

Mount Holly Town Plan
Adopted August 26, 2004

Mount Holly Town Plan

Mount Holly Planning Commission
Mount Holly, VT

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I. COMMUNITY PROFILE

1. Town Goal

The goal of the Town of Mount Holly is to preserve its rural lifestyle and appearance while providing community services, recreational and cultural opportunities, quality education, and protection of our environment, as well as economic growth opportunities. Specific policies relating to the prior list are outlined in this Plan. Results of efforts to achieve these goals will be measured by future residents' quality of life. This Plan has been prepared consistent with Title 24 Vermont Statutes Chapter 117 section 4302.

2. Adjacent Municipalities

The Town of Mount Holly shares common boundaries with the following towns: Wallingford, Mount Tabor, Weston, Ludlow, Plymouth, and Shrewsbury.

Most of the common boundary with Wallingford and the entire common boundary with Mount Tabor occur within Green Mountain National Forest. The Town expects that for the foreseeable future, all such lands will continue to be managed by the United States Forest Service such that forest in all uses will be compatible among these towns. The remaining boundary with Wallingford and the entire border with Shrewsbury and Plymouth involve lands rural in nature with low-density housing and related agriculture or forestry uses. Such uses do not conflict with each other or with the Green Mountain National Forest.

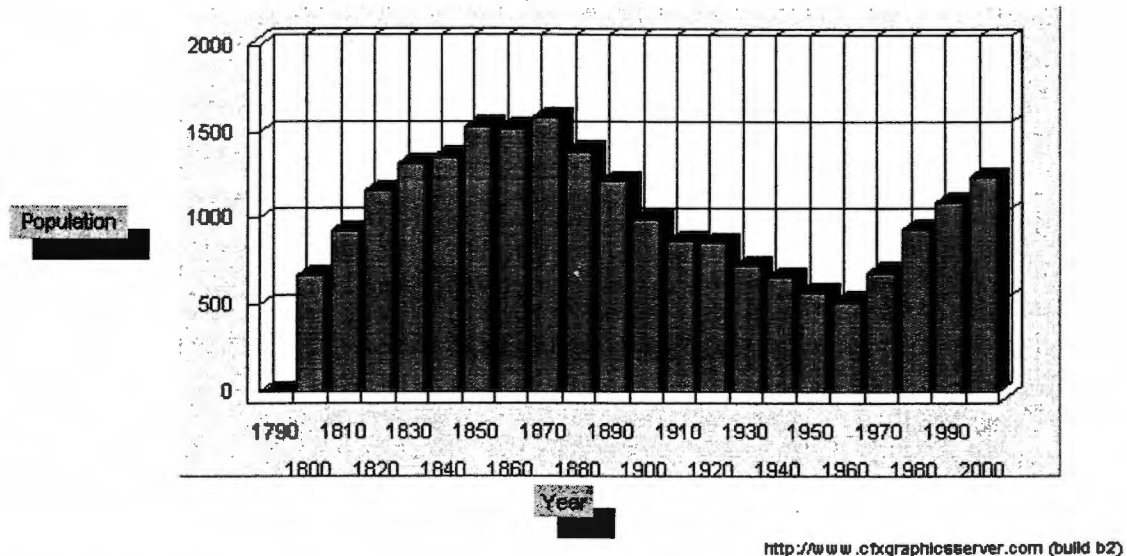
The common boundary between Mount Holly and Ludlow occurs on the east slope of Okemo Mountain and primarily within Okemo State Forest. The activity along this border is skiing. This is compatible with the Ludlow Town Plan and from the ridge eastward, with the Mount Holly Town Plan.

The area adjacent to the Mount Holly-Weston boundary is an area of low housing density. Part of the boundary is within Green Mountain National Forest and will continue under United States Forest Service management along both sides. Some of this area is within the Okemo State Forest and will continue under Vermont Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation management. The remaining land in this area, due to its remote location, will likely remain in low density uses and should remain compatible. The Rutland Regional Plan is designed to complement the Town's plans and this Plan is designed with the Rutland Regional Plan in mind.

3. Population and Employment

Mount Holly's population was, at its maximum, 1,582, in the 1870s. Dairying, forestry, and forest products manufacturing supported most of the population on widely dispersed farmsteads and within village clusters. With the decline of upland farming and the closing of the factories, 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 Rutland and Ludlow area for job opportunities, for retirement, and for vacation homes. The United States census shows that the Mount Holly population was 938, in 1980; 1,093 in 1990; and 1,241 in 2000.



The 2000 census showed an average wage in Mount Holly of \$25,386. When looking at household income, which includes single person and non-related member households earning an income, the median income is \$44,821. It is interesting to note that in 2000, 26.3% of Mount Holly's population was under age 18, while 11.8% was over age 65. Several challenges face the community. Some of these challenges include the need for education, need for job opportunities, housing and the welfare of our senior citizens.

