

# Town of Poultney

Town Plan

# Poultney Town Plan

## Poultney Planning Commission

- Jaime Lee, Chair
- Doug Langdon
- Mary-Sue Reed
- Mark Teetor
- Neal Vreeland



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# Contents

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<b>The Town of Poultney .....</b>	<b>2</b>
Vision .....	2
Goals .....	2
<b>The Land.....</b>	<b>3</b>
Current Land Use .....	3
Natural Resources .....	5
Future Land Use .....	14
Compatibility.....	19
<b>The Resources.....</b>	<b>20</b>
Historic & Cultural Resources.....	20
Recreation .....	21
Economy.....	23
<b>The Community.....</b>	<b>27</b>
Demographic Profile.....	27
Town Governance .....	27
Facilities & Utilities.....	27
Housing .....	33
Transportation .....	35
Energy.....	42
Flood Resilience .....	44
<b>The Plan.....</b>	<b>47</b>
Authority to Plan .....	47
Planning Process.....	47
Implementation.....	47



# The Town of Poultney

The Town of Poultney, with a population of 3,020 as of 2020, is located in the southwestern part of Rutland County, 17 miles from Rutland, 35 miles from Glens Falls, NY, and 80 miles from Albany, NY. The historic Poultney Village, a state designated downtown, and East Poultney Village, a state designated Village Center, lies within the town's 44 square miles. Although simply a rest stop on the Albany to Montreal turnpike in early days, the downtown area now hosts the town's main business district, the homes of approximately 1,552 residents, and the sprawling Green Mountain College campus at its western terminus.

The north half of Lake Saint Catherine is within the town's boundaries and has been recognized as a vacation resort for over 100 years. Although the lakeshore is mostly in private ownership, the Lake Saint Catherine State Park on the east side of the Lake provides campsites, picnic areas, and swimming facilities for general public use. An exceptional expanse of wild and undeveloped land lies in the northeast and is characterized by mountain peaks, steep slopes and a high ridge line.

Poultney has a varied natural environment. It is bounded on the west by the Poultney River. Its land boundaries range from elevations of 500 feet or less to 2,320 feet elevation at Spruce Knob on the east boundary. Several small streams ripple through the hills to the east and flow west to the Poultney River or to Lake Saint Catherine. The Buczek Marsh Wildlife Management Area (96 acres) is located approximately halfway between the downtown and the lake. The Bird Mountain Wildlife Management Area (350 acres) is located in the northeast corner of Poultney. The Lewis Deane Nature Preserve is east of the lake and encompasses the row of prominent cliffs that extend into the Town of Wells.

Recreation opportunities are plentiful. The town's Recreation Commission provides a seasonal program for children and adults, and many private and nonprofit organizations provide numerous social and recreational opportunities. The Delaware and Hudson (D&H) Rail Trail, local rivers and streams and Lake Saint Catherine provide abundant outdoor recreational opportunities, and Slate Valley Trails, a public access trail network,

comprises over 40 miles of multi-use trails for mountain biking, hiking, cross-country skiing, and other outdoor recreation. The Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST), responsible for the organization of the sport of snowmobiling in the State of Vermont, utilizes the D&H Rail Trail right-of-way and oversees snowmobile trails within the town. An extensive system of local trails is organized and maintained by the Poultney Valley Snowmobile Devils, in cooperation with Poultney landowners who allow them to use their property.

The town, in addition to its natural resources and recreational assets, has also shown itself to be an incredibly adaptable community. It did not sit idly by when its landmark, Green Mountain College (GMC), announced its impending closure in 2019; instead, leading up to and since that time, the community has actively sought out and engaged with local, State, and federal partners to support the evolution of the town beyond the closing of GMC.

## Vision

People who live, work, and play in Poultney appreciate our differences, celebrate what we have in common, and seek to grow the quality of all our lives. These qualities lead us to care—sometimes passionately—about what should change about our town or what should not. We want leaders who can help us help ourselves make a stronger, better Poultney for all.

## Goals

- Conserve our natural environment and preserve our historic resources.
- Maintain a welcoming, neighborly, safe community.
- Increase and diversify the local economy:
  - Grow Poultney's outdoor recreational economy in line with the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities (RERC) plan.
  - Support existing businesses and encourage new ones.
- Maintain necessary infrastructure:
  - Follow a long-term Capital Improvement Plan and work to ensure it reflects current community needs.
  - Partner with the RRPC for transportation or road related projects and grants.

# The Land

## Current Land Use

There are three distinctive population centers: Poultney Village (home of historic Main Street and Poultney’s designated downtown), East Poultney (centered on the historic East Poultney green), and the shore of Lake Saint Catherine. Beyond the village, home sites are scattered, with newer homes built among the older residences. In earlier days, rail service and landscape together set the pattern of home distribution. The Poultney River flows through the town and delimits its western boundary with New York State.

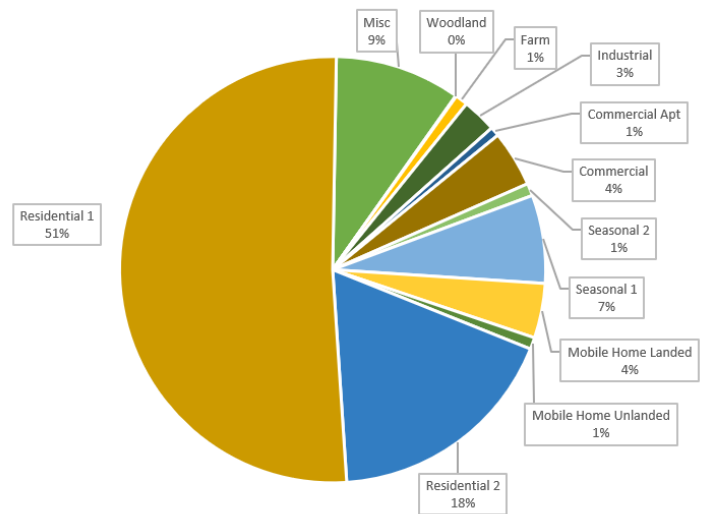
Poultney Village is the current hub of commerce, while East Poultney was the original settlement. The two villages are linked by Route 140. Major concentrations of seasonal dwellings are located on the shoreline of Lake Saint Catherine. Despite the crowding of summer cottages, this area of town retains much of its natural beauty, namely: a geologic fault lake nestled between two hills with Route 30 running along its eastern edge.

Poultney originally established categories of land use through the adoption of a town plan in 1970 and zoning in 1971. The town’s Unified Bylaws, adopted in 2014 and subsequently amended, establishes thirteen Zoning Districts each with different purposes and limitations. This town plan seeks to layout a future land use plan by addressing the goals and objectives articulated throughout this document.

Based on Department of Taxes’ 2019 data, more than half of parcels located within the town are used for residential purposes. The following gives an overview of Poultney’s primary areas and their function(s).

Land Use	Parcel Count
Misc	161
Woodland	1
Farm	16
Industrial	44
Commercial Apt	12
Commercial	72
Seasonal 2	16
Seasonal 1	113
Mobile Home Landed	70
Mobile Home Unlanded	15
Residential 2	302
Residential 1	867

Distribution of Land Use



## Poultney Village

The Village of Poultney is not only the central focus of the town, but is the center for community functions, employment and commerce. The town and village offices, visitor center, water and sewer services, schools, fire station, and major employment and commercial uses are located in the village area. It encompasses a compact regional shopping area associated and several commercial and industrial establishments arranged mostly on Main Street with the campus of the former Green Mountain College at its westernmost terminus. Poultney Village encompasses the Main Street Historic District which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The parcels within the heart of the village are included in Poultney’s designated downtown (see the Future Land Use Map).

The Village of Poultney is home to four future land use areas: Village Residential, Village Commercial, Village

Industrial, and the Green Mountain College Adaptive Reuse Area.

### **Agriculture & Rural Residential Areas**

East Poultney, the one population center in this district, consists of a cluster of homes, mostly old and many of historical interest. It is centered around a triangular green along with a church and three museum buildings owned by the Poultney Historical Society. It is a recognized historic district by the National Register of Historic Places and, as previously noted, it is a designated Village Center through the Vermont Downtown Program.

Outside the population hubs of Poultney Village, East Poultney and Lake Saint Catherine, the town is generally rural with open spaces, scenic vistas and heavily forested ridgelines that provide ample opportunity for various forms of recreation, as discussed in The Resources chapter. Residences and farms are located along the primary highways of Route 30, 31 and 140, as well as alongside roads such as those located in Hampshire, Finel and Morse Hollows. The hilly terrain, steep slopes and thin soils have limited development in the eastern section of the town.

Commercial activity in this district is primarily natural resource based. The superiority of slate for roofing, flooring and other uses has served to make slate quarrying and processing the dominant industry. While agriculture is declining, farm and forestry operations occupy this area, along with abundant home occupations and cottage industries.

Some portions of the Agricultural & Rural Residential areas require conservation and protective measures due to their fragile, unique or irreplaceable nature, or are necessary for the maintenance of environmental quality.

No area in this area is served by municipal water and sewer. Any development in this area is served by on-site sewage disposal systems, and any development with on-site sewage disposal and potable water requires a wastewater and water supply permit issued by the Agency of Natural Resources. Development in this area must also be reasonably served by the existing road network.

Constraints for development vary for each specific district within the Agriculture & Rural Residential Areas,

and are outlined in the Poultney Unified Bylaws, which should be referenced for additional information and guidance.

### **Flood Hazard Area**

The flood hazard area in Poultney is designated on the 2008 Federal Insurance Administration Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). This area is also identified in the Future Land Use Map and the Zoning Districts Map adopted by the town. More detailed maps are available at the town office. For additional information, see the Future Land Use section following this section.

### **Lakeshore Area**

Lake Saint Catherine has served as a vacation destination since the 1880's. Much of the development consists of historic summer cottages and camps with direct lake access. Recently, some of these have been winterized or expanded upon. There are few rentals on the lake, and most homes are occupied only in summer and on holidays. Few commercial establishments occupy this area, and even on busy weekends there is a peaceful, quiet nature to the lakeshore.

### **Village Industrial and Industrial Areas**

Industrial and light manufacturing activities are an important component of Poultney's economy and landscape. The Industrial areas in town reserve lands for expanded industrial and directly associated commercial development outside the village on soils and slopes best suited to such intense use, and which are served by town roads. The Village Industrial area contemplates only those developments that are in keeping with environmental and siting standards due to proximity to less intensive land uses.

### **Northeast Conservation and Wildlife Habitat Area**

The Northeast Conservation and Wildlife Habitat Area is generally defined as the northeast corner of the town, bounded by the Castleton and Ira town lines and in part by the Middletown Springs town line, and on the interior by Pond Hill Road to the west, both the north and south sides of Ames Hollow Road and easterly and northeasterly of Clark Hollow Road and along both sides of Morse Hollow Road. It includes generally the town's highest mountain peaks or slopes from mountain peaks just outside of the town boundaries, including Birdseye

Mountain, Herrick Mountain and Spruce Knob, and connecting ridgelines within the town.

This area is characterized by steep slopes with thin soils and fragile vegetation that provides significant recharge to the ground and surface waters. It includes significant seasonal and year-round watercourses draining into the Poultney River watershed. In 2011, it was identified as an area containing irreplaceable natural resources and provides an unparalleled significant expanse of unbroken, unfragmented and significant wildlife and natural habitat area. Significant tracts of land just outside the town boundaries are now owned by the State of Vermont as wildlife habitat areas. The pristine and unfragmented ridgeline frames the northeast area of town as a significant scenic resource. The large tracts of land are in the ownership of relatively few individuals or businesses and have been traditionally devoted to uses involving forest resources, recreation and hunting.

Access is difficult and limited and is traversed generally only by a single class 4 Town Highway and an "Impassable or Untraveled" trail, as defined by the Town of Poultney General Highway Map.

### **Downtown & Village Center Designations**

Vermont's Downtown and Village Center Program designations provide incentives and give communities the technical assistance needed to encourage new development and redevelopment in our compact, designated areas. The program's incentives are for both the public and private sector within the designated area, including tax credits for historic building rehabilitations and code improvements and priority consideration for other state grant programs.

**Village Center.** The East Poultney Village Center designation has enabled the town to preserve and celebrate the rich history of Poultney where the town first began. The focal area of the Village Center consists of a beautiful green where many community events are held and the iconic and historic United Baptist Church of Poultney which sits atop the green. These emblematic fixtures are surrounded by quiet residences, mixed-use residence/home occupations, the East Poultney General Store and many historic buildings, several of which have been turned into museums operated by the Poultney Historical Society. Through the Village Center Designation, the town has been able to apply for grants

to enhance the area, including a comprehensive sidewalk network and a pedestrian friendly bridge over the East Poultney Gorge. The designation was first awarded in June 2005 and needs to be reapplied for every eight years.

**Designated Downtown.** Poultney's designated Downtown encircles the primary hub of commerce in town, encompassing Main Street, extending to Poultney High School at its eastern terminus and the lands formerly housing the Green Mountain College campus on the westerly terminus. The designated downtown is overseen by the Poultney Downtown Revitalization Committee, Inc., (PDRC), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Designation was first received in 2002, and revitalization efforts by the PDRC and other partner organizations have included streetscape improvements (such as benches, streetlights, flowerbeds, trash receptacles, banners, and improved signage), sidewalk expansions and connectivity, construction of the Slate Quarry Park, attracting new businesses to Poultney's downtown, and encouraging the repurposing of historic structures for new and expanding businesses. These efforts and more remain a goal into the future. As with the village center designation, downtown designation status needs to be renewed every eight years.

## **Natural Resources**

### **Land and Wildlife**

Poultney is the product of drastic tectonics and subsequent glaciation and erosive forces. Its landscape is a patchwork of hills, basins and other depressions and valleys with corresponding variation in its underlying bedrock, its soils and surface and subsurface water.

For many years a principal source of revenue, the slate industry is located on the western edge of town and in adjoining New York state and in the neighboring towns of Castleton, Fair Haven, Wells, and Pawlet.

Associated with the slate belt is a long zone underlaid by greywacke, a sandstone apparent in ledge outcrops. A substantial part of eastern Poultney consists of various hills with bedrock of the Saint Catherine formation, a complex including phyllites and quartzite. The soils are shallow and mostly occupied by forests of hardwoods and softwoods, excepting where they have been cleared for pastures. The shallowness of these soils, with

occasional pockets of deeper soil, has important implication for the location of domestic water wells and conventional septic systems. Drilled wells in these areas are satisfactory if they tap into aquifers in fractured bedrock.

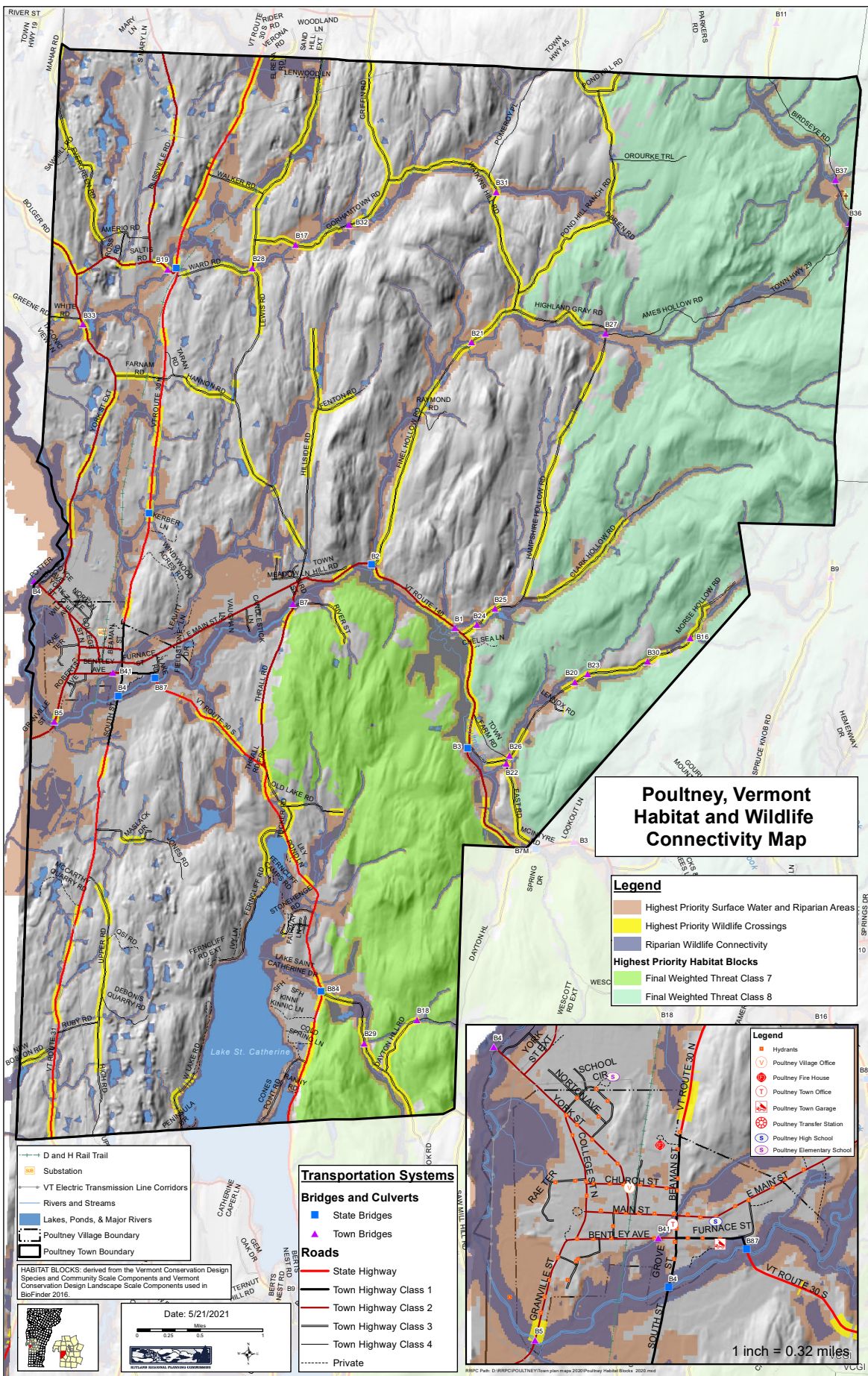
Rare and endangered species of plants and animals are present throughout the town. A total of fifteen sites have been identified by the Vermont Non-Game and Natural Heritage Program. The approximate, generalized locations of these sites are shown on Natural Resources Map 1. The town continues to encourage the protection of these sites. The Agency of Natural Resources Department of Fish and Wildlife has identified significant natural communities located in the Northeast Conservation and Wildlife Habitat Area, including wildlife migration corridors. The “Inventory and Assessment of Wetland and Upland Wildlife Habitat in the Upper Poultney River Watershed” confirmed and identified these areas in northeast Poultney. The area has traditionally provided recreational opportunities including horseback riding, hiking, snowmobiling and hunting. The lack of easy access, the limited existence of primitive roads and trails, and its remoteness have contributed to its preservation. The Agency of Natural Resources has designated this area as worthy of special attention due to its unfragmented nature in a state in which development has caused increasing encroachments on, and fragmentation of, such habitats. As of 2020, Poultney was home to over 2,322 acres of conserved land.

