

CABOT

Town Plan 2025



DRAFT

Prepared by the Town of Cabot Planning Commission:

Bobby Searles, Chair
Peg Elmer Hough, Vice-Chair
Kate Chatot
Dawn Andrews
Glenn Goodrich

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Cabot Selectboard
Cabot Conservation Committee
Cabot Historical Society
Cabot School Board
Cabot Community Association
Cabot Arts
Cabot Fire Department
Cabot Ambulance
Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission
Michael Socks

Plan Approved by Cabot Selectboard, _____ (date)

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of the Plan

A Town Plan identifies goals and strategies for maintaining, improving, and developing a livable, sustainable community. An approved Town Plan enables the citizens of Cabot to have a legal say over both private and State land use decisions in the Town. State statutes grant the plan great weight in determining whether development projects subject to Act 250 are approved, and the conditions applied to approval.

If a town chooses to plan, it must do so within the framework established by State legislation, which sets standards for the way municipal plans are to be developed, reviewed, and adopted. An up-to-date plan is required as a basis for any local land use regulations (such as zoning) and to be eligible for a variety of grant funds. Cabot's last Town Plan was adopted in 2017.

The 2025 Town Plan, which includes elements on housing, energy, land use, natural and historic resources, community facilities, transportation, and economic development, will be the basis for updating the town's land use regulations and provide a reference in the review of projects before the local Design Review Board, and projects subject to Act 250 Review.

This plan describes both existing conditions in Cabot (people, resources, challenges) and aspirations for the future of the community. The aspirations are expressed as **goals** and found at the end of every section, along with **implementation strategies** which articulate the policies and action steps designed to help reach those goals. A "measure of progress" is also identified, which will help chart progress made in relation to stated policies or tasks.

B. Public Participation

The Planning Commission recognizes the importance of public participation in the planning process. Planning commission has distributed various sections of the Town plan to the groups and organizations within the document. These organizations are providing revisions and feedback regarding the various sections. Draft copies of the various chapters were posted at the Town Hall and on the Town web page for public review and comment.

Progress is also being reported through articles in the monthly *Cabot Chronicle*.

The following vision statement was developed with input from the citizens of Cabot and has served as a guide for the Planning Commission as it developed the various sections included in this updated Town Plan. The Plan will guide Cabot in a direction that will help the community realize its vision and accommodate future growth in a way that does not compromise the irreplaceable features and qualities that its citizens want to preserve. The 2025 Town Plan also recognizes the destructive effects of the July 2023 floods and the threat of future flooding in a changing climate that must be considered in future development.

VISION

The Town of Cabot envisions a future that continues our history and identity as a rural community, with an emphasis on stewarding the features that make us a unique and special place to live: a vibrant, compact village center surrounded by acres of open farmland and forest that contain ample recreational resources, majestic scenery, clean and bountiful waters, and historic features yet is also increasingly resilient as the climate changes.

In this future, Cabot residents will meet their needs for food, material, shelter, and transportation using resources managed in an affordable and sustainable manner.

The thoughtful placement of housing, commercial, civic, and recreational spaces in Cabot will strengthen and preserve an active village center, maintain a healthy working landscape, and best steward our natural resources. The historic village will serve as a focus for Cabot's identity.

C. Historic Overview

The Cabot village we see today evolved from a rich agricultural tradition with roots in the late 18th century. This architectural, cultural, and topographical record still shapes Cabot's identity.

The earliest settlement was on Cabot Plains in 1779, where the Bayley-Hazen Military Road cut a swath through the northeastern part of what is now Cabot. The Bayley-Hazen Road was named for Colonel Jacob Bayley, who began construction of the road in Wells River in 1776, and General Moses Hazen, who continued the road to its ending point at Hazen's Notch in 1779, in what is now Westfield.

The Town of Cabot was chartered August 17, 1781, and surveyed and lotted in 1786. Historical accounts note that Cabot was named by Lyman Hitchcock, one of the original Town proprietors, in honor of his bride-to-be, a Miss Cabot of Connecticut.

In 1789, sawmills and grist mills were built on the Winooski River in what later became Cabot Village, and by the 1790s, settlement began to spread. In 1796, the seat of government was moved to the geographic center of Town. This "Centre", as it was called, was a promising village with a church, school, store, a number of houses, livestock pound, a four-acre common, and cemetery. In 1800 the town population had reached 349 persons.

New settlements grew around the productive mills along the river and by 1820 the population almost tripled to 1,032 residents. The present village became the center of community activity and in 1825, the church that had been built in the Center in 1806 was disassembled and moved to Cabot Village.

Farm crops at that time included wheat, flax, hay and apple cider. Sheep and other livestock were raised on the newly cleared land, and a large woolen mill was built about 1825 in Lower Cabot. In 1833 a wool carding mill was built in the upper village which continued in business for 44 years. Other

early industries included a tannery, several blacksmith shops, starch factories, wagon factory, sleigh shop, numerous sawmills, and foundry.

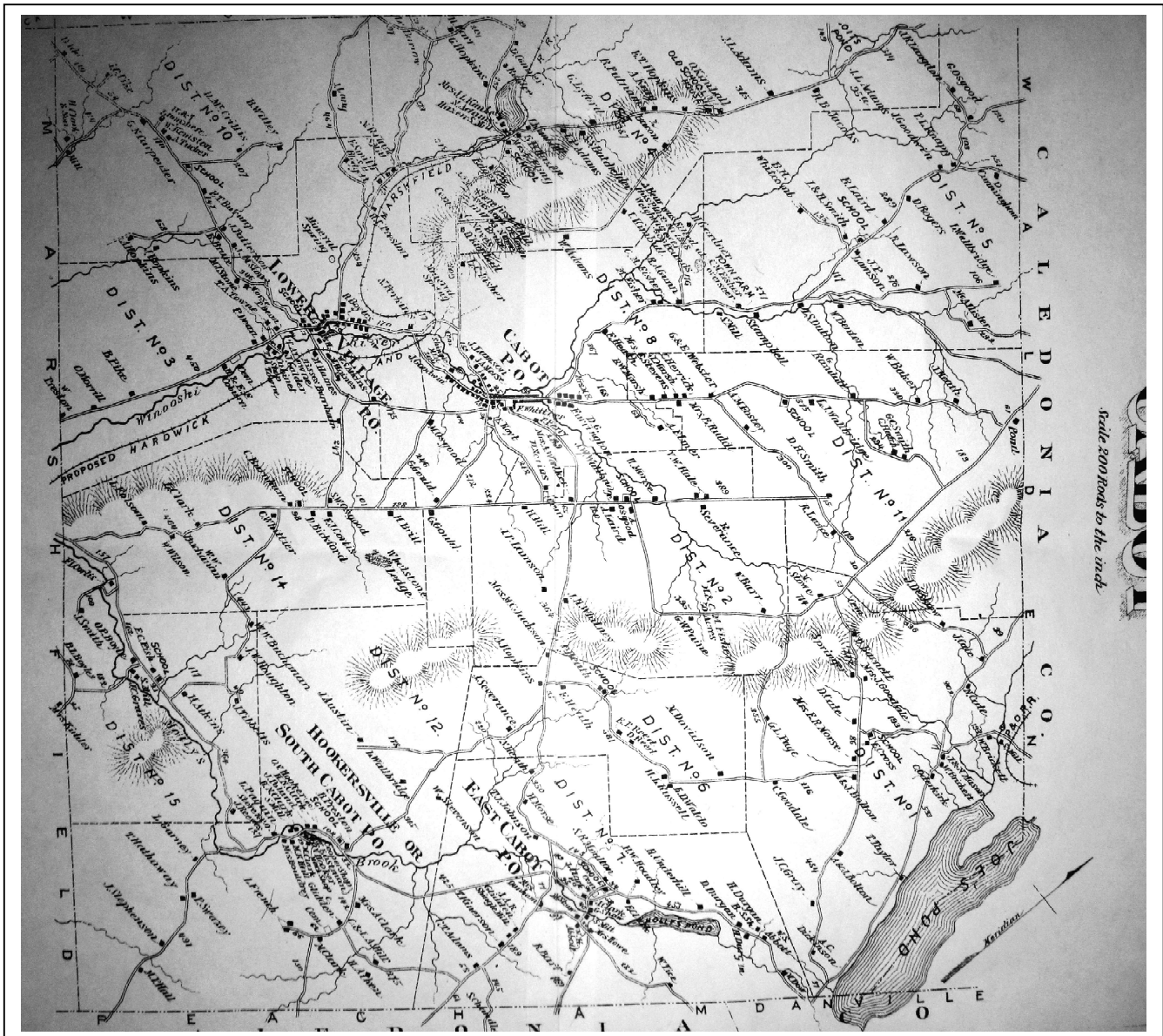


Figure I-1: F.W. Beers Atlas of Washington County, 1873

The demand for lumber to build houses for the growing population led to the building of water-powered lumber mills throughout town, including in Cabot Village, Lower Cabot Village, Hookerville, East Cabot, West Hill Pond, and Peterville (now submerged in the Molly's Falls reservoir). The county road connecting the Caledonia County Seat at Danville with Montpelier passed through Cabot, bringing travelers, and spurring the construction of the Winooski Hotel in 1833. (In 1914 the hotel burned -- the Willey Memorial Building is now located on the site.) By 1840 the population in Cabot reached 1,440 residents—a number not reached surpassed until the 2020 census.

Between 1850 and 1880 the demand for wool declined, while the construction of railroads opened up new markets for dairy products and lumber. Apples and maple sugar were also important crops

in the last quarter of the 19th century. Butter production increased rapidly during this period, to nearly 160,000 pounds in 1880, and cows began to outnumber sheep on most Cabot farms. Agricultural statistics published at the beginning of the 20th century indicate that Cabot had 675 horses and colts, 3,500 cows, 2,000 other cattle, and 500 sheep. There were also four lumber mills, and about equal amounts of land were described as “tillable” and “in forestry.”

Inevitably, the railroads that first opened markets to Cabot farmers also brought competition from farms in New York, Pennsylvania and the Midwest. As in much of Vermont, Cabot's population peaked in 1840 then decreased steadily until 1970, when it reached a low of 663 people.

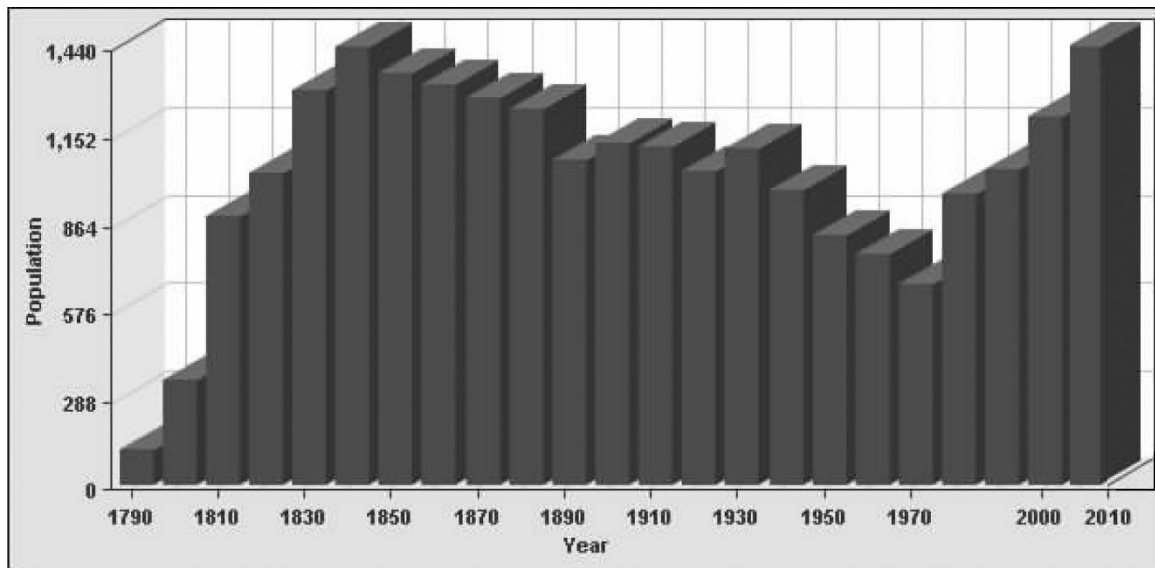


Figure I – 2: CABOT – Total Population 1790 - 2010 (*Note: 2020 population data is 1,443) (Source: U.S. Census Bureau – Census of Population & Housing, 2000 Summary File 1 Table P1)

While declining throughout the northeast, dairy farming persisted in Cabot probably due to the formation of the Cabot Creamery. Started as a private enterprise in 1893, and it became the Cabot Farmers' Cooperative Creamery following enabling legislation for cooperatives. The success of the Creamery, which managed to weather the Great Depression of the 1930s, has provided a convenient outlet for Cabot dairy farmers and a place of employment for many other residents to this day.

Sources:

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D. Community Snapshot

Cabot’s population in 2020 was 1,443. Although the population in Cabot has more than doubled since 1970, it has only just surpassed the population in town in the year 1840, when Cabot’s population peaked at 1,440 residents. The 2020 census indicated that Cabot’s population had a higher percentage of school-aged children (aged 5 – 19), at 17.4% of the population, than was typical in Vermont as a whole, where 11.8% of the population was in this age bracket. The average household size in Cabot in 2020 was 2.6 persons, higher than the statewide average of 2.3.

Cabot’s % of population 65 and older is 21.6 in 2020, which is slightly above the state average of 20.6, and is only slightly lower than the county average of 22.2. The median age in Cabot in 2020 was 39.6, vs. 42.9 statewide. Of the total Cabot population 25 years and older, 17.7% had some college, and 40.8% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. These figures on educational attainment in Cabot track closely with the figures statewide -15.9% some college and 43.7% bachelor’s degree or higher.

The median household income in Cabot for the five-year period 2018-2022 was estimated at \$68,767, as compared to \$77,278 for all of Washington County and \$74,014 for all of Vermont. Median family income in Cabot for that period was estimated at \$73,036 as compared to \$99,315 countywide and \$97,153 statewide.

Table I-1: Employment Status in Cabot, 2022

Industry	Number	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	92	12.0%
Construction	118	15.3%
Manufacturing	117	15.2%
Wholesale Trade	8	1.0%
Retail Trade	100	13.0%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	11	1.4%
Information	16	2.1%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	11	1.4%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	42	5.4%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	139	18.0%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	8	1.0%
Other services, except public administration	56	7.3%
Public administration	53	6.9%
Employed civilian population 16 years and over	771	
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates		

Although these statistics point to the fact that most residents in Cabot earn their primary income in occupations and industries other than agriculture or forestry, Cabot is nonetheless characterized by

its rural and forested areas and has a population density of only 32.53 persons per square mile (as compared to an overall population density in Vermont of 65.82 persons per square mile). An important indicator of the way land is used in Cabot is the “Current Use” program. In 2023, a total of 13,704.65 acres of land in Cabot was in this program, representing about 53% of the total land area in town. In addition, 2,109 acres of farmland and open space are permanently conserved through easements and public ownership. So, while only a small percentage of residents are officially classified in the federal census as having farming or forestry occupations, farming and forest management is a pervasive use that defines the character of the Town.

E. Climate Resilience and Community Self-reliance

The flooding of Cabot village in July 2023 brought the community together, to work on recovery and mitigation. A new Climate and Flood Resilience section has been added to this Plan. The next several years will require an exhaustive effort by the Selectboard, Flood Task Force and many other committees and volunteers to get funding for and implement mitigation measures. Even while we address the impact of 9” of rainfall in one day, other areas of the country are already experiencing up to 30” in one event.

Planning for a sustainable future in a time of global climate change is a daunting task: competition, volatility, and uncertainty are factors likely to make long-term planning difficult and costly. The 2024 Town Plan acknowledges global climate change as a factor that will impact the cost and quality of life for Cabot residents, recognize our responsibility to consider community, environmental and economic sustainability in the plan, and to clarify local opportunities – goals and plans of action – to mitigate the causes and effects of climate change, through the plan.

F. Compatibility with the Region

According to Vermont statute, a municipal plan is “compatible” with the plans of its neighboring towns and the region if it “will not significantly reduce the desired effect” of those plans. Cabot, located in Washington County, is served by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, which has developed and adopted the *Central Vermont Regional Plan* in 2016. On July 9, 2024, the CVRPC Board of Commissioners moved to readopt the 2016 Regional Plan. Staff at CVRPC are currently working on the 2025 Regional Plan Update.

Towns that border Cabot are to the northeast, Walden, in Caledonia County; to the northwest, Woodbury, Washington Co.; at the northern corner, Hardwick, Caledonia Co.; to the southwest, Marshfield, Washington Co.; to the southeast, Peacham and Danville, Caledonia Co. Of the Towns that border Cabot, the only town that does not have an adopted Town Plan is Walden.

The proposals contained in the 2024 Cabot Town Plan will not reduce the desired effect of the plans of the region or of neighboring Towns.

II. NATURAL HERITAGE

A. Introduction

Both residents and visitors value the natural resources of Cabot including forests, clean waters, clean air, healthy wildlife populations, rare species, significant natural communities, scenic vistas, recreation opportunities, and a working landscape that helps feed us. To sustain our natural resources and rural character for current and future generations, conservation must be a priority in town planning. This includes protecting prime agricultural soils, aquatic and forest habitat, natural communities, ecological processes, and connected landscapes as well as mitigating the effects of human activities including climate change.

B. Existing Conditions

Understanding and planning for the protection and sustainable use of Cabot's natural resources requires understanding the physical landscape. The configuration of its mountains, valleys, wetlands, lakes, and rivers is crucial in determining the distribution of natural communities, habitats, and native species.

The following broad environmental factors influence the distribution of species, habitats, and natural communities: climate, bedrock and surficial geology, topography, hydrology, and land use history.

Geology, Topography, and Soils

Except for the irregular boundary at Joe's Pond, Cabot is square in shape, six miles on each side, a total of 22,325 acres. Cabot lies in the geographic region known as the Piedmont, in the foothills of the Green Mountains.

There are three distinct rock types in Cabot: (1) metamorphosed limestones of the Waits River formation (northwest and southeast); (2) mica-rich quartzites of the Gile Mountain Formation (central); and (3) New Hampshire Series Granites (southeast). The Waits River and Gile Mountain Formation rocks were originally deposited as sediments in an ancient sea and were later transformed into rock, folded, and uplifted into mountains during the continent-continent collision of the Acadian Orogeny (mountain building event) that occurred 350-400 million years ago.

The highest point in Cabot is Danville Hill (2,246 feet), followed by Joe's Hill (2,198 feet), Burbank Hill (1,980 feet) and Thistle Hill (1,909 feet). The lowest part of town is 880 feet at the point where the Winooski River exits the town at the Marshfield border.

Most of Cabot lies within the Winooski River drainage basin, and Coits Pond is the headwaters of the Winooski. A small portion of the eastern section of town drains to Joe's Pond, a part of the Connecticut River drainage basin.

Climate and Climate Change

Climate, weather patterns and topography affect soils and soil erosion, plant growth, air quality, storm water runoff and flooding, groundwater supplies, road maintenance, energy demand for cooling and heating, access to alternative energy sources and our seasonal economy. In the past, Vermont's northern climate was dominated in winter months by cold, dry Canadian air in winter and by warm, moist air from the south in summer, but the climate has been slowly warming for centuries and that warming has been accelerating.

In Vermont, the average annual temperature has increased by 3 degrees Fahrenheit since the beginning of the 20th century. Global climate predictions and scientific models forecast temperature increases as high as 5 to 9 degrees Fahrenheit in the next 50-100 years. In recent decades, climate change has shifted from a concern about the future to a critical present-day issue with many implications for town planning as made clear by the severe flooding that struck Cabot in 2011, 2023 and 2024.

Increasing temperatures have already caused more very hot days, a longer growing season, an increase in heavy downpours, severe flooding, and the influx of invasive species. 2010-2020 was the warmest 11-year period on record. Annual precipitation has increased by 6 inches since the 1960s, but episodes of drought have also increased as weather becomes more erratic.

Warmer winters cause less winter precipitation to fall as snow and more as rain. Warmer winters also prevent the ground from freezing which affects tree health and forestry practices, the maple industry, winter recreation and road maintenance. The freeze-free period has lengthened by three weeks since 1960. Frequent freeze-thaw cycles stress trees and other plants, increase rain-on-snow events that can cause winter flooding and are changing Vermont's traditional spring mud season to events repeated throughout the winter.

Climate change will affect the local economy. Agricultural production including dairy, fruit, vegetable and maple syrup are impacted by unpredictable weather, shifting seasons, reduced pollinators and increased pests. Climate conditions suitable for maple/beech/birch forests are expected to shift dramatically northward as warming occurs. This may leave a smaller portion of the Northeast with a maple sugar industry and the colorful fall foliage enjoyed by residents and visitors. The projected reduction in snow cover will impact winter recreation and the industries that rely on it.

Climate change will alter the town's natural environment by including the plant and animal species that can thrive in Cabot, the migration patterns of birds, the temperature of rivers and ponds, altering the fish species present, and many other aspects of our ecosystem. Inevitably, the variability and severity of weather will impact the human and natural environments and require both diversification of the local economy and action to limit future emissions of carbon and climate changing air pollutants.

For more information: <https://climatechange.vermont.gov/vermont-today>.

Air Quality

Like most of Vermont, Cabot is fortunate to have exceptional air quality. Nonetheless, we are impacted by air pollution generated far from Vermont. Coal burning power plants in the Midwest are a main cause of airborne pollutants (nitrous and sulfur oxides and mercury) that can impact the health of forest and pond ecosystems as well as human health. The Vermont Department of Health has issued statewide and waterbody-specific fish consumption advisories, limiting the recommended intake of certain fish species, due to mercury contamination. In recent years, rising temperatures and drought have increased wildfires in Canada and the American West that have driven visible plumes of smoke over the Northeast, causing hazardous air quality.

Cabot has various microclimates, causing significant variation in temperature, precipitation, and frost dates. Cabot Village and Lower Cabot are in valleys subject to temperature inversions especially during the winter months that can trap wood smoke from heating systems.

Illegal residential burning of trash, including agricultural plastics, can be a significant source of toxic air pollutants and exposure in any part of town, but especially in higher density areas, and in areas where temperature inversions occur. Young children and the elderly can be particularly sensitive to air pollutants, including particulates and airborne toxic materials. Continued enforcement of restrictions against trash by the Cabot Health Officer will reduce this public health hazard and nuisance.

Soils

Understanding the characteristics and capabilities of the local Cabot soils is critical for planning future land use. Soils information can be an important guide for reviewing development proposals, protecting prime agricultural soils, and identifying natural habitats that need protection.

Because of Cabot's location in the upland drainage region, it lacks the abundance of rich bottomland soils found in towns that are lower in the drainage basins of the Winooski and Connecticut Rivers. Nevertheless, Cabot has significant areas of prime agricultural soils which have been mapped (See Map 2b: Natural Resources). Cabot lacks any significant sand and gravel resources.

A soils interpretation sheet from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the USDA is available for each soil type which describes the soil and evaluates its capability for certain uses. Information on slope, texture, density, permeability, depth to bedrock, flood hazard, seasonal highwater table, and other characteristics is available. Soils are evaluated for their suitability for construction, septic systems, water supply, recreation, farming, woodland management, and wildlife and resource material uses. In general, unfavorable soil types for development typically contain excessive slopes, shallow depth to bedrock, wet soils, excessively drained soils, unstable soils, and erodible soils. NRCS has classified Vermont's soils into twelve categories, called Agricultural Value Groups, according to their

limitations, management requirements, and potential for crop production. The Town of Cabot encourages all land use proposals to review the soils maps for suitable uses.

NRCS has rated most soils in Cabot for their forest productivity. Given the desire of the Town to conserve forest land, soils with good forestry potential should be considered in development proposals. However, NRCS ratings only reflect physical and chemical compositions of the soils and do not consider location, current land use, parcel size or other relevant factors. A geographic information system (GIS) study could include other criteria for determining the conservation potential of important forest land in the Town such as potential natural community and erosion potential. When prime forest lands are thus identified, the Town could take steps to ensure the land remains productive.

Water Resources

Water and its movement have a profound influence on animals, plants, and natural communities, as well as human activities. Lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams provide habitat for a diversity of fish, aquatic plants, aquatic invertebrates, and other organisms. Wetlands that form in waterlogged soils, along with riparian areas, provide a variety of habitat functions for wildlife along with other biodiversity values.

Cabot's ground and surface water resources are connected to the Lake Champlain watershed via the Winooski and Lamoille rivers and to the Connecticut River watershed via the Passumpsic River. Wetlands, ponds, and streams in the northwest quadrant form the headwaters of the Winooski River, which winds its way through Cabot and is closely paralleled by Route 215. In Lower Cabot, Jug Brook feeds into the Winooski. Waterways in the northeastern corner of Cabot flow into Joe's Pond and eventually the Connecticut River.

Lakes and Ponds

Five significant lakes and ponds lie at least partially within Cabot's borders:

Molly's Pond: A scenic, productive pond with a large diversity of aquatic plants (including rare species) and outstanding wildlife value. Molly's Pond is a natural pond of nearly forty acres, with a maximum depth of 28 feet. There are no public lands adjacent to the pond, although the Vermont Land Trust holds easements on large tracts of land bordering the pond. Water quality and the fishery are generally in good condition; however, the shoreline is predominantly agricultural fields and unbuffered.

West Hill Pond: An artificial pond of 48 acres, with a maximum depth of 13 feet. Shoreline is mostly privately owned but includes a fifty-foot state Fish & Wildlife access area. The dam is in poor condition and presents a potential flood hazard to downstream properties near Jug Brook (see Flood Resilience section).

Molly's Falls Reservoir (Marshfield Reservoir): An artificial, mesotrophic lake (medium productivity and nutrient levels), rich in wildlife (including loons and migratory birds), covers 402 acres, with a maximum depth of 35 feet. Its outlet and shoreline are in Cabot, with the watershed extending into Marshfield and Peacham. Ninety-eight percent of the land within its watershed is undeveloped. The reservoir is a power supply source operated by

Green Mountain Power, which owns the area around the dam and a small camp lot along the shoreline of the reservoir. The rest of the shoreline, the reservoir, and 643 acres surrounding the reservoir is owned by the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation and is operated as Molly's Falls Pond State Park. There is a Fish & Wildlife access area and gas motors and jet skis are permitted on the reservoir. Other permissible activities include swimming, paddling, picnicking and limited camping.

Joe's Pond: A natural lake with artificial control that covers 396 acres, a maximum depth of 78 feet. Significant diversity of plant life exists around the lake and adjoining wetlands. The pond has a heavy concentration of development along its shorelines in both Cabot and Danville. Joe's Pond is noted for both warm and cold-water fish species including yellow perch, smallmouth bass, pickerel, bullhead, and brown and rainbow trout. Other popular recreational activities include boating and swimming. Green Mountain Power regulates lake levels for hydroelectric generation. There is a state boating access area, and municipal swimming and picnic areas in Danville. The water quality is rated as fair, though many pressures exist: a high level of development; proximity to roads, leading to increased runoff potential; and fluctuations in the water level. High density housing on the shoreline on private septic systems and a lack of vegetated buffer are water quality concerns.

Coits Pond: A shallow lake in the northwestern corner of Cabot, with shoreland in Cabot and Woodbury. Vermont Fish & Wildlife owns a 27-acre tract on the southwest shore of this pond including an access area. Current uses include warm water fishing and carry-in boating; motorized watercraft are not allowed.

Issues of concern for Cabot's lakes and ponds include the threat of aquatic invasive plant species, land development and private septic systems, lack of riparian vegetated buffers, and limited public accessibility.

Rivers and Streams

Cabot has over 40 miles of upland streams and rivers. Most streams are small but some of the larger streams support recreational trout fishing. Little information is available on upland streams in Cabot. Water quality information is available on the Winooski River. Until recently the Winooski was affected by failed and discharging septic systems and occasional straight pipes to the river in the village. With the construction of a community wastewater treatment facility over 25 years ago, water quality has improved for recreational uses such as fishing and swimming. Vegetative buffer strips along farmland adjacent to the river are sparse or non-existent.

In 2006, the Cabot Conservation Committee completed a geomorphic assessment of the main stem of the Winooski River and a few tributaries with funding obtained through the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. A River Corridor Management Plan was developed to identify and prioritize areas of significant stream bank instability. Numerous problem areas were identified, particularly along the main stem of the Winooski River. Non-vegetated, eroding stream banks degrade fish habitat, increase water temperature, and add excessive silt and nutrients that degrade water quality.

The towns of Cabot, Marshfield, and Plainfield have formed the Winooski Headwaters Community Project under the auspices of the Friends of the Winooski River. Yearly water quality sampling in the late spring and early summer has been conducted for more than 15 years on the main stem of the Winooski River and various streams feeding into it. Water quality is generally good to excellent for parameters such as phosphorus, nitrogen, chlorides, and E.coli bacteria. Rainstorms that cause runoff can greatly increase water pollution for these parameters as well as turbidity – this reflects land development such as roads and land clearing and a lack of vegetated riparian buffers.

Issues of concern for rivers and streams include riparian buffer degradation and runoff from land that has been exacerbated by the changes in climate that have led to more intense and frequent precipitation events. Given increased precipitation and intensity of rainfall and the devastation to town infrastructure, such as roads, culverts, and dams, the town should consider developing a watershed management plan that will enhance flood resiliency, water quality and wildlife habitat.

Wetlands

Wetlands are land areas that are saturated or inundated by water and support plant and animal life adapted to saturated soil conditions. Such areas include marshes, swamps, bogs, fens, wet meadows, ponds and vernal pools. Wetlands were traditionally thought of as undevelopable and undesirable places - swamps and wasted land that was either drained or filled and used as agricultural fields. In fact, Cabot Village and Lower Cabot were once part of a sizeable northern white cedar swamp bordering the Winooski River that was drained and developed.

Wetlands perform important environmental and ecological functions such as reducing flooding, filtering sediment and pollutants before reaching surface and ground waters, supporting numerous wildlife species, and providing open space and scenic beauty. Although poorly designed and sited development in or near wetlands can impair their functions, in most cases, development can be accommodated in the vicinity of wetlands when properly planned.

Cabot contains numerous small wetlands, totaling approximately 670 acres or 2.7 percent of the land area. Many of these wetlands were initially designated by the Vermont Water Resources Board as Class Two wetlands. Class Two wetlands have an initial buffer of 50 feet. Class I wetlands have an initial 100-foot buffer. Class III wetlands are those that are either not significant or have not yet been evaluated and are not protected under the Vermont Wetland Rules. Allowed uses include most farming and forestry, recreational activities, and repair and maintenance of utility lines and poles.

