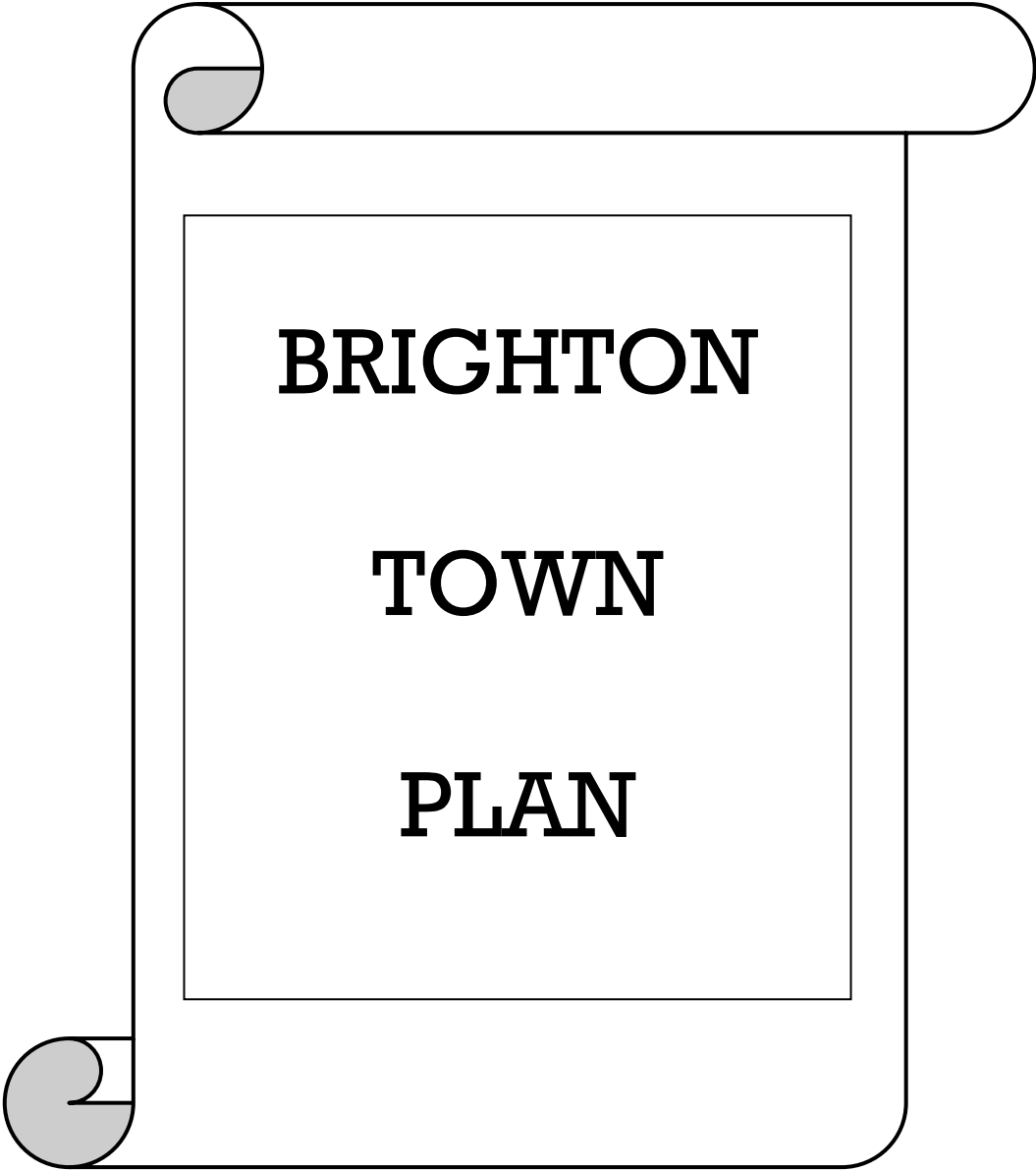


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## INTRODUCTION

In the face of a continued sluggish economy and increasing pressure for development, Brighton must find a way to maintain the delicate balance between growth and the preservation of the unique character of the town. The Town of Brighton (Fig. 1), officially established in 1832, remained a small and isolated community because of the inaccessibility resulting from the rugged, harsh environment. That changed in 1853, when the Atlantic and St. Lawrence Railroad brought jobs including a U.S. customs office, and a tenfold population growth, playing a significant role in the community throughout the two world wars. The customs office officially moved out of Island Pond in 1973. Today the railroad is still in use, however, mainly for transportation of freight and perhaps once a summer, an excursion train passes through.

Today, Brighton is a community of over 1300 residents, the majority of whom live in Island Pond. The community is showing a slow economic growth and lack of employment opportunities. The 1990 census reported unemployment at 28.6%, with 19% of the population living below the poverty level. Also, many of those that belonged to the Church group in town left here to reside in other areas. The majority of the employed people of Island Pond are employed in retail and professional fields such as health and education or in manufacturing. At this point, employment in manufacturing decreased when in August of 2001, Ethan Allen closed the doors of its furniture factory here in Island Pond. Other significant sources of employment include transportation, construction, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and public administration. Of those employed, 41% must commute outside of the county to get to their jobs. Significant community employment exists in local businesses, enhanced by growing tourism.

Island Pond enjoys a rich diversity of natural resources. In addition to the well-known lake and island, Brighton is home to McConnell Pond, Spectacle Pond, Beecher Pond, and a few smaller ponds. Much of the land is covered by boreal forest and wetlands providing an amazing diversity of wildlife and vegetation. Bluff Mountain, the Clyde River and many other rivers and streams add to the unique resources of Brighton. Brighton State Park and an expansive trail system provide an opportunity for residents and tourists alike to enjoy camping, views, hiking, beaches, snowmobiling and cross country skiing. The landscape of historic buildings, mountains, open space and spectacular views provide Brighton with a unique rural character that

must be preserved.

## **SECTION I: VISION AND PLANNING GOALS**

Brighton is a rural town blessed with beauty in its clear rivers and water, abundant forests, and geological variety. This is something that we feel should be preserved.

There are many things that we as a planning board feel are necessary for the future of our town.

For Instance:

1. First and foremost, affordable housing. In order to preserve the neatness of our town, and also for our townspeople to take pride in it, there is a great need for affordable housing. For those who do not own property, and for those who fall into the low-income bracket, self-esteem is very important, and this would be a plus both for the town, and the people who reside here.
2. Economic Growth. We feel that in the next five years or more that our town needs to pursue more economic growth. This will hopefully give more people more employment, which in turn benefits everyone. We are thinking along the lines of a building that could house a fair sized business.
3. We are planning on putting either a boardwalk, pedestrian path or bicycle route around a part of our lake, which enhances the lake and its shoreline. Benches will be available and hopefully a couple of picnic tables.
4. We plan on expanding our playground area. We started out with new equipment and can add to it, as money becomes available. Our tennis court also needs a new face-lift. It should be resurfaced and its nets replaced. We also envision in the park, on Cross Street, a nostalgic skating rink, with lights and perhaps music, to keep at least a little part of our town quaint.
5. Along with putting in new sidewalks in our downtown area, we want to also put steps that will make it easier to negotiate the high curbs. In addition, a sidewalk that reaches to Brighton Elementary School would be a great safety feature.
6. We currently have, in the planning stage, a bike and/or pedestrian path that would go at least part of the way around the lake. An informational outdoor bulletin board could be built to give people information about our town. This information could include scenic areas, hiking trails, camping facilities, fishing accesses, and beaches accessible to the public and tourists.

