

# West Haven Town Plan

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## Table of Contents

The West Haven Community and Landscape. ...	3
Community Engagement .....	4
Culture, History, and Economy.....	4
Land Use. ....	6
Flood Resiliency.....	10
Natural Environment .....	12
Recreation. ....	21
Community Facilities.....	22
Transportation.....	25
Energy .....	28
Housing.....	29
Executive Summary.....	31



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**RUTLAND REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

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# The West Haven Community and Landscape

## Location and Setting of the Town

West Haven is located in western Rutland County, surrounded by the Towns of Fair Haven, Benson, Dresden (New York), and Whitehall (New York). It is 20 miles west of Rutland, and 30 miles northeast of Glens Falls, New York.

The physical setting of the Town is a reflection of its topography, physiography, and land use. The topography of West Haven is highly variable, ranging from a low of 100 feet at Lake Champlain to a high of 1,080 feet at the top of Bald Mountain. Its physiography reflects the fact that the town lies at the southern extreme of the Champlain Valley. Physiographic regions consist of areas with distinct combinations of relief, geology, soils, and climate.

Land use in West Haven reflects the historical tradition as a self-sufficient farming community. The land use pattern of farms separated by farm and forest land predominated through the 1960s and '70s. This pattern has started to give ground to diffuse residential development as more residents seek employment outside of town.

## Demographic Characteristics

The social and cultural setting of the Town is a reflection of its past and present population. West Haven's population, according to the 2010 Census, was 264, having decreased slightly from 278 in 2000, compared to 273 in 1990 and 240 in 1970. West Haven remains the second least populated community in the Rutland Region.

Despite the stability in the total number of residents, West Haven's population has undergone several significant demographic changes in the past thirty years. The median age of West Haven residents was 50.9 in 2010 (compared to 41.3 years in 2000). This figure represents a jump from the median age of 33.6 in 1990 and just 23.1 in 1970. The ageing baby-boomer population and a decline in the number of children under 18 in the town (down from 63 to 44 between 2000 and 2010) are the primary reasons for the dramatic change. A related trend has been a decline in the average household size, from 2.67

persons per household in 2000 to 2.36 in 2010. As recently as 1970, the average household size was 3.93 persons.

The decrease in average household size is the result of a combination of factors. These include increases in the number and proportion of older couples and single seniors living alone, increases in the number of couples who choose to have fewer or no children, and increases in the number of single parent households. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of people living alone jumped from 19 to 27, while the number of families with children under 18 declined from 33 to 25.

Much of West Haven's population was and is still employed in surrounding towns. In-town employment takes the form of home-based businesses and agriculture. Approximately 23 percent of West Haven residents were reported to be employed in Health Care and Social Assistance occupations. Another 17.7 percent of residents were employed in Educational Service related occupations, and 13.3% were employed in Manufacturing related occupations (Job counts by NAICS Industry Sectors, 2010). Many residents were employed by the retail trade and accommodation/food services sectors.

These general trends are likely to continue in West Haven as the population ages. In the coming years, these changes will begin to affect the need for adjusted housing supply, services, transportation modes, and facilities in West Haven and Rutland County. These trends are highlighted and discussed throughout the Town Plan alongside the needs of current and future residents.

# Community Engagement

## The Community Dinner

On June 5, 2018, the West Haven Planning Commission hosted a community dinner at the Town Hall. Approximately 27 town residents attended to partake in conversations about town assets and prospective town improvements. This dinner was held after a town-wide survey was conducted, and between the two outreach efforts the following input was collected:

West Haven residents love the town’s natural beauty, open space, recreation, landscape, and the fact that it is a small, quiet town. Residents are appreciative of their neighbors and their community, and expressed interest in having more town-wide community functions.

The survey also yielded areas in town that residents think could be improved: population loss, town event notice / town bulletin board, town meeting day, zoning, and support for small businesses.

## Community Engagement Implementation Actions

Host more frequent community gatherings, to foster a greater sense of community and volunteerism.

Develop the Emergency Management Director (EMD) position to include a strategy for a town emergency alert chain.

Brainstorm a creative method for advertising town meetings and town events.

# West Haven Culture, History, and Economy

West Haven’s historic and cultural resources are tied to the town’s agricultural past. The majority of the town’s 11 sites listed on the State Register of Historic Places are homes or agricultural buildings dating from the turn of the 20th Century, when the local population stood at nearly 800 residents. The small West Haven village traces its history and some of its key buildings to the earliest settlements in the community.

Agriculture remains important in West Haven, a small farming community with many architectural remnants of its long agricultural history. It is the farms and farm land, however, with their historic houses, barns, and other out-buildings, that tell the story of everyday life in 19th century West Haven.

Cultural resources include a wide range of features, institutions, organizations, interrelationships, and beliefs that impact daily lives. Cultural resources in the Town of West Haven include the old elementary school, the local church, the town hall (which is the former grange hall), the town museum, the volunteer fire department, and any activities set up to increase the sense of community in West Haven.

Historic resources are important; they stand as powerful and readily visible reminders of the past and present. Historic buildings also make a major contribution to the celebrated Vermont environment



that is crucial to both the area's economic prosperity and to personal well-being. The West Haven Historical Society was incorporated on July 12, 2000, with the mission of collecting, preserving, and exhibiting anything related to history of the town.

The Historical Society's accomplishments include the restoration and relocation of the old Center School for re-use as the Society's museum. The Society is also in the process of collecting artifacts that pertain to the history of West Haven, including old town reports and pictures.

The town has a significant source of archeological artifacts at the Galick Farm property within The Nature Conservancy's Helen W. Buckner Preserve at Bald Mountain. The South Champlain Historical Ecology project has found thousands of artifacts dating back thousands of years, and the site continues to be excavated to this day.

Threats to historic and archeological resources in the town do not appear to be significant. Archeological resources could be affected by increased water levels or flooding of shoreline areas and by unauthorized collection. Historic resources could be affected by deferred maintenance and deterioration and development that alters the character of historic areas.

### **Town Economy**

In 2011, there were three major private sectors established in Town, including Goods Producing (animal production, agriculture, and silviculture) and Service Providing (truck transportation and performing arts/spectator sports). Other employment



in Town included Government sector industries and home occupations.

The Home Occupations present in West Haven are varied, but largely customary to Vermont and the region. They include (but aren't limited to) diversified agriculture (including organic produce), dog training, artist home studios, knitters and other craft artists.

### **Economic Development Implementation Actions**

- Encourage residents to join the Fair Haven / West Haven Front Porch Forum Page
- Encourage residents to post on front porch forum if they have a home occupation.
- Encourage production of farm products.

## Land Use

The Future Land Use Section is shaped by the findings and recommendations made in all other elements of the Plan. It translates and synthesizes ideas on a wide range of topics into a coherent policy on future development. The Future Land Use Section is where the Town “puts together all of the pieces” of the planning “puzzle.”

While goals, objectives, and various maps help define the town’s vision for the future, the Future Land Use section serves as a guide for the creation or amendment of programs (including bylaws) that implement the Town’s vision. Local land use controls, for example, translate the desired development concept into a clear, attainable, and enforceable land use program.

As required by state law, the Future Land Use Plan contains both text and a Future Land Use Map. The future land use map displays the desired future development patterns recommended by the Plan, while the future land use text explains the basis or logic for the pattern and the desired sequence of land development.

To ensure that the distinction between the town plan and zoning remains clear, the future land use map in this plan is conceptual. The lines showing the edge of districts are deliberately blurred and generalized. The map does not reflect features such as property lines because property lines change over time. Moreover,



property lines represent a level of mapping detail that does not “mesh” with the generalized nature of the data and analysis used in preparing this plan.

The conceptual future land use plan for West Haven contains three land use districts. The characteristics of the land in these three districts suggest different planning needs, issues, and community objectives. The districts shown on the future land use map are intended to establish basic guidelines for future land use and intensity. The town’s zoning should translate the goals of this plan into specific standards that regulate land development.

### **Settlement District**

The Settlement District contains the Town’s existing built-up areas and suggests where future development should be most compact in West Haven. It is divided into two areas of historic settlement.

One portion covers the center of West Haven and takes in West Haven village and a small surrounding area. The second portion covers the small built up area along Main Road, Hackadam Road and portions of River Road in eastern West Haven. The district, which covers approximately one tenth of the town, consists of a relatively flat, low plateau in West Haven village and varied terrain elsewhere.

The Settlement District contains the largest concentration of residential development in West Haven. It also contains the community's public buildings and institutions. Access to the parts of the Settlement District is very good, given its location and the presence of town highways.

The area, in general, is characterized by a mix of open and wooded lands. Residential and agricultural uses share the district, giving it a separate appearance and character than other, more agrarian or forestry- oriented parts of the community.

Natural features within the district include limited areas of agricultural and forest soils.

### **Future Development**

The potential for future development in the Settlement District is constrained by soils with poor suitability for septic disposal.

Otherwise, because of its location, proximity to services, and natural features, growth can be accommodated with relatively minor impact.

Specific recommendations for the Settlement District include the following:

- Future growth in West Haven should be targeted for this district;
- Regulations should permit a mix of housing types and affordability levels;
- Lot layout, building design, should enhance the area's character and help maintain the balance of agriculture, forest, and residential uses;
- Water supplies should be protected through

- careful siting and design of septic facilities;

Development should occur at a density that reflects existing conditions in the district. Wherever possible, the Town encourages developments to use the least amount of land possible for private residential uses and in order to help retain land for agriculture.

