

CHAPTER VIII

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A. Overview

A healthy economy is essential to maintaining Williamstown's quality of life. A diversified and dynamic economy provides employment, stimulates social and cultural interaction, and generates income to provide for a wide variety of community services, including education, health care and physical infrastructure. On the individual level, a diversified economy offers greater opportunities for people to engage in satisfying and meaningful occupations and pursuits.

The purpose of this element is to guide and plan for economic development that will create employment in Williamstown which keeps pace with the region's labor force, provides an adequate flow of taxable economic activity to fund state programs, and increases the wealth and economic well being of residents.

B. History

According to the Williamstown Historical Society, prior to 1840, most early residents of Williamstown worked on family farms.

In 1888, the first train arrived in the Williamstown Village. An economic “boom”, lasting for nearly 4 decades, followed. Quarries and farmers could finally ship their products to other parts of the country, and more and more goods and services streamed into Williamstown. During this time-period the following quarries were established: 1) Pirie Quarry (1882), 2) Jones Brothers Quarry, and 3) Dr. Bailey Quarry. (All currently owned and operated by Rock of Ages (1882). Other businesses included: Burrell Roofing and Lacillade Lumber were established in the 1940's. Other businesses included: Bruce's Garage (1892), Watson Hotel, Williamstown Inn, Hibbard House, Lotus Lake Camp (1952), Lynde Store (1952), and Smallwood Nurseries (1932). The late 1960's were a major period of road building in Vermont, making travel even easier. After that time, the entrepreneurial spirit came alive. The number of family farms began to decrease and tourism started to increase. In Williamstown, the following business were established after the 1960's: UniFirst (1972), Randolph National Bank (1979), VEPCO (Vermont Electric Power Company – formerly VELCO) (1980), Pump N' Pantry, A&S Collections, Depot & Main convenience store, Farm & Country Hardware, Behind the Scenes restaurant, (1980's) and most recently Dollar General and Poulin Lumber 2010,

C. Current Conditions

A diverse economy is a strong economy. Luckily, diversity is the backbone of employment in Williamstown, which is the home of many well-established businesses. According to a 2008 Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce Report, Williamstown has 61 employers, providing work for around 516 people. Major employers include (A&S Collection, Burrell Roofing, Progressive Plastics, Pike Industries, and the Williamstown Public School System and other municipal positions). However there are also many smaller businesses, often small and run out of people's homes. In fact, almost 10% of the labor force works at home – up almost 20% from 1990. In addition, Williamstown is fortunate to still have working farms, including dairy operations, Christmas tree farms, a potato farm, and many sugarhouses. We also have a variety of wholesale and retail merchants, manufacturers, and general service businesses.

In spite of all this business activity, Williamstown is still considered a “bedroom community” as approximately 80% of its workforce works outside of town, primarily in the Regional jobs centers of Barre, Montpelier and Waterbury. Table – below, displays a breakdown of employment data for Williamstown from the 2000 Census. It shows the vast majority of Williamstown's workers were employed in the Manufacturing, Education, Health and Social Services, Retail Trade, Construction and Public Administration Sectors. The average annual wage for Williamstown workers in 2006 was \$31,574. This compares favorably to the rest of Orange County (\$29,781), but below the State average (\$35,535). Obviously, Individual wages vary widely in Williamstown due to different types of occupations.

**Table: General Employment Data for Williamstown
2000 Census**

Census Category		Change from 1990
Population 16 Years and Over	2,464	+ 16.4 %
In Labor Force	1,841	+ 16.7 %
In Armed Forces	0	
Civilian	1,841	
Employed	1,737	+ 17.5 %
Unemployed	104	+ 16.9 %
Not In Labor Force	623	
Employed Population 16 Years and Over	1,737	
Male Employed Population 16 Years and Over	904	
Female Employed Population 16 Years and Over	833	
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining Industry	55	
Construction Industry	142	
Manufacturing Industry	312	
Wholesale Trade Industry	82	
Retail Trade Industry	225	
Trans., Warehousing, and Utilities Industry	65	
Information Industry	44	
Finance, Ins., Real Estate, Rental, and Leasing Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management Services Industry	111	
Education, Health, and Social Services Industry	310	
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food Services Industry	83	
Public Administration Industry	121	
Other Service Industries	88	

While Williamstown has displayed fairly strong economic/job growth over the past several decades, there are some indications of economic hardship beginning to emerge. According to the Vermont DET, the April 2009 unemployment figure for Williamstown was 10.2% (State average 8 %). This represents a dramatic increase from just a few years ago when it stood at a relatively healthy 4%. According to the 2000 Census, Vermont Housing Data Williamstown had an average poverty rate of 8% (representing 257 individuals in 54 families) in comparison to the statewide rate of 10%.

D. Trends

Projections developed by the Office of Policy and Information of the Vermont Department of Employment and Training help to identify the shifts that are occurring in the state and regional economies. National and international forces have a tendency to have greater influence on manufacturing, while state and

regional market forces combine to influence the non-manufacturing side.