7. Similar to the town water and sewer systems, we would like to extend the sewer system around the lake, and connect the two ends of the water system. The demand for this increases as numerous permanent homes and many summer camps and homes are being built every year. Given the vital importance of the lake to local recreational interests and to the local economy, the Selectmen and Planning Commissioners strongly favor extension of the sewer line to protect and enhance Island Pond Lake.
8. We have looked at a site that is located behind the town garage to relocate our Recycling Center. There is enough space to handle this and also enough space to add its own driveway, so as not to interfere with the town garage.
9. From the damage done this winter, and the breakage of some, we are in need of new picnic tables, and several more town and park benches. Townspeople and tourists who visit our town use the benches extensively. To promote a neater appearance, we also want to obtain a neater looking container for the disposal garbage.
10. As we have taken on a larger area to cover, we would like to enlarge and enhance our town Fire Station, so that it will have adequate space to house the equipment that we now have, and also space for equipment that we will need in the future. It also is in need of roof repair and a new furnace.
11. Soon we will need more space at the Brighton Elementary School, due to the increase of population, and the rules set by the State for space per student. There is enough acreage to do this.
12. This year will see the construction of the new footbridge that will connect the upper area of town with the lower business district. The bank that stems from the upper part, is in dire need of cleaning. It is our intent to clean this up and to decorate it with flowers and some sort of greenery. It would be a nice addition if there were an "Island Pond" emblem that could be imbedded in the middle.
13. At this point, we understand that it is not for sale, however, it has been recommended by several citizens, that the town of Brighton consider purchasing the Island, if and when it does come up for sale. This could be a much-added attraction for our town.
14. The water and sewer utilities require continual maintenance and upgrading. Currently, the North reservoir is in need of a new 4" water intake line extending approximately one mile from the intake to the reservoir. Also the treatment plant is in need of a new grinder pump to help to

make the process less hazardous.

15. The public baseball field on Derby Street needs a facelift for public recreation.

16. Consideration should be given to improving the third floors of the municipal building and the railroad station for some kind of occupancy to generate revenues.

Our village has several church steeples, rising above the historic restored train depot that now houses the Community National Bank and other offices. Also these same spires overlook a busy, growing commercial district. At the eastern end of town, where the Ethan Allen furniture factory stands empty, new enterprises are being explored.

Town buildings include the Town Hall, a new town garage and an elementary school.

Recreational facilities include an often used gymnasium; an ice-skating rink; many snowmobile trails; hiking trails; rivers and a lake; two baseball fields; a busy recreation area below the Town Hall, which includes a tennis court, a basketball court, newly purchased playground equipment; and a newly acquired boating dock with a close-by town beach which is constantly used during the summer. The State beach and camping area are high on the list of the best in the State of Vermont.

Several state roads connect Brighton to neighboring towns and are used by many local citizens to reach their daily work places.

Planning goals center around providing a balance between and among these diverse interests.

Our population includes many retired citizens, a large work-age concentration and many children, both pre-school age and those attending our schools.

We plan on providing areas accessible to the working public--industrial zone, concentrated service areas in the village, commercial zone and relaxed living areas around farm land, forest and recreational magnets--rural, residential and seasonal zones in the balance.

## **SECTION II: LAND USE AND ZONING DISTRICTS**

Two maps were produced for this section. One large land use map for general use (which can be found in the Town Office), and several copies of a smaller land use map (8.5 x 11) for inclusion in an updated Town Plan (Figure 2). The Northeastern Vermont Development Association supplied the data used to generate these maps. NVDA interpreted the land use from 1982 orthophotos.

From these maps, one can clearly see that the majority of land in Brighton is forested. The town of Brighton consists of approximately 35,000 acres of land. About 30,000 of these acres, or 85%, are forested. This domination of forest as a land use is consistent with other towns in the region. Forested areas in Brighton are used for recreation, commercial timber harvesting, woodlots, and maple sugaring. One should not underestimate the value of this significant amount of open land to the community, as well as to the State of Vermont. Open land is particularly valuable for tourism and recreation. In the words of the 'Planning Manual for Vermont Municipalities', "Open land provides residents and visitors with an opportunity for quiet and spiritual enrichment. It's open land that makes Vermont unique."

The second largest land use in Brighton is agriculture, with 1,695 acres, or 4% of the total. Wetlands come in third and cover 1,180 acres, or 3% of the total. (Note: these wetlands statistics are less accurate than the statistics contained in the wetlands section of this report). Urban/developed lands account for only 292 acres, which is significantly less than 1 % of the total. One can clearly see the concentration of urban development around the northern end of Island Pond. The remaining acres are divided between lakes/ponds, rail transportation, and roads.

The desired land use within the town is to retain the scenic, recreational and environmental qualities of the area while providing for growth which would boost the town's economic condition.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. To make Island Pond Village a focal point within the area for services and economic development while maintaining the town's over-all rural character.
2. To promote the use of land in town in such a way that it benefits the entire community. To help anticipate necessary municipal services as changes occur.

**ZONING DISTRICTS:**

The zoning map officially entitled "Brighton Zoning Map" is recommended as part of that by-law. The Town of Brighton Zoning Map shows a division of the town into the following districts.

"R-1" Residential One	"S" Seasonal
"R-2" Residential Two	"COM" Commercial
"R-3" Residential Three	"IND" Industrial & Special Industrial
"RL" Rural Lands	

**Residential One** is an area close to shopping facilities, serviced by water and sewer, which already has a high density of residential use.

**Residential Two** is the area that is suitable and desirable for single-family dwellings on smaller lots than in rural areas, and public water and/or sewer utilities are or can be reasonably expected in the future to service this area. This district is located near the present commercial area and around the lake.

**Residential Three** areas are suited to single-family dwellings with lots that are at least two acres in size. They are of a rural character and may be suitable for light farming, forestry or limited commercial use, particularly along highways.

**Rural Lands** are the areas that should have the lowest intensity of use, having primarily such uses as agriculture and forestry and a maximum residential density of one family per 25 acres. The criteria used in selecting the land area to be devoted to this use are the lack of roads or road network within the area; the availability of water and sewer; and if utilities are not available, the

suitability and unsuitability of the land for sewage drainage fields; and the remoteness of the land from population concentration.

**Seasonal** areas are certain rural areas of Brighton, desirable for seasonal dwellings, due to their scenic setting. However, the primary use of these areas should continue to be forestry or agriculture. In order to limit the density of seasonal dwellings, to protect the scenic quality and not to over-develop the land in view of its relatively poor soils which are not suitable for residential development, a density of one family per ten(10) acres is recommended.

The **Commercial** area will serve as a central business district for the region, the community, or a sizable portion of the community to include retail and wholesale establishments, offices and limited high-density residential use.

We have combined Industrial and Special Industrial areas into one **Industrial** zone that run along the east side of Route 105 from Henshaw Road to the power facility directly across from the building that formerly housed Ethan Alien furniture factory, and for a depth of 500 feet from the road right of way. The objectives are to provide locations for the establishments-of plants to provide employment opportunities and to broaden the tax base. Potential good highway access and water and sewer services are major considerations. A variety of types of manufacturing are permitted. This area does not conflict with major residential areas.

### **Factors Considered In Developing The Land Use Plan**

Based on some research input, it becomes clear to this board that we must support state legislation such as Act 250 and laws applying to wetland preservation and logging practices if the health and integrity of our town is to continue. These laws should be followed, not just because they are the law of the land, but also because they make good sense. In addition, this board will not compromise preservation of lake qualities and historic areas.

### SECTION III: HOUSING

Brighton has a few for-profit and non-profit providers of low-income housing. Otherwise, except for in the village, there are mostly single-family houses. The subsidized housing providers are Marcel and Anita Gervais, Northern Community Management Corp. (formerly Gilman Housing Trust) and Vermont State Housing Authority. The Gervais operate two sites, Hillside Acres with 12 deep subsidy units and Sunrise Manor with 22 deep subsidy units designated for elderly. The Northern Community Management Corp. operates five sites in Island Pond with a total of 14 units, out of which three are designated accessible. The Vermont State Housing Authority does not operate any units, but issues Housing Choice Vouchers which can be used throughout the county in participating subsidized rental agreements. Eighteen vouchers are available to be used throughout the county, but most are used in the town of Brighton.

#### CURRENT HOUSING DATA

The data used for most of this Town Plan is from the 1990 U.S. Census. The 2000 Census data, except for population data, had not been released at the time of writing this document.

<b>1. EXISTING HOUSING DATA</b>		
<i>Status</i>	<i>Number of Units</i>	
Occupied		
Owner	358	
Renter	156	
Total occupied		514
Vacant		
For rent	22	
For sale only	9	
Occasional use	313	
All other vacant	25	
Total vacant		369
Total units		883
1990 Census, Tables H1, H4, H6, H8		

As of April 1, 1990, there were 883 dwelling units in Brighton. As can be seen in Table 1, of these 883 units, 514 were occupied and the remaining 369 were vacant. Most of these vacant units, 313, are used seasonally, occasionally, or for recreation.