### **Agricultural District**

The Agricultural District is the largest district in West Haven. It occupies roughly one-half of the town and takes in areas not covered by the Settlement District or the Conservation District.

The Agricultural District contains and seeks to maintain West Haven's important agricultural resources - farmland, agricultural soils, and forest soils. Natural features in the District include significant natural areas, deeryards and sensitive areas.

The area is characterized by active farmland intermixed with forests and homes throughout the rolling landscape. The preservation of agricultural and forest resources and farms is the primary objective of this district.

### **Future Development**

Development in the Agricultural District has not been extensive in recent years. However, because of the attraction rural living has for many people, the potential for growth pressure is real.

As is the case in the Settlement District, the soils' limited capacity for on-site sewage disposal is the primary constraint to development. Furthermore, access to some parts of the District is limited.

Specific recommendations for the Agricultural District include the following:

- Subdivisions should be designed to preserve
- "Farmable" lots;
- Roads should be maintained to permit easy
- transportation of agricultural commodities;
- Natural areas should be avoided by development;
- Water supplies should be protected through

- careful design and siting of septic facilities and through the use of best management practices;

Development in the Agricultural District should, to the greatest extent possible, maintain the low-intensity, active use character of the land. The Town encourages the continued development of agricultural and forestry enterprises in this district. While residential development is encouraged to take place in the Settlement District, very low intensity construction can take place in a manner that is consistent with this Plan.

### **Conservation District**

The Conservation District contains West Haven’s most important habitat and natural resource lands.

The District, which takes up approximately 40% of the town, is predominately characterized by tall hills, steep slopes, wetlands, and stream corridors

Specific natural features in the district include Bald Mountain, East Bay and its associated marshes, numerous deeryards, and several significant wildlife habitats and communities. These areas are home to exceptional natural habitats.

### **Future Development**

There has been little development in the Conservation district in recent years. Much of the land, including most of the lower peninsula, has been placed under permanent conservation easements.

Lands included in the district are generally unsuitable for development because of the poor soils, steep slopes, poor access, and the presence of many natural habitats of importance to the town.

Furthermore, access to much of the district is extremely limited.

Specific recommendations for the district include the following:

- All forms of development should be directed to other areas of the town whenever possible;
- Development that does take place in the conservation district must avoid important natural areas;
- Public access to important resource areas should be retained as much as possible.

Development in the Conservation District should be limited to very low impact uses. The Town, as well as The Nature Conservancy and other major stewards within the district, are committed to preserving and making public use of the unique natural environments in an unobtrusive manner. Year-round residences should be prohibited; development density of allowed uses should occur at 25 acres per lot.

### **Land Use Goals**

The following strategies suggest ways that West Haven’s land use goals and objectives should be implemented. The Town should:

Maintain the historic settlement pattern of a more densely settled village, surrounded by working farm and forest land.

Develop a program to ensure that agriculture remains a viable land use.

Stabilize property taxes for farmers and forest land owners enrolled in the Vermont Use Value Appraisal programs.

Create, update and implement zoning and other bylaws that promote the land use and other goals of this plan.

Create property tax incentives to conserve farmlands, river access points, critical trails, scenic areas, and key historic areas. If possible, couple incentives with right-of-first refusal held by the town.

Assemble information on how to site and design development that promotes the goals of the town and the landowner. Include a listing of voluntary conservation measures and resource people.

### **Capability of Land for Development**

The potential for future development in West Haven is



directed, in part, by a variety of environmental limitations of the land. In general, the three most significant limitations are steep slopes, soils that do not work with on-site septic systems, and areas prone to flooding.

### **Steep Slopes**

Areas with steep slopes are generally not conducive to development. They pose significant obstacles with respect to construction, potential erosion from the loss of vegetation, and the installation of septic systems that will filter correctly. The removal of vegetation from steep areas exposes loose soils and increases the speed at which rainwater can carry remaining plants and soil away from the site and into rivers.

In Vermont, the installation of septic systems on slopes greater than 20% are prohibited. In West Haven, all development on steep slopes is discouraged. Where logging is to take place, selective cutting is favored over clear-cutting.

Steep slopes are present in West Haven along the eastern and western borders of the town. Areas exceeding a 25% slope account for just under 25% of all land in the town.

### **Septic Suitability**

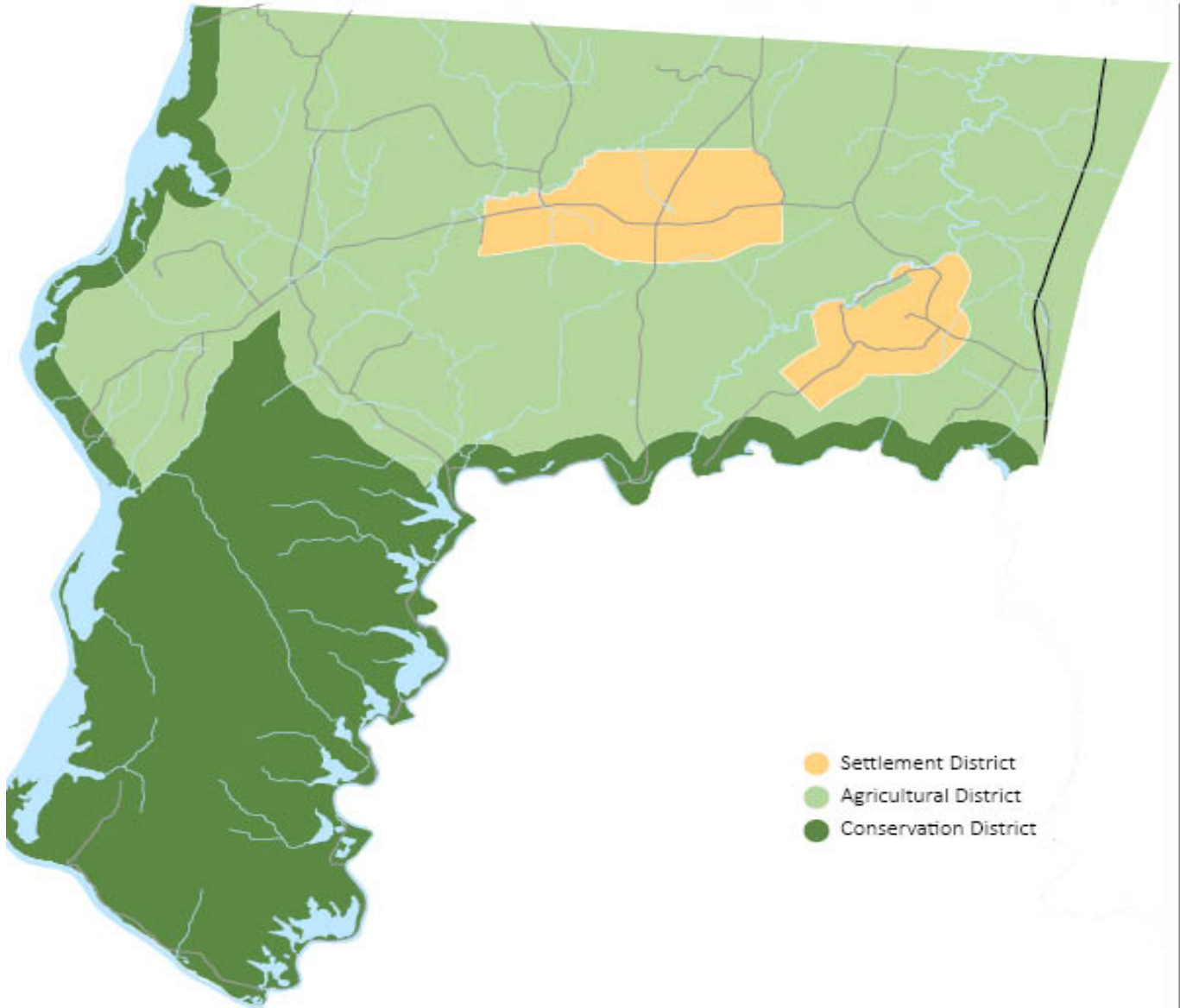
The majority of West Haven's soils are not conducive to the installation of traditional on-site wastewater septic systems.

The most common soil association in the community, Kingsbury-Vergennes, contains high proportions of dense clay, which does not drain water well. Traditional leech fields, which are designed to allow clear, but unfiltered, wastewater, to slowly percolate through soils, are less effective in these conditions. Leech fields installed in these types of soils tend to force unfiltered water to the surface, which may pose a health hazard. Other areas of the community contain soils with high proportions of gravel and/or sand, which drains water very quickly. As a result, wastewater from traditional on-site septic systems returns to the water table too quickly, before soils have had a chance to act as a filter. That water may re-enter the groundwater system from which drinking wells draw.

The State of Vermont has a statewide permit requirement for onsite disposal of wastewater. Standards were imposed requiring a minimum depth of soil above bedrock and the water table and infiltration rates. A provision was also added exempting all single and two family house lots of over 10 acres in size from obtaining a permit. This exemption was heavily used in West Haven on account of the poor soils and lower costs associated with unregulated septic systems.

