

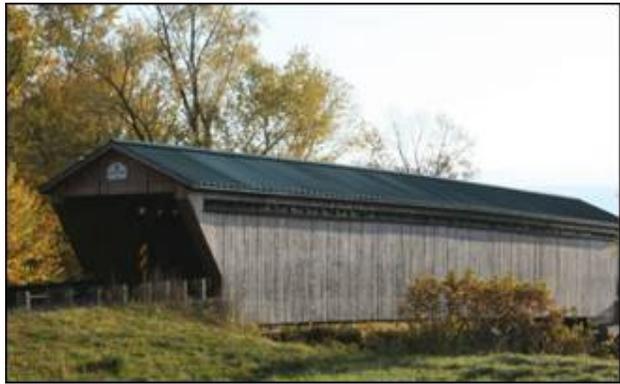
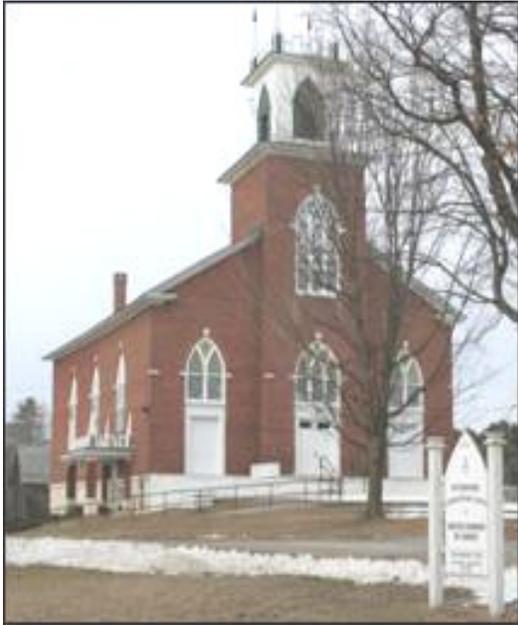
# PITTSFORD TOWN PLAN



**As Adopted by the Select Board**

**December 19, 2012**





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# INTRODUCTION

## I. Purpose of the Town Plan

The Pittsford Town Plan is a framework and guide for reaching community goals and providing a vision of the town's future. It also attempts to balance the wide range of competing interests and demands found in the town, to coordinate the pattern of development, the use of important natural resources and to address both current and long term needs. The goals and actions stated within this comprehensive plan were developed to preserve and protect the town's assets while providing a future vision for town officials, businesses and citizens of Pittsford.

The Town Plan should be used in a variety of ways. First and foremost, the Town Plan should be a basis for community programs and decision making. For example, it should influence the town's budget and capital expenditures, community development efforts and natural resource protection initiatives. As required by law, it should also serve as a foundation for local land use controls such as zoning, subdivision and health regulations. Furthermore, the Town Plan should be given full effect in all appropriate regulatory proceedings, including but not limited to Act 250 and Title 30, Section 248.

Because it is not able to address every important local issue fully, the Town Plan should also be looked at as a source of topics for further study. Some aspects of the Town Plan are based on limited evaluations or on evaluations that be periodically updated. Finally, the Town Plan should be used as a source of local information that can be valuable to citizens, businesses, students and members of local boards and commissions.

What people really want, and was evident from the public input to this plan (multiple meetings in 2009 and 2012), is to protect and enhance the quality of life. **Growth, if it improves the quality of life is desirable; if it only benefits a few, then it is not desirable.** Therefore, the essence of this town plan is how to maintain and improve the quality of life for our citizens.

## **II. Statutory Authority and Requirements**

Town Plan preparation is guided by the Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act (Chapter 117 of Title 24, Vermont Statutes Annotated). This section of law specifies what a Town Plan may and/or must contain. The Pittsford Town Plan is consistent with the Rutland Regional Plan, readopted on April 15, 2008 and is compatible with approved plans from neighboring communities.

24 VSA 4382 (a) requires that all plans contain ten items or elements. These elements include: a statement of objectives, policies and programs; a land use plan; a transportation plan; utility and facility plan; a statement of policies on the preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas; and educational facilities plan; an implementation program; a statement indicating how the plan relates to development trends in adjacent communities; and energy plan; and a housing plan. While all ten elements must be incorporated into a plan, communities are not prohibiting from combining closely related elements, such as the element for educational facilities and the element for other utilities and facilities.

In addition to containing all the required elements, plans must also be consistent with a series of statutory goals listed in 24 VSA 4302. Consistency with the goals means that the goals have been considered and addressed in the process used to prepare the plan, not that the plan include all the goals. Furthermore, where any of the goals do not apply to the town or are incompatible with it, the plan need only document the goal's inapplicability or incompatibility with local desires.

## **III. Preparation of the Town Plan**

Planning for the future is a continuing activity and should reflect new data, laws, technologies, planning concepts and the changing needs and desires of the community. The Pittsford Planning Commission has the responsibility for the preparation of the Town Plan. The Town Plan must be updated and readopted on a five-year basis according to Vermont State Statutes.

The Town Plan adopted in 2000 expired in 2005 and was renewed as a partially updated plan in 2007. Numerous public meetings were held prior to the 2007 update, followed by more meetings for more input into this completely updated plan.

Our previous Town Plan emphasized the need for growth, which, although not defined, is assumed to relate to bringing in new business which in turn would create new jobs and wealth in

the community. This focus on growth comes with the tacit belief that, in various ways, we will all benefit. Since the adoption of the previous Town Plan, there has been no evident business growth, however, there has been some construction of single-family housing. This leads to the conclusion that we need to reconsider this approach. By use of our zoning regulations we could manage any such growth, the quality of life in our community will be safeguarded and continue to improve.

There are downsides to growth:

- ☀ Increased traffic and related accidents
- ☀ Increased pollution (air, water, noise, etc.)
- ☀ Possible increase in crime
- ☀ Demand for more infrastructure (water, sewage, sidewalks, police)
- ☀ Dilution of traditional village to countryside character
- ☀ Sprawl and strip-style development

We believe that if we protect and improve the quality of life in our community we will attract the type of businesses that will contribute to this goal.

## **IV. Vision**

Pittsford will be a town with a preserved rural heritage and character, having a pedestrian friendly Village Center which supports the development of business opportunities, with well-developed social, civic and recreational activities and venues that provide benefits to an active and diverse community.

## **SECTION A: TOWN BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **I. History**

In 1535, French explorer, Jacques Cartier was the first European to see the territory which is now Vermont. In 1609, Samuel de Champlain traveled up the Richelieu River and discovered what is now known as Lake Champlain, named after him.

During the early 1600's, the area was still a contested territory. In 1763, England was granted the territory via the Treaty of Paris and this ended the French and Indian War. The Green Mountains were then quickly opened to settlement and to squabbling between the colonies of New Hampshire and New York as to which had the proper claim to the territory then known as the New Hampshire Grants. The governor of New Hampshire granted land in the territory to settlers. New York, also claiming the land, granted it to other settlers. In 1764, King George of England ruled that New York owned the land. A group called the Green Mountain Boys fought to keep their land and forced the New Yorkers out of the region.

The settlers of the New Hampshire Grants united and on January 17, 1777, Vermont was declared an independent republic at a meeting held at Westminster and subsequently acquired its own minted coins and postal service. Vermont remained an independent republic until March 4, 1791 when it joined the Union as the 14<sup>th</sup> state. Vermont finally settled the dispute with New York in 1790 by paying \$30,000 to that state.

On October 12, 1761, The New Hampshire Royal Governor, Bennington Wentworth, granted a charter to a new town in New Hampshire Grants to be known as Pitts' Ford which later changed to Pittsford. The name came from a ford on Otter Creek and was named after William Pitt, prime minister of England at the time. That same year 25,000 acres were granted to 63 proprietors. Half-brothers Gideon and Benjamin Cooley settled here in 1767 as farmers.

Clusters of sawmills, grist mills, tanneries, blacksmith shops and schools sprung up to support the community and Pittsford Village soon developed on the post road running north from Rutland. After 1795, Grangerville was formed on Furnace Road around the Granger family's iron blast furnace and foundry. Many of the workers were Irish immigrants. After the War of 1812, French Canadian farmers arrived and settlement quickened for several decades.

The Revolutionary War Hubbardton Battlefield Historic Site lies just to the west and can be viewed from the western ridgeline of Pittsford. This site is the only Revolutionary War site that remains essentially as it was in 1777. When the troops were told to disperse from the battle, they fought a rearguard action as they passed over the ridgeline into Pittsford.

Sheep farming became the principal agricultural activity with the arrival of Spanish Merino sheep. Thousands of sheep browsed the logged off hills. Mills sprung up to treat the wool creating a major industry that lasted until after the Civil War. With the demise of sheep farming, dairy farming became the dominant occupation and the farmers were able to sell their milk to two creameries that were established in town. Florence farmers opened several small marble quarries in the early 1800's. The marble industry grew, changing Florence to a mix of farms and quarrying by 1850. By 1910, immigrant marble workers from many European and Scandinavian countries swelled the Florence population. They worked and lived in Vermont Marble Company owned quarries, farms and houses. The Florence mill, built in 1898-1902, sawed marble blocks, produced finished marble products, and shipped to markets via the Clarendon and Pittsford Railroad.

During post-Civil War prosperity, residential housing boomed from the 1870's and late 1890's. Successful farmers, lawyers, merchants, and doctors built new homes or remodeled old ones. Marble sidewalks, the Walker Memorial Building/Maclure Library and the Pittsford Aqueduct system improved the town's appearance and life in general until a recession weakened the economy at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Electricity and telephones came to town in the early 1900's. The Vermont Sanatorium, the new Town Clerk's Office and Lothrop School were erected, although many outlying schools remained open.

World War I interrupted progress, followed by a surge until the 1927 flood and the 1929 Great Depression. Hard times lasted until 1941 when Pearl Harbor plunged us into World War II, followed by the Korean Conflict. In the 1960's, we joined the Otter Valley Union School District, adopted a Zoning Ordinance, and built the Recreation Area.

Designated an "urban community" since the 1980's, farming has declined and forests are reclaiming pastures as we become a bedroom community with 70% of the working population employed outside of Pittsford. The town still maintains a largely rural appearance outside the village, however, residential construction continues to encroach on agricultural land.



PITTSFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## II. Physical Characteristics

The town of Pittsford lies between the Taconic Mountains to the west and the Green Mountains to the east. Otter Creek, which winds its way between Florence and Pittsford, is the second largest watershed in the State of Vermont which flows into Lake Champlain. Florence and Pittsford are located within the Vermont Valley Biophysical Region. Furnace Brook also flows southwesterly through the town and has provided a source of power in the past.

On the west side of Otter Creek, in a wide valley, is the village of Florence, a rural and industrial zone of Pittsford. While the valley floor is generally within the 100-year flood plain, there are several farms in operation. Because of its history as a source of marble and crushed stone, the valley is also Pittsford's primary industrial area. The hills to the west of Florence are generally steep slopes (15% or greater) with soil deficiencies which present limitations for development.

East of Otter Creek, Pittsford is located in an area of favorable slopes and soils. This holds true except for lands along East Creek which runs from the Chittenden reservoir through east Pittsford in a flood plain that was a 300 acre lake until a 1947 flood destroyed the dam.

Cox Mountain, Blueberry Hill, Biddie Knob, Bald Peak and ridge line areas above 800 feet all present limitations to extensive development due to their steep slope and poor soils. The most prevalent problems are unfavorable permeability, shallow depth to bedrock and an excessive amount of stone. These higher elevations retain rainfall providing for water supplies while supporting woodlands and marches necessary for wildlife. Industrial development here should be prohibited and other development here should be severely limited to low impact residential and agricultural use so as not to disturb the delicate nature of these areas.

### **III. Population**

In 1791 Pittsford's population was 850. The population grew to over 2,100 by 1870 then declined to 1,775 in 1890. By 1910 the population had increased to around 2,500 and then fluctuated over the following 40 years. From 1980 to 1991 the population increased 16.8% from 2,590 to 3,026 establishing the town as an urban municipality.

Pittsford's present population is estimated to be about 3,211. The population is expected to increase at a slow and stable rate into the year 2020, with a projected population of 3,275.

Despite the general stability in the total number of residents, Pittsford is undergoing significant demographic changes with a climb in the median age to 40.1 in 2000, an aging trend that is generally echoed county and statewide. Another trend in population is the increased proportion of family households. In 2000, families made up 33.5% of all households, which is somewhat higher than in 1990 when families made up 27% of the population. Despite the rise in the proportion of families however, the 2000 census indicates that there has been a slight drop in average household size to 2.44 from 2.47 in 1990. This is likely due to an increase in single householders, a change that is also echoed nationally.

