

# **Cabot Town Plan**

**Adopted by the Cabot Selectboard on June 4,2003**

**Cabot Planning Commission  
Cabot, Vermont**

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## **A Vision of Cabot in the Future**

In the future, Cabot will continue to be a small rural community with a working landscape - farms and forests dominating the landscape and fostering a sense of open space. A vibrant and attractive village center will underlie the social fabric of the town, encompassing a healthy business district, residential areas, school, municipal buildings, places of worship, elderly housing, and recreational and social facilities. The village will be safe, quiet, and accessible to pedestrians.

Our population will continue in its strong traditions of self-employment, entrepreneurship, and support of local businesses. The Cabot Creamery will continue to be a major employer and tourist attraction, playing an important role in the local economy. Our municipal services and facilities will be a source of pride to those who live and work in town.

A friendly, caring and involved community will remain our strongest asset. Volunteerism in government and community organizations will be strong as citizens of all ages work together to solve our problems and meet our needs. Participation and healthy debate on important community issues will occur and be encouraged.

The young and the elderly will find reason to stay or return to Cabot - an indication that we are living our vision.

We will hold an understanding and appreciation of our past and retain some of our traditions as a town and a community as we strive to live a little more deliberately than the world around us.

# INTRODUCTION

A town plan identifies goals and strategies for maintaining, improving, or developing a livable community - in terms of growth and economic development, cultural, natural and historic resources, housing, facilities and services, transportation, and land use. As time passes, change and growth are inevitable. This five-year plan will help to guide change in Cabot in a way that helps the community realize its vision and desired future. The plan also identifies what we want to keep and preserve - such as natural and historic resources, and the very character of the town.

The policies and goals of the plan dealing with growth, development, and land use are the basis for updating the town's zoning regulations and the standards for reviewing projects before the Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Adjustment, District Environmental Commission, and Environmental Board. An approved town plan enables the citizens of Cabot to have a legal say over both private and state land use decisions in the town. State statutes grant the plan great weight in determining whether development projects subject to Act 250 are approved.

Through public meetings, community surveys, and planning forums, Cabot residents have expressed a vision for the town. We hope the Planning Commission has captured this vision of where we want to go - and that the policies, goals, and actions in the plan help us to get there.

This plan discusses who we are, what our resources and challenges are, and what our aspirations for the community of Cabot are. The aspirations are expressed as **Goals** and will be found throughout the document. Strategies that might help us reach our goals are **Plans of Action**. These will also be found throughout the document and are summarized in Appendix C. **General Policy and Regulatory Guidance** are those growth and development issues and concerns that should be addressed in zoning regulations and potentially in projects reviewed by the Board of Adjustment or the District Environmental Commission.

## Compatibility Statement

According to Vermont statute, a municipal plan is considered to be "compatible" with the plans of its neighboring towns and the region if it "will not significantly reduce the desired effect" of those plans. By virtue of its geography and planning goals, Cabot's potential for inter-municipal land use conflicts is limited. The basic focus of this plan (to preserve the rural-agricultural character of the town while accommodating reasonable growth and development), and current development patterns do not appear to threaten or obstruct the planning goals of any neighboring community or of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC).

Draft copies of this plan were mailed to all neighboring towns, the CVRPC, and the Department of Housing and Community Affairs for review and comment. No objections were raised. Plans of all neighboring towns have been reviewed by the Planning Commission. Representatives of the Danville Planning Commission attended the Planning Commission's public hearing and our respective plans were discussed. The Cabot Planning Commission has participated with Peacham and other Northeast Kingdom towns in informal planning forums. Two such forums were held. The Town of Cabot therefore concludes that this plan is compatible with the plans of adjoining communities and with the CVRPC plan.

## A Brief History

The Town of Cabot was chartered by the Independent State of Vermont to a group of 66 proprietors, August 17, 1781. The surveying and lotting of the town was completed in 1786 by Mr. Cabot, of Connecticut, and James Whitelaw. The name Cabot, however, is thought to come not in honor of this first survey, but from Lyman Hitchcock, one of the proprietors, who was engaged to a Miss Cabot, also of Connecticut, a descendant of Sebastian Cabot.

In 1779, the Bayley Hazen military road was constructed through the northeastern part of Cabot. The early settlements in town were made along this route, on Cabot Plains. A tavern, store, and various other businesses also located on the Plains, and most of the town business was conducted there. The 1790 census showed a population of 122.

In 1796, the seat of government was moved to the geographic center of town to better accommodate settlers in the southern section. This "Centre," as it was called, was a promising village with a church, school, store, a number of houses, livestock pound, a four-acre common, and cemetery. By 1800, the town population had grown to 349.

Commerce at the earliest settlements was limited, with production barely exceeding subsistence levels. Surplus farm production did not become a factor in Cabot's economy until after 1800. Potato whiskey was among the early cash crops. The first distillery was built on the Plain in 1809. So many potatoes were planted in anticipation of the success of this new enterprise that it became necessary to build another distillery in 1810 in order to process the entire crop. The smuggling of whiskey to British soldiers in Canada during the War of 1812 proved so lucrative that 12 distilleries were operating concurrently in the town of Cabot.

Of course other crops and stock were also being raised, including hogs, wheat, flax, hay, and apple cider. A sawmill was constructed about 1789 on the river in what is now Cabot Village, and shortly thereafter a gristmill. By 1803, there were at least three mills in Lower Cabot: sawmill, gristmill, and fulling mill.

Gradually, other businesses found it advantageous to locate in proximity to these mills, and by 1820, very little commercial activity remained on the Plain. Soon thereafter, about 1825, the seat of government moved to the present village, and by 1850, almost nothing remained of the promising developments on the Plain and at the Centre.

By 1830, the population of Cabot reached 1300. This rapid growth in the first half-century resulted in a heavy demand for lumber for the construction of houses and outbuildings, and many small mills were built at various watered sites around town. There were lumber mills in Cabot Village, Lower Cabot Village, Hookerville, East Cabot, West Hill Pond, Southwest Hill (now Ducharme Hill), Petersville (now under the reservoir), West Danville, Marshfield Village, and probably others which have been forgotten.

Pasture land and crop land was opening up during this period as the forests were gradually cut off. Sheep were raised on the newly cleared land; so many that a large woolen mill was built in Lower Cabot about 1825 and in 1833 a wool carding mill was built in the upper village which continued in business for 44 years. A tannery was built in 1825, and in 1826 a blacksmith shop and foundry were constructed.

By 1840 a starch factory and several more mills had been constructed, and the village had two churches, a tavern, store, school, common, and cemetery. The lower village, too, was a well established commercial center at that time. Subsistence farming had given way to an economy based on the export of agricultural products, particularly wool, cattle, and sheep (both for meat and breeding stock).

Between about 1850 and 1880 a gradual change occurred in the nature of farming in Cabot. First, the demand for wool declined, perhaps as a result of competition from the cotton industry. Secondly, improvements in roads, coupled with the construction of railroads, opened up new markets for dairy products (particularly butter, previously considered too perishable to travel any distance), and lumber. Butter production increased rapidly during this period, to nearly 160,000 pounds in 1880, and cows began to outnumber sheep on most Cabot farms.

Apples and maple sugar were important crops in the last quarter of the 19th century, and since that time potatoes, poultry, swine, sheep, and horses have been commercially raised in town. However, the backbone of Cabot's economy for the past 120 years has been dairy farming, and to a lesser extent, lumbering.

Inevitably, the railroads which at first opened new markets to Cabot farmers later brought competition from farms in New York, Pennsylvania, and the Midwest. The increasing dependence of Cabot farmers on agricultural exports was accompanied by a long and steady decline in the town's population which began about 1840 and continued well into this century. The 1970 census found only 663 persons living in town, about half of the current number. The opportunities for work and the promise of success grew less and less over the years as the forest was gradually reduced and the once fertile soils were exhausted by 19th century farming methods. Many left Cabot over the years for the opportunities opening up in the West, or, later, in the industrial centers of the Northeast.

In 1860 there were 213 farms in Cabot covering some 25,000 acres. By 1992 there were only 330 farms in all of

Washington county covering about 58,000 acres. Today, there are probably no more than 20 working farms in the Town of Cabot, including a dozen dairy farms. This represents an astounding shift away from agriculture as a livelihood over the past century. Land use in town has changed significantly as a result. Much of the land once cleared for pasture or tillage has since returned to forest. Much of the land remaining in agriculture is used more "efficiently" now, with greater inputs of soil amendments resulting in greater crop yields.

Interestingly, though lumbering has remained an important economic activity in Cabot throughout this century, there are no longer any operational sawmills in town (with the exception of a few portable bandsaw mills). Water power, however, is still used at Joe's Pond and at Molly's Falls Reservoir, where Green Mountain Power Corporation owns electrical generating plants. These reservoirs bring significant tax revenue to the town, and afford important recreational opportunities.

The 2000 census showed that Cabot had the highest percentage of rural farm population in Washington County. It also found that of the 643 Cabot residents who were employed, thirty-one percent worked in town, about 60 of them on farms or lumbering. A probable factor in the persistence of farming as a livelihood in Cabot was the formation of the Cabot Farmers Cooperative Creamery in 1919. The success of this enterprise, due in large part to the hiring of progressive managers over the years, has provided a convenient outlet for Cabot dairy farms and a place of employment for many other residents. The Creamery has also been a source of supplemental income to the farmers of Cabot, through equity payments made throughout the years to its members.

Though Cabot remains strongly rural-agricultural, it has experienced in recent years a surge in population, including many families whose breadwinners commute to work in surrounding towns. Some of the new arrivals chose to live in Cabot because of its rural-agricultural character, some perhaps to enroll their children in a small and intimate school, and some to work at the school or creamery. Most of the recent development in town has been residential, with very little commercial, industrial, or agricultural expansion. If this trend continues, the town's primary land use may soon become residential.

This brief history is instructive to our planning efforts in a number of ways. In envisioning the future of the residents of the 36 square miles that make up the Town of Cabot, we need to assess the elements which make us a community. Cabot's history indicates that until about 1970, the population was limited largely by the capacity of the town's natural resources to support it. Before 1970, most persons in town were engaged in the common work of producing, processing, and selling agricultural products, or in providing related services. Limited means and opportunity for travel dictated that people expend their energies on community activities - local churches, local schools, and local social events. In other words, the community was defined by its place, by the opportunities available within that place, and by its sense of "stewardship of place."

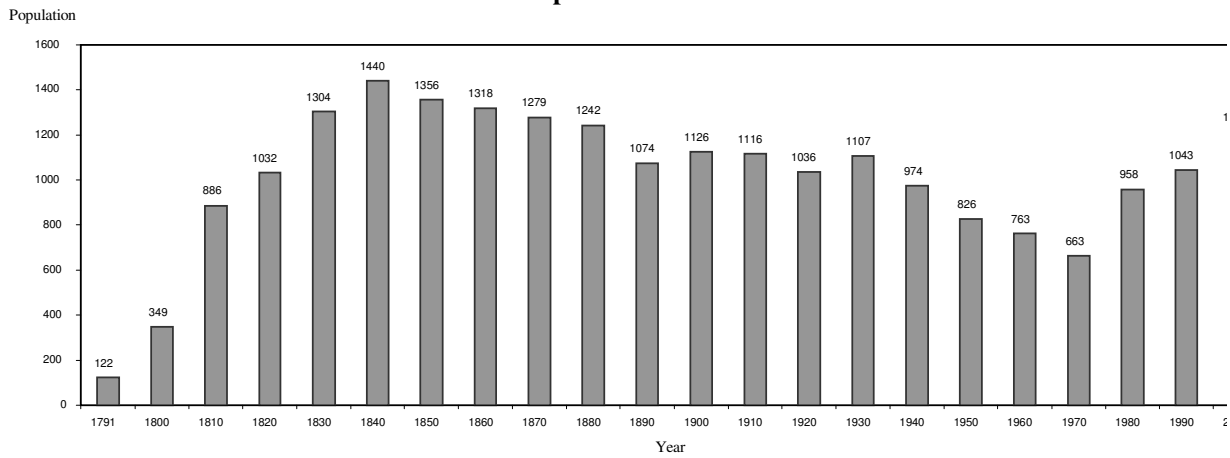
Since 1970, the population has nearly doubled. It is now the case that over half the population works elsewhere, and therefore has a greater range of involvement with other communities, including "non-geographic communities" (political, artistic, work-related, environmental, etc.). Many Cabot residents are now free of the economic constraints of place, and engage in the local community in varying degrees for many different reasons. As the importance of husbandry, production, and place diminish as defining factors of our community, new common concerns seem to be emerging, which taken together, might be defined as a "stewardship of public interests."

Expenditures for public service and infrastructure have increased exponentially over the last thirty years. Most of this investment has been made in roads and in the school, but we have also made improvements in fire protection, ambulance service, water and wastewater service in the village, recreational facilities, public buildings, and so on. In addition to these services, a number of interests and concerns have surfaced in recent years, which are evidence of a developing sense of shared public resources. The work of the Planning Commission, the Conservation Committee, the Recreation Committee, the Thistle Hill Neighborhood Alliance (opposed to the construction of cellular phone towers), Cabot Concerned Producers Committee (advocates for retaining local ownership of the creamery during its financial crisis of 1991-92), the Historical Society, the Oral History Committee, the Cemetery Commission, the Cabot Skylighters Snowmobile Club, the United Church, the Cabot Coalition, the Community Development Council, the Community Center Committee, and the extraordinary level of community outreach achieved by the school, are all expressions of shared interest in the use of Cabot's physical landscape and human resources.

The history of land use in Cabot is that of utilizing local natural resources to support the population. As we approach the point where this is no longer necessary, it seems that the role of individuals as stewards of the land is giving way to a greater public role in that stewardship. Surveys of public opinion in Cabot have repeatedly shown that most of

the population wants to preserve the rural-agricultural character of the town. This may represent an acknowledgement of the future economic importance of our natural and agricultural resources, or it may simply reflect an aesthetic appreciation of the working landscape. In either case, it would appear that stewardship of the land, whether public or private, is still an important component of what makes us a community. Preservation of Cabot's rural-agricultural character will require a much higher degree of community discussion and input than in the past. Individuals whose working hours are not invested on Cabot farms or in Cabot institutions must be willing to support the additional public role (and therefore cost) in maintaining that character.

### Cabot Population - U.S. Census Data



## SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Cabot is a small community with a strong small-town atmosphere. Cabot's geography contributes to our sense of community - almost all roads lead to the village, centrally located in a valley surrounded by the hilly outlying areas of town. Perhaps in part because of the lack of proximity to a major highway, the traffic through Cabot Village is largely comprised of community residents, many of whom have work to do or errands to run at one or another of the village businesses or institutions. As a result, there is a sense of purposeful activity in the village, accompanied by an extraordinary degree of familiarity and shared interests. The village is "where it's at" for community activities.

### School

The Cabot School, pre-K through high school, is the center for much of the community's social interaction. There are many activities for students, such as Girl Scouts, sports, music, drama, academic competition clubs, and the high school year book. The school has hosted programs for community members in the arts, computer science and other fields. The Health Center in Plainfield maintains a clinic at the Cabot school which serves the general public. The Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO) is very active, raising money with the popular Fourth of July celebration to help sponsor class trips, special group and individual student activities, and a Halloween party for elementary students. The PTSO raised money, and with the help of an Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) Community Fund grant and over 90 volunteers, built the playground structure behind the elementary school. Athletics are popular. The school gym is completely booked in the winter with both school and community basketball teams of all ages and abilities. Soccer, baseball and softball have many participants at several levels-enough to make good use of three playing fields in town. The school gym is also the site of the popular Cabot Skylighters Snowmobile Club ride-in and barbecue.

### Community

The Willey Building in the center of the village houses the town library, town offices, and is the headquarters of the Cabot Coalition (a group connecting youth and adults and promoting a variety of alcohol, drug and tobacco-free activities). The building also provides meeting rooms, a small kitchen, and the top-floor auditorium, used for community concerts and get-togethers, private parties, school concerts, and Town Meeting. On the village green is the United Church of Cabot, active with regular Sunday services and additional study groups and a youth group. The village is also home to the Green Mountain Masonic Lodge. The Cabot Historical Society maintains a building on Main Street. The Cabot Senior Citizens group meets for lunch in the church. Cabot's recycling depot is a busy area on Saturday mornings. The UDAG Scholarship Fund is a community education resource, awarding scholarships each year to Cabot citizens, both youth and adults. The Twin Town Homemakers, formerly the Home Dem, meet in the church for social and educational purposes.

Cabot Village is also home to the Cabot Ambulance and the Cabot Volunteer Fire Department. Both of these volunteer organizations are a source of local pride as they provide vital services to our town and adjacent communities. They also enhance community services with fund raisers including pancake breakfasts and dances.

Many of these organizations work together to put on community special occasions like the Fourth of July parade, barbecue, auction, and rummage sale, the Apple Festival, the Halloween party in the village, and Old Home Days.

### Businesses - Not Just Cheese

Cabot is widely known as the home of the Cabot Creamery, producers of dairy products, but there are many smaller businesses in town. The Creamery's warehouse and packing plant, factory, visitor center, and office building are all located in the village. Also in the village are a restaurant, a general store, hardware store, three service garages, a real estate office, a law office, clock repair shop, gift shop, excavation and trucking service, and a propane filling station. In the Lower Cabot area, there are three landscape nurseries, a hair stylist, charter fishing service, a horse logger, and another general store. A number of other business are located throughout the town, including carpenters, plumbers,

electricians, building contractors, truckers, woodworkers, a furniture maker, a tool maker, surveyor, a pilot with plane, timber cutters, lawyers, accountants, computer sales and service, a wholesale clothing design and distribution business, and a manufacturer of statuary. Green Mountain Power Corporation generates electricity in Marshfield using water stored at the Molly’s Falls Reservoir. Power is also generated by GMP in West Danville from the water stored in Joe’s Pond. Cabot is also home to about 20 working farms of a variety of sizes with a variety of products, ranging from dairy cows, goats, and llamas to maple syrup, fruits, grains, and turkeys. The large number of these small business adds to the sense of Cabot as a self-reliant community.

Issues:

Young people in town complain that there’s not enough to do, no place to hang out. Other elements missing from the social/business mix (mentioned by a number of residents in surveys and meetings) are a laundromat and possibly some form of senior housing.

Some recent hearings on the question of whether to conduct all town business by Australian Ballot indicated that a significant number of people in town feel disenfranchised by Town Meeting. While a clear majority of residents voted to continue doing business at the Town Meeting, some measures might be undertaken to include more townspeople in the meeting discussions (see section on town government).

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Plans of Action</b>
Foster citizen involvement in	local government and enhance the sense of community for all of Cabot’s residents. All community groups should regularly and actively involve youth in their spheres of activities. The Cabot Coalition should be encouraged to take the lead in advocating and training community groups to more actively involve youth in activities. The Selectboard should make a proposal to the Town Meeting during the next five years for the establishment of a web site including an events calendar, meeting minutes, public notices, a business directory with job opportunities and want ads, especially for young people, and a community bulletin board/discussion forum. This site might include an informal “welcome wagon” feature for newcomers to the community, to acquaint them with services, events, programs, community organizations, health care availability, etc. in town. All community organizations should make regular submissions to the quarterly community newsletter published by the Cabot Coalition, which is mailed to all households in Cabot.