In 2007, Vermont's Wastewater System and Potable Water Supply Rule came into effect, regulating water supply and wastewater systems. Landowners must work with the State and our regional State Permit Specialist to obtain permitting for new, replaced and updated systems

West Haven Future Land Use Districts



## **Flood-Hazard Areas**

Among the greatest challenges associated with development in Vermont is dealing with the flat, well-drained lands bordering streams and rivers. Compared with much of the state's land, it is easy to access, build on, and install functional septic systems on. At the same time, those lands are prone to flooding from spring thaws or heavy rainstorms. As a result, they are generally considered unsuitable for construction, but can remain prime locations for agriculture and recreation.

Flood-prone areas are generally distinguished into two categories: floodways and flood hazard areas (or floodplains). Floodways are areas in or immediately next to the traditional watercourse of the stream. Flood hazard areas are usually described as a '100-year flood plain', meaning that in any given year, the odds are 1 in 100 that flooding will occur.

Flooding can cause significant damage, costs, and injuries to homes or other structures built within flood hazard areas, as has been demonstrated throughout Vermont and the United States.

In 2006, Flood Hazard Area Regulations that met the minimum requirements of FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program were incorporated into the West Haven Zoning Regulations.

## **Flood Resilience**

The State of Vermont has identified areas along stream banks where development would be prone to damage from inundation type flooding or stream bank erosion type damage. In response to this research, the State has developed model bylaws, development recommendations, and special flood/

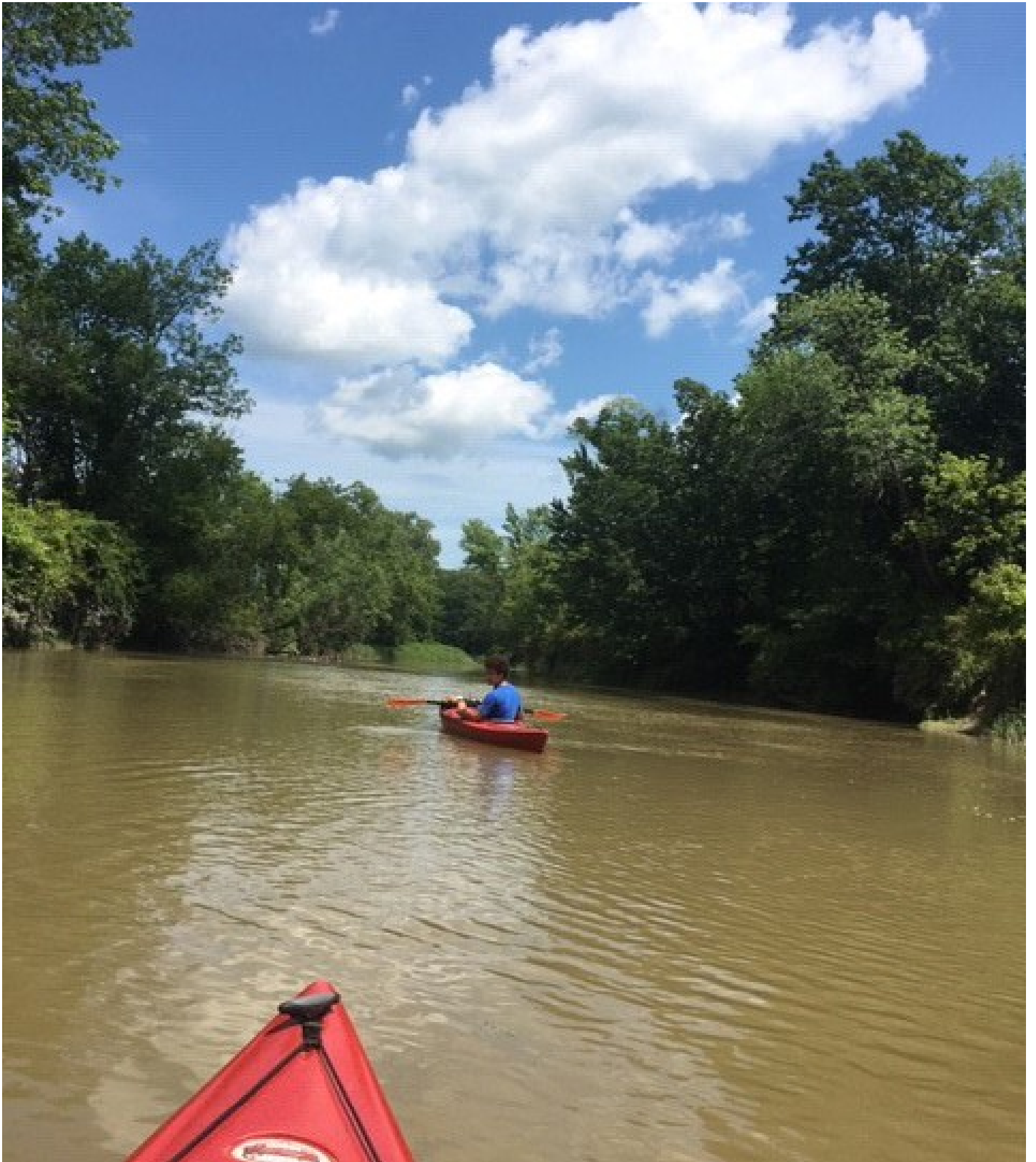
erosion education for towns in an effort to help towns build flood resilience programs. West Haven has already adopted flood regulations for the areas of town that fall in the FEMA special flood hazard area. The town does not have specific river corridor bylaws, but fortunately, the town's river corridors mostly coincide with the FEMA special flood hazard areas, giving the river corridors some level of regulation. Additionally, this fact imparts that by adopting the State's river corridor bylaws, the town will not be subjecting additional lands to regulation, but will instead be subjecting the FEMA flood hazard areas to additional regulation.

The town now has the opportunity to review and adopt the State's model bylaws, in an effort to add more protections to the FEMA special flood hazard area and to put in place official river corridor protections bylaws.

### **Flood Resiliency Implementation Actions**

Invite the Rutland RPC to host informational meetings about the State's River Corridor Protection program.

Develop the Emergency Management Director (EMD) position to include a strategy for a town emergency alert chain.



## The Natural Environment

Major natural resources in the Town include its agricultural and forest lands, mineral resources, wildlife habitats, wetlands, lakes and ponds, rivers and streams, and recreation areas. Many of these resources contribute directly to local economic activities, such as farming and forestry. Resources may also contribute indirectly, for example by attracting travelers and tourists who purchase goods and services in the Town. By making West Haven a desirable place to live, these resources also contribute to the Town's high quality of life.

Lands within West Haven with high potential for agricultural production are found throughout the Town but are focused in its eastern section. Lands with high potential for forestry production are concentrated on the rolling hills of West Haven's western section.

Mineral resources, including sand and gravel, are present to a limited extent.

Important surface water resources (lakes and ponds, rivers and streams) include the Poultney River, Lake Champlain, Coggman Pond, Billings Marsh Pond, and the Hubbardton River. Groundwater resources include the Town's aquifers, which appear to have their greatest potential along the base of the Great Ledge. Water resources also include wetlands, which are found throughout the Town.



## **Physical Setting and Geology**

West Haven is located at the southernmost end of the Champlain Lowland region. The Town owes its unique shape to the Poultney River and Lake Champlain. These waterbodies played major roles in the formation of West Haven's wetlands and marshes, home to many diverse ecosystems. The natural communities that develop in a region are highly influenced by underlying geological and topographical characteristics. The

exposed bedrock of Bald Mountain within the Buckner Preserve, the glacial till along its flanks, and the heavy lake bottom, pluvial and recent sediments deposited by retreating glaciers, all form the varied environments that characterize the Town. These landscape features vary in elevation from 100 feet along Lake Champlain to 1,080 feet at the summit of Bald Mountain.

### **Soils**

West Haven is made up of many different soil types, and their individual qualities directly affect the capabilities and possibilities to support varying uses.

The most common soils in the Town are ones generally well suited for the cultivation of crops but have slow permeability and high water tables, making them undesirable for septic leach fields. These soils generally occur in low lying, sediment filled areas

Soils found on the mountains, hills and ridges of West Haven consist of loamy till and are often found

overlying slate and schist. These soils vary in depth from shallow to moderately deep, and are well drained. In areas where these soils are shallow, they are poorly suited for cultivated crops, pasture, trees, and most development. These soils also support many fragile ecosystems containing rare plant and animal species.

Deep and well drained soils are found along present and past river and stream channels. These soils have high potential for cultivation as well as the possibility of development as sand and gravel resources, but are not good locations for permanent structures because of flooding potential.

### **Agriculture Resources**

Agriculture is the foundation of a highly valued rural lifestyle, an important economic activity, and a significant feature of the Vermont landscape. Residents have expressed a desire to maintain the Town's open spaces and rural atmosphere. The continuation of working landscapes helps preserve these qualities appreciated by local residents.

Land capable of supporting agricultural uses requires prime agricultural soils as well as that with moderate slope, adequate parcel size, and access.



Soils suitable for agricultural use are scattered throughout West Haven, with larger contiguous areas limited to the flatter northwest and south central areas of the Town. Prime and statewide agricultural soils only constitute about 16% of West Haven's acreage, and few tracts of land in the Town consist entirely of soils capable of supporting agricultural operations. Because of these limitations, many farmers rely on lower quality soils to support their operations, or diversify their business with sugaring or grazing operations.