Occupied housing units in Brighton seem to have ample room for the occupants. The number of persons per housing unit in 1990

was calculated by dividing the Town's 1990 population of 1562 by the 514 occupied housing units to get the average of three persons per unit. Table 2 shows how this number worked out in

relation to owner occupied and rented homes. In addition, Table 3 indicates that 89% of the units have 4 or more rooms and that 69% have 5 or more rooms.

<b>2. PERSONS PER UNIT</b>		
<i>Persons</i>	<i>Occupancy</i>	
	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Renter</i>
1	88	58
2	129	34
3	51	22
4	63	22
5	21	16
6	2	2
7 or more	4	2
Total units	358	156
1990 Census, Table H18		

<b>3. ROOMS PER UNIT</b>	
<i># of Rooms</i>	<i># of Units</i>
1 room	13
2 rooms	20
3 rooms	61
4 rooms	181
5 rooms	208
6 rooms	142
7 rooms	105
8 rooms	88
9 or more	65
1990 Census, Table H16	

Brighton's housing stock is at an average age for the region. Table 4 shows that the median year which houses were built is 1957. Nearly half of the overall units were built before 1939 with a large burst of new construction in the 1970s and 1980s. Table 5 indicates that most of the housing units are equipped with complete kitchen and plumbing facilities, implying that the units are in relatively good condition.

<b>4. YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT</b>	
<i>Time Period</i>	<i>Units</i>
1989-March 1990	26
1985-1988	54
1980-1984	103
1970-1979	152
1960-1969	87
1950-1959	63
1940-1949	20
1939 or earlier	378
Median year built	1957
1990 Census, Tables H25 & H25A	

Tables 6 and 7 also give an indication of the quality of housing in the town. Table 6 shows the sources of water for the Town. There is some cause for concern with the 98 houses that have an unspecified source for their water supply. These could be unfiltered and/or untreated surface water which could be a health concern. Table 7 shows that

<b>5. KITCHEN AND PLUMBING FACILITIES</b>		
	<i>Kitchen</i>	<i>Plumbing</i>
Complete facilities	880	863
Lacking complete facilities	3	20
1990 Census, Tables H42 & H64		

many of these units have a managed system for treating sewage. All of the units served by the

public water supply and public sewer are in the village of Island Pond. As discussed under Section IV, the village serves these units with underground lines.

<b>6. WATER SUPPLY</b>	
<i>Source</i>	<i>Units</i>
Public/Private system	647
Individual Well:	
Drilled	101
Dug	37
Some other source	98
1990 Census, Table H23	

<b>7. SEWAGE DISPOSAL</b>	
<i>Means</i>	<i>Units</i>
Public sewer	390
Septic tank or cesspool	484
Other means	9
1990 Census, Table H24	

### **AFFORDABILITY**

The definition of affordable in terms of housing is that the mortgage or rental payments do not exceed 28% of the occupant's gross income. Table 8 presents data on housing costs as a percentage of household income for both renter and occupied units. This table sets forth sample data for owner and renter occupied units.

<b>8. HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN 1989 BY MONTHLY HOUSING COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN 1989</b>					
<i>Income Category</i>	<i>Occupancy</i>		<i>Income Category</i>	<i>Occupancy</i>	
	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Renter</i>		<i>Owner</i>	<i>Renter</i>
Less than \$10,000:			\$20,000 to 34,999		
Less than 20 percent	2	2	30-34 percent	5	0
20 to 24 percent	5	4	35 percent or more	0	0
25 to 29 percent	6	11	Not computed	0	1
30 to 34 percent	3	8	\$35,000 to \$49,999		
35 percent or more	20	32	Less than 20 percent	27	5
Not computed	1	2	20 to 24 percent	1	0
\$10,000 to \$19,999:			25 to 29 percent	0	0
Less than 20 percent	34	9	30 to 34 percent	0	0
20 to 24 percent	2	14	35 percent or more	0	0
25 to 29 percent	9	11	Not computed	0	0
30 to 34 percent	0	11	\$50,000 or more:		
35 percent or more	24	14	Less than 20 percent	34	3
Not computed	0	8	20 to 24 percent	3	0
\$20,000 to \$34,999:			25 to 29 percent	0	0
Less than 20 percent	45	10	30 to 34 percent	0	0
20 to 24 percent	14	5	35 percent or more	0	0
25 to 29 percent	11	3	Not computed	0	0
1990 Census, Tables H50 & H59					

This table reflects the fact that there were 65 renter occupied households that were paying in excess of 30% of their household income. The data for the owner occupied units includes the

costs of taxes, insurance, and utilities as well as the cost of the mortgage if one exists. Hence, only those households paying in excess of 35% of the household's income have been counted as paying too much per month of housing. In this instance, 44 owner occupied households were paying in excess of 35 % of their household income. All totaled, then, there were 109 households that were paying too much for housing. This represents 27% of the households in Brighton. This suggests that housing affordability should be closely watched when the new figures of the upcoming Census data are released. The Planning Commission encourages methods to encourage more affordable housing, such as considering tax breaks or permit conditions for businesses who want to build in town with provisions that they build a certain percentage of units as affordable.

**PROJECTED HOUSING NEEDS**

Before one can project the Town's housing needs, it is necessary to project the Town's population growth. This was very difficult for Brighton because all the projections were wrong. As can be seen in Table 9, the population dropped dramatically in the past decade. The Table

<b>9. POPULATION GROWTH 1990-2000</b>		
<i>Area</i>	<i>2000 Pop.</i>	<i>% Change 90-00</i>
Brighton	1,260	-19%
Averys Gore	0	
Charleston	895	6%
Ferdinand	33	
Lewis	0	
Morgan	669	35%
Newark	470	33%
Warrens Gore	10	
Westmore	306	0%
Essex County	6,459	1%
Northeast Kingdom	62,438	7%

U.S Census Bureau, 2000

also shows that none of the surrounding towns in Essex County experienced a decline in population. There are several things to speculate from these figures. First, a large portion of the population moved out of Town to live elsewhere, and in fact, an estimated 250 members of the local Community Church group did indeed move out of town. Second, all

population projections will be skewed because they didn't account for this change. Third, the amount of available household units opened up. This third assumption would be significant because it would indicate that there should be adequate available housing in the Town

However, there have been some changes to the housing stock, such as fire, which has depleted the number of houses in town. Approximately 20 units including apartment houses and single-family dwellings have burned in the past ten years. No new rental buildings have been built to

replace this loss. Yet there has been new construction of single-family dwellings built by the owners. In summary, the available and projected housing needs seems adequate to accommodate the current and projected population within the Town.

## **SECTION IV: ASSESSMENT OF TOWN SERVICES**

### **UTILITIES AND FACILITIES**

#### **WATER**

As surrounding towns struggle with access to high quality water and appropriate services, Brighton enjoys an ample supply of fresh water at reasonable rates. The Water Department was chartered in 1904, and the 1987 legislature reviewed and approved the ordinance that set up the town's water service. Monthly public meetings are presided over by the elected Water Commissioners, who are responsible to the voters. Recently completed projects:

1. Mountain Street pipes were replaced in 1994 prior to the street's repavement in 1995.
2. 1200 feet of 4" Transite asbestos-concrete pipe were removed and replaced on Lakeshore Drive.

There is concern that the remainder of the approximate 2.5 mile asbestos-concrete pipe left in the ground on the lakeshore should be removed and replaced soon. In the future, the Commission should give a report on the asbestos pipes regarding which pipes are left and where they are found.

Currently, there are 485 water services (pipes going to houses), serving over 675 customers, monitored by the Water Commission. There are two reservoirs in town located in both the northern and southern ends of town. The North reservoir holds 250,000 gallons of water, whereas the South one holds 330,000 gallons. These reservoirs serve most of the village of Island Pond and the houses immediately around the lake. The North reservoir is in need of a new 4" water line extending approximately one mile from the intake to the reservoir. Lakeside Camping has its own private well system. Each reservoir has an approved Wellhead Protection Plan. The cost of water service, for an individual unit, per quarter (based on September, 2000 figures) is a \$35 minimum charge for 15,000 gallons and a \$20 debt payment on a bond issued in 1987. The cost for sewer service is an additional \$49 in addition to this charge.

