

CITY OF BARRE 2010 MUNICIPAL PLAN

Adopted by Council: October 26, 2010

Planning and Zoning Department
City of Barre
6 North Main Street
Barre, VT 05641

802-476-0245

History:

The following public hearings were held regarding this plan:

- Planning Commission Public Hearing: June 24, 2010
- Council Hearings: October 19, 2010 and October 26, 2010

This Municipal Plan replaces the previous Municipal Plan adopted October 18, 2005, in its entirety.

Acknowledgements:

Partial funding for this project was provided from the Municipal Planning Grant Program administered by the Department of Housing and Community Affairs.

Additional funding to complete the Downtown Market Study was provided through a Vermont Community Development Program grant, a Vermont Community Foundation grant and a donation from Edgewood Development, Inc.

Sponsorship of Public Forums was partially provided by:

- *Times-Argus*
- *Northfield Savings Bank*
- *Sean and Nora's Restaurant*
- *Community National Bank*
- *Fecteau Residential Homes*

The City of Barre would like to thank the many individuals and organizations that participated in development of this plan including:

- *Barre City Planning Commission*
- *Vermont Forum on Sprawl*
- *Vacant Land Study Planning Commission Subcommittee members*
- *Housing Study Planning Commission subcommittee members*
- *Child Care Planning Commission subcommittee members*
- *Market Study committee members*
- *Barre Housing Authority*
- *Barre Partnership*
- *Barre Area Development*
- *Central Vermont Land Trust*
- *The many individuals, businesses, and organizations who participated in the public forums and hearings*

CITY OF BARRE

2010 MUNICIPAL PLAN

LIST OF TABLES	8
INTRODUCTION	9
Municipal Plan Definition and Purpose	9
History of Barre City Planning Process	10
Current Municipal Plan Process.....	10
Plan Format.....	11
BARRE CITY COMMUNITY PROFILE	13
History of Barre	13
Land Use	13
Natural Features.....	13
Land Use Patterns.....	14
Residential Land Use Lot Sizes	15
Population Characteristics, Changes and Projections	15
Population Size and Estimates	15
Age Composition	16
Race Composition.....	16
Income Characteristics.....	16
Marital Status.....	17
Education.....	18
Employment.....	18
Commuting Patterns	20
Housing Characteristics	21
Housing Change and Projections	21
Rental Unit Composition	22
Housing Price Trends.....	23
LAND USE	25
Introduction.....	25
Land Use Goals	25
Vacant Land Use Study	25
Lands along undeveloped rights-of-way.....	26
Large undeveloped tracts of land	26
Downtown industrial area.....	27
Undeveloped areas on Allen Street.....	27
Undeveloped residential properties.....	27

Review of Existing Land Use Ordinances	28
Proposed Implementation Strategies.....	289
HOUSING	31
Introduction.....	31
Housing Goals.....	31
Housing Turnover Data.....	32
Housing Issues	33
Affordability and Availability of Purchase of Homes.....	33
Availability of Land for New Construction and Conversions.....	38
Affordability and Availability for Rentals	40
Housing Stock Conditions	40
Elderly Housing Needs and Special Population Needs	41
Regional Housing Distribution.....	281
Proposed Implementation Strategies.....	42
DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION.....	45
Introduction.....	45
Executive Summary of Market Study Report	45
Downtown Vision and Market Directions	46
Recommended Strategies and Action Steps.....	46
Strategy One: Build an Attractive and Welcoming Downtown Environment.....	46
Strategy Two: Coordinate and Expand Business Attraction and Retention Activities.....	47
Strategy Three: Expand Downtown Arts and Cultural Activities and Strengthen Their Connection to Regional Tourism Attractions	47
Strategy Four: Undertake a Sustained Cooperative Marketing and Promotion Initiative.....	48
Strategy Five: Expand funding, capacity and community support for the Barre Partnership.....	48
PRESERVATION OF RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT.....	51
Introduction.....	51
Environmental Goals	51
Larger Undeveloped Tracts of Land	51
Canales Wetlands.....	51
Williams Lane Brownfield.....	51
Riverfront Preservation.....	52
Waste Disposal	52
Proposed Implementation Strategies.....	53

CHILD CARE 55

- Introduction.....55**
- Child Care Goals.....55**
- Capacity Compared to Demand55**
- Time Spent in Daycare56**
- Cost and Affordability of Child Care.....57**
- Child Care Providers57**
- Barre City Local Regulations.....57**
- Proposed Implementation Strategies.....58**

UTILITIES AND FACILITIES 61

- Introduction.....61**
- Utility and Facility Goals.....61**
- Public Utilities61**
- Non-Education Public Buildings.....62**
- Public Parks and Recreation.....63**
- Cemeteries63**
- Downtown Parking Areas.....64**
- Proposed Implementation Strategies.....65**
- Proposed Implementation Strategies.....65**

TRANSPORTATION 67

- Introduction.....67**
- Vehicular Traffic.....67**
 - Existing Conditions..... 67
 - North Main Street Reconstruction 69
- Pedestrian Movement70**
- Central Vermont Regional Path70**
- Commuting Patterns and Mass Transit71**
- Access Management.....73**
- Planning Commission Involvement in Transportation.....73**

EDUCATION	75
Introduction.....	75
Goals.....	75
School Enrollment and Expansion Needs	75
Proposed Implementation Strategies.....	76
ENERGY	77
Introduction.....	77
Goals.....	77
Building Code Requirements	77
Development as a Micropolitan	77
Traffic Signalization Improvements.....	77
Energy Efficiency of City Maintained Facilities.....	77
Proposed Implementation Strategies.....	78
CONSISTENCY WITH DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS IN ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES AND REGION.....	79
Introduction.....	79
Central Vermont Regional Plan	79
Town of Berlin.....	79
Town of Barre	79
APPENDIX	81
Downtown Barre Marketing Strategy and Action Plan	81
Vacant and Underdeveloped Parcel Assessment Survey Results.....	81
Housing Survey Results.....	81
Proposed Zoning Amendment Language.....	81
Maps.....	81
R-10 Level of Conformance of Developed Lots	81
PR Level of Conformance of Developed Lots	81
PR with Two or More Units Level of Conformance of Developed Lots.....	81
Vacant Lands and Areas Likely to be Redeveloped Over 2 Acres by Zoning District	81
Areas to be Considered for Rezonings	81
Current Zoning Districts	81
Areas to be Considered for Future Rezonings.....	81
VTRANS Arterial Road System.....	81

Public Facilities and Cultural Sites	81
Environmentally Sensitive Sites	81

List of Tables

Table 1: Assessment Classification of Land	14
Table 2: Residential Lot Sizes	15
Table 3: City Population Change from 1940 to 2000	15
Table 4: Age Composition	16
Table 5: 1999 Income Distribution	16
Table 6: Family Status	17
Table 7: Education of Population Over 25 Years Old	18
Table 8: Employment Status	19
Table 9: General Work and Commuting Patterns	20
Table 10: Residence to Work Patterns	20
Table 11: Housing Units by Year	21
Table 12: Project Based Subsidized Housing	21
Table 13: Owner Occupied vs. Renter Occupied	22
Table 14: Type of Housing 2000	22
Table 15: Year Housing Unit Built	22
Table 16: Household Size	23
Table 17: Percent Annual Increase in Housing Cost 2003 to 2004	23
Table 18: Average Sale Price of Housing	23
Table 19: Proposed Land Use Strategies	29
Table 20: Average Sale Price of Housing	34
Table 21: Comparison of Required Incomes for Various Owner-Occupied	35
Table 22: Taxes for Average Housing Sales	36
Table 23: Number of Transfers, 1/1/03 and 12/31/04	36
Table 24: Comparison of DOM for 2003 and 2004	37
Table 25: Owner-Occupied Rental Properties with 2 to 8 Units	38
Table 26: Lot Size Conformance of Developed Residential Uses in R-10 and PR Districts	39
Table 27: HUD 2004 Rental Data	40
Table 28: Proposed Housing Strategies	43
Table 29: Proposed Environmental Strategies	53
Table 30: Child Care Capacity	56
Table 31: Family Center Demand	56
Table 32: Weekly Cost of Day Full Time Care — 2002	57
Table 33: Proposed Child Care Strategies	58
Table 34: Proposed Facilities Strategies	65
Table 35: Problems at Signalized Intersections Strategies	68
Table 36: Problems at Unsignalized Intersection	68
Table 37: Problems on Roadways	69
Table 38: Barre City Residence to Work Patterns	71
Table 39: 2000 Type of Commuting	72
Table 40: Proposed Transportation Strategies	73
Table 41: Proposed Energy Strategies	78

INTRODUCTION

Municipal Plan Definition and Purpose

The municipal plan is both a thorough research document of the community's present condition and a guide for accomplishing community aspirations and intentions through public investments, land use regulations and other implementation programs. The plan is based upon surveys of existing conditions and probable future trends in the municipality, the region, and the state. Based on these surveys and trends, the plan identifies strategies for development and preservation of resources.

Factors considered include:

- The capability of the land to support the uses
- The availability of community facilities and services necessary to accommodate the uses
- The need to prevent overcrowding of land and buildings
- The interrelationship and compatibility of proposed land uses with existing ones
- The need to ameliorate undesirable conditions
- Consistency with other policies of the community and region.

The principal purpose of the municipal plan is to be a guide for the achievement of short-term and long-term community goals. To do that, the plan attempts to:

- Define the community's vision for its future
- State and promote community values in its goals, objectives and programs
- Establish a process for orderly growth and development
- Balance competing interests and demands
- Provide for coordination and coherence in the pattern of development
- Provide for a balance between natural and built environment
- Reflect regional conditions and consider regional impacts
- Be consistent with statewide goals and policies
- Address both current and long-term needs
- Give specific guidance while retaining enough flexibility to be useful when faced with unforeseen circumstances

The Planning Commission is responsible for preparing the plan, distributing the plan, holding public hearings on the plan, and submitting it to the Council for consideration. Council is required to hold at least two additional hearings before adoption.

The Barre City Plan has been prepared with close attention to the requirements of Title 24 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated which requires municipal plans to include the following elements:

- A statement of objectives, policies and programs
- A land use plan
- A transportation plan
- A utility and facility plan
- A statement of policies on the preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas, scenic and historic features and resources
- An educational facilities plan
- A recommended program for the implementation of the objectives of the development plan
- A statement indicating how the plan relates to the development trends and plans for adjacent municipalities, the area and the region

- An energy plan
- A housing element which includes a recommended program for addressing low and moderate income persons' housing needs

History of Barre City Planning Process

Barre City has had a history of municipal plan development. The following are the municipal plan activities to date:

- 1963 — First municipal plan was prepared as a joint City and Town project. It included a land use plan, community facilities plan and a traffic plan.
- 1971 — A less comprehensive study and plan was completed.
- 1980 — A new plan was adopted addressing future land use, transportation and parking, and community facilities.
- 1985 — A new plan was prepared and adopted and then readopted in 1990
- 1992 — A comprehensive new plan was developed, adopted and formed the basis for the current plan
- 1994 — An economic development plan was developed.
- 1997 — The plan was readopted with amendments and the 1994 economic plan was included as addendum to the plan
- 2003 — The 1997 plan was readopted with the addition of 2000 census data.
- 2005 – The 2003 plan was substantially revised and updated.

Zoning and subdivision regulations have been the primary means to implement land use recommendations in municipal plans. Barre City also has a long history of land use regulations. Some of the major highlights include:

- 1950 — First zoning ordinance for the City of Barre was adopted creating three zoning districts: Residential, Commercial and Industrial.
- 1968 — First revision created a Light Industry Zone.
- 1974 — A complete overhaul of the ordinance was completed forming the basis for the current zoning districts.
- 1985 — Flood Hazard Area regulations adopted.
- 1986 — Subdivision Regulations adopted.
- 1996 — The Development Review Board was created.
- 2000 — Design Review Districts were created.
- 2003 — Total re-write of Zoning Ordinance for clarification of regulations and uses.
- 2006 – Early in the year, amendments are made to the bylaws to add the Downtown Mixed Use district and other changes. Later in the year, the Bisson Farm area was rezoned, PUD regulations were adjusted for entire City, and minimum lot sizes were changed in PR District.
- 2010 – Changes are made to the sign regulations, enforcement, and general provisions.

Current Municipal Plan Process

In September 2003, the Planning Commission started the process of creating this municipal plan. The Planning Commission formed study committees to address the topics of child care, housing, vacant and redevelopable land parcels, and marketing the downtown.

Study committee tasks included some or all of the following:

- Conducting a preliminary analysis to get a sense of issues and directions.
- Gathering and compiling statistical data and information regarding study topics.

- Inventorying existing and proposed facilities.
- Conducting surveys for additional data.
- Interviewing key individuals involved in study topic.
- Using the city's Geographic Information System to provide for a spatial analysis of data.
- Analyzing data and information.
- Preparing a presentation of findings and recommendations.
- Conducting public forums on study topics
- Presenting their findings and/or written draft to the Planning Commission

The downtown market study was a separate study with a summary included as part of this plan. The complete plan is adopted by reference and is included in the appendix. The downtown market study was a joint project of the City of Barre and the Barre Partnership, the designated downtown organization.

A series of informal public forums were held to review the downtown revitalization, child care, housing, and land use issues. These forums provided a means to review the Planning Commission's initial findings and recommendations with the public.

In 2010 the Planning Commission decided to readopt the current 2005 plan with minor amendments to account for changes since the previous adoption. This plan relies on the Census for many of its baseline facts and figures and the current 2010 Census numbers will not be released until 2012. In light of this fact, the planning commission felt a full plan revision would not be appropriate at this time. Instead this quick re-adoption will buy the city and planning commission a few years to take a more deliberate approach to the plan revision and await the new Census figures.

The Planning Commission has therefore applied for and received a Municipal Planning Grant to do a complete revision of approximately half the City Master Plan. This revision will address those chapters that do not rely on Census numbers such as transportation, economic development, natural resources, utilities and facilities, and energy. The remaining chapters will be revised after the Census figures are released.

Plan Format

This plan first includes a community profile. This community profile has been developed to provide an overall view of the past and current trends. The community profile will provide the reader with an overall understanding of the community.

Following the community profile are chapters relating to the individual elements of the plan. Each section also includes:

- Data that relates to specific elements
- An analysis of available data and issues relating to elements
- A statement of goals and directions
- Specific strategies

Barre City Community Profile

This community profile has been developed to provide an overall view of the past and current trends in Barre City. It also provides data that is not specific to just one element of the plan. The community profile will provide the reader with an overall understanding of the community. Unless otherwise indicated, the statistical data has been obtained from the United States Census. Additional data and analysis of trends pertinent to individual plan elements are found within those sections of this plan.

The data contained in this plan is based on 2000 Census figures.

History of Barre¹

On November 6, 1780, 19,900 acres of land which was west of the New Hampshire Grants and east of New York was chartered to William Williams and 60 others and given the name of Wildersburgh. This chartered land encompassed the area known as the City of Barre and the Town of Barre. In 1788 John Goldsbury and Samuel Rogers brought their families here and began to settle the area. They were eventually joined by other people from New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

In 1793, the name of the community was changed to Barre. There is some debate about whether this occurred by auctioning off the right to the highest bidder or by means of a fist fight.

After the initial process of settling the community, the basic manufacturing enterprises of the day (saw mill, grist mill and bartering of food) were established. Barre started to develop in a different manner than the surrounding communities after the granite industry was established soon after the War of 1812. The development of this industry and other factors led to some population growth up until 1830. However, this growth leveled off for some fifty years thereafter. There were 2,012 residents in 1830 and just 2,060 in 1880.

The arrival of the railroad in Barre helped the granite industry become a major industry. The fame of this vast deposit of granite, which some geologists say is 4 miles long, 2 miles wide and 10 miles deep, soon spread to Europe and Canada. Large numbers of people migrated to Barre from Italy, Scotland, Spain, Scandinavia, Greece, Lebanon, Canada and a number of other countries. The population increased from 2,060 in 1880, to 6,790 in 1890, to 10,000 in 1894.

Over time, a major portion of the population came to reside in the lower valley portion of the Town which included different villages. For reasons best known to the people of the time, just under four square miles of the more populated area of the town was carved out in 1895, and the City of Barre was created by the action of the voters and the charter which was granted by the state legislature. The City of Barre has continued to exist as a separate governmental entity from the Town to this date.

Land Use

Natural Features

Barre City is the site of the junction of two valleys, carrying the Stevens and Jail Branches of the Winooski River. The valley floor is at approximately 600 feet above sea level and ranges from one-half to one mile in width. Rising above the valley floor are flat-topped, gently rolling to steep hills approximately 400 feet above the valley floor.

¹ Source: Extracted from "Barre in Retrospect" 1876-1976 published by the Friends of the Aldrich Public Library, 1975.

The Stevens Branch runs through the downtown area, portions of which have been channeled. Much of the downtown area is located within the 100-year FEMA flood plain with flood levels of less than one foot to over six feet.