The viability of continuing West Haven's traditional working landscape is dependent on factors outside of the soil resources of the town. Limiting factors such as highly variable and uncertain commodity prices, the loss of local markets, and the conversion of agricultural land to other uses such as residential development can work against the existence of

farming related activities.

Supporting working landscapes means supporting the rural characteristics that help identify West Haven. Many programs are available to aid in the continuation of farming. The statewide "Current Use" program helps alleviate undue taxation on large tracts of farmed land. The Town should support local agricultural and value-added silvicultural products by encouraging farm stands, farmer's markets, community gardens and farm-to-school initiatives wherever feasible.

### **Mineral Resources**

West Haven's mineral resources are primarily sand, gravel, and shale. These are important as raw materials, and are used widely in construction-related activities and processes.

The process by which the extraction of these resources occurs must acknowledge and address conflicts that can arise concerning environmental effects of the extraction, as well as the proximity of the potential site to other land uses such as residential development.





## **Forestry**

Silviculture has a long history in the region. Lands capable of supporting forestry are critical to the forest products and fuel wood industries, as well as providing benefits such as wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities. Many of these benefits are not associated with values found in commercial forestry, but are more general, benefiting all of West Haven's residents.

High quality forest lands are scattered throughout the Town, with the greatest concentration found in the flatter north central portion. Aside from chemical and physical characteristics, other factors affecting the capability of land to support forestry include parcel size, contiguous acreage, access, land use, and forest type and quality.

## **Wildlife Habitats**

The benefits provided by wildlife habitats and other natural and fragile areas are numerous. They contribute to the regional economy by attracting travelers, recreation seekers, and wildlife admirers as well as add to the community's character and sense of place.

West Haven's wildlife resources are diverse. The Town has a large array of natural communities, supported by varied landscape features such as Lake Champlain, the Poultney River, large wetlands, and many marshes. The wetlands and marshes provide migratory birds a unique place to rest during their travels along the Atlantic flyway. These natural areas are worthy of attention and protection as the state's prime representatives of Champlain Valley flora and fauna.

Deer wintering areas, natural heritage sites incorporating rare plants and animals, and fishery resources can all be found in West Haven. Deer wintering areas are predominantly located in areas in low, south facing slopes and along watercourses, and consist of approximately ten percent of the Town's land area. West Haven hosts many rare plants, uncommon bird species and rare reptiles.

## **Forest and Wildlife Habitat Connectivity**

In 2008, the Staying Connected Initiative identified areas in West Haven as important lands, part of a network of connected habitats linking the Green

Mountains to the Adirondacks for wide ranging mammals. Critical Habitat Connectivity areas in West Haven connect adjacent forested blocks of "stepping stone" habitat, typically blocks greater than 5,000 acres. Here, road corridors and/or fragmented forest cover separate larger forest habitat blocks. These areas are places where land use most threatens connectivity for wide ranging mammals. Landscape features that support connectivity (e.g. riparian habitat along streams and rivers, linear strips of forest cover in otherwise developed areas and hedgerows, woodlots/small forest blocks) are especially important in these areas. Accordingly, land use management will ideally not destroy and/or would restore these features.

The State of Vermont Agency of Natural Resources has continued this effort and has updated the maps (page 17) to show which blocks of forest are important for maintaining forest health and habitat connectivity.

The town of West Haven should coordinate efforts to protect its valuable natural resources with the organizations discussed in this chapter to further the goals of this plan. While much has been accomplished in West Haven, many of the rare plant and animal sites, as well as wetlands and other important habitats are not currently protected.

## **Land Conservation**

Decisions regarding use of the land should consider the impact on these natural resources. One private landholder in West Haven, The Nature Conservancy, is working to preserve the many diverse and ecologically important plant and animal communities in the Town. Much of their landholdings can be found in the southern tip of West Haven, as well as along the Poultney River. Lands conserved by the Nature Conservancy, as well as other conservation programs are presently protecting many fragile ecosystems found along steep slopes, deer wintering habitat, and wetlands.

Much of West Haven surrounds the southern end of Lake Champlain, an area characterized by an ecologically rich landscape of undeveloped lake and river shoreline, deep emergent wetlands, calcareous cliffs, and oak-hickory woodlands. The Eastern New York / Vermont chapters of the Nature Conservancy has protected over 8,000 acres in the Southern Lake

Champlain Valley including over 5 miles of Poultney River shore in New York, along with two significant holdings within West Haven. This landscape-scale project is a bi-state partnership: Eastern New York and Vermont Chapters share site-based staff and office space.

### **Watersheds**

A watershed is a distinct, topographically defined land area that drains into a single river, river system, or standing body of water. The activities taking place in a watershed play a critical role in the quality of the water draining from it, and water quality awareness is an important key to maintaining a healthy watershed.

The eastern half of West Haven lies in the Poultney River watershed, while the western half of the Town drains directly into the Lake Champlain watershed. Much of the eastern portion of the town actually drains into the Hubbardton River, a large tributary to the Poultney River.

### **Surface Water**

Surface water resources, which include lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, and wetlands, provide many important benefits. For example, surface waters support economic activities such as agriculture; residential activities such as drinking and cleaning, and recreational activities such as swimming and boating. They also serve as habitat for wildlife and as an important component of the hydrologic cycle.

West Haven's primary water bodies – the Poultney and Hubbardton rivers – are both used for recreational and educational opportunities, as well as providing wildlife habitat and harboring archeological resources. In June 1991, the Lower Poultney River was designated as an Outstanding Resource Water (ORW) because of its exceptional natural, cultural, and scenic values.

Lakes and ponds constitute the other surface water resources in West Haven. Major lakes and ponds include Lake Champlain, Coggman Pond, and Billings Marsh Pond. These resources offer recreational opportunities as well as supporting warmwater fisheries. Recently, the discovery of aquatic invasive species, such as the water chestnut, potentially limits their uses. The Nature Conservancy has launched an eradication campaign to manage these aquatic plant

infestations.

Discharges to the surface waters in West Haven occur from a variety of sources and involve a wide range of pollutants. Pollution occurs in the form of point source pollutants, or those discharged directly into the water body, and non-point source pollutants, which can include agricultural and other surface runoff that affect the water quality of the rivers and streams. When surface waters become polluted, humans can be affected directly through exposure to pollutant concentrations in the aquatic environment, or indirectly through exposure to secondary impacts, such as algal blooms associated with excessive nutrient discharges. Incidental contact with contaminated water, as well as the consumption of contaminated water or aquatic organisms can also affect human and animal health.

### **Wetlands**

Wetlands are land areas that are saturated with water at least part of the year and include marshes, swamps, sloughs, fens, and mud flats and bogs. Wetlands provide important wildlife habitats, but also provide other benefits such as storing storm water runoff, purifying surface and groundwater supplies, recharging aquifers, controlling erosion, and providing areas for recreation.

Wetland losses may be incurred both directly and indirectly. In addition to direct loss of acreage, the quality of the habitat may deteriorate due to several factors– the infestation of exotic weeds, vulnerability to a variety of pollutants; litter from recreational users; and atmospheric pollutants that alter chemical compositions of wetland waters. Because of their many beneficial functions, direct loss of wetlands due to filling can have dramatic ecological effects besides habitat losses.

The majority of West Haven's wetlands are found along the shore of Lake Champlain and East Bay; along the banks of Coggman Creek and the Hubbardton River; and in the northeast corner of Town. Horton Marsh, East Bay Marsh, Schoolhouse Marsh, Billings Marsh, and Coggman Marsh comprise the significant portion of West Haven's 1,300 acres of wetlands.

# West Haven Forest Blocks and Forest Connectivity



## Forests and Habitat

- Priority Forest Blocks
- Highest Priority Interior Forest Blocks
- Highest Priority Riparian Connectivity
- Highest Priority Forest Connectivity Blocks

## Ground Water

Ground water is water that has infiltrated into the soil through sand, gravel, or rock. The areas where groundwater is stored are called aquifers. An aquifer is a geologic formation containing enough water to yield significant quantities to wells and springs. Places where groundwater is replenished by surface waters are known as recharge areas. Groundwater is drawn from aquifers through wells. Areas surrounding wells are called areas of influence. In the same way that pollutants introduced from watersheds can affect the water quality of streams, rivers, and lakes, contaminants can be introduced into groundwater supplies through areas of influence as well as through direct discharge to the subsurface (as through an abandoned well or leaky storage tank). Groundwater pollution in rural areas is primarily associated with

agricultural practices, road salt, and septic tank problems.

Groundwater is a critical water resource for West Haven. It meets the residential, agricultural, and commercial needs of town. Groundwater in the town is usually of high quality and quantity. According to the Water Supply Division of the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, 95 wells have been recorded for West Haven between 1967 and 2007. Wells drilled before data was kept by the department and still operating are unaccounted for in this analysis. Yields of these wells vary widely.

The approximate location of aquifers and recharge areas have been developed through geology, soils and well log data. The limestone and dolomite bedrock found to the east and west of Bald Mountain are conducive to the occurrence of bedrock aquifers. The eastern edge West Haven along the Great Ledge has been identified as the most productive areas in Town.