#### **SEWER**

The Sewer Board monitors public and private septic systems. The EPA regulates the open capacity of municipal sewer access. Wastewater is treated by an aerated lagoon system installed

circa 1976 and is operated under contract with Hoyle, Tanner & Associates. Capacity of this system is 150,000 gallons daily and currently the system has 40% available to new customers. Approximately 400 customers in the village have sewer service. The system was last pumped circa 1990, and with new methods in place, future need of pumping will be minimal. The treatment plant is in need of a new grinder pump, which will help to make the process less hazardous. Also, due to the many new dwellings being built around the lake, there are hopes that in the near future, the town sewer line will extend to the lake. The Sewer Board monitors private septic installations. Coordination among all boards would help so that they have knowledge of proposed installations. Roads and street improvements will also be coordinated with sewer and water improvements as much as possible.

### **TOWN GARAGE**

The Town's road equipment is housed in the new town garage on Railroad Street. It was built near the State garage so that supplies such as sand, gravel, etc., complement town and state requirements. The old site of the town garage will be left conforming to the residential district in which it lies. At the present time, it is being used for storage of town property.

### **FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Brighton's Fire Department is run by an extremely dedicated volunteer group of 27 adults and 2 junior members. At the time of this printing, this number may have decreased, due to the closing of the Ethan Allen plant, and some of the Department's volunteers needing to either move from town, or to commute to other towns for employment. The Town provides a small budget which maintains the fire station building and five vehicles including a fairly new tanker that was recently purchased, two pumpers, 1990 and 1972, an equipment van, and a fairly new pumper equipped with the Water Department's Hale pumper. Another cooperative aspect between the Fire and Water Departments is care of the 95 hydrants located within the town. The Station House maintains the building on Railroad Street, which also houses the Ambulance rescue vehicles. The Fire Station is in need of roof repair, a new furnace, and an addition to the building.

## **RESCUE DEPARTMENT**

Twelve active squad members, one Emergency Medical Technician-Intermediate, two Emergency Medical Technicians, three Emergency Care Attendants and six First Responders, make up the team for the Brighton Rescue Squad. Here again, the Rescue Department will be looking for people to join their team for the same reason as the Fire Department due to the closing of Ethan Allen. Two emergency vehicles (ambulances) are housed in the town fire station. Emergency Medical Technicians attend trainings in Newport and St. Johnsbury. Dispatch from the Derby State Police barracks sends attendants into Brighton, East and West Charleston, Norton, Morgan, Westmore, and Newark. These towns contribute small amounts to the non-profit department to keep things running smoothly. Insurance billings cover other expenses. Off-road rescue missions are effected by volunteers who lend four-wheelers or snow-machines and toboggan-like sleds to the rescue efforts. The new E911 system helps the dispatch office give a more accurate type of information to the rescue teams.

## **POLICE PROTECTION**

Brighton is a satellite of the Derby State Police barracks. State Police protection is dispatched through that office. An elected constable serves the town.

## **RECYCLING STATION**

This is a controlled, maintained station where residents bring all manner of recyclables to the facility where an attendant sorts and stores them by categories. These activities greatly reduce dumping fees for citizens, as well as help in the global efforts to recycle. The Planning Commission highly recommends that the station relocate to an area accessible to residents, but away from the lake and the downtown district, to preserve the towns' natural beauty. It is also a recommendation of the Commission that the new location for this facility should be in the area of the town garage, since the town owns ample property there.

## **PUBLIC SCHOOL/YOUTH SERVICES**

Brighton elementary and junior high school-age population receives public education in a school located on the lower end of Railroad Street. Kindergartners who are age five by August 31st,

may attend in September. The school provides buses to transport children to and from school, where both full time and part time classroom teachers instruct 175 students (more or less). Breakfast and hot lunches are available on the school premises. Programs described in the State's Public School Approval Plan are provided, including art, music, physical education, health, school counseling, special education, Chapter 1 services, and Speech and Language services. School grounds contain excellent playground equipment and a new baseball field. An adjacent fourteen acres owned by the town school district remain undeveloped. The public facility for high school students is North Country Union High School in Newport. An educational facilities map is included in the maps available at the town clerk's office.

### **OTHER MUNICIPAL LAND & BUILDINGS**

Brighton owns two municipal forests. Hiking trails and picnic accesses are being considered to make these lands more available to the townspeople and their guests.

There are several public recreation facilities throughout the town, including the town park facilities such as tennis courts, beach, playground area, volley ball court, basketball court, winter skating rink, ball fields, state park beach, camping areas, private campgrounds. Bluff Mountain has some very nice hiking trails. The public baseball field on Derby Street that has potential to be used in a variety of ways.

The municipal building houses the Probate Court, the Public Library, the offices of the Town Clerk, and Listers. At this time, there is also an office being occupied by the Administrative Assistant. Business space is also rented. An elevator was installed a few years ago, and is accessible to those who really need to use it. Also we have a gym that is used for sports, town meetings, talent shows, and other community gatherings that come about.

Three small cemeteries are located off Pleasant Street. One has had some work done. Brush was cleaned out, and grading was done to enhance the grounds.

The town-owned historic train station is occupied by Community National Bank, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Historical Society, and other professional offices on the 2nd floor.

## **UTILITIES**

Verizon provides telephone service to the town. Citizens Utilities provides electrical power and several dealers from other town provide propane fuel. Eagle Fuel, a local business, along with other private companies from other towns provide heating fuel. Adelpia provides cable access to the townspeople. These services adequately address the needs of Island Pond now, and will be able to do so in the future.

## **TELECOMMUNICATION FACILITIES**

The placement of telecommunication facilities will be provided on an individual basis as determined by the Town Planning Board of Brighton. Towers and related infrastructure require careful consideration. These structures tend to be located on highly visible locations on mountaintops and ridgelines, and the need for additional facilities is projected to increase dramatically in the next five to ten years. The federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 placed certain limitations over municipal control of these structures; however, within those confines, Brighton must act to protect the Town's historic character, rural nature, and aesthetic beauty.

Toward that end, the Zoning Bylaws should incorporate appropriate guidelines and regulations governing at least the following areas: aesthetics, integrity of residential zones, ridgeline protection, preferred locations (general and specific), and co-location or clustering of tower facilities.

The Town of Brighton is quite concerned about the aesthetic and environmental impacts of tower facilities. When planning new infrastructure or upgrades to existing systems, special consideration shall be given to any primary or secondary impacts that would reduce resource values (including but not limited to aesthetics and streetscape design, agricultural land, timber resources, natural areas, wildlife habitat, and historic sites). In addition, when a new facility is planned, there must be clear evidence that the proposed location is necessary based upon economic considerations, potential impacts on resource values, and the resulting public benefits. In all cases, appropriate and suitable techniques shall be used to minimize or prevent any adverse impacts from the placement of telecommunication facilities and related infrastructure. The following list includes goals and policies regarding Telecommunication facilities:

1. All such facilities shall be located in appropriate areas, respecting the integrity of residential areas, aesthetic concerns, and natural resource issues. Through the Zoning Bylaws, the Town may specify reasonable areas where these facilities may be located. This is important on a macro scale (general areas in Town) as well as a micro scale (specific desirable placement or location: for example, below ridgelines, tucked into groves of trees, and the like).
2. Towers and related infrastructure shall only be as tall as absolutely necessary. Where towers are located within the treelines, they should be made to be extendable, so they can “grow” with the trees, and remain the minimum height needed above the treetops.
3. Unless required by the FAA, towers shall not be illuminated. Where required, lights shall be shielded in order to minimize aesthetic impacts, and so that light is cast only where needed.
4. Structures shall be designed in order to minimize aesthetic impacts. Equipment shed can be hidden in the trees; depending on site-specific circumstances, tower structures may be monopole or lattice, of appropriate colors and minimal reflexivity, or even disguised as trees or steeples. Towers and related infrastructure shall be screened from view to the greatest extent possible.
5. Electric or transmission lines shall be installed so as to minimize aesthetic and ecological impacts. For example: clear-cut swaths, created for power lines or access roads which go straight up the mountainside, often create far more adverse impacts than the towers they serve, and are not acceptable.
6. The Town reserves the right to hire independent consultants to evaluate the application and facility. The applicant shall pay for the reasonable costs of these services.
7. All equipment shall be downsized as technology advances and removed when no longer used or needed. These requirements can minimize aesthetic intrusion, while maximizing the potential to serve a greater number of users in the same physical area. A bond may be required to ensure that funds are available to accomplish these purposes.