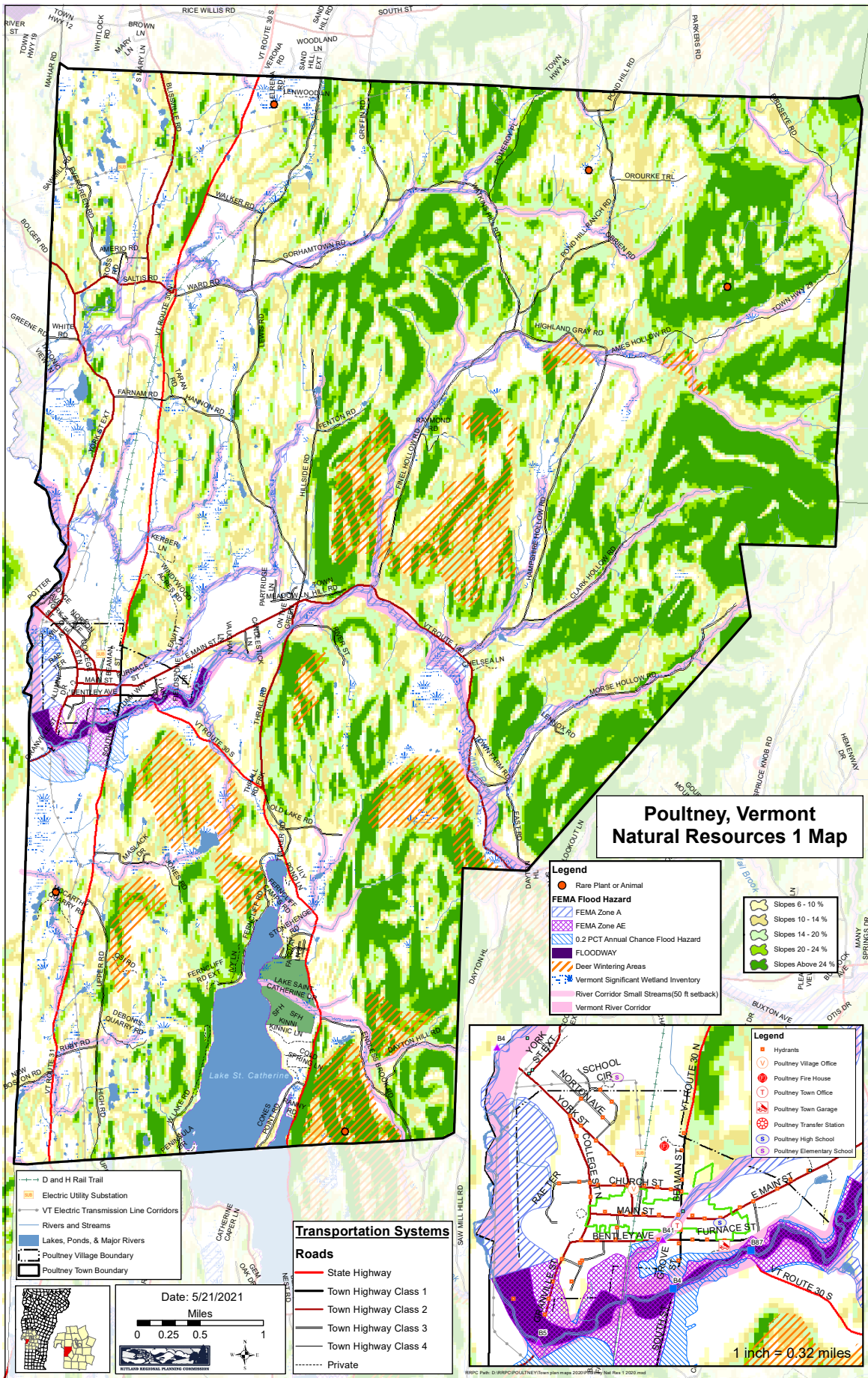
The town has a mix of forested and open land, both of which provide critical habitat areas for significant flora and fauna. Outstanding natural areas that offer refuge for endangered species or are examples of the natural heritage of the town should be protected from development. The benefits provided by wildlife habitats and other natural and fragile areas are numerous. They contribute to the economy by attracting travelers, recreation seekers, and wildlife admirers as well as add to the community's character and sense of place. Wildlife habitats and other natural and fragile areas are mapped generally by the state and include deer wintering areas (commonly known as deer yards), bear habitat, migratory staging areas for waterfowl, mast stands, fisheries and sites of rare plants and animals.

Other significant types of wildlife habitat include large intact forested tracts capable of supporting larger mammals and wildlife corridors. A wildlife corridor is an area of land used by wildlife to travel from one large block of habitat to another. In the Poultney area, the two blocks run along the north and eastern border of Lake Saint Catherine and along the eastern most border of the town. This can also be viewed in Habitat and Wildlife Connectivity Map. While most animals do not cover the entire distance between the mountain ranges, maintaining a continuous network of habitat allows for genetic flow between animal populations and lets individuals range as far as they need.

Wildlife habitats, deer wintering yards, rare plant and animal areas, and priority habitat blocks are mapped on Natural Resources Maps 1 and 2 as well as the Habitat and Wildlife Connectivity Map. Conservation of open spaces and natural resources should be a high priority to maintain Poultney's rural character as well as its ability to be resilient to the potential effects of climate change. These important maps – Habitat and Wildlife Connectivity, Natural Resources 1, and Natural Resources 2 – follow.







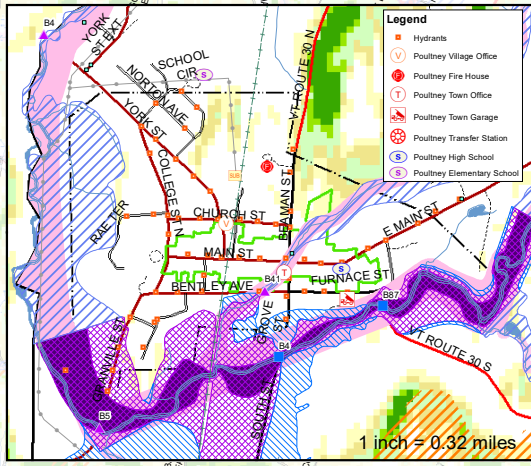
## Poultney, Vermont Natural Resources 1 Map

- Legend**
- Rare Plant or Animal
  - FEMA Flood Hazard**
    - FEMA Zone A
    - FEMA Zone AE
    - 0.2 PCT Annual Chance Flood Hazard
  - FLOODWAY
  - Deer Wintering Areas
  - Vermont Significant Wetland Inventory
  - River Corridor Small Streams(50 ft setback)
  - Vermont River Corridor

- Slopes 6 - 10 %
- Slopes 10 - 14 %
- Slopes 14 - 20 %
- Slopes 20 - 24 %
- Slopes Above 24 %

- Transportation Systems**
- D and H Rail Trail
  - Electric Utility Substation
  - VT Electric Transmission Line Corridors
  - Rivers and Streams
  - Lakes, Ponds, & Major Rivers
  - Poultney Village Boundary
  - Poultney Town Boundary

- Roads**
- State Highway
  - Town Highway Class 1
  - Town Highway Class 2
  - Town Highway Class 3
  - Town Highway Class 4
  - Private



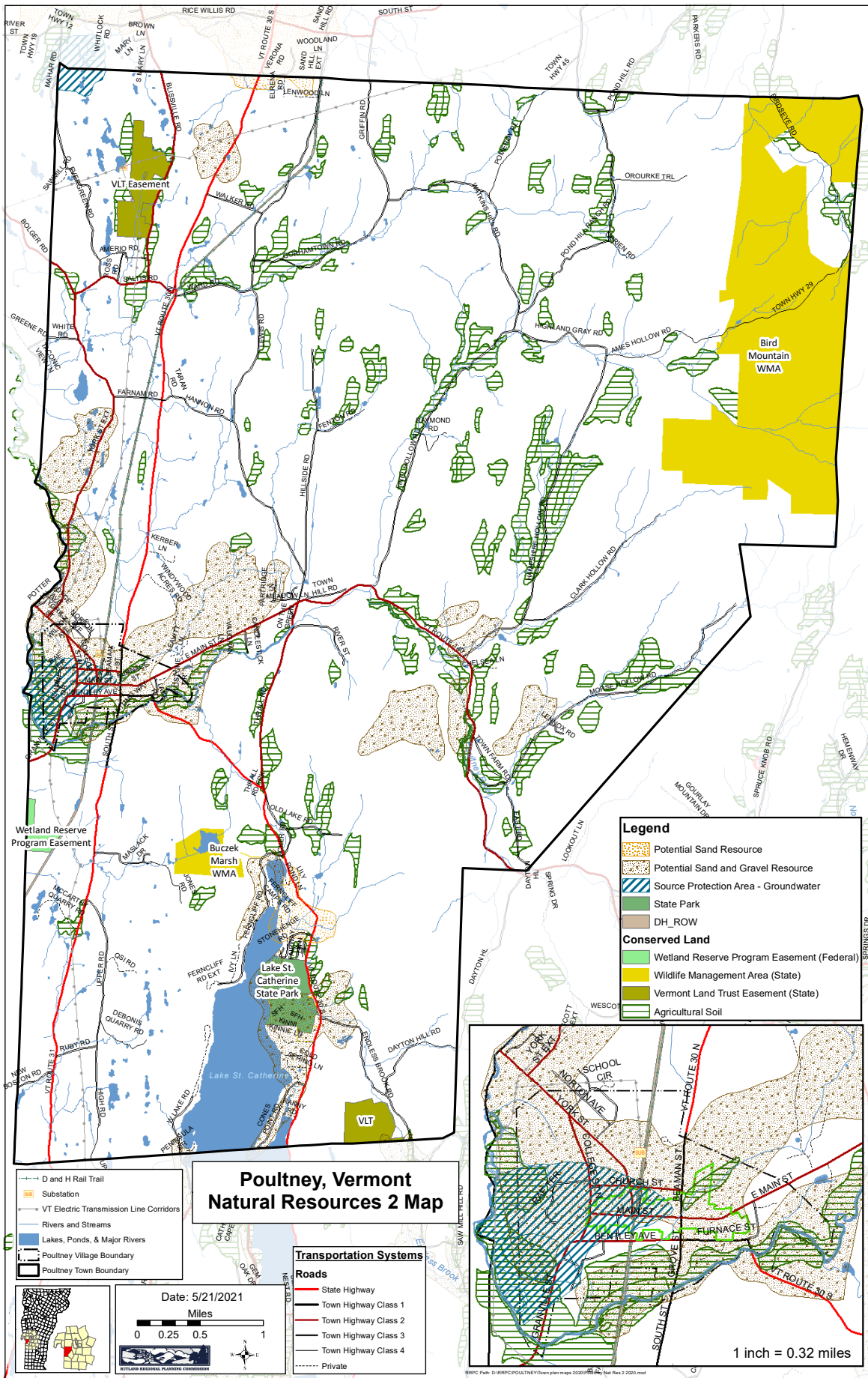
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Miles

0 0.25 0.5 1

WETLAND RESOURCES PLANNING COMMISSION

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### Poultney, Vermont Natural Resources 2 Map

- - - D and H Rail Trail  
 □ Substation  
 - - - VT Electric Transmission Line Corridors  
 - Rivers and Streams  
 - Lakes, Ponds, & Major Rivers  
 - - - Poultney Village Boundary  
 - - - Poultney Town Boundary

**Transportation Systems**

**Roads**

- State Highway
- Town Highway Class 1
- Town Highway Class 2
- Town Highway Class 3
- Town Highway Class 4
- Private

Date: 5/21/2021

Miles

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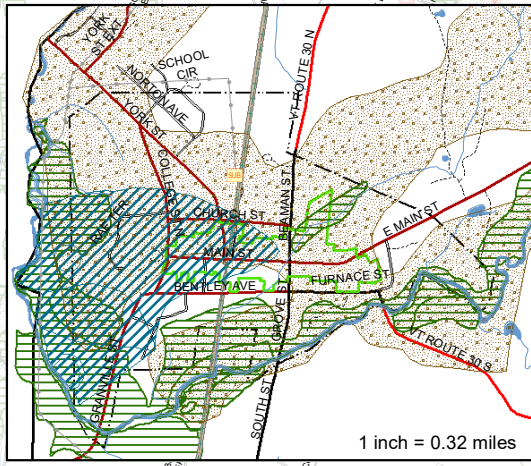
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**Legend**

- Potential Sand Resource
- Potential Sand and Gravel Resource
- Source Protection Area - Groundwater
- State Park
- DH\_ROW

**Conserved Land**

- Wetland Reserve Program Easement (Federal)
- Wildlife Management Area (State)
- Vermont Land Trust Easement (State)
- Agricultural Soil



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## Wetlands

Wetlands are land areas that are saturated with water at least part of the year and include marshes, swamps, sloughs, fens, and mud flats and bogs. Wetlands – of which there are 1,580.32 acres in Poultney – provide important wildlife habitats, but also provide other benefits such as storing stormwater runoff, purifying surface and groundwater supplies, recharging aquifers, controlling erosion, and providing areas for recreation.

Because of their many beneficial functions, direct loss of wetlands due to filling can have dramatic ecological effects in addition to habitat losses. In concert with the State of Vermont, the Town of Poultney prohibits development within a 50' buffer of Class II Wetlands and a 100' buffer of Class I Wetlands.

## Sand, Gravel and Slate

Sand, gravel and slate are important resources to the town's economy and underlie many areas in town. During much of Poultney's early history, the town's economy rose and fell with demand for these natural resources, especially slate. The Slate Quarry Park Group, a nonprofit formed in 2016, has worked closely with the Town of Poultney, the Poultney Historical Society, and various local and regional stakeholders to construct a pocket park on Main Street. The park, located on town-owned land, was erected in honor of Poultney's rich history with slate, and to pay tribute to the workers and industry that began in the 1850s. An official groundbreaking took place in 2021.

Much of the sand and gravel resources in Poultney are used for town road maintenance, and it is essential to identify and plan for future use of those deposits, which are of sufficient quality, and for which the impacts of a sand and gravel operation can be successfully mitigated. In determining which sand and gravel deposits should be planned for future extraction, it is important to identify those which are also recharge areas both for existing public or community wells and for potential public water supplies.

Many mining operations, especially in the slate industry, will idle as the market for the product decreases and then reopen as the economic tides turn in favor of the product. As increased residential development occurs in the town, care must be taken to decrease potential future conflicts as old quarries reopen.

## Agriculture and Forestry

The prime lands for farming are found in the valleys of the several tributaries to the Poultney River and in the sand and gravel basin found along the lower reaches of the Poultney River. Poultney is home to approximately 1,085.47 acres of prime agricultural soils. Historically, farming consisted of many dairy and beef cattle farms. These agricultural operations have declined since the 1970's, though there are still a number of active farms in beef, dairy, rabbit, and vegetable production. Farmers, squeezed by high costs relative to income, supplement their income through maple syrup production, harvesting of timber, and crop raising. Farmland is gradually being converted into other, primarily residential, uses.

Currently the lowlands of Poultney are occupied by hardwood forests of maples, oaks hickories and young elms not affected by Dutch Elm disease. The high lands consist of birch and beech forests.

To increase the viability of farm and forest resources, the manufacture and marketing of value-added agricultural and forest products on these lands is strongly encouraged. Locally produced food products are an asset to the community and a large driver of tourism in Vermont. As such, uses that provide access to locally sourced foods, including farmer's markets, CSAs, co-operatives, community gardens and farm stands, are strongly encouraged in town.

## Water Resources

The town is traversed by the Poultney River and several tributary brooks running from basins and through valleys of alluvial gravel and sand. Areas of the Poultney River have been identified as a high priority for restoration work as well to address bank stabilization and the re-growth of natural plant communities.

Stream headwaters located in the upper reaches of a watershed are usually cool and have a high oxygen content and low nutrient content. Because stream headwaters are usually forested, which retards erosion processes, headwater streams are clean and allow the photosynthetic zone to extend across the width of the streams. For this reason, upland streams tend to be highly productive in vegetative growth and are extremely sensitive to sedimentation and pollution discharges.

Many of these streams are ephemeral, flowing only during periods of high runoff when water tables rise and intersect the stream channel. All of these factors make headwaters and pristine streams extremely sensitive to perturbation resulting from logging and urbanization.

Individual domestic water supplies are drawn from various kinds of wells in the alluvium, and the leaching characteristics for septic effluent disposal are generally acceptable. Development in areas with high water tables risk pollution by septic tanks. Once contaminated, these waters may present health hazards and pollute surface waters if the ground water contributes to stream flow or wetlands.

In addition to the river tributaries, the town's water resources consist variously of small ponds (including a number of artificial ponds), vernal pools, Class II Wetlands, and a substantial portion of Lake Saint Catherine, a major summer resort. The waters of Lake Saint Catherine are monitored by the Lake Saint Catherine Association. In partnership with state, regional and local entities, the Association has taken an active role in invasive species management and other lake health initiatives, such as encouraging septic upgrades with the construction of additions to houses on the lake.

### **Steep Slopes and Ridgelines**

The suitability of land for development decreases on steep slopes where soils could be shallower and surface water runoff increases. 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. Slopes greater than 20% in steepness may present problems in complying with the Vermont Wastewater Regulations. Thus, settlement is generally restricted in areas where the slopes are in excess of 20% and development in areas of 15-20% slope may be permitted if it can be demonstrated that subsurface sewage disposal will meet all state requirements. Serious limitations to steep slope development also include depth of soil and access for emergency and delivery vehicles. Roads must be designed to allow year round access by emergency and service vehicles, with maximum slopes for unpaved roads not exceeding 7% finish grade (for paved roads, the grade should not exceed 10%). In support of resilient erosion control

measures, the use of riprap is discouraged and the use of hydroseeder (where appropriate) is encouraged.

In addition, areas with high elevation and ridgelines present striking visual features and contribute significantly to the town's unique landscape. Settlement in these areas may be extremely visible from other parts of Poultney and adjacent towns. With elevations of 500 feet or less to 2,320 feet elevation, the Town of Poultney considers it critically important to protect its viewsheds within the town.

Ridgelines also present significant land use development problems. At high elevations, ridgeline precipitation is greater, air and soil temperatures are lower, soils are shallower and lower in nutrients, slopes are steeper, wind speeds are higher and re-establishing vegetative cover is difficult and slow to replenish.

### **Scenic Resources**

Poultney's landscape is still primarily rural, with the exception of Poultney and East Poultney villages. This pattern of development offers scenic vistas and open space for residents and visitors alike. The Route 30 Scenic Byways project (the Stone Valley Byway) is a recognition of the scenic resources found throughout the town. The continuation of open spaces and agriculture in the town benefits those in agriculture, as well as those who appreciate the scenic values associated with the rural landscape, whether they be residents or visitors to the town. The work to revitalize the village areas contribute to the retention of rural areas in town by offering vibrant and economically viable population growth centers appropriate for residential and commercial development.

The pristine and natural ridgelines and mountain peaks of the Northeast Conservation and Wildlife Habitat Area constitute a significant contributor to the scenic resources of the town and frames the viewscape to the northeast.

