

7 | Facilities and Services

7.A OVERVIEW

A primary purpose of this plan is to identify services currently available to town residents, evaluate the effectiveness of the town and other providers in delivering those services, anticipate future demands, and assess whether those demands can be met efficiently. Waitsfield residents enjoy a range of services and facilities, including an efficient municipal government, excellent emergency services, access to a variety of social, recreation and health care services, and state-of-the-art telecommunications infrastructure.

Despite the wide range of excellent services available, the town faces several challenges regarding specific facilities and services. The lack of municipal water and sewer hinders efforts to foster a compact settlement pattern, which can result in sprawl and a corresponding loss of the town's rural character. Local government and education are largely dependent on property tax revenues to fund their operations and taxpayers are stressed by a growing tax burden. Continued growth in the community will require an ongoing assessment and upgrade of specific facilities.

7.B TOWN GOVERNMENT

Administration. Waitsfield is governed by a five-member Selectboard, which is responsible for preparing the town's budget, setting policy, administering town finances and a variety of related duties. A full-time Town Administrator reports to the Selectboard and is responsible for the day-to-day management of town affairs. Town staff also includes a full-time elected Town Clerk and Treasurer and an Assistant Clerk hired by the Town Clerk.

Like most small communities, Waitsfield is heavily dependent upon volunteers to fulfill many governmental duties. Several dozen local residents are elected or appointed to serve on boards and committees, and to represent Waitsfield on regional organizations. This dedication and sense of duty helps define our community, and keeps local institutions open and accessible.

Planning. Waitsfield has an active land use planning and community development program that dates back to the late 1960s. Most planning functions are carried out by a volunteer Planning Commission. A

Development Review Board is responsible for much of the oversight of the town's land use regulations. Both bodies are assisted by the Zoning Administrator, who is responsible for the day-to-day administration and enforcement of local regulations.

With the formation of the Mad River Valley Planning District in the mid-1980s, the Planning Commission has been able to augment its planning capacity with professional assistance.

Fiscal Condition. In Vermont, the principal mechanism for funding local government is the property tax. While certain types of outside assistance are available (including state highway aid, fees for services, miscellaneous special purpose grant programs), approximately 80 percent of Waitsfield's annual municipal budget is funded through the local property tax. The fact that non-tax revenues consistently make up around 20 percent Waitsfield's budget is largely due to an aggressive effort on the part of town government to identify and secure alternative revenue sources, such as grants, to fund specific projects.

Figure 7-1 shows annual municipal expenditures between 2004 and 2008. The town has maintained a relatively stable budget for the past several years. Approximately one-third of the town budget is dedicated to road maintenance.

Waitsfield's municipal expenditures are generally higher than in neighboring communities, however, due partly to the town's function as the valley's commercial center and the high level of service provided by local government. In addition, the town does not benefit from a higher value grand list like the neighboring Fayston and Warren, nor large non-tax revenue sources such as those provided the town of Moretown in exchange for hosting the WSI landfill. This, coupled with steep tax increases to fund local education, and related pressure to reduce municipal taxes, will limit the town's ability to maintain existing services, much less fund new initiatives, in coming years.

Capital Budget & Program. To limit fluctuations in town expenditures, thereby stabilizing tax rates, the town has adopted a capital budget and program on an

annual basis for more than 20 years. The capital budget and program is a planning tool to help the town anticipate future capital expenditures and to schedule them so to avoid sharp increases in the tax rate during any one year. When combined with a capital reserve fund, the town can spread capital costs over a number of years, further stabilizing the municipal budget. It is also a mechanism for considering capital expenditures in the context of this plan to ensure that budget decisions are consistent with the town's planning goals.

With regard to the town's capital reserve funds, which have been used effectively over the years, the town should always consider the appropriate balance between savings and indebtedness when making capital purchases. Interest rates on long-term borrowing remain at historic lows. This, coupled with rapidly appreciating land costs in town, presents an opportunity for the town to take advantage of low interest rates by bonding for key investments.

7.C TOWN PROPERTIES

The town owns several properties used for a variety of civic, recreation, conservation and cultural purposes. The following is a partial list of town properties and a description of relevant considerations related to each.



Joslin Library/Town Office. The town office is located on the first floor of the Joslin Library. The building has undergone several renovations in recent years, including exterior repairs and interior improvements in the library. Town office space is occupied by administrative offices, including the Town Clerk's office, meeting space and the vault housing the town's property records. Space in the building has become

increasingly tight. The most pressing problem is limited vault space, which has been near capacity for several years. In addition, storage and work space for staff is limited, and attendance at public meetings of more than 12 to 15 people typically requires attendees to occupy office areas and/or to stand in hallways.

It is uncertain whether the library building could be expanded to accommodate additional vault and work space. If an expansion could physically be accommodated, it would need to be carefully designed to avoid damage to the building's historic character. Other options include relocating to an existing building in Waitsfield Village, possibly adjacent to the General Wait House, or constructing a new facility elsewhere in Waitsfield Village or Irasville. It is clear that planning should begin in the near future, with the goal of developing a proposal to provide adequate office and vault space within Waitsfield Village or Irasville within the next three to five years.

An important consideration in planning for a new town office is the historic (pre-1950s) practice of designing civic structures to reflect the values of the community. A new town office should serve as a community focal point and convey a sense of permanence, pride of place and respect for tradition, while at the same time incorporating necessary elements of function and efficiency. The offices should also be centrally located to encourage community interaction.