Land Use Patterns

Barre City covers 4.02 square miles and 3,232 land parcels were included on the 2004 grand list. Land use changes have not been significant in recent decades. Only 18.5 acres of land have been converted from undeveloped and non-forested or forested land to developed land from 1970 to 1990². Table 1 shows a breakout of assessment classification of uses:

Class	Acres	Percent
Single Family Unit	645	29.7%
Mobile Homes Unit	15	0.7%
Two Family Unit	81	3.7%
Three Family Unit	30	1.4%
Four Family Unit	16	0.7%
Five or More Units	47	2.2%
General Commercial	45	2.1%
General Office	7	0.3%
Industrial	124	5.7%
Utilities	19	0.9%
Hotel/Motel	17	0.8%
Nursing care	29	1.3%
Mixed Use	16	0.7%
Farm	123	5.7%
Exempt - Other	34	1.6%
Exempt - Local (includes cemeteries)	325	15.0%
Exempt - School	33	1.5%
Vacant - Residential	474	21.8%
Vacant - Industrial	80	3.7%
Vacant - Commercial	10	0.5%

As shown above, approximately 38% of the land area is used for some type of residential use and approximately 12% is used for commercial and/or industrial uses. Approximately 18% is exempt property (most owned by Barre City) and approximately 31% is vacant and/or farm use. The local exempt property is 33% in cemetery use and another 35% is comprised of Rotary Park, Farwell Street recreation area, the bike path, and the cow pasture. (See the Appendix for mapping regarding the current zoning and vacant lands.)

There were 28 areas identified by the Planning Commission over two acres in size that have either no development or very limited development. These include larger individually owned parcels or smaller separately owned undeveloped parcels that are contiguous. Nine individually owned parcels, all over 10 acres in size, comprise 551 acres of vacant or farm land. Within these nine parcels 60% is on two parcels covering 141 acres. One parcel is 190 acres. (See the Land Use Section for additional details on a study of these vacant areas including likely develop.)

² Source: UVM Center for Rural/Vermont Center for Geographic Information

³ Source: Compilation of assessment data as of 4/1/04

Residential Land Use Lot Sizes

2004 Assessment Department data was used to analyze current residential land uses within the two residential zones. Table 2 shows the percent of lots by size for single family uses.

Lot Size (sq. ft)	R-10 District	PR District
Over 10,000	85%	55%
7,500 to 9,999	9%	12%
5,000 to 7,499 of size required	4%	16%
Under 5,000	2%	16%

As noted, most single family homes in the R-10 district are over 10,000 square feet which is the required minimum lot size for that district. The single family PR lot sizes are significantly different than the R-10 district. Approximately 32% of the homes are on lots less than 7,500 square feet compared to only 6% of the R-10 homes. Only 55% of the PR homes meet the current required 10,000 square foot lot size requirement. (See the Housing Section for additional discussion and analysis on lot size requirements and analysis. See also the land use mapping in the Appendix for maps of lot conformance.)

In the PR district, 36% of the developed residential lots are multi-family uses. Approximately 80% of the two-family dwellings are on lots under 5,200 square feet. Approximately 80% of the parcels with three or more units have lots sizes of 1,500 square feet or more per unit. This is considerably different than the requirements in the PR District. (See the Housing Section for additional discussion and analysis on lot size requirements and analysis.)

Population Characteristics, Changes and Projections

Population Size and Estimates

Barre has experienced an overall population decline of 15% since 1940 as shown in Table 3. However, since 1960 the decline has been gradual. The decline from 1970 to 2000 can be attributed to a decline in household size. Between 1970 and 2000 the household size declined from 2.9 to 2.2 persons per household, or 24%. If the 2000 household size was still 2.9, as in 1970, the population would be over 12,000 persons. The average 2000 household size for Central Vermont and Vermont overall were both 2.4.

In contrast, the Central Vermont area had a 6.2% increase in population from 1990 to 2000 while the state overall population increase for 1990 to 2000 was 8.2%. Barre currently is the tenth largest town or city in the state.

Year	Population	Absolute Change	% Change Over Decade
1940	10,909	N/A	N/A
1950	10,922	13	0.1%
1960	10,387	-535	-4.9%
1970	10,209	-178	-1.7%
1980	9,824	-385	-3.8%
1990	9,482	-342	-3.5%
2000	9,291	-191	-2.0%

The Census estimates the July 2003 population as 9,166.

In summary, given the current growth patterns and given that the household size will probably not continue to decline as much as in past decades, the overall population for Barre City will remain stable or only slightly decline. Only major changes in development trends would substantially change this conclusion.

Age Composition

Table 4 compares the age composition in 1990 and 2000. As might be expected from general national trends, there was a slight increase in the percent of population between ages 30 to 64 and a slight decrease in the percent of population between ages 19 and 29. However the percentage of persons under 19 years old and the percentage of population over 65 years old changed only slightly. Barre City has a similar percentage of persons under 18 years old and a higher percentage of elderly population than the region and state. Compared to Central Vermont and the Vermont state overall, in 2000, the percentage of persons under 18 years old was 25% and 24%, and the percentage over 65 years old was 13% for both.

	1990	Percent Population	2000	Percent Population
18 and Under	2,319	24%	2,138	23%
19 to 29	1,727	18%	1,304	14%
30 to 49	2,486	26%	2,844	30%
50 to 64	1,198	13%	1,355	15%
65 and Over	1,752	18%	1,650	19%
Total Population	9,482		9,291	

Race Composition

Overall, Barre City’s population is predominately white. Only 5% of the population listed race as something other than all white. Throughout Vermont, about 3% of the population is non-white.

Income Characteristics

Table 5 indicates the income distribution for families and households. By Census definition households include all persons sharing a household unit. A family is a subset of a household and includes only households with two or more related individuals. Fifty-four percent of all households are considered families by the Census.

Income Range	Households	%	Families	%
Less than \$10,000	640	15%	174	8%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	748	18%	253	11%
\$20,000 to \$29,999	699	17%	345	15%
\$30,000 to \$39,000	572	14%	325	14%
\$40,000 to \$49,000	387	9%	273	12%
\$50,000 to \$59,000	404	10%	316	14%
\$60,000 to \$74,999	336	8%	285	12%
\$75,000 to \$99,000	267	6%	222	10%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	97	2%	73	3%

Over \$124,999	79	2%	40	2%
Total	4,229		2,306	
Median Income	\$30,393		\$42,660	

In 1999, 72% of the households earned less than \$50,000, although all income classes are present. In comparison, 60% of the Central Vermont households earned less than \$50,000. One-third of the households earned under \$20,000 compared to the Central Vermont region that had 21% of the households earning under \$20,000. Approximately 13% of the Barre City residents live at or below poverty compared to only 8% for the Central Vermont region. 18% of the children live in poverty. In addition, 17% of the population received food stamps in 1998 and 10.5% received public assistance income in 1999.

Likely reasons for the higher percentage of lower income households include:

- Subsidized housing attracting lower income families
- A high percentage (19%) of elderly persons compared to the region (13%)
- A high percentage (3.5%) of persons under supervision of the Department of Corrections who have limited skills and education compared to the state (1.6%)
- A low percentage (17%) of persons over 25 and older with a college degree compared to the region (30%)
- A higher percentage (53%) of rental properties attracting lower income people compared to the region (26%)

As would be expected, due to more two-income households, families have a higher household median income. The average annual wage for 2003 for Washington County is \$31,902⁴. (A local average annual wage is not available.)

Marital Status

Of the families, 71% are married couples, and 29% are families without a husband or wife present. There were 446 families, or 19% that included children with only one parent present. 87% of the single-parent families were headed up by a female. For comparison, in Central Vermont, 13% of the families included children with only one parent present. Likely reasons for the higher percentage of single-parent families is a higher percentage (53%) of rental properties attracting single-parent families compared to the region (26%.) Table 6 reflects these figures.

Total Families	2,306	%
Married-couple Family	1,642	71%
Breakout Married-couple families:		
With own children under 18 years	746	32%
No children under 18 years	896	39%
Other Family Types	664	29%
Break Out of Other Family Types:		
Male Householder, no wife present	128	6%
With own children under 18 years	55	2%
No own children under 18 years	73	3%
Female Householder, no husband present	536	23%

⁴ Source: Vermont Department of Labor, Labor Market Information

With own children under 18 years	391	17%
No own children under 18 years	145	6%

In married families, 80% of the husbands were in the labor force and 63% of the wives were in the labor force. Within other family types, 71% of the household heads were in the labor force. No statistics are available to identify how many families with children under 18 years old had parents in the labor force.

Education

As shown in Table 7, 18% of the population over 25 years old did not hold a high school diploma. This is higher than in Central Vermont overall where 12% did not hold a high school diploma. 40% of this population group has had some type of education beyond high school compared to 54% for Central Vermont overall.

Table 7: Education of Population Over 25 Years Old		
Population Over 25 Years Old	6,477	%
No Schooling Completed	68	1.0%
To Grade 4	12	0.2%
Grades 5 to 8	466	7.2%
Grades 9 to 12, No diploma	648	10.0%
High School Graduate	2,658	41.0%
Some college, no degree	1,031	15.9%
Associate Degree	446	6.9%
Bachelor's Degree	827	12.8%
Master's Degree	215	3.3%
Professional Degree	69	1.1%
Doctorate Degree	7	0.1%

Seventeen percent of the population over 25 years old had a bachelor's degree or higher. In Central Vermont, 30% of this population group had a bachelor's degree or higher.

Employment

There is almost an even mix between male and females employed and over 16 years old. Table 8 shows the Census industry groups where persons are employed. Education, health, and social services industry is the largest group employing 22% of the population. The industries of manufacturing, retail, and public administration were the next three dominant categories with each employing between 10-15% of the employed population over 16 years old. The industry employment categories for Barre residents is very similar to those in Central Vermont overall. Within Central Vermont education, health, and social services industry employed 22% of the employed population over 16 years old. In addition, the industries of manufacturing, retail, and public administration also employed between 10-15% of the population.

Table 8: Employment Status		
Population 16 Years and Over	7,448	
In Labor Force	4,727	63.5%
Not In Labor Force	2,721	36.5%
Employed Population 16 Years and Over	4,515	
Male Employed	2,298	50.9%
Females Employed	2,217	49.1%
Areas of Employment for Employed Population 16 and Over		
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining Industry	55	1.2%
Construction Industry	262	5.8%
Manufacturing Industry	558	12.4%
Wholesale Trade Industry	175	3.9%
Retail Trade Industry	618	13.7%
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities Industry	132	2.9%
Information Industry	168	3.7%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Rental, Leasing Industry	286	6.3%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management Services Industry	232	5.1%
Education, Health, and Social Services Industry	1,004	22.2%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food Services Industry	307	6.8%
Public Administration Industry	507	11.2%
Other Service Industries	211	4.7%

Commuting Patterns

One-third of the workers over 16 years old reported employment within Barre City. Most workers commuted by motor vehicle. About 7% walked or biked to work. More people carpooled rather than used public transit, reflected in Table 9.

Table 9: General Work and Commuting Patterns		
Workers 16 Year and Over	4,464	
Work in Barre City	1,486	33.3%
Work at Home	165	3.7%
Work Outside Barre City	2,978	66.7%
Commute by Motor Vehicle	3,991	92.8%
Drive Alone	3,295	76.6%
Carpool	686	16.0%
Commute by Public Transportation	30	0.7%
Commute by Bicycle, Foot or Other Means	278	6.5%
Reported Minutes to Work		
Less than 5	248	5.9%
5 to 19	2,703	63.9%
20 to 39	872	20.6%
40 to 59	323	7.6%
60 to 89	84	2.0%
Over 90	69	1.6%

Seventy percent of the workers traveled less than 19 minutes to work and another 21% traveled between 20 to 39 minutes. In comparison, Central Vermont workers traveled slightly more with 53% of the working people commuting under 19 minutes and 31% traveling between 20 to 39 minutes. The lower commuting times are likely due to more employment opportunities in the Barre/Montpelier area and reflect one of the benefits of encouraging development within established growth areas.

Table 10 indicates where Barre residents work. As would be expected from the data in Table 9, almost 75% of the residents work either in Barre City or the nearby towns of Montpelier, Berlin or Barre Town. (See Transportation Section for further discussion on transportation and commuting issues.)

Table 10: Residence to Work Patterns		
Work In	4,464	
Work in Barre City	1,486	33.3%
Montpelier, Berlin and Barre Town	1,841	41.2%
Other Towns in Washington & Orange County	659	14.8%
Other Locations	478	10.7%

Housing Characteristics

Housing Change and Projections

Although the population has slightly declined since 1940, the number of housing units has had small increases of less than 7% during the same time period except for the 1970's. In the 1970's 458 housing units were added. 47% of these units, or 216, were newly built subsidized housing units. Another 120 units can be accounted for by the construction of Highgate Apartments, which in 1991 became subsidized housing. Without considering the subsidized housing and Highgate construction, only 122 units were added in the 1970's. This is a 3.3% increase which is less than previous decades. Without considering subsidized housing units in the 1980's, only 50 units were added between 1980 and 1990, or about approximately 1%.

Year	Total Housing	Absolute Change	% Change Over Decade
1940	3,151		
1950	3,392	241	7.6%
1960	3,608	216	6.4%
1970	3,693	85	2.4%
1980	4,151	458	12.4%
1990	4,321	170	4.1%
2000	4,477	156	3.6%

Complex	Year Built/Converted to Subsidized Housing	Number Units
Green Acres	1,971	50
Washington Apts.	1,970	51
Tilden House	1,973	79
Jefferson	1,976	24
CDW Summer St	1,978	12
North Barre Manor	1,982	120
Highgate *	1,991	120
Total		456
* Highgate was constructed in 1970 but was converted to subsidized housing in 1991.		

In addition to the project based subsidized housing, there are another 269 Section 8 housing vouchers. Central Vermont Land Trust has another 52 units receiving some type of subsidy. Approximately 777 units, or 17% of all housing units, received some type of assistance.⁵ Project based housing is 10% of all available housing.

⁵ Source: Information compiled from multiple data sources by the Planning Commission Housing subcommittee

In summary, given the past trends and given there is not some other major influence, there is no large housing increase projected (See the Housing Section for more discussion and information regarding housing issues.)

Rental Unit Composition

Approximately 53% of the housing units are rentals. Despite the significant addition of subsidized housing units between 1970 to 1982, there was a slight decline in the percent of rental housing units.

Year	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Total Occupied	% Rental
1940	1,246	1,812	3,058	59.3%
1980	2,006	1,997	4,003	49.9%
1990	1,967	2,081	4,048	51.4%
2000	1,993	2,287	4,280	53.4%

Forty percent of the housing units were detached dwellings. Smaller multiple dwelling buildings of 2 to 9 units make up 45% of the overall housing units and 76% of the attached housing units. Larger multiple dwelling buildings of 10 or more units made up 12% of the housing units and 21% of the attached housing units. Within the larger category, there are 444 subsidized housing units, or about 80% of this category.

Type	Number	%
Detached Housing Units	1,801	40.2%
Attached Housing Units	2,651	59.2%
1 Unit	74	1.7%
2 Units	667	14.9%
3 or 4 Units	679	15.2%
5 to 9 Units	673	15.0%
10 to 19 Units	137	3.1%
20 to 49 Units	117	2.6%
50 or More Units	304	6.8%
Mobile Homes	25	0.6%

Over half of Barre City’s housing units were constructed prior to 1939 with the remaining construction occurring mostly from 1940 to 1979 with slightly less being built since 1980. Barre’s housing stock is slightly older than Central Vermont overall where 35% of the housing stock was built before 1939.

Year	Number	%
1980 to 2000	471	10.5%
1960 to 1979	746	16.7%
1940 to 1959	714	15.9%
Prior to 1939	2,546	56.9%

Year	Population	Occupied Housing	Household Size
1970	10,209	3,523	2.9
1980	9,824	4,003	2.5
1990	9,482	4,048	2.3
2000	9,211	4,220	2.2

The average household size for Barre City in 2000 was 2.2 which is slightly less than the overall state household size of 2.4. This would be expected given the number of rental units.

The drop in housing size can not be attributed to a change in housing composition since the percent of rental units has not changed drastically since 1970. On a national level, the drop in housing size is due to families having fewer children and an increase in households without children due to the overall aging of the population. It is assumed this would be similar for Barre City.

Housing Price Trends

Table 17 shows the cost increases in 2004 housing sales based upon an Assessment Department study of residential resales (property sold more than once with a three-year time frame.)⁶ The large annual increases are reflective of increases throughout Vermont. In 2003, the median price of a home in Vermont has risen to \$150,000. This is an increase of nearly 54% from 1996 and about 11% from 2002 alone.⁷

Type	Annual Increase in Cost
Single-family dwellings	15.4%
Two-family dwellings	18.02%
Three-family dwellings	25.87%
Four-family dwellings	24.05
Five or more unit dwellings	19.45%

Table 18 shows the average selling price for various categories.⁸ (See the Housing Section for additional housing data and discussion on housing issues.)

Type	Cost
Condominiums	
Resale Units	\$100,400
New Units	\$159,800
Single-family dwellings	\$117,200
Two-family dwellings	\$106,100
Three-family dwellings	\$113,900
Four-family dwellings	\$127,300

⁶ Source: Barre City Assessment Department study of 100 single-family residences and multiple family dwellings with a total of 132 living units on 44 parcels.

⁷ Source: Between a Rock and Hard Place: Housing and Wages in Vermont, 2004 Update

⁸ Source: Barre City Assessment Department study of 100 single-family residences and multiple family dwellings with a total of 132 living units on 44 parcels.

