

# **Tinmouth**



# **Town Plan**

**Adopted September 14, 2017**

The 2007 version of the Tinmouth Town Plan was declared  
“2007 Plan of the Year”

by the Vermont Planning Association.

The 2012 version contained only minor changes, as the 2007 version  
incorporated a very thorough update.

In 2016, amendments were added, including a new energy section, a modified flood  
hazard section, and a list of historically significant sites.

This 2017 version contains significant revisions to the sections on energy,  
flood hazards, and education, as well a few other minor changes.

## **Acknowledgements**

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# Vision

**Tinmouth is a friendly, family-centered, civic-minded,  
rural community that values peace and quiet**

Residents of our town gathered for a visioning session to define and focus the direction of the town at the start of the last Town Plan update, in 2012. The following vision represents the input from Tinmouth residents, as developed in 2000 and re-validated by surveys in 2006 and 2017 and open meetings and hearings. It represents a durable vision of the town and its future:

## Tinmouth residents hope to

- Maintain the rural aspects of the town including active, productive farms, open meadows, substantial forests, and scenic mountains vistas.
- Balance the needs of residents for housing, safe roads, good schools, public services, and recreational opportunities with clean waters, mixed wildlife habitat, and undeveloped land.
- Promote a small-town, neighborly atmosphere by continuing to improve Tinmouth center and support civic activities and efforts.

## Objectives

It is the purpose of this Plan to guide future growth and development within the Town of Tinmouth by providing a framework of planning policies and recommendations which will assure that decisions made at the local, regional, and state levels are consistent with the following specific objectives:

1. Preserve the rural character of Tinmouth.
2. Maintain sustainable agriculture as an economic base that minimizes impact on soil, water and air quality.
3. Protect and preserve scenic and historic features, open spaces, fragile and wildlife habitats and other natural resources.
4. Maintain a population consisting of residents and families of all incomes, ages, and types.
5. Allot sufficient space in appropriate locations for agricultural, residential, recreational, and commercial development in order to meet the needs of the town.
6. Prohibit incompatible and uncoordinated development activity.
7. Allow for future growth to occur in a way which will not place an undue burden on the town to provide community facilities and services.
8. Assure that basic needs of health, safety, education, and housing will be met and maintained at satisfying levels in accordance with population growth.
9. Foster local activities, programs, development patterns, and town governance that build the town's strong sense of community.
10. Require that public utilities be located in such a way that they will not have an undue adverse effect on the scenic quality and land values of the town.
11. Require that town highways permit safe and efficient movement of vehicles through the town.



# Contents

<b>CONTENTS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>6</b>
THE TINMOUTH PLANNING COMMISSION.....	6
THE TINMOUTH TOWN PLAN.....	6
LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND STATEWIDE PLANNING IN VERMONT.....	6
CONTINUED MAINTENANCE OF THE PLAN.....	7
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN.....	7
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PLAN AND PLANS FOR SURROUNDING AREAS.....	8
<b>CHAPTER II: WHO AND WHAT MAKES UP OUR TOWN? .....</b>	<b>9</b>
WHO WE ARE.....	9
OUR WORK.....	10
OUR COMMUNITY.....	10
OUR LAND.....	12
<b>CHAPTER III: HOW WE USE THE LAND.....</b>	<b>18</b>
HISTORIC AND CURRENT SETTLEMENT PATTERNS.....	18
LAND OWNERSHIP.....	20
CURRENT USES OF LAND, ANALYSIS, AND SOLUTIONS.....	22
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.....	24
OPEN FIELDS AND FORESTS.....	24
WATER QUALITY ISSUES.....	26
CHANGES IN PLANT DIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEMS.....	27
UTILITY TRANSMISSION LINES.....	30
HISTORIC SITES AND STRUCTURES.....	30
<b>CHAPTER IV: HOW WE PROVIDE FOR OUR NEIGHBORS .....</b>	<b>32</b>
AFFORDABLE HOUSING.....	32
CHILD CARE.....	34
CHILDHOOD AND LIFELONG EDUCATION.....	35
LIFELONG LEARNING.....	37
EFFECTIVE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT.....	38
RECYCLING AND SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL.....	40
COMMUNITY-SPONSORED RECREATION.....	40
OUTDOOR RECREATION.....	41
EFFICIENT USE OF ENERGY.....	42
TOWN GOVERNANCE.....	43
HEALTH CARE AND ELDERLY SERVICES.....	45

<b>CHAPTER V: MAKING GOOD DECISIONS ABOUT OUR FUTURE.....</b>	<b>45</b>
FUTURE LAND USE DISTRICTS.....	45
WHERE AND HOW DEVELOPMENT IS ENCOURAGED .....	49
AREAS SENSITIVE TO DEVELOPMENT .....	50
FLOOD RESILIENCE .....	53
STANDARDS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT, REGARDLESS OF LOCATION:.....	55
ACCESSIBILITY OF PROPERTIES.....	57
SUBSURFACE SEWAGE DISPOSAL .....	58
COMMERCIAL ENERGY GENERATION AND TRANSMISSION FACILITY SITING.....	58
OTHER ELECTRICAL FACILITIES.....	65
NEW DEVELOPMENT POLICIES.....	55
<b>ENDNOTE PAGE .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: TINMOUTH HISTORIC AND CULTURALLY SIGNIFICANT FEATURES.....</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>TOWN MAPS.....</b>	<b>70</b>
FUTURE LAND USE .....	71
NATURAL RESOURCES.....	72
RESTRICTED LANDS.....	73
WILDLIFE HABITAT SUITABILITY ANALYSIS .....	74
TRANSPORTATION .....	75
TOWN FACILITIES .....	76
BEERS 1869 MAP OF TINMOUTH.....	77
VERMONT HISTORIC REGISTER MAP .....	78

# Chapter I: Introduction

## The Tinmouth Planning Commission

The Vermont Planning and Development Act enables the legislative body of all municipalities to create a Town Planning Commission which may consist of not less than three nor more than nine members. Members are appointed by the Tinmouth Selectboard. At least a majority of the Commission must be permanent residents of the community. In accordance with the Act, the Tinmouth Planning Commission is given the authority to prepare a Municipal Development Plan and to recommend this document to the Selectboard and the voters. The Tinmouth Planning Commission was formed in the early 1970's. Currently there are nine members serving staggered three-year terms.

## The Tinmouth Town Plan

A Municipal Development Plan, once approved by the Tinmouth Planning Commission and adopted by the Select Board, is the official policy of the community with regard to future growth and development. It is intended that the Plan be used in a positive manner as a tool in guiding the direction of growth in a way that is both economically feasible and environmentally acceptable.

The first Tinmouth Town Plan was written in 1973 and has been updated and amended multiple times in the ensuing decades. This most recent version was prepared over the course of 12 months, from April 2011 to March 2012, by the Tinmouth Planning Commission, and amended in 2016. Both the 2016 version and this revision contain only modest changes, the principal difference being in the energy and flood hazard sections.

The 2017 Tinmouth Town Plan will be implemented through (1) following recommended actions to be completed in the next eight years; (2) changing and adopting zoning and subdivision regulations and other land use controls as recommended, (3) cooperating with other government agencies, and (4) further studies.

## Local, Regional, and Statewide Planning in Vermont

The Tinmouth Town Plan is an integral part of the regional and statewide planning process. In adopting the Town Plan, citizens of Tinmouth may anticipate the future with the knowledge that a significant step has been taken in the development and preservation of their community. The Plan was prepared in conformance with the requirements in the Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act (Chapter 117 Section 4382. The plan for a municipality.) As well, the Tinmouth Town Plan is consistent with the



Rutland Regional Plan, readopted in June 2015, and is also compatible with approved plans from surrounding communities. Under the authority of the Select board, the Tinmouth Planning Commission prepared this Town Plan. It was approved by the Rutland Regional Planning Commission on September 19, 2017.

In terms of its significance in relation to State land use controls and growth policy, the Town Plan plays a key role. Vermont's Act 250 includes a provision for a review procedure through which all applications for subdivision and development must pass. During the review process, the feasibility of each project is weighed against ten criteria, guidelines set forth as environmental and economic safeguards. The tenth criterion requires that any subdivision or development must be in conformance with a duly adopted development plan, land use or land capability plan which exists on the state level. The tenth criterion insures that the proposed development is in compliance with the policies set forth in the regional plan and the more detailed local town plan. In this way planning and development at the three levels of government, state, regional and local, are integrated to form a consistent approach to the problems caused by rapid growth.

### **Continued Maintenance of the Plan**

Because planning is a flexible, continuing process, the Tinmouth Town Plan will be reviewed and amended from time to time in light of new developments and changed conditions affecting the municipality. In accordance with Section 4387 of the Act, the Plan shall expire and have no further force and effect eight years from the date of its adoption, unless it is readopted by the Select board. The Plan may be readopted in the form as expired or about to expire, and shall remain in effect for the next ensuing eight years or until amended. The Tinmouth Planning Commission should review the Plan on a regular basis to ensure it remains a current vital document.

### **Implementation of the Plan**

#### **Land Use Bylaws:**

As a policy document, the Plan provides the legal as well as the conceptual basis of all land use control. The specific controls are accomplished by the enactment of bylaws. Since the bylaws are intended to implement the Plan, their content must reflect the findings, recommendations, and policy statements embodied in the Plan. Zoning and Subdivision Regulations were revised November 2014 to ensure compatibility with the 2012 Town Plan. This link between the Plan and any implementing regulations was made more direct with the Legislature's 2004 revisions to the enabling statutes. The 2017 Tinmouth Plan addresses these needs. Permanent zoning regulations, first adopted in 1977 and last amended in 2014, allow the town to permit, prohibit, restrict, regulate and determine land development, including, without limitation, the following:

1. Specific uses of land, water courses and other bodies of water.
2. Dimensions, location, erection, construction, repair, maintenance, alteration, razing, removal, and use of structures.
3. Areas and dimensions of land and bodies of water to be occupied by uses and structures, as well as areas, yards, and other open spaces and distances to be left unoccupied by uses and structures.
4. Density of population and intensity of use.

Zoning and subdivision regulations apply to all lands and uses of land within the municipality except as specifically exempted. A zoning map depicts the separate districts and their correspondent use classifications. All provisions for each class of uses or structures within each district are uniform in nature. The regulations are developed and revised by the Planning Commission and adopted by the town's voters. The regulations are enforced by the zoning administrator. Permits requiring board approval are reviewed by the Planning Commission or Zoning Board of Adjustment. Decisions by these boards may only be issued following public hearings.



## Capital Budget and Program

Expenditures of public funds will be required to implement some of the recommendations contained in the Plan. The Town has several capital accounts: the Equipment Fund, the Highway Reserve Fund, the Capital Building and Repairs Fund, and the Road Construction and Paving Fund. The Selectboard administers these funds.

## Non-Regulatory Implementation Tools

Use of the town plan is not limited to regulations and adopted capital budgets. A wide range of projects, sponsored by the town itself or groups serving the town, can implement the goals of the Plan and ensure that Tinmouth's future is being coordinated. Examples could include:

- Working with non-profit housing agencies to build affordable housing in the town.
- Providing residents with information brochures on water quality issues identified in the Plan.
- Establishing a working group in town to help landowners maintain historic structures.

## Relationship Between Plan and Plans for Surrounding Areas

The relationship between this Plan and the development trends and plans for the surrounding area has been considered. For purposes of this Plan, the surrounding area includes the Towns of Wallingford, Clarendon, Ira, Middletown Springs, Wells, Danby and Pawlet and the Rutland Region as a whole.

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. This Plan recognizes the need to accommodate some population and housing growth within the Town, although the amount is relatively small given Tinmouth's unsuitable soils, varied topography and land cover, and its distance from job centers.

Review of the land use plans of surrounding communities suggests that the future land use pattern promoted by this Plan is generally compatible with those of our neighbors. Surrounding communities promote low-density land development and 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 flood plains) are also identified and targeted for conservation, as they are in Tinmouth. Policy statements in the Plan are also generally compatible with those of surrounding communities'

plans. Tinmouth has a long history of cooperation with its neighbors. Students were formerly tuitioned to Mill River and West Rutland schools. The town school district merged with Clarendon, Shrewsbury, and Wallingford in the Mill River Unified Union School District, with a single Board, budget, and tax rate, in 2016. The Fire Department has mutual aid agreements with surrounding communities; the Wallingford Rescue Squad, Poultney Rescue Squad and Middletown Springs First Response cover us for emergency care. Tinmouth is a member of the nine-town Solid Waste Alliance Communities.





## Chapter II: Who and What Makes up our Town?

Two critical components make up the Town of Tinmouth: its people and its landscape. The way in which we interact with one another, and with the land, is our community. Below is a short description of the basic parts that make up this town: the people we call neighbors and the land we have the ability and responsibility to manage. The rest of this plan will focus on how we have chosen - and are choosing - to provide for ourselves and our neighbors, and make use of our land.

### Who We Are

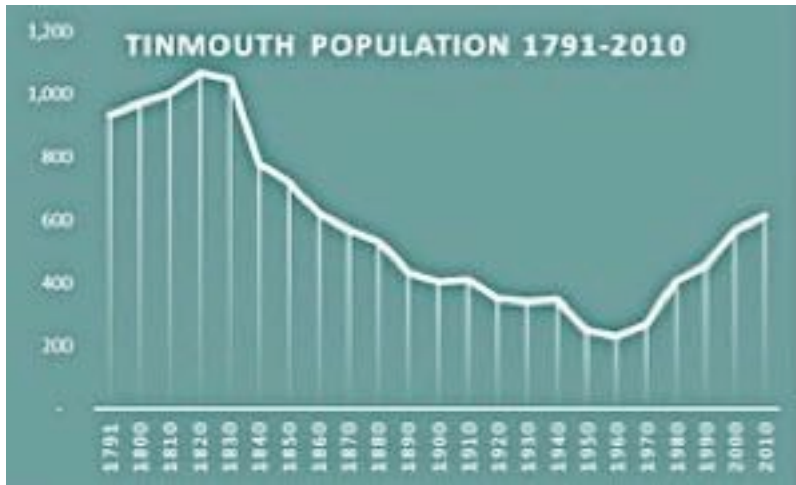
The population in the town of Tinmouth fluctuated greatly during the twentieth century as compared to Rutland County and the State of Vermont. The general trend from 1900 to 1960 was a decrease in resident population. However, in recent decades, the town has experienced a sharp increase of population, from 268 in 1970 to 567 in 2000 and to 613 in 2010. Since 1970, Tinmouth has had the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest percentage change in population (129%) and ranked 13<sup>th</sup> in absolute growth. In recent years, the pace of growth, as compared with the rest of the region, has been increasing. <sup>1</sup> (Endnotes are on page 66.) Between 1990 and 2010, the town has had the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest percentage change in population (35%) and ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in absolute growth.

Tinmouth's population, as a whole, is aging. Since 1990, the average age of the town's residents jumped from 33.7 to 40.1 years in 2000 and 44 in 2010. The number of children under 19 years of age declined from 125 to 108 (a decrease of 14%). During the same time, the over-65 population increased from 50 to 74 (an increase of 80%). It is expected that all of these trends have continued to today as the nation's baby boomer population is reaching retirement age.

A parallel trend increased the proportion of non-family households. In 2010, families made up 68% of all households. This figure remains high by Rutland County standards, but is substantially lower than the 85% they comprised a decade earlier. It is not surprising, given this increase in non-family households, that the average household size dropped to 2.41 persons in 2010 from over 2.6 in 1990.



Town Fun Day, 2001



The U.S. Census American Community Survey from 2011-2015 estimates only 9.6% of Tinmouth residents (24 people) reported having lived in a different house five years prior. That compares to 24.3% of the Rutland County population and 25.7% of the Vermont population.

### Population Analysis:

Many variable factors influence the population changes in

Tinmouth. These include economic conditions, the availability of loans for land purchase and home construction, commuting costs to places of employment, as well as changing rates of migration and birth, and the availability of housing opportunities. These figures indicate that the availability of housing options for greater diversity of household types – notably non-family households, elderly persons, and smaller households in general, has become an important issue in Tinmouth. Locally, growth pressure extending outward from Manchester and Rutland are reverberating in Tinmouth. Between 2000 and 2010, housing units rose from 330 to 362. Seasonal homes represented approximately 27% of these units, the majority of which are located adjacent to Tinmouth Pond, though more recent new development has been scattered throughout the town. In 2010, 83.5% of Tinmouth’s units are owner occupied.

### Our Work

Many residents are employed in towns throughout the Region. According to U.S. Census American Community Survey estimates from 2011-2015, there are 279 Tinmouth people in the work force: 237 work in Rutland County, 32 work outside of Rutland County, and 10 work outside of Vermont. <sup>2</sup> (Superscripts refer to notes on page 67) people both live and work in the town and 30 workers who do not live in Tinmouth work in the town.

According to 2011-2015 U.S. Census American Community Survey estimates, health & social services (25.9%), manufacturing (11.1%), agriculture/mining & forestry (10.5%), and retail (10.2%) were the leading sources of employment for Tinmouth residents. Despite the loss of employment in farming and agriculture, these fields still employ higher percentages of local residents than most of the communities in Rutland County. Evidence also suggests that residents are employed in a variety of home occupations (8.6% or 24 people, according to ACS 2011-2015).

### Our Community

When people speak of “community” in Tinmouth, it means much more than just the sum of the people who live in the Town. When we speak of community, we speak of how individuals respect one another, interact, and relate to the land.

### Respect

Tinmouth strives to be a community that is open to diverse ideas, perspectives, and lifestyles. We have a long history of making our living off the land through agricultural and forestry, but recognize that this is broadening

to include commuters, retirees, and seasonal residents. Though new ideas and change bring out differences of opinion, we work hard to resolve the issues and move ahead together as neighbors.

### **Interacting with each other**

The easiest way to quantify the notion of “community” in Tinmouth is by listing all of the different ways in which we come together for everyday events and special occasions. The *Tales of Tinmouth* is a testament to this, with residents from throughout the community putting it together monthly and announcing all of the issues and events going on in town. While these events are by no means the only way in which people interact, or even the only way in which residents of Tinmouth should or do relate to the Town, it frames at least part of the picture. Below is a sampling of the kinds of events that Tinmouth residents have come together to do over the years.



Large groups of coordinated volunteers have:

- Brought in the whole first cut of hay for a farmer who was injured in a tractor accident.
- Rebuilt a couple of homes after house fires.
- Built two additions to the school, renovated the firehouse, and built the community center.
- Raised the funds and built a barn for a dairy farmer who lost his to a fire.
- Arranged for months worth of meals for the sick or injured.
- Organized and participated in weekly softball, volleyball, and basketball games.
- Hosted annual Tinmouth Community Day parade, races, games, and exhibits.
- Held monthly contra dances.
- Staged regular concerts at the Old Firehouse.
- Created the Tinmouth Handbell Ensemble, with bells and other equipment paid for with donations.
- Pooled garden flowers to decorate Tinmouth family weddings.

The Anne and Roy Wilbur Fund is supported annually with donations of money and food to provide holiday food baskets and help with fuel, electricity, etc. It was created by members of the Tinmouth Community Church.

The Tinmouth Community Fund, established with funds left over from completion of the Community Center and held by the Vermont Community Trust, annually awards small grants for projects within the town.

Tinmouth Community Scholarship Fund, begun with local contributions, provides scholarships for post-secondary education and camp attendance. It was expanded in 2016 when the Town Meeting voted to give it a large amount from the former School Tax Stabilization Fund when the school district merged into the Mill River Unified Union School District.

The Town now has a website—[tinmouthvt.org](http://tinmouthvt.org)—that includes much information about the town; and the town participates in Front Porch Forum, an on line e-newsletter and bulletin board.



## Our Land

### Bedrock Geology

The geologic formations underlying the town of Tinmouth are composed of bedrock units running in a north-south direction. These rocks were originally sedimentary (shale, limestone, dolostone, sandstone), deposited in a marine environment during the Cambrian to early Ordovician period (540 - 480 million years ago). Some of the rock units were metamorphosed into schist, marble, quartzite, and other metamorphic rocks during the mid-Ordovician period (about 470 - 440 million years ago). Folding and faulting also took place at this time, resulting in the town's existing geologic structure.

Tinmouth Valley is chiefly underlain by carbonate rocks (e.g. marble, dolostone and limestone). These formations are relatively soft in comparison to those of the highlands flanking the valley, and therefore are more susceptible to erosion. A band of Shelburne Marble, of economic importance elsewhere in Vermont, underlies the lower eastern slope of Tinmouth Mountain. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century marble was quarried in Tinmouth for gravestones.

### Surface Geology

Overlying the bedrock formations are surficial materials of varying depth and composition. Their deposition is primarily the result of glacial activity approximately 40,000 - 10,000 years ago. Unsorted unconsolidated glacial material, known as till, was laid down directly by glacial ice and now mantles most of the town. A moraine along the eastern slopes of Tinmouth Mountain marks an extensive build up of till when the glacial front probably was temporarily stabilized. Glacial melt waters deposited sands and gravels, forming kame moraines and kame terraces along the lower slopes of the valleys. On the floor of Tinmouth Valley, a sinuous esker was formed by the subglacial deposition of sand



and gravel along a melt water channel. The bedrock of the mountains and valleys was modified by the action of the moving ice.

At one point Tinmouth Valley was dammed by ice, which created a high-level lake of substantial size. Surface deposits related to lake sediments are therefore found along the sides of the valley floor.

They consist of horizontally bedded gravel, sands and clays.

### Soils

Detailed information about soil classifications for individual sites can be found in the Soil Survey of Rutland County, Vermont, last updated in 1998 by

the Natural Resources Conservation Service and Forest Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. Tinmouth's seasonal high water tables, steep slopes and high stone content can limit land use options.

"Prime" and "Statewide" agricultural soils, the Dutchess - Bomoseen - Pittstown and Georgia and Amenia soil associations with 3-8% slopes and minimal stoniness, exist in pockets surrounding the Channel valley and extend up Harrington Crossroad into the northern Gulf valley. The largest occurrence bounds East Road, starting south of Channel Road and extending north along North East Road.

## Topography

**Northwestern Tinmouth** has a narrow valley with gentle slopes, bordered by mountainous terrain to its east and west.

The **only connection** between the eastern and western parts of the town occurs through a gap in the northern part of the ridge.

An **undulating upland valley** lies between Tinmouth Mountain and Spoon Mountain in the west-central area, separated from the eastern half of the town.

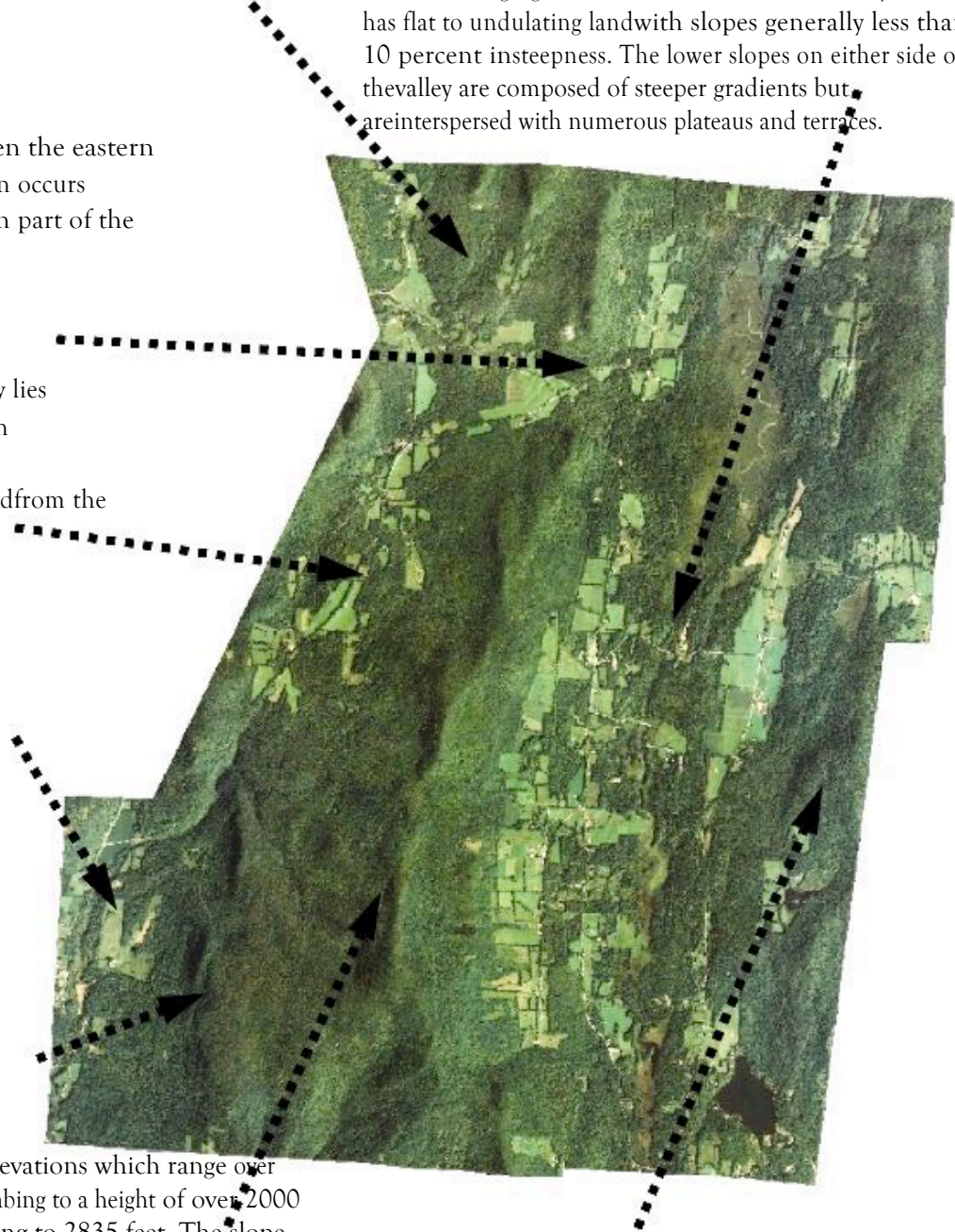
Narrow lowland **Valley** rests in the Southwest corner of the town, bordered by Tinmouth Mountain and mountains in the town of Wells.