General Wait House. The historic General Wait House, the original home of Waitsfield's founder, Benjamin Wait, was purchased in 1995. Funded with the assistance of an "enhancement grant" from VTrans and private donations raised by the Waitsfield Historical Society, the building accommodates display space for the Historical Society, the Mad River Planning District office, a visitor center operated by

the Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce, public rest rooms, community meeting space and office space for local service providers.

The main house was restored to serve the aforementioned functions; the attached barns were only stabilized and remain in need of restoration. Preliminary plans for the restoration include expanded display space for the Historical Society, and additional space for larger community meetings and functions than can be accommodated within the main house. Not only should the restoration provide a worthwhile community service, it should improve the outward appearance of the building and enhance the northern gateway to Waitsfield Village. The General Wait House should have a manager and a detailed upkeep and maintenance plan in order to properly care for this important community resource.

Town Garage. The town's highway department, discussed in Chapter 8, is housed in a garage located off the Tremblay Road, near its intersection with North Road. Built in 1986 after a fire destroyed the previous garage, the garage is located on a 10.8-acre parcel. The current facility is adequate to meet anticipated needs, and the parcel can accommodate expansion should it become necessary.

Cemeteries. Waitsfield owns and maintains four cemeteries:

- ◆ Irasville Cemetery, on Route 100 in Irasville;
- ◆ Village/Mill Cemetery, on Bridge Street just east of Waitsfield Village;
- ◆ General Wait Cemetery, behind the fire station in Waitsfield Village; and
- ◆ Common Cemetery adjacent to Waitsfield Common.

The Waitsfield Cemetery Commission, is the body responsible for the maintenance and management of the cemeteries. The town is fortunate that, due to decisions of current and past cemetery commissioners, Waitsfield has a perpetual care fund that is among the largest in Vermont. Due to the large endowment, and the commission's careful management, each of the four cemeteries is exceptionally well maintained on an ongoing basis.

Capacity exists in each of the cemeteries, although space is limited in all but the Common Cemetery (which was expanded with the purchase of nearly

an acre in the early 1990s). Total remaining capacity, however, is approximately 600 spaces. In light of ongoing development pressure and the limited availability of suitable land, additional space may be required within the next five to ten years to ensure that space will be available to serve future generations. Although expansion potential is limited for most of the cemeteries, such expansion would be most efficient to maintain on an ongoing basis. If expansion is not feasible, the establishment of a new cemetery might be required, although it should be located in proximity to one of the other four.

Other Properties. In addition to the Waitsfield-Fayston Fire Department, which is discussed below, the town owns several parcels used for conservation, recreation and other community uses. These parcels are described in appropriate sections of this plan.

Town/Village Green. Due to the donation of seven acres of open land by the Flemer family in 2009, the town has a parcel of open common land on the north end of Waitsfield Village. Plans for the land are being developed and include an orchard of fruit trees. There is also a small park adjacent to the Joslin Library, and the two undeveloped commons located at the intersections of the Common, Joslin Hill and East Roads. The town lacks common land in Irasville and should consider ways to procure land that could serve as a focal point for future pedestrian-oriented, village-style development in Irasville as call for in this plan.

7.D PUBLIC SAFETY

Law Enforcement. The Vermont State Police and the Washington County Sheriff's Department are responsible for law enforcement in the Mad River Valley. The State Police operate out of the Middlesex Barracks located on Route 2 in Middlesex, and are primarily responsible for all law enforcement matters in our area, particularly major criminal investigations.

Waitsfield has contracted with the Washington County Sheriff's Department for local police coverage for nearly two decades. The goals of this program are to enforce traffic safety and provide emergency response services. The local patrol is widely viewed as a cost-effective way in which to provide police protection without the burden of a local police department.

Sugarbush Resort also has an annual agreement with the sheriff's department to assist with traffic control during the ski season and special events. Officers di-

rect traffic at the intersection of Route 100 and Route 17. Similar traffic control services have been required for large special events, which are typically a condition of a special event's permit issued by the Selectboard under the Special Events Ordinance. This program ensures that traffic safety is maintained during periods of uncharacteristic high traffic.

While it is impossible to draw a correlation between the level of police coverage and crime rates, Figure 7-2 indicates the extent to which the number of crimes in Waitsfield has remained relatively stable in recent years and the predominance of property crimes (e.g., larceny, shoplifting, auto theft, etc.). Waitsfield's crime rate remains lower than state and county averages.

One likely cause of the consistently low crime rate in Waitsfield is the strong sense of community that exists. In many respects, a strong community is the best deterrent to crime. As the town grows it will be critical that it not develop in a way that serves to isolate community members or create barriers to local institutions, that options for civil interaction are provided, a strong sense of place is fostered, and that development is guided to reinforce traditional land use patterns—including attractive, pedestrian-scale villages—and maintain a clean, healthy environment.

Waitsfield-Fayston Fire Department. Fire protection services are currently provided by the Waitsfield-Fayston Volunteer Fire Department. The department covers both Waitsfield and Fayston and maintains a mutual assistance agreement with other nearby fire departments. Fayston funds 40 percent of the annual operating and capital costs of the department. This 60/40 split was determined by the approximate percentage of responses within each town. In addition to the funding agreement, many Fayston residents serve as volunteers. As both towns grow, the breakdown of calls should be monitored to ensure that funding remains fairly allocated.