According to these projections, future job growth will be concentrated in the service-provider sector of the economy, with education, health services, professional and business services growing the fastest. Healthcare practitioners are at the top of the list (i.e., registered nurses, medical assistant, and physical therapists). Construction will also continue to grow. Other projected increases are in the areas of professional and related occupations, which include architecture and engineering occupations, education, training and library services. Computer or information technology occupations should also see gains. Finally, tourism, particularly recreation based tourism, is projected to be a growth industry well into the 2040s.

Manufacturing will continue to decline due to technological changes resulting in the need for fewer and fewer people to get the same output and outsourcing. Industries with the largest decline in employment will be apparel manufacturing, textile mills, and computer and electronic manufacturing. These types of jobs have been decreasing for decades and there is no reason to believe the trend will change.

The agricultural sector also is expected to continue its historical trend of decreasing employment, in part because the average wage earned by farmers remains lower than that of other sectors and because of fluctuating incomes. However, Williamstown still has about 10 working dairy farms, one potato farm, a tree farmer, and various other agricultural farms/businesses. These agricultural jobs are a very important part of our economy in their own right, as well for the intangible aesthetic benefits they provide. Furthermore, agriculture also contributes to tourism. Putting out the welcome mat for visitors and residents by encouraging farmers markets, visits to the farm, cut-your-own Christmas tree, and fruit orchards in those out-of-the-way places can contribute immensely to the sustainability of our agricultural industry and our local economy. People like Vermont food products because they feel they are safe and fresh. Buying locally grown and manufactured products adds to the local economy. Hope lies with small farmers currently capitalizing on their natural advantages by diversifying and rotating crops, integrating livestock, and residents buying locally.

Another important trend to note is aging of our labor force. The number of older workers is projected to grow by almost 50%, or 4 times the growth projected for the overall labor force. About 1/5th of the labor force will be 55, or older, by 2012.

E. Williamstown Economic Survey

In the fall of 2003, the Select Board formed an Economic Development Committee to assist the municipality in finding creative ways to bring more businesses into the town and enhance the existing businesses.

The Economic Development Committee surveyed the community to gather ideas on how to proceed with economic development. Residents reported that their family members were leaving Williamstown in search of work elsewhere. Some residents reported that if they could have found decent jobs at good wages locally, they would have remained in Williamstown. Most recognized attracting good jobs to Williamstown was not going happen overnight. People agreed that attracting “just any” new business into town was not the answer for our long-term future. Residents reported that they did not want to exploit the environment in order to support economic sustainability saying, “Ruining the environment just makes for bad economics and bad ethics.” Protecting our natural resources is critical for the economic well-being of our future. The town can have clean, safe, and sustainable jobs if we all work together to shape the future of our town.

The survey revealed the following ideas and desires of town residents for improving Williamstown's economic attraction, particularly in the village downtown area:

- A farmer's market
- A grocery and /or variety store
- A laundry mat
- A family restaurant
- Health care practitioners
- A town common & other common areas (i.e., a senior center building, hiking paths)
- Jobs that are clean and sustainable
- Community activities & spirit
- A Vietnam war memorial
- Sidewalks & cross walks in both the villages
- Clean-up activities/pride
- Trees and landscaping
- Fun activities for teenagers

F. Economic Development Issues

Diversity and Self Sufficiency

Research has shown that community and economic development are best supported when local solutions and resources are brought to bear on local problems. Small, new businesses are the backbone of economic development and job creation. In Central Vermont, enterprises with less than 20 employees comprise 90% of total private businesses while providing for 38% of total private employment. (National figures are 87% and 26%, respectively.) Even though initial employment gains may be small, start-up businesses have immediate impacts on the local economy. Small companies tend to hire locally, buy locally and put more money into the local economy than they take out.

Over the past decade, Central Vermont has become a leader in small business formation, with Williamstown adding its share of new, small, innovative businesses to the list. In Williamstown, the vast majority of the more than 60 employers fit the definition of small business.

Education/Workforce Demographics

The quality of the work force and quality of life are directly related to community emphasis on education. Elementary and high school education are the basis of the human infrastructure. They provide the skills necessary for individuals to interact with one another in civil and meaningful ways. They are also the source of basic vocational skills in communications, mathematics, and problem solving.

As our society becomes more technologically advanced, these elementary skills take on even greater importance. Complex manufacturing techniques require workers who can process information and manipulate advanced machinery. Information management requires the ability to identify, isolate and utilize a wide variety of data.

Institutions of higher education play an important role both as major employers and as support institutions for technology based industry. The Central Vermont region hosts six colleges and post-secondary schools. Spin off institutes and for-profit ventures undertaken by the higher education community have added substantially to the economic and cultural wellbeing of the region. Advanced educational institutions also play a major role through the provision of programs that advance technical and problem solving skills.

While an elementary and high school education can provide the building blocks for an educated work force, individual advancement and technological improvement will depend on the development of life-long learning habits and opportunities for all workers. The public education system must expand to meet the vocational needs of adults. Public and private institutions and employers must take a proactive role in identifying the skills necessary for economic vitality in the future, and take the steps necessary to prepare and retain the work force.