**The Gulf** is a narrow and steep-sloped ravine through which the headwaters of Wells Brook cascade.

**Tinmouth Mountain** has elevations which range over 2000 feet with one summit climbing to a height of over 2000 feet with one summit climbing to 2835 feet. The slope forming walls of this mountain ridge is generally steeper than 20 percent, with the upper east-facing slopes becoming precipitous at higher elevations.

**Tinmouth Valley**, broad and U-shaped in cross-section, has elevations ranging from 1000 to 1500 feet. The valley floor has flat to undulating land with slopes generally less than 10 percent in steepness. The lower slopes on either side of the valley are composed of steeper gradients but are interspersed with numerous plateaus and terraces.

**Clark Mountain** borders the eastern side of Tinmouth Valley. Its elevations reach a summit of 1965 feet above sea level. The slopes are steep along this ridge, but they are not as extensive as those on Tinmouth Mountain.



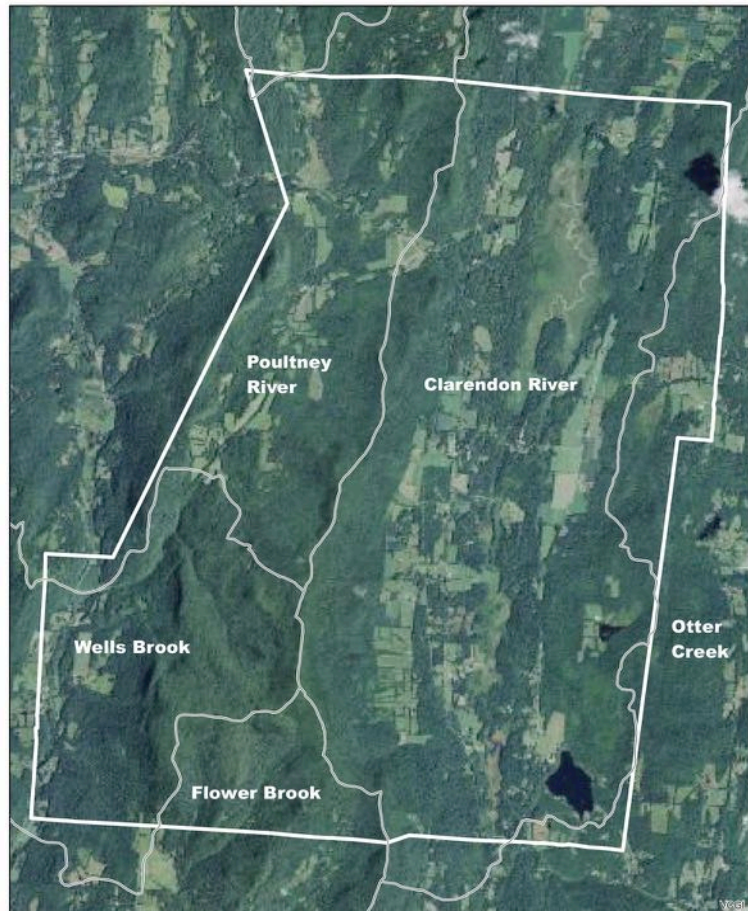


Lower slopes of the Clark and Tinmouth Mountains have mixed soil types of the Paxton - Georgia - Amenia Association with seasonal high water tables, limiting agricultural activities and septic development. Higher elevation areas on both mountains have much shallower soils with heavier rock content. The Tinmouth Channel wetland area is generally covered with the high organic matter Pinnebog muck soil. Remaining valley areas in the northwest and southwest sections of the town have the deep soils of the Dutchess - Bomoseen - Pittstown Association.

## **Watersheds**

Surface water drains in two key directions: westward, into the Poultney-Mettowee Watershed and eastward, into the Otter Creek Watershed. Both eventually lead into Lake Champlain and the Great Lakes watershed that drains via the St Lawrence River. Five sub-watersheds direct water into these two. See watershed map at right.

1. The Tinmouth Channel flows north, becoming the Clarendon River, a major tributary of Otter Creek.
2. The east slopes of Clark Mountain drain into the Valley of Vermont and the Otter Creek.
3. The southwest corner of Tinmouth drains westward through the Wells Brook into the Mettowee River.
4. The south end of Tinmouth Mountain drains towards Flower Brook, which flows westward and joins the Mettowee River.
5. The northwest section is drained by the headwaters of the Poultney River.



## **Streams and Rivers**

Tinmouth serves as the headwaters for a series of streams and rivers that serve the two watersheds described above. The three largest bodies of flowing water are the Tinmouth Channel, the Poultney River, and the Wells Brook.





### Chipman Lake

Chipman Lake, in the southeast corner of the town, known also as Tinmouth Pond, is the only significant water body. It is approximately 79 acres in surface area, has an average depth of seven feet, and drains into the Tinmouth Channel. In recent years, lake residents have been grappling with an invasion of Eurasian milfoil.

According to the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, the lake is in a mesotrophic state, meaning that it has moderate nutrient concentrations. “Mesotrophic lakes have moderate algae growth and relatively clear water. Often these lakes support plant growth around much of their shoreline and may have some shallow areas with abundant plant growth.”<sup>3</sup>

“Trophic state is a classification of the degree of nutrient enrichment of a lake. As a lake ages it progresses naturally from an oligotrophic state, through mesotrophic, to a eutrophic state. The addition of cultural sources of nutrients, however, can greatly accelerate this process and result in premature eutrophication and associated water quality problems.” (Cultural sources of nutrients would be septic discharge, as well as agricultural, lawn, and storm water runoff).<sup>4</sup>

There are no other significant lakes or ponds within Tinmouth’s borders, though numerous wetlands stretch across the town.

### Wetlands

Wetlands are Vermont’s most productive ecosystems and serve a variety of beneficial functions: protecting water quality and quantity, retaining storm water runoff and reducing flooding, providing crucial habitat for fish, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, insects and plants, serving as valuable resources for education, research and recreation, and contributing to the open space character of the landscape.

The Tinmouth Channel Wetland is one of only three Class I wetlands in the state of Vermont. Class I wetlands are considered “exceptional or irreplaceable in their contribution to Vermont’s natural heritage and are therefore so significant that they merit the highest level of protection” according to the 2002 update for Water



Resources Board's Vermont Wetland Rules. The extensive and diverse wetland habitats range from open fens to shrubby and wooded swamps and represent numerous state significant natural communities due to the limey (calcareous) bedrock.

At the southern end tamarack swamps and a rare open calcareous peat land form the headwaters. The waterway eventually broadens so that the northern end is navigable by canoe. Historically this end was straightened or channelized, likely so that iron ore could be transported from Clark Mountain to early iron furnaces downstream. Early surveys showed the wetlands subdivided into hay lots for nearby farmers, though these earlier agricultural disturbances are no longer evident.

Class II wetlands, also considered "significant," and any wetlands contiguous to mapped Class I and II wetlands are regulated as well and mapped by the State of Vermont and included in this Plan's Natural Resource maps.

Class III wetlands, although greater in number, are not protected by the Vermont Wetland Rules of 2002 because of their small size or intermittent nature, but may have local significance and may be protected by other federal, state or local regulations.

## **Ground Water**

Groundwater resources have not been reliably mapped in Tinmouth. In general, the occurrence of groundwater is controlled by the existence and permeability of fractures and pore spaces in sediment and bedrock. The deep deposits of glacial sands and grounds in Tinmouth valley, and to a lesser extent along the narrow valleys of Wells Brook and the Poultney River, have the greatest potential for shallow groundwater storage. The groundwater supply is sustained by the infiltration of precipitation and surface water through soil and rock material. The permeable sand and gravel deposits of the valleys allow direct recharge from the surface. The upland hills and mountains covered with thin soils are also important recharge areas. Because the bedrock is highly fractured in most parts of town, it is the primary aquifer for many Tinmouth residents. Bedrock well depth varies depending on the density of water-bearing fractures.

Three major groundwater sources emerge at the Hepburn, Merrill, and Wright springs on the east side of Tinmouth Mountain.

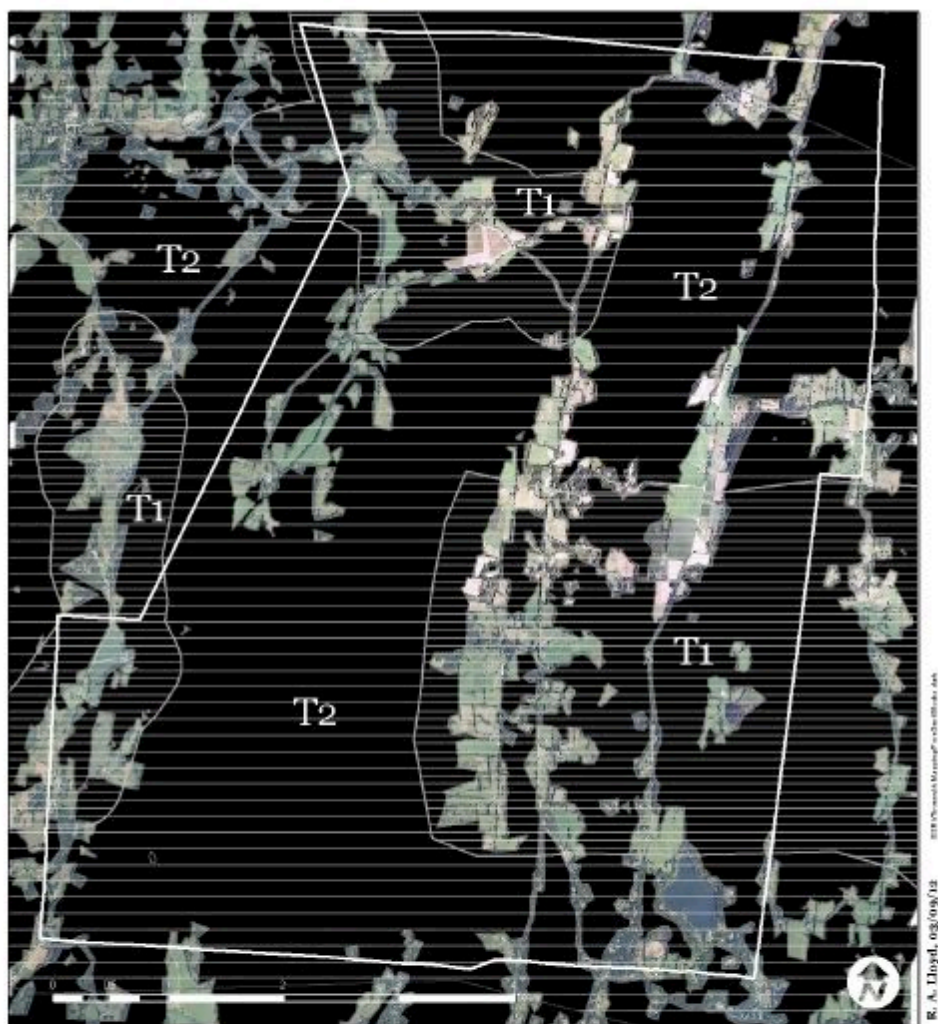
## **Vegetation**

The composition and extent of vegetation which existed when the town was first settled was quite different from that which exists now. Early settlers modified the forest by clearing trees to open fields for crops and pasture land or to harvest products for industry (charcoal, potash, cedar oil). Successive cuttings for timber followed this activity. In the past eighty years, there has been extensive re-growth of forests as farms have shrunk or disappeared on the town's more marginal agricultural lands.

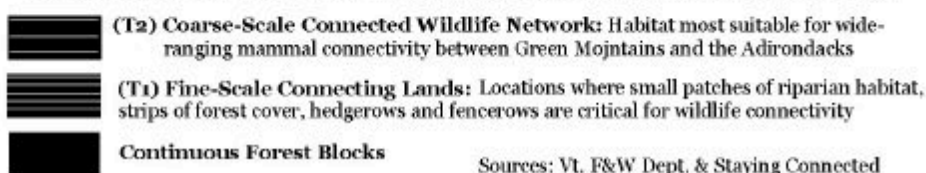
Most of the town is covered with a relatively young northern hardwood forest. The trees commonly comprising this forest are beech, birch, and maple in association with hemlock, white pine, and some spruce. The Tinmouth Channel is covered with various species of wet-tolerant plants. Typical are red maple, larch, white cedar, willow, alder, sweet gale and sedges.

Approximately one-quarter of the town is in open fields. These are predominantly used for pasture or cropland to support the dairy industry.

Adjacent to these open fields are numerous 'old field' upland areas. They are in vegetative transition with many pioneer species.



### Continuous Forest Blocks/Wildlife Connectivity



### Connectivity

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 of animals and plants;  
 allows animals to access suitable habitat to meet their daily and annual life needs;  
 allows seasonal movements (migrations) to essential range or habitat;  
 allows young adult animals to access new range, away from natal range; and  
 allows adult animals to interact with potential mates, thus improving reproductive success and genetic fitness.

### Wildlife

Tinmouth is a unique network of ecological communities supporting a variety of animal, plant and insect life: from its small vernal pools in the forested uplands down through the pasture grasslands and woodland edges to the varied swamps, fens and rare plant communities in its wetlands. Intercontinental migrating waterfowl visit our extensive wetlands. Neo-tropical migrants (our common summer songbirds) breed and nest in our older growth forests (providing interior forest conditions), woodland edges and brushy pastures. Moose, bear, coyotes and bobcat have smaller seasonal migrations following corridors connecting the Tinmouth Channel with the large forested blocks on the Tinmouth Mountain and Spoon Mountain ridges that run north through Ira and south through Danby, and on Clark Mountain, that is contiguous with major forest blocks in Clarendon and Wallingford. Deer rely on the Tinmouth Channel for winter cover and move through the fields, woodland edges and upland forests as their diet changes through the seasons. More localized still are the diverse amphibians relying on the brief appearance of woodland vernal pools, Tinmouth's many species of dragonflies needing pristine wetland habitats, butterflies requiring specific host plants and fish spawning in Tinmouth's brooks.





The town is situated at the crossroads of two critical wildlife migration corridors in the Rutland Region. In part because development is concentrated along the Route 30 and Route 7 corridors, the upland plateaus and mountains of the Taconic Mountains provide excellent connectivity for wildlife in a north-south direction. In addition, Tinmouth is critical for east-west movement of wide-ranging mammal species and is central to one of the few networks of forested habitat connecting the Green Mountains and the Adirondacks.

Contiguous forest habitat provides a significant contribution to the local community's interests in its natural heritage, identity, and working landscape.

These lands provide many ecological functions for fish, wildlife, plants, and all the natural processes that sustain them. Further, they provide extremely valuable connections for people to enjoy and appreciate the land and its abundant resources. To this end, we will work to inform landowners of these values and offer assistance for any conservation actions that are in keeping with the local community's conservation interests. See the Wildlife Habitat Suitability Analysis on page 79.

## Climate

The 2011 precipitation in Tinmouth was 39.12" inches. Evaporation and the transpiration of plants return a large percentage of this amount directly to the atmosphere. The remaining water forms surface water or it replenishes the ground water supplies underlying the valley floors. The temperature ranges from a mean January temperature of 9.8 degrees F to 82.1 degrees F in July. The annual chance of sunshine in Tinmouth is 53%. The mean length of growing season is 130-140 days.

## Chapter III: How We Use the Land

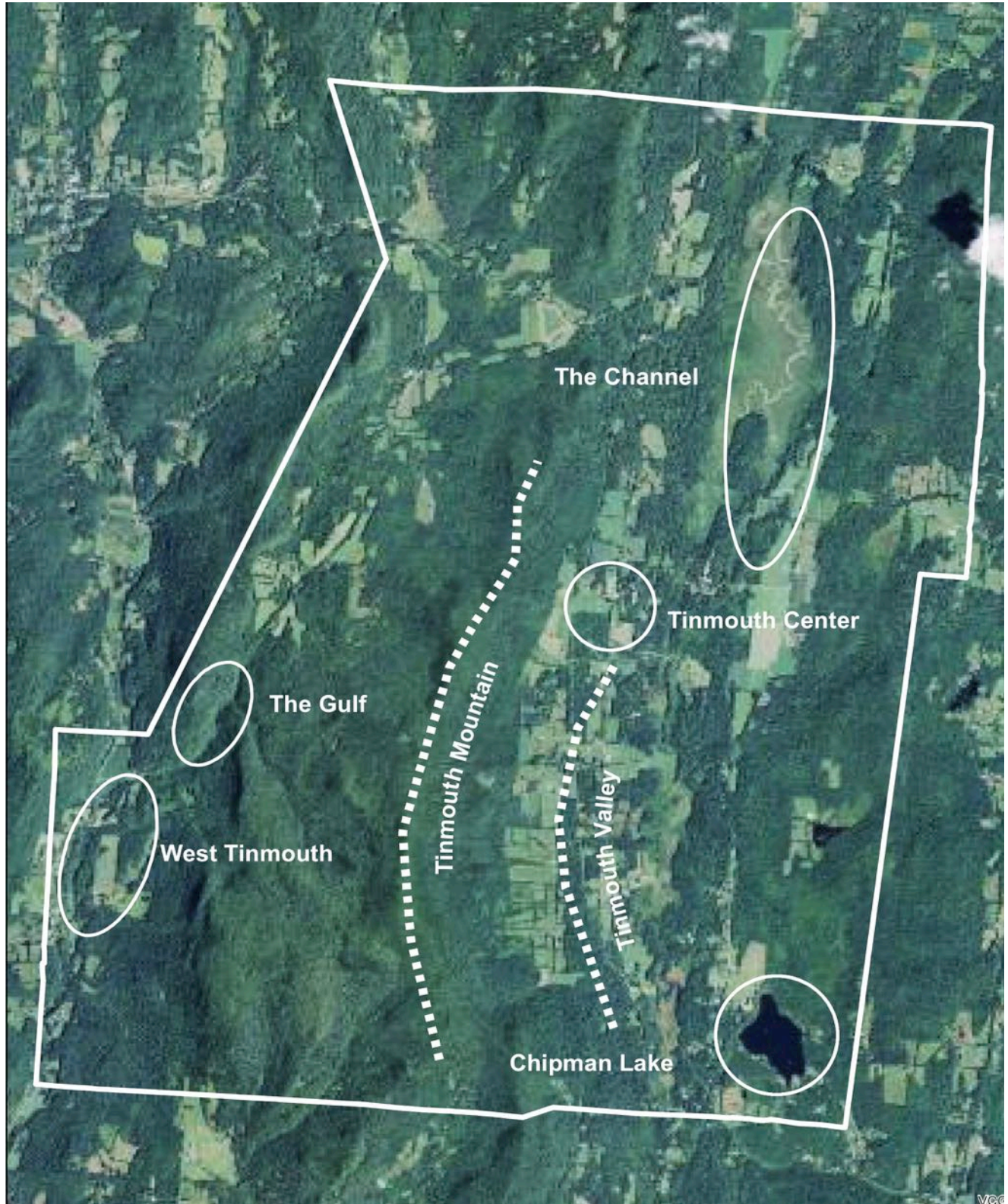
*This chapter of the Plan organized to cover the ways in which landowners, residents, and visitors use the land in Tinmouth; the challenges we face with the ways we currently use the land and water; and ways in which we can solve the problems we have today. How we would like to see the land and water used in the future is addressed in Chapter 5: "Making Good Decisions about the Future."*

### Historic and Current Settlement Patterns

Present land use in Tinmouth is rural-residential in character and is related to agriculture. The density of settlement is very low, and its distribution has been influenced by the physical composition of the land. Tinmouth Valley contains the major concentration of settlement. At its center is a small hamlet, which serves as the focus of community activity. It contains the town's community facilities, the town office, school, firehouse, community church, and a seasonal snack bar. A National Historic District, it has only a few houses, many of them historic, and fewer than 20 inhabitants.

The southern portion of the valley has a relatively high proportion of settlement, mostly occurring along town roads. This area is also the location of a major concentration of seasonal dwellings which ring the shoreline of Tinmouth Pond (Chipman Lake). Other concentrations of settlement occur in the valleys in the West Tinmouth area and are quite remote from the eastern portion of the town.

## Settlement and Land Features of Tinmouth





## Settlement Pattern Analysis

Tinmouth remains a community founded upon farming, even though for a long time the majority of its residents have worked outside the town. As development slowly takes place, however, it is possible that the town's agricultural character and landscape may continue to wane. Although the number of working farms has continued to decline in Tinmouth, those that remain have taken over land from abandoned farms. Dairy farming is predominant in Tinmouth as in the rest of Vermont.

Despite the diminishing number of farms, Tinmouth has a considerable amount of undeveloped open land and forest areas. Preserving these spaces and encouraging working use of the landscape is vital to maintaining the rural character valued by Tinmouth residents.

## Land Ownership

There were 445 parcels in town in 2017. The majority of land in town is owned and managed by individuals or small businesses. Approximately 49% of all private parcels are over 10 acres in size. The largest category of parcels includes those under two acres, none of which is developable. About 200 parcels lie between 2 and 25 acres in size, about 37% of the parcels, but only 11% of the land. Approximately 330 of all parcels in town have at least one home or other principal structure on them.

### Tinmouth Acreage Analysis

Acreages	Number of Parcels	% of Total Parcels	Total acres in Category	% of Total Acreage
0 to 1.99 (1)	92	20.7%	89	0.5%
2 - 9.99	101	22.7%	502	2.7%
10 - 24.99	97	21.8%	1421	7.7%
25 - 49.99	56	12.6%	2001	10.8%
50 - 99.99 (2)	53	11.9%	3713 (1)	20.1%
100 - 249.99	33	7.4%	5162	28.0%
250 - 1200 (3)	12	2.7%	5492 (2)	29.8%
Totals	445	99.8%	18,380	99.6%

(1) Includes 80-acre Tinmouth Pond (Chipman Lake)

(2) Includes large Tinmouth Channel Parcel. Acreages do not include roads.