Presently, the department is staffed by 26 active volunteers and responds to around 80 incidents in a typical year. Over the past decade, the department has seen its average number of calls per year increase by 70 percent, while the number of personnel has not changed significantly. Volunteers are reimbursed a nominal fee for time spent on emergency responses; however, the bulk of time spent on administration, training and maintenance is voluntary.

While the number of volunteers is adequate to maintain the excellent level of service presently provided, the number of volunteers should be monitored and additional fire fighters actively recruited. In particular, it is important for the department to include volunteers that are in town and available to respond to emergencies during normal workday hours.

Fires actually represent only a minor component of fire department calls and the department most frequently responds to motor vehicle accidents. Many calls are also related to malfunctioning heating systems that are resolved before a fire starts. In addition to emergency response, the department has emphasized fire prevention and education. The past performance of the fire department has been exceptional, and there is no reason to believe that performance will change in the coming years.

Major equipment, which is maintained in the fire station located adjacent to the General Wait House in Waitsfield Village, includes a 2003 1,000-gallon International pumper, a 1987 Ford pumper, a 1982 GMC tanker and a 2000 Chevrolet van. A 1943 Ford Model A pumper is also maintained, which symbolizes the department's years of dedicated service to the community. Annual contributions to a reserve fund are made toward future equipment replacement, although no major expenditures are included in the current capital budget and program.

Ambulance & Rescue Services. The Mad River Valley Ambulance Service is organized as a non-profit corporation and provides 24-hour service to residents and visitors of the Mad River Valley.

The service operates from a facility in Waitsfield Village, which was purchased in 2001. In addition to providing four garage bays, space is available for equipment storage, administrative offices, and meeting and training facilities. The facility has an emergency generator, base station radio and 25-pair phone cable so that it can operate as an emergency operations center during a disaster. Rescue equipment currently in use includes three fully equipped ambulances, a rescue/extraction vehicle (not used for transport) that carries heavy equipment, a "mass-accident" trailer, off-road rescue equipment, a dispatch radio and field radios, as well as a substantial amount of emergency medical equipment.

The service has grown considerably over the years to meet the needs of the growing community. Since

its inception in 1971, the annual number of calls has increased by 81 percent. The service currently has a roster of 60 volunteers valley-wide. The average first responder response time is 7 minutes, while the ambulance response time is less than 17 minutes. One reason for such a fast response time is the local dispatch service, which notifies volunteers in scattered locations around the valley of a call. Since the late 1990s, E-911 emergency response service has been available in the valley.

7.E SOLID WASTE

The management and disposal of solid waste is a growing challenge due largely to rampant materialism, excessive packaging and the prevalence of disposable consumer goods. This is exacerbated by the high cost of disposal, from both a financial and environmental standpoint. Efforts to reduce the amount of waste before it enters the waste stream, and recycle the broadest range of waste in a cost-effective manner, will become increasingly important as population increases.

Waitsfield is a member of the Mad River Resource Management Alliance. The alliance is a six-town district formed through an inter-local agreement in 1994 and includes. Other member towns are Duxbury, Fayston, Moretown, Warren and Waterbury. The alliance is responsible for the preparation and adoption of a Solid Waste Implementation Plan, which is required under the state's solid waste law. That plan is regularly updated and submitted to the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources for review and approval.

A representative and alternate from each town serves on the alliance board, which meets bimonthly to set policy, determine programs and oversee the activities of a part-time administrator. A per capita assessment is charged to cover administrative and program costs (\$2.00 in 2008). Additional funding is provided by Waste Systems International Inc. (WSI), which operates a landfill in Moretown. WSI funds the alliance's education programs and a portion of the hazardous waste drop-off events.

Free disposal of appliances, tires, and collected roadside trash is also provided in association with annual alliance-sponsored events such as Green Up Day, Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days, and tire collections. The alliance works with the Associa-

tion of Vermont Recyclers, and is a member of the Northeast Resource Recovery Association, which helps market some recyclable commodities.

Hauling, recycling and landfill services are provided under agreement with WSI. Trash collection services also are provided by other private haulers. As the "host district" for the WSI landfill, local residents can bring their recyclables to the Moretown facility at no charge. A regional transfer facility, located in Waitsfield's Limited Business District and operated by Casella Waste Management, provides area residents with a convenient solid waste disposal site as well as a place to recycle materials. It appears that the transfer station is profitable, although should that change the valley would be without a convenient disposal facility.

7.F SEWAGE DISPOSAL & WATER SUPPLY

Municipal Wastewater Treatment. Currently, all of the town's sewage disposal needs are addressed by individual on-site systems. Lacking a central wastewater collection and treatment facility, town officials have studied the feasibility of developing such a facility to serve the high density portions of town, especially Irasville and Waitsfield Village.

In 1999, the town secured funding from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources' revolving fund to study the feasibility of developing a municipal wastewater disposal facility to serve Irasville and, possibly, Waitsfield Village. As a result of preliminary analysis, the town purchased a 12.2 acre parcel (the Munn site) located south of Irasville for \$126,000 in November, 2000.

Subsequent to the acquisition of the Munn site, the town's consulting engineer continued to explore the feasibility of a wastewater system. While the Munn site appears adequate to dispose of up to 87,000 gallons per day of treated waste, further exploration may identify additional sites. Potential also exists to supplement disposal to the Munn site with coordinated management of other existing or potential scattered on-site systems.