## HISTORIC / CULTURAL RESOURCES

We are fortunate to have a physical record of some of our historic sites and buildings to reflect on, appreciate, and to learn from. The Cabot Historical Society and the Cabot Oral History Committee are two local groups working to maintain this connection with the past. The Cabot Historical Society operates a museum on Main Street and is active in acquiring, fixing up, and maintaining historical buildings and sites. The Cabot Oral History Committee's 1999 publication of *Cabot, Vermont: A Collection of Memories From the Century Past*, documents the many cultural changes which we have experienced in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, through oral histories and photographs.

The Cabot School curriculum has included a "Heritage" class and the school has been involved in visiting and working at historic sites and buildings. The second grade visited the West Hill School House and had a lesson from an "old schoolmaster," Henry Bissex, experiencing how learning was different 100 years ago. Twice, Cabot High School students have hiked and camped on the Bayley Hazen Military Road as part of a re-enactment of the historical road's construction and the hardships encountered by the American troops.

### The Hazen Road and Markers

The Road was built in two phases, the first in 1776 by Colonel Jacob Bayley from Newbury to Cabot Plains, the second in 1779 by General Moses Hazen from Cabot Plains to Montgomery Center. It was intended as a supply route for American Revolutionary forces in Quebec, but later proved useful as a route for settlers.

Seven small granite markers were placed beside the road in about 1901. From south to north: 1) Bearing the words "Hazen Camp," it marks the probable site where General Hazen began the second phase of the road; 2) Near the Plains Cemetery at the junction of the roads is a marker worded simply "Hazen Road"; 3) A hundred yards to the north on the western side of the road is a marker, "Smuggler's House," locating a house that was used as a smuggler's haven during the War of 1812; 4) A hundred yards to the north on the same side of the road a marker designates "First School."; 5) A hundred feet to the north on the eastern side of the road is a marker near the site of the "Yellow House," the first frame building in the town, built around 1792. It was operated as an inn serving travelers and locals on the Bayley-Hazen Road; 6) One-half mile to the north on the eastern side of the road, a marker reading "First Settler" marks the location of the home of Benjamin Webster, who came to Cabot with his family in 1783; 7) Approximately one mile to the north on a portion of the road that is now abandoned is a marker with the words "Gordon Shot," a reference to the death of a British General during the Revolutionary War.

### The Center Cemetery, Pound, and Markers

The Center Cemetery contains the oldest gravestones in Cabot; those of many of the first settlers. About 1915, the stones were removed and the ground was ploughed and planted with potatoes. The stones were later replaced and set in rows. The Center Pound, where stray animals were confined in early settlement days, was rebuilt about 1915. The location of the first Congregational Church in Cabot is marked by a large boulder bearing an inscription. The church building was moved to the village in 1826. About one acre of land encompassing the pound and church markers was given to the town in 1803, and is recorded on page 27 of the land transfer book. A time capsule is buried on the site which is opened and replenished on every fiftieth anniversary of the Congregational Church. The most recent opening took place in 2001.

### Historically Significant Buildings

*Oldest House:* Due to population change and fire, there are relatively few early buildings left in Cabot. One prime contender for oldest house is the so-called Max Ducharme place on Ducharme Road.

*Notable Homes:* Other homes of note which should be preserved include the Wiswell-Wells-Coyle-McKay house in Cabot Village, which has an uncommonly fine and intact Victorian interior and exterior; the "Judge Lamson" home on Elm Street, which is a stately and well-situated "Italianate" home of 1869; and the "Town-Currier-Thompson-Spencer" house in Lower Cabot, which is a rare and classic example of "carpenter-Gothic" Victorian style, built

about 1875.

*Lower Cabot School House:* Presently used as a home, the Lower Cabot School House, built in 1880, is a handsome building. It was altered to include a kitchen, library, and theater, and served for many years as the focal point for frequent Lower Cabot community events. Its preservation and maintenance should be encouraged due to its visual beauty and historic significance.

*West Hill School House:* Built in 1854 and used until 1917. Owned by the Cabot Historical Society and has undergone substantial restoration. It should be kept in good repair as an example of its type.

*The Walbridge School House:* Moved from its original location on the Walden Heights Road to the old settlement area on Cabot Plains. It was extensively renovated into an attractive vacation home without compromise of its original appearance. It is a fine example of adaptive reuse of an historic building that otherwise would have been lost.

*The South Cabot School Houses:* Both are historic sites now in private ownership. Their maintenance and restoration should be encouraged.

*Old Village School or Brimblecombe Shop:* The first Cabot Village school, and was built in 1845. The building was bought by the Independent Order of Good Templars, a temperance organization, who converted it from a tenement into a meeting hall in 1898, with a paneled auditorium and stage upstairs. On the ground floor were a kitchen, cloakroom, and dining hall. The prudent Good Templars also introduced to the deed the proviso “no dancing in the building” which remains on the deed today. Later, the Morrill Women’s Relief Corps and the Modern Woodsmen had their meetings there. Bob Brimblecombe used the building as a plumbing shop for a number of years before it was purchased by the Cabot Historical Society, which has been working to restore the building as a meeting hall and museum. The town should promote the preservation and restoration of the property in any practical manner.

*United Church of Cabot:* Was originally organized as the Congregational Church in 1801. The present church house was built in 1849, after the original church was knocked down, moved and set up twice, the second time with more modern Greek Revival styling. The Congregationalists and the Methodists formed the United Church in 1928. The church building has a handsome late Victorian interior, a fine Greek Revival exterior and forms the visual centerpiece for the village common area. Its preservation should be encouraged.

*Willey Memorial Hall:* The town hall was built in 1921, the money for it being raised by solicitation. Mr. C. W. Willey gave matching funds. It was built of lumber cut and milled in Cabot. It was owned and maintained by the Judith Lyford Women’s Club, but was given to the town in 1974. It contains a stage and auditorium, kitchen, dining room, club room, lounge, public library, Town Clerk’s offices, and meeting space. Town Meeting is held in the auditorium. Substantial renovations to the building were completed in the 1990s and included a sprinkler system, a new heating system, a lift for handicapped accessibility, a new entranceway, a new Town Clerk’s office and vault, expanded library space, improved lighting, addition of storm windows, new restrooms, and external painting of clapboards and roof. Community involvement has been strong, and the voters supported use of local UDAG funds to pay for the renovations. It is a significant facility for town activities and functions, and the town must begin to budget for its proper upkeep.

*Methodist Church Building:* Most recently a theater and painted in Victorian colors, was built around 1827. It was converted from a church into a gymnasium in 1938 and was used by the school for four decades until sold to its present owner. The building should be evaluated for possible purchase by the town to serve a community function.

*Mill Sites:* There are several historic mill sites around town, at which can be seen the remains of old dams. There is one below Wil & Alison Ameden’s home on Ducharme Road, another on the Carpenter Road near the Marshfield town line, the old Ford mill dam behind Harry Thompson’s house in Lower Cabot, the West Hill Pond dam and mill site, and the mill site in South Cabot. Beneath the water of the Molly’s Falls Reservoir lie the remains of the small community of Peterville, which included a number of homes, a mill, and school. The existing dam and mill site in Lower Cabot are also of historic interest.

*Barns:* There are very few old barns remaining in Cabot. However, a careful inventory of historic agricultural structures might identify several which are worthy of preservation or restoration.

## Cemeteries

Cabot takes great pride in maintaining and improving its cemeteries. Hopefully, this commitment will continue. A wonderful account of Cabot's cemeteries appears in *Cabot, Vermont: A Collection of Memories From the Century Past*. In addition to this, there are plans to publish an historical perspective on Cabot's cemeteries in much greater detail. This will be a fine addition to Cabot's written history. There are seven cemeteries that are active and maintained by the Cemetery Commissioners. They are: *Center Cemetery* - Established in 1799; the town's first cemetery; *Durant Cemetery* - Established in 1813 in Lower Cabot; *Cabot Village Cemetery (Elm Street)* - established in 1820; *Kimball Cemetery* - Established in 1814 (not maintained as a town cemetery); *West Hill Cemetery* - Established in 1817; *Cabot Plains Cemetery* - Established in 1825; *South Cabot Cemetery* - Established in 1834; *East Cabot Cemetery* - Established around 1847

A great deal of effort has gone into making improvements in several of the cemeteries in recent years. Fencing, stone washing, fountain repairs, and landscaping have been priorities. Upcoming work includes additional fencing on two sides of the Elm Street Cemetery, stream bank stabilization at Durant Cemetery, and activation of the fountain at Durant Cemetery. All seven cemeteries have lots available. Even the town's first cemetery, Center Cemetery, will have burial lots available. Some cemeteries have been expanded, such as Cabot Plains Cemetery, and more significantly, Elm Street Cemetery, with the acquisition about three acres of land for expansion across the road. Improvements to this land will require some additional town resources in the coming years. In addition to these efforts, new maps will be prepared for each of the cemeteries. This information will be maintained electronically through the town offices. Through the dedication and efforts of many townspeople, Cabot's cemeteries stand as a memorial to our cultural heritage for residents and visitors alike.

## Cabot Historical Society

The CHS currently has about fifty members. The CHS owns two buildings, the society building in town behind the church and the West Hill School House above West Hill Four Corners.

Thanks to the generosity of one member, the village building was completely electrically rewired. Prior to this, the society used an extension cord to the church when it needed power for the building. The building is open by request for specific research and is also open July 4, Fall Foliage Day, during Old Home Week, Vermont Apple Festival, and for other special meetings and gatherings.

The West Hill School House has undergone significant renovation over the last few years and has also accumulated a collection, thanks mostly to a grant received through the school and the efforts of the students. A composting toilet has been added to the back of the building, a new stove has gone into place and the room has been decorated to historically resemble a schoolhouse of its time.

The society has joined several other historical associations, and participated in the June Expo 2001 in Tunbridge. The society is working with the Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance and has had two visits from the Collections Care Program director to take an inventory of the collection and discuss its care. A slow but ongoing effort is underway to expand, update, and catalogue the collection. With help from the school, the Historical Society is preserving and cataloging the "Osgood papers," a collection of early town records.

## Issues

As is typically the case of volunteer organizations, a core group shoulders most of the work of the society and new energy is needed. Also items which should end up in the society museum are now more likely to be sold because of the monetary value. The wonderful collection is somewhat static and labeling needs to be updated.

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Plans of Action</b>
Record and preserve existing historical resources. Compile a genealogy of early settlers and prominent citizens.	Help preserve historical integrity of village and town. Increase membership and activities of society. Have a photographic inventory of the buildings in the village, working farms and schoolhouses, as well as other outstanding historical buildings in town. Take a picture of town residents during Old Home Week(s). Continue to interview older folks who grew up in Cabot. Continue to collect and copy older photographs. Investigate apprentice help for displaying and cataloging photographs. Support all efforts to preserve town records. Support activities of others who are moving in this direction, like the effort of the church congregation to restore their windows. Assist owners with research of their property. Work with other willing civic organizations to welcome new residents to Cabot giving relevant information and promoting the town's historical strengths. Town residents Bonnie Dannenberg and Caleb Pitkin are both working on this project. Gathered material will be available at the historical society. Schedule a special meeting to discuss genealogy in general and town genealogy. Increase mailings to members and make these publications available at local outlets. Make the organization more visible at public events and through articles in local publications. Increase number of events open to the public. Increase hours and special days that society buildings are open to the public.

# NATURAL RESOURCES

## Geology - Topography

Except for the irregular boundary at Joe's Pond, Cabot is square in shape, six miles on each side, a total of 22,325 acres. Cabot lies in the geographic region known as the Piedmont, in the foothills of the Green Mountains.

There are three distinct rock types in Cabot: (1) metamorphosed limestones of the Waits River formation (northwest and southeast); (2) mica-rich quartzites of the Gile Mountain Formation (central); and (3) New Hampshire Series Granites (southeast). The Waits River and Gile Mountain Formation rocks were originally deposited by sediments in an ancient sea and were later transformed into rock, folded, and uplifted into mountains during the continent-continent collision of the Acadian Orogeny (mountain building event) that occurred 350-400 million years ago.

The highest point in Cabot is Danville Hill (2246 feet), followed by Joe's Hill (2198 feet), Burbank Hill (1980 feet) and Thistle Hill (1909 feet). Much to the annoyance of many natives, U.S. Geological Survey maps interchange the names of Joe's Hill and Danville Hill. The lowest part of town is 880 feet at the point where the Winooski River exits the town at the Marshfield border. Most of Cabot lies within the Winooski River drainage basin, and Coits Pond is considered to be the headwaters of the Winooski. A small portion of the eastern section of town drains to Joe's Pond, a part of the Connecticut River drainage basin.

## Soils

Soils in the uplands of Cabot are of the Glover-Calais and Calais-Buckland associations that are generally well drained and have moderate amounts of calcium carbonate (buffering capacity). Although these soils are usually suitable for residential and agricultural uses, there are areas where considerable limitations exist because of steep topography, wetness, shallow depth to bedrock, and unfavorable soil textures. Many areas containing these soil types are unsuitable for septic tank leach fields. Subordinate soils found in depressions in upland areas are very poorly drained loamy soils of the Muck and Peat Peacham Association that are not suitable for any use.

Soils found in the upper Winooski River valley are of the Windsor, gravelly Windsor, and Hartland-Belgrade associations. Windsor-gravelly Windsor-sandy-gravelly soils are found on terraces along streams and creeks in central Cabot, whereas Hartland-Belgrade silty soils are found in the Winooski River valley in southern parts of Cabot. Windsor and gravelly Windsor are generally suitable for all uses, however, some Hartland-Belgrade soils have severe limitations for many uses.

Because of Cabot's location in the upland drainage region, it is nearly void of the rich bottomland soils found in towns that are lower in the drainage basins of the Winooski and Connecticut Rivers. Prime agricultural soils as defined by the State of Vermont are scattered in quite limited acreage - present along the Winooski River south of Cabot Village, in the Cabot Plains area, and in East and South Cabot.

## Earth Resources

Sand and gravel resource areas in town are very limited. Two areas mapped for sand and gravel resources are both along the South Walden Road, one in the vicinity of Houston Hill Road and the other in the vicinity of Cross Road. The granites of Cabot intruded into the Waits River and Gile Mountain rocks during the waning stages of the Acadian Orogeny. Such granites are frequently quarried as dimension stone. Although no such active granite quarries exist today in Cabot, quarrying was conducted in the northwest corner of town from 1904 into the 1930's. In nearby in Woodbury a significant quarry exists and can be seen from higher vantage points to the east in town.

## Climate and Air Quality

Cabot has various microclimates, causing significant variation in temperature, precipitation, and frost dates. Cabot

Village and Lower Cabot are in valleys subject to temperature inversions especially during the winter months. Perhaps Cabot's greatest air quality concerns lie within these areas - smoke from wood furnaces and wood stoves and other heating sources. Illegal residential burning of trash does occur in Cabot and can be a significant source of toxic air pollutants and exposure in any part of town, but especially in higher density areas, and in areas where temperature inversions occur. Burning of agricultural plastics can also be a problem. Young children and the elderly can be particularly sensitive to air pollutants, including particulates and airborne toxic materials.

Goal	Plan of Action
Maintain Cabot's high air quality.	The town will rely on the services of the Central Vt. Solid Waste Management District to educate Cabot residents on the health hazards of burning trash. If education alone does not lead to behavior change, the Cabot Selectboard should consider adoption of a municipal ordinance that bans the burning of household trash and agricultural plastics, following model ordinances that have been developed. The ordinance should be publicized and efforts made to voluntarily remove burn barrels and provide public education prior to any enforcement of an ordinance.

## Flood Hazards and Floodplains

The FEMA maps of flood hazard zones provided to the town years ago describe areas in terms of 100-year and 500-year-flood levels, primarily identifying areas subject to the threat of inundation along the main stem of the Winooski in Lower Cabot. Traditionally, these maps are the information source for town planning purposes and for mortgage lenders in deciding which properties need flood insurance protection.

### Issues

Over the past decade flood damage costs have risen dramatically in Vermont, due to the increasing occurrences of flooding. Precipitation trend analysis suggests that intense, localized storms, which can cause flash flooding, are occurring with greater frequency. Recognizing at-risk locations is crucial to avoiding future destruction and loss of life. The June 1998 flood took Cabot by surprise, with upland streams jumping stream beds, carving out new channels, and filling Main Street with silt.

As precipitation and the frequency of downpours increases and Cabot streams are forced to carry more water, the present definition of a 100-year flood may no longer be accurate. If incidents of flooding change over time, the definition of a 100-year flood, and design guidelines for infrastructure, may need to change.

The majority of recent flood damage (80%) in Vermont is occurring along upland streams, as it did in Cabot in 1998, damaging private property and infrastructure such as bridges, roads, and culverts. Mountainous or hilly areas tend to have narrow, confined channels through which flood waters move rapidly and travel downstream more quickly than in flat areas. Even though a building is not located in a valley where a rising river could overflow its banks and slowly inundate the structure, it is not necessarily safe from flood damage.

Residents along streams not previously recognized as flood areas do not need to be located in the 100-year floodplain to be able to buy the federally-subsidized flood insurance. Anyone with a building investment in a vulnerable location is eligible in Cabot.

Cabot's zoning regulations have not historically identified these stream corridors as areas needing protective setbacks for development. That may need to change. By establishing setbacks in its by-laws, the town can prevent people from building structures too close to rivers, such that the structures could be flooded or swept away by strong currents during a storm.

Impervious surfaces such as roads, driveways, parking areas, and buildings prevent water from soaking into the ground, increasing runoff and erosion potential. Any disturbance of the soil or any change in topography may increase erosion potential. Building development and soil tillage are two primary causes of soil disturbance in Cabot. Logging is another. Excessive logging can leave hillsides open to erosion, removing the forest canopy that would have absorbed and retained much of the water. Improperly constructed logging roads may lead to increased runoff and erosion, particularly on poorly drained soils. Private driveway culverts are often undersized, causing washouts and road damage during intense storms.

Driveways which are improperly graded and ditched can direct water onto the main road, increasing highway maintenance costs. Improper maintenance of town roads, ditches and roadway culverts can lead to washouts. Soil and vegetation allowed to build up on the edges of roads prevent water from running into ditches. Clogged culverts restrict water flow. Inadequate investments in municipal infrastructure result in problems such as undersized (or too few) culverts, inadequate ditches, or the lack of headwalls on culverts.

The problem of flooding is not limited to just floodplains and low-lying neighborhoods. Stream erosion and migration can endanger private and public property throughout the watershed. This is occurring in several areas of Cabot, including the village and Lower Cabot areas. A better understanding of the relationships between different areas within the watersheds should allow Cabot to find solutions.

Goal	Plans of Action
Reduce damage from future flooding	and to prevent changes to the landscape which could increase hazardous flooding conditions Review and update Cabot’s Flood Hazard Ordinance to comply with state standards and to address the following: ♦ Not allow subdivision in Flood Hazard Areas because it will promote development of the area. ♦ Restrict the building of new structures in Flood Hazard Areas. ♦ Restrict land use in Flood Hazard Areas to open space, recreational and agricultural uses or to improvements in existing structures. ♦ Where an unstable channel is shifting back and forth fairly quickly within a corridor, it may be more appropriate to map and zone the entire corridor as a no-build area rather than assign arbitrary setbacks for structures. Adopt a highway access policy as a separate ordinance administered by the Road Commissioner which requires adequately sized culverts and angle of intersection with town roads so as to protect against washouts. Request accurate flood hazard maps through the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission. The Conservation Committee will continue efforts to assess the current conditions of the Winooski River and its main tributaries and to identify what corrective measures can be taken to reduce streambank erosion.