Vermont's Wetland Rules indicate that local Planning Commissions are responsible for undertaking studies, making recommendations on wetland protection, and indicating those areas for wetland protection in the land use plans, including wetlands that have not been designated or mapped. No municipality may grant a zoning permit for the development of a wetland prior to the expiration of a period of 30 days following the submission of a report to the Agency of Natural Resources describing the proposed use, the location requested, and an

evaluation of the effect of such proposed use on the Town Plan and Regional Plan. The current zoning ordinance does not designate or protect these areas.

There is one large wetland complex in East Cabot that is greater than forty acres in size. This complex consists mainly of forested wetland, with smaller areas of scrub-shrub and emergent zones. The remainder is small wetlands from one to ten acres in size, scattered along the Winooski River and to the west. The most common wetland type is forested wetland, followed by scrub-shrub and emergent, and a small amount of aquatic bed wetlands. Perhaps the richest, most diverse wetlands occur in association with several ponds, including Coits, Joe's, Molly's and West Hill.

Many wetlands in town have not received study or characterization for significant values. The Conservation Committee is conducting a Natural Resource Inventory to characterize significant and unique natural communities, many of which are wetlands and located on private property. Upon completion of the study, we will have further information publicly available on wetlands.

Of special concern in the future is to protect significant wetland communities that have been identified and educate landowners and residents on conservation practices.

Groundwater

Fractured bedrock in the hills and high elevations and gravel deposits in the lowlands and valleys are the principal recharge areas for local groundwater supplies. Groundwater sustains base flow in streams and the main stem of the Winooski River. It also supplies potable water supplies for the village wells and private wells and springs.

The town generally has adequate groundwater supplies throughout town, that are both of high quality and free of contamination. A village wastewater system has minimized groundwater pollution from septic systems that were eliminated 25 years ago. Vital to protection of groundwater sources is an awareness of their recharge areas. Aquifer recharge areas are zones not only directly above the aquifer through which precipitation percolates, but also upland areas. The limited development around Source Protection Areas (SPAs), or wellhead protection areas, for the two water supply wells, Bond Hill and Danville Hill, has helped to maintain high quality potable water.

Since land use can impact groundwater quality, and aquifer recharge areas are yet to be adequately mapped, the town must be ever vigilant to insure that within designated SPAs, special consideration is given to prohibiting and carefully managing development and practices that could contaminate local groundwater supplies. The Agency of Natural Resources has recommended land use guidelines for SPAs that should be evaluated for adoption.

Forest Resources

This section of the Town Plan addresses the many aspects of the forested landscape. Forest resources in Cabot provide residents with multiple benefits provided by the forest including air quality, water quality, climate change mitigation, stream flow attenuation, wildlife habitat

and connectivity, recreational opportunities, and economic opportunities. Cabot has 37.3 sq. miles of land area and 1.2 sq. miles of water area. Most Cabot's 37.3 square miles of land is forested.

Forest Blocks

A forest block is a contiguous area of forest not developed for non-forest use. The forested area can contain forest in any stage of succession. Recreational trails, wetlands, or other natural features may be present. Contiguous forest supports many native plants and animals, especially species that require larger home ranges to survive. The larger the size of the forest block, the greater the number of species that can occur there. Larger blocks also provide more opportunities to conduct sustainable forest management, and to provide a mix of forest age classes. Map 3 shows the distribution of Cabot's Forest habitat blocks, ranging from 20-500 acres to over 1,000 acres. The largest forest blocks are considered as the priority for avoiding forest fragmentation. Typical uses of a forest block would include agricultural practices and forestry operations; both uses are exempt from municipal regulation, as well as recreational and conservation uses.

Habitat Connector

Contiguous forest habitat is an area of forested land with either no roads or low densities of Class III or IV roads and little or no human development. Contiguous forest areas may have various ages of succession forest or forest cover and may be composed of other habitat types such as wetlands or old meadows that are part of the overall contiguous habitat complex. Ideally, these areas and habitats relate to other similar areas so the wildlife that use them can move freely to other forested areas and habitats. It is important to keep in mind that there is no minimum or maximum number of acres to define contiguous habitat; rather it is important to consider the size of the contiguous forest habitat and associated species of plants and animals within the context of the level of fragmentation in the region/area. In addition, the configuration of the habitat is also an important consideration for identifying contiguous forests. For instance, an area of forest habitat that is highly irregular in shape, with a high degree of forest edge may be less functional than an equivalent size area of regular shape. Contiguous forests are a vital component of habitat connectivity, allowing wildlife to move freely through habitats without impediments.

Forest Fragmentation

Fragmentation is the division of a forest block due to land development. As land use changes occur, land subdivision occurs to parcels which were once contiguous forest blocks. The consequence of human settlement and development of the landscape is forest fragmentation into smaller and smaller areas of forest. The creation of gaps in the forest and barriers to wildlife movement such as housing and commercial development, roads, and power lines results in the direct loss or inaccessibility of important habitat. The reduction in size of forest patches can render the forests and other habitats unsuitable for certain species of native plants and animals. The smaller the habitat patch, the smaller the number of species that can occupy the habitat. Fragmentation of a forested area affects species composition, favoring species like raccoons that are more tolerant of human activities and more general in their habitat requirements. Furthermore, these tolerant species may outcompete native species for the same resources, like food and denning and nesting sites,

leading to further native species decline. Fragmentation disrupts connections between habitats that are essential for movement, and the survival, of many species of large, wide-ranging carnivores such as black bear, bobcat, and fisher.

Forest Management

Proper forest management based on a long-term view of the forest can result in economic returns for landowners, often providing an incentive to keep large tracts of land free of development. Large tracts of undeveloped land can provide numerous benefits to the public including recreation, scenic enjoyment, and wildlife habitat. The consequences of poor forest management can include degradation of wildlife habitat, loss of biological diversity, and a reduction in water quality. A sound forest management plan should consider multiple objectives. Priorities of a sound forest management plan include sustainable timber production, maintaining and protecting water quality, improving wildlife habitat, sustaining biological diversity, and overall forest health. Other objectives would be pursuant to the landowner's needs and vision for a given tract of forest land. The objectives of a forest management plan should be carefully considered with the consultation of at least one qualified and licensed forestry professional. Whatever the landowner's objectives are, a consulting forester should be contracted to assist with the development and writing of the forest management plan. The Washington County Forester (currently – Robert Nelson) is another valuable resource available to Cabot landowners when developing a forest management plan. A well thought out forest management plan is best for managing a parcel of land for sustainable timber production and long-term forest health. Primary conservation areas to receive special consideration in a forest management plan include the following.

- Rare, threatened, and endangered species occurrences
- Wetlands, streams, and rivers
- Riparian habitats
- Vernal pools
- Significant natural communities
- Special flood hazard areas
- Wildlife crossings
- Wildlife wintering areas

Private Forest Land

The vast majority of Cabot forestland is privately owned. Much of the private forestland is variable-sized parcels associated with single family dwellings. There are also many undeveloped larger tracts of managed woodlands in Cabot. Cabot currently has a high percentage of land enrolled in the State's Use Value Appraisal program (i.e., Current Use program). These parcels are managed in accordance with a forest management plan approved by the Washington County Forester as required by the State's Use Value Appraisal program.

Municipal Forests

The 40-acre Cabot town forest is the only municipal forest in Cabot. It is in the northern part of Cabot just off the South Walden Road on Slim Payne Way, surrounded by privately owned forest on all sides. The town forest provides secure access to the value and benefits

of the forest for residents. There are 1.35 miles of year-round multi-use trails in the Cabot town forest, maintained by the Cabot Trails Committee. In 2022, Cabot became the first municipality in Vermont to grant Indigenous people the right to forage on public land by opening the town forest to the Abenaki people. In a ballot measure approved on March 1, 2022, Cabot residents granted the Abenaki people the right to forage for food, medicinal plants, and art-making materials in the Cabot town forest.

Wildlife Resources

Wildlife Natural Heritage Elements

The elements of our natural heritage - all the things that are important to consider when planning for conservation - range from individual species and their habitat needs, to large landscapes and the many species and ecological functions they support. We have a reasonable knowledge of the habitat needs of some species, like black bear and peregrine falcon, but for most species there are major gaps in our knowledge.

Conserving our natural communities is one way to ensure that we retain most of our native wildlife species. But conserving natural communities in isolation is not enough. To ensure the proper functioning of these communities and to provide habitat for wide ranging and reclusive species, we must conserve and foster the stewardship of larger landscapes and areas of undeveloped land, with all their component species, habitats, and natural communities.

The following discussion addresses the three conservation levels important in conserving our wildlife natural heritage: landscape level, community level and species level.

Landscape Level: Contiguous Forests and Connecting Land

Contiguous forest habitat is an area of forested land with either no roads or low densities of Class III or IV roads and little or no human development. Contiguous forest areas may have various age classes or forest cover and may be composed of other habitat types such as wetlands or old meadows that are part of the overall contiguous habitat complex. Ideally, these areas connect with other similar areas so the animals that use them can move freely to other forested areas and habitats. It is important to keep in mind that there is no minimum or maximum number of acres to define contiguous habitat; rather it is important to consider the size of the contiguous forest habitat and associated species of plants and animals within the context of the level of fragmentation in the region/area. In addition, the configuration of the habitat is also an important consideration for identifying contiguous forests. For instance, an area of forest habitat that is highly irregular in shape, with a high degree of forest edge may be less functional than a similar size area of regular shape. Contiguous forest is important because it:

- Supports the biological requirements of many plants and animals, including those species like bobcats and black bears, which require large areas.
- Serves as habitat for source populations of dispersing animals for recolonization of nearby habitats that may have lost their original populations of those species.
- Supports public access to and appreciation of the forested landscape.

- Provides forest management opportunities for sustainable extraction of forest resources while providing opportunities to yield a mixture of young, intermediate, and older forest habitat.

Connecting lands or habitat is land that links larger patches of habitat within a landscape. These connections are essential to keep habitat patches (genetic reservoirs) from becoming isolated; if cut off from the local and regional movement of wildlife, populations can die out. Many of the smaller wetland or wooded areas in Town retain their wildlife populations only because they are connected to larger, less disturbed areas.

These connections or linkages are disappearing, mostly due to housing development. There are few large and unbroken tracts of wetland or forest left in Town. Cabot is part of a high priority habitat linkage area referred to as the Worcester Range-Northeast Kingdom linkage area as identified by the State and conservation organizations.

Connecting habitat is important because it does the following:

- Allows animals to move freely across their range.
- Allows plants and animals to colonize new habitat as climate change, succession, or other ecological processes force them to migrate.
- Reduces the risk of population isolation and provides for the exchange of genetic information among populations.
- Allows young adult animals to access new range.

Community Level: Natural Communities

A natural community is an interacting assemblage of plants and animals, their physical environment, and the natural processes that affect them. As these assemblages of plants and animals repeat across the landscape wherever similar environmental conditions exist, it is possible to describe these repeating assemblages as natural communities.

Identifying natural communities is a powerful tool for developing effective land management plans, determining conservation priorities, and increasing our understanding of Cabot's natural heritage. The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department currently recognizes 80 upland and wetland natural community types in Vermont. Some examples of upland natural communities are Northern Hardwood Forest and Temperate Calcareous Cliff, while examples of wetland natural communities are Red Maple - Black Ash Swamp, Cattail Marsh, and Northern White Cedar Swamp. Each community type is assigned a state rank that describes the rarity of the community on a statewide level. In Vermont, inventories for significant natural communities have only taken place at the county and watershed levels. Identification of significant natural communities at the town level can help focus efforts on those areas in need of conservation and management attention.

Several types of natural communities deserving of particular attention. These include:

- Wetlands - that provide fish and wildlife habitat, flood and erosion protection, nutrient and pollution filtration, groundwater recharge, and aesthetic diversity; o Riparian and aquatic habitats - that have a wide variety of plant and animal communities with an

interconnected food web that includes reptiles, amphibians, plants, waterfowl, songbirds, bats, mink, and otter. Healthy riparian ecosystems give life to all the species that inhabit them, including those species that use bodies of water only at certain times during their life cycle, such as during breeding or migration.

- Riparian and aquatic habitats – that have a wide variety of plant and animal communities with an interconnected food web that includes reptiles, amphibians, plants, waterfowl, songbirds, bats, mink, and otter. Healthy riparian ecosystems give life to all the species that inhabit them, including those species that use bodies of water only at certain times during their life cycle, such as during breeding or migration.

Species Level: Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species; Deer Winter Habitat; Mast Stands; Important Turtle Habitat; Grassland and Bird Habitat; Early Successional Forest and Scrub Habitats

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department recommends that town conservation planning processes consider the following additional species level elements because they are not necessarily protected or properly represented through either landscape level or natural community level conservation.

- Rare, threatened, and endangered species - rare species such as the loon, which is found in Cabot, are important conservation challenges of our time and will serve as indicators of whether we can create sustainable economies and lifestyles, locally and beyond.
- Deer Winter Habitat - Deer yards can vary in size from a few acres to hundreds of acres, consisting of mature or maturing softwood cover that provides protection from deep snow, cold temperatures, and wind. A variety of other wildlife species also benefit from dense softwood stands, including snowshoe hare, coyote, fox, fisher, bobcats, crows, ravens, and many others. Logging can be either beneficial or detrimental to the habitat depending on harvest method, and education on management practices is important. About 24% of Cabot's land area is considered deer winter habitat. Cabot's mapped deer yards can be found on Map 2a.
- Mast Stands - The seeds of shrubs and trees serve as important wildlife food for numerous species including mammals, birds, amphibians, and reptiles. Beech and oak stands are extremely important for the productivity of black bears in Vermont. Mapping significant mast stands and encouraging their protection through education will protect wildlife diversity.
- Important Turtle Habitats - Turtles are a long-lived group of animals that face many threats from human activities. Seven species occur in Vermont and nearly all spend most of their time in aquatic environments. The greatest challenge facing turtles is their ability to produce young by finding suitable nesting habitat where young hatchlings safely make it to an aquatic environment.
- Grassland and Bird Habitat - There are several birds, including rare and endangered species that rely on grassland habitat for their survival in Vermont. Populations of

bobolinks and other grassland birds have declined due to loss of habitat. Although Cabot has limited grassland habitat that would allow for reproductive success, there are management opportunities, such as mowing practices that could increase the amount of grassland habitat.

- Early Successional Forest and Shrub Habitat - Many species of wildlife require early successional forest and shrub habitat, including ruffed grouse, American woodcock, New England cottontail rabbit, and songbirds such as the Golden-winged warbler.

Invasive Species

Invasive species are non-native species, which can include both terrestrial and aquatic plants and animals. The list of invasive species already present in Cabot is extensive, including Eurasian milfoil, purple loosestrife, Japanese knotweed, giant hogweed, cow's parsnip, poison parsnip, goutweed, buckthorn, wild chervil, and honeysuckle (several species of honeysuckle are native plants). Invasive species are non-native species that proliferate to the detriment of native species. Aggressive growth of invasive species can displace native species and alter the balance and biodiversity of natural communities. Invasive insects, parasites, climate change and diseases are altering the biological diversity of our forests. Beech trees are succumbing to beech bark disease, hemlock trees are succumbing to hemlock wooly adelgid, and ash trees are dying from infestation by Emerald Ash Borer. Invasive plants such as Japanese knotweed and giant knotweed can affect water quality and contribute to erosion during large storms. Both plant species have grown aggressively in the riparian areas along the Winooski River. Knotweed is a shallow rooted plant and washes out easily during heavy storms and spring runoff when growing along riverbanks.

Cabot should do what it can to prevent further spread and proliferation of invasive species, potential strategies to control the spread of invasives includes the following.

- Surveying the presence and location of invasive (non-native) species in town. Seek input from foresters and landowners on the presence of invasive (non-native) species on privately owned lands. Plants such as the common buckthorn and Morrow's honeysuckle are widely spread throughout Cabot.
- Working with the town road crew to adopt and implement best management practices to prevent the spread of invasive plants when cleaning ditches and mowing along roadways.
- Promoting the use of native plants on new plantings as part of any construction projects seeking design approval.
- Provide a list of known invasive plant species which are not suitable for planting in Cabot, the list should be made available to assist residents when choosing plants for yards and gardens.

Goals and Implementation Strategies

<p>Goal: Continue to identify natural resources and promote voluntary measures that protect and enhance Cabot’s natural resources such as significant natural communities and wildlife habitats, priority forest blocks and connecting habitat, riparian vegetated buffers, prime agricultural and forest soils, identified scenic viewsheds, and other natural resources described in this plan.</p>		
Implementation Strategy	Key Implementer	Future Progress Measure
Water Resources		
Provide education and assistance to encourage the enhanced riparian vegetated buffers on waterways, such as organizing volunteers to plant buffers on private and public land, distributing educational and grant information, and collaborating with Friends of the Winooski and others.	Conservation Committee	Increased riparian plantings
Continue to participate in annual water quality sampling and testing with the Headwaters Community Project and Friends of the Winooski.	Conservation Committee	Annual sampling program conducted
Seek funding and collaborators for a watershed management plan that will enhance flood resiliency, water quality and wildlife habitat.	Conservation Committee, Friends of the Winooski, Regional Planning	Funding for a plan Draft plan developed
Agricultural and Forest Soils		
Seek assistance from the regional planning commission in the identification, characterization, and mapping of prime agricultural and forest soils that can be used for future planning purposes.	Conservation Committee Planning Commission Regional Planning NRCS	Maps generated
Forest Resources		
Educate residents on the importance and location of priority forest blocks and connecting habitat, the prevention of forest fragmentation, and resources available to assist with forest management plans.	Conservation Committee County Forester Vermont Coverts	Education and outreach conducted
When work is complete on the natural resources/natural communities’ study in 2025, use this study to complete the process of identifying priority forest blocks under Act 171.	Conservation Committee Naturalist Consultant	Priority forest blocks and connecting habitat designated in 2025

Natural Communities		
Upon completion of the natural resources/natural communities' study in 2025, conduct outreach on significant natural communities and wildlife habitat, priority forest blocks and connecting habitat. Assist landowners in identification and protection.	Conservation Committee	Education and outreach conducted
Maintain a Conservation Fund that supported by public and private funds that can be used to conduct special studies and to acquire land that is a priority for long-term conservation.	Conservation Committee Select Board	Conservation Fund maintained and supported by the town
Invasive (non-native) Species		
Survey the presence and location of invasive species with input from foresters and landowners and maintain an inventory.	Conservation Committee	Ongoing survey developed
Work with the town road crew to adopt and implement best management practices to prevent the spread of invasives when performing road maintenance activities.	Conservation Committee Cabot Road Crew	Best Management Practices developed
Promote the use of native plants by landowners and in construction projects seeking design approval. Create a list of known invasive plant species not suitable for planting in Cabot that can be distributed to landowners. Provide information and assistance on eradication of invasives.	Conservation Committee Planning Commission Development Review Board	Outreach materials on invasives developed. Workshops on invasive eradication provided

Goal: Consider regulatory approaches to protect and enhance natural resources.		
Implementation Strategy	Key Implementer	Future Progress Measure
The Conservation Committee and Planning Commission will collaborate to identify zoning and subdivision provisions that will enhance and protect natural resources discussed in this plan, including but not limited to overlay districts, steep slopes and ridgelines, forest fragmentation, prime agricultural and forest soil protection, forest block and connecting habitat protection,	Conservation Committee Planning Commission Regional Planning	Protective measures identified for inclusion in zoning

riparian vegetated buffer protection along streams, and water supply source protection.		
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III. HISTORIC RESOURCES

A. Introduction

Cabot's built environment is rich with history in its buildings, old mill sites, cemeteries, fence lines, patterns of fields and forests, historic site markers, ancient roads, and trails—some lined with century-old trees. Buildings and other historic resources can teach us about our history and help us understand how Cabot grew to be what it is today.

Understanding the evolution of our human-built environment along with our natural environment, enables us to be better stewards and planners for the future. Cabot's historic resources are valued by the community, as evidenced by the research, archives, preservation and interpretation activities of the Cabot Historical Society.

Historic buildings and landscapes attract tourists who are very important to the local economy. Restoring or preserving old buildings can use fewer materials, less energy and is sometimes cheaper than building new. Preservation and restoration are kinds of recycling that reduce construction waste and saves energy used to manufacture and transport building materials. Grants and other financial assistance may be available for income-producing or publicly owned properties.

B. Existing Conditions

Properties in Cabot listed on State Register of Historic Places

From 1978 to 1979, the State Division of Historic Preservation undertook a survey of historic resources in Cabot. Some of these resources were also identified by the Cabot Historical Society as being historically significant in earlier town plans.

The State identified a total of 62 resources in Cabot, two of which were Historic Districts: The Lower Cabot Historic District, consisting of 30 surveyed structures and the Cabot Village Historic District, consisting of 68 structures.

Figure II-I is the location map included in the State's 1979 survey. It identifies the locations of historic resources in Cabot by numbers next to circled structures. The two historic districts are identified by shading on the map. The list of resources in the subsection entitled "Locally Identified Historically Significant Buildings and Sites" (below) are labeled with the corresponding number assigned it in the State survey. The Inventory forms are available online.

It is noted that a comprehensive inventory of Cabot's historic resources has not been undertaken in over 45 years, so it is possible that some of the resources described in the State survey are no longer extant.

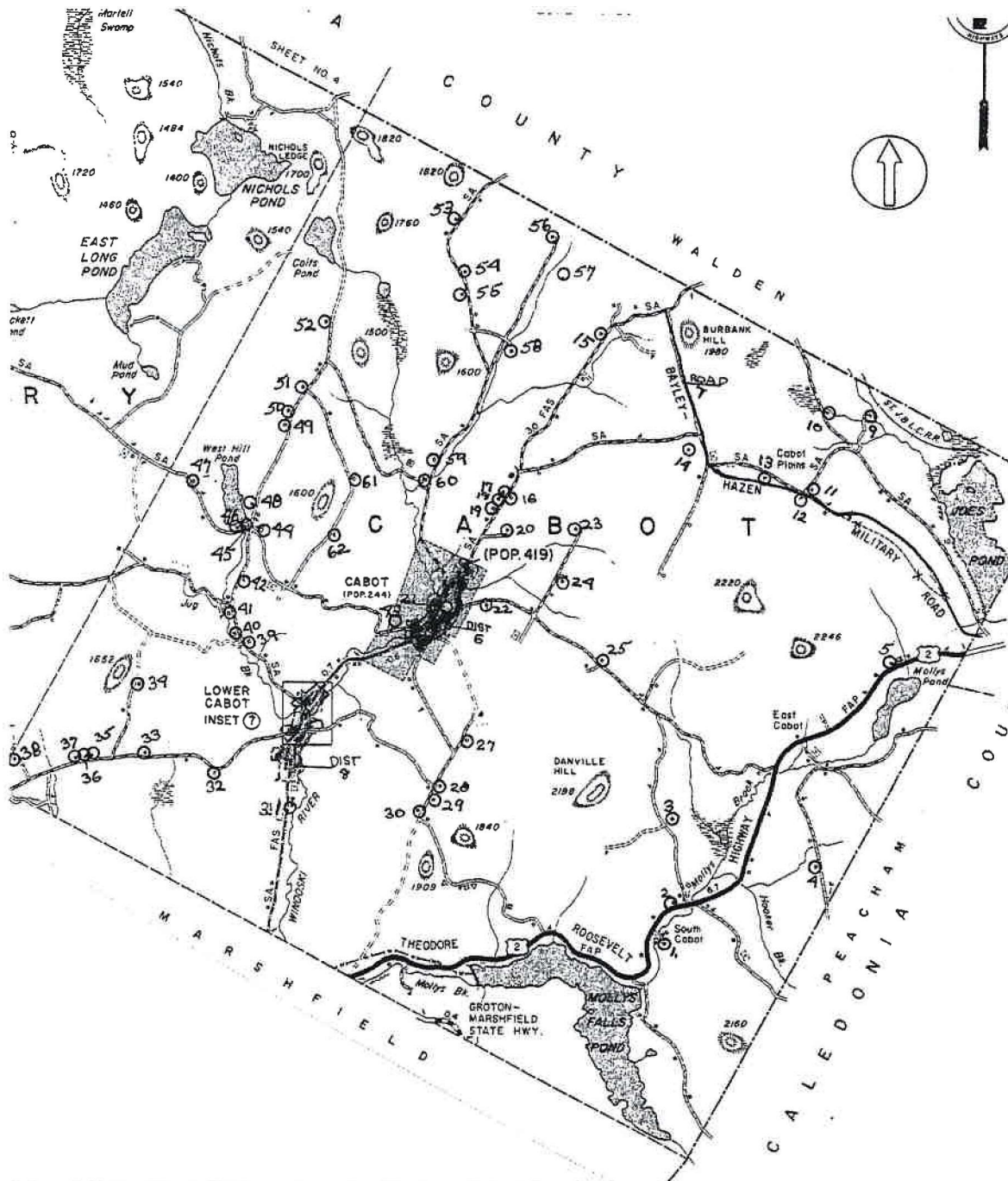


Figure III-1: Historic resources identified in 1979 Historic Sites and Structures Survey prepared by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation.

Descriptions of the two historic districts, as included in the State's 1978 - 1979 survey and prepared by Division staff, are as follows:

Lower Cabot Historic District

"The Winooski River provided waterpower for small mill operations and manufacturing in Lower Cabot. The first settlement was in 1799 and by 1889 it was a thriving post village of about 30 dwellings with two meeting houses and a woolen mill (built 1825) producing " flannels" and other fabrics as well as doing custom carding.

The village declined with the demise of small manufacturing, but into the 20th century there was a vigorous community spirit centered around activities in the Lower Cabot School (#12), presently used as a residence.

Now the meeting houses and mills are gone, but many of the original houses remain. Several were built by True Asaph Town, a builder and wood products manufacturer in the 3rd quarter of the 19th century. Also still extant are a school (built in 1880), a store, and the water-powered Davis sawmill, now in ruins (#29)."

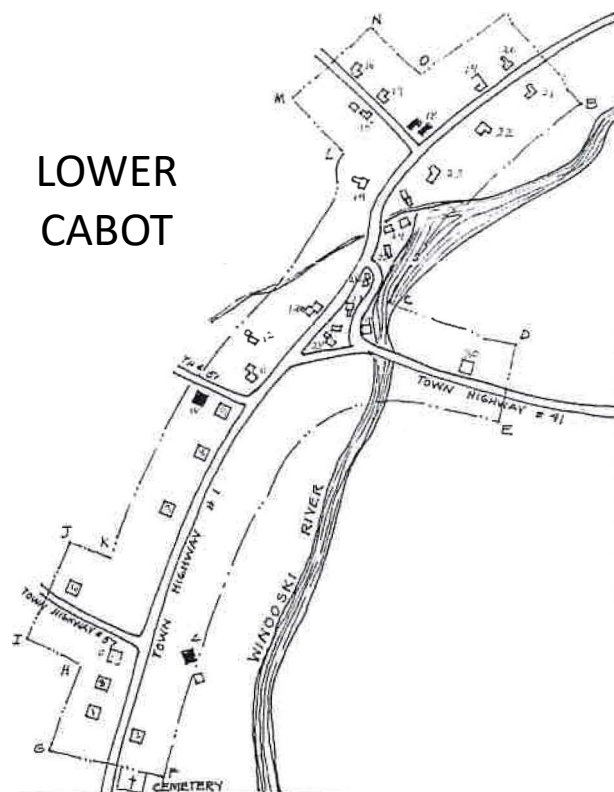


Figure III-2: Lower Cabot Historic District as depicted on 1979 Historic Sites and Structures Survey

Cabot Village Historic District

"This long linear district along T.H. #1 (Main Street) and #35 (Elm Street) includes a village green with a Civil War monument of Barre granite, a cluster of late 19th century commercial buildings and a row of workers houses along Elm Street adjacent to the location of a former carriage factory which was on what is now Clough Lane and grist mill on the corner of Elm and Main. The village is rich in Greek Revival architecture. The Wiswell-Coyle house combines mid and late 19th century components. The interior has outstanding examples of Eastlake design.

Cabot Village was incorporated on November 19, 1866. Its site on the Winooski River was selected by Thomas Lyford and his son, Thomas Lyford Jr., for saw and grist mills built in 1789. The original Town center on the plateau east of the village decreased in importance compared with the settlement which grew up around the water powered mills. In the 1820's some buildings were moved to the valley location, which in the 1880's held several stores, potash and pearl ash manufactory and distillery, cloth-dressing and wool carding mill, two blacksmith shops with a trip-hammer and foundry. Other businesses included a harness shop, barber, doctors, lawyers, and milliners. The Village's location midway between Montpelier and St. Johnsbury made inn-keeping a lucrative business. The Village of Cabot was dissolved in 2010 and incorporated into the Town of Cabot.

Cabot Village is an important historic resource because it provides a nearly intact view of a small 19th century manufacturing and agricultural settlement."

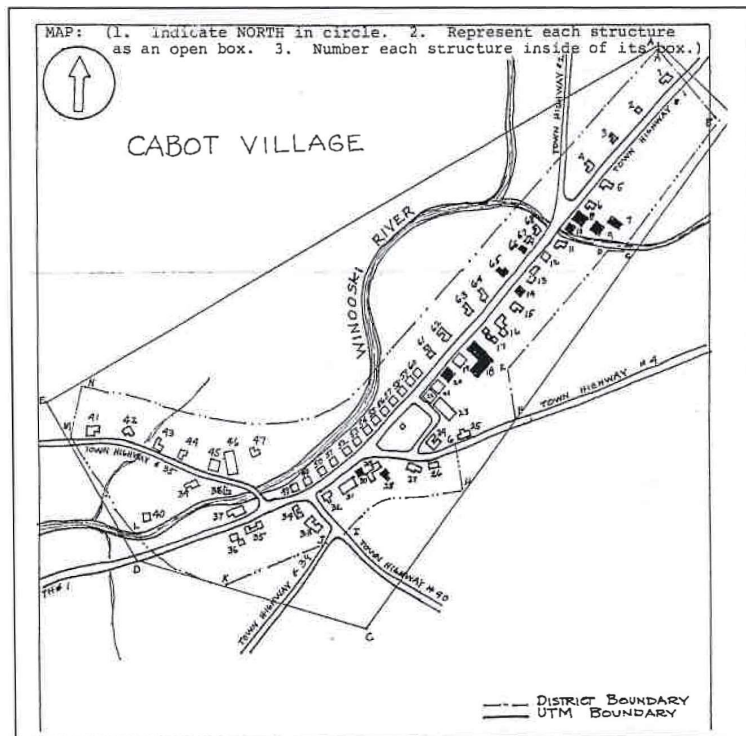


Figure 111-3: Cabot Village Historic District as depicted on 1979 Historic Sites and Structures Survey

Locally Identified Historically Significant Buildings and Sites

The Cabot Historical Society has identified the following historically significant sites and structures in Cabot. The corresponding listing of the site in the State survey is noted in parentheses:

The Hazen Road and Markers (Site No. 7)

The Bayley-Hazen Road was built in two phases, the first in 1776, financed by Colonel Jacob Bayley, from the present village of Wells River in Newbury to Cabot Plains, the second in 1779 by General Moses Hazen from Cabot Plains to Hazen's Notch in Lowell. It was intended as a supply route for American Revolutionary forces in Quebec, but later proved useful as a route for settlers. As shown on the reference map, the Bayley-Hazen Road cut through the northeastern section of Town, from Peacham north of Molly's Pond.

