

## Excerpts from Local and Regional Plans

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### 1. Northeastern Vermont Development Association Regional Plan, PROPOSED DRAFT 2005 – IN PROGRESS

#### VOLUME 1

##### Regional Vision (2)

...With an economy that is to a great extent linked to our natural resource base, the region and its municipalities should also embrace strategies to protect the environmental quality in the Northeast Kingdom.

##### Chapter 2 Energy is still under development

##### Chapter 4 Historic, Cultural & Scenic Resources (9)

##### Historic, Cultural & Scenic Resource Goals

- Significant historic, cultural, and scenic resources within the region should be identified and preserved.

##### Strategies

- Assist communities to preserve and maintain historic downtowns, village centers, buildings, and rural and scenic landscapes.

#### VOLUME 2

##### Chapter 2 Energy is still under development

##### Chapter 4 Historic, Cultural & Scenic Resources

##### Historic, Cultural & Scenic Resource Goals

- Significant historic, cultural, and scenic resources within the region should be identified and preserved.

##### Strategies

- Assist communities to preserve and maintain historic downtowns, village centers, buildings, and rural and scenic landscapes.

##### Chapter 7 Natural Resources

##### Natural Resource Goals (100)

- The overarching goal for the region is to balance local economic needs with the protection of the natural resource that so many of the region's residents enjoy and depend upon.

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## 2. Northeastern Vermont Development Association Regional Plan, Re-adopted September 28, 2000, Effective November 3, 2000

### OVERALL VISION

The Northeast Kingdom is a special place because many of its traditions continue to be passed from generation to generation. These traditions are of compact village centers surrounded by open land of working farms and forest land...Maintaining the environment and the rural character of the area are critical to creating a healthy economy for the Northeast Kingdom. We have the opportunity and responsibility to maintain the long held Northeast Kingdom traditions. (5)

### VI. ENERGY ISSUES

The amount of solar and other alternative sources of energy used in the region is unknown. These small scale attempts at energy independence and production are encouraged to help diversify the region's capacity to produce energy. (19)

### IX. LAND USE PLAN

Large blocks of forest land should be maintained to support wood-related industries, retain the region's natural beauty, protect fragile areas, encourage wildlife, promote recreational usage, and maintain a healthy, sustainable forest based economy. (28)

#### B. Future Land Use

##### Development Considerations

##### 1. Economic benefit

- The effect of the overall economic benefit to the community shall be considered including the number of jobs created and the effect on the tax rate. (35)

##### 3. The Character of the Area Affected

- Consideration should be made with respect to the proposed development's effect on aesthetics, open spaces and the scenic and historic integrity of the area affected. Measures to mitigate any such adverse impacts shall also be considered. (35)

##### 6. Air/water/noise/light pollution and soil erosion

The project will not cause undue soil erosion, noise or light pollution. (36)

##### 7. Wildlife habitat, agricultural and forest resources

- Projects will be designed to the greatest extent practicable to preserve critical habitats including but not necessarily limited to deer wintering areas, wetlands, endangered or threatened species habitats and stream and shoreline corridors.
- Projects will not be allowed to fragment or to adversely impact the access to large blocks of forest and so as to result in potentially significant loss of silvicultural productivity or to significantly degrade the habitat quality for wildlife species dependent on such habitat. (37)

8. Landscaping/buffers/screening

- Landscaping, screening or other buffering techniques should be included to mitigate adverse impacts; i.e., visual, noise, pollution filter, stormwater retention, of proposed conditional uses on adjoining properties or to preserve the existing character of the area. (38)

13. Higher Elevations

- In accordance with state policy, areas with elevations over 2,500 feet should receive little or no development and logging practices should receive careful review to ensure adequate protection for sensitive areas. (39)

3. Sheffield – NO Town Plan

4. Sutton Town Plan, Adopted August 23, 2005

I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

A. A Sense of the Future (pg. 5)

Sutton residents appreciate the balance of the “pretty and the practical” which characterizes the town. Sutton offers living proof that scenic vistas and forested highlands are best maintained by those whose livelihoods depend upon their continued growth and healthy development. Sutton demonstrates that a working landscape is best preserved by the people who earn a living from it.

III. LAND USE PLAN

C. Proposed Land Use

7. Industrial (pg. 15)

Wind energy development is a potential industrial activity for high elevation ridgelines in the northern portion of the Town (Norris Mountain and adjacent summits and the higher elevation summits and ridgelines in the Willoughby State Forest). However, such development, because of their visual impact, the accompanying noise, and their potential impact on wildlife and the environment are not appropriate for these areas.

VIII. ADJACENT TOWNS

E. Sheffield (pg. 32)

Much of that part of Sheffield that lies along the Sutton/Sheffield town line is both mountainous and inaccessible...Sheffield has approved preliminary plans for the siting of wind measurement towers as a precursor to an industrial energy project...This development has the potential of having a significant adverse visual impact on the Town of Sutton and properties within sight of the project. In addition, the light and visual impacts from the project could disturb the peace and tranquility of the neighborhood from the West Ridge to the Sutton/Sheffield town line. At this time, Sheffield does not have a Town Plan.

**IV. TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

**B. Existing Transportation Facilities**

*5. Scenic Roads (pg. 17)*

Scenic roads are everywhere in Sutton, from the main roads to any of the dirt roads. Maintaining these views should be a main priority. Future planning efforts should include an inventory of the Town’s scenic roads and vistas as well as the preparation of a set of regulations to be included in the Sutton Zoning Bylaw that are designed to protect these roads and vistas.

**C. Proposed Transportation Facilities**

*5. Scenic Roads (pg. 18)*

Nearly every road in the town of Sutton has a scenic view somewhere along its length. The town’s scenic beauty should be respected and protected. As a means of protecting these scenic views the Town should consider the preparation of an inventory of these scenic views. Then, if the Town so desires, a viewshed ordinance or bylaw could be considered to protect these viewsheds. The Planning Commission discourages industrial and commercial development that would impact Sutton’s scenic vistas.

**V. UTILITY AND FACILITY PLAN**

**B. Existing Facilities**

*10. Similar Facilities and activities*

**d. Wind Towers (pg. 21)**

From the point of view of visual impacts, wind towers are a lot like cell towers... Wind towers that will be connected to the grid are regulated by the Public Service Board under the authority of 30 VSA, §248 and cannot be regulated by the Town. Therefore, it will be very important for the Town to become involved in the §248 permit process for such towers.

**VI. PRESERVATION PLAN**

**B. Scenic Features and Resources**

Scenic protection areas shall include all lands above 2,000 feet elevation – specifically Norris Mountain and adjacent summits and high elevation ridgelines and summits in the Willoughby State Forest. While the Town of Sutton will welcome small, suitably sited domestic wind towers, the Town shall, nevertheless, preserve it’s undeveloped high land and it’s time honored natural horizons as a birthright for our children. Therefore, this plan recommends that any development above 2,000 feet in elevation not exceed 100 feet in height and strongly discourages the erection of wind towers on lands above 2,000 feet.

**IX. ENERGY PLAN**

**A. Goals (pg. 33)**

To encourage the efficient use of energy and the development of renewable energy resources.

**B. Energy Resources (pg. 34)**

...As there does not appear to be any energy shortages, the only apparent problem with the supply of energy is its cost. Sutton is affected like every other town in the country by rising energy costs.

D. Development of Renewable Energy Resources (pg. 34)

The use of domestic scale renewable energy resources such as solar, wind, hydro and wood heat should perhaps be explored by both the Town and its residents. Making use of renewable energy resources...should also result in lower energy costs.