## Lakes and Ponds

Cabot’s ground and surface water resources are connected to the Lake Champlain watershed via the Winooski and Lamoille rivers and to the Connecticut River watershed via the Passumpsic River. Wetlands, ponds, and streams in the northwest quadrant form the headwaters of the Winooski River, which winds its way through Cabot and is closely paralleled by Route 215. In Lower Cabot, Jug Brook feeds into the Winooski. Waterways in the northeastern corner of Cabot flow into Joe’s Pond and eventually the Connecticut River.

Five significant lakes and ponds lie at least partially within Cabot’s borders:

*Molly's Pond:* A scenic, productive pond with a large diversity of aquatic plants (including rare species) and outstanding wildlife value. Molly's Pond is a natural, public lake of nearly forty acres, with a maximum depth of twenty-eight feet. Its outlet and shoreline are in Cabot, with the watershed extending into Peacham. There are no public lands adjacent to the pond. The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife reports fair water quality and good recreational fishing, although nutrient levels are high due most likely to runoff from surrounding agricultural land uses.

*West Hill Pond:* An artificial, privately-owned lake covering about forty-eight acres, with a maximum depth of thirteen feet. Its outlet and shoreline are in Cabot, with the watershed extending into Woodbury. Shoreline includes a fifty-foot municipal beach and state boating access. Warm water fishing and swimming are allowed, motorized boating is not. Due to draining or lowering of the water level, the pond is not always fishable. There is a high percentage of farmland within the watershed.

*Molly's Falls Reservoir (Marshfield Reservoir):* An artificial, mesotrophic lake (medium productivity and nutrient levels), rich in wildlife (including loons and migratory birds), covers about 400 acres, with a maximum depth of thirty-five feet. Its outlet and shoreline are in Cabot, with the watershed extending into Marshfield and Peacham. Ninety-eight percent of the land within its watershed is undeveloped. The reservoir is a power supply source operated by Green Mountain Power, which also owns a significant proportion of the shoreline. Warm water and cold water fishing are permitted, albeit impaired due to water level fluctuations (between one and six feet in summer and ten to twelve feet in the winter) and turbidity. The State owns some public land around the reservoir with no developed access. There is a state boating access; gas motors and jet skis are allowed.

*Joe's Pond:* A natural lake with artificial control, is a public water that covers about 396 acres, has a watershed area of 18,445 acres, a maximum depth of 78 feet, and a mean depth of 21 feet. Tremendous diversity of plants exist on the lake and adjoining wetland, which is large and significant. The pond has a heavy concentration of development along its shorelines in both Cabot and Danville. The outlet is in Danville and the watershed also includes Peacham, Stannard and Walden. Joe's Pond is used for warm and cold water fishing, boating, swimming, and as a power supply. There is a state boating access and municipal swimming and picnic areas in Danville. The water quality is rated as fair to good, although many pressures exist: a high level of development; close proximity to roads, leading to increased runoff potential; fluctuations in the water level; and the size of the watershed in proportion to the lake indicates that the "pond may reach a critical mass of nutrient/sediment loading beyond which water quality degradation may become apparent." (1990 Lake Assessment, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation).

*Coits Pond:* A shallow, public lake in the northwestern corner of Cabot, with shoreland in Cabot and Woodbury. Current uses include warm water fishing and carry-in boating; motorized watercraft are not allowed. Due to heavy sedimentation and periphyton (plant and animal growth on stems/leaves of rooted plants), aesthetics, aquatic life, secondary contact and swimming uses are threatened.

## Issues

A 1994 State of Vermont Water Quality Summary noted high levels of eutrophication and acceleration of rates of eutrophication at West Hill Pond, Joe's Pond, and Molly's Pond.

Rare, threatened or endangered species have been identified on all of these bodies of water. Most notably, loons are present on Molly's Falls Reservoir.

Public access to Cabot's lakes and ponds is limited to Joe's Pond (access in West Danville), Molly's Falls Reservoir and West Hill Pond.

Cabot's lakes and ponds are threatened by close proximity to other bodies of water that are infested with Eurasian milfoil, a nuisance aquatic plant. Eurasian milfoil has been reported in Marshfield Reservoir. At Molly's Pond,

nutrient levels are high; periphyton and plant growth have been noted adjacent to unbuffered farmland (*1990 Lake Assessment*, Vermont, Dept. of Environmental Conservation)

Due to the development density and a lack of zoning coordination among the towns who share the shoreline and/or watershed (Cabot, Danville, Peacham, Stannard, and Walden), Joe’s Pond is considered to be vulnerable to water quality degradation.

Molly’s Falls Reservoir has a largely undeveloped shoreline which is owned by Green Mountain Power Corporation. In the future, there may be development pressures on the shoreline that have not been anticipated or assessed.

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Plans of Action</b>
<p>Maintain and enhance biodiversity in and around lakes and ponds. Minimize negative human impact on water quality. Increase public access to Cabot’s lakes and ponds.</p>	<p>Protect threatened and endangered species that use lakes and ponds. Create vegetative buffers of native species around identified sensitive lake and pond shores by working with and educating land owners. Protect Marshfield Reservoir from significant shoreline development through zoning and other conservation measures. Encourage road design standards, reconstruction, and improvements which preserve mature vegetation as a visual and noise buffer, especially in the Route 2 corridor adjacent to Marshfield Reservoir. The Conservation Commission should identify opportunities to enhance public access to Cabot’s lakes and ponds, especially for activities such as non-motorized boating and fishing.</p>

## Wetlands

Wetlands are land areas that are saturated or inundated by water and support plant and animal life adapted to saturated soil conditions. Such areas include marshes, swamps, bogs, fens, wet meadows, ponds and vernal pools. Wetlands were traditionally thought of as undesirable places - swamps and wasted land that was either drained or filled and put to use, usually for agriculture. In fact, Cabot Village and Lower Cabot were part of a northern white cedar swamp bordering the Winooski River that was drained and developed. Under today’s wetland protection laws, Cabot Village would not have been able to develop in its current location. The mucky soils and high water table characteristic of wetlands makes for poor septic system suitability.

Wetlands are now known to perform important functions such as reducing flooding, filtering sediment and pollutants before reaching surface waters, supporting numerous wildlife species, and providing open space and scenic beauty. Although poorly designed and sited development in or near wetlands can impair their functions, in most cases, development can be accommodated in the vicinity of wetlands when properly planned.

Most significant wetlands greater than an acre in size in Cabot appear on National Wetland Inventory maps. Cabot contains numerous small wetlands, totaling approximately 670 acres or 2.7 percent of the land area. Many of these wetlands were initially designated by the Vermont Water Resources Board as Class Two wetlands. Class Two wetlands have an initial buffer of 50 feet. Class I wetlands have an initial 100 foot buffer. Class III wetlands are those that are either not significant or have not yet been evaluated and are not protected under the Vermont Wetland Rules. Allowed uses include most farming and forestry activities; recreational activities, and repair and maintenance of utility lines and poles. Vermont’s Wetland Rules indicate that local planning commissions are responsible for undertaking studies, making recommendations on wetland protection, and indicating those areas for wetland protection in the land use plans, including undesignated wetlands. No municipality may grant a zoning permit for the development of a wetland prior to the expiration of a period of 30 days following the submission of a report to the Agency of Natural Resources describing the proposed use, the location requested, and an evaluation of the effect of such proposed use on the Town Plan and Regional Plan. The present zoning ordinance does not designate or protect these areas.

There is one large wetland complex in East Cabot that is greater than forty acres in size. This complex consists mainly of forested wetland, with smaller areas of scrub-shrub and emergent zones. The remainder are small wetlands from one to ten acres in size, scattered along the Winooski River and to the west. The most common wetland type is forested wetland, followed by scrub-shrub and emergent, and a small amount of aquatic bed wetlands. Perhaps the richest, most diverse wetlands occur in association with several ponds, including Coits, Joes, Molly's and West Hill.

### Issues

Many wetlands in town have not received study or characterization for significant values. There has not been study of so-called Class III wetlands. Any kind of comprehensive wetland evaluation in Cabot is likely to take a significant amount of time and resources. From the standpoint of wildlife significance, the wetlands adjacent to and bordering the ponds in town should be studied first, especially in identifying significant wildlife habitat in the town.

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Plans of Action</b>
No net loss of Class One and Class Two wetlands and the values and functions that they serve.	The Conservation Committee will seek assistance to begin to evaluate and characterize significant wetlands in Cabot, starting with those wetland complexes bordering and adjacent to the town's ponds, including West Hill, Joe's, Molly's, and Coits. In addition, wetlands adjacent to the Winooski River should also receive priority. After initiation of wetland evaluation and upon recommendation of the Conservation Committee, the Planning Commission will consider any necessary zoning restrictions or educational programs necessary to retain wetland values that may be affected by land use activities.

## Rivers and Streams

Cabot has over 40 miles of upland streams and rivers. Most streams are small but some of the larger streams support recreational trout fishing. Little information is available on upland streams in Cabot. Some water quality information is available on the Winooski River. Until recently the Winooski was affected by failed and discharging septic systems and occasional straight pipes to the river in the village. With the recent construction of a wastewater treatment facility, water quality should improve significantly for recreational uses such as fishing and swimming. Vegetative buffer strips along farmland adjacent to the river are sparse or non-existent.

### Issues

Undoubtedly, Cabot's rivers and streams are affected by non-point and agricultural runoff. However, the extent of any water quality problems in Cabot are not well documented. State studies of rivers and streams are sparse. This may be due to relatively small size of the upland streams and headwaters and their limited ability to serve as a recreational resource. Cabot High School has probably done the most extensive studies of the Winooski River, showing a healthy Winooski River upstream of the village, and somewhat degraded in the village (prior to the construction of the wastewater system). Although the Winooski River would probably benefit from river bank vegetation and buffer strips, much of the basic water quality information to base decisions on is lacking.

In June, 2001, by an act of the legislature: "The Town of Cabot shall not be required to install and operate phosphorus control equipment at its wastewater treatment plant until July 1, 2003 in order to provide it time, if it so chooses, to adopt and implement a non-point phosphorus reduction plan in accordance with section 5 of No. 51 of the Acts of the 1997 Session. If Cabot chooses to adopt and implement a plan by July 1, 2003, then the town shall not be required to install and operate phosphorus control equipment in its wastewater treatment plant." (text from the *Journal of the Vermont House of Representatives*, June 2, 2001)

Goal	Plan of Action
Protect and enhance the water quality of Cabot's rivers and streams.	Retain Cabot's exemption from having to operate phosphorus removal equipment at our wastewater treatment plant. The Conservation Committee should request additional water quality studies and information on water quality protection from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation. This information could then be used to develop protection strategies. Water quality and stream bank protection, through a watershed approach, involving multi-town coordination and state assistance will be encouraged for the Winooski River and significant tributaries. The Conservation Committee should assess the Winooski and its major tributaries in town with the assistance of the Agency of Natural Resources. This assessment will then be used to identify areas where streambank stabilization and vegetative buffers would be recommended. If it is determined that phosphorus treatment is necessary at the wastewater treatment plant, the Conservation Committee and the Wastewater Commissioners should explore the feasibility of developing a phosphorus reduction plan as an alternative.

## Wildlife

Cabot currently enjoys a wide variety of animal species. Some of the mammals include bobcat, snowshoe hare, mink, white tail deer, black bear, moose, and coyote. Ducks, geese, loons, songbirds, hawks, and turkeys are also prevalent. A diversity of amphibians and reptiles also exists.

Although Cabot has diverse wildlife populations of animals, human activities have had a significant impact on the species in this area. The eastern timber wolf was hunted and driven from here. The clearing of the land in the past has allowed an increase in the deer population at the expense of the moose. The catamount was thought to have been hunted to extinction in the northeast. Logging, road construction, and land development, if not done with care, can cause major damage in the form of stream siltation. This can interfere with the insect life in these waters affecting fish and invertebrates. The influence would continue up the food chain to waterfowl, fisher, river otters, and other animals. Agricultural runoff can have similarly far reaching consequences.

With the loss of farms and expansion of forests, the species mix is changing again. The coyote arrived in the state 50 to 55 years ago, perhaps filling the void left by the wolf. There has been confirmed evidence that the catamount is still in the state and there have been several recent sightings in Cabot. In the last several years, the turkey and moose populations have increased. In order for us to have a positive interaction with these wildlife species it is important to know what their habitat needs are, and to meet these needs when possible.

Cabot presently has mixed land cover, ranging from open fields and pastures to northern hardwood forests and dense coniferous forests. The deer in this region require the open lands for summer foraging and the evergreen forests for winter shelter. Cabot also possesses numerous wetlands, ponds, rivers, and streams. As well as being a source of summer food for moose, wetlands provide early spring food for bears in the form of fresh green shoots.

### Public Education

The Cabot Conservation Committee has hosted an assortment of educational and recreational programs and family outings featuring Cabot's natural resources through the seasons. Activities have included a wetland presentation, waterway field studies, snow shoe treks, canoe explorations, wildlife tracking and plant and bird identification hikes.

### Issues

Some individuals in town see a need for more information on our wildlife populations and habitats. Several citizens have volunteered for and completed training in the Keeping Track Community Wildlife Monitoring Program. The mission of Keeping Track is to inspire community participation in the long-term stewardship of wildlife habitat. Keeping Track teaches adults and children to observe, interpret, record and monitor evidence of wildlife in their communities, so that this information can be used in local and regional conservation planning.

The training teaches volunteers not only how to detect and interpret animal sign and understand the principles of habitat selection by target species (such as black bear, mink, bobcat, otter and fisher), but also how to apply this knowledge to a precise data collection program that, over the course of time creates a picture of habitat usage in the town or region. When training is complete, volunteers establish study areas, called transects, which they then survey once each season.

Public education, understanding, and appreciation of natural resources by Cabot citizens will assist in achieving the goals of this plan.

Concern has been expressed about residents that intentionally feed wildlife such as deer and the need to provide public education on why this is not a prudent practice. The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife has a brochure on this topic to discourage the practice which can be made available in town.

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Plans of Action</b>
Identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas, including	critical habitats, like deer wintering areas.
Monitor and improve native biological diversity. Minimize fragmentation of large woodlands. Educate Cabot citizens on natural resources and their values that are worthy of protection. Maintain an active Keeping Track program to monitor and assess wildlife resources and educate Cabot citizens. The Conservation Committee will introduce landowners to current and potential habitats on their lands, and to protective measures that can be employed. The Conservation Committee will explore local incentives that can be provided for conservation easements. The Conservation Committee and town library will continue to provide natural resources educational opportunities to Cabot citizens.	

# FACILITIES, UTILITIES, SERVICES

## Ambulance Services

Cabot Emergency Ambulance Services, Inc. is an independent non-profit ambulance service that primarily serves Cabot and Marshfield, and on occasion, Walden and Plainfield. The Ambulance Service is housed with the Cabot Fire Department. The Ambulance responds to over 120 calls per year on average. Most patients are transported to the Central Vermont Medical Center. The Ambulance Service is supported with donations, fund raisers, appropriations from the towns of Cabot and Marshfield, and insurance reimbursements for services. A new ambulance was purchased with support from a UDAG grant.

The Ambulance Service depends on volunteers. Membership is down significantly from previous years when there were twenty or more. The roster is comprised of Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) at the basic and intermediate levels, first responders, and CPR certified drivers. Under new state regulations, all ambulances in the State must be staffed with a minimum of one EMT and a first responder.

### Issues

When the Cabot Ambulance is unable to respond to emergency calls because of personnel shortages, the Barre Town Ambulance is dispatched, adding fifteen to thirty minutes of travel time to the hospital. Weekdays, when many people work out of town, are a critical time of volunteer shortage. The Cabot Ambulance has discussed this concern with the Selectboard and has offered other options if volunteers cannot be found: (1) Pay up to two trained persons to be on-call with the Cabot Ambulance for at least 8 hours per day, or (2) contract out ambulance services. These options are both significantly more expensive than the current system.

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Plan of Action</b>
Timely, efficient, and skilled emergency	ambulance services are available to Cabot residents. It is imperative that the town address the current shortfall in volunteers and monitor the situation on a regular basis, since lives are at risk. The town, through the Cabot Selectboard, will assist the Cabot Emergency Ambulance Service in advertising and recruiting new volunteers. The Cabot Selectboard will periodically meet with the Ambulance Service to review status of membership and provision of service. If the situation does not improve or deteriorates, the Selectboard will devise a plan of action and budget as necessary to be brought to the townspeople at Town Meeting.

## Law Enforcement

In the past, the town has contracted with the Vermont State Police to provide a law enforcement presence in town. The County Sheriff is also engaged periodically to monitor and ticket speeders on town and village roads. Currently, enforcement of the dog ordinance is being accomplished through a contract with a certified enforcement officer in Danville. None of Cabot's recent constables have been certified law enforcement officers.

### Issues

There has been a growing concern about younger people "hanging out" in the village, traffic speeders through the village, tire screeching, loitering, littering, and minor acts of vandalism. There has also been growing concern about the increasing frequency of burglaries in town. Although most people agree that Cabot is a safe place to live, they also acknowledge that there are problems to address. These are not problems that will go away with a police presence alone.

### **Plans of Action**

Continue to contract for periodic presence of the county sheriff and/or State Police. Make sure that the individual(s) assigned to Cabot are good communicators and facilitators with townspeople and the Selectboard. Encourage the formation of a "neighborhood watch" group in the village and promote community involvement in finding solutions. The Cabot School, residents, community organizations, and town officials should be involved.

## Fire Protection

At this writing, the Cabot Fire Department consists of thirteen volunteers, on call at all times to respond to fire emergencies. Cabot is a member of the Capitol Fire Mutual Aid System, which includes all of the towns in Washington County and some surrounding communities. Cabot has automatic response agreements with Marshfield, Plainfield, and Walden. Currently ten members of the department are certified in State of Vermont Fire Training. In a typical year, the Fire Department responds to around sixty calls per year, less than half of which are for Cabot emergencies, with the remainder being mutual aid calls. Generally, more than half of the calls are fire-related, with the rest related to traffic accidents.

The Cabot Fire Department facility was constructed in 1962 with two bays, and a lean-to section was added in 1970. Two additional bays were added in 1992, making a total of four bays. The lean-to was converted into a training room and office. A new furnace system was added in 1998. A hydrant fill (located inside the building to fill trucks in cold weather) was added in 1999. The current building is at maximum capacity with no kitchen facilities. The Cabot Ambulance is also housed in one of the bays.

Equipment owned by the Fire Department includes:

- 1000 gallon per minute pumper (1990) with 3500-watt generator, portable pump (250 gallon per minute), 2 self-contained breathing apparati, 1900 ft 2½ hose, 500 ft 1½ hose, 16 ft roof ladder, 24 ft extension ladder, and adapters.
- 1600 gallon tanker (1999) with 2 portable pumps, 2100 gallon fold-a-tank, 35 ft ladder, and forest fire equipment.
- Rescue truck (1982) with 4 self-contained breathing apparati, five spare bottles, winch, Jaws of Life (1980), power ram and cutter, 3500-watt generator.

The Department is I.S.O. certified (at the present time "8" rating), meaning that structures within a three mile radius of the firehouse qualify for reduced fire insurance rates.