Finally, continued economic vitality depends on the existence of a skilled, knowledgeable and innovative “next generation” workforce. With an older than average and rapidly aging population, along with the lowest percentage of people in the 25 to 29 age group in the nation, Vermont faces some serious challenges in this regard. Chief among them is the disincentives our relatively low wages and high cost of living provide to young people to stay in the State. Williamstown must recognize these trends and strive to support and cultivate opportunities for young people to stay in, return to, or discover our town as an exciting and affordable place to work and live.

According to the 2000 census approximately 81% of the work force has a high school diploma or better. In fact, 34% of those 25 and over have either an associate’s degree, bachelor's degree or graduate-professional degrees. While these percentages have increased significantly since the 1990 census, they still lag behind state and regional averages.

Access: Transportation and Communications

The ability to transport goods and information, and be accessible to clients and customers is essential to business. With its own interstate exit and a major state highway, Williamstown is well situated to take advantage of its physical accessibility. It is also within 20 minutes of a state airport with business/cargo capabilities.

Of course physical access is not enough for businesses to prosper in this day and age. They need a network of telecommunications infrastructure that enables information-based industries to link into a worldwide telecommunications network. There remain challenges to both take advantage of this advanced technology, and to keep pace with the developments of this quickly changing industry. The town -wide availability of the state-of-the-art telecommunications/information technology infrastructure (including high speed internet access and wireless communications) would increase work options for residents and could potentially reduce commuting and its impacts on the transportation infrastructure and the environment.

Quality of Life/Village Vitality

The Vermont Business Roundtable surveyed the state's businesses in 2003 and discovered that the top 2 reasons businesses located to Vermont were because of: 1) a high quality of life and, 2) the owners had ties to the state. Quality of life could be described as having a safe environment (clean air, water and land, transportation, and access to health care and emergency services), job opportunities, natural beauty, educational quality, and low crime rate.

Also essential to a high quality of life is a dynamic and varied social/cultural experience. The village as the center of social activity provides the critical mass necessary for a flourishing interchange of ideas, art and culture. The traditional New England village is a virtual textbook of human history - the variety of architectural styles reveal the economic and social fortunes of its inhabitants, past and present. It is considered by many to be the pinnacle in land use design. In scale and function, it satisfies our needs for privacy, community and livelihood. Maintaining historic development patterns of village centers surrounded by resource based agricultural, mineral, forest and recreational activities balances economic and environmental interests. Concentrating growth and development within the confines of a village allows the community to implement infrastructure improvements in an efficient and effective manner that will improve the quality of life while limiting the degradation of the environment.

Williamstown is fortunate to have a village with the infrastructural capacity for further growth and development (or re-development). We have already seen that many Williamstown residents have lofty goals for the village and would like to see it revitalized and improved. Towards this end, the town should consider applying to the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs for "Village Center Designation". This relatively easy process could help residents qualify for various tax incentives and loans and make Williamstown more competitive in a variety of grant programs.

Industrial and Commercial Development

Industrial and commercial development is important because it provides jobs to nearby residents. Williamstown does not have many choices for locating industrial and commercial development due to its rolling hills and valleys. In 2004, promotion of environmentally clean, diverse, and sustainable small industrial commercial developments are in the best interest of the residents. Commercial and industrial development that is auto-dependent, separated from other uses, and scattered in rural areas is not "smart growth". It is essential that the industrial park area be available for those industries that cannot be located elsewhere in Williamstown, or in the surrounding communities. There are problems with our current industrial park site that need to be corrected: the site is too small, not only for current businesses that are located there, but for future development this may cause industrial businesses to locate in residential areas. The industrial park also has problems with parking demand, high land cost, and environmental issues (developed in a flood zone area).

In keeping with the rural characteristics of this community, future development of commercial properties and structures should consider exterior architecture to include natural materials. (i.e. stone, brick, lumber) In comparison, commercial development and architecture should exclude metal/vinyl/concrete and glass facing.

Exterior planning of new and repurposing of existing buildings should include landscaping techniques such as visual barriers, shrubs, trees, seating areas offset with gardens and flower beds to create an atmosphere of tranquility and beautification.

The town recognized that exit 5 of the interstate is a possible asset for future business. This interchange area would be highly appropriate for light commercial and/or light/clean industrial development. The town officials will work closely with the Regional Development Commission and Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce to attract these types of firms.

G. SUMMARY

Despite the current economic downturn, Williamstown has the underpinnings of a strong economy. The diversity of its larger employers, the number of small employers, the variety and level of skills found in its labor force, and its quality of life are its prime assets. In conjunction with, businesses and other regional development groups, Williamstown will participate in economic development efforts so as to capitalize on these assets and overcome economic obstacles. Some of those aspects are improving community pride and spirit, education levels, visual appeal of both Villages, housing, and our infrastructure in order to attract good paying jobs. Attracting the right businesses will allow us to keep our community alive, healthy, and not lose the aspects of our rural culture that we cherish.