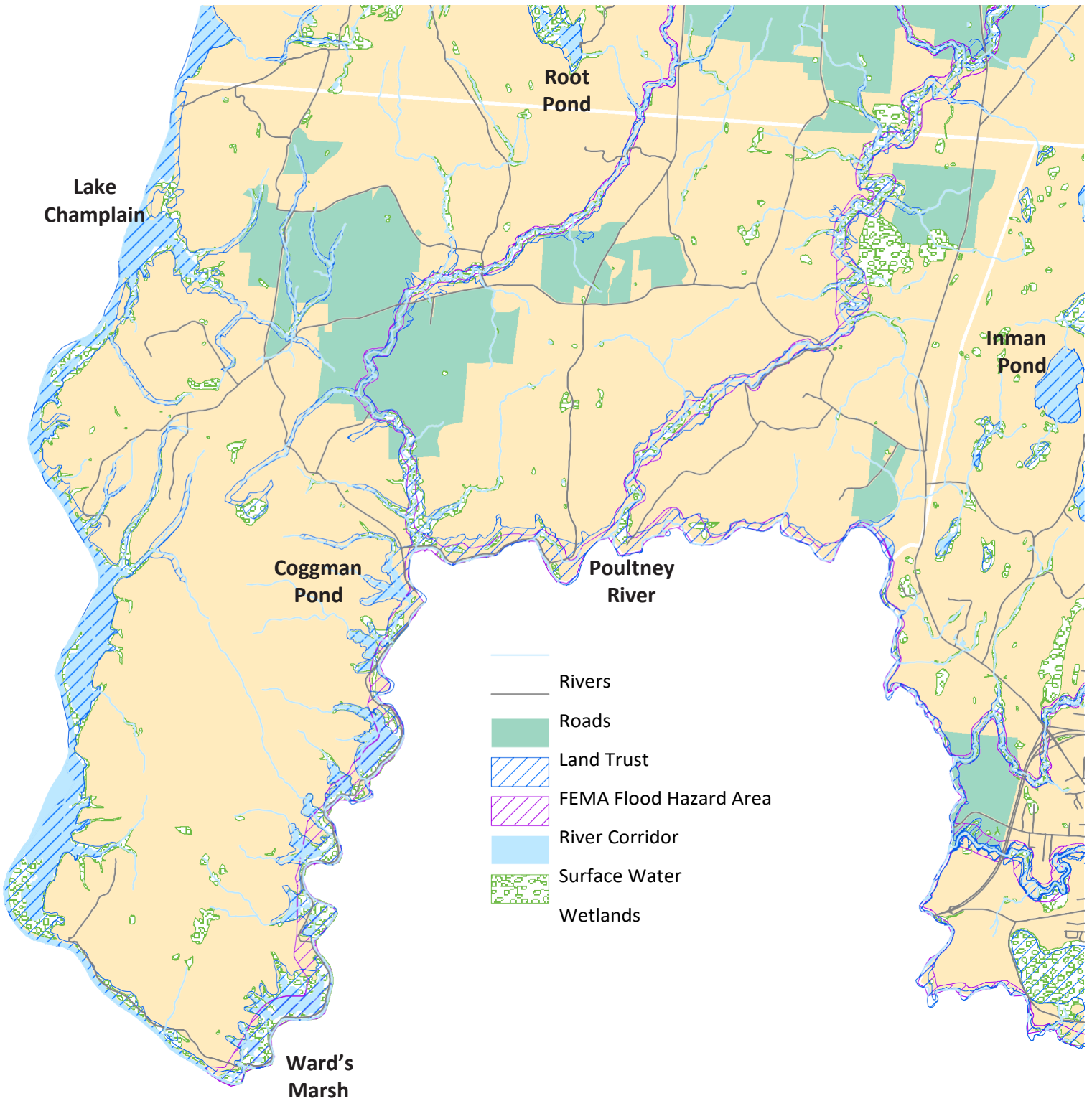
## Scenic Resources

In the course of planning for West Haven's future, it is important that the presence of high quality open space and scenic resources, broad scenic areas as well as scenic landmarks, are recognized and the integrity of such resources is preserved. Scenic resources have aesthetic, historical and economic value. Siting of future construction, as well as community facilities and infrastructure, should always consider the potential impact on the aesthetic qualities of the community and preserve the undisturbed integrity, wherever possible, of West Haven's quality scenic and open space resources. Scenic resources enhance the quality of life of West Haven's residents, but these resources are fragile. Use of these areas must be balanced with their protection and preservation so that misuse and overuse do not destroy the delicate balance of form and pattern that defines scenic beauty.

West Haven residents have identified the view from Bald Mountain, Buckner Preserve, and views along the Poultney River corridor to represent important scenic landmarks within the Town.



## Lakes, Rivers, Land Trusts, and Flood Hazard Areas in West Haven



### **Natural Resource Implementation Goals**

Ensure that agriculture remains a viable land use. stream conservation and water quality protection. protect West Haven’s scenic resources, including scenic roads. Support Nature Conservancy projects on the Hubbardton and Poultney rivers.

### **Natural Resource Implementation Actions**

Support in efforts that are assessing the source of pollutants in the town’s two stressed waterways: Coggman Pond and Billings Marsh Pond.

Support in the State process of reclassifying the Ward Marsh Complex as a Class 1 Waterway. Support in local efforts of biomonitoring and/or water quality monitoring on streams that are candidates for reclassification, such as Ward Marsh.

Support the Southern Champlain Stormwater Collaborative efforts to implement stormwater outreach so that landowners are aware of stormwater Best Management Practices and to create local expertise in implementing green stormwater (GSI) practices.

Town will request the Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC) write a one page educational insert for FY19 town report.

When the State determines the sources of nutrient levels in the waterways, the Town will ask the RRPC to develop a one page report for town report.

Invite RRPC to present the complete results of the Lake-Watershed Stormwater Master Plan and of the LakeWise Assessment project.

Support local land trusts and conservation organizations in conserving forest blocks that are important for protecting water quality in headwater streams.

Support Volunteer community group(s) that are conducting water quality testing.

Invite the RRPC and Poultney Mettowee Natural Resources Conservation District (PMNRCD) Tree Program to plant trees in sensitive areas for erosion control, make suggestions for trees that

work well in this landscape.

Town will request the RRPC direct the Planning Commission to resources listing plants and trees that will be suitable for planting in the West Haven environment.

### **Recreation**

West Haven’s location and geography provide the town with unique opportunities to promote outdoor recreation. Preserves maintained by The Nature Conservancy coupled with the Poultney River and the southern end of Lake Champlain provide areas for hiking, cycling, cross-country skiing, fishing, canoeing, kayaking, snowmobiling. and other activities. Tim’s Trail and the Susan Bacher Memorial Trail in the Nature Conservancy land provide maintained, marked and interpreted hiking opportunities.

The Steven Pettis Memorial Recreation Field next to the old elementary school includes a baseball and soccer field and a basketball court.

Designing and implementing a plan to promote year-round recreation in West Haven should be a priority.

### **Recreation Implementation Actions**

Have RRPC create a map of the bike trails, hiking trails, and public boat access in the town.

## Community Facilities

### Education

Students in kindergarten through eighth grade attend Fair Haven Grade School, while older students continue their education at Fair Haven Union High School. The number of students attending from West Haven has risen slightly at both schools over the past few years; in 2012-13, 25 West Haven residents attended the Grade School (compared to 23 a decade earlier) while 14 attended the High School. Both schools have adequate capacity for projected enrollment.

Both schools are funded using Act 60 formulas, which are based on per pupil spending for each school and communities. Local tax rates are calculated based on a statewide “block” amount and a locally-determined “above-block” amount.

### Child Care

The availability of child care for our residents is a factor related to the affordability of living in West Haven. Parents of young children need to have safe, accessible, and affordable child care options; otherwise, choices have to be made between earning a living or raising a family.

The 2010 U.S. Census reported 15 children under the age of five years, and in 2018, there was one licensed childcare provider on record for the town of West Haven. It is common in Rutland County for

child care options to exist more often closer to places of employment as opposed to close to bedroom communities. Fair Haven may be the choice location for West Haven families to seek childcare, given the numerous providers. The town has two licensed providers, one being the Fair Haven Grade School, and the other being the Boys and Girls Club of Fair Haven, as well as 10 registered homes for childcare.

### Facilities in Surrounding Towns

In addition to child care, neighboring town Fair Haven provides an assortment of other amenities. The Town provides a supermarket, pharmacy, hardware store, gas stations, fast food, clothing and other retail, banks and several restaurants. The Village of Benson provides a restaurant, general store and small retail.

### Fire and Rescue

Fire protection is provided by the West Haven Volunteer Fire Department, located at 59 North Road. Rescue services for Town residents are provided by the Fair Haven Rescue Squad.

The most pressing needs for the Fire Department are upgrades to communications equipment and protective gear for volunteers and recruiting new members.

### Law Enforcement

Public safety services in West Haven are provided by the Vermont State Police, and the local constabulary.