II. HISTORY

In 1759 General Amherst ordered a road built from Fort Number 4 in Charlestown, 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 stagecoach 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 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 the former Mount Holly General Store and Mount Holly Post Office. 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

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within three miles of one another, 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 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 three natural ponds, Patch Pond, which is now called Lake Ninevah, was never used as a water power source, but Jackson's Pond, which has since been renamed Star Lake, was. Abraham Jackson built the Town's first sawmill at the outlet of his pond in the center of what was then called Mechanicsville. At one time, eight mill ponds existed within the Town. By 1869, Mount Holly had fourteen sawmills in Town.

Rich deposits of brick clay were another of Mount Holly's assets. A brick kiln was constructed near what was to become 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 construction crews of the Rutland and Burlington Railroad. Each wanted to be first to run a train through from Boston to Burlington. Working from both ends, the 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 Department of Geology at the University of Vermont.

Once the railroad was completed through Mount Holly local land owners supplied firewood for the engines until they were converted to coal in the late 1800s. Because of the demand for firewood and to supply the forest products manufacturers much of the uplands of the town were open at the turn of the century.

In 1882, the Crowley Cheese Factory was built. It is the last survivor of several cheese factories in town that processed milk for shipment to down country markets. 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 after serving for many years as Town Hall is today's Town library and community center.

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. The high elevation, cool summer evenings, nearby lakes, country cooking, attractive accommodations, rural lifestyle, and

convenient railroad access gave Mount Holly a new life as a summer season retreat.

In 1911, citizens petitioned to have the post office name changed from Mechanicsville to Belmont.

III. 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; 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 (46 square miles). About one-fifth of the Town consists of publicly owned land within Okemo State Forest on the Town's eastern border, Green Mountain National Forest on the western border, and about 92 acres on the northeast side of Star Lake also owned by the State of Vermont. A 55 acre tract, Bowen Forest, was granted to Yale University in remembrance of an aviator killed in World War I. Most recently, in cooperation with the Vermont Land Trust, local fund raising, Raymond and Clarise Dana, and the Seward family of East Wallingford, 77 acres of land was conserved for agricultural uses in 2003.

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, snow shoeing, 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.

The character of Star Lake is changing due to the introduction of Eurasian Milfoil in 1997. This invasive weed has become the dominant environmental problem in the lake due to its tendency to choke out other growth with its extremely dense formation. The natural aging process of the lake will be expedited and future recreational use is in danger. During the summer of 1998, many Town volunteers, receiving the support of a state grant, began a campaign that involved hired divers and volunteers hand pulling the milfoil. A successful fund raising effort was organized in 2002 to support retaining technical assistance and to purchase Sonar, a chemical that will be used upon State of Vermont approval to eliminate Star Lake's Milfoil. The use of Sonar at a strength of 8 parts per million was approved by the State April 2004 for application during 2004.

In addition, over the years the lake has received runoff from surrounding agricultural fields that when actively farmed, were heavily fertilized. Consequently, algae growth has often become a significant problem in late summer.

In August of 1997, the Select Board was approached by the Belmont Playground Society (society members are Allen Devereaux, Don Tarbell, and Thomas Perkins), who wished to donate the ownership of the Star Lake beach and dam property to the Town of Mount Holly. Investigation into this property found an Army Corps of Engineers report noting the dam flume was inadequate. Repair and or rebuilding of the dam and the outlet culvert could lead the Town into large costs. In spite of concerns regarding the condition of the dam and the need to maintain the community beach, the Select Board accepted the property of the Belmont Playground Society in 2001.

The Lake originally supported a standard warm water fishery including sunfish, perch, bullhead, and pickerel. Today these have been replaced by bass, channel catfish, perch, 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 as well as a beaver lodge. Ospreys, Great Blue Heron, and loons are still seen occasionally on the lake, along with migrating waterfowl both spring and fall. A seasonal population of Canada Geese enjoys the lake and has become a nuisance especially at the Belmont beach. 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 that public access is limited to a small boat access owned by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife. There is no public 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. Nesting 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 and not accessible to the public.

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 habitat and for recreational use including hunting, fishing, camping, snowmobiling, and cross country skiing. This area was the site of the reintroduction of the pine marten into Vermont by the Department of Fish and Wildlife in 1989.

e. Okemo State Forest. Much of the western slope of Okemo 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 by the State as such. Fishing, hunting, hiking, snowmobiling and cross-country skiing are the principal recreational activities in this area.

A portion of Okemo Mountain's eastern side Ski Area is located within the Town of Mount Holly and is part of the long-term leasehold of Okemo Mountain, Inc. A hiking trail has been constructed from the site of the former Healdville railroad station to the mountain summit. As part of Okemo Mountain Inc.'s Jackson Gore development, commenced in 2002, adjacent bear habitat and corridor lands were dedicated for preservation.

f. Mount Holly School Facilities: Ballfields 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 route through Mount Holly travels 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. See map.

h. Private Land. Much of the remaining private land in Town is still open for recreational activities such as hiking, hunting, fishing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, 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. In recent years as land ownership has changed, there has been an increase in posting that restricts access for specific recreational use such as hunting and fishing.

i. VAST Snowmobile Trail: The Vermont Association of Snowmobile Trails main north-to-south corridor (known as "Route 7") passes directly through Mount Holly, crossing Route 155, the Healdville Road, and Route 103 on its way north. This trail, and a number of related and connecting trails, are maintained by VAST's local chapter, the Mount Holly Sno-Drifters.