ECONOMIC GOALS AND POLICIES

GOALS	POLICIES & TASKS
<p>1. To nurture our existing businesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperate with the Department of Tourism and Marketing and Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce to help market our existing businesses • Press for affordable fiber optic service and other improvements in communication infrastructure throughout the community • Seek assistance from the Central Vermont Planning Commission to study and clean-up abandoned, idled and underused industrial and commercial contaminated sites (aka “Brownfields”) • Recognize business owners in public forums (e.g., newspapers, annual festivals). • Pursue “Downtown Designation” for the village and the Nation Register designation for certain village properties in order to qualify for grants, low interest loans and other incentives.
<p>2. To recruit new business and services to town to increase the tax base while keeping the rural culture of the community alive and authentic</p> <p>Encourage the <i>Economic Development Committee</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to increase our economic competitiveness. The team could take responsibility for the following: • working with the Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce to increase marketing and promotional efforts • finding a location and seek funds to build a small information booth • encouraging local businesses to list local events on the Vermont Travel Plan Website • recruiting new healthcare services to town • seeking creative ways to get and keep the town clean and improve its aesthetics (including enlisting volunteers for plantings) • exploring opportunities for hosting and maintaining a farmers market in the Williamstown Village area • seeking media opportunities to attract attention to our town • Exploring ways to recruit new, clean businesses to town (especially restaurants, small niche manufacturing & health-oriented businesses), • Exploring the development of a professional center for Williamstown village. The center could have space for a dentist, doctor, lawyer, variety store, and pharmacy • Encouraging wireless broadband telecommunication services
<p>3. To develop broad based support for agriculture as an economic activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage locally grown food, encourage a farmer’s market, gardening operations, and roadside farm stands/markets/garden centers • Consider a “right to farm” ordinance • Encourage participation in use value and land trust programs to alleviate tax burdens and acquire operations capital • Work with Vermont Technical College’s Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program to provide farmers with consultation in business planning

4. To promote life-long learning opportunities.

* Encourage businesses to upgrade and improve the skills and knowledge of their employees by working with the local Workforce Investment Boards

5. The town officials will work closely with the Regional Development Commission and Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce to attract light commercial and/or light/clean industrial development at the exit 5 interchange

CHAPTER IX

TRANSPORTATION

A. Overview

Public roads and private automobiles are the predominant means of transportation in Williamstown. The condition and performance of the town and state's transportation system affects our quality of life, the natural environment, and our economic well-being.

One of the primary issues facing Williamstown's future is whether residential development will continue to require virtually complete dependence on the automobile or whether it will include some mixed-use aspects that encourage alternate modes of transport. Another issue the town is faced with is development in rural areas where roads are steep, twisty, and narrow and staff has difficulties providing services to these areas.

This chapter provides an overview of how the existing transportation network functions and how it might be improved.

B. History

Local residents built and maintained early roads. The first crude roads in Williamstown were most likely dusty in the summer and muddy in the spring. Residents used stocky horses, or oxen, to pull heavy sleds and wheeled carts for transport of goods and people. According to the *Book of Opinions*, published by the State of Vermont, Secretary of State's Office, when Legislature passed the 1781 Highway Act it gave power to the Select Board to set a road tax on each male between 16 and 60 years old. The road tax was payable in labor unless people refused to work, in which case they had to pay their taxes by selling their land to their local town collector. Because of the poor conditions of the early roads, there were often harsh words between the Select Board and community members.

In 1889, Williamstown got its first railroad connecting Williamstown to Barre and Montpelier Junction and the main line north and south. The old depot and grain building are still located on Depot Street in the Williamstown Village, though the railroad has since been abandoned.

In the early 1900's, the first self-propelled electro-gasoline combination car was introduced. When automobile production and ownership soared, major road building started with a new concrete highway constructed through the village in 1931 and continued with the surfacing of the road to Northfield (VT 64) in the early 1950's. Road building went on throughout the 1960's and 1970's with the completion of the Interstate which linked our community to most of the major cities of the Northeast.

C. Current Conditions

Interstate System

The State, under Federal control, maintains the Vermont's interstate system. Interstate 89 provides Williamstown residents with fast access to their jobs and tourists an easy access to our Village area for goods and beautiful mountain views. Marring of natural and scenic features along the 89 State Highway has been discouraged. The State has also protected the Highway from strip development. There are two access roads (Route 63 and 64) off Interstate 89 both provide easy access into Williamstown.

State Highways/Interstate Access Roads

Vermont Routes 14 and 64 are classified as state highways. Williamstown's access road, *Route 64*, takes travelers down a steep (11% grade), winding hill into the Williamstown village. The views along Route 64 are picturesque and the people who travel them appreciate their aesthetic contribution. New houses spaced along the road are beginning to place pressures on those working farms and spacious fields that attracted people to the area in the first place. Traffic congestion along Route 64 is minimal. During the 2003-2004 Community Focus Groups, the residents unanimously agreed that having a second way into town via South Barre access road, Route 63, which stretches from Route 64 along Hebert Road to Route 63, was beneficial to the community.