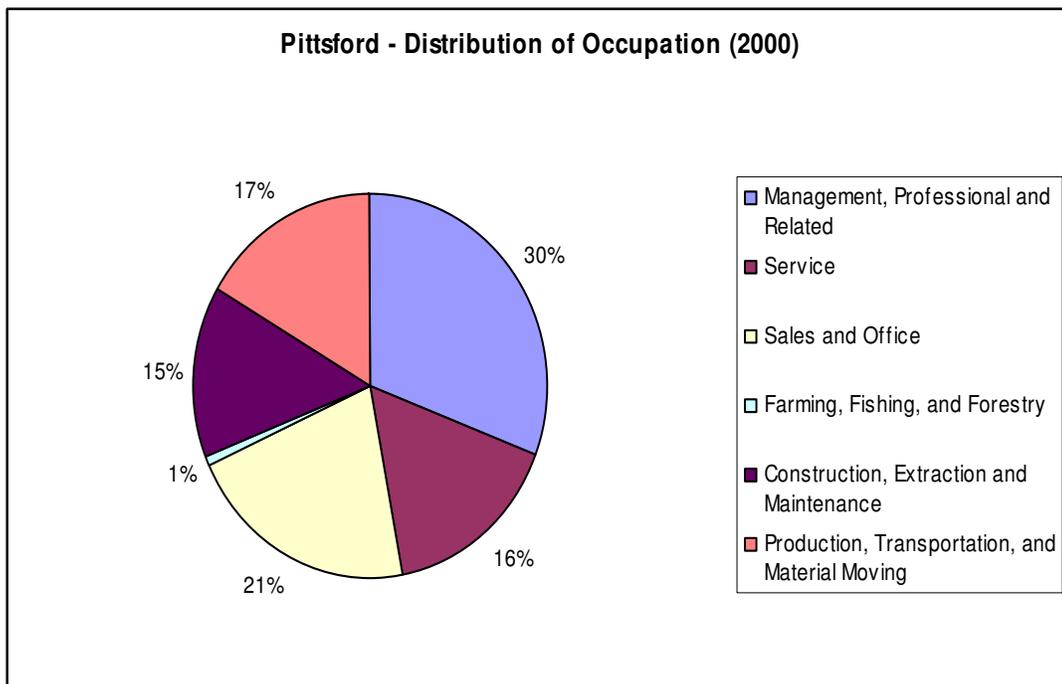
These general population trends are likely to continue in Pittsford as the population continues to transform. As a result, it will eventually affect the need for adjusted housing supply, services, transportation modes and facilities in Pittsford and Rutland County.

### **IV. Economic Base**

Pittsford's economy relies on manufacturing, commercial service enterprises, agriculture and tourism. Manufacturing activities consist of lumber, printing, woodworking, highway supplies and processing of calcium carbonate.

Agricultural activities occur throughout the town. Commercial and service enterprises are found primarily on the main highways through the village, and sections of Routes 3 and 7. Additional local employment is provided by the Vermont Police Academy while many residents also work in Rutland City and County.

A majority of Pittsford’s residents are employed in surrounding towns. As of 2000, 30% of Pittsford’s working residents were reported to be employed in management and professional occupations. Another 21% were employed in sales and office related occupations. Agriculture, forestry and fishing represented the employment of 1% of Pittsford residents (see chart below).



Over the past few years, some new businesses have been established along Route 7 north and south of the village. These have noticeably struggled to succeed, as have some which had existed for many years. An analysis of local factors which contribute to business success or failure would be useful to future new businesses.

Pittsford is unusual in that it lacks a developed village center. A village center would provide synergistic business opportunities with convenience for shoppers, while limiting the negative aspects associated with uncontrolled sprawl.

Town revenues are based upon property tax assessment of the grand list of property values of residential and commercial property as well as a property tax on business equipment, user fees for water and sewer, and a Village Tax. More than 35% of Pittsford’s tax revenue is paid by OMYA.

The following chart shows the distribution of taxes (not acreage) based upon the assessed grand list values in 2001 by categories determined by the Vermont State Lister's coding:

| <u>Property Type</u>        | <u>% of Total Tax</u> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Residential                 | 45.68                 |
| Seasonal                    | 3.00                  |
| Commercial                  | 6.78                  |
| Industrial & Utilities      | 21.08                 |
| Farming                     | 1.61                  |
| Woodland                    | 0.57                  |
| Miscellaneous & Public Land | 2.13                  |
| Personal Property           | 19.16                 |

Construction or expansion of infrastructure should reinforce the general character and planned growth patterns of the area. Private capital, public funds, grants and loans should be used to finance this growth.

A long range state AOT plan to upgrade Route 7 through the village will involve lowering the street level for greater traffic safety, improved parking access and renewed curbing and sidewalks for greater pedestrian safety.

## **V. Town Government**

The town operates with the support of many volunteers dedicated to Pittsford. These volunteers support a small team of employees who maintain our roads, manage our finances, keep our recreation area and programs operating and our transfer station functional.

The Select Board is an elected, five person board, responsible for overall governance of the town. It oversees the work of the town manager and town employees, proposes budgets, adopts local by-laws and sets town policies. The chief financial and operating officer is our town manager who is supported by an assistant. They maintain and conduct the daily business of our town. The town clerk/treasurer keeps our records in order and collects the monies required to keep our town open for business. This position is also supported by an assistant. There are five town-based boards appointed by the Select Board. Each of these boards is made up of volunteers.

The Recreation Director is assisted by a seven person board, who oversees the operation of the recreation area and various programs offered by the department throughout the year.

The Zoning Administrator is supported by the Zoning Board of Adjustment. This seven person team is responsible for reviewing applications for conditional uses and variances from the zoning regulations and hearing appeals of decisions made by the Zoning Administrator.

The third appointed board is the Planning Commission, currently consisting of five members and is responsible for developing and writing the Town Plan, writing zoning regulations and hearing certain zoning applications. It is also responsible for working with the Select Board and other organizations and individuals in town to implement the Town Plan.

The recently consolidated Water and Sewer Commission oversees the operation of the town's water sources and distribution system and the sewer system and plant. It is made up of five members with two alternates.

A recent addition to the town appointed boards is that of the Ethics Committee, whose primary role is to work with matters concerning conflict of interest.

The Board of Listers is made up of elected officials responsible for the assessment of town property and updating the list of appraised properties within the town. This is a three member, part time, paid board with a paid secretary.

## **SECTION B: COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

### **I. Land Use Plan**

#### **Traditional Land Use Patterns**

Settlement patterns in Pittsford were initially determined by available waterpower, transportation routes and quality agricultural land. The combination of these factors led logically to the development along the Otter Creek valley while industries were attracted to the Florence area because of the availability of raw materials, primarily marble.

The village of Pittsford developed above the Otter Creek flood plain on a major north-south transportation route, which became Route 7. Most of the town's commercial and service activities and community facilities are located within the village area. The village and town were merged in 1988 upon approval of the state legislature.

New commercial and professional facilities are encouraged to locate in the proposed Village Center area, so as to help reduce sprawl and provide more safety and convenience to its citizens.

Florence, located on the west side of Route 7 and Otter Creek, developed as an industrial center focusing upon marble and chemical processing. The railroad was important in the early development of the area and retains its importance as a spur of the Vermont Railway supporting activities in the area, particularly OMYA, Inc., a multinational corporation producing processed marble.

Other significant properties within the town are the Vermont Police Academy and Fire Fighting Academy as well as summer homes and two summer children's camps. Individual residences and farmsteads are located throughout the town with agricultural land comprising almost one-half of the town's total area. Agricultural activity, rural and open areas, and ridge line landscapes define the character of our town. Through this plan and its associated zoning and proposed subdivision ordinance, our town will attempt to retain, enhance and improve these defining areas.

Several acres of forested land also exist in the town in the form of preserves or other lands unavailable for development. These properties include:

- ☀ 1,787 acres owned by the Nature Conservancy
- ☀ a 109 acre portion of the Proctor Town Forest
- ☀ a 360 acre parcel owned by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife
- ☀ 55 acres owned by the Historical Society
- ☀ 14 acres in a town forest, a 48 acre town recreational area
- ☀ 43 acres owned by the school district

These properties comprise a natural resource, which this plan endorses as worthy of retention in their natural state.

## **Future Land Use Areas**

### ***Land Use Vision and Goals***

Pittsford's land use goals focus on developing business activities to supply jobs to local residents and on the development of a diversified industrial and commercial base. This development must be pursued responsibly and with due consideration for environmental constraints. Economic development in Pittsford should proceed in full compliance with "smart growth" and compact development principles.

To achieve this broad vision of harmonious economic development, Pittsford has set the following objectives, which should be given consideration in all development decisions:

- ☀ Promote the health, safety, vitality and aesthetics of the community through economic and residential growth that is targeted to compact, mixed use centers at a scale convenient and accessible for pedestrians and appropriate for the community.
- ☀ Develop within the town those locations and services which will be attractive to commercial and professional investors who may locate in the community.
- ☀ Protect and preserve environmental quality and important natural historic features of Vermont, including but not limited to natural areas, water resources, air quality, migratory flyways, wildlife corridors, scenic resources and historic sites and districts.
- ☀ Conserve agricultural lands and forestry resources whenever possible. Maintain open space and the historically rural character of the community by supporting sustainable agricultural and forestry practices as an economic resource.

## ***Land Use Districts and Overlays***

The following land use areas reflect the town's future plans for management of growth while considering environmental constraints such as flood plains, wetlands and steep slopes found throughout the community. Taken together, these areas provide a variety of agricultural, business, residential and recreational opportunities.

### 1. Village

This area is mostly the former Village of Pittsford. This plan proposes to maintain the village's traditional social and physical character, while promoting commercial and small business growth within this area. Some portions of the village are long established and have little room for expansion, being suitable mainly for residences, neighborhood commercial uses and recreation. The village is also the site for much of the state and local governmental uses in our town. The Pittsford Green Historic District, established in 1982 in the National Historic register, is seen by many as having potential as a focus for future community activities, as defined in the Village Designation.

### 2. Rural

Rural areas are those areas outside the village not otherwise designated for commercial, industrial or conservation. A large portion of the area is not served by municipal water or sewer. Growth in this area should be managed consistent with the character of the area, the availability of services, and the site conditions.

An objective of this plan is to preserve the traditional rural character and the aesthetics which have traditionally defined the community, by managing the development and harmony of open space, ridge lines and woodland while supporting economic growth.

Several areas of the town are especially adapted for agricultural activity. Farming contributes to the economic base of the community and contributes to the character of the town. Agricultural lands preserve open space, provide sanctuary for wildlife and waterfowl, utilize the flood plain in ways other business cannot and foster the retention of forested areas as natural and economic resources and buffers to mitigate destruction due to natural disasters. This plan promotes the preservation and reclamation of land for farming. Furthermore, the town acknowledges the value of the Vermont Current Use Land program, which supports farmers in their efforts to maintain open spaces.

### 3. Industrial

Land in the Florence vicinity has traditionally been agricultural and industrial and offers potential for further industrial expansion. A rail spur serves the area, there is direct truck access from Route 7, high voltage power service is provided and municipal water is

available. While municipal services do not presently exist in Florence for wastewater treatment, consideration has been given to developing a sewer treatment facility. The current industrial area is composed primarily of land owned by OMYA and the railroad. Other sites adjacent to OMYA lands and along access to the OMYA lands are also considered to have potential for industrial uses but may require substantial resources to make them useable for industrial purposes.

#### 4. Commercial

Principal activities include services, retail, restaurant, commercial and banking. Development in this area of the village should be encouraged to create a vibrant commercial center.

In November 2007, the State Downtown Development Board awarded Pittsford with Village Center Designation. This program was created to support development of older and historic properties within Designated Village Center districts through tax credits targeted at general rehabilitation work, code compliance work and exterior improvements of the facade of buildings.

The three credits are:

- ☀ 10% State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit applies to costs for substantially rehabilitating a certified historic building and piggy backs on the 20% Federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit
- ☀ 25% Facade Improvement Tax Credit
- ☀ 50% Code Improvement Tax Credit applies to costs of bringing a building into compliance with state building codes

#### 5. Rural Commercial

The Rural Commercial areas are located along portions of Route 3. The intent is to provide an area where light commercial uses would be permitted that would not detract from the rural and residential atmosphere common throughout most of Route 3 but would permit residents to engage in activities that are somewhat more intensive than customary home occupations, yet not as intensive as the uses in the commercial areas.

#### 6. Conservation

The Conservation areas are above the eight hundred (800) foot contour and are generally characterized by dense forests, steep hills with shallow or otherwise fragile soils, stream banks and elevations where development is to be limited. Some of the more prominent areas within this district are Cox Mountain, Bald Peak, Blueberry Hill, Biddie Knob and the Taconic Range. Other protected areas include lands owned by the Nature

Conservancy, the town of Proctor and some land owned by Pittsford and the state of Vermont. These lands are important sources for water supplies. They provide habitat for wildlife and offer scenic vistas of Pittsford which are essential components of our character and the tourist industry. Development above the eight hundred (800) foot contour should be limited to residential and agricultural uses only. Given the availability of water and on-site sewage disposal, avoidance of erosion issues and wildlife habitat; development between the eight hundred (800) foot and eleven hundred (1100) foot contours lots should be at least five acres, above the eleven hundred (1100) foot contour lots should be at least ten acres.

It is recommended that the town consider language within our zoning regulations which will impose specific limitations on portions of the town which are sensitive to view amenity or highly sensitive to development due to erosion, or would seriously impact wildlife habitat. Industrial development in the Conservation areas would threaten the orderly development of the region, as adjacent communities have all adopted similar restrictions on areas of this elevation. Therefore, any development, even low impact, will have an effect on not only Pittsford, but the surrounding communities. The zoning ordinance should include regulations prohibiting industrial development and limiting other low intensity development along ridge lines, prohibiting the placement of signs, and limiting the development of telecommunications towers or other large structures.

## 7. Flood Plain Overlay

A floodplain is the flat land adjacent to rivers and streams that is periodically inundated to varying depths during flooding periods. The National Flood Insurance Program uses the 100-year flood frequency as the standard for delineating flood hazard areas. The 100-year flood has a one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. The flood of 1927 is estimated to be a 100-year frequency event and was used as a standard for mapping Pittsford's floodplains. As of August 2008, the Town of Pittsford, along with most other towns within the region, updated their Flood Hazard Area Regulations in order to reduce flood damage risk. At the same time, Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) has modernized existing floodplain data for towns within the region with new Flood Insurance Rate Maps which identify floodplain boundaries and affected properties. An applicant may appeal the Floodplain boundaries to FEMA through the process of obtaining a Letter of Map Amendment.

There are currently 48 structures that lie in the floodplain; 44 are residential buildings, 3 are commercial, and 1 is unknown. There are also 2 fire hydrants in the flood plain. Much of the floodplain in the Town of Pittsford is along Otter Creek. There are also areas along portions of East Creek and Furnace Brook. As of 6/30/2007, there were 8 NFIP policies in force, amounting to \$1,464,800 in insurance coverage.