### **Goals and Action Items**

1. Protect natural ecosystems that support wildlife, rare and endangered species, and other significant natural areas and resources identified in this Plan.
  - a) Educate the public about the functions and values of wildlife habitats and the protection of rare, endangered and threatened species.

- b) Network landowners with private conservation groups such as the Vermont Land Trust or the Nature Conservancy who can acquire development rights or purchase land to protect these resources.
2. Advance the protection and enhancement of wildlife habitats, natural communities and rare, endangered and threatened species, and, in particular, discourage any further fragmentation of these areas. Discourage and refrain from industrial or large-scale development and roads in these areas.
    - a) Encourage practices and land uses that decrease the amount of forest fragmentation to the extent possible.
  3. Maintain and conserve with a heightened sense of awareness the Northeast Conservation and Wildlife Habitat Area.
    - a) Limit the use of this area to historical forest resource uses, but with a heightened requirement of adherence to sustainable timber management practices and consistent with protection of wildlife habitat and nondestructive recreational uses. Discourage the type of development which could lead to posting of the land, making it unavailable for hunting and other recreational purposes.
    - b) Maintain language in Poultney's Unified Bylaws to prohibit all other types of land use in this area.
  4. Protect Class II wetlands (Class I are not present) in accord with Vermont Wetland Rules.
    - a) Provide information and education to landowners and developers about the location and functions of wetlands and the requirement of the Vermont Wetland Rules.
    - b) Post maps of Class II wetlands, public water aquifers, and wellhead protection areas in the Poultney Town Office; notify affected property owners of wetlands identified on their property before further development.
    - c) Promote the importance of a vegetated buffer strip along the shore, to trap and filter nutrients and sediment in the Lake Shore Zoning District.
    - d) Assist owners in securing proper permits under the Vermont Wetland and Shoreline Protection Rules before development occurs.
    - e) Discourage the use of riprap.
  5. Promote the continued growth of the slate industry in a manner that is compatible with other goals of the town.
    - a) Support the Slate Quarry Park on Main Street as a community gathering place and a tribute to the slate industry and its rich history in Poultney
    - b) Regularly review existing standards to ensure future sand and gravel operations are compatible with surrounding uses.
    - c) Reference the NRCS handbook, "Vegetating Vermont Sand and Gravel Pits" in requirements for reclamation plans.
  6. Encourage the conservation of the best agricultural and timber producing lands in the town for their beneficial influence on the watersheds, wildlife, aesthetics and character of Poultney as well as for their economic values.
    - a) Promote an ethic of volunteerism in conservation of trees as a resource.
    - b) Increase public knowledge of forest stewardship concepts in the cycle of tree planting, care and maintenance.
    - c) Development of prime agricultural soils should be planned in such a way as to preserve the future agricultural use of the land.
    - d) Protect forest blocks and avoid fragmentation. As such, development shall be designed and sited in a manner to limit the fragmentation of large blocks of contiguous forest to the greatest degree possible.
    - e) Encourage residents to enroll in the Current Use program and/or conserve their forestlands.
    - f) Continue to explore the use of planned unit developments to protect agricultural soils and minimize potential wildlife habitat fragmentation.
    - g) Limit the use of the Northeast Conservation and Wildlife Habitat Area to historical forest resource uses, but with a heightened requirement of adherence to sustainable silvicultural practices, consistent with protection of wildlife habitat and nondestructive recreational uses.
    - h) Support the local production of food through Farmer's Markets, CSAs, Co-Operatives, Community Gardens, and Farm Stands.
  7. Protect and enhance the ability of Poultney's water resources to provide wildlife habitat, travel corridors, and public recreational opportunities.
    - a) Protect groundwater recharge areas.

- b) Encourage water quality best practices by property owners and contractors to protect streambanks and shorelines.
  - c) Promote the use of adequate erosion control measures in areas of high erosion potential (e.g. steep slopes, roads and erodible soils) and high susceptibility to surface water pollution (e.g. along wetlands, streams and ponds).
  - d) Encourage the use of practices that will help address water quality by decreasing nutrient run-off, erosion and sedimentation
  - e) Establish reasonable, site specific stream buffers that preserve and conserve water quality, natural habitats, wildlife movement, and other processes along aesthetically, ecologically and recreationally important sections of streams.
  - f) Provide information about permitting, proper installation and maintenance of septic systems as mandated by the State of Vermont.
  - g) Provide information to encourage local farmers to use the best management practices (BMPs) reasonably available.
  - h) Provide forest landowners with information and incentives to protect water quality.
  - i) Support the Poultney Mettowee Natural Resource Conservation District monitoring of Poultney River water quality and efforts to identify methods to address concerns.
  - j) Support efforts of the Lake Saint Catherine Association to deal with invasive species in the lake.
  - k) Support the Poultney Mettowee NRC and University of Vermont Lake Education and Action Program, which work with lake associations and area youth to implement water quality projects and develop long-term water quality education programs.
  - l) Development should be consistent with rules under the Shoreline Protection Act and setback a minimum distance of 50' from the shoreline of all natural streams and natural and man-made ponds in the town, including Lake Saint Catherine, unless an extreme hardship exists because of topography, size of land parcel, or other unusual circumstances, or the developer submits evidence that an adverse impact will not occur by closer development.
  - m) Support grant applications written by the Lake Saint Catherine Association to maintain and improve water quality.
  - n) Support local, regional and statewide agencies and initiatives disseminating information regarding non-native invasive species, including Eurasian milfoil, water chestnuts, zebra mussels and others.
8. All development other than those uses and structures essential to the operation of agriculture, forestry, recreation and wildlife production shall be restricted from flood hazard areas as designated on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) for Poultney, as well as taking into account information gained through the Geomorphic Assessment of the Poultney River. Those structures and uses permitted should be allowed only as conditional use in conformity with the provisions of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973.
- a) Support the use of the Poultney River Geomorphic Assessment and Stream Corridor Plan in development decisions.
  - b) Continue to hold flood emergency preparedness and response planning in the community.
9. Maintain high air quality standards for current and future residential, commercial and industrial development in Poultney.
10. Encourage the protection and enhancement of the natural beauty and scenic characteristics of special significance to local landscapes.
- a) Encourage the preservation of significant scenic and aesthetic values. Prohibit large-scale developments on ridgelines, and in particularly the Northeast Conservation and Wildlife Habitat Area which would have the effect of impacting its natural beauty as a scenic resource as well as wildlife. Prohibit any development requiring structures containing flashing warning lights or navigational aids.
  - b) Encourage residential, industrial and commercial development to avoid undue adverse impact on significant natural areas to the greatest extent possible. Establish a process for conceptual review of proposed large scale developments to influence project design to protect scenic resources and natural areas.
  - c) Investigate and evaluate the availability of a natural area Transfer of Development Rights program (TDR) to protect important natural areas and historic and scenic resources while, at

the same time, respecting the economic interests of property owners.

- d) Achieve appropriate balance between the desire to protect and preserve natural areas and features and the rights of property owners to make reasonable use of their property.
- e) Encourage landowners to avoid undue adverse impact on natural areas and historic and scenic resources that are designated as important.

## Future Land Use

### Poultney Village & Future Utility District

The village – a hub for services, business, and community for the town - is basically a district of services for water, sewage, street maintenance, and lighting with its own administration. Poultney's schools and several of its churches lie within the village. It is accessible from Routes 30, 31, 140 and 22A, connecting it with Castleton, Granville, NY, Middletown Springs, Wells, Hampton, NY, and Fair Haven.

New development in this district should be characteristic of the existing development pattern. It should occur at a similar density and continue the diversity of uses seen in the village today. Future development should maintain and reinforce the village as the town center, while continuing to preserve its distinctive residential, commercial and industrial mix of uses, for which there have been established individual future land use areas:

- **Village Residential.** Primarily residential uses with some light commercial mixed in, always within the same structure.
- **Village Commercial.** Primarily commercial uses with some residential, particularly multi-family housing, mixed in, often within the same structure.
- **Village Industrial.** Lands with historic industrial uses located within the village, for which light industrial uses should continue at a reasonable scale and intensity so as not to be disruptive to neighboring residential districts. Commercial uses subordinate to and directly related to adjoining industrial uses should be allowed.

The purpose of the **Future Utility District** is to provide for development that is characteristic of the existing village

development pattern in lands most suitable for growth, where there is the capacity for extending water and sewer lines. Growth in this centralized location should also tie into the existing sidewalk network wherever feasible, to continue to foster a walkable and bikeable village core. Development in the Future Utility District should not occur at a pace or in a manner that would create strip development along VT Route 30 or the village roadways.

### Green Mountain College Adaptive Reuse Area

The campus lands formerly home to Green Mountain College include multiple structures (many historic), athletic fields, barns and farmlands, and natural resources.

Given its close proximity to Poultney Village and connections to municipal water and sewer, there is ample opportunity to redevelop this parcel with uses appropriate to the area and surrounding neighborhoods.

While this land has primarily been used as an educational facility, various complementary, accessory uses have occurred here over the decades, including lodging, wood and metal shops, art galleries, artist studios, cafés and eateries, music and theatrical performance venues, culinary arts, camps, clubs, and many others.

### Agriculture and Rural Residential District

Outside the population hubs of the Village of Poultney, East Poultney, and Lake St. Catherine, Poultney is generally rural with open spaces, scenic vistas and heavily forested ridgelines that provide ample opportunity for various forms of recreation, as discussed in The Resources chapter.

Based on the lack of municipal water and sewage, any future developments in this area require: on-site sewage disposal systems and water, a wastewater and water supply permit issued by the Agency of Natural Resources and be reasonably served by the existing road network.

Due to the differing capabilities of the land in the various areas of town, and of the road network, density of residential development should vary according to the severity of those constraints:

- **Agriculture Rural Residential - 1 acre (ARR-1).** Areas suitable for development at 1 acre densities. Lands within this designation have



slopes less than 15%, soils with slight or moderate limitations for onsite sewage disposal, a good road network of arterials and collectors, and are not susceptible to flooding.

- **Agriculture Rural-Residential - 2 acre (ARR-2).** The decrease in permitted density is dependent upon the presence of one or more development constraints including limitations for onsite sewage disposal, high water table, or shallow soils. However, the vast majority of the lands within the town fall into this suitability category. A combination of arterial and collectors which are generally in good condition and are adequate to carry additional development suffice as an adequate road network.
- **Agriculture Rural-Residential - 5 acre (ARR-5).** The density decreases again in this designation due to the addition of slopes over 15% to the list of development constraints. This district contains roads which are generally capable of carrying increased traffic loads.
- **Agriculture Rural-Residential - 10 acre (ARR-10).** This designation includes lands which, in general, have very severe limitations for development due to steep slopes, shallow and/or wet soils and a severely limited road network. This area also includes much of the forested land in the town, as well as many of the soils identified as high potential for forestry.

### Flood Hazard Area

A Poultney flood hazard area is designated on the Federal Insurance Administration Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM), last updated August of 2008. This area is identified in the Future Land Use Map and the Zoning Districts Map adopted by the town. Overall, there are 1,519.37 acres located within a Special Flood Hazard area. More detailed maps are available at the Poultney Town Office. All new development other than those uses and structures essential for the operation of agriculture, forestry, recreation and wildlife production shall be restricted within the Flood Hazard Area designation. Any permanent structure associated with the above uses, and any other structure allowed in the Flood Hazard Area shall be subject to the regulations set forth in the Poultney Unified Bylaws, Article VIII: Flood Hazard Area.

In 2009, the Planning Commission met with representatives of the Poultney Mettowee Natural Resources Conservation District and determined that the Flood Hazard Area closely overlaps areas identified as susceptible to Fluvial Erosion Hazards. As a result, the town has and continues to provide information to landowners about the risks of Fluvial Erosion Hazards and has informed owners that insurance provided through the National Flood Insurance Program does not cover damages resulting from Fluvial Erosion.

The Planning Commission continues to work with the Poultney Mettowee Natural Resources Conservation District to ensure that risks to public safety, critical infrastructure, historic structures and municipal investments are mitigated or removed entirely from existing, expanded or proposed development. The Poultney Geomorphic Assessment and Stream Corridor Plan and the expertise of the staff of the PMNRCD and the Vermont River Management Section are routinely relied upon for development decisions.

### Lakeshore District

This district was specifically created to preserve the qualities of minimal commercial presence and peaceful, quiet nature as well as to control water pollution, maintain the scenic value of the shoreline, minimize shoreline erosion and maintain vegetation and habitat along the shoreline.

### Industrial District

Industrial uses shall be limited to those which are non-polluting and are not a nuisance within their neighborhood. This is especially important in the industrial areas within the Village Industrial District where dense residential development is present. Commercial uses subordinate to and directly related to adjoining said industrial uses should be allowed. Industrial designations are identified on the Poultney Future Land Use Map included in this Plan.

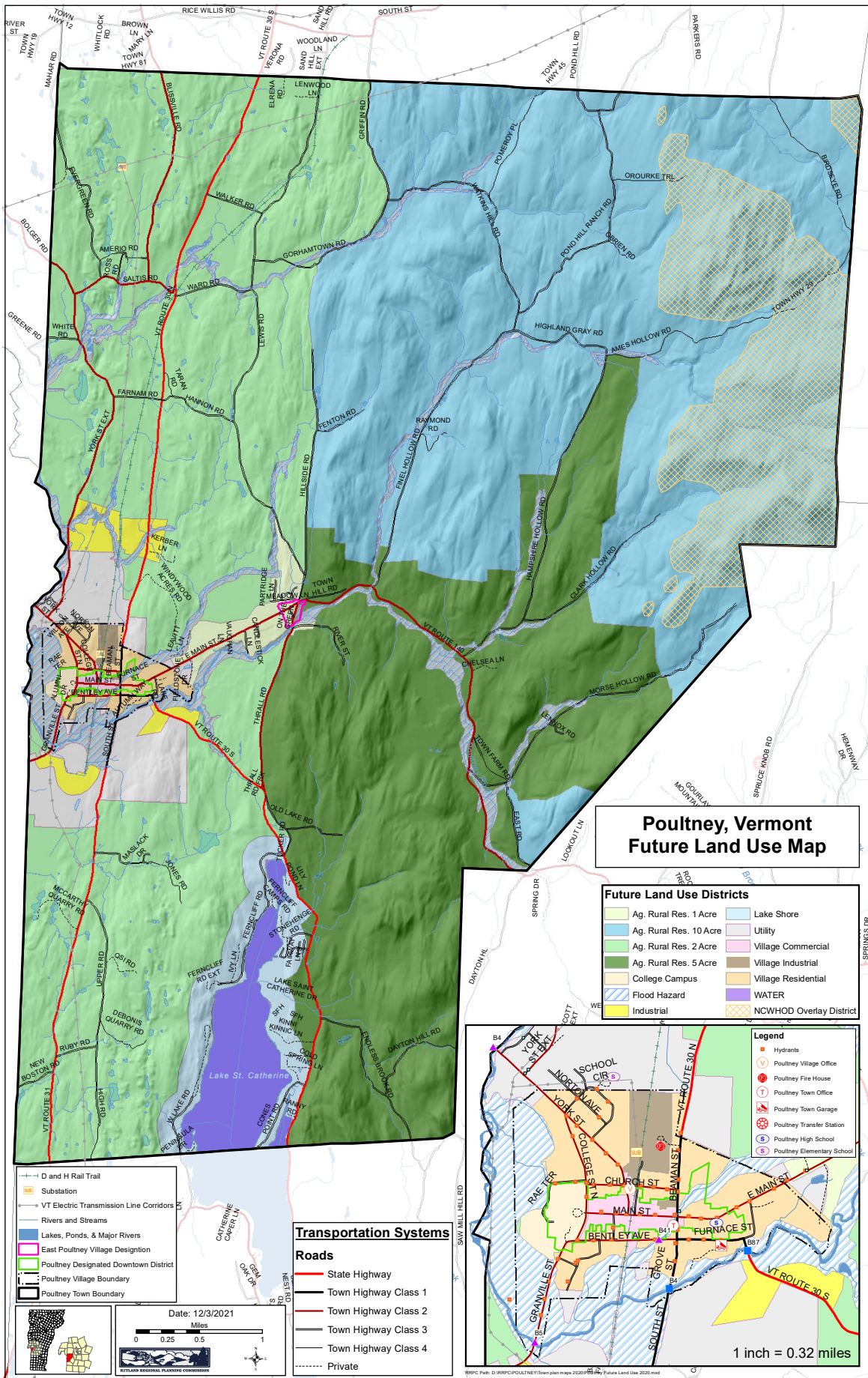
### Northeast Conservation and Wildlife Habitat Area

The Northeast Conservation and Wildlife Habitat Area is specifically defined as that land having an elevation of 1,300 feet or greater above sea level and lying easterly of Hampshire Hollow Road and easterly of Pond Hill Road, as depicted on Poultney's Northeast Conservation and

Wildlife Habitat Area map. Significant natural communities recently identified by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department are depicted on the Poultney Habitat and Wildlife Connectivity map. This area has been identified as related to a significant wildlife corridor for the northeast region of the United States of America.

The Poultney Mettowee Conservation District was involved in a more extensive research project to assess the wildlife habitat in the Poultney Watershed. In 2011, they released a report titled "Inventory and Assessment of Wetland and Upland Wildlife Habitat in the Upper Poultney River Watershed." This report largely confirms the presence of significant natural communities and potential wildlife linkage in the Northeast Conservation and Wildlife Habitat Area, giving this block of land a high priority. Two other identified blocks are located within the Town of Poultney.

The Future Land Use Map of Poultney's districts, overlaid with the transportation system, and boundary information can be found on the following page.



## Poultney, Vermont Future Land Use Map

Future Land Use Districts	
Ag. Rural Res. 1 Acre	Lake Shore
Ag. Rural Res. 10 Acre	Utility
Ag. Rural Res. 2 Acre	Village Commercial
Ag. Rural Res. 5 Acre	Village Industrial
College Campus	Village Residential
Flood Hazard	WATER
Industrial	NCWHOD Overlay District

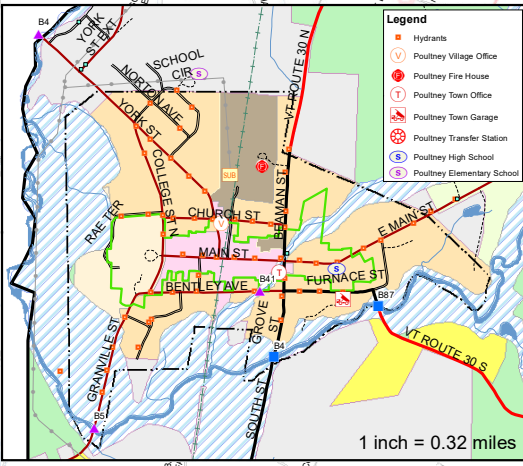
Legend	
Hydrants	Poultney Village Office
Poultney Fire House	Poultney Town Office
Poultney Town Garage	Poultney Transfer Station
Poultney High School	Poultney Elementary School

Transportation Systems	
Roads	
State Highway	Town Highway Class 1
Town Highway Class 2	Town Highway Class 3
Town Highway Class 4	Private

D and H Rail Trail  
 Substation  
 VT Electric Transmission Line Corridors  
 Rivers and Streams  
 Lakes, Ponds, & Major Rivers  
 East Poultney Village Designation  
 Poultney Designated Downtown District  
 Poultney Village Boundary  
 Poultney Town Boundary

Date: 12/3/2021

Scale: 0 0.25 0.5 Miles



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## Goals and Action Items

1. Maintain the historic character of Poultney Village and designated downtown while providing opportunities for social, cultural, and economic diversity.