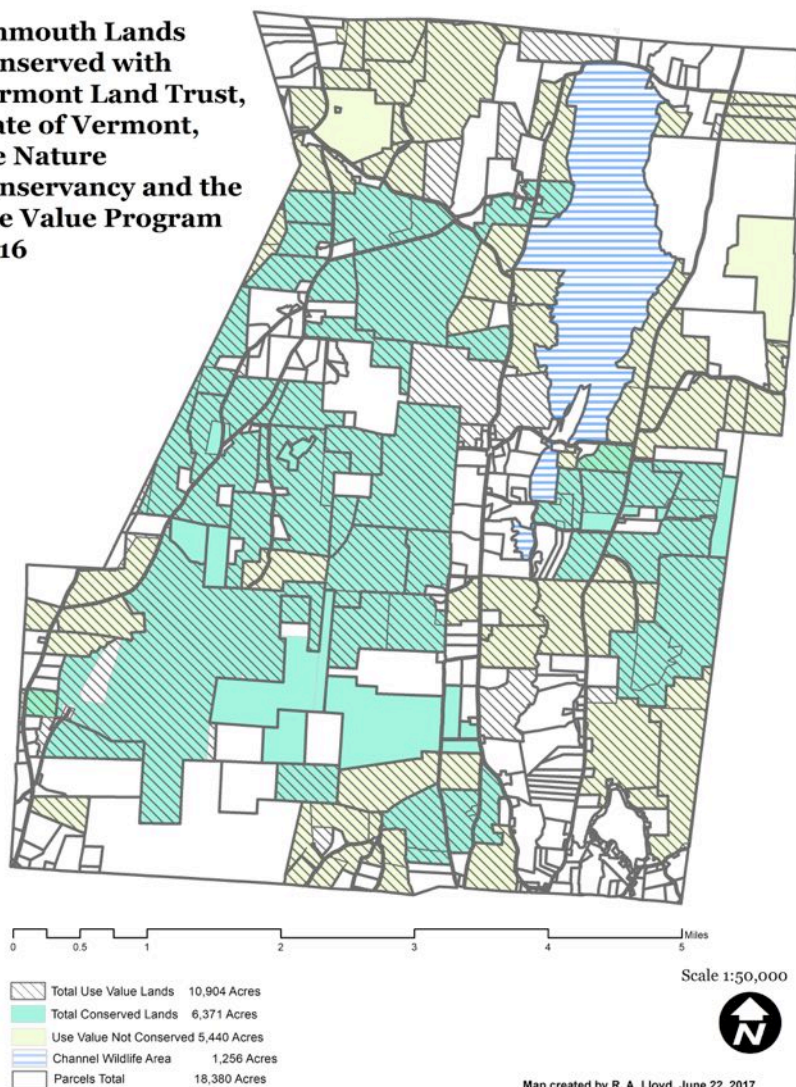
## Publicly Owned Land

The town owns several parcels of land on which the municipal buildings – town office, Old Firehouse, fire station, creamery, church, town garage, transfer station, and cemetery. In addition:

- A tract of land, consisting of 1,256 acres that includes almost all of the Tinmouth Channel wetland, which is owned by the State of Vermont.
- The 260-acre Tinmouth Purchase Recreation Area, owned by the town.
- A power line right-of-way owned by Green Mountain Power which extends the entire length of the Tinmouth



**Tinmouth Lands Conserved with Vermont Land Trust, State of Vermont, the Nature Conservancy and the Use Value Program 2016**



## Restricted Land

Several organization associated with the Town have been active in conserving land in Tinmouth in perpetuity. The Selectboard worked with the Vermont Land Trust and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to buy land for the Tinmouth Purchase Recreation area in 1997, and with the State of Vermont to designate the Tinmouth Channel a Class I wetland in 2003. The Tinmouth Land Trust has worked with landowners to broker the donation or sale of development rights to the Vermont Land Trust. Most of the Vermont Land Trust projects have also incorporated and set aside land for future residences, approximately 25 total. Several of these have been designated specifically for affordable housing. Future conservation work should pay close attention to supporting farming and forestry in the town and conserving the town's natural heritage while ensuring that economic opportunity and the ability for new housing to be built at an affordable cost is not lost.

Most of the conserved land is also in Vermont's Current Use program, which like the conservation easements, prohibits subdivision and prescribes good forestry and farm management practices. It should be noted that these lands are conserved due to private landowner initiatives.

## Restricted Land Acreage Analysis

Total town parcels acreage	18,380 (does not include roads)
Total land in town	18,532
Total conserved land	6,371
Tinmouth Channel	1,256
Total in Current Use, not conserved	5,440

Total conserved, and/or in Current Use Program, and in Channel 13,067, or 70.5% of total land in town

## **Current Uses of Land, Analysis, and Solutions**

### **Homes and homesteads**

Tinmouth's year round and seasonal residents live, for the most part, in widely dispersed, single-family housing along the major roads in town. There is slight, but by no means large, concentration of housing at the junction of Route 140 and Mountain View Road near the town center and another along the southern portion of East Road. The highest density of residential development is the largely seasonal housing surrounding Chipman Lake in the southeast corner of Tinmouth.

Since 2000, the number of homes in Tinmouth has increased by 9%. Of Tinmouth's 362 housing units in 2010, 254 were occupied and 108 were vacant which includes 100 for seasonal, recreational or occasional use. Most housing units are owner-occupied: 83.5% in 2010, with the remaining 16.5% renter-occupied. Both types saw increased numbers in the 2000s. Owner-occupied homes increased by 9%, from 194 units to 212 units. Renter-occupied homes increased from 37 to 42, an increase of 13.5%. The number of mobile home housing units declined from 2000 to 2017, from 46 to 38.

Tinmouth has a sizeable but declining number of seasonal housing units. On the 2017 Grand List, 83 parcels are classified as "vacation" out of 316 total residential parcels. The 2007 Grand List showed 97 vacation homes out of 304 total residential parcels.) Seasonal housing units typically have fewer rooms than year-round housing units. The high concentration of summer camps around Chipman Lake account for most of these units in Tinmouth, though in recent years a number of these homes have been converted to year-round units.

### **Recent trends in housing construction**

A total of 47 permits were issued over the past ten years for houses and mobile homes, however nine were not constructed. Of the 38 built, 79% were for constructed homes and 21% were for manufactured housing which included mobile homes. Of note is that 15 other properties received permits to construct an addition to an existing home. Of the total permits issued, 10 were for the replacement of existing structures, five of those a new manufactured home on the existing foundation, one mobile home was replaced with a house and four houses were constructed to replace existing houses. The average size of all new homes built was approximately 2,200 square feet with the largest new home at 4712 square feet and the smallest at 784 square feet.

There were 14 permits issued for subdivision development during this time creating 32 lots. These included three affordable housing projects which created eight affordable housing lots, of which only two had dwellings constructed on them. Most of additional lot which had a single



family home constructed on it, five created lots that have not yet been built upon.

The number of home sales between 2007 and 2017 totaled 41. These figures include both R1 (house with less than six acres) and R2 (house with more than six acres) properties as well as manufactured housing. The average lot size, for all home sales, was 23.5 acres. The smallest residential lot (with home) sold was 1/3 acre and the largest was 600+ acres.

Of the 41 total home sales transactions, 49% were on lots with 6 or less acres and averaged 2.6 acres in size. The remaining 51% were on lots larger than 6 acres and averaged 41.5 acres in size. Manufactured housing sales were 17% of all home sales over this 10 year period.<sup>5</sup>

### **Home and Homestead Analysis**

The new homes added to the town over the past 35 years have generally been well integrated into the community and followed principles that make Tinmouth unique: small homesteads in valley areas surrounded by mowed fields and / or forested areas. All additional housing places increased burdens on the town's transportation network (see below for details) and services (see chapter 4), but recent growth has not overwhelmed either of these.

Three recent features of new housing development have, however, highlighted issues worth noting and addressing in this Plan. They are:

1. *Homes placed in the center of fields:* A small number of new homes have been located in the middle of former agricultural fields, effectively splitting the fields into two or three segments. More creative development of the site could have allowed for equal access and amenities to the landowner while preserving the future viability of agricultural activities for decades into the future. The Tinmouth zoning regulation's agricultural overlay was designed to address this issue. This regulation should be monitored for its effectiveness over time and altered if necessary.

2. *Homes built in key wildlife habitat areas or corridors.* Identification of wildlife habitat and corridors is an ongoing effort in Tinmouth. Key areas were identified in 2002 and were afforded some additional protection through larger lot sizes connecting the Tinmouth Channel to highland areas across North East Road and across North End Road in two places. Lot size requirements appear to be addressing the issue at least partially, though they do not address small habitat areas.

3. *Conversion of homes around Chipman Lake for year-round use.* Town records indicate that several homes in the immediate vicinity of Chipman Lake have been converted to year-round homes. This has had the positive impact of ensuring that there are more people to watch over the neighborhood during the winter and allowing more people who love the town to live here throughout the year. Two key concerns, however, are the increased use of private roads that may not have been designed for winter use, and additional use of septic systems, lawn fertilizers, etc, that may be contributing to phosphorus loading and the growth of Eurasian Milfoil in Chipman Lake.

### ***Homestead Policies***

The preservation and renovation of existing housing stock is encouraged over demolition and re- building. Land should be managed and developed in ways that sustain a variety of future uses, including agriculture and woodland management.

- New construction and renovations that increase homestead energy efficiency are strongly encouraged

### ***Homestead Actions***

- Provide residents with information about how individuals can support wildlife habitats and corridors.
- Provide residents with information about increasing energy efficiency through house siting, design, and renovation, and ways to help finance such work. An Energy Committee has been formed to work on these and other issues.

## **Economic Development**

During the first part of the 19th century, Tinmouth evolved as a small rural community. The population, greater than exists now, supported a diverse economic base. Iron mines, blast furnaces and forges, marble quarries, saw mills, agriculture, and commercial establishments provided this relatively large economic structure. People of varied backgrounds and economic levels lived and worked together in what was essentially a self-contained and self-sufficient community.

Significant modification of that economic base has taken place over the years. In the more recent past, the town's economy was primarily related to agriculture, particularly the dairy industry (see below). The economic base is also influenced by a seasonal increase in population during the summer, related to the development of vacation homes within the town. But since 1960 employment has been dominated by residents commuting to out-of-town jobs. However, computers and our fiber-optic cable connections have offered increased opportunities for work at home. The changing nature of employment has a significant effect on land use. The Tinmouth Town Plan intends to accommodate these changes, especially the growth of home occupations by local residents.

A seasonal snack-bar and auto-detailing facility are located in the hamlet of Tinmouth, but most commercial uses are dispersed throughout the southern part of Tinmouth Valley. These consist of: an auto detailing shop, seasonal cottages, a campground, B&B's, and a seasonal guest lodge, among others. One farm runs a seasonal farm stand. Another offers a community supported agriculture (CSA) program. Tinmouth's Farm to School Committee helps promote nutritional education throughout the community by connecting students with local farmers and adding local produce to school meals. Many home-based businesses operate in town. The 2016 Town Phone Directory lists over 50 businesses or services offered, mostly by individuals.

## **Businesses Analysis**

The impact of commercial uses is minimal within the town. Businesses draw mostly local patrons and do not generally present traffic, pollution, or noise concerns. The town is not likely to see a substantial increase in commercial activity in the near future because of its location and small population. In the 2017 residents' survey, percentages of those who favor or moderately favor various types of economic development were 93% agriculture, 76% bed & breakfast, 74% independent artisans (arts and crafts), and 72% home-based businesses. Percentages of those who oppose or moderately oppose various types of economic development were 82% heavy industry, 74% used or new car businesses, 56% gas stations, and 41% retail stores.

### ***Businesses Policy***

- The town of Tinmouth supports the development and expansion of agriculture (including forestry), B & B enterprises, independent artisans and home-based businesses.

## **Open Fields and Forests**

Open fields and forestland dominate the town's landscape. The degree to which this landscape is actively managed varies by property and location within the town. Today, 75% of the town's land is considered to be forested, while 25% is in open fields. These figures underscore a slow, but dramatic change in land use over the past century. It is estimated that in the early 1900s, 75-80% of lands in Vermont were in farm use, with Tinmouth as no exception.

Residents of Tinmouth identify strongly with the open fields that cover most of the Tinmouth valley and other flat or rolling parts of the town. Historically, much of these areas – save the wettest parts of the Tinmouth Channel – were actively farmed in one form or another. Today, open fields are still common on the less-steep slopes in town and





make up approximately half of the 8,500 acres of land enrolled in the State's Current Use Program. The program, which reclassifies land to a lower taxable rate in exchange for farm and forest conservation, has been a popular choice for Tinmouth residents. The State of Vermont reimburses the Town for the majority of the difference in taxes collected. Agricultural use includes:

*Dairy and beef farms.* There are nine active dairy and beef farms in Tinmouth. The Census reported 40 Tinmouth residents working

fulltime in the agriculture, forestry, fishing, or mining industry in 2000, up from 31 in 1990. These four industries employed 14.4% of the population over age 16 in Tinmouth between 2011 and 2015

*Hayfields.* Approximately 40 hayfields are used to support farms in the Tinmouth area and beyond. Landowners facilitate this system in part to make some income from the land and in part to keep the land open and to retain the town's character.

*Horse Boarding:* The care of horses has grown as a business in southern Vermont in recent years. There are currently three active horse boarding facilities in Tinmouth, but the potential exists for more given the availability of open fields and the overall growth of the market. Forested areas cover virtually all of the land not actively cleared or considered to be wetlands, including the overwhelming majority of land on steep slopes or at high elevations in the community. Logging has remained a source of income and employment for town residents. Managed forest area accounts for approximately 6,100 acres of land enrolled in the State's Current Use program. Those lands are scheduled with 20-30 year harvest rotations.

### **Open Fields and Forestry Analysis**

Open fields and forest land are both closely tied to the town's identity. In the town's 2006 resident survey 86% of respondents said that working farms in Tinmouth were "important" or "very important" to them. These results were consistent among both year-round and seasonal residents. The same survey revealed large numbers of respondents who said they would *not* want to see retail development on working farms (74%), forest land (69%) and former farm fields growing back up (43%). In the 2017 survey (as reported above), 93% of the respondents favor the conversion of farmland to forest over the past century has taken place primarily on poor soil and / or steeper slopes. Dairy farming in particular has suffered in recent decades because of competition from large-scale farms across the country and this problem will continue for the foreseeable future because of national agriculture policies. In addition, it should be noted that larger farms in neighboring communities have suffered equal, and perhaps more substantial declines in recent years. At this point, the number of active farming operations in Tinmouth makes the town somewhat of an anomaly in the area. This is due, at least in part, to the dedication of landowners and town officials to

promoting farming through perseverance, assistance between neighbors, and land use policies that support farming and open space conservation.

#### ***Open Fields and Forestry Policies***

- Keep active, sustainable agricultural and forestry practices a top priority for land use in Tinmouth.
- Logging operations should take place at appropriate times of year.
- Remind qualifying land owners of the current use program option.
- Retain farms and large contiguous forest blocks wherever possible.

#### ***Open Fields and Forestry Actions***

- Review land use regulation to ensure that sustainable agriculture and forestry practices are a top priority and information is available to landowners.
- Provide information to residents about the importance of undisturbed vegetated buffers
- Identify patches of contiguous forest, those that are relatively large, in good condition (e.g., relatively unfragmented or un-developed).



### **Water Quality Issues**

Similar to other areas of Vermont, nonpoint source pollution is the major source of water quality concerns in the Town of Tinmouth. Unlike point source pollution, such as a direct discharge or outfall pipes, nonpoint source pollution is more diffuse, harder to quantify and more difficult to control. Examples are runoff from parking lots, back roads, fertilized lawns, and runoff from agricultural fields. According to the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, the working landscape contributes more than half of the phosphorus polluting Lake Champlain. Agricultural and forestlands together produce 57% of Vermont's total phosphorus load to Lake Champlain. Stream instability, such as erosion, makes up 21% and developed lands (including paved roads) and unpaved roads contribute 13% and 5% respectively.

To a large extent, nonpoint source pollution control and nonpoint source pollution prevention focuses on the watershed approach, through land use management.

### **Water Quality Analysis**

The majority of the threats and impairments to lakes and ponds in Tinmouth are caused by non-native nuisance aquatic species. The Poultney and Mettowee Basin has the highest concentration of lakes with dense populations of Eurasian water milfoil statewide. Tinmouth Pond has been documented as having a “moderate” level of milfoil infestation, indicating that locally abundant water milfoil growth here and there along the shoreline is evident. Members of the Tinmouth Pond Milfoil Project (TPMP) have experimented with the use of a suction harvester to remove milfoil beds. With support from the town, the TPMP has purchased two “Solarbees”, devices that aerate the water, improves water quality and possibly inhibits milfoil propagation and growth. There are many other methods used for controlling Eurasian water milfoil on lakes and ponds in Vermont, including hand-pulling, the use of bottom barriers, mechanical harvesting, and biological



controls. Adequate resources are a significant limiting factor to Eurasian water milfoil management at Chipman Lake and elsewhere in the state as recreational activities continue to spread it. One factor that should hamper its spread to nearby lakes and ponds is the lack of a formal public access to the Pond.

Wetlands protection is gaining momentum in southwestern Vermont. The Tinmouth Channel, that lies within the Otter Creek watershed, was designated in 2001 as one of three Class One wetlands in the state. Wetlands are usually associated with riparian areas and forested areas. Other wetland conservation efforts are underway in the West Rutland Marsh and Otter Creek headwaters.

#### ***Water Quality Policies***

- Drainage, filling, and fragmentation of wetlands associated with agriculture, forestry, development and road construction should be minimized.

#### ***Water Quality Actions***

- Increase public awareness of the important functions and values of wetlands.
  - Invite conservation districts and other partners to provide workshops for citizens as to the value of wetlands to reduce flooding, filter nutrients, and recharge ground water.
  - Direct landowners towards federal and state programs available for enhancement or protection wetlands.
- Several sources of funding are listed at the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation.

### **Changes in Plant Diversity and Ecosystems**

Tinmouth has a rich diversity of plant and animal species, as identified in Chapter II of this Plan. Some of our land development practices have dramatically impacted these ecosystems, however. Early forestry and agricultural endeavors changed the types of plants and animals most common to the Town, replacing forested areas with limited numbers of grasses and crops grown on the land. In recent years, while some of the biodiversity of the forests has grown back, residents have begun to introduce non-native, and in some cases, invasive plant species to the town. Invasive plants, once introduced to an area, typically spread very quickly and overtake existing species.

In Tinmouth, several invasive plant species have gained a foothold. These include barberry, buckthorn, honeysuckle, purple loosestrife, garlic mustard, Japanese knotweed, Eurasian milfoil, and wild parsnip. The plants have been introduced in two ways: by gardeners inadvertently planting these species and by those undertaking construction or road work, disturbing soils and allowing plants carried by the wind, vehicles, boats, or wader, to settle without competition.

### **Diversity Analysis**

Invasive plants are extremely difficult to control. By definition, they tend to thrive in their new host communities because they have few or no predators and adapt quickly to changing environments.

In recent years, several newer homes have also created more manicured lawn area than had previously taken place in Tinmouth. Keeping diversity among the Town's plants is critical not only for the health of the Town's wildlife and its unique natural areas such as the Tinmouth Channel.

#### ***Diversity Policies***

- Where planting is to take place, native plant species should be considered and invasive species completely avoided.

#### ***Diversity Actions***

- Inform residents about the harmful effects that over-use of fertilizers on lawns and gardens can have on the growth of invasive plants and algae in nearby streams and ponds

- Inform residents about ways to minimize the disturbance of lands when clearing or digging on their lands.
- Inform residents of the benefits of allowing native plants to grow, undisturbed, at the edges of streams and ponds.
- Require undisturbed vegetated buffers along all stream banks and shorelines in the town's zoning regulations.
- Limit the disturbance of natural habitats when performing maintenance on town roads.
- Identify locations of known wildlife crossings along town and state roads.
- Incorporate a map of wildlife crossing areas into the Town Plan and prioritize these areas for conservation.

## **Movement Across the Land (Tinmouth Transportation Network)**

The rural character of Tinmouth, like many other small Vermont communities, is supported in large part by its network of rural roads comprising the town highway system. The road system is an integral part of the town's scenic landscape, settlement patterns, and economic well-being. The network of highways and roads forms a system that provides for the efficient and safe movement of traffic and ease of access to individual properties, while at the same time maintaining the rural character of the town.

There are 39.68 miles of roads in the town, most of which are maintained locally. Route 140, which is the main east-west passageway, serves Tinmouth Center and provides an important link with the adjacent municipalities of Wallingford and Middletown Springs. East Road, North East Road, Mountain View Road, Route 140, North End Road and, seasonally, the Gulf Road offer north-south passage through Tinmouth, at lesser volumes, and connect the community to the towns of Clarendon and Ira to the north, and Danby and Pawlet to the south. Some



portions of Route 133 – state maintained and state controlled – lie in Tinmouth's southwest and northwest corners. The most heavily traveled roads in Tinmouth are Route 133 near the intersection of Route 140 (with counts ranging from 1,300 to 1,500 vehicles a day over the past decade) and Route 140 near West Hill road (with a 2011 - 2016 count of 1100 to 1178 cars daily). East Road and Route 140. are also heavily traveled. <sup>6</sup> (See Transportation Map, page 75.)

“Many of Vermont’s back roads have been widened, straightened, paved, or otherwise ‘improved’ to accommodate increased traffic and provide new access. Often, these modifications have caused unnecessary damage to environmental features and in turn have degraded the scenic, economic, and cultural values associated with the community.” The Vermont Back Road <sup>7</sup>



### **Transportation Network Analysis:**

As presently constituted and maintained, the road system is adequate to the needs of the town and, barring significant changes in the town settlement patterns, should not be changed. On a few occasions each year (Town Meeting and the Volunteer Fire Department's Game Supper, for example), parking in and around the Town Center is over congested

Buildings and uses located within close proximity to highways and roads may result in unsafe conditions or high public costs if the road requires widening. These situations can be avoided if buildings are set back an adequate distance from the highway.

### ***Transportation Network Policies***

- The roads in Tinmouth should be designed and engineered primarily for local use and maintenance, low traffic volumes and axle-weights, lower speeds, tolerant of curves, grade changes, and minimal shoulders (if they are paved at all).
- Improvements to town roads shall be carried out in a manner which will protect, conserve, and enhance scenic features and wildlife.
- Maintain or improve the current level of service on all roads on town; give priority to maintenance

### ***Transportation Network Actions***

#### ***1. Rural Character and Safety***

- Balance the needs for mobility and accessibility with the need to preserve the valuable scenic, natural, historic, cultural and community resources.
- Maintain or enhance the rural environment or setting as a primary design goal. Design criteria for improvements should include esthetics and the project's setting equally with engineering considerations.
- Limit heavy truck use on all roads. Prohibit regular heavy industrial truck use of roads as thoroughfares.
- Post and enforce speed limits on selected Class 2 and Class 3 roads.
- Designate the seasonal road through the "gulf" as a scenic back road; only improvements which would not disrupt its scenic qualities should be allowed on this road.
- Discourage planning and construction of traffic thoroughfares through Tinmouth.
- Road improvements must be fit to the community rather than have the community fit to the road.
  - Maintain a transportation system that promotes the other goals and policies of this plan and makes it easier to direct desired community patterns of land use and economic development.

#### ***2. Maintenance and Improvements***

- Ensure that all roads are maintained and upgraded to be safe for not only automobile and farm traffic, but allow for pedestrian, bicycle, horses and other shared uses.
- Plan land use and take actions to avoid the need to expand the capacity of town highways.
- Plan investments in roads to support desired land use patterns and to improve the livability of Tinmouth. Road improvements must be fit to the community rather than have the community fit to the road improvements.

The impacts on erosion, siltation, and aquatic life of stream crossings necessary for development should be minimized by maintaining fish passage, preserving or enhancing habitat, and limiting in-stream disturbance. Before supporting any new transportation projects, policies or improvements, analyze and compare a reasonable range of alternatives:

- 1) Evaluate alternatives in terms of environmental costs, energy use or conservation, social costs, and public investment; and
- 2) Compare the ability of each alternative to meet the goals and policies of the town plan.

## Utility Transmission Lines

Running in a north-south direction along the base of the eastern slopes of Tinmouth Mountain is the GMP transmission lines and right-of-way corridor (formerly owned by the Vermont Marble Company).

## Utility Transmission Analysis

The distribution of a system must be efficient, but if improperly located, the character of scenic areas, views, and contiguous land uses can be adversely affected. In this regard, the town is concerned that they would be inconsistent with the objectives set out on page 3.

See also the discussion of transmission lines in Chapter V, under “Commercial Energy Generation and Transmission Facility Siting.”

### *Utility Transmission Policy*

- The town supports the continued use of the existing Proctor-Danby power transmission line by GMP to supply power to the Danby Quarry. It should not be upgraded to accommodate other uses.
- The town strongly advocates for a public and open local debate over the construction of any new utility grade power generation or transmission facilities.

### *Utility Transmission Action*

- New electric transmission lines and major transmission facilities are strongly discouraged.

## Historic Sites and Structures

Learned House, the stone house on North East Road, and the Sawyer House in the village, built in 1815 by ironmaster Wait Rathbun, have statewide significance.



The majority of Tinmouth’s historic structures are related to the town’s agricultural heritage. When we think of “historic structures” in Tinmouth, we generally think of long-standing farmsteads, barns, and the stone walls that were built both to show property lines and stow rocks that turn up each year in the soil. A handful of places in town – most notably the hamlet, which been designated as an Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places – have historic structures that remind us of our civic past.

