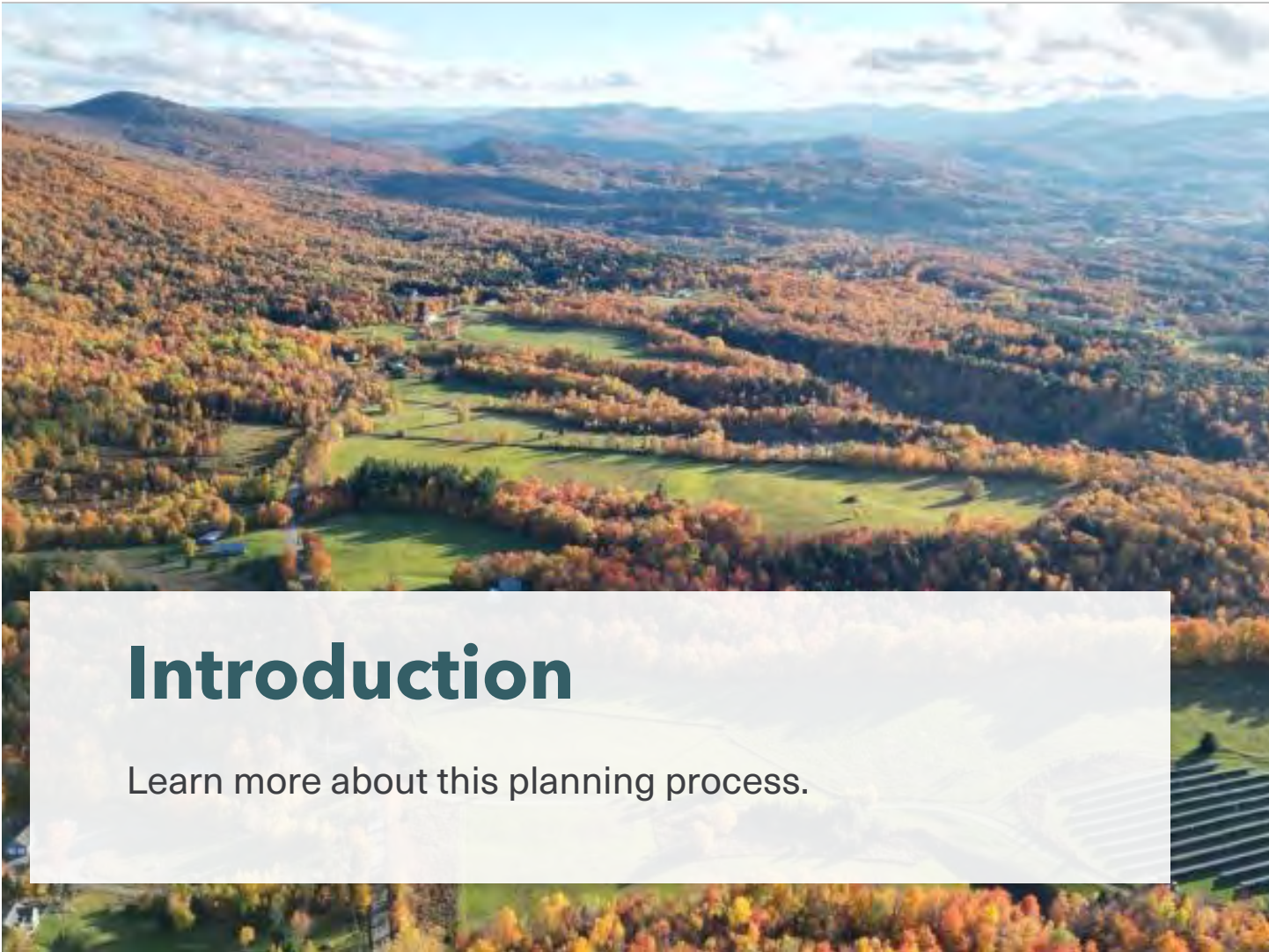


An aerial photograph of a golf course in Waterbury, Vermont, during autumn. The golf course is a vibrant green, surrounded by dense forests with trees in shades of orange, yellow, and red. In the background, rolling hills and mountains are visible under a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

Introduction

Learn more about this planning process.

Why Plan?

This Town Plan reflects the Waterbury Planning Commission's work—in close collaboration with residents, community organizations, and planning partners—to **identify a broad range of aspirations and goals for Waterbury's future**. The plan also outlines specific actions and strategies to achieve those goals.

The Town Plan serves two essential purposes. First, it is required by Vermont State law under 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117 in order to secure critical state and federal funding, maintain Act 250 and regulatory standing, and participate in programs such as

Designated Downtown and Growth Center designation. This is especially important as Waterbury focuses on flood recovery and resilience, housing, and community development. Second, the Town Plan provides focused policy direction to the Planning Commission, Select Board, and municipal staff as Waterbury works to implement its goals.



An aerial view of Waterbury Reservoir.

About this Plan

How this Plan was Built

Work on this Town Plan began in 2024 and was guided by three objectives:

First, to increase public engagement with the Town Plan.

Waterbury's previous Municipal Plan—adopted in 2018—served its purpose but may not have been widely referenced by the general public. The Planning Commission sought to change that. By presenting this plan in an interactive, web-based format and investing heavily in community outreach, the Commission aimed to produce a plan that residents will actually read, use, and hold their local government accountable to.

Second, a more actionable plan. Goals and aspirations are only meaningful when paired with specific implementation strategies.

This Town Plan identifies concrete actions and assigns responsibility for every stated goal. Consultation with Waterbury's Town commissions, civic organizations, and community partners was instrumental in shaping those implementation strategies. Specific actions—regulatory updates, new programs, targeted studies, and capital investments—will help drive the change the community envisions.

Third, a well-organized, chapter-based document. The Planning Commission maintained a traditional chapter structure organized by topic area, providing a familiar framework for readers while introducing the accessibility and interactivity that the online format makes possible.



Aerial view of Route 100 and Winooski St in Waterbury.

What We Heard

Built by the Community, for the Community

The planWTB process was driven by a sustained commitment to community participation. Beginning in 2024, the Planning Commission reached out to a wide range of town organizations and civic groups, inviting them to contribute input for specific plan chapters. Organizations that participated in the process included Town staff, the Waterbury Public Library, the Housing Task Force,

the Conservation Commission, Discover Waterbury, the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC), and Waterbury LEAP.

Community Survey

A community-wide survey, distributed in the fall of 2024 through Front Porch Forum, the Waterbury Roundabout, the Town's Facebook page, and physical flyers throughout Town, drew **409 responses—just under 10% of Waterbury's voting population.**



Visioning Sessions

Building on those results, the Planning Commission facilitated four public Visioning Sessions in early 2025, offered in both in-person and online formats. Sessions covered each chapter of the Town Plan: Local Economy, Facilities, Utilities, Local Government, Housing, Energy and Transportation, Natural Resources, Flood Resilience, Recreation, Historic and Cultural Resources and Land Use. Facilitator summaries from all four sessions were compiled and made publicly available on the planWTB website. Sessions were held on March 13, March 20, April 2, and April 29, 2025.

Chapter-Specific Public Meetings for Aspirations, Goals, and Strategies

The Commission then held a series of chapter-specific public meetings:

Date	Topic
August 25, 2025	Local Economy, Utilities & Facilities, Local Government
September 8th, 2025	Housing
September 22, 2025	Energy, Transportation
October 13, 2025	Natural Resources, Flood Resilience
October 27, 2025	Historic & Cultural Resources, Recreation
November 10th, 2025	Land Use

This plan was shaped by the Waterbury community at every step.

**View full
responses to
the survey**

**Survey
Results
Summary**

**Visioning
Sessions
Summary**



Stowe St in Waterbury.

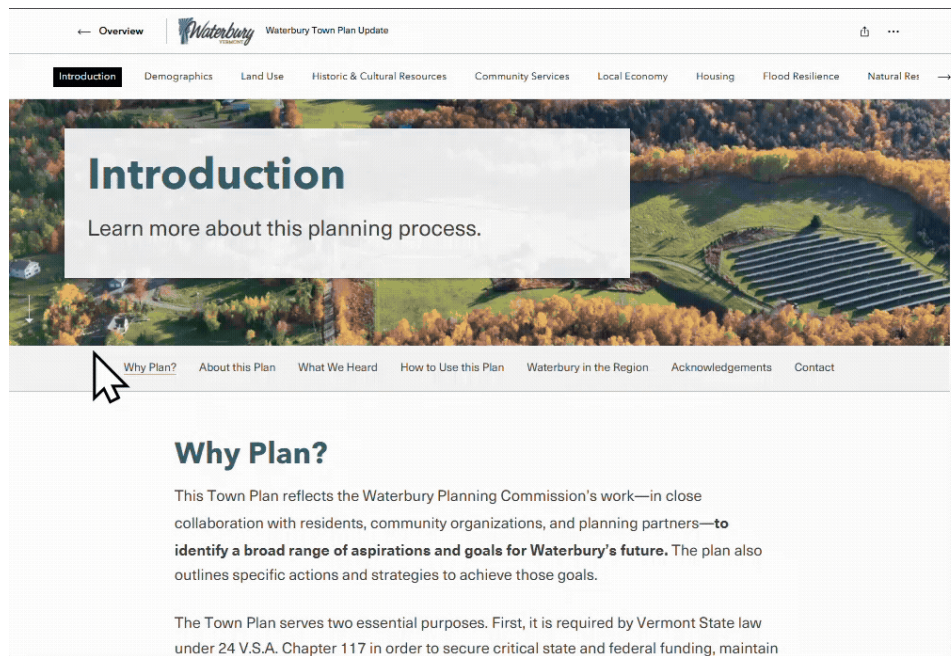
How to Use this Plan

The Waterbury Town Plan covers a wide range of topics that affect daily life in the community, from housing, transportation, and recreation to natural resources, economic development, energy, and municipal services. While each chapter focuses on a specific topic, together they tell a broader story about Waterbury's future and provide guidance for decisions made by residents, businesses, Town boards, and partner organizations.

Plan Navigation

Navigating Between Chapters

If you are looking for information on a particular topic, you can jump directly to the relevant chapter by using the tabs at the top of this website. Depending on your window size, you may need to click the arrow at the top right to scroll through all plan chapters.



Navigating between plan chapters.

Navigating Within Chapters

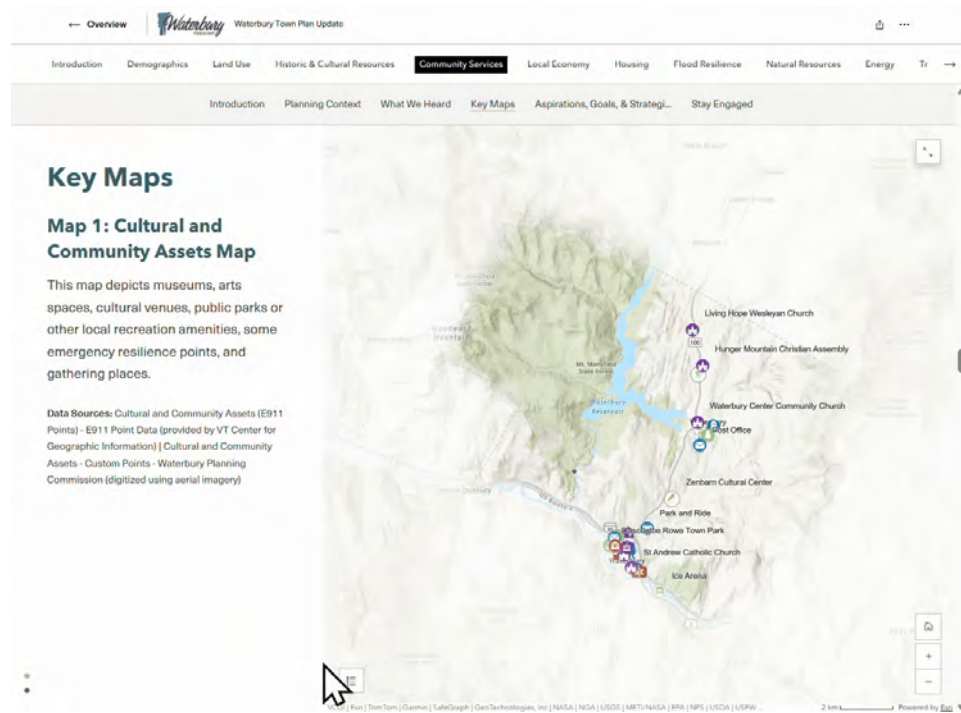
To navigate to different sections within each chapter, use the secondary set of tabs along the top of the page or scroll vertically through the page.



Navigating within chapters.

Using the Interactive Maps

Most chapters have a section of interactive "Key Maps." Click the bottom left corner icon to see the map's legend. Use the plus and minus buttons on the bottom right to zoom in and out of the map. Click and drag to move the map around. Click on specific points to see more information.



Navigating interactive maps.

How the Plan Chapters are Organized

Most chapters follow a common format:

- Introduction – Why the topic matters to Waterbury.
- Planning Context – Existing conditions, trends, opportunities, and challenges.
- What We Heard – Key themes from the public engagement process.
- Key Maps – Interactive maps that display relevant data, locations, and analyses.
- Aspirations, Goals, and Strategies – The community's vision and actions for the future.

- Tracking Progress – Suggested measures to evaluate implementation over time.
- Stay Engaged – Opportunities for residents to remain involved and support implementation.

This plan and this format satisfies Vermont's municipal planning requirements while making the Plan easier to navigate and use. Readers interested in understanding existing conditions may focus on the Planning Context sections, while those looking for future priorities and actions may focus on the Goals and Strategies.

Where Should I Look?

Because communities are interconnected, many topics appear in more than one chapter. Recreation, for example, is addressed in the Community Services chapter through programs and facilities, in the Transportation chapter through trails and connections, in the Natural Resources chapter through outdoor access and stewardship, and in the Local Economy chapter through tourism and outdoor recreation businesses. Similarly, housing is discussed not only in the Housing chapter, but also in Land Use, Transportation, Energy, Municipal Services, and Flood Resilience because housing decisions affect infrastructure, affordability, mobility, energy use, and exposure to natural hazards. Readers should expect some overlap between chapters, as many community issues cannot be addressed through a single topic area.

If I want to...	First, look in...	If you don't find what you're looking for, also look in...
Understand population, age, income, and workforce trends	<u>Demographics</u>	<u>Housing</u> , <u>Local Economy</u>
Learn about future growth patterns and where development should occur	<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Natural Resources</u>
Understand housing affordability, availability, and future housing needs	<u>Housing</u>	<u>Demographics</u> , <u>Land Use</u>
Learn about roads, sidewalks, trails, transit, and transportation projects	<u>Transportation</u>	<u>Land Use</u> , <u>Community Services</u> , <u>Energy</u>

If I want to...	First, look in...	If you don't find what you're looking for, also look in...
Understand flood risks, resilience projects, and hazard mitigation efforts	<u>Flood Resilience</u>	<u>Natural Resources</u>
Learn about forests, waterways, wildlife habitat, and conservation priorities	<u>Natural Resources</u>	<u>Flood Resilience</u> , <u>Land Use</u>
Understand energy use, renewable energy, and climate-related goals	<u>Energy</u> .	<u>Natural Resources</u> , <u>Housing</u> , <u>Land Use</u>
Learn about local businesses, jobs, tourism, and	<u>Local Economy</u> .	<u>Natural Resources</u> , <u>Land Use</u>

If I want to...	First, look in...	If you don't find what you're looking for, also look in...
economic development about recreation facilities, education, libraries, health services, and community programs	<u>Community Services</u>	<u>Municipal Services</u>
Learn about Town government, utilities, public safety, and municipal facilities	<u>Municipal Services</u>	<u>Land Use, Energy</u>
Explore Waterbury's history, cultural resources, arts organizations, and public spaces	<u>Historic & Cultural Resources</u>	<u>Land Use</u>
Understand how all of the Plan's	Tracking Progress sections throughout	

If I want to...	First, look in...	If you don't find what you're looking for, also look in...
recommendations will be implemented	the Plan	

Whether you are a resident, business owner, volunteer, developer, elected official, or simply interested in Waterbury's future, this Plan is intended to serve as a practical guide for understanding community priorities and supporting informed decision-making in the years ahead.



Blue skies in Waterbury.

Waterbury in the Region

This plan will affect not only Waterbury residents but also neighboring communities, the Central Vermont Region, and the State of Vermont. Waterbury sits at a geographic and economic crossroads—a gateway community connecting the Mad River Valley to greater Burlington, a hub for outdoor recreation, and the

site of one of Vermont's most significant post-flood recovery and resilience efforts.

This Town Plan seeks to further goals that align with the region and serves as a foundation for cooperation with our neighbors. The Waterbury Planning Commission considered the following town plans during the process: Moretown, Duxbury, Montpelier, Bolton, Richmond and Stowe Town Plans as well as the Central Vermont Regional Plan during the development of this plan.



Aerial view of Route 100 in Waterbury.

Acknowledgements

This Town Plan update was a significant undertaking, and it reflects the dedication of many people over many months.

We want to thank the following individuals and groups for their essential contributions to this plan:

- Julia Randall and Alex Belenzs at SE Group
- Neal Leitner, Town of Waterbury Planning Director
- Martha Staskus, former Planning Commission Chair
- The Conservation Commission, Housing Task Force, Waterbury Historical Society, Discover Waterbury, Waterbury LEAP, and CVRPC—whose members gave their time and expertise to make this plan reflect the full breadth of Waterbury's civic life.

Most importantly, we thank the residents and stakeholders who attended visioning sessions, completed the survey, showed up to public meetings, and cared enough about Waterbury's future to make their voices heard. This plan belongs to you.

Sincerely,

Dana Allen, Chair Waterbury Planning Commission

Contact Information

Waterbury Planning & Zoning 28 North Main Street, Suite #1
Waterbury, VT 05676 Phone: (802) 244-1012 Email:
nleitner@waterburyvt.com

Created for the Town of Waterbury by SE Group.

planWTB | Waterbury Planning Commission | 2026 [Insert final adoption date
once known.]

An aerial photograph of Waterbury, Vermont, showing a mix of historic brick buildings and modern structures, with a church steeple visible in the center. The town is nestled in a valley with green hills in the background under a blue sky with scattered clouds.

Demographics

Learn more about how Waterbury has changed over time.

Summary

Understanding Waterbury's demographic profile is essential for understanding the character of Waterbury, its people, economics, education and age distribution and age distribution that is essential to plan for the future.

At a Glance

- Population: 5,405 (2024)
- Median Age: 43.2
- Median Household Income: \$103,917

- Poverty Rate: 7.9%
- Bachelor's Degree or Higher: ~52%
- Residents 65+: ~25%

Key Takeaways for Planning Purposes:

#1 The Risk of Out Migration and Slow or No Population Growth



5,405
Population (2024)

Waterbury's population has grown slowly since 1980, increasing from 4,303 residents reaching 5,405 residents in 2024, an increase of about 1,100 people or about 26% over 64 years, or less than 1% per year. This mirrors the growth of much of the state. However, what's past is not a prologue. According to the US census, Vermont experienced population decline in 2024 and 2025 due to out migration, an aging population, and a slowing birth rate. Given this, even retaining our historical growth rate will require change.

Why this matters for planning: A static or declining population in Waterbury will increase the tax burden of residents, pressure the local economy, school system, and other community services. In order for Waterbury to maintain its historical growth rate of slow and steady population growth, the town will need a planning framework that can support the development of sufficient and affordable housing and a compelling set of community services, facilities, and infrastructure to attract and retain residents.

#2 Waterbury Has an Aging Population and a Declining Birth Rate



43.2

Median Age

Waterbury's median age has risen to 43 years, which is about the same as Washington County and the State, but significantly older than the median age in the US of 39.4 years. In 2025, about 25% of Waterbury Residents were over the age of 65. Vermont's birth rate which historically more than offset deaths, has declined and is now the lowest in the nation according to the CDC. In Waterbury, the natural rate of increase (births less deaths) has decreased substantially since 2020 and based on current trends will turn negative over the next decade. Vermont writ large is experiencing this same trend, resulting in a declining school age population and a higher cost burden per resident to maintain government services.

Why it matters for planning: As the share of older residents grows and the natural rate of population increase declines, Waterbury may experience increased demand for accessible housing, transportation options, healthcare services, and opportunities that allow residents to age in place. The declining student population, a follow on to a declining birth rate, and state policy encouraging district consolidation which could impact school operations. Brookside Primary School is the only school within Waterbury. Finding a means to maintain services and amenities that attract and support younger households will be important to the community's long-term vitality.

#3 Decreasing Household

Size

The number of people living in a home ("households") is shrinking in Waterbury. According to the Housingdata.org, in the last 25 years, Waterbury's average household size fell from 2.42 to 2.31. This tracks closely with the broader trend within the state, which saw household size shrink from an average 2.44 to 2.28. Such a change

 ~ **25%**
Residents 65+

is increasing the demand for housing despite a stagnant to shrinking population. According to the Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA), Vermont will need to increase its housing stock by 5,000-7,000 units per year to account for this change.

Why this matters for planning: Even with a static to declining population, Waterbury will likely need to increase both the number of housing units and diversity of housing types to accommodate these changes in household configurations. Along with factors identified in more detail in the Housing Chapter, demographic changes—aging population and smaller household sizes—contributes to the increases in housing demand that planners must anticipate. See the [Housing Chapter](#) for more information.

#4 Income and Poverty

Waterbury is a relatively affluent town. Median household income has grown about 80% from \$56,500 to \$103,900 from 1990 to 2024. Notably, the Town's median household income has been consistently above that of Washington County, the State and the United States. While Waterbury household income has grown, poverty in Waterbury has also grown. Between 1990 and 2024, poverty rates increased from 5.4% to 7.9% in Waterbury. Poverty rates for children are even higher.



\$103,917

Median Household Income

Why this matters for planning: While Waterbury's household incomes exceed state and national averages, rising poverty rates and affordability challenges indicate that economic prosperity is not shared equally across all residents. These trends highlight the importance of expanding housing opportunities, supporting workforce development, and maintaining

! 7.9%

Poverty Rate

access to community services for households across a range of income levels.

#5 Highly Educated Workforce

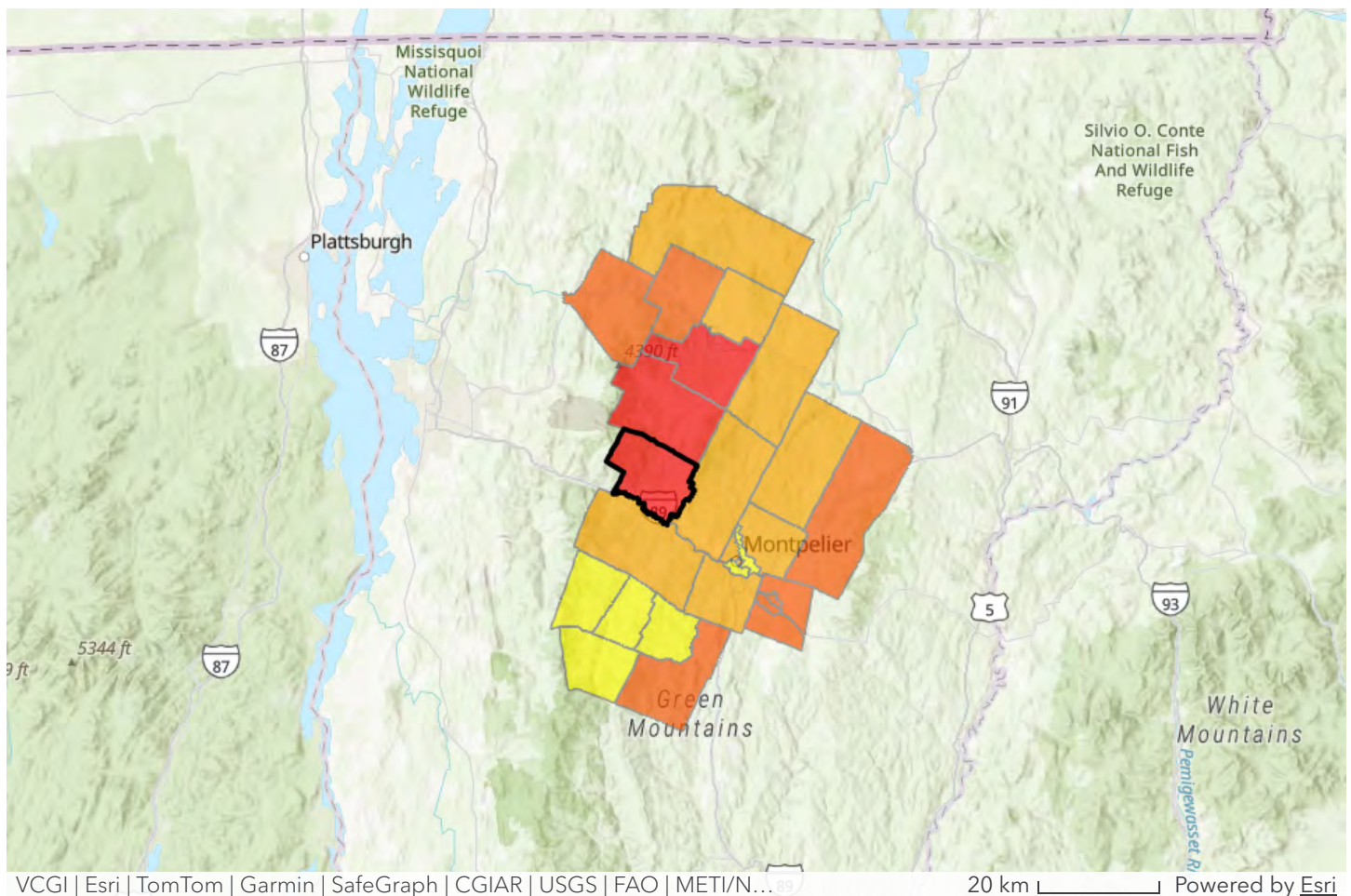
Waterbury residents are highly educated compared to state and national averages.

Approximately 52% of adults hold a bachelor's degree or higher (well above the 31.5% national average), and 91.5% have completed high school.



Attained Bachelor's Degree or Higher

Why it matters for planning: Waterbury's highly educated population is an important community asset that supports economic development, entrepreneurship, civic engagement, and workforce resilience. Maintaining a strong local economy and providing housing opportunities for workers and families will help the community retain and attract residents across a range of ages and professions.



Key Maps

Map 1: Population

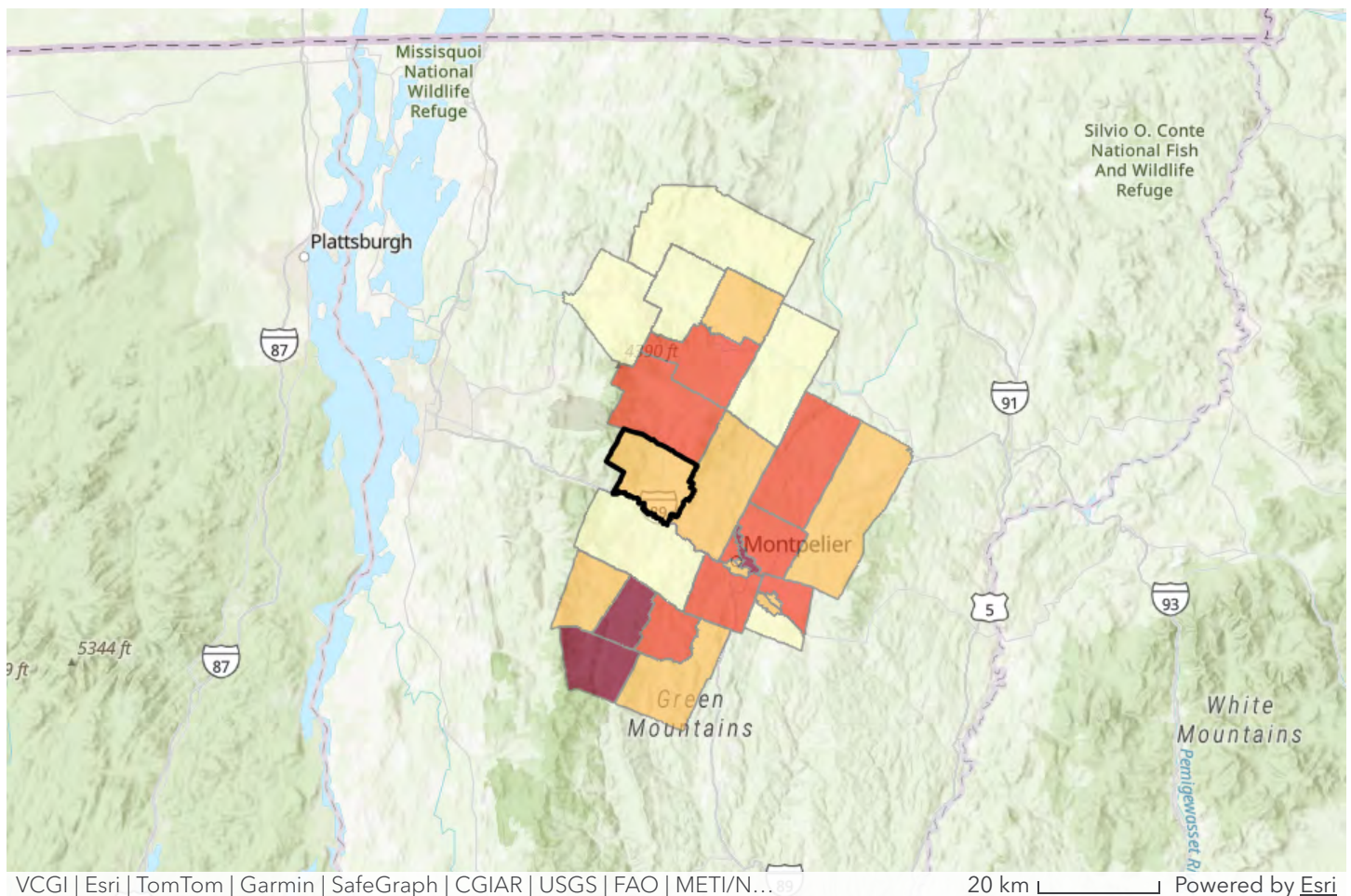
This map shows Waterbury's Total Population contrasted with surrounding towns in Washington and Lamoille counties for comparison. Waterbury has a relatively high population compared to the surrounding area.

To see Population characteristics, use the buttons below.

Population Density

Population Change - 2010-2020

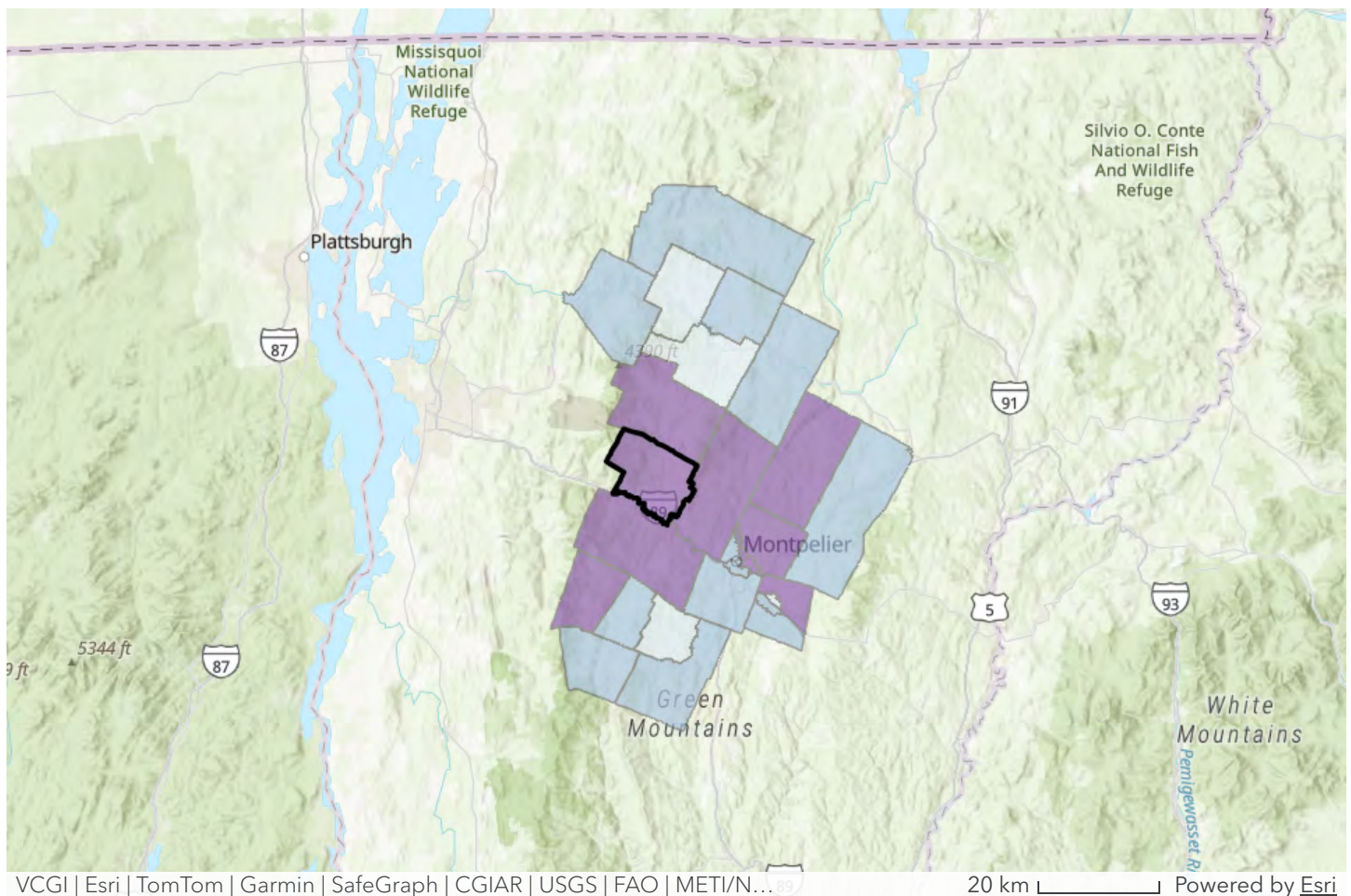
Data Source: Population (Total & Density) - US Census Data 2020 - Provided by census.gov



Map 2: Population Over 65

This map shows Waterbury's population over 65 contrasted with surrounding towns in Washington and Lamoille counties for comparison.

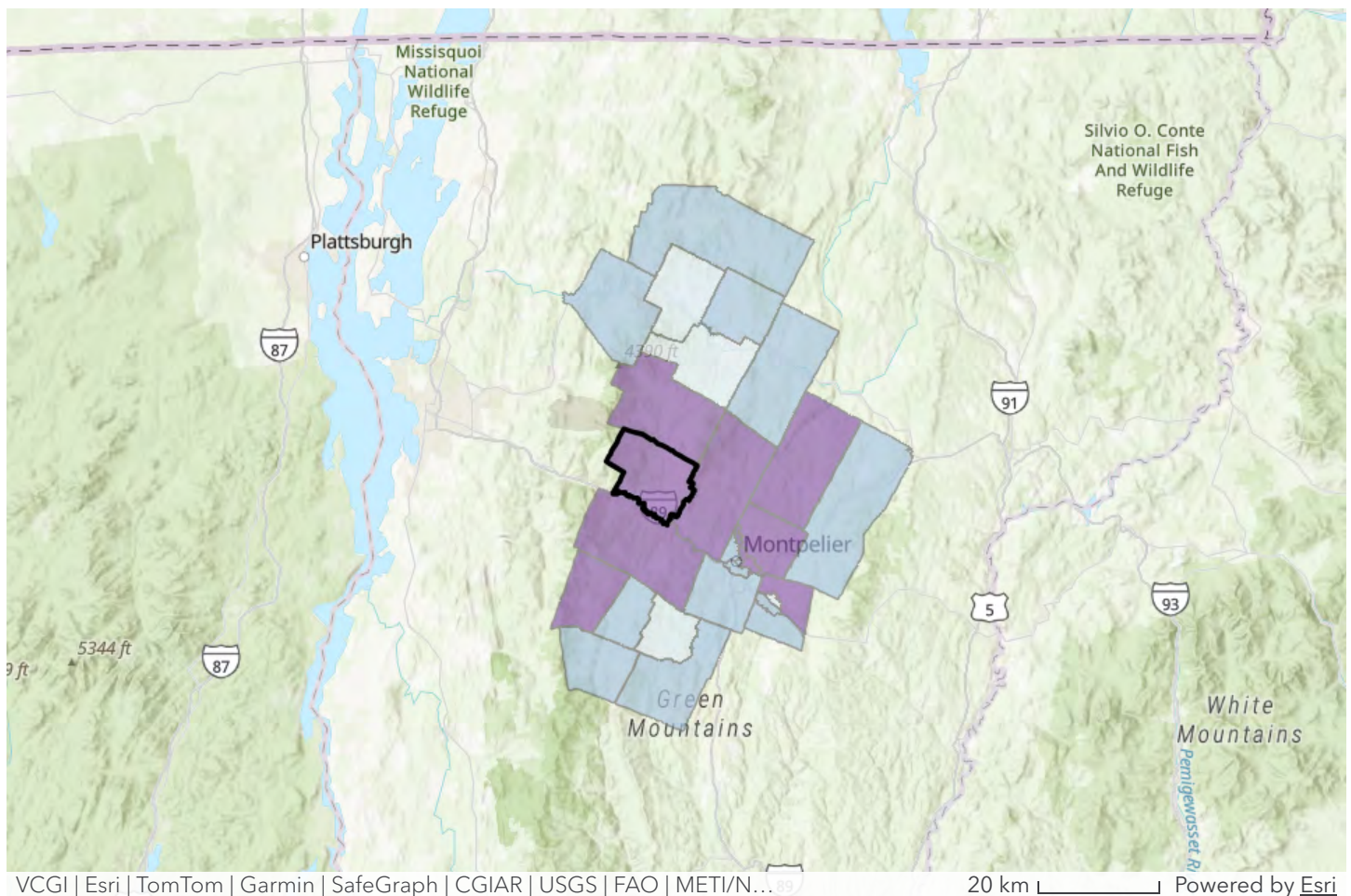
Data Source: Age Demographics - American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2019-2025 (data derived from overall population age demographics by Waterbury Planning Commission).



Map 3: Median Household Income

This map shows Waterbury's Median Household Income contrasted with surrounding towns in Washington and Lamoille counties for comparison.

Data Source: Income Demographics - American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2019-2025



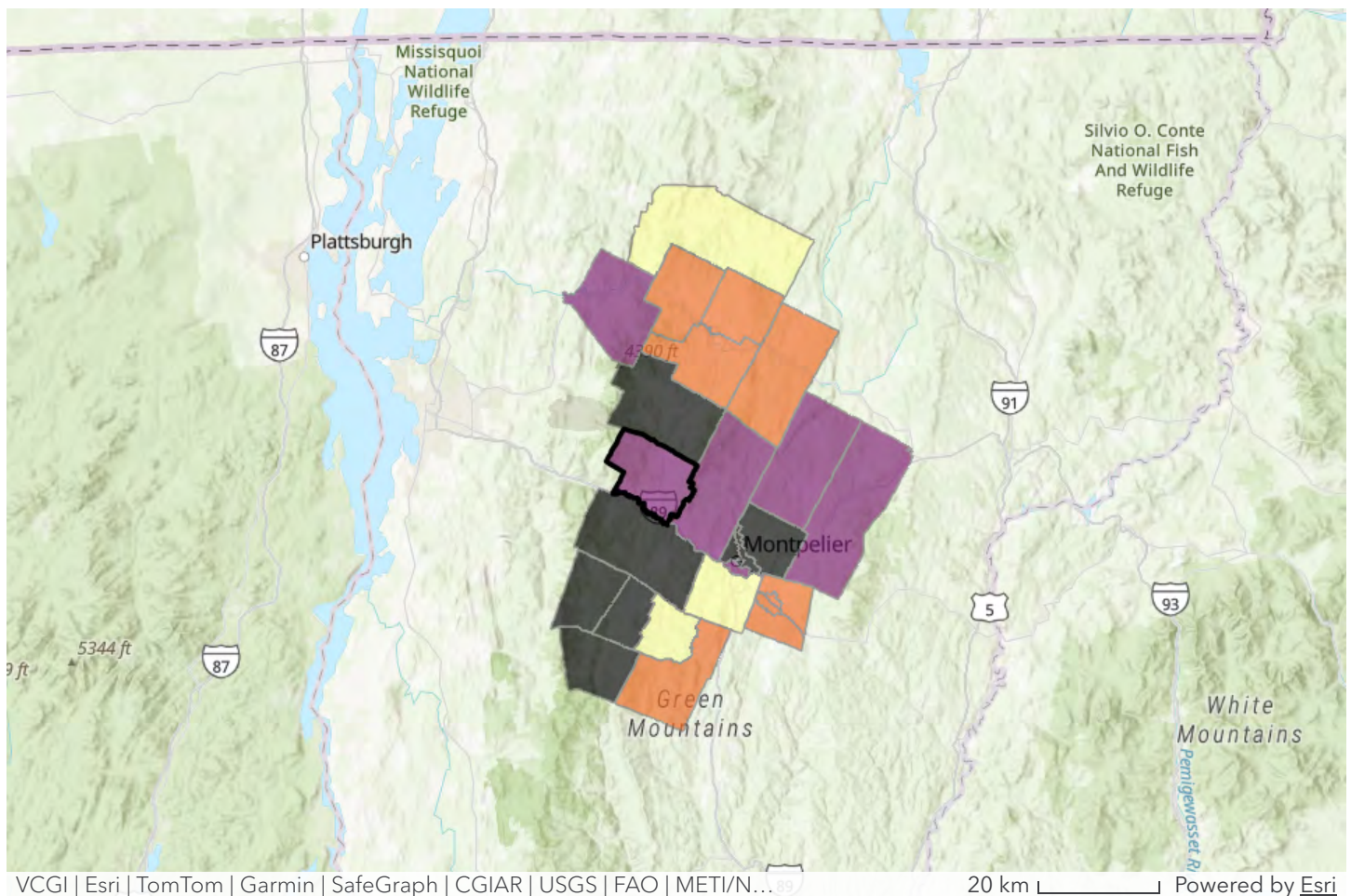
Map 4: Median Household Income

This map shows Waterbury's Median Household Income contrasted with surrounding towns in Washington and Lamoille counties for comparison.

To see population below poverty level, use the button below.

Percent Population Below Poverty Line

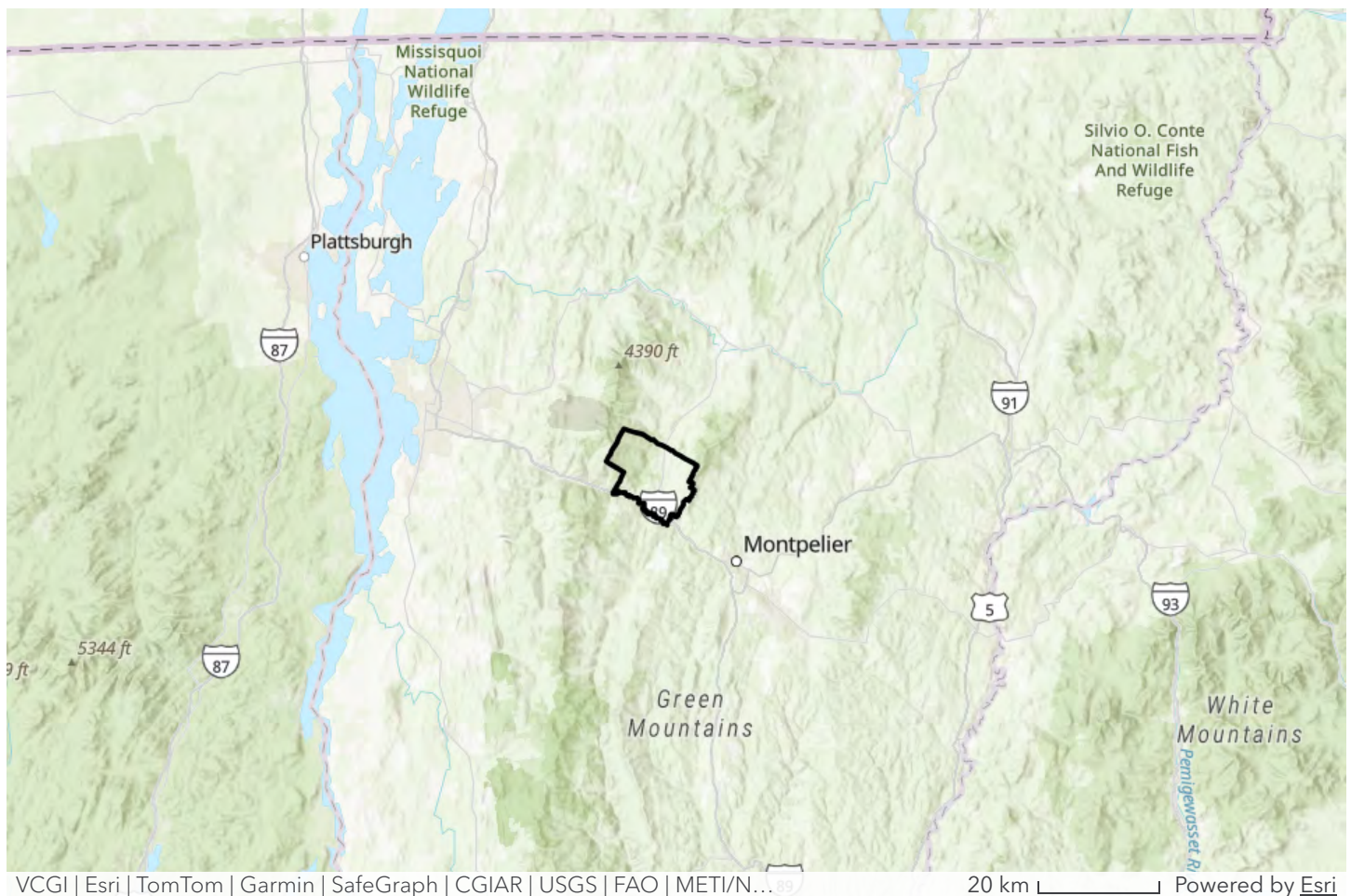
Data Source: Income Demographics - American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2019-2025



Map 5: Education

This map shows Waterbury's Percent of Adults with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher contrasted with surrounding towns in Washington and Lamoille counties for comparison.

Data Source: Education Demographics - American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2019-2025



Map 6: Housing Information

This map shows data associated with housing in Waterbury contrasted with surrounding towns in Washington and Lamoille counties for comparison.

Total Housing Units

Housing Units Occupied (Primary)

Housing Units Vacant (Non-Primary)

Occupied Means: Usual place of residence of a person or group.

Vacant Means: No one living there at the time of the Census, seasonal homes (even if visited occasionally), or units where the owner has a usual occupied residence elsewhere.

Data Source: Housing Data Demographics - American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2019-2025



Aerial view of Route 100 and Winooski St in Waterbury.

To view additional Demographic information relevant to this Comprehensive Plan update, click here:

Appendix

Created for the Town of Waterbury by SE Group.

planWTB | Waterbury Planning Commission | 2026 [Insert final adoption date once known.]



Historic & Cultural Resources

Introduction

The history and culture of a community are more than chronology and artifacts.

Communities are made up of their geographic landscapes, architectural character, local organizations, historic and cultural artifacts, and residents (past and present) expressing and acting on their desires, values, and goals. In Waterbury, these elements come together to create a shared sense of place that continues to evolve over time, connecting residents to the community's past, present, and future.

An understanding of Waterbury's history provides important context for future decisions about growth, development, and community investment. To support a strong and connected community, Waterbury must continue to invest in the organizations, places, traditions, and stories that contribute to its identity. This includes preserving and sharing local history, supporting arts and cultural activities, maintaining meaningful public spaces, and creating opportunities for all our residents to participate in civic and community life.



From left: "Phoenix Rising" by Jessica Wilson, and "The Waterbury Special" sculpture by Phillip Godenschwager, "Floodgates" by Sarah Lee Tarat.

Planning Context

The Waterbury Historical Society

The Waterbury Historical Society makes history visible in our community. By collecting, preserving, and sharing local artifacts and stories, the society seeks to educate and instill appreciation for our past and its relevance to our present and our future. They are one of Waterbury's key education resources, providing convenient access to our archives, programs, and History Center, engaging community members of all ages, researchers, and tourists interested in Waterbury's history and its relevance to the broader story of Vermont.

The Waterbury Historical Society is a volunteer-run nonprofit organization charged with stewarding the history and collections of the Town of Waterbury. The society presents quarterly programs and special events to educate and engage the public in local history. Its quarterly newsletter shares carefully researched essays as well as personal narratives from local residents, along with updates about society business. The society maintains the proper care, storage, and display of the 12,000+ artifacts—objects, documents, and photographs—in the Town's collection. The society also curates and maintains the History Center, located in the historic Dr. Janes house at the Municipal Complex.

Learn about Waterbury's history!

Waterbury's Arts & Cultural Resources

Arts, culture, and creativity are essential attributes of resilient societies, and that has proven true for Waterbury. The arts were a key element in the rebuilding of our Town after Tropical Storm Irene devastated the downtown in 2011. The arts initiatives that arose lifted hearts and awareness, allowing people to connect, heal, and celebrate their perseverance together. Following Tropical Storm Irene, the Town was able to access Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding for an arts center project. Following the storm, FEMA held a Community Fair to assess public perception of different projects, and the arts center received the highest ratings of any project that was not an infrastructure or flood resilience-related project. This revealed a community interest in and support for the arts in Waterbury that had not been identified previously. In 2012, Waterbury Activities and Cultural Center (WACC), an arts organization of 20 years, merged with an emerging group to launch Across Roads Center for the Arts. The arts have also aided in the recovery of the business sector in Waterbury by filling downtown commercial spaces with pop-up installations that helped promote vibrancy until businesses could get back up and running. Art also makes our

Town more adaptable, appealing, and user-friendly through way-finding and well placed public art.

Creative endeavors continue to be a significant part of community-building in Waterbury. Fostering the arts and arts events in Waterbury through performance, visual and written arts, and public art projects creates a sense of community well-being and connectivity and provides avenues for self or group expression to constructively foster dialogue that is inclusive, interactive, and community building. Arts and culture organizations contribute to community pride and engagement. According to the most recent (2023) US Arts and Economy Prosperity Study (AEP6), nearly 86% of respondents expressed they “would feel a great loss if this (arts/culture) activity or venue was no longer available.”

Art Events & the Local Economy

According to the US Bureau of Economic Analysis (published October 2023), the arts and cultural industries contributed over \$1.2 billion to the Vermont economy. In the most recent AEP6, data shows that arts and culture drives commerce to local businesses, calculating 1.4 million attendees to Vermont non-profit events who spent an additional average of \$34.53 in the community of the event beyond the cost of admission. This is a strong indicator for the value of the arts in Waterbury’s local economy.

In addition to their cultural and aesthetic value, the arts are an undeniable source of economic benefit in Waterbury that enhance and improve other business sectors as well. Artistic activities and events stimulate commerce in Waterbury’s restaurants, lodging, and retail shops. For example, the weekend-long Waterbury Arts Fest showcases local artists’ work and craft foods and boasts thousands of visitors to our Town each year, who also shop, dine, and visit other businesses. Additionally, River of Light Parade is in its second decade of attracting large crowds for warm cheer on a cold night each December to Waterbury. Finally, the Waterbury Rotary Club produces Vermont’s longest running live outdoor

music series, offering critical gathering opportunities and accessibility for community members all summer long.

Art & Cultural Organizations & Venues

Since Tropical Storm Irene, there are a growing number of Waterbury's arts-centered groups that are working hard to bring a variety of these resources and experiences forward in our community including: A River Runs Through It, Across Roads Center for the Arts (formerly WACC), Axel's Frame Shop & Gallery, Bridgeside Books, Grange Hall Cultural Center, Green Mountain Performing Arts, MakerSphere, Mud City Studios, New Stage Players, Phoenix Gallery and Music Hall, Discover Waterbury's Art Fest, TURNmusic, Waterbury Arts, The White Meeting House, Winterfest, Woodchuck Theater (and Film) Company, and The Zen Barn. In addition, municipal outlets and churches, a robust restaurant downtown district, dynamic studio artists, and various creative businesses fortify diversity and industry in our business sectors and contribute to a rich community life. It is critical that these, and emerging efforts in Waterbury, are encouraged to grow and work alongside each other and with other sectors to offer the services and enrichment needed for the benefit of our Town to create an open, equitable, and growing society where artists and community are welcome to participate and thrive.

Public Art in Waterbury

Public art or "placemaking" influences the way people see and connect with a place. Murals, sculpture, memorials, functional or landscaped architectural elements, community art projects, digital media, performances, and festivals all add value, providing opportunities for people to experience art—even for those who have never

set foot in a gallery, museum, or theater. Public art enhances the built environment, creates social connections, sparks economic investment, builds a distinctive sense of place, and supports cultural tourism. It can be a key attribute in making communities healthier and more vibrant.

Vermont Arts Council, 2026

Waterbury has celebrated several permanent public art installations in recent years, notably: the sculpture on the train overpass near the roundabout which honors Waterbury's legacies through depictions of prominent historical buildings; The Phoenix sculpture on Stowe Street's WDEV building commemorating the resilience of our community after Tropical Storm Irene; and Jack's Alley which beautified and repurposed an overgrown and neglected space in our downtown while celebrating Jack Carter, a unifying charismatic leader in Waterbury's civic arena. These public art projects all underwent a considered series of processes and outreach that allowed the larger community to engage in their planning and execution, producing high quality results and longer lasting impacts for community building. Public art supported by the municipality, such as these, when created in a deliberate inclusive process, provides access and opportunities to all area artists as well as a deeper experience in the outcome with more of our residents.

What We Heard

The Planning Commission conducted a Community Survey digitally and distributed throughout Town in late 2024 to gather facts and understand trends within the community and help guide informed decisions throughout this planning process. In early 2025, in-person and on-line Visioning Sessions were held to hear what elements and aspects should be maintained, evolve and/or

transform within the community. Below is what we heard from you regarding Historic & Cultural Resources in Waterbury.

Residents View Waterbury's Historic and Cultural Stewardship Positively

Survey respondents generally agreed that Waterbury does a good job identifying, protecting, and preserving important historic and cultural resources. This topic received high ratings in the Community Survey, suggesting residents view the Town's current preservation efforts as successful.