Any new development in these areas is discouraged. The potential for flood damage in these areas is high and is likely to cause expense to land owners, the town, the state and the Federal Government.

An important function of floodplains is the storage and conveyance of floodwaters. New development and the associated fill placed in a floodplain can obstruct flood flows and reduce the ability of the floodplain to store water, which can subsequently cause floodwaters to rise to higher levels on upstream and adjacent properties. The town should consider the effects of floodplain encroachment on all properties when making land use planning and management decisions.

The town should limit building and other investments in river corridors. In addition to preventing future flood losses to structures built in hazardous areas, this approach avoids constraining a river, allowing the stream or river, over time, to become more stable. Statute 24 V.S.A. §4424 specifically authorizes towns to adopt zoning for shorelines, floodplains and other hazardous areas, including fluvial erosion zones.

Most communities in Vermont rely solely on the minimum standards of the NFIP to protect their communities from flood hazards. Floodplain management based solely on NFIP minimum regulations allow for development in floodplains that could reduce the floodplain's ability to convey and store water and will cumulatively result in increases in the 100-year flood elevation. A rise in floodwaters not only can cause properties that were once flood-free to now be flood-prone, but can also cause increases the velocity of floodwaters, thereby increasing the potential for erosion of stream banks during floods.

The NFIP minimum standards do not preserve the floodplains' flood storage and conveyance functions, other natural and beneficial functions of the floodplain, such as water quality maintenance and protection, groundwater recharge and discharge, and biologic resources and functions, which can have negative impacts on a community's economic and other resources. Pittsford has adopted more stringent regulations and is therefore eligible to receive insurance premium discounts for its residents through participation in the Community Rating System.

The Town of Pittsford Flood Hazard Area Regulations and Flood Insurance Rate Map for Pittsford is available for viewing at the town office.

## 8. Wetlands Overlay

Several areas within Pittsford have been designated as wetlands. Uses in the wetlands are limited to seasonal recreational, agricultural and open space. With the exception of agricultural buildings (if permitted by State and or Federal Regulations), limited

recreational use and very limited other uses, construction within the wetlands is generally prohibited.

Areas within the Wetland Overlay are firstly considered as Wetlands. However, the land within the Wetland Overlay still retains its original Zoning District classification and is subject to the regulations for the applicable district as well as Wetlands Regulations.

### ***Other Land Use Considerations***

#### **1. Mineral Resources**

Although the extraction, processing and transportation of the earth and mineral resources that are located in Pittsford may create adverse and undesirable impacts on neighboring and surrounding land uses, such impacts, in and of themselves, may not be sufficiently adverse to warrant the prevention or prohibition of such extraction and processing. With appropriate consideration for surrounding land uses and proper mitigation measures, extraction of earth resources may be permitted on appropriately located sites in the town.

The extraction and processing of mineral resources is also a significant economic activity in Vermont and Rutland County. Resources such as sand, gravel, marble and structural or architectural stone products produce direct and indirect employment.

OMYA, Inc., producer of finely ground calcium carbonate, has one of its six North American production plants in Florence. Calcium carbonate is manufactured for the food, medicines, paper, paint and plastic industries. The plant produces dry and slurry products that are transported primarily by rail cars. OMYA stimulates significant economic activity in Pittsford, as well as the greater regional areas, and is seen as a key business in the growth and success of the town in the future.

OMYA, as of September, 2008, estimates there are enough raw materials from local area quarries to maintain current production levels through the next 50 years. OMYA also reported in September 2008 that it employs 150 in direct production operations and another 20 in corporate support activities. In addition to the 170 employees, OMYA also annually engages 150 local subcontractors with an average of 50 working on site at any given time. OMYA estimates that 30% of its employees and independent contractors are Pittsford residents. Most of the current jobs at the OMYA facility are considered highly skilled, which often necessitates recruitment outside of the local area. Most of their operations are highly automated and, therefore, labor is not considered a major cost element of production, while energy and freight costs are considered major.

Several opportunities for community benefit have been identified through enhanced corporate/public partnership between Pittsford and OMYA. Some of these include:

- a. Florence Town Well: The well acts as a critical backup water supply and OMYA currently only draws approximately 10% of the volume permitted in the current agreement with the town.
- b. Storage of Road Salt and Sand: OMYA is willing to store salt and/or sand at an in-plant site if helpful to the town during difficult winter conditions.
- c. Fire Vehicle Storage: Pittsford currently maintains a fire vehicle on the OMYA site for coverage within the Florence area.
- d. Local Crisis Planning: While OMYA has its own Crisis Plan in place, they have indicated a willingness to participate and share in local crisis planning for Pittsford.
- e. Road and Bridge Repair: OMYA has in the past, and may in the future, assist in the financial requirements regarding the local plant access road infrastructure maintenance.

## 2. Agricultural/Forestry Resources

Pittsford remains a rural area with a variety of active farm and farm-related businesses. Farming activity in Pittsford produces a variety of farm goods such as beef, lamb, eggs, vegetables, honey, maple syrup, Christmas trees and specialty “value-added” foods such as jams and home canned goods.

Pittsford has seen a shift in the size and number of farms over the past ten years. While there has been a decrease in the number of acres in active farm production, there has simultaneously been an increase in the overall number of productive farms. This can be explained by the loss of large dairy farms which require a high number of acres, and an increase in specialized market farms which tend to be smaller in acreage.

Agricultural lands developed for non-agricultural uses often result in fragmented parcels. Although much of the agricultural soils remain usable in these situations, the difficulty of managing these separately owned properties for a single agricultural enterprise could exclude their use for agriculture now and in the future.

Farms in the Pittsford are adjusting to new modes of operation. Dairy farms formed their own cooperatives, giving them greater leverage in the regional marketplace and a better price on milk for the individual farms. Others are making the transition to organic milk, in response to a growing national demand. Still others are raising beef cattle and other grazing animals. Many farms are returning to or emphasizing diversification of products and marketing methods including the production of value-added products that bring a higher return over focusing on a single commodity subject to globalized price structures.

One of the key forces supporting smaller farms is the growing interest among consumers in purchasing local food products. Statewide efforts to promote the *Vermont Seal of Quality* and purchase of locally produced goods are reportedly increasing sales for local food producers. Consumers are encouraged to buy local our Farmers' Markets.

Horse riding, as a recreation and sport in Pittsford has been well accepted. Many residents own horses. A growing number of farms are being used for horses either to simply board and pasture, or as riding stables and arenas.

There are a number of organizations (e.g. Pittsford Community Corporation, Vermont Land Trust and The Nature Conservancy) as well as state programs that focus attention on preserving valued farm and forest lands through donations, purchase or conservation easements which pay the landowners to keep the land in agricultural use versus parceling it off and selling it for development. There has been significant activity in Pittsford within these programs. The conserved land establishes and maintains undeveloped land that will remain an opportunity for future agriculture and forestry that would not exist if the land were developed.

Despite its obvious benefits, some potential shortcomings have been identified. For example, there are concerns about how the purchase of development rights will affect future generations of farmers who will not have the opportunity to parcel off some of their land when funds are tight. Also, what happens to the land if a landowner stops farming? Other concerns revolve around rising land and housing prices in close proximity to conserved lands.

Pittsford has been known for agriculture and there are a number of state programs to support the viability of the agriculture sector. More local support would be beneficial. The Pittsford Community Corporation has recently assisted in conserving 113.76 acres at the MacComber Farm on Route 3 in 2005 and has a vision of going further with conserving farmland in Pittsford. A greater collaboration between agencies, Non-Profit groups and agricultural organizations working to preserve agriculture could be utilized to further farmland protection in our town. In Rutland County, organizations such as United States Department of Agriculture and Vermont Department of Agriculture could play a role in assisting conservation of open farmland as well as the Non-Profit groups. The Vermont Housing Conservation Program provides grants to assist local conservation easements.

In order to help protect agricultural and forest lands, Pittsford is in the process of developing subdivision regulations. While farm operations are exempt from local zoning laws, they have to follow the Vermont Agriculture AAP's. Giving attention to how surrounding parcels are developed can help avert some of the potential conflict between farm business operations and residential homes. Subdivision regulations should

consider the impact a land division and development scheme would have on forestlands and agricultural parcels.

Many new farmers lease land in the beginning while they test their business ideas and build a customer base. A popular economic development strategy is to create “incubator” space for new businesses to get started. Burlington’s Intervale has successfully applied this model to farming by providing support via low-cost lease agreements and equipment sharing to new farmers. Pittsford farmers are encouraged to inquire into these models of production.

Efforts should be made to ensure that retiring farmers in Pittsford are aware of Land Link, a program aimed at matching new farmers with lands to lease or manage and the myriad of other resources available at the national, state and local level.

One way to address the issue of viability is to concentrate on increasing the amount of product purchased at a local level. There are a number of successful models across the Northeast where *buy local* campaigns have significantly raised the demand for locally produced goods and products – thereby supporting existing operations and opening up the opportunity for additional farms and forest-related businesses. The town should seek ways to support local farmers and the development of local farmers markets.

## **Pittsford Special Actions: Agriculture and Forestry Resources**

Pittsford will strive to accomplish the following actions in the coming years:

*a. Partnerships:*

- Work with interested groups (Pittsford Community Cooperation, Vermont Land Link, and Vermont Land Trust) to better support the retention and viability of agricultural lands through their land use plans and regulations
- Work with area farmers and the Rutland Area Farm and Food Link to increase outlets for agricultural products produced in the Region
- Work with land trusts to examine the effects of land conservation techniques and to devise ways of countering unintended consequences such as escalating land and housing costs
- Partner with other organizations to create a farm incubator in the Rutland Region to help new farmers get started in Pittsford
- Support partnerships with Natural Resource Agencies to plan for sustainable farming and forestry

*b. Regulations and Planning:*

- The town will support the "Current Use" or "Land Use" management program and will encourage improved support services for sustainable forestry practices
- Review and update zoning regulations to promote cluster development and limit the segmentation of farmland
- Where housing or other development on lands suitable for agriculture and forestry is proposed, help shape land use regulations and development review to encourage cluster housing to allow for the continuation of large tracts

c. *Town and Citizen Initiatives:*

- Create an Agriculture Preservation Committee of local residents in partnership with the Vermont Department of Agriculture to investigate economically viable farming practices and products, especially product diversification
- Support forestry management programs which improve the quality of wood lots as a timber resource and as wildlife habitat
- Initiate a study to evaluate the needs and concerns of the local forest industry

### 3. Recreational Water Resources

The need to maintain and improve water quality in the town's ponds and streams is vital to preserving drinking water quality, recreational water resources and storm water control (example Tropical Storm Irene). Several recreational water locations exist within the town. The largest, Otter Creek, flows through several communities and industrial areas prior to its reaching Pittsford where the Pittsford wastewater treatment plant discharges treated water into the flow. The State Water Resources Board has indicated that the water quality condition along the range of Otter Creek and its tributaries is to be cleaned to a Class B water source. Class B waters are suitable for bathing and recreational use, irrigation and agricultural uses, good fish habitat and as a public water resource after filtration and disinfection.

Furnace Brook is considered a wild stream by the Department of Fish and Wildlife and contains a significant population of rainbow, brown and native brook trout.

The upper Castleton River watershed (privately owned) is 2 miles south of Butler Swamp in Florence consisting of 70 undeveloped acres. A sensitive blue heron rookery is located at this site.

The Kendrick Pond (publicly owned) impoundment, a former ice collection pond, contains a dam which may need deconstruction and holds approximately three acres.

### 4. Natural Resources

#### a. Wildlife Habitats

Habitat is the area that a species of wild plant or animal needs to live. Species feed, take shelter, travel, breed and produce young according to habitat preferences, which can

range from very strict to very general, depending on the species. Human activities have direct impacts on the quality and quantity of habitat available for wildlife. As human population grows, and as human activities encompass more of the undeveloped lands in our town, wildlife habitats can be destroyed or compromised such that they no longer meet the needs of wildlife populations.

In Pittsford, the most serious cause of habitat loss and alteration include development activities in relatively wild places, in wetlands, in scarce ecosystems and on ridge lines.

...ANR's identification of the Grandpa's Knob habitat area as a rare and irreplaceable natural area (RINA) containing numerous rare species and set-significant natural communities. The agency recently completed a habitat block rating system for the entire state, and the Grandpa's Knob habitat block scored 11<sup>th</sup> in the state out of 4,055 blocks total, and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Taconic range only to the Bomoseen block as a RINA. \* The REPORTER p.22, May 30, 2012

Other stressors include the introduction of non-native species and some agricultural and forestry activities. Aquatic systems are most threatened by pollution, stream channel changes, erosion, sedimentation, inadequate fish passages, shoreline development, dams, water-manipulations and aquatic invasive species such as milfoil, water chestnut and purple loosestrife.

Suitable habitat and vibrant migratory flyways and wildlife corridors are the key to survival of Vermont's wild animals and plants. Pittsford is also located in a critical New England wildlife corridor; therefore any degradation of this area could negatively affect flora and fauna throughout the New England area. Habitat provides all of a given species' needs for food, shelter and reproduction. Degradation of the habitat can result in increased stress, reduced vigor and reduced reproductive success.

Habitat requirements may change during a species' lifetime according to the stages of its life cycle. Many animal species make use of several types of habitats during the course of a single day. Two other critical habitats found in Pittsford are wintering areas for deer and spawning areas for trout.

Development activities cause both direct and indirect impacts to wildlife habitat. Habitat may be lost outright, as in the cutting of deer wintering areas or the filling of wetlands. Indirect impacts include the fragmentation of habitat, noise and light pollution, the alteration of water levels in wetlands or floodplains and greater human presence; making

travel and reproductive success more difficult for wildlife. Increased human activity may have the effect of forcing shy and wary species deeper into the woods when, for example, a residential subdivision is created at the edge of a well-frequented migration corridor, making less of the existing habitat actually usable for those species.