Dry hydrants to supplement fire fighting have been installed at the following locations: Urban Road (Smith), Bolton Road (Baharian), Coits Pond Road (West Hill Pond), South Walden Road (Pinette), Route 2, East Cabot (Payne), Coits Pond Road (Houston), Ducharme Road (Ameden), and Thistle Hill (Walker).

### Issues

The Fire Department is currently looking for additional locations for dry hydrants on Bothfeld Hill Road, and Route 215 North. State funding is available for hydrant installation.

Additional membership is needed to insure adequate coverage, especially for daytime fires. As a greater number of residents find employment outside of town, the challenge of adequate fire coverage by a volunteer squad becomes a greater concern that needs to be addressed.

Current budgetary needs are being met. A sinking fund for eventual purchase of a pumper truck in eleven years has been established, which should insure that replacement will be provided for when it becomes necessary.

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Plans of Action</b>
Continue to provide Cabot with excellent fire protection services with trained volunteers and well-maintained equipment.	Complete the installation of dry hydrants at the identified areas of greatest need. Use available opportunities to publicize/advertise the need for volunteers. Continue to support the sinking fund on a yearly basis for eventual replacement of the pumper truck.

## **911 Program**

The Vermont Enhanced 911 Program has been implemented in Cabot. This program was established to assist local emergency response organizations (fire, ambulance, and police) in effective and efficient response to emergencies. As part of this program, all of the roads in town have been officially named and residences and businesses assigned a number related to location. Street signs have been purchased and installed.

The Town of Cabot has in place a comprehensive disaster contingency plan, detailing the resources available to the town within the Central Vermont Area, including services provided by the state and federal governments. In anticipation of any disruption which might have occurred as a result of the "Y2K" computer problem, the town purchased a portable PTO driven 100 amp generator.

### Issues

Theft of the E911 road signs has been a continual problem, particularly in the eastern part of town. Posting of residence numbers has not occurred in Cabot, but would provide additional guidance to drivers of emergency vehicles.

## **Cabot Public Library**

The library facility occupies two rooms, approximately 1300 square feet, on the second floor of the Willey Building and is ADA accessible. The library is open fourteen hours per week on Tuesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. The library is staffed by one librarian and utilizes approximately two hours of community volunteer assistance weekly.

The library provides Internet access as well as connection to the Vermont Automated Library System (VALS), affording access to inter-library loan programs. The library is also a member of the Vermont Online Library, a service providing patrons with online access (from both the library and at home) to a core set of full-text information resources through an on-line /electronic information database. The library provides two computers for public use serviced with DSL, a high speed Internet access.

Services and programs include Preschool Story Time, Vermont Humanities Council adult book discussions, Summer Reading Programs, and special monthly programs. The number of volumes is approximately 7500. The 2001 total lending figure of 4,276 is apportioned among readers as follows: 57% adults, 38% juvenile, and 5% inter-library loans. Recent renovations have greatly enhanced the comfort and usability of the library space, improving shelving in the adult fiction collection and the children's room, creating a more efficient circulation desk/work area, improving lighting and interior wall and floor finishes. New tables and chairs have also been added to the reading/computer room.

### Issues

The library has seen tremendous growth in patronage. Children's visits have increased by 71% - mostly due to computer use during the after-school hours. Adult visits have increased by 21%. Computer use has increased by 700%. Town residents express support and are pleased with recent renovations and new technological resources. The current challenge the library faces is to be able to provide the materials and services needed to support this increase in patronage. In addition to the two stated goals within this report, in 2003 trustees and staff will develop a five-year plan that identifies community needs.

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Actions</b>
The community will continue to	have improved access to the library and its services. Library users will enjoy a varied collection of formats (books, books-on- tape/CD, videos, and magazines) for borrowing. Public knows about and makes use of library's electronic resources for personal research, education, and recreation.
	Develop quarterly newsletter highlighting hours, new books, and books-on-tape, programs, and electronic resources. Newsletter will be available through distribution at the library, post office and school. Make use of local print media and local web sources for press release of library news. Maintain a large collection of current fiction and nonfiction. Increase audio-library materials. Increase hours of operation to include additional days open. Continue to offer successful and varied programs, including Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS), Vermont Humanities Council book discussions, author readings, Preschool Story Time, Summer Reading Program, and other special programs. Continue to improve facilities for ease of use. Add additional staff, volunteer or paid. Two of the library's four newsletters produced each year will include an item about available electronic resources. Participate in the Vermont Online Library so patrons can access electronic resources from home as well as at the library. Offer computer instruction for groups, one-on-one, and self-direction. Develop technology plan and budgets for updates and expansions of technology to meet staff and patron needs.

## **Educational Facilities And Services**

The Cabot School is comprised of the high school and middle school classroom building (constructed in 1938), the gymnasium and four satellite elementary/integrated arts classroom buildings (constructed in 1971), all located on a single campus site in the center of Cabot Village. Extensive renovations of the buildings were completed in 1997. The high school and middle school building was thoroughly upgraded, and a dining room was added to the gymnasium. Satellite renovations included heating system upgrades, expanded space in kindergarten and pre-school and the addition of mudrooms in each elementary building.

The Cabot School maintains a bus fleet of four full-sized vehicles used to transport students to and from school and to various co-curricular activities and events, including the Barre Vocational Technical Program. Buses are replaced on a planned cycle, anticipating about ten years of service per bus.

Total student enrollment in 2000-01 was 245: 118 in Pre-K-6, 46 in the middle school, and 81 in grades 9-12. Enrollment over the past five years has varied from 264 in 1998 to 238 in 1999. Indications for the next three years using the Cohort Survival Method for projecting enrollment suggest total enrollments between 220 and the current 245.

### Staffing

The staff has remained consistent over the past five years at 45 faculty and staff (paraprofessional) full time teaching equivalents (FTE), which are based upon state definitions and determinations.

### Programs and Services Currently Offered

Programs and services currently being offered include: Language Arts, Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Literature, French, School-to-Work, Physical Education, Health and Wellness, Computer Technology, Art, Industrial Technology, Choral and Instrumental Music, PreSchool, Special Education, Service Learning, and Vocational Education (Barre Vocational Technical Center).

The Cabot School has been in the forefront of standards-based curriculum development and the creation and implementation of a comprehensive authentic assessment system.

### Operational Costs

Local expenditure for Cabot School operational costs are as follows for recent years: Fiscal Year 2000, \$2,391,074; Fiscal Year 2001, \$2,515,884; and Fiscal Year 2002, \$2,638,593.

### Cabot School as a Community Resource

There is a very strong link between the Cabot community and the school. Many activities primarily presented for the school are open to the public and are often attended by community members. These functions include concerts like the U.S. Army Reserve Band and lectures by guest authors. Athletic activities are widely supported by the school community. The school is constantly used by various community groups for recreational and organizational functions. The gym is used after school and on weekends both by adults and students for sports activities and other events such as auctions and craft shows. Cabot residents are able to walk in the gym each morning during winter. The school kitchen is used throughout the year by many organizations for fund raising dinners and food sales. Community groups utilize school facilities for related activities and planned events. Organizations such as Girl Scouts, Vermont Rural Partnership, Cabot Coalition which sponsors a fortnightly Teen Center, the Athletic Committee, the School Goals Advisory Committee, and the Parent-Teacher-Student Organization (PTSO) make frequent use of the meeting spaces after school hours. Stronger community links have been forged recently through the Heritage Class partnership with the Cabot Historical Society, the development of a Service Learning curriculum,

connections between students and local businesses through the School-to-Work initiative, and the mentoring components of the senior capstone project, Individual Opportunity to Achieve (IOTA).

### Educational Opportunities Available to Cabot Residents

The Cabot School arranges learning opportunities with other educational institutions in Vocational and Continuing Education. Besides the Barre Vocational Technical School, there are several post-secondary schools in the region. Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC), Adult Basic Education, and Cabot's Wellness Director work closely with community individuals and families to inform them about academic and skills-based program application processes, costs, and scholarship opportunities and the availability of financial aid. More than 60% of Cabot's graduates continue their training through post-secondary education.

### Issues and Concerns

At present there is no room in Cabot's facility to accommodate a larger student population. Several classrooms are presently overcrowded, and there is a schoolwide shortage of storage space.

The music program in particular is severely limited due to a lack of adequate practice and performance space. At present, the art, music, and industrial technology programs are housed in the same building which is far less than ideal in regard to noise and dust. Alternatives and long range plans are currently being considered by a group of educators who are most directly involved with those areas.

Considerable grading work is essential around the rear of the satellite buildings to prevent the seepage of ground water into the basement level classrooms.

As our population becomes more and more aware of pollutants and toxic substances, there is an ongoing interest in improving the environment in and around the school campus. A parent / teacher / student study group has assessed ways to make our campus more environmentally friendly.

In a world becoming more and more accessible to all of us through technology and travel, Cabot School is striving to foster the concept of world citizenship as well as anchoring our endeavors in a sustainable rural community.

Certainly, the way in which we govern the school community is very important and becomes even more so during a time when qualified, experienced administrators are difficult to attract and keep. A thorough study is currently underway to determine what modifications / improvements might be feasible.

The Cabot School Board is developing a five-year plan to address the facility matters listed above.

The goals and action steps below focus on the school as a vital community resource and an integral component of Cabot's sense of community.

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Plans of Action</b>
	The Cabot School will continue to be a source of vitality to the Cabot community and a community resource, not only to parents and school children, but to the community as a whole. Students will be involved in town government affairs as a part of their learning experience. Any facility review, including a space needs review conducted by the Cabot School Board, will be effectively shared and communicated with the community. The School will continue to explore and implement methods to publicize school events and activities to all town residents and other methods to improve communication with the community as a whole. The School will explore methods to engage students and faculty in meaningful community service and involvement in town government. The School Board and administration shall seek out and implement effective ways to inform and engage town residents in significant budgetary decisions

## **Town Government**

The Town of Cabot still conducts much of its business at Town Meeting in March. Although the Town Clerk and Treasurer, Selectmen, and School Directors are elected by Australian Ballot, all other town officers are nominated and elected at the meeting, and all town appropriations (except UDAG grants) are made at the meeting. Justices of the Peace are elected at the General Election in November. Every year there is lengthy discussion about the town and highway budgets, but the meetings are civil, and usually no more than two or three hours in length.

### Town Clerk and Treasurer

This office is staffed by the clerk and treasurer with the help of a single assistant, and is open to the public five days a week. The Town Clerk also serves as secretary for the Selectboard, and for many years has been the treasurer of the UDAG Fund. Most of Cabot's vital records and land records have been recently professionally restored and/or stabilized against further deterioration.

### Selectboard

Cabot has a three-member Selectboard which meets twice monthly. For much of the past five years, most of the time available for Selectboard business has been devoted to the planning and construction of the village wastewater system. As a result, the board has been somewhat distracted from its responsibility to enforce the various town ordinances. Some of the issues most pressing on the Selectboard are law enforcement, solid waste and junk car removal, filling vacancies in town offices, and maintaining the highways.

### Auditors & Listers

These two boards have been plagued by resignations over the past several years, perhaps because the work is irregular, demanding, and the pay rate is very low.

### First and Second Constable, Pound Keeper

These elective positions have also been subject to a high turnover in recent years. A common complaint heard from some recent office holders is that untrained constables are ineffective against the kind of vandalism and disturbance of the peace that is becoming more common in town. The Selectboard hires the services of a professional law enforcement officer to assist the pound keeper in enforcing the dog ordinance. (See section on law enforcement.)

### Planning Commission /Board of Adjustment

During the past five years, the Planning Commission has updated the town sewage ordinance, written a new Town Plan, and developed an ordinance governing the permitting and construction of telecommunications facilities. The Zoning Board of Adjustment, appointed by the Selectboard, meets as needed to consider applications for conditional uses and variances.

### Zoning Administrator/Sewage Officer

These offices are filled by a single individual.

### Board of Civil Authority

In the past, Cabot has had five Justices of the Peace, who, with the Selectboard, comprise the Board of Civil Authority. In recent years, the board has found it necessary to recruit additional help on election days. Furthermore, the Republican party has for some years had little or no representation on the board, necessitating the recruitment of

Republican assistants on election days (ballot counting is supposed to be done by teams not of the same party). Effective with the 2002 election, Cabot will elect seven justices.

### Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG)

In 1992, the Town of Cabot began receiving payments from the Cabot Farmers Co-operative Creamery of a two million dollar loan, which funds had been granted to the town by the Federal Agency of Housing and Urban Development. A six- member committee was formed to formulate policy and to manage the fund on an ongoing basis.

As the loan is re-paid by the creamery, the principal and interest is allocated to the separate funds within the UDAG fund itself. These funds are:.

1. Community Loans Fund - Available for loans to the Town of Cabot, Village of Cabot, Cabot School Board and other committees organizations and commissions created by these bodies for activities that serve to achieve the goals of the UDAG Plan. This fund shall not exceed \$500,000.
2. Commercial Loans Fund - Low interest loans available to businesses for projects consistent with the goals of the UDAG plan.
3. Community Facilities Grant Fund- Available to non-profit organizations, civic groups and municipal groups that are responsible for the operation and maintenance of community facilities. Eligible activities include construction, renovation, rehabilitation, or other improvement of community facilities consistent with the goals of the UDAG plan.
4. Educational Scholarship Fund - A \$100,000 endowment securely invested, from which the annual interest is disbursed in the form of 2 or more scholarships to graduating students of Cabot High School or to adult residents of the Cabot community.
5. Community Life and Town Meeting Grant Fund - Available to community groups for activities that serve to achieve the goals of the UDAG plan.

These funds were created with the following goals in mind:

1. To protect and enhance the quality of life and the character of the town
2. To promote commercial development consistent with the scale and character of the community
3. To promote education of Cabot residents
4. To improve community infrastructure, facilities, and services
5. To enhance the tax base through the support of existing businesses and creation of new businesses
6. To preserve the fund in perpetuity to serve the needs community for many years to come

Many municipal initiatives and private businesses have been financed by the UDAG funds. Renovations to the town hall and the support of the volunteer fire department and ambulance service are projects that have been important in maintaining the quality of life in our town.

Many local businesses have also benefited from borrowing UDAG funds. For example, past loans include those to Rona's Homemade- a small bakery, Zutano, a distributor of children's clothing, The Vermont Cereal Company, producers of "Eric and Andy's Oats", a garbage hauling business, a greenhouse and two dairy farms. Clearly, the diversity of this portfolio serves to enhance the local business climate.

The Cabot UDAG fund is a great, if under-utilized, asset to the Town of Cabot. It is interesting to note that for the calendar year 1999, all available funds in the Commercial Loan Fund were loaned out before the end of the year. It is always hoped that local business will consider financing options through the Fund and that the trend towards increased usage of the fund by bona-fide, successful local businesses will continue. (See section on economic development.)

## Highway Department

The highway department consists of four employees who maintain the roads and road equipment. These four employees work under the supervision of a Road Commissioner appointed by the Selectboard. Since about 1996, the Road Commissioner has been one of the Selectmen, and the position was unpaid. In 2002, the Town Meeting appropriated a \$10,000 stipend for the Road Commissioner.

The town garage is presently located in the north end of Cabot Village. All the road equipment, as well as the stockpile of sand, is stored at this facility. Space is limited.

The highway department has a short-term equipment replacement schedule, but has not developed a long-term plan for road improvement. (See section on Transportation.)

## Village Government

The incorporated village of Cabot is governed by a board of trustees. The board is responsible for the operation of the municipal water system and the street lights. Operation and billing for the water system have been provided through a contract with Simon Operating Systems.

## Wastewater Commission

A six-member commission was recently appointed by the Selectboard to oversee the operation and maintenance of Cabot's newly constructed wastewater system., in accordance with the recently adopted wastewater ordinance. This commission is charged with developing policies respecting the future use of the system and is currently in the process of preparing long-term operation, maintenance, and capital budgets for the system. (See section on Sewage and Municipal Wastewater.)

## Capital Budgeting

The Town of Cabot presently has no comprehensive plan in place for the long term maintenance, replacement, or improvement of its municipal infrastructure.

## Issues

Discussions are underway between the village trustees and the Selectboard about the possibility of merging town and village. The wastewater and water systems might then be combined into a fire district under a single management. Considerable operational savings might result from such an arrangement.

Over the years, Cabot's administrative burden has been increased by the UDAG program, the wastewater treatment facility, and the more frequent use of the Willey Building since its renovation ten years ago. There has been discussion in town for a number of years about the possibility of hiring a full time Town Manager to undertake these administrative tasks, as well as most of the work currently performed by the Town Clerk.

At least three times in the past decade, the town has voted on questions of whether to move toward Australian Ballot voting on various issues and offices. For the most part, these efforts have failed (although the major offices are now filled by Australian Ballot). The issues raised by these efforts continue to linger, however. The main objections to voting budgets at Town Meeting seem to be: 1) Persons who cannot attend the meeting cannot vote by absentee ballot; 2) persons attending the meeting are intimidated by voice votes (reluctant to express their position publicly); and 3) voice voting, and even the paper ballot voting as practiced at Cabot Town Meeting introduces an element of subjectivity to the voting results. The Town is currently experimenting with meeting times and locations as a method to improve participation at town meeting, related to town and school issues.

Goals	Plans of Action
	<p>Ensure that the Town of Cabot is able to provide the services necessary to support future growth. More efficiently operate the village water and wastewater systems. More efficiently conduct the business of the town, expedite cooperation and communication between the numerous committees, commissions, and boards in Cabot, and better serve the public. Foster among future residents a greater sense of involvement and ownership in town government, and broaden the public discourse on issues which come before Town Meeting. The Planning Commission and Selectboard should begin discussions on the development of a capital budget. The Selectboard and Village Trustees should develop a single governance structure to operate these services. Within the next five years, the Selectboard should bring to the Town Meeting a proposal for creating and funding the position of Town Manager. The Select Board and Planning Commission should sponsor an annual forum to familiarize Cabot residents on the duties and responsibilities of town officials to encourage interest in seeking office.</p>

## Ground Water / Water Supply

Ground water resources and their protection is of extreme importance to the well being of the town. It is fair to say that the Cabot community is completely dependent upon groundwater for domestic water supply and industrial uses. Both quantity and quality of ground water are important in planning for the future.

Most of the ground water in Cabot comes from fractures in the underlying bedrock. Well drilling logs maintained by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources provide information on almost 200 wells in town ranging from less than 100 feet to more than 500 feet in depth. Most of these wells yield more than the 2 ½ - 3 gallons per minute deemed adequate for domestic water supplies. Although there is little available ground water quality testing, it appears that the ground water resources are of high quality, with the exception of sulfur water associated with some wells in Lower Cabot.

Well head source protection areas have been delineated for both well sites that serve the Cabot Village water supply. These are areas that serve to directly “recharge” or replenish the groundwater aquifer. A recharge area consists not only of the land area directly above the aquifer where precipitation percolates, but also upland areas where runoff drains and percolates toward the aquifer. Surface waters can also serve to recharge aquifers and can therefore affect water quality. Both source protection areas are characterized by low-density agricultural/residential development in proximity to town and state highways.

### Issues

Although no immediate threats to water quality exist for the town’s public water supply from incompatible uses, preventative measures need to be taken now. Less certain are threats to water quality in private wells and springs. Minimum two acre lot zoning in Cabot can present threats to water quality from on or off-site septic systems if not properly sited and designed.

A number of wells in Lower Cabot have been contaminated as a result of a petroleum leak from the buried fuel tanks at the store. Bottled water is provided to the owners of these wells by the State of Vermont. The state has installed treatment systems in a number of these homes. Water drawn from many wells in Lower Cabot tends toward a sulfur flavor, sometimes quite strong.