Survey respondents rated Waterbury's efforts to identify, protect, and preserve historic and cultural resources at an average of 3.8 out of 5—the highest average score among all survey topic areas.



Residents Value Waterbury's Strong Sense of Community

Community members consistently identified Waterbury's sense of community as one of the Town's defining strengths. Nearly 70% of residents surveyed expressed appreciation for the organizations, events, traditions, and public spaces that bring people together and contribute to community identity.

Sense of community ranked among the most valued aspects of Waterbury in the Community Survey.

Preserving Waterbury's Identity Matters

Residents consistently expressed appreciation for the qualities that make Waterbury unique, including its sense of community, village character, scenic beauty, and local traditions. Community feedback reflected a desire to maintain these defining characteristics while accommodating future change and growth.

**3 OUT OF 5 OF WATERBURY'S
MOST-LIKED FEATURES ARE
RELATED TO OUR HISTORIC
& CULTURAL RESOURCES**



SENSE OF
COMMUNITY



SCENIC BEAUTY

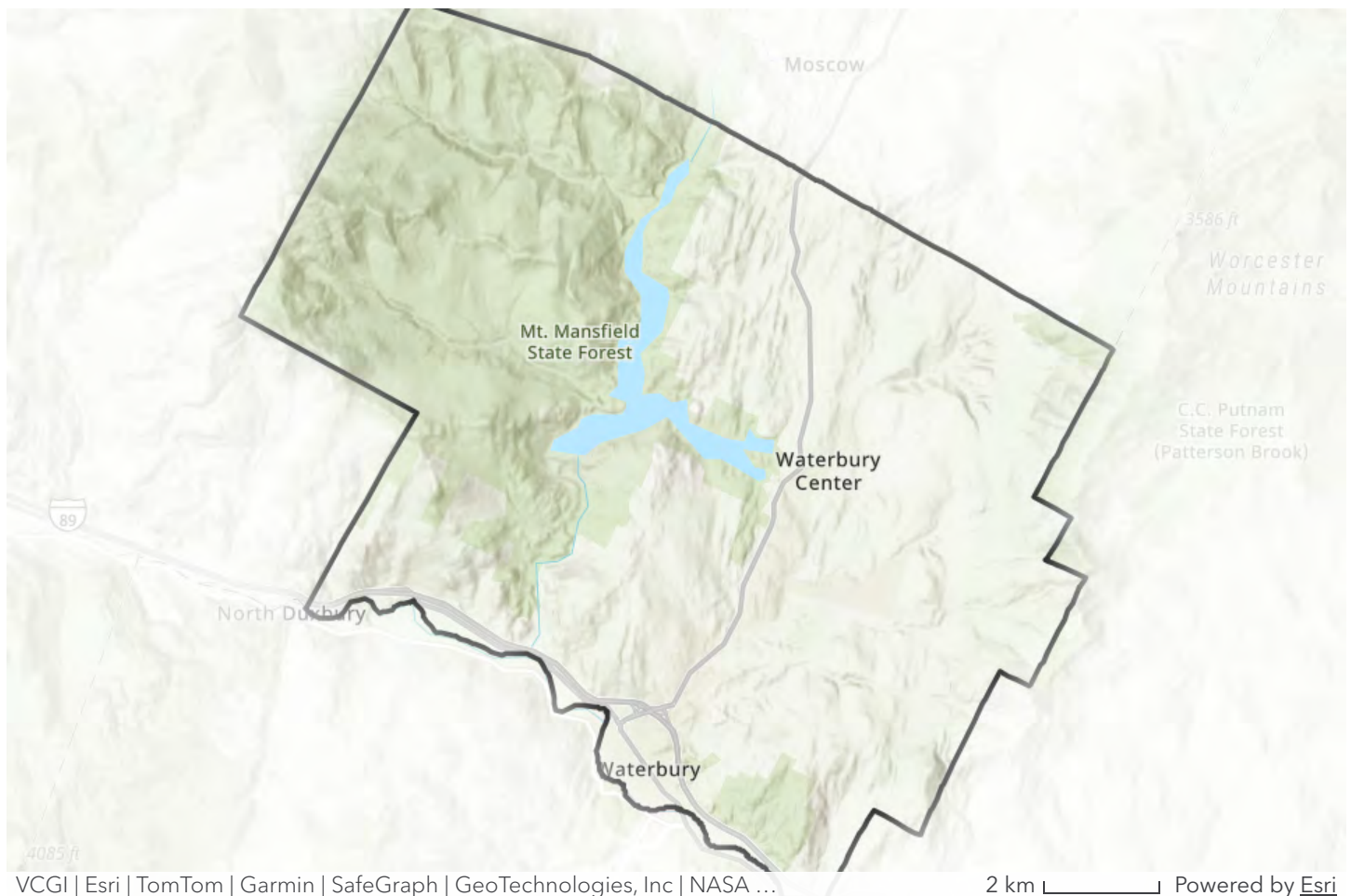


RURAL AREA
& LIFESTYLE

To read more about the results from Community Engagement from this plan, click the button below:

**Survey Results
Summary**

**Visioning Sessions
Summary**



Key Maps

Map 1: Historic Districts and Properties

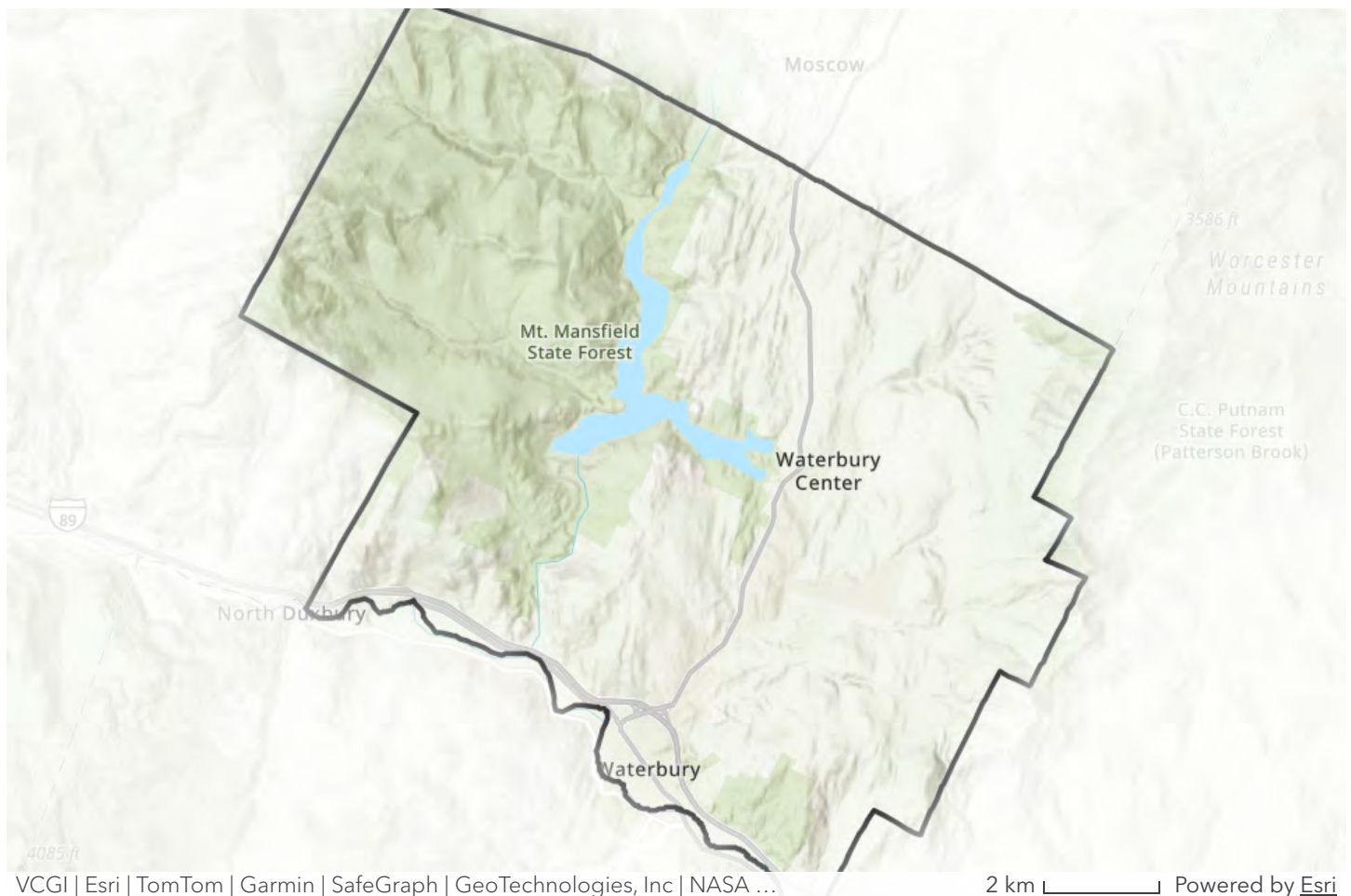
This map depicts listed historic districts and structures.

Historic Districts

Historic Structures (All Contributing)

Historic Structures (Floodprone)

Data Sources: Historic Districts - polygons from VT Center for Geographic Information (VCGI) | Historic Structures - digitized using building footprint data (VCGI / UVM Spatial Analysis Lab) from Town 'Historic Contributing Structures' paper maps | Floodprone Historic Structures - created using National Flood Hazard Layers - Special Flood Hazard Areas intersected with Historic Structures



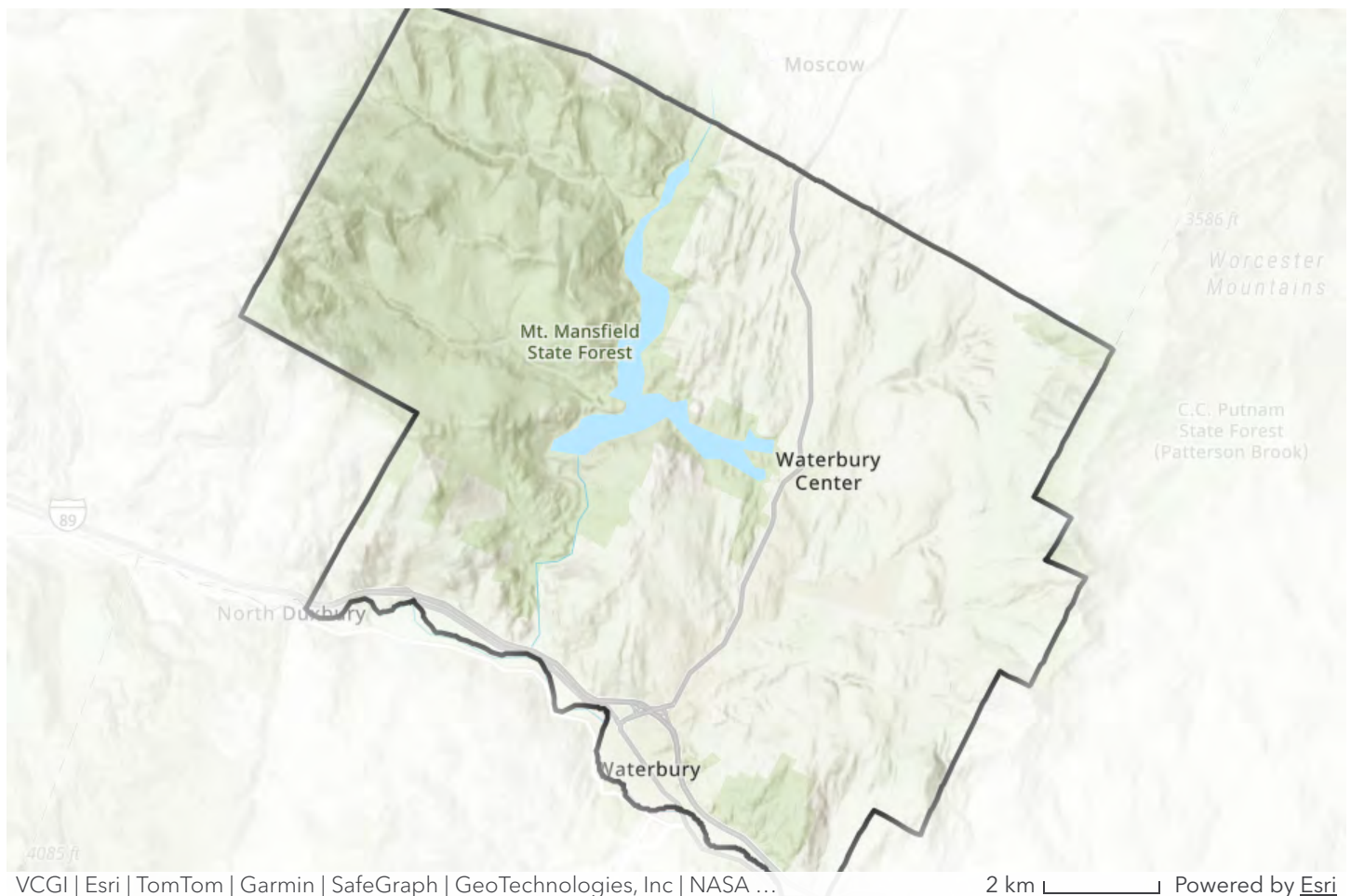
Map 2: Cultural and Community Assets Map

This map depicts museums, arts spaces, cultural venues, and gathering places.

Public Art

Historic and Cultural Spaces

Data Sources: Public Art - created by Waterbury Planning Commission | Historic and Cultural Spaces - created by Waterbury Planning Commission.



Map 3: Districts Important for Cultural Resources

This map depicts designated areas that can influence the development of cultural or historic resources.

State-Designated Downtown Area

Design Review Overlay District

Historic Districts

Designated Village Centers

Data Sources: State Designated Downtown & Historic Districts - Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (provided by VT Center for Geographic Data) | Design Review Overlay District - Town of Waterbury

Aspirations, Goals, & Strategies

Waterbury's future plans for Historic & Cultural Resources are captured in the following Aspirations, Goals, and Strategies:

Aspiration 1 - Vibrant Arts, Culture, and Public Spaces

Waterbury recognizes the importance of the arts and cultural organizations that provide community engagement, creative expression, and skill building. The arts contribute to Waterbury's economic and community development through events and activities that attract visitors and community members and support local businesses. Waterbury cultivates vibrant and well-maintained public spaces, including formerly vacant and underutilized areas, that strengthen the Town's social, cultural, and creative life.

Aspiration 2 - Stewardship of History and Inclusive Community Identity

Waterbury embraces change while serving as a responsible steward of its history and cultural resources. The Town fosters ongoing conversations about its identity and history that honor those who have contributed to Waterbury and intentionally elevate voices that have been historically underrepresented, engaging with the full complexity of the past in ways that strengthen shared understanding and belonging.



Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: Promote a vibrant community and local economy through Waterbury's arts and cultural organizations and events.

- Strategy 1.1: Support Waterbury cultural and arts organizations and their work through promotion, partnerships, and

coordinated marketing efforts.

- Strategy 1.2: Support Discover Waterbury and other organizations in their development and promotion of new and existing events and opportunities for arts-based organizations and businesses.
- Strategy 1.3: Support the viability and growth of performing arts venues and creative spaces in Waterbury.
- Strategy 1.4: Support the continued development of arts-related initiatives, such as arts trails or coordinated programming that connects different parts of Town.

Tracking Progress on Goal #1

- Number of arts, cultural, and community events held annually.
- Attendance at arts and cultural events.
- Number of active arts and cultural organizations operating in Waterbury.
- Participation in arts-related programming and initiatives.

Goal 2: Integrate arts and culture into Waterbury's public spaces and daily life.

- Strategy 2.1: Support the expansion and maintenance of public art installations, such as Jack's Alley, to enhance public spaces.
- Strategy 2.2: Continue ongoing placemaking strategies, such as bike racks, benches, and interpretive signage, to improve public spaces, support appreciation of history, and reinforce community vitality.
- Strategy 2.3: Create a centralized, Town-hosted webpage providing information about available community arts and cultural programs, including links to local organizations and seasonal offerings.
- Strategy 2.4: Support the use of underutilized or vacant buildings and public spaces as arts and community resources.

Tracking Progress on Goal #2

- Number of public art installations maintained or added.
- Number of placemaking projects completed.
- Utilization of arts and cultural programming resources.
- Number of underutilized spaces activated for cultural or community use.

Goal 3: Integrate historic preservation into Town planning and land use decisions throughout Waterbury.

- Strategy 3.1: Consider historic preservation values in updates to relevant zoning bylaws and development review processes.
- Strategy 3.2: Promote adaptive reuse of historic structures to support housing, small businesses, and community needs while retaining historic character.
- Strategy 3.3: Pursue grant funding, including Vermont Barn Preservation Grants, USDA Rural Development funds, and private heritage foundation funds, to support preservation efforts.
- Strategy 3.4: Continue and expand support of Waterbury's Historical Society in its work, including programming and the storage, display, and curation of historic resources.
- Strategy 3.5: Promote historic tourism initiatives as an economic and cultural asset for the Town.

Tracking Progress on Goal #3

- Number of historic preservation projects completed.
- Historic structures rehabilitated through adaptive reuse projects.
- Grant funding secured for preservation initiatives.
- Participation in historic tourism and heritage-related programming.

Goal 4: Make Waterbury's history accessible, inclusive, and reflective of diverse experiences.

- Strategy 4.1: Support the Waterbury Historical Society in their efforts to document and share the stories of those who have contributed to Waterbury's development, including individuals and communities that have been historically underrepresented.
- Strategy 4.2: Increase public engagement and dialogue about the complexity of Waterbury's history and its importance to the Town's present and future.
- Strategy 4.3: Support continued improvement and accessibility of digital archives and physical collections, both online and in community spaces such as the public library, historical society, and schools.
- Strategy 4.4: Strengthen collaborations with educators, Town committees, cultural organizations, and businesses across public events, community and educational programs, and infrastructure initiatives related to historic preservation.

Tracking Progress on Goal #4

- Quantity of archival materials digitized and made publicly accessible.
- Participation in Historical Society programming and educational events.
- Number of interpretive exhibits, programs, or educational initiatives completed.
- Partnerships established among schools, cultural organizations, and preservation groups.

Who Tracks Progress

The Town should track progress on historic and cultural resources through coordination among local cultural organizations, the Historical Society, community partners, and Town committees.

Suggested Responsible Entities

- **Town:** Planning Commission, Selectboard, Library Trustees, and Town staff.

- **Non-Town:** Waterbury Historical Society, Discover Waterbury, arts and cultural organizations, schools, local businesses, Rotary Club, and other community partners.

Stay Engaged

Ways residents can support community goals for Historic & Cultural Resources in Waterbury

This section is intended to help Waterbury residents celebrate, preserve, and share the history, arts, and cultural traditions that contribute to Waterbury's identity. To stay engaged, refer to the following resources and actions:



Support Local Arts and Cultural Organizations

- Attend local performances, exhibits, festivals, and cultural events.
- Volunteer with arts organizations and community event organizers.
- Support local artists, makers, and creative businesses.

Explore and Share Waterbury's History

- Visit local historic sites, museums, and exhibits.
- Participate in historical society events, walking tours, and educational programs.
- Share family stories, photographs, and historical materials that contribute to community history.

Support Public Spaces and Placemaking

- Participate in community projects involving public art, beautification, and placemaking.
- Help activate public spaces through community events and cultural programming.

Artwork: "Skater Boy" in memory of Declan Quinlan by Randolph Rose.



Promote Inclusive Community Storytelling

- Participate in conversations and initiatives that explore the diverse experiences that have shaped Waterbury.
- Support efforts to document and share stories that may not be well represented in traditional historical records.

Stay Connected

- [Town of Waterbury website](#): central hub for announcements, project updates, and public meeting information.
- [Town of Waterbury Facebook Page](#): real-time updates and engagement opportunities.
- Town Newsletter & Text Alerts: sign up for email and SMS notifications. Text "Hi" to (802) 200-2644 any time you need to.
- Text "Waterbury" to 91896 to opt in to text alerts. TextMyGov
- Participate in public workshops, surveys, events, and programs related to arts, culture, history, and community identity.

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once known.]



Community Services

Introduction

At the heart of Waterbury are its people.

We aspire to be a community where residents of all ages—from our youngest to our oldest—have their basic needs met and can access the educational, health, recreational, and social services they need to thrive. Supporting this vision is a dedicated network of volunteers, community organizations, elected officials, and Town staff who work together to foster a healthy, resilient, and inclusive community.

Recreation is a central social and economic driver of the Waterbury community. We have vibrant youth sports leagues, parks, and other recreation facilities. The Town's location between the Green Mountains and the Worcester Range, combined with easy access to major ski resorts, waterways, connected forests for hunting, and extensive mountain biking, hiking, and snowmobile trail networks, makes Waterbury both a regional recreation destination and a community where outdoor recreation is central to the local economy and culture. Discover Waterbury serves as a key partner in promoting recreation opportunities, supporting community events, enhancing visitor experiences, and strengthening the connection between recreation, tourism, and economic development.

Yet preserving the qualities that make Waterbury such a vibrant place to live, work, and recreate requires confronting a number of significant challenges. Like many communities across Vermont, Waterbury is experiencing declining school enrollment and educational facilities in need of maintenance and upgrades, an aging population that is increasing demand for health and supportive services, and rising housing and living costs that have made necessities such as food and shelter less affordable for many residents.



From left: Brookside Primary School, Fat Biking in Waterbury, The Center in Waterbury Village, Backcountry Skiing in Waterbury, a community planting project.

Planning Context

Health Services

Waterbury is sandwiched between three hospitals all within 20-30 minutes of downtown. It is home to numerous pediatric, dental, and alternative medicine practices, as well as a Central Vermont Medical Center clinic in town. Waterbury Ambulance (WASI), a non-Town operated non-profit, provides emergency medical services as well as backcountry rescue to Town residents through

a network of paid staff and over forty volunteers. Though the Town benefits from these services, Waterbury experiences several healthcare access challenges common in rural Vermont communities, including rising healthcare costs and long wait-times to see medical professionals.

Recreation

Waterbury has long been a hub for recreation, earning the title “Vermont’s Recreation Crossroads” thanks to its rivers, reservoir, mountains, extensive trail network, and easy access to major recreation destinations. The Town offers a wide range of facilities including parks, sports fields, a recreation center, municipal pool, mountain biking trails, two disc golf courses, forests, ice rink, skate park, and recreation buildings, many of which were created and maintained through strong volunteer and public-private partnerships. Municipal recreation programs are overseen by the Town’s full-time Recreation Department and volunteer Recreation Committee, providing affordable camps, afterschool care, classes, and sports opportunities for residents.

Community partnerships play a central role in maintaining Waterbury’s recreation system, with local organizations and volunteers supporting everything from soccer fields, bike trails, and skateparks to flower boxes and winter festivals. Recent long-range planning efforts for the Ice Center area and Hope Davey Park outline future improvements, while additional priorities include creating new and expanding existing recreation facilities, improving signage, and strengthening pedestrian and bike connectivity.

Beyond Town-managed amenities, state recreation areas such as Little River State Park, Waterbury Center State Park, the Long Trail, and CC Putnam State Forest provide extensive opportunities for camping, hiking, skiing, hunting, fishing, boating, and mountain biking, which helps to support both community life and the local tourism economy. Discover Waterbury supports recreation

through destination marketing, event coordination, partnership building, community engagement, and promotion of Waterbury's recreation assets and recreation-based economy.

Education

Waterbury is part of the Harwood Unified Union School District (HUUSD), which stretches from Warren north to Waterbury. Brookside Elementary is the sole school within the Town's boundaries. In addition to providing elementary schooling, it serves as a gathering place for residents with the school gym hosting Town Meeting Day, our primary polling place, volleyball and basketball leagues, and countless other community events.

HUUSD is not immune to the broader challenges afflicting education in Vermont. The district has experienced a 5% drop in enrollment since 2021; its facilities are outdated, with a growing backlog of deferred maintenance; and labor costs have significantly outpaced inflation, driven by sharply rising health care premiums for district staff. Residents are concerned by these trends and the impact on their education property tax rate, which has grown 25% over the last five years.

Given these challenges, which are not unique to HUUSD, the state government is undertaking a major overhaul to Vermont's school system. The changes could significantly affect Waterbury, including potential shifts in administrative oversight, district boundaries, school configuration, facility investments, input over school budgets, and class sizes. Indeed, during the summer of 2026, the Building Use and Visioning Committee of the HUUSD School Board has met and discussed creating a five-year plan for our school district, which will address, among other things school closings. While all discussions are preliminary, it is possible that HUUSD will decide to close Brookside Elementary. That will impact not only the school-age population and their families attending Brookside but the Town as whole because of the significance of Brookside as a community center.

Senior Services

Nearly a quarter of Town residents are seniors. The Senior Center serves as a hub for older residents to gather, eat, and engage in a range of programming. The Senior Center partners with Meals On Wheels to help more seniors live independently by providing in-home access to nutritious meals and regular wellness checks. The Senior Center is supported by the Central Vermont Council on Aging, an organization to help residents in the region age independently with dignity and choice. The Senior Center is also supported by Waterbury taxpayers and a strong donor base in Waterbury.

Social Services

Waterbury residents have access to a number of wrap-around services. The Waterbury Common Market provides free food assistance; the Good Neighbor Fund provides assistance to anyone in the Waterbury area in need of emergency financial assistance; and the Waterbury Congregate Family Center provides seasonal emergency shelter, case management, and basic necessities for unhoused families with children or pregnant individuals. Waterbury is serviced by the Capstone Community Action Network, which focuses on alleviating poverty for residents of Central Vermont with targeted services like heating and housing assistance, job skill training, and financial counseling.

Youth Services

Waterbury has a robust set of youth services and programs. The Town Recreation Department runs a summer camp, hosts swim lessons, and youth sports leagues. The Public Library holds regular programming for children. There are numerous daycares throughout Town, a two-day-a-week public Pre-k, ball fields and playgrounds, youth mentoring programs, and the Children's Room, a public space for families with young children to gather.



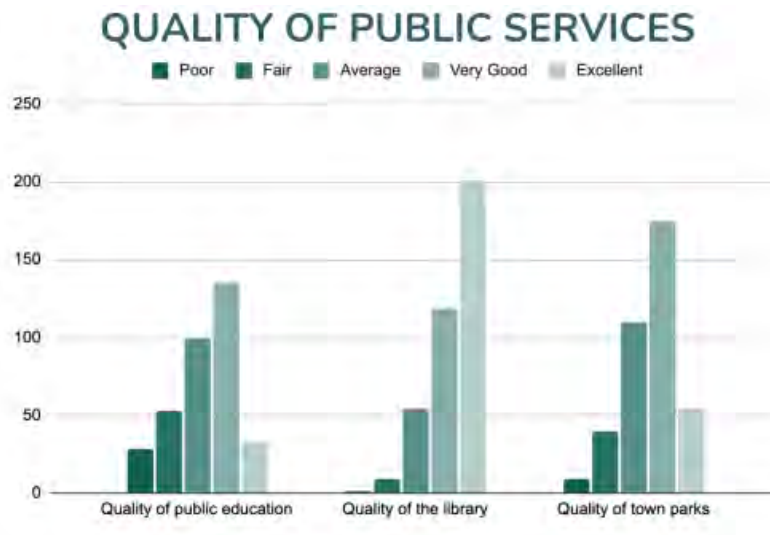
What We Heard

The Planning Commission conducted a Community Survey digitally and distributed throughout Town in late 2024 to gather facts and understand trends within the community and help guide informed decisions throughout this planning process. In early 2025, in-person and on-line Visioning Sessions were held to hear what elements and aspects should be maintained, evolve and/or transform within the community. Below is what we heard from you regarding Community Services in Waterbury.

Residents Value Waterbury's Community Facilities and Services

Residents generally expressed satisfaction with many of the services and facilities that support daily life in Waterbury. Community feedback highlighted the importance of maintaining high-quality public spaces, recreation facilities, educational opportunities, and community gathering places.

The Waterbury Public Library received some of the highest ratings of any community facility included in the Community Survey.



Recreation is Central to Community Life

Residents consistently identified recreation opportunities as one of Waterbury's greatest strengths. Community members value the Town's parks, trails, recreation facilities, sports programs, and access to outdoor recreation resources throughout the region.

Recreation opportunities ranked among the most valued aspects of Waterbury in the Community Survey.

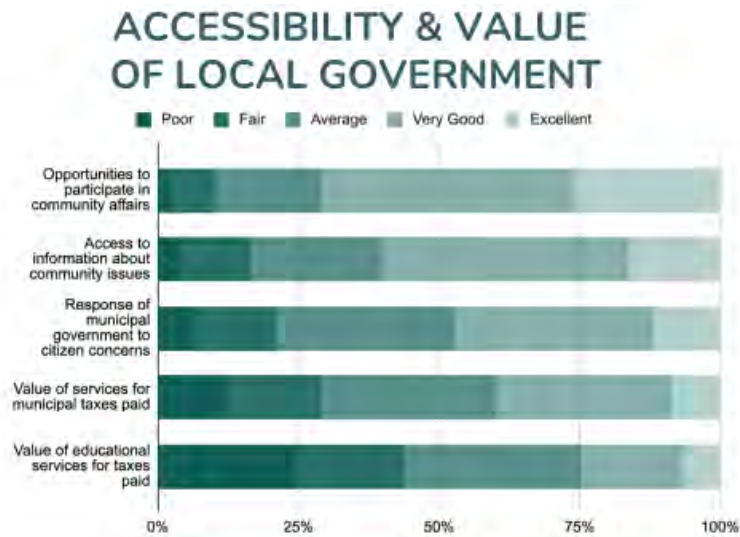
Community Engagement Matters

Waterbury residents expressed a strong desire to remain involved in local decision-making and community life. Feedback highlighted the importance of maintaining opportunities for civic participation, volunteerism, and community events while finding new ways to engage younger residents and historically underrepresented groups.

Affordability and Access are Growing Concerns

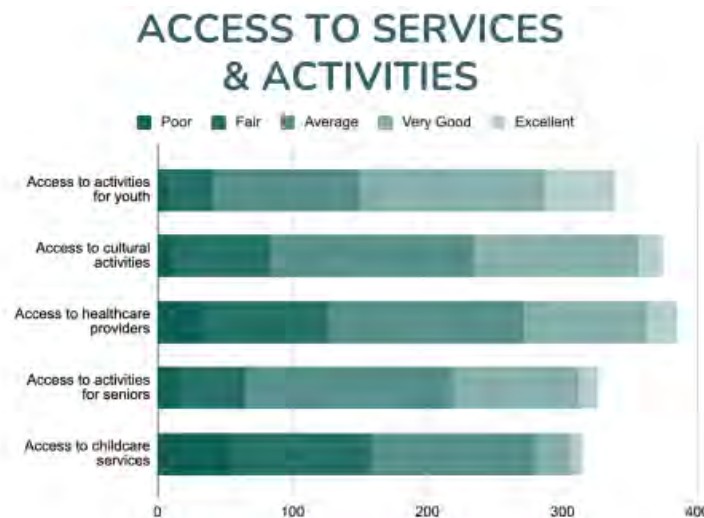
Residents frequently connected quality of life with the affordability and accessibility of community services. Housing costs, property taxes, childcare tuition, education costs, and access to services were recurring themes throughout the engagement process.

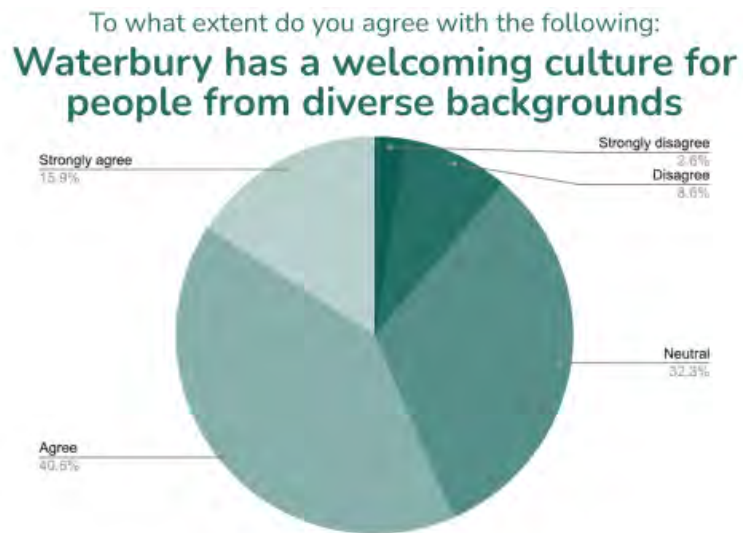
Property taxes were identified as one of the community's most significant challenges.



Supporting Residents Across All Life Stages

Community members emphasized the importance of maintaining services that support residents throughout their lives, including youth programs, educational opportunities, senior services, food assistance, recreation programs, and social services. We heard that, despite the availability of these services, there is still a need for childcare in Waterbury. Feedback reflected a desire to ensure that Waterbury remains welcoming and supportive for residents of all ages and backgrounds.

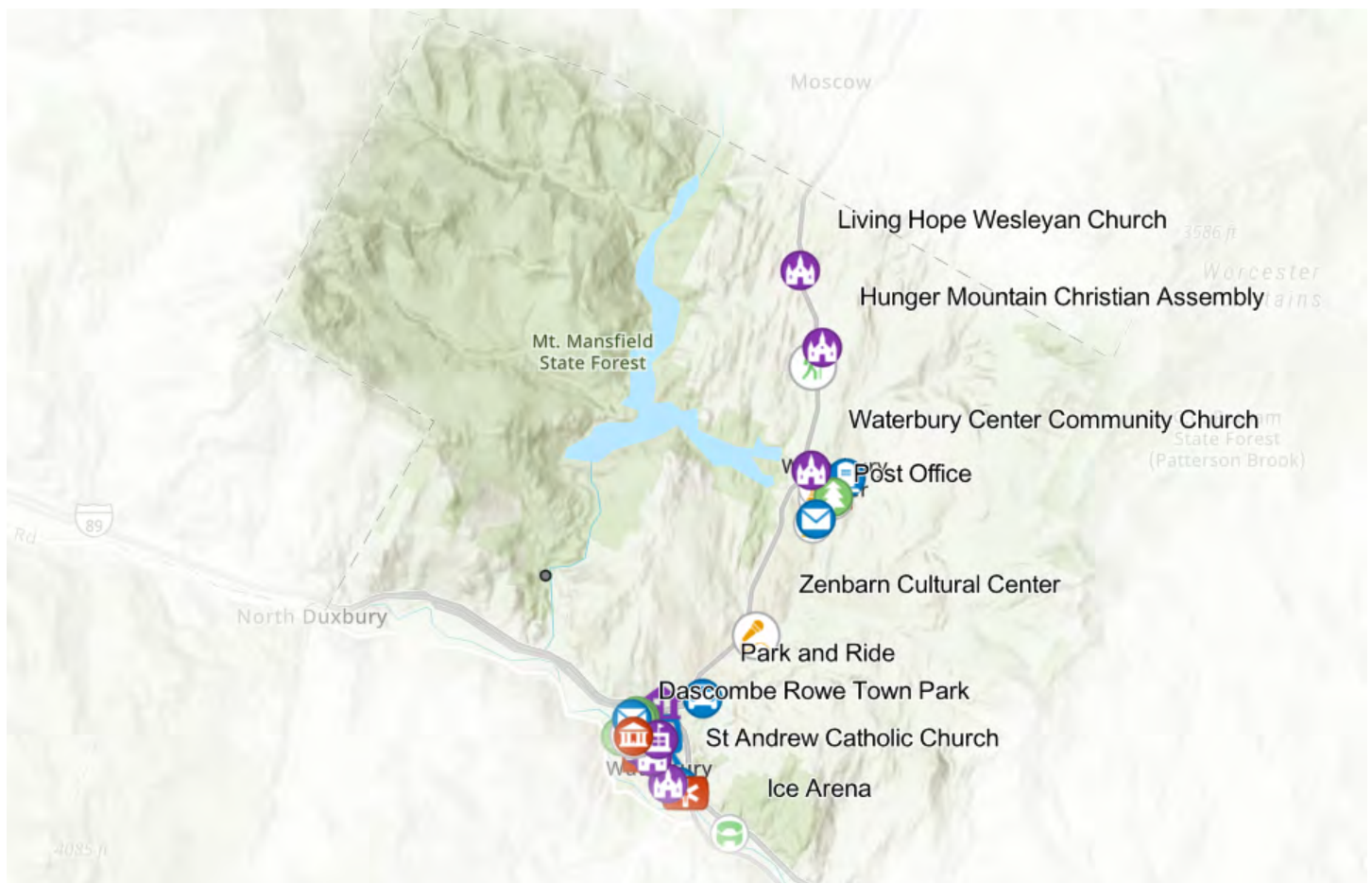




To read more about the results from Community Engagement from this plan, click the button below:

**Survey Results
Summary**

**Visioning Sessions
Summary**



Key Maps

Map 1: Cultural and Community Assets Map

This map depicts museums, arts spaces, cultural venues, public parks or other local recreation amenities, some emergency resilience points, and gathering places.

Data Sources: Cultural and Community Assets (E911 Points) - E911 Point Data (provided by VT Center for Geographic Information) | Cultural and Community Assets - Custom Points - Waterbury Planning Commission (digitized using aerial imagery)



VCGI | Esri | TomTom | Garmin | SafeGraph | GeoTechnologies, Inc | NASA ... 5 km Powered by Esri

Map 2: Recreation Assets Map

This map depicts various recreation resources in the Town of Waterbury.

Data Sources: E911 Trails - E911 (provided by VT Center for Geographic Information) | Waterbury Community Path - Revitalizing Waterbury | Cross VT Trail - Cross Vermont Trail Association | VAST Snowmobile Trail - VT Agency of Natural Resources - ALLTRAILS layer (provided by VT Center for Geographic Information) | Recreation Assets point data - E911 Data (provided by VT Center for Geographic Information)

Aspirations, Goals, & Strategies

Waterbury's future plans for Community Services are captured in the following Aspirations, Goals, and Strategies:

Aspiration 1 - Accessible, Inclusive, Quality Community Services

Waterbury will foster a safe, healthy, and connected community by providing accessible, quality community services—including education, recreation, food assistance, childcare, senior services, library services, civic spaces, and other community programs—that meet the needs of current and future residents across all ages, abilities, and life stages.

Aspiration 2 - Enhanced Recreation and Community Engagement

Waterbury's recreational areas, programs, and facilities will foster community involvement, engagement, and connectedness through opportunities for all ages, abilities, and interests throughout the year.



Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: Support the full range of community services and educational opportunities.

- Strategy 1.1: Identify opportunities to coordinate and strengthen the provision of community services among Town and state government, regional organizations, and local service providers.
- Strategy 1.2: Improve public awareness of community services through a central webpage on the Town website and accessible information at community locations such as the Waterbury Public Library and municipal offices.
- Strategy 1.3: Support programs and events that foster social connection by bringing residents together in publicly accessible gathering spaces and community facilities.
- Strategy 1.4: Support the availability of and access to quality educational facilities and programs, including partnerships with

regional vocational, technical, and/or educational organizations such as Central Vermont Adult Education, to empower residents of all ages to participate fully in community and civic life.

- Strategy 1.5: Encourage Waterbury's participation in the school district to support quality, affordable education.
- Strategy 1.6: Continue and enhance support for civic organizations, including but not limited to the Waterbury Common Market, the Senior Center, Waterbury Rotary, the American Legion, and the Good Neighbor Fund.
- Strategy 1.7: Continue and enhance support for organizations that support mental health, substance abuse and rehabilitation, veterans' affairs, and future community services needs.

Tracking Progress on Goal #1

- Number of community service providers and organizations participating in coordination efforts.
- Usage of Town-hosted community services webpages and information resources.
- Number of community events, educational programs, and public gatherings supported annually.
- Participation in civic organizations, volunteer programs, and community service initiatives.
- Availability and utilization of social service programs, food assistance programs, and community support services.

Goal 2: Maintain and enhance recreational facilities and areas, library services, and community gathering spaces.

- Strategy 2.1: Maintain, improve, and expand parks, playgrounds, fields, and recreation facilities and areas to ensure safe and inclusive use.
- Strategy 2.2: Recreation Committee to evaluate future facility needs, including potential new recreation facilities.
- Strategy 2.3: Support the Waterbury Public Library as a hub for education, digital access, and community programming.

- Strategy 2.4: Support recreational programming and community events that encourage participation by residents of all ages and abilities.
- Strategy 2.5: Support accessibility improvements to parks and recreational facilities, including evaluation of facilities for Americans with Disabilities Act compliance.

Tracking Progress on Goal #2

- Participation rates in Recreation Department programs and activities.
- Utilization rates of parks, trails, recreation facilities, and community gathering spaces.
- Number of recreation facility improvements completed.
- Library program participation and facility usage.
- Progress toward accessibility improvements in recreation facilities and public spaces.

Goal 3: Anticipate and plan for current and future community needs.

- Strategy 3.1: Evaluate demographic trends and community needs to anticipate future service demands related to aging populations, youth populations, and low/moderate and middle-income households.
- Strategy 3.2: Support age-friendly initiatives, events, and facilities that enable residents to remain active and engaged in the community.
- Strategy 3.3: Evaluate, support, and advance childcare availability and youth programming to support Waterbury families.

Tracking Progress on Goal #3

- Tracking demographic trends related to age, household composition, and population change.

- Availability of childcare slots and youth programming opportunities.
- Levels of participation in senior services and age-friendly programming.
- Community needs assessments completed and incorporated into planning efforts.
- Number of partnerships addressing emerging community service needs.

Who Tracks Progress

The Town should track progress on community services through coordination among Town departments, community organizations, educational institutions, and service providers.

Suggested Responsible Entities

Town: Recreation Department, Planning Commission, Selectboard, Waterbury Public Library, and Town staff.

Non-Town: Harwood Unified Union School District, Central Vermont Council on Aging, Capstone Community Action, Waterbury Common Market, Good Neighbor Fund, Waterbury Ambulance Service, Rotary Club, American Legion, and other local service providers

Stay Engaged

Ways residents can support community goals for Community Services in Waterbury

This section is intended to help Waterbury residents stay informed, participate in community life, and support the services, programs, and organizations that help residents thrive. To stay engaged, refer to the following resources and actions:



Support Community Organizations

- Volunteer with local organizations such as the Waterbury Common Market, Good Neighbor Fund, Rotary Club, American Legion, and other community service providers.
- Participate in fundraising efforts and community events that support local services.

Participate in Recreation and Community Programs

- Register for Recreation Department programs, classes, camps, and community events.
- Utilize local parks, trails, recreation facilities, and gathering spaces.
- Participate in public discussions about future recreation and facility improvements.

Support Responsible Recreation & Access

- Use trails, parks, waterways, and natural areas responsibly and help protect sensitive habitats during recreation activities.
- Participate in discussions related to trail planning, recreational access, and conservation management.
- Respect trail closures, habitat protection areas, and seasonal access restrictions when posted.



Support Education and Lifelong Learning

- Attend school district meetings and stay informed about educational initiatives affecting Waterbury.
- Utilize programs offered through the Waterbury Public Library and regional educational organizations.

Support Residents Across All Life Stages

- Learn about programs that support youth, families, older adults, and vulnerable populations.

- Volunteer with organizations providing food assistance, housing support, transportation, wellness services, and senior programming.

Stay Connected

- [Town of Waterbury Website](#): central hub for announcements, project updates, and public meeting information.
- [Town of Waterbury Facebook Page](#): real-time updates and engagement opportunities.
- Town Newsletter & Text Alerts: sign up for email and SMS notifications. Text “Hi” to (802) 200-2644 any time you need to.
- Text “Waterbury” to 91896 to opt in to text alerts. TextMyGov
- Participate in public workshops, surveys, events, and programs related to arts, culture, history, and community identity.

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Local Economy

Introduction

Waterbury has a vibrant and diverse economy for a small town, with a population of 5,405 (as of 2024 assessments).

Major employers include Ben & Jerry's, Darn Tough, and the State of VT. It has a bustling downtown filled with renowned restaurants, breweries, boutique retail stores, and a variety of arts opportunities. This is complemented by an industrial park

complete with full-scale manufacturing capabilities and access to world class recreation that serve residents and tourists alike.

In addition to these sectors, Waterbury's economy is supported by a range of small-scale and community-based activities, including building trades, recreation-based businesses, nonprofit organizations, and volunteer-led groups such as MakerSphere, Discover Waterbury, the American Legion, and Rotary. These organizations contribute to the Town's economic resilience, workforce development, and overall community vitality.

The Town's infrastructure and central location have helped to breed this diversity and economic vitality. The local economy is further sustained by a civically minded populace with above average income and education attainment rates.

Although Waterbury has experienced steady population growth over the past decade, it faces several challenges that could limit future economic opportunity if left unaddressed. These include a shortage of housing—particularly for workforce and low- to middle-income residents—limited availability of commercial real estate, especially mid-sized office space, and ongoing flood risk in parts of our historic downtown, which serves as the economic heart of the community. In Waterbury, mid-sized office space refers to office spaces generally between approximately 2,000 and 10,000 square feet that can accommodate small- to medium-sized employers, such as professional services firms, remote work hubs, or regional business offices.



Local businesses and visitor-facing signage in Waterbury.

Planning Context

Waterbury's Job Market

As of Q3 of 2025, Waterbury supports approximately 5,000 jobs and functions as a regional employment center. About 60 percent of jobs are in the private sector, while roughly 40 percent are in the public sector, reflecting the significant presence of state government employment in the community.

Location, Location, Location

Waterbury's location on Interstate 89 between the state capital of Montpelier, the economic hub of the Burlington metropolitan area, and major ski destinations like Stowe, Sugarbush Resort and the Mad River Valley, and Bolton Valley has been key to its economic development and continues to give the Town a lasting advantage.

State Government Nexus

Waterbury's economy is shaped by a significant public-sector presence, particularly from state government. The Waterbury State Office Complex supports about 1,500-2,000 employees, which supports local employment stability and separates Waterbury from peer communities.

State Designations for Downtowns and Villages

Waterbury is currently home to one of Vermont's 23 Designated Downtowns and a portion of Waterbury Center is a designated Village Center. Having Downtown and Village Center designations provides the Town with financial incentives, training and technical assistance supporting efforts to restore historic buildings, improve housing, design walkable communities and encourage economic development by incentivizing public and private investments. The Designated Downtown program is anticipated to change to Neighborhoods and Centers with the updated Community Investment Program as part of the implementation of Act 181.

Discover Waterbury & Waterbury Area Development Committee

Discover Waterbury (DW, formerly known as Revitalizing Waterbury) is a non-profit, founded in 1991 with the mission to preserve, promote, and enhance the economic, historic, and social vitality of Waterbury for residents, businesses, and visitors. Within DW is the Waterbury Area Development Committee (WADC), a group of local and diverse professionals to identify economic development priorities that are critical to sustaining economic prosperity for the Town and its residents. DW and WADC members provided critical material and input for this chapter.

Floods & Future Growth Areas

Much of Waterbury's historic downtown lies in the 100-year and 500-year floodplain. Parts of this area were flooded during 2011 Hurricane Irene and again in the July summer floods of 2023 and 2024. Additional development in the historic downtown will have to account for this risk, particularly in the age of climate change. It also suggests that economic resilience will necessitate development in other areas of the community such as the designated Village Center in Waterbury Center.

Working Lands Economy

Waterbury's working lands economy (including agriculture, forestry, and maple production) has historically contributed to the Town's economy. Like many Vermont communities, Waterbury has experienced a gradual decline in traditional working lands activities due to factors such as rising land values, development outside of the more densely populated areas, changing markets, and workforce challenges.

While these sectors may represent a smaller share of the local economy today, they remain an important part of Waterbury's rural character, and landscape. Forestry, maple production, and small-scale agriculture continue to contribute to the local and regional

economy, though their long-term viability depends on market conditions, land availability, and broader economic trends. Notwithstanding this, maintaining and growing these economic sectors is an important focus for Waterbury's future economic vibrancy.

Rise of Remote Work

23% of Town survey respondents reported working from home—a notable increase from the 14% reported in the 2020 Census. 94% of households have broadband access, suggesting that web-based remote work is possible for more and more residents of Waterbury. The growth of remote work provides residents with geographically flexible economic opportunities, while also increasing demand for housing, as both current and prospective residents are no longer tied to the local job market.

What We Heard

The Planning Commission conducted a Community Survey digitally and distributed throughout Town in late 2024 to gather facts and understand trends within the community and help guide informed decisions throughout this planning process. In early 2025, in-person and on-line Visioning Sessions were held to hear what elements and aspects should be maintained, evolve and/or transform within the community. Below is what we heard from you regarding the Local Economy in Waterbury.

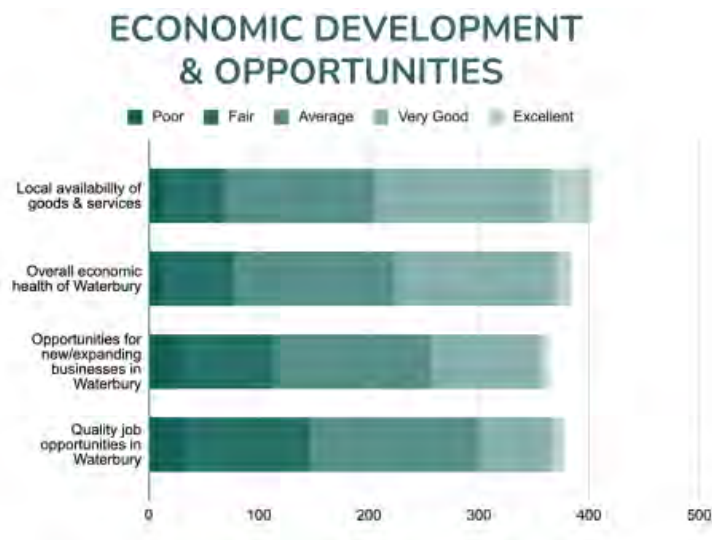
Residents Are Concerned About Affordability and the Cost of Living

Residents repeatedly identified affordability as a major community concern. Rising housing costs, property taxes, childcare expenses, and other household costs were frequently cited as challenges affecting residents' ability to live and work in Waterbury.

Property taxes and affordable housing ranked among the top challenges identified through the Community Survey.

A Strong Local Economy Supports Community Services and Quality of Life

Community feedback reflected an understanding that a healthy local economy helps support municipal services, schools, recreation facilities, and other community assets. Residents expressed interest in maintaining a vibrant business community while preserving Waterbury's character and sense of place.



Housing and Workforce Challenges Affect Economic Growth

Residents frequently connected economic development to housing availability and affordability. Community members recognized that a lack of housing options can make it difficult for local businesses, schools, healthcare providers, and service organizations to attract and retain employees.

Affordable and adequate housing emerged as one of the most significant challenges identified during the planning process.

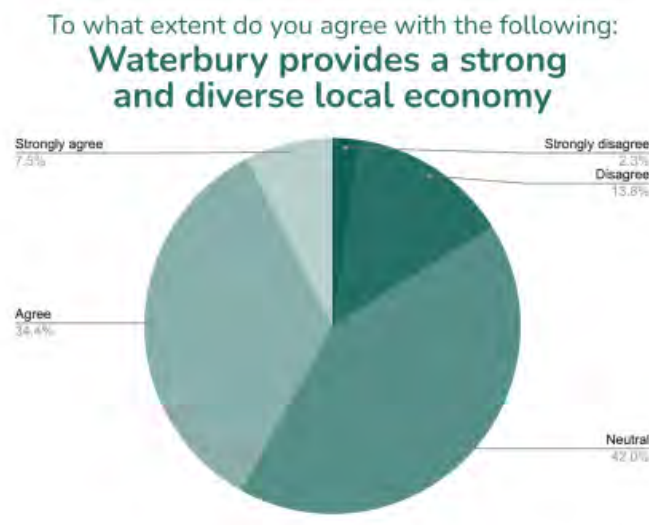
Recreation, Tourism, and Downtown Vitality are Important Community Assets

Residents consistently identified Waterbury's recreation opportunities, scenic setting, downtown businesses, and visitor economy as important community strengths. Community feedback highlighted the role recreation, tourism, restaurants, retail businesses, and community events play in supporting local jobs and economic activity.

Recreation opportunities ranked among the characteristics residents value most about Waterbury.

Residents Support Thoughtful Economic Growth

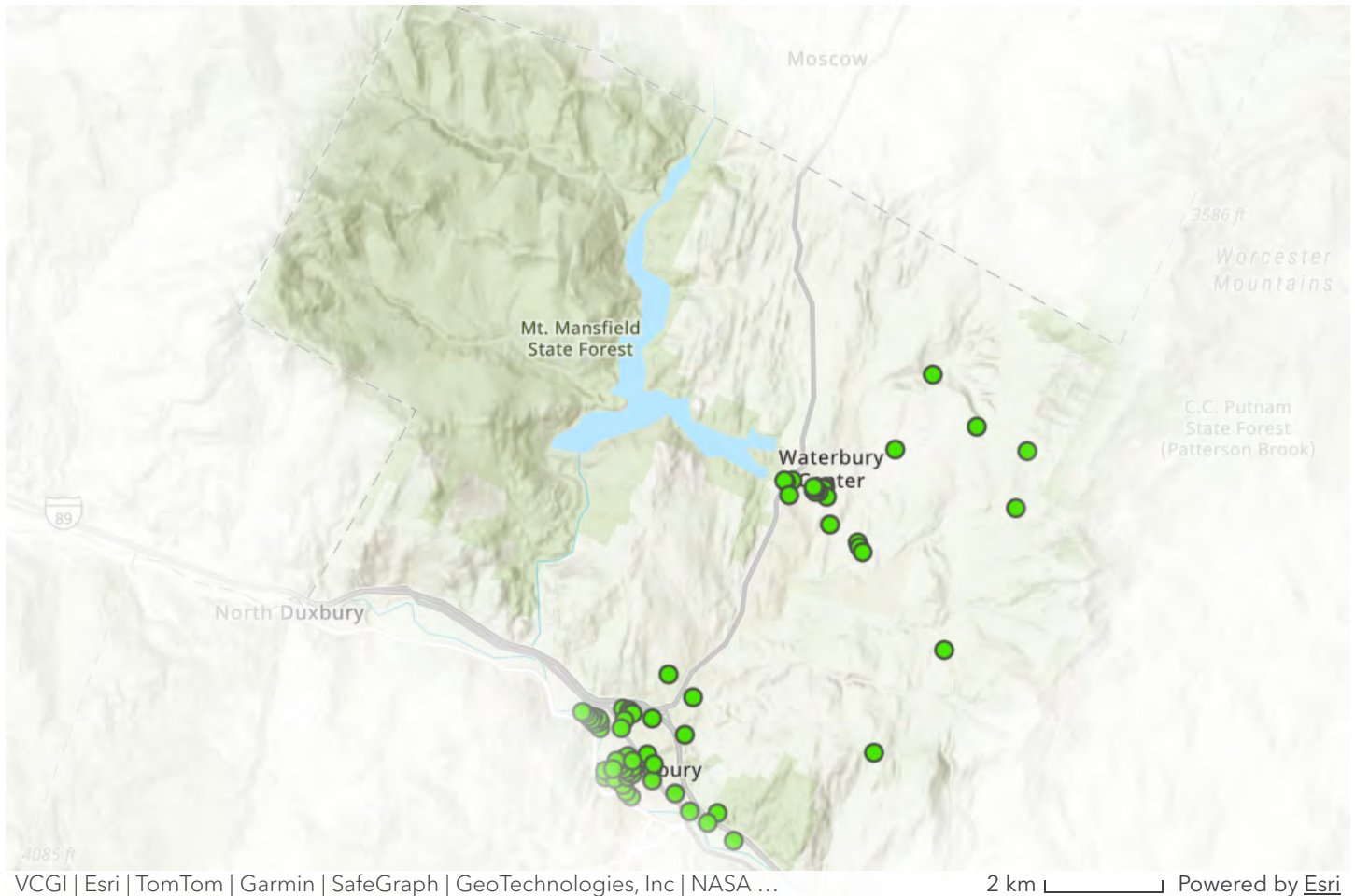
Community members generally supported economic growth that strengthens the tax base, supports local businesses, and creates opportunities for residents while maintaining Waterbury's character, natural resources, and quality of life. Feedback emphasized balancing growth with the qualities that make Waterbury a desirable place to live, work, and visit.