State Highway, Route 14 serves as a gateway into Williamstown village and guides the traveler from Brookfield through Williamstown Gulf and north into Barre City. While Route 14 brings economic vitality to our town by providing access to Williamstown Village, traffic is increasing rapidly, especially during those times when people travel to and from work. At those times, the traffic can be somewhat heavy, less pedestrian-friendly and occasionally unsafe.

Town Highways

In the Highway Act, Vermont first recognized classes of highways for the purpose of granting state aid. The Select board has the responsibility for general supervision and control of town highways. The following are the four basic highway groups in the town of Williamstown based on the Agency of Transportation, 2004 Town Highway Mileage:

- Class 1 town highways are those town highways that form the extensions of a state highway route and carry a state route number. There are no class 1 town highways in Williamstown
- Class 2 town highways are the most important town roads and connect from town to town and have high traffic volumes. Williamstown has 18.24 miles of class 2 town highways. Falls Bridge Road was recently upgraded to a class 2 road, making it eligible for state matching funds and 90% funding for the replacement of the bridge
- Class 3 town highways are all traveled town highways other than class 1 and 2 that receive state funding. The minimum standard for class 3 town highways is that it be negotiable under normal conditions all seasons of the year by a standard manufactured pleasure car. Williamstown has 50.9 miles of class 3 town highways
- Class 4 highways only need to be maintained "to the extent required by the necessity of the town, the public good and the convenience of the inhabitants." There are no standards for maintenance of class 4 town highways in the state. Williamstown has 11.45 miles of class four town highways

As we grow, the town may want to study the upgrading of a few of class 4 roads to class 3 to help with traffic circulation. For example, in 2010 Cold Spring Road was connected to Ferno Road to provide additional access to the interstate. To avoid conflicts between the use of highways and future development, the town has established a Motor Vehicle Ordinance that was adopted On May 2, 1994, by the Select Board. It is available for inspection in the Town Manager's office. On October 21, 1995, amendments to the ordinance were adopted.

The ordinance addresses parking, speed limits, driveways, discontinued roads, stop and yield signs, 1-way traffic only, enforcement and other areas.

Commuting Patterns

As we have already seen, Williamstown is a job exporter, with about 80% of our labor force leaving town to work. Commuting and commuting patterns can have a major impact of traffic issues in a community. Relevant commuting data from the 2000 Census is as follows:

Travel Time

- 49.6% take under 20 minutes to get to work
- 29.4% take 20-29 minutes to get to work
- 14% take 30-40 minutes to get to work
- 11.6% take 45 minutes or more time to get to work

Commuting Method

- 79% of Williamstown residents drive alone to get to work, and
- 10% carpool
- 8.7 % work at home
- 1.6% walk or bike to work

Travel Patterns

- 40.8 % leave at 5:00 a.m. to 6:59 am
- 37% leave at 7:00 a.m. to 7:59 am
- 8.2% leave at various times in the am
- 8% leave at 12:00 a.m. to 11:59 pm
- 6% leave at 8:00 a.m. to 8:59 am

D. Maintenance Issues

Road Maintenance

Maintaining and enhancing the local road network in a safe and effective manner is an important community responsibility. The town highway department is responsible for maintaining both town and village roads. In an attempt to balance the needs of the town road improvements and limited financial resources, the road department budget represents a big challenge. Much pays for necessary sand, salt, roadside drainage/ditch maintenance, new equipment, and manpower. As we move forward, attention needs to be paid to upgrading roads and bridges. Currently, the roadside drainage/ditch maintenance remains a top priority in conjunction with the 3-phase road grading program begun in 2003.

Paving and maintaining of existing paved roads is an ongoing fact of life and will take continued funding in the town highway budget each year.

Ancient Roads

As of spring of 2010, there were 2 roads identified by the Ancient Roads Committee to be considered to be reconstituted by the town.

E. Safety Issues

Speed/Volume

Speed limits are useful in providing safety to the motorist driving along and entering the roads and to pedestrians and animals along the roadside. Speed limits also provide safety and guidance to visitors unfamiliar with our roads. A very small percentage of drivers tend to cause most of the problems.

High traffic volumes have a negative impact on the perceived quality of life. Speeding vehicles put pedestrians and horseback riders at risk. Traffic delays cause motorists to seek routes on back roads, and traffic congestion has negative effects on the local economy.

On August 8, 2002, a survey of roads for traffic count and speed were conducted on five major roads as part of a speed limit study (Hebert, Baptist, Falls Bridge, South Hill and Stone Roads). Findings indicated increasing commuter traffic from adjacent towns, speeds limited by road conditions, traffic compressed at peak times of the workday, and that vehicle trips in Williamstown are increasing. Title 23 section 1007 states that a town may set speed limits of 35 miles per hour on unpaved town highways, if it places signs.