Goals	Actions
Cabot’s high ground water quality is	maintained and citizens are aware of preventative measures to protect water

quality. Ensure that clean drinking water is always available to Lower Cabot residents with contaminated wells.

Implement the Source Protection Plan for the Cabot Village Water System and update every three years as required. The Planning Commission will evaluate these source protection plans for implications to the zoning regulations and propose any amendments accordingly to protect the public water supply. The Village Trustees and the Selectboard will explore the feasibility of extending the village water supply to Lower Cabot.

## **Sewage and Municipal Wastewater**

### On Site Sewage Systems

Cabot has adopted a sewage ordinance based on a model ordinance developed by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

The sewage ordinance covers construction of new on-site septic systems, alterations and repairs to existing systems and requires a permit from the sewage officer prior to commencing work. Other than minor modifications (generally replacing or repairing the septic tank and piping) which require a minor permit, all other modifications, replacements or new systems require a Disposal System Construction Permit. Technical information for the permit application must be prepared by a certified Site Technician B or a practicing licensed professional engineer. Seasonal dwellings with running water and plumbing are required to go through the same permitting process. Change of use such as addition of plumbing or running water, conversion of seasonal dwellings to year-round dwellings, conversion of single family to multiple family dwellings or change in commercial use also triggers review of the sewage system by the sewage officer and in some cases a need for a Disposal System Construction Permit. Pit privies will generally not be approved. A Certificate of Compliance must be issued by the sewage officer with some proof (either by visual inspection) or by written report and certification of the approved designer that the system was built as approved.

### Issues

Many residents may be unfamiliar with the sewage ordinance and may therefore not comply with it fully. Areas where poor soils or small lots exist (such as Joe's Pond) should be carefully monitored.

### Cabot Wastewater Treatment Facility

Cabot Village began planning for a municipal wastewater project in 1989. A Zenon membrane microfiltration wastewater collection system was endorsed by the Cabot Selectboard and the VT-DEC in 1999 and construction of the facility was subsequently completed in fall 2001. The system, which is the first of its kind in Vermont, serves Cabot Village and Lower Cabot.

### Phosphorus Treatment

The Cabot wastewater treatment facility includes tanks and equipment to remove dissolved phosphorus from the discharged wastewater. This equipment was funded 100 percent by state funds. Phosphorus, a natural fertilizer, acts as a water pollutant in excess amounts, contributing to undesirable effects on water quality, including excessive algae growth, increased turbidity, and decreased oxygen levels.

Under state statute, all new discharges to the Lake Champlain basin, (which includes Cabot) must limit the discharge of phosphorus (to 0.8 part per million on a monthly average). But also under state statute, Cabot is specifically

exempted from being required to operate the equipment until July 1, 2003. This is of economic significance to the town because annual operation costs for phosphorus removal may be \$10,000 - an additional cost to system users. However, Cabot is also authorized to participate in a pilot project that could allow the town to reduce phosphorus by means other than operating the phosphorus removal equipment. This would be by developing an off-site on non-point phosphorus reduction plan - in other words, by preventing release of phosphorus runoff from agricultural practices, erosion (particularly along roads), or other human activities. Implementing the plan could save the town and users money while achieving better results.

The new treatment plant will be monitored for phosphorus discharge to determine if indeed it exceeds the 0.8 part per million discharge limit, requiring operation of the equipment.

### Long-term Maintenance and Operation

The Cabot Wastewater Commission has yet to develop a long term financial plan for operation and maintenance of the treatment plant. Technical assistance is available from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) in financial management planning.

### Allocation of Reserve Capacity

A careful prioritization of the allocation of reserve capacity will necessarily define the scope of potential development within the wastewater service area. The Wastewater Ordinance sets forth mechanisms for the distribution of capacity for different user classifications. The Wastewater Commission is charged with setting annual limits for each user classification. However, long term management of the reserve capacity is not addressed in detail. Is excess capacity to be allocated indiscriminately among these user classifications or are certain uses more beneficial to the town as a whole? Should uses such as elderly housing, restaurants, or other “common” uses be favored over increased residential development? Should some capacity be reserved for future expansion of the school?

Goals	Plans of Action
Efficiently operate the wastewater system in accordance with state and local regulations	Regulate future development within the wastewater service area Improve compliance with the sewage ordinance The Selectboard should periodically meet with the Sewage Officer to review the status of compliance with the sewage ordinance to determine if problems or concerns exist. If it is determined that phosphorus treatment is necessary at the wastewater treatment plant, the Conservation Committee and the Wastewater Commissioners should explore the feasibility of developing a phosphorus reduction plan as an alternative. The Wastewater Commission should develop a financial management plan for the wastewater system within the next year, utilizing assistance available through the VT DEC. The Wastewater Commission, in close cooperation with the Planning Commission, shall, within the next year, discuss and develop clear allocation formulae, to insure a fair and beneficial distribution of reserve capacity consistent with the objectives of the Town Plan and other ordinances or regulations of the Town of Cabot. The Planning Commission will evaluate the need for educational materials about wastewater disposal. Such material might be included on the permit application or on educational brochures.

## **Solid Waste**

Cabot has been a member of the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District (CVSWMD) since 1989. The District and its 22 member towns provide solid waste management services and establish regulatory programs to properly reduce, recycle, and dispose of hazardous waste.

Solid waste collection and disposal is not provided to residents as a municipal service. Residents have several options for trash disposal: self-haul to a transfer station (such as old C.V. Landfill, East Montpelier, or Hardwick);

private hauler pick-up; or bag drop off to a private trash hauler. CVSWMD is no longer attempting to site a landfill in one of its member towns. Transport and disposal is provided through private firms to a limited number of large landfills. There is currently adequate landfill capacity in the private sector.

A mandatory recycling ordinance exists for all residents and businesses in the District. The following materials are required to be recycled: newsprint, clear glass, #2 HDPE clear plastic (milk jugs), tin and aluminum cans. In addition to these materials, businesses and municipalities are required to recycle cardboard and office paper.

The District operates 11 recycling depots or centers in member towns. Cabot is fortunate to have one of these centers located on Cabot Creamery property adjacent to the fire station to serve Cabot and other surrounding member towns. Residents are able to recycle all of the mandatory items plus other materials such as boxboard, and #1 PETE plastic (soda bottles). (Note: private haulers must also provide recycling services) The depot is open 9 a.m. to noon each Saturday. It is currently operated under a contract with John Cookson Trash Hauling. The Cabot Conservation Committee oversees the operation of the recycling facility.

In December 2001, the recycling trailer and platform was removed and replaced with a compartmentalized roll-off container in which mixed containers and mixed fibers are now accepted. This so-called "co-mingled" system reduces labor for both users and attendants. Unfortunately, not all users are informed about recyclable and non-recyclable items and there are others that choose to break the rules. This requires constant education and surveillance.

The District has established a facility for the collection and proper disposal of hazardous wastes by residents and small businesses at the C.V. transfer station in East Montpelier. This facility is open two Saturdays per month during the months of May through November. It is currently planned to have an annual one-day collection event in Cabot for the convenience of outlying towns in the District.

As a member town, Cabot has actively participated on the CVSWMD Board in its decision-making process including the regulatory process and establishing programs to serve its member towns. Other services include funding of Green-Up Day activities, backyard composting, reuse events such as clothing Drop and Swap events, clean up of dump sites and educational programs, including school programs. Cabot and all member towns are currently charged an annual per capita fee of \$1.50. The remainder of the capital and operating budget is funded through a \$12 per ton surcharge on trash disposal. The largest portion of the District budget is earmarked for recycling programs.

## Issues

Many town residents and some businesses do not recycle or utilize hazardous waste collection days sponsored by CVSWMD. Some illegal trash burning and roadside dumping occurs. There is a continuing need for education related to recycling and waste disposal.

Convenience of and cost of disposal are probably two major factors affecting current waste disposal habits in town. In addition to illegal disposal, some large or bulky wastes, such as furniture, appliances, abandoned trailers, motor vehicles, and tires remain on a property because of these reasons.

CVSWMD is investigating the establishment of fewer full-service depots throughout the District (to handle not only recyclable materials, but tires, scrap metal, trash, used oil, etc.). This could result in the closing of the Cabot recycling depot or possible relocation in Cabot or one of the neighboring towns.

There are growing numbers of junk cars and non-permitted (junk) mobile homes in town. In many cases, applicable state laws are being violated, with enforcement responsibility falling on local authorities. Assistance and education on junk car removal is necessary. CVSWMD offers free junk car removal. The Selectboard recently appointed a committee to develop a junk car ordinance for consideration at a future Town Meeting. The proposed ordinance was presented at the 2003 Town Meeting and was defeated in an advisory vote.

Goals	Plans of Action
	<p>Cabot residents and businesses will be educated on proper disposal, recycling and waste reduction and will be provided with convenient and cost-effective opportunities to do so where possible. The Conservation Committee will work with the Selectboard and the District to provide convenient recycling/disposal opportunities for tires, scrap metals/appliances, motor oils, and bulky items. The town should remain an active participant in the District by annually appointing a representative and alternate and attending board meetings. Town residents will be informed and educated about recycling, waste reduction, and proper waste disposal on a regular basis through town reports, mailings, newspaper articles, and other means. They will be encouraged to participate in Green-Up Day activities, household hazardous waste collection events, and other activities. The Cabot School should take advantage of waste management educational programs such as those offered and subsidized through the Solid Waste District. The town zoning regulations in regard to abandoned trailers should be enforced. The Selectboard should address junk cars, abandoned trailers, illegal burning, and illegal dumping using public education, zoning regulations, ordinances, and enforcement.</p>

## Cabot Community Center

The 1998-99 Cabot Planning Survey, a 1998 community workshop analysis, and UDAG surveys tabulated as early as 1995 all consistently listed a “community center” as a very high priority. Currently Cabot does not have a community center. The school and church have long been the hub of activities for education, arts, recreation, social services, and community meetings.

To date, Cabot has limited after-school programming, yet we have many latchkey youth in our community. There is mounting evidence of abuse of drugs and alcohol among Cabot’s youth. This, coupled with the economic pressures which cause parents to spend more and more time working away from home, points to a need for some recreational/educational programming for youth who are not fully engaged in work, school, or other activities. In response to this need, the school and its community partners are discussing the possibility of extended library hours, homework assistance, a computer technology series, art classes, after-school and summer outdoor education activities, and greater exposure to the performing arts.

The creation of the Cabot Coalition and the receipt of the New Directions Substance Abuse Prevention Grant have provided Cabot with many opportunities to strengthen our community. The coalition is composed of youth and adults who have come together to address a variety of community needs, and while this partnership is rich in ideas, enthusiasm, and commitment to our community, financial resources are limited. One result of this discussion has been the establishment of regular teen-centered evening events in the gym and the cafeteria. The Coalition established the so-called HOP (Hang Out Place) for after school activities which operates twice weekly for grades six through twelve at the school (and previously at the Masonic Lodge).

Cabot Commons, a senior housing group, is also interested in the development of a multi-use community center.

Several possible sites for a community facility include the Masonic Lodge, the house at the wastewater plant, and the former Shoestring Theater building in the village.

Goals	Plans of Action
	<p>Establish a space in Cabot dedicated to recreational, social, cultural, and culinary uses. Facilitate the efficient use of existing facilities in Cabot for recreational, social, cultural, and culinary uses. Community organizations should determine the physical and programming needs for the center, undertake a feasibility study of new and existing sites, and explore funding options. The Cabot School Board should consider buying the former Shoestring Theater building to facilitate future adaptation for school and/or community use. Consider a Facility Coordinator (perhaps within the scope of service provided by the Cabot Coalition) to coordinate the efficient use of school, town, and private facilities. Advertise and coordinate the availability and use of facilities for community purposes</p>

in a town web page.

## Health and Human Services

Health Care services within the Town of Cabot are limited to Cabot Health Services, a branch of The Health Center in Plainfield. The Plainfield Health Center and Hardwick Area Health Center are the closest available healthcare facilities. Central Vermont Hospital in Berlin, Copley Hospital in Morrisville, and Northeast Vermont Regional Hospital in St. Johnsbury are the nearest hospitals. Most patients in need of emergency services are transported to Central Vermont Hospital.

There are several privately operated home-based childcare services within the Cabot community.

The United Church of Cabot plays a valuable supportive role for Cabot senior citizens. The Church is also home to a weekly Alcoholics Anonymous meeting.

### Local Appropriations

The Town of Cabot annually appropriates funds to a wide range of agencies to support their services to Cabot residents. These organizations include the following:

A.W.A.R.E.; Battered Women's Services and Shelter; Central Vermont Community Action Council; Central Vermont Council on Aging; Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice; Family Center of Washington County; Onion River Food Shelf; Peoples Health and Wellness; Retired Senior Volunteer Program (R.S.V.P.); Sexual Assault Crisis Team of Washington County; Twin Valley Senior Center; Vermont Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired; Vermont Center for Independent Living; Washington County Diversion Program; Wheels; Washington County Service Bureau; and Woman Centered.

### Available Services

Many social services are provided to Cabot residents by regionally based organizations within Washington County as follows:

*Family Education and Support:* O.U.R. House, child sexual abuse advocacy and treatment; Parent Anonymous Chapter; Parent to Parent of Vermont; Vermont College Big Brother/Big Sister Program; The Washington County Family Center, offering parent child play groups, parent education, and parent support activities and community development activities; the Washington County Youth Service Bureau; and Head Start

*Community Mental Health Services:* Washington County Mental Health Services providing intensive family based services, home based family counseling, and resolution programs to include the community Based Sex Offender Treatment program.

*Pregnancy Prevention and/or Services:* Planned Parenthood of Northern New England

*Supervision/Treatment:* Washington County Diversion

*Substance Abuse, Prevention and Treatment programs:* Washington County Youth Services Bureau; Maple Leaf Counseling; Champlain Valley Drug and Alcohol Services; the Dawnland Center; Substance Abuse Prevention Services of Barre; and other private providers.

### Cabot Coalition

Vigorous community dialog led to the formation of several initiatives including the Cabot Coalition. The Cabot Coalition has been funded by the 'New Directions' grant awarded in October of 1998, and other grants.

The overall project goal of the Cabot Coalition is to delay the onset of first use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs and to change norms that accept youth substance use. Specifically, the Coalition intends to continue to work with our community partners to:

- Reduce ATOD use among 12-17 year olds ;
- Delay the onset of first use;
- Prevent persistent anti-social behavior by early elementary school students and
- Improve and expand leadership of, and participation in, community ATOD abuse prevention efforts.

The Coalition is administered by a full-time coordinator, Lori Augustiniak

### Issues:

While our surroundings appear idyllic, the challenges that face our rural community are serious. Location and isolation are major issues. Transportation can be a problem, as youth and families most in need of services often do not have access to private transportation and little public transportation is available in Cabot.

Our community does not have a local newspaper or radio station to provide notice of community events or coverage of community news. For the most part, 'goings-on' are publicized by word-of-mouth, or by sporadic coverage in the *Hardwick Gazette*.

Goals	Plans of Action
<p>Sustain the efforts of existing community partnerships started under the auspices of the Cabot Coalition and the beneficial programs and services provided through the New Directions Grant, and subsequent grants. Disseminate information about the wide range of health and human services provided both locally and regionally. Make these programs accessible to more of the Cabot populace.</p>	<p>Increase opportunities for social interaction among and between all age groups within the Cabot Community. The School Board should collaborate with the Cabot Coalition on programs and curricula which educate young adults about youth risk behaviors</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support the continuation of a Coalition coordinator position to work with community members in the expansion and enhancement of services to youth, adults and elderly in Cabot. In many cases, grants require matching local funds. This includes developing a plan to make the Coalition sustainable with part-time or volunteer efforts.</li> <li>2. The Coalition coordinator will work with coalition members to assess training needs and organize such training (e.g. leadership and facilitation) to increase the number of community coalition members who hold leadership positions in Cabot.</li> <li>1. The Coalition should explore methods by which volunteers and/or paid staff may employ the "Patch" concept similar to that provided by the Hardwick Area Patch: <i>"The purposes of 'Patch' include: Making services more easily accessible to local residents by being located in the community; actively involving community residents in the planning and delivery of services; building on the community's strengths and resources, and the skills and talents of local residents to create a healthier place to live and raise children; and involving all members of the community in solving community-wide problems."</i></li> <li>2. The School Board should consider allowing greater utilization of school transportation resources for use by the public, and should explore the feasibility of making space available for satellite programs otherwise offered only at state and county levels at outlying locations.</li> <li>3. Develop a town web page, which will in part be devoted to health and human services available to the citizens of Cabot.</li> <li>4. Consider using information kiosks or other similar structures or locations as standard points of distribution of printed materials and postings in public places.</li> <li>5. Establish an informal "welcome wagon" program for newcomers to the community, to acquaint them with services, events, programs, community organizations, health care availability, etc. in town.</li> <li>6. The Coalition coordinator will work with coalition members and other community organizations to sponsor community ATOD education sessions/workshops and continue to publish a quarterly newsletter to increase awareness of ATOD issues and community activities.</li> <li>1. Seek ways to formalize the mentoring programs of the Cabot Coalition to support at-risk youth, as well as those programs such as the Next Steps Program, undertaken by the school to include peer tutoring, Adopt-a-Grandparent Program, inter-generational luncheons, and service learning projects.</li> <li>2. Involve youth in planning and implementation of programs.</li> <li>1. Hold a public forum to discuss appropriate approaches to addressing youth risk behaviors.</li> </ol>

## **Activities of the Cabot Coalition:**

The primary activities of the Coalition are focused on prevention strategies that include:

### **School Based Curricula**

In grades K-12, that teaches students to make healthy choices regarding the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs

### **Counseling & Support Groups.**

The Coalition initiated and works to sustain a drug and alcohol counselor (Student Assistant Counselor - SAP) at school at least two days per week. The counselor has been holding small group sessions with students to discuss conflict resolution, stress management, drugs and alcohol prevention, effects of alcohol on the family, and eating disorders, and has been meeting with students and parents individually to discuss alcohol, tobacco, or other drug uses.

### **Camp Cabot Summer Program.**

Nearly half of all youth ages 8-14 participate in this free summer outreach/prevention project.

### **Mentor Program.**

The Coalition is developing a community mentor program for youth that need an extra measure of friendship in their life.

### **Youth Leadership Development.**

The Coalition supports two student-led prevention groups, one in the middle school and the other for high school students, to promote healthy decision-making and substance free alternative activities.

### **Education and Skills Training.**

In addition to reaching youth, the Coalition is dedicated to educating the entire community about ATOD use, abuse and prevention. Activities have included prevention workshops and community member participation in state, regional and national prevention conferences.

### **Cabot News.**

The Coalition launched this quarterly community newsletter that publicizes community events and prevention information.