Seven small granite markers were placed beside the road in about 1901 by the Old Home Days Committee (precursor of the Cabot Historical Society). From south to north:

- 1) Bearing the words "Hazen Camp," it marks the probable site where General Hazen began the second phase of the road.
- 2) Near the Plains Cemetery at the junction of the roads is a marker worded simply "Hazen Road".
- 3) A hundred yards to the north on the western side of the road is a marker, "Smuggler's House," locating a house that was used as a smuggler's haven during the War of 1812.
- 4) A hundred yards to the north on the same side of the road a marker designates "First School".
- 5) A hundred feet to the north on the eastern side of the road is a marker near the site of the "Yellow House," the first frame building in the town, built around 1792. It was operated as an inn serving travelers and locals on the Bayley-Hazen Road.
- 6) One-half mile to the north on the southern side of the road, a marker reading "First Settler" marks the location of the home of Benjamin Webster, who came to Cabot with his family in 1783.
- 7) Approximately one mile to the north on a portion of the road that is now abandoned is a marker with the words "Gordon Shot," a reference to the death of a British General during the Revolutionary War, who was shot to get his boots. The marker that refers to the shooting of British Brigadier General Patrick Gordon is misleading. He was shot from ambush in the province of Quebec, near Chambly, by American Benjamin Whitcomb, a Lieutenant at the time.

The Center Cemetery, Pound, and Markers

Cabot Center, located in the geographic center of Town, was the main settlement in Town prior to the mid-1820s, when the area which is the present village center gained prominence. The Center Cemetery, located on Old Center Road, contains the oldest gravestones in Cabot, including many of the first settlers. About 1915, the stones were removed, and the ground was ploughed and planted with potatoes. The stones were later replaced and set in rows. The Center Pound, where stray animals were confined in early settlement days, was rebuilt about 1915. The former location of the first Congregational Church in Cabot is marked by a large boulder bearing an inscription. (The church building

was moved to the village in 1826.) About one acre of land encompassing the pound and church markers was given to the town in 1803 and is recorded on page 27 of the land transfer book. A time capsule was buried on the site which is opened and replenished on every fiftieth anniversary of the Congregational Church. The last opening took place in 2001. The capsule was not replaced.

Ducharme Place. Located on the south side of Ducharme Road. The State survey notes that the main section of this house, constructed ca. 1814, may be the oldest in Cabot and is a good example of the early construction methods and building form used by the early settlers in Cabot. (Site No. 32)

Wiswell- Wells-Coyle-McKay House. Located on the southeast side of Main Street, this house is described in the State survey as a Greek-Revival style house that partially burned and was replaced in 1866. In 1889 the house was altered with the addition of a Mansard roof and two-story circular bay, and a shingled porch was added in the 1920's. (Site No. 21, and No. 16 in Cabot Village Historic District). It is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Judge Lamson House. North Side of Elm Street. Built in the Italianate style in 1869. (Site No. 43)

Town-Currier-Thompson-Spencer House. Lower Cabot. This house is a good example of Carpenter-Gothic Victorian style, built about 1875. State survey notes that it was built by True Asaph Town, a local wood products manufacturer and builder and owner of a sawmill. (Lower Cabot Village Historic District Site No. 3)

Lower Cabot School House. Presently used as a home, the Lower Cabot School House was built in 1880. It was altered to include a kitchen, library, and theater, and served for many years as the focal point for frequent Lower Cabot community events. (Lower Cabot Village Historic District Site No. 12)

West Hill School House. Built in 1854 and used as a school until 1917. Owned by the Cabot Historical Society and has undergone substantial restoration. Good example of its type. (Site No. 44)

The Walbridge School House. Moved from its original location on the Walden Heights Road to the old settlement area on Cabot Plains. It was extensively renovated while retaining its original appearance. It is a fine example of adaptive reuse of an historic building that otherwise would have been lost. (Site No. 14)

The South Cabot School Houses. Both are historic sites now in private ownership. Mid-19th century school located on a 0.1-acre parcel on Route 2 near Last Road (parcel 12-016.000); and 1930's school located on Ennis Road. (Sites No. 1 and 2) Old Village School or Brimblecombe Shop. The Cabot Village School, built in 1845 in the Greek Revival style. (Note: the first Cabot School was on the plain in district one.) The building was bought by the Independent Order of Good Templars, a temperance organization, which converted it

from a tenement into a meeting hall in 1898, with a paneled auditorium and stage upstairs. On the ground floor were a kitchen, cloakroom, and dining hall. The Good Templars also introduced to the deed the proviso "no dancing in the building" which remains on the deed today. Later, the Morrill Women's Relief Corps and the Modern Woodmen had their meetings there. Bob Brimblecombe bought and used the building as a plumbing shop for many years before it was purchased by the Cabot Historical Society, which has been working to restore the building as a meeting hall and museum. A restored painted *stage* curtain is in this building. (Cabot Village Historic District Site No. 21)

Reade School House. Historical marker located on Urban Road. This schoolhouse was built prior to 1870 and burned in 1910.

United Church of Cabot. Was originally organized as the Congregational Church in 1801. The present church house was re-built in 1849, after the original church was knocked down, moved, and set up twice, the second time with more modern Greek Revival styling. The Congregationalists and the Methodists formed the United Church in 1928. The church building has a handsome late Victorian interior, a fine Greek Revival exterior and forms the visual centerpiece for the village common area. (Cabot Village Historic District Site No. 22)

Willey Memorial Hall. The Town Hall was built in 1921, on the site of the Winooski Hotel which was destroyed by fire in 1914. The money for the Willey Building was raised by solicitation, and Mr. C. W. Willey gave matching funds. It was built of lumber cut and milled in Cabot. It was owned and maintained by the Judith Lyford Women's Club but was given to the town in 1974. It contains a stage and auditorium, kitchen, dining room, club room, lounge, public library, Town Clerk's offices, and meeting space. Town Meetings were held in the auditorium. A restored painted curtain is in this space. Substantial renovations to the building were completed in the 1990's and included a sprinkler system, a new heating system, a lift for handicapped accessibility, a new entranceway, a new Town Clerk's office and vault, expanded library space, improved lighting, addition of storm windows, new restrooms, and external painting of clapboards and roof. (Cabot Village Historic District Site No. 31)

Methodist Church Building. Most recently a theater and painted in Victorian colors, it was built in 1827 in the Greek Revival style. It was converted from a church into a gymnasium in 1938 and was used by the school for four decades until sold to its present owner. (Cabot Village Historic District Site No.27)

Mill Site on Carpenter Road. Near the Marshfield town line (Site No. 37)

Old Ford (or Haines) Mill Dam. Lower Cabot. Site of a former woolen mill (Lower Cabot Historic District Site No. 29). The present sawmill ruins date from the 1920's, built after the Haines mill building burned.

West Hill Pond Dam and Mill Site. Mill house converted to residence. (Site No.45)

Mill/ Site in South Cabot. Located in the former settlement known as Hookerville, a mill village. (Part of Site No. 1)

Peterville. The site of this settlement was flooded by the creation of Molly's Falls Reservoir. Archaeological potential.

Cemeteries

There are eight cemeteries in Town that are historically significant. Seven are still active and maintained by the Cemetery Commissioners. They are:

Center Cemetery - Established in 1799; the Town's first cemetery;

Durant Cemetery - Established in 1813 in Lower Cabot;

Cabot Village Cemetery (Elm Street) - established in 1820;

Kimball Cemetery - Established in 1814 (not maintained as a town cemetery);

West Hill Cemetery - Established in 1817; Cabot Plains Cemetery - Established in 1825;

South Cabot Cemetery - Established in 1834;

East Cabot Cemetery - Established around 1847

C. Historic Preservation Statutes and Programs

State and Federal Statutes

Sites listed in or determined eligible for the State Register are considered under criterion 8 of Act 250 for proposed projects that require land use permits. During the permit process the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation makes recommendations to district environmental commissions, who issue permits and may deny them for projects that have an undue adverse effect on historic resources. Adverse effects can usually be avoided through early planning and coordination with the Division.

Other projects using state funds or requiring a state license, permit, or approval must also take into account resources listed in or eligible for the State Register.

The State Division of Historic Preservation reviews projects that require federal permits under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Section 106 requires that all federal agencies funding, permitting, licensing, or assisting a project must consider the effect of that project on historic properties listed or eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

Village Center Designation

The purpose of Village Center Designation by the State is to recognize and encourage local efforts to revitalize Vermont's traditional village centers. Benefits include various tax credits that are designed to assist with rehabilitation and code improvements for older and historic buildings located within the designated center. Application is made to the Vermont Downtown Program (see the Economic Development section for more information on this program).

D. Planning Considerations

Inventory

The first step in assessing and mitigating potential impacts to historic resources is to undertake a complete inventory and assessment of Cabot's historic resources. The last comprehensive inventory conducted by the State, referenced in this section, was completed over 40 years ago so it is likely that some of the resources are no longer extant or have been significantly modified over the years.

Design Guidelines

Cabot's historic buildings evoke a unique sense of place. In the areas of Cabot Village and Lower Cabot Village, the architectural features and orientation of these historic buildings provide the context for new construction and should be a starting point for public outreach to educate landowners on the significance of historic properties in our community.

Village Center Designation

Village Center designation was received from the State in 2014 with the goal of revitalizing Cabot's Village Center while preserving Cabot's historic fabric. This program offers financial incentives to income-producing properties in the village center as well as technical assistance to the community.

For further information contact the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation at www.accd.vermont.gov/historicpreservation or the Cabot Historical Society

E. Goals and Implementation Strategies

Goals and Implementation Strategies	Implementation Strategy	Key implementer(s)	Future Measures of Progress
<p>111.1 Provide a means to identify and interpret Cabot's existing historic resources.</p>	<p>111.1(a) Create an up-to-date inventory of historic structures and sites in Town (including photographic documentation) using the State Register listings as a starting point.</p> <p>111.1(b) Match an E-911 address or coordinate with each site to enable GIS mapping of resources.</p>	<p>Cabot Planning Commission/ Cabot Historical Society in consultation with State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Planning Commission with assistance of Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC)</p>	<p>Historic Resources inventory updated Historic resources mapped</p>
<p>111.2 Retain historic resources Town-wide that provide a physical connection to Cabot's past and provide a unique sense of place.</p>	<p>111.2(a) Educate residents on the location and value of historic resources in Cabot. Participate in the UVM PLACE program to enhance educational focus and develop specific Cabot</p> <p>111.2(b) Educate owners of historic properties on weatherization and energy retrofits that can significantly reduce operating costs and energy use in historic buildings while retaining historic features.</p>	<p>Cabot Historical Society, Conservation Commission and Planning Commission Ad hoc Energy Team with assistance of SHPO</p>	<p>Educational programs scheduled PLACE community learning Educational programs schedule</p>

<p>111.3 Preserve campsite of General Hazen in 1779. Preserve First school house location accurately</p>	<p>111.3(a) Secure deeded access to 1779 encampment of General Hazen Relocate marker to correct location</p>	<p>Planning Commission/ Selectboard/ Historical Society Historical Society, Landowners Selectboard</p>	<p>Preserved site access</p>
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IV. HOUSING and POPULATION

A. Introduction

Housing and the population it accommodates, both seasonal and year-round, has a bearing on all aspects of the community of Cabot. All the services, facilities and infrastructure in Town, all the Town's natural resources, and the Town's retail business uses are impacted by the location and density of housing. While personal choice plays a large role in where housing development occurs, climate change and flooding, land use regulations and infrastructure improvements can serve to guide development to areas that are most advantageous for the Town as a whole.



Figure IV – 1: Needs a figure caption.

B. Existing Conditions

Population and Housing Counts

The 2020 census count of 1,443 shows that the population of Cabot has just about reached the peak established in the mid-nineteenth century. However, as shown in the data below, the percentage of growth in housing units has surpassed the growth in population.

As shown in Table IV-1 below, the population from 1970 to 2010 more than doubled (116% increase), while the number of housing units tripled. The difference in the rate of growth of population vs. housing units is due partly to changes in household size during that time period, and partly due to the greater number of seasonal houses built in Cabot since 1970.

In the last 10 years, the rate of housing and population growth has almost stalled, with an increase of only 10 residents and 38 households. Cabot's number of total housing units actually decreased by 15 units, and many of those were lost in the village due to the conversion of two structures from residential to commercial use, and the demolition of a

blighted apartment building. This is contrary to a goal of gaining more housing in the village, on public water and wastewater treatment and in walking distance to services.

Table IV-1: Housing Units and Households vs. Population in Cabot 1970 – 2020

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Population	663	958	1,043	1,213	1,433	1443
Total Households	195	323	365	452	570	608
Total Housing Units	257	449	496	634	771	756
Source: U.S. Census Bureau						

Housing and Household Characteristics

As shown on Table IV-2, a majority of householders in Cabot in 2020 owned their home, with owner-occupied units accounting for 83% of all occupied housing units that year. This percentage has remained basically unchanged since 1990. There were 98 renter-occupied housing units in 2020, representing 17% of all occupied housing units, only a 1% increase over 30 years.

Table IV-2: Housing by Type of Occupancy 1990-2020

	1990	2000	2010	2020
Total housing units	496	634	771	756
Total occupied housing units	363	452	570	580
Owner occupied	305	381	N.A.	482
Renter occupied	58	71	N.A.	98
Total Vacant	131	182	201	176
For seasonal, recreational or occasional use	84	158	N.A.	N.A.
For rent	4	1	N.A.	N.A.
For sale	5	5	N.A.	N.A.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau – Census of Population and Housing, Summary File 1				

The number of housing units identified for seasonal, occasional, or recreational use rose by 74 units from 1990 to 2000, from 84 to 158. In 1990, 16.9% of housing units were used seasonally; in 2000, 24.9 % of all housing units were identified as seasonal, indicating a growth trend in vacation homes in Cabot during this period.

Regarding housing type, census data shows single family homes are the predominant housing type, accounting for 90% of all housing units in 2010.

Table IV-3: Housing Units by Units in Structure, 2009 - 2020

	1990	2000	2010	2020
Total Housing Units	496	634	771	756
Single-family houses	422	554	602	589 (78%)
Apartments in multi-unit buildings	21	35	16	57 (7.5%)
Mobile homes	41	38	52	110 (14.5%)
Other	9	7		
Source: U.S. Census Bureau – 2020 Census of Population and Housing, Summary File 3 Tables H32 and H31, and 2005-2009 American Community Survey, 2020 Census				

There were no major changes in the percentages of housing types in Town from 1990 to 2020, although the percentage of apartments in multi-unit buildings has risen slightly, from 6% to 7.5%, while the percentage of mobile homes has more than doubled, from 6% to 14.5%. There's a clear nation-wide crisis in the lack of affordable housing, which is driving these housing choices.

The percentage of the population of Cabot (in both owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing units) that have lived in their homes since 1989 or earlier is similar to those found in the County and State. Census data from 2022 shows that about 14.3% of Cabot residents in owner-occupied units had lived in their home since 1989 or earlier, with about 36.3% having moved into their housing unit since 2010. 34.2 % moved into their housing unit from 2000-2009. The most recent data shows that 10.3 % have been renter occupied housing units versus 1.2% owner-occupied since 2021. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau – Census of Population and Housing, Summary)

Special needs housing

Cabot has eight affordable housing units dedicated to seniors in the Cabot Commons development on Glinka Road. These 8 units represent less than 1% of the total housing unit count in Cabot. In 2000 Census counted 35 households in Cabot with one or more people 75 years or older, representing 7.7% of all households in Cabot. By 2020 that number increased to 60, or 7.9% of the units. Cabot's % of population 65 and older is 21.6, which aligns with the state average of 21.7, and is only slightly higher than the county average of 20.5. There are 40 units in Cabot of single person households over 65 years in age. This puts a spotlight on social needs, certainly during extreme weather events, but also a need for daily support in transportation, medical care, meals, and social exchange. As the general trend statewide is an aging population, Cabot needs additional senior housing, along with those support services. In the last five years, a non-profit has transformed in the former Elks building on Main Street. Formerly called Faith in Action, it has become Neighbors in Action, and purchased the building in 2024 from the town. They are providing some of those needed services.

Housing Demand and Affordability

Table IV-4 shows data on land and home sales in Cabot as compared to Washington County and the State. The residential property type with the highest number of sales in Cabot was in the category "Residential on less than 6 acres" for which there were 9 sales in in the first two quarters of 2024. The median price of a home on less than 6 acres in Cabot was \$247,500, which was \$190,000 in 2010, and 20% higher than the median price for the same property type in Washington County (\$205,000, in 2020) and similar to prices statewide. A stiff, almost 50%, increase for homes on more than 6 acres has occurred since 2010, when the median price was \$240,000. The Cabot average is similar to the county and state-wide prices for this type of property.

Table IV-4: Property Transfers 2024

Location (year)	Property Category	Number of valid sales	Average Selling Price	Median Selling Price	Average Price / acre	Median Price / acre	Median Acres
Cabot (2024)	Res. < 6 acres	13	\$181,500	\$210,000	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	Res. 6 > acres	14	\$335,820	\$345,000	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	Seasonal < 6 ac	6	\$259,500	259,500	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	Seasonal 6 > ac	3	\$111,925	\$111,925	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	Wood Land	6	\$128,333	\$100,000	\$12,157	\$10,142	10
Washington County (2024)	Res. < 6 acres	831	\$368,711	\$325,000	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	Res. 6 > acres	308	\$532,763	\$410,000	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	Mobile Home w/land	58	\$143,860	\$128,500	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	Seasonal < 6 ac.	36	\$292,120	\$210,000	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	Seasonal 6 > ac.	34	\$192,302	\$77,200	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	Farms	7	\$1,060,900	\$1,060,900	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	Woodland	39	\$208,531	\$100,000	\$3,887	\$8,514	12
Vermont (2024)	Res. < 6 acres	9,039	\$396,014	\$330,000	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	Res. 6 > acres	3,382	\$497,069	\$366,200	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	Seasonal < 6 ac.	544	\$241,210	\$173,159	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	Seasonal 6 > ac.	335	\$302,981	\$142,158	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	Farms	268	\$640,285	\$329,900	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	Woodland	384	\$172,667	\$77,450	\$2,216	\$3,472	19
Source: Vermont Department of Taxes, State of Vermont Property Transfer Tax System, accumulated 2024 Year-to-Date Returns Processed through September 30, 2024							

The median household income in Cabot for the five-year period 2017-2022 was estimated at \$68,767, as compared to \$77,278 for all of Washington County and \$74,014 for all of Vermont. Median family income in Cabot for 2021 was estimated at \$60,502 as compared to \$89,462 county-wide and 84,152 state-wide.

The median income for a family of four established county-wide by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for 2019 was \$82,233. This median income level is used by HUD to calculate the income limits of its major affordable housing programs such as Public Housing, the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program, the Section 811 program, and the Section 202 program. It is adjusted for these programs based on household size and other program regulations.

According to the 2024 Fair Market Rent (FMR) for Washington County, the rental rate for an apartment is \$1,106, \$1,453, and \$1,832 respectively for a 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom, or 3-bedroom housing unit. The 50th Percentile Rent for Washington County is \$1,180, \$1,550, and \$1,955 for a 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom, or 3-bedroom housing unit. The income needed to afford an apartment in Washington County in 2023 was \$38,120 for a 1-bedroom apartment and \$50,200 for a 2-bedroom apartment.

The median wage for employed Cabot residents for the 2023 period were estimated at \$59,580, as compared to \$64,682 in Washington County and \$61,805 for the state. (For a breakdown of occupations of the employed population in Cabot for this period, see Table I-1 in “Introduction”).

Although 2010 data are not yet available on median monthly costs for housing, data compiled by *Vermont Housing Data* in 2000 indicates that Cabot residents who owned their home were less stressed financially than those who rented their home. The median monthly owner costs in Cabot in 2000 represented only 19.2% of household income, although median gross rents accounted for 41.9% of renters’ income that year. Housing costs are considered “affordable” if they do not exceed 30% of household income. Based on 2022 Vermont housing data homeowner cost burden, 30% of Cabot residents were paying 30-49% of their income on their home, and 15% were paying 50% or more of their income on their home. In the state, 14% were paying 30-49% on their home and 10% were paying 50% income or more on their home.

The rental vacancy rate for Cabot according to the 2010 census was 9.3% and 7% for the state. The *Vermont Housing Needs Assessment Guide* notes that, in general, a rental vacancy rate is considered “healthy” when it is approximately 5 percent, and a healthy owner vacancy rate is 2%. A vacancy rate below that indicates that there may be a need for additional rental housing.

According to 2022 Census, housing stock in Cabot has 3% vacant, 15% seasonal, 14% renter, and 68% owner. Cabot has 2% of the housing stock for the whole county. The housing stock for Washington County has 3% vacant, 13% seasonal, 24% renter, and 61% owner.

Patterns of residential development

Today, in part due to technology (e.g., cars, telecommunications) and land use regulations, new residential development tends to be more dispersed, also known as sprawl, can have costs, these include increased roads and infrastructure maintenance, increased vehicular traffic, and fragmentation of open space and wildlife habitat.

Positive results of developing more dense housing close to the center of town include decreased development costs due to proximity to existing infrastructure; increased opportunities to create a variety of housing types; increased vitality and economic activity in the town center: increased viability of public transportation; and preservation of natural resources and agricultural land.

Another option for minimizing sprawl and preserving agricultural and forested land is to encourage the use of planned residential developments (PRDs). This is an existing provision in the Town's zoning regulations that allows the Planning Commission to modify the required lot area, setback, and other provisions applicable in the zoning district in order to encourage optimum preservation of open space and more efficient use of land.

Cabot's existing zoning regulations permit residential uses as well as PRDs in all four zoning districts.

Housing and the Regional Plan

*(This is an interim measure retrieved from CVRPC Regional Plan Readoption Reassessment Report - Housing targets 2024.)

CVRPC has completed a comprehensive housing targets assessment with a planning horizon of 2030. This housing assessment is meant to be a stand-in for the Statewide Housing Needs Assessment by the Department of Housing and Community Development (to be applied in CVRPC Regional Plan Update 2024-2025). Most of the regional housing discussion, including goals and policies to identify the location, quality, types, and costs of housing is included in the 2016 CVRPC Regional Plan. This assessment has the limited purpose of discussing the median housing and transportation cost for Central Vermont communities and of providing regional and municipal housing targets. The analysis is based exclusively on data from the 2020 census. This assessment is based on four primary data points: the growth rate of households in Central Vermont, the natural rate of housing unit destruction, a healthy vacancy rate of 5%, and the estimated number homeless households in Central Vermont. By focusing on these factors, CVRPC tries to develop a rough understanding of the evolving housing landscape, set regional and local housing targets, and hopes to facilitate informed decision-making to address the diverse housing needs of the community over the next decade. Based on this assessment, the region has a target of 1,267 new or replacement housing units for Central Vermonters of all backgrounds.

Vermont statute states that RPCs create a policy for households to avoid spending greater than 30% of their income on housing and not more than 15% of their income on transportation costs. The 2016 CVRPC Regional Plan established the objective of strategically planning population growth around dense mixed-use core areas. A thorough

examination of household expenditures on housing and transportation reinforces the finding that housing and transportation constitute a relatively smaller proportion of household budgets in the downtown areas of Central Vermont compared to households in lower density census tracts.

Based on municipalities combined – Marshfield, Cabot and Plainfield total percent of area median income spent on housing/transportation is 53% (housing 26% and transportation 27%). For much of the Central Vermont planning area, housing costs exceed the affordability threshold of 30% of household income. To establish housing needs, 24 V.S.A. § 4348a(a)(9) states regional planning commissions shall estimate total needed housing and disaggregate targets by municipality. CVRPC developed the following targets based on the theory that if new housing is built to accommodate the rate at which the number of households grew between 2010 and 2020, replace housing units that are being removed from the housing stock through natural destruction, and elevate the regional vacancy rate to 5%, this supply-side action would help depress housing costs and increase housing affordability.

CVRPC estimates that by 2030 an additional 521 housing units are needed to accommodate the growth in the number of households and elevate the vacancy rate to 5%. While 450 housing units are needed to replace the destruction of existing housing units. Therefore, a total of 971 new housing units needs to be built by 2030 to relieve current pressure on the housing market. This analysis begins to estimate regional need. However, it relies on several assumptions, namely that the creation of new housing will improve affordability. CVRPC will continue to work to integrate this analysis into the work that has already been completed as part of the 2016 CVRPC Regional Plan.

C. Planning Considerations for Future Housing Development

Based on the dual goals of protecting farmland and important natural resources, and supporting the vitality of the historic village centers in Cabot, the *preferred* location for 80% of the 10-year projected new housing growth in Cabot (64 units), is as follows:

Thirty-five percent (35%) of the projected housing growth through 2020 (22 housing units * to be updated in 2025) is projected to occur within the Village and Lower Village District.

Some of the area within this district is served by the Town wastewater system, and the northern part of the district is currently served by public water, ideal for promoting greater density. A Planned Unit Development on Danville Hill Road in 2011 is a good example of applying that zoning technique. It's provided for eight new housing lots in an area safe from flooding and designed to protect open space for recreation, producing food and protecting natural resources. One notable public safety negative is the single access on a 17-foot-wide ROW.

Sixty-five percent (65%) of the projected housing growth through 2020 (42 housing units* to be updated in 2025) is projected to occur within the Low Density Residential and Agricultural District. A proposed reduction in permitted residential density coupled with a reduction in minimum lot size will enable better protection of resources in this district. A

Planned Unit Development on Coits Pond Road in this district was approved by the Planning Commission in 2011, another application of the newer zoning technique and providing for conservation of open and forested land.

A factor that will influence the location of new housing units in the central village area, in addition to zoning regulations, natural constraints, and the personal choice of future homeowners, is the remaining capacity in the Cabot wastewater system. The wastewater system is currently at about 50% capacity. An allocation plan that prescribes that amount of reserve sewer capacity that will be made available for residential, commercial, and civic uses (e.g., school) will help better determine the number of housing units that can be developed in the downtown village districts.

Directing the location of future development to existing centers served by transportation arteries and public water and wastewater facilities is a long-time statewide planning strategy. By incorporating this strategy into local land use regulations, Cabot can plan for a more sustainable future. See Section V Land Use for further discussion of planning strategies.

D. Goals and Implementation Strategies

Goal	Implementation Strategy	Key implementer(s)	Future Measures of Progress
Affordability:			
<p>IV.1 Ensure the availability of affordable housing options in Town for all ages – single and multifamily homes for sale, rental, and new construction – particularly in areas accessible to Town facilities and services.</p>	<p>IV.1(a) Investigate grant and loan programs available through the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, Central VT Community Land Trust, and other organizations that can be used to renovate existing rental housing and/or develop new housing.</p> <p>IV.1 (b) Investigate ways that Cabot’s UDAG funds can be leveraged to improve housing opportunities.</p>	<p>Planning Commission/ Selectboard</p> <p>CCIF Committee/Planning Commission</p>	<p>Housing data indicates that both owners and renters in Cabot spend less than 30% of income on housing and that income vs. home values/rents are more closely aligned. Discussion occurs.</p>

Goal	Implementation Strategy	Key implementer(s)	Future Measures of Progress
<p>IV.2 Housing – both owner-occupied and rental – in central village areas will be well-maintained and attractive, and pedestrian-oriented to reduce dependence on cars.</p>	<p>IV.2(a) Investigate and improve local procedures for enforcing the VT Rental Housing Health Code to assure that rental housing is well-maintained and safe.</p>	<p>Town Health Officer/ Selectboard</p>	<p>System for periodic inspection of rental units is in place and documented.</p>
<p>Compact development patterns:</p>			
<p>IV.3 A greater percentage of new housing is concentrated in the downtown village area close to existing infrastructure and community facilities, to the extent practicable.</p>	<p>IV.3(a) Prepare a wastewater allocation schedule to ensure that sewer capacity will be available for balanced growth of residential, commercial, and public uses, consistent with the goals of the Town Plan.</p>	<p>Selectboard in consultation with Planning Commission</p>	<p>Wastewater Allocation Plan prepared</p>
<p>IV.4 Planned unit developments will be encouraged in the areas outside the center of town, for the maximum preservation of farmland and forested</p>	<p>IV.4(a) Review provisions of the Town’s zoning regulations, including those pertaining to planned unit developments, and revise as necessary to maximize preservation of farmland and</p>	<p>Planning Commission</p>	<p>Track the locations of new residential units as they occur to compare actual development to desired patterns of growth.</p>

Goal	Implementation Strategy	Key implementer(s)	Future Measures of Progress
areas and the most efficient use of land.	forested areas in locations outside the village core.		

V. LAND USE

A. Introduction

Decisions regarding land use can have a significant impact on the community, affecting property values, demand for services, and quality of life. Regulation of land use has been recognized as a legitimate public concern in Vermont since at least the 1920's, when the Vermont Legislature first authorized the creation of Municipal Planning Commissions, and then passed State enabling legislation allowing municipalities to regulate land use through zoning.

The Land Use section of the Town Plan is a culmination of the goals articulated in the sections regarding historic resources, natural resources, housing, transportation, recreation, public facilities, and economic development. As such, it provides the basis for the Town's land use regulations.