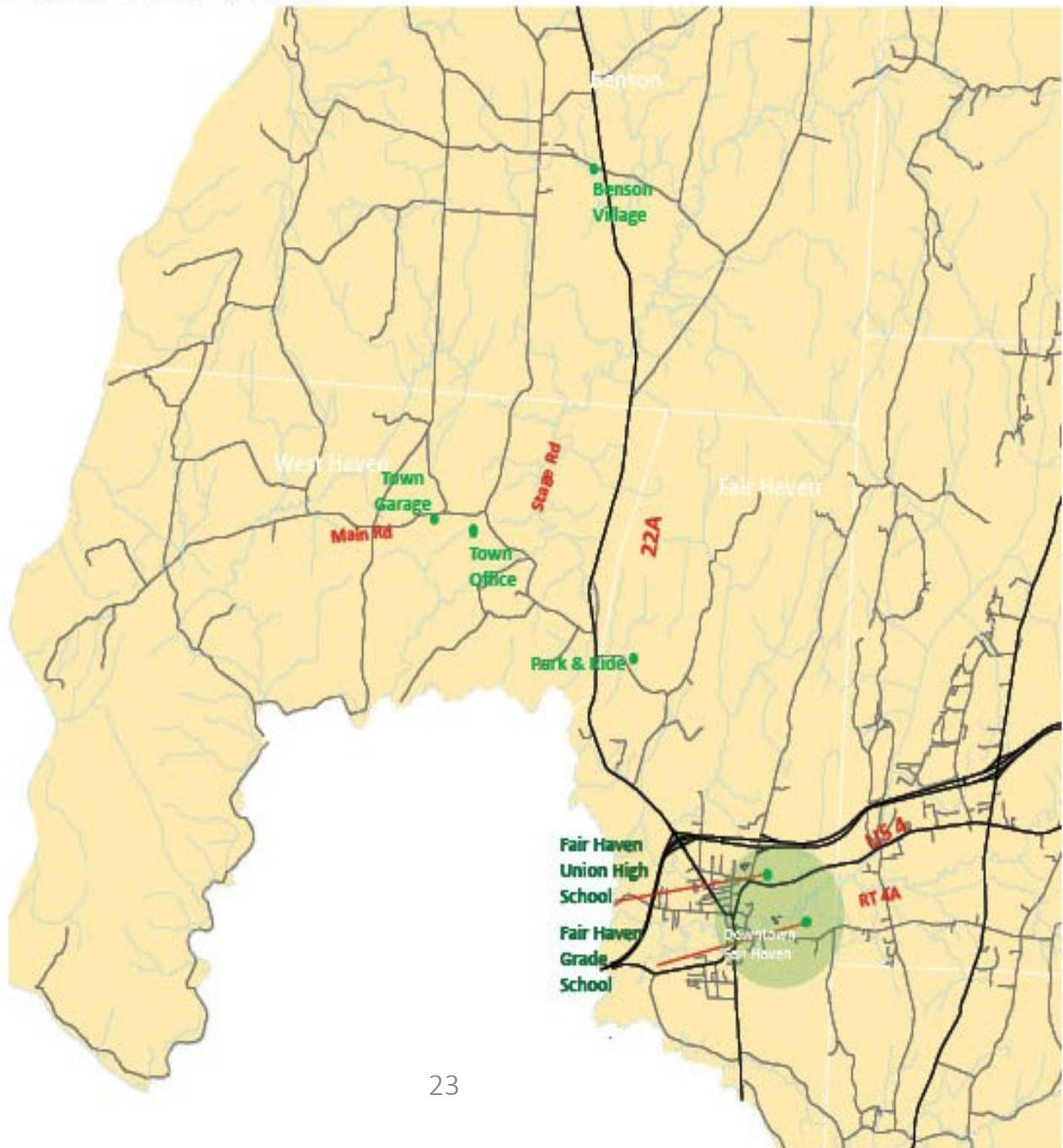
Because of the rural nature of the Town, public safety service is generally provided on an on-call basis, though the town is covered during regular area patrols.

The adequacy of public safety services is currently considered good by local standards. In the future, the adequacy of public safety services could change if development increases in remote areas where the detection of criminal activity is more difficult.

### Solid Waste and Recycling

West Haven manages its solid waste in cooperation with the Town of Fair Haven. Fair Haven hosts a solid waste transfer station and recycling center that is open for use by West Haven residents at a fee basis. This facility is a part of Solid Waste Alliance Community (SWAC).

### West Haven Community Facilities





## **Water Supply and Wastewater**

Water supply and wastewater are managed entirely at an individual scale in West Haven. Dug or drilled wells and on-site septic systems serve nearly all residents. Given the rural settlement pattern of community, the town has no immediate intention to examine municipal water supply or wastewater facilities.

The physical constraints of West Haven's soil are among the key factors guiding future development in the town. The predominance of clay and other soils, which do not percolate well has historically made the

installation of on-site septic systems difficult. Newly adopted statewide water supply and wastewater rules will likely open landowners to more possibilities, however.

## **Communications**

Communications exist in several forms in West Haven. Traditional land-based telephone access, dial-up, wireless and DSL Internet access are available from a variety of providers. Wireless telecommunication is possible in select areas throughout the community based on reception, though no towers or repeaters are currently located in the town.

True high speed internet is not available in town because although the service may be delivered to the pole, infrastructure to deliver it to individual houses does not yet exist. This is a major issue for the town, as it inhibits current residents from working from their homes, and it is detrimental in attracting new residents (especially telecommuters and those interested in home occupations) and businesses.

Obtaining high-speed Internet access and improved wireless communications are priorities for the Town of West Haven. In that light, the town has recently adopted regulations to encourage wireless telecommunications facilities to be constructed in a manner that is unobtrusive and consistent with the goals of this plan.

## **Community Facility Implementation Actions**

Be open to discussions with neighboring towns about the connectivity of internet lines and cell tower coverage across West Haven town boundaries.

Work with RRPC to apply for HMGP funding, for a generator and wheel chair access to the town hall.

Look for grant funding for an AC / heat pump for the town hall.

Look into installing a Tesla power wall from GMP in the Town Hall.

Set up a reserve fund for the school property.

Advertise for new Fire Department recruits at town events.



# Transportation

## Present Facilities and Services

Transportation facilities and services in or available to residents of the Town include highways, rail, bus and paratransit, air, and trails for biking and walking.

There are 3.0 miles of state highways (VT Route 22A) and 35.2 miles of town highways in West Haven. The town's highways are further divided into two classes: Class 2 and Class 3. West Haven contains 12.6 miles (33 percent) of class 2 highways, which are those that are judged to be the most important in the community. The 22.6 miles of Class 3 highways are routes negotiable by a standard automobile on a year-round basis.

The condition of highways in West Haven is generally good. Surface conditions are adequate, although extensive sections of Main Road require attention. Initial examinations suggest that these sections may need to be rebuilt before being repaved in order to solve the problems.

None of the roads in West Haven are so dangerous so as to be classified as High Accident Locations (HALs) by the Vermont Agency of Transportation. The town recognizes, however, that problems do exist and should be addressed.

Traffic volumes are well below design capacity. The average daily traffic on VT 22A in 1991 was estimated at 4640 trips in northern West Haven and 5090 trips in southern West Haven. The average daily traffic on Main Road was 440. As recently as 2008, the average daily traffic on VT 22A was estimated at 3,600 trips in northern West Haven and 4,700 trips in southern West Haven. The average daily traffic on Main Road was 330. Traffic on some roads is so low so as to raise questions about the need for continued maintenance by the town. The roads - TH 6 (Bay Road) and TH 26 (old 22A),- could be reclassified as class 4 roads if the town found that year-round maintenance was not required.

While West Haven has no officially designated scenic highways, several highways in the Town might warrant such a designation.

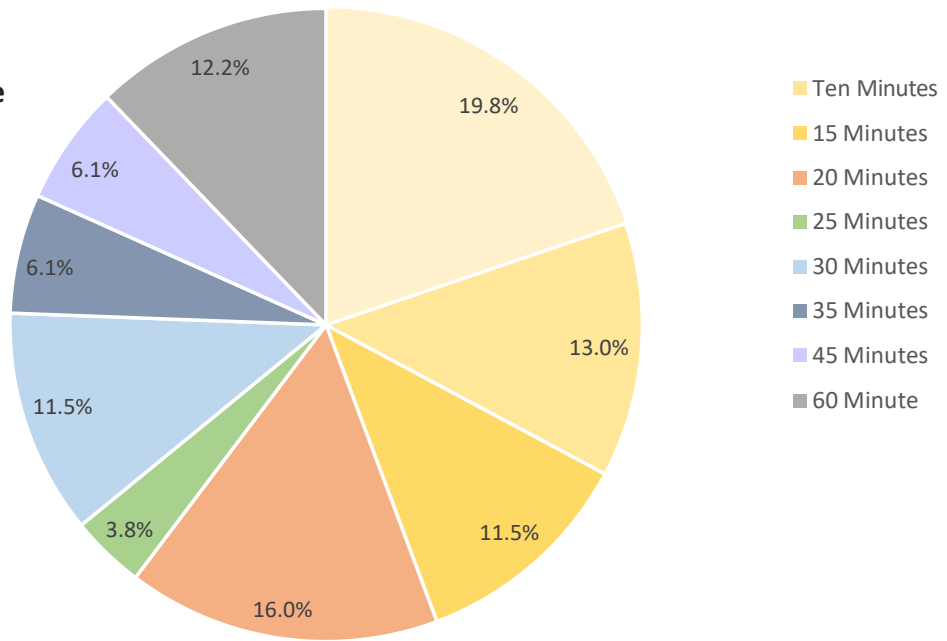
In 2011, West Haven was awarded a Municipal Park-and-Ride Grant to construct 10-20 spaces at the site of the old elementary school and recreational fields on Main Road, in close proximity to Route 22A.