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. Star Lake: The Town should implement shore land zoning in an effort to control the introduction of phosphorus and sediments from cultural sources such as septic systems, agriculture, and soil erosion and to retain the undeveloped appearance of much of the lake. Any opportunity that would lead to the removal of bottom sediments, with attendant nutrient loads, should be explored in order to retard the eutrophication process. The Town should continue to support programs and apply for grants offered by the state aimed at managing nuisance weed growth.

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 public water resource in the Town and as such is available for use by townspeople; however, Tiny Pond is surrounded by private property and does not have any public access. Future consideration should be given to securing public access to the pond and water frontage for public recreation.

d. Green Mountain National Forest: The forest should retain its wild and primitive nature with special emphasis on wildlife habitat maintenance and dispersed hunting, fishing, hiking and other forms of 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: Types of dispersed recreational activities (hunting, fishing, hiking, and other forms of recreation) will be encouraged by doing whatever possible to maintain the forest areas, important water courses, and open spaces. In particular, the Town believes that public lands in Town should be managed to provide those activities that may not be possible on private lands in the future. The Planning Commission recommends that additional public lands not be converted to use by private interests. Existing public lands should be managed to maintain and promote the various wildlife needs and recreational activities outlined previously.

f. Mount Holly School Facilities: Developed recreational ballfields should be

maintained and improved as funds and resources become available. Every attempt should be made to increase facilities when possible. The Mount Holly School Board opened a new multipurpose addition to the elementary school in 2001. The facility supports gymnasium, theater, exhibit, and multi-purpose meeting activities. This facility should be made available for public use as much as possible.

g. Catamount Trail System: The Town supports the continued maintenance of the Catamount Trail System by the nonprofit Catamount Trail Association.

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 as well as its maintenance as a recreational resource. As of 2004 there are 6,268 acres within the program.

i. VAST Snowmobile Trail: The Town supports the continued maintenance of the VAST Snowmobile Trail by the Mount Holly Sno-Drifters and encourages them to work with private landowners to ensure that trail placement does not cause traffic, noise, or other related problems, especially in more densely populated locations such as Belmont Village.

2. Fire: Inventory

The Mount Holly Volunteer Fire Department is an organization of 20 active members who provide fire protection to the Town along with assistance in other emergencies. The main fire station is on School Street, and a substation is located in Belmont Village. The Fire Department has a 2004 operating budget of \$57,950. Additional moneys are generated through fundraising projects such as snowmobile races, raffles, coin drops, and an auction. The Department provides public fire prevention programs to local schools, and other organizations as requested. In conjunction with the Rescue Squad, the Department responds to auto accidents and other emergencies. The Department currently has four fire trucks, two pumpers, one pumper-tanker, and one tanker. The "Jaws of Life" was acquired in 1996.

Fire dispatching is provided by the Vermont State Police. The current number is 911 or 259-2700.

2. Fire: Policy

The primary responsibility for fire fighting in Mount Holly should remain with the Mount Holly Volunteer Fire Department, and the Town is committed to providing adequate resources for training and equipment for this service. In a rural situation, fire protection can be a significant problem. There are, however, certain things that can be done to reduce the danger and increase that protection. Two dry hydrants have been installed at Star Lake to access water for fire fighting in the village. 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 lower 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 \$2,400. The Rutland County Sheriffs Department is available as needed and has been requested by the Select Board 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 current constable's phone number is listed in the Town report, and the Vermont State Police number is 773-9101 or 911.

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. Presently, Town constables are required to complete 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 en route to Rutland. The Rescue Squad has a volunteer staff, eight of whom are certified Emergency Medical Technicians. Presently, the Rescue Squad 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 2004 Rescue Squad budget is \$29,750, of which \$8,000 is Town funded. The Rescue Squad maintains two ambulances housed at the School Street Rescue Squad building. The Vermont State Police provides dispatching for these calls. The current Rescue Squad phone number is 775-3133 or 911.

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. Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Plan

A draft Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan was prepared for the Town of Mount Holly in early 2004 and is subject to review by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and adoption by the Mount Holly Select Board. Town officials, including members of the Planning Commission and the Select Board, as well as Fire Department members, road maintenance staff, and the Emergency Management Coordinator, worked with staff from

the Rutland Regional Planning Commission to complete a Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan for Mount Holly. This process included analyzing the Town's disaster history, gathering input about known hazards, and developing mitigation strategies that will avert or lessen the damage that can be caused by disasters such as flood events, wind storms, power outages, and hazardous materials. This document, once reviewed and adopted, will satisfy a FEMA mandate for each town in the nation to produce such a plan by November 2004 in order to continue eligibility for disaster relief funds in the future.