Maps describing the town’s utilities and facilities are available for review in the town clerk’s office.

## **SECTION V: TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation planning is vital in the overall planning of a community. As one of the essential elements of a municipal plan, transportation systems have a fundamental impact on land use development. Transportation facilities provide for the movement of people and goods within the community and provide connections between homes, industries, businesses, schools, parks, government offices, and places beyond the municipality. (Adapted from the planning manual for Vermont Municipalities, 1993). A map describing the existing and planned transportation facilities is available for review as part of this plan in the town clerk's office.

As such, the regional focus on the transportation system provides the appropriate vantage point for assessing and directing planning efforts. The Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA) has forwarded a general set of transportation goals and objectives for Northern Vermont municipalities.

### **ROADS AND SIDEWALKS**

Brighton has two state highways, Routes 105 and 114. There are no designated scenic roads, but both are scenic through town. These roads are also in moose habitat and there are many warnings of moose collisions with automobiles. Of the twenty miles of paved roads in town, two miles are scheduled to be repaved each year. This meets the State estimates of a reasonable maintenance schedule. Maintenance of dirt roads takes up approximately fifty percent of road maintenance time for culvert repair, grading, etc. Minimum construction standards for dirt roads will be adhered to. In the case of a proposed subdivision layout being submitted, no road will be accepted by the town unless it meets minimum Class Three road standards and the process for laying out a road in Vermont Statutes Annotated, Title 19, Subchapter 2 is followed.

Consideration will be given to the paving of gravel roads where a certain threshold of density of residences is reached. All parking in Island Pond village is on-street parking.

The Town is responsible for certain sidewalk creation and upkeep as well. The Town maintains sidewalks on Derby Street, Railroad Street, Main Street, South Street, Mountain Street and Cross

Street. The sidewalk of the so-called Joseph's Corner has been made handicapped-accessible. Current sidewalks need to be improved because of the increased pedestrian traffic. By agreement with the state, the town must upgrade and maintain the Route 105 Overpass sidewalk and the adjacent south Street sidewalk to the northern terminus of the proposed pedestrian bridge. A pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks is in the planning stages. Currently, pedestrian and bicycle facilities and the connectivity between Pleasant Street and recreation areas is being studied by the Town and funded by an Enhancement grant. Winter maintenance of these sidewalks, including the bridge ramp, is done by using the regular snowplows and the town's tractor. Merchants are responsible for shoveling snow and ice from their properties, though the town may help from time to time. There is NO plowing of private roads or sidewalks conducted by the town.

## **AIRPORT**

The John H. Boylan State Airport lies just over four miles east of town and serves small commercial and private planes. This 188-acre site has a one-turf runway 2,650 feet long and 125 feet wide. Under the Capital Facilities Plan, some minor improvements were carried out in 2000 including obstruction removal and runway turf improvements. This airport is good for summer and daylight use considering it is not plowed in the winter and has no lights for directing night traffic. Continued support of this facility is necessary and greatly appreciated.

## **RAILROAD**

The Genesee & Wyoming Railroad (formerly the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad) operates through Brighton with a terminal in Island Pond Village. This is the Northeast Kingdom's busiest line. The line extends from Portland, Maine to Sainte Rosallie, Quebec where it connects with Canadian National Railway and then on into Montreal and the entire Canadian Rail network. In Sainte Rosallie it also connects with the Canadian American Railroad Company. Four trains a day run between Island Pond and Canada and six a day between Island Pond and Maine. Lumber is the principal freight, but as mentioned earlier, there is an occasional excursion train that passes through.

## **SECTION VI: ENERGY**

Electricity is provided by Citizen's Utilities. Previously, the meter amount per month was estimated, but starting in 2001 the company will read the meters and maintain an accurate account of the amount of electricity used by its customers. Several dealers out of town as well as Eagle Fuel, in Brighton, supply heating oil. Propane is also supplied by companies based in surrounding towns. There is an adequate supply of gas and diesel offered in town.

There seems to be no problem in the community regarding energy needs and scarcities. The costs of energy, however, seem to be difficult for many people to afford. The rates of electricity, for instance seem to have sharp increases regularly without an apparent reason. Heating oil prices appear to be equal to those of other places. The State of Vermont encourages people to sign up for fuel assistance and people in Town use this service.

The Planning Commission recognizes the importance of renewable energy resources and recommends their appropriate development and use within the town. These would include the use of wood heat, solar, wood, small hydro, and wind energies. The conservation of energy is also strongly encouraged. This plan recommends the use of energy saving products such as insulation, efficient appliances, and, when necessary winter weatherization products. New construction and the replacement of old appliances, doors, and windows should always be done with energy efficient products. In addition, energy efficient behavior (shutting off lights when leaving the room, turning the thermostat down at night, etc.) should be taught and used at school, home and in the workplace. The Planning Commission also recommends that an energy audit be conducted in all Town owned buildings. Then the necessary improvements should be made to these buildings to make them more energy efficient.

Re-use and recycling are two more important methods of conservation. Re-use consists of the development of second, third, or more uses of a primary (first time) product. Recycling requires the collection and reproduction of products from the initial resources. Not only do these methods save on energy consumption, they also cut down the flow of solid waste. It is the Planning Commission's recommendation that a new Recycling Center be located on the

backside of the town garage.

In addition to development patterns, site design can play a large role in bringing down energy costs. Southern orientation can provide direct energy contributions. Designing building construction to provide large insulated window areas on the southern side, allows passive solar heating in the winter months. These windows will capture sunlight and in turn pay for themselves in energy savings. In the same way, designing construction to allow large southern roof areas allows the homeowner to retain the opportunity of future solar development. This should be considered in initial site design. Consideration of the natural surroundings is also important in site design. The use of existing shelterbelts, or tree rows, can further reduce energy costs. Shelterbelts act as buffers to the cold winter winds (if located on the north side of the building) or provide cooling shade in the summer (if on the south).

## **SECTION VII: WATER**

### **WATER QUALITY**

Protecting water quality should be a high priority for the Town of Brighton. Activities such as logging on steep slopes or down to the water's edge, building houses close to the water, runoff from gravel roads, and cutting vegetation seriously affect water quality. A basic respect for the integrity of the lake and shoreline must be exhibited. These are important issues today. Figure 3 is a map of the surface waters of the town of Brighton.

There are ways to prevent the degradation of water quality on a lake. It is clear that if some fairly strict measures are not adopted, the lake may end up polluted and containing a significant algae bloom. Preventative measures include ensuring that no black water and very little gray water enter the lake, establishing vegetative buffer strips along the shore to prevent runoff and erosion, setting the camps back from the water's edge to allow a greater filtering distance before any pollution that does occur enters the lake, and requiring that all year round or enlarged camps have properly designed and installed septic systems.

Water quality is monitored by the Lake Association. Volunteers take water samples every week, for thirteen weeks, from two sites around the lake.

### **BUFFER STRIPS**

Buffer strips are areas of natural, undisturbed vegetation along the shoreline of lakes, ponds, and streams. They provide many functions including providing wildlife habitat, a visual screen from the water, and reducing the runoff and nutrients that enter the water. This works by slowing down runoff, allowing time for water to soak into the ground and the nutrients to be absorbed into the soil and plants.

The size of the buffer strip is determined by its intended function and the topography of the shoreline. Any sized buffer strip, even a few feet, is better than no buffer at all. Certain wildlife species such as black bear need large strips (perhaps as large as one mile). Other species, such as most birds and small mammals, need only twenty-five to fifty feet. The size of the buffer strip required to effectively eliminate nutrients is debated. Most sources suggest fifty to three hundred

and fifty feet. The Vermont guidelines for acceptable logging practices (AMPs) suggest a minimum of fifty feet on areas with slopes less than ten percent and an additional twenty feet for each additional ten percent slope. (Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation, Acceptable Management Practices for Maintaining Water Quality on Logging Jobs in Vermont, 1987).

### **UNDEVELOPED LAKESHORE**

In 1992, the Northeastern Vermont Development Association completed a resource inventory of the undeveloped lakeshore in Northern Vermont. The study identified undeveloped tracts of shoreline on lakes over ten acres. An "undeveloped tract" was defined as having a minimum of one thousand feet of shore frontage with a depth of two hundred and fifty horizontal feet with no human structures or 2-wheel drive roads. Undeveloped shoreline contains many valuable attributes including critical wildlife habitat, it helps maintain high water quality and enhances recreation opportunities (NVDA, 1992).