Land Use

Introduction

The Vermont Planning and Development Act, includes the following land use goals:

- Development should maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact villages and urban centers separated by rural countryside.
- Intensive residential development should be encouraged primarily in areas related to community centers, and strip development along highways should be discouraged.
- Economic growth should be encouraged in locally designated growth areas, or employed to revitalize existing village and urban centers, or both.
- Planning should provide for the wise and efficient use of Vermont's natural resources and facilitate the appropriate extraction of earth resources and the proper restoration and preservation of the aesthetic qualities of the area.

The Planning Commission conducted two studies to develop this section of the plan. First, a review of existing land use regulations was completed by the Planning Commission in conjunction with the City Planning Department. Second, the Planning Commission and Planning Department, in conjunction with the Vermont Forum on Sprawl, conducted a study of the larger vacant parcels and parcels likely to be redeveloped. In addition, public input was obtained through a public forum on land use.

Some general land use patterns are presented in the community profile section. In addition, a detailed analysis of housing issues and development is included in the housing section. Some additional and more specific land use analysis is presented below. This section of the plan primarily focuses on the goals, issues and strategies relating to land use development and land use ordinances.

Land Use Goals

The following land use goals are adopted:

- Encourage development of Barre City as a Micropolitan⁹ in order to avoid sprawl development in the surrounding rural regions.
- Encourage commercial and mixed-used development within the designated downtown area.
- Allow the existing industrial uses to continue and expand to meet the demands of a changing economy.
- Preserve remaining open space areas where environmental and access issues make development undesirable.
- Increase the overall tax base through managed development.
- Preserve at least portions of city-owned properties as open space for outdoor recreation and enjoyment.
- Ensure new retail development be of a scale and scope suitable for a downtown urban environment.

Vacant Land Use Study

There were 31 areas identified by the Planning Commission over two acres in size having either no development or very limited development, or were likely to be redeveloped with significantly different uses. These include larger individually-owned parcels or smaller separately-owned undeveloped parcels that are contiguous. Nine individually-owned parcels, all over 10 acres in size, comprise 551 acres of the

⁹ The US Census defines a Micropolitan as a core geographic area containing a substantial population nucleus, together with adjacent communities having a high degree of social and economic integration with that core where the total population is between 10,000 and 50,000.

vacant or farm lands. Within these nine parcels, 60% is on two parcels — one parcel being 141 acres in size and the other parcel being 190 acres in size. (See Appendix for the vacant area study map.)

The Planning Commission formed a land use subcommittee to complete on-site assessments of the 31 identified areas. Technical assistance was provided by the Vermont Forum on Sprawl. The committee included members of the Planning Commission, local residents, and a representative from the Central Vermont Community Land Trust.

The committee completed site visits of most parcels and provided written assessments. In addition, the Planning and Zoning Administrator reviewed potential development issues with the City Engineer. An effort was made to contact land owners of vacant parcels to discuss anticipated future land uses. Some landowners participated in a land use public forum.

This information was compiled and reviewed by the Planning Commission. Individual assessments were prepared and are included in the Appendix.

The following classes of vacant or redevelopable lands were identified:

- **Lands along undeveloped rights-of-way** — these small parcels, generally under multiple ownerships, were created through old city subdivisions. They exist along rights-of-way without any developed streets. Most lots have no direct access to developed streets. Five areas covering 47 acres exist within this class.
- **Large undeveloped tracts of land** — these four parcels, each under individual ownership, are undeveloped and each are at least 70 acres in size.
- **Downtown industrial area** —this area is comprised of the industrial area between the river and the Merchants Row parking and is under multiple ownership. Recently adopted changes have rezoned this area as Downtown Mixed Use.
- **Undeveloped areas on Allen Street** — these two vacant parcels are zoned commercial-industrial with a smaller area zoned residential.
- **Undeveloped residential properties** — this class of land included 16 mostly vacant parcels, each individually owned, which were suitable for single-family and/or multi-family development and varied in size from 3 acres to 48 acres.

The following is a review of recommended changes within each of these areas. More detailed information can be found within the individual assessments in the Appendix.

Lands along undeveloped rights-of-way

The main issue regarding these properties is access to road frontage and utilities. Multiple ownerships make development difficult. The parcels furthest from public streets are difficult to develop due to high costs for construction of access and utilities.

As recommended in the 2005 Municipal Plan, recent zoning changes have implemented restrictions associated with lots abutting existing, undeveloped rights of way. Such development is allowed on private streets and with connections to private utilities only if a condominium or similar type homeowner association is formed to guarantee adequate maintenance of such facilities.

Large undeveloped tracts of land

These areas represent the major parcels of land left in the City having potential for some preservation of open space. The City "cow pasture" property is recommended to stay at least in partial public ownership with development of outdoor recreation activities. Furthermore, it is recommended the city consider limited multi-family development on part of the property to generate revenue and increase available multi-family housing while still preserving portions for open space and outdoor recreation (See the

facilities section for further discussion of recreation.) The proposed limited multi-family development would require rezoning a portion of the property to PR.

The other large parcels are on the western side of the City next to the Berlin town line. Much of the area is steep, has limited access, and limited sewage and water availability. This area is mostly zoned Conservation. Efforts should be made, both through regulatory changes and other means, to encourage cluster residential developments on these parcels. This will result in the land owners being able to develop their properties while still preserving open space areas. In addition, external funding sources should be explored to determine available funds for purchase of conservation easements or outright purchases of these properties.

As was recommended in the 2005 Municipal Plan, the upper portion of the Bisson farm property was changed to R-10 to allow for single family development within the carrying capacity of the available utilities and road network (See Appendix for map of areas to be considered for rezoning.)

Downtown industrial area

This area was historically the downtown industrial area, but changes in the local economy resulted in some of the buildings being abandoned or converted to commercial uses. A small residential area exists within the center of this area allowing for the potential to redevelop with light industrial uses, commercial and multi-family.

As recommended in the 2005 Municipal Plan, a large portion of the downtown industrial area was rezoned Downtown Mixed Use, allowing industrial uses to continue while encouraging new development to be limited to light industrial, commercial and multifamily. This new district encourages development that compliments the existing downtown area.

Last, this area has potential for enhancement of the Stevens Branch including a possible walkway and similar amenities. It is recommended a setback from the river be required of new development in order to preserve the riverfront area. Riverfront development is further discussed in the environmental section.

Undeveloped areas on Allen Street

This area includes two parcels currently undeveloped. Past plans called for industrial development on at least portions of these properties. However, such development has not occurred and may not be desirable given the distance from the downtown, lack of public transit, and disturbance of environmentally sensitive areas within the parcels. A more desirable development would be single family or multi-family, possibly as a cluster development, in order to avoid wet areas and steeper slopes. In 2003, this area was rezoned from a light-industrial zone (which is no longer present in the current zoning ordinance) to industrial-commercial. This rezoning allows for development of residential uses as conditional uses in addition to development for the commercial and industrial uses. No rezoning change is recommended for this area.

Undeveloped residential properties

The remaining studied parcels included various undeveloped residentially-zoned properties throughout the City. None are recommended for rezoning. PUD developments are encouraged to preserve open spaces and environmentally sensitive areas. Some of these parcels are situated behind properties developed on public streets and have limited accessibility. In the past, proposals have been submitted to the City to allow for shared driveways to access these rear properties. As was recommended in the 2005 Municipal Plan, no shared driveways will be permitted without the creation of a condominium or homeowner association.

Review of Existing Land Use Ordinances

A major rewrite of the Zoning Ordinance was completed and adopted in August, 2003. Since that time certain provisions were found to need further clarification and minor modifications. The Planning Commission completed a review of the existing zoning regulations and found the following areas of clarification and modification were recommended (and since 2005 have been adopted):

- Addition of definition for pole mounted signs
- Clarification and amendments to expiration of and time to complete approved development
- Minor amendments of standards for small parking lots, addition of snow storage provisions and addition of waiver for parking standards
- Modification to allow for waiver of application items not deemed to be applicable
- Clarification of requirements for business signs
- Define the word "street" to mean a class 1, 2 or 3 road
- Addition of provision for one additional small business sign on a property
- Addition of definitions for contracting services and repair shops
- Addition of a definition for a change in use
- Change single-family and two-family dwelling additions and accessory structures in commercial districts to permitted uses instead of conditional uses
- Allow approval of minor home occupations by the Zoning Administrator
- Clarification that accessory structures can be attached to the principal structure
- Exemption of certain minor uses from setback requirements

Proposed draft language and further explanation of the proposed changes is included in the Appendix.

The following reviews are also recommended to be completed:

- Review and modify access standards to not permit lots created without frontage on a public street, require homeowner-type associations for development of lots on undeveloped rights-of-way, and not permit shared driveways as the only means of access to a lot. [Done]
- Review and possibly modify the Design District standards for clarity.
- Review and possibly add regulations of adult uses.
- Review and possibly modify PRD provisions for clarity. [Done]
- Review and modify the subdivision regulations for clarity and streamlining approval process.
- Review and possibly add regulations regarding various types of waste disposal operations, including landfills. (See environmental section for further discussion.)
- Review and possibly add regulations restricting the size of new retail development.

In 2003, the state laws governing land use regulations were modified affecting certain provisions of the existing land use regulations. The following changes are recommended in the zoning and subdivision ordinances in accordance with the new state laws:

- Modify the language regarding existing small lots to allow development on lots in separate and nonaffiliated ownership if they existed prior to January 5, 1974 and were at least 5,000 square feet in size and 40 feet in width. Contiguous lots that come under common ownership are recommended to lose the right to be individually developed unless such development occurs on a configuration of lots meeting required district lot sizes. [Done]
- Modify the required frontage regulations to require that lots only be developed with frontage on a public street, whereby a public street is defined as a class 1, 2 or 3 road. No new lots are recommended to be permitted without public street frontage and reasonable potential for construction of driveways to the proposed building area. [Done]

- Modify the home occupation provision from requiring home occupations to "not change the character" of a neighborhood to "not have an undue effect upon the character of the neighborhood." [Done]
- Modify height restrictions for antennas, wind turbines, and roof-top solar collectors to require them to be within the district height regulations. [Done]
- Add a provision stating certain uses listed in 24 VSA § 4413 are only regulated in regards to those items listed in 24 VSA § 4413. [Done]
- Modify the existing accessory apartment provisions to be in accordance with the required provisions of 24 VSA § 4412(1)e, which allows accessory apartments in any single-family dwelling. [Done]
- Modify the group home regulations as amended in 24 VSA § (a)(g) and clarify the separation requirement between homes is to each group home structure, not the property line.
- Correct inaccurate Vermont State statute section references in current zoning ordinance. [Done]
- References to old sections of Chapter 117, Title 24, should be updated to the current sections. [Done]
- Fences and certain other minor land developments are recommended to be exempt from zoning permits under the provisions of 24 VSA § 4446. [Done]
- Modify the time to record plans to 180 days.

Proposed Implementation Strategies

Based upon a review of the land use analysis and public comments, the following strategies are recommended.

Table 19: Proposed Land Use Strategies				
Strategy	Time frame	Involved Parties *	Resources	Key Tasks
Study and develop a new mixed-use zoning district for the downtown industrial area that includes appropriate light industrial uses, commercial uses and residential.	2005-6 [Done]	PC, PZ, BP	Staff assistance	Develop draft district guidelines Hold public forum with invitations to property owners Finalize guidelines Complete required adoption process
Study and develop final recommendation for exact area for Bisson farm rezoning to R-10	2005-6 [Done]	PC, PZ	Staff assistance	Develop boundaries for rezoning Complete required adoption process
Finalize and adopt the proposed zoning clarification amendments	2005-6 [Done]	PC, PZ	Staff assistance	Finalize changes Complete required adoption process
Finalize and adopt the zoning amendments related to Chapter 117, Title 24	2005-6 [Done]	PC, PZ	Staff assistance	Finalize changes Complete required adoption process

Table 19: Proposed Land Use Strategies

Strategy	Time frame	Involved Parties *	Resources	Key Tasks
Complete a review and possibly modify or add standards regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access standards • Design District standards • Regulations of adult uses • PRD provisions • Subdivision ordinance • Waste disposal operations 	2005-6 [Partially done]	PC, PZ, BP	Staff assistance	Develop new regulations Hold public forum Finalize regulations Complete required adoption process
Study and develop recommendations for limited development of cow pasture property	2005-6 [Partially done]	PC, PZ, Council, Eng	Staff assistance	Develop schematics Hold public forum Present to Council for consideration

* **Bold indicates lead implementing party**

PC-Planning Commission, PZ-Planning and Zoning Administrator, BP-Barre Partnership

Housing

Introduction

The Vermont Planning and Development Act includes several goals directly related to housing, including:

- Plan development to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside
- Ensure the availability of safe and affordable housing for all Vermonters
- Housing should be encouraged to meet the needs of a diversity of social and income groups in each Vermont community, particularly for those citizens of low and moderate income.
- New and rehabilitated housing should be safe, sanitary, located conveniently to employment and commercial centers, and coordinated with the provision of necessary public facilities and utilities
- Sites for multi-family and manufactured housing should be readily available in locations similar to those generally used for single-family conventional dwellings
- Accessory apartments within or attached to single-family residences, which provide affordable housing in close proximity to cost-effective care and supervision for relatives or disabled or elderly persons, should be encouraged

The Planning Commission formed a housing subcommittee to address the above housing goals and to develop draft strategies for the Planning Commission's consideration. Membership included representatives from the City Planning Department, City Assessment Department, Barre Housing Authority, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, Washington County Mental Health Services, Central Vermont Land Trust, Community National Bank, Chase Surveying, and Fecteau Residential, Inc. Public input was obtained through a public forum.

A presentation of general housing data and trends is presented in the Community Profile Section of this plan. Some additional and more specific housing data and analysis is presented in this section. In addition, this section of the plan focuses on the issues and strategies relating to housing.

Housing Goals

The following housing goals are adopted:

- Promote programs and strategies that provide assistance with housing purchases for low-moderate income households
- Promote programs and strategies that provide assistance with rental costs for low-moderate income households
- Promote programs and strategies that help control the rising housing costs
- Increase communication between the various housing organizations operating within the city
- Modify lot size regulations to allow in-fill development to occur at levels already present in neighborhood areas
- Promote a user-friendly environment that encourages residential developers to invest and construct within the city
- Continue efforts to improve rental housing quality through a rental inspection program

Encourage new residential development to locate in Barre City as part of an effort to meet the state housing goal, "to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside."

Housing Turnover Data

In order to better understand why people are buying housing in Barre City, a housing turnover survey was completed. A survey asking demographic questions and some general questions about housing purchase decisions was sent to all residential properties involving valid sales from January 1, 2004 to November 3, 2004 using 2004 Grand List data. A total of 285 surveys were sent out of which 159, or 56%, were returned. (See the Appendix for a completed tabulation of turnover data.) The survey percentage of owner-occupied, rental properties, and owner-occupied rentals correlated closely to the same percentage as the actual survey population. Given the high rate of return and given the close correlation in similar mix of uses, the survey is considered to be valid to draw conclusions. (See the Appendix for a copy of the housing survey.)

The first part of the survey dealt with general information about the new owners. The following are some conclusions:

- 41% of the new owners made improvements, since purchasing their property, indicating that a significant number of new owners bought the properties with the intention of making improvements.
- 36% of the respondents of rental properties were owner-occupied rentals compared to an overall city-wide rate of 44% owner-occupied rental properties.
- Realtors were the top means of searching for properties (used by 44% of the respondents) with the internet, newspaper, and friends being used by 20-27% of the respondents.
- 45% of the owner-occupied respondents previously lived in Barre City, Barre Town or Montpelier, 15% were from other Central Vermont areas, 21% were from elsewhere in Vermont, and 12% were from out-of-state. Although about 8% did not indicate a past location, data reveals that about one-third of the new owners are coming from outside Central Vermont area. Of those outside Central Vermont, 64% are from Vermont.
- About a half of the respondents indicated they considered buying in the surrounding towns of Montpelier, Berlin and/or Barre Town.
- 58% of the respondents commute less than 19 minutes to work. The 2000 Census showed 69% of people commute less than 19 minutes, indicating a slight increase in the distance people are traveling to work. When considering those who previously lived outside of central Vermont, but within the state, only 6% commute less than 19 minutes. It is assumed this increase in commuting time is due to the fact that those previously living further away kept their previous jobs near where they lived before.
- 41% of new owner-occupied households had at least one child living in the household. About 28% of the households had children in the 0 to 5 years old age class. Only 16% of the households had children 6 to 13 years old and 11% of the households had children 14 to 18 years old. There was no available data on children in rental units.
- When asked how long owner-occupant respondents anticipated staying in their new home, there was a mix of responses. About 40% plan on staying less than five years indicating their home is a starter home. Approximately 30% anticipated staying 5 to 10 years and another 30% anticipated a long term stay of over 10 years.
- When considering those with children under five years old, 36% of the owner-occupied respondents anticipated staying less than 5 years, 28% anticipated staying 5 to 10 years and 36% anticipated staying over 10 years in their home. A similar pattern was found with households having children 5 to 13 years old. Overall the distribution of responses to anticipated stay did not seem to vary much regardless if children were present in the household.

The second part of the survey examined how new owners ranked the importance of various items when making a decision to purchase their property. New owners were asked to rank twenty-one items as "little

or no importance," "some importance," "highly important," or "not applicable." Results were tabulated and analyzed for both owner-occupied parcels and rental parcels (including owner-occupied rentals.) (The detailed survey results in the Appendix provide further insight into the ranking priorities.)