The Community Planning Survey undertaken in 2024 indicated that Cabot residents highly value natural features, working farms, and schools and wished to protect them from adverse impacts when development occurs. (See survey results in Appendix A)

Comparing the 2022 Census of Agriculture to the 2002 Census, the state of Vermont had 6,571 farms, about the same as today, but 1,508 were dairy farms. Since then, nearly a thousand farms have shifted from dairy to diversification in agriculture. At the same time, small farm enterprises have begun to proliferate. Many hope that new farm enterprises can form an economic nucleus for small towns like Cabot. A lot of work by the town, local non-profits and private enterprise has been devoted to re-vitalizing Cabot Village, focusing on boosting the creative economy. The village is often humming with activity in the evening and on weekends. Cabot is becoming known as a "happening" center of music, arts, and food. It is hoped that both the village center and a working landscape can continue to thrive and provide the base for a local economy.

The visual beauty and charm of our community and other surrounding communities is not a luxury and cannot survive as a picture postcard or museum piece. It only survives if life on and near the land is a working proposition. When a rural economy loses its vitality, fields get sold off, grow up to brush, or get sold off for building lots. Once our prime agricultural soils are split up and put to such uses, they are lost to this and future generations, and in the process, the visual beauty is lost. It is often said that suburban sprawl is quiet and insidious – you don't know you have it until it may be too late. Land is a core asset to our community.

It is also clear that maintaining a thriving village center requires not just the devotion of business owners but also the active support of townspeople. Decisions about maintaining the school, adding recreational activities and location of community infrastructure all play a role in helping hold onto village businesses.

Since the 2010 plan, Cabot has completed a 2022 Cabot Designated Village Center map for the center and worked hard to implement it.

Repeated devastating floods in 2011, 2023 and 2024 have been financial blows the businesses and property owners struggle to recover from repeatedly. More information is included in the climate resilience section of this Plan, but successful mitigation and adaptation strategies are needed.

How we choose to use land and the steps we take to retain desirable characteristics of land use will make all the difference in the future.

Land use planning and community and economic development planning are key to maintaining and enhancing the desirability of Cabot as a place to live and work. We are at a turning point with a new economy as well as continuing growth pressures, with Cabot’s population remaining somewhat stagnant and aging over the last 20 years. Traditional zoning regulations alone will not lead us to our vision of a retaining a working landscape surrounding a village center, as growth in population and housing occurs.

Cabot has followed planning strategies to meet its goals. The Planning Strategies in the table below are helpful guidance as well as flexible and adaptable and have been successfully applied via a mix of regulation, infrastructure and private investment, and volunteer efforts.

<p>Planning Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Create mixed land uses (residential, commercial, public buildings)➤ Take advantage of compact building design➤ Create a range of housing opportunities and choices➤ Create walkable neighborhoods➤ Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place➤ Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical natural areas➤ Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities➤ Provide a variety of transportation choices➤ Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective➤ Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions
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B. Existing Conditions

Land Use/Land Cover

Historically, land use in Cabot has been predominantly agrarian. Although the number of acres actively farmed has decreased, along with the population, over the last 150+ years, Cabot’s landscape is still characterized by working farms and forested hillsides, and its village settlements are still distinct and marked by nineteenth-century residential and civic architecture.

Today, agriculture and forestry figure significantly in the Town’s land use: in 2021, a total of 14,344 acres in Cabot were enrolled in the “Current Use” program, representing approximately 58% of the total area of the Town. Although land currently enrolled in the current use program does not ensure that this land will not be developed with other uses in

the future, 2,033 acres of land in Cabot are permanently preserved through easements held by the Vermont Land Trust.

The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission analyzed the 2021 National Land Cover Dataset:

Table V-1: Land Cover

Land Cover Class	Acres	Percent of Total Land Area
Agriculture and Open Land	3,074	12.5%
Forested/Shrub Land	18,426	75%
Developed Land	1,349	5.5%
Water & Wetlands	1,733	7.1%
Total Acres	24,582	100%

As shown above, agriculture/open land and forested land together comprise approximately 87.5% of the land area in Town.

Natural Features

Cabot’s natural features affect the extent to which land can sustain future development. In some cases, natural features such as steep slopes, the presence of bedrock, or wetlands, make development unlikely due to practical building constraints. Other features, such as prime agricultural soils, pastureland, or forests may be easier to develop, but the loss of these areas to uses that are not directly related to farming or forestry would significantly alter the Town’s character and the ability to sustain farming operations in the future. (See the Natural Resources section of this Plan for a more detailed description of Cabot’s natural features, including steep slopes, wetlands, stream corridors, and agricultural soils. See the Economic Development section of this Plan for a discussion of the role of agriculture and food system development, and the village center in Cabot’s economic development).

Scenic Resources

Scenic resources in Cabot include historic buildings located throughout the Town and concentrated around the Common in the downtown area; views from public roads and lands of wooded hillsides, cultivated fields, and distant mountain ranges, including the Green Mountains; and scenic vistas visible from the vantage point of private lands. Scenic resources contribute significantly to the character of Cabot.

Recreational use of open lands

Open and forested lands in town provide recreational opportunities, particularly in the winter months. Through permission secured from a number of private property-owners for seasonal use through farm fields and wooded areas, Cabot’s recreation committee has expanded, delineated and maintained a trail system, used for hiking, biking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. (See also the “Recreation” subsection of the “Facilities, Utilities and Services” section IX of this Plan.)

Development Patterns

Although a majority (approximately 86%) of all housing developed in Cabot since 2003 has been outside the historic village areas, this has not yet significantly altered Cabot's predominantly rural character. Cabot has, for the most part, retained its pattern of compact village settlements surrounded by large tracts of forested and open land.

The compact development along the corridor of Route 215 in the areas of Cabot Village and Lower Cabot Village still defines the center of civic and commercial activity in Town. The focal point in Cabot Village is the Common, around which is clustered the buildings of the Cabot School, the Cabot Historical Society, the United Church of Cabot, Neighbors in Action, the Cabot Village Store, Harry's Hardware (and The Den), Cabot Garage, repeated attempts at a restaurant and residential structures, all of which comprise the State-Register listed Cabot Village Historic District (see Historic Resources section of Plan). Lower Cabot Village, also listed on the State Register as a distinct historic district, is centered on the intersection of Route 215 and Sawmill Road. Only the Cabot Greenhouse and Nursery, remains as a commercial use in this hamlet.

Dense residential development exists along the shores of Joe's Pond, in the northeastern part of Cabot. About 53 residences are located on approximately 28 acres of lakeshore in Cabot and take access from West Shore Road. Although this lakefront area was originally a community of summer camps, in recent years the houses have become year-round residences, and many have been substantially renovated and enlarged.

State Route 2 passes through the southeast portion of Town. The land along this corridor has remained largely undeveloped and lies adjacent to significant environmental features including Molly's Pond, the Marshfield Reservoir (Molly's Falls Pond), wetlands and watercourses, and forested and agricultural land. Molly's Falls Pond has transitioned into a state park, with just a handful of remote camping sites. Businesses exist of interest to tourists, including the Goodrich Maple Farm and the Hooker Mountain Distillery.

Most housing development that has occurred in the rural areas of town in the last 20 years has not resulted in the development of new subdivision roads but built on either existing lots or on lots created through small, planned unit developments with common access driveways. This new housing development has been scattered throughout town, and no new loci of development, either residential or commercial, have emerged.

Existing Utilities Affecting Land Use

The Town of Cabot has a sewer system with a wastewater treatment facility located on Sawmill Road, and a public water system supplied by two public wells. Currently, the wastewater system infrastructure exists along the corridor that extends from Upper Cabot Village on the north to Lower Cabot on the south, including Main Street (Rt. 215), and portions of Danville Hill Road, South Walden Road, Elm Street, Glinka Road and Sawmill Road. The public water infrastructure exists in the same general area, although it does not extend as far north or south along Route 215.

The presence of public water and sewer systems allow for denser development, including residential, civic and commercial uses, in the areas of Town served by these utilities. The two public wells, one on Danville Hill Road and the other on Route 215 North (Bond Hill), are located on the northern and northeastern boundaries of the water and sewer systems. Each well has a delineated Source Protection Area, within which land uses need to be regulated so as not to pose a risk of contamination to these important groundwater recharge areas (See Map 2 for delineation of Source Protection Areas).

C. Existing Local Land Use Regulations and Planning Considerations

Much of Cabot’s existing zoning predates the Town Plan of 2003, although a considerable amount of work since then has updated small sections. The last major update was in 2019.

Below is a brief description of the key provisions of the Town’s existing land use regulations, and descriptions of each of the zoning districts, along with planning considerations for each of the zoning districts.

Site Plan Review

All structures and uses except for one and two-family dwellings and agricultural uses, and enclosed accessory uses associated with them, require site plan approval by the Cabot Development Review Board. While the regulations specify what should be shown on the site plan, they do not currently specify standards to be met through the site plan design.

Conditional Use Review

Any use which is identified as a “conditional use” in a particular zoning district is required to obtain approval by the Cabot Development Review Board. The zoning regulations include general and specific standards to be considered in the review of such applications.

Planned Residential Developments

Planned residential developments (PRDs), are permitted in all districts except the Shoreland district. This provision of the Cabot land use regulations allows developers to request to modify general requirements of the zoning district related to lot size and setbacks, from the Development Review Board, in order to better preserve open space and facilitate better planning. Dwelling units are permitted to be single family or multi-family within these developments.

Flood Hazard Area

The Cabot Zoning bylaws include the flood hazard bylaws to meet the requirements of the State and Federal Emergency Management Agency and ensuring that residents and businesses in Cabot would still be eligible for flood insurance. The ordinance specifically prohibits all new principal structures, “critical facilities,” and storage and junk yards in the flood hazard area boundaries and prohibits accessory structures in the floodway.

Zoning Districts

The Town currently has four zoning districts: the Village and Lower Village District, Low Density Residential and Agricultural District, and the Shoreland District.

Village and Lower Village District

The boundaries of this district, as shown on the Current Zoning Map, are defined by the land that is less than 300 feet from the edge of the highway right of way of Route 215 in what was formerly the incorporated Village of Cabot and extending south into Lower Cabot.

This district permits residential uses, one and two-family dwellings, accessory dwelling units and multi-family elderly housing, along with various commercial and civic uses. Other defined uses, including restaurant and retail stores, require the issuance of a conditional use permit by the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

The minimum lot area in the Village zoning district was revised in 2019 to align with state incentives pressing for higher density in locations with public water and wastewater service available – to 10,000 s.f. per dwelling unit. The state has now overridden that density with a requirement for 5 dwelling units per acre. In the Lower Village District dwelling units still require 25,000 s.f. per acre. Other requirements vary according to the use.

Planning Considerations: The “Build Out and Village Sampling Report” prepared by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission at the request of the Cabot Planning Commission in 2010 indicated that the average existing lot size in the “Upper Village” area of the Medium Density zoning district is 0.5 acres, with the median lot size being 0.4 acres. In the “Lower Village” the average lot size is 0.81 acres, with the median being 0.58 acres.

Included in the State of Vermont’s substantive planning goals is the directive that development be planned so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village centers surrounded by rural countryside. To accomplish this, new residential and commercial development should be encouraged near community centers, economic development should be employed to revitalize existing village centers, and public investments in infrastructure should reinforce the planned growth patterns of the area.

The areas of Cabot currently within the “Village and Lower Village District” include the areas surrounding the historic village center and the area known as “Lower Cabot Village.” While the area surrounding the common and Town Hall is the main commercial and civic hub, lower Cabot Village has historically been a smaller commercial hub and has the potential for additional commercial and residential development.

Cabot’s state-designated “Village Center” covers primarily the Village part of this district and takes into consideration the locations currently served by public water and sewer, those areas where it would be desirable to extend public water and sewer in the future, as well as the location of existing land uses and natural features.

Vermont statutes define "village center" as the “traditional center of the community, typically comprised of a cohesive core of residential, civic, religious, and commercial

buildings, arranged along a main street and intersecting streets.” The state statutes continue to add state grant incentives to designated centers, as well as the potential tax and regulatory incentives. The objectives are to attract and maintain mixed uses, a higher density of residential development, connectivity, multi-modal transportation facilities, public open space and landmarks, and other features that form a cohesive and vital village core.

Guidelines and incentives promoting “complete streets” in this district can help ensure that new development accommodates both strollers and wheelchairs, supports walking rather than driving, and fosters connectivity to new and existing public parking areas and public transportation options, while protecting the character of the historic village center area.

It is acknowledged that since the Winooski River and its tributaries run through the center of the “Village Center District,” the associated flood hazard area will continue to pose development constraints within this district (see delineation of flood hazard areas on Map 6).

Permitted and conditional uses in the district should contribute to the continued development of these areas as centers of civic and commercial life. The district regulations should reflect the goals of protecting natural resources, fostering economic development, and encouraging new retail businesses.

Additional standards regarding permitted uses and development may be needed for the areas that fall within the source protection areas of the Danville Hill Well and the Bond Hill Well. This may be accomplished through the creation of a source protection overlay district.

Since the area along Route 2 and that is currently zoned “Lower Village District” does not contain existing commercial uses or dense residential uses, is not served by public water or sewer, and is not a location where the encouragement of new commercial or dense residential development is warranted, this area requires more land per dwelling unit.

Shoreland District

This district encompasses land within 800 feet of the shores of lakes or ponds greater than 20 acres, which includes Coits Pond, West Hill Pond, Molly’s Falls Pond, Molly’s Pond, and Joe’s Pond. Non-residential uses in this district are limited to agriculture, forestry, and recreational or water-dependent uses. The minimum lot size is one acre for residential uses and 2 acres for non-residential uses.

Planning Considerations: Guidelines for the siting of structures within this district, and dimensional standards such as maximum building height and lot coverage, will need to be re-examined to assure that the goals of maintaining high water quality, maintaining vegetative buffers along shorelines, retaining scenic views, and improving public access are realized.

It is noted that the areas currently included in the “Shoreland District” classification vary greatly regarding existing development and resource value (see discussion of these resources in Section II of this Plan, “Natural Resources”). While existing development on

the shore of Joe's Pond is quite dense (almost 2 units per acre), residential development around other water bodies in Town are considerably less dense. The varying recreational and natural resource value of lands around these water bodies should be acknowledged and varying levels of review should be considered through the creation of more than one category of Shoreland District (e.g., "Shoreland District I", "Shoreland District II," etc.). Dimensional and density standards would be tailored to protect the unique features of the resource, and residential density and/or maximum lot size would vary in each district.

Low Density Residential and Agricultural District

The vast majority of Cabot's land area, 21,682 acres, is in this zoning classification. This district encompasses most of the farmland and forested areas in the Town of Cabot, as well as scattered residential development and a few commercial uses.

A variety of residential and non-residential uses are permitted, with most commercial uses requiring a conditional use permit. Notably, under current zoning "bank, financial institution" is the only commercial use unrelated to a residence, recreation or agricultural use that is permitted as-of-right in this district.

Planning Considerations: State statute enacted in 2023 and 2024 is radically altering protection of natural resources and Cabot's regulations should be revised to align with those rather than mislead landowners on what is permitted. There is a new emphasis on protecting mapped forest blocks and wildlife corridors. Development that is proposed on long driveways outside of the village will gain state land use review under Act 250.

A re-examination of the permitted and conditional uses within this district, as well as permitted residential density, is necessary to ensure that the land use regulations do not present barriers to agricultural use of the land into the future, and that the district regulations reflect the goals of preserving working farmland, protecting natural resources, and fostering economic sustainability, which is closely aligned with agricultural and forestry use of the land.

While agricultural operations often require tracts of at least 10 contiguous acres, the area needed for a residence does not need to exceed about one acre (in areas not serviced by public water and sewer. To conserve key open land while permitting the creation of house lots, the establishment of a lower maximum residential density in this district (e.g., one unit per 3 to 10 acres), coupled with a smaller minimum lot size (e.g., 40,000 square feet), will help facilitate this. To discourage the siting of new houses in locations that hinder the best utilization of the land for agriculture or forestry uses, the zoning regulations may be updated to set clear standards for siting of house lots, the location of building envelopes for structures, and the conservation of remaining land on the parcel for agricultural, forestry and other uses.

In addition, the mandatory use of the planned unit development provision for major (5 lots or more) subdivisions in this district, and the inclusion of a specified percentage of land to be conserved (e.g. 60%), will help to achieve the land use goals of preserving important natural and agricultural resources while permitting residential growth.

Below is an illustration of how land can be conserved using the provisions of planned unit development. The housing density (number of house lots) is the same in both examples, but the layout on the right conserves more forest and open space.

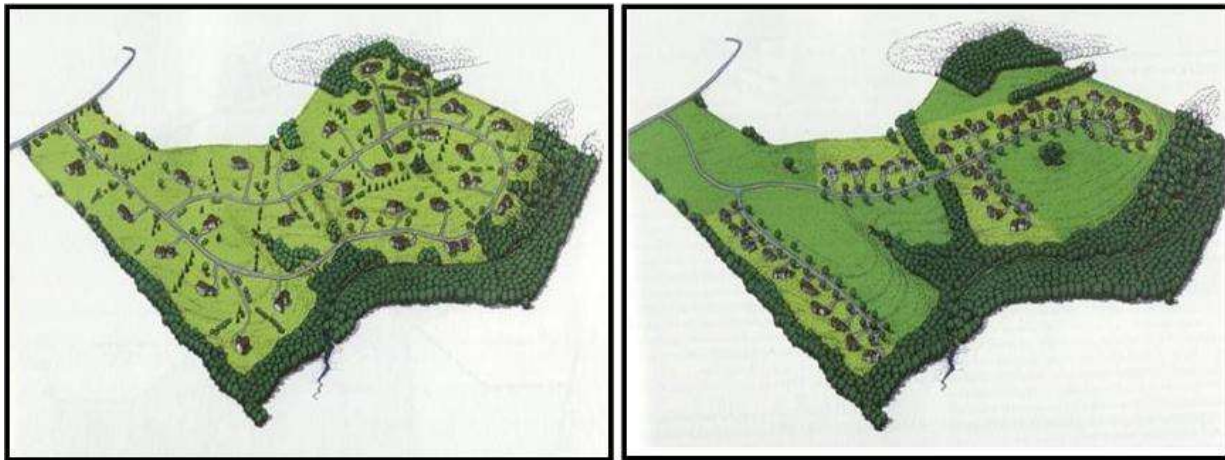


Figure V – 1: Needs a figure caption. (Photo source: www.resourcefulcommunities.org)

Since the current boundaries of the Low Density Residential and Agricultural District include lands of varying degrees of value for agricultural and forestry uses (as well as wildlife habitat) it is useful to identify forest blocks, wildlife corridors, critically important agricultural and other natural resource lands using available data. This may lead to recommendations for resource protection districts that warrant even lower residential densities (e.g., one unit per 10 acres or more) and heightened protection through land use regulations. The establishment of an “Agricultural Overlay District” based on the presence of agricultural soils is recommended, and further study of significant forested areas may warrant the future establishment of a “Forest Reserve District.” The depiction of prime agricultural soils include both Prime Farmland (meets national standard for prime) and Statewide Important Farmland (meets Vermont standard for prime). It is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed fiber, forage, and oilseed crops.

Other Planning Considerations for All Districts

The development and adoption of subdivision regulations can work in tandem with zoning to assure that future development occurs in a way that achieves the land use goals in each of the districts. These regulations should include standards to best utilize existing infrastructure and to avoid impacts to natural and historic features and should include standards for the identification of open space to be preserved. Features that should be considered in the design of subdivisions include agricultural lands, forested areas, scenic resources, steep slopes, wetlands and water bodies, historic resources, trails, hedgerows, and stone walls. Buffers from wetlands and surface waters could be incorporated into subdivision design standards. 2024 changes to Act 250 jurisdiction provide an exemption for developments 50 units or less in designated village centers having public wastewater and water service, as well as zoning and subdivision regulations. This makes it wise for Cabot, not having the professional staff needed for oversight of major development, to wait on adoption of

subdivision regulations until the impact of those state changes on towns similar to Cabot are clearer.

The town should gain updated and more accurate flood hazard area maps in 2024. It is proposed that all of the provisions articulated in Cabot’s existing Flood Hazard Area ordinance be reconfigured as a “Flood Hazard Overlay District,” for ease of implementation and enforcement. As an overlay district, the underlying district regulations would still be in effect, except where the Flood Hazard Overlay was more restrictive.

Scenic Character

Cabot’s roadways are graced with scenic character, views are highly important to the residents of Town. Cabot’s position in the watershed with varied elevation changes also provides highly prized short- and long-range views throughout every season. This is an important feature to the Town of Cabot and significant planning goal.

D. Goals and Implementation Strategies

Goal	Implementation Strategy	Key implementer(s)	Future Measures of Progress
<p>V.1 Plan future residential and commercial development to locate in Cabot’s existing residential and commercial development nodes: Cabot Village and Lower Cabot Village.</p>	<p>V.1 (a) Prepare and adopt an allocation schedule on a yearly basis for the uncommitted reserve capacity of the wastewater system.</p> <p>V.1(b) Ensure that the development within the Village does not negatively impact the public water supply by establishing a Source Protection Overlay District that encompasses the wellhead protection areas.</p>	<p>Selectboard Planning Commission/ Selectboard</p>	<p>Allocation schedule adopted Overlay District regulations drafted</p>
<p>V.2 Land is used and developed in a way that retains working farms and productive forest land as major land uses in the Town, and protects natural, historic, and scenic resources.</p>	<p>V.2 (a) map critically important forest blocks, agricultural, and open land in Town to serve as an information base for landowners and developers</p> <p>V.2 (b) Strengthen PRD/PUD regulations to specify a percentage of land to be conserved as part of the development (e.g.</p>	<p>Planning Commission, with assistance of Vermont Land Trust and CVRPC Planning Commission/ Selectboard Planning Commission/ Selectboard</p>	<p>Map created PUD regulations revised Zoning regulations updated Acreage permanently conserved through easements increases.</p>

	<p>60%); and to provide for buffer areas between residential development and adjacent residential and agricultural uses.</p> <p>V.2(c) adopt provisions into the zoning regulations to better guide land use development throughout town.</p> <p>V.2 (d) Educate landowners about options regarding conservation easements – coordinate with statewide database of farmland.</p>	<p>Conservation Committee/State and Regional agencies and non-profits (e.g., Vermont Land Trust)</p>	
<p>V.3 Participate in the development of, and support, recommendations for flood mitigation and adaptation</p>	<p>V.3 (a) Participate in public outreach meetings on the scientific study of the two tributaries most affecting Cabot village</p> <p>V.3 (b) Prepare and submit applications to FEMA to fund recommended hazard mitigation actions</p>	<p>Cabot Flood Task Force</p> <p>Selectboard</p>	<p>Hazard mitigation strategies implemented</p>
<p>V.4 Plan new development in areas served by existing infrastructure, including utilities</p>	<p>V.4 (a) Revise existing performance standards for uses in all districts (section 3.15 of</p>	<p>Planning Commission/ Selectboard</p>	<p>Regulations revised</p>

<p>and roads, while ensuring that the uses and the rate and scale of development is in keeping with Cabot's existing character, and that property values are preserved.</p>	<p>Cabot Zoning ordinance) and create specific standards for the siting of residences in the Low Density Residential and Agricultural and Shoreland Districts.</p> <p>V.4 (b) Modify regulations for signs, as necessary, to preserve community character.</p>	<p>Planning Commission/ Selectboard</p>	<p>Regulations revised</p>
<p>V.5 Promote pedestrian access for all development in village centers.</p>	<p>V.5(a) Develop a capital improvement plan that includes the development of new sidewalks/paths.</p> <p>V.5(b) Seek grant funds to accomplish pedestrian infrastructure improvements.</p>	<p>Planning Commission/ Selectboard/CCIF Committee/Cabot CCA</p> <p>Planning Commission/ Selectboard/CCIF Committee/Cabot CCA</p>	<p>Plan created improvements to infrastructure made in accordance with plan</p> <p>Grants secured</p>

VI. ENERGY

A. Introduction

Energy and energy-related issues are addressed in the Cabot Town Plan for the following reasons:

- 1) Energy prices are impacted by events far away and out of our control. These events can occur with little advance notice, but the changes can be dramatic and occur quickly.
- 2) Energy supply has become less reliable due to global shortages, disasters, and political events.
- 3) Global climate change, due in part to the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere from the combustion of fossil fuels, is impacting global, national, and local environments and economies. The magnitude and scope of the changes are unknown, and the impacts on agriculture (including our ability to rely on distant food sources) and wild plant and animal populations could be profound.

Cabot acknowledges these issues and shall promote policies to mitigate their environmental and economic impacts on our community. Cabot's planning goals reflect a desire to improve energy efficiency and meet our local energy needs without the consumption of non-renewable energy or the use of any energy source that leads to long term degradation of the environment.

With the volatility of weather events increasingly causing extended power outages and other disruptions, any action Cabot can take to help both the community and individuals increase energy self-reliance will be an important improvement.

Our vision is that Cabot residents will meet their needs for food, shelter, materials, and transportation using resources managed in a sustainable manner and sourced as locally as possible.

B. Overview

Energy Use

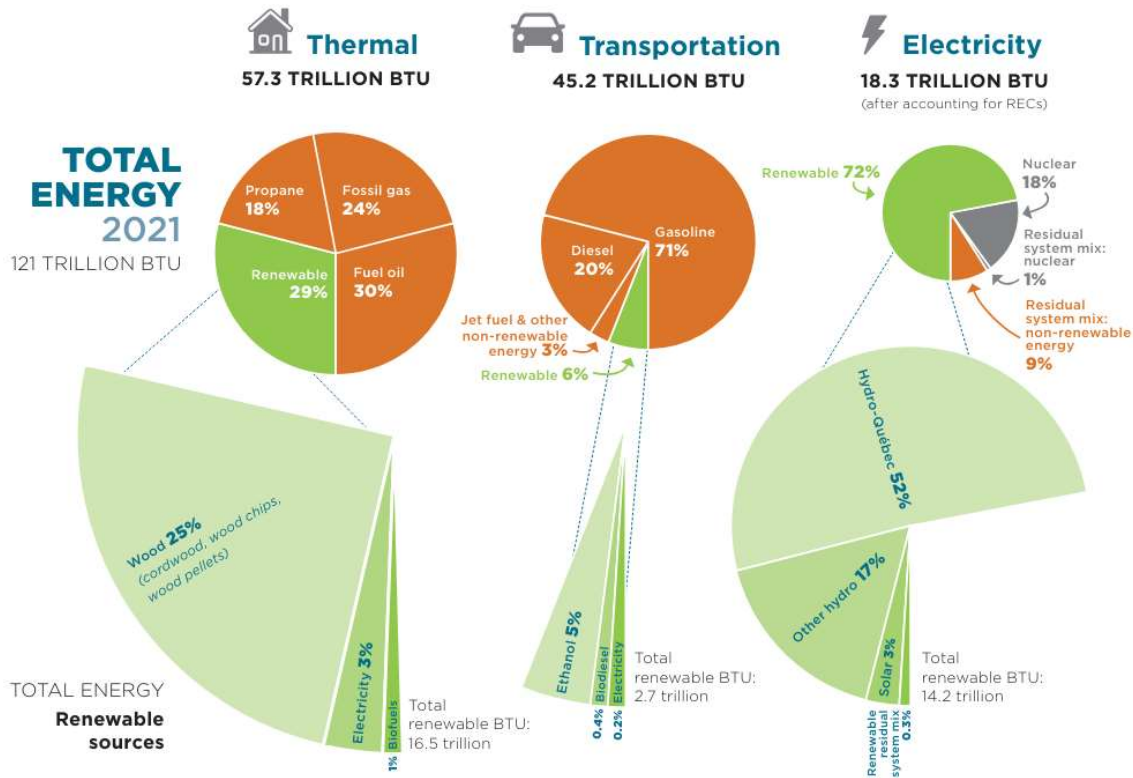
Although analyses of energy demand by fuel and sector are not available for Cabot, data generated for the State are illustrated below. These profiles are changing rapidly as state-level policies promote energy efficiency and the transition to renewable and carbon-free energy sources.

Through the 2022 Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan and legislation passed in 2024, Vermont has set the following goals:

- Total Energy: 90% of statewide energy needs are met by renewable sources by 2050.
- Transportation Sector: 10% of energy needs are met renewable energy by 2025, and 45% by 2040.

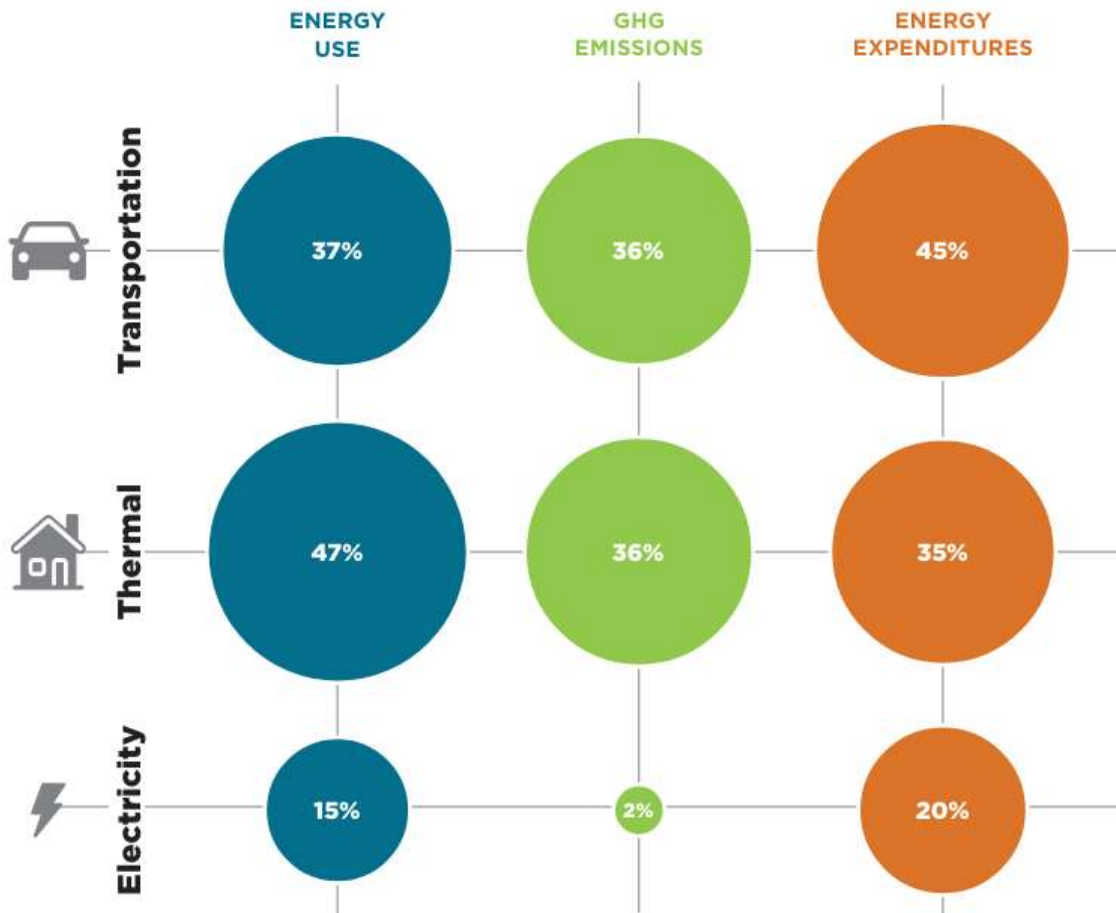
- Thermal Sector: 30% of energy needs are met by carbon-free resources by 2025, and 70% by 2042.
- Electricity Sector: 100% of energy needs are met by renewable resources by 2030 for Green Mountain Power, while Washington Electric has met this already.