The Selectboard hired an engineering firm to design a system to serve Irasville with potential expansion to Waitsfield Village in the future. With grants and users funding the bulk of the project, a bond vote was held in March 2008 to finance the balance of the \$5.7 million project but was defeated. The Selectboard has

deferred reconsideration of a municipal wastewater system while proceeding with the municipal water system, which was approved in November 2008 after being narrowly defeated in two prior votes.

Options for limited shared wastewater systems in Irasville and Waitsfield Village are being explored. Currently, the town has a loan balance on funds borrowed from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources to cover engineering and other wastewater development costs.

Should a municipal system become a practical reality, it will be important that the allocation of available capacity be coordinated with other policies of this plan so that the system reinforces—rather than undermines—land use, housing and economic development goals of the town. Most importantly, service areas should correspond with designated growth center boundaries, and allocation policies should foster the type and rate of development desired by the community.

On-Site Disposal. It is important to note that a central collection and treatment system is only intended to serve designated growth centers. New and existing development outside of Irasville and, possibly, Waitsfield Village will continue to be served by on-site in ground disposal. In 2002 the Vermont Legislature amended the state's on-site septic rules to require all new development, regardless of lot size, to meet state septic system standards. This effectively eliminated the "10 acre loophole," which exempted lots greater than 10 acres from any design standards.

The new standards also allow for a number of "alternative" septic system designs which allow for the placement of septic systems on land that could not have met the previous standards. As a result of the rule changes, on-site disposal systems may now be located on hundreds of acres in Waitsfield previously unsuitable for on-site systems.

Water Supply. In 2008, Waitsfield voters approved the bonds for construction of a municipal water system to serve Irasville and Waitsfield village. That project is currently moving forward with construction anticipated to begin in 2010. The \$7.6 million project will be paid for by \$4.5 million in federal grants, connection fees, and a \$3.014 million loan.

As designed, the municipal water system will begin at the Reed Road wellhead and follow the town's rights-

of-way along Long Road, down Bushnell Road, and to a new storage tank to be constructed on the town-owned former LeClair gravel pit site. From the tank, the transmission main would follow a right-of-way to Tremblay Road, where it would meet Route 100 and continue on to Waitsfield Village and Irasville. Hydrants will provide fire protection along the route.

Outside the planned service territory for the new municipal water system, development will continue to rely on private wells.

7.G COMMUNITY SERVICES

Joslin Memorial Library. The Joslin Memorial Library, located in Waitsfield Village, is administered by a Board of Trustees. A private organization, Friends of the Joslin Library, provides support on a regular basis. A part time librarian maintains library hours Monday through Saturday. Library staff is supplemented by a dedicated group of volunteers who perform a variety of tasks. Without these volunteers, the high level of service library patrons have grown accustomed to would suffer.

The library houses over 9,700 books, supplemented by an interlibrary loan program with other libraries in the state. The library offers children's programs including a pre-school story hour, a Saturday reading program for school-aged children in addition to a summer program. The library also provides internet access, a large collection of audio book tapes, home book delivery for elderly and disabled residents and, also with support of a foundation grant, a newly expanded adult program.

In addition to private fund-raising and income from various endowments, a large portion of the Library's operating costs are provided by the towns of Fayston and Waitsfield. Waitsfield also leases the bottom floor of the library for town offices, which provided a much needed income to the library.

Because the town has outgrown existing office space, it is likely that an alternate location for a larger facility will be considered in the coming years. Should a relocation occur, the library would be able to expand to provide additional storage and reading space. It would also provide limited handicapped accessibility, which is severely restricted today. When efforts to study town office space needs are initiated, a corresponding analysis of library space options should also occur.

Health Care. The non-profit Health Center, which was created in 1981, is the primary health care provider in the Mad River Valley. The facility is leased to Central Vermont Medical Center, which provides general family medical care to valley residents.

Since the inception of the Health Center, other health professionals have opened offices in the valley. Other health care services available to local residents include:

- ◆ A full service private dentist office located in Irasville.
- ◆ Visiting Nurse Service. Home health care which includes therapy (physical, speech, occupational) and counseling, consoling the elderly; homemaker service (meals, shopping, housekeeping); Hospice consoling and counseling the terminally ill and their families; and child birthing classes.
- ◆ Vermont Department of Health. Well Child Clinic (preschool immunization), WIC Programs (prenatal and preschool nutritional programs).
- ◆ Washington County Mental Health. 24-hour emergency service, outpatient clinic, substance abuse programs, job placement, day programs, day hospital and resident programs.

Hospitals serving the Valley include the Central Vermont Medical Center in Berlin, Gifford Memorial Hospital in Randolph and Fletcher Allen Healthcare in Burlington.

Day Care. Day care facilities are regulated by the Vermont Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services. Day care providers operating out of private homes who care for not more than six pre-school children from two or more families, in addition to not more than four school age children for four or less hours each day, must be registered with the state. Presently only two home child care operators are registered in the town—a reduction from past years, when as many as five home child care services were registered in Waitsfield.

Larger facilities, and those not operating out of the care provider's home, are licensed by the state. A licensed facility is allowed to provide care to larger numbers of children, and is subject to more stringent regulation and periodic inspection. Currently

six licensed facilities operate in Waitsfield, including the after school program which uses the elementary school.

Other than the use of the elementary school, the town is not involved in providing day care to local residents. No change in this policy is anticipated, although changing demographics resulting in one parent homes and more two working-parent families have created a growing need for adequate day care. It is not known how adequately these needs are now being served. While there are few actions the town would be likely to take to remedy this, additional facilities could be encouraged through the elimination of any local regulatory barriers to their development and the continuation of the after school program.