According to the speed limit study, the miles per hour surveyed on roads were as follows:

	<u>average speed</u> per hour	<u>Posted</u> <u>Speed</u>	<u>Average Daily totals</u> (cars a day)
• Stone Road:	39	35	580
• Hebert Road:	42	35	480
• Baptist Street:	38	35	148
• Falls Bridge:	32	35	750
• South Hill Road:	28	35	450

Accident Locations

The State of Vermont Orange County Sheriff's Department prepared the following accident report for all the years since computerized statewide data began in 1994 to 2002: 8 on Baptist Road, 15 on Hebert Road, 13 on Stone Road, 8 on Tower Road, 9 on McCarthy Road, 13 on Falls Bridge Road, and 78 on Route 14. Unreported accidents are much higher according to local inhabitants who live on these roads.

A second source of accident data is the Vermont Agency of Transportation, Traffic Research Unit. According to the 2002 accident report, I-89 had 11 accidents, and VT-64 had 5. Other areas that were included in the report included: a few incidents on McGlynn Road, Stone Road, McCarthy Road, Sugar House Road, Hebert Road, Route 14, and Chelsea Road. According to the November 26, 2002 Traffic Impact Report, the Route 14 corridor that accesses to the intersection of Vermont's Routes 14 and 63 has an actual accident rate close to the "critical accident rate" based upon existing traffic volumes and movements showing 20 accidents at the intersection during the period 1997-2002. There have been 9 accidents on Williamstown's stretch of Route 14 between 1997-2001. Traffic and related accidents on Route 14 are expected to grow.

Road surfaces have improved over the past five years. However, the town continues to have road surfaces in poor repair. Residents have reported gravel spilling into their driveways. Pavement dropping off a

few inches at the roads edge can deliver tragic consequences. Unforgiving hazards include sharp curves, insufficient shoulders, and poor surfaces.

Special attention is required to some roads for safety concerns. In particular, sharp corner of Hebert Road (across from the past Lynde School) and the sharp corner of Cogswell Street.

The town has done some work over the past 5 years to improve road signs; however, many signs are still poor. Improvements should continue on an ongoing basis. Signage should be inventoried and new ones placed according to the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

Town Bridges and Culverts

Bridges and culverts on class 4 roads cannot be ignored. If the town puts a culvert in, then the town is liable to keep them in repair. If the town issues a permit to a resident that allows him/her to put a culvert in for their own use then the resident is liable for maintenance and repairs. The town culvert program replaces or upgrades 8-10 culverts per year.

The long awaited Williamstown VT 64 State Highway Bridge over brook number 2, bridge 10, is on the high priority list of projects and scheduled for construction in 2006. It was completed in 2009.

F. Traffic Solutions/Alternatives

Traffic Calming/Access Management

The town must manage a safe and efficient flow of traffic along our roads. Access management is a set of techniques that the town officials can use to control access to highways, major arterials, and other roadways. (See **MAP 1** for more information). The following are examples of access management techniques that the town can use, especially in the village access areas:

- some calming devices such as “green” strips, curbs, on street parking, raised sidewalks, speed humps, rumble strips, street-tree plantings, street furniture, landscaping, signage, and textured or colored pavement can be more effective than traditional speed reduction measures such as police enforcement because they are based on self-enforcement
- alternate routes and grid networks reduce traffic when incorporated into village areas and highly used roads
- space and location of driveway location For example, driveways should be located away from intersections and provide adequate sight distance to see oncoming traffic and curb cuts should be limited and consolidated
- limits to right-of-way access onto highways For example, connect parking lots and consolidate driveways so vehicles can circulate between businesses without having to re-enter the major roadway

Bicycle and Pedestrian Access

Among the recommendations of the 2003-2004 Community Survey and Focus Groups was the need to develop more walking trails and improve the safety of walkers, bikers, and horseback riders from people driving cars. These are still important activities in town and are becoming more frequent on our back roads.

Bicycles provide a clean, economical and energy efficient mode of transportation. They are a primary means of transportation for young people and more recently have become an increasingly popular form of recreation and transportation for adults. There is currently no bicycle route within the Town. Traffic, speeding and irresponsible driving are becoming more frequent creating dangerous situations for cyclists. Most of the highways used by bicyclists do not have sufficient shoulder width to accommodate them safely.

Pedestrian byways are an important and integral part of the transportation system. Residents have reported they want a safe and walkable village. Residents walk across the main road of busy Williamstown Village every day, all day long. Especially during certain times of the day, motorists lack respect for people trying to cross the street in the village areas.

Sidewalks provide safe routes for pedestrians in neighborhoods, commercial and industrial areas, areas frequented by children, and community centers. In areas of moderate to higher density development, having sidewalks is a necessity. Sidewalks have been a debated issue in town. After much debate, fund raising, and receipt of grants, Williamstown will begin construction of sidewalks along Route 14 and adjacent streets during the summer of 2010.

Footpaths are informal pedestrian byways utilized to move traffic between points or as nature trails and other recreational purposes. The Planning Commission suggests that footpaths should also be developed on land owned by the town.