## Youth at Risk

Figures from the 2001 Youth Risk Behavior Study, administered to Cabot School students in 8<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade are highlighted below:

### The Good News

- Youth norms around smoking and drinking alcohol improved.
- Our youth are talking to their parents and school staff about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs more than their peers around the state.
- More youth report that their parents discourage tobacco use by youth.
- Cabot youth rate their developmental assets (involvement in school activities and community, parental communication about school) higher than other youth in Vermont

### Areas in Need of Attention

- Our youth use their seatbelts less than the Vermont average
- The number of Cabot youth who report drinking, using marijuana, and receiving illegal drugs on school property increased
- More students obtain their alcohol from home
- Tobacco is a big problem among our youth (25 percent have smoked one or more days in the past 30 days)
- Heroin use among our youth has doubled and our rate is double the Vermont average (7 percent vs. 3 percent)
- IV drug use has tripled and is double the Vermont average (6 percent vs. 3 percent)
- Nearly 60 percent of our youth know an adult who used illegal drugs in the past year

### We Exceed Vermont Averages in Several Categories. More Cabot Youth:

- Rode in cars with drivers under the influence of marijuana
- Attempted suicide in 2001
- Drank 10 or more days in the past month
- Tried marijuana prior to age 13
- Report that it is easy of very easy to get cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana
- Know an adult who has sold drugs in the past year

## Recreation

A variety of recreational programs and activities are available in Cabot. The Cabot School provides a vital component through its sports programs. Many non-student residents use school gym facilities. A group of Cabot residents is raising funds for a new floor in the gymnasium. Many parents volunteer to coach the school's basketball, soccer, baseball, and cross-country running teams. Local residents also contribute time to support cross country skiing activities, adult basketball, ice skating, and certified swim instruction at nearby Groton Pond.

Public lands in Cabot are available for hiking, swimming and boating access and other low-impact recreation. These include our town forest, town rights-of-way, and class IV roads, which may be used for skiing, biking, jogging, horseback riding, and walking. Cabot owns the recreation field at the north end of village, with its two ball fields, basketball court, storage buildings, and picnic area.

The Recreation Committee actively promotes, maintains, and raises funds for recreational improvements and equipment purchases. These efforts have contributed significantly to improvements at the recreation field including construction of the shelter facilities, drainage improvements at the adjacent baseball/soccer fields and a new guardrail at the parking area.

Privately owned and/or operated facilities include Larry & Son Field, which is used for soccer, baseball & softball, and Wendell Carlson's ball field, used mostly for softball.

Public boating access is available at West Hill Pond, Joe's Pond, and the Molly's Falls Reservoir. Recreational activities at Joe's Pond include boating, fishing, and camping.

The Skylighters Snowmobile Club maintains trails in Cabot. Approximately fifty miles of trails, primarily on privately owned land, interconnect with the Vermont Association of Snowmobile Travelers (V.A.S.T.) system are enjoyed by snowmobile operators, and cross country skiers.

Some individual property owners maintain walking, hiking, and cross-country ski trails on their land. Horseback riding is a growing recreational activity in town. Hunting and fishing are significant recreational activities in town and bring important seasonal revenues to local businesses.

### Issues

It is clear that the network of trails and town rights-of-way are currently used extensively by the residents of Cabot. The preservation of these rights-of-way and continued cooperation between users and landowners is critical if we are to maintain the privilege of the safe and respectful use of these resources.

There is significant interest in bicycling by children in town. Local residents and bike tourists are commonly seen biking our roads. Several town rights-of-way and class IV roads might be considered as bike trails. Speeding and narrow shoulders on Cabot roads can be problems for bikers and pedestrians. A significant need can be demonstrated for trails that are independent of the main thoroughfares and for safe wide shoulders/sidewalks/bike lanes for safe recreational bike use along town roads. This is especially important between Lower Cabot, Cabot Village, and the Cabot Plains Road.

The Recreation Committee has been a recipient of federal funds for improvements at the recreation field facilities. The Recreation Committee has traditionally requested 500 to 1000 dollars in funds at Town Meeting to supplement its own fund raising activities such as concession sales at school sporting events, movie nights, and an annual golf outing. Maintenance of the recreation field facilities is currently accomplished through the efforts of the Recreation Committee and town maintenance personnel. A predictable source of revenue for these maintenance needs are warranted.

Over 50% of Cabot school age students participate in interscholastic athletic activities. The current gym facilities

are barely adequate. Seating is inadequate at popular sporting events. Team sports and adult and non-student uses of the gym often compete for valuable gym time.

While team sports are important to the Cabot community, there is a need to accommodate the recreational and fitness needs of students who choose not to participate in team sports. Efforts at the school to introduce individual sports (track, cross-country running, skiing), have been successful but have little financial support or transportation to and from events. These efforts are dependent on volunteers to coach and provide transportation and therefore may not be available every year.

There has been interest in additional facilities for activities such as tennis, a ropes course, and fitness trails, which might be used by a large segment of the community not currently served. Facilities and activities for individual achievement should be as strongly supported as those efforts geared toward scholastic team sports.

Goals	Plans of Action
<p>Identify and insure access to our recreational resources for various outdoor recreational activities.</p>	<p>Develop a formal plan for maintenance of facilities that are currently utilized for team sports and recreational activities. Encourage the development of additional facilities necessary for indoor sports activities. Encourage the development of facilities and funding to support non-team sports. The Conservation and Recreation committees shall work together to accomplish the following: 1. Develop a plan for acquiring or maintaining a trail system in town for recreational use to include all existing town rights-of way, particularly trails and class four roads. 2. Identify needs and opportunities for additional trails to include bicycle and exercise trails. 3. Identify through signs, maps, and other means, Cabot's trail facilities, land trust lands, town forests, historical resources, and other desirable areas warranting public access. 4. Study the compatibility of motorized and non-motorized recreational use of these facilities. Identify trails which might be safely used by both and, where appropriate, make recommendations for the separation of uses. 5. Develop a strategy for safe bicycle travel between areas commonly accessed by residents. 6. Review all speed limits in town and make recommendations for posting all roads for speeds consistent with safe recreational use. 1. The town shall continue funding a summer maintenance position for the purpose of mowing and otherwise maintaining spaces currently used for recreational activities such as the ball fields and outdoor courts. 2. The School Board should provide more funding for the maintenance of the recreation facilities currently used by the school. 3. The School Board should encourage students to assist in the maintenance of recreational facilities used by the school. 1. The School Board should examine the need for expansion of the existing gym and development of additional multi-use facilities. 2. The school should continue to make facilities available for public use, whenever possible. 1. The Recreation Committee should conduct public surveys and promote the development of facilities identified by those surveys, such as tennis courts, paddleball courts, fitness trails, and ropes courses. 2. The Cabot School Board should promote individual sports and recreational opportunities outside the scope of traditional team sport activities by funding facilities and transportation. Consider developing an outdoor recreational equipment "library" which makes available canoes, snowshoes, volleyball equipment, skis, etc. for use by town residents for a nominal fee.</p>

## Arts and Cultural Activities

Arts and cultural activities traditionally centered around the school and church until 1991, when actor and director William Joerres moved his amateur Shoestring Theater from Montpelier to the old Methodist Church on the village common. For the next five summers, Joerres produced plays and other arts events using local, non-professional performers, producers, and crew. In 1995, Peg Lane, a teacher at the Cabot School, formed the Cabot Cultural Connection (CCC), which brought performing artists into town for school and community events. Among those presented by the CCC were folk singer Margaret McArthur, Quebecois dancer and musician Benoit Bourque, and the Kahurangi Maori Dancers from New Zealand.

During the 1980s, Project Harmony, an exchange program with the (then) Soviet Union, not only exposed Cabot youngsters to life in Russia, but hosted a group of Armenian students and musicians in Cabot. In recent years, some high school classes took field trips to Quebec, France, and Belize, and other places. The Cabot High School Jazz band, under the direction of Brian Boyes, performed at the FlynnSpace Theater in Burlington.

In 1997, the Cabot Community Association (CCA), a non-profit corporation, was founded as the successor to the CCC, with a goal, among others, of creating a venue in the village for arts and cultural activities. Cabot Public Library offers reading programs for children, pre-school story hours, and book discussions for adults through the Vermont Council on the Humanities.

The school's student concerts and annual student theatrical production are some of the highlights of the town's cultural year, along with the occasional contra dances organized by residents David and Susan Carpenter, and the many interesting events sponsored by the Historical Society. Art teacher Ruth Kaldor offers instructional courses in her classroom for community members. Students have produced the occasional "Cabot Chronicles," a newspaper featuring local news and interviews. The Twin Town Homemakers, organized under the aegis of the Cabot United Church, holds quilting, cooking and crafts events. Cabot is the home of Vermont Poet Laureate Ellen Bryant Voigt, film star Luis Guzman, fiddle player David Carpenter, the summer residence of author Dorothy Sucher, and appears as the setting of David Mamet's novel, *The Village*. In 1998, Kingdom County Productions conducted a summer youth acting and screenwriting program in Cabot that contributed to the film, *In Jest*, directed by Vermont filmmaker Jay Craven and featuring Vermont actors Tantoo Cardinal and Rusty Dewees.

### Issues

There is currently no space dedicated to the performing arts in town, although the school gymnasium, cafeteria, Willey Building auditorium, and the former Shoestring Theater have served this function to varying degrees. Local cultural activity might be enhanced by the presence of a central gathering place for year-round informal socializing.

Goals	Plans of Action
Develop an arts and cultural facility which may include performing space, teaching space, art gallery and coffee shop, community center, and other functions.	Encourage the Cabot Community Association and Community Center advocates to explore facility needs and consider temporary programs in existing town space, such as the Willey Building.

## Communications

Telephone service for the 563 and 426 telephone exchanges are provided by Northland Telephone. DSL internet access and cable television service is now available in some areas of the village and town. Cell phone service providers have been seeking to expand coverage along US Route 2 in Cabot.

### Issues

The general public and businesses depend on adequate telecommunications services. Wireless communications for

emergency services are not adequate in some locations in town. It is important for town officials (Selectboard, Planning Commission, and Zoning Board of Adjustment) to be knowledgeable and informed on the technology so as to make siting decisions that are in the best interests of the town.

<b>Policies</b>
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Minimize visual, aesthetic, safety, and property value impacts of telecommunications facilities and towers by enforcing setback requirements. Require a clear demonstration of need for the proposed facility by the applicant. No towers should be built on speculation. Require that the applicant demonstrate that lease space on a tower is available to other telecommunications providers under the terms of a fair market value lease. Avoid siting towers on ridge lines.
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<b>Goals</b>	<b>Plans of Action</b>
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Preserve the character of the town while allowing adequate telecommunications services to be developed. Minimize the impact of telecommunications facilities on the scenic, historic, environmental, natural, and human resources of Cabot. Provide zoning standards and requirements for the regulation, placement, design, appearance, construction, monitoring, modification, and removal of telecommunications facilities and towers. Locate towers and/or antennas in a manner which promotes the general safety, health, welfare, and quality of life of the citizens of Cabot. Minimize the impact of telecommunications facilities on property values and scenic areas within the town.	
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Th  
e town should encourage the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission to develop a regional plan for adequate telecommunications facilities and services to assure that they are sited for the greatest benefit with the least adverse impact. The town should periodically update its telecommunications zoning regulations to keep abreast of technological changes and advancements in the industry.

## TRANSPORTATION

The road system in Cabot is a network of 78 miles of state and town highways. There is no public rail, air, or water transportation in town. Over-the-road public transportation is limited to school busing and Wheels services.

### State and Federal Highways - 7.2 miles

U.S. Route 2 traverses 6.7 miles from the southerly border with Marshfield to the easterly side into Danville. Route 232 (Groton-Marshfield ) runs for 0.4 miles just inside the town's border.

### Class 2 Highways - 17 miles

State Aid Highway #1 (paved), also known as Route 215, runs northeasterly 6.8 miles through the middle of town between Marshfield and Walden. It is sufficient for the present traffic volumes, but there is a need to widen the narrow bridge on a sharp curve between Lower Cabot and Cabot Village.

State Aid Highway #2 (paved), the South Walden Road, runs 3.9 miles from Cabot Village to South Walden. It is sufficient for current traffic volumes.

State Aid Highway #3 (gravel), West Hill Pond Road and Cabot Road, runs from Lower Cabot to West Hill Pond, thence to Woodbury, 2.9 miles in all.

State Aid Highway #4 (gravel), Danville Hill Road, runs 3.5 miles from Cabot Village to U.S. Route 2 at East Cabot.

### Class 3 Highways

These are other infrequently traveled public highways so designated that are not Class 1 or 2. The minimum standard for Class 3 highways is that they be negotiable under normal conditions all seasons of the year. Cabot has 41.2 miles of such highways, which are mostly gravel roads. A bridge on Sawmill Road is scheduled to be replaced by the State of Vermont within the next several years.

### Class 4 Highways & Trails

These include all other infrequently traveled public highways. They are not eligible for state aid funds, are not maintained for winter use, and may be reclassified or discontinued. Cabot has 12.1 miles of Class 4 highways, including 4.5 miles of legal trails.

Trails are public rights-of-way, usually either abandoned highways or new public rights-of-way laid out by the Selectboard to provide access to abutting properties or for recreational use. The town has no obligation to build, maintain, or safeguard the use of its trails. The Vermont Local Roads Program suggests that, *"With the population growing and the interest in outdoor recreation also increasing, it is important to keep Class 4 highways and trails as public resources. Town-controlled corridors will help to ensure that there will continue to be a place to enjoy snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, walking, bicycling, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, and other activities . . . Class 4 highways and trails also provide important transportation access for forest and agriculture maintenance."*

There has been little change in the classification of roads in the past five years, and there is no anticipated change during the current planning period.

Cabot Village is not bisected by U.S. Route 2 like the surrounding villages in Plainfield, Marshfield, and Danville. Therefore the village does not have many of the traffic issues and problems created by this main east-west traffic corridor. Nevertheless, traffic speed on our class 2 highways and back roads raises safety concerns, particularly on narrow roads with no shoulders.

Truck traffic from the Cabot Creamery is accommodated on most of Cabot's roads. Unpaved class 3 back roads

must also accommodate school buses and some trucks for business and agricultural activity. Heavy rains have caused steeper sections of some class 3 roads to wash out on occasion at great cost and inconvenience to the town.

Cabot's road crew does an excellent job of maintaining the roads. The Cabot School is often able to remain open while surrounding schools declare a "snow day." This is a credit to our road crew and program.

Cabot is continuing work on culvert replacement throughout the town. Culverts are being inspected, upgraded, and added as necessary to insure that erosion problems are minimized. The town will have a record of the location, size, and condition of all culverts in town.

Loggers must pay a \$500 refundable deposit for a log landing within the public right-of-way, to cover any road damage caused by truck and equipment traffic. Driveway permits are also required when new driveways are constructed to pay for the cost of the culvert installation.

New sidewalks and curbs have been added in the center of the village, improving pedestrian safety.

### Issues

Village parking is limited for businesses, residential, and community functions in the village. The school is also facing parking problems. The town should address this issue by providing public parking in the village. This can be done by acquiring land or converting land from existing uses.

The town should address traffic speeding, which is a pedestrian safety and nuisance issue. More signs, physical traffic calming methods, or enforcement of the speed limit could make the village more pedestrian-friendly. Bike and pedestrian access by children to the ball fields and recreational fields from the village and from Lower Cabot is not adequate from a safety standpoint. Concerns have been expressed about excessive speeds on back roads and outside of the village.

The town does not have an annual road plan and long- range maintenance strategy. Such a plan could save the town money in the long run. The town should take full advantage of training and assistance that can be provided by the Vermont Local Roads Program and the Vermont League of Cities and Towns on issues of erosion control, road drainage improvement, tree and brush removal, and maintenance for paved roads.

The town garage is located in a densely populated residential area. Both the building and the site are limited. Part of a long-range maintenance plan should include a capital budget for replacement or relocation of the town garage, equipment replacement, and major road work.

The town has no available public transit services. Given the nature of area, the town and surrounding areas may benefit by working together on securing rural public transit services. Such efforts are underway in the town of Plainfield, and the town should stay in communication with Plainfield on this matter.

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Plans of Action</b>
Provide a well-maintained network of roads, parking facilities and pedestrian accessibility that maintains the rural character of the town.	The Selectboard should develop a five year road and equipment maintenance strategy which includes an annual road plan and budget for both paved and gravel roads. The Selectboard should appoint a study committee to evaluate replacement and improvement options for the town garage facility. The highway department should provide adequate line paintings for pedestrian crossings. The Selectboard should appoint a study committee to explore ways to improve parking in the village and to control speeding where necessary in town. Preserve native trees as a visual and noise buffer along town road rights-of-way, where practicable.



# HOUSING

## Current Conditions

Cabot's homes come in a large variety of sizes, shapes, conditions, and ages, but there is really not very much variety in type. Most of us (87%) live in conventional single-family detached houses, a few of which, primarily in the village, have been subdivided into apartments; a smaller number of us (6%) live in mobile homes which have been more or less permanently placed on rural building sites. At this time, there are no purpose-built apartment buildings, row houses, elderly housing or nursing home complexes, tenements, dormitories or congregate housing units. Houses in the village areas are sited relatively close to each other. In the surrounding areas they range from scattered to isolated.

The population of Cabot has been increasing over the past several decades, creating a demand for additional housing. Many of the newer residents do not work in town. Consequently, Cabot is slowly evolving into a bedroom community with a concurrent increase in creeping suburbanization. Almost all of the new housing units have been built in the outlying areas for several reasons, including lack of accessible land and the septic constraints in the village and Lower Cabot areas, and the perceived desirability of the rural-residential style of living - "a yard of one's own." The result has been a low-level form of sprawl; increasing traffic on the back roads; increasing burdens on the fire department, ambulance service, and school system; increasing the possibility of environmental pollution; and decreasing the rural character, which most of us consider one of the most basic positive attributes of the town.

According to census data, Cabot's population has grown steadily through the last 30 years. In the last 10 years, it grew at twice the rate of the State of Vermont. At the same time, the population is aging, with a median age of 37.9 years, and median household size has declined. Working together, these two factors add up to a demand for more housing units. Home ownership in Cabot is less affordable than in Washington County as a whole (the average household income in Cabot is somewhat lower and more Cabot families pay more than 30% of their income for owned housing). The year-round rental housing market in Cabot is very tight: there are few units available, with rental rates about half of Washington County's, but they in fact, statistically, appear to be more affordable than owned housing units.

A large number of new housing units were constructed in Cabot between 1970 and 1980, corresponding with a major population boom. All in all, growth of the number of housing units in Cabot has remained approximately in line with population growth and the reduction in household size.

Recently, in response to comments on surveys and at public meetings expressing strong interest in senior citizens' housing, a small group of citizens has established Cabot Commons, a private non-profit organization, with the aim of buying some existing properties in the village and redeveloping/renovating them for senior rental units and some community space.

## Issues

The main issues of concern to Cabot's residents are that quality housing should be available to people of all incomes and all age groups and family types. This includes affordable housing for both homeowners and renters, the existence (and improvement) of sub-standard and other housing in poor condition, and the lack of housing for the elderly. Another recent concern is maintaining the character of the housing in the village: the new wastewater treatment plant may facilitate conversion of existing single family homes into duplexes. Providing housing without compromising the rural character of Cabot is important to maintaining our town's future health and identity.

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Plans of Action</b>
	Allow for balanced development which maintains the traditional New England village center patterns of use (housing is largely single family dwellings), while supporting regulations in the village regarding elderly housing and multi-use dwellings (i.e., home and office, home and shop). Maintain uses in about the same proportions as

they are. Ensure that the town by-laws do not impose any unnecessary regulatory barriers to the provision of affordable housing

1. The Planning Commission can act as a task force to gather up-to-date and reliable information on Cabot's current housing situation.
  - a. Continue to monitor efforts to establish elderly housing in town.
  - b. Consult with Marshfield and other neighboring towns regarding the possibility of establishing a sub-regional task force to research housing issues, identify needs and develop programs and proposals, particularly in the area of elderly housing.
2. Use planning and zoning to increase flexibility where warranted, to remove unnecessary regulatory barriers, to encourage concentrated settlement patterns and creative site designs, including clustering, as a means to reduce infrastructure and land costs.
3. Find effective ways to provide financial aid, such as supporting the purchase of development rights and partnerships with non-profit agencies, including community land trusts and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund.
4. Consider the use of Certificates of Occupancy to ensure that housing is not a threat to public health and safety and is built to the specifications under which it is approved.

