

1.0 INTRODUCTION

With the backdrop of the Taconic and Green Mountains and an abundance of rolling farmland, Pownal offers one of the most pleasing visual landscapes in the region. A community with a rich heritage and varied history, the Town today faces the challenges of changing times, changing lifestyles, and changing economic conditions. Since 1960 Pownal has grown phenomenally and new problems have arisen which require attention from an informed and concerned populace. This Town Plan has been prepared to serve as a guide for decision-makers to influence the course of events in the coming years.

1.1 The Purpose

As stated above, Pownal is experiencing a number of significant changes, both in its population base and in its economic base. Public facilities and housing have deteriorated in the older villages, the existing tax base is static, and many jobs have left the community. The Town's single greatest asset, its natural environment, has been subjected to abuse, and its citizens have been forced to accept less-than-optimal environmental conditions. These are a number of the longstanding problems which the town must resolve in the coming decade.

The preparation of the Plan should serve as a forum for the discussion of these problems, and possible paths toward their resolution. The Plan presents a frank outline of areas of concern and recommends alternative courses of action. But the Plan can only serve as a guide for later broad-based community action. Cooperation to overcome the difficult decisions which must be faced is essential.

1.2 Statutory Authority

The Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act (Chapter 117, Title 24 VAS) enable municipalities to conduct comprehensive planning studies upon which to base such implementing devices as zoning bylaws and subdivision regulations. The Act further states that municipalities either update or re-adopt their Town Plans every five years. Pownal first adopted its Town Plan in 1972.

The State enabling act requires that a Town Plan be in effect before any amendments to the Zoning Bylaws or other land-use regulations are adopted. Hence, the current planning effort is a prerequisite to any further land-use initiatives.

The 1972 Plan proposed five land-use districts. Pownal still has five districts, but much has changed since their adoption. Currently, there are two Rural Residential zones – with one and two-acre minimums, a Village Mixed-Use designation covering Pownal's three traditional villages, a small Industrial zone, and a Forest District. The objectives in creating these zones are to encourage appropriate land-use activities, reflect Pownal's history and its evolution over time, and to protect and preserve the environment that community members so cherish.

One objective of the current planning effort is to reflect on the purchase of the former Green Mountain Race Track and the master plan submitted by its new owners. This long-dormant parcel was previously zoned to encourage industrial activity, but outreach efforts were unsuccessful. The current proposed master plan for the property calls for a relatively dense, mixed-use project including several levels of residential housing, a transitional care facility, commercial activities and preservation or creation of common green space for the enjoyment of the residents of the Town and visitors. Accommodating this proposal would require a change in the zoning of the area to a Village Mixed Use versus industrial zone. This has led to a review of the previous industrial zone and village areas that abut this property by the town's various boards.

1.3 Statement of Objectives

1. Provide for land development (residential, forest, commercial, and industrial) in the areas for which each type is best suited.
2. Encourage the development of environmentally sound development in order to broaden the Town's economic and tax base without debasing the environment.
3. Preserve open space in order to protect the rural quality of the Town by encouraging farming and clustering of future development.
4. Provide for future community needs (public health, education, housing, roads, infrastructure and public safety) at a generally acceptable level of service.
5. Achieve the best possible quality of environment for the Town's residents.
6. Keep the rugged and poorly accessible mountain and forest areas free from development, reserved for forestry and public recreational uses appropriate to their wilderness character.
7. Take all possible steps to further the preservation of (a) scenic and historic resources, (b) wildlife and wildlife habitat, and (c) unique and fragile areas, and to provide public enjoyment of these areas.
8. Create a community that is efficient and economical to operate in order to decrease the tax burden on property owners through wise apportionment of land-use functions.
9. Keep existing zoning regulations up to date and sensitive to the needs of the community. Prepare for additional capital expenditures through utilization of a capital budget and program.
10. Improve active and passive public recreation opportunities for Pownal's residents.

11. Enhance the three distinct village centers and their civic, residential and commercial activities by encouraging a centrally oriented organization of uses, densities, circulation, structures and other related elements within and near the core villages.
12. Protect the public safety by encouraging an increased presence of law enforcement.
13. Residential development should occur at a rate that does not burden municipal facilities and services, as they are being maintained and upgraded throughout the villages. Where centralized water and or/sewage systems are available or proposed in the Village areas, the rate of growth needs to be consistent with the capacity and life of such systems. Conventional on-site systems in outlying areas need to be maintained and upgraded as needed.
14. Encourage the conservation of energy and promote the development of renewable energy resources which will benefit the Town's citizens.
15. Ensure a supply of water, both underground and surface, that is sufficient in quality and quantity to meet the future needs of the Town to the greatest extent possible.
16. Encourage the safe, economical disposal of solid waste by maximizing the efficient use of land space and by promoting increased recycling whenever possible.
17. Aggressively pursue the elimination and prevention of unsightly eyesores and any community health- related problems.
18. Discourage illegal roadside dumping.
19. Provide for sufficient graveyard space and maintenance where needed.
20. Continue to pursue state and federal financial support and program assistance to bring additional resources to bear to improve the residents' quality of life. Examples of such programs include the state Community Visit Program, Village Center Designation and Growth Center Designation.

1.4 Smart Growth

Smart growth initiatives are the best examples of improving a community, whether that is resource protection, village improvements, new infrastructure, historic preservation, etc. They also try to avoid scattered development and encourage efficient expenditure of public funds. Pownal is cognizant of the need to ensure that public expenditures and new infrastructure are supportive of community goals and plans that will not lead to inappropriate development or scattered growth, while focusing on health

and public safety issues. In response to smart growth, Pownal has established several new initiatives that include:

- A Village District suitable for a range of activities - from residential to commercial – and at higher densities than other zoning districts. The establishment of this district also helps encourage efficient expenditure of public funds by promoting growth in areas where infrastructure already exists;
- Overlay Districts that help preserve natural areas and to alert developers of significant constraints to land-use activity;
- Increased minimum lot sizes in the Rural Residential and Forest Districts;
- Establishment of a transfer-of-development rights program;
- Establishment of subdivision regulations; and
- Encouragement of retail and commercial development in the Village centers by making those uses permitted uses.

2.0 POPULATION

A look at population trends can be extremely useful in helping a town prepare for the future. By investigating past trends and making a series of informed judgments regarding future conditions, reasonable population projections can be made. From these projections, local officials can estimate the level of municipal services which will need to be provided during the coming years. In addition, decisions can be made concerning where growth will occur, what areas will be preserved, and at what density development should be distributed over the landscape. Population Projections, as illustrated in Tables A-1 and A-2, provide the basis for these judgments.

2.1 Trends

During the 1960's, Pownal experienced the second highest growth rate in Vermont; population increased by almost 1,000 persons and the average annual growth equaled 6.2%. Since 1970, that trend declined somewhat, but the Town has continued to grow. 1980 Census figures indicate that Pownal's population was 3,269 and that its 1970-80 growth rate averaged 3.39% annually. This compares with a county rate of 1.4%. 1990 Census figures indicate that Pownal's population was 3,485 and that its 1980-90 growth rate averaged .66%, showing a definite slowing trend. In fact, from 1990 to 2000, Pownal has shown average annual growth of .21%, while the county experienced average annual growth of .32%. According to U.S. Census Bureau statistics, in 2000, Pownal's population totaled 3,560 persons, an increase of 2.1% since 1990.

After comparing Pownal's recent growth with that of the county and neighboring towns, it becomes obvious that Pownal is absorbing a share of the Bennington and Williamstown area growth. It is essential that local officials be prepared to face the issues which will result from this situation.

The table below illustrates the fluctuating population trends in Pownal over the past 100

years. The Town lost population during the early years of this century as people left rural areas for the city. Between 1920 and 1940, population remained stable, and then gradually inched upward until 1960. Then a wave of migration from the more populous states to the south, along with the creation of commercial and manufacturing jobs in Pownal, fueled the explosive growth between 1960 and 1970. The Town grew 2.6 times as fast as the region during the decade 1970-1980, and Pownal's population exceeded for the first time in at least a century, 10% of the region's population.

<u>POWNAL POPULATION TRENDS:</u> <u>CHANGE</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>POPULATION</u>	<u>%</u>
	1900	1,976	
	1910	1,599	-19.1%
	1920	1,396	-12.7%
	1930	1,425	+2.1%
	1940	1,402	-1.6%
	1950	1,453	+3.6%
	1960	1,509	+3.9%
	1970	2,441	+61.8%
	1980	3,269	+33.9%
	1990	3,485	+6.6%
	2000	3,560	+2.2%

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau & Vermont Center for Rural Studies

2.2 Projections

Predicting future population levels is a process that requires certain assumptions concerning conditions over the coming years. The simplest method of projecting is to assume that the most recent growth rates will re-occur in the future. Economic conditions in Pownal, as well as in the surrounding area will likely impact rates of growth in the Town. Should job opportunities expand in Bennington and Williamstown, Pownal will continue to absorb a measure of that growth. Should Pownal's tax rate continue to rise in comparison with that of its neighbors, a major factor in the Town's population increase will lose its importance. This may account for the current decline in the overall growth rate. However, if a major development is undertaken that serves to increase population through increased housing, expanded commercial activity and a broader tax base, Pownal will continue to be viewed as relatively attractive compared to its neighboring communities.

Table A-2 includes projections of future population levels using the straight-line projection method. State of Vermont figures in Table A-2 are taken from the 2000 U.S. Census projection data.

Table A-1

TOTAL POPULATION BY TOWN, REGION, COUNTY, AND STATE - 1970 to 2000

<u>Town</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>1970-1980</u> <u>% Change</u>	<u>1980-1990</u> <u>% Change</u>	<u>1990-2000</u> <u>% Change</u>
Arlington	1,934	2,184	2,299	2,397	12.9	5.3	4.3
Bennington	14,586	15,815	16,451	15,737	8.4	4.0	-4.3
Dorset	1,293	1,648	1,918	2,036	27.5	16.4	6.1
Glastenbury	0	3	7	16	0.0	133.3	128.6
Landgrove	104	121	134	144	16.4	10.7	7.5
Manchester	2,919	3,261	3,622	4,180	11.7	11.1	15.4
Peru	243	312	324	416	28.4	3.8	28.4
Pownal	2,441	3,269	3,485	3,560	33.9	6.6	2.1
Rupert	582	605	654	704	4.0	8.1	7.6
Sandgate	127	234	278	353	84.3	18.8	27.0
Shaftsbury	2,411	3,001	3,368	3,767	24.5	12.2	11.8
Stamford	752	773	773	813	2.8	0.0	5.2
Sunderland	601	768	872	850	27.8	13.5	-2.5
Woodford	286	314	331	414	9.8	5.4	25.1
Bennington Region	28,279	32,308	34,516	35,387	14.3	6.8	2.5
Readsboro	638	638	762	809	0.0	19.4	6.1
Searsburg	84	72	85	96	-14.3	18.1	12.9
Winhall	281	327	482	702	16.4	47.4	45.6
Bennington County	29,282	33,345	35,845	36,994	13.9	7.5	3.2
State of Vermont	444,330	511,456	562,758	608,827	15.1	10.0	8.2

Sources: 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000 U.S. Census of Population and Housing