Senior Services. The Mad River Valley Senior Citizens Inc. is a non-profit corporation which operates to coordinate and provide services for the elderly population of Fayston, Moretown, Warren and Waitsfield. Funding is provided through a combination of local, state and federal grant funds and donated time and energy of valley residents.

The most important program provided by the seniors is the operation of the Senior Center and the senior meals program, both of which operate out of Evergreen Place—a shared housing facility for elders located in Irasville.

Social Services. Most social services are provided by state government through a variety of programs coordinated through the Agency of Human Services. In addition to state programs, all of which are delivered from offices located elsewhere in Washington County outside the valley, several private non-profit organizations provide varying types and levels of assistance to local residents. Several of these service providers receive annual appropriations from the town. In addition, the following two organizations are located within the Mad River Valley and provide assistance exclusively to valley residents:

- ◆ Valley Community Fund, a non-profit organization serving residents of the Mad River Valley. Funded entirely through contributions, the Community Fund provides financial assistance to local residents experiencing financial hardship.
- ◆ Mad River Valley Food Shelf, coordinated by the Valley Clergy Council, distributes do-

nated food and groceries to Valley residents in need of such assistance.

The assistance of these, and other, private organizations will likely become increasingly important as the current federal administration reduces support for programs designed to assist the least fortunate members of society.

Cultural Organizations. Mad River Valley residents enjoy access to a wide range of homegrown cultural resources and events. While not directly supported by the town on a regular basis, the following organizations provide a variety of performances and exhibits.

- ◆ Vermont Festival of the Arts, which, in cooperation with the Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce sponsors an annual arts festival.
- ◆ Valley Players, a theater group operating out of the Odd Fellows Hall in Waitsfield Village.
- ◆ Green Mountain Cultural Center, which sponsors a variety of exhibitions, performances and classes in the restored round barn in Waitsfield.
- ◆ Mad River Chorale, a local chorus group.
- ◆ Phantom Theater, an experimental theater group based in a restored Warren barn.
- ◆ Skinner Barn, which hosts a variety of performances and events in a restored barn on the Common Road.
- ◆ Waitsfield Farmers Market, which not only provides a direct market for local farmers, cooks, artisans and crafts people, but also provides an opportunity for local residents and visitors to congregate and socialize on a regular basis between May and October.
- ◆ Bundy Center for the Arts, which has been used for both the exhibition of visual arts as well as a venue for performing arts.

In addition, several individual artists and businesses support a strong community arts culture. Artists studios, which often include display space, are located throughout town, although several are concentrated in Waitsfield Village. Musicians regularly perform at Mad Mountain Tavern, Purple Moon Pub and the Eclipse Theater, which also functions as the valley's only movie theater.

Community Center. Despite the range of recreation, community and cultural activities available to valley residents and visitors, most of which are located in Waitsfield, several residents have lamented the lack of a central community center. Such a center could serve as a gathering place and central recreation facility for the valley's youth. It could also serve as a multi-generational facility that could serve as a recreational, social and cultural resource for a broad cross section of the community.

While there is clear support for a multi-purpose community center, the depth and breadth of that support is not yet clear. Should such support exist, the creation of a community center in Irasville could serve to strengthen that area's function as a growth center and activity center for the entire valley.

7.H COMMUNICATIONS & MEDIA

Waitsfield is served by both traditional and more modern forms of communication that inform the community and connect residents with each other and the wider world. In fact, valley residents have access to telecommunications technologies that are on par with most urban areas and are considerably more advanced than in most rural communities.

Telecommunications services available to Waitsfield residents are now multiplying at an unprecedented rate, due to ongoing technological advances, industry deregulation, and an expanding number of local and national service providers. As discussed in Chapter 5, the valley's advanced communications infrastructure is one of the area's greatest economic assets.

Unlike traditional phone and broadcast networks, available for a nominal fee or the cost of purchasing a radio or television, many of the new technologies and services require a substantial initial capital investment (e.g., for computers, satellite dishes or wiring), and subsequent monthly payments. There is also a learning curve associated with the use and application of new technologies. As a result, there is a growing information or digital divide, which affects mostly lower income households and the elderly on fixed incomes, who also are often less familiar or comfortable with new technologies.

Newspapers. The Valley Reporter, the valley's weekly newspaper since 1971, is the town's official newspaper for public warnings, notices and announcements. The Vermont Journal, a second weekly paper cover-

ing the Mad River Valley and Waterbury, was founded in 2002 and is presently distributed free of charge to local residents. Waitsfield also receives limited local coverage in the Times-Argus, central Vermont's daily paper based in Barre. Other state and national papers are available through local outlets.

Telephone Service. Waitsfield Telecom, Waitsfield's local, privately owned telephone company, was founded in 1904. In 1994 the company expanded to include GTE's former Central Champlain Valley service area, forming Waitsfield/Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT). The company now has more than 100 employees and more than 20,000 access lines.

WCVT currently provides a variety of telephone services to area businesses and residents for monthly fees. Local consumers have the option of selecting from a variety of long-distance service providers, including the phone company's Green Mountain Long Distance service.

Wireless Services. Cellular phones and other personal wireless services are an increasingly common means of communication, and provide access to remote areas not served by phone lines. Because of local topography, cellular phone service remains spotty in the valley.