### **NON-POINT RUNOFF**

Non-point run-off pollution comes from a variety of sources such as erosion due to house construction, deforestation, failing septic tanks, grass clippings from lawns, manure spread on fields, gravel washing off of roads, improper or excessive application of lawn fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides, etc. By definition non-point pollution tends to be dispersed and dilute. However, all these activities combined, contribute to downgrading the water quality. Nutrient inputs such as phosphorous, nitrogen and organic matter, lead to eutrophication and reduces water transparency (resulting in increased water temperature). Also, undesirable chemical products threaten human health and the aquatic ecosystem.

## **SECTION VIII: WETLANDS**

Until the early 1970s, wetlands were thought to be useless swamplands, resulting in a loss to farming and other purposes. It is estimated that Vermont has already lost nearly 50% of its wetland resources and continues to lose hundreds of acres on an annual basis. Today, the importance of wetlands is understood. They provide habitat for fisheries, wildlife and vegetation including threatened and endangered species; water storage for flood and storm water runoff; erosion control; and have recreational, aesthetic and economic value. Wetlands are Vermont's most productive ecosystem, although they cover less than 5% of the total surface area of the state. Planning for wetlands is a crucial aspect of preserving the natural resources, biodiversity and health of Vermonters (Vermont Wetlands Rules, 1990).

Federal wetlands protection legislation was first passed in 1972 under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The state of Vermont regulates the destruction of wetlands through the guidelines of Act 250, and more recently through the Vermont Wetlands Rules which were adopted in 1990.

The Vermont Wetlands Rules defines wetlands as "those areas of the state that are inundated by surface or ground water with a frequency sufficient to support significant vegetation or aquatic life that depend on saturated or seasonally saturated soil conditions for growth and reproduction. Such areas include but are not limited to marshes, swamps, sloughs, potholes, fens, river and lake overflow, mud flats, bogs, and ponds, but excluding such areas that grow food or crops in connection with farming activities". These rules specify provisions for the identification and classification of wetlands, establishment of buffer zones, allowance of conditional uses of wetlands including farming exemptions, enforcement of rules and the role of the Water Resources Board and local governments. The Vermont Wetlands Rules defines the role of local planning commissions in wetlands planning as being "responsible for undertaking studies, making recommendations on wetland protection, and indicating those areas proposed for wetland protection in the land use plans (24 V.S.A.). In addition to these rules, no municipality may grant a zoning permit for the development of a wetland prior to the expiration of a period of thirty (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 plan of the municipalities and on the regional plan (24 V.S.A. Section 4409(c)(2)(A))".

There are 27 wetlands areas listed on the National Wetlands Inventory for Brighton. Because local information generally reveals a gross underestimation of national figures, it is speculated that there are many more wetland areas to be identified. The latest state data indicates that wetlands comprise more than 3,300 acres which is nearly 10% of the land in Island Pond (Water Resource Board, 1994). Most of these lands are privately owned. Island Pond's wetlands generally consist of six different classification types: primarily forest, forest & shrub-scrub, forest & emergent, primarily scrub-shrub, scrub-shrub & emergent and primarily emergent. Wetlands of interest include but are not limited to the wetlands along the west inlet stream of Nulhegan Pond which consist of a diverse complex of bogs, soft wood swamps, alder swamps and beaver meadows; the Clyde River wetlands consisting of shrub, black ash and northern white cedar swamps, sedge dominated marshes and dead water areas which contribute diverse wildlife; the Meehan Hill Swamp and other wetlands surrounding Beecher Pond, Spectacle Pond and Island Pond (Figure 4).

The preservation of these wetlands should be a priority in Island Pond's conservation effort. The owners of all of the wetland areas should be contacted and educated about the importance of protecting these areas. Private owners should be aware of the potential for rare and endangered species inhabiting the lands, the necessity of buffer zones, and the restrictions on both development and use of motor vehicles in these areas. Wetlands, like all natural areas, are not confined by political boundaries. Therefore, cooperative efforts should be made in protecting any wetland areas located across town boundaries.

The Vermont Wetlands Rules clearly outline the provisions regarding the planning of wetlands. The Agency of Natural Resources' (ANR) Department of Environmental Conservation, Water Quality Division is available as a resource in assisting with wetlands planning including the provision of assistance in delineation, classification, determination of conditional use and the enforcement of wetlands rules. Other sources of information include but are not limited to the ANR Planning Division's Vermont Rivers Study; the Lake Champlain Basin Program; nonprofit organizations including land trusts such as the Vermont Land Trust, the Nature Conservancy and NVDA; and local conservation groups.

## **SECTION IV: FOREST RESOURCES**

Forestlands are one of the most striking features of Brighton. Indeed, Brighton's landscape is nearly 85% forest, lending the area much of its scenic beauty, recreational potential, and economic opportunities. It also plays a large part in the town's rural identity; contributing to Brighton's "sense of place" and underscoring the rustic character of the Northeast Kingdom.

Northern Vermont's forests represent what is typically termed a "transitional" forest type, as the hardwood and conifer stands of the Northeast Kingdom lie between the mixed hardwoods of the south and the true conifer forests of the north. In lower elevations, the classic northern hardwood-hemlock association is present, including sugar maple, beech, yellow birch, and eastern hemlock. On higher elevations, and occupying a great deal of Brighton's forest area, lay the coniferous forest tracts, composed mainly of red spruce, balsam fir and white pine. These stands, often called "boreal," "Taiga," or "spruce-moose" forest, are characterized by short growing seasons, great precipitation as rain or snow, low winter temperatures, and sandy, acidic soils.

This extensive coniferous forest, which is present in much of the northern part of the state, forms the center of a vital pulp and paper industry that has a long history in New England. In general, Brighton's forestland plays a vital part in supporting the local regional lumber economy, recreation, and hunting. The map provided (Figure 5) illustrates the importance of Brighton's forests to the economic interests in the region through a depiction of clear-cut areas harvested since 1982. According to this data (provided by NVDA), nearly 5,000 acres of forestland have been clear-cut since the early 1980s, or almost 17% of Brighton's total forest coverage. This board is concerned with the herbicide policies that often accompany a clear-cut operation. These herbicides ultimately affect surface water and lake water qualities. Public health may be in jeopardy if this continues.

The board sees a need for development and timber industry growth, but wants to encourage sustainable forestry practices so that making a living does not compromise quality of life.

## **SECTION X: WILDLIFE**

Sixteen miles south of the Canadian boarder, it is not surprising that plants and animals in Brighton have special adaptations that enable them to live in one of the coldest, forested regions in the world, the boreal forest. This primarily evergreen landscape provides deep shade and acidic soil for other plants and animals to call home. These factors and a relatively small human population create excellent habitat potential for a variety of animals and plants, both large and small (Figure 6). As the town searches for economic growth and stability, care should be taken to preserve the extensive fish and wildlife resources.

The Town of Brighton is fortunate with its abundant wealth of forested area, water resources and open space. Wildlife and its subsequent habitat are highly valued by residents and visitors alike. In fact, hunting, fishing and bird watching were listed as the top three activities in the Brighton Community Survey. Wilderness was specifically listed as one of the factors that residents valued most about Island Fond compared to other places in the Northeast Kingdom. With so much interest expressed, it is obvious that the residents are requesting an extra effort be extended to preserve the fantastic wilderness resources available in Brighton, Vermont.

In 1989, the Non-game and Natural Heritage Program of the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department began the two-year process of recording and creating an inventory of "Vermont's Endangered, Threatened, and Rare Plants, Animals and Natural Communities" (Exceptional Natural Habitats, 1991, p1). This knowledge was intended to serve as a central database and planning tool for regional and town planners, developers, educators, and researchers. (Information about ordering this document can be found below.) In whole, we found it to be beneficial in understanding what areas might need special attention and why. In addition, "Exceptional Natural Habitats and Rare Plant and Animal Species of Essex County, Vermont" provides some specific recommendations for protecting plants, animals, and their habitats for the town plan.