A variety of bats, including endangered Indiana bats have been found locally and are beneficial in the control of insect populations. The following are several steps that maintain suitable habitat for bats:

- ☀ Maintain connectivity between forestland and riparian/wetland habitats
- ☀ Promote sustainable use of forests, thereby providing a mixture of age classes and a supply of larger dead and dying trees
- ☀ Maintain forested buffers along the town's water bodies, particularly Otter Creek
- ☀ Protect existing caves and mines used by bats
- ☀ Continue to investigate the cause of fatal disease in the local bat community – currently it points to pesticide usage, which should be greatly reduced

#### b. Aquatic Ecosystems

Alteration of aquatic ecosystems results in changes to a variety of habitats that support an intricate community of plant and animal life. Entire populations or particular life stages of a species may be affected by the change. Species shifts can have broader implications for the ecosystem as a whole in terms of its structure and functions. Symbiotic and predator/prey relationships may be thrown out of balance or the productivity of certain species may be depressed for some period of time.

As documented by the Non-Game and Natural Heritage Program within the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, the Rutland Region is home to a wide variety of the state's rare community types.

#### c. Wetland Ecosystems

Wetlands are a vital part of Vermont's ecosystems. They are perhaps the most biologically productive areas of the state and rank among the richest in terms of the variety of plant and animal life they support. Many species use wetlands for part of their lives; certain other species depend entirely on wetlands for their survival.

Vermont's wetlands are part of the Atlantic Flyway, a major route taken by migratory birds in the spring and fall. Pittsford falls within this Atlantic Flyway. Wetlands along this flyway are critical resting and feeding areas for Canadian and snow geese, numerous species of ducks and a wide variety of other waterfowl such as herons, egrets, rails, bitterns, marsh and sedge wrens and many songbirds.

#### d. Ridge Lines

The ridge lines of Pittsford are a vital part of what defines our community. The scenic views they provide are an important part of the character of our town. These scenic vistas are of significant importance from public areas as well as from numerous private residential properties within Pittsford. As these ridge lines are a part of the Atlantic Flyway, only very low impact, low density, non-industrial development should be permitted in these areas. The Taconic Ridge line is recognized by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources as a Rare and Irreplaceable Natural Area.

### **Pittsford Actions: Land Use and Development**

- ☀ The town will revise its zoning ordinance to ensure that growth is managed in more rural areas and encouraged in the village area. The revision process will include adoption of subdivision regulations
- ☀ The town will encourage the conservation and stewardship of contiguous forested areas and ridge lines suitable for the protection and enhancement of existing wildlife habitats
- ☀ The town should enhance zoning regulations to preserve the scenic views of our ridge lines
- ☀ Coordinate with the Rutland Economic Development Corporation (REDC), the Rutland Area Chamber of Commerce, Rutland Region Education alliance and the Regional Planning Commission to establish information for expanding job opportunities within the county and the town and make this information available at Maclure Library and the town offices
- ☀ Consider the development of a resource center for materials, which would support business development and financial assistance
- ☀ Conduct a study to assess the opportunities for job development within Pittsford and solicit input from local businesses for ways to improve the business environment
- ☀ The town should research and pursue development opportunities and requirements for supporting business growth
- ☀ Support and enhance the Pittsford Merchants' Association

- ☀ Conduct an analysis of the reasons for past business failure and offer assistance to new business ventures in town through a volunteer group of knowledgeable and experienced business people
- ☀ Establish a joint committee with OMYA to explore opportunities for synergistic local businesses
- ☀ Explore the pros and cons of offering tax incentives to new businesses
- ☀ The town will strongly object to any development on the ridgeline which would negatively impact the view from the Hubbardton Battlefield Historic Site

## **II. Transportation**

### **Transportation Vision and Goals**

The quick, efficient and safe movement of people, goods and services, within and through the community, is needed to maintain vitality. Public highways will continue to be the primary method of transportation for the foreseeable future in Pittsford. The primary challenges facing the community are:

1. To adequately fund the maintenance of existing roads, paths and trails
2. To improve and to increase the availability of alternative transportation modes such as paths, sidewalks, trails and public transportation
3. To accommodate regional traffic impacts through transportation improvements that do not significantly alter the character of the community

Pittsford's goal is to provide a safe and well-maintained transportation network. The town will strive to improve the surface condition and longevity of the town's total highway system. By expanding the level of annual maintenance on town roads, more total road miles will be repaired each year and paved surfaces will be maintained sufficiently so that a newly paved surface will accept at least 10 years of wear before requiring resurfacing.

The town will focus planning efforts on the provision of safe, convenient, economic transportation management and services within the village district. The town will continue to explore ways to reduce traffic congestion and improve parking and pedestrian safety within the village. Assessing and improving public transportation in Pittsford is an important aspect of the Transportation Plan. The town must increase opportunities for all citizens, but particularly elderly or disabled citizens, to access community and regional services.

## Highways and Roadways

Transportation infrastructure within the town of Pittsford varies from high volume public roadways, such as US Route 7, to footpaths and trails throughout the community.

Pittsford roadways are classified and discussed within the following seven categories:

### 1. Principal Arterial Highways

US Route 7 is the only arterial highway in Pittsford. It is a part of the National Highway System as so designated by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). US Route 7 extends the entire length of the State of Vermont and provides a western corridor north into Canada and south into Massachusetts. It traverses the designated Pittsford Village Center and connects with the adjacent communities of Rutland to the south and Brandon to the north. It is the most traveled (and therefore the most used) route for entering and exiting Pittsford. Seven locations in the Pittsford area on Route 7 were monitored and traffic was actually counted or estimated at the same sites at various times in 2002, 2004 and again in 2006. Traffic has slightly declined during the last four years from an average of approximately 10,100 cars per day in 2002 to 9,600 in 2006 for an approximate 5% decline as reported by the Vermont Agency of Transportation Division. It is also interesting to note that the count sites in the middle of the village averaged approximately 10,000 adjusted average daily traffic (AADT) are higher than those counts taken south and north of the village center which were recorded at 8,000 and 9,000 AADT.

### 2. Major Collectors

Many of Pittsford's secondary roads serve not only to connect the town's outlying areas to the village, but also serve as connectors to the neighboring towns of Brandon, Proctor, Chittenden, Rutland Town and West Rutland. These are classified as Class 2 roads and provide connection to US Route 4 and to the neighboring communities of Florence and Proctor. With the absence of an interstate connection in or near the town of Pittsford, Route 3 is a main route for vehicle traffic and is used for transporting materials as well as travelers and commuters.

Other collector roads and local streets link with Routes 7 and 3 and complete the network. West Creek Road is a major collector which generally parallels Route 7 in Pittsford and runs from Brandon through Florence and into Proctor. It has one very narrow railroad overpass with only a twelve-foot clearance. The Vermont Agency of Transportation has included this overpass for reconstruction in its long term plan but it is not yet scheduled nor is it known when this may occur. West Creek Road is often used

for transporting agricultural and industrial materials and is a major biking route. The most recent traffic counts are from 2003 when the southern end had an AADT of 270 vehicles while north of Depot Road experienced an AADT of 910 vehicles.

Whipple Hollow Road extends from the terminus at the north at the OMYA plant in Florence south through West Rutland to US Route 4A and is one of the primary north-south routes from Florence. Adjacent land use consists of industrial, agricultural and residential applications. In 2007, the Rutland Regional Planning Commission counted an average daily traffic of 412 vehicles. Furnace Road, another important collector road, connects Route 7 in the village to the town of Chittenden and it registered an AADT of 780 vehicles in 2003. Both of these important collector roads are in need of significant resurfacing.

### 3. Town Roads

Town roads include non-arterial corridors within, or proximate to, the village center which serves residential and commercial users. Town roads in Vermont are classified as Class 2, which is usually paved all season surfaces, Class 3 is a mix of paved and unpaved all-season roads and Class 4 is generally narrow and unpaved seasonal roads. The majority of roads in the town's inventory are classified as Class 3 and 4 roads. There is a mix of paved and unpaved roads, typical of community networks in Vermont with load limits of 24,000. High AADT counts of 1200 vehicles were recorded on Kendall Hill Road, the primary truck connection from Route 7 to West Creek Road and to the OMYA plant. Interspersed among these roads are four historic covered wooden bridges which further reduce the carrying capacity of these roads to 16,000 pounds.

### 4. Private Roads

Some of the town's roads are privately owned and provide access to residences. These are permitted by the town and are required to be built to town standards. Snow plowing on Class 4 and on private roads is the responsibility of the owner. A road or trail may be "discontinued" by the town or the town may decide to resume highway maintenance at its discretion.

### 5. Trucks and Bridges

Truck traffic is a significant issue in Pittsford and is generated by two principal sources. The highest volume is from through-traffic along Route 7. Another major source of truck traffic is the OMYA plant in Florence, associated with the processing of marble into calcium carbonate.

Adverse impacts of truck traffic include health and safety concerns from noise, dust, air quality impairment, vibrations and congestion. These must be balanced with the public

welfare benefits of having employment opportunities, goods moved and services provided in the community.

The town and the Vermont Agency of Transportation share jurisdiction for the maintenance of bridges, there are 23 bridges and 307 culverts in Pittsford.

#### 6. Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure

Within and proximate to the village area, sidewalks provide alternate transportation options, creating a friendly and walkable community. There are no formal bicycle lanes or routes, but local and visiting bicyclists use many roads and trails in the town.

It should be apparent from reading this plan that Pittsford is pursuing a variety of programs to increase economic prosperity in the town. Several of these efforts focus upon improving the condition of the village and commercial districts to support a centralized community. This would be a pedestrian area for the most part which would reduce the necessity for extensive driving to satisfy consumer needs.

The town will pursue the development of multi-use, non-motorized paths. In addition to their recreational advantages, these would provide an alternative mode of transportation which could also reduce the number of automobiles on the highways.

#### 7. Rural Footpaths

Both formal and informal networks of trails exist and traverse both public and private lands. Pittsford is very proud of its trails and boasts more hiking trails and footpaths than most other villages and towns in Vermont. The town offerings include some of the most scenic and most interesting in the state. The Pittsford Trails Committee should develop a 5-year plan on maintaining and enhancing trails in Pittsford.

## **Railroads**

The Vermont railway parallels Otter Creek through the corridor, crossing roads at grade at three sites in the town. The railway is a primary carrier for raw materials and goods and provides a spur into the industrial district. There is no railroad passenger service in Pittsford.

## **Public Transportation**

While Pittsford has no public transportation resources itself, a joint venture between Addison County Transit Resources and the Marble Valley Regional Transportation District (THE BUS) now offer daily service between Rutland and Middlebury with morning, mid-day and late afternoon runs between the two end towns with stops in Pittsford. Pittsford's elderly and persons with disabilities can receive additional transportation options as part of the public transportation program. Those most likely to use public transit are those without access to a vehicle and the 2000 US Census reported this was the situation for only 60 households, which represent slightly more than 5% of total households in Pittsford.

## Projects and Issues

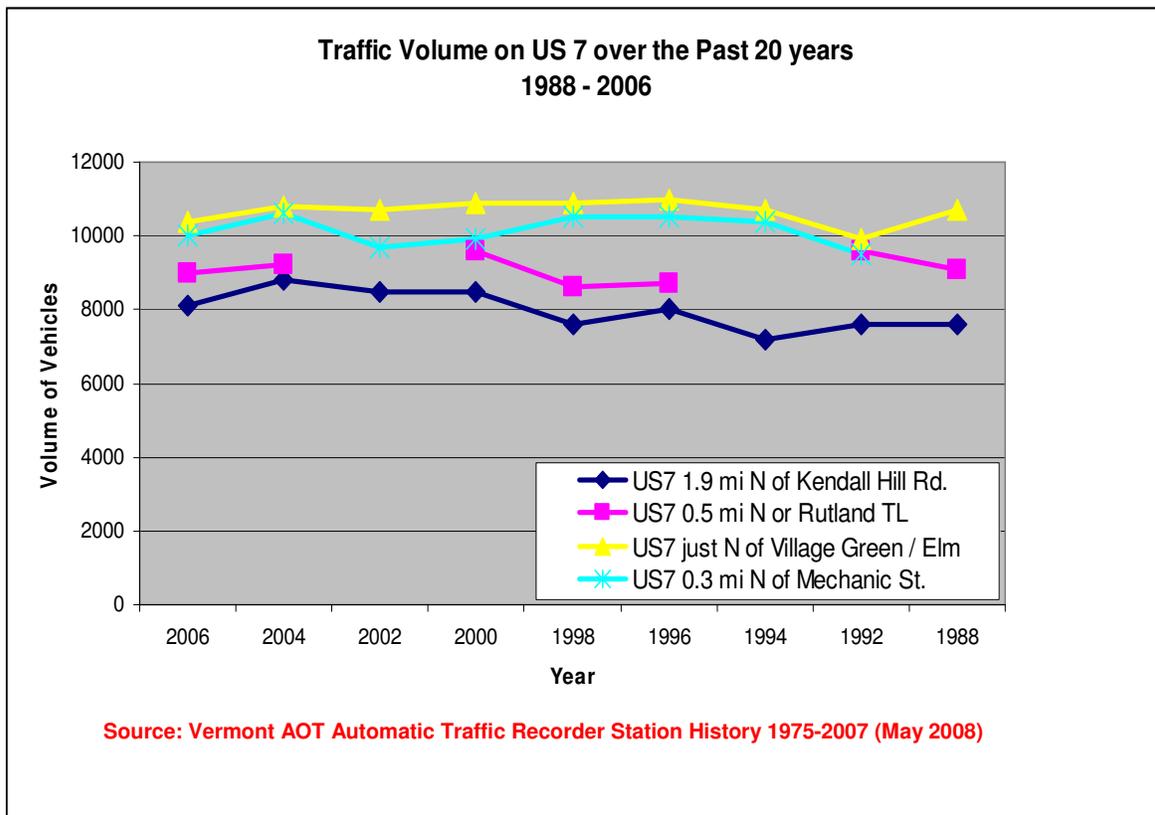
### 1. Route 7 Upgrade

In the spring of 2000, a Route 7 Steering Committee completed a Route 7 scoping report which included a rebuilding of Route 7 with consistent 8-foot shoulders, reconstruction of intersections, drainage improvements, landscaping, utilities, relocations and safety improvements. The work will be completed in six separate stages.

| <b>Route 7 Upgrade Segments</b> |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Segment 1                       | Pittsford – Arch Street South                                  |
| Segment 2                       | Pittsford – Plains Road to Arch Street                         |
| Segment 3                       | Pittsford – Branford House (Pomainville Farm) to Plains Road   |
| Segment 4                       | Brandon/Pittsford – Otter Valley High School to Branford House |
| Segment 5                       | Brandon – High Street to Otter Valley High School              |
| Segment 6                       | Brandon Village Segment to High Street                         |

Although construction was slated to begin in 2008, recent changes at the Agency of Transportation may have delayed construction on this vital road and approximate starting dates are not yet clear. It appears that construction is still intended to commence within the next year or two.