Several of the historic structures indicated on the Scenic and Historic Sites Map (see page 80) are worthy of preservation. The 'old store' in Tinmouth Center has been renovated to house town offices and a library. Next door is the Old Tinmouth Firehouse, which has been renovated into a public gathering place and concert venue.

Historic sites and structures are offered a limited degree of protection under the Vermont Statutes, Act 250 being the only regulatory mechanism addressing them. In granting permits for subdivision of lands, the District Environmental Commission must find that the proposed project "will not have an undue adverse effect on the scenic or natural beauty of the area, aesthetics, historic sites or rare and irreplaceable natural areas."<sup>8</sup>

A list of historic structures and their location appears in Appendix A, page 69.

## Historic Sites and Structures Analysis

While residents of Tinmouth have a great love for the history of the town and its structures, there are, at present, no town-sponsored regulations or programs supporting their continued existence. The greatest challenge to keeping these structures is upkeep and maintenance. There does not appear to be substantial pressure to remove or redevelop these sites.

### *Historic Sites and Structures Policy*

- The Town of Tinmouth strongly supports the conservation and maintenance of historic sites and structures within the town. Future development should retain these elements of our past. Any highway work should pay special attention to the presence of stone walls. Whenever feasible, structures of historical significance shall be adaptively converted to new uses which would maintain their architectural or cultural value to the community.



### *Historic Sites and Structures Actions*

- Work with landowners to apply for historic structure (including barn) preservation funds.
- Create an Old Barn Commission that will work with land owners to rehabilitate barns through grants programs, low interest loans, and town events.





## Chapter IV: How We Provide for our Neighbors

*This chapter of the Plan is focused on the services and assistance that we, as Tinmouth residents, are responsible for or choose to provide to our neighbors.*

### **Affordable Housing**

Housing, for the most part, is a land use issue. How many houses should the town permit to be constructed, and where? The ground rules are set out in the Zoning Regulations. Housing is also a social issue of concern to some residents. When housing in Tinmouth is unaffordable, there may be less diversity in its population and, potentially, the loss of its younger and older residents to other communities.

Housing in Tinmouth is “affordable” when households with incomes at or below the county median income pay no more than 35% of their gross income on housing costs. (HUD standard is 30%) In Tinmouth, costs normally associated with rural housing development, such as on site sewerage, drilling and piping for water supply, larger lot sizes (whether due to zoning or consumer tastes), telephone, TV, and electric connection fees, among others, may contribute to a smaller proportion of housing units in town being considered “affordable.”

The housing market has changed dramatically since the boom ended in 2008. Instead of rising prices for existing housing, prices have fallen since then, and sales are still slow though prices have stabilized. When these houses are resold they drag the market down further, but they also create opportunities for financially qualified buyers to purchase an affordable house in many cities and towns.



A study commissioned by several housing organizations in Rutland County in 2004 identified two key factors affecting the affordability of housing:

"The market for moderate-income, first time homebuyers is tied closely to mortgage rates. If mortgage rates increase substantially, the market will become very tight. The greatest concern for all potential first-time homebuyers is the need for a stronger local job base to provide households with the minimum income of about \$32,000 to afford a first home." In 2011, the median house price in Rutland County was \$138,500. The estimated income needed to afford a median home was \$42,355. As reported in the US Census (2011-2015), the median household income in Tinmouth was \$46,719.

In the 2009-2013 U.S. Census estimates, less than a third (27.7%) of Tinmouth homeowners were paying 30% or more of their income in housing costs and 13.8% were paying more than 50%. However, these residents did own a dwelling (house or mobile home on a lot), and may not be a significant market for new "affordable" housing if it was offered.

### **How Tinmouth Relates to Housing Needs Throughout Rutland County**

Tinmouth is not an island, but an artificial set of boundaries created in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and largely erased by the automobile. The "Tinmouth" housing market is simply a subset of the Rutland County market or, more broadly, the southwestern Vermont market. It may or may not be more expensive than some other towns, due to the cost factors described above. But in that market there are now a substantial number of homes for sale for \$100,000 or less --mostly, to be sure, in Rutland City. A mobile home or doublewide on a lot in Tinmouth also might cost as little as \$100,000. Either could be purchased with FHA financing by a family with an income of \$32,000, good credit, and \$5,000 for down payment and closing costs. Various subsidies available through Neighborworks of Western Rutland County could reduce these requirements. However new construction, whether built on site or in a factory, costs substantially more. In 2015, the median price of a single family home in Tinmouth was \$141,000. But families with relatively modest incomes are not necessarily priced out of the Rutland County market.

### **Local Subsidized Housing**

Tinmouth is not a very suitable place, from a countywide perspective, to build affordable single-family housing – if indeed it can be built anywhere in the county without substantial subsidies. The town offers few jobs or services. So life in Tinmouth is life with the automobile. Most families, even of modest means, find it essential to own and operate two cars, despite the high cost of gasoline. Heating oil is rising in cost after a period of very low prices. Thus the cost of living in an "affordable" house in Tinmouth is not insubstantial, and notably more than living nearer the county's towns and urban areas.

One solution to the cost of constructing affordable housing is to cluster small houses on small lots. Some of the land that would otherwise have been part of each building lot is turned into common open space. This solution was invented in growing suburbs where open space was disappearing. The open space was regarded as the benefit received by the public at large for higher density than would otherwise be allowed. Tinmouth has ample open space -- two thirds or more of the town -- so this solution offers the town very little. Conversely, closely spaced housing on small lots is inconsistent with the town plan, the town's zoning (save for a planned unit development), and the desire of current residents for a rural rather than a suburban environment.

One recent, subsidized affordable housing project in Tinmouth has four half-acre building lots on 10 acres, with the remaining 8 acres to be held in common and managed jointly by all the owners. The land was donated by the owners of 215 adjacent acres of open land held under a conservation easement

prohibiting further subdivision. In the planning stage there was interest expressed by several Tinmouth families in these houses. To date, only one house has been built and sold, and not to a Tinmouth resident or relative of one. To make it affordable, the purchase was heavily subsidized by the developer, using various sources of public (mostly federal) grant money. Several reasons for the slow success of this project present themselves. Due to affordability limitations on the subsidies, some interested parties had incomes too high or too low to qualify. Several had credit problems or couldn't raise even a small down payment. The communal ownership arrangement was not satisfactory to some. Others were put off by the legal limitations on the amount of appreciation the purchaser could enjoy on resale, imposed to keep the houses "perpetually affordable" -- a requirement of the original subdivision permit. Several prospective purchasers simply said they didn't want to live in a subdivision, but on a large lot of their own. Others calculated the costs of commuting to distant jobs, and found Tinmouth unaffordable.

### **Housing Affordability Analysis:**

Tinmouth is a small community, and efforts to alleviate affordable housing needs should be implemented on a scale appropriate to the population. In a rural town, efforts to provide affordable housing units may include: zoning which allows for living situations such as "mother-in-law" apartments and duplex houses, both allowed here; identification of existing structures that could be rehabilitated for affordable or senior housing; construction of mobile homes and "doublewides" on individual lots; and informal counseling and assistance to families in need of affordable housing. In addition, Tinmouth's tradition of volunteer service might make housing constructed by Habitat for Humanity feasible.

#### ***Housing Affordability Policies***

- Proposals for high-density affordable housing projects should be carefully considered to be sure that any proposed compromise with our rural environment is worthwhile.

#### ***Housing Affordability Actions***

- Collaborate with not-for-profit housing organizations and government agencies to pursue affordable housing options consistent with the character of the town, to meet housing needs of Tinmouth residents and their families.

### **The Future**

This plan is for eight years, based on conditions in 2017. Real estate trends are slow to change, so it should remain realistic for that time. However, economic and political conditions can change quickly, and could invalidate this section of the plan in less than eight years. Therefore, the Planning Commission should keep abreast of economic changes, and propose modifications to the Plan or the Zoning Regulations if it believes that this section is no longer appropriate.

### **Child Care**

The availability of child care for our residents is a big factor related to the affordability of living in Tinmouth. 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. There currently is least one licensed or registered child care facility in Tinmouth, located at the School.

## **Child Care Analysis:**

It is difficult to assess the need for child care facilities in Tinmouth because of the high proportion of adults who commute to other communities to work. It is expected that many parents choose to have their children near to their places of work, thus potentially reducing the need for facilities in Tinmouth. Parents and / or child care providers in Tinmouth should be asked to provide input on the need for additional child care facilities. Tinmouth offers school 3 half-days a week for 3 year olds and five days a week for four year olds. School procedures allow K-6 children to be left at school as early as 7:30 and picked up as late as 5:30. After-school programs involve small fees. State and federal aid is available to help with before and after school fees. While Tinmouth School does not operate in the summer, our district, Mill River Unified Union School District, offers all-day summer programs at Clarendon Elementary for much of the summer.

### ***Child Care Policies***

- Encourage maximum flexibility for parents to have access to quality child care providers.

### ***Child Care Actions***

- Permit the use of single family homes in Tinmouth for small-scale family child care facilities.
- Meet with current child care providers and parents of young children to determine if there is a need for additional child-care capacity in town.

## **Childhood and Lifelong Education**

### **Mill River Unified Union School District**

In 2014 The Vermont Legislature determined that a key driver in the cost of education was that there were too many small school districts. Act 46 of that year required consolidation of local school districts (but not schools) into districts with at least 900 students. Reduced tax rates for five years were offered. For those who did not consolidate, the state would produce a mandatory merger plan in 2018. The five school boards in the Rutland South Supervisory Union, Clarendon, Shrewsbury, Tinmouth, Wallingford, and Mill River Union Middle/High School felt that the comfortable working relationship established as a supervisory union meant that we could combine with a minimum of difficulty and some advantages. Taxes were reduced for four years, and in the second budget the district produced there were significant savings, some unanticipated. With voter approval the boards were combined into the Mill River Unified Union School District in 2016. Tinmouth no longer has a school board of its own, but has developed substantial influence on the larger District Board.

### **Tinmouth Elementary School**

Tinmouth has a five-room school for its elementary students, pre-K through grade 6. The school, though small, is a focal point for the entire community, drawing together parents, children, voters, and citizens from throughout the community. In 2000 town



residents donated time and money to construct the Tinmouth Community Center, which is attached to the school. It serves the school as lunchroom and gymnasium, as well as providing a fifth classroom. While the town owns the school building and the Community Center, the school maintains both of them.

#### **School Enrollment**

2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
53	49	45	50	50

The current level of those numbers is due to a large increase in Pre-K enrollment in the last two years. If Pre-K enrollment continues as it has been recently the overall enrollment will increase in future years. Some have expressed concerns that the small size will make Tinmouth a target for closing by the new district. The last Tinmouth School Board foresaw this, and secured a provision in the Articles of Agreement that no school would close without a unanimous vote of the District Board (including the Tinmouth representative) and a vote of the town in which it is located. Therefore, Tinmouth School will not close unless the town wants it to.

#### **High School Students**

Students in grades 7-12 formerly attended classes as tuition students at public and private high schools in surrounding towns. Primarily these students attended Mill River Union High School in Clarendon. Enrollment at Mill River, as at most Vermont high schools, has declined steadily over the past five years, and is substantially smaller than its 1997-98 peak of 796 students. The merger Articles of Agreement provide that the Tinmouth students attending schools other than Mill River in 2015-16 would have their tuition paid to the school of their choice until they graduate. Students who were attending other public schools were placed on the state limited school choice program, under which the sending District does not pay tuition – a healthy saving for the newly merged district.

Secondary Students	2012-13	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
	35	35	35	30	31

The number of secondary students is expected to remain about the same until the large Pre-K and Kindergarten classes in 2016-17 start entering seventh grade six years from now.

#### ***PreK-12 Education Policies***

- Provide Tinmouth students with the highest possible opportunities for education, not only by public policies but by supporting school activities and volunteering at the school. Participate vigorously in the activities of the Mill River Union School District School Board, so that Tinmouth continues to be regarded as an equal partner.
- Ensure that proposals over the future of Tinmouth Elementary School strictly adhere to the Articles of Agreement, which require a vote of the town to close it. Any discussions in the community about closing it should take place in an open and inviting setting, and that residents are kept well-informed.

#### **Post-Secondary Education**

Tinmouth, like many communities throughout Vermont, generally loses its college-aged population to other locations. Several post secondary choices do exist in the Rutland region: Castleton University, Green Mountain College, College of St. Joseph, Community College of Vermont, and for some trades Stafford Technical Center (essentially a high school program). However, a substantial number of students from Tinmouth choose to leave the area for the many personal reasons that cause people to choose their colleges. Not many return; nor do many of those who attend local colleges choose to return here. Of the town's 613 residents in 2010, 22 were between the ages of 20 and 24.

The Tinmouth Community Fund has instituted a Scholarship Fund. It grants scholarships to Tinmouth residents who are attending post-secondary schools. When the Tinmouth School District merged into the Mill River Unified Union School District, over \$75,000 in the school Tax Stabilization Fund was transferred to the Scholarship Fund. An annual plant sale, held for 35 years, contributes several thousand dollars a year, along with many individual contributions.

### **Post Secondary Education Analysis**

Youth relocation from Tinmouth and other rural communities is nothing new, and will likely continue in the future. Students are encouraged in school to learn about world cultures, economies, and political systems. It should be no surprise that many take the opportunity to learn about these first hand. In Tinmouth the challenge of losing college aged students to other areas is coupled with an ongoing opportunity to attract other young people who want to explore living and working in a rural community. This is especially the case for younger individuals and families who would like to develop or take over a farm. The Town can support this by welcoming new residents and providing newcomers with mentoring in how to build a successful enterprise here.

#### ***Post-Secondary Education Policies***

- Work with local land owners, the University of Vermont's Landlink, the Vermont Land Trust, the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, and others to connect new farmers with farmlands available for lease or purchase in Tinmouth.

### **Lifelong Learning**

Learning includes both formal and informal education. We are fortunate to have many different avenues for education in our community. For adults, this includes activities at the Tinmouth Library and Rutland Free Library, and concerts and lectures in the Old Firehouse and the Community Center. The town support of the Rutland Free Library entitles every Tinmouth resident to a library card there. The Paramount Theater's programs are ever-expanding, and now include a dozen Metropolitan Opera company operas in High Definition, British National Theater productions, classical music concerts, and a variety of programs for every taste. In the summer Dorset and Weston Playhouses produce outstanding theater. The Killington and Manchester music festivals bring classical music at moderate cost in the summer. Libraries in Manchester and Rutland offer the Vermont Humanities Council First Wednesday lectures – different in each town.



### **Lifelong Learning Analysis**

It is important that all Tinmouth residents have access to ongoing education. It spurs creativity and ingenuity at home and at work, and helps to fulfill our lives.

#### ***Lifelong Learning Policies***

- The Town will continue to support the Tinmouth Library and the Rutland Free Library.
- The Town will continue to make its buildings available for educational events of interest to its residents.



## Effective Emergency Management

Having emergency services available is among the basic needs of residents in Tinmouth. The Town, together with its non-profit partners, is active in all four phases of emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

### Mitigation

In November 2015, the Town re-adopted a Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Plan identifies the most likely types of emergency incidents and locations where these incidents are most likely to take place. The Plan also sets forth a prioritized list of tasks to be completed to reduce the damage from future emergencies. Key issues in Tinmouth include the potential for flooding or road closures in a handful of locations, as well as the presence of students at the Tinmouth Elementary School during school hours. Priorities in the Mitigation Plan include ensuring that Town records are safely stored, that the Town maintains an up-to-date Rapid Response Plan, and that the Town seek entry into the National Flood Insurance Program. Refer to the Mitigation Plan for details.

The Town has also completed an inventory of its bridges and culverts and adopted a series of codes and standards for road maintenance that ensure sustainable practices. Having these programs in places can reduce the Town's match against State dollars for certain public works maintenance projects.



## Preparedness

The Town has an appointed Emergency Management Coordinator who is responsible for working with town officials and first responders to maintain an up-to-date Rapid Response Plan. The RRP should be examined and re-adopted on an annual basis to ensure that the phone numbers for key individuals are correct and that other key elements -- such as making sure that all shelters are approved by the American Red Cross -- are maintained.

## Response

**Fire Protection:** The Tinmouth Fire Department is a volunteer organization. It belongs to a Mutual Aid Pact with Clarendon, Danby, Middletown Springs, Pawlet, Poultney, Ira, Wallingford and the Wells Fire Departments. The Fire Station is located in Tinmouth Center next to the Town Office and all fire protection equipment is owned by the department. The Fire Department has faced the challenge of retaining membership, as have most departments in the State. The recruitment of many junior firefighters to support the adult crew has helped the Department to remain a vital and effective organization in recent years.

**Emergency Medical Services:** The eastern portion of Tinmouth is covered by Wallingford Rescue Squad, which is five miles away. The west part of Tinmouth is served by the Poultney Rescue Squad and Middletown Springs First Response. The distances of these services from the town is a limiting factor in providing immediate emergency aid. The town has also participated in the state E-911 numbering system.

**Police Protection:** Tinmouth is covered to a limited extent by Rutland County's Sheriff's Deputies under contract between the town and the sheriff. Major crimes bring in the State Police. Tinmouth constables no longer have law enforcement authority, under recently passed laws to promote law enforcement professionalism.

## Recovery

The Town maintains records of costs incurred in the recovery from disasters, including road repairs, culvert replacements, etc. Recording and reporting this information to Vermont Emergency Management and the local Agency of Transportation District Office helps the State to apply for Presidential declarations of disaster in larger events and can make the town eligible for substantial reimbursement of costs. The Town's emergency management officials, as well as residents in general, have also historically been very supportive of residents who have suffered damage or losses in an emergency and provided whatever assistance is needed or available.

## Emergency Management Analysis

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

### ***Emergency Management Policies:***

- Facilities and effective equipment as well as training for fire protection shall be provided within the financial capabilities of the fire department and town.
- Actively participate in multi-town emergency preparedness activities while striving to be self sufficient wherever possible.

### ***Emergency Management Actions***

- Consideration should be given to the formation of an inter- town police force drawn from Tinmouth and adjoining communities.
- Consideration shall be given to the formation of a First Response Squad to work with the Wallingford and Poultney Rescue Squads.

- Encourage town residents to join the Volunteer Fire Department
- Promote emergency safety among households in Tinmouth by including preparedness tips in the *Tales of Tinmouth*

## Recycling and Solid Waste Disposal

Sewage and solid wastes can cause serious health and environmental problems if not properly treated and disposed of. It is essential for the Town to require and, where appropriate, to provide adequate and safe disposal systems for these waste products.

In 2002, Tinmouth voted to adopt an Interlocal Contract with the towns of Benson, Chittenden, Fair Haven, Middletown Springs, Rutland Town, Shrewsbury, Sudbury, and West Haven as the way to help address the solid waste needs of these communities. The contracting towns are known as the Solid Waste Alliance Communities (SWAC). SWAC contracts with a part-time administrator to represent the member towns at state-wide solid waste and hazardous waste meetings, disseminate information to the towns, obtain grants for the benefit of the SWAC towns, coordinate recycling pickups, oversee shared equipment, and help maintain a Solid Waste Implementation Plan (required by State regulations) covering all SWAC towns. SWAC arranges household hazardous waste collections that are available to residents four days per year with drop-off service available through an agreement with the Rutland County Solid Waste Management District throughout the year. The cost of these collections is shared by the SWAC towns.

Tinmouth operates a solid waste transfer station, open for use by residents twice a week. Non-recyclable trash is disposed of by dumpster with a fee of \$2 per bag. Cans, glass, and plastics are combined in a partial zerosort container, while paper is separated into 3 categories (mixed paper, newspaper and cardboard). Large metals, wood and computer equipment go into separate containers. Food waste is accepted for composting.

## Recycling and Solid Waste Analysis:

Reducing the quantity of waste materials is essential to controlling the cost of solid waste disposal. Recycling and reusing materials keeps them from the landfill as does composting organic matter.

### ***Recycling and Solid Waste Policies:***

- The town shall continue to meet the requirements of all State solid waste laws.
- The town should work with the State, SWAC, and private organizations to educate residents on the importance of reduction and recycling of waste materials and actions we can take to achieve goals.

### ***Recycling and Solid Waste Actions:***

- Complete a comprehensive plan for the transfer station's facilities and operations
- Regularly publish recycling guidelines in the *Tales of Tinmouth*
- Provide residents with information about at-home composting through the *Tales of Tinmouth*.

## Community-Sponsored Recreation

Recreational activities are both a use of land and a service supported by residents and town officials. The use of land for outdoor recreational purposes is discussed in Chapter III. The Town supports many recreational activities in several different facilities. The activities that take place within these facilities make up a big part of the community that is Tinmouth.

Recreational facilities owned or supported by the town include:

- The **Tinmouth Community Center**, opened in 2000. The facility was built using money and time donated by many Tinmouth residents. Today, it serves as a lunch room and gymnasium for the Tinmouth Elementary School, a large meeting hall, and a public recreation facility for residents and

visitors to Tinmouth. It is also the home of the Volunteer Fire Department's annual game supper and is a staging area for the Tinmouth Community Celebration each year.

- The **Tinmouth Library**, located behind the Town Offices, is open two days per week. The Library is staffed by a volunteer librarian and several others who work to keep the Library's holdings current and offer reading and writing groups and educational talks to residents of all ages. The number of users of the library has increased substantially over the past ten years. All residents are also members of the **Rutland Free Library**, which has a wider range of books, periodicals, and programs. The two libraries complement each other, together providing services which are among the best in the Region.
- **Ball field and childrens' playground near the Community Center.**
- **The Old Firehouse**, a small meeting area and concert hall, located between the Town Offices and the new Fire Station. The Stage was refurbished in the late 1990s thanks to multiple grants from the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation and the work of Tinmouth residents. It offers one of a handful of community-supported concert series in the area.
- **The Tinmouth Purchase Recreation Area**, a 280-acre woodland lot near the top of Tinmouth Mountain, purchased by the Town in 1997 with assistance from the Vermont Land Trust and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. Accessible by foot, snowmobile, or horse for hiking, riding, picnicking, etc. 📍

## Recreational Program Analysis

Tinmouth has a lot going on for a community of its size. This can be attributed to the ongoing efforts of volunteers who organize the events and to residents and visitors who attend regularly and make events a tremendous success.

### *Recreational Program Policies*

- The town strongly supports the use of its facilities for recreational activities of interest to residents.
- Continue membership with the Rutland Free Library and support for the Tinmouth Library

### *Recreational Program Actions*

- Publicize recreational events in the *Tales of Tinmouth* to encourage participation by all town residents.
- Consider developing a recreation area on town lands adjacent to the town garage if this seems the best use of that land.

## Outdoor Recreation

Residents of Tinmouth and visitors to the town use the land for all types of recreation: hunting, fishing, trapping, snowshoeing, hiking, cross country skiing, cycling, snowmobiling, ATV riding, boating, and horse-back riding, among others. The impacts of these activities vary widely, though most affect defined areas. The town's expansive forest and open areas make it ideal for these and many other recreation activities. Enjoyment of the land and water in the town is one of its key binding features and one of the reasons that residents are so strongly connected and committed to the long-term health of these natural features. The Tinmouth Purchase Recreation Area is a Town owned tract of land for

the use and enjoyment of its residents and visitors. In 2014 with a grant from the State of Vermont to repair damage from hurricane Irene, the town created the Tinmouth Purchase Loop Trail, accessible from





Pent Road. In 2016, the newly formed Tinmouth Conservation Commission erected a cabin on the site of the former “Blanchard Camp,” open to the public for overnight recreation. In addition, construction was started on the Tinmouth Ridge Trail, which will connect the school field to the Purchase Loop Trail. Of particular note are the activities that have potential impacts on wildlife and natural resources within the town and on the quality of life of neighbors. They include:

- Erosion caused by overuse of trails by ATVs, mountain bikes, hikers, and horses. Repeated wear on the same trails – especially during the springtime – can create ruts and develop erosion patterns on steeper slopes. In general, users of trails in Tinmouth have been respectful of this and have not caused significant problems. If use of these trails increases in the future, steps may need to be taken to limit soil erosion.
- Noise pollution created by ATVs and snowmobiles. Overuse of trails can alter wildlife habitat and travel corridors because of the noise created by engines. Little research has been done in this area in Tinmouth to determine whether the current use has had a substantial impact.
- Aquatic nuisance species can be carried between bodies of water by boats and fishing gear.

### **Outdoor Recreation Analysis**

Recreational uses of the land and water in Tinmouth are generally low-impact, both because of the type of recreation most commonly exercised, and because of the limited use most trails, lands, and waterways receive. The slow conversion of land around residents’ homesteads, as more people make their living inside the house or outside the town instead of using the land – will mean a change in the town’s appearance; it could alter the plant and animal habitat in the town and exacerbate water quality issues in the town’s streams.