# ENERGY

In Vermont, fossil fuels are our primary source of energy, accounting for 75 percent of all energy use. Reliance on fossil fuels contributes to dependence on foreign countries, increased atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases, acid rain, and poor air quality. Continued dependence on fossil fuels will ultimately create severe environmental problems and the potential for economic hardship when supplies dwindle or are cut off. In Vermont and in Cabot, we are severely impacted by rising energy costs because of our dependence on the automobile and our cold climate heating needs.

Common sense dictates that we attempt to decrease our overall energy demands, use our current supplies more efficiently, and begin to shift to more local and renewable sources of energy such as hydro, wind, solar, and wood. While these alternatives are not completely benign in their environmental impacts, they are generally less harmful than fossil fuels and are sustainable over the long term. Many studies indicate that for every dollar spent on outside or non-local energy sources, 85 cents flow out of the regional community. This impacts the local community both in terms of income and employment. In contrast, for every dollar spent on wood, only 12 cents leave the community. Another consideration is that these local renewable energy resources add to the self-reliance of the town, as they are not subject to politically-induced shortages or price hikes.

Land use policies are important in facilitating energy conservation and the development of renewable energy resources. Land use planning can save energy that would otherwise be lost through inefficient site designs and settlement patterns. Strategies to consider include building on southern slopes, use of vegetation as wind block and shade, and flexible lot layouts with clustered buildings. Directing new growth toward areas with existing infrastructure and services can also reduce energy demands.

Although the energy picture often appears abstract and beyond the influence of individual communities, local planning can play a positive and effective role in guiding energy decisions. By promoting efficient land use patterns, participating in energy development decisions, facilitating alternative transportation options, and encouraging energy conservation strategies, even a small town like Cabot can help to bring about a more sustainable energy future.

Cabot residents make good use of locally available and renewable energy for home heating. Wood is Cabot's most popular heating fuel, well above state and county averages. Burning wood keeps more money in the local economy. Home heating costs and energy use can be significantly reduced through auxiliary solar systems, passive solar design, and even building orientation. In addition, proper insulation and weatherization of both new and existing structures yields returns far greater than the investment required over the life of most buildings.

Cabot residents along Route 2 and Route 215 receive electricity from Green Mountain Power Corporation (GMP). Those in the hills and along the backroads are served primarily by the Washington Electric Cooperative. GMP maintains hydroelectric generating facilities at Marshfield Reservoir and Joe's Pond.

## Issues

Cabot residents should reduce their dependence on non-renewable fossil fuels for environmental and economic reasons. Residential and municipal energy conservation would benefit the town, as would using local fuel sources such as wood to a greater extent.

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Plans</b>
<b>of Action</b>	
Encourage energy conservation and the development of local, renewable energy resources. Promote more	

efficient transportation opportunities. Support demand-side conservation programs that are designed to reduce demand for electricity through greater energy efficiency and conservation. Promote land use policies which minimize infrastructure and transportation-related energy costs. Promote the use of practical energy conservation measures in the siting of new development and in the orientation, design, construction, function, and maintenance of new or renovated buildings. Reduce municipal energy expenses. Encourage adherence to environmentally sound utility maintenance practices. Minimize the impact of energy generation facilities on property values and scenic areas within the town.

The town will encourage the Regional Planning Commission to assist with local and regional initiatives that promote public transportation and carpooling. The town will conduct an energy audit of municipal facilities.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Cabot has one large employer. The Cabot Creamery was founded in 1919. It joined the Agri-Mark Cooperative in 1992. More than 1,500 dairy farm families in New England and New York own Agri-Mark, which markets 40% of the milk in New England. The Cabot plant is one of three. Its specialties are cheese, cottage cheese, sour cream, yogurt, and butter. The best-known product sold under the Cabot brand is traditional cheddar cheese, which has won many prizes, including World's Best Cheddar. Much of this cheddar is aged in the Cabot warehouse and wrapped in the packing plant. The Visitor Center attracts tourists and school groups.

More typical to Cabot are small, home-based, businesses. Just a few of Cabot's small businesses are two general stores, a hardware store, three auto repair businesses, professional offices, landscaping and garden suppliers, a clock repair shop, a bed and breakfast, a garden statuary manufacturer, and a children's clothing designer and distributor. We have many skilled tradesmen, artisans, crafts people, and other independent contractors. In keeping with Cabot's agricultural roots, many businesses have strong ties to the land. There are about twenty small to midsize farms, that raise everything from dairy cows to llamas and turkeys. In early spring, Cabot's sugar maples are tapped. Green Mountain Power Corporation produces electricity with water stored in both Molly's Falls Reservoir in Cabot and Joe's Pond in West Danville. The Cabot public schools are an important employer. Many Cabot residents work in other towns. The nearby small cities of Montpelier and St. Johnsbury are common destinations for commuters.

In Cabot the next five years will see modest growth in businesses that capitalize on the beauty of our land. The interest of an increasingly urban population in rural recreation will attract more visitors to our ponds, cross-country skiing, camping, fishing, canoeing, hunting, bicycling, snowmobiles, and other outdoor activities.

Cabot has more than forty miles of snowmobile trails. They are part of the Vermont Association of Snowmobile Travelers (VAST) statewide network. Most are main "corridor" trails that are groomed to a width of eight feet. The trails traverse the town in all directions. Cabot Skylighters is the local snowmobile club. Snowmobile registrations and member dues pay for grooming and maintenance of trails by VAST. The 157 snowmobile clubs in Vermont have 27,000 members. This sport creates significant, and growing, economic activity in the snowy months. Our economy benefits from riders who buy gasoline, food, beverages, and other items on their rides through Cabot.

Businesses that do not need a large population nearby, such as small retail, insurance, real estate, automobile service, food service, and consulting, will thrive. The Cabot public school will continue to be an important employer. Custom trucking, farming, haying, logging, cord and pulp wood cutting, maple syrup production, Christmas trees, quarrying, and plant and tree nurseries will bring in income from our natural resources.

UDAG Fund - Cabot has a valuable economic resource. In 1987, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded the Town of Cabot a grant of approximately two million dollars. The first loan was to the Cabot Farmer's Co-op to build a warehouse and improve Cabot Creamery's wastewater treatment. The Creamery makes periodic repayments at 4% interest. That loan will be fully repaid by 2003. The repaid money, called the Cabot UDAG Fund, is used to boost Cabot's economy and community development. Cabot intends to conserve the UDAG Fund in perpetuity. The UDAG Fund Committee makes grants and loans under a written plan that is periodically revised and voted on at Town Meeting. The current mission statement is: "The purpose of the Cabot UDAG Fund is to provide financial resources through a fair and consistent process to local individuals and groups for activities and projects that serve to strengthen the economic, cultural, educational, environmental and social well-being of the Cabot community."

In addition to loans for community purposes, scholarships, and community grants, the UDAG Fund makes commercial loans to Cabot businesses. Since 1992, the Committee made loans to businesses in the agricultural, food, retail, clothing manufacturing, and service sectors. The Fund boasts an excellent record of repayment. The UDAG Fund Committee is essential to a thriving economy in Cabot. (See section on Town Government.)

### Issues:

Cabot's economy is part of a larger system. Much of what we need originates elsewhere. Much of what Cabot residents sell - labor, services, or goods - is sold outside of town. Manufacturing and agricultural businesses are a declining share of the economy. The service sector is increasingly dominant. In Vermont, travel and tourism are vital to the economy. Cabot would benefit if more tourists and snowmobile enthusiasts patronized local businesses.

Businesses depend on good infrastructure. In addition to roads and bridges, they rely increasingly on telecommunications. Businesses that use the internet to stay in touch with customers and suppliers have more opportunity to locate in small towns than traditional enterprises. Good mail and private delivery services can be vital to small entrepreneurs. Some businesses need good access to a commercial airport. Burlington has the nearest airport with major carriers. Although, the distance is moderate and the roads good, firms that often rely on air travel may find the winter drive daunting.

Cabot does not have a chamber of commerce or similar group to promote Cabot and its economy. Business people and others interested in Cabot's economic future could form one. The Selectboard should consider creating a paid position to improve Cabot's image and support suitable businesses. The UDAG Fund Committee, when it revises its plan and when it makes loans to Cabot businesses, should consider balancing economic and environmental goals. A town web site could provide information about Cabot and encourage small businesses to locate here. Cabot's public schools can foster economic learning, through school to work and other programs, particularly for students who may want to start local businesses after graduation.

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Plans</b>
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**of Action**

Cabot wants to keep strong ties to its land and natural resources. Much of Cabot's history is the story of people who both lived and worked in our town, relying on themselves and their environment to earn their daily bread. We recognize the world is changing but, insofar as it is practicable, Cabot wants to maintain its independent tradition and spirit of self-reliance. Cabot wants sustainable economic growth. Where zoning permits mixed uses, we must make sure that agricultural, commercial, and residential uses are compatible with each other. The scale of development must respect Cabot's rural character. We prefer activities that preserve the beauty of our natural environment, do not require substantial new infrastructure investments, and maintain the culture and traditions of a rural lifestyle. The often-difficult task is to balance these goals as the world outside Cabot changes.

Revisi

ons to the zoning regulations should look to direct economic growth to areas that have adequate capacity for controlled development. The UDAG Fund Committee should investigate if a Cabot tax stabilization fund would encourage desirable new businesses to locate in Cabot.

# LAND USE

## Current Land Use

Currently, Cabot is nearly two-thirds forested and one-third open land. The number of operating dairy farms continues to decrease, with barely a dozen farms remaining. Through the Vermont Land Trust, the development rights have been purchased on three contiguous operating dairy farms in East Cabot, totaling over 1000 acres. This will help to assure preservation of farmland, open land, and scenic landscapes in this section of town, which may serve as a model for future preservation efforts.

The clusters of homes and commercial establishments around the town's best mill sites in Cabot Village and Lower Cabot have always served as focal points of commerce, industry, and social and civic life. The villages and countryside are physically distinct and serve distinctly different functions. This separation of rural-agricultural areas from the business and social centers in town helps to create a landscape, culture, and lifestyle still treasured by residents and visitors alike. The use of the land is inextricably linked to "rural character." In survey after survey, Cabot residents have expressed their desire to retain the elements of this rural character in town.

Most of the residential growth in Cabot over the past 30 years has been outside of the village area. This new growth pattern, if left unchecked, could ultimately result in loss of rural character, less vibrant villages, the waste and/or destruction of natural resources, and greater public costs.

Fortunately, Cabot appears to have many land owners who are committed to the preservation and sound management of their lands. This is demonstrated by high participation in Vermont's Use Value Appraisal Program. This program allows landowners (25 acres minimum) to have their land taxed according to its use value, not its development potential.

The recent construction of a wastewater treatment plant serving the village will correct water pollution problems caused by inadequate septic systems and poor soils. At the same time, it may lead to residential and commercial development and changes in property use in the village. If growth in the village area is properly managed and monitored, the village can become a more vibrant focal point for the community.

Surveys show that most residents do not want to see rapid residential growth in Cabot. Yet residential growth will continue. This growth should be managed to preserve open spaces, discourage large residential developments, and maintain the overall town character.

The Cabot Creamery has a strong and visible influence in the village and the town. Public surveys show strong public support for our largest industry. The town must maintain an open dialogue with management of the facility to the mutual benefit of the town and the Creamery.

Goals
Open Land Protect agricultural lands of outstanding quality so they are not developed in a manner to exclude the production of food and fiber. Allow development to occur in a manner that thoughtfully preserves open space, both forested and unforested, and maintains the rural character of Cabot. Maintain and enhance agriculture and encourage agricultural diversity. Historic Preservation Preserve and protect recognized historic sites and buildings consistent with their historic character. Residential and Commercial Development Concentrate residential growth in or near existing village settlements. Promote and develop the concept of hamlets for more concentrated residential development Discourage large subdivisions that consume open space and that stress local services and infrastructure. Assure compatibility of residential and commercial development that are in proximity to one another. Natural Areas Identify and protect natural areas that contain rare, remnant, or unique species of flora and/or fauna. Woodlands Protect high quality woodlands as a sustainable source of logs, pulpwood, and cordwood. Discourage clearcutting of forested land that leads to habitat destruction, soil erosion, and stream sedimentation. Avoid habitat fragmentation in permitted development. Protect deer wintering areas. Water Resources, Wetlands, and Floodplains Maintain and enhance biodiversity in and around lakes and ponds. Protect threatened and endangered species that use ponds and wetlands. Retain the present amount (no net loss) of significant wetland (Class One and Two) and the values and functions

they serve. Maintain high ground water quality. Reduce damage from future flooding and prevent changes to the landscape that could increase hazardous flooding conditions. Increase public access to Cabot's lakes and ponds. Scenic Areas Protect the rural character of Cabot through identification and protection of scenic areas including open spaces, ridgelines, and the working landscape.

## Application of Zoning Regulations

New land uses in Cabot are subject to the application of zoning regulations. The purpose of such regulation is to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the populace. In regard to land use, key purposes also include protection and conservation of the value of property, protection against overcrowding of land, and the encouragement of such present and future development that benefits the town.

The zoning ordinance, through its terms, conditions, and guidance, is the principal vehicle by which the goals of the Town Plan can be realized. No division of a parcel of land or construction of any type, excavation or change in the use of a building, or extension of any use of land can commence except in compliance with the ordinance. The Town Plan must be revised every five years. No new zoning provisions may be adopted in the absence of an updated Town Plan.

## Zoning District and Zoning Map

Through the town zoning ordinance, Cabot is divided into “zoning districts” intended to identify the key resources, existing land uses, permitted and allowed uses. For each district, the ordinance provides guidance and requirements intended to promote land use that is consistent with the Town Plan. A municipal zoning map clearly defines district boundaries.

Each zoning district has its own requirements. The ordinance outlines district uses that are allowed, uses that are allowed if minimum permitting requirements are met, and uses that may be permitted if higher “conditional use” standards are met. The intent of the districts is to promote certain types and levels of land use that are compatible with existing land uses as well as the goals of the Town Plan. Conversely, districts plainly and directly discourage land uses that are inconsistent with plan goals.

## Conditional Use Requirements

In any district, certain uses may only be permitted by approval of the board of adjustment if general and specific standards prescribed in the zoning bylaws are met, as determined by the board after public notice and public hearing. These standards are intended to be rigorous, since conditional uses, by definition, introduce potential new impacts not necessarily envisioned under existing plans. Ultimately, the zoning board of adjustment shall not grant a permit unless it finds that the proposed conditional use meets all criteria set forth in the zoning ordinance. State statute defines the general standards and a list of site-specific standards that the board may impose.

## Planned Residential Development

The zoning ordinance allows the modification of some district regulations to allow for planned residential development (PRD), subject to conditions and in accordance with procedures. The purpose of the provision is to encourage flexibility of design and appropriate development of land. The PRD option offers the opportunity to cluster or otherwise locate housing so as to preserve the natural, scenic or agricultural qualities of open land. The PRD option also can be used to achieve a mixture of housing types of different densities.

## On-Site Sewage Disposal Requirements

Cabot’s on-site sewage disposal requirements mandate that all new dwellings be served by a septic system that is designed by qualified individuals. This mandate renders some land unsuitable for development because of depth to ground water, ledge limitations, poor soils, or severe slope. Recent changes to Vermont’s on-site sewage disposal requirements will potentially allow for sewage disposal systems to be approved in areas that previously could not be developed due to wastewater disposal restrictions. It will be important for the town to understand these regulatory changes in light of its existing ordinance.

## Voluntary Restrictions

Increasingly, land trusts and other types of conservation organizations are helping landowners to protect agricultural, scenic, forest, and habitat resources through the voluntary sale or donation of development rights. The use of land trust techniques provides a non-regulatory alternative that has already been utilized in Cabot to preserve open space and agricultural lands. As understanding and acceptance of such land preservation alternatives grow, preservation easement purchase and donation will likely play an even greater role in the future.

### **General Policies and Regulatory Guidance**

Public access to lakes and ponds for boating, fishing, swimming, and other recreational activities should be encouraged. Prohibit development on slopes greater than 25 percent in all districts and regulate development of slopes over 15 percent so that development will not result in soil erosion and/or sedimentation of surface waters. Timber harvesting - incorporate into zoning by-laws the voluntary guidelines set forth in the current version of the Acceptable Management Practices (AMPs) for Maintaining Water Quality on Logging Jobs in Vermont. A protective strip of vegetation of at least 50 feet in width should be left along all surface waters. A more restrictive list of conditional uses in zoning districts should be considered in revisions to the zoning regulations, when such uses may conflict with the land use purposes of the particular district and/or the goals of this plan. Accessibility - It shall be the policy of the town not to accept new roads or to upgrade class 4 roads unless there is clear benefit to the town from such action. Rural Character - Whenever possible, the rural character of Cabot is to be preserved. Rural character means the historic development pattern of densely built village centers clearly delineated from the surrounding low-density rural residential area. The village centers and hamlets should contain residences as well as businesses and public buildings. The rural residential district should contain and maintain open spaces, farms and forests as well as residences, home-based businesses, and a few small scale commercial and industrial establishments built in a way that is in scale with and respects the scenic rural character and working landscape of Cabot. Use of Natural Resources - it shall be the general policy of the town to encourage the wise and efficient use of natural resources and to facilitate the appropriate extraction of earth resources and the proper restoration and preservation of aesthetic qualities of the area. New development outside of the village should site buildings at the edges of open spaces and below ridge lines and site road access so that a minimum of open space is consumed and road entrances are shared where possible. Large scale residential developments (of a size that would exceed current school student capacity) is not consistent with the rural character of Cabot. Encourage residential developments of two or more units and all mixed use development within the Agricultural/Rural District to be developed according to PRD (Planned Residential Development) or PUD (Planned Unit Development) standards in order to conserve natural resources and protect important landscape features. Clarify lot size requirement by stating clearly in the zoning regulations that each lot size minimum applies to each residential unit, commercial or industrial structure proposed on a parcel, except as may be provided in PRDs and PUDs. Develop clearly written zoning regulations that inform the citizens of Cabot of their rights and responsibilities, and the process they must follow to achieve their development goals. The regulations should be supplemented with printed material to answer commonly asked questions about the Town Plan and zoning regulations and clarify common misunderstandings. Carefully monitor compliance with Cabot zoning regulations. The village wastewater system will be confined to its existing limits unless and until any proposed expansion/extension of wastewater line is addressed in a revision to the Town Plan. Zoning regulations should consider any impacts of the wastewater system on maintaining the character of the area served by the system. Conversions from seasonal dwellings or camps to year round residences should require conditional use permits and septic system review. Improvements to Route 2 in the vicinity or close proximity to Marshfield Reservoir should maintain existing vegetative buffers and not encroach any further on the reservoir. Where possible vegetative buffers should be improved.