5. Pre-Disaster Mitigation: Policy

The Town is committed to implementing the procedures defined in the PDM Plan and supporting the participation of the Town's public safety organizations and public works personnel. As directed by FEMA and as a participant in the Rutland Regional Planning Commission, Mount Holly will maintain the PDM and the Town's capacity to meet PDM requirements.

6. 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. The Rutland Area Visiting Nurse Association and Hospice (RAVNAH) provides "Home Care" services to Mount Holly residents 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. A medical clinic staffed and operated by the Springfield Hospital and a private practice medical office are available in Ludlow. The Ludlow Rescue Squad offers mutual aid assistance to Mount Holly should an event require the service.

6. Health Care Services: Policy

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

7. Cultural Facilities: Inventory

a. The Mount Holly Community 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). In 2001, the Library received the first of two \$5,000 grants from the Vermont Library Association to support a paid part-time librarian. In 2003, the Town voted to continue the annual stipend to support this position. With the addition of a part-time paid staff member, the Library is now open part-time three days a week during the winter months, and five days a week in summer. As a result, the number of visitors has more than doubled.

The Library has a collection of over 10,000 volumes, in addition to an audiocassette CD, DVD, and video library. It also sponsors numerous musical and educational events as well as a winter reading group.

b. Mount Holly Community Historical Museum: A museum was the idea of a descendant 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 Mount Holly Community Historical Museum officially opened in September 1969 with 150 members.

In 1998, the museum building was renovated structurally and made handicapped accessible with the addition of a ramp leading directly to the entrance from a newly constructed parking area. As the existing building fills and improved archiving space is needed, the museum board is actively considering options for improving, expanding, or relocating the museum.

During July and August the Museum is open Saturday afternoons for browsing and Sunday afternoons when programs are often scheduled. It is also open by appointment. There is a special day for elementary school children to visit in the fall. Collections include photographs, quilts, clothing, Chase Toy Factory items, a record of all gravestones in Mount Holly cemeteries, genealogies, Town Reports, scrapbooks and many other items illustrative of the area's history.

7. Cultural Facilities: Policy

a. The Mount Holly Town Library will continue to be supported and managed primarily by volunteers, but Town support is essential to its long-term survival. Donations of printed material and funds will improve the quality and quantity of inventory, and continued efforts to secure grant monies will help broaden the Library's programs.

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.

Honorariums are offered to those who provide the wide range of programs and there are ongoing necessary building repairs. The Mount Holly Community Historical Museum will continue to be an important contribution to the Town's cultural life.

8. Education: Inventory

In 1818, 392 students attended nine separate schools in Mount Holly. By 1859, there were 14 separate school districts. 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. Three more classrooms and a library were added in 1985. The School Activity Center, a gymnasium multipurpose addition, was completed in 2001. Enrollment peaked in the early 1900s at 140 students then declined to 82 students in 2003. Year 2003-04 enrollment rose to 92 pupils K to grade 6.

The community is in the process of reducing the last two bond issues. The Mount Holly School is governed by an elected three member board with a 2004 annual budget of \$1,128,800.

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 three of seven representatives on the school board.

Additional regional education opportunities for Town residents are available at the Springfield Vocational Center, Stafford Vocational Center, Community College of Vermont, Castleton State College, and the College of St. Joseph.

8. 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.

It is the goal of the Town to provide an opportunity to all residents for an excellent education including appropriate pre-school opportunities. 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. More and more mandated programs have been required by the State with no commensurate increase in State aid. 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.

9. Child Care: Inventory

Vermont law encourages child care as an important community service. Child care facilities, services, and personnel may be licensed or registered. Vermont communities are encouraged to assist in the location and operation of child care services. The 2000 Census reported there were 65 (5.2%) children under the age of five in the Town. There is one registered child care service in Mount Holly located at 190 Syria Road. Residents use child care services near their employment in other communities.

9. Child Care: Policy

The Town supports the expansion of licensed child care facilities and services for the residents of Mount Holly and works with neighboring communities (such as Ludlow) to support child care services for Town residents.

10. Town Administration: Inventory

The Town is governed by a three-person Select Board elected for three-year, alternating terms. The three members elect a chairperson, and each receives a modest stipend approved by the voters to cover commuting and communication expenses. An additional sum has been budgeted in recent years to compensate Select Board members 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 clerk and treasurer are elected annually by residents at Town Meeting. These are part-time salaried positions.

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

The Select Board hires the road crew. One of the crew is appointed to perform "foreman" responsibilities on an annual basis.

The Select Board appoints the five members of the Planning Commission for rotating terms. The Board appoints a representative to the Rutland Regional Planning Commission, the Rutland Regional Transportation Council, and an Animal Control Officer. An attorney for the Town is retained on an hourly basis. The Board recommends the Town's Health Officer to the State Board of Health for appointment.

The Board of Civil Authority, composed of the Select Board members, Justices of the Peace, and Town Clerk, receives tax appeals made to the listers and deals with voter registration, election procedure, and counting of votes.