A review of the owner-occupied properties reveals the following items as having at least 75% of the respondents ranking the importance as "some importance" or "highly important:"

- Overall quality of property (98%)
- General neighborhood quality (95%)
- Price of property compared to others (93%)
- Level of traffic on street (90%)
- Security of neighborhood (89%)
- Overall regional appeal (79%)
- Availability of housing in area (78%)
- Level of taxes compared to other areas (78%)
- Proximity to work (75%)

Rental property owners had similar rankings:

- Price of property compared to others (94%)
- Overall quality of property (94%)
- General neighborhood quality (92%)
- Level of traffic on street (88%)
- Good rental property investment (88%)
- Security of neighborhood (86%)
- Overall regional appeal (80%)

Shopping convenience, recreation opportunities, quality and availability of local services, desire to live in urbanized area, and proximity to family all received between 50% to 75% rankings for owner-occupied parcels indicating they weighed into the decision process, but not as much as the above issues. The quality of local schools did not rank high overall in considerations. When considering only owner-occupied households with children, 30% of the respondents ranked quality of schools as somewhat important and 42% ranked schools as highly important.

Housing Issues

Upon examination of the housing data, the Housing Subcommittee and the Planning Commission identified the following issues that related to housing in Barre City.

Affordability and Availability of Purchase of Homes

As discussed in the Community Profile Section, cost for single-family and two-family housing increased 15% and 18% in 2004 based upon a study completed by the City Assessor. This is a continuation of steady increases in the last few years.

The following is the average sale price of residential properties:

Type	Cost
Condominiums Resale Units	\$100,400
Condominiums New Units	\$159,800
Single-family dwellings	\$117,200
Two-family dwellings	\$106,100
Three-family dwellings	\$113,900
Four-family dwellings	\$127,300

Normally, a bank loan requirement is that not more than 30% of a household income be spent on housing costs (excluding utilities.) A typical single-family home at a cost of \$120,000, with a 30-year mortgage at 6% interest and with a 5% down payment, requires an annual household income of \$53,570. (See chart below for detailed comparisons of housing costs by type.) In addition, approximately \$8,600 is needed for down payment and closing costs.

The 1999, U.S. Census household income was \$30,393, and the median family income for 1999 was \$42,660. Given an inflationary adjustment of 10.4%, the 2003 median household income would be \$33,553 and the median family income would be \$47,096. The 2002 Vermont Department of Labor annual average wage was \$28,012. It can be concluded that less than half of the families and even more single-person households can not afford to buy a typical house for sale.

Another consideration is the effect of changes in interest rates. A two-percent increase in interest rates requires an additional \$6,050 of income. Given historical trends, it may be safe to assume interest rates will increase, making housing even less affordable.

In comparison, in 2003, the median single-family home cost in Vermont had risen to \$150,000, an increase of nearly 54% from 1996 and about 11% from 2002 alone. A Vermont household needs to earn \$56,090 to afford the median-priced home.¹¹ Indications are that Barre City offers housing at a more affordable price than Vermont overall. Given that one-third of the new buyers are from outside Central Vermont and given the housing prices are higher in other Vermont areas, it is assumed the housing costs are attracting other Vermonters to move to the city.

Housing becomes more affordable when considering purchasing an owner-occupied rental parcel. A typical two-family home at a cost of \$112,140 with a 30-year mortgage at 6% interest and with 5% down payment, requires an annual household income of \$35,100. A typical four-family home at a cost of \$146,483 with a 30-year mortgage at 6% interest and with 20% down payment, requires an annual household income of \$24,100. However, down payment and closing costs for a four-family dwelling is around \$29,000.

¹⁰ Source: Compilation of assessment data as of 4/1/04

¹¹ Source: Between a Rock and Hard Place: Housing and Wages in Vermont, 2004.

Table 21: Comparison of Required Incomes for Various Owner-Occupied Housing Types and Interest Rates¹²

Single Family	Loan Amount	Interest Rate	PITI*	Required income	Assumptions
\$120,000	\$114,000	6.0%	\$1,064	\$42,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single family purchase, average taxes of \$3180 per year • Homeowners insurance at \$500 per year • Need \$8600 including closing costs
\$120,000	\$114,000	7.0%	\$1,139	\$45,000	
\$120,000	\$114,000	8.0%	\$1,217	\$48,000	
Two Unit	Loan Amount	Interest Rate	PITI	Required income	Assumptions
\$112,140	\$106,533	6.0%	\$1,014	\$35,100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rental income of \$600. Tenant pays utilities. • Required income does not include rental income. • Can do with 5% down (\$9000 including closing costs)
\$112,140	\$106,533	7.0%	\$1,084	\$37,900	
\$112,140	\$106,533	8.0%	\$1,157	\$40,900	
Three Unit	Loan Amount	Interest Rate	PITI	Required income	Assumptions
\$119,380	\$95,504	6.0%	\$879	\$24,200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both rentals cost \$600. Tenants pay utilities. • Required income does not include rental income. • Need 20% down (\$27,000 including closing costs)
\$119,380	\$95,504	7.0%	\$942	\$26,800	
\$119,380	\$95,504	8.0%	\$1,007	\$29,500	
Four Unit	Loan Amount	Interest Rate	PITI	Required income	Assumptions
\$146,483	\$117,186	6.0%	\$1,009	\$24,100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each rental unit costs \$600. Tenants pay utilities. • Required income does not include rental income. • Need 20% down (\$33,200 including closing costs)
\$146,483	\$117,186	7.0%	\$1,086	\$27,200	
\$146,483	\$117,186	8.0%	\$1,166	\$30,400	

*PITI: Principal, interest, taxes and insurance
Further assumptions:

- For multi-family units, all sales for each type in years 2004 and 2005 were averaged.
- Three and four unit properties will also require an additional 6 months of PITI in homeowner's bank account in order to qualify for conventional financing. That averages an additional \$5300 for three-family homes and an additional \$6100 for four-family homes.
- For all property types, it is assumed \$3180 per year is required for taxes and \$500 per year is required for homeowners insurance.
- For all multifamily, this was assumed at \$600 per month rent per each non-owner occupied unit.

¹² Source: Prepared for Housing Subcommittee by Lee Youngman, Community National Bank.

Last, affordability is affected by tax rates. Below is the current taxes required to be paid for the average sale units based upon a 2004-2005 Barre City tax rate of \$2.72 for owner-occupied residential property and \$3.1347 for non-residential property.

Type	Owner-occupied Rate	Non-Residential Rate
Condominiums		
Resale Units	\$3,672	\$4,232
New Units	\$4,345	\$5,007
Single-family dwellings	\$3,187	\$3,673
Two-family dwellings	\$2,884	\$3,324
Three-family dwellings	\$3,096	\$3,569
Four-family dwellings	\$3,462	\$3,990

Another way of considering the data is reviewing the actual average residential tax paid. The Vermont Department of Taxes normally uses single-family homes on parcels less than 6 acres in size for this evaluation. In 2003, the average residential tax in Barre City was \$2487. Within Vermont, 116 towns, or 46%, had a higher average residential tax. Within Central Vermont, 12 towns, or 47%, had a higher average residential tax. The neighboring towns of Berlin, Montpelier and Barre Town all had higher average taxes.

The other issue concerning purchasing, is availability. The following is the number of valid residential transfers between January 1, 2003 and December 31, 2004:

Type	Count
Condominiums	35
Single-family dwellings (including mobile homes)	197
Two-family dwellings	48
Three-family dwellings	25
Four-family dwellings	13

A data analysis of the multi-listing sales included, 139 single-family homes sold during 2003 and 2004 (the 58 additional transfers included in assessment data were mobile homes and sales by owner.) The analysis included a review of overall DOM (days on the market.) DOM's in the bottom and top 15% for that year were eliminated in this analysis in order to get an average DOM without including homes that sold very quickly or more slowly due to unusual circumstances.

¹³ Source: Compilation of assessment data as of 4/1/04

¹⁴ Source: Compilation of assessment data as of 4/1/04

Year	Avg. DOM	DOM for bottom 15%	DOM for top 15%	DOM Without Bottom and Top 15%
2003	72	7 or less	176 or more	34
2004	56	5 or less	107 or more	36

The analysis shows single-family homes are selling quickly and availability has become scarce. This seems to also be confirmed by anecdotal information being provided by local realtors. It is assumed the lack of availability is also helping to drive up pricing.

Another aspect for examination is the availability of programs to assist with the purchase of homes by households with lower to moderate incomes. The Central Vermont Land Trust is the primary provider of such assistance through the NeighborWorks HomeOwnership Center. This program is dedicated to expanding homeownership opportunities for people of all income levels in Washington, Orange and Lamoille Counties. The NeighborWorks HomeOwnership Center provides pre-purchase credit and budget counseling, guidance on affordable mortgage financial products, home maintenance education, assistance with home rehabilitation planning, and delinquency consultation services. The HomeOwnership Center also administers loan and grant programs for down payment and other assistance for income-eligible recipients. The Homeland Grant Program provides down payment assistance up to \$20,000.00 for homebuyers with low to moderate income levels in exchange for restrictions which ensure permanent affordability of the property. The Revolving Loan Fund can be used to provide down payment assistance or low-interest property rehabilitation loans for borrowers who are similarly income qualified. There currently are 36 homes purchased through this program. The NeighborhoodWorks HomeOwnership Center also offers assistance with homeowners to prevent foreclosures through budgeting assistance and negotiation with lenders.

Other available homeownership financing programs include programs through the Vermont Housing Finance Agency and USDA Rural Development. A lead abatement program is also by the state through the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. The USDA program provides direct loans to low-income applicants who do not qualify for conventional financing. Financing is available for buying new or existing homes. Applicants must show adequate repayment ability for the loan request. Loan rates are subsidized based upon total household income and may vary by year depending upon household income. The subsidy can be recaptured from a portion of the home appreciation if a sale or refinance occurs within the first five years.

An analysis of the Assessment data also indicates approximately 44% of all rental properties are owner-occupied. This analysis was done by comparing homestead values and total assessment values. (This percentage is very close to a separate analysis done by the Assessment Department where it compared the mailing addresses to the location addresses. Where the two addresses are the same, the rental property is generally owner-occupied.) Table 25 shows the breakdown by type of unit.

Table 25: Owner-Occupied Rental Properties with 2 to 8 Units¹⁵

Class	Total Parcels	Owner- occupied Rental*	Percent Owner- occupied
Two-Family	312	210	67%
Three Units	137	45	33%
Four Units	65	9	14%
Five to Eight Units	68	4	6%
Office and Apts	17	3	18%
Store and Apts	20	2	10%
Totals	619	273	44%

Assessment records indicate there are 35 mobile homes within the city. No mobile home parks exist in the city and all mobile homes are on separate lots. Mobile home parks are permitted as a conditional use within the PR District. There is a set of standards for mobile home parks requiring "a mobile home shall be on a lot not less than 10,000 square feet in area, exclusive of any roads, walks, and common recreation areas." This requirement is overly restrictive and could be prohibitive to establishing a mobile home park. State law requires that reasonable standards be in place to allow for development of mobile home parks. A review of the mobile home park standard should be completed to make sure that provisions are reasonable.

Finance opportunities for manufactured homes are available through local banks, credit unions, and other financial institutions. A variety of loan programs are available for home land/home transactions including conventional (fixed and adjustable rate), VHFA and other secondary market loans requiring as little as 5% down with competitive rates. Mobile homes (Doublewide & Singlewide) have more restrictions and often times are harder to obtain financing. For land/home transactions there is still a variety of programs available through local banks and other financial institutions but it has become increasingly difficult to obtain financing for a home only transaction. This type of loan tends to require a higher interest rate, higher percentage of down payment and a lesser term than a combined land and home transaction. The secondary market tightened its requirements for mobile homes last year and has caused some lenders to no longer sell singlewides on the secondary market and to require 10% down on doublewides if less than A+ credit level.

Recent sales have also indicated an interest in condominium apartment purchases. Between January 1, 2003 and December 28, 2004, there were 35 condominium sales. Currently there are four condominium developments within the city. Current zoning regulations do not prohibit or restrict condominium ownership.

Availability of Land for New Construction and Conversions

Another consideration is the availability of land for new construction including both new plan development and in-fill development. Based upon a land survey of all vacant lands over two acres in size, there currently remains adequate land for new plan development. (See Land Use Section for further discussion.)

However, an examination of required minimum lot size shows current requirements are restricting in-fill development in the PR District. Table 26 shows how existing developed residential use lot sizes

¹⁵ Source: Compilation of assessment data as of 4/1/04

compare to the required lot sizes. In the R-10 district (which permits only single-family housing) 79% of the homes meet or exceed the requirements. However, in the PR District (which permits single-family and multi-family housing), only 46% of the developed residential uses meet the required lot sizes. When considering just the PR multi-family development, only 30% meet the required lot size. When considering just the PR single-family development, 55% meet the required lot size which is only slightly better (See Appendix for maps of lot conformance for R-10 and PR districts.)

Size of Property Compared to Required Size	R-10	PR		
	SFR	SFR and MFR	MFR Only	SFR Only
Conforming — Meets or Exceeds Required Size	79%	46%	30%	55%
75% to 99% of size required	8%	12%	12%	12%
50% to 74% of size required	4%	17%	18%	17%
Less than 50% of size required	2%	25%	40%	16%

The current PR minimum lot size requirements are restricting conversion of single-family homes to apartments and restricting the addition of more units in multi-family dwellings. The Planning Commission set criteria that approximately 80% of the existing uses should be conforming within the PR District. In order to meet that criteria the single-family minimum lot size would need to be approximately 4,800 square feet, the two-family minimum lot size would need to be approximately 5,200 square feet and multi-family dwellings (with three or more units) minimum lot size would need to be 1,500 square feet per unit. The current PR requirements are 10,000 square feet for single-family and two-family, and 8,000 square feet per unit for multi-family with three or more units.

The current requirements are also restricting the development of vacant PR parcels and PR properties with excess acreage. Assessment records show there are 49 vacant PR parcels of which 22 are under 10,000 square feet in size. It is difficult to assess how much additional development could occur on larger developed parcels if the PR minimum lot sizes were changed.

As a result of recommendations in the 2005 Municipal Plan, the City adopted new minimum lot sizes and density requirements for the PR district which more closely reflect the actual uses on the ground.

Recent changes in state law now require that zoning bylaws allow, as a permitted use, one accessory dwelling unit that is located within or appurtenant to an owner-occupied single-family dwelling.

Limitations include:

- The accessory unit is an efficiency or one bedroom apartment
- Unit is accessory and clearly subordinate to the single-family dwelling
- Property wastewater capacity exists
- The units do not exceed 30% of the total habitable floor area of the single-family dwelling
- All applicable setback, coverage, and parking requirements specified in the bylaws are met.

No additional lot area can be required for the accessory apartment except to meet the needs for setbacks, coverage and parking. This required change will increase the potential for apartments in larger single-

family dwellings. It is recommended that these provisions be enacted as outlined in the state law and the Planning and Zoning Administrator be authorized to approve such changes.

Affordability and Availability for Rentals

The 2000 Census indicates 48% of all occupied housing units were rentals. The 2000 Census reports the median gross rental, regardless of the number of bedrooms and including utilities, as \$473. The U.S. Department of Housing lists the following as 2004 rents for Washington County (data is not available at the city level):

Type	Fair Market Rent	Median Rents (Includes utilities)
0 bedroom unit	\$399	\$423
1 bedroom unit	\$494	\$524
2 bedroom unit	\$666	\$707
3 bedroom unit	\$833	\$883
4 bedroom unit	\$935	\$992

For Vermont overall, the 2004 Fair Market rent for a two-bedroom unit was \$717, slightly higher than the Washington County's \$666 Fair Market rent for a two-bedroom.

To pay for a two bedroom apartment at Fair Market rent requires \$26,640 in income, or an hourly wage of \$12.80. The annual average 2002 Vermont Department of Labor wage is listed as \$28,012. However, 33% of the households and 19% of the families earned less than \$20,000 in 1999 according to the Census. These income levels make a two bedroom unit unaffordable without some type of subsidy.

With the designated downtown, there are an unknown number of upper story apartments. The condition and status of these units are not documented. A study is underway to inventory the downtown upper story uses and evaluate potential reuse or improvements possible. It is desirable to maintain apartment of at least moderate quality in the upper stories of downtown buildings.

Housing Stock Conditions

In 2004, the City of Barre Council approved a rental housing inspection program similar in requirements to the HUD Section 8 inspection program. The goal of this program is to establish and maintain a minimum housing quality level. No data is available documenting existing housing conditions although anecdotal evidence from the Building Department indicates there are some rental units in considerable disrepair. A database to track inspections and violations has been developed for the Building Department. An analysis of this data should be completed after a year of the inspections to determine the level of disrepair and to determine any patterns.

As discussed above, almost two-thirds of the two-family units are owner-occupied and one-third of the three-family units are owner-occupied. It is assumed that owner-occupied housing generally tend to lead to better maintained housing. This assumption should be verified once the rental inspection program has been underway. Increasing the level of owner-occupied rentals is considered to be desirable and a means to increasing the overall quality of rental properties.

In addition to financing for purchase, the Central Vermont Community Land Trust operates a revolving loan fund that finances home improvements in the City. Funds can be used to correct health and safety issues, create handicapped accessibility, and make improvements that will conserve energy. Borrowers

must have a household income below the county median. Loan maximum is \$15,000 per unit or \$25,000 for a duplex.