Table A-2

Population Projections
Bennington Region by Municipality

Town	Annual Base Population 2000	Population Projection 2010	Population Projection 2020	Average Increase 2000-2020
Arlington	2,397	2,577	2,770	0.75%
Bennington	15,737	16,162	16,598	0.27%
Dorset	2,036	2,375	2,771	1.67%
Glastenbury	16	30	56	8.73%
Landgrove	144	161	179	1.15%
Manchester	4,180	4,712	5,312	1.27%
Peru	416	500	601	2.02%
Pownal	3,560	4,066	4,643	1.42%
Rupert	704	750	800	0.66%
Sandgate	353	506	726	4.34%
Shaftsbury	3,767	4,376	5,084	1.61%
Stamford	813	835	857	0.27%
Sunderland	850	960	1,084	1.29%
Woodford	414	470	533	1.34%
Bennington Region	35,387	38,172	41,176	0.79%
Vermont	608,827	652,512	673,169	0.53%

Source: BCRC; U.S. Census 2000; Vermont Center for Rural Studies

Note: Population Projections based on past trends and anticipated increases

3.0 LAND USE PLAN

3.1 General Development Pattern of the Town

There are three distinct village units in Pownal: Pownal Center, North Pownal, and Pownal Village. Pownal Center, approximately 400-500 feet higher in elevation than the other settlements, borders Route 7. It is here that the Town Office is located. North Pownal is located along the Hoosic River and Route 346, and Pownal Village lies at the intersection of Routes 346 and 7, just north of the former Green Mountain Race Track. Both Pownal Village and North Pownal have considerable areas within the alluvial plain of the Hoosic River. In 2002, in conjunction with the Town's plan to precede with

wastewater treatment systems to serve these three settlements, the Town formally placed them in Village Mixed-Use Zones. These zones help define the extent of Phase 1 of the wastewater treatment service area, while intentionally encouraging more dense and more varied residential and commercial activities traditionally associated with the villages of Vermont. Such designation, as well as restrictions on sewer line hookups outside of the Villages, serves to discourage inappropriate development in more rural residential and agricultural areas.

Much of the residential growth in the town has occurred to the east of Pownal Center. However, considerable commercial development arose along Route 7 after the completion of the Green Mountain Race Track during the 1960s. Major housing developments are also located on the western side of the Hoosic River and in the areas near Mann and Mason Hill. A number of mobile home parks are located in Pownal, with large developments in and near Pownal Center and in the vicinity of the Green Mountain Race Track.

The remainder of the town is characterized by farmland, open fields, and the backdrop of the Green Mountain and Taconic Ranges. In Pownal, the prevention of “sprawl” type development has been made difficult because of the tendency for growth to occur between the Villages. A pattern of random development can cause economic and environmental costs that are higher than necessary. Pownal still has a great deal of open land on the edges of the Town, a resource which helps maintain the rural character of the Town. Should development encroach in these areas, Pownal’s rural quality will be diminished while incurring additional expense for municipal functions. Such development should be discouraged and tightly controlled.

3.2 Land Use

An important foundation to the Plan is the designation of future land-use planning districts which form the basis for implementing bylaws. Pownal’s land-use classifications as well as biological and natural areas (Map, Appendices) provide for the following: Village Mixed Use, Rural Residential 1(RR1), Rural Residential 2(RR2), Commercial, Industrial, Forest, Flood Hazard Overlay, Wetland Overlay, and Conservation Overlay.

a) Village

There are three Village designations on the land use plan map: Pownal Center, North Pownal, and Pownal Village. The Villages are more compact settlements with a mix of uses and tend to be at higher densities of use than surrounding areas. The minimum lot size in the Village area is 10,000 square feet except that the standards for some uses may result in a larger lot area. Public wastewater treatment systems will soon serve the three Village areas.

The three areas designated by this district are considered the Town’s “growth centers” because of their existing or planned infrastructure which is capable of supporting future growth anticipated by the Town in the next twenty years. These villages should not be

confused with the official state designation of a “Growth Center;” rather we are using the term in a descriptive manner. Specifically, the Villages centers shall:

- 1) provide for more concentrated, high-density development;
- 2) provide a mix of land uses including commercial, retail, public service, transit, and residential that are in close proximity, planned as a unified complementary whole, and are functionally integrated;
- 3) provide a pedestrian-oriented circulation network that minimizes vehicular traffic and significantly reduces the amount of pavement for parking and driveways between buildings and streets;
- 4) encourage the traditional town center pattern of appropriately scaled buildings facing onto a well-defined and active public street;
- 5) promote innovative site planning to maximize uses, shared parking, and public open space and pedestrian amenities which create an aesthetically pleasing and socially active community center;
- 6) facilitate and/or strongly encourage multi-story buildings within existing height guidelines.

b) Rural Residential 1 (RR1)

The purpose of the Rural Residential 1 District is to maintain and preserve the character and scenic qualities of outlying areas while providing the opportunity for a limited mix of residential, commercial and public uses appropriate for medium-density development. The RR1 is also intended to provide a transition area between the Village District and the Rural Residential District 2. The potential exists for including limited extensions of the municipal sewer system. The RR1 district encourages a less-concentrated settlement pattern with a minimum lot size of 1 unit/ 1 acre. With the exception of approved cluster subdivisions, each primary dwelling unit shall be located on a separate lot of at least 1 acre.

c) Rural Residential 2 (RR2)

A large portion of the Town is classified as Rural Residential 2. This district provides for a variety of uses including residential, non-residential and agricultural uses. The minimum lot size is 2 acres with larger lots for some uses with their own standards. Many of Pownal’s biological and natural areas (Map 3) are located in this area with policies for their protection. The purpose of the Rural Residential District 2 is to maintain and preserve the agricultural character and scenic qualities of outlying areas while providing the opportunity for lower-density residential and non-residential development subject to general and specific conditions. Permitted residential densities are at a minimum of 1 primary dwelling unit/ 2 acres. With the exception of approved cluster subdivisions, each primary dwelling unit shall be located on a separate lot of at least 2 acres.

d) Commercial (C)

The purpose of the Commercial District is to provide designated areas for economically beneficial commercial activity that will benefit the residents of the Town, and which will foster employment opportunities.

e) Industrial (I)

The purpose of the Industrial District is to provide designated areas for economically beneficial and environmentally responsible industrial development in order to foster employment opportunities.

f) Forest (F)

The purpose of the Forest District is to preserve tracts suitable for perpetuating forest resources and to maintain a high quality of the watershed and water supply. Commercial forestry, recreational uses, and rustic camps are appropriate uses in the Forest District, while year-round living is not allowed. The Forest Districts depicted on the land-use map (2) are at higher elevations in the Taconic and Green Mt. Ranges and the Carpenter Hill area. (Also see 3.3.2)

g) Flood Hazard Overlay

The flood insurance study rate plans and flood boundary-floodway maps are the basis for this overlay.

h) Wetlands Overlay

There are several wetland areas located throughout the Town of Pownal. The Town recognizes them as natural and fragile areas and has created this district to protect the values and functions which they serve, in such a manner that the goal of no net loss of wetlands and their function is achieved. Thus, the purpose of the Wetland Overlay District is to protect the natural system functions (i.e. water and air purification, flood attenuation, speciation, and nutrient cycling) that are critical to the support of human, animal and plant populations in the Town of Pownal.

i) Conservation Overlay

Pownal contains natural areas that have significant geologic features or unusual or important plant and animal qualities that make them unsuitable for development because of their local, statewide, national and global significance. Included are regions of steep slopes, rare and endangered species, and significant wildlife habitat. Land uses and development in this district must be planned and designed to be compatible with the surrounding geographic characteristics of the landscape, to be harmonious with wildlife habitat and the species that depend on this habitat, and should recognize and protect the full range of habitats and species in the Town.

3.3 Conservation and Natural Resources

There are 29,925 acres in Pownal, 10,500 of which are in rugged and

mountainous areas. Valley and gently sloping land comprise approximately 6,000 acres, some of which is flood prone or swampy. The remaining 13,500 acres are at higher elevations but consist of gently rolling hills or level land.

In the southwestern portion of the Town, the Taconic Range rises quite abruptly to over 2,300 feet above sea level. Along Pownal's eastern boundary, the southern end of the Green Mountain Range reaches similar elevations. Spreading northward from Pownal Center is the relatively level Vermont Valley, separating the Green Mountains from the Taconic Range, and extending one third the length of the state.

A major feature in Pownal's landscape is the meandering configuration of the Hoosic River. Cutting across the southwest corner of the Town, the River enters Pownal from Williamstown, Massachusetts and runs northwesterly into New York State. The Hoosic flows through a corridor of level rich alluvial land averaging about one half mile in width. In noting that Pownal is the only town in Vermont that has access to the Hoosic River, the 1990 State Legislature allocated \$5,000 for some preservation, planning and cleanup of the River. There is an active association to which some town citizens belong known as the Hoosic Water Shed Association that has taken an active role in helping utilize public access and use of the river.

The preservation of the valuable natural areas within the Town is of continuing importance to the citizens of Pownal. These areas comprise important educational, cultural, and aesthetic assets because of the number of significant ecological processes which occur within them. Understanding the interrelationships between the various natural elements of the landscape - topography, soils, watercourses, groundwater, and vegetative cover - is necessary to protect these resources.

3.3.1 Topography & Soils

Information regarding soils and topography is important in classifying site suitability for development, since slopes in excess of 25% present severe limitations for building due to the inability of septic effluent to enter the soil. Development in areas with slopes should be designed to work with the natural drainage pattern in order to minimize soil erosion. Sufficient level land must be available for the proper operation of leach fields.

There are 11,489 acres in Pownal having slopes in excess of 20%. One reason the rugged and mountainous areas of Pownal should remain free of development is to avoid the high costs of road and runoff maintenance on steep slopes. School bus and emergency services may also be difficult in these areas, thereby increasing costs to the town and placing residents in danger. In addition, there are 200 acres above 2500 feet in elevation. The use of this land is restricted by Act 250 since the lower temperatures, high winds, and shallow soils make these areas extremely fragile and susceptible to damage from human activity.

Soils are an important consideration in site development, since their

characteristics can affect the feasibility of on-site waste disposal, as well as the stability of structures built upon them. The soil content also affects the ability of the soil to accept presence of a seasonally high water table

The U.S. Soil Conservation Service has prepared a soil survey of Pownal. The survey's results allow the identification of areas with limitations for community development, agriculture, recreation, and forestry. The wealth of information contained in the survey is a major resource and should be referred to by the Pownal zoning boards and developers in reaching land-use decisions.

3.3.2 Forest Areas

There are approximately 10,500 acres of mountain and forest land in Pownal. The forest land boundaries were redefined in a 1995 Zoning Bylaw amendment for clarity. Because of the topography, soil conditions, high elevation, and inaccessibility of these areas, this land is unsuitable for development. Yet this forest land serves many valuable purposes which result in an improvement of the public health and welfare.

Forest resources provide employment and economic benefits to the Town and region. In addition, these areas serve as vital sources of water for public and private supply. The high-quality forest environment also provides a recreational resource with a wilderness character, serves as a wildlife habitat, and prevents soil erosion. The town must maintain an active role in seeing that the forest areas are available for public use. They can do this by continually providing access to the resources needed for traditional cultural activities that have characterized Vermont throughout the last century, along with supporting more recent appropriate uses.