Private service providers are actively pursuing tower sites throughout Vermont to expand wireless coverage. Under the federal 1996 Telecommunications Act, the town cannot exclude personal wireless services or unreasonably discriminate among providers, but can regulate facility siting, environmental impacts, and appearance through local zoning. Radio frequency emissions, including related interference and health considerations, are regulated separately by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), but can be subject to local monitoring requirements to ensure that FCC standards are being met.

Radio, Television & Cable. Because of the mountainous terrain, Waitsfield residents without cable or satellite service get limited radio and television reception. Waitsfield Cable, owned and operated by Waitsfield Telecom, has been serving the valley since 1980. The company currently offers within its service area, for monthly fees, cable television, digital cable and radio, and pay-per-view options. The basic analog cable package includes three channels that feature local programming: Waitsfield Cable (Channel 11) advertising local events, Sugarbush Resort Televi-

sion (Channel 12), and Mad River Valley Television (Channel 44), the valley's designated public access station. Channel 44, on the air since 2000, provides community access to local airwaves and coverage of local government, school and community events. The channel is managed by a board of directors, and maintains a studio and production equipment for use by community groups.

Town residents outside the cable service area have access to other wireless television services for the price of dish installation and a monthly service fee.

Internet & Web Services. Information and services, including government and educational services, also are increasingly being provided through web sites, accessed via the internet. Waitsfield Elementary School has access to on-line services and resources through K12net, an extension of Vermont's GOVnet, which supports local and distance learning programs. The Joslin Library also provides public access. The Town of Waitsfield has an official website that provides a wealth of information about town government, local businesses, community groups and more.

Green Mountain Access, founded in 1997 as an affiliate of Waitsfield Telecom, has grown from a local ISP to a statewide company that offers many of the latest internet technologies. Residential internet services currently offered in town include dial-up access, high speed digital service lines (DSLs), roaming access, and web hosting. Local businesses, in addition, may also have access to dedicated (ISDN and T1) lines, frame relay services for higher speed service.

7.1 RECREATION

The Mad River Valley offers a rich variety of recreation opportunities to year-round residents, seasonal home owners and visitors. A brief inventory of available facilities includes:

- ◆ Two major downhill ski areas;
- ◆ Two cross country skiing facilities;
- ◆ An 18-hole golf course;
- ◆ More than 60 tennis courts;
- ◆ An airport offering gliding;
- ◆ Several riding stables;
- ◆ A relatively clean river system suitable for fishing, paddling and swimming (the Mad

River has been identified as one of Vermont's premiere swimming resources); and

- ◆ Miles of trails, footpaths and old logging roads, including the five-mile long Mad River Greenway in Waitsfield.

Despite these many opportunities, only limited resources exist for formal or organized recreational pursuits, including youth sports leagues and services.

Public Facilities. Public recreation facilities in Waitsfield are limited, although in recent years the town has expanded the number and type of facilities available. Existing facilities include:

- ◆ Ball fields and recreation facilities located at the Waitsfield Elementary School, which are available for public use during non-school hours and the summertime. These facilities are limited, however, and do not presently meet state educational facility standards. There may be an opportunity in the future to acquire adjacent land in the floodplain for expansion.
- ◆ Scrag Town Forest consists of 360 acres acquired by the town in 1991 (see Chapter 11). The forest offers back country recreation opportunities and access was enhanced in 2009 with the creation of a small parking area and trail access on Bowen Road.
- ◆ The Lareau Swimhole Park, that was constructed with the assistance of a VTrans enhancement grant in 2003, in addition to two adjacent parcels (former Austin and former Tardy properties), that provides less formal access to the Mad River.

Private Not-for-Profit Facilities. Another facility open to the public is the Couples Club, an eight-acre multi-purpose field located in the floodplain of the Mad River in Irasville which offers two baseball fields, a small pavilion and river access. The property is managed by the Couples Club, a private organization, and is exempted from property taxes by the town on an annual basis. The Valley Little League has entered into a long-term lease with the Couples Club to ensure it will remain available for youth baseball.

The Skatium, an outdoor skating facility is located in Irasville and maintained by a not-for-profit organization. The Skatium has artificial ice and a Zamboni, but is susceptible to weather conditions due to the

lack of a cover. The Skatium organization has identified enclosing the facility as a priority, which should be encouraged concurrent with efforts to improve the area's appearance, especially during non-winter months.

Trails. The Mad River Greenway is an extremely popular five-mile grass path along the Mad River north of the Tremblay Road. The greenway is maintained through a partnership between the town, the Mad River Path Association, and landowners. Similar partnerships maintain a village path network. This network could form the core of what could eventually be a single pathway linking Irasville with Warren Village to the south and the Fayston Elementary School to the west, and linking Waitsfield Village with Moretown Village and Harwood High School to the north.

An assortment of additional easements and license agreements for trails and paths around town, although an extensive, integrated network has not been completed. Through continued partnerships with the Path Association and landowners, such a network could be developed in the future. In addition to trails, Class 4 Roads which are not maintained for year-round travel also provide recreational access, especially in the Forest Reserve District.

Several miles of winter trails for skiers and snow-machines are maintained by the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) on private land in Waitsfield and surrounding towns. Part of an extensive state-wide network, the local trails are maintained by the local VAST chapter—the Mad River Ridge Runners.

Recreation Programs and Planning. Waitsfield presently does not have an active recreation committee or board and does not offer any recreation programs. However, the town, together with Fayston and Warren, formed the Mad River Valley Recreation District in 1993. The purpose of the Recreation District was to support local recreation facilities and programs, and to identify and pursue opportunities to expand existing facilities or create new facilities. The District has provided funds to improve the Couples Club fields in addition to providing support to other private non-profit recreation organizations such as the Skatium.