10. Town Administration: Policy

The Mount Holly Select Board operates the Town as efficiently and cost consciously as possible in light of budgetary restraints.

The Select Board has established a capital funding program for all replacement of Town equipment and other major expenses.

Continued volunteer participation in Town government will be encouraged.

The Town is to promote and support a continued planning process. This planning process is to include continued development and maintenance of this plan, to work with adjoining municipalities and their planning process, and to work with the Regional Planning Commission and their planning process.

In response to a 2002 Town Meeting straw vote that supported a "discussion of zoning," the Planning Commission established a Commission-led and open-to-the-public Working Group. Since mid-2002, the Working Group has held monthly meetings. With Select Board and Planning Commission support, a successful application was made for a Year 2003-2004 Municipal Planning Grant. The grant funds were used to support a town-wide survey of poll list and grand list individuals, retain a planning consultant, and support a Community Planning Fair with three follow-on events.

A surprisingly strong 35 percent response was received from the Community Opinion Survey. This served as the basis for organizing four public participation events. More than 150 individuals participated in the events with total participation exceeding 250. The outcome of the process supported by the 2003-2004 Municipal Planning Grant has been a set of definite issues and concerns regarding the land use, development, and socio-economic future of Mount Holly. To address the results, a Year 2004-2005 Municipal Planning Grant was received to support Phase II with the goal of offering land use control options that could be adopted to help the Town manage change.

The Phase II program, directed by the Working Group and assisted by the Rutland

Regional Planning Commission, is reviewing opinion survey and Planning Fair results, the Town's land use, physical, environmental, and capacity characteristics. Within the constraints of State of Vermont enabling law, land use management and development control options will be offered by the RRPC. The outcome of the Phase II program is expected to be a land use control proposal that will be offered for Town approval.

The Phase III program outlined in the Phase I Municipal Planning Grant commits the Planning Commission to draft a complete update of the Town Plan. This update will reflect the results of the public participation effort supported by Municipal Planning Grants, the interactive land use control drafting process, the anticipated effect of changes to existing land use controls (Subdivision Ordinance), and Town action regarding new land use control ordinances.

The Planning Commission is committed to participating with adjacent towns, the regional planning commissions, and transportation councils as well as state and federal agencies regarding plans, programs, and projects that may impact Mount Holly. Planning Commission members are encouraged to participate in events that will expand their respective capacity to perform effectively. The 2004 Town budget expanded Planning Commission funding and for the first time includes support for professional development.

11. Transportation: Inventory

The main outlines of the present Town road system were established by the 1800s. Vermont Route 103 through Mount Holly was a gravel road in 1925, being paved in 1930. Between 1954 and 1966, Route 103 was relocated and rebuilt in sections. Vermont Route 155 was brought into the state system in 1959, and a short section north of Tarbellville Road was rebuilt ten years later. Sections of Vermont Route 140 were paved as local roadway between 1948 and 1953, and were 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. Except for occasional excursion trains, passenger service was ended by the Rutland Railroad in the early 1950s.

The Vermont Transit Company bus line presently provides daily service to Boston, Albany, and Montreal. It stops in Ludlow 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 only. Amtrak passenger service is available at Bellows Falls, White River Junction, Rutland and Whitehall, N.Y. Public transportation for people without cars does not exist in Mount Holly.

In a rural community such as Mount Holly, the most important component of the transportation network by far is the highway system. Not only does it provide for auto access to all parts of the Town and 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 that 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 of Class 2 town highways:

Town Highway Name	Limits
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Tarbellville Road	Tarbellville Rd. at VT 155 to the Belmont Road
Shrewsbury town line	
Hortonville Road	
Healdville Road	TH1 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 46.84 miles of Class 3 town highways.

4. Class 4 town highways are all other town highways including trails and pent roads. The Select Board determines which town highways are Class 4; Mount Holly has 12.47 miles of these highways.

Presently, there are 15.4 miles of state highway within Mount Holly

The estimated 1991 Average Daily Traffic and Design Hour Volume prepared by the Vermont Agency of Transportation show that traffic on existing Town highways does not exceed suggested levels of service and that traffic levels are well below design capacity. It does not appear that any Town Road will experience over loading problems in the near future.

Estimations by the Vermont Agency of Transportation of accidents on Town highways show few accidents with no particular concentration in any area. There seems to be, however, a concentration of accidents at the caution light on Vermont Route 103. It should be noted that 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 that is located in Mount Holly.

Bridges: Every other year, the Vermont Agency of Transportation surveys the nine bridges on Town highways that exceed spans of twenty feet and determines necessary repairs. In the 2002 State survey, three bridges, numbers 61, 64, 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.

11. Transportation: Policy

To prevent deterioration of Town road infrastructure, roads must be continually maintained using available state funding and local tax revenue. (After the cost of schools, the Town's largest expense is for road maintenance.)

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 but are considered to be an asset as they do provide access to remote areas for the public while not requiring any maintenance expense by the Town.