Community Visioning Mapping

During Town Meeting in 2025 and at four Community Visioning Sessions, attendees were asked questions about how they felt

about parts of Town and were told to place colored dots on a map to indicate those feelings. The point locations as well as the Response Density (heat maps showing the locations of the most responses) are shown here.



Questions:

Places in Town to Change / Invest In

To read more about the results from Community Engagement from this plan, click the button below:

[View the full engagement results](#)



VCGI | Esri | TomTom | Garmin | SafeGraph | GeoTechnologies, Inc | NASA ...

5 km Powered by Esri

Key Maps

Map 1: Employment Centers and Commercial Areas

Zoning - Commercial / Industrial / Mixed

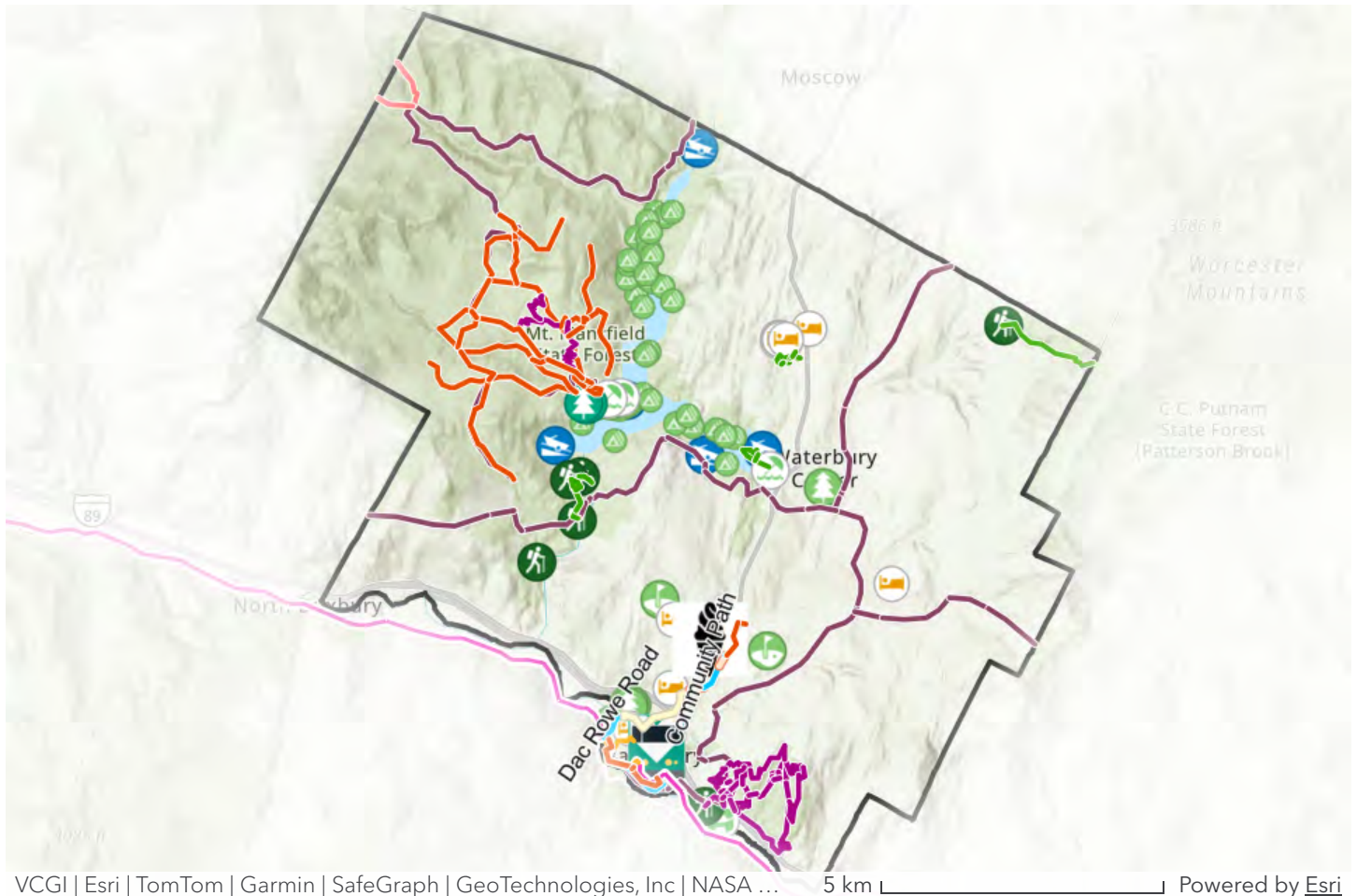
State-Designated Downtown Area

Water / Wastewater Infrastructure

The following layer is a non-exhaustive list of businesses in Waterbury (primarily derived from the Discover Waterbury Business Directory) with estimates of the number of employees symbolized.

Businesses in Waterbury

Data Sources: Zoning - Town of Waterbury (provided by Central VT Regional Planning Commission) | State-Designated Downtown Area - Central VT Regional Planning Commission (provided by VT Center for Geographic Information) | Water/Wastewater - Edward Farrar Utility District | Businesses in Waterbury - geocoded from Discover Waterbury (formerly Revitalizing Waterbury) Business Directory - business types and sizes assigned and estimated by Waterbury Planning Commission.



Map 2: Tourism and Visitor Economy Assets Map

This map depicts downtown areas, trails and trailheads, recreation assets, lodging, and visitor-serving uses.

Data Sources: Recreation Feature Point Locations - E911 data using SiteType coding | Cross Vermont Trail - Cross Vermont Trail Association | E911 Trails - E911 Data | VAST Trail - VT Agency of Natural Resources 'Trails' layer - note this

data may be out of date and can include sections of trail that are no longer active
| Waterbury Community Path - digitized by the Planning Commission based on
local knowledge, imagery, and known road connectors

Aspirations, Goals, & Strategies

Waterbury's future plans for Local Economy are captured in the following Aspirations, Goals, and Strategies:

Aspiration 1 - A Diverse, Thriving, and Accessible Local Economy

Waterbury continues to support development by ensuring critical infrastructure access for public and private developments that bring job opportunities, housing opportunities, and community opportunities into the municipality. Many different business types thrive in Waterbury. The Town supports diverse business types, from restaurants and bars, to retail, to manufacturing. Waterbury has thriving downtowns and retail districts that serve as social and economic hubs for residents and visitors alike. It is easy to do business in Waterbury, and the Town is a willing, dependable partner for local businesses.

Aspiration 2 - Economic Opportunity Supported by Housing and Essential Services

Waterbury has adequate levels of housing that is affordable to the workforce. The workforce in Waterbury has access to essential services, such as childcare.



Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: Leverage infrastructure investments to support new and existing businesses.

- Strategy 1.1: Utilize the Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP) to expand infrastructure capacity for increased housing density.
- Strategy 1.2: Pursue infrastructure recommendations from ongoing Better Connections planning to enhance connectivity within Waterbury Center and create a walkable, business-friendly environment.
- Strategy 1.3: Evaluate the use of Local Option Tax revenues to incentivize business development or infrastructure projects on a case-by-case basis.

Tracking Progress on Goal #1

- Infrastructure improvements completed, including through programs such as CHIP, Better Connections, Clean Water State Revolving Fund, and similar programs.
- Private investments leveraged through public infrastructure improvements identified above.
- Local Option Tax revenues allocated toward economic development or infrastructure projects.
- Progress implementing Better Connections recommendations (completed vs. outstanding).

Goal 2: Strengthen organizational capacity related to economic development; use community events to support overall vibrancy.

- Strategy 2.1: Evaluate the feasibility of hosting a Farmers' Market and other community events under the auspices of Discover Waterbury.
- Strategy 2.2: Support the implementation of the Economic Development Strategic Plan to ensure adherence to long-term development objectives.

Tracking Progress on Goal #2

- Number and attendance levels of community events, including festivals, markets, and town-wide programming.
- Level of participation in Discover Waterbury initiatives and related programs.
- Progress on key goals and strategies in the Economic Development Strategic Plan (completed vs. outstanding actions).

Goal 3: Encourage infill development and modernize land use policies.

- Strategy 3.1: Complete updates as part of Phase 2 of the Zoning Bylaw Modernization project to create a more favorable development environment for businesses and commercial property owners.
- Strategy 3.2: Utilize updated zoning bylaws and revised Act 250 legislation to incentivize infill development within the downtown and other designated areas.
- Strategy 3.3: Investigate opportunities for office space and facilities not currently accommodated within the existing commercial property mix, including medium-sized office spaces.

Tracking Progress on Goal #3

- Complete Phase 2 Zoning Bylaws
- Number of infill development projects completed in designated growth areas.
- Number of development applications approved for housing, commercial, mixed-use, or industrial uses.
- Availability and utilization of commercial and industrial space, including office space.
- Commercial vacancy rates in downtown, Waterbury Center, and other key commercial areas.

Goal 4: Promote Waterbury as a destination for tourism and recreation.

- Strategy 4.1: Promote outdoor recreation opportunities, including Little River State Park, to strengthen summer tourism.

Tracking Progress on Goal #4

- Measure the economic impact of promotional efforts to promote tourism and recreation through assessments of sales tax revenue.
- Measure visitor activity associated with key destinations and events, including downtown, Little River State Park, and town-wide recreation and cultural events.
- Assess changes in the number of tourism-related businesses and recreation-based enterprises operating in Waterbury.
- Measure seasonal fluctuations in business activity tied to tourism and recreation.

Goal 5: Strengthen regional and state partnerships to support local businesses.

- Strategy 5.1: Partner with surrounding municipalities and state-level organizations to promote and incentivize engagement with Waterbury businesses.

Tracking Progress on Goal #5

- Number of partnerships or joint initiatives with Discover Waterbury, WADC, CVRPC, and regional organizations.
- Participation in regional economic development initiatives and programs.

Who Tracks Progress

The Town should track progress on economic development through coordination between the Planning Commission, Town staff, and local business organizations, with support from regional partners.

Suggested Responsible Entities

- **Town:** Planning Commission, Housing Task Force, Town staff, and Town engineer.
- **Non-Town:** DW, WATA, Friends of the Waterbury Reservoir, Rotary, CVRPC, and regional economic development partners.

Stay Engaged

Ways residents can support community goals for Local Economy in Waterbury

This section is intended to help Waterbury residents stay informed, support local businesses, and contribute to a strong and resilient local economy. To stay engaged, refer to the following resources and actions:



Support Local Businesses

- Shop, dine, and use services locally to support Waterbury's small businesses and workforce.
- Participate in local events, markets, and seasonal activities that contribute to downtown vitality.
- Promote Waterbury businesses through word-of-mouth and social media

Participate in Community Events, Initiatives, and Local Groups

- Volunteer with local groups like Discover Waterbury
- Attend events organized by Discover Waterbury and other local organizations.
- Participate in community-driven initiatives such as farmers markets, festivals, and business promotions.
- Provide feedback on local economic development efforts through surveys, meetings, and events.

Engage in Local Planning & Development

- Attend Planning Commission and Development Review Board meetings related to economic development projects.
- Stay informed about zoning updates, infrastructure projects, and development opportunities.
- Participate in discussions about the future of downtown, Waterbury Center, and other growth areas.



Support Workforce & Business Needs

- Support local efforts to expand workforce housing and childcare availability.
- Advocate for infrastructure and services that help local businesses grow and attract employees.
- Explore opportunities to start or expand businesses in Waterbury, including remote work and home-based enterprises.

Strengthen Regional Connections

- Engage with regional initiatives led by CVRPC and neighboring communities that support economic development.
- Support partnerships that promote Waterbury as part of a broader regional destination.

Stay Connected

- [Town of Waterbury Website](#): central hub for announcements, project updates, and public meeting information.
- [Town of Waterbury Facebook Page](#): real-time updates and engagement opportunities.
- Town Newsletter & Text Alerts: sign up for email and SMS notifications. Text “Hi” to (802) 200-2644 any time you need to.
- Text “Waterbury” to 91896 to opt in to text alerts. TextMyGov
- Participate in public workshops, surveys, events, and programs related to arts, culture, history, and community identity.

Created for the Town of Waterbury by SE Group.

planWTB | Waterbury Planning Commission | 2026 [Insert final adoption date once known.]



Housing

Introduction

Waterbury enjoys a wide array of housing choices from iconic historic homes to log cabins and newly built houses.

But like the rest of Vermont, residents face a housing market with home and rental prices exceeding 30% of their annual income and are therefore "cost burdened." In particular, Housingdata.org reports that in 2024, about 46% of Waterbury renters and 24% of home owners were cost burdened. Contributing factors to the high

cost of housing include smaller household sizes and persistent development barriers. The Waterbury Housing Task Force, having studied this issue for more than a year, estimates that Waterbury requires approximately 30 to 40 new housing units annually to meet Waterbury's current population growth.

Based on feedback from residents and the realities of the housing market, the Town's efforts will focus on creating new housing units for all incomes and life stages, rehabilitating homes that are unoccupied or are in need of rehabilitation, and prioritizing housing that is affordable and suitable for low/moderate to middle-income families. The intent is not just to build more homes, but to expand and more fully use existing housing, rehabilitate older housing, and use available land, while retaining the developed compact village center and rural character of Waterbury. In this regard, the focus will be on expanding housing with access to public water and, where available, wastewater. The effect of this effort is to alleviate the affordability crisis, expand the labor force, boost the local economy, add to the school-age population, and allow seniors to downsize while staying in their community.



New construction and alternative home types in Waterbury.

Planning Context

Waterbury is a growing and economically vibrant community, but its housing market is increasingly defined by a widening gap

between supply and demand. Over the past several decades, population and household growth in Waterbury have outpaced much of Washington County, while the pace of new housing construction has not kept up with demand. Limited inventory and constrained turnover have tightened the market; fewer homes are being sold, rental vacancy rates remain well below healthy levels, and the Town needs an estimated 30-40 new housing units annually just to keep pace with household growth trends and to make up for past deficits. At the same time, rising sale prices have outpaced what many households can afford, creating a growing gap between incomes and housing costs.

This has created our housing affordability crisis; rising sale prices have outpaced what many households can afford. As stated above, in 2024, about 46% of Waterbury renters and 24% of home owners were cost burdened. The median home price exceeded median 2024 annual income by about \$100,000. These pressures are compounded by demographic shifts—including an aging population and small household sizes—which are increasing demand for a wider range of housing types.

Persistent barriers to development continue to limit new supply. Zoning barriers and regulatory complexity, a lack of infrastructure, and rising construction costs make many projects—especially small- and mid-scale developments—difficult to finance. While new units have been permitted in recent years, not all permitted structures are completed and those that are built may not result in long-term housing for residents or be affordable to many residents. Short-term rentals have expanded significantly—doubling between 2019 and 2025—although the scale of its impact on the long-term housing market is still uncertain. Additional information on housing and affordability can be found at [HousingData.org](https://housingdata.org).

A Path Forward

Despite these challenges, Waterbury has made meaningful progress in positioning itself to respond:

1. **Phase 1 Zoning Bylaws Update:** The Town has begun efforts to modernize zoning to encourage infill development.
2. **Housing Task Force:** The Town has established the Waterbury Housing Task Force to advance the goals of the Municipal Plan. Additional programs include homeowner education programs, an ongoing analysis of housing data and short-term rental trends, and an analysis of the best locations to create housing.
3. **Housing Reserve Fund:** The Housing Reserve Fund has allocated a portion of the Town's local option tax toward down payment assistance.
4. **Marsh House:** Completion of 26 affordable housing units in Downtown with Downstreet

The community is taking a proactive and collaborative approach to expanding housing opportunities. These efforts provide a strong foundation for the Aspirations, Goals, and Strategies outlined in this chapter.

State Efforts to Boost Housing Production

Since the housing crisis in Vermont reached new heights in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been several changes and initiatives at the state level intended to boost housing production throughout Vermont. Relevant policy changes include the HOME Act, which expanded permissions for duplexes and ADUs statewide, and Act 181, which launched a process to identify areas planned for growth that would be eligible to receive state assistance and an exemption from Act 250 (Vermont's land use law). In addition, in 2024, the Agency of Commerce and Community Development launched the Homes for All initiative, including a toolkit for small developers and community development advocates to expand missing middle housing and infill development.

“Missing middle” housing refers to homes like duplexes, triplexes, accessory dwelling units, and townhomes—housing types that were commonly built pre-1945 but were disallowed by zoning in

many communities in the latter half of the 20th century— that renters and owners can typically afford if they earn between 80% and 120% or 150% of median area household income. “Infill development” refers to development within existing neighborhoods, as opposed to “greenfield development,” which refers to development on previously undeveloped land adjacent to or outside existing neighborhoods.

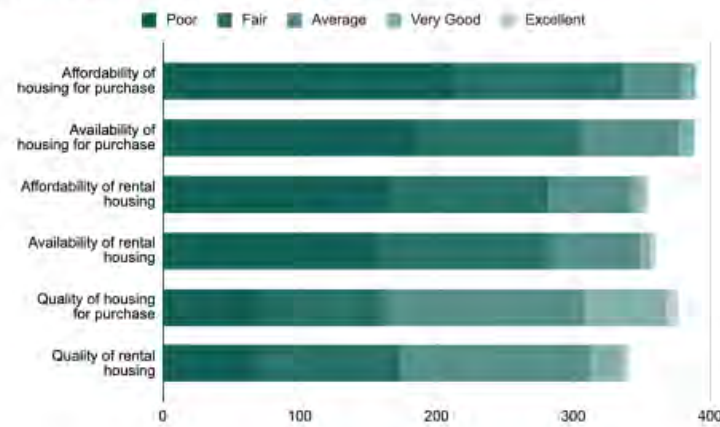
What We Heard

The Planning Commission conducted a Community Survey in late 2024 and held in-person and online Visioning Sessions in early 2025 to understand community priorities. The following themes emerged regarding housing in Waterbury.

Housing Affordability and Availability

Residents identified affordable and adequate housing as one of the most significant challenges facing Waterbury, with nearly 75% of survey respondents identifying it as a top community challenge. Survey responses also showed particularly low ratings for housing affordability and availability, with affordability of housing for purchase and affordability of rental housing both averaging 2.4 out of 5, and availability of housing for purchase averaging 2.5. Residents consistently expressed that Waterbury is not currently providing enough safe and affordable housing options for existing and future residents, with that question receiving an average score of 2.1 out of 5.

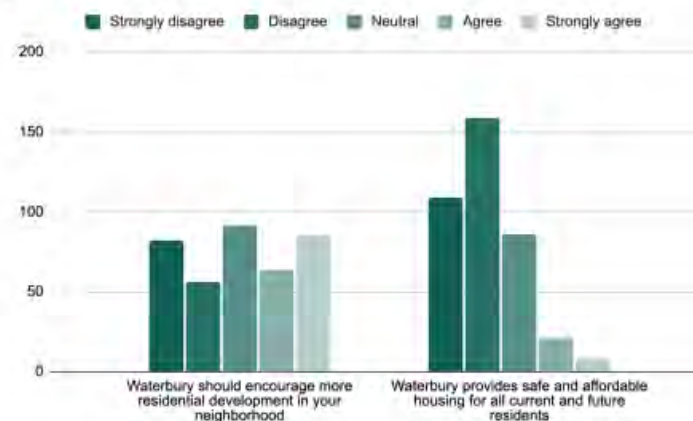
HOUSING AFFORDABILITY, AVAILABILITY & QUALITY



Housing Diversity and Housing Types

Residents expressed support for expanding the range of housing options available in Waterbury. Feedback highlighted the need for accessory dwelling units (ADUs), smaller homes, multifamily housing, workforce housing, senior housing, and housing suitable for households at different life stages and income levels. Community members also emphasized the importance of rehabilitating vacant or underutilized buildings and converting unused commercial space into housing opportunities.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT & AVAILABILITY



Neighborhood Character and Growth

While residents generally support the creation of additional housing, opinions were more mixed regarding new residential

development within existing neighborhoods. When asked whether Waterbury should encourage more residential development in their neighborhood, responses averaged 3.0 out of 5, indicating divided opinions. Community feedback emphasized the importance of balancing housing growth with neighborhood character, rural landscapes, and Waterbury's historic village centers. Residents also expressed a preference for focusing new housing in areas with existing infrastructure such as water, wastewater, sidewalks, and village centers.

Housing and Quality of Life

Housing concerns were frequently linked to broader community issues including affordability, property taxes, workforce retention, and economic vitality. Respondents identified property taxes as the top overall challenge facing Waterbury, with approximately 78% identifying it as a concern. Housing availability and affordability were also commonly linked to the ability of local businesses, schools, and community organizations to attract and retain workers and families.

Community Visioning Mapping

During Town Meeting in 2025 and at four Community Visioning Sessions, attendees were asked questions about how they felt about parts of Town and were told to place colored dots on a map to indicate those feelings. The point locations as well as the Response Density (heat maps showing the locations of the most responses) are shown here.



VCGI | Esri | TomTom | Garmin | SafeGraph | GeoTechnologies, Inc | NASA ...

2 km Powered by Esri

Questions:

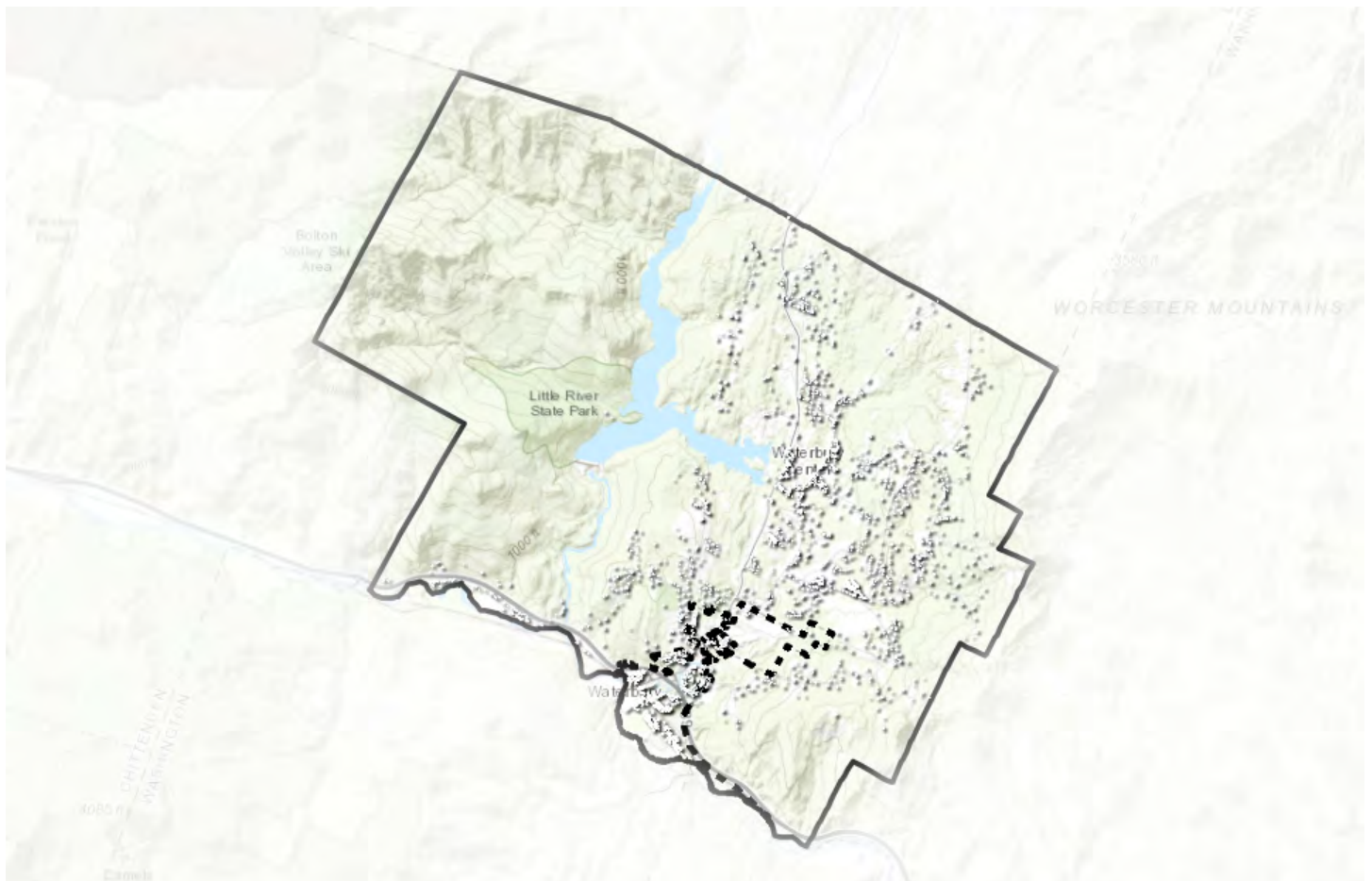
Housing - Desired Development Locations

Places in Town to Change / Invest In

To read more about the results from Community Engagement from this plan, click the button below:

**Survey Results
Summary**

**Visioning Sessions
Summary**



VCGI | Esri Canada | Esri | HERE | Garmin | USGS | NGA | EPA | USDA | NPS...

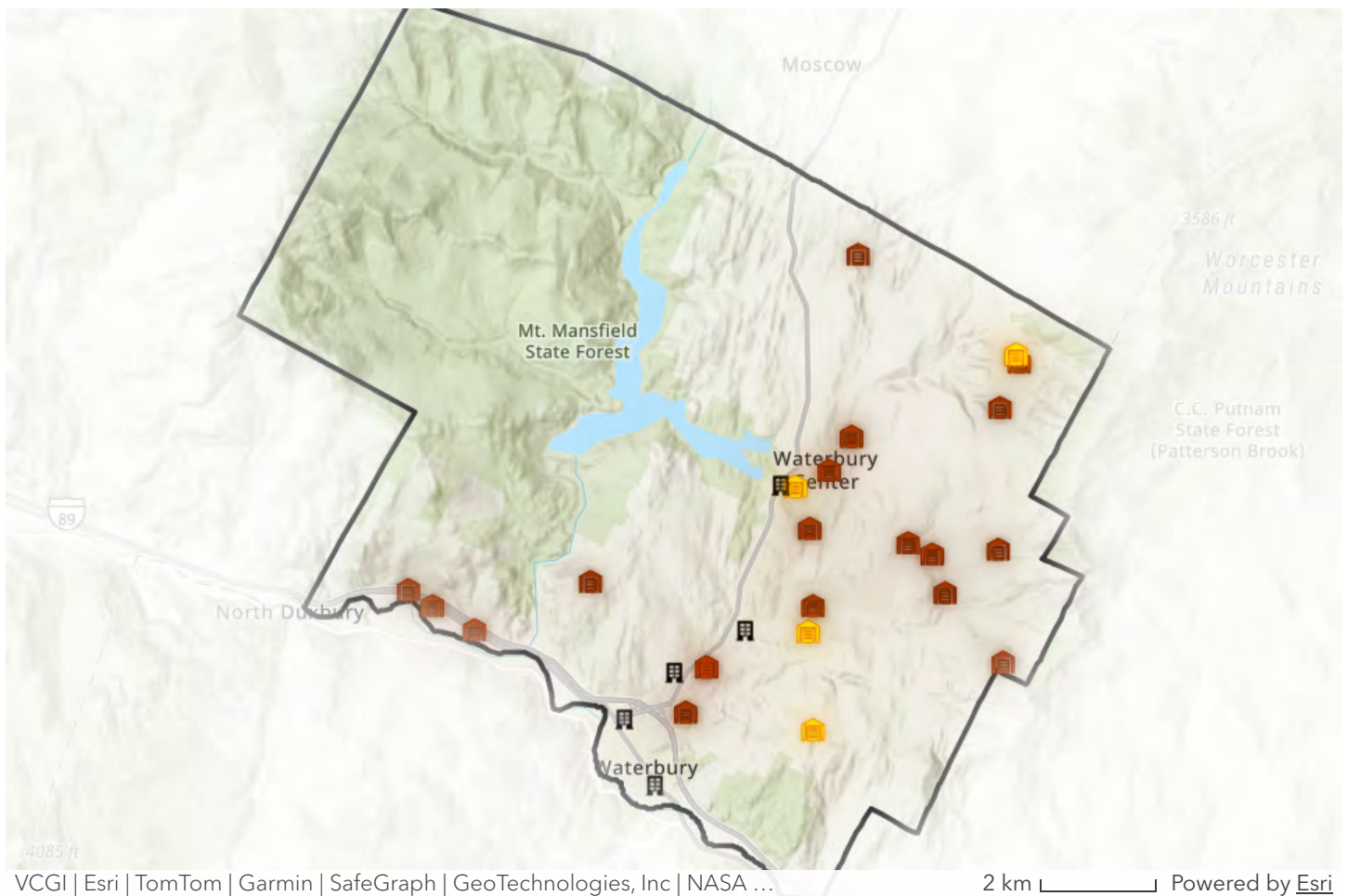
5 km Powered by Esri

Key Maps

Map 1: Housing Types and Density

This map depicts different housing types in Waterbury.

Data Source: Building Footprints - VT Center for Geographic Information - E911 Data



Map 2: Housing Growth: Residential Permits Issued

This map shows the residential housing permits issued in Waterbury from 2016 to 2025.

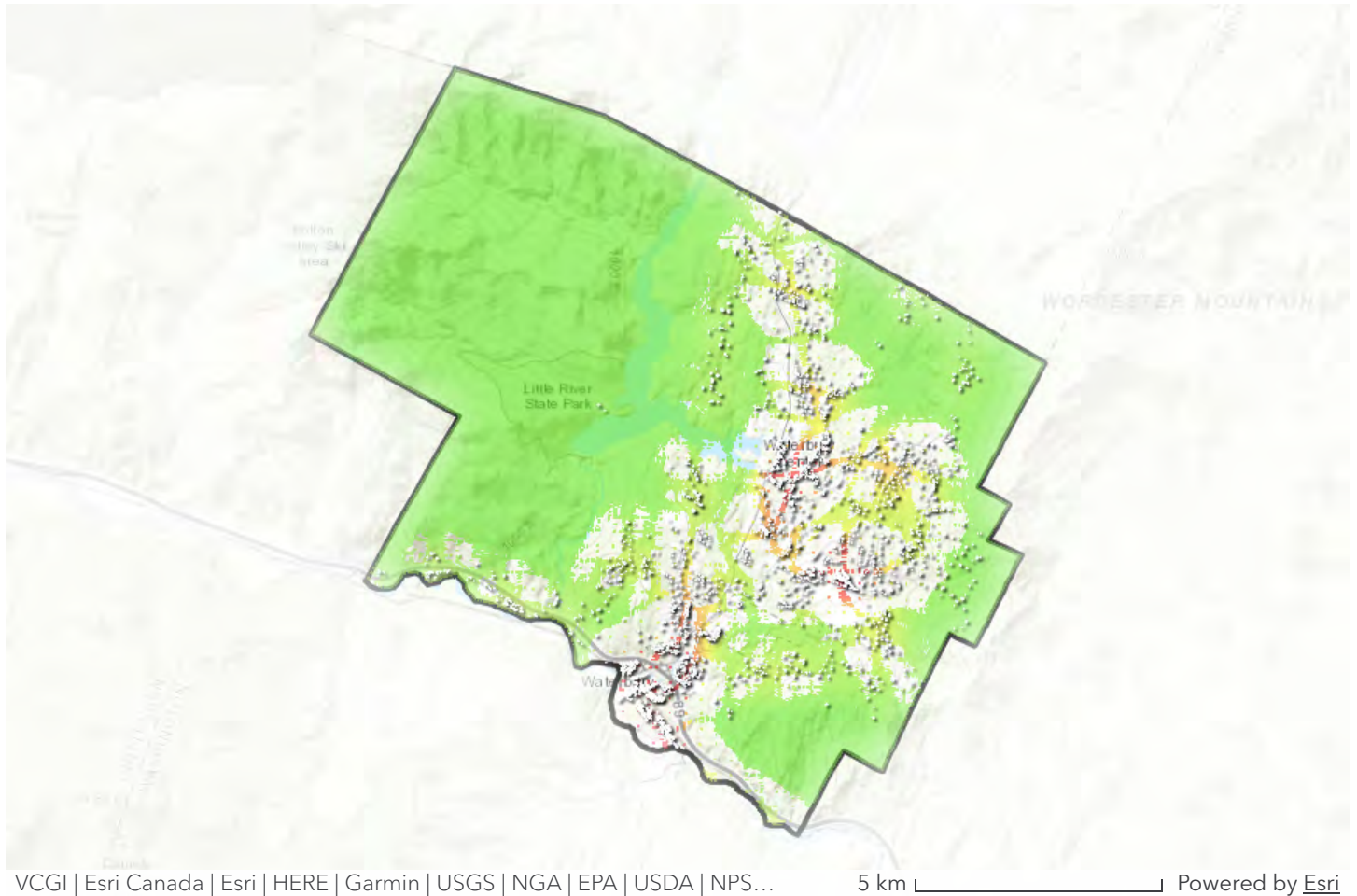
To view the permits issued by year, **click the Play button (at the bottom center of the map)** to see each year's permit activity. Use the Pause button to see a specific year.

An important note: these data describe permits issued, not necessarily structures built. Permit data in Waterbury does not currently contain that structure.

This data is also graphed.

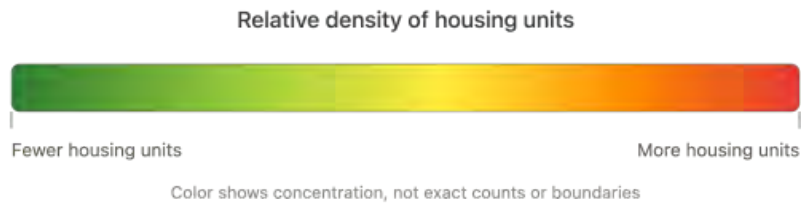
- [New Permits Issued](#)
- [Number of Units by Year](#)

Data Source: Housing Permit Data from Town (and formerly Village) Department of Planning.



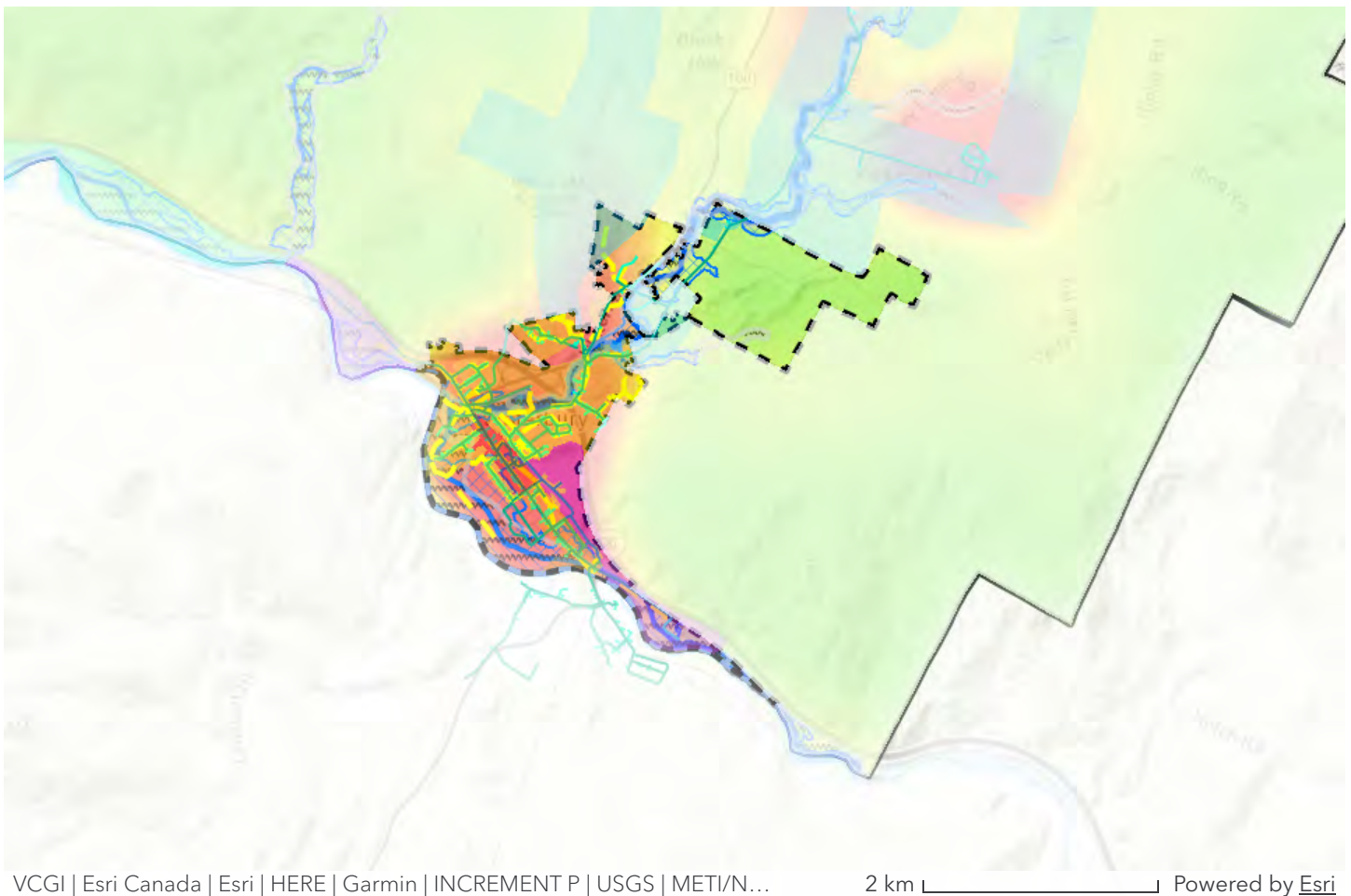
Map 3: Housing Density

This 'heat map' illustrates the relative density of residential units within Waterbury. Data was created using the number of housing units contained in the VT Center for Geographic Information's Building Footprint E911 Data and interpreted using a density-creation mapping algorithm by the Waterbury Planning Commission.



Housing Density layer legend. Red Areas = More Housing Units. Click to expand the graphic.

Data Sources: VT Center for Geographic Information - Building Footprint E911 Data | Housing Density Heatmap - created by Waterbury Planning Commission based on E911 Residential Site Type use codes and Number of Units per building.



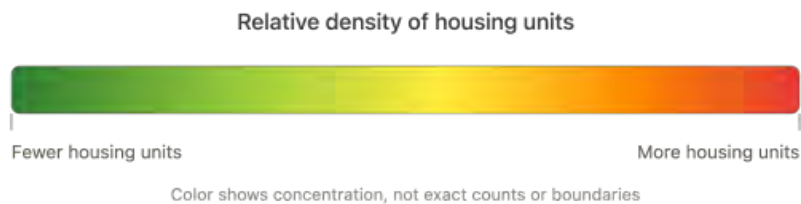
Map 4: Housing Opportunity Areas Map

This map depicts several different layers of interest in potential residential housing development projects.

First, the Edward Farrar Utility District (EFUD) area illustrates where water and wastewater service exists for larger multi-family developments (also note the water and wastewater pipe lines to additionally show that).

Second, the residential zoning districts are shown to illustrate where housing is currently allowed through zoning bylaws.

Third, housing density (the green-to-red heatmap in the background) shows existing housing density derived from units of housing and illustrates existing more densely developed areas.



The Housing Density layer legend is shown above. Red areas = More Housing Units. Click to expand the graphic.

Fourth, areas of potential risk are shown via the Flood Hazard Overlay and the VT Agency of Natural Resources River Corridor area. These are zones which may flood during certain events.

Finally, the area around [⊕ Waterbury Center State-designated Village Center](#) (click the link to zoom to that area) is shown as this area is zoned for denser housing development and is served by drinking water. The same layers mentioned above are shown in this area as well where they exist.

Together, these layers indicate areas of potential opportunity and risk with respect to housing development.

Data Sources: Zoning Districts and Flood Hazard Overlay - Central VT Planning Commision & Waterbury Planning Commission | EFUD Drinking Water and Sanitary Sewer Lines - Edward Farrar Utility District | Waterbury Designated Village - VT Center for Geographic Information | River Corridors - VT Agency of Natural Resources



Map 5: Flood Risk & Housing Vulnerability Map

This map identifies residential areas vulnerable to flooding. To create this map, we identified which residential structures are located within a Flood Hazard Areas (FHAs) as mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). We then took the number of housing units in those structures (as reported by E911 data) and created the ⊕ 'heat mapped' areas showing where there are more or fewer residential units in FHAs. The downtown area has four distinct concentrations including the ⊕ Union Street / Armory Avenue area, ⊕ the Butler Street area, the ⊕ Elm / Randall Streets neighborhood, and ⊕ South Main Street. On Route 2, the ⊕ Farr's Field area is also flood prone.

Data Sources: Housing Density in Flood Hazard Areas - Waterbury Planning Commission | Flood Hazard Areas - National Flood Hazard Mapping Program

Aspirations, Goals, & Strategies

Waterbury's future plans for Housing are captured in the following Aspirations, Goals, and Strategies:

Aspiration 1 - Housing for All Incomes, Life Stages, and Abilities

Waterbury ensures that current and future residents—across all incomes, life stages, and abilities—can live in safe, quality homes that support their well-being, livelihoods, and connection to the community

Aspiration 2 - Context-Sensitive Growth and Neighborhood Integrity

Waterbury increases the supply of housing (ownership and long-term rentals) while respecting existing neighborhoods, historic character, and the natural environment, and by encouraging higher-density housing in locations served by infrastructure such as sidewalks, water, or wastewater.

Aspiration 3 - A Supportive and Predictable Housing Development Environment

Waterbury fosters a clear, efficient, and collaborative housing development environment that supports professional developers, nonprofit partners, and individual landowners in creating and maintaining diverse, sustainable housing options, including new construction, accessory dwelling units, duplex conversions, infill, and rehabilitation of existing homes.



Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: To meet current and future community needs, increase housing supply to meet community needs in

consideration of CVRPC targets as well as the Waterbury Housing Task Force goal of 36 units.

- Strategy 1.1: Through land use policies, promote infill housing within existing neighborhoods and buildings, particularly in areas with access to water or wastewater infrastructure.
- Strategy 1.2: Continue funding and strategically deploying the Housing Reserve Fund to support small-scale developers and homeowners creating projects that are integrated into existing neighborhoods with minimal impact on infrastructure and community character.
- Strategy 1.3: Identify and map underutilized or vacant parcels near existing infrastructure that are suitable for housing developments and proactively engage landowners and potential developers.
- Strategy 1.4: Consider allocating a portion of the Housing Reserve Fund to provide small predevelopment grants for early-stage project work, such as site planning, market analysis, and permitting.

Tracking Progress on Goal #1

- Number of new housing units created annually (total and by type).
- Number of infill housing units developed within areas served by water and/or wastewater infrastructure.
- Number of projects supported through the Housing Reserve Fund.
- Number of underutilized or vacant parcels identified and mapped for potential housing development.
- Number of predevelopment grants awarded and projects advanced to construction.

Goal 2: Prioritize expanding affordable long-term rental and ownership opportunities for low/moderate and middle-income households as part of efforts to meet

CVRPC targets as well as the Waterbury Housing Task Force goal of 36 units.

- Strategy 2.1: Encourage the use of local, state, and federal resources (e.g., the Housing Reserve Fund, tax increment financing through the Community and Housing Infrastructure Program, Urban Development Action Grants, and Community Development Block Grants) and partnerships with nonprofit housing organizations (e.g., Habitat for Humanity) to support the creation and preservation of low/moderate and middle-income housing.
- Strategy 2.2: Prioritize investments that both create new low/moderate and middle-income housing and improve the resilience, safety, and energy performance of existing affordable housing stock through the Waterbury Housing Improvement program, VHIP, or other comparable programs including those recommended by the Housing Task Force.
- Strategy 2.3: Promote state and regional homeownership resources, such as Downstreet's Home Ownership Center and programs offered by the Vermont Housing Finance Agency, to support homeownership across a range of income levels.
- Strategy 2.4: Support local partners in expanding opportunities for homeownership, including partnerships, down-payment assistance programs, and support for first-time buyers. The Waterbury Housing Task Force promotes awareness of pathways for owner-occupants to create housing, such as accessory dwelling units and multifamily conversions.
- Strategy 2.5: Increase the supply of housing affordable to low/moderate and middle-income households by at least 7–8 units of renter-occupied housing stock, and 7–8 units of owner-occupied housing stock annually.

Tracking Progress on Goal #2

- Number of new rental units and ownership units created annually and their affordability levels. In Waterbury, the focus

should be on new units affordable to 120% of median income and below.

- Homeownership rates for low/moderate and middle-income households.
- Number of existing housing units improved through weatherization, WHIP, VHIP, or similar programs.
- Number of units created using key housing programs, including those offered by Downstreet's Home Ownership Center and VHFA

Goal 3: Waterbury's land use policies support a wide range of housing types and living arrangements.

- Strategy 3.1: Explicitly allow and promote "missing middle" housing types—such as townhomes, cottage courts, co-housing, small multifamily buildings, and clustered development—through zoning updates and public guidance.
- Strategy 3.2: Implement Phase 2 Unified Development Bylaws to address barriers that limit housing choice, particularly within and near areas with access to water, wastewater, or walkable village areas.
- Strategy 3.3: Support housing options that enable seniors to age in place, accommodate people with disabilities, and meet the needs of the local workforce.
- Strategy 3.4: The Waterbury Housing Task Force will continue to provide public education/outreach of regional and state resources that support missing middle housing, including the Homes for All Toolkit and similar guidance.
- Strategy 3.5: Encourage accessory dwelling units by simplifying permitting, clarifying rental allowances, and providing clear design and compliance guidance.

Tracking Progress on Goal #3

- Adoption and implementation of updated zoning bylaws supporting diverse housing types.

- Number of ADUs and missing middle housing units permitted and constructed annually.
- Participation in public education or outreach programs related to housing options.

Goal 4: Waterbury aligns housing development with infrastructure capacity and overall land use goals. Identify areas to promote creation of housing through the resource-efficient expansion of infrastructure and revised zoning bylaws in the first 3 years of the plan.

- Strategy 4.1: Conduct a buildout analysis to evaluate opportunities for increased density in different parts of Town and assess implications for zoning, wastewater capacity, and infrastructure planning.
- Strategy 4.2: Incorporate feasible wastewater extensions and associated feasibility studies into the Town Capital Improvement Plan or the Edward Farrar Utility District long-range planning to support coordinated housing growth. Leverage Clean Water State Revolving Fund to help pay for capital improvements.
- Strategy 4.3: Encourage housing growth in more densely developed areas with access to water, wastewater, or other applicable infrastructure to reduce sprawl, protect surrounding rural landscapes, and manage long-term public costs.
- Strategy 4.4: Continue participation in State Designation Programs to provide developers with permitting and financial benefits. Evaluate and implement Tier 1A or 1B areas to receive Act 250 exemptions for housing.

Tracking Progress on Goal #4

- Completion of buildout analysis and identification of priority growth areas.
- Infrastructure investments supporting housing growth (e.g., wastewater extensions) and number of units created on

water/wastewater or other infrastructure.

- Enrollment in State Designation Programs and designation of Tier 1A or 1B areas.

Goal 5: Waterbury preserves existing housing and reduces displacement risk by reusing existing buildings and supporting a broader range of housing types.

- Strategy 5.1: Invest in flood resilience projects (e.g., flood reduction projects and flood resilient construction) and weatherization improvements to protect existing housing, reduce operating costs, and prevent permanent loss of housing stock.
- Strategy 5.2: Continue and enhance participation in FEMA's Community Rating System to reduce flood insurance costs and improve long-term housing stability.
- Strategy 5.3: Explore design guidance and regulatory flexibility for historic buildings in flood-prone areas to support rehabilitation while reducing flood risk and avoiding unnecessary buyouts.
- Strategy 5.4: Encourage the conversion of underutilized or vacant buildings into housing.
- Strategy 5.5: Support the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic homes to allow conversion into duplexes or multifamily housing, where consistent with historic preservation goals.
- Strategy 5.6: Through Waterbury LEAP, partner with weatherization providers to publicize programs that reduce housing costs and improve resilience.

Tracking Progress on Goal #5

- Number of existing housing units rehabilitated or made flood-resilient.
- Participation in FEMA's Community Rating System and resulting insurance cost reductions.

- Number of vacant or underutilized buildings converted into housing.
- Revision of zoning guidance to allow for resilience work on historic homes and buildings.
- Number of historic properties rehabilitated for housing use.
- Leads generated through Waterbury LEAP for weatherization.

Goal 6: Waterbury improves transparency, data, and coordination for long-term local rentals.

- Strategy 6.1: Maintain rental registry to track rental units and monitor the impacts of short-term rentals on long-term housing supply, affordability, and availability.
- Strategy 6.2: Expand the Building Better Waterbury initiative into a comprehensive support program that provides education, technical assistance, and clear guidance for homeowners and small-scale developers for development of long-term rental housing.
- Strategy 6.3: Work with state representatives and regulatory agencies to advocate for simplified fire code compliance pathways for accessory dwelling units and multifamily housing (including both owner-occupied and long-term rental units) that maintain safety while reducing unnecessary barriers.

Tracking Progress on Goal #6

- Number of rental units registered and tracked through the rental registry.
- Trends in share of short-term vs. long-term rental units to assess impacts.
- Participation in Building Better Waterbury programs and technical assistance efforts.
- Policy or regulatory changes adopted to simplify development of long-term rental housing.
- Fire code changes or legislation introduced targeting fire safety.

Who Tracks Progress

The Town should track progress on housing through coordination between the Planning Commission, Housing Task Force, and Development Review Board, with support from housing partners and regional organizations.

Suggested Responsible Entities

- **Town:** Planning Commission, Development Review Board, Housing Task Force, and Town staff.
- **Non-Town:** Agency of Commerce & Community Development, Downstreet Housing & Community Development, Evernorth, Discover Waterbury, private developers, builders, and landowners, Habitat for Humanity, CVRPC, Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA), and other nonprofit housing partners.

Stay Engaged

Ways residents can support community goals for Housing in Waterbury



Help Create and Improve Housing Locally

- Consider building an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) or converting existing space into housing to support long-term rental opportunities.
- Explore opportunities to rehabilitate or weatherize existing homes to improve safety, efficiency, and affordability.
- If you own underutilized property or buildings, consider options for housing development or adaptive reuse.

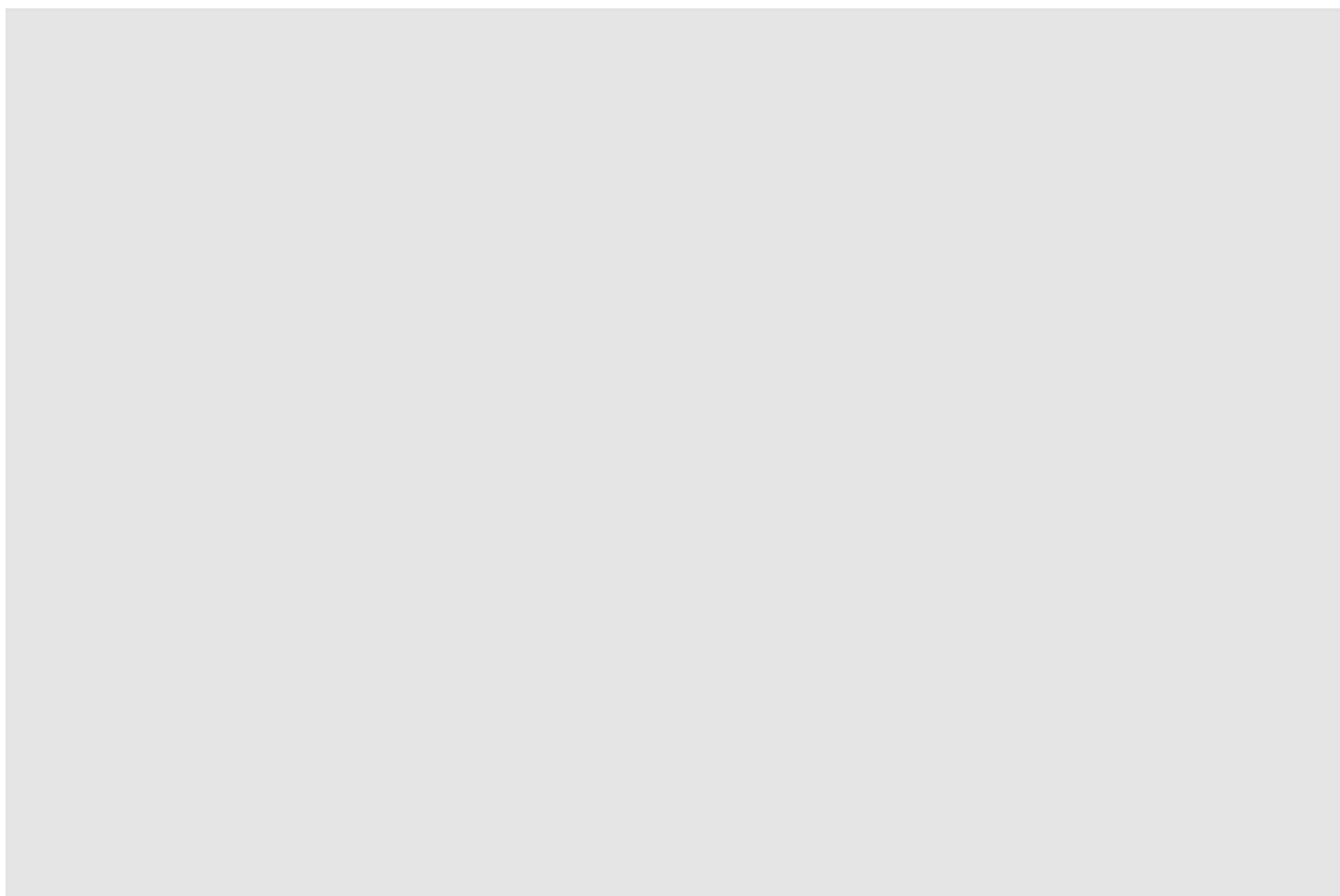
Support Affordable and Workforce Housing

- Learn about and utilize programs that support homeownership, rental housing, and rehabilitation, including Downstreet, VHFA, and local Housing Reserve Fund programs.
- Support local and regional housing initiatives that expand opportunities for low- to moderate-income households.