The Town owns three separate parcels on the West Mountain. Each parcel has a forest management plan. One 40 +/- acre parcel has had a successful timber harvest with the proceeds being placed in a special Timber Harvest Fund. The 73-acre Swallow Hill forest parcel was acquired through gift in October 1997 and some minor foresting has been done under the forest management plan for that area. The property known to residents in the past as The North Pownal Tannery woodlands, which consists of over 750 acres, was purchased by the Town with the help of VLT and VHCB grants. This area has a woodland management plan and is set aside for public use. The town dedicated the land in Alan Strobridge's name, a selectman that passed away that helped with the process of obtaining this land for public use. These areas are set aside for forestry and conservation purposes and public use.

It is the intent of the Town to maintain compliance with the stipulations of ownership which it acquired with the lands, and to be responsible stewards and active participants in protecting these valuable resources for all to enjoy.

Future harvest treatments and management activities will be undertaken according to the treatment schedule included in the forest management plans and approval by the

other agencies as outlined in the management plans. Secondary goals will be to enhance recreational opportunities for townspeople such as hiking, horseback riding, cross country skiing, picnicking, and hunting and to promote future timber resources. Work has begun at the Strobridge complex, with proposals for trails and other public uses.

Some of these areas are very fragile, sensitive environments and in order to maintain these assets, structures in the forest district are not suitable for use as year-round dwellings, but rather used occasionally for temporary shelter of a recreational purpose. New camps can be located on lots not less than 25 acres (unless it is a pre-existing small lot), and only chemical incinerator or privy type toilet facilities may be used. Permanent improvements - structures for year-round use are inappropriate in these areas unless they serve an important public function under careful control. In some of the management plans there are certain structures allowed that will enhance recreational activities.

Pownal residents need to take an active role in the management of forest resources. Forest management practices in Pownal should be under the guidance of the county forester or other qualified personnel. These practices should be attentive to the need for protecting the water supplies which flow from this area.

3.3.3 Streams and Drainage Ways

Besides the meandering Hoosic, there are a number of small brooks which flow into the valley and settled areas of the Town. It is imperative to protect the small streams draining the hollows along the edge of the Town, along with the more major water sources such as Ladd Brook, Jewett Brook, Bathtub Brook, and South Stream. The destruction, diversion, or contamination of these draining channels can increase flooding, destroy wildlife habitat, result in erosion, and detract from their scenic quality. One method of protection is to provide a buffer zone within the normal bank of any stream or drainage way.

Attention should also be focused on the water quality of the Hoosic River. All residents and visitors should take all necessary measures to prevent contamination of the River. It is understood that a great part of the Hoosic's water quality problems originate upstream, outside of Pownal. The Town encourages inter-state cooperation for the purpose of alleviating the contamination problems of the River.

In 1990 an organization called the Pownal Hoosic River Watershed Association was incorporated to work with the existing watershed association in neighboring Massachusetts and the proposed association in New York State. Today, this association is known as Hoosac River Watershed Association and is made up of concerned residents from all backgrounds and schools of thought and has no legislative authority. A number of Pownal people are still actively involved with the HRWA.

3.3.4 Flood Hazard Areas

One natural area with severe development limitations is that land along the Hoosic River which is flood prone. In accordance with the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 and subsequent amendments, Pownal adopted permanent Flood Hazard Regulations to restrict development in those areas defined by the federal flood insurance study. Lands designated within the 100-year flood zone are subject to development constraints aimed at minimizing flood damage. Construction within the zone labeled “the floodway fringe” must meet certain minimum construction standards including anchors to prevent flotation, the use of flood-resistant materials, and the placement of utilities and services away from or above areas subject to flood inundation. In addition, the lowest floor of buildings constructed in the floodway fringe should be elevated above the level of the estimated 100-year flood. Municipal infrastructure services are allowed along the fringe but must meet federal, state, and town regulations outlined in the permitting process. Junkyards, solid waste disposal sites, and future hazardous materials are not permitted within the flood hazard area. The exclusion of these uses from both the floodway and the fringe will prevent the excessive damage to which they are particularly subject, especially in terms of flotation. A map displaying the location of the boundaries of the “floodway fringe” is available at the Town Office Building. There is one site the town, state cares for that is federally permitted for hazardous storage which is located on the old Pownal tannery lagoon area site which currently includes the wastewater treatment facilities buildings and equipment along with a superfund cleanup site.

3.3.5 Earth Products Removal

The extraction and processing of earth resources should not impose any undue adverse effects on the residents of the Town. Such safety, comfort, and convenience of present and future generations are protected.

Earth resources extraction and processing have a high potential for becoming nuisances in any of the following ways:

- A. They may generate harmful levels of dust, air pollution, or radioactive contamination of the air or water.
- B. Surface water quality may be diminished because of siltation resulting from increased soil erosion.
- C. The storage and disposal of waste materials, both solid and liquid, may present adverse health implications.
- D. The damage to the landscape may limit the utility of the site for subsequent use.
- E. Earth extraction activities can result in heavy truck traffic, thereby leading to decreased highway safety, the deterioration of highways and bridges, and hence increased municipal costs.
- F. The primary and secondary impacts of these operations can reduce the value of

surrounding properties. Should the impacts of earth products removal operations permeate the Town, property in general could be affected.

Because of the nature of these impacts, it is the policy of the Town of Pownal to permit earth resource extraction activities only when it has been shown that there will be no adverse impact on the Town and its residents. No new earth resource extraction or processing operations, neither expansion of an existing operation, nor resumption of an inactive operation shall be permitted until it has been demonstrated that no detrimental impacts will occur. The proponents of such activities must bear the burden of proof that no such impacts will occur. Any such processing or extraction proposal must also include a plan, acceptable to the State Agency of Natural Resources and Pownal zoning boards for the rehabilitation of the site at the conclusion of extraction or processing activities. Appropriate guarantees should be required to ensure the rehabilitation at the owner's expense.

The incremental horizontal expansion of existing sand and gravel operations can result in significant detrimental impacts on the Town over a period of time. For this reason the extent of growth of existing operations should be controlled. Possible methods of controlling such expansion include regulating the excavation, requiring the rehabilitation of areas already consumed before permitting expansion, and setting limits on the percentage of total area exposed at any one time.

a) Energy Development

Energy resources development has the potential for severely disrupting both the physical and social fabric of a community. This has been the case in other states, especially in the west, where small towns suddenly were forced to accommodate large numbers of workers beyond the capacity of existing housing, public facilities, schools, etc.

Should energy development initiatives take place in Pownal, the Town must be protected from incurring the resulting municipal costs. Those who will profit from the activity should be ready to share in meeting those expenses. Adequate bonding must be required in order to protect the Town.

b) Uranium Mining

It is impossible to specifically locate uranium in the Town without detailed geologic exploration. Hence, there is no method at this time of designating specific areas where the potential for such mining activity exists. Given the known health dangers of radiation exposure, the considerable volume of waste materials generated by uranium mining, and the inability of mining operations to wholly contain these tailings, the Town of Pownal prohibits such activity within its boundaries.

c) Nuclear Waste Sites

There have been efforts since 1985 to consider certain areas in Vermont as high-level nuclear waste storage sites. The Vermont House of Representatives passed a resolution which directs the Department of Energy to no longer consider the water bearing rock formations in Vermont for this purpose. The possible sites considered near Bennington County would be the Green Mountain Massif which includes Pownal. The Town of Pownal prohibits the siting of nuclear waste facilities.

d) Geology and Minerals of the Area

The Vermont Valley extends in a north-south direction in the Green and Taconic Mountains for a distance of approximately eighty-five miles and varies in the width from one to seven miles. This valley, developed on a thick section of less-resistant carbonate rocks, becomes a narrow defile at its north end and broadens to include the six- to seven-mile-wide area of rolling land to the south. Southward of Pownal Center, the valley is terminated by the Pownal Upland, a series of low hills which connect the Taconic Range to the west with the Green Mountains to the east, and separate the Hoosic Valley from Bennington Valley. In addition to the many small hills dispersed throughout the valley, a ridge (the "High Taconics") tends to parallel the Green Mountain Front and is composed of a thick section of quartzite, dolomite, and calcite marbles with inbedded gray and black phyllites. Because of their resistance to erosion, quartzite and dolomite marbles form the crests of the hills and low mountainous ridges within the lowland. Due to the structural configuration of the valley's bedrock, extensive Pleistocene glaciation and post-glacial erosion, present play elevations vary from 600 to 1000 feet.

The retreat of glaciers left large beds of sand and gravel in the Vermont Valley, hence several gravel and sand beds are being worked in Pownal, the largest of which are the Barlow, Hart, and Palmer operations.

Mineral localities in the area include anchorite on the west slope of Carpenter Hill and chalcopyrite (copper) in quartz on the east slope. The south slope of the Dome probably has hematite (an iron ore). The abandoned quarry on Route 346 mined limestone. Other localities have limestone derivatives.

3.3.6 Shorelands

The use of the land surrounding Barber's and Thompson's Ponds can have a significant impact on the quality of these water bodies. Intensive residential development with on-site sewage systems adjacent to the Ponds may result in excessive vegetation and perhaps choke the pond or lake. If this does indeed occur, these water bodies will lose depth as the decaying vegetation builds up from the bottom until a swamp appears where these ponds once existed. A buffer zone from natural banks can help to forestall this possibility. It is incumbent on property owners in these areas to recognize utilization of on-site systems which protect the Ponds. In areas where this has not been the case future expansion should be treated as nonconforming use.

3.3.7 Wetlands

Wetlands generally include marshes, swamps, flooded flats, wet meadows, bogs, sloughs, and slangs. There are approximately 414 acres in Pownal that meet these criteria. Wetlands provide temporary storage for flood water and storm runoff, control the effects of erosion, and contribute to wildlife habitat and to the quality of water.

The Vermont Land Development Capability Plan identified the wetland area north of Barber's Pond and along South Stream Road as significant ecological features. These and all other smaller wetland areas should be preserved in their natural condition.

3.3.8 Agricultural Land

Approximately 2,200 acres are in agricultural use in Pownal. While it is in keeping with the Town's interest to maintain these properties as active farmland, the farmer must not be forced to bear a cost of preserving these lands while the community at large benefits. Since Pownal has traditionally been a farming community, and its rural character is one of its greatest assets, the Town supports creative measures to preserve agricultural land.

The protection of prime agricultural land in Pownal is desirable for reasons beyond the basic desire to preserve a bucolic lifestyle. As transportation costs increase, locally grown food products will become more essential. Vermont-made products are also widely sought-after by residents and visitors alike, and should be actively encouraged and supported. The pastoral landscape is also the foundation of Vermont's substantial tourist trade. Pownal's Routes 7 and 346 offer a high-quality visual approach for travelers from Massachusetts and New York. As a gateway to Vermont the rustic integrity of these areas are deserving of safeguards.

3.3.9 Natural Features

The following is a list of identified significant natural features which should be considered for special protection status.

1. The Dome

Location: About 3.5 miles east northeast of Pownal Village.

Elevation: 2,748 feet.

Being the highest peak in the Town, the Dome has regional, scenic, and recreational significance.

2. Kreigger Rocks

Location: The rocks area exposed for about one mile along the Hoosic River.