Mount Holly has adopted town road specifications that comply with state regulations. Existing Town Subdivision Regulations allow the Planning Commission to address proper roadway design for subdivisions. The primary consideration in providing access to roads is to insure adequate sight distance, scenic values, proper construction, and emergency vehicle access.

It is a proper goal of the Town to work toward establishing adequate public transportation options for citizens unable to drive. The service could be on a regularly scheduled or demand responsive basis and supported by private vehicle, bus or van (such as Marble Valley Regional Transit) or train. The goal would be to provide access to shopping, services, and events available in neighboring communities.

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 2SO351-7A-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.

Belmont was designated a Village Center District (VCD) under the State's Downtown Centers Program early 2003. The VCD program offers priority consideration for special project funding that enhances the VCD. Such projects may include road improvement, street edge, stonewall, street tree restoration, and related improvements that maintain the character of a village.

The Planning Commission recommends that the State undertake a study and, if borne out by a study, improvement of Vermont Route 103 in the vicinity of the caution light.

12. Solid Waste: Inventory

Mount Holly is (by statute) responsible for disposal of its solid waste. Historically, this occurred at the Town "dump." While initially acceptable, state law made closure of the dump necessary. The site of the Town's capped landfill was converted to the Town Transfer Station. Solid waste is brought to the Town Transfer Station by residents. The wastes are required to be sorted into recyclable and non-recyclable materials. The non-recyclable materials are compacted and removed from the Transfer Station.

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 action was finalized on December 10, 1990. Mount Holly withdrew from the eight town group in 2001.

As of 2004, the current status is that the Town is waiting final approval of a Solid Waste Implementation Plan that was submitted for State action November 2003. Solid waste is presently being sorted for recycling and then removed by a private hauler.

Mount Holly has made and continues to support 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 now mandatory and offers free disposal of all recyclables. Recycling facilities include a 2,800 s/f metal structure that is dedicated to recycling. The recycling building was recently improved (summer 2003) with the addition of extra support beams for the roof and side walls. Additional recycling facilities include a baler, forklift, three 40 cubic yard containers, for colored glass, clear glass, tin/aluminum, and an enclosed, wheeled wooden trailer for newspaper collection. .

12. Solid Waste: Policy

The Town of Mount Holly recognizes its duty to its citizens, to responsibly dispose of its solid waste. Participation in any potential solution of the solid waste disposal problem will be at the Town's discretion subject to State approval.

The Town of Mount Holly has accepted a role for solid waste disposal. This not only entails 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 will be handled as an integrated process. Mount Holly works with Londonderry regarding the disposition of household and CEG hazardous wastes.

13. Sewage Disposal: Inventory

There is no public sewage disposal system in the Town of Mount Holly. All sewage is disposed "on site." There is currently no control or regulation on the construction or 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.

Because of Mount Holly's hydrogeology with minimal distance to bedrock and impervious soils, failed sewage disposal systems pose a substantial threat of groundwater contamination.

13. 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 septic regulations so that every property owner can continue to access pure water from the ground without fear of contamination by others. Without necessary regulations, the Town will rely on the State of Vermont laws and standards to regulate sewage disposal.

14. Building Registrations: Inventory

Building registrations are required to commence construction in the Town of Mount Holly. The purpose of the form is to allow Town officials to evaluate the effects of construction on education, recreation, power transmission lines, water supply, sewage and refuse disposal, storm drainage and other similar facilities.

14. Building Registrations: Policy

The Planning Commission, in order to keep track of land use changes for assessment purposes and to monitor growth and advise regarding possible negative impacts of any construction, enforces the requirements of the building registration process.

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 a few 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's Flats Wetlands is an extensive area of wetlands, marsh, and alder swamp that extend along the south side of 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 near here during construction of the railroad. Undoubtedly more fossils remain below the surface. See attached map.

b. **Flood Plains:** Flood plains 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:** Class I 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 as amended from time to time.

b. **Flood plains:** All construction in these flood zones identified by the Town of Mount Holly Flood Hazard Regulations, as amended from time to time, must conform to those regulations.

c. Shorelines: Lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams should be protected to the greatest extent possible by maintaining or establishing, naturally vegetated buffer strips on their banks. Width of buffer strip should conform to the Vermont Wetland Rules, as outlined above under "Wetlands" as amended from time to time. Surface water should be protected from uses that would reduce the scenic appeal of their shorelines.

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 Route 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 because 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 whiter deer yard areas in Mount Holly. All of these are located in the west and northwest parts of Town with the exception of a single area north of Route 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: Development within areas demonstrated to be black bear habitat as critical habitat necessary for bear survival should be discouraged and the areas protected and managed.

2. Deer Yards: Development within area demonstrated to be 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 should be permitted adjacent to deer wintering areas if it can be demonstrated 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 2,331.5 acres, or 9.1% of Mount Holly, is in Okemo State Forest and approximately 3100 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 that is owned and managed by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife. Approximately 55 acres are contained in the Bowen Memorial Forest held by Yale University, and at the intersection of Route 155 with Maple Hill Road, 77 acres were reserved for forest and agricultural use in 2003.