Transportation in West Haven is dominated by automobiles and highways. Although the town is not directly served by any other major modes of transportation, the existence of alternatives to traditional automobile travel needs to be recognized.

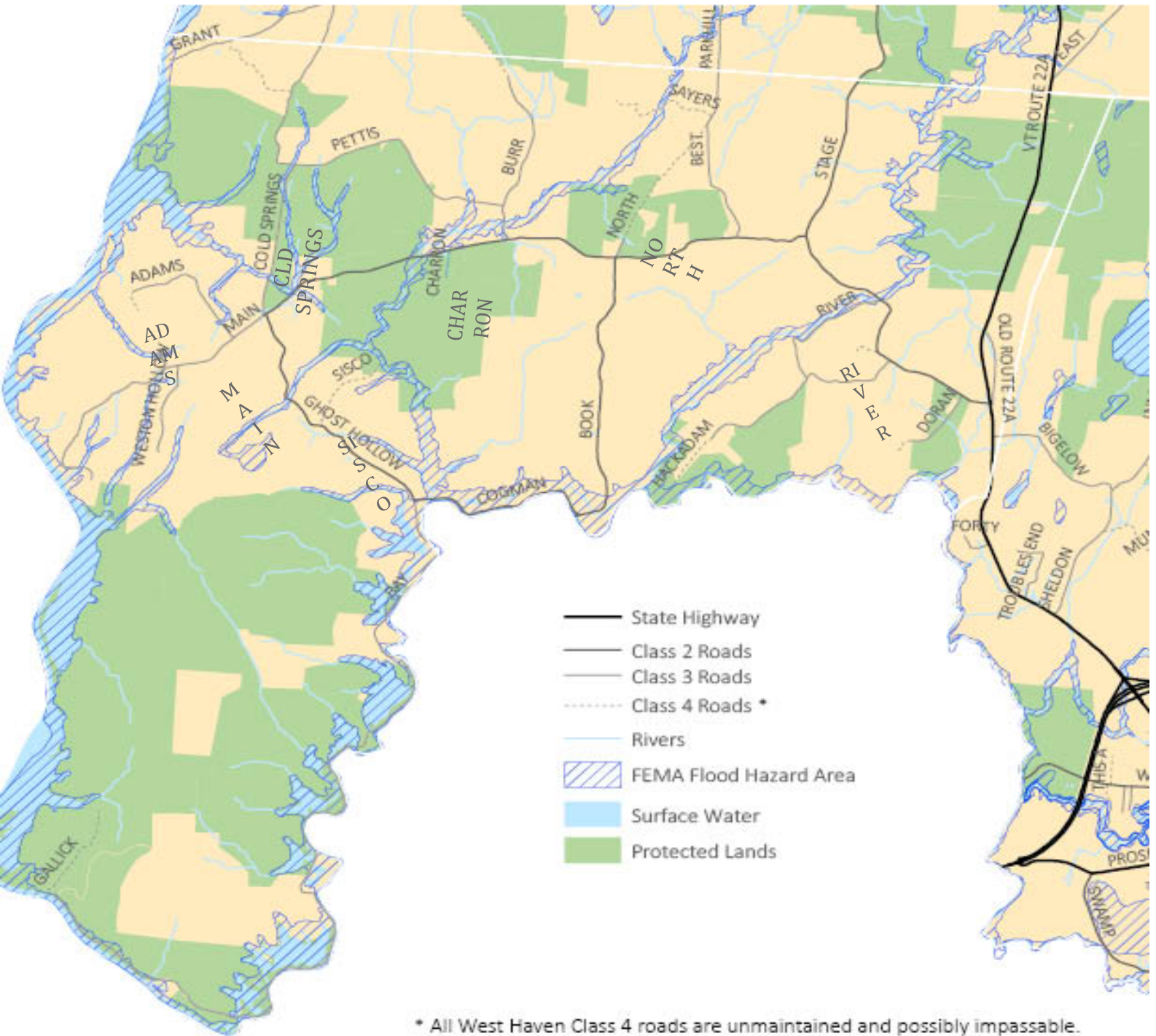
Access to freight-oriented rail service is possible at Rutland. The nearest tracks pass south of West Haven through Castleton and Whitehall. The nearest air service is found at Rutland State Airport in Clarendon. Air service is also available in Burlington and Albany. The Marble Valley Regional Transit District provides paratransit services to members of the public.

Bicycling and pedestrian travel are recreational as well as practical transportation modes. Only one designated cycling route exists in West Haven – the West Haven/Fair Haven Vermont to New York Loop of the Champlain Bike Trail – and white signs along Main Road mark its path.

**West Haven Residents' Average Commute Times to Work (2016 US Census ACS)**



# Road Classifications in West Haven



## Transportation Goals

Work with neighboring towns to ensure that proposed developments in those towns will not overburden West Haven transportation systems.

Work with the Vermont Agency of Transportation to ensure that policies for land along VT 22A balance the needs for safety and appropriate future development.

Develop a program that reduces energy spent for transportation and reduces excess automobile trips on West Haven's roads.

Revise local regulations to promote West Haven's transportation goals and policies in concert with future land use goals.

Adopt local standards for construction, improvements and maintenance of town roads.

Develop criteria for reviewing proposed intersections of driveways or side streets with town highways.

Amend regulations to require that private development roads meet standards for town roads.

The Town should require that development roads be brought up to town standards before being taken over by the town.

## Transportation Implementation Actions

Pursue grants for a town salt shed.

Pursue grant funding to improve the parking area around the town hall.

Seek out grant funding for an EV charging station.

Study the potential benefits of a scenic road designation.

## Energy

West Haven's energy consumption is typical of a small rural Vermont town. The Census' 2016 American Community Survey notes that 87% of the town's residents commute to work by car or truck, and that the average commute time is 32 minutes.

The town's electricity consumption (as compiled by the VT Community Energy Dashboard) shows that the town has the lowest overall consumption rate in Rutland County. However, the town ranks 10th in the county for per capita electric usage. Electricity for the town is provided by Green Mountain Power. Energy facilities in the town include a hydroelectric dam at Carver's Falls and a transmission line strung parallel to Route 22A.

Some residents have taken the initiative to install renewable energy including solar and wind. There is also one community solar project in town.

The Town of West Haven is committed to encouraging energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy resources throughout the community. The Town recognizes the link between promoting a reduction in resources and efficient patterns of land use development.

The town of West Haven supports the States initiative to promote renewable energy and reduce reliance on fossil fuels. West Haven is amenable to supporting efforts in town that will promote energy conservation and go toward the goal of fixing climate change.

## Energy Implementation Actions

Invite the Rutland RPC to explain the pros and cons of an enhanced energy plan for the town.

Invite in GMP about an EV charging station at the park and ride.

## Housing

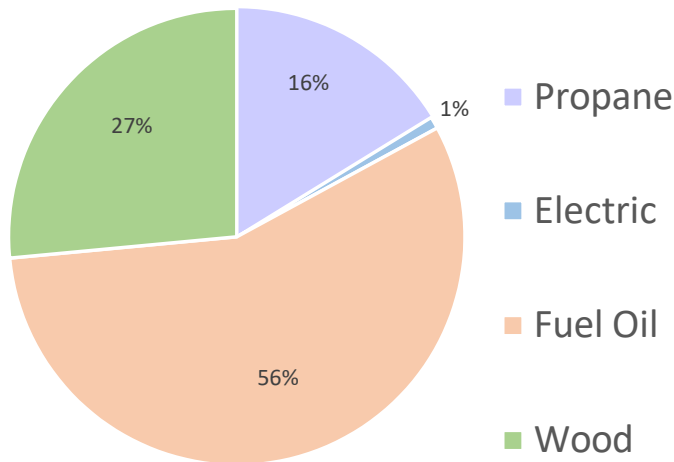
Identification of housing needs requires an evaluation of housing demand, housing supply, and buying power. According to data gathered from the US Census Bureau, the National Low Income Housing Coalition, and the Vermont Housing Awareness Campaign, housing remains difficult to buy or rent at affordable rates throughout Rutland County and in West Haven.

Nationwide, a trend towards fewer persons per households has changed the type of housing needs and increased the demand for housing – especially affordable housing – in many towns, even those with stable or declining populations.

Single family and mobile homes account for the overwhelming majority of housing in West Haven. The Census notes that of the 147 housing units in 2016, 117 were single family and 28 were mobile homes. The 2010 Census showed that there were 131 housing units in West Haven, and the 2000 Census marked 118 units.

West Haven’s housing stock, like the stock in the neighboring towns, continues to age. Over 25 percent of all structures in the town were built prior to 1940. These units require attention to ensure they remain in good structural form.

**Home Heating Fuels in West Haven**  
(2016 US Census ACS)



### Housing Affordability

An analysis of West Haven’s housing situation indicates three distinct issues affecting affordability. These include the aging of the population, the presence of low and very low income households, and the costs associated with development of the land.

In West Haven, 26.5 percent of all residents were over 62 in 2010. This indicates a trend towards an increasingly elderly population. This population’s housing needs will shift as current residents may begin to search out smaller units in West Haven or be forced to search elsewhere.

West Haven, like every community in the Region, is home to low-income households for whom affordability is especially difficult. The majority of these households are comprised of young adults or elderly community members, indicating the need

for housing types that fit the unique needs of these groups.