Figure 7-1: Municipal Budget

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Expenses						
Administration	\$307,520	\$342,920	\$384,380	\$360,120	\$329,980	
Road Department	\$522,340	\$520,290	\$566,700	\$489,960	\$496,220	
Fire Department	\$60,720	\$56,090	\$58,390	\$58,820	\$64,600	
Police Program	\$33,740	\$37,580	\$28,820	\$28,210	\$37,730	
Water and Sewer	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$38,980	\$18,350	
Employee Benefits	\$89,810	\$97,850	\$99,270	\$97,210	\$94,410	
Special Articles	\$122,310	\$111,720	\$110,140	\$94,940	\$121,150	
Miscellaneous	\$189,220	\$182,070	\$183,710	\$277,930	\$291,110	
Total Expenses	\$1,325,660	\$1,348,520	\$1,431,410	\$1,446,170	\$1,453,550	
Revenues						
Administration	\$81,120	\$84,800	\$68,020	\$82,430	\$54,620	
Delinquent Taxes	\$21,530	\$19,720	\$19,190	\$19,040	\$11,710	
Road Department	\$75,970	\$76,560	\$144,140	\$225,240	\$77,170	
Fire Department	\$23,600	\$21,390	\$20,550	\$20,940	\$28,440	
Police Program	\$32,540	\$50,940	\$28,030	\$28,650	\$24,570	
Miscellaneous	\$53,700	\$61,660	\$61,730	\$98,620	\$91,750	
Taxes	\$1,058,990	\$1,015,030	\$1,085,580	\$1,129,980	\$997,870	
Total Revenues	\$1,347,450	\$1,330,100	\$1,427,240	\$1,604,900	\$1,286,130	

Source: Waitsfield Town Annual Reports, adjusted to 2009\$ using the CPI

7.J GOALS

7.J-2

Figure 7-3: Emergency Response Statistics

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Fire					
Total Calls	68	76	88	81	
Active Firefighters	24	20	23	26	
Structure Fire	1	3	2	1	
Wild Fire	3	0	1	2	
Motor Vehicle Accident	18	22	28	17	
Utility Assistance	7	4	3	5	
Other	39	47	54	56	
Call to Waitsfield	37	40	49	47	
Call to Fayston	30	33	38	29	
Call to Warren	1	2	1	4	
Call to Moretown	0	1	0	1	
Rescue					
Total Calls	413	460	418	420	
Personnel	60	68	60	57	
Call to Waitsfield	141	157	135		
Call to Fayston	113	98	85		
Call to Warren	149	110	159		
Call to Moretown	49	46	41		

Source: Waitsfield Town Annual Reports

Facilities and services that reinforce the town's land use, development and natural resource protection

Figure 7-2: Waitsfield Crimes and Crime Rate

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Part I Crime	41	41	26	26	35	38	44						
Part II Crime	76	61	80	87	82	87	84						
Crime against a Person								2	1	3	5	4	
Crime against Property								69	46	43	57	47	
Other Crime								0	2	0	5	1	
Total Crimes	117	102	106	113	117	125	128	71	49	46	67	52	
Crime Rate													
Town	75.88	66.89	70.01	74.15	70.52	75.35	76.51	41.62	28.5	26.9	39.93	30.99	
County	139.55	160.90	146.27	148.84	132.24	128.65	110.46	44.54	43.46	38.45	40.80	38.86	
State	127.37	123.35	118.65	118.66	112.47	108.65	101.78	45.45	47.02	48.47	47.58	48.34	

Source: Vermont Crime Report. Note: The methodology was changed data since 2004 is not directly comparable to pre-2004 data.

7.J-1 A full range of community services and facilities that are provided in a cost effective and environmentally sound manner without creating an undue burden on local taxpayers.

goals and policies.

7.K POLICIES

7.K-1 Plan facilities and services to accommodate anticipated future growth and to avoid unreasonable burdens on the town's taxpayers. To this end:

7.K-1.a The scale, timing and location of development shall be controlled to ensure that the resulting demand for services and facilities does not exceed the municipality's ability to provide them; and

7.K-1.b In the event new or expanded public facilities required to accommodate proposed development are not available or planned, the developer shall fund the proportional cost of the facility(ies) needed to accommodate the new development unless the town determines that the proposed development will provide community benefits which outweigh or offset the cost of the required facility(ies).

7.K-2 Coordinate the provision of facilities and services with the land use and development goals and policies outlined in this plan, including the reinforcement of growth centers. To this end:

7.K-2.a Facilities that require regular access by the general public and are compatible with compact, mixed use development, such as municipal offices, post offices, community centers and fire stations, should be located in Waitsfield Village or Irasville;

7.K-2.b Facilities that are both land intensive and require regular access by the general public, such as recreation fields, should be discouraged in the Agricultural- Residential, Commercial Lodging and Forest Reserve Districts unless designed to serve the immediate neighborhood;

7.K-2.c Facilities that do not require regular access by the general public, such as highway maintenance, or are not compatible with compact, mixed use development, such as solid waste transfer facilities, shall be located in appropriate centralized, nonresidential locations, preferably in the Industrial District or Limited Business District.