Source: <https://publicservice.vermont.gov/document/2022-comprehensive-energy-plan>



Sources: Energy Information Administration, 2023; Efficiency Vermont, 2023; Vermont Department of Public Service, 2023; Vermont Department of Taxes, 2023; EAN, 2023.
Note: The electricity pie chart does not include electricity used for thermal and transportation purposes, as that electricity usage is shown in the respective thermal and transportation pie charts. Percentages may not sum exactly to 100% due to independent rounding. The electricity pie chart shows Vermont's electricity portfolio after accounting for RECs. One result of this is that wind and biomass generation do not show up as electricity resources, since RECs from those resources are primarily sold out of state.

Figure VI – 1: Vermont's Energy Mix (Source: Energy Action Network. Annual Progress Report for Vermont 2023. https://eanvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/EAN-APR-2023_Apr112024.pdf)



Sources: For 2021 energy use: Vermont Department of Taxes, 2023; EIA State Energy Data System (SEDS), 2023; Vermont Department of Public Service, 2021 Electric Utility Resource Survey. For 2020 GHG emissions: Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Vermont GHG Emissions Inventory and Forecast: 1990-2020, 2023. For energy expenditures: Efficiency Vermont, Vermont Energy Burden Report, 2023. **Note:** Energy use does not add up to 100% due to independent rounding. GHG emissions do not add up to 100% because only energy sectors are shown, which are responsible for 74% of VT's total emissions (26% of Vermont's GHG emissions come from non-energy sectors).

Figure VI-2: Vermont's Energy Consumption, GHG Emissions, and Expenditures by Category (Source: Energy Action Network. Annual Progress Report for Vermont 2023. https://eanvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/EAN-APR-2023_Apr112024.pdf)

Like most Vermont households, Cabot resident's largest energy uses are home heating (thermal), electricity, and transportation.

Home Heating: Estimates for primary home heating fuel are available for Cabot as shown in Table VI-1. Many households are dependent on propane or fuel oil, but the use of wood for home heating is much more common in Cabot than Washington County or Vermont as a whole. Wood offers advantages as a local resource, minimal greenhouse gas impact, and economic benefits (approximately 80% of each dollar spent on wood remains in the state compared to 20% for nonrenewable energy sources). Disadvantages are high particulate emissions, however newer wood burning technologies and stricter emissions standards may mitigate this impact. Cabot should encourage continued use of wood for home heating, but also encourage using the more efficient and clean-burning stoves n furnaces that are now available.

Electricity: Grid-connected Cabot residents along the Route 2 and Route 215 corridors receive electric service from Green Mountain Power Corporation (GMP) while the remainder are member/owners of the Washington Electric Cooperative (WEC). Both electricity providers are strong supporters of renewable energy sources including solar, large, and small scale hydroelectric, wind, and landfill methane. Given the availability of renewable and carbon-free electricity from our local utilities, cost-effective GHG emission reductions can be achieved through the electrification of fossil fuel-consuming energy uses such as space and water heating (via heat pumps) and transportation (via electric vehicles).

WEC is 100% reliant on renewable, Vermont-generated sources, primarily its methane-driven plant at the Coventry Landfill. That site, being the sole landfill for all of Vermont and accepting out-of-state trash, is controversial. The need to protect the water supply and recreational resource of Lake Memphremagog is impacting the landfill's operations but the methane supply should be present for a long time.

GMP, the largest utility in Vermont, has been aggressive in its efforts to develop stronger microgrids, to reduce the geographic spread of outages, and to increase individual self-sufficiency of its users via incentives for solar, back-up batteries, highly efficient heating systems and other appliances. The fuel mix for each utility is provided on the company websites (see Resources section).

Transportation: The rural character and decentralized settlement patterns of Central Vermont pose a difficulty in efforts to minimize the consumption of traditional fuels in the transportation sector. Like many rural communities, Cabot residents are heavily reliant on privately-owned motor vehicles for mobility. See the Land Use (Section V) and Transportation (Section VIII) sections for actions to reduce reliance on private motor vehicles.

Potential Local Energy Sources

Wood/Biomass. Forest and shrub land cover almost three-quarters of Cabot's total land area. The generation of heat from biomass is a strategy that will continue to benefit the Town. Cabot School's wood chip heating plant has had needed repairs completed and should return to replacing a significant proportion of heating oil in the 2024-25 heating season.

Solar. Solar energy is inexhaustible, does not emit greenhouse gases, and reduces reliance on foreign energy supplies. Passive solar (incorporating design principles into buildings to capture free heat and light) and active solar (thermal collectors and photovoltaics) should be encouraged in Cabot. Development review should encourage site and building design that maximizes passive heating and cooling.

Wind. Cabot probably does not have viable sites for industrial scale wind generation (generally at elevations between 2,500 and 3,500 feet). Small scale wind turbine technology is a viable option for private individuals or groups of individuals. State law restricts the regulation through zoning of turbines with blades less than 20 feet in diameter, and small-

scale turbines that return energy to the power grid are exempt from local bylaws and are instead reviewed by the Public Utilities Commission under Section 248.

Geothermal Heat. Geothermal energy is the use of the Earth’s near constant temperature (45—58 degrees F) a few feet below the surface for heating and cooling applications, often using ground source heat pumps. The two types of geothermal systems with potential for use in Vermont are open loop systems using a water well and closed loop systems using underground or underwater pipes. Suitable applications are site specific.

Biofuels. Biofuels are renewable, agriculturally derived liquid fuels. Some varieties of plants with high oil or cellulose content including corn, sunflower, canola, soy and hemp can be employed to produce biodiesel, ethanol, and even straight vegetable oils that can be used to run vehicles and heat buildings, Biofuels could be produced in Cabot, and doing so could help keep money circulating in the community, create jobs and sustain local agriculture, while helping to avoid the external costs associated with fossil fuels. However, it may also take farmland out of food production and some question the energy *inputs* that processing requires.

C. Planning Considerations for Energy Sustainability

Cabot should make investments in energy efficiency for low cost, immediate economic and environmental benefits and explore renewable energy options for energy consumption.

Buildings and Structures

Cabot should support residents in improving the energy efficiency of their homes and businesses, both existing and new construction. Such investments will reduce the percent of income residents spend on energy, per capita energy consumption and environmental degradation.

Cabot should also make energy efficiency investments in town-owned facilities. In 2024, the Willey Building Committee applied for a large municipal energy grant, to make major improvements to the Willey Building, and the Wastewater Treatment Facility, to reduce the heating and electrical usage of the buildings. If a grant is awarded, the funds will support adding solar panels to the Willey Building. If battery backup is added as well, the Willey Building can become an energy-independent charging center when extended power outages occur in town.

Transportation and Settlement Patterns

Cabot should support actions that reduce reliance on motor fuels such as improved access to, and increased use of, alternative and public transportation and increased use of electric vehicles. A public EV charging station, added in 2022, is a popular addition to the parking area by the Willey Building. Options such as bus, vanpooling, ridesharing and bicycling will decrease energy consumption (See Section VIII Transportation.)

Cabot gained and recently renewed its village center designation and updated its village zoning standards to allow more dense housing. The state has mandated a density of five

dwelling units per acre, where public water supply and wastewater treatment is available. That's Cabot village. The activity of business owners, Cabot Community Association and Cabot Arts has been supporting the vitality of the village, to help reduce travel between employment opportunities, housing, entertainment and social services, the expansion of broadband access, and increased use of local goods and services (See Section V Land Use).

Neighbors in Action supported a Cabot Food Hub, created via efforts by the Cabot Community Association. Intended to provide an option for ordering local agricultural products online with a Saturday morning pick-up, the enterprise needs steady support and promotion, to help both the local growers and consumers have ready access to the local products. The Hub lasted for three summers but didn't have enough use to be sustained.

Resources

Statewide energy use data: Energy Action Network. https://eanvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/EAN-APR-2023_Apr112024.pdf

Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan 2022: <https://publicservice.vermont.gov/about-us/plans-and-reports/department-state-plans/2022-plan>

Town Energy Plan guide. <https://vnrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Energy-Planning-Implementation-Guidebook.pdf>

Vermont Renewable Energy Resource Center. <http://www.rerc-vt.org/>

Efficiency Vermont (<https://www.encyvermont.com/>)

Green Mountain Power. <https://greenmountainpower.com/energy-mix/>

Washington Electric Cooperative. <https://www.washingtonelectric.coop/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/2024-Power-Source-Chart.pdf>

Vermont Energy Atlas. <http://www.vtenergyatlas.com/>

D. Goals and Implementation Strategies

Goal	Implementation Strategy	Key Implementer(s)	Future Measures of Progress
<p>VI.1 Create a standing Energy Committee to develop and implement energy strategies to improve energy efficiency, conservation, and individual and community self-sufficiency.</p>	<p>VI.1(a) Authorize a Cabot Energy Committee, to include our Energy Coordinator. Use existing means of communication (e.g., Cabot Chronicle, e-mail list, Front Porch Forum) to recruit members.</p>	<p>Planning Commission, Select Board</p>	<p>Energy Committee formed</p>
<p>VI.2 Increase awareness of local energy conservation resources.</p>	<p>VI.2(a) Provide information on the town website to residents, including farmers, on energy conservation resources and services.</p> <p>VI.2(b) Explore the practicalities of establishing a Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program in Cabot.</p> <p>VI.2(c) Involve local students in projects .</p>	<p>Energy Committee</p> <p>Selectboard/Energy Committee/CCIF</p>	<p>Communications created</p> <p>Decision made on whether to establish PACE Program</p>

Goal	Implementation Strategy	Key Implementer(s)	Future Measures of Progress
		Energy Committee/local teachers	Projects with local students developed
VI.3 Promote energy conservation measures in new construction and enhance on-site renewable energy generation opportunities.	VI.3(a) Provide printed information on energy conservation measures and the benefits of third-party certification and audits for Cabot residents and businesses.	Energy Committee/Zoning Administrator	Monitor number of new structures that have been third party-certified for energy efficiency (e.g., Efficiency Vermont)
VI.4 Promote energy conservation in existing buildings.	VI.4(a) Post information on available energy efficiency & weatherization services at Town Clerks office and Town web site.	Energy Committee	Postings
VI.5 Promote access to a regional transportation network (carpool, van pool access, local bus link)	VI.5(a) Maintain the park & ride lot at Neighbors in Action. VI.5(b) Follow up with GMTA on possibility of	Energy Committee Planning Commission	P&R lot created Increased use of public transportation

Goal	Implementation Strategy	Key Implementer(s)	Future Measures of Progress
<p>other local products and services to reduce energy usage.</p>	<p>existing Farm-to-School lunch program.</p> <p>VI.7(b) Use more locally produced wood chips than oil in the heating plant at Cabot School.</p> <p>VI.7(c) Provide steady support and promotion of the Cabot Food Hub</p>	<p>Cabot School</p> <p>NIA, CCA, Cabot Chronicle</p>	<p>produce for lunch program</p> <p>Greater percentage of wood chips than fuel oil used</p> <p>The Hub returns, grows and thrives</p>

VII. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A. Introduction

A “Healthy Economy” was indicated by residents as the number one factor for economic development. Economic health at the local level can be greatly affected by various factors beyond business vitality, including how a community plans for infrastructure improvements, how it invests in public and recreational spaces, and how it retains the unique scenic and historical features that create a distinct sense of place. These factors can impact Cabot’s ability to retain and sustain existing businesses as well as attract new ones.

Downtown development is a Vermont goal to encourage public and private investment in infrastructure, housing, historic preservation, transportation, and human services in historically settled areas to support an economically strong downtown. Cabot benefits from a compact, historic village center that is home to a mix of businesses.

Cabot also has several productive home-based businesses which rely on the public road infrastructure to both get their goods to markets and allow customers to visit their place of business.

Whether and how to promote economic growth was a pivotal question during Cabot’s Visioning Meeting in 2012. Maintaining a vibrant village center that enables residents and visitors to access essential services and businesses locally, was determined to be a key goal, to maintain a healthy local economy. Cabot moved forward to develop a Village Revitalization Plan (at <https://www.cabotvermont.org/economic-development-workgroup/>) as a guidance document, and has implemented many of the recommended steps. With public water and wastewater treatment available, as well as fiber optic cable, the village is the place in town best suited for new development. There has been an increase in new businesses and activity in the last decade, but the challenge is to maintain them in the face of floods and low traffic.

Cabot’s efforts at maintaining and improving community vitality are notable for the Town’s resilience and persistence. Local leadership makes this possible. The Town has a strong leadership cadre and volunteer ethic that includes the Selectboard, municipal committees and a variety of partners, including the Cabot Community Association, Cabot Community Theater, Cabot Arts as well as businesses such as The Den, the Village Store, Cabot Creamery, and others. Special care should be taken to ensure this local leadership remains intact and vibrant. This can include regular acknowledgment of the contributions of these partners and well as continuing to encourage other businesses (including new arrivals) to participate in these efforts.

Cabot’s continuing vitality depends on its ability to attract visitors - including tourists and prospective residents and investors. Events such as concerts, parades and festivals are an important part Cabot’s attractiveness. In its economic development efforts, the Town and its partner organizations should seek to maintain and expand its events calendar, while ensuring that policies are in place to accommodate visitors, such as adequate parking and limited

hours, in ways that enhance the quality of these experiences for residents and local businesses as well as new visitors.

The 2020 Decennial Census prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau shows an estimated population of 1,443 and 756 housing units, an increase of 10 people in 10 years and fewer housing units. After 40 years of sharp growth from 1970 to 2010, Cabot's population growth has slowed since 2010 but is still expected to gradually increase.

Growth in Cabot represents both opportunities and challenges. The goal of the Town Plan is to guide growth in a way that supports a healthy and vibrant local quality of life.

B. Existing Conditions and New Initiatives

Existing Businesses/Employers

Cabot's largest employer, the Cabot Creamery, founded in 1919. It joined the Agri-Mark Cooperative in 1992. Approximately 1,100 dairy farm families in New England and New York supply Agri-Mark, which markets 40% of the milk in New England.

The Cabot plant generally has 250 workers on campus at a time, working three shifts, 7 % of whom are Cabot residents. The best-known product is cheddar cheese which has won many national and international awards. Much of the cheese is aged in the Cabot warehouse and wrapped in the packing plant.

The combination of Agri-Mark's financial stability and Cabot's brand has worked well for both companies. Within two years, the company expanded acquiring the cheddar cheese facility (formerly owned by Kraft) in Middlebury, Vermont, and in 2000, some of the administrative and marketing was moved from Cabot to Montpelier. In 2003, Agri-Mark acquired a third cheese production facility in Chateaugay, New York, and in the following year a new distribution center opened in Montpelier, close to I-89. This alleviated much of the large truck traffic in and out of Cabot village, one source of irritation and concern of townspeople. In 2014, the Creamery's administrative and marketing was moved from Montpelier to Waitsfield. Since 1992, the Cabot Cheese Farmers' Store has operated along Rte. 100 just south of Stowe, Vermont and provided a popular tourist stop for thousands of travelers each year. In 2024, they opened a store in Hardwick.

The remoteness of Cabot and the original plant facility was offset by the popular Visitor's Center that brought people from all over the nation and often foreign countries there. The Food Safety and Modernization Act, which in part restricts access to food manufacturing areas, brought an end to the Visitor's Center in 2020. The plant remains an important factor in the village. Many generations of Cabot citizens have served the company and owe their livelihoods to the little creamery that's become a giant in the cheese-making industry. Many respondents to the 2024 survey said they hope the Cabot Visitors Center store returns to Cabot.

Cabot's smaller retail businesses include a general store, a hardware store, an auto repair business, professional offices, and a restaurant in the village. Additionally, prepared food is

available at both the Cabot Village Store and Harry's Hardware, with food trucks adding to dining out options regularly.

Home-based businesses include skilled tradesmen, landscaping and garden suppliers, artisans, crafts people, a bed and breakfast, several building trades contractors, several day care centers and summer camps. There has been growth in Rhapsody, a value-added soy foods manufacturer with international acclaim.

The Cabot School is the second largest employer in town, with about 50 full and part time people, including teaching, administrative, maintenance, and food service staff. A uniquely small K-12th grade school, with 165 students in 2024, it is the largest draw for young families to move to Cabot. Despite the challenges of retaining a small school, many voters continue to support the school as a key feature in attracting new younger residents, and for maintaining a vibrant community and active village center.

Agriculture

Cabot residents have ranked farms and farming as an important community issue, including the development of value-added agriculture and farm-based businesses. Agriculture has been identified as a critical component of a sustainable economy, not only in Cabot but state-wide. The state's historical agrarian base, the recognition of the Vermont brand as a mark of quality, and Vermont's proximity to over 38 million consumers within a 200-mile radius have been identified as factors which support the growth of agriculture as a driving force in the State's economic development plan.

When asked to help the Cabot Planning Commission prioritize planning issues, respondents to the 2010 Community Planning Survey ranked retention of farms as the number one issue. In keeping with Cabot's agricultural roots, many businesses have strong ties to the land. There are a range of agricultural operations in Cabot, from dairy farms to horticultural operations. Maple syrup is also an agricultural staple, with approximately 12 sugaring operations in Town.

In February of 2011, surveys were sent to approximately 30 farm businesses in Town. Questions were asked regarding the amount of land the farmers owned or leased, what kinds of products they produced, and whether they perceived any obstacles in the form of land use regulations to their farming business. Of the 30 farmers sent surveys, 13 completed surveys were returned. Of those who responded, a majority (8) farmed on 100 acres or more, 6 producing dairy products. Other products included Maple syrup, poultry, beef, fruits, vegetables, animal feed and forest products. A majority (11) sold their products directly from the farm, and only one respondent sold goods at a farmers' market. There were none which sold goods through community supported agriculture (CSA).

Cabot has gained several new diversified farms in the last decade. The Economic Development Workgroup gained funds to initiate an online food hub, which then grew into the Cabot Food Hub administered via the Neighbors in Action in the former Mason's Building on Main Street. Vendors post their products and update them weekly. Buyers order by Thursday and pick up on Saturday morning.

Center for an Agricultural Economy

The Hardwick-based Center for an Agricultural Economy and its offshoot, the Vermont Food Venture Center (VFVC), are valuable nearby resources that are supportive of agricultural businesses. The VFVC is a shared-use kitchen incubator for value-added and specialty food producers who can rent the kitchen on an hourly basis or arrange for co-packing at the facility, which is undergoing a major expansion. The Center's staff provides food and agricultural business consulting services to aspiring entrepreneurs, existing food businesses and organizations looking to promote food businesses as an economic development tool. The mission of VFVC is "to provide professional food processing opportunities to regional agricultural producers in a way that increases the value of that agricultural production, adds living wage jobs, strengthens Vermont's local food network, and further integrates the agricultural economy into the life of the Hardwick community."

New Farmer Projects

Another valuable program is the New Farmer Project that is run by the University of Vermont Extension. The program offers many informational classes and resources for starting farmers, including how to start a business. It also provides a connection between landowners and farmers. The website for the project, <http://www.uvm.edu/newfarmer/>, has information on farming jobs, funding opportunities, and includes the comprehensive "Resource Guide for Vermont's New and Aspiring Farmers."

Other sources of assistance may be accessed via Vermont's Sustainable Jobs Fund, Vermont's Housing and Conservation Program (particularly the Farm Viability Program) and the Vermont Land Trust.

Tourism

Cabot's rural setting, working farms, historic sites, and recreational resources are attractions that have the potential to bring more tourists to the area to support the local economy (See also Historic Resources section)

It is unfortunate that the town has lost the Cabot Creamery's Visitor's Center, which drew a steady stream of tourists to the village. Anything Cabot can do to help the Creamery bring back the tours would be a major help to economic vitality.

Cabot has approximately 28 miles of snowmobile trails that are part of the Vermont Association of Snowmobile Travelers (VAST) statewide network. A main corridor of this network intersects with Cabot's downtown Main Street. The 157 snowmobile clubs in Vermont have 27,000 members. Cabot Skylighters is the local snowmobile club. The Den at Harry's Hardware and the Village Store are located on a trail and create a regular stop. The loss of gas pumps in the village is another loss in drawing other spending in the village.

Connection to the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, the annual Ride the Ridges biking event and Molly's Falls State Park are new additions to town outdoor recreational opportunities. There is also a winter trail system and ice rink on the common, maintained by Cabot's volunteer Cabot Trails Committee. Portions of the trails are available for hiking all year. The trails,

most of which are located on private property through access agreements with the property owners, and events, are bringing economic activity to the town.

Local activities, such as the 4th of July parade, the Apple Pie Festival, and the Cabot Fall Foliage Festival are important annual events. New music and art events organized by Cabot Arts and via The Den are attracting visitors to town from all over the region. The Cabot Arts and Music Festival in July attracts between 400-600 people to the Village. The Cheese and Culture Festival in September attracts over 1000 people to Cabot. The Cabot Village 12th Night Celebration attracts 200 people and brightens the winter. Ongoing monthly music events attract upwards of 1000 people annually. The monthly Arts Show and Tell, and the Art Barn are attracting a range of artists. The village Art Gallery was an attraction as well, with Sandy Ducharme's Rug Hooking Studio bringing enthusiasts from long distances. It's unfortunate that the July 2023 flood has ended the use of that village building for the arts. All these activities contribute to the local economy, bringing people and economic activity to town.

Recreation

Recreational opportunities are a draw for visitors and new residents. Cabot has a long-standing Recreation Committee that helps maintain the recreation field and facilities. With a desire to create a trails network and Selectboard support, the CCA recruited a Trails Committee which has established a large network in the last five years, with more coming. The Talbert Trails and McQueeney Trails were the first locally created. Maps are provided, with color-coding to show length and difficulty.

Cabot shares a significant and gorgeous section of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, maintained by VTrans and VAST. The most recent addition is a re-opened, wooded trail (former road) connecting the historic 1790's Old Town Center (with markers for features such as the cemetery, stocks and animal pound) with the Willey Building in the village. The entire Cabot School worked on installing a poetry trail with 16 stations and QR codes to listen to the authors read their poems. The Trails Committee maintains an active Facebook page.

Economic Development Programs and Resources for Support

Below are a few key community resources for community economic planning and support in Cabot. Along with state programs, such as the Municipal Planning Grants and the Building Better Places, there are also many non-profit organizations and foundations that provide grants for projects related to economic development, such as the Vermont Community Foundation and Preservation Trust of Vermont. Sources of funding specifically for infrastructure improvements, such as bike and pedestrian paths, are discussed in the Transportation section of this Plan. Most funding sources require that the proposed project is consistent with the adopted Town Plan.

Small Business Administration/ Vermont Small Business Development Center

The Vermont Small Business Development Center supports new business creation and existing small business growth and maintenance through no-cost confidential advisement,

training, financial analysis tools, and strategic assessment. It also offers training for entrepreneurs to plan for sustainable, value-added agriculture businesses.

Cabot's Village Center Designation

Renewed in 2023, the goal of Cabot's Village Center Designation by the State is to support local public and private efforts to keep the village center vibrant. Directly after the renewal the village was hit hard in the July 10, 2024 flood, which has the community working hard to mitigate future impacts. The state program is based on the recognition that economically strong downtowns are critical to the health and well-being of Vermont's communities. The program recognizes the need for assistance to municipalities for downtown transportation infrastructure, including parking facilities, sidewalk expansion, lighting, and EV vehicle chargers.

Benefits of program participation include various tax credits for owners of commercial and residential rental property to assist with rehabilitation and code improvements for older and historic buildings located within the designated center. Government and religious buildings, as well as single-family residences are not eligible for the credits. However, applicants who are otherwise eligible for the credit, but do not have the tax liability to use a tax credit can sell the credit to a bank in exchange for cash.

Cabot Community Investment Fund (CCIF)

This fund has been an important financial resource since 1988, originating from an Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) given to the Creamery and then paid back to the town. As a locally controlled source of funds, the Cabot Community Investment Fund (CCIF) can be more flexible than outside funding sources. It is overseen by the CCIF Committee, with appointments by the Selectboard and School Board, and guided by a plan.

The purpose of the Cabot UDAG Plan is to provide financial resources through fair and consistent processes to local individuals and groups for activities and projects that serve to strengthen the economic, cultural, educational, environmental, and social well-being of the Cabot community. In 2022 the fund was put on temporary hiatus, to build the balance back up through careful investment.

Over time, the fund has assisted via grants to community groups, including the municipal wastewater system, the Willey Building, Cabot Commons Senior Residence, the Masonic Hall, and Cabot School, as approved by the Town Meeting. Many residents have received educational scholarships from it for higher education.

C. Planning Considerations

New Businesses

The Cabot Community Planning Survey conducted in June 2024 asked residents what new businesses were needed in town. Over 25 percent of respondents indicated that an eatery of some type was needed in Town. About 10% said they'd like gas pumps back in the village.

Village Parking

The policy for parking around the Willey Building was revised in 2022 to clarify its public use for visitors to the village, which allowed for the zoning regulations to be revised to relax requirements for new village uses. There remains a need to address parking for the multiple major village events now occurring which attract crowds. Cabot also lost its designated “park n ride lot” at the Mason’s Building when that was purchased by Neighbors in Action. A parking plan to address those needs, which incorporates and encourages multimodal forms of transportation, would help within the Village Center district.

Community and Economic Development Coordination

In early 2011, the Cabot Coalition facilitated meetings of community organizations to explore ways to collaborate and share information. At these meetings, interest was expressed in forming a committee to formulate a community and economic development plan and identify strategies and initiatives to create a more vibrant, healthy, and sustainable community that fosters a strong local economy. The Cabot Coalition, since re-named the Cabot Community Association (CCA), was identified as the lead in this effort, since it was a long-established community organization, had a centralized office, and publishes the Cabot Chronicle.

Since this time, the CCA produced the Cabot Village Center plan with the help of a consultant and community input, supported the creation of Cabot Arts, Cabot Mentoring, Neighbors in Action, and the Cabot Economic Development Workgroup (EDWG). That group worked through the removal of the blighted building at 3065 Main St (finally completed by a private benefactor), re-activated communication with the Cabot Creamery, created the Cabot Food Hub. The EDWG is in recess now, due to the work being implemented by a range of other entities. The CCA’s major 2023 accomplishment was creating a childcare facility in the church basement, to meet a particular local economic development need.

Managing Growth

By regulating residential growth in agricultural areas, population growth has a greater potential to benefit the local economy. Channeling growth to the village center areas and creating better connections between residential, recreational, civic, and commercial uses enables population growth while retaining farmland and open space. Living in the “downtown” village center will be more appealing if the Town invests in public spaces, including landscaping in public rights of way, safe routes for walking and biking, and well-situated parking areas (including bike parking) for those visiting the downtown areas.

Other Challenges

Cabot was hit hard by the July 10, 2023 flood, devastating the village businesses, the Willey Building, and completely cutting off several roads. The Selectboard supported significant volunteer efforts, Neighbors in Action provided free meals to flood victims and volunteers and Cabot stitched itself back together quickly. The ongoing recovery effort will take years

and consumes a huge amount of energy. The Selectboard created a Flood Task Force which has actively and successfully sought NGO, state, and federal government support.

D. Goals and Implementation Strategies

Since the 2017 Town Plan, Cabot has accomplished the following:

- The CCA created an Economic Development Working Group which developed a Village Revitalization Plan to promote business in the village
- The CCA provides grants annually to village property owners to purchase flowers, to keep the village attractive
- Village Center designation was sought from the state, approved, and then renewed in 2023 until 2028

The town will promote the following strategies to implement economic development objectives for the next 8 years.

Goal	Implementation Strategy	Key implementer(s)	Future Measures of Progress
<p>VII.1 Create and promote economic opportunities for businesses and other organizations to succeed. Maintain Village Center designation</p>	<p>VII.1(a) Continue to maintain the goals of the Village Revitalization Plan, and renew the designation as needed</p>	<p>Cabot Community Association, Planning Commission, CCIF</p>	<p>More sustained village businesses</p>
<p>VII.2 Provide adequate parking solutions for large events in the village center and encourage bike and pedestrian networks.</p>	<p>VII.2(a) Create a Village Parking Plan that addresses pedestrian access, parking, and traffic calming infrastructure in the village center to provide for increased connectivity between residential uses,</p>	<p>Planning Commission Selectboard Cabot Community Association, Highway, village residents and businesses</p>	<p>Village Parking Plan is developed and implemented</p>

Goal	Implementation Strategy	Key implementer(s)	Future Measures of Progress
	public parking areas and commercial, civic, and recreational uses during large events.		
VII.3 Improve the physical attractiveness of the village center business district and preserve the Town green/common as the visual centerpiece of community life.	VII.3(a) Addressed in Village Vitalization Plan and supported via annual grants.	CCA	Attractive village maintained and enhanced
VII.4 Capitalize on Town’s scenic, recreational, and historic resources to draw new customers to local businesses.	<p>VII.4(a) Maintain and expand four-season trail system that connects to village center and public parking areas through the creation of a master plan and supported through grant funds.</p> <p>VII.4(b) Identify locations for bicycle routes throughout Town, undertake infrastructure improvements to improve safety, and create a bike</p>	<p>Trails Committee/Recreation Committee</p> <p>Trails Committee/ Recreation Committee/</p>	<p>Expanded and broadly used trails system</p> <p>Bicycle routes mapped and bike racks installed in village center, recreation field and Neighbors in Action</p>

Goal	Implementation Strategy	Key implementer(s)	Future Measures of Progress
	<p>parking area in village center.</p> <p>VII.4(c) Create a printed, self-guided walking/biking tour of historic resources.</p>	<p>Recreation Committee/ Historical Society</p>	<p>Walking/biking tour of historic resources created.</p>
<p>VII.5 Support working farms and agri-based businesses</p>	<p>See Land Use section for multiple strategies designed to achieve this goal. Help connect farmers to supporting resources and help with marketing options.</p>	<p>Planning Commission/CCA</p>	<p>Number of farms and agri-businesses continues to grow.</p> <p>Number of agri-based businesses grow</p>
<p>VI.10 Promote consumption of local food and other local products and services to reduce energy usage.</p>	<p>VI.10(a) Ensure that funding continues for existing Farm-to-School lunch program.</p>	<p>Cabot School/Selectboard</p>	<p>School continues to use local produce for lunch program</p>

VIII. TRANSPORTATION

A. Introduction

The transportation infrastructure in Cabot is assessed regarding the adequacy of the roadways for handling vehicle traffic, and for its ability to provide for other modes of travel, including pedestrian and bicycle routes. Well-maintained routes, serving motor vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians are important to establish connections between the rural areas of Town and the Village Center. Also important are connections of local roads to the principle arterial road, U.S. Route 2 and VT Route 15, which provides for interregional travel needs.

