areas for reducing runoff and downstream damage during periods of flooding. These areas have been identified and designated on the Mount Holly Flood Hazard Area maps.

c. Shorelines: Naturally vegetated shorelines of ponds, streams, and rivers are important for several reasons. They help reduce summer water temperatures, prevent erosion and slow surface runoff, provide bank

stabilization, provide food and shelter for fish and other wildlife, and are aesthetically pleasing.

- d. Lakes: See above under Recreation.

## **2. Surface Water Resources: Policy**

- a. Wetlands: Wetlands should be protected from development by maintaining an undisturbed buffer strip of naturally vegetated land around the wetland edge and by preventing runoff and direct discharges into wetlands. Wetlands classified as Class 2 should be protected by a fifty foot buffer strip as outlined in the Vermont Wetland Rules of 1991. At such time as Class 1 wetlands are designated in town, they will be protected by a buffer strip in accordance with the State regulations.
- b. Floodplains: Disturbances of or construction in flood hazard areas identified by the Town of Mount Holly Flood Hazard Regulations, must conform to those regulations.
- c. Shorelines: Lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams will be protected from encroaching development by maintaining or establishing undisturbed, naturally vegetated buffer strips on their banks. Width of the buffer strip will conform to the Vermont Wetland Rules, as outlined above under "Wetlands".
- d. Lakes: See above under Recreation.

## **3. Wildlife Habitat: Inventory**

### a. Unique Flora and Fauna Habitats

- 1. Black Bear Habitat: The western slope of Okemo Mountain is of great importance to the black bear population in this area. The upper elevations support significant beech stands, which to judge by claw marks and other indicators, are, and have been of major importance to the bear locally. Lower elevations provide aquatic habitats with an abundance of early spring foods. The entire area provides a corridor connecting Green Mountain National Forest with important lands north of Route 103. Between Okemo State Forest and Green Mountain National Forest across Rte. 155 there is a connecting neck of private land critical to maintaining this corridor.
- 2. Deer Yards: Continued development in rural areas puts pressure on wildlife. Deer are adaptable during the summer months since food is abundant, water is easily obtained, and cover is not as critical as during the winter when all three of these factors must be in close proximity to each other. Winter cover is necessary in order to reduce heat loss and

minimize energy expenditure. Good cover reduces the effect of wind chill, minimizes snow depth, along with providing nearby sources of food and water. One has only to look at the effect of deforestation of a century ago to see what happens to wildlife in general and the deer herd in particular, when winter habitat disappears.

The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife has identified eight winter areas in Mount Holly. All of these occur on the west and northwest parts of town with the exception of a single area north of Rte. 103 in the Healdville area. All are illustrated on the attached map.

### **3. Wildlife Habitat: Policy**

#### a. Unique Flora and Fauna Habitat

1. Black Bear Habitat: Black bear habitat identified by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife as critical habitat necessary for bear survival, should be protected and managed as recommended by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife.
2. Deer Yards: Deer wintering areas should be protected from development and other uses that threaten the ability of this habitat to support deer. Commercial, residential, and industrial development should not occur within deer wintering areas. Development may be permitted adjacent to deer wintering areas if consultation with the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife determines that the integrity of the wintering area has been preserved.

### **4. Forest Lands: Inventory**

Approximately 55% of the town is currently covered by hardwood forests primarily sugar maple, yellow birch, and beech while 31% is in soft wood cover mainly red spruce and balsam fir. This translates into approximately 17,634 acres of hardwoods and 9,604 acres of softwood. Out of these totals, approximately 2,769 acres, or 9.1% of Mount Holly, is in Okemo State Forest and approximately 2,999 acres, or 9.5% of Mount Holly, is in Green Mountain National Forest. In addition to these lands there is 92.3 acres of land bordering Star Lake which is owned and managed by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife.

### **4. Forest Lands: Policy**

Presently private and public forest lands in town produce income through production of maple syrup, hardwood and softwood logs, pulp wood, fire

wood, and Christmas trees. Indirect income comes from the wildlife and recreational uses as well.

It is the policy of the town to encourage uses of the forests as described above and to discourage reducing land parcels to a size that makes them no longer economically or aesthetically useful for these purposes.

### **5. Open Lands: Inventory**

Open lands are defined as all lands which are not forested and thus includes wet lands (see Surface Water Resources above: V.2a-c), agricultural lands, and other non-forested lands. Current agricultural use includes four producing dairy farms, one hog farm, and assorted livestock producers of beef cattle, sheep, and horses. Fields for hay are still maintained widely around town, and some corn is still grown for livestock.

### **5. Open Lands: Policy**

It is the policy of the town to encourage maximum use of agricultural lands and keep other open lands in that condition where ever possible. In this regard, the Current Use Value taxation program is to be encouraged.