There are two main outcroppings, one above the Tannery in North Pownal and the other 3/4 of a mile south.

Elevation: The summit above the rocks is 1,240 feet; the base is 530 feet.

3. Potholes in Washtub or Bathtub Brook (“The Tubs”)

Location: About 1.5 miles north northeast of North Pownal.

Elevation: About 700 feet.

“The Tubs” consist of three pothole formations in the course of the stream. A narrow passage has eroded through crystalline marble and limestone. The middle “tub” is a typical pothole; revolving stones whirl in its waters. The bowl is about six feet deep, and of an elliptical form about 26 feet in circumference.

4. Hemlock Gorge

Location: 2 miles north northeast of North Pownal.

Elevation: Between 760 and 1,050 feet.

A deep rock gorge along Bathtub Brook, the rocks are moss covered and old hemlocks rise at various angles from the steep sides.

5. Barber School Meadows

Location: Approximately 1.75 miles east of Pownal Center, adjacent to Barber’s Pond.

Elevation: 1,100 feet

A scenic area of flat boggy meadows with remnants of rare plants.

6. South Stream Waterfowl Area

Location: East Pownal, along South Stream Road.

Elevation: 1,090 feet.

A shrub swamp, deep marsh, and a small pond of about 10 acres impounded by a man-made dam. Provides breeding habitat for waterfowl. Total of 368.5 acres.

7. Chalk Pond

Location: Approximately 1.5 miles northeast of Pownal Village.

Elevation: 1,320 feet.

Old boggy pond enclosed by shrubs and having a mixture of calcareous algae and diatoms.

8. Cranberry Bog

Location: 1.5 miles east of Pownal Center along Barber’s Pond Road.

Elevation: 1,150 feet.

An open bog mat dominated by sphagnum and sedges with unusually rich bog flora.

9. Maple Grove School Swamp

Location: Adjacent to the Bennington boundary in East Pownal.

Elevation: 1,050 feet.

A swamp forested with hardwoods and supporting a variety of rare plant species.

10. Middle Pownal Road Swamp

Location: East of Middle Pownal Road.

Elevation: 1,080 feet.

Hardwoods swamp containing at least three types of swamp communities.

11. Peckham Hill

Location: Approximately 1.5 miles northwest of North Pownal.

Elevation: 1,290 feet.

An oak-hickory forest community (found very frequently in Vermont) with 3-4 inch stem flowering dogwood and sassafras.

12. Pownal Mountain Laurel

Location: Reservoir Hollow, west of North Pownal.

Elevation: 1,000 feet.

The only extensive occurrence of mountain laurel in southwest Vermont.

13. Pownal Red Pines

Location: 1 mile south of Thompson's Pond.

Elevation: 1,600 feet.

A stand of 15 red pines between 14 and 20 inches in diameter breast high. This tree is found very frequently in the Bennington region.

14. Swamp of Oracles

Location: Approximately one quarter mile west of Sweet Road.

Elevation: 1,280 feet.

A secluded swamp which once supported a great variety of orchids, this site is threatened with destruction by residential development.

15. Deer Yard of Pownal Village

Location: One-half mile east of Pownal Village.

Elevation: 1,000 feet.

A wooded area on the lower southwestern slopes of Mason Hill and along Ladd Brook providing shelter and browse for deer. The yard is crucial to the survival of the deer herd in the region.

16. Deer Wintering Areas

Several other areas within the Town also contain deer winter range, as mapped by The Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife. These forest areas are generally typified by concentrations of softwoods species (pines, hemlock, spruce) with high crown closure. These areas provide numerous thermal and microclimatic advantages to the deer such as reduced snow depths, less wind, increased daily mean temperatures, and increased relative humidity. Forest stands of the type described should be carefully examined for deer use to reduce the impact that potential development may have on these very important and critical habitat areas.

17. Black Bear Habitat

Location: Forest Districts (West Mt., East Mt. & Dome)

The remote forestland areas within the Town provide an important habitat for black bears. The West Mountain area is classified by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department as a seasonal habitat. These areas are frequently used by bears, including some cub-producing females, and contain critical seasonal feeding areas and vital travel corridors. The East Mountain and Dome area comprises a portion of the Green Mountain Range that contains critical habitats necessary for bear production and survival. These areas of generally contiguous and remote forestland support a relatively high density of cub-producing females and are crucial to the long-term stability of Vermont's bear population.

General Policies

1. Any development which encroaches upon or may have an undue adverse impact on any unique natural feature mentioned herein, or not mentioned but in the public interest, should be discouraged.
2. The physical elements of the land (soil, slope, etc.) shall be given thorough consideration before any development or change in land use shall take place.
3. Areas which provide water supplies shall be protected from any disturbance which affects the quantity of clean water for public use. This includes surface and ground waters used for shallow wells in populated areas within the towns.
4. Development in the 100-year floodway fringe should meet certain building design criteria in order to minimize flood damage. All development must meet federal and state standards for flood protection.
5. Development should be so designed to protect and maintain the Town's primary agricultural soils, public safety, and health. Decisions regarding development should be made with the need to maintain the rural character of the Town. Development in the village areas and abutting properties near the village areas must be encouraged to

better protect the agricultural and forest areas of the town. The Pownal zoning boards should look favorably on appropriate development in the villages and their abutting areas.

6. Within its site plan review capability; the Development Review Board should look favorably on developments whose designs are attentive to the needs to preserve open and agricultural land, public safety, and health.
7. Operators of sand and gravel extraction activities shall be required to rehabilitate unused areas at the conclusion of the operation.
8. The mining and milling of uranium shall be excluded from the Town in order to protect the public health and safety.
9. Development in the Forest areas should be of a recreational or commercial forestry nature, and should be attentive to the need to maintain the wilderness character of these lands for public use.
10. Land use along streams, water bodies, and drainage channels should not adversely affect the quality of these waters.
11. Land use and development should be harmonious with wildlife habitat and the species that depend on this habitat, and should recognize and protect the full range of habitats and species in the Town.

3.3.10 Route 7 & Route 346 Corridors

One aspect of uncontrolled or undesirable growth in a community that can occur both with and without sewer service is strip development along a highway corridor. Strip development undermines community character and the historic settlement patterns, promotes inefficient use of land and can also lead to traffic conflicts and safety concerns. Pownal wants to promote development within the Village Districts and growth centers and discourage sprawl and strip development patterns. This is a desirable goal with or without sewer service. Currently there are extensive stretches that are undeveloped and have scenic and natural resource values along the Routes 7 & 346 corridors that run outside the village growth areas. Thus, these corridor areas should be delineated as a specific planning area and guidelines adopted to promote appropriate development and conservation practices within these sections of the corridor.

General Policies

1. Landscape, Aesthetics and Natural Resources

- Promote retention of existing vegetation and woodlands, including underdeveloped land separating developed parcels.
- Using the overlay districts, discourage development in areas with natural resource qualities and ensure that site plan proposals avoid these areas and provide suitable buffers.

- Identify scenic resources (view sheds, outstanding landscape character, etc.) along the corridor and employ means to respect and protect those qualities where possible.

2. Traffic Management

- Encourage shared curb cuts and other access management principles.
- Promote sign management and sign ordinance revisions to control size, lighting placement of on-premise commercial signs.
- Work with Vermont Agency of Transportation on traffic control and traffic flow measures.
- Review proposed developments for traffic impacts; create threshold for requiring traffic studies from applicants.

4.0 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Investigating the trends in housing starts over the past several years is useful in order to gain some ideas of the direction future development will take in Pownal. Between 1974, when the Town first adopted zoning, and 1990, permits were issued for 237 single family residence, 122 mobile homes, and 20 camps. Development has not been steady, but has tended to fluctuate. During the 1990’s the State recognized mobile homes under the same criteria as a single-family dwelling. The table below shows that the trends in development, for the past five years, have continued to grow steadily.

Zoning Permits Authorized

	Single Family	Camps
1994	0	0
1995	12	1
1996	18	0
1997	10	3
1998	12	0
1999	11	6
2001	10	2
2002	10	2
2003	15	2
2004	10	

Even with the advent of a centralized sewage treatment system serving the three Villages, single-family development will continue in outlying areas. This being the case, it is important that future development occurs on sites capable of maintaining permanently functioning on-site sewage and water facilities.

In order to assure the permanent feasibility of such systems, the Town should ensure that development occurs within the constraints of site capability. The major factors of soil type, slope, depth of bedrock, seasonally high water table, etc. should be determined to adequately support the operation of on-site septic systems as one vehicle to prevent the establishment of homes on poor sites. Lot size alone cannot guarantee that a site will be acceptable for long-term waste disposal. The prevention of septic system failure is of key importance.

Within residential areas served by centralized wastewater collection and treatment, the town should encourage and anticipate residential density will increase. Conversion of single-family units to multi-family units and construction of new units on vacant lots are anticipated, as well as increases in business and commercial uses within the Village districts. This should result in a lower increase in demand on road services from the Town. Areas served by centralized wastewater and treatment that can provide residential density increases should be looked on favorably by the zoning review boards as quality growth areas within the town.

4.1 **Location**

The location of development is a major consideration in the effort to keep a town economical and efficient to operate. Studies have shown that unplanned scattered growth is the most expensive form of residential development in terms of economic and environmental costs, natural resources consumption, and various personal costs to the homeowners themselves. In reaching decisions which relate to the development of areas remote from existing settlements, consideration should be given the importance of controlling municipal service costs by limiting road mileage, preserving resources, and maintaining open space.

4.2 **Rate**

The rate of residential development can be a critical factor in maintaining an efficient and economical town. Should a large project bring a sizeable number of new residents, the Town may suddenly be faced with a host of new expenditures. The Vermont Land Use and Development Law (Act 250) addresses the issue of fiscal stability by insuring that a proposed development does not significantly affect a town's "existing and potential financial capacity to reasonably accommodate" such growth. The rate of population increase in Pownal should not exceed the community's ability to provide the necessary services and facilities to its residents.

One method of making certain that the rate of growth does not excessively burden the Town's financial capacity is the adoption of a capital improvement program. Act 250 states that in towns which have duly adopted such a program, the burden of proof shall be on the developer that his project will not significantly affect the financial capacity of the Town. Preparation of a capital budget would serve other purposes besides controlling the pace of development. Most importantly, it would provide a means of achieving a stable tax rate by planning and scheduling the financing of necessary capital expenditures.

Policies

1. Residential areas outside of the Village districts should allow for single-family homes on one-acre lots or larger, with the ability to support on-site water and sewage facilities. Provisions for open space development should be made where sufficient water and waste disposal can be made available.
2. All residential development should maintain a level of density compatible with land and service capabilities.
3. Residential development should be restricted in areas where the natural slopes would pose problems for road maintenance, municipal and emergency services or sewage treatment systems.
4. In all site development, care should be exercised to avoid soil erosion, sedimentation, or other pollutions from entering surface or ground waters.
5. The pace of development should not exceed the Town's financial capacity to provide services to its residents.
6. Development should not occur in areas that do not contain adequate infrastructure and are remote from existing settlements. The Town shall work to find ways to promote growth and development within and near the designated growth centers.
7. A road system capable of ensuring the safe and efficient movement of traffic should either be in place or be planned for immediate construction before the development of any large scale residential project.
8. Keep all areas of the town favorable to appropriate uses and a high quality of life by periodically reviewing zoning districts.
9. Promote development near existing roadways and settlements by continuing to build infrastructure to support such development goals while helping to maintain large open tracks of land.