7.K-3 Provide services and facilities in an efficient and cost effective manner while ensuring a high level of service. To this end:

7.K-3.a Capital expenditures will be programmed to avoid sharp fluctuations in the property tax rate;

7.K-3.b Alternatives to the property tax to fund local services and facilities (including user fees, state/federal grants and loans, impact fees and negotiated exactions, special taxing districts, private foundations and assistance from non-governmental and/or local option taxes) will be used wherever practical, providing they do not place an additional burden on residents of limited financial means or undermine other policies of this plan;

7.K-3.c Wherever practical, services and facilities to address Valley-wide growth and development will be provided in conjunction with neighboring towns.

7.K-3.d Statewide efforts to restructure state educational funding to reduce the reliance on the local property tax are strongly supported.

7.K-4 Recognize the importance of making the most effective and efficient use of existing services, structures and facilities and utilities before expanding capacity or constructing new buildings or facilities. In the event a new building(s) is required, it shall be designed to reflect the community's historic and architectural heritage, a strong sense of permanence, and to serve as a symbol of civic pride

7.K-5 Continue to use the General Wait House primarily for civic, community and cultural purposes, including public rest rooms, community meeting space, cultural activities, celebration of community history and heritage, and public information. To that end, restoration of the attached barns for one or more of these purposes is encouraged.

7.K-6 Maintain town funded emergency services, including fire and police protection, in a manner that continues their current high level of service as the community grows.

Draft for Review (7 May 2010)

- 7.K-7 **Develop municipal water and sewer systems to serve Irasville and Waitsfield Village. Such systems should provide the greatest volume of capacity in the most cost effective manner as possible. Once constructed, the system capacity shall:**
- 7.K-7.a Be allocated in accordance with the land use, housing, and economic development policies of this plan;
- 7.K-7.b Be allocated only to serve users within a defined service area to include the Irasville Village District and, if practical, Waitsfield Village Districts, unless an imminent threat to public health requires extension beyond those boundaries—in that case capacity will be used only to eliminate that threat and not to serve other users outside the service area; and
- 7.K-7.c Be managed, together with the operation of the facility, to ensure maximum protection of water quality in the Mad River and its tributaries.
- 7.K-8 **Explore opportunities for the town to acquire land for conservation, recreation and community facilities. Priority should be given to parcels which provide multiple values to the community.**
- 7.K-9 **Manage undeveloped and semi-developed town-owned properties, including Scrag Forest, the Lareau Swimhole, and other conservation and recreation parcels for the protection of ecological resources and sustainable use.**
- 7.K-10 **Support the efforts of the Mad River Path Association to create a network of walking and bicycling paths in the Mad River Valley, including extending the Mad River Greenway to link Waitsfield Village with Moretown Village to the north, and with Warren Village to the south. To this end, the town will assist the Path Association by:**
- 7.K-10.a Holding easements on segments of the path right-of-way;
- 7.K-10.b Incorporating path easements into required open space and pedestrian connections as part of local development review processes; and
- 7.K-10.c Incorporating path segments into management plans for town-owned land.
- 7.K-11 **Continue to work with the Couples Club to ensure the club's recreation fields remain viable and accessible to local residents and youth sports leagues.**
- 7.K-12 **Continue to encourage the efforts of VAST to provide an integrated network of winter recreation trails in a manner that does not adversely impact neighboring homeowners and the natural environment, and allow VAST trail use of Class 4 roads on a case-by-case basis to avoid conflict with other users of the road and neighboring residential properties.**
- 7.K-13 **Make changes to the classification, maintenance, or use of Class 4 roads that would result in an increase of automobile use, especially within the Forest Reserve District, only if existing recreational uses are maintained or replaced or mitigated with comparable recreation opportunities.**
- 7.K-14 **Manage town cemeteries, and expand if needed, to ensure that burial opportunities will exist for the foreseeable future, and to ensure that as undeveloped properties become limited, town cemeteries will continue to serve as an important cultural focus of the community.**
- 7.K-15 **Continue to participate as a member of the Mad River Valley-Waterbury Solid Waste Alliance, including the alliance's efforts to reduce waste generation and provide environmentally sound waste disposal opportunities.**
- 7.K-16 **Encourage continued operation of the Valley Transfer Station in its present location, and encourage a privately operated bottle redemption center in conjunction with the Transfer Station, or at a separate location in Irasville or Waitsfield Village.**

7.K-17 Encourage public and private social service providers, including state, regional and local agencies and non-governmental organizations, to continue providing services to local residents. To this end, the town will continue to consider funding such organizations on an annual basis, and will support efforts to improve local delivery of such services through partnerships with local organizations.

7.K-18 Support the development and operation of a multi-generational community center within Irasville or Waitsfield Village.

7.K-19 Encourage the Valley Health Center to continue to meet the needs of local residents and to serve as a designated Rural Health Clinic.

7.K-20 Integrate the expansion or development of wireless telecommunications facilities (e.g. cellular) requiring towers or similar facilities into the existing built environment, such as affixed to silos, steeples, cupolas, or on towers located within the Industrial or Irasville Village District.

7.K-21 Support the expansion of telecommunication service in the community, including broadband Internet access, and efforts to ensure greater public access through the Joslin Memorial Library and local schools, and through greater municipal use of the world wide web to disseminate information.

7.K-22 Continue to work with and provide support, to the extent practical, to community arts and cultural organizations.

7.K-23 Support and continue to help fund Mad River Television's (Channel 44) efforts to broadcast meetings of public interest, and will use this medium to expand local awareness of community events and issues.



7.K-24 Encourage the creation of recreation facilities that foster fitness and well-being (e.g., fitness courses) in a manner that is integrated throughout the community.