Good transportation routes have a bearing on the local economy. Local retail business owners depend on well-maintained routes, as well as adequate parking areas, to attract business. The local agricultural industry is also dependent on a good road system, since farmers depend on them to get their products to markets -- or allow customers access to their farm.

A well-planned multi-modal transportation infrastructure that provides connections to alternative transportation options, such as ride-share programs and public transportation, encourages a reduction in the number of single-occupant vehicle trips, having a positive impact on energy conservation and creating more bicycle- and pedestrian- friendly roadways.

Finally, a safe pedestrian infrastructure is particularly vital in the village area of Cabot, where it makes sense to walk rather than drive from home or place of business to schools, recreational facilities, stores, post office and Town Hall.

B. Existing Conditions

Existing Road System

Cabot has approximately 64.78 linear miles of public roadways, 18 miles paved and approximately 46.19 gravel surfaced roadway. The Town is responsible for the maintenance of approximately 58.22 miles of roadway.

The amount of road in each of four classifications is listed in Table VIII – 1 below.

Route 215 is the main north-south corridor in Town, extending from the Town of Walden in the north to the Town of Marshfield in the south. It is “Main Street” when it passes through the Cabot Village and is also the main thoroughfare passing through Lower Cabot. The speed limit on Route 215 ranges from 25 M.P.H. in Cabot Village to 50 M.P.H. north and south of the main village area.

Much of U.S. Route 2 in Cabot is scenic, providing long views of forested areas, cultivated fields, and pastureland. The land adjacent to Route 2 in Cabot is sparsely developed, and all the land is zoned either “Low Density Residential and Agricultural” or “Shoreland”.

Plans for the widening and repaving of the stretch of Route 2 that lies in Cabot have been completed by VTrans and work has recently begun, the first phase is complete the final two sections are in process and a completion date has not been determined.

Table VIII – 1: Existing Road System

Road Class	Road names	Condition	Linear Miles
State/Federal Highways	U.S. Route 2	paved	6.2
	Route 232	paved	0.4
	TOTAL		6.6
Class 2 Highways	State Aid Hwy #1 (Route 215)	paved	6.8
	State Aid Hwy #2 (South Walden Rd)	paved	3.9
	State Aid Hwy #3 (West Hill Pond Rd/ Cabot Rd)	gravel	2.9
	State Aid Hwy #4 (Danville Hill Rd)	gravel	3.5
	TOTAL		17.1
Class 3 Highways	Various roads	gravel	
	TOTAL		41.2
Class 4 Highways and Trails	Various roads	varies	7.4
	Legal trails	varies	4.5
	TOTAL		11.9

Following the July 2023 flood, which severely eroded culverts and bridges on Blodgett, Jug Brook, Menard and Mack Mountain roads in Cabot, the town is continuing work on culvert replacements to meet new state standards required by FEMA. An inventory of culverts was completed in 2013. Culverts are being inspected, upgraded, and added as necessary to ensure that erosion problems are minimized. Act 64 the states clean water act will provide a new range of challenges to the Town, implementation of new permit requirements, revisions in road standards and alterations in best practices from driveway connections to Town infrastructure to sizing of culverts to allow for stormwater passage. Changes at the local

level in how stormwater should be managed, diversion and filtration rather than the traditional ditch and carry it, will impact how resilient our infrastructure can be. Best management practices are already altering how our infrastructure rebounds from more frequent and intense storms.

Classes of Town Highways

Class 2 Town highways are primarily the responsibility of the Town. The state is responsible for center line pavement markings if the Town notifies the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) of the need to replace them. Any designation of a highway as a Class 2 must be approved by VTrans.

Class 3 Town highways are the responsibility of the Town. The minimum standard for class 3 highway is a roadway that is passable under normal conditions year-round, including maintenance of sufficient surface and base, adequate drainage, and sufficient width to provide winter maintenance. If a class 3 highway is not maintained to this standard, it may be deemed “Not Up to Standard” and subject to removal of state aid for the affected road mileage.

Class 4 Town highways include pent roads (public roads that may be gated by permission of the governing body). The Town’s responsibility for these roads is limited to maintenance of drainage structures (bridges and culverts). Legal trails, designated through legal proceedings, are not Class 4 town highways.

Residents can petition the Town to request that a road be reclassified. The Town’s governing body may also act on its own motion without a petition. Before acting on reclassification, a hearing must be held on the proposal, and a decision should be made by the governing body within 60 days after the hearing. The Town has developed a class four road policy for management and is developing new driveway standards.

Existing Pedestrian Facilities

In Cabot Village, a sidewalk extends on the northwest side of Main Street (Rt. 215 North) from the Masonic Hall to just before the intersection of Main Street with Elm Street. On the southeast side of Main Street, a second sidewalk with crosswalk exists in front of the Willey Building extending to the rear accessible entryway. Two crosswalks are identified in the upper portion of Main Street by the school with signs and pavement markings, and a fourth crosswalk is marked in front of the Cabot Creamery. Extension of the walking trails thru a shared bicycle – walking trail to the lower recreation field south of Main Street is planned, as is replacement of the sidewalk from the Masonic Hall to the upper recreation field at the North end of the Village.

Public Transportation

The Green Mountain Transit Agency and Rural Community Transportation, Inc. currently provides weekday commuter service along Route 2 from St. Johnsbury to Montpelier with regular stops in Danville, Marshfield, Plainfield, and East Montpelier. Busses will stop for passengers in other locations when it is safe to do so. There are currently no scheduled

stops on Route 2 in Cabot, the two closest stops being the Danville Park & Ride and the Old Schoolhouse Common in Marshfield.

Commuting

Cabot has developed a Park and Ride at Neighbors in Action on Main Street, usage by residents for carpooling is encouraged, this lot also provides additional parking in the village area of Town and overflow parking for community and school activities. Table VIII – 2 below shows recent five-year estimates for vehicle use, carpooling and use of public transportation by working Cabot residents, as compared to workers throughout Washington County. Possible exploration on a second Park and Ride location outside of the Village on Route 2 along the route 2 commuter route is being explored.

Many Cabot workers (64%) drove alone to work in the 2020 Census. That figure county-wide was 71.4%. The Census Bureau’s 5-year estimates indicate that a sizable percentage of Cabot workers – about 22% - walk to work or work at home and another 18% are carpooling or taking public transportation. County-wide, those categories are less than Cabot’s commuting practices. Everywhere, the COVID pandemic has altered workplace requirements so that more people will be working, at least part-time, at home in the future.

Table VIII – 2: Commuting to Work

	Cabot		Washington County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Workers 16 years and over	762	100%	30,981	100%
Car, truck, or van -- drove alone	486	64.%	22,067	71.4%
Car, truck, or van -- carpooled	105	14%	2,145	6.9%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	3	0.4%	249	0.8%
Walked	34	4.5%	1,267	4.1%
Other means	0	0.0%	258	0.8%
Worked at home	134	17.6%	4,920	15.9%
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	33.0	---	23.4	---

Source: 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Recreational trail system

Cabot has added a Trails Committee in recent years, which has been successful in obtaining state grants to expand the town’s recreational trail system for use by non-motorized travel (e.g., snowshoers, cross country skiers, hikers) by agreement with private property owners. The trail system provides access to scenic resources and open space as well as a connection to the center of Town. The “Old Center Loop” is a four-season trail which starts and ends behind the Willey building, and extends up to Old Center Road, and added poetry stations created by Cabot School in 2024. A portion of this loop which extends along Glinka Road is also a VAST (Vermont Association of Snow Travelers) trail and permits snow machines. This loop connects to a trail system extending to Dubray Road. The McSweeney trails and

Talbot trails are two newer networks. There is also a winter trail system located in the western section of Town extending from Beaver Brook Farm to Woodbury Road. The Lamoille Rail Trail system is now completed, from St. Johnsbury to St. Albans, with a popular and scenic portion of this trail passing thru the northeastern portion of Cabot near Joes Pond (See Recreation Section of Plan for more information). In addition to its recreational value, the trail system, particularly the section that provides connection to the center of Town, has the potential to increase local economic activity. Signage at trailheads and brochures available online provide maps and more information.

Signage

Cabot has participated in the High-Risk Rural Roads program for new signage on Vermont 215 from the Marshfield Town line to Walden, new signage was installed in 2017 under this program. A signage policy for development and placement of informational and highway signs is under consideration with recent revisions to the Towns Traffic ordinance and requirements for signage maintenance programs. Radar control speed signs have also been installed within the village along 215.

Existing Policy, Programs, Resources and Funding

Local Regulations

The Town has adopted road and bridge standards pertaining to the construction of all new roads in Town, even if the road is not proposed to be conveyed to the Town. These standards specify the surface and drainage requirements and erosion control measures required during road construction. The standards do not currently specify road width or other design standards.

Existing local regulations pertaining to use of town highways include the requirement for loggers to pay a \$500 refundable deposit for a log landing within the public right-of-way, to cover any road damage caused by truck and equipment traffic. In addition, permits are required for the construction of new driveways.

State Policies

The State of Vermont in 2012 authorized “Complete Streets” legislation to ensure that the needs of all users of Vermont’s transportation system—including motorists, bicyclists, public transportation users, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities—are considered in all state and municipally managed transportation projects and project phases, including planning, development, construction, and maintenance, except in the case of projects or project components involving unpaved highways. These “complete streets” principles shall be integral to the transportation policy of Vermont. A wide variety of grant programs such as “the Bicycle and Pedestrian Program, Transportation alternatives and Safe routes to School” are funded to help fulfill these objectives.

The Clean Water Act, (Act 64) passed in 2014, will have a direct impact on transportation infrastructure. Towns will be required to develop erosion control and stormwater plans for their highway system. New State permits will be required for municipalities and phased in over the next 2-3 years. The state will be providing regional planning with funding to help

support municipalities in development and implement these plans and provide required technical assistance.

Funding Sources

A source of funding available specifically for trails systems is the Recreation Trails Program (RTP), a federal assistance program of the Federal Highway Administration that provides funding for the development and maintenance of recreation trails, trailside amenities, and trailhead facilities. Both motorized and non-motorized trail projects may qualify for assistance. The program is administered at the state level through the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation, in cooperation with the VTrans.

Municipal Planning Grants are also available to fund a variety of projects, including capital improvement plans for transportation. The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission offers assistance to communities like Cabot seeking grant funds for transportation infrastructure improvements.

State Programs

VTRANS administers and supports a wide range of Highway Grants and programs including planning grants for project development design and construction.

These programs include Better Roads Grants, Class 2 paving grants, Structures grants and others previously listed in this section.

State Aid for Town Highways

State aid to town highways is based on the mileage of Class 1, 2 and 3 Town highways. The state appropriation is apportioned among the different classes of roads, with 6% going to Class 1 roads, 44% going to Class 2 roads, and 50% going to Class 3 roads. The planned use of these funds, as well as local funds (which must be at least \$300 per mile of roadway), must be detailed to the state in an annual Town Plan for the maintenance and construction of all highways under the Town's control for the following year.

C. Planning Considerations

Safety

Traffic speed on class 2 highways and back roads are a safety concern, particularly on narrow roads with no shoulders. In the Village, signage, traffic calming infrastructure, and/or better enforcement of the speed limit would improve pedestrian safety. The extension of sidewalks along Main Street, connecting the Cabot School with the village and recreational fields, would improve safety. Signs identify a school zone with a posted the speed limit of 25 MPH.

Signage

Existing and new signage needs to meet current standards for retro-reflectivity.

Access/connectivity

Given that almost 50% of fossil fuel use in Vermont is attributed to transportation, non-motorized transportation such as walking and biking should be encouraged in town planning considerations, such as site plan review.

Bike and pedestrian access by children to the recreation fields in both upper and lower Cabot Village is not adequate and poses a safety concern. In particular, the bridge near the intersection of Route 215 and South Walden Road that must be traversed to reach the recreational fields from the Cabot School is too narrow to provide for safe pedestrian or bicycle access. Village Center designation provides funding opportunities to improve sidewalks from the Creamery to the recreation fields, which should be pursued. The location of bicycle racks should be reviewed and augmented.

Road Standards

With Act 64 (clean water act) new standards to control stormwater runoff and road maintenance standards will be implemented. Stormwater permitting at the town level will be put into place over the next 2 years. The lack of standards that specify road width and other design considerations in the construction of new roads and access driveways in Town are problematic. At issue are concerns regarding access by emergency vehicles and minimizing impervious surfaces and clearing of natural vegetation to avoid excessive storm water runoff. Road standards that assure safe access, minimize impacts to the environment, and preserve the historic characteristic of the Town need to be developed and adopted by the Town.

Continued development of the class IV road policy and driveway guidelines to meet new act 64 requirements are important considerations for maintaining and protecting Town Infrastructure.

Scenic Roads

The State has a program for designation of scenic roads (19 V.S.A. Section 2502) that the Town may be able to take advantage of. Designation as a scenic road ensures that the scenic qualities of the road are preserved or enhanced.

Parking

Although Willey Building parking is clearly available for village public parking, parking for businesses, residential, and community functions in the village is limited. Parking for festivals and events needs management. The school also faces parking pressures. One of the land use goals identified in this Town Plan is to encourage additional residential and commercial development in the village centers. Additional parking facilities, in conjunction with pedestrian linkages and traffic calming measures, should be planned to accommodate such growth and make sure the celebrations are successful.

Cabot Arts has counted parked cars on July 4. New satellite areas along Elm St have been created. Study of parking management and options for the festivals should be pursued.

Factors to be considered in the location, size and design of a public parking area include:

- Variations in parking need during different times of day
- Connection of parking areas with sidewalks
- Provision of accessible spaces
- Landscaping to protect streetscape and provide buffer to absorb storm water runoff
- Design that is conducive to maintenance, including snow removal
- Separation of bike parking area from car parking area by use of a buffer, for safety reasons.

Public Transportation

Expanded access to public transportation could benefit Cabot residents who commute to work, reducing the number of commuters driving alone. The feasibility of extending public transportation up Route 215 to Cabot Village should be explored or a location along route 2.

Training

The Town should take full advantage of training and assistance provided by State and regional agencies such as the Vermont Local Roads Program on issues such as erosion control, road drainage improvements, tree and brush removal, and best practices for road maintenance, including roads adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas.

Capital Improvement Program

A long-range plan for the improvement and maintenance of the Town's transportation infrastructure, should be included in the development of a Capital Improvement Program and budget to implement the program (See also "Community Utilities, Facilities and Services" section of Plan).

Flood Resiliency

Storm water discharge from Town structures and highways cannot discharge into waters of the state. Disconnection of existing transportation infrastructure, stormwater systems and improvements to best management practices to improve the ability of the Towns transportation infrastructure to shed stormwater rapidly into filtration areas rather than into the watershed is a key goal for flood resiliency. Proper planning implementation and maintenance of existing structures, replacement of undersized structures and management of erosion prone areas will not only improve water quality but in the long run lessen the maintenance burden for Town infrastructure. Reconnection of rivers to floodplains along roadways when replacing infrastructure and properly coordinating and sizing infrastructure to handle flood conditions are key goals.

The Town has relocated the Town Garage facility out of the flood plain and reconnected the former garage site to the river as a stormwater filtration area to mitigate floodwaters thru the village. The Better roads program has provided funding for a bank stabilization project and two culvert replacement projects where road washouts were the norm. Following the damage of July floods in 2023 and 2024, FEMA and state mitigation funding is being

applied for to maintain and improve municipal infrastructure (See Flood and Climate Resilience section for more details).

D. Goals and Implementation Strategies

Goal	Implementation Strategy	Key implementer(s)	Future Measures of Progress
<p>VIII.1 Establish safe routes between residential and commercial/ civic/recreational uses in the village area, thereby making it more pedestrian and business friendly.</p>	<p>VIII.1 (a) Maintain a capital improvement plan (CIP) and budget with estimated costs, based on the above master plan.</p> <p>VIII.1 (b) Seek FEMA and state grant funds to accomplish infrastructure improvements.</p>	<p>Selectboard/Ad hoc Committee appointed by Selectboard</p> <p>Flood Task Force/ Selectboard</p>	<p>CIP maintained</p> <p>Applications made</p>
<p>VIII.2 Improve non-motorized access from rural areas of Town to the village areas.</p>	<p>VIII.2 (a) Maintain and expand four-season trail system supported through grant funds.</p> <p>VIII.2 (b) Identify locations for bicycle routes throughout Town and undertake infrastructure improvements to improve safety.</p> <p>VIII.2 (c) Create and implement plans for the improvement of</p>	<p>Planning Commission/ Trails Committee</p> <p>Trails Committee/ Consulting engineer/ Selectboard</p> <p>Planning Commission/ Consulting engineer/ Selectboard</p>	<p>Master plan for trails created</p> <p>Improvements planned</p> <p>Improvements planned</p>

Goal	Implementation Strategy	Key implementer(s)	Future Measures of Progress
	the bridge on Main Street at the intersection of Rt. 215 and Walden Road for flood resiliency and to make it safer for bicycle and pedestrian use.		
<p>VIII.3 Maintain Town road system, and provide for adequate maintenance facilities (i.e., Town Garage), and retain scenic qualities.</p>	<p>VIII.3 (a) Investigate and adopt comprehensive standards applicable to the construction of new roads and access driveways.</p> <p>VIII.3 (b) Develop a capital improvement program that provides for the routine maintenance of the town road system and transportation infrastructure and equipment.</p> <p>VIII.3 (c) Explore designation of scenic roads or byways.</p>	<p>Town Selectboard/ / Fire Department</p> <p>Selectboard</p> <p>Planning Commission/ VTrans</p> <p>Selectboard/Road crew</p>	<p>Standards adopted</p> <p>CIP developed</p> <p>Inventory completed of scenic roads</p> <p>Less driveway-caused washouts</p>

Goal	Implementation Strategy	Key implementer(s)	Future Measures of Progress
	VIII.3(d) Explore creating a Clean Our Culverts month or other program to encourage maintaining culverts at intersections of town roads and private driveways		
VIII.4 Improve safety on existing roadways.	<p>VIII.4 (a) Evaluate adequacy of existing road signage throughout Town and improve as necessary to comply with MUTCD.</p> <p>VIII.4 (b) Evaluate and enforce speed limits.</p> <p>Evaluate and replace thru realignment the bridge at the lower end of the Village of Cabot on VT 215 South</p> <p>Evaluate and improve</p>	<p>Selectboard/Road Commissioner/Ad hoc committee appointed by Select Board</p> <p>Selectboard</p>	<p>School zone posted; additional signage added as necessary</p> <p>Speeding is reduced</p>

Goal	Implementation Strategy	Key implementer(s)	Future Measures of Progress
	intersections in the village based on recommendations by VTRANS and the village scoping study completed in 2012.		
VIII.5 Retain the traffic flow efficiency of Route 2 as a valuable interregional travel route, while maintaining its scenic qualities.	VIII.5 (a) Review land use regulations, including zoning and new subdivision regulations, for opportunities to incorporate best practices for access management as recommended by VTrans.	Planning Commission	Regulations reviewed and revised if needed
VIII.6 Better utilize existing public transportation system and reduce the distance and number of single-occupant vehicle trips.	VIII.6 (a) Maintain GMATA service on Rte 2 and explore possibility of extending service up Route 215.	Selectboard	Number of commuting workers utilizing public transportation is > 0
VIII.7 Expand parking in the Village to improve downtown accessibility and traffic management during festivals.	VIII.7 (a) Investigate off site public parking locations. VIII.7 (b) Study parking numbers at large events and	Planning Commission /Selectboard Planning Commission/	Off-site options identified. Parking study completed and

Goal	Implementation Strategy	Key implementer(s)	Future Measures of Progress
	recommend new options	Selectboard/local businesses	recommendations implemented
VIII.8. Improve access between LVRT and the rest of Cabot	Connect LVRT to Cabot village and other trails in town.	Trails Committee	Improved Bicycle and walking access between Cross VT Trail and LVRT

IX. COMMUNITY FACILITIES, UTILITIES, AND SERVICES

A. Introduction

Cabot's government offices, facilities, services, and utilities play an important role in the health and well-being of Cabot residents. All residents depend, to some extent, on solid waste disposal, police and fire protection, health services, schools, parks, electric power, and the public water supply system. The location and capacity of such systems and services can significantly influence quality of life and where and to what extent growth occurs in the Town. The thoughtful placement, development, and maintenance of infrastructure can guide residential and commercial growth to the most suitable locations in Town, and away from areas where such development could be less safe or have undesirable impacts.

B. Existing Conditions

Town Buildings

The primary Town-owned buildings (from north to south) that directly serve Cabot residents are:

- Town Garage, the new facility is located at 2691 South Walden Road and some equipment remains at the sawmill road facility.
- Town Recreation Building, located on the recreation fields on the west side of South Walden Road at its intersection with Main Street (Rte. 215)
- Cabot School Buildings (seven), located on the southwest side of Main Street just north of the Town Common
- Willey Building, located on the southeast side of Main Street (Rte. 215) between Danville Hill and Glinka Roads
- Temporary Firehouse, located adjacent to the recreation fields off the South Walden Road
- Wastewater Treatment Building, located on the north side of Saw Mill Road
- Sawmill Rd storage facility, includes solid Waste Collection and storage, located on the north side of Saw Mill Road
- Old Mill House on Saw Mill Road, currently not in use

Town Government

Cabot's Town government offices are located in the Willey Building on Main Street.

The Town of Cabot conducts much of its business at Town Meeting in March. The Town Clerk and Treasurer, Selectpersons, Justices of the Peace, and School Directors are elected by Australian Ballot: all other town officers are nominated and elected at the meeting.

Selectboard

Cabot has a five-member Selectboard, which is responsible for the general supervision of Town affairs. Among its duties are the enactment of local ordinances, the preparation of an

annual budget, the maintenance of Town Roads, real estate and equipment, the appointment of all non-elected positions, and the hiring of all Town employees except the Assistant Town Clerk and the Librarian. The Selectboard also operates the Town wastewater and water systems are operated by a single contractor.

Town Clerk

The Town Clerk is an elected office. The Town Treasurer shifted to an appointment by the Selectboard in 2023. The offices of Town Clerk and Treasurer, and an assistant, are in the basement of the Willey Building. Among the duties of the Town Clerk are recording proceedings of Selectboard meetings, issuing various licenses, recording land records, and managing elections. The Treasurer keeps account of monies received and paid out by the Town.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission is a five-member board. Its responsibilities include preparation of the Town Plan and its update every eight years, the preparation and presentation to the Selectboard of bylaws and other means to implement the Town Plan. The Planning Commission will look at reviewing and revising the zoning bylaws in sections based on community input and consider drafting subdivision regulations. The Planning Commission helps update and maintain the Hazard Mitigation Plan and may also prepare and present to the Selectboard a recommended capital budget and program for a period of ten years.

Development Review Board

Cabot has consolidated development review formerly split between the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Adjustment into this one, seven-member, body, which reviews applications for conditional uses and variances, site plans, Planned Residential Developments (see Land Use section for a description of this type of development).

Members on both the Planning Commission and the Development Review Board are appointed by the Selectboard.

Zoning Administrator and Planning Assistant

The position of Zoning Administrator is nominated by the Planning Commission and appointed by the Selectboard. The Zoning Administrator's duties are to approve or deny applications for zoning permits, literally administer the municipal zoning bylaws, and assist the planning commission.

Roads

Town roads are maintained by a Road Foreman who supervises two employees. The duties of the road crew are to maintain the roads and the road equipment. The Highway Fund budget includes an equipment replacement schedule and a sinking fund which is intended to minimize fluctuations in tax revenue caused by the occasional replacement of plow trucks. The Highway Budget also includes a paving reserve fund that serves as a matching fund for state highway grants. The road crew is supervised by the Selectboard.

Other Committees and Organizations

There are various additional committees and commissions in town that take on particular tasks, including the Conservation Committee (see Natural Resources section), the Recreation Committee (see Recreation subsection below), Trails Committee, Flood Task Force, the Cabot Historical Society, the Senior Citizens Committee, the Cabot Community Investment Fund (see Economic Development section), the Willey Building Committee, and the Cemetery Commission.

There is also a non-profit branch, the Cabot Community Association with its offspring of Cabot Arts, Cabot Show ‘n Tell, Cabot Mentoring, Cabot Chronicle and more, which administers key social initiatives for the town.

Cabot updated its privately maintained website at <http://cabotvt.us/>, in 2024. Along with Front Porch Forum, and a Facebook Cabot Connects group site, a system is assured to provide public notice of scheduled meetings of the Selectboard and various town committees and to post the most recent versions of important Town documents. This aids in transparency of, and sparking participation in, Cabot’s decision-making.

Challenges/Needs Related to Town Government

The Highway Fund budget contains an equipment replacement schedule through 2026. The Town has created written plans for the long-term maintenance, replacement, or improvement of its municipal infrastructure. A long-range plan for the improvement and maintenance of the Town’s transportation infrastructure, a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and budget to implement the program. The required content of a capital budget and program is spelled out in 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117. The capital budget and program is a ten-year document: year one is the capital budget for the upcoming fiscal year, and years two through ten are the capital program, or schedule of investments, for the following nine years. The Planning Commission should review and submit annual project recommendations for inclusion in the CIP.

To efficiently manage the Town’s facilities and departments, undertake the preparation of a CIP, and secure grants to aid in the implementation of a CIP, it is recommended that the Town should explore a Town Manager form of government, and conduct a vote at a future Town Meeting. State statute 24 V.S.A., sections 1235 through 1238 specify the duties of a Town Manager, which include performing most Selectperson’s duties, serve as the general purchasing agent, maintain Town buildings and facilities, and act as Road Commissioner, among other duties. It is expected that the efficiencies realized in the management of Town facilities and the grants that could be secured by such an individual would pay for the cost of establishing and maintaining this position.

Ambulance Services, Fire Protection, and Emergency Planning

The Town currently has a contract to provide emergency medical transport with Cabot Emergency Ambulance Service, a private corporation that has been serving Cabot since 1967. CEAS was formerly housed with the Fire Department, but the 2023 flood undermined the Fire Station and forced its condemnation. FEMA provided funding for a temporary firehouse and

will fund a future planned permanent Public Safety Building, but it would not permit the privately-owned CEAS to be housed in either the temporary or the new public facility.

CEAS is supported by donations, appropriations from the Town of Cabot and insurance reimbursements. There is currently one ambulance in service. Emergency medical transport service in Cabot is embedded in the District 6 Mutual Aid structure, and the Town remains committed to providing such service to its residents and visitors.

Challenge/Needs: Finding a secure facility in which to park the ambulance is necessary.

Fire

The Cabot Fire Department (CFD) is overseen by a Fire Chief, who manages volunteers consisting of 29 firefighters, of which 12 are also on the newly upcoming formed CFD FAST Squad, consisting of VEFR (Vermont Emergency First Responders), EMTs (Emergency Medical Technicians), and AEMT (Advanced Emergency Medical Technicians) personnel. The department is on call 24/7 - 365 days/year to respond to fire and EMS emergencies. Cabot is a member of the Capitol Fire Mutual Aid System, which includes all the towns in Washington County and some surrounding communities. Cabot has automatic response agreements with Marshfield and Walden. Currently ten members of the department are certified in State of Vermont Fire Training. In a typical year, the Fire Department responds to around 148 calls. Generally, more than 75% of the calls are fire-related, with the rest related to traffic accidents, Hazmat, or other emergencies. Once the CFD FAST squad goes online, the projected yearly call volume for CFD is 258.

In addition to responding to emergencies, the Fire Chief provides guidance to the Selectboard, the Planning Commission, and other Town committees on fire safety matters. This includes site review for new residential and commercial developments as well as water supply extensions/locations for fire suppression and lockbox (for keys) installations.

The Fire Department has space for 3 vehicles in the temporary firehouse erected in 2024. A new site for a permanent building to properly meet federal (NFPA) and state regulations is under design just south of the village, which includes a fire pond.

The Department is I.S.O. certified (at the present time "7.7," with "1" being the best and "10" the worst.) The fire department's goal is to get the rating down to a "3" which would result in structures within a three-mile radius of the qualifying firehouse, for reduced fire insurance rates. One of the strategies to lower this rating is not only having an NFPA-approved station but also to install more dry hydrants in Cabot and replacing the small 1600-gal 24-year-old tanker with a new 3000-gal tanker. Dry hydrants are maintained and installed under the department.

This year the department has created a board of 6 members to assist with the department's operation mechanics. Updating of the department's SOP, SSR, SOG and by-laws (approved by the select board) also took place to match the current operation of the department and the town's current and future needs.

Challenges/Needs: The Cabot Fire Department has identified several issues relating to the firehouse, water availability, membership, radio and other equipment, road access, EMS service and other issues. Meeting even required standards is expensive. Fundraising, including seeking grants, is on-going.

Hazard Mitigation

The Town revised the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2024 with the assistance of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, to assure that the Town is capable of mitigating, responding to and protecting the public from increasing natural disasters.