5.0 HOUSING NEEDS

A combination of factors, including the supply and demand scenario of the area's housing market, the decline in the employment base in the Town and the age of existing structures is responsible for an emerging housing problem in Pownal. The housing problem can be divided into three categories: that related to the escalating price of land and existing homes, older deteriorating structures and mobile homes.

During and right after the 1960's Pownal experienced phenomenal growth in the number of mobile homes. Since 1974, mobile homes have accounted for 53% of the zoning permits granted for dwelling units. In 1976, 38% of all mobile homes in the Bennington County Planning Region were located in Pownal, despite the fact that only 8.7% of the region's population lived in the Town. In 1979, there were 311 mobile homes located in parks and 61 such units located on individual lots, in total comprising 31.7% of the Town's total housing stock. However, this is significantly less than the 1976 count of 428 units and there has also been a indicating that the growth in mobile homes has peaked.

The existence of so disproportionate a share of this type of housing has created several problems for the Town. Mobile home parks have suffered from overcrowding, inadequate waste and water facilities, and aesthetic problems. It is in the Town's interest that all mobile home parks strictly comply with State regulations in order to alleviate situations detrimental to the public health and safety.

Mobile home parks should provide for safe and convenient access and proper disposal of sanitary wastes. Parks should contain sufficient land area to provide community recreation space and should be adequately protected against fire. Existing parks should be upgraded to meet public health and safety requirements before carrying out any plans for expansion. Mobile homes on individual mobile park sites should conform to Pownal mobile home park ordinance requirements.

Because mobile homes fulfill a need for low-cost housing, every effort should be made to improve existing conditions. Mobile home owners, as well as park owners and operators, should be made aware that a variety of federal and state program exist which provide financing for the rehabilitation of individual units and parks. Park owners especially should be encouraged to take advantage of programs for improvements in landscaping, drainage, roads, water and septic supply or sewage disposal.

Pownal's housing stock also contains a considerable number of older homes, some of which are in poor condition. Deferred payment loans, low-interest loans or a combination of each can be used to assist homeowners in upgrading their houses. Residents of Pownal should be made aware of all the possible sources of assistance available to alleviate the housing problems of the Town. A combination of state and federal programs, along with commercial financing, can serve as a crucial factor in achieving the Town's housing goals.

Housing Goals

- Decent, safe and sanitary housing for residents of the Town; including adequate space, clean water and sanitary disposal of waste.
- The rehabilitation of deteriorating housing and neighborhoods, and the conservation of existing housing and neighborhoods from blighting influences.
- Future housing stock that will be affordable for residents of Pownal.

Housing Policies

1. The encouragement of participation in housing rehabilitation programs which make funds available for families of low and moderate incomes, the elderly, and the handicapped.
2. Attention should be focused on the need for increasing the energy conservation potential of existing buildings.
3. Provide information on programs and resources to persons and families in need of upgrading their homes.
4. The encouragement of mobile home park owners and operators to seek assistance for the purpose of upgrading their developments to meet state regulations and local ordinances.
5. Affordable housing should be developed within the growth centers where infrastructure, facilities, employment opportunities, and public spaces are planned or already exist, rather than in outlying areas.

6.0 BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

Traditionally a farming community, Pownal's economy evolved to the point where business and industry played a major role in providing tax revenue and employment. The construction of the Green Mountain Park Race Track in 1964 added considerably to the spurt of growth the Town experienced during that decade. During the past several years, however, overall economic activity has sharply declined with cutbacks, plant shutdowns, and layoffs occurring in industrial and commercial enterprises. In the future, the Town should take steps to avoid the dependence on a few large taxpayers, and encourage a broader, more diverse tax base. This is an important strategy since taxpayers would be subject to a sudden drastic tax increase should the current scenario repeat itself.

Average Annual Covered Employment

Pownal - 1979 through 1990
 1990 - inside and outside of Pownal

INDUSTRIAL GROUP	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1989	1990
Construction	4	7	7	12	13	45	166
Manufacturing	332	308	294	331	260	96	421
Trade	75	72	67	70	73	84	365
Service	180	207	225	194	190	99	553
Other	12	13	11	4	9	77	183
TOTAL	603	607	606	611	545	401	1688

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau: 1990 - Table 2 / 1990 CPH-L-83

Pownal had a per capita income in 1990 of \$11,821.00. Pownal had 325 households living below poverty level and receiving some form of public assistance. A look at the income of neighboring households does not differ significantly for that of the State or County.

Income Distribution According to Personal Vermont Income Tax Returns - 1994

		Pownal	Vermont
00000-	4999	168	35,166
5000-	9999	148	30,112
10000-	14999	169	30,359
15000-	19999	168	27,441
20000-	24999	125	22,230
25000-	29999	104	17,775
30000-	39999	150	29,467
40000-	49999	125	21,546
50000-	PLUS	199	43,588

SOURCE: Vermont Department of Taxes - 1994
Summary of Tax Statistics

Because of the need to stabilize the tax base and to provide more jobs, the Town encourages the establishment of varied and appropriate commercial development.

Since the closing of the Green Mountain Race Track in 1992, the town and regional economic development agencies have actively pursued industrial uses for the property, which has been zoned Industrial. Though aggressive and persevering, these efforts have been unsuccessful. With the recent purchase of the track property and the owner's intention to use the property for a mixture of residential and commercial uses, and along with their request for a zoning change to Village Mixed-Use, the Town would have only two small areas zoned Industrial.

Given this situation, the likelihood of attracting any relatively large-scale industrial uses is remote. However, given the advances in communication and digital technologies, it is appropriate and necessary for the Town and regional economic development agencies to aggressively pursue businesses that are flexible in their ability to locate their enterprises, and who appreciate quality of life as a viable part of the success of their business and for the health and well-being of their employees.

With this in mind, the Town should aggressively pursue any and all initiatives to bring state-of-the-art communications technologies to every corner of the Town, especially wireless broadband. The importance of such an initiative can not be overstated for Pownal's ability to participate in, and perhaps be among the leaders in, the 21st-century economy.

Bringing new businesses to a town is a process which requires the support, enthusiasm and participation of the community. In 1995, the Board of Selectmen created the Pownal Community Development Committee, comprised of volunteers from the Pownal community, to assist them in the evaluation of suitable businesses for the Town. The Town should continue to encourage commercial and business development but it should be strictly controlled so as to preserve the high quality of life we all would like to maintain. Among the considerations in reviewing business development are the following:

- Setbacks
- Landscaping Plans
- Height Limitations
- Adequate Site Planning
- Lighting Plans
- Sign Requirements
- Traffic Patterns
- Infrastructure
- Emergency service

Pownal has experienced a number of environmental problems because of its existing industrial base. It is imperative that any future development be sensitive to the need to protect the public health and safety and avoid diminishing the quality of the air or surface and ground water. The Zoning Bylaws have been amended to define the types, sizes, and impacts of permitted businesses.

The costs of providing municipal services to commercial and industrial sites are generally less than their tax yield. Tax benefits may reduce or even eliminate infrastructure cost; however, road improvements, traffic problems, or reliance on one industry is not best for the Town either.

For this reason, expansion of the commercial and industrial base should be controlled to ensure quality development. Since some of this development is treated as a conditional use by the Zoning Bylaws, it should be ensured by the Pownal zoning boards that appropriate conditions are placed on these proposals with respect to traffic access, circulation, landscaping and screening and any other aspects of the development that will adversely affect the health and safety of the Town's residents, or which will degrade our environment. This review should be done along with any Act 250 or other state review process.

Policies

1. Encourage development that will expand the tax base and provide a net benefit to the Town.
2. Set standards for permitted types and sizes of businesses.
3. In planning industrial and related activities, it should be ensured that no significant adverse impact will fall onto surrounding areas or municipal services.
4. At the time of the completion of industrial and commercial expansion, utilities, roads, and other services should be in place so that the Town is not left with any additional expense. Bonding should be required to meet these needs.
6. The Town should encourage commercial development that strengthens the existing village centers. The zoning review boards should look favorably upon those commercial developments which will not place a net encumbrance upon the town.
7. Commercial and industrial developments should meet minimum design standards regarding access, landscaping, screening, and setbacks. Performance standards have been established to address the problem of adverse environmental effects. These standards should protect the townspeople from excessive noise, odor, smoke, vibration, glare, or other nuisances.
8. Utilize the commercial/industrial sites data-base developed by the BCRC to encourage and market the availability of buildings and properties.

9. Commercial uses should be encouraged in a concentrated pattern within the growth centers.
10. Highway-oriented retail and commercial, development should be discouraged along the main highways in Pownal except within the village growth areas.

7.0 COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES, AND UTILITIES

7.1 Water Supply

Water is a critical aspect of planning for Pownal's future. High-quality water is a precious resource and one that must be protected for future generations.

Approximately 3,000 of Pownal's residents get their water from one of three sources: shallow wells, deep wells, or springs. The remainder is supplied by small "systems". These include Roy's Royal pine, Lampman's (Pownal Center), Fire District #2, which is by far the largest and serves some 400 people in the southwest part of Town, and Fire District #3 (State Line Drive).

North Pownal

Water supplies for the residents of North Pownal are derived from individual wells.

Pownal Village

Except for approximately 15% of its residences, Pownal Village is served by a water system operated by the Pownal Fire District #2.

Pownal Center Water Supply

The Lampman Water System in Pownal Center serves a trailer park. The source for the system is a spring-fed reservoir one-half mile east of Pownal Center Village and a 179-foot drilled well in the Village. Low-level contamination of the spring has been an intermittent problem, and has been high enough to warrant a boil water notice.

Water for the rest of the village residences is supplied by individual wells or springs. The mixture of on-site water systems and on-site sewage disposal in Pownal Center increases the possibility of contamination of individual wells.

7.2 Centralized Wastewater Collection and Treatment

In order to maintain the rural character of Pownal, to limit the potential for unwanted growth in outlying areas, and to encourage development to occur within the

growth centers, the Town currently prohibits wastewater connections to the municipal sewers located outside of the sewer service areas.

Wastewater disposal in Pownal is currently provided by individual, on-site systems. The Town health officer responds to public concerns about failing on-site systems and issues corrective orders applicable to the on-site conditions. However, in the Town's three population centers, corrective actions to existing problems are usually limited by poor soils, high ground water and/or lack of land or proper soils for repairs or construction of new systems. The Town has acknowledged for years the limitations of substandard soils and their negative impact on acceptable wastewater disposal in Pownal. Many health orders are issued with the understanding that there is no acceptable on-site correction available.

In 1997 the Town applied for and received special State funding to conduct a feasibility study of wastewater disposal in its three population centers. The studies documented the widespread limitations to proper wastewater disposal in the three centers (Pownal, Pownal Center, and North Pownal) and recommended a detailed study of alternatives. The Town voted in April 1999 to finance the Facilities Planning Study of alternative solutions of wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal for the three population centers. The recommendation from the Facilities Planning Study was to construct collection sewers in the three population centers and pump the collection wastewater to a wastewater treatment facility at the old Tannery lagoon site in North Pownal. The town voted to bond \$2 million of the wastewater treatment facility cost. The remaining cost has been actively campaigned for through grant requests.