- a) The density and character of any development should be compatibly integrated into the existing form of the village and its zoning districts. The existing mix of uses should continue, with industrial uses sited in the traditional industrial areas of the village.
- b) Plan and encourage development and settlement patterns that maintain the historic character of the village. Provide citizens with healthy, diverse and desirable housing, recreational and economic opportunities, and encourage wise and efficient use of public and private resources.
- c) Identify means to bring more reliable and cost effective internet access to Poultney residents.
- d) Maintain the designation status of Poultney's downtown and East Poultney's village center through the Vermont Downtown Program.
- e) Develop capital plans and programs that will implement efficient public infrastructure planning in advance of development.

2. Allow the orderly growth and re-development of the former Green Mountain College property within the context of the village such that expansion of the property's uses does not unduly impact the capacity of community services and facilities or adversely impact surrounding neighborhoods.

3. Maintain the rural character of the town while encouraging economic use of the available natural resources in a manner that protects other natural resource values addressed in this Plan.

- a) Within the Green Mountain College Adaptive Reuse Area and the Village Commercial zoning district, land use regulations should encourage the development of new and retention of existing businesses serving the recreation industry

4. Maintain the natural and aesthetic values associated with Lake Saint Catherine.

- a) Encourage the establishment and maintenance of a vegetative buffer along the shoreline for erosion control, filtration and/or capture of nutrient and chemical runoff by providing information to local contractors, updating the town website, and any homeowner associations.
- b) Support and/or participate in the Basin Water Quality Council.

5. Maintain a viable industrial component to the town's economy.

- a) Provide for the limited expansion of existing industrial developments and appropriate new industrial developments within the Industrial and Village Industrial districts.
- b) Provide for local industrial employment opportunities that do not unduly impact the capacity of community services and facilities, while protecting less intense adjacent land uses and maintaining high environmental and siting standards.

6. Conserve the Northeast Conservation and Wildlife Habitat Area to maintain its irreplaceable natural and wild resources, its asset as a scenic resource and to protect watershed which is fed by this drainage area.

- a) Limit the use of this area to historical forest resource uses, but with a heightened requirement of adherence to sustainable timber management practices and consistent with protection of wildlife habitat and nondestructive recreational uses.
- b) Encourage and promote the use of conservation easements by private landowners consistent with the goals of protecting the area.
- c) Encourage the use of the "Inventory and Assessment of Wetland and Upland Wildlife Habitat in the Upper Poultney River Watershed" in landowner education and planning.

## Compatibility

Development in Poultney affects neighboring communities, and vice-versa. This is especially apparent along major roadways, on Lake Saint Catherine, and where employment is concerned.

This plan promotes the preservation of Poultney's historical settlement pattern through the focusing of economic development efforts in the village, a designated downtown, as well as supporting the revitalization efforts being undertaken throughout the town. Residential growth is also promoted in this area of town. Outside of the villages, residential and commercial sites are more dispersed, and the capability of the land and surrounding natural resources guides the intensity and nature of development activities. These outlying areas are characterized by agriculture and other natural resource industries, recreation, and low-density residential uses.

Poultney's plan and development trends reinforce a rural character on its borders with Wells, Middletown Springs and Ira. It is the belief of the town that this Plan is compatible with those of its neighbors, sharing many of the same values for water quality protection, concentrated development, and active natural resource industries.

Cooperation with neighboring towns can be seen in the presence of emergency mutual aid agreements with surrounding towns and the town's support of the Lake Saint Catherine Association and the Poultney Mettowee Resource Conservation District water quality efforts affecting the surface waters of Poultney and its neighboring towns.

This plan is also compatible with the Rutland Regional Plan, last adopted in 2018.

# The Resources

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## Historic & Cultural Resources

### Historic Resources

The Town of Poultney was chartered in 1761 and named after Lord William Poultney, Earl of Bath. This village, with East Poultney, is listed in the National Registry of Historic Places.

East Poultney was settled in 1771 by Ethan Allen's cousins. His brother, Heber Allen, was the first town clerk. Its historic district includes about 60 houses, two churches, a store and post office, and three museums.

Information on the historic development of Poultney is obtainable in a booklet published in 1988 by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. The booklet is one of a set covering each of the twenty-seven towns in Rutland County published under the encompassing title of The Historic Architecture of Rutland County. The Poultney booklet includes maps of Poultney, its several historic districts, and an inventory of buildings preserved by these districts. It covers eight different styles of buildings spanning more than 130 years of history. These and other materials may be available at the Poultney Historical Society, and more information can be found at [poultneyhistoricalsociety.com](http://poultneyhistoricalsociety.com). Walking/Driving Tours are available for download on the website, and brochures for the Walking/Driving Tours can be found at area businesses and in the Stonebridge Visitor's Center.

### Cultural Resources

The Poultney Public Library (PPL), located at 205 Main Street, as of 2020 housed a collection of over 13,800 books, including a selection of audio books (715) and DVDs (3,464). Other items available for check out included craft and activity kits and outdoor recreation equipment such as snowshoes, bicycles, and telescopes. PPL is a hub for online connectivity, with free 24/7 wireless internet access and eight public access laptops available to cardholders. Both the elementary and high schools maintain libraries as well.

There are five churches in town. These institutions provide for the spiritual needs of the community and are also an integral part of the social and community service fabric of the town.

The Poultney Area Artist Guild, Horace Greeley Writers Guild, Stone Valley Arts, and area art studios all contribute cultural opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy or participate in.

Castleton University, located 8 miles to the north, is a public 4-year college offering a broad variety of educational opportunities. It is the home of the Castleton Summer Festival of the Arts and throughout the year, presents various activities and programs in the fine arts and other academically related programs, which are open to the general public.

Poultney is also home to the former Green Mountain College (GMC) environmental liberal arts institution. Founded in 1834 as the Troy Conference Academy (Methodist), it became a private 4-year liberal arts college with approximately 700 students by 2011. The college closed its doors in 2019 and, in 2020, the college property was sold at auction.

Community volunteer service organizations contribute significantly to the wellbeing of a community. Local volunteer organizations cover a broad range of interests, including: health, recreation, safety, agriculture, environment, religion, arts, history, economic development, youth, senior citizens, social service public affairs, fundraising, and education. A representative listing of organizations follows:

- American Legion, J. Claire Carmody Post #39
- Poultney Area Chamber of Commerce
- Poultney Downtown Revitalization Committee
- Poultney Historical Society
- Poultney Rotary Club
- Poultney Fish and Game Club
- Boy Scouts of America Troop 13 Cub Scout Pack 122
- Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains
- Poultney Area Artists Guild
- Poultney Area St. David's Society
- Poultney Booster Club
- Poultney Community League
- Poultney-Mettowee Natural Resources Conservation District
- Poultney Valley Snowmobile Devils
- Men's Group of St. Raphael
- Poultney Woman's Club

- Bomoseen Valley Grange
- St. Raphael’s Women’s Guild
- The Nature Conservancy
- Slate Valley Trails
- Stone Valley Arts
- Poultney Bluegrass Society
- Poultney Area REKO Ring

## Recreation

The town appoints a volunteer Recreation Commission, which is responsible for planning, implementing, and supervising programs and for maintenance of facilities. Their operations are supported by tax dollars, program fees, grants and donations.

The Commission offers a variety of programs and activities within the community, including traditional sports (tennis, basketball, baseball, soccer, miniature golf, etc.), and arts and crafts. Special programs have been provided to make use of residents' special skills and talents, including camps centered on farming and animal husbandry.

Outdoor facilities owned by the town or school district include ball fields at Poultney High School, and the 13-acre park–Veterans Park–located behind Poultney Elementary School. Veterans Park facilities include two tennis courts, a basketball court, four softball fields, a soccer field and a playground area with play equipment and picnic facilities. The Poultney Community League, which administers the youth baseball and T-ball program, also utilizes these fields in their programming. The tennis and basketball courts are open to the general public. The Poultney Elementary School gymnasium provides meeting facilities for youth groups and basketball and classrooms for arts and crafts programs. Slate Quarry Park, constructed in 2021, is a pocket park, located on Main Street on town-own lands.

Recreational opportunities for those youth that do not wish to participate in traditional team sports are needed in town. Facilities such as a municipal skateboard park would help fill this need. Slate Valley Trails (SVT), a local non-profit organization dedicated to building and maintaining multi-use trails open to the public, has partnered with the High School since 2019 to establish and coach a mountain bike club.

Other outdoor facilities include an eighteen-hole golf course at the Lake Saint Catherine Country Club and a miniature golf course on Route 30 east of Lake Saint Catherine. The town is home to two Wildlife Management Areas – the 350-acre Bird Mountain Wildlife Management Area in the northwest corner of Poultney and the 96-acre Buczek Marsh Wildlife Management Area northwest of Lake Saint Catherine – both of which offer dispersed fish and wildlife-based pursuits including hunting, fishing, trapping, wildlife viewing, walking and hiking, and maintain varying degrees of connectivity to the VAST trail network.

Lake Saint Catherine, a 5.6 mile-long body of water, covers 1,088 acres and is composed of three sections: Lily Pond to the north has 22 acres, the main lake has 904 acres, and, to the south, Little Lake has 162 Acres. These areas offer public swimming, camping, picnic facilities, private boat rentals, water skiing and fishing. Lake Saint Catherine State Park, located on the eastern shore of the main lake, has summer camps, full bath facilities, swimming, boating, fishing, a playground, a disc golf course and a nature museum. An adaptive mountain bike trail at the park was constructed in Summer 2021. It is the eighth most visited state park in Vermont.

Pond Hill Ranch, located on Pond Hill Ranch Road in the northeast corner of Poultney, offers horseback riding, rodeo and similar events. Throughout town, area streams, rivers, and the lake provide fishing for brook, brown, and rainbow trout and for bass and pickerel.

The Delaware and Hudson Recreation Path, also known as the D&H Rail Trail, was established in 1986 when the Vermont General Assembly authorized the Vermont Agency of Transportation to lease the Washington branch of the Delaware and Hudson rail right-of-way to the Vermont Department of Forests and Parks for recreational use. The section of the trail within Poultney is 7.14 miles in length. The trail's 19.77 miles runs from the New York state line in Rupert through Pawlet, Wells, and Poultney, ending in Castleton. The trail is open to non-motorized recreational use with the exception of snowmobiles, which are permitted in winter as conditions allow.

The trail within the four cooperating towns is supervised and maintained by the Vermont Agency of Transportation and Vermont Forests and Parks. In addition to helping supervise the D&H Trail, the Vermont

Association of Snow Travelers (V.A.S.T) oversees an additional system of trails running through Poultney. State and local police are empowered to enforce regulations of the trails. In 2020, several investments were made to the D&H Trail in the vicinity of Poultney’s downtown. A new parking area was established off Bentley Avenue, the trail was resurfaced, and several sections of split rail fencing were installed alongside the trail.

Beyond the D&H Rail Trail, the Poultney Valley Snowmobile Devils snowmobile club oversees a vast network of local trails. The club works closely with landowners to secure and retain trail access, and only members have permission to ride these trails.

New trails have been installed in and around Poultney’s downtown, many of which spearheaded by Slate Valley Trails (SVT). SVT manages the Poultney River Trail, a multi-use trail that creates a loop off of the D&H Rail Trail and runs behind the former Green Mountain College campus. The town and a number of volunteers are working to improve this asset. These networks are both educational and recreational in nature. SVT, in partnership with private landowners, also manages many miles of other trails throughout Poultney and the surrounding area, including:

- More than 35 miles of multi-use trails accessed from trailheads on Town Farm Road, Endless Brook Road, and the Lake Saint Catherine Country Club, popular with mountain bikers, hikers, and families
- Several miles of hiking trails on Howe Hill in East Poultney
- Approximately 5 miles of multi-use trails at Delaney Woods in Wells

As of 2021, Slate Valley Trails is working with the town and local leaders to plan connections from the villages of Poultney and East Poultney to these trails, as well as to sites along Lake Saint Catherine. These connections are critical in linking trail users and visitors to local businesses, driving a local recreation economy.

## **VOREC**

In 2019, the Town of Poultney was awarded a Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) grant from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. The state’s

VOREC webpage provides an overview of the purpose for the program, stating in part:

“In Vermont, a healthy outdoor recreation economy directly supports related businesses and organizations. Moreover, it also contributes to numerous other aspects of the Vermont economy and culture, including the encouragement of healthy communities and individuals, enhancement of the Vermont lifestyle and the Vermont brand, increased connection to nature and attraction of high-quality employers and a sustainable workforce in all economic sectors” (Source: [fpr.vermont.gov/vorec](http://fpr.vermont.gov/vorec). 4.22.21).

As of 2021, Poultney’s VOREC grant was being implemented by a local Advisory Committee including town representatives, key stakeholders and local leaders that comprise the Outdoor Recreation Opportunities Task Force developed during the 2019 Poultney Comes Together planning initiative. The grant includes marketing consultation, development of a new brochure, website, and panel for the Fair Haven Visitor Center (1356 Prospect Street, Fair Haven, VT), wayfinding signs to identify key outdoor recreation sites, and an Economic Assessment report.

## **Goals**

### **Historic & Cultural Resources**

1. Protect historic and cultural resources that contribute to small-town character.
2. Encourage adaptive re-use of historic properties that does not degrade the overall quality of the town’s historic districts.
3. Seek opportunities to provide financial or technical support to property owners to improve the appearance of and/or maintain older structures.
4. Consider the need to create and adopt architectural or site design standards for the villages.
5. Gauge community interest in establishing a Certified Local Government (CLG) administered by the National Park Service and the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation to increase access to funding and technical assistance.

### **Recreation**



1. Continue to support investment in, maintenance of, and stewardship for the D&H Rail Trail as an outstanding recreation asset to Poultney. Foster relationships with the state to ensure goals are met.
2. Support research that investigates future recreational infrastructure and opportunity.
3. Conduct studies to determine feasibility of connecting the downtown to Lake Saint Catherine and other recreational trails.

resident was 19.5 minutes with the majority (75%) of residents driving alone.

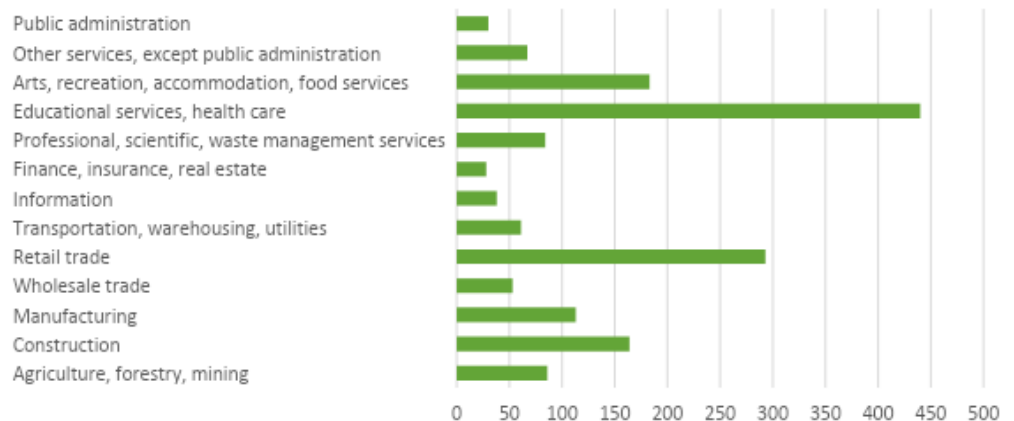
With the closure of Green Mountain College in 2019, the town lost not only a major employer but also a keystone of the town’s reputation, a community player, and a reliable seasonal influx of students (and thus, consumers). Since 2019, there has been a concerted effort by the town and residents, with support from the Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC), along with numerous federal and state agencies and

## Economy

Between 1771 and 1821 as the town was settled, the core of Poultney’s economic activity was agricultural. Many distilleries popped up, including the manufacture of corn and rye whiskeys and cider brandy, until at one point there were ten operations within the town limits. Then a large part of the town’s commerce, these operations swiftly disappeared in the 1830s due to the rise of the Temperance movement. Between 1824 and 1835, sheep husbandry boomed, followed by dairy associations and fruit growing. Mills and foundries connected the villages of Poultney and East Poultney, and the turnpike (now Vermont Route 30) cemented the Village of Poultney’s role as a transportation center. The railroad arrived in 1851, and much of East Poultney moved west to meet it. By the 1900s, there was a huge boom in the slate industry, and the slate quarries that had opened in the 1840’s were now employing hundreds of Welsh, Italian, Irish and Slavic immigrants, as Poultney was transformed and industrialized. At this time, Poultney’s downtown housed five department stores, dry goods stores, restaurants, stables, and several photographic studios.

According to the American Community Survey, as of 2017, Poultney had 1,640 working citizens with nearly 27% working in the education services and health care industry and retail being the next major employer. The median household income was \$49,417 in Poultney, lower than the Rutland County median income of \$57,808. The average travel time to work for a Poultney

Industry and Occupation of Poultney Residents



organizations, to envision a path forward. With the 2020 purchase of the property, the new owners are working closely with town officials as they explore future development ideas.

### Poultney Comes Together

In April 2019, over 200 residents attended a community meeting to begin the discussions of how the town would adapt to a future without Green Mountain College. This meeting and following meetings resulted in a report, Poultney Comes Together, which outlined the process and the five key actions identified to support the town moving forward and represents a coalition of Poultney townspeople.

The key actions were:

- Expand trails, biking and outdoor recreation opportunities as an economic driver for Poultney’s future
- Develop a Poultney co-working space and incubator for new start-up businesses and invite newcomers to the town
- Develop a Bank
- Improve Broadband Infrastructure

- Boost Poultney's downtown

For each key action, an individual taskforce with local community members was formed to pursue related goals as well as local and state resources, including the identification of community members who could offer support.

### **Poultney Economic Development Office**

In 2020, the Town of Poultney established its first ever Economic Development Office (EDO) with funding from a USDA Rural Business Development Grant. The town used the grant to hire a part-time Economic Development Coordinator to work in tandem with a professional planner that was closely involved with the Poultney Comes Together planning initiative. A summary of the work of the EDO in its inaugural year is below:

- Assisted local businesses with COVID Recovery grants and programs;
- Updates to the Vermont Vacation website;
- Provided support and responded to requests relative to the sale of the former Green Mountain College campus in August 2020;
- Prepared marketing materials in collaboration with the Poultney Downtown Revitalization Committee (PDRC) and the Poultney Area Chamber of Commerce;
- Oversaw implementation of Poultney's Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) grant with Advisory Committee;
- Established a social media presence for the town;
- Coordinated with Poultney Rotary and Young at Heart Senior Center to implement the Everyone Eats program;
- Developed a Poultney Bucks program with the Poultney Area Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR);
- Supported the start-up of the REclaimED Makerspace;
- Developed a joint application with Stone Valley Arts and REclaimED Makerspace for public arts funding;
- Led the Steering Committee for the EPA Recreation Economy for Rural Communities (RERC) project;

- Prepared findings and recommendations relative to the town's zoning bylaws and economic development;
- Met with potential new businesses seeking to locate in Poultney.