Public Transportation

Many people, including the elderly, disabled and poor, cannot live in a community setting without access to public transportation. Public transportation is a vital service that helps people live in less restrictive settings. Public transit serves the general public, elderly persons, disabled persons, and low-income persons. Williamstown is served by the Green Mountain Transit Agency, a non-profit organization that provides a mixture of fixed and non-fixed route services to benefit the Williamstown citizens. A shuttle picks people up at Williamstown Square and each Tuesday at the Garden Apartments to transport individuals to Hannaford’s (Shopping Special).

The Williamstown’s Park and Ride is located off exit 5, I-89 on Route 64. The paved, lighted, parking area has 23 parking spaces, and 1 disabled space. The parking area facilitates carpooling and ridesharing and is well used.

TRANSPORTATION

Goals	Policies and Tasks
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To maintain and preserve our transportation system. 1a 	Establishing a <i>Transportation Advisory Committee</i> to work with the Transportation crew, property owners, merchants, residents, and police to identify transportation problems and help to solve them. The Transportation Advisory Committee could take responsibility for the following:

- Developing an asset management plan (inventory the condition of roads, come-up with agreed upon standards, solutions, costs, priorities, and how to implement the vision over time)
 - Developing and adopting a five-year capital program, updated annually and divided into annual capital budgets, to provide for maintaining current and acquiring future capital improvements. The capital budget and program will prioritize and project where the transportation money will be spent and include additional funding for unexpected issues and beautification efforts.
 - Organizing beautification projects that encourages tourism, protects and allows enjoyment of roadside scenic features. For example, the Vermont Agency of Transportation's Byway Program.
 - Studying possible traffic calming devices, pullouts for vistas, and walking paths
 - Organizing groups to do some maintenance work on trails the town still owns right of way
 - Looking at a 5 to 10 year highway and bridge reconstruction and rehabilitation program
- 1b. Surveying the residents who live on major roads for expanding the paving program to determine their desires, before plans are considered.
 - 1c. Reviewing the Town Highway classifications periodically by taking into consideration increasing highway needs, changing traffic patterns and growing population.
 - 1d. Considering applications for acceptance of public highways and roadways and to adopt and adhere to an orderly procedure for taking action on such applications. The decision on an application for acceptance of a highway is reserved to the sole and absolute discretion of the Select Board, who will consider the granting or denial of an application on the basis of what is in the best interest of Williamstown residents.
 - 1e. Designing roads that comply with A-76 State of Vermont Design Standards.
 - 1f. Investigating Access Management techniques from VT Trans.
 - 1g. Continuing to use pavement, gravel, and maintenance management systems to maintain all roads.
 - Developing a program that over time upgrades those roads that are currently below desired serviceability criteria
 - Improve driveways with excessive spillage (The grade in front of a dwelling or other building adjacent to the road cannot be changed by more than 3 feet without following quasi-judicial procedures)
 - 1h. Continuing to address the project backlog and implement shelf projects.
 - 1i. Limiting the construction of new roads in open fields and design them so that they do not significantly increase forest fragmentation.
 - 1j. Developing roads that are logically related to the topography to produce reasonable road grades.
 - 1k. Encouraging subdivisions adjacent to roads designated as scenic to be appropriately designed with respect to the sighting of any structure and site alteration, including grading filling, removal of trees, stone walls, or other existing landscape features that are consistent with the scenic quality of the road.
 - 1l. Encouraging landowners understanding that all newly planned roads and driveways meet environmental laws (i.e., approval for paving/disrupting flow near wetland areas, and others).
 - Designing, if possible, a access/curb cut permit application (Select Board coordinating with the State Department of Transportation/ Natural Resources).
 - 1m. Studying and taking appropriate steps to correct unsafe roads and improve safety on bends on Hebert Road and Cogswell Street.
 - 1n. Continue to inventory, inspect and repair the Town's culverts
 - 1o. Using established sign-off inspection report form for all new roads (adequate drainage, how steep, how wide for essential services).
 - 1p. Designing standards and declare all substandard roads as a public nuisance (Too narrow, twisty, poor drainage).

2. To increase the safety and perception of safety and choices in transportation including non-motorized users, walkers, horses, that share the use our streets.