All living things need water to survive, and Brighton is fortunate in the quantity and placement

of its water resources. In fact, the National Wetlands Inventory lists 27 wetlands in Brighton. Also, beautiful lakes, rivers and ponds design the countryside adding light, color and life to the rolling hills. Especially noted are the lakeside bogs, cedar swamps, cold calcareous cliffs and talus, tannic water ponds, and red pine forest/woodland in the area.

Often it is only the dedicated and the lucky that are able to see the residents of the Northeast Kingdom forest. More likely, tracks or scat may be spotted, left behind by black bear, bobcat, moose, hairy woodpeckers, red squirrels, chipmunks, white footed mice, rabbit, deer, and raccoon. Also a popular bird habitat, one may find an evening grosbeak, a crossbill, a wren, a chickadee, an owl or a hawk, to name just a few feathered residents. Especially noted are those who have been overly displaced in most communities such as: common loon, spruce grouse, black-backed woodpecker, peregrine falcon, heron, northern harrier, rock vole or the whip-poor-will.

Many special plants also call Brighton their home, as they prefer one of the local swamps, bogs, marshes, ponds, lakes, rivers, streams, or mountains. Their presence portrays the health and well being of the area, and from this, we can attribute healthy wildlife habitat as well. Looking carefully, you may find:

mountain fly honeysuckle	rose (rosa nitida)
white-fringed orchis	goldthread
American shoregrass	bunchberry
tuberculed orchis	ground fir
humped bladderwort	bog aster
Houghton's sedge	bog sedge
purple bladderwort	wintergreen
mountain cranberry	twinflower
small yellow-eyed grass	water bur reed

Because of these features and others, Brighton is rated fourth in terms of ecological values of the 78 towns in Vermont that are included in the Northern Forest. The ecological values rating judges many sectors and compares the ratings to other Vermont towns. Brighton rated well

because it scored first for natural communities, second for rare animals and high for rare plants and deer wintering areas.

The U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife keeps an office in Brighton, which overlooks the Silvio O. Conte National Wildlife Refuge in the region.

## **SECTION XI: ECOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE AREAS**

Identifying and preserving Vermont's natural diversity should be an important goal in planning. Making land use and preservation decisions involve careful consideration of multiple factors. Examining ecologically sensitive areas should be an important aspect of this process. These areas contain significant communities and rare plant and animal species that deserve protection.

Ecologically sensitive natural areas can be defined as areas of land or water that have, in contrast to the normally encountered landscape of a region, retained or have reestablished their natural characters (although they need not be undisturbed) and retain unusual or significant flora, fauna, geological, or similar features. A natural area is ecologically sensitive when it is especially susceptible to human disturbance.

Ecologically sensitive natural areas provide some important tangible benefits: maintenance of biodiversity/protection of rare and endangered species (plant and animal), and scientific, educational and recreational value. Aside from these, natural areas can also be important for spiritual, philosophical, and emotional reasons.

Brighton is situated in the geographic center of the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. Geologically, the area is significant because of its granite and glacial formations, which are important in shaping the patterns of vegetation. Although elevations in Essex County are higher than average for Vermont, the lowlands contain some of the most notable ecological features. Some of the most outstanding wetlands in the state are present in Brighton, most notably in the Nulhegan Basin. The region's swamps, bogs, and beaver meadows support a diverse array of plant and animal species. The area's boreal forests, as an extension of the great northwoods of Maine and northern New Hampshire, also provide havens for biodiversity.

To better understand the ecologically sensitive natural areas in Brighton, a preliminary inventory, done by The Non-game and Heritage Program, has been included in this report. The comprehensive Inventory is available at the town offices.

## **SECTION XII: HISTORIC RESOURCES**

While town plans are obviously oriented toward the future, a reflection and consideration of the past can be crucial to a town's sense of identity. The history of Brighton is a rich one, and offers the town many opportunities to establish strong and lasting connections between local and outside interests.

Few settlers came to the part of Vermont that is now Northern Essex County until after the War of the Revolution had been fought and won, and then few and slowly. The first settlers were primarily from Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, beginning in the 1780s. Colonel Joseph Nightingale and sixty-five others officially chartered the township in 1781. The unusual name, Random, was first used to designate the township owing its coinage to the site's original purchase as a random land tract in Vermont by a Rhode Islander named Joseph Brown. The residents later changed the largest lake in the area, originally named Knowlton Lake, to Island Pond which also became the name of the village. In 1832, the town residents changed the name Random to the current name Brighton. In March of that year, Brighton was formally organized.

The town grew slowly over the first half of the 19th Century, most likely attributable to the relative isolation of the township in a rugged, and often harsh, environment. Travel, for example, was limited to sleds and snowshoes through the long winter season. The original water supply flowed from springs atop Bluff Mountain, and was distributed through town by its own pressure. The first post office did not appear until 1849, providing further evidence of Brighton's remote character and slow growth during this time.

In 1850, there were 193 residents, but only a few years later, Brighton experienced its first large growth period. The Atlantic & St. Lawrence Railroad began traveling through Brighton in 1853, and offered a convenient and almost perfect midway point between Montreal and Portland, Maine. Portland's attractiveness to Canadian interests lay in its status as an ice-free port which allowed for efficient export of goods and merchandise to Europe. Also in 1853, a U.S. Customs Office opened in Island Pond, and Brighton began luring new residents from the ranks of railroad crews and their families. During this time, the population of Brighton would grow ten-fold. The regional timber industry also contributed to the growth of the town as it took advantage of the

railroad for convenient lumber transport. Lumber mills were erected in Brighton and powered by water. On many of the lands cleared by timbering, farms sprung up, rounding out Brighton's rural landscape.

In 1903, a railroad station was built housing the US. Customs office. It also accommodated visiting railroad crews in the bunk area and had a lock-up for potential customs violators. The Customs office finally closed its doors in the Island Pond Station in 1973 when it moved its remaining operations to Norton, Vermont, sixteen miles to the North.

It would be difficult to overestimate the significance of the railroad to the development and character of Brighton. In its peak operation in World War I, grain and crucial supply transport to Europe underscored the importance of the rail line. Many troop trains ran through Island Pond during the final years of the war. These trains transported Canadian wounded soldiers back to their homeland. Soon after the war shipping gave way to the transport of items such as hay, milk, pulp, coal, wheat, and lumber. Again, in the 1940s, the railroad would play a role in transport of goods for the war effort, although on a smaller scale than its previous contribution.

Today, trains stop then pass through Brighton daily, carrying Canadian wood pulp, paper industry supplies, and container cars in transit. The newly renovated station contains a bank and is the home of the Island Pond Historical Society and Museum. The historical society's annual meeting draws from a pool of more than 400 members across the country, but a more active historical society would be a boon to the town. The station's grandeur has survived, and its existence is a testament to the vitality and uniqueness of Brighton's rail past.

### **ISLAND POND HISTORIC DISTRICT**

In 1979, the Island Pond Historic District was recognized by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. Encompassing thirty historic buildings and sites located along Depot, Main, Railroad (Pherrin), Maple, South, Walnut, Cross, Elm, Middle, North, and Mountain Streets, the district is essentially perched on the hill overlooking the village, but also includes a number of building fronting on Main Street. The designated buildings currently are used for a variety of purposes: commercial, government, private residence, religious, and transportation.

Figure 7 is a reproduced version of the state historic district map produced in 1977. This is the most current information the State of Vermont has regarding the Island Pond Historic District. While it is extensive, there undoubtedly exist additional buildings/sites which are eligible for inclusion on the state Register. The National Register as well, may prove to be a possibility for some sites, and may offer grant funding to assist renovation with historical projects and programs.

Island Pond's historical legacy needs to be carefully addressed in any municipal initiative for the future. Planning for the protection and enjoyment of historical resources can provide the town with another feature to attract outside interest through its preservation and promotion. Toward this effort, the town may wish to consider the creation of a historic preservation "mini-plan" or control district design to be incorporated into the larger municipal plan. This mini-plan would involve a careful inventory of Brighton's historic resources, and would serve as a guide for residents to preserve the continuity of the historic district.

Secondly, the visibility, expertise, and size of the historical society in Island Pond are evidence of the strong interest in the town's history and traditions. This would seem to place the society in a good position to captain the effort for future registration/recognition at the state and national level, and in the general creation of the mini-plan itself.

### **SECTION XIII: SCENIC RESOURCES**

Brighton is set apart from other towns in New England because of its natural beauty. Island Pond Lake, the historic district, Bluff Mountain and other beautiful aspects add to the town character. Its scenic resources provide economic, recreational and aesthetic benefits for residents and visitors alike.