### **6. Commercial and Industrial Lands: Inventory**

A. Current commercial areas in town include:

- a. the area from Harry's Cafe to Lakeside Power Center on both sides of Route 103;
- b. the Village of Belmont;
- c. the area along Route 155 near East Wallingford;
- d. part of the east side of Okemo Mountain in Mount Holly currently leased to the Okemo Ski Area;
- e. Bill Johnson's auto body repair;
- f. various Bed and Breakfast facilities around town.
- g. various self employed construction contractors.

B. Current commercial-industrial areas in town include:

- a. the area on Route 103 around Deco Manufacturing;
- b. the area around the Crowley Cheese Factory.
- c. the south end of Stewart Road North associated with Wright Construction.

## **6. Commercial and Industrial Lands: Policy**

NOTE: Nothing within the sections on commercial and industrial areas shall be construed to restrict agricultural or forestry related activities. It is the intention of this policy to promote commercial and industrial development in areas of the town that meet basic policy criteria of the Town Plan and any relevant State of Vermont policies. Economic development is to be encouraged whenever possible.

### A. Commercial areas should include:

- a. the Village of Belmont from Tiffany Road, to the intersection of Lake Street and Healdville Road, to the cemetery on Maple Hill Road and west on the Tarbellville Road to the Museum. The following types of activities will be permitted; general store, bed and breakfast, office space, and cottage industries.
- b. the east side of Okemo Mountain associated with the Okemo Ski Area. Permitted activities include those related to skiing and other forestry type uses.
- c. Route 155 in East Wallingford Village from the Mount Holly-Wallingford town line on route 155 to, and including, the Blue Spruce Inn.
- d. the triangle of land east of East Wallingford village bounded by the Mount Holly-Wallingford town line on the west, Route 103 on the north and Route 140 on the south; Permitted activities for both areas around East Wallingford [sections V-6A(c) and (d)] include the following types: commercial garage, saw mill and wood working shop, retail shops, maple sugar production, bed and breakfast, motel and office space.
- e. approximately one quarter mile in each direction from the intersection of Turnpike Road and Hortonville Road. Permitted uses include power substation, bed and breakfast, country inn, small retail businesses, self employed construction contractors.

### B. Commercial-Industrial areas should include:

- a. the south side of Route 103 from Healdville Road to and including the Lakeside Power Center.
- b. the north side of Route 103 from Deco Manufacturing to the area presently or formerly operated as Becketts Auto Repair. Permitted uses in sections V-6B (a) and (b) include lodging, restaurants, retail shops, repair services, (including automotive and small engine) office space, and light industry.
- c. four corners at Route 103, Belmont Road, and Hortonville Road from School Street, to a point approximately one quarter mile north of the Rt. 103 intersection and to a point approximately one half mile east of the Belmont-Hortonville Road intersection on both sides of Route 103;

Permitted uses such as retail shops, light industry, bed and breakfast, motels, office space, municipal services, are included.

- d. approximately one quarter mile north on the Sawyer Hill Road.
- e. the area around and associated with the Crowley Cheese Factory; Permitted uses include agriculturally related industry, office and retail space.

## **7. Residential Property: Inventory and Policy**

Mount Holly sits astride the Green Mountain ridge, land formally glaciated and presently covered primarily with glacial till soils which are singularly unsuitable for usual septic system construction. Many slopes are steep, while soils are shallow to bedrock or impermeable soil layers. (See attached map) Consequently special measures need to be adopted to handle sewage without contaminating ground water or otherwise creating health hazards.

The Town has Subdivision Regulations which require a permit for any division of land into 4 or more parcels.

Any Act 250 application must be reviewed by the Select Board and the Town Planning Commission.

In order to keep land in as large blocks as possible to retain Mount Holly's rural character and "working landscape" appearance, grouped developments shall be encouraged. When land subdivisions occur, the subdivider should attempt to place houses in a small area grouped together while leaving the majority of the parcel undeveloped. This allows for retaining the rural appearance of the town and continues to foster the agricultural and forestry uses of the land. Development of this nature would provide the land owner with the same number of housing units while leaving most of the land open for traditional uses.

There are currently 801 housing units in Mount Holly with the potential for over 400 new homesites which would not require Town subdivision review. It is estimated that including sites created through the subdivision process, a total of about 1500 new homesites could be constructed in Mount Holly. In view of this information, it appears that the town is at a crucial point in its growth and therefore it is recommended by both the Planning Commission and the Town Planning Committee, that the town adopt zoning regulations, and building permit requirements.

As stated by the Department of Housing and Community Affairs, housing is a basic right, not just a commodity for speculation. Economic development and housing are linked together. It is difficult to attract business to an area if



there is not adequate housing for employees. The need for affordable housing is determined if an individual or household pays more than 30% of its income in rent and utilities, or if a homeowner pays more than 30% of income in mortgage, taxes, and insurance.