The municipal wastewater system, currently under construction, provides collection sewers in Pownal Village, Pownal Center, and North Pownal. The Pownal Center wastewater will be pumped through a pressure pipe along Cedar Hill Road to the B&M rail right-of-way and then to the new treatment facility at the old Tannery lagoon site in North Pownal. The Pownal Village wastewater will also be pumped through a pressure pipe from the Village along Route 346 to the treatment facility. North Pownal wastewater will flow directly to the treatment facility. This cost-effective long-term solution allows for a permanent correction to substandard wastewater disposal in Pownal's villages. It provides improved public health and safety as well as the opportunity for improved living conditions and conveniences such as home improvements, laundromats, eating establishments, and other small business and light industry.

The Select Board and the Sewer Study Committee were very active in shaping the Facilities Plan to meet the needs of the Town's three population centers and to reflect the true conditions in each of these study areas. There were many meetings to review alternatives and to develop a plan that maintains the village character in each of the three centers and to limit development outside the service areas. The centralized collection systems and discharging wastewater treatment facility are designed to eliminate the existing wastewater disposal situations within the service areas and to allow a modest growth of residential, commercial, and light industry within each of the population

centers, thus developing vibrant village centers as part of the historic settlement pattern.

The Town developed a sewer use ordinance. It will be used in the continued management of wastewater disposal. The Town also created a sewer allocation ordinance for the villages consistent with Smart Growth and sustainable community initiatives.

7.3 Solid Waste Disposal

The Town of Pownal had leased the land on which the Town's transfer station is currently located from a private landowner since 1967. The site was first used by the Town as a gravel bed, and in the early 1970's was converted into a sanitary landfill. In 1982 this landfill was closed, and a new landfill was constructed a few hundred feet to the north on the same parcel. In 1988 the Town started a recycling program whereby #1 and #2 plastic containers, tin/aluminum cans, clear, green and brown glass, cardboard and newspapers were collected, stored and transported in a segregated manner. In 1992 the Town ceased its landfill operations and began to transfer its waste to an out-of-town disposal facility.

In 1996 the Town negotiated with the property's owners for its purchase, and that same year the Town applied for a state grant to construct a new transfer station. The facility has been designed to manage trash, recyclables, unregulated household hazardous waste, tires, white-goods, metal, brush and stumps, and tires. A Drop & Swap area allows for the organization and distribution of reusable items. A composting operation for segregated, non-recyclable, organic materials has also been proposed.

The Town built a Centralized Materials Processing Facility to enable the Town to efficiently divert the maximum amount of material from the waste stream, with the greatest net cost savings. Without this facility, the Town would have been unable to sort and remove valuable resources from the waste stream.

7.4 Emergency Services

Pownal is served by two volunteer fire departments and one rescue squad. There is a high level of cooperation between the departments, at major fires, mutual aid drills, and monthly chief meetings. The majority of expenses are covered by a tax voted each year for operating expenses and volunteer manpower. A sinking fund was created for the purchase of new trucks and air packs. A general review of the capacities and needs of each department is presented below.

The **Pownal Fire Protection Association** incorporated in November of 1946 and is now completing their 60th year of emergency service to the Town of Pownal. The new fire station (which was completed in 1991) is located on Route 346 next to the Pownal Post Office.

The four bay stations, houses the four pieces of apparatus in their fleet. Engine

915 is a 1992 E-one Pumper with a 1,500 gallon per minute pump and a 1,500-gallon water tank. This engine has a six-man cab and carries 15 air packs plus numerous other equipment. Engine 919 is a 1974 Mack Pumper with a 1,000 g.p.m. pump and a 1,000-gallon tank. This truck is used to shuttle water to the scene of a fire. Truck 914 is a 1976 Dodge four-wheel drive truck which specializes in water supply. This truck has a 1,000 g.p.m. front mount pump and carries 2,500 feet of 4" supply hose. Truck 917 is a 1992 Ford four-wheel drive which carries all of our rescue equipment. This equipment consists of two sets of "Jaws of Life", high angle rescue gear, and other emergency equipment to assist the Pownal Rescue Squad when and where needed.

The Pownal Fire Department responds to all structural fires in the Town of Pownal as well as responding with the Pownal Rescue Squad to all motor vehicle accidents with the "Jaws of Life". Chimney fires, good intent calls, flooding conditions, car fires, and other misc. calls make up the balance of their calls.

In 1994 the North Pownal, Pownal Center, and East Pownal Fire Departments consolidated into one unit and became the **Pownal Valley Fire Department**. The three original stations are maintained with each having apparatus. The consolidation allowed for unified training and the elimination of duplicate purchases of equipment.

The Department worked with the Pownal Elementary School on their disaster and evacuation plan. The Pownal Center Station is the designated evacuation site in case of an emergency.

One goal of any volunteer organization is to increase manpower and they have begun this with the recent addition of two junior members and three regular members. Any person is eligible and can always be put to good use no matter what level of training they have or want.

Rescue Squad

The **Pownal Center First Aid Squadron** was begun in 1959 through the Pownal Center Fire Department. A handful of volunteer firemen were determined to make a difference for those in need of emergency treatment in Pownal. The concept of emergency medical services was something new. It was focused on basic first-aid skills, especially bandaging, splinting, use of oxygen, and resuscitation. The training films and slide presentations were graphic and realistic. Emergency Care Attendants and EMT certification now require even more time. Several levels of EMT training are available.

Pownal Rescue is one of the oldest squads in the state of Vermont. The basic principal of rescue service in Pownal has not changed. They were formed to provide quality emergency services to the community of Pownal. Their survival would not have been possible without the generous donations of time, service, and financial support of many people, not just members. A tradition based in concern for those in need continues.

All emergency services in Pownal are faced with a major shortage of volunteers at

this time. The Pownal Rescue Squad with the town has enlisted the assistance of the Village Ambulance Service of Williamstown, MA to ensure adequate coverage for the community. The Town Fire Departments and Rescue Squad must work on strategies to reverse this trend before Pownal loses its emergency protection by default.

7.5 Public Safety

The major responsibility for the protection of public safety is held by the Vermont State Police. The closest state police outpost is in Shaftsbury, 15 miles from Pownal Center. During recent years the need for police services has risen to the point where local enforcement seems appropriate to consider. While the costs of a municipal police service would be burdensome, the need for adequate protection remains.

A fledging Neighborhood Crime Watch organization has not thus far attracted Town wide interest. Active participation by all Town residents could be a valuable step toward enhancing public safety. Under the present system, the townspeople elect a Constable. However the Constables cannot be expected to provide around the clock protection. The Constable has limited authority, while the second constable position was changed to the Animal Control Officer. Although the Animal Control officer position has greatly improved response time and handling of animal problems there is still a need for a holding area for animals that are taken in by the town. The town runs a yearly rabies clinic but is still in need of an accurate dog census to help prevent the spread of this disease.

7.6 The Solomon Wright Library

Pownal's Main Street library was built in 1966, being the first library in Vermont to be granted funds from the Lyndon B. Johnson Library Services and Construction Act. The pleasant brick-faced colonial type structure was constructed using no town tax dollars. Matching funds were raised with donations from Pownal residents, businesses and friends. In the fiscal year 1995-96 the library board was able to raise monies to add a much needed 576 sq. ft. addition that included a community room and librarian's office.

Additions to the library collection are now catalogued using donated computer equipment in the new office. Cataloguing is easier and faster and the volunteer staff is able to put more new items per week on the shelves. The number of items in the collection remains around 20-30,000 with periodic necessary weeding of outdated materials. Patrons are now able to borrow videos, books on tape/cd and dvd/cds.

The book budget for our small library is not large but with donations from townspeople and free interlibrary loan service Pownal residents are able to easily access the material(s) they need. Since 1993 the library has offered this service and research assistance to supplement our collections.

In the past few years the adult and juvenile reference collections have been updated and supplemented by the Public Access computers that are available for all patrons. The library continues to subscribe to the Vermont Online Library for the residents of Pownal. This 24/7 service includes home/office/library access to information databases geared to all age levels from many general and specialized sources with full text capabilities. Patrons receive access instructions at the library.

Staffed by volunteers, the library is open 16-18 hours per week with both evening and weekend hours to serve the needs of the community. "The Solomon Wright Public Library is committed to provide informational access and services for the continued enjoyment, educational growth and enrichment of all its community residents. Special attention is given to young and/or new readers in all of these areas to promote an informed citizenry." With the continued cooperation of the Retired Senior Volunteer program and other interested residents, the Director is able to ensure the goals set by the trustees in the aforementioned statement are reached to the satisfaction of each patron. Board meetings are open to the public and are on the third Thursday of each quarter. Newsletters are available quarterly which include upcoming events.

An excellent collection of Native American arrowheads and artifacts, the gift of the late Gordon Sweeney of Bennington is periodically on display. The addition of the community room allows the library to display works of area artists and thematic educational and/or historical collections more often. Gerald and Nancy Lubeck prints along with donated art work are displayed on a rotating basis. Donated family genealogies, town history material, and genealogy forms/online assistance is kept on file for use in the library and is supplemented with access to the Pownal Historical Society's information online.

Surplus books and materials are placed on sale periodically at reduced prices to add to the library's budget. With the funds raised the Director has been able to purchase requested materials, curtains, printer for the computer, educational puzzles and program prizes. Without the generosity of area supporters it would be very difficult to maintain a collection that is up-to-date and offer special programs along with maintaining the library building, utilities, etc.

One of the goals mentioned in a previous report has been achieved! The town of Pownal now supports the library at the state recommended minimum per capita based on the 2000 Federal census data. With this specified criteria finally in place the library board and director were able to apply for state standards. The Vermont Department of Libraries awards this standards certification to libraries that: have policies up-to-date, offer free service to all, have specific designated budget items, spend per capita amount for materials, offer interlibrary loan, board and director developing plans of service for the community, reports are made to the town and the DOL, have the recommended consistent scheduled hours per week, and meet other standards that help ensure good service for the townspeople. Notification received this month that Vermont Minimum Standards were met for the 2006 year. This first time library achievement will be celebrated along with the 40th anniversary of service in the Main Street building in the spring of '06!

Future goals set by the trustees and Director will include working toward state minimum standards each year with recommended improvements and updated policies as needed, investigation into an improved circulation system appropriate for small libraries, expanded and updated web page, continued updating of collections and offering programming for all ages. Freeman Grant funds enabled the library to offer more programming over the past three-year period. The effort to direct some part of the budget toward programming will continue due in part to improve public relations for the library, the entertainment and educational benefits of the material/topic presented and interaction among the participants which strengthens the social fabric of our small rural town. Building upkeep along with considerations for future building expansion/changes are concerns that the board works to address as needed. Continued cooperation with the Historical Society and the area Tutorial center, the AARP Tax Aide Service, area Book Club, tutors/home schoolers, and providing group meeting space, will continue to enhance our service and better serve Pownal.

7.7 Education

Pownal’s educational needs are served by the town’s elementary school and the Mount Anthony Union High School District #14. The Pownal School demographics analysis shows the enrollment increased and then leveled off during the 1980’s and the start of the 1990’s. The recent enrollment trends have stabilized in both Pownal’s elementary and secondary population. Future school population is shown to increase by over 200 students as we go through the 1990’s.