- Engage with nonprofit housing organizations working in Waterbury and the surrounding region.

Participate in Local Planning & Housing Initiatives

- Attend Planning Commission, Selectboard, and Development Review Board meetings related to housing and development.
- Participate in the Waterbury Housing Task Force and other local committees focused on housing solutions.
- Provide input on zoning updates, housing policies, and development proposals that shape the future of the community.



Stay Informed About Housing Resources

- Take advantage of educational resources such as the [Homes for All Toolkit](#) and local outreach efforts led by the Housing Task Force.

- Participate in workshops, open houses, and community discussions related to housing and development.
- Stay informed about programs that support ADUs, infill housing, and missing middle housing types.

Support Balanced Growth and Community Character

- Engage in discussions about where and how housing should grow, particularly in areas with access to water, wastewater, and walkable village centers.
- Support efforts to expand housing while maintaining Waterbury's historic character and natural environment.

Stay Connected

- [Town of Waterbury Website](#): central hub for announcements, project updates, and public meeting information.
- [Town of Waterbury Facebook Page](#): real-time updates and engagement opportunities.
- Town Newsletter & Text Alerts: sign up for email and SMS notifications. Text "Hi" to (802) 200-2644 any time you need to.
- Text "Waterbury" to 91896 to opt in to text alerts. TextMyGov
- Participate in public workshops, surveys, events, and programs related to arts, culture, history, and community identity.

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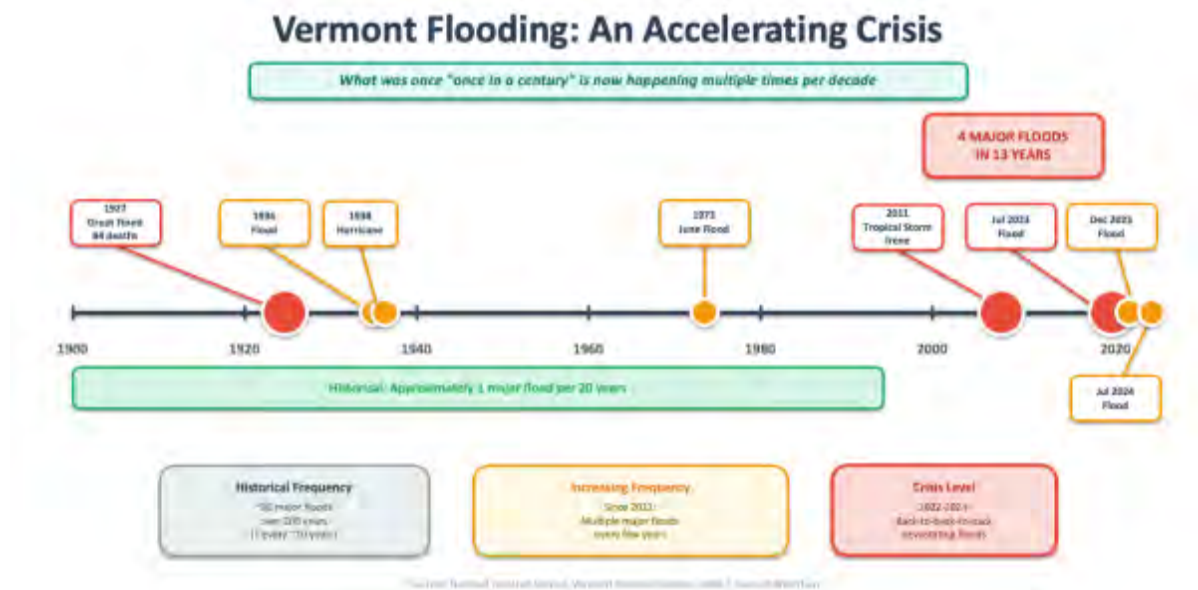
Flood Resilience

Introduction

Flooding has shaped Waterbury for a century.

This chapter discusses the history, scope, and impact of flooding in Waterbury. Located on the Winooski River, which is fed from the Crossett, Thatcher, and Graves Brooks, as well as the dam-influenced Little River, Waterbury is a community shaped by water. It's in the name, after all!

Waterbury's location has influenced its increasingly urgent efforts to improve flood resilience for its residents. The following Planning Context, Survey Results, Maps, and outline of Waterbury's Aspirations, Goals, and Strategies illustrate how the community can become more resilient to flooding and less prone to suffer the damages that have been seen in the past.



A timeline of flooding in Waterbury, VT since 1900. *Click the image to expand to full size.*

Planning Context

Major floods in 1927, 1936, and 1938 demonstrated the vulnerability of the Winooski River valley, and the 1927 event caused loss of life and widespread property damage. These disasters prompted construction of the dam, creating the Waterbury Reservoir, which reduced damages for decades.

That sense of protection ended with Tropical Storm Irene in August 2011. Nearly a foot of rain fell in less than 24 hours, overwhelming both natural systems and engineered controls. Water rose to five feet along Main Street, forcing evacuations and damaging approximately 220 buildings—nearly one-third of Waterbury's homes. The State Office Complex suffered extensive

damage, displacing more than 1,400 state employees. Tropical Storm Irene made clear that changes in land use, floodplain function, and building patterns play a critical role in long-term resilience.

The July 2023 floods caused widespread damage to neighborhoods, downtown businesses, and municipal infrastructure. Flooding from the Winooski River, Thatcher Brook, and Graves Brook inundated more than 200 homes and at least 20 businesses, disrupted Main Street (Route 2), and caused millions in structural damages. Municipal infrastructure sustained roughly \$300,000 in direct damage. While FEMA assistance supported recovery, many costs fell to the Town. A smaller flood followed in December 2023, underscoring the community's ongoing vulnerability. In the aftermath of these events, Community Resilience for Waterbury (CRew) formed and was later codified into the FEMA-designated long-term recovery group.



Residents of Waterbury canoe through Elm Street in July of 2023.
Photo: David Goodman / VT Digger

On July 10–11, 2024, Waterbury experienced its third significant flood in 13 months. The Winooski River peaked just inches short of major-flood stage, running five feet higher than predicted and catching many residents off guard. Several homes recorded 4.5 feet of water; sections of Gregg Hill, Henry Hough, and Shaw Mansion roads washed out entirely. Community volunteers with CRew coordinated cleanup while the Town provided pumps, dehumidifiers, and vacuum trucks. Many residents had become unwilling experts in flood recovery. More began seriously considering FEMA buyouts, and Town officials accelerated mitigation efforts—including



Flooding in July 2024 submerged parts of the Roundabout at the entrance of Waterbury. *Photo: Emma Malinak / VT Digger*

exploring floodwater storage at Randall Meadow. After these floods, the Waterbury Selectboard created the Natural Disaster Preparedness Committee and hired its first Natural Disaster Preparedness Coordinator in April 2025. These actions reflect the community's recognition that flooding is no longer a rare catastrophe but an ongoing challenge.

FEMA and the Uncertain Future of Funding

Two flood assistance funding mechanisms, the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF) and Community Rating System (CRS), are suspended as of 2026. Given this, the future and reliability of federal funding to support flood recovery is uncertain. In this context, local and state-driven funding and solutions are even more critical to Waterbury's long-term resilience.

Waterbury is pursuing a variety of funding sources as of 2026 to fund flood resilience projects, including Community Development Block Grant, Disaster Recovery funds, State-based Clean Water and Enhancement Grant funds, and Lake Champlain Basin Program funding for project planning and implementation. The Town is also considering leveraging Clean Water State Revolving Funds for infrastructure improvements, which could lead to using Water Infrastructure Sponsorship Program dollars for natural resources projects.

Rooted in History, Guided by Experience

Waterbury's future planning must be rooted in its flood history and guided by climate science. Protecting floodplains and river corridors, directing new development away from high-risk areas, planning new, more resilient development within them, investing in resilient infrastructure, and restoring natural systems that absorb and slow floodwaters are all essential to reducing future losses. The lessons of Tropical Storm Irene and the repeated floods of 2023–2024 remind us that thoughtful planning today is how we safeguard lives, property, and the long-term vitality of this community.

Climate Change and Waterbury's Flood Vulnerability

Climate change is reshaping Vermont's precipitation patterns. The Northeast has seen a 50–60% increase in extreme precipitation since the mid-1990s, with projections pointing to a further 52% increase by century's end. A warmer atmosphere holds more moisture, giving storms greater intensity when conditions align. Vermont ranks fourth among the lower 48 states for flood risk, and its mountainous terrain amplifies that exposure—steep slopes channel rainfall quickly into valley bottoms, while already-saturated soils limit absorption. Waterbury is particularly vulnerable, situated at the confluence of the Winooski River, Thatcher Brook, and Crossett Brook, where floodwaters from multiple watersheds converge downtown. What were once called 100-year floods are arriving far more frequently.



Flooding in Waterbury on July 11th, 2024. *Photo: Dana Allen*

What We Heard

The Planning Commission conducted a Community Survey in late 2024 and held in-person and online Visioning Sessions in early 2025 to understand community priorities. The following themes emerged regarding flood resilience and hazard mitigation in Waterbury.

Climate Change and Flood Risk

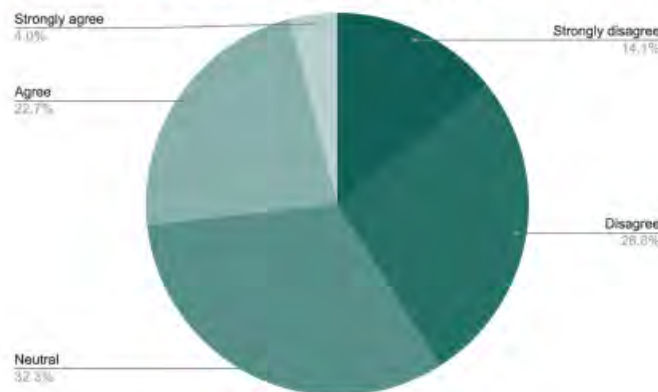
Residents identified climate change and stormwater management as the third most pressing community challenge. Flooding and its impacts on infrastructure, housing, and the local economy are widely recognized concerns, indicating strong support for proactive resilience planning.

Perception of Flood Preparedness

Survey responses indicate that residents believe Waterbury is making progress on flood resilience but that additional work is needed. Overall ratings suggest moderate confidence in the Town's current efforts, with clear interest in strengthening preparedness and long-term mitigation strategies.

To what extent do you agree with the following:

WATERBURY EFFECTIVELY ENCOURAGES FLOOD RESILIENCE

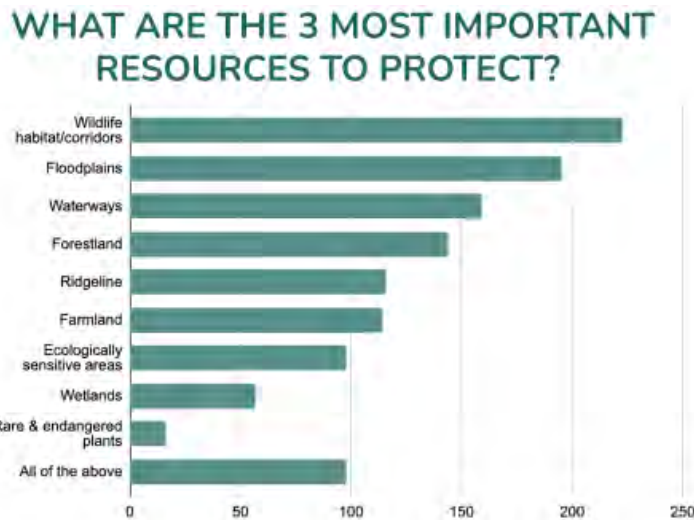


Stormwater and Infrastructure

Stormwater management emerged as a key area of concern. Residents recognize the importance of improving infrastructure systems to better manage runoff, reduce flood risk, and protect public and private investments.

Natural Resource Protection

Residents strongly value the protection of natural systems that contribute to flood resilience. Floodplains, waterways, wetlands, and forested areas were identified as priority resources, highlighting broad support for nature-based solutions and conservation strategies.

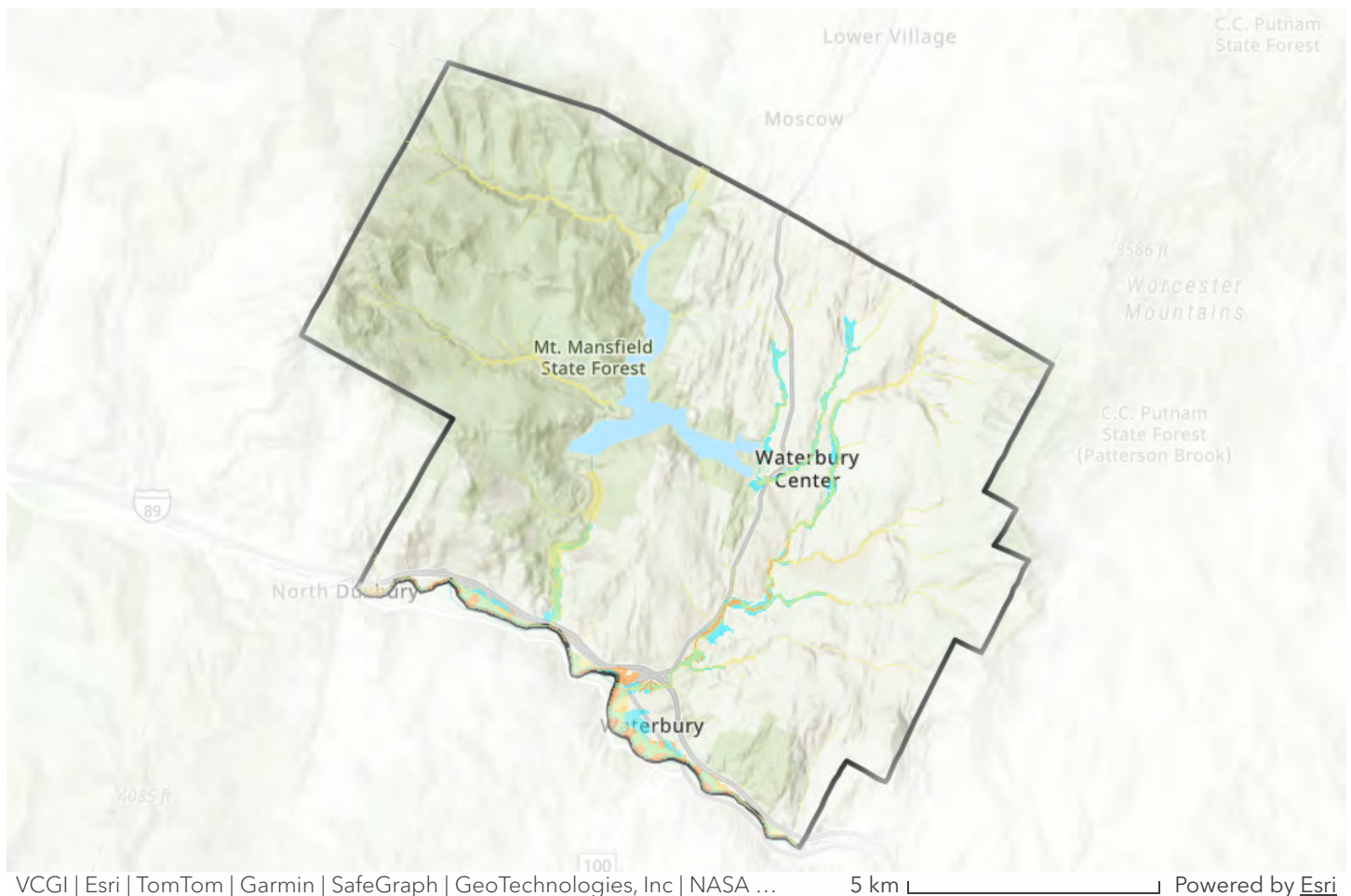


Flood resilience is closely tied to other major community concerns, including housing affordability, property taxes, and community infrastructure. This underscores the need to balance resilience investments with broader affordability and growth considerations.

To read more about the results from Community Engagement from this plan, click the button below:

**Survey Results
Summary**

**Visioning Session
Summary**

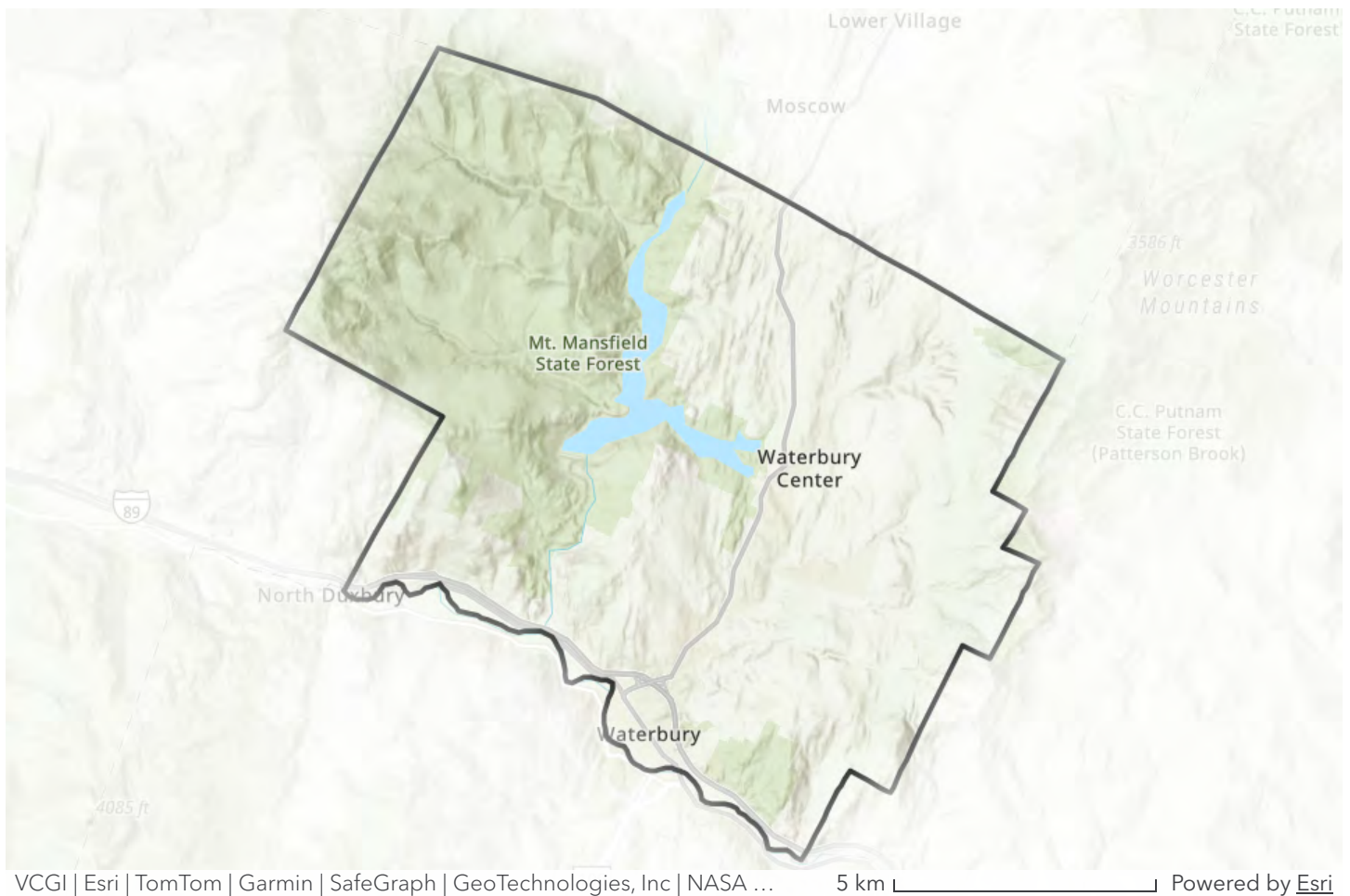


Key Maps

Map 1: River Corridor and Flood Hazard Areas

This map depicts FEMA floodplains and VT Agency of Natural Resources River Corridors and 50' stream setbacks.

Data Sources: River Corridors - VT Agency of Natural Resources | Floodplains - Special Flood Hazard Areas - National Flood Hazard Mapping Program



Map 2: Flood-Prone Infrastructure and Facilities: Roads and Structure

The Vermont Transportation Resilience Planning Tool (TRPT) is a web-based application that identifies bridges, culverts, and road embankments that are vulnerable to damage from floods, estimates risk based on the vulnerability, and criticality of roadway segments, and identifies potential mitigation measures based on the factors driving the vulnerability. Note that this map can also be found in the Transportation section.

50-year Flood Event - Risk

Risk — The combination of Vulnerability and Criticality. A road is high risk when it is both likely to be damaged *and* important to the community. Low-risk roads are either well above flood danger, easily bypassed, or both.

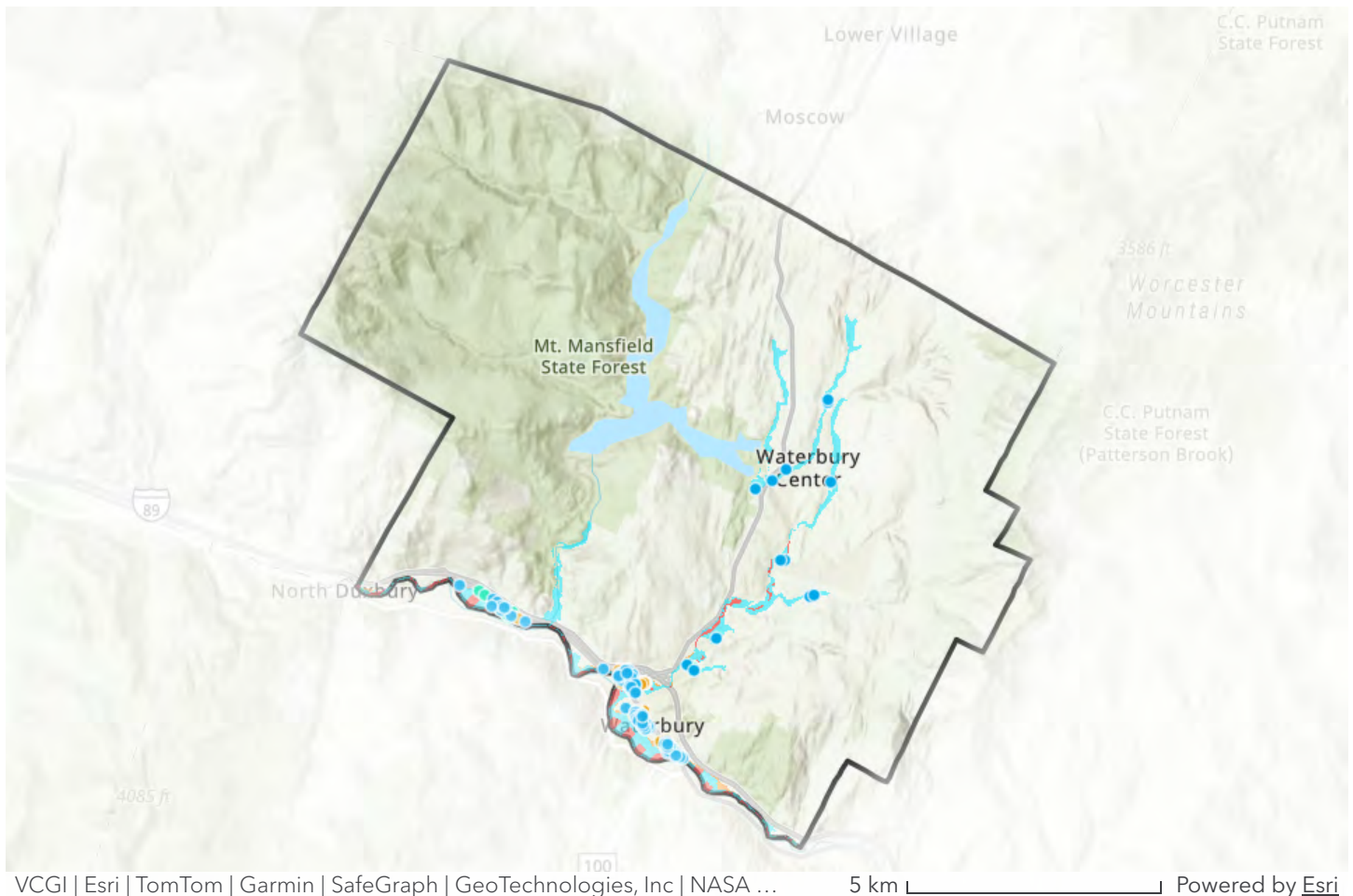
50-year Flood Event - Vulnerability

Vulnerability — How likely is this road or structure to be physically damaged by a flood? Higher scores reflect locations that are close to the river, have been damaged before, or face powerful erosion, sediment, or flooding pressure.

50-year Flood Event - Criticality

Criticality — How much do people depend on this road? Higher scores reflect roads where a closure would strand many travelers, cut off emergency services, or eliminate a key detour route.

Data Sources: All Data - VT Agency of Transportation



Map 3: Flood-Prone Housing and Neighborhoods

This map identifies residential areas vulnerable to flooding. To create this map, we identified which residential structures are located within a Flood Hazard Areas (FHAs) as mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). We then took the number of housing units in those structures (as reported by E911 data) and created the 'heat mapped' areas showing where there are more or fewer residential units in FHAs. The downtown area has four distinct concentrations. Farr's Field on Route 2 is also prone to flood damage.

Union Street

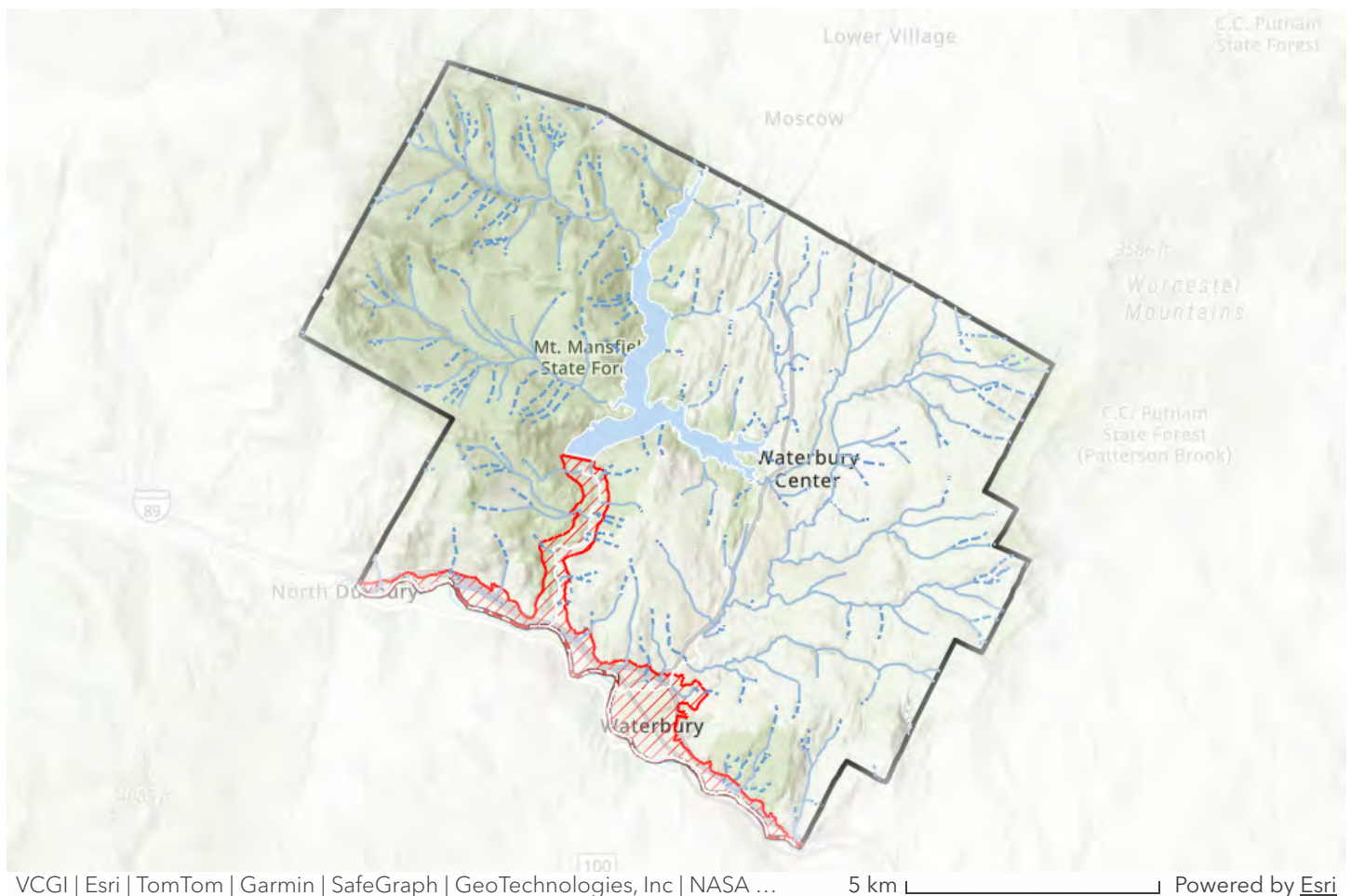
Butler Street

Elm / Randall Streets

South Main Street

Route 2 - Farr's Field

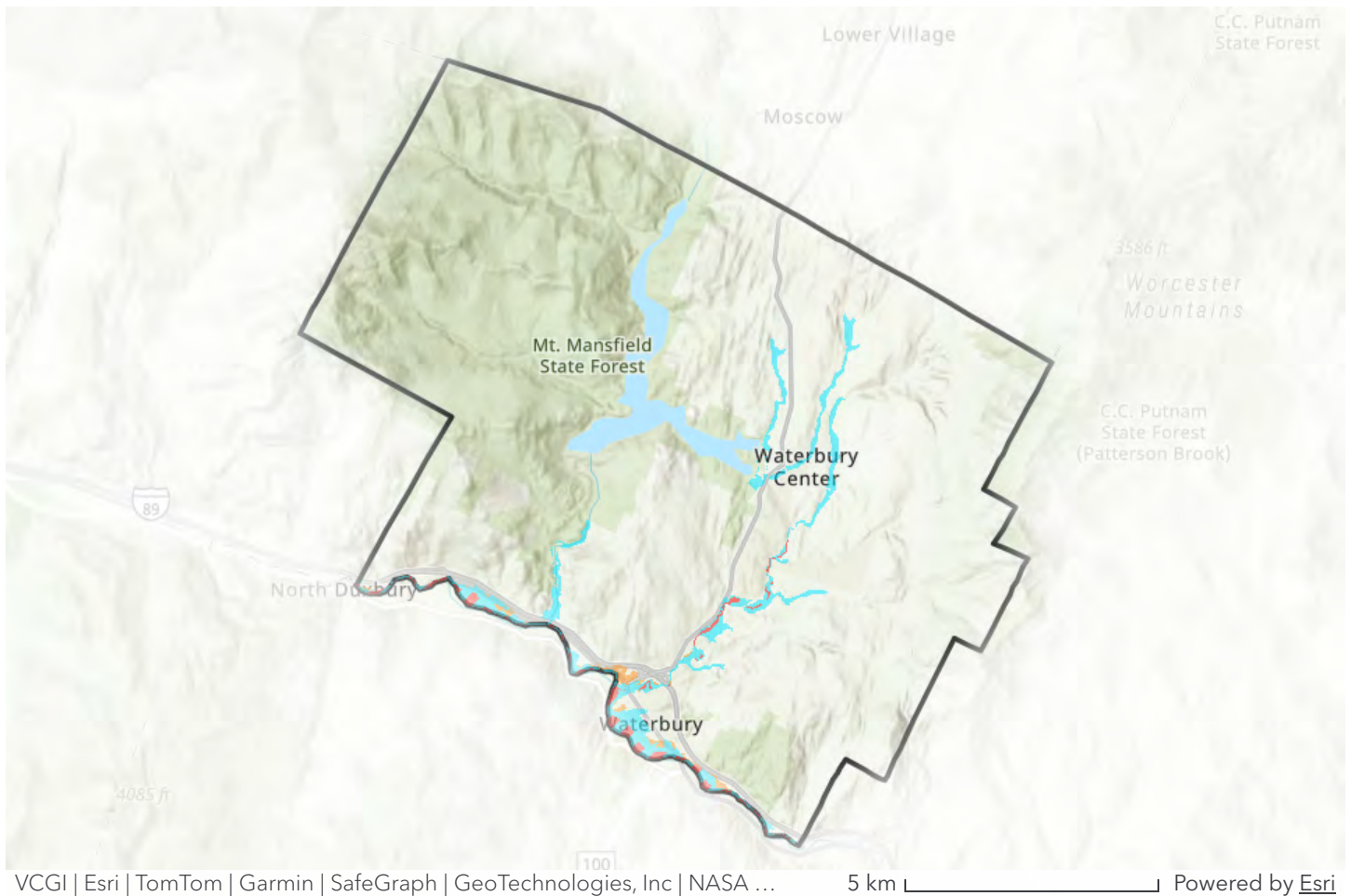
Data Sources: Residential Point Locations - E911 Data | Special Flood Hazard Areas - National Flood Hazard Mapping Program | Flood Prone Housing and Risk 'heatmap' - Waterbury Planning Commission



Map 4: Potential Dam Inundation Areas

Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) created this layer of potential High Risk Dam Inundation Areas showing the potential extent of inundation if certain dams in Vermont were to fail. VEM notes in this data that only certain dam inundation areas were digitized and that extents may not be complete.

Data Source: Dam Inundation Areas - Vermont Emergency Management - VT Center for Geographic Information

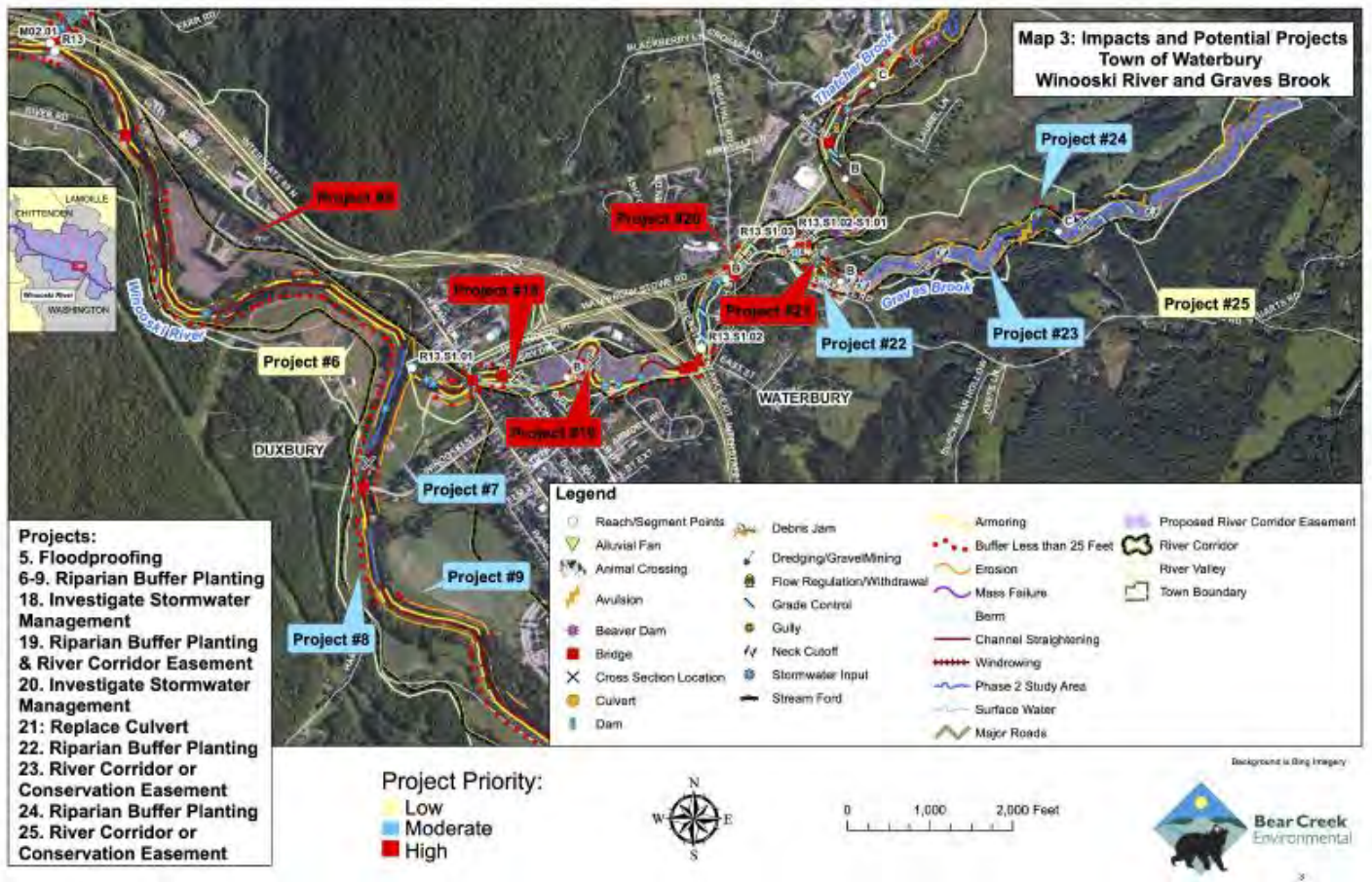


Map 5: Mitigation and Adaptation Projects Map

Since 2011, Waterbury has been pursuing a variety of flood resilience measures. A hydrologic and hydraulic study conducted in 2013, often referred to as the 'Choke Study' investigated the possible impact of the ⊕ Winooski Street Bridge in creating a constriction of the Winooski River and increasing flooding. While this was not found to be the case at normal flow conditions, there were a number of scenarios identified for increasing flood resilience.

At the time they included ⊕ lowering a portion of a farm field in Duxbury, ⊕ reconnecting a portion of the floodplain on the State Office Complex cornfield, and ⊕ possibly doing the same in an upstream portion of the same property. Despite efforts to implement those projects, none came to fruition.

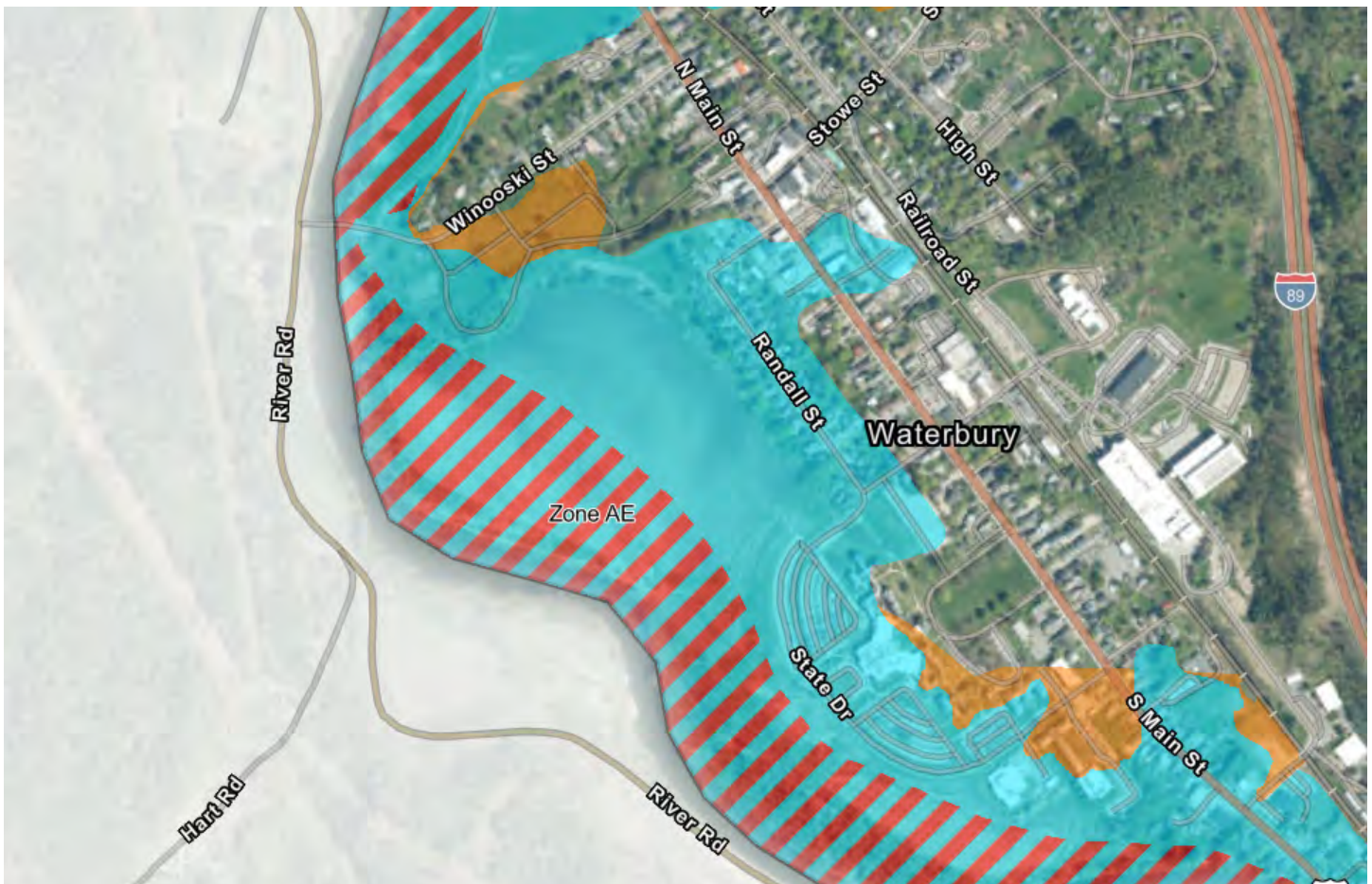
Data Source: 2013 Choke Study - Milone and MacBroom Consulting (now SLR Consulting)



Map 6: Mid Winooski River Corridor Plan

The next effort to identify mitigation projects in Waterbury came in 2015 with the Mid Winooski River Corridor Plan which identified numerous potential projects that could help improve water quality, flood resilience, and aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems along the Winooski River as well as up the tributaries. Some of those projects can be seen on the map (right) produced for that study which included floodproofing the wastewater treatment plant, riparian plantings along the main river corridor, stormwater management, culvert replacements, and easements along the river and its tributaries.

Data Source: Mid-Winooski River Corridor Plan - Vermont Agency of Natural Resources



Esri Community Maps Contributors | VCGI | Esri | TomTom | Garmin | Safe...

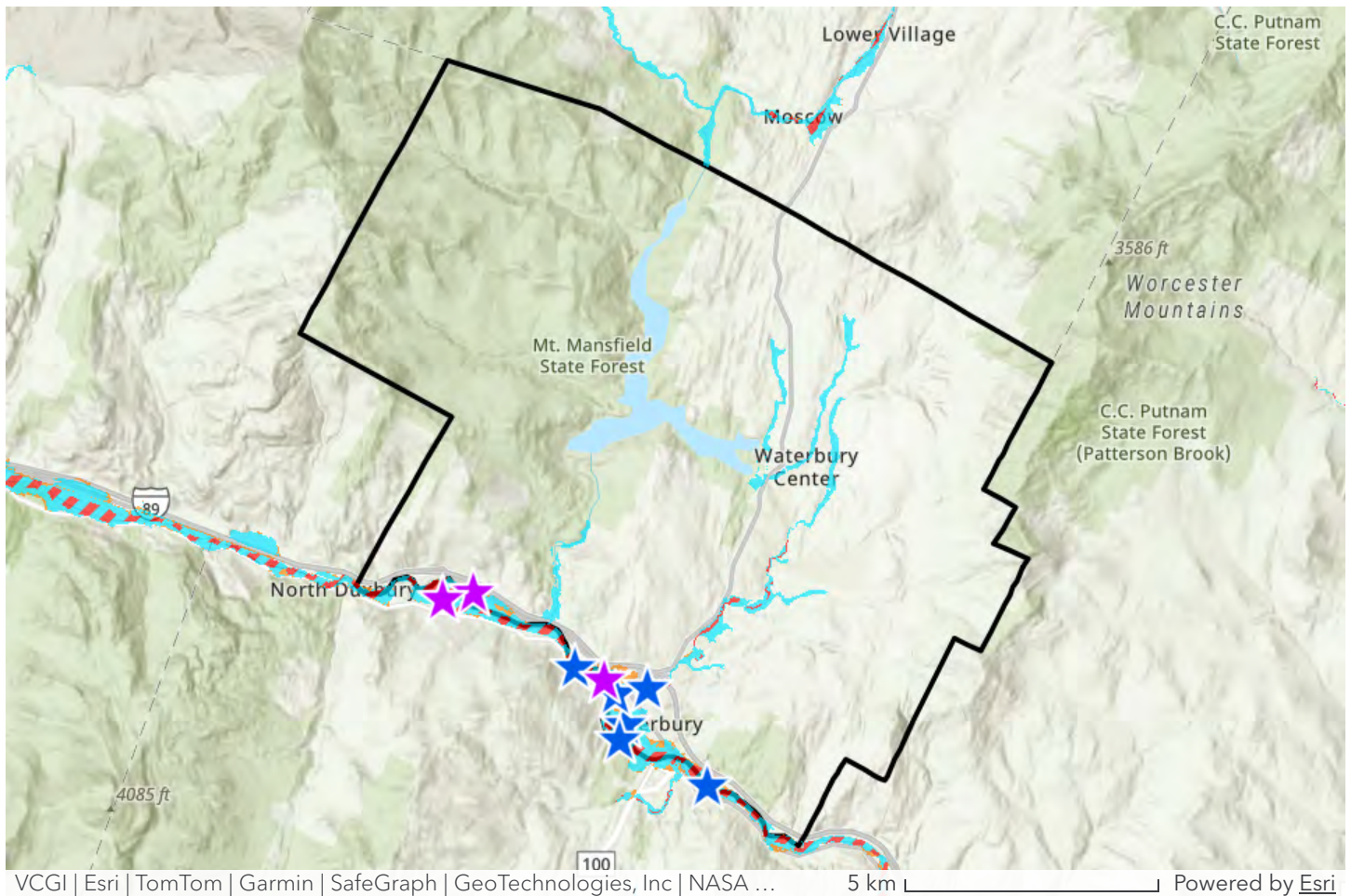
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Map 7: Potential Future Projects: Randall Meadow

In 2025, after applying for numerous grants to explore flood reduction options at Randall Meadow (the corn field located on the State Office Complex property), the Town of Waterbury was awarded a Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery grant of \$2.0 million. The project, preliminarily estimated to cost \$4.3 million total for design and implementation, envisions ⊕ removing an average of 1.5' of soil across more than 40 acres of land, including a high spot near Randall Street where an average of 3.5' would be removed, resulting in 100,000 cubic yards of material removed total.

This is projected to decrease flood elevations in the Randall / Elm Street areas and would have an impact on flood elevations as ⊕ much as 7,000 linear feet upstream from the Meadow.

Data Source: Concept Plan - SLR Consulting & Town of Waterbury



Map 8: Potential Future Projects

During the same round of CDBG-DR funding, Waterbury participated in the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission's Resilience Initiative for Vermont Empowerment and Recovery (RIVER Navigator) grant application to fund a Town-wide hydrologic and hydraulic modeling study that will ultimately provide Waterbury with an alternatives analysis—essentially a list of potential opportunities to increase flood resilience in the community with larger-scale projects like Randall Meadow.

Data Source: Town of Waterbury & SLR Consulting (Preliminary Projects Developed for Planning and Grant Application Purposes Only)

Aspirations, Goals, & Strategies

Waterbury's future plans for Flood Resilience are captured in the following Aspirations, Goals, and Strategies:

Aspiration 1 - Waterbury is Prepared to Address Flood Events

Waterbury is well-prepared to face flooding threats and is well-positioned to protect life, property, and critical community functions. The Town relies on coordinated emergency response planning, trained volunteer capacity, clear public communication systems, and strong partnerships with state, federal, and regional entities to maintain adequate flood response and recovery capacity.

Aspiration 2 - A Flood-Resilient Waterbury

Waterbury reduces flood risk by encouraging growth away from high-hazard areas or promoting more resilient development within them, advancing flood resilience projects, strengthening stormwater and infrastructure performance, and protecting natural systems (e.g., wetlands, floodplains, and forests) that reduce flood impacts. Climate change mitigation is also an important step towards reducing flood impacts.



Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: Reduce flood risk through resilient land use policies and development patterns.

- Strategy 1.1: Direct new development outside of River Corridor areas (as identified by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR)) and limit the scale and vulnerability of redevelopment within River Corridor areas.
- Strategy 1.2: Incorporate ANR River Corridor model bylaws in Town regulations updates to reduce future losses and strengthen eligibility for state and federal resilience programs.

- Strategy 1.3: Identify key watershed locations to consider limiting development to manage stormwater impacts and protect long-term watershed health, either through a natural resources inventory, stormwater management plan, or similar assessment.
- Strategy 1.4: Improve resilience of buildings and infrastructure within mapped flood hazard zones through innovative improvements and redevelopment in accordance with Waterbury's Special Flood Hazard Regulations.
- Strategy 1.5: Consider adopting road and driveway standards that address erosion impacts, hydrologic connectivity, and inundation issues.

Tracking Progress on Goal #1

- Adoption of River Corridor model bylaws and related flood hazard regulations.
- Adoption of resilience measures in updated bylaws.
- Adoption of driveway standards that address runoff and related concerns.

Goal 2: Strengthen flood readiness planning, coordination, and public communication.

- Strategy 2.1: Empower and collaborate with groups like CReW and NDPC to maintain and update a detailed flood readiness and recovery master plan addressing highest-risk locations, volunteer needs, alternate transportation routes, recovery protocols, and coordination with local, state, and federal partners. This master plan should integrate recommendations from the state-approved emergency management plan, FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plan, and guidance under the Natural Disaster Response Manual to ensure coordination and consistency.
- Strategy 2.2: Expand emergency alerts and public information systems by joining and promoting emergency alert systems like

VT-ALERT and maintaining a reliable text-alert notification system for flooding and other emergencies.

- Strategy 2.3: Participate in the Winooski Basin Flood Collaborative to strengthen regional coordination, improve shared preparedness, and advance priority resilience projects.
- Strategy 2.4: Continue to support CReW's efforts towards building resilience and improving mitigation to ensure the Town can mobilize a reliable volunteer force during flood events.
- Strategy 2.5: Through the Town's Natural Disaster Preparedness Committee (NDPC), establish a budget for recruitment, annual training and outreach to businesses and residences with elevated flood risk.
- Strategy 2.6: Pursue funding to support flood readiness planning and actions.
- Strategy 2.7: Conduct a Hazard Mitigation Plan or Flood Mitigation Plan to assess areas at highest risk of damage from flooding.

Tracking Progress on Goal #2

- Completions of flood readiness and recovery master plan that, among other things, integrates recommendations from the state-approved emergency management plan, FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plan, and guidance under the Natural Disaster Response Manual to ensure coordination and consistency.
- Updates to the Hazard Mitigation Plan or Flood Mitigation Plan.
- Ongoing, adequate funding for CReW and NDPC.
- Participation levels in emergency preparedness training and volunteer programs (e.g., CReW programs).
- Local levels of enrollment in emergency alert systems such as VT-ALERT and local text alert systems.
- Number of joint initiatives or coordination efforts through groups such as the Winooski Basin Flood Collaborative.
- Funding secured for flood readiness planning and preparedness activities.

Goal 3: Implement stormwater, infrastructure, and property-level projects that reduce flood impacts.

- Strategy 3.1: Create and implement a Town stormwater master plan in coordination with private, public, regional, and state partners to identify priority investments, reduce flood impacts, and improve long-term system performance, including targeted measures to reduce inflow and infiltration (I&I) in high-risk areas where feasible.
- Strategy 3.2: Reduce flooding and erosion risks by implementing non-regulatory stormwater and infrastructure improvements in high risk locations. These improvements could include culvert maintenance programs such as Culvert Crawlers/adopt-a-culvert.
- Strategy 3.3: Expand property-level and municipal infrastructure resilience measures, including residential backwater valve installations and building and utility elevation or resilience improvements where appropriate, to reduce damage and repetitive loss and protect essential infrastructure.

Tracking Progress on Goal #3

- Completion of stormwater master planning that identifies priority projects.
- Completion of master plan recommendations (Stormwater Master Plan and Waterbury Center Better Connections), including the number of culverts, drainage systems, or roadway improvements completed to reduce flood rise and improve water quality.
- Participation in the Friends of the Winooski storm water mitigation education programs.
- Reduction in inflow and infiltration (I&I) within the wastewater system.
- Number of infrastructure projects designed to improve flood resilience in high-risk areas.