## Land Use Districts

Three current land use districts are described below. These districts generally represent land use patterns. Future development should be limited to densities and types which preserve the identity of these districts, and limited to a

scale which is in keeping with the nature of the various districts. In establishing the land use districts, the following conditions were taken into consideration:

1. Current and historic settlement and land use patterns.
2. The need to accommodate a reasonable level of growth and development for the foreseeable future.
3. Existing infrastructure and the reasonable future expansion thereof.
4. The location of important natural resources.
5. Present and prospective access by improved public roads and public utilities.
6. The rights of landowners to the reasonable economic use of their property.
7. Future needs and desires of the town as discussed in the goals, policies and regulatory guidance of this plan.

### Medium-Density Developed District

#### *A. Physical Characteristics and Boundaries*

This district encompasses all lands within 150 feet of the street line in the village and within 300 feet of the street line down through Lower Cabot as far as Durant Cemetery. It also encompasses parts of Hookerville Road and Ennis Road in South Cabot. It generally includes those areas of town that have historically been most densely settled along the main streets and roads.

#### *B. Current Land Uses, Trends, Problems/Issues*

Much of this district is now served by a new wastewater system which will allow for some commercial expansion and some in-fill development and expansion. Much of the village is built out but there is some additional space for new development in the Lower Cabot portion of this district. Available parking in the village is limited both for commercial and municipal functions. Additional centralized parking near the stores and the Willey Building is greatly needed. The town garage exists in a densely settled part of the village, a less than desirable mix of uses in this area.

#### *C. Desired Future Conditions*

The following are the desired characteristics of this district:

1. High-density, mixed use development.
2. Village remains the center of social and civic and light commercial/retail activity.
3. Lower Cabot remains primarily single family residential.
4. Parking in the village is improved through the development of a parking lot near the center of commercial and municipal activity.
5. The town garage is relocated out of the village.
6. Elderly housing is established in the village.

#### *D. Recommended Strategies*

1. The district boundaries should correspond with the present wastewater service area. Any lands outside of this area should become a part of the Low-density Residential and Agricultural District. The Undeveloped Village District should be eliminated. Any Cabot village lands not within the new "Village District" should become part of the Low-density Residential and Agricultural District.
2. That part of the current district located in South Cabot should become part of the Low-density Residential and Agricultural District.
3. A Committee should be formed by the Selectboard to report back on recommendations for relocating the town garage.
4. The town should explore a municipal use for the house it owns on Saw Mill Road near the wastewater treatment facility.

### Undeveloped Village District

*A. Physical Characteristics and Boundaries*

The Undeveloped Village District consists of all other village lands not incorporated into the Medium-density Developed District. Due to the terrain of this area, it is largely undeveloped.

*B. Current Land Uses, Trends, Problems/Issues*

This area is not served by the wastewater system. One acre zoning for residential use may be too small for adequate separation of water supply and septic on adjoining lots.

*C. Desired Future Conditions*

This area is most suited to low-density agricultural and residential uses.

*D. Recommended Strategies*

Eliminate this district and combine with Low-density Residential and Agricultural District, which will make minimum residential lot size two acres.

### Low-Density Residential and Agricultural District

*A. Physical Characteristics and Boundaries*

This district includes most of the land in town not within Cabot Village or within 300 feet of Rt. 215 in Lower Cabot with the exception of shorelands around the five ponds in town. It is characterized by a mix of residential and agricultural uses, open land, and forested land.

*B. Current Land Uses, Trends, Problems/Issues*

This district contains most of the town's actively used farmland, and it is also where most of the new residential development is occurring. In addition, commercial uses also occur. Conflicts can occur in this zone between residential and commercial activities because of issues such as noise, dust and truck traffic. However, surveys conducted by the Planning Commission show that most people find the mixed uses acceptable.

*C. Desired Future Conditions*

1. The rural character of the landscape is maintained. New development is mainly residential in nature. Agricultural uses are maintained or expanded. Commercial development is on larger parcels with uses that are compatible with residential development.
2. Small home businesses should be compatible with nearby residential and agricultural uses.

*D. Recommended Strategies*

1. Increase minimum lot size for commercial development (aside from home occupations) to assure compatibility with residential uses.
2. Provide incentives and education to promote site sensitive lot configurations.

### Shoreland District

*A. Physical Characteristics and Boundaries*

This district encompasses all lands within 800 feet of the shoreline (normal mean high water mark) of the following ponds: Coits Pond, West Hill Pond, Marshfield Reservoir, Molly's Pond, and Joe's Pond.

*B. Current Land Uses, Trends, Problems/Issues*

Except for Joe's Pond, much of the district has low-density development. Generally, the soils in this district are

not suitable for conventional septic systems. Future residential development has the potential to negatively impact water quality, which is generally of good to high quality and suitable for recreational purposes. Public access for recreational use of the town's ponds is limited to a small access area on West Hill Pond, a large boating access area on Marshfield Reservoir. Access to Joe's Pond is available in the town of Danville. Vegetative buffers, which are important to water quality, are lacking or compromised in some developed shoreland areas, and are in need of further study and evaluation. Current zoning allows for very limited commercial use in this district other than commercial camps and commercial forestry.

*C. Desired future conditions*

1. Low-density development occurs in the Shoreland District and high water quality is maintained for recreation.
2. Public access to Cabot's ponds is enhanced.
3. Vegetated buffers are maintained and enhanced along shorelines.

*D. Recommended Strategies*

1. Minimum lot size for permitted land uses should be increased to two acres (from one acre) for single unit residential development, consistent with the Low-density Residential and Agricultural District.
2. Permitted commercial uses in zoning regulations for this district should be evaluated and possibly expanded (for example, to include businesses associated with recreation).

## **Appendix A - Census Data**

## **Appendix B - Maps**

**Utilities, Facilities, and Transportation**

**Natural Resources**

**Land Use / Land Cover**

**Current Zoning**

**Proposed Zoning Changes**

## Appendix C - Plans of Action Summary

See text for full description

Plan Section	Responsible Entity	Plans of Action
Sense of Community	Community organizations	1. Regularly and actively involve youth in civic activities in the town. Encourage Cabot Coalition to advocate and train community groups to more actively involve youth.
	Selectboard/Planning Commission	2. Establish town web site.
	All community groups	3. Make regular submissions to quarterly Cabot Coalition Newsletter.
Historic/Cultural Resources	Cabot Historical Society	4. Photographic inventory of village, historical buildings, farms. Preserve historical town records.
		5. Support and assist public and private historical efforts and research of properties. Promote the town's historical strengths by informing and educating both new and existing residents..
		6. Compile a genealogy of early settlers and prominent citizens. Schedule a special meeting to discuss genealogy in general and town genealogy.
		7. Increase mailings to members and make publications more available locally. Increase visibility of the Society at public events. Increase number of events open to the public and open hours of society buildings
Natural Resources	Selectboard / Planning Commission	8. Eliminate trash and agricultural plastic burning through education, or if necessary, through development and enforcement of an ordinance.
	Conservation Committee	9. Review and update Cabot's Flood Hazard Ordinance to comply with state standards.
	Selectboard	10. Adopt a highway access ordinance requiring adequately sized culverts and angle of intersection with town roads.
	Conservation Committee	11. Request accurate flood hazard maps through the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission.
		12. Encourage road design standards, reconstruction, and improvements which preserve mature vegetation as a visual and noise buffer, especially along Route 2 adjacent to Marshfield Reservoir.
		13. Create vegetative buffers of native species around sensitive lakes and pond shores by working with and educating land owners.
		14. Protect Marshfield Reservoir from extensive shoreland development through zoning / other methods.
		15. Identify opportunities to increase public access to Cabot's lakes and ponds.
		16. Seek assistance to evaluate and characterize wetlands, especially those adjacent to ponds and the river.
	Planning Commission / Conservation Committee	17. Consider necessary zoning restrictions and/or educational programs to maintain wetland quality and values that may be affected by land use activities.
	Conservation Committee	18. Request additional water quality studies and assistance from the Agency of Natural Resources in streambank erosion protection methods.
		19. Conduct a river and stream assessment with assistance from the Agency of Natural Resources to determine areas where streambank stabilization methods and riparian buffers would be appropriate.
	Conservation Committee / Wastewater Commissioners	20. If phosphorus treatment and removal is necessary at the municipal wastewater treatment plant, determine the feasibility of developing an off-site phosphorus reduction / mitigation plan.
	Village Trustees	21. Implement the Source Protection Plan for the Cabot Village Water System and update every three years as required.

<b>Plan Section</b>	<b>Responsible Entity</b>	<b>Plans of Action</b>
Natural Resources	Planning Commission	22. Evaluate water supply source protection plans and propose any zoning bylaw amendments necessary to protect the public water supply.
	Village Trustees / Selectboard	23. Explore the feasibility of extending the village water supply to Lower Cabot.
	Conservation Committee	24. Maintain an active Keeping Track Program to monitor wildlife and to educate residents on wildlife.
		25. Educate landowners on habitat protection measures, including invasive plants.
		26. Explore local incentives that can be provided to landowners for conservation easements.
	Conservation Committee / Cabot Public Library	27. Continue to provide natural resources / wildlife educational opportunities to Cabot residents.
	Selectboard	28. Assist Cabot Ambulance Service in advertising / recruiting new volunteers and monitor status of service. If service deteriorates, devise plan of action to improve service.
Law Enforcement	Selectboard	29. Continue to contract for local sheriff / police coverage .
	Community organizations, school, Village Trustees	30. Encourage formation of “neighborhood watch” group in the village and promote community involvement in finding solutions to vandalism.
Fire Protection	Cabot Fire Department	31. Complete the installation of dry hydrants at the identified areas of greatest need.
		32. Use any available opportunities to publicize / advertise the need for volunteers.
	Selectboard	33. Continue to support the sinking fund for eventual replacement of the pumper truck.
Cabot Public Library	Library Trustees / Librarian	34. Develop quarterly newsletter, highlighting books, programs, other resources, and hours of operation.
		35. Maintain a large selection of current fiction and nonfiction. Increase audio-library materials.
		36. Increase hours of operation to include additional days open. Continue to increase ease of use.
		37. Continue to offer successful and varied programs, including wildlife/natural programs through VINS, book discussions, summer reading, Preschool story time.
		38. Add additional staff, volunteered or paid.
		39. Offer computer instruction for groups, one-on-one, and self-direction.
		40. Participate in Vermont On-Line Library so patrons can access electronic resources at home and library
		41. Develop technology plan and budgets for updates and expansions of technology to meet needs.
Educational Facilities / Services (Cabot School)	School Board	42. Any facility review, including a space needs review, should be effectively shared and communicated with the community.
	School Administration	43. Publicize school events and activities to all town residents. Improve community communication.
	School Administration	44. Explore methods to engage students and faculty in community service and town government.
	School Board / School Administration	45. Seek out and implement effective ways to inform and engage town residents on significant budgetary issues.
Town Government	Selectboard / Planning Commission	46. Begin discussions on the development of a capital budget.

<b>Plan Section</b>	<b>Responsible Entity</b>	<b>Plans of Action</b>
	Selectboard / Village Trustees	47. Develop a single governance structure to operate water supply and wastewater services.
Town Government	Selectboard	48. Develop a proposal for creating and funding the position of town manager.
	Selectboard/Planning Commission	49. Sponsor an annual forum to familiarize Cabot residents with duties of town officials to encourage interest in seeking office.
Sewage / Wastewater	Selectboard	50. Periodically meet with the Sewage Officer to review status of compliance with sewage ordinance.
	Wastewater Commissioners	51. Working with the Conservation Committee, consider the feasibility of developing an off -site phosphorus reduction / mitigation plan as an alternative to phosphorus treatment / removal, if necessary.
	Wastewater Commissioners	52. Develop a financial management plan for the wastewater system, utilizing assistance from the State.
	Wastewater Commissioners/ Planning Commission	53. Discuss and develop clear allocation formulae for fair and beneficial distribution of reserve capacity consistent with the Town Plan and ordinances of the town.
	Planning Commission	54. Evaluate the need for / develop educational materials on proper management of on-site septic / wastewater disposal systems.
Solid Waste	Conservation Committee	55. Provide convenient recycling/disposal for tires, metals, appliances, motor oils, and bulky items.
	Selectboard	56. Find and appoint town representative to Central Vermont Solid Waste Mgmt District Board.
	Conservation Committee	57. Regularly inform residents about recycling, waste disposal, waste reduction, and Green-Up Day.
	Cabot School	58. Utilize solid waste management educational programs offered through the Solid Waste District.
	Selectboard	59. Address junk cars, abandoned trailers, illegal burning and illegal dumping using education, zoning regulations, ordinances and enforcement.
Cabot Community Center	Community organizations	60. Determine physical and programming needs; undertake feasibility study for site, including funding.
	Cabot School Board	61. Consider purchase of former Shoestring Theater for school and/or community use.
	Community organizations	62. Consider a facility coordinator to coordinate efficient use of school, town and private facilities.
Health and Human Services	Cabot Coalition	63. Support continuation of Coalition coordinator to provide services to youth, adults, and elderly.
		64. Organize training to increase community members holding leadership positions in Coalition.
		65. Explore methods to employ the "Patch" concept (similar to Hardwick Area Patch).
	School Board	66. Consider greater utilization of buses for use by public; explore feasibility of satellite health services.
	Cabot Coalition	67. Develop web page for health and human services as part of a town web site.
		68. Consider information kiosks for distributing printed materials on health and human services.
		69. Establish informal "welcome wagon" program to acquaint newcomers to services, programs, events.
		70. Sponsor community ATOD workshops and

continue to publish quarterly newsletter.

		71. Seek ways to formalize mentoring programs for at-risk youth.
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		72. Involve youth in planning and implementation of Coalition programs.
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	Cabot Coalition / School Board	73. Hold a public forum to discuss appropriate approaches to addressing at-risk youth behaviors.
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Recreation	Recreation & Conservation Committees	74. Develop a plan for acquiring or maintaining a trail system for recreational use to include all existing town rights-of-way, particularly trails and Class 4 roads.
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Plan Section	Responsible Entity	Plans of Action
		75. Identify opportunities for additional trails to include bicycle and exercise trails.

	Recreation and Conservation Committees	76. Identify through signs, maps, and other means the public trails, public lands, and historical sites.
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Recreation		77. Study/ make recommendations on compatibility of motorized and non-motorized use of trails.
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		78. Develop a strategy for safe bicycle travel route between areas commonly accessed by residents.
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	Recreation & Conservation Committees	79. Review all speed limits in town; make recommendations for posting of roads for safe speeds consistent with safe recreational use.
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	Recreation Committee	80. Continue funding a summer position to maintain recreational fields and facilities.
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	School Board	81. Consider more funding for the maintenance of recreational facilities used by the school.
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		82. Encourage school students to assist in maintenance of recreational facilities used by the school.
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		83. Examine the need for expansion of the existing gym and additional multi-use facilities.
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		84. Continue to make school recreational facilities available for public use, whenever possible.
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	Recreation Committee	85. Conduct public surveys to determine types of recreational facilities/activities desired.
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	School Board	86. Consider funding activities and transportation to promote individual sports and recreational opportunities; consider developing an outdoor recreational equipment "library" for loan to town residents for a small fee.
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Communications	Planning Commission	87. Encourage Central VT Regional Planning Commission to develop a regional plan for adequate telecommunications facilities (greatest benefit with least adverse impact).
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		88. Periodically review/revise zoning regulations for telecommunications facilities as technology changes.
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Transportation	Selectboard	89. Develop 5-year road and equipment maintenance strategy, with annual road plan maintenance budget.
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		90. Appoint a study committee to evaluate replacement/improvement options for the town garage facility.
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	Road Commissioner	91. Provide adequate line painting for pedestrian crossings.
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	Selectboard	92. Appoint study committee to improve parking and control speeding in the village.
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	Road Commissioner	93. Preserve native trees as a visual and noise buffer along town rights-of-way where practicable
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Housing	Planning Commission	94. Monitor efforts to establish elderly housing;
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consult with neighboring towns to address housing issues.

		95. Use planning and zoning techniques to encourage concentrated, clustered housing development.
		96. Identify financial aid methods/incentives that encourage concentrated housing development.
		97. Consider use of Certificates of Occupancy in new development.
Energy	Planning Commission	98. Encourage the Central VT Regional Planning Commission to assist with local/regional public transit
	Select Board	99. Conduct energy audit of municipal facilities.
Economic Development	Planning Commission	100. Direct economic growth through zoning to areas that have adequate capacity for development.
	UDAG Fund Committee	101. Evaluate whether a tax stabilization fund would encourage business development.

## **Appendix D - Summary of Various Surveys**

Public Opinion on Planning Issues in Cabot - Various Surveys

1992 Mail Survey - 42 respondents to Planning Commission mail survey

1995 UDAG Survey - written survey at Town Meeting to identify most important projects for UDAG funds

1998 SWOT Analysis - 13 residents participated in a “visioning” session with a Brattleboro architectural firm to identify the town’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (so-called SWOT analysis)

1999-2000 Planning Commissioners’ list of critical issues

1998-99 Planning Commission random phone survey (42 respondents)

### 1992 Survey

- Continued loss of farms, woods and farm economy of concern
- Preservation of rural character
- Lack of senior housing
- Need for more employment in town - small business, light manufacturing, home business
- Sewer system needed

### 1995 UDAG Survey at Town Meeting

Most important projects (for use of UDAG funds)

#### High Priority

- Village water system
- Village sewer
- Youth recreation/drop-in center
- Attract new businesses - incentives
- Improve economics of farming

#### Medium Priority

- Job development program
- Senior housing
- Zoning and planning studies
- Community/recreation center
- Town historical museum enhancements
- Restaurant

#### Low-Medium Priority

- Town manager/coordinator
- Recreation/biking/ski trails
- Work with Creamery to retain presence in town
- Business incubator facility
- Additional recreation field

### SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

#### Strengths

- Small town intimacy
- Affordable place to live
- Quiet
- Good schools

#### Weaknesses

- No place to hang out

#### Opportunities

- Teen center/community center
- Farmland preservation
- Parking solution in village
- Working Landscape

#### Threats

- Haphazard growth not keeping with the character of the town

#### Planning Commissioners - Critical Issues (1999-2000)

- Inadequate village parking
- Sewer system impacts on village housing (single vs. multi-family)
- Cabot Creamery retention in town
- Maintenance of town facilities
- Avoiding incompatible land uses
- Haphazard growth
- Youth facilities/activities
- Greater integration of community in school programs
- Preserve open space/critical habitat
- Commercial development - types and locations
- Telecommunications towers

#### 1998-1999 Planning Commission Phone Survey

- General support for residential and commercial growth dispersed through town
- Types of uses least encouraged: seasonal residents, recreational businesses, garages, tourist businesses
- Most people want to see more recreational opportunities - a mix of types
- Job opportunities for youth and young people; small business growth
- Vast majority in preserving scenic, historic, natural areas and agricultural character
- Preserve agricultural lands
- Mixed reaction to a conservation fund in town
- Very important: improve/maintain municipal facilities; senior housing; youth center; maintaining farms and agriculture; protection of individual development rights; protect natural and sensitive areas; protect ridges and scenic areas; control business and housing developments

- Very strong support for Cabot Creamery
- Most Valued: small town character, sense of community, people, school
- What could be improved over the next five years : Youth opportunities, promote small businesses, recreation opportunities. Significant support for sewer.

General observation by Planning Commission: Amazing consistency in response to what people value most about Cabot. Reading through the surveys was uplifting! Seems like there is general satisfaction with life in Cabot and the way things are, with a couple of consistent themes on how we can improve.