The USDA Rural Development also offers low-interest loans and grants to very-low income families and individuals who own a home in need of repair. Last, the Central Vermont Community Action Council also provides energy conservation and weatherization modifications to homes and apartments. These are available at no cost to residents who meet income eligibility guidelines regardless of whether the home is rented or owned.

Elderly Housing Needs and Special Population Needs

The Housing subcommittee also considered the housing needs of special population groups such as the elderly, homeless, and mentally handicapped. Although no empirical data was available, the anecdotal information seems to indicate that the local regulations were not restricting development of needed housing. Instead, inadequate funding has resulted in programs not being able to meet the special population needs. Waiting lists exist for subsidized housing opportunities. Funding for these programs are generally provided through state and federal sources and are beyond the control of local government. Proposed federal funding cuts will result in additional people being unable to meet basic housing needs.

Community education was also considered an important element of meeting the special population housing needs. Discrimination and community concerns against mentally handicapped persons, subsidized housing projects, and programs for criminal re-entry housing programs can be lessened through a broad community education programs.

Regional Housing Distribution

In 2008, the Central Vermont Regional Plan adopted a Housing Distribution Plan as part of its Regional Plan. CVRPC's Housing Committee developed the Plan to encourage the development of more meaningful and practical local housing plans and to promote the sustainable and efficient distribution of housing region-wide. It was formulated with the aim of ensuring that all towns continue to contribute similar (or in the case of municipalities with more infrastructure like Barre City, greater) percentages of the Region's total housing in the future than they did in the year 2000. By doing so, it is hoped that the burdens and benefits of providing housing can be balanced among Central Vermont communities and sprawling, inefficient patterns of growth can be curtailed.

This document asks municipalities to plan for a future estimated housing need through the year 2020. Specifically, the CVRPC Plan asks municipalities to provide:

- “A detailed map or maps of the town showing the town’s preferred locations for future housing units – consistent with current or proposed zoning – for 80 percent of the anticipated 10 to 15 year housing allocation.
- Mapping updates that identify the locations and number of housing units created in the town since the previous town plan adoption.”

While municipalities are under no obligation to comply with the guidelines of *Distribution Plan*, inclusion of the above items *will* be necessary in order for any plan adopted after January 1, 2009 to receive regional “approval” (per Chapter 117, Section 4350).

The Distribution Plan allocates 476 new housing units to Barre City over the next ten years (2010-2020). This total exceeds other CVRPC forecasts for this same period. CVRPC employed this higher figure in response to both a perceived Region-wide housing crises and a desire to locate residences in close

proximity to jobs and in locations that have adequate infrastructure capacity (sewer, water, public transit, etc.) to accommodate higher densities of development. Furthermore, it is recognized that if Barre City's population (both in raw numbers and as a percentage of Regional totals) continues to shrink, the City's vitality would suffer and new housing development will continue to push out into Central Vermont's more rural communities. CVRPC believes that such a future would threaten to undermine Vermont's primary statutory planning goal: *"To plan development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside."*

While CVRPC's numbers may seem high given the trends over recent decades and the current economic climate, it is important to emphasize that CVRPC views the City's response to the Distribution Plan as a planning exercise. According to CVRPC: *"The projected housing demand numbers are not quotas or targets and we will not be requiring **implementation** of the 80% "growth zone". We are most interested in knowing that municipalities are cognizant of where housing growth is currently occurring, and thinking about where it should occur in the future, in their respective communities."* As such, it makes sense for the City to plan for this growth, as the housing market is subject to change and such growth is likely to come eventually.

To meet these Regional Plan requirements the City Planning Commission first requested the development of a map showing the location of all new housing units developed in the past five years (2005-2009). There were approximately 55 units developed in this time with many being single-family units developed in the residential-10 district but also new apartment units in the planned-residential and other districts.

To determine if the City Zoning bylaws posed a burden to developers creating new units the Planning Commission reviewed a CVRPC build out analysis that looked from 2000-2060. That analysis showed adequate capacity within the existing zoning to accommodate expected growth through 2060.

The City, through zoning changes and other activities over the past five years, has taken the following actions to encourage in-fill development:

- Zoning revisions to incorporate statutory changes for the creation of accessory apartments,
- Zoning revisions that reduce minimum lot size for single home developments and multi-unit housing,
- Creation of an inventory of developable parcels in the City, which is posted on the City website,
- Zoning revisions to incorporate statutory changes for the creation of Planned Unit Developments.

It is the opinion of the Barre City Planning Commission that it is the housing market that is driving housing development in the City rather than zoning, sewer capacity, water infrastructure, transportation, or other factors.

Given the fact that Barre City is geographically smaller and more homogeneous in its existing land use than most municipalities, the City's "preferred allocation map" (as defined in the Regional Plan) simply confines 80% of these allocated new units to areas within sewer and water services zones outside of the Conservation District.

Proposed Implementation Strategies

Based upon a review of data and based upon comments at the housing public forum, the following potential strategies are recommended for consideration.

Table 28: Proposed Housing Strategies

Strategy	Timeframe	Implementing Parties *	Resources/Funding Required	Key Tasks
Revise PR District minimum lot sizes to more closely correspond to existing residential lot sizes. The following is recommended minimum lot sizes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5,000 square feet for single- and two-family units with conditional uses of 4,000 square feet • 2,000/unit for over units with over 7 units requiring conditional use and specific siting requirements 	2004-5 [Partially done]	PC, PZA	Staff Time	Incorporate into other recommended zoning changes
Create a program to encourage owner-occupied rental properties by proving financing of additional down payment funds required for rental properties. In addition, provide landlord education to those considering owning owner-occupied rental property.	2005-6	CVLT	Staff Time	Modify current loan guidelines
Modify existing \$300,000 revolving loan fund to allow funds be used for conversions of single-family homes to multi-family units or for conversions to include accessory apartments	2005-6	CVLT	Staff Time	Modify current loan guidelines
Monitor and analyze housing inspection program to determine any patterns regarding rental housing in disrepair	2005	PZA, PC	Staff Time	Analyze data and report results to PC
Review mobile home park standards to make sure they are reasonable and consider changing the 10,000 square foot requirement for each mobile home	2004-5	PC, PZA	Staff Time	Incorporate into other recommended zoning changes
Change single-family housing accessory apartment provisions to correspond to required state law	2004-5 [Done]	PC, PZA	Staff Time	Incorporate into other recommended zoning changes
Consider methods to use tax stabilization to increase available housing and to improve housing stock conditions	2004-5	BP, PZA, Council	Staff Time	Develop a subcommittee to review tax stabilization criteria
Inventory downtown building upper stories to establish suitability for conversion to apartments and to	2004-5	PZA, PC, BP	Staff Time, Planning grant	Create inventory Hire consultant Complete

Table 28: Proposed Housing Strategies

establish opportunities to improve existing apartment conditions			(secured)	analysis
Increase communications between housing organizations and the City through formation of a housing task force to discuss housing issues and needs, lobby for needed housing legislation, and maintain a web site with available city housing resources.	2005-6	CVLT , BHA, other housing groups, PZ	Staff Time, Planning grant	Determine lead agency, establish goals and objectives
* Bold indicates lead implementing party				

PZA – Planning and Zoning Administrator, PC – Planning Commission , BP – Barre Partnership, CVLT – Central Vermont Land Trust, BHA — Barre Housing Authority

Downtown Revitalization

Introduction

The Vermont Planning and Development Act includes the following economic development-related goals:

- Economic growth should be encouraged in locally designated growth areas
- Planning should provide for a strong and diverse economy providing satisfying and rewarding job opportunities while maintaining high environmental standards, and expanding economic opportunities in areas with high unemployment or low per capita incomes.

Downtown Barre has long been a commercial center for Central Vermont. In response to disinvestment and growing competition from shopping centers in neighboring communities, merchants and community leaders established a non-profit Main Street revitalization organization in the 1980s. This organization evolved into the Barre Partnership in 1997 and became the designated downtown organization under Vermont's downtown program. Over the past twenty years, business, government and civic leaders have completed many projects and improvements maintaining downtown Barre as an active business and retail center with a growing number of arts and cultural attractions.

To better understand downtown Barre's market position, define its future market directions, and formulate a strategy to retain and expand its customer markets, the Barre Partnership and Barre City retained Karl F. Seidman Consulting Services and Mt. Auburn Associates to undertake a market analysis and formulate a marketing strategy for downtown Barre. The study presents the recommended Downtown Marketing Strategy, drawing upon findings from demographic and economic analysis, customer and business surveys and local community input. Formulation of the Downtown Marketing Strategy was based upon:

- An inventory of downtown businesses
- A detailed analysis of secondary demographic and economic data
- A random telephone survey of 469 households in the primary and secondary market areas
- A survey of 39 businesses
- Focus groups conducted with six stakeholder groups: (1) arts, cultural and tourist attractions; (2) bankers and economic development professionals; (3) young adult residents; (4) property owners and real estate professionals; (5) retail and service businesses, and (6) town officials.
- Interviews with major arts, cultural and tourist attractions, government leaders, and economic development organizations
- Two community forums: one held to formulate a downtown vision and select future market directions and a second to review strategies and prioritize action steps.
- Meetings with the Market Study Committee

This section presents the Executive Summary for the report. The 42-page study titled "Downtown Barre Marketing Strategy and Action Plan" completed by Karl F. Seidman Consulting Services dated March 2005 is hereby adopted by reference as part of this municipal plan.

Executive Summary of Market Study Report

To evaluate downtown Barre's market position and create a strategy to retain and expand its customer markets, the Barre Partnership and Barre City hired Karl F. Seidman Consulting Services and Mt. Auburn Associates to conduct a market study and formulate a downtown marketing strategy. This report presents the recommended Downtown Marketing Strategy based on demographic and economic analysis, customer and business surveys and community input. The strategy advances shared goals by

targeting key market opportunities, branding key downtown strengths, and applying successful approaches from other communities' experiences. A community-wide commitment to implementation with many organizations assuming new activities is central to the strategy's success. New funding, staff and/or volunteer resources will be needed for some organizations to fully implement these new responsibilities.

Downtown Vision and Market Directions

A shared vision for downtown Barre emerged from surveys, community forums and focus groups reflecting the following desired long-term qualities:

- A diverse mix of stores and activities that encourage gathering and strolling downtown
- A special pedestrian-oriented environment with less truck traffic, better lighting and crosswalks, more flowers and green space, that is cleaner and more attractive
- Better coordinated downtown marketing, store hours and shopping opportunities
- A center for socializing and entertainment, with many restaurants, events, cultural activities, nightlife and gathering places

Three market directions were selected, based on the market analysis and community input, providing the best basis for strategies to strengthen downtown branding and expand its market:

- **Community and Convenience Shopping Center** to expand downtown's current role as a shopping destination and center for community activities with more varied stores, activities and effective marketing.
- **Historic Downtown** to enhance downtown Barre's appeal to existing customers, young adults, central Vermont residents and tourists by enhancing and showcasing its historic buildings and landmarks and promoting its diverse culture, connections to the Granite industry and key historic events and themes.
- **Arts, Culture, and Entertainment Center** to advance downtown as an arts and entertainment center by expanding and better promoting its arts, cultural and entertainment offerings.

Recommended Strategies and Action Steps

Five strategies are proposed to expand consumer markets, strengthen downtown Barre's branding, market position and offerings, and increase long-term implementation capacity.

Strategy One: Build an Attractive and Welcoming Downtown Environment

Expanding Barre's customer base depends on making downtown a more attractive and welcoming place, where people feel safe and comfortable and want to linger, stroll and shop.

Key recommended action steps to create a more attractive and welcoming downtown include:

- Ensuring the completion of the North Main Street reconstruction with a community wide lobbying effort and an active design review process with Vermont Transportation.
- Installing art and historic exhibits in empty store windows and vacant buildings.
- Developing a partnership between teen residents and businesses to involve youth in downtown activities and reduce public safety concerns about teenagers hanging out.
- Establishing a downtown clean-up and beautification squad that organizes volunteers and hires teens to help maintain a clean and attractive downtown environment.
- Create an attractive gateway at the northern downtown entrance.
- Establish a façade improvement program with design assistance and low-cost loans to motivate property owners to improve their façades and promote high quality designs.
- Install aesthetic lighting of historic buildings, trees, window displays, and business interiors to improve downtown's historic and aesthetic nighttime environment.

- Implement a public safety partnership to address customer perceptions of public safety in the downtown that may deter shopping and dining.
- Commission artists to design signs and streetscape elements.

Strategy Two: Coordinate and Expand Business Attraction and Retention Activities

Barre has a strong and diverse business base, but needs to reuse several vacant buildings and expand its retail diversity to appeal to a larger customer base. The recommended action steps for business recruitment include:

- Focus business recruitment on five target businesses: restaurants, cafes, specialty food/grocery stores, arts/crafts/gift retailers and home furnishing stores.
- Designate Barre Area Development as the business recruitment coordinator (BRC) to coordinate strategy implementation, undertake direct marketing; and serve as the contact person and ombudsman for firms. A memorandum of understanding should be prepared to formalize this role.
- Create a recruitment package with effective collateral materials to make the case for locating in downtown Barre and provide useful information on how to start a business. Key materials include a Market Profile on downtown's customer markets; a Community Profile on Barre and Central Vermont as a place to live and do business; a Guide to Starting a Business in Barre; a Downtown Revitalization Brief on the downtown improvement strategy; and an up-to-date listing of downtown space to lease and buy.
- Undertake an initiative to recruit target businesses. A mix of formal and informal approaches are needed to reach existing businesses, new entrepreneurs and people interested in moving to Barre and to successfully recruit businesses.
- Expand efforts to develop vacant and underused buildings. A combination of community pressure, stronger enforcement of city codes, and identifying new owners with an interest in acquiring the property are needed.

Strategy Three: Expand Downtown Arts and Cultural Activities and Strengthen Their Connection to Regional Tourism Attractions

Augmenting and more effectively leveraging Barre's solid base of arts and cultural activities to make downtown a more vibrant and attractive destination for area residents and visitors is a key component of the overall downtown marketing strategy. Additional action steps to strengthen the strategic value of its arts and culture activities for downtown include:

- Produce a monthly arts and events calendar to supply a central and high quality source of arts information. The calendar should be widely distributed at arts organizations, government offices, churches, restaurants, retail locations, and the state's Visitor Centers. Copies also could be inserted in central Vermont newspapers. A web-site with the calendar should also be created and linked to the web-sites of other organizations.
- Add events at the Vermont History Center. The Center's current lecture and performance schedule should be expanded to include new events targeted to local residents and visitors. One option is a series of events focusing on the state's history and genealogy.
- Establish joint promotions with key attractions. The City and Barre Partnership should use joint promotions to broaden the marketing of arts and culture activities. Joint promotions can be developed both among arts and cultural organizations and between these organizations and the business community.
- Expand downtown festivals and events. Add a few new programs and events to broaden Barre's existing successful festivals and fill in seasonal gaps. This effort should include reviewing the pay-off from current events and culling ideas from the experiences of other small communities.

- Create a strong Central Vermont regional identity around granite-related attractions by consolidating granite-related attractions and activities into a highly visible and critical mass of destinations and events and integrating them more effectively into the regional tourism promotion infrastructure. This will help Barre and Central Vermont fully capitalize on this first-class cultural asset and its status as a premier destination for granite-related activities.

Strategy Four: Undertake a Sustained Cooperative Marketing and Promotion Initiative

With growing competition on several fronts, downtown Barre needs to aggressively market itself as a destination and coordinate advertising to (1) establish a strong and positive brand image for downtown Barre; (2) retain and increase patronage among its core customer base; and (3) attract a greater share of the young adults and visitor markets. The following action steps are recommended to achieve these goals:

- Establish a cooperative downtown advertising campaign to market the overall downtown while advertising individual stores. Sustained regular newspaper and radio advertisements should be included in the campaign.
- Create a downtown map and guide with a comprehensive listing of downtown stores, restaurants and attractions. Additional simple fliers can build recognition for three large clusters: dining and entertainment; clothing and gift stores; and home supply/home improvement. Distribute guides in downtown stores and destinations, the Montpelier and I-89 Visitor Centers, major regional attractions, lodging locations, and major employers.
- Organize a "buy local" campaign to capitalize on strong customer recognition that shopping downtown helps the local economy. This campaign should use a grass roots marketing approach to directly motivate residents to shop at locally owned downtown stores and foster a community ethic for shopping downtown.
- Organize a "Make a Night of It" promotion to expand recognition and patronage of downtown evening offerings and use these dining and entertainment venues to encourage downtown shopping.
- Establish sales promotions linked to major events in which stores hold a special sale around and during the event both to attract more people downtown to the event and to encourage shopping by people who come to the event. Barre Homecoming Days is a first candidate to develop and test this promotional approach.
- Use a common logo and consistent themes and images in key materials and promotions, including the cooperative ads, Barre Partnership materials, downtown event and festival posters to strengthen downtown branding.

Strategy Five: Expand funding, capacity and community support for the Barre Partnership

The Barre Partnership has successfully spearheaded downtown revitalization for many years, but new resources are needed to successfully implement the downtown marketing strategy. The following action steps will strengthen the Partnership's capacity and expand community commitment to downtown improvement initiatives:

- Formalize membership and dues. The Partnership's new membership and dues system is an important step to clarify all are welcome to participate in the organization, obtain more predictable annual revenue, and expand its membership and revenue base.
- Recruit community-wide volunteers. The Partnership should launch a community-wide volunteer recruitment campaign. Tools to recruit new volunteers include contacting recent community forum participants, radio public service announcements, news articles, and one-on-one outreach by staff, board and committee members.
- Create a monthly e-newsletter to keep members and supporters informed about the Partnership's activities and upcoming meetings and events.