In 2021, the town included funding for the part-time Economic Development Coordinator in its budget and will continue to seek other funding to support the office and related projects.

The vision for Poultney's economic development focuses on retaining and expanding the scope of current businesses, while also seeking to diversify and strengthen the town's overall economic picture through the attraction of new businesses in certain identified sectors. The major focus of new business recruitment is twofold, the first being the attraction of those businesses that would support and grow Poultney's tourist economy, the second being the attraction of knowledge-based businesses that focus on intellectual capital. The overall goal of new business recruitment is to provide meaningful, well-paying jobs for Poultney residents particularly in the areas of recreation economy, manufacturing, and value-added products that support existing farm and agricultural operations.

### **EPA Recreation Economy for Rural Communities (EPA RERC)**

The closure of Green Mountain College in 2019 spurred multiple revitalizations actions and efforts. With assistance from state and regional agencies, the town applied for, and was selected, as one of ten communities within the entire U.S to receive planning assistance from the EPA Office of Community Revitalization. In February 2021, the town participated in a week-long series of virtual workshops aimed at growing the recreation economy in Poultney. The workshops yielded a number of action items that will guide investment and economic development efforts in Poultney in years to come.

### **Protecting Poultney's Uniqueness**

Across the United States, rural areas face a real and growing threat to small town character through the exponential increase and encroachment of formulaic retail establishments (chains). While a healthy balance of use types is highly desirable, it behooves us to ensure that economic growth in Poultney occurs at a pace and scale that is complementary to, rather than destructive

of, our historic built environment and the community it has supported and continues to foster. This plan supports local businesses that speak to the town's essential character.

### **Community Branding**

As of 2021 the Town of Poultney lacks a cohesive, branded identity. While various logos, slogans, banners, signage and websites have appeared over time, their creation has been need-based and not strategically considered. According to the Vermont Downtown Action Team (V-DAT) Design Tool Kit, produced by the State of Vermont, community branding "is an essential part of fostering the sense of place that keeps residents interested in downtown and that makes the community an attractive destination for visitors, potential residents and investors."

This plan supports efforts to embark on a strategic branding initiative, one which would seek to increase exposure for Poultney businesses, serve as a recruitment tool in attracting future businesses, boost retail traffic, and attract future residents. Deliverables sought by such an initiative can include, but shouldn't be limited to, a logo, color palette, typography and layout guidelines, updated signage guidelines consistent with sign regulations, town signage and banner guidelines, updated wayfinding signage, town hall signs, town slogan, town stationery, iconography guidelines, a website redesign for those web assets owned or authored by the Town, and a branding guidelines page on the town website whereby all such guidance will be readily available to interested citizens and community organizations.

### **Goals**

1. Partner with and provide support for Lake Saint Catherine State Park, Slate Valley Trails and others to promote growth of the outdoor recreation economy.
2. Support businesses and establishments that sell Vermont made goods and products to leverage the value of the Vermont brand.
3. Encourage visitor related establishments and events to occur in the downtown.
4. Create a business environment knowledgeable in, and supportive of, an outdoor recreation economy and that

provides goods and services reflective of the needs of recreationalists.

5. Expand marketing of the town's cultural and recreational assets through the VT Department of Tourism website and/or other online outputs.
6. Support the creation of high-quality social media for the town and its businesses.
7. Support the repurposing of the former Green Mountain College campus to provide jobs and increase the economic vitality of the region.
8. Focus on creating a supportive climate for entrepreneurs.
9. Create tax incentives and/or loan programs to attract new businesses.
10. Establish funding programs for microenterprises and property improvements.
11. Identify and address infrastructure issues that hinder economic development in the community.
12. Ensure zoning regulations allow a variety of lodging including hotels, motels, inns, bed and breakfasts, short-term and seasonal rentals.
13. Integrate the actions of the Poultney Downtown Revitalization Committee with the Poultney Area Chamber of Commerce and the Poultney Economic Development Office into a connected program of technical assistance for Poultney businesses.
14. Participate in programs and opportunities available from the Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR), the Vermont Small Business Development Center (VTSBDC), Small Business Administration (SBA) and other similar organizations to improve the business environment in Poultney.
15. The town should investigate appropriate formulaic business model limitations through land use regulation to ensure that the town's character is not lost to suburban sameness.
16. Develop a new community brand, associated materials, and brand guidelines for the town of Poultney that both exemplifies its preserved historic charm, natural beauty and is conducive to digital advertising and online presence.

### **Dark Sky**

The Town hereby adopts a Dark Sky policy to support the rural nighttime environment. Dark skies create a restful

nighttime environment conducive to human health and the natural nocturnal ecology. Dark skies at night play a contributing role in rural culture, including star gazing, the sense of open space, and the opportunity to observe nocturnal wildlife.

All outdoor lighting in the town shall be designed and installed to minimize glare, light trespass, and sky glow. Lights shall be aimed downwards to illuminate paths, doorways, driveways or roadways rather than lighting up the sky, and shall be appropriately shielded, screened, and limited in duration by use of timers or motions sensors to contain the light to the area where it is needed, and when it is needed.

The town shall amend its unified bylaws to incorporate or strengthen specific lighting standards consistent with this policy, and shall specifically consider whether and where adoption of the Illuminating Engineering Society/International Dark Sky Association may be appropriate within the Town.

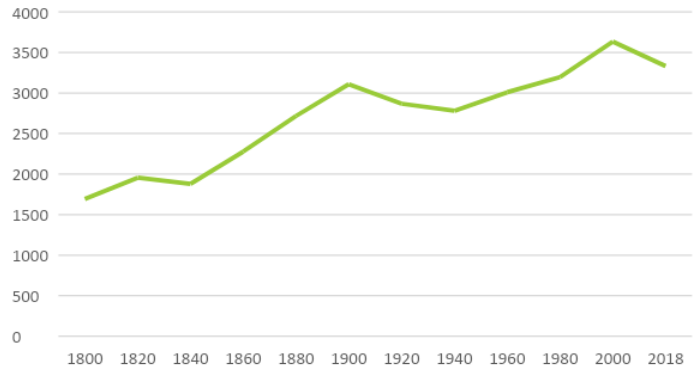
# The Community

## Demographic Profile

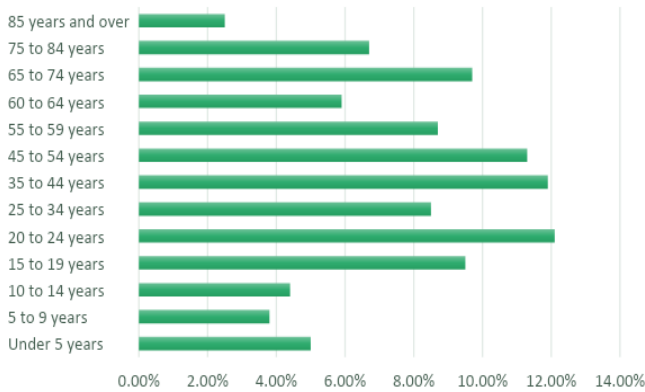
During the past century Poultney’s population has fluctuated significantly, from a high of 3,699 in 1910, to a low of 2,781 in 1940. The 2020 U.S. Census reported a population of 3,020, a significant decrease from the 2000 census (3,633). Poultney’s population changes have generally coincided with population changes in the county and state. Green Mountain College students were counted as Poultney residents in the 2010 U.S. Census, which contributed to the decline in 2020.

While population projections estimate that Poultney’s population will continue to decrease slightly over the next decade, trends show that a shift to a larger elderly population will also occur.

Population



Age Distribution



## Town Governance

Government is divided into village and town components. Poultney Village, which includes the whole of Poultney’s designated downtown, is governed by an elected five-member Board of Trustees. The Town of Poultney is governed by an elected five-member Selectboard. Day-to-day administration is provided by a Town Manager, and in the village, by a Village Manager, though historically these two positions have been held by the same individual. Village facilities include a sewage treatment facility, a water system, the village offices and five miles of streets. Village offices are located next to the old firehouse.

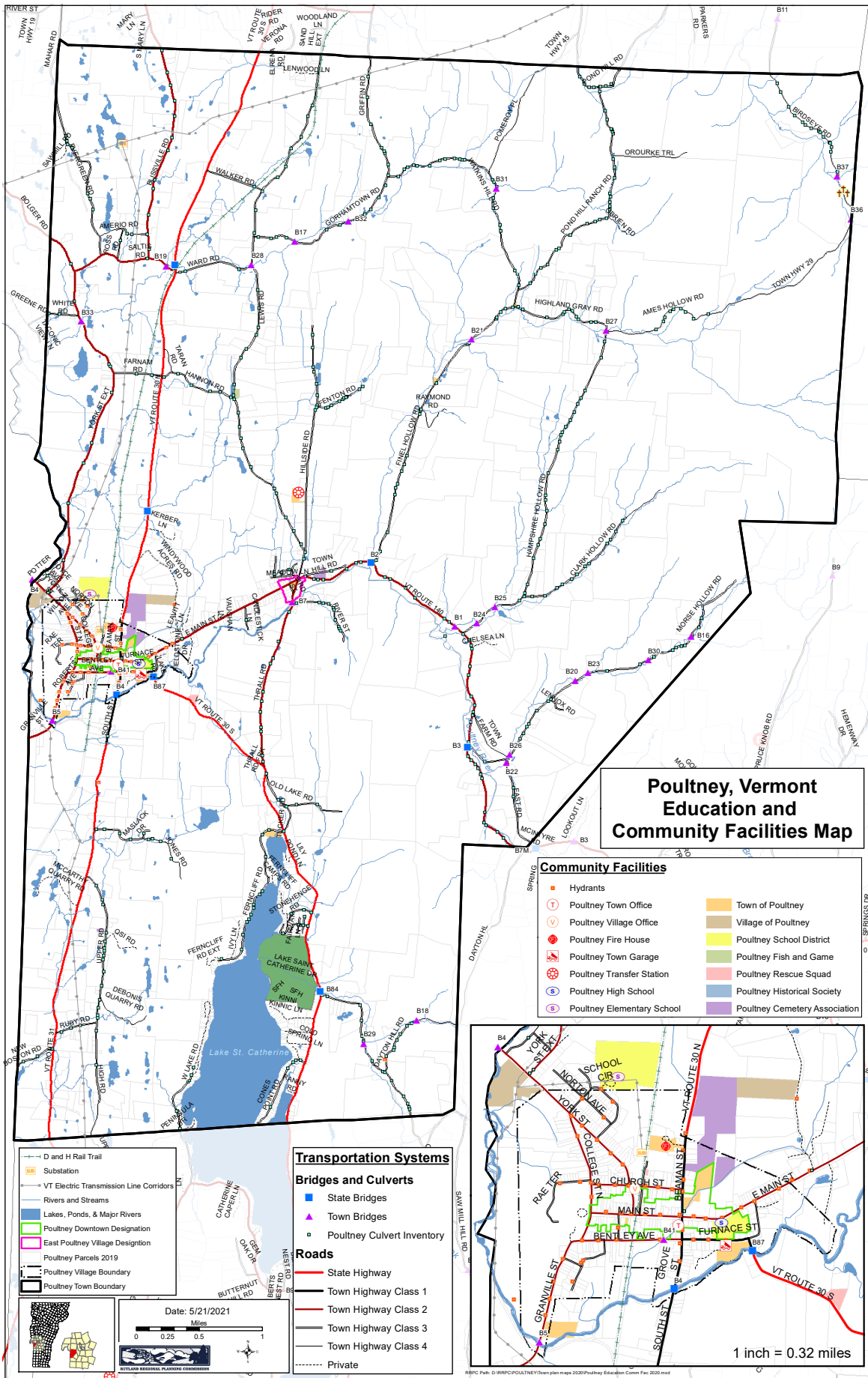
## Facilities & Utilities

### Public Facilities

Town facilities include a library, a visitor center that houses important service organizations, a senior center, a highway department garage, and the solid waste transfer station and recycling center. Town offices are located at the corner of Main Street and Route 30.

ADA Accessible public restrooms are available at the library, the visitor’s center and the field at Veteran’s Park, however these are only open during hours of operation. As the town and various stakeholders work to revitalize Poultney’s downtown, due consideration should be given to such amenities, and any relevant public investment should be centrally located, regularly maintained, and accessible to all. As we discuss in The Community chapter’s section on Transportation, these tourist amenities could be thoughtfully combined with a well-signed indoor bus stop and waiting area, and/or electric vehicle charging stations.

A map of education and community facilities can be found on the following page.

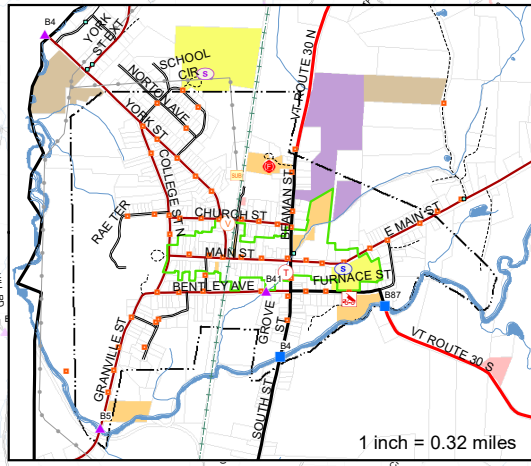


## Poultney, Vermont Education and Community Facilities Map

- Community Facilities**
- |                            |                               |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Hydrants                   | Town of Poultney              |
| Poultney Town Office       | Village of Poultney           |
| Poultney Village Office    | Poultney School District      |
| Poultney Fire House        | Poultney Fish and Game        |
| Poultney Town Garage       | Poultney Rescue Squad         |
| Poultney Transfer Station  | Poultney Historical Society   |
| Poultney High School       | Poultney Cemetery Association |
| Poultney Elementary School |                               |

- Transportation Systems**
- Bridges and Culverts**
- State Bridges
  - Town Bridges
  - Poultney Culvert Inventory
- Roads**
- State Highway
  - Town Highway Class 1
  - Town Highway Class 2
  - Town Highway Class 3
  - Town Highway Class 4
  - Private

- D and H Rail Trail
  - Substation
  - VT Electric Transmission Line Corridors
  - Rivers and Streams
  - Lakes, Ponds, & Major Rivers
  - Poultney Downtown Designation
  - East Poultney Village Designation
  - Poultney Parcels 2019
  - Poultney Village Boundary
  - Poultney Town Boundary
- Date: 5/21/2021
- 0 0.25 0.5 Miles



1 inch = 0.32 miles

Maple Leaf Data Services, Inc. 2021. All rights reserved. 5/21/2021. Poultney Education and Community Facilities Map.

## Childcare

Ensuring accessible, affordable, quality childcare is integral to sound economic development planning. In Poultney, there is currently one registered family childcare home. This provider can accommodate 16 children according to Vermont Childcare Information Services, a part of the Child Development Division of the state. There are currently two licensed childcare and early education opportunities in the Poultney area, including the Poultney Elementary School PreK Program and the Leap Frog Nursery School.

Children	2000	2010	2018	% Change '00-'18
Under 5yrs	159	170	186	17%
5 – 9	231	147	134	- 42%
10 – 14	229	149	136	-41%
Total	619	466	456	-26%

To understand better the ability of these three facilities to meet the childcare needs of Poultney families, an analysis of the number of children estimated to need care, and the type of care needed is necessary. In Poultney there are presently 456 children under the age of 14 (2018 American Community Survey). Children under the age of 5 represent approximately 40% of this population (186). This represents continued growth of this young population (under 5) – in 2010 it was noted that the number of children under the age of 5 had, at that time, increased for the first time in two decades, indicating the potential for an increased need for childcare in the town. The total number of children under 14 has decreased, though, indicating a staggering child cohort, from infants and toddlers to school age children.

Oftentimes single-parent households are more likely to need childcare, than married couple families. The total children (under age 18) in single parent households are decreasing, from 102 in 2000 to 90 in 2010.

While the overall number of children potentially needing childcare services is declining, there are not enough data to determine whether the childcare needs of Poultney residents are being met. The town has made an effort to maximize the availability of childcare by providing space for Leap Frog Nursery in the Stonebridge Inn Visitor Center and by encouraging the provision of childcare

through the allowance of childcare facilities in all zoning districts.

## Education

More Poultney residents are receiving formal education. The population with four or more years of higher education increased from 21.0% of the total population 25 years old and older in 1990 to 29% in 2000 to approximately 30% according to the 2018 American Community Survey.

Greater Rutland County Supervisory Union (GRCSU) is the school district that both Poultney Elementary and Poultney High Schools are a part. As of 2019, Poultney Elementary School served approximately 226 students in grades kindergarten through sixth (Poultney Elementary School September 2019 Board Report). The school actively updates their website, [poes.grcsu.org](http://poes.grcsu.org), which includes links to their active social media platforms. As of 2021, Poultney High School served approximately 211 students, some of which tuition students from surrounding towns. The high school also has an active web presence, both on their website, [pohs.grcsu.org](http://pohs.grcsu.org), and social media. LiHigh School, founded in 2006, is located in Poultney and offers programs to students ages 11 to 22 years old. The school envisions itself as “... a place where curious and passionate individuals feel free to explore their interests and passions with the support of compassionate individuals who can help them develop their skills and understanding in a real and meaningful way”.

## Telecommunications

The Town and Village of Poultney, along with its surrounding rural areas, are all faced with insufficient or unaffordable broadband access that negatively impacts the business environment as well as access to educational resources. In the past, free WiFi was available on Main Street through a partnership with the Poultney Downtown Revitalization Committee, the Poultney Public Library and business owners who hosted repeaters on their properties. This system became outdated and is currently inoperable.

In 2020, the town joined the Otter Creek Communications Union District, the mission for which is to “expand affordable broadband access to the residents of the member towns”. The Communications Union District functions as a municipality and the town

designates one representative from the community to serve as its delegate.

Also in 2020, the town installed several free outdoor WiFi hotspots with emergency funding from the Vermont Department of Public Service and assistance from Rutland Regional Planning Commission. The hotspots serve the areas near the Poultney Village Office, the Young at Heart Senior Center and the East Poultney Green. In addition, the Poultney Public Library, the Stonebridge Inn Visitor Center and the elementary and high schools have free WiFi access on site.

### Water Supply

The Village of Poultney owns and operates a municipal water system. Water is supplied from two gravel wells located west of the village. The water system underwent a major upgrade in 1983-1984. In 2010, well pumps were upgraded for energy efficiency, funded by a Climate Change Grant. In the same year, water lines were upgraded along Norton Avenue, York Street and York Street Extension, new water telemetry equipment and circuit board were installed, three new fire hydrants were installed, and the water meter replacement project was completed. Between 2010 and 2021, water lines were updated on Beaman Street, Furnace Street and Firehouse Lane. In addition, stormwater retention ponds were installed on York Street, stormwater infiltration mechanisms were installed on Grove Street, and rain gardens were installed on East Main Street and Furnace Street.