The potential scheduling of construction of only one segment per year has caused significant concern in the local business community. There are concerns that dragging the construction out over six years may result in prolonged negative impacts on local tourism and commerce due to consecutive years of perceived and/or real construction delays and the resultant diversion of traffic flows. The reduced traffic experienced on Route 7 in Pittsford during the past six years, as described above, may have been realized wholly or in part from the perceived and real construction delays and disturbance of traffic patterns experienced upstate during two of the above six years while Route 7 in Shelburne and South Burlington were being upgraded.



## 2. Transportation Funding

The Federal and State governments pay for all the costs of maintaining Federal and State highways (such as US 7 upgrades). The town, with some Federal and State financial assistance, is responsible for the repair and maintenance of Class 2 and 3 town roads. Pittsford's present highway budget was increased by \$78,185 or 9% (\$856,428 to \$934,613) due to increases in the cost of insurance and paving, and in order to provide for a more ambitious maintenance plan.

A new road maintenance program is currently being developed. Local funds can be extended by applying for state grants that are annually available through the Agency of

Transportation. Once a new Capital Program is in place, the town can also apply to the Better Backroads Program for funds. By maintaining a capital budget and an active transportation planning program, in conjunction with neighboring towns, Pittsford will be in a better position to anticipate highway needs and plan for them in an efficient and cost effective manner.

### 3. Infrastructure Inventory

Pittsford has a complete inventory of culverts; the size, material, condition and location in graphic information system format. The town should regularly update this data set, which is valuable for capital budgeting.

### 4. Access Management

Roads have two primary purposes, mobility and accessibility to adjacent land. The efficiency and safety of all town roads are directly affected by the frequency and location of points of access, or curb cuts. The design of curb cuts is also important in terms of drainage and road maintenance. Consistent and comprehensive access management policies are necessary to balance the needs of motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists and other users of the roadway systems to travel in safety and with sufficient mobility and as traffic volumes increase, this becomes increasingly important.

Example strategies for improving access management include:

- ☀ Minimum sight distance at driveway or street intersections.
- ☀ Maximum number of driveways per lot.
- ☀ Minimum distance between curb cuts and minimum distance between driveways and nearest intersection.
- ☀ Shared driveways.
- ☀ Minimum and maximum driveway widths and minimum driveway lengths.
- ☀ Driveway turnaround area (for small existing lots fronting the corridor).
- ☀ Minimum area and/or bays for loading and unloading.
- ☀ Landscaping and buffers to visually define and enhance access points.

### 5. Commuting and Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

TDM involves a variety of strategies to influence travel behavior by mode, cost, time or route in order to reduce the number of vehicles and to provide mobility options. TDM strategies are often applied to achieve public goals such as reduced traffic congestion, improved air quality and decreased reliance on energy consumption.

The average number of vehicles per household reported in the 2000 Census was 1.77. The average travel time to work for residents has been steadily increasing; in the past decade, it increased 34% and was just over 24 minutes in the 2000 Census. Since 85%

of the workforce drove to work alone, an example of TDM may be the development of a park and ride lot and the town is encouraged to study such a project.

## **Pittsford Actions: Transportation**

1. Maintain and improve a transportation system that is safe and efficient
  - ☀ Support VTrans' maintenance schedule for Pittsford's roads and bridges
  - ☀ Ensure that Pittsford's transportation network is properly maintained despite funding shortages on the Federal and State levels.
  - ☀ The town should explore opportunities for alternative transportation funding
  - ☀ During the upgrade of the Route 7 project, assess detours during reconstruction that balance the transportation system's needs with the quality of life of residents
  - ☀ Maintain the scale, rural quality and capacity of secondary roads during improvement and maintenance procedures
  - ☀ Through zoning or local ordinance, continue to restrict curb cuts where alternative access is possible and require that all new roads and all private roads and driveway intersections with town roads meet minimum safety and design standards
  - ☀ Undertake an access management study - where needed, implement access management strategies, including shared driveways, minimum distance between driveways/intersections, landscaping, maximum driveways per lot, or turn-around areas on small lots fronting the corridor
  
2. Minimize transportation energy consumption and trips
  - ☀ Implement park and rides as appropriate, working with the state when possible
  - ☀ Require provisions for bicycles and pedestrians on any new, or improvement projects, to Class 2 or 3 roads and bridges
  - ☀ Encourage the dedication of easement to permanently protect pathways through the subdivision and site plan review process
  
3. Support regional efforts to provide and maintain systems that meet the needs of all segments of the population
  - ☀ Work with neighboring towns, the Rutland Regional Planning Commission, the Rutland Region Transportation Council and the State of Vermont on a full range of transportation infrastructure topics to ensure that Pittsford's transportation policies are being addressed

#### 4. Actions

- ☀ Continue constructing a master plan and a capital program for both short term and long-term maintenance and expansion of paved and unpaved surfaces
- ☀ Seek alternatives to calm traffic within the district, such as improving sidewalks and pedestrian security and providing a safe route for children to walk to school
- ☀ The town should pursue a traffic calming study and review policing policy
- ☀ Support regularly scheduled bus service from Pittsford to neighboring communities as a means to reduce commuter traffic and facilitate movement to medical, shopping and other services
- ☀ Coordinate with the Regional Planning Commission to conduct a survey of community interest and perform a cost-benefit analysis on the subject of scheduled service by THE BUS
- ☀ Support the Marble Valley Transit which has scheduled routes between Middlebury and Rutland
- ☀ Coordinate with the Vermont Department of Transportation and with the Pittsford Merchants' Association to reduce the real and perceived disruptions and delays relative to the Route 7 upgrade

### **III. Utility and Facility Plan**

#### **Vision and Goals**

The Town of Pittsford's Utility and Facility Plan's long term goal is to expand and/or maintain all public services within the town to meet the needs of public health, residential growth, and business growth. The town will develop a master plan and capital budget to guide the town towards its goal.

Pittsford's location close to Rutland makes it primarily a bedroom community for the larger metropolitan area. Emphasis should remain on providing adequate services to the immediate village area which will continue to make it an attractive area to live and play. With global warming becoming a widely debated issue, fossil fuel reserves of finite amounts and fluctuating prices; emphasis should be placed on providing service facilities within the village to decrease traffic and the need to travel distances to these services.

## **Health Care and Human Services**

The World Health Organization defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” The health of a community depends on the quality of life as well as the availability of health care. When considering development projects for which air, noise, light, water pollution and other ill effects on human health are probable, the importance of human health, quality of life and the environment should be given priority over development interest.

High decibel audible noise has many proven adverse human health impacts and the town should create appropriate zoning regulations to address this issue. Low decibel audible noise has more of an annoyance factor and if it continues long term can result in a loss of mental and social well-being. Low decibel noise can cause sleep deprivation and its many concomitant health effects. These effects are more noticeable in rural areas where background noise is low. In addition, potentially harmful human health issues primarily related to non-audible noise (infrasound) are a concern.

Primary health care needs are generally provided by physicians and dentists located in Brandon and Rutland City. The Rutland Regional Medical Center, a fully accredited acute care facility with 188 beds, provides 30 specialized service areas. Inpatient and outpatient medical services are available. In addition, helicopter transfer is offered for emergency care at two large acute care and educational centers located within 60 miles of town at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, NH and Fletcher Allen Health Care in Burlington, VT. Outpatient care is supported by the Rutland Area Visiting Nurse Association and Hospice (RAVNAH). The Rutland region is well served by three large extended care facilities and several smaller facilities as well as adult day care and respite care. All four levels of care are provided by these facilities. Emergency transportation and immediate care are provided by Pittsford First Response in cooperation with Rutland Regional Ambulance Service. The service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Volunteers are urgently needed to maintain the current level of service provided by First Response.

At meetings with various town groups, the idea of a local physician and pharmacy to meet the needs of village residents was suggested. With environmental concerns relating to pollution and traffic congestion on Route 7, local access to health care may well become an issue for consideration in the next five to ten years.

## Child Care

Ensuring accessible, affordable and quality child care is an integral part of any community. Most young families today require some type of child care outside of the home. Experience has taught us that quality child care remains a critical community need nationwide. Nine licensed childcare providers exist in Pittsford. Five are home based, two are childcare centers and two are school based. An additional thirty sites exist within a 6.6 mile radius based on figures available from the Vermont Bright Futures Child Care Information System. While this may appear adequate, it is not clear from currently available data how adequately current facilities for childcare serve the needs of the town.

Children are fundamentally important to the town's future. Appropriate and affordable child care is a vital part of a community's future and could well be a factor in future growth and the ability to attract and retain families who currently live in the town or might choose to purchase property. The six-mile radius reflects the opportunity for childcare in a community where a parent(s) might commute to work. Should any one of the current child care centers close its doors, an immediate critical need for childcare would develop and cause hardship and strain on local families. Hence, every effort should be made to retain current childcare availability and attract future programs to the community.

A study of the current facilities and their adequacy could well avoid any problems in the future and could mean that the town needs to find additional ways to provide affordable and adequate childcare for its young families. A town wide survey would address the situation and provide statistics to see how well our needs are being met.

## Emergency Management

Having emergency services available is a basic need of residents in Pittsford. The town, together with its non-profit partners, is active in four phases of emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery and emergency management analysis.

### 1. Mitigation

In 2004, the town adopted a Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Plan. It identifies the most likely *types* of emergency incidents and *locations* where these incidents are most likely to take place. It also sets forth a prioritized list of tasks to be completed to reduce the damage from future emergencies. Key issues in Pittsford are flooding and highway accidents, which are the most frequent and damaging hazards. Priorities in the Mitigation Plan are to decrease the risk of flood damage and highway accidents, that the

town maintains an up-to-date Rapid Response Plan and that the town maintains its participation in the National Flood Insurance Program. Refer to the Mitigation Plan for details.

## 2. Preparedness

The town has an appointed Emergency Management Coordinator who is responsible for working with town officials and first responders to maintain an up-to-date Rapid Response Plan. The RRP documents all the steps that need to be taken in the event of an emergency and includes a complete listing of contacts, selected methods for alerting the public, locations that are to be used as shelters and emergency operations centers, the availability of emergency equipment and a map of evacuation routes. The RRP should be examined and re-adopted on an annual basis to ensure that the phone numbers for key individuals are correct and that other key elements, such as making sure that all shelters are approved by the American Red Cross, are maintained.

## 3. Response

### *Fire Protection*

Fire protection is provided by a 44 member volunteer fire department with a centrally located station on Arch Street and a substation at the OMYA plant in Florence. Fire-fighting equipment includes three pump trucks, a tanker, a 75-foot extension ladder truck, an emergency generator truck, utility trailer and an equipment truck. Members meet weekly to train and check equipment. Additional fire support is available through the Rutland County Mutual Fire Association. Expansion of residential and commercial units along Route 3 and Route 7 will necessitate an expansion of water service to support fire-fighting needs. The largest fundraising event sponsored by the PVFD is the Haunted House at the former sanitarium. This October fundraiser has been a community event since 1980 and attracts 4,000 plus visitors to Pittsford every year.

With funds from FEMA, a siren was installed behind the town office in 2006 to alert citizens of imminent danger due to environmental or public safety issues. This siren is tested monthly and citizens have been informed of the appropriate responses to siren signals.

### *Police Protection*

The town uses a system of constables and special or auxiliary police officers who must be trained and certified through the Vermont Police Academy. The State Police and the Rutland County Sheriff's Department provide additional police services.

These officers strongly recommend that a town-wide effort must be made to bring house numbers up to the 9-1-1 standards. In some instances, more than one number appears on

a dwelling, making it very difficult to determine if they have arrived at the correct residence when a call comes in for assistance. Public complaints indicate that discussion is needed concerning traffic calming and speed limits throughout the village.

#### *Emergency Medical Services*

Pittsford First Response provides immediate care and patient stabilization services. The nearest hospital is the Rutland Regional Medical Center. Ambulance service is provided by Rutland Regional Ambulance as needed.

#### 4. Recovery

Pittsford maintains records of costs incurred in the recovery from disasters, including road repairs, culvert replacements, etc. Recording and reporting this information to Vermont Emergency Management and the local Agency of Transportation District Office helps the state to apply for Presidential declarations of disaster in larger events and can make the town eligible for substantial reimbursement of costs. The town and its residents have historically been supportive of residents who suffered damage or losses and have provided whatever assistance was needed or available.