- Update and regularly review staff and committee work plans. Each committee should update its work plan to reflect new projects and responsibilities under the marketing strategy. The Executive Director's work plan should also be revised and reviewed on a quarterly basis.
- Expand financial support for a full-time staff person and administrative staff. The current part-time staffing is insufficient to implement the marketing strategy. Increased annual city funds and business pledges, perhaps on a 50/50 basis, is a quick way to raise the funding needed to readily put in place full-time staffing for implementation.
- Institute an annual celebration. The Partnership should proceed with its planned annual awards dinner and make the event a fun celebration designed to attract a broad group of volunteers and celebrate their contribution to, and progress in, improving downtown Barre.
- Create new subcommittees for key tasks. Three new committees are recommended to focus on priority projects and facilitate new partnerships: (1) an Arts, Culture and Tourism committee to implement Strategy Three; (2) a Public Safety Committee to work on public safety issues; and (3) a subcommittee of the design committee to focus on advocacy and design review for the North Main Street reconstruction.
- Organize a monthly breakfast meeting for businesses to network and build trust, stay informed and engaged in downtown improvement efforts; and learn about important local and regional resources and issues.
- Focus the Barre Partnership's mission on downtown. Barre City would be better served by having the Barre Partnership focus exclusively on downtown initiatives and establishing a separate economic development committee to direct work on the city's overall economic development agenda.

Preservation of Resources and Environment

Introduction

The Vermont Planning and Development Act includes an environmentally-related goal to provide for the wise and efficient use of Vermont's natural resources and to facilitate the appropriate extraction of earth resources and the proper restoration and preservation of aesthetic qualities of the area. Barre City has significant development, but is not "built out." Large undeveloped tracts of land that include environmentally sensitive areas and provide for open green space are important to the community. Clean rivers exist having potential for re-development. Unfortunately, existing and past development has also left the community with some environmentally hazardous sites and blighted areas. (See Appendix for map of environmentally sensitive areas)

Environmental Goals

- The following environmental goals are adopted:
- Balance the desire for compact urban development with the need to preserve certain amounts of open space
- Provide for the adequate and safe disposal of residential waste
- Encourage cluster type housing development on larger tracts of land
- Restore and maintain river frontage and improve river bank stabilization, appearance and public access

Larger Undeveloped Tracts of Land

The Planning Commission completed a study of undeveloped parcels including four parcels that are over 70 acres in size each (See the land use section for a comprehensive review of this study and Appendix for vacant land map.) The City provides for, and encourages, planned residential development to allow for preservation of open spaces. In addition, the current zoning includes over 300 acres of land zoned conservation. Much of this area has steep slopes and is wet, limiting development potential. The primary values of this conservation land is wildlife habitat and low-impact recreation. Some of the area has been logged over the years and is a diverse and productive mix of habitat types supporting abundant wildlife, including turkey, deer, bear, bobcat, moose, and many other species of birds. The upper section of this area is farm land with open fields.

As discussed in the land use section, a small percentage of this area is recommended to be rezoned to R-10 residential, however, the majority of the area is not recommended for rezoning. Furthermore, efforts should be made, both through regulatory changes and other means, to encourage cluster residential developments on these parcels. This will result in the land owners ability to develop their properties while still preserving open space areas. In addition, external funding sources should be explored to determine available funds for purchase of conservation easements or outright purchases of these properties.

Canales Wetlands

A two acre parcel of land at the corner of Pleasant Street and Fortney Place was recently purchased by the Capital Area Land Trust, Inc. in order to preserve a significant wetland. Plans call for developing a small wooded park with walking trails. The City supports these efforts and encourages development to occur through volunteer efforts.

Williams Lane Brownfield

A .87 acre parcel at the end of Williams Lane next to the Stevens Branch currently is listed as a brownfield site due to coal tar remaining in the soil. The State currently operates wells to monitor the

movement of the coal tar from the site. The area can not be disturbed to any degree, although indications are the coal tar movement is limited. In addition, there is potential for the parcel by "capping off" the site with an impervious surface, further reducing coal tar movement. No funds currently exist to remove the hazardous materials. It is recommended this site continue to be monitored and the City encourage capping off the site to allow uses compatible with area. It is further recommended that the City continue investigating partnerships with state, federal, or private entities to bring this site to finale.

Riverfront Preservation

The Stevens Branch, which is over 3.5 miles long, runs northwest across the City. The Jail Branch is over 1.5 miles long and joins the Stevens Branch behind 121 South Main Street. Over 145 properties include a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial uses abutting these two rivers. Much of the land next to the Jail Branch is undeveloped steep slopes, while most land abutting the Stevens Branch is more gentle, with the exception of the area next to Route 62. Due to the terrain, the Stevens Branch has considerably more adjacent development.

Few planning efforts have been made to preserve the riverfront areas and no land use regulations exist to protect these areas except for floodplain management controls. The Friends of the Winooski and similar such organizations have been formed to help educate the public to reduce pollution of the Winooski watershed and promote wildlife habitat, scenic value, and recreational opportunities related to the Winooski. The City endorses these educational efforts.

The City should take a more proactive approach to preserving our river fronts. A study of riverfront vegetative management should be pursued. Furthermore, possible regulations to preserve vegetation and shore lines along the rivers should be considered.

Within the downtown area, the Stevens Branch runs through an industrial area that is anticipated to be redeveloped with new mixed uses over the next decade. This redevelopment presents an opportunity to improve the appearance of the riverfront with public walkways, landscaping, and lighting. Such improvements would allow residents to rediscover this natural resource. Riverfront improvements would require acquisition of public easements over private land and considerable public investments in walkways. External funding should be sought to help cover the costs for design and implementation. Discussions should be held with landowners in this area about such a walkway in order to gain their input and support.

Waste Disposal

Siting of landfills, transfer stations, recycling processing plants and hazardous waste facilities require a difficult balance between meeting a regional need while still protecting the environment, abutting property rights, and available community resources. Within the last five years, there have been efforts to locate a new landfill within the Barre Town/Barre City area.

Currently, the Barre City zoning ordinance allows landfills, landfill collection sites, solid waste incinerators, solid waste, and transfer facilities as conditional uses within the industrial zone. Recycling centers are allowed as permitted or conditional uses within the commercial, commercial-industrial and industrial zones. No standards, beyond the general conditional use review criteria, apply to these waste disposal facilities. State planning laws allow regional solid waste facilities, certified under 10 V.S.A. Chapter 159, to " be regulated only with respect to location, size, height, building bulk, yards, courts, setbacks, density of buildings, off-street parking, loading facilities, traffic, noise, lighting, landscaping, and screening requirements, and only to the extent that regulations do not have the effect of interfering with the intended functional use."

The City of Barre is a member of the Central Vermont Solid waste Management District (CVSWMD.) Barre City utilizes the CVSWMD as the primary regulatory agency controlling the siting of new landfills. In May 2005, CVSWMD proposed amendments to their Solid Waste Implementation Plan (SWIP) including new landfill siting criteria. The new criteria would not allow a landfill within Barre City given the available vacant land that is zoned industrial. However, landfill development in the neighboring towns could have a substantial affect on the Barre City road system and city property owners.

An ad hoc committee of the CVSWMD was formed to consider, discuss and return recommendations to the CVSWMD Board. Four public hearings were held to review the proposed siting criteria. The May 2005 draft proposed siting criteria is acceptable to the City. However, the criteria requirements should not be made any less stringent in the future. The final version of the siting criteria, if modified from the May 2005 version, should be reviewed by the Planning Commission for comments.

When reviewing a proposed landfill site, the impact of additional waste disposal vehicles on Barre City arterial roads should be closely evaluated. Route 302, which serves as a major arterial through Barre City runs through the downtown area. This area already suffers from the problems associated with truck traffic in a downtown area. Additional truck traffic resulting from a landfill should not travel through the downtown area on a regular basis. In addition, Route 14 runs mostly through high density residential areas and is not suitable for additional truck traffic.

Proposed Implementation Strategies

The following potential strategies are recommended for consideration.

Table 29: Proposed Environmental Strategies				
Strategy	Time frame	Involved Parties *	Resources	Key Tasks
Study and consider possible land use regulation amendments to promote good vegetative management along river fronts	2006-7	PC, PZ, CO	Staff time, Planning grants	Develop study criteria/RFP Seek funding if needed Conduct study Develop possible regulations
Study potential development of walkway along the Stevens Branch	2006-7	PZ, PC, BP, landowners	Staff time, Planning grants	Hold public forum Develop RFP Seek grants Conduct study
Review regional solid waste plan (SWIP)	2006-7	PC, PZ, CO, ANR, SW	Staff time	Review SWIP May 2005 draft is modified
<p>* Bold indicates lead implementing party PC-Planning Commission, PZ-Planning and Zoning Administrator, BP-Barre Partnership, CO- Council, ANR-Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, SW-Central Vermont Solid Waste District</p>				

Child Care

Introduction

One of the newest planning goals of Vermont Planning and Development Act is "to ensure the availability of safe and affordable child care and to integrate childcare issues into the planning process, including child care financing, infrastructure, business assistance for child care providers, and childcare workforce development." The Planning Commission formed a day care subcommittee which included a Planning Commission member, a representative from Washington County Family Center, and the City Planner, to discuss issues related to childcare and to develop strategies for implementation. Public input was obtained through a public meeting. An invitation to this meeting was mailed to all local providers to discuss the issues. Comments were also requested from the local child care network.

Child Care Goals

The following child care goals are adopted:

- Ensure local land use regulations do not interfere with the development of new child care facilities when in appropriate locations according to size
- Increase communications between the City, the child care provider network, and Washington County Family Center in order to better understand child care issues and needs
- Assist potential new child care providers with local approvals and direct them to potential funding and development assistance

Capacity Compared to Demand¹⁶

The 2000 U.S. Census reported that 53.5% of all Barre City families had related children under 18 years old. Furthermore, 11.3%, or 261 families, had children under 6 years old. Married-couple families and female householders had similar percentages of families with children under 6 years old, or 12.4% and 9.5% respectively. In the married families, 80% of the husbands were in the labor force and 63% of the wives were in the labor force. Within other family types, 71% of the householder heads were in the labor force. Although the Census does not directly address households with children under 6 years old and with parents who work, the above data clearly indicates there are many children with working parents.

The State classifies and regulates child care into licensed child care centers, licensed home care and registered home care. As of November, 2003, the following is a breakdown of local child care service available. It is important to note that, legal exempt child care services (LECC) are not included in this figure along with other unregulated services such as relatives and friends. LECC's are defined to generally include care for not more than two families including that of the provider. Families using LECC's are permitted to use reduced state subsidies for payment of services.

¹⁶ Data for the information in this section was compiled from Child Care Services Division report (herein referred to as the CCSD Report) published January, 2003 by the State of Vermont Child Care Services Division and the Family Center of Washington County (herein referred to as the Family Center) unless otherwise noted.

	Barre City		Washington County
	Total	Capacity	Total
Home Day Care	31	186 (6 wk-5yrs) 124 (school age)	75
Licensed Centers	6	97	34

According to the CCSD report, "child care programs reported that they are generally full or nearly full-to-capacity... When asked did they receive requests for care they could not meet, a sizable portion — from 15% for school-age children to 39% for infants — said "yes". The study only contacted providers and did not reflect actual demand since parents and families were not contacted.

The Family Center has found there is a high demand for child care that can not be met. For the first 9 months in 2003, the Center had the following number of calls:

Age of Child	# Calls	% of Calls
Pregnant	39	6.6%
0-1	149	25.2%
1-2	125	21.1
2-3	59	10.0%
3-5	79	13.4
5-6	49	8.3%
6-12	91	15.4
Total	591	

Over half of all calls were for child care services for children under 2 years old. The Family Center also reported some providers have asked not to refer any more infants to their programs because they have an existing waiting list. They also reported, in the Washington County area, there is a 1 to 3 year waiting period for infant care. There seems to be a clear need for additional child care services, especially for infant care.

Child care services outside of the city also need to be considered. The 2000 US Census reports 66% of the Barre City working residents work outside of Barre City.

Time Spent in Daycare

According to the CCSD report "about one third of Vermont's children in regulated programs are receiving care for eight to nine hours per day. About 7% are receiving more than 10 hours of care each day." The CCSD report also shows there is a high rate of part-time use of child care. The report indicated this "could be an indication parents are using what is available, and turning to unregulated care to fill in the gaps." Although this data reflects statewide data, it is assumed the data also applies to Barre City.

Most programs, according to the CCSD report, are open nine hours per day. The Family Center staff noted there is only very limited, or no evening or weekend hours for child care. This makes it difficult for parents with job hours outside of the normal weekday hours.

Cost and Affordability of Child Care

As in Table 33, the average price of child care in Barre City generally appears to be slightly less than county-wide or state-wide. However, prices vary from center to center. In addition, licensed child care is generally more expensive than registered home child care.

Care Type	Barre City	Washington County	Statewide
Infant	\$108.47	\$108.07	\$113.32
Toddler	\$98.47	\$102.65	\$108.03
Preschool	\$89.44	\$99.53	\$105.35
Kindergarten	\$86.15	\$91.71	\$96.94
School Age	\$66.50	\$83.90	\$90.74

Statewide, one quarter of children in regulated programs are receiving child care subsidies. In Washington County, the percent of children receiving subsidies is approximately 27%, with home child care having a slightly higher percent (29%) versus licensed care (21%.) Subsidies are meant to make child care affordable to families. A conclusion of the CCSD report was "child care subsidy rates are moving further away from market rates."

Child Care Providers

The profile of the Vermont child care provider was provided by the CCSD report. Although this was a statewide survey, the findings are assumed to be typical for Barre City. The CCSD report profile indicated the following:

- The supply of registered family child care homes is declining, and just over half (52%) intend to continue for five years or more. The number of licensed, not-for-profit centers is increasing.
- The number of accredited centers is increasing. One third of the responding centers are involved in the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation process. Sixteen percent of the centers surveyed are accredited by NAEYC, and 15% are conducting self-studies as part of the accreditation process.
- Seventy-one percent of the center respondents have experienced difficulty in hiring child care staff. A lack of qualified candidates was the cause of this difficulty in 50% of cases, while lack of competitive salaries (38%) and benefits (30%) were seen as problematic. It was noted by 37% of the respondents, job applicants had been lost to the public school system.
- Many child care providers do not make a livable income with only 14% having net earnings of over \$20,000 for 2001 and 42% had incomes less than \$10,000 per year.
- The average low and high hourly wages for a head teacher were \$9.32 to \$11.22 with teachers' average earnings ranging from \$8.65 to \$10.33.
- 80% of the registered family child care providers did not have any form of health insurance in 2002.
- Two-thirds of the providers do not have a college degree which is comparable to the level of all adults state-wide although 96% had a high school diploma or GED which is higher than adults statewide.

Barre City Local Regulations

Barre City Zoning regulations control the location and site operations of child care. The zoning ordinance classifications match the state child care classifications. Registered home child care

operations are a permitted use in all districts and required approval of the Development Review Board as a home occupation. Home occupation regulations relating to child care include:

- Not allowing more than two nonresident employees
- Control of any possible noise and/or traffic.
- Registered home care is listed as a permitted home occupation subject to the requirements of any home occupation.

Licensed home care is allowed as a conditional use in all districts except Industrial-Commercial, Industrial and Conservation. Licensed child care centers are allowed as a conditional use in the Central Business District and Commercial District. Conditional uses are subject to Development Review Board (DRB) approval and allow for the Development Review Board to place conditions on the approval as they relate to certain site operations.

All child care types require a DRB hearing which requires an application fee of \$50 for home child care and \$75 for child care centers. Hearings are held monthly and involve advertisements in the newspaper and notifying abutting property owners of the application. An additional zoning fee of \$30 for home occupations is required after approval by the DRB. Child care centers would pay a zoning fee based upon the proposed costs of construction improvements. Applications for DRB hearings are required approximately three weeks before the hearing.

Proposed Implementation Strategies

Based upon a review of data by the child care committee and based upon comments at the child care public forum, the following potential strategies are recommended for consideration:

Strategy	Timeframe	Implementing Parties *	Resources/Funding Required	Key Tasks
Create a volunteer day care liaison position appointed by City Council who would keep Council and the Planning Commission apprised of child care issues and legislation	2005-06	PC, Council	Minimal	PC makes recommendation with approval by Council
Reduce or remove fees for zoning approvals	2005-06	PC, Council	Minimal	PC makes recommendation with approval by Council
Remove the requirement for DRB approval for home day care	2005-06	PC, Council	Minimal	PC makes recommendation with approval by Council
Work with Central Vermont Community Action Coalition to help disseminate information about revolving loan funds available to help with child care operation	2005-06	Child care liaison, CAC	Minimal	Child care liaison would develop system for dissemination of data. Information would be made available at the Zoning Office

Table 33: Proposed Child Care Strategies

startup costs				
Encourage City Council to adopt resolutions of support for state legislation that enhances the child care opportunities in Vermont	Ongoing	Child care liaison, PC, Council	Minimal	Child care liaison would advise Council on legislation
Provide links on the city web site to information about starting day care	2005	Child care liaison, webmaster	Minimal	Child care liaison would provide information to city web master
Provide links on the city web site to information about child care subsidies	2005	Child care liaison, webmaster	Minimal	Child care liaison would provide information to city web master
Make information available in the Zoning Office about assistance available from the Washington County Family Center	2005	Family Center, PZA	Minimal	Washington County Family Center would provide information to City Planner

*** Bold indicates lead implementing party**

PC-Planning Commission, PZ-Planning and Zoning Administrator, BP-Barre Partnership, CO- Council, ANR-Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, SW-Central Vermont Solid Waste District

Utilities and Facilities

Introduction

The Vermont Planning and Development Act includes the following facility-related goals:

- Make public investments, including the construction or expansion of infrastructure, reinforcing the general character and planned growth pattern of the area.
- Plan for, finance, and provide an efficient system of public facilities and services to meet future public needs.
- Ensure public facilities and services include fire and police protection, emergency medical services, schools, water supply and sewage and solid waste disposal.
- Maintain and enhance recreational opportunities for Vermont residents and visitors.