### Wastewater

Extensive upgrades to the Waste Water Treatment Facility were completed in 2002 to bring the Facility into compliance with the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, which regulates the discharging of effluent. These upgrades have reduced levels of phosphorus in released effluent and increased the efficiency of operation. The facility now has the capacity to accommodate more residential, commercial or industrial development in areas served by village sewer and within the Future Utility Zoning District.

### Solid Waste

The Town of Poultney owns and operates a transfer station located on Hillside Road in East Poultney. This transfer station, located at the former Poultney landfill

site, is a certified e-waste collector, collecting items containing toxic materials, including (but not limited to) lead, mercury and chromium. The Town of Poultney is a member of the Rutland County Solid Waste District.

### Emergency Management

Emergency management protects communities by coordinating and integrating all activities necessary to build, sustain, and improve the capability to (1) mitigate against, (2) prepare for, (3) respond to, and (4) recover from threatened or actual natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other man-made disasters. These phases often overlap as there is often no clearly defined boundary where one phase ends and another begins. To ensure success, Poultney coordinates activities in all four phases of emergency management.

### Mitigation

Mitigation consists of those activities designed to prevent or reduce losses from disaster. In 2019, Poultney began work to update their Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP). The multi-jurisdiction LHMP for the town and village received FEMA approval in 2020. The LHMP identifies their highest risk natural hazards and the locations and assets these hazards are most likely to impact. It also sets forth a prioritized list of actions to be completed to reduce the damage from future hazard events. The FEMA-approved LHMP will expire after five years.

Poultney 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 place reduces Poultney's match against state dollars for federally declared disasters and certain public works maintenance projects.

### Preparedness

Preparedness is focused on the development of plans and capabilities for effective disaster response. The town has an appointed Emergency Management Director (EMD), who is responsible for coordinating the various components of the town's emergency management program, including working with town officials and first responders to maintain an up-to-date Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP).

The LEMP is an all-hazards plan that establishes lines of responsibility during a disaster and includes staffing and location information for the local emergency operations center (EOC); municipal purchasing agents for



emergencies and emergency spending limits; a listing of municipal resources, mutual aid agreements, and local resource suppliers; selected methods for public information and warning; locations that are to be used as shelters; and a complete listing of contacts. The LEMP identifies the Poultney Firehouse as the primary local EOC. The Poultney High School is listed as the primary local shelter and the Poultney Elementary School as the alternate local shelter.

The LEMP should be examined and re-adopted annually by May 1<sup>st</sup> to ensure all content remains current and accurate. In addition, Poultney should consider exercising their LEMP on a periodic basis. Exercises enhance knowledge of plans; allow members of the local emergency team to improve their own performance; and identify opportunities to improve capabilities to respond to real events. There are different types of exercises that can be used to evaluate plans – tabletop exercises, functional exercises, and full-scale exercises.

## Response

Response is the immediate reaction to a disaster – it may occur as the disaster is anticipated, as well as soon after it begins. In Poultney response services include fire protection, rescue, and public safety/police.

Poultney has its own volunteer fire department, which provides fire services to both the town and village. The 25-member department is assisted by mutual aid through the Rutland County Fire Mutual Aid Association. The fire department is also assisted by a volunteer first response rescue squad. The Poultney Rescue Squad serves as Poultney’s ambulance service. Law enforcement is provided by an appointed constable with supplemental services contracted through the Rutland County Sheriff’s Department.

In the event of a natural disaster, like a flood event, Poultney public works personnel perform a critical role in emergency management efforts. They are a key partner in the community’s response and recovery from disasters. To augment Poultney’s public works capacity, they participate in the Rutland Region Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement.

## Recovery

Recovery includes those activities that continue beyond the emergency period to restore critical community

functions and manage repair efforts. Poultney should maintain records of costs incurred in the recovery from disasters, including road and culvert repairs. This information is reported to Vermont Emergency Management and aids the state in applying for federal declarations of disaster in larger events. It is also critical to ensuring Poultney then receives the fullest amount of government financial assistance legally allowed during a federally declared disaster.

Vermont’s Emergency Relief Assistance Fund (ERAF) provides state funding to match federal Public Assistance after federally-declared disasters. Eligible public costs are reimbursed by federal taxpayers at 75%. For disasters after October 23, 2014, the State of Vermont will contribute an additional 7.5% toward the costs. If Poultney takes specific steps to improve flood resilience the state will contribute 12.5% or 17.5% of the total cost based on these requirements. Currently, Poultney (both village and town) is at the 7.5% level. To achieve a higher state match, Poultney will have to adopt the mitigation measures described below.

12.5% ERAF funding for eligible communities that have adopted four mitigation measures:

1. National Flood Insurance Program (participate or have applied);
2. Town Road and Bridge Standards – (annually certify adopted standards that meet or exceed current VTrans Standards;
3. Local Emergency Management Plan (adopt annually after town meeting);
4. Local Hazard Mitigation Plan - Adopt a FEMA-approved local plan (valid for five years).

17.5% ERAF funding for eligible communities that also have adopted:

1. Maintenance of an active rate classification (class #1 through 9) under FEMA’s Community Rating System (CRS) that includes activities that prohibit new structures in mapped flood hazard zones, OR;
2. Adoption of a Fluvial Erosion Hazard (FEH) or other river corridor or floodplain protection bylaw that meets or exceeds the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources FEH model regulations and scoping guidelines.

## Healthcare and Social Services

A variety of health and human service facilities are available to residents. Some are located within the town, but many are provided by regional organizations. These include VNA and Hospice of the Southwest Region, Rutland Area Community Services (formerly Rutland Mental Health), Rutland Regional Medical Center, Castleton Family Health Clinic, Mettowee Family Health Clinic, the Southwestern Vermont Area Agency on Aging, and the Vermont Department of Health Services.

## Goals

### Facilities and Utilities

1. Provide adequate community facilities and services to the citizens of Poultney.
2. Partner with current owner(s) of the Green Mountain College campus and other interested adjacent towns to assess demand and maximize the base of potential users of broadband, fiber optic and increased cell phone coverage.
  - a) Work with potential providers to assess demand and identify possible ways of increasing coverage.
3. Partner with new owner of the Green Mountain College campus to advance the town's economic and educational goals.
4. Anticipate growth and development so that the capacities of local facilities and services keep pace with expanded needs.
  - a) By 2023, Planning Commission to research costs and feasibility of: expansion of Poultney Town Office; new vault for Town Clerk's Office; and upgrade and repair Poultney Village Office.
  - b) Incorporate findings of Program 1 into Capital Improvement Plan if found to be feasible.
5. Provide an environmentally sound and energy and cost-efficient system of public facilities and services to meet present and future demands for fire protection, public safety, emergency medical services, water supply, sewage treatment, solid waste management and disposal, and other essential services.
  - a) Form a merger committee to explore the costs and benefits of a Town/Village merger.

6. Provide for the continuing regular maintenance and upkeep of public buildings in a cost-effective manner.
  - a) Anticipate capital costs and continue to plan for them through a capital budgeting program.
  - b) Continue to revise and update a long-term Municipal Capital Program and Budget. List major capital investments and improvements needed in the next 5 to 10 years; estimate costs and seek possible funding sources; and schedule and budget expenditures based on needs and priorities.
  - c) Develop management plans for each municipally owned building and property and ensure that they are maintained, utilized and upgraded to meet the needs of citizens and employees. These plans should be incorporated into a comprehensive Capital Program and Budget for the town, village and school district.

### Library

1. Maintain and improve building structure.
2. Initiate energy conservation measures.
3. Continue to work to maximize shelving capacity and make the most efficient possible use of available space throughout the facility.
4. Integrate new technologies in ways that will improve service and enhance the library's ability to fulfill its mission.

### Education

1. Involve the community in Poultney's education system.
  - a) The Town/Village should continue to work with the School District to provide recreational, educational and cultural events for the community.
2. Promote continuing education opportunities for Poultney residents.
  - a) The community should support ReClaimed Makers Space and Stafford Technical Center programs that provide an alternative educational experience and/or retrain persons to meet employment needs in the community
3. To provide appropriate facilities for a comprehensive and equal educational experience for all ages (academic, athletic, vocational, social, cultural and ethical).

- Continue to work with the Poultney Public Library, Community Colleges of Vermont, the Vermont Small Business Development Center and similar organizations to offer training opportunities in the Poultney community.

#### Poultney High School

- Continue to address climate issues and work on solutions together.
- To promote health and wellness of all educational stakeholders as well as the community at large, through continued partnerships and increased communications and activities.

#### Child Care

- Support the availability of accessible, affordable, quality childcare for residents of and employees in Poultney.
  - Allow for the expansion of licensed childcare facilities and services.
  - Work with neighboring communities to support childcare services.
  - Encourage larger employers in town to provide childcare options for their employees.
  - Increase understanding of the correlation between strong economies and the availability of safe and affordable childcare.

#### Telecommunications

- Support the development of infrastructure that creates improved broadband access while avoiding adverse impacts to aesthetics.
- Improve access to high-speed broadband and fiber optic throughout the community.
- Re-establish free WiFi on Main Street in Poultney's downtown.

#### Emergency Management

- For mitigation, complete at least one of the mitigation actions identified in the LHMP; maintain an up-to-date bridge and culvert inventory; or maintain an up-to-date road erosion inventory.
- For preparedness, exercise the LEMP; ensure the position of Emergency Management Director is always filled.
- For response, provide adequate emergency services including fire, ambulance, police; continue membership in the Rutland County Fire Mutual Aid

Association and Rutland Region Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement.

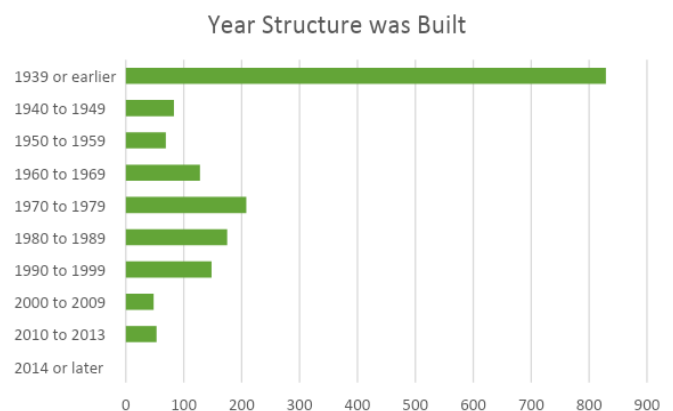
- For recovery, develop a system for documenting infrastructure damages from storm events.

## Housing

Poultney is a very historic community that has retained many of its original buildings. Housing density is high in the villages, and residences are within walking distance to services, schools, and shopping opportunities. Mixed-use zoning in the Village Commercial zoning district enhances business vitality, provides employment opportunities close to home, and creates a variety of housing choice.

Housing can also be found scattered throughout the rural areas of town, as well as surrounding Lake Saint Catherine.

The town's housing stock is among the oldest in the county. Approximately 47% of Poultney's residences were built before 1939, according to the US Census 2017 American Community Survey. Because of this, housing availability and affordability is based not only on the number of units of housing in the town but the condition of the housing stock as well.



The Poultney housing situation is characterized by a balance of renter and owner-occupied housing, with approximately 75% of homes being owner occupied and 25% of homes renter occupied (2017 American Community Survey). The historic villages of Poultney and East Poultney provide older single-family homes as well as apartment and duplex housing, however these older structures are more likely to be highly inefficient and costly in terms of energy, and some may require energy

efficiency upgrades, lead-based paint remediation, and other rehabilitation over the long-term.

Town wide, the housing stock is largely composed of single-family homes (for both owners and renters) with approximately 75% of housing being single family homes and 18% being multifamily units. Mobile homes or other structures make up 7% of the housing stock. Vacancy rates vary, though, with the homeowner vacancy rate at 3.8% and rental vacancy rate of 7.5% (2018 US Census American Community Survey).

Household size in Poultney has mirrored statewide and county trends as well with a decreasing average household size moving from 2.71 people per household in 1990 to 2.26 in 2018 (2018 US Census American Community Survey). This represents a 16% decline in comparison with a 9% decline in Rutland County and 10% statewide. Approximately 17.8% of Poultney households have children under the age of 18 as of the 2017 American Community Survey, in comparison with 41.4% in 2000 according to the 2010 Census. The 2017 American Community Survey also shows that 5.1% of households are female led households.

The town's three elderly housing developments can also be found in the Village of Poultney. Access to services and support is important with 15.8% of Poultney households having a householder over the age of 65 living alone, up from 12.9% in 2000 (US Census and American Community Survey).

While selling prices for homes have nearly doubled from 2000 to 2018 going from \$82,500 to \$150,000, homeownership is still reasonably affordable to most of Poultney's residents (HousingData.org). "Starter" homes, or those homes most likely to be bought by young families and individuals, are only slightly less affordable to Poultney homebuyers than their counterparts across the state (where the median sale price is \$215,000). Higher valued homes for households looking to "move up" and out of their "starter" home are more affordable for a Poultney household than their counterparts around the state or even the region. According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2017 American Community Survey, 25% of Poultney homeowners are in unaffordable situations (spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs) as opposed to 29% for the Rutland Region.

According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition's *Out of Reach 2019* report on the cost of housing, a renter household must earn \$18.06 per hour while working full time to afford a modest 2-bedroom apartment in Rutland County (costing approximately \$939 per month) and only pay 30% of their income for rent and utilities. This housing wage is significantly higher than the state's minimum wage, which, as of January 1, 2021, was \$11.75 per hour for non-tip workers. A minimum wage earner would have to work 67 hours a week to afford a 2-bedroom unit. To give perspective, the Census' 2017 American Community Survey estimates that 34.4% of Poultney households earn less than \$35,000 a year and \$37,560 would be needed to afford a 2-bedroom unit in Rutland County.

### Goals

1. Support the availability of access to decent, safe, sanitary and affordable housing of a quality that encourages good maintenance and ensures that the overall quality of the town's physical assets is maintained.
  - a. Preserve, protect, and prioritize affordable workforce housing that supports Poultney as an equitable and inclusive town, which includes access to safe and affordable neighborhoods for a range of household types and incomes.
  - b. Support the rehabilitation of existing units, upgrade housing stock, and improve neighborhoods by partnering with Neighborworks of Western Vermont, Rutland County Community Land Trust, Bennington

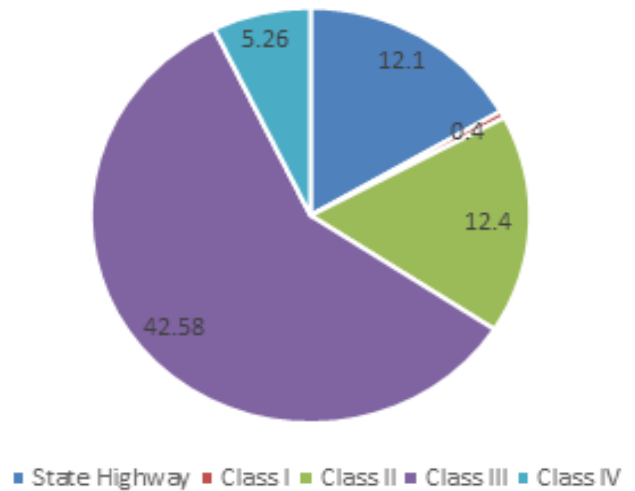
Rutland Opportunity Council, Efficiency Vermont and others.

- c. Promote mixed income and mixed-use developments where appropriate and especially in the village.
  - d. Work with area housing organizations to determine need for subsidized family rental housing and possible ways to provide such.
  - e. Make provisions for growth in housing for all income levels and household situations in the Town’s unified bylaws.
  - f. Evaluate the potential for reducing certain dimensional standards such as lot coverage requirements and setbacks in support of increased accessible housing, increased walkability, tax benefits, and tourism benefits.
2. Provide for the future housing needs of the Village and Town of Poultney.
- a. Work to meet the needs of elderly residents by exploring options such as graduated-care living units, elderly/handicapped accessible units, and access to local public transit.
  - b. Identify expansion areas for the East Poultney Village Center that will accommodate housing that follows existing village development patterns.
  - c. Work with regional and state organizations to research and identify appropriate locations and incentives for subsidized family rental housing.
3. Encourage life safety code improvements, energy conservation measures, and other home improvements through the nonprofit housing organizations providing services in the Region.
- a. Provide homeowners and landlords with information on USDA Rural Development grant and loan programs for housing rehabilitation and upkeep of older units.

## Transportation

Effective transportation planning can increase a town’s capacity to manage growth, foster community and economic development, improve health and safety, and assure accessibility, efficiency, and mobility. The town will benefit greatly from implementing various planning resources and tools to help manage and grow an efficient and equitable transportation system. From managing assets such as culverts and roads to improving the downtown streetscape, the town will find that effective planning leads to cost effective town improvement.

Town of Poultney Road Miles

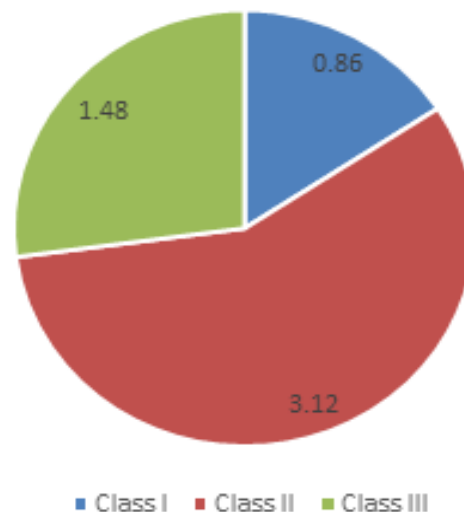


### Highways and Roads

Roads constitute the most significant component of Poultney’s transportation network. Much like other towns in Vermont, Poultney has a diverse mix of road types that model the diverse mix of land-use types. Poultney consists of a dense downtown center surrounded by less dense residential and rural farmlands and forests. The current highway network consists of two arterial highways, several collectors, and dozens of local roads. According to the 2017 VTrans Town Highway Data, the Town of Poultney has a total of 71.74 road miles and the Village of Poultney has a total of 5.46 road miles.

VTrans has jurisdiction over the State Highways (Route 30 & 31) in the Town of Poultney. VTrans is responsible

Village of Poultney Road Miles



for management and maintenance of State Highways as well as legal authority to define access to the highway. For Class I, II, III, and IV highways – the Village and Town of Poultney are responsible for separate maintenance and management of the highways. The town appoints a road commissioner and employs a full time Road Foreman and Road Crew. The village also employs a full time Road Foreman. Road maintenance, including road upgrades and snow removal, is a critical need for residents and visitors and is a significant item in the town and village budgets. Both the town and village have adopted the most recent VTrans Town Road and Bridge Standards. The town has recently investigated reclassifying some of the Class III and IV town highways to Class IV or legal trails to comply with state requirements. The town recently reclassified a section of Ames Hollow Rd. The town should coordinate with VTrans, the town’s Planning Commission, and the RRPC to identify, prioritize, and plan changes to town highway classification.

The town and village capital improvement budget is an effective planning tool to manage town highway maintenance and upgrades. Capital Improvement Planning can provide structure for routine maintenance, prioritize special projects, and allocate adequate funding.