<p>2a. Investigating roads frequently used by walkers, joggers, bikers, and horseback riders, and provide appropriate and safe walkways to the greatest extent possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using The Bike Sufficiency Ratings to further investigate pedestrian/bicycle path opportunities <p>Placing bike racks and benches along roads and paths in the village areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for both the villages of Williamstown and Foxville, and outlying neighborhoods of new growth areas, for integrating non-motorized transportation via bike paths, walking paths, and recreational trails. Where traffic is less than 1500, Annual Average Daily Traffic sharing of the road should be looked at. • Considering Williamstown CL 4 Town Highways for hiking and horseback riding trails. <p>2b. Considering sidewalks and pedestrian walkways for the safety and convenience of pedestrian and vehicular traffic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future planning should include: adding new sidewalks to connect Construction Hill Road to South Main Street at the Post Office conforming curbs with existing sidewalks in the Village areas. • Repaving and upgrading of existing sidewalks in the village. • Working with the State to develop two pedestrian crosswalks along Route 14 of the Williamstown village for the safety of our residents: from the Gardens to the Pump and Pantry and from the Bank to Behind the Scenes Café. <p>2c. Encouraging new projects to afford enough parking space so that cars are not forced to park in the road.</p> <p>2d. Encouraging road and driveway projects that provide enough room for emergency vehicles to enter and turn-around.</p> <p>2e. Placing warning signs, as necessary, near places that have horses and near farms that regularly drive tractors and pull farm equipment on roads. In areas considered unsafe, town officials should place luminous signs so visitors and residents can avoid these problem areas at night, if they meet warrants.</p>
<p>3. To enhance the street environment</p> <p>3a. Seeking funds to plant at least five trees/bushes per year on Town property in the downtown area and for other beautification areas along the rural roads in Town and entryways into the villages.</p> <p>3b. Requiring attractive transportation system elements and surroundings to reinforce community identity Preserve tree-lined areas of roadways. Property owners should be encouraged to plant new trees where older trees have been removed.</p> <p>3c. Studying the re-establishment of a few roads, which will help with traffic circulation including Henry Road which does not currently connect to Flint Road as shown on the highway Map, Erskin road from Graniteville to Gilbert Road, Cold Springs to Ferno and Grand View to reconnect with Chelsea road. Also study the potential for adding a connecting road from the Pump and Pantry to the former Lacillade Lumber.</p> <p>3d. Encouraging developments to keep large parking lots in the back of their buildings.</p> <p>3e. Update and adopt a long-plan scenic road plan based on Scenic Roadway standards promulgated by the Agency of Transportation. Williamstown has many rural, primarily gravel, roads that should be preserved for their scenic, cultural (stonewalls), and rural qualities.</p> <p>3f. Improving entry-ways into the villages to set image and bring speed down in the villages by using suggestions by the Better Back Roads Manual.</p>
<p>4. To promote reduction of transportation energy costs</p> <p>4a. Developing an integrated plan for non-motorized transportation in the Williamstown village.</p> <p>4b. Encouraging Green Mountain Transit Agency to expand the shuttle to the Foxville village area.</p> <p>4c. Seeking transportation enhancement grants for infrastructure/community attributes projects that are small in scope to reinvigorate the Town like enhancing pedestrian/bicycle, and enhancing scenic and historical assets.</p> <p>4d. Preserving Class 4 roads for recreational use, or downgrade their status to a legal trail thus retaining the public's interest in them.</p>

- 4e. Studying and coordinate planning efforts for extending plans for the Bike Path from connecting towns along the old train tracks.
- 4f. Promoting car pool programs and public transit.
- 4g. Encouraging non-motorized travel through accommodating walking, bicycling, and the use of transit in addition to a safe and coordinated street system.
- 4h. Encouraging concentrated settlement patterns, which minimizes transportation related energy costs.

5. To be accountable to and educate the community about the roads.

- 5a. Maintaining a long-term schedule for major and minor road improvements.
- 5b. Seeking technical assistance from the State Vermont Department of Transportation and Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission and Vermont Local Roads Program (St. Michael’s College) to help our community learn about local road building and maintenance strategies.
- 5c. Updating to be more accurate the official Town Highway Map with the State

6. To Manage Roadway Access

- 6a. Promoting driveway interconnection of adjacent developments along major highways.
- 6b. Limiting one driveway per parcel, with special conditions for additional driveways. For example, lots with larger frontages, or those with needs for separate right and left-turn entrances.
- 6c. Encouraging shared driveways.
- 6d. Encouraging subdivision design where lots fronting on major roads have internal access from a residential street (sometimes known as, “reverse frontage”).
- 6e. Providing adequate distance between the interstate and nearby curb cuts according to the following standards:

<u>Design Speed of Roadway Section (MPH)</u>	<u>Curb Cut Spacing (Feet)</u>
• 30	200
• 35	225
• 40	275

- 6f. Coordinating land use, subdivision, and site design decisions that affect access management needs along state highways with the Department of Transportation (Select Board).
- 6g. Limiting curb cuts by developing a curb cut permit application process.
- 6h. Promoting provisions for all parcels having road frontage on town and state highways, for access to be located at least 150 feet from the intersection of public road rights of way, for all uses except for single and two family dwellings, which shall be located at least 50 feet from such intersections. Distance should be measured from the radius of the driveway.
- 6i. Discouraging roadway connection roads that have cul-de-sac (dead-end) designs to enhance the safety and efficiency of our highways.
- 6j. Complying with the Williamstown Highway policy.
 - Ensuring that all newly developed private roads are brought-up to class 3 standards.
 - Ensuring maintenance of all roads not designated as Class 3 Town Highways or higher shall be the responsibility of the subdivider. The subdivider shall supply evidence and assurance that said roads will be adequately maintained either by himself/herself or by an owner’s association.
 - Managing access to public roads, defining design standards for new roads, protecting scenic features along existing roads, and the upgrades or protection of un-maintained public (class 4) roads.
- 6k. Continuing to participate in Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission’s Transportation Advisory Committee.