The Planning Commission sought the advice and direction from the City Engineer in developing this section of the plan. The City of Barre maintains public facilities and services that are adequately meeting the needs of the current population. In addition, there are ample opportunities to meet the anticipated future demands of the community through existing facilities or through improvements to existing facilities. (See Appendix for map of public facilities and cultural sites and see Environmental section for discussion of landfill siting.)

Utility and Facility Goals

The following facility-related goals are adopted:

- Maintain a public water and public sewage system meeting state and federal standards and to provide future development needs of the city and portions of the surrounding communities.
- Provide adequate fire, police and emergency medical services in a cost-effective manner.
- Provide recreational opportunities within the financial constraints of the City and participating organizations.
- Encourage the development of private and non-profit recreation opportunities to supplement existing public recreation opportunities.
- Encourage the surrounding communities to participate in cooperative efforts for joint recreation activities and facility usage.

Public Utilities¹⁷

Green Mountain Power (GMP) provides the city with adequate electric services with minimal disruption. In recent years, GMP has expanded and upgraded its facilities to meet the needs for new growth.

Charter Communications provides adequate cable TV services and also broadband access throughout the city. In addition, the zoning regulations allow television satellite dishes to be installed in residential districts without a zoning permit, making it easy to obtain satellite TV as an alternative TV service.

The city water facilities were updated in 1995 to meet the current federal and state requirements. Adequate capacity exists to service the community and certain surrounding areas.¹⁸ City water rates need be at a level to continue to fund required improvements to keep the water operations updated and efficient.

¹⁷ Source: General utility information was derived from the 2003 Central Vermont Regional Plan

¹⁸ Source: Specific information about sewer and water expansion needs were reviewed with the City Engineer

The Barre Wastewater Treatment Plant serves the City and parts of the Town of Barre. It has a design capacity of 4.0 million gallons per day (mgd), an average flow of 2.1 mgd and serves a population of about 16,000. In 2003, there were 3,456 residential hook-ups, 220 commercial hook-ups, 80 industrial hook-ups and 62 public hook-ups¹⁹. Assuming new hook-ups will come on line in the same ratios and require the same daily flows, the plant could be able to accommodate 1,300 new residential connections, 49 new commercial users, an additional 18 industrial hook-ups and about 14 semi-public users. No upgrades are anticipated to be needed in the near future. The City works closely with the Town of Barre regarding future capacity needs for those areas served by the plant. 588 dry tons of sludge are disposed of each year from this operation.

Cell phone coverage is provided throughout most of the city. Cellular antennas are encouraged to co-locate in or onto existing structures when possible in an aesthetically pleasing manner. A series of cellular antennas currently are located on the side of the Auditorium.

During the 1999/2000 legislative session, the state stormwater management regulations were substantially modified. Stormwater runoff, which is defined as precipitation that does not infiltrate into the ground, causes extensive damage to both private property and public infrastructures, and adversely affects water quality. As development occurs, the amount of impervious cover increases, and so do the potential problems associated with stormwater runoff. These problems can be categorized into two main components: the increased volume and rate of flow of water draining from the site, and loading of pollutants which are directly washed off these impervious surfaces and carried into receiving waters. The State is currently evaluating the stormwater permitting process for new development and redevelopment. The new regulations are expected to be more stringent and require stormwater management for more projects. These new stormwater regulations will also affect existing and new city stormwater systems. Nationwide, some communities are establishing stormwater management utilities, whereby property owners pay a fee to maintain the stormwater system based upon the amount of additional runoff from their site. The City may need to consider establishing a stormwater management utility fee if the costs for the new regulations exceed the ability to fund required improvements through regular property taxes.

Non-Education Public Buildings

Barre City includes many public facilities. Facilities not operated by the City include the post office, library, various types of senior housing, Barre Housing Authority complexes, Barre Opera House, Studio Place Arts, Vermont Granite Museum, Vermont History Center, the court house and various state office buildings. The City owns and administers a public works garage, City Hall, fire station, the Barre Outdoor Recreation (BOR) building, and the Auditorium.

Currently a new public safety building is being constructed that will house the police, fire, and emergency services. This building is designed to serve the long term needs of these operations and will leave both the fire station and police station vacant. Planning is underway to expand the City Hall offices to make use of the old police station. Studies are being conducted to determine how to best make use of the vacant space in order to alleviate overcrowding within City Hall and how to best consolidate services in order to provide better public service.

As recommended in the 2005 Municipal Plan, the Fire Station has been redeveloped into a successful suite of businesses. A previous study found extensive building code upgrades were required for continued use as a fire station. Built in 1904, the Barre firehouse was patterned after the Wollaston Street station in Quincy, Massachusetts.²⁰ The station retains its original wooden-arched folding doors

¹⁹ Source: 2003 Central Vermont Regional Plan

²⁰ Source: Historical information derived from the Barre City National Register of Historic Places Inventory

as well as most of its original architectural integrity. It is currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The final use retains its historic character as recommended in the previous plan.

Public Parks and Recreation

The City of Barre has a wide range of recreational facilities including:

- Municipal pool
- BOR facility
- Municipal Auditorium
- Alumni Hall
- Tennis courts
- A variety of ballfields
- A variety of small playgrounds

In recent years upgrades have been made to the Farwell Street ballfields. In addition, space has been reserved next to the new public safety building for future recreation needs. No other new playgrounds or ballfields are anticipated to be built in the next several years, but small scattered green spaces are encouraged.

Volunteer-based organizations provide significant recreation opportunities beyond the city-sponsored recreation program. These organizations make use of many publicly-supported recreation facilities such as the BOR and city ballfields.

The pool, BOR and Auditorium serve as regional assets by providing recreational and entertainment opportunities to not only city residents, but also to residents from surrounding communities. Unfortunately, the recreational fees to support these facilities are currently not sufficient to cover expenses and the facilities and programs require local property tax support or an aggressive fund raising campaign. At the same time, the costs for other required city services continue to increase and support for increased taxation decreases resulting in less discretionary funding for services such as recreation. Efforts are underway to determine how to best operate these facilities without increasing the tax burden. It is possible some recreational opportunities will be lost if more effective operations and/or increased revenue sources are not found. Coordinated recreation planning and programs between neighboring communities could result in more cost-effective programming, increased scales of economies, more varied programs, and increased use of city facilities.

Improvements have been made to City Hall Park including restoration of the gazebo and memorial, reconstruction of the sidewalks, and improved landscaping and streetscaping. External funding and matching funds have been secured for the gazebo restoration and sidewalk reconstruction. Other funding needs secured for additional improvements. Improvements to City Hall Park help further facilitate the downtown market study goal to "build an attractive and welcoming downtown environment."

Cemeteries

The City is known nationwide for its showplace 73 acre Hope Cemetery. This cemetery, in addition to serving the traditional role of a burial place, contains a variety of monuments, mausoleums, and sculptures, which are excellent examples of Barre's greatest granite artists. The 27 acre Elmwood Cemetery and the 19 acre St. Monica Cemetery provide additional burial space. The Elmwood and St. Monica Cemeteries no longer have lots for sale. The Cemetery Department operates as a separate entity with enterprise funds from lot sales and burial fees providing a bulk of the operating funds. Increases in cremations (and therefore a drop in burials), competition from other available cemeteries, and ever increasing operating costs, are making it difficult to continue the current level of services and

maintenance. Efforts are underway to examine how to best operate the cemeteries given the financial constraints present.

Downtown Parking Areas

Currently, much of the downtown parking needs are met by City-owned parking areas. The Merchant Row parking area provides much of this parking. Appearance improvements of this area further facilitates the downtown market study goal to "build an attractive and welcoming downtown environment ". Desirable improvements include:

- Improved landscaping
- Completing sidewalk connections to allow for safer pedestrian movement
- Improved appearance of the rear of buildings
- Improved rear access to businesses

External funding should be sought to assist with making these improvements. Discussions should be held with property owners abutting Merchants Row parking in order to secure their input and support. As recommended in the 2005 Municipal Plan, the City secured Municipal Planning Grant Funds to develop a Merchants Row Master Plan to address the concerns and ideas expressed above.

Proposed Implementation Strategies

Based upon a review of data and based upon comments at the housing public forum, the following potential strategies are recommended for consideration:

Table 34: Proposed Facilities Strategies

Strategy	Timeframe	Implementing Parties *	Resources/ Funding Required	Key Tasks
Develop a plan for re-use of the old fire station	2005-6 [Done]	Co , PC, PZA, BP, CE, State, VT Preservation Trust	Staff assistance Study grants Historic Renovation grants	Create an ad hoc study committee Review existing building study Develop overall desired directions Obtain public input Research grant opportunities Develop final plan
Improve the appearance of City Hall Park	2005-7 [Ongoing]	PZA , CE, BP, Co	Staff assistance, grants	Follow through on existing funding Developed detailed landscaping plans Secure additional funds
Improve appearance of Merchant Row parking area and rear of buildings	2006-9 [Ongoing]	PZA , CE, BP, Co	Staff assistance, grants	Develop plans Seek public input Secure funds

* **Bold indicates lead implementing party**

PC-Planning Commission, PZ-Planning and Zoning Administrator, BP-Barre Partnership, Co- Council, CE – City Engineer, TP – TAC representative

Transportation

Introduction

The Vermont Planning and Development Act includes the following transportation-related goals:

- Provide for safe, convenient, economic and energy efficient transportation systems that respect the integrity of the natural environment, including public transit options and paths for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Highways, air, rail and other means of transportation should be mutually supportive, balanced and integrated.

The Planning Commission sought advice and direction from the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission transportation staff, VTrans staff, and the Green Mountain Transit Agency staff in developing this section of the plan. (See Appendix for map of arterial roadway)

Transportation Goals

The following transportation goals are adopted:

- Optimize existing traffic configurations and traffic lighting to provide for the efficient movement of existing and future vehicular traffic.
- Improve the appearance of existing arterial roads in the City.
- Promote alternative modes of transportation.
- Create a pedestrian-friendly environment.
- Maintain and construct new sidewalks that serve areas of existing or anticipated high volumes of pedestrian use.
- Maintain neighborhood sidewalks within the financial constraints approved by the City voters.
- Promote and improve safe vehicular access with new development and redevelopment.

Vehicular Traffic

*Existing Conditions*²¹

Barre City has a well established road system that is not anticipated to see major changes in configuration except for limited new residential streets and possible modifications to various intersections to improve traffic flow. There are 5.5 miles of Class 1 road, 4 miles of Class 2 road, 37.7 miles of Class 3 road, .07 miles of Class 4 road, and 1.5 miles of state highway. The Class 1, 2, and 3 roads and state highway total 48.8 miles. The city road system includes Route 14 and Route 302 which are identified in the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission transportation plan (CVRPC plan) as part of the region's principal arterial system. The principal arterial system carries the major portion of trips entering the region as well as the majority of the intra-regional travel. In addition, the city has access to I-89 via Route 62 which is classified as part of the interstate highway and expressway system.

The CVRPC plan includes a comprehensive technical review of intersection levels of service, highway capacity, accident areas, and bridge capacity. The following is a summary of the major problem areas identified in the CVRPC plan that pertain to Barre City.

Level of Service (LOS) for intersections is the standard measure used to quantify the operational performance of highway facilities as perceived by the user. The grades A, B, C, D, E and F are the five possible LOS ratings where "A" indicates excellent conditions with free flow, "E" indicates intolerable conditions with unstable flow, and "F" indicates that demand exceeds capacity. In urban areas, where

²¹ Source: Central Vermont Region 2020 Regional Transportation Plan

drivers expect more delays than rural roadways, LOS of "D" is often considered acceptable. The following signalized intersections were identified as having a level of service of D for at least one approach currently or projected for 2020 according to the CVPRC plan. However, other traffic studies have identified LOS F for existing and future conditions and, therefore these intersections are considered problem areas.

Table 35: Problems at Signalized Intersections Strategies

Signalized Intersection	2000 Avg. LOS	2000 Worst Approach LOS	2020 Avg. LOS	2020 Worst Approach LOS	Notes
US302/VT14/Elm	C	C	D	D	The proposed Main Street reconstruction project is planned to improve performance.
VT14/Prospect /Church	C	C	C	C	
US302/VT62 /VT14	D	D	D	D	

The following unsignalized intersections were identified as having a level of service of E or lower for at least one approach currently or projected for 2020 according to the regional plan.

Table 36: Problems at Unsignalized Intersection

Unsignalized Intersection	2000 Worst Approach LOS	2020 Worst Approach LOS	2020 Worst Approach LOS with Proposed Improvements	Notes
VT14/Circle St	F	F	NA	No projects are proposed.
VT14/Quarry St	D	F	NA	Changes are being proposed via a VTrans scoping project that supports signalization.
Elm St/ Summer St	F	F	NA	No projects are proposed. A traffic study to add turning lanes should be pursued.
Summer St /Seminary St	C	C	NA	No projects are proposed.
VT 14/ Summer St	C	D	NA	Consideration for changes are being considered as part of the Main Street reconstruction project that includes signalization.
US 302/ Berlin St	F	F	NA	No projects are proposed. The island design was recently modified slightly to improve safety.
US 302/ Beckley St	E	F	NA	No projects are proposed.

The CVRPC plan also reviewed unacceptable service of E or F on road segments now and in 2020. The CVRPC policy defines what is an unacceptable LOS for various roads as per a policy involving the nature of the area. The following problem areas were identified:

Highway	Segment	Unacceptable LOS	Avg. ADT		Level of Service	
			2000	2020	2000	2020
US RT 302	West of RT 62	E	16,600	19,000	E	E
	East of RT 14 (west)	E	18,600	21,390	E	E
	West of RT 14(east)	E	17,600	20,400	E	E
RT 14 (south)	At Barre Town/Barre City line	E	15,700	18,055	D	D

The area of Route 302 running through the downtown was also rated by CVRPC as a high accident location area due to the numerous turning movements.

The segment of Route 302 running through the downtown has two conflicting uses. As a major transportation corridor it includes motorists and truckers traveling through the region preferring to bypass the downtown area. This segment is also used by local residents who are shopping and working in the downtown. These users park in town and add to the pedestrian traffic. The parking and pedestrian traffic hinders the through-traffic users while the through-traffic users conflict with the local users by adding additional noise, dust, and odors.

The Main Street reconstruction project described below will help alleviate congestion and result in improved intersection design, but overall the conflicts will continue. According to traffic consultants hired by the City, the key to improved flows is reducing the overall traffic volumes entering into the downtown area. A downtown bypass for through-traffic would alleviate congestion. However, no such bypass is currently in the planning process and is not anticipated to occur in the near future. Truck routing from Quarry Hill across the river and down Brooklyn Street to Route 62 has been considered, but, again, has no plans or funding.

The CVRPC plan also evaluates bridges. The Granite Street bridge is currently being replaced [has been replaced since 2005 plan adoption]. Plans are underway for replacement of the Prospect Street bridge which is structurally deficient [also replaced since 2005 plan was adopted]. All other bridges were rated as not deficient (structurally or functionally.)

North Main Street Reconstruction

The most significant proposed road construction project is the reconstruction of North Main Street from Route 62 to the City Hall Park. This project will involve replacement of all utilities, street lighting, sidewalks and complete reconstruction of the paving system. Final engineering is currently underway for this project and construction is scheduled within the next several years. Potential changes in traffic patterns, including a roundabout around City Hall Park, were also studied by traffic consultants hired by the City in 2005. It was found that the best traffic design was to keep the current configuration with optimization of the lights (which is proposed as part of the Main Street reconstruction.)

This project was initiated for utility replacement but evolved into a total reconstruction. The project will include complete revitalization of the streetscape, greatly improving the appearance of the downtown.

The N Main Street reconstruction project, which is likely to involve construction over a two-year period, will cause traffic disruption for local residents and businesses. Efforts must be made to guarantee support by the residents and businesses for this project since a loss of public support could result in a

loss of state funding. This could also result in additional local tax dollars being required to make required utilities upgrades.

Pedestrian Movement

Some older city streets have sidewalks on at least one side. In recent years, the city has presented a sidewalk construction/replacement fund for voter consideration. The allocated funds are currently not enough to maintain the existing sidewalks. In 1998, the City Engineer developed a long-term sidewalk maintenance plan to ensure that sidewalk replacement occurs based upon an overall evaluation of sidewalk conditions. In addition, when funds permit, new sidewalks have been added. Due to limited local funds, external funding sources have generally been needed to construct new sidewalks. For example, sidewalks were added along Hill Street with partial funding through a Vermont Transportation Enhancement grant. External grant funds have also been secured for sidewalk replacement within the portions of the downtown and within the City Hall Park. Sidewalks are an important element in terms of commuting to work. The 2000 Census indicated 6.5% of the workers commuted by foot or bicycle and 33% of the worker lived and worked within Barre City.