Concern for young people establishing a home, for those with lowest income and for the elderly who can no longer maintain a home are issues to be addressed. There is assistance available from Vermont's Department of Housing and Community Affairs.

## **8. Energy: Inventory**

Mount Holly is crossed by two high voltage transmission lines, one of 115kv and one of 345kv. The 115kv line is serviced by a substation of 2.5 megawatts.

Home heating in town is probably the single largest consumer of energy. Homes are heated by electricity, oil, coal, propane gas, and wood. A few homes make use of solar and wind energy to supplement other energy forms.

## **8. Energy: Policy**

Energy efficient construction will be encouraged in the future. The following item of the 1992 Mount Holly Town Meeting was duly warned and adopted.

*"To see if the Town of Mount Holly will advise their state legislators to send the following message to Vermont Senators, Congressman, and to the President of the United States, 'that we urge the creation of a national energy policy that would shift our dependence on fossil and nuclear fuels to energy efficiency conservation and renewable energy sources.'"*

## **9. Scenic Resources: Inventory**

- a. Scenic Roads: Perhaps nothing typifies New England and Vermont more than tree lined gravel roads backed by stonewalls. Where the road provides vistas of adjacent farm land and buildings and distant mountains with their patchwork of agricultural and forest land, the views take on special significance. Maple Hill Road (TH 22) is one such road.
- b. Scenic Ridge Lines: Views of hills and mountains either forested or in agricultural use are an important aesthetic resource for Mount Holly. A skyline of buildings is out of character with the Vermont most people

know. Early Vermonters built below ridge lines probably in part to avoid the buffeting of winter winds, but that created the vistas we value today. The most obvious exception of a ridge line building in town today is the fire tower on Okemo Mountain.

## **9. Scenic Resources: Policy**

- a. Scenic Roads: Maple Hill Road (TH 22) from Belmont to Rt. 155 is designated a Scenic Road under town regulations and designation under the provisions of Vermont's Scenic Road regulations should be pursued. The present gravelled section of road should be maintained with maple trees along the roadside which, along with the stone walls, should be preserved and/or replaced as necessary. Removal of dead trees and/or replacement work of trees shall be done by the Town.

The town may want to consider adding sections of the following roads to the list as well as others:

Old Turnpike Road  
Healdville Road  
Packer Cemetery Road  
Shunpike Road  
Cole Road  
Hedgehog Hill North  
Okemo Mountain Road

- b. Scenic Ridge Lines: New construction in town should occur below tree lines on ridges. Houses or other buildings should be constructed in such a location that they do not project above the tree line on which they are located. This is important for aesthetic considerations as well as for energy conservation measures. The fire tower on Okemo is an exception. The tower has historical significance and the State Department of Forest and Parks is urged to maintain and repair the tower as necessary.

## **10. Geologic and Mineral Resources: Inventory**

The primary known mineral resources in town are sands, gravels, and some clays left by the retreat of the glaciers. The sands and gravels are especially obvious along parts of Rte. 103, adjacent to Rte. 155, and in a few other isolated locations where they have generally been removed for construction purposes in the past. A large rock quarry exists on the north slope of Okemo mountain just south of Rte. 103 at the Mount Holly-Ludlow town line. Material was removed from this site for construction of the relocated Rt 103 in the 1960s. Reportedly uranium exists on Okemo Mountain, and there are some small

outcrops of asbestos also occurring in town. Quantities of clay and asbestos are probably not present in quantities economically worth removal.

### **10. Geologic and Mineral Resources: Policy**

Sands and gravels will continue to be used as they have in the past, primarily for road projects and construction in town. Radioactive waste from uranium mining would present a significant health hazard to the people of Mount Holly along with major destruction of Okemo Mountain. No mining of uranium is to occur in Mount Holly.

## **VI. Conclusion**

This revised Town Plan gives a sense of the history of Mount Holly and indicates where we are today. Information has been gathered from many sources including U.S. Census figures 1990, various agencies of the State of Vermont, The Rutland Regional Planning Commission, Mount Holly's Financial Capacity to Accommodate Growth prepared by Ad Hoc Advocates, February and April 1991, Carroll Tarbell's History of Mount Holly, Vermont 1987, the "Community Attitude Survey" completed in 1990, and the readopted Town Plan of August 1991. After over two years of meetings and input from many individuals, we have given suggestions and recommended courses of action to guide future growth and development.

In a rural town such as Mount Holly, as population increases and development occurs, financial resources remain limited. It is important to have active, volunteer participation in every aspect of the town's functions and activities. These efforts facilitate the management of Town and school affairs, provide a unifying force in the community and ensure that Mount Holly continues to be a town of which everyone can be proud.

### ***Mount Holly Planning Commission Town Plan Committee***

Town Plan  
12.27.91  
8.4.92  
8.19.92  
10.25.92  
10.31.92  
11.22.92  
12.6.92  
3.15.93  
3.30.93  
5.4.93