- Number of residential and commercial properties implementing flood mitigation measures (e.g., backwater valves, elevation improvements).
- Number of repetitive loss properties mitigated, elevated, or removed from flood risk.
- Participation in flood mitigation grant programs or funding initiatives.

Goal 4: Protect and enhance forests, floodplains, wetlands, and natural areas that provide natural flood mitigation, reduce inundation and erosive impacts, and support long-term watershed health.

- Strategy 4.1: Identify and prioritize potential areas for wetland restoration to promote runoff storage for flood mitigation.
- Strategy 4.2: Conduct a Town-wide survey, modeling, and alternatives analysis to evaluate priority local infrastructure and flood mitigation opportunities and integration of resilience objectives into future projects.
- Strategy 4.3: Advance flood resilience measures at Randall Meadow.

Tracking Progress on Goal #4

- Acres of wetlands, floodplains, or riparian areas protected or restored since adoption of this plan.
- Progress on identified flood mitigation projects such as Randall Meadow.
- Completion of watershed studies, modeling, or alternatives analyses to identify mitigation opportunities.

Goal 5: Reduce climate drivers of flooding and support long-term adaptation.

- Strategy 5.1: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions through land use patterns, renewable energy, and transportation investments

coordinated with the Land Use, Energy, and Transportation chapters.

Tracking Progress on Goal #5

- Progress toward targets in the Energy and Transportation Chapters.



Who Tracks Progress

The Town should track progress on flood resilience through coordination between municipal departments, emergency management groups, and regional watershed partners.

Suggested Responsible Entities

- **Town:** Planning Commission, Selectboard, Public Works Department, and the Natural Disaster Preparedness Committee (NDPC).
- **Non-Town:** Community Resilience for Waterbury (CRew), CVRPC, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR), FEMA, Friends of the Winooski River, and the Winooski Basin Flood Collaborative.

Stay Engaged

This section is intended to help Waterbury residents stay informed, reduce flood risk, and support a more resilient community. To stay engaged, refer to the following resources and actions:



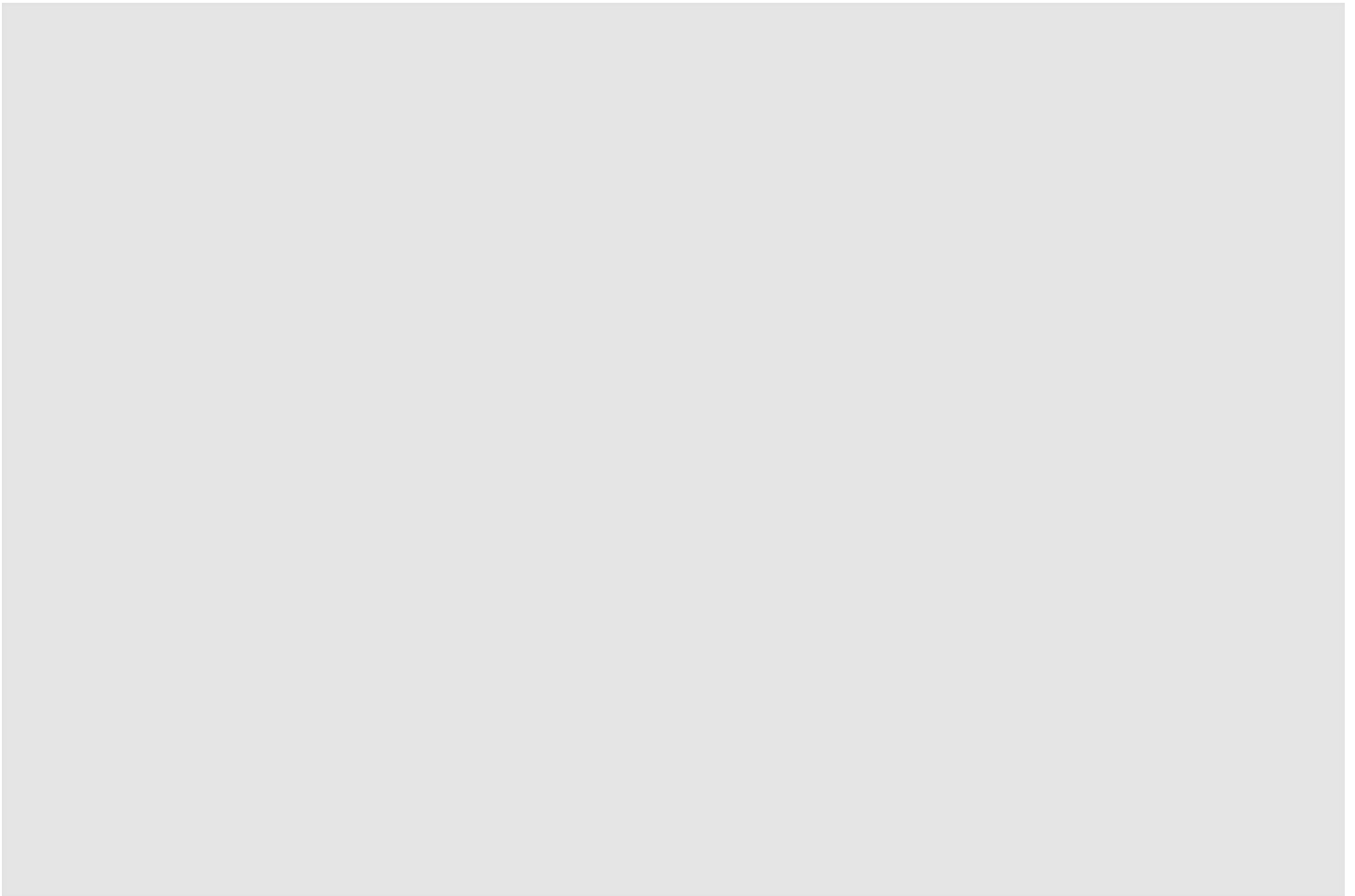
Prepare Your Property

- Evaluate your home or business for flood risk and consider mitigation measures such as elevating utilities, installing backwater valves, or improving drainage.
- Maintain culverts, drainage areas, and stormwater systems on your property to reduce localized flooding
- Explore FEMA and state programs that support flood mitigation, elevation, or buyouts.



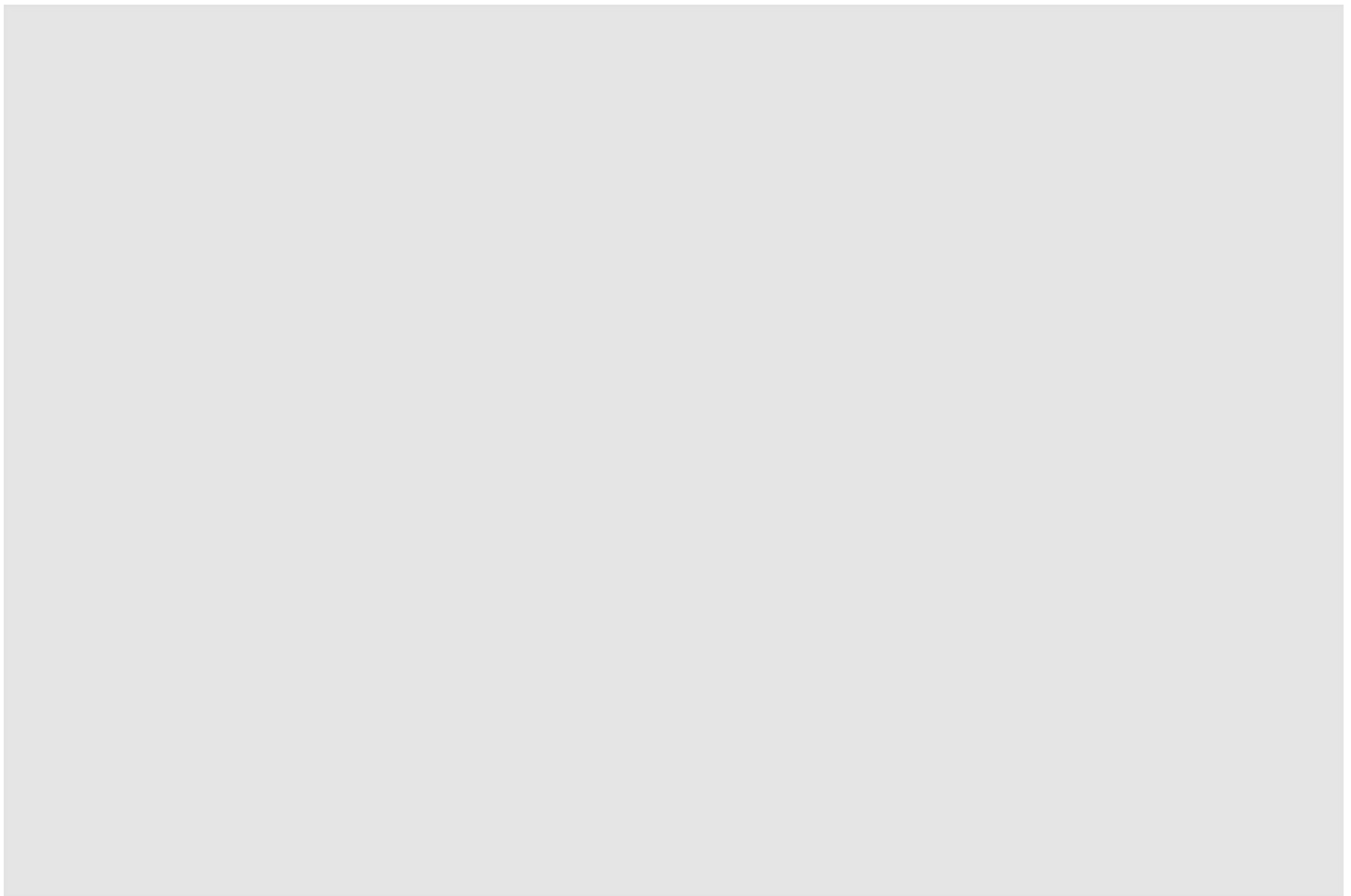
Participate in Local Resilience Efforts

- Get involved with Community Resilience for Waterbury (CRew) to support flood preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.
- Participate in volunteer opportunities related to flood response, cleanup, and community support.
- Attend trainings or workshops focused on emergency preparedness and resilience.



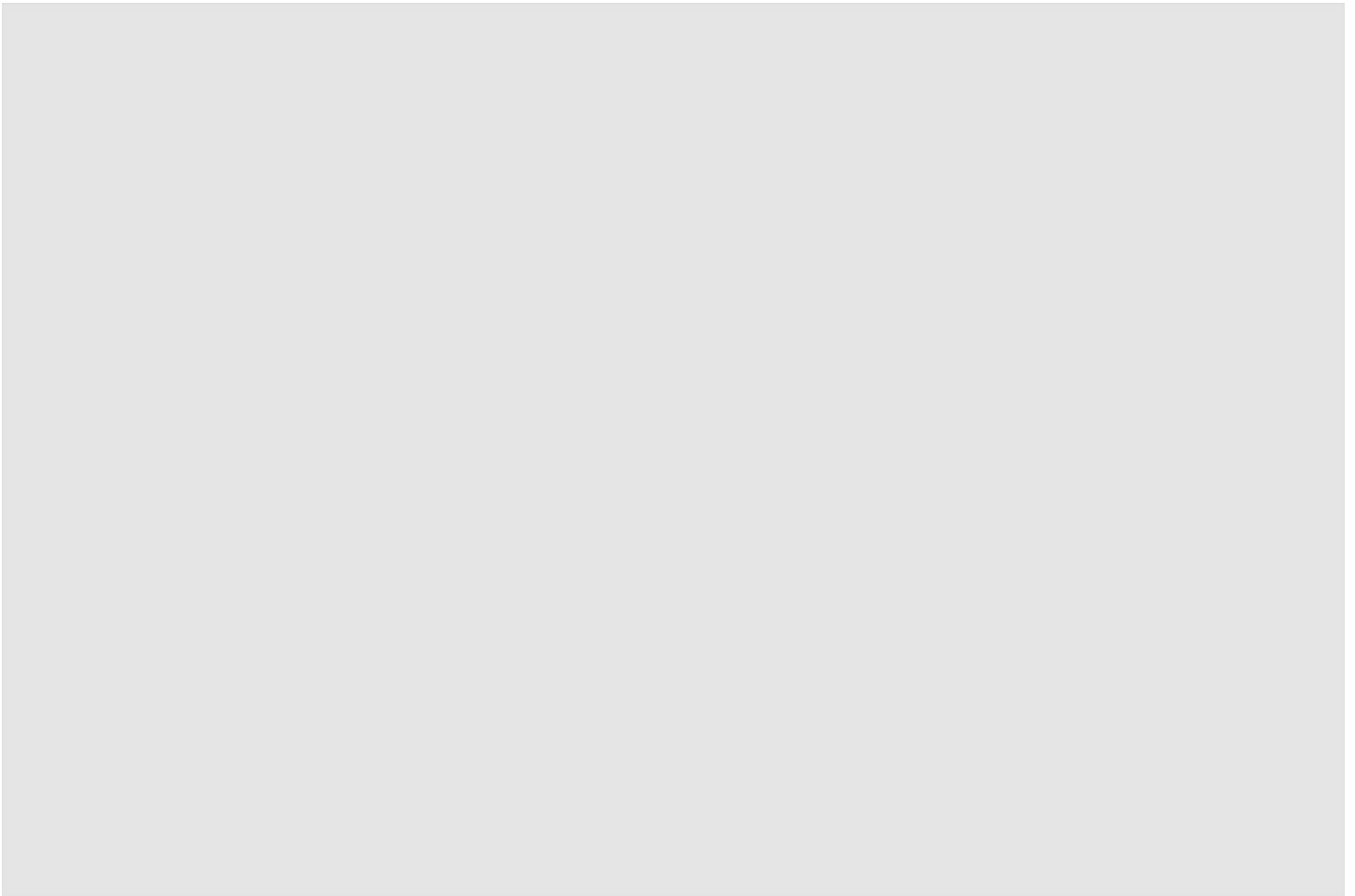
Stay Informed & Prepared

- Sign up for VT-ALERT and local text alert systems to receive real-time emergency notifications.
- Follow Town communications during storm events for updates on road closures, shelters, and recovery resources.
- Understand evacuation routes and emergency procedures in flood-prone areas.
- Evaluate your home or business for flood risk and consider mitigation measures such as elevating utilities, installing backwater valves, or improving drainage.
- Maintain culverts, drainage areas, and stormwater systems on your property to reduce localized flooding.
- Explore FEMA and state programs that support flood mitigation, elevation, or buyouts.



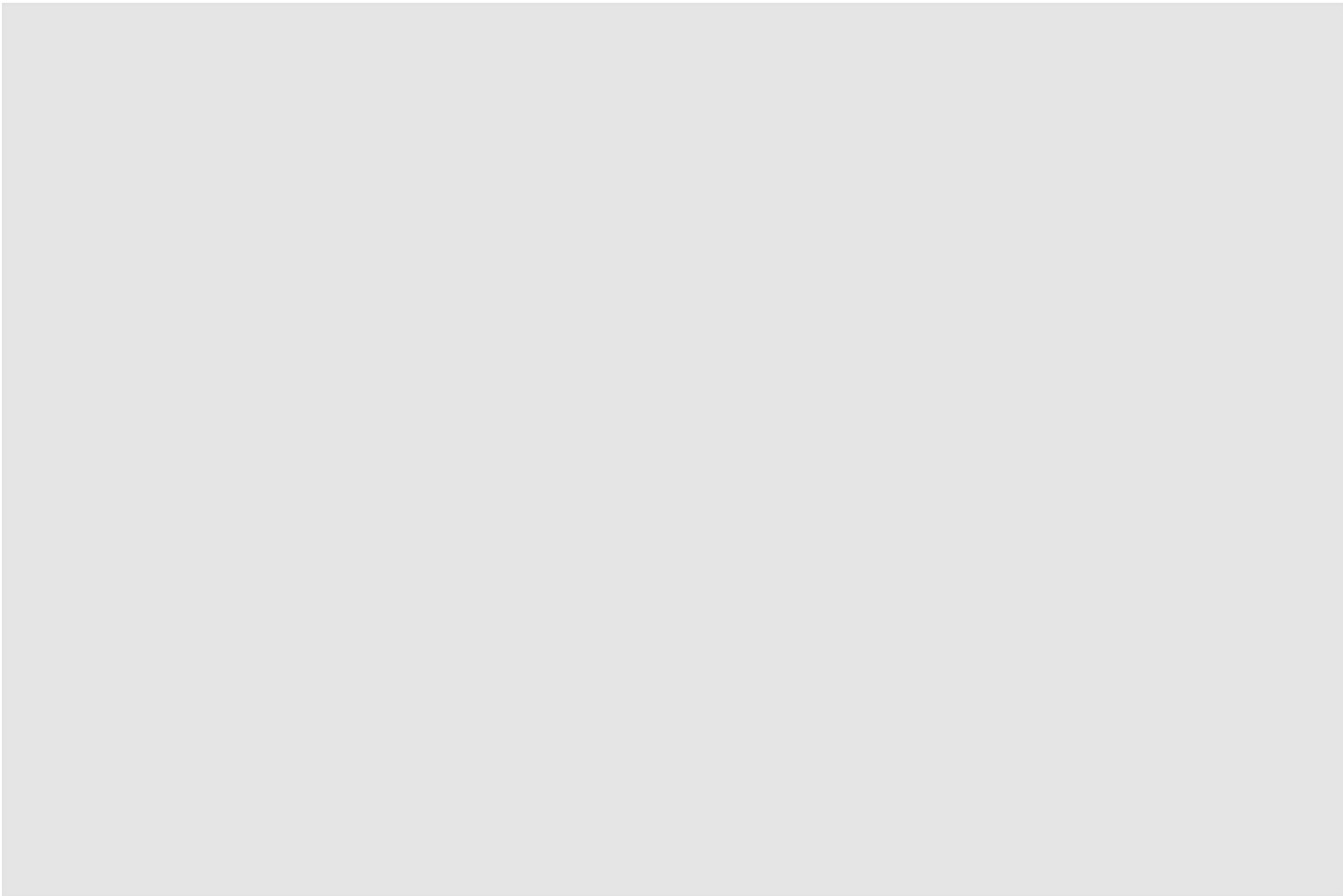
Support Resilient Land Use & Development

- Support policies and projects that direct development away from high-risk flood areas or improve resilience within them.
- Participate in Planning Commission and Selectboard discussions related to land use, zoning, and flood resilience projects.
- Provide input on local mitigation projects and planning efforts.



Protect Natural Systems

- Support conservation of wetlands, forests, and floodplains that help absorb and slow floodwaters.
- Participate in local stewardship efforts such as tree planting, riparian buffer restoration, or land conservation initiatives.



Stay Connected

- [Town of Waterbury Website](#): central hub for announcements, project updates, and public meeting information.
- [Town of Waterbury Facebook Page](#): real-time updates and engagement opportunities.
- Town Newsletter & Text Alerts: sign up for email and SMS notifications. Text "Hi" to (802) 200-2644 any time you need to.
- Text "Waterbury" to 91896 to opt in to text alerts. TextMyGov
- Participate in public workshops, surveys, events, and programs related to arts, culture, history, and community identity.

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once known.]



Natural Resources

Introduction

Waterbury's natural setting is one of its most significant assets.

Tucked between the Green Mountains and the Worcester Range, the Town's landscape is a living mosaic of working farms, forested hills, wildlife habitat, and clean waterways. Landmarks like the Waterbury Reservoir, the Winooski River, the Green and Worcester mountain ranges aren't just scenic—they are the ecological backbone of our community, supporting everything from clean drinking water to flood resilience to local agriculture to the outdoor

recreation and tourism economy that locals enjoy and that draws visitors year-round.

This chapter describes Waterbury's key natural resources and the planning context shaping how we steward them. It is guided by two core aspirations: that Waterbury maintains a healthy, thriving landscape, and that every resident has meaningful, equitable access to it.

Growing recreation use, development in sensitive areas, forest fragmentation, invasive species, and the accelerating effects of climate change all pose real risks to the lands and waters that define Waterbury. Protecting them requires intentional planning—understanding what we have, where it's most vulnerable, and how local decisions can safeguard it for the people who live here today and those who will call Waterbury home in the future. This chapter's Aspirations, Goals, and Strategies reflect the Town residents' recognition of and responses to these pressures—from guiding where development occurs to protecting habitat connectivity, responding to invasive species, managing recreation, and strengthening the watershed and wetland systems that buffer our community against a changing climate. The needs of the ecosystem and the needs of its human population need to operate with respect for each other, in recognition of the fact that they are intrinsically interrelated and dependent on one another for continued sustainable functioning.

Waterbury has zoning and bylaws, which are updated overtime, and seek to protect our natural resources, and guide development throughout the Town, particularly in higher elevation and steeper slope areas. The State of Vermont also has regulatory programs like the Act 250 Land Use Review Board and regulations for waterways, wetlands, forest land, and agricultural lands, all of which determine how development occurs. Waterbury's protection and development of these natural resources will operate in this changing regulatory landscape.



Aerial view of Waterbury Reservoir.

Planning Context

Landscape and Forests

Approximately 80% of Waterbury is forested, making the Town's landscape a significant natural asset. The Green Mountain and Worcester Ranges form dramatic boundaries on the west and east, while the valley floor of the Winooski River winds through the heart of Town. These forests provide habitat for black bears, moose, white-tailed deer, and dozens of bird species of conservation concern, including Bicknell's Thrush and Canada Warbler.

Roughly 13,000 acres are held by the state as part of Mt. Mansfield and C.C. Putnam State Forests and Little River and Camel's Hump State Parks. One of Waterbury's aspirations for Natural Resources, equitable access to nature, is bolstered by these lands.

Growing recreation use, development pressure, forest fragmentation, invasive species, and the accelerating effects of climate change all pose risks to the lands and waters that define Waterbury. This chapter's Aspirations, Goals, and Strategies are designed to respond to these challenges by protecting habitat connectivity, guiding development away from sensitive resources, strengthening watershed and wetland protection, managing recreation impacts, and supporting long-term stewardship of the Town's natural systems. The health of Waterbury's natural resources and the well-being of its residents are closely

connected, making thoughtful management of these resources essential to the community's future.

The Shutesville Hill wildlife corridor which spans the Waterbury - Stowe Town border, has been identified by the State's Agency of Natural Resources BioFinder database and mapping tool as a Highest Priority wildlife connectivity block linking the Green Mountains to the Worcester Range, is the subject of an ongoing initiative to consider how to balance animal migration with development. The Waterbury Conservation Commission, in partnership with local, regional, and state-level partners like the Agency of Natural Resources, Waterbury Land Initiative, the Vermont Land Trust, and Stowe Land Trust, is promoting conservation efforts in that area. While the importance of this area has been documented, the Town also recognizes the needs expressed by residents to balance conservation with development and individual property rights. One of this chapter's goals is to develop a plan for this area by 2030.

Water Resources

Clean water is at the center of Waterbury's identity. The Winooski River, Thatcher Brook, Little River, Graves Brook, and their many tributaries all flow through the Town, converging in ways that make Waterbury's valley particularly prone to flooding in recent times—but also rich in aquatic habitat and recreational opportunity. The 840-acre Waterbury Reservoir, originally built for flood control in the 1930s, now also supports hydroelectric power generation and is a beloved destination for fishing, boating, camping, and swimming.

Protecting water quality starts on land. Naturally vegetated streambanks and riparian buffers filter pollutants, stabilize banks, keep water temperatures cool, and provide critical wildlife corridors between forest blocks. The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources recommends minimum undisturbed buffers of 50 to 100 feet along streams and 100 feet around larger waterbodies,

and Waterbury's local regulations should reflect those standards. The Waterbury Reservoir and its watershed are currently listed by the State as impaired due to sedimentation and turbidity, while recent monitoring data from the Friends of the Winooski show that several tributaries in Waterbury have phosphorus concentrations elevated above target levels for Lake Champlain's aquatic health, which are both reminders that upstream land use decisions have downstream consequences.

Wetlands are another critical part of the water resources picture. Vermont has lost nearly half its historical wetland area to development and drainage. What remains provides flood storage, groundwater recharge, pollutant filtering, and irreplaceable wildlife habitat. Waterbury's Class II wetlands are regulated under State rules as they provide important water quality and flood storage functions.

The goals of this Plan respond directly to these conditions, prioritizing identification and protection of high-value wetlands and watershed systems potentially beyond State requirements, recognizing their growing importance as climate-driven precipitation patterns intensify.

Wildlife and Biodiversity

Waterbury's diverse habitats support an exceptional range of wildlife. The entirety of the Town falls within the Mansfield/Worcester Priority Block identified by the National Audubon Society, recognizing its statewide importance for bird conservation. Deer wintering areas (deeryards) have been mapped across approximately 5,480 acres of Town, with concentrations near Barnes Hill and within or adjacent to state forestlands. Bear habitat—where cub-bearing females rely on remote, contiguous forest—is found in the Mt. Mansfield State Forest and the Worcester Range portions of the Town.

Waterbury's shade tree canopy within village centers also deserves attention, a goal captured during Plan development. Street trees provide shade, stormwater management, and habitat value—but they require ongoing investment in maintenance, species diversification, and planned replacement. The Emerald Ash Borer's expected arrival underscores the urgency of inventorying and planning for the Town's ash trees now, before losses mount.

Access to Nature

Waterbury's natural areas are a source of enormous community benefit—and growing demand. Waterbury's recreational economy supports local businesses and enriches quality of life for residents. The Town's goal—that every resident lives within a 10-minute walk of a natural or recreational area—reflects the importance of equitable local access, not just destination recreation. Achieving that goal while protecting ecological function requires thoughtful development, assessment of visitor impacts, and long-term planning for how Waterbury's public natural spaces will be managed as both use and pressures grow. Access expansion with visitor impact monitoring and long-term management planning can help ensure recreation and ecological health advance together.

What We Heard

The Planning Commission conducted a Community Survey in late 2024 and held in-person and online Visioning Sessions in early 2025 to understand community priorities. The following themes emerged regarding energy, sustainability, and resilience in Waterbury.

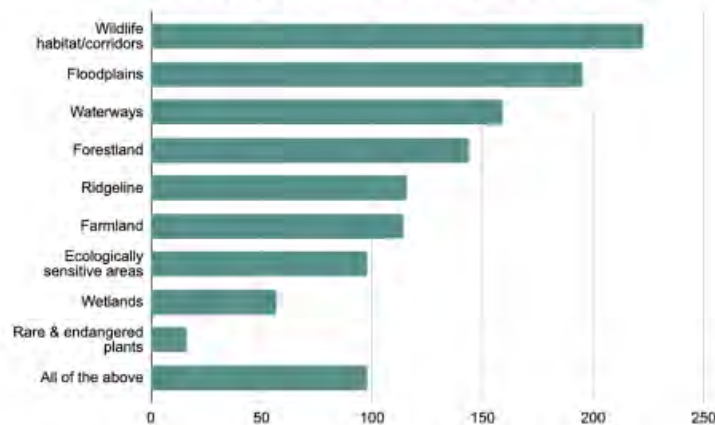
Residents Support Protection of Natural Resources

Residents consistently identified scenic beauty, natural resources, rural character, and recreation opportunities as some of the

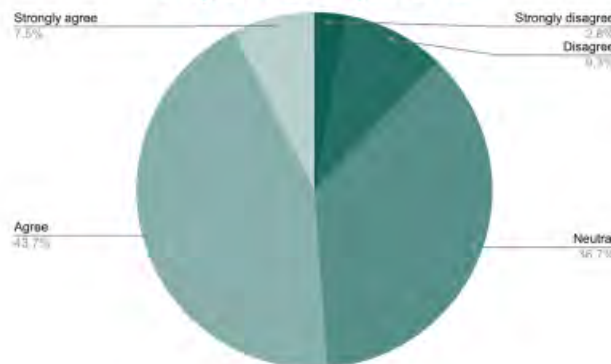
aspects of Waterbury they value most. Community feedback emphasized the importance of maintaining the wildlife corridors/habitat, floodplains, waterways, and open spaces that define Waterbury's identity and quality of life.

Wildlife habitat/corridors, floodplains, water resources were identified as important natural resources to protect.

WHAT ARE THE 3 MOST IMPORTANT RESOURCES TO PROTECT?



To what extent do you agree with the following: Waterbury effectively preserves natural resources and ecologically important systems



Access to Nature is an Important Community Priority

Residents value Waterbury's access to trails, forests, parks, waterways, and outdoor recreation opportunities. Recreation opportunities emerged as one of the most appreciated

characteristics of the community throughout the engagement process.

Recreation opportunities ranked among the community characteristics residents value most about Waterbury.

Concern Regarding Climate Change and Environment Is Increasing

Residents identified climate change and stormwater management as ongoing community concerns. Feedback throughout the engagement process reflected awareness of the relationship between environmental conditions, flooding, infrastructure, and long-term resilience planning.

Climate change and stormwater management were identified as community challenges through the engagement process.

Community Visioning Mapping

During Town Meeting in 2025 and at four Community Visioning Sessions, attendees were asked questions about how they felt about parts of Town and were told to place colored dots on a map to indicate those feelings. The point locations as well as the Response Density (heat maps showing the locations of the most responses) are shown here.



VCGI | Esri | TomTom | Garmin | SafeGraph | GeoTechnologies, Inc | NASA ...

2 km  Powered by [Esri](#)

Place-Based Feedback

Click the buttons below to review the responses.

Places to Preserve / Protect

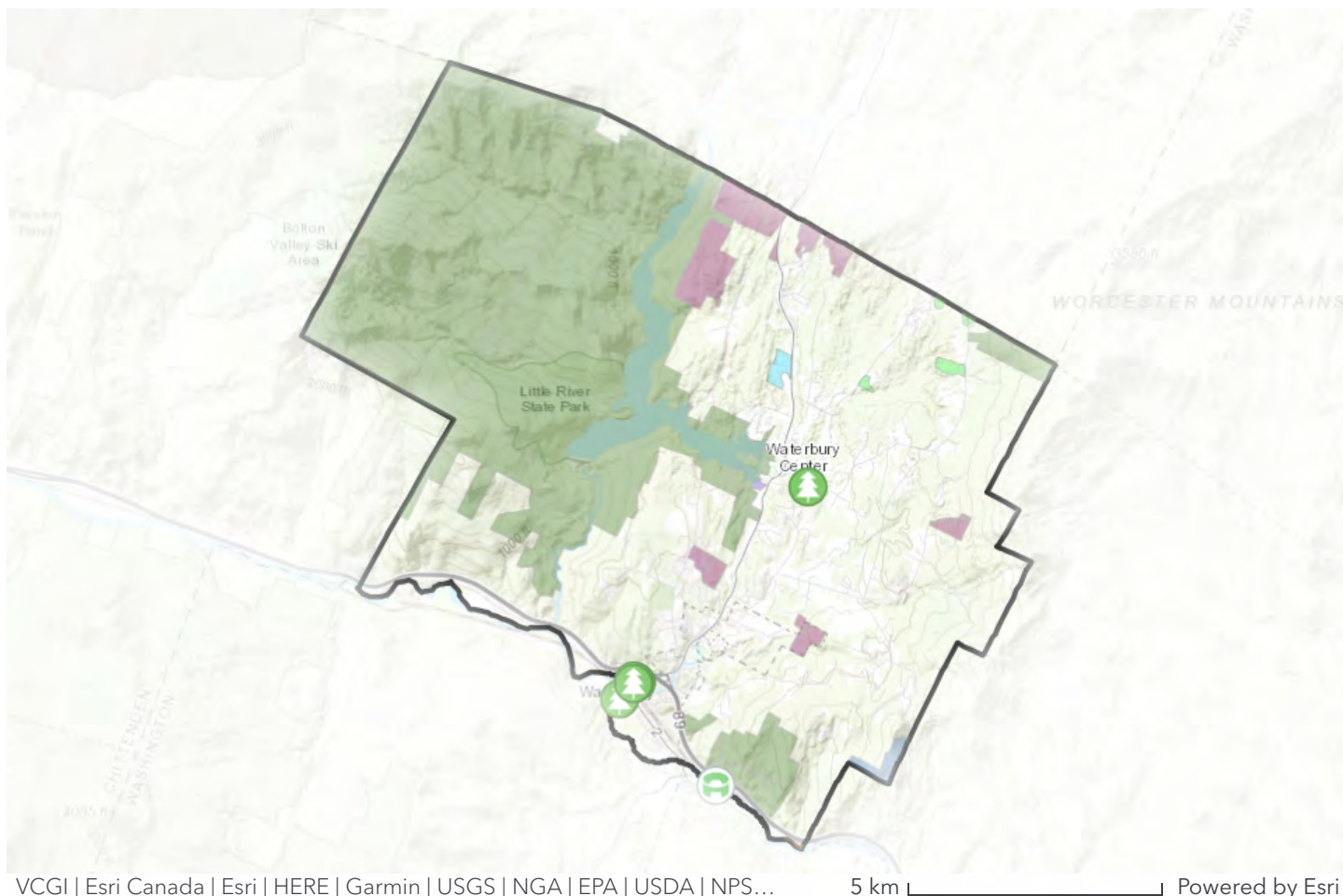
Places to Change / Invest In

Favorite Place in Town

To read more about the results from Community Engagement from this plan, click the button below:

**Survey Results
Summary**

**Visioning Sessions
Summary**

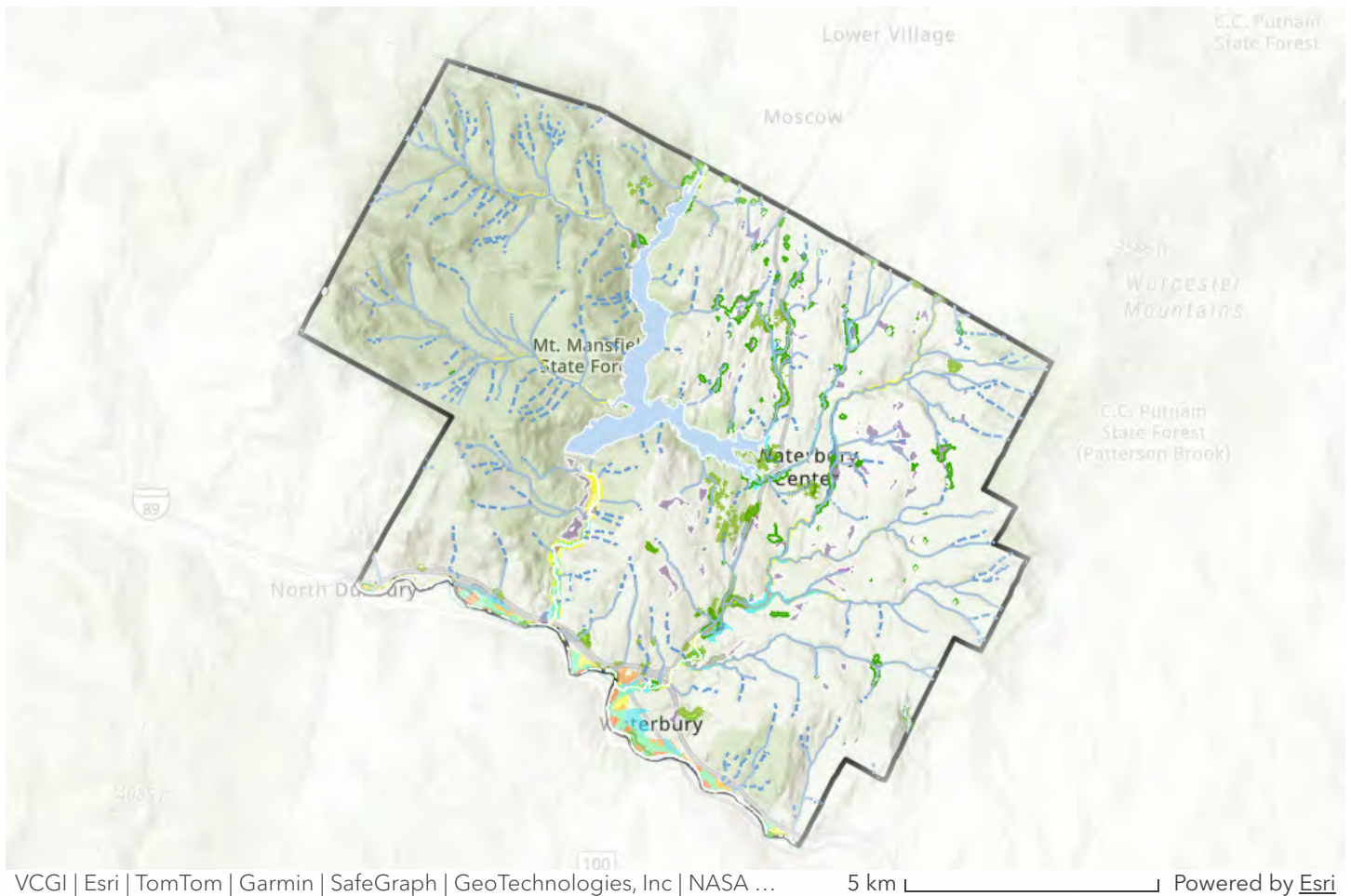


Key Maps

Map 1: Protected Lands and Public Open Space

This map depicts conserved lands, conservation easements, state and local protected lands, and parks/recreational open space.

Data Source: Protected Lands - VT Agency of Natural Resources | Recreation Assets - Town Parks - E911 Data



Map 2: Surface Waters, Wetlands, and Riparian Buffers

This map depicts rivers, streams, ponds, lakes, Class I-III wetlands along with Advisory Wetlands (areas that have been identified as potential wetlands) and Hydric Soils with Wetland Indicators (a soil attribute that can indicate the presence of wetlands, though these are not formally mapped wetlands), River Corridors and 50' setbacks on smaller streams, and FEMA Flood Hazard Areas.

Use the buttons below to see individual maps.

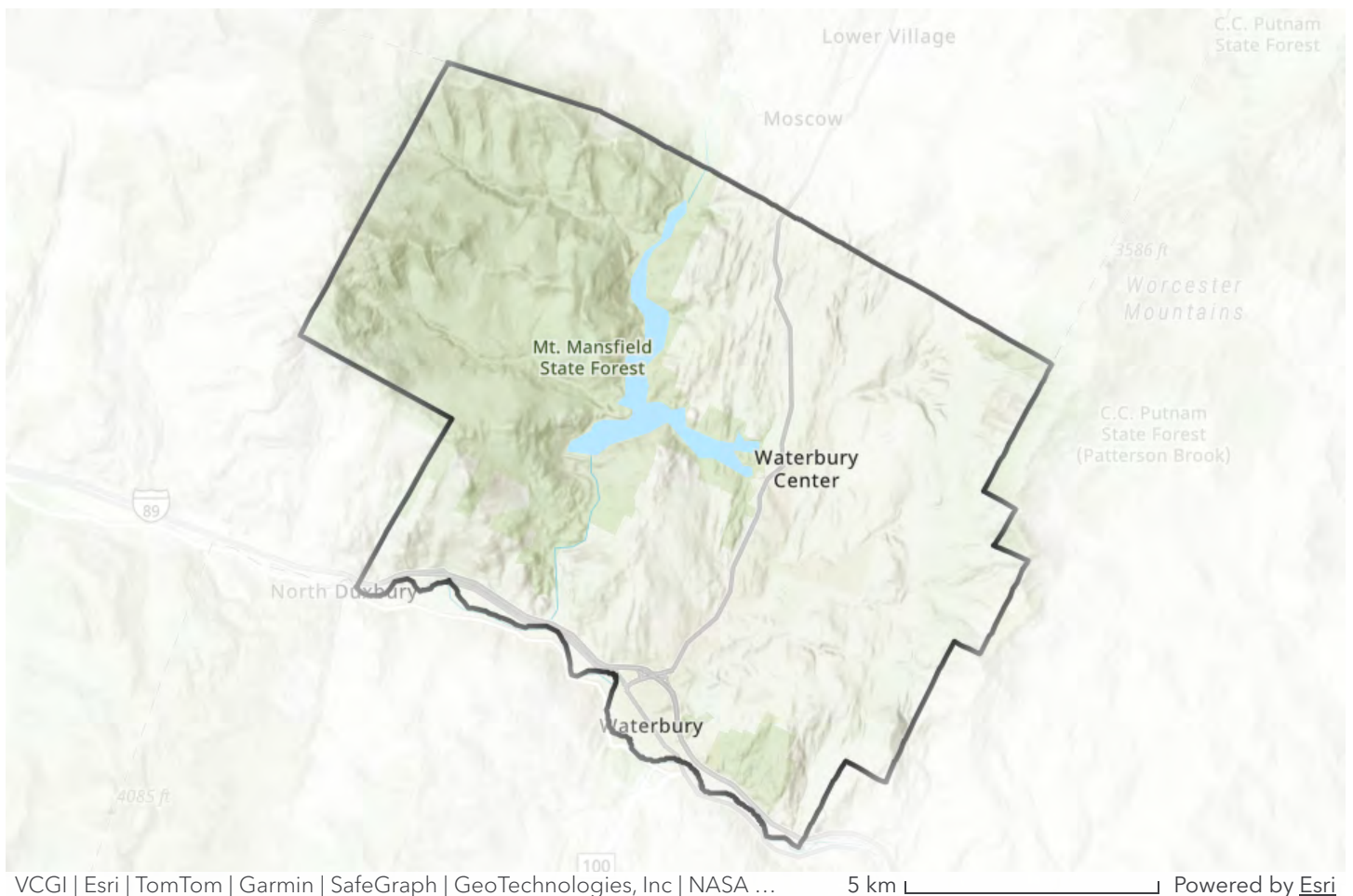
Water Resources & Wetlands

Hydric Soils with Wetland Indicators

River Corridors & 50' Setbacks (Streams)

FEMA Flood Hazard Areas

Data Sources: Water Resources and Wetlands / Hydric Soils with Wetland Indicators / River Corridors and 50' Setbacks - VT Agency of Natural Resources | Flood Hazard Areas - National Flood Hazard Mapping Program



Map 3: Forest Blocks, Wildlife Connectivity, and Agricultural Soils

This map depicts VT Agency of Natural Resources-designated forest blocks, wildlife corridors, significant natural communities, and prime and statewide agricultural soils.

This data was developed by the BioFinder mapping program to aid in determining areas of potential conservation significance.

Interior Forest Blocks

Riparian Wildlife Connectivity

Wildlife Connectivity Blocks

Significant Natural Communities

Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species

Vernal Pools

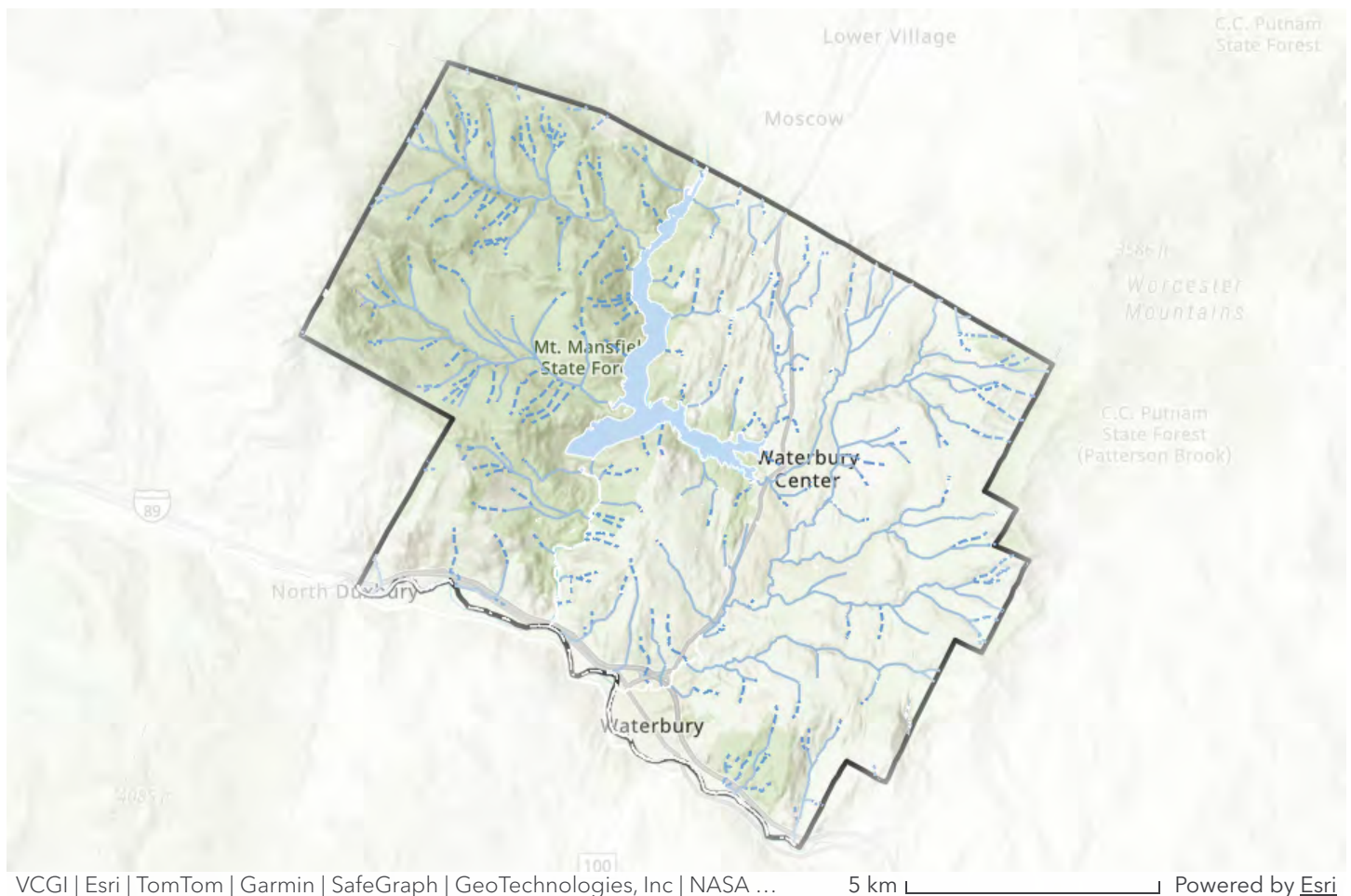
Wildlife Road Crossings

Agriculturally Important Soils

Use Value Appraisal (Current Use) Parcels

Note: UVA (Current Use) Parcels are only for 'forestland' parcels and does not include parcels enrolled in 'agricultural' current use specifically.

Data Sources: All Data Except Agriculturally Important Soils and Use Value Appraisal Parcels - VT Agency of Natural Resources BioFinder Program | Agriculturally Important Soils - National Cooperative Soil Survey - provided by VT Center for Geographic Information | Use Value Appraisal Parcels - VT Center for Geographic Information



Map 4: Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Development Constraints

This map identifies steep slopes, flood hazard areas, wetlands, river corridors, and other constrained or sensitive lands that may be relevant for development review.

Steep slope areas (greater than 15%) are shown where contiguous patches exceed 2,000 square feet based on statewide QL1 Lidar elevation data from 2023.

Steep Slopes

Flood Hazard Areas

River Corridors

Wetlands (mapped)

Wetlands (Advisory)

Advisory Wetlands are those that have not been formally mapped but which may be of potential regulatory concern per VT Agency of Natural Resources.

Data Sources: Steep Slopes - Elevation Data based on VT Statewide QL1 Lidar Data provided by VT Center for Geographic Information - processed to show slopes over 15% and greater than 2,000 square feet by Waterbury Planning Commission | Flood Hazard Areas - National Flood Hazard Mapping Program | River Corridors and 50' Stream Setbacks - VT Agency of Natural Resources | Wetlands - mapped and Advisory - VT Agency of Natural Resources

Aspirations, Goals, & Strategies

Waterbury's future plans for Natural Resources are captured in the following Aspirations, Goals, and Strategies:

Aspiration 1 - A Healthy, Thriving Landscape

Waterbury protects and conserves its forests, wetlands, waterways, wildlife habitat, and working agricultural lands to support climate resilience, ecological health, biodiversity, scenic character, local food systems, local economy, and long-term sustainability. Waterbury guides land use and conservation practices to maintain its rural character and traditional uses.

Aspiration 2 - Equitable Access to Nature

Waterbury residents enjoy equitable access to nature and a strong sense of place. The community is engaged in long-term stewardship, ensuring healthy and connected natural systems for current and future generations.



Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: Strengthen the Town's capacity to identify, prioritize, and protect important natural resources and integrate natural resources protection into municipal decision-making.

- Strategy 1.1: Create and maintain a mapped inventory of high-priority natural resources through a natural resources inventory process and then develop a set of recommendations to address mapped resources.
- Strategy 1.2: Working with experts and landowners, the Conservation Commission will propose a plan to manage the Shutesville Hill wildlife corridor by the year 2030.
- Strategy 1.3: Monitor for ecological health and threats, including invasive species and other emerging impacts.

Tracking Progress on Goal #1

- Completion and periodic updates of a Town-wide natural resources inventory and associated mapping.
- Percentage of affected landowners in the Shutesville Hill wildlife corridor contacted to participate in future planning.
- Number of mapped priority natural resource areas incorporated into planning, zoning, or conservation decisions.
- Completion and implementation of a management plan for the Shutesville Hill wildlife corridor.
- Analyze data from monitoring efforts related to invasive species, forest health, and ecological threats.

Goal 2: Support habitat connectivity and watershed protection.

- Strategy 2.1: Educate landowners regarding the importance of managing for water quality and wildlife habitats.
- Strategy 2.2: Partner with regional, state, and nonprofit conservation organizations to secure conservation easements, shared stewardship agreements, and permanent land protection.

- Strategy 2.3: Identify key wildlife corridors and habitat blocks (e.g., potential priority areas such as the Shutesville Hill wildlife corridor) and evaluate measures to mitigate fragmentation and development impacts.
- Strategy 2.4: Evaluate conservation tools such as conservation overlays and cluster development provisions.
- Strategy 2.5: Pursue funding sources (e.g., grants, a conservation fund, or partner-supported land acquisitions) to protect parcels with long-term conservation value.

Tracking Progress on Goal #2

- Acres of land protected through conservation easements, stewardship agreements, or public acquisition and acreage of identified wildlife corridors, habitat blocks, or watershed protection areas incorporated into local planning efforts.
- Number of partnerships established/maintained with conservation organizations and regional/state agencies.
- Participation in educational outreach related to habitat protection and water quality stewardship.
- Funding secured for conservation or watershed protection projects.

Goal 3: Guide development to protect natural resources identified as part of Strategy 1.1.

- Strategy 3.1: Limit development in sensitive areas and direct growth toward more densely developed areas and designated village centers to reduce sprawl and protect intact natural and agricultural resources.
- Strategy 3.2: Update zoning and subdivision bylaws to consider prime agricultural soils and land use conflicts.
- Strategy 3.3: Promote enrollment in Vermont's Use Value Appraisal (Current Use) Program to support long-term preservation of working lands.
- Strategy 3.4: Sustain key open spaces and scenic landscapes that contribute to community character and environmental

function.

- Strategy 3.5: Update zoning and subdivision bylaws to limit the fragmentation of forests.

Tracking Progress on Goal #3

- Number of permitted development projects utilizing cluster development, conservation design, or similar tools.
- Acres of prime agricultural soils and working lands conserved or maintained in productive use.
- Local participation rates in Vermont's Use Value Appraisal (Current Use) Program.
- Track changes to forest fragmentation in Waterbury over time.

Goal 4: Ensure that every resident lives within a 10-minute walk of a natural or recreational area, balancing access with efforts to conserve sensitive habitats and ecological function.

- Strategy 4.1: Improve public access to natural and recreational areas so that residents of all ages and abilities can enjoy access to outdoor amenities in Waterbury.
- Strategy 4.2: Develop a long-term, Town-wide management plan for balancing conservation and recreational use in natural areas.
- Strategy 4.3: Implement low-impact trail design, and maintenance practices that avoid sensitive habitat areas and reduce ecological impacts.
- Strategy 4.4: Monitor and manage visitor impacts using community feedback and ecological assessments..
- Strategy 4.5: Support the creation of interpretive signage, citizen science programs and public-facing educational tools in conserved areas to strengthen understanding of local ecology and cultural history.
- Strategy 4.6: Support the development of multi-use conservation easements that allow compatible recreation while protecting habitat and agricultural functions.

Tracking Progress on Goal #4

- Miles of trails, paths, or public access connections added or improved.
- Number of residents served by improved access to parks, trails, or natural areas.
- Completion of long-term management planning for Town-owned or publicly accessible natural areas.
- Installation of interpretive signage, educational materials, or citizen science programs.
- Monitoring and assessment of visitor impacts on sensitive natural areas.

Goal 5: Strengthen biodiversity and tree canopy health through proactive forestry and invasive species response.

- Strategy 5.1: Expand the resilience of Waterbury's shade tree population through planned replacement, species diversification, and long-term canopy management practices.
- Strategy 5.2: Establish a dedicated annual tree maintenance budget and schedule to support pruning, mulching, monitoring, inoculation where appropriate, and replacement planting.
- Strategy 5.3: Implement an Emerald Ash Borer response approach on Town-managed properties, including inventorying ash trees, inoculating high-value trees where appropriate, and planning for replacement to maintain canopy function.
- Strategy 5.4: Support Town staff roles and training needs to ensure proper pruning practices, safe maintenance, and effective coordination with the Town's Tree Board or relevant commissions.
- Strategy 5.5: Identify candidate parcels and partnerships for consideration of a Town Forest that supports public access, environmental education, and long-term stewardship.

Tracking Progress on Goal #5

- Completion and maintenance of a public tree inventory, including ash tree monitoring
- Number of trees planted, replaced, or maintained annually.
- Implementation of Emerald Ash Borer response and canopy management actions.
- Establishment and annual funding of a Town tree maintenance program.
- Number of invasive species management or education initiatives completed.
- Progress toward establishment of a Town Forest or related stewardship partnerships.

Goal 6: Protect and enhance wetlands and watershed systems that provide ecological and flood resilience benefits.

- Strategy 6.1: Identify and prioritize wetlands for local protection beyond applicable state regulations based on ecological value, flood mitigation function, and watershed health benefits.
- Strategy 6.2: Perform educational outreach on the functions and values of wetlands.