Cabot School

The Cabot School is comprised of the High School and Middle School classroom building (constructed in 1938), the gymnasium and four satellite elementary/integrated arts classroom buildings (constructed in 1971), all located on a single campus site in the center of Cabot Village. In 1997, the High School and Middle School building was thoroughly upgraded, and a dining room was added to the gymnasium. Satellite renovations included heating system upgrades, expanded space in kindergarten and pre-school and the addition of mudrooms in each elementary building. In 2009, the school's performing art center (CSPAC, which was constructed by town volunteers and private fundraising), and a wood chip heating plant were completed.

During the 2010-2011 school year, groundwater seepage and flooding in the elementary and high school buildings necessitated foundation, waterproofing, and excavation work as well as interior renovations. In 2011, the Cabot School Directors received a thorough report on the condition of the school's various buildings, and the report was updated in 2014. The report concluded that the high school building was in good condition structurally, but that the school gymnasium needed extensive renovation because of roof leaks and resulting decay. Additionally, the report recommended the elementary campus buildings be extensively renovated or rebuilt.

In 2018 Cabot voters approved the use of \$200,000 of UDAG (CCIF) funds to replace the gymnasium roof. That summer the old leaking roof was removed, new spray foam insulation installed, and a new standing-seam roof on the building was completed. Several years later the adjoining cafeteria roof was replaced, and new windows and doors were installed in the elementary buildings. In 2023-2024 grant funds were used to upgrade the heating/ventilation system controls throughout the campus, and a ventilation system was installed in the CSPAC. During that same year major portions of the school's wood-chip heating plant were also replaced/upgraded.

Cabot School buses transport students to and from school and to various co-curricular activities and events, including the Barre Vocational Technical Program. Buses are replaced on a planned cycle, anticipating about ten years of service per bus.

Enrollment and Staffing

There were 10 students in the graduating class of 2024, and total student enrollment (Pre-K through 12) in the 2023-24 school year was 155: 16 in Pre-K, 79 in K-6, 20 in the middle

school, and 40 in grades 9-12. Enrollment over the past five years has declined from 162 in 2019-20 to 155 in 2023-24.

Expenditures

Total expenditures for Cabot School operational costs for fiscal years 2022, 2023, and 2024, as reported in annual report for 2015 was as follows:

FY 22 Actual: \$3,314,718

FY 23 Actual: \$3,450,377

FY 24 Budget: \$3,620,061

Of these totals, approximately 10% were used for operations and maintenance, and 2-3% were used for student transportation.

Cabot School as a Community Resource

There is a very strong link between the Cabot community and the Cabot School. Many activities primarily presented for the School are open to the public and are often attended by community members. The completion of the Performing Arts Center (built by volunteers and largely local donations) has helped to accommodate community functions, including plays, concerts and lectures by guest authors.

The School is frequently used by various community groups for recreational and organizational functions. The gym is used after school and on weekends both by adults and students for sports activities and other events such as auctions and craft shows. Cabot residents can take part in early-morning fitness programs in the gym throughout the year. The school kitchen is used throughout the year by many organizations for fundraising dinners, community celebrations, and food sales. Community groups utilize school facilities for activities and events.

Organizations such as the Cabot Recreation Committee and the Cabot Community Theatre use the school facilities after school hours.

Educational Opportunities Available to Cabot Residents

The Cabot School arranges learning opportunities with other educational institutions in Vocational and Continuing Education. Besides the Central Vermont Career Center (formerly known as the Barre Technical Center or BTC) in Barre, there are several post-secondary schools in the region. Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC), Adult Basic Education, and Cabot's Wellness Director work closely with community individuals and families to inform them about academic and skills-based program application processes, costs, and scholarship opportunities and the availability of financial aid. On average, 70-80% of Cabot graduates go on to post-secondary education following graduation.

Challenges/Needs

As noted above in this report, major parts of the Cabot School campus (including the gymnasium and elementary campus) need extensive renovation. Clearly, a major goal for the school in the near future is to address this issue: the cost of school building projects increases every year. However, the size of the investment needed in Cabot School's facilities will depend on whether the school continues to operate as it has in the past: educating Cabot students from pre-kindergarten through high school here in Cabot.

Progress on meeting challenges identified in the previous Town Plan

As part of the Act 46 consolidation process in 2019, the Cabot School District and the Twinfield School District joined the Caledonia Central Supervisory Union. This supervisory union now supports 7 schools: Cabot, Twinfield, Danville, Walden, Waterford, Peacham and Barnet. In the years since, the schools have collaborated on professional development activities for teachers, and now have a single maintenance supervisor coordinating facilities work at all campuses. In addition, special education services for students at all 7 schools are coordinated at the supervisory union level. For the past several years the athletic programs at all three high schools (Cabot, Danville and Twinfield) in the SU have been gradually merging as student numbers have declined. This fall, for example, the Varsity Boys soccer program ("Caledonia United") has both a JV and Varsity team composed of players from all three schools. The collaboration in athletics has increased opportunities for students and broken down much of the neighboring-town rivalries. As student numbers continue to decrease at all three high schools there is increasing interest in forming a merged "union" high school, and increasing financial pressures on small schools may soon push that interest into actual commitment and planning.

Child Care

The availability of safe and affordable child-care services is critical to Cabot. Quality child-care benefits families by preparing children for schooling and social interaction while enabling parents to work and provide income. It benefits businesses by expanding the workforce and creating more reliable, productive employees. Furthermore, child-care facilities are businesses themselves and their existence expands local and regional economies directly through the hiring of workers and purchase of goods and services.

In 2016, there were four licensed day-care providers in Cabot, but by 2022, none remained. That year, the Cabot Community Association sought out and won a grant to study the feasibility of establishing a child-care facility in the Fellowship Hall (basement) of the Cabot United Church. The CCA secured the participation of ABC/AOL, LLC., based in St. Johnsbury, a private operator of several licensed child-care centers, as consultant. With further support from Let's Grow Kids, the Vermont Early Childhood Fund and private donors, the CCA refurbished and furnished the Fellowship Hall, concluded a rental agreement with the Church, and engaged ABC/LOL to obtain the required licensure to operate a Cabot Child Care Center, under the aegis of the CCA.

The Center opened in November 2023 and by June 2024 had full enrollment of 14, ranging from infants to toddlers not yet eligible for pre-school, and a full-time staff of three.

In addition to the Child Care Center, the Cabot School has a preschool program on the elementary school campus adjacent to the Church, so children in day care can make a seamless transition. Elsewhere in Central Vermont, there are approximately 90 registered home care providers and 20 licensed care providers, with the majority located in the Region's employment and population centers (i.e., Barre, Montpelier, and Waterbury).

Cabot Public Library

The library facility occupies two rooms on the second floor of the Willey Building, with approximately 1,300 square feet and is ADA accessible. The library is open 25 hours each week and is staffed by the Library Director, Youth Librarian, and several substitutes. The Library Board of Trustees consists of five members.

The library provides high speed internet access with four computer stations in the Reading Room. Materials may be requested from other libraries within Vermont as well as outside of Vermont through the interlibrary system provided by the Vermont Automated Library System (VALS). The Cabot Public Library also participates in "Listen Up! Vermont" where Library patrons are able to download free audio and e-books, the Vermont Online Library where patrons are able to read research articles from publications through the Gale Databases, Universal Class which offers over 500 online non-credit continuing education classes and several other online resources – Vermont Music Library, Heritage Quest, Vermont Digital Newspaper Project – all accessible from the library's website: www.cabotlibrary.org

Regular ongoing Library programs include Preschool Story Time, Meditation Group, Yoga, Tai Chi, Contra Dances, Pokemon, Community Book Group/Discussion, Summer Reading Program and special monthly programs totaling 137 individual program offerings.

Challenges/Needs:

There is always an ongoing need for volunteer help with shelving books, discarding books from the collection, processing new items, and programming. There is a constant challenge to maintain an adequate budget for new items to meet library standards set by the Vermont Department of Libraries and to provide quality programs at low or no cost.

Recreation

A variety of recreational programs and activities are available in Cabot. Many are offered by the recreational committee.

Public lands in Cabot are available for hiking, swimming, and boating access for fishing and hunting, and other low-impact recreation. These include our 40-acre town forest, town rights-of-way, and class IV roads, which may be used for skiing, biking, jogging, horseback riding, and walking (See Transportation section for issues relating to maintenance of Class IV roads).

Cabot owns the recreation field at the north end of village, with its two ball fields, basketball court, storage buildings, and picnic area and leases additional land at the south end of Town.

A new, Molly's Falls State Park has been established at what was formerly land owned by Green Mountain Power around the Marshfield Reservoir. This 625.4-acre parcel of land accesses a 402-acre reservoir. The state currently maintains remote camping sites, accessible by boat. This has long been an active boating and fishing site in the community.

The Lamoille Rail Trail has opened, with a scenic section in Cabot from Joes Pond to South Walden, which established an important year-round recreational experience and attraction. The trail system extends 93 miles long from Swanton to St Johnsbury.

The Recreation Committee actively promotes, maintains, and raises funds for recreational improvements and equipment purchases. These efforts have contributed significantly to improvements at the recreation field.

Public boating access for fishing is available at West Hill Pond, Joe's Pond, Coits Pond and the Molly's Falls Reservoir. All access points are on State land. Recreational activities at Joe's Pond include boating, fishing, and swimming. There is one state park in Cabot: Molly's Falls State Park. The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation purchased the 1064 acres, including the 411-acre reservoir in 2015 guaranteeing continued recreational access to the reservoir and surrounding lands for Cabot residents, Vermonters and visitors to Vermont. Currently, recreational activities include boating, paddling, fishing, picnicking, swimming, and limited camping.

Approximately fifty miles of snowmobile trails, primarily on privately owned land, interconnect with the Vermont Association of Snowmobile Travelers (V.A.S.T.) system and is enjoyed by snowmobile operators and cross-country skiers.

The Recreation Committee, and now the Trails Committee, have been instrumental in obtaining permission from property owners to maintain both a winter trail system and a four-season trail for hikers, skiers, joggers, snowshoers and, in some cases, horseback riders and cyclists. The Trails Committee has expanded the trail system, installed boards with maps at the trailheads, and provides the maps online on the town website.

Challenges/Needs

The network of trails and town rights-of-way are currently used extensively by the residents of Cabot. The preservation of these rights-of-way and continued cooperation between users and landowners is critical if we are to maintain the privilege of the safe and respectful use of these resources.

There is significant interest in bicycling in town. Several town rights-of-way and class IV roads might be considered as bike trails. Speeding and narrow shoulders on Cabot roads can be problems for bikers and pedestrians. A significant need can be demonstrated for trails that are independent of the main thoroughfares and for safe wide shoulders/sidewalks/bike lanes for safe recreational bike use along town roads. This is especially important between Lower Cabot and Cabot Village.

The Recreation Committee has traditionally requested funds at Town Meeting to supplement its own fundraising activities. The Trails Committee has been successful in

gaining some state grants. Devastation of the recreation field was repaired with new drainage and seeding in 2024, to mitigate future damage. Maintenance is currently accomplished primarily through the efforts of volunteers.

A privately owned facility, Larry and Son Field, leased by the town and is used for soccer, baseball & softball, was devastated in repeated floods of 2023 and 2024. No plans have emerged to recover that site. The temporary firehouse was placed on the site of the former basketball court, but FEMA helped fund the new replacement court.

Solid Waste

Cabot is a member of the Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District (NEKWMD). Each of the member towns in the NEKWMD is represented by at least one Supervisor, appointed by the Selectboard for a term of one year. The Board of Supervisors is the primary authority over the NEKWMD.

Solid waste collection and disposal is not provided to residents as a municipal service. Residents have several options for trash disposal: self-haul to a transfer station; private hauler pick-up; or bag drop off to a private trash hauler. A private trash hauling service is available at the town recycling center where recycling can be dropped off free of charge. The recycling center is located on Saw Mill Road adjacent to the Town Wastewater Treatment Facility.

Challenges / Needs

New state recycling laws and increasing volume of recycling require the incremental expansion of recycling available at the current recycling center, staffing requirements will need to be reviewed and modified to meet expanded need.

Water Supply

Ground water resources and their protection are of extreme importance to the town. The Cabot community is completely dependent upon groundwater for domestic water supply and industrial uses.

Wellhead source protection areas have been delineated for the two well sites that serve as sources for the Town Water system that provides public water. The source protection areas serve to directly “recharge” or replenish the groundwater aquifer. Both source protection areas are characterized by low-density agricultural/residential development in proximity to town and state highways.

The Danville Hill Well provides the primary source of public water for those within the water service area of Cabot, it was drilled in 1968. It is located about a half mile east of the village center before the intersection with Menard/Old Center Road and is drilled to a depth of 295 feet. The step flow tested yield of this well is 259.5 gallons per minute (GPM).

The Walden Road Well, also known as the Bond Hill Well, provides a secondary source of water for Cabot, and is located on Route 215 north of its intersection with Main Street, and less than half a mile from the intersection with Garney Road. The well was drilled in 1949

at a depth of 225 feet. The step flow tested yield of this well is 21.9 gallons per minute GPM.

Utility Partners currently manages both the water supply and wastewater systems. There are currently 104 water users.

Challenges/Needs

The primary water supply for the Town of Cabot comes from the Danville Hill Well. This water supply connects to the main system with a 3" pvc line. Several breaks and leaks over the years have impacted the service to the Town, replacement of this line is an important system need. Maintaining capital budgeting to improve and replace system components is a long-term need.

A water line replacement for Danville Hill Road is being explored. Asset management work for the water system is a priority to help minimize large, short-term expenses.

Sewage and Municipal Wastewater

The Cabot Wastewater Treatment Facility, located on Sawmill Road in Cabot, was completed in fall of 2001. The facility is managed by Utility Partners and is under the direct authority of the Selectboard. All daily operations and plant management decisions are made by the Selectboard or its designee, the wastewater Superintendent including but not limited to budgeting, rate-setting and capacity allocation.

Cabot's sewage treatment facility has a design capacity of 50,000 gallons per day (GPD), with a daily flow of 20,000 to 25,000 GPD. There are currently 114 connections and 174.5 Equivalent Residential Units (ERU) on the system.

All residences in Cabot outside of the wastewater treatment facility service area have individual on-site wastewater systems. The construction or replacement of on-site systems requires a permit from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation.

Challenges/Needs

A careful prioritization of the allocation of reserve capacity will necessarily define the scope of potential development within the wastewater service area. The Wastewater Ordinance sets forth mechanisms for the distribution of capacity for different user classifications. The Selectboard is charged with setting annual limits for each user classification. The Selectboard should determine, with input from the Planning Commission, School Board, the local business community, whether uses such as elderly housing, restaurants, or other commercial uses should be favored over increased residential development, and if some capacity should be reserved for future expansion of the school.

The plant is aging. Engineering review of the whole system was underway in 2024 with significant recommendations for improvement anticipated. Some replacement of components was completed with markedly improved performance. A Capital Plan is needed to manage the financing of needed improvements.

Electric Service

Cabot residents along Route 2 and Route 215 receive electricity from Green Mountain Power Corporation (GMP). Others along back roads are served primarily by the Washington Electric Cooperative.

Communications

Telephone service for the 563 and 426 telephone exchanges are provided by FairPoint Communications. Wireless, satellite, DSL and cable internet access and cable television service is provided in most areas of the town by many companies. Two ATT cell antennae are in Town providing cell service to portions of the Town. The town adopted an ordinance governing telecommunication facilities and towers (Article V) in 1998.

The Cabot Library provides free wireless Internet access. In addition, a privately managed town website (<http://cabotvt.us>) – with the support of the Selectboard and Town Clerk – provides useful information about key activities in the civic life of the town, from election results to upcoming events and public meeting minutes. At the same time, a free but private email list Front Porch Forum (<http://frontporchforum.com/>) serves to share important announcements and provides a community calendar for events and requests among Cabot residents. Finally, a growing town paper, the Cabot Chronicle (<http://cabotchronicle.org>), provides a useful point of reference for town news and local perspective.

At the same time, many Cabot residents and associations are taking to social networking resources such as Facebook and Twitter, where social chatter along with news and information upcoming events are shared regularly. The Town of Cabot maintains a Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Town-of-Cabot>.

Internet access can help Cabot residents' meet needs in the areas of local government transparency and accountability; information sharing and coordination support for voluntary action; economic development support through promotion in the areas of tourism as well as access to information about grants, loans, and awards that can benefit Cabot business owners, entrepreneurs, and artists.

Challenges/Needs

The town's telecommunications zoning regulations need to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to ensure they keep pace with changes in the industry.

The general public and businesses depend on adequate telecommunications services. Cell phone service and high-speed internet access is available in most parts of Town, and, as noted previously, wireless/communications for emergency services are not adequate in some locations in town. Additional exploration for cell service expansion along route 2 is a need for the community and public safety.

Law Enforcement

The County Sheriff is engaged periodically to monitor and ticket speeders on town and village roads. Currently, enforcement of the dog ordinance is being accomplished through a

contract with a certified enforcement officer in Danville. None of Cabot's recent constables have been certified law enforcement officers, but they work closely with the State Police on local calls.

Challenges/Needs

Speeding through the village has been identified as a major issue. See Transportation section further discussion of speed limit issues and concerns.

Health and Human Services

Health Care services within the Town of Cabot are limited to Cabot Health Services, a branch of The Health Center in Plainfield. The Health Center in Hardwick, Danville Health Center and are the closest available healthcare facilities. Central Vermont Medical Center in Berlin, Copley Hospital in Morrisville, and Northeast Vermont Regional Hospital in St. Johnsbury are the nearest hospitals. Most patients in need of emergency services are transported to Central Vermont Medical Center.

The Cabot School also houses a Wellness Center with a nurse available part-time for local residents.

The United Church of Cabot plays a valuable supportive role in the community. Various organizations, meet at the church and other community facilities, and provides social events for its members. The Church is also home to a weekly Alcoholics Anonymous meeting.

Neighbors In Action Northern Communities Partnership, Inc., a non-profit established in 2004, currently leases space in the Masonic Hall and maintains an office in Lyndonville. The organization provides free services to the elderly and disabled through a network of local volunteers. Programs include a twice monthly Food Share program, community dinners and a monthly Senior's Adventure Morning.

Cabot Community Association

The Cabot Community Association is a 501(c)3 not for profit organization with a mission to enhance the quality of community life for those residing, doing business, and visiting Cabot, VT. In partnership with its citizens, businesses and service organizations, the Cabot Community Association will work to:

1. Maintain and enhance our inviting, healthy and safe community.
2. Empower Cabot residents to participate in the governance and management of our town.
3. Provide a forum for individuals and organizations to network and share resources.
4. Promote community service.
5. Foster community pride.
6. Enhance educational and recreational opportunities.
7. Develop a vibrant, diversified economy.
8. Represent Cabot's interests in local and regional partnerships.
9. Monitor data and trends to plan for the future health and wellbeing of residents of all ages.

10. Preserve and enhance the working landscape and the natural beauty of our environment; and
11. Support such other charitable and educational activities, consistent with the above-stated purposes and with the provisions of Sections 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or corresponding provisions of subsequently enacted Federal Law, as the Board of Directors may from time to time determine.

Civic and Cultural Activities

A. Introduction

Cabot can boast significant civic, cultural, and artistic richness. The broad array of public and private institutions and resources that support the civic and cultural life of Cabot reflect an important tradition of investment, participation, and patronage. From a town meeting tradition that persists today, to numerous festivities throughout the year, Cabot is a vibrant community that nourishes its residents and its visitors. Rooted in traditions and passed-along knowledge, these resources require ongoing investment of time, attention, and money by Cabot residents – from volunteer time to visitor attendance to private contributions and budget appropriations. To manage these resources well and accommodate the growth of new opportunities in a dynamic cultural environment, diligent stewardship is required. To provide recognition and appreciation, an annual Cabot Public Service Award is given.

B. Existing Conditions

Civic Life: Civic life in Cabot is defined by the voluntary associations, organizations, and institutions along with social networks that comprise society outside government and private life. There are many dimensions to Cabot’s civic life; we’ll focus on a few here: town meeting, voluntary associations, and Internet resources.

1. **Town Meeting:** Like roughly 31 percent of Vermont towns and cities where the town meeting tradition continues, Cabot’s civic life reaches its climax on the first Tuesday of March each year. During Town meeting, roughly 20% of Cabot’s eligible voters gather to discuss the Town’s business and pass important decisions – some (such as the election of town officials) by Australian Ballot and many others through discussion and voice, hand, or paper ballot. In a sense, this is our single greatest opportunity to learn where our shared and individual priorities and interests in the town lie and to plan our investments in the future.

Town meeting is an important opportunity to hear how our preferences stack up against those of others, and to hear the voices in favor or opposed to various discussion items.

2. **The Arts and Culture:** Cabot has gained a cultural gem in Cabot Arts, a non-profit, and Cabot Show n Tell, which have both gained Cabot a regional reputation for music and art, drawing visitors from all over New England and Canada. Cabot Arts hosts a popular music jam every Sunday afternoon at The Den, free concerts by regional folk musicians on the green on Thursdays in August and features internationally renowned musicians in concerts in the Willey Building several times each year. Many of the

Willey Building events sell out, entertaining people coming from far beyond Cabot.

As Dana Robinson's song about Cabot, "The Town That Music Saved" says, "there's more going on than any sane person can do".

The Pranskys have been hosting an annual summer "Jerry Jam" music festival on their farm as well. The Den at Harry's Hardware features local musicians on weekend nights and other activities.

Cultural and artistic life in Cabot is augmented by important community events throughout the year:

- 12th Night, on the green in January, sponsored by Cabot Arts and featuring fires, food, music, puppets and other theater and craft-making, closed with a lantern parade around the green.
 - Maple Fest occurs in March as spring begins to break and includes artisans' booths and maple syrup.
 - The Fireman's pancake breakfast Memorial Day weekend in May.
 - Fourth of July parade attracts thousands of spectators who pack Main Street, coming to see the train of floats, dancers, antique and farm equipment.
 - The Cabot Art and Music Festival at the end of July, featuring musicians of national reputation.
 - Ride the ridges in September is a series of adventure bike rides thru the town of Cabot ranging from 10K to 100K with a barbecue lunch on the common after the ride event. People from outside of Vermont are attracted to come. Hosted by the Mentoring program and CCA.
 - The annual Northeast Kingdom Fall Foliage Festival has been shifted, by the CCA, to begin now in Cabot on a Saturday, either the end of September or beginning of October. Cabot Arts holds its Cheese and Culture Festival on the green on that Saturday, to coincide with events held by the United Church, Historical Society, and others. Thousands of foliage visitors were attracted to come in 2024. The weeklong series of events begins in Cabot and then travels to surrounding communities, with tours, breakfast, lunch, and dinner events, highlighting local scenery and driving tours.
 - Apple Pie Festival in October, hosted annually by the Historical Society for many years, is currently on hold. A "slimmed-down" version has been included in Foliage Day.
3. Community Arts Facilities: Cabot School Performing Arts Center, Neighbors in Action, Cabot United Church and the Willey Building provide space for community gatherings, school music and Cabot Community Theater performances, talent shows, and film screenings.
 4. Historical Society: The Cabot Historical Society was formally founded in 1965 and currently maintains two historic properties in Town, the Main Street Museum (acquired in 1978) and the West Hill School (acquired in 1970). The Main Street Museum also houses an intact and well-preserved second story theater. The Historical

Society has also published collections of oral histories, a local family history, and a collection of early Cabot photographs. The Historical Society has a website: cabothistory.com.

5. **Cabot United Church:** The Cabot United Church makes an important contribution to the social and cultural life in Cabot. In addition to hosting numerous community dinners and occasional public concerts throughout the year, the Church enables community members to exercise their love for music through song, a choral group, and weekly worship services. They host an important child-care business in the basement.
6. **The Willey Building:** Long a venue for theater, dance, puppet shows, and other forms of public gathering such as weddings and meetings, the Willey Building houses an entire theater on its third floor, complete with a balcony level. In addition to a theater the Willey Building hosts a community kitchen and meeting room that is available for public use at a nominal fee. The Cabot Library, also housed in the Willey Building, hosts its own calendar of events throughout the year.

Challenges, Needs

There are several opportunities to expand and strengthen artistic and cultural life in Cabot.

Broaden participation: Many of the boards, committees, and planning groups that enable a thriving civic and cultural life in Cabot require a frequent replenishment rate of rank-and-file volunteers as well as leadership. Town offices and resources can be leveraged to expand the visibility of these positions and play an active part in helping to fill them.

At the same time, expanded arts marketing and promotion efforts will bring in larger numbers of participants, supporting everything from donations and sales to word-of-mouth advertising to business traffic in town. Key partners in this effort could include Cabot Arts and Cabot Show n Tell.

Invest in Facilities: While Cabot boasts a plethora of venues for live performance, there is no permanent venue to display visual arts and crafts in Cabot village. Not only could such a resource entertain visitors, but it could also provide local artists with a centralized, shared space in the heart of the village. Neil Bainton has created a temporary space at his home, called the Arts Barn, during foliage season, for local artists to exhibit and sell their work, which is popular.

Support Youth: Through increased coordination, fundraising, and resource-sharing, Cabot could significantly improve the out-of-school resources available to students interested in exploring the arts, technology, and culture.

Cabot School has formed a Youth Council, to help identify the needs and interests of Cabot youth, and to develop an agenda of activities.

Cabot Cemeteries

The Town of Cabot owns 28.47 acres of land in 7 community cemeteries around Cabot. The Cemetery Commission who manages these assets is facing a variety of challenges, developing owned land for additional plots, consolidating, and managing storage facilities, recording, and transferring institutional knowledge. The cemetery properties are also facing challenges with respect to maintaining older headstones and managing older trees established along boundaries and within the border of the cemetery. These old growth trees are unstable and nearing the end of their life expectancy, damage from falling branches and the roots from these massive trees.

Progress on Goals:

The Town has completed a variety of town projects over the past 5 years:

- a site was acquired to build a new Fire Station.
- A variety of culvert upgrades have been completed.
- A capital budget for water and wastewater has been established, with a reserve fund.
- System allocations have been reviewed and established for the wastewater system.
- Highway capital equipment schedule for maintenance and purchases was created.

C. Goals and Implementation Strategies

Goal	Implementation Strategy	Key Implementer(s)	Future Measures of Progress
<p>IX.1 Continue to provide Cabot with excellent ambulance services and fire protection with trained volunteers and well-maintained equipment. Protect residents, visitors, and businesses to the extent feasible from natural disasters.</p>	<p>IX.1(a) Use available opportunities (Cabot Chronicle, Town email list) to publicize/advertise the need for volunteers.</p> <p>IX.1(b) Develop public information campaign with the goal of having all residents ensure their house numbers are visible from the road to aid</p>	<p>Cabot Ambulance/Fire Dept.</p> <p>Cabot Ambulance/Fire Department</p>	<p>Volunteers increase</p> <p>House numbering improved</p>

Goal	Implementation Strategy	Key Implementer(s)	Future Measures of Progress
	<p>in quick response during an emergency.</p> <p>IX.1(c) Continue to maintain and implement a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.</p> <p>IX. 1(d) Implement public awareness campaign to improve equipment access to properties by providing adequate turn-off and pull off areas on private roads and driveways</p>	<p>Selectboard, Fire Department, Planning Commission</p> <p>Fire department</p>	<p>Mitigation Plan updated every 5 years and after any natural disaster</p> <p>Improved access</p>
<p>IX.2 Maintain the Cabot public library as an important community resource.</p>	<p>IX.2(a) Library directors will develop and implement a detailed plan to forward this goal, supported by a yearly Town appropriation and supplemented by private donations.</p>	<p>Cabot Library Trustees</p>	<p>Plan developed and updated regularly</p>
<p>IX.3 The Town’s facilities and Cabot School will continue to be a source of vitality to the Cabot</p>	<p>IX.3(a) The School and Town will explore opportunities to engage the community as a</p>	<p>School Board/Selectboard/ Planning Commission</p>	<p>Events publicized via social media and town website</p>

Goal	Implementation Strategy	Key Implementer(s)	Future Measures of Progress
<p>community and a resource for the community as a whole.</p>	<p>whole in town and educational enrichment programs and encourage community participation.</p> <p>IX.3(b) The School and Town will continue to explore and implement methods to publicize events and activities to all town residents and other methods to improve communication with the community as a whole.</p> <p>IX.3(c) The School Board will continue to explore alternatives for the high school and build consensus on future choices</p>	<p>School Board/Selectboard/ Planning Commission</p> <p>School Board, town residents</p>	<p>Educational enrichment programs developed</p> <p>More support for any alternative chosen</p>
<p>IX.4 Ensure effective town governance and ensure that all Town facilities, and infrastructure, including water supply and wastewater</p>	<p>IX.4(a) The Selectboard will review Capital Improvement Plan and budget for maintaining the Town’s infrastructure.</p>	<p>Selectboard</p>	<p>CIP discussions occur</p>

Goal	Implementation Strategy	Key Implementer(s)	Future Measures of Progress
<p>facilities, are properly maintained, and appropriately located.</p>	<p>IX.4(b) Identify appropriate re-use for the temporary Fire Station and complete the new station.</p> <p>IX.4(c) Evaluate the benefits of establishing the position of Town Administrator.</p> <p>IX.4(e) Explore opportunities for rehabilitating the old sawmill location and completion of expansion at the recycling center</p> <p>IX.4(f) Finalize acquisition of the Sawmill site.</p>	<p>Selectbd/Fire Department</p> <p>Selectboard</p> <p>Selectboard</p> <p>Selectboard/Conservation Committee/ Friends of Winooski</p>	<p>New Fire Station completed</p> <p>Decision on Town Administrator made</p> <p>Develop a plan for rehabilitation</p> <p>Acquire funding and develop plan</p>
<p>IX.5 Cabot’s ground water quality is maintained, and citizens are aware of preventative measures to protect water quality.</p>	<p>IX.5(a) Maintain the Source Protection Plan for the Cabot Water System and update every three years as required.</p>	<p>Selectboard/contract operator</p>	<p>Report up to date</p>

Goal	Implementation Strategy	Key Implementer(s)	Future Measures of Progress
	<p>IX.7 (b) Develop a financing plan to follow through on engineering recommendations to repair and update the plant</p>		<p>Wastewater system performing well</p>
<p>IX.8 Identify and ensure access to resources for various recreational activities.</p>	<p>IX.8 (a) Continue to develop and maintain a trail system in town for recreational use.</p> <p>IX.8 (b) Identify through signs, maps, and other means, Cabot’s trail facilities, land trust lands, town forests, historical resources, and other desirable public access.</p> <p>areas</p> <p>IX.8 (c) Study the compatibility of motorized and non-motorized recreational use of trails, identify trails which might be safely used by both and, where appropriate, make recommendations for the separation of uses.</p>	<p>Conservation, Trails, and Recreation Committees</p> <p>Trails Committee/ Recreation Committee</p> <p>Trails Committee/ Recreation Committee</p>	<p>trails and public information maintained</p> <p>Signs created, GPS identifiers set, maps available at Town Hall/ kiosks/web pages</p> <p>Development of recommendations</p>

Goal	Implementation Strategy	Key Implementer(s)	Future Measures of Progress

X. CLIMATE AND RESILIENCE

A. Flood and Climate Resilience

After 2011, a year of several major flood disasters, the Vermont Legislature added a requirement that all communities address flood resilience as part of their municipal plans. “Resilience” is an increasingly common term that’s risen to common use after repeated weather disasters. It generally means the ability to “bounce back” after bad things happen, or to adapt to and face repeated disruptions in the future. For a community, resilience means the ability to effectively understand, plan for, come together quickly to respond to and, in a timely manner, recover from disastrous events.