The number of births recorded in Pownal over the past nine years is shown in the following table. A trend similar to that for school enrollments is evident. It is expected that the number of entering students will increase in the next five years.

POWNAL BIRTHS RECORDED

1990	32
1991	24
1992	31
1993	36
1994	34
1995	24
1996	26
1997	31
1998	25
1999	27

SOURCE: Pownal Town Reports Vermont Department of Health

Pownal's elementary school has a capacity of 410 students, with 21 available classrooms. Current enrollment is 284 students, 134 below that level. The Vermont Public School Approval Standards state that K-3 classes may have an average of 20 students per teacher, and 4-6 classes an average of 25 students per teacher, except where paraprofessionals are used to compensate. Of the 21 classrooms available, four are special purpose classrooms. Pownal School has not reached its population capacity.

As of February, 2005, there are 32 students in the seventh grade, 37 students in the eighth grade, 45 students in the ninth, 39 in the tenth, 41 in the eleventh, and 40 students in the twelfth. With the completion of the new wastewater disposal facility, there will be the potential for expansion.

Currently, the Pownal School District owns the Oak Hill School building on Oak Hill School Road, the Senior Center on North Pownal Road and the Pownal Elementary School on Schoolhouse Road.

7.8 Utilities

Central Vermont Public Service Corp. (CVPS) provides electrical service throughout Pownal. CVPS generates and purchases electricity from a variety of sources and is the transmission carrier. Until such time as retail wheeling (free market choice) becomes available to Pownal consumers, efforts should be made to ensure a reliable source of energy and at rates more favorable and comparable to other states and regions. There is however the need in some areas of town for three-phase powers both for agriculture and commercial use.

7.9 Communication

Rapid changes in technology and consumer demand have generated a range of new services from transmission of data over the internet to cellular communications. New and expanded infrastructure is required to support these relatively new ventures. In some cases it may result in the replacement and upgrading of cable to consumers or in the case of cellular wireless facilities it might involve towers for the transmission of signals. Pownal should ensure that services are or will be available for its residents while assuring that the siting/ replacement of such facilities are environmentally compatible. To avoid over-proliferation of facilities by competing carriers, the same infrastructure should be utilized (as in co-location on towers) or routes vs. developing new corridors.

8.0 MUNICIPAL FINANCES

The following section summarizes Pownal's municipal finances.

TAX BURDEN

Pownal has few industrial taxpayers and therefore the tax burden of all Pownal property owners' increases proportionally as the Town expenses increase. Vermont has a Statewide Education tax law. All properties on the education grand list are classified as either homestead or nonresidential. A statewide education tax, imposed at different rates, is applied to those two classes of property. For example, in 2005 the Vermont base rate for non-residential property was \$ 1.51 per \$ 100 of assessed value. This was adjusted to reflect the common level of appraisal (CLA) in Pownal. The CLA is the ratio of the assessed value of property in Pownal to the latest estimate (by the State) of fair market value of that same property. Because Pownal had a complete reappraisal in 2005, the CLA was calculated to be 113 % for that year giving a non-residential tax rate of \$ 1.3312 (\$ 1.51 divided by 1.13). The Vermont base education rate for homestead property in 2005 was \$ 1.02. This was increased by Pownal's education spending adjustment of 1.37726 and divided by the CLA giving a homestead education tax rate of \$ 1.2385. Vermont allows some tax relief on education taxes based on income. Eligible Vermonters can receive an income-based adjustment to their school taxes.

Table 1 show the expenditure budget for the last six years has not kept up with inflation, the first annual payment of \$ 122,800 on a \$ 2,000,000 Sewer Bond was in 2005. This flat tax was \$ 77.29 for developed properties and \$38.64 for land only parcels. Ballot Article expenses have increased substantially. The voters must be more aware that each article approved at the polls results in increased taxes. The Road Budget has generally increased each year. With 89 miles of hilly roads to maintain it is difficult to do an adequate service without increasing the expenditures substantially. The School Budgets have increased with inflation because the majority of expenses consist of employee pay and benefits. The School Board has been pro-active to be sure that the school facilities are upgraded to have an excellent learning environment with minimum utility costs.

Table 1
EXPENDITURE BUDGETS

Tax Year	General Budget	Ballot Articles	Road budget	School Budget
2005	\$ 560,190 (1)	\$ 190,790	\$ 628,850 (2)	\$ 5,916,570 (3)
2004	541,749	183,190	561,750	5,761,728
2003	486,300	175,290	516,450	5,725,090
2002	459,820	167,390	488,510	5,099,780
2001	389,040	160,890	479,150	4,896,352
2000	353,580	168,022	456,750	4,587,880

- (1) Plus \$ 122,800 Sewer Bond beginning in 2005.
- (2) Includes 8% (\$ 50,000) added contingency
- (3) K -12

Table 2 shows the slow increase in the Grand List in earlier years. The Town had a reappraisal in 2005.

Table 2

GRAND LIST AND TAXES ASSESSED

Tax Year	Grand List	Taxes Accessed	Tax Rate	
			Homestead	Per \$ 100 Non-Resident
2005	\$ 1,948,619	\$ 3,627,430	\$ 1.76 (1)	\$ 1.85 (1)
2004	1,290,105	3,288,964	2.47	2.66
2003	1,280,270	3,504,706	2.73	
2002	1,269,875	3,212,922	2.52	
2001	1,262,358	2,932,935	2.32	
2000	1,254,208	2,630,293	2.09	

(1) Plus \$ 77.29 Sewer Bond Flat Tax per developed parcel; \$ 38.74 for undeveloped parcels.

Table 3 lists the Delinquent Tax burden that must be absorbed by the General Fund and in turn by the taxpayers. The Delinquent Tax Collector takes a very proactive action in collecting unpaid taxes.

Table 3

DELINQUENT TAXES

Tax Year	Uncollected Taxes
2004	\$ 58,914
2003	31,500
2002	13,913
2001	7,718
2000	5,159
1997-1999	4,001
Total Delinquent	\$ 121,205

Financial Accounting

The Annual Town Report reflects accurately the financial health and transactions of the Town. The Town has a professional audit performed every year.

The Annual Town Report is aimed at supplying four major aspects of the Town's financial condition:

1. Previous year's financial transactions
2. Current year's financial transactions
3. Next year's proposed budgets
4. Designated Funds for future Capital Program expenses

The Selectmen and the Public also have available monthly financial reports of the current activities in order to review and control the exact financial conditions of the Town.

Capital Programming

Several long term Capital Programs are underway at the present. The major project is the construction of an estimated \$ 29,000,000 Wastewater system that covers the three village centers. Recent accomplishments include the Transfer Station and Road Department buildings. Funds have been set aside for the North Pownal bridge project and future equipment needs. A more formal 5-year and 10-year Program should be a priority so both short term and long term goals may be budgeted to eliminate undue fluctuation of tax burdens on the taxpayers. For instance, the Town Office is too small to accommodate employees and their files and no formal plan has been put in place to finance a new facility even though a purchase of property near the town hall for a possible future town buildings was done in early 2006. There are too many demands on the limited resources to accommodate all capital needs. On June 30, 2005 Pownal had \$ 497,000 in designated funds to be used on future expenditures. This shows that several long-term proposed projects are being addressed.

Goals

1. Avoid drastic fluctuations in the tax rate.
2. Continue to use a clear, consistent system of accounting in order to allow everyone to reach informed decisions.

9.0 MUNICIPAL MANAGEMENT

The employment of a Town Administrator or an Administrative Assistant would result in numerous benefits to the town. The role of the selectmen should be to make major policy decisions that will prevent crisis situations rather than responding to individual "brushfires." The details of the office can prevent the Board from acting on long-range matters at times. An assistant administrator with the proper training could research the full range of funding programs available to eliminate Pownal's most pressing

needs. The employment of a professional planner on a part-time basis would be beneficial for the same reasons and should be considered. Time availability of Select Board members is the main reason for gains or losses in knowledge and resources being obtained that could benefit the town. Current Select Board members have provided much of the services as outlined above but skill levels and knowledge among them do change as members come and go. Having a professional employee full-time dedicated to working only for the town and its interests is a win-win for all.

10.0 TRANSPORTATION

A safe, convenient, and economical transportation system is essential to the people and the Town's economy. Various modes of transportation make up the system and each should be considered in the context of need. The road system (and bridges) will continue to dominate the primary venue for transportation. Effective management and maintenance of this system will continue to be a priority of the Town. Other modes of transportation such as public transportation, B&M rail service, and proximity to airports (Bennington, North Adams, and Albany) also provide opportunities for the community. Not to be overlooked are other facilities such as sidewalks, pathways, and bicycles routes which may lead to schools, parks or may be a part of larger regional systems. Infrastructures like fiber pathways, cable plants and other hi-tech support could provide transportation for information and data that could actually reduce highway transportation needs.

Pownal currently has over 74 miles of state and municipal highways within its boundaries, one of the highest in the county. However, a comparison with similar towns in the state indicates that highway expenditures in Pownal have remained within an acceptable range. As the Town grows, it is essential to minimize highway costs by fostering development along existing roads within appropriate constraints (growth in village high-growth areas verses countryside), as noted elsewhere in this Plan. Any new roads should meet Town standards. Those roads providing access to remote areas should be discouraged, and must not require the same level of maintenance as roads near village centers or established residential areas. The continual wear and tear on local highways necessitates a sustained effort each year to maintain and/or resurface as much mileage as possible. The Town should strive to rehabilitate as many miles of roads as deteriorates annually.

To avoid unnecessary expenses, the Town should strictly enforce the Selectmen's resolution of May 15, 1964 requiring individual property owners along town streets or roads to install driveway culverts and obtain driveway permits. The Zoning Administrator should direct applicants for a new dwelling to the Road Foreman in order to obtain such permits.

Highway Classification and Mileage

Highways within Pownal can be classified under one of the following categories:

National/State

- U.S. 7 is on the National Highway System and is a “principal arterial” highway corridor along the west side of VT.
- VT 346 is a “major collector” highway linking U.S. 7, NY 22, and secondary roads in Pownal.

Class 1 Highways

- These highways are locally maintained sections of the State numbered highway system, currently there are no Class 1 Highways in Pownal.

Class 2 Highways (11.85 miles)

- Class 2 Town Highways are selected as the most important highways in each town. As far as practicable they shall be selected with the purposes of securing trunk lines of improved highways from town to town and to places which by their nature have more that normal amount of traffic. (19 VSA section 302(2))

Class 3 Highways (50.41)

- a) Class 3 Town Highways are all traveled town highways other than class 1 or 2 highways. The Select Board, after conference with a representative of the Vermont Agency of Transportation, shall determine which highways are Class 3 Town Highways.
- b) The minimum standards for Class 3 Highways are a highway negotiable under normal conditions all seasons of the year by a standard manufactured pleasure car. This would include but not be limited to sufficient surface and base, adequate drainage, and sufficient width capable to provide winter maintenance.
- c) A highway not meeting these standards, may be reclassified as provisional Class 3 Highway if within five years of the determination, it will meet all Class 3 Highway standards. (19 VSA section 302(3))

Class 4 Highways (9.08)

- Class 4 Town Highways are all other Town highways. The Select Board shall determine what highways are Class 4 Highways. (19 VSA section 302(4))

Town Trails

- Unmaintained Town rights-of-way; preserve public access along a corridor.