#### ***Outdoor Recreation Actions***

- Provide residents with information about trail designs and maintenance techniques that prevent erosion. Provide information to boaters and anglers reminding them to clean their gear carefully between outings to prevent the spread of aquatic nuisance species.



### **Efficient Use of Energy**

Over the past few years, energy consumption has again become an important topic across the state and Country. In Tinmouth, overall energy use is low because of the sparse population and few businesses or town facilities. Transportation is the leading source of energy use in the Rutland Region and throughout the State. In 2017, it

accounts for 36.8 percent of all energy consumed in the State<sup>9</sup> and 44.7% of carbon dioxide emission.<sup>10</sup> In 2015, 255 Tinmouth residents commuted to work, of whom 214 drove alone and 31 carpooled.

Home energy use in Tinmouth is a combination of heating oil, electricity, and wood. The Total annual electric energy use in Tinmouth is 2.35 GWh. The average home uses 6,808 KWh.<sup>14</sup> A number of homes in town use household-scale windmills, active solar panels, or passive solar design to provide energy, reduce heating costs, or heat water. There are 12 solar sites in Tinmouth, of which 4 are ground-mounted PV, 6 are roof-mounted and 2 produce hot water. Together they produce 46,662 kWh of electricity per year.<sup>11</sup> No town-wide energy efficiency programs have been established in Tinmouth, though the Select board created an energy committee in the spring of 2007 to address local energy consumption.

## **Energy Use Analysis**

It is no surprise that energy use for transportation is high in Tinmouth. Because of the town's rural setting, most residents need vehicles to commute to work, school, and services. At this point, there are no viable alternatives, however, as the numbers of jobs in town are limited, and the small population of the town will likely not support a local store. Carpooling to work may be an option, since over 1/3 of all employed Tinmouth residents work in Rutland City or Rutland Town. Local wind energy production is an option for some Tinmouth residents and businesses. Western slopes of the town's mountains have relatively strong sustained wind speeds. Solar systems used for heating water and providing electricity are also becoming increasingly competitive options.

### ***Energy Use Policies***

- The town of Tinmouth advocates for greater energy efficiency in all forms.

### ***Energy Use Actions***

- The town will provide assistance to the energy committee to reduce energy consumption in Tinmouth.
- In any future construction of town buildings, attention should be explicitly given to ways to minimize the potential future costs of energy.
- The town should explore means of alerting potential builders to such simple energy conservation information as findings that a south facing design, without any other considerations, reduces heating costs by about 10%. This information could be provided when a building permit is applied for.
- Establish a regular car-pool program for Tinmouth residents headed to the Rutland area for work, school, or errands.
- Establish a park & ride area for residents.

## **Town Governance**

Our town operates on the shoulders of volunteers dedicated to Tinmouth, and is supported by a small team of employees who keep our roads clear, our records in order, our school running effectively, and our transfer station operational.

There are six town-based boards in town:

- *The Select board* is an elected, three person board responsible for overall governance of the town. It oversees the work of town employees, proposes budgets for voter review, and sets town policies.
- *The Planning Commission*, appointed by the Select board, currently has nine members and is responsible for developing the town plan, zoning regulations, and subdivision regulations, as well as

reviewing subdivision and planned unit development applications. It is also responsible for working with the Select board and other organizations and individuals in town to implement the plan.

- *The Zoning Board of Adjustment*, appointed by the Select board, currently has seven members and is responsible for reviewing applications for conditional uses and variances from the zoning regulation and for hearing appeals of decisions made by the zoning administrator.
- *The Energy Committee*, newly formed in 2007, is appointed by the Select board and is responsible for assisting the town and its residents to reduce energy consumption wherever possible. ¶
- *The Tinmouth Community Center Board*, elected by the organization's members, is responsible for the maintenance and any new projects associated with the Community Center.
- *The Tinmouth Housing Rehabilitation Loan Board*.

In addition to these town-sponsored boards, there are a handful of non-profit organizations whose missions are to serve the town.

- *The Tinmouth Land Trust* works with landowners to encourage land conservation and affordable housing and, where appropriate, sale of land or development rights to organizations such as the Vermont Land Trust for conservation purposes.
- *The Tinmouth Volunteer Fire Department* currently has 26 members, including several juniors. The Department's mission is to provide emergency response services to the town and to neighboring communities on a mutual aid basis. The Fire Department typically receives half of its annual budget from taxpayers in town, with the rest coming from fund raising events, donations, and grants.
- *The Tinmouth Library Board* maintains our small library and runs activities throughout the year to encourage literacy.
- *The Tinmouth Conservation Commission* steward of the town's natural resources, including wildlife, forests, recreational trails, and to educate the public on conservation topics.
- *The Tinmouth Community Church Administrative Council* is responsible for the upkeep and programming at our church located in the Center.
- *The Tinmouth Community Fund* gives small grants to support town spirit and a sense of community.
- *The Tinmouth Historical and Genealogical Society*.
- *The Tinmouth Pond Milfoil Project*.

The town is supported by a small staff that includes a town clerk / treasurer / zoning administrator, town office assistants, road commissioner and road crew, and transfer station attendants.

### **Governance Analysis:**

Tinmouth has a long history of open and public decision-making. In 2006, voters adopted the Australian ballot system for election of town officers, but Town Meeting continues to discuss Town and School expenses, and to vote them up or down. Boards and committees are served by dedicated individuals from various backgrounds. The community of Tinmouth is a vitally important piece of the town. Work and school schedules, which regularly send residents outside the town's borders, bring with them challenges for the town's sense of community, but also opportunities to bring new ideas together in service of one another.

#### ***Governance Policies***

- The Town of Tinmouth seeks to engage in open and public governance at all times.

#### ***Governance Actions***

- Continue to support the publication of the *Tales of Tinmouth*.
- Participate in Front Porch Forum

## **Health Care and Elderly Services**

In Rutland County, a variety of health and human services are available to residents. These include the Rutland Regional Medical Center, Rutland Area Visiting Nurses, Rutland Area Community Services, the Southwestern Vermont Area Agency on Aging, Long Term Care Ombudsman, Legal Service Attorney for Elders, One-to-One Program, InterAge Program, Vermont Department of Health, Association for Retarded Citizens, Rutland County Parent/Child Center, Vermont Association for the Blind, Rutland County Women's Network and Shelter. Tinmouth residents draw on the services of many medical practitioners in the area, as well as more distant resources such as the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, NH, and the UVM Medical Center in Burlington, VT.

## **Chapter V: Making Good Decisions About our Future**

The future character and prosperity of Tinmouth will be a reflection of how we use the land. If uses change, so will the character. The purpose of this plan is to propose where changes in use might have minimal effect, as well as where present uses should be conserved. The broad goal is to allow new development of varying types, new uses and, at the same time, to preserve the overall character of the town.

### **Future Land Use Districts**

The Land Use Districts, defined in the following paragraphs, are a guide for the growth and development of the Town. The four land use districts in Tinmouth are the Rural Residential, Lake Shore, Protection, and Conservation Districts. There also Agricultural, Ridgeline and Flood Hazard Overlay Districts. These land use areas provide for a variety of residential, commercial, agricultural, and recreational opportunities for the future while considering local environmental constraints as well as existing land use patterns. This Plan is not a zoning regulation, although it provides guidance for zoning changes and updates. The future land use map, designating the boundaries of each district, is an integral part of the plan. (See map p.71)

### **Tinmouth Center**

Tinmouth Center is a hamlet in the center of town, and the town's historic focal point. It is in the rural residential district, but is worth considering on its own. This village is a road junction containing a very low density grouping of buildings without any water, sewer, or sidewalks.

School, church, and town office each have small parking areas, and there is some roadside parking. Primarily a governmental center, the town office, town library, fire station, elementary school, and Community Center attached to the school are located here. It is a registered National Historic District,



with some town buildings and several houses of a historic nature. The town's only retail facility, a seasonal snack bar, is located here. Thus it provides a center for community interaction, a container for community memories, and a focus of community identity. However, it lacks the elements of a village, such as a store, gas station, or other commercial services, has no public utilities, and has a population of less than 20. It is not the kind of village that development can be built upon. Its inhabitants must work at home or commute to jobs, and find stores and services in other towns the same as residents on scattered lots.

### **Tinmouth Center Analysis**

It is hoped and expected that Tinmouth Center will remain the gathering spot for town residents. It is not anticipated that this will be a location for substantial future development, however. Poor soil conditions, the lack of any public infrastructure and lack of commercial services make future development no more feasible in the hamlet than elsewhere in the community. The 2017 survey found that residents were 2-1 against allowing smaller lots adjacent to the village, so any future development must be on five acre lots.

#### ***Tinmouth Center Policies***

Tinmouth Center shall remain the focus of the Town in terms of town services and gatherings. Any development in or near the hamlet shall be compatibly integrated with its appearance and its existing form. Its status as a National Historic District shall be protected by the community and the town government.

#### ***Tinmouth Center Actions***

- Maintain the historic appearance of the Tinmouth Village National Historic District.
- Complete the stabilization and restoration of the Old Creamery.
- Apply for and support a Village Center Designation.

### **Rural Residential District**

Settlement in the outlying areas of the town historically has been associated with farming and related agricultural uses. For this reason, homes have been generally located on land that is suitable for residential purposes and at the same time, they have been compatibly related to the pattern of open fields and woodlands.

### **Rural Residential District Analysis**

Recent rural settlement has not been related to farming, but rather to permanent residences or vacation homes. This type of housing and country lifestyle is highly valued, yet usually breaks up continuous tracts of land formerly used for agriculture and forestry and often contributes to sprawl. The creation of a Rural Residential District is an attempt to accommodate the demand for rural housing, (usually a single-family home, a few farm animals, a garden and one or two small out-buildings), with minimal economic and environmental impacts.

The development of residential housing in Tinmouth (described in detail in the Housing section of the Plan) creates the largest growth pressure in town. Every effort should be made, within this district, to have development sited in locations that preserve open space, forested areas and natural resources.

#### ***Rural Residential District Policies***

- The Rural Residential District shall promote densities that maintain a rural character.
- Buildings, driveways, and other structures should be in places with lower quality agricultural soils and away from key wildlife habitats and other areas with sensitive natural environments.

- Density of development should be guided by the limitations of the land and specified in the town plan and zoning bylaws (as described in Chapter I).
- Regulations may provide for special considerations or increased densities of development if the proposed development conserves or protects important natural features, historic buildings or vistas, or includes the establishment of affordable housing.



### Lakeshore District

Chipman Lake (commonly known as Tinmouth Pond) has long been the focus of seasonal recreation activities ~ swimming, boating, etc. The shoreline is characterized by numerous pre-existing small lots, with minimal setbacks from side lot lines and the lake, accommodating vacation camps and cottages, sometimes with small outbuildings. During the summer, the lakeshore is also home to the largest single concentration of population in the town.

### Lakeshore analysis

In recent years, some seasonal cottages have been converted to year-round residences or, in some cases, torn down and replaced by more substantial buildings. If this trend continues, there may be a need to examine road conditions and access to properties for year-round emergency services.

#### *Lakeshore Policies*

- New structures should be sited with the greatest possible sensitivity to minimizing intrusion on neighbors and the shoreline.
- New construction should include measures to limit the amount of sedimentation and nutrients delivered into the Pond.
- Wherever possible, undisturbed vegetated buffers should be established along the shoreline to promote health of the Pond.

#### *Lakeshore Actions*

- State Lakeshore regulations should be strictly enforced in any new construction.
- Examine road conditions and access to properties for year-round emergency services.

### Conservation District

**Conservation areas contain lands that are very sensitive to development for a variety of reasons. They generally contain significant natural** resources such as large forest blocks, high elevations, steep slopes

In 2002, the town added land to this district in the areas surrounding the Tinmouth Channel and connecting the Channel to Tinmouth Mountain. The decision to add this land followed an extensive public input process and is intended to help maintain the quality and function of this unique wetland and wildlife habitat.

## Conservation District Analysis

While the goal of maintaining larger, less disturbed land area in the town has been supported by the



Conservation District, land development over the past 25 years has not always forwarded the intent of maintaining viable agricultural and forestry lands or wildlife habitats. The Planning Commission has learned that supplemental tools, in addition to minimum lots sizes, are necessary to help land owners identify and conserve sensitive areas within the Conservation district.

### *Conservation District Policies*

- Conserve sensitive areas within the Conservation District while allowing for limited, low intensity development.

## Protection District

Protection areas contain land that is unconditionally protected from development such as lands above the 2,500-foot contour, lands that are in the floodplain, and significant natural features and wetlands. These include the 1245-acre Tinmouth Channel (a Class 1 wetland), the Poultney River source wetland, Crow Hill Wetland, Ballou's Swamp, the top of Tinmouth Mountain above 2500 feet, and the narrow, steep sided Tinmouth Gulf.

## Protection District Analysis:

Lands in the protection areas are suitable for low-impact recreational uses, such as hiking and nature trails, hunting, and other human-powered low impact recreation. Intensive motorized recreational activities, such as "four-wheeling", are not appropriate or should occur only in designated areas. The state of Vermont requires that agriculture and forestry be allowed in all zones, including the protection areas.

### *Protection District Policies*

- The Town of Tinmouth shall prohibit permanent structures in the Protection District.
- Subdivision of land within the Protection District is strongly discouraged.

## Agricultural Overlay District

Agriculture is an important part of the economy, image, and lifestyle of Tinmouth. The continued economic success of this activity is directly related to the availability of large amounts of undeveloped land with moderate slope and productive agricultural soils. Retaining large tracts of undeveloped land in areas identified as high resource value for agriculture is vital to ensuring the future viability of farming in Tinmouth. Based on current land use as well as consideration of soil associations and slopes, some lands have been identified as of the greatest agricultural resource value that require protective measures. These lands were incorporated into a special "Agricultural Overlay" district in the town's zoning regulations in 2002. This district's regulations strongly encourage new development to be situated on the edge of farms and other open fields instead of in their centers. Development in this district requires a conditional use permit.

### *Agricultural Overlay District Policies*

- Maintain the Conditional Use policy in this district with a flexible approach to siting.

## **Ridgeline Protection Overlay District**

To retain the undeveloped character of these prominent features of the Tinmouth landscape, protect important habitat corridors for wildlife as well as viewsheds from Tinmouth and surrounding communities, and prevent development on shallow soils and/or steep slopes, a “Ridgeline Protection Overlay District” has been created. Development in this district requires a conditional use permit.

## **Where and How Development is Encouraged**

### **Intermediate Slopes and Terraces**

The area of intermediate slopes and terraces is a transitional zone between the valley floor and steep slopes. Its landscape form is characterized by undulating topography interspersed with small terraces, plateaus and knolls. Because of this diversity, settlement in these areas will have minimum visual impact if properly sited.

#### ***Intermediate Slope and Terrace Policies***

- Settlement shall occur in areas of intermediate slopes and terraces and be sited to take advantage of natural terrain and other scenic features.

### **South-Facing Slopes**

In the winter, cold prevailing winds are from the northwest. During the same season, the sun’s orientation and altitude decreases, reducing the duration and angle of exposure on northern slopes. Snow and frost accumulations tend to be greater and remain longer than on southern slopes. These factors produce a stressful microclimate. Consequently, buildings usually require greater amounts of insulation and/or energy to produce comfortable interior climates. By contrast, buildings oriented towards a southern exposure benefit from longer periods of sun during the winter, protection from northerly wind, and longer growing seasons.

#### ***South Facing Slope Policy***

- Where practical, settlement should occur on south-facing slopes.

### **Forest/ Open Field Edge**

Open fields are the foundation of the town’s agricultural heritage and future (See Chapter III). In addition, the contrast between open fields and the woodlands that enclose them form the most apparent visual aspect of the town’s landscape pattern. The fields open up long views across Tinmouth’s valleys. Therefore, their scenic quality is highly vulnerable to settlement. Tinmouth’s landscape pattern has evolved primarily as a result of agricultural pursuits. The isolated groupings of farm dwellings and buildings are characteristic of these activities. They provide focal points of scenic and historic interest.

Maintaining Tinmouth’s active farms, open fields, wildlife corridors, and unbroken productive forests are all top priorities of this plan. It is also important, however, for residents and landowners to have room for future development. Building along the border between these open and forested areas will have the least impact on the community’s economic potential and natural habitat and will give all residents and visitors the opportunity to share the scenic beauty of the town.

#### ***Forest/Open Field Edge Policy***

- Development is strongly encouraged to take place on the border between open fields and forested land to avoid the loss of either resource.
- Views to farms shall generally be preserved, and settlement should be clustered to emulate the isolated groupings of farm structures.



## Areas sensitive to development

An analysis of the natural processes and formation comprising Tinmouth indicates that there exist certain areas which, because of their fragile nature, irreplaceable value, or vital function in maintaining the environmental health and quality of the town, require special conservation and protective measures related to future development. While some of these areas are protected under current planning and zoning, e.g. the Protection District and the Wellhead Protection Areas, some are not. Below, the nature and importance of these fragile areas are described and policies are set forth for any future development in the town.



### Steep Slopes

When the steepness of slopes exceeds 15 percent, the suitability of land for settlement decreases significantly. On steep slopes, surface water runoff is high. When vegetation is removed for the construction of roads and buildings, the area for absorption of precipitation is reduced. In turn, the susceptibility to increased rates of runoff may result in excessive erosion. The proper functioning of subsurface disposal systems is severely limited on steeper slopes. Slopes greater than 20 percent in steepness present difficulty in complying with the Vermont Health Regulations governing septic systems for subdivisions. In addition, settlement on steep slopes can be costly to the town for the maintenance of roads and possible construction of potential utilities. Settlement on these areas will be extremely visible from other areas within the town.

#### *Steep Slope Policies*

- Construction or other development activities on slopes greater than 15% should include erosion control measures.
- Settlement shall avoid areas where the steepness of slope is over 20 percent.
- Settlement on steep slopes shall be restricted to low densities and locations which will have the minimal visual impact on scenic quality.

### Ridgelines and Elevations Above 2500 Feet

As part of the Taconic Mountain Range, the land in Tinmouth rises to relatively high elevations and presents two prominent north-south ridgelines. At high elevations, generally above 2500 feet, and ridgelines precipitation is greater, air and soil temperatures are lower, soils are shallow and low in nutrients, slopes are steep, wind speeds are

higher, and re-establishing vegetative cover is typically a slow process. Such characteristics create an environment which is intolerant to intensive use. If significantly disturbed, excessive erosion may result. These high mountain areas also play a vital role in the water cycle. The greater amounts of precipitation filter through the thin soils, eventually reaching major ground water supplies. Uses which result in the removal of vegetation and soil cover are especially detrimental to the natural drainage of water. In addition, areas of high elevation and ridgelines are strong visual features and form a large part of what residents consider to be the town's unique landscape. Clear-cutting or development in these areas stand out dramatically from long distances.

The debate over large-scale wind turbines is growing in Vermont. One older wind farm in Searsburg has operated for several years with relatively small turbines. It is now expanding with much larger ones along two ridgelines. Others have been built in Lowell and Sheffield in the Northeast Kingdom and in Milton. Their turbines are up to 499 feet high and in arrays of up to 22 machines stretched along miles of ridgeline. The size and weight of the components requires construction of roads 60 feet wide with moderate grades, requiring large amounts of blasting and grading up to and along the ridgeline. Utility scale wind turbines over 125 feet at the maximum blade height and "wind farms" of two or more turbines are incompatible with the scenic beauty and rural residential character of our town. Although the town lacks legal jurisdiction over such development, the Public Utility Commission should be made aware that it is incompatible with the town, as demonstrated by our ridgeline ordinance. Smaller turbines for individual family or farm use, under 125 feet high and not on ridgelines, are permitted by the Zoning Regulations. For further discussion of renewable energy production, and Tinmouth policies please see the section on Commercial Energy Generation and Transmission Facility Siting on pp. 58 to 64.

#### ***Ridgelines and Elevations Above 2500 Feet Policy***

- Maintain and enforce the Conditional Use policy in the Ridgeline Overlay district.

### **High Water Table**

Areas with a seasonal or year-round high water table within 4 feet of the ground surface place very critical constraints on settlement. Use of subsurface sewage disposal results in pollution of surface and ground water. Cellars are frequently filled by excessive seepage of water. While high water tables may occur in many areas throughout the town, available soils information generally suggests that this condition is directly related to the occurrence of the Muck and Peat association and commonly related to the Bernardston- Pittstown association. In addition to the constraints above, the Muck and Peat association, because of its low bearing capacity, cannot provide stable support for the construction of buildings.

#### ***High Water Table Policies***

- Development is strongly discouraged in areas with high water tables.

### **Shore and Stream Banks**

As the interface between land and water, shorelines and stream banks must be considered as being fragile areas. Certain species of wildlife are greatly dependent upon the particular habitat of these areas. Vegetation along the water's edge acts as a stabilizing force, preventing erosion and siltation, and providing shade to cool water temperatures. Streams are under state ownership, but permission may be required to cross private lands for fishing and hunting. Building too close to shorelines reduces the scenic quality of surface water, as evidenced by the settlement which has occurred around Tinmouth Pond. Effluent leaching from septic systems placed too close to the water's edge is very likely to pollute ground water and surface water.

Landowners should be aware of Vermont's Shoreland Protection Act of 2014, which requires a permit for any new development within 250 feet of a shoreline.

### ***Shore and Stream Bank Policies***

- Shorelines and stream banks shall be retained in a natural state and protected from uses and settlement which would cause erosion, prohibit public access, and reduce scenic qualities.
- Vegetated shoreline and stream bank buffers shall be required for all new development near year-round water bodies.
- Surface water shall be protected from settlement and uses which would reduce their water quality or despoil the scenic appeal of their stream banks and shorelines through setbacks, buffer strips, and minimal land disturbance for construction erosion control.

### ***Shore and Stream Bank Actions***

- Prepare and publicize information for residents about the ecologic and long term financial benefit of protecting stream banks and shorelines.

## **Wildlife Habitats and Corridors**

The Town of Tinmouth is positioned in the center of key wildlife corridors and habitat areas. Mostly unbroken forest areas stretch from Dorset through Danby and Tinmouth into Ira and beyond through the mountain ranges. Of particular importance are links between mountain areas and the Tinmouth Channel, a critical water source and habitat area for mammals, insects, birds, and reptiles. Those developing land throughout the Town of Tinmouth should be careful to minimize impacts on wildlife by ensuring the continuance of connected forest and wet areas. See the Wildlife Habitat Suitability Analysis on page 74.

### ***Wildlife Habitat Policies***

- Wildlife habitats (wetlands, deer yards, bear range and surface water) and corridors between habitats shall be retained in their natural state and protected and buffered from uses and settlement that would reduce their vital function. Rare and endangered plants and animals and their habitats shall be protected and preserved.
- Fragmentation of forest blocks shall be avoided and connectivity between blocks encouraged.

## **Glacial Eskers**

The glacial eskers, on the floor of Tinmouth Valley, define a rare and unique geological area. They contain a large and porous gravel deposit which serves as a large-scale cache for water serving the Tinmouth Channel. While mostly located within the town's Protection District, they stretch into neighboring land use districts.

### ***Glacial Esker Policy***

- Tinmouth's glacial eskers shall be protected from use and settlement which would destroy their scientific or water-carrying value.

## **Aquifer Recharge Areas**

The quantity and quality of the town's ground water supply is directly related to the type and intensity of uses which occur in areas of high aquifer recharge. Extensive settlement can greatly reduce these areas of recharge and also increase surface runoff, thus decreasing infiltration of surface water. Also, the quality of ground water may be threatened through numerous subsurface sewage disposal systems. Because a potable water supply of sufficient

### ***Aquifer Recharge Area Policy***

- Aquifer recharge areas shall be protected from uses and settlement which would significantly reduce their permeability or be of danger to the quality and/or quantity of ground water supplies.

## Wetlands

The wetland areas within the town contain special vegetative communities. They form a distinctive and unique landscape pattern of high scenic quality.

### ***Wetland Policies***

- Wetland areas shall be retained in their natural state for the provision of wildlife habitats, retention areas for surface runoff, recreation, and scientific value. A naturally vegetated buffer strip of at least 100 feet in width will be maintained around all wetlands identified on the town's wetland inventory map. Direct discharges into wetlands are prohibited.
- Wetland areas shall be protected from uses which would reduce their scenic quality. Class I and II wetlands and Class III wetlands of concern to Tinmouth are mapped on the plan's Natural Resources map.
- Reminder concerning Class I and II wetlands: Information regarding actual wetland boundary and conditional use determination for individual sites can be obtained from the Department of Environmental Conservation. The current Vermont Wetland Rules should be consulted for allowed uses and zoning permit restrictions.