Existing housing in West Haven is not able to meet the affordability of its low-income residents who desire to buy their own homes. While rental units are generally more affordable in West Haven, an accurate count of the number of rental units and their availability is lacking, and the number of units may not be able to accommodate the elderly and low-income households looking for smaller, less expensive living situations.

This situation is aggravated by the fact that the average household size has continued to drop, from 2.67 persons in 2000 to 2.36 in 2010. This trend has had several impacts: a rise in the demand for smaller housing units, a possible decline in school enrollment, and a change in the use of existing larger homes.

It should be noted that Fair Haven has a significantly greater amount of housing stock, and is roughly 8 miles from West Haven. West Haven residents requiring more affordable housing may be able to look into the Fair Haven housing market as an option.

**Future Needs**

West Haven’s population is not likely to grow significantly in the next ten years. This is not to suggest that there is no demand for housing, at an affordable rate, among West Haven residents. To the contrary, the town recognized the need to support efforts to ease the cost of housing in the community so that it may continue to exist as a diverse community.

Recent changes in the statewide water supply and wastewater rules, combined with Vermont’s increasing popularity as a residential environment suggest and new technology for septic in clay soils, that there may be an increased demand for new housing.

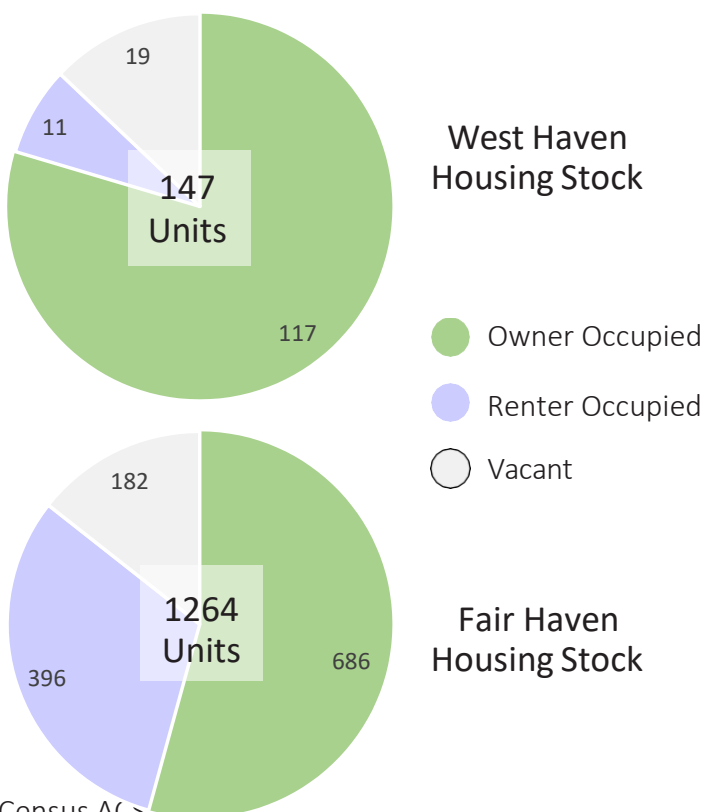
However, the town’s rural location, combined with sparse internet connection opportunities, an absence of a school within the town boundary, and the sparse commercial activity in the area make West Haven a less probable location for housing development in Rutland County.

Maintaining West Haven as a rural agricultural town where new housing starts require 25 acres of land can make building in West Haven financially prohibitive. This is a trade-off in the realm of housing development in rural Vermont.

In West Haven, housing and overall land use are closely linked. In fact, over 94% of all structures in the town are residential. Given West Haven’s character, future construction in the community is likely to follow this pattern. It is therefore important to consider the impacts of new single family housing on the town’s overall landscape. As the Town’s remaining farms continue to be divided into smaller, residential parcels, the need for an overall strategy for maintaining the Town’s resources and uses is apparent. The Future Land Use element examines this issue in greater detail.

**Housing Implementation Actions**

Encourage the Rutland RPC to find grant funding to have a consultant conduct a housing study for the West Haven area.



\*2016 US Census ACS

## Executive Summary

The 2019 West Haven Town Plan is a framework and guide for accomplishing community aspirations and intentions.

It is the intent of this Plan to further the goals listed in T. 24, § 4302 of the Vermont Statutes. The Plan supports the implementation of each goal unless specifically stated to the contrary.

The issues and trends identified by the Plan suggest that West Haven is typical of many Vermont communities. It is struggling with the challenge of meeting local needs for services on a limited budget, while experiencing concern over changes taking place in the community's environment. For example, the town is searching for cost-effective ways to maintain its roads, and dispose of its solid waste. It is also trying to conserve its bountiful natural resources in a manner that is fair to individuals and to the community as a whole.

The town is clearly taking steps to address these issues, such as by preparing this Town Plan. The development patterns promoted by it reinforce the tradition.

West Haven's new Town Plan is a framework and guide for accomplishing community aspirations and intentions. This introduction explains the purpose and use of a Town Plan and describes the steps followed in its preparation. The statutory authority for Town Plans, as well as important statutory requirements are also mentioned.

### **Purpose and Use of the Plan**

The primary purpose of this Town Plan is to create a blueprint that shows what local citizens want West Haven to be like in the future and to set out goals, objectives, and priorities for action that will help the community's hopes for the future to be realized.

It also attempts to balance the wide range of competing interests and demands found in the Town, coordinate the pattern of development and the preservation and use of important natural resources, and address both current and long-term needs. It promotes equity and efficiency and the recognition of the public interest in the resources and investments that are found in the

Town.

The Plan can, and should, be used in a variety of ways. First and foremost, the Plan should be a basis for community programs and decision-making. It should influence, for example, the Town's capital budget, community development efforts, and natural resource protection initiatives. As required by law, it should also serve as a foundation for local land use controls such as zoning and subdivision. Furthermore, the Plan should be given full effect in all appropriate regulatory proceedings, such as Act 250 and the Section 248 (Certificate of Public Good) process.

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

### **Preparation of the Plan**

Responsibility for the preparation of the Town Plan rests with the West Haven Planning Commission. In the course of developing the Plan, the Planning Commission and town contracted for technical assistance with the Rutland Regional Planning Commission.

This Plan is an update based on previous Plans, which were adopted by the Selectboard in July 2008, June 2003, June 1998, and October 2013. Work on this update began in January 2018. Monthly public meetings of the Planning Commission culminated in a Planning Commission Public Hearing, a Selectboard Public Hearing, and the adoption by the Selectboard.

### **Statutory Authority and Requirements**

Preparation of Town Plans is guided by Chapter 117 of Title 24 of Vermont Statutes. Chapter 117, § 4382

(a) requires that all plans contain twelve items or elements. These elements include: a statement of objectives, policies, and programs; a land use plan; a transportation plan; utility and facility plan; a statement of policies on the preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas; an educational facilities plan; an implementation program; a statement



indicating how the Plan relates to development trends in adjacent communities; an energy plan; a housing element; a flood resiliency element; and an economic development element. While all twelve elements must be incorporated into a Plan, communities are not prohibited from combining closely related elements, such as the element for educational facilities and the element for other utilities and facilities.

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

### **Plan Implementation**

The West Haven Plan is designed to be implemented in a number of ways. Each section of the Plan contains clear implementation strategies for work needed in the future.

The Plan, and its goals, objectives, and implementation strategies will serve as the foundation for revisions to the town's zoning and subdivision regulations, and may be used to help craft other regulations such as those guiding the installation of wireless telecommunications facilities. The Plan also carries weight in Vermont's Act 250 process.

The West Haven Plan is also intended to promote non-regulatory implementation. It supports work done to improve housing, natural resources, cultural and historic facilities, recreation opportunities, economic development, and transportation access and safety. Strategies for all of these, and others, are listed throughout the plan.

### **Relationship Between Plan and the Development Trends and Plans for the Surrounding Area**

Efforts have been made to ensure that the revised plan for the Town of West Haven is compatible with development trends and goals set forth by neighboring communities and the Rutland Region as a whole.

For the purposes of this Plan, the surrounding area includes the Towns of Fair Haven and Benson.

This Plan promotes residential, agricultural, conservation and small-scale commercial activities at levels consistent with the community's place at the rural, agricultural edge of the Rutland Region and the Town's rich endowment of natural resources.

Review of the development plans of surrounding communities suggests that the future land use pattern promoted by this Plan is generally compatible with those of West Haven's neighbors. Surrounding communities promote land development consistent with the physical capacities of the land and the continuation of resource-based uses (such as agriculture) in outlying areas and higher density and commercial uses in existing built-up areas. Sensitive areas (such as floodplains) are also identified and targeted for conservation, as they are in West Haven.

Policy statements in the Plan are also generally compatible with those of surrounding communities' plans. Particularly noteworthy is Fair Haven's desire to meet its needs by encouraging a balance of activities—residential, commercial, industrial and agriculture and Benson's goals to preserve its rural character, protect natural resources and the environment, maintain services and promote the community's welfare, and sustain the community's heritage. All three communities promote levels and types of growth that are sustainable.

West Haven has a long history of cooperation with its neighbors. As indicated elsewhere, West Haven coordinates education of its elementary and high school-age children, solid waste matters, and rescue services with the Town of Fair Haven.

The West Haven Town Plan is, also, consistent with the Rutland Regional Planning Commission's Regional Plan, most recently adopted in June 2018.