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. These sorts of uses should be encouraged by the Town.

It is the policy of the Town to encourage uses of the forests as described above and to discourage isolating wooded parcels or reducing woodlands to a size that makes them no longer economically, environmentally, or aesthetically useful for these purposes.

5. Open Lands: Inventory

Open lands are defined as all lands that 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 uses include at least one dairy farm, assorted livestock producers of beef cattle, sheep, hogs, chickens, turkeys, and horses. Fields for hay are maintained widely around Town, and some corn is grown as livestock feed.

5. Open Lands: Policy

It is the policy of the Town to encourage continued agricultural use of existing agricultural lands and to keep other open lands in that condition wherever possible. In this regard, the Current Use Value taxation program is to be encouraged. In addition, the Mount Holly Conservation Trust, a private nonprofit organization, has been formed in order to pursue other open and forested land conservation initiatives through private fundraising and grantsmaking.

6. Villages and Hamlets: Inventory

Mount Holly's history is closely linked to the past and current existence of a number of smaller settlements. The Town has identified the Village of Belmont and the following Hamlets as part of the Rutland Regional Planning Commission's long-range land-use planning effort.

Mount Holly: The area around the intersections of Route 103 and Belmont Road to the south and Hortonville Road to the north, including School Street.

Bowlsville: The area surrounding the intersection of Bowlsville Road and Route 103.

Healdville: The area surrounding the intersection of Healdville Road, Shunpike, and Route 103.

Hortonville: The area surrounding the intersection of Hortonville Road and Shunpike.

Tarbellville: The area surrounding the intersection of Tarbellville Road and Route 155.

East Wallingford: The area surrounding the intersections of Routes 155, 140, and 103.

6. Villages and Hamlets: Policy

The Working Group of the Mount Holly Planning Commission is working with local residents to further define the boundaries and land-use policies that are appropriate for maintaining the character and community of Mount Holly's village and hamlets and in order to balance the desire to preserve what it already there while planning for future use.

7. Commercial and Industrial Lands Inventory

Commercial and light industrial activity currently takes place in the following locations in Mount Holly:

1. 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.
2. The east side of Okemo Mountain associated with the Okemo Ski Area.
3. Route 155 in East Wallingford Village from the Mount Holly-Wallingford town line on Route 155 to, and including, the Blue Spruce Inn. 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.
4. Around the intersection of Turnpike Road and Hortonville Road approximately one quarter mile in each direction.
5. The south side of Route 103 from Healdville Road to and including the Wright Construction Company.
6. The north side of Route 103 from Deco Manufacturing to the area presently or formerly operated as Becketts Auto Repair.

7. 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.

8. Approximately one quarter mile north on the Sawyer Hill Road.

9. The immediate area around and associated with the Crowley Cheese Factory. Permitted uses include agriculturally related industry, office and retail space.

10. The immediate area of Garrow's Fabrication Shop on Old Turnpike Road. Permitted use is light industry.

11. The immediate area of Johnson's Auto Body Repair Shop. Permitted use is repair services.

12. Wright Construction Company's equipment storage and maintenance facility South Stewart Road.

In addition, Mount Holly also has or had various Bed and Breakfast facilities around Town and various self-employed construction contractors.

7. Commercial and Industrial Lands Policy

It is the policy of the Town of Mount Holly to:

1. To provide a healthy climate for economic growth;
2. To strengthen the economic base by encouraging greater diversification of business enterprises;
3. To provide for continued economic growth centered about recreation activities, summer and winter;
4. To encourage economic activities that provide year-round income and employment;
5. To develop a more cohesive community through enlarging local residency opportunities for the year-round work force presently not residing in Town.

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. The Working Group of the Mount Holly Planning Commission is working with local residents to develop a long-range plan for identifying appropriate commercial districts and for encouraging small business and light industrial development that is appropriate to Mount Holly's rural character.

8. Residential Property: Inventory

Mount Holly sits astride the Green Mountain ridge, land formally glaciated and presently covered primarily with glacial till soils that 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 adopted Subdivision Regulations that require a permit before an existing tract of land is subdivided. It is estimated that including sites created through the subdivision process, a total of about 1500 new home sites could be constructed in Mount Holly.

As of the 2003 Grand List there are 1197 parcels and 940 housing units in Mount Holly. This is a housing unit growth rate of 20% in five years, as compared to the growth rate of 1970-1980 (43%) and 1980-1990 (32%) and 1990 to 1999 of 20%.

These percentages are deceiving. The actual rate of new properties has consistently been around twenty new properties a year since 1970. Of the 940 properties, 439 are full-time residents, 432 are seasonal residents, and 69 are resident or non-resident mobile homes. The percentage of seasonal homes has increased to almost even as compared to a 60 - 40 split in 1993.