"A scenic community that protects its environment attracts more visitors and hence brings in more income" (Stokes, 61). The participants in the Take Charge program identified that increasing recreation and tourism would be important to the town's economy. Many people choose to hunt, fish, camp, and snowmobile in Brighton because of the area's natural beauty. By protecting Island Pond's scenic resources today, the town can ensure a sustainable tourist economy in the future.

The value of living in a beautiful place is more than economic. Many residents feel that natural beauty is what they like most about Brighton. Each Brighton resident has beautiful views not far from his/her doorstep. A glimpse of the pond from the top of the hill, a glorious sunrise over neighboring mountains, a brisk fall walk through brightly colored trees are simple day-to-day treasures that are to be appreciated.

Brighton's scenic resources offer economic and aesthetic advantages to residents and visitors alike. Planning for these resources will assure a scenic heritage for future generations.

Listed below are some of the places that community members and guests identified as their favorite scenic areas and views. These are broken into two sections: points to look at and points to look from. There are many prominent sites in town that can be seen from several viewpoints, such as Bluff Mountain that can be seen from the center of town or Route 114. The following is a list of these sites:

Bluff Mountain, Dolliff Mountain, Haystack Hill, Island, Island Pond Lake, Back Pond, McConnell Pond, Nulhegan Pond, Spectacle Pond, Historic District, Railroad Station, Village Churches

Other locations can provide panoramic views of the surrounding terrain. The following places are well worth the visit not only for their singular prominence but also for the surrounding views:

Bluff Mountain, Meehan Hill, State Beach on Island Pond Lake, Brighton State Park, Historic District, Mountain Street, Pleasant Street, Route 114 South to Newark, Route 114 North to Morgan, Road to Center Pond

This list is by no means exhaustive or complete. It is a preliminary compilation of the places that townspeople and outsiders feel to be scenic. An initial scenic map has been included in this report (Figure 8). Many additions can be made to the map by the townspeople of Brighton.

## **SECTION XIV: RECREATION AND TOURISM**

From hiking, to boating, to snowmobiling, Brighton attracts many visitors each year due to its diversity of recreation opportunities. It is frequently referred to as the “Snowmobile Capital of Vermont.” Brighton has three major areas to enjoy the outdoors: Brighton State Park; a sizable private campground, Lakeside Camping; and a section of the former Champion Lands, now owned by Essex Timber. In combination, these resources all help to support the commercial businesses in Island Pond village.

Brighton State Park, located on Spectacle Pond has 63 tent/trailer sites, 21 lean-tos, but no hookups. The facilities include hiking trails, a beach, a nature museum, bath house, playground and concession stand. Old logging roads reach deep into the area, offering interesting side trips. Spectacle Pond Natural Area, a part of Brighton State Park, is a 15-acre site which contains a natural stand of mature red pines with an understory of boreal plant species such as sheep laurel, pipsissewa, blueberries and wintergreen. This type of forest ecosystem is uncommon in Vermont, especially in the Northeast Kingdom.

Lakeside Camping is a privately owned facility on Island Pond. It features majestic pines, over 1500 feet of sandy beach, lakeshore views, trout fishing and nesting loons. The 200 campsites are both wooded and open with full hookups, playgrounds, a game room, convenience store, boat rentals and boat cruises. Wildlife abounds and moose sighting is common.

The former Champion Lands cover a vast area of the region. The new West Mountain Wildlife Management Area, Silvio O. Conte National Wildlife Refuge and the public access easements on Essex Timber land combined with the pre-existing Victory Basin area and Maidstone State Forest provide over 150,000 acres of protected area that contain the State’s largest deer wintering areas. Brighton contains a section of the Essex Timber land which has public access easements, but does not allow for overnight camping. These lands are prime wildlife habitat and offer many acres for day explorations.

Tourism is Vermont's second largest industry and is currently an essential part of the Island Pond economy. It can be an excellent tool for economic development. However, there are impacts and

limitations to tourism as an economic growth tool, which can be minimized with proper preparation through planning. Recommendations for future tourism development are outlined earlier in this plan, and various resources are available in brochures provided by local business people.

After surveying a handful of restaurants, hotels and retailers, it is evident that tourism is already a contributing factor to the town's economy and character. Listed below are some preliminary impressions gained from these discussions. The businesses surveyed have existed in Island Pond for between one and twenty-three years, ranging in size from one employee to as many as fifteen. While part-time employees were a substantial base, full time employment constituted the majority. Seasonal employee fluctuations were minimal.

Two thirds of those surveyed attributed more than fifty percent of their total income to tourism. Our results show that the strongest tourist populations are: campers, snowmobilers, and hunters, in that order. Businesses surveyed felt that summer, winter and fall were adequately busy while mud season is traditionally slow. Currently occurring on a small scale, bicycle tours, fishing and foliage viewing are three activities that could be further promoted and developed with relative ease.

Those surveyed stated that town events such as the Winter Carnival, Fourth of July Parade and Fall Festival were major assets to increasing their business. In addition, the high school reunion, snowmobile races and the historical convention also contribute annually.

Local businesses have encouraged tourism through advertising. Such efforts ranged from the local newspapers to publications reaching a broader scope such as Vermont Life and the Boston Globe.

## **SECTION XV: DEVELOPMENT TRENDS & PLANS FOR ADJACENT TOWNS & THE REGION**

The Town of Brighton is bordered by eight towns. These include Westmore, Morgan, Charleston, Newark, Warren's Gore, Avery's Gore, Lewis, and Ferdinand. At the time this section of the Brighton Plan was written, only the Town of Morgan had a Town Plan in effect.

### **WESTMORE**

Westmore had a Town Plan which recently expired. The development along the town boundary between Brighton and Westmore is very minimal and is not expected to change much. This is a very rural section of Westmore, with only one secondary road providing access. The Planning Commission does not anticipate any major impact as a result of development along this boundary.

### **MORGAN**

Morgan's Town Plan indicates that the more concentrated development should occur in the two villages of Morgan and Morgan Center. The Plan places emphasis on the importance of open space, and forestry and farming uses and allowing residential use to be dependent upon soil and water quality. However, the two major transportation routes, 105 and 114, connect at the border of Morgan and Brighton which could pose development pressures on Brighton.

### **CHARLESTON**

Charleston does not have a Town Plan and although the Clyde River will inhibit some development between the two towns, there is a lot of land that is accessible for constructing homes and businesses. Route 105 and some of the other well-used roads create areas to watch for development pressures.

### **NEWARK**

Newark's Town Plan states its compatibility with Brighton based upon the rural nature of both towns. Newark is presently in the process of creating zoning districts as it proposes its Town Zoning Bylaws, but at this time there is little residential or developed land areas on the border of Brighton. However, Route 114, Newark Pond Road and Center Pond Road hold potential for more development, which the Planning Commission will watch carefully.

## **UNORGANIZED TOWNS AND GORES**

The governing body for the towns of Warrens Gore, Averys Gore, Lewis and Ferdinand is recognized as the Unorganized Towns and Gores. They have had a Town Plan that has since expired. There appears to be minimal development pressures from any of these towns. The Former Champion Lands with its land easements (Averys Gore, Lewis and Ferdinand) the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Nulhegan Refuge (Lewis), the West Mountain Wildlife Management Area (Ferdinand), and Wenlock Wildlife Management Area (Ferdinand) will prevent development in these towns and hence along the border of Brighton. Route 105 going into Ferdinand is through wetland and floodplains, which further prevents development in this area.

## **REGIONAL CONTEXT**

In a regional context, Brighton is considered a service center. It is an important center in its area for commerce, services, employment and community life. Service centers are also defined by having at least one state highway. Brighton has State Routes 114 and 105. Most of Brighton is served by municipal water and sewer and the Town employs municipal administrative staff. Limited other government functions are also carried out here, such as the state attorney's office and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service office located in Island Pond village. Brighton differs from some of the larger growth centers like Newport/Derby and St. Johnsbury, but it is a hub in its own area. The continued existence of Brighton as a service center is due to the fact that it is separated by some distance from these two regional growth centers and has therefore not become a satellite of either.

Brighton welcomes working with neighboring towns in all aspects of implementation of this plan. This concludes the Town Plan of Brighton, May, 2002.