## Productive Woodlands

Timber is a potential resource of commercial value. Productive growth and management are dependent upon extensive areas of connected forestland with suitable soil conditions for tree growth.

### ***Woodland Policies***

- Maintain large forested blocks of land within the Town of Tinmouth and between Tinmouth and neighboring communities.
- New development should take place on the edges of forest areas to avoid the interruption of connected woodland areas and loss of viable silvicultural activities.

## Floodways and floodplains

Future development in floodways or floodplains is discouraged. The potential for flood damage in these areas is high and is likely to cause expense to land owners, the town, and state and federal government.

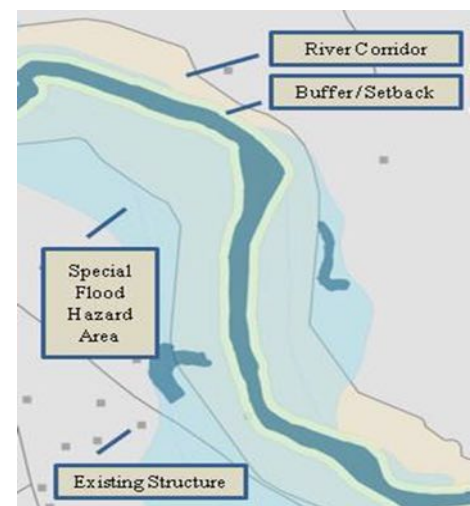
### ***Floodplains Policies***

- The town shall review development in the floodplain in accordance with National Flood Insurance Program regulations and the town's flood insurance rate maps.

## Flood Resilience

Flood events are Vermont's most frequent and costly type of natural disaster. There are two types of flooding that impact communities like Tinmouth: inundation and flash flooding. Inundation occurs when water rises onto low-lying land. Flash flooding is a sudden, violent flood, which often entails fluvial erosion (stream bank erosion). The combination of flash flooding and fluvial erosion causes the most flood-related damage in the state.

To meet the new state requirement of identifying flood hazard and fluvial erosion areas and designating areas to be protected, maps are an essential aid. The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) was created by the Federal Emergency Management Agency



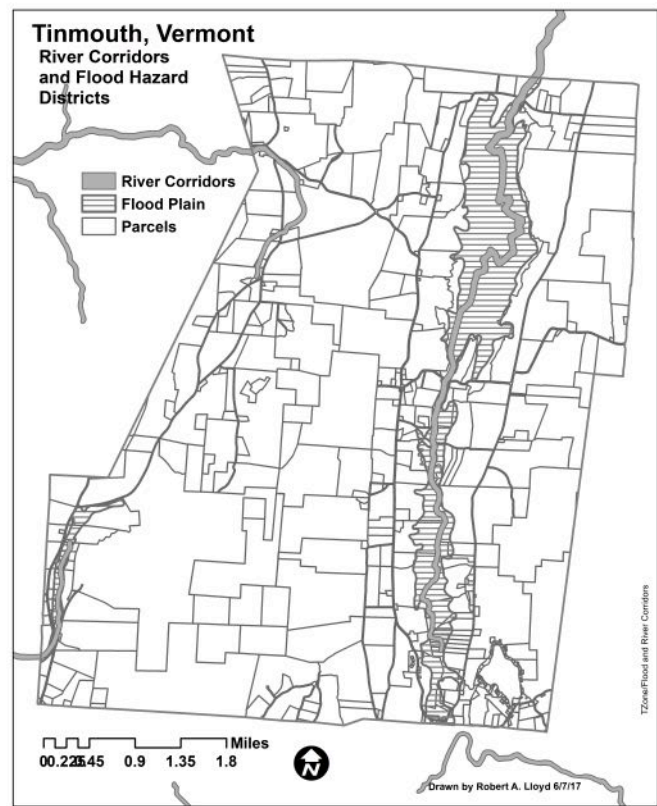


(FEMA) to address inundation hazards. Flood insurance rates are based on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) or Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRMs), which delineate areas of the floodplain likely to be inundated during a flood. These are identified as a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) or with a 1% chance of flooding (100-year flood). Town participation in NFIP is voluntary.

However, in Vermont, two thirds of flood damages occur outside of federally mapped flood areas. Vermont's River Corridor and Floodplain Management Program, developed by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR), delineates areas subject to fluvial erosion. River corridor maps are designed with the recognition that rivers are not static. A certain amount of erosion is natural when floods reach Tinmouth because of the town's relatively steep terrain and frequent storms.

Because the methods of mapping inundation and fluvial erosion corridors differ significantly, flood maps and river corridor maps differ to some degree. Figure above a generic depiction showing how the Special Flood Hazard Area differs from the River Corridor.

Tinmouth is committed to making knowledgeable and strategic decisions about how to best protect, manage, and restore watershed resources and minimize flooding. Riparian buffers reduce flood hazards and stabilize stream banks, attenuate floods, provide aquatic and terrestrial habitat and wildlife corridors, filter runoff, absorb nutrients, and shade streams, keeping them cool. Wetlands, like the Tinmouth Channel, also prevent flood damage and are a vital component for maintaining the ecological integrity of land and water. In addition, upland forests also moderate flood impacts and attenuate flood impacts. Steep slopes, on the other hand, can be a detriment during flooding by amplifying water volume and velocity in rivers and streams. A map of Tinmouth flood and river corridors is shown on the next page.



## History of Flooding in Tinmouth

Flooding is a relatively low hazard risk for Tinmouth. Because of the town's system of east-west roads and north-south orientation of its waterways and proactive actions by the road foreman, the town experiences relatively minimal damages during flooding events. Compared to neighboring towns, in 2011 damages from Tropical Storm Irene were minor. A few roads in Tinmouth were damaged by erosion and the town received \$18,655 in FEMA funding for replacement gravel. Other recent flooding in Tinmouth:

- December 2000—Countywide flooding, FEMA declared disaster, cost to Tinmouth—\$25,684.
- January 1996—Countywide flooding, FEMA declared disaster, cost to Tinmouth—\$2,515.

In Tinmouth, road damage due to flooding and fluvial erosion usually consists of road and culvert damages. Problem areas are: 1) Near the intersection of Rt. 133 and Rt. 140. This area also has three trailers in it that could be adversely affected in a 100-year flood.; and 2) Pent Road where it turns to Class 4.

## Current Conditions

Very few structures are built in the flood plain, so the danger of flooding to residences and other structures is minimal. E-911 mapping data indicate 11 structures are within the SFHA (the 1% annual chance flood hazard areas) and none in the 0.2% annual chance flood hazard areas of the town. The types of structures are listed below.

Existing Structures in the Mapped Flood Hazard Areas

E-911 Structures	1 % (SFHA)	0.2 %
Camp/bungalow	4	
Church		
Commercial		
Educational this district also typically have shallow depths to bedrock.		
Fire		
Government		
Lodging		
Mobile Home	2	
Multi-Family		
Other Commercial		
Other Residential		
Single Family	5	
Total E-911	11	

In 2010, Tinmouth adopted flood hazard regulations to reduce flooding and fluvial erosion by avoiding new development/fill/removal of wetlands in the Special Flood Hazard Area. The town is not enrolled in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and Tinmouth has no flood insurance policies through the NFIP. Because of its lack of NFIP participation and river corridor regulations, the town is only eligible for the lowest level of state post-disaster funding through the Emergency Relief Assistance Fund (ERAF) - 7.5%.

### *Flood Resilience Actions:*

- Explore the removal of structures in flood areas. Existing homes and businesses at serious risk of flood damage should be identified and prioritized by the town for mitigation actions such as elevation/relocation or purchase and demolition.
- Limit percentage of impervious surfaces. Because impervious surfaces prevent the infiltration of water into the soil, these man-made surfaces exacerbate flooding by increasing the amount and velocity of storm water runoff, particularly in areas where such surfaces are prevalent.
- Maintain vegetated buffer strips in riparian zones surrounding streams and rivers.
- Maintain upland forests and watersheds for predominately forest use.
- Require new development to preserve vegetated riparian buffer zones that are consistent with state riparian buffer guidelines.

## Standards for New Development, Regardless of Location

### *General Development Policies*

- Include provisions in both the zoning and subdivision regulations which allow for review of site conditions, settlement patterns, natural features, the placement of driveways, the location of buildings, and other aspects of residential development that may impact sensitive natural areas,

water quality, open spaces, the working landscape, and important views and vistas. Upon completion of the Town Plan, re-evaluate the zoning ordinance for compatibility with the Plan.

- Consider ‘incentive/flexible zoning’ to allow for higher density (clusters) housing developments to preserve farmland and undeveloped land.
- Minimize functional conflicts and require that developers be responsible for relieving traffic problems which are generated by their developments.
- Critically review and evaluate proposed development which generates unsafe traffic conditions, especially along sections of highway with low sufficiency ratings.

## **Conflicting Activities**

Tinmouth residents have a tradition of sharing living and working space. Unlike many communities which have slowly segregated their land uses from one another – including farming from housing – Tinmouth retains a rural character precisely because of its mix of homes and small, home-based businesses and farming operations. At the same time, residents recognize that there are certain activities which can create conflict if located in proximity to one another, most notably activities that include blasting or drilling. Because of Tinmouth’s widespread residential and agricultural activities, essentially all of the town is located in an area of potential conflict.

### ***Conflicting Activities Policies:***

- Quarrying, mining, blasting and working for mineral resources shall be prohibited. Removal of naturally occurring sand and gravel deposits should be permitted, with suitable screening from neighbors, and without any blasting.

## **Forest Protection**

Development pressures can pose problems for maintaining forest blocks, wildlife habitat, and habitat connectors. Once fragmented, the movement of plants and animals is inhibited. This restricts breeding and gene flow and results in long-term population decline. Besides a long-term loss of biodiversity, fragmentation can lead to an increase in invasive plants, pests and pathogens, and reduction in water quality. Connected forest habitats are a key component of forest adaptation and response to climate change, while fragmentation is a threat to this natural resilience. Fragmentation of timberland into smaller holdings can make it more difficult to use the forest in traditional ways. Silviculture and wood harvesting can become impractical and economically nonviable as well as a potential loss of biomass for renewable energy generation. Functional connections among forest and wildlife blocks should be maintained

“The term ‘parcelization’ is used to describe changes in ownership patterns whereby large tracts are divided into smaller parcels. The act of parcelization is mostly a legal exercise where large tracts of land are divided into smaller ownerships or land holdings. The result of parcelization may simply be an increase in the number of people who own a specific parcel of land. However, when larger parcels are divided and sold or transferred into multiple parcels, often through the process of subdivision, the result can be disjointed land ownership patterns that promote new housing and infrastructure development (roads, septic, utility lines, etc.). When this development occurs, it can fragment the landscape and negatively affect plant and animal species, wildlife habitat (called habitat fragmentation), and water quality. It can also affect the viability of large tracts of forestland to contribute to Vermont’s rural economy. Forest fragmentation and habitat fragmentation are often the result of parcelization and its associated development.”

From Final Report of the Forest Parcelization  
Roundtable 2007 Jamey Fidel, Vermont Natural Resource  
Council

in such a way to allow for wildlife dispersal and movement safely across large areas. Many of the large habitat blocks in Tinmouth lie under conservation easements, either private or governmental, that prevent further fragmentation.

Wooded habitat on both sides of the road for 1000 feet or more is the model for optimal wildlife movement. Habitat connectivity can also be realized in the riparian zones of surface water and wetlands. Steep slopes adjacent to roads should be kept but the use of perched culverts, which inhibit fish migration, should be limited.

#### ***Forest Protection Policies***

- Using the maps created by the town supplemented by state forest block data as a guide, the town should keep critical habitats functionally linked with larger blocks of habitats (forest lands and other natural communities).
- These large “core” habitats should be bordered by compatible land uses and be interconnected by unfragmented open spaces and contiguous forest

### **Prevention of Strip Development**

Because of the topographical constraints on Tinmouth’s highway system, growth may tend to occur in strip-like fashion. Strip development is a form of residential settlement occurring in a linear path along rights-of-way of roads and highways which often restricts visual and physical access to interior lands. Numerous "curb cuts" providing access to both homes and businesses increase the possibility of automobile accidents from entering and exiting traffic. As development proceeds, the value of these roads as transportation corridors is reduced. Traffic is often impeded, and the cost of snow removal and busing for school children may rise dramatically when secondary roads become settled.

In effect, inefficient utilization of land results from development strung along road networks. Access controls and setback requirements can be effective in controlling this type of growth

#### ***Strip Development Policies:***

- Important scenic views shall be protected from strip development or other patterns of settlement which would substantially disrupt their scenic values.
- Strip development does not encourage community integrity and results in traffic congestion, excessive use of town roads and hazardous traveling conditions. The number of curb cuts along town highways and roads shall be limited.
- The function which each town highway serves is directly influenced by adjacent settlement patterns. To maintain efficient and safe vehicular movement, settlement must not adversely affect these functions.

### **Accessibility of Properties**

Numerous and uncontrolled accesses along town highways may create hazardous conditions for the safety of the traveling public. They may also result in unwarranted damage by obstructing or diverting the flow of water onto a highway. The Select Board is empowered by Vermont State Law to impose reasonable conditions on any proposed plan for development of land in order to reduce the number of access points required for that project. At their discretion, the Select Board may make such regulations as are necessary to protect and promote the safety of the traveling public, but shall in no case deny reasonable ingress and egress to property abutting the roadways.

The municipal costs for provision and maintenance of the town highway system is a substantial share of the town's annual budget. New public roads to land which is not reasonably accessible can significantly increase these costs beyond the revenue generated by new settlement.



### ***Accessibility Policies***

- Access to town highways is controlled by the Select Board via their driveway ordinance and by the Planning Commission in Site Plan Review . This policy should be reviewed periodically and kept in force.
- Lands which do not lie within 1/2 mile of a town or state highway, which are presently maintained year round, are considered to be not reasonably accessible. Roadways providing access to such lands, which might be maintained by the town, shall not be taken over by the town unless evidence is given that sufficient revenue will be generated by the new settlement to provide adequate funds for maintenance of such roads. This policy shall not preclude the construction of roadways of distance greater than 1/2 mile from a town road, providing they are maintained under private ownership.

### **Subsurface Sewage Disposal**

Development has traditionally been limited by the restrictions on individual subsurface sewage disposal systems to treat domestic wastes. The capability of the land to accommodate the proper installation and functioning of these systems so as not to result in a hazard to public health has been a major constraint in Tinmouth. Areas characterized by shallow depth to bedrock, steep slopes, and high water tables have been identified as presenting critical constraints on settlement using subsurface sewage disposal. For areas not presenting critical constraints, the general capability for on-site subsurface disposal of sewage has been identified from an analysis of soil associations and slopes. These areas have been classified and mapped as having slight to moderate, moderate to severe, or severe limitations.

The Agency of Natural Resources has universal jurisdiction over sewerage or wastewater and water supplies. New regulations allow the use of innovative and/or alternative disposal systems. Administration of the regulations is by the State Wastewater Division, and the town has no control over what has been permitted or installed. However, the town should use its control of zoning permits to stay current on approvals by the state.

### **Commercial Energy Generation and Transmission Facility Siting**

Under 30 VSA 248, the VT Public Service Board (PSB) must issue a Certificate of Public Good prior to the construction of electrical generation or transmission facilities. A Section 248 review addresses environmental, economic, and social impacts associated with a particular project, similar to Act 250, but with more limited public involvement. In making its determination, the PSB must give due consideration to the recommendations of municipal planning commissions and its Town Plan.

The Town will participate in the Public Service Board's review of new and expanded generation facilities as necessary to ensure that local energy, resource conservation and development objectives are identified and considered in proposed utility development. This may include joint participation in collaboration with other affected municipalities and the Rutland Regional Planning Commission for projects that may have significant regional impact. Act 56, passed in 2015, gives the host municipality automatic party status in the PSB permitting process. It is acknowledged that the PSB's prime focus is on administering state public policy, not on local land use planning.

### **Community Standards**

The following five community standards are to be considered (a) in undertaking Town owned electrical generating projects and programs, (b) in updating the Tinmouth Zoning Regulations and subdivision regulations to address commercial electricity generation and transmission development, to the extent they are subject to local regulation, and (c) in the review of new or upgraded commercial electricity generation facilities and systems by the Town of Tinmouth and the Public Service Board (Section 248 review):

1. Plan Conformance: New commercial, utility-scale electricity generation facilities and proposed system upgrades, should be identified in or be consistent with the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan, the Vermont Long-Range Transmission Plan, and utilities' Integrated Resource Planning (IRP) ("commercial solar facilities").
2. Alternatives Analysis. Tinmouth is happy to participate, within limits, in supplying electricity for local needs. Its rural, agricultural nature is inconsistent with industrialization, such as large-scale solar arrays and wind farms not serving local needs but selling electricity on the open market (merchant facilities). A new commercial electrical facility should be considered only after potential alternatives, including increased energy efficiency, distributed energy systems, and existing facility upgrades are evaluated and found to be insufficient to meet system reliability needs or projected demand in Vermont. Commercial electrical facilities in Tinmouth should serve local needs; if they are grid-tied, the power should be sold to users within the state of Vermont. Local utility-owned facilities are preferred to merchant facilities.
3. Benefits: For the town of Tinmouth to support establishment of utility scale commercial solar array, there shall be a demonstrated local public need that outweighs adverse impacts to local residents and resources. Facility development must benefit town residents, businesses, and property owners in direct relation and proportion to the impacts of the proposed development, and should not impede orderly development of the town consistent with this Plan.
4. Impacts: New generation, transmission and distribution facilities must be evaluated for consistency with community and regional development objectives and to avoid undue adverse impacts to significant cultural, natural and scenic resources identified by the community.
5. Decommissioning: All facility certificates or impacts shall specify conditions for system abandonment and decommissioning, including required sureties for facility removal and site restoration to a safe, useful, and environmentally stable condition. All hazardous materials and structures, including foundations, pads and accessory structures, must be removed from the site. Development shall be accomplished in such a way that it does not compromise the future agricultural value of the site. Decommissioning funds alone, though essential, are not a substitute for design that will allow the land to revert to agriculture when the facility is removed.



### **Commercial Solar Electricity Facility Siting**

Commercial solar power (array greater than 150 kW) has the potential to provide a moderate contribution to Vermont's demand for electricity. However, in Tinmouth it must be compatible with other land uses.

Many Tinmouth homes have already mounted solar arrays on rooftops, or have set up two or three freestanding panels in the yard. Slightly larger arrays for on-farm use are generally acceptable as

well. “Commercial/Industrial Solar Arrays” (hereafter “Commercial arrays”) consist of dozens, even hundreds or thousands, of freestanding panels in arrays covering from a few acres to over a hundred acres. These convey an image of industrial development inconsistent with our agricultural and rural residential community.

The Town of Tinmouth supports responsibly sited and developed solar electricity projects within its boundaries. However, it desires to maintain the open landscape and scenic rural views important to the working agricultural and rural residential nature of the town. Not all commercial or community scale solar electricity projects proposed can meet this standard. Projects must meet the following criteria in order to be supported by this plan:

### **Preferred Areas:**

Commercial solar facilities are not a permitted or conditional use under Tinmouth Zoning Regulations, so only facilities licensed by the State Public Utility Commission can be installed. New commercial solar facilities and transmission facilities shall be sited in locations that reinforce the community’s traditional and planned patterns of development, which is of a countryside that includes large amounts of working farm and forest land and scattered homes on large lots. The following areas have been identified as suitable for the development of larger, utility-scale commercial solar electricity generation and transmission facilities (150 kW or greater), consistent with this pattern of development:

- Roofs of residential, agricultural, and municipal buildings;
- Sites where existing hedgerows, hills, or other topographical features naturally screen the proposed array from view by neighbors and by the public on main highways;
- Sites where facilities can be clustered at the edge of timber stands and in previously disturbed areas, such as gravel pits, closed landfills, or former quarries. Clear-cutting forest areas for commercial solar arrays is inconsistent with the nature of the Town of Tinmouth.
- Solar facilities in working agricultural areas may be feasible, but should be located on the least productive portions.
- Locations that have existing natural vegetation to meet screening requirements, or can accommodate the planting requirements set forth below.

### **Setbacks**

Under Act 56, passed in 2015, minimum setbacks requirements for in-state, ground-mounted solar generation facilities approved under Section 248 are:

From a state or municipal highway	100 feet for a facility with a plant capacity exceeding 150 kilowatts (kW); 40 feet for a facility with a plant capacity between 15 and 150 kW.
From each property boundary that is not a state or municipal highway	50 feet for a facility with a plant capacity exceeding 150 kW; 25 feet for a facility with a capacity between 15 and 150 kW.

The Public Utility Commission may require a larger setback or with agreement of the applicant, local legislative body and adjoining owners, a smaller setback. The state does not require setbacks for facilities with plant capacities of less than 15 kW.

Town of Tinmouth Setback requirements, which apply to all commercial solar arrays of any size, are:

- From a state or municipal highway (Class 1-4): 50 feet, measured from the edge of the right of way (25 feet from the centerline) and properly screened (see below)
- From a property boundary that is not a state or municipal highway, for any solar facility including on-site home or farm arrays: 50 feet, properly screened.
- From the Tinmouth Village National Historic District: 1000 feet from the boundary approved by the Secretary of the Interior
- From a stream or Class 1 Wetland: 100 feet
- 

At this time, it is unclear which setback rules will be applied to any particular project, perhaps both.

## Screening

While the preferred screening is vegetation already in place, commercial solar facilities larger than 15 kW shall be screened from roads and adjacent property with native evergreen trees placed inside the required setback. Dead or dying trees shall be replaced promptly by the owner of the array. If not, the Town of Tinmouth shall have the right to enter onto the property to plant replacement trees. The owner of the array shall be responsible for the cost of the trees, the time and usage charges for town personnel and equipment, and costs of any contracted work. The Tinmouth Planning commission shall review the plans for any array over 15KW. If it determines that more screening, such as higher trees, or less screening is required, the applicant shall make appropriate changes in its plans and construction activities.

## Exclusion Areas

Because of their distinctive natural, historic or scenic value, and special significance to the community, commercial solar facility development shall be excluded from (prohibited within), or shall not be supported by the town in the following locations

- The following zoning districts: Lakeshore District, Ridgeline Overlay District, Conservation District, Protection District, Flood Hazard District
- A location that requires fragmentation of Tinmouth's working landscape, including undeveloped forestland, open farmland in operation, and primary agricultural soils (as mapped by the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service. Solar array development should not compromise the future agricultural value of the site. Clear-cutting forest areas for commercial solar arrays is wholly inconsistent with the nature of the Town of Tinmouth, and is prohibited. Clearing forested land for solar arrays is limited to tracts of less than an acre for on-site home or farm arrays.
- Rare, threatened, or endangered species habitat or communities as mapped or identified through site investigation, and core habitat areas, migratory routes and travel corridors similarly identified.
- Land that is subject to a conservation easement, whether or not the easement permits it or the holders of the development rights consent to it.
- Lands in Current Use must be removed from Current Use taxation before beginning construction of the transmission lines on or off site, or the arrays themselves.
- Highest priority interior forest blocks as defined by State of Vermont as they overlie the Tinmouth Channel. See also forest blocks labeled T2 on page 20.



- Well head protection zone
- Open lands at the entrances to the town: Land bordering Vt. Rte. 140 between the Wallingford town line and Ballou's swamp and at the junction of Rte. 140 and Rte. 133
- Floodways shown on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs)
- Fluvial erosion hazard areas shown on River Corridor Maps developed by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR)
- Class I, II and III wetlands
- Agricultural heart of the Tinmouth Valley
- Open lands within sight of the intersections of Vt. 140 and North East Road; and of Vt. 140 and East Road
- Location where a site cannot be screened from the view of neighbors and thus prohibits them from the peaceful enjoyment of their property
- A site that does not allow for Tinmouth's prescribed screening standards
- A site that causes significant adverse impacts to historical or cultural resources, including Tinmouth Village National Historic District, state or federally designated historic sites and structures, and locally significant cultural resources identified in the Town Plan. See Appendix A, page 67.