#### **Emergency Management Analysis**

The town of Pittsford has been active in its emergency management responsibilities. Because of the town's small population and rural setting, response to some types of emergencies will not be as quick as they might be in larger communities, but the town's residents have taken strides to be as self-sufficient as possible in the event of an emergency.

### **Solid Waste Disposal (Trash and Recyclables)**

Pittsford operates a solid waste transfer station on Depot Street which accepts residential garbage for compacting and transfer to the regional solid waste collection center. Most recyclable items are accepted at this station. Residents are urged to clean and sort items before attempting to use the facility. The Solid Waste District conducts a collection of hazardous wastes four times a year. Collection dates are advertised in local papers and bulletins. In addition, construction debris, metals, household appliances and some other products can be discarded for a fee at the regional transfer station on Gleason Road in Rutland. Pittsford operates the transfer station on a fee basis per bag of garbage and admits residents who have purchased a bumper sticker at the Town Offices. Current hours of operation are posted for Wednesdays and

Saturdays. Pittsford is a member of the Rutland Regional Solid Waste District. Also at the transfer station, the boy scouts have a returnable bottle bin.

Education concerning recycling and its benefits are vital to reduce the amount of trash which is disposed of in our community. The amount of recycled materials is well below the 50% mark, which is the goal of the industry. Despite national and local efforts, the recycling rate in recent years has declined.

## **Cable Television, Internet, Telephone, Electric Service**

Cable television service is available in some areas of town through Comcast with an office located on North Main Street in Rutland. For residents not able to access cable, a variety of digital and satellite services are also available in the immediate region.

In March 2008, FairPoint Communications, Inc. took over Verizon's landline phone and Internet service areas in Northern New England. FairPoint has plans to expand high-speed Internet access across Vermont, Maine and New Hampshire. Cell phone service reception is good to excellent in the Pittsford area with some dead spots in isolated areas. A cell phone tower is located on Grandpa's Knob to the west of the town.

Modern communication technology is essential for economic development, education, and efficient medical and emergency services. Cell phone capability and high-speed Internet (a.k.a. broadband) are especially important for economic development. The Vermont Department of Public Service Approximate Broadband Availability in Vermont – 2006 map indicates that much of Pittsford has access to high-speed Internet through cable modems or through DSL (over the phone lines). Areas that may not have service include the western town border (adjacent to Hubbardton and Castleton) and the southeast corner of town. The Maclure Library also provides access to high-speed Internet on six public computers.

Residential and commercial power is supplied by Green Mountain Power (formerly Central Vermont Public Service) with offices located in Rutland.

## **Sewer System**

Connections to the wastewater treatment plant are primarily along Route 7 north and south in the village and along Arch Street where the plant is located. A new sewage treatment plant was built in 2002. An engineering firm has been retained to propose solutions to the

remaining problems with the sludge handling system and chlorine contact chamber so that we meet all state regulatory requirements.

A separate problem is the infiltration of storm and groundwater into the sewer pipes, which affects the efficiency of the wastewater treatment process and, at times, brings the inflow to the plant to maximum capacity and exceeds capacity at times. The consequence is that the plant does not have surplus capacity to connect any new development in the village. The Water and Sewer Commission continues to work with engineering consultants to identify the source of the infiltration and plan solutions to the problem. All residents are encouraged to plant rain gardens or to use other landscaping techniques to allow storm water to seek into the ground rather than run off and into the sewer system.

Residents outside the area served by the treatment plant must install private septic systems which meet state standards. A state permit is required and a state authorized inspector must approve the system before enclosure. Permit forms are available from the town clerk.

## **Public Water Service**

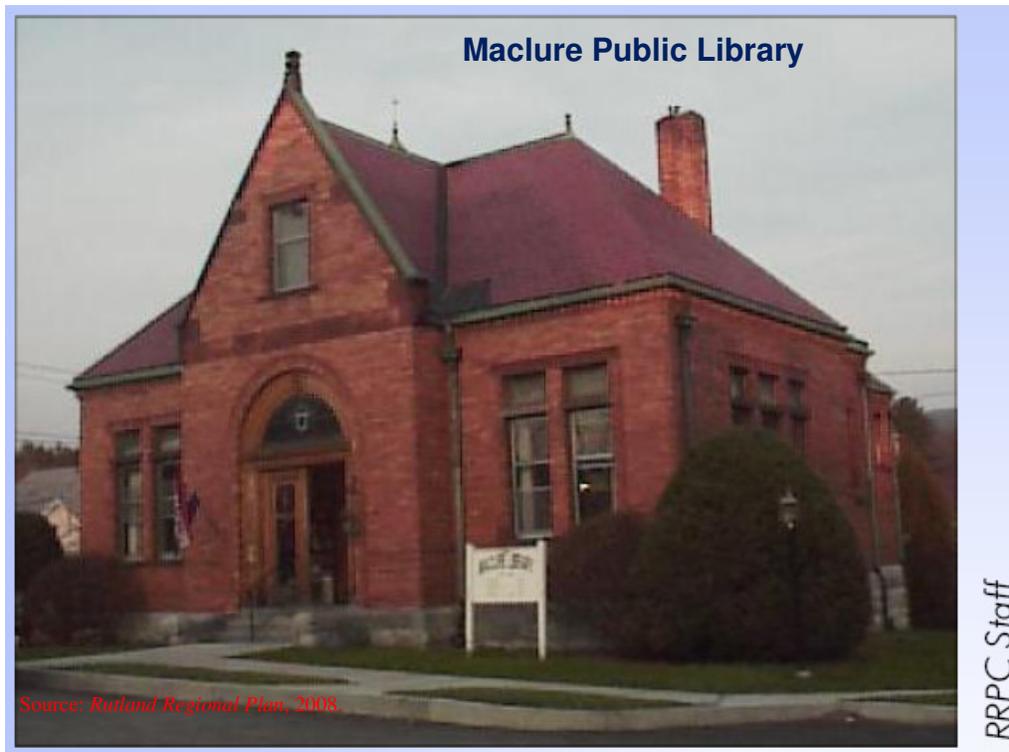
The Pittsford municipal water system consists of five springs on land purchased from the Nickwackett dairy farm in North Chittenden on Nickwackett Mountain and one spring (Sand Spring) located approximately one mile south. The land has been purchased by the Town of Pittsford to protect the water source. The Nickwackett water supply is stored in three reservoirs on Plains Road with capacities of 25,000, 175,000 and 800,000 gallons. Pittsford water system currently uses one-third of its capacity. Our water supply is more than adequate and of excellent quality.

Any residences or businesses outside the water district must be supplied by their own private wells or springs. Many of our agricultural and residential areas are outside our water district area.

## **Maclure Public Library**

Pittsford is most fortunate to have a public library facility which is centrally located and on the National Registry of Historic Places. The town library was founded in 1796 and the present building was donated by Dr. Henry Walker in 1895. The lower level was redesigned in 2000 as a children's room, with a reference and computer area. Grant money facilitated major roof repairs and two new chimneys. In 2008, the Maclure Library was featured in the Rutland Regional Plan's chapter on Public Libraries.

The library is funded primarily by tax dollars, donations and endowment dividends. A Board of Trustees oversees the operations and sets its policies. In small communities, the local library provides a range of services, resources and activities that are cultural as well as educational; such as children's programs, reading groups, literacy education, informal concerts, movies and more. In addition to our own collection, patrons have access to material from libraries throughout Vermont via interlibrary loan.



Maclure Library offers different services than do the local public schools. The community library serves all ages, from toddlers to seniors. Special focuses are preschool story hours, daycare and senior housing book delivery, author visits, lectures, book club and Internet and computing facilities. The library provides the community free meeting room space, current literature, information resources and technology, and materials to pursue personal growth, to make informed decisions and to be self-reliant individuals. The library is open six days a week and all programs and services are free to Pittsford and Florence residents; out of town residents may borrow materials by paying an annual membership fee.

To provide the residents of Pittsford with the best possible services, the library collaborates on programs and activities with the Recreation Department, Lothrop Elementary School, Otter Valley Union High School, parent groups and other regional public libraries and organizations.

Maclure Library's 2007-2012 Long Range Plan anticipates an above average increase in circulation and program attendance and inadequate parking for library patrons. Future plans include increased funding for materials and programs, library automation, and parking.

## **Town Offices**

The Town of Pittsford municipal offices are located in a modern brick facility located on Plains Road off of Route 7 north. The offices house the town clerk, town manager, Recreation Director, town listers, Zoning Administrator and assistants to the town manager and clerk. The town vault is in this building. Various town committees meet here and the offices are equipped with up to date phone and computer systems. All town business is conducted on site.

Future plans include a complete fire-proof vault in the basement area to store files. Recently, the replacement of the roof was completed.

## **Post Office**

The town post office is located in a wooden structure just off Route 7 and adjacent to a general store. The structure has been deemed inadequate by the Postal Service and plans have been underway to build a replacement; however, controversy arose within the citizenry regarding location which has held the project up for a number of years. A legal challenge to the developer's proposed location at the end of Plains Road and Route 7, led to a decision by the State Supreme Court that the proposal needs to be revamped to ensure public safety at the point of egress from the proposed site. To date, the project remains on hold. The location of the post office will contribute to the town's development of a village center and its location should be given very careful consideration.

Pittsford needs a new post office and it ideally would be located in a safe and convenient area for all residents, especially the elderly who may live within walking distance of any proposed location. Ideally, a new post office would be situated within the Village Center so that it will benefit from and add to the shared amenities of the center.

## **Recreation**

The town is fortunate to have a Recreation Area and full-time Recreation Director who is responsible for the development and management of a variety of programs offered by the department. Programs include a summer day camp, a Red Cross approved swimming instruction program as well as baseball, basketball and soccer programs and a special program for senior citizens. Additionally, there are scheduled events for all ages which include a fishing derby, ice cream social, teen dances, movie nights and the popular town wide event: Pittsford Day. The Recreation area is located off Furnace Road. It is very well maintained and consists of baseball and soccer fields, a basketball court, tennis courts, a swimming area in a spring fed pond, volleyball court and children's play area with new equipment. Additionally, there is a bathhouse with bathroom facilities, a snack bar and a picnic pavilion. There are grills and picnic tables by the brook and beaches for relaxing. The area is open to Pittsford residents from April to November with a small fee for use of the swimming area. Lifeguards are on duty in the summer throughout the day. For a nominal fee, the area is available to rent for special events for residents and non-residents. Additional recreation resources are described further in the Recreation and Open Space section of the Plan.

### **Pittsford Actions: Utility and Facility Plan**

- ☀ The town needs to explore ways to increase and retain First Response volunteers
- ☀ The town should meet with current childcare providers and parents of school-age children to determine if there is a need for additional child care capacity in town
- ☀ There is a need to participate in multi-town emergency preparedness while striving to be self-sufficient wherever possible

## **IV. Recreation and Open Space**

### **Recreation**

Open space is important to the town as a component of local planning and serves two functions: first, it protects and enhances natural resources; and secondly, it is intimately related to the economic development of the area by virtue of its appeal to potential land owners and visitors who view it as part of the region's character. The town exercises local control of open space and recreational facilities through zoning and proposed subdivision regulations.

Pittsford has benefited from the actions of the Nature Conservancy and others to preserve undeveloped land. The town and school district own several parcels within the community boundaries and outside the town in Chittenden where development is prohibited and forestry management practices are followed. The town now has a Forest Management Plan developed in 2007.

Residents and visitors alike can enjoy our local scenic and historic treasures which include several historic sites within the town. There are four covered bridges, two of which have been rehabilitated and the Gorham Bridge, which has been completely rebuilt. In addition, there is an eighteenth century iron furnace, historic buildings, the site of the Revolutionary War's Fort Vengeance and Fort Mott, as well as several icy caverns, hiking trails and numerous vistas and views from and of mountain ranges. The scenic view with the Taconic Mountains on the west, Green Mountains on the east and the beautiful Otter Creek Valley showcases the natural and historic beauty of our town. Brooks and streams which wind through town provide water for fishing, while our scenic beauty and open space provide opportunities for picnicking, hiking and camping.

The community has developed and maintains the seasonal Pittsford Recreational Area, which is a vital link to all forms of recreation for area residents. We are fortunate to own this site which was purchased from the state when it was part of the Sanatorium. A resident committee oversees the athletic and recreational programs. In addition, the Trails Committee, a group of local hiking enthusiasts, volunteer their time and efforts to develop and now maintain a series of hiking trails throughout the town which traverse both public and primarily private land. This trail system is a valuable recreational asset for the town and is one of the few such systems in the entire state.

## Inventory of Existing Pittsford Recreational Facilities

| <u>Name</u>                    | <u>Type</u>       | <u>Location</u>       | <u>Owner</u>       |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Pittsford Recreation Area      | Public Recreation | Furnace Road          | Pittsford          |
| Camp Sangamon for Boys         | Summer Camp       | Sangamon Road         | Private            |
| Camp Betsy Cox for Girls       | Summer Camp       | Sangamon Road         | Private            |
| Golf Driving Range             | Driving Range     | Route 7 North         | Private            |
| Pittsford Ice Caves            | Exploring Cave    | Goat Farm Road        | Historical Society |
| Pittsford Recreation Trails    | Network Trails    | Throughout Town       | Public and Private |
| Proctor Town Forest            | 109 Acre Forest   | Whipple Hollow Rd     | Town of Proctor    |
| Pittsford Town Forest          | 290 Acre Forest   | Middle Rd, Chittenden | Pittsford          |
| Sugar Hollow Preserve          | 282 Acre Forest   | Sugar Hollow Rd       | Nature Conservancy |
| High Pond Preserve Forest      | 1514 Acre Forest  | Fire Hill Road        | Nature Conservancy |
| Proctor-Pittsford Country Club | Golf and Dining   | Corn Hill Road        | Private            |
| Sugar Hollow Driving Range     | Driving Range     | Route 7 South         | Commercial         |
| Taranovich Recreation Fields   | Athletic Fields   | Route 7 South         | Private            |
| Pomainville's Wildlife Area    | 360 Acre Wetland  | Route 7 North         | State of Vermont   |

### Pittsford Actions: Recreation

- ☀ Continue to support the trails committee in their efforts to maintain the walking trails
- ☀ Continue to review and update Recreation Area needs and maintenance as well as review community interest in programs / Expand and change programs as indicated
- ☀ Consider opportunities to utilize recreational assets on a more year-round basis
- ☀ Protect and maintain our recreational assets by managing our recreational, historical and natural resources wisely
- ☀ Evaluate opportunities to add new recreational activities for both adults and children

## **V. Educational Facilities Plan**

### **Education Vision and Goals**

The Town of Pittsford will strive to provide many educational opportunities. The town will seek out educational and cultural opportunities for all ages through organized evening and summer programs of classes and activities. To develop a community program of "creative education", Pittsford residents will be given the opportunity to instruct small classes in subjects ranging from music, hobbies, athletic programs, language training, computer education, etc. Through these programs, the town hopes to create a vibrant community that respects the talents and creativity of all its citizens.