Tracking Progress on Goal #6

- Number of wetland or watershed protection initiatives completed in coordination with partners.
- Public participation in wetland education and outreach programs.



Who Tracks Progress

The Town should track progress on natural resources through coordination between the Conservation Commission, Planning Commission, Tree Board, and Town staff, with support from

regional conservation organizations, state agencies, and local landowners.

Suggested Responsible Entities

- **Town:** Conservation Commission, Planning Commission, Tree Board, Recreation Department, Development Review Board, and Town staff.
- **Non-Town:** Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR), Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC), Vermont Land Trust, Stowe Land Trust, Waterbury Land Initiatives, Discover Waterbury, Friends of the Winooski River, Audubon Vermont, watershed organizations, recreation partners, and willing landowners.

Stay Engaged

Ways residents can support community goals for Natural Resources in Waterbury

This section is intended to help Waterbury residents stay informed, support stewardship efforts, and participate in protecting the forests, waterways, wildlife habitat, working lands, and natural areas that define Waterbury's character and quality of life. To stay engaged, refer to the following resources and actions:



Steward Waterbury's Natural Resources

- Participate in volunteer stewardship activities such as trail maintenance, invasive species removal, tree planting, and watershed cleanups.
- Help monitor, report, and eradicate invasive species, erosion issues, or damage to trails and natural areas.
- Support efforts to maintain healthy forests, waterways, wetlands, and wildlife habitat on both public and private lands.

Protect Working Lands & Wildlife Habitat

- Learn about Vermont's Use Value Appraisal (Current Use) Program and other conservation programs available to landowners.
- Support local farms, forestry operations, and land conservation efforts that maintain Waterbury's rural landscape and ecological health.

- Consider conservation easements, habitat-friendly land management, and forest stewardship practices where appropriate.

Participate in Local Conservation & Planning Efforts

- Attend Conservation Commission, Planning Commission, and Selectboard meetings related to natural resources, conservation, recreation, and land use planning.
- Participate in public workshops, surveys, and planning efforts related to conservation, forestry, watershed protection, and recreation access.
- Support efforts to improve access to nature while balancing ecological protection and long-term stewardship.
- Support and join local natural resource groups like Friends of the Winooski River, Friends of the Waterbury Reservoir, Waterbury Land Trust, and others.



Learn About Waterbury's Natural Systems

- Explore educational resources related to local ecology, wetlands, wildlife habitat, forests, and watershed systems.
- Participate in citizen science programs, educational walks, interpretive programs, and conservation events.
- Stay informed about climate resilience, biodiversity, and watershed protection initiatives affecting Waterbury.

Stay Connected

- [Town of Waterbury Website](#): central hub for announcements, project updates, and public meeting information.
- [Town of Waterbury Facebook Page](#): real-time updates and engagement opportunities.
- Town Newsletter & Text Alerts: sign up for email and SMS notifications. Text "Hi" to (802) 200-2644 any time you need to.
- Text "Waterbury" to 91896 to opt in to text alerts. TextMyGov
- Participate in public workshops, surveys, events, and programs related to arts, culture, history, and community identity.

Created for the Town of Waterbury by SE Group.

planWTB | Waterbury Planning Commission | 2026 [Insert final adoption date once known.]



Energy

Introduction

Energy plays a central role in Waterbury's economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and community resilience.

The energy used to heat buildings, power homes and businesses, and move people and goods through the community represents a significant cost to residents, businesses, and municipal government. In addition, the emission of greenhouse gases

contributes to climate change and its devastating effects on Waterbury, including the flooding of 2023 and 2024, the historic drought conditions seen in 2025, and increasing freeze/thaw cycles. Improving energy efficiency and transitioning to renewable energy reduces costs and greenhouse gas emissions while strengthening local resilience to withstand extreme weather events caused by climate change.



L: EV charging in Waterbury. R: A solar array in Waterbury.

Planning Context

State Goals and Act 174

Waterbury has a long history of effective energy planning and community engagement. Vermont's goal is to achieve 90% renewable energy use by 2050 and the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission has set out milestones to achieve the State goals. Meeting such goals requires communities to improve energy efficiency, expand renewable energy generation, increase the use of stored and distributed energy (batteries), incorporate newly emerging renewable energy technologies, and reduce fossil

fuel use, particularly in heating and transportation. Waterbury's energy planning is also informed by Vermont's Act 174, which allows towns to receive "substantial deference" in state energy siting decisions when local plans meet Vermont's planning requirements.

In 2018, Waterbury adopted, and the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission approved, Waterbury's Enhanced Energy Plan, establishing a framework for meeting the Act 174 objectives while maintaining rural, cultural and historic character and preserving its natural resources. That Plan remains in full force and effect.

This Energy chapter builds on the Energy Plan by identifying progress made to date; the aspirations, goals and strategies of the community to move toward a more efficient, affordable, and resilient energy future while supporting the Town's broader economic, environmental, and community development objectives; and to meet the targets set forth by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission.

Waterbury's Substantial Progress in Switching to Green Energy Sources

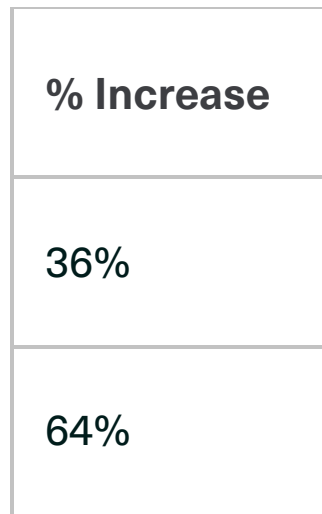
Waterbury has made substantial progress in moving toward renewable and carbon-free fuels, and reducing energy consumption in the last eight years. Energy Table 1 shows that between 2018 and 2024 Waterbury increased: the number of registered electric vehicles (electric and hybrid) by 546%, the number of cold climate heat pumps by 238%, the number of hot water heat pumps by 97% the number of weatherization projects by 36%, and the number of installed solar capacity (KWs) by 64%.

Energy Table 1: Waterbury Energy Dashboard (2018 to 2024)

	2018	2024
Electric Vehicles and Hybrids	48	310
Cold-Climate Heat Pumps	294	995
Hot Water Heat Pumps	161	317
Weatherization	235	319
Solar Installations (KWs)	2,816	4,629

Sources: Energy Action Network, Green Mountain Power, Washington Electric Cooperative, and Northfield Electric Department. Hardwick Electric Department solar installations are not available.

% Increase
546%
238%
97%



Sources: Energy Action Network, Green Mountain Power, Washington Electric Cooperative, and Northfield Electric Department. Hardwick Electric Department solar installations are not available.

To compare the growing adoption of these technologies in Waterbury to the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission region, the following discussion adjusts the alternative energy technology adoption by the number of households in Waterbury and Central Vermont, respectively. Energy Table 2 shows the growth in the adoption of green energy technologies between 2018 and 2024 for each 100 households for Waterbury and Central Vermont. In both Waterbury and the region, the growth of electric and hybrid vehicles and cold climate heat pumps is outpacing the growth of the other green alternative energy technologies. Waterbury leads the region in the growth of electric vehicles, but, due to a larger base in 2018, has a smaller rate of growth in other technologies.

For instance, per 100 households, Waterbury has grown the number of electric vehicles by 492% while Central Vermont has grown its electric vehicle adoption by 384%. Waterbury has grown heat pump installations by 210% per 100 households compared with Central Vermont's 359% per 100 households. Waterbury has grown heat pump installations by 210% compared with Central Vermont's 359%. Hot water heat pump installations have grown in Waterbury by 81% and in Central Vermont by 128%.

Weatherization projects have grown in Waterbury by 24% compared to Central Vermont's 51%. Solar installations have

grown in Waterbury and Central Vermont by 51% and 59%, respectively.

Energy Table 2: Comparison of Waterbury and Central Vermont Region Adoption of Specific Green Energy Solutions

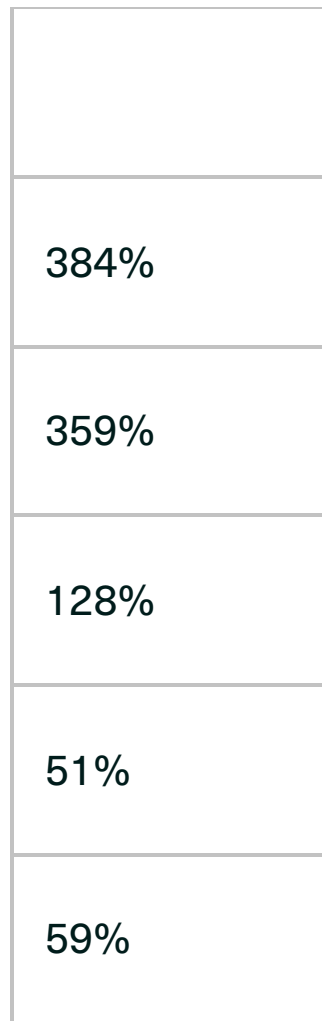
	Installs per 100 Waterbury Households	
	2018	2024
Electric Vehicles and Hybrids	2.3	13.4
Cold Climate Heat Pumps	13.8	43.0
Hot Water Heat Pumps	7.6	13.7
Weatherization	11.1	13.8
Solar Installations (KW)	130	200

Sources: Energy Action Network, [Housingdata.org](https://housingdata.org), Green Mountain Power, Washington Electric Cooperative, and Northfield Electric Department. Central Vermont Region is Washington County and the towns of Orange, Washington and Williamstown. Hardwick Electric Department solar installations are not available.

	Installs per 100 Central VT Households	
Change	2018	2024
492%	1.5	7.3
210%	4.4	20.2
81%	4.9	11.1
24%	12.1	18.2
51%	100	160

Sources: Energy Action Network, [Housingdata.org](#), Green Mountain Power, Washington Electric Cooperative, and Northfield Electric Department. Central Vermont Region is Washington County and the towns of Orange, Washington and Williamstown. Hardwick Electric Department solar installations are not available.

Change



Sources: Energy Action Network, [Housingdata.org](https://housingdata.org), Green Mountain Power, Washington Electric Cooperative, and Northfield Electric Department. Central Vermont Region is Washington County and the towns of Orange, Washington and Williamstown. Hardwick Electric Department solar installations are not available.

About Waterbury Local Energy Action Partnership (Waterbury LEAP)

Recent progress made is in no small part due to community dedication and leadership, particularly from Waterbury LEAP. LEAP is an independent, all-volunteer nonprofit that also functions as Waterbury's town Energy Committee. Since its formation in 2007, LEAP has helped residents and businesses understand energy options, organized public education programs (including the Energy Fair), and connected households with incentives and technical assistance for weatherization, heat pumps, solar energy, and electric vehicles. In particular, LEAP has been working with the municipal government and residents to implement the pathways identified in the 2018 Enhanced Energy Plan. Most

recently, LEAP has taken a lead in securing a Better Connections grant to study the ability to improve the walkability of Waterbury Center. While often considered a transportation initiative, improving walkability is also a key energy strategy: it reduces reliance on vehicle trips, lowers transportation-related energy use and emissions, and supports more compact, efficient development patterns.

More Work is Necessary

Opportunities remain to further reduce energy use and costs, lower emissions, and address climate impacts in Waterbury.

Buildings and Weatherization

Waterbury's aging housing stock presents significant opportunities to reduce energy use through weatherization, window insulation, and conversion to electric systems. Educating builders and residents about reduced operating costs, available subsidies, and tax credits will be critical to accelerating adoption of these improvements.

Renewable Energy Capacity and Efficiency

There is additional capacity on the electric grid, particularly on rooftops, to support expanded solar energy development. There are also opportunities for residences and commercial establishments to install battery backup systems to enhance the efficiency of solar power. At the municipal level, the Town should continue to explore ways to improve building efficiency and acquire equipment and vehicles that reduce its carbon footprint.

Transportation and Electrification

Given Waterbury's central location in relation to recreation and tourism opportunities, additional progress can be made by expanding electric vehicle charging infrastructure and encouraging the adoption of electric vehicles and electric tools.

Barriers to Adoption

Despite these energy efficiency opportunities, a significant portion of Waterbury households have not yet adopted green technologies. Up-front installation costs are likely a major factor, even as regional goals call for aggressive progress toward clean energy.

Wind Energy Constraints

Opportunities for commercial wind power are limited in Waterbury due to a lack of suitable locations and strict state regulations. Potential sites are generally located on higher elevations within Mount Mansfield State Forest or the Worcester Range, which are largely outside the Town's jurisdiction.

What We Heard

The Planning Commission conducted a Community Survey digitally and distributed throughout town in late 2024 to gather facts and understand trends within the community and help guide informed decisions throughout this planning process. In early 2025, in-person and online Visioning Sessions were held to hear what elements and aspects should be maintained, evolve and/or transform within the community. Below is what we heard from you regarding Energy in Waterbury.

Residents are Concerned About Climate Change and Long-Term Resilience

Community feedback reflected growing concern about climate change, stormwater management, flooding, and long-term community resilience. Residents frequently connected energy planning with broader concerns related to environmental sustainability, infrastructure, and future community preparedness.

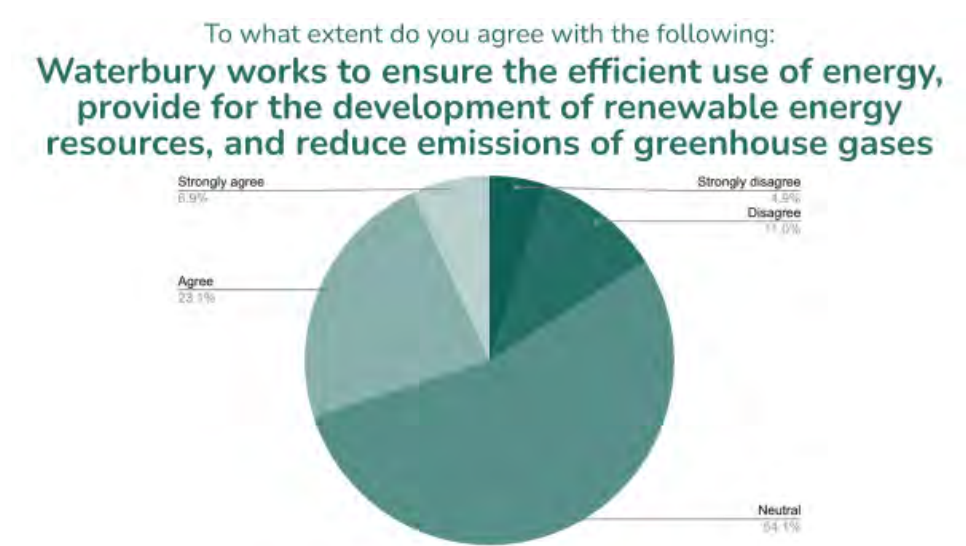
Climate change and stormwater management ranked among the top community challenges identified through the engagement

process.

Energy Affordability and Cost Savings Matter

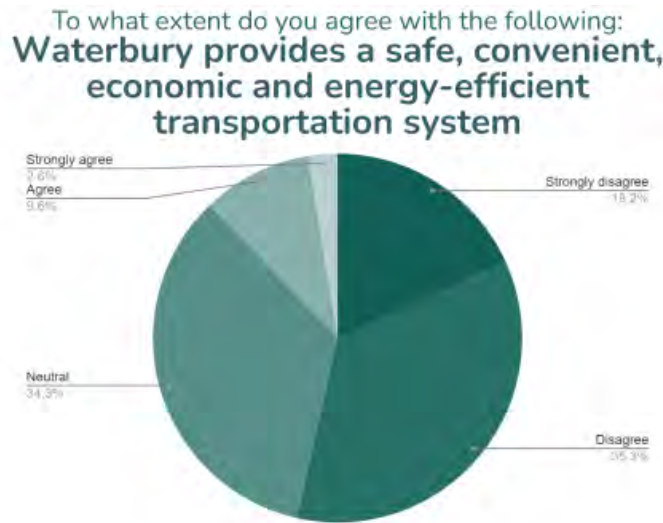
Residents expressed interest in practical energy improvements that reduce long-term costs for households, businesses, and municipal operations. Community feedback emphasized the importance of affordability, energy efficiency, and reducing operating expenses through weatherization, efficient building systems, and infrastructure improvements.

Residents frequently linked energy improvements with broader affordability and cost-of-living concerns.



Transportation and Energy are Closely Connected

Residents recognized the relationship between transportation systems, energy use, and emissions. Community feedback reflected support for improvements to walking, biking, transit, and electric vehicle infrastructure as part of broader sustainability and quality-of-life goals.



Residents Support Local, Practical Energy Solutions

Community members generally supported community-scale renewable energy, energy efficiency initiatives, and infrastructure investments that align with Waterbury's rural character and village development pattern. Residents emphasized the importance of balancing environmental goals with reliability, affordability, and local context.

Education and Partnerships are Important

Residents expressed interest in stronger communication regarding energy programs, incentives, rebates, and local sustainability initiatives. Community feedback also highlighted the importance of partnerships between the Town, utilities, regional organizations, and community groups to support implementation and public awareness.

To read more about the results from Community Engagement from this plan, click the button below:

**Survey Results
Summary**

**Visioning Sessions
Summary**



Key Maps

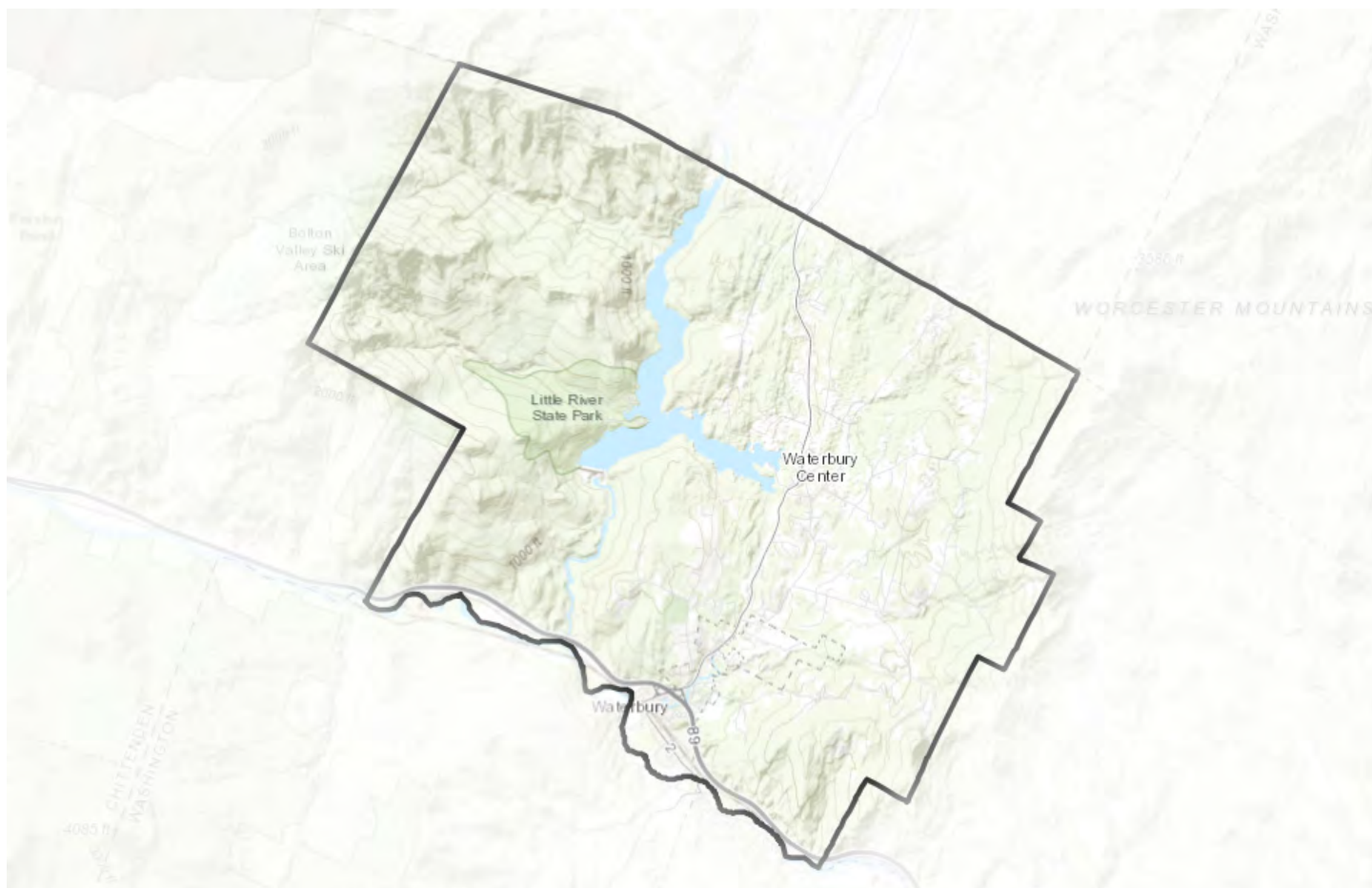
Map 1: Municipal Energy Assets Map

This map depicts town-owned buildings and private & municipal renewable energy projects.

Click the links below to see those facilities.

Wastewater Treatment Plant - Solar Panels

Sweet Farm Road - Solar Panels



VCGI | Esri Canada | Esri | HERE | Garmin | USGS | NGA | EPA | USDA | NPS...

5 km Powered by Esri

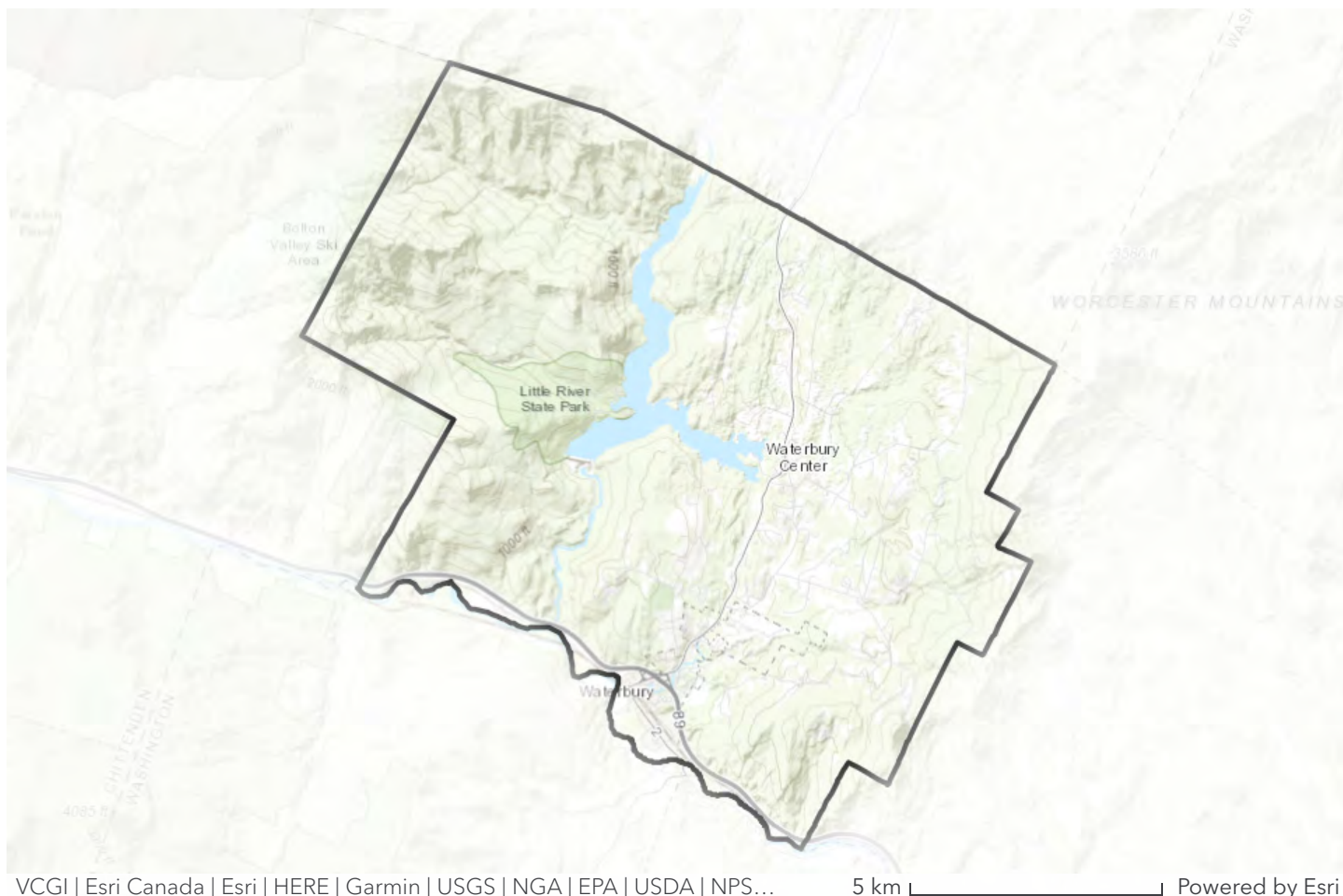
Map 2: Renewable Energy Potential Map

This map depicts solar, wind, and other renewable suitability areas.

Solar - Ground Mount Potential

Wind - Potential

Geothermal - Potential Soil/ Water/Wells



VCGI | Esri Canada | Esri | HERE | Garmin | USGS | NGA | EPA | USDA | NPS...

5 km Powered by Esri

Map 3: Energy Infrastructure

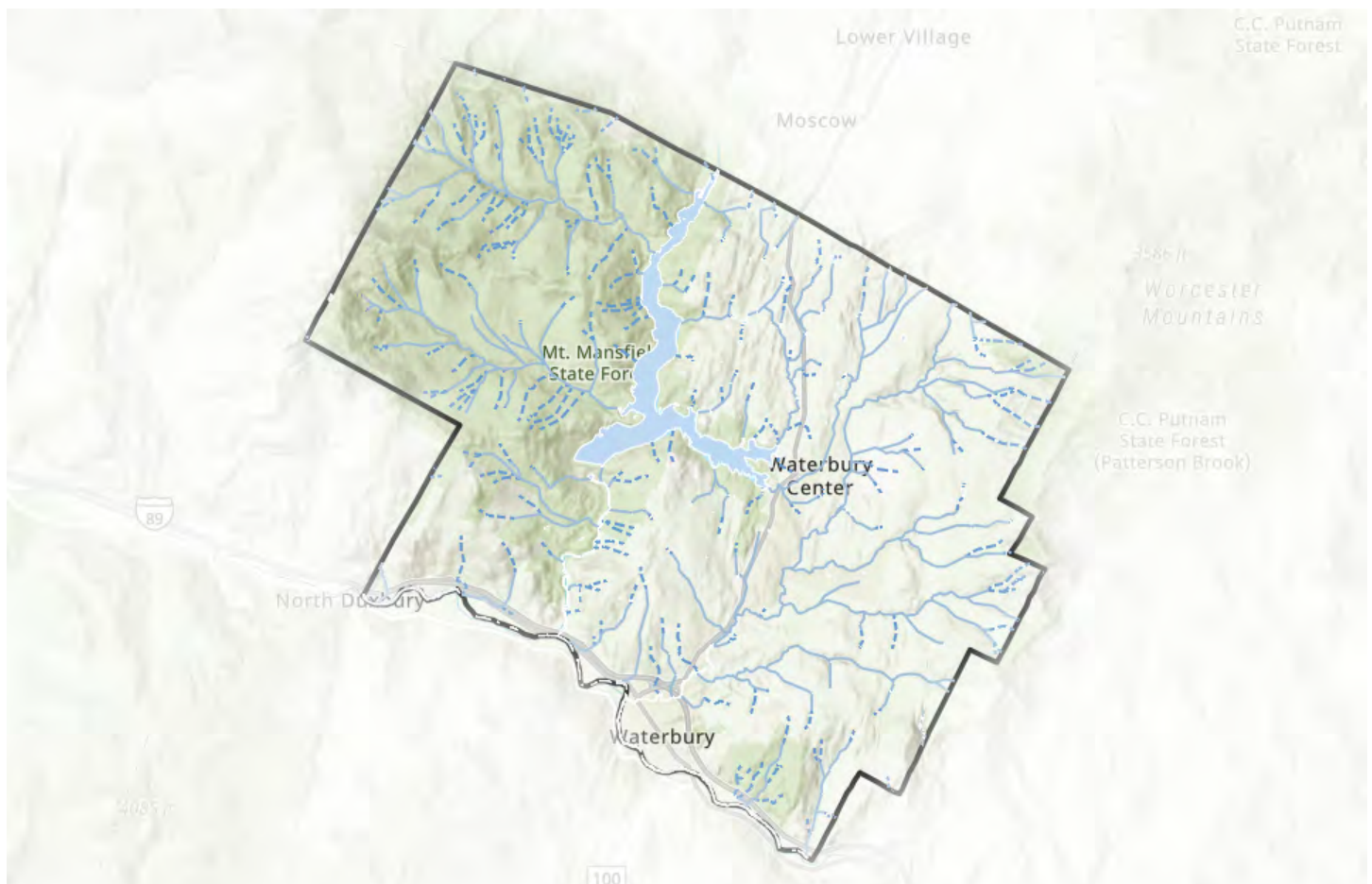
This map depicts energy infrastructure in the town of Waterbury. Click each button below to see the different layers.

Substations - 3-Phase - Distribution

Renewable - Generation & Storage

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Grid Capacity



VCGI | Esri | TomTom | Garmin | SafeGraph | GeoTechnologies, Inc | NASA ...

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Map 4: State Known Constraints

These are all the State-level 'Known' constraints with respect to developing renewable energy projects.

Vernal Pools

River Corridors & 50' Setbacks on Streams

FEMA Floodways

Significant Natural Communities

Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species

Wetlands



VCGI | Esri | TomTom | Garmin | SafeGraph | GeoTechnologies, Inc | NASA ...

5 km Powered by Esri

Map 5: State 'Possible' Constraints

This map shows areas that may possibly constrain renewable energy development projects.

Prime Agricultural Soils

Act 250 Soil Mitigation Areas

Flood Hazard Areas

Protected Lands

Deer Wintering Areas

Highest Priority Interior Forest Blocks

Hydric Soils with Wetland Indicators

Aspirations, Goals, & Strategies

Waterbury's future plans for Energy are captured in the following Aspirations, Goals, and Strategies:

Aspiration 1 - An Energy Efficient, Affordable, and Resilient Waterbury

Waterbury continues to reduce energy use through efficient buildings, equipment, infrastructure, and municipal operations while maintaining a high level of community services and resources. Waterbury promotes equitable access to energy efficiency programs especially for low/moderate and middle-income households.

Aspiration 2 - Waterbury Leads in Adopting Renewable Energy and Reducing Energy Consumption

Waterbury reduces fossil fuel consumption through promotion of renewable energy installations, innovative heating technologies and energy efficient municipal operations and community initiatives. Through planning, partnerships, education, and accurate monitoring of system use and capacity, Waterbury, including the municipal government, demonstrates how a small, rural community can reduce emissions.



Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: Reduce municipal and community-wide energy use through efficiency audits, education, and incentives.

- Strategy 1.1: Integrate energy efficiency into Town upgrades and capital improvements (e.g., exterior lighting, facility improvements, and public infrastructure) by using high-efficiency technologies and controls.
- Strategy 1.2: Periodically update energy audits on all municipal properties and implement a prioritized maintenance and retrofit plan to reduce long-term costs and energy use. Identify Town buildings with the greatest potential for heating fuel reduction and weatherization improvements.
- Strategy 1.3: Partner with local and regional organizations such as Waterbury LEAP to expand education, workshops, and access to energy efficiency resources through Town communications, public events, and outreach channels to increase adoption of energy efficiency practices.
- Strategy 1.4: Promote incentives and technical assistance pathways through Efficiency Vermont that help residents and businesses complete energy audits and implement energy efficiency measures that reduce long-term operating costs.
- Strategy 1.5: Educate Waterbury residents on the affordability of renewable energy and energy conservation. Prioritize outreach and program access for low/moderate and middle-income households and cost-burdened residents, including clear guidance on available rebates, financing options, and weatherization support.

Tracking Progress on Goal #1

- Number of homes and businesses completing energy audits and/or weatherization projects.
- Participation in Efficiency Vermont programs and other energy efficiency incentives.

- Number of municipal buildings with completed energy audits and implemented retrofit projects.
- Estimated reduction in energy use (MMBtu or kWh) across municipal operations.

Goal 2: Strengthen planning, permitting, and building standards to support energy-efficient development.

- Strategy 2.1: Update Town bylaws and development standards to encourage energy-efficient buildings and site design for new construction and major redevelopment.
- Strategy 2.2: Distribute through the Planning & Zoning Department a standardized information packet for developers and applicants early in the permitting process that outlines energy efficiency requirements, best practices, and available program resources.
- Strategy 2.3: Coordinate with utility providers and regional partners to maintain and monitor accurate, up-to-date information on system use, infrastructure capacity, and energy constraints to inform development decisions and long-term planning.

Tracking Progress on Goal #2

- Adoption of updated zoning bylaws and development standards that encourage energy efficiency.
- Create a standard information packet for developers and applicants within one year of the adoption of this Town Plan.
- Number and percentage of development applications incorporating energy-efficient design and, separately, renewable energy systems.
- Coordination efforts with GMP and regional partners to track system capacity and energy use.

Goal 3: Expand renewable energy and distributed clean energy opportunities in Waterbury.

- Strategy 3.1: Periodically review the targets and goals of the Town's Enhanced Energy Plan to identify viable locations for renewable energy development.
- Strategy 3.2: Partner with utilities, developers, and local and regional organizations to advance new renewable energy projects that increase local generation and support grid decarbonization.
- Strategy 3.3: Install renewable energy technologies such as solar on Town and school buildings and facilities and electric vehicles and equipment where feasible to reduce municipal energy costs and offset Town energy consumption.
- Strategy 3.4: Evaluate opportunities to use tools such as virtual net metering, renewable energy credits, and community-scale projects to distribute renewable energy benefits more equitably across Waterbury.

Tracking Progress on Goal #3

- Total installed solar capacity (kW) and number of solar installations in Waterbury.
- Number of municipal and school facilities with renewable energy systems installed and estimated energy savings.
- Participation in renewable energy programs, such as net metering and renewable energy credits.
- Progress toward renewable energy targets outlined in the Enhanced Energy Plan and CVRPC benchmarks.

Goal 4: Reduce emissions from heating and transportation sectors.

- Strategy 4.1: Advance weatherization and clean heating alternatives (e.g., air-source heat pumps, geothermal systems, and biomass where appropriate) as systems are built, replaced or upgraded in Town and school buildings as well as other buildings in town. Increase efficiency of cooling systems as climate changes and summers warm.

- Strategy 4.2: Support education and promote partnerships that help residents, landlords, and businesses evaluate weatherization and clean heating and renewable energy options, prioritizing solutions that reduce long-term costs and improve resilience during winter and extreme weather events.
- Strategy 4.3: Encourage the installation of electric vehicle charging stations in publicly and privately owned parking areas and in newly built and renovated homes.
- Strategy 4.4: Continue to provide education programs demonstrating the cost reductions associated with electric vehicles and plug-in hybrid vehicles.
- Strategy 4.5: Ensure that zoning bylaws and other local policies and programs promote clustered mixed-use development to encourage public transit, ride sharing, and walkability.
- Strategy 4.6: Promote the use of the Waterbury Park & Rides for carpooling and ride sharing.

Tracking Progress on Goal #4

- Number of cold-climate heat pumps and other clean heating systems installed.
- Number of households and businesses transitioning away from fossil fuel heating systems.
- Number of LEAP education programs (or similar) and participation in each.
- Participation in programs supporting weatherization, insulation, and efficient cooling systems, including Efficiency Vermont programs.
- Number and geographic distribution of electric vehicle charging stations.
- Utilization of Park & Ride facilities and local participation in carpooling or ride-sharing programs; assessment of carpooling data collected by the American Community Survey.
- Green Mountain Transit ridership numbers on routes through Waterbury.

Goal 5: Waterbury will meet or exceed the 2025, 2035, and 2050 targets for thermal and electric efficiency improvements, and use of renewable energy for transportation, heating, and electricity.

- Strategy 5.1: The strategies above are designed to meet these goals.

Tracking Progress

- Overall trends in community-wide energy use and greenhouse gas emissions and progress toward meeting 2025, 2035, and 2050 energy targets for efficiency and renewable energy adoption.

Who Tracks Progress

The Town should track progress on energy goals through coordination between the Planning Commission, Selectboard, and Town staff, with support from local energy partners and regional organizations.

Suggested Responsible Entities

- **Town:** Planning Commission, Selectboard, Town staff, and departments overseeing facilities and capital planning.
- **Non-Town:** Waterbury LEAP, Efficiency Vermont, Green Mountain Power (GMP), CVRPC, and State energy agency

Stay Engaged

Ways residents can support community goals for Energy in Waterbury

This section is intended to help Waterbury residents stay informed, reduce energy costs, and help Waterbury transition to a more

efficient and resilient energy future. To stay engaged, refer to the following resources and actions:



Improve Your Home or Business

- Schedule a home or business energy audit through Efficiency Vermont to identify cost-saving upgrades.
- Take advantage of available rebates, financing, and technical assistance for weatherization, insulation, and heating system upgrades.
- Consider installing heat pumps, solar panels, or other renewable energy systems to reduce long-term energy costs.

Participate in Local Energy Programs

- Connect with Waterbury LEAP (Local Energy Action Partnership) to learn about workshops, events, and local energy initiatives, <https://www.waterburyleap.org>.

- Attend community events and educational programs focused on energy efficiency, renewable energy, and climate resilience.
- Stay informed about Town initiatives related to energy planning and infrastructure improvements.

Reduce Transportation Emissions

- Consider switching to an electric or plug-in hybrid vehicle and explore available incentives.
- Use or advocate for expanded electric vehicle charging infrastructure in Waterbury.
- Utilize Park & Ride facilities, carpooling, the bus, and ride-sharing opportunities to reduce fuel use.



Support Energy-Conscious Development

- When building, renovating, or developing your property, incorporate energy-efficient design and renewable energy

systems.

- Work with the Town early in the permitting process to understand energy-related requirements and opportunities.

Stay Connected

- [Town of Waterbury Website](#): central hub for announcements, project updates, and public meeting information.
- [Town of Waterbury Facebook Page](#): real-time updates and engagement opportunities.
- Town Newsletter & Text Alerts: sign up for email and SMS notifications. Text “Hi” to (802) 200-2644 any time you need to.
- Text “Waterbury” to 91896 to opt in to text alerts. TextMyGov
- Participate in public workshops, surveys, events, and programs related to arts, culture, history, and community identity.

Created for the Town of Waterbury by SE Group.

planWTB | Waterbury Planning Commission | 2026 [Insert final adoption date once known.]



Transportation

Introduction

Waterbury's transportation system is central to the Town's quality of life and economic vitality.

Its network of local roads, state highways, transit services, bike and pedestrian pathways and connections, and rail connections links residents to jobs, services, and recreation both within the community and across the region. While this system provides

strong regional access, it remains heavily oriented toward automobile travel.

The transportation strategy for Waterbury is to build on these assets while creating a more balanced, safe, environmentally friendly, and connected system that better serves all users.



A Waterbury cyclist uses one of the bike racks installed as part of the Main Street Reconstruction project. *Photo: Bobbi LoCicero (photo shared by Vermont Natural Resources Council).*

Planning Context

Waterbury's transportation system is heavily influenced by its location along major regional and state transportation corridors, including Interstate 89, U.S. Route 2, Vermont Route 100, and active rail infrastructure that provides daily Amtrak service to New York City and beyond. Many of these facilities are owned and controlled by the State of Vermont or other entities rather than the Town itself. As a result, implementation of transportation improvements in Waterbury often requires coordination with VTTrans, regional partners, and adjacent municipalities, particularly for projects involving roadway safety, traffic congestion,

multimodal connectivity, and flood resilience along state-managed corridors.

How Waterbury Plans for Transportation

Waterbury plans transportation improvements through local planning documents, annual capital budgeting, and coordination with regional and state partners. Transportation projects are commonly funded through a combination of local capital funds and state and federal grant programs, including VTrans grants, Better Connections, Transportation Alternatives, and hazard mitigation funding.

Over the past decade, Waterbury has made significant investments in its transportation system that reflect a shift toward safer, more resilient, and multimodal infrastructure. These efforts have been shaped by local priorities, state policies such as Vermont's Complete Streets principles, and increasing attention to climate impacts and community development patterns.

Downtown & Corridor Improvements

The most significant transportation investment in recent years was the reconstruction of Main Street (U.S. Route 2 / VT Route 100) through Waterbury's downtown. Completed in 2021, this project rebuilt critical infrastructure while enhancing sidewalks, streetscape, signage and overall pedestrian safety—improving conditions for all users while supporting downtown economic vitality.



Main Street Reconstruction circa June 2020. *Photo: Gordon Miller (provided by Revitalizing Waterbury).*

The 2016 Downtown Parking Study assessed parking in the downtown area during that time period. Since then, numerous changes have taken place and a new study is needed.

Infrastructure Maintenance and Resilience

Waterbury has continued to prioritize maintenance and strategic upgrades to its transportation infrastructure, including bridges, culverts, and local roads. The Town's Public Works Department works tirelessly, maintaining and upgrading the road system to ensure safe and reliable on the Town roads. Projects such as the rehabilitation of Bridge 36 (completed in 2025) over Thatcher Brook on Stowe Street and ongoing capital improvements to Town-maintained roads reflect a growing emphasis on long-term asset management and climate resilience. In particular, stormwater upgrades and flood-conscious design have become increasingly important components of the Town's transportation planning and investment.

Waterbury's transportation infrastructure—particularly roads, bridges, and stormwater systems—is becoming increasingly expensive to maintain and upgrade, driven by inflation, aging assets, reduced access to locally sourced gravel and sand, and more frequent and severe storm events. Increasingly, climate-related impacts are placing additional strain on the Town's transportation infrastructure, accelerating deterioration and increasing repair costs. At the same time, uncertainty around future state and federal funding programs has heightened concern about the Town's ability to finance needed improvements over the long term. Programs such as FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program, Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A), Transportation Alternatives funding, and other discretionary infrastructure and resilience grants established or expanded through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act face evolving federal priorities and uncertain long-term reauthorization in the future.

Multimodal Investments

Waterbury benefits from a strong foundation of multimodal transportation assets that enhance connectivity within the community and to the broader region. The Town is served by Amtrak's Vermonter line, with a renovated historic rail station that



Amtrak Train Service in Waterbury.

Photo: Bobbi LoCicero (shared by Vermont Natural Resources Council).

functions as both a transportation and community hub. The park-and-ride facility near Route 100 provides an important link to public transit services (e.g., Green Mountain Transit), supporting commuting and carpooling. Within the downtown area, an established sidewalk network supports walking and rolling to local businesses and services, while the Waterbury Community Path offers a shared-use off-road path that holds the

promise of connecting key destinations. In addition, Waterbury's proximity to and integration with the Cross Vermont Trail strengthens regional recreation and transportation opportunities, positioning the Town as an important node in a broader multimodal network.

The Town was awarded a Better Connections grant from the State of Vermont in 2025 to conduct a transportation plan identifying opportunities for enhanced connectivity and safety in Waterbury Center. Recently, Discover Waterbury (formerly Revitalizing Waterbury) has embarked on an initiative in partnership with the Town's Recreation Department and other bike and pedestrian stakeholders groups in the area to create a 'Community Pathways' plan that ties together existing paths, trails, and connections to form connections between trail networks like those at Perry Hill with the downtown area, and the downtown area with the Center and eventually Little River State Park. The initiative is new but reflects a desire for cohesive transportation and recreation assets.

Safe Streets & Connectivity

Waterbury has addressed street safety through a combination of major corridor reconstruction, targeted pedestrian improvements, and emerging traffic calming strategies. In addition to the Main Street Reconstruction Project, investments have focused on expanding and upgrading sidewalk infrastructure, including

projects on Stowe Street and planned extensions, such as along Foundry Street, aimed at improving access and safety for people walking, including students and commuters.

The Town has also increasingly emphasized traffic calming and context-sensitive design as tools to improve safety, particularly in village areas and residential neighborhoods. Waterbury was awarded a Better Connections grant in 2025 from the State of Vermont Agency of Transportation to identify opportunities for improved pedestrian, bicycle, and multimodal connectivity within the Waterbury Center Village Center and surrounding mixed-use core, including connections between the Village Center, Hope Davey Memorial Park, Waterbury Center State Park, the Grange Hall Cultural Center, Cold Hollow Cider Mill, and nearby residential and commercial areas. At the same time, ongoing and proposed improvements to the Community Path and other shared-use facilities support safer alternatives to driving by providing dedicated space for walking and biking.



Pedestrians using a Main Street crossing with traffic calming bumpouts created during the Main Street Reconstruction project. *Photo: Bobbi LoCicero (shared by Vermont Natural Resources Council).*

Public Transit

Waterbury is served by regional public transit that connects the Town to key destinations including Montpelier, Burlington, and Stowe. In 2024, service previously provided by Green Mountain Transit (GMT) transitioned to Rural Community Transportation (RCT). Commuter and regional routes continue to serve Waterbury, with stops at the park-and-ride on Lincoln Street, Waterbury Center, and in the downtown area, providing important mobility options for workers, residents, and visitors. However, as Vermont's transit providers face ongoing funding challenges, the future of key services such as the Waterbury–Montpelier LINK route are uncertain.

At the Crossroads

Waterbury's location between two of Vermont's most popular destinations (Stowe and the Mad River Valley) has a significant influence on local transportation conditions. Route 100 and I-89 serve as key corridors for visitor travel, resulting in pronounced seasonal and weekend traffic volumes, particularly during winter ski season and peak foliage periods. This influx contributes to congestion, increased wear on road infrastructure, and safety challenges for pedestrians and cyclists. Additionally, major roadways in Waterbury support large semi-trucks and commercial traffic, supporting large-scale industry and resulting in a more diverse economic base for the Town.

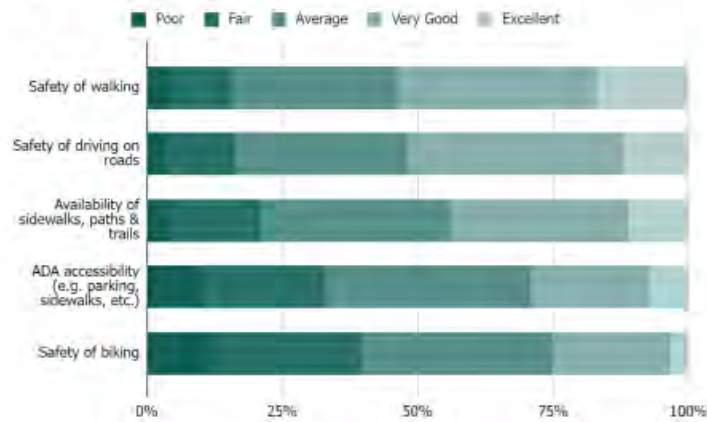
What We Heard

The Planning Commission conducted a Community Survey digitally and distributed throughout Town in late 2024 to gather facts and understand trends within the community and help guide informed decisions throughout this planning process. In early 2025, in-person and on-line Visioning Sessions were held to hear what elements and aspects should be maintained, evolve and/or transform within the community. Below is what we heard from you regarding Transportation in Waterbury.

Walking, Biking, Accessibility, and Safety

Residents generally view walking conditions and sidewalk availability more positively than biking conditions. Survey responses indicate that residents feel safest driving, followed by walking, while biking infrastructure and safety were identified as weaker aspects of the transportation system. Safety of driving and walking both averaged 3.3 out of 5, while safety of biking averaged 2.9. Availability of sidewalks, paths, and trails averaged 3.2, and ADA accessibility averaged 3.0, suggesting residents see opportunities for improvement in accessibility and multimodal connectivity.

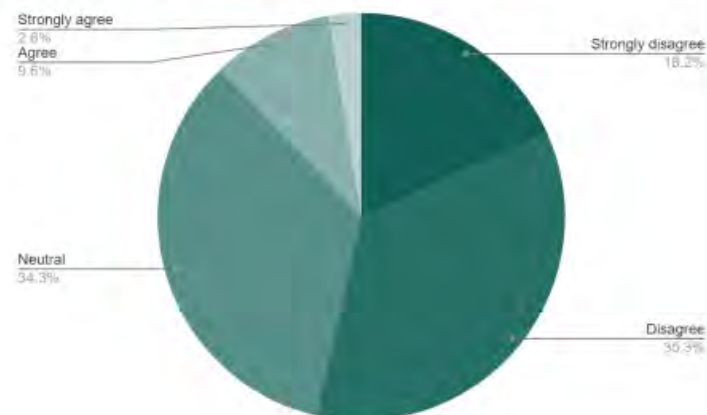
TRANSPORTATION SAFETY & ACCESS



Transportation Safety

Transportation safety remains an important community concern. While residents generally rated driving conditions as acceptable, feedback emphasized the need for safer walking and biking connections between neighborhoods, village centers, schools, recreation areas, and commercial destinations. Residents also expressed interest in improving roadway safety and reducing conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.

To what extent do you agree with the following:
Waterbury provides a safe, convenient, economic and energy-efficient transportation system?



Convenience and Transportation Options

Residents expressed concern regarding whether Waterbury currently provides a transportation system that is safe, convenient, economic, and energy efficient. That question received an average

score of 2.4 out of 5, indicating substantial room for improvement. Community feedback emphasized interest in expanded transportation options, including improved pedestrian infrastructure, biking facilities, public transportation connections, and multimodal transportation opportunities.

Growth, Traffic, Parking, and Infrastructure

Transportation concerns are closely tied to broader issues related to growth, housing, and economic development. Approximately 27% of respondents identified traffic congestion as a top community challenge, while transportation options and community infrastructure were also identified as concerns. Feedback emphasized the importance of coordinating transportation improvements with future housing and economic development efforts.

Quality of Life and Connectivity

Transportation was frequently discussed as part of broader quality-of-life conversations. Residents value Waterbury's walkable village centers, recreational opportunities, scenic environment, and geographic location, and expressed support for transportation improvements that strengthen community connectivity while maintaining the Town's character. Recreational opportunities were identified by approximately 60% of respondents as one of the things they value most about Waterbury, reinforcing the importance of trail, sidewalk, and recreation connectivity improvements.

Community Visioning Mapping

During Town Meeting in 2025 and at four Community Visioning Sessions, attendees were asked questions about how they felt about parts of Town and were told to place colored dots on a map to indicate those feelings. The point locations as well as the Response Density (heat maps showing the locations of the most responses) are shown here.



VCGI | Esri | TomTom | Garmin | SafeGraph | GeoTechnologies, Inc | NASA ...

2 km  Powered by [Esri](#)

Place-Based Feedback

Click the buttons below to view the responses.