### **Bridges and Culverts**

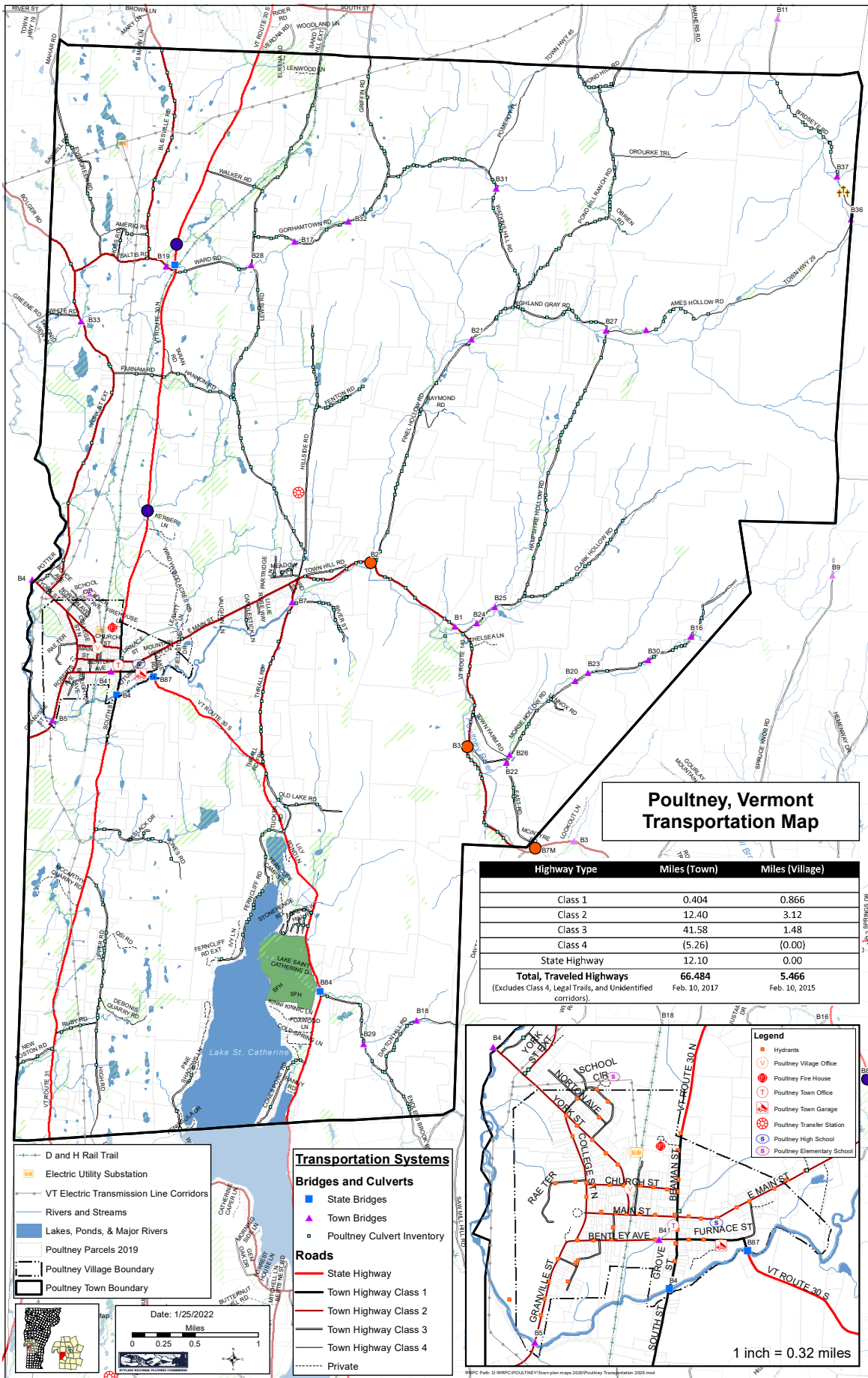
Poultney has a total of 474 culverts, all of which were inventoried in 2015. The full list of culverts - sorted by condition, material, size, and type - can be accessed on the VTrans online culvert inventory – [VTCulverts.org](http://VTCulverts.org). The online inventory is an important planning tool for the Town Capital Improvement Budget and can provide structure for routine maintenance, prioritize upgrade projects, and allocate adequate funding. Of the 474 total culverts, 55 culverts are listed as poor, critical, or urgent condition and should be scheduled for replacement and/or upgrade in accordance with the VTrans Town Road and Bridge Standards.

Poultney has a total of 13 roadway bridges, 5 of which are state owned on State Highways. The remaining nine bridges are town owned and eligible for state funding through the Town Highway Bridge Program. The full list of the bridges, with location maps and inspection reports can be accessed online through [VTransparency.org](http://VTransparency.org). The town also owns an additional 19 small bridges and large

culvert structures and can be viewed at [VTCulverts.org](http://VTCulverts.org). Routine bridge inspection and maintenance are critical to ensure effective connectivity, safe travel, and a resilient transportation network.

In 2019, the town replaced Bridge #2 located on TH-2 over Finel Hollow Brook. In addition, Bridge #7 located on TH-6 over the Poultney River, is slated to be replaced between April 2022-October 2022. In 2021, temporary repair work was completed on Bridge #3, located on VT 31 in the village, which had been ranked as the second highest need for replacement for the FY2022 Town Highway Bridge Pre-Candidate Rankings by the Rutland Region Transportation Advisory Committee.

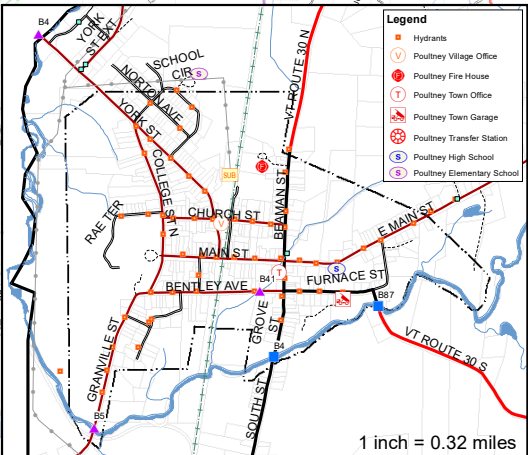
The following map provides information on identified bridges, culverts, road types, mileage, and the road network.



### Poultney, Vermont Transportation Map

Highway Type	Miles (Town)	Miles (Village)
Class 1	0.404	0.866
Class 2	12.40	3.12
Class 3	41.58	1.48
Class 4	(5.26)	(0.00)
State Highway	12.10	0.00
<b>Total, Traveled Highways</b>	<b>66.484</b>	<b>5.466</b>
	Feb. 10, 2017	Feb. 10, 2015

(Excludes Class 4, Legal Trails, and Unidentified corridors.)



**Transportation Systems**

- D and H Rail Trail
- Electric Utility Substation
- VT Electric Transmission Line Corridors
- Rivers and Streams
- Lakes, Ponds, & Major Rivers
- Poultney Parcels 2019
- Poultney Village Boundary
- Poultney Town Boundary

**Bridges and Culverts**

- State Bridges
- Town Bridges
- Poultney Culvert Inventory

**Roads**

- State Highway
- Town Highway Class 1
- Town Highway Class 2
- Town Highway Class 3
- Town Highway Class 4
- Private

Date: 1/25/2022  
 Scale: 0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Map File: C:\BPP\POULTNEY\poultney\_transportation\_2020.mxd

## **Traffic Volume and Safety**

Poultney's geographic location, bisected by the major arterial highway VT-30, creates a blend of local traffic on town highways and non-local through traffic on VT-30 and VT-31.

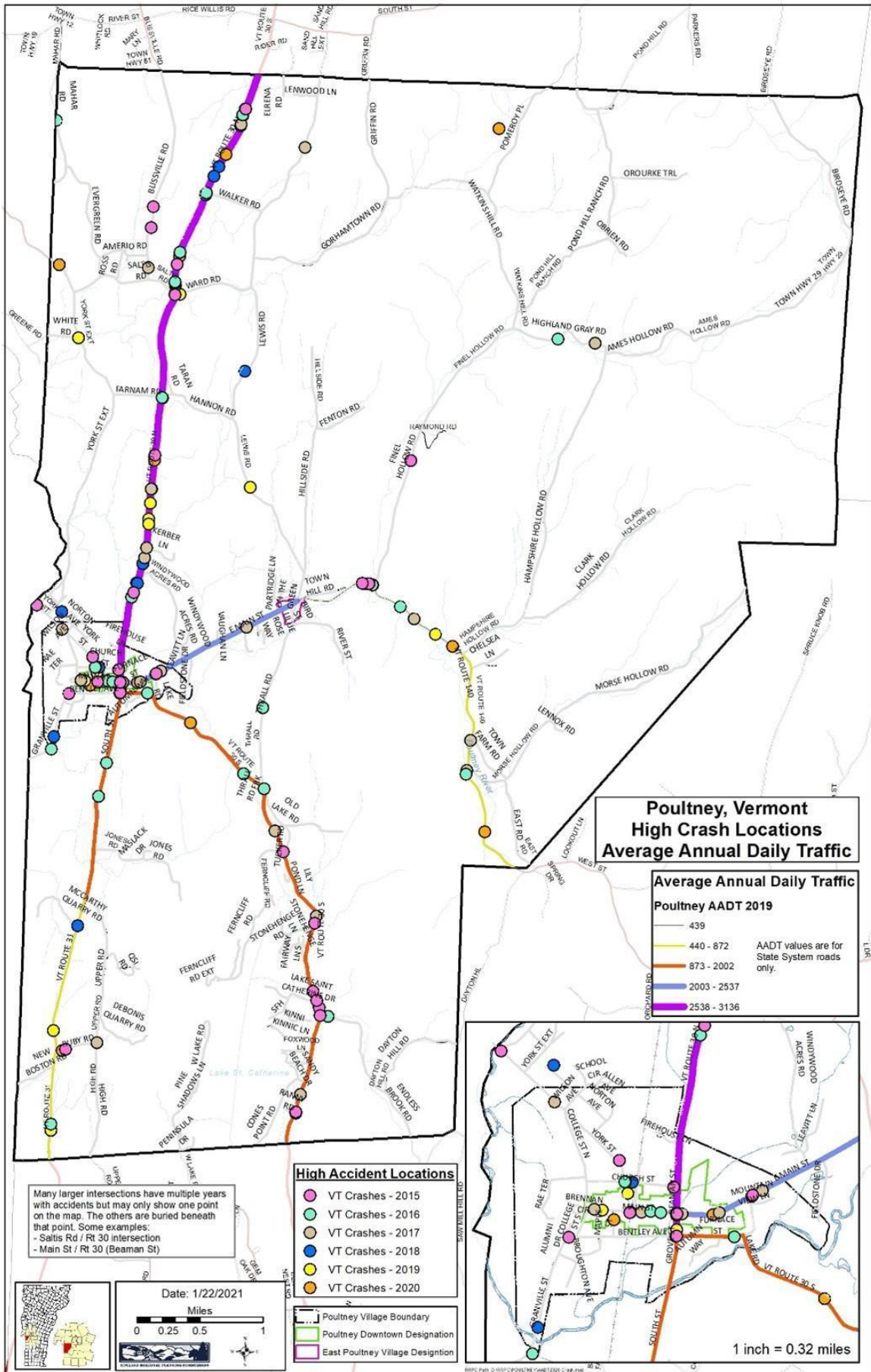
VTrans collects routine traffic count data for VT-30, VT-31, and VT-140 (E Main Street). The most recent data, collected in 2018, reported an average annual daily traffic (AADT) of up to 3,600 vehicles per day (VPD) on VT-30, 1,700 VPD on VT-31, and 2,600 on VT-140. The highest AADT volumes are reported within the village at the intersection of VT-30/VT-140, otherwise known as the "four-corners". In addition, VTrans has historic AADT data on local roads throughout the village and town. The highest traffic volume is experienced in the village with roads such as College Street (2,200 in 2019) and York Street (1,800 in 2020).

According to the VTrans Public Crash Data Report, from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 to January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, Poultney experienced 142 crashes with 30 resulting in injury. Of the 142 total crashes, nearly 40% (53) occurred on VT-30. This is down slightly from the previous six-year period (2009-2015) with a total of 165 crashes (42% occurred on VT-30). The two-lane, state highway is a 50 mile per hour (MPH) zone outside of the village, and experiences higher crash rates due to non-local traffic, higher speeds and volumes, and limited lines of sight. The biggest concentration of traffic crashes occurred at prominent intersections, such as the four-corners.

The efficiency and safety of town roads are directly affected by the frequency and location of points of access (or curb cuts.) Incorporating Vermont Access Management Best Practices can work to optimize safety and efficiency of roadway access by reducing the number of conflict points where accidents typically occur. Consistent and comprehensive access management policies are necessary to balance the needs of roadway users with the needs for land development. Strategies for improving access management include: adequate sight distance at a driveway or intersection, distance between curb cuts and driveways, shared driveways, driveway turnarounds, appropriate on-site and shared parking, landscaping and buffers to define and limit access points. This is important for the Village of Poultney when considering changes to the downtown or with new or redevelopment.

The following Road Map includes data for accident locations, traffic volume, and town boundaries.





## Municipal Roads General Permit

The Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) is intended to achieve significant reductions in stormwater related erosion from municipal roads, both paved and unpaved. To comply with the MRGP, towns implement a customized, multi-year plan to stabilize their road drainage system. Poultney, with the help of the RRPC, conducted a road erosion inventory in 2019 to identify problematic road segments, develop mitigation strategies, and target potential sources of funding. The RRPC created a Road Stormwater Management Plan to assist the town with planning road segment upgrades under the MRGP.

The full road erosion inventory can be accessed online through the MRGP Implemental Table Portal. The online portal is an important planning tool to ensure compliance with the MRGP. The online portal can help prioritize road segments and identify sources of funding. Of the 37 miles of hydrologically connected roads, the town has 7 very high, 14 high, and dozens of moderate and low priority road segments that need to be upgraded to MRGP standards. The village has no segments that need to be upgraded.

Figure 1: Hydrologically-Connected Road Types

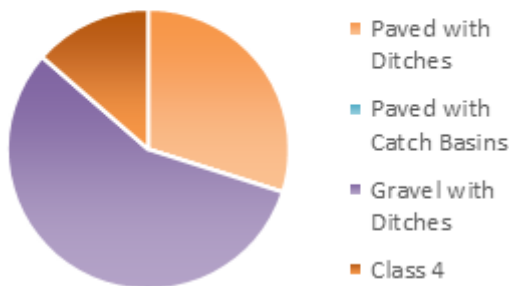
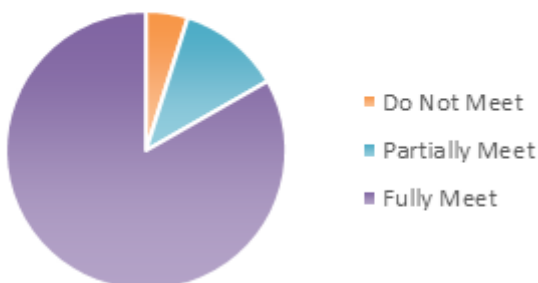


Figure 2: % Meeting MRGP Standards



## Alternative Transportation

### *Bicycle and Pedestrian Network*

Bicycle and pedestrian travel are critical elements in creating a balanced and resilient transportation network. Bicycling and walking are efficient means of transportation with community health and energy conservation benefits and reduces congestion and demand for parking.

Poultney has a robust network of pedestrian facilities throughout the downtown, mainly in the form of sidewalks. Poultney has systematically upgraded deteriorated sections with ADA-compliant sidewalks. There are many sections still requiring replacement. Pedestrian facilities also require safe road crossings with well-lit, marked, and signed crosswalks. Enhanced crosswalks, such as rapid flashing beacons (RFBs), are necessary for high traffic locations.

The current bicycle network in Poultney consists mainly of the D&H Rail Trail and the network provided and maintained by Slate Valley Trails. The Rail Trail is a 19.8-mile section of former railroad bed with two distinct sections, Castleton to Poultney and West Pawlet to Rupert. The Rail Trail passes through the center of downtown Poultney and offers safe off-road connections between neighboring Towns. There are no on-road bicycle facilities in Poultney. According to the VTrans On-Road Bicycle Plan, Poultney is listed as a “high priority” route along the VT-30 S corridor. Moreover, the VTrans Bicycle Level of Comfort Map ranks VT-30 and VT-31 as a moderate comfort level, with the Furnace St section as a low comfort level.

### *Electric Vehicles*

A solar powered electric vehicle (EV) charging exists on the property of the former Green Mountain College campus, however this location is off the beaten path and not always accessible. An EV charging station should be centrally located in Poultney’s downtown.

### *Public Transit*

For the convenience of bicyclists, local businesses and community organizations such as the Poultney Public Library and Poultney Downtown Revitalization Committee have installed permanent bike racks in various locations of Poultney’s downtown. These

amenities are encouraged wherever a need can be demonstrated.

Marble Valley Regional Transit District (MVRTD) or “The Bus” provides public transportation to Poultney. The “Fair Haven Route” travels from the transit center in downtown Rutland and services the towns of West Rutland, Castleton, Fair Haven, and Poultney. The Fair Haven Route normally operates five trips per day, seven days per week, with an average annual ridership of approximately 22,000 riders. Poultney currently has three fixed bus stop locations on Main Street in downtown, however signage is substandard or nonexistent, and none of the stops are sheltered. MVRTD will also make “Flag Down” stops along the route if the driver determines it is safe to stop. MVRTD also offers complementary para-transit service, service for Medicare patients and the elderly, and service for persons with disabilities.

#### *Park-and-Ride*

Currently, there are no town or state-owned park-and-rides in the Town of Poultney.

### **Complete Streets**

The Complete Streets initiative is a comprehensive planning, design and implementation system under the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) that broadens transportation possibilities beyond motor vehicles. Implementing complete streets practices can improve alternative modes of transportation and improve safety. In addition, complete streets create a “sense of place” that fosters community health and economic development.

#### *Streetscape Improvements*

Downtown Poultney suffers from auto-centric road design that allocates the majority of public Right-of-Way (ROW) to automobiles and does not accommodate other modes of transportation or other uses of public spaces. For example, Main Street is 55 feet wide and includes two 15-foot travel lanes and angled parking on one side with parallel parking on the other. There are adequate pedestrian facilities on both sides of Main Street, but the overly wide road width makes on-road bicycling and pedestrian crossing dangerous. The Village of Poultney could experiment with a temporary redesign of the road to test new configurations with community-led demonstration projects.

#### *Parking Plan*

The Town of Poultney has a blend of parking in the downtown, with most public spaces existing on-road with rear-angle or parallel parking on Main Street. Poultney has received complaints about limited parking in the Village, especially for large events like the town-wide yard sale. As local assets grow, some anticipate a need for additional parking to accommodate visitors. The Village would benefit from a formal parking plan that maps current parking inventory, identifies gaps and potential locations, and design projects to address parking.