The focus of this plan section is to summarize both natural and manmade hazards Cabot could face in the future, and the strategies we can take to reduce our long-term risks and damages. For more detail on the priority hazards and steps Cabot intends to take, please see the 2025 Cabot Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP).

Flood Resilience: There are two types of flooding that impact communities in the state of Vermont - inundation and flash flooding. Inundation flooding occurs over an extended period and over an extended area of a river’s floodplain, inundating previously dry areas. This type of flooding occurs slowly, but flood waters can cover a large area. Inundation flooding is slow and allows for emergency measures to be put in place. Cabot hasn’t suffered this type of disaster. Being upland, in the headwaters of the Winooski River, with steep slopes leading to valleys, erosive flash flooding is Cabot’s increasing crisis to address.

Flash flooding occurs when heavy precipitation falls over a short period of time. Precipitation falls so quickly that the soil is unable to absorb it, leading to surface runoff. Runoff streams to the lowest channel in an area, the water level rises quickly in upland brooks, and begins to rage downstream.

Flash flooding is dangerous due to the velocity of the water, which can move large boulders, trees, bridges, cars, and buildings. Fast moving water in the stream channel undermines roads and structures and changes the river channel itself, exposing other roads and structures to future flooding damage. Flood debris plugs culverts and bridges, leading to even greater damage. In Vermont, most flood-related damage is caused by flash flooding and fluvial erosion (erosion of stream banks).

Due to steep slopes, two tributaries to the Winooski that flow downstream into the village have caused repeated expensive damage to public infrastructure and private property in the village center, most recently in 2011, 2023 and 2024. In those events, the same dirt roads throughout the town were severely gullied, with bridges and culverts being washed out on Jug Brook Rd, Blodgett Rd, Menard Rd and more. Slope failure behind the fire station led to destabilizing of that structure, and condemnation, in 2023. The Town Clerk's office was also flooded, not for the first time, in 2023.

Floodplains and river corridors have an important role, and need to be managed carefully, to help store excess flood water and capture erosive energy. Development in the floodplain can lead to property damage and risks to health and safety. Development in one area of the floodplain or river corridor can also cause increased risks to other areas by diverting flood flows or flood energy. Debris carried by the floodwater from one place to another also poses a danger. Flooding is worsened by land uses that create impervious surfaces that lead to faster runoff, and past stream modifications that have straightened or dredged channels, creating channel instability.

To protect its floodplains, Cabot has had adopted flood hazard bylaws in place for decades, enforced by the Zoning Administrator. The state, in legislation passed in 2024, will be taking over that administration and enforcement – to build consistency statewide and further reduce damages occurring from flooding.

FEMA administers the National Flood Insurance Program, which provides flood hazard insurance. Cabot residents qualify for the federal insurance, regardless of whether their property is located within a mapped flood hazard area, because the town has adopted and implements flood hazard bylaws to control land development.

Flood Hazard Areas: There are two sets of official maps that govern development in floodplains in Vermont. They are the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) and VT Agency of Natural Resource's River Corridor area maps. FEMA has calculated the floodplain on the FIRMS to show the 100-year flood boundary, or a flood that has a 1% chance of any given year of occurring. This area of inundation is called the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). FIRMS may also show expected base flood elevations (BFEs) and floodways (smaller areas that carry more current). FIRMS are only prepared for larger streams and rivers. The tributaries causing so much erosive damage in Cabot, are not shown as flood hazard areas.

The state hopes to have new FIRM maps available in 2025. Studies have shown that a significant portion of flood damage in Vermont occurs outside of the FEMA mapped areas along smaller upland streams, as well as along road drainage systems that fail to convey the amount of water they are receiving. It should be noted that the small, steep slope streams may not be mapped by FEMA in NFIP FIRMS (Flood Insurance Rate Maps), but flooding along these streams is commonly happening, and should be expected and prepared for. Property owners in such areas, outside of SFHA, are not required to have flood insurance but they can purchase it and it is much less expensive for structures outside the mapped hazard areas. Flash flooding in these reaches can be extremely erosive, jumping outside stream channels to cause damage to road infrastructure, buildings, cutting through the sides of hills

and creating landslide risk. The presence of undersized or blocked culverts can lead to further erosion and streambank/hillside undercutting. Intense, local storms are occurring more frequently, with 9” of rain measured in the July 10, 2023 storm and 5” on July 10, 2024.

By fall 2024, Cabot will complete a detailed study of the two tributaries draining into the Winooski River across Main Street in the village center. Strategies to slow down and reduce the stormwater flow into the village during flash flooding will be chosen and funding applied for to implement the projects. Additional strategies to adapt the historic buildings and infrastructure in the village, to reduce their vulnerability to flood damages, will be encouraged. Strategies being discussed include:

- a buyout of the Cabot Garage in order to replace the double culverts under the building with a much larger box culvert or bridge
- natural or manmade debris catchers in the streams
- catchment into ponds or sidehill floodplains
- flood shields on the town office windows and doors
- replacement bridges and culverts on other dirt roads throughout town, with infrastructure having larger capacity
- applying for funding to conduct detailed study of other problematic, steep slope watersheds in the town

Extended Power Outages, Extreme Heat and Cold Weather Events: Extended power outages are the most common disaster in Vermont. They are more inconvenient than costly, especially compared to the flash flooding, but when an extended outage is combined with either extremely hot or cold weather, it becomes deadly.

Cold has long been a feature of winters, which Vermonters are more accustomed to preparing for. See the 2024 Cabot LHMP for detail on the history of severe winter storms with snow, wind, and ice. The weather trends due to climate change are predicting that Vermont winters will become warmer and wetter. That trend is already in effect. Heavy rainfall on snow, in December 2023, caused widespread flooding issues. Cold temperatures make those wet events more miserable.

In addition to increased flash flooding, Cabot is also experiencing longer periods of summer heat. Particularly for those older than 65 or with underlying conditions, living in temperatures above 85 degrees Fahrenheit for long is life threatening. The death rate in Vermont rises, above average, during these weather events. Cabot has a number of seniors living alone, who could be vulnerable.

Vermont homes have not historically been designed for cooling during hot weather, and broad installation of window air conditioners will only contribute to the global warming causing the extreme weather. Heat pumps are being encouraged via Efficiency Vermont incentives, which do help to keep interior conditions comfortable. New homes can and should be designed to moderate both extreme heat and cold. Cabot Library, although it has limited open hours, is a comfortable cooling center for residents. Some formal provision for a cooling center, that can be available as needed for those who need it, should be created.

Two utilities provide electricity in Cabot, Washington Electric (WEC) and Green Mountain Power (GMP). GMP covers Cabot village and is generally more reliable. WEC is a rural cooperative, with more overhead lines running over forested territory. Weather events that include heavy snow, ice, wind – even a violent summer thunderstorm – can result in outages that have lasted up to 5 days for residents in the hills of Cabot. Increased self-sufficiency via solar panels and backup battery systems, both for individual homes and the community, should be encouraged.

In 2024, Cabot applied for funding for solar panels at both the Willey Building and the wastewater treatment plant. There is discussion about establishing a Resilience Hub, an independently powered community center that can provide for cooling, warming and charging devices.

Drought: Cabot has suffered several summers of drought, affecting agricultural production, and leading to private wells going dry for a period of time. The town does offer water to fill tanks and bottles and could provide information on water storage strategies to help during low water periods.

Building Community Climate Resilience: A sense of community – of knowing neighbors and those who might be vulnerable in an emergency – is key to building and maintaining community resilience. Cabot’s strong sense of community reflects bonding that has been renewed during and following recent flooding disasters, when town residents rallied to help each other. Cabot’s leadership was quick to create a Flood Resilience Task Force following the 2023 flood, which has driven public outreach events and applications to fund the studies to determine future mitigation strategies.

Neighbors in Action provided meals to both victims and volunteers during extreme flood cleanups. Cabot knows how to celebrate and work well together. An “After the Flood” event in summer 2024, just days after repeat flash flooding, combined fun, music, and food with a series of “information stations” to provide resources to promote disaster preparation and adaptation.

A community discussion on how to enhance resilience, in winter 2025, may result in more actions to build a stronger Cabot, including to institutionalize regular opportunities to both work and celebrate together as a community.

B. Goals and Implementation Strategies:

Goal	Implementation Strategy	Key implementer(s)	Future Measures of Progress
Better understand the impact of heavy rains in the town streams and rivers	(a)Initial study of two tributaries in Cabot village (b)Further study of other problem tributaries	Selectbd, Flood Task Force	Decisions on mitigation strategies to gain funding for and undertake Less flood damage
Protect municipal infrastructure and buildings from the potential of flood damage	(a)Identify culverts and bridges needing upsizing, and replace when funding makes possible (b)Apply for funding for flood shields for the town offices (c)Work with landowners in the watersheds to identify and devise other water storage and debris catchment projects d) Pursue a buyout of the Cabot Garage in order to replace the culverts under the building with larger culvert or bridge	Selectbd, Road Foreman, Flood Task Force	Less flood damage

	with implementation (b)LHMP update begun by 2028		
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XI. APPENDICES

A. Community Survey, 2024

Cabot Town Planning Survey – Results Overview

Participants: 98

How long have you lived in Cabot? Average: 22.6 years – Ranging from 1 to 71 years.

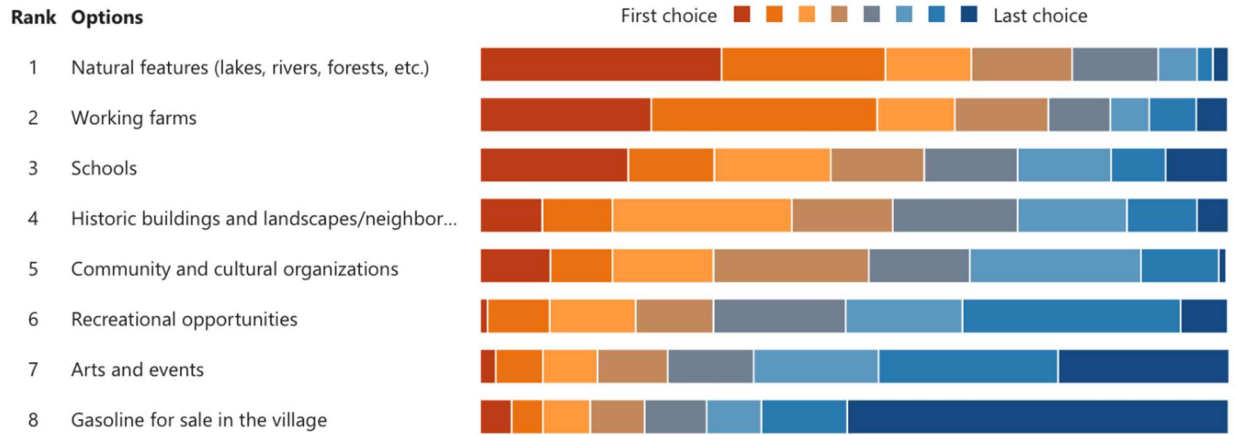
What do you value most about Cabot?



In your opinion, what is the most important issue that the community needs to address?



To what extent do you value the following features of Cabot? (Ranked Choice from most to least Important):

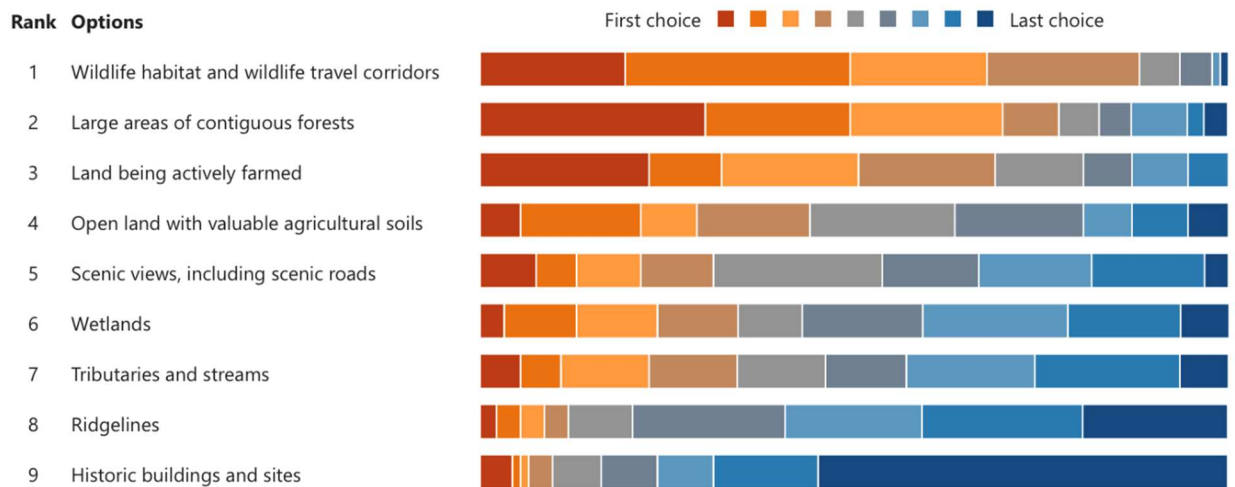


Do you believe that Cabot needs more:

- Single-family housing 55
- Multi-family housing 43
- Housing for the elderly 52
- Housing for the disabled 34



The following resources should be protected when development occurs: (Ranked choice from most to least important)



What recreational opportunities in Cabot do you value most?

30 respondents (36%) answered **trails** for this question.



What, if any, additional businesses do you think are needed in the Town of Cabot?

29 respondents (37%) answered **restaurant** for this question.



Do you believe that Zoning should regulate protection of forest blocks? Like Cluster housing?

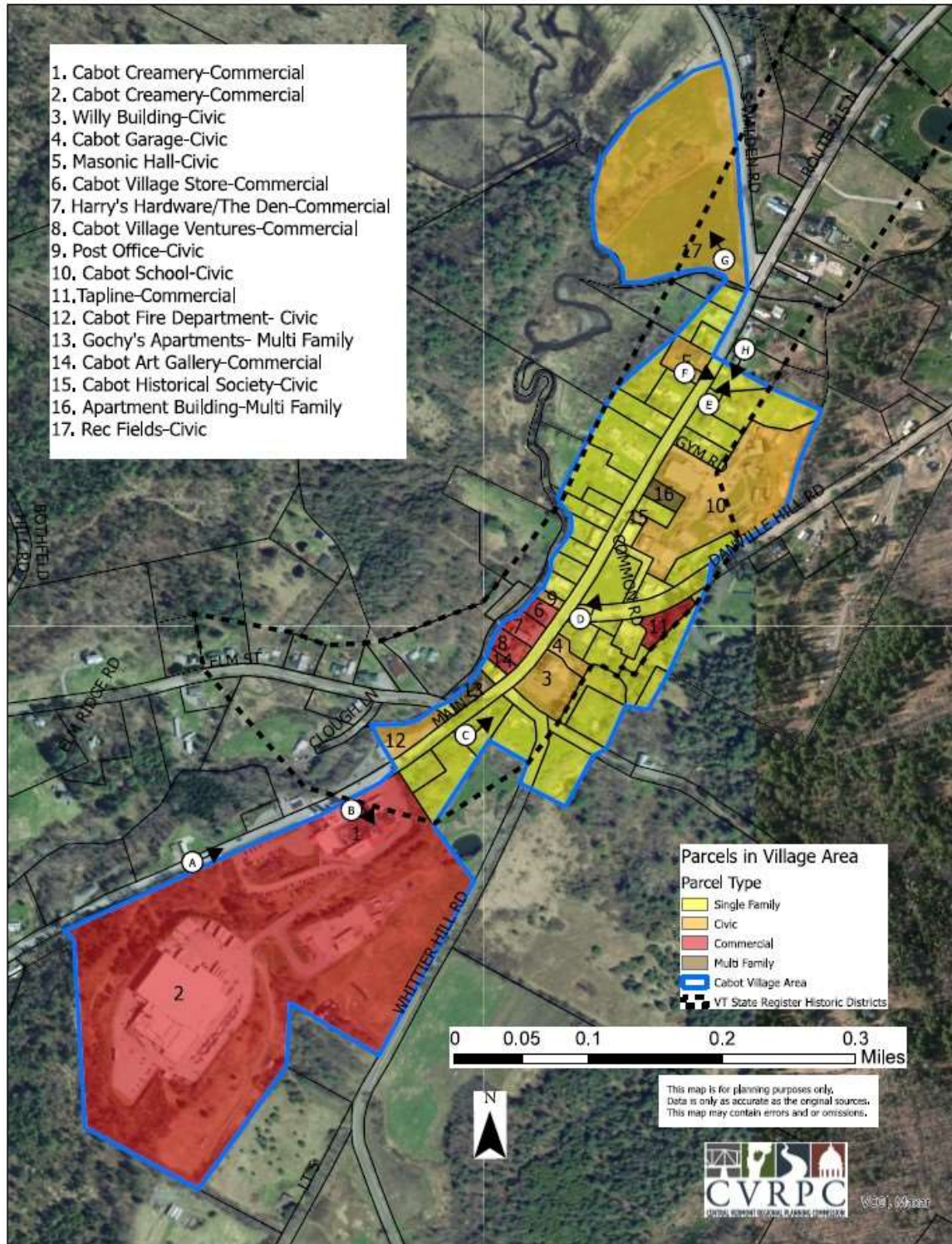
Yes: 42 No: 19

Please help the Planning Commission prioritize the following issues:

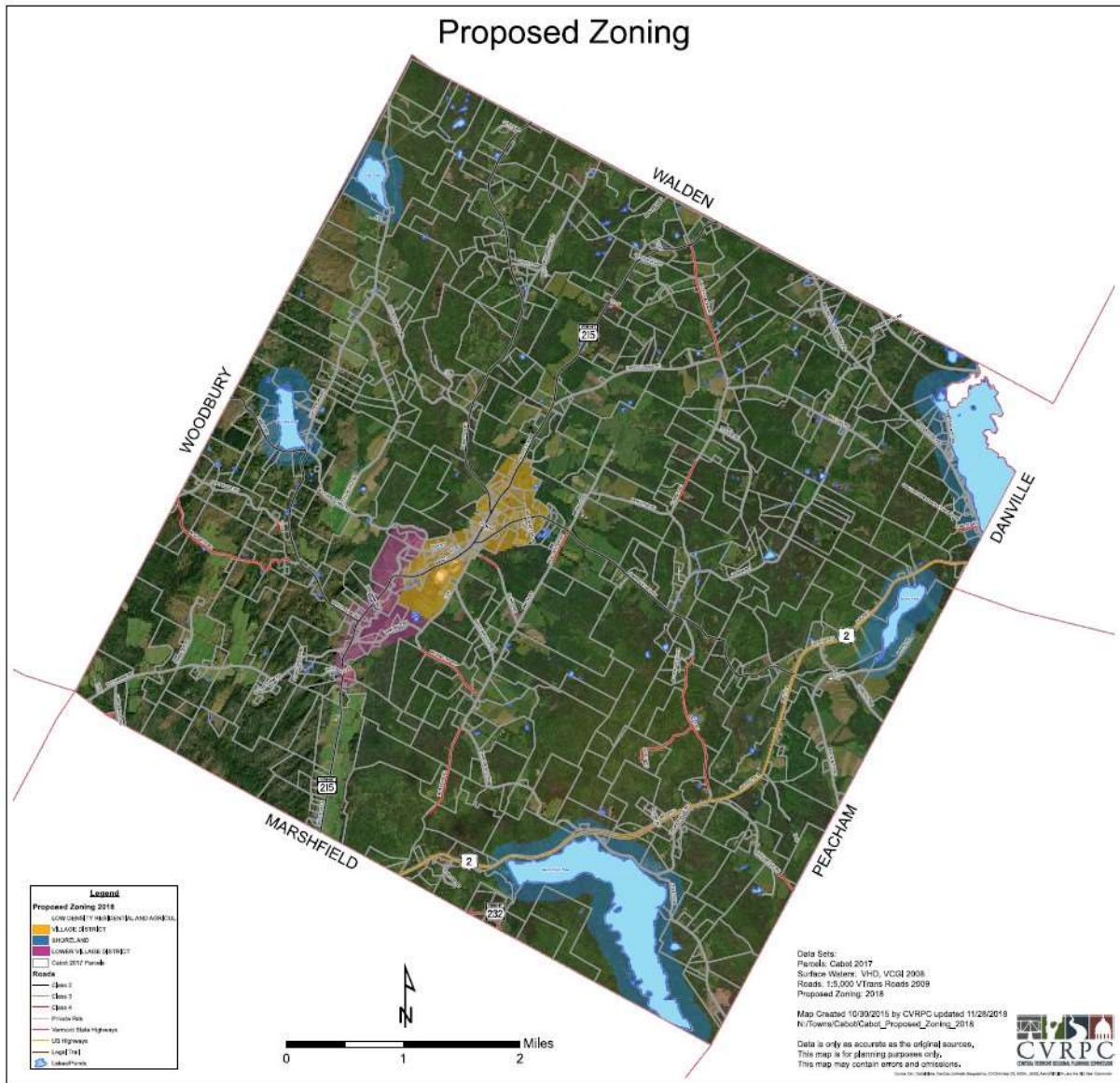
TOP FIVE CHOICES:

1. Retention of open space/natural areas
2. Better cell service/internet
3. School facility planning
4. Affordable housing opportunities
5. Climate change mitigation

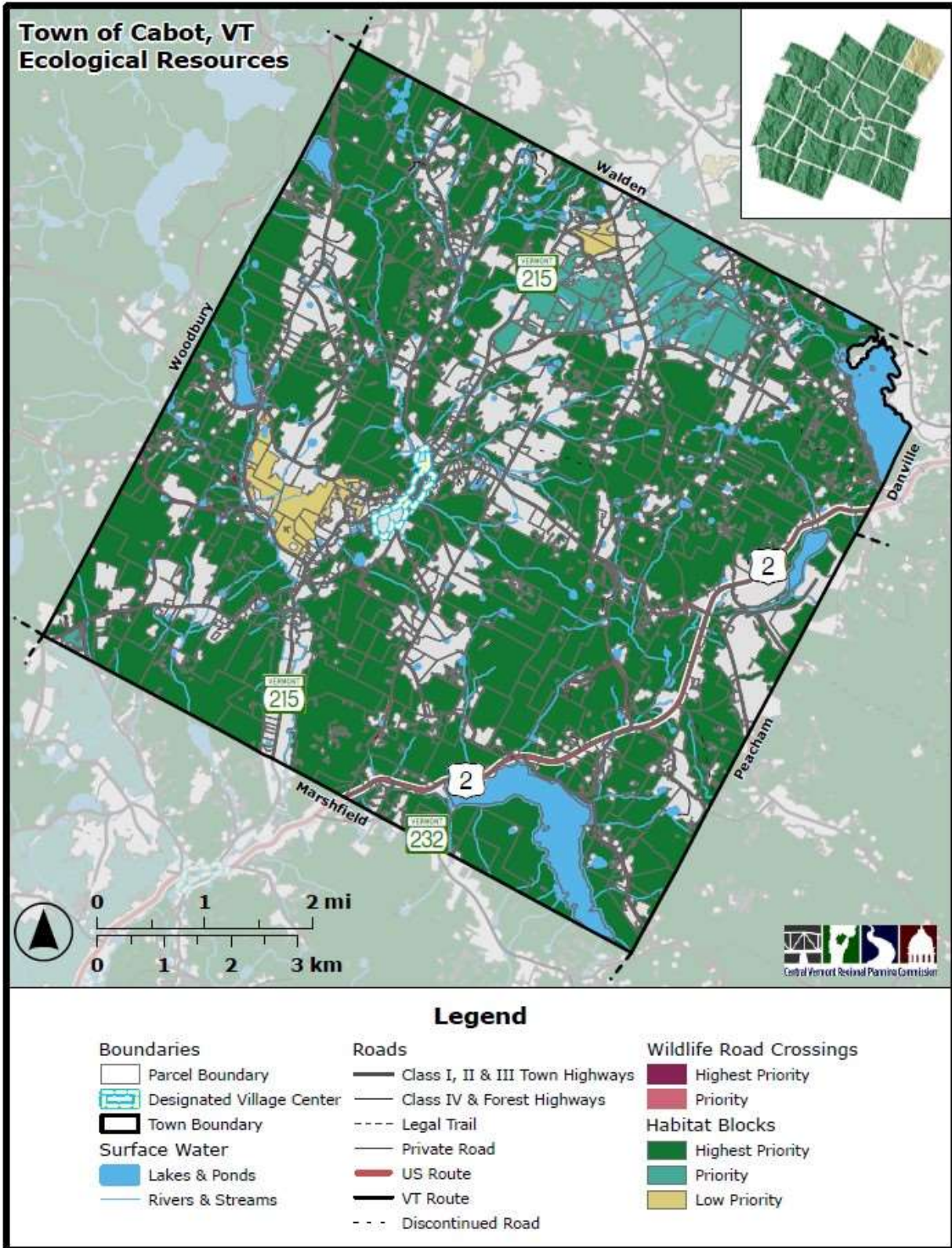
B. Cabot's Designated Village Center, 2022



C. Cabot Zoning Map, 2018



D. Cabot Ecological Resources Map, 2024



E. Fire Department

Emergency Service Task	Priority	Status
<p>The Temporary station.</p> <p>Currently, carcinogens that are produced at emergency scenes are not properly DECON at the temporary facility when equipment/personnel are returned as per NFPA 1500.</p>	<p>EXTREMELY HIGH</p> <p>The health (mentally and physically) of the volunteers is at risk as per NFPA 1500 and countless proven studies.</p> <p>The apparatus is also not protected with a sprinkler system as per NFPA 13</p>	<p>The new Cabot Public Safety Building facility is in the final design phase to meet all NFPA & State of VT requirements. Possible funding is being reviewed by utilizing FEMA and other outside agencies. A new station will also help lower the ISO rating for the Town and be a main complex for all Town municipal emergency services. The building will also house the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) when needed and be a prime candidate for a regional firehouse.</p>
<p>Emergency source of Water.</p> <p>The Fire Department is looking to add additional sites for dry hydrants to the existing 13 locations</p>	<p>Medium</p> <p>Additional water sources are imperative for 2nd supply source availabilities</p>	<p>Two new sites are being considered and are being negotiated with landowners. A tax break is now available to all landowners if the pond has a dry hydrant installed and certified by the Chief and the system provides 1000 GPM of water minimum for 15 min. CFD will utilize grants for 75% of the cost of installation.</p>
<p>Volunteers:</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>The newly formed membership team is steadily increasing the</p>

<p>Increasing Firefighting positions/administration positions to ensure adequate response, especially during the day.</p>	<p>The type of emergencies we now respond to in this day and age is complex regardless of whether it is before, during, or after the call.</p>	<p>membership roster (from 19 to currently 29) to meet town demands/needs. Advance training is applied to all members.</p>
<p>Class 4 road accessibility & private driveways</p>	<p>High</p> <p>Difficulty reaching landowners with full-size equipment. Most of the 7.7 miles of class 4 roads have low-hanging vegetation obstructions preventing larger emergency apparatus from accessing these remote areas. Private driveways mirror the same concern. Private bridges must be engineered certified and rated for the apparatus to cross. Adequate road width and turnaround areas are needed in driveways to permit tanker trucks and other apparatus to reach structures.</p>	<p>Public awareness programs are in place to educate these landowners to trim vegetation, widen roads and install impervious areas for turnaround. A smaller apparatus with very limited pump ability and onboard water storage is being considered.</p>
<p>Radio / Communication</p>	<p>High</p> <p>Our current radios (8 portables and 6 mobiles) that are 15 years old are an equipment model line no longer serviceable as per Motorola.</p>	<p>Grants have been applied for the replacement of the equipment (estimated cost \$95,285.00)</p>

<p>Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)</p>	<p>Extremely High</p> <p>The self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) that the department currently owns (now down from 12 to 9 packs) is discontinued from the manufacturer and recertification of them is unavailable to meet NFPA 1981</p>	<p>Grants have been applied for replacement of 12 packs (estimated cost (\$116,649.00))</p>
<p>First Aid Stabilization Team (FAST Squad)</p>	<p>Extremely High</p> <p>Faster Additional assistance is needed for EMS calls.</p>	<p>The Department has started a FAST Squad consisting of 12 CFD EMS members to respond to EMS calls to help stabilize the patient and perform life-saving measures till a transport agency arrives. CFD FAST Squad should be online around November 1, 2024. A FAST squad cannot transport to the hospital.</p>
<p>Water Tanker</p> <p>Apparatus MUST be replaced after 20 years of service (NFPA 1911),</p>	<p>Extremely High</p> <p>The current tanker is 24 years old and only holds 1600 gallons of water (the smallest tanker in the area). An average structure fire requires an excess of 55,000 to 68,000 gals of water to extinguish. Many times we run low/out of water during firefighting operations.</p>	<p>Sinking funds have been implemented and grants are being applied for a new 3000-gallon tanker. (Estimated replacement cost \$550,431.00) This will also lower the Towns ISO rating.</p>
<p>Fire Fighter Gear</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Budget items are implemented into the</p>

<p>(Maximum firefighter gear life is 10 years- NFPA 1851)</p>	<p>The average cost to outfit a firefighter is \$5500. This includes a helmet, Bunker pants, Firefighter coat, gloves, flashlight, Nomex hood, and boots.</p>	<p>operating budget due to NFPA setting now higher requirements for firefighting gear. Costs have increased. Grants and comparison shopping is an ongoing daily objective.</p>
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