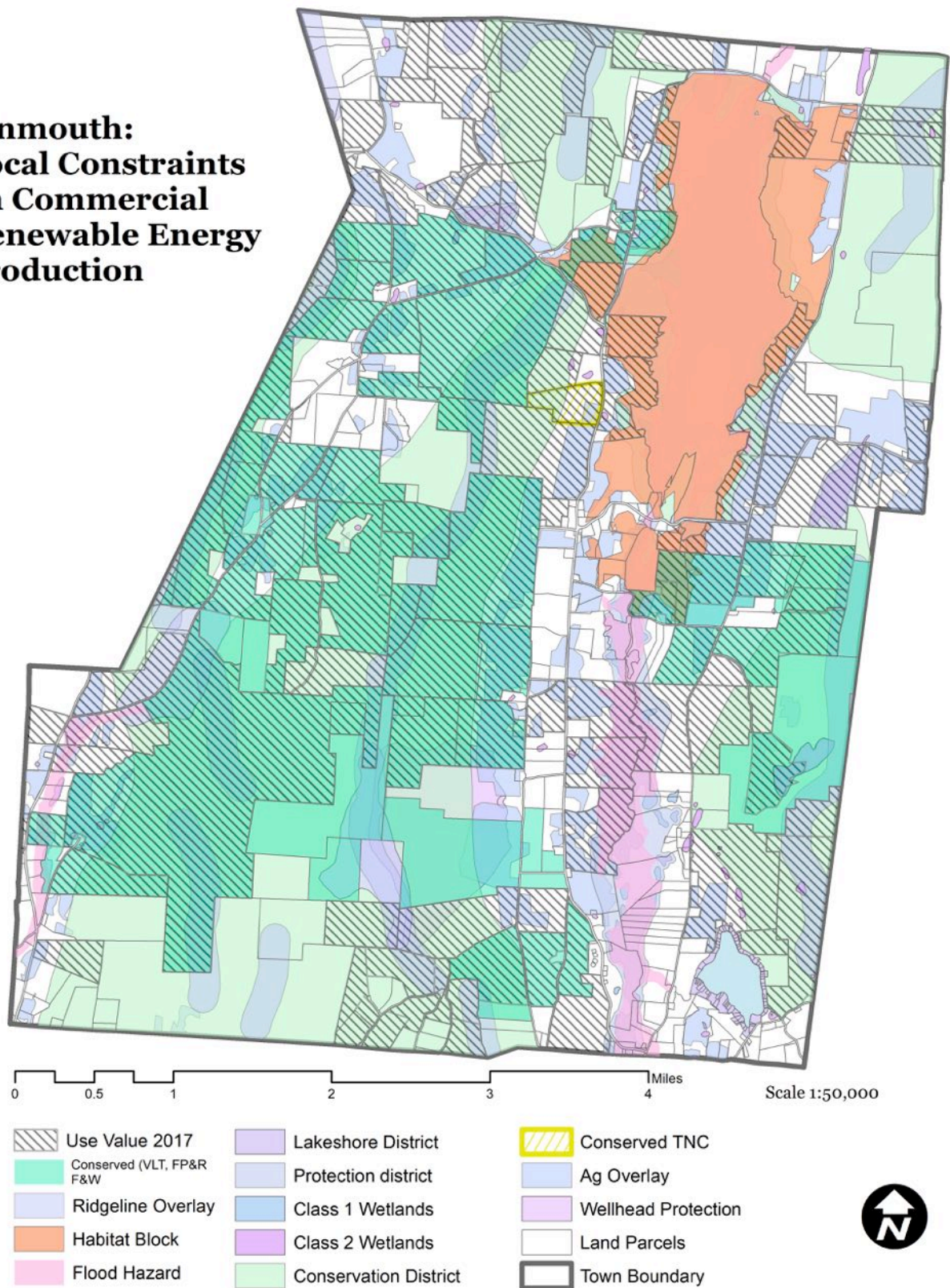
See the accompanying two maps entitled "Tinmouth: Local Constraints on Renewable Energy Production" and "Tinmouth: Total Local Constraints on Renewable Energy Production, and Solar Suitability." (Psp. 63 and 64, below)

### **Reading the Two Constraint Maps.**

The first map, on page 63, titled "Tinmouth: Local Constraints on Renewable Energy Production," depicts some, but not all, of the Exclusion Areas listed above. It shows that land use in Tinmouth is controlled by a number of private and public restrictions. The dominant private control lies in the hands of individual parcel owners. Some parcel owners have relinquished their development rights to the Vermont Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, the Vermont Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation or the Use Value program. The Tinmouth Channel is owned by the State of Vermont, is declared a Class 1 Wetland, and is controlled by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. Other controls include the Tinmouth Zoning regulations and the federal flood zone program. Putting all this in one map results in almost unreadable complexity.

The second map, on page 64, titled "Tinmouth: Total Local Constraints on Renewable Energy Production, and Solar Suitability," combines all the constraints from the first map into one gray color and adds data from the Vermont Center for Geographic Information (VCGI) showing areas identified as of prime solar suitability, as determined by analysis of several factors, including slope, elevation and orientation. Their inclusion here in no way constitutes a favorable recommendation by the Planning Commission to site commercial solar projects. A commercial project on these sites would begin with a proposal by landowner and developer, and would be subject to approval by the Public Utility Commission. The Public Utility Commission may also consider unmapped issues such as the screening and viewscapes mentioned in the section on Exclusion Areas.

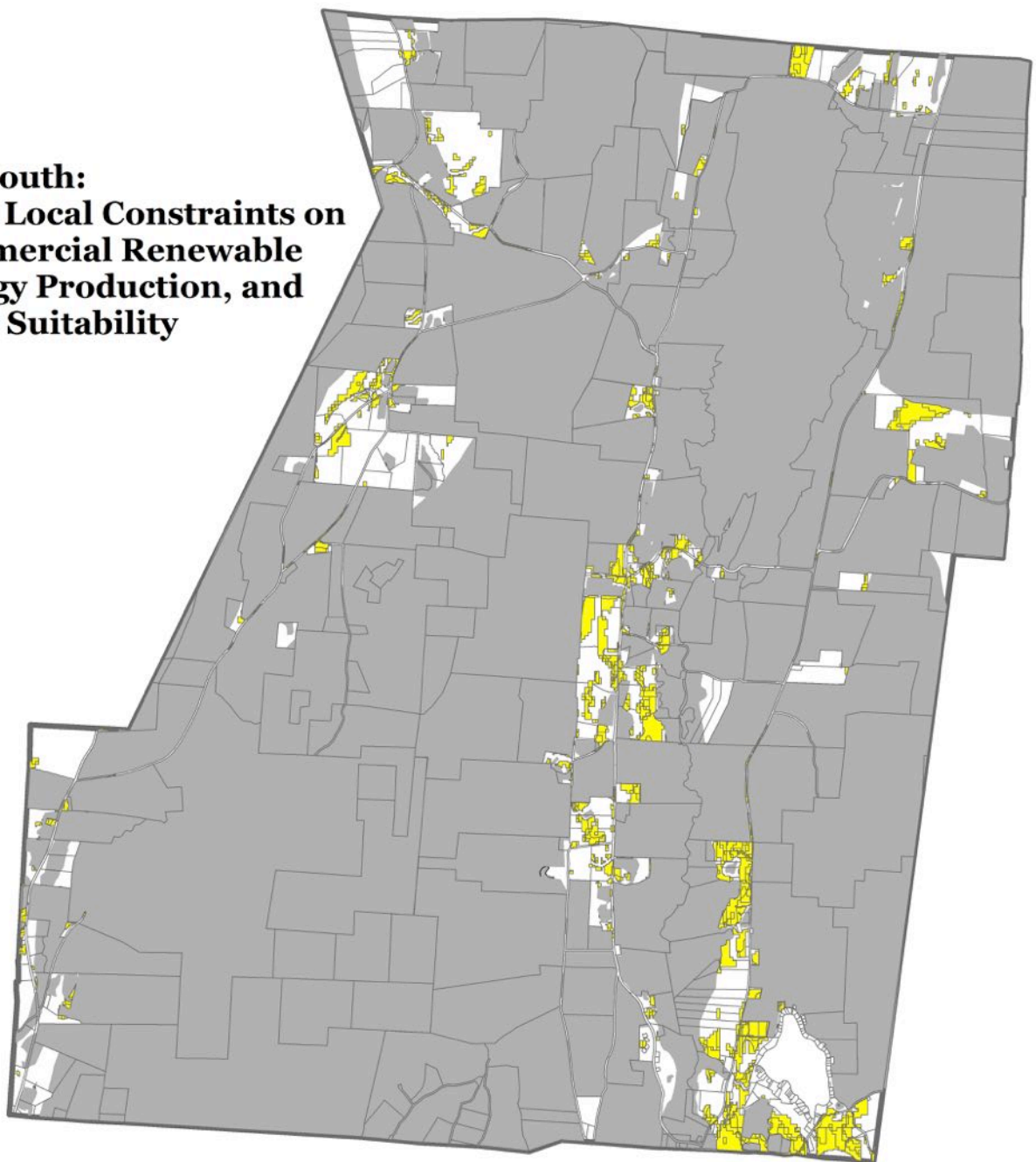
# **Tinmouth: Local Constraints on Commercial Renewable Energy Production**



Prepared by R. A. Lloyd, June 3, 2017

VLT/Local Constraints

**Tinmouth:  
Total Local Constraints on  
Commercial Renewable  
Energy Production, and  
Solar Suitability**



0 0.5 1 2 3 4 Miles

Scale 1:50,000

- Prime Areas of Solar Suitability (525 Acres)
- Areas Masked by Local Constraints
- Ownership Parcels



Prepared by R. A. Lloyd, April 20, 2017

VLT/Local Constraints

## Other Siting Recommendations

Site selection considerations are not limited to generation facilities alone. Access roads, site clearing, onsite power lines, substations, lighting, inverter sheds, and off-site power lines can have impacts as great as those of the generation facility. Development of these elements shall be done in such a way as to minimize any negative impacts. In planning for facilities, designers should take steps to mitigate the project's impact on natural, scenic and historic resources and improve its harmony with the surroundings. New solar generation and transmission facilities that include multiple installations shall include equipment of uniform design.

## Other Electrical Facilities

**Wind Farms:** Ridge top development is not consistent with Tinmouth's rural residential nature. The Ridgeline Overlay District permits residential development on or near ridgelines only in limited circumstances – including a 35-foot height limit. Commercial wind towers sometimes are 500 feet high, though any ridge top tower is not compatible with our community. All of our ridge tops are now forested and undeveloped. Wind towers shall not be permitted on them.

**Biomass Generating Facilities:** Under current circumstances generating plants using wood or other biomass aren't likely to be feasible in Tinmouth. However, a large industrial building, requiring large numbers of trucks to bring in fuel, is inconsistent with the rural character of Tinmouth. Such a facility should not even be considered.

**Hydro:** While there was once a large lake providing power for iron smelters, the dam, just south of North End Road, was removed in 1815. The lake bottom is now a Class I Wetland, entirely owned by the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department. Although the lake was large, it was shallow, and if dammed up again would probably not provide adequate water for hydroelectric generation. To provide much drop the powerhouse would probably have to be downstream in the Town of Clarendon. A hydroelectric facility was planned by the Hortonia Light and Power Company in the same place about 100 years ago. Work started on the west end of the dam, but it was abandoned when the east end proved have insufficient foundation strength. Although the rights were acquired by Central Vermont Public Service, they never developed it. Eventually it was sold to Nature Conservancy and then to the State of Vermont (Fish and Wildlife Department). It is unlikely that commercial scale hydro will be feasible in Tinmouth, as this is the only apparent site.)

**Transmission Facilities:** Transmissions facilities shall follow existing power line rights of way, provided they are in use and not abandoned, or public road rights of way. Clear-cutting new power line rights of way through forestlands is not permitted. If new lines cross working agricultural property they shall be designed so as to permit as much continued agricultural use as possible within the right of way. Substations shall be screened in the same way as solar arrays or gravel pits.



## Endnote Page

- 1) Source: US Census Bureau, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov) (page 9).
- 2) Figures provided in American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2015 (page 10).
- 3) Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, Water Quality Division, Lakes and Ponds Section. [http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/waterq/cfm/lakerep/lakerep\\_select.cfm](http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/waterq/cfm/lakerep/lakerep_select.cfm) visited 5-22-2007 (page 15).
- 4) Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, Water Quality Division, Lakes and Ponds Section. [http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/waterq/cfm/lakerep/lakerep\\_select.cfm](http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/waterq/cfm/lakerep/lakerep_select.cfm) visited 5-22-2007 (page 15).
- 5) Data on housing trends provided by Tinmouth Town Listers (page 23).
- 6) Transportation Data Management System, 2011 and 2016 (page 28).
- 7) Longfield, Jr., Robert F. The Vermont Backroad: A Guide for Protection, Conservation, and Enhancement of Its Scenic Quality. March 1974 (page 28).
- 8) Vermont Statutes Annotated, Title 10, Section 6085 (page 30).
- 9) US Energy Information Administration, State Profile and Energy Estimates (page 43).
- 10) Climate Change in Vermont, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (page 43).
- 11) Vermont Energy Dashboard 2017 (page 43).



## Appendix A: Tinmouth Historic and Culturally Significant Features

### Tinmouth Village National Historic District (NHD)

Names in parentheses are from 1869 Beers map (Map 1). SHR numbers from Map 2.  
Tinmouth School (front and second sections; 1883/1949) (School No. 6)  
Town Office and Library (Rice/Taylor/Weeks store; possible 1791 meeting house (now library) (Store L.R. – Levi Rice)  
Old Firehouse (once a Grange Hall; used as fire station, then restored as a meeting space)  
Old Creamery  
White house, south of store (Packard)  
Rice house, Bliss Rd; built 1835 (L. Rice)  
Rathbun/Sawyer/Weeks house, Bliss Rd; built 1815 (P.O.; M. Sawyer)  
Town sheds (1836/1920; built to cover carriages during Church services)  
White house across from school; once Parsonage (parsonage)  
Not on Register: Rice Upper Farm house 1790's, west end of Bliss Road (L. Rice)  
Sawyer Cemetery (Cem.)

### State Historic Register (SHR) and other historic sites

Names from 1869 Beers map (Map 1); SHR numbers keyed to map 2, State Historic Register Map  
North East Road  
Burr Clark house (also called Leonard house; stone; 1834; B.R. Clark) SHR - 14  
Mattocks house (1<sup>st</sup> on right north of Rte. 140 (J.W.Noble) SHR 15  
Ballard house (1<sup>st</sup> on left north of Rte. 140) (J. Ballard) SHR 13  
Former Noble house/country inn, North East Road at corner of 140 (Henry Noble) SHR - 12  
Rte. 140 East of North East Road (Cobb Hill)  
Frog Rock (not SHR; top of Cobb Hill; best viewed traveling east)  
Stone Corral on Young property; not visible from any road (Not SHR)  
Hannibal Hopkins farm (H Hopkins) SHR  
Truman Young farm – settled by John Hopkins in 1770- still run by his Young descendants.  
Bicentennial Farm 1976. All buildings modern, however. (E. Hopkins)  
East Road  
House; corner Rte. 140 and North East Road, east side; possibly a replacement (L. Cobb)  
Brick house on east side (L. Cobb) SHR 16  
Small blue house on east side, now Burden (1869 D.G. – Dexter Gilbert, a large landowner and owner of property for rent)  
Tinmouth Pond camps. 10 on the State Register. All in the Lakeshore zone. SHR 28-38  
Wright's Road  
General Clark's marble mill; replica water wheel run by water from the Big Spring (D.G. house occupied by Michael Green, peddler, and family; now replaced)  
Marble Quarry. On Merrill Spring Road extension above Wright's Road.  
Mountain View Road  
Gray gambrel roofed house; c. 1790; one of three English gambrels in Tinmouth. (L. Phillips) SHR 18

South School Now a home and much added to. (School No. 5) SHR 19  
 White Cape Cod house (D.G.)  
 Red gambrel roofed house, c. 1790, or maybe 1824, one of three English gambrels. (D.G.) SHR 21  
 White Cape farmhouse across from red barn (Fish farm – L. Campbell)  
 Federal mansion/Greek revival trim (D. Gilbert) SHR 20  
 Merrill Spring Road  
 Glen Merrill house - where Merrill Spring turns 90 degrees south; once junction with  
     back of the lots road (Mrs. Rogers)  
 Large black farmhouse (Mrs. Valentine) SHR 23  
 White farmhouse on a rise (also Mrs. Valentine) SHR 22  
 Gilmore Road  
 Farmhouse at south end of the road; parts are 1790's (Campbell)  
 Rte. 140 from Village to East Road  
 Fallen down c. 1790 gambrel roof house (M. Capron) SHR 10  
 Cape on north side; has remains of blast furnace in rear (A. Packard) SHR 11  
 Falling in old cheese factory on south side at bridge (Cheese fact)  
 Collapsed dam south of Rte. 140 bridge  
 Tinmouth Cemetery (south side, east of bridge)  
 Rte. 140 North of village to North End Road  
 White farmhouse on east side (Valentine) SHR 9  
 Yellow farmhouse on east side (A.H.Aldous)  
 Cramton Cemetery (east side of Rte. 140; Cem.)  
 North End Road  
 Tinmouth Channel wetland (including wetlands, dams, and fens from North End Road to  
     Mountain View Road at Danby town line).  
 Hortonia Power company dam (North End Road at culvert; south side)  
 Blast furnace remains, one on dam south of North End Road and another north of the road  
 Noble-Squier cemetery  
 Harrington Crossroad  
 Yellow farmhouse, gable to road; south side (W. Norton)  
 Marble Quarry, north of road  
 Rte. 140, North End Road to Middletown line  
 Cape Cod farmhouse, opposite McNamara Road (C. Crampton) SHR 2  
 House, formerly schoolhouse No. 7 at McNamara and Gulf Rds., opposite previous  
     house SHR 4  
 Lime Kiln, Northrup Road  
 Old Cemetery, maybe #1, at Northrup Road  
 Vt. Rte. 133, Ira to Middletown line  
 White gambrel roofed house; Dutch framing design south; English north  
     (H. Thompson) SHR 1  
 McNamara Road  
 Gambrel roofed barn built 1913 (Clark, though built after his death) SHR 3  
 Farmhouse, 2 story, Dr. Theophilus Clark, home, farm and doctor's office for much of  
     19<sup>th</sup> Century (Clark) Not on SHR  
 Gulf Road (Lower Gulf Road)

Large barn ¼ mile south of Rte. 140 – SHR 8

Carriage barn, now house, painted red, just before McNamara Road (part of C. Youngs farm)

White Cape Cod farmhouse, intersection of McNamara and Gulf Rd (L. Hathaway)

SHR 5

Cape Cod house, built 1786 by Samuel Allen; moved ¼ mile south of original site.

(C. Youngs) SHR 6

White Cape Cod, Journey's End Rd; built by Archibald Norton around 1840. SHR 7

Yellow house, west side of northern intersection of Gulf and Upper Gulf Roads (W.C.)

Greek revival, gable to road farmhouse, on Lower Gulf near southern intersection with Upper Gulf Road. (E. Ives) SHR 24

The Gulf (Wells Brook ravine) and side hill section of Gulf Road

West Tinmouth

White farmhouse, bottom of Gulf Road. (W.S. Preston) SHR 25

White farmhouse, steep-pitched roof, apparently 1790s, just north of Gulf Road on Rte. 133 (Perhaps Clarke on Beers map)

Large farm complex, Greek revival farmhouse, coaching route stone in stone wall.

(J.P. Grover) SHR 25

1790's farmhouse, very near road, east side of Rte. 133 south of East Wells Road (E. Reed).

SHR 27

Cape Cod style farmhouse, barn, McCoy Road. Once owned by Lt. Phineas Paul, 14<sup>th</sup>

Vermont (P.C.Paul)

Rollin Cook cheese factory, intersection of Rte. 133 and McCoy Road (Cheese Fact, R. Cook)

Former schoolhouse number 3, once across from Cook cheese factory, at

Brook Road; now at Wells Rd intersection (School No. 3) SHR 26

Lillie-Paul Cemetery (on 133 at Danby boundary; Cem.)

### **Mountain Land (Special areas)**

The Purchase – large forest west of the summit of the Tinmouth Mt. range and east of West Tinmouth. The mountain overlooking West Tinmouth is sometimes shown on maps as The Purchase, but the entire area properly bears that name. In the early 1800's two men acquired this area at tax sales. Locals sneeringly called it the Holland Purchase, after a 5,000 square mile purchase by Dutch investors in Western New York. Neither sold well. "Holland" forgotten within 50 years.

Tinmouth Mountain Range  
(all areas on East and West slopes)

Tinmouth Purchase  
Recreation Area – town owned forestland with cabin and trails.  
Part of the area known as The Purchase.





# **Town Maps**

## **Future Land Use**

This map shows the Town's intended land use for the future as reflected in the current Zoning Regulations. The Legend explains the different categories in general terms. More detailed explanations can be found on pages 44-48. In obeying regulations, landowners should consult with the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation to obtain more precise information about the location of the wetlands.

## **Natural Resources**

This map highlights significant natural features, some of which — such as slopes of 25% or greater — severely limit development. Others — such as deer and bear areas — indicate wildlife habitat that should be left undisturbed to the extent possible. The rare plant and animal sites should be left undisturbed.

## **Restricted Lands: Public and Private**

This third map shows the Tinmouth Channel Wildlife Management Area, which belongs to the State of Vermont, the Tinmouth Purchase Recreation Area, which belongs to the Town of Tinmouth, and the extensive areas of privately owned lands to which either the Vermont Land Trust or the Nature Conservancy holds a conservation easement. Although these easements differ in some details, all of them prohibit further subdivision and generally limit their use to forestry and agriculture. Several of these 24 conservation projects allow the construction of a limited number of single-family residences. The Wellhead Protection Area, set aside to protect the quality of water for sale extracted from an active spring, has virtually the same restrictions as a conservation easement.

Two other areas are represented on the map:

### **TinHotspots**

This dataset is the result of an effort to map biological "hotspots" in Vermont based on the "element occurrences" in the Nongame and Natural Heritage Program database. The NNHP database, compiled and maintained by the VT Department of Fish and Wildlife, records over 4000 locations of rare, threatened, and endangered plants, animals, and exemplary natural communities throughout the state. 2332 of the highest quality and rarest of these point locations were mapped, and polygons were drawn economically around concentrations of mapped points. These polygons, are taken to represent areas of high biological significance or diversity

### **Representative Landscape Area**

This coverage represents the results of an analysis of landscape diversity in Vermont. Polygons in the dataset represent as much as possible of the physical diversity in each of the state's 8 biophysical regions (BPRs)~ hence the name "representative landscapes" (RLs). Units of physical diversity were based on elevation, bedrock type, surficial deposits, and landform. An understanding of the location of areas of high landscape diversity offer conservation scientists a key to identifying areas of high biodiversity value.

**Wildlife Habitat Suitability Analysis** from the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife

## **Transportation Map**

This map shows roads, bridges and culverts.

## **Town Facilities**

This map shows the locations of the Town Office, the Old Creamery, the Old Firehouse, The Firehouse, the Church, the School and Community Center, the Town Garage, and the Transfer Station.