### **Education Facilities and Funding**

The Pittsford School District has a five member Board of Directors which oversees the operation of the K-6 Lothrop Elementary School. The original school opened in 1912 and served grades 1-12. With renovations in 1967, 1985, 1992 and 1995, the building now serves 283 elementary students as of January 2008. The building has 16 classrooms, a library/resource center, computer lab, music room, art room, student support center, principal, guidance, secretary office space and a health station within the main building. The cafeteria and physical education facilities are housed in the former Town Hall, which was purchased by the school district in 1967.

The Lothrop School buildings are in good physical condition. The age of the buildings necessitates constant maintenance but no major renovations are anticipated over the next five years.

Lothrop provides student transportation for approximately 95% of the student body. Six buses, ranging in age from one year to 13 years old, cover approximately 32,000 miles of rural roads in a normal school year. The town road crew works closely with the school during the winter months to assure safe transportation for students.

Students in grades 7-12 attend Otter Valley Union High School (OVUHS). The OVUHS Board is made up of twelve members with three members representing the Town of Pittsford. The budget for OVUHS is developed by the OVUHS Board and presented to all six sending towns for their approval. OVUHS serves the towns of Brandon, Goshen, Leicester, Pittsford,

Sudbury and Whiting. The OVUHS enrollment has decreased from 718 to 657 from the fall of 2006 to the spring of 2009. Projections are for enrollment to decrease until 2012 to a level of around 550 students, staying relatively level for some years thereafter. The student/teacher ratio was 12.54 during the 2007-08 school year. The grade 9-12 dropout rate for the 2003-04 school year was 5.0%; for the 2007-08 year it was 2.24%.

The original main OVUHS building was constructed in 1960. A library addition came in 1987 with an arts annex added in 1992 and a middle school addition in 1996. Total enrollment capacity is now in excess of 780. Because of the unused enrollment capacity, future residential development with its potential impact on enrollment can be absorbed. A new roof was installed on the main building in 2008.

The Town of Pittsford is assessed for the OVUHS expenditures based upon its annual enrollment as compared to the union as a whole. Pittsford was expected to contribute 28% of the OVUHS budget for the 2006-2007 school year. Students attending OVUHS as juniors and seniors have access to Stafford Technical Center. The cost of vocational education is assessed separately to the town.

The Pittsford School District and the OVUHS district are part of the Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union. RNEU serves the towns of Brandon, Chittenden, Goshen, Leicester, Mendon, Pittsford, Sudbury and Whiting. RNEU supports a superintendent of schools, a business manager and office staff, special education directors and services and a curriculum director and services for the above towns. RNEU also provides student transportation services for those students attending OVUHS and its sending elementary schools. Towns are assessed based upon their annual student enrollment as compared to the district as a whole. The RNEU Board is composed of three members from each school district. Each school district has three votes at the supervisory union level.

Post-secondary education options are not available in Pittsford, however, there are several colleges located in the Rutland Region. Castleton State College, College of St. Joseph, Community College of Vermont, and Green Mountain College are all within a short drive from Pittsford.

### **Pittsford Actions: Education**

- ☀ Establish an education program of “creative education,” in which town residents have the opportunity to share their skills, knowledge, interests and hobbies with others
- ☀ Fully utilize available community facilities such as school, town hall, recreation area, library, etc. for educational programs such as creative education classes
- ☀ Build on current programs offered by the Library and the Recreation Department

## VI. Energy Plan

### Energy Vision and Goals

As costs of transportation and heating fuel continue to rise faster than household incomes, residents will need to implement cost-effective energy savings measures, as well as stable, alternative energy sources. In the future, the town envisions energy consumption as a guiding force in development and land use planning decisions. The town is interested in exploring the possibility of using micro-hydro as a sustainable source of electricity.

### Energy Use

#### 1. Electric Energy

Pittsford is primarily a residential community. Electrical power is provided by Green Mountain Power (GMP), GMP recently merged with CVPS, our former provider. Nearly all of our residential homes are customers of GMP, a for-profit utility company.

#### 2. Transportation Energy

Pittsford's 1,712 workers spent an average of about 24 minutes on the way to work in 2000. An overwhelming 85% drove alone in their own vehicle. Carpooling contributed another 7% of workers, while 3% walked and 5% worked at home (Census 2000). Compared to Rutland County data, Pittsford residents drove alone to work more frequently and commuted about four minutes longer than the average. Municipalities can help reduce drive times for their residents by encouraging compact development patterns that locate services close to each other and close to where people live. The town should continue to investigate the merits of *Park and Ride* programs and parking lots for same.

#### 3. Home Heating Energy

Pittsford residents used a variety of fuel sources to heat their homes in 2000. Fuel oil and kerosene heated nearly three-quarters of Pittsford's housing units. Bottled, tank or liquid petroleum gas heated 13% of homes and 5% of homes used electricity. Wood fuel is a renewable source used to heat 7% of Pittsford (Census 2000). The town should encourage residents to install residential sized solar and wind.

## Regional Energy Trends

The Rutland Regional Plan (2008) identifies several trends in energy use over the next 5-20 years. Pittsford's energy use changes are likely to be in line with these regional trends.

- ☀ Electrical energy consumption is likely to continue to increase in the commercial and industrial sectors, demand from these sectors varies throughout the year; supply and cost is predicted to fluctuate according to supply and global events
- ☀ Peaks in demand will likely become a significant concern for providers and consumers, as large-scale storage of electricity is not an option
- ☀ Demand for fossil fuels (used in transportation, heating, and power generation) will continue to increase, despite increases in cost, reduction in demand is limited by our built environment, which is automobile-oriented; alternative transportation such as rail service or bus, suffer from inadequate critical mass to support same

## Energy Saving Strategies and Alternative Energy Sources

Although Pittsford has little control over the fluctuations of the global energy market, there are many steps the town can take at a local level to help our citizens and government offices function cost-effectively and with the smallest possible impact on the environment.

### 1. Efficient Building and Infrastructure Design

Efficient building design is an important aspect of energy conservation. Although the town does not utilize a building code, it does endorse the efforts of the District Environmental Commission in lowering water use in toilets, installing reduced flow shower heads and other energy saving options when it considers an Act 250 permit. The town also encourages the use of compact fluorescent bulbs as a way to reduce energy consumption. The town supports initiatives such as the Pittsford Community Cooperation launched a program resulting in the replacement and installation of 3,000 fluorescent bulbs.

Planting trees around a home or other building provides shade in the summer and protection from wind in the cold winter months. South-facing windows provide a means of passive solar heating. Citizens of Pittsford interested in efficient building design can consult the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building

Rating System™, provided by the U.S. Green Building Council (see the discussion provided in the Rutland Regional Plan).

The water department maintains an inspection program for leaks. Furthermore, the town is contracting for inspection of all water sewer lines and storm drains for the purpose of eliminating infiltration into the wastewater treatment plant. This should reduce the quantity of water treated at the plant and the amount of processed water released into Otter Creek while also reducing the demand for electrical usage at the plant.

## 2. Designated Village Center

In keeping with Pittsford's agricultural heritage of maintaining open spaces, preserving the rural countryside and in efforts to reduce sprawl, the town will encourage commercial development in a designated Village Center. Consolidating venues, services and parking within the same area provides convenience for residents while at the same time promotes a healthy business environment. Combining merchants, venues and mixed use practices in one area helps to recruit new synergistic businesses and at the same time improves their probability for success. The designated Village Center assists in mitigating traffic congestion by centralizing the resulting commercial traffic at one location instead of spreading it out for multiple traffic stops up and down the highway.

Forrest Farm is located at what most residents would currently call the Village Center area with Pittsford's more popular and existing venues already located adjacent to the site including Maclure Library, Kamuda's Country Store, The Hilltop Tavern and the Post Office. A Vermont State Designated Village Center area has been identified and approved and provides certain financial and tax benefits for commercial improvements within the designated area. Also, state and local Historical District designations have been awarded to several areas within Pittsford. The Forrest Farm site is within the Vermont State Designated Village Center area and within a designated State and Federal Historical District, thus making those financial benefits available for restoration and development on the site and also assuring that all such restoration and development is in keeping with Pittsford's heritage and historical architecture.

## 3. Traditional Land Use Patterns

Land use patterns are a significant factor in determining energy demand. Transportation is the leading user of energy in the region and in the state. Compact development and mixed-use village/town center development help reduce demand for transportation energy by locating many goods and services in the same place. Supporting compact development surrounded by more rural open areas also helps maintain the traditional land use pattern that residents and visitors associate with the history and character of our state as a whole, and Pittsford as a rural area within this state.

#### 4. Solar and Wind Power

Solar power is not used to any significant degree within Pittsford, although both solar and wind power have been tried and found successful on a limited scale. The town is very interested in the use of alternative sources for energy such as passive solar, solar and wind power on a small or residential scale. All structural elements of these small scale systems should be under 100 feet in height, placed either on a building or in such a way that view of the landscape is not obstructed and with less than a 20 foot rotor diameter. Large industrial installations open to public and residential view should be in harmony with the rural character of Pittsford and should not be developed. Further, there are no isolated sites far enough away from residential areas to avoid the health concerns associated with commercial sized wind towers.

There is an active wind power project under consideration by Reunion Energy (started years ago by Noble Environmental Power), a portion of which would be in Pittsford. Other towers in this proposed project would be in Hubbardton and West Rutland. This project does not fall within the parameters of acceptable structure sizing, nor can it be implemented due to needed associated infrastructure (such as roads on steep slopes) without undue adverse effect on our entire landscape, watershed, wildlife corridors and especially our ridge lines.

Pittsford encourages the use of residential and small scale wind, solar, wood, methane and other renewable and sustainable energy resources if they comply with all of the conditions, restrictions and directions set out elsewhere in this town plan.

#### 5. Hydropower

Pittsford is currently home to a hydropower plant operated by GMP. Vermont has the fourth largest potential in the nation for low power and small hydro projects, according to a recent Dept. of Energy feasibility study, which indicates that this may be a significant resource for energy independence in the future. Community Hydro provides an interactive mapping tool which displays the potential of hydropower. There are several potential power project sites that appear to be located in Pittsford (Map on: <http://www.communityhydro.biz>, accessed 8/1/2008). The town is interested in exploring opportunities for micro-hydro power generation.

### **Pittsford Actions: Energy**

- ☀️ Adopt an Energy Conservation Policy
- ☀️ Appoint a Local Energy Coordinator and create an Energy Committee to explore alternative and sustainable fuel sources in town, such as micro-hydro

- ☀ Work with Efficiency Vermont to help reduce energy costs
- ☀ Promote energy-reducing alternate methods and alternative construction on all new municipal buildings
- ☀ Encourage car-pooling to work and develop a Park and Ride Program
- ☀ Support builders in the town in using energy-efficient construction methods and encourage their use, determine if this can be implemented through changes in our Zoning Regulations
- ☀ The Vermont School Energy Program, run by the Vermont Department of Public Service ([http://publicservice.vermont.gov/energy-efficiency/ee\\_semp.html](http://publicservice.vermont.gov/energy-efficiency/ee_semp.html)) is a support program providing management tools to help schools maximize their energy saving potential, and should be used
- ☀ Given the health and aesthesis concerns of industrial wind power, this should not be allowed. Encourage residential use of sustainable and renewable energy sources by adjusting the permitting process for certain defined systems to be listed in our Zoning Regulations

## **VII. Housing**

### **Housing Vision and Goals**

All housing in Pittsford should be safe, sanitary and affordable and should meet the needs of current and future Pittsford residents. The town's priorities should be to improve existing low and moderate income housing and to locate new housing options in a visually attractive village environment. The town will also encourage the preservation and rehabilitation of the town's existing housing stock.

### **Basic Housing Information**

Housing is the most dominant feature of Pittsford's built environment. Pittsford's housing stock consists primarily of wood framed, single family homes scattered throughout the community. The two largest concentrations of homes are in Pittsford Village and Florence. Together they account for a substantial proportion of all homes in the town.

Housing costs, including construction, maintenance and taxation, are the single most important financial expense and investment for most residents. Supplying appropriate housing for residents of all income levels and life stages is an important role of the town.

The number of housing units in Pittsford has increased steadily each decade since 1940. Between 1960 and 2000, the total more than doubled, to 1,388. Of those, 68% were single family homes, 9% were two-family homes, 8.5% were mobile homes and the remainder were larger multi-family structures.

Renters made up 24% of the town's population in 2000, slightly below the average of 30% for Rutland County and comparable with most mid-sized communities aside from Rutland City and Fair Haven.