Of the properties in Mount Holly, 449 are properties of 6 acres or less land while 422 properties have more than 6 acres of land. Of the mobile home units 20 are "unlanded," do not have their own lot, and 49 are on a separate parcel. The 2003 Grand List noted for the first time in Town history that 53 % of the Town's value is now held by non-residents. This information comes from the local grand list and from the Rutland Regional Planning Commission.

Based on 1999 data included in the 2000 U.S. Census of Population, Mount Holly has a need to increase low to moderate income housing. According to the statistics in this report, there are 62 rental units in the Town. Of that number 12 units or 19.4% are occupied by renters who pay more than 30% of their income as rent. 26 units or 58% of the rental properties and only 9 owned properties are considered affordable based on mean income.

8. Residential Property: Policy

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, wildlife, 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.

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.

It is the Town's policy to promote diversity of housing types for all citizens. This is to be accomplished by:

1. promoting preservation of the existing housing stock;
2. assisting citizens with information on agencies that provide loans for development of affordable housing;
3. allowing the conversion of single family homes into multi-family homes; and
4. encouraging housing development where suitable.

It is recommended that a program be developed to address the present and future needs of low and moderate income persons as identified by the Regional Planning Commission.

9. 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. The heating of residences is probably the single largest use 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. Several homes are "off the grid" and depend on non grid energy sources.

9. Energy: Policy

Energy efficient construction should be encouraged whenever possible in the Town. The following item was duly warned and adopted at the 2003 Mount Holly Town Meeting: "Be it resolved that the citizens of the town of Mount Holly urgently call upon our municipal leaders, state legislators, governor, and Congressional delegation to put Vermont in the forefront of a sustainable energy future. Specifically, we request immediate and ongoing action on legislative initiatives designed to promote energy efficiency in Vermont's homes, businesses, public buildings, and transportation systems, and to encourage expansion of the renewable energy industry in the state of Vermont."

10. Scenic Resources: Inventory

a. Scenic Roads: Perhaps nothing typifies New England and Vermont more than tree-lined gravel roads defined by stone walls. 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.

10. Scenic Resources: Policy

a. Scenic Roads: Maple Hill Road (TH 22) from Belmont to Rt. 155 is designated a Scenic Road by town policy and designation under the provisions of Vermont's Scenic Road regulations should be pursued. The present graveled section of road should be maintained with maple trees along the roadside that, with the stone walls, should be preserved and/or replaced as necessary. Removal of dead trees, clearing of brush between the trees, and/or replacement 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 be encouraged to 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. If the placement of communications towers in Mount Holly becomes necessary, their construction should disturb the aesthetic value of any ridge lines as little as possible. Under the provisions of Vermont's Telecommunications Law (24 V.S.A. ss 2291 (19), 24 V.S.A. Chapter 59, and 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117), the Select Board adopted: "An Ordinance Regulating Telecommunications Facilities in the Town of Mount Holly. effective December 8, 2001.

11. 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

Route 103, adjacent to Route 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 Route 103 at the Mount Holly-Ludlow town line. Material was removed from this site for construction of the relocated Route 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.

11. 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.

The extraction process should be carried on in a manner that will minimize erosion siltation or pollution of surface or ground water supplies. Extracted areas should be properly reclaimed and restored. Radioactive waste and the release of radon gas 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. PLANNING ISSUES

Downtown Development and Rehabilitation Bill (H.278). Basically this law provides appropriations of funds, tax credits, and priority for other considerations to a defined district that meets strict criteria. Based on experience with the Downtown Development Program, legislation was adopted that modified the program to make it applicable to smaller Vermont villages. In the middle of 2002 the Village Center Designation (VCD) program was created and villages were invited to apply as participants. Early in 2003 Village of Belmont property owners applied for and were granted a Village Center Designation for Belmont. The boundaries of the Belmont VCD are based on the requirements of the program and as a result are more constrained than defined in this Town Plan. (See Belmont VCD Boundary Map.) The Belmont VCD leadership with property owner participation have identified a number of concerns that may be addressed through VCD benefits. High on this list is the replacement of street trees and the restoration of stone walls that once defined the village.

VII. 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 for 2000; 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; the Mount Holly Planning Commission Town-Wide Survey completed in Spring 2003; and the re-adopted Town Plans of August 1991, May 1993, and February 1999.

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.

VIII. HISTORY OF PLANNING IN MOUNT HOLLY

The Town first enacted a Town Plan in the early 1970s.

The Town first enacted Flood Hazard Regulations in 1987.

The Town enacted Subdivision Regulations in 1973 and revised them in 1998.

The Town voted against the adoption of a proposed Zoning Ordinance in 1994.

The Town supported a Municipal Planning Assistance Grant, beginning in late 2002, completed a Town-Wide Survey in early 2003, retained a consultant, and conducted a Community Planning Fair and three Workshops to identify land use and development concerns in the concerns.

The Town receiving a second Municipal Planning Assistance Grant, beginning in late 2003, to support preparation of land use controls that address concerns expressed in the 2003 public participation process, for eventual voter consideration late 2004 or 2005.