#### *Building Connections*

The Village and Town of Poultney are expanding local arts, recreation, and education assets, however some of these assets lack direct connections to the downtown and residential neighborhoods. Slate Valley Trails has grown and connected the trail networks at Fairgrounds (near VT-140) and Endless Brook (near VT-30). As of 2021, there were trailheads with parking areas at Endless Brook Road, Town Farm Road (Fairgrounds), in East Poultney village (Howe Hills), at Lake Saint Catherine State Park, and at the Lake Saint Catherine Country Club. Poultney is working to grow the recreation economy and revitalize the downtown but will require more planning to create connections to local assets, accommodate more tourism traffic, and improve multimodal options and the streetscape in downtown.

### **Regional Overview**

Poultney participates in regional transportation planning through a member appointment to the Rutland Region Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), which consists of representatives from all Rutland Region towns. The TAC identifies and develops solutions to town and regional transportation issues and serves to promote and support an integrated, sustainable, and resilient transportation system. In addition, the TAC serves a valuable role in the project prioritization process with VTrans to add and rank projects on the State Capital List for state and federal funding.

### **Goals**

1. Take an active role in transportation planning in the Town of Poultney.
  - a) Make transportation planning a priority for the Town Manager, Road

- Commissioner, and Selectboard and seek planning assistance from the RRPC and VTrans.
  - b) Seek grant funding for municipal planning or scoping studies for transportation related projects.
  - c) Continue active participation in the Rutland Region TAC.
2. Develop a Capital Improvement Plan to identify, prioritize, and fund transportation related projects.
    - a) Utilize asset management tools such as VTCulverts.org to plan culvert upgrades and maintain an up-to-date culvert inventory. Develop plans and apply for grants to fund high priority culverts: Culvert ID #369 on West Lake Rd, ID #245 on Watkins Hill Rd, and ID #426 on VT-140.
    - b) Develop asset management inventories such as road surface condition, sidewalk network, and signage to plan upgrades and build capital budgets.
    - c) Prioritize paving projects and develop plans for repaving Saltis Rd and West Lake Rd.
    - d) Prioritize stormwater infrastructure upgrade projects. Develop plans and apply for grants to fund high priority projects such as Barrett Brooke Passageway.
  3. Continue to comply with the Municipal Roads General Permit.
    - a) Utilize the MRGP Implementation Table Portal and the Road Stormwater Management Plan to prioritize and plan upgrades to road segments that do not meet MRGP standards.
    - b) Apply for state and federal funding from the Better Roads Program, Grants in Aid, and other stormwater mitigation funding sources to upgrade roads and stormwater infrastructure. Prioritize very high/high priority segments on Pond Hill Rd (identified by the MRGP as segments #152002, 152003, 152007, and 1521300) Ames Hollow Rd (segment ID #1406), Fenton Rd (segment ID #97076), Hannon Rd, and West Lake Rd.
      - c) Track progress of road segment upgrades and maintain an up-to-date road erosion inventory.
  4. Continue to develop and support alternative modes of transportation.
    - a) Develop new pedestrian facilities that fill gaps in service and connect to local assets or neighborhoods. Prioritize and add pedestrian facilities connecting to Meadow Lane in East Poultney, and Bentley Avenue and Furnace Street in the village.
    - b) Improve pedestrian safety by installing enhanced crosswalks at high traffic locations. Prioritize projects on Main Street.
    - c) Determine feasibility of bicycle lanes, markings, or other facilities along high priority corridors.
    - d) Determine feasibility of installing an electric vehicle charging station in Poultney's downtown.
    - e) Improve access to public transit with more bus stops, better signage, bus shelters, and direct engagement with MVRTD for marketing and planning.
    - f) Determine feasibility for a new multi-modal park-and-ride facility.
  5. Develop connections to local assets and complete streets in the downtown.
    - a) Improve the streetscape of downtown by piloting redesigns and temporary demonstrations. Apply for local and state grants to complete this work.
    - b) Develop a parking plan for the downtown: inventory current parking and identify new parking.
    - c) Apply for scoping grants to plan connections to local assets like Slate Valley Trails.

## Energy

The Town of Poultney is committed to doing its part to meet the State of Vermont's goals of reducing energy consumption through means that comply with the town's desire to maintain its rural character. Vermont State Statute 24 V.S.A. § 4382 (9) requires that municipal

plans include an energy plan including, “an analysis of energy resources, needs, scarcities, costs and problems within the municipality, (and) a statement of policy on the conservation of energy ...” This section addresses these components and includes a brief discussion on renewable energy.

Electricity Use by Sector (KWH by Year)	2017	2018	2019
Commercial & Industrial	7,948,008	8,054,403	6,669,933
Residential	10,462,003	11,044,180	10,735,082
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,410,011</b>	<b>19,098,584</b>	<b>17,405,015</b>
Count of Residential Premises	1,641	1,641	1,629
Av. Residential Usage	6,375	6,730	6,590

### Energy Consumption

Poultney recognizes the link between promoting a reduction in resources and efficient patterns of land use development as can be seen by its patterns of development and concentrated village centers. The continuation of dense commercial and residential village development helps decrease automobile dependence and gives residents who do not wish to commute the opportunity to live in town.

That said, automobile dependency is relatively high in Poultney, mainly because of its distance from Rutland City, the region’s employment and retail hub. According to the 2019 Census American Community Survey, 74% of Poultney residents drive to work alone; 9% carpool; workers per car/van/truck is 1.06. On a positive note, relative to other towns in the region, a higher percentage of Poultney residents (8%) walk to work; 0.3% bicycle to work, and another 6% work from home. Residents in Poultney and East Poultney villages have the opportunity to walk to local services, such as the post office, commercial shopping, Poultney Town Office, or churches and schools.

Currently, homes, commercial structures, and institutional buildings presently draw on a variety of energy sources in Poultney – predominantly fossil fuel based. Fuel oil or kerosene is the most common source of heating fuel in town (62.7%) with bottled, tank, or LP gas (13.7%), electricity (1.4%) used and 21.8% ‘All other fuels’, according to the 2019 US Census American Community Survey. Poultney is located in the service territory of Green Mountain Power, which provides electrical service to the town.

### Energy Production and Efficiency

The State of Vermont has adopted a set of ambitious energy goals through its Comprehensive Energy Plan (CEP) which was updated in 2016. To help communities reach the sustainable energy future envisioned by the CEP, a central goal is to attain 90% renewable energy by 2050. However, development of new renewable energy sources will not be enough to achieve the state’s goals. Since renewable sources yield less energy per unit than fossil fuel-based counterparts, a dramatic reduction in overall energy consumption also is critical to meeting this target. The Town of Poultney is committed to encouraging energy efficiency and the use of responsibly scaled and sited renewable energy resources in appropriate locations within the community to minimize the adverse aesthetic impacts the community.

### Production

In all public and private energy needs the use of local, small-scale and noncommercial renewable energy should be encouraged. This includes firewood, small-scale solar power, passive, active and photovoltaic, geothermal ground source energy, and small-scale wind power where feasible.

In recent years small-scale solar energy technology has been employed on some residential structures for passive solar heating and/or photovoltaic energy creation. It is recognized that solar panels, particularly in denser residential areas and in higher elevations visible for greater distances, may cause reflective glare issues and thus are not strongly supported by this plan. Small-scale solar energy projects should be encouraged and constructed in such a fashion as to minimize or eliminate adverse glare effects.

As of the end of 2019, Poultney generated 1.5 MW of solar power, much of it on rooftops. Two small wind generators totaled 13.7 KW for a grand total of 1.51 MW

of renewable energy generation (Vermont Energy Dashboard, accessed November 20, 2020).

Large scale or commercial wind farms are not supported by this town plan nor by the Rutland Regional Plan.

By the end of 2019, battery storage projects totaled 7 with 35 kW battery output and 94.5 kWh usable storage capacity.

## Efficiency

Weatherization and rehab programs for existing houses could be better utilized to help residents conserve their heating energy. In 2011, the town participated in the NeighborWorks HEAT Squad program, disseminating information about the project throughout the town. This project is aimed at helping residents improve the efficiency of their homes by offering energy check-ups (audits) at a reasonable price and by offering incentives and financing towards energy efficiency improvements.

Efficiency Vermont, the nation's only efficiency utility, has an informative webpage at [www.Efficiencyvermont.com](http://www.Efficiencyvermont.com) with information about their current programs, including energy audits, incentives for Home Performance with Energy Star, information on appliances and compact fluorescent and LED bulbs, building an Energy Star home, home heating help, rebate information, and Efficiency Vermont's reference library.

Vermont's Residential and Commercial Building Energy Standards set construction and energy standards. The Vermont Legislature passed the Residential Building Energy Standards into law in 1997. The code was updated in 2020. There are specific regulations for residential and commercial/industrial projects.

For residential projects:

- Any project commencing construction after September 1, 2020 must comply with 2020 RBES.

For Commercial/Industrial projects:

- Projects that have applied for or obtained a permit before 9/1/2020 can still follow 2015 CBES.
- Projects that have not obtained or applied for a permit prior to 9/1/2020 must comply with 2020 CBES.

- A permit in this context is limited to a building permit or an Act 250 permit.

For more information on the new energy code, go to: <https://publicservice.vermont.gov/content/building-energy-standards-update>.

## Goals

1. Create opportunities for walking, cycling and other energy efficient, non-motorized alternatives to the automobile.
2. Continue to promote clustered and multi-family housing developments to concentrate energy consumption and decrease the need for extensive electric transmission infrastructure.
3. Promote Efficiency Vermont in their energy conservation programs by providing information on Efficiency Vermont programs with building permits and in water bills. Set an example by participating in conservation programs at town buildings as applicable.
4. Provide printed information to builders on energy saving construction at the time zoning/building permits are issued.
5. Require contractors to build homes that conform to the Vermont building code. Ensure that proof of compliance with state Energy Code Standards by requiring documentation attached to permits filed at the local level. Offer training on 2020 standards.
6. Encourage the sustainable management of forests for firewood and other uses.
7. Support goals outlined in the Economy chapter with the intent of supporting job development in Poultney and thus working to diminish the need for extensive travel out of town for work.

## Flood Resilience

Following the devastation from Tropical Storm Irene in 2011, the Vermont Legislature added a requirement that all communities address flood resilience as part of their municipal plans. Flood resilience is planning for a municipality's capacity to absorb a flood related shock and recover quickly as well as be prepared for future events. As such, this planning is now required by 24 V.S.A. §4382(12)(B) as well as by the town's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), which identifies flooding as the greatest hazard the town faces.

There are two types of flooding that impact a community like Poultney: inundation and flash flooding. Inundation occurs when water rises onto low lying land. This type of flooding happens slowly, but flood waters can cover a large area. It may take days or weeks for inundation flood waters to subside which may lead to severe property damage. Flash flooding is a sudden, violent flood which often entails fluvial erosion (stream bank erosion). It does not typically cover a large area, but the water moves at a very high speed and flood waters rise quickly, making flash floods particularly dangerous. Fluvial erosion can severely damage roads and property – both public and private.

Severe storms with particularly heavy precipitation can create flash flood conditions. However, over an extended period of time, severe storms may cause inundation flooding due to the cumulative effects of continuous rain, saturated soils, and high water table and aquifer levels. Both floodplains and river corridors fill an important need in making space for flood waters and dispersing erosive energy.

Climate change will likely exacerbate flooding in Vermont. According to the Vermont Climate Assessment (2014), precipitation has and will continue to increase, particularly in the winter months. Since 1960, average annual precipitation has increased 5.9 inches; almost half (48%) of this change in rainfall has occurred since 1990. Because precipitation will likely occur in shorter, more intense bursts, it will likely produce precipitation that runs off the land rather than filters into it. Records across Vermont show that “flashy flows” are increasingly common in Vermont rivers. Also, the expected increase in precipitation during the winter may lead to added snowmelt and flooding in the spring.

### **History of Flooding and Vulnerable Assets**

Poultney’s LHMP outlines the town’s historical flood events and assets vulnerable to flooding. There is no predictable rate at which these events occur, but more often than not, when there is a flooding event there is costly damage resulting. Recent and notable events include: January 1996 countywide flooding resulted in a federally declared disaster (DR1101) with \$23,653 in local damages; July 2000 heavy rains resulted in DR1336 with \$13,200 in damages; December 2000 rains resulted in DR1358 with \$53,640 in damages; August 2011,

Tropical Storm Irene (DR4022) with \$386,203 in damages, and April 2019 with DR4445 resulting in \$200,000 in damages.

According to the LHMP, areas that are prone to inundation flooding include: Granville Street; South Street; D&H Rail Trail Bridge (Poultney River); and River Street. Flash flooding events periodically wash out sections of several roads: Pond Hill Ranch Road; Ames Hollow Road; Hampshire Hollow Road; Watkins Hill Road; Finel Hollow Road; Morse Hollow Road; Endless Brook Road; West Lake Road; Dayton Hill Road; Ridgeview Lane; and Old Lake Road. Assets that are vulnerable to flooding include homes, roads, culverts, and bridges.

Maps of Poultney’s vulnerabilities and hazards can be found in the town’s LHMP as well as in both the Future Land Use and Natural Resources (I) maps located in the appendix of this document.

### **Flood Hazard Mapping and Assessment**

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% annual chance of flooding (100-year flood). Town participation in NFIP is voluntary. In Vermont, two thirds of flood damages, especially flash flooding, 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. Development in the river corridor and stream channel engineering over time have increased channel instability. While these management practices may create the illusion of stability, these engineered channels when tested by a high flow, such as a flood, cannot be maintained. Special mapping and geomorphic assessments can identify fluvial erosion hazard areas along rivers, more comprehensively defining high hazard areas.

## **Flood Mitigation Strategies**

The town's LHMP identifies the town's capabilities to plan for and mitigate hazards including actions and projects and should be referenced for the most recent resources and strategies identified. Primary strategies include: NFIP participation, Flood Hazard Area Regulations, and community outreach and planning.

### **NFIP Participation**

The Town of Poultney received a FEMA flood hazard boundary map in December of 1974 and joined the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) on July 2, 1980. The Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) and Flood Insurance Study were first published in February 11, 1977. The Rutland County DFIRM became effective in August 2008. The hydrology and hydraulics were updated in the DFIRM.

According to FEMA, there is one flood insurance policy issued in the Village. This policy covers \$50,000 in value. Twenty-three (23) flood insurance policies are issued in the town. In total, these policies cover \$4,042,500 in value. There are no repetitive loss properties. Flood insurance is available for any structure in town regardless of previous losses or location. The cost of flood insurance premiums rises in areas identified at a high-risk level.

### **Flood Hazard Area Regulations**

In 2014, zoning, subdivision, and updated flood hazard area regulations were combined into Unified Bylaws. These Flood Hazard Area Regulations establish a Flood Hazard Area District, which is designated on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) for Poultney and serve the purpose of maintaining the flood water carrying capacity of all flood-prone areas in the community and to ensure that any structures or uses permitted within these areas are properly protected from flood hazards.

### **Community Outreach & Planning**

Poultney's LHMP identifies several education and outreach opportunities that could be used to implement mitigation activities and communicate hazard-related information.

These include but are not limited to: the Poultney Recreation Commission, Poultney Downtown

Revitalization Committee, Poultney Area Chamber of Commerce, Lake Saint Catherine Association, Slate Group, Poultney Historical Society, Poultney Fish and Game Club, and Poultney Rotary Club. It is also pointed out that better coordination is needed with these existing programs and organizations to help implement future mitigation actions.

### **Goals**

1. Encourage the adoption and implementation of existing mitigation resources, such as River Corridor Plans and Fluvial Erosion Hazard Maps.
2. Recognize the connections between land use, stormwater, road design, maintenance, and the effects from disasters.
3. Work with the Poultney Mettowee Conservation District on future water quality planning projects to identify opportunities for natural system protection – specifically stream bank stabilization and riparian vegetated buffers.



# The Plan

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The Vermont Planning and Development Act enables the legislative body of all municipalities to create a Planning Commission which may consist of not less than three nor more than nine members. Members are appointed by the Poultney Selectboard and must serve without compensation. At least a majority of the Commission must be permanent residents of the community. In accordance with the Act, the Poultney Planning Commission is given the authority to prepare a Municipal Development Plan and to implement this document by the development and adoption of bylaws. The Poultney Planning Commission is comprised of five members.

## Authority to Plan

The Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act (Chapter 117 of Title 24, Vermont Statutes Annotated) guides the preparation of town plans and includes required and suggested elements and adoption procedures. The Vermont Statutes (24 VSA §4382a) require that all plans contain twelve required elements: a statement of objectives, policies, and programs; a land use plan; a transportation plan; a utility and facilities plan; a statement of policies on the preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas; an educational facilities plan; an implementation program; a statement indicating how the Plan relates to development trends in adjacent communities; an energy plan; a housing plan; an economic development plan; and a flood resilience plan. While all twelve elements must be included, communities are not prohibited from combining closely related elements.

## Planning Process

Responsibility for the preparation of the town plan rests with the Poultney Planning Commission. In the course of developing the Plan, the Planning Commission and town contracted for technical assistance with the Rutland Regional Planning Commission – work which was funded by the award of a 2020 Municipal Planning Grant from the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development. A town plan or municipal development plan must be approved by the Poultney Planning Commission and duly adopted by the town. It is the official policy of the community, with regard to future growth and development, to provide standards of development to ensure that the town's distinct character

and its scenic viewsheds are protected and preserved. It states the goals, objectives, policies, and priorities for action that guide the community towards its vision for the future.

During this planning process the Poultney community was engaged through social media (primarily Facebook and Front Porch Forum) as well as through the PoultneyPlanning.com website. This website allowed the Poultney Planning Commission to share the updated town plan, explain the planning process, the importance of it, and solicit feedback through open comment and structured surveys. Through this site people were also able to register and request updates as they became available. Since the website was published on March 15<sup>th</sup> through May 14<sup>th</sup> alone there have been 542 visits to the site. In the first month most people viewed the site on their cell phone (48%) and 72% being directed to the site from Facebook. This shifted in the second month with 78% accessing the site using a desktop and 80% using the url to access the site rather than through Facebook. This insight lends the Planning Commission to understanding the importance of social media and the ability to create information that is easily viewed on the go.

## Implementation

There are many ways to implement the goals and action items of this Plan, which fall into two general categories: regulatory and non-regulatory options. Regulatory options consist of zoning regulations and other town ordinances. Non-regulatory implementation options include, but are not limited to capital planning, special studies, advisory commissions. Adoption of the Plan is the only means available for the town to legally establish growth and development policies. 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 Plan, by identifying unique and fragile areas, or those regions of high scenic, natural, or historic value, seeks to guide development by respecting both the potentials and constraints offered by nature, balancing these as well as the current and long-term needs. It promotes equity and efficiency and the recognition of the public interest in the resources and investments that are found in the town. As required by law, it should also serve as a foundation for local land use controls such as zoning, subdivision, and health regulations. Furthermore, the Plan should be given full effect in all appropriate regulatory

proceedings, such as Act 250 and the Section 248 (Certificate of Public Good) process. Finally, the Plan and its technical reports should be used as a source of local information. All contain information that can be valuable to citizens, businesses, and members of local boards and commissions.

Because town planning has been characterized as a flexible, continuing process, the Poultney Town Plan may be reviewed from time to time and may be amended in the light of new developments and changed conditions affecting the municipality. The town plan shall expire and have no further force and effect on the date eight years from the date of adoption. 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.