## **Beers 1869 Map of Tinmouth**

## **Vermont Historic Register Map**

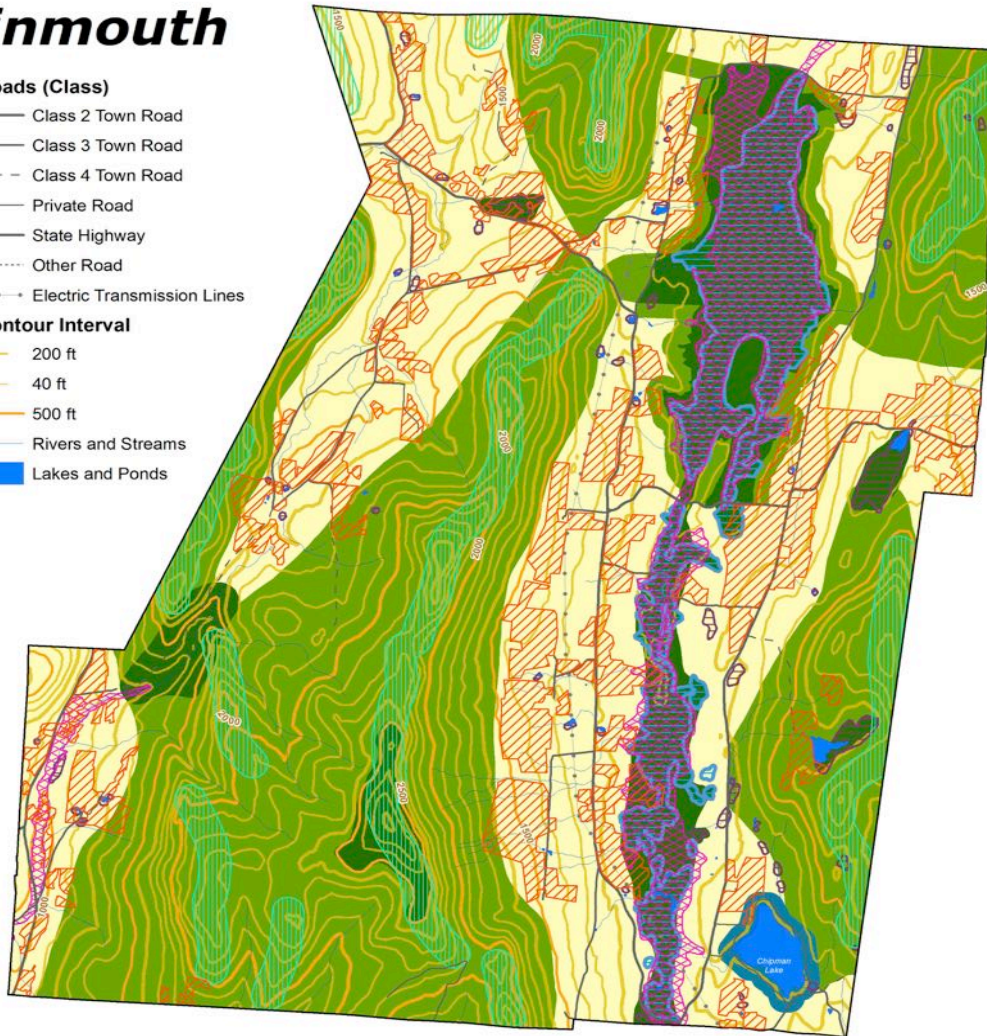
# Future Land Use *Tinmouth*

## Roads (Class)

- Class 2 Town Road
- Class 3 Town Road
- - - Class 4 Town Road
- Private Road
- State Highway
- ..... Other Road
- + + + Electric Transmission Lines

## Contour Interval

- 200 ft
- 40 ft
- 500 ft
- Rivers and Streams
- Lakes and Ponds



## Location Map



Map intended for planning purposes only.  
For more information, please contact:  
Rutland Regional Planning Commission  
The Opera House, Third Floor, PO Box 965  
Rutland, VT 05702 (802) 775-0871

## Legend

- Flood District: No Development
- Agricultural Overlay: Limited Development
- Ridgeline Overlay: Limited Development
- Wetland, Class One: No Development
- Wetland, Class Two: No Development
- Wetland, Class One: 100 Foot Protection Zone; No Development
- Wetland, Class Two: 100 Foot Protection Zone; No Development
- Conserved: 25 Acre Minimum
- Lake Shore: High Density
- Protection: No Development
- Rural Residential: 5 Acre Minimum
- Pond

ROADS: VT Center for Geographic Information.

ELECTRIC LINES: VT Electric Power Company.

SURFACE WATER: Vermont Hydrography Dataset using 1:5,000 digital orthophotos, USGS 7 1/2' quadrangles and 1:20,000 color infrared aerial photography and other data sources.

WETLANDS: boundaries are derived from National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) and the Vermont Significant Wetland Inventory (VSWI) and are approximate. Wetlands less than three acres in size may not be shown. The wetlands depicted are those regarded as regulatory by the VT Water Resources Board.

FLOOD PLAIN: DFIRM data from FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps. Floodplains for planning purposes only. Refer to the VNR DEC, Water Quality Division, Floodplain coordinator for official floodplain determinations. (802) 241-37.

AGRICULTURAL OVERLAY, RIDGELINE OVERLAY AND LAND USE CLASSES: determined by the Tinmouth Planning Commission.

0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 Miles

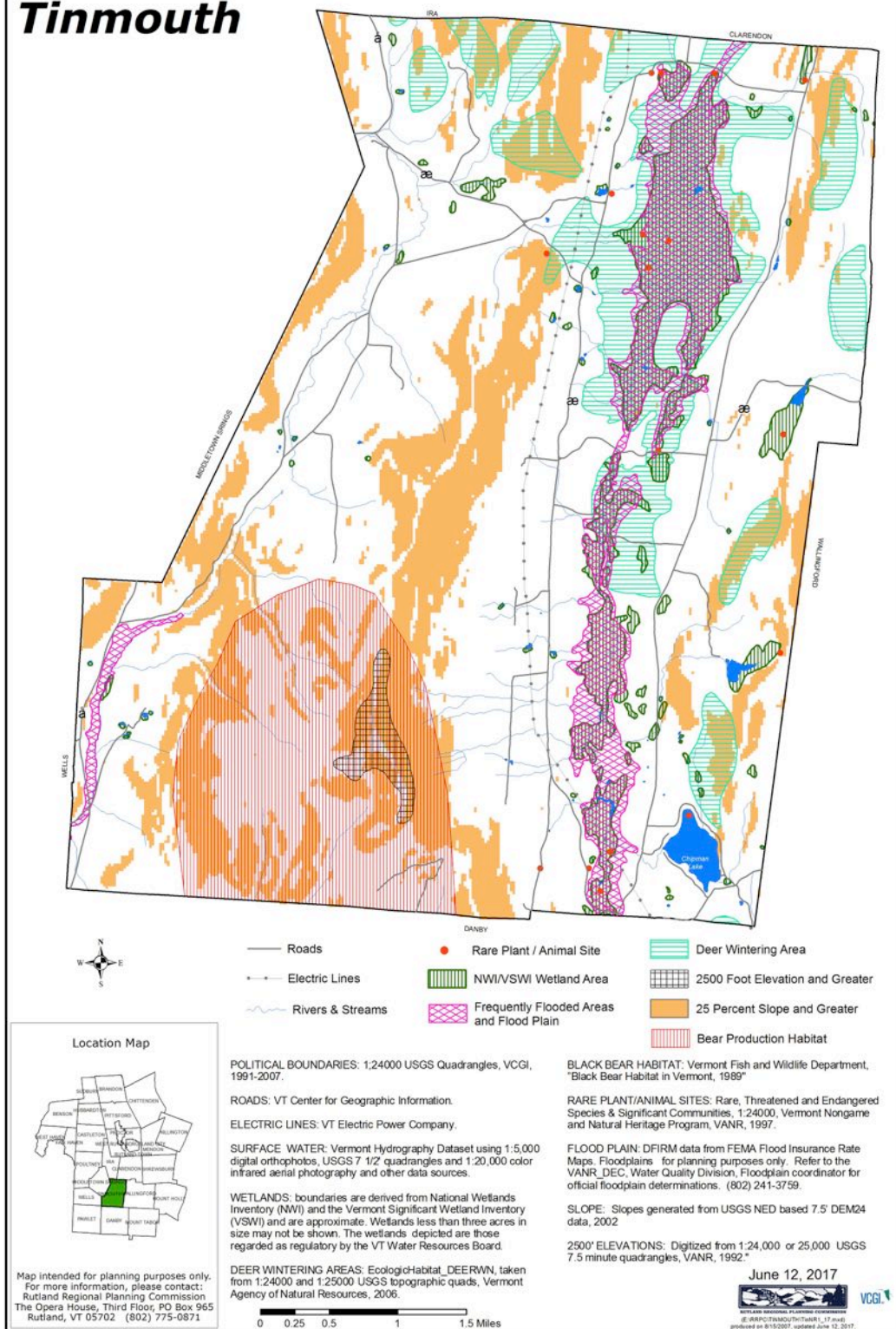
June 12, 2017



REPLACES RUTLAND REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
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produced on 6/15/2017 - updated June 12, 2017

# Natural Resources

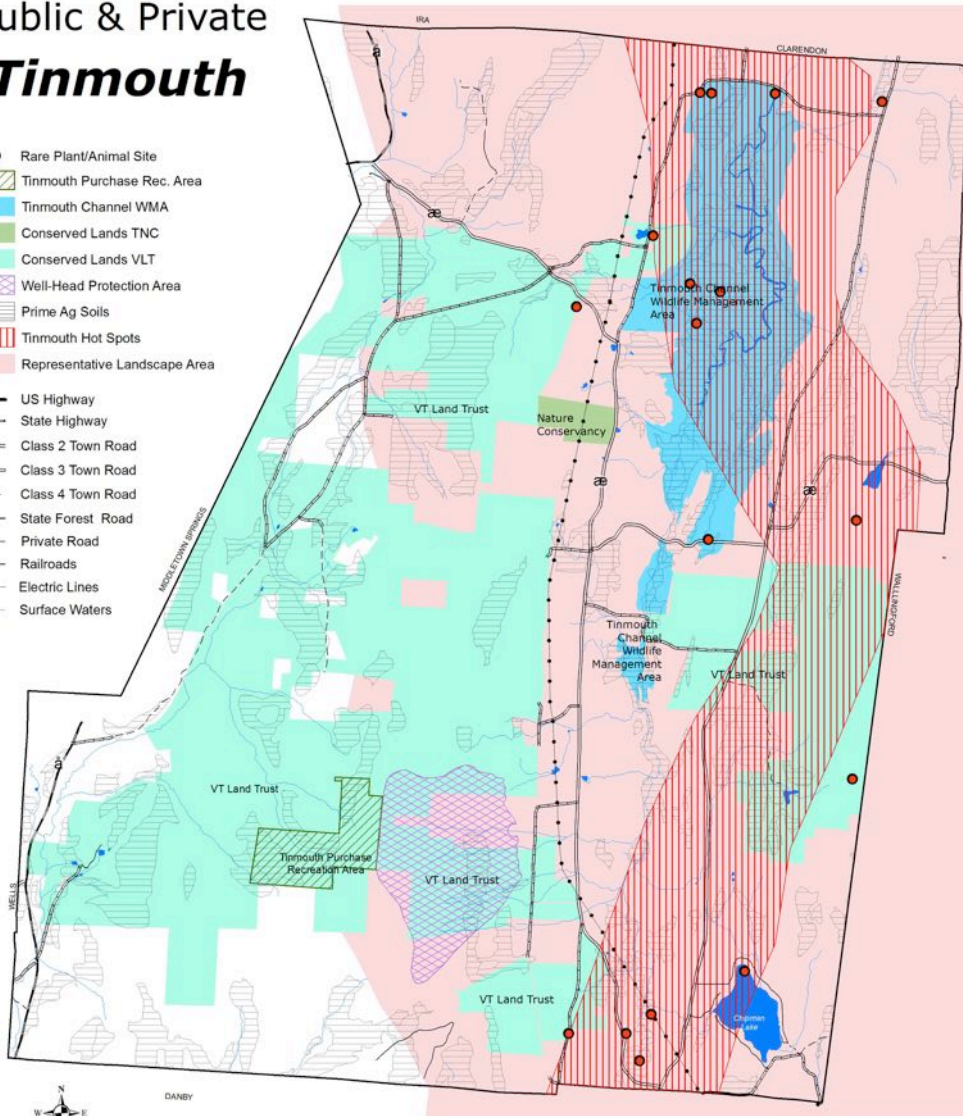
## Tinmouth





# Restricted Lands Public & Private *Tinmouth*

- Rare Plant/Animal Site
- ▨ Tinmouth Purchase Rec. Area
- ▨ Tinmouth Channel WMA
- ▨ Conserved Lands TNC
- ▨ Conserved Lands VLT
- ▨ Well-Head Protection Area
- ▨ Prime Ag Soils
- ▨ Tinmouth Hot Spots
- ▨ Representative Landscape Area
- US Highway
- State Highway
- Class 2 Town Road
- Class 3 Town Road
- Class 4 Town Road
- State Forest Road
- Private Road
- Railroads
- Electric Lines
- Surface Waters



Location Map



Map intended for planning purposes only.  
For more information, please contact:  
Rutland Regional Planning Commission  
PO Box 965, The Opera House, Third Floor  
Rutland, VT 05702

Tinmouth town boundary is derived from several sources: Tinmouth Parcel data (Russell Graphics, 2002), Middletown Springs Parcel data (Russell Graphics, 2005), Wallingford Parcel data (Russell Graphics, 1999), and a town line survey performed for the town of Middletown Springs by ALX Environmental, 2002.

SURFACE WATER: Vermont Hydrography Dataset (1:5000)

WELLHEAD PROTECTION AREAS: SPA's for groundwater sources (wells, springs), 1:24,000 USGS QUADRANGLES, VANR-DEC- Water Supply Division and VT Department of Health, 1998.

PUBLIC/CONSERVED LANDS: Vermont Conserved Lands Database 1:5000 parcel data, UVM-SNR-SAL, 1999.

SURFACE WATER PROTECTION AREAS: SPA's for surface water sources (stream, pond, etc.) 1:24,000 USGS quadrangles, VANR-DEC-Water Supply Division and the VT Department of Health, 1998.

SOURCE PROTECTION AREAS: Surface and subsurface areas from or through which contaminants are reasonably likely to reach a public water source. GPS coordinate information 1994. Halliburton NUS Corp. original dataset: 1:24,000 USGS quadrangles, VT Department of Health.

SPA's for planning purposes only. Refer to the VANR-DEC, Water Supply Division, for official SPA determinations. (802) 241-3400.

ROADS: VT Enhanced 911 project 1996 -2007.

June 12, 2017

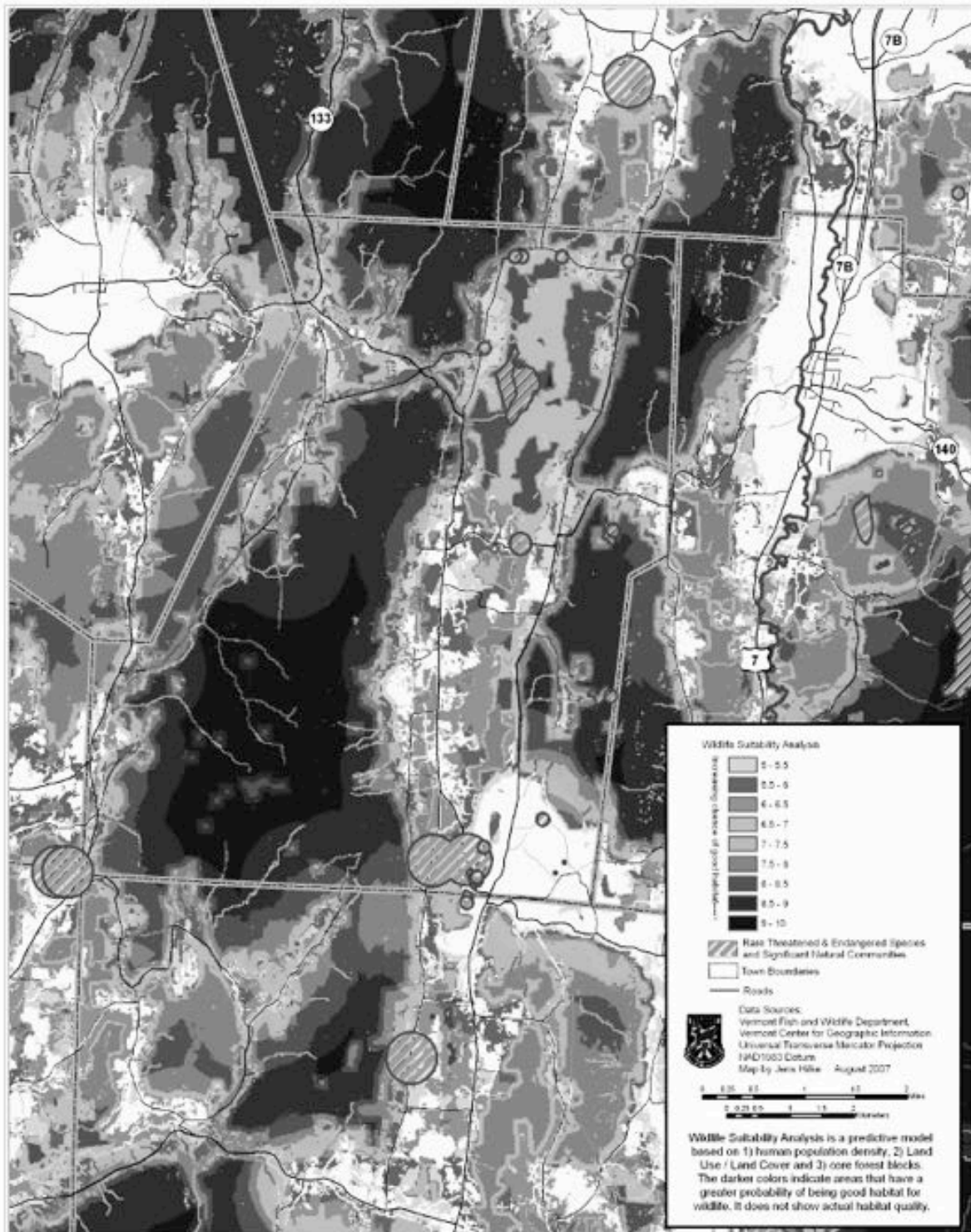


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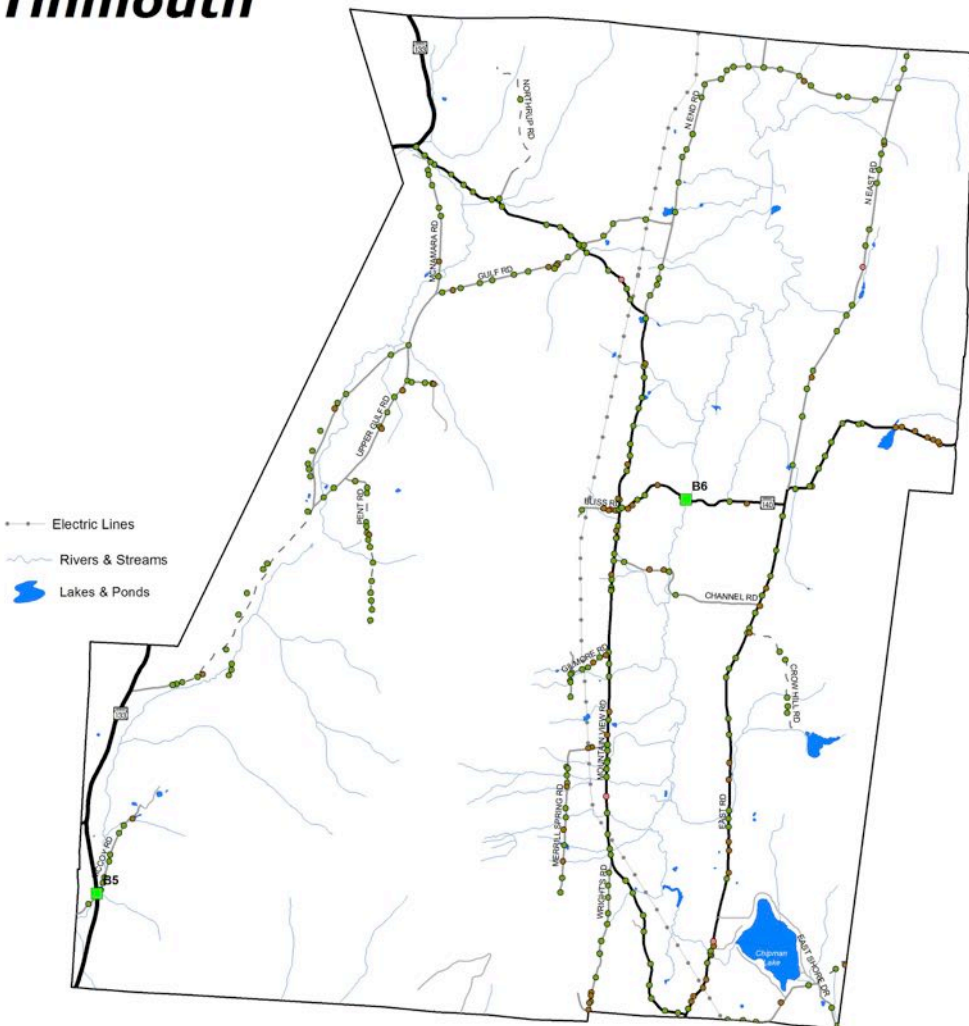


# Wildlife Habitat Suitability Analysis



# Transportation Map

## Tinmouth



Electric Lines  
Rivers & Streams  
Lakes & Ponds



### Roads

- State Highway (3.431 mi)
- Class 2 Town Road (13.0 mi)
- Class 3 Town Road (18.51 mi)
- - - Class 4 Town Road (4.42 mi)
- Private Road
- ..... Other Road

TOTAL, TRAVELED HIGHWAYS, FEB. 10, 2016: 34.941 mi  
Excludes Class 4 and Legal Trail Mileage.  
(VTrans General Highway Map, Town of Tinmouth)

0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 Miles

### Bridges (VTRANS)



### Culverts

- Cross
- Parallel
- Unknown

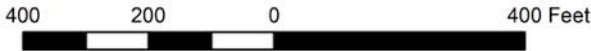
June 12, 2017

RUTLAND REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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VCGL

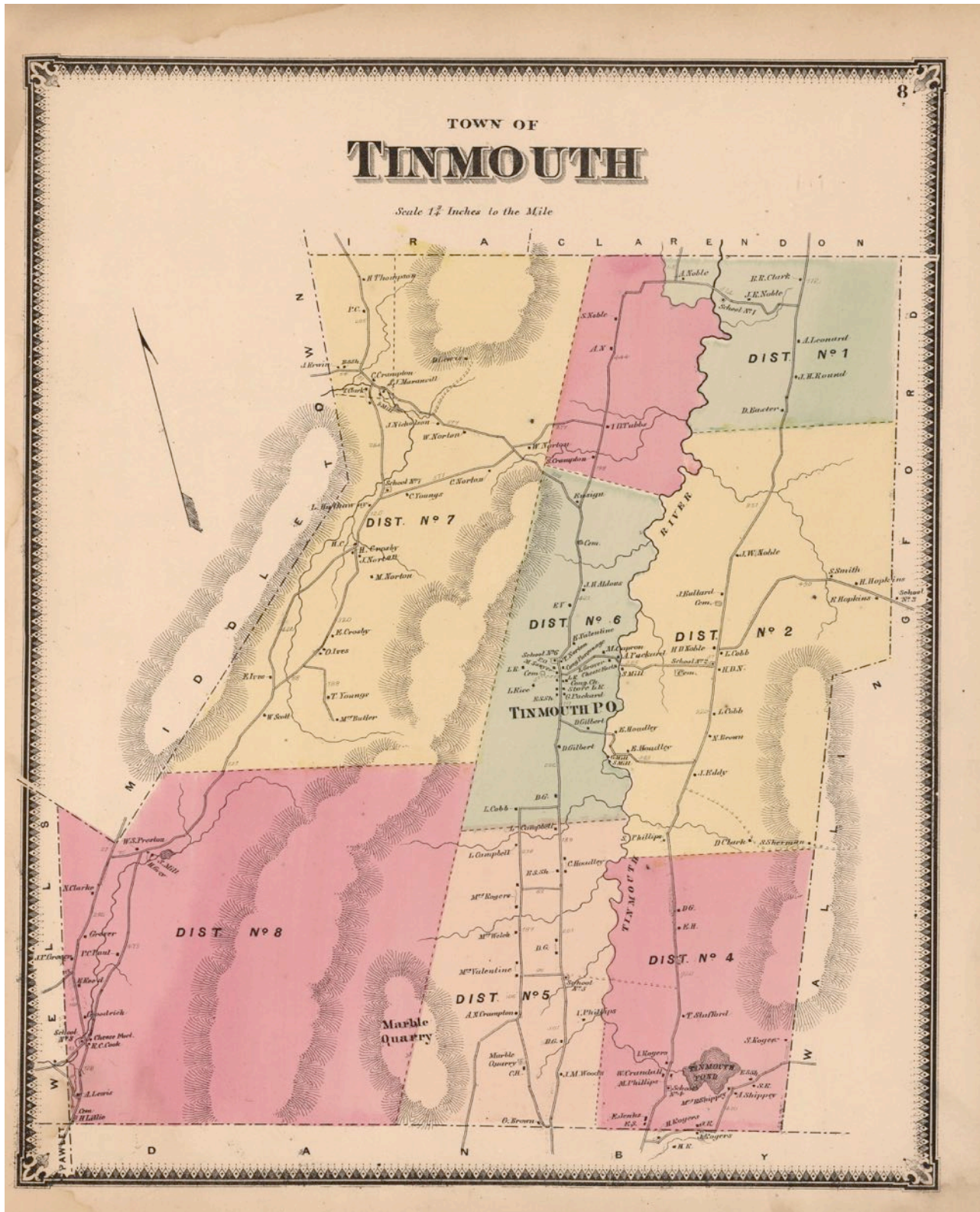
Tinmouth, Vermont  
Town Facilities



Robert A. Lloyd, 6/14/17



# Beers 1869 Map of Tinmouth





## Vermont Historic Register Map