Homes used on a seasonal basis accounted for just 3.5% of the total in 2000, among the lowest proportions in the County. The town's central location in relation to both ski areas and lake regions has attracted seasonal residents. The number of seasonal residences, however, dropped 3.75% from 80 units in 1980 to 77 in 1991. Between 1991 and 2000, the number of seasonal housing units dropped to 48, accounting for just 3.5% of residences.

Finally, according to the US Census, the median home value in Pittsford placed the town exactly at the mid-point of the County.

Based upon the household size in Pittsford and upon population projections, the number of housing units required in the next decade varies from a low of 35 to a high of 335.

The town does not have a large number of rental units available either as single family homes or as multiple family dwellings. Some of the units currently being used require lead paint abatement, plumbing or electrical upgrades or other work to meet current state codes. Property owners and developers can seek grant programs or low cost loans to rehabilitate these structures to meet community housing requirements.

Housing for senior citizens has been enhanced through the development of the Pittsford Commons residential living condominiums. This type of residence and other community living accommodations are congruent with the town's plans for a revitalized village with pedestrian services and commercial center to support a central residential district, i.e. the Designated Village Center and possibly the current Forrest Farm property.

## **Householders**

The increase in housing units over the last 35 years has not been met by an equal growth in the town's population. Since 1970, the number of housing units in town has jumped by 75%. During that same time period, however, the town's population grew by just 36%. A dramatically declining average household size is the principal reason. Trends toward families having fewer children, larger numbers of elderly persons in the population and young adults choosing to wait longer before marriage and having children, have each contributed to this decline.

Persons age 65 and older made up 13% of Pittsford's population in 2000 (a figure that is comparable with statewide numbers). It is interesting to note, however, that households led by persons 65 and over accounted for 20% of all renter-occupied units and 21% of all owner-occupied homes (Statewide, the figures were 17% and 23%, respectively). This suggests that there are many households being led by persons on moderate or fixed incomes. It is expected that in the nine years since the 2000 Census, these numbers and percentages have increased, based on the number of people age 55-64 at the time.

Single parent households accounted for nearly 26% of all family households with children in 2000. And while this figure is comparable with a Rutland County figure of 28%, it underscores a housing, transportation and childcare need in the town.

One final note of interest: nearly 38% of Pittsford's population in the year 2000 lived in a different home five years prior. Of those, one quarter relocated from outside Rutland County. These figures highlight how, even in a relatively stable community such as Pittsford, there can be tremendous turnover.

## **Affordable Housing**

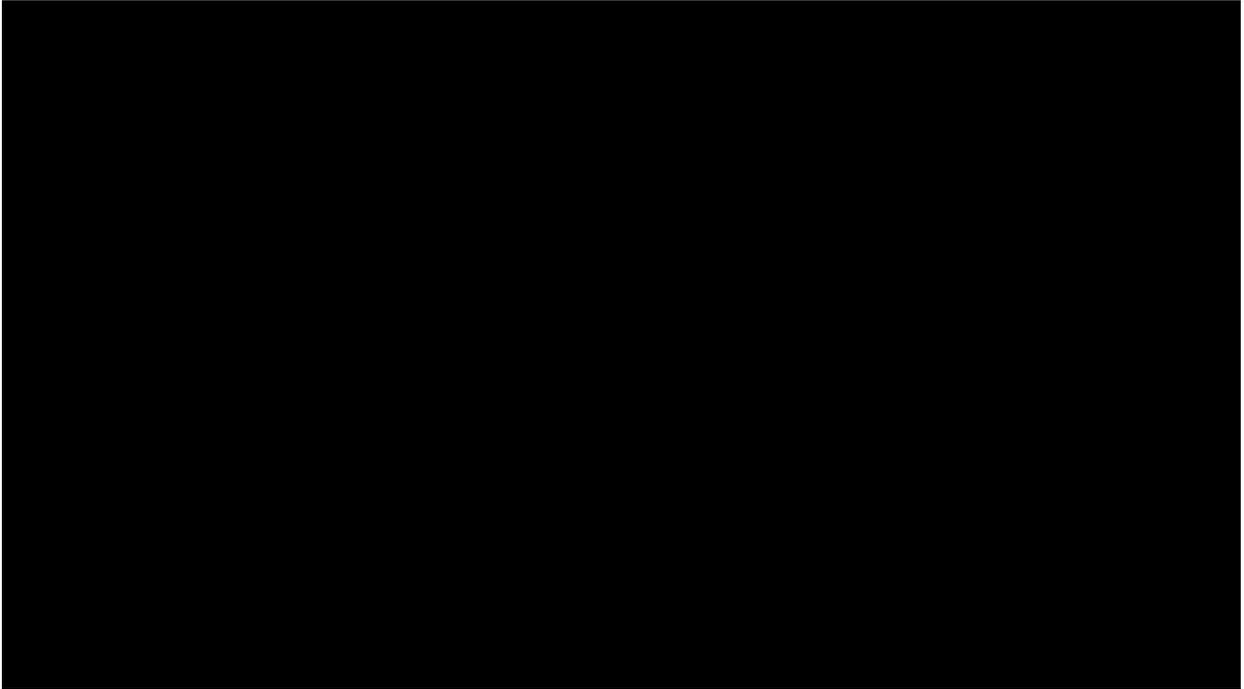
### *Cost and Affordability*

In general, housing is considered to be affordable to a household when the standard costs amount to no more than 30% of a household's gross income. (This does not include related costs such as water & sewer, transportation, taxes, etc.).

In the year 2000, 36% of all renters paid more than 30% of their income towards housing. Slightly below the region-wide and statewide averages, yet troubling for those individuals. Among homeowners in Pittsford, 32% of households with a mortgage and 5% of owners without a mortgage were paying more than 30% of their income to housing. These figures are comparable to the 24% and 15% statewide and county wide numbers.

According to the 2005 Rutland County Housing Needs Assessment, Pittsford's affordability for both first-time and move-up homeowners – those seeking to grow into larger homes – is comparable with that of other similarly-sized towns in the Rutland Region. Home sale prices, for single family homes on less than six acres of land, have doubled over the past ten years, but that increase has essentially mirrored the trend across Rutland County. Over that same time period, median family adjusted gross income in Pittsford increased by 54%, from \$37,400 in 1997 to \$53,400 in 2006. While this data cannot be used for a direct comparison, it does suggest that housing costs have outstripped gains in incomes over the past decade.

**Median Home Sale Prices (under 6 acres), Pittsford & Rutland County: 1997-2006**



Source: Vermont Department of Taxes, property transfer tax, accumulated data reports 1997-2006. <http://www.state.vt.us/tax/statisticsproprans.shtml>, visited 7/1/2007

*Local Subsidized Housing*

Currently, there are 30 subsidized or below-market housing units for elderly persons in Pittsford. This figure is roughly comparable to those of other towns in the region with similar populations. There is a gap, however, in subsidized family units in the town. At present there are no such units in Pittsford, while other communities such as Fair Haven, Brandon, Castleton and Rutland Town each have over 20.

**Regional Housing Challenges**

It is important to note in this section that while the market for subsidized, or lower-cost traditional housing, may not be present in Pittsford, it is present on a regional basis. And the region, of course, is nothing more than a collection of individual communities. Each has a responsibility to assist where possible the region's lower-income families.

The 2005 Rutland County Housing Needs Assessment identified several segments of the population that are facing especially difficult searches for housing that is affordable. Among the study's conclusions are four key points:

- ☀ The county's non-elderly, low-income renters are currently underserved by the supply of subsidized rental housing, especially with respect to the distribution of Section 8 housing certificates
- ☀ Rental affordability problems are almost entirely limited to those earning less than \$20,000; while they represent just over half the renters in the county, they account for 80% of those experiencing high rent burdens; families with fixed or low incomes are faced with ongoing difficult decisions about which bills to pay; homelessness (including those living on the street and those forced to co-habitat with other families) is an ongoing issue throughout the region and state
- ☀ The market for moderate-income, first time homebuyers is tied closely to mortgage rates; when mortgage rates are low, first time homebuyers can make payments towards the mortgage's principal instead of having to pay high interest rates
- ☀ The greatest concern for potential first-time homebuyers is the need for a stronger local job base to provide households with the minimum income of about \$32,000 to afford a first home

## **Housing Challenges in Pittsford**

### *Water & Sewer Capacity*

Any future housing development in the village can be tied into our new water and sewer systems. Supporting the town's mandate of clustered village growth and allowing rural areas to remain undeveloped.

### *Aging Housing Stock*

Nearly half of the town's housing units are over 70 years old. While age of housing is not necessarily synonymous with condition of housing, older homes do tend to have greater maintenance costs. In Pittsford, the substantial elderly population living in owner-occupied homes (see the first page of this section) – many of whom live on fixed incomes - may be facing maintenance work and costs beyond their means. This problem is not just a local one, substantial older housing exists throughout the state. The challenge in the future will be not only for senior citizens and others to keep up with maintenance work, but also for new families seeking to buy

older homes and facing the challenge of both buying a home and making substantial improvements if previous residents were unable to perform them.

### *Transportation*

The Rutland Regional Plan identifies the cost of transportation as one of the big hidden costs of housing. People who live within walking distance of services, stores and their places of employment can, potentially, substantially reduce their costs by having just one car in a family, or even no vehicles. The same holds true for households that live near reliable public transportation. In Pittsford, limited services and stores are available in the village center. In 2006, an infrequent but regular bus service was initiated linking Middlebury and Rutland; this is expected to somewhat alleviate this need. With these options, it is possible that village residents can use fewer vehicles, or at least have the opportunity to use them less frequently. Outside of the village, however, and for substantial numbers of commuters throughout the town, transportation is a cost that is simply a factor of living in Pittsford.

## **Pittsford Actions: Housing**

- ☀ Collaborate with non-profit housing organizations such as the Rutland Housing Trust, the Bennington Rutland Opportunity Council (BROC), Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC), and NeighborWorks of Western Vermont to pursue options and meet housing needs of Pittsford residents
- ☀ Provide information to landlords and homeowners about state and non-profit-funded housing re-habilitation programs, including the USDA Rural Development grant and loan programs
- ☀ Examine potential for the town's zoning regulations to allow for higher density housing while maintaining Pittsford's historic character. Specifically:
  - Re-examine minimum lot sizes and setbacks, especially in the village and in Florence
  - Encourage development outside of village areas to take place in a clustered form that concentrates homes and infrastructure while conserving usable land for forestry, agricultural or recreational purposes
  - Permitting the conversion of larger homes and structures to multi-family housing
  - **Develop mixed use and complete street zoning regulations**

## **SECTION C: RELATIONSHIP OF THE TOWN PLAN WITH PLANS AND TRENDS OF OUR REGION AND NEIGHBORS**

Planning is a necessary tool for enabling conditions that allow as many Vermonters as possible the opportunity to become builders, investors and competitors in a worldwide market place. We are looking to expand cottage industries, home-based work and entrepreneurial ventures that preserve and revitalize the rural economy of the town yet have minimal impact on our infrastructure, safety services, scenic views, aesthetics, health or the environment.

Adjacent town plans have been reviewed to insure that there is no conflict between Pittsford's development and conservation goals and those of neighboring communities and the Rutland Regional Board's Plan. For the most part, Rutland County towns are focused on the same objectives as Pittsford: preservation of rural and open space, conservation of natural resources, controlled residential growth to meet the needs of all residents and development of manufacturing and commercial services for improving local economies.

This plan recognizes that Pittsford does not exist in isolation from the region and will affect and be affected by what happens in the surrounding municipalities. This plan promotes residential, agricultural, conservation and small-scale commercial activities at levels consistent with the community's endowment of natural resources in the Rutland Region with minimal impact on infrastructure, safety services, scenic views, aesthetics, health or the environment.

For purposes of this plan, the surrounding area includes the towns of Rutland, Mendon, Proctor, West Rutland, Castleton, Hubbardton, Sudbury, Brandon and Chittenden. According to the Rutland Region Future Use Map, the municipal border Pittsford shares with Hubbardton, Castleton and West Rutland is characterized as low density development and development constraint areas due to mountainous terrain, steep slopes and watershed, wildlife corridor and erosion concerns. Medium density development is predicted along the border with Proctor, Rutland Town and southeast Chittenden. Along the border with Brandon and Chittenden, low density development is expected due to mountainous terrain, steep slopes, watershed, wildlife corridor and erosion concerns and lack of infrastructure.

Surrounding Rutland County towns are focused on the same objectives as Pittsford's. Sensitive areas (such as flood plains and ridge lines) are also identified and targeted for conservation, as they are in Pittsford.

## **SECTION D: IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM AND PRIORITIES**

The major priorities for our town over the next few years will be withstanding the economic recession which is presently upon us. It is hoped that the Federal Government economic stimulus actions and other assistance programs for storm and natural disaster repairs will, in some, way help with each of these immediate priorities.

However, we still must determine how to address the ongoing issue of how to revitalize and expand the town's business base. This plan has proposed a number of 'actions' which it is believed will help reach this goal. Although a larger term objective it is of equal, if not greater, importance to those priorities noted above.

Revitalizing the village through development of a Village Green Center and discouraging sprawl are seen as integral to any revitalization plan.

Another problem which needs attention is our aging housing stock. Almost 50% of the houses in Pittsford are over 70 years old. Programs focused on upgrading and preserving local housing is a growing need.

Pittsford has some excellent attributes which our citizens value, and they must be preserved through local government support and the noteworthy volunteer efforts of many of our citizens. Of note is our library and its various programs, our Recreation Department with its facilities and well managed programs, our Town Trails and our excellent schools. Also our open land, farms, forests, scenic views enhance the health and quality of life for our citizens.

A priority is to update zoning regulations, adopt sub-division regulations, and to comply with the goals of Section 4203.

Preserving and enhancing these resources through a focus on safety and the quality of life is the essence of this plan.

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