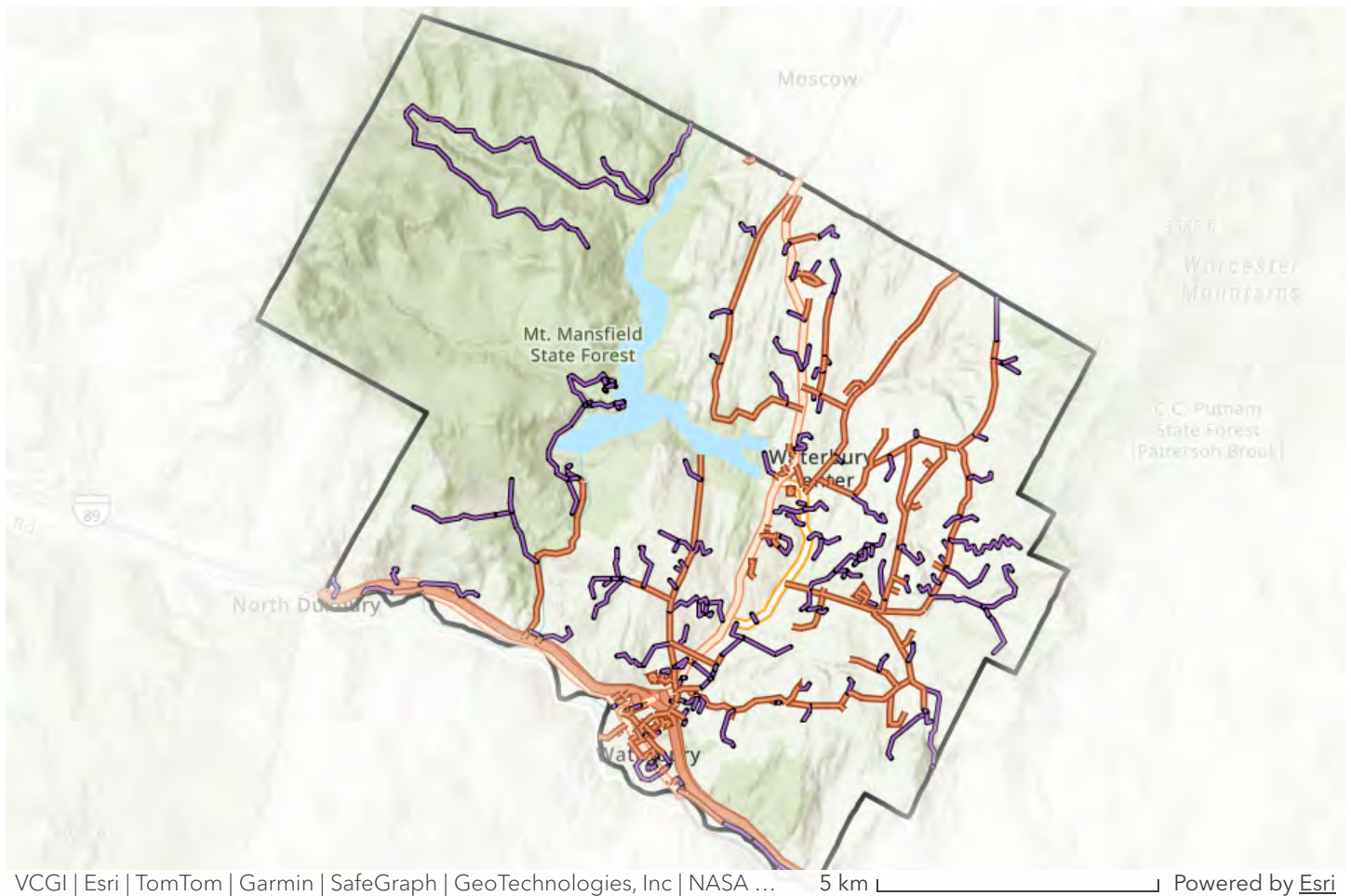
Feel Unsafe Driving

Feel Unsafe Walking or Biking

To read more about the results from Community Engagement from this plan, click the button below:

**Survey Results
Summary**

**Visioning Sessions
Summary**



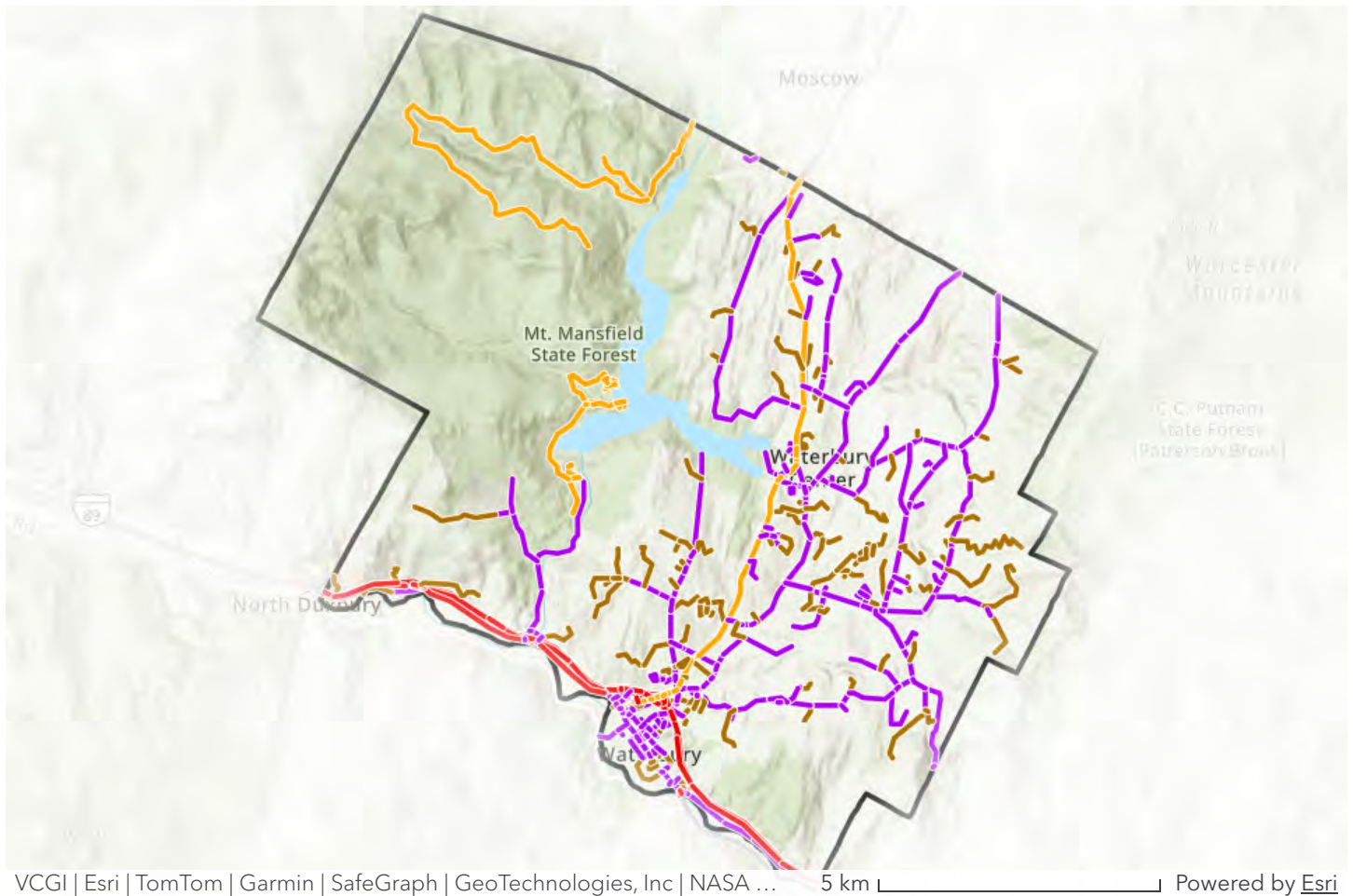
Key Maps

Map 1: Transportation Network - Road Functional Classes

This map shows all roads within Waterbury as classified by the Vermont Agency of Transportation's Functional Class System.

Functional Class describes the *role* a road plays in the transportation network—how much through-traffic it's meant to carry versus how much it's meant to provide direct access to homes and driveways. Roads range from Interstates and Arterials (built to move higher volumes of traffic longer distances) down through Collectors to Local roads (built mainly for local access), regardless of whether the road happens to be owned by the Town, state, or federal government.

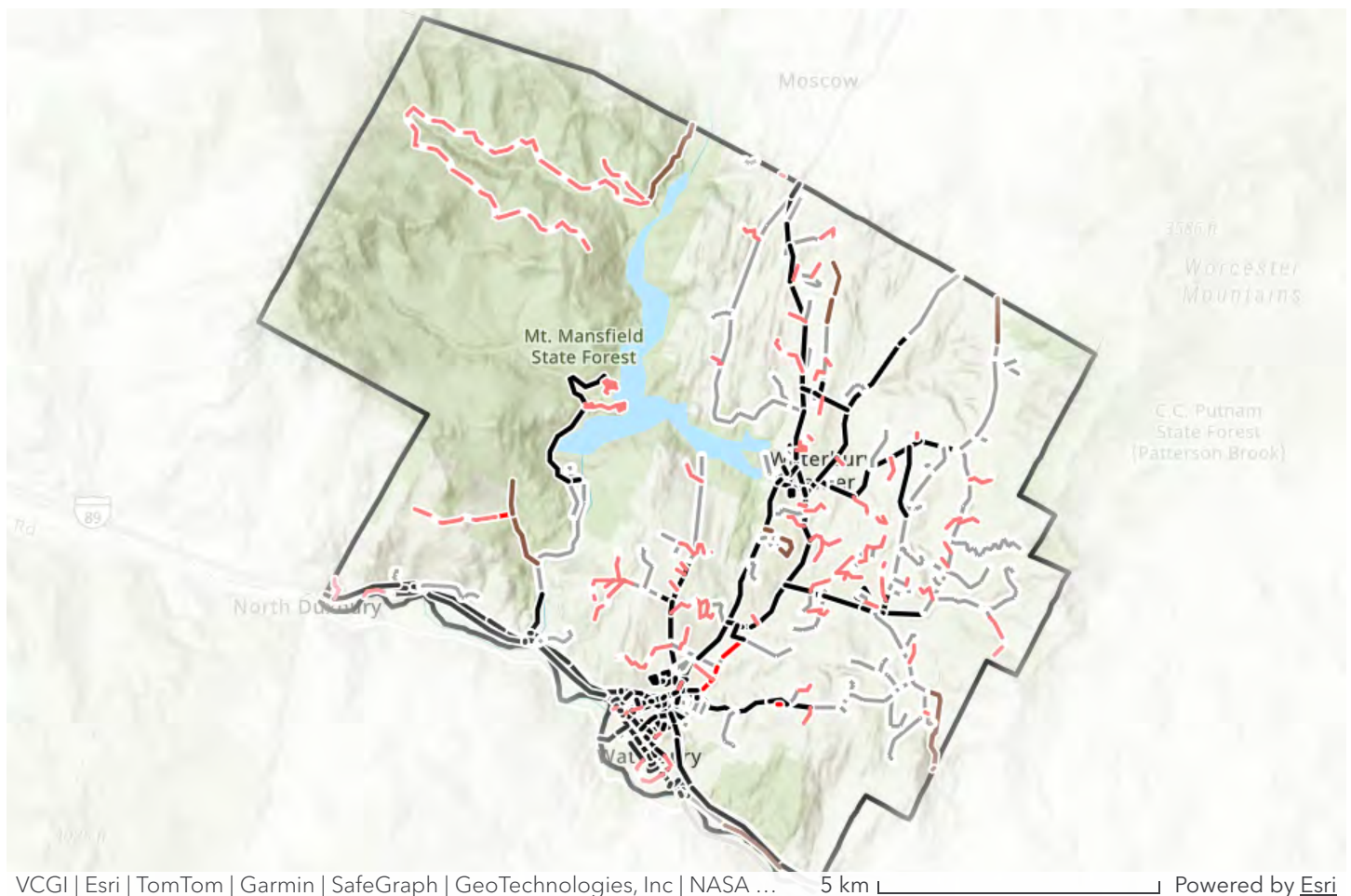
Data Source: All Roads Layer - VT Agency of Transportation (provided by VT Center for Geographic Information)



Map 2: Road Maintenance Responsibility

This map shows who is legally responsible for owning and maintaining a road—town, state, or federal government—rather than how busy or important the road is. It's the field to use when you want to know, for example, which roads a Town has to plow and repave itself versus which ones the state or federal government takes care of.

Data Source: All Roads Layer - VT Agency of Transportation (provided by VT Center for Geographic Information)



Map 3: Transportation Network - Surface Type

This map shows road selected according to different surface types.

Data Source: All Roads Layer - VT Agency of Transportation (provided by VT Center for Geographic Information)



VCGL | Esri | TomTom | Garmin | SafeGraph | GeoTechnologies, Inc | NASA ... 5 km Powered by Esri

Map 4: Traffic and Safety Concerns

This map depicts data from VTrans on crash locations from their Crash Database (primarily reported by VT State Police). Point data is from 2010–2026.

VTrans Crash Data - Points

There are additional data for High Crash Locations - road segments (there are no data in Waterbury for High Crash Location Intersections). Segment data represents crashes from 2012 to 2016 (this is the most recent and available data from VTrans).

Total Crashes

Crashes with Injuries

Severity Index

Severity Index: A score that weights crashes by how serious they were—a fatal crash counts far more than a fender-bender. A higher score means the crashes that happened on this segment tended to cause serious injuries or deaths, not just property damage.

Actual to Critical Crash Ratio

Actual to Critical Crash Ratio: Compares how many crashes actually occurred on this segment to the number that would statistically be expected given its traffic volume and road type. A ratio above 1.0 means crashes are happening more often than expected—the higher the number, the greater the concern.

Data Source: Crash Locations - VT Agency of Transportation



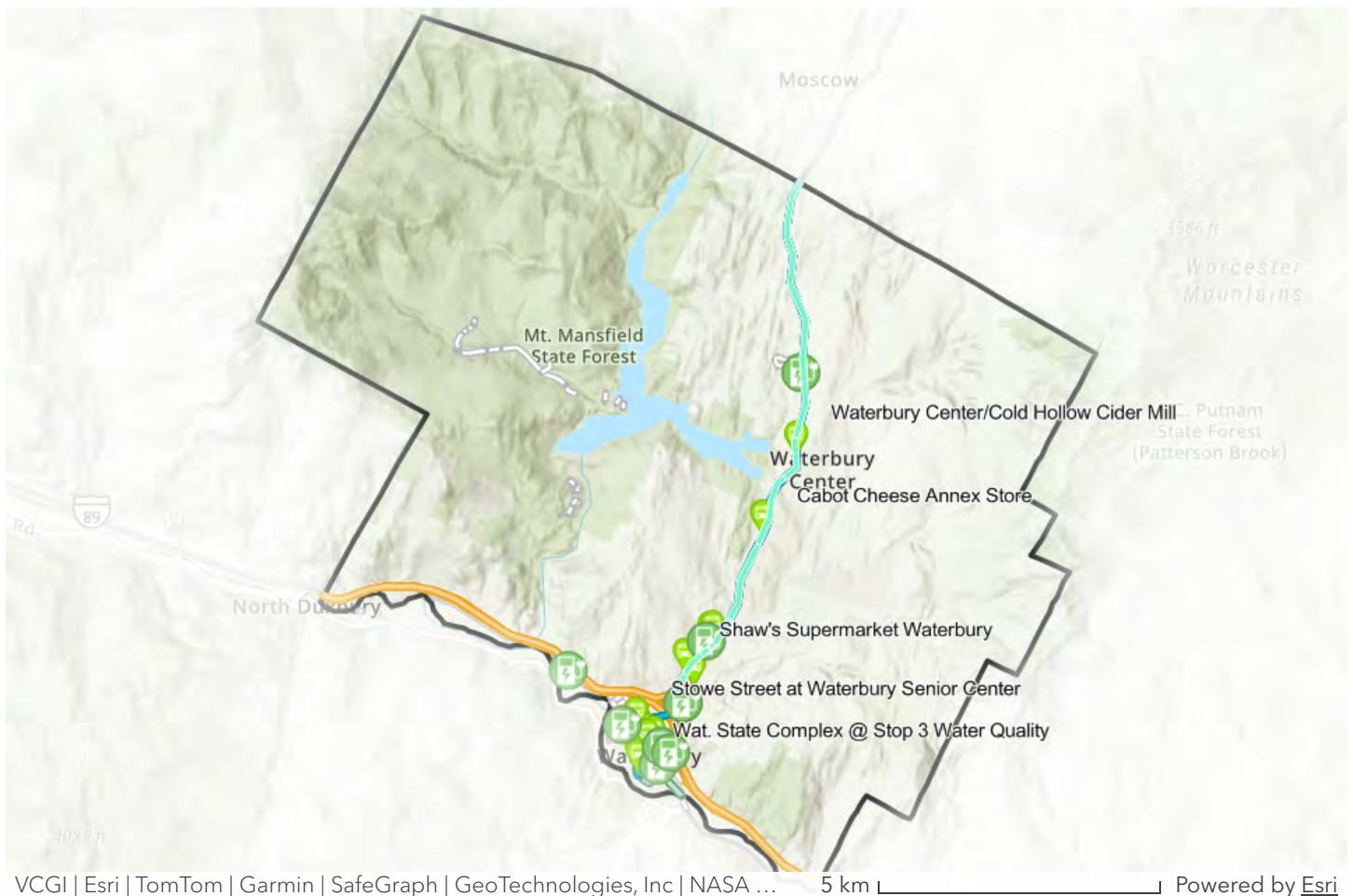
VCGL | Esri | TomTom | Garmin | SafeGraph | GeoTechnologies, Inc | NASA ...

2 km Powered by Esri

Map 5: Pedestrian and Bicycle Network

This map depicts existing sidewalks, bike routes, and trail connections (primarily those for transportation versus those for recreation).

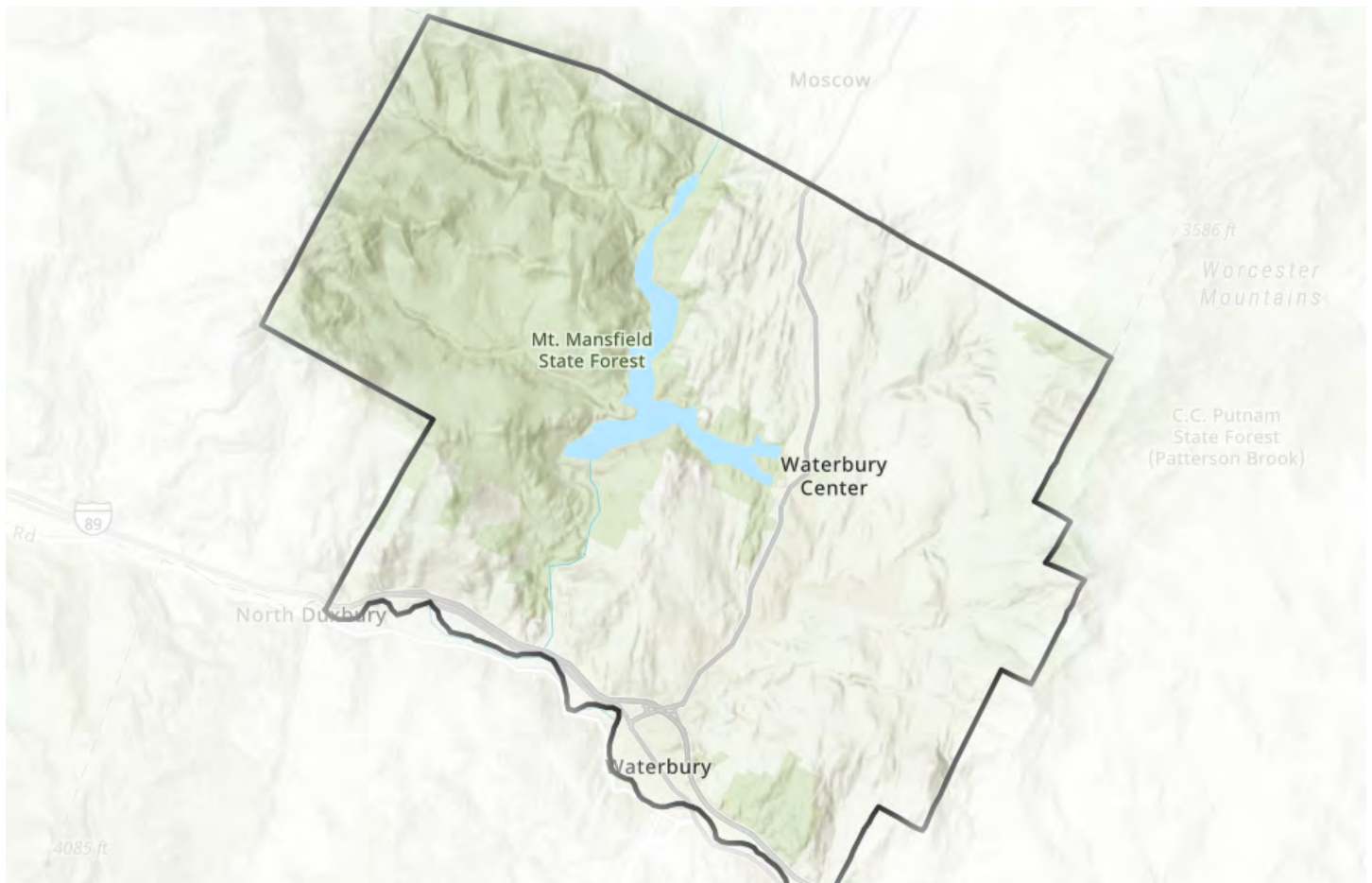
Data Source: Sidewalks - Waterbury Planning Commission from OpenStreetMap sidewalk data and manual addition | Community Path Connectors - Waterbury Planning Commission | Cross Vermont Trail - Cross Vermont Trail Association



Map 6: Transit and Park-and-Ride

This map depicts transit routes, stops, bike lanes and park-and-ride facilities.

Data Sources: Bus Stops and Routes, Sidewalks, and Bike Lanes - Derived from OpenStreetMap Data by Waterbury Planning Commission



VCGL | Esri | TomTom | Garmin | SafeGraph | GeoTechnologies, Inc | NASA ... 5 km Powered by Esri

Map 7: Transportation Resilience Program

The Vermont Transportation Resilience Planning Tool (TRPT) is a web-based application that identifies bridges, culverts, and road embankments that are vulnerable to damage from floods, estimates risk based on the vulnerability, and criticality of roadway segments, and identifies potential mitigation measures based on the factors driving the vulnerability. Use the links below to see:

50-year Flood Risk Ranking

50-year Flood Vulnerability Ranking

Criticality Index

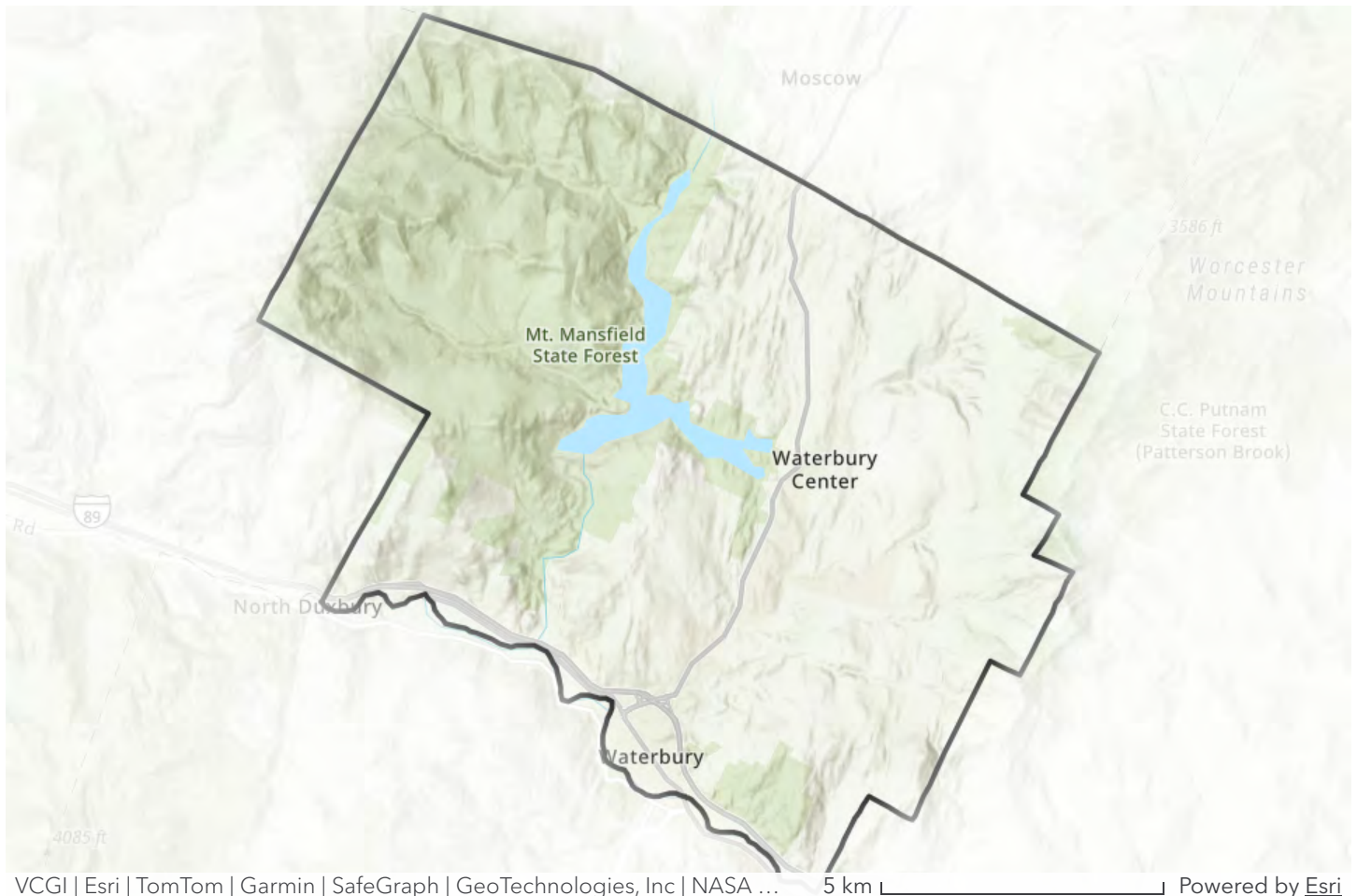
Risk—The combination of both. A road is high risk when it is both likely to be damaged *and* important to the community. Low-risk roads are either well above

flood danger, easily bypassed, or both.

Vulnerability—How likely is this road or structure to be physically damaged by a flood? Higher scores reflect locations that are close to the river, have been damaged before, or face powerful erosion, sediment, or flooding pressure.

Criticality—How much do people depend on this road? Higher scores reflect roads where a closure would strand many travelers, cut off emergency services, or eliminate a key detour route.

Data Sources: All Layers - VT Agency of Transportation



Map 8: Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) Road Segments

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation's Municipal Roads General Permit is intended to reduce stormwater-related erosion and damages on municipal roads. Towns will implement a customized plan to upgrade their road drainage

system, bringing roadway drainage up to basic maintenance standards. The permit is required by Act 64, the Vermont Clean Water Act, and the Lake Champlain Phase I TMDL which seeks to reduce phosphorus, a primary driver of harmful algal blooms.

Roads that are [⊕ Hydrologically Connected](#) (draining to water) are inventoried (click the link to see connected road segments).

Roads are then assigned a [⊕ Ranking](#), which determines if the road needs to be brought to MRGP maintenance standard to alleviate erosion and potential phosphorus export.

Over time, the Town will bring these road segments into MRGP compliance.

Data Sources: MRGP Road Segments - VT Agency of Natural Resources (provided by VT Center for Geographic Information)

Aspirations, Goals, & Strategies

Waterbury's future plans for Transportation are captured in the following Aspirations, Goals, and Strategies:

Aspiration 1 - A Well-Connected Waterbury

Waterbury has a safe, connected, and convenient multimodal transportation system that emphasizes Complete Streets, ADA-compliant infrastructure, and a robust trail and path network.

Aspiration 2 - Land Use Supports Safe Walking, Biking, and Transit

Waterbury directs growth in a thoughtful and coordinated manner to reduce sprawl, including compact nodes of development with infrastructure that enables walking, biking, and local transit options. Waterbury encourages a shift away from single-occupancy vehicle use toward active and shared transportation,

supporting climate resilience and reduced emissions associated with transportation.



Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: Strengthen public transit and community transportation options.

- Strategy 1.1: Expand partnerships to increase volunteer participation in the VTTrans Community Driver Program to improve access to transportation for Waterbury residents.
- Strategy 1.2: Include Green Mountain Transit (GMT) in the early stages of relevant large-scale land development and transportation planning discussions to strengthen coordination and improve local transit outcomes.
- Strategy 1.3: Advocate for more frequent and effective public transportation services to improve reliability and increase transit accessibility for residents, workers, and visitors.
- Strategy 1.4: Partner with public transportation service providers to promote available public transportation options and encourage increased routes and connectivity to and from Waterbury.
- Strategy 1.5: Highlight transit information prominently through the Town website, Town offices, and key local businesses to improve visibility and ridership.
- Strategy 1.6: Promote a community-wide shift toward active transportation and public transit use by improving infrastructure, service availability, and public awareness of alternatives to driving alone.
- Strategy 1.7: Conduct a parking study to address community parking needs.

Tracking Progress on Goal #1

- Number of volunteer drivers participating in the VTrans Community Driver Program.
- Public transit ridership levels on routes serving Waterbury.
- Number of transit coordination meetings or partnerships with regional transit providers and major employers.
- Public awareness and visibility of transit information through Town communication platforms and local businesses.
- Changes in frequency, reliability, or service coverage of public transit routes serving Waterbury.
- Parking study conducted.

Goal 2: Drive use of alternative transportation modes by partnering with employers and regional stakeholders to reduce single-occupancy vehicle dependence and enhance alternatives, such as walking, biking, and transit.

- Strategy 2.1: Develop partnerships with Waterbury-area employers to increase transit ridership for employees and customers, including support toward local match requirements for transit investments.
- Strategy 2.2: Collaborate with employers to support sidewalk and bike lane improvements that strengthen commuter safety and improve last-mile connections.
- Strategy 2.3: Connect employers with local and regional ride-sharing and carpooling organizations to expand commuting options and reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles.

Tracking Progress on Goal #2

- Number of employer partnerships supporting transit, biking, walking, carpooling, or ride-sharing initiatives.
- Utilization rates of Park & Ride facilities and ride-sharing programs.
- Number of new or expanded commuter transportation programs serving Waterbury employees and residents.

Goal 3: Improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to support safety, comfort, and connectivity.

- Strategy 3.1: Prioritize sidewalk, crosswalks, and bike improvements in high-traffic and high-risk areas and in locations serving critical destinations such as schools, medical facilities, parks, grocery stores, and community services.
- Strategy 3.2: Improve bike and pedestrian connections between key hubs in Town, including downtown, Route 2, and Route 100, to support daily commuting and transportation needs.
- Strategy 3.3: Coordinate with VTTrans planners to identify and advance opportunities for walking and biking improvements along the Route 100 and Route 2 corridors.
- Strategy 3.4: Ensure that future major roadway improvements align with Vermont Complete Streets guidelines to support safe travel for all users and all modes.
- Strategy 3.5: Ensure zoning bylaws require sidewalks for new developments where appropriate.
- Strategy 3.6: Extend sidewalks and pedestrian/bike facilities to underserved areas and areas of new development to create a more continuous, equitable Town-wide network.
- Strategy 3.7: Prioritize bicycle and pedestrian design treatments that improve safety, particularly for children and older residents, including enhanced crossings and traffic-calming approaches.
- Strategy 3.8: Consider installing Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) at high-priority intersections and crossings to strengthen pedestrian safety.
- Strategy 3.9: Ensure bikeway design reflects best practices for user safety and comfort and encourages use of protected bike lanes where feasible. Note: Protected bike lanes are strongly preferable to wider shoulders from a safety perspective. Consider incorporating NACTO standards for bicycle facility design.

Tracking Progress on Goal #3

- Miles of new or improved sidewalks, bike lanes, shared-use paths, or pedestrian facilities completed.
- Number of ADA accessibility improvements completed.
- Number of crosswalk, RRFB, traffic calming, or intersection safety improvements implemented.
- Number of roadway or corridor projects incorporating Complete Streets principles.
- Bicycle and pedestrian crash or safety data trends.
- Number of development projects incorporating sidewalks, paths, or multimodal infrastructure.

Goal 4: Grow and maintain a well-connected trails and paths network as part of Waterbury's multimodal system.

- Strategy 4.1: Document and publicize trail and path network within the Town.
- Strategy 4.2: Improve and expand the Town's recreational path system to expand recreation access and connectivity between neighborhoods and destinations.
- Strategy 4.3: Improve signage and wayfinding across the trails and community path network to support safe and intuitive use by both residents and visitors.
- Strategy 4.4: Encourage pedestrian-friendly new development in locally defined growth areas; ensure that future bylaw updates meaningfully expand multimodal transportation opportunities.

Tracking Progress on Goal #4

- Miles of recreational trails, shared-use paths, or community path connections added or improved.
- Completion of trail mapping, signage, and wayfinding improvements.
- Number of connections established between neighborhoods, recreation areas, schools, downtown, and other destinations.

- Progress implementing recommendations from the Community Pathways initiative and related planning efforts.

Goal 5: Improve electric vehicle readiness and Town-wide EV access.

- Strategy 5.1: Expand electric vehicle charging access Town-wide by increasing charging availability and addressing gaps in the public charging network.

Tracking Progress on Goal #5

- Number and geographic distribution of public electric vehicle charging stations.
- Number of charging sessions and estimated usage levels at public EV charging stations.
- Number of municipal or public facilities equipped with EV charging stations.

Goal 6: Improve roadway safety throughout Waterbury.

- Strategy 6.1: Evaluate speeding concerns along Town roads and implement effective safety improvements.
- Strategy 6.2: Coordinate with VTrans to evaluate high-crash locations on state highways, including the intersection of Blush Hill Road, Route 100, and Waterbury-Stowe Road, and identify potential safety improvements.
- Strategy 6.3: Evaluate and pursue roadway safety recommendations from the 2026 Better Connections plan for Waterbury Center.

Tracking Progress on Goal #6

- Number of roadway safety projects completed on Town and state-managed roads.
- Speed monitoring data and implementation of traffic calming measures.

- Number of high-crash locations evaluated and improved in coordination with VTrans.
- Progress implementing recommendations from the Waterbury Center Better Connections plan.
- Transportation-related grant funding secured for safety, multimodal, or resilience improvements.

Who Tracks Progress

The Town should track progress on transportation through coordination between the Planning Commission, Public Works Department, and regional transportation partners, with support from state agencies, utilities, transit providers, and local stakeholders. Note: EV charging usage can be tracked through periodic reporting from charger operators, Green Mountain Power, and charging network providers, which automatically collect data such as charging sessions and electricity usage.

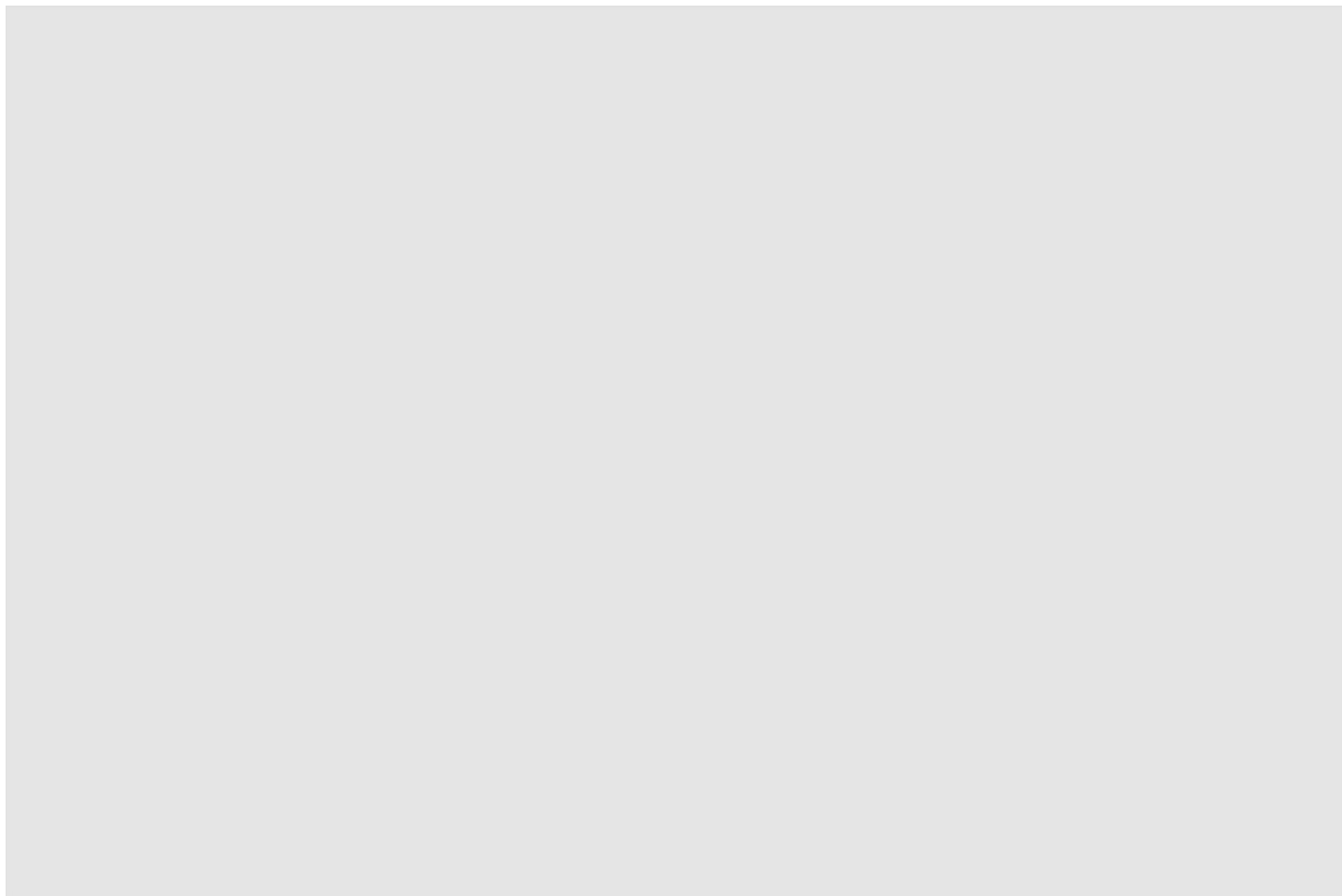
Suggested Responsible Entities

- **Town:** Planning Commission, Public Works Department, Recreation Department, Development Review Board, and Town staff.
- **Non-Town:** Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans), Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC), Rural Community Transportation (RCT), Green Mountain Transit (GMT), Green Mountain Power (GMP), Discover Waterbury, Cross Vermont Trail Association, charging network providers, and regional transportation and recreation partners.

Stay Engaged

Ways residents can support community goals for Transportation in Waterbury

This section is intended to help Waterbury residents stay informed, provide feedback, and support improvements to transportation safety, accessibility, connectivity, and mobility throughout the community. To stay engaged, refer to the following resources and actions:



Walk, Bike, and Explore Locally

- Use and support Waterbury's sidewalks, trails, community paths, and multimodal transportation facilities.
- Explore local and regional trail systems, including the Community Path, Cross Vermont Trail, and connections to recreation areas and village centers.
- Report sidewalk, crossing, signage, trail, or roadway maintenance concerns to the Town.

Support Transportation Safety & Connectivity

- Participate in public meetings and planning efforts related to transportation safety, sidewalks, traffic calming, and roadway improvements.
- Share feedback on high-risk intersections, speeding concerns, accessibility barriers, and unsafe walking or biking conditions.
- Support projects that improve connections between neighborhoods, schools, recreation areas, downtown, and Waterbury Center.

Use and Promote Alternative Transportation Options

- Consider using public transit, ridesharing, carpooling, walking, and biking for local and regional trips when feasible.
- Learn about available transit routes and transportation assistance programs serving Waterbury.
- Encourage local employers and organizations to support transit use, carpooling, and active transportation options.

Support Community Pathways & Recreation Connectivity

- Participate in planning and volunteer opportunities related to the Community Pathways initiative and trail network improvements.
- Support efforts to improve trail signage, wayfinding, accessibility, and safe connections between recreation and community destinations.
- Contact the Town Planning office to explore provide an easement on your land to support connectivity of trails and/or paths.

Support Electric Vehicle Infrastructure & Clean Transportation

- Utilize public EV charging stations and support expansion of charging infrastructure throughout Waterbury.
- Consider transitioning to electric or lower-emission vehicles and transportation options when feasible.
- Stay informed about EV incentives, charging programs, and transportation-related energy initiatives.

Stay Connected

- [Town of Waterbury Website](#): central hub for announcements, project updates, and public meeting information.
- [Town of Waterbury Facebook Page](#): real-time updates and engagement opportunities.
- Town Newsletter & Text Alerts: sign up for email and SMS notifications. Text “Hi” to (802) 200-2644 any time you need to.
- Text “Waterbury” to 91896 to opt in to text alerts. TextMyGov
- Participate in public workshops, surveys, events, and programs related to arts, culture, history, and community identity.

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planWTB | Waterbury Planning Commission | 2026 [Insert final adoption date
once known.]

An aerial photograph of Waterbury, Vermont, taken during sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow over the town and the surrounding green hills. The town's buildings, including a prominent white church with a steeple, are visible in the valley. A semi-transparent white box with the title "Municipal Services" is overlaid on the bottom half of the image.

Municipal Services

Introduction

Waterbury's municipal government plays a central role in delivering essential services, ensuring that residents' voices are heard in decision-making and guiding the community's future.

This chapter discusses municipal government, facilities, utilities, and services. The chapter highlights key changes and initiatives and presents a roadmap of aspirations, goals and strategies to

strengthen our municipal government's transparency, accountability, and resiliency.



From left to right: Rusty Parker Park in winter, an art fair in Waterbury, Stowe St Alley beautification groundbreaking, a bike rack in Waterbury.

Planning Context

Town Government & Utilities

Waterbury's Town government operates under the direction of the Selectboard with a Municipal Manager and Town Clerk as key administrative roles. Specific staff address the functions of Planning and Zoning, Finance, Property Taxes, Public Works, Human Resources, Public Safety, Recreation, Waterbury Historical Society, the Waterbury Public Library, and billing for the Edward Farrar Utility District (EFUD).

The Town volunteer boards and commissions offer a variety of services and strategic direction to the Town Select Board. Visit www.waterburyvt.com for more on each of these:

- Board of Civil Authority
- Board of Listers
- Cemetery Commission
- Conservation Commission
- Development Review Board
- Fire Department

- Housing Task Force
- Library Commission
- Natural Disaster Preparedness Committee
- Planning Commission
- Recreation Committee
- Tree Board

In 2017, Town and Village voters merged the Village into the Town of Waterbury. Voters also disbanded the Village police department. The merger has brought updates to local regulations, zoning, and community planning that ensure the Town's goals and policies are representative of all residents.

Taxation

In 2024, Waterbury received approval by the Vermont General Assembly to enact a Town Charter, clarifying the authority of the Municipal Manager and authorizing a Local Option Tax. A Town-wide property reappraisal is planned to be completed in 2026. This initiative will provide the Town with updated data around the housing stock and private properties to better inform housing, land use, and tax policies.

Edward Farrar Utility District (EFUD)

EFUD was formed July 1, 2018, following the merger and is managed under the leadership of five Commissioners and operates independently while sharing some resources with Town government. The EFUD provides water and wastewater services to the downtown area and some adjacent areas. See "Key Maps" section for more information.

Emergency Management & Public Safety

Following significant impacts from repeated flooding in previous years, the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan was updated from 2018 and adopted on August 19th, 2024. A Hazard Mitigation Planning

Team including representatives from the Selectboard, Planning Commission, flood resiliency committees and natural resource commissions, and a local Emergency Management Coordinator along with the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) assisted the Town with this Plan update. The Plan was approved by FEMA on December 4, 2024.

The Waterbury Fire Department operates from a Main Street Firehouse in the heart of downtown with 6 fire/rescue apparatus and a Maple Street Firehouse in Waterbury Center with 5 fire/rescue apparatus. The Waterbury Ambulance Service, Inc (WASI) is a non-profit organization serving primarily Waterbury, Duxbury and Moretown. In 2021, WASI was selected the Vermont Ambulance Service of the year. Since 2018, Waterbury has contracted with the Vermont State Police to provide two resident state troopers. Beginning July 2026, a County Sheriff will support state police services in Waterbury.

The Town also offers a text messaging service to provide updates to residents. [TextMyGov](#) is the Town's text messaging service to "Opt-In" to receive Town information such as hours, voting or paying a bill or relevant text alerts for important issues in the area or to report an issue on the go.

Additional Public Facilities

The Waterbury Public Library

The Library originated in the 1915 home of Civil War surgeon Dr. Henry Janes, who bequeathed his residence to the Town as a public library. Following the 2011 devastating downtown flooding, the Janes House was expanded, completing and creating a new library space and meeting rooms in 2015.

The Edward E. Steele Highway Maintenance Facility

Waterbury Public Works Department maintains the extensive network of Town paved and gravel roads, sidewalks, culverts, parks

grounds, cemetery grounds, and pool facilities.

Local Parks & Recreation Facilities

The Town's parks and recreation facilities host a variety of activities, including disc golf, soccer, softball/baseball, youth sports, and other athletic activities. Other activities including hiking, mountain biking, and water sports are available on state land within the Town of Waterbury.



L: Town garage. R: Train bridge crossing Route 100 in Waterbury.

What We Heard

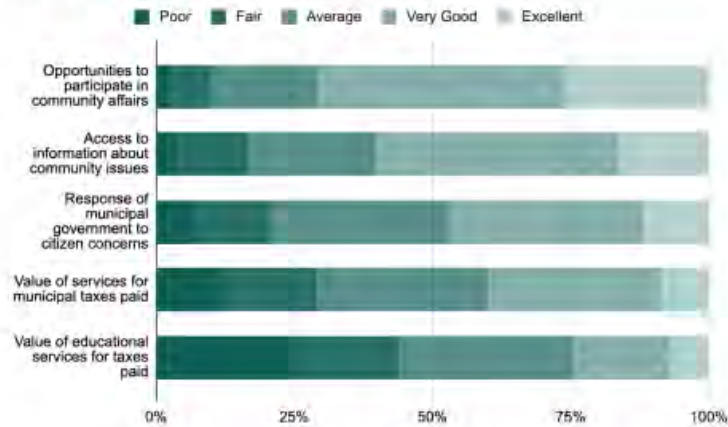
The Planning Commission conducted a Community Survey in late 2024 and held in-person and online Visioning Sessions in early 2025 to understand community priorities. The following themes emerged regarding municipal services, facilities, and local government.

Community Engagement

Waterbury residents are highly engaged and value opportunities to participate in local decision-making. Survey results indicate strong

participation and interest in community affairs, though there is a desire to broaden engagement—particularly among younger residents and historically under-represented groups.

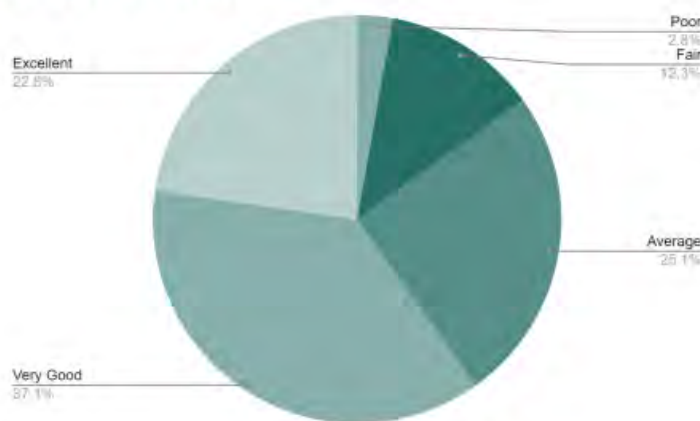
ACCESS TO & VALUE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT



Government Transparency and Communication

Residents expressed a need for improved transparency and communication from Town government. While access to information and participation opportunities are generally viewed positively, respondents identified opportunities to strengthen communication tools such as social media, newsletters, community calendars, and text alerts.

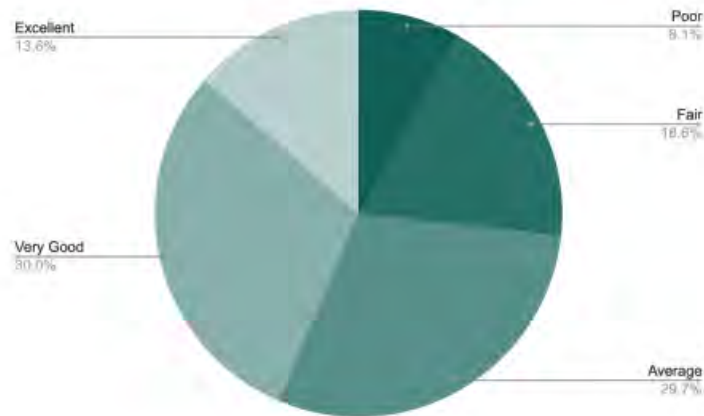
OVERALL TOWN RESPONSE TO EMERGENCIES



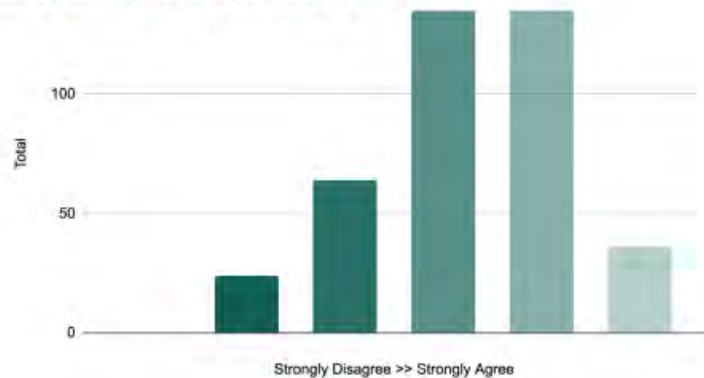
Public Safety

Residents generally feel that Waterbury is doing an adequate job addressing public safety and emergency response. Emergency response is viewed more positively than safety from crime, with some concern—particularly in the downtown area. Community members expressed interest in exploring options to strengthen policing, including increased state police presence or reconsideration of a local police model.

SAFETY FROM CRIME



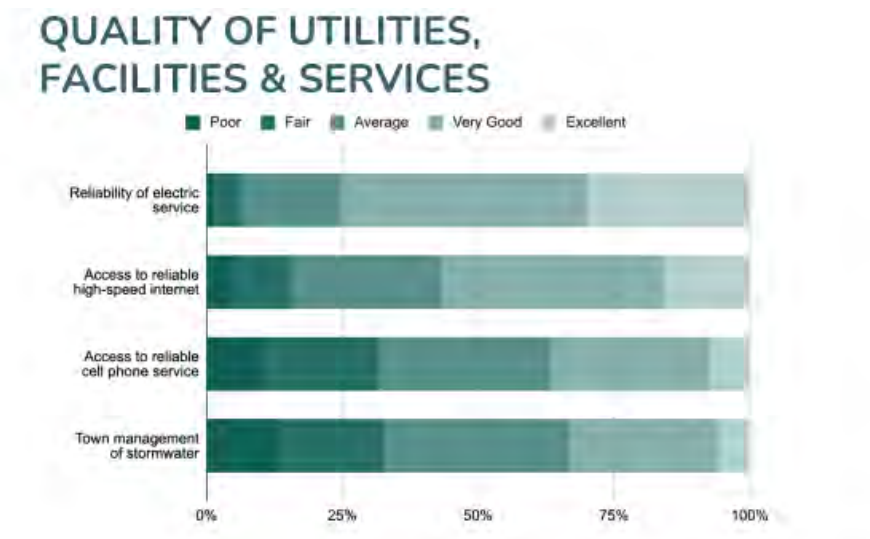
WATERBURY EFFECTIVELY MITIGATES RISKS TO PUBLIC SAFETY & HEALTH:



Utilities, Facilities, and Infrastructure

Residents report generally positive access to essential services such as electricity and high-speed internet. However, there are concerns about the reliability of cell service and stormwater

management. These areas are viewed as functioning adequately but with room for improvement.



Value of Services and Property Taxes

Residents indicated that the value of municipal services is generally acceptable, though there is concern about the overall cost of property taxes and their impact on affordability. Property taxes were identified as one of the most significant community challenges.

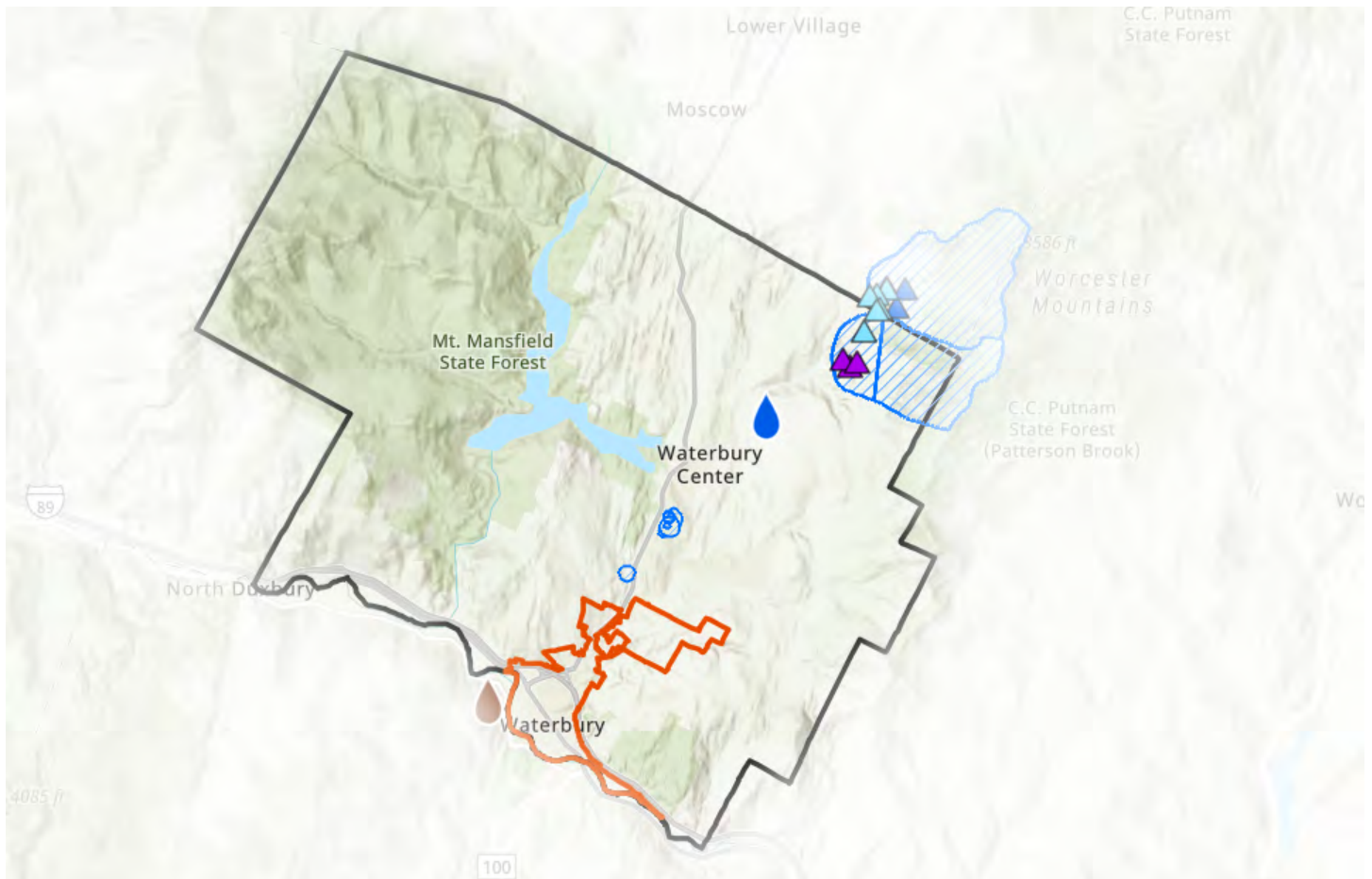
Community Assets

The Public Library stands out as a highly valued community asset, with residents consistently rating it as one of the highest-quality municipal services. More broadly, residents expressed appreciation for Waterbury's strong sense of community, natural resources, and recreational opportunities.

To read more about the results from Community Engagement from this plan, click the button below:

**Survey Results
Summary**

**Visioning Sessions
Summary**



VCGI | Esri | TomTom | Garmin | SafeGraph | GeoTechnologies, Inc | NASA ...

5 km Powered by Esri

Key Maps

Map 1: Water and Wastewater Service Areas Map

This map depicts existing service areas, treatment facilities, and system boundaries.

Water Service - Infrastructure

Waterbury's drinking water, provided by the Edward Farrar Utility District, relies on a ⊕ water treatment plant fed by a ⊕ series of wells and surface water intakes located at the foot of the Worchester mountain range. It serves approximately 6,000 residents in Waterbury as well as ⊕ parts of Duxbury and Moretown.