Currently, an overall sidewalk replacement/construction policy does not exist. Such a policy is necessary in order to address the following questions:

- What sidewalks are considered critical due to high volumes of pedestrian use?
- When should developers be required to include sidewalks in new plans?
- When should sidewalks be removed?
- What is the process for notice when sidewalk removal is proposed?
- Who should pay for replacement of sidewalks (abutting owners or city)?
- Who should be responsible for snow clearance?
- Where are new sidewalks needed?

It is recommended that a sidewalk policy be developed as soon as possible.

The Main Street reconstruction project will result in sidewalk replacement on Main Street within the downtown. Part of the project includes review and potential redesign of pedestrian crosswalks. Suggestions have been made to better define crosswalks and limit the number of crosswalks. The proposed new streetscape will greatly improve the appearance of the sidewalk area.

Efforts should be made by city staff to secure external funding for new sidewalk construction in order to better leverage limited available local funds.

Central Vermont Regional Path²²

The Central Vermont Regional Path (CVRP) is a proposed 14.5 mile separated shared-use facility which will extend from Montpelier through Berlin, Barre City to Barre Town utilizing a former railroad bed and paralleling the Winooski River. This proposed bike path will connect certain regional employment areas, shopping districts, tourist attractions, recreational facilities, and schools. The primary purpose of the proposed path is to provide a safe, convenient, and inviting way for all ages of bicyclists and pedestrians to traverse the central portion of the state between Barre Town and Montpelier. A complete description of the proposed path is available in the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission transportation plan.

The following is proposed or constructed within the city:

- Within the city, Section 6 of the plan has an advance conceptual plan to proceed from the Granite Museum across the Stevens Branch to the fill slope of VT 62. At Berlin Street, the path would be

²² Source: Central Vermont Region 2020 Regional Transportation Plan

a bike lane within the roadway on Berlin Street, Smith Street, and Blackwell Street (crossing under Rt 62.) On the south side of VT 62, the bike lane would return to a separated share use path, cross the Steven's Branch into the Barre City rail yard, and continue to Depot Square in the downtown.

- A potential spur to the CVRP is completed and runs from Fairview Street in downtown Barre to the municipal pool area.
- Section 7 is proposed to follow the railroad line through the central business district where it meets and runs parallel to the Stevens Branch to the Spaulding Branch to the Spaulding High School, travel overland to the Washington County rail line near Thunder Road, entering Barre Town.

The projected final engineering and construction cost for Section 6 is 1.7 million dollars. A 20% local match, or \$340,000, is required to seek state funding to complete the project. To date, this has not been allocated due to budgetary restrictions. The bike path is considered a desirable project that will serve not only the city, but also the complete region. Although local funding is currently not available, future funding consideration should be given for possible inclusion as a voter ballot item and/or for potential external funding including grants and donations.

Since the 2005 Municipal Plan was adopted, the City and Town of Barre has moved forward on the implementation of the Central Vermont Bike Path. Planning is currently underway by volunteer Path Committees in each municipality appointed respectively by the Barre City Council and Barre Town Selectboard. These two Committees were established to re-activate the path planning a a result of a \$500,000 bequest from Charles Semprebon to each Community. Both Committees have identified potential paths that would support the connection of the two municipalities, as was Charles Semprebon's wish. Currently an RFP issued by the CVRPC on behalf of the two municipalities has been issued for the completion of a Preliminary Engineering Study to formalize the connectivity and to identify issues rearding cots, rights of way, grading, etc.

Next steps with regard to the completion of the Museum segment of the City path are currently under review. Act 250 requirements are being pursued with a focus on finalizing contract plans and most importantly right-of-way acquisition to ensure the availability of key secdtions of the route if/as land owners or uses change.

Completion of the entire Barre City segment is probably years away from fruition. However, it is important to note that the Semprebon bequest was a significant catalyst to a meaningful re-start of the completion of that objective for the City.

Commuting Patterns and Mass Transit

Many city residents commute to areas throughout the region and state. The following shows where residents are working.

Work In	Count	Percentage
Barre City	1,486	33.3%
Montpelier, Berlin and Barre Town	1,841	41.2%
Other Towns in Washington & Orange County	659	14.8%
Other Locations	478	10.7%

According to the 1990 census, 48.9% of the residents worked within Barre City indicating that residents are now commuting greater distances. The housing turnover survey (See housing section for more

information) indicated that approximately 20% of the people were moving in from areas within Vermont, but from outside of Central Vermont. Although it can not be documented, it is suspected that some of these people may still be working in jobs near their previous residence location, accounting for the increase in commuting distances found in the housing turnover survey. In addition, according to the "Economic and Demographic Forecast for Central Vermont Region 2000 to 2020", in 1990 there were 6,773 jobs within the city, while in 2000 there were 6,512 jobs. A loss of local jobs will also result in increased commuting times.

Most workers commuted by motor vehicle. About 7% walked or biked to work. More people carpooled rather than used public transit when commuting with other persons.

Commuting Method	Count	Percentage
Commuter by Motor Vehicle	3991	92.8%
Drive Alone	3295	76.6%
Carpool	686	16.0%
Commuter by Public Transportation	30	0.7%
Commuter by Bicycle, Foot or Other Means	278	6.5%

For those persons desiring or needing transit, there is local transportation services offered by Green Mountain Transit Authority (GMTA) and, to a lesser extent, several small-scale taxi operations. GMTA includes an elderly and disabled transportation program which includes:

- Deviated fixed routes
- Council on Aging transportation services
- Medicare transports
- Ticket to ride (an allowance program for non-ambulatory and ambulatory services for disabled persons and their families)
- Ridematch program
- PATH and various other third party transports

A total of 1005 Barre City clients use these services. GMTA places the value of these services in the current year as \$47,901.

GMTA also currently operates the following fixed routes serving Washington County residents²³:

- The City Route connecting Montpelier and Barre on a 30-minute frequency
- Two hospital routes, Montpelier Hospital Hill and Barre Hospital Hill, running on an hour frequency.
- Commuter routes from Waterbury and Northfield into Montpelier, providing transit links to area residents and businesses.
- The Link Express (Operated by CCTA and GMTA), an express bus service which connects Washington County to Chittenden County. This route runs Monday through Friday during peak commuting times and makes stops at the Montpelier, Waterbury and Richmond Park and Ride lots and Fletcher Allen Health Care before arriving in downtown Burlington.
- Hannaford Shopping Special between Barre City and South Barre

These services also have interconnected routes with other GMTA and CCTA routes.

²³ Source: Transit data provided from GMTA directly or from GMTA web site

GMTA is also hoping to locate at least one new bus shelter in the downtown area in the vicinity of the new Brooks/Lenny's Plaza. This is encouraged by the city and limited staff support should be provided to assist with this project.

GMTA continually re-evaluates bus stops and routes. The overall routes are recommended to be maintained. The City should remain involved in future transit planning through active involvement with the Central Vermont Regional Transportation Advisory Committee.

Access Management

Access management is a set of techniques that can be used to control access to highways, major arterials and other roadways. Access management includes several techniques that are designed to increase the capacity of these roads, manage congestion, and reduce crashes. These techniques include:

- Increasing spacing between signals and intersections
- Regulating driveway location, spacing and design
- Median treatments, including two-way left turn lanes
- Use of service and frontage roads
- Land use policies that limit right-of-way access to highways

Once development occurs, it is often too late to make use of access management techniques. The zoning ordinance provides limited access management including limiting the number of driveways per lot and controlling driveway design to some extent. Although the arterial roads have seen considerable development with only limited access control, new development and re-development should include consideration for access management.

It is recommended that the Planning Commission review the Vermont Access Management guide developed by the Vermont Agency of Transportation for consideration of possible additional access management techniques to be incorporated into the zoning and subdivision ordinances.

Planning Commission Involvement in Transportation

The Planning Commission has had only limited involvement in various transportation issues in the city. Most of the transportation planning has been managed by the City Engineer, and to a lesser extent, through the Central Vermont Regional Transportation Advisory Committee. The Planning Commission should become more involved in transportation planning as it relates to land use patterns. It is recommended that the Planning Commission periodically meet with the City Engineer and/or the City representative on the Central Vermont Regional Transportation Advisory Committee to learn about ongoing transportation planning efforts and to discuss the relationship with the current and anticipated development within the city and region. Proposed Implementation Strategies

Based upon a review of data and based upon comments at the housing public forum, the following potential strategies are recommended for consideration:

Table 40: Proposed Transportation Strategies				
Strategy	Timeframe	Implementing Parties *	Resources /Funding Required	Key Tasks
Develop a sidewalk policy	2005-6	Co, PC, PZA, CE	Staff assistance	Develop overall goals Draft criteria Obtain public input Finalize policy

Gain public support for Main Street Project	[Done]			See the Downtown Market Study for details on this strategy
Review potential additional access management controls	2006-7	PC, PZ, Co, CE, VTTrans	Staff assistance	Review VTrans guide Develop draft regulations Obtain public input Adopt regulations
Increase Planning Commission role in transportation planning	Ongoing	PC, PZ, CE, TP	Staff assistance	Dedicate Planning Commission meetings to review transit and transportation projects as needed
Secure external funding for sidewalk construction in areas that receive or are anticipated to receive high volumes of pedestrian use	Ongoing	PZ, CE	Staff	Define areas for new sidewalks Continually review grant opportunities Apply for potential grant funds

*** Bold indicates lead implementing party**
PC-Planning Commission, PZ-Planning and Zoning Administrator, BP-Barre Partnership, Co- Council, CE – City Engineer, TP – TAC representative

Education

Introduction

The Vermont Planning and Development Act includes an education-related goal "to broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities sufficient to ensure the full realization of the abilities of all Vermonters."

The Planning Commission sought the advice and direction from the Superintendent of Schools in developing this section of the plan. Details regarding population trends in regards age distribution is provided in the community profile section. This section focuses on potential physical expansions required in order to meet changes in demographics and projected enrollments.

Goals

The following education goals are adopted:

- Met the education needs of City residents
- Have the City and School District work together on community issues and needs by maintaining open channels of communications between key staff and elected officials.

School Enrollment and Expansion Needs²⁴

City residents are provided public education through the Barre City Elementary Middle School and Barre Technical Center/Spaulding High School. Private elementary schooling is also available at the St. Monica Church School.

The Barre City Elementary Middle School enrollment is about 900 students. It is projected that this enrollment level will continue for the next five years. The Spaulding High School enrollment of students from Barre Town and Barre City is about 850 students with 50 more students enrolling from the communities without designated high schools such as Orange, Washington, Topsham, and Corinth. It is projected that this enrollment level will also continue for the next five years. Enrollment at the Barre Technical Center that receives students from Spaulding High School, Cabot High School, Twinfield High School, U-32 High School, and Montpelier High School is expected to increase from its current enrollment of 215 students attending full or part time. Enrollment is anticipated to increase a full-time equivalent of 10 students per year for the next five years.

Since the Barre City Elementary Middle School is just ten years old and student enrollment is remaining steady, no major renovations are plan. An unfinished soccer field on the south side of the property will likely be completed over the next two years.

While there are no specific plans at this time, some future projects contemplated at the Spaulding High School and Barre Technical Center include:

- Renovation of the Jackson Dairy Building into usable classroom space
- Renovation of the science department facilities
- Renovation of the building trades and automotive program facilities
- Installation of lights on the football field

²⁴ Source: Information provided by a letter dated November 15, 2004 from Dorothy Anderson, Superintendent of Schools

The Supervisory Union office building is located in the former Ayers Street School. No exterior renovations are planned. Possible future interior renovations reconfiguring into two offices as staff requirements dictate.

Proposed Implementation Strategies

Based upon a review of data, no city strategies are recommended to be pursued at this time. The City should inform the Superintendent of Schools of any major development that is anticipated to potentially change school enrollment. In addition, the School District is requested to meet with the Planning Commission when there are significant proposed expansions or changes in school district facilities.

Energy

Introduction

The Vermont Planning and Development Act asks for an energy-related goal to include an energy plan as part of the municipal plan that includes an analysis of energy resources, needs, scarcities, costs and problems within the municipality, a statement of policy on the conservation of energy, including programs to implement policy, and a statement of policy on patterns and densities of land use likely to result in conservation of energy.

Goals

The following energy goals are adopted:

- New building construction and major reconstruction include energy conservation measures
- Encourage development of Barre City as a micropolitan to avoid sprawl development in the surrounding rural regions, thereby reducing energy consumption associated with travel
- Promote ride sharing and public transit use
- Practice and incorporate energy-conservation within city operations

Building Code Requirements

Local and state building codes currently require energy conservation measures when constructing new buildings or when completing major renovations. These requirements are recommended to be continued.

Development as a Micropolitan

The most significant energy conservation measure recommended by the city is to encourage development within the city and not in the surrounding rural areas. Zoning density requirements for the PR district have been revised to allow for controlled in-fill development and a mixed use district has been designated for the downtown industrial area. In addition to these measures, promotion of residential development of the upper stories of downtown buildings should be encouraged. Such recommendations will lead to development of the city core area and result in overall transportation energy savings.

Traffic Signalization Improvements

The City is planning on signal optimization in the downtown area as part of the North Main Street reconstruction (See transportation section for more discussion.) Signalization optimization results in improved traffic flow which reduces fuel consumption. Signal optimization should be considered as a significant means to improve energy usage by city and regional residents.

Signalization work associated with the North Main Street Reconstruction Project is scheduled to be done during the 2010 construction season. Effected intersections will include Route 62/North Main Street, Maple Avenue/Summer Street, Summer Street/ Elm Street, Elm Street/ North Main Street, and North Main Street/ Prospect Street.

Energy Efficiency of City Maintained Facilities

Previously, the City conducted energy audits of certain facilities and made certain improvements based upon these audits. The City should consider additional energy audits available through the services of Efficiency Vermont. This should also include a review of street lighting which is mostly rented from Green Mountain Power with a few exceptions.

Proposed Implementation Strategies

The proposed strategies discussed above are covered in the housing and land use sections of this plan.

Table 41: Proposed Energy Strategies				
Strategy	Timeframe	Implementing Parties *	Resources /Funding Required	Key Tasks
Implement energy audits for city maintained facilities	2006-8 [Ongoing]	CE	Staff assistance	Arrange with Efficiency Vermont
<p>* Bold indicates lead implementing party PC-Planning Commission, PZ-Planning and Zoning Administrator, BP-Barre Partnership, Co- Council, CE – City Engineer, TP – TAC representative</p>				

Consistency with Development Patterns in Adjacent Municipalities and Region

Introduction

The Vermont Planning and Development Act requires a statement indicating how a plan relates to development trends and plans for adjacent municipalities and the region. The Central Vermont Regional Plan, the Berlin Town Plan, and the Barre Town Plan were reviewed to establish consistency with this plan.

As required by state law, copies were provided to the abutting towns and Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission. No comments were received from any of these organizations.

Central Vermont Regional Plan

Last, the Central Vermont Regional Plan was reviewed for consistency with this plan. Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission staff was consulted to assist with review and recommendations regarding certain portions of the plan development. No inconsistencies between the Regional Plan and this plan appear to exist.

Town of Berlin

The Town of Berlin is situated west of Barre City. Vermont Route 302 and Route 62 connect the two municipalities. Natural shared features include the Stevens Branch and forest cover in the southwest corner adjoining the Town of Berlin. Along Route 302, the land uses in Barre City adjoining the Town of Berlin are mixed including residential, commercial and industrial, which is compatible with the Berlin Town current and proposed future uses. The conservation area is zoned for residential development in Berlin with a minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet.

No apparent use conflicts exist between Barre City and Berlin. This same finding was found in the Berlin Town Plan dated March, 2005.

Town of Barre

The majority of Barre City is surrounded by the Town of Barre. Although divided into two municipalities in 1895, there has been a long history of sharing resources including wastewater, water, stormwater utilities, school operations, and certain recreation facilities. Staff coordination is ongoing between law enforcement, fire, and public works. Continued efforts are being made to determine areas to further share resources in order to provide for more efficient government operations. In addition, many residents have lived in both communities and, according to a recent market study, downtown Barre serves as a principal shopping center for Barre Town residents. Routes 302 and Route 14 serve as major transportation routes between the two communities. In addition, numerous less-traveled roads provide additional transportation connections.

All abutting lands in Barre Town are zoned residential which is compatible with the anticipated future uses in Barre City. This same finding was found in the Barre Town Plan dated September, 1999.

Appendix

Downtown Barre Marketing Strategy and Action Plan

Vacant and Underdeveloped Parcel Assessment Survey Results

Housing Survey Results

Proposed Zoning Amendment Language

Maps

R-10 Level of Conformance of Developed Lots

PR Level of Conformance of Developed Lots

PR with Two or More Units Level of Conformance of Developed Lots

Vacant Lands and Areas Likely to be Redeveloped Over 2 Acres by Zoning District

Areas to be Considered for Rezonings

Current Zoning Districts

Areas to be Considered for Future Rezonings

VTRANS Arterial Road System

Public Facilities and Cultural Sites

Environmentally Sensitive Sites