With trails being discussed at the state level for abandonment, the Select Board should work on clearly defining existing trails within Pownal to be outlined on a town map

before they are lost to the public use.

Scenic Roads Designations

Pownal's rolling farmland and dramatic mountain ridges contribute to the Town's status as one of the most scenic locales in the county. The web of local roads, placed over the landscape allows both residents and visitors to take pride and enjoy this visual bounty. The Town's pleasing rural atmosphere is one of the key factors in attracting new residents, and thus, helps account for its expanding population.

But as its population grows, the Town's highway network will need improvements to keep pace. For the sake of safety and speed, majestic trees lining the roads will be cut, stones from historic walls will be scattered and once pleasant views will be lost. In order to preserve the visual quality of the most scenic town roads while maintaining a high level of safety and function, the Town should identify its scenic roads and maintain them in accordance with authorized by the Scenic Highway Law of 1977.

Programmed Improvements

Capital planning on improving town offices should be done due to the various code violations in the current structure. A parcel adjacent to the town offices has been acquired for a building but design and cost planning through a capital budget program still need to be worked on.

Finishing work at the town transfer station to improve recycling and lower cost to taxpayers is ongoing and should continue to be funded to prevent roadside dumping and creation of dangerous waste dumps outside of the state-approved area.

Animal control has taken a major step forward in recent years by the town hiring an animal control officer, but Pownal still lacks the ability to manage its own processing and holding areas. A committee has recommended that the town start by having a holding area. This would greatly enable the Animal control officer to manage the program more easily. Capital planning has started and more work is being done in this area.

Policies

1. The Town should strive to maintain the existing road network in an adequate condition through an annual rehabilitation effort.
2. All new road construction should be consistent with limitations imposed by topographical conditions, natural areas, areas that have special resource value, while not further burdening municipal or emergency services.
3. All new roads should meet Town specifications.

4. Trails used throughout the town need to be defined and outlined on town maps
5. Scenic roads should be maintained in a manner which preserves their visual quality. The Scenic Road Designation program should be studied as a method of achieving this end.
6. At the time of all new road construction, pedestrian pathways and bicycle routes should also be implemented where appropriate, particularly within the growth centers.
7. Plan for coordinated site uses among separate properties, specifically along the Route 7 & 346 corridors (i.e., shared access, driveways, parking).
8. Discourage road extensions that would increase local spending on road operations and maintenance.
9. The use of traffic calming techniques and access management should be used in the village centers.

11.0 HISTORIC RESOURCES AND PRESERVATION

Pownal Historical Society

The Pownal Historical Society, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization founded in 1994 by a group of people interested in learning more about the history of Pownal. We welcome the participation and involvement of any interested persons and encourage all members and interested parties to attend our Historical Society meetings held on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Solomon Wright Public Library.

The Society's goals include raising public awareness of the history of Pownal, stimulating our children's interest in the history of Pownal, cultivating an awareness of Pownal's founding fathers and its early inhabitants, gathering and preserving historical data and artifacts, and sharing with other communities the data which might be relevant to their history. Throughout the course of each year we search for and organize all relevant historical data, solicit memberships, and organize fundraising events.

Society programs and activities include presentations by speakers on a range of historical subjects, collection of oral histories through 'memories of Pownal Past' programs, publication of The Pownal Gateway newsletter which features stories about early and more recent Pownal people and places, maintenance of the Town website at www.pownal.org, outreach to Pownal Elementary School on local history-based projects, cemetery clean-up projects, and antique appraisal fairs. We also participate in the annual Vermont Historical Society Fair in Tunbridge.

The Pownal Historical Society History Center is located at the Solomon Wright Public Library; its goal is to make the history of Pownal accessible for all. Our Project

Center serves as the base for working on project activities that as completed are added to the historical resources available at the History Center.

In 1974 the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation prepared an initial inventory of historic sites. Properties/sites were photographed and documented. In some instances structures no longer exist or may have been removed due to hazardous or deteriorating conditions. Copies of the original survey can be reviewed at the Town Office or the Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC). The Town should seek state assistance or a grant to undertake a more in-depth assessment of historic resources for future reference and bringing attention to significant historic resources before they are inadvertently converted or lost.

12.0 RECREATION

The Pownal Recreation Commission provides a four-week summer program for Pownal residents from pre-kindergarten to the sixth grade. The program is held at the Pownal Elementary School. The program provides supervised activities in a variety of fields.

The committee offers its bookkeeping services to the Pownal Tee Ball and Farm League, Pownal Little League, and The Pownal Youth Soccer organization and maintains a fund for the tennis and basketball courts at the elementary school.

In 1990 Pownal residents were asked to complete a questionnaire regarding town needs. Of those responding, 57% felt recreational facilities were inadequate. Currently, there are a number of facilities which serve a portion of the total communities needs. These include:

- The North Pownal Ball Field
- The Pownal Elementary School Field
- Barber's and Thompson's Ponds (private access)
- State Wildlife Management Area
- Hiking Trails
- The Green Mountain Race Track

Policies

1. The Town should explore the various alternatives for improving recreation opportunities for its citizens.
2. Lands adjacent to streams and water bodies which serve a recreational function should be protected from adverse impacts of development.
3. Any community development strategy should take into account the need for recreational facilities.
4. Investments in recreational facilities should be to the extent possible, located

conveniently to all members of the community.

13.0 ENERGY

13.1 Overview

Sharp fluctuations in the prices of fuel oil and gasoline have vividly demonstrated that energy is a scarce resource subject to quantity, management and distribution. Energy conservation and the use of renewable energy resources provide opportunity at the local level to influence overall consumption and resulting cost to consumers. Larger users/consumers may have less choice in their dependence and at some point there may be greater choice for all consumers by selecting the most competitive suppliers/brokers and choice of energy source such as green energy. Wood resources in Pownal are considerable and higher elevations may in some locations lend themselves to wind energy. This plan encourages the use of renewable energy resources and takes into account the environmental policies in Section 3.0. The use of current energy sources can also be influenced by conservation and effective land-use policies, including an efficient land-use pattern. The new sewer system will help concentrate future development in an energy-efficient land-use pattern. Energy conservation measures are encouraged for all building construction and reconstruction. The siting and orientation of buildings to maximize solar exposure is encouraged when feasible.

13.2 Goals

1. Assure a safe and reliable supply of energy to meet the reasonable needs of the businesses and residents of Pownal.
2. Make energy choices which maintain or improve environmental quality.
3. Encourage the development of renewable energy resources.
4. Continue to investigate the use of existing hydroelectric facility in North Pownal.
5. Strive for the most efficient use of each energy source, matching the fuel to the end use.
6. Assure an equitable and affordable energy supply for consumers.
7. Promote education and awareness of energy consumption, cost, and conservation measures and alternatives.
8. Assure that energy-related facilities are properly sited with consideration to natural and scenic resources and environmental impacts.

13.3 Policies and Actions

1. All practical energy-conservation measures should be taken during the siting, design, and construction or reconstruction of buildings; insulation standards recommended by The Department of Public Service should be adhered to. Encourage innovative energy technologies.
2. Commercial and industrial uses should include energy efficiency and conservation in their business plans and operating procedures.
3. Town and school buildings should include energy efficiency and conservation in Day-to-day operations, the use of equipment and vehicles.
4. Support programs such as community energy audits and distribute information to businesses, homeowners, and institutions.
5. The existing small hydroelectric facility/dam site may be appropriate if in productive use, provided the stream qualities are not further diminished. Absent productive use the dam/facility should be evaluated for its economic/environmental impact, and whether it should be removed in the future.
6. Where generation, transmission, and distribution lines or corridors are proposed, design plans should consider visual impacts, health-safety and environmental concerns of the town and residents.

14.0 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

What are some of the ways the proposals and policies stated in this plan can be implemented? Obviously local regulatory power will insure that many of the policies are carried forth, but there are also other routes to achieving the objectives contained herein. The following is a brief description of the different ways in which the Town Plan can be implemented, both regulatory and non-regulatory in nature.

Act 250 - Vermont's Land Use and Development Law, (Act 250) requires that a permit be obtained for projects above a certain size or impact threshold. The District Environmental Commission analyzes each project application according to 10 criteria. One of those criteria is conformance with the local plan. This allows the opportunity to provide input to the Act 250 process. In terms of addressing broad general concerns, the Town Plan can be brought into consideration with every development project subject to Act 250 review.

Federal and State Funding Programs - The Town Plan charts a direction and sets up a number of priorities for needed projects. The Town should begin to act on these suggestions by aggressively seeking federal and state assistance for environmental enhancements, economic development, and recreation, increased protection of the public safety and health, and rehabilitation of housing.

Town Plan - Pownal has had a Town Plan since 1972, and should keep its plan both up-

to-date and in effect. It is intended that the plan be reviewed and adopted as a guide to growth and development and that it be amended from time to time to reflect changing conditions and circumstances.

Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations - Like the plan, the bylaws and subdivision regulations need to be reviewed to reflect new or changing conditions and as a result of changes to the state enabling act (T. 24 VSA, Chapter 117). The existing Zoning Bylaw and subdivision regulations should be compared to the Plan to ensure consistency and for implementation to the desired goals of the Plan.

Other Ordinances - Sign, sewage disposal, junkyards, barrel burning, and other related ordinances need to be reviewed and updated as necessary.

Mapping Program - Pownal has benefited from the Geographic Information System - GIS not only in the update of the Plan and Zoning Bylaw but as a tool for development and site plan review. The Town should take advantage of new data layers as they become available. New parcel maps current preparation will prove valuable for many purposes and will be compatible with the GIS standards.

Citizen Committees - The Town will continue to encourage citizen participation at public meetings and designation of special committees as needed to address a particular issue or concern.

Coordination with Regional and State Agencies - The Town is a member of the Bennington County Regional Commission and has appointed representatives to the BCRC. It is important to have close coordination to ensure that plans and programs are mutually supportive. Assistance is also provided by other organizations such as the Bennington County Industrial Corporation (BCIC). Specific needs of the Town can be addressed through various state programs whether water supply, wastewater disposal, or transportation grants. The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board have awarded some grant funds for agricultural land preservation.

Relationship to Other Plans - The towns of Bennington, Stamford, and Woodford, VT have approved Town Plans. Pownal's Plan is largely consistent with these plans in the forest and rural areas. The Plan also takes into consideration appropriate uses in the forest district which includes the watershed/water supply sources for Williamstown, MA. It is also important that the Town Plan is consistent with the Bennington County Regional Plan so that they are mutually supportive for local and regional policy.

Smart Growth - A recent thrust in land-use planning is smart growth and suitable community development. These initiatives take the best examples of improving a community whether it's resource protection, village improvements, new infrastructure, historic preservation, etc. They also try to avoid scattered development and encourage efficient expenditure of public funds. Pownal is cognizant of the need to insure that public expenditures and new infrastructure are supportive of the community goals and will not lead to inappropriate development or scattered growth, while focusing on health

and public safety issues.

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Karen Burrington, Town Clerk
Don Prouty, Transfer Station Supervisor

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