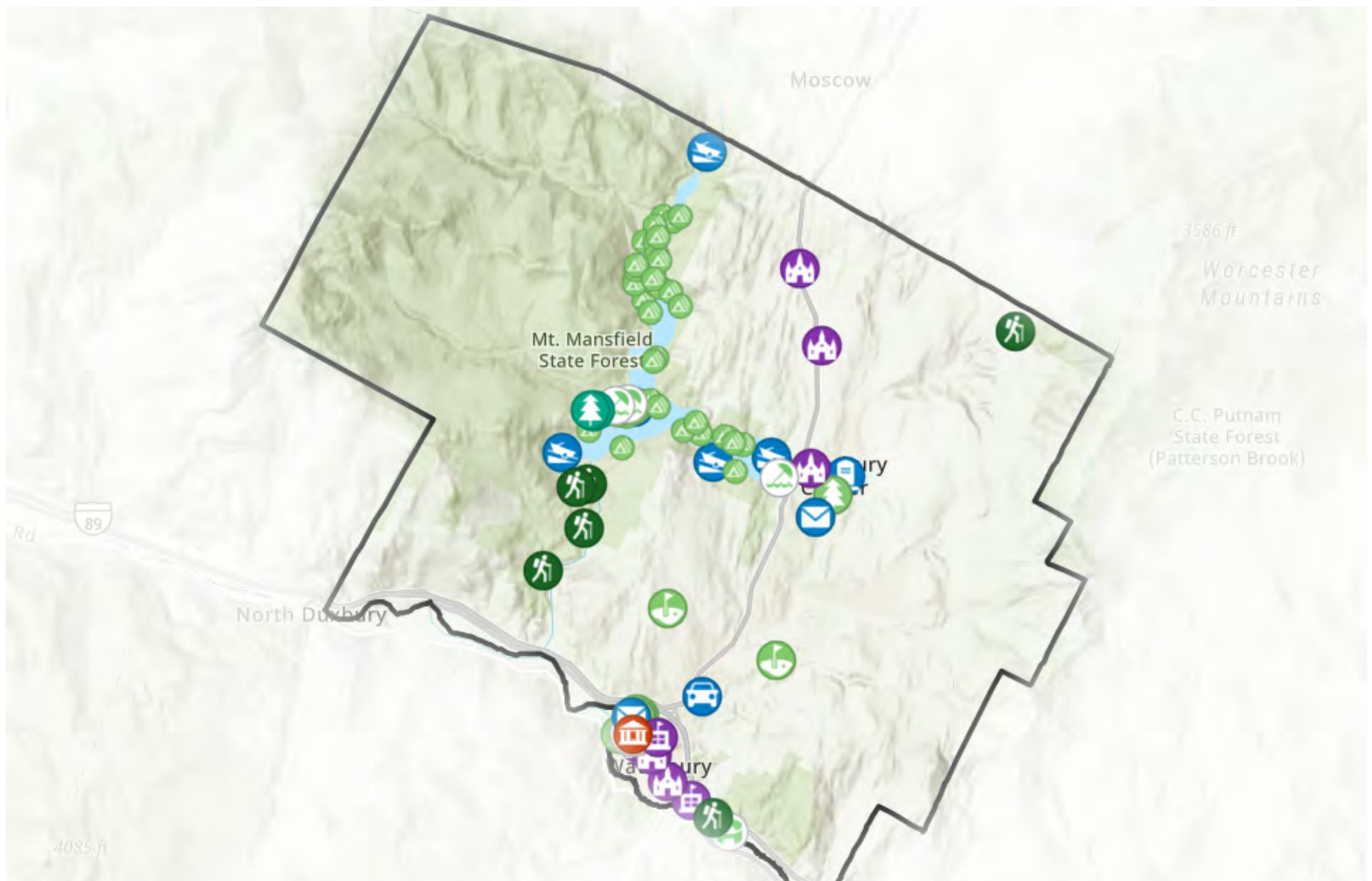
Wastewater Service - Infrastructure

Waterbury's wastewater service area is encompassed by the [⊕ Edward Farrar Utility District](#). The [⊕ wastewater treatment plant](#) is located on Route 2.

Stormwater Drainage - Infrastructure

Click [⊕ here to zoom to the EFUD area](#) to see Stormwater Infrastructure or [⊕ click here to zoom to the Center / Triangle area](#).

Data Sources: EFUD Area - Central VT Regional Planning Commission | Wells and Source Protection Areas - VT Agency of Natural Resources | Other Point Features - created by Waterbury Planning Commission



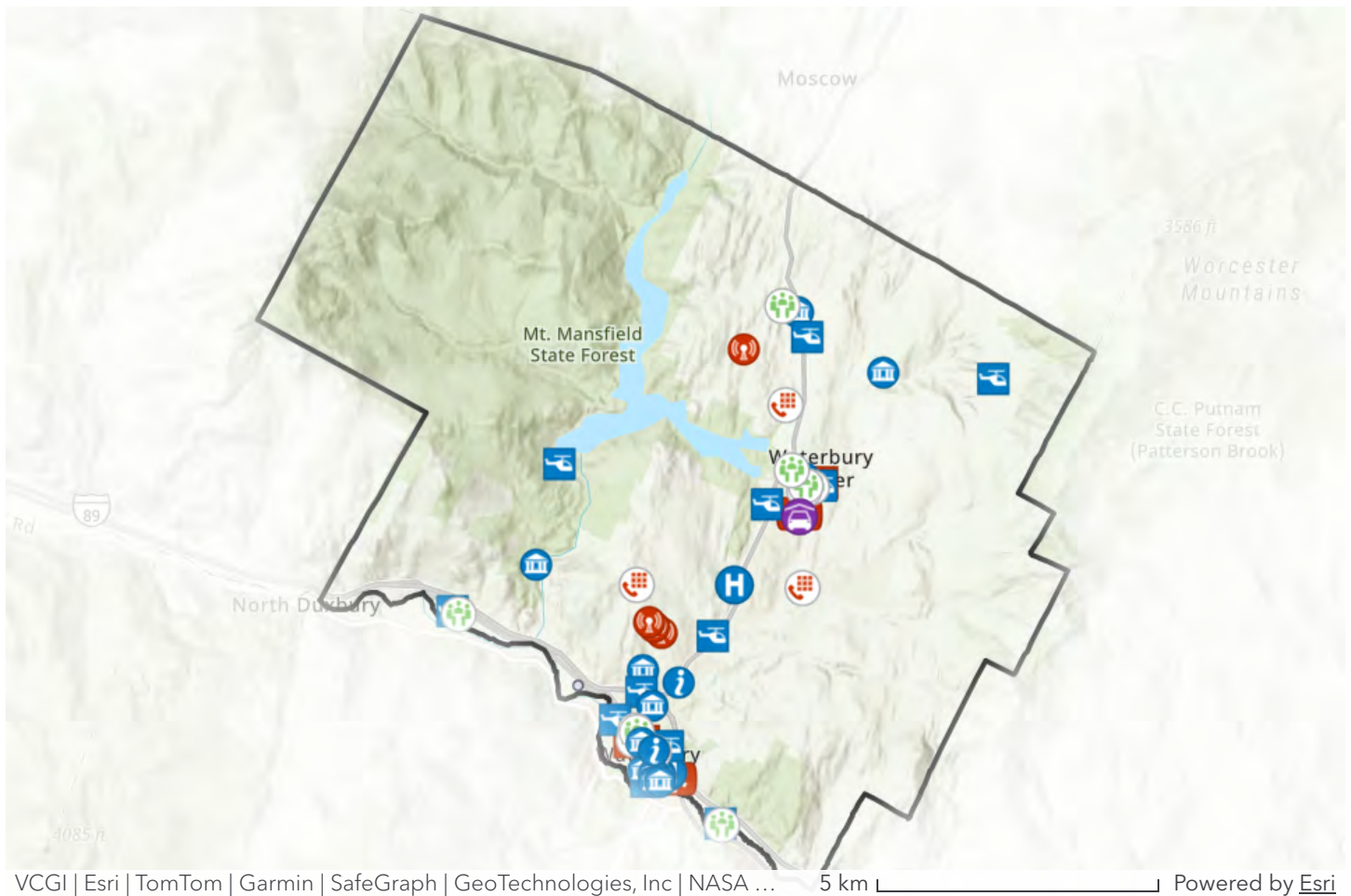
VCGL | Esri | TomTom | Garmin | SafeGraph | GeoTechnologies, Inc | NASA ... 5 km Powered by Esri

Map 2: Public Facilities and Utilities Map

This map depicts Town buildings, highway garage, police stations, firehouses, schools, libraries, and major utility infrastructure. It also depicts selected non-municipal facilities that provide important services to the community (note that not all locations have icons). Some facilities of note include:

- ⊕ Town Municipal Offices (including the Public Library)
- ⊕ Town Garage
- ⊕ Fire Department
- ⊕ Ambulance Garage
- ⊕ State Armory (Emergency Shelter)
- ⊕ Waterbury Family Medicine
- ⊕ Post Office - Downtown Area
- ⊕ Post Office - Waterbury Center Area
- ⊕ Lincoln Street Park and Ride

Data Source: E911 Point Data - VT Center for Geographic Information



Map 3: Emergency Resilience Facilities

This map depicts facilities that are important to the community during emergencies.

Use the Zoom and Scroll tools to explore the various locations. Some important sites for emergency resilience are:

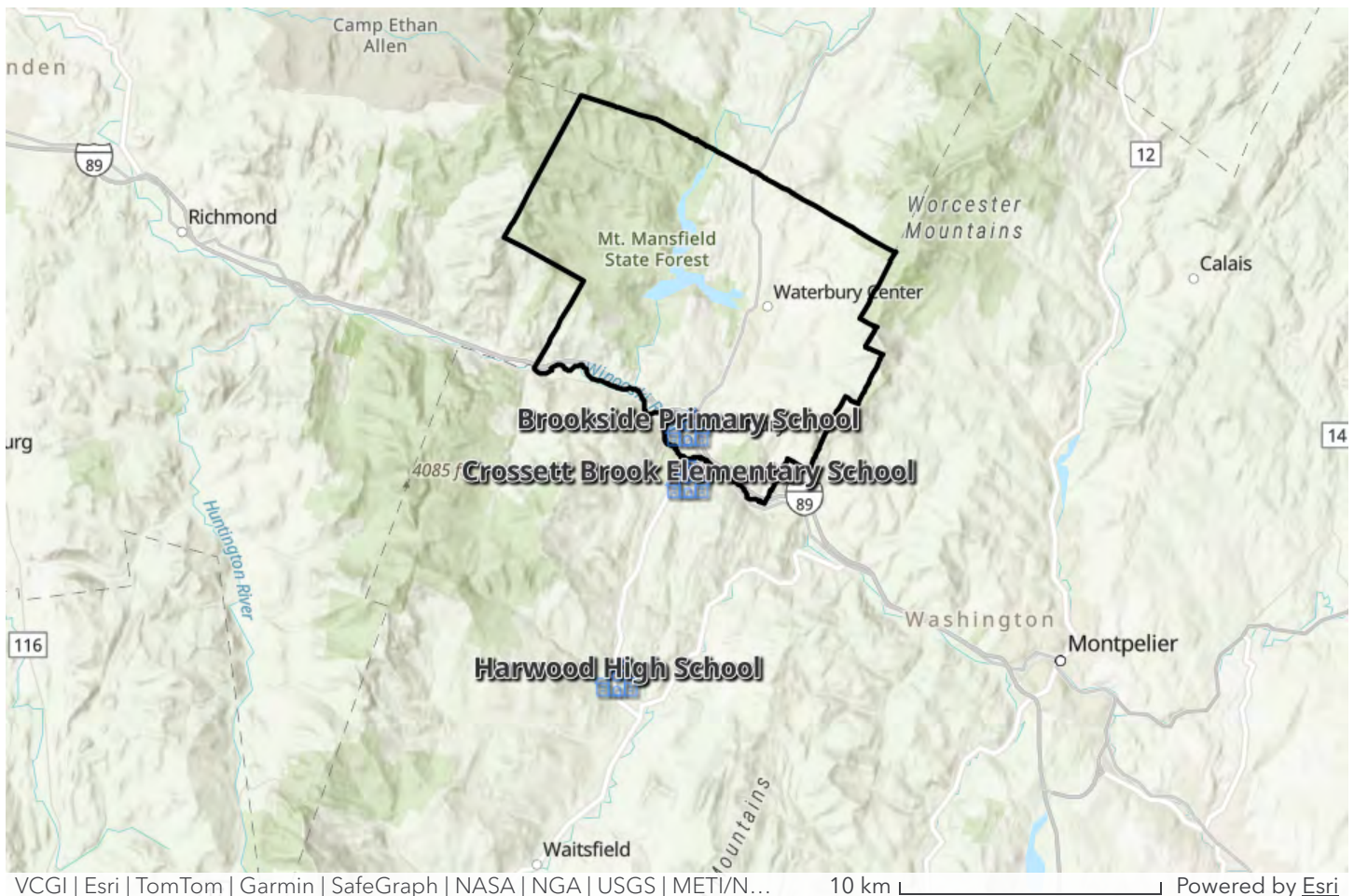
- ⊕ Town Offices (Primary Meeting Point in Emergencies)
- ⊕ Ambulance Garage
- ⊕ Fire Station - Downtown
- ⊕ Fire Station - Waterbury Center
- ⊕ Waterbury Family Medicine

Waterbury has several important features for emergency responders such as:

Helicopter Landing Areas (as derived from E911 Data) at:

- [⊕ Dac Rowe Park](#)
- [⊕ State Office Complex](#)
- [⊕ Pilgrim Park](#)
- [⊕ Hope Davey Park](#)
- [⊕ Ice Arena](#)
- [⊕ Little River Dam](#)
- [⊕ Farr's Field](#)
- [⊕ I-89](#)
- [⊕ Airstrip Drive](#)
- [⊕ Ben & Jerry's Complex](#)
- [⊕ Sweet Road](#)
- [⊕ Waterbury-Stowe Road](#)

Data Source: E911 Point Data - VT Center for Geographic Information



Map 4: Educational Facilities

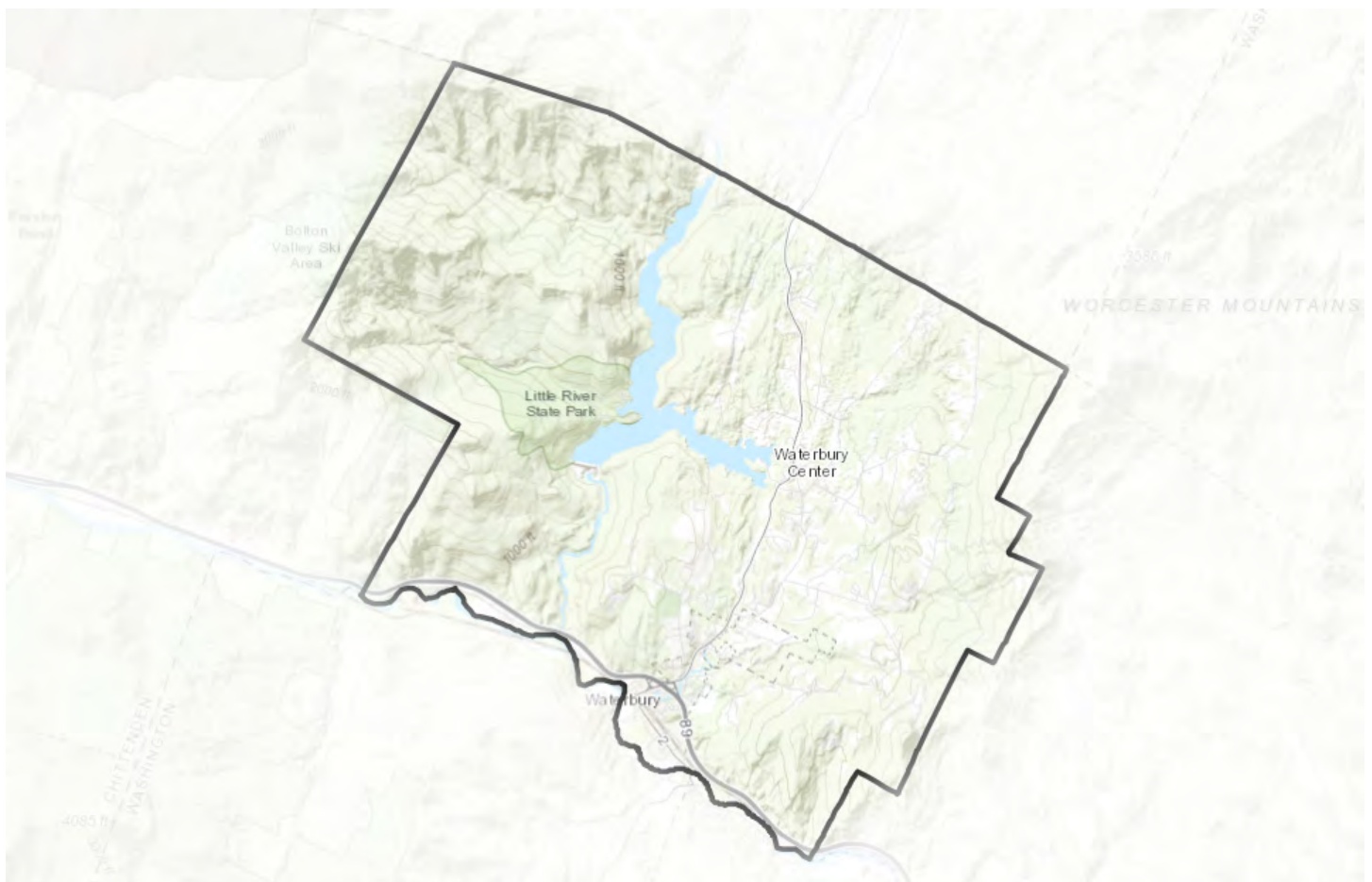
This map shows educational facilities which, while not owned or managed by the Town of Waterbury, are important for the area's community.

Brookside Primary School

Crossett Brook Primary School

Harwood High School

Data Source: E911 Point Data - VT Center for Geographic Information



VCGI | Esri Canada | Esri | HERE | Garmin | USGS | NGA | EPA | USDA | NPS...

5 km  Powered by Esri

Map 5: Electric Transmission

This map shows electric grid transmission infrastructure which, while not managed by the Town of Waterbury, is important for development in the area. Waterbury's network is made up of two primary systems:

3-Phase Transmission Lines

Distribution Power Lines

There are also  two major substations. Electricity in Waterbury is supplied by Green Mountain Power.

Data Source: Transmission Lines and Substations - Green Mountain Power
Data (provided by VT Center for Geographic Information)

Aspirations, Goals, & Strategies

Waterbury's future plans for Municipal Government, Utilities, & Facilities are captured in the following Aspirations, Goals, and Strategies:

Aspiration 1 - Effective, Transparent, and Collaborative Municipal Government

The Town meaningfully involves and listens to community leaders responsible for municipal government functions. Waterbury maintains a cohesive, long-term public safety strategy. The Town is committed to transparency and consistently provides opportunities for community members to engage on community issues and projects.

Aspiration 2 - Reliable and Sustainable Water and Wastewater Systems

Waterbury's water infrastructure serves the community's domestic, commercial, and fire protection needs for the next 100

years. Waterbury's wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal system meets community growth demands for the next 50 years while protecting public health and natural resources in full compliance with state and federal standards. Waterbury's water and wastewater systems are efficient, cost-effective, and reliable. Competent, well-trained, and dedicated staff manage and operate the water and wastewater systems, prioritizing customer service and public education. Water and wastewater utility charges are structured to provide adequate financial resources to support ongoing operations and responsibly manage debt obligations.



Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: Strengthen municipal accountability and performance by enhancing government transparency and communication.

- Strategy 1.1: Deploy technology that increases transparency and facilitates public participation in Town government. For example, promote usage of textmy.gov, social media platforms, and newsletters.
- Strategy 1.2: Continue to engage the public early in the budget process, including "Have Your Say Day."
- Strategy 1.3: Improve the quality of the Town website and social media presence to better publicize the work and accomplishments of local committees.
- Strategy 1.4: Improve the cohesion and usability of the Town calendar.
- Strategy 1.5: Improve the clarity and conciseness of tax bills for local businesses.

Tracking Progress on Goal #1

- Percentage of residents subscribed to Town newsletters, text alerts, or social media updates.

- Participation levels in public meetings, including “Have Your Say Day.”
- Website analytics (unique visitors, time spent, page visits).

Goal 2: Improve public safety services and planning and strengthen intergovernmental coordination.

- Strategy 2.1: Partner with Vermont State Police, the County Sheriff, and surrounding towns to build a model for improved police services in Waterbury.
- Strategy 2.2: Engage with potential policing partners, including the County Sheriff, Berlin Police, Stowe Police, and Montpelier Police.
- Strategy 2.3: Ensure adequate fire service capacity in response to current and projected community growth.

Tracking Progress on Goal #2

- Police service response times and coverage agreements with regional partners.
- Fire service staffing levels, volunteer participation, and response times.
- Completed model of policing/public safety plan.

Goal 3: Strengthen intergovernmental coordination with the Edward Farrar Utility District, the State of Vermont, CVRPC, neighboring municipalities, and school governance bodies to enhance planning and service delivery.

- Strategy 3.1: Improve coordination between Town and EFUD to ensure unified planning and operations.
- Strategy 3.2: Maintain solid partnerships and channels of communication with key governmental partners, including the State of Vermont, CVRPC, utility providers, and neighboring municipalities.

- Strategy 3.3: Support the work of school government and related civic engagement opportunities.

Tracking Progress on Goal #3

- Number of joint initiatives or planning efforts conducted with EFUD, CVRPC, the State of Vermont, and neighboring municipalities.
- Frequency of coordination meetings or joint planning activities between local, regional, state, and school district partners.

Goal 4: Maintain and improve municipal infrastructure resiliency by addressing roadway conditions, flood impacts, and emergency preparedness in alignment with the adopted Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

- Strategy 4.1: Complete an updated hydrology study encompassing the Winooski River and Thatcher Brook.
- Strategy 4.2: Work with the State of Vermont to clarify jurisdiction, funding, and access policies for water level alteration.

Tracking Progress on Goal #4

- Completion of hydrology and flood studies.
- Progress on hazard mitigation actions identified in the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan as well as those identified in the Flood Resilience chapter of this plan.

Goal 5: Maintain, expand, and operate Waterbury's water and wastewater systems and additional infrastructure in a financially sustainable and environmentally responsible manner.

- Strategy 5.1: Maintain accurate information regarding water and wastewater system use, available capacity, and projected needs to guide responsible expansion and system planning.

- Strategy 5.2: Review system use and capacity annually to assess future needs and expansion requirements.
- Strategy 5.3: Review utility rates annually and implement necessary adjustments
- Strategy 5.4: Set utility charges sufficient to support system operations and retire indebtedness.
- Strategy 5.5: Explore grant and low-interest loan opportunities when planning for expansion, major repairs, or improvements.
- Strategy 5.6: Provide education to customers on water-efficient fixtures and water-saving practices.
- Strategy 5.7: Consider opportunities for harnessing geothermal energy within Waterbury.
- Strategy 5.8: Explore the new or expanded use of renewable credits through Green Mountain Power or other applicable partners.

Tracking Progress on Goal #5

- Annual review of water and wastewater system capacity and infrastructure condition.
- Water loss rates and system efficiency metrics.
- Utility rate adjustments and financial performance of water and wastewater utilities.
- Grant or financing secured for utility improvements.
- Quantify area of water/wastewater expansion and number of new rate payers on the system.



Who Tracks Progress

The Town should progress on municipal services through coordination between the Selectboard, Town Manager, and relevant departments, with support from regional partners.

Suggested Responsible Entities

- **Town:** Selectboard, Town Manager, Public Works, Fire Department, Planning & Zoning, and the Planning Commission.
- **Non-Town:** Edward Farrar Utility District (EFUD), Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC), State of Vermont agencies, and regional public safety partners.

Stay Engaged

Ways residents can support community goals for Municipal Services in Waterbury



Attend Local Meetings

- Town Select Board Meetings (regularly scheduled, agendas posted online).

- Volunteer Commissions & Committees such as Planning Commission, Conservation Commission, and Housing Task Force.

Engage Through Communication Platforms

- [Town of Waterbury Website](#): central hub for announcements, project updates, and public meeting information.
- [Town of Waterbury Facebook Page](#): real-time updates and engagement opportunities.
- Town Newsletter & Text Alerts – sign up for email and SMS notifications. Text “**Hi**” to **(802) 200-2644** any time you need to.
- Text “**Waterbury**” to **91896** to opt in to text alerts through TextMyGov.



Participate in Community Feedback Opportunities

- “Have Your Say Day”: dedicated budget and Town project engagement event.
- Community Surveys: periodic opportunities to weigh in on priorities and services.
- Public Workshops & Open Houses: tied to infrastructure, recreation, or planning projects.

Engage with Regional & Civic Partners

- Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC): regional planning initiatives affecting Waterbury.
- Edward Farrar Utility District (EFUD): updates on water/sewer services.
- School District Boards: coordination on education and civic engagement.

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planWTB | Waterbury Planning Commission | 2026 [Insert final adoption date once known.]



Land Use

Introduction

Waterbury has a distinctive and deeply rooted sense of place.

Waterbury is comprised of compact, walkable village centers surrounded by low-density rural development, open countryside, working farms, and forested hills in which locals and visitors alike enjoy diverse recreation opportunities. That pattern—shaped over generations by geography, agriculture, and community values—is still visible today. How we manage land use over the next decade will determine not just Waterbury's evolution, but our ability to

balance the needs of our growing and changing community with our historical ways of using land.

This chapter describes how land is currently used across Waterbury, what's shaping development pressure, and the processes that guide where and how growth happens. The goals associated with this chapter are greatly influenced by the patterns, practices, and associated goals found in other chapters. In many ways, land use is the culmination and unification of the Plan's other chapters.

Given that, the overarching aim of land use is to direct and enable growth thoughtfully: channeling new homes, businesses, and investment toward the places that can best absorb it, while keeping floodplains safer, natural resources intact, and the rural landscape that defines Waterbury's identity recognizable for the generations ahead.

One of the most important tools that the Town has in service of guiding development are the Unified Development Bylaws that have been undergoing a process of change and modernization since 2018 when Waterbury Village was formally dissolved and absorbed into the Town. Waterbury adopted new Unified Development Bylaws for the so-called Phase 1 Area (areas of the Town between Interstate 89 and the Winooski River from the Middlesex border to the Bolton border). Subsequent to the development of this Plan, the Town will continue to develop Unified Development Bylaws for the remainder of Town in the so-called Phase 2 Area. Those Bylaws will be informed in many ways by this Plan.



Scenes of Waterbury (Left: Farmers Market, Center: Hiking in Little River State Park, Right: Vermont Artisan Coffee & Tea)

Planning Context

How Waterbury Is Laid Out

Waterbury covers nearly 50 square miles—about 32,000 acres—with roughly 80% forested or relatively undeveloped space, and approximately 6% developed. Most development is concentrated in two distinct village areas: Waterbury village to the south, and to a lesser extent, Colbyville and Mill Village, and Waterbury Center village along Route 100 to the north. These areas are a focus of economic, social and cultural activity hosting a wide array of retail, service, and larger businesses, civic institutions, cultural facilities, diverse residential housing, and the Town's wastewater and water systems.

Outside the villages, development thins out considerably—scattered residences along Town roads, active farm operations, forested hillsides, and large tracts of state land including Mt. Mansfield and C.C. Putnam State Forests, and Little River and Camel's Hump State Parks.

Waterbury's Downtown and Its Neighborhoods

Waterbury downtown is the Town's historic, commercial, residential and civic core. It sits at the confluence of the Winooski River and Thatcher Brook—a location that gave early European

settlers flat, productive land but is also vulnerable to repeated flooding. Today, more than 100 structures sit within the mapped 100-year floodplain and over 150 sit in the Agency of Natural Resources mapped River Corridor, a reality that shapes everything from building permits to insurance costs to long-term planning decisions.

The historic downtown, centered at Main and Stowe Streets, includes a state-designated Downtown, Historic District, and a Waterbury Zoning Design Review Overlay District that informs new development. Beyond the core, the downtown area encompasses residential neighborhoods, industrial parks (Pilgrim and Grenier Industrial Parks), the reconstructed State Office Complex (rebuilt more flood resiliently after Tropical Storm Irene in 2011), parks and recreation fields, and the Colbyville area at the northern edge—a gateway district that has evolved into a more auto-oriented commercial area along Route 100.

Route 100 and Waterbury Center

The 5.6-mile Route 100 corridor connects Waterbury downtown to Stowe's Town line, passing through Waterbury Center along the way. It's one of the most visited stretches of road in central Vermont—a state-designated Green Mountain Byway recognized for its scenic, cultural, and ecological values.

Waterbury Center itself clusters around the historic triangular green at the intersection of Guptil Road, Maple Street, and Howard Avenue—a traditional New England village form that includes the Grange Hall Cultural Center, a post office, recreation fields, and the restored Green Mountain Seminary building, now home to affordable housing and MakerSphere, a nonprofit arts organization.

The Route 100 corridor is an area of Town that has seen growth in recent years and residents have expressed concern about how this growth is managed. The Unified Development Bylaws in the Phase

2 Area will seek to address these concerns as the Town looks to balance the various goals along this corridor.

Rural, Agricultural, and Forest Lands

Outside the downtown and village areas and the Route 100 corridor, Waterbury's landscape is predominantly rural and forested. Residential development has increased in these areas as Waterbury has grown. Managing this growth with respect to historic development patterns is of concern to the Town.

Waterbury's remaining active farmland is largely located in these rural areas as well. Sustaining agricultural uses requires regulatory tools and voluntary programs like conservation easements and Vermont's Current Use (Use Value Appraisal) taxation program, which helps keep productive land in agricultural or forestry use by reducing the tax burden on enrolled landowners. Further work needs to be done to identify other possible mechanisms to incentivize landowners to conserve their land voluntarily.

At the upper elevations development on forested ridgelines and mountain flanks are regulated by the Ridgeline, Hillside, and Steep Slope Overlay District, adopted in 2006. These areas include some of the Town's highest-priority wildlife habitat blocks and connectivity corridors, most notably the Shutesville Hill wildlife corridor near the Stowe Town line, where large mammals cross between the Worcester Range and Mt. Mansfield State Forest. This area has been under consideration as a wildlife corridor for years, a process which is ongoing.

Recreational Land Use & Public Access

Waterbury is known colloquially as the Recreation Crossroads of Vermont, situated between the Mad River Valley and Stowe and along the I-89 corridor. Recreational land uses range from Town-owned facilities such as Hope Davey Park, Anderson Field, the Community Path, the Ice Center Area, recreation fields, playgrounds, and the municipal pool, to extensive trail networks on

public lands including Perry Hill, the Little River State Park trail system, the Long Trail, Mount Mansfield State Forest, C.C. Putnam State Forest, and the Waterbury Reservoir. These assets provide opportunities for walking, hiking, biking, skiing, snowmobiling, boating, fishing, hunting, and organized sports.



Recreation demand has increased substantially in recent decades as Waterbury has become both a destination and a gateway to recreation throughout central Vermont. While recreation contributes to the local economy and quality of life, it also creates land use considerations related to parking, trail connectivity, infrastructure capacity, natural resource protection, public access, and neighborhood impacts. Future land use planning should continue to balance recreation access, conservation goals, and community needs.

Flood Risk and Land Use

Waterbury's experience with flooding—from the 1927 disaster to Tropical Storm Irene in 2011 to the repeated floods of 2023 and 2024—has made the relationship between land use and flood risk impossible to ignore. The locations most vulnerable to flooding tend to be the same places where development has historically concentrated: the flat, low-lying land along the Winooski River and its tributaries. Managing that tension thoughtfully is one of the central land use challenges of this planning period. More recently, e.g., the 2024 flood, roads outside of the low-lying areas have been compromised from overflowing streams clogging culverts with debris.

To manage development, the Town enacted Special Flood Hazard Regulations to require new development be more flood resilient through building elevation, flood storage creation, and minimizing flood flow restrictions created by buildings. Vermont's Agency of

Natural Resources developed River Corridor (the area in which a river will meander over time) model bylaws often overlap with or expand upon flood hazard areas and provide tools to help make development more resilient. The Town can consider adopting these bylaws to further help guide development.

Land Use Regulations

Waterbury guides development through a combination of local regulations, state regulations, and voluntary conservation programs. Together, these tools influence where development occurs, how it is designed, and how important natural, agricultural, and community resources are protected.

At the local level, the Town's Unified Development Bylaws establish zoning districts, permitted uses, dimensional standards, flood hazard requirements, design review standards, and special overlay districts. These include the Ridgeline, Hillside, and Steep Slope Overlay District, which helps protect sensitive high-elevation areas and scenic resources. The Planning Commission develops and recommends zoning regulations, while the Selectboard adopts them following public review. The Zoning Administrator and Development Review Board (DRB) administer and enforce these regulations through the permitting process.

Following the dissolution of Waterbury Village in 2018, the Town began development of a unified set of zoning regulations. Phase 1 of the Unified Development Bylaws was adopted in 2024 and applies generally to areas south of Interstate 89. Completion of the Phase 2 Bylaw update for the remainder of the Town is a major implementation priority of this Plan.

State regulations also play a significant role in shaping development. Act 250, Vermont's statewide land use review program, regulates certain development projects based on criteria related to natural resources, infrastructure, transportation, community services, and conformance with local and regional

plans. Additional state regulations affecting land use include flood hazard, river corridor, wetland, shoreland, wastewater, and transportation access requirements. Significant changes to Act 250 and related land use laws are currently underway through implementation of Act 181 and other statewide reforms.

Voluntary programs also influence land use patterns. Vermont's Use Value Appraisal (Current Use) Program helps maintain agricultural and forest lands by reducing property taxes on qualifying lands that remain in productive use. Conservation easements and other land protection tools similarly help preserve working lands, natural resources, and scenic landscapes.

Waterbury will continue to monitor and participate in implementation of evolving state land use legislation, including Act 181 and future Act 250 reforms, and will update local regulations as necessary.

What We Heard

The Planning Commission conducted a Community Survey digitally and distributed throughout Town in late 2024 to gather facts and understand trends within the community and help guide informed decisions throughout this planning process. In early 2025, in-person and online Visioning Sessions were held to hear what elements and aspects should be maintained, evolve and/or transform within the community. Below is what we heard from you regarding Land Use in Waterbury.

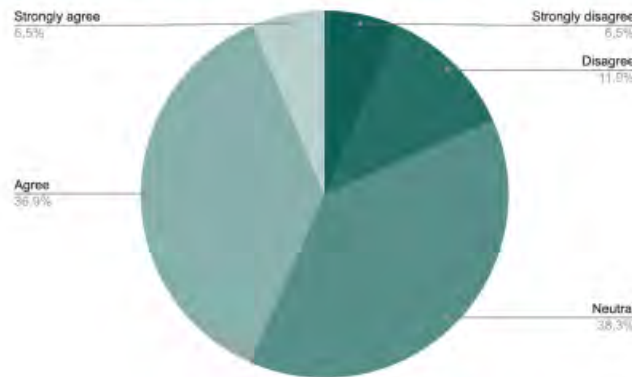
Waterbury's Rural Character and Village Pattern are Highly Valued

Residents consistently identified Waterbury's scenic beauty, rural character, and sense of community as some of the community's greatest strengths. Feedback emphasized the importance of maintaining Waterbury's traditional development pattern of

compact village centers surrounded by open land, forests, and working landscapes.

Residents repeatedly identified scenic beauty, rural character, and sense of community as some of the most valued qualities in Waterbury.

To what extent do you agree with the following:
Waterbury effectively plans development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside



Housing Affordability and Availability are Major Community Concerns

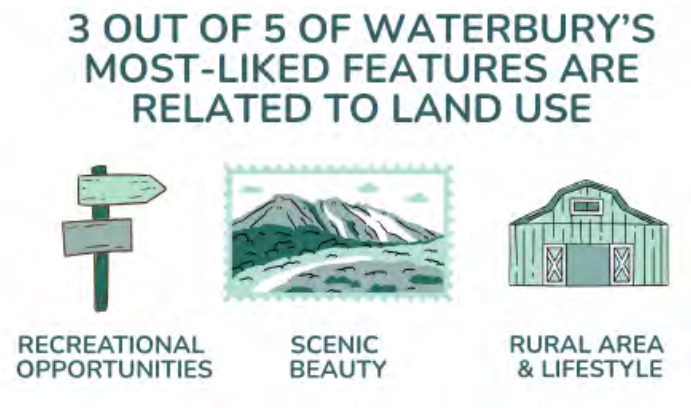
Residents repeatedly identified housing affordability and housing availability as among the most significant challenges facing Waterbury. Community members expressed concern about rising housing costs, limited housing options for workers and families, and the impacts these trends are having on the community's long-term sustainability.

Affordable and adequate housing ranked among the top challenges identified through the Community Survey.

Growth Should Occur in Appropriate Locations

Residents generally supported directing future growth toward existing village centers and areas served by infrastructure while protecting important natural resources, working lands, and flood-prone areas. Feedback reflected a desire for development patterns

that strengthen downtown Waterbury, Waterbury Center, and connections between existing developed areas.



Flood Resilience is an Important Land Use Consideration

Flooding, climate impacts, and stormwater management emerged as recurring concerns throughout the engagement process.

Residents recognized the importance of considering flood resilience and environmental conditions as part of future land use planning and development decisions.

Flood resilience and stormwater management were identified as significant long-term community concerns.

Conservation and Working Lands Matter to Residents

Residents expressed support for protecting forests, waterways, recreation areas, farmland, and other natural resource areas as Waterbury continues to grow and evolve. Community feedback emphasized the importance of balancing conservation, recreation, economic activity, future development, and property rights.

Protection of natural resources and working lands emerged repeatedly as community priorities throughout the planning

process.

Community Visioning Mapping

During Town Meeting in 2025 and at four Community Visioning Sessions, attendees were asked questions about how they felt about parts of Town and were told to place colored dots on a map to indicate those feelings. The point locations as well as the Response Density (heat maps showing the locations of the most responses) are shown here.



Place-Based Feedback

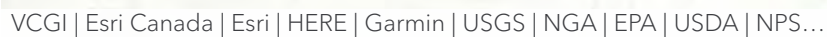
Click the buttons below to view the responses.

Places to Preserve / Protect

Favorite Place in Town

Survey Results Summary

Visioning Sessions Summary

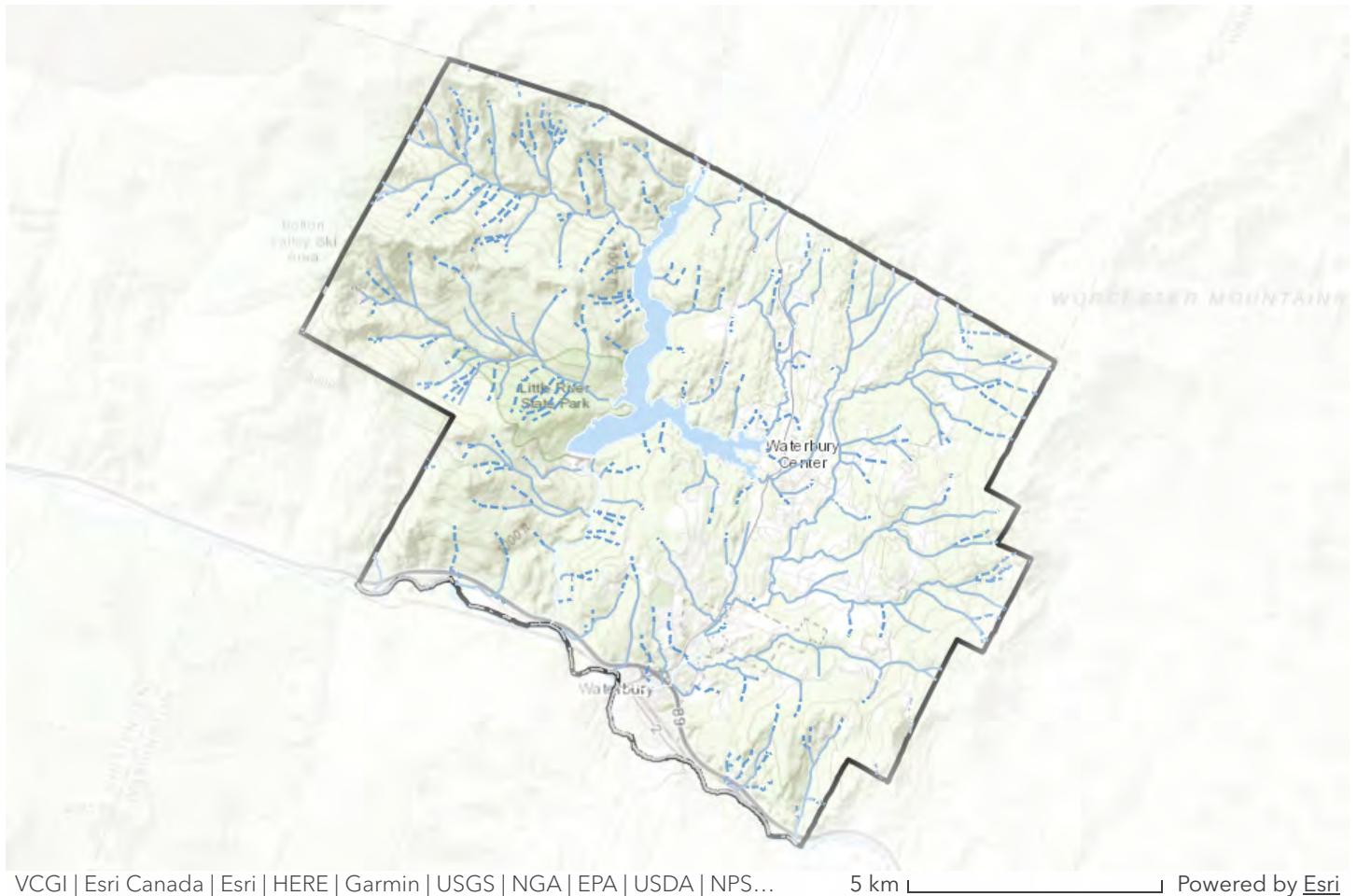


5 km Powered by

Map 1: Existing Landcover

This map depicts current land cover categories as mapped using remotely sensed data by the University of Vermont's Spatial Analysis Laboratory (UVM SAL).

Data Source: Landcover - University of Vermont - Spatial Analysis Lab (UVM-SAL)



Map 2: Zoning Districts and Overlays

This map depicts Zoning Districts, as well as Overlays and associated water and wastewater service areas.

Zoning Districts - Town-Wide

Zoning Districts (Phase 1 Area)

Design Review Overlay District

Special Flood Hazard Overlay

Ridgeline - Steep Slopes Overlay

State-Designated Downtown Area

Designated Village Center

Historic Districts

Edward Farrar Utility District

Data Source: Zoning Districts / Design Review Overlay District / Special Flood Hazard Overlay / Ridgeline - Steep Slopes Overlay / State Designated Downtown Area / Historic Districts / EFUD Area - Central VT Regional Planning Commission



Map 3: Ecologically Significant Areas (Vermont BioFinder Data)

This map depicts ecologically significant areas as outlined by the Vermont BioFinder mapping initiative.

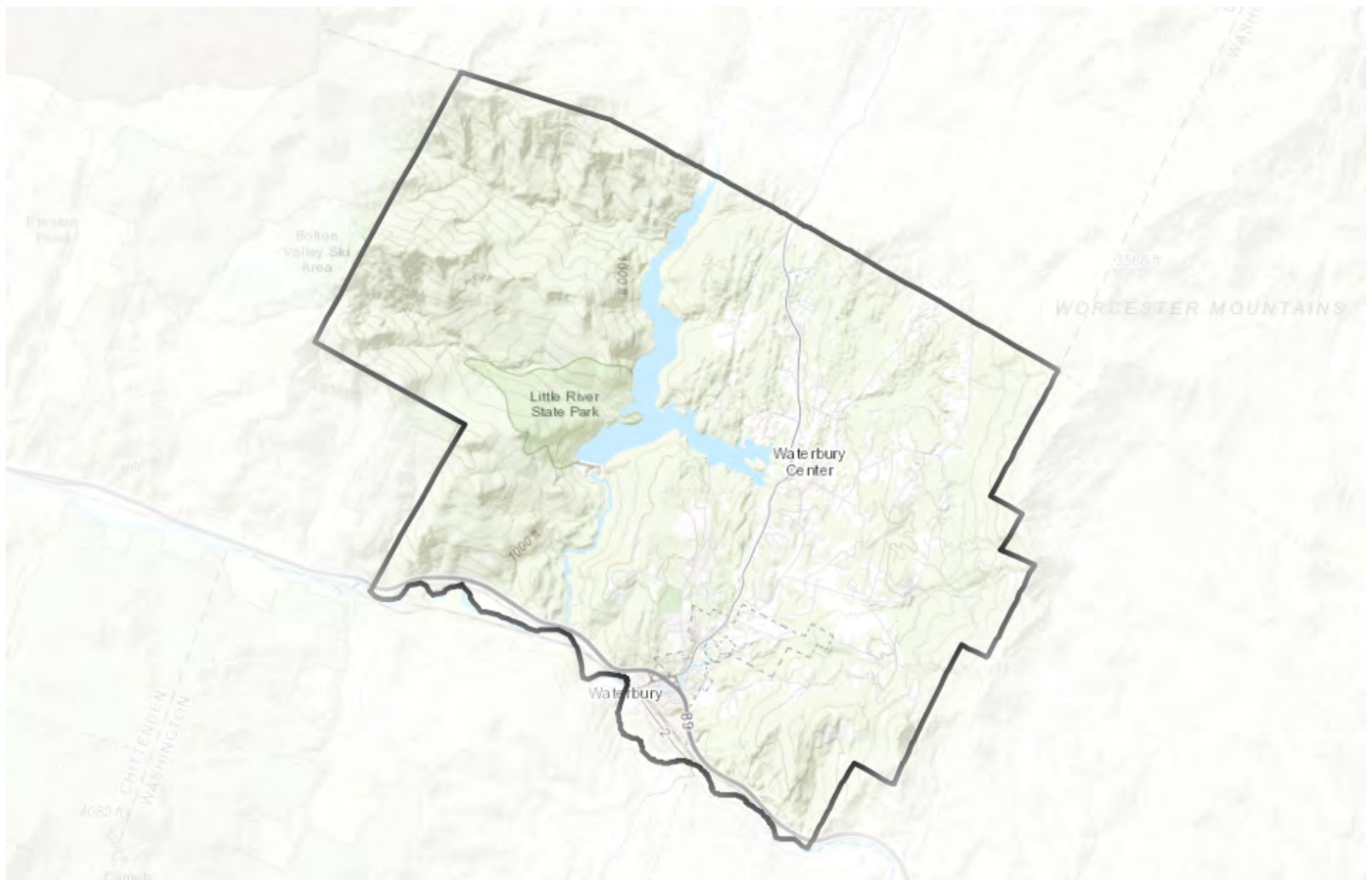
Forest Blocks

Surface Water & Riparian Habitat

Riparian Wildlife Connectivity Areas

Connectivity Block (Habitat Connectors)

Data Sources: All Layers - VT Agency of Natural Resources - BioFinder 4 Data Mapping



Map 4: Potential Growth Areas

This map depicts several layers that illustrate where possible growth areas—in particular for housing—could occur. Planning for growth must account for several variables, including the availability of infrastructure and the level of risk of development in a given area.

EFUD Service Area

[Click here to zoom to the EFUD Service Area](#)

Residential Zoning Districts

Housing Density (Existing)

'Risk' Areas

All Layers

Waterbury Center - Designated Village

[Click here to show zoning for the Designated Village.](#)

Data Sources: Zoning Districts and Flood Hazard Overlay - Central VT Planning Commision & Waterbury Planning Commission | EFUD Drinking Water and Sanitary Sewer Lines - Edward Farrar Utility District | Waterbury Designated Village - VT Center for Geographic Information | River Corridors - VT Agency of Natural Resources

Aspirations, Goals, & Strategies

Waterbury's future plans for Land Use are captured in the following Aspirations, Goals, and Strategies:

Aspiration 1 - A Complementary, Balanced Land Use Pattern

The Town of Waterbury will be a place where complementary land use patterns, including residential, mixed-use, and commercial development, can be accommodated in a way that respects traditional uses and new needs.

Aspiration 2 - Compact Growth that Prioritizes Walkability and Protects Natural Resources and Rural Character

The Town of Waterbury will conserve important working lands, open spaces, natural landscapes, recreational opportunities, and wildlife corridors, and concentrate future development and housing within and adjacent to walkable, vibrant growth centers with access to public infrastructure service in a flood-resilient manner.



Goal 1: Direct growth to compact centers and areas with access to water and/or wastewater infrastructure to avoid sprawl and maintain Waterbury's traditional settlement pattern.

- Strategy 1.1: Complete an update to the zoning bylaws that aligns with Town Plan goals, including managing sprawl along Route 100.
- Strategy 1.2: Concentrate infill development in growth centers and specific nodes along Route 100 through access management standards and walkability standards to limit sprawl, traffic, and related impacts.
- Strategy 1.3: Evaluate the use of tax-increment financing (TIF) or the Community Housing and Infrastructure Program (CHIP) financing to support new development where appropriate.

- Strategy 1.4: Actively participate in the Act 181 implementation process, including identifying potential Tier 1A and/or Tier 1B designation areas where Act 250 review of housing development projects will be limited. Engage with the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission and the Vermont Land Use Review Board as part of this process.

Tracking Progress on Goal #1

- Adoption and implementation of updated Unified Development Bylaws.
- Number of new housing, mixed-use, or commercial projects located within designated growth centers or infrastructure-served areas, categorized by their financing mechanism (i.e., TIF, CHIP, or any other financing tools).
- Number of infill development projects completed within growth areas.
- Participation in Act 181 implementation and designation of Tier 1A and/or Tier 1B areas.

Goal 2: Support working lands, recreational access, and natural resource areas.

- Strategy 2.1: Support the health of Waterbury's natural ecosystems while maintaining and increasing public access and recreational opportunities.
- Strategy 2.2: Ensure zoning bylaws support the viability of working lands, including agricultural resources and responsible forestry.
- Strategy 2.3: Establish a working group to recommend to the Planning Commission and Select Board programs and opportunities that incentivize protection of important natural resource areas and/or designated scenic resources, including but not limited to the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor.
- Strategy 2.4: Finalize a management plan for the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor.

Tracking Progress on Goal #2

- Acres of agricultural land, forestland, or natural resource areas protected through conservation, Current Use enrollment, or related programs.
- Completion and implementation of a management plan for the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor.
- Number of recreation access, trail, or conservation projects completed.
- Participation in working groups or initiatives focused on natural resource protection and scenic resource conservation.
- Updates to zoning bylaws supporting working lands and responsible forestry practices.
- Growth in the number of visitors to the area for recreational activities such as biking, skiing, frisbee golf, and water sports.

Goal 3: Reduce long-term flood risk through land use practices and regulations.

- Strategy 3.1: Evaluate adoption of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources model River Corridor zoning bylaws to promote responsible future development.
- Strategy 3.2: Ensure Town Unified Development Bylaws comply with state flood hazard area and wetland regulations.
- Strategy 3.3: Promote resiliency in floodplains and river corridors in Town-owned areas and work with landowners to identify additional opportunities for conservation and protection measures in flood-prone areas.

Tracking Progress on Goal #3

- Adoption and implementation of River Corridor or flood resilience bylaws and regulations.
- Number of development projects incorporating flood resilience or flood-conscious site design.

- Acres of floodplain or river corridor restored, protected, or conserved.
- Progress on flood resilience and conservation projects in Town-owned flood-prone areas.
- Coordination with State and regional partners regarding floodplain and wetland compliance.

Goal 4: Promote the growth of the municipal grand list through thoughtful land use planning and regulation.

- Strategy 4.1: Use zoning bylaws, in alignment with the Town Plan, to support a range of current and future land uses that contribute to Waterbury's economic vibrancy, including housing, mixed-use development, light industry, and appropriate industrial businesses.

Tracking Progress on Goal #4

- Growth in the municipal grand list associated with housing, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use development.
- Number and diversity of development projects approved under updated zoning bylaws.
- Commercial and industrial vacancy trends within village centers and designated growth areas.
- Amount of private investment leveraged through public infrastructure or planning initiatives.



Who Tracks Progress

The Town should track progress on land use through coordination between the Planning Commission, Development Review Board, and Town staff, with support from regional and state planning partners.

Suggested Responsible Entities

- **Town:** Planning Commission, Development Review Board, Conservation Commission, Recreation Department, Selectboard, and Town staff.
- **Non-Town:** Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC), Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR), Vermont Land Use Review Board, Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB), and regional conservation and economic development partners.

Stay Engaged

Ways residents can support community goals for Land Use in Waterbury



Participate in Local Planning & Development Discussions

- Attend Planning Commission, Development Review Board, and Selectboard meetings related to land use, development, housing, conservation, and infrastructure planning.
- Participate in public workshops, surveys, and community discussions regarding zoning updates, village planning, and future growth areas.
- Stay informed about and comment on ongoing implementation of the Unified Development Bylaws and regional and state land use policy.

Support Compact Growth & Village Vitality

- Support housing, mixed-use development, and economic activity within existing village centers and infrastructure-served areas.
- Encourage development patterns that strengthen walkability, connectivity, and efficient use of infrastructure.
- Participate in discussions regarding growth along Route 100, Waterbury Center, downtown, and other growth areas.

Protect Working Lands & Natural Resources

- Learn about programs such as Vermont's Use Value Appraisal (Current Use) Program and conservation easements available to landowners.
- Support local farms, forestry operations, and land conservation initiatives that maintain Waterbury's rural landscape and economy.
- Participate in stewardship, conservation, and recreation planning efforts related to forests, waterways, floodplains, and wildlife habitat.
- Participate in discussions regarding the protection of natural resources and creation of programs to incentivize conservation.



Support Flood Resilience & Responsible Development

- Stay informed about flood resilience projects, river corridor planning, and land use policies that reduce long-term flood risk.
- Support development approaches that balance growth, resilience, natural resource protection, and community character.
- Participate in discussions related to climate resilience, stormwater management, and conservation planning.

Stay Connected

- Town of Waterbury Website: central hub for announcements, project updates, and public meeting information.
- Town of Waterbury Facebook Page – real-time updates and engagement opportunities.
- Town Newsletter & Text Alerts – sign up for email and SMS notifications. Text “Hi” to (802) 200-2644 any time you need to.

- Text “Waterbury” to 91896 to opt in to text alerts. TextMyGov
- Participate in public workshops, surveys, and planning efforts related to land use, growth, conservation, and community development.

Created for the Town of Waterbury by SE Group.

planWTB | Waterbury Planning Commission | 2026 